Introduction: Castles

Between the 9th and 10th centuries, the new invasions that were threatening Europe, led the powerful feudal lords to build castles and fortresses on inaccessible heights, at the borders of their territories, along the main roads and rivers' fords, or above narrow valleys or near bridges. The defense of property and of the rural populations from marauding invaders, however, was not the only need during those times: the widespread banditry, the local guerrillas between towns and villages that were disputing territories and powers, and the general political crisis, that invested the unguided Italian kingdom, have forced people to seek safety and security near the forts. Fortified villages, that could accommodate many families, were therefore built around castles. Those people were offered shelter in exchange of labor in the owner's lands. Castles eventually were turned into fortified villages, with the lord's residence, the peasants homes and all the necessary to the community life. When the many threats gradually ceased, castles were built in less endangered places to bear witness to the authority of the local lords who wanted to brand the territory with their power, which was represented by the security offered by the fortress and garrisons.

Over the centuries, the castles have combined several functions: territory's fortress and garrison against invaders and internal uprisings; warehouse to gather and protect the crops; the place where the feudal lord administered justice and where horsemen and troops lived. They were utilised, finally, as the lord's and his family residence, apartments, which were gradually enriched, both to live with more ease, and to make a good impression with friends and distinguished guests who often stayed there. Their size varied according to the importance of the castle, the lord's wealth and the number of servants and soldiers who were housed. The first castles consisted mainly of a vaguely circular ditch, that enclosed a small hillock on which the excavation soil was accumulated. This terrain was reinforced with stones and timber and formed a hillock, from 5 to 20 m high, on which a wooden tower (the keep) was built. The moat whose walls were often covered with timber, to prevent landslides, could be made more dangerous by planting sharp-pointed poles on the bottom. A wooden bridge which could be removed or lifted, secured the passage between the inside and the outside.

Close to the inner ditch's bank, it was eventually began to raise a logs palisade, often reinforced by higher corner towers, from which the archers could target the attackers. If the latter were able to cross the ditch and break down or climb over the fence, the besieged could still seek refuge in the tall and
strong tower as extreme defense. The keep was equipped with slits to throw darts and well supplied with food and water to resist for long periods of time. Over time, castles' structure evolved; the wooden constructions were replaced by massive stone walls and the moat, if it existed, was widened and the drawbridge appeared. High and mighty towers defended the access, which was already protected by sturdy doors and iron gates. Around castles, just beyond their walls, developed villages. They were inhabited by servants' families and the many artisans who worked at the manor: carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, locksmiths, armors and weapons manufacturers, tailors, potters, wagon wheels makers, barrels, crockery, but also clerics for the liturgical services, pages, wool spinners, staplers, allotment farmers and help cooks, dishwashers, maids etc.

The village also hosted a small local market, and, a little further, just beyond the fields, there could be other buildings such as folds, mills, sheds and farm implements and wagons. Over the two hundred years since their first appearance, castles changed profoundly. They became bigger and stronger and often had a tower complex, with round corner towers (which ensured a better view of the defenders), up to 30-35 meters high and three or four floors. The keep was often surrounded by a second internal moat, while a second drawbridge could isolate it from the rest of the castle.

To make it simple, if attackers were able to penetrate into the castle, they would have found inside a second keep: higher, stronger and practically impregnable. The outer circle’s walls could be 4 meters thick (six feet for the keep’s wall) and be formed by two walls of large hewn stone, with a space between the walls filled with rubble and concrete, and reinforced by piece iron chains. It should be noted that the term “castle”, in Friuli, do not indicate a village defended by walls in which only a small portion is paid to the mansion with an exclusively military structures (formwork), but it refers to a fortified complex inhabited by a noble family whose features are distinctly military and defensive.

The mighty and complex Friulian defensive system, was aimed to defend the outlets of the Tagliamento, the Natisone, the Soca, against the dangers from the east and the north-south. They also controlled communications, as well as defending Friuli from the dangers coming from the sea. They were spread all over the plain as to defend the inner streets and fords, which were of major strategic and commercial importance. Each complex is an original unique and unrepeatable building. The castles were not the result of a predetermined project, carried out within a few years, but the result of a secular growth.

Each fort was built, modified and, if damaged or destroyed, rebuilt in a different period and, sometimes, transformed, especially in the plains and on the hills, into villas, mansions or offices or farms. The castles that were built on the mountains instead, with the advent of the Venetian’s supremacy and the increased use of artillery, lost many defensive functions, and were often abandoned, especially if located in inaccessible positions.

Many of those castles are still privately owned, and others, especially the most important are property of the State, the Region or of Commons. Some retain certain residential functions or are uninhabited, others are reduced to fascinating ruins, still capable of evoking the echoes of a glorious past, despite the sense of deep melancholy that remains. Others have been converted into restaurants, hotels, wineries, museums. Each one is worth visiting, even only from the outside, to appreciate the architectural features and ideally relive the complex historical events.
The route: the province of Udine

The Castle of Albana (Prepotto)

Coordinates: 46.057058, 13.49459
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

It’s very likely that on the limestone base, dating back to the Cretaceous period, where now stands the castle of Albana, there was already in the Lombard period some defensive work guarding the road that connected the plain with the Natisonale valleys. The town is mentioned for the first time in 1161, while the document, with which Pertoldo of Albana left all his possessions to the church of Santa Maria di Cividale, dates back to 1185. Subsequently, the village and the castle became feuds belonging to the Count of Gorizia, but remained available to the church of Cividale until it was conquered by Napoleonic troops in 1797.

In 1483 the castle became part of the assets of the family Waldsee-Mels-di Colloredo through the marriage between Fiammetta De Portis of Cividale and Giacomo of Mels.

In July 1478, the castle was attacked by the Turks that, under the command of Iskander Beg, assisted by Jurij Fuchina, Caporetto’s traitor, plundered and devastated the entire Vipacco’s valley and the plain that extends from Gorizia to Cormòns.

In 1500, with the extinction of the house of the Counts of Gorizia, Albana passed directly to the Habsburgs, and a few years later had to endure the siege Venetian troops that fought against the imperial power: the castle, however, thanks to its defenses and the energetic fighting spirit of his lords, put up a fierce and valid resistance.

The hostilities, between Venice and the Empire, have lasted for eight years, during which, to the destructions brought by war, were added the devastation of the 1511 earthquake and a violent plague that led to the castle’s ruin.

In the seventeenth century, the fortress lost its defensive significance and its military function, and suffered, like many other castles, a radical transformation into a country residence.

During the Great War the castle was requisitioned by the Italian army who turned it into a military hospital, and in 1916 an Austrian grenade destroyed the northeastern tower, that was once again restored by the owners, the counts Mels – Albana.

During the Second World War the castle was required and occupied by the police and partly by displaced families coming from southern Italy, because of allies’ bombing.

During that period, the property passed to the family Gabriotti of Cividale that in 2000 started a major restoration.

The Albana Castle consists of a central rectangular tower with four corner towers connected by a wall that draws two inner courtyards.

Visitors enter the castle complex on the north side, through a round arch portal. On the keystone are etched the coat of arms of Mels and the lion of St. Mark.

The eastern part is also the oldest. One of the rooms features a beautiful late sixteenth century fireplace, while the ceiling is beamed. The next room has a vaulted ceiling.

According to ancient legends from the south-eastern tower, there’s a natural underground tunnel that leads to the Judrio stream, which flows just two hundred meters from the castle.
The Castle of Sdricca (Manzano)

Traces of Roman settlements as well as graves, urns, vases, buckles, rings, came to light in the whole territory of the town of Manzano. According to scholars, the fortified house of Sdricca might just have been an outpost of the Roman Empire, used in through the centuries by the monks of Rosazzo Abbey as a refuge during the terrible Hungarians invasions, that from 899 to 952 overrun the region, making scorched earth on their path and killing, in any raid, whoever they met. The first documented report of the fortified house, dates back to 1170, in an act of donation made by the church of Aquileia that mention a certain Enrico Sdricca. Manzano was’s the Lords stronghold and they readapted it into a fortress to defend against raids of various warlords and bandits. After the destruction of the castle of Manzano, the fort may have had a defensive function for the military and economic control in the area and have been used as a extreme shelter from the feudal lords in times of difficulty. Later, with the advent of the republic of Venice, it became a villa-farm belonging to the same noble family.

The building, whose structure makes it appear as a farmhouse, shows a similar system to that of a Roman villa, much restored and fortified: it has the shape of a quadrilateral (that encloses a square courtyard) with two massive towers to the north and to the east, and thick and high walls, the facade is graced by an arched loggia while on the inside you can admire beautiful vaulted ceilings.

The Castle of Manzano

We do not know the origins of the castle of Manzano that overlooks, from a small hill, the riverbed of Natisone, but it is certain that its ruins show how the castle was the cornerstone of many historical events of the Friuli. It is situated in an ideal position to control the roads to Cividale and Gorizia. The western front was well armed, while the slope at noon was naturally protected by the rough terrain that falls sheer. The castle was built before 1216 for sure, because on that year the patriarch Pertoldo conceded the investiture to Canciano of Manzano, whose family was probably of German origin and settled in Friuli in the 11th century. During the wars between the Patriarchs of Aquileia and the counts of Gorizia, the castle was taken and resumed several times and also supported the struggle between the lords of the castle and communities, suffering serious damages. Between 1256 and 1386 the castle was subject of conquest, raids and divisions, until it came under the jurisdiction of Cividale. In 1293, the lavish wedding of Conrad of Manzano with Matilda of Buttrio was celebrated there with many famous guests, games and tournaments. Over time, the lords of Manzano became guilty of all kinds of wickedness and for this reason, the patriarch Ottobono sieved the fortress that withstood for two days, and was later abandoned, during the night, by the feudal lords and their acolytes through an underground tunnel: the lords eventually made amends for their sins and were forgiven. Some years later, an act of violence started a feud between Cividale and the lords of the castle, which lasted for years: Taddeo di Manzano, “driven by real suspicion”, killed his wife Sofia
of Buttrio, accused of adultery, and threw the corpse to the beasts. 1431 marked the castle’s end because of the Venetians war against Ludovico of Teck, who entered Friuli with 5000 Hungarians: Pantaleone and Giovanni of Manzano supported the latter, but were taken prisoner by the Venetians and sentenced to death. They obtained the grace thanks to the request made by the community of Cividale with the condition, however, that their castle had to be razed to the ground. This destruction made people unable to defend themselves from attacks and, in the subsequent years, were recorded dramatic clashes with Turkish troops that looted the area. Of the manor, that once had a circular shape, only the walls remained standing, but after some time they came crumbling down due to the continuous erosion caused by the flooding the Natisone. As proof of its existence remains an imposing wall, consisting of squared blocks of stone, where you can still see the old window openings. Around the castle of Manzano many legends have flourished. One of the many tells that inside the tunnel dug, to allow the escape of the owners in case of siege, is a hidden treasure consisting of a carriage covered in gold and full of valuable objects.

**The Castle of Saciletto (Ruda)**

Coordinates: 45.846567, 13.365155  
Area: Plain  
The site is reachable by: road

The original castle of Saciletto, that was located on ancient road that led from Aquileia to Cividale, seems to have been built as a defensive outlook post, from the Lombard Andreas De Zazil in 1139. The oldest certain record though, dates back to 1274, when it is referred to as Castrum Zazilet” in one of the many wars that have marked the history of this area. In 1303 it was bought by the patriarch Ottobo-no Razzi to counter the aims on the plain of the Lords of Gorizia, but all his efforts were vain, for in 1309 it was attacked and completely destroyed. In the documents, until the sixteenth century, is remembered as Sacilettum Castrum Desolatum”. Precisely because of its strategic logistics, the castle was repeatedly the subject of contention between the counts of Gorizia and the patriarch of Aquileia. It then became property of the lords of Porcia, of the patriarch Marco Barbo, and, at the end of the fifteenth century, of the Counts Antonini who purchased it from the Serenissima, and turned it into a dominicale building between the spring waters and the forests. The castle remained in the possession of this family until the end of 1800, when it was sold to Count Roma, of Romanian origin. During the First World War, when the front was on the Carso, the Italians instituted in this castle the military tribunal that judged the defectors, who were then shot behind the cemetery of Alture. In 1923 it was purchased by E.P. Salem who restored it according to the aesthetic of romantic inspiration. The castle complex is made up of the villa (a palace characterized in the central part by a tower with a patriarchal eagle carved in stone, which visible on the right wall of the gate), the chapel, dedicated to St. Antonio da Padua (which bears the coat of arms of the Antonines input) and the outbuildings; the castle is surrounded by a large park.
The Castle of Strassoldo (Cervignano)

Coordinates: 45.860914, 13.323642
Zone: Plain
The site is reachable by: road

The complex of Strassoldo consists of two castles, upper and lower, which formed a single defensive element that has always played a significant military role in protecting the way to Aquileia. In ancient times, this area was located, in fact, along the important Roman road Via Julia Augusta that connected Aquileia with the Norian. Here, two other major roads intersected: Via Annia to the south and Via Postumia to the north. The Upper Castle is probably the oldest. According to tradition, the name of the place originated from Rambaldo of Strassau, one of the commanders of the Roman general Flavius Aetius, who fought against Attila in 451. A century later, Bernero Strassau, one of his a descendant, built a manor called “the two towers”, with the ruins of Aquileia, that had been destroyed by the Huns. More likely, the origins of the complex must be traced back to the Lombards, who erected the fort to guard this part of the territory against the Byzantine presence in the lagoon of Grado. The lower castle, was born around the year one thousand, near the upper fort, perhaps as a defensive work in protection of Lower Friuli against the Hungarians’ invasion. The family originally held the castle of Lavariano and belonged to the feudal lords who arrived in Friuli before 1077, when the patriarch of Aquileia obtained the formalization of his temporal power. Only towards the end of the twelfth century the Strassoldo abandoned the original site to stop permanently in the present castle, still owned by the family. The castles were the subject of complex political and military events during the struggles between the Patriarchate of Aquileia and his opponents: in 1219 the Strassoldo allied with the League of Treviso, but in 1221 they submitted to the patriarch and later were closer to the Counts of Gorizia, siding with the latter in mid 14th century, during the period of clashes with the county of Gorizia.

