



ITALY

100 Pasolini

by Bruno Zanzottera

 p a r a l l e l o z e r o



Rome. *Hostia*, Nicola Verlato's monumental work on a wall in the Tor Pignattara district of Rome. It depicts Pasolini falling onto an island where his mother and the poets Petrarch and Ezra Pound already are. A work of significant impact that has been labelled "the Sistine Chapel of Tor Pignattara".



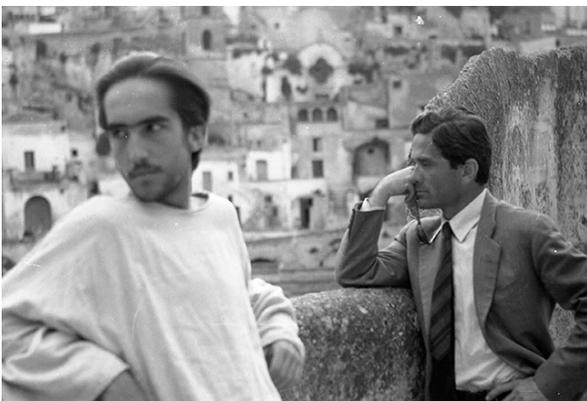
Ostia (Rome). Franca Vannini and Francesco Pasqual, a poet from the Italian National Poets Team, read a poem by Pasolini to commemorate his death. They are on the beach at Idroscalo, a working-class neighbourhood situated on the Tiber estuary which could be the perfect place for the characters from Pasolini's stories and films to live today. It was close to here that his lifeless body was discovered on 2 November 1975.



***I've walked in the light of history,
but my being was always heroic,
under your dominating, intimate thought***

Fragment: To Death

On 5 March 2022 Pier Paolo Pasolini would be turning 100, a difficult age to reach, but his life was violently cut short long before on a November evening in 1975 on Ostia beach near the mouth of the River Tiber, and where today lives a community of people who perfectly reflect the characters of his films and writings. A murder still shrouded in mystery.



One of the most talked about and controversial figures of his time, Pasolini represents a reference point for Italian and international culture. More than a poet, filmmaker or writer, Pasolini is a being that lives in the dimension of myth, since he managed to embody a destiny that's not only tragic but also universal. Due to his incredible ability to read and foresee the transformations of contemporary society, Pasolini is an author that remains highly original and relevant.

This reportage, put together to mark 100 years since his birth, does more than just retrace the places that formed the backdrop of his life – from Rome's working-class suburbs to its bourgeois district of EUR, the Friuli of his youth and the relationship with his mother, the Bologna of his birth and university education, Grado, Matera and Tuscania which count among his film sets – it also meets with the scholars and artists who've worked on his texts and paid homage to his legacy.



But above all it recalls certain locations and personalities such as the residents of Idroscalo, the place where his battered body was found, and who today wouldn't look out of place in one of his films.

A suburb just like any of the other Roman suburbs that formed the backdrop for part of his life and which today have been profoundly transformed.



Etna (Sicily). Old lava flows on the slopes of the volcano, among which Pasolini shot the scenes of the Devil's temptations of Christ in the film *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1964) and several scenes from the film *Porcile* (*Pigsty*, 1969).



Rome. Antonio, a shepherd who lives at the foot of Monte Cucco in the village of Trullo, photographed in front of Torre Righetti, which provided the setting for Totò and Ninetto Davoli in a number of scenes from *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (*The Hawks and the Sparrows*, 1966).



Rome. Amir, a young rapper who was born in Italy to an Italian mother and an Egyptian father, photographed in front of the Gasometer alongside the River Tiber, one of the working-class neighbourhoods that served as the backdrop in some of Pasolini's early films. Amir mentions Pasolini in his latest book, *Educazione Rap*: "I discovered Pasolini and I feel a close connection with him because his poetic style was very raw, us rappers are the poets and heirs of their history".

Matera. Sasso Barisano, where Pasolini shot scenes set in Jerusalem for the film *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1964).





