

# THE RENAISSANCE ADDITION

Throughout the Middle Ages and almost to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the northern boundary of the city ran along the current road system of *viale Cavour-corso Giovecca*. To the north of this boundary there were a number of buildings, even prestigious ones, some of which were owned by the Duke. In 1492 Ercole I commissioned Biagio Rossetti to include this vast area in the centre (thus doubling the surface area of the city) and the great architect and town-planner designed a plan which, due to its original and rational nature, made Ferrara “the first modern city in Europe”. In honour of the Duke who ordered its building this great district is known as *Addizione Erculea*.

## THE ITINERARY IN BRIEF



### CASTELLO ESTENSE

*Starting point of the route*  
Corso Ercole I d'Este

- 1 Palazzo di Giulio d'Este
- 2 Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza
- 3 Palazzo dei Diamanti
- 4 Palazzo Prosperi Sacrati

### *Diversion from the itinerary*

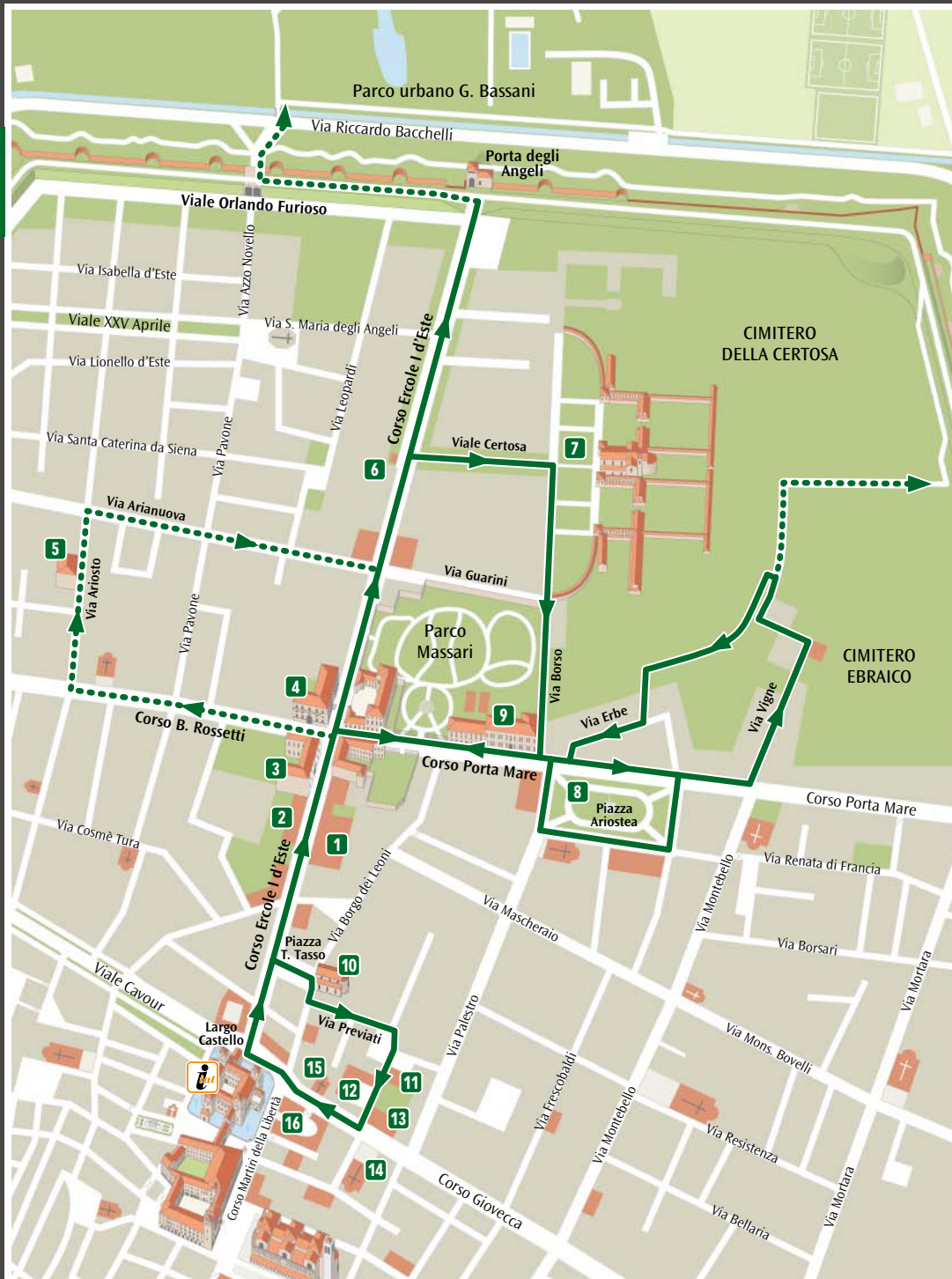
- 5 Casa di Ludovico Ariosto
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### *Direction Parco Urbano G. Bassani*

