

# NINE STEPS THROUGH HISTORY

Emilia-Romagna tells its story

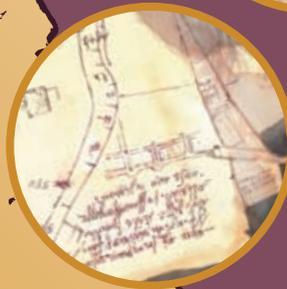


Ferrara



Bologna

Ravenna



Forlì

Cesena

Rimini



# Images and words from Emilia-Romagna, 1

## Regione Emilia-Romagna

### Servizio Comunicazione, Educazione alla Sostenibilità

Responsabile **Paolo Tamburini**

### Agenzia Informazione e ufficio Stampa della Giunta

Direttore **Roberto Franchini**

[www.regione.emilia-romagna.it](http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it)

### Istituto per i Beni Artistici Culturali e Naturali

Presidente **Ezio Raimondi**

Direttore **Alessandro Zucchini**

[www.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it](http://www.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it)

### Consulta degli Emiliano-Romagnoli nel mondo

Presidente **Silvia Bartolini**

[www.emilianoromagnolinelmundo.it](http://www.emilianoromagnolinelmundo.it)

### Coordinamento editoriale

**Tiziana Gardini**

**Piera Raimondi**

Agenzia Informazione e ufficio Stampa  
della Giunta

### Illustrazioni

**Sergio Tisselli**

### Impaginazione

**Monica Chili**

### Traduzioni

**Logos Group, Modena**

### Progetto e coordinamento del gruppo

**Valeria Cicala**

**Vittorio Ferorelli**

Istituto per i Beni Artistici Culturali e Naturali

**Gina Pietrantonio**

Servizio Comunicazione; Educazione  
alla Sostenibilità

### Gruppo di lavoro

**Paolo Degli Esposti**

**Silvia Mazzoli**

**Simonetta Trevisi**

Servizio Comunicazione; Educazione  
alla Sostenibilità

**Sante Zavattini**

Servizio Affari Generali, Giuridici  
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Servizio Lavoro

# NINE STEPS THROUGH HISTORY

Emilia-Romagna tells its story



*Nine steps through history* has been created through the collaboration between various departments of our Regional Administration, with the aim of sketching a portrait of Emilia-Romagna and its history in simple words, accompanied by Sergio Tisselli's admirable watercolours.

The message to anyone leafing through this booklet is that from the beginning of history onwards, this area has always welcomed different people and experiences, all of which have contributed to the identity of a region where sea and river, road and Apennine mountain pass, have acted as routes for connection, trade and cultural enrichment.

Elaborating a description of Emilia-Romagna's identity is one way of offering it to others, and therefore of creating a relationship with those who don't live here but who have their roots here, and also with those who come here from afar in order to put down roots and seek new opportunities.

The Regione Emilia-Romagna, as a regional government entity, is approaching a significant milestone in its lifetime: the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its effective foundation, a birthday which invites us to reflect for a moment on its achievements, on the growth it has offered its inhabitants, on its projects and policies and its strategies for the future. For all its brevity, this booklet intends to think deeply about the heritage on which this important institution is founded, and the sense of responsibility with which we must administrate it.

**Vasco Errani**

President of the Emilia-Romagna Region

The English language has a beautiful word, *serendipity*, which expresses the possibility of making pleasant and unexpected discoveries or findings quite by chance. When the “Consulta degli emiliano-romagnoli nel mondo”, the Consulta degli emiliano-romagnoli nel mondo, makes contact with the numerous associations and communities of emigrants in other countries, such discoveries are frequent: stories and situations that offer unexpected glimpses of other realities, unforeseen evidence of descendants of emigrants from Emilia-Romagna in the most exotic, unlikely and far-away places, brought there by necessity for survival or by thirst for adventure.

Nowadays there is a widespread usage among young people, which is related to serendipity even if the discoveries perhaps depend more on choice than chance: this is the custom, first established in the United States, of leaving books somewhere in urban or rural landscapes so that other people can find them and read them. An episode of similar bookcrossing marks the beginning of *Nine steps through history*, the booklet which our Forum is offering the community of citizens of Emilia-Romagna and their descendants around the world in order to bring them closer to the history and culture of the land of their origins.

A girl arrives at the twin towers housing the offices of the Regione for an appointment, and notices a book sitting on a low wall, forgotten or deliberately left there by somebody. She begins to read it and enters a story that is a history of one particular corner of the world, namely Emilia-Romagna. The images on the pages, by the cartoonist and water-colour painter Sergio Tisselli, will help our friends in distant places to participate in the millennial history of our region and feel them as part of their own history. In a way, after all, they resemble episodes of family history that belong to the whole family, whether in Italy or abroad. The idea of this gift, which we offer as part of the celebrations of the Regione Emilia-Romagna’s fortieth birthday, came about through collaboration between the Forum, the regional council’s Information Agency and Press Office, the Regione’s Public Relations Office and its Cultural Heritage Institute. All these bodies are jointly working on a renovated version of the website *Emilianoromagnolinelmondo.it* ...where you can find all the material which we have gathered here and enhanced with fine illustrations for this booklet.

**Silvia Bartolini**

President of the Consulta  
degli emiliano-romagnoli nel mondo

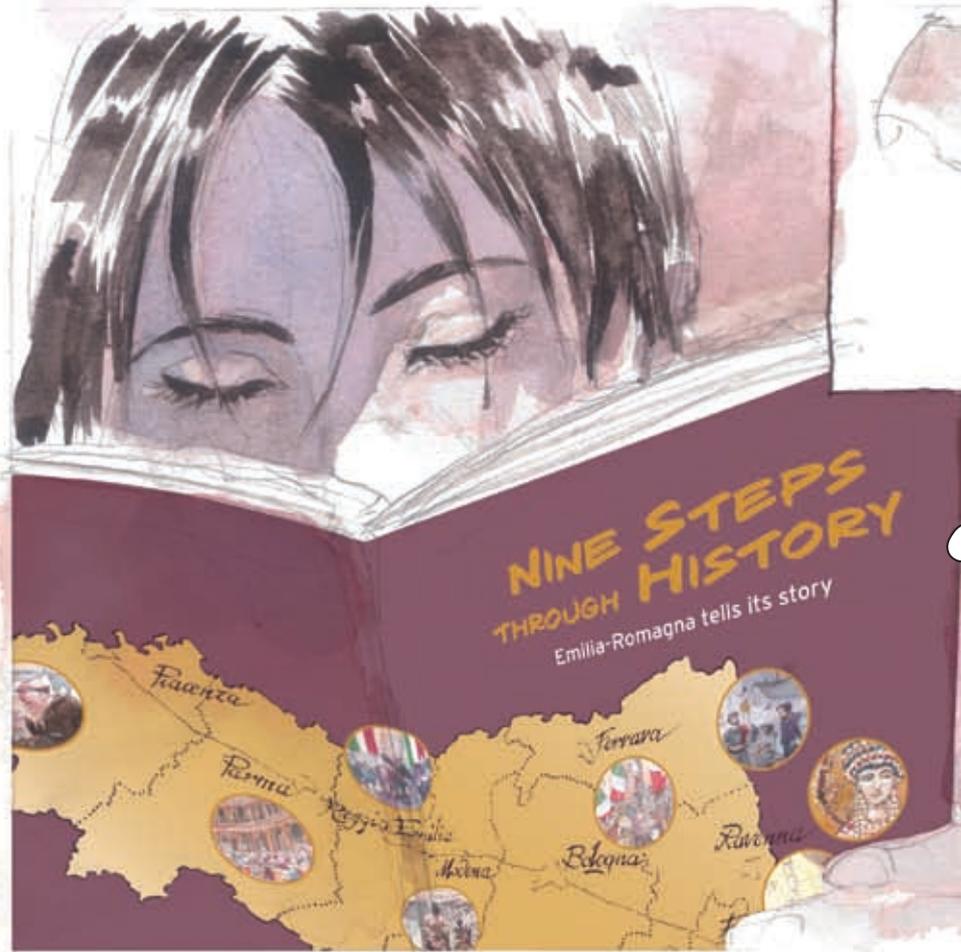




I'VE ARRIVED:  
THE TOWERS OF THE  
REGIONE EMILIA-ROMAGNA!  
I'M A BIT EARLY...



