

## A convent and a private palace in symbiosis, rich of history and transformations during centuries.

### Coexistence of tradition and innovation in a respectful restoration.

#### Type of intervention

Restoration  Rehabilitation / Renovation

#### Concerned elements on the intervention project

- 1. Foundations and underground structures
- 2. Vertical structures
- 3. Horizontal structures and vertical connections
- 4. Roof and terraces
- 5. Façade and building envelope
- 6. Finishes and completion elements
- 7. Integrate services
- 8. General strategies for building recovery

**Site** Church-Convent of S. Anna la Misericordia & Bonet Palace, S. Anna la Misericordia square, Palermo, Sicily, Italy

**Objectives** Restoration intervention, now the Palermo's E. Restivo Gallery of Modern Art of Palermo (GAM).

**Property** Public: Municipality of Palermo

**Designer** General project & construction management: Municipality of Palermo  
Arch. M. Li Castri, Arch. C. Bustinto, Ing. G. Letizia  
Chief engineer of restoration: Eng. Salvatore Bruno  
Integrated services Design: Eng. G. Pecorella  
Historical research: Prof. Arch. M. Giuffrè, Arch. S. Di Fede, Arch. F. Scaduto  
Executing company: I.T.E.R

**Date** 1998-1999



## Background to the intervention

Fig.0: View of the cloister of the convent, often used for concerts. © Francesco Renda

The monumental complex, Church and Convent, had been built in an area formed in the past by an unhealthy inlet bordered by rocky cliffs, filled by the alluvial deposits of the *Kemonia* river and reinforced by landfill materials. It is one of the monuments, although not very ancient, that was more subject to disastrous events in the last three centuries.

The Church of *St. Anna* is located in the square of the same name, in the ancient district of Palermo called the *Guzzetta* and, subsequently, *Misericordia* plane.

Towards the end of the 16th century, the Fathers of the Third Order of San Francesco acquired the adjacent *Bonet* Palace that was expanded and incorporated into a new convent. In addition, they transformed an already existing chapel into a church dedicated to *Santa Maria della Misericordia* on whose high altar the image of the miraculous Madonna della Pietà was placed (1470). Then, thanks to alms and contributions of illustrious Panormitan citizens of the time and the generosity of the city's Senate, they decided to build a larger temple, built according to late Renaissance forms.

The original project was entrusted to the Senate architect *Mariano Smiriglio* who incorporated the original church into the transept. The works began in 1606 and lasted more than thirty years also because the foundations rested on a muddy and rock-free soil as originally there was a bend in the *Kemonia* stream on that site.

Adjacent to the church, the Convent was built, for the religious of the Franciscan Third Order, between 1606 and 1648 around a grandiose Renaissance portico. The convent is accessed through an external portal that leads to the staircase.

In the same area, between 1488 and the early 1500s, the Palace of Gaspare Bonet, a Catalan merchant, was built; of that palace the south-eastern part containing the tower remains. The building, in the second half of the 1600s, was annexed to the Convent and adapted to the needs of the Franciscan fathers.

In 1872, with the abolition of religious orders, the church and the convent were requisitioned and handed over to the Municipality of Palermo which assigned various uses: it was the seat of the municipal customs guards and then, after 1878, of the high school called Umberto I.

Only in 1930, the Convent returned to the friars who occupied a part of it and resumed saying mass in the Church which, for years, had been used as a "municipal granary".

In over a century of history, the Gallery of Modern Art has gone through a long journey that has led to an increase in collections, but above all to its affirmation as one of the most modern and vital cultural institutions in the city of Palermo. Named after as Empedocle Restivo Modern Art Gallery, promoter of its constitution at the beginning of the last century, the Museum opened its doors in a space of the Politeama Theater (*ridotto*) on 24th May 1910, immediately setting as the main objective to make available the testimonies of the exalting season of the belle époque in a period of great cultural ferment full of new projects for the city.

Today it is a modern art gallery; it hosts 214 selected works, 176 paintings and 38 sculptures.

A story written year after year with an eye to the future and which has continued since 2006 within the monumental complex of *St. Anna*, the new venue suitable - both structurally and publicly - to the needs of a museum of the 21st century.

In the new spaces, with a renewed scientific order, the artistic works of art are exhibited into fourteen thematic and monographic sections that illustrate the path of the figurative arts in Italy between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, testifying the role that painters and sculptors have assumed as national importance in the events of modernist Palermo.

Among the greatest masterpieces: the large monumental canvases by *Giuseppe Sciuti*, the landscapes by *Francesco Lojacono*, the naturalism of *Antonio Leto*, the Art nouveau references of *Ettore De Maria Bergler*, the sparkling and luminous taste of *Giovanni Boldini* and the dense season of the twentieth century, testified by authors such as *Massimo Campigli*, *Felice Casorati*, *Mario Sironi*, *Renato Guttuso*, *Franz von Stuck*, who give back the atmospheres and suggestions of a modern European capital.

The general project for the scientific organization of the Museum was curated by a group of scholars coordinated by *Fernando Mazzocca* and composed of *Gioacchino Barbera*, *Luisa Martorelli*, *Antonella Purpura* and *Carlo Sisi*. The installation project was signed by *Corrado Anselmi* and the lighting design by *Leonardo Adragna*.

## Description of the building

From 1994 to 2001, the Historical Center of the city of Palermo was affected by an extraordinary recovery activity: over 600 billion of the old liras, more than 200 worksites of public initiative and many others of private initiative, these are the big numbers that remember us that lucky season.

A dedicated regulation, the urban planning instrument (the Historic center of the City of Palermo was in those years equipped with an Executive Detailed Plan (P.P.E.), approved

with a decree of the territory and environment assessor (D.A.R.T.A.) of the Sicilian Region n. 525 of 13 July 1993), the creation of a special Office (Office and related Department for the Historic Center), endowed with a vast autonomy of action, technical skills and equipment and also the availability of specific economic resources; all these factors had represented the causes triggering a construction impulse for the city, in some ways truly and still today unmatched.

The interventions, coordinated by a program approved by the City Council had - as first objective - the recovery of the vast municipal property inside the Historic Center, including the former Convent of Sant'Anna la Misericordia located at the Lattarini quarter, within the so-called Tribunali district.

As it was previously said, in the fifteenth century the convent was originally the residence of the Bonet Catalan merchant family, the palace and its appurtenances then had passed, first, to the Jesuit Congregation and, later, to the Bologna family, and finally to the Franciscans of the Renewed Third Order, who enlarged and transformed them - in the second half of the sixteenth century - into a convent.

