

Brief History

“...Casale terrae Marigii quod fuit quondam Templariorum...”

This brief but fundamental latin phrase has been traced from the Angiojui records and dated 9th October 1320. Although the work was originally considered lost, it re-emerged thanks to a transcription of napoletano historian Camillo Minieri Riccio and was contained in his mysterious yet fascinating questioning of the origin of Maruggio and it's noble past.

From Nicola De Marco lawyer, politician and overall a man of great culture came a great work in the form of a register of the last century.

This tried, for the first time to collect and piece together all the information that was scattered throughout the land and offer it in an acceptable manner. This was considered the authority on the subject until the arrival on the scene of one Prof. Luigi Marseglia. His notable work entitled “Peregrinazio” passing through Bianca Capone, expert researcher of the information on Templars. They had wanted to formulate a hypothesis, “ Volte Stravaganza” about the origin of this small village and its foundation.

Nevertheless the prevalent historiography wanted the data of 963 surviving inhabitants of three hamlets or small villages notably, Olivaro, Castigno and San Nicola (and perhaps also Civitecchia, Roselle and others) destroyed during the Saracen incursion.

These people had built in a valley surrounded by a swamp rich in herbal medicine. “Il Marrobbio” or rather “Marubbio” would have probably suggested the name of the town. An idea that had already proved successful in other italian localities in the proximity of swamp or wetlands where this particular type of plant was to be found. Abruzzo, Sardegna and Lazio are examples of this.

La Capone had in fact, during the course of a meeting in 1984 to study the period dress of the Templars. risked a suggestive hypothesis of the period of the subject matter. His theory that with a lot of the villages that were in areas with more wetlands, there had to be two fundamental ways of thinking:-

- ❖ The first that with areas deemed “agricultural they would look for a way to pull up the fertile ground and convert it to that, the same as swamp or wetlands.
- ❖ The second being for a military motive and that of defence, in much of the zones of similar characteristics. These were to be of strategic importance in adapting to the defence of the Saracen attacks.

Many well known witnesses came to support the hypothesis From numerous traces left by the Cavaliers of the Temple in the centre of the village and its surroundings, the presence of the sculptured crosses found in some palaces, and elsewhere was impressive. The etched tombstones in addition to the churches and other monuments overall seemed to confirm the symbolism, and mysticism, that surrounded the Templars.

In March 1308 there was an economic and political agreement reached between the Church and the then King of France “Philip the handsome” or “Philip the fair.” King Philip who, was himself, was suffering from a lack of funds, hated the Templars and their wealth. The agreement gave him the

opportunity he desired and resulted in the arrest of the Templars and the sequestration of their wealth and property. Those arrested included the Maruggio Order. Giovanna Caballaro took possession of the Templar office that was at least was in custody from the local judge Pietro Porcario di Aversa responsible for the Templars in the area of the land of Otranto.

Successively in May 1312 Pope Clemente the fifth decreed the assignation of the Templari ai Giovanniti, the Templars of St John or (The Cavaliers of Malta). Most probably La Caballaro, refused to hand over the large Templar estate to the new legal Landlords. The hand over was only done in 1317, perhaps after the intimidation of Roberto D'Angio or in the changes how it was possible, for the son of La Caballaro, Nicola de Pandis to enter the Order, that changed things, by him becoming first Commendatore (Commander) of Maruggio.

The presence of the Cavaliers of Malta helped develop the small country town by undertaking major projects to protect the town from Turkish pirates. Thanks also to the construction of the castle with its ditch and towers.

Today there remains only one tower, (privately owned) and of wall of the town, not forgetting the watch towers to be found along the coast of the Ionian Sea.

On June the 13th 1637 an attack by the Saracens caused serious damage but amazingly no one died during the incursion. A young girl was kidnapped but then returned to the town. Perhaps a real record of this event venerates also Saint Anthony and a celebration takes place every year in his honour. This event second to some of the more ancient anniversaries that re-occur annually in the town

Pen pictures of important local people

Tomasso Del Bene born Maruggio 1592. Son of parents Lupo and Perna Longo, Tomasso entered the Order of Tiatini in 1622 where he distinguished himself by his works. He died in 1673 aged 92

Giovan Battista Martena born Maruggio 28th August 1609. Author of some letters of military strategy. He was nominated Captain of Trabucchi and fireworks throughout the land celebrated his transfer to Napoli. The point of such people in the history of artillery was valid when he created an innovative system in the use of mortars, putting into practice an efficient method of limiting accidents with artillery fire. Giovan died in 1676 aged 67. His work was re-discovered by Prof. Giovanni Fortino Marsella, which must in part, have created enough interest thanks to a commemorative memoriam in the central square of the village.

