*The Palazzo Pretorio Museum devotes a great exhibition to the religious and civil symbol of the City of Prato.   
The story is known: the merchant Michele brought the relic from the Holy Land and since the end of the 12th century the Belt is jealously guarded by the city walls and - for them - by the wonderful railing by Maso di Bartolomeo which since 1442 prevents access to the chapel built at the end of the 14th century on the left side of the Cathedral of St. Stephen.   
All our citizens know that the reliquary guarding the 87 centimeters of brocade that bore the belly of Mary opens with three keys - two at Mayor’s disposal, one held by the Bishop - but outside our borders, not everyone knows that the History of the Belt is an inextricable plot of politics, art and devotion that moves from the giving of the relic by Michele to the priest of St. Stephen in 1172 and which has its culmination, as far as we can see still today, between the 14th and the 15th centuries.   
Before the Prato Factory, which had been investigated four years ago with the beautiful pre-opening of the Museum, overshadowed and anticipated the Renaissance, already the 14th century was marked by a rich polyphony attributable to a single, large commission embodied by the Belt itself.   
Also under this profile, the permanent collection of Palazzo Pretorio and the one of the Cathedral Museum are two perfect witnesses.   
Not only. Today's Cathedral and today's Piazza del Duomo were progressively conforming to the needs for preservation of the Relic, and therefore the city grew with it, from pilgrimage to pilgrimage. At the same time, a rich iconography - in particular, on exhibition, coming from Tuscany – confirms the universality of the theme of "Bound by a Girdle".   
The Administration and the City are aware of the absolute value of an exhibition that the Curators, the Conservator and the staff of Palazzo Pretorio have prepared for two long years, even with the contribution of a Scientific Committee of extraordinary value.   
For this reason it was decided that the inauguration of the exhibition coincided with the inauguration of the restored Monte de 'Pegni which is the area of the palace intended for temporary exhibitions: four austere, versatile halls that confirm the commitment to a Museum of the History of the City.*

**Matteo Biffoni, Mayor of Prato  
Simone Mangani, Councilor for Culture**

Inizio modulo

Fine modulo