



De Luca Editori d'Arte s.r.l.

PRESS RELEASE

Presentation of the Special Volume
of the *Bollettino d'Arte*, Ministry of Culture

THE MEDAGLIERE OF PALAZZO REALE IN TURIN HISTORY AND RESTORATION OF THE ROOM AND COLLECTIONS

Thursday, December 11, 2014 at 4.00 pm
Palazzo Chiabrese, Salone degli Svizzeri – Piazza San Giovanni, 2 – Torino

The Medagliere is a small sumptuously decorated room of the Palazzo Reale in Turin. It lies between the actual palace and the frescoed gallery painted by Claudio Francesco Beaumont, destined to become the Royal Armoury by King Carlo Alberto of Savoy Carignano. This same name is also applied to Carlo Alberto's collection of coins, medals and seals for which the room was in fact designed. The volume presented here, a result of the combined effort of many and coordinated by Alessandra Guerrini, former Director of the Royal Armoury, tells the story of the development and construction from 1835 to 1838 of a singular and homogeneous project that was the king's strongest desire. The success of this project may be due to the particular attention it received from the court architect Pelagio Palagi, who, a coin collector himself, was directly interested in the subject matter. In placing the three institutions – Library, Armoury and Coin Collection – in a separate outer wing of the palace, Carlo Alberto was trying to create new cultural institutions in Italy based on the French model, both as a structure for study and as an illustration of the history of the kingdom, which he already considered that of a unified Italy. The planning of the Medagliere (the Cabinet of Medals according to its historical name) ends with the death of Carlo Alberto, as does the growth of the collection, which had reached a notable 28,600 coins, some 3,200 medals, plaques and military decorations, and more than 1,400 seals. From the end of the nineteenth century, the room was progressively forgotten; in 1958, the collections became part of the Medagliere Civico; finally, in 1977, the cabinets were put in storage and the room destined to accommodate an expansion of the Armoury. Research into different aspects of the Medagliere's history was carried out in tandem with the restoration begun in 1992 and financed entirely by the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo. The original appearance of the room which had been much altered during the 20th century has now been restored and the collections reinstated. The volume in question, together with a specially created photographic section, comprises a first part with a reconstruction of the history of the room and its collections, and a second part which covers restorations of the room's decorative components. Analyses of the painted surfaces and the wood used for the cabinetwork follow. Finally, there is a large appendix dedicated to the publication of the archival documents, the file of Palagi's drawings for the room as well as a summary list of artists and artisans employed.

For more information contact the *Bollettino d'Arte* and the *Direzione Regionale del Piemonte*
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