

## The pavaglione

It is a structure unique in its genre and is a remarkable example of a natural marketplace, designed and built over two centuries ago. Its origins date back to the sixteenth century when Alfonso II d'Este, the last Duke of Ferrara, decided to demolish the citadel which represented the fortified and walled centre of Estense Lugo, leaving an enormous field in front of the fortress. Here in 1584, the Duke had a "a loggia measuring more than 200 feet in length by 40 feet wide" built with the building material which remained, in line with the gate of the fortress and the entrance to the Carmine Church.



The trade fair, held every year in August, was soon transferred to the area, used for the Wednesday market. The field thus became the site of the trade fair, and wooden shops were built on it next to the loggia to meet the needs of the merchants who came all over the region. The Lugo trade fair thus became the most important in the Papal State after that of Senigallia. Carefully restored in 1984, the Pavaglione is an irregular quadrilateral, whose long sides measure 131 and 133 metres respectively against the 82 metres of the short sides. It still hosts some of the town's most important commercial activities. Just as more than two hundred years ago, the weekly market and biennial trade fair are held under its porticoes, in addition to many shows and exhibitions.

### Interesting fact

The origins of the name of the four-sided portico is very interesting, probably deriving from the fact that silkworms (from the Latin *papilio*, or the French *papillon*) were sold there. The portico in Bologna hosting the same kind of market was also known as the Pavaglione, and when this market ceased to exist, the Pavaglione in Lugo became the best-known of all the silkworm markets, so much so that the term "to pavaglione" ("fare il Pavaglione") was coined in the towns and cities of Romagna to refer to the activity of putting out a basket of silkworm cocoons in the square for the market.

## The market

Emporium italiae frequentissimum , these are the words written on one of the plaques of the Pavaglione, and nothing better sums up the character of this building, a veritable symbol of Lugo's commercial vocation.



Ever since its origins, the life of the Pavaglione has been closely linked to the market and the trade fair. The market was regulated in 1437 by way of a deed from Duke Niccolò III d'Este for the collection of levies in the town: those who worked at the market enjoyed total exemption from levies and taxes. Even at that time the market was held on Wednesdays (the Italian word for Wednesday is "mercoledì", from Mercury, the Roman god of commerce) and the volume of business was vast, so much so that there is good reason to believe its origins go even further back than the Estense deed. Today the market occupies the internal square and porticoes of the Pavaglione as well as the whole town centre, with an area of over twenty-five thousand square metres, more than 1000 stallholders and thousands and thousands of visitors each Wednesday.