In 1381 the complex was set on fire by the patriarch’s troops as revenge for the Strassoldo’s alliance with the Republic of Venice. In 1499 (ten years after the visit by the Emperor Frederick IV of Germany that stopped there, while travelling between Aquileia and Trieste) the castles were touched by the Turkish raids. In 1500, to resist the attacks, they were further equipped with walls and towers. In 1509 troops belonging to the League of Cambray, established between the Empire and the papacy, against the Republic of Venice, attacked and damaged the forts. In 1641, the Strassoldo-Graffemberg were made Counts of the Holy Roman Empire, with the offshoots of Soffumbergo, Villanova and Chiasottis. In the same century, there was the extinction of lower Strassoldo, and the upper lords inherited both castles. The family offered to the Hapsburgs a long series of important officials and generals, among which stood out in importance, Giulio of Lower Strassoldo (governor of the Austrian Lombardy); Franziska Romana Strassoldo - Grafenberg (wife of Field Marshal Radetzky), Michele (governor of Lombardy under Radetzky and Austrian chamberlain), Giulio (commander of the Strassoldo Brigade during the First war of Independence), and Marshal Kuhn (fierce opponent of Garibaldi in Bezzecca). The two existing castles were transformed in 1749 and later adapted to a noble countryside residence. Around the mighty, 18 meters high, tower, the only survivor of the two that originally equipped the medieval complex, spreads the Upper Castle with the noble building, many farm outbuildings, the church of St. Nicolò (which houses a Lombard stone cross, which proof of place’s the antiquity), and a garden dating back to the...
mid-eighteenth century and contemporary with that of the lower castle. To visit the lower castle, you have to pass a typical 17th century “pusterla cuspidata” that includes the ancient palace’s keep (within which there are: a beautiful living room with wooden ceilings of the late 16th century, an old kitchen with a large fogolâr and a guardhouse, reminiscent of the medieval military function of the complex), some rustic buildings, the church of San Marco (probably obtained from a tower in 1575) and the park. The new village, which extends nearby, probably arose in the 13th century as a natural expansion of the lower castle and was in turn fortified and equipped with two doors towers, one of which is called Cisis. Within the complex, there are also an old mill of the 12th century, who has worked for over seven hundred years, and in which are stored many old machinery, and the medieval church of Santa Maria “in Vineis” (located just outside the walled circuit) in which it contains a one of the most important fresco cycle of Friuli which dates back to the fourteenth-century. A love story, or maybe just a romantic legend, is linked to the castles of Strassoldo. It is said, indeed, that the young Ginevra, daughter of Artuico of Strassoldo, called “the Beautiful”, betrothed in 1218 to the young Odorico of Villalta, was kidnapped by the noble Frederick of Cucagna. The threats and the brutality of this man were useless: disgusted, Ginevra rebelled and stiffened to the point of remaining petrified. Only when Odorico Villalta had conquered the fortress where he was imprisoned, the young woman came back to life, called by the kiss of her beloved husband.

The Castle of Udine
Coordinates: 46.064417, 13.236101
Zone: City
The site is reachable by: road

The “Utini castrum” (from “udh”, meaning hill, or even from the Indo-European root, meaning “ud” “water”, referring to the pond that used to form at the foot of the hill) is mentioned for the first time in 983, when it was donated by emperor Ottone II to the Patriarch of Aquileia Rodoaldo, together with a large territory of about five square miles around the castle. Both the hill and the surrounding plain, however, show many traces of a much older human settlement. Its prominent position made it suitable to accommodate strategic lookout points since the most distant epochs. At its feet were found the remains of an ancient prehistoric castelliere, and in its subsoil those of a military castrum dating back to over two thousand years ago, ie at the time of the founding of Aquileia, in 181 BC. From the twelfth century on, Udine became an increasingly important center of commerce (with the establishment of a weekly market in the current via Mercatovecchio) and transit, so that, during the patriarchy of Bertoldo of Andechs of Merania, from being a simple gastald it assumed the role of patriarchal seat. This very patriarch has also instituted a Council composed of 12 nobles and 12 common men and provided to expand the Castle (that in 1232 hosted the emperor Frederick II). The old mansion included the keep, the old patriarchal palace, the new patriarchal palace (larger and more luxurious, with a private chapel and a salon or “caminata” used to accommodate the members of the nobility, clergy, and communities) and the Church of Santa Maria di Castello, the oldest parish in the city. The earthquake of January 25, 1348 severely damaged the buildings that were rebuilt with greater dignity and functionality. In fact, in 1368 the new patriarchal seat could worthily receive the visit of the Emperor Charles IV of Germany, who on April 27 was a guest of the Patriarch Marquardo of Randeck. At the end of the fifteenth century, Friuli was invaded by the Turks, whose hordes have cau-
sed terror, destruction and victims. On September 23, 1472 the turks encamped three miles from Udine (that was by then protected by a triple wall, the outermost of which, was equipped with nine gates) but could not enter it. 1420 marked the end of the patriarchal state with the submission of Friuli to the Venetian Republic. On this date the castle ceased to be the seat of the Patriarch and later became the residence of the Lieutenant Veneto until 1797, date of the fall of the Venetian Republic and the arrival of the French. A year later, after the Treaty of Campoformido, the Austrian troops took possession of the city. During the Austrian rule (which lasted more than half a century), the castle was used as a barracks and also as the seat of the Court and of the civilian prison. With the conclusion of the Third War of Independence, and the annexation of Friuli to Italy, in 1866, it was taken over as State property, and in 1906 was designated as the seat of the City Museum. During World War I, Friuli was invaded by the Austro-Germans who commandeered the castle and made it their military headquarter.

The castle of Udine is accessible from Piazza Libertà through the triumphal arch, surmounted by a venetian lion, built by architect Andrea Palladio in 1556, in honor of Lieutenant Domenico Bollani. Before reaching the hill’s top, passing on the right, there’s a Gothic cloister built in 1487 during the governorship of Lippomano, and the Church of Santa Maria di Castello, the oldest in the city, built on a site that probably housed a place of worship: some the fragments found, include a Christ Logos, which supposedly dates the construction in Lombard times, although the present church reveals a Romanesque shape, dating from the twelfth century. The interior has three naves, divided into large round arches, the little right apse retains a remarkable cycle of Romanesque frescoes with the “Deposition” into a basin and “Figures of apostles and holy scenes” in the Chamber and in the wall. Their execution can be traced back to the thirteenth century. Next to the church stands the bell tower (completed in 1539 by Giovanni da Udine) surmounted by a statue of the Angel Gabriel in gilded bronze, placed there in 1777: his outstretched arm indicates the winds’ origin. The other side of the church leans against the “Casa della confraternita”, a medieval building where Parliament of Friuli met (ie, the consultative assembly that flanked the patriarch in the legal and administrative functions) before the castle was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1511. It’s furnished with period furniture and the ceiling is decorated with a fresco depicting the Madonna holding the model of the ancient Castle. Next to it, stands the Arch Grimani, erected in 1522 in honor of the Doge bearing the same name, through which you arrive in the castle’s forecourt where there are four elegant wellheads. In the loggia, there are about 30 Roman inscriptions coming from the whole region, but mainly from Aquileia, Zuglio, Cividale and from the territory of Lower Friuli. At the square’s end there’s the “House of Contadinanza”, where the Contadinanza used to meet. The assembly was founded in 1511 after the bloody peasant riots, in the famous “Shrove Thursday” of that year. The assembly intended to protect the interests of farmers, oversee the taxation and guard the weapons, that were given in case of necessity to people. The impressive Renaissance palace stands mighty on the hill overlooking the city. The current structure retains little of its original appearance, because of the wars and natural disasters that dotted the ancient history of this castle. Already seriously affected by the earthquake of 1348, it was almost totally destroyed by the violent earthquake that struck the entire Friuli in 1511. On its foundation so it was therefore decided to build the current building, designed by the architect Giovanni Fontana in 1547, who was then replaced by Giovanni da Udine, who gave the building an impressive roman, 16th-century, look and devised the outer staircase. The most important part of the entire building is the Hall of Parliament, where there are many frescoes by Pomponio Amalteo, Grassi, Francesco Floreani and Giambattista Tiepolo that celebrate the greatness of Udine and Friuli. The hall is remarkably gilded by wooden painted ceiling. Above the building there is the observatory of the “guardiafogo”, that housed the city guards who had to give the alarm in case of fire. In the basement you will find the old prisons. The castle now houses the Civic Museum which includes an art gallery, the archaeological and numismatic museum, the Museum of Risorgimento and the Friulian Museum of Photography.
A legend that has been passed down for centuries, narrates the origin of the hill on which the castle of Udine stands. It is said that the castle was erected in 452 by the Huns of Attila to allow their commander to enjoy the fire of Aquileia, one of the most great Roman cities of that time, which he had previously sacked and burned. This was done by filling the helmet of every soldier with soil that, thrown on a clearing in the middle of the plain, gave origin to the hill that now dominates the town and the lake that in ancient times opened at its feet.

**The Castle of Faedis (Cucagna, Zucco, Soffumbergo)**

Coordinates: 46.1589688, 13.3491236 (Zucco), 46.1603268, 13.3461571 (Cucagna), 46.1380341, 13.3709300 (Soffumbergo)

Zone: hill

The site is reachable by: trail

Within its territory the municipality of Faedis can boast three castles: Cucagna, Zucco and Soffumbergo. The castles of Zucco and Cucagna, which are located on the top of two adjacent hills, formed an important defensive structure on the ancient and important road that led from Cividale to Tarcento, and was crossed by the merchants who brought in Friuli steel products manufactured in Bovec, in the upper valley of the Isonzo. The oldest fort is that of Cucagna, about which we have knowledge from the 12th century. The name probably derives from the Friulian Ciùc ("rounded hill"), and is documented from 1186 on, when Guarnero of Faedis and his son Ulrico, ministers of the Church of Aquileia, have obtained the permission, by the Patriarch Giovanni IV, to build a tower and, in that occasion, they took the new fortress' name. The manor’s history though seems to start more than a century before: precisely in 1027 when the patriarch Popone granted the permission to Odorico Auspergh, a Carinthian noble, to erect a castle in Faedis, within a more complex project called “the aristocratic colonization”, which included many fortification, in order to make Friuli more secure against the barbarian invasions. After the destruction of the castle of Partistagno in 1239, which was under his feudal jurisdiction, Adalprettio Cucagna obtained by the patriarch of Aquileia, Bertoldo of Andechs, the permission to erect a new manor. This building was erected, according to tradition, in a lower position than its predecessor, almost as a form of submission and respect to the first, most ancient and illustrious castle. Initially owned by the nobles of Cucagna, it was then transferred permanently to a branch of the family that took the name from the fortress of Zucco (from Friuli “zuc” “hill”). The new complex, larger than the previous, had an articulated map with double walls and a wide moat. Inside the fence stood the keep, the fortified domus, some housings and also the castle chapel which can still be seen today. The two forts formed a powerful fortified system to which was included a third modest tower (that dates back to 1248) located on the highest hill Rodingerius. In the 14th century, the Cucagna’s feud was vast and included assets in many parts of Friuli and Istria. Given the position, that allowed the two castles to help one another in case of need, the
forts were considered almost impregnable, so much that there's memory of a single siege that occurred in 1310, when Odorico, failing the family’s tradition, went against the patriarch Ottobono. He escaped the patriarchal militia's siege in Monfalcone, and took refuge in the castle of Cucagna, banishing the cousins and putting Faedis on fire. The castle, stormed with “stronger machines”, resisted forcefully, but eventually Odorico decided to escape in Treviso; once forgiven by the Patriarch he returned to Cucagna in 1318 and in 1325 expanded the residential domus of the castle. At the beginning of the 400s, however, the castle of Cucagna was so badly damaged that Francesco of Cucagna, on the occasion of the celebrations for the wedding with Nicolussia di Castello and Tarcento organized the ceremony in the more hospitable and better preserved castle of Zucco.

