

The Courtyard of Honour

The Courtyard of Honour of the Quirinale Palace appears to be a large arcaded piazza, unified and harmonious in shape, but it is in fact the result of four separate phases of construction which were carried out between the end of the 1500s and next century.

The oldest and most easily distinguishable section forms the backdrop to the courtyard with the tower rising above it. This part of the palace was originally an isolated villa, whose construction was begun in 1583 by Pope Gregory XIII who wished to pass the hot Roman summers on the Quirinal Hill, a fresher and airier location than the Vatican. The architect who designed this first building was Ottaviano Mascarino, from Bologna.

The next pope, Sixtus V, decided to enlarge the structure with a long wing running down the piazza and a second building directly in front of the older villa; Domenico Fontana was in charge of these projects.

The palace and the Courtyard were completed under Pope Paul V by the architect Flaminio Ponzio, who designed the wing on the side of the gardens, and Carlo Maderno, who rebuilt the Sixtus V structure in order that it could accommodate larger and more solemn ceremonial spaces.

The clock-tower was originally a simple viewing tower crowning the 16th Century villa. At the beginning of the 17th Century it was fitted with a clock and bell, and towards the end of that century a mosaic of the *Madonna and Child* was carried out, based on a design by Carlo Maratta. Above the tower fly the Italian and European flags as well as the presidential standard, which is lowered when the Head of State is not in Rome.

Note the unusual Roman style clock face divided into quadrants denoting only six hours: over the course of a day the hour hand makes four rotations rather than the typical two.

The Staircase of Honour

The Staircase of Honour of the Quirinale Palace was built in 1609 by the architect Flaminio Ponzio. The double ramp crossover design allows guests access to the two main rooms of the palace: the Great Hall of the Cuirassiers and the Grand Ballroom. This architectural solution was particularly useful during the time of the popes when the other rooms of the palace could not be crossed since they were mostly private rooms of the pontiff.

At the crossover point of the two ramps an ample landing faces onto the Quirinale gardens. From this position one can admire the fresco by Melozzo da Forlì depicting the *Redemptor in Glory among the Angels*. This work, dating to around 1480, was part of the apse decoration in the church of the Holy Apostles. When the church was completely rebuilt, Pope Clement XI ordered this large fragment of fresco to be detached and conserved. It was moved to the Great Staircase of the Quirinale in 1711 and positioned at such a height as to retain the original view from below. Other fragments of Melozzo's fresco – the famous musician angels – are housed in the Vatican.

The Great Hall of the Cuirassiers

We are in the largest and most majestic room in the palace, where the most important ceremonies and audiences with the Head of State are held.

The Hall has largely maintained its appearance since it was constructed in the early 1600s. The imposing wooden ceiling and polychrome marble floor reflecting its geometric layout both date from that period. The marble doorways and the monumental double door leading to the Pauline Chapel also date to the 17th Century; the large marble lunette depicting *The Washing of the Feet*, by Taddeo Landini, was sculpted in 1578 for St Peter's Basilica and later transported to the Quirinale in 1616.

The fresco frieze along the upper part of the wall, from 1616, is the work of a group of painters directed by Agostino Tassi, Giovanni Lanfranco e Carlo Saraceni. In keeping 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 a few months before the realization of the frescoes.

After the unification of Italy the Savoy family did not substantially change the layout of the Hall: 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, to celebrate the country's successful unification.

In the early 1900s the Hall underwent a period of decline: there was a plan for it to house a skating rink, while in 1912 it was transformed into an indoor tennis court.

The 18th Century tapestries decorating the walls are part of two distinct series: the first, French, is dedicated to *The Stories of Psyche*, while the other, in part French and in part Neapolitan, illustrates the adventures of *Don Quixote*.

THE PAULINE CHAPEL

This large chapel takes its name from Pope Paul V Borghese, who ordered its construction in 1615 in order to equip the Quirinale with a space the same size as the Sistine Chapel. Its layout corresponds precisely to that of the Sistine Chapel to allow the holding of ceremonies indifferently in either the Vatican or the Quirinale.

From 1823 the Pauline Chapel was used as the seat of four consecutive conclaves. The first pope elected here was Leo XII, the last was Pius IX. After the Capture of Rome on September the 20th, 1870, he had to leave the palace to the functionaries of Vittorio Emanuele II, the first King of Italy.

The polychrome marble floor and the splendid ceiling decoration, modelled in white and gold plaster, date to the first 17th Century decoration of the Chapel. A marble balcony projects from the right-hand wall, it too from the 1600s: it is the *cantoria*, which accommodated the choir for sung mass services.

The wall paintings are, however, more recent. They were carried out in 1818, in just over a month, by a group of eleven painters. The *faux architectural* decoration is of niches containing figures of the Apostles, the Evangelists and of St Paul.

Upon the altar we find not a painting but a tapestry: it was woven in the Parisian workshops of Gobelins in 1817 and depicts the *Final Sermon of St Stephen*.

Every Sunday, at the same time as the opening of the rooms of the Quirinale, the chapel hosts a concert which is open to the public and is transmitted live by radio.

THE FIRST STATE ROOM

The First State Room is the place where, on some occasions, the Head of State meets high authorities and guests before the ceremonies which take place in the Great Hall of the Cuirassiers

It was originally the drawing room of an apartment which included the four adjacent rooms. According to the original plans these rooms were for the pope's use, but were in fact guest rooms to host sovereigns and other foreign dignitaries staying in the Quirinale.