With the suppression of religious Orders and Corporations, starting from 1866, the church and the annexed convent were destined to profane uses; thus, began the phase of greater decadence and heavy transformation of the religious complex. Almost completely unusable after the damages caused by the earthquake of March 1968, the monument was abandoned and in a state of disrepair until the mid-1990s.

In April 1996 the restoration works started, accompanying the monument to represent the headquarters of the Civic Gallery of Modern Art (G.A.M.).

At that historical time the building site, due to the amount of the

works (amounting, as we said, to over 6 billion of ancient liras) and for historical-artistic importance, assumed a strong media value for the municipal administration, which had identified precisely in the recovery of the historic center one of the main programmatic and force points.

Sicily in general, and particularly Palermo, in those years lived a season of strong social and cultural redemption after the mafia massacres of 1992 (in May 1992 in Capaci (PA) and in July of the same year in Palermo, in fact the judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino along with their bodyguards were killed in a mafia attack) and the attacks of cultural heritage in the year 1993 (we would recall here, between May and July 1993, the mafia attacks to the Georgofili Tower, alongside the Uffizi museum in Florence, to the Pavilion of Contemporary Art (PAC) in Milan and to the basilicas of St. Giovanni in Laterano and St. Giorgio al Velabro in Rome). A new civic conscience permeated more and more broad categories of civil society and, especially after the courageous example of the entrepreneur Libero Grassi (killed by the mafia in 1991), also the entrepreneurial world, in particular the Sicilian construction companies, were permeated by a renewed yearning of legality.

Despite these premises, in September 1996 the entrance gate to the construction site of Sant'Anna la Misericordia convent was found closed, several times with bolts replaced and also many requests for money began to arrive, useful to guarantee alleged security guards and protections, what the chronicle taught us to call "pizzo" bribe: the I.T.E.R (Ravennate Cooperative of Interventions in the Territory), executing company of building works, with great courage chose the path of denunciation, shared also by the coeval Direction of Works (entrusted to the architects Mario Li Castri and Carmelo Bustinto and to the engineer Giuseppe Letizia, at that time all they functionaries of the Historic Center Office of the Municipality of Palermo) and the Municipal Administration.



Fig.1: The inner portal of the convent cloister, with the date of construction engraved. © Francesco Renda



Fig.2: The façade along the Croce dei Vespri square, during the restorations. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

Police forces intervened with their presence, day and night, of watchmen and plain clothes policemen on site; during the morning of 15 February 1997, at the opening of the construction site, the tragedy manifested itself to the first workers arrived on site: the southern branch of the sixteenth-century cloister had collapsed, or rather, a collapse had been provoked, making a revenge against the rejection of the so-called "pizzo" bribe and the choice of legality pursued by the building company and the client. "Unknown people" introduced themselves into the building site, operated a working machine, attached one of the gray stone Billiemi columns, a compact gray limestone of the cloister, with a steel cable and caused it to tip over.

## The Diagnosis of the building (values and state)

### CHURCH FAÇADE

The restorations made it possible to analyze the state of conservation of the stone materials that make up the façade of the church, and the deterioration and damage were evident. The shell limestone of the exposed structural ribs was strongly degraded by polluting deposits, more adherent in the parts protected from the run-off of the rains. The columns, bas-reliefs and statues in gray Billiemi limestone and Carrara marble were also covered with thick crusts and these were coupled with biological patinas and infesting biological encrustations. The chemical-physical degradation of the lithic materials was instead attributable to water infiltrations, with evident presence of saline efflorescence and consequent disintegration of the constituent material, implemented by the wind action.

The bedding mortar for the segments, based on lime and aggregates with variable grain size, was partly intact, but detached from the stone. The statues showed advanced phenomena of stone disintegration, especially below the thick

crusts, causing difficulties in their removal, at the risk of compromising the pulverized surfaces.

Before the stone consolidation intervention, the surface deposits were removed, an indispensable phase for the more complex cleaning operations to be carried out for the removal of surface deposits and crusts; the pre-consolidation was carried out in relation to the original materials found in situ. In the presence of detached parts, re-assemblies were carried out



Fig.3a-b: Pre-consolidation and cleaning works, as well as freeing up closed openings. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

using epoxy adhesives, co-agents and by means of pins made up of fiberglass bars. All the grouting of mortar in depth and to integrate the missing stone parts was carried out with hydraulic mortars, selected aggregates and natural pigments. The restored plasters were subjected to a glaze which was useful for

chromatic rebalancing and the newly created plasters followed rigorous recipes aimed at restoring traditional lime-based plasters that conform to the existing components in terms of grain size and color.



Fig.4: Disinfestation intervention through the application of herbicide. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

## Restoration works

The restoration works carried out by the Municipality of Palermo, with the high supervision of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, made it possible to allocate a large part of the premises of the convent to the Gallery of Modern Art, thus fully returning it to the enjoyment of citizens.

In 1996 the Municipality of Palermo started a "building site of knowledge" which allowed the discovery of the fifteenth-century building. A long and demanding restoration work follows which recovers all the rooms, restoring the extraordinary site to the city and the charm of its internal courtyards and the magnificent cloister which, surrounded by the colonnade, connects the

complex to the Baroque church dedicated to St. Anna.

The entire complex underwent a thorough restoration: this allows the elimination of all the structures that had incorporated over the time and allows for structural consolidation, the restoration of part of the stone elements, the restoration of the roofs, with the exception of the body intended for cafeteria, the restoration of the external fronts and the colonnade of the cloister.

In a place so rich in history and charm, the large spaces were adapted and set to accommodate the permanent collections of the Museum, temporary exhibitions, museum activities and services. Over one thousand three hundred square meters of exhibition areas, library, historical archive, rooms for educational activities, conference rooms, bookshop, cafeteria-restaurant.

### CONVENT and BONET PALACE RESTORATION WORKS

The restoration works brought to light important testimonies of the original facies of the Bonet palace and the Convent of St. Anna, following the elimination of numerous superfetation and buildings added during the time. The methodological restoration process has combined historical archival research with critical surveying, the stratigraphic reading of materials, chemical-physical diagnostics, the interpretation of instability for structural verification, the conservation of the monument with the technological innovation necessary for the functionalization. The most significant and numerous findings of the ancient Bonet palace: it was possible to brought to light the portico with three pointed arches, supported by pillars and octagonal section, which had been entirely incorporated by wall structures; the access system to the internal courtyard from the side alley (vicolo dei Corrieri), the mullioned windows of the internal elevations of the noble floor, a portal with an ogival

frame, the "Catalan-style" windows on the ground floor, characterized by a stick frame and decorations floral and anthropomorphic, the "Pisan" mullioned windows on the northern façade of the courtyard and the round arch in stone ashlar useful to access the ground floor, the masonry of the cantonal. Wooden decorated floors, with the surviving tempera paintings, were also found, hidden by vaulted wooden ceilings. In the cloister of the Convent, the arcades were freed from the incongruous superfetation and closures made since the nineteenth century to better distribute the internal paths, according to the different uses and functions assigned to the building. The Billiemi compact limestone columns were cleaned by means of compresses of cleaning solutions with clay support.