Nicolo de Marco born Maruggio 24th July 1877 from parents Pietro and his wife, a lady of nobility, Antonietta Gigli. Nicolo graduated in the philosophy of law and committed himself politically to the Liberal Party of Italy. He was a town councillor for Maruggio in 1909. He became Deputy Mayor and councillor for Manduria a year later before being appointed Commissioner of neighbouring Sava in 1919. He went on to become Effective Member of the Provisional Board of Taranto in 1934. In 1939 He was elected Mayor of Manduria and Albanian Consul to Taranto. His career progressed and in 1947 he became Sub Steward of the Benefici Vacanti for the diocese of Oria, and a member of the Deputation of Homeland History for the region of Puglia.

Described as a fond, sincere man who was not interested in owning property in his own village even so he was their "town dweller with a coat of arms" with his first gathering of "Cenni Storici" or outline of history. From his gift of thousands of outstanding ideas and notions that he undertook

with intuition and farsightedness he was described as “A man without time.” He is still today, in the heart of those who had known him for his liberal manner. They agree that his manner was non-aristocratic compared with other humble people.

Note: An interesting point concerning the village, is that you will find that streets are named after many people who have connections with Maruggio. Nicolo de Marco is one such person. A map of the village and Campomarino is available free and can be obtained from the Municipio or Town Hall.

Monuments and places of Interest

Chiesa Matrice - Perhaps the work of famous architect Raimondo of Francavilla the Chiesa Matrice or Mother Church dedicates the nativity of the Virgin Mary. He was edified in the old part of the village by his church of the Byzantine era. “Santa Maria de Nova” which was integrally constructed. The work of construction, part of which to be carried out under the direction of Giambattista Alliata started at the end of the 15th century (Presbyterian and choir) and the church was probably finished in the beginning of the 16th century with the construction of the nave and two lateral aisles to complete basic plan of the building. In the 17th and 18th centuries, he added to the interior of the building with decoration in plaster. The facades are split up and divided into two lines superimposed in a way that you find a round glass window in a Baroque style. In addition, in 1743 the rose window was replaced after being destroyed by the violent earthquake of Nardo that occurred on the 20th April of that year, together with the main door, also replaced with one of a Baroque style. The coat of arms of the family Alliata was included in the facades.

The buildings basic plan had a central nave that was covered by a vault supported by arches to six points of support on columns; these presented capital sculptures with heads, animals, flowers and leaves of acanthus. On the walls are signs relative to the presence of the Cavaliers of Malta.

Between the years 1959 and 1961 a restoration programme was undertaken, its first for ninety years. The result of which is plain for all to see today.

Annexed to the church is an underground crypt containing the body of Saint Costanzo donated to Maruggio by the *Commendatore Chigi in 1733. The crypt also contains a representation of the apparition of the Madonna to Bernadette in Lourdes.

The church is the highest building, standing above all others, and can be seen clearly from outside the town.

*The then leader of the Order of The Cavaliers of Malta

Church of Saint John the Baptist Penitent - The church, with its flowers on the internal walls was constructed at the end of the 16th century for the will of the Cavaliers of Malta. At the centre of the facades is a place for the coat of arms of the Order with the date of 1503. At the side of that are the Carafe and Palms. Originally there was a hospital that received the sick and accommodated pilgrims, the original use being curtailed in the 17th century. What followed was a building that became a hospital for the injured that arrived from the Terra Santa with people suffering from infections of illnesses like cholera. The church today, no longer a place of worship presents a unique nave and originally was provided with three altars. It was closed as a house of worship in the last century.

Church of Saint Eligio - The church of Saint Eligio when erected in the last part of the 16th century outside the walls of the town by the brotherhood of the SS. Annunziata founded in Maruggio in 1619 by Jesuit missionary Gabriele Mastrilli besides a little later constructing the Church of Annunziata

The façade that resulted in the joining of this and the church of the Annunziata presents a frieze of a Greek bauletto or travelling case, a door and lowered arch, and an elaborate window with ionic capitals devoid of traditional support.

