

THE CHAPTER OF THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR

November 24, 2024 Palazzo Brancaccio, Rome

In a vibrant atmosphere celebrating the 220th anniversary of Napoleon Bonaparte's coronation as Emperor - a man who, at 34, achieved an unparalleled rise through history, moving from victory to victory on the battlefield and securing the supreme magistracy of the French Republic with the lifelong Consulate in 1802 - Rome hosted the Chapter of the Order of the Iron Crown. This took place in the magnificent halls of Palazzo Brancaccio.

Following a welcome aperitif, a large audience of Nobles, Knights, and Guests gathered in the Hall of Angels, attended by the 14th Grand Chancellor Prince R. Cecchetti, the Secretary General, the Magistrat Council, the Court of Honour, and Provincial and Regional Delegates. The Order's Chaplain, Monsignor Luigi Casolini di Sersale, Rector of the Chapter of Tivoli Cathedral, delivered blessings to all participants and their decorations.

A solemn ceremony followed, featuring the presentation of Diplomas. Each honouree was individually invested by the Grand Chancellor after the Chief of Chancellery and Master of Ceremonies read a brief biography. Additionally, new Regional Delegates and the new Deputy Commander of the Emperor's Honour Guards were appointed. This historical association, founded in Paris on October 26, 1860, by the 4th Grand Chancellor, focuses on deepening and promoting the study of the Napoleonic Italian Kingdom Army, the Grande Armée, and all armed forces linked to Napoleon I.

The Grand Chancellor presented an address explaining Napoleon's decision to proclaim himself Emperor, despite already holding full governing power. This decision aimed to stabilize the State, surpassing the tumultuous Revolutionary years, the Reign of Terror, and the Thermidorian Reaction, while also solidifying the social achievements cherished by the bourgeoisie: the irrevocable nationalization of properties, abolition of feudal privileges, protection of free trade, and administrative stability. This choice also integrated the French Republic - its government now led by an "Emperor of the French" - into the broader system of European monarchies, thus legitimizing it. The address highlighted the "Augustan" logic underpinning this move.

The address emphasized the Pope's critical role, as his presence was necessary to "consecrate" the new sovereign, fulfilling the deep-seated religious tradition in France that conferred a sacred role upon monarchy. This was meant to restore the grandeur of monarchy, which the Republic had not entirely erased, and underline the religious aspect as a tool for maintaining social order. However, it was agreed that, in the Pope's presence, Napoleon would crown himself. This act secularized the coronation, dismissing the traditional and sacramental elements that previously belonged exclusively to the Church. In doing so, Napoleon fully asserted his individuality before both God and men, declaring that his throne came not from the Church but from his victories.

The historical address was followed by a presentation from the Secretary General on the Order's contemporary status and activities.

A traditional musical segment, performed by musicians from Tivoli's Ergo Cantemus Academy, featured the exceptional participation of soprano Arianna Morelli from the Rome Opera House.

The evening concluded with a Gala Dinner in Palazzo Brancaccio's Red Hall, met with universal acclaim and marked by the customary toast to the Emperor.



From left: Count Admiral Andrea Tamburelli Lanzara di Pietragavina, Grand Officer Gianni Cortigiani and Prince Raffaello Cecchetti di Brugnolo