The gaps in the plastic modeling of the architectural moldings and cornices, cornices and mullioned columns have been re-proposed simplified and without ornamentation and finishing details, in order to show the volumes and the original geometries of the elements only: they will therefore appear as the rough draft of the original ones, to the advantage of the overall legibility of the image of the building.



Fig.5: Discovery, incorporated in the masonry, of a sculpted capital. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

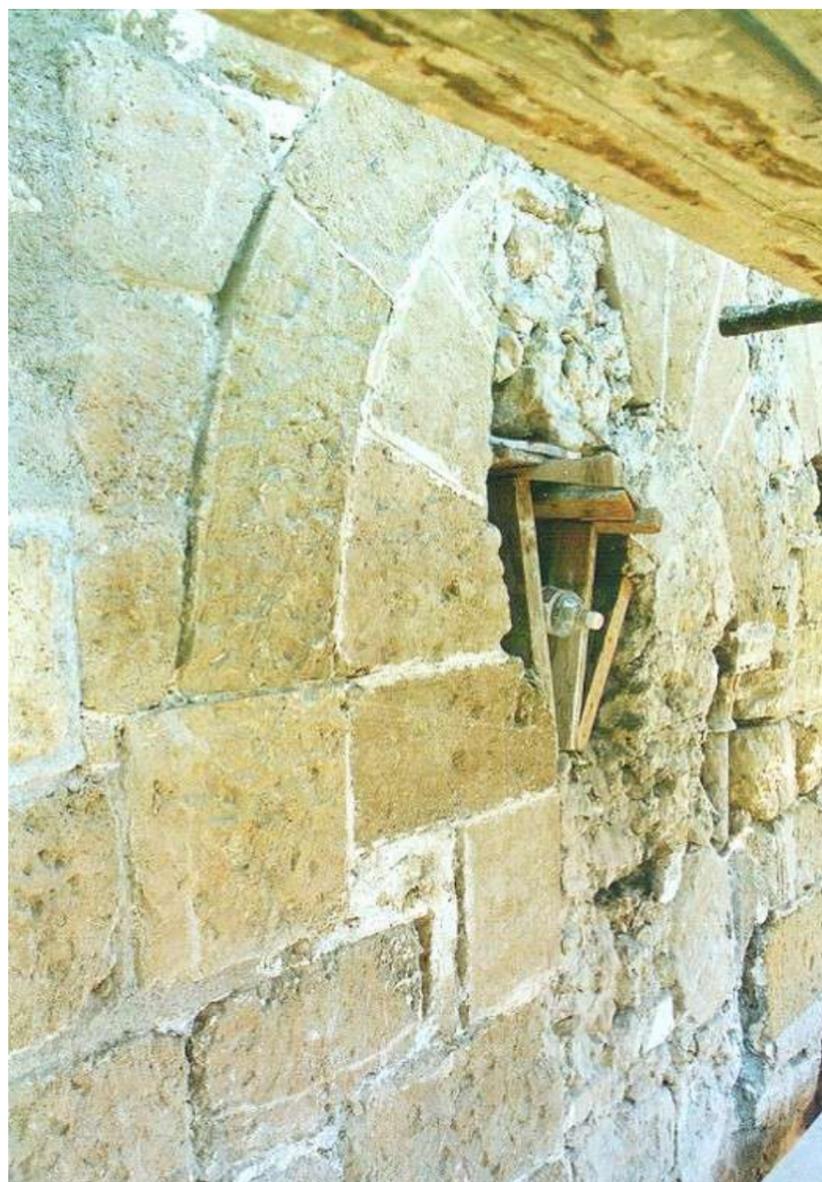


Fig.6a-b: Securing work on a reopened mullioned window and appearance of the "Catalan-style" cornices that have been chipped to hide them over time. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.7: The internal courtyard of the restored Bonet palace, during the visit with the Eng. Renzo Botindari, on the occasion of the Staff Training Course in Palermo (September 2021) of the EU Smart Rehabilitation 3.0 project. © Manfredi Saeli



Fig.8: The arches of an arm of the convent portico, before the restoration, with the stony arches closed by incongruous masonry. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.9: Start of demolition and restoration work on the convent portico. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.10: Detail of the arcades of the portico, after the restorations. © Francesco Renda

