



L' AQUILA

**THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AND COPD**

L'AQUILA, APRIL 9–1, 2015



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Fondazione Internazionale Menarini promotes the Congress “the missing link between Cardiovascular Disease and COPD” in the historical city of L’Aquila, also called “Florence of Abruzzo” for its rich historical-artistic heritage of noble palaces, spectacular churches with ancient façades and numerous monuments of great value.

The city boasts a long and rich cultural tradition in theatre, cinema, classical and symphonic music displayed by prestigious municipal and regional institutions as the most renowned orchestras and the Alfredo Casella Musical Conservatory, the local branch of Rome’s world famous Santa Cecilia Academy. For the highest quality of its cultural events and for having hosted in the years the concerts of the greatest musicians in the world, it has earned the prestigious name of “Salzburg of Italy”. As proof of this, includes among its honorary citizens Arthur Rubinstein, Goffredo Petrassi ed Ennio Morricone.

The city counts 75.000 inhabitants, since 1860 it is the capital town of Abruzzi region, its most important centre for art and history and the widest, counting 110 municipalities.

It is home of a prestigious public research university founded at the end of 1500 with the higher instruction provided by the Jesuits. It counts today 30.000 students and is organized in nine departments presenting mainly a scientific-technological character with many research groups. Furthermore, we find the Physics Gran Sasso National Laboratory (LNGS), part of the National Institute of Nuclear Physics (INFN), the largest laboratory for astroparticle physics situated underneath the Gran Sasso Mountain to protect the experiments from cosmic rays. It is home of many experimental researches conducted by scientists from all over the world.

L’Aquila is geographically positioned in the middle of the Apennines, at an elevation of 714 metres on sea level and 93 km northeast from Rome. It lies in a valley, on the left bank of the Aterno River, surrounded by the imposing Gran Sasso massif (2.912 metres high), hosting the Garibaldi refuge, and the group of the Velino-Sirente.

The city is surrounded by charming landscapes and picturesque villages counted as “the most beautiful villages in Italy”. Also by natural treasures such as the Abruzzo-Lazio-Molise National Park, the oldest one in Italy; the Gran Sasso-Monti della Laga National Park with its “little Tibet”, the huge karst plateau of Campo Imperatore; the Majella National Park; the Sirente-Velino Regional Park.

All of them are populated by rare animal species saved from extinction: the Apennine wolf, the very beautiful Abruzzo chamois, the Marsican brown bear.





A BRIEF HISTORY

The story of the city starts in the mid-13th century thanks to a man of unique culture, creativity and ability called *stupor mundi* (wonder of the world), who planned the town: Frederick II Hohenstaufen, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, king of Sicily, king of Germany, king of Jerusalem. His son, Conrad IV, continued the construction of L'Aquila issuing its founding diploma in 1254. Manfred, then, destroyed the city in 1259 for its fidelity to the Church of Rome during the struggle between the Papacy and the Empire and for becoming Episcopal seat in 1257 with Pope Alexandre IV. In 1266, Charles I of Anjou and his Florentine aristocrat Royal Captain Lucchesino da Firenze re-founded the city, built the imposing city walls with eighty-six sighting towers and divided the town in four quarters: Santa Giusta, Santa Maria Paganica, San Pietro a Coppito, San Marciانو. 99 castles of the nearby villages came together to participate the founding of the new city and it is said each one have built a square, a church and a fountain within the city walls. According to the tradition, this gave rise to describe L'Aquila as the city with 99 churches, 99 squares and 99 fountains and, still today, to celebrate the ancient origin of the town, the small bell La Reatinella in the Civic Tower, tolls 99 times, each day at sunset.



This magic number 99 recurs so many times in the city and makes it full of charm and mystery. It is no coincidence that the first great and significant historic monument of the town is the "Fontana Rivera" or the fountain of the 99 spouts. It is the memorial monument of the city as it celebrates its origin and represents the symbol of the common effort and partnership of the 99 castles.

The city's medieval settlement known as "Aquilii" was born on this source of water.



From it L'Aquila got its name and acquired the eagle of the Emperor Frederick II of Swabia as its coat of arms.

Architect Tancredi from Pentima began to erect the fountain in 1272 to celebrate the 99 castles of the Aquila Valley, that contributed to the foundation of the city.

The water flows perennial out of 99 spouts covered with stone figures, all different from each other, representing the lords of the founding castles.