- 7 Tempio di San Cristoforo alla Certosa
- 8 Piazza Ariostea
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### *Corso Giovecca*

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- 14 Chiesa dei Teatini
- 15 Chiesa di San Carlo
- 16 Teatro Comunale





THIS ITINERARY BEGINS AT THE NORTH RAVELIN (OR ENTRANCE) TO THE CASTLE. THE VIEW FROM HERE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THE GRANDEUR OF THE PROJECT KNOWN AS THE **HERCULEAN ADDITION**.

This Street was formerly known as *Via degli Angeli* after the church dedicated to *S. Maria degli Angeli* which stood along it. It forms one of the two main thoroughfares of the *Addizione Ercolea*. With no shops and flanked by fine palazzos, it still retains the features of a residential road as the Duke intended. Its focal point is the **Quadrivio degli Angeli** ("Angels' Cross-roads"), at the junction with the other road of the *Addizione* (*corso Porto Mare - Biagio Rossetti - Porta Po*), underlined by the presence of three elaborately decorated buildings.



Along Corso Ercole I d'Este stand the following buildings

## 1 Palazzo di Giulio d'Este

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 16

Built in the early years of the great building works of the *Addizione Ercolea*, the Palazzo belonged for some years to Giulio, illegitimate son of Duke Ercole I, famous for his participation, together with his brother Ferrante, in the plot of 1506 against Alfonso I and Cardinal Ippolito, his great enemy. Subsequently the building was the property for centuries of the ancient lords of Carpi, the princes Pio di Savoia. The attribution to **Biagio Rossetti** is based on different elements, such as the marble portal, the use of brickwork in the arch vaults of the windows and in the highly jutting cornice, the extremely free use of architectural style, and a small balcony which appears to be set halfway between the ground and first floors. [SEAT OF THE PREFECTURE]

## 2 Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 19 • tel. 0532 244949

In the section dedicated to the **Risorgimento** a large collection of period illustrations are to be found, including some particular curious satirical caricatures and cartoons in the first room. The showcases display a good number of uniforms, firearms and weapons. One showcase contains a curious series of objects among which is a set of handcuffs, some cell keys and even a spyhole, a reminder of the imprisonment of the Ferrarese patriots Succi, Malaguti and Parmeggiani.

The second room is dedicated in particular to the Bersaglieri del Po, a Ferrarese volunteer corps under the command of the marquis Tancredi Trotti Mosti (whose bust is in the entrance hall), which fought heroically in the battles of Cornuda and of Monte Berico in 1848. The collection is completed with decorations and banners.

The section dedicated to the **Resistenza** is organised in a very similar way to the first, except that there are less objects. The documents date from between 1919 and 1945 and deal with the period of the great social struggles, the Fascist dictatorship, the Second World War and liberation.

## 3 Palazzo dei Diamanti

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 21 • tel. 0532 244949

Its building was ordered by Sigismondo d'Este around 1493 and is definitely the masterpiece of the court architect and town-planner **Biagio Rossetti**. It takes its name from the 8,500 "diamonds" which form the marble rustication of the original facing.

Situated at the junction of two main roads of the *Addizione*, the building symbolises the prestige and glory of the House of Este, but is also intended to emphasise the importance of the cross-roads itself. The *Palazzo* was designed for a diagonal vision and its focal point is therefore the corner, embellished by the splendid candelabras sculpted by Gabriele Frisoni and the attractive small balcony. On the **ground floor** are living quarters and spaces where the major temporary exhibitions organized by Ferrara Arte and the Gallerie d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Ferrara are held.



**The National Art Gallery** is situated on the **first floor** and its rooms retain large traces of the ancient, sumptuous decorations.

The collections of paintings housed here cover the period from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The visit moves off from the hall hosting the Vendeghini Baldi Collection which boasts a number of not-to-be-missed works, such as *The Adoration of the Wise Men* by Jacopo and Giovanni Bellini; a *Holy Virgin* and a *St. Petronius* by Ercole de' Roberti; a small *Christ* by Mantegna. In the following rooms the older masters are represented by Cristoforo da Bologna, Simone dei Crocifissi, and the Master of Figline. The fifteenth century is represented by works of artists of the **Officina Ferrarese**: two saints by Michele Pannonio; *St. Jerome* by Vicino da Ferrara; a pair of magnificent tondo depicting *The Judgement and The Beheading of St. Maurelius* by **Cosmè Tura**.

