

## Piobesi Torinese

*Important remains of Roman age lead us to suppose that the area where later the parish of St. John rose was already used in ancient times. With the erection of the Castle, the inhabited area moved to the area of the current town. In the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the curtis of Publice was constituted, being part of the properties of the bishop of Turin. In 1193 the Castle and the countryside of Piobesi were assigned to Merlo and Ardizzone Piossasco. In 1347, during the war between the count of Savoy and the Visconti of Milan, the Castle was damaged by the troops of Luchino Visconti. Between 1458 and 1461, the bishop of Turin Ludovico of Romagnano ordered the reconstruction of the village. In the 1536 Piobesi was occupied by the French army, which reinforced the defensive system. In 1559 the duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy took possession of the inhabited area, which lost progressively its assignments as fortified outpost.*

On a road axis already present in the late imperial Roman age, but still used in the early Middle Ages, was built the **Church of St. John to the Fields**, now surrounded by the cemetery. This very important trace of the most ancient age of Piobesi, is an authentic museum, which testifies the transformations of the religious buildings from the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Roman age is represented by a sepulchral headstone, now preserved in the Museum of Antiquity in Turin, and by an inscription on the portal of the church; moreover, a milestone, inside the church, remembers the Roman road. The plinth of a font source allows us to suppose that a Christian building already existed since the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The current parish church probably dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century; it was built on the foundations of the previous constructions recycling the existing Roman material. The building still preserves intact three apses and numerous rests of frescoes. On the upper area of the central apse a “Christ in Glory” inside a lozenge-shaped ornament and to his feet the twelve apostles: the painting technique reminds the othonian cycles. The two side apses and the walls offer other interesting frescoes of the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, while an important 15<sup>th</sup> century cycle is now displayed in Turin, in the Sabauda Gallery. October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1359, Giovanni Pivart and his wife Guglielmina, born in Chamousset in Savoy, commissioned the fresco located on the portal of the church, representing the “Madonna with Her Child”, at her side two angels with musical instruments, the two clients and the Sts. John the Baptist and Christopher. In 1717, on the right side of the church, a chapel was raised in honour of “St. Mary's Name”, where a fresco of the 15<sup>th</sup> century is preserved. The **castle** was founded by the bishop Landolfo between 1010 and 1037 and in 1347 it was destroyed by the army of the Visconti. Of the ancient castle only one of the four towers (dating back however to the 14<sup>th</sup> century) remains. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was transformed into a civil residence and for some years it was the residence of the count Brassier of Saint-Simon, ambassador of Prussia to the Kingdom of Sardinia. From 1998 onwards it is a property of the town. Today it accommodates the town library in an environment preserving frescoes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the enclosure of the castle, an Italian garden has been reconstructed, with its typical hedge mazes so much appreciated by the nobles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Interesting is also the castle chapel, dedicated to St. Lawrence, containing a rich wooden Baroque altar. Of the ancient Church of St. Mary – dating back to 1461 – remain only a mighty **bell tower** and some masonries englobed in the sacristy. The today's **parish church**, dedicated to the Birth of Mary, was rebuilt in 1892 and preserves at the high altar a valuable painting of Tommaso Andrea Giovenone (1855, “Madonna with Child and the Saints Anthony the Abbot, John the Baptist and Rocco”, ex-voto after the 1831 cholera epidemic). Contemporary to the foundation of the new town of Piobesi, decided by the bishop Ludovico from Romagnano in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, is the **house** of Corso Italia, decorated with Renaissance windows and terracotta medallions. Two **casafortes** rise along Corso Italia, while in the Magenta Street it is possible to see a beautiful **house** (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries) decorated by valuable terracottas. Few are the examples of Baroque architecture: among them, the **church of the Holy Ghost**, commissioned in 1704 by the Confraternity of the *Battuti Bianchi* after a project of the architect Giovanni Tommaso Prunotto and the small **chapel of St. Rocco**. On Corso Italia rises also **Palace Aymini**, a bourgeois

residence erected in eclectic style around 1880, since 1934 used as Town hall. The elegant **School building** faces it, with a small open gallery in new renaissance style (1928-31). Scattered in the town, some houses still preserve on their façades some **devotional frescoes** (in the S. Giovanni Bosco Street No. 3, the Holy Shroud is represented with St. Peter). The hamlets deserve a visit as well; some of them are of ancient origin: among them, especially interesting is **Tetti Cavalloni**, which probably dates back to the times of the ancient Publice; once this area was surrounded by thick woods, rich with game and a favourite hunting destination of king Vittorio Emanuele II of Savoy. In its inhabited area it can be found the **chapel of the Holy Trinity** (18<sup>th</sup> century): the picture on the high altar is a work of the painter Agostino Cottolengo of Bra (1794-1853), brother of St. Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo, founder of the Small House of the Divine Providence in Turin. In this hamlet two **baking ovens** are preserved, one of which - dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century - is still used. In Tetti Cavalloni, Teresa Petronilla Camoglio was born in 1841; she, together with her sister Giuseppina founded “The perpetual daily adoration”; a beatification process for the two sisters is in progress.

### **Fairs and events**

*Bread Fair* (September): every year this fair animates the hamlet of Tetti Cavalloni; it is possible to see the baking operations in the ancient oven of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

*Fair of St. Maura* (first Sunday of August): the fair is an occasion for popular celebrations, with the traditional amusement park, the charity bazaar and musical evenings. Once it was tied up to traditions that could date back to the carnival customs of the Early Middle Ages.

*Autumn Fair* (third Tuesday of November): it is a commercial fair with stalls along the town streets; the Society of the Clog-makers (founded in Piobesi in 1876) - which has renovated this ancient activity – takes part to the fair as well.

### **For information**

Town hall, 9 Corso Italia, tel. 011.9657083

Library, 6 Corso Italia, tel. 011.9657846

[www.comune.piobesi.to.it](http://www.comune.piobesi.to.it)