The frescoed frieze along the upper part of the wall is by Agostino Tassi, who painted it in 1616. The coat of arms of the Borghese pope, Paul V, can be found in the four corners, while the eight scenes depicted in the *faux* framed paintings illustrate the life of St Paul, namesake of the pontiff.

The ceiling decoration, dedicated to an allegory of the *Fruits of Peace*, dates to 1906, and the beautiful Murano coloured glass chandelier is also from the first years of the 20th Century.

Notable among the furnishings is a prestigious French clock from the mid-1700s, two 18th Century Neapolitan tapestries dedicated to the tales of Don Quixote, and the painting by Francesco Mancini, from the first half of the 1700s, which shows Chastity in the act of flogging Cupid after having broken his bow and arrows; it is one of the few works of art from the papal collections left in the Quirinale after the Unification of Italy.

ROOM OF THE VIRTUES

The room takes its name from the four cardinal Virtues which appear in the frescoed frieze on the walls, painted in 1616 by Cesare Rossetti. As well as the Virtues, the frieze includes ten *faux* framed paintings of relaxing landscapes. As in the adjoining rooms the centre of the vaulted ceiling once bore the coat of arms of Pope Paul V, but was modified in the 1800s with the emblem of Pius IX.

The Tapestry of *Christ Driving the Merchants from the Temple* is part of a grandiose *New Testament* series, woven in the Paris workshops of Gobelins in the mid-1700s. The series is composed of eight pieces in total, four of which remain in the Quirinale while the others are conserved in the pontifical collections. Another tapestry from this group hangs in the Room of the Flood.

On either side of the tapestry are two magnificent terracotta vases, produced in Mexico in the late 1600s; they are mounted on elegant gilt wooden bases from the 1700s. The other two vases are part of an extraordinary oriental porcelain collection put together by the popes in the second half of the 1700s; the bases were specifically made to display all of the large vases in the Quirinale gallery.

THE ROOM OF THE FLOOD

The name of this room refers to the Universal Flood, one of the biblical scenes painted in the 1616 frieze decorating the walls. Of the friezes in the apartment adjacent to the Pauline Chapel, this one stands out for its excellent state of conservation. Antonio Carracci, nephew of the more famous Annibale, worked here along with an unidentified but highly accomplished Caravaggesque painter.

In the mid-1800s, this and the adjoining rooms underwent renovations in line with the wishes of Pope Pius IX. This project produced the decorations on the sides of the vaulted ceiling and the refined plasterwork decoration of the walls, which simulates polychrome marble dressing.

The 18th Century tapestry of the *Washing of the Feet* is part of the magnificent *New Testament* series mentioned in the Room of the Virtues. This precious series of eight tapestries was donated by Napoleon Bonaparte to Pope Pius VII in 1805, when relations between the emperor and the pontiff were not yet definitively ruptured. Four years later Pius VII was arrested by French functionaries here in the Quirinale.

THE ROOM OF THE LOGGIAS

In this room the 17th Century frieze was greatly altered and reorganized in the 1800s, while the fresco at the centre of the vaulted ceiling remains intact despite the coat of arms of Paul V being replaced by that of Pius IX. On the sides of the vaulted ceiling one can admire the beautiful 19th Century decorative work, in which the painter and scenographer Annibale Angelini set out a *faux* loggia perspective. Note the Swiss Guards moving about or lazily leaning out from the painting.

Along the walls of the room hang five frescoes which were removed from a corridor of the Quirinale which was demolished in 1940. They are five views of buildings and cities connected to the papacy of Urban VIII Barberini and were painted in 1635. In particular, two frescoes depict the Castel Sant'Angelo, protected by the new fortifications ordered by the pope, and the Pantheon, depicted with its so-called "ears", i.e., the two bell-towers which were demolished in the 1800s. The other frescoes present views of Orvieto, Civitavecchia and San Caio, a no-longer-standing church located near the Quirinale.

As in the rooms before and after, in the Room of the Loggias we find four large and precious oriental porcelain vases. The gilt bases, despite bearing the later added coat of arms of the Savoy family, were carved in the 1700s for Pope Benedict XIV.

THE DOORKEEPERS ROOM

This room retains the name linked to the terminology of the papal court, the Doorkeepers, or *Bussolanti*, were in fact the attendants of the pope's antechamber.

The last of the rooms making up the 17th Century apartment, this room contains a door hidden by the wall upholstery, leading to a tiny oratory inside the Pauline Chapel.

Here too the older decoration included the pope's coat of arms in the centre of the vaulted ceiling and the frieze on the walls, but the latter was substantially altered in the 1800s by the insertion of eight landscapes which are the settings for scenes from the life of St Benedict.

Among the works of art set out on the walls, take particular note of the 17th Century picture by Giovan Battista Gaulli, a preparatory sketch for the fresco in the Jesuit Library in Rome. There is a tondo containing a copy of Raphael's famous *Madonna della Seggiola*, produced in the Vatican School of Mosaics in 1929. Set into its frame are the initials of Pope Pius XI, who presented the piece to King Vittorio Emanuele III in December 1929, on the occasion of the first royal visit to the Vatican after the signing of the Lateran Pacts had ratified the accord between Church and State.

BALCONY ROOM

The large French door in this room opens onto the Loggia of Blessings. It was built in 1638 based on plans by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, and sits directly above the main entrance into the Quirinale.