The interior offers a unique nave joined to the nave of the church of Annunziata. The vault and stalls, surrounded by a floral motif. At the centre there are heads of winged angels. The main altar is side by side two elegant cavities with triglifi and palms and supported by spiral columns decorated with floral motifs.

The Church of Annunziata - The Church of Annunziata or the Virgin Mary is situated next to that of Saint Eligio and dates back to the 17th century.

Externally you are presented with a profile of a Capanna or small building the size of a hut or shed, the facade having a portal, with triangular timpani (kettledrum) overhung from a window.

The inside instead offers a unique nave joined to the Saint Eligio church much similar the last in many decorative elements. Ornated with twelve heads of angels corresponding to twelve veils of nuovo riche floral motif's with the presence of a tower, a fountain of sun and moon that recalled the litany, originally presented as the head of a dog. In 1637 when the town was plundered by the Saracens the roof was destroyed and replaced by one with tiles. Moreover in 1688 a new baroque altar was sculptured in stone, and at the centre was to be a place for the antique painting of the Annunciazione

Church of St Mary of Grace and the ex Monastery, The Order of the Friars of Observance - The structure goes back to the 16th century, The Templar Commander of Maruggio was then Mattia de Capua. An order of Pope Clement VII, made on the 6th April 1534 enabled the friars of the order to construct the building which was completed in 1575. The structure comprised a church, and an annexed monastery, that is unique in all of the area. The church is formed by a unique nave, to which there are three chapels to the left, and one to the right. The three to the left are characterized by beautiful altars in baroque style while the chapel to the right is simple and inside you will find a crucifix. On the long wall of the nave it is possible to see what remains of the antique frescos, many of them unfortunately are lost. The monastery on the contrary, with four articulate porches in twenty arches divided by octagonal pillars. Its precious twenty-eight fanlights together with frescos, some of which reproduced the scenes of the life of St Francis of Assisi, St Antonio of Padova, St Pasquale Baylon, and St Bernard of Sienna. The ceiling is with vaulted with an arrangement of the cross from local wood and stone. At the centre of the monastery is a well overflowing from columns that sustain the weight of a statue of St Anthony with a baby boy.

From 1779 it was the seat or office of novices, and from 1847 also a school of sacred eloquence. It was until 1866 the office of the priest. The monastery was abolished in 1876 It was however, re opened in 1891 with a small community and, until the beginning of 1900 was the seat of novices and school of theology and philosophy It then became the barracks of the Carabinieri or Military Police, an elementary school and today it is the town hall and the seat of the local council.

The Church of St Mary of the Temple - Annexed to the community cemetery from 1876 and probably built in 1585 when governed by the Templars in the time of Commander Paolo Affaitati on a chapel pre-existed prior to the origin of the Templars. The altar was constructed in stone from Lecce in a baroque style originally from the church of St John the Baptist outside the Walls. You will find there a setting of a delicate effigy of The Virgin Mary with baby, the same that is to be found in the emblem of the town heraldry. The church is more locally known, as the church of “St Mary of Green.”

Small Churches, or Chapels - On the roads of the outskirts of the town and in some localities, you will find these delightful miniature churches. A list of these is together with some of the dates of construction and locations is shown below

1. The chapel of the Holy Sacrement of the Crucifix (1523) on the road towards Avetrana
2. The chapel of Our Lady of the Cross (1643) in the locality of Truni-Colonne
3. The chapel of St. Cosimo (circa 1700s) on the road towards Toricella
4. The chapel of Our Lady of Carmine in locality Castigno
5. The chapel of Our Lady of High Seas between the areas Capoccia and Scorcialupo
6. The chapel of the Sainted Spirit (circa 1800s) on the road towards Campomarino
7. The chapel of De Marco now Cavelli, (private) in the complex of the palace of his namesake

Castello or Castle (of the Cavaliers of Malta) - The Castle of the Cavaliers of Malta described also as “The Palace of the Commander” was built in 1368 for the good will of the Cavaliers of the Order of Malta, adjoining the walls of the town. Decorated by a grand trilogy with the coat of arms together with the arms of the Grand Master at the time, Huges Loubenx de Verdalle. Visible on the arch of the entrance was the coat of arms of the then Commander Alliata also to be seen on the façade of the Chiesa Madre or Mother Church. The Castle faces the Piazza del Popolo or the “People’s Square”, which is the main square in Maruggio. The entrance from Via Umberto where an arch approach to the courtyard in which one will find the original chapel of “Our Lady of Visitation. The castle comprises also, some rooms at the floor of nobility, and an olive press, and storage facilities on the ground floor.

