THE IDEA OF IDENTITY IN MUSEUM EXPERIENCE: THE QUIRINALE PALACE IN ROME, THE PALAZZO REALE IN NAPLES, THE GRANDMASTER'S PALACE IN MALTA. A COMPARATIVE STUDY.

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Abstract

Museum identity is the result of a long and complex process where many components play a crucial role. It is closely tied to collective and cultural memory and represents the constant transformation of the museum itself and its community. Historical events deeply influence this process being the ground where the other components take their shape: namely the relationship between art and politics, the urban transformation, and the museological displays. The combination of memory and identity - meant as two DNA strands directed towards past and future - allows drafting a theory on museums conceived as living structures and twenty-first century forums of debate and understanding.

To the love for knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

Museums have been usually examined and studied through the eyes and perception of visitors, observing their reaction to collections or displays. Since the very first survey conducted in the 1962 (Bourdieu-Darbel, 1963), the focus was concentrated on the audience. The sociological aspects were important to realize who were and who could become the new museum visitors and *tout court* the citizens of post World War II societies.

Several surveys have been made to know in depth the audience and to orientate the museum offer, so much so that the identity of visitors has been well designed and interpreted in the past decades (Falk, 2008, 2010). Nevertheless a lack of interpretation in museum identity is evident. This research aims to reverse the perspective focusing on the making of museums as identity keepers by means of their history, their social function, their relationship with power and politics. In other words, retracing the making of the museum not only through the lens of audience, but through the main historical events and personalities who left their mark. That will contribute to the reconstruction and knowledge of the museum identity.

The birth of the museum idea in the eighteenth century has contributed to the creation of a multifaceted interpretation and a more complex sense of modern societies identity. The museum has been seen since the very beginning as the venue where citizens could collect the major symbols of their own history and tradition (Schubert, 2009). It is evident in the conception of the Capitoline Museums, the first public museum in Rome opened in 1471. In that year Pope Sixtus IV selected a group of bronze statues of great symbolic value that had previously been housed in the Lateran. The statues were the *She-Wolf*, the *Spinarius*, the *Camillus* and the colossal *Head of Constantine*. The return to the city of some traces of Rome's past greatness was made even more important by their placing on the Capitoline Hill, the centre of ancient Roman religious life and seat of the civilian magistrature from the Middle Ages onwards.

The sculptures had initially been arranged on the external façade and courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. This decision had a strong symbolic value as "exhibition" of the artistic heritage of the people returned to the people. In doing so the Pope did not donate, but returned to the city a very important fragment of its history and made the Romans participate in its glory and splendour. The original nucleus shortly became enriched by the subsequent acquisition of finds from excavations taking place in the city, all of which were closely linked to the history of ancient Rome. During the sixteenth century a number of important pieces of sculpture were set out on the Capitoline Hill from several archaeological areas, such as the Boarius Forum, the Basilica of Maxentius, the Roman Forum completing the collection that was eventually enriched with the equestrian statue of *Marcus Aurelius*, which was brought to the Lateran in 1538 on the wishes of Pope Paul III.

The *She-Wolf* and the *Marcus Aurelius* statues are still nowadays part of the collection as symbols of the museum and identity symbols of the city itself. It is interesting to note through these passages how art has always had a value of identity, being often used as an instrument of power and, in wartime, as the spoils against which the winner lashes out when he wants to destroy the defeated power. Throughout the centuries art has been linked to politics in different shapes and ways. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic era, the Italian Risorgimento, colonial looting, the artistic policy of Hitler, the First and the Second World War, and the policy of refunds after the end of a conflict are some of the recent interconnections between these two factors.

In Europe there have been many episodes of plundering during the wars. One of the best known is related to the Amber Room in the Palace of Empress Catherine, located in the current town of Pushkin, in Russia. It was donated by a Prussian king to the empress in the eighteenth century, but was captured by the Germans when they came near Leningrad in 1941 and brought to Königsberg, city of East Prussia now called Kaliningrad. It was held there until the beginning of 1945, then it disappeared. It is likely that it was lost in the wreck of a German ship that sailed from Gdansk, torpedoed by a Soviet submarine. This is a typical example of how art has been a subject of war and has had a

relevant meaning in the conflicts perpetrated throughout history, changing the way people looked at the artistic heritage. On the one side, it was the symbol of supremacy and of a new political order; on the other, it was the sign of a lost identity as in the case of the Menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum that the Romans brought into the city after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and depicted in relief on the Arch of Titus in Rome. By moving the Menorah from Jerusalem, the symbol and sign of Jewish identity was uprooted and dispersed.

The work of art and the artistic heritage are thus ideological and cultural symbol of a community. They represent the collective and cultural memory keeping every single historical phase as a crucial moment to understand the modern identity of a venue. This premise is the basis of the research on museums' identity, especially for those museums that have a close connection with the venues of political power. Actually, the connection between art and politics has always been present in the history of mankind and has grown stronger more and more over the centuries.

Furthermore, when an identity collection is located within a building that for many years has been identified with the symbol of local power, the link between cultural heritage, community and history is deeply rooted. A classic example of this social and cultural system is the Quirinale Palace in Rome. It is one of the case studies of this research, and since it was a papal residence it has been later turned into the royal residence until the final transformation, after the proclamation of the Republic, when it was called the "House of the Italians". From the place of religious power to the place of temporal power and eventually the democratic power, the Palace has lived all these transformations retaining in its structure and in its architectural, decorative and artistic fabric all traces of the construction of its identity.

Similarly, the Palazzo Reale in Naples and the Grandmaster's Palace in Malta have embodied the meaning of all major historical, political and artistic events becoming a symbol of local power and the favourite place of all rulers who passed by the respective cities. These three palaces in Rome, Naples and Malta have played an important role in the construction of the urban fabric as

catalysers of attention and interests from different points of view. The shape of these cities has been deeply influenced by the presence of the palaces that can be seen as elements of specific city planning. Actually the location of the palaces determined a different axis of urban development and a convergence of interests towards the city centres. Their political role was emphasized by the facing squares, which provided a unique perspective in relation with the other buildings that stood nearby. The palaces together with the square become the representative places of institutional power, but also the place where the population could join in occasion of feasts and celebrations.

The shaping of the urban space implicates, more than the design of the physical space of the city, strengthening connections between aesthetics, knowledge and instances of the government. This research aims to give a contribution to the complex relationship between art and politics, analysed from the perspective of museums as "history-in-the-making", and specifically museums of institutional palaces. They represent a privileged point of observation for the study, analysis and understanding of the cultural identity of which they are custodians and at the same time vehicle. They can be considered as keeper of a virtuous process of change of society and its development, due to their centuries-old influence in the perception and interpretation of the cities. Museums have definitely contributed to the construction of the collective memory thanks to their strong cultural identity. Memory and identity are closely related and from their continuous mutual exchange and enhancement one can experience a real growth in the sense of belonging. They way one perceives, comprehends and interprets the surrounding world is also influenced by a community milieus; the cultural heritage housed in museums can contribute to the making of that complex process that is the development of the personal and collective identity.

An interesting aspect of the museum identity making is the role of temporary exhibition. In the Quirinale Palace, the main interest is focused on the role of the Italian presidency with all the local communities and traditions, and on the international relationships it has. The exhibitions vary from the

topics related to the history of Italy and its main personalities (*L'eredità di Luigi Einaudi* – The legacy of Luigi Einaudi, 2008; *Noi, l'Italia* – We, Italy, 2011-2012; *La grande Guerra. La liberazione. Cento gemme della filatelia italiana* – The Great War. The Liberation. One hundred gems of the Italian philately, 2015; *Primo Levi*, 2017) to the making of the Palace (*Il Quirinale dall'Unità d'Italia ai nostri giorni* – The Quirinale from the Unification of Italy to today, 2011-2012; *Margherita di Savoia e la Biblioteca del Quirinale* – Margherita of Savoy and the Quirinale Library, 2012; *Il Palazzo e il colle del Quirinale* – The Palace and the Quirinale Hill, 2013; *Il Palazzo del Quirinale: suggestioni d'autore* – The Quirinale Palace: author's suggestions, 2016). Some exhibitions were also dedicated to Italian masters of all the times such as Pontormo and Bronzino (2010), Guttuso (2016), Paolo Guerriero (2016); to international events such the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2014) or to other cultures such as the exhibition on Jordan (2010), Cyprus (2013), and Slovakia (2016). A great emphasis is on the work of the Carabinieri unit for the protection of cultural heritage and the recovery of lost or looted objects with exhibitions held in 2008, 2014 and 2015. From this partial review of the temporary exhibitions at the Quirinale Palace one can pinpoint that the objectives of the curators range from the excellence of Italian art and craftsmanship (for instance with exhibitions on the Italian literature, the Neapolitan nativities and the Sicilian *Pupi* marionettes) to the history of the nation and its making, to international topics. These curatorial choices basically mean the intent to travel along and make known the many faces of Italy. They can also bring distant worlds to Italy with which audience can find a thousand-year-old cultural link. Furthermore, the interest in Europe and its birth from mythology to today (with exhibitions in 2007, 2010 and 2014) aims to give a strong political sense to all the museological choices that the curators make to reaffirm the social role of the museum as a place where everybody can find part of his or her cultural identity, perfectly embodying the "House of the Italians" as the presidential palace is supposed to do.

The Palazzo Reale of Naples devoted the main temporary exhibitions to detailed studies of its collections through the analysis of single works or groups

of items, and personalities who significantly represented the transformations of the Palace. All these studies were recorded in a series of notebooks that enrich with scrupulous archival researches the knowledge of the collection. For instance, the research on the Chinese art influence led to the notebook *"Quadretti" cinesi di collezione borbonica dalla "Favorita" di Napoli e Palermo* (Chinese small paintings in the Bourbonic collection of the "Favorita" villas in Naples and Palermo) in 2001. Again in 2001 another research on the "grottesca" (the decorative art of combining natural and human forms, and foliage so common in the ancient Roman painting in Pompeii and Herculaneum, and rediscovered in the sixteenth century) was published in the notebook *L'Antico. Opere recuperate* (Ancient art. Recovered works); a few years later, a study on coat of arms led to the notebook *Criptogrammi della storia. Stemmi del Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Cryptograms of history. Crests in the Royal Palace of Naples) and the related exhibition in 2003. More recently, in 2011, an exhibition on the Queen Margherita of Savoy was set up to celebrate the 150 years from the Unification of Italy retracing the changes that Italy was experiencing thought the her life. The researches on the Queen allowed investigating the theme of "margheritism", meaning the subtle power of attraction that she exerted on artists and intellectuals as on the fashion and customs of the growing nation. The visitor were immersed in the world of Margherita and her passions: the arts, fashion, literature, music, archaeological discoveries to live a significant chapter of the Italian, Neapolitan history as well as of the Palazzo Reale. In this way the curatorial choices have been more oriented on the definition and the rediscovery of the anecdotes of the Palace able to tell its micro- and macro- history. The search of the minutely facets linked to the furniture, the paintings or vases collection, the décor has led to a vast amount of information and in-depth knowledge that has allowed the making of high quality exhibitions. All this work, based on rigorous scientific approach, meant a specific aim to precisely define the historical identity of the Palazzo Reale and its relationship with the city of Naples. Indeed, more than the social role, in this case it is quite evident the cultural role of the museum as a keeper of local history interlaced with national and international events.

The Grandmaster's Palace seems to reflect the same spirit of Palazzo Reale exhibitions, focussing on local history rather than its role as presidential palace. The main exhibitions set up in the State Rooms were dedicated to the Great Siege of 1565. Many different topics have turned their attention on the historical events of one of the most significant episodes of the Maltese cultural identity that led to the making of Valletta and to diplomatic relationships all over Europe. The fresco by Perez d'Aleccio in the State Rooms, representing the Great Siege, makes this Palace a sort of sounding board of all the art and cultural activities related to the memory and the study of those events. As a result of that, exhibitions on coins and medals that belonged to the Knights, as well as the commemorative exhibition on the 450 years from the Siege held in 2015 within the State Rooms, are examples of the close and unavoidable relationship between the history of the Order and the Palace. In 2018 the Grandmaster's Palace will held an exhibition on Picasso and Dalì, in occasion of the European Capital of Culture scheduling that seems to distance the Palace from its specific identity. It can mean an opening to international artists, but a possible issue is the concealment of the permanent collection in favour of the temporary exhibition. This can occur because of the lack of dedicated spaces to temporary exhibitions that inevitably modify the perception of the original display. In this case the curatorial choices alternate between tradition and innovation, linking the museum spaces, on the one side, to its role of primary national palace where the local history is told and kept; on the other side, to the attempt to use the Palace like an international showcase where audience can experience exhibitions of wider geographical interest. To avoid such overlapping of permanent and temporary collection, the regeneration project of the Grandmaster's Palace will include a section devoted to exhibition that should allow a proper museum experience in the State Rooms.

It is interesting to note how the use and the choice of the museum spaces can modify the museum perception and identity. The Quirinale usually set up exhibitions in a separate area, in the Palazzo Reale exhibitions can be held inside the large Ball Hall without deep interventions on the permanent collection, while in the Grandmaster's Palace the shape of the State Rooms is

consistently affected and almost hidden during a temporary exhibition. These are three different ways to interpret the social and educational role of the museum as a place where audiences of all type can deepen specific topics or get in contact with totally new ones. In this sense, the Quirinale totally responds to its role of cultural site dedicated to all the Italians, putting on display stories, traditions, personalities, and locations that belong to the national heritage. The Palazzo Reale offers a set of topics that allows the in-depth knowledge of the city of Naples and the role of the Palace throughout the centuries. The Grandmaster's Palace is mainly concentrated in the history of the Order of St John as a symbol of its uniqueness and cultural identity, with a glaze to the internationalization of the city of Valletta in the very year of its consecration as European Capital of Culture.

The way curators perceive museum collections does reflect the social role of the three museums, and it is crucial for the contemporary museum identity as a consequence of what the Palaces and the collections entered the collective imaginary when they were opened to the public.

Therefore, the contribution to knowledge in this field of research is the focus on museum identity since there are no theories as such in Museum Studies. The hypothesis is that museums can be seen as living structures that grow together with their community. Their living structure is made up of two main elements that compose the idea of museum in itself: memory and identity. Memory is embodied in the collection, the artefacts or objects (whatever their nature: archaeology, art, science, ethnography, or other tangible and intangible human creation) telling stories about the past, the ways of living, the tastes, the interests, and the development of mankind in all possible fields of interest. On the other hand, identity is embodied both in the display and in the interpretation of these same objects. The museum display is a way to select, give relevance to, and propose a possible interpretation. This interpretation is the result of modern theoretical frameworks that follow a specific path capable of analysing and summarising an enormous amount of information. What the interpretation sometimes does not declare is the partiality of its message. Every interpretation

is the sum of different theories that inevitably exclude others to give evidence and sustain their outcomes. What is more and more needed in museum interpretation and mediation is the declaration that each single explanation is one of the many possible aspects composing the identity of a specific object in modern society.

As a result, if memory is looking backwards and identity is building brick after brick looking forwards, the museum can be seen like a statue of the Roman god Janus, a double-faced creature with his two faces melded together with the eyes directed in opposite directions. Even if the gazes are directed elsewhere, the head is a single one, a unique, uniform structure. In these terms, the museum could be able to preserve its past and display it providing different forms of mediation, and also build tools to face the future. Somehow, memory is the only weapon against disaffection and oblivion, and the museum can achieve a strategic function in modern societies, offering a sufficiently broad knowledge that enhances and develops a stronger identity.

If memory and identity are so closely tied from a sociological perspective, a theory that can link these two elements to a museum needs to combine two opposite and complementary forces. Moreover, the museum identity theory is composed of many other different elements enriching its composition. Relevant aspects to be considered are historical, cultural, ethnographic, anthropological, urban, social, and environmental, much like the tiles of a complex mosaic. As explained in the case studies presented in this work, all these elements have contributed to designing the modern identity of a palace and its collection. The relationship with the city and the square is fundamental to the imagery of the palace and the memory of it has been melded with the social events, the landscape, and the idea that travellers and visitors have matured during their museum experience.

To make this theory graphically, the most suitable image is that of DNA strand which offers many points for reflection and analysis, as can be seen in the conclusions of the research. The conformation of the strand allows to better identify the characteristics of the museum identity and to combine them together in a specific and unique way each time. Indeed, the idea that memory and

identity run in two parallel and opposite directions perfectly reflects the description of the DNA strand, which is moreover tied together with complementary strands that make every single being unique. The museum identity theory is based on the assumption that each and every museum is a nonpareil structure where the elements of its making have contributed to shape it throughout the centuries and do contribute also today to its uniqueness and its constant transformation (fig. 1).

By analysing the three case studies mentioned above (Quirinale Palace, Palazzo Reale and Grandmaster's Palace) to support the Museum Identity theory, this research will explore the main aspects related to the making of meaning meant as a paradigm depicting the visitors' active role in creating meaning of a museum experience through the context they bring (Silverman, 1995), and the importance of interpreting and communicating (Hooper-Greenhill, 2005, 2007, Falk, 2010).

Special attention will be given to the definition of and the interrelation between memory and identity as two parts of a set enabling the in-depth knowledge of the museum structure. In this case, works by Assman (1997), Halbwachs (1997), Hobsbawn (1983), and Riegl (1903) have been fundamental to retrace the meaning of collective and cultural memory and identity, the meaning of tradition, and the meaning of monument with its implications with the making of a museum and its relationship with its community and the city where it is located.

A third pillar of this research, besides the making of meaning paradigm and the relationship between memory and identity, is the close bond between art and politics that have determined many collecting choices and many consequences in terms of use of the Palaces and their *auctoritas* (Godart, 2010). The influences politics has always had in the art sector are more than evident in the three case studies for their constant role as institutional palaces and centres of power.

Keeping together and observing from time to time the constituent elements of a collection, it is finally possible to reconstruct the true identity of a

museum, always considering its adaptability and its continuous transformation in line with the society.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 The Research Idea

The experience of a museum is part of a process of meaning-making that the audience can have while visiting a collection, a palace, or an exhibition. The making of meaning is essentially a strategy to help the understanding of visual culture by means of interpretative processes, communication, and educational theories (Hooper-Greenhill, 2005). Sometimes, the real identity of a venue and the main aspects of a museum are not that evident or as clear as one would expect. This maybe because of a lack of good communication, missing explanations concerning historical facts, symbols, as well as the functions a museum has served during its century-old life. For these reasons, it is of a certain relevance to retrace the single events of a venue in order to put together all significant parts of the narrative discourse enabling comprehension and fruition. By studying historical events, one can deeply understand the social, political, and economic issues that engendered a work of artefact in a specific place and in a specific frame as a consequence of the culture at that time. It also means that all the links and passages from a historical event to the next enhance the making of meaning. This meaning-making works as a sort of spiral staircase, leading to new discoveries and enlightening the clear and hidden meanings from different perspectives with different intensity.

Such a meaning-making process at the museum needs a multi-disciplinary approach and a multi-level communication programme. It is then suitable to utilise a wide-ranging methodology to elicit a proper museum experience that is able to stimulate questions, debates and open new directions towards a more informed appreciation of art. Obviously, educating viewers with a picture of the past allows them to build a solid foundation onto which they can build a scientifically correct narrative. Through this first passage, it is then possible to add new bricks of knowledge regarding other disciplines, providing a complex fabric of understanding to depict the identity of a venue.

It is also important to focus on the evolution of historical events that have generated and modified a museum collection to understand the tastes of the time and the social and political implications intended in a museum. Thus,

when visiting a museum or a cultural venue, many factors must be taken into account if one wishes to gain a holistic experience: social and cultural history, artistic techniques, restorations, artists' biographies, etc. The complexity of the mediation levels should tend towards the mediation of all cultural aspects, including not only the site, but also the territory and the urban area where the site is located. As a result of that, another relevant issue that ought to be considered is the relationship between the site and the city where it has been constructed.

1.2 The case studies

The two main areas on which this research intends to focus are the museum experience and museum identity. The first is a direct consequence of the second and at the same time represents its premise. In fact, identity is a process in action and the experience of identity takes part in its making and development.

In historical and cultural venues, identity is enriched by centuries of events, personalities and works, where sometimes the stratification can hardly be distinguished and defined. Museums especially can be overwhelming because of the density and diversity of their collections that speak a peculiar language that needs to be translated. For this reason, the case studies needed a monument or a place that could contain together both historical and cultural instances in well-balanced proportions. In other words, museums are venues where the identity, history and memory, are representative of a whole community; where the idea of identity is multifaceted and comprehensive of historical, cultural, social, and urban characteristics. Nonetheless, city museums, house museums, or private collections can reflect only some of these distinctions. On the other hand, historical palaces completely mirror identity being the result of a century-old process of cultural and collective memory, especially when these historical palaces are turned into museums, as they have played a relevant role as institutional and political buildings related to a recognised power. As a consequence of this premise, three state palaces with

museum-oriented paths that have been selected for the case studies: namely the Quirinale in Rome (fig. 2); the Royal Palace in Naples (fig. 3); and the Grandmasters Palace in Malta (fig. 4).

These three locations are closely tied to the concept of *auctoritas*, formerly restricted to the political history of ancient Rome where this term was used to refer to the prestige, influence and capability a person had achieved in Roman society. However, *auctoritas* was not merely political since it had an arcane content and symbolised the "power of command" of heroic Roman figures. In the three palaces this “power of command” is rooted in the idea itself of the venues having been used as the Institutional residences of all the kings, rulers and commanders who have passed by Rome, Naples or Malta.

Among the three cities, and then the three palaces, there are many historical, geographical, artistic, cultural, and social influences and connections. The cities of Naples and Rome were often associated with Malta because of their cultural connections and also the fact that artists worked in this geographical area. In fact, the three cities were strongly connected in the 1500s and 1600s: from a juridical point of view, the Maltese archipelago belonged to the Kingdom of Sicily and so it entered the Kingdom of Naples and Two Sicilies in the Bourbon Age; from a social point of view though, the Knights of the Hospitaller Order of St John referred directly to the Pope as their supreme authority. This constant contact entailed a worthwhile exchange of ideas, artists, theories, and experiences that have determined a common destiny and a similar evolution in terms of use and function of the palaces.

The Grandmaster’s Palace, the Quirinale Palace and the Royal Palace are linked to the Knights of Malta, to the Pope as King of Rome and to the King of Naples respectively: three different faces of power which reflect the concept of culture they intended to develop in their respective countries. Three powers that endured, undisputed, until the end of the eighteenth century when the winds of change brought about by the French Revolution swept away the legitimate kings or nullified them. In the case of the Knights of Malta, indeed, the last Grand Master moved to Trieste, the Order broke up, and a few knights moved to Orthodox Russia and created Czar Paul I as the new grandmaster. The year

1798 is therefore the turning point in the evolution of the history of the three palaces and it is also the starting point of research in order to reconstruct the course of the events that lead to the present perception of their identity.

The research methodology therefore starts from the definition of the concept of memory whether collective, cultural, social, or otherwise: through bibliographical and archival research that retraces the past identity of the historical palaces, expressly referring to social aspects as the macro-area of this specific contest. Thus the definition of a past identity serves as the first step towards interpreting the shift that has lead to the present identity. The latter - pinpointed thanks to interviews with museum experts and curators - is the key to understand how and why a specific community feels a sense of belonging in relation to a museum collection, as a result of which, current museum identity tells the stories of a city and its community becoming a mirror and a witness of their culture and social development.

1.3 The Venues of Historical Memory

In this research the museum must be perceived as: a venue where stories are gathered and summarised into a unique experience composed by the shaping of identity. The definition of culture and the ability of a community to put into effect the highest and most sophisticated ambitions of hegemony, where the political use of art turns into a declaration and a superior messenger of whoever is in power. The choice of the three historical venues is also linked to their institutional authority. It becomes clear, considering the common characteristic of noble palaces that have witnessed, as "spectators", the most relevant events in their respective cities. The front *piazza* (square) is an extension of the palace and symbolically served to represent, promote, and propagate the rulers established within their precincts (fig. 5). The palace and the square were fundamental spaces to understand the social evolution and the cultural growth of each city; they can mirror and represent political signs, and highlight the true nature of a place to its observer thanks to their symbolic relationship (fig. 6).

The three selected palaces in this research are the Quirinale in Rome, the Palazzo Reale in Naples, and the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta that include in their "genealogical trees" great historical events and simple stories of daily life, as well as artistic masterpieces and small details making them unique in their genre. These palaces mark with their presence the passage of time which left behind them remarkable traces of engineering, artistic, and decorative skill from the end of the sixteenth century to modern times and have become cultural and historical palimpsests. The architectural and artistic traces inside, and the urban ones on the outside, make these three palaces the focal centre of their cities' development and change. They are, definitively, not only the witnesses but also the morphology makers of their cities, becoming the venue from which to start and arrive at for the understanding of the modern and contemporary city. Actually, their location in a specific site of the city has determined the development along axes that were decided not only for geographical reasons, but also political ones.

Centrality in the city of the sixteenth century and influence in the development of the urban fabric in the centuries that followed, made these palaces the centre of government expansion. Control at this time was both centripetal and centrifugal for culture and power. It was centripetal because they represented the nucleus towards which all masters and artists in different ages gravitate, creating taste and forging style. Moreover, the palaces were catalysts of political interest: since in their making they acquire both collective imagination and role of command as a local authority site.

The Quirinale in Rome was a papal residence first and Royal Palace later, at the end of monarchy it became the Italian Presidential Palace. The Palazzo Reale in Naples was the site of the Viceroy, then a Bourbon Residence and finally the Neapolitan palace of the Savoy Kings, where the last king of Italy was born. Instead, The Grandmaster's Palace started as the seat of the Hospitaller Order of St John, it then became a British Governors' residence and finally the Maltese Presidential Palace and House of Parliament.

Thus the three buildings relate and preserve within their walls twists of events and personalities that make them custodians of history and of collective

and civic memory. In their centrifugal characteristics, instead, the three palaces have projected the idea of government and even at the time of important and sudden transformation they have established a channel of communication with the city and have kept a strong symbolic value capable of expanding and reflecting on the whole territory.

The interest in studying and comparing their parallel events emerged from this particular peculiarity, shaping the idea of identity that we still have today. A crucial moment in the reflection and awareness of the palaces' role and function takes us back to the period between 1798-1799 when the catalyst of the French Revolution led to deep changes that led, in the nineteenth century, to the drive towards unification and the proclamation of a republican state (fig. 7). The Jacobin republics in Rome and Naples and the passage of General Bonaparte via Malta towards Egypt (fig. 8) are the events that fracture the centuries old hierarchical order imposed by the popes, the Bourbons and the Knights of St John. Even though the Roman and Neapolitan Jacobin republics had a short life, and the respective rulers returned back to their thrones (partially losing their authority), in Malta it marks the end of the Hospitallers and the start of a new historical era.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, European citizens started to become aware of the concept of a united, independent, and liberal constitutional government and began slowly to discover their own national identity. One may observe two major waves of change where the concept of nation emerged. The first one is "the French Revolution, its vicissitudes and its, largely Napoleonic, repercussions, spanning the continent from the British Isles to Russia, from Norway to Spain and to the Balkans. The second wave rolled in from about the 1850s – after the revolutionary tide of 1848 had subsided – to 1914" (Therborn, 2002).

The French Revolution, indeed,

> "rose from the clashes of monarchs and peoples, within a country and by peoples drawn into the maelstrom of wars between monarchs. [The second half of nineteenth century epic] surged from processes of national

> state unification, mass migration and the rise of industrial capitalism with its concomitant social conflicts and mass mobilizations. The former cracked up the carapace of medieval traditions and royal power, either wide open with a bang or stealthily ajar… [In conclusion, after] the French Revolution the threat and the claims of the *Grande Nation* gave rise to [the feelings of] nationalism or proto-nationalism" (Therborn, 2002).

Therefore it may be argued that the French Revolution initiated the search for a national identity.

The Jacobin Republic that followed, and the campaigns of General Bonaparte, were historical events that modified the path of history, leading to a deep social and cultural transformation. This transformation reached its peak in second half of the nineteenth century, the golden age of the bourgeoisie, with the Italian wars of independence (1848, 1859, 1866) that culminated in the First World War. This period (1914-1918) of time has even been referred to as the "Fourth Italian War of Independence" as the conclusive act of Italian unification completed the work started in 1848 (Genovesi 2009; Duggan 2011). It has been argued convincingly that the First World War was an integral part of the Italian Risorgimento process, seen as a "long Risorgimento" from the end of the eighteenth century to the end of the First World War. An extended period that was needed for the creation of the Italian national identity (Pécout, 2011) completed with the annexation of Venice in 1866 ratified in the Austrian-Italian Treaty of Vienna and eventually with the Capture of Rome by the Kingdom of Italy in 1870. The year 1914 marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, determining the close of a civilization and liberal capitalism. Therefore, the end of the First World War and specifically the year 1919 marks the *post quem* limit of this research, as I am considering the Great War as the ultimate closure of an epoch.

1.4 The Issue of Identities

From a psychological point of view, identity is "the totality of one's self-construal, in which way, one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future" (Weinreich, 1986). Enlarged to a social or ethnic group, this definition also includes those dimensions that express the continuity between one's construal of past ancestry and one's future aspirations in relation to ethnicity. Consequently, identity is "a structural representation of the individual's existential experience, in which the relationships between self and other agents are organised in relatively stable structures over time […] with the emphasis on the socio-cultural milieu in which self relates to other agents and institutions" (Weinreich and Saunderson, 2003). It means that personal experiences and events contribute in forming the identity as well as the identity of individuals and social groups. It can also be applicable for venues and places where the individuals and social groups act, for which they represent a vital and regenerating memory. This theory leads to a wider observation of the issue about identity, including the social and cultural aspect of it. On the one hand, individual identity is a neuronal-based process; on the other hand, social identity is a cultural-based process. In the second case, symbolic forms represent the many diverse elements that are composing a social structure. This latter can recognise itself in the traditional dances, costumes, laws, monuments, ornaments, as well as myths, stories, and landscapes (Assmann, 2001).

Actually, in order to define the concept of identity of a venue one needs to start by looking at memory. Yet one needs to specify the type of memory and Maurice Halbwachs (1997) argues that there are no purely private memories as that would lead an individual outside of his community and that each of us always takes with him a quantity of different people (Halbwachs, 1997). Halbwachs insists that the sociologist undertakes a path that starts from a different approach than Assmann about the origins of collective memory. He shifts the discourse concerning collective knowledge out of the biological

framework into a cultural one. Simultaneously, Aby Warburg, the art historian was developing his theory on social memory also moving away from the idea of an inheritable or "racial memory" (Gombrich, 1970) that was still present in the works of many psychologists, *in primis* Jung. The conclusion, reached by both Halbwachs and Warburg, highlights the fact that the specific character that a person develops, derives from his belonging to a distinct society while culture is a result of socialisation and customs. Unlike the evolution of animals, that guarantees the survival of the species, human beings must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations (Assmann, 1995). In this sense cultural memory can help to determine societal practices directing behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society. Halbwachs, then, pinpoints two main areas related to collective memory: "communicative memory" including varieties of memory based on everyday communications and specifically referred to oral history. Its main characteristic also represents its limit that is highly dependent by the temporal horizon. Oral histories usually go back in time from eighty to one hundred years, namely three or four generations, and do not shift with the passing of time. It means that there are no fixed points to bind communicative memory, unless it turns into a cultural formation outside the everyday memory. The second main area defined by Halbwachs is a direct consequence of this transition from everyday communication to objectivised culture that is characterised instead by its distance from the everyday. Therefore, "cultural memory" has its fixed point and the horizon is not subject to changes with the passing of time. It is more related to cultural formation such as texts, rites or monuments, as well as institutional communication – recitation, practice, observance. Cultural memory is a sort of suspended world where time and space are regulated differently from everyday life in order to recreate "retrospective contemplativeness" (Johnson, 2012) where meanings and customs that have been crystallised can become accessible again. It is very true in museums where centuries-old objects can tell again their story and come to life as part of a collective memory.

Starting from the studies of Halbwachs and Warburg, Jan Assmann attempts to relate their theories connecting their assumptions: Halbwachs asserts

the relationship between memory and group, while Warburg the relationship between language and cultural forms. Assmann (1995) considers memory, culture, and the group to be the three poles of his theory on cultural memory. Basically, therefore culture is based on texts, images, and rituals specific for each and every age and society to emerge and grow. These are all elements of what one calls today the intangible cultural heritage that makes a society visible to itself and to others. And as Assmann argued, "which past becomes evident in that heritage whose values emerge in its identificatory appropriation tells us much about the constitution and the tendencies of a society" (1995, 133). So, the way one chooses to talk about the past is decisive to characterise his or her own community.

1.5 Social and temporal dimension of identity

The idea of plurality in the shaping of memory can be combined with the idea of development of a connective structure. Assmann (2001) identifies this as the link between the social and temporal dimension; these two dimensions together give rise to a common space of experience, attempts and actions. The narrative and normative modalities of the connective structure establish the ground of belonging and identity, leading the individual back to a sense of community; therefore the repetition (*Wiederholung*) and the actualisation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) give a shape to tradition. The concept of cultural memory, at the base of cultural identity, relates to an external dimension of human memory that is divided into four areas: mimetic memory (referring to action), memory of things (referring to objects), communicative memory (referring to language and communication) and cultural memory, which is the summa of the three previous areas. When a mimetic routine assumes the status of a "ritual", that is to say it acquires a meaningful value in addition to the functional one it goes beyond the field of memory. Rites belong to cultural memory because they represent a form of transmission and actualization of cultural meaning. Even objects used in rituals, when they may remind one of a meaning and not only serve a practical purpose. Symbols, icons, and representations (i.e.

commemorative stelae, funeral monuments, temples, idols, and so on) transcend the horizon of memory and things, because they make explicit the temporal and identity index that are usually implicit (Assmann, 1997). This concept then becomes fundamental in the theories of social memory. Warburg and Halbwachs developed this theory contemporaneously as one of cultural memory. Assmann compares and analyses the two theories arguing

> "the specific character that a person derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture is […] a result of socialization and customs. The "survival of the type" in the sense of a cultural pseudo-species is a function of the cultural memory. […] Humans must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations. The solution to this problem is offered by cultural memory, a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation" (Assmann, 1995, 125-126).

Since studies about identity began, surveys have usually been referred to museums to investigate audiences or more recently evaluation about communication and educational activities (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1966; Falk, 2008, 2010; Falk and Dierkling, 2013; Hooper Greenhill, 2007; Samis and Michaelson, 2001; Hanki, Lee, and Okeke, 2014). Few attempts have been made instead to focus the museum identity as an element subject to change. Indeed, a constant defect of museum professionals was the certainty that the collection was supposed to be untouchable and unchangeable, and unmovable. In short it used to be seen as static, both geographically and historically. But identity is constantly in a process of change, and museums should reflect this change in their displays to face all the societal, cultural, and ethical challenges of the twenty-first century.

1.6 The invention of tradition

The attempt to categorize the identity of a venue solicits very careful attention and a meticulous study of the historical, social, political and artistic characteristics that have moulded its shape along the centuries. Pinpointing and clearly understanding the true nature of a venue also means discovering that current events are nothing more than consequences of social and cultural factors, and are as intrinsic in the urban fabric as to be predictable and typical of a specific nucleus in modern society. Basically, the research of identity corresponds to a research of ancestors, a type of genealogical tree thereby recognising one another and delving in the past in order to comprehend the future. It is also crucial to distinguish history and what Eric J. Hobsbawm called "the invention of tradition" (1983). The historian makes a fundamental difference between traditions and customs, where the first is unchangeable even if real or invented, while the latter is to be seen both as a driving force and a flywheel effect for the society. Indeed, customs can be modified or innovated - even if it is not that simple or spontaneous – as they proceed together with everyday life and this is a constant work in progress. According to Hobsbawm, the invention of a tradition is essentially a process of ritualization and formalisation characterised by its reference to the past; but it not only usual of "traditional societies", rather modern ones have often adopted this solution in the past two centuries when the idea of nation arose throughout Europe. So old uses were adapted to new conditions, and old models were modified for new goals (Hobsbawn, 1983). Examples can be found from the Highlands in Scotland, to India or Africa and they are all typical of a new interpretation of the past. For instance, in the Highlands there was no noteworthy literature until the nineteenth century, and the traditional poems were "imported" from Ireland (Trevor-Roper, 1983). Also, what one usually links to the highlanders' clothing - the kilt – is an English invention after the Union of 1707; the *tartan,* woven fabric on a geometric colour design, probably came from the Netherlands, and the kilt was designed by Sir Walter Scott for a performance that took place in honour of a Hanoverian king (Trevor-Roper, 1983). Still, the kilt in Scotland

dates back to the sixteenth century but was modified with time and began to be associated with the Scots in the nineteenth century, possibly thanks to Scott[1]. In these terms, something that was not part of an ancient ritual became the ritual, modifying the perception the society had of itself and the consideration that other social groups had about it.

Therefore, the genealogical tree could sometimes lead to faraway lands and conditions, which one had failed to consider until they appeared and took hold. From this perspective, the micro stories turn into the key points for reading these complex and fascinating structures, keeping the identity of a community that can be reflected into a museum. These institutions that for centuries have housed and preserved the cultural expressions of a specific venue can tell an eloquent story about the historical, political and social connections that have shaped the experiences of all individuals. They contribute, in a different manner, to creating a living place of knowledge, a living place of historical and collective memory. Some museums have generated debates and comparisons in their approach to identity, while others have encouraged accepting it but nevertheless "the museum has had to address the questions of whose history is being constructed and whose memories are being negotiated by the museum, and ultimately whose voices will be heard and whose will be silenced" (McLean, 2005).

1.7 The Place Identity

Many topics arise when talking about the identity of a place and they involve many different influences such as geography, urban planning, architecture and heritage. They concern the meaning and the significance of these venues not only for their inhabitants, but also for all people passing through. 'Place identity' basically concerns the urban character considered as the look and the nature of a place that can grow and develop through the centuries. Sometimes the urban character can be linked to a single venue and is

[1] In 1822, King George IV visited Scotland for the first time and it was the first time in

able to summarize in itself the history and the soul of a whole city. In a sort of *ante litteram* place making[2], from the sixteenth century some architects were commissioned to plan and shape the cities of Rome (fig. 9), Naples (fig. 10) and Valletta (fig. 11) thus fulfilling the patrons' expectations of fame and grandeur. In these specific cases, the construction of the three palaces also meant the transformation and the movement of the urban fabric towards new institutional places.

Nowadays it is possible to talk about the significance in heritage of these venues, because they embodied the historical value and the cultural identity of their environment. To define historical value it is necessary to refer to Alois Riegl, an Austrian art historian who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century and who devoted his studies to establishing art history as a self-sufficient academic discipline. In one of his last works, *The Modern Cult of Monuments* (1908), he points out that it

> "is apparently the more comprehensive and may therefore be elaborated on first. We call historical all things that once were and are no longer. In keeping with the most modern conception, we include therein another view as well; that everything that once was can never be again, and that everything that once was forms an irreplaceable and inextricable link in a chain of development. Or, in other words: everything that succeeds was conditioned by what came before and would not have

[2] In the 1960s the idea of a city designed and shaped according to the needs of people involved writers, architects, planners and philosophers. They created a debate around this topic that also became political concerning place-identity, because of the narrative of place that different social groups or individuals construct. Regards to this topic, see also: Hague, C. and Jenkins, P. (Eds) (2005). *Place identity, planning and participation*, London ; New York : Routledge, 2005; Proshansky, H.M. (1978). 'The city and self-identity', *Journal of Environment and Behaviour*, Vol. 10, pp. 57-83; Proshansky, H. M., Fabian, A. K. and Kaminoff, R. (1983). 'Place-identity: Physical world socialization of the self', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 3, pp. 57-83.

occurred in the manner in which it did if not for those precedents" (Riegl, 1903: 70).

Riegl also provides a definition of artistic value that is relevant to this research in the perspective of an interpretation related to the collections that are exhibited at the museum. Thus, he argues that

> "*artistic value* has to be defined differently, depending on the earlier or more recent point of view. According to the older definition, a work of art was considered to possess artistic value if it corresponded to the requirements of an alleged objective, but to date never clearly formulated, aesthetic. The more recent point of view assesses the artistic value of a monument according to the extent to which it meets the requirement of contemporary *Kunstwollen* (will to art), requirements that are even less clearly formulated and, strictly speaking, also never will be because they change unceasingly from subject to subject and from moment to moment" (Riegl, 1903: 71).

The definition of monument given by Riegl is revealing as it is meant to highlight the way one is used to categorise artefacts and works according to personal sensitivity and taste. Actually, a sort of translation occurs every time one declares and defines a work made in the past as a historical monument. It is evident in so far as

> "the creators of these works, which we consider today as historical monuments, wanted primarily to satisfy certain practical or ideal needs of their own, of their contemporaries, and, at most, of their heirs, and certainly did not as a rule intend to leave evidence of their artistic and cultural life to future generations, then the term "monuments", which we nevertheless use to define these works can only be meant subjectively, not objectively" (Riegl, 1908: 72).

But, if a historical monument is just the result of a subjective process of making meaning, how does it become an emblem of cultural and collective identity?

Identity can be seen as the conception and expression of personal and group affiliation, especially in cultural identity. Referring to monuments and artworks, it is basically the distinctive characteristic belonging to any unique venue that becomes the symbol of a social category or group. In this sense, identity conceptualises in itself both relational and contextual aspects aiming to define and label a specific milieu.

Social identity is not to be intended as a categorisation but as a general interpretation of self and group processes (Turner and Reynolds, 2010). An interesting point is the statement according to which social behaviour modifies along a continuum between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour; social identity thus focuses on the social structural factors that foresee the end of the continuum that will most influence an individual's behaviour, with the forms that behaviour may take (Turner, 1999). Instead, with cultural identity, the main focus is on identifiers that complete and permit the individual to be understood as a whole coherent subject. These identifiers may be found in different settings related to history, language, religious beliefs, aesthetics and other various expressions of culture that all participate in shaping identity. The complexity of cultural attitudes and traditions, on one side, and social components on the other, should be considered in the interpretation of a venue especially a historical palace that is often associated with many historical meanings.

1.8 Identity, Memory and Urbanism

The three cities are not only associated by their historical events. The link between Rome, Naples and Malta can be seen as far back in time as when the Knights of St John disembarked on the Mediterranean island in 1529 at the end of a long peregrination. A moment in time when, a geo-political arrangement saw Central-Southern Italy split under the aegis of the popes in the

Papal State (that was extended from Bologna to Southern Latium) and the Kingdom of Sicily. Malta territorially belonged to Sicily and the Hospitaller Knights were a religious chivalric order reporting directly to the Pope. Thus, a double-sided channel becomes evident, geographical on the one side and administrative on the other side, which makes the island of Malta a strategic place for Mediterranean diplomacy. A territorial link to Sicily has always been deep-rooted, not only for commercial exchanges, but also in connection to matters of cultural identification with a land that, besides geographical proximity, was closer from a religious, linguistic and institutional point of view, and where it was easy to recognise one another. The Order of St John's reliance on the Papacy and their function as defenders of Christianity in the Mediterranean Sea make them a *militia* of singular uniqueness and great power (fig. 18); they had not be subjected to any European crown but the one of St Peter's throne. The eight *langues* of the Knights Hospitallers made them automatically *super partes* in their diplomatic relationships with the single countries because of their affiliation with a higher legitimated order and their well-defined mission, that is to say the protection and safeguarding of Christianity. This preferential way of communicating with the Rome of the popes and the Spanish viceroys of Naples and Sicily made it possible for Malta to develop a language of art influenced by "Italian" architects, engineers and artists coming from the two sixteenth century capitals not simply to export the style of the age, but to interweave beneficial relationships, acting as a springboard to form ever more eminent commissions.

The enticement of artists to Malta of artists from the continent, particularly the Italian peninsula, thus launched a defining process of the urban fabric and a shared cultural heritage that provides the foundation of Maltese national identity. This helped in the shaping of a set of models, styles, and symbols – as Therborn argued –

> "at the intersection of art and power, of ritual and urban design, of architecture and imagery. Something that tries to create, express or maintain, not so much beauty nor just power but, collective identity. A

particularly ordered identity, that is, identification with something and/or someone as a lodestar, an example or a pride of the collective. Capital cities, qua capitals, are manifestations of political power. They are invested with symbolic functions of representing the polity and the country/the people they are capitals of. This symbolism may be approached empirically along four axes, the spatial layout, the pattern of architecture, the kind of public monumentality, and the nomenclature of public space" (Therborn, 2002).

The four axes of analysis have a symbolic function in each political period. The first example concerns the naming of the street along the side of the Quirinale Palace. In 1561-62 it was Via Pia (Pius street). This road axis was of enormous importance as it connected the Palace to Michelangelo's Porta Pia (Pius Gate), namely the entrance to the city from Via Nomentana with direct access to the Quirinale from the eastern area (fig. 12). It is the road of urban expansion under the popes and is also the road historically linked to the liberation and the unification of Rome and Italy. Eventually it became the street of government buildings, surrounded by a massive ministerial district in post-unification and republican Rome.

Another clear example concerning monumentality can be seen in Naples in the construction of the church dedicated to San Francesco di Paola in front of the Royal Palace (fig. 13). The church is a huge *ex-voto* commissioned by the most Catholic King Ferdinand IV of Bourbon on his return to Naples immediately after his exile to Palermo. The king returned only after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and the consequent Restoration in 1815. He took possession of his residence again at the end of the "French decade" (1806-1815), during which Joseph Bonaparte and Joachim Murat had occupied the throne of Naples. As a gesture of thanks, the king changed his name and he became known from this time on as Ferdinand I King of the Two Sicilies.

He had the church constructed on the model of the Pantheon in Rome and having a semi-circular colonnade similar to that designed by Bernini in St Peter's Square. Two bronze equestrian statues are located in the middle of the

square facing the Royal Palace, and they represent Ferdinand I and his father Charles of Bourbon (fig. 14), king of Spain and his predecessor to the throne of Naples. In this way Ferdinand I ratified a very strong and close relationship between the Church and the square, on the opposite side of which stood the Royal Palace. The square itself represents the confirmation by the King of his divine right to rule (fig. 15). The statues were positioned next to the Church entrance facing towards the Palazzo Reale façade, as if they have come out of the religious temple to let the Kings return to their domain. Thus, the church is mirroring a sort of state religion testifying to the regal power of the King. In order to complete this work it was necessary to excavate on the side of the Pallonetto hill, at the back of the church and of some dwellings built on the slope in the Santa Lucia district (fig. 16). All this in the name of a higher purpose: to symbolically declare the belonging of Ferdinand I to that specific site, mediated by divine will to which the great circular temple testifies.

One comes across similar parallels in Malta, and specifically Valletta, where the most pertinent element is envisaged in the spatial layout defined on the Laparelli map. The map traces the schemes of ancient Roman military architecture and design along a geometrically perfect grid. Laparelli was commissioned by the Knights of St John to plan the new city. This was in 1566 in the aftermath of the Great Siege. He chose the Sceberras promontory to implement the axial design for the new headquarters of the Order following the wishes of the Grandmaster Jean Parisot de Vallette (fig 17).