The room also communicates with the Pauline Chapel and could have been used as a sacristy. There is none of the ornamental frescoes here which characterize the rooms of the papal apartment, although there is some elegant plasterwork which evokes the stucco decoration of the chapel.

During the conclaves which took place in the Quirinale in the 1800s the room's French door used to be bricked up in order to symbolize the isolation of the palace with respect to any influence which might have filtered in from the outside world; European powers at the time would indeed try to direct the election of the successor to St Peter to their favour. As soon as the new pope had been elected, however, the bricks used to be broken through in order to announce the news and to permit the new pontiff to bless the crowd below for the first time.

At one time the room was known as the "Precordium Room", because it was here that deceased popes were prepared for embalming. The internal organs, known as the "precordium", were transferred into two metal containers before being taken to the nearby church of St Vincent and St Anastasio in Piazza di Trevi.

ST JOHN PARLOUR

Like the adjacent Balcony Room, the vaulted ceiling of this room is decorated with refined plasterwork dating to 1616. More recent, however, are the four rectangular pictures set into the stucco. They were painted at the end of the 1800s, at the time of the Savoy monarchs, to celebrate the royal palaces in Turin, Florence, Venice and Naples.

According to the initial 17th Century project, this room was supposed to have become a private chapel of the pope; however, it was instead used as a service space off the sacristy. Today it is only a connecting room which nonetheless contains two items of particular importance. The octagonal table dates from the mid-1500s and is a splendid example of refined coloured marble marquetry. The gilt wooden base in the shape of an intertwined pair of dolphins dates from a later period, though it too is highly refined. The wooden panel painting is an ancient copy of *St John in the Desert* by Raphael. It is an excellent quality 16th Century piece and has been attributed, among others, to Giulio Romano, the most gifted of Raphael's students.

YELLOW HALL

The Yellow Hall was originally part of a room almost seventy metres in length, known as the Gallery of Alexander VII. The gallery no longer exists because in 1812 the French administration, which had taken possession of the Quirinale and was preparing the palace in advance of the arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte, divided the gallery into three halls, covered over a large part of the frescoes decorating the walls and bricked up all of the windows overlooking the courtyard.

Restoration work carried out over the last number of years has unblocked the windows and led to the rediscovery of a large part of the 17th Century wall paintings, which were produced between 1656 and 1657 by a group of sixteen painters directed by Pietro da Cortona.

The decoration brought to light by the restoration is on the lower part of the walls, between the windows, where pairs of male figures are located next to an altar against an architectural background of columns. The columns are interrupted higher up by the presence of later decorative elements, carried out in the Napoleonic period, over which further papal and Savoy projects were laid; restoration is still in progress on this part of the decorations.

Also on the upper section of the walls are paintings of scenes from the Old Testament, which are part of the Baroque cycle. Foremost among these is the large fresco of *Joseph Recognized by his Brothers* by Pier Francesco Mola, which is located on one of the short walls.

Of the Napoleonic decorations this room still conserves a beautiful white and green marble fireplace, embellished with three oval medallions using the micro mosaic technique.

AUGUSTUS HALL

The Augustus Hall occupies the central space in the former Gallery of Alexander VII, which was split up into three rooms during the Napoleonic occupation of the Quirinale. In order to imagine the original space of the gallery we must bear in mind that the two short walls of this room did not previously exist and were built only in 1812.

As in the two adjacent rooms, here too the restoration works have allowed the bringing back to light of the decoration on the lower part of the walls and the reopening of the bricked-up windows facing onto the courtyard, restoring the original luminosity to the space.

Between the windows we see the rediscovered and restored Baroque paintings, while higher up are the biblical scenes from the same period and alternate with ornamental panels on a gold background carried out during the Napoleonic occupation which hide the upper part of the columns.

The room's current name refers to the marble bust resting on one of the console tables, a partial copy of the famous sculpture known as *Augustus from Prima porta*. Until the middle of the 1900s the space was referred to as the Throne Room because Pope Pius IX and later the Kings of Italy had used it for this purpose.

HALL OF THE AMBASSADORS

During the Savoy period the room was reserved for receiving recognized diplomatic emissaries, a function which continues even today on occasions of official visits of heads of state to the Quirinale.

This room too was part of the Gallery of Alexander VII and shares its history and restoration works with the Yellow Hall and the Augustus Hall.

Here also are frescoes dating from the mid-1600s which can be seen between the windows and higher up the walls in the paintings of the biblical scenes. These latter alternate with 19th Century paintings covering the upper part of the columns.

Belonging to the Baroque cycle is also the magnificent *Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Carlo Maratta, which concludes the series of Bible scenes with a splendid image of the birth of Christ. On the facing wall, however, the mural depicting the *Mission of the Apostles* was carried out by Tommaso Minardi in 1864 and represents the last important work carried out in the papal palace before the transformation of the Quirinale into the seat of the Kings of Italy.

As in the other two rooms of the gallery, here the works carried out in the Napoleonic period included the relaying of the floor, which in this case was embellished with mosaic panels. Despite having been largely restored and reintegrated, the mosaics date from the 2st Century AD and probably originate from Villa Adriana in Tivoli.

HERCULES ROOM

We are now in one of the newest rooms in the Quirinale. It was in fact created in 1940 by demolishing the rooms of the pontifical winter apartment in order to realize a new Throne Room.