Works by Garofalo, Scarsellino, Bononi and Sebastiano Filippi, known as Bastianino, represent the following century. An interesting item is an altar-step by the Bolognese artist, Amico Aspertini.

A room is fully given over to the display of two magnificent panoramic views attributed to Sebastiano Serlio and a *The Muses Erato and Urania* by an unknown fifteenth century master, which were part of the decoration of the Private Study of the Marquis Leonello d'Este in the demolished Delizia di Belfiore.

The Palace's extensive *Feast Hall* hosts a number of large works, such as the frescoes depicting *The Triumph of St. Augustine* and *Ancient and New Testament Stories*, the works respectively of Serafino da Modena and Benvenuto Tisi, also known as **Garofalo**.

The following halls with their richly decorated ceilings made up the apartments of Cesare d'Este and Virginia de' Medici. There are several veritable masterpieces on display here by **Niccolò Pisano** and **Vittore Carpaccio**. There are also many works by Garofalo, including the outstanding Slaying of the Innocents, greatly admired by Vasari. Worthy of attention are several paintings by **Battista** and **Dosso Dossi**.

The last hall is dominated by the overwhelming Polyptych Costabili, painted by Garofalo and Dosso Dossi, complete with its original engraved and gilded wooden altar piece, with the *Enthroned Madonna with Saints*.

An especially precious item is a portable altar by the great painter El Greco.



*Judgement of St. Maurelius*, Cosmè Tura

#### 4 Palazzo Prosperi Sacrati

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 25

Building began in 1493. The building has a corner decoration, like the other palazzos of the *Quadrivio*, but stands out above all due to

its grandiose marble portal, which is the most significant example of monumental sculpture in Ferrara.

[NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]



A little detour from the itinerary takes you to Corso Biagio Rossetti. Turn right into via Ariosto where, at N° 67, you will find the

#### 5 Casa di Ludovico Ariosto

Via Ariosto, 67 • tel. 0532 244949

*"Parva, sed apta mihi, sed nulli obnoxia, sed non sordida, parva meo, sed tamen aere domus"*. "The house is small but suitable for me, clean, free of expenses and purchased solely with my own money", reads the inscription on the façade of the house where Ludovico Ariosto (1474 - 1533) spent his twilight years, devoting himself to the third and final edition of *Orlando Enraged*, published in 1532.

The house, probably built to the design of **Girolamo da Carpi**, has a simple but elegant brick façade. **Interior**: on the first floor a small museum dedicated to the poet has been laid out. The room on the right conserves the bronze cast of his inkstand, editions of his works and many medals representing him, including the one found in his tomb in 1801.

In the small central corridor stands a display case which conserves the beautiful 1881 edition of *Orlando Enraged* illustrated by Gustave Doré.

In the room on the left, with its elegant chimneypiece, are a nineteenth century bust and portrait of the poet and some furniture, including a chair that belonged to him.


In the second part of the street, the one which leads to the city walls and to the **Porta degli Angeli** ("Angels' Gate"), the buildings gradually decrease in number and importance, until the Street becomes almost identical to a country road, lined with tall poplars.



Along the street stands

#### 6 Palazzina degli Angeli

This house is sited where once was the vegetable patch of the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli. Many members of the Ducal family were buried here. The Palazzina was designed by Adamo Boari and built in 1913-1916. [PRIVATE DWELLING]

 Carrying on to the end of the street, you will come to the **Porta degli Angeli** designed by B. Rossetti. From here you go up on to enjoy a walk along the walls that still protect the city.

The stroll along the walls will take you to the immense **Parco urbano G. Bassani**.

On the way back, going along Corso Ercole I d'Este, turning left will take you to the splendid Certosa, where you will find the


## 7 Tempio di San Cristoforo alla Certosa

Piazza Borso d'Este • tel. 0532 244949



Visitors are greeted by a huge lawn spread out in front of Saint Christopher's Church that is flanked by two long arcades.

The history of **Carthusian Monastery** in Ferrara goes back to 1452, when Borso d'Este endowed it. It was transformed into a monumental cemetery at the beginning of the 1800s. The Church dedicated to Saint Christopher was built towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and completely restored few years ago. The restoration includes many works of art in their original location, among them 15 altar pieces, wooden choir screens, the altar with its ciborium, three massive crucifixes, and many other liturgical furnishings.