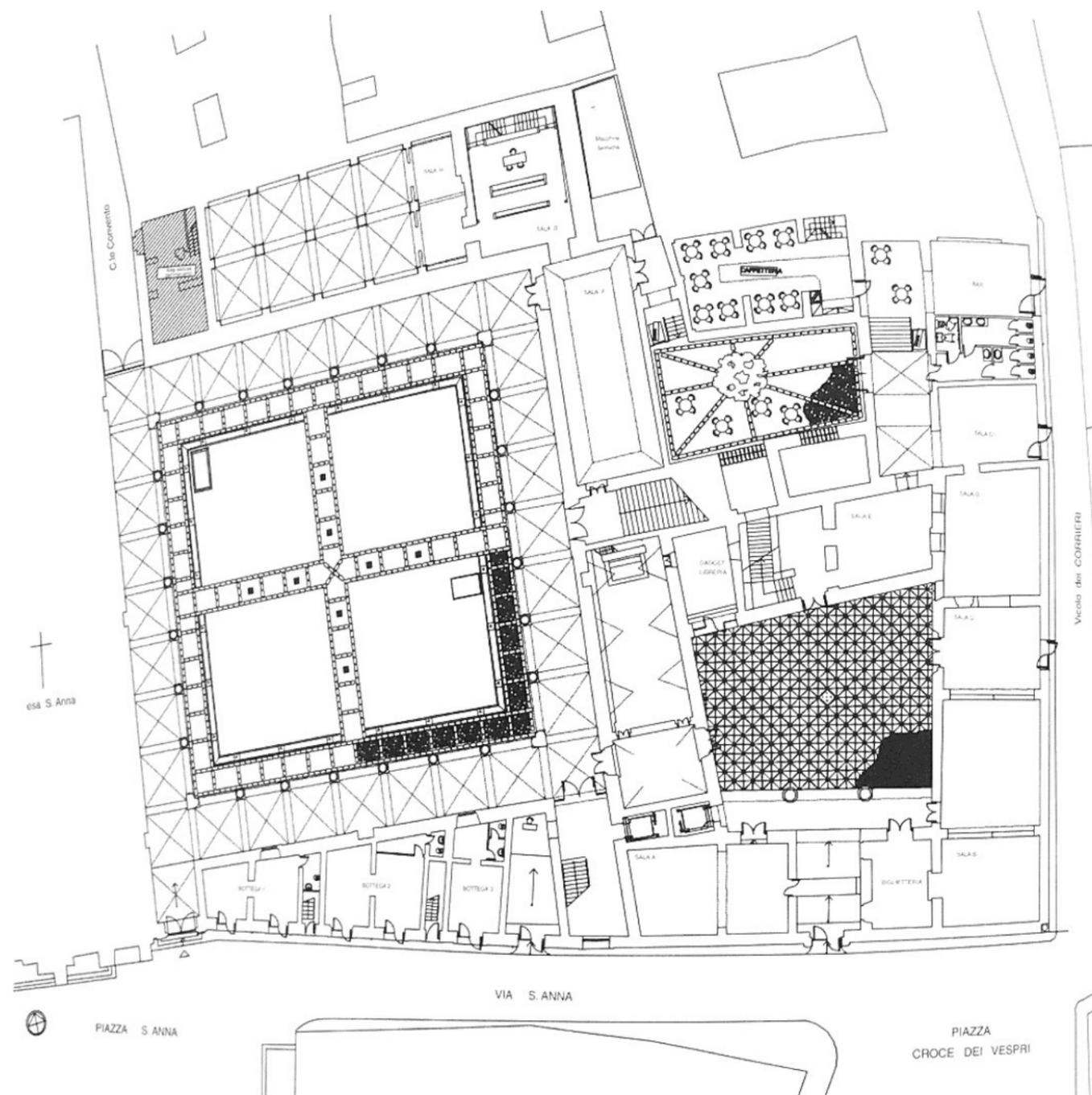


Fig.11: Ground floor plan of the convent with functional diagram of the new uses. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.12: Cleaning and plastering work on one of the columns of the portico, in compact gray limestone. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

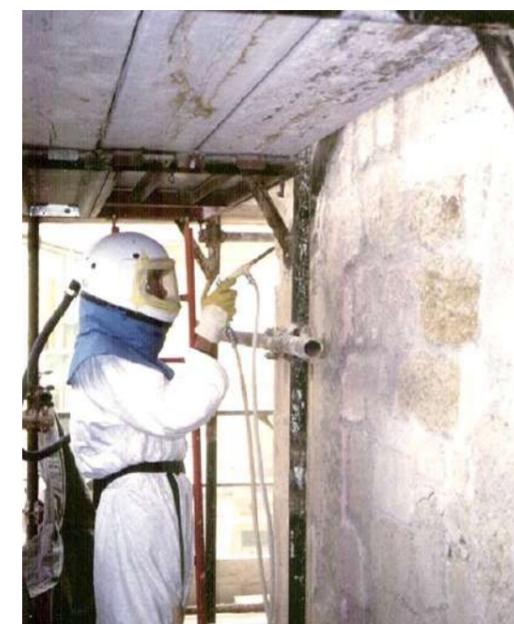


Fig.13: Micro-aero-abrasive cleaning interventions of the shell limestone wall faces. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.14: Restoration of the openings in on sight stone of the convent portico. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.15: Tempera painted wooden floor, before restoration works. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

### CONVENT'S ARCHES AND VAULTS RESTORATION & RECONSTRUCTION

A cloister of convent columns, following a calamitous event, broke with a plane of rupture inclined at about 30° and the cross vault supported by the column collapsed, dragging the two neighboring ones. A unique construction system with the respective supporting stony columns: another column was divided into two parts, with a nearly horizontal fracture plane, and the other one resting on the collapse material of the vaults, remaining miraculously intact. On reconstruction interventions in architectural restoration the theoretical schools have been confronting each other for years; in those years had appeared recent the restoring experience of the portico of the San Giorgio in Velabro church in Rome, collapsed following the mafia attack in 1993.

The "political value" of the restoration intervention has been extensively analyzed by the professor and Italian Architect Paolo Marconi in numerous essays; for the Sant'Anna la Misericordia cloister the municipal administration precisely intended to pursue – having also acquired the opinion of the engineer and historian Rosario La Duca, Professor at university (Palermo, 1923-2008, he's considered one of the greatest connoisseurs of the history and evolution of city of Palermo) - the path of restoration as the only viable one. Facing the (re)construction of a masonry vault in the XX century was not an ordinary activity; the training of construction engineers - and even more of architects - but also - and above all - of the workforce, has for too many years taken away from knowledge of materials and construction techniques.

The first activity was the survey of the collapse, useful to determine the trajectories that the columns, the ashlar of the arches and the vaults and - in general – of all the demolished elements, had followed: the direct survey, both

geometric-dimensional and material one, highlighted the original construction technique.

The attention paid to the materials of the local building tradition, accustoms the eye to recognize the compact stone used for the columns and capitals, the carving stone left in sight of the pulvini and arches on the external façade of the portico, as well as the materials coarsely squared, tied with wide joints of mortar and used for the apparatus of the nails of cross vaults, not pleasant to the sight and therefore plastered to the intrados.

Columns, Attic bases and capitals were made of "Billiemi stone", while the arches of the façades, the pulvini and the cross vaults were made of local shell limestone, porous and easily workable. The restoration was carried out reusing all the surviving materials for anastylosis, which were been cataloged

by type, origin and possibility of re-use.

The columns had been preliminarily restored, two by anastylosis and one by a new invoice, obtained from a monolithic block, expressly chosen in the Billiemi quarry. The arches of the façade were been restored using some special arching wooden framework, partially due to anastylosis, while the blocks irreparably damaged were replaced with elements of new workmanship, made ex novo using Sabucina stone; the quarries of Sabucina are located on the homonymous mountain, far about 10 km from the town of Caltanissetta (Sicily); a limestone that presents excellent mechanical properties with characteristic color and grain. The restoration of the colonnade and arches was followed by the substitution of the pulvini on the surrounding wall, also in this case using Sabucina limestone ashlars.

