

Molise

Venafro Olive Tree

Estimated age:
over 500 years

Olive Tree
(Olea europea Linné)

Municipality: Venafro (IS),
Venafro Olive Tree Historical
Park

Circumference of the trunk:
about 5.3 m
Height: 7 m

This Patriarch is one of the oldest olive trees in Molise, where its cultivation has been known since Roman times, so much so that Venafro oil was considered among the best. The variety is Licinia, although it is also called “Aurina” because of the golden colour of its oil. The park extends over terraced land with a rich history, as evidenced by the mule tracks that lead to Conca Casale and the remains of walls built with irregular stones and the ancient Roman cisterns. No olive-growing area in the world has more tradition and more ancient references than the Venafro area. The Venafro Regional Historical Agricultural Olive Park, which extends to the foothills of the Mainarde mountain range, is home to numerous monumental olive trees. In a section on olive oil in his *The Natural History*, Pliny the Elder claims *Venafrum* oil is the highest ranked in the world, thanks to its Licinia olive. In his Odes, Horace also exalts the olive oil from Venafro, believing that it is without comparison. For Juvenal, the oil was an indispensable condiment, while Strabo and Virgil also refer to it.