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Assessorato Regionale,  
Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali  
e dell'Identità Siciliana



Città di Acireale



Lions Club Acireale

# Collection of historical uniforms

Ing. Aldo Scaccianoce

Piazza Duomo, Acireale





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Presidente Rosario Musmeci

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The collection of uniforms located in the Town Hall takes its name from the scholar Aldo Scaccianoce, who gathered each piece.

The relics shown have a double significance: historical and artistic. Every piece has its own historical story to tell, as they have all been worn during events that have shaped European history over the course of the XIX century, while the nineteenth century has been pregnant with highly artistic cultural moments since the Napoleonic period.

These relics, in fact, also give testimony of fashion, taste, make and aesthetic quality that make them real masterpieces of craftsmanship.

The Assessorato ai Beni Culturali (Department of Cultural Heritage) of the Region of Sicily added the collection to its priceless patrimony in 1988, to avoid the dispersal of the important cultural collection.

The exposition installation was done by the architect Giuseppe Anfuso. Within each single cabinet each relic preserves its historical, military and artistic relevance.

## PREFACE

The work presented is born from the desire of the Lions Club Acireale to give service to the town of Acireale, favouring its tourism, and with it, its economy.

I must thank Aldo Scaccianoce who has provided us with his publications on the relics exhibited in the collection.

I must also thanks all those, from Acireale or not, close to us or never even met, who have answered our invitation so generously and totally free of charge, translating the booklet in nine different languages and, thus, demonstrating a high sensitivity towards a cultural event which is destined to offer a great service to all tourists who want to know more about the masterpieces exhibited in the museum collection.

A special thanks to the Assessorato Regionale Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali e dell'Identità Siciliana, whom we asked authorisation, and the City Council of Acireale, who has sponsored the initiative.

*The President of the Lions Club Acireale  
Rosario Musmeci*

# COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL UNIFORMS

## CABINET 1

### RUSSIAN EMPIRE

- 1) Uniform of a general of the Russian Empire, probably of Tsar Alexander III. The gold epaulets bear in the centre the imperial initials of Alexander II, the reigning tsar's father. There are also the medals of the military campaigns against the Turkish and the Cross of St George's Order. The "Papakha" is a lamb bearskin of a general of the Russian Imperial Army. The inside is in white kid. Second half of nineteenth century.
- 2) Spiked helmet (1846) of the Russian Imperial Infantry of "Mogilev" regiment. It was worn by a soldier who fought at Sevastopol in 1856, during the Crimean war, also against Lamarmora's Bersaglieri (Italian infantry soldiers recognizable by their plumed hats) of the kingdom of Sardinia, allied with France and England. First half of nineteenth century.
- 3) Officer's helmet belonging to the cuirassiers of the Russian Tsar's Imperial Guard, worn during ceremonies in the imperial palaces and on the occasion of great military parades. The helmet (1846) in gilded brass shows in front the Star of the Grand Cross of St. Andrew's Order, with a finely crafted enameled badge. The silver double-headed eagle, coming from the eagle of the Holy Roman Empire, shows on its breast the shield of St. George, emblem of the Romanov family.  
Second half of nineteenth century
- 4) Plaque of the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Anne of Russia, instituted by Charles Frederick, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp in 1735, in memory of his wife Anna, Peter the Great's daughter. The Order was accorded also for military credits.  
Second half of nineteenth century

## **PAPAL STATES**

- 5) Complete gala uniform of the Noble Papal Guard of Pope Pius XI. Orderly saber, top-boots and white wool trousers. Half gala and ordinary uniforms had a black wool jacket.  
First decade of twentieth century
- 6) "*Giamberga*", gala tailcoat of the Noble Papal Guard. It was worn only during great religious solemnities and for the Pope's coronation. Gold epaulets of lieutenant and bandolier in gold stripe with the initials G.N.P. (Noble Papal Guard). Period of Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII. 1849-1900.
- 7) Bolero belonging to the regiment of Papal Zouaves. 1860.
- 8) Leather parade helmet of the Roman Civic Guard established by Pope Pius IX in 1846. It was worn also by the Guards of the Provisional Government of Sicily during the 1848-1849 revolution for the independence from the Bourbons of Naples. 1846.

## **PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF SICILY**

- 9) Sabre belonging to a field officer of the National Guard, worn in Sicily in 1848, coming from the family of Barons Scudero of Villanova, Acireale. 1848-1849

## **AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE**

- 10) "*Tchapska*", square cap belonging to the third Austrian Uhlan Regiment. Typical hat of the light cavalry since Napoleonic times used for the first time by the Polish lancers of the Guard of Napoleon I.  
End of the second half of nineteenth century.
- 11) Helmet belonging to Austrian dragoons and cuirassiers (1855). It was used till 1914.
- 12) "*Sabretache*", sabre pouch, worn at one's side with the Gala uniform of General Field Marshal of the Austrian Imperial Army. The initials F I (Franz I) were adopted after 1805 (Austerlitz battle)

when the Holy Roman Empire ended and Franz II became Franz I, Emperor of Austria. It is embroidered with gold and silver-gilt metal thread with a red morocco leather purse.