Rome. Silvio Parrello, known as "il Pecetto", one of the *Ragazzi di Vita* (The Street Kids) from the novel by Pasolini: "There were more than fifty of them, and they invaded the small clearing of dirty grass around the trampoline: Monnezza was the first to leave... followed by Remo, Spudorato, Pecetto, Ciccione...". Here he's photographed in front of some photos of Pasolini and him as a child on the wall outside his studio.



Tuscania (Viterbo). The Church of San Pietro provided the setting for Totò and Ninetto Davoli as Franciscan friars in *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (*The Hawks and the Sparrows*, 1966).



Casarsa della Delizia (Pordenone). The Tagliamento River near Casarsa della Delizia where Pasolini spent some of his childhood years. The river is mentioned several times in his works: "They sleep the small birds hunted / by the little boys from Friuli, after lunch / when the Tagliamento is as vast as a desert, and, among the still dreamlike vines and the mulberry trees / that already smell of silk, the fields of corn / are like prides of roaring lions". (*Una disperata vitalità - A desperate vitality*, from the collection *Poesie in forma di rosa - Poems in the form of a rose*).



Bologna. Two young lovers in front of the bookstands in the Nanni bookshop in Portico della Morte, where the young Pasolini went to buy his first books: "Portico della Morte is my fondest memory of Bologna. I bought my first books there when I was fifteen, and it was wonderful, because never again in your entire life do you read with the same joy as when you're that age".



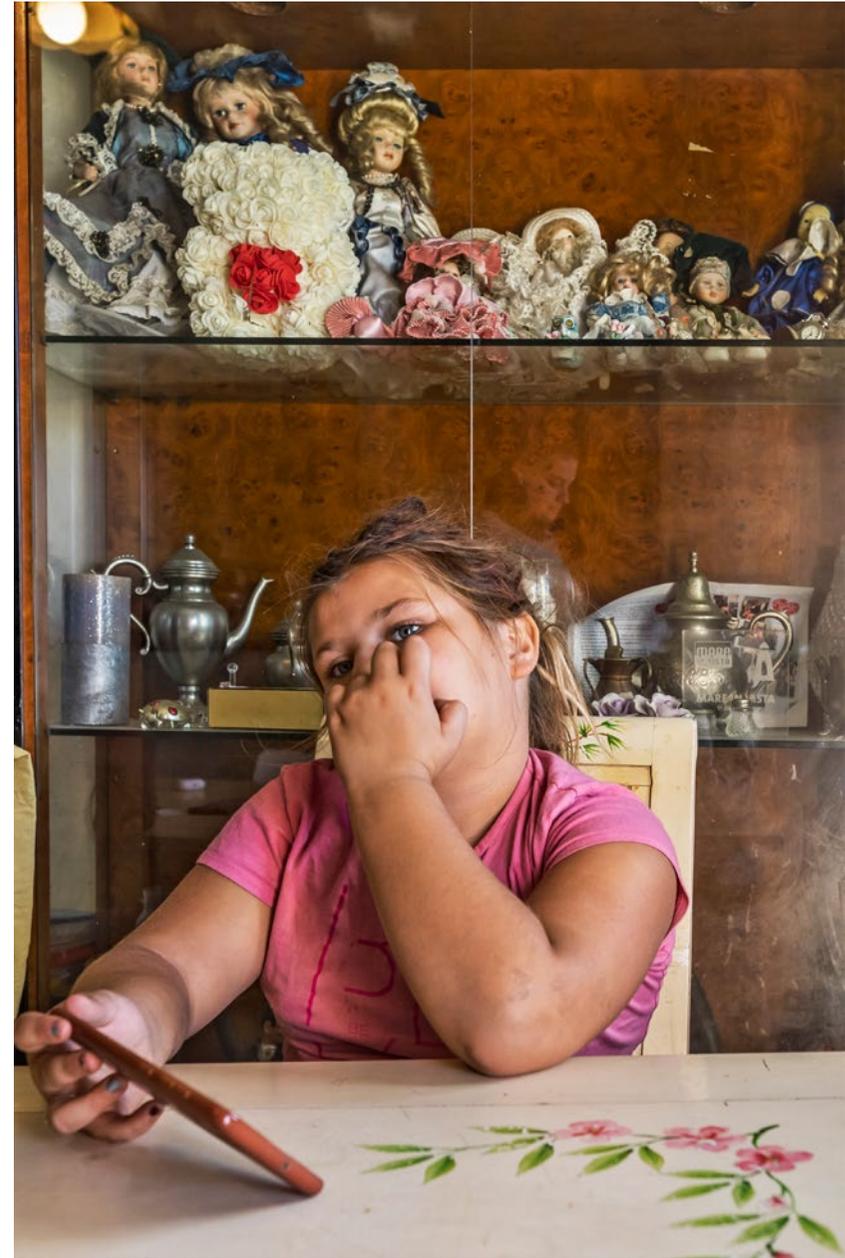
Ostia (Rome). Stormy seas at Idroscalo on the Tiber estuary. It wasn't far from here, in Via dell'Idroscalo, that Pasolini's lifeless body was discovered on 2 November 1975. Today, Idroscalo, by virtue of its buildings and residents, could easily be one of the neighbourhood's typically found in Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita* (The Street Kids).



