ISTITUTI OSPITALIERI DI VERONA

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St Giacomo and Lorenzo Hospital, founded in 1223 for the care of leprosy victims, was the first hospital in Verona, with a capacity of 40 beds. When lepro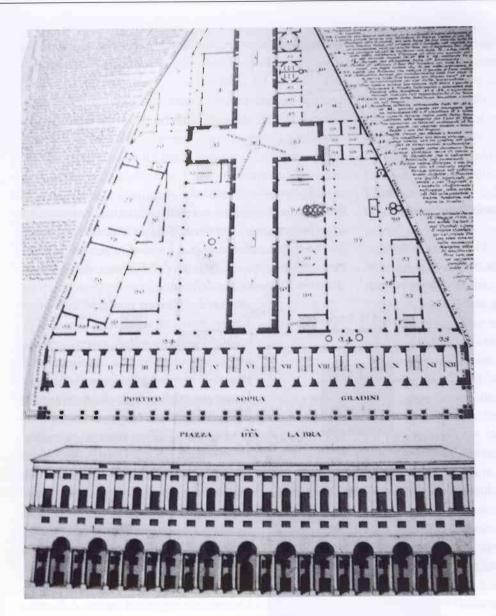sy became rare, the hospital admitted plagued and scabbed patients. In the XIV and XV century, 34 charitable institutions were based in Verona. Most of them had been founded and were run by religious or lay confraternities. Some of these hospices were attached to a monastery. Most of them included a kitchen , a chapel and one or two common rooms for both men and women.

The "Santa Casa della Pietà" (Holy House of Mercy) was founded in 1426 by the College of Notary, with the mission of "conveniently hosting, assisting and nourishing invalid and sick people". It included two separate wards: one offered 48 beds to generically "sick" people, to patients presenting with fever and to elderly citizens. The other hosted foundlings up to the age of 5 years. A balanced diet and salasso were the main therapeutic strategies. The separation of patients from poor people and the identification of diseases with different origins suggests that hospitals were slowly assuming a therapeutic role. The house was staffed with one physician, one surgeon and one nurse, a male nurse for the men's ward and a female nurse for the women's ward, who were constantly present. The "Santa Casa" was also the first institution to provide assistance for orphans and abandoned children; in 1491 it hosted 427 children. Even though abandoning a child was prohibited by the Church, children were frequently found in a basket purposedly located nearby the entrance of the House during night time; the name of "foundling" derives from this practice, which was due to the extremely harsh condition of everyday life at that time. The "Santa Casa" was closed in 1808 by napoleonic laws.

During the XVIII century, social assistance to the poor was separated from health care. The construction of the "Ospedale della Misericirdia " (Mercy Hospital) started in 1788. The three story building, with a large and beautiful facade, was located in the central Piazza

tutes with contagious diseases, and women in labour. In 1819 a new ward for mental diseases, named "Ospedale dei Pazzi" was started.

At the beginning of the XX century a new 675 bed hospital was built in Borgo Trento. The Children's Hospital was added to this facility. The hospital plan was based on the new idea of building separate pavillions. After sixty years, the last buiding, hosting maternity and geriatric wards, was completed thanks to the contribution of many banks and private donors. During the same period the University of Veron grew, and a new clinical hospital was built in Borgo Roma. These two hospitals are now managed by the same administration.

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Bra, near the Arena. The French domination reorganized health assistance. All the hospitals in Verona merged into the Misericordia Hospital, which was therefore called Ospedale Maggiore (Major Hospital). This structure was able to assist 150 patients, subdivided into acute, chronic and untreatable patients. No more than 25 "untreatable" patients were accepted. The new hospital soon became inadequate, expecially when soldiers wounded during napoleonic wars were transferred there and, at the same time, cholera, pestilence, typhus and scabby heavily hit the population. Moreover, in 1808 a decree prohibited begging in the streets, and mendicants took refuge inside hospitals.

In the XIX century, some religious confraternities volunteered to take over the care of patients inside the city hospitals. In 1812 the Order of the Sisters of Mercy founded a separate facility of the Misericordia Hospital, in which 110 beds were dedicated to the care of women presenting fever, untreatable female patients, prosti-