As well as the large oriental porcelain vases which we have already seen in other rooms in the palace, in this space there is a notable group of three tapestries, woven in Paris in the royal workshops of Gobelins between the end of the 1600s and the beginning of the following century. They depict the so-called *Triumphs of the Gods*: scenes linked to the figures of Apollo, Minerva and Hercules – the mythical hero who gives his name to the room.

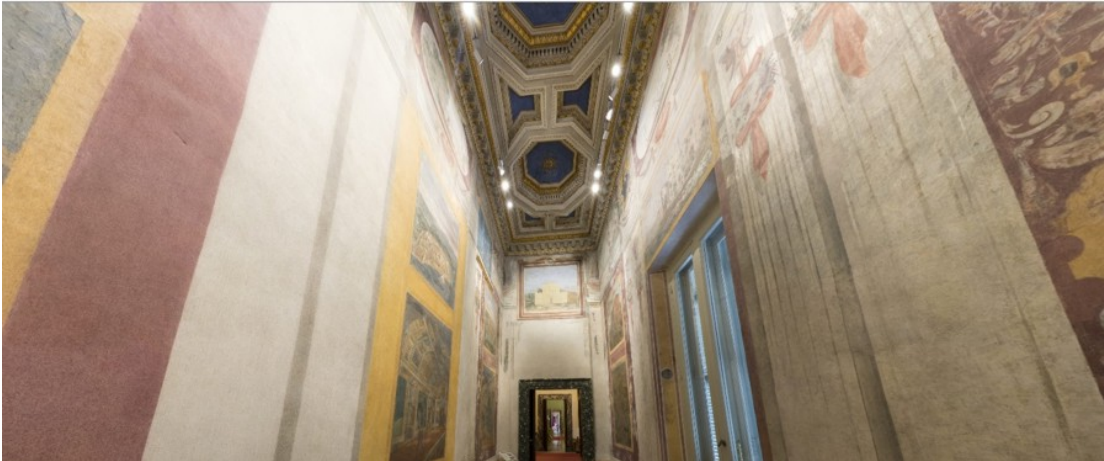
The six paintings by Corrado Giaquinto are also greatly important. They were produced in around 1735 and depict several episodes taken from the adventures of Aeneas. The six canvases were taken from the Villa della Regina in Turin, one of the palaces which the Savoy family drew from in order to decorate the Quirinale after 1870.

HALL OF THE CABINETS

Like the Hercules Room, this hall was also created in 1940. Previously, a small chapel with an audience chamber was located here; this was particularly famous because it was the room where Pope Pius VII was arrested on the orders of Napoleon Bonaparte on July the 6th, 1809.

The name of the room comes from the five inlaid cabinets which rest on console tables. There is also a monumental *secrétaire* which comprises over a hundred drawers and secret compartments of all sizes.

On the walls hang four elegant French tapestries from the 1700s depicting classical divinities which symbolize the Seasons and the Elements. A fifth tapestry, also from the 18th Century, features an episode from the story of Don Quixote. The hanging completes the group of French tapestries and is part of an important series which were woven in the royal Bourbon workshops in Naples and dedicated to Cervantes' famous character. Including the many solely decorative tapestries, the Quirinale houses over one hundred pieces from the Neapolitan series.



PASSAGGETTO OF URBAN VIII

This narrow corridor originally connected the Pope's summer apartment with his winter apartment. It was the Pontiff's private passageway and this explains the rich fresco decorations on the walls, partly disclosed during recent restoration work.

The Passagetto was first painted with frescoes in 1613, at the time of Pope Paul V, born Camillo Borghese, by the principal decorator of the Palace, Annibale Durante. This is when the fake architecture and frieze were installed in the top portion of the walls, where it is possible to see the dragon and eagle which recall the coat of arms of the Borghese family.

Under Pope Paul V, the corridor was only 8 metres long and was extended by 3 metres in 1634, under the rule of Pope Urban VIII, born Maffeo Barberini. On that occasion, painters Simone Lagi and Marco Tullio Montagna embellished the walls with numerous scenes of monuments and places associated with the reign of Urban VIII.

The most interesting scenes are the ones of the bustling panorama of the city of Ancona seen from the sea, the Vatican Gallery of Maps, which is painted with the accuracy of a miniature, and a beautiful view of the Vatican Armoury. Note should also be taken of the scene with the siege of Casale Monferrato, which recalls the historical events of 1630.

The opposite wall displays two views, one hanging on top of the other, of St. Peter's Basilica: both images feature the cross-section of the façade of the Basilica, showing the inside of the portico in which the rites of the opening and closing of the Holy Door took place during the Jubilee of 1625.



THE ROOM OF DRUSUS THE ELDER

The room is named after a marble bust of a man named Drusus the Elder, the beloved step-son of Roman emperor Augustus, who died young after he fell from his horse.

In the 17th Century, this hall was known as “Urban’s Room”, in honour of Pope Urban VIII who used it as his audience room, as it was connected to his private apartment. At the end of the 19th Century, Umberto I of Italy chose it to be his bedroom.