The exact and strict linearity of the streets follow the slopes of the hill from Fort St Elmo to the extreme eastern point of Sceberras to rise towards the end of the peninsula to the west, where a well-protected bridge is positioned to defend the city. Within this grid they pinpointed strategic areas in which to position the eight Auberges of the Knights. Thus, the position of the Grandmaster's Palace in the middle of the grid is very meaningful as it is exactly in the intersection of the main access roads to the city (today Republic Street, formerly known as Strada Reale) (fig. 18). It is also important to point out that Valletta is still nowadays the only centre in the Maltese archipelago named Il-Belt, that is to say 'The City', precisely to differentiate its different

nature. Today, the many Auberges have been turned into institutions or public entities, such as ministries or government palaces, or museums, and still mark in one's imagination political and social venues of the city. Since the Order of St John was a religious order 'The City' was actually meant to serve as the convent, as it was named at their time 'Il Convento'. Only much later, with the advent of the French in 1798, did Valletta become the 'City of Malta' (Xuereb, 2014).

Identity, therefore, can be described as "memory in action" (Candau, 1996) whereby a strong memory – organising memory as an important dimension of a group framework and its own identity representation – can be contrasted with a weak, shallow memory not easily shared amongst a group of individuals for whom collective identity is in itself incomprehensible. The making of the idea of collective cultural identity has to be based on shared values and characterising experiences of a whole community in order to be perceived as a part of personal education. The changing condition of identity can be seen in the light of temporal flux. It is closely linked to symbolic changes and to their capacity for making meaning. Thus throughout the centuries the deepest *esprit du lieu*, the feeling of belonging, the awareness of the historical and cultural value can all be allowed to emerge.

The three palaces are the result of a complex evolution, the outcome of a hegemonic wish, which has been translated through the centuries into a syncretic model of cultures and tastes. The sequence of many different architectural, artistic and artefactual styles makes these palaces (with their collections and resultant museums) a figurative book of history where the Murat writing desk in Empire style (fig. 19) can tell about the French decade in Naples; as the frescoes by Matteo Peres d'Aleccio (fig. 20) state better than a thousand words the sense of the agitated and dramatic hours of the Great Siege of Malta; or the Dioscuri in front of the Quirinale allows us to reflect on the site development from the Imperial age until the hill was identified as the site of the Papal Residence in the sixteenth century (fig. 21).

1.9 The Museum Experience in the Historical Palaces

The role of the museum in society is fairly recent and over this short period of time the stories and voices have enriched perception of the world, partly modifying its aspect, too. The concept of museums though goes back in time to Ancient Greece where all manifestation of mankind found their "house" in a place open for research, knowledge and sharing. The museum was born as a place where knowledge and ancient science could be exchanged, as featured in the etymology of the word *mouseion,* meaning a temple dedicated to the Muses, guardians of all arts and sciences. In 280 BC Ptolemy Philadelphus founded an institute in Alexandria where culture could be promoted and the king took care of all residing artists and scientists. The scholars could benefit from comfortable spaces to suit their studies as well as a wage to finance their research. The museum also hosted artworks and books (Malraux, 1951).

Originally, the museum was conceptually connected to the Academy of Plato, which was devoted to the worship of Apollo and the Muses; such connection became fashionable again in the Renaissance when a new Academy was founded in Florence, under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici, with the deliberate intention of recreating the ancient Athenian one. The Florentine Academy became one of the most representative centres of Neo-Platonism where a group of philosophers and scholars gathered around Marsilio Ficino in order to promote the rebirth of Plato's doctrine (Malraux, 1951). The word academy is especially used when referring to a place where the arts and science are studied, and there have been plenty of museums that have preserved its name over the course of history. Paolo Giovio and Antonio Pollio subsequently adopted the word 'museum' to identify collections of artworks and exclusive pieces following the Renaissance fashion. Another important step in the definition of the modern museum is represented by the creation of Francis I's Gallery in Fontainebleau: initially intended as a mere connection between the two wings of the Royal Palace, it was then decorated with frescos by some of the most prominent painters of Mannerism, thus transforming it into a proper exhibition generating a change in the concept of the museum or picture gallery

(Mottola Molfino, 1998; Pomian, 2004). The museum in its modern connotation originates from a methodical collection of artworks and the first prototype of the kind can be found in the Musei Capitolini, open to the public in 1734 by Pope Clement XII. In eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe the name 'Gallery' used to refer to the place where the most prestigious collections of paintings were kept, while 'Museum' would stand for a collection of antiquities (Poulot, 2009).

1.10 De-contextualisation and re-contextualisation of museum collections

When looking into identity and memory one of the most relevant curatorial aspects of museums is the concept of de-contextualisation considered as a consequence of the creation of eighteenth-nineteenth century collections. In Italy, the abolition of religious orders in 1861 - with the consequent disintegration of entire collections of paintings and artworks once part of decoration of churches and monasteries - still represents the main part of national civic museums. On the other hand this concept is connected to the re-contextualization effort carried out in setting up modern museums, understanding how the sense of artworks has been translated and how their key function has been subconsciously broadened and their use modified.

It has been argued that, museums tend to suppress the original meaning of an artwork of any kind and gives the audience the image of artworks back by placing them in a very different way, deducing from them their own being (Malraux, 1965). The reconstruction of historical events leading to the making of a certain venue is thus at the base of a proper museum experience. The reasons behind sixteenth century collecting were related to intellectual motivation. Yet the motivations of others overlapped including prestige and personal power, dynastic pride, ideological propaganda that luxury, rarity and cosmopolitan character, which the collected objects embodied to perfection (Mottola Molfino, 1991).

Actually, the mediation of contents and artworks displayed in a museum is first of all a historical change, needed also to reconstruct the idea of collecting and explaining the motivation and the presence of a certain type of artefacts. The interconnections between museum collections and art history, social history and cultural history are basically a delicate balance between micro- and macro-history. This aspect is relevant in the historic house models because they mirror personal tastes, choices, and attitudes that compose the complex mosaic of micro histories, so important in the making of the museum narrative.

However, by moving an object from a private collection, or from the place it was originally intended for, into a museum, in other words in a place which should ensure its free fruition, questions can help to clarify the relationship between the artist, the artwork and the audience. What turns out to be completely different is the use it was originally intended for. Thus it is crucial to let the museum speak so as to allow its story to be told beyond a mere façade. Mediation can therefore take up the role as the real translation of the museum object, conveying the motivations behind the artist's work from one context to another. If, as stated by André Malraux, French art theorist and Minister of Cultural Affairs during de Gaulle's presidency (1959-69), museums are the twentieth century's cathedrals and have over time built up a communicative rituality, therefore they do need mediation to allow all of these elements to be experienced.

The aesthetic and educational experience therefore becomes an art experience, lived through the knowledge of the artwork from different points of view (historical, formal, technical, critical etc.). In a certain sense, this issue is not so difficult to face in a historical Palace where a more evident coherence is still apparent between "contents" and "container", where the question of de-contextualisation is minor compared with other types of museum.

On the subject of experience, and art experience in particular, John Dewey is a philosopher who has looked deeply into the issue of knowledge in society. He has written academic papers offering a wide spectrum of analysis on the topic of experience applied to several aspects of life. Dewey defined the

analysis of personal experiences as a relationship between the artwork (and its story) and the meaning one can reach and make, in the attempt to rectify the rift and shorten the gap between the works, and therefore between the museum and the audience. The lived experience of art takes into account two complimentary aspects: emotion, on one side, and knowledge on the other. In other words, the aesthetical experience and the cognitive experience contribute to creating the museum experience. The aesthetical experience is represented as a transformation unveiling new horizons in a different dimension from that of ordinary life, where perception defines itself in the field of a lived experience. The cognitive experience provides tools of interpretation and understanding, offering elements that create inferences and develop personal tastes through a process of signification. The twist of these two experiential typologies can lead to personal and social enhancement, to the progressive improvement of the individual shaping as a person and as part of a community retrieving the museum's identity value.

The quality of the experience is the ultimate target for Dewey, nonetheless it is a political objective looking at a democracy of education intended for all. In order to achieve all this, the principles to be followed are connected with the continuity of experience (each experience has something of its previous ones, and will somehow change the qualities of those to follow) to the growth which can be inferred (especially the ability to gain new experiences and a better look at the surrounding world, learning from experience) and finally to the interaction between various conditions on the horizon (whether these can be structured, as in the school context, or changing and hard to manage).

These aspects marked in the philosophy of art are easily experienced in a historical palace, which can be considered similar to a house museum even if a 'palace museum'. More, because the collection and the furniture housed in the palace are part of the original making of the building, therefore they are closely related to the development of the palace being a fundamental and essential element of its evolution. Less, because a historical palace not only refers to a family or to a person who lived in it, but to the whole community gravitating around it over the centuries. To sum up the three palaces under this study, for

instance, they are not house museums in a strict sense of the word because they represent the soul and the core of the city, mirroring all the various cultural and social transitions that have occurred to shape the idea of the city itself.

In terms of changes in the perception of the aesthetic experience, Dewey's theories can still be shared nowadays. He argued that topics that may seem marginal to the making of a collective spirit can still perfectly fit in the identity-making process of a community in relation to its artistic production. The arts used to be seen as functional to a unitary purpose, so it is fair to ask where the separation and the un-relatedness of art and culture were born, and when art itself was placed on a pedestal, taking it away from everyday life. A key factor in the dissolution of this relation lies in the mobility of communities which, by abandoning their place of origin, end up losing the most immediate and physical contact between the artwork and the *genius loci*, once naturally represented by the former, namely their place of origin. The result in this two-way de-contextualisation - the individual from the environment of origin, and the artwork from its experience of origin - moves objects once meaningful within their community to a situation where they become symbols of taste, peculiar to a certain culture.

Each interaction can bring stability, and order in the vortex of change is a form of rhythm, and taking into account that the real world is a combination of movement and points, of fractures and reactivations, the experience of a living creature can be gifted with aesthetic qualities. Men recurrently lose and re-establish their balance within the surrounding environment, and in that action the balance itself becomes the start of a new relationship with the environment, bringing in the potential for new adjustment.

1.11 The Museum Idea

The end of the nineteenth century was crucial for the shaping of modern museums since the French Revolution led to the emergence of new perceptions about artworks and conservation. One of the main challenges of the age was the invention of boundaries and issues of *lieux de mémoire* (Poulot, 2001), a venue

for arts and knowledge where the concept of museum could develop and become a symbol of new reflections about morals and memories. Art and history collections were intended to offer both delight and models for artists and artisans, to set also examples of virtues to the citizens and celebrate the glory of ruling elites for posterity. A kind of struggle or competition in the international art market began across Europe, for which Quatremère de Quincy talks about a "relic hunting" to grab the best Raphael as if paintings and works of art would become the real objects of fetishism (Poulot, 2001).

In France, the origin of museums during the French revolutionary phase is linked to public pressure, to the attempts of administrative reform and especially to the revolution as the result of expropriation and nationalisation. The key point is the deep cultural crisis that the country had experienced, marked by the reconsideration of the traditional links among past, present and future. As Poulot argued, preserving the past - and especially the collections inherited by a civic player hitherto unthinkable - become a major political challenge as well as an intellectual and artistic concern. The vandalism that occurred during the French Revolution (fig. 22) looked like a trauma of collective memory, as well as moments of elaboration of a heritage given to the new ethical-political foundations. It was the reshaping of the past for posterity and enhanced the authenticity that the national community and current generation coveted.

This destructive rage endangered a large proportion of the religious and private collections, while another large part was reallocated as the heritage of the new French nation. In fact, the idea to turn the Louvre into a museum had been outlined during the *Ancien Régime*, but by 1793 the Count d'Angiviller was in charge of this transformation (Schubert, 2000) on behalf of the new regime. He drafted a list of paintings to be purchased and asked a group of architects to formulate some changes in the path of the *Grande Galerie* in order to get a proper museum space, more fitted to the exhibitions' needs. D'Angiviller worked fifteen years on this project but eventually the idea was realised after the revolution. On August 10th 1792 the French monarchy fell and after only nine days the National Assembly passed an act ratifying the

transformation of the royal palace into a public museum without mentioning the previous project.

The *Musée Central des Arts* (the first in a long series of names for the museum) was opened on August 10th 1793 and the governors were artists (Hubert Robert, Fragonard, Vincent, Pajou and de Wailly) who mainly put on display paintings housed in the *Salon Carré* and the *Grande Galerie* (fig. 23). Even if the goals of the new museum were those of educating people, promoting patriotism, and modernizing spirits, the revolutionaries were also accused of promoting iconoclasm and destruction of the *Ancien Régime* collectors' tradition. The end of the eighteenth century is a critical period in the transformation of attitudes to monuments and their past, and its contradictions. On the one side, the need to create a *tabula rasa* after the past regime, on the other side, the use of a palace that embodied it and the need to use a completely different language with the same images. The translation of political meanings has always been followed by new art languages.

The hostility of the French Revolution to the property of the nobility and the church had at the time given way to pragmatic recycling by builders who treated ancient monuments as quarries and much of what disappeared was looted and sold abroad. It was a time when chunks of French heritage were being broken up, demolished and carted away. In this context, the commitment of Prosper Mérimée was instrumental in saving many monuments that would otherwise have been destroyed. Mérimée served as Inspector-General of Historic Monuments in France from 1834 to 1860 and, from amongst the artworks he discovered and saved, one of the best-known examples is the luminous tapestry known as *The Lady of the Unicorn*, found at the Château de Boussac and today housed in the Museum of Medieval Art in Paris. In 1849 he was engaged to prevent the demolition of the *Cité de Carcassonne*, and as a consequence of his efforts, the crypt of Saint-Laurent in Grenoble was classified as a historical monument.

From this perspective it is easy to realise that museums are not only products of history, but history-making as well (Preziosi, Farago, 2004). If at the beginning they were constituted around collection and display practices,

later on they become a way in which state governments have perpetuated relations of domination (at the Louvre it will become more evident in the following century especially in relation to non-western art and civilization).

Even the idea of cultural heritage took shape in the aftermath of the Revolution when Victor Hugo hurled abuse at the Jacobins who intended to demolish Versailles, medieval monuments and the other royal palaces, in order to erase the memory of the kings. A sort of *damnatio memoriae* aimed to design a new 'virginity' of national culture and history. Hugo on the other hand talked for the first time about the concept of *patrimoine* (1825) starting his own personal war against the *démoliseurs* (destroyers). He stressed the peculiar duality of a palace talking about its use and its beauty, arguing that if the first belonged to the owner the latter belonged to the whole world and that it was blind self-interest alone that led those who encouraged demolition of historical monuments. Hugo wanted to "stop the hammer that mutilates the face of the country" requesting a law capable of imposing respect and consideration for human artwork.

According to Hugo, whatever the rights of property, destruction of historical and monumental buildings should not be permitted to 'those vile speculators'. Demolishing a monument was not a right of the revolutionaries, it was a matter of general and national interest and the point was the making of a specific and well-focused law. What Hugo hoped for was,

> "a law for monuments, a law for Art, a law for French nationality, a law for memories, a law for cathedrals, one law for the greatest products of human intelligence, a law for the collective work of our fathers, a law for history, a law for the irreparable which we destroy, a law for what is most sacred in a nation after the future, a law for the past, there is no time for this just, good, holy, useful, necessary, indispensable, urgent law, we will not make it" (*Et une loi pour les monuments, une loi pour l'art, une loi pour la nationalité de la France, une loi pour les souvenirs, une loi pour les cathédrales, une*

loi pour les plus grands produits de l'intelligence humaine, une loi pour l'œuvre collective de nos pères, une loi pour l'histoire, une loi pour l'irréparable qu'on détruit, une loi pour ce qu'une nation a de plus sacré après l'avenir, une loi pour le passé, cette loi juste, bonne, excellente, sainte, utile, nécessaire, indispensable, urgente, on n'a pas le temps, on ne la fera pas ! 1832).

In the early nineteenth century France, Hugo was fighting to save medieval monuments from iconoclastic rage, but his pamphlet provides a basis for looking at the ancient monuments in a different way, to consider the past artefact as just a tile of a larger mosaic where mankind has expressed its skills and art genius.

1.12 The birth of a national identity

A step back to the eighteenth century is needed in order to realize how the same historic changes spread outwards in Italy and Malta. It is profoundly meaningful that, in the three cities mentioned in this research project, the idea of a collection, and then of a museum, started thanks to the archaeological findings dated to the 1700s. The artefact, the findings of ancient roots, gave birth to a "national" identity and moulded the destiny of the palaces housing those unique collections.

Probably the most famous excavation of that time occurred in the area around the Vesuvio, nearby Naples, where in 1738 King Charles of Bourbon started a methodical archaeological campaign aiming to find and dig out the Roman cities of Herculaneum, Stabiae, and Pompeii (fig. 24). A first finding was dated to 1719 when Count d'Elboeuf excavated spectacular statues on his estate in Portici. So Charles, moved by his wish to locate the lost ancient cities, started a search that looked a lot like "treasure hunting" that changed tack completely in the 1755 when the Accademia Ercolanese was founded. The Accademia aimed to study and publish the finds, and this aim was thankfully

successful and twelve volumes titled *Antichità di Ercolano* appeared between 1757 and 1792 (D'Alconzo, 1999).

A group of fifty workers usually dug in the ancient area not paying attention to the architecture, but only to the artefacts and movable objects. Quite often they cut holes to pass through the walls resulting in the loss of much crucial information. At the very beginning, findings were recorded and put on display at the *Reggia* in Portici, built in 1738 as a royal residence by the major architects of the time in Naples (Medrano, Canevari, Vanvitelli, and Fuga) and then turned into the *Herculaneum Museum* where a wing of the Palace was dedicated to ancient Roman statues. Later on, a new site was needed and most of the collection was moved to Naples to be housed at the Royal Palace. When almost all paintings, gems and coins had been moved to Naples, the Royal Palace acquired a different meaning, not only did it serve as the residence of the king's household but it also became a keeper of ancient treasures.

In those same years another relevant fact determined the creation of a great museum when King Charles inherited the Farnese collection and decided to transfer some of the most fascinating statues ever found from Parma and Rome to Naples. In 1731 Antonio Farnese died without heirs, he was the last member of the male branch of the dynasty and so the assets passed to his niece Elizabeth, wife of Philip V of Spain and mother of the new Duke of Parma and Piacenza, Charles of Bourbon, who inherited the entire art collection. The War of the Polish Succession broke out between Spain and Austria; in February 1734 Charles went to conquer the Two Sicilies (at that time an Austrian vice-kingdom) and in leaving Parma ordered the Farnese art collection to be transferred to Naples, which was completed between 1735 and 1739. The Farnese gems and library were also brought to the Royal Palace of Naples in 1736. In the meantime Charles ordered the building of a "lustrous dwelling" that served as seat of the artworks. That is how the Palace of Capodimonte was envisaged and was therefore devised solely for that purpose and only later used as a royal residence (Mazzoleni, 2007).

The peace treaty of Vienna, concluded in 1735, recognized Charles' right to transfer the property. Not all of it left Parma: in 1738 friction developed

between Naples and Vienna because of the Austrian refusal to allow the transfer from Colorno of two large basalt statues depicting Hercules and Bacchus. The statues were found in the Farnese Gardens in Rome at the time of Francesco Farnese, and deposited in the studio of the sculptor Giuliano Mozzani for a restoration until then unfinished. The initial protests of Charles ceased since the Spanish court considered them diplomatically unaffordable (Schipa, 1904).

The transfer of the Farnese collection was only completed fifty-four years later, when Ferdinand IV of Bourbon also decided to move the Roman collection to Naples. It consisted mainly of sculptures and archaeological finds preserved in the Farnese Palace in Rome. The transfer, which took place between 1786 and 1788, caused much unrest in the Papal capital. In fact, Pope Pius VI protested and raised strong objections in an attempt to hold onto the collection of sculptures (fig. 25).

In later years, during the numerous riots experienced in the Kingdom of Naples, the King would remove works from the collection, thus preventing them from being stolen. Paintings by Titian such as *Danae*, *Pope Paul III with his Grandsons* and *Pope Paul III Without Cap* as well as some works from the Royal museum (today the Archaeological museum), and the Farnese gems of the Royal Palace had the same story. The year after the revolution of 1799, the King returned to Naples because of the restoration of the Bourbon kingdom. These works were later shown again in the capital of the kingdom and all stored temporarily (even paintings) in the hall of the "Secret Room" of the Royal museum, awaiting final allocation (Mazzoleni, 2007).

This description is just an example of how complex the making of a collection can be and how we can consider the museum as “history-in-the-making”. It is interesting to note that the Farnese library, influenced by the National Library of the Royal Palace as well as the Farnese Bull, the Farnese Hercules and the magnificent Farnese Cup - among the masterpieces of a grand collection that came from Caracalla Thermal Baths (Haskell, Penny, 1994) - are now an essential part of the art on offer in the city of Naples. They are part of the history and they made the history of Naples from a cultural point of view.

In Malta the discoveries made in the seventeenth and eighteenth century were documented among others by Giovan Francesco Abela, Giovan Antonio Ciantar and Ignazio Paternò, Prince of Biscari. The Commendatore Abela is remembered in the chronicle of the time as the first Maltese citizen to write about local history and to gather ancient artefacts to set up a museum (L'Arte, 1863). In his *Della descritione di Malta, isola del mare siciliano, colle sue antichità ed altre notizie* published in 1647 he drafted the model of the following work about the history and customs of Malta (fig. 26). Count Ciantar continued along the same lines when in 1778 he edited his *Malta illustrata.* In this he often quotes Abela's *Descritione* (Freller, 2009). Even Paternò quoted Abela and Ciantar in his *Viaggio per tutte le antichità della Sicilia*. One would not expect otherwise, Abela and Ciantar were the standard works until well into the nineteenth century. The third edition in 1817 offered an overview of all Maltese archaeological digs and findings. Interestingly, from the point of view of museum identity, Commendatore Abela, was the first to suggest the creation of a museum and also drafted the first report about the art and history of Malta. In his short biography in the bi-monthly magazine *L'Arte*, it states that he had every intention of setting up an art collection, but he did not find a suitable place for the "*erudita curiosità dei dotti*", and kept the artefacts in a country lodge where unfortunately they were stolen. Abela's collection was bequeathed to the Jesuits but was left behind when they were expelled from Malta, at which point the collection passed to the Order of St John and later the Public Library, and the Museums. Following this episode, the remaining artworks were donated to the library of the Order of St John, at the time called *Tenseniana* (*L'Arte*, 1863).

Thus, since the first significant archaeological findings in Italy, such as the luxurious *Domus Aurea* in the fifteenth century, or the huge complex of the Baths of Caracalla in the sixteenth century, these treasures from the past have been seen as part of local identity, worthy of all possible care and attention. Archaeology eventually became a science in the eighteenth century and thanks to scholars like Johan J. Winckelmann and Ennio Quirino Visconti archaeological study started paying proper attention to context and not only to

the individual item. This change of perspective and the parallel desire to build local identity, led to the definition of another discipline: Museography or the enumeration and description of a museum's collection.

In 1727, Casper F. Neickel, in his work *Museographia*, provides a detailed description of how an exhibition room should be, what size it should be, and the orientation of the windows, how to choose colours for the walls and furniture for the placing of cabinets and shelves. He then presents museography as a science related to the practical operation of the museum: display systems, readability of contents, general operation, problems of security and conservation of objects, analysing situations and proposing practical solutions.

1.13 Museums as keepers of collective memory in modern Europe

Throughout most of the eighteenth century we see the development of ideas and ideals leading to the making of all the most important European museums. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to remember that the first museum ever set up was the Capitoline Museum in Rome. In 1471 Pope Sixtus IV donated to the people of Rome a group of bronze statues of great value. Thanks to the following archaeological campaigns the Vatican Museums originated as a group of sculptures collected by Pope Julius II (1503-1513) and placed them in what today is the Cortile Ottagono (The Octagon Courtyard). The popes were among the first sovereigns who opened the art collections of their palaces to the public thus promoting knowledge of art history and culture. The Vatican Museums are indeed a complex of different pontifical museums and galleries that began under the patronage of the popes Clement XIV (1769-1774) and Pius VI (1775-1799). In fact, the Pio-Clementine Museum was named after these two popes, who set up this first major section (fig. 27). Later, Pius VII (1800-1823) considerably expanded the collections of classical antiquities, to which he added the Chiaromonti Museum and the Braccio Nuovo gallery. The Vatican Museums were created following archaeological findings and were interpreted at the very beginning mainly as antiquity collections.

Subsequently, the British Museum (1759) in London (based on the collections of Sir Hans Sloane) and the Louvre (1793) in Paris, (a result of revolutionary ideals) were opened to the public. Nineteenth century Europe witnessed the birth of the great temples of Art. The National Gallery In London England (1824); The Hermitage in St Petersburg in 1852; The Prado in Madrid (1819); The Alte Pinakothek (1826), and the Neue Pinakothek in Munich (1853); the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, among which the Pergamonmuseum and the Alte Pinakothek (opened between 1845 and 1876); and the Künsthistoriches Museum in Vienna (1891). The museum idea emerges as the making of a local tradition, the actualisation of cultural and historical memory capable of retracing and recomposing the pieces of community development. Thus the museum does not only become a keeper of artefacts and memoirs, but it is understood as a centre of knowledge; an agora discussing and building cultural identity. Ultimately, museum identity can be seen as a mirror of the social and cultural community identity thanks to the century old making of a common pathway capable of informing us about the way we were and the way we are now.

As a matter of fact, the museums housed in the palaces of this study cannot be strictly considered as house museums because they do not entirely respond to the scope and the function of the latter. Indeed, a house museum is a house that has been turned into a museum keeping the original furniture that reflects the placement and the usage in the home. House museums range from castles to cottages from all periods and are directly related to the idea of collective memory as they mirror a shared experience starting from a family or an individual system of relationships. As Halbwachs argued, "each aspect, each detail, of this place has a meaning intelligent only to members of the group, for each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society, at least of what is stable in it" (1950). So, the decision to transform a house into a house museum thus is usually based on social history studies that pay more attention to people and their way of living. A typical house museum can be a writer or an artist's residence such as the Keats and Shelley House Museum in Rome; can be linked to a family as Casa

Rocca Piccola in Malta; or Museo Pignatelli in Naples. That kind of museum is closely tied to a personal taste or a familiar story, rather the palace museum can tell the events, the feelings and the expectations of an entire city or community (or possibly a nation). A splendid example of a house museum is the Sir John Soane's Museum in London where the interests of the owner are still perfectly visible, and visitors can easily experience his lifestyle and his taste for art, literature, and antiques. Sir John Soane was a neo-classical architect who collected paintings, drawings, and antiquities besides models and projects of his own works. Before he died, in 1883 he established a private act of Parliament to maintain his house "as nearly as possible" as it was during his lifetime, a Board of Trustees was in charge of its care and even nowadays to offer a correct experience of the museums, only small groups of visitors are allowed to enter at any one time in order to keep the idea of a house more than a museum. The house thus allows visitors to gain an in-depth experience in the life of a specific person at a point in time.

Nevertheless, the definition of 'house museum' cannot be applied to the Quirinale, the Grandmasters' Palace and the Palazzo Reale, as they partially correspond to the idea of a private residence where the original furniture is on display. They also have a public function that shows a great difference from the house museum. Another relevant example in this sense is Palazzo Pitti in Florence, built in the fifteenth century to be the residence of the family in competition with the Medici that eventually purchased it the when the Pitti descended into financial ruin. In 1550 Eleonora of Toledo and Cosimo I Medici moved into Palazzo Pitti that thus became the official residence of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany. Architectural changes were made according to modern design with the large inner courtyard and the Boboli Gardens, and later on the Vasari Walkway connecting the Pitti with the Uffizi. Even the successors, the Lorena and Savoy families, resided at Pitti as well as the Bourbons and Elisa Bonaparte, stating that the palace perfectly embodied their needs for grandeur and public statement (Bertelli and Pasta, 2003). As a result of this, a new district developed on the other side of the River Arno and again the palace became the new political, social and cultural pole of the city of Florence.

This typology of historic palace-house museum would require a new definition that better fits their complex identity. On the one side they are the reflection of social history (so linked to the idea of house museums and their original setting), but on the other side, they represent changes in international relationships and public life that are closely tied to the idea of macro and political history. The main difference lies in the social and political milieu, private or public life, familiar or institutional reflection of the palaces. So, more than house museums or historic houses, they could be defined as "palace museums" or historic palace museums where the shift from house to palace aims to embody the different soul of political and institutional entity besides the private and family abode. A "palace museum" can be seen as the main private palace with a functional and political role transformed into a museum that has kept throughout the centuries its identity as a political, social, and cultural centre embodying the idea of *auctoritas*.

Therefore, the three case studies selected for this research, could be more properly named 'palace museums' rather than 'house museums', as they are representative of a whole community and a centuries-old life that tells the history on many different levels: social, political, art, architectural, urban, cultural, and also private. So, they embody the collective memory and at the same time the cultural identity of the city and its community.

CHAPTER 2

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 The research question

One of the main issues in museum studies is the interpretation and mediation of heritage, and consequently the identification of methodologies to apply to talk about museums over the time. In my experience, there a gap between the museum identity (embodied in its history and collections) and the meanings audiences experience. The main question of this project is to retrace the shift from past to present in order to design the museum experience identity and build the museum identity theory The case studies selected have been primarily studied from a cultural perspective, then the research focused on other aspects that can deeply influence their identity. Actually, the crucial aspect is the making of a specific identity, developed during the time and composed by several different historical episodes. The aim of this research is thus to know and define the idea of identity that has been taking shape in the institutional palaces, now partially turned into museums, and how these specific characteristics are experienced. An analytical approach based on the study of cultural history is at this point essential for a proper understanding of heritage codification, in order to recreate the *esprit du lieu* that defines history, functions and relations.

The museum identity is a combination of components that have influenced and determined a location both from a centripetal and centrifugal perspective. The making of a place identity, namely the *genius loci*, is a dialogue between the spirit of the venue and those who move and anthropomorphise the entire environment. Actually, the identity of a specific place cannot be disconnected from the territory where it exists and grows, being a process *in itinere* and constantly in evolution. In assessing museums, one can actually relate to different identities within them, at least a past one and a present one being the beginning and the current stage of the evolution.

Historical research is important to trace the past identity of a museum. This kind of exercise is needed in order to put the main events into a chronological sequence. It will help to provide a proper understanding of events that characterised the evolution from a social, an architectural, and an artistic

point of view while at the same time taking account of the urban perspective. The exercise will allow a comparison between the inside, that is the museum, and the outside, namely the city where it is located. Furthermore, it was then necessary to search for a historical point in time which allows for a comparison between the three palaces under study. This exercise would help to evaluate and assess the roles played by the three different power holders who resided in these palaces and the way culture was perceived at the time. By examining the most representative palaces of the cities, in the cultural and institutional terms, the concept of identity of those venues takes shape within their complex structure. While the past identity has been defined through historical research, the present identity needs a multi-level perspective. This entailed consulting several actors involved in the development of the modern identity of the museums under study, namely the museum curators and the audience. Indeed curators and their audience represent two distinct groups namely, those who construct, and those who enjoy and evaluate the role of the museum. One may add a third group, that is the experts who are very well acquainted with the venue who serve as a *super partes* figure that is not directly involved in the museum experience. This multiple approach contributes towards a proper evaluation of the present museum identity, constructed and enhanced as a living place of historical and collective memory, verifying whether the intentions correspond to the results of the meaning making strategies, namely tools and methods a museum can use to engage its audience (Hooper-Greenhill, 2005). The way sought to define the actual identity of the palaces was through interviews with experts and curators. The response is then compared to the outcomes of observations obtained from the different types of audience. This methodology can provide a wide range of information to describe how the museum identity has been modified during the century and how the perception of it is really evident when experiencing the current collections.

2.2 The Grounded Theory methodology

The methodology that can better match the need to gather and analyse

such diverse and different data, and construct a theory from it is known as Grounded Theory (Ellis, 2016; Glaser, 2016; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Goulding, 1999; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Actually in this research there is no hypothesis to confirm, but rather it attempts to provide a collection of qualitative data that can be tagged with codes when concepts and elements become apparent. When more data is collected, codes can be grouped into concepts and then into categories that may represent the basis for a new theory. "Given its emphasis on new discoveries, the method is usually used to generate theory in areas where little is already known, or to provide a fresh slant on existing knowledge about a particular social phenomenon" (Goulding, 1999); and this is exactly what this research aims to do. It intends to focus on museum identity and their development.

Indeed, Grounded Theory "generates conceptual hypotheses that get applied to any relevant time, place, and people with emergent fit and then is modified by constant comparison with new data as it explains what behaviour obtains in a substantive area" (Glaser, 2002). The idea of a museum identity theory is also connected to this concept of changes, and constant comparison with new data, that clearly represents the evolution of museum idea and museum mission.

The study was conducted over a span of four years, during which period, a large amount of visual and written documentation has been consulted to consolidate the ideas that emerged from the research. Scholars and historians contacted for this study considered the three palaces as the centre of power, and specifically the power of command mentioned in the first part of this text.

Information gathered while researching in the libraries and archives of Rome, Naples and Malta allowed me to shape a wide knowledge of architectural transformations and changing royal dynasties. Images, maps, paintings, engravings, and popular press (i.e. weekly and monthly magazines, postcards, etc.) provided the material for a rich and varied in-depth analysis. This varied documentation represents a solid basis for deep research analysis and helped to define the identity of the palaces under study more clearly.

Historical maps have been priceless documents as they enabled me to visualise the way in which the three cities modified their urban axis according to the presence of the palaces, confirming what the Research Idea sustained about their centripetal and centrifugal forces. From now on, maps are an essential part of the research as direct witnesses of all urban changes and transformations. Their analysis will be concentrated in the second part of the thesis and further research will be needed to pinpoint all existent materials from libraries, archives and museums. The latter ones are not only intended as palace museums, but city, or fine arts museums, displaying artworks depicting local history. In Rome the most relevant are: the Museo di Roma of Palazzo Braschi, and Museo Centrale del Risorgimento Italiano. In Naples: The City Museum of Castel Nuovo and the National Museum of San Martino Chartreuse. In Malta: The National Museum of Fine Arts and The Maritime Museum. More paintings and visual documents were added in their collections to enrich the portfolio of images.

The analysis will thus be focused on a systematic and meticulous reconstruction of the history of the three palaces in question, namely the Quirinale in Rome, Palazzo Reale in Naples and the Grand Masters palace in Valletta. The data gathered through interviews to key informants and curators, and focus groups with museum staff and visitors will lead to a large corpus of information. The first set of interviews has been conducted and key informants basically validated all hypotheses that have been discussed in the chapter dedicated to the research idea of this study. The second set of interviews with curators has added interesting information to complete the complex mosaic of events referred to the palaces, especially in recent times.

All materials that have been collected and additional information obtained allowed me to make a better assessment to discuss my main hypothesis related to the role of the Palaces under study. In fact the prominence and grandeur of the palaces under study within their urban context testifies to the way they have been always perceived as regal venues. This research is historically based until the beginning of the First World War. The *post quem* has been postponed to the end of the War; therefore 1919 is the chronological limit of the thesis.

Initially the *post quem* was 1914, immediately before the outbreak of the war. Bibliographical and archival materials from all three, instead, have confirmed the decision to extend the *post quem* to the end of the war because of the effects on the cities' history. In fact, the consequences of the First World War also affected the three palaces and not only concerning furniture and use, but more incisively the identity they acquired.

The year 1919 was a crucial moment in Maltese history. The *Sette Giugno* (7 June) riots over the excessive price of bread led to greater autonomy from the British government. It is to be interpreted as the first phase of a national identity process culminated several years later in independence. In Italy, 1919 brought the rise of the fascist movement led by Benito Mussolini. The ever-increasing violence began when Fascists attacked the offices of the Italian Socialist Party's newspaper *L'Avanti!* It is also the year when the Palazzo Reale of Naples was opened to the public as an artistic and antiquities institution of the Italian kingdom (Porzio, 2008).

Therefore the historical cycle of unification and independence wars was concluded and a new phase of national history begun across the Mediterranean Sea. The identity of the palaces saw a second crossroad and changed direction towards a modern era.

2.3 The interviews to key informant

The key informants have been contacted and interviewed and an assessment of their comments will follow. [This needs to indicate that you have concluded the work] For the Quirinale Palace, the key informant is Louis Godart, Director for the Conservation of Artistic Heritage of the Italian President; for the Palazzo Reale in Naples, the key informant is Marina Causa Picone, former Director of the Museum and the curator in charge of the actual display of the collections; for the Grandmaster's Palace, the key informant is Giovanni Bonello, who until recently was in charge of the Regeneration Project of the Palace.

The curators that have been chosen for the second set of interviews are curators or museum personnel involved in the educational departments. I have met Anna Di Paolo and Giuseppe Colducci at the Quirinale Palace, in charge of the educational programs on behalf of the TCI (Touring Club Italia); Valeria De Angelis and Stefano Gei at the Palazzo Reale in Naples, respectively educator and teacher involved in educational programs and activities; Bernardine Scicluna and Robert Cassar, respectively in charge of the Grandmaster's Palace Educational programmes and the Palace Armoury on behalf of Heritage Malta.

To properly examine the issue of museum identity from different points of view and gather information from different actors', three sets of interviews have been drafted. The first set of questions has been posed to key informants selected for the three palaces in order to have an external, but authoritative opinion. In fact, the experts that have been contacted were related to the palaces and could provide in-depth knowledge in terms of historical, cultural, and museological expertise. They have been chosen because of their vast and prominent literature in the museum field and specifically for the respective palaces.

The key informant at the Quirinale Palace in Rome, is Louis Godart, the Director for the Conservation of Artistic Heritage of the President of Italy. Godart is a Belgian archaeologist and philologist specialised in Mycenaean writing and has played a prominent role in the research of Mediterranean civilisations, especially in connection with Cretan civilisation. He is also full professor of Mycenaean philology at the University Federico II of Naples.

The key informant for Palazzo Reale in Naples is Marina Causa Picone, the former Director of the Palace. She is an Art Historian with a specific interest in the Neapolitan XVII century painting and drawing. She has been researching on painters working in Naples that are now part of the Museum collection such as Battistello Caracciolo. She has devoted her studies to the knowledge of small aspect of the art and cultural life in the city of Naples that have been recognised as crucial for the understanding of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In Malta, the key informant for the Grandmaster's Palace is Giovanni Bonello, former Judge of the European Court and renowned historian and author of many monographs on Maltese culture. Bonello was Superintendent for the Palace Regeneration Project from 2010 to 2017. As expert in local history and culture, in 2004 he published the most exhaustive essay on the Grandmaster's Palace with noticeable contributions of Maltese experts. This essay has been the pivotal work for all those that have studied the collection and the evolution of the Palace in the past years.

2.4 Set of questions to key informants

The questions posed to the key informants were drafted to recognise their impressions and their feelings beside their acquaintance of the places. Here below the questions and a short explanation to justify the choice.

Question no. 1:

The UNESCO definition of monuments *outlines works which* are *of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, or science*. *What is your definition of historical monuments and how does it suit the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace?*

This question aims to pinpoint the relevance of the Palaces for those who have been involved in varied ways in their making and see how it compares to an international definition of monument. The Palaces embody many diverse natures and they also represent one of, or, most probably, the main monument of the city. A new key to interpret them can arise by comparing the UNESCO definition and the key informant definition. For this reason the first question started from a common and recognised meaning of monument.

Question no. 2:

According to you, is it possible to experience the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace in all its main historical and artistic transitions?

The three palaces have survived through seven centuries and numerous changes have characterised them. As a consequence of that, the collections, the furniture, the decorations as well as the meanings and the uses have changed every time a new ruler arrived. In terms of museum communication, it is crucial to understand the historical and artistic transitions to retrace them in the proper way. This question aims to solicit a critical thought in those who have a profound knowledge of the palaces in order to retrace the essential transformations that could help visitors' comprehension.

Question no. 3:

Which is the most relevant historic transition in the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace?

This question is related to the previous one and focusses on the historic transition that made the difference in the way the Palace was perceived. This element could represent the turning point in the museum communication as it refers to the cultural memory of the place and its very identity. In these terms, the question aims to pinpoint the historical event that characterised the Palaces and turned them into the modern monument one can experience. It is a crucial question to be compared to visitors' observations and realise if the experts' idea corresponds to the audience experience.

Question no. 4:

Which is the most relevant artistic transition in the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace?

Historical events and changes of ruler often correspond to changes in terms of new art commissions that reshape the Palaces. There are numerous examples of this 'tradition' where the artistic transition represents one of the most relevant and tangible acts made to underscore political power. It is also the question that allows definition of a close relationship between art and politics and how the look of the Palaces changed in terms of artistic taste and political meaning.

Question no. 5:

According to you, how did the perception of the Palace change between a XVIII-XIX century traveller and a modern-day visitor?

This information is useful to understand what could be the main impression that travellers had in the past and what is the perception that visitors have today. The perception can change according to personal education and external variables, such as the urban environment and the visit modes. An important variable, in these terms, is the crowded conditions current visitors experience versus the exclusivity of Grand Tour travellers. This variable may deeply modify perception of the museum space and consequently the museum experience.

Question no. 6:

Which are the aspects they could focus on in the XIX century?

This question aims to analyse the past identity of the palaces and focus on what could be of more interest in the past centuries. By reading letters and opinions of Grand Tour travellers in the archives and the national libraries, I have selected a few aspects that according to them were of higher relevance and it is of great interest the comparison between what they notice and how their observations are taken into account today.

Question no. 7:

How do you think they could be made more attractive to the public today?

Taste and expectations have changed radically in the past three centuries and focussing on visitor expectations can provide a new opportunity to rethink displays, communication tools, museum offers, all developed to ensure the highest museum standards capable of turning the collection into a place where education and emotion can be perfectly matched. This question aims to let museum experts ponder over the characteristics of audience and the way to combine together the main elements of the museum experience (education and emotion).

Question no. 8:

How do you define the cultural identity of the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace?

This question aims to select common ideas about cultural identity within the scientific and academic worlds to structure the theory of identity that is the main goal of this study. Scholars have discussed many different aspects and finding a common denominator will give the chance to synthesise the diverse suggestions in a final statement.

Question no. 9:

When the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace was opened to the public as a museum collection, what changed in the identity of the venue?

All questions try to build a bridge between past and present and this one is closely tied to the previous question aiming to get more information about the shift in terms of perception of the palaces and their museums after opening in the 1950s and 1960s. Expert opinion is useful to study a crucial passage in the making of the museums and the way the modern audience can experience their history.

Question no. 10:

Do you think audiences experiencing the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace today get all the needed educational tools to perceive and feel the "esprit du lieu"?

Step by step, this last question opens the discourse to one of the most challenging aspects of museum life and what it offers: the educational tools provided to all types of audience to allow everybody to experience the collections in an inclusive and engaging way. Communication tools, educational workshops, events, and exhibitions can all better focus on or distract from the original museum meaning; a big issue is indeed the balance between audience expectations in terms of cultural offering and one of the main museum missions, namely preservation.

2.5 Interviews and set of questions to curators

The second set of interviews have been conducted with curators and museum professionals in the field of education who have direct contact with audiences and can give an internal perspective of public expectations, needs and reactions.

Question no. 1:

What is the main museological aspect the set-up is focussing on?

This questions aims to investigate how curators or those in charge of educational activities look at the collection and what they think could be of main interest for the audience. This focus gives the possibility of going deeper into the meaning the museum has acquired today.

Question no. 2:

How does the set-up of the museum respond to the original scope of the palace?

At this point, the answers can help to differentiate the past identity from the present one, looking at the possible changes in the display and function as elements of the palace transformation in terms of political institution and cultural location. It also helps to clarify possible changes in the architecture and the positioning of halls and artworks inside the structure.

Question no. 3:

Do you think that today's audience can experience both the past and the present identity of the venue?

This issue is more related to educational activities and how the museum staff is correctly engaging all types of audience in order to offer an emotional and cognitive experience enabling the museum to speak and tell its story. If the audience are involved in their experience, and communication tools are well-

conceived (for use by different groups of people of different ages and needs), past and present identities can be brought to light and can explain a lot about the palace and the city itself.

Question no. 4:

Is the museum experience of the (Quirinale, Palazzo Reale, Grandmaster's) Palace enabling a focussed knowledge?

This question is closely tied to the previous one, but here the interest is focused on the quality of communication tools and not only on their presence along the museum path.

Question no. 5:

According to you, does the visitors' experience reflect the efforts the curators made to conceive the museum path?

Here the focus is evaluation and how the museum staff looks at visitors as part of the museum and not only as 'users'. Museum staff – especially those working in the communication and educational department – can really make the difference in terms of audience development and appreciation. It is a crucial point in the life of the museum and it also marks the policy and the mission a museum has decided to follow.

Question no. 6:

How can visitors interact with the curators in order to share their experience? Is there a visitors' book or other communication tools?

This point refers to feedback and the possibility audiences have to communicate with museum staff. Accepting the idea that a museum is a venue of cultural and social exchange, and giving the audience a larger space in terms of suggestion for better management, simply sings of appreciation. The staff can get fruitful information to modify, implement or keep a specific activity within the museum.

Question no. 7:

What are the educational tools the museum adopts to involve visitors?

This question is focussing expressly on educational activities developed and offered to involve audiences. Usually, educational tools are part of a museum workshop or a tailored guided tour enabling interest, knowledge and participation. This combination is also very much needed to promote a feeling of loyalty in the visitors and to allow them to feel closer to the institution.

Question no. 8:

How do educational activities aim to involve visitors in maximising their experience of the museum identity?

Again, this question aims to investigate the quality of museum activities and offers a wider idea of what a museum can do to engage its audience.

Question no. 9:

Do you propose activities at the museum (such as series of conferences or debates) allowing audiences take part in the learning experience?

As a consequence of the previous question, this one focusses not only on educational activities properly intended as workshops, guided tours, or exhibitions, but on all types of activities that can engage a wider audience and especially residents of a specific urban area.

Question no. 10:

How do the curators implement communication about the museum to share accessible and meaningful information?

This question refers to communication tools, from the visitors' book and flyers, to the website, from publicity to invitations to single events, all intended as vehicles of information and tools for community building.

2.6 Main challenges and obstacles to the research methodology

When I was planning the research methodology, I would have liked to have been able to engage experts, museum people, and audiences. For the

audience I had thought about a focus group that could help in deepening their perception and feelings while experiencing a museum. Some objections were made by museum curators because of the difficulty in setting up a focus group, and more importantly, for reasons of privacy.

As a result of that, the method of research was based on observations rather than focus groups with visitors. Indeed, in the case of the Quirinale Palace, it would have been arduous to get permissions from the generic audience. At the Grandmaster's Palace, however, the main issue was to find a homogeneous group available to visit the State Rooms for a longer period, as most of the visits are to the Armoury section. Observations have been considered more relevant also in order to investigate how much time visitors usually spent experiencing these collections, and to respond to one of the Grounded Theory requirements, namely "to enter the worlds of those under study in order to observe the actor's environment and the interactions and interpretations that occur" (Goulding, 1999).

All information gathered from interviews and observations has been analysed according to the Grounded Theory methodology, and has offered a relevant introduction to the palaces and their identity. This aspect will be discussed in further depth in the concluding chapter.

