

0. DEATH IN LOMBARDY - Story Preface

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This photo depicts the ruins of Aquileia, a once-great town of Ancient Rome. The place was utterly destroyed by Attila and his Huns. Image by Zavijavah, online via Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

After fighting on the Catalaunian Fields, Attila and the Huns went home. In the spring of 452, they traveled to the [Lombardia region](#). Death and destruction were about to befall the [towns of Lombardy](#).

[Aquileia](#) - at the head of the Adriatic Sea, northeast of the imperial capital of [Ravenna](#) - was *completely* laid waste by [the invaders](#). Located west of [Trieste](#), Aquileia was established by the Romans, during the days of the Republic, as a strategic military location.

Serving its purpose for hundreds of years, Aquileia also prevented barbarians from invading Italy. [Caesar Augustus](#) met with [Herod the Great](#) here in 10 B.C. The [Postumian Way](#) ended at Aquileia and other roads led from it to other Roman provinces.

Initially, Attila thought his siege of Aquileia had failed, and he was ready to lift it. Then - according to legend - the Hun leader saw birds unexpectedly fly out of the city. Trusting in omens as he did, and knowing that animals often leave before disaster strikes, Attila reinstated the siege. Before Attila, the town was impregnable. After Attila, it *never* recovered. The destruction to the city was total and absolute.

Avoiding [Ravenna](#), then the capital of the Western Roman Empire (and known today as the "[capital of mosaics](#)"), Attila was less generous to other towns. Let's [virtually visit](#) a few of them:

- [Padua](#) (Padova), for centuries [home](#) to a famous [university](#), fell. It has long been said that people fleeing [Padua](#) (the link depicts a woodcut from the famous Nuremberg Chronicle), in advance of Attila's arrival, founded the city of Venice (also called [Venezia](#)).
- [Verona's](#) fortifications provided little defense for that ancient town. It, too, fell.
- [Brescia](#) (Brixiae) was [taken](#) without difficulty.
- So was [Bergamo](#).
- [Milano](#) (known as Mediolanum to the ancients and home today of the famous [Duomo Cathedral](#)) offered no resistance.
- The Huns pillaged [Pavia](#) (then called Ticinum - it is located on the Ticino River); it also fell. In Pavia's beautiful [Charterhouse Monastery](#) ([Certosa di Pavia](#)), a medallion (with the words Flagellum Dei - "Scourge of God") depicts Attila. (It does not match the physical description of Priscus who personally met Attila.)

On the banks of the Mincio River, not far from [Mantua](#) (Mantova), Attila met Pope Leo the Great. At issue was whether the Huns would attack Rome.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DEATH-IN-LOMBARDY-Attila-the-Hun>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DEATH-IN-LOMBARDY-Attila-the-Hun>

Media Stream

Ruins of Aquileia, a Once-Great Roman Town

The Emperor Justinian once described Aquileia, in northern Italy, as “the greatest of all the towns in the West.”

That, however, was before Attila the Hun, and his invaders, utterly destroyed the once-beautiful town.

So thorough was the Hunnic destruction that today visitors can only glimpse a hint of what was once a city of Roman grandeur.

This image, of the remains of ancient Aquileia, depicts what had once been a Roman fluvial port along the the river Natiso.

Imaginative Roman engineers worked on the city’s harbor system which included canals (to drain water flow, among other things) and reinforced river banks (protected with corrosion-resistant Istrian limestone).

After Attila’s costly visit, however, all the hard work of the Roman engineers was left to decay, along with the rest of the once-great town.

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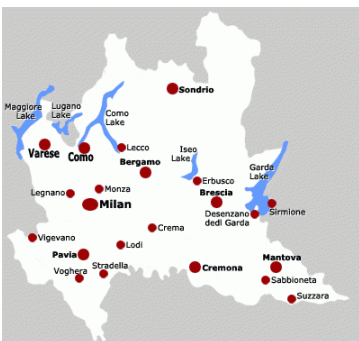
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ruins-of-Aquileia-a-Once-Great-Roman-Town>



Lombardia Region - Map

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Towns of Lombardy

Image online, courtesy the winecountry.it website.

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Aquileia - Map

Image online, courtesy the Map Collection at the University of Texas at Austin [website](#).

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Ravenna - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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INVASION OF THE HUNS INTO ITALY After the painting by T. Chios

Invasion of the Huns into Italy

Online, courtesy the heritage-history.com website.

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Trieste - Map

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

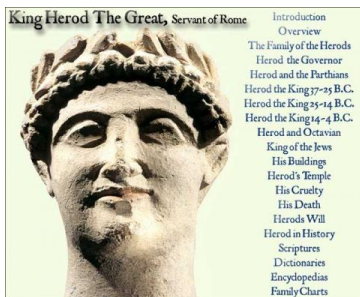
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Caesar Augustus

Image online, courtesy the BBC.

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Herod the Great, Servant of Rome

Image online, courtesy the bible-history.com website.

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View of Ravenna

This photo was taken by ania70pl. Online, courtesy the virtualtourist.com website.

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Ancient Mosaics - Ravenna, Italy

Image, described above, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Empress Theodora - San Vitale Mosaic in Ravenna

Image, described above, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Mantua

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Padua: City View

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

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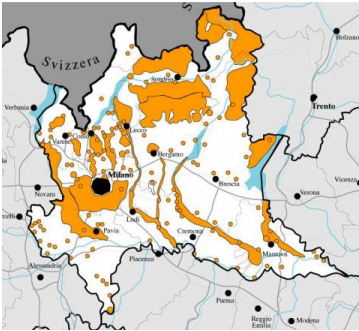


Padua (Padova)

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Map: Milano Region

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Attila Medallion

Image online, courtesy the boglewood.com website.

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Brescia

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Charterhouse Monastery

Image online, courtesy the Cornell University website.

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Duomo Cathedral

This photo was taken by MarkusMark in February, 2009. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

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Bergamo - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy the atlanteparchi.it website.

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Map: Brescia

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Milano: Piazza Duomo

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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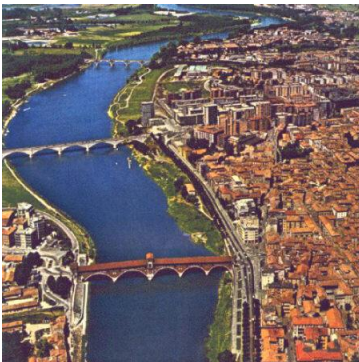


Padua Scene

Image, described above, online courtesy Morse Library at Beloit College.

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Pavia: Aerial View

Image online, courtesy fotosimágenes.org website.

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University at Padua

Image online, courtesy pbase.com website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/University-at-Padua>



Venezia

Image online, courtesy online-artikel.de website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Venezia>



Verona: Aerial View

Image online, courtesy the visitsitaly.com website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Verona-Aerial-View>