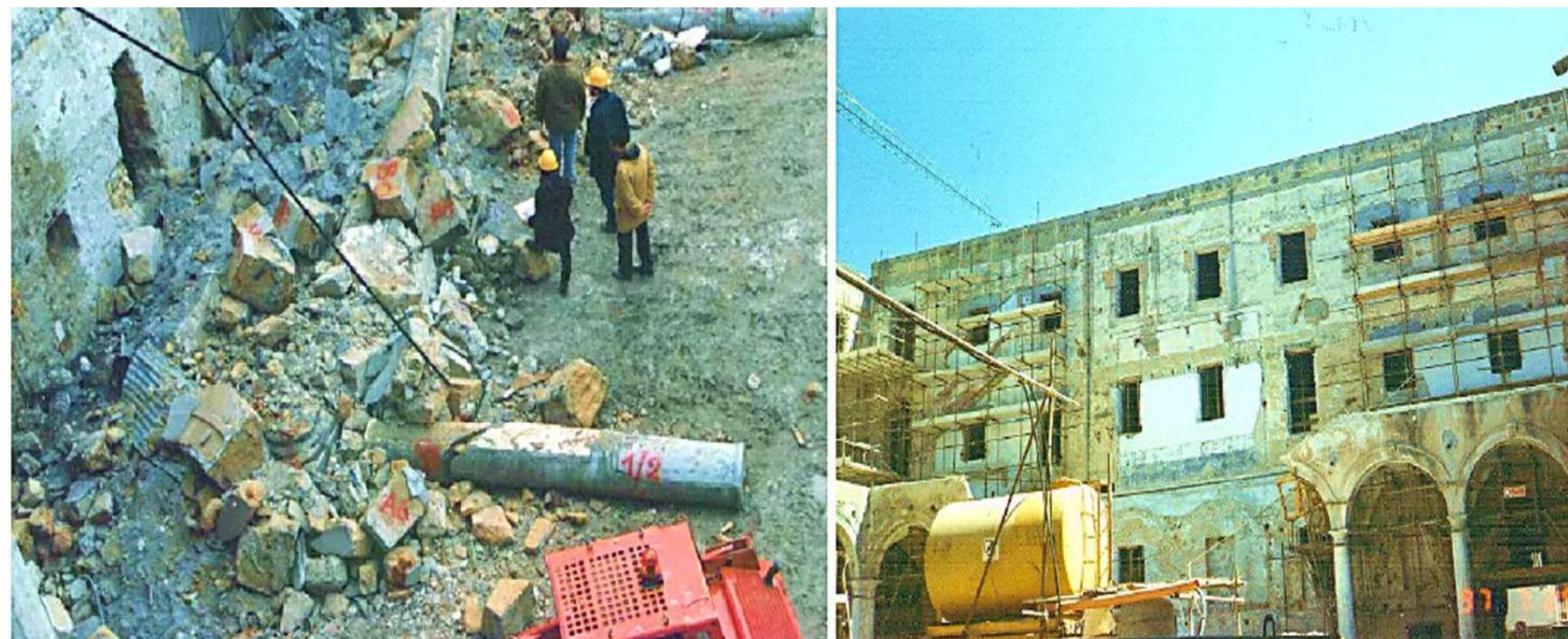


Fig.16: Collapse of an arm of the porch of the convent, following a mafia attack and start of the reconstruction and restoration works. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

This constructive experience allowed to go beyond the pragmatism of the building yard's need and to review the construction phases as a fundamental chapter of the stereotomy knowledge of the historical construction: "doing" also resulted "explaining" how this architecture had been constructed, in a continuous and renewed dialogue between designer and employed stone masons; not only, through the (re)construction phases the acquisition of knowledge reached high levels of technical depth, denouncing constructive defects and quality of technical elements, often being able to have true constructive sections, that only the collapse could determine.

Once these operations were completed, a wooden supporting framework was built, in order to realize the nails of the cross vaults. The curving wooden structure was made adapting the geometries of the pre-existing structures, so as to guarantee the continuity of the intrados and the mutual solidarity between all the vault parts. It's clear that the wooden carpentry assured a great safety for the operators, but mainly allowed to replicate the original construction technique, using limestone ashlar that were roughed out on site and tied with a mixed mortar of lime mortar (grassello), hydraulic lime and aggregates with a controlled granulometry spindle. The experience showed that with only a few days of technical training the construction workers acquired specialized and manual skills. The quality of the work and the speed of execution increased exponentially after the first tests of execution and a small pilot building yard, carried out on the sidelines and before starting.

Those workers were shortly thereafter called to intervene in other restoration interventions on vaulted systems. We are referring to the interesting reconstruction - for its re-proposing construction phases, masonry equipment and constituent materials - of the thin brick vaults defined in the Mediterranean area such as bóvedas tabicadas, timbrel vaults, the so-called Sicilian "dammsi realini" according to Sicilian language; in the

