

# Discovering Italy's Sangro Valley

## an exploration of the region's archaeology, nature, and culture

14 nights/15 days

This archaeological excursion will take place in the Sangro Valley in the Abruzzo province of eastern Italy; it combines intensive work on an archaeological excavation—the Sangro Valley Project's sites on Monte Pallano—with visits to some of the most beautiful cultural and natural attractions in the Sangro Valley (Val di Sangro). The Abruzzo region is located to the east of Rome and extends from the Apennines to the Adriatic Sea; it encompasses nearly 11,000 square kilometers (three-quarters the size of Connecticut) of coastal areas, hilly uplands and mountains. Known as the “green province,” the Abruzzo is home to some of Italy's oldest National Forests and Parks. It has a long history of human habitation, dating from the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods through today.

### Introduction to the Sangro Valley Project

The Sangro Valley Project was established in 1994 by John Lloyd (Oxford University), Neil Christie (Leicester University), and Amalia Faustoferri (Italian Archaeological Superintendency). Since Lloyd's untimely death in 1999, a new Anglo-American team (Susan Kane, Oberlin College and Ed Bispham, Oxford University) has been formed to continue operations in the region ([www.sangro.org](http://www.sangro.org)). The Project's aim has been to study society, economy, and settlement change within the context of a Mediterranean river valley system—the Sangro River valley in the territory of the ancient Samnites. Using both intensive and extensive archeological survey, the aim of the Project is to assess human impact on, and transformation of, the Sangro Valley between the prehistoric and Medieval periods. Since 2000, the Sangro Valley Project has been working with the USDA Forest Service and the Italian Archaeological Superintendency on a number of collaborative projects, such as this excursion and the creation of the Monte Pallano archaeological park. The USDA Forest Service also serves the Italian Archaeological Superintendency as an advisor for an emerging integrated plan for sustainable development using cultural heritage and environmental resources to attract cultural tourism.

The Sangro River begins in the mountainous upland plateau of the Apennines of central Italy (now the modern provinces of the Abruzzo and the Molise, an area that in part corresponds to the territory of ancient Samnium) and flows east to the Adriatic coast. Surprisingly, large parts of ancient Samnium remain relatively unknown. Portrayed in the Roman historical record as a culturally isolated area, the region's reputation as the epitome of ‘backwoods’ Italy has persisted into modern times. Discoveries by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Abruzzo and the Sangro Valley Project have demonstrated that this area of Samnium, particularly from the Iron Age through the Roman periods, was a greater participant in the broader processes that shaped ancient Italy than had been previously thought.



Overview of the excavation area on Monte Pallano

The Sangro Valley Project is currently focusing its work around Monte Pallano. A dominating feature in the Sangro River middle valley's landscape—Monte Pallano—is clearly a key to the understanding of the middle Sangro Valley. Long known for its huge megalithic walls, Monte Pallano was the principal center for a multi-focal nucleated settled environment from the early Iron Age until the High Empire, with sporadic activity continuing in the Middle Ages. Over the two past decades, the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Abruzzo has excavated a substantial complex of public buildings on Monte Pallano. Since 1999, the Sangro Valley Project has uncovered evidence for the temenos of a sanctuary of unexpected wealth and sophistication nearby. The emerging archaeological evidence on the mountain confirms Lloyd's hypothesis that Monte Pallano was an important town (oppidum) or regional center (pagus). Pallano is the site of a new archaeological park designed to promote community-based tourism as part of a larger effort to support sustainable regional economic development.

There are still major questions to be answered. Monte Pallano was an important feature in the ritual and territorial landscape of the ancient Samnites. The Project now seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of this complex two-valley system and to reconstruct the region's ancient cultural and environmental landscape.

### Introduction to the Val di Sangro

The planned touring itinerary will introduce you to the three areas of the Val di Sangro: the mountainous upland region of the Maiella massif and the National Parks, the middle valley where the Monte Pallano excavations are located, and the coastal plain, famous for its traditions of fishing and sea-trade. Because of the richness of its natural and cultural heritage, the Abruzzo is considered an “open air” museum. The region is noted for its low population density, geographical isolation, its long history of human habitation, and its remarkably unspoiled environment.

