



**Roma. Palazzo Magistrale.**

I ventisei volumi del primo organico inventario dei beni dell'Ordine, che attraverso le sue schede tendenti a coprire sia il settore dei beni architettonici, sia quello delle opere d'arte, costituisce un «unicum» nel quadro dei patrimoni d'interesse culturale dell'Europa.

**Rome. Magistral Palace.** *The 26 volumes of the first, systematic inventory of the Order's assets, covering both its buildings and works of art, constituting a "unicum" in the sphere of European cultural heritages.*

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## **CULTURAL HERITAGE**

### ***The Order's Artistic and Architectural Heritage Conservation and Restoration Works***

*"Figaro-Magazine devoted ample space to our Order in its issue of 11 September 1993, soliciting in-depth contributions from H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master and other high officers of the Grand Magistracy and devoting a large part of its article to our art and architectural treasures, illustrating it with numerous photographs. The initiative had immediate echo in international circles and we received several requests for further information from Europe and the American continent. We were specifically asked for more details of our cultural heritage, of which many were unaware. Just as they were unaware of the commitment - highlighted by an interview with 'Figaro-Magazine' - of our Receiver of the Common Treasure, Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, not only to preserve, with the offices of the Grand Magistracy, this heritage but also to plan its restoration and even reconstruction, respecting tradition and often establishing museums to exhibit it.*

*To meet these requests, it was decided to give an overview - albeit basic rather than exhaustive - of the Order's art heritage in this edition of the International Review, also mentioning the projects of the Common Treasure for its maintenance and subsequent improvement of functionality and efficiency. A rich series of photographs, some of which never published before, accompany this article. In the past five years there have been important renovations of the Grand Master's Palace in Via Condotti in Rome, the Order's extraterritorial headquarters, also involving the restoration of the chapel. The specially chosen technical team worked on the basis of previous studies of the original colours, faithfully reproducing the luminosity and chiaroscuro effects which had faded over time. The restoration was carried out employing some of the best experts available, among whom Prof. Carlo Pietrangeli, General Manager of the Vatican Museums, who disinterestedly offered his experience. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to thank him with sincere admiration. The Via Bocca di Leone facade has also been restored to its*

*initial splendour and part of the inside of the palace has been carefully refurbished, respecting its original architecture and colours.*

*In the pictorial art sector, there was the delicate restoration of De Ribera's "Sagrada Familia", carried out through the Naples Monuments and Fine Arts Service and later exhibited in various shows. The Common Treasure was responsible for the recovery of this masterpiece and during the work on it some dealers offered modest sums to buy it from the Grand Magistry, completely unaware of its author. Today the work is well looked after and protected. Considerable restoration works have also been carried out in the Order's extraterritorial seat on the Aventine Hill, including extraordinary maintenance and architectural rehabilitation. The renovation of the Council Complete of State room and the wall overlooking the Knights of Malta square were noteworthy. The most significant functional and architectural works in the Magione Castle, the Grand Master's residence, were carried out to the hall on the ground floor, which was inaugurated last September, and the library. This last renovation was organized by the Common Treasure in the framework of its programme for preserving the Order's books which have been collected and arranged here in the most suitable environmental conditions, safe from any attack by outside elements. Humanitarian works include the renovation of the Nasisi farm in Taranto, where a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts has been set up, managed with the co-operation of the Community Incontro. This initiative was a contribution to the works of the Grand Priory of Naples and Sicily, in whose territory the property is situated. As regards museums, an important undertaking was the establishment, in Chignolo Po, of the 'Cusani Visconti Museum' with its various rooms containing mementoes of the benefactor family with numerous testimonies of the Order and its history. A particular contribution to this project was given by Dr. Antonio Spada, who also organized an exhibition of photographs taken before and after the works. Valuable books from the existing library are also on show in the museum.*

*There have also been several interventions over the last five years on the Grand Magistry's personal property and furnishings. Furniture and furnishings were restored for the Columbus Celebrations in Genoa where the Common Treasure organized an interesting exhibition linked to the Order's presence on the seas and its activities worldwide. Dr. Antonio Spada also helped with this exhibition prepared by the staff of the Grand Magistry's technical office.*

*As the Rivista is being printed, an Order of Malta museum is being set up in the Grand Masters' Palace on the island of Rhodes, occupying four rooms with reminders of the Knight's presence on the island and the Order's present activities all over the world. Among the great architectural restoration works, mention is to be made of the Palace in Prague, which was restored under the supervision of the Common Treasure and which is now the headquarters of the Grand Priory of Bohemia, which recovered all its urban properties after the fall of communism. However, the most important commitment which the Order has ever taken on in modern times for its cultural heritage is the restoration of Fort St. Angel, the first residence of the Knights on the island of Malta, recently conceded by the Maltese Government to the Order's Grand Magistry for its exclusive use for 50 years.*

*First of all, the monument was surveyed to define its historical background and an initial work stage involved the refurbishment of the old St. Anna Chapel and its appurtenances. A second work stage concerned the restoration of the adjacent area of the Grand Master's Palace and the refurbishment of the underground spaces. A third stage of works is being studied to enhance the functional nature of the first two restored parts and open up a*

passage leading to the old port. Particularly significant was the elimination of all the provisional and not archeologically justified additions which over the years had affected the historical and monumental image of the complex. Great attention has been paid to replacing the original doors and windows, the exterior and interior paintings, the restoration of the decorations and the uncovering of ancient frescoes. The attempt to make the restored monument functional was definitely the most difficult phase of the project, which was solved by deciding to dedicate the spaces next to the St. Anna Chapel for permanent use and the Master's Palace and adjoining premises as occasional reception rooms. The underground area can be dedicated to the recovery and exhibition of any artefacts found during the second stage of works and any other objects having historical relevance. Prof Nino Vicari was the designer of this unique restoration enterprise and architect Roger De Giorgio the project manager in Malta. The inspection of the works was entrusted to the architect Giampiero Cardillo, who generously offered his services to the Order.

Besides the extraordinary maintenance of all its properties in various countries, the Common Treasure has also designed special works in the Grand Prior's Palace in Venice. Important works are also in progress in the beautiful Battiloro Palace on the Riviera di Chiaia in Naples, by now in its final stage. This brief but significant overview confirms the Order's commitment to its cultural heritage which consolidated over the centuries, now offering the most suitable financial means necessary for achieving the Order's institutional aims. Considering the importance of this heritage, the Receiver of the Common Treasure decided to have a proper inventory drawn up with photographs of furnishings and works of art, offering the best guarantee for the future and the certainty of pinpointing individual assets. This inventory will be presented to H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master next April.



**Roma. Villa Magistrale all'Aventino.**

Sede extraterritoriale dell'Ordine, dove hanno luogo le riunioni del Consiglio Compito di Stato, del Capitolo Generale, le cerimonie religiose più rappresentative e gli incontri e le visite di Stato. Vi risiedono il Gran Priorato di Roma, le Ambasciate dell'Ordine presso l'Italia e presso la Santa Sede, l'Ufficio Filatelico e Numismatico.

**Rome. Magistral Villa on the Aventine.** Extraterritorial seat of the Order, where the meetings of the Complete Council of State, the Chapter General, the most representative religious ceremony, and the State meetings and visits are held. The Magistral Villa hosts the Grand Priory of Rome, the Embassies of the Order to the Republic of Italy and the Holy See, the Philatelic and Numismatic Office.