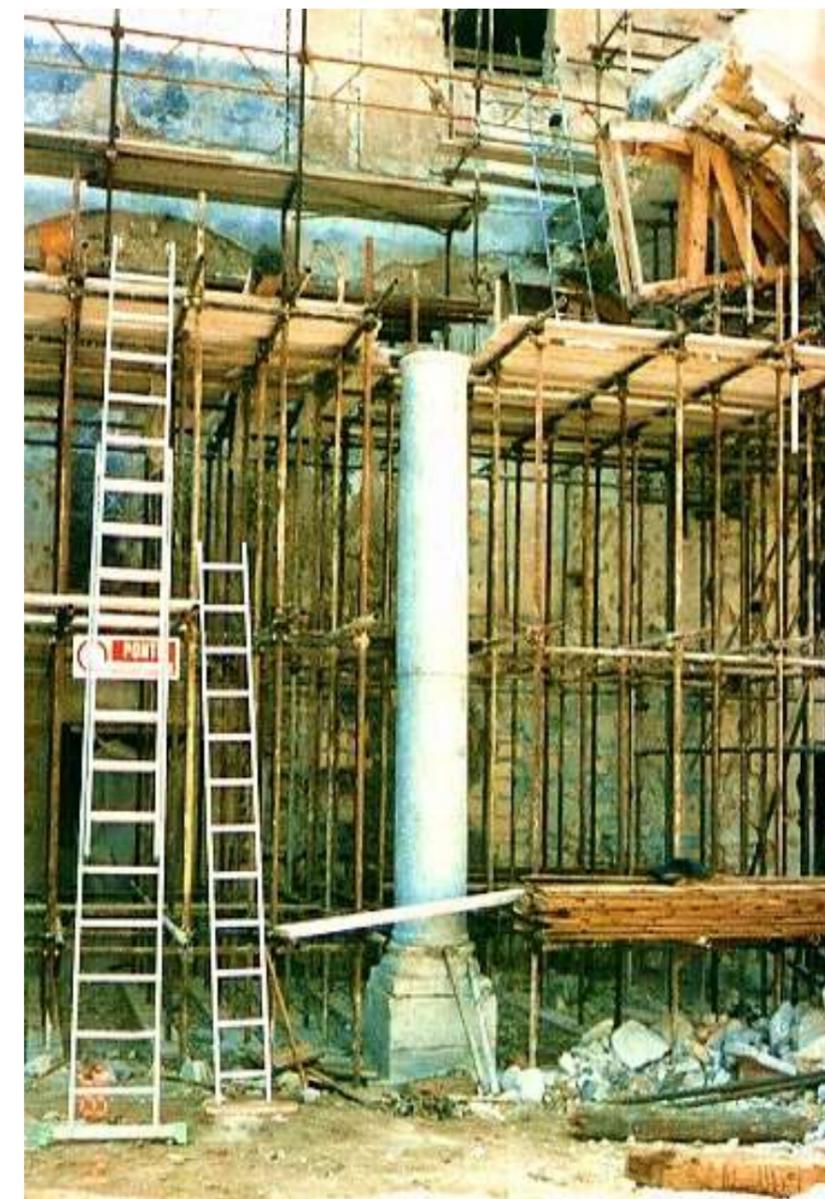
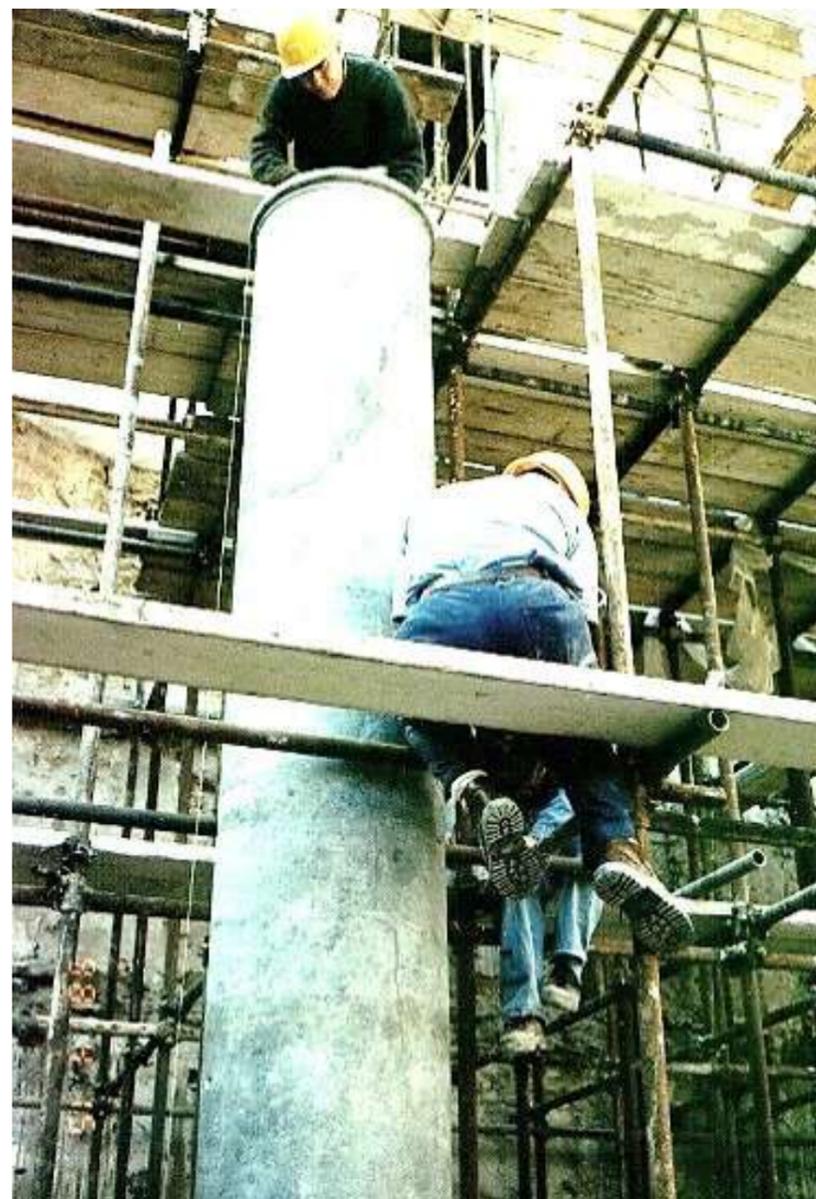


Fig.17a-b: Collapse of an arm of the porch of the convent, following a mafia attack and start of the reconstruction and restoration works: relocation of old and new columns of compact limestone. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.18: Relocation of old and new columns and capitals of compact limestone. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.19: Collapse of an arm of the porch of the convent, following a mafia attack and start of the reconstruction and restoration works: reconstruction of stony arches. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

particular case of St. Anna la Misericordia convent the construction typology is declined in cross vaults set on brick arches and pillars, featuring nails realized using flat tiles, horizontally placed on their flat surface and plastered with gypsum paste-mortar, following the appropriate realization of a wooden supporting framework. Singular appears in the lightening and stiffening structural system of dome-shaped counter-vaults, presenting a lowered shape, then recovered and re-proposed.

It is pointed out that this construction practice finds positive feedback from philological reconstructions for construction geometries and technological modalities in other Panormitan building yards, reiterating the contemporary challenge of the construction tradition, such as in the Bonocore palace near the Vigliena square. Reasons of cheapness, material-constructive compatibility, reduced invasiveness, lightness, insulation make the re-proposal of this construction technique an opportunity and an equally reassuring possibility in the recovery and/or

restoration yard, often the only way to proceed, avoiding the replacement of ancient vault systems, considered - wrongly - more reassuring than others.

Once the woodworking structure has been made, either continuous or partial, the first dry layer of bricks is placed on the extrados of the same, taking care of the well settlement and then it's possible to carry out the first layer of gypsum paste and water (often applied to portions of vault that are easy to manage

by the employed workers, so as to quickly allow the laying of the next layer, sheet, when the gypsum paste is still fresh and in a plastic state), even of millimeter thickness and taking care that this fills the joints between adjacent bricks. The different layers of juxtaposed bricks must not have coinciding joints and the bricks are also arranged in a different direction, with respect to the underlying layer, being very careful to clamp the vault well to the masonry, after making the suitable traces into the same masonry.



