

Hospital of St. Gotthard (15th century)

via Monti, 27

Nothing is known about the origins of this hospital, which has been recorded since 1430s; as stated during a pastoral visitation in 1444, it was dependent on the abbot of the nearby convent of St. Julian, who nominated its rector. In 1496 St. Gotthard was definitely incorporated with the *hospitale novum* (the hospital of St. Anne): documents record that at the end of the 15th century the deputies of St. Anne's ruled the celebrations made officiated by a *schola* of *Disciplini* in the church of the ancient hospice. In 1537 all foundlings that Gerolamo Miani had initially gathered at St Leonard's moved to St. Gotthard's. This institute survived till 1546, when it was joined to the *Scuola della Misericordia* (Confraternity of Mercy). The church, of which nothing is now traceable, went on with its celebration until the beginning of the 17th century, whereas the hospital buildings were rent out for profane activities.

What documents tell us...

From the records of the town council, 1433

Since the podestà affirms that many pilgrims and other poor visitors complained that they received neither hospitality nor handouts both inside and outside the city, with great disgrace for nobles and citizens of Como, and since an appreciable number of hospitals, richly equipped by the inhabitants of Como, are set in the city in order to lodge and give donations to the needy, St. Gotthard's minister promises, in the presence of the Savi di provvisione (Wisest in the city council) he should prepare two beds ready and give assistance to the poor.

Extract from Francesco Magnocavallo, *Memorie antiche di Como*, 1518-1559

The scolla was organized as follows: Gerolamo Miani led poor, infirm, miserable children to this school, washed them from filth and fed them with love and care. After leading to his house, children were charged with different jobs, he went to church with them several times a day in order to pray and praise the Lord. This practice was also followed before each meal. After their health had bettered and after being addressed to good values and art, these children were assigned to families as domestic staff and there they could learn any kind of occupation.