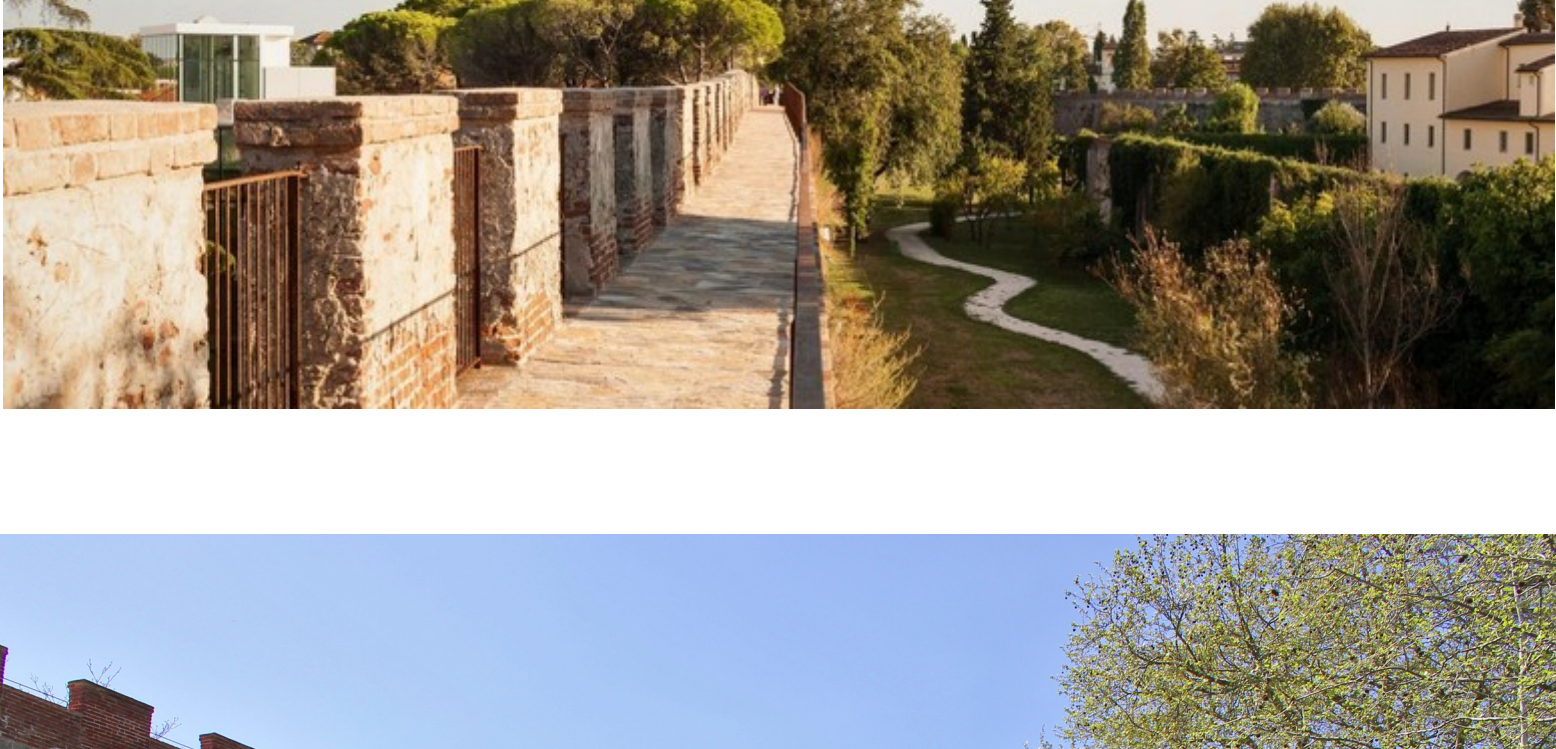


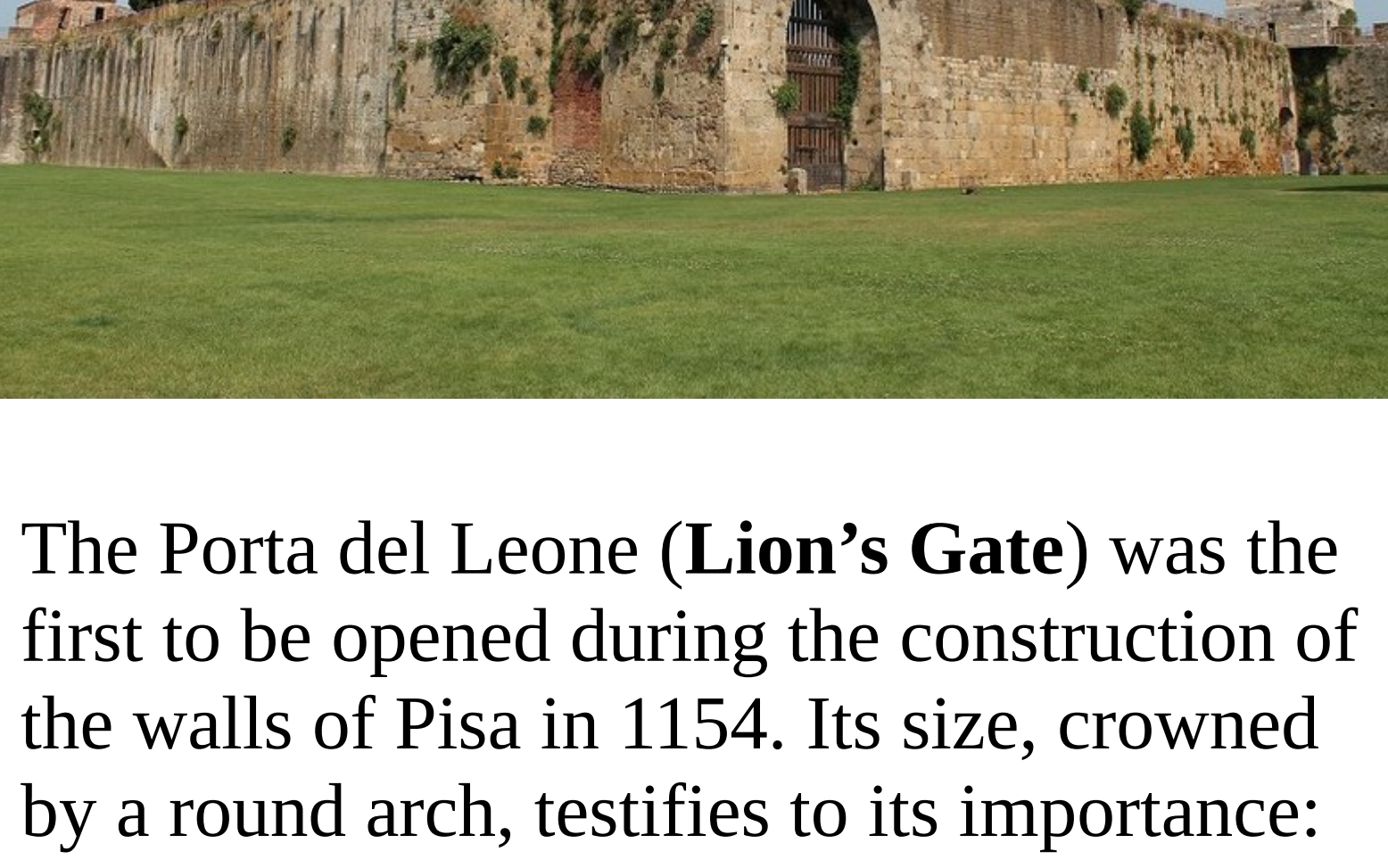
It is not certain that Pisa had walls from the Etruscan, Roman, or even Lombard period. The geographical position, on the confluence of the Arno and Auser rivers (today Serchio), the dense network of canals and the marshy terrain gave it a certain natural protection. For sure there were fortresses and towers in strategic places, but the descent of **Frederick Barbarossa** in **1154**, interested in knowing a city that declared itself to be free, was decisive for the construction of the new walls. In the same year, **Consul Cocco Griffi** started the construction of the Pisa walls, starting right from Piazza del Duomo, near the **Leone gate**.

11 meters high, up to 2 meters thick, they were completed in a century, with a **Roman-style masonry technique**, and using a variety of materials: tuff, limestone from the nearby town of San Giuliano and **Verrucana stone**. The entire perimeter measured about 7 km, with towers every 300 meters and about 20 gates; the enclosed surface was almost 200 hectares. Today a little more than 5 km of walls remain standing, given the nineteenth-century demolitions and war destruction, and it is possible to walk on top of about 3 km of them.

The walls of Pisa are one of the oldest national examples of almost completely preserved city walls.