It is essential at this point to briefly retrace the historical events in order to understand how, at a certain point in modern history, these palaces turned into institutional centres of power. It is also important to evaluate how audiences interpret and experience them while crossing their halls or simply looking at them from the outside. Especially, in relation to the symbolism that throughout the centuries has modified their artistic language, proposing again and interpreting the heritage of the classical age in a many different ways linked to always-new political and monumental needs.

CHAPTER 3

THE QUIRINALE PALACE IN ROME

3.1 The City of the Popes

In the Renaissance age the imperial figurative imagery in the city of Rome was translated for the use of the new *pontifex*. The new rulers adopted schemas that were already known and familiar in order to transmit Christian meanings that were not only religious, but first of all connected to the territory. An exemplary case is the positioning of the statues of Saints onto emblematic monuments of the Imperial Rome. Indeed, the statues of St. Peter and St. Paul were respectively erected on top of the columns of Trajan (fig. 28) and Marcus Aurelius to stress the authority of the Pope on the urban territory in the aftermath of the exile from Avignon.

Rome is historically defined as the *city of the Popes* privileging such dimension – that is only apparently "static" - on all the other aspects and moments of its life. In the 1700s and 1800s the city experienced two unprecedented phases, at least for the modern age, during which the forced physical absence of the Vicar of Christ and the lack of the peculiar mix of temporal and spiritual powers made it a "normal" city. It was no longer characterised as the "holy city", centre of Catholicism and theocratic power, but on the contrary as a revolutionary city (Caffiero, 2005). The fall and deportation of Pius VI during the first Jacobin Republic in 1798 (fig. 29) and the escape of Pius IX during the Roman Republic in 1849, determined not only the total overthrow of the institutional order and the political and administrative government, but changes on a symbolic and cultural level. These changes affected society deeply, more than one can expect considering their short term and the apparently missed entrenchment.

3.1.1 The consequences of the French period

Shortly after the siege of Mantua (1796) had taken place, Garrau and Salicetti (Bonaparte Delegates) presented to Pope Pius VI sixty-four conditions for Peace. Many of these conditions were so humiliating and destructive to the Roman Catholic religion, that the Pope declared himself bound in conscience to

reject them. The French Commissaries replied that they must all be accepted to their full extent, or all refused. The Pontiff not only suspended the treaty and endeavoured to procure better terms through the mediation of Spain, but also held back the contributions and statues that were included in the war trophy Napoleon asked for. Foreigner travellers who were in Rome at the time were mortified to see many of the most celebrated statues being packed up. Indeed, some of the most popular statues, such as the *Gladiator* from the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme were on the verge of leaving to France in wood cases. In order to avoid the dismantling of Roman artistic heritage, the Pope told the workmen to take as long making one case as they would be making a thousand (Starke, 1802).

Rome was for some years annexed to Napoleonic France. The ancient grandeur of Rome naturally attracted the Emperor, who proclaimed it the second capital of his Empire and named his son and heir the King of Rome. But little, if anything, came of that. Soon the Pope returned to rule the city (1805), and Italy was not yet a nation. Rome was still considered only the city of Antiquity and of the Church. Stendhal who after years in France had "got a glimpse of modern civilization", wrote his very detailed guidebook of Rome in the 1820s, stating that "modern architecture" was the Basilica of St Peter and the Farnese Palace by Michelangelo (1829/1980: vol. 1: 47, 122).

Rome without the Pope seemed to have no consequences, but in reality it was bound to affect the history of the capital of the Unified Italy. The first Republic, established in the *Urbe* in the last two years of the eighteenth century was short-lived and fraught with difficulties. Yet a mere fifty years later came a second and much more brief republican phase.

These experiences had relevant repercussions. For many reasons they contributed in making and shaping Italian national identity, both due to the "Roman issues" that dominated the nineteenth century, and the ideal of Rome as the capital and symbol of Italian unity. This was a project in action from 20th September 1870, namely the Breech of Porta Pia (fig. 30) when the Italian troops entered the city of Rome and removed the Pope from his centuries-old throne. The rigid contrast between the Italian State and the former sovereign,

between the idea and the project of a modern capital in a modern State and the tradition of the capital of Christianity, was played out in front of a hostile pope deprived of his territorial supremacy. A constant presence inside the walls of the city, provided with significant freedom in the government of the universal Church.

What emerges is indeed, a sense of a deep breach with the secular Roman-papal tradition, which will be also repeated in 1849 during the siege of Rome leading to the second Roman Republic during the Italian Risorgimento. The small Republic, founded in February 1849 as a result of the great riots of 1848 (which involved the whole of Europe) had a short life (just five months from February 9th to July 4th) because of the military intervention of Napoleon III. He restored the papal order on behalf of France, for political expediency, including nevertheless an article of the French Constitution (Caffiero, 2005).

3.1.2 A new political phase

The brief phase of the Roman Republic was a significant experience in the history of Italian unification (which was the purpose of the Republic). It saw many leading figures such as Giuseppe Garibaldi and Goffredo Mameli from the Risorgimento rush from all over the Italian peninsula to meet and talk about their ideas. In those few months Rome passed from the condition of one of the most backward states in Europe to testing new democratic ideas. These were mainly inspired by Mazzini's theories, based on political and civil life principles: universal male suffrage (female suffrage was not actually forbidden by the Constitution, but women remained excluded by custom) abolition of the death penalty and freedom of worship. These would become a reality in Europe only a century later. So, the republicans of the nineteenth century did not represent this breach by the reorganisation or the urban administrative modernisation, neither by the explosion of a radical anticlericalism (fig. 31).

Between the two modern republics one can locate a division of cultural and behavioural processes of politicization and transformation. This was the turning point in political culture and was intended to create an identity and

image that Republicans wanted to give to the secular Rome, in opposition to the papal regime (fig. 32). From this perspective, trying to understand the impact of secular identity in the city centre of Catholicism and theocracy, a new field had yet to be explored and specifically the role and use of art according to policy, pedagogy and identity. In a city like Rome this becomes more meaningful than anywhere else. The new political-cultural symbolism is formed through the metaphor of the ancient and the open use of political and moral history.

3.1.3 The role of art in the Republican Rome

The use of art, on the one hand, and of classical history and its monuments, on the other one, stresses the originality of the Roman case within the Italian Republican experiences at the end of the eighteenth century for two main reasons. Firstly, due to the insistence on the educational function of artworks and artistic images and secondly, the role and the political use of the classic antiquities in a Republic established in a city like Rome (Caffiero, 2005).

With regards to the first point, it is important to remember that emphasizing the educational and pedagogical value of the images could also achieve the opposite goal of conservation and protection of the monumental historical heritage. For instance, there was a heated debate related to the proposal of destroying and erasing any coat of arms from the urban fabric, as symbols and emblems of the former theocratic and aristocratic regime. The proposal had undoubtedly put important artistic objects in danger and even at risk of being lost forever. The moderates considered this radical position ‘vandalism’. However, the same ‘vandalism’ had previously happened when the Popes pillaged ancient pagan ruins in order to build the new Christian City of Rome. The second point, instead, is about the concept of history, the role of republican antiquities and its use as foundation myths of the new Republic. The Roman origin, for clear historical reasons, appears even from an emphasized classical style guise, as acquired from genealogical representation of a new political regime, which was re-joined to ancient, Republican Roman spirit. The poster used as a republican propaganda (fig. 33), indeed, is divided into four

sections where the words *freedom* (libertà) and *equality* (eguaglianza) occupy large part of it. The Roman fasces is designed diagonally and gets on the top a hat usually referred to Jacobin troupes. The combination between ancient and modern symbols allows a direct connection to the political ideals of the ancient Rome. The *fasces lictoriae* was a bound bundle of wooden rods sometimes surrounding an axe or a laurel wreath. It symbolised a magistrate's power and jurisdiction, more extensively power and authority, but also suggested strength trough unity. Putting the Jacobin hat on top of the fasces, the ancient Republican Rome symbolism was immediately translated into a modern and clear message to the European monarchs.

3.1.4 Symbolism and emblems of Ancient Rome

The new political foundation needed both ancestors and new disciples to re-connect with a "legitimate" history. Therefore, symbols and emblems that formed part of the symbolic and monumental heritage of the ancient Roman republic were adopted by the new political religion. For instance, the imperial eagle is perhaps the most significant of these symbols (fig. 34). The predatory bird was closely connected to royalty already in Greek mythology, as the bird of the king of the gods, Zeus, his messenger and almost his incarnation. But the Roman world made it the symbol of the authority of the state, linking it to the very idea of Rome. The eagle appears on the coins with the lightning of Jupiter between the legs, symbolizing the power of the armed state, guarantor of order and justice. With the same meaning appears on the banners of the legions. The strong military connotation, however, is not divorced from a sacred and ideological value: the eagle is the bird that witnesses the divine protection of the people who bears it. With the affirmation of imperial power, which in practice concentrates the state authority in one person, the eagle also becomes a symbol of the emperor (Gordon, 1979).

The gradual sacralisation of this figure makes this image even stronger. The eagle, like the winged Victory, crowns the emperor, testifying to the divine character of his power: the emperor, god on earth, has, like Jupiter, an eagle by

his side. This symbolism was fortunate: it is found also in the coats of arms of the ruling houses that wanted to witness a continuity with the Roman Empire and the sacredness of their power. The Austrian Kaiser and the Tsar of all the Russias, which also in the title maintained a link with the Roman Cesar, wore their coats of arms with the imperial eagle (Stewart, 1966). Therefore, recalling ancient spirits meant the sacralisation of new institutions, whilst going back to the origins assumed the sense and the guise of a return to a mythical time, that of one of the first centuries pure classical spirits founding a new religion of the nation. One still needs to assess properly how Roman eighteenth century aesthetics (the new political style based on civil religion and the cult of antiquity) originated from a historical ancestor, and how it was consciously used in nineteenth century national rhetoric and the twentieth century political aesthetics (Caffiero, 2005).

3.1.5 The political use of images

The return to antiquity and neo-classical taste was widely diffused in Rome even before the revolutionary political declination; since artistic production, aesthetical doctrines and primarily the study of antiquities blossomed long before the eighteenth century. Therefore, iconography and a system of images, a language, and a style of symbols could be easily recognised by a wider audience. For instance, the symbol of Brutus and Julius Caesar became part of a new revolutionary imagination. Brutus (fig. 35) was seen first of all as a symbol of an oligarchy partisan, who fought against the return of a potential empire established by Julius Caesar. In the Middle Ages Dante had condemned him because of the conspiracy and assassination of Caesar. However, in the Renaissance his reputation had been rehabilitated thanks to the poem *Dialogus de Libertate* (1478) by Alamanno Rinuccini where the ancient world is the way to experience the Florence of the Medici thought a filter of ancient culture and values. The exaltation of freedom (which is the ancient *Fiorentina Libertas*, namedly the oligarchic and republican governments of the city) is directly connected to complaints of tyranny against Lorenzo the

Magnificent (who was compared to the Greek tyrant Phalaris for his autocratic and nepotistic system of power). The symbol of Brutus gained great favour among French revolutionaries for his fight against the idea of the empire and for his successful attempt in Caesar parricide (fig. 36).

Considering the role of art and iconography, the Republic in Rome gives a lot of information about the birth of an original political culture, especially "Roman" which influenced numerous aspects of nineteenth-century processes of political aesthetics (recurring in antiquity and art) and the religion of the nation.

Between the two modern Republics one finds the crossroads of the following political processes determining the cultural and behavioural transformation. Actually the year 1799 is a decisive turning point in political culture aimed at creating the identity and image of the city of Rome in a Republican and lay sense, in opposition to the pontifical regime. From this point of view, it is important to focus on the impact that a secularized identity had had in the city known as the centre of Catholicism and theocracy. The role and the use of art in a political and educational sense, and the search of a new identity assume a more relevant meaning in a city like Rome, than elsewhere. In fact, the new political-cultural options show themselves through metaphors of an ancient world and the emphasized political and moral use of the past (Pownall, 2007).

3.1.6 The cult of antiquity

The Roman origin concerns the history and the role of a republican antiquity, its use as a foundation myth for a new Republic. It also arises from the classical style appearance and from the genealogical representation of the new political regime, which was connected to the ancient republican Roman spirit.

The recourse to antiquity also expressed the need of sacred and sacralisation of new institutions. The return to the origins, instead, assumed the sense and the role of a return to a legendary age, the one of the pure classicism of the first centuries, where founding the new religion of the nation.

The return to antiquity and the neoclassical style have had an extensive diffusion in Rome even earlier than the revolutionary political declination, because of the artistic production and the aesthetical doctrines. Especially the antique ateliers blossomed throughout the eighteenth century lead to the circulation of an iconography and a "system" of images, a language, a style and above all symbols which could be immediately recognisable from a wide public. The cult of antiquity already had its own political vocabulary when in 1794 a group of artists and artisans hatch a plot to get back to the freedom the ancient Romans had (Donato, 2000). In 1798 the link between the Republican ideals and the memory of antiquity was even stronger also in the use of the legislative bodies, namely republic, tribunate and senate. Moreover, the Roman Jacobin deputies belonged to the bourgeoisie and had been educated in Jesuit or Piarist colleges. It means that they were well trained in the Roman Laws, so far considered the highest example of legislative coherence. It was the study of Cicero, Plutarch, Tacitus, seen as a "historic workshop" (Cambiano, 1974), that marked the revolutionary ideals.

The imagery of Brutus became the emblem of the civic value against and republican culture. The conspiracy against Caesar was the historical event that marked the idea of freedom against the oppression of a dictator (Donato, 2000) . The cult of Brutus, in particular, manifested itself through objects of all kinds, such as busts and engravings, or the *Società degli Emuli di Bruto* (Company of Brutus' Emulators). A bust of Brutus was crowned in the courtyard of the hospital of Santo Spirito, and the "patriots", after the closing of the Constitutional Circle, discussed the idea of bringing the bust of Brutus in a procession for the anniversary of 14th July. On Brutus, hero and symbol of a political and ethical project, the anti-republican rejection fell after the Neapolitan invasion: "This morning a troop of people extracted from the Vatican Palace the bust of Brutus, who served for the Patriotic Feast of the first Vendemmiale, they placed it on a small cart, and took him around the city, making him see also to the Jews on the Ghetto Gate. Finally, they threw it into the Tiber, where the tricolour banner was buried" (Giuntella, Tacus Lancia, 1980).

3.1.7 Towards a new cultural identity

From the point of view of the role of art and iconography, the Republic supplies a lot of information in Rome about the birth of a political culture that was for several extents original, effectively "Roman". It started the eighteenth century – and maybe even the twentieth century – processes of making both of an aesthetics of politics (where the recourse to the ancient art fits very well) and of a religion of the nation.

Rome became the capital of the new Italy after a war against the Pope. The conflict between the nation and ecclesiastical tradition was nowhere as sharp as in Rome. The Italian troops of the king Victor Emmanuel II entered Rome through a breach just to the right of the Porta Pia. The former Via Pia, the Renaissance perspectival street, became Via XX Settembre, after the day of the breakthrough of the papal city wall. The summer Palace of the Pope, the Quirinal, became the Royal Palace. From it, in a northeast direction towards the Pincio Park and the Villa Borghese, meandered the new fashionable main street of Rome, Via Vittorio Veneto (a royal name), opened in 1879. Other new major arteries of nationalism were the Via Nazionale from Piazza dell'Esedra (now Repubblica) to Piazza Venezia and the Via Umberto (again a dynastic designation, now del Corso) from the latter to the Piazza del Popolo (Ravaglioli, 1995; Hibbert, 1987; Lill, 1983) (fig. 37).

Existing palaces in Rome were put to new uses, the Quirinale for the King, Madama for the Senate, Montecitorio for the Chamber of Deputies, Chigi for the Prime Minister. However, there was also soon a heavy ministerial quarter constructed, along Via XX September and the street of the liberation of Rome would become the street of some of the highest political and democratic institutions such as the Ministry of Finance (the first huge ministerial building erected in 1872-77), the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Defence. The treasures of art were mainly preserved in pre-state forms, in the Vatican, in individual churches and palaces. No national museum ever acquired any artistic hegemony. The Quirinal Palace with its new use begins a process of transformation and, even if it is always seen as a royal palace, its cultural

identity experiences a gradual change and assumes a larger sense: from the palace of the popes, to the palace of the kings, eventually with the Republic to the palace of all the Italians.

3.2 A history of its building and surroundings

3.2.1 The Quirinale Hill in Ancient Rome

The Quirinale Palace is located in a place where, being built on high ground, residential areas, public buildings, and places of worship have been housed since ancient times. Indeed, in the fourth century BC the temple of the God Quirinus, after the name of the hill, and the temple of the Goddess Health were built on the top of the Quirinale hill (fig. 38). Propitiatory ceremonies were celebrated in favour of state welfare and the most imposing presences on the hill ware certainly the Baths of Constantine and the Temple of Serapis, built by Caracalla in 217 AD. In the ancient Roman temple, there were two sculptures of Castor and Pollux, whose constant presence on the Quirinale hill brought about its name of Monte Cavallo (Hill of the Horse). The two big male statues of Piazza del Quirinale depicted the Dioscuri, retaining the reins of prancing horses, according to rare iconography that appears in the Severan Age (III century AD). The sculptures, probably belonging to the so-called Temple of Serapis, were reused in the Baths of Constantine (fig. 39), on the occasion of their renovation after the earthquake of 443 AD (Coarelli, 2013).

The interest for the two groups of sculptures was revived in the fifteenth century, when Pope Paul II ordered between 1469 and 1470 a first partial restoration of the two giants. The next century, under Pope Sixtus V, the sculptures were included in the programme of expansion and adornment of the square. They were the subject of a complete restoration performed in 1585 and were moved to the sides of a marble basin to form a backdrop for the monumental road axis from Porta Pia to the square (Spagnesi, 1990). It was finally Pius VI, in 1786, who placed them in their current position, at the side of

the obelisk coming from the Mausoleum of Augustus. In 1818 Pope Pius VII had to replace the original tub with a granite basin from the Roman Forum.

Since the Middle Ages the hills started to be populated by churches, palaces and noble towers, while the old buildings were in ruins and their marbles began to be used to build new factories.

3.2.2 Villa Carafa and the Renaissance palaces

In the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, palaces and villas of nobles and prelates were built around the square and along the ancient via Alta Semitica (now Via del Quirinale). These included the villa of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, who owned a villa with a vineyard on the spot where now the Palazzo del Quirinale stands (Colalucci, 2002). In 1550, Villa Carafa was leased by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, also owner of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, who transformed the vineyard into an elaborate garden, with fountains, water features and ancient sculptures. The beauty and amenity of the vineyard of Cardinal d'Este led Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85) to expand at his expenses the small villa (entrusting the task of the new building to the architect Ottaviano Mascarino). Between 1583 and 1585, he projected an elegant villa with a front porch and loggia internally connected by a beautiful spiral staircase. Mascarino also designed the so-called 'turret', the belvedere that crowns the building. The pope wanted to find a location far away from the humidity and stench coming from the River Tiber and the unhealthy conditions of the Lateran Palace, therefore the Quirinale hill was one of the most suitable places in Rome.

In 1587, Sixtus V (1585-90) successor of Gregory XIII, bought the villa in 1587 by the Carafa di Monte Cavallo to transform it into a summer residence for the Papacy. The small villa built by Mascarino was not sufficient to accommodate the papal court and did not meet its needs and requirements. Therefore, Sixtus V commissioned the architect Domenico Fontana to expand the building by constructing a long wing towards the square and a second building on via del Quirinale, so as to make a large courtyard. Sixtus V also took care to design the square, providing the restoration of the sculptural group

of the Dioscuri, as mentioned above. He died at the Quirinale Palace, and the renovation project was completed by his successors. Clement VIII (1592-1605), focused his attention on the garden, ordering, *inter alia*, the construction of the monumental Fountain of the Organ, decorated with mosaics, stucco, statues and animated by the sound of a water organ.

3.2.3 The Baroque age: Ponzio, Maderno and Bernini

The architecture of the Palace that still stands was completed under the pontificate of Paul V Borghese (1605-21). The architect Flaminio Ponzio was responsible for the construction of the wing towards the garden (fig. 40) including, among other things, the grand staircase of honour, the great hall of the Consistory (today Salone delle Feste) and the Chapel of the Annunciation, painted by Guido Reni with some co-workers.

On the death of Ponzio (1613), he was succeeded by Carlo Maderno, in carge to build the entire wing on Via del Quirinale (which in the meantime had taken the name of Via Pia). In this part of the Palace, Maderno designed some important halls such as the Sala Regia (now Hall of Cuirassiers), the Cappella Paolina, the Papal Apartments. Paul V considered these rooms worthily decorated for his needs, then hired a team of painters and plasterers that in some cases reached a high artistic level of results as for the frescoes in the Sala Regia or stucco ceiling of the Cappella Paolina (Colalucci, 2002).

The architecture of the palace was completed under Paul V. The rest of the seventeenth century was devoted to the delimitation of the boundaries and the fortification of the entire complex of the Quirinale Palace, which was extended to almost the intersection of the Quattro Fontane (fig. 41). Urban VIII Barberini (1623-44) fenced in the entire perimeter of the gardens, enlarged the building destined for the accommodation of the Swiss Guard (the first nucleus of the Manica Lunga, the building that runs along via del Quirinale), and also thought about the defense of the Palace by building a low tower facade. In addition to this purely defensive work, Urban VIII also took care of the gardens, which were enlarged and equipped with new fountains, while Gianlorenzo

Bernini was entrusted with the design of the Loggia delle Benedizioni (1638) placed above the main portal of the Palace façade (fig. 42).

Furthermore, Pope Alexander VII Chigi (1655-67) commissioned one of the most important companies of artists in interior decoration to depict scenes from the Old and New Testament (fig. 43). The frescoed frieze was located along gallery in the wing of the Palace facing the square. The frieze was painted under the direction of Pietro da Cortona by a group of painters, among them Carlo Maratta and Pier Francesco Mola, and is now visible in the three rooms (the Yellow, the Emperor Augustus, and the Ambassadors rooms) in which the Gallery of Alexander VII was divided in 1812 (Borea, 1999).

3.2.4 The eighteenth century renovation

The last major work on the architecture of the complex of the Quirinale and its surroundings were completed within the first half of the eighteenth century. Between 1721 and 1730 Alessandro Specchi and later Ferdinando Fuga built the Papal Stables (fig. 44) overlooking the square entrance from Via della Dataria. Ferdinando Fuga was also responsible for the completion of the Manica Lunga and construction of a building used for offices of the Secretary of the *Cifre* - who was in charge of the diplomatic correspondence with the Holy See which would be subsequently used as accommodation for the rulers of Italy and then of the Presidents of the Republic. Fuga also designed the Coffee-House (1741) in the gardens of the Palace, and, on the square, the Palazzo della Consulta, which was supposed to house some offices and the Swiss Guards (fig. 45).

3.2.5 The Napoleonic transformations

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the history of the Quirinale underwent a change that would have had an important role also on the artistic events of the palace. In 1809 troops of the Napoleonic army occupied Rome, capturing Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) and deported him to France. The Quirinale

was chosen by the government as residence for the Emperor Napoleon. In anticipation of his arrival the Palace was adapted to the new demands and fashionable neoclassical taste. To make the necessary changes quickly, the architect Raffaele Stern coordinated a wide team of artists, including the painters Felice Giani and Jacques Dominique Ingres, and the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (Natoli, Scarpati, 1989). In this era a grandiose rearrangement of the square, was designed. However, it was never implemented, as Napoleon never arrived.

The imperial family never stayed at the Quirinale Palace (Godart, 2010). The war and political subversion led the army of Joachim Murat to Rome in November 1813, but in May 1814 Pope Pius VII returned and took back his possession of the Quirinale. He quickly worked to erase the traces of Napoleon's occupation as possible, while using again the architect Stern. Among the most important interventions after the Pope's return, to be noted are the austere frescoes in the Pauline Chapel and the final version of the Fountain of Dioscuri.

3.2.6 Pius IX and the end of the papal residence

The last pope to stay at the Quirinale was Pius IX (1846-78), who left traces of his pontificate by painting the ceilings of some of the rooms of what had been the apartment of Paul V. He also entrusted a wall painting of great commitment to Tommaso Minardi, who depicted the *Mission of the Apostles* (1848) (fig. 46) in the Hall of Ambassadors. It is also important to mark that it was used as the location for papal conclaves in 1823, 1829, 1831 and 1846 (Menniti Ippolito, 2004) (fig. 47). These events linked the imagery of the place to the popes and their blessing; the balcony became in this way an element of the celebration and the architectural element where all the following rulers did appear to stress their role and their presence. The Palace became not only the residence of the popes, but also the place where the election was held giving to the all area a sense of sacredness that did not get before.

When in 1870 General Cadorna took possession of the Quirinale Palace on behalf of the royal Savoy family, he perfectly realized what this meant. With the occupation of the Palace any vestiges of papal sovereignty disappeared, and Cadorna stated "this aspect of the capitulation of Rome is so important because the Quirinale Palace must become the new magnificent mansion of the King of Italy" (Godart, 2010). The key point was that the Quirinale, as well as the Consulta, were apostolic palaces and infringing upon them automatically one infringed upon the property rights of the Pope. The jurisdictional controversy ended only when the lawyer Gennarelli asserted the Quirinale had never been the residence of the Pontiff as the Pope, but only in his position as the King of Rome (Menniti Ippolito, 2004). His own seats were the Vatican, as the Head of Catholicism, and the Lateran palace, as the Bishop of Rome. Previously, Napoleon had also taken the Quirinale Palace (respecting the immunity of the other religious seats) looking at it as a place connected to the secular function of the Pope-King and not to spiritual ministry. By associating the Quirinale with its function as seat of the Pope as King, the emperor Napoleon aimed to clarify that the Pope had two distinct functions: he was the spiritual head of the Catholic Church and the Bishop of the City of Rome, on the one hand, and the leader of the papal state on the other.

3.2.7 The Savoy Royal Palace

Choosing the Quirinale as the new residence of the Kings of Italy could seem an obvious controversy against the Vatican, because it was also the venue were Pius IX conclave was celebrated in 1846. Another palace would have meant a compromise. The Quirinale can therefore be "summed up as a great and glorious building where the impulses, inventiveness, and contradictions of the post-Renaissance Church, the Reformist Church and a Church enlightened by the genius of Bernini" as Spadolini stated (Godart, 2010).

In 1870, after the breach of Porta Pia and the annexation of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy, the Quirinal Palace became to all purposes the residence of the royal family (Mureddu, 1977). To turn the old Papal Palace into a mansion,

some rooms - particularly the wing towards the garden - were completely refurbished in most cases by adopting a sumptuous Louis XV style. The neo-Rococo style well suited the eighteenth-century furniture that had arrived at the Quirinale Palace in the last years of the nineteenth century from Royal Palaces throughout Italy. Among these pieces emerged some furniture of great value, such as the commode by Bernard Vanrisanburg from the Doge's Palace in Colorno, the library of the Piedmont ebony carpenter Pietro Piffetti, moved to the Quirinale from the Castle of Moncalieri (fig. 48). The provenence of all different furniture meant the royal family intention to represent all its possessions in Italy and have a piece of every and each palace at the Quirinale that has to embody the ideal of the new unfied country. The anachronism of furniture bear to a significant discussion today, since the composition of the pieces and the rooms talk about the

Important paintings and a series of tapestries also arrived; Vittorio Emanuele II sent ten of the twenty sixteenth-century tapestries designed by Bronzino, Pontormo and Salviati from Florence. Meanwhile, two series made in eighteenth century of Beauvais cartoons by Francois Boucher came from Parma, whilst six paintings by Corrado Giaquinto with *Stories of Aeneas* come from Moncalieri (fig. 49).

While furniture, paintings, tapestries and various furnishings from the Italian realms formed the majority of the furniture which is now preserved in the Palace, only the large collection of oriental vases remained from the Papal Past. By the end of seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, some paintings (*St. John*, attributed to Giulio Romano, *Chastity who castigates Love* by Francesco Mancini, two paintings of the school of Pietro da Cortona in the Hall of Balcony and a few others) and tapestries (Gobelins with the four New Testament stories which were donated by Napoleon to Pius VII in 1805) remained. In this way the Palace became the official royal residence of the King of Italy, though some monarchs, notably King Victor Emmanuel III (1900–1946) actually lived in a private residence elsewhere (Villa Savoia on the via Salaria) and the Quirinale was used simply as an office for state functions (fig. 50). The King was used to commute daily to the Quirinale where his routine was that of any civil servant,

occasionally interrupted by official receptions and the outbreak of the First World War, during which the Piano Nobile was converted into a Red Cross hospital (Antonelli, 1997). The only structural work to the Quirinal from this period was the modification of what had been the Pope's private apartments in the Mascarino Casino for Hitler's state visit to Rome in 1938. The official report stated the massive works made in that occasion: the entrance to the hall of the apartment was substantially modified, a new marble floor was laid, ancient dark red marble columns (previously in the Pauline Chapel) were transported there as supports for ancient statues, new and prestigious furniture were acquired for the bedroom, and a new entirely bathroom with marbles on the floor and on the walls (Godart, 2016). In the same occasion, other refurbishments were made to open a hall adjacent to the Hall of the Ambassadors, namely the current Hall of Hercules (fig. 51) were formerly was located the apartment of the Empress Maria Luisa. In 1940 Cesare Maria Crestini was in charge of the ceiling and fresco decoration with shields of the Savoy family and few changes were made then until the end of the monarchy.

3.2.8 The end of the monarchy and the Republican Italy

On June 13th 1946, Umberto II, who had succeeded to the throne after the abdication of Victor Emanuel III, and was called 'the May king' on account of the brevity of his reign, left Italy for exile after the referendum by which the Italian nation chose republicanism. Two days before, Alcide De Gasperi, statesman and first prime minister of the republican Italy, informed Umberto II of the choice of the Italians in favor of a new form of State (Briganti, 1962). After the departure of the Savoy Kings, a debate interested the use of the Palace whether it should become the residence of the head of the new Italian State. On January 1st 1948, the day the Republican Constitution came into effect, the Council of Ministers decided that it should become the official residence of the President of the Italian Republic (Antonelli, 1997).

Since then the buildings and furniture have remained almost unaltered; official ceremonies take place in the same rooms used for such purposes by the

House of Savoy. Thus the *Salone dei Corazzieri* houses the Cuirassiers (a special division of Carabinieri assigned to the defense of the Palace since the time of the kings) during State visits, while on the same occasions the Hall of the Ambassadors is used to present the diplomatic corps to foreign Heads of State. The Throne Room, as used by both popes and sovereigns, clearly no longer has any function, while the *Palazzina* designed by Fuga has been turned into the apartments of the President (Antonelli, 1997).

The ancient papal custom, noted with amazement by Goethe in his *Italian Journey*, of permitting open access to the Palace for most of the day, was no longer followed until President Mattarella was elected. In 2015 the official rooms are open to the public on a daily basis thanks to volunteers, while the Gardens are open every June 2nd, as usual, to celebrate the establishment of the Republic.

3.3 The collections of antiques and carriages in the Quirinale Gardens

3.3.1 The Gardens layout

The complex of the Quirinale Palace also encloses a garden of almost four hectares keeping an important part of the past and present history (fig. 52). The way the garden was landscaped and the presence of buildings still visible within it tell a lot of the Papal, Royal and Republican periods. The Gardens also gather some of the most interesting collections belonging to the Quirinale, namely the antique statues - found during excavations within the garden - and the carriages collection.

When at the beginning of the sixteenth century Villa Carafa was built on top of the hill, there were two residential buildings linked by gardens, tree-lined walks and courtyards. The enclosing wall of the garden separated them and there was not an organic design. The first who devoted his attention to the garden was Cardinal Ippolito d'Este after he rented Villa Carafa in 1550. He transformed it into one of the most elegant residences in Rome commissioning

Girolamo da Carpi and Tommaso Ghinucci to design the garden and organized it into roads, pavilions and flowerbeds (MacDougall, 1994). A main entrance road running parallel to the Strada Pia accessed it. The main road fanned out into a trident converging towards a central pavilion with a nymphaeum surrounded by ancient statues. Another central plan pavilion in wood and foliage was located in the place where the eighteenth century Coffee House would later be built. A staircase descended to the lower portion of the area, in the direction of the Trevi district, which hosted a nymphaeum decorated with statues of Apollo and the Muses, then transformed into the Organ Fountain (fig. 53) during the age of Clement VIII (MacDougall, 1994).

Gregory XIII started the construction of the Palace but left the arrangement of the garden unchanged. His successor, Sixtus V installed the waterworks to bring water to the fountains after he ordered the construction of the Acquedotto Felice (Hibbart, 1964). Paul V, albeit respecting the previous arrangement, radically transformed the garden into a perfect monumental design. Later, Pope Urban VIII extended it towards the Quattro Fontane (Four Fountains), including therein the former Vigna Boccacci (Boccacci vineyard), which had been left uncultivated on the edge of the estate, flattening out and building a wall around the top of the hill.

3.3.2 The Coffee House

Pope Benedict XIV had the most panoramic place of the garden embellished with an elegant Coffee House (fig. 54), whose construction begun in 1741 with the architect Ferdinando Fuga. The Pope destined it to become a place for cultural encounters (Kiely, 2015). The building is a three-arched portico along the two façades, flanked by two parallel wings, which dovetailed into the front terrace with a white and pink peperino stone diamond-shaped flooring. A Doric frieze on the façade highlights the design, crowned by the cornice supporting twelve toga-donning busts. The back façade, which overlooks the city, has a niche containing the bust of the Pope. The large building of the Stables, which the Savoy sovereigns had built in 1875,

compromises the magnificent view, once a unique attraction for visitors (Spagnesi, 1990). The interiors of the Coffee House are also embellished with elegant stuccos and paintings by Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787). The walls are decorated with large paintings by Jan Frans van Bloemen and by Placido Costanzi – respectively known for their landscapes and figures, which elegantly hang over the fireplace. The parlour on the left features a similar stucco decoration and paintings by Agostino Masucci. Two architectural *capricci* by Giovanni Paolo Panini hang on the two longer walls and represent Piazza del Quirinale (1733) and Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore (1742) (Steil, 2013). The Coffee House was the setting for the encounter between Benedict XIV and Charles of Bourbon, King of The Two Sicilies, on November 3rd 1744, which was depicted by Panini in a famous painting displayed at the Capodimonte Museum in Naples (fig. 55). The painting portrayed the visit of the King to the Pope after the victory of the Bourbon troops over the Austrian army in 1744 in Velletri. Three years before they had signed a Concordat that marked a long friendship between the kingdoms of Rome and Naples (Kiely, 2015).

3.3.3 The nineteenth century works

During the reign of the House of Savoy, interventions included the creation of the Caserta Fountain, designed for King Umberto I (1878-1900) by Giulio Monteverde and built in front of the Coffee House. It features a sculptural group from the park of the Reggia di Caserta, with three female figures sitting on a rock in the middle of a circular basin (fig. 56).

The Organ Fountain (fig. 57), which is visible from the terrace, was once the greatest attraction of the lower part of the Garden (MacDougall, 1994). As it has already been said, the fountain, built by order of Clement VIII, was the centre stage for a performance in which nature merged with the harmonies of a water organ through water tricks and a skilfully designed backdrop of vegetation. The inner lining of the niche, in polychrome stucco, depicts a series of the Stories of the Creation and the Stories of Moses, interspersed with figures of sea deities, chimeric creatures and aquatic animals. The niches on the back

wall originally contained the statues of Apollo and of the nine Muses. Three large staircases fan out from the fountain, making the water race down in a cascade. In front of the fountain stood a large oval pond surrounded by tall trees, which was demolished during the construction of the royal mews. The music mechanism, which was manufactured between 1596 and 1609 by organist Luca Blasi, was completely renovated in the eighteenth century by order of Clement XI. The old mechanism was replaced with a new system operated by cascading water, which set in motion a toothed wheel connected to the keyboard.

The Gardens are enriched with an oval-shaped labyrinth (fig. 58) encircled by cypresses and with a small obelisk at the centre, so typical of Italian Renaissance gardens. The maze is clearly visible from the terrace above the *Casina Svizzera* (Swiss house), a small nineteenth century building with crenelated walls and Ticino-style interior decorations. The eastern side of the garden is markedly landscaped in the vogue of English gardens. It is crossed by Viale dei Sarcofagi (*Boulevard of sarcophagi)*, which is lined by twelve prestigious sarcophagi of the Roman period. The arrangement in this part of the garden is less formal, with mixed groups of shrubs softening the landscape according to the Romantic vogue. The Viale dei Sarcofagi ends in front of the exedra of the Villa Olivieri, located on the very edge of the garden. On the left are the greenhouses, half-hidden by the vegetation, where the bedding plants destined to decorate the flowerbeds and the halls of the Quirinale Palace are grown and cared for. The Boschetto (thicket), once characterized by an original layout, is separated from the garden by tall walls and hedges. The walks were arboured and the remaining spaces were covered by thick vegetation that gave the whole area the appearance of a wood (MacDougall, 1994).

3.3.4 The Gardens renovation project

During the Presidency of Giorgio Napolitano (2006-2015), it was decided to recover the garden layout on the basis of a historically documented project (Segretariato generale dela Presidenza della Repubblica). The project privileged

the age immediately following the early period of Cardinal d'Este, which survived for less than three decades and which was documented from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. The project re-designed the old layout, recreating the evocative perspective connecting the Rustic Fountain to the seventeenth century staircase leading up to the *bel étage* of the Palace. The first phase of the project focused on the original botanical and architectural layout of the area, maintaining the original perspective points.

The landscaping design included a planting plan that would simultaneously respect the geometric design of the garden and the growth of the plants. Gardening operations began with the restricted selective pruning of the holm oaks present in the area. These pruning interventions have highlighted the primary postulate of an ancient garden, namely the regular growth of a variety of plant species.

The hedges present in the area involved in the historical recovery effort have gradually been replaced in order to re-establish the symmetrical effect of an Italian Renaissance garden. Hedges have played an essential role in redesigning and separating the two distinct areas of the classical garden. Indeed, the stage-curtain partitioning of the plants embracing the fountain commissioned by Gregory XV, with its water tricks, have been gradually pruned into a topiary geometric design. This type of agora-centred architecture, compounded to the water tricks of the fountain, conveyed an emotional connotation to the Italian Renaissance garden. To complete the thicket in a way that was historically and botanically compliant, the area was planted with shrubs, bushes and arborescent plants like myrtle, laurel and holm oaks.

3.3.5 The recent archaeological discoveries

The excavation of a sector of the Quirinale Gardens allowed the discovery of part of the archaeological fabric underlying the main building of the Palace (fig. 59) (Godart, Lauro, 2016). The excavated sector was limited to a small area and that has determined a stratigraphic search restricted to a section strongly affected by the overlapping of past interventions. The latter had

followed the abandonment of the site and, in a more consistent way, were characterised by the different settlements of the sixteenth century garden.

Remains of a Roman statue, probably reused in the seventeenth century as a lintel at the time of the excavation by Gianlorenzo Bernini, emerged in an abandoned tunnel in the Boschetto area. The seventeenth century works concerned the foundations of the first stretch of the Manica Lunga. The archaeologist Louis Godart, Councillor of the President of the Republic for the protection of the artistic heritage, argued that the sculpture derives from a sacred place that coincides with the temple of Quirinus and placed just under the Quirinale. The archaeological investigation has shown how the entire sector brought to light was deeply affected by the construction of the Palace. The ancient walls were levelled, regularized and filled from debris to create a plan suitable for the strong part of the wall of the buildings (Godart, Lauro, 2006). The structures that came to light belong to an almost exclusively residential settlement area developed between the Republican age and the full Imperial age. The oldest structures are referred to a Roman *domus* as evidenced by the decorative materials found (pictorial fragments, stuccos, clay elements, etc.) and parts of mosaic floors now visible thanks to a complex work of recovery and restoration. The housing structures have at least four main building moments in which there is a radical transformation of the layout. In addition to an ancient tuff wall, the excavation also shows a retaining or perimeter wall supported by a substantial ballast, rooms built in brickwork with remains of cocciopesto paving and a series of arches probably pertinent to a portico (Godart, Lauro, 2006).

The archaeological area confirms its particular importance, especially in connection with various remains of ancient structures now incorporated in the structures of the Quirinale area. Indeed, the archaeological collection of the Quirinale Palace, as it stands today, is the result of complex historical developments that started with the collection created by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este in 1550, until the nineteenth century when the collection, much impoverished compared to the original, was consolidated into a prevalently statuary collection. Today in the Quirinale Palace, but mostly in its gardens, it is possible to see numerous idealised statues of deities and Apollonian and mythical figures

in Roman togas, as well as original and copies of busts testifying the tendency of recovering all ancient artefacts to be seen as the intention of the popes to witness their symbolic bond with the ancient rulers of Rome (Witte, 2014).

3.3.6 The Stables and the carriages collection

Shortly after Victor Emmanuel II, the King of a united Italy, settled in the Quirinale Palace, the Ministry of the Royal House thought of designating part of the old papal palace to accommodate horses, carriages and harnesses (Rossi Doria, Marzullo, 2010).

The court of the House of Savoy needed a large stable, which was necessary both for everyday activities and for state visits, because the stables that the popes had built on the Quirinale square during the eighteenth century were not big enough. It was therefore decided to build a large L-shaped facility marking the north-western border of the Quirinale compound. The building, now known as the *Fabbricato Cipolla*, after the architect who built it, was large enough to accommodate the stables, a barn, galleries for harnesses and riding gear, a circular paddock, 126 staff rooms and a carriage depot (Rossi Doria, Marzullo, 2010). This building houses the Gallery of Harnesses and Liveries, a History Study Room displaying the most valuable harnesses, the office of the Crown Equerry (the royal officer in charge of this important part of life at Court), and the collection of carriages.

Specialised firms manufactured most of the carriages used by the Court, except for four gala carriages from Piedmont and three from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, at the end of the nineteenth century. The four gala horse-drawn carriages from Piedmont (fig. 60) are the oldest and most valuable pieces of the Quirinale Palace collection and were often used in the most important occasions during the reign of the House of Savoy. They consisted of a gilded Berlingotto Great Gala carriage of 1789 with decorations; a Berlin of 1817 called the "Marriage Coach" (fig. 61) because it was used for the marriage of Victor Emmanuel II; another Berlin of 1817 completely decorated with stories of the Greek hero Telemachus in search of his father Ulysses; the Egyptian carriage

(fig. 62), manufactured for the celebration of the Carnival of 1819 in Turin in ivory-white but later painted black and used as a hearse for the solemn funerary transport of the Savoy royals (Rossi Doria, Marzullo, 2010).

Two of the three carriages from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany also date back to 1821-22 but are simpler, less sumptuous and less markedly original in character than their four splendid Piedmontese counterparts. Among the 105 carriages in the Quirinale Palace collection, deserving of mention are several gala and grand gala berlin carriages produced in Milan for Victor Emmanuel II, covered and uncovered carriages for the private use of the king or court officials, country carriages, children's horse carriages, pony carts and a little Rococo berlin given to the young Prince of Naples and future King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III.

Antonio Cipolla's original project for the Stables included a room – defined in the oldest records "Luxury Saddlery" and subsequently "Luxury Saddle Study Room" – that was used to store rare and valuable equestrian apparel belonging to the House of Savoy or given to them during state visits. The large walnut showcase with twelve large single-pane windows was made by Roman-born wood carver and carver Giuseppe Ficini around the middle of 1875. Among the many objects kept in the Historical Saddlery the most valuable is the horse harness of the carriage used by Napoleon for the crowning of the King of Italy on 26th May 1805 and the trappings of the horse of the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais (Rossi Doria, Marzullo, 2010).

The most admirable of the numerous gifts made to the Savoy Royal Family by North African and Middle Eastern sultans and kings include a crimson velvet and gold horse trapping given to Prince Umberto of Savoy by the Bey of Tunis in 1863 along with two flintlock pistols and a cane.

Part of the collection are two Prussian cavalry officer harnesses given by Umberto I of Italy when he was appointed honorary colonel of the 13th Hussars cavalry regiment on 8th June 1882 following the signature of the Triple Alliance treaty. Finally, the album containing reproduction of the carriages previously kept in the Royal Stables of Florence is of great artistic and historical

value. It contains photographs by Giuseppe Alvino and Alessio Campa, which was given to Umberto I of Italy in 1885 during a visit to the Royal Stables.

3.4 The Museum and the modern identity of the Quirinale Palace

3.4.1 The meaning of historical monuments

The interview with Louis Godart, Director for the Conservation of Artistic Heritage of the Italian President, highlighted some very interesting points for the interpretation of the Quirinale Palace and for the construction of an educational program useful to all visitors. The interview starts with the notion of a historical monument and how it is interpreted by UNESCO (works of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, or science), and how this definition can be associated with the Quirinale. According to Godart, "a historical monument is rooted in history, it has been called to play an important role in building a reality that in the case of Rome is the reality of the eternal city". From this point of view it can be said that the Quirinal is undoubtedly a historical monument because it was born as a papal Palace in 1583 and what makes it exceptional is the fact that since it was born to this day it remained a palace of power: from 1583 to 1870 it is was the palace of the popes, from 1870 to 1946 the residence of the kings of Italy and from 1946 to today, and will continue without a doubt, it is the seat of the highest magistrate of the republican State (the Presidency of the Republic).

The most interesting thing to note is that during the brief period of the Napoleonic occupation when the Pope was arrested and deported to France, in the Emperor's mind the palace was destined to become the imperial one. There is an uninterrupted relationship between the Quirinal Palace, the historic palace, and the seat of what the Latins called *auctoritas*.

3.4.2 Main educational narratives

Until 2015 the visits were allowed only on Sunday morning and Godart and his associates were engaged in official visits by the President of the Republic to show the Palace to the ambassadors and foreign Heads of State. The historical continuity between the various periods that have crossed the palace is the key point of all visits to bring back the old pages of the palace's history fallen into oblivion. These steps are needed to create a red thread and allow visitors to fully enter the spirit of the place.

In particular, two historical moments characterized the present view of the Quirinal from an artistic and decorative point of view: the Napoleonic one and the Savoyard one. The architecture of the Palace can be focused on three major phases that are the pre-Gregorian period (or before 1583), the second period from the pontificate of Gregory XIII to that of Paul V (1583-1618) and the third period from the pontificate of Urban VIII to that of Clement XIII (1623-1732) when the Palace was substantially modified. “Architectural activities after 1732 are very little consequence, since they involved only interior decoration and modification” (Wassermann, 1963).

Regarding Napoleon, the emperor who came to Rome in 1804 wanted to make the Quirinal the empire’s palace and had provided enormous sums for the alterations that have been sometimes harmful, something beneficial (Godart). The brief Napoleonic occupation represented something important from the historical perspective of the palace, as well as of course the Savoy period. When the Savoy settled in the Quirinal in 1870, the Palace had been emptied of all the furniture that had been properly brought to the Vatican because of an agreement signed between the Vatican and the young Italian state. The Savoy have modified some parts of the Palace, especially in the eastern wing, some halls have been enlarged because they dreamed of copying the Realm of Versailles and introduced in some rooms the rococo style which obviously covered the six- and seventeenth-century decorations of the popes. These are the two salient moments that have seen transforming the Quirinal Palace, not that much from

an architectural point of view rather than from an artistic point of view, and also a dwelling place.

