

Turin, on Monday, construction of the building site for the restoration of the altar of the Shroud Chapel

The altar of the Shroud still shows the signs of the fire that devastated the Chapel on 11 April 1997. The large and complex scaffolding of the architectural site has, in fact, hitherto prevented its restoration. The recovery works co-financed by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism Art Bonus 2018, the Specchio dei Tempi - La Stampa Foundation and the Compagnia di San Paolo will begin on Monday 9 March.

The works were entrusted to the San Luca Consortium of Turin, winner of the negotiated procedure tender pursuant to art. 63 of Legislative Decree 50/2016 as amended, coordinated by the architect Marina Feroggio, Sole Director of the Procedure and Director of Works.

The altar was designed by the architect Antonio Bertola (1647-1719) to house the Shroud, preserved in the central urn from 1694 to 1993. Originally from Biella, he was appointed First Architect in 1708, a qualification never previously attributed. Bertola adapts the monumental altar to the circular shape of the chapel thus creating two fronts - one facing the Cathedral and the other facing the Royal Palace - with the large urn of the Shroud in the center. The altar was made of black marble, enriched with decorations and sculptures in gilded wood to make it shine in the penumbra of the lower part of the chapel. The four angels with the symbols of the Passion, on the sides of the urn, and the eight cherubs of the upper part of the balustrade, some of which bearing the nails of the cross, were made between 1692 and 1694 by the "Carvers of SAR" Francesco Borello and Cesare Neurone. The putti, with particularly elegant movements compared to similar sculptures of the time, survived the fire because they were kept in the sacristy and will be replaced in their place, like the two surviving angels. Even the embossed and chiseled silver tabernacle, built in 1790-91 by Carlo Genova called Lacchetta, and the apparatus details, such as the lamps and pyramid candlesticks, will return to decorate the altar of the Shroud Chapel at the end of the restoration work.

During the construction phases of the construction site, from 9 to 17 March 2020, only the view of the Shroud Chapel will be allowed, afterwards it will be possible to access it and observe the progress of the works.