With the invention of gunpowder, the castles lost their importance and were abandoned and destroyed: Zucco was probably abandoned since the mid 16th century, perhaps because it was deeply damaged by the battles that led to the passage to the Republic of Venice, or the earthquake of 1511, or even for the awkward position that made it no longer indispensable to the new defensive system. A document from 1596 gives news that, in that year, the church of Zucco was built using stones from the ruined castle. Shortly after even the nobles of Cucagna moved into their most comfortable and cozy plain villas. Both castles have suffered a lot of damage during the first and second world war. The imposing ruins are a precious example of a medieval fortress before the great transformations that, to different degrees, have altered the appearance of most forts.

The castle of Cucagna is characteristic by a square tower, with an elevated postern, around which is likely to have developed the first settlement. Not far away from there, remain the slots and the arched entrance portal, with the annexed large cistern, of the fortified domus. Of particular interest is the castle chapel, dedicated to San Giovanni, harmoniously situated in the building fabric. What’s left of the castle of Zucco are the impressive defensive walls and some details including the trapdoors and posterns that granted the access to the keep. Within the veil, there is a church dedicated to the Madonna of Zucco, which was rebuilt in the fifteenth century on the foundations of a previous building. On the inside there’s is a fourteenth-century style painting that represents the Madonna del latte between Saint Giovanni Battista and San Giovanni. It was painted by unknown master, and its great beauty and is attributable to the Venetian and Emilian school.

**Castle of Soffumbergo**

The oldest findings of the castle of Scharfenberg (which means “steep hill”, as to emphasize the place harshness of where the castle was built, italianized in Soffumbergo) suggest that on the hill, in the late Roman period, arose a watchtower, to guard the plain of Cividale, and that it was also used by the Lombards (some scholars say it has lombard towers) and the Saxons, around the year one thousand, as it’s proved by some graffiti found on the castle church walls. The lords of this fort were of German origin, and were probably given the feud by the by the Brass in the 11th century to defend Friuli. In 1184, the castle was inhabited by Mattia and his son Variendo, lords of Soffumbergo, vassals of the Church of Aquileia, but according to a 1025 document, the fort already belonged to the patriarch. A few decades later, the same noble family completed the construction of a sumptuous residence at the hill’s roots of on which the castle of Soffumbergo arose. The fact has few parallels in the friulan castle history.
of the 14th century. The landscape’s beauty and the healthy air of those places, led the Patriarch Bertoldo of Andechs, a great friend of the emperor Frederick II of Germany, to choose the castle, in 1298, as a summer residence, which will have been used also by his successors. For almost the entire first half of the 14th century, the lords of Soffumbergo enjoyed the broad protection of the Church of Aquileia, although there were frequent disputes with the lords della Torre that were invested, in 1313, by the Patriarch of the right to reside in the castle. The House, however, remained faithful to the Patriarchate until 1349, when they allied with the Count of Gorizia against Patriarch Bertrando of San Genesio who was murdered in the plain of Richinvelda on June 6, 1350. Among the leaders of the conspiracy there was also Enrico of Soffumbergo. His relatives tried, in vain, to dissociate from his action yielding the manor to the new patriarch Nicola of Luxembourg, who conquered the castle, hung Enrico to the gallows (who had an old grudge with justice for other crimes he committed from 1345) in the square facing the defensive wall, and expelled from the castle all his relatives. With the conquest of Friuli by the Venetian Republic in 1420, the castle became a possession of Cividale, that saw in it the much hated symbol of Aquileia’s authority, and destroyed it down to the foundation, using gunpowder and mines. In 1512 it passed to the Strassoldo along with other fiefs connected to it.

The castle was never rebuilt. Currently the towers’ remains and the residential domus’ fence are still visible; the ancient castle chapel instead, thanks to the numerous renovations and restorations, is still completely intact.

The Castle of Partistagno (Attimis)

Coordinates: 46.1781329, 13.3215907
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: trail

The site (whose name derives from the old German “behrt”, brilliant, and “stein”, stone, meaning “shining castle”) was appointed in the late 11th century, but it is certain that since Roman times, it harbored a very important fort, because of his central location on the road that linked Forum Julii (Cividale) and Gemona. It was equipped with a rampart, a stone tower (the inside of which it was later made into an apse for the castle’s church) and a water cistern dating back to the Roman period. This artery has played a key role in the Lombard period, when it joined the ducal city to the castrum, mentioned by Paul the Deacon in his Historia Langobardorum. The place was mentioned for the first time in 1096, when a certain Ercole of Partistagno was mentioned in a document, but the castle was apparently built before that date, perhaps by the Moosburg, feudal lords of German origin and owners of the nearby castle of Attimis. In 1170 Voldarico, the son of Matilda of Moosburg, and already Marquis of Tuscany, “for the forgiveness of their sins” gave the castle of Partistagno, along with the other properties he acquired by fraud, to the Patriarch of Ulrico II of Treven. Two years later, the Patriarch gave the feud to Everardo of Faedis, who took the surname of his new estate of Partistagno and then passed it on to his descendents. In 1239, emperor Frederick II of Germany, conquered it and broke it down, but the fort was evidently rebuilt, since in 1309 the Cividale burnt a part of it to revenge against the Partistagno, guilty of having ravaged the countryside in the area. A few decades later, it was involved in the struggles between Cividale and Udine for the appointment as Patriarch of Filippo of Alencon, who had granted...
the Partistagno’s support. In the 15th century a large fortified mansion was erected near the oldest walls, with clear residential intentions rather than defensive, but it was destroyed by a fire a century later. In the 16th century Partistagno was included among the “ruined” castles of Friuli, and the Partistagno settled in Belvedere of Povoletto. However in the 17th century the castle was still well conserved if it’s true that, in 1642, Count Baldassarre Partistagno removed all the tiles to cover the roofs of Ronchis of Faedis, that had been destroyed by a fire. According to legend, the oldest castle was demolished by the inhabitants of Faedis, tired of the depredations of the lords of Partistagno.

The castle is loosely divided into upper and lower, but it is actually to be considered an architectural unit consisting of several parts, that have been added over a long period of time. Today still remain important elements of the ancient walls, like the tower of the upper castle, an oven, short sections of the walls, traces of other turrets, and the church of St. Oswald whose origin dates back to the 14th century and that was renovated in the late ‘500. Inside the apse there’s has a magnificent fresco dating back to the late fourteenth century, attributed to the Friulian Vitalesca school influenced by Lorenzo Veneziano, which depicts Cristo Pantocratore with the twelve apostles, and is considered one of the most important art works in Friuli.

The rectangular domus magna develops over three floors, with rooms heated by fireplaces, mullion windows, stone benches and a valuable portal on the east side, the traces of furniture inside the building give a good idea of what the original setting was. The four floors were used as such: the basement for storage, the noble floor for representation; the residential floor with fewer windows and equipped with “niche sinks” and the attic (or service plan).

The Castle of Attimis
Coordinates: (Upper Attimis) 46.186564, 13.317859, (Lower Attimis) 46.187845, 13.316566
Zone: hill
the site is reachable by: trail

Attimis (whose name is probably of Gallic origin, from ati and tem, meaning the place is above, across the water) was the site of two castles, of which there are visible traces. The upper castle or “castelvecchio” is the oldest and was mentioned for the first time in 1106, when Bertoldus Episcopus, owner of the castle and son of Bavarian prince Purcardo of Moosburg, gave it to his niece Matilda and her husband Conrad with everything else around it. The couple’s son, Voldarico, who was also the Marquis of Tuscany, once flattened a dispute with his brothers who had been rejected with weapons from the household possessions, gave the castle, Villa Attimis, the manor of Partistagno and many other goods the church of Aquileia “for the forgiveness of his sins”. The Patriarch, after four days, gave it to his brothers Enrico and Arpo, cousins of Voldarico, and founders of the two branches of the Attems. The divisions, among the brothers and many strategic opportunities, induced the Attems to erect a new fort called Castelnuovo in sec. XII. It is still not clear who the first manor’s lord was, but at the end of the 200s, a certain Artinido of Attems appeared and swore allegiance to the Patriarch of Aquileia. For unknown reasons, a few years later, the same Patriarch imposed to Artinido to burn the new building to the ground or to keep it exclusively in defense of the Church of Aquileia. The lord chose the latter solution, but later allied with the Count of Gorizia against the Patriarch, who sent his troops, conquered the castle and demolished it. Evidently, it was later rebuilt and returned to the Attems, as in 1377 they result as the owners of both castles. Ten years later, they teamed up with Gerardo da Camino, the lower fort was equipped with a cannon, sent by the Udinesi (it is to be noted that the gunpowder was introduced in
Friuli just a year before and, therefore, this fortress was one of the first to be defended with firearms. In 1420 both castles, the last ones in Friuli, gave all their weapons to the Republic of Venice. A goods inventory has confirmed that the upper castle still existed in 1484. Having no evidence that the Serenissima had dismantled the two forts, as these were of strategic importance, it may be assumed that it was the fugitives who began the destruction during their raids at the end of the XV century. It’s certain that the two constructions were completely destroyed by the disastrous earthquake of 1511. The Attimis have erected, at the foot of the hill, a castled house defended by towers, that was destroyed in 1944, after the war. Two L-shaped walls of the main tower of the lower castle are still visible. They are located almost at the center of a modest circuit building of rather elongated shape and with a moat.

The upper castle was largely recovered and restored: the oval’s perimeter surrounded by walls, the pentagonal tower (with no entry), the domus structures and the base of the west tower. On the path leading to the castle there are the remains of a guard house.

The archaeological medieval museum of Attimis, was born with the aim to preserve and present the remains and the objects of the everyday life in feudal castles (approximately from the tenth to the fifteenth century) of a large territory along the piedmont road that from Cividale del Friuli leads north. Through archaeological findings, models and environment reconstructions it provides an overview of the various aspects of the life of a medieval castle with many sections devoted to hunting, fishing, agriculture, livestock. The museum exhibits a rare collection of weapons and defensive armament, and the oldest wooden Madonna in Friuli which dates back to the mid-thirteenth century.

hours
01/11 - 31/03 Sundays and holidays from 10.00 to 13.00 - from 14.00 to 18.00
01/04 - 31/10 Sundays and holidays from 10.00 to 13.00 - from 14.00 to 19.00

The Castle of Cergneu (Nimis)
Coordinates: 46.2124955, 13.3020777
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: trail

What remains of this castle, which was one of the most ancient in Friuli, arise on the hills spur between the valleys Montana and Lagna, probably on the foundations of a Roman defense tower, also used by Lombards. The place’s name (from the Latin “cerrenetum”, meaning “oak forest” or “oak”) is documented in 1170, when the Patriarch gave Villa Cergneu to Voldarico, Marquis of Tuscany, and descendant of a Bavarian family of princes. In sec. XIII the Patriarchs attribute the jurisdiction over the territory of Cergneu to the lords of Savorgnano and then, someone named Conrad, belonging to that family, gave the castle to two of his sons, Detalmo and Pietro, who, according to the custom of that time, took the castle’s name. In 1348 the entire castle complex was severely damaged due to the earthquake and the battles against the patriarchal factions (the Cergneu were allied with the Savorgnano against the Patriarch), which will continue throughout the century, the six children of Detalmo Cergneu therefore decided expand it and strengthen it with the construction of the domus magna, leaning against the west wall of the ancient tower. Despite the importance of this family in the nobility of Friuli, which is
proven by the fact that in 1415 it was part of the forum of the Parliament of the Fatherland of Friuli, the manor (that was deprived of its defensive purpose because of its position, too far from places in which power was exercised and trades were made) soon began to suffer from neglect of its owners: in 1480 it is still cited, with its tower and two houses, but already in 1521 the fort was described as damaged, perhaps because of the contemporary war between Venice and the Empire, or following the battles of Shrove Tuesday in 1511 (when it was sacked by the Udinesi) or to the disastrous earthquake of that year. Since then it has never been quoted again, if not as feud owned by the Brazzà. In 1521 the historian Giovanni Candido placed it among the “ruined” castles of Friuli and a story alone, not well documented about death of Giovanni Battista Cergneu, that perhaps took place in the castle, casts the doubt that in 1567 a part of the manor was still habitable. The still impressive remains of the Cergneu castle, lie along the short and steep castle road (with traces of the original pavement) that runs within a short stretch of woods.

