



## Piero della Francesca

A pilgrimage from Umbria to Milan

**11–17 September 2026 (MM 169)**

7 days

Speaker: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

A journey to see nearly every surviving work in Italy by the Early Renaissance master.

Varied and extensive itinerary, with time in Milan and Florence.

Also Urbino, Monterchi, Arezzo, Sansepolcro, Perugia – among the most beautiful towns in central Italy.

This tour is an exhilarating study of one of the best-loved and most intriguing artists of the 15th century. It also takes you to a select handful of some of Italy's loveliest places and best-stocked galleries, and through some of her most enchanting countryside.

Though the theme is a specialised one, the tour is by no means intended only for serious students of the subject. Few art lovers are untouched by the serenity and beauty of the high-key palette of Piero's works; even fewer would be unmoved by seeing most of his surviving works in the towns and landscapes in which he created them.

Born about 1412 in the small town of Sansepolcro on the periphery of Florentine territory, Piero spent little of his life in the Tuscan capital to which most provincial artists flocked. Though he was not without influence, he had no 'school' or direct successors. A mathematician, his images beguile with their perfect perspective, architectonic form and monumentality.

There is little documentation for his life, and he seems to have been a slow worker. Few works survive, despite the fact that he lived until the age of 80.

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Monterchi, Città di Castello.** Fly at c. 8.00am (British Airways) from London Heathrow to Florence. Drive to Monterchi to see Piero's beautiful fresco *The Madonna del Parto*. Continue on to the hotel in Città di Castello for the first of three nights.

**Day 2: Perugia, Sansepolcro.** Perugia, the capital of Umbria, is one of Italy's most beautiful towns. The National Gallery of Umbria in the medieval town hall has a polyptych with *The Annunciation* by Piero. There is a wealth of other monuments,



Urbino, wood engraving c. 1880.

including a fine merchants' hall with frescoes by Perugino. In the afternoon visit Borgo Sansepolcro, Piero's birthplace and home town. Visit the museum in the former town hall, where Piero's early masterpiece, *Madonna della Misericordia*, a panel of St Julian, and the marvellous *Resurrection* fresco are housed. Walk around the town centre, passing Piero's house and the Romanesque Gothic cathedral.

**Day 3: Urbino.** Drive through mountains to the hilltop town of Urbino. As one of the most enlightened and creative courts of the Renaissance, it has an importance in the history of art out of all proportion to its small size. Piero possibly contributed to the design of the beautiful Ducal Palace, which houses his exquisite *Flagellation of Christ* and the *Madonna di Senigallia*. Visit S. Bernardino, where Federigo da Montefeltro was buried.

**Day 4: Arezzo, Florence.** See Piero's great fresco cycle, *The Legend of the True Cross*, executed over a twenty year period, at S. Francesco, Arezzo. In the cathedral see his fresco of *Mary Magdalene*. Continue on to Florence where one night is spent.

**Day 5: Florence, Milan.** Avoid the busiest of the daily crowds by heading early to the Uffizi, which contains Piero's portrait panels of

Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and his wife Battista Sforza. In the afternoon, travel by business class rail to Milan for the first of two nights.

**Day 6: Milan.** In Milan the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum and the Pinacoteca di Brera contain paintings by Piero. Visit also the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana's small but remarkable collection.

**Day 7: Milan.** Visit the Renaissance church of S. Maria delle Grazie; the refectory houses Leonardo's *Last Supper*. Fly from Milan Linate to London Heathrow, arriving at c. 5.00pm.

### Lecturer

Dr Michael Douglas-Scott mixes scholarship with accessible discourse, wit with reasoned opinion, and is highly sought-after as an art history lecturer. He has lectured for York University (London campus) and Birkbeck College, University of London, specialising primarily in 16th-century Italian art and architecture. He studied at the Courtauld and Birkbeck College and lived in Rome for several years. He has written articles for *Arte Veneta*, *Burlington Magazine* and the *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*.

Piero della Francesca  
continued

## Practicalities

**Included:** Travel by private coach and business-class rail; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 1 lunch & 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Hotel Tiferno, Città di Castello** (hoteltiferno.it): a central 4-star hotel, renovated respecting the original architecture; a successful blend of old and new, with helpful staff. **Hotel Santa Maria Novella, Florence** (hotelsantamarianovella.it): a delightful 4-star hotel in a very central location. **Rosa Grand Hotel, Milan** (starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/rosa-grand-milan): a smart 4-star hotel excellently located directly behind the Duomo. Rooms are well appointed in a clean, modern style. *Single rooms throughout are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** The tour involves a lot of walking in the town centres where vehicular access is restricted, and should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. There is a lot of walking over unevenly paved ground. Fitness is essential. You will need to be able to carry (wheel) your own luggage on and off the train and within stations. Some days involve a lot of driving. Average distance by coach per day: 62 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 23 participants.