

San Teodoro al Palatino



San Teodoro is a circular church dedicated to the 4th century Greek soldier martyr St [Theodore Tyro](#) from Euchaita in Asia Minor, who was martyred at Amasea. It is at Via San Teodoro 7 on the western slope of the Palatine, in the rione Campitelli.

In November 2000, Pope John Paul II, announced that he was granting use of the church to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. This means that it will be used by the Greek Orthodox community in Rome. On 1 July 2004, the church was officially inaugurated for its new use by His Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. However, it remains consecrated as a Catholic church and the Diocese lists it as such.

History

The church may have been built as early as the 6th century in the ruins of the granaries of Agrippa (Horrea Agrippiana), Imperial Roman grain warehouse. The round shape is unusual, and it is possible that the church was built in the ruins of a temple of Romulus. The earliest definitive evidence of the church's existence is from the 9th century, but a Christian mosaic from the 6th century was found under excavations, supporting the earlier date.

As the dedication to one of the most venerated saints of the East attests, it was built in a period of strong Byzantine influence in Rome. The church may have been built as a diakonia, to provide food for the needy.

It was rebuilt under Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455) and renovated on the orders of Francesco Cardinal Barberini in 1643.

Pope Clement XI hired Carlo Fontana to renovate and redecorate the church (1702-1705), but insisted that he respect the historical building and works of art and craftsmanship.

After the renovation of 1729, the church was given to the Confraternita dei Sacconi Rossi, the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 1738 Pope Clement XII restored the church to its previous ownership, and added a new chapel and sacristy. In 1769 a campanile was added, and the altars were replaced in 1779. In 1825 the sanctuary was rebuilt, the interior and courtyard were renovated and a wall was built between the courtyard and neighboring gardens. Extensive internal renovations were completed in 1852.

According to tradition, the church was one of the seven original deaconries in Rome. It was assigned to a deacon by Pope St Agatho c. 678.

Pope John Paul II announced in November 2000 that he was allowing the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Greek Orthodox community in Rome to use the church, with the official inauguration occurring on 1 July 2004, presided over by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople.

Exterior

In front of the church is an atrium. An ancient pagan altar can be seen in the middle; it used to support the altar of the church. At the back is an ossuary, where you can see stacked skulls and bones through a grille.

The papal emblem of Nicholas V, engraved in marble, are placed in the walls to the right and left of the main entrance.

Interior

The apse mosaic, which is from the 6th century, is very nice, but it is difficult to see in the dark church. Try to get the caretaker to turn the lights on. It shows Christ seated on an orb representing the heavens, flanked by Peter and Paul and by two martyrs, St Theodore and St Cleonicus. St Theodore is a later addition, from Nicholas V's restoration. Christ's clothes are black and have gold *lati clavi*, stripes indicating high rank on Roman garments.

In front of the sanctuary is a modern templon (partition wall) which is an essential element in the Orthodox Liturgy. It is in Renaissance design, with four embedded icons: on the left is the Virgin and St. Theodore and on the right is John the Baptist and Christ.

There are two side altars in the church. One dedicated to St. Crescentino, with the altarpiece by Giuseppe Ghezzi (1707). The second altar is dedicated to St. Giuliano, son of Ioulianos (Alexandrinus the Martyr), in honor of the original painting by Baciccio, that is now lost. The altarpiece above this altar is of St. Ranieri da Pisa and St. Giaginta Mariscotti, patron saints of the order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In the apse behind the altar, there is a Russian icon of the *Blessed Virgin and the Holy Child* in a frame supported by angels of stucco. The highest point of the dome is painted with the *Pantokrator*, by I. Karousos.

The Etruscan Wolf which is now on the Capitol (with Romulus and Remus added at a later date) was kept here until the 16th century.

Artists and Architects:

Bernardo [Rossellino](#) (1409-1464), Italian sculptor and architect
Carlo [Fontana](#) (d. 1714), Italian architect of the Late Baroque period
Francesco [Manno](#) (1754-1831), Italian painter and architect
Giuseppe [Ghezzi](#) (1634–1721), Italian painter of the Baroque period

I. Karousos, Greek painter

Location:

Via de San Teodoro, 7

Coordinates: [41° 53' 25.62" N, 12° 29' 5.37" E](#)

Info:

Telephone: 0039 06 6786624

Open very day 9.00am-12.30pm

Masses

Sunday 9.15am-10.30am (Greek Orthodox rite)

Refs:

THE HOLY CHURCH OF SAINT THEODORE TIRON ON THE PALATINE HILL; 2006

Links:

http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/San_Teodoro

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Teodoro_%28Rome%29

http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp?ID_schede=51

<http://www.060608.it/en/cultura-e-svago/luoghi-di-culto-di-interesse-storico-artistico/ortodossi/san-teodoro-al-palatino.html>

http://www.tesoridirioma.net/chiese_medioevo/san_teodoro_palatino.html

<http://www.romasparita.eu/foto-roma-sparita/22668/san-teodoro>