Overcoming a nice arch access bridge, you arrive to a large artificial terrace, originally surrounded by a moat. Here you can still see the remaining walls of the square tower, which still shows windows, louvers and the door. On the inside you can see the four floors division, and sections of the defensive walls. Against the tower there is a residential domus that dates back to the fourteenth century. Near the castle stands the church devoted to San Pietro and Paolo (originally dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene), built in 1323 by Pietro, Giovanni and Corrado of Cergneu. It is said that the last Count of Cergneu Savorgnan Brazzà was a proud and cruel man who treated his employees worse than animals, and because of this was hated by all. When its settlers and servants turned sixty years old, they had to report to him that would kill them, so that they couldn’t waste more food. One day, a poor folk from Ramandolo turned sixty, and decided to oppose this cruel practice and, invoking the help and the protection of San Giovanni. He killed the count with a trick and went back home: San Giovanni had protected him.

S. John’s protection is also responsible for the successful conclusion of an event occurring shortly after. The castle was besieged for days by an enemy, when the widow of the Count, Sigismonda, went out, with her two children, to beg for mercy in the name of his kinship with the Baptist. Challenged to prove that statement, she performed a roll of paper from which it resulted her lineage with the saint: the Lord did not want to know anything else, hid his sword, showed his face, gave her his hand and removed the siege.

The piece of castle still standing after the assault, is the same you can see today.

**The Castle of Tarcento**

Coordinates: 46.2299655, 13.2031631  
Zone: hill  
The site is reachable by: road

In the Dark Ages, Tarcento became the fief of the German family of Machland that erected two castles: the upper castle, or San Lorenzo’s, at an altitude of 410 meters, and the lower fort of Coja, located about 600 meters away. Probably, the upper castle was originally a Roman watchtower, which was also used by the Lombards. The first feudal lords gave it to the bishop of Salisbugo, which was succeeded
by the lords of Caporiacco (heirs in female line of the upper feud and part of the lower one). When Federico e Detalmo died in 1281, the castle was assigned to Artico di Castello or Castel Porpeto, whose family later took the name of Frangipane and to which it belonged in the following centuries. After the estate’s division, the sons of Artico di Castello, as testified by a document dated February 4, 1304, decided to build two castles in Tarcento and therefore by 1311, the town had the Upper the Lower Castle on the hill of Coja. This evolution inside the feud spread in many neighboring towns and is due to the downward displacement of the castles, which became closer to roads, that were more convenient and less endangered by invaders’ raids. As a result of inheritances, sales and divisions, there were many disagreements between relatives. As a result, in 1348, Francesco di Castello resorted to arms to take back the Upper Castle, which was guarded by Fulchero Savorgnan. He later incurred in the ruthless revenge of Patriarch Nicolò of Luxembourg, who wanted to punish him for his participation in the conspiracy who had murdered the Patriarch Bertrand in 1350. Francesco was caught, dragged and decapitated: his head was publicly exposed in the city streets and then stuck on the Castle’s main door. In 1352 the patriarchal troops assaulted and destroyed the two castles, and the Parliament of Friuli proclaimed cursed the sons of Francesco and deprived them of any assistance and right.

In 1384, during the struggles for the appointment as patriarch of Filippo of Alenqon, Doimo di Castello, fearing that the upper manor could fall into enemy’s hands, decided to burn it and then dismantle it. Some of the material were used to strengthen the barbican and the castle walls and to complete the “casa magna”. During the occupation of Friuli by the Serenissima, these Lords made an act of submission. During the third invasion of the Turks in 1477, the Venetian historian Sabellico took refuge in the castle and from there observed the burning of villages and the Friulan plain, but at the end of the 15th century the manor was already in need of restoration. The Lower castle was finally destroyed, along with the Upper fort, in 1511. It was firstly set on fire by the peasants’ revolts of the famous Shrove Thursday, and then crushed by the catastrophic earthquake that followed in the same year. There was only one tower left, which can still be seen today. In 1616, the owners, Polidoro and Giobatta Frangipane, pledged to rebuild it but the reconstruction was never realized. The surviving tower was almost completely demolished in 1833, and in 1858 the land’s owners tried to destroy what was left, but they had to desist because of the walls’ thickness.

The ancient, fifty feet high, tower, on which you can still see traces of the various floors and their rare paintings, was nicknamed by the local population, as a result, the Cjiscjelat, near which, every year, is made the “Pignarul Grant”, the traditional epiphany fire, considered among the greatest in Friuli. For over seven centuries, at sunset on January 5, a procession with hundreds of people in medieval costumes walks through the streets of the historic center, until they reach the foot of the hill of Coja. Here the “venerable old man” narrates the story of the feudal investiture of Arctic of Castello. At the end of the re-enactment, participants are invited to follow him to the “Cjiscjelàt”, armed with their torches. Here the old man finally sets the “pignarul grant” (the bonfire) on fire. The smoke, rising up from the pile of wood, indicates a good harvest if it angles east, and a bad one if it goes west. Until a few centuries ago the outcome of this divination, inspired the emigration of local farmers, who left their land to seek work or luck elsewhere. You can still see what’s left of the foundations and some ruined walls of the upper castle, as well as a casing soil, presumably placed at the entrance of the fortifications. There is a legend, which has many versions, about the inhabitants of the castle of Coja: it seems that, at the
time when they were giurisdicenti in Tarcento, the Counts of Frangipane, were involved in all sorts of things. If in the surrounding area there was a pretty girl, they called her to the castle to meet all their desires and then, when they tired, they walled her up alive, or threw her down a tower. Such an infamy deserved a punishment, and the Venetian Republic, who watched over the country's justice, sent armed soldiers to punish the Frangipane for their cruelty. The soldiers eventually made an agreement with a servant and promised her a bunch of gifts if she did what they asked. One night, after the Lords had gone to bed, the maid put a candle on a window, so that the soldiers could shoot in the dark and quickly fled. It took only a few minutes for them to fire over Coja. Some say that they pulled a single cannon, some say tens. The castle collapsed and none of those who slept in it managed to escape.

### The Castle of Prampero (Magnano in Riviera)

Coordinates: 46.2518111, 13.1935501  
Zone: hill  
The site is reachable by: road

The fortress was built in 1025, in a position that permitted to control the transit routes to the Alps under license from the patriarch Popone, by the Lords of Pramberg, a family of German origin, that as suggested by the name which means “burned mountain”. The place name comes from the German medieval word that meant “place cleared by fire” and Berg (Castle). From the towers it was possible to control the streets below and ask tolls for maintaining the roads, and the communications. The courtyard was used to house tools and products. The castle was built, on a Roman lookout for the control of the important Via Julia Augusta, the road that departed from Aquileia and proceeded towards the Norian, namely Germany. The lords of Prampero, that came from the German city of Augsburg, were senior officials of the Patriarch and in close relationship with the lords of Gemona. They took part in the most salient military and political facts in the state of Aquileia. In 1313 they opposed valid resistance to the troops of the Count of Gorizia, which were repulsed and defeated. Because of a sum of money, in 1394, Bortolussio Prampero and his brothers imprisoned in the castle of the Florentine Spinello Castellano, who was ambassador of Pope Boniface IX to the King of Hungary.

In 1416 it was conquered by Gemona and then freed by the Patriarch. The Prampero tried to resist, opposing also the venetian troops, that in 1419 had started the occupation of Friuli. On May 26, 1420 though, they signed a dedication pact in which they promised to remain loyal to Venice. During the struggles between the Strumieri and the Zamberlani, in the peasants revolt on the famous “Shrove Thursday” of February 27, 1511, the castle was ruined by a fire, caused mainly by the grudges undergoing within the family. Further damage was caused by the earthquake. The castle was rebuilt in 1576 and further renovated in the seventeenth century, assuming a more residential countenance. The castle complex was composed of a series of buildings articulated around an inner courtyard, among which there were: a Square Tower and the residential domus with a Renaissance loggia. There were also some appliances like a mill, a church, a vegetable garden and an orchard.

Reduced to ruins by the repeated earthquake shocks of 1976, the fort was the subject of a long process of recovery and reconstruction that has affected the north tower, the Gemona tower and the palatium.
Although the first news of the castle of Ravistagno date back to the middle of the thirteenth century, the German toponym Rabenstein, “cliff of crows” could indicate a probable Ottonian origin, but it was used as a lookout post also in prehistoric times and during the barbaric age (it was in all likelihood part of the defensive system linked to the castrum of Artegna, and quoted by Paul Diacono in his Historia Langobardorum). The castle, in fact, had the dual purpose of protecting Gemona and serve as a vantage point for sightings and reports. There are written reports about Ravistagno in 1211, but it was only in 1287, after several changes of ownership (previously these lands belonged to Ermanno of Clama and Asquino of Varmo), that it was bought, for 300 marks from Aquileia, by the noble Enrico of Prampero, whose successors owned the whole feud for the following centuries until the Napoleonic period. In 1348 the castle was severely damaged by the earthquake. During the Venetian domination (after 1420) the country was administered in the name of the Prampero by the assembly of heads of families gathered in Vicinia, presided by a Dean and flanked by two jurors. Presumably, the castle tumbled down already in the 14th century, perhaps because of the war against the commendatory patriarch Filippo d’Alencon, that took place between 1381 and 1387. Maybe it was also ruined by the earthquake of 1348. Surely in the ‘400s, Ravistagno’s fortress was already in ruin and completely abandoned if, as the chronicles say, the countrymen dismantled the ancient walls almost completely and utilized the stones for other buildings. The masonry, that still exists, dates back to the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries.

The original structure was very wide and included many lookout towers and other buildings. Of that trapezoid fort, which had the longer side on the sheer rock, remain impressive masonry fragments (which are accessible the old castled road, in some places you can still see the original stone parapets) and to the east, the watchtower.
of a upper castle, eventually destroyed by the inhabitants of Gemona in 1381, and a lower stronghold, which was leant against the walls of a primitive tower, called lombard, placed near the front door. Next to the no longer existing upper castle, it was built, in 1005, the church of San Martino whose foundation lie most probably on the ruins of a Lombard temple. The feud was first cited in 1253, when Guarnerio of Artegna was invested by the patriarch of Aquileia, Gregorio of Montelongo, in exchange for his services, during the occupation of the castle of Tricesim; and then, in 1260, following the excesses of Artegna: part of the wall was demolished by the militias of the Patriarch, who entrusted the custody of the manor to one of his captains. The castle was often scene of clashes between the Patriots and the Artegna, and in 1293, for a short period of time, it was under the control of the gemonesi. It was considered “unnecessary and harmful” and therefore was almost completely destroyed in 1387, due to some disagreements between the Artegna, the Udinesi, the Gemonesi and the Patriarch. It was rebuilt in 1410 and destroyed again just three years later by Venetian troops led by Pandolfo Malatesta. The strategic defensive importance of the manor, induced the inhabitants of Gemona and Artegna to rebuild the castle in 1418 by order of the patriarch Lodovico of Teck, as a defense against the Serenissima, that had already begun the occupation of Friuli. Gotofredo, the last lord of Artegna, left the feud to his brothers in law Federico e Giacomo Savorgnan that obtained the investiture in 1389. This family settled in the lower castle and rebuilt the fort and the walls, retaining the fort’s possession until the eighteenth century, when the foreign domination of the French and Austro-Hungarians began. In 1499 the castle was besieged and sacked by the Turks who evidently caused considerable damage. Between 1515 and 1527, part of his materials were used to reconstruct the nearby church of San Martino, ruined by the earthquake of 1511. Following several changes of ownership, the manor came to the notary Giovanni Modesti and then, in 1678, to his heirs who gave the fort to the parish of Artegna in 1869. For a long time the castle was inhabited by poor people, and was completely neglected. It was eventually purchased by Count Fulvio Bonati Savorgnan of Osoppo, whose heirs are the current owners. The castle was badly damaged by the 1976 earthquake, but has now been fully restored. The so called Lombard tower, which was placed near the front door, belongs to the original building, and is perhaps to the oldest. As for the rest, the building has undergone several changes over time. The church of San Martino, which gives its name to the hill, was built in 1005 (as attested by an ancient inscription) probably on the ruins of a Lombard temple attached to the upper castle. It has been destroyed and rebuilt several times over the centuries, but its contemporary forms date back to the sixteenth century, and contains a precious cycle of frescoes by Gianpaolo Thanner, dated to around 1525-30, including Doctors of the Church with the Evangelists, the twelve Apostles and the Passion of Christ.