WHAT'S THIS BOOK  
DOING HERE? LET'S  
TAKE A LOOK...



**NINE STEPS  
THROUGH  
HISTORY**  
Emilia-Romagna tells its story



THE ADRIATIC,  
THE SEA WHICH MARKS  
THE EASTERN  
BOUNDARY...

BETWEEN THE SEVENTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES BC, DURING THE BRONZE AGE, THIS AREA WAS SETTLED BY A CIVILIZATION KNOWN TODAY AS THE "TERRAMARE", WHOSE PEOPLE LIVED IN PILE-DWELLING VILLAGES. THIS PRIMITIVE CULTURE EXTENDED ACROSS MUCH OF EMILIA-ROMAGNA, REACHING AS FAR AS THE SLOPES OF THE APENNINES, LEAVING NUMEROUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRACES THAT HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE TERRITORIES OF MODENA AND PARMA.





# NINE STEPS THROUGH HISTORY

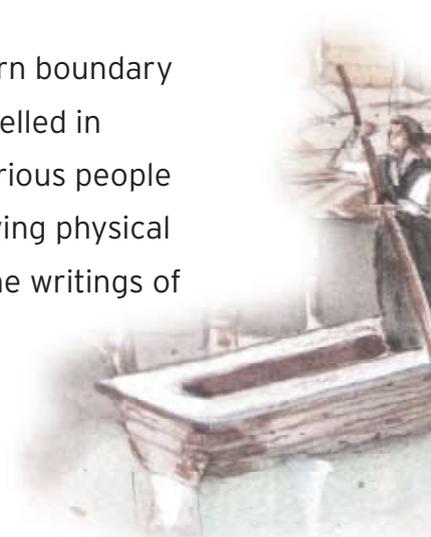
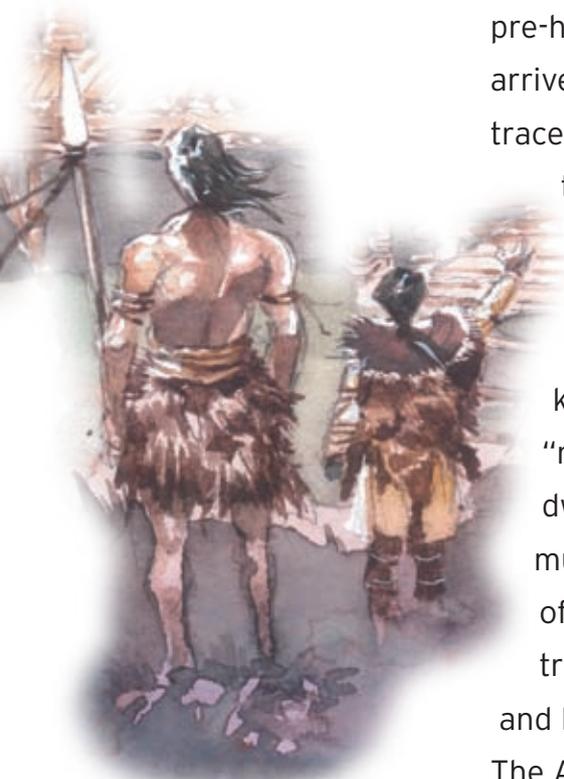
Emilia-Romagna tells its story

The Adriatic, the sea which marks the eastern boundary of Emilia-Romagna, was already much travelled in pre-historic times. It was the route by which various people arrived and settled in the Italian peninsula, leaving physical traces in the territory and narrative traces in the writings of the earliest historians.

Between the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries BC, during the Bronze Age, this area was settled by a civilization known today as the "Terramare" (from "marl earth" in Italian), whose people lived in pile-dwelling villages. This primitive culture extended across much of Emilia-Romagna, reaching as far as the slopes of the Apennines, and left numerous archaeological traces that have been found in the territories of Modena and Parma.

The Adriatic Sea is frequently mentioned in Greek mythology (in connection with Hercules, for example), and in accounts of Homeric heroes.

Greek navigation of the Adriatic became increasingly intense from the seventh century BC, much of it headed for the Po delta, especially to the port of Spina, as can be seen from the superb ceramics now in the Ferrara Archaeological Museum. Throughout antiquity this port retained its role as a connecting hub between sea traffic and river traffic towards the Po Valley and the Alps and thence to Europe.





“Proto-Villanovian” and “Villanovian” are the terms now used to describe the civilizations in this region which came into contact with the Etruscan civilization between the eighth and sixth centuries BC. The Etruscans penetrated to these parts via the river Reno valley and the settlements at Marzabotto and Bologna (then called *Felsina*), reaching as far as the Po delta. To the east of the Apennines, the various Etruscan principalities and cities dominated trading activities, above all in the regions towards the coast, for example through the valley of the river Marecchia, where the town of Verucchio was built over a flourishing Proto-Villanovian settlement. In the western part of Emilia-Romagna, however, the Etruscan domination amounted to a total political monopoly... in Felsina, along the route towards Spina, in the areas of Modena, Parma, Piacenza and even on the other side of the Po. They were responsible for a notable artistic production and remarkable developments in town-planning and construction, exemplified by the city founded at Marzabotto, in the Reno valley. West of the Apennines the Etruscans met and merged with the Ligurian people, who would later experience the invasion of the Celts and then the Romans.



In Emilia-Romagna the Celts generally settled in villages that dominated Apennine passes, such as Monte Bibeale in the Idice valley, in the Bologna area. Meanwhile, the Adriatic coast continued to be the site of intense mercantile



GREEK NAVIGATION OF THE ADRIATIC BECAME INCREASINGLY INTENSE FROM THE SEVENTH CENTURY BC, MUCH OF IT HEADED FOR THE PO DELTA, ESPECIALLY TO THE PORT OF SPINA, AS CAN BE SEEN FROM THE SUPERB CERAMICS NOW IN THE FERRARA ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM. THROUGHOUT ANTIQUITY THIS PORT RETAINED ITS ROLE AS A CONNECTING HUB BETWEEN SEA TRAFFIC AND RIVER TRAFFIC TOWARDS THE PO VALLEY AND THE ALPS AND THENCE TO EUROPE.