The frieze painted on the walls dates back to the Savoy dynasty. The writing on the escutcheons held up by cupids refer to famous Roman battles but also to events that occurred at the time of Charles Albert, King of Piedmont-Sardinia, and Victor Emmanuel II, the first King of Italy. The aim was to create a parallelism between the Roman Empire and the expansion of the Savoy dynasty. In addition to the eagle of the House of Savoy, the frieze also depicts a number of daisies (margherita in Italian), which alluded to Queen Margherita, the wife of King Umberto. Sitting below a beautiful Caravaggesque painting depicting a penitent Saint Jerome lies a black 18th Century chest of drawers crafted in Paris with refined Japanese lacquer panels by cabinetmaker Bernard Vanrisamburg, who probably made this prestigious piece of furniture for King Louis XV.

Of considerable value is also the 18th Century furniture decorating the room which comes from the Duchy of Parma and includes a valuable tapestry portraying animals and landscapes set against a red background.

Of particular value is the large tapestry decorated with exotic animals that forms part of an 18th Century “New Indies” tapestry series. Five more pieces of the same series are hanging in the Hall of the Zodiac.



THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

This is the room in which the President of the Republic holds his official meetings with the invited Heads of State and consults with party secretaries before forming the Government.

At the time when the Quirinale Palace was the seat of the Pontiffs, this room was the summertime bedroom of the Pope. During the Napoleonic rearrangement of the Palace, the room was turned into the emperor's dining room and at the end of the 19th Century King Umberto I used it as his private office.

The ceiling was decorated at this time, in neo-Renaissance style. The frieze, painted with pairs of angels upholding knightly "enterprises", dates back to the same period.

The room is decorated with furniture of the 18th and 19th Centuries. More specifically, the President's desk was made in France in the middle of the 18th Century and was brought to Rome from the Reggia of Parma.

The painting hanging on the wall behind the desk was painted by 17th Century French painter Jacques Courtois, who was known in Italy with the name of "the Bourguignon". It represents the martyrdom of forty Jesuit priests who were assaulted on their ship by a group of pirates. The other two paintings displayed in the room are by Angelo Maria Crivelli nicknamed "il Crivellone", an 18th Century painter specialised in paintings portraying animals and still lifes. The two large paintings in this room come from the art collection of the House of Savoy and are dedicated to barnyard animals.



THE LILLE TAPESTRY ROOM

The name of the room comes from the five tapestries that decorate the walls and that were woven in the French city of Lille at the beginning of the 18th Century. These magnificent tapestries are dedicated to bucolic themes set in vast landscapes. They depict the activities carried out in the countryside, seen from an idealised and lofty perspective and showing scenes of leisure, like a card game or a lively dance by a tavern. Special attention should be focused on the borders framing the tapestries: they are decorated with work tools, barnyard animals, vegetables and musical instruments.

The room originally formed part of the summer apartments of the Popes. In the 18th Century it was called the “Ante-chamber of the Madonna”: it contained a large painting by Carlo Maratta that had been used as a model for the mosaic with the Madonna and Child giving blessing that crowns the Tower of the Quirinale Palace.

At the beginning of the 19th Century, when the Palace was occupied by the French government, it was split into two rooms, one of which was destined to become Napoleon Bonaparte’s bedroom. However, when the Pope regained possession of the Palace after the French occupation, the two rooms created for Napoleon were once again united, thus restoring the room’s original volume.

When the Quirinale was converted into the royal palace for the King of a united Italy, this part of the Palace was set up to be the bedroom of King Umberto I and his wife and the Lille Tapestry Room in particular was destined to become Queen Margherita’s bedroom.



NAPOLEONIC PARLOUR

During the years of the French occupation of the Palace, this room, which was adjacent to Napoleon's bedroom, was set up as the Emperor's washroom.

The parlour's ceiling dates back to the Napoleonic period and was originally decorated with mythological scenes dedicated to the rite of dressing and of donning an armour. The paintings were removed from the ceiling at the time of Pope Pius IX and only six medallions now remain showing several figures holding up clothes and weapons. On the four corners of the ceiling, it is possible to see four elegant allegories of Fame: they are holding in their hands crowns of laurel that they are offering to couples of eagles, symbolising the glorious Napoleonic Empire.

The three tapestries decorating the walls of the room are part of a series dedicated to the stories of Don Quixote and illustrate episodes of the famous novel by Miguel de Cervantes. They were woven during the second half of the 18th Century in the Neapolitan Tapestry Factory.

The painting hanging between the windows depicts Eugene of Savoy, the famous Army captain who successfully led the Imperial Army of Austria between the 17th and 18th centuries; the frame of the painting is richly engraved with military trophies.



PIFFETTI LIBRARY

This is one of the Palace's most impressive rooms: the Piffetti Library. The room was not designed for the Quirinale Palace but for the villa of the Queen, one of the residences of the House of Savoy in Turin. The library dates back to the first half of the 18th Century and was brought to Rome in 1879 to be adjusted to the apartment of Queen Margherita, the wife of King Umberto I. The original structure consisted of a tall base and book shelves, while the wooden flooring was made at the time the library was installed in Rome.

This masterpiece was made by Pietro Piffetti, one of the greatest woodworkers of his time, who mainly worked at the service of the royal House of Savoy. The Quirinale Palace library is made of a poplar frame lined with different kinds of wood like rosewood, olive wood, boxwood and yew wood. The structure is embellished with refined ivory inlays.

The room is completed with two small console tables lined with tortoiseshell and ivory inlays reproducing sheets and engravings lying on the table. One of the fake ivory sheets bears the signature of Pietro Piffetti.

On top of the shelves sit eight majolica vases and four gilded wooden sculptures representing the Four Seasons.

