

The three lives of Torba Monastery

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Three lives and three reasons to visit Torba. **Caterina Proietti created a remarkable broadcast for the TG1** about the history of the monastery, which was transmitted on Saturday evening, on Easter eve.

The structure, as the journalist described it, **“is a corner of the Middle Ages along the Olona River”** and is located on the way of the **Via Francisca of Lucomagno**, which is an ancient path that goes from Costanza to Pavia, and from there connects to the Francigena Way, arriving to Rome. It represents a place of pilgrimage that has been revalued thanks to a project to which participates also **the Fai, owner of the monastery**. Moreover, **Torba is a World Heritage site because it is part of a series of heritages of the Longobards**, among which there is the castrum of Castelseprio.

Therefore, the RAI choose to give a large space to it by a broadcast one and a half minutes long of which the script is showed below.

Three lives of the Torba monastery pass through more than a thousand of years.

At first it was a security castrum, then a place of prayer and finally a farmstead, a corner of the Middle Ages along the Olona River. The Japanese cherry trees reveal the mystical simplicity of this placed born in the 15th century. The small church without facade represents a distinctive trait of Christianity.

“The apse is East-facing, which is why the facade, that faced a slope subject to landslides, couldn’t be preserved”, explained **Elena Castiglioni**, the project manager for the Fai.

The tower, outpost of the Roman empire, had the purpose of protecting some strategic places from the barbarian invasion. It has now become a destination for thousands of tourists, mostly in the Easter period.

“The monastery counts more than 20,000 visitors, a number that rises year after year. It is a place where you can easily fall in love with its art and its history”, added Elena Castiglioni.

Placed inside a World Heritage archaeological park, the monastery has been managed totally by the Fai for 30 years. In the oratory, the frescoes tell the story of the lives of the Benedictine nuns who had prayed and worked there for centuries.

“The nuns left the place around the middle of the 15th century, because by the time it was little visited and it was inhabited by many wild animals, therefore it was a bit dangerous. About thirty years later, they officially asked to come back since the animals in Luvinate, where the other sisters were, were way more dangerous than the real wild animals that lived in Torba”, concludes Elena Castiglioni.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE TORBA MONASTERY

How to get here

By car

The highway “Autostrada dei Laghi” (A8) Milano-Varese: exit in Solbiate Arno and then follow the

signs to Castelseprio and Torba

Taxi agreement

CONSORZIO ARTIGIANI VARESE TRASPORTO PERSONE

RADIO TAXI VARESE

For information and costs contact the following number:

0332 24 18 00

There is the possibility to reach the Torba Monastery (Castelseprio) from Varese and vice versa.

By public transport

By Trenord train, towards Milan:

stop at Tradate station, take the public bus of Giuliani & Laudi – line B45, heading to Varese, and get off at the “Torba” bus stop.

For information about the timetable, visit the website of Trenord, while for the bus timetable, visit the bus service website.

There is a 20% discount on the entry ticket, for holders of the ITINERO o IO VIAGGIO that is still valid.

There is a 10% discount on the entry ticket, for the holders of a Trenord ticket validated the same day of the visit with destination the location of the “Bene del Fai” served by the train line service Trenord. In particular: Varese

di Translated by Martina Gambirasio (Reviewed by Prof. Robert Clarke)