

BORGONATO

Borgonato is an arbitrary correction of an entirely different name; in the oldest documents, the town is referred to as 'Bogonago', and this suffix -ago, would indicate its origin in Celtic times, as is the case with Gussago, Cazzago and Vanzago.

The oldest evidence of the area is preserved on the picturesque hill, which rises among the vineyards on the southern side of the town: an archaeological survey carried out on the hill revealed the presence of wooden huts with materials from the 3rd to 5th century A.D., contemporary with the Roman kilns with annexed villa rustica, found in the locality of Quattrovie a short distance south of the town.

Borgonato appears in written history in documents from the years 879 and 905 that mention the court of 'Bogonago' being part of the property of the powerful Brescian monastery of San Salvatore - Santa Giulia. The Julian court was probably located on top of the hill where the 12th-century church of San Salvatore still stands. The small church of San Vitale, built at the foot of the northern slope of the hill, is also attributed to the early Middle Ages. In the Romanesque period, the church underwent various transformations until it became a parish church in the 14th-15th centuries. In the late medieval period, a castle-ricetto was formed on the hill, a fortified structure well attested in the Brescian area in the hilly areas of Franciacorta and Basso Garda. The tower and the annexed building are preserved from the ancient castle.

In the same years, in the western part of the village, a settlement of tower-houses and cottages enclosed by high walls sprang up on the initiative of the nobility. These were the houses of the ancient Isei-Oldofredi family, who were succeeded, in the first half of the 15th century, by the Lana de Terzi nobles who arrived in the Brescia area in the 13th century from the nearby Val Cavallina. Within this historic centre are a valuable medieval tower-house, the austere Palazzo Lana (16th-17th century) and the headquarters of the prestigious Guido Berlucchi S.p.a. and Fratelli Berlucchi wine cellars.

At the end of the 18th century, the old San Vitale church was demolished and the current parish church with isolated bell tower was built on the hillside.

In the 19th century there was an important kiln (now disappeared) in Borgonato, owned by Count Antonio Lana, which produced high quality floor tiles.

Characteristic of the village is the presence of 'broli murati': plots of land, once used for specialised crops such as vineyards and orchards, that were fenced off by walls to prevent access to outsiders.