The Castle of Cassacco
Coordinates: 46.1845845, 13.1925201
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

The hill on which the castle of Cassacco arises (which comes probably from the Latin name Cassius) was certainly a Roman lookout, guarding the Via Julia Augusta, which led from Aquileia to the Norian. In all likelihood, around the eleventh or twelfth century, the Southern Tower was built and the castle must have had a defensive character for the lords of Cassinberg. The first mentioned fortress dates back to 1202 when the Count Enghelberto of Gorizia stopped in the castle. In 1254, the Patriarch of Aquileia Gregorio of Montelongo, gave the estate to Leonardo Cassacco. Du-
During the Middle Ages, it was often disputed by many feudal families, until 1340, when Patriarch Bertrando from San Genesio granted the investiture to the lords of Savorgnan della Bandiera. The castle was bought in the fifteenth century by the lords Montegnacco who provided to the manor’s restoration and consolidation. Perhaps because of its structure or for its strategically unworthy position, the castle was only marginally involved in the wars that affected most of the other Friulian fortresses and this allowed it not to suffer serious damage and maintain unchanged, besides some more recent buildings, its authentic appearance. The defensive complex’s architecture of the castle dates back to the thirteenth century (exception made for some later modifications) and is characterized by two, three-storey high towers originally joined by a connection whose façade is decorated with three arches. It is assumed that in the eleventh-twelfth century the defenses were made up of a single tower and a fence, not dissimilar from the similar late-antique “equipped works”. Along the walls (which still shows the remaining stones of the ancient walkways) there are other towers of modest dimensions and buildings used for a rustic purpose. Between the castle and the courtyard, you can see the remains of the moat. On the entrance’s right side, there is a fifteenth century church, devoted to Santa Maria Assunta, that was enlarged by Nicolò di Montegnacco in 1856. Two Roman reliefs effigies, which date back to the second century after Christ, are located on the north side of the wall along the moat. This fact suggest the garrison’s ancient origin.

In 1976, the castle was damaged by the earthquake. Since its reconstruction, is one of the most beautiful castles in Friuli. According to legend, this castle and the nearby castle of Tricesimo, both owned for over a century by the Montegnacco, were connected by an underground tunnel, which was reachable descending forty steps.

The Castle of Tricesimo
Coordinates: 46.1669180, 13.2175693
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

It seems that, in 12 BC, the moraine hill, which dominates a large part of the Friuli plain, on which the Castle of Tricesimo was built, was defended by some walls built by order of Emperor Cesare Augusto to guard the road that from Aquileia led to the Norian. The place’s name is due, in fact, to a Roman settlement built 30 miles away (“Tricesimum” or “Tricensesimon” from the Latin numeral “tricesimus”, or thirtieth) from Aquileia, and is mentioned in the Itinerarium Antonini Augusti of the third century AD. The castle is documented from 1200 onwards, and was subjected to the lords with the same name. Towards the end of the century it was purchased by the lords Della Torre (originally from Gemona) who submitted to the Patriarchate of Aquileia. Because of its strategic location, the manor was the center of several battles between the Patriarch of Aquileia and the Count of Gorizia, it has been besieged three times.
from 1305 (the year in which, the patriarch Ottobono de Razzi attacked the castle, until the besieged surrendered to hunger) to 1310, and it has passed from hand to hand until it returned to the patriarchy, who reinforced its defenses, as to offer an adequate resistance to the assaults. Despite this, in 1420, the fief of Tricesimo, was occupied by Venetian troops and subjected to the control of a Venetian captain, but it was not spared from the attacks of the hordes of the Turks that devastated Friuli in 1477 and 1499. With the advent of the Venetian Republic, the fortress became property of several families: in 1504 Giovanni of Prampero owned the castle, and restored the fort, some parts of which still remain today. In 1511, the castle was looted by the starving peasants in revolt. Twenty years later it was sold to the lords of Montegnacco who, in 1627, sold it to the nobles Valentinis, who rebuilt the keep and the towers making it look like an ancient feudal mansion. The three round walls that surrounded the castle, were torn down by order of Napoleon when he visited Tricesimo, on his way to Austria, in order not to leave behind any dangerous resistance points. The manor remained to the Valentinis until 1948, when it was ceded to the Archbishop of Udine, to be set aside for worship and spiritual retreat. Because of the large influx of pilgrims, many modifications were made to the castle, that dramatically changed the original shape. Currently, it is composed of the medieval keep (with major renovations of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, although some of the original elements are still visible) and an outer wall of the medieval era (with loopholes and merlons, defended by six corner towers) within which there is the castle chapel, built in the sixteenth century and decorated with a fresco by the Friulan painter Pomponio Amalteo. In the crypt below you can admire the remains of frescoes from the same period. Inside the large halls, you can still admire the original beams, the beautiful old vaults and the large halls decorated with monumental fireplaces. Because of the many alterations, the erection of the shrine of Our Lady Missionary (which took place in 1955 on the ruins of the northern part of the fort) and the complete restoration, carried out after the earthquake that hit Friuli in 1976, many of the original parts of the fort are now completely lost.

The Castle of Brazzacco (Moruzzo)

Coordinates: 46.1348838, 13.1468582
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

In the town of Moruzzo, on the top and on the southern slope of a moraine hill, there are the two castles, the upper and lower, of Brazzacco, which are located a few hundred meters away from each other. This configuration is dated around the year one thousand, but it is based on a very ancient structure, that according to some scholars, dates back to the eighth century, as confirmed by the discovery of some Roman coins in it and by the location’s name itself (the predial toponym - acu, derived from Braccius or Brattius, proper name of a family of Roman settlers). There is also a reference to the Lombard period (“in partibus Bratkas”) and one around the year one thousand (“S. Leonardus Bratka de pago”) which refers to the chapel of St. Leonardo, enclosed in the current fifteenth century boundary. The origin of the upper fort, could be traced back to X century if it is, as many historians believe, the castle of “Braitian”, donated in 983 by Emperor Otto II to the Patriarch Rodoaldo. History though provides very little direct information on both castles. They were certainly built before 10 December 1186, when Federico Brazago (or Bracago) gave some assets to Wodolrico of Porpeto, while in 1202 recurs the
name of Arnold of Brazzacco, one of the judges of a dispute about the rights of the Church of Aquileia, between the Patriarch Pellegrino II and the counts of Gorizia Mainardo and Engelberto. In the XIII sec. the two manors were inhabited by two different Brazzacco families linked by ties of kinship, but in the early fourteenth century they passed by inheritance, or purchase by marriage, to the representatives of various families, such as the Fagagna, the Colloredo, the Belgrade, the Cergneu (that will later own the entire feud). At the end of the century it was under the jurisdiction of seven spouses, even if a part of the upper castle has continued to belong to the Brazza. In 1309 the Lower Castle was burned and looted by the militias led by Rizzardo from Camino, Captain of Treviso, in spite of the site's remarkable natural protection provided by the great swamp, that was reclaimed only later on, which stretched up to the ancient village of Santa Margherita del Grugn, located on the height facing the Borgo Sant'Andrea.

It seems that the upper fort hadn’t suffered mutilating damages or tampering in such circumstances, while in the famous riots of the “Shrove Thursday” in 1511 both castles were looted and destroyed by the locals. The causes that led to their sunset are unknown, as it remains unclear why the forts were built so far from major roads. The House of the upper manor became extinct in the first half of the 15th century with the death of Federico di Brazza; on February 6, 1443 both the feuds became part of the possessions of the family Savorgnan de Brazza Cergneu, which was granted the power to exercise the right to judge both in civil and criminal cases. Four centuries later, in the second half of 1800, a descendant of the same family, inherited the property from his father Francesco, and bequeathed it to his son Detalmo who was the last lord of both castles. Pietro Savorgnan di Brazza, son of Ascanio and brother of Detalmo, naturalized in France, had the dream to explore the “unknown lands” of central Africa, and during his second expedition to Africa founded Brazzaville, the current capital of the Republic of Congo. The upper fort, although modest in size, is one of the few elements of fortified architecture in Friuli that has not been modified or altered in the course of the centuries.

Situated on a hill, it includes a walled circuit (another one, more peripheral, enclosed the village), a mighty main tower (originally three floors high) and a building guard, also known as “the captain’s house, that had administrative functions and a prison. As it often happens in these very old buildings, the other structures were made of wood or wattle walls and therefore have been completely lost over the centuries. Just below the castle rises the church devoted to San Leonardo and the mansion Brazza Pirzio Biroli, which was built in 1923 and designed by the well-known architect Provino Valle, on the remains of the previous building destroyed during the First World War and of which only the unfinished lateral buildings remain, surrounded by a large park full of rare plants and trees. Behind the castle, on the same hill, stands the small church of S. Michele, whose origins are well prior to the year one thousand and near which a coin of Claudius Gothicus (269-270 AD) was found. Not much, however, remains of what was once the castle rock bottom: you can still see the watchtower (whose oldest parts date back to the thirteenth century), the castled church of Sant’Andrea (that dates back to the first half of the fourteenth century) and some unfinished buildings. The walled circuits are only guessable.

Visiting hours
Sundays from 15.00 to 18.00

The Castle of Moruzzo
Coordinates: 46.1202392, 13.1235713
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

Moruzzo is one of the most beautiful locations on the hills of Friuli, and offers a panoramic balcony where the eye can range, on clear days, from the Carnic Alps, to the friulian plain and to the lagoon. Because of its geographical location, the area was inhabited since the sixth century BC, as evidenced by interesting archaeological finds around the castle and at the foot of the hill, among which there’s an old bron-
Christian crucifix. Even the name (that comes from the Latin “murus” and indicates a place “enclosed by small walls”) would seem to indicate the existence of a primitive fortified settlement of Roman origin. The hypothesis is justified by the fact that, at that time, Aquileia’s border crossed through the territories of Moruzzo and Rive d’Arcano. The importance of the town was also enhanced by the proximity to the road called “Cividina” which, departing from the ancient Forum Julii, joined the Via Concordia near Fagagna. Because of its strategic location, in the Middle Ages, in the territory of Moruzzo four castles were built. They all were characterized by different stories and related to the events occurring within the single family: the Castle of Gruagno, the Castle of Moruzzo and the two castles Brazzacco. The first document mentioning the castle of Moruzzo is dated 1161, and talks of Wraslaw de Muruz, which also appears in later documents, but already in the 13th century the castle is bestowed by the Patriarch Raimondo della Torre to Odarlico of Tricano or Arcano, founder of the family branch that soon obtained the complete lordship of the manor. The castle was besieged in 1313 by the Count of Gorizia, which forced Federico the defender, to come to terms. Some years later Domenico, called “the Mutolino”, one of the castle’s owner, tried to plot a conspiracy against his relatives, but was imprisoned. In the summer of 1419, also this manor had to surrender to the power of the Serenissima: Marco Tricano-Moruzzo refused to submit to the Republic and was accused of conniving with the Lords of Carrara against the Venetians: he was taken captive in Udine and fearing, perhaps, an escape or, more likely, a revolt, he was strangled in the night, and the sentence was carried out on the corpse, who was then beheaded. It was 1421. For his fierce loyalty to the Patriarch, and for the will of making Friuli independent, Mark is considered the first patriot of Friuli. After many ups and downs, the castle passed to the Polcenigo, and finally, in the second half of the 15th century, it was bought by the Arcoloniani, an ancient family originally from Vicenza, who provided a major restoration, since the manor was almost in ruins. Further damage to the fort were caused by the lootings and fires produced by the Turks in the invasion of 1477. On December 20, 1491 Antonio Arcoloniano obtained a loan of 100 ducats to provide for the manor’s restoration, but only twenty years later, following the popular uprising of the Shrove Thursday, which erupted in Udine between filoveneti (the Zamberlani) and the pro-imperial (Strumieri), the castle of Moruzzo was plundered by the faction loyal to Venice, to whom the Arcoloniani were loyal. The castle remained in their possession for over three centuries, until the end of the family. During this long period the castle was efficiently maintained and the feud was ruled with honesty and wisdom, favoring the settlers’ lives. The community of Moruzzo could govern itself autonomously through the assembly of heads of families, who gathered under the shade of a huge linden tree to make the decisions of common interest. The lime tree of Moruzzo, which can still be seen in the square, between the church and the castle’s village, is one of the oldest trees in Italy: it is in fact mentioned in botany texts among those with more than 700 years of life. The House of Arcoloniani died out in the 18th century, and in 1856, by female inheritance, it passed to the Codroipo. In 1866 it was assigned to Count Giovanni Groppiero of Troppenberg, a noble of the Holy Roman Empire and it remained in his family until 1953. As in many other examples in Friuli, the castle of Moruzzo has changed over the centuries, following the ups and downs of its owners, its original defensive function died out and it was turned into a prestigious noble residence. At the beginning of the 20th century, the outer walls circle, with battlements and buttresses, and the tower (which was much higher until the 17th century, and was used both as residence and as a defensive building) in which the access door opens, were still standing. Today it is almost completely gone. The access tower has been restored with Romanesque style inserts of the 19th century. The other five semicircular towers-cells, placed on the wall’s the path were built, probably on ancient
defensive stands, at the end of the 19th century. In addition to the ancient fifteenth-century residen-
tce, is still visible the beautiful building known as the “captain’s house” that probably housed the guards
that had to defend the manor. There are also the prisons and the clerk’s court. Completing the building
complex, there are the oratory of San Leonardo, rebuilt in memory of a fourteenth-century chapel, and
two seventeenth-century barns on the southern side of the castle.