Torre dell Orologio (The Clock Tower) and Monument to the Fallen - Situated in the Piazza del Popolo (People’s Square) is the Clock Tower. This was built following a decision taken on the 9th December 1855. In 1939 a transformation took place by the addition of a memorial plaque to the fallen of the First World War. The sculpture reproduces a soldier’s helmet garlanded by a wreath above a memorial panel showing a wounded soldier supported by a crutch. The wounded soldier is bending towards a young member of the Fascist Youth Group whilst below is a bronze panel representing a scene of combat surmounted by a winged victory. Located above is a memorial containing all the names of the fallen in that period that have been engraved on the panel. In 1969 the town administration decided to add another memorial panel, this time to honour the fallen of the second world war.

Palaces

1	Palazzo Longo	16 th century
2	Palazzo Morleo	19 th century
3	Palazzo Armieri	17 th century
4	Palazzo Massafra	19 th century
5	Palazzo De Marco	(Covelli)

6	Villa Montoto	19 th century
7	Palazzo Seminarile	19 th century situated in the centre of Campomarino
8	Palazzo Caniglia	17 th century situated near the Chiesa Madre today serving as the Town library

Centro storico or Historical Centre (The old part of the town)

The historical centre of the village, locally known as “Shanghai” consists of narrow and twisting blind alleys to two sides of the more accessible Via Umberto 1. This Via, or street offers access to Piazza San Giovanni (St John’s Square) from Piazza del Popolo (The People’s Square). The street also divides the historical centre into two parts, and it is from here that one will find The Chiesa Madre, The Castle, The Palazzo Caniglia or Biblioteca Comunale as it is now known as. One can also find the Clock Tower and War Memorial, in fact all of the places of interest, can be found within a short walking distance of each other.

Historic Military Architecture

In the year of 1473 it was considered necessary, to construct three watchtowers along the coast to warn against Saracen attacks:

The Tower of the Mount of Ovo or more simply known as Tower of Ovo or Ovo Tower. The tower borders the municipality of Torricella and is situated on a vertical cliff 14 metres above the sea. It can be located by taking the road from Campomarino to Torre Ovo. Although it is not cited in the list of 1569, the tower is typical of the period and pyramidal in as much as the top is narrower than the base. The site can be seen, and accessed from the road but unfortunately due to not being structurally safe, the tower is not accessible for safety reasons.

The Torre Moleni or Moleni Tower can be found overlooking the sea in Campomarino near the port. Commanding a view of the sea that linked with the other towers of Boracco 4km south and Ovo 5km-north west. This not only is this included with the list of 1569 but we also have news from property and landowners of 1583, a certain Francesco de Carbuines.

Torre Burracco or Storm tower

This tower although still along the coast you will find today in the territory of neighbouring municipality of Manduria. A guardian of the “torrent of the storm” as indicated by its name the tower linked with others (San Pietro to the south and Moleni to the west) to provide an early warning system of attacks from the sea.

Rural Construction

In the municipal territory there exists fifteen Masserie or animal communes (large animal farms). One can be forgiven for mistaking these impressive structures for Manor Houses or even stately homes. These were the places where, for many reasons, all the animals were kept together and looked after by people who lived in the Masseria. Pride of place inside the building was given to the animals and their welfare. An interesting point is that from One Masseria you can see practically all others in the area. This meant that being built on high ground, they could not only be seen by neighbouring Masserias, but also they were in a position to offer mutual protection from people with evil or criminal intent. Below you will find listed the Masserias, some still being used

used while others are in a state of abandonment. They are, from west to east together with their names in local dialect as follows:

Masseria Samia (La Samia), Masseria Pepe (Lu Pepi), Masseria Cravara (La Cravara), Masseria Garroni (La Carruni), Masseria Tremola Vecchia (La Tremula), Masseria Le Fabbriche (Li Fabbrichi), Masseria Cazzizi (Li Cazzizi), Masseria dei Preti Li Previti), Masseria Nova (La Massira Nova), Masseria Piccina (La Massira Piccina), Masseria del Vento (Lu Vientu) Masseria Mirante (Lu Miranti), Masseria Mavilia (La Maviglia), Masseria Grazioli (Li Grazioli), Masseria Corregia (La Curregia)

In the territory you will also find numerous Trulli's (Li Trodurri) in local dialect. These strange buildings were former dwellings of the people who worked the land. Built on the principle of the weight of each stone being reliant on the next one supporting it, even to the domed shaped roof. Differing however, from the ones you will find in Alberobello by shape, colour, and roof of conical design. You will also find besides, other structures of Saletinian type "LI Pajari" similar to a trulli but smaller in height and characterized by a roof of straw.

