

Pancalieri

The territory was probably inhabited since the Roman times but the village of Pancalieri was built by the Longobards around a small fortified system. The castle was granted in feud in 1159 by the emperor Federico Ist Barbarossa to the bishop of Turin and for a long time contended between the Counts of Savoy and the diocese of Turin. Between the 13th and the 14th centuries, Pancalieri was submitted to the dominion of the marquises of Romagnano and the Provana family. During the centuries, Pancalieri suffered the devastations deriving from the continuous wars. In 1364, the prince Giacomo of Acaja besieged Pancalieri, during a quarrel with the marquis of Saluzzo; a few years later, the territory was occupied by the Viscountis of Milan, in struggle with the Acajas. It passed then to the Savoy family and again to the Acajas: in 1410, the siege and the surrender of the castle to the Princes of Acaja was the subject of one of the first poems in Piedmontese language. In the 1416 Pancalieri was granted in feud to a cadet branch of the Acajas, the Lords of Racconigi. After long periods of warfare and pillage, Pancalieri passed under the French domination in 1554. Returned to the Savoys, in the 1616 Pancalieri was subjected by the duke Carlo Emanuele 2nd of Savoy to the De Geneve marquises of Lullino, who in 1688 gave it to the Turinetto marquises of Priero and Cambiano: the latter had the right to nominate the parish priest.

Not much can be found in Pancalieri of its most ancient history; the already crumbling down castle was demolished in the 19th century. Of the ancient parish church of St. Mary, dating probably back to the year 1000 and later embellished by the marquises of Romagnano, nothing remains; it was probably located in the site of the today's cemetery. The current **cemetery chapel** (already mentioned in 1159) was the Commenda of the Knights of St. John, and was built around 1400: its inside preserves a valuable fresco. Among the churches, especially interesting is the **parish church of St. Nicholas bishop**; the current church presumably dates back to 1513, but it preserves more ancient parts such as the bell tower. Its layout is Latin cross-like with three aisles and it was modified at the beginning of last century with superimpositions on the façade in neogotic style. The high altar, in marble, is in Baroque style. On the right side there is a chapel dating back to the second half of 18th century with a valuable alto-relievo medallion representing the Virgin Mary, attributed to the school of the Juarra. In the neoclassic chapel on the opposite side, there is a crucifix and wooden statues. On the same side, towards the exit, a beautiful picture by Tommaso Andrea Lorenzone (Pancalieri 1824-Turin 1902). Valuable the choir in rococo style. Of the **church of St. Rocco** we have news since 1613, but in 1769 it was restored and turned into Baroque style, with an elegant façade opened by a wide window. The **Church of St. Bernardino**, built in 1723, preserves a statue of Our Lady of the Carmine (1767). The small **chapel of the Blessed Virgo of the Pity** was erected in 1697. In the **church of St. Gaetano** rests the corpse of the Founder of Confraternity of the Poor Daughters of St. Gaetano, Giovanni Maria Boccardo (1848-1913), beatified in Turin by the Pope John Paul 2nd in 1998 and that of the Blessed Mother Gaetana of the St. Sacrament, of Pancalieri, in the world Carlotta Fontana (1870-1935); in the adjacent rooms a small museum dedicated the life of the founders can be visited.

In the historical centre some remarkable civil buildings can be found: the **Palace of the Counts Morra of Carpenea and Benevello Challant**, close to the parish church (left side), of the 18th century, with a splendid portal surmounted from a balcony with the coat of arms of the previous owners; the **Palace Clara**, close to the parish church too, a former monastery of the Minorenes with attached **mill**; the latter dates back to the 15th century, but it was readapted in the following centuries: on the canal, next to the wheel, there is a small oasis of aquatic birds. Crossing the Principe Amedeo street, we can see two important constructions: on the left side **House Bertini**, once belonging to the family that gave birth to Gian Maria Bertini (1811-1876), philosopher, member of the Academy of the Sciences and teacher in the University of Turin; on the right side, a **villa**, built in 1825 by the family Giacosa, a rare example of the new palladian style in Piedmont.

Around Pancalieri, numerous rural chapels can be found. Especially interesting are: the **chapel of St. Ann**, built perhaps with material coming from one of the castle towers; the **chapel of the priorate of St. John of the Motta** (18th century); the **chapel of St. Agostino** of ancient origin (14th century?), today in downfall, on the road towards Carignano. Of great environmental impact, it is the **sanctuary of the Madonna of the hermit**, solitary among the mystical silence and the green of the woods, in past managed by the Carmelites, and built to protect the fields and the crops: it was built after the 1630 great pestilence, probably an ex voto, containing an ancient pillar with the painted figures of the saints protecting against the epidemics; the current altar dates back to 1745. The building is surmounted by an icon of the Holy Virgin Mary fresco-painted on the wall. Around Pancalieri, it is still to be remembered, in the locality Castelrainero, the small **chapel devoted to the Immaculate, St. Charles and St. Grato** (first half of the 18th century).

Events.

“**Viverbe**” (third Sunday of September): interesting fair dedicated to the variegated world of the officinal herbs, in particular the peppermint of Pancalieri, one of the official typical products both of the Province in Turin and of the Traditional Agricultural and Alimentary Products of the Region Piedmont. The peppermint is used for numerous therapeutic and gastronomic preparations, and, together with other herbs, constitutes the base for liqueurs and infusions.

Fair of St. Nicholas (December): dedicated to the patron saint of the town, it is a feast-day in the period before the solemnities of Christmas time.

For information

Town hall, Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II 5a, tel 0119734800/0119734102;
www.comune.pancalieri.to.it