First decade of nineteenth century.

- 13) Uniform belonging to the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I, king of Hungary and Bohemia. Medals are backwards as a sign of modesty. After 1914 the Emperor no longer wore the Russian Cross of St. George's Order given by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. This uniform comes from Count E. Vitetti's collection in Rome.

First decade of twentieth century.

- 14) White jacket of corporal, "Gefreiter", of the Austrian Infantry Regiment "Erzherzog Sigmund". It is distinguished by the collar, the red cuffs and the yellow buttons. The jacket was worn by the Imperial Royal Austrian Army from 1848 to 1866 and at the battle of Solferino during the Second War of Independence in 1859.

Austrian giberna of gendarmerie or of non-commissioned officer.  
Second half of nineteenth century.

## CABINET 2

### KINGDOM OF ITALY

- 1) Rifle green uniform belonging to Humbert of Savoy Prince of Piedmont ( future Umberto II) of 1928. This uniform is complete with trousers provided with badges and the inscription "Crown Prince". The four highest decorations of the Kingdom of Italy are attached on the uniform: the small collar and the plaque of the Most Holy Annunciation with the motto of the Royal Family "FERT"(*Fortitudo Ejus Rhodum Tenuit*), the Grand Cross of the Order of St.Maurice and St.Lazarus with the plaque, and the plaques of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown of Italy and of the Colonial Merit Star. On the collar it brings the orphrey of the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem and Malta. The rifle green colour has been used since the second decade of

the twentieth century when there was a clean break with tradition and luxury. With this letter of July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1980 written in Cascais, Humbert II granted that it remained in the collection of uniforms after the proposal of restitution to the legitimate owner. 1928.

- 2) Horse parade uniform of Lieutenant Colonel of the Light Horse Regiment Guides n.19 with decorations of campaigns and plaque and collar of the prestigious Military Order of Savoy.  
First decade of twentieth century.
- 3) Uniform of Lieutenant General of the Royal Italian Army in full dress uniform. The helmet has the initials V. E. III (Victor Emmanuel III) and so it belongs to the first years of the twentieth century as the helmet was abolished in about 1906. On the sleeves and collar there are the famous Greek frets of the generals and the golden stars. The trousers have the double silver band. You can admire the decorations of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown of Italy, the great distinction of the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus and the knighthood of the Military Order of Savoy. The silver medal for Military Valour, the Cross of the Legion of Honour, the medal of the "Italian wars", the campaign medals of the Risorgimento and of the Italian Unification fill the chest of this valiant combatant. The Infantry sabre (1888) has an ivory hilt, used by generals, as well as the ribbon with a big pendant in golden beads. The helmet, in sea lion fur, with a gilded eagle with the Savoy cross on the breast, is surmounted by a drooping plume of white vulture feathers and heron feathers, symbol of command, on top.  
End of nineteenth century.
- 4) Portrait of General Carlo Colli from Felizzano. He took part in Italian Independence Wars. He fought in St. Lucia, Volta Mantovana, Novara and Palestro. In 1881 he was promoted Lieutenant General of the Italian Army.
- 5) Gala uniform of cuirassier King's Guard. The cuirassiers were the king's representative guards in the Palace of Quirinale and his guard of honour. The helmet and the armour belong to the age of Humbert I (1878-1900). The squadron of the cuirassiers has been transformed into Guard of the President of the Italian Republic since 1946.  
End of nineteenth century.

## **KINGDOM OF SARDINIA**

- 6) Complete uniform of “*Lancieri di Montebello*”. On May 20<sup>th</sup> 1859, the regiment “*Cavallegeri di Monferrato*” attacked in Montebello, where the colonel Tommaso Morelli di Popolo died. On August 25<sup>th</sup> a new regiment was formed; it was named after the famous battle of Montebello Lancers. The belt in brocade is of cavalry, but it has the buckle of the light cavalrymen with the initials V. E. (Victor Emmanuel). 1859.

## **KINGDOM OF ITALY**

- 7) The Infantry Army is represented by this first captain of Bersaglieri in the uniform model 1903, that is without flower ranks. First decade of twentieth century.

## **KINGDOM OF SARDINIA**

- 8) Cavalry helmet of about 1831. The orphrey is composed of the Savoy eagle and it is surrounded by flags and laurel leaves. On top the royal initials C. A. (Charles Albert).
- 9) Pewter epaulets model 1831; they belonged to the uniform of the Piedmontese knight. 1831-1848.

