



Projet Erasmus+ Namur - Marsala

" Patrimonia "



A la découverte du patrimoine historique, architectural et culturel

Palatine Chapel in Palermo



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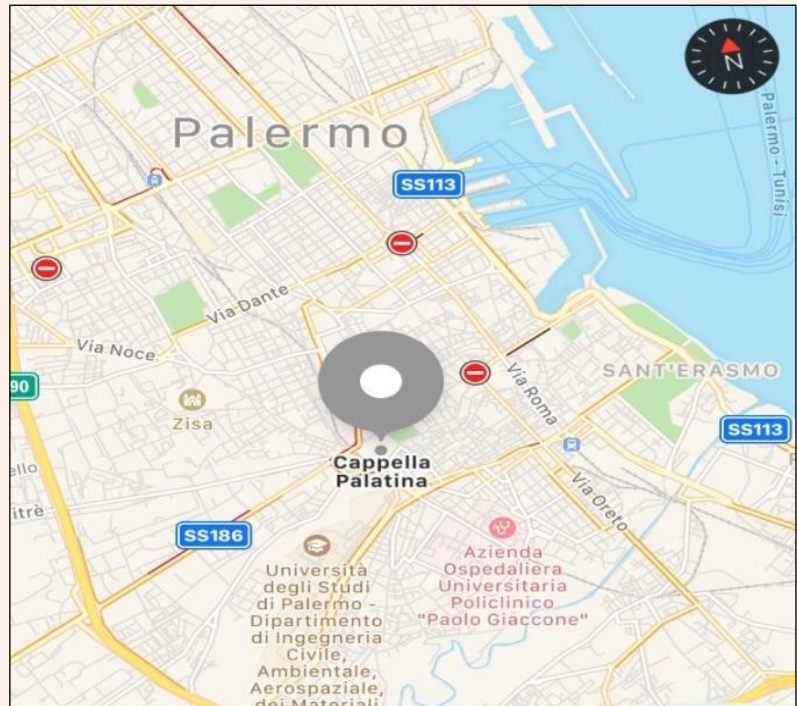
Translated by Timothy Foncoux 



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ABSTRACT

The Palatine Chapel is located in Palermo, in one of the most prestigious neighborhoods of the city center.



HISTORY

From the ninth to the twelfth century the meeting of Islamic and Byzantine cultures, already present on the spot with the Roman culture brought by the new rulers, participates in the birth of a new, unique, artistic and architectural style.

One of the most representative structures of this period was the Palatine Chapel in Palermo. In 1129 the Chapel was built by Ruggero II as a private chapel of his Royal Palace in Palermo, it was completed in 1143. It is one of the most significant monuments of the Norman art, because it merges Roman and Arab architectural elements with the splendid Byzantine mosaics depicting Christ the King.

Aragonese Period

At the Renaissance time, privilege is granted on January 11, 1416 to Gaeta to order the Court of Real Heritage to dedicate every year 20 people to maintain the Chapel. In 1458, King Giovanni II of Aragon ordered restoration works for the repair of the roof. The restorations are found in particular in the scene depicting the Resurrection of Tabitha. Among the architecture is a part of the chapel with an octagonal plan. The dome was clearly inspired by Brunelleschi's dome. Indeed, it recalls that of the cupola of the Santa Maria del Fiore cathedral in Florence.

Spanish Period

In 1549 Tommaso Dazello often quotes in "The history of Sicily" the disastrous situation in which the building was located, to the point that it was possible to see the Palatine Chapel through the ruins. The situation improved when the viceroys of Sicily raised to their residence the structures of the Palace of the Normans by improving it.

Savoyard Period

In 1714, the new king Vittorio Amedeo II of Savoy, through the royal heritage court, raises funds for the maintenance of the temple.

Bourbon period

Between 1717 and 1753 the restoration works continued with the recovery, the repair and the realization of new mosaics of the major altar and the completion and the erection of the marble statue representing Saint Pietro, work of Giovanni Battista Ragusa. Externally, a new cycle was realized, an allegory of the particular historical moment, marked by the events of Davide Assalonne, and characterized by the medallion in which are reproduced the profiles of Ferdinand III and Maria Carolina.

Contemporary Period

Damaged by the earthquake of September 2002, it was restored and completed in July 2008. The restoration project, written by architect Guido Meli, director of the "Regional Center for the restoration" of the Sicilian region, was financed by the rich German Reinhold Würth for more than 3 million euros. The works were executed by a group of cultural property restructurers under the technical direction of architect Mario Li Castri. Tourist services are provided by the Federico II's Foundation..

