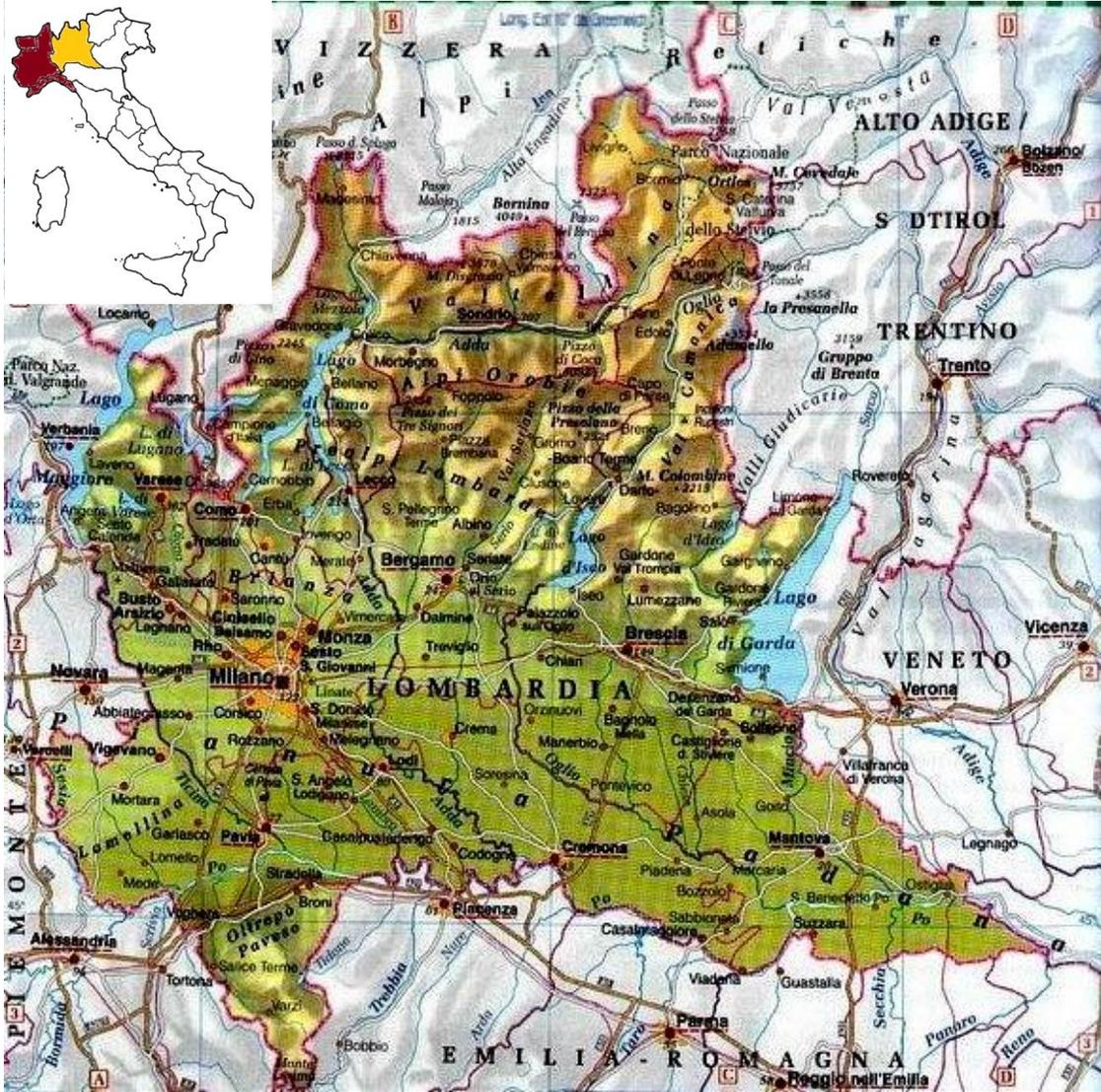


LOMBARDIA – Geographical features

03. THE NORTH-WEST



« Lombardia is the garden of the World »
- Italian proverb

- Main cities: MILANO, Mantova, Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Varese
- Historical overview: Traces of human presence date back to the 2nd millennium BC. It became one of the most developed areas of the Roman Empire. After its fall, it was invaded by tribal peoples; among them, the Longobardi had a long-lasting reign (568-774) After a period under the Holy Roman Empire, in the 15th century the Duchy of Milan was a major political, economical and military force at the European level. Lombardy was the core of the interests of several dominators, among whom Spanish, French and Austrians; it struggled of continuous wars and battles. Just after the Napoleonic era Lombardy became one of the intellectual centers leading the Italian unification process, it was finally **annexed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1859.**
- Spoken languages: Italian
- Climate: high variety due to a wide array of elevation, proximity to inland water basins, and large metropolitan areas. The climate is mainly humid subtropical, especially in the plains. Winter season, that in Lombardy is normally long, is rainy and rather cold. In addition, there is a high seasonal temperature variation.

Duomo, Milano



Bergamo Venetian Walls



Como Lake



Cathedral of San Pietro Apostolo, Mantova

Po plain





Saint Francis in Ecstasy, Caravaggio

Alessandro Manzoni was an Italian poet and novelist. He is famous for the novel *The Betrothed* (*I Promessi Sposi*), generally ranked among the masterpieces of world literature. The novel is also a symbol of the Italian Risorgimento, both for its patriotic message and because it was a fundamental milestone in the development of the modern, unified Italian language.



The Betrothed is set in Lombardia in 1628, during the oppressive years of direct Spanish rule, it is seen as a veiled attack on the Austrian Empire, which controlled the region at the time. It is also noted for the extraordinary description of the plague that struck Milan around 1630. It deals with a **variety of themes**, from the **cowardly, hypocritical nature** of one prelate (Don Abbondio) and the **heroic sainthood** of other priests (Padre Cristoforo), to the **unwavering strength of love** (the relationship between Renzo and Lucia, and their struggle to finally meet again and be married), and offers some **keen insights into the meanderings of the human mind**.