3.4.3 Travellers and visitors' feelings

All this is hardly perceptible today with respect to Grand Tour travellers who visited Rome between the end of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. The travellers of that period had a culture that certainly is not the culture of today's tourists and therefore a preparation and a perception of beauty that much it is hardly found in today's tourists, with very few exceptions. According to Godart, between Stendhal describing the Quirinal Palace, the Palazzo Farnese or the great palaces of Rome compared to a Japanese tourist who comes with his camera there is an abyss, maybe there are still tourists able to recognize the Beauty, but their preparation is undeniably very different from that of Goethe, Stendhal or, before them, Montaigne.

The key problem highlighted by this answer is the lack of good education that younger generations have lost both for an impoverishment of the study (in Italian schools the history of art is less and less studied) and the lack of curiosity for reading and culture in general (Report, ISTAT 2016). Cultural data becomes more and more relevant if one also thinks of the capability to observe and analyse what the Grand Tour travellers and writers could testify in their works.

If one takes into account two characters who have come into contact with the Quirinale Palace, namely Chateaubriand and Stendhal, what struck most was the palace of power, and in this case the power of the Popes. In the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, Chateaubriand writes extraordinary pages to describe Napoleon's transformations in the Quirinal Palace when General Radet sent to arrest Pope Pius VII. In his autobiography published between 1848 and 1850, Chateaubriand gives an intimate description of his time, a historical moment that has seen great changes in the history of France and Europe, providing literary portraits of the greatest characters lived between the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. He writes small *poèmes en prose*, and in particular, the portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte is very lucid and

severe. Chateaubriand, in fact, arrived in Rome in 1803 following the emperor's residency at the Embassy of France; although in contrast to him, the writer dedicates many pages alternating praise for his military genius and blame for his megalomania that he considers to be fickle for men and France. Chateaubriand also recounts one of the conclaves, but what is most striking is the architectural relationship between the Palace and papal power, and for a Christian like he was (the book *Genius of Christianity* in which his conversion is told was published in 1802) this was 'the Palace of the Pope' and the palace the Loggia of the blessings where the crowds where waiting for the pope to bring to the balcony (Godart).

This feeling extended also in the Savoy period; in fact, the king brought to the balcony (already the Loggia of the Blessings) during the great festivals and processions. The *Istituto Luce* retains images and newsreels that show the Prince of Piedmont and Maria José as they look out over that balcony and one can easily notice the same impact between the crowd and the king or the pope.

3.4.4 The identity of the Quirinale Palace

Coming to a more recent period, contemporary audiences live in any case the effect and impact with the institutional power. The Quirinale Palace welcomes between 220.00 and 250.00 visitors on a yearly basis, both school and adults. People are happy to walk through the halls of this Palace that is always associated with official events in the Nation. For example, when one enters the *Salone delle Feste* and is said that this is the room where governments swear loyalty to the Republic in the hands of the Head of State people are very interested, and when one makes the effort to contextualize each room by connecting it with the institutional events a useful service is made encouraging public participation and understanding of the life of the Palace.

One can certainly say that this is a Palace where even today history is 'built' (Godart) and people are sensitive to this element; perhaps in the same way as the artistic impact, also the institutional impact affects the public.

Thus, the identity of the Quirinale Palace has been built on some historical elements that go far beyond the papal building. In fact, the cultural identity of the Palace goes hand in hand with that of Rome; the Palace is associated with the history of the eternal city, the history of the Western world and leaves and has left a strong track in the cell of the centuries, identity can be summed up in this: the sign that is left in local and global history.

One can see the Quirinal Palace as the mirror of the vicissitudes that made great Rome, and that make Rome the eternal city. Before the papal palace, the Quirinale hill is linked to republican-imperial age and one just has to take a look at the square that houses the statues of the *Dioscuri* from the Constantine Thermal Baths or the fountain, both findings dating back to Roman times. Even in the Gardens of the Quirinale, the remains of the republican-imperial Rome have been found and can now be visited. The history of the hill and the palace follows the history of the eternal city, are inseparable and inextricable.

3.4.5 A change of status

Since President Sergio Mattarella's election in 2015, guided tours to the Quirinale Palace have been regulated differently and the Historic Apartment and Carriage Museum are now open on a daily basis on reservation (more details will be discussed in the next section). Opening to the public, and to such a large audience, has led to changes in the perception of the place, because this Palace is undoubtedly perceived as the Common House of the Italians. Every Italian feels the Palace as a nation's good and is directly involved in the life of the palace.

Godart work over the years has also been focussed on the communication and dissemination of the various discoveries made over time, from the archaeological excavations in the Gardens, to the renovation and construction of the Historic Apartment. He made sure that everybody could perceive the Palace in detail through the publication of guides and multimedia visits. In this way, visitors were allowed to retrace the rooms after a visit *in situ* with multimedia tools and support for the visit. This work never stops because history pages of

the palace that have fallen into oblivion are constantly brought to light updating all tools that allow to live the transformations or rather the discoveries that take place in the Quirinal Palace.

3.4.6 The House of Italians

According to the jurist Gregorio Arena, opening the Quirinale Palace to citizens on a regular basis is not like opening a new museum to tourists. It gets a political and educational meaning as it affects the Palace nature suddenly changing it: from a distant and physically inaccessible institution to a welcoming place, which everybody can visit, be received and accompanied by common people. From a political point of view, the opening sends a message in absolute contradiction with the dramatic deterioration of the relationship between citizens and institutions. President Mattarella knows that the most effective communication is “conscious behaviour of being communication”. Actually, the Palace was so far virtually inaccessible on the highest hill of Italian politics, the opening communicates better than speeches how the President understands the relationship between citizens and institutions. Maybe in the decision to open to the citizens the ancient Palace of the Popes and Kings there is also somewhat the idea of the disposition at article 87 of the Italian Constitution, stating that the President “represents national unity”. So far, the nation and its unity have embodied in one person. From now on national unity will also be embodied in a physical, concrete place that Mattarella also declared the house of Italians.

So, other Italians are going to welcome and guide visitors. Here it is the educational meaning in entrusting the visitor's welcome to university students (who thus acquire credits for their academic career) and to the now proven Volunteers of the Italian Touring Club. It is important to state that the Quirinale does not open to add another museum to the already long list of cultural assets. It is open to give all the Italians the chance to understand, identifying themselves in a beautiful legacy of ancestors, what it means to be a nation. The focus is to strengthen the sense of belonging to the significance that that Palace

has had and has in the Italian history. Students and volunteers will have to try to convey this, **transforming every visit in an occasion of education to nationality and national identity**. Moreover, their presence in those rooms has an educational value because it communicates with the facts the great news that in the last ten years has changed the very idea of citizenship in Italy.

3.4.7 Volunteers and educators

In 2001, the introduction to the Constitution of the principle of subsidiarity has legitimized the autonomous initiatives of citizens who are actively involved in the care of tangible and intangible common goods of the places where they live. The Quirinale Palace has to be seen as a common good, owned by the State, of course. This is the reasoning Anna Di Paolo marked to explain the involvement of civil society in the opening of the Palace. She is in charge of management and organisation on behalf of Touring Club Italia at the Quirinale Palace, while Giuseppe Soldoni is the shift supervisor in charge of the guided tours. Their interviews opened a window on how volunteers are trained and how they manage visitors inside the Palace. As said above, there are both students and TCI volunteers leading groups and they are trained from both entities, namely the Servizio Patrimonio Area Tutela e Valorizzazione del Patrimonio Artistico and the Touring Club Italia. For a political meaning, there are no audio-guides since all visits are led by a person to emphasise the human relationship with the institution. Each apprenticeship lasts 150 hours (50 hours training and 100 hours guiding) and it becomes a real 'training ground of experience' for students. After the apprenticeship and an exam they can become TCI volunteers and then participate to periodic updates both at the Quirinale Palace and Castelporziano. The latter is a presidential estate located by the coastline and including historic hunting grounds; its specific Mediterranean ecosystem and variety of flora and fauna, made Castelporziano a Natural State Reserve in 1999. It is also sprinkled with interesting archaeological ruins and, as a result of that, educational tours mixing artistic and naturalistic aspects are offered there.

In order to guarantee continuity in the behaviour of volunteers, a supervisor is designed everyday and is in charge of the relationship between volunteers and the Quirinale Palace. The organisation of guided tours is quite complex due to security reasons and an escort, an assistant, and a cuirassier accompany the group during the visit. The path follows a specific itinerary and timing allowing audience to understand the historical evolution of the presidential palace. It is important to stress that it is an institutional display and not a museum one with reconstructions of the settings. The narrative is mainly devoted to make this difference clear and usually visitors do appreciate it. It is also meaningful how all presidents modify part of the display; for instance, Mattarella is very careful to furniture, especially to paintings with their symbolism, images, and allegories.

3.4.8 Main educational issues

A crucial point is the chronological reconstruction of the events that led to the current Palace. Many visitors ignore its genesis, in particular the papal age and every passage is told with little sparks enabling a wider knowledge of the place and its history. Surveys conducted reveal a high visitors satisfaction and a positive perception of the Palace opening, although a few complains were referred to the limited time of the visit. One has to consider also that there is not a proper reception structure with a bookshop or a cafeteria, and school groups do visit the Palace simultaneously with general public. There are about 500 visitors a day and only the 10% are foreigners. Actually, a limit is that visits are only led in Italian and for visitors coming from abroad a brochure in English in available.

For the moment, there are no educational activities to involve visitors in deepening the museum identity and no activities at the museum (such as series of conferences or debates) are proposed to allow audience take part in the learning experience. This lack is probably coherent with the assertion made above stating that they were not inclined to show the Palace like a museum, but rather and essentially like the presidential site. This is also evident in the

communication tools provided; the website is split into two main sections devoted to the institutional and the cultural sides. Efforts have been made to emphasise that what was earlier all one is now more accessible thanks to virtual tours, but in any case refers to the Quirinale Palace in its complex and multi-functional structure.

CHAPTER 4

THE PALAZZO REALE IN NAPLES

4.1 The City of the Bourbon Kings

The origins of the Bourbon family can be traced back in Central France in the ninth century and rapidly grown in power and importance thanks to a politics of weddings, wars, and coalitions. The first Bourbon king was Henry IV of France in 1589 and since that time they were competing with the Habsburg the supremacy in Europe for the following two centuries. The Bourbon Kings of Naples were a branch of the Spaniard lineage starting in 1735 with Charles III, son of Philip V, who was wisely committed to raise the lots of the kingdom again (Ghirelli, 2015).

The city of Naples in the eighteenth century was like "a big head on a thin body" (Galasso, 1987): the metaphor tries to explain the relationship between the capital city and its kingdom. This judgment expressed by the Southern reformers and enlightened thinkers, such as the philosopher Giambattista Vico and the jurist Mario Pagano, stressed the parasitic phenomena that dried up the provinces' vital sap during the Spanish and Bourbon age. Vico played a significant role in the cultural and industrial modernisation of the whole country, being Naples for centuries the only university in Southern Italy educating generations and generations, from Humanism to the Enlightenment. Indeed, the University of Naples was founded in 1224 by the emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, and it was the oldest public non–religious university in the world that trained secular administrative staff in Europe (Astarita, 2013). It meant that the city of Naples led the way towards modern culture in a wide landscape, since it was for a long time second only to Paris in Europe and to Constantinople in the Mediterranean in terms of population size and infrastructure.

4.1.1 A capital city

After the defeat of the emperor Frederick II in Benevento in 1266, the kingdom of Naples passed to the Angevin dynasty and Charles d'Anjou

proclaimed the city as the capital of his reign. This a great moment when splendid palaces and majestic churches were built also during the reign of Robert and his wife Sancha of Aragon, such as the Church and Monastery of Santa Chiara (fig. 63), the Angevin "Maschio", the Church of San Giovanni a Carbonara. The city was flourishing and both population and trade increased (Sakellariou, 2012). After the decadence of the family with Queen Joan and her successors, King Alfonso of Aragon conquered Naples in 1442 and opened a new era that allowed Naples to embrace the Renaissance art and ideals. It is in this historical period that artists such as Jacopo Sannazzaro, Pietro Summonte, and Lorenzo Valli developed their works, and the city was embellished by monumental edifices and artworks in Castel Nuovo with its splendid marble arch (fig. 64), the churches of Sant'Anna dei Lombardi and Sant'Angelo a Nilo, housing respectively works by Vasari and Donatello. Angevin and Aragon rulers gave relevant results both from the art and architectural points of view in Naples: the openness and intellectual attitudes of Robert "the Wise" of Anjou and Alfonso "the Magnanimous" of Aragon represented a meaningful flywheel that the Spanish rules had been able to use and develop.

4.1.2 The Spanish Vice-kingdom

When Grand Captain of Spain Consalvo de Cordoba, under the banners of Ferdinand the Catholic, entered Naples in January 1504, he also inaugurated, among great honours and festivities, what would have been the *longa aetate* of the Spanish Vice Kingdom of Naples. The feat puts to an end the Aragon reign that lasted from 1442 and delivered the ancient lands of the Realm of Naples to the Spanish Crown.

After Cordoba, many other rulers alternated, sometimes with well deserved administrative powers, sometimes less so, at the office of Viceroy. Among them, the ruler historiography commemorates for greatest capability and merit, is Don Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, son of Frederick of Toledo, Duke of Alba, and Maria Ossorio Pimentel. Indeed, Don Pedro de Toledo ruled from 1532 to 1553 with ingenious temperament along with careful

administration in the fields of justice, economy and urbanism, under the King Charles I of Spain. Urban historians do credit Don Pedro with one of the most relevant changes in the city layout that characterises the city even nowadays: the Spanish district (fig. 65). It is a military quarter that covered the hill from Sant'Elmo to the Viceroy's palace, following the slope according a perfect hippodameous scheme with a dense grid made of parallel and perpendicular roads.

The Catholic kingdom of Spain became even more central to the international scene with Philip II (1556-1598), "the Sword of Counter-Reformation". He was able to overshadow France and Holland, the centres of Protestantism, and to face and repel Turkish armies in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, an objective judgment on the reign of Philip II is difficult to formulate because of the defeat of the "Invincible Armada", which in 1588 began the slow political decline of Spain. It had the effect of diluting its previous achievements, but did not underestimate that in the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis he found the answer to the need for an alliance between Counter-Reformation and political power in its own international, military and diplomatic weight to assert the deliberations of Trent in Spain's Castilian. Another highly interesting aspect in the result of Cateau-Cambresis was to officially affirm the absolute predominance of Spain on the Italian peninsula, which would thus be linked until the end of the seventeenth century at the entourage of Philip II and its direct successors.

In 1559, therefore, Italy knew the direct Spanish domination of the Duchy of Milan, the Kingdoms of Naples, Sicily and Sardinia. The Corona administered under its command about half the Italian territory, occupying Sardinia and Sicily already Aragonese domains, the Kingdom of Naples, conquered at the beginning of the century, the Duchy of Milan, obtained with the Peace of Madrid of 1526, and the State of the Presidi (namely five towns along the Tuscan coast from Porto Ercole to Orbetello), taken shortly before the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. These domains were already living with the consequences of Counter-Reformation, animated since 1540 by the rigorous Gian Pietro Carafa, native of Capriglia Irpina in the Kingdom of Naples,

ascended to the Pontificate in 1554 under the name of Paul IV, even among the adversity of Carlo V.

Although in 1563, Philip II had established in Madrid the Supreme Council of Italy, with Spanish ministers, one Milanese, one Sicilian and two Neapolitans. In these domains, which lacked geographical proximity and historical or cultural homogeneity, Spain did not impose legal uniformity of government: Sicily, Sardinia and Naples were governed by three distinguished viceroys, while Milan was ruled by its own governor (Galasso, 1998). There were also several local magistrates assisting the Royal Delegate: in Sicily there was a Parliament of ancient Norman origin divided into feudal, ecclesiastical and state-owned arms, similar to the local representation in Naples and Sardinia. In Milan, however, it was the Senate, dating back to the Sforza era, to handle significant powers in the judicial and administrative fields. The key to reading these two centuries is perhaps provided by the careful analysis of Francisco Elijad de Tajada y Spinola Gomez (1964) who identified in Spain's Castile-led political initiative the efforts to defend Roman Catholicism, its concept of life and social order. The work of Spanish sovereigns, for the Spanish jurist, collapsed under the blows of the Protestant advance, of absolutism and of jurisprudence, which defaced the medieval past of knightly and catholic banners. The defeat of Spain then became the defeat of Catholicism, while that society conceived as a *corpus misticum*, was flourishing in Italy, also becoming almost prescriptive in legal and spiritual matters. Elsewhere Catholicism was either disappearing or transforming.

The tough years of Philip III and Philip IV that followed Philip II, as well as the barbarian pirates on coastal areas, earthquakes, eruptions and a scary plague that in 1656 halved the population of the capital, which already accounted for half a million inhabitants at an age when cities such as Milan and Rome counted as little as one hundred thousand. Nevertheless, in June 1707, when the link between Spain and the Church was fractured, the Emperor of Austria, with the support of Pope Innocent XII, conquered Naples by ending the Spanish supremacy that had ruled for two centuries.

4.1.3 Succession's issues

A chronic crisis for the Kingdom of Naples opened the eighteenth century with the problem of Charles II's succession, a problem endangering European socio-political balance, apparently only restored with the peace of Ryswick in 1697. The problem of succession closely involved the France of Louis XIV (since the French sovereign had married a descendant of the Habsburgs of Spain), Leopold I (husband of Charles II's sister), and Vittorio Amedeo II of Savoy (son of a Spanish princess).

When reading Charles II's will, however, it became clear that had designated his universal heir as Philip V of Anjou, nephew of Louis XIV, provided that he did not joined the Spanish crown to the French one. The situation therefore led to fear of a possible union between France and Spain, creating a *casus belli* for the Spanish succession war (1701-1714), in which England, Holland, Austria and Prussia united against France that, after the defeat suffered in Turin in 1706, abandoned Italy for the benefit of the Austrians.

4.1.4 The Austrian period

It was precisely the Austrian troops who entered in Naples in 1707, ending Spanish domination in the Kingdom and being welcomed as possible "levellers" of a Southern part expecting a new political phase. The Habsburgs ruled in the South from 1707 to 1734, without substantial political and institutional changes.

The leadership of the central government was entrusted to the jurists, while the Collateral Board became the centre of administrative power. Under the Austrian government, the Kingdom of Naples still had to provide tax payments, and once again feudalism was the centre of fiscal and political management, feeding tensions that often led to unrest, such as the Peasant Revolt in 1721. The continuous attempts to recapture the Kingdom by Philip V made ruling even more difficult for the Austrian Viceroys. In 1718, he tried to

re-establish his control in Sardinia and Sicily, but was defeated at Capo Passero, and with the Peace of The Hague 1720 the Austrian control was reaffirmed.

Such tensions created above all financial instability: in fact, it was attempted to limit the power of the barons without any success, as the Collateral Council intervened in defence of feudalism. In 1728 Viceroy Michele Federico Althann instituted the "Banco di San Carlo" to finance private entrepreneurship in the mercantile field, repurchase public debt and liquidate the ecclesiastical requests. The viceroy himself antagonised the Jesuits order for having tolerated the publication of the works of the anti-clerical Giannone and Grimaldi.

Philip V tried a new attempt to invade Naples that brought the budget of the vice-kingdom back into deficit, forcing, in 1731, Aloys Thomas Raimund to promote the establishment of a "University Council" to control the budgets of small provincial centres, along with the "Giunta delle Numerazioni" a council for the reorganization of financial administrations, established in 1732. However, landowners and clergy who wished to avert the government's attempts to tax ecclesiastical properties hindered the new land records. The last of the Austrian Viceroys, Giulio Visconti, was forced to cope with the Bourbon invasion and the subsequent war, but managed to leave the new sovereigns in a better financial situation than the one found at the end of the Spanish Vice-kingdom in Naples.

4.1.5 Charles of Bourbon and the new political balance

Charles of Bourbon arrived in Naples in 1734 (fig. 66) and may be truly described as the first sovereign of Naples trough his family, which was strictly connected to the Kingdom of Spain (his father being Philip V). When he was crowned King of Spain in 1759, his second-born son Ferdinand IV succeeded to the throne of Naples, as Charles reinstated a constant and invasive Spanish tutelage. After the wedding between Ferdinand IV and Marie Caroline of Austria the European frontier widened and introduced Sir John Acton, commander of the naval forces and prime minister of Naples, as confidante of

the queen. It seems that the Bourbons were in Naples mainly because it was convenient for the great political game of European international relations.

The Neapolitan Bourbon branch was above Spanish ascendancy for a long time and for six or seven decades the most influent ministers were not Neapolitans, but rather advisors hailing from other Italian kingdoms or from abroad. Indeed, the beginnings of the reign of Charles of Bourbon were characterized by a strong dependence on the court of Madrid, where Elisabeth Farnese - his mother - exercised her influence on Naples through two Spanish nobles to whom she had entrusted her son before sending him to Italy: the Count of Santisteban, Prime Minister and Guardian of the King, and the Marquis of Montealegre, Secretary of State. In particular, Santisteban was the most powerful man in the Neapolitan court for the first four years of the reign of Charles, so much so that he chose the king's attendance and friendships, insisting that nobody should have a higher influence over his young sovereign. Later on the lawyer Bernardo Tanucci learned to be one of the most influential men in the court, then progressively obtained an authority that would last much longer than that of the two Spaniards. In 1738, Charles and his wife Maria Amalia determined the fall of the Count of Santisteban, whose invasive presence was no longer tolerated, and urged this recall to Spain. The Marquis of Montealegre succeeded in the post of Prime Minister, but he was not more skilled in gaining popularity at court than his predecessor. However his position was firmly guaranteed by the favour of Elisabeth Farnese, who exercised control over his son through a close correspondence with him.

4.1.6 Cultural innovation and attempts of modernisation

The prominence of Naples in the eighteenth century was not due to the presence of the Bourbon kings, but they benefitted from and gained a fame that was greater than their contribution (Galasso, 1998). Before the departure of the Spaniards, a cultural and intellectual transformation had already started and the new dynasty took advantage of their new energies and potential, which they funnelled into imposing projects of public works such as the St. Charles Opera

House (fig. 67), the Royal residences in Caserta, Capodimonte and Portici, the Albergo dei Poveri (fig. 68), the Caroline Forum, the Botanical gardens, the Bourbon Library (then National Library), the Academy of Sciences, and the Nunziatella Military School. This was also the age of the excavations in Herculaneum and Pompeii, which led to the establishment of the first section of the Herculeanense Academy (then National Archaeological Museum) (fig. 69). It was also the age of great intellectuals like Giuseppe Maria Giannone, Antonio Genovesi, Gaetano Filangieri and Ferdinando Galiani who were the living proof of the integrity of the city's changing and reforming climate, and of its new European connections.

In 1790 the ties between the monarchy and the ruling class, in particular the intellectual class, were broken in an irreversible way because of the social conditions and the abysmal disparities of the city of Naples compared to the provinces. The most active part of the country turned its attention towards revolutionary France and the Bourbons immediately sided with the anti-revolutionary monarchies. The effects of this rift became so evident that in 1799 after the short parenthesis of the Jacobin republic in Naples, a reaction to feudal politics resulted in a bloody repression where also Mario Pagano died. Later on, Napoleon expelled the Bourbons in 1806 and the French Kings, Joseph Bonaparte and Joaquin Murat (fig. 70), achieved what had not been possible at the end of the eighteenth century in terms of civil and jurisdictional rights. They did justice to Neapolitan revolutionary ambitions and helped them to win their cause. Their reign became an important example of what happened and what was happening in Europe in the twilight of the old monarchies. All the works and initiatives launched by the French kings like administrative reform, the abolition of feudalism, the introduction of the Napoleonic Civil Code, the reform of the court of justice, the setting up of cultural institutions, remained in place when the Bourbons came back to Naples in 1815. However, it was only a superficial compromise. The king also changed his name from Ferdinand IV to Ferdinand I King of the Two Sicilies, annexing Sicily to the Kingdom of Naples which led to the start of strong Sicilian resentment against the monarchy that

reached its climax in the revolutions of 1820, 1830, 1848 and 1860 (Galasso, 1998).

In 1820 Ferdinand I granted a constitution to the Kingdom of Naples under the constant pressure of liberals and the followers of Murat. However soon after, the king betrayed the people's confidence by withdrawing the document and calling in Austrian troops to restore his neo-absolutist order. The situation grew worse under his successor Francis I (1825-30). Matters improved slightly under Ferdinand II (1830-1859), during whose reign the 1848 revolts nevertheless broke out. Although Ferdinand II was a conscientious sovereign, his devotion to royal duties was stronger than the general interests of his country. This was very clear in 1848 when the King, first among all the Italian sovereigns, allowed a constitution to be drafted but then retracted it and thus repressed liberal and national turmoil. This action was a gift to the Savoy kings of Piedmont-Sardinia who remained the only reference for the national Italian cause. It meant as well that the Bourbon Kings had betrayed for the third time (in Sicily and then twice in Naples) those who trusted in them for modernisation and a liberal constitution. When under Francis II (1859-60) the political and social complexity had reached a critical point, Victor Emmanuel II suggested liberal action. However, Francis II's politics of isolation could not withstand this. So, in Sicily after the Expedition of the Thousand, in Italian *Spedizione dei Mille*, the sudden success of Garibaldi the kingdom fell like a house of cards. Superior historical reason won over and the unrest in the provinces became unstoppable. What had started in 1799 and been ratified in 1815 would see its effects only after national unity with an opening towards the Mezzogiorno, Italy and Europe.

4.1.7 The end of the Bourbon kingdom

Just after the historical meeting at Teano on 26th October 1860, Garibaldi conquered the southern territories for Victor Emmanuel II (fig. 71). The latter, standing on the balcony of Palazzo Doria D'Angri in Naples (fig. 54), announced the annexation to the rising Italian state under the crown of Savoy.

The following years marked change and adjustment. First of all, the people of Naples were tied up with a new political reality and with a remote government. This was the time when the phenomenon of brigandage exploded as resistance against the newly unified states. Seen from different perspectives it was either a valiant or a brutish organisation (Oddo, 1863; Turco, 2000; Dumas, 2011).

Even if it lost its rank of capital city, Naples remained the most important political, economic and social centre in Southern Italy. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it was the fifth most populated city in Europe after London, Paris, Madrid and Vienna; yet it was in a deep economic and social crisis (Serao, 2010). Due to the transition from the Bourbon dynasty to the Italian annexation, it was also one of the few cases of a European capital of an independent kingdom relegated to the role of regional capital. To highlight the complexities of its identity, during the same period, the city was the subject of significant urban renewal.

4.1.8 The Risanamento

The far-reaching urban intervention that radically altered Naples since the mid-nineteenth century was a consequence of a severe cholera epidemic, which broke out in 1883. At the urging of Nicola Amore, the Mayor at the time, the law for the rehabilitation of the city of Naples was passed in 1885 and on 15th December 1888 the Company for the *Risanamento* (fig. 72) of Naples was founded. The purpose was to solve the problem of degradation of some areas of the city that was the main cause of the spread of cholera. The demolition of several buildings was decided, to make way for the Corso Umberto I, Piazza Quattro Palazzi, Piazza della Borsa Italiana, and the Galleria Umberto I (figg. 73, 74).

Behind the great 'Umbertini' edifices - built during the age of King Umberto I -the situation remained unchanged. Rather, the new structures served to hide the degradation and poverty of those districts instead of solving their problems. Several prominent monuments were demolished and whole medieval areas gutted (fig. 75).

This idea of renewal was basically linked to a need for configuration into a modern state appearance, urban layout and decoration. European capital cities embarked upon a remarkable politicisation and monumentalisation of urban space. Parisians called a key feature of it, "statue mania" (*statuomanie*) (Agulhon, 1988; Michalski, 1998). This constructed and affirmed national identity by collective national memory in an era dominated by historicist forms of expression, and by holding forth examples to the nation in the context of beginning public mass education.

In the city of Naples it was pretty evident when in 1888, King Umberto I of Savoy made changes to the western façade side of the Palazzo Reale (facing Piazza del Plebiscito). A series of statues of prominent rulers of dynasties who had ruled the Kingdom of Naples from the foundation to the twelfth century were displayed in niches (fig. 76).

The statues are displayed in chronological order and start with Roger the Norman, when the city was an independent state, and end with Victor Emmanuel II, the largest in height and added at the end on orders from the King himself. The other statues are Frederick II Hohenstaufen, Charles I of Anjou, Alfonse of Aragon, Charles V, Charles III of Spain and Joachim Murat. None of the statues refers to the Bourbon dynasty, not even Charles of Bourbon, who is identified as Charles III.

Again the perception of the urban space and the resulting changes made on the symbolic monuments of a city represent the key to the very identity of a venue and to organize the historic flow into a coherent and meaningful framework.

4.2 The making of the Palazzo Reale

4.2.1 The Vice-Regal Palace

At the time of Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca and Viceroy of Naples (1532-1552) the architects Ferdinando Manlio and Giovanni

Benincasa built the Old Vice-Regal Palace surrounded by gardens onto a hill dominating the harbour (fig. 77). The building changed the perspective of the city also thanks to a new straight street (today via Toledo) that was built towards the hill of San Martino along the old Angevin city walls. The area experienced a significant urban intervention with the construction of a complete new district where the troops' accommodations were built, the so-called Spanish district. The latter was designed according to a regular grid of orthogonal streets facing towards the sea in order to take advantage of the sea breeze and the sun. The Old Vice Regal Palace (destroyed in nineteenth century because of a fire) was built in the area that is nowadays between the Opera House and the Royal Palace on the side of Piazza Trieste e Trento. It is traceable only thanks to some drawings and engravings (first among them the one made by Antoine Lafréry in 1566 - fig. 78 -, now at the Museums of San Martino in Naples, and by Leonardo Coccorante in 1739, now at the Harrach Gallery in Vienna).

4.2.2 Don Pedro de Toledo urban development

During the vice-kingdom of Don Pedro de Toledo the city was redesigned. Sewer systems, street pavements and new fortifications closed the city within a strong defensive wall reinforced by four castles: Castel Novo (fig. 79), Castel dell'Ovo (fig. 80), Castello del Carmine, Castel Sant'Elmo. Several aristocratic palaces, as well as convents and monasteries, were built in the ancient Greek-Roman area, since Naples was the second city in the Kingdom of Spain after Madrid, and the most populated in Western Europe.

The Spanish Vice-Kingdom was for Naples a period of great and intense cultural life. The city did not represent a mercantile class as it happened in Seville on the Flanders, but there were thriving art schools at any level. A wealthy and intelligent patronage was spreading out all over the Reign. In Montella, for instance, the Cavaniglia family commissioned many artworks to Flemish painters, as was customary among European aristocrats; in Solofra, the University and the Orsini competed to own the works of Francesco Guarino, noted Baroque painter, who never left his hometown because of the amount of

commissions he received there. In Avellino, Prince Francesco Marino Caracciolo commissioned Cosimo Fanzago to restore his estate and to embellish the city; not to mention the Chartreuse of Saint Lawrence in Padula that in those very years was turned into a regal palace and became a symbol of the Benedictine power in Europe (De Cunzo, 2008).

4.2.3 The regal palace

In 1599, the then Viceroy Don Fernandez Ruiz de Castro, Count of Lemos, expressed the intention to build a royal residence in the city, in order to achieve a worthy place to accommodate Philip III King of Spain and the Queen, who were expected to make an official visit to Naples, an event which in the end never took place. Thus, the building became the seat of the Spanish Viceroy, despite the fact that Don Pedro de Toledo (Viceroy fifty years before) had already one built. In the years that followed the palace was used by Austrian Viceroys and later the rulers of the House of Bourbon. After the unification of Italy, the Savoy used the palace as a residence.

The construction of the building was undertaken by Domenico Fontana, Chief Engineer of the Kingdom and one of the most prestigious architects of his time. He was famous for having initiated major works on the urban restructuring of Rome for Pope Sixtus V, but after the latter's death he had fallen quickly out of favour. Therefore, he accepted with great enthusiasm the new task in Naples and even left his signature on the two bases of the columns at the entrance: "*Dominicus Fontana Patricius Romanus Eques Auratus Comes Palatinus Inventor*".

The area chosen to build the new work was the land occupied by the vice regal palace gardens mentioned above. This land was very important from a strategic point of view, given its proximity to the sea and the Angevin castle (as both were easy escape routes in case of emergencies). It was also relevant from an urban planning point of view, as the city plan of the time provided for an expansion of the city to the right of these areas (namely the districts of Pizzofalcone and Chiaia). The new building would have definitely confirmed

and increased their construction value. In addition, the large open space that opened in front of the main entrance could be used to accommodate the populace in festivals and important occasions (fig. 81). The magnificient vice-regal gardens designed in 1540 during the time of don Pedro were destroyed for the construction of the new palace, since the extension of the city was already planned and begun towards west. A few years later, the Count of Lemos moved the University to the other end of via Toledo (1616) stressing the importance he willed to give to the whole axe from east to west. As a result of that, the presence of the Angevin Maschio (former seat of the Aragonese Spanish court), the vice-regal palace, and the new Royal Palace in the same area gave a dignified character as centre of power to the place (De Cunzo, 2008).

4.2.4 The seventeenth century structures

The first stone was probably laid in 1600, but due to the great turmoil under the initial direction of the Count of Lemos and his successor, Francisco de Castro (1601-1603) then followed a long period of slowdown when Juan Alfonso Pimentel of Errera led the city (1603-1610). Therefore, perhaps due to lack of funds, or more likely because the latter had no great interest in taking forward the work started by the family of a Viceroy with whom he did not side. Later, the work resumed at a good pace when Pedro Fernandez de Castro, a new family member of the Counts of Lemos, settled in Naples. In 1616 Confalonieri, a traveller passing through Naples, wrote that the Royal Palace façade was all made in “piperino” (dark grey volcanic stone largely used in the Neapolitan architectures), at the first floor there were twenty-one windows and three balustrades, while at the second floor the same number of windows and no balustrades. The ground floor was designed with large porticoes opened to the street, but the interior was not completed being visible two staircases and a large squared courtyard with two sides to be covered with porticoes (De Cunzo, 2008). It means that part of the Fontana project was partially achieved and basically only the Vice-king apartment and the main section of the palace were built. Indeed, Battistello Caracciolo, Giovanni Balducci and Belisario Corenzio

depicting Spanish kings and rulers painted the rooms with frescoes. Three rooms still preserve the original paintings with *The Splendours of the Aragonese Crown*, *The Splendours of the Crown of Spain*, *The Feats of Grand Captain Consalvo de Cordova, conqueror and first Vice-king of Naples* (fig. 82), testifying the construction of these section at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Therefore, the architect Domenico Fontana, died in 1607, was never able to see his work fully accomplished, what indeed happened only in 1843 with Gaetano Genovese. Over the centuries, the most important architects in the Kingdom worked on this project, such as: Giulio Cesare Fontana, Bartolomeo Picchiatti, Onofrio Gisolfi, Francesco Antonio Picchiatti, Domenico Antonio Vaccaro, Ferdinando Sanfelice, Luigi Vanvitelli, Ferdinando Fuga and Antonio Niccolini. However, despite the centuries and the new demands all remained broadly faithful to the original draft made by Fontana.

In 1644, Francesco Antonio Picchiatti won the contest for the decoration of the royal chapel, which he then built. Two years later, the structure was finished thanks to the interventions of Jusepe de Ribera (who built the altarpiece depicting the Immaculate Conception together with Giulio and Andrea Lazzari, Charles Mellin and Giovanni Lanfranco) and the chapel was consecrated (fig. 83).

In 1651, the Viceroy Don Iñigo Velez de Guevara y Tassis, Count of Oñate, commissioned Francesco Antonio Picchiatti to build the current monumental staircase, which replaced the previous more modest one. The new building was further enhanced when, in 1843, Gaetano Genovese opted for the demolition of the vice regal palace, giving more light and making more visible elements of the architecture which was also enriched with coloured marbles, statues and reliefs in marble executed by the best Neapolitan masters.

Between 1658 and 1659 Cosimo Fanzago sculpted the statue of the *Immaculate Conception* created for the main altar of the chapel (now housed in the Archbishop Seminary of Naples) while Giovan Battista Magno, said Modanino, dealt with the stuccos plating. Between 1666 and 1671 the construction of the Belvedere (fig. 84) was completed, there were decorations,

now lost, by Louis Garza, Andrea Matino and Giacomo Massaro. At the same time, more precisely in 1668, in the garden, on the corner of the descent towards the sea, a statue of a Giant was placed, now on display at the Archaeological Museum of Naples. In 1707, the royal chapel was modified again. This time on the ceiling, rebuilt by Giacomo del Po, of which there are traces of frescoes between the windows.

4.2.5 The Bourbon residence

In 1734, when the Kingdom of Naples became independent, the palace was finally turned into the residence of the King. In 1738, Charles of Bourbon - on the occasion of his marriage with Maria Amalia of Saxony - commissioned Francesco De Mura to paint decorations in the Diplomatic hall. The artist painted an *Allegory of the virtues of the spouses* on the ceiling (fig. 85). Domenico Antonio Vaccaro took charge of the bridal chamber where he painted the *Allegory of Love* and the *Allegory of the majestic King*, other work was done by Francesco Solimena, Nicola Maria Rossi and Leonardo Coccorante.

The new Sovereign also commissioned the apartment of the Maggiordomo to Ferdinando Sanfelice. Furthermore, in 1737, the San Carlo Opera House was built and the royal porcelain factory founded. Subsequently, between 1742 and 1743, the Belvedere was expanded with the addition of the roof garden and in 1751 the Royal Printing was founded. Three years later, Luigi Vanvitelli carried out some work on the consolidation of the façade and between 1756 and 1758 the eastern part of the building was also built, perhaps by Ferdinando Fuga, called Braccio Nuovo, which occupied a large area of the gardens. Originally used for parties, in more recent times it was intended to house the National Library Vittorio Emanuele III. In the same years, the construction of the side towards the sea was delineated, however it remained incomplete (only the first six spans of balcony were built).

Ferdinand IV continued the work entrusting it to Ferdinando Fuga, who (on the occasion of the marriage of the King and Maria Carolina of Austria in 1768) had transformed the Great Hall of the Spanish Palace into a theatre (fig.

87). Unfortunately, this room was located in the area of the building that was hit by bombing in 1943 during the Second World War. All that has been saved, besides the overall structure, are the three walls with the stage, and the niches with statues of papier-mâché depicting the muses and the gods by Angelo Viva (fig. 87). Other decorations in the theatre were made under the supervision of Ferdinand Fuga between 1775 and 1778.

Later, between 1806 and 1815, during the French period, the interiors were decorated with Napoleonic furnishings that came from France, made by local craftsmen. Whilst, the high altar of the church of St. Teresa degli Scalzi (built in 1674 by Dionisio Lazzari) was transferred to the Royal Chapel. At the same time, Antonio Niccolini created a new facade for the San Carlo theatre.

In 1818, after the return of the Bourbons (that had taken place three years earlier) the third antechamber and the Hall of the throne were decorated. In 1832, a fountain was placed in the courtyard and the seventeenth century stables demolished to make space for the new one in the neoclassical style. When Ferdinand I got back to Naples he started the construction of the church of San Francesco di Paola (fig. 88) which he had vowed to do after his return from Palermo. The project was entrusted to the architect Pietro Bianchi in 1816 and the church was confirmed a Papal Basilica by Gregory XVI (inaugurated in 1836). The vestibule and the interior of the church imitated the Pantheon as a consecration of Bourbon regal power endorsed by the Church of Rome. It was a deeply symbolic intention to outline a specific boundary whereby Ferdinand I had supreme power recognised by God. Indeed, the square between the Palace and the church gives the sense and the meaning of a regal supremacy even more since when the bronze equestrian statues of Charles III and Ferdinand I were placed in the middle of the square facing the Palace façade, as getting out from the church and allowing the Bourbon authority to rule in the city of Naples (fig. 89).

4.2.6 The refurbishment after the fire in 1837

In 1837, a fire damaged the east wing of the palace. An event that required restoration, headed by Gaetano Genovese, and displacement of the king and the court to the second floor. The work, which lasted from 1838 to 1858, led to the demolition of the old Vice regal palace and the royal porcelain factory, while the construction of the garden was revised and the Apartment of the parties was enriched with stucco decorations by Gennaro Aveta and tempera by Gennaro Maldarelli, Giuseppe Cammarano, Filippo Marsigli, Vincenzo de Angelis, Salvatore Giusti, and Camillo Guerra. Moreover, the private apartments were moved to the second floor and the first floor, overlooking the courtyard, became the "Etichetta" apartments. Finally, decorations in marble on the Grand Staircase (fig. 90) and other rooms were made.

4.2.7 The turn of the Unification of Italy

With the Unification of Italy, as mentioned previously, the palace became the Residence of the House of Savoy and, in 1861 in the garden to the north, the statue of Italy appears. Later, in 1888, King Umberto I commissioned the eight statues in the niches of the façade with the clear intention to stress the lineage of the Savoy Crown in the city of Naples. The statues represent the beginners of the eight dynasties who had ruled in the city from the Normans to the Hohenstaufen, Angevin, Aragonese, Hapsburgs, Bourbon, Murat and finally the Savoy. In 1919, the Royal Palace became the property of the State (Porzio, 2006) and was opened to the public. Between 1922 and 1923, by Decree of the Minister Anile, the National Library Vittorio Emanuele III was moved to the first and second floor of the Party Wing. The Second World War and even the fall of the monarchy had caused the dispersion of some furniture. Since 1995 is in the form of museological historic apartment and National Library.

This brief historical reconstruction of the Royal Palace gives an idea if its role and the influence it had on the city. First of all, the location determined the development of the city towards the sea and the northern coast. The first vice regal palace determined the repositioning of the urban axis from the Greek-

roman city annexing the Castel Novo and drafting a real network among the other castles of the city (Capuano, Sant'Elmo and Carmine). The renewal of the seventeenth century palace confirmed the political and military importance of the venue where the other institutional palaces radially converge pointing at the new power district of Naples. It was thus, natural to expand the city boundaries including the Castel dell'Ovo and the area towards the north-west, which embodied in the nineteenth century the spirit of a modern European city with buildings, squares and monuments meaning the new intellectual, social and artistic golden age of Naples (after the other golden age the city lived in the Seventieth century). It was actually the time of the *café-concert*, or *café-chantant*, directly imported from France that found in Naples fertile land with the opening of several concert halls such as Margherita (after the Queen) inside the Umberto I Gallery and the Gambrinus just in front of the Royal Palace. The symbol of the *Belle époque* became in Naples a theatrical genre that gave origins to Neapolitan song as well. The Royal Palace was the cornerstone of a cultural hub together with the San Carlo theatre, the National Library, at the time of the Savoy. The Palace was also (from the Bourbon age) the site where the Farnese collection was formerly housed. Indeed Charles III, was the son of Elisabeth Farnese whose art collections were moved from Rome, Parma and Piacenza to Naples. Before the display of the actual museum set up in the 1950s, the coins and the archaeological works (now at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples) and the picture gallery (Porzio, 1999) (now at Capodimonte) were all kept at the Royal Palace forming one of the most tremendous art collections in the world.

Another point is the presence of all the main masters of fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries who worked on the construction and decoration of the viceroy and then king's palace. The mutual influences and the artists' concurrence led to the combination of several art styles that are still perceivable through the seventeenth frescoes by Corenzio (fig. 91) and Caracciolo, or through the Bourbon and French furniture (fig. 92), as well as though the royal manufacture of tapestries and ceramics (fig. 93). Obviously, all the sovereigns tailored the palace according to their taste and

modified its shape inside and outside to create a wider and more recognisable part of the city. The colours of the palace façades, red and dark grey, stand out and make it immediately evident at the sight from any possible perspective, from the sea, from the city, from the hill. It is a distinctive complex of wings added in order to define and make explicit the grandeur of the royal families, where each new ruler left a mark of his legacy to build the very uniqueness of the place.

4.3 The Museum and the modern identity of Palazzo Reale

4.3.1 The post-war restoration

The Palace and the "Grande Appartamento di Etichetta" have been deeply restored after the World War II when it was turned into the Welfare Club of the Anglo-American troops. They made changes in all the area of the Palazzo removing the silk tapestry from the walls and adapting the architecture to their purposes (fig. 94). The furniture was recovered in safe storages and later on displayed again in the original rooms, but a bombing destroyed the ceiling in the Court Theatre and the fresco by Francesco De Mura depicting the *Aurora* (1765) painted in the King Dressing Room.

The 1950s and 1960s have been years of restoration and search for a new display to make the Palace live again its splendour. Since that time numerous archival and bibliographical researches have started to retrace the original design in order to offer a philological approach. The Palazzo Reale has been the residence and the public seat of Spanish and Austrian vice-kings from 1600 to 1734, and the royal palace of the Bourbon kings from 1734 to 1860. Then it was turned into the peripheral abode of the Kingdom of Italy and dwelling of the Princes of Piedmont. The today display is a post World War II reorganization responding to the plan designed by Domenico Fontana in the seventeenth century. What is different is the north façade built in 1843 after a massive fire that destroyed the old vice-regal palace and previously the Sala Regia was

turned into the Court Theatre. The nineteenth century works gave birth to the Scalone d'onore by Gaetano Genovese, the magnificent entrance to the Grande Appartmento d'Etichetta when the king and queen private apartments were moved to the second floor, and to the south wing display with a proper art gallery facing the sea.

4.3.2 The modern display

Three historical periods are perceivable in the modern display and they are closely tied to the three main political influences the palace had: Spanish vice-kingdom, Bourbon kings, and Savoy age. Even if the architecture and the seventeenth century decoration remind the old Renaissance style due to the Fontana design and Belisario Corenzio frescoes (Porzio, 2008). Indeed, the style depicted by Corenzio and his workshop is very similar to the decoration Fontana made in Rome for Pope Sixtus V, such as the dome of the Sixtine chapel in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore or the ceiling in the church of Saint Louis of France where the gilded rib elegantly contrast with the white surfaces. As well, the Corenzio décor dedicated to the story of Consalvo de Cordoba (fig. 95), first Spanish vice-king of Naples, represents one of the greatest cycles of Neapolitan naturalistic culture. Within these frescoes, one has to mention the work of Battistello Caracciolo who painted his only secular fresco also painting the portrait of his master Caravaggio in the Room XI, the Room of the Great Captain.

When Charles III became king of Naples, the palace was enlarged and transformed according to a new etiquette based on the king figure and his precious private rooms decoration. An example is in the first anti-chamber where Francesco De Mura painted the ceiling with the *Allegory of the Virtues of Charles and Maria Amalia*, covering seventeenth century frescoes. Francesco Solimena, Domenico Antonio Vaccaro, and Francesco De Mura, besides many more engravers, ebony carpenters, marble and ornament artisans, worked at the royal refurbishment by redesigning the palace on the king taste. This is also when the collections housed in the Palazzo Reale started being split in different

locations. Actually, Charles III decided to move the painting collection to the Bourbon Museum (later National Museum) and during the Savoy age all the porcelain and the armoury were moved to Realm of Capodimonte, while the carriages to Florence, the Physics Cabinet to the University, the Music Archive to the Conservatory, watercolours and prints to the Picture Gallery. It means that the Palazzo Reale does not house a proper collection, but high quality craftsmanship and refined furniture.