Tradition and folk lore

The saints protectors of Maruggio are St John The Baptist and St Christopher whose festa is celebrated annually on the 13th and 14th of July. The cult of St John the Baptist (San Giuanni) was brought to the town by the Cavaliers of Malta and from that time he became another Saint Protector again highlighted annually on the 24th of June. The variation of dates testified by the Episcopal decree of 30th June 1928. Within this episcopal document was an agreement to a request of the people of Maruggio, to hold festivities on the days of 13th and 14th of July. An event over all, to recognise the record of a miracle of St John, that saved the town from a strong and violent storm. The cult of St Christopher instead was the all'inizio del Novecento and in a sequel in 1962 this saint was declared "co-patrono" or co-patron saint. In olden days during the festa a fair was organized.

Today the festa is felt more by the Maruggesi (towns people) and the "Saints they come" festival consists of a long procession and ends with a Mass. Coloured lights illuminate the two main streets in Maruggio Via Vittorio Emanuele and Via Malta together with Piazza del Popolo. All the festa is cheered by music played by the town band and the town itself is crowded with people either taking part or simply enjoying the celebrations.

The Celebration of Our Lady of Green (Festa della Madonna del Verde)

Our Lady is celebrated for a popular legend in which she had cured or healed many sick people, babies suffering from "favismo", which gave a green hue to the body. For this act, she received the name of Madonna del Verde and in the past from the pilgrims and the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns. She is dedicated by the 500th chapel of the Santa Maria del Tempio that, in the area is really called the church of Our Lady of Green. Today this is to be found annexed to the cemetery, and the event celebrated annually on the 21st of October.

Events

The town in collaboration with an local agency "Pro Loco" organizes the "Estate Maruggese" or "Summer for Maruggians", with a march or procession, concerts of singing, and cultural festivals that take place between June and September. One of the more important events is "La Strada dei Saperi dei Sapori" or "The Street of Taste and Flavour." This event takes place in "Centro Storico" the old part of the town where products produced by local businesses can be displayed and tasted.

Places of historical value can be visited, or there is the concert of “Pizzica” or rhythmic folk music performed by musicians from the area of Puglia.

Frazione or fractions, areas of local towns or villages

The area of the Marina of Maruggio named Campomarino or the sea countryside is the larger part of the town. Other localities close to the sea can be found to both the east and west of Campomarino. To the west you will find:

- 1 Aquadolce-Cerenaica, with a small, high and rocky coast line
- 2 Cappocia-Scortialupi or Capoccia Scorcialupi with a low coastline of stretches of rock and sand
- 3 Commenda with a low coastline of sand with some stretches of rocky coast

To the east you will find:

- 4 Monaco Mirante with areas of high rocky coast and dunes here you will find also Mediterranean undergrowth and plant life.

For those who prefer to swim or play, from the east to the west you will find the many beaches of:

Torre Oveo, Piri Piri, Aquadolce, Madonnina, Commenda, Del vento,

Not forgetting the beach of the port of Campomarino, the centre of tourist attraction. Continuing towards the east there are other beaches namely:

Pendolari, Cardinale, and Monaco

up to the point one arrives at Torre Borracco,

this being the border of the territory of Maruggio/Manduria

Local Produce

In “campagna” or the countryside there are many vineyards and olive groves producing valuable olive oil and some of the finest wines respectively. This area is in fact famous for its oil and the local wines of “Primitivo” and “Negromare” A lesser-known fact is that the countryside also produces some of the finest fruit and vegetables available anywhere.

An extension to the coastline of 9km of beaches and crystal clear sea has developed a tourist bathing facility that only recently has been considered true and real resource of the town in helping its economy.

During the summer months organizations of those responsible for holiday tourism join forces with those of tourism culture, and food and drink thanks to various events organized where they come together, wearing local costumes to exhibit food and drink specialities, typical of the area.