The Castle of Villalta (Fagagna)
Coordinates: 46.105494, 13.116118
Zone: hill
the site is reachable by: road

The thirteenth-century castle of Villalta (the name comes from its geographical position “ high villa”,
meaning “rural village situated on a hill”), was, for many centuries, the scene of historical and legenda-
ry stories, and is perhaps one of the most beautiful castles in Friuli and certainly the most important. Al-
though many previous Roman fortifications existed in the area, the castle was probably built in the 10th
or 11th century, and appears for the first time in the chronicles of the year 1216, when, Henry the Elder,
managed to repel the soldiery of Ezzelino Romano that beset it. The family though, is first mentioned
in a 1169 document, where a certain Hericus from Villalta, of the Caporiacco, is mentioned as a witness
in a Villach act of patriarchal confirmation. The castle was often a place of fierce fighting because of its
strategic position and the turbulence of his vassals. Not surprisingly, during the fourteenth century it
was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. Henry the Elder, who in 1216 rejected the siege of the soldiers
of Vecellone da Prata, and fought for Ezzelino III da Romano, was the head of the Ghibellines in Nor-
thern Italy. Henry the Younger, in 1299, built near the castle a small monastery for the Minor Friars.
The blessed Odorico da Pordenone, original figure of ascetic - adventurer, who visited Beijing, was also
hosted there.
In the early years of the 14th century, the Count of Gorizia took possession of the castle, and Odorico
from Villalta, with much risk, managed to descend from the walls disguised as a friar to take refuge at
the lords of Camino, while nearly all the defenders were killed to avenge the death of fifty assailants.
The castle was landed, and the supplies were transported in Udine, but the Villalta got to rebuild the
castle. In 1306, during a raid in Trivignano, the Villalta and their allies burned the church with all the
fifty people who had taken refuge there. Between 1316 and 1340 Villalta has gradually battled with
Cividale, the lords of Moruzzo, of Arcano and the some relatives from Caporiacco. Finally, in 1350,
after a long series of disputes with Patriarch Bertrando St. Genesio, due to the legacy of his father,
Francesco di Villalta di Uruspergo and some of his cousins joined the conspiracy against Aquileia, which
ended tragically on June 6 in the plain of Richinvelda with his murder. This story was the coup de grace
to the family honor, because many, at the time and later on, saw in Francesco the murderer of the last
great friulan prince. Bertrando’s successor, Nicolò II of Luxembourg, punished the conspirators with
violent repressions and, on June 30, 1353, the destruction of the castle of Villalta was completed. The
same fate befell upon the house of Francesco di Vil-
lalta in Udine. Despite the prohibitions of the Board
of Udine, the castle was rebuilt and turned out to be
even more gorgeous. In 1385, it was taken by Udi-
nesi and the Venetians, which razed it to the ground
once again in six days: it was bombarded with four
mortars and the defensive works were demolished.
Indrussio Villalta was taken prisoner and a Mass was
celebrated, to thank Our Lady of Grace of Udine (the
use of firearms had just been introduced in Friuli).
These events had drained out Villalta’s resources. To
obtain a loan, by Carlo della Torre di Udine, they had to yield the whole manor to this Lombard family, antagonist of the Visconti, that arrived in Friuli in the 13th century following a defeat and suffered by the hands of the latter. The Torriani have considerably widened the castle, especially with the construction of the imposing Renaissance wing near the ancient keep. During the famous “Shrove Thursday”, on February 27, 1511, the castle was attacked by peasant bands incited by Antonio Savorgnan against the feudal and the nobles dwelling in Villalta. Tacdea della Torre e Giacoma di Colloredo, together with their children, barely found refuge in the castle belonging to the latter. The slow passing of the years, has brought a relative calm to the House, but towards the end of 1600 the name of the Torriani was once again linked to the bloody and wicked deeds of some characters. Carlo della Torre, who held prestigious honorary positions at the imperial court in Vienna, ended his days in prison for crimes in Graz. Personal interests for the inheritance, divided the three sons: the eldest son Lucio, died poisoned in Villalta, the other two fought until Girolamo, in an ambush at dusk on November 15, 1699, killed his brother Sigismondo, on the staircase leading to the main area. The latter’s son, Lucio, grew ruthless, wicked and rebellious to every law. During the second decade of the 1700s he was a protagonist of many criminal acts and the Council of Ten in Venice, on July 16, 1717, decreed the destruction of the beautiful palace that he had in Udine, and the seizure of all his other goods, including the castle, which was one of his favorite haunts. But the young Count Lucio didn’t repent and indeed, with the help of his cousin Nicolò of Strassoldo and his mother, Countess Marianna, got rid of his young and docile wife Eleonora Madrisio, who was killed in the castle of Noble. For this murder, the Venetian and Austrian authorities, by mutual agreement, enacted against him a call for capital punishment. It took two hundred soldiers, with four cannons, to catch Lucio and his accomplices, who were barricaded in a villa in Farra d’Isonzo, the three men were arrested and taken to the fortress of Gradisca d’Isonzo and there, after a public torture, beheaded on July 3, 1723. Count Lucio was buried in an unmarked grave without a funeral in the cemetery of a church in Gradisca. The family’s assets remained impounded for decades until the arrival of Napoleon. The Torriani could get them back from General Bernadotte. The castle, though, began to crumble, part of the walls and the ceilings fell and then the Counts della Torre Valvassina got rid of it. During the First World War it was the site of a Austro-Hungarian command after the Defeat of Caporetto.

The complex, which is one of the finest examples of defensive architecture existing in Friuli, is very well preserved and retains its original fortified configuration, with a double wall embattled and the Ghibelline battlements, the drawbridge, and the keep, that together constituted the ancient defensive core, are located on the highest part of the building complex. Two round towers at the sides, enclose the various buildings including a mansion of the sixteenth century with a leaning tower. The main floor, rearranged in the seventeenth century, consists of a series of frescoed halls arranged in sequence, among which we find the Hall of the patriarchs, the imperial rooms, the Badger room, and the Hall of family trees. On the ground floor there’s a beautiful kitchen. In one of the round towers there is the sixteenth-century chapel of San Michele, which preserves the beautiful altarpiece of the Madonna della Corona. The Castle of Villalta, was declared a national monument in 1974.

“Fuel of scandals, den of bandits, contrabands, safe haven of violence”; “The castle monitors alone, abandoned by men as well as events”; “Everything is ruined: the life has fled from here, driven by the horror of so many crimes”; “You will not find a trace of the legendary pitfalls, where the folk tales say the young peasant girls were being predate.”

With such gloomy filters, reporters and historians have painted the castle of Villalta from the first half of the eighteenth century until the early decades of the twentieth century, ie in the period during which it was abandoned and uninhabited, following the infamous adventure of Count Antonio Lucio della Torre which led him to the gallows at the age of 27.
The Castle of Fagagna

Coordinates: 46.114745, 13.087914
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

In a geographically important position, placed on the road that connected Julia Concordia with the Norian, lie the ruins of the castle of Fagagna (the name derives from the Latin Fagus (beech) meaning “beech forest”). They are located on a site inhabited since Roman times as it attested by various archaeological findings. Around the 8th century, in fact, there already was a fortified settlement of great strategic importance as it touched the important consular road that led from Concordia to Silanos, near the modern Artegna. In 983 a “castrum” was given by Emperor Ottone II, along with those of Udine, Braitan, Buja and Groagno to Patriarch Rodoaldo. The defensive work (governed through a dedicated steward and supported by numerous families of “habitatores” who resided within the castle’s walls and belonged to different families) has belonged to patriarch until the Venetian conquest in 1420 in which was involved, because of its strategic importance, as well as in many other conflicts that marked the history of Friuli in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1230, Siurido of Cianciano Manzano, figures as the lord of the old castle; twenty years later, Ezzelino III da Romano, Lord of the March of Treviso, who was fighting against the Patriarch Bertoldo of Andechs, occupied the feud with the complicity of the lords of Manzano and Varmo; the manor was so much damaged that in 1248 it was decided to restore it. Two years later, however, Rizzardo, rector of Fagagna, and his brother Reinardo managed, “with felony”, to introduce many enemies in the fort that hanged over the walls the insignia of Ezzelino. The Patriarch Bertoldo punished the traitors, banishing them and depriving them of all their possessions, but in 1298, Patriarch Raimondo, however, returned the feudal prerogatives to the Lords of Fagagna. The castle suffered further damage in 1304 thanks to the Count of Gorizia, who was fighting against the patriarchal power. It was again once again occupied by the Counts of Gorizia in 1313 and, in 1328, the patriarch Pagano della Torre reinforced the defenses. Twenty years later, another patriarch, Bertrando di San Genesio, held a historic meeting of the Friulian Parliament in Fagagna; among the defenders of this patriarch, who was murdered as a result of a conspiracy, figured Carlevario of Fagagna, who was taken as a prisoner on this very occasion. The castle was besieged in 1361, from September 12 to 20, by the Austrian dukes Frederick and Rudolph, who had arrived in Friuli at the head of 4000 horsemen. In 1411 the Hungarian riders of King Sigismund took and plundered Fagagna after just one day of resistance, and came back to destroy the castle twice more, in 1418 and in 1419, causing much damage and devastation. In 1420 the castle surrendered to the Venetian occupants with a dedication act to the Serenissima From that moment on, the castle’s buildings underwent a progressive deterioration, although a restoration of the defensive works was probably made in 1472 and in 1500 for fear of the Turkish cavalry’s raids. Towards the mid 15th century, a branch of the d’Arcano di Sotto family, gave birth to the House of Asquini who reigned over Fagagna for the following three centuries. Some of the surviving families remained for some time in the castle houses, other moved in the village below using for the new homes, the castle’s ruins. The castle of Fagagna was burned and looted during the popular uprising on Carnival Thursday in 1511 and in the same year, was severely damaged by the earthquake. By the 16th century the important and magnificent castle was already in ruin. Of the castle, which once included the patriarch’s palace of and many residences for the vassals, remain today nothing but the ruins of the ancient town walls (once made up
of two crowns that surrounded the hill), the village’s entrance, also called the “Synagogue” (which gave access to the centa and is the only one left of the original three), some remains of the ancient palace and a square tower, which has been heightened in recent times and converted into a bell tower. Other ruins testify the ancient rural village, among them there’s the church of San Michele, supposedly the castle’s ancient chapel, which dates back to 300, but whose dedication refers to a possible Lombard origin. Many legends say that the castle of Fagagna and that of Villalta were connected by a tunnel, in which, during the siege of Ezzelino, were hidden a golden sow with her piglets. The various versions places this magical treasure in a different location, but it was never recovered. It has been searched in the underground path between the castles of Fagagna and Villalta “sot la Torate”; in the gallery that reaches Caporiacco, near a monastery and in a mound tomb, “la tumbule di Foscan” behind the castle of Villalta.