Fig.20a-b: Collapse of an arm of the porch of the convent, following a mafia attack and start of the reconstruction and restoration works: wooden centering useful for the reconstruction of stony arches and vaults. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.21: Collapse of an arm of the porch of the convent, following a mafia attack and start of the reconstruction and restoration works: reconstruction of stony vaults. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.22: The new timber vaults, after reconstruction works. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

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Fig.23: Reconstruction of collapsed brick timbered vaults. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

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Fig.24: The monumental staircase, today. © Francesco Renda



Fig.25: The inner courtyard of Bonet Palace, before restorations. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area



Fig.26: The inner courtyard of Bonet Palace, after restorations. © Manfredi Saeli



Fig.27: Consolidation intervention on a wooden floor, useful to the creation of an inside hollow space. © Francesco Renda



Fig.28: Consolidation works and structural reinforcements on wooden roofs. © Municipality of Palermo, Historical Center Technical Area

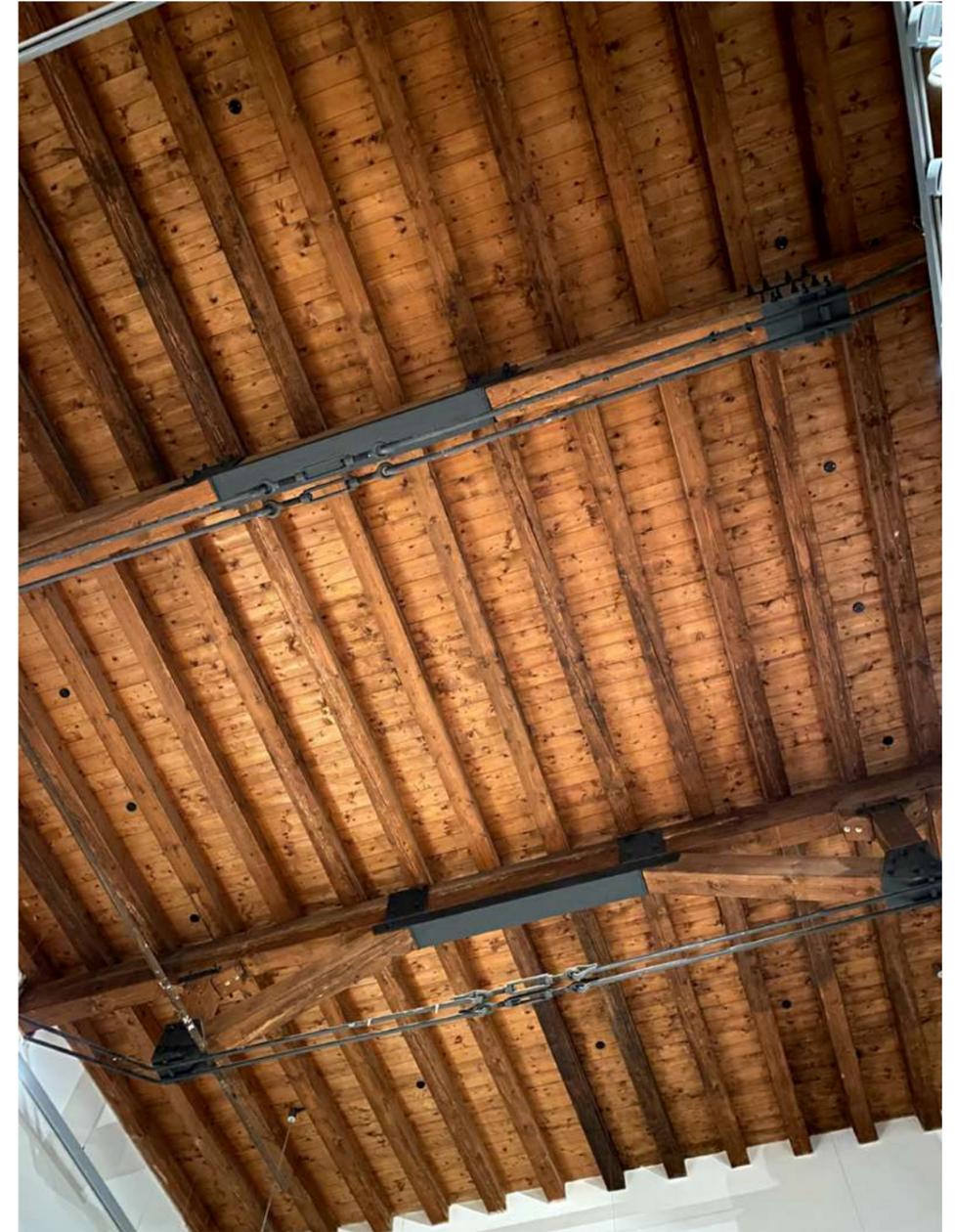


Fig.29: Consolidation works and creation of wooden beams with steel reinforcements. © Luisa Lombardo



Fig.30a-b: Creation of a new security staircase and integrated services (lightning and air conditioning systems) in correspondence of wooden trusses. © Francesco Renda & Luisa Lombardo

