





# Palmanova

A RENAISSANCE STAR

The fortress of Palmanova is not only a gem of military art but also a casket full of curious aspects. It is a model of town unique of its kind, in the shape of a perfectly symmetrical nine-pointed star. A bulwark of the renaissance concept of ideal town wanted by the Venetian Government to defend the eastern border from the Ottoman raids and from the expansion goals of Austria. Since 1960 it has been considered a national monument.



## Palmanova



The town can be accessed through three monumental gates, attributed to architect Vincenzo Scamozzi from Vicenza. Porta Aquileia (initially Porta Marittima), magnificent and elegant, dates back to 1598. Porta Udine and Porta Cividale, started in 1604 and completed in 1605, feature a more sober structure. Inside them one can see the niches with the fireplaces once used by the soldiers and the large studded wooden doors. Inside Porta Udine one can see the lifting wheels of the drawbridge.

The heart of the star-shaped town is Piazza Grande, the ancient hexagonal parade ground, from which the six main streets (three boroughs and three quarters) start. The square, at the centre of which the high banner that symbolizes the fortress stands, is adorned by the statues that represent the General Superintendents of the fortress, considered one of the most prestigious offices in the government of the Serenissima Republic of Venice. Piazza Grande is overlooked by the town's most important monuments, above all the seventeenth-century Cathedral built by the Fortification Office of Venice.

On the façade of the Cathedral of Palmanova, in the square, of Baroque inspiration, one can see, inside as many niches, the statues of Christ the Redeemer, of Saint Mark - the patron saint of the Republic of Venice - and of Saint Justina, whose day - 7<sup>th</sup> October - also coincides with the victory of Lepanto against the Turks and with the foundation of the town of Palmanova. The central clefts, on the other hand, stages St. Mark's lion.

The single-nave cathedral preserves valuable works of art among which a wooden Madonna attributed to Domenico from Tolmezzo (dating back to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century), frescoes by Domenico Fabris and the Altarpiece of the troops (dating back to 1641) by Alessandro Varotari called Il padovano.

The double ceiling truss of painted larchwood is very precious as well. The bell tower, adjacent to the cathedral, dates back to 1776.



In the municipality of Trivignano Udinese, a few kilometres (4 km) from Palmanova, you will find the small medieval town of Clauiano, one of the best preserved in Friuli's plain.

The origins of the town date back to the Middle Ages: the oldest buildings can be attributed to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and are located around St. George's Church and in via Borgo S. Martino.

More numerous are the buildings of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Over time the town has kept unchanged both its town-planning structure (the original medieval plan) and the typical rural architectures of Friuli: the old houses made of stones, with the main side overlooking the road and the inner courtyard. Embellishing elements are the elegant doors, surrounded by white stones, which introduce to large arcades.

In the main street of the town you will find St. George the Martyr Church (18<sup>th</sup> cent.), in which you can admire a remarkable sixteenth-century font. Just outside the town, among the fields and close to a grove, you will find the small St. Mark's Church.

The first documents date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century but it is supposed to be older, as it was probably situated along the old medieval road that from Aquileia led to Cividale, with subsequent rearrangements in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The charm of this place is enhanced by the frescoes (mid-14<sup>th</sup> cent.) that adorn the apse, and the seats along the perimeter of the walls, like in Oriental churches.

**Imagining time: Autumnal Equinox Festival**  
Art, Culture, Music, Traditions and Food and Wine products in an amazing setting. The old houses open their courtyards to visitors, to music, to creativity.

**For information:** Tourist Office of Palmanova  
Borgo Udine 4 - 33057 Palmanova (Ud) tel / fax - +39 0432 924815 palmanova.turismo@libero.it



# Palmanova

THE FORTRESS TOWN

An outline of the town's history  
The building of this fortress started in 1593 by order of the Serenissima Republic of Venice that aimed at defending the eastern border, as well as from the raids of the Turks and of the Usbeks (pirates of Slavic race), from the expansion goals of Austria as well. Declared a national monument in 1960, the fortress-town is not only one of the best preserved examples of military architecture of the Renaissance, but also features the concept of ideal town. Looking at it from above, it is possible to admire the perfection of the characteristic polygonal urban layout in the shape of



## Palmanova, walking in the town centre

Palazzo del Provveditore Generale (Palace of the General Superintendent)  
Town Hall of Palmanova, piazza Grande, 1  
33057 - Palmanova (Ud) tel +39 0432 922111  
www.comune.palmanova.ud.it  
Opposite the Cathedral, on the opposite side of the square, you can see the symbol of the civil power of the ancient fortress: the Palazzo del Provveditore Generale (Palace of the General Superintendent), today's Town Hall. Started in 1598, it was enlarged in 1611. Next to the palace, the Loggia della Gran Guardia (Loggia of the Guard), the seat of the troops that watched over the General Superintendent, and the Loggia dei Mercanti (Merchants' Loggia), which contains a monument to the fallen by Marcello Mascherini.