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navigation, the main ports being Rimini and Ravenna. Founded in 268 BC, *Ariminium* (Rimini) was the first colony created by the Romans in the Po valley, offering passage for men and goods through convenient Apennine passes towards the Tiber valley and on to Rome. The Romans gave the Po valley the name of Cisalpine Gaul, meaning the land of the Gauls this side of the Alps. This territory was divided in two by the river Po (in Latin *Padus*), forming two regions,

one on either side of the river: *Transpadana* and

*Cispadana*, the latter largely corresponding

to today's Emilia-Romagna. The foundation

of Rimini paved the way for wider Roman

penetration in the area, starting with the

founding of the colony of *Placentia* (today

Piacenza) in 218 BC. The Second Punic

War and the invasion of Hannibal put a

brake on further Roman expansion in the

area for well over a decade, but between

189 and 183 BC colonization resumed with

the foundation of *Bononia* (Bologna), *Mutina*

(Modena) and *Parma*.

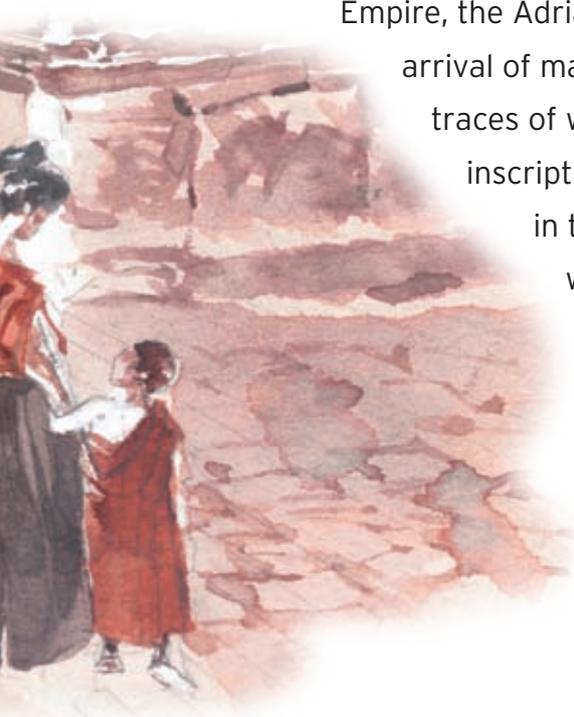
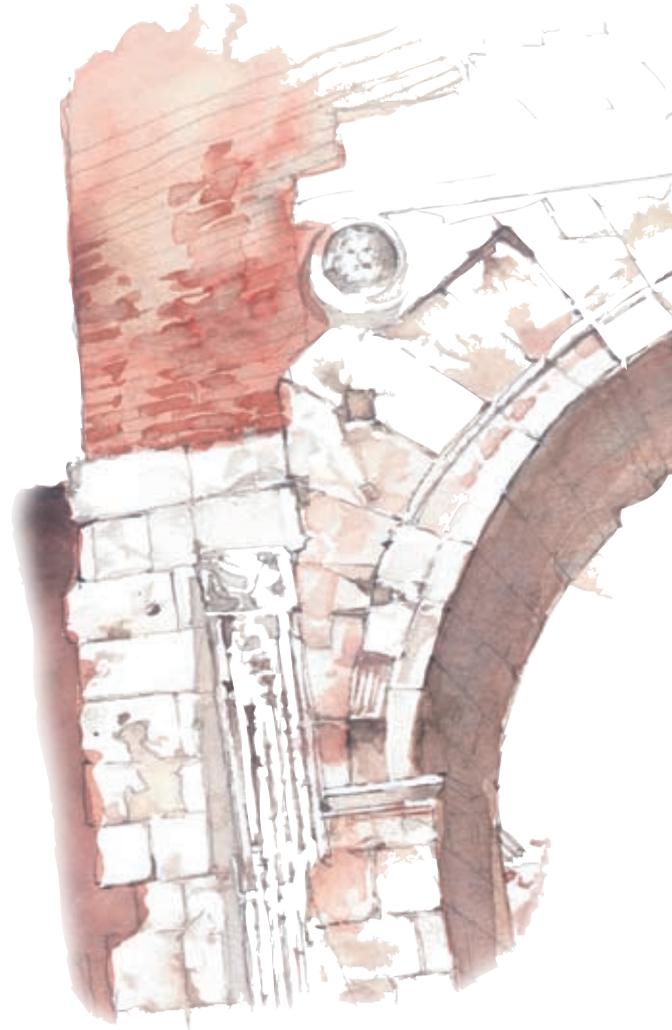
In order to connect the various Roman colonies, a major road construction project was implemented by the consul Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, from whom the consular road took its name: Via Aemilia in Latin, Via Emilia in Italian. This began in Rimini and finished in Piacenza, and became the key factor in a total transformation of both the area's landscape and its economy: the swamps were reclaimed, the land was divided into properties and



brick-making factories were set up to facilitate the construction of new cities.

From the first century BC and during the reign of Augustus, thanks to the particular advantages of its lagoon, Ravenna was the naval base for Rome's Eastern Fleet (called the Classis, hence the name Classe given to the city's port area). As a result the area became home to numerous sailors recruited in faraway parts. Various roads continued the Via Emilia route further north, including key communication roads through the coastal lagoons and marshes north-east towards Altino and Aquileia (in what is today Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia). The spread of Roman rule brought with it systematic population transplants, of which evident traces remained in religious expression and in the extension of literacy. Throughout the Age of the Roman

Empire, the Adriatic bore witness to the arrival of many cults from the Middle East, traces of which still survive in objects, inscriptions and monuments: at Sarsina, in the Apennines above Cesena, there was a huge sanctuary dedicated exclusively to oriental divinities.



IN ORDER TO CONNECT THE VARIOUS ROMAN COLONIES, A MAJOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED BY THE CONSUL MARCUS AEMILIUS LEPIDUS, FROM WHOM THE CONSULAR ROAD TOOK ITS NAME: VIA AEMILIA IN LATIN, LATER VIA EMILIA IN ITALIAN. THIS BEGAN IN RIMINI AND FINISHED IN PIACENZA, AND BECAME THE KEY FACTOR IN A TOTAL TRANSFORMATION OF BOTH THE AREA'S LANDSCAPE AND ECONOMY: THE SWAMPS WERE RECLAIMED, THE LAND WAS DIVIDED INTO PROPERTIES AND BRICK-MAKING FACTORIES WERE SET UP TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CITIES.





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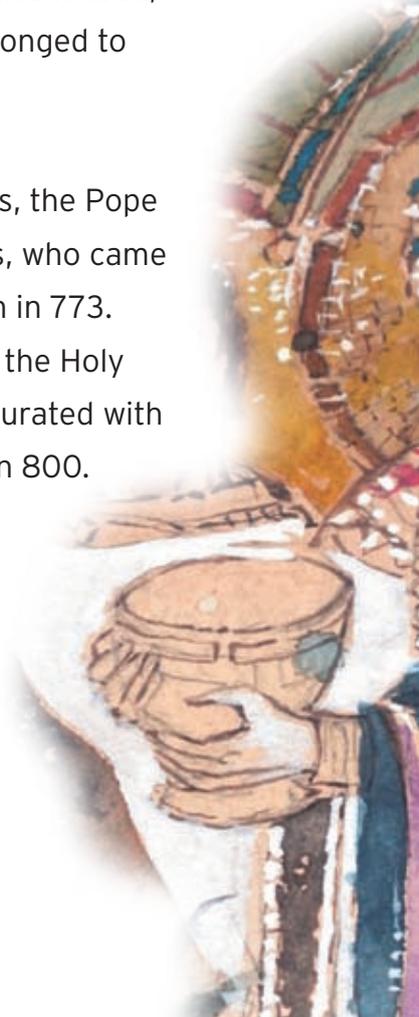


