

1. CIVITELLA D'ARNA HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

ARNA IN PRE-ROMAN AND ETRUSCAN TIMES

The hill on which Civitella d'Arna sits, at an altitude of 335 m a.s.l., is marked by the confluence of two streams: the Rio Piccolo and the Fosso del Bagno, and overlooks the valley between the Tiber and Chiascio rivers. The placename "Arna" has paleo-Umbrian origins and means "running water". The site was in use by humans between the Lower Palaeolithic period and the Iron Age, culminating in an Umbrian *oppidum* with a fortified position in pre-Roman times. It was probably a place of worship with links to health, as suggested by bronze votive statues that show figures praying or making offerings, which have been dated to between the 6th and 4th centuries BC and some of which are preserved in the Bellucci Collection (at the Archaeological Museum of Perugia). The progressive expansion of Etruscan Perugia towards the east, seeking control of the Tiber Valley and the Apennine passes, brought Arna under the political and cultural influence of the Etruscans, as recorded by Pliny the Elder (Nat. Hist. III, 3, 13) who also mentions three hundred Umbrian *oppida* conquered by the Etruscans. Perugia's Archaeological Museum has two *kelebai*, krater-style vases with columnar handles, for use as funerary ash urns; a bronze stamoid *situla* in fragments; and two antefixes of architectural origin, possibly from a temple. Of particular interest are the remains of bronze funerary beds from tombs where people from the upper social classes were buried, featuring two pairs of moulded feet, two armrests decorated with stunning dogs' heads and carvings of cherubs, and a fulcrum decorated with a horse protome and a bust of Dionysus. The same tombs also contained rich Hellenistic furnishings, including two silver unguentariums or oil containers, and a silver *stiletto* dagger. During the late Hellenistic period, tombs for cremated remains began to appear, which were found to contain ash urns with sloping lids or lids depicting a recumbent figure (the Perugian style), while others had a high cuspidate lid (the style common in the Umbrian area).

ARNA IN ROMAN TIMES

As ancient Umbria and Etruria gradually fell within the Roman sphere, Arna found itself involved in military clashes between the anti-Roman coalition and the Roman army. In fact, during the Third Samnite War in the winter of 296 BC, the Romans made camp at the Arna *oppidum* (Livy X, 25, 4) before the Battle of Sentinum. This was the battle which would mark the defeat and eventual decline of the entire Etruscan people, and the unstoppable growth of Roman power. Following the Social War (89 BC), the territory of Perugia was absorbed into Roman land, and at the end of the civil wars, the Perusine War (41 BC) saw Perugia defeated, burned and sacked and its territory drastically reduced. The fate of Arna, which had first been interwoven with that of Perugia, now depended entirely on Rome. During the course of the first century BC, it became a Roman municipality governed by a *duoviri iure dicundo* (a two-person magistracy) and assigned to the Clustumina tribe in the Regio VI of Augustan Rome, as documented by Roman epigraphs held at the Archaeological Museum of Perugia. The high point of Arna's urban development was to come during the early centuries of the Roman Empire, atop the Civitella hill, where the castle was later built. Two enormous **cisterns** survive as testament to the importance of this Roman municipality, contained within the ex-Palazzo Sozi at the castle and in the ex-monastery of the *Padri Filippini* order, both constructed using the technique known as *opus caementicium* (Roman concrete). One takes the form of a huge room, 24 m in length and visible from the outside, divided internally by a central wall which creates two long communicating areas, covered over by two

vaulted arches built into the dividing wall, which is clad with waterproof plaster. The other is visible from the front, has dimensions of 15.49 m by 19.63 m, and includes eight areas (of which only six can currently be visited) arranged along a dividing wall, with vaulted arches. Additionally, the remains of a spa building, decorated with mosaics, marble furnishings and statues, were also found during excavation works on the hillside. Unfortunately, no proper scientific excavation has ever been made.

ANTIQUARIUM: THE LOST CITY OF ARNA

The Antiquarium began life as the idea of pupils and teachers at the Ripa middle school and was opened in 2013. The artefacts it contains come from the territory of Arna and shed light on various aspects of life in the Roman municipality of Arna, around the 1st-2nd centuries AD. The territory of Arna was organised on the basis of rural settlements scattered across the flat and fertile countryside through which the tributaries of the Tiber and Chiascio rivers flow. In fact, *villae rusticae* or country villas have been rediscovered which were once part of imperial *praedia* or farmlands. In the absence of excavations, nothing can now be seen of the temple dedicated to Fortuna, described by the Perugian scholar G.B. Vermiglioli and attested to by the votive epigraphs to Fortuna kept at the Archaeological Museum.

The prosperity of the municipality of Arna is also demonstrated by the stunning bronze head of Hypnos, held at the British Museum in London, a priceless Roman copy of an original Greek statue in the style of Praxiteles. Many other fragments from marble statues, architectural adornments and ceramics, as well as coins and various materials discovered both on the hillside and in the area of Civitella which have found their way into private or miscellaneous collections, reveal further details of the Roman era. Traces of the centre of Arna exist up to the beginning of the 6th century BC, as demonstrated by late Roman coins and the foundation of Arna as an autonomous diocese in 499.

ARNA IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

The Perugian-style Civitella d'Arna castle was first built towards the end of the 13th century, probably in 1297; over time, it was often involved in wars between Perugia and Assisi and was badly damaged. Around 1350, the entire townland was gifted to the Sant'Emiliano Monastery, which was the leading house of that monastic order before it was suppressed. Towards 1600, the residence annexed to the San Filippo Neri oratory and the surrounding lands were inherited by Abbot Sozio Sozi, with the entire area taking on the name Civitella Sozi. In 1737 the last of the Sozi family, Demetria di Aurelio, married the knight Stefanino Cosimo Degli Azzi, of the noble family from Arezzo. The castle and its properties then passed to the Genoese Spinola family and finally to the Baldelli family, who are its current owners. The castle, which has undergone various restoration projects over time, holds within its walls the parish church of San Lorenzo, which is home to some important paintings. These include *Il Gonfalone*, attributed to Bartolomeo Caporali (late 15th c.), a painting by the Perugian artist Domenico Bruschi, a 19th-century crucifix, a Deruta ceramic tile from the late 1500s, and a fresco attributed to Giannicola di Paolo, a student of Perugino. Civitella D'Arna's history and appearance underwent another new twist during the 19th century thanks to the work of a parish priest, Don Francesco Baldelli, who oversaw the construction of the bell tower and reshaped the appearance of the village. The three bronze bells, weighing 536, 264 and 127 kg, were made in 1850 and are the stars of an immersive historical re-enactment that takes place in the village every year.