

THE BISHOPS OF PADUA



A. Mantegna, *Saint Prosdocimus*, Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera



G. Ferrari, *Francesco Pisani*, 1795, Padua, Prato della Valle

The series of bishops of Padua begins with **Prosdocimus**, the city's patron saint, who it is said was a great, 1st century evangeliser. The episcopal control of the north-eastern section of the Euganean Hills began prior to the year 1000, in the form of an administrative and agricultural presence. From the 14th century, the bishop's farming business was limited to Luvigliano Hill, until in the early 16th century **Francesco Pisani** acquired other fields to enhance the complex with a new access from the Doric portal. In the 16th century villa, the function of the estate as a spiritual retreat prevailed over its use as farmland.

The end of the seignury of the Carraresi family in Padua was sealed by the city's submission to Venice in 1405. In 1509, the *Serenissima* lost control of many domains but reacted by rapidly reasserting its power over a large part of its previously controlled territories. The task of governing Padua was then given back to the "Captains of the People" (*capitani del popolo*), the chief magistrates (*podestà*), the bishops and other figures within the Venetian ruling class. One particularly important bishop in the early period of Venetian domination was **Pietro Barozzi** (1441-1507). It was in 1495 that this humanist and bibliophile began the renovation of the bishop's palace.



B. Montagna, *Bishop Pietro Barozzi*, Padua, Palazzo vescovile



The Doric portal



B. Montagna, *Bishops' Hall*, Padua, Palazzo Vescovile



J. da Montagnana, *Chapel*, Padua, Palazzo Vescovile

The palace of the bishops of Padua within the city itself, called the **Vescovado**, was erected next to the Basilica Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta (Padua Cathedral). An episcopal castle from the 8th century onwards, before being modified in the late 15th century, it includes works by Jacopo da Montagnana (1440/43-1499) and Bartolomeo Montagna (1499/50-1523) and today houses the Diocesan Museum. The chapter library (*biblioteca capitolare*) was founded in the 12th century and was then increased in size thanks, above all, to **Iacopo Zeno** (1418-1481). Opened to the public in the late 15th century. It houses several important illuminated manuscripts and incunabula.