The display, indeed, reflects the style the royal apartments had after 1860. The inventories dated to 1874 and to 1928 have been really useful to retrace the changes made in the Savoy age that still condition the visitor perception today. One of the big issues in the Palazzo Reale display is concentrated in the southern wing "Quadreria". The picture gallery, indeed, is the only collection in a strict sense housed along the apartment, and it suffers the dispersion of many works that were composing the original décor. This dispersion is due to the post World War II inventories that only recorded the existing collection inside the royal palaces of Naples and did not monitor the moves or the losses made during the war to save the artworks. Nevertheless, the 1874 inventory can be seen as the first modern record and starting point for any further research (Porzio, 1999). This effort is needed for a historical validation of the museum origins, in the search for an original vocation (Emiliani, 1974). In these terms, the story of the Quadreria is closely tied to the story of the Capodimonte Picture Gallery making, where the peculiar element is not the importance or the provenance of the artworks, rather their historical display in the two palaces. In the nineteenth century edition of Celano's "Notizie del Bello, del Curioso, dell'Antico e del Curioso della città di Napoli", the guide clearly expose the results of Ferdinand II restoration of the palace, mentioning the modern painting collection at the second floor (namely the private rooms) and the old masters paintings at the first floor (the etiquette apartment). It is important to mention as well that since the time of Murat and the French vice-kingdom, there was a painting restorer working in a laboratory internal to the palace (Porzio, 1999). After the fire that determined a complete refurbishment, the Quadreria was

partially dispersed in the many rooms of the palace, and embellished with tapestries and inlaid marble tables and consoles.

4.3.3 The collection

As regards the 1928 inventory, many references give the idea of the exact provenance and use of artworks made into the palace. Some of them were gifts, some purchased at the International or National Exhibitions and all of them provide meaningful elements to comprehend the taste, especially of the Queen Margherita, between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The paintings that entered Palazzo Reale in those years testify the interest and royal promotion of the contemporary art, an aspect that has been neglected so far (Porzio, 2004).

Indeed, the Palazzo Reale hosted the first Naples Biennale in 1921. Two years earlier the Palazzo entered the state property and in 1920 ten rooms of the eastern wing were granted to display the Biennale housing about nine hundred paintings showing “all the healthy trends of the national art” (Picone, 1986). Those rooms were empty after the World War I – during which they were turned into a military hospital – and the Art Commission of the Biennale decided to use the nineteenth century rooms instead of the seventeenth century ones considered too much historically signed. The Biennale was so successful that the need of a new museum dedicated to modern art becomes larger and larger. This idea will give the right impulse to the creation of a museum that was in a certain sense already constituted in the Realm of Capodimonte were a picture gallery was held with works by Morelli, Altamura, and Palizzi. Unfortunately, the Biennale of 1921 was not replicated as the rooms in the eastern wing of the Palazzo were definitely destined to the National Library with a decree of Minister Giolitti (1923). The division in many different and independent areas started in those years and in the post World War II the Grande Appartemento di Etichetta was definitively separated from the rest of the complex that comprehends the San Carlo Opera House, the Superintendence Departments, and the National Library.

The study of inventories provides a large set of information that on the one hand generate new questions, on the other hands helps in constituting again the right value and meaning of display. Actually, a few works have been "rehabilitated" and put on display after these researches because their presence was functional to the making of the all collection (Porzio, 1999). All these information given about the origins of Palazzo Reale display and especially looking at the other museums in Naples that house part of its collection, it is probably true to say that it is the symbolic mother of all the main cultural institutions in Naples. In these terms, the Palazzo Reale identity as a museum is much stronger than excepted at the beginning because it is not only a historical palace, but the location from where all the other main museums and institutes from the National Archaeological to the Capodimonte Picture Gallery, from the University of Naples to the National Library were born. Not only the place where the power of command is embodied, but the place where the power of culture is spread all over the city of Naples.

4.4 The educational offer at Palazzo Reale

4.4.1 The museum activities after the Ronchey Law

Educational activities in Italian museums have undergone a phase of profound change due to the approval of the Ronchey Law in 2004. This law, named after the Minister of Cultural Heritage who promoted it, outsources reception and educational activities for visitor in museum in favour of private associations or companies.

At Palazzo Reale, in 2000, a number of people were already included in the museum's staff as technical museum assistants supporting the activities of the educational department with an internal didactic system that has kept throughout the years its institutionalized specificity available on demand.

During this long time - and at different moments - there has been a continuity of didactic exhibitions that have brought to light many aspects of

history and life within the Palazzo. From 2011 to present, a large part of this research work and study has flown into the QR code itinerary, which is linked to the eleven thematic notebooks on the collections of the museum. The first of them was edited in the years of the direction of Marina Causa Picone, and the others with Annalisa Porzio. The thematic notebooks were made with funds for educational activities made available by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, while the last one was published with the funds of the Friends of the Museums.

4.4.2 The DAI Room

In 2003, works for the DAI Room on the Universal Museum Accessibility Services began thanks to European funds. It was designed as an universal access room, equipped with tactile paths driven by operators, video with the history of the Palace in L.I.S. (Italian Sign Language) and cartoon for people with cognitive deficits. An architect, a psychologist and an art historian have worked at the project, which was inaugurated in 2007 (Porzio, De Laurentiis, Schiappa, Massaro, 2008). The main purpose was to make the museum accessible to disabled, putting more attention on visual disabilities, and creating activities and themes that were good for other disabilities. Much work has been made on labels system and the making of a reception room where visitors can acquire knowledge tools to spend in the halls of the Palazzo.

One of the main issues was what kind of experience visitors were supposed to have in the DAI Room. A model of the Palazzo Reale was made and people can touch it as well as reproductions of the facade statues. This first step provided an interesting experience of approaching the history of the Palazzo and its construction. Likewise, small environments have been reproduced to better understand how an artwork is made, some furnishings and some details of the origins, such as the scale reproduction of the throne exhibited in the museum.

In addition, two videos featured by Mario Franco, Neapolitan film director and cinema historian, with a cartoon guide carries visitors to retrace the history of the place with a special focus on construction techniques; it is very useful

especially for young people. Visitors can also use and consult another tool in the form of an active itinerary of the Palazzo available in the single halls. Different questions are asked to focus on the individual rooms and this sort of guide-book is downloadable in PDF on the Internet. It is also available in Braille version for visually impaired visitors.

4.4.3 Main educational department activities

The educational department has launched activities targeted to the public with disabilities and activated experimental workshops, such as the one called *Primavera Odore-Colore* (Spring Smell-Colour) for a multisensory stimulation, above all olfactory perception. These examples gave rise to a city network, the first in Naples, to bring the visual impaired public to art and in particular the project *Napoli tra le mani. L'Arte attraverso percorsi fruibili* (Naples in the hands. Art through Accessible Routes) has involved various institutions such as the Galleries of Capodimonte, the Charterhouse of San Martino and the University of Suor Orsola Benincasa.

The educational department has carried out an exhibition on stolen art in collaboration with Carabinieri of the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit, and an alternative itinerary for visual impaired was created. Tiflodidactic tables reproduced the works on display to convey their contents, because the artworks were closed in the cases for security reasons.

There have been many projects made on the territory and not only inside the museum; activities that linked the museum to the context such as the creation of educational panels for the nearby Palace of the Prefecture, historically linked to the Royal Palace. Actually, Ferdinand I had the idea of building a palace to accommodate the foreigners who came to visit the Bourbon court. The Foresteria palace, then the Prefecture, was built in 1815 by the neoclassical architect Leopoldo Laperuta (1771-1858), on the area of the Convent of the Holy Spirit following the competition for the overall accommodation of the square. In addition, in 1890, on the project of Antonio Curri and the participation of forty-three collaborators between sculptors and

painters, the Café Gambrinus, a historical cafeteria centre of the city cultural life, was built at the ground floor of the building.

In addition to the Prefecture's Palace, the educational department designed panels for the Circle of the Union, because the latter is housed inside the block of the San Carlo Opera House. The texts explain the relation among the different parts of the area and it was well understood that this was not an isolated block, but a complex and highly articulated monumental building. This work made the whole making of the Palazzo Reale better known.

4.4.4 Education and multimedia

One of the most recent projects conducted has seen the creation of a multimedia application called *Enjoy Palazzo Reale!* designing a visit path with the QR code technology. It was the result of funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in partnership with the Department of Cultural Economics (the class of Management of Cultural Resources) of the Seconda Università of Naples. A quite innovative kind of communication at the museum, that has been developed and aims at making the visitor active during the visit of the museum. The visitor is thus not only provided of information by educators, but can decide how to orientate his visit. With particular interest in new technologies using smartphones and tablets, sixty points of interest have been selected between works of art and environments. In addition, history and art information cards have been developed with multimedia content that enrich the points of interest with images and videos that would normally not accessible to viewers. Through the QR codes located by the works, visitors can connect to an on-line database and take advantage of this service.

The funding originally covered the costs of researchers involved in an Italy-Poland project with the Dinamov Museum in Warsaw. This cooperation brought to the development of a tool where the Royal Palace researchers contributed to the methodology and the cultural approach of communicating historical-artistic data, while the Dinamov Museum researchers to the scientific methodology because they were already in the advanced stage. There was also

support from the *Consorzio Gloss* that created the technology platform to upload data into the application that is then downloadable free of charge from traditional virtual stores. *Enjoy Palazzo Reale!* Can be used offline inside the palace, visitors can download it in the area of the ticket office where Wi-Fi is available and then use in the museum environments. Inside the halls there is no strong signal given the conformation of the architecture, and it takes about a minute to download the 40 mega of the application.

Among the curiosities that can be found in the application, visitors can listen to the alarm of the clock made by Charles Clay in 1730 (fig. 97). And that is because it is not always possible to be there while the clock sounds and see it in action. This is a very rare musical machine, which is still under study, in which the clock put into action a metal roller that acted in turn, closing and opening the wooden barrels, a small organ, allowing you to listen to ten different music. Since Handel also wrote two suites for the English watchmaker, the importance of this watch for the history of the eighteenth century music and technology is evident. This is accompanied by the historical reconstructions of post-war restorations, trying to give meaning to the recovery that was done before and after, the functioning and ringing of the clock, compared to paintings of rare authors exhibited in other museums in the world.

The selection of sixty works is due to a mixed criterion based on the historical-artistic importance and the curiosity awakened by the works or the environments for the visitors. There are works that do not have exceptional value, but they are very curious and it was worthwhile to deepen the content, the historical information, and the context. Afterwards, the problem has arisen to co-exist the QR code path with the audio guide that provides an overall view of the palace. Nevertheless, the first provides information on some works with different languages and this makes them interchangeable and directed to different types of audience.

This project was joined by years of activities organized for the *Giornate del Patrimonio* (Heritage Days), itineraries at the Tomb of Virgil, or on the installations in Piazza Plebiscito that between 1995 and 2006 made the square an interesting stage for contemporary art. Among the most well-known works

are Mimmo Paladino's *Salt Mountain*, followed the works by Anish Kapoor, Jannis Kounellis, Richard Serra, Rebecca Horn, and others.

Many links between ancient and contemporary art were also sought through the *Art'è* (Art is) project for which there has been a great processing of content and works. The most successful has been the comparison between a painting representing a marine landscape and Debussy's music on the sea where art and music came together and exalted each other.

4.4.5 Effects of the Italian Museum Reform

It was also planned to create other educational rooms that unfortunately did not take place during the transition to the Polo Museale (museum pole) that now incorporates the Royal Palace following the reform of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage in 2016.

The shortage of educational department staff is partially compensated for work-related learning (*alternanza scuola-lavoro*) where high school students are involved in an apprenticeship programme to develop skills in specific job sectors. In particular, students of an economic institute with orientation towards tourist are coming to the museum reception activities in the DAI Room open on appointment two days a week. The project lasts for 60 hours and it has been possible to conduct public monitoring as well as museum staff tracked the disabled audience when planning the DAI Room. The making of DAI Room meant a significant growth of public: 67 to 900 users from 2007 to 2009 (Porzio), at that time Palazzo Reale was the first in Naples with a space dedicated to disabled.

As regards the main museological aspect of the Palazzo Reale, according to the curators, the essential element is to make the museum speak. In this specific case, there is a peculiarity that can be, on the one hand, a limit and, on the other hand, an advantage. Namely the artworks housed in royal palaces are contextualized and within a dwelling the set-up is historicized and remains as it is, while in a museum it is almost always the result of a "theft". The educational service led by Annalisa Porzio has always had an intelligent and correct way of

using the materials of the museum and developing an educational offer that was based on the material itself exploring the possibilities in all its aspects. The capability to invent using environments and materials and build a kind of language easy to manage by visitors, was based on a continuous study and research of the Palace. Every research path and every new discovery became a usable path or exhibition offered to the public and this is the great challenge of museum education.

One major problem is the persistence of 'visual ignorance' in younger generations because students do not learn how to read the artworks from the very beginning of their studies. They are visual illiterates that need a set of tools to be able to distinguish and understand the works of art and, above all, be able to make a great distinction between sensationalization and the enjoyment of cultural heritage (De Angelis).

As Fernando Bologna, art historian and father of historical-artistic research in Naples said, every work of art before being a monument is also a document. This point seems essential to the understanding and reading of artwork in all possible nuances. For this reason, and to facilitate the usability of the environments, the educational department is designing a new apparatus for visitors with portable description sheet to out and use in each room. A real problem is the presence of label stock on the walls and the size of paper cards that can be exposed in the rooms. It has been designed to overcome the problem using visual guides to facilitate the reading of the contents, of the works, and the environments for all visitors, even the less used to experience a museum. What one tries to do is to give information about single works and narrate without interfering too much with the layout. At the moment the cards are still there but the trend would be to eliminate them and use transparent totems realized by Stefano Gei to provide background information in each room. These totems contain essential information, while for a full reading of the room, one can find the signal for the in-depth studies with the QR code system.

As a result of all these activities, the museum has over time produced a culture of itself also thanks to the contribution of external experts who have provided their collaboration and expertise on some works such as the musical

clock, the throne of the Negus, Russian art works, etc. There are still some topics to deal with, and many thematic itineraries were born out of curiosity such as the one on nutrition related to some still-life paintings that show ancient foods and dishes. From these research the path *From Mangiafoglie to Mangiamaccheroni. Brief History of Nutrition in Naples* was born and promoted on the occasion of the Heritage Days in 2015.

4.4.6 Audience engagement

It is important to emphasize that one can understand the function of the Palace through the centuries, but surely the visit can somewhat floor because the visitor who does not know it well expects to find the private room, the bedroom, and so on. Maybe, the first step for the visitor is to understand the historical phase of the palace that involved the transformation of use when it passed from a private function to a representative one in the Piano Nobile, as the royal family was used to live at the second floor (Gei). Some visitors may have this difficulty, but a full visit can provide an explanation to overcome the impasse even through the introductory panels. Although, according to Valeria De Angelis, the tour guide is irreplaceable for understanding because it is possible to interpret doubt and curiosity and within the superintendents one should create this professional figure in a stable way.

Sometimes the relationship with the museum is difficult for booking visits, especially to find the availability of the private company in charge of it. Anyway, general public can have a full experience of the museum, as they perceive the structure and its privileged position. From a logistical point of view the Palace is located in a very convenient area of the city and many possibilities are offered to come and visit it. However, visitors can interact with curators trough a guest book in the DAI Room and there is always a direct feedback. Another way to write or send tips is via the form in the Service card visitors can find at the ticket office. They can also interact via email or website.

4.4.8 Dissemination strategies

Other moments of disclosure such as conferences and meetings have also become the cues for the study of new itineraries in the museum and the discovery of confrontation with external experts.

For example, the meeting held in 2009 about the year 1943 and the destructions of World War II was the inspiration for drawing an itinerary through the photos of the State Archives that recorded the furnishings of the time. The films of the Istituto Luce on the bombing and reconstruction of the city of Naples were used, as well as the films of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro, in which Colalucci, renowned Italian restorer, recognized his mother as a young restorer involved in the reconstruction.

In 2014, conferences were organized in collaboration with the Association of Friends of the Museums. The cycle of four conferences on distant worlds has led to the creation of as much educational notebooks dedicated to Turkey, China, Africa and Russia. They were then turned into an itinerary in the museum that illustrates frescoes, objects, furnishings and iconographies of extra European provenance. This itinerary was offered to the public every Thursday in the month of May, in occasion of *Maggio dei Monumenti* (May of Monuments). It is a cultural event taking place in the historic centre of Naples since 1992. Organized during the month of May, there are a number of events including guided tours in private or usually closed sites, concerts, theatrical activities, exhibitions and various initiatives.

The collaboration with Simonetta Fune led to the creation of cartoons presented for Valentine's Day with protagonists the Duke and Duchess of Berry. This work created a direct link with a set of porcelain on display and became an element of disclosure and promotion of a part of the collection on display.

All ministerial occasions are used as an impulse to deepen the knowledge of the Palazzo Reale: Heritage Days, Expo 2015, extraordinary openings, May of Monuments, religious and lay feasts, etc. How much has been done has been

achieved with a minimum of funds allocated to educational programmes, which are now no longer available from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

As far as communication is concerned, there is a provisional Internet site of the Superintendence of Naples but there is not a specific site dedicated to the Museum, except a subsection. Now that Palazzo Reale is in the administrative framework of the Polo Museale, its web page will also come to the platform. In recent years, more attention has been paid to social media that has brought a significant contribution to the initiatives of the Educational department by increasing the public and the channels of communication. In particular, the use of Twitter and Instagram has strengthened the presence of the Palazzo Reale on the network also thanks to participation in initiatives such as Museumweek. The latter is an interchange of images that lasts a week and involves all museums in the world. In 2016, 4000 museums participated at the daily assignment of a theme and the museum was to publish twitts and photos related to the subject. There is an exchange between a multitude of users and it can become an important showcase for the museum. Once again, however, all this is possible thanks to the systematic work of knowledge and research on the collections.

4.4.8 Museum staff

At present, the Educational department is composed of three part-time persons: Stefano Gei, Architect and Museum Technical Assistant; Antonella Delli Paoli, Art History and Museum Technical Assistant (now Technical Assistant); and Antonia Tafuri, Art History and Security Assistant. When there was no separation between the Superintendence and the Museum there was much more personnel, now this division has caused a reuse of skills that has depleted the educational offer because the Polo has only one director for all the public museums in Campania. For example, you could first make a turn in the DAI Room with all the MTAs, even those in the National Library, and there was more continuity in the opening. You could use six or seven people, now there are three of which two part-time (Porzio).

This also led to a reduction in the educational offer. In fact, when Giovanni Abete, an MTA also philologist and linguist, had designed a listening to the song of birds developed in six meetings with recordings to be heard in DAI Room, it had to be halted before the scheduled because of the partial closure of the room due to lack of dedicated staff. After the ministerial reform, the collaborative moment in research, study, and educational practice is missing and reduced to the essentials.

4.4.9 The perception of locals and visitors

The main meaning that should emerge from the visit to the Palazzo Reale is the historical meaning, the integration in the city and the artistic significance that bind them together in the sense of the "art that is made", that is used and created. Art also has a historical reason and a double aspect in searching for the solution to artistic problems and try to find out how one has come to that solution. The Palace has a privileged role to place the work into its historical aspect. In certain sense, the visitor may have the privilege of living in regal environments for a day during a visit. In a picture gallery one cannot have the same perception, this distinguishes it from other types of museum because the context is not secondary and can give different effects depending on the type of visitor. In fact, a visitor coming form another city may have a different perception if he or she has read something prior to the visit. For the Neapolitan who lives in the city, however, is almost a scenery flat within an urban context where he or she goes all day. The visit can have a very special meaning which is then what is often found because **locals remain ecstatic discovering they had under their nose something important they had not experienced yet.**

As a result of that, new paths and new projects privileging a historical period over others can help in seeing the complexity and evolution of the Palace. At the moment, the educational department also provides downloadable itineraries dossiers on the Viceroy period, the Battistello works, the Bourbon age, and the Pompeian rooms. All that in order to offer the visitor all the

possible tools to enjoy the visit at the Palazzo Reale, and to experience one of the great cultural and artistic treasures of the city.

CHAPTER 5

THE GRANDMASTERS PALACE IN VALLETTA

5.1 The City of the Knights of St John

The city of Valletta experienced a period of great splendour in the sixteenth and seventeenth century when, in the aftermath of the Great Siege of Malta, the Grandmasters and the Knights Hospitallers built it as a symbol of their established presence in the heart of the Mediterranean. In the centuries that followed, the interest in its strategic location practically supplanted the cultural, architectural and artistic value of the imposing buildings erected in Valletta, up to the point of nearly losing the memory of the Order's presence. "To a great many Englishmen the name Malta appears to call up but a single idea. We think of a dot upon the map of Europe, which represents, we know, a very important naval and military station, and are apt to suppose that the whole interest of this insignificant-looking place is wrapped up in its strategic value" (Flower, 1897) (fig. 98). At the end of the nineteenth century the perception of Malta suffered a lack of consideration from an architectural and artistic point of view. The main purpose the island has had in the Mediterranean was defence from the Ottoman Empire and defence from piracy (Scarabelli, 2009), and this still characterised the idea that the European ruling classes had about it.

However, the travellers who reached Malta and Valletta in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Brydon, 1773; de Boisgelin, 1805; Galt, 1812; Colt Hoare, 1819, Angas, 1842) all admired the impressive and luxurious sites they visited and found out that the "little island contains many building worthy of notice" with "no trace of littleness about the churches, the palaces, the castles of Malta" (Flower, 1897). The history of Malta and the foundation of Valletta are strictly related to the presence of the Hospitaller Order of St John. In 1530, Grand Master L'Isle d'Adam had accepted from Charles V the island and its dependencies as their base in 1529 from Emperor Charles V after several years of wandering around the Mediterranean (Cassar, 2000b). Due to its proximity to the harbour, the first Grand Master Philippe Villiers L'Isle Adam (1530-1534), set up his abode in Fort St Angelo (fig. 99), while a make-shift *collacchio* and other official building including the Auberges of the eight *langues* were in Birgu. Mdina was, and remained, the town of Malta until 1798. It was then with

Grand Master de Vallette (1557-1568) that the Order lived one of the decisive episodes of its history with the Great Siege of 1565 against the Ottoman armada of Suleiman the Magnificent. De Vallette led the knights in defending the entrance to the Grand Harbour (from Fort St Elmo to protect Birgu and Senglea), but after only four months (18th May – 8th September) of bloody and heavy bombardments the defeated Ottoman fleet set sail back to Constantinople. They left behind them several ruins and deep sociological effects. The Maltese population fought alongside the Knights to protect the island. All able-bodied Maltese males aged 15 to 65 were expected to fight. As a consequence of that, the Maltese felt close to the Knights (who had never been seen as enemies) and eventually "the siege experience had generated a sense of belonging and solidarity" (Cassar, 2000).

5.1.1 After the Great Siege

In the aftermath of the Great Siege (fig. 100), de Vallette decided to fortify Fort St Elmo and repair the old fortifications. Many renowned European architects and military engineers, such as Antonio Fremmolino, Baldassare Lanci, Pietro Pardo, Antonio Quinsani da Montalcino, and Bartolomeo Genga, were involved in the planning of a new city of the Order of St John even before 1565 (Freller, 2010). In particular, Genga arrived in Malta in 1558 and made plans for the reconstruction and re-building of the Auberges in Birgu. He also drew up a plan for a new residence for the Grand Master and a new town on top of Mount Sceberras; but he suddenly died and unfortunately his plans did not come to fruition. Later Lanci, the military engineer of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, proposed a plan for a fortress city in 1562, but it was not followed up. Probably, some plans drawn by Genga were taken into account when the Maltese architect Girolamo Cassar started working on the project of the new city with Francesco Laparelli (Freller, 2010). A lack of funds made all the initiatives impracticable until the event of the Great Siege in 1565, which brought to light the need for a new fortified city. Actually, a few days after the victory over the Turks, Grandmaster de Valette sent a missive to Fra Giuseppe

Cambiano, the Order's ambassador in Rome, to advise all Christian Princes about the victory and to ask for an economic contribution and the expertise of military engineers. As Braudel argued, the loss of Malta to the Ottomans would have been disastrous for Christendom (Ganado, 2003).

De Vallette leant on the kings of Portugal and Spain and on the Pope Pius IV, who sent his own engineer, Capitano Francesco Laparelli who was from Cortona and from noble and ancient lineage (Rocchini, 2009). In Rome, Laparelli had been commissioned to build the fortifications of Castel St Angelo, Borgo Pio, and the walls enclosing the Vatican citadel. Pius IV sent him to Malta to repair Siege damages. The architect arrived in Malta on 28th December 1565 and, after a few months of consultations and hesitations from the Grand Master, the first stone was laid on March 28th 1566 (Vella Bonavita, 2009). The city of Valletta rose "on the slopes of Mount Sceberras in silent testimony of a tripartite achievement of a Frenchman, an Italian and a Maltese: Jean De Valette, Francesco Laparelli and Girolamo Cassar – the founder, the military engineer, the architect" (Ganado, 2003). Three features were defined in the making of an urban structure laying down the hill and overviewing the two branches of the port, Marsamxett on one side and Birgu on the other side (fig. 101). The main purpose of the new city was to be a 'shield for almost all of Christendom' (Freller, 2010).

5.1.2 The plan of the city

Laparelli wanted to design a city layout able to deflect the strong winds of the Island that would be traversed by a large street in the middle and levelled alleys. He discussed this plan with Valette, the viceroy of Sicily Don Garcia de Toledo, and Philip II who was the supreme feudal lord over the islands (Freller, 2010). However, in the end the Knights opted for a more conventional orthogonal structure (Vella Bonavita, 2009). The Engineer exploited as much as possible the orography, especially the flat areas on top of the mount, making it a highly professional and mathematically harmonious project (fig. 102). Although great efforts were made to level parts of Mount Sceberras and give a military

appearance to a difficult area, it was a complex project to execute, due to the strong slopes of the land. The "unique peculiarity of actually being, in the most strict and literally sense, one solid block of almost perfect building stone" (Flower, 1897) makes Valletta, and Malta, very similar to Naples, where the tufa stone was actually dug from the underground and worked on above to build Palaces. The limestone fortifications of Malta are an unusual combination of human and natural work where the graft of bricks onto the solid stone reminds of the tufa structure of Fort St Elmo in Naples. As, Brydone exclaimed in his letter dated 6th June 1773 "all the boasted catacombs in Rome and Naples are a trifle to the immense excavations that have been made in this little island".

After Grand Master De Vallette's death, the city grew thanks to his successors Pietro Del Monte (1568-1672) and especially Jean l'Evêque de la Cassière (1572-1581) who ordered at his own expenses the making of the Magistral Palace, the Sacra Infermeria and the Conventual Church of St John the Baptist. La Cassière also commissioned Girolamo Cassar the seven Auberges for the Knights (Ganado, 2003). Laparelli trained Cassar before leaving Malta and the latter proved to be a most talented architect. The only parts of Laparelli's plan which were not executed were the *Manderaggio* (or gallery-pen) and the arsenal (Freller, 2010). Then in 1571 the Order moved from Birgu to Valletta, as the *Città Nuova* was titled after Grandmaster de Valette. The move also meant a deep change in the defensive character of the island, becoming the centre of all military activities in Malta.

5.1.3 Chivalrous art and architecture

It is important to stress the point that the making of Valletta and its development deeply reflected the history of early modern art and architecture. Actually, the construction of new Auberges in the new city and the consequent gradual raising of the Order's lifestyle, led to a great increase in commissions and artworks made for the knights. The more elaborate and spectacular imagery of Maltese baroque represents a specific expression of this artistic intention following the taste and the style of southern Catholic Europe (Freller, 2010). It

meant a change of mindset by getting closer to a more refined and aristocratic attitude. The Auberges were a symptomatic example of the change. There are differences in terms of size and décor when looking at the architectures of Birgu and then of Valletta (fig. 103). Each 'language' had its own hostel, although dignitaries and high-ranking knights could live in their private palaces. The Auberges afforded lodgings to the young knights and constituted the main meeting-place for all; they could also be used to receive pilgrims or distinguished visitors who might request hospitality (Galea, 2011). Apart from the decoration commissioned on demand to embellish the Auberges, the latter were usually adorned with arms or artworks bequeathed by the 'spoglio' (spoils) of the individual knights. Some auberges have survived in Rhodes as well, where the first settlement of the Order was located. In Birgu the most of the auberges are still standing (the Italian and German Auberges were destroyed during Nazi bombing raids in WWII), while in Valletta only five remain, since the auberges of France and of Auvergne were destroyed during the Second World War, and the auberge of Germany was dismantled in 1839 to build the Anglican cathedral. Moreover, in 1792 the Bavarian Langue was instituted under Grand Master de Rohan Polduc (1775-1797) and blended with the revived English one, forming the Anglo-Bavarian Langue (Galea, 2011). Indeed, when the *Città Nuova* was founded in 1565, the English auberge was not built because of the Anglican schism when in 1532 king Henry VIII proclaimed himself head of the English church breaking every relationship with the Pope and the Catholic church. It meant a momentous event in the history of the Order of St John with the estrangement of English, Welsh, and Irish knights from the 'Catholic' bastion in the Mediterranean Sea.

5.1.4 Two political and cultural poles

In the meantime, a dual social structure was taking shape in Malta especially after the siege and the building of Valletta. "This duality did not only exist at a social level, but it also pervaded the mental and cognitive structure of Maltese society. Two different cultural blocks, strictly separated from each

other, formed two opposite camps, namely Mdina with its suburb of Rabat as the seat of the countryside; Birgu – and later Valletta - the seat of the urbanised harbour area" (Cassar, 2000a). This duality lasted through the whole age of the Knights Hospitallers, ending only with the French Napoleonic invasion. Indeed, until the Napoleonic period Valletta was not the capital of Malta. Mdina was entitled to be both political and cultural centre where the Grand Masters used to stay (fig. 104). Even the church of St John, as mentioned above, was the Conventual church of the Hospitaller Order and later will become Co-Cathedral of the island.

5.1.5 Bonaparte in Malta

As Carmel Testa stated, for 268 years that chivalrous international Order dominated the fortunes and daily life of the local population who, in the majority were happy to live under that singular institution which provided safety from Muslim peril, adequate means of employment and a fairly decent livelihood. The sudden arrival of Bonaparte with his army in June 1798 shattered the peaceful and staid way of life of the Maltese population (1997). Frans Sammut retraced the week Bonaparte passed before conquering Malta analysing documents and letters that the French general sent in preparation of the attack. The detailed report made by Matthieu Poussièlgue, first secretary of the Legation in Genoa, represent a precious correspondence with Bonaparte, explaining also the relationship between the French knights and France at the end of the eighteenth century. Actually, Poussièlgue was also the cousin of the knight Antoine Poussièlgue, chief of the port of Valletta and ambassador of Venice. Thanks to him all doors would open and Matthieu could easily accomplish the tasks Bonaparte had entrusted to him, namely to obtain information on the state of mind and defence of the island, judged impregnable, and to undertake necessary negotiations to weaken the defences of the archipelago (Sammut, 2006). Poussièlgue reported the way the Maltese were living and recorded a strict feudal system that could not be accepted in revolutionary France. Also because half of maritime commerce in Malta was

coming from France, and the latter imported most of Maltese cotton; it meant that the manpower working in Malta was French. There were, therefore, economic and political reasons behind the invasion of Malta by Bonaparte since the Order of St John represented feudal obscurantism and it was not acceptable in revolutionary France (Sammut, 2006).

Besides, the majority of knights in the 1770s and 1790s was French (among them a meagre group supporting the revolution), the French military sections provided the half of the finance support, and the Grandmaster himself was French, Emmanuel de Rohan-Polduc (1775-1797). In many aspects one could unofficially consider Malta as a French protectorate. In 1765 King Louis allowed the Maltese in visit in France the very same rights of his subjects, and the code *Diritto Municipale di Malta* published by Grandmaster de Rohan in 1784 was close to the ideals and the regulations in effect in France. A few years later, in 1789, also due to the increasing corruption spread among the knights, the deputy Armand-Gaston Camus proposed to suppression of the tithes levied by the secular and religious orders in France, including the Maltese knights. The Republican Party accomplished this attempt only in 1797 when probably the interest in the island was diminishing (Sammut, 2006). In the aftermath of the storming of the Bastille, Grand Master de Rohan started a new political relationship with England asking for a permanent consul based in Malta. It was a weak attempt to protect himself from republicans in the island who were becoming more and more numerous. There were affiliated in the army, in the ministries, in the church. Actually, Bosredon Ransijat (secretary of the Treasury and minister of the War), Fay (engineer in charge of the fortifications), de Bardoneche (in charge of the artillery), Toussad and the Lascaris brothers and many other knights were part of a kind of secret association. There were also priests participating to this conspiracy such as the abbots Frin, Beufort, Libreri, and Bellegrand, brother of the general Vaubois who had to flee from Malta at Bonaparte arrival (Sammut, 2006).

More recently, Charles Xuereb focussed on a crucial point in the relationship between the Maltese population and the occupying French troops: the religious power was so strong as to influence the masses and have control of

their actions. A number of unpopular decisions taken by the new French government created a feeling of unrest and discontentment (Xuereb, 2014), which led to the brief duration of French influence on Malta.

5.1.6 The French influence in the political life

From correspondence between the general Bonaparte and Talleyrand, it was clear that the first step contemplated by Napoleon was the annexation of Malta whose inhabitants, according to him, were favourable to the French. Furthermore, the Order was aristocratic and on the execution of Louis XVI a solemn requiem was performed in St John's at which Grand Master De Rohan presided. The latter was also the one who tried to reform the military forces of the Order but in 1778 his attempts resulted in complete failure (Glenfell, 1902). When de Rohan died in 1797, Gran Master Ferdinand von Hompesch was elected. He was a German. Unfortunately he was not the right man to face the oncoming storm, due to his weakness and indecisiveness. In 1797 all Europe, with the exception of England, was at the feet of general Bonaparte whose eyes were set on the East and Egypt. For this reason he needed naval supremacy in the Mediterranean and a base of operations. The capture of Malta was crucial to Bonaparte intentions and once again the island became a coveted fortress. The Maltese were prepared to resist the French but both munitions and provisions were denied to them by order of the Grand Master. So, when General Bonaparte passed by the Island, in the direction of Egypt, he needed only four days to conquer Malta where he spent a total of six days, during which he dictated instructions to change the government of Malta reflecting French republican ideals (Cassar, 2000b) (fig. 105).

Again Testa, in his volume dedicated to the French in Malta, stated how after the sudden expulsion of the Order from Malta the 80,000 Maltese inhabitants were obliged to change their lives and way of thinking due to the radical innovations of a French republican administration. Besides the order to establish primary schools in Malta and Gozo, a central school, a library, a museum, an observatory, and a botanical garden in Malta, the general also

ordered radical changes in the life style. The only language accepted was French and the proclamation in 12 propositions written by Bonaparte himself was posted on all main buildings announcing a new political path. All inhabitants gained same rights (article 1) and slavery was abolished also for Turkish prisoners (article 3), but on the other hand they were forced to wear the French tricolour cockade and could obtain the French national clothing only after special permission of the General-in-Chief (article 4). All feudal titles and the Order of St John tiles were banished as well coats of arms and the Order military uniforms (articles 5, 6, and 7). The most controversial article ware probably the eighth and the ninth ones establishing the symbols of the French Republic to be erected in each and every church meaning that the island of Malta belonged to France. Moreover, everybody was forced to accept these principles, and in case of violation a progressive penalty was exacted: from one third of the individual's revenue, to prison sentences, to deportation and confiscation of half of their assets (article 12). When Bonaparte went on to Egypt, he left General Vaubois in Malta with a contingent of 4,000 soldiers who stripped churches and palaces of all their wealth. Vaubois promulgated some extremely unpopular anti-clerical laws that aroused a popular uprising on 2 September 1798. Hasty measures and ill-advised conduct on the part of that administration forced the Maltese countryside to erupt into spontaneous revolt in less than three months. The French garrison and their few local collaborators were besieged inside the Grand Harbour area by the Maltese insurgents, who were subsequently aided by the British and their Portuguese allies. During those years of warfare and hardship (that elapsed before the French finally had to surrender and depart from Malta) the Maltese were masters of their own destiny for the first time in history. In those two years the first steps towards an independent nationhood were forged, an arduous and often a heart-breaking task which finally came to fruition in 1964 with Maltese independence (Testa, 1997).

5.1.7 Under the Crown of Britain

Thanks to the intervention of King Ferdinand IV and Lord Nelson, Commander of the British fleet, Malta could accomplish its uprising and the French capitulated on 5th September 1800. Malta was supposed to be given back to the Hospitaller Knights, but the population rose up against this possibility and asked to stay under the Crown of Britain. It actually became a crown colony in 1813 and was given to Britain as a possession only by the Treaty of Paris in 1814, a decision than ratified at Wien in 1815 (Cassar, 2000b).

In the course of the nineteenth century Malta became increasingly important to the British. Especially after the opening of the Suez Canal, Malta appeared to be a perfect stronghold, both for the British fleet, and British trade. The Maltese economy depended heavily on the British navy, but most Maltese didn't benefit from it in any tangible way. There was much poverty, especially among rural communities. In any case, the British government was aware that, to secure their position on the island, they had to interrelate civil and religious authorities (Mallia Milanes, 1988). Indeed, when Sir Ralph Abercromby, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, took formal possession of the island on 5th September 1800 immediately informed the Maltese that 'all rights, privileges, and immunities in Church and State were to be preserved'. In the Declaration of Rights of 15th June 1802 this statement was reiterated affirming that the King of Great Britain was to uphold and protect their religion, and no other sovereigns should interfere in temporal or religious matters; also stating that other religions were to be tolerated. It was a crucial point considering the relevance and the constant presence of Catholic religion in the life of Maltese people.

Thanks to the Maltese stationing, Britain became the most influential power in the Mediterranean in the course of the nineteenth century, although it did not belong there geographically (Frendo, 2012). Its primary route was the Atlantic, but the Mediterranean, even if it was a closed sea, bordered on three continents, thus becoming the main objective for expansionist European countries. Therefore controlling the naval routes also meant control over commerce and the likely outcome of conflicts. The British had been trying to

expand their rule across the region since the seventeenth century, when they acquired Tangier from Portugal (1662) and conquered Gibraltar from Spain (1704). Later the conquest of Minorca (1783) and part of Corsica (1795c.) meant a significant move of the British interests towards the centre of the Mediterranean. Eventually the Napoleonic wars led to an all-out British military engagement at sea and, as Frendo argued, it was while Nelson and Bonaparte chased each other's fleet in Mediterranean waters that Britain became actively involved against France in Malta and Egypt (2010). Malta actually gravitated into the British imperial sphere when it was confirmed in 1814, as the Ionian Islands also became British possessions, making the Mediterranean an imperial power. It soon acquired a peculiar identity since many religions, languages, cultures, and influences were melted together where Britain ruled over Christians, Muslims, and Coptic Christians living in Malta, Turkey, Cyprus, and Greece. The policy of religious freedom of worship was established as a necessary feature of the imperial system, also clear in Canada (1774), Martinique (1794), the South African Cape and other colonies (Wettinger, 1988).

5.1.8 Religious issues

The British establishment managed the Church-State relations based on the ideas of freedom, protection, and co-operation, clearly mentioned in the twelve Constitutions granted to Malta from 1813 to 1964. This was particularly relevant in the religious field taking into account the resuming contact with the Church of Rome after almost two centuries of silence, on the occasion of the Congress of Vienna (1815). Moreover, the increasing visibility of Catholics in Ireland and Canada led to new political and diplomatic relationships, also with the Catholic Church in Malta. Indeed, the British co-operated with the Church in education, which had been exclusively imparted according to religious principles by Catholic clergy, and Jesuits opened a school that was to raise standards in education. Also from the judicial point of view, a burial law was enacted in agreement with the Church and burials were prohibited in the inner-

port areas since 1869. However, some issues started when it came to settling the use of the Conventual Church of St John. It was built by the Order and was part of their belongings, and for this reason the Colonial office considered it a Government property. It was also ruled that the church could become an Anglican place of worship. This decision could represent a real obstacle to the erstwhile good relations between the Catholic Church and the State because in 1577 Gran Master La Cassière decreed that if the Order renounced Malta the Conventual Church would have been reverted to the local clergy. So, two thrones were set on the high altar, one on the right side (previously reserved to the Grand Master) for the Sovereign of Britain, the other on the left side for the Archbishop (Bezzina, 1988). This event marked a crucial element in the relationship between Maltese people and the British Government, namely the opposition of priests to British policy would have meant a dangerous opposition by the people and a resulting revolt.

The British insistently tried to introduce Protestantism amongst people, but with no success (Cassar, 1988). Catholic religion played a critical role in many occasions and its importance was clear in the event of the unification of Italy, so much so that the British Government supported pope Pius IX declaring to be at his disposal if the need arose (Bezzina, 1988). Despite this, a nationalist cultural dimension was immediately evident in Malta; for instance, the use of English in official communications was quickly abandoned since nobody understood it. All communications had to be in Italian and there was no tradition of English Common Law. As a result of that, coexistence between Maltese people and the British was not easy and even if the Maltese felt that the navy was there for their benefit, such intended impression of security was artificial. A Nationalist critique of colonialism pointed out that this failed to develop a stable domestic economy, or diverted what existed to serve imperial interests (Frendo, 2006). Over time two groups were formed, with Anglophile loyalists on the one side, and nationalists claiming the *italianità* and *latinità* on the other side.

5.1.9 Towards the Maltese national identity

An increasing discontent affected the Maltese since their incomes were so small compared to the British ones and the common feeling, as stated by Frederick M. Lacroix, was that the colonialists were indifferent towards the interests of Malta's native inhabitants (Cassar, 1988). Harbour activities provided the most of the employment for the population, but they had to work in deplorable conditions. Moreover, the Maltese were excluded from high positions in all sectors, from politics to the armed forces, from commerce to dockyard, causing resentment and disadvantage. Since 1849 there had been a Government Council with a number of Maltese representatives, but they were in the minority. The new constitution of 1887 gave the elected members of the Council a majority, but in 1903 this amendment was rescinded. The influence of the Maltese on politics remained trifling, until the establishment of the Maltese parliament in 1921 (Mallia-Milanes, 1988). As a result of that, on the 7th of June 1919 riots against the British took place because of a rise in bread prices. Some Maltese were killed by British troops in Valletta, and this event led to a national mourning (Frendo, 2012).

However, the last quarter of the century also saw technical and financial progress in line with the Belle Époque that was bringing renewal to European social classes with the rise of the bourgeoisie. The following years saw the foundation of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank (1882) and the beginning of the Malta Railway set-up (1883). The first Maltese postage stamps were issued in 1885 (fig. 106) and in 1904 a tram service was activated. The making of the Royal Opera House began in 1888 and in 1912 Dun Karm Psaila, the "bard of Malta", wrote *Quddiem Xbieha tal-Madonna* his first poem in Maltese (earlier he had only written in Italian). All these innovations were leading towards the making of a national consciousness and identity. Maltese nationalism arose primarily as a cultural resistance to British Anglicization policy, and the banner of the *italianità* emphasised this process. Italian influence in Malta was more than linguistic, it was religious and, to some extent, political considering the number of Italian expatriates who found refuge in Malta during the Risorgimento.

Liberals, anticlericals, radicals, republicans, nationalists, and monarchists met in Malta and keep their cultural and political activities in Valletta (Frendo, 2012). In this milieu Fortunato Mizzi found a cultural and political support to establish the Anti-Reform Party (1880), later turned into the Nationalist Party. He promoted the use of the Italian language in Malta and a pro-Italian political activity in contrast with the precepts of the British Government to use English in schools, administration, and law court. A new constitution including more powers to the Maltese was requested and then obtained in 1887 starting a significant process towards the independence of Malta that eventually occurred in 1964.

5.2 The Grandmaster's Palace

5.2.1 The centre of the new city

The location of the Palace of the Grand Master was first planned at the back of the St James Cavalier in a safe position, although Baldassarre Lanci, the Engineer of the Grand Duke of Florence, suggested placing it in the centre of the city next to a large square (Ganado, 2001). St James Cavalier was the highest point of the city but was not central and, because of the bastions and bulwarks, ill-placed for the erection of a huge palace and adjacent square (Freller, 2010). Then the Magisterial Palace stood in an area once occupied by the Auberge d'Italie and other private residences, one of which belonged to Eustachio del Monte, nephew of the Grand Master Pietro del Monte (1568-1572), and it "grew, sprawled and metamorphosed over a century and a half" (Bonello, 2001).

5.2.2 The frieze of the Great Siege

In his research on the Palace, Giovanni Bonello tried to retrace the architectural steps through the words of the first historians of the Order,

Giacomo Bosio and Bartolomeo del Pozzo. They recorded the move from Birgu to Valletta in 1571, how at the time the new city was incomplete and uninhabited, and also how the Palace came about. In order to build the whole structure, four separate properties were united together: the former Auberge d'Italie, the house of Eustachio del Monte and the houses of Fra Bernardo Raimondo and Fra Giannotto Bosio, two individual knights. Another section, the back towards Strada Mercanti (today Merchant Street), already belonged to the state and this peculiarity of being two adjacent buildings explain the presence of at least two internal courtyards. This peculiarity also influenced the front façade that had been changed and modified at least eight times to give a more coherent proportion to the whole section (Bonello, 2001).

The Grand Masters all gave much thought to the making of the Palace and each of them added their influence to the architecture and its decorative system. "It took a long time to complete and furnish all the rooms. The exterior of the building reflects the fact that, in the late sixteenth century, the Order had not yet become an institution of proud *homes du monde* with its splendid display of baroque and rococo tastes" (Freller, 2010). Actually the massive and plain square structure on the outside resembled a more fort than an aristocratic palace. Thanks to Grand Master La Cassière (1572-1581) the Supreme Council Chamber was built and frescoed by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio with the historical frieze depicting the Great Siege. The Italian painter depicted the main events of the Great Siege in twelve frescoes decorating about half the total surface of the walls. When La Cassière commissioned these paintings he wanted to make sure that all the events occurred in 1565 would remained impressed in the collective memory of the knights (Freller, 2010). So, from the arrival of the Ottomans to the attack of Fort St Elmo (fig. 107), from the fall to the following attacks and finally the arrival of the *Gran Soccorso* (fig. 108) and the Turkish Armada put to flight (fig. 109). Each and every panel is then separated with allegorical figures representing the theological and cardinal virtues (charity, hope, religion, faith, temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence) besides happiness, fame, victory, virtue, patience, perseverance, and nobility. For century this event remained fixed in all European countries as the most relevant moment in recent

history as much as Voltaire stated that nothing in the world was better known than the Siege of Malta (Lochhead, 2009).