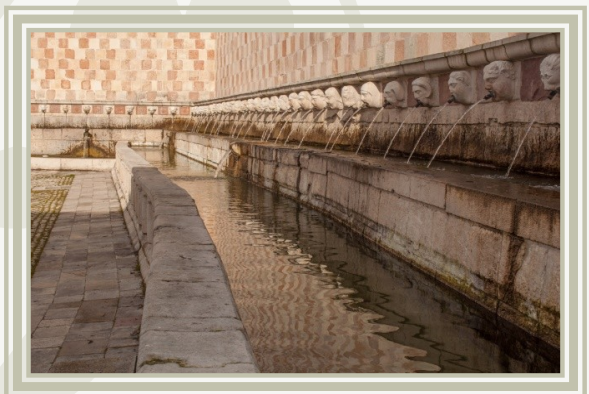
Designed in a trapezoidal shape, the fountain is surrounded by an elegant wall in white and pink chequered marble and carries a sculpted eagle in its centre

with a Latin inscription.

A legend says that under a stone much bigger than the others, in the centre of the square, the architect Tancredi was buried, after being executed because he refused to reveal the location of the precious water spring.

During the earthquake on 6 April 2009, the fountain emerged surprisingly unscathed, although the neighbourhood was completely destroyed. For

the people of L'Aquila, this meant a sign that the city remained strong and solid despite the greatest difficulties and always faithful to its motto *immota manet* (it remains unaltered).





The fountain was once the public washhouse and also, during the Middle Age, the place where the Lanaioli, the wool guild, washed, carded, weaved and dyed the wool.

For the city wool trade, the city occurred maximum splendour between the XIV and XV century as it was located in a strategic position on the “via degli Abruzzi” (the actual State Road SS 17), on the main road connecting south with central Italy. From Napoli it lead through the trading towns of Isernia, Sulmona (home of the Latin poet Ovidio), Perugia, and Arezzo arriving to Florence. The area around L’Aquila was the main market centre of the trades and after few years the city became quickly the second most important town in the Kingdom of Naples. Also from 1382 to 1556, L’Aquila was granted the right to coin its own money to mark its independence.

For the entire period of Middle Age, the city made its wealth through the production, the trade and the export of wool and saffron, reaching the markets of northern Italy, Europe and Middle East. Its greatest economic splendour favoured the construction of many public works as a Hospital, the church of S. Bernardino and the University. In 1482, a pupil of Gutemberg established here one of the first printing house.

Still today the economy of the city is characterized by the production on the precious saffron, milk products, wine, cereals and handicrafts objects.

Some events weakened the city in power and importance: in 1530, the Spanish invasions of Charles V to punish the city for having favoured Francis II; in 1646, 1703, 1786, the terrible earthquakes; in 1799, the Napoleonic invasions that seized all the gold and silver of L’Aquila and dispersed the remains of Saints Celestine and Bernardine.

After the defeat of the lieutenant Johachim Murat, Napoleon’s brother in law, L’Aquila returned to the Kingdom of Naples before entering the Italian State after unification.

During the Second World War, L’Aquila became famous for the Brigata Majella, the partisans unit fighting for Italy’s liberation from the German Third Reich soldiers.



One of the most important events of L’Aquila is the historic-religious-cultural ceremony of the “Perdonanza Celestiniana” (the Celestinian Pardon) which is celebrated during the week from 23 to 29 of August. On the 28th of August 1294 the hermit Peter of Morrone was crowned Pope Celestino V at the Aquilan Catholic Church of Santa Maria di Collemaggio, outside the apostolic walls of Rome. He issued a Papal Bull

granting a rare plenary indulgence to all pilgrims visiting the Basilica through its Holy Door on the anniversary of his papal coronation. Every year the key of the Holy Door and the Papal Bull are carried on a procession from the Municipality palace to the Basilica. The celebration culminates on 28th of August with the opening of the Holy Door by the Cardinal. The mortal remains of the “pope of the great refusal”, how Dante Alighieri defined him, rest in the mausoleum of the basilica.

The Basilica is the largest church of L’Aquila and was built outside the city by Pietro da Morrone, between 1283 and 1288. The tradition says that the Virgin Mother came to him in a dream and ordered him its construction. It and has a typical Romanesque and Gothic Abruzzese architecture and is in the form of a Latin cross. The façade is decorated with contrasting white and pink stones and three doors surmounted by a rose window. The interior shows frescoes with scenes of the Virgin’s Life and some Baroque decorative elements reconstructed after an earthquake.