Rome. Gabriella Massa, President of the cultural association Roma Slow Tour, organises various tours that take in the buildings and locations of relevance to Pasolini. Here she is in front of the Felice Roman Aqueduct, which is located on Via del Mandrione and is where a slum once stood that Pasolini often visited to look for characters for his books and films, as can be seen in the photo she's holding.

A photograph of the Acqua Marcia aqueduct in Rome, Italy. The aqueduct is a long, low stone structure with a series of arches, stretching across the middle ground. In the foreground, there are tall, dense reeds or grasses, some of which are in sharp focus, creating a natural frame for the scene. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue, and a small bird is visible in flight in the upper right quadrant. The overall atmosphere is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

Rome. Parco degli Acquadotti where Pasolini shot several scenes from *Mamma Roma* (1962) starring Anna Magnani.



Ostia (Rome). Residents of Idroscalo, a working-class neighbourhood which could be the perfect place for the *Ragazzi di Vita* (The Street Kids) from Pasolini's films and novels to live in today. It was close to here that his lifeless body was discovered on 2 November 1975.



Monterano (Rome). The ruins of the Church of San Bonaventura in the abandoned village of Monterano in Lazio, which served as the backdrop for some scenes in the film *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1964).



Casarsa della Delizia (Pordenone). The photographer Elio Ciol immortalized Pasolini in a number of different Friulian settings. Here he's in his studio with some shots of Maria Callas taken during her visit to Casarsa della Delizia during the filming of *Medea* (1969).



Grado Lagoon (Gorizia). Shot of the Laguna di Grado (Grado Lagoon) with the large villa that provided the setting for a number of scenes in the film *Medea* (1969) starring Maria Callas. Pasolini and Callas often spent long periods of time here even after the movie had finished being filmed.



