

## **The Cloister of Saint Orso**

The cloister of Saint Orso was built at the beginning of the 12th Century.

Monastic life at the site officially began under the Bishop Aribertus (1132-1139) and the first prior Arnulphus, when the chapter was reformed and converted from a collegiate foundation into a community of Augustinian canons regular by Pope Innocent II in 1133 – in modern dating 1132 – and confirmed by an inscription on one of the decorated capitals in the south wing of the cloister.

At the end of the 15th Century the Prior Georges de Challant built the vaults and the South side of the cloister was rebuilt later: some original capitals were removed and are now in the Palazzo Madama Museum in Turin.

The capitals and the columns are made of marble: the black color is due to the oxidation of a protective paint that was added later.

Description of the capitals from capital no. 1 (south side) to capital no. 40 (west side).

**Capital no. 1 :** 4 eagles, placed on the corners, with open wings in order to occupy the empty space,.

**Capital no. 2 :** Goat heads that support or eat braided leaves and branches.

**Capital no. 3 :** Four men are catching vegetable elements. This capital maybe reminds the division of property between the Cathedral (to which belonged 2/3 or these goods) and Saint Orso Collegiate Church, that obtained the remaining one third of them.

**Capital no. 4:** The series of the prophets begins; here Malachi, Zechariah, Haggai and Sophonias

**Capital no. 5:** The Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel

**Capital no. 6** The Prophets Jonah, Micah, Nahum and Habakkuk

**Capital no. 7:** The Prophets Obadiah, Amos, Joel and Hosea

**Capital no. 8:** The Prophets Moses, Balaam, Nathan and Elijah

**Capital no. 9:** Life and miracles of Saint Orso

**Capital no. 10:** The Resurrection of Lazarus, Saint Andrew and Saint Peter

**Capital no. 11:** Jesus, Martha and Mary Magdalene, Saint Bartholomew and Saint James the Less.

**Capital no. 12:** The protagonists of the regular reform : Saint Orso, Saint Peter , prior Arnulphus, Saint Augustin and bishop Aribertus.

**Capital no. 13:** decorative capital with an inscription reminding the date of the institution of regular life.

**Corner pillar:** Decoration with large acanthus leaves.

**Capital no. 14:** Capital replaced during the second half of the 18th Century.

**Capital no. 15:** Romanesque capital that cannot be compared with the other original ones.

**Capital no. 16:** Capital replaced during the second half of the 18th Century

**Corner pillar:** Monstrous animals fused at the head on each corner

**Capital no. 17:** King Nebuchadnezzar and three young men thrown into the fiery furnace.

**Capital no. 18:** The Annunciation, King Salomon and David who is playing the viol.

**Capital no. 19:** The Nativity

**Capital no. 20:** The three Wise Men (Magi) visit Erode

**Capital no. 21:** The Flight to Egypt with the angel that appeared to Joseph in a dream telling him to flee.

**Capital no. 22:** Decorative capital with volutes

**Capital no. 23 :** Martyrdom and stoning of Saint Stephen

**Capital no. 24:**Members of the religious community are taking water from the well.

**Capital no.25:** Lamb heads : braided vegetal elements are coming out from their ears

**Capital no.. 26:** Birds with human heads

**Capital no.. 27:** The fox and the stork fable.

**Capital no 28.:** Decoration with acanthus leaves.

**Capital no 29:** Decoration with vegetal elements

**Corner pillar:** Decoration with acanthus leaves

**Capital no. 30:** The birth of Esau and Jacob.

**Capital no. 31:** Jacob receives the birthright from his brother and Isaac, tricked by his son, blesses him.

This is the resin made copy of the original capital which was stolen in 1996.

**Capital no. 32:** Jacob's dream as he sees a ladder leading to heaven.



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