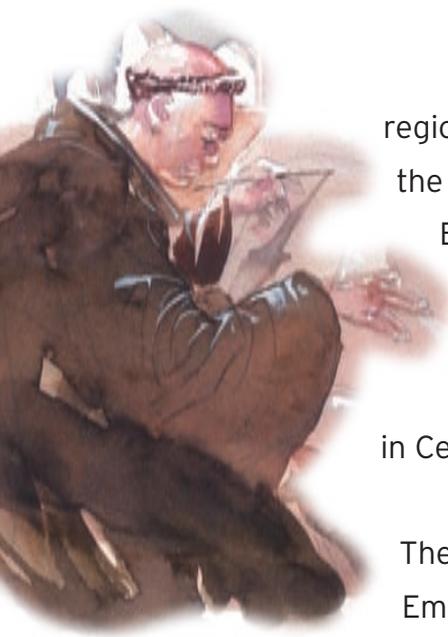
In the sixth and seventh centuries AD, Ravenna was the most important political centre in the Italian peninsula. In 402 AD the emperor Honorius had established it as the capital of the Roman Empire, and after the chaotic period of the barbarian invasions, in 493 Italy came under the dominion of the Ostrogoths, whose king, Theodoric, made his base in Ravenna. In 527, with the advent of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, Ravenna became the seat of the Exarch (the Governor of Italy) and enjoyed a period of extraordinary splendour, still visible in the basilicas of San Vitale and Sant'Apollinare in Classe.

During the sixth century our region's political unity was broken up by the invasion of the Lombards, who took over various areas but were unable to definitively defeat the Byzantine forces. The Lombards occupied Emilia as far as Bologna and Imola, and established their power base in Reggio, while the Byzantines kept hold of the Adriatic area, which took the name of Romagna because it belonged to the Romans of Byzantium.



To combat the Lombard invaders, the Pope requested the help of the Franks, who came south to Italy and defeated them in 773. Our region then became part of the Holy Roman Empire, which was inaugurated with the coronation of Charlemagne in 800. During the early centuries of the Middle Ages, in convents and abbeys throughout the





region, scribes painstakingly recopied texts from the classical tradition, a notable example being Bobbio, in the Apennines near Piacenza.

The work of those countless hands made possible the founding of the great libraries: among the first was the Malatestiana Library in Cesena.

The subsequent evolution of the Holy Roman Empire led to the administrative subdivision of the area into many separate fiefdoms. Over time the sovereignty of the fiefdoms came to be attributed to the bishops, who thus began to constitute small local dominions. In this period two main poles of influence emerged within the region: in the western part of Emilia the Counts of Canossa dominated (above all the famous Countess Matilda), while in the Romagna area the

Archbishop of Ravenna was the prevailing authority. The Empire and Church found themselves on opposite sides in the “investiture conflict” over the right to appoint bishops. In 1077 the Canossa castle on the hill near Reggio was the site of the humiliation of the Emperor Henry IV before Pope Gregory VII. In this conflict-ridden context, the wealthier classes in the cities (landowners and merchants) became increasingly impatient with the feudal authorities and began to promote a new kind of political







IN 527, WITH THE ADVENT OF THE BYZANTINE EMPEROR JUSTINIAN, RAVENNA BECAME THE SEAT OF THE EXARCH (THE GOVERNOR OF ITALY) AND ENJOYED A PERIOD OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR, STILL VISIBLE IN THE BASILICAS OF SAN VITALE AND SANT'APOLLINARE IN CLASSE.

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order for the local administration of law, justice, taxation and the economy: the “Comune”, or municipal government. Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, throughout Emilia-Romagna and indeed throughout northern Italy, these new forms of local government were established in the principal cities, guided by consuls elected by a council of important citizens, and before long they were extending their sphere of political influence to the areas surrounding the cities. As the model of the Comune became widespread, the cities became motors of a notable economic and cultural revival.

At first these major or minor “city states” formed alliances with one another in order to resist the assaults of the imperial troops, but once their common enemy had been defeated rivalries between neighbouring cities began to emerge... as well as rival factions within each comune: those supporting the Papacy (the Guelphs) and those in favour of the Emperor (the Ghibellines). The continuous internecine feuding and external conflicts weakened the city magistrates and institutions, preparing the way for personal governments run directly by aristocratic factions. All the cities of Emilia-Romagna came under the seigniorial rule of noble families: Piacenza, Parma, Mirandola, Carpi, Correggio, Scandiano, Imola, Faenza, Forlì, Ravenna and Rimini. Ferrara, as a notable example, became the centre of the dominions of the d’Este family, whose rule later extended to cover both Modena and Reggio. The rule of the Comune survived for longer in Bologna, apart from brief

intervals of dominance by the Pepoli family and later the Bentivoglio family. After a whole series of wars between different regional powers (Milan, Venice, Florence and the Papal State), at the beginning of the sixteenth century Bologna and Romagna finally became parts of the Papal State.

Despite wars and political instability, the age of the Comunes and the Family Dominions witnessed an intense and varied blossoming of cultural and economic progress, encompassing industry, agriculture, trade, art and poetry: the city of Ravenna is still home to the tomb of Dante Alighieri! This was the period when the University of Bologna was founded, making it the oldest university in the world. Also during this period the great cathedrals and city government palaces were built, as well as the castles and fortresses, while city walls were enlarged to contain the growing number of inhabitants.

The sixteenth century opened with the Papal State consolidating its rule over the eastern part of our region, Pope Julius II launching a series of military campaigns to conquer firstly the cities of Romagna and then, in 1506, Bologna. When Duke Alfonso d'Este died without direct heirs in 1597, the Papal State occupied Ferrara and its territories, leaving the d'Este family with Modena and Reggio. The resulting political order in Emilia-Romagna was to then remain stable (apart from the brief Napoleonic interlude) until the unification of Italy over a hundred and





Amelia

DURING THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES, IN CONVENTS AND ABBEYS THROUGHOUT THE REGION, SCRIBES PAINSTAKINGLY RECOPIED TEXTS FROM THE CLASSICAL TRADITION, A NOTABLE EXAMPLE BEING BOBBIO, IN THE APENNINES NEAR PIACENZA. THE WORK OF THOSE COUNTLESS HANDS MADE POSSIBLE THE FOUNDING OF THE GREAT LIBRARIES: AMONG THE FIRST WAS THE MALATESTIANA LIBRARY IN CESENA.



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sixty years later, with the region was divided into three States: the duchy of Parma and Piacenza (created in 1545 by Pope Paul III for the Farnese family, of which he was a member), the duchy of Modena, and the possessions of the Papal State (Bologna, Ferrara and Romagna).

Among the countless extraordinary personalities from the world of culture who left their mark on Romagna during the Renaissance was Leonardo da Vinci, who in 1502 designed the port and canal for the city of Cesenatico.

Despite the region's underlying political stability, during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it enjoyed only brief periods of real peace. Again and again the area suffered the passage of foreign armies, which inevitably brought with them epidemics and famines: examples were the invasion of the Landsknechts, the Thirty Years War, the Wars of Succession of the first half of the eighteenth century. In the provinces ruled by the Papal State, the centralised administrative structures were reinforced, thus increasing the power of the Pope's local representatives: these were the Cardinals, acting as Papal Legates... from the word "legato" meaning tied or bound, from which in turn was derived the term "Papal Legations" referring to the territories of Bologna, Ferrara and Ravenna. The small duchies of Parma and Modena, on the other



hand, survived between their more powerful neighbouring states thanks to skilful use of diplomacy.

