



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 falling 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.