The Castle of Caporiacco (Colloredo di Montalbano)

Coordinates: 46.1501079, 13.0879033
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

The palace overlooking the village of Caporiacco (which comes from a predial toponym, and the name of the Roman colonist Cavorius) stands on the ruins of an ancient castle destroyed and rebuilt several times over the centuries, protected by still visible buttresses, on top of a hill along the ancient Roman consular road that came from Concordia. It was probably built between 1026 and 1045, but the oldest document that talks about the Caporiacco family, which was provided, in the twelfth century, of civil and criminal authority and jurisdiction, dates back to 1112 and cites Federicus de Cauriaco as a witness of an arbitration between the bishop of Concordia Rivino and Gabriele, patriarch of Aquileia Vodolrico’s lawyer. In 1219, the castle was mentioned among the various possessions of the lords, and then counts, of Caporiacco, one of the oldest and most distinguished families in Friuli, who had jurisdiction over the castels of Villalta, Invillino, Tarcento and Castelporpetto. In that year, the castle was used in the war by the League of Treviso, which gave rise to the armed struggle between the Ghibelline party (which included the Caporiaccos, who wanted the feuds to be free of patriarchal dominance) and the Patriarch Berthold of Andechs. Peace was concluded, thanks to the mediation of Duke Leopold of Austria, on May 21, 1221, in the church of San Lorenzo in Caporiacco in presence of Patriarch Berthold himself. It was not a longlasting truce though, because in 1248, the rebellious spirit of this family led Detalmo of Caporiacco to ally with Ezzelino III from Romano, head of the Ghibelline party in Upper Italy, against the patriarch Gregorio of Montelongo. The fleeting fortune of Ezzelino waned soon, and Detalmo was forced to surrender to the patriarch, who alienated his possessions and destroyed the castle, which was later rebuilt. In 1300, the Patriarch Pietro Gera gave the castle as a fief to Lodovico and Randolfini of Villalta Caporiacco, which made further improvements. Only ten years later, Enrico II, Count of Gorizia, General Captain of Friuli, attacked the Caporiacco because they supported the Republic of Venice: Lodovico was imprisoned and the castle was set on fire. Promptly repaired again to fulfill his military duties, it was once again damaged by the patriarchal militias of Nicolò of Luxembourg in 1351, as part of the reprisals against the murderers of his predecessor Bertrando of San Genesio. The feud was then occupied in 1419 by the troops of the Republic of Venice. Like many other castles, the fort of Caporiacco suffered many damages and lootings during the riots of 1511, by the Zambarlani faction of Ve-
netian policymakers, led by the noble Antonio Savorgnan. The earthquake that followed shortly after, destroyed it permanently. In more recent times, the remains of the old castle were reused to erect new houses, erasing the defensive structures. These buildings were heavily damaged by the earthquake of 1976 that brought the entire west side down, leaving only a tower standing, however the prior reconstructions and requalification had already transformed the ancient castle in a cluster of private houses, almost completely erasing the old signs of feudal architecture. The ancient manor’s figure is now traced only by the remains of the overall complex, while some walls and buttresses, placed to the north-east, are the only remains of the ancient fortifications.

The Castle of Colloredo di Montalbano
Coordinates: 46.166487, 13.138795
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

In 1025, the noble Liabordo, lord of Waldsee in Lower Austria obtained, in exchange for the services rendered to the emperor Conrad II "The Salian", during the invasion of Italy, the right to erect a castle on the hill of Mels. This fort was then documented in 1302, when William of Waldsee, Viscount of Mels, obtained by the patriarch of Aquileia Ottobono de Razzi, Lord of the entire Friuli, the permission to build on top of this hill a new castle “with solid walls, moats and belts” near the old manor of Mels, which was not big enough to contain the power of the family who controlled the thriving market of Venzone and a long series of feuds between the mountains and the hills. The work was completed, after the death of Guglielmo, by his three sons: Asquino, Bernard and Vicardo, who first assumed the name of Colloredo Mels Waldsee. Built for defensive purposes, in the middle of the feud as stable and safe abode, was one of the most magnificent castles of Friuli since its inception and is a typical example of residential castle. Many were the struggles fought inside the fort by its bellicose owners against the patriarchs, the Counts of Gorizia, the Camineri, the Savorgnan, the Torriani. In 1313 the castle underwent a strong assault by the troops of the Count of Gorizia, led by General Pietrapelosa. The castle resisted the attacks for a long time, but was caught and landed on June 21, 1315. In later years it was reconstructed and the Colloredo supported various clashes with the lords of San Daniele.

They later joined the Udinesi league against the patriarch Filippo d’Alencon. The castle was validly defended in 1385, when it was attacked by the troops of Francesco da Carrara, in aid of the patriarch. The lords of Colloredo also tried to defend the fief from the occupation of the Venetian Republic, looking for space in the hinterland of Friuli, but on May 16, 1420 had to surrender to the troops of Venice, to whom they later swore allegiance, seeing confirmed the feud’s investiture. In 1511, year of the peasant revolts in Friuli, the castle was burn and destroyed by local people, instigated by the faction of the Zambarlani, as opposed to the so-called “Strumieri”, close, like the Colloredo, to the German Emperor. To the damages caused by angry peasants, were added for those caused by the terrible earthquake that destroyed Friuli a few months later. Since those times the walls underwent several changes that helped transform the image of the castle. The famous frescoes in the studio, that is located in the west tower date back to the half 500s were made by Giovanni da Udine, considered the greatest painter in the region. He focused on a rich set of mythological themes, surrounded by the characteristic “grotesque” decoration. In 1584 the panoramic south road was opened. Of particular value are the architectural elements that make up the whole
The imposing entrance tower, or tower-gate, which recalls the fourteenth century, stood in defense of the castle and its inhabitants, but in the 600s it lost its defensive function, the drawbridge was replaced by a brick one, and was enhanced by a panoramic loggia on the top floor; the construction of the clock and the sundial date back to the eighteenth century. The keep, built on top of the hill, is made up of a complex of medieval-like buildings, arranged in a ring around a central courtyard. The feud’s lord lived there with his family, and on the lower floors there were the guardhouse and armory. Inside there were several boardrooms and residence chambers; beside the frescoed studio, you could see a sixteenth century room, known as “the Cardinal”, the evocative “Hall of Justice” and the room that belonged to the famous writer and partisan Ippolito nievo, author of “Confessions of an Italian”.

Two large wings guarded by two towers were an integral part of the castle as well as the “red house”, so called because of the exterior color that distinguished it from other buildings. It was a four floor rectangular building built in the fourteenth century near the southern boundary, and near the eastern tower. The lower floors were originally used as a store and a cellar, while the upper lounge housed a the precious coffered ceiling. On May 6, 1976 Friuli was hit by an earthquake that had disastrous effects on people and things, and the Castle of Colloredo, the symbol of Friuli and one of the landmarks of the history of Friuli, was left only with the west wing; the constructions that rose on the eastern side were destroyed to the ground. Today, after almost 40 years since that tragic event, the renovations are soon to be terminated.

The oldest document that testifies the existence of the castle of Mels, is a paper of 1056, concerning the annexed chapel of St. Andrea. The construction of the castle dates back a few decades earlier, when the noble Liabordo, lord of Waldsee, in Lower Austria, received, in exchange for the services he rendered to the emperor Conrad II “The Salian” during his invasion of Italy, the right to erect its own fort on the hill. The location, and then the feud, in the municipality of Colloredo di Monte Albano, took its name from the Latin fitotoponimo “malum” or “melum”, which means an area planted with apple trees. In 1262 the castle was partially destroyed by a fire, but it was promptly reconstructed and the properties of Duri-go II of Mels were immediately shared so that the fort could be assigned to his son Enrico. In the following century, Durogo of Mels and two of his grandchildren have allied with the Patriarchal Vicar, the Count of Gorizia, and Udinesi against Rizzardo da Camino and in 1310 they were given the task of defending the ford on the Tagliamento and keep the castle available for the Allies. In 1352 it was partially destroyed by Patriarch Nicolò of Luxembourg during the repression of the noble compromises in the murder of his predecessor, Bertrando de Saint Genies, including Durogo and Bosso of Mels. The reconstruction followed but, when interests and alliances changed, the castle gradually lost importance. Even though the historian Girolamo di Porcia, in 1567, called the fort “Melso castle destroyed”, it is reasonable to assume that different parts of the building were still left standing when, about two hundred years later, the Venetian lieutenant Alvise Mocenigo decreed the demolition of what had become an unsafe building, that did not deserved to be restored. What remains of the entire fort, suggests a quadrangular castle, located on a hill north of the tenement, defended by a crenellated wall, a tower and surrounded by three terraced balconies, from which it was possible to appreciate the houses built in the fourteenth century as a reinforcement of the curtain. In 1976, after the earthquake, only the square plan tower, called “the Torate “, of the ancient castle remained. It was partly rebuilt in
1995 with the original stones and is located on the northern edge of the flat pad on the path of what once was the inner wall, with which it formed a barrier, and the church of Sant’Andrea which was consecrated in 1056. In 1597, it was equipped with an altarpiece dedicated to Saints Andrew, Matthew and Jerome, and built by Gasparo Narvesa from Pordenone, which is now in the parish church of All Saints. From ancient documents we know that, in 1912, the church was impoverished and desecrated, and finally abandoned in 1972.

The Castle of Buja
Coordinates: 46.2283030, 13.1526947
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: trail

The origins of Buja (from the medieval word Boga or Buga, meaning “hollow” or “depression”) are very old, as testified by some castellieri found in the municipality’s territory where prehistoric men, coming from the plain below, hid in times of need. In the Roman era, the Castrum Buga, guarded an important road junction of the morainic amphitheater of Tagliamento, and was part of a complex system of fortifications used both for defense and warning (through mirrors and fires) for impending enemy raids. At the Roman Empire’s end, the Lombard domination was integrated and merged with the previous ecclesiastical system. A Lombard fortress probably arose in Buja, while on the middle hill, the S. Laurinz, was built the mother church of the parish that bears the same name. The first reliable documentation on this site dates back to 792, when the name Boga is mentioned referring to the church of San Lorenzo in Monte, located within the walls of the ancient manor. In that year, Charlemagne granted the castle church to the Patriarch Paulinus II. The castle, one of the oldest in Friuli, is documented in 983, when Otto II of Saxony confirmed the possession of five friulan castles to the Patriarch of Aquileia Rodoaldo: Fagagna, Gruagno, Udine, Baitan and Buja. After a long period of almost uninterrupted belonging to the church of Aquileia, in 1194, the “Castrum” Buia was inhabited by Johannis de Buga. Afterwards the gastaldia was sold or assigned by the Patriarch to different families, excluding, though, feudal investitures or rights of inheritance. In 1265 it was attributed to the lords of Arcano, but on April 14 in the same year, they gave it back to the patriarch Gregory of Montelongo that granted it to the lords of Villalta. However, in 1267 the property was once again redeemed by the patriarch, for the sum of 2300 pounds. Various documents testify that the gastaldia was transferred to different families, in exchange of an appropriate compensation, or assigned for particular merits. In 1312 the patriarch Ottobono gave the castle to Federico Prampero, but in the later years the manor suffered the consequences of the wars against the Counts of Gorizia, and it bore two sieges in 1313 and 1315. In 1341 the Patriarch Bertrando of Saint Genies granted the gastaldia to Vicardo of Colloredo who committed to the castle’ restoration “ruined because of its antiquity.” Following the new disputes between the Count of Gorizia and the Patriarch, the fortress was besieged twice more, first in 1345 and then, for a very long time, in 1350. Twenty years later, the Patriarch Marquardo gave the castle to Francesco Savorgnan and his heirs, with the understanding that, at its own expense, he should “strengthen the tower and finish building’s wall.” The family soon argued with the Patriarchate and in 1385 and was deprived of the castle, to own it again after the patriarch’s death, who was killed in a conspiracy on October 13, 1394. During the war between the Emperor Sigismund of Germany and the Republic
of Venice, in 1413 the estates owned by Savorgnan were occupied by imperial troops and the gastaldia of Buja was once again united to the City of Gemona. Five years later, on November 20, 1418, the patriarch Louis of Teck, committed against Venice, sold the estate and gastaldia to Gregory Arcoloniani from Udine, but by that time the manor was already “quite ruined”. In 1420, with the submission of Friuli to the power of Venice, the castle belonged once again to the Savorgnans, who kept it until 1797, when, after the fall of Venice, jurisdictions were abolished. During this long period the manor was not spared from looting and occupations. The 1511 earthquake contributed to the castle’s destruction, whose ruins were used by the inhabitants of nearby villages to rebuild their homes.

Currently you can still see some fragments of the ancient fortress, scattered over the hills of San Sebastiano, San Lorenzo and Mount Zoc. The main elements of the walls structure are located near the parish church of San Lorenzo, which uses as bell tower one of the castle perimetal towers.