The seventeenth century saw many important architectural renovations and additions to the new ducal capitals: in 1617 the Farnese duke Ranuccio I entrusted Giovan Battista Aleotti with the construction of the wooden theatre in the Palazzo della Pilotta, to provide a stage to house extravagant Baroque scenic fantasies; in 1634 in Modena, the d'Este duke Francesco I had the Ducal Palace built, which would house his superb art collection.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, our region, like so many others, was influenced by the ideas of The Enlightenment, with its rational lay approach to social, political and economic problems. The duchy of Parma, which passed under the rule of the French Bourbon dynasty in 1732, was particularly receptive to cultural influences from Europe, which in political terms implied opposing ecclesiastical privileges and abuses, and in economic terms brought with it the modernisation of the silk and paper industries, and of printing (the great typographer Giambattista Bodoni was highly active in Parma). Many intellectuals in Modena, and most notably Ludovico Antonio Muratori, participated directly in implementing reforms in the fields of justice and taxation.

By the time Napoleon invaded Italy, the principles of equality transmitted by the French Revolution were already well rooted in our region, and the less wealthy classes



AMONG THE COUNTLESS  
EXTRAORDINARY PERSONALITIES FROM  
THE WORLD OF CULTURE WHO LEFT THEIR  
MARK ON ROMAGNA DURING THE RENAISSANCE  
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THE CITY OF CESENATICO.



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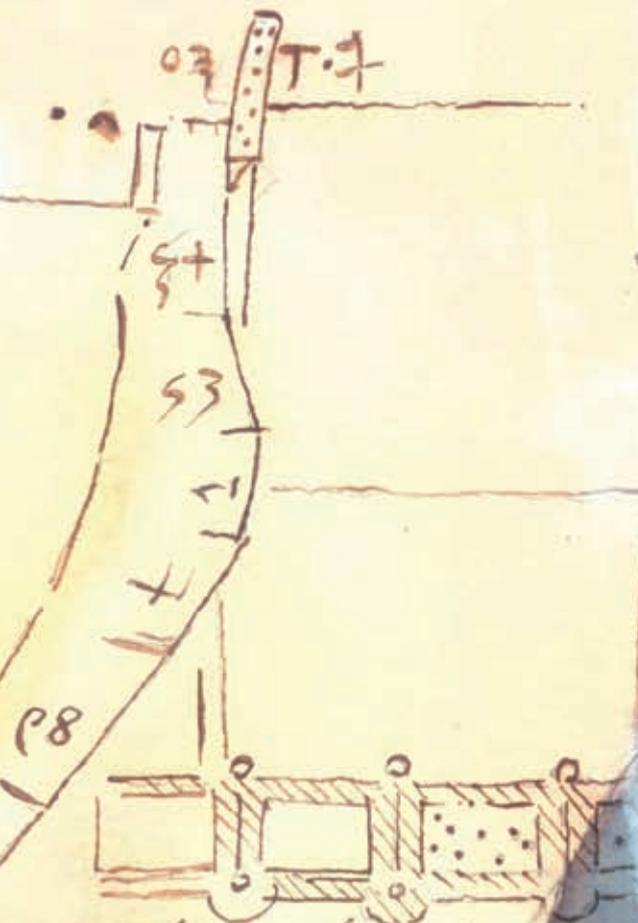
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Leonardo

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were strongly influenced by the more radical views of the Jacobins. After the Napoleonic occupation in 1796, provisional governments were formed in Bologna, Ferrara, Modena and Reggio, which launched profound reforms of feudal and aristocratic privileges.

These four cities joined together to form the Cispadana Republic, which in the Congress of Reggio, on the 7th of January 1797, proclaimed as its flag the green, white and red tricolour which would later become modern Italy's flag. A few months later, Napoleon had the Cispadana Republic incorporated into the new Cisalpine Republic which included the whole northern part of the peninsula and which was subsequently given the name Italian Republic.

In 1805 this Republic became the Kingdom of Italy, with Napoleon Bonaparte as its king. Parma and Piacenza, on the other hand, were directly annexed by France. After an initial enthusiasm for the wave of revolution, the Italian population began to show increasing hostility towards the French, who effectively had direct control of the Italian Republic which then became the Kingdom of Italy. The weight of taxation, the compulsory military service and the permanent state of warfare combined to create growing resentment across all social classes. Support was growing behind the idea of a popular uprising in favour of Italian independence and unification, as we can read in the Joachim Murat's Rimini Proclamation dated 30th March 1815. But in the same year the Congress of Vienna

