

# GUIDED TOUR OF THE CHAPEL IN THE ROCK of Gete

led by Dott. Tajani

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Free Event – EMOTIVE Project  
19 October 2025

## Exploring the Chapel in the Rock of Gete

As part of the public outreach activities of the **EMOTIVE research project — *Emotional Interactive Videotour Experience*, CHANGES SPOKE 9, CUP H53C22000850006, PNRR M4C2** — Emoticron S.r.l., in collaboration with the Municipality of Tramonti and Ca' Foscari University of Venice, organized a series of free guided tours dedicated to the historical and identity landmarks of the area.

The goal is to make Tramonti's cultural heritage accessible to everyone — residents, visitors, scholars, and enthusiasts — through activities that promote knowledge, interpretation, and storytelling. For this reason, we make the full transcripts of the guided tours available on our website.

The Rock-Cut Chapel of Gete is one of the oldest and most evocative historical sites in Tramonti. Nestled beneath the large natural cavity known as Grotta

Sant'Angelo, it is a rare example of early medieval sacred architecture, linked to the cult of Saint Michael and to the earliest forms of Eastern monasticism that spread along the Amalfi Coast between the 8th and 9th centuries.

During the free guided tour held on 19 October 2025, Dr. Antonio Tajani accompanied visitors through the origins of the rock-cut church, its two-nave layout, the transformations it underwent over the centuries, and the archaeological findings that bear witness to devotion, floods, reconstruction, and the presence of monastic communities. A journey that blends history, archaeology, and spirituality, making this site unique within the Amalfi Coast.

Below is the full transcript of the free guided tour held on **19 October 2025** at the Rock-Cut Chapel of Gete, led by **Dr. Antonio Tajani**.

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## Chapel in the Rock – Exterior

We are in a place of extraordinary historical and spiritual significance: the Grotta di Sant'Angelo, beneath which stood the ancient Church of San Michele Arcangelo, documented as early as the 11th century in the archives of the Archdiocese of Amalfi.

The original church had two naves and was partially carved into the rock and partially extended outward. In front of it stood the headquarters of the Confraternity of San Marco, which used the adjoining spaces for its activities.

## A church marked by humidity and pastoral inspections

Its position beneath the rock caused constant humidity and water infiltration. For this reason, during pastoral visits by the archbishops of Amalfi, many sacraments were celebrated in the adjacent chapel dedicated to San Marco, which was drier and more suitable for worship.

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### The 1734 flood

The fate of the church changed dramatically in 1734, when a devastating flood swept away the entire complex:

- the church,
- the burial chambers,
- the remains of the deceased,
- the sacred furnishings,
- and even the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament.

The waters carried everything down the valley to the sea.

The same flood destroyed several hamlets in Maiori and the surrounding area.

To commemorate this event, Maiori still celebrates, on the third Sunday of November, the feast of Santa Maria a Mare, associated with the protection invoked during the disaster.

## The new church and the cult of Saint Michael

After the destruction, the community built a new church in a safer location — the present-day parish church, still dedicated to San Michele Arcangelo.

The cult of Saint Michael — traditionally associated with caves, high places, and warrior protection — is a hallmark of Lombard culture. The presence of a cave sanctuary dedicated to Saint Michael suggests an influence of the *Longobardia Minor*, as seen in other areas of Campania, from Sarno to the Amalfi Coast.

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## Eremitic origins: cells, lauras, and Eastern monasticism

Before the medieval church, this place was already a center of spirituality. Between the 8th and 9th centuries, the area was inhabited by hermit monks — likely Basilian or of Eastern origin — who lived in rock-cut cells known as laure.

One of the lateral cavities, now incorporated into the structure, was known in ancient documents as the "Chapel of the Nativity", because it housed a small icon of the Nativity. During the cholera epidemic of 1740, when the population was dying in large numbers, the parish priest, Don Francesco Cardamone, asked and obtained permission to use this space as a place of burial.

## Chapel in the Rock– Interior

### The current structure and restorations

What we see today is the result of restoration work begun in the 1980s by the parish priest Don Alfonso Ferraioli, who sought — with the means available at the time — to preserve what remained of the ancient rock-cut church.

The structure preserves:

- the original two naves;
- a medieval vault still visible in places;
- an original column with a Romanesque capital;
- fragments of ancient plaster;
- the small side chapel — the former “Chapel of the Nativity” — with fragmentary floral and vegetal frescoes;
- a hypogean chamber containing the recomposed bones of ancestors, placed together in a memorial tumulus.

### The sacredness of the cave

The whole forms a rare example of a high-altitude rock-cut church on the Amalfi Coast — an important testimony to:

- Eastern monastic presence,
- Lombard devotion to Saint Michael,
- early medieval rural communities,

- ancient inland routes connecting the upper hamlets to Maiori.

The atmosphere is most striking inside the grotto itself: a simple, intimate space once illuminated only by small openings and by the light of torches during worship.

It is one of the few places on the Amalfi Coast that has preserved its early medieval identity so completely.

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### **A selection of photographs from the free guided tour held on 19 October 2025**

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Tramonti SA](#)





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