



FONDAZIONE BANCA DEL MONTE DI LOMBARDIA

# Pavia e la sua provincia



## 1-Pavia, the city

The history of Pavia begins on the left shore of the Ticino river around the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., when the meeting of Gallic and Ligurian populations brought to the first instatement. That village will become in 489 AD the Roman colony Ticinum. After the fall of the western Roman Empire, it will become the residence of gothic King Teodorico, who will build his palace there.

It will then be the Longobardi to make the city grand. They conquer it in the year 568 and make it the capital of their kingdom enriching it with churches and monasteries. The period of splendour will continue under the Franks from 774 until 924, when the city is plundered by the Hungarians.

Even so, in spite of the repeated conquests and incursions, still today the roman cardo and decumano constitute the main streets of Pavia.

Beyond the covered bridge on the river, built in 1351 in place of a previous roman bridge, begins the antique cardo: today's Strada Nuova or New Street.

We follow it towards north, leaving on the other side the Borgo Ticino, the antique fishermen's village that rose on the southern spurs of the city.

To the east is the Romanesque basilica San Michele Maggiore where Federico Barbarossa in 1151 was crowned emperor of the Sacred Roman Empire.

To the west are instead the romanesque basilica San Teodoro and ahead the Piazza del Duomo.

The Duomo was built, beginning in 1488 where two twin romansque basilicas stood. On its left the remains of the civic tower can be seen, which unfortunately collapsed in 1989. In front is the arcaded building of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Vescovile Palace.

Going around the back of the Duomo, you find Piazza Cavegneria, towards which the most antique wing of the Broletto faces, dating back to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The Broletto closes Piazza della Vittoria on the south part, we are in the heart of the city. In the vicinity is where the Strada Nuova, the cardo, intersects the decumano, in other words the directive is formed by Corso Cavour and Corso Mazzini.

Half way down Corso Cavour is Palazzo Bottigella, with its beautiful Renaissance style façade. From there, going north, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Church del Carmine, work by Bernardo da Venezia, the architect of the Visconteo Castle.

For Via Roma you return to Strada Nuova, in front of the University. Crossing where the main entrance is, you get to Piazza Leonardo da Vinci.

Here stand out three Romanesque towers: together with the two of Via Porta, are the remains of the towered medieval Pavia which rose as symbol of prestige by will of the most noted families.

Still in the piazza is the interesting crypt of the Church of Saint Eusebio.

Founded in the Longobardian era, it was the arian cathedral of the city, during the era of King Rotari who, in Pavia, propagated his historic proclamation in 643.

Slowly the church met its progressive degradation until it was torn down in 1923.

Conserving instead all of its splendour is the nearby church of Santa Maria di Canepanova: the renaissance style masterpiece of the city. The director of construction, in the early 1500s, was Giovanni Antonio Amadeo.

Still in the area, in the same piazza, is the City Hall. It was transferred in 1874 from the Broletto to the 7<sup>th</sup> century Palazzo Mezzabarba.

Going north towards the castle are the Collegio Ghislieri and the Collegio Castignoli Brugnatelli: this latter was the first institute of Pavia in 1429. Following are the 3<sup>rd</sup> century church of San Francesco and the Collegio Cairoli.

Travelling along Via Santa Maria alle Pertiche you meet the Visconteo Castle. In 1359, Galeazzo Secondo Visconti seized Pavia and elected it residence of the court. He founded the Castle and imposed on the city a decisive renewal, which was carried on by the Sforza. Historically, from this moment on, the city will follow Lombardy's fate.

From Piazza Castello returning west, to end the tour of Pavia with another of its numerous Roman masterpieces, is the Basilica of San Pietro in a golden sky where rest the remains of the philosopher Severino Boezio, and those of Saint Agostino.

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