

THE MONUMENTAL COMPLEX OF SAN DOMENICO MAGGIORE, NAPLES

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The monastery of San Domenico Maggiore, together with the church, forms a monumental complex which is the result of many changes started in 1227, when Pope Gregory IX sent to Naples a group of Dominicans. Between 1272 and 1274 Thomas Aquinas, one of the most influential authorities of Catholic theology, taught philosophy at San Domenico in the Studium wanted by Charles I of Anjou. The monastery reached its maximum development after the rebuilding promoted in 1669 by Tommaso Ruffo, the Grand Prior of Bagnara.

During the sixteenth century the building was articulated into three distinct parts: Saint Thomas' dorm, the novitiate and the dorm of the Masters, located around an inner garden. The monastery is now divided into different areas: one part is still occupied by Dominican monks; a second one, at the ground floor, is occupied by the Virtus Gym; a third, large part, is occupied by the high school Alfonso Casanova; the largest part of the complex, which was the seat of the courtrooms of "Corte d'Assise" (criminal court) during the 1990s, has recently been restored.

The restoration was aimed to the recovery and preservation of the original spaces, with their architectural and decorative features, among which mention must be made of the sixteenth-century frescoes and stuccos adorning Thomas Aquinas' dorm. The first stage of the restoration project started in 2000 and was completed in 2002 (project Polis-Musea, supported by the Superintendence for Historical Patrimony of Naples with the Financial Grants for Historic Centre of Naples of the European Community); the second stage began in May 2006 and ended in July 2011 (financed through state resources provided by law 0.12.2000, no. 400, art. 1 "Restoration on Cultural Heritage" after the "Programma Quadrato" agreement between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Campania Region). Thanks to the joint efforts of State and local government the Convent was thus reopened to public in May 2012.

The Complex will host the 24th Conference of the European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art from 2nd to 6th July 2018.

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