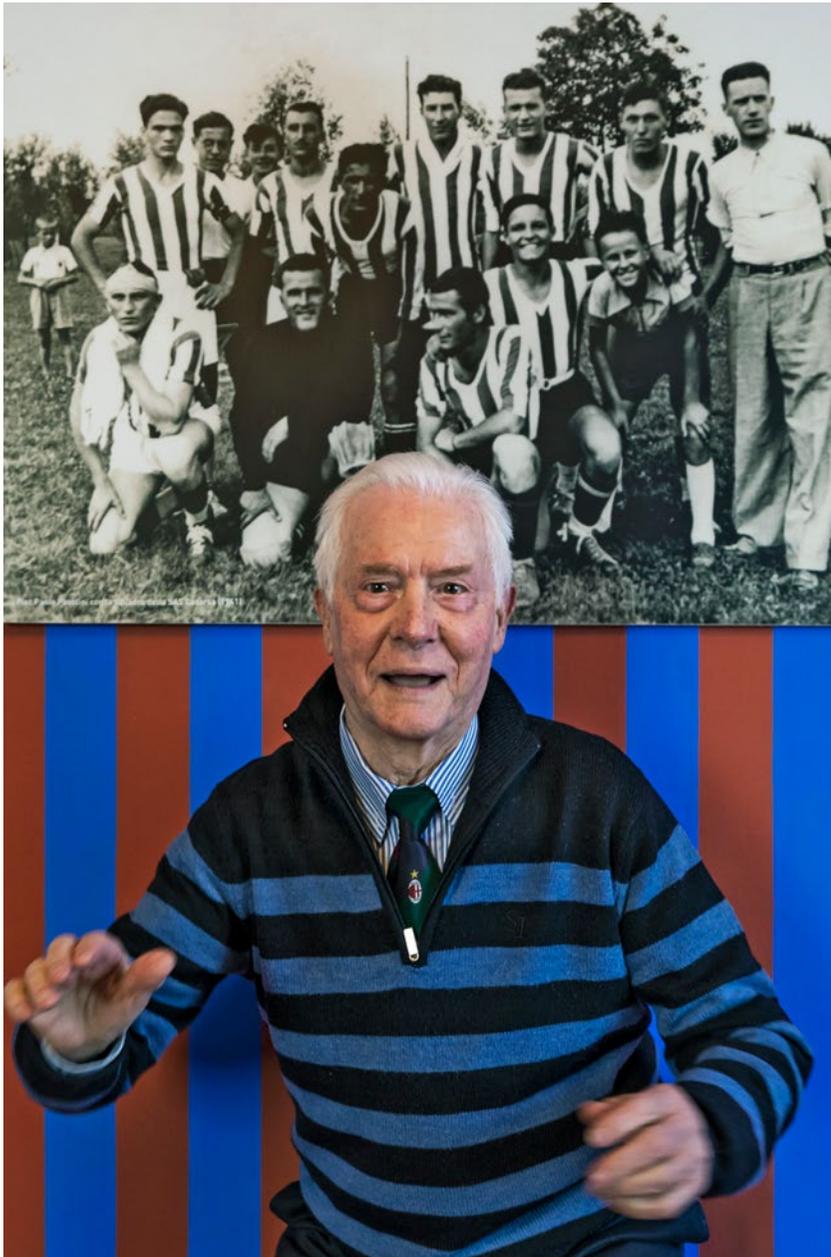
Naples. Daniele Sanzone, lead singer of the group A67, which combines hip hop with neomelodic music, photographed in Scampia in front of a work depicting Pasolini and Angela Davis by the Neapolitan street artist Jorit. Daniele quotes Pasolini in one of his lyrics from the album *Naples Walking*: "As inappropriate as Salvini's bullshit, like the voice of Pasolini in Italy".



Rome. The cross on the top of Monte dei Cocci in Testaccio, a hill created in Roman times with fragments of oil amphorae from the nearby river port. This neighbourhood formed the backdrop for several of Pasolini's novels and scenes from his films, it was near this cross that the photographer Paolo di Paolo created a famous photographic reportage of Pasolini.



Bologna. Roberto Chiesi, head of the Centro Studi - Archivio Pier Paolo Pasolini (Pier Paolo Pasolini Study Centre - Archive) in Bologna, photographed in front of the film poster used to advertise the film *Porcile* (Pigsty, 1969), in which Ugo Tognazzi is shown wearing a pig mask.