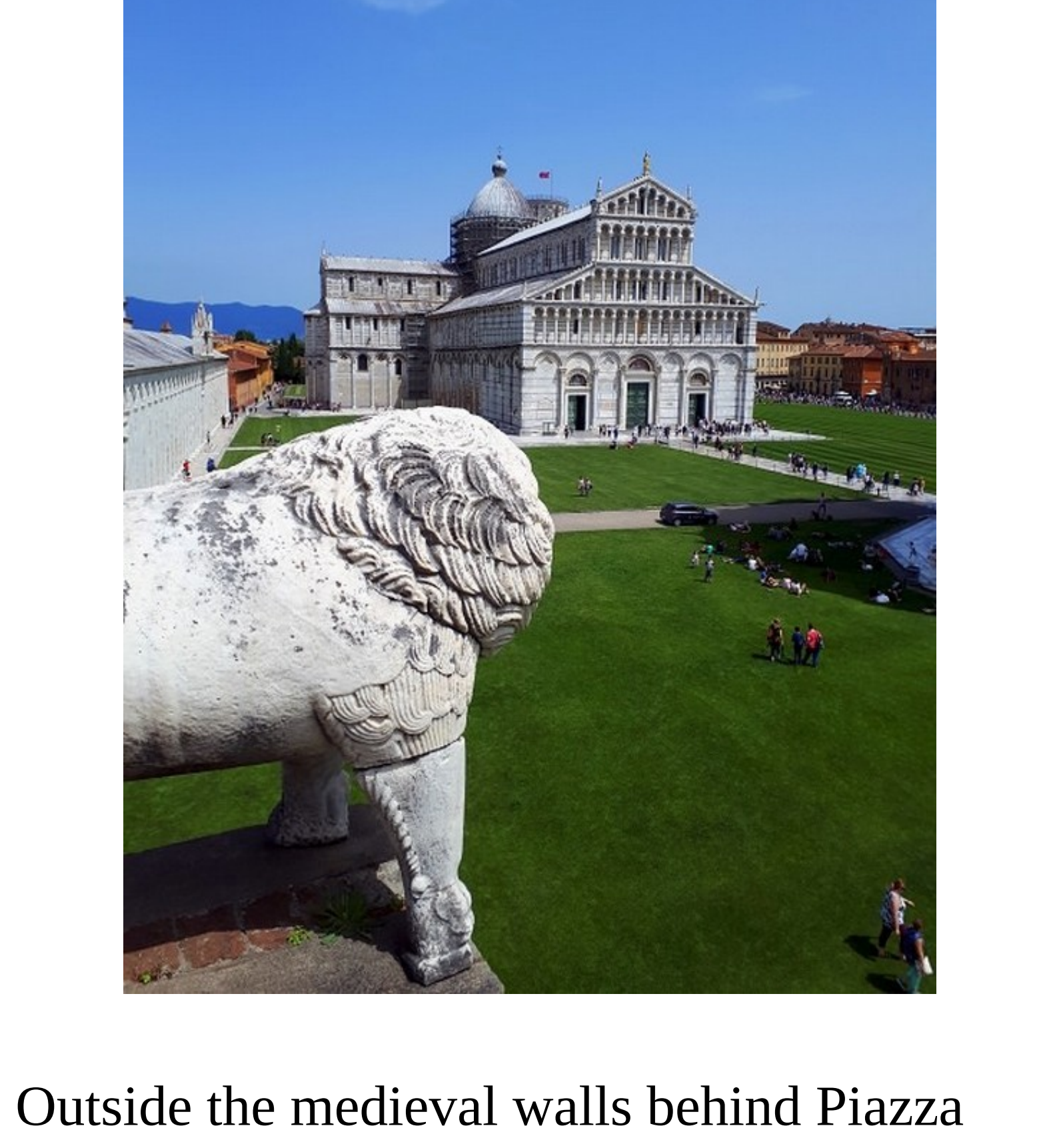


Porta del Leone e Cimitero Ebraico



The Porta del Leone (**Lion's Gate**) was the first to be opened during the construction of the walls of Pisa in 1154. Its size, crowned by a round arch, testifies to its importance: it was intended for triumphal entrances and for the passage of wagons and carts laden with goods.

The marble lion, originally placed in the niche of one of the towers defending the gate, was oriented towards the outside, guarding the city, most likely on the top of the now demolished tower. Outside, from the cemetery, a shelf can still be seen, presumably a temporary location of the statue. When, in 1406, the Florentines conquered Pisa, they moved the lion towards the corner of the walls and turned it inwards.



Outside the medieval walls behind Piazza dei Miracoli, the Jewish cemetery has hosted the burials of the Jews of Pisa and elsewhere since 1674.



Of particular interest are the quality and stylistic variety of the tombs, which range from the traditional Jewish parallelepiped forms to the Empire style monuments of the early twentieth century.

The different geographic origins of the graves show how the Jewish presence in Pisa has been varied over the centuries and also testifies to the choice of many Jews (especially from Spain and Portugal) to be buried in the Pisan cemetery, by virtue of the monumental context in which it is inserted. Documents and testimonies attest to the existence in Pisa of at least four Jewish cemeteries from the 13th century to today.

