



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Oratory of St. Omobono

Opposite the Parish Church of San Lorenzo stands seventeenth-century Oratory of St. Omobono, once seat of the lay confraternity devoted to cult of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary, known as "Company of the Blues" from the colour of the vestments worn by its members. Inside there is a small dome with the Assumption painted, which the painter Pietro Paolo Colli (1776 - 1828) realized in 1813, perhaps with the help of his very young pupil Pietro Alessio Chini. In 1850, Pietro Alessio, by this time mature, completed the decoration of the oratory, the remains of which may perhaps be recognized by the monochromatic paintings still visible today in some areas of the side walls. Subsequently, in 1913, Dino Chini had restored the environments of the Confraternity, and a further intervention on his part is recorded seven years later.

At the end of December 1924 a bad fire gravely damaged the nave of the oratory, which remained uncovered for about two thirds. Immediately after the serious event a citizen was set up for the restorations, of which Chino Chini was also part. The demanding works of restoration proceeded quite quickly, so that the church could already be re-opened to the cult in October 1925.

The Furnaces and the Chinis played a role of primary importance in the restoration work, as can still be verified today when visiting the small church. On the front wall, there is a beautiful window portraying the **Lady of Peace**, which was donated, like all the others, by Chino Chini and the Furnaces. The other windows of the oratory have glass tesseras with marbling and geometrical decorations with rhombus, in the simple, pleasant taste of Decò tone, with some Coats of Arms of the Confraternity of St. Omobono.

In the window on the left of the presbytery, which remind one of those of the Town Hall in its geometrical extraction, a small inscription recalls the donation made in September 1925 by Chino Chini and his wife Teresa Ghezzi. The beautiful entrance screen idealized by Dino Chini e realized for the wooden parts by the joiner Aldo Bargelli, suffers from a state of severe deterioration; it has windows decorated by the Furnaces, but this was carried out after the re-opening of the oratory, since it bears the date of 1926.

The decorations of the windows consist of Coats of Arms in the form of rhombus of the marquis Ferdinando Frescobaldi, probably the donor of this artefact, and of the Company of St. Omobono.

The task of retouching the painting of the Colli in the dome of the church and probably that of realizing the simple decorations of the new ceiling, were entrusted to the same Dino Chini, in substitution of those carried out by Pietro Alessio and completely destroyed in the fire. On the left side, near the side entrance, a marble tomb-stone dated 1919 and dedicated to the brothers of the "Company of the Blues" fallen in war, is walled up. It is adorned by a frame in ceramics composed of ovoli and gilded diamonds, related to the production of the Furnaces and, evidently, surviving the destruction of the fire of December 1924.

On the opposite wall of the church, a monumental plaque in polychromatic ceramics in relief may be seen, dedicated to three employees of the Furnaces fallen in the Great War. It was realized in 1925, on occasion of the outstanding diligence reserved for the restoration of the oratory. The commemorative tone, solemn and austere, of the hand-manufactured article is relieved and almost livened up by the sparkling polychromy with metallic reflections and decorative motifs with broken lines, stylized vegetables, Greek frets which, associated to the Renaissance repertoire, fill the whole of its surface.

Worthy of appreciation are the extraordinary qualities of the shaping and the decorative motifs which, once again, unite and harmonize elements culturally heterogeneous in a synthesis which is modern but proportionate to the requirements of the destination and significance of the work.