5.2.3 The use of inner spaces

The Supreme Council Hall is also known as the Hall of St Michael and St George after the institution of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1818. At the time of the Knights, the hall was used for state functions and it was the main setting for large state gatherings and after this more additions were made to design the Palace. First of all the summer residence at the time of Grand Master Verdalle (1582-1595) and the *Sala d'armi* along the entire length of the palace back façade, but it is with Grand Master Pinto (1741-1773) that the Palace took the appearance it has today (Vella, 2008). He carried out the major alterations to the Magistral Palace extending a lavish patronage to the arts, also establishing printing (1747) and founding the University (1769). The Palace structure was especially modified in the lower loggias turning them into stables for the horses of the Guard and Visitors. Pinto also replaced the fountain in the upper courtyard with a more imposing one and opened a second portico leading from Palace Square to the main courtyard (Bonello, 2001). Lord Patrick Brydone, a Scottish traveller, visited Malta during his Grand Tour of Italy and Sicily at the time of Grand Master Pinto and edited a book in 1773, the first one dedicated to the Italian island. During his stay in Malta he visited the Palace and through his words the structure of the main building in Valletta took shape as he stated "it is very noble though a plain structure, and the grand master (who studies convenience more than magnificence) is more comfortably and commodiously lodged than any Prince in Europe, with perhaps the exception of the King of Sardinia. The great stairs is by much the easiest and best I ever saw" (Brydone, 1773, p. 318-319).

Also on the Piano Nobile there is another hall which deserves attention. The Council Chamber is elegantly decorated with a set of Gobelins tapestries ordered in 1708 by Grand Master Perellos. The silk tapestries were woven in Paris after paintings by the Dutch artists Franz Post and Albert Eckhout, who

formed part of expedition corps accompanying Prince Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen in Brazil. The works were to embellish the chamber as part of the Grand Master *gioia*, for his all newly election (Feller, 2010). The set consists of ten panels depicting the *Tenture des Indes* with exotic landscapes and animals represented in vivid and vibrant colours (fig. 110); even if many tapestries of the same subject are housed in important collections, this is the only full set of this kind. To the early eighteenth century is also dated the fountain in the *Loggia del Nettuno* (fig. 111) providing a useful source of water (Vella, 2008). An addition to the Palace was made in 1745 when a clock was added in the main courtyard and name after Grand Master Pinto. The Pinto Clock was designed and installed by the Maltese clockmaker Gaetano Vella; it is divided in four elements with the principal dial in the center showing hours and minutes and above a smaller one registering the moon phases (Freller, 2010) (fig. 112).

Theresa Vella has reconstructed the use of the halls at the time of the Order thanks to a drawing showing the old assignment for each single room. So, the *Bottigliera* (store of bottle wine), the *Ricetta* (livestock), the *Confetteria* and the *Camere delli Guardiani della Cavallerizza* (ceremonial ornamentation of cavalry), and the *Bottega del Ferraro* (blacksmith's shop) tell a lot about the primary necessities of the knights who were mainly tied to chivalrous life and the needs of armoury (Vella, 2008).

5.2.4 The French Commissioners

As said before, Bonaparte's arrival in Malta prefigured the end of the Order of St John in the Mediterranean Island followed by feeble resistance by Grand Master von Hompesch (1797-1798). General Bonaparte declined to take up residence at the Palace, choosing a private palace in Merchants Street (Testa, 1997). The French Commissioner Boresdon de Ransijat, instead, resided there as the new governor but he was not interested to the Palace and its contents and pertinences. This is evident in the way they used the Archives of the Order that von Hompesch unsuccessfully requested to take away with him. An order was issued "whereby all papers, parchments and documents of the Order, except the

documents dealing with titles of ownership were to be used […] as cartridges for the artillery" (National Library of Malta, 2013). Soon after the Maltese people rebelled against the French and the Archives were providentially saved from dispersion and destruction thanks to the sense of duty of fra' Gaetano Bruno, *Uditore* of the Order (*L'Arte*, 1863, n.16). Only two years later, in 1800, the French army withdrew from Malta.

5.2.5 Travellers visiting the Governors' Palace

As a consequence of the Treaty of Paris (1814), Malta became a colony of the British Empire and the Palace was designed for the residence of the British Governor and his family, meaning substantial changes. In 1818 King George IV instituted the Order of St Michael and St George and consequently the Supreme Council Chamber was renamed after the new chivalrous order. The British refurbishment altered the previous structure distorting and sometimes destroying the Knights' traces. The d'Aleccio frescoes were "savagely butchered" and were only partially saved and restored in 1908 by Vincenzo Busuttil (Bonello, 2001).

The perception of the Palace in the nineteenth century was overshadowed by the sad oblivion of the Knights' heritage. The rooms were hung with portraits of Sovereigns and Princes, sent by the respective rulers and monarchs to Malta that the British did not care about (Freller, 2009). But even in a state of neglect, travellers were positively impressed by the architecture and collections, especially the Gobelins tapestries, the armoury in direct reference to the armour of Grand Master Aloph de Wignancourt (fig. 113), and the paintings by Cavalier d'Arpino, Caravaggio (fig. 114), Guido Reni, Jusepe de Ribera (Angas, 1842). In any case it was seen by some as a "large plain building, equal to any of the royal monasteries of England" (Galt, 1812). Other travellers paid more attention to the architecture of the island by trying to define a specific style and Flower stated "it may be noticed that mention has been made of the third element which contributes largely to the special peculiarities of Maltese architecture. Besides the ethnological and geological conditions, which in the

themselves make for an exceptional architectural development, there has been a political-religious influence of 'The Order' (Flower, 1897). In a certain sense Flower pinpointed a sort of chivalrous architectural style that in Malta is embodied in the making of the Magistral Palace, which can be considered as the Order's cultural and political project together with Conventual Church. Girolamo Cassar was also entrusted with the planning of the church and, as a military engineer, designed an architecture reflecting the soul of the Order (Freller, 2010). Built in the 1570s, the Church and its façade, with its sober character, mirrored the monastic spirit of the Hospitallers. Chapels were assigned to each *Langue* and, at its first stage, the Conventual Church was modestly decorated. During the magistracy of Alof de Wignacourt (1601-1622) the *Langues* were in charge to embellish their chapels and the Baroque style prevailed. Grandmasters and knights were also used to donate gifts and artworks made by leading artists that transformed the Conventual Church in its flamboyant and demonstrative character (Freller, 2010).

The later architecture is practically all of one character and

> "all the principal examples of it were made within a space of two hundred years, during the palmy days of the Order. To be more precise, it may be said that the great building era extends from the last quarter of the Sixteenth century to the first quarter of the Eighteenth. During this comparatively short period an extraordinary series of public works were carried out, on such a scale of magnitude and solidity as to give the impression that, however circumstances may alter and particular methods of use may be changed, Malta has been sumptuously endowed with buildings for almost every purpose to the end of time" (Flower, 1897).

5.2.6 The Palace and the square

As Theresa Vella has recently argued, the Palace was the very heart of the new city's social, political, and military centre. It came to be surrounded by the finest examples of Baroque architecture (Vella, 2008) and the square in front of it always drawn the attention of the rulers as an attraction point and a showcase of the city: from the column of Verdalle to the fountain of Wignancourt, from the British parade ground to the public games as the *giostra* and the *cuccagna*. The Palace and the square acquired the sense and the symbol of the citizenship, the sense of belonging, which makes that specific area of the city the core of all the public expressions (fig. 115).

As well in Rome and Naples, the making of the palace meant the reconfiguration of the city into a dynamic system of relations where the urban fabric is suddenly and permanently catalysed towards the renaissance city centre. In the case of Valletta the idea of building a new city and the morphology of the island led not only to the change of the political and religious core, but basically to a social and anthropological change. The philosophical assumption *Homo faber fortunae suae* seems to perfectly fit in the renovation expressing the intents of an ideal city designed according to the principles of classicism.

The plan made of perpendicular streets and perfect geometries make Valletta and the Palace an example of "historical acting of man" where the utopic theories of Hippodamus of Miletus, Pythagoras and Plato are translated into a strategic and military scheme (fig. 116). The same city scheme is retraceable in Naples in the Hippodamian plan of the ancient Roman city, but also in the military Spanish district built at the time of Viceroy Pedro de Toledo (who proposed the same planning) (fig. 117). In Rome it will be was adopted only after Unification to build new residential areas, because the city was not subject to attack from the sea (being far from the coastline) and probably did not need a military force as concentrated and organised as in Naples and Valletta.

The shaping of the urban space implicates, more than the design of the physical space of the city, participation in the political and administrative

processes related to urban transformation making more acute the "look" on the city and strengthening connections between aesthetics, knowledge and instances of the government. In any case, the Grandmasters Palace gets a distinctive feature that no other European noble palaces have, except the papal residences with the due differences. Namely it was not made for a couple or a family, but for a single man. The Palace was intended to be the residence of the current rulers and went hand in hand from one grand master to the other, while many different papal residences were built for many different popes. So, the Grandmasters Palace is a special kind of noble house that deeply experienced the passage of all the rulers from the 1570s onwards.

5.3 The Museum and the modern identity of the Grandmasters' Palace

5.3.1 The Palace Armoury

The Grand Master Palace reflects a complex architectural layout due to many changes during the different occupations. This complexity is evident also in its double museological soul: on the one hand, the Armoury and, on the other hand, the State Rooms. They also differ in terms of accessibility since the first one is regularly open to public, while the latter is open according to the presidential agenda.

The Armoury in the Grandmaster's Palace was established in 1604. It was not the first or only one established by the Order. Indeed, there were still various armouries throughout the villages till the end of the Knights in Malta, used mainly to supply the troops from each village. When the knights moved to Valletta, the armoury indeed was housed in a building in St George square, opposite the Palace. Because of lack of space, it was then moved inside the Palace, but other armouries were located in Valletta as well as in Birgu (Freller, 2010).

The Armoury on the Grandmaster's Palace was a noble armoury, supplying the troop of city, and keeping more decorative armours (fig. 118).

Usually after the death of a knight, the suit of his armour was left there to the Order and deposited inside the armoury. Indeed, Gran Master Wignancourt dedicated the largest room inside the Palace for the armoury, which was originally located on the first floor of the rear side of the Palace. Currently, what was used to be the armoury is split in smaller rooms for the use of the Parliament and "in a few years it could be restored and given back to the original purpose" (Cassar). The Armoury was moved to the ground floor in 1975 because of the new use and function of part of the State Rooms since the upper room were turned into the Chamber of Parliament of the Republic of Malta since 1976.

The armoury has been later transferred to the old stables in the 1990s and because of the size and shape of the rooms, the collection was divided into two main areas: the armours, on a side, and the weapons, on the other side. "Museologically and according to modern standard it is not the ideal way to present these items for the visitors. This display does not allow presenting a story, rather than a collection of objects and probably after the restoration to its former place this aspect could be better addressed" (Cassar).

5.3.2 The original display and use

Looking at drawings and photographs of the past it is possible to realize how the place went through many changes. The collection and the display, indeed, do not mirror the original function of the Armoury and even if it was not a museum, at the time of the Knights of St John, the Grandmasters were used to bring their guest to let them see such a vast collection of weapons in case there was the imminence of an attack or a war. It was a sort of security measure stored in there.

It was still very much used until the end of the sixteenth century. In the mid seventeenth century the armours became obsolete and the troops were no longer supplied with those kinds of protective combat attire, but the armoury was still functioning as a military storehouse for weapons: fire arms, pole arms, swords, etc. In this way it was still serving as an important armoury for the

supply of the troops. It is important to stress the fact that in the past all the items were being used, and the damaged objects were being removed from the collection, either to be thrown away or used to recycle the metal parts.

5.3.3 The British Governors' changes

During the British period, the Governor John Le Marchant (1858-1865) loved the history of the country. Previous governors as military were not that much interested in the past of Malta, their main concern was to keep the island safe against attacks. So, Governors Le Marchant and his successor Herny Knight Storks (1864-1867) established the armoury again at certain parameters: first of all the restoration of many objects and the manor of the time. By doing that, they removed also important information from armours and weapons what meant unfortunately the loss of a lot of information. In most cases, they just stocked and make them look like almost how one can see the different items nowadays. By removing all the dirt they also deleted part of the decoration, leather, textile attached to the armours, now one can just see the skeleton of what they were. In that way, in a certain sense, the Armoury has been saved up to today because there were requests to dismantle and take it to England. A lot of pieces were already taken overseas; the request was to take the whole armoury there in order for safekeeping. The British Governors "were the rightful owners of the Palace after the Grandmasters of the Order and that is why the Palace has remained the seat of power for so many years" (Cassar).

The Cathedral of St John represents a similar case. It was the main church of the Order, but the British Governors were not catholic. In the first half of the nineteenth century they were intended to turn the cathedral into a protestant church and this would have meant a drastic change to the local heritage. It was going to be changed, the governors did not pursue its purpose and still up to these days it is in function of the bishop of Malta and the ownership of the State. It is important to stress how all the sites that belonged to the Knights of St John continued to be owned by those that ruled the country at the time.

5.3.4 Educational issues

In the opinion of Robert Cassar, the curator of the Armoury, these passages and events are not well explained in the educational tools. Visitors can get this information if they have a tailored tour, and an audio-guide is also offered but does not tackle these aspects of the history of the Armoury. One of the next challenges for the Armoury curator is to "invest into interpretation, since nowadays museums have to contend with modern day technology, which change faster than exhibits". In the process undertaken by the museum some changes will be made also from this point of view, in order to renew and innovate communication tools to provide a wider interpretation and better engage audience.

Visitors can interact with curators though visitor books, where it is possible to take a lot of comments that are taken into a particular account to try to amend within the museum staff limits. The curator also takes notes of comments on Trip advisor.

Not always visitors can talk with the curator, but museum staff often addresses to him questions and curiosities, as most of them is not always well trained to give historical information. There is not that facility at the museum, but "ideally museum personnel is trained to answer certain questions even if the training is based on individual interest. Some take a lot of interest, but some works here do not tackle any historical queries even those simple things".

In terms of educational tools, the Armoury does not have many resources (fig. 119). Labels are old and need to be changed; the museum staff offers guided tours from the front desk free of charge. In the past they used to do educational activities for children, but there were problems with staff members, who were not always available. "We used to have an activity book that was given to each student; they can start using it in the rooms of the Armoury and then complete it with their teacher at school. But this has not been followed up". The educational activities are still been carried out by the National Museum of Fine Arts on behalf of Heritage Malta.

5.3.5 Educational activities

At the Armoury there is a meaningful problem that is space. There is not enough space for educational activities, however in November 2015 the museum hosted an interesting week of activities: a governmental initiative called *Zigozai*. In 2016 it was not replicated, as the Parliament required the closing of the Armoury for security reasons. This is also a sensitive facet and can represent a real problem for the museum's activities. The *Zigozai* project saw a class or two coming to the museum everyday for a week and each student chose a piece of the collection; then they had to draw it on a piece of paper, cut it up, and collage it and make their own knight. "It was interesting to realize how children observe and interpret the armours and their design also, because not many people look at the design of the items displayed in there".

No conferences or meetings are usually held in the Armoury to allow audiences to take part to the learning experience. The only occasion is an annual meeting of the Historical Sword-fighting Group; since 2012 the curator and the historical group have organized a three-day conference, during which the participants come to the Armoury only for a morning session that include a panel of key note speakers about a specific subject, and the tour of the collection. The latter is especially dedicated at the weapons handling section to feel the weight, the movement and it is an important learning experience for them. This group is very specialised in studying the old trainings and techniques of fencing and when one can relate to the real object it is a plus.

The lack of space is a significant problem. There are only two rooms full up with objects, in addiction to them the conservation laboratory and the curator office. It means that a lot of activities cannot be done and this is a pity; when the historical group meeting is organized it is held in the room upstairs in the Historical palace. Earlier there was another area behind the carriages at the entrance of the Armoury where children activities could be done, but now it is used to distribute the audio-guide. It was used to be the educational area, "but teachers did not attend that much the activities and something has to be given

away". The educational programmes were abandoned because of space; when the *Zigozai* project was held there, it closed off half of the Armoury and part of the collection was not visible. "Hopefully, the Renovation project of the Grandmaster's Palace will assign more space for these activities. Apart the main hall, according to the discussion made until now, there will be at least an exhibit room where educational for all public can be set up with interpretation, small or temporary exhibitions". As it is today, the space of the Armoury is not sufficient and limits the activities that the museum can have to offer more than occasional initiatives. Occasionally the arcades in the internal courtyards have been used as exhibition areas, but it also depends on weather.

5.3.6 Museum communication and staff

As regards communication, the Armoury is included in the Heritage Malta website where each museum is posted with a description and a few pictures. Then, a general email receives all queries addressed to the Armoury and the curator Robert Cassar is used to reply especially to historical queries that give a chance to manage and make new contacts, studying about specific items inside and outside the Armoury, and items housed in other museums. That allows establishing relationships with specialists and professionals around the world.

The curator is the only dedicated staff member at the Armoury, apart the custodians who do not fall under his responsibility. It means that he is in charge of all the aspects concerning the museum management and curatorship, from education to research work, opening access to students or scholars interested in studying objects in the Armoury, welcoming VIPs as well as school groups. The lack of personnel makes all simple activities complicated, since "only to open a case to get an item one needs at least two people to carry such heavy objects housed in the museum. Moreover, all the showcases are dated to the 1950s and they are historical in themselves and delicate". In the renovation project, some of showcases will be kept upstairs in the State Rooms, in order to keep the general aspect of the Armoury because, in the opinion of Robert Cassar, "this is not as any other museum. The object cannot be taken off from there and put into

new, high-tech showcases that would mean a completely different perception. Actually the objects fit quite well in the showcases and the latter are still well functioning because they keep dust out even thou they are very old; unfortunately one cannot say the same about humidity builds up inside and cannot come out". The renovation project will allow having a ventilation system in the cases to prevent this problem, especially in summertime.

5.3.7 Potentialities and uniqueness of the collection

So, from the establishment of the *Sala d'Armi* in the Palace as the main storehouse of the Order (fig. 120), the Armoury as a museum represents the history of the Knight of St John as a fighting institution (Spiteri, 1999). Unfortunately, very little information is given on the other arsenals of the Order and it is easy to figure out how impressive it should be when reading the seventeenth century inventories. Besides armours, helmets, corselets, and other kind of protections there were over 24.000 muskets, 19.000 pikes, 24.000 swords, 5.000 cuirasses, 500 bullet-proof breastplates in the large hall alone, together with another 6.000 muskets and 2.000 helmets in the smaller room (Spiteri, 1999). All that provided with their powder flasks and all garments required for every single knight and soldier. By reading these numbers it is easy to understand the importance of the armoury for a chivalrous order and consequently realise how refined and decorated some of the armours could be as symbols of their military power and supremacy (fig. 121).

5.4 The State Rooms

5.4.1 The Grandmasters' heritage

When speaking of the National collections one refers to the paintings, sculptures, and all the artefacts; they not only include the works that are on display at the Palace, but they also include the artefacts that are dispersed in all

government buildings - some of which function as ministries, as well as the Palaces: namely, San Anton (fig. 122), Verdala (fig. 123), and the Grandmasters' one in Valletta. So, the relevance of the National Museum of Fine Arts to the Palace is because the items are part of the National Collections, which by far falls under the responsibility of the curator of the National Museum of Fine Arts.

Bernardine Scicluna, curator of the State Rooms on behalf of Heritage Malta (government agency for cultural heritage) and based at the National Museum of Fine Arts, has been working since 2010 on the inventory of the Palace and the rigorous work is taking a lot of time in relation to the huge amount of items collected. Part of her responsibilities are conservation and research project, while her involvement in the Palace was a mainly supervision and overseen. When the State Rooms were open to the public, her involvement as curator was very little. In the complex of the Grandmaster's Palace, the area related to the State Rooms is the central courtyard with the statue of the Neptune and the building around it. Part of it is the Parliament, namely the House of the Representative, the Parliament Corridor and the main Corridor leading to the State Rooms; so the latter are accessible trough the Parliament and the Office of the President.

The other relevance, on the historical background, when the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts starting getting together it included works that used to be at the Grandmaster's Palace; and for a number of reasons going trough negotiation some of these works are now on display in different collection, but strictly speaking they are part of the National Museum of Fine Arts collection. This is another thread that links the two institutions (Grandmaster's Palace and Museum of Fine Arts).

When it comes to education programmes, finding, or creating effective outreach programme the real issues starts, since the State Rooms can be much more interesting and accessible in terms of information. In recent months, there was a serious interest in creating audio-visual guides for the State Rooms, Robert Cassar and Bernardine Scicluna were involved in providing texts respectively for the Armoury and the State Rooms. The latters at the moment

are very much lacking in terms of accessibility, not just the physical accessibility but the information one. Initially, some basic signs were made to invite audiences to not taking flash photography, not leaning on the wall, not smoking. Giovanni Bonello came out with many ideas that unfortunately have not been implemented. Moreover, in 2007 a decision was taken to transform the Palace into historic house museum and the Parliament had to move out. Until the new building for the Parliament is not completed this project cannot take place. "Once the House of Representatives with its affiliated offices are empty out, then the project will be completed. The proper museum and the Armoury will be set upstairs, and the room downstairs at the courtyard level will be turned into exhibition rooms. The corridor of the Prince of Wales where there is the chapel with the lovely frescoes by Paladini deserves to be opened to the public. It will give back coherence to the path that now is in pieces". The State Rooms, and most especially the corridors, are subject to change: the furniture will get moved, the paintings will be transferred, changing the stories. This idea went into a hard debate to decide if they have to be removed or not because so many changes have been made from 1798; however in these days, thanks to sufficient sensitivity and cultural maturity, movements will be taken to a minimum to save the integrity of the palace. The Palace was inhabited, it was a house on a grand scale, and it has to be uninhabited for administrative and functional reasons, but changes are about to happen which is part of the history of the Palace itself (fig.124).

5.4.2 Accessibility and educational tools

One of the recent efforts to make the Palace more accessible is the audio-visual guide that was focussed on information about the courtyard downstairs, and of course the area where audiences have access at the moment namely the Main Corridor where they are invited to stop and look at the artefacts and the building itself, and the State Rooms (the Tapestry Chamber, the Dining Room, the Grand Council Chamber, the Pages Room, and the Ambassadors' Room) with a bit of mention to the Prince of Wales corridor that cannot be physically

accessible but it is visible from there. The audio-visual guide makes an attempt to show how multi-layered the history of the Palace was. What one can see today is "the stratification like an archaeological site; for instance the British impact is visible on the marble flooring that 1900s and the guide aims to point out how in over five hundreds centuries of history and different functions and administrative visions have left their impact". The Regeneration project is trying to preserve the old history and, the other hand, select the artefact that are very happily on display or on reserve at St John's in Camden in London, where one has a good view of what was once the Palace.

In order to be effective the audio-visual guide has to be concise, the challenge is to give a background, general information and then focus. The main focuses were on the paintings as far as the State Rooms consents - excluding the Tapestry Chamber, considered as the highlight of the tapestry collection. The paintings were presented in contexts and the focus was basically on particular details imagining the visitor wondering about those ones. For instance, the portrait of Grandmaster Antonio Manoel de Vilhena (1722-1736) where he is seated getting the sword and the helmet, could give birth to a question because one cannot see that kind of helmet in other works. So, in the audio-visual guide is explained that "it represented a privilege that the Pope was used to give to the grandmaster and also, talking about Vilhena, visitor can know he was the one who opened the Manoel Theatre, that was the first public theatre in Malta". These little achievements are to connect different stories to say that Valletta is a UNESCO heritage site. The real focus is on context, so the paintings led back to the context explaining the circumstances that brought to that artwork. Part of the information is on a general perspective because the visitors are invited to stay and look around the State Rooms and - apart from having concise information one need - the texts take into consideration the time audience can devote to the visit. It is mainly directed to individuals that have time and like to enjoy the visit at the Palace.

The State Rooms in any case are part of a larger building and, from a museological point of view, it is difficult to treat them as a whole. The Rooms of Representative are not that interesting from an art point of view, and in a

certain sense the State Rooms have always been open to the public also during the time of the Order when it was shown off to the continental European aristocratic in visit to Malta.

5.4.3 Past and future regeneration projects

"With the Regeneration project probably even the private apartments of the Palace will be made accessible. They are small rooms, much smaller than the visible ones, but they are interesting in terms of new chapters told about the life of the Order when looking at the summer and winter apartments". In these terms there a direct connection with current history, considering that San Anton and Verdala Palaces are the summer and the winter residences of the President and Valletta is the office and administrative centre.

It is a complex situation and until the rooms of the house of representative are not vacuumed and the apartments are not open to the public, it will be difficult to have a whole vision of the Palace. "Moreover, in 2018 Valletta will be the European Capital of Culture and in that occasion a decision must be taken. The Palace needs to decide what his faith is going to be". Many changes will happen if one considers that the National Museum of Fine Arts will move to the Auberge d'Italie by 2018 and will modify its name into MUŻA project. Apart the implication with the muses and the acronym with the words museum and art, in the Maltese language the word 'muża' is also referred to inspiration and mood. So there are different layers of interpretation and it seemed to be the most appropriate word for the new museum. In 2018, again, the Co-cathedral of St John is going to build an extension so that the tapestries can be seen as one whole collection. Another project will interest the lower side of Valletta, the *Design Clusters Project*, so Fort St Elmo as well as all the surrounding areas will become prime sites.

5.4.4 The issues of temporary exhibitions

The Palace has also been the venue for exhibitions. In 2014 in occasion of the birth anniversary of Mattia Preti the State Dining Room and the Sala del Gran Consiglio were the two rooms that housed the exhibition put up by Heritage Malta and the National Museum of Fine Arts. Big exhibitions organised by other entities have been housed in the Palace - for example Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti – but in any case, when some of the State Rooms were used for this purpose, the dynamics of the place changed completely. A lesson was learned, because in 2011 there was an exhibition organised by FPM dedicated to the Maltese artist Edouard Caruana Dingli and this exhibition had used the State Dining Room and the Sala del Consiglio that are interconnecting and the opening of the first one is at the corner of the two corridors where visitor can come both from the spiral staircase or from the Parliament. Usually, visitors enter the State Dining room and then go to the Sala del Gran Consiglio and come out from the latter's second door. When the exhibition was on, the Ambassadors Room and the Pages Room were not touched for the simple reason that these are two crucial rooms for the office of the President because it is where he receives the credentials from new ambassadors or private meetings. In the Tapestry Chamber music concerts, book launches and lectures were hosted as well as in the Sala del gran Consiglio and the Dining Room with a selected audience.

When there was the exhibition of Caruana Dingli a lot of the comments stated the high quality of the artworks, but also reported that one cannot realise to be into the Palace. "Visitors to the exhibition could enter the Palace from the spiral staircase that was a great experience in itself (unfortunately it is not permitted in the regular visitors' route) but, on the other hand, the perception of the State Rooms was altered because of the display". Audience reported that "the only moments when one remembered to be in the Grandmasters' Palace was when one enters or exits the site, during the exhibition itself one focusses on it and has absolutely no attachment or connection with the context". This aspect was taken into account when the Mattia Preti exhibition was held in

2014. The point of the display was that the context of the Palace would not be eclipsed for the following reasons: remind the visitors that the exhibition is taking place within the presidential palace, but the contents of the presidential palace should not distract from the exhibition.

The exhibition, which started in the State Dining Room, had to have all its painting and furniture removed; fortunately the Sala del Gran Consiglio has no furniture. "There were visitors anyway looking at the frescoes. The focus was on the exhibition but to feel that you are in the presidential palace". Another reason is referred to the fact that Mattia Preti was a knight and the Grandmaster Palace was built by the Order of St John, there had to be that kind of respect of the historicity of the venue and the latter became an important historical context for the exhibition. FPM in a certain sense had no reason to link Caruana Dingli to the Palace, but on the other hand the choice of the venue of the Palace was to give the exhibition prestige.

5.4.5 The Palace as a whole

The Palace needs to be properly put on the cultural heritage map because it has suffered a lot of intricacies and complexities. Visitors generally visiting the State Rooms are astonished that a little island like Malta has such a palace, the main criticism is lack of information, and they want to know more. Despite the use of more panels, the audio-visual guide is the first step. Moreover, the Palace needs a resident curator and a team of people run show from visitor access point of view, conservation, preventive conservation, when talking about so many works, different composite materials as the tapestries, frescoes, and so on. During *Notte Bianca* (the annual event with overnight spectacles and performances taking place in October), the Palace is open to the public and there is usually a big crowd of visitors, the Nettuno courtyard is used for music concert and ballet. Moreover, once the Pinto clock will be restored it will become an attraction again. Possibly when the Palace will be treated as a whole, also educational activities could be run properly. At the time of the "Mattia Preti exhibition, activities were conducted in the courtyard also thanks to the season

when it was held" (May and June). The project is trying to maximise the space that can be available and not only in the way of the day scheduled according to the presidential agenda. Actually "the State Rooms are closed once on a weekly basis when the President accepts Diplomatic and other official credentials, and sometimes also unexpectedly for meetings or last minute events". This aspect does affect negatively the activities and the initiatives to be held there; maybe for this reason guest-books report very little information, as if the route along the State Rooms was not part of the Palace experience. In fact, the Grandmasters Palace is not seen as a museum, both in the perspective of locals and tourists. It is still closely tied to the idea of the presidential site and more effective actions to increase its knowledge should be done also in connection with the nearby Co-cathedral of St John (fig. 125), which instead is seen as one of the major cultural and art attraction of Valletta and Malta.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 The perception of a common heritage

In this study, I have tried to retrace the elements composing the identity of a museum, particularly when it is housed in a historical palace. Three macro-areas have determined the course of the research, considering the following variables: the interplay between art and politics; the definition of an urban and a geographical area; and the shift of a place into a cultural institution.

The case studies presented have also shown how the historical events they experienced were part of a common heritage. The *ante quem* was fixed at the year 1798 since all over Europe it marked a delicate period in terms of political and social change. The ascent of General Bonaparte brought turmoil that affected Rome, Naples, and Malta in equal measure with consequences still visible today. Probably, if he had not designated the three Palaces as residences for his direct delegates and representatives, the following rulers might have opted for another solution. The three cities are splendidly dotted with many aristocratic palaces and the Quirinale, the Palazzo Reale and the Grandmaster's Palace are not the only ones that could have represented the centre of power. The choice of these three palaces by Bonaparte aimed, on the one hand, to wipe out the recently removed sovereigns as a kind of modern *damnatio memoriae*; on the other hand, it gave rise to the perception of those palaces as the true and only iconic places linked to political power. It was the sense of rivalry towards him that marked in a profound way the need to re-establish some visible traces of the past in the aftermath of the Council of Vienna.

This sentiment also led to the complete redesign of spaces, halls, and furniture to give a new and tailored appeal to the rulers who followed. The way the King of Naples refurbish the Palazzo Reale and the surroundings is paradigmatic of this phenomenon. He embellished the Palace with new paintings as evidence of his absolute right to be king and remain in the Palace. The portrait of Charles I of Bourbon by Camuccini represents exactly that, emphasising the role of the King and his legacy on the city of Naples. When the museum has been open to the public, the portrait has been displayed in the Hall of the Throne recreating part of the story and bringing Charles I back to the

place where he was remembered as the King of the Two Sicilies. Moreover, in the painting the King is pointing at the square and the new church in front of the Palazzo Reale, symbolising his divine investiture. If Bonaparte had not temporarily dismantled Charles III's kingdom, the latter would not have commissioned the church of St Antonio di Paola, and many structural changes in the palace, transforming it into the new royal residence, would not have been made.

General Bonaparte represented an epochal turning point in the perception of the palaces described in this research, because he directed the spotlight of history onto them, transforming their identity, and further strengthening the links to the places and symbolisms that they have subsequently cultivated. This aspect is closely tied to the first macro-area related to the connection between art and politics as two poles of a complex and enduring relationship that has shaped cities, palaces, and museums.

6.2 Art and politics

Since the birth of Western thought, the relationship between art and politics has been contradictory as well as conflicting. Plato in the *Republic,* describing the three great classes in which the ideal state would have been subdivided (guardians/philosophers, soldiers, and craftsmen/workers), finds no place for poets, who therefore are excluded from the political sphere. This exclusion appears to be the intuition of a peculiarity of art in relation to politics and the irreducibility of art to politics (Guerri, 2015). However, every aesthetic experience is political, as a "germ of a new humanity, of a new form of individual and collective life" (Rancière, 2004). According to Rancière, politics does not simply mean the administration of public affairs, but rather the "configuration of a specific space, the allocation of a particular sphere of experience". Art is politics, not so much for the feelings and messages it transmits, but for the "kind of time and space it establishes, in the way it cuts this time and populates this space" (Rancière, 2004).

So, when Pope Sixtus V devised a great urban renewal plan for the city of Rome he was also planning his great legacy. The area of Santa Maria Maggiore was redesigned opening six new roads that changed the idea of the district and its dynamics (fig. 126). The Pope created a new route that, crossing the three hills of the Rione Monti, connected Trinità dei Monti with the basilicas of San Giovanni in Laterano and the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. The path of the Via Sistina - named after the Pope - passes the Quattro Fontane at the Quirinale, the Viminale, Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Esquiline, to the Lateran Palace, and is marked by great Egyptian obelisks, erected by the papal architect Domenico Fontana. Finally, Sixtus V laid the foundations for the urban development of Rome beyond the neighbourhoods bordering the Tiber. He integrated Borgo (until that time autonomous) as the fourteenth district of the city. The roads built within the Aurelian walls dictated the course of development over the following three centuries.

Also in Malta, the making of the *Città Nuova* brought meaningful change in the interests of, and the political balance between, the Knights and the Maltese people. The coming of architects, artists, and craftsmen from the kingdoms of Rome and Naples marked an evolution in the sensibility of the locals with regard to art. An example is the architect Girolamo Cassar who was an assistant of Laparelli before taking over the project of the construction of Valletta. His name is linked to the Co-Cathedral of St John, to the Magistral palace, and to some of the *auberges*, and his artistic mastery was deeply influenced by the political decisions made during this period. Eventually, politics positively conditioned his time and his space, allowing him to meet prominent engineers and artists that otherwise would not have come to the island.

6.3 The policy of *Grand Travaux* in France

One might be mistaken in thinking that the correlation between art and politics refers exclusively to the past. Again France and Paris make it possible to observe how the *grands travaux* politics is so powerful in the collective

imagination that it can shape the identity of a place. For example, President Mitterand started the most impressive civil engineering plan since Hausmann had changed the city's urbanization in the 1870s. He wanted to leave a personal mark, promoting the Opéra Bastille, the National Library, the Défence district, and affecting the most iconic building in France: the Louvre. To achieve his ambitious project, Mitterand created a special government agency named EGPL (*Etablissement Public du Grand Louvre*). The architect I.M. Pei was assigned the project and he proposed the erection of a glass pyramid in the centre of the *Cour Napoléon*. This triggered debates about a contemporary construction being introduced into a historical location, since the Louvre was not merely the most important museum in France, but also the setting where some of the most crucial events in the French history had occurred. In a single part of the Louvre, the collection, the period furniture, and the ancient royal apartments often converge. The result is a grand stratification of historical references and reminiscences of past and present in a museum. Rarely is a place so overburdened with national symbolism and institutional significance (Schubert, 2009).

Mitterand followed the example of President Pompidou who decided on the creation of a multidisciplinary centre in the area of the Plateau Beaubourg. On the museological side, the Centre Pompidou is clear sign of cultural change and new art politics. This centre generated a sort of *effet Beauborg* (Baudillard, 1977) where the museum as an institution is radically transformed. It is essentially seen and experienced as a place of reflection and also of debate on societal changes and issues (Zuliani, 2009), no longer a place of aesthetics and enjoyment.

6.4 Art, Politics and Identity in the twenty-first century

it is thus evident that also today the relationship between art, politics and identity is present in the international agenda as "many communities striving for statehood in the past have used cultural heritage as a means to promote a distinctive national identity (Norway under Swedish dominion in the mid- to

late nineteenth century is one example), and today states where politically active minorities exist fear that those minorities will use their distinctive intangible heritage as a means to increase their political appeal internally and internationally, with the ultimate goal of forcing the state into agreements on autonomy, or even creating the conditions for secession" see the UNESCO Convention on safeguard of the intangible heritage (Lixinski, 2011). Heritage can be a driving force to get a community unite or to stress its diversities. Within this sensible boundary the work of museums and cultural institutions is increasingly necessary to highlight a common strategy and learn how to understand and combine memories and identities that are forcibly perceived in different ways, even if rising from the same experience. Actually, one of the most dangerous kinds of boundary is the social one; a sociological exclusion (Augé, 2006) that can be associated both with the relation between cities and their suburban areas, and with the common language. According to Marc Augé the meaning of exclusion is to be referred also to what he defines as *spatial language*. It is a kind of language that no longer uses the concepts of particular and general as if they were tied to an archaic world. The past is not seen as a source for improving today; and does not provide the present with new perspectives. As a result, language is only concentrated in a present space (therefore spatial language) and not in a diachronic path.

Following this idea "the manifestation of heritage […] must be described by reference to its significant features at the present, also including the discussion of the social and cultural functions played by it. The history of the element is not a required element. The free, prior, and informed consent of the communities, groups, or individuals must also be secured and proven, in the same fashion as the consent for inscription in the urgent list" (Lixinski, 2011). Some doubts arise in considering this concept as if past, present, and future were not linked and part of the same process. Focusing only on the present identity would represent a loss of sense and meaning; as well as the radical concentration within certain boundaries that do not offer a basis for productive debate. Indeed, especially in the case of intangible heritage, the connections beyond the community boundaries have meant a rediscovery of personal and

community identity. One of the most prominent cases is the Argentinean Tango in which communities felt pride in their heritage only after its exposure to the 'outside world', where it was well-received and praised. In this sense, "heritage loses its territorial identity, loosens its material ties in order to survive" (Lixinski, 2011).

It is evident how the relationship between art, politics, and identity is sometimes extremely difficult, but it is crucial in any case. The proper balance between personal ambition and community benefit represents its thorniest side, and pinpoints the basis for comparison between social and spatial relations. When art is considered in relation to urban layout it is often in terms of works designed to enhance public spaces aesthetically, and more generally of products and practices that are part of the cultural strategies of urban redevelopment and 'regeneration'. Such public art has gained an important economic, social and cultural status and has attracted considerable discussion and debate. Some of this has been critical, continuing the selective practices often favored in such work, as well as the particular social interests served. As Malcolm Miles comments, "much of what has been published in urban studies, cultural and urban geographies, and cultural policy emphasizes the role of cultural institutions in urban regeneration while ignoring more radical forms of practice that irritate those institutional structures" (2004). In referring to intervening in cities, the focus is usually on such practice as has developed in recent years alongside, and at times in dialogue with, critical urban theory and that has also been associated with other terms that include 'critical spatial practice' (Rendell, 2006), or what has been termed 'arts of urban exploration' (Pinder, 2005).

As Pinder stated, these terms have their own histories and geographies, but most of the practices that are critical and politicized in relation to dominant power relations and their spatial constitution, that are involved in but frequently disrupt everyday urban life, that make use of artistic and creative means to question and explore social problems and conflicts without necessarily prescribing solutions, and that resist the processes through which urban spaces are currently produced in the interests of capital and the state as they seek out and encourage more democratic alternatives (Pinder, 2005).

The relationship between the urban spaces and the palaces has already deepened, and it is interesting to note how this influence can also affect other aspects of social and cultural life. For instance, the implications on a theory about identity arising from this research can easily be employed in other fields, not only with regard to museums. As Assmann argued, identity is composed of many different factors and symbolic forms give it shape over time (Assmann, 1995); we can also add the dimension of space to the dimension of time as a further element that helps in the making of identity. Time and space are subject to change and indeed in this research I have tried to explain how identity is not fixed in a static structure, but rather it is constantly evolving and using memory (the past) to rebuild itself (the future). This concept could be extended to national identities where people are moving in a changing world and cultures are mixing and melting into each other. Cultural identity is intrinsically made of constructed of cultural memory and museums can once again be a pole of research, education, and social inclusion.

6.5 Historical palaces as places of cultural identity

Museums can easily be seen as living structures that grow together with their community. Their living structure is made up of two main elements that compose the idea of museum in itself: memory and identity. Memory is embodied in the collection, the artefacts or objects (whatever their nature: archaeology, art, science, ethnography, or other tangible and intangible human creation) telling stories about the past, the ways of living, the tastes, the interests, and the development of mankind. On the other hand, identity is embodied both in the display and in the interpretation of these same objects. The museum display is a way to select, give prominence to, and propose a possible interpretation. This interpretation is the result of modern theoretical frameworks that follow a specific path capable of analysing and summarising an enormous amount of information. What the interpretation sometimes does not declare is the partiality of its message. Every interpretation is the sum of different theories that inevitably exclude others to give evidence and sustain

their outcomes. What is needed more and more in museum interpretation and mediation is the declaration that each single explanation is one of the many possible aspects composing the identity of a specific object in modern society.

As a result, if memory is looking backwards and identity is building brick after brick looking forwards, the museum can be seen like a statue of the Roman god Janus, a double-faced creature with his two faces melded together with the eyes directed in opposite directions. Even if the gazes are directed elsewhere, the head is a single one, a unique, uniform structure. In these terms, the museum could be able to preserve its past and display it providing different forms of mediation, and also build tools to face the future. Somehow, memory is the only weapon against disaffection and oblivion, and the museum can achieve a strategic function in modern societies, offering a sufficiently broad knowledge that enhances and develops a stronger identity.

If memory and identity are so closely linked from a sociological perspective, a theory that can link these two elements to a museum needs to combine two opposite and complementary forces. Moreover, the museum identity theory is composed of many other different elements enriching its composition. Relevant aspects to be considered are historical, cultural, ethnographic, anthropological, urban, social, and environmental, much like the tiles of a complex mosaic. As argued in the case studies presented in this work, all these elements have contributed to designing the modern identity of a palace and its collection. The relationship with the city and the square is fundamental to the imagery of the palace and the memory of it has been melded with the social events, the landscape, and the idea that travellers and visitors have matured during their museum experience.

6.6 Identity elements: codes and concepts

All museums are different and need a tailored approach to understand their constitutive role and meaning in the community where they were created. In the case studies presented, a set of concepts has been defined as similarities that have linked their evolution and allow codes to be set up for interpretation.

The position of the palaces in a specific area of the city was crucial, especially where a large square was creating a sort of proscenium. Squares are symbolic spaces: they acquire an iconic value being transformed - due to historical events - not only into social spaces, but specifically into political spaces. Walking in the square, people do not see the inside, but only the outside of the building as the seat of a symbolic power. They became popular backdrops for political events and the way to present the shape of power. Parades, talks, processions, and ceremonies took place in the square by the institutional palaces since they represented the symbolic space in relation to power (Cohen, 1979). They embody the *genius loci* since they can be seen as a bridge between the 'built' and the 'imaginary' (Heidegger, 1976). The *genius loci* is a Roman concept revealing how every single person gets his or her own *genius*, the guardian spirit. This spirit gives birth to people and places, accompanies them from the beginning to the end of life, and determines their soul and essence (Norberg-Schulz, 2011). According to Heidegger, the concept referred essentially to the builder or architect, but over the centuries a palace also influences the collective imagination as a result of the stories and the *aura* that shape its perception. The structure of a place, indeed, does not have an unmovable or permanent condition. Places usually do change, and sometimes also very quickly, this does not mean that the *genius loci* is lost or modified; the making of the identity of a place takes a long time and the stratification of architectural elements is needed to keep the essence of a place in always-new contexts (Norberg-Schulz, 2011). At urban level, ancient Romans visualised spatial organisation through the intersection of two roads (*cardo* and *decumanus*) that shaped newly founded cities in the past and was still used in the Renaissance age. Looking first at the urban layout of Naples and Valletta, the layout following the ideal order, along parallel and perpendicular axes (figg. 127, 128), can easily be seen. In the case of Rome however, the urban layout does not follow this scheme, if not in apart from in individual areas, such as the Forum or the Baths; the city does not respond to a specific geometric criterion. Its *genius loci* does not reside in geometrical abstractions since its monuments were not conceived as single elements, but as a whole (Guidoni, 1972).

As Norberg-Schulz stated in his work on *genius loci*, some specific elements characterise the formal structure. They are not tangible and need a symbolic language that refers to their style; in this perspective, Greeks made the crucial movement towards a formal language of architecture. They gave a definition to natural sites as if the latter had human characteristics; consecrating a particular place to a specific divinity was the first step in the process. The decisive step was the construction of a temple, the symbolic structure that gives a physical presence to a symbolic entity.

Temples in ancient times, as well as the palaces in this research, are not isolated elements in the city, but constitute a set of relationships that involve the city, the palace, the surrounding areas such as squares and other buildings, decorations, and all those elements that merge into the general idea of *auctoritas* and the making of meaning. As a result of this, one can identify five main codes defined by concepts explaining the identity of a monumental palace:

6.6.1 Urban layout

The location in a specific area of the city and the way the city has been shaped around the palace. It was very evident in the urban development of Naples (fig. 129) and Rome (fig. 130), where the palaces meant the re-definition of urban axis and the making of new districts, moving the social and economic interests from one side of the city to the other. In Valletta, the peculiar orography, suggests the location of the Palace on the top of the hill in the very centre of the city (fig. 131), symbolising the core of all activities and the pole of attraction for residents and visitors. The relationship between the palace and its surroundings is the premise to the symbolic relationship with the urban space and it emphasises the political and social functions it fulfils in the collective imagination.

6.6.2 Public space

The Palaces acquire an element of connection with the external world: the main balcony on the façade. The balcony is a kind of diaphragm between the inside and the outside representing the symbolic passage where the rulers had direct contact with the crowd (fig. 132). The balcony represents the frame and the stage where the rulers play their public role having a dialogue, or more accurately, making a speech addressed to their subjects (fig. 133). So, the balcony is the opening towards the square, meant as an attraction point of attraction and a showcase of the city. The square gives the sense and the meaning of a regal supremacy and the large squares in front of the palaces just introduce the sense of *auctoritas* that the palaces embody. The public space that the balcony and the square represent are therefore the illusion of participation in the political life of common people (fig. 134). For this reason, it is crucial to give them a formal and symbolic form that can perfectly demonstrate the supremacy on the one hand, and the clemency of the rulers on the other, to find a good balance between the public and private life.

6.6.3 Private space

The interiors of the Palaces are now accessible to the general audience public, and it is also possible to enjoy walking along corridors and halls entirely decorated with tapestries, vases, frescoes, furniture, and décor of many different provenances and typologies. The private spaces reflect the need to impress, and the usual choice of décor in royal palaces of this kind is tapestry. In fact, in the three Palaces a large collection of silk tapestries represents a symbol of wealth and testifies to the interesting taste of the time for exotic scenes as in the sets displayed in the Grandmaster's Palace and the Quirinale. In Naples, however, the tapestry collection recalls the local tradition in

comparison with other tapestries of French manufacture. As regards furniture, the presence of items coming from foreign countries signified political and diplomatic relationships, and at the same time evoked a sense of reverence for those who were allowed to stay there. Furthermore, frescoes and furniture tell captivating stories about the historical events that happened inside the palace or in the city as the cases of the Peres d'Aleccio frieze in the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta, the Savoy symbols covering the papal coats of arms in the Quirinale Palace in Rome, or the Empire style office furniture from the Murat period in the Palazzo Reale in Naples.

