

SHEETS

Legends of the Duomo

MIRACULOUS APPARITION

In a legend from the 15th century a miraculous apparition is recounted. A priest named Francesco da Giussano was very intent on praying when two female figures materialized before him. The first was Saint Elizabeth, the second was none other than Theodelinda herself. The visitors urged Francesco to look for some sacred relics of the Holy Land that a cleric had hidden so to protect them from an impending danger. The hiding place was then forgotten. They were gifts from Pope Gregory the Great to the Longobard queen. This is why it was Theodelinda herself that showed priest Francesco where to find the precious and sacred testimonies of faith.

THE SACRILEGIOUS SON OF KING ROTHARI

Paul the Deacon recalls another apparition in his *Historia Langobardorum*. St. John the Baptist himself - narrates the historian - is said to have appeared before King Rothari's son, Rodoald. He is described as a sacrilegious person because he had profaned his father's tomb to steal his treasure. John the Baptist interdicted him from entering the Duomo and every time Rodoaldo tried to enter the temple, a mysterious force grabbed him by the neck and pushed him out of the sacred building.

THE PROPHECY



MONZA – The anchorite warns the Emperor Constans II (Theodelinda's Chapel, Duomo)

Paul the Deacon also tells the story of a prophecy that proves the value of the Duomo of Monza in the Longobard imaginary. The episode takes place in the time when the Byzantine Emperor Constans II the Bearded was trying to reconquer Longobard Italy.

Paul writes that an anchorite monk warned the Emperor of the uselessness of his military attempt since the Longobards were protected by St. John the Baptist for whom Queen Theodelinda had built a temple.

A two-sided prophecy: the Longobards would go to rack and ruin when they stopped worshipping the saint and

his church. Paul the Deacon adds that he lived to see this last part of the prophecy become true. And indeed he adds:

“We have proved that this has so occurred, since we have seen that before the fall of the Langobards, this same church of St. John which was established in the place called Monza was managed by vile persons so that this holy spot was bestowed upon the unworthy and adulterous, not for the merit of their lives, but in the giving of spoils”

[*Historia Langobardorum*, V, 6]