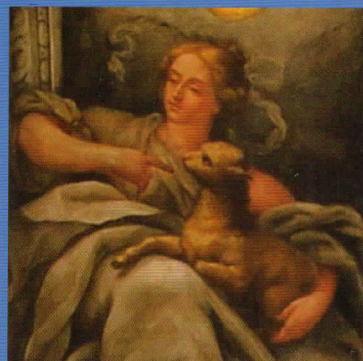


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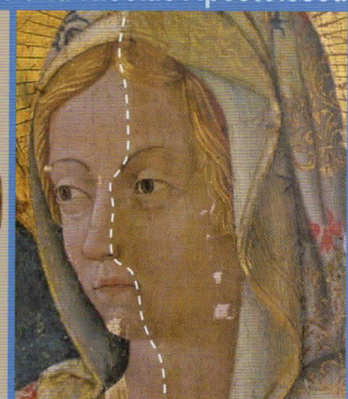
## 11<sup>th</sup> European Symposium on Religious Art, Restoration & Conservation

Proceedings book



*Edited by*

María Luisa Vázquez de Ágredos-Pascual  
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The Romanic arch exposed in the Museum of Colle del Duomo in Viterbo (Italy), 12th century *Credit: Claudia Sorrentino*  
Hasmonean coin (Jannaeus) found in the ritual area of Magdala (Israel) archaeological excavations. Eight pointed star in diadem. *Credit: Andrea Garza-Díaz Barriga*

IR photo of the piece "Circle of Joos van Cleve, *Crucified Christ, with the Virgin Mary, Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint John the Evangelist*, oil on panel, 66,5 x 44,25 cm. Private collection" *Credit: Marta Raich, Jessica Martí & Miquel Herrero*

Adoration of the Magi from the Saint-Lazare cathedral in Autun (France, 12th century) *Credit: Salvatore Sindoni*

'The Madonna with Child' Church of Santa María la Mayor of Oliva (Valencia, Spain) - after the restauration *Credit: María Francisca Sarrió-Martín & Luis Bertomeu-Contreras*

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Embouchure arch of the Saint Juan Nepomuceno's Chapel, Church of Saint Andrew, Valencia (Spain), (1751 - 1778). *Credit: Giannotta Gaetano*

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Liturgical book from Chapter Library, Valencia (Spain), Ms 125, fol. 2r. *Credit: María Luz Mandingorra Llavata & Vicent Pons Alós*

11<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN SYMPOSIUM ON RELIGIOUS ART,  
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*PROCEEDINGS BOOK*

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# ESRARC 2019

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Dear Colleagues,

Several years ago I had the immense pleasure to attend my first *European Symposium on Religious Art, Restoration and Conservation*, the driving forces for which are Romania and professor Iulian Rusu. Even then I believed that an international meeting such as this *Symposium* was a hugely important scientific initiative for Europe for several reasons. Firstly, because of what heritage represents for any population, which is of course identity. International Cooperation Master Plans continue to invest in heritage because the research, intervention and value enhancement activities carried out in this area reinforce the Cultural Identity of our peoples, thus contributing to the Local Development of countries, in both rural and urban environments. Work in the field of Cultural Heritage therefore requires a commitment to strengthening the community and promoting Human Development. If, in addition, this work centers on religious Cultural Heritage, the commitment is even greater since this type of heritage encompasses countless traditions, customs, beliefs, rites, chants, sounds, smells, and other thousand-year-old elements that make up the rich intangible heritage to which each culture feels strongly united generation after generation. This is a sacred matter because it reminds us all of who we are. If, for centuries religions have opened the borders between peoples and cultures, and these borders are continuing to open, the aim of this *European Symposium on Religious Art, Restoration and Conservation* has always been to create an environment in which experts from different countries and creeds from both East and West can come together and debate. In this way, this Symposium has become a space for promoting scientific exchange and progress in which religion does not act as a barrier between cultures but as the argument that unites us all and a means for raising social awareness. In this eleventh edition of the *Symposium* we welcome contributions from researchers from Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Middle East, Mexico, and other regions. Contained within these pages are the religious heritages of the three great Western religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) in their ancient and contemporary contexts, as well as Orthodox art and artistic manifestations from other cultural worldviews such as the ancient Mesoamerican. It is clear, therefore, that religion is capable of creating spaces for promoting union and dialogue that are as edifying from the human and scientific perspectives as this *European Symposium*. Finally, we should also highlight another aspect of this *Symposium* that helps to make it a melting pot of knowledge in a multitude of directions: its interdisciplinary nature. The researchers who will present their work belong to a wide range of fields and disciplines and include historians, historians of art, restorers, architects, archaeologists, geographers, engineers, chemists, physicists, philologists and journalists, as well as experts in mass social media in view of the importance of their work for increasing the visibility of Cultural Heritage.

