



FONDAZIONE BANCA DEL MONTE DI LOMBARDIA

Pavia e la sua provincia



9-San Teodoro

Situated in the south east part of the city, a few paces from the Ticino river, the church of San Teodoro was the reference point in the first centuries following the year 1000 for the people of the river who populated this part of the city.

The present building is the reconstruction in Romanesque forms of a more antique church named after Saint Agnes and later dedicated to Saint Theodore, bishop of Pavia during the passing phase from the period of domination of the Longobardi and the rise of the Franks in the 8th century.

In red brick, the basilica presents an installation of three naves terminated by three semicircular apses and is surmounted by an elegant octagonal crossing tower, enlivened by glazed plates, some of exotic origin, others produced locally imitating plates brought as gifts by the pilgrims returning from the Holy Land.

The inside is divided into three naves covered by cross vaults: at the end of the church the presbytery is elevated on the ample oratorical basement crypt. The columns and the lateral walls are enlivened by votive frescoes of the 2nd century that donate a characteristic atmosphere to the church. Underneath a few of these images, (saints, martyrs, virgin Mary's in thrones with the baby), glimpses of traces of the black smoke can be seen left by the candles lit by the devoted of the previous centuries.

At the end of the left nave, next to the presbytery, is the statue of Saint Theodore, defender of Pavia, in the act of holding up the model of the city.

The vicissitudes of the Saint can be seen narrated in 12 frescoed squares, made at the beginning of the year 500, on the left wall of the transept: from the election to bishop of Pavia to his death, and in particular, the miracles he performed to defend the city during the rise of the Franks.

Further down, the fresco of the offering of the bulkhead of the boat people, represents the animal offering of fish that the corporation presented to the clergy.

During the course of the same campaign of frescoes, on the right side of the transept, 10 squares with the story of Saint Agnes Virgin martyr, were made by a master of greater talent.

To this same master, the double version of the view of the city of Pavia is attributed, around 1525 and collocated today in the entrance portal: an extraordinary representation of the medieval city with the two towers, the double cathedral, the covered bridge on the Ticino of Viscontine era, the merchant ships and the floating mills.

The fresco was originally found overlaying the one visible today on the left hand wall of the entrance, which constitutes the first version, left unfinished because of an erroneous calculation of the proportions.

Behind the façade and along the right hand nave, flooring mosaics of the 12th century were recently discovered and renovated, since they are part of the original decoration of the church. The few remaining fragments display decorative motifs of braided ribbon, and real and fantasy human and animal figures, typical of the medieval figurative repertoire and of complex symbolic significance.

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