6.6.4 Decorative symbols of power

Decorations reflecting the power of commands are usually put outside the palaces. The flags and the many plaques on the facades were a visual representation of power, showing the main historical events that have proclaimed that place as unique in the urban space (fig. 135). Plaques represent a concise tale about the people who lived or acted there and mark the place with a specific *aura*. They also keep those people alive in the memory of residents and visitors, designing the historical sequence of events that made the location so meaningful (fig. 136). In the case of the Palazzo Reale in Naples, the statues of all the kings who ruled and founded a dynasty also represent a clear political message of how a narrative of inclusion or exclusion could re-write history and its interpretation. Indeed, the Bourbon kings were intentionally excluded to allow the Savoy dynasty highlight their role in Southern Italy (fig. 137).

6.6.5 Connection to communication roads

The location of the Palaces by the sea or a river gave them an important role also in the perception of the dialogue with the external

world. The harbours (namely Lascaris in Valletta, Beverello in Naples, Ripetta by the river Tiber in Rome) open the boundaries of the palaces and their politics to the Mediterranean Sea, expanding the power of the city. The possibility of surmounting the boundaries is crucial for improving the reputation of the rulers and gives them direct access to innovations and exotic items. So far, the openness to the external world is once again a way to reinforce the idea of power of command.

6.7 Macro areas of analysis

Ultimately, the Palaces have been playing a double institutional role, both on the political and the cultural side. The five codes and the concepts previously identified can subsequently be organised into three macro areas that lead to the modern perception of the palaces as institutional places and museums at the same time:

6.7.1 Architecture and urbanism

The repositioning of the cultural, social and economic interests in the wake of the creation of the Palaces meant the reconfiguration of the city in a dynamic way. In Malta the creation of Valletta moved the political and religious centre from Mdina and Birgu when the Knights of St John left the damaged *auberges* to go to the *Città Nova* and later the French moved the capital to Valletta. Also, in Naples the construction of the Palazzo Reale and the Church of San Francesco di Paola represents a monument celebrating the 'lay' form of religion. A connection between the palace and the church is created by the square with its equestrian statues, linking the sacred place to the location of the royal power. The Quirinale Palace moves the temporal power of the pope from the Vatican to the city

centre. This change also modifies the development of the city, the roads, and commerce, designing an entire new district around the palace.

6.7.2 Socio-politics

From the Napoleonic period onwards the role and the function of the three Palaces started changing and the idea of museum was slowly defined leading to their modern perception. The issue is whether there has been continuity or recovery of the past. The Palaces kept their allure as identity places and it was the reaction against Napoleonic politics that firmly determined the way they were experienced and transformed. Subsequent rulers in Rome, Naples, and Malta contributed to the making of a 'social identity' embodied in the three Palaces. The identification of legitimate power had to pass through the residence in these Palaces to mark the passage and ratify a change in status, from the past to the present: from Napoleon and his idea of the Empire to the established power after the Treaty of Vienna. More than the meaning of the palaces themselves, it was fundamental to reconstruct a collective and social identity, stress the *genius loci* to gain the favour of the people. Linking the idea of power to an iconic place in the city allowed the definition of a historical memory that has lasted until today. As has already been noted, this decision led to anthropological and urban changes since the cities modified their layout according to the presence of the palaces in their specific locations.

6.7.3 Museology

By considering the French Revolution as the period when the concept of heritage was first considered and the idea of a permanent collection opened to the public was achieved, the years focussed on in this research marked two crucial moments also from a museological point of view. The years 1798 and 1919 are decisive moments in the perception of the Palaces also as places of culture. When General Bonaparte passed from Italy via Malta en route to Egypt, the ideas of the revolution travelled with him and even if the impact was short in time (just a few months) it had a deep resonance. It was thanks to the safeguarding of monuments and the definition of cultural heritage in France that the concept of the museum took shape and has been the way to protect, display, and study different cultures and historical periods through their artefacts (fig. 138). The nineteenth century was a time of national museums that contributed to the definition of a common identity and memory. The First World War marked a meaningful period in the perception of monuments and museums, since they were the witnesses of the past and present glory. As a result, keeping and restoring a museum meant the restoration of the national identity and the recovery of the collective memory. In the aftermath of the Great War the Palaces experienced a new phase of their life and entered the process of being turned into proper museums, a process that was concluded in the second half of the twentieth century.

These codes and concepts are helpful for designing a museum theory that starts with the in-depth acquaintance of the narratives to describe the characteristics that a place should present to be seen as an identity place.

6.8 The Museum DNA Theory

Museums can be conceived as living structures where dependent and independent variables shape their identity. Primarily, if one considers the internationally accepted definition of ICOM, one can find the dependent variables: the openness to the public, the permanent collection, the research, preservation, purchase, and exhibition of tangible and intangible heritage, the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. All these elements comprise the dependent variables that have to be present for an institute to be socially and culturally recognised as a museum. If one of these variables is missing, the definition as a museum can fail and the idea itself changes in favour of a different kind of institute, for instance a centre for the arts or a cultural centre. That is to say that a museum has to respond to specific criteria to be identified as such. The independent variables, instead, denote the museum's specificity and uniqueness. These kinds of variables provide identity elements capable of characterising a museum and giving it a special *allure*. The independent variables change according to the social system, the cultural milieu, the geographical location, and also to historical events that mark a place in a lasting and deep way. These elements are constantly developing and offer the opportunity to investigate and rethink a museum over and over again. Current events necessarily affect a museum agenda if the museum proposes itself as a place of dialogue and discussion. For instance, many museums are devoting themselves to debates about refugees or climate change, because these are today the most sensitive topics that involve all the cultures in the world. These topics are part of the contemporaneity, and museums also perform a social role. In a recent conference dedicated to difficult stories told at the museum (ICOM Nord, 2017), many speakers argued about the different perception of history and social problems one has. Karen Logan, project curator at the National Museums of Northern Ireland, best summed up the spirit and the feeling that most curators and museums experts experience: "we share the same history, but we don't share the same memory". Again, personal experiences based on the independent variables can mark one's perception of past events affecting not only identity, but also memory.

As already stated, memory and identity are closely tied in a mutual exchange of information and influences. They represent the two main elements of the museum structure, in constant evolution and change, being its vital poles. While memory looks backwards, to the past, collecting all necessary information to constitute the historical base of the museum, identity is looking forwards, enriching itself with brand-new elements. As a living structure that extends its extremities in two opposite directions, and having many different intersections, the image that better matches this idea is the DNA double helix.

6.8.1 Watson's DNA Theory

In molecular biology, the double helix refers to the structure formed by double-stranded molecules where the double helical structure arises as a consequence of its secondary structure, and is fundamental to determining its tertiary structure. James Watson, one of the two scientists who discovered the structure of DNA, published the story of this pivotal study that reveals how "DNA would have to provide the key to enable us to find out how the genes determined, among other characteristics, the color of our hair, our eyes, most likely our comparative intelligence, and maybe even our potential to amuse others" (Watson, 1968, 8). DNA is then the way to deepen the acquaintance and the comprehension of particular elements that, in the museum field, are comparable to the specificity of a human being.

Giving these data, the museum identity theory can be drawn on the basis of the DNA strand theory, where memory and identity represent the two strands of DNA heading in opposite directions: forwards (identity) and backwards (memory). The other components typifying molecules interconnected between identity and memory can be traced in the common elements that came to light in the case studies. In fact, the following independent variables were all part of the making of these three palaces, providing them with a unique, but transforming personality.

The description Watson gave of the single phases of the discovery can add another interesting element to the identification of the other independent variables:

"a further complication arose from the fact that four types of nucleotides were found in DNA. In this sense, DNA was not a regular molecule but a highly irregular one. The four nucleotides were not, however, completely different, for each contained the same sugar and phosphate components. Their uniqueness lay in their nitrogenous bases, which were either a purine (adenine and guanine) or a pyrimidine (cytosine and thymine). But since the linkages between the nucleotides involved only the phosphate and sugar groups, our assumption that the same type of chemical bond linked all the nucleotides together was not affected. So in building models we would postulate that the sugar phosphate backbone was very regular, and the order of bases of necessity very irregular" (Watson, 1968, 19).

6.8.2 Internal and external elements of Museum Identity

Paraphrasing this description, one can say that all the components have a common base, but some of them are regular and some, instead, are irregular. The backbone is cultural history intended as "an example of a cultural tradition in perpetual transformation, constantly adapted to new circumstances" (Burke, 2008). Cultural history is the palimpsest where the "irregular" or constantly changing elements move and shape the modern identity of a museum. The specific elements, like the proteins of human DNA, can be identified in history, ethnography, anthropology, tradition, urbanism, geography, symbolism, and politics.

The peculiarity of museum DNA lies in the combined presence of elements that shape it both internally and externally. The first four elements - history, ethnography, anthropology, and tradition - are internal factors, while urbanism, geography, symbolism, and politics are external ones. An internal factor is affecting the DNA in a deeper way and is part of its core structure.

History, for instance, is the basis on which to build all possible narratives in a museum and provides information enabling the advancement of knowledge and critical thinking. Ethnography describes the roots of a community and the meaning of its belonging to a certain place and a certain culture. It helps with forming a profound connection with traditions that are the intangible laws whereby a community recognise itself and establishes relationship of brotherhood. Anthropology gives an overall perspective of past and present societies focusing on some specific aspects such as norms, values, and language. These elements compose the inner structure that it in a certain sense inherits and, even in constant change and evolution, assumes the traits of the most significant characteristics of a museum, its collection.

The external elements contribute to the shaping of the museum identity from a different perspective. They cannot be directly tied to the collection, but at the same time have a deep influence on it. So, urbanism is an important element for understanding the social and political forces that throughout the centuries have influenced the status a museum acquires within a city. It has been clear in the three case studies how their presence in those specific locations influenced the shape of the cities. The same can be said for the grand museums that have regenerated industrial or unpopular districts as in the case of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the MAXXI in Rome and so on. Urbanism arises with a two-way dialogue influencing the city during its evolution (as in the case of the Quirinale Palace and Palazzo Reale in Naples) or becoming the cornerstone of a new urban layout (as in the case of the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta). In either case it does not affect the collection directly, but the perception that travellers or visitors have had of looking at the museum from the outside. In these terms, geography also plays a pivotal role in the perception of a museum, depending on the surroundings and the morphology of the place. Geography also affects the way one relates within a given space; it connects the physical and cultural world, and one's personal attitude to visiting new places and new countries can change one's perspective when experiencing a museum and making comparisons between what is already known and what is going to be experienced. Again, it is related more to

audience perception rather than to the collection itself. Symbolism can help in representing ideas and qualities creating a set or a system of symbols capable of articulating emotions and states of mind. It provides an interpretational key to enter new cultures and new experiences at the museum, so symbolism can be the way to explain something that is distant both historically and geographically. Talking about ancient mythology, and the meanings of the symbols linked to a god is also a way to discuss some traditions still present in modern society. An example is the caduceus, the herald's wand with two serpents twined around it and carried by Hermes, the messenger of the gods. This symbol is often confused with the single serpent rod of Asclepius, a deity associated with healing and medicine, which has led to the use of the caduceus as the symbol of modern healthcare organisation. So, symbolism from the past can relate to modern times again in the perspective of a better understanding for audiences. Finally, politics and the relationship between art and politics are useful to illuminate the reasoning and presence of a certain collection in a certain museum, always in the direction of a clear and useful message for audiences. Most museums are the result of 'theft' where the collection was not intended as part of its decoration. Even in the case of house museums some of the furniture might not be original but come from other sites, as in the case of the Quirinale Palace. All museums are the result of a complex, difficult, sometimes controversial process leading to the making of a collection that cannot have any direct connection with the city and its community. If one considers the grand museums, from the Louvre to the British Museum, from the Vatican to the Prado, they house collections mainly coming from other countries and other cultures. They are collectors of non-indigenous cultures, but offer a way to experience how colonial politics and nineteenth century regulations (namely the closure of monastic orders due to Napoleonic directives) have shaped their perception and have had a deep impact on their interpretation.

6.8.3 Collections and Audiences

As a result of that, some elements are referred to the collection and some others to the audience that ultimately are the two main poles composing a museum. In the definition of a museum actually these two parts are conceived as equal poles of attention and interest. A museum cannot exist without its permanent collection, or without its audience, and the right balance between conservation and educational requirements is not always easy to find. On the one side, preservation and restoration are essentials to conservation and require specific methods and timing of work; on the other side, educational activities and audience engagement are vital to making the museum talk and build a sense of community and belonging.

The museum identity theory is based on these two main components: collection and audience that in turn identify themselves as the memory and the identity of the museum, where the first is looking backwards and is more focused on the collection and its making; while the latter is more focused on the way to communicate the museum meanings in a proper way and engage the audience to allow them to feel part of the museum. Identity is constantly changing and evolving as well as audience and communication; if one considers the museum a living structure, this perpetual change is part of its nature and cannot be summarised into a stereotyped experience.

As a result of that, one can pose a question asking when museum experience and museum identity do converge. There are of course some similarities that make the one experience the consequence of the other. In fact, a proper museum experience should be achieved following a making meaning process that can analyse and offer a set of information that gradually introduces the audience to the characteristics of the museum. Taking into consideration the three moments Panofsky (1939) suggested for reading a work of art, it could be easily considered that a museum experience passes through a first observation (iconography) and a deepened analysis of facts, relationship and historical events (pre-iconology and iconology).

An identity museum experience, on the other hand, is a combination of actions aimed at experiencing not only the iconography and iconology of

artworks displayed in a museum according to the Panofsky theory, but it will add other information from the sociological, anthropological, and ethnographical contexts completing the framework with a close examination. This kind of experience also suggests the interaction with diverse representatives of the cultural heritage sector with a different perspective on this field. It is important to remember that all collective actions are a kind of political participation. In the case of museum and cultural heritage, the interactions between different components of civil society make any action a political one. For instance, the way artists see and shape the world is intensely political and some of the most innovative analyses of political problems come from interaction between artists, students, curators and audiences (Danchev and Lisle, 2009). All the members of a community face the same issues, sorting them out together means to make politics (Don Milani, 2004) and be deeply involved in the societal challenges. If museums are rightfully considered as one of the most relevant venues for community building and developing the sense of belonging, it follows that the twenty-first century museums cannot be alien to that.

6.8.4 Forum or temple of the twenty-first century?

The research question was to analyse the shift between the past and the modern identity of a museum and its focus is on the transformation of the perception that travellers had, and that the audience currently have, when looking at this institution as a temple or as a forum (Cameron, 1971). In the early 1970s, Duncan F. Cameron, director of the Brooklyn Museum, stated that museums were living an identity crisis and probably needed psychotherapy to find themselves again. Museums were oriented towards two main directions: their prestigious and consolidated history, on the one side, and the need for renovation, redefinition, and museum space opening, on the other; which were both posing the issue of the museum's survival (Zuliani, 2009). The idea of a temple or a forum seemed to signal the end of the museum as a symbol of a noble past that was slowly dying. In this circumstance, a balance and a new

cultural koine between *forum* and *temple* were found in the making of the Centre Beaubourg, a centre for contemporary arts conceived in the aftermath of the 1968-inspired movements and achieved, as said before, in 1977 by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers (Zuliani, 2009). So the decade from 1968 to 1977 also signalled a turning point in the conception and perception of museums thanks to the opening of centres for the arts all around Europe and the United States. For instance, the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci opened in Prato in 1988 with the purpose of presenting, collecting, documenting, and promoting the most advanced artistic research; or the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow, officially established in 1992, but having already had a long tradition in the Third Eye Centre founded in 1974 by Tom McGrath. More recently, the CKI (Centre for Art and Interculture) in Copenhagen established in 2008 after a long process represents excellence in promoting accessibility to the art scene and support audience engagement initiatives.

It is interesting how institutions dedicated to contemporaneity are usually defined as centres and not museums, as if the latter were linked to an old-fashioned idea of audience engagement. It is interesting to note how a change in the terms of policies can lead to innovative processes of involvement. A clear example comes from Italy where, as a consequence of museum reform in 2016, twenty Italian institutions gained financial autonomy, and therefore, the direct decisional capability of the directors (while previously every action had had to be approved by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage). This meant an impressive increase in cultural activities, and the opening of historical museums, such as Museo di Villa Giulia in Rome or the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, to a larger sector of the audience that usually did not experience them. In the Etruscan museum, for instance, the participatory process of the cultural offering has radically changed the perception of Villa Giulia. Moreover, audiences of different ages have been attracted and the friendly approach of Valentino Nizzo, the new director, on social media is a way to engage and reach many potential visitors.

In Naples, a video where museum professionals from different departments present their favourite museum artworks has given an important

message: the museum is made of objects, stories, and people. It responds perfectly to the principles of the Faro Convention (2004) that focuses on the importance and responsibility of the community with regard to the knowledge and protection of cultural heritage. These aspects are also crucial elements of the identity museum experience where artworks and people (both the audience and professionals who work there) represent the *quid* that makes the difference and give a profound sense to the experience.

In this framework, all museums should be or become a forum where one can talk about contemporary issues according to an art modality. Also where heritage can discuss the contemporary world and issues in an honest process of mutual understanding in which the codes and concepts of the museum identity experience enable visitors to develop a wider knowledge of society. This process should follow a solid knowledge of the museum identity meant as a precursor of experience where the collection is the starting point to discuss any aspect of the past and present world. As a result of that, memory is the outcome of a personal and a collective experience that keeps at its origin the idea of the museum transforming it into a comprehensive experience. Also, from the idea of identity to that of experience, and eventually to the making of memory, the museum identity experience is a tool where evidence based information referring to items is harmoniously combined with interactive activities engaging the audience, an emphatic approach leading to a mutual exchange of knowledge, and a participatory process for cultural and social inclusion.

FIGURES

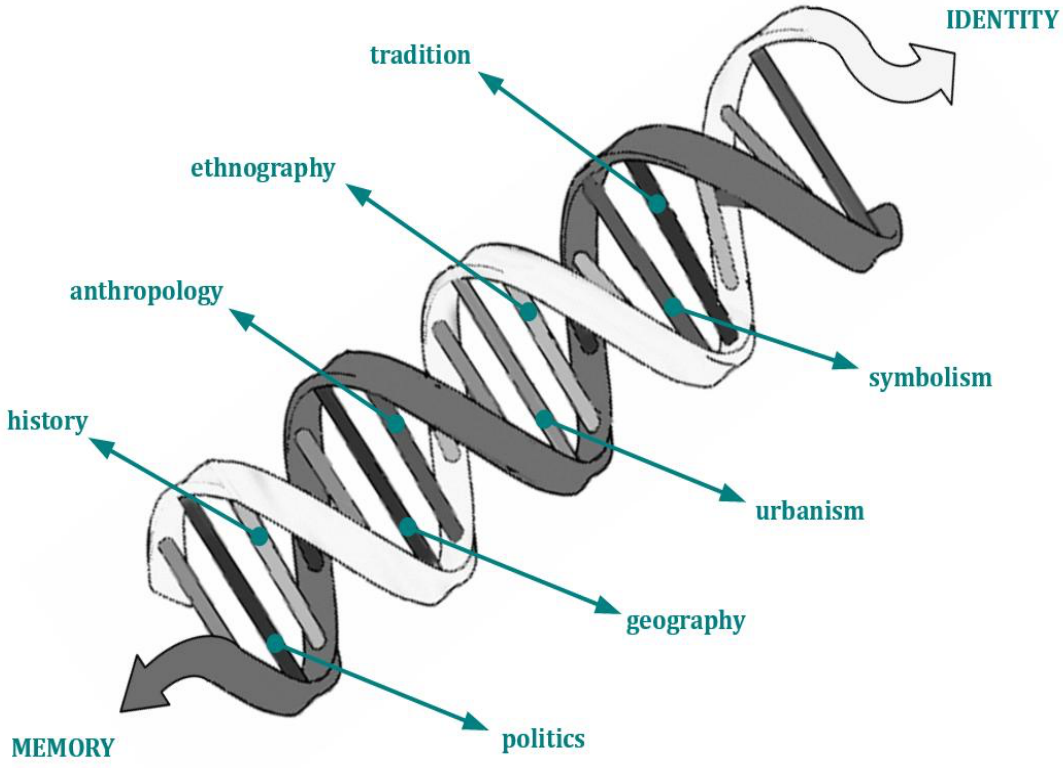


fig. 1 – The Museum Identity Theory scheme

This scheme is the graphic representation of the museum identity structure made up of two main elements that compose the idea of museum in itself: memory and identity. Memory is embodied in the collection, the artefacts or objects (whatever their nature: archaeology, art, science, ethnography, or other tangible and intangible human creation) telling stories about the past, the ways of living, the tastes, the interests, and the development of mankind in all possible fields of interest. On the other hand, identity is embodied both in the display and in the interpretation of these same objects.
If memory is looking backwards and identity is building brick after brick looking forwards, the museum can be seen like a statue of the Roman god Janus, a double-faced creature with his two faces melded together with the eyes directed in opposite directions. Even if the gazes are directed elsewhere, the head is a single one, a unique, uniform structure. In these terms, the museum could be able to preserve its past and display it providing different forms of mediation, and also build tools to face the future.

fig. 2 – Gaspar van Wittel, *View of the square and Montecavallo Palace*, 1683-89

fig. 3 – Antonio Joli, *View of Naples and the Royal Palace of Naples*, 1740

fig. 4 – Charles Frederick de Brocktorff, *View of the Governors Palace in Valletta Island of Malta*, nineteenth century

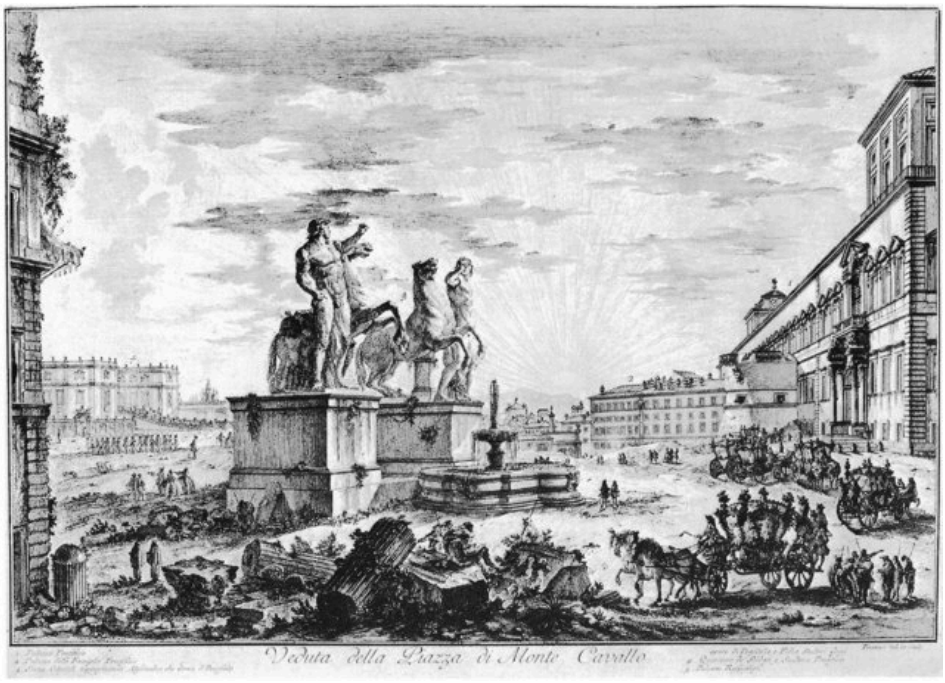


fig. 5 - Giovan Battista Piranesi, *Monte Cavallo and the Dioscuri*, 1779

fig. 6 - Anonymous, *King Ferdinand II entering the Royal Palace of Naples*, 1830-35

fig. 7 – *The tree of liberty* 1789

A decree of the Convention of 1792 regulated its use and decoration: the tree of liberty was a pole surmounted by the red Phrygian cap and adorned with flags. It was used for civil ceremonies: oath of magistrates, bonfires of noble diplomas and even for revolutionary celebrations such as the dance of Carmagnola. The tree of liberty remained a symbol of the liberal republican ideology, and as such was sometimes implanted also in subsequent years, on the occasion of republican events.

fig. 8 – Jean Antoine Gros, Battle of the Pyramids, 1810

fig. 9 - Egnazio Danti, *View of Rome*, Gallery of Maps, 1583-88 (Vatican Museums)

fig. 10 - Egnazio Danti, *View of Naples*, Gallery of Maps, 1583-88 (Vatican Museums)

fig. 11 - Egnazio Danti, *The Great Siege of Malta and the City of Valletta*, Gallery of Maps, 1583-88 (Vatican Museums)

Fig. 12 - Bartolomeo Faleti, *Elevation of the Porta Pia*, 1568

fig. 13 - Postcard, *Royal Pontifical Basilica of St Francesco di Paola*, 1880 ca.

fig. 14 – Anton Raphael Mengs, *King Charles III of Spain.* 1761c.

fig. 15 - Equestrian statue of King Ferdinand I of Two Sicilies in Plebiscite square, Naples

Fig. 16 - Cassiano da Silva, *Royal Palace Square and Convent of San Francesco di Paola*, 1672 (before the construction of the homonymous Basilica)

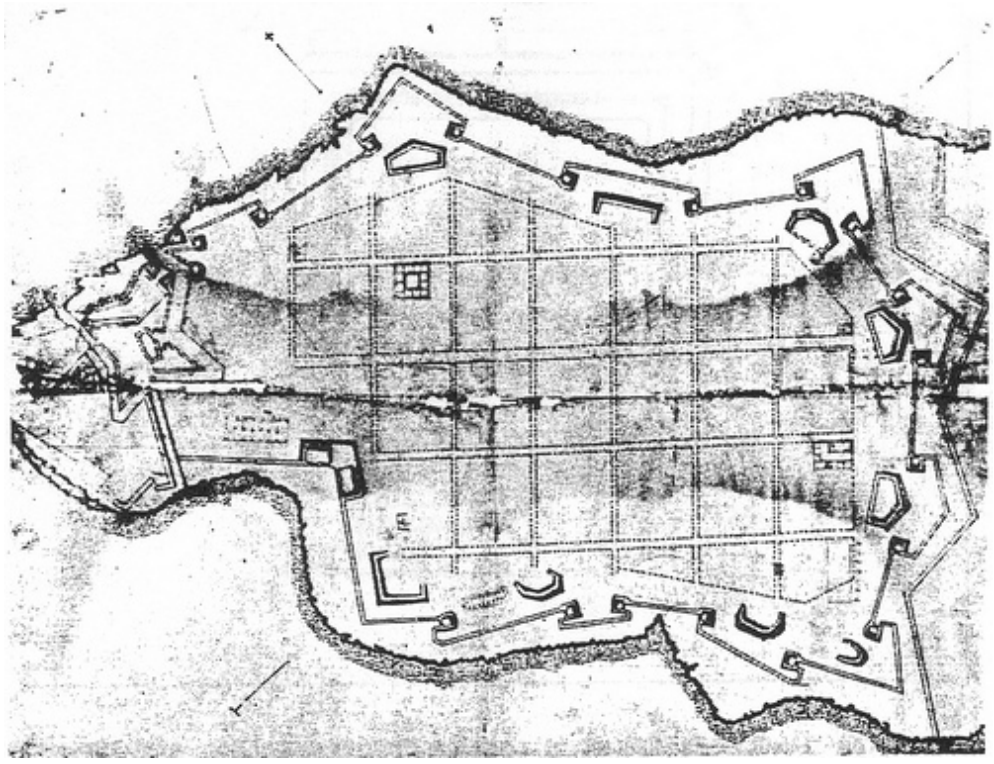


fig. 17 - Francesco Laparelli, *Map of Valletta, 1566*

fig. 18 Peter Van der Aa, *Valetta Civitas Nova Maltae olim Militiae*, 1712

Fig. 19 - Murat Studio in the Royal Palace of Naples

fig. 20 - Matteo Peres d'Aleccio,*The Siege of Malta: Arrival of the Turkish Fleet on 20th May 1565,* Grandmaster's Palace Valletta State Rooms

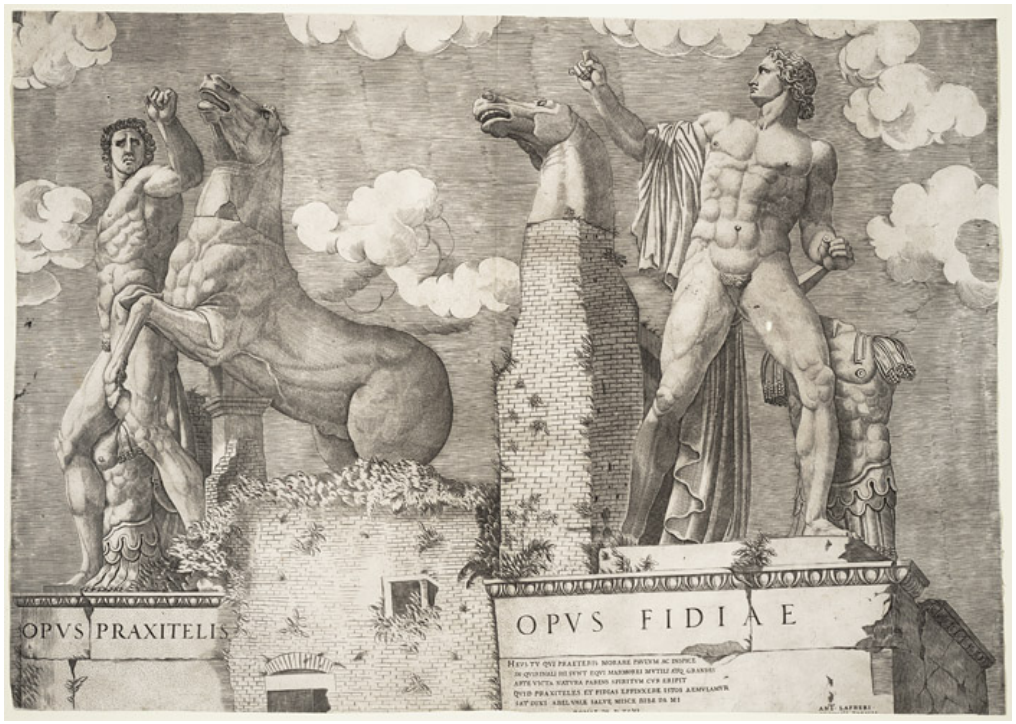
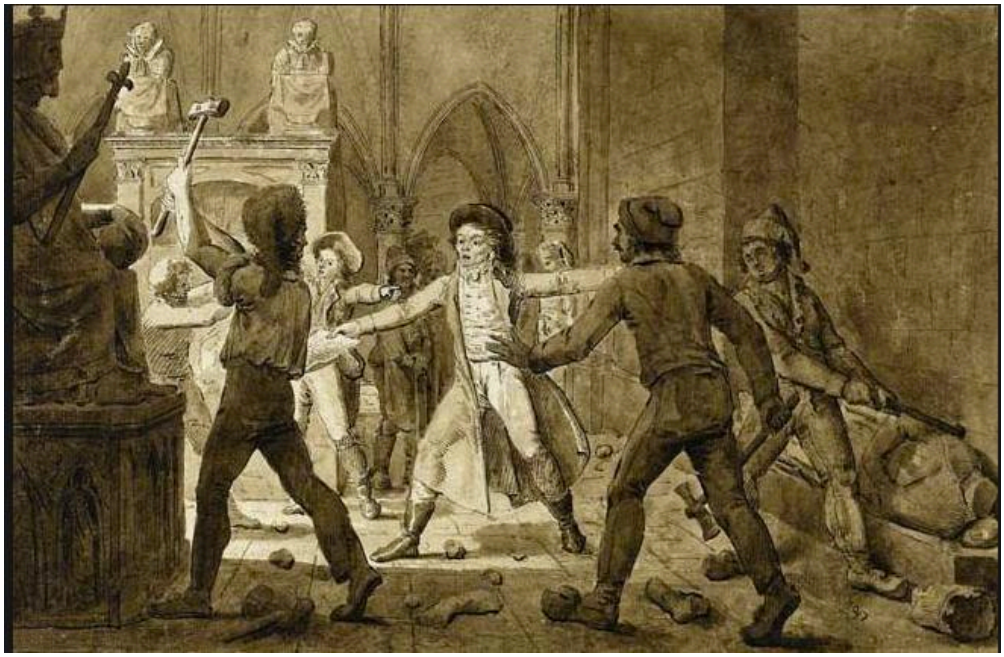


fig. 21 – Antonio Lafréry, *Dioscuri in Montecavallo square* (detail), 1546



fig, 22 – Anonymous, *A print of Le Noir attempting to rescue sculpture from destruction during the French Revolution*, nineteenth century, (Musée de Cluny)

fig. 23 - Robert Hubert, *La Grande Galerie du Louvre*, 1795

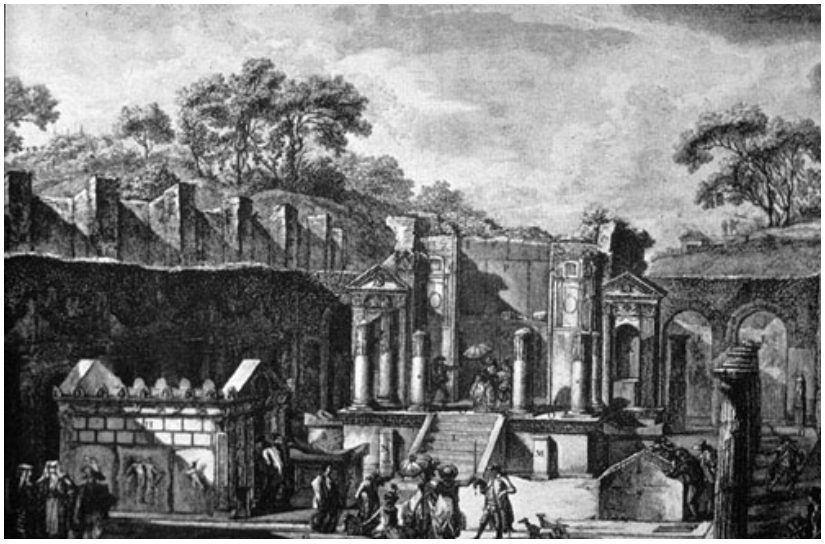


fig. 24 - Giovan Battista Piranesi, *The Temple of Isis at Pompeii*, 1788

fig. 25 – *The Farnese Bull*, second century BC Hellenistic massive sculpture. It is the largest ever recovered from antiquity. Firstly display in the Royal Gardens by the sea and then moved to the Archaeological Museum.

fig. 26 - Commendatore Abela, *Della descritione di Malta, isola del mare siciliano, colle sue antichità ed altre notizie*, 1647

fig. 27 - Francesco Miccinelli, Vincenzo Feoli, *View of the Rotonda where the Biga is displayed at the Pio-Clementine Museum*, first half nineteenth century

fig. 28 – Luigi Rossini, *View of the Trajan column and excavation*, 1819-1823

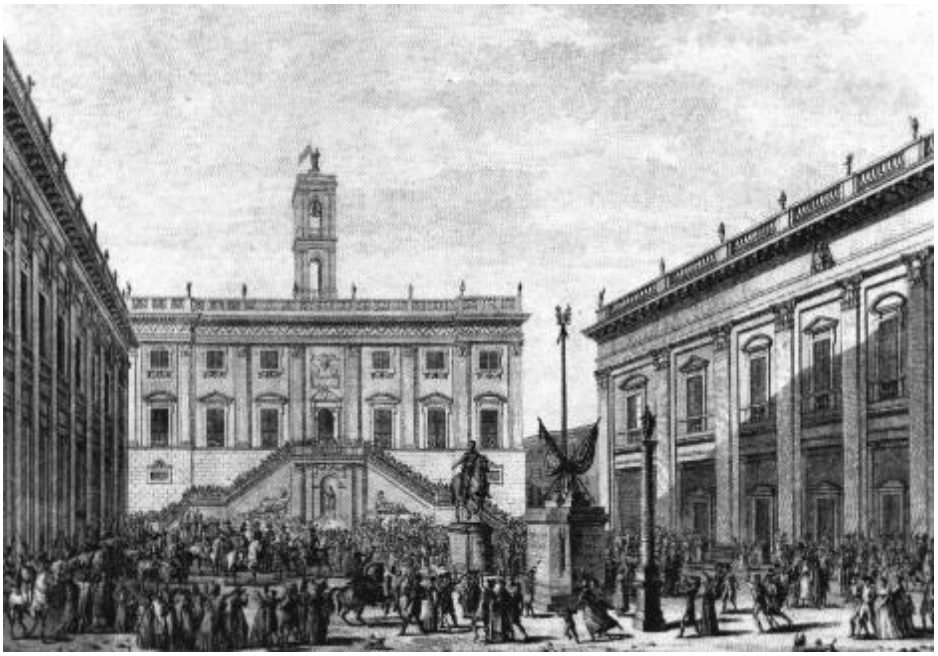


fig. 29 - The Tree of Freedom and the Proclamation of the Roman Republic onto the Capital Hill, 15th February 1798, (Museo Napoleonico, Roma)

fig. 30 – Gioacchino Altobelli, *Breech of Porta Pia,* 1870, Museo Centrale del Risorgimento, Roma.

fig. 31 Manifesto of the Second Roman Republic "*A Flash of Freedom Emancipated not equalled for 120 Years*", 1849

fig. 32 - Postcard "*Rome in 1849. St Peter's square at dawn on April 30*"

fig. 33 - Jacobin flag in Italy "*Freedom – Equality*"

fig. 34 – Eagle used a symbol in ancient Rome on banners of the legions.

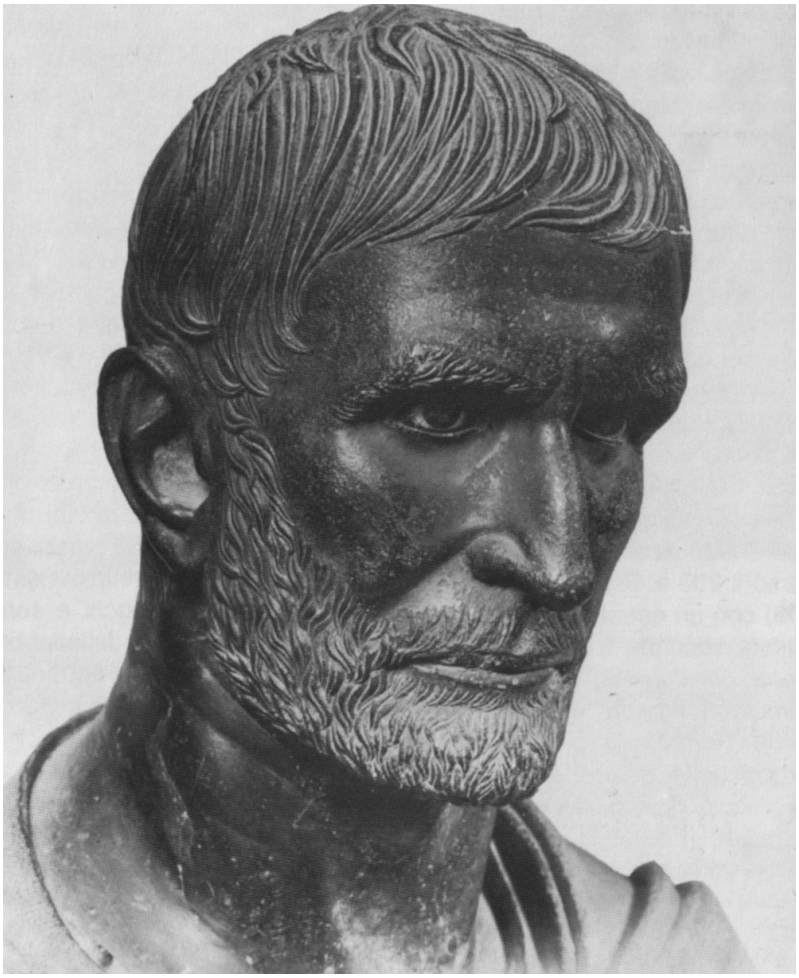


Fig. 35 – Caius Junius Brutus, Musei Capitolini, fourth-third century BC.
The statue should be part of a larger statue, one of the prominent examples of Republican Roman portrait. Only the head is ancient and the identification with Brutus goes back in time to the Renaissance age thanks to comparisons with coins dated 59 and 49 BC.

fig. 36 - Vincenzo Camuccini, *Death of Julius Cesar*, 1798

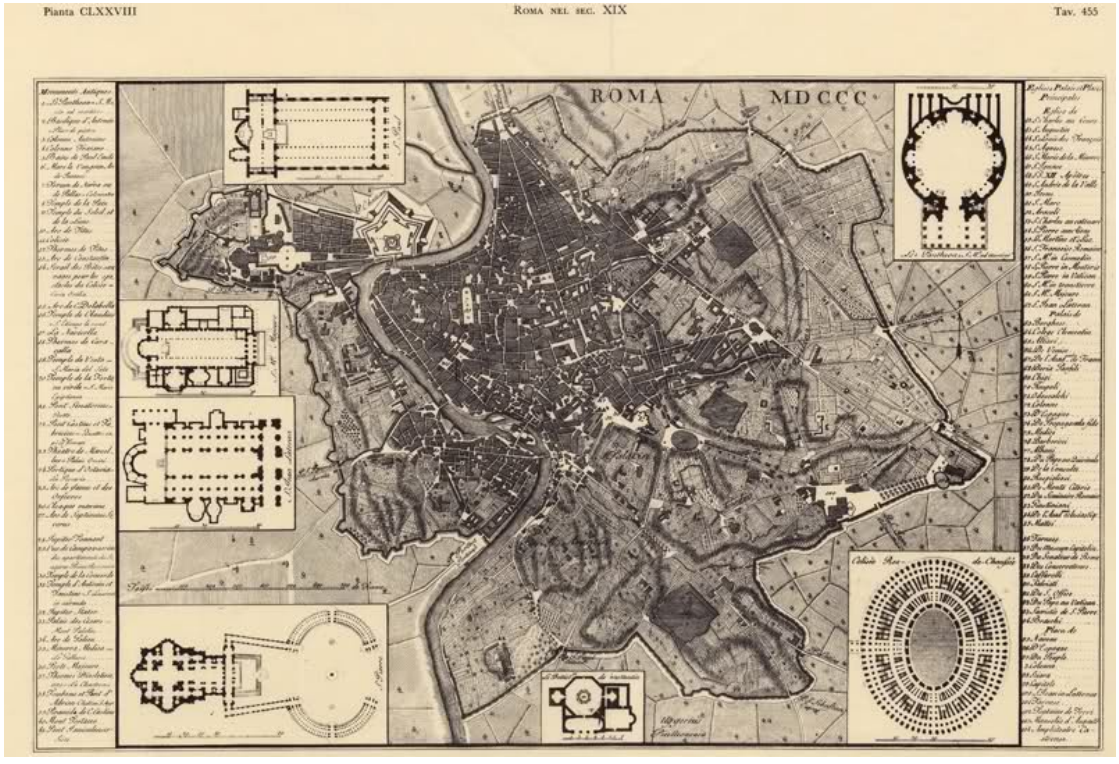


fig. 37 – Venanzio Monaldini, *Map of Rome*, 1843

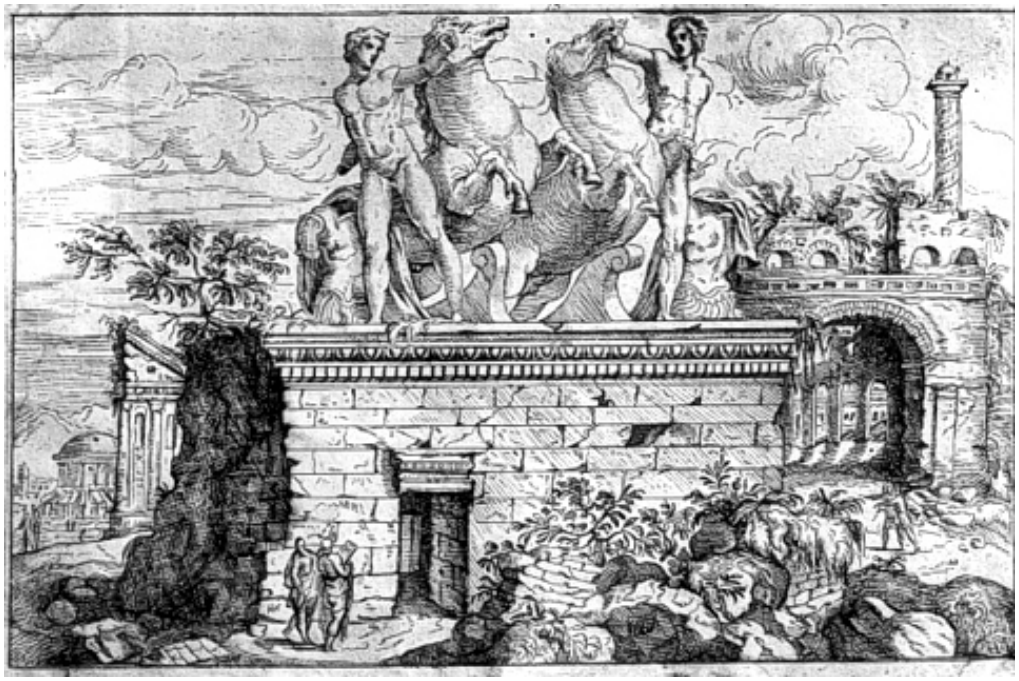


fig. 38 – Battista Pittoni, *The Dioscuri and the Temple of God Quirinus*, 1520

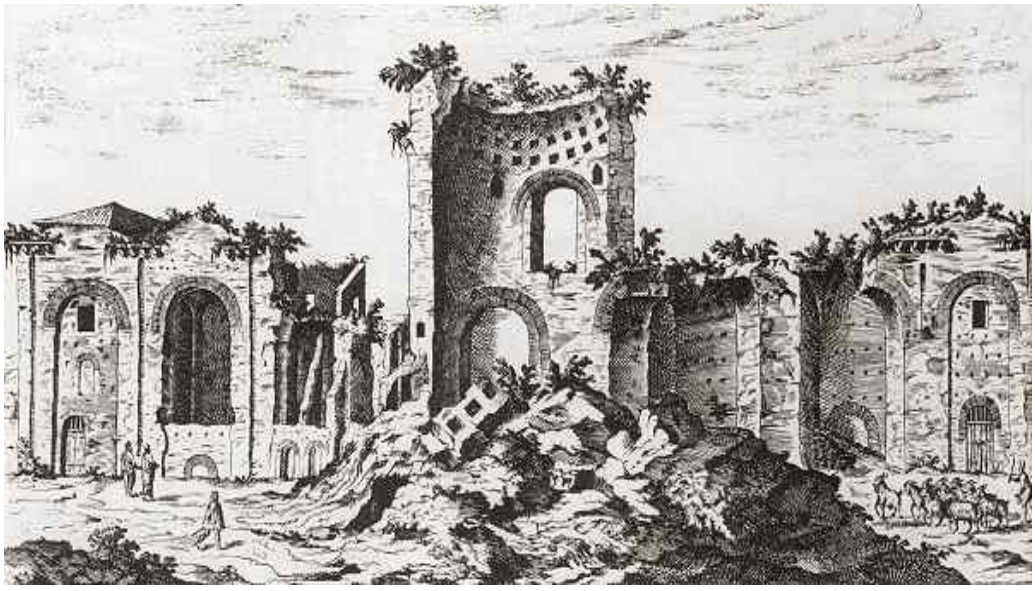


fig. 39 Etienne Dupérac, *Ruins of the Bath of Constantine*, 1575

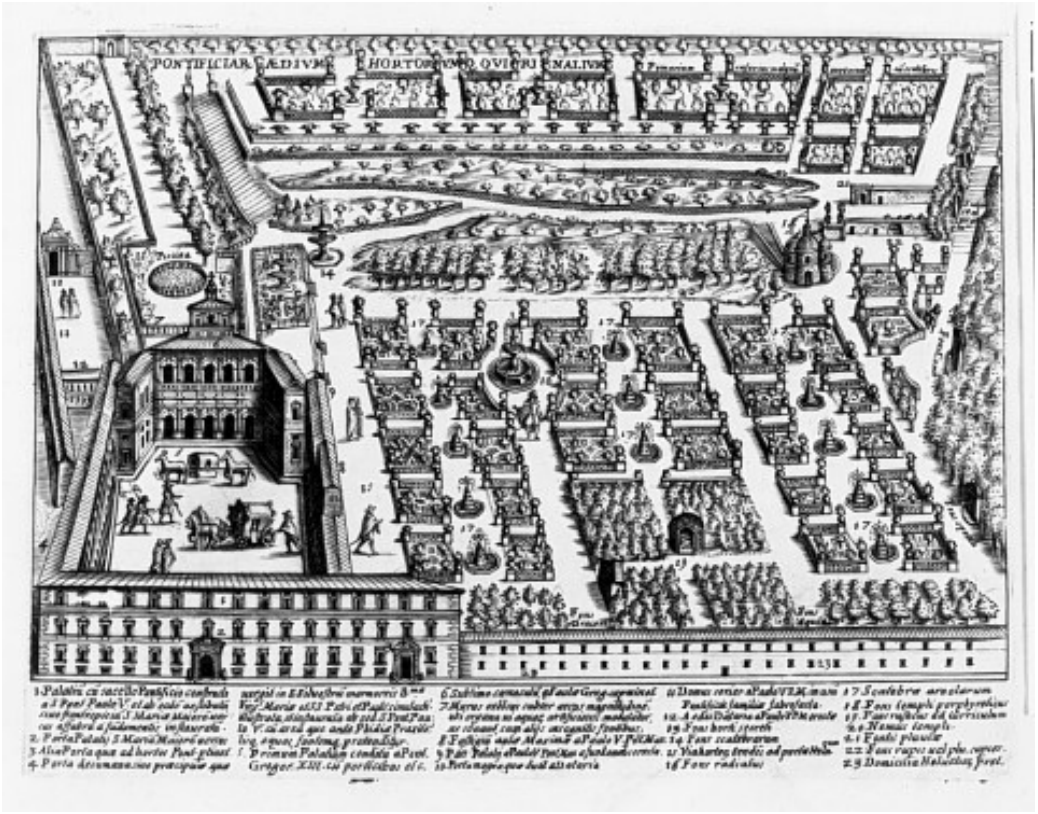


fig. 40 Giacomo Lauro, *View of the Quirinal Hill and Gardens*, 1618 c.

