



BASILICA OF S. EUFEMIA (ST. EUPHEMIA)*

* building totally or partially in ruins

You can find this point of interest in Ossuccio - Path 1 - Stage 3

INFORMATION

Location: the remains of the old basilica of S. Eufemia lie on a wide green plateau at the east end of the Island.

Paving: the adjacent path is grassy.

Architectural barriers: information on accessibility is available in the description of Stage 3.

Access: it is an archaeological site, it is therefore advisable to observe it from the outside.

Services: -

Leisure and food: the surrounding green plateau is equipped with benches and small wooden tables for anyone wishing a break. A bar and a restaurant are available on the island.

DESCRIPTION

(Drawn from the descriptive panels on site and in the *Antiquarium*)

«The basilica of S. Eufemia (St. Euphemia) is the most remarkable monument on the island and the first to have been discovered by archaeologists.

The remains you see here were part of the Church built in 1031 by Litigerius, bishop of Como (historical sources document the deed of foundation). It was demolished by the city of Como in 1169. Archaeological excavation has revealed the existence of an earlier religious building, erected during the Early Christian period or the Early Middle Ages. The earliest ruins date back to Roman times.

The Romanesque building was a large three-aisled basilica (22×62 m); the aisles, separated by octagonal masonry columns, terminated in three semicircular apses facing east. A central staircase of 9 steps allowed visitors to ascend to the raised presbytery while in the wings two smaller staircases led down to the crypt. Given the composition of the terrain (for the most part bedrock), the right apse was placed at the same level as the aisles while the left apse was built on a somewhat higher level.

A portico with two side wings containing several graves was built in front of the façade. In the left wing a staircase led to a raised plateau and the religious complex of S. Giovanni with its twin apse baptismal hall. The granite threshold of the entrance portal is still visible in the middle of the wall which once was the façade of the church.

The fragments of fresco found by Monneret de Villard (who unearthed the remains of the church in 1913) indicate that the interior of the church was probably plastered and painted».

«The stone staircase on the north wall provided access from the central nave to the bell tower. The Romanesque bell tower was found to be a late Roman square tower. It is one of a series of earlier structures identified beneath the nearby complex of S. Giovanni and probably extending over the area occupied by S. Eufemia».