The books kept in the library mostly date back to the end of the 19th Century and many of their bindings are decorated with the coat of arms of the House of Savoy. Some also contain dedications to and ex libris of Queen Margherita.



THE MUSIC ROOM

The music room is thus named because of the presence of an English fortepiano and of several pieces of furniture decorated with musical instruments.

The room's current arrangement still recalls the original decoration of the early 19th Century, when the room was destined to be used as Napoleon's office. The Emperor would have enjoyed the spectacular panorama and symbolically dominate the entire city through the room's six large windows.

The decoration of the vault dates back to the years under the French occupation, and it features in the centre a large painting by the Bologna-born artist Pelagio Palagi depicting Julius Caesar while he dictates to his scribes the *Commentarii de bello gallico* and *de bello civili*. Napoleon was a great admirer of Caesar and his literary texts, so much so that, in the painting at the Quirinale Palace, the Roman ruler is portrayed with the effigy of the French emperor.

The decoration of the rest of the vault also derives from the original Napoleonic project and features six tondos portraying the pagan divinities that protected Rome, set against a blue background. The paintings are by Felice Giani, the most original of the Italian neoclassical painters, who enthusiastically supported the revolutionary ideology and the expansionist ambitions of the Napoleonic Empire; for this reason he often worked for French customers and, in the Quirinale Palace, he decorated many of the rooms of Napoleon's apartment. The paintings hanging on the walls were painted at the beginning of the 19th Century and depict several members of the Savoy Royal Family.



HALL OF PEACE

This hall too formed part of the apartment prepared for Napoleon and it was dedicated to the theme of Peace.

On the ceiling we see a bustling scene showing a pagan sacrifice near two altars, one dedicated to Peace and the other to Janus (Giano, in Italian). This divinity was associated to the theme of peace but, at the same time, it also recalled the name of the painter: Felice Giani. Other paintings by the same painter once decorated the ceiling but they were replaced by mirrors at the beginning of the 20th Century.

The works of art contained in this Hall are intended to exalt the figure of Napoleon as the bringer of peace, the only condition in which the arts and letters could prosper. This is the reason why the gypsum frieze along the walls is dedicated to painters, sculptors, architects and musicians, who are portrayed in the medallions. Next to each medallion there is a winged Fame crowning the twenty-two artists with a laurel wreath. Part of the artists portrayed are Italian and part French, except for Austrian composer Joseph Haydn, who was included in the frieze because he was particularly loved by Napoleon.

The frieze is the work of Roman-born Alessandro d'Este, the favourite student of the neoclassical Italian sculptor, Antonio Canova. Canova did not produce any work of art for the Quirinale Palace although he collaborated in making the iconographic design used in the wing of the Palace designated to be Napoleon's apartment.



HALL OF VICTORY

Also this room forms part of the suite of rooms designated for Napoleon Bonaparte in 1812.

This room was dedicated to the theme of War or Victory, as confirmed by the lively battle scene that stands out at the centre of the beautiful coffered ceiling. The painting was by Felice Giani, the painter who also decorated the ceilings of the adjacent rooms. The gypsum frieze decorating the upper portion of the walls is also consistent with the theme of the room. The medallions contain the portraits of the so-called Twelve Caesars, which referred to the Roman Emperors from Julius Caesar to Domitian, and are displayed between pairs of winged Victories and weapon trophies. Each one of the medallions originally bore the name of the corresponding emperor but when Pope Pius VII returned to the Quirinale Palace after the Napoleonic occupation, the names of the emperors were removed. This room contains two very precious pieces of French furniture dating back to the 18th Century. The file cabinet placed behind the desk, instead of being endowed with drawers, is fitted with leather-covered boxes that were used to file documents. An exquisite and delicately crafted secretary desk made by woodworker Martin Carlin is decorated with extremely refined Sevres porcelain panels painted with baskets of flowers.

On the walls above the doors to the Hall, there are seven 18th Century oval paintings containing the portrait of ladies of the Viennese court of Maria Carolina of Austria, the wife of Ferdinand IV, King of Naples. Lastly, worthy of special note is the original 19th Century clock made up of an alabaster column topped by a complex mechanism showing the planetary phases.



HALL OF THE LADIES

The Hall of the Ladies is still mostly arranged as it first was in 1812, when it was destined to be the living room in the apartment of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The stucco frieze was commissioned to one of the greatest artists of neoclassicism, the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, who worked in Rome at the end of the 18th Century. The frieze portrays the entrance of Alexander the Great in Babylon, a theme that was chosen to symbolise the entrance of Napoleon in Rome, an occurrence that in fact never came to be. The work of art was very successful at the time, to the extent that the Danish sculptor made several duplicates for other customers.

Dating back to the Napoleonic period are also the marble flooring, which embeds a Roman mosaic at the centre, and the lovely fireplace decorated with two Dacian slaves. The room's vault was also painted in 1812 by Felice Giani, who painted the ceilings of the apartment's other rooms. A large painting dedicated to the Roman emperor Trajan was installed at the centre of the vault during the Napoleonic period but was then removed and placed in another area of the Palace. The removal unveiled the presence of a 17th Century fresco that is still visible today and shows the coat of arms of Pope Urban VIII, born Maffeo Barberini.

The present-day name of the Hall originates from the presence along the walls of four large circular paintings depicting King Charles Emmanuel III of Savoy and his three wives, all of whom died after only a few years of marriage, ultimately leaving the king widowed over more than thirty years.