The countryside is dotted with small towns—on mountain tops or nestled in valleys—that are a testament to the strong and enduring character of the local people. “Forza ma gentile” or “Strong but kindly” is how the Abruzzese people describe themselves. The province is noted for its animal husbandry (good meat and cheese products) and agriculture (excellent wines and grain to make the famous Abruzzese pasta). Abruzzese cooking is one of the most famous regional cuisines in Italy, noted for the simple but hearty character of its dishes and the use of traditionally made local ingredients.

## Itinerary: Archaeological Work Program and Touring

### 9 July (Saturday)– day 1

Arrive in Rome. Transfer from Fiumicino Airport to the Satellite Palace Hotel in Roma Lido. Afternoon at leisure. Evening introductory lecture.

### 10 July (Sunday) – day 2

You will be driven by coach from the hotel in Roma Lido to the hotel Colle del Lago in Pietraferrazana, a Medieval town in the middle Sangro Valley and on the edge of the Lago di Bomba (Bomba Lake). Along the way you will visit the city of Chieti, the capital of the province, perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Adriatic. Some of the Roman town is still visible, including two temples and a well-preserved theatre, into whose side has been built a state-of-the-art interactive museum on the history of Chieti—the Museo di Civitella. We will also visit the Museo Archeologico to see the “Warrior of Capestrano” statue and other important archaeological finds from the region.

08:30 - depart Rome  
11:30 - Chieti Museums  
14:00 - lunch on Autostrada (at Autogrille)  
16:00 - check-in at Hotel Colle del Lago and leisure  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 11 July (Monday) – day 3

In the morning, there will be a visit to the Monte Pallano site and in the afternoon an introductory lecture on the Sangro Valley Project.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - visit to Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - introductory lecture  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 12 July (Tuesday) – day 4

In the morning, begin archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 13 July (Wednesday)– day 5

Archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 14 July (Thursday) – day 6

Archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 15 July (Friday) – day 7

Excursion to the seaside city of Pescara to visit the Museo delle Genti d’Abruzzo (Museum of the People of the Abruzzo). This lovely new museum has a range of exhibits that explore daily life in the Abruzzo from prehistory up to today. There will also be a visit to the Abbey of S. Giovanni in Venere and the Documentation Center on the “trabocco” fishing platform. A special dinner at one of Pescara’s fine seafood restaurants will complete the day

08:30 - breakfast  
09:30 - depart for Pescara & visit Museum  
13:00 - sack lunch  
14:00 - afternoon in Pescara  
20:00 - dinner at seaside restaurant

### 16 July (Saturday) – day 8

Visit to the archaeological sites of Iuvanum and Pietrabbondante. Iuvanum was the ancient center for the Frentani tribe and later an important Roman municipium, located in the upper area of the Sangro middle valley. Pietrabbondante, further to the south-east in the Molise, is one of the most important and impressive sites of ancient Samnium. Its famous 2nd century B.C. temple-theatre complex is dramatically situated on the site’s mountainous slopes. There may also be time to visit Schiavi D’Abruzzo, another Samnite site famous for its two restored temples.

08:00 - breakfast and departure for Iuvanum  
13:00 - bag lunch  
14:00 - depart for Pietrabbondante and Schiavi d'Abruzzo  
20:00 - return to dinner at hotel

### 17 July (Sunday)– day 9

Archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 18 July (Monday) – day 10

Archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 19 July (Tuesday) – day 11

Archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 20 July (Wednesday)– day 12

Archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 21 July (Thursday) – day 13

In the morning archaeological work on Monte Pallano, and in the late afternoon a visit to the nearby town of Atessa on market day.

08:00 - breakfast  
09:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
12:30 - lunch  
15:00 - work on Monte Pallano  
17:00 - visit to Atessa  
20:00 - dinner at hotel

### 22 July (Friday) – day 14

Visit to the Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo and Pescocostanzo. The National Park of the Abruzzo was created in 1872 and made a State Park in 1923, thus making it one of the oldest Parks in Italy. It is a national treasure and one of the most important wildlife preserves in Europe (home to the native wolf and bear). On the way home, we will stop in Pescocostanzo, a very typical Abruzzese mountain town well-known for its lovely Renaissance architecture and artisanal working in gold, wood, wrought iron, and lace.