The city hosts one of most imposing defensive example of the military Renaissance architecture in centre Italy: the Spanish Fortress, also called “castello” by the Aquilans. It was erected under the Spanish rule when L’Aquila became the second most





important city of the Kingdom of Naples. It rose in 1534 on a previous garrison and was designed by the Spanish architect Don Pirro Aloisio Escribà. It was ordered by Prince Philibert of Orange on the highest point of the city to punish local populations in open rebellion against the Spanish domination. In fact, on the plaque at the top of the entrance there is the inscription: *ad reprimendam audaciam aquilanorum* (to repress the audacity of the Aquilans). The fortress was financed by heavy taxes levied on the citizens of L'Aquila, who also had to sell the silver case where S. Bernardine's body was kept and also fused the city bells to serve as cannons. Never used for military operations, it was the Spanish centre to control the city and the wool trade along the crossroad between Napoli and Florence.

It is a square structure with four imposing bastions and walls thirty metres high, ten metres thick at the base of the foundations and 5 metres at the top. They are surmounted by massive merlons, with openings for the archers and the long-distance cannons. All around the fortress was a ditch, never filled with water, aimed at defending the foundations from the enemy's artillery. Interesting is the special anti-mine corridor aiming at defending the castle in case of explosion.

The Basilica of S. Bernardino. It is considered the largest Renaissance Church of Abruzzo and of great historical-artistic value. It was erected between 1454 and 1472 by S. Giovanni from Capestrano, an Aquilan disciple of S. Bernardine of Siena. Its elegant Renaissance façade was designed by Cola dell'Amatrice in 1540 and consists of three levels with three different orders of columns in the classical Doric, Ionic and Corinthian styles to express the ideal of a perfect fusion of Greek and Latin classical forms with the



Christian heritage. After the catastrophic earthquake of 1703 the interior of the church was redecorated in Baroque style. It still contains the body of S. Bernardino da Siena, the city's patron saint who died here in 1444. In 1461, his body was placed in the mausoleum built by Sylvester of L'Aquila, pupil of Donatello and featuring the trigram IHS (*Jesus Hominum Salvator*), symbol of S. Bernardino.

Most noteworthy are the large altarpiece by Andrea della Robbia in polychrome terracotta representing the Resurrection and the tomb of Maria Pereyra Camponeschi by Silvester of L'Aquila.

Since its foundation, several earthquakes hit the city of L'Aquila as it is located at the centre of the Apennine chain. This mountains were born due to the continue collision between the Eurasian and African plates with a system of still active faults. Moreover, the city lies on the bed of an ancient lake providing a soil structure that amplifies seismic waves.

The first registered earthquake dates back to 13 December 1315 and the last to 6 April 2009 with Mw 6.3 of the moment magnitude scale, causing 309 victims, 1.600 injured and 67.000 homeless. At 3.32 am of that spring Monday, the entire territory of L'Aquila was badly damaged in 20 seconds.

The loss of human lives and of the civil, historical and cultural heritage has not beaten the strong Aquilans. With the contribution of the Italian Institution and numerous local and foreign

solidarity actions the population is reconstructing the injured city, slowly but progressively, with dignity, resolution, hard work and sacrifice.





HOW TO REACH L'AQUILA

BY CAR

From Rome take the motorway A24 Roma-L'Aquila-Teramo, exit L'Aquila east;
from Bologna take the motorway A14 Adriatique Bologna-Bari (exit Giulianova-Teramo), proceed on SP 262 towards Teramo. Continue on A25 Teramo-L'Aquila-Roma, exit L'Aquila west;
from Pescara take the motorway A25 Pescara-Roma, exit Bussi, proceed on SS17 towards L'Aquila;
from Napoli take the motorway A2 Napoli-Roma, take the motorway A24 Roma-L'Aquila-Teramo, exit L'Aquila east;
from Perugia take the highway and SS Perugia-Terni-Rieti-L'Aquila.

BY BUS

From Rome: autolinee ARPA from Tiburtina railway station;
from Pescara: autolinee ARPA from the train station terminal;
from/to L'Aquila/Perugia/Bologna/Milano/Venezia/Bari: Autolinee Baltour

BY TRAIN

Train only from Terni and Sulmona connects L'Aquila. For more info visit the Trenitalia website.

BY PLAIN

Nearest airport to L'Aquila are Pescara and Rome.
Pescara: Aeroporto d'Abruzzo
Rome: Aeroporto Roma Fiumicino / Aeroporto Roma Ciampino

RADIO TAXI L'AQUILA

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