BRONZINO'S ROOM

The room takes its name after the important group of tapestries that decorate the walls, some of which were woven from cartoons by the famous Florentine painter Agnolo Bronzino. The tapestries are dedicated to the biblical figure of Joseph, son of Jacob, and were woven around the middle of the 16th Century by order of Cosimo I de' Medici to adorn the walls of the Sala dei Duecento in Palazzo Vecchio, in Florence. The series is made up of twenty tapestries, ten of which are still kept in Florence, while the rest were taken to Rome in 1882 to embellish the Savoy dynasty's royal palace. At present, the ten tapestries of the Quirinale Palace are displayed in this hall according to a rotating system.

Nowadays the room hosts the meetings of the Italian President of the Republic with invited Heads of State and their delegations. The hall was once known as the "Dark Room" because the windows do not directly open onto the exterior but onto the "Hall of Battles", so called because it was decorated with several paintings dedicated to renaissance victories. The painting on the vault, portraying an allegorical celebration of Italy, dates back to the reign of the House of Savoy, at the beginning of the 20th Century.

The current appearance of this room is strongly conditioned by the rearrangement of this part of the Palace that was carried out ahead of Adolf Hitler's visit in 1938. That was when the marble portals and flooring were put in place, in addition to the busts of ancient Romans, almost all of which are modern and were purchased from antique dealers for the occasion. Lastly, note should be taken of the richly engraved tables crafted in 1888 by the Venetian master craftsman Valentino Panciera Besarel to decorate the Imperial Apartments of the Manica Lunga, the Palace's "Long Wing".

THE MASCARINO STAIRCASE

Ottaviano Mascarino, who gives his name to this magnificent staircase, was the architect who designed the first part of the Quirinale palace in the late 1500s. The building, commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII, was a villa where the Pope intended to spend the summer months taking advantage of its position on the Quirinal hill, a location considered to be fresher and airier than the Vatican.

The staircase was the main form of access to the upper floors of the villa and Mascarino designed it with great care, choosing a spiral shape based on an original elliptical plan. Pairs of travertine columns support and refine the ramp, while natural light cascades from the central stairwell above, creating interesting chiaroscuro effects against the semi-darkness of the steps.

This staircase is Mascarino's most famous architectural creation and has always been greatly admired, so much so that Francesco Borromini built a faithful replica of it in Palazzo Barberini.

LOGGIA OF HONOUR

When consultations for the formation of a new government are held in the Quirinale, this is the room where the representatives of the political parties make their declarations to the gathered press after meeting with the Head of State.

The room is part of the 16th Century villa built by Ottaviano Mascarino for Pope Gregory XIII and was originally an open loggia, a typical structure in a summer residence. The fitting of the great arches with windows dates to the 1700s, the five large windows are the reason why this part of the palace is in fact known today as the “Vetrata” – the glass wall.

The vaulted ceiling paintings and the *lunettes* are dedicated to the arts and date to 1908, in the early years of the reign of Vittorio Emanuele III. Eight of the twelve columns in line along the walls of the room were taken from the Pauline Chapel. They were part of the marble transenna which divided the chapel in two. However, this structure was dismantled for the occasion of the wedding celebrations of Prince Umberto in January of 1930.

ROOM OF THE BEES

Though today it is a simple connecting room, in the 1700s it was used by the pope to impart his blessings to the faithful through a window facing onto the Courtyard of Honour.

The bees which give this room its name are to be found at the centre of the vaulted ceiling. They were painted in the 1600s to represent the coat of arms of a great pope from the Baroque period: Urban VIII Barberini. The remaining part of the vaulted ceiling was decorated in 1907 with grotesques and bust of figures from ancient Rome.

The stucco frieze is from the Napoleonic period and is dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici, who was held up as a model for his patronage of the arts, his capacity for good government and his non-aristocratic origins – virtues much appreciated by Napoleon. The author of the 1812 frieze was Francesco Massimiliano Laboureur, a Roman sculptor who had always been close to French cultural circles.

Among the room's furnishings it is worth noting the bust of the Emperor Commodus from the 2nd Century AD and the Parisian tapestry from the late 1700s dedicated to an episode of French history.

THE HALL OF THE ZODIAC

With this room we enter the wing of the palace alongside the garden, which was chosen by the Savoy family to host their main ceremonial activities.

The room contains a stucco frieze from the Napoleonic period, modelled by Carlo Finelli and depicting the Triumph of Julius Caesar. Everything else in the room was the result of the transformation of the Quirinale into a royal palace for the sovereigns of a unified Italy.

Going against the austere atmosphere of the former pontifical palace, the vaulted ceiling was decorated in 1888 by Annibale Brugnoli with a languid allegory of Aurora flanked by signs of the zodiac. In the *lunettes* below the vaulted ceiling the sovereigns' guests could admire young women involved in dancing, making music, drinking, feasting...

Chosen for the walls, however, was a spectacular series of 18th Century tapestries, entitled *The New Indies*, and was dedicated to the flora and fauna of Brazil and Latin America. In reality the group of tapestries located in this room is not part of the older series but was woven later, still in the 18th Century, in which the South American nature was embellished with European and African animals.