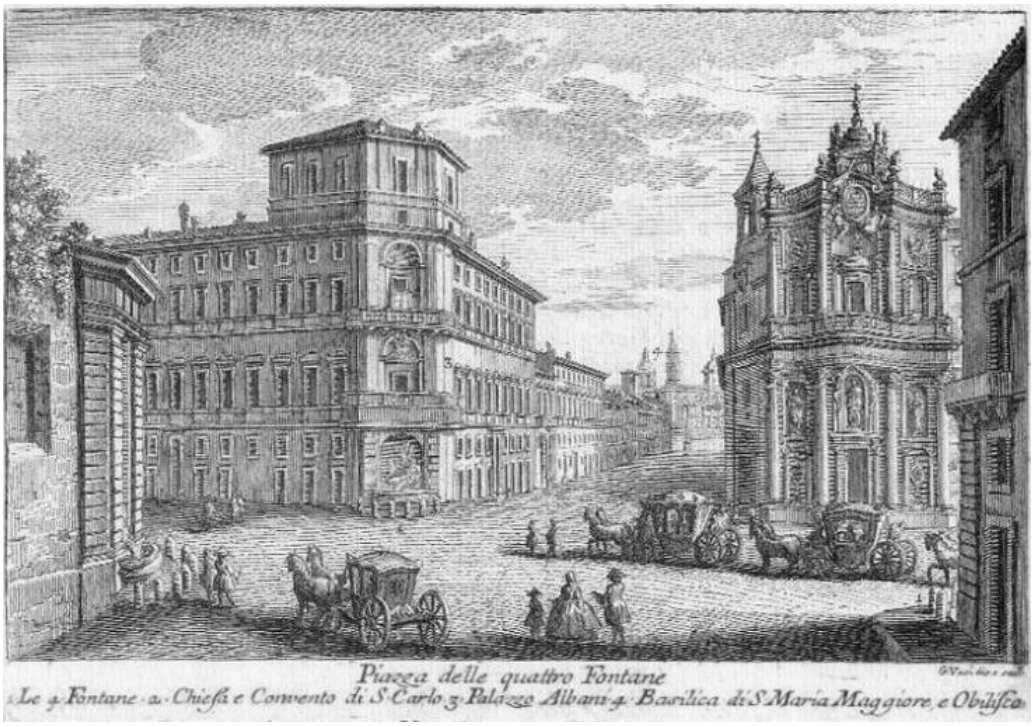


fig. 41 – Giuseppe Vasi, *Quattro Fontane square*, 1752

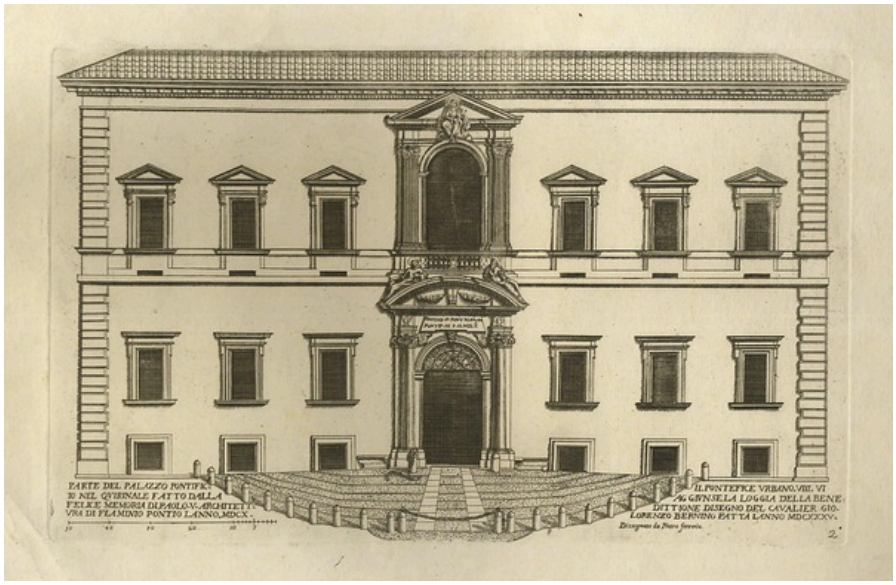


fig. 42 – Giovanni Giacomo de Rossi, Loggia and façade of the Quirinale Palace, second half of the sixteenth century

fig. 43 – Pietro da Cortona, Frieze with stories of the Old Testament, Gallery of Alexander VII, Quirinale Palace

fig. 44 – Giuseppe Vasi, *The Pope's Stables begun by Innocent XIII, and finished by Clement the XIII,* 1740 c.

fig. 45 – Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Palazzo della Consulta*, 1749

fig. 46 – Tommaso Minardi, *Mission of the Apostoles*, Quirinale Palace

fig. 47 – Pius IX blessing the worshippers in Frosinone, 1863

fig. 48, Pietro Piffetti, Library, wood inlaid and ivory from the Royal Palace of Moncalieri, Quirnale Palace

fig.. 49 – Corrado Giaquinto, *Mercury appears to Aeneas*, 1735, Quirinale Palace

fig. 50 Hall of Corazzieri (Presidential Guards), Quirinale Palace

fig. 51 - *Triumph of Hercules*, Gobelins tapestries, Hall of Hercules, Quirinale Palace

fig. 52 - Giovan Battista Falda, *View of the Quirinale garden*, 1683

fig. 53 – *Organ Fountain*, nineteenth century, Quirinale Gardens

fig. 54 – *Coffee House*, Quirinale Gardens

fig. 55 – Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Charles of Bourboon visiting Pope Benedict XIV at the Coffee House*, 1746, Gallery of Capodimonte, Naples

fig. 56 - *Caserta Fountain*, Quirinale Gardens

fig. 57 – Organ Fountain, detail, Quirinale Gardens

fig. 58 – Oval Labyrinth, Quirinale Gardens

fig. 59 – Excavation in the area of the Quirinale Hill

fig. 60 - Gran Gala berlin, known as Telemaco, 1817

fig. 61 – Gran Gala berlin, known as Marriage Coach, 1817

fig. 62 - Gran Gala berlin, known as the Egyptian, 1819

fig. 63 – Monastery of Santa Chiara in Naples (the cloister)

fig. 64 – Triumphal arch of Maschio Angioino (detail with the King Alfonso of Aragon)

fig. 65 – Domenico Bertelli, Map of Naples, 1570


fig. 66 - Neapolitan Anonymous, *View of Naples with the entrance of Charles of Bourbon in Largo di Palazzo* (on the left side the old vice royal Palace), eighteenth century

fig. 67 – San Carlo Opera House (the interiors)

fig. 68 – Albergo dei Poveri, Naples, façade, end of the nineteenth century

fig. 69 - Filippo Morghen, *Charles of Bourbon King of Naples*, from the series "Antiquities of Herculaneum exposed", 1790

fig. 70 - Odoardo Fischetti, *Joachim Murat witnessing the conquest of Capri from the village of La Nunziata in Mas- salubrense October 5, 1808*, 1809

fig. 71 – Carlo Ademollo, *The encouter in Teano*, 1878, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples

fig. 72 - Wenzel Franz, *Garibaldi entering the city of Naples*, 1860-75

fig. 73 - W.B. Clarke and T. Bradley, *Map of* Naples, 1835

At this moment the perception of the city is opening up as a fan getting the base in the area of the Royal Palace. In the XVII and XVIII centuries the city grew up towards southwest due to the of the other royal residences (Capodimonte and Portici), in the XIX century instead the city discovered the northern coast developing towards Posillipo, which became the new high bourgeois residential area and one of the stereotypic panoramas of Naples.

In this map, the view from the hill of Posillipo allow to see the growing urban area by the sea.

Fig. 74 - Aloisio Giambarba, *The Risanamento area* [in black] *between Piazza Nicola Amore and Piazza Municipio*, 1895

fig. 75 - On the occasion of the visit of King Umberto I (September 8, 1884) the city is remodelled and opens the large straight that leads from the train station to the Royal Palace. The "Rettifilo" starts the work of restoration of the city that involves the demolition of palaces, churches and monuments. In the following years it will be adjusted to even more incisive works that will raise the ground by more than 3 meters and the reclamation of over 980,000 square meters and the disappearance of 95,000 square meters of buildings that will give space to fill the sea.

fig. 76 - *La cacciata*, (*The expulsion*), the expulsion of the Bourbon from Sicily in an allegorical print, 1848.

fig. 77 – Anonymous Neapolitan, *The Vice-Royal Palace of Naples*, seventeenth century
It is still visible on the left side the old vice royal Palace (white and grey) destroyed during a fire at the beginning of the XIX century

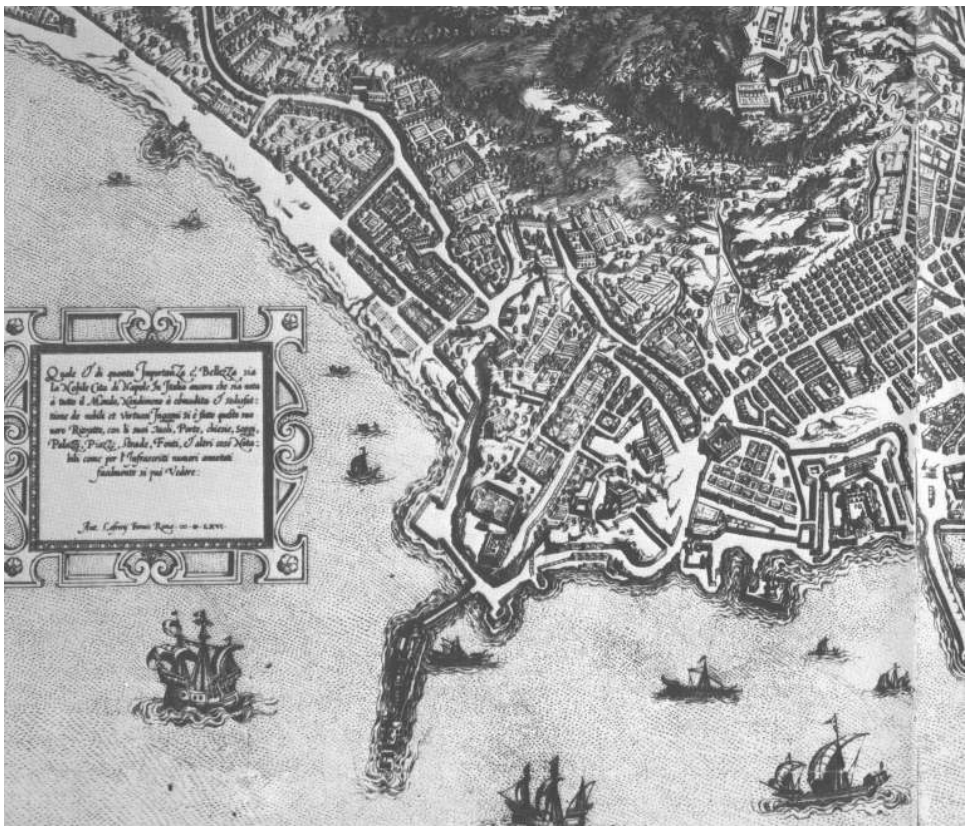


Fig. 78 - Antonio Lafrery, detail with the vice royal Palace and the military Spanish quarter built as a grid on the slope of the St Elmo hill, 1566

Fig. 79 - Neapolitan Anonymous, *Castel Nuovo seen from the sea*, 1680

fig. 80 - Gaspar van Wittel, *Naples from the sea*, 1750 c.

fig. 81 - Andrea Costa, *The Royal Palace of Naples*, 1696

fig. 82 – Battistello Caracciolo, *Consalvo de Cordoba meeting Neapolitan Ambassadors*, 1606-11

Fig. 83 - Michele Foschini, *Ferdinand IV as King of Naples*, 1759 (interior of the Royal Chapel)

fig. 84 – Palazzo Reale and the Belvedere

fig. 85 – Francesco De Mura, *Allegory of the virtues of the spouses*, 1738

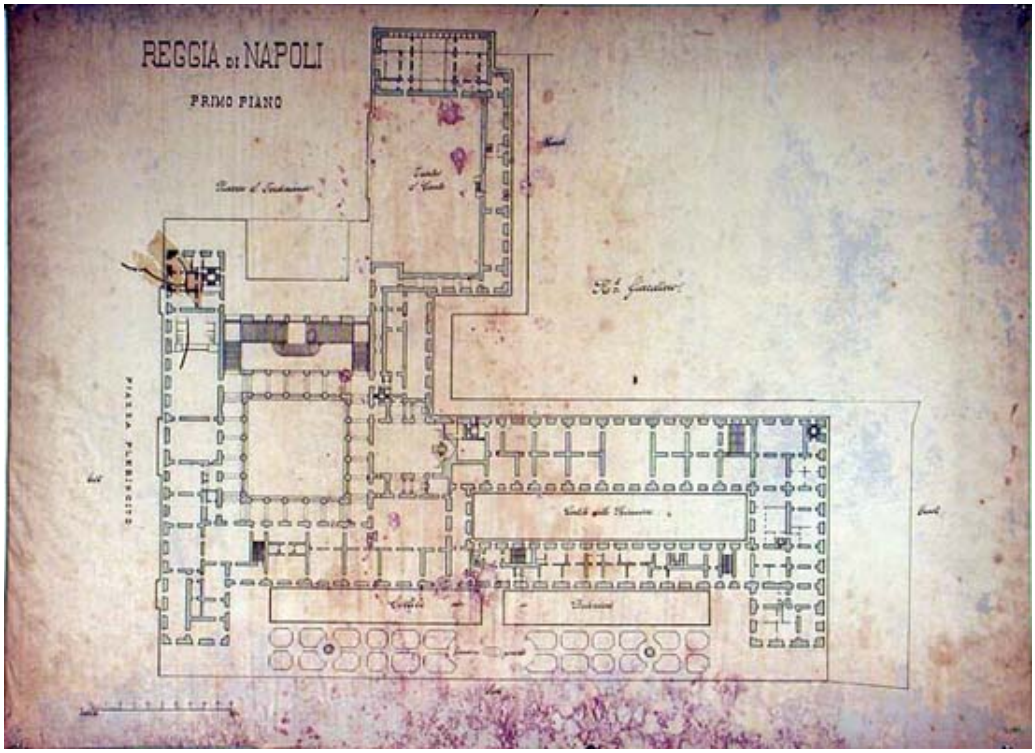


fig. 86 – The plan of the Palazzo Reale, first floor, nineteenth century

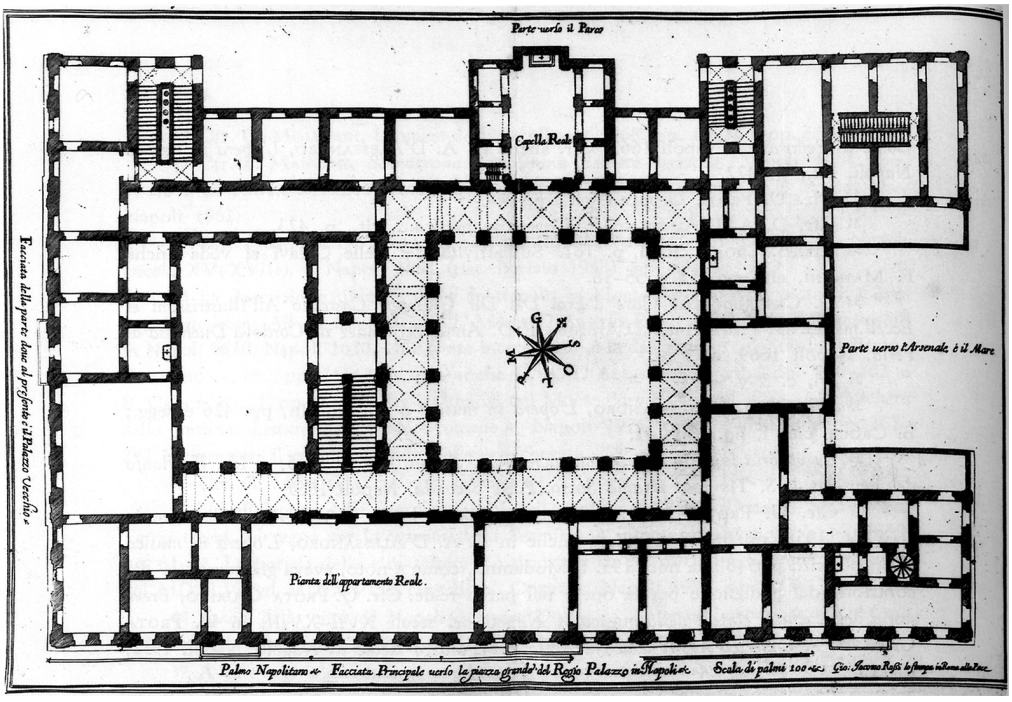


fig. 87 – The plan of Palazzo Reale before the fire, eighteenth century

fig. 88 – Piazza and church of San Francesco di Paola, photocrome, 1890-1900

fig. 89 – The Church of St Francesco di Paola, façade

fig. 90 - Gaetano Genovese, Grand Staircase, 1837-40

fig. 91 – Belisario Corenzio, Hall of Ambassadors, painting of the ceiling

fig. 92 – Adam Weisweiler, *French Empire Desk*, 1812 (Murat studio)

fig. 93 – Furniture in the second Anti-chamber

fig. 94 – Allied troops in Palazzo Reale during World War II, photograph

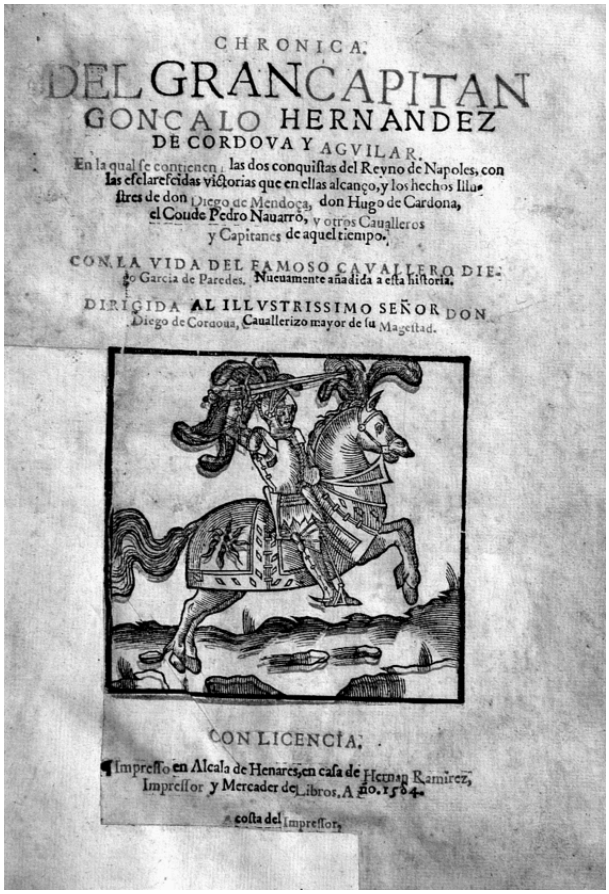

CHRONICA
DEL GRAN CAPITAN
GONCALO HERNANDEZ
DE CORDOVA Y AGVILAR.
En la qual se contienen las dos conquistas del Reyno de Napoles, con las esclarecidas victorias que en ellas alcançó, y los hechos Illustres de don Diego de Mendoça, don Hugo de Cardona, el Conde Pedro Nauarro, y otros Caualleros y Capitanes de aquel tiempo.
CON LA VIDA DEL FAMOSO CAVALLERO Diego Garcia de Paredes. Nueuamente añadida a esta historia.
DIRIGIDA AL ILLVSTRISSIMO SEÑOR DON Diego de Cordoua, Caullerizo mayor de su Magestad.
CON LICENCIA.
Impresso en Alcala de Henares, en casa de Hernan Ramirez, Impressor y Mercader de Libros. A ño. 1564.
A costa del Impressor.

fig. 95 – *Chronica del Gran Capitano Goncalo Hernandez de Cordoba y Aguilar*, 1564

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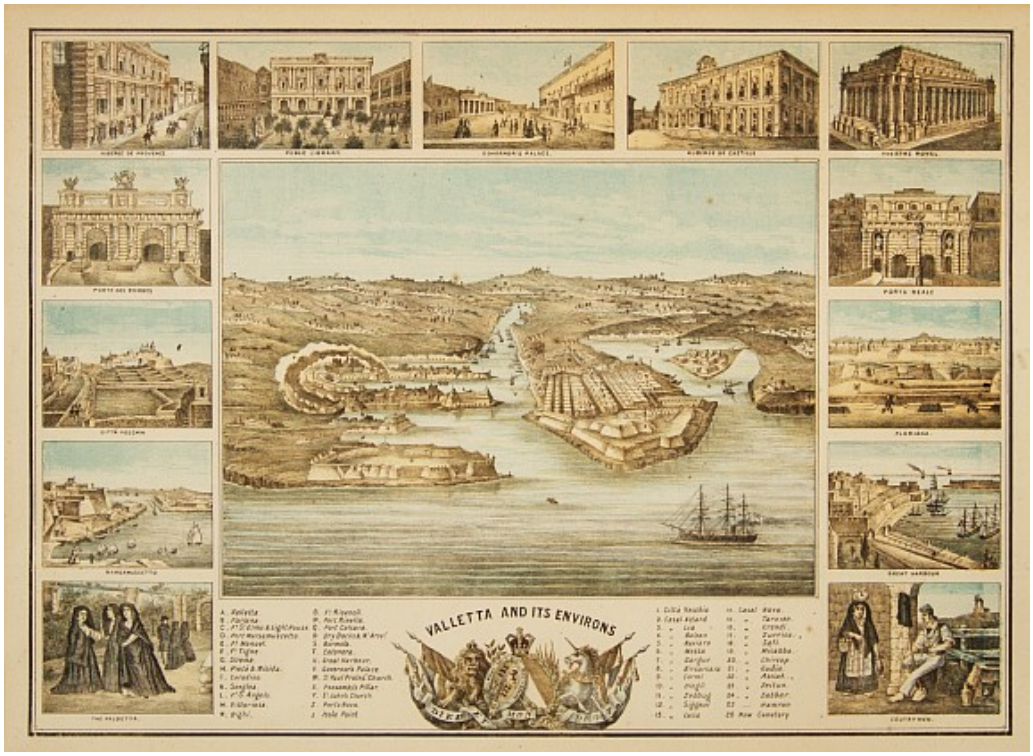

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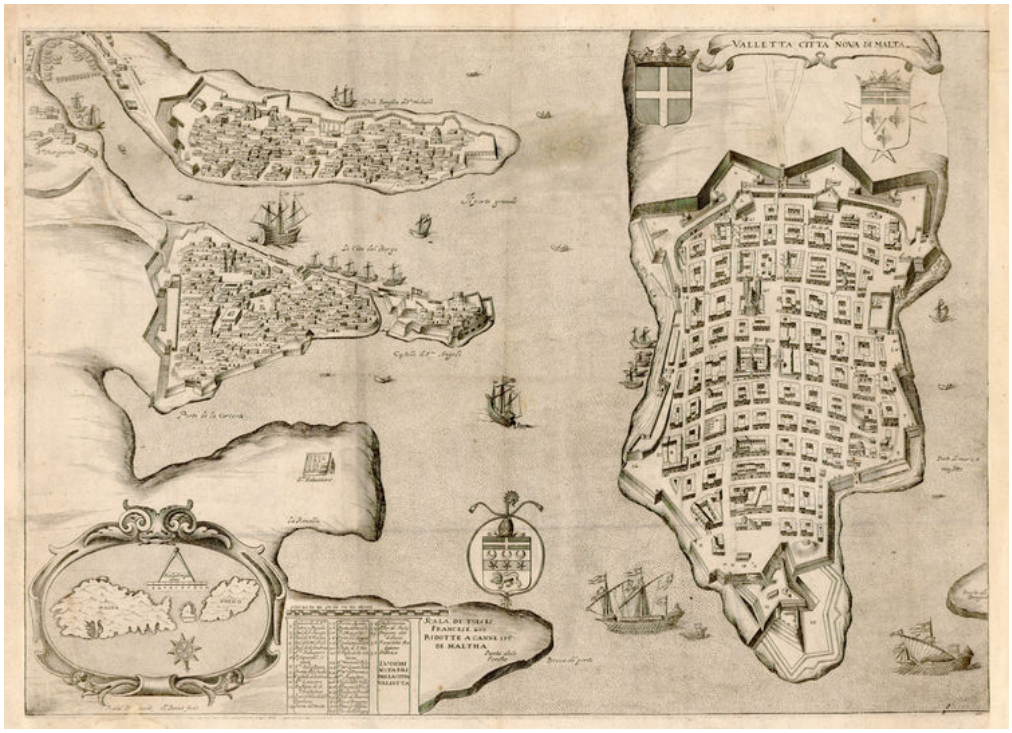

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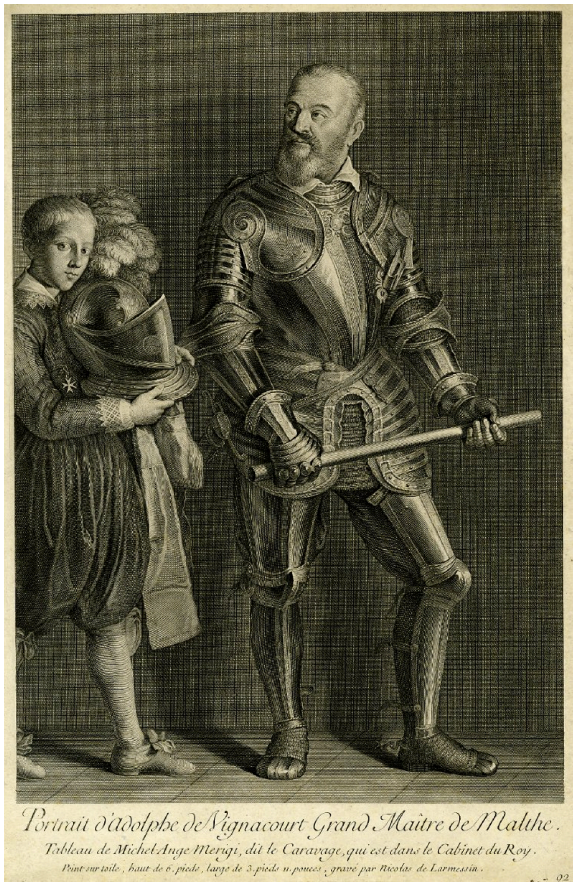

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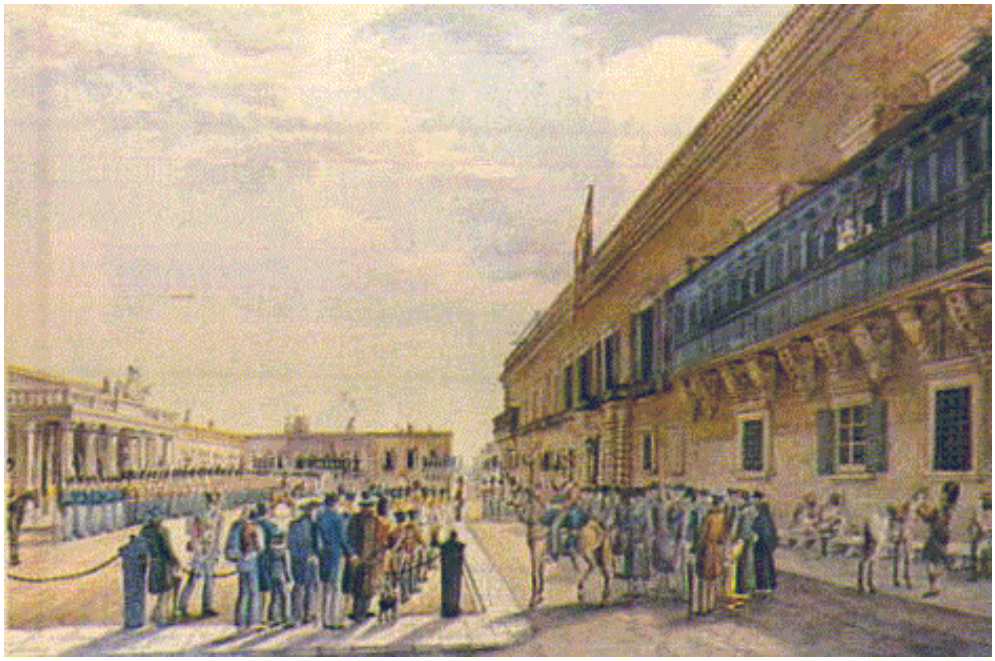

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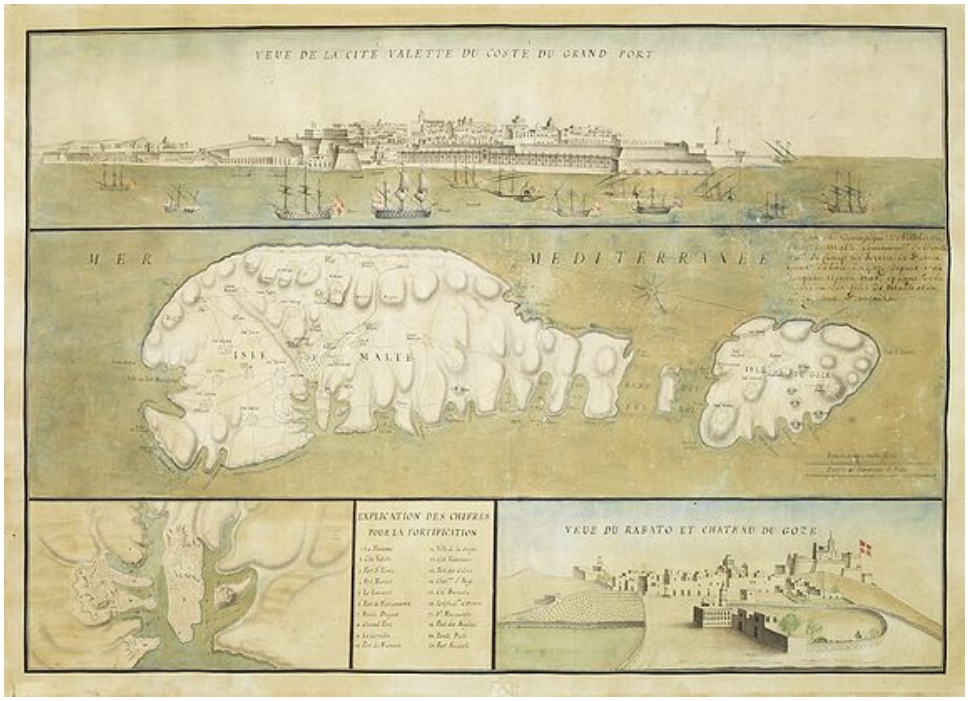

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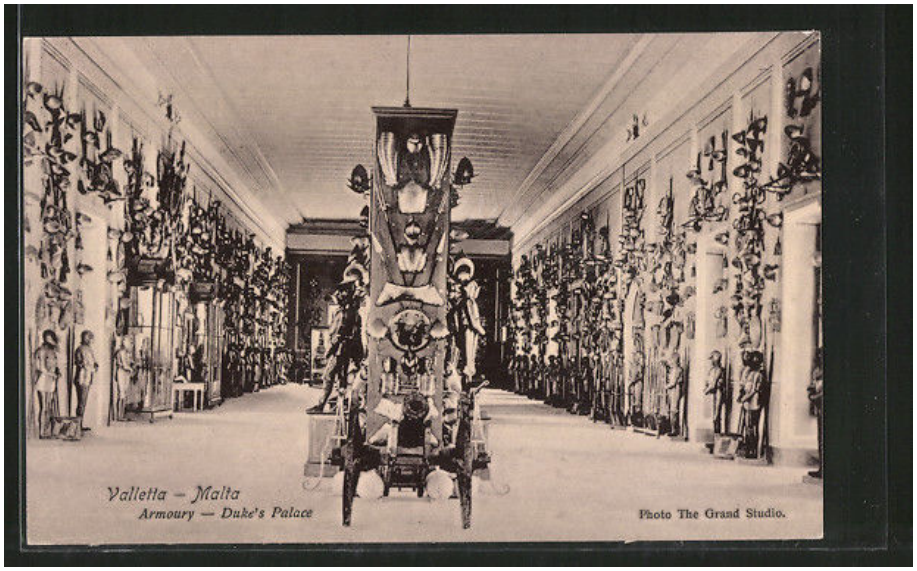

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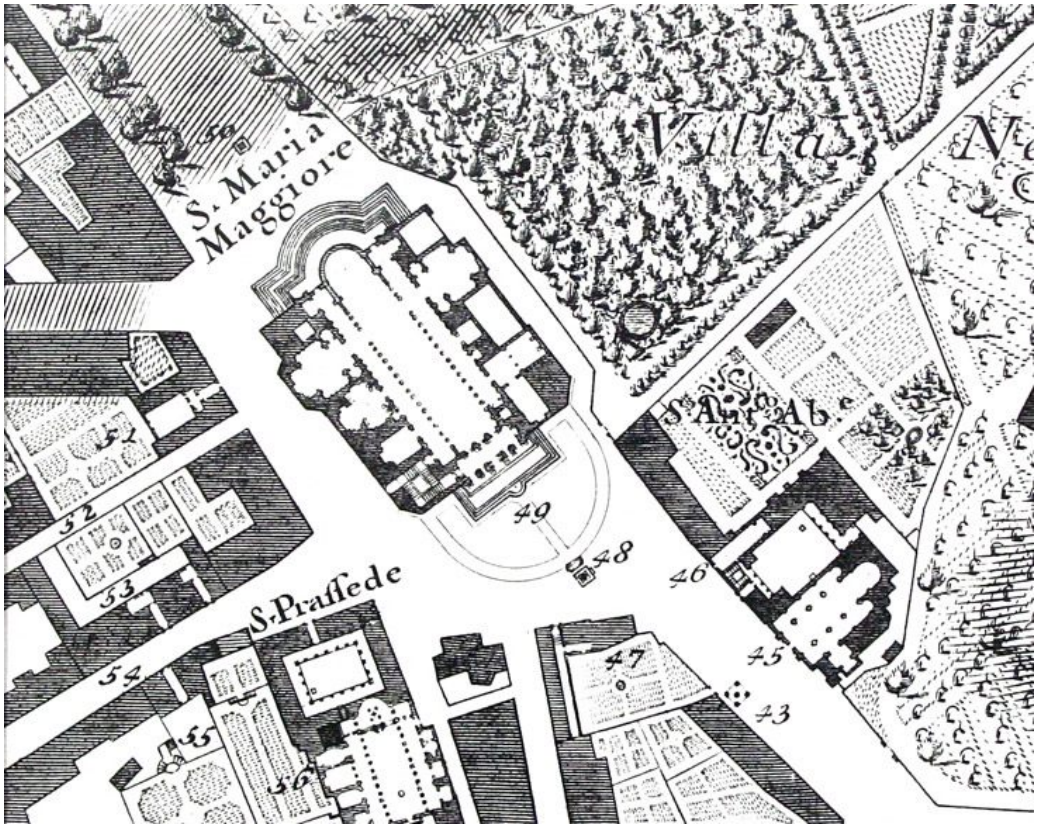

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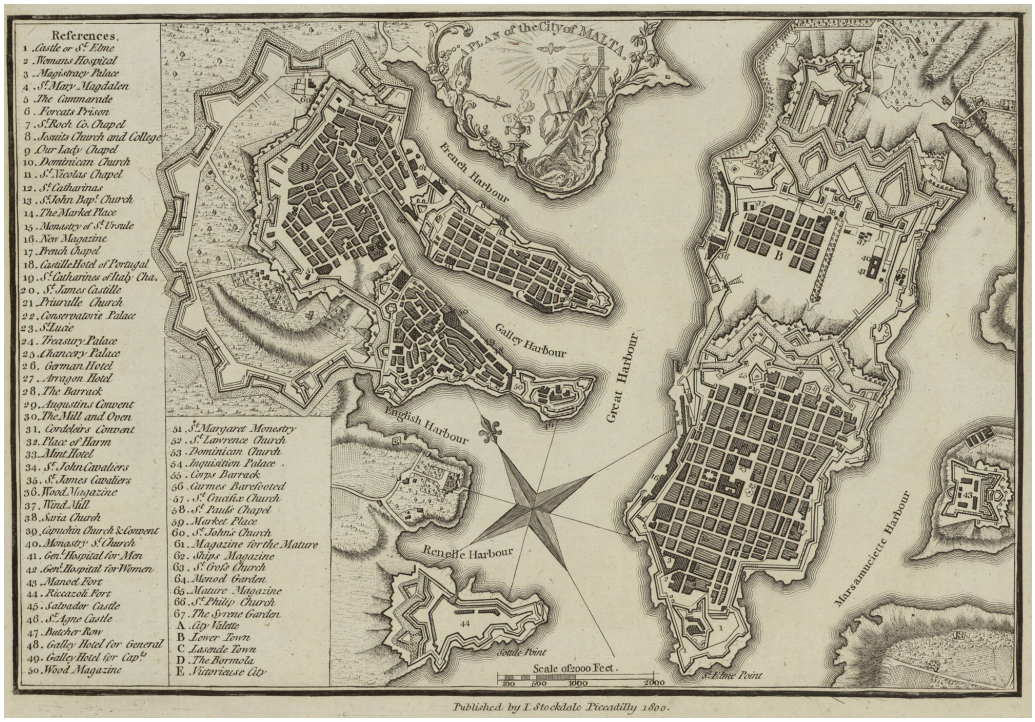

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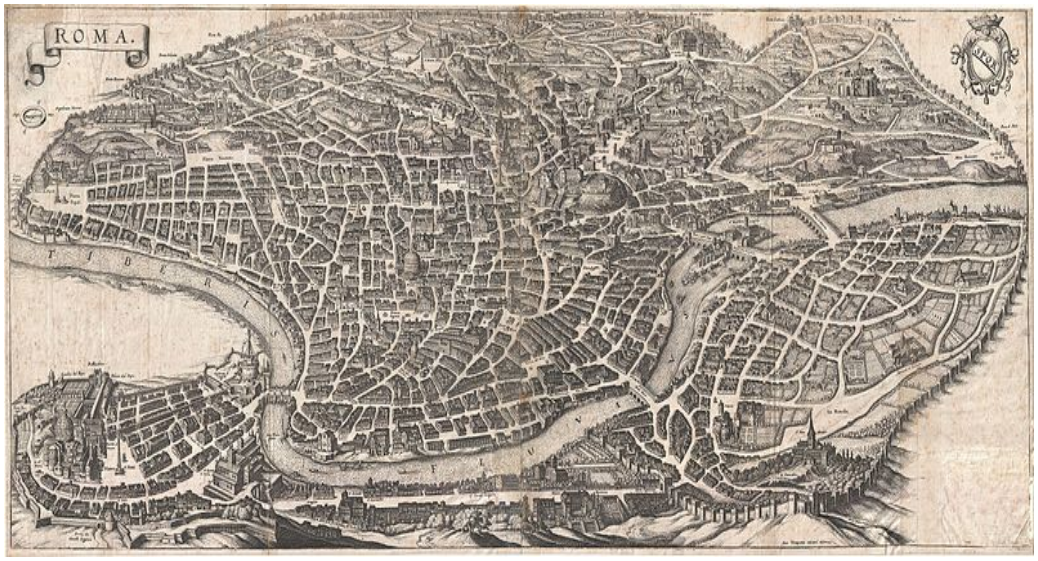

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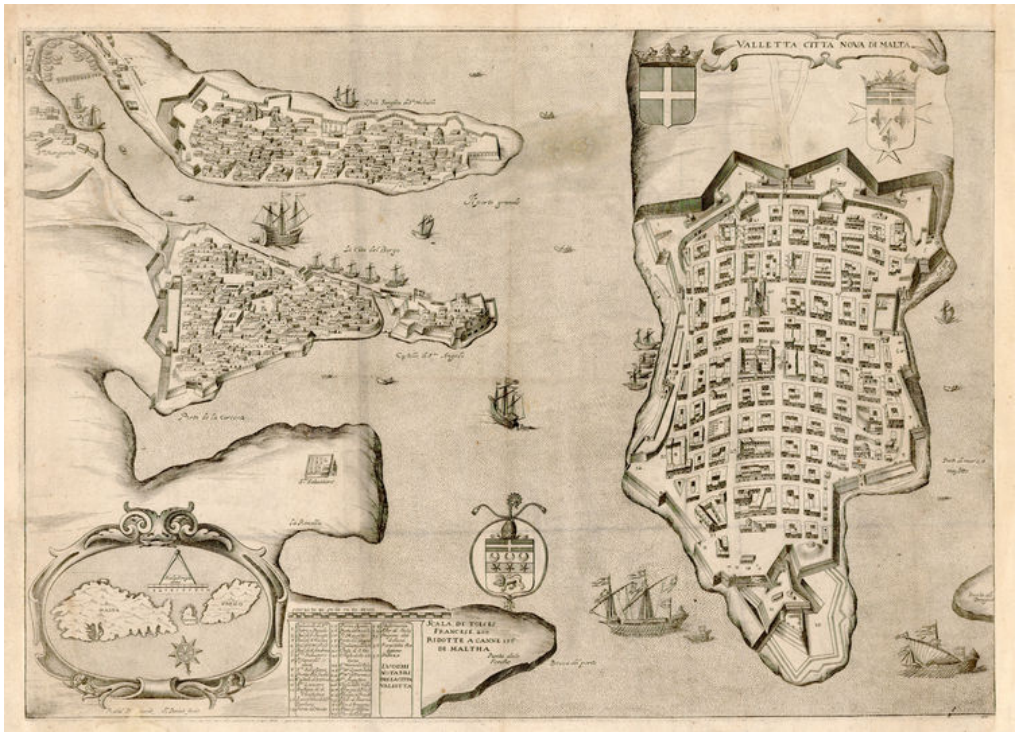

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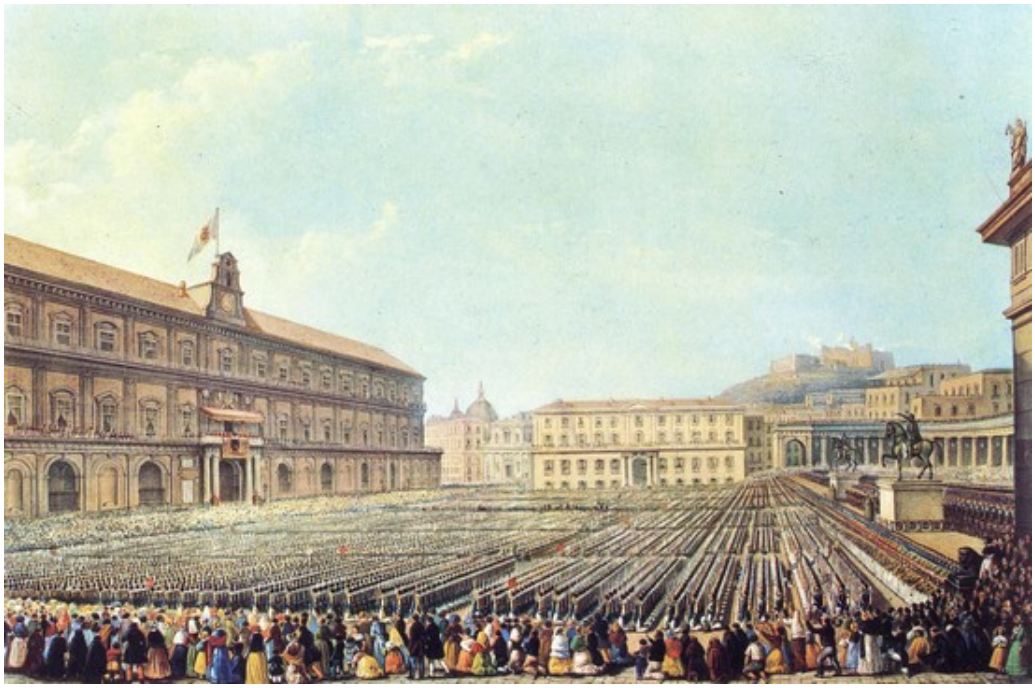

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