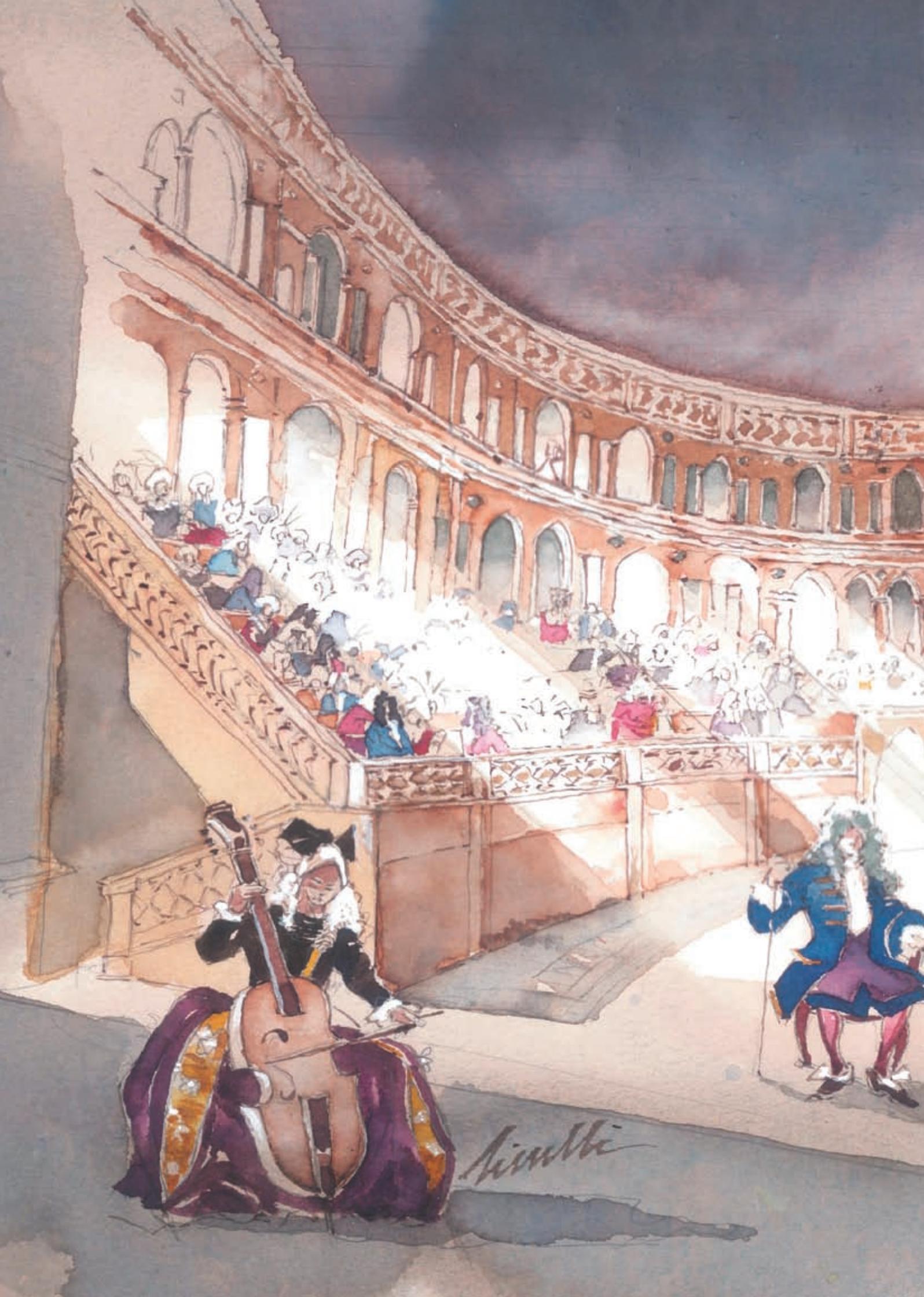


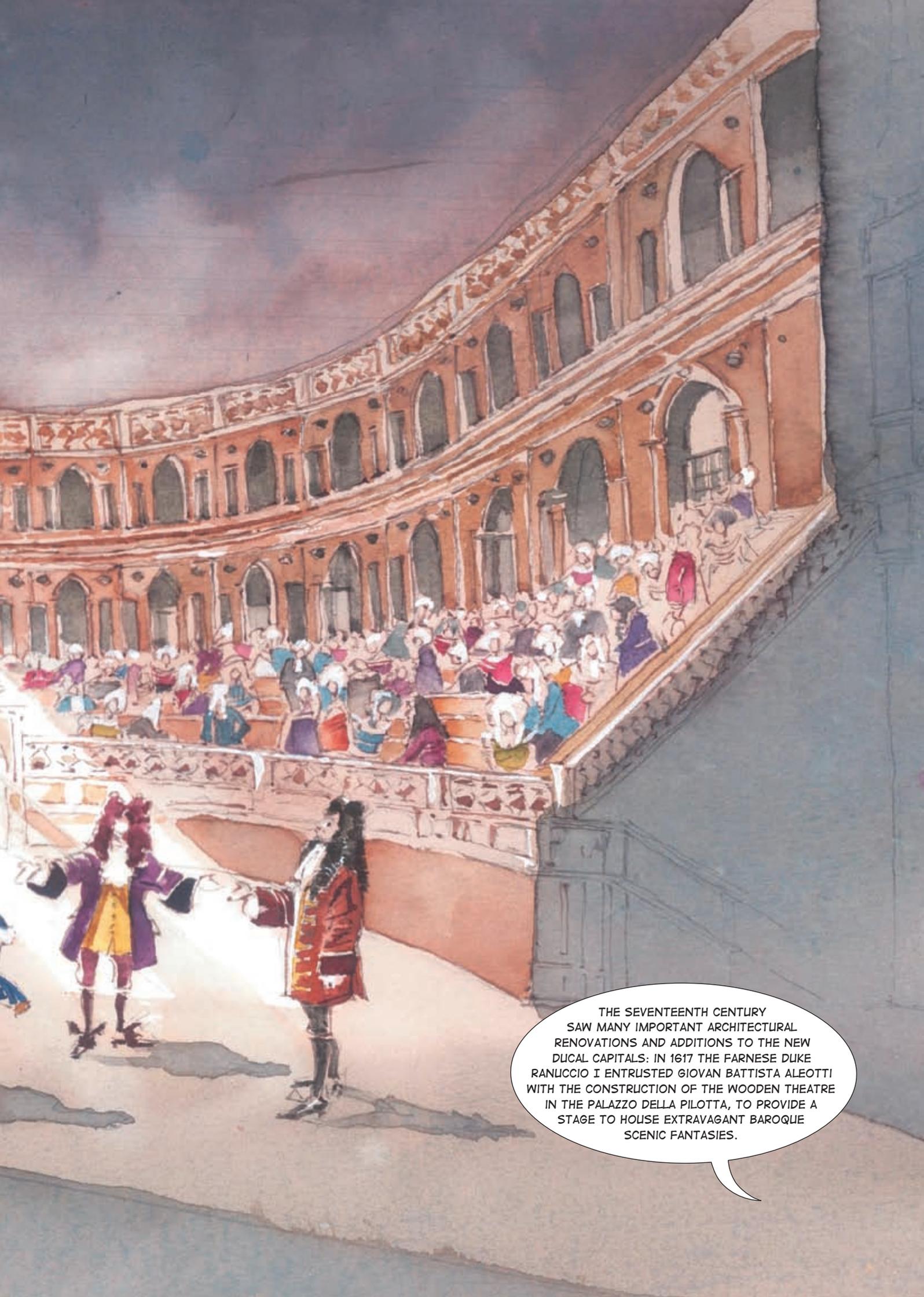
decided to restore the political order as it had been before the Napoleonic period and placed Italy under Austrian rule, thus postponing Italian patriotic aspirations by decades. And so, between 1814 and 1815, in Emilia as elsewhere, the Congress of Vienna enforced a return to the old territorial framework, restoring the Legations (Bologna, Ferrara, Forlì and Ravenna) to the Papal State, Modena to the d'Este family, and Parma to the ex-Empress Marie Louise of Austria. Naturally, there was widespread discontent, especially among those who had occupied important political positions during the Napoleonic period, and those who had reaped significant economic benefits from the opening up of borders and the commercial development of the Po valley in general and who now found themselves penalised: this dissatisfaction found expression in the creation of various more or less clandestine associations.



The wave of insurrection that spread from France to many parts of Europe in 1831 was felt with particular intensity in Modena, guided by Ciro Menotti: from here the agitation spread to Parma and the Legations. Austrian troops intervened to restore order, but in Modena and the Legations there was considerable violence. The revolutions of 1848 also provoked uprisings in Emilia: the duchies revolted against the ruling nobles, and popular support was so strong that the princes were forced to flee, while the rebels issued a proclamation annexing the areas with







THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SAW MANY IMPORTANT ARCHITECTURAL RENOVATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE NEW DUCAL CAPITALS: IN 1617 THE FARNESE DUKE RANUCCIO I ENTRUSTED GIOVAN BATTISTA ALEOTTI WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WOODEN THEATRE IN THE PALAZZO DELLA PILOTTA, TO PROVIDE A STAGE TO HOUSE EXTRAVAGANT BAROQUE SCENIC FANTASIES.

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the Kingdom of Sardinia. A republic was declared in Rome, and the Papal State conceded autonomous constitutions to Bologna, Ferrara and Romagna: however, it refused to allow them to participate in the uprising against the Austrians, thus permitting Austria to soon regain control. The fall of the Roman Republic and Garibaldi's retreat through the swamps around Comacchio brought down the curtain on this extraordinarily dramatic sequence of events.

In May 1859, when the troops of the alliance between Napoleon III and the King of Sardinia Vittorio Emanuele II crossed the Ticino river, renewed anti-Austrian uprisings took place, backed by the newly wealthy middle classes. In March 1860 a series of plebiscites approved the annexation of the eight recently created provinces of Emilia-Romagna to the Kingdom of Sardinia. The first general elections of what was soon to become the Kingdom of Italy had been held in January of that year and many illustrious patriots and outstanding personalities of our region were elected to the new parliament. Among them was Marco Minghetti, who argued that decentralisation was a necessary counterweight to the unification of the provinces, and drew up a model of parallel regional administration that met with vigorous opposition from the new ruling class.