08:00 - breakfast and departure for the Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo  
13:00 - lunch  
15:00 - depart for Pescocostanzo  
20:00 - return to dinner at hotel

### 23 July (Saturday) – day 15

Breakfast and departure by coach for Rome.

08:30 - breakfast and departure for Rome  
12:00 - arrive in Rome; excursion concludes (we can assist with hotel reservations)

## Accommodations and Program Costs

Participants will stay in the rustic Albergo Colle del Lago in Pietraferrazzana. The hotel provides double or triple rooms with bath. Most breakfasts and dinners will be taken at the hotel's restaurant and will feature local Abruzzese specialties.

The program fee is \$2,250—which includes a tax-deductible contribution of \$500 to Oberlin College for the benefit of the Sangro Valley Project. International travel is in addition to the program fee, and is to be covered by individual participants.

The fee covers the following:

- 1 night at the Satellite Palace Hotel in Roma Lido (dinner not included)
- 13 days of complete pension, including drinks, in the Albergo Colle del Lago, Pietraferrazzana (in double or triple rooms)
- Pulman Coach transfer from Rome to Albergo Colle del Lago and return
- Professionally supervised archaeological work on Monte Pallano for 8 full days

- Transportation to and from Monte Pallano
- Pulman Coach transportation for 3 days of excursions in the area
- Accompanying specialist guides
- Entrance to the Museo Archeologico e il complesso archeologico della Civitella at Chieti
- Entrance to the Museo delle Genti d'Abruzzo in Pescara
- Entrance to the Parco Nazionale
- Entrance to the sites of Iuvanum, Pietrabbondante, and Schiavi D'Abruzzo
- Supplemental dinner at Pescara

A deposit of \$250—due by 31 January 2005—will reserve a place in the program. Checks should be made payable to: "Oberlin College-Sangro Valley Excursion" and sent to Susan Kane, along with an application form. The balance is due no later than 1 May 2005. The program requires a minimum of seventeen participants, and will have no more than twenty-two participants.

# Sangro Valley Project Field School

In your archaeological work on Monte Pallano you will interact with undergraduate students from Oberlin College and other institutions of higher education, as well as members of the Sangro Valley Project's professional staff.

Since its inception the Sangro Valley Project has included a Field School and considers the training of students in the latest archeological and technological methodologies to be part of its essential mission. The Field School strives to inculcate in undergraduates the old maxim that archeology is basically about three things: objects; landscapes; and what we make of them, now and for the future.

The Project's use of archeological, geological, geographic, environmental, and cultural resource management approaches, coupled with the latest technology, provides students with a rich "hands-on" learning experience that helps them to prepare for graduate study and other post-graduate work. This "hands on" training is supplemented by field trips to other sites and nearby museums, and with lectures on the history of the region, the principles of archaeological documentation, and discussions of the current problems facing professionals in the field of heritage resource management and in the stewardship and assessment of cultural and environmental resources.



2004 Heritage Excursion participants and staff at the Monte Pallano excavations

## Personnel

### Susan Kane

Professor Kane holds an undergraduate degree from Barnard College and a doctorate from Bryn Mawr College. A member of the faculty at Oberlin College since 1977, she has excavated in the US, UK, Greece, Yugoslavia, Libya, and Italy; and has served as Director of excavations at Poggio Colla (Tuscany, Italy) and the Sangro Valley Project (Abruzzo, Italy). Currently, Susan co-chairs the Department of Art at Oberlin. She is Vice President for Publications for the Archaeological Institute of America and has published extensively in archaeology and archeometry.

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### John Ippolito

Currently John is Forest Heritage Program Manager for the USDA National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. He has previously led Passport in Time projects in Texas. John will accompany participants throughout the project and will supervise their archaeological work on Monte Pallano.

### Velicia Bergstrom

Velicia is the Forest Heritage Program Manager for the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana. She has been actively involved in field school projects since 1988 and has excavated sites from a wide variety of time periods. In addition to excavation, she employs Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) in her work. She will travel with the group and oversee geophysics on Pallano.