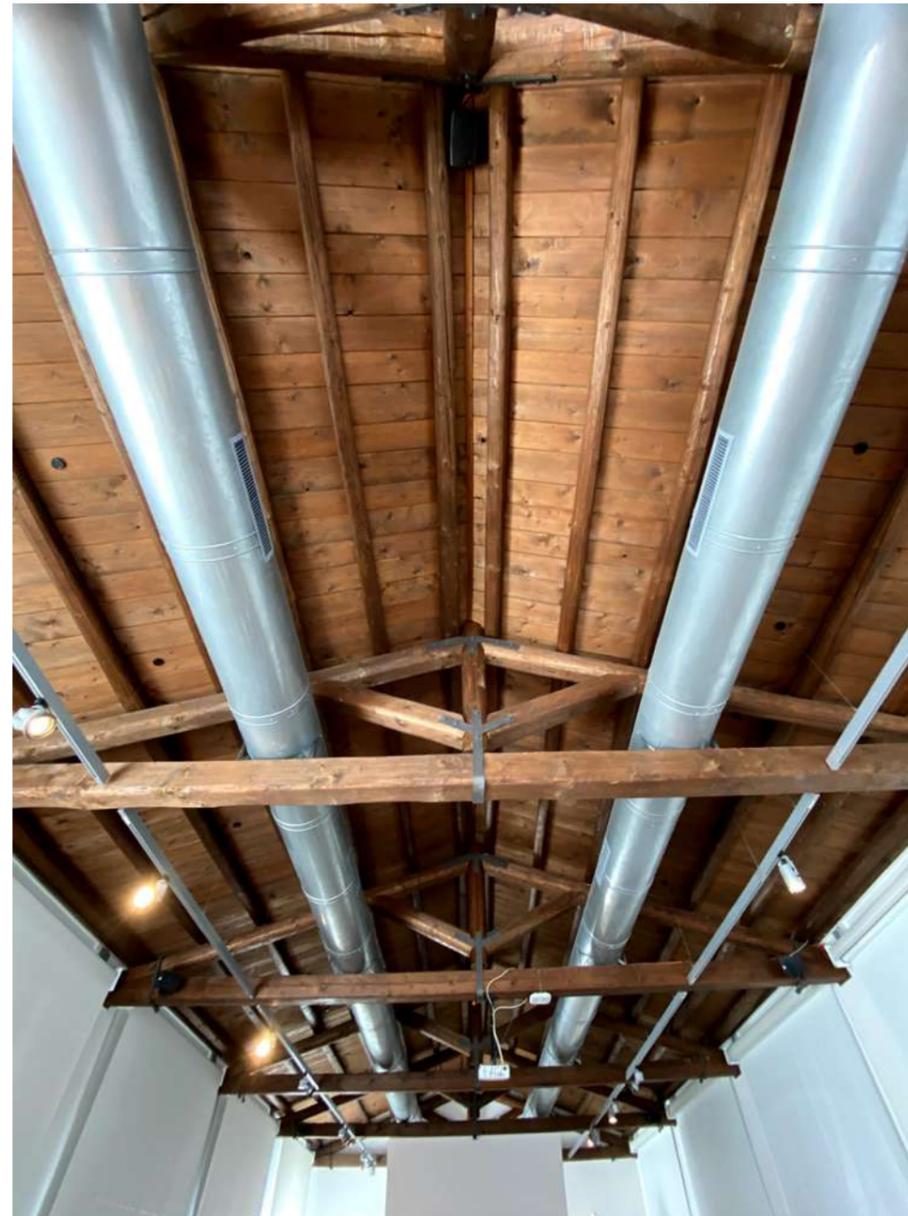


Fig.31: Air-raid shelter below the courtyard of the convent, now used to house the integrated services. © Luisa Lombardo

## Assessment of the results

The restoration project includes:

- structural interventions aimed at the restoration of the existing materials and construction systems and the adaptation to museum;
- restoration intervention of stony construction system, wooden structures, also using innovative technologies;
- philological reconstruction of stony vaults and tiled vaults;
- strong plant integration for the conversion of works of art into a museum and modern art gallery (safety and fire prevention, lifts, heating, cooling and lighting, ...);
- interventions aimed at energy efficiency;
- interventions aimed at design for all and accessibility of fragile users.

The restoration interventions have imposed particular attention

on the design solutions concerning the structural aspects and those relating to the technological systems: for both the priority logic of safeguarding the architectural artifact was pursued, using techniques and materials deriving from the construction tradition and the "rule of art" but revisited by technological innovation and design decisions based on minimal intervention and minimal invasiveness.

The virtuous circle of processes and interventions draws the vital sap - also in this case - from the synergistic capacity to collaborate with the municipal administration and the protection bodies or Superintendence, creating an industrious supply connection, able to establish a fervent exchange of protocols and guidelines, capable of interacting with the issues of static safety but also of conservation, especially in the field of architecture, presenting a strong monumental value.

In the identity scene of Italian architecture, the attention towards the historic heritage grows more and more, increasingly acquiring some important connotations. The construction activity related to it appears an economic spin-off and also a real possibility of undisputed work opportunity, where little of ex novo architecture is realized and much building heritage must instead be rehabilitated or restored.

The restoration site of the ex-convent of St. Anna la Misericordia in Palermo, today the prestigious headquarters of the GAM, destination of many tourists who visit Palermo during all the periods of the year, is one of the many virtuous example that - really - show us how much the challenge of the building tradition is current, even if the reenactment of ancient magisteriums and construction processes.

These design choices are not anachronistic, but rather actual precisely by virtue of the possibility of looking at the past as a winning possibility for the future, albeit pursuing the necessary

regulatory verifications and the absolute necessity of static security.

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Much of the information contained in this sheet has been deduced with the collaboration of the Municipality of Palermo and the GAM Palermo. We would also thank Arch. Mario Li Castri, the Director of GAM and especially Eng. Renzo Botindari, GAM responsible for security.

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Fig.32: The internal court of the restored convent, during the visit with the Eng. Renzo Botindari, on the occasion of the Staff Training Course in Palermo (September 2021) of the EU Smart Rehabilitation 3.0 project. © Francesco Renda

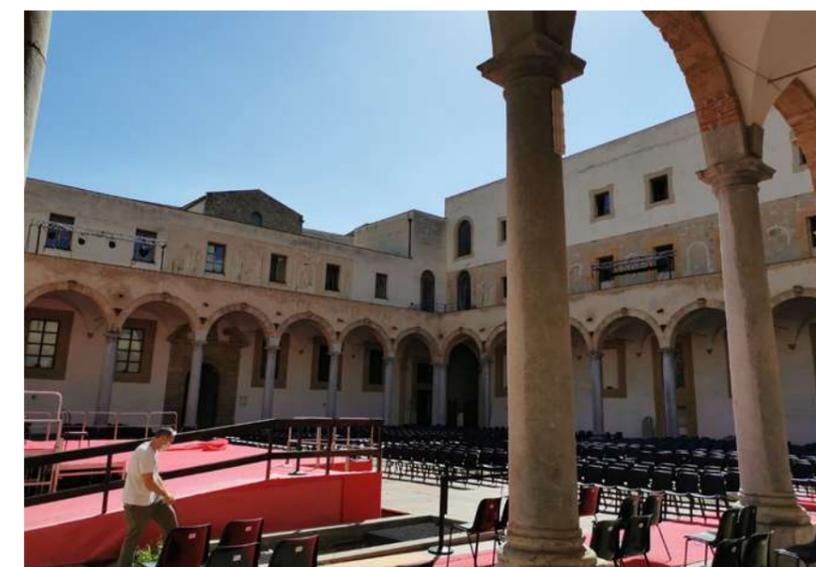


Fig.33: The courtyard itself, with a detail of the stage intended for concrete, equipped with ramps. The restoration project took care of in detail all aspects relating to extended accessibility. © Luisa Lombardo