 The tree-lined Via Borso will next take you to Corso Porta Mare. Ahead of you lies

## 8 Piazza Ariostea

This square was intended to become the fulcrum of the *Addizione Ercolea* and was at the time named **Piazza Nuova** (New Square), to distinguish it from the former market square, on the southern side of the Cathedral. However it never became important for commerce, but remained a large area free of buildings, with the function of a public park.

In the centre stands a column on which a **statue of Ludovico Ariosto** was placed in 1883.



The buildings which open onto the piazza are very simple: to the south stands *Palazzo Rondinelli*, built at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by **Biagio Rossetti**, which stands out above all due to its large portico with 22 arches, with a wooden ceiling, which performs the function of a "covered Street".

On the west side of the piazza stands *Palazzo Strozzi Bevilacqua*, built in 1499 characterized by a large portico with 15 arches.

In this *piazza*, on the last Sunday in May of each year, the **Palio di San Giorgio** is held - an extremely ancient event which includes, in addition to a great historical procession, four races: the race of the *Putti* (young boys) and that of the *Putte* (young girls), donkey and horse races.

Staying on the left of Corso Porta Mare, you will come to Via delle Vigne for a detour that touches the **Cimitero Ebraico** after which you will follow the cycle/footpath that runs as far as the end of the city walls.

 Taking Corso Porta Mare to the right, it leads to

## 9 Palazzo Massari

Corso Porta Mare, 9 • tel. 0532 244949



This building was built at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, commissioned by Count Onofrio Bevilacqua, and later underwent a large number of extensions and redesign, the most important of which was the building of an annexe to the main Palazzo, in an elegant neo-classical style, known as the *Palazzina dei Cavalieri di Malta*, as it belonged to the knights of Malta in the period (1826 - 1834) when they were based in Ferrara.

The ground floor is the seat of the **Museum of Modern and Contem-**





*Gladiolus Struck by Lightning, F. De Pisis*

**porary Art Filippo De Pisis.** The first part of the museum exposes works by Mario Sironi, Aroldo Bonzagni, Achille Funi and Roberto Melli; the second half of the museum is dedicated to the work of Filippo De Pisis (1896-1956). A very original artist who was a poet as well as a painter, throughout his work he managed to transmit a kind of dark melancholy that alternated with the search for a cosmic dimension. His colours in particular are unmistakable, passing from pastel to dark tones, which at times are broken up, almost wounded, by vivid dashes. There is a high number of still lifes, one of his cherished genres and one that clearly shows the influence of Giorgio Morandi.

The **large ceremonial staircase** leads to the **first floor**, whose rooms are still decorated with frescoed ceilings furnished with antique furniture and rugs from various buildings in the city.

The rooms house now several arts collections. The **Giovanni Boldini Museum**, dedicated to the Ferrarese painter who lived between 1842 and 1931 and became the most popular portrait painter of high society in Paris. The visit begins in the palace's elegant Baroque chapel, situated beyond the Grand Hall. This is followed by three small rooms with works realised by the artist in his younger days, among which are a *Self-portrait* and the oil painting *Two White Horses*. In the fourth room, magnificently frescoed and of vast proportions, five large paintings are on display, which alone bear witness to Boldini's mastery of the portrait: *Countess Gabrielle de Rasty*, *The Infanta Eulalia of Spain*, *The Little Subercaseuse*, *Countess de Leusse* and *Fireworks*, all painted between 1878 and 1891. The Boldini Collection continues with drawings and watercolours, the splendid *A Walk in the Bois* (1909) and ends with the *Woman in Rose*.



*Woman in Rose, G. Boldini*

Other rooms house the **Museum of the Nineteenth Century** with masterpieces by famous painters like Previati and Mentessi. In the garden of Palazzo Massari stands the **Pavilion of Contemporary Art**, used for temporary exhibitions.

Walking along Corso Porta Mare, you will pass between two green areas. Opposite Palazzo Massari are the **University Botanical Gardens** and across the road is **Parco Massari**. This is the biggest of the parks inside the walled area of the city.