BIBLIOGRAPHY: [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappella_Palatina_\(Palermo\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappella_Palatina_(Palermo))

ARCHITECTURE

The private chapel temple, in addition to the place of worship on the ground level, is 33 meters long and 13 meters wide. To the left of the Chapel, we can see a Latin church divided by 10 granite columns in 3 naves and on the right, in the presbytery, we can recognize a small Eastern Christian church, that is to say Byzantine square plan topped by a hemispherical dome, such as those seen in the East, Greece, or Turkey.



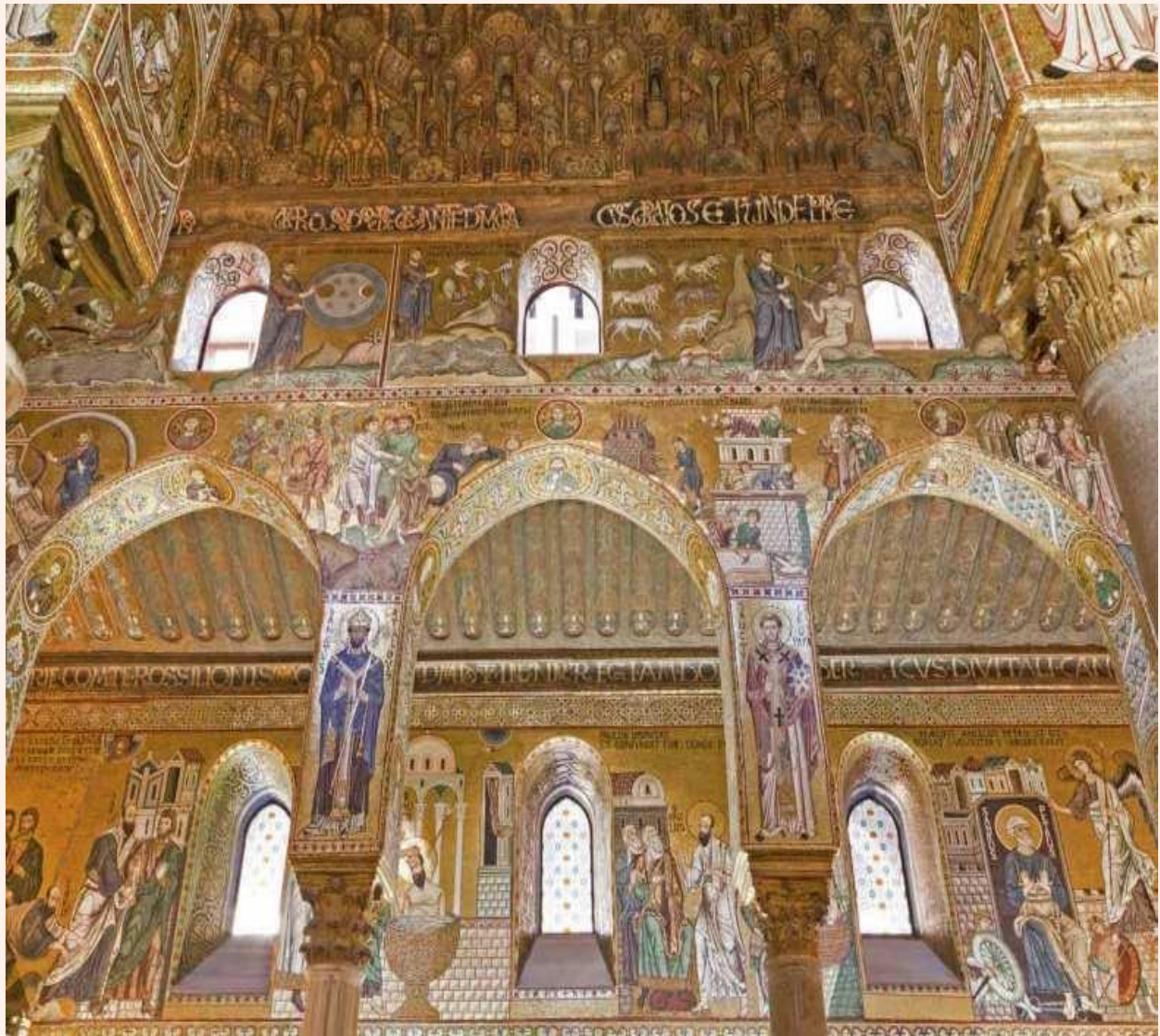
The wall of the right aisle is the adjacent lodge overlooking the Maquida courtyard. The dome and the bell tower were originally visible on the drawing of the Palace before being included in the aggregate of the buildings of the Royal Palace, following the constructions operated by the viceroys during the Spanish period. The wall houses a stone clock, working with water, intended to mark the canonical hours, bearing engraved inscriptions in Greek, Latin and Arabic. The first impression is that we enter a normal Christian church. If we look better at its structure, we can recognize two small churches. Even the inscriptions on the walls in Latin and Greek testify to the fact that in this little chapel, of Ruggero II's period, the two religious components are balanced and the masses were formalized in Greek and Latin. The presbytery has a square shape that represents the 4 elements: air, fire, water and earth. And then we see the octagon shaped casing. In fact, the number 8 represents both the Resurrection and the universal judgment.

