



Gaetano Cortese obtained his degree in Political Science from the “La Sapienza” University in Rome in 1964. In 1968 he received a Doctorate in International Law from the Law Faculty of “La Sorbonne” University (Docteur en Droit de l’Université de Paris).

After his military service, as Lieutenant of the Air Force, he sat for the Italian Diplomatic Career Examination and

obtained a permanent post at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the Ministry he was first assigned to the Directorate General of Emigration and Social Affairs, and subsequently to the Office of the Undersecretary of State, to the Secretariat General, and finally to the Directorate General for Countries of the Americas.

He also served as Counsellor Adjunct for Press and Information at the Presidency of the Republic.

On his missions abroad, he was assigned to the Italian diplomatic representations in Zagreb, Yugoslavia; Bern, Switzerland; Havana, Cuba; Washington D.C., USA; and Brussels, Belgium (European Union).

From 1999 to 2003 he was Ambassador of Italy to His Majesty the King of Belgium, Albert II, and from 2006 to 2009 Ambassador of Italy to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Italian Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (O.P.C.W.) in The Hague.

Former Assistant for “International Organization and International Law” at the Faculty of Political Science of the University “La Sapienza” in Rome, he is the author of books and articles on European and International law.

In 2016 the Press Association (Circolo della Stampa) in Milan awarded Ambassador Gaetano Cortese the Culture Prize for the publication of the prestigious collection of books edited by Carlo Colombo in Rome, with the intent to valorize the architectural and artistic patrimony of the diplomatic residences abroad.

In 2018 the President of the European Academy of Higher Studies (Artecom) conferred to Ambassador Gaetano Cortese a Prize for the Culture 2018 – seventh Edition – with the title “Academician honoris causa”.

In 2020 Ambassador Gaetano Cortese was conferred different prizes: first for the valorization of the patrimony of books concerning Italian diplomacy “Premium International Florence Seven Stars” during the Summer Gran Concert; then another Cultural Prize “The Drunk poet... of colours” (Il Poeta ebbro di colori) – third Edition – during “the Festival of two Worlds” (Festival dei Due Mondi) in Spoleto.

Recently, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brera (Università Politecnico di Milano) as guest speaker at the International Convention for a Master Degree (The photography of the cultural patrimony) the Ambassador Cortese presented a relation on “The photography and the patrimony of the Italian Diplomatic Residences around the world”.



## THE EMBASSY OF ITALY IN EGYPT

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The natural barrier of the Nile, the island of Rawdah, the dense vegetation that characterize the residential district of Garden City in Cairo provide the backdrop for the building of the Italian Embassy, designed by Florestano Di Fausto and inaugurated in 1931.

That pleasant spot had already captured the collective imagination of European travelers before, becoming a particularly popular narrative theme for the allure of its landscape, which featured in the itineraries to visit the Egyptian city.

The architect Florestano Di Fausto was fully aware that the outline of his building would need to stand out against a background so full of history, without being overwhelmed by it. It was precisely against that scenic backdrop that he presented his sober and elegant show-piece in the modern Italian style.

The main façade facing the Nile canal endows this Representation office with great charm, permeating it with a character entirely its own, most unlike the pretentious buildings lined up along the Nile.

The interiors of the diplomatic headquarters weave a diverse and intriguing canvas: the ceilings embellished with geometric stuccoes, the fireplaces, and interior fixtures were all studied in detail by Di Fausto.

The access path to each room is fluid, clear, and dynamic. The spaces on the ground floor are shaped by light; their articulation reveals an enduring modernity.

The Volume engages the reader with its historical rigor and extremely well-calibrated explanations of the architectural and furnishing solutions adopted, which make the Cairo office one of the most conceptually and compositionally innovative among the Italian architectural gems in the North African capitals overlooking the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the assorted perspectives of the authors of the book offer precious insights into the values attributed by the Italian diplomatic world to culture as an irreplaceable instrument of “soft diplomacy”.

*Front dust jacket:*  
Main entrance of the Embassy, Corniche El-Nil side.  
Photo by Nesrine Elkhatib.

*Back dust jacket:*  
Entrance from the Garden of the Residence.  
Photo by Nesrine Elkhatib.