The route now takes you back along Corso Ercole I d'Este but, before reaching the Castle, you can turn left into Piazza Torquato Tasso to admire the

## 10 Chiesa del Gesù

Via Borgoleoni, 56 • tel. 0532 205908

Overlooking *Piazzetta T. Tasso*, it was built in 1570 to a design by Alberto Schiatti, and later extended by adding chapels. The austere façade is in fired brick and tiles throughout. The interior, with a single nave, contains paintings of considerable interest. To the left of the entrance we can see an important 15<sup>th</sup>- century sculpture group in polychrome terracotta: *The Mourning of Christ* by **Guido Mazzoni**. According to tradition the crying figures around the body of Jesus represent members of the court and, more particularly, the two statues on the far right allegedly depict Ercole I and his wife Eleonora of Aragon. Behind the main altar stands the sepulchral monument to Duchess Barbara of Austria, wife of Duke Alfonso II d'Este.

A short distance walking along via Previati there is a group of buildings built in the rationalist style by the architect **Carlo Savonuzzi** in the 1930s as part of redevelopment of the area previously occupied by the hospital. It is one of the few good redesign projects performed in that period. The piazzetta is dominated by a primary school with a fluted tower which acts as a perspective fulcrum. Opposite, two identical buildings house the "C. Frescobaldi" conservatory and the Civic Museum of Natural History.

## 11 Museo Civico di Storia Naturale

Via De Pisis, 24 • tel. 0532 244949



The Museo Naturalistico is the first museum in Emilia Romagna to be developed along the lines of an eco-museum that combines displays exhibition areas along with a Learning Centre and reading materials. The museum offers the visitor a broad review of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds, invertebrates and insects covering branches of the natural sciences such as zoology and entomology. There are large collections of fossils, minerals and rocks in the sections devoted to the earth sciences: palaeontology, geology and mineralogy. Of particular interest is "Earth's Environment", a section dealing with understanding the environment and its development and organised using innovative museum techniques, which brings to light the environmental diversity and changes in the world we inhabit. The Specialist Library, the Reading Room and the Educational Section are also the public's service. The museum also carries out important work in scientific research and the spread of knowledge.

 Continuing along Via Boldini will take you to the

## 12 Piazzetta Sant'Anna

This was the courtyard of the old **Sant'Anna main hospital**, dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and operative up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The hospital incorporated pre-existing buildings, including the Armenian monastery of San Basilio, whose picturesque portico can still be seen.

For many years the poet **Torquato Tasso** was kept prisoner in one of the rooms there.



 Continue along **Corso Giovecca**

This Street, built by Biagio Rossetti by demolishing the old walls, forms the link between the Medieval city to the south, and the Addizione Erculea to the north, thus forming the main thoroughfare of the city. Embellished by a number of noteworthy buildings, the road is closed off to the east by a theatrical 18<sup>th</sup>-century arch.

## 13 Palazzo Roverella

Corso Giovecca, 47

Built in 1508 circa, to a design by **Biagio Rossetti** for Gaetano Magnanini, secretary to Duke Alfonso I. It was acquired by the Roverella family in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The façade has an elaborate decoration in brickwork arranged so as to achieve an actual geometrical division of the surface.

[NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]



## 14 Chiesa dei Teatini

Corso Giovecca, 52 • tel. 0532 247822

This church was built in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to a design by Luca Danesi. The unfinished façade has the preparation for the marble facing.

The interior has elegant decorations and a panel depicting the *Purification of the Virgin* painted by **Guercino** in 1634 of great interest.

## 15 Chiesa di San Carlo

Corso Giovecca, 19 • tel. 0532 247173

This church was built between 1612 and 1623 on the area of a demolished oratory, to a design by **Giovan Battista Aleotti**. It is a unique example in Ferrara of pure Baroque architecture. The façade is divided by two double columns bearing an architrave with tympanum, niches with statues and a portal with divided tympanum and angels holding a coat of arms. The chiaroscuro effect creates an impressive overall appearance despite the small size. The interior has an elliptical plan with two large rectangular chapels and a semicircular apse. The ceiling has an elegant fresco from 1674 by the painter **Giuseppe Avanzi**. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

## 16 Teatro Comunale

Rotonda Foschini • tel. 0532 218326



The theatre was built between 1790 and 1797, under the direction of **Antonio Foschini** and **Cosimo Morelli**. The two façades of the building, not heavily decorated, blend with the urban setting and the two exits of the elliptical widening, which originally served for the arrival and departure of carriages, frame two important buildings: the Castello Estense to the west and the church of San Carlo to the north. Inside the **Foyer** can be admired with its rich, mainly Empire style, decorations and above all the large auditorium, a typical example of Italian-style theatre, elegantly stuccoed and frescoed by Francesco Migliari in 1850.

The Civic Theatre currently performs a central role in the cultural life of the city and whole country, the venue for several seasons of theatre, opera, ballet and concerts, as well as top-rate concerts organised by the Ferrara Music Committee.