The chapel has a basilica shape. The floor is in mosaic of hard stones and the walls are covered with marble with mosaic squares that have twice been executed: we think that the oldest date back to the 1240s, while those of the central nave should go back to the years 1260-1270.

The central altar dates back to the 1700s, the walls of the central nave represent episodes taken from the Old Testament, while in the aisles are related episodes from the Acts of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In addition to the Byzantine mosaics, the Palatine Chapel is famous for its sculpted ceilings, made by Fatimid school teachers, an artistic expression typical of Arab buildings in Maghreb and Egypt.

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ARTISTIC AND RELIGIOUS WORK :



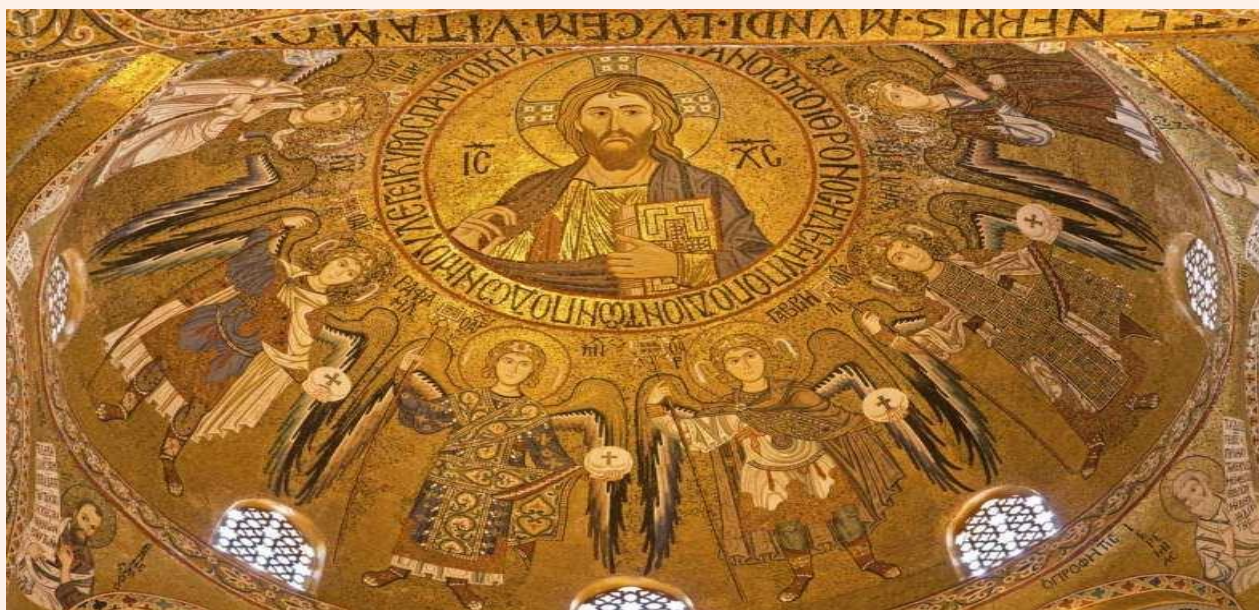
Inside the chapel are about 750 paintings depicting the wish for a happy life after death. These paintings represent many scenes mainly related to Muslim traditions and animals, such as eagles, peacocks or figures like trees or monsters. One of the most characteristic paintings is the separation of earth and sea.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: <http://www.palermoviva.it/la-cappella-palatina/>



The artists worked for God. Indeed, the love and perfection with which they worked and dedication turned only to the glorification of God. Indeed, according to the precepts of Islam, work is a form of worship. Other works inside the chapel include a monolithic candelabra and a marble sculpture representing lions biting humans and animals

Guy De Maupassant has defined the Palatine Chapel as the most beautiful church in the world, the most amazing religious jewel dreamed by human thought. It recently joined the UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Christ Pantocratore is a representation of Jesus typical of early Christian and even medieval Byzantine art, especially present in mosaics and frescoes. Jesus is represented in a majestic and severe attitude, seated on a throne, blessing with the three fingers of his right hand, according to the custom that remains in the Orthodox Church.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cristo_Pantocratore#Bibliografia