## **CABINET 3**

## **KINGDOM OF ITALY**

- 1) Under-saddle parade Caparison of the marshal of the Regi Carabinieri. Beginning of the XX century.
- 2) Over-saddle caparison for parade harnesses of cavalry officials with case sporting the embroidered silver initials of Vittorio Emanuele III. First decade of the XX century.
- 3) Dress uniform bicorn for the commanding colonel of the Carabinieri cavalry regiment. Second half of XIX century.

## **SECOND FRENCH EMPIRE**

- 4) “*Tchapska*”, square hat for lancer in dress uniform of the lancer line regiment. Mid XIX century.
- 5) “*Kepi*”, cadet hat of the Special Military school of Saint Cyr. Mid XIX century.
- 6) “*Bolero*”, off-duty jacket for officials of the Imperial Guard. The slacks the Zuavi used during the battle of Palestro, called “*Lamoriciére*”, were richly decorated and characteristic of these colonial regiments. Second half of the XIX century.
- 7) “*Bonnet de police*”, beret of the grenadier troops of the Imperial Guard of Napoleon III. Second half of the XIX century.

## **KINGDOM OF ITALY**

- 8) Horse harness with red caparison braided with silver, under-saddle of a general of the King of Italy, with the initials of Vittorio Emanuele III in silver. The silver double chevron shows that it was a lieutenant general's; the king's harness had three silver chevrons and the Iron Crown embroidered instead of the royal initials. Leather saddle, saddlebag and drapes in silver braided cloth. Beginning of the XIX century.

## **KINDGOM OF PRUSSIA**

- 9) Horse caparison, over-saddle for infantry official in “*bleu di Prussia*” cloth braided with gold and the initials of Federico Guglielmo Re. Beginning of the XIX century.

## **SECOND FRENCH EMPIRE**

- 10) “*Dragoni dell'Imperatrice*” parade helm for the dragoons of the cavalry regiment of the Empress Eugenia. This regiment was part of the Imperial Guard. Second half of the XIX century.

## CABINET 4

### SECOND FRENCH EMPIRE

- 1) Dress uniform of the officials of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment of the grenadiers of the Imperial Guard of Napoleon III. On the neck it sports the typical ruff of the officials on duty, on the chest the participation medal for the “*Guerra d’Italia*” (Italian war). In 1859 the regiment won the battle of Solferino that would end the Second Italian War of Independence. Sword with infantry belt of the French Guard. 1859.
- 2) Bearskin of the Guard of Napoleon III, also typical of the grenadiers of the first Empire. 1854-1870.
- 3) Chenille helm and armour plate of the French carabiniers (1856-58). The armour plate has the imperial Napoleonic eagle at the centre of the halo. 1854-70.
- 4) Helm and armour plate of the cuirassiers of the Imperial Napoleonic Guard that fought in the battle of Sedan that marked the end of the Napoleonic era. 1858-1870.
- 5) “*Sabretache*”, leather bag tied to the left with the saber and thus called “*sabretache*”. The shield has the number of the regiment at the centre. Typical decorations used by the Hussars for their personal effects since 1750. 1830-1848.
- 6) Helm and armour plate of the French cuirassiers. The helms of the French cuirassiers had a bearskin turban and a tall brass crest supported by a polished iron cap. In 1840 the helm made entirely of steel will be abandoned for the band, now made in sealskin, with the historical “*marmouset*” complete crest and cap. 1845-1870.

### FRENCH PRESIDENCY

- 7) “*Sabretache*”, Hussar sabre pocket of the Luigi Napoleone period of presidency, before he became Napoleon III in 1854. There is no crown on the eagle’s head. 1849-1854.

### FIRST RESTORATION

- 8) “*J'avais un bon manteau blanc, un habit rouge, un casque noir,*

*des pistolets et un grand sabre ... j'étais si jeune! La Maison du Roi, en 1814 avait été remplie d'enfants ...*" Black helm, cited by the romantic poet Alfred de Vigny who used to be a gendarme of the "Garde du Roi" and that gives us an idea of the opulence during the imperial Napoleonic era. 1814.

## FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE

- 9) "*Bonnet de police*", on duty beret for the knights of the "*riding Hunters*" regiment. A small horn is embroidered on the front. Inside there is the name of the knight and the year 1809.
- 10) "*Shakot*", cap for Hussar officials during the end of the Napoleonic Empire. Used in 1806, it is lined in cloth and has a simple rope loop as decoration, with a cockade underneath and a button at the centre. The white, on-duty, pompom was substituted by a high plume. Second decade of the XIX century.
- 11) "*Tchapska*", square cap for regiment officials of the cavalleggeri-lancers of the Imperial Guard. It is one of the most significant relics of the Napoleonic era. The commander of the regiment was the prince Giuseppe Poniatowski and all of the lancers were Polish. First decade of the XIX century.
- 12) Bearskin of the foot grenadiers of the Imperial Guard (circa 1808). This hat is the most famous of the "*Grande Armée*". It is decorated with a red copper plaque. The red high plume stems from a tricolour cockade with the imperial eagle embroidered at the centre in "*aurora*" thread. A large white cord runs through the majestic hat. The "*Vecchia Guardia*" (old guard) was made up of high stature soldiers that had at least ten years of service. The Imperial Guard grenadiers were the best of the Napoleonic troops, present in all the campaigns; they would sacrifice themselves, until they died out at Waterloo.
- 13) Special saber for the infantry of the old Guard, called "*briquet*". The blade is 70 cm long and has a brass hilt (Klingenthal imperial manufacturing). It is complete of "*brudière*", bandolier and black cartridge case with the eagle and the guard flames. First decade of the XIX century.
- 14) "*Shakot*", cap for the officials of the 17<sup>th</sup> regiment of the infantry in 1806. The regiment participated in the Italian campaign and was in Lodi and Rivoli. They were also at the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz

and Jena. It is a historical relic that recalls all the Napoleonic campaigns. The red pompom was used during the daytime, while the high plume was used for the dress uniform. Beginning of the XIX century.

## FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC

- 15) Officer uniform of the “*demi-brigade des Allobroges*” of 1796. The carabineer battalion, of which the 27<sup>th</sup> troop is part of, commanded by colonel Dumas is present at the battle of Lodi on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, where its commander will receive the “*sabre d'honneur*”. The name “*Allobroges*” comes from the ancient Gaul peoples. The uniform is complete with shoulderblades and cords typical of the period. This “*habit-veste*” is a model that goes back to the “*Ancien Régime*”.

## FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE

- 16) Cartridge case and bandolier of the grenadiers of the Imperial Guard of Napoleon I. They were used to carry the cartridges of the rifles. First decade of the XIX century.

### CABINET 5

## GERMAN EMPIRE - KINGDOM OF PRUSSIA

- 1) Prussian mitre of the first regiment of the foot guards, given to the troops to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first day of military service by the Kaiser. 1894.
- 2) Dress uniform of an Uhlan of the 19th regiment “*König Karl*” used even on the 2nd of September in Sedan, the battle that marked the fall of Napoleon III. 1870.
- 3) Helm and armour plate of the cuirassiers of the bodyguards. The black armour plate, used only for the spring parade, was given to the regiment by the czar Alexander I in 1814. The armour plate is an original of the era and sports Cyrillic writing on the inside. 1902.

- 4) Parade helm of the line regiment officers in the Russian dragoons. Second half of the XIX century.
- 5) “*Vaffenrock*” Prussian General uniform, 1907 model. The helm sports a black and white goose plumes instead of a crest, which are the colours of Prussia. The general was honoured with the Grand Cross of the Prussian order of the Red Eagle.
- 6) Mitre of the grenadiers of the Prussian Kingdom. This cap was given to the entire regiment by the czar Alexander I of Russia for the valour demonstrated at Waterloo. It was used until 1914 by the 1<sup>st</sup> foot regiment “*Alexander Kaiser*”. 1824-1914.
- 7) Pointed helm of the cuirassiers of the 6<sup>th</sup> regiment “*Csar Nicholas of Russia*”. The brass helm belongs to the regiment founded in 1691 that participated in the Napoleonic wars, all the wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the battle of Verdun in 1918.
- 8) Helm of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment of the line cuirassiers. Armour plate used by the German cuirassiers in battle until 1882. The armour plates had a gouge on the chest as proof they had been tested with a firearm to verify their strength.
- 9) Busby of the Hussar officers of the 17<sup>th</sup> regiment in black seal fur with stork plume that shows the campaigns the regiment participated in: Peninsula, Sicily, Waterloo and Mars la Tour. When it returned from the Spanish wars in 1814, the regiment goes on to strengthen the defence of Bourbon Sicily against an attack from Naples by Murat. The population fled when seeing the knights with the skull on their hats. The Hussar regiment would then become part of the Prussian army. 1880-1914.
- 10) Uniform complete with “*sabretache*”, saber pocket of the officials of the 16<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Hussars of the Schleswig-Holstein, whose “*chef*” was the Emperor of Austria. All the regiments had uniforms and “*sabretache*” in different colours to distinguish themselves. 1880-1914.

***Text: Aldo Scaccianoce***

***Translation: Maria Teresa Faraci (first and second cabinet)***

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