In the half century that passed between the annexation and the First World War, the centuries-old division of Italy into different states with different laws and systems, the contrast between the economic situations in different regions - plus resurgent rivalries between different cities

- greatly complicated the assimilation of the provinces of Emilia-Romagna with the newly united state of Italy. Despite this, the period between 1870 and 1914 was a time of momentous economic development, with huge improvements in agriculture, major land reclaiming projects, the foundation of a modern industrial system and the activation of commerce on a national scale. Emilia and Romagna were home to a forceful drive towards the creation of various kinds of association, especially through the followers of Mazzini and the socialists led by Andrea Costa. This produced the first agricultural cooperatives, which organised collective land leasing, and the first cooperative movements for farm labourers. Social unrest and rural problems were frequently in the news for many years: 1897 saw strikes organised by workers in the rice-fields in the Ferrara area and by harvesters in Molinella. In 1901 the first congress of the Federation of Farm Workers was held in Bologna, while particularly bitter rural strikes took place in 1907 and 1908 in the provinces of Ferrara, Bologna and Parma.

After the end of the First World War, the problems of agricultural workers in Emilia-Romagna arose once more, and more acutely than ever before. Standards of living in the countryside had been much improved through years of social struggle, but this led to a dramatic rise in the rural population and an excess of manpower, due also to the limited industrial growth in the region. Throughout Italy socialist organisations gained support, both in urban and rural areas, thanks in part to the echo of the Russian



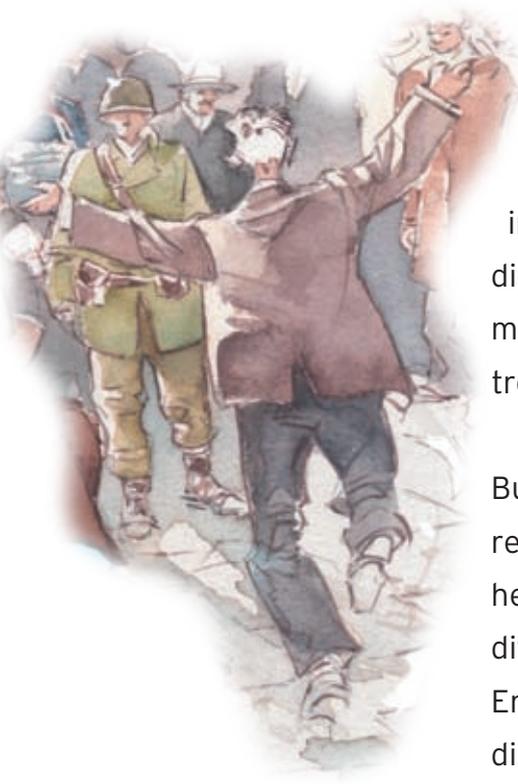
BOLOGNA, FERRARA,  
MODENA AND REGGIO JOINED  
TOGETHER TO FORM THE CISPADANA  
REPUBLIC, WHICH IN THE CONGRESS OF  
REGGIO, ON THE 7TH OF JANUARY 1797,  
PROCLAIMED AS ITS FLAG THE GREEN,  
WHITE AND RED TRICOLOUR WHICH  
WOULD LATER BECOME MODERN  
ITALY'S FLAG.





# NINE STEPS THROUGH HISTORY

Emilia-Romagna tells its story



Revolution: strikes and labour agitation involved millions of workers, country people and the unemployed, with Emilia at the forefront of this movement. It proved to be at the forefront too in terms of the brutality of rural landowners' reactions: in Bologna the attack on Palazzo d'Accursio on the 21st of November 1920 initiated a crescendo of violence, attacks and destructive raids by fascist squads financed by the ruling classes. Thousand of Emilian workers were forced to expatriate to avoid persecution, in many cases continuing the struggle against Mussolini's dictatorship from abroad. Between 1936 and 1939 many men from Emilia enrolled as volunteers to combat Franco's troops in Spain.

But in the final years of the Second World War our region was engulfed in warfare of an intensity not seen here since the Middle Ages: from late July 1943 the different components of the anti-fascist movement in Emilia-Romagna were increasingly involved in actions of disturbance and resistance against the occupying Nazi forces. In those years the collaboration between social and political movements of all kinds and colours, embracing a vast proportion of the urban and rural population, gave the Resistance in our region a popular breadth and force unequalled anywhere else in Italy. The first partisan guerrilla actions took place in the autumn of 1943, and over the next two years intensified throughout the Apennine area which was cut in two by the 300 kilometre fortified Gothic Line which the Germans had created between Rimini in the east and La Spezia in the west. The Germans



reacted by carrying out ferocious reprisals, not just against the partisans but also against civilians and local clergy who were found to have supported the Resistance: 3,500 civilians were executed or massacred in the region, and 6,000 partisan fighters died. This created wounds which are still visible and still painful, especially so in some cases, such as that of the massacre of women, children and old people carried out by the SS in the Reno Valley. The allied forces entered Rimini in September 1944, and by November had also liberated Ravenna. After the long winter halt to the northward advance, in April 1945 the allies began their final offensive, breaching what remained of the Gothic Line towards Bologna. There the fascist forces within the city, abandoned by the Germans, were forced to flee by the insurrection of the populace. In two weeks, between 14 and 28 April, the Nazi-Fascist front collapsed from the river Senio to the river Po, and Imola, Bologna, Modena, Ferrara, Reggio Emilia, Parma and Piacenza were all liberated. Thus began a new phase in the history of Emilia-Romagna: the consolidation, defence and development of democracy.

Many other struggles would follow, as part of the profound dialectic between renovation and conservation, and these kept alive the ideals of the Resistance.

In 1970, in implementation of the framework envisaged by Italy's new Constitution, which after the Second World War had marked the end of the monarchy and the birth of the Italian Republic, the administrative entity of the Regione Emilia-Romagna was instituted. From then until the end of the century the Regione managed and





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# NINE STEPS THROUGH HISTORY