Casarsa della Delizia (Pordenone). Left: Mario Muccin, 91 years old today, knew Pasolini and was his barber, here he's photographed at the Centro Studi Pier Paolo Pasolini (Pier Paolo Pasolini Study Centre) in Casarsa della Delizia in front of a picture of SAS Casarsa, the football team Pasolini played for. He's the little boy on the far left in the photo, he was the ball boy. | Right: Maria Anna Lenarduzzi, known by her nickname Mariannina, was a student of Pasolini's at the middle school in Valvasone. Here she is pictured at the Centro Studi Pier Paolo Pasolini (Pier Paolo Pasolini Study Centre) in Casarsa della Delizia in what was once his family home with some of the original furniture.



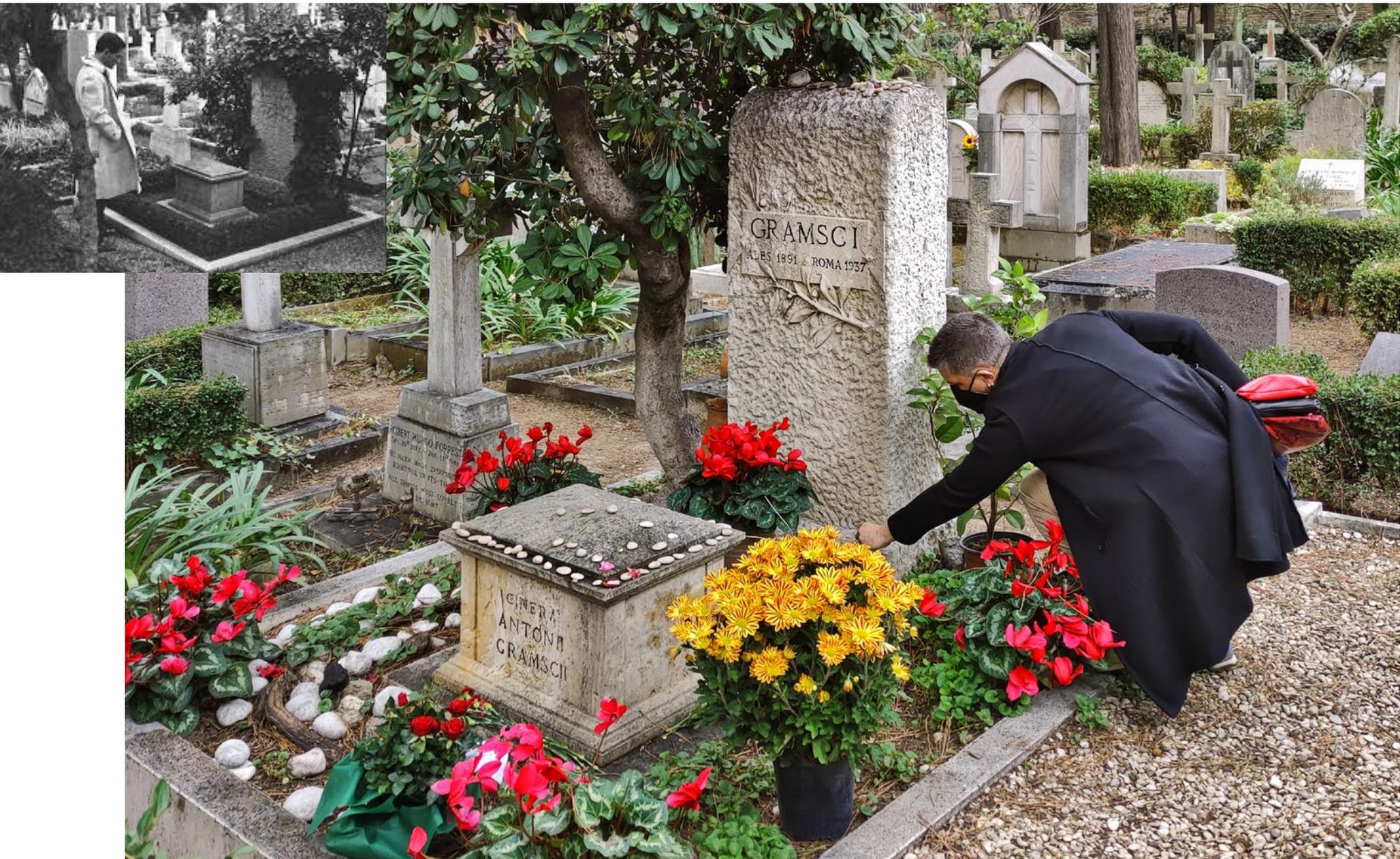
Ostia (Rome). Franca Vannini with her granddaughter on the terrace of her house in Idroscalo on the Tiber estuary, not far from where Pier Paolo Pasolini's body was discovered on 2 November 1975. Franca is very proud of her neighbourhood and is an admirer of Pasolini, she's even written a long text about him: "This is Idroscalo. My home, my everything. The first and only village that lies on the final frontier that Rome has always forgotten to have on the sea... I invite you here, to Idroscalo, to touch its essence with your own hands and that humanity that Pasolini loved and defended with all he had".