THE HALL OF PAUL V'S BUILDING PROJECTS

Until a few years ago this room was known as the Hall of the Piedmontese Wall Hangings, which referred to an 18th Century silk tapestry which had decorated the walls since the end of the 1800s. In 2005, conservation priorities dictated the removal of this fabric and led to the discovery and restoration of an important frieze from 1610 featuring fountains and buildings whose construction was ordered by the Borghese pope Paul V. Among the buildings featured is a façade of the Basilica of St Peter, three views of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and one of a corner of the Quirinale as seen from the garden.

The ceiling retains the tempera painting decoration from the late 1800s, which masterfully simulates a silky surface effect, matching the style of the Rococo fabrics that had been on the walls.

The room contains a significantly prestigious and valuable group of 18th Century armchairs, sofas and stools which were made in France but which was brought from the Royal Palace in Colorno. The unique pair of bronze, tin-plate and Meissen porcelain candelabra are from the same period and show a swan on water passing through a grove of reeds.

The 17th Century painting, attributed to Giovanni Andrea Sirani, depicts the Triumph of Galatea; the beautiful marine nymph is depicted sailing on the water accompanied by Cupid.

THE HALL OF THE TAPESTRIES

This room was decorated by Ignazio Perricci from Apulia in 1877. He designed the sumptuous gilt wooden decorations and mirrors around the four magnificent 18th Century tapestries. The tapestries, taken from designs by the famous French painter François Boucher, depict elegant mythological scenes dedicated to the *Loves of the Gods* and to *Tales of Love and Psyche*.

The vaulted ceiling was painted by Cesare Maccari in 1877 too, inspired by Boucher's sensual style and the light-hearted themes of the tapestries. The painter from Sienna portrayed *Love Crowning the Three Graces* against a vast azure sky.

The late 19th Century furniture was created specifically for this hall and is perfectly in stylistic harmony with the Rococo taste of the room. A careful examination of the centre of the sofa backrest reveals the monogram VE of King Vittorio Emanuele II.

The only element out of step with the characteristics of the hall are the frescoes on the splays of the four windows, which were painted in 1610 for Pope Paul V. At the centre of the grotesques is the image of a mirror reflecting the sunlight in a forest to symbolize the role of the pontiff, called to reflect divine grace in the world.

THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNUNCIATION

The chapel of the Annunciation is one of the artistic jewels in the Quirinale Palace. It was part of the private apartment of Pope Paul V Borghese and was decorated in 1610 by one of the greatest masters of the time, Guido Reni, who made use of a number of collaborators including Giovanni Lanfranco and Francesco Albani.

The frescoes in the chapel are dedicated to episodes from the life of the Virgin, from the angelic announcement to the father Joachim to the glory of the Virgin meeting God the Father in heaven. The altar piece portrays the Annunciation.

A 17th Century door decorated with the emblems of Pope Urban VIII Barberini has recently been returned to a space at the side of the altar. The door permitted the chapel to be a reserved space for the pontiff who could enter directly from his rooms. From that position the pope had in front of him the most unusual image in the chapel, which is today also the most famous subject in this cycle: the scene portrays the young Maria in the Temple, concentrating on sewing with two angels standing by.

The only non-original element in the chapel is the floor, which was laid in 1815 for Pope Pius VII Chiaramonti, whose coat of arms sits at the centre of the coloured marble geometry.

Given the great artistic value of the room, the chapel was not modified at the time of the Savoy family's renovation of this wing of the palace. Nevertheless, during receptions which took place in the adjacent halls it was used as a space in which to wash the dinnerware.

THE HALL OF THE MIRRORS

The Hall of the Mirrors is one of the most important from the perspective of the institutional activities which are conducted in the Quirinale. Here, in fact, is where some audiences with the Head of State and the swearing-in of Constitutional Court Judges are held.

The current layout of the room dates to 1877 and the hand of Ignazio Perricci, who created the elegant Rococo style space, indulging the taste of Princess Margherita. The future queen did in fact oversee the furnishing and organizational works of the great halls and tried to banish the monastic atmosphere of the ancient papal palace by drawing inspiration from the ostentatious style European royal palaces of the 1700s.

This room was intended as a ballroom, as revealed by the pictures on the vaulted ceiling depicting a playful circle of figures suspended in the heavens. The walls are covered with a sparkling system of mirrors which reflect the lights of the Murano chandeliers *ad infinitum*. The white porcelain colour which characterizes the room is enlivened by gilt carvings and by the curtains, also golden in colour.

Perhaps this is the room in which it is easiest to imagine the life of the palace under the Savoy royal family at the end of the 1800s. It was then that the Quirinale, after the austere centuries of the papacy, became a theatre of social receptions, sumptuous lunches and court balls.

THE GRAND BALLROOM

Along with the Great Hall of the Cuirassiers, the Grand Ballroom represents the heart of the presidential palace. Indeed it hosts ceremonies and audiences which include large numbers of invitees as well as being the setting for State Lunches and the swearing-in of new governments.

The furnishing of the room dates to the years immediately following the Unification of Italy. Indeed, the Savoy family marked out this room's vast dimensions for the most important ceremonies. This explains why the typical Rococo style favoured by the rulers here gave way to a more majestic arrangement with imposing architecture decorated with military symbols and allegorical figures rising up to the centre of the vaulted ceiling with a fustian painting dedicated to the Triumph of Italy.

The room was, however, used for lunches and balls, to this end it was fitted with two enormous mirrors which reflect and amplify the light from the large chandeliers. In 1889 a "stable orchestral platform" was created - a high balcony facing onto the room equipped to host the musicians hired to accompany the court banquets and dances.