Emilia-Romagna tells its story



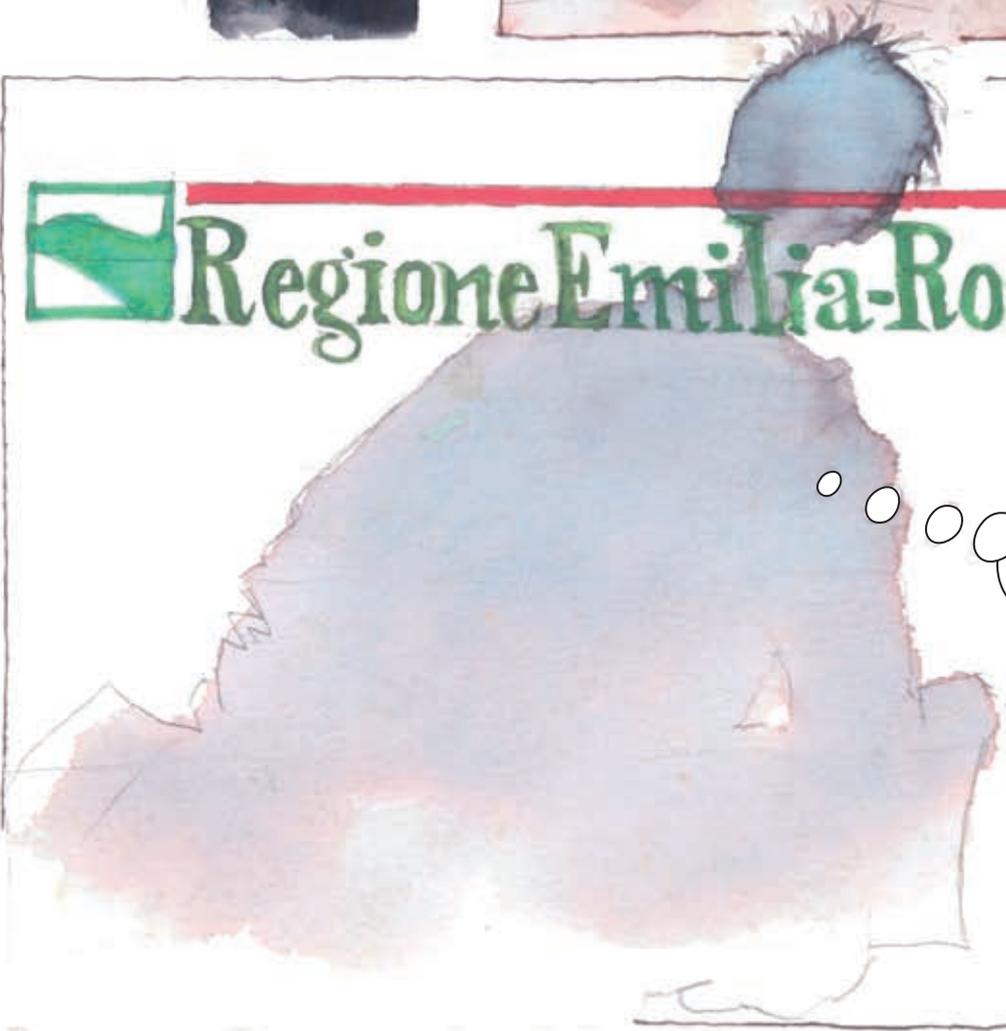
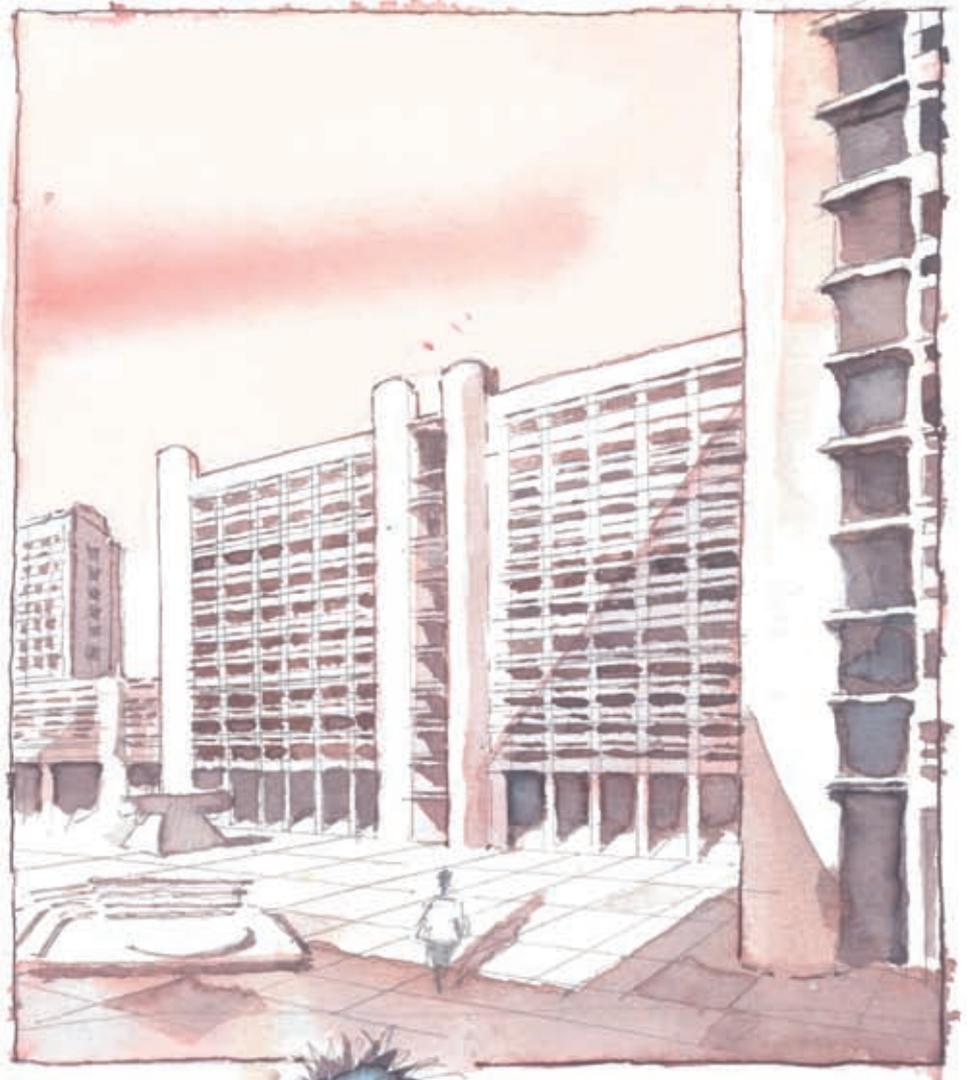
developed a territorial structure that from the post-war period had already been characterised by its polycentric nature: a series of strong cities, capable of combining and interconnecting economic growth, social development and administrative efficiency. An organisational model which over the years has permitted different local communities to differently express aspects of their own particular cultural and civic attitudes. The various component provinces of Emilia-Romagna do not all share the same economic and social features, but it is the Italian region that shows the least difference between the weakest and strongest province, and every area, in its own different way, has achieved successful growth. The axis traced by the Via Emilia from Bologna to Rimini has been consolidated, while the coastal strip has developed both in the more densely inhabited southern part and in the northern part with its richer landscape and naturalistic treasures. The piedmont axis from Parma to Bologna has also been reinforced and new manufacturing axes now cross the lowland areas: Imola-Faenza-Lugo, the Mirandola area, the Bologna-Ferrara axis, and the Rimini hinterland. The Apennine zones, which constitute nearly half the region's total area, have seen their different local characteristics recognised and each has elaborated its own path of development.

Today Emilia-Romagna has become a major European region, a strategic hub connecting the dynamic macro-areas of central and northern Europe, the Mediterranean basin and the Adriatic-Danube zone. Although the agricultural sector is still paying the price for its structural

crisis, the field of specialised industrial manufacturing is extremely versatile and highly competitive, especially in mechanical engineering. The most thriving of the tertiary sectors, that of business services, is spread widely across the region and, in proportion to population figures, places various of our provinces among the best performers in Italy (Bologna, Parma, Modena and Reggio). Tourism continues to account for a significant slice of the region's economy. The level of investment and the number of personnel connected with scientific and technological research is among the highest in Italy, and the regional university system is comfortably top of the national rankings as regards attracting students from abroad. Social services, health services, cultural heritage and activities, as well as service companies, are all run according to the most modern organizational methods.

The heraldic image, or logo, of the Regione Emilia-Romagna is a stylised representation of the two essential features of this territory's long history: the wavy line of the river Po and the oblique line of the Via Emilia. The natural element of water leading to the sea, and the human creation of the road connecting people and their different careers, passions and histories.





# Regione Emilia-Romagna

A WONDERFUL  
HISTORY,  
A WONDERFUL  
STORY!



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