



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 papal apartments. In the 18th Century it was called the “Ante-chamber of the Madonna”: it contained a large painting by Carlo Maratta which had been used as a model for the mosaic with the *Madonna and Child Giving Blessings* 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 reunited, thus restoring the room’s original volume.

When the Quