

## CARRIAGES

Shortly after Victor Emmanuel II, the King of a united Italy, settled in the Quirinale Palace, the Ministry of the Royal House thought of designating part of the old papal palace to accommodate horses, carriages and harnesses.

The life of the numerous members of the court of the House of Savoy needed a large stable, which was necessary both for everyday activities and for state visits, because the stables that the popes had built on Piazza del Quirinale during the 18th Century were not big enough. It was therefore decided to build a large "L-shaped" facility marking the north-western border of the Quirinale compound. The building, now known as the "[Fabbricato Cipolla](#)", after the architect who built it, was large enough to accommodate the stables, a barn, galleries for harnesses and riding gear, a circular paddock, 126 staff rooms and a carriage depot. To date part of this building hosts the Gallery of Harnesses and Liveries, a [History Study Room](#) displaying the most valuable harnesses, the office of the Crown Equerry (the royal officer in charge of this important part of life at Court) and the collection of carriages.

Most of the carriages used by the Court, except for four gala carriages from Piedmont and three from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, were manufactured by specialised firms at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The four gala horse-drawn carriages from Piedmont are the oldest and most valuable pieces of the Quirinale Palace collection and were often used in the most important occasions during the reign of the House of Savoy. They consisted of a gilded [Berlingotto great gala carriage of 1789](#) with decorations; [a berline of 1817](#) called the "Marriage Coach" because it was used for the marriage of Victor Emmanuel II; [another berline of 1817](#) completely decorated with stories of the Greek hero Telemachus in search of his father Ulysses; [the Egyptian carriage](#), manufactured for the celebration of the Carnival of 1819 in Turin in ivory-white but later painted black and used as a hearse for the solemn funerary transport of Savoy royals.

Two of the three carriages from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany also date back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (1821-22) but are simpler, less sumptuous and less markedly original in character than their four splendid Piedmontese counterparts.

Among the 105 carriages in the Quirinale Palace collection, deserving of mention are several gala and grand gala *berline* carriages produced in Milan for Victor Emmanuel II, covered and uncovered carriages for the private use of the king or court officials, country carriages, [children's horse carriages](#), pony carts and a little Rococo *berline* given to the young Prince of Naples and future King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III.