



*Lo scenografico atrio a quattro
campate con antiche colonne
marmoree*



*Quadro raffigurante Camillo Benso
Conte di Cavour eseguito
da Luigi Fognola*



*Particolare degli arredi della Sala dei
Carron di San Tommaso*



Notes on the History of Lascaris Palace

Lascaris Palace is a good example of a noble mansion of Turin's Baroque period. Even though it has been modified over time, it still retains the characteristics of a noble mansion: both externally and internally its main features are a scenic hall with four arches supported by ancient marble columns (according to the fashion of the day it was meant to provide a ceremonial reception hall), to the main staircase, to the covered balconies, to the refined and important chambers on the 1st floor. The Palace, on the wishes of Beggiami di Sant'Albano, was built between 1663 and 1665 on the block of Santa Francesca Romana della Contrada di San Carlo.

In 1674 the Palace became property of Gabriella di Marolles, a favourite of Carlo Emanuele II, who married Carlo delle Lanze, count of Sales. She refined the Palace with the contribution of artists such as Stefano Maria Legnani of Milan, known as Legnanino, who worked in Turin also on the decoration of the Chapel of Merchants, some halls of Carignano Palace and Barolo Palace.

In 1720 Gabriella di Marolles sold the building to the marquess Carron di San Tommaso, who lived there till 1803. In this period the first transformations took place, among which the lengthening of the western wing. In February 1803, Giuseppina Maria Anna, last descendant of the Carron di San Tommaso family, married the marquess Agostino Lascaris di Ventimiglia. Since then the Palace has held its current name.

The history of the Lascaris family is complicated. It's sufficient to remember that, in 1263, its family head Guglielmo Pietro dei Conti di Ventimiglia, married Eudossia Lascaris, daughter of Teodosio II, emperor of Nicea. From then onwards the original Ligurian family name was united to the Greek name. Adele or Adelaide Susanna was the only daughter of Agostino Lascaris and Giuseppina Carron di San Tommaso, who then married the marquess Gustavo Benso di Cavour, brother of the famous Camillo Benso di Cavour, very First Prime Minister of the newborn Italian Kingdom (1861). Nowadays we still have a portrait of this great statesman painted in the mid-19th century by Luigi Fognola.

In 1833 Adele Lascaris died giving birth to a child at the tender age of 26.

Her husband Gustavo moved with his children, always in Turin, to the Cavour family house. The Benso family kept the property of Lascaris Palace from 1841 till 1883, renting it from 1861 to the State Council for twelve years and from 1872 to the Supreme Court.

Since 1883 the Palace has no longer been a private residence and became an Institutional Office. When the contract with the Supreme Court expired, Giuseppina Benso di Cavour Alfieri di Sostegno sold the Palace for £ 480.000 to the Bank of Sconto e Sete. The building that had maintained till then, more or less entirely, the original form, was divided by the Bank; the side facing via Arsenale became property of the Tiberina Bank, that demolished the old summer houses, constructing a new three-storey building. The Bank itself modified some parts of the Palace and added two galleries on the courtsides.

On July 11th 1899, in Lascaris Palace took place FIAT – the main car industry in Italy – first meeting of the board of directors. In 1904 the Bank sold the Palace to the countess Tiretta, who, in 1917, sold it on to Riccardo Gualino, who in 1920 made it the SNIA Viscosa (a textile industry) headquarters. The bombing of Turin on the 13th of July 1943 hit Lascaris Palace too. The worst damages were made in the central hall where Legnani's frescoes from the 17th century were destroyed. In 1948 SNIA Viscosa sold the building to the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Craftsmanship that restored the building and moved in six years later.

On January 16th 1975, Piedmont Region bought the Palace from the Chamber of Commerce. In 1979, after four years of building works, some important discoveries were made. In Gabriella de Marolles' apartment, wooden decorated boxed ceilings and stuccoed walls with two cycles of frescoes named 'Allegorical' and 'Samson's feats' were uncovered. Lascaris Palace then became the headquarter of the Regional Assembly of Piedmont.

The Councillors' room, dug from below the courtyard without damaging external structures, was renovated in January 1997.

In 2000 the wooden lockings of the gallery windows were restored.

In 2002 three rooms were renewed on the ground floor of the Palace (before there was the Library of Regione Piemonte) known as "the President's Hall", "the Flag" and "the Councilmen".

In 2006 a significant recovery of the "Hall of Honour" dedicated to the memory of Aldo Viglione, a great Regional Council President who died during his charge - with stretching of Damascus tapestries to the walls and furnishings according to the Baroque style of the aulic rooms.