Rome. A wall painting by Omino 71 in Via Fanfulla da Lodi in Pigneto district where Pasolini shot much of his first film, *Accattone*. The words "Io so i nomi" ("I know their names") refers to an article Pasolini published in *Corriere della Sera* entitled *Che cos'è questo golpe. Io so* ("What is this coup? I know").



Tuscania (Viterbo). The Church of San Pietro provided the setting for Totò and Ninetto Davoli as Franciscan friars in *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (*The Hawks and the Sparrows*, 1966). The crows flying above the basilica are reminiscent of the hawks that Brother Ciccillo (Totò), in the film, had to convert to the word of God.



Rome. Gramsci's grave at the Cimitero Acattolico (Non-Catholic Cemetery) in Testaccio. Pasolini, who was photographed visiting the grave by the photographer Paolo di Paolo, dedicated a long poem to the politician and philosopher who founded the Communist Party, the poem is entitled *Le Ceneri di Gramsci* (*Gramsci's Ashes*): "A red scarf, like that found around the neck of partisans and, near the urn, on the waxy ground, a different red, two geraniums".



Rome. Roberto Panzironi, the owner of the Biondo Tevere restaurant where Pasolini spent his final evening with Giuseppe Pelosi, the man convicted of his murder, although the circumstances of his death still remain shrouded in mystery. On the wall behind him is the painting by the French painter Ernest Pignon entitled *Pasolini Pietà*, with obvious similarities to Michelangelo's *Pietà*.



Milan. The *Lamentation of Christ* by Andrea Mantegna exhibited at the Accademia in Brera. Pasolini took inspiration from famous paintings for his films, and the final scene of *Mamma Roma* shows her son Ettore tied to the bed in his cell in the exact same manner as Christ in this painting.



Rome. A wall painting by the artist Zilda which was inspired by *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (*Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*) and is painted among the vaults of the Roman aqueduct in Via del Mandrione, where a slum once stood that Pasolini often visited to look for characters for his books and films.



Monteporzio Catone (Rome). The singer Giovanna Marini sitting in her house. She was a friend of Pasolini's and wrote the song *Lamento per la morte di Pasolini* (Crying over Pasolini's death) following his murder.



Rome. Dario Pontuale, author of the book *La Roma di Pasolini* (Pasolini's Rome), under the Testaccio bridge where the final scene of *Accattone* was filmed, in which the main character played by Franco Citti dies in a car accident while fleeing from the police on a motorbike, right at the entrance to the bridge.



Tuscania (Viterbo). The Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore that provided the setting for Totò and Ninetto Davoli as Franciscan friars in *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (*The Hawks and the Sparrows*, 1966).



Chia (Viterbo). The spot on torrente Castello (Castello stream), which flows under the Torre di Chia, where Pasolini shot the scenes of the baptism of Christ in the film *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1964).