A little further, in Borgo Udine, Palazzo Trevisan houses the Municipal History Museum. Founded with the aim of letting people discover, through documents, maps, weapons, coins, paper money and relics, the history of the fortress in its historical periods: the Venetian, the Napoleonic, the Austrian and the Italian periods.

Near the Municipal History Museum is the Palazzo delle Finanze o del Ragionato (Finance Palace), built in 1598 as the seat of the treasurer of the Serenissima. The Palazzo del Monte di Pietà (Pawn Palace) (opposite the Palazzo dei Provveditori, on the corner between via Aquileia and the square) was built in 1666 to offer support to poor citizens. The Palazzo del Governatore delle Armi (Palace of the Governor



At a short distance from Aquileia, a few kilometres before the Renaissance town of Palmanova, you will find a small medieval town of remarkable beauty: Strassoldo, which features two of the oldest castles of Friuli, the Castello di Sopra (Upper Castle) and the Castello di Sotto (Lower Castle). Various are the hypotheses concerning the origin of its name. In German Strasse Holt means "to keep, to control the road". It is certain that the homonymous family, the Strassoldo counts, have been living here for a thousand years or even more.

The town, which dates back to the thirteenth century, can be accessed through the tower-gate called "Cisis", which overlooks an avenue surrounded by 16<sup>th</sup>-century houses. From the bridge over the Taglio one can enjoy a magnificent view over the Castello di Sotto (1360), imposing and surrounded by an age-old park crossed by irrigation ditches.

To access the Castello di Sopra (1322), too, it is necessary to cross a small bridge over the Taglio river. The two castles are characterized

as "water castles", being situated in the Bassa Friulana resurgence area. On the left you can see the former huskery of the castle, dating back to 1812, which supplied rice to the Viennese Court.

Next to the castle is the thirteenth-century Church of Santa Maria in Vineis, which preserves a cycle of fourteenth-century frescoes among the most beautiful and best preserved in Friuli.

Moreover, St. Nicholas' Church (1725-1750), which preserves two paintings by Pierre Bainville and the Renaissance altar of the risen Christ, attributed to Bernardino da Bissone, a sculptor from Tivino active in Friuli since 1491, is worth a visit. However, few people know that in this small church Field Marshal Radetzky married Countess Francesca Romana Strassoldo on 22nd April 1978.

Leaving the town through the Cisis Gate, you can go right and reach the bridge from which you can admire the old mill of Strassoldo. Going straight on, after the sports ground, you will see two "ponds", actually two eighteenth-century ponds.

**For information:**  
via dei Castellini, 22  
33052 Strassoldo  
Cervignano del Friuli (Ud) tel +39 0431 93093 info@castellodistrassoldo.sotto.it

**Ass. Europea Valorizzazione Castellini, Palazzi e Giardini Storici**  
Castile of Strassoldo di Sopra via dei Castellini, 25  
33050 Strassoldo tel +39 0431 93217 info@castellodistrassoldo.it www.castellodistrassoldo.it  
**Please note:** for information on the visits and events at the castles.

**Santa Maria in Vineis**  
Visits by appointment  
Municipal Tourist Board "Amici di Strassoldo"  
Borgo dei Castellini, 3 tel +39 0431 93298

**Recurring events**  
In spring: "Flowers Water and Castles"  
In autumn: "Fruit Water and Castles"  
During these events it is possible to visit the castles and their parks.



At the fall of the Serenissima and after the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797) the town soon returned under the Austrian rule, but in 1805 it was occupied by Napoleon Bonaparte's French troops. Napoleon established his headquarters in the town and built an additional circle of walls - the range of the guns, in fact, had increased and therefore the thickness of the existing defences was insufficient - equipping it with the so-called "unettes", bastions of half-moon shape; moreover, he built functional structures, such as powder magazines and casemates.