The Castle of Susans (Majano)

Coordinates: 46.195046, 13.052109
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

Since ancient times, the hill of Susans (from the Latin “Sosius”) was an excellent lookout point to guard both the near Roman road, that connected Pinzano with San Daniele, and the fords on the Tagliamento. The hill was certainly the site of a Roman fort and later a medieval fortress, but the castle is mentioned for the first time only in the 1036, as “Villa de Suzan”, when the Patriarch Poppone donated to the nuns of Santa Maria of Aquileia a piece of land in villa de Suzen. In 1199, in the foundation act of the Hospital of St. Tomaso, Artuico of Varmo gave to the Knights of San Giovanni the goods that he and his predecessors had in Susans, reserving for himself the use of a manse and the jurisdiction over the area. Already subject to the Church of Aquileia, the feud was assigned in 1275 to Tommaso of San Daniele. In 1304 the castle was enlarged and strengthened by the new owners and Federico Asquino of Varmo who worked to “to give the castle a beautiful shape.” Involved in the struggles between the patriarch Ottobono de Razzi (1302-1315) and the Count of Gorizia, Federico of Pers, who was the captain of Udine, was attacked in the castle of Susans on November 2, 1313 and was forced to come to terms. The agreements were not respected, so, two years later, on June 19, 1315, having made prisoners the three sons of Frederick, the Goriziano destroyed the castle. Its reconstruction was soon made.

The castle, however, due to the lack of successors of Frederick, was partially acquired by the lords of Colloredo with a series of acts that have continued until 1347. It should be noted that the acquisition of Susans had taken place shortly after the nobles of Colloredo had founded the eponymous castle. In this way, the family, with Susans, Mels and Colloredo, the respective castles, villages and rights, created a power space on the way to Germany and on Ledra River, rich in windmills, from where it was easier to check the fords on the Tagliamento. In April 1350, due to the rivalry between the supporters of Patriarch Bertrand and his opponents, the castle of Susans, now a fief of the Colloredo, was attacked and landed by the militias from Udine, Gemona and their allies. It’s very likely that the nobles of Colloredo then proceeded to restore the place, since, between the end of 1300 and 1415, Susans, with its jurisdiction, was once again one of the voices of the Parliament
of Friuli. New wars, however, decreed the end of the medieval fortifications. In 1511, like most of the castles in the area, Susans was the scene of bloody battles between pro-empire and pro-Venice factions, which resulted in the famous peasant revolt of the "Shrove Thursday" and was set on fire. Two years later it was assaulted again and damaged by the troops of Emperor Maximilian, fighting against the power of Venice. However, the long endured struggles and the various historical events, in the end, made it uninhabitable by the nobles of Colloredo, who preferred to reside in Colloredo. Between 1631 and 1640, Fabrizio di Colloredo Mels, Marquis of Santa Sofia and steward of the court of Tuscany, began the work that led to the definition of the present castled villa, following the architectural tradition of the Medici’s court where Colloredo had grown and worked. The construction scheme of the castle of Susans repeats some military architecture models of the late Middle Ages, but especially of Renaissance civil architecture and of the 17th century. The main building has a square plan with four corner mighty towers that reinforce the edges. Inside, the halls have various sizes, and are decorated with furniture, paintings and prints. Of the ancient defensive core remains very little.

The Castle of Arcano (Rive d'Arcano)

Coordinates: 46.142368, 13.036439
Zone: hill
Reachability site: road

The place where the castle of Arcano arises, was certainly the site of a prehistoric settlement. The present castle was part of a defensive system, that consisted also of a second manor, now disappeared, in Arcano Inferiore. The fort stood in place of the present church of San Mauro on the Corno's shores, where once lied a Roman country mansion. The reason why the lower castle disappeared is still uncertain: perhaps it was demolished by order of the Patriarch Nicholas of Luxembourg, to avenge against the d'Arcano, who had participated in the conspiracy against the Patriarch Bertrand of San Genesio, or perhaps it was destroyed by the Turks during the their raids in the late fifteenth century. The current castle, built in a strategic and more secure position, arose out of an earlier fortified building perhaps prior to the tenth century. The manor belonged for centuries to the illustrious family of the d'Arcano, whose glory began with Leandro de Cornu (named after the stream below) owner of a castle near the river that bears the same name. His son Ropretto (1167-1211) gave birth to the Tricanos (hence d'Arcano), so called in the Middle Ages because of the three black dogs depicted on the family crest, to symbolize loyalty to the Emperor and to the Patriarch of Aquileia. The d'Arcano were one of the most important families of Friuli: they sat in the Parliament, they inherited the offices of marshals and standard-bearers of the Church of Aquileia and they also boasted the possession of the castles of Monterelea, Buia, Moruzzo in Friuli, and that of Castelrotto Istria. The members of this family judged various contentions of the time and were involved in all the feudal struggles that shook the Patriarchate between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: they sided either with Aquileia (in 1299 Leandro d'Arcano had to give to the Patriarch's enemies horses and banners), or with the Count of Gorizia (because of this alliance, the fortress suffered many attacks by the Udinesi in 1349, the Carrara in 1385 and the Gastaldo of San Daniele in 1396). In 1420 the castle passed under the rule of
the Venetian Republic, but, in 1429, the Serenissima gave it back to Gabriele d’Arcano as part of the assets of the castle of Moruzzo, which had been confiscated some years earlier. In 1511, during the riots of the last Thursday before Lent and the clashes between the parties of Zamberlani (filoveneti) and Strumieri (pro-imperial), the castle was looted and set on fire: while Giovanni Nicolò, Lord of Arcano, fled in Spilimbergo, the manor’s inhabitants, and especially the women, had to endure the harassments and abuses of the angry peasants. Although it was renovated in various times and despite the tower’s loss, probably severed at the end of the sixteenth century, the castle retains its picturesque medieval aspect. It has the three-round crenellated Guelph walls, a patrol path, the characteristic double portaia tower and watchtowers, the remains of a drawbridge and a majestic tower (one of the biggest in Friuli) topped with an elegant row of mullioned, late-romans windows. On the inside, the manor looks like a country mansion: there’s a room frescoed by Andrea Urbani which depicts rustic and bucolic themes and other various rooms with fireplaces and portals created by Raffaello de’ Raffaelli. Inside the complex you will also notice the small church devoted to Santa Maria della Neve, whose construction dates back to the first half of the fourteenth century. The Arcano castle is linked to the mysterious life of Francesco d’Arcano, who married Todeschina Prampero in 1635, who was killed as a result of stab of jealousy. Todeschina, just before dying, wrote his initials with blood on a castle’s wall, which remained visible until the earthquake of 1976. The body was walled up by her husband and was found in the early twentieth century, during some restoration work.

The Castle of Ragogna
Coordinates: 46.187641, 12.961055
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: road

The Castle of Ragogna, (the locality’s name is of uncertain origin, perhaps Illyrian, but certainly derives from the Latin name Ragonius) is located on a high peak, which dominates a large part of the valley of the Tagliamento, and is probably one of the oldest forts in Friuli. The manor was built on the “Reuniae castrum”, a Roman fort that guarded the ford near the local Roman road that, from Concordia Sagittaria led to Osoppo. As a matter of fact many rustic villas of that age remain intact. The fortress is mentioned in the 6th century, with the ancient name of Reunia by Venanzio Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, and is also mentioned by the historian Paolo Diacono, in relation to the invasion of Friuli by the Avars in 610: the king of these people had defeated and killed the Lombard Duke Gisulfo and precisely from the castle of Reunia, in 693, came Aufrido to invade and usurp the dukedom, while Rodoaldo, Duke of Friuli, was absent from Cividale. Further information about the castle are missing, but we know that before 1122, the territory and Ragogna, belonged to the Dukes of Carinthia of the Eppensteins house. The castle eventually passed, in the same year, to the Styrian margraves of the House of Trungau. In 1218 the Lords of Ragogna obtained the fief from the Babembers and thus were confirmed by the patriarchs of Aquileia. Thanks to his friendship with the patriarch, the eldest of the Ragogna had the “jus ferculi” right, namely the right to remove from the patriarchal table the food that had been particularly appreciated. A document for the division of property, dated 1260, allows us you to know what the structure was like and how was it equipped, to protect its housing, by two subsequent rounds of walls. In 1268, this structure had to endure the harassment of the troops sent by the Parliament to
punish Siurido Ragogna who had betrayed and killed the bishop of Concordia. The fortress resisted the siege and the troops were forced to retreat. That was also the most beautiful moment for the fortress and it coincided with the period in which the Patriarch of Aquileia warred against the dukes of Austria. The Ragogna though, sided with the latter, setting up raids very similar to banditry. Nevertheless the Patriarch managed to win, and in 1365 gained the castle. It was during this period that the Lords of Ragogna have purchased a bad reputation for their harassment against the common people, and the patriarch’s militia, to reduce their pretensions. The earthquake of 1348, however, “destroyed the two towers of the castle that fell, with a huge noise, in the underlying Tagliamento”. In 1365, Francesco Savorgnano, to bring back to obedience to the Church the Ragogna, who stood up for the Dukes of Austria, led the army under the castle and laid siege. The defense was strenuous, but the besieged, reduced in number and exhausted by hunger, had to give up and in the same year and signed a pact of devotion. In the 15th century the castle of Ragogna became a possession of the Serenissima. In 1503 the castle and lands were bought by the Counts of Purilium (now Porcia) that have repaired the fort and made it a place of rest, fishing and hunting, suitable for guests. Soon after, the manor declined so much that in 1567, Girolamo di Porcia described it as: “Ragogna is a ruined castle, but there are many relics of towers, houses, a church and a tower where the lord’s room used to be.” In 1511 and in 1560 two events occurred that finished the castle, which was previously abandoned and then devastated by the earthquake and a fire. In 1787 it was the residence of Count Federico of Porcia, but in the last years of the century the manor was completely abandoned and neglected. 1866 marks the passage to the Kingdom of Italy and the hill, on which the Castle of Ragogna stands, regained its primary strategic importance. In 1880, new defensive systems were installed and other fortifications were erected. During WWII, the area was given a new destination because of the very hard clashes that took place in this area during the Liberation. Passed by the testament of Alfonso Count of Porcia to the City of Ragogna, the castle was badly damaged in the 1976 earthquake. The beautiful works of restoration, which lasted several years, gave the castle the look it had in its last phase, in the 17th century. It is now possible to admire the city walls, that originally surrounded the entire hill, the northern gate, the keep and some other towers, the internal courtyard has a well and a series of buildings which were originally housed the cellars, prisons, kitchens and stables.

The Castle of Flagogna (Forgaria del Friuli)
Coordinates: 46.2136369, 12.9682338
Zone: hill
The site is reachable by: trail

Questa territorio, abitato anticamente da popolazioni Celto-Carniche, fu importante incrocio viario tra l’area, once inhabited by Celtic-Carnic populations, was an important road junction between the Po Valley and the Norian along the river Arzino valley and through the valley of the Three Towns Lake. Along these paths, the ancient Celts were followed by the Romans, the Lombards and the Carolingians. The place’s strategic and commercial importance is testified by the numerous castles built in medieval times over similar previous defensive and control structures. The existence of two distinct Flagogna castles, located on the same mountain, is documented in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by various deeds. Almost certainly, of Lombard origin, the oldest fort, known as “Castelvecchio”, is mentioned for the first time, when Ulderico of Attimis, the Marquis of Tuscany, in 1170, listed all his possessions to the Church of Aquileia. Later documents confirm that the endowments, the sales, the weddings and any other matters related to the lords of Flagogna (it is assumed that the name came from the Latin “fulgur”) were precisely regulated “iure marchionatus Attemps” according to the law of
the Marquis of Attimis. For over a century, we have no precise information about the castle, but a document from the 1270 suggests that in the meantime another building was erected: that is to say, the “Ca-
stelnuovo” also known as “Castle of St. John” from the homonymous chapel built within the castle’s pe-
rimeter, to the east of the oldest building of which, already in 1311, remained only one tower. Another
document shows that, in 1332, the widow of the Lord of Flagogna, sold her property to Hector Sa-
vorgnan. Castelnuovo was severely damaged by the earthquake of 1348 (that “with three shakes, more
and more violent “ destroys the entire manor) and rebuilt using the ancient castle’s materials, obviously
gone completely in ruins. In 1372, an act was drawn up “in the great room of the new building” and ten
years later it was drawn up another one “in a stove between the tower and the church of St. John”. Af-
ter the earthquake, therefore, the castle complex was not only restored, but also rebuilt and enlarged.
Conquered by the Udinesi in 1412, was given to the nobles Valentinis that dismantled it before handing
it to the Venetian Republic in 1420. It was then re-
turned to the Savorgnan and was further damaged by the 1511 earthquake, and mentioned among the
destroyed castles. It was completely abandoned in ruins because of its poor strategic importance.
Castelnuovo was a well- defended building due to its location on a hill. It is surrounded by defensive
walls provided with slots, and a portal that opens on the north side; internally there are the remains of
the keep and the small sixteenth-century church of San Giovanni, which is a renovation of the oldest
chapel.

Texts by Enza Chiara Lai  (bibliographical references on www.ciaoin.com)