



PORTA FERRAIA (FERRAIA GATE) ALSO KNOWN AS PORTA DI SAN PAOLO (GATE OF SAINT PAUL)

You can find this point of interest in Cantù - Path 2 - Stage 1

INFORMATION

Location: Porta Ferraia (Ferraia Gate), also known as Porta di San Paolo (Gate of San Paolo), is inside the garden of the former Casa Scotti (Scotti House), which was previously part of the property of the Pietrasanta family, and, later, of the Archinto family, who have left us the beautiful seventeenth century portal with an ashlar cornice and their family crest.

Access: at present the gate is not visible, because it is inside a private property where building works are being carried out.

Services: bus stops for urban and suburban routes in Piazza Parini; automated teller machines in Piazza Garibaldi and via Corbetta; Chemist's in via Ariberto da Intimiano and via Matteotti;

Leisure and food: bars, cafes and shops in the area; municipal gardens in via Dante (Parco Argenti) and via Roma (Parco Martiri delle Foibe).

DESCRIPTION

The gate referred to as Porta di San Paolo (Gate of Saint Paul) in Carlo Montanara's map published in 1835 by don Carlo Annoni is the only one still in existence along the eastern perimeter of the town walls. It is next to the oratory of the Blessed Virgin, a few dozen metres north of the Basilica of the same name. Nineteenth century sources indicate it as Porta Ferraia or Ferraria, in connection with the nearby Contrada della Ferraia, a quarter which nowadays corresponds to the area around Via Pietrasanta, which is south of the gate. The toponym of the quarter refers to the working of iron (*ferro* in Italian) in order to obtain agricultural tools and nails, a production already recorded in Cantù in ancient times. In fact, a document dated 907 gives evidence of the obligation undertaken by the brothers Godeperto and Orso, inhabitants of Galliano, to manufacture a certain number of sickles for the abbey of Nonantola (Province of Modena) every year.

The gate, built to an irregular trapezoid plan, has been interpreted as being the base of a gate tower that opened into the town walls; the portal has a slightly lowered arch, framed by an archivolt made of square cut local stone.

According to Graziano Alfredo Vergani, the author of a study on the stratigraphic units of the walls, the building would be the result of a long series of interventions and changes which continued for centuries, at least from the 11th-12th to the last century. However, no medieval or post-medieval documents mentioning it have been found.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Gate of San Paolo (Saint Paul) is not referred to as such in the cartography from the 16th century onwards, nor does the gate appear to be connected to a road leading out of or giving access to the town, although it is quite evident that it is positioned in the direction of the Galliano hill: it is a «*Gate that does not lead anywhere*». This would be explained by the progressive development of the village of Cantù, which started in the 13th century to the detriment of the settlement of Galliano, culminating in 1582 in the transfer of the function as a parish from S. Vincenzo (St. Vincent) to S. Paolo (St. Paul). This situation may have led to the loss of importance or even to the abandon of an ancient road link to this gate, a trace of which might be recognizable in the toponym Gallianello.