## The fortifications and the other historic palaces

The Fortifications  
From Porta Cividale it is possible to follow a short itinerary among the various fortified elements of the town: the curtain, on the side of the nonagon of the fortress; the cavalier, a high post on the curtain for long-range artillery; the bastion, in the shape of an arrow head, with wide flat spaces for the artillery and with depots for weapons; the fausse-braye, a rampart parallel to the curtain wall for protecting the soldiers' movements from the internal fortifications to the external ones; the moat, a ditch that separates the first circle of fortifications from the second Venetian defence line; the ravelin, an outer rampart in axis with the curtain and protected by a dry

moat, a structure equipped with an artillery emplacement and with powder magazines as well as with underground tunnels. From the square of the ravelin one accesses the road that leads directly to the Napoleonic lunette, the third fortified line, made by the French Engineers, in obedience to Napoleon's will, in 1805-1806. The "caponier" is the central structure equipped with posts for the fortress guns, protected on its sides by two stone vaulted chambers called "casemates". The lunette can be reached along the external road or through a fascinating walk in the tunnels under the circles of walls, as the soldiers did during the patrol rounds.



Historical re-enactment  
On the second Sunday of July the old fortress experiences again the splendour of the Serenissima Republic age and sacred and profane are combined in one single event. The Most Holy Redeemer, the town's protector and patron saint, is celebrated and the town goes back in time to July 1602, when the then General Superintendent, Gerolamo Cappello, raised for the

manoeuvres and assaults: all this under the large gonfalon with the image of St. Mark's Lion hoisted by all the town's authorities. The knights, the ladies, the people, all rigorously wearing period costumes and suits of armours, recreate the atmosphere of four hundred years ago. Court dances, horse carousels, weapon handling exhibitions, simulations of military



At 7 km from Cervignano you will find Aiello, a small town in the resurgence area, once rich in mills and where several Roman finds have been found, among which the statue of the leader Navarra, preserved at the museum of Aquileia and found in the 1950s in the countryside between Aiello and Cavenzano.

In the latest years the town has been characterised by the realization of numerous sundials on the walls of public buildings and private houses. The sundials, that is to say, the solar clocks that have marked time since ancient times, provide modern man with the silent and discreet possibility to read time, reminding him - with the shadow of the gnomon - to live fully each moment of his existence.

Along the town's streets one can admire over sixty sundials of different types. One can read the Babylonian time, that of the ancient Romans, the Italic time and the Islamic times. The fulcrum of the itinerary is the Courtyard of Sundials, without forgetting the universal sundial, which reveals where in the world the sun is rising and setting at that moment. In short, sundials that will charm you with their shadows and lights, letting you endorse the advice of their mottoes.

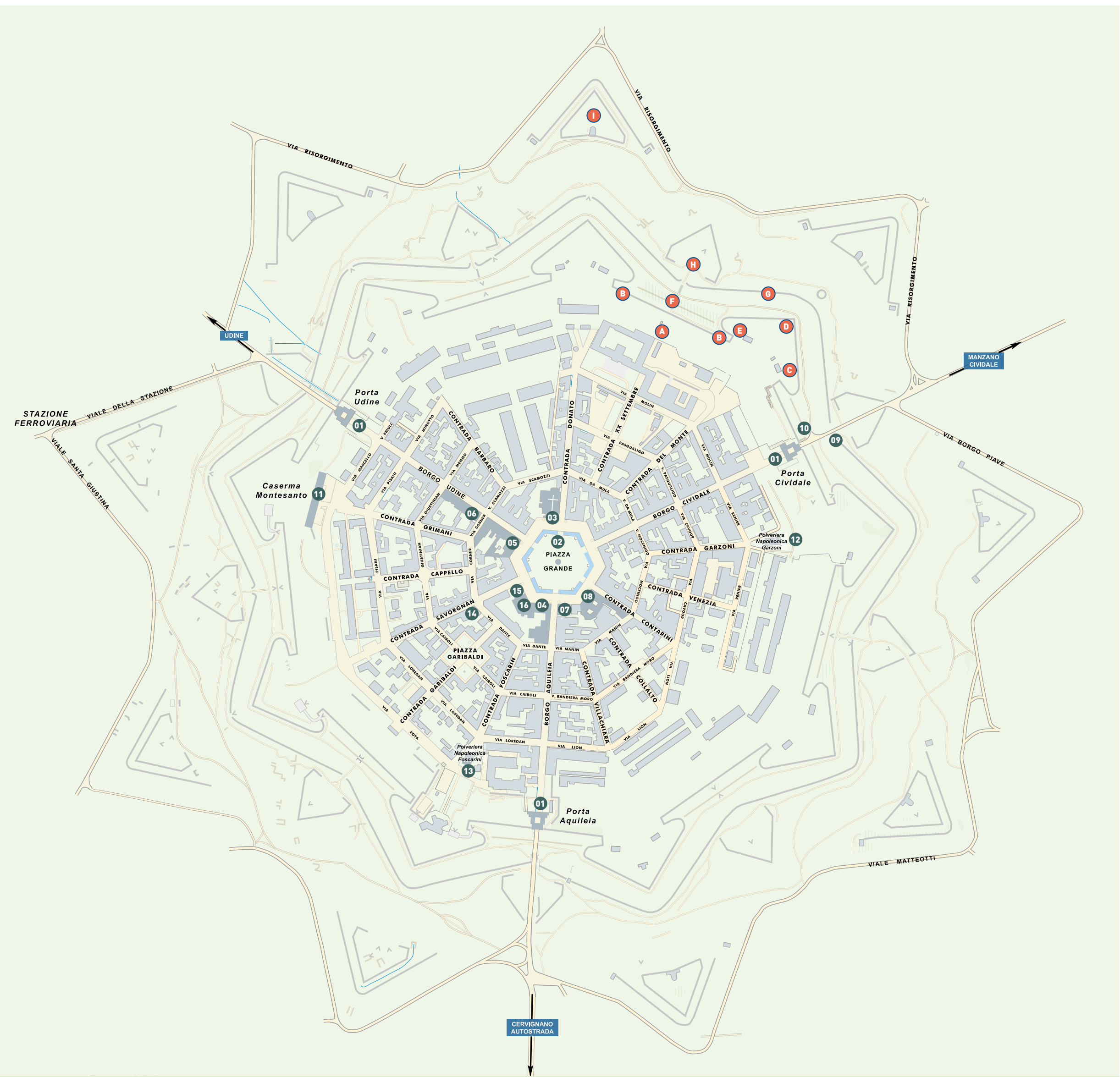
In the town centre you will then find the seventeenth-century Parish Church dedicated to St. Ulrich; the De Bona-Urbanis Castle, which stands on the remains of a late-medieval fortified construction; St. Dominic's Church and the former convent.