Rome. Simona Zecchi, an investigative journalist, has written two books about Pasolini's murder: *Pasolini, massacro di un poeta* (Pasolini, the massacre of a poet) and *L'inchiesta spezzata di Pier Paolo Pasolini* (The broken investigation of Pier Paolo Pasolini) in which she argues and demonstrates how Pasolini's murder was an organized political assassination and not a casual sex-related killing. Here she's pictured in front of the Basilica dei Santi Pietro e Paolo in the EUR district, where Pasolini moved to in 1963, right on the steps where Pasolini was filmed doing an interview with Michel Random entitled *Vivre et encore plus*. Pasolini wasn't particularly keen on this bourgeois neighbourhood and in his last novel, *Petrolio*, he labelled the basilica "a fake Saint Peter".

Bologna. A plaque on the wall of the house at Via Borgonuovo 4 where Pier Paolo Pasolini was born, at the time it was a military quarters.

IN QUESTA CASA IL 5 MARZO 1922

NACQUE

PIER PAOLO PASOLINI

POETA SCRITTORE REGISTA

IL COMUNE DI BOLOGNA
GIUGNO 2004



Rome. The River Tiber viewed from Tiber Island with Ponte Emilio (Emilio Bridge) or Ponte Rotto (Broken Bridge) in the foreground, the first brick-built bridge to be constructed over the river in Roman times. The river features in many of Pasolini's works and films. "From the Dome of St Peter's, behind Ponte Sisto, to Tiber Island behind Ponte Garibaldi, the air was as taut as a drum skin. In that silence, between walls that in the heat of the sun stank like pissholes, the Tiber flowed yellow as if pushed by the rubbish that filled it to the brim" (*Ragazzi di Vita - The Street Kids*). This is just one of the many quotes dedicated to Rome's river.



Rome. Left: the Biondo Tevere restaurant and the table where Pasolini spent his final evening with Giuseppe Pelosi, the man convicted of his murder, although the circumstances of his death still remain shrouded in mystery. | Right: a girl from Idroscalo (Ostia), a working-class neighbourhood situated on the Tiber estuary, which today could be the perfect place for the characters in Pasolini's stories and films. It was close to here that his lifeless body was discovered on 2 November 1975.

Ostia (Rome). The Pier Paolo Pasolini Literary Park with the monument created by Mario Rosati, near where Pasolini's lifeless body was found on 2 November 1975.





Bologna. A painting by Pasolini depicting his close friend Laura Betti together with other people, exhibited at the Centro Studi - Archivio Pier Paolo Pasolini (Pier Paolo Pasolini Study Centre - Archive) in Bologna.



Rome. A shot of the Tiber near Ponte Testaccio (Testaccio Bridge). The final scene of the film *Accattone* takes place at Ponte Testaccio, in which the main character played by Franco Citti dies, but there are many references to the Tiber River in Pasolini's works.



Grado Lagoon (Gorizia). Oscar, from the Graisani de Palù association that manages the large country villa where a number of scenes from *Medea* (1969), starring Maria Callas, were filmed. Pasolini and Callas often spent long periods of time here even after the movie had finished being filmed.



Rome. The Casal Bertone railway workers building, also known as the "Edificio dei cervi" (Deer building) because of the two bronze statues standing by the entrance. In *Mamma Roma* (1962), Anna Magnani lived here before moving with her son to the new INA Casa (a social housing initiative) buildings in Cecafumo.

Ostia (Rome). Idroscalo, a working-class neighbourhood situated on the Tiber estuary, which today could be the perfect place for the characters in Pasolini's stories and films. It was close to here that his lifeless body was discovered on 2 November 1975.





Tuscania (Viterbo). A flock of sheep on the hills of Tuscania. In the background stand the towers and Church of San Pietro as they appear in some scenes from *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (*The Hawks and the Sparrows*, 1966) with Totò and Ninetto Davoli who go there to convert the hawks to the word of God.



Casarsa della Delizia (Pordenone). Pasolini's grave in the cemetery in Casarsa, he was laid to rest next to his mother, Susanna Colussi, with whom the poet maintained a special relationship throughout his life.