Last year in the beautiful city of Prague, when it was decided to hold this year's *Symposium* in Valencia, we were extremely grateful and honored to assume such an important legacy. The cultural and religious mosaic that Valencia has always been lends meaning and significance to this choice. The fact that this *Symposium* will be hosted by the Universitat de València, the oldest university in our region with over 500 years of history dedicated to education and research, underlines this meaning and significance. It is also underlined by the fact that the Faculty of Geography and History, given its total commitment to Heritage, Culture and Society, will be the mouthpiece for this international conference. We are sure that this *11th European Symposium on Religious Art, Restoration and Conservation* will enhance the quality of previous Symposiums and lay the foundations for future editions.

Maria Luisa Vázquez de Ágredos-Pascual  
Faculty of Geography and History  
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## THE BENEDICTINE CHURCH AND MONASTERY OF SANTA MARIA MADDALENA OF CORLEONE. WORKS OF ART AND DOCUMENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This work examines the different phases of construction of the church and the monastic complex of Santa Maria Maddalena of Corleone, an important centre in the Sicilian hinterland, focusing in particular on the modern age. The unpublished archival sources investigated, as well as identifying the workers involved in the work, make important artists come to light. Subsequently, it moves on to the identification of the still existing works of sacred art, never scientifically investigated and collected together for the first time.

**Keywords:** Corleone, Benedictine monastery, sacred art, decorative arts, painting, sculpture, silverware, textiles

### INTRODUCTION

Corleone, called by the historiographic tradition of modern age “royal city of a hundred churches”, reveals further pieces of its religious and artistic life with the news that emerged from the unpublished research on the monastic complex of Santa Maria Maddalena with a further emphasis on the cultural and artistic richness of the Animosa civitas [1-3]. The ancient monastic complex, located near the current cemetery area to the north-east of the city walls, traditionally dates back to the foundation of Pope Gregory the Great, as suggested by the 1787 manuscript by Constantine Bruno [4, 5]. Guglielmo II after the foundation of the Benedictine abbey and the church of Santa Maria La Nuova in Monreale included in the endowment of the monastery also Corleone, therefore, in 1177, the archbishop of Palermo Gualtiero gave the monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena to Theobald, bishop and abbot of Santa Maria La Nuova. In 1180 Archbishop Gualtiero repeated the concession and in 1183 Pope Lucius III confirmed it. From the end of the sixteenth century to the first decades of the following century, the monastic complex was enlarged and the church underwent modernisation and rebuilding, after which there were interesting commissions. The sixteenth-seventeenth-century church was completely demolished in 1728 and rebuilt according to the project of Father Giuseppe Mariani, engineer and architect of the Royal Court, followed by a further phase of enrichment of the sacred furnishings [State Archive of Palermo, Fund for Suppressed Religious Corporations of Corleone, Monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena, vol. 516].

### OPERATIONAL GOALS

The complex building events of the ancient monastery are detailed in the modern era thanks to

the interesting unpublished documents kept in the Fondo Corporazioni Religiose Soppresse of the State Archives of Palermo. The reported information enriches the knowledge of the artistic heritage of the period, unfortunately partly lost, testifying to the religiousness and devotion of said town and the cultured and refined patronage of the abbesses of noble lineage, belonging to the Garlano, Maringo, Firmaturi, Sarzana families. The unpublished archival research has further investigated modern age documents, but it has also dwelt on brief references to the medieval period to highlight the overall wealth of the monastery under consideration. The careful analysis of the remaining artistic heritage, linked above all to the enrichment of the sacred furnishings following the eighteenth-century reconstruction, has made it possible to identify some interesting works, most of them unpublished or briefly mentioned by local scholars, which will be collected and presented here for the first time.

### RESULTS

Among the ancient works still retained is the precious “Officium divinum”, illuminated codex, now preserved in the Municipal Library of Palermo (4QqA2), signed in 1433 by the Amanuense and miniaturist Amato di Fucarino [6], to be referred probably to the commission of the abbess Elena De Nazano, belonging to a family of Lombard origin, well integrated in the political and administrative life of Corleone, daughter of Giacomo and Isolda, who ruled the monastic institute between 1399 and 1440 [7-10]. An important artist who worked in Corleone at the end of the Middle Ages is Tommaso De Vigilia, in contact with the Benedictine monastery for which he painted the Saint John the Evangelist, now preserved in the Regional Gallery