Moreover, in the "Pascut" widening it is possible to

**For information:**  
www.ipaesdellemeridiane.com

**Information on the Museum of Rural Civilization:**  
tel +39 338 3534773 museo.aiello@libero.it [visits by appointment]

## Map of the centre of Palmanova with main points of interest



MAP OF THE CITY OF PALMANOVA		
Points of interest and itineraries to the discovery of the town centre		
01 The Gates	11 Montesauro Barracks	Useful numbers
02 Piazza Grande	12 Garzoni Napoleonic Powder Magazine	
03 Cathedral	13 Foscari Napoleonic Powder Magazines	<b>Tourist Office of Palmanova</b> Borgo Udine, 4 tel and fax +39 0432 924815 e-mail: palmanova.turismo@libero.it Visits for groups and school parties also by appointment
04 Palace of the General Superintendent	14 Theatre	
05 Palazzo Trevisan/Municipal History Museum	15 Loggia dei mercanti [Merchants' Loggia]	<b>Municipal History Museum</b> Borgo Udine, 4 tel and fax +39 0432 929106
06 Finance Palace	16 Loggia della Gran Guardia (Loggia of the Guard)	
07 Pawn Palace		<b>Military History Museum</b> Museum Location: Keep of Porta Cividale tel +39 0432 923535 Piazza Grande, 21 tel +39 0432 928175 e-mail: museo_storico_mil@hotmail.it
08 Palace of the Governor of Arms		
09 Keep of Porta Cividale		
10 The Fortifications		
A Curtain		
B Cavalier		
C Loggia		
D Bulwark or Bastion		
E Loggia		
F Fausse-braye		
G Moat		
H Ravelin		
I Lunette		



The history of this town is linked to that of Aquileia; in fact, one of the largest sepulchral areas of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. developed along Via Gemina.

Inside the Parish Church you can see the high altar carved by P. Zuliani (1750-1767) and the triptych of Saints Cantius, Cantianus and Cantianilla, of 1581, attributed to G. Secante from Udine.

Of considerable interest, in the upper hall, two paintings by Furlanetto, a Venetian painter who worked between the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one depicting the Martyrdom of the four virgins of Aquileia and the other the three martyrs from Aquileia, Cantius, Cantianus and Cantianilla, the children of a local Roman noble family that had rural properties.

The two brothers, first officers of the Roman army, were converted to Christianity, together with their sister Cantianilla. They were persecuted and killed in 304 A.D. This has been considered a legend for a long time, until their relics were found in 1960. In the Antiquarium Cantianense, an exhibition

room next to the parish church preserves valuable finds, such as funerary inscriptions, sculptures, mosaics.

**For information:**  
Largo Garibaldi, 37 - Hamlet of Pieris  
tel +39 0481 472311 / fax +39 0481 472334



## Surroundings of Palmanova

