



## THE GREAT HALL OF THE CUIRASSIERS

You are in the largest and most stately room in the Palace, the seat of the most important ceremonies and audiences of the Italian Head of State.

The Hall has largely maintained the appearance it had when it was constructed in the early 1600s. Both the majestic wooden ceiling and the polychrome marble floor reflecting its geometric layout date back to that period. Of the same period are the marble doorways, the monumental double door leading to the Pauline Chapel and the large marble lunette depicting *Our Saviour Washing the Feet of his Disciples*. It was sculpted by Taddeo Landini in 1578 for St Peter's Basilica and was later transported to the Quirinale Palace in 1616.

The frescoed frieze along the upper part of the wall was painted in 1616 by a group of painters directed by Agostino Tassi, Giovanni Lanfranco and Carlo Saraceni. Consistent with the function of the Hall, where the Pope would receive sovereigns and ambassadors, the frieze features eight ambassadorial missions which reached Rome from distant lands during the papacy of the Borghese pope, Paul V. Of particular interest is the image of the Japanese emissary Hasekura Tsunenaga, who was received by the Pope in the Quirinale Palace only a few months before the realization of the frescoes.

After the unification of Italy, the Savoy family settled in the Palace but did not substantially change the layout of the Hall. To celebrate the country's successful unification they installed a great shield bearing the Savoy cross in the centre of the ceiling and commissioned the painting of a second frieze featuring the coats of arms of the main cities of Italy.

In the early 1900s the Hall underwent a period of decline: it was first planned to

be converted into a skating rink and was ultimately transformed into an indoor tennis court in 1912.

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