of Sicily in Palazzo Abatellis, work signed and dated 1492 [11]. Also kept in the Sicilian Gallery, but from the Corleone monastery, is the polychrome marble statue of the Madonna and Child made in the early decades of the sixteenth century by Antonello Gagini (1478-1536) [12]. The patronage of the nuns was accompanied by that of their wealthy families. Costantino Bruno in his manuscript of 1787 wrote as follows: "The ancient church of this Monisterium inspired so much devotion, that Joseph Garlano Seniore had the care to obtain dispensation to be able to be buried there and after having aided other churches and works, because his considerable wealth enabled him to do so, was buried in the green marble of Pensovola in Genoa". The documentary research carried out has revealed, among other things, the act of commissioning the marble tomb of the aforementioned nobleman. On 18 January 1607 the *magister* Giovanni Giacomo Cirasolo, sculptor "mediolanensis", undertook with Costantino Garlano, son of the deceased Giuseppe, to sculpt "unam sepulturam sepulcrum sive monumentum [...] petre vulgariter vocate di Ponsevera misca" according to a previously prepared drawing [State Archive of Palermo, Fund of Notarial Acts, Francesco Maringo, vol. 12492, f. 149]. The work in mixed marbles would have been much appreciated in Corleone where in 1630 the Cirasolo was called again to perform two marble burial monuments for the Sgarlata family in the church of San Domenico, which can still be admired, while there is no trace of the work of the Benedictine church [13]. As the unpublished payments testify, in the seventies of the seventeenth century the big chapel of the church was completed. It was decorated with paintings by Antonio Vasquez, painter and designer much appreciated by the Jesuits, who constantly intervened in the spiritual formation of the Corleone nuns and who probably also suggested the artists they trusted. Vasquez was probably assisted by a painter from Corleone, Marco Binello, as attested by a payment "for his work days, the price of gold, paint, oil and others for the large chapel made in the church of said monastery", already previously called by Benedictine nuns to perform the preparations of Holy Thursday, the so-called tombs [State Archive of Palermo, Fund of the Suppressed Religious Corporations of Corleone, Monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena, vol. 628, ff. 286, 288, 117, 294]. Of the artist, already mentioned in the research by Giovanni Mendola, as a young collaborator of the Palermo painter Paolo Geraci, active in 1632 in Corleone, the canvas of the *Madonna del Latte* retained [14]. In 1660 the benedectine nuns ordered

the tabernacle for the high altar to be done by the palermitan Francesco la Yndusa (Indusa, Iendusa), certainly to be identified with the woodcarver from Palermo, who a few decades earlier had made the 'Machina del Sepolcro' of the Cathedral of Palermo, artist who, together with Michele la Rosa and Giovanni Caramella, performed between 1660 and 1661 the cases of the organ of the church of San Matteo in Palermo, the latter also known and appreciated in Corleone where he made, together with Francesco D'Amari, for the church of San Domenico, the custody of the organ still kept. Among the figures of artists involved in the embellishment of the eighteenth-century church, we remember Antonio Pignataro and Michele Pappalardo of Palermo, the latter so far not known, "for having adored the chapel of that new church of said monastery up to the cornice, major arch, large paper inscribed with the major arch, Holy Spirit and others". The references to the stuccoes are noted by Mr. Sansiverino, probably Nicolò Sanseverino, well-known palermitan modeller of the eighteenth century. The troubled construction phases of the church, abandoned in the nineteenth century after a landslide, and the subsequent transfer to the church intra moenia of Santa Rosalia, have unfortunately dispersed many interesting works mentioned in documents, but despite everything there is still a group of valuable artifacts that are presented here. From the unpublished pastoral of 1649, to be ascribed to the commission of the abbess Maringo, to the valuable frame in jasper and gilded copper of 1753, which embellishes the oldest painting depicting Santa Maria Maddalena (Fig. 1), the carved and gilded wooden chair, the work of an artist from Palermo in 1762 (Fig. 2), covered in the seat and back with red velvet embroidered in gold and spun silver, the interesting paliotti in velvet or textured fabric embroidered with gold and silver threads and embellished with pearls, gems and coral grains. It is hypothesized that it may have been the nuns themselves who carried out the valuable embroidery of the paliotti still kept for the total absence in the numerous unpublished registers examined of items of expenditure for embroidery, but only for the purchase of fabrics. In addition, on October 21, 1762 (11<sup>th</sup> Ind.), the payment of the tari 7 and grain ten "for two parabolas of Venice scissors for embroidery" was recorded, as well as the payment made on June 10, 1763 (11<sup>th</sup> Ind.) of tari 10 and grain 6 to master Domenico of Trapani "for having increased the loom of embroidery" and on July 1, 1763 (XI Ind.) again a payment to the same master of axe for having "framed the new embroidered frontlet", identified and catalogued (Fig. 3) [State Archive of Palermo, Fund of the





Suppressed Religious Corporations of Corleone, Monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena, vol., 628, f. 138; vol. 683, f. 236, vol. 685, f. 38].

## CONCLUSIONS

The research, besides the identification of the remaining works of art, contextualized in the cultural and artistic environment of the periods examined, and the regret of the loss of important masterpieces noted in the archival papers, such as the silver frontal with the representation of St. Benedict, makes well-known painters, sculptors, indorators, silversmiths emerge revealing a clientele attentive to the fashions of the time and well informed about the value of the artists involved from time to time in the enrichment of religious environments. Among these, in addition to the examples already mentioned, we remember the palermitan silversmith Nunzio Gino very active also for the Benedictine nuns of the monastery of the Holy Saviour of the same town. Moreover, looking through the faded pages of the volumes examined, other figures of artists not yet known come out of oblivion, such as the silversmiths Antonio Bellaroto and Vincenzo Costanzo, the latter certainly one of the members of the famous family [15].

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Fig. 1 – Sicilian workers, *Santa Maria Maddalena*, about 1650-1753, Corleone, church of S. Rosalia





Fig. 2 – Sicilian carver, *Chair*, 1762, Corleone, church of S. Rosalia



Fig. 3 – Sicilian manufacture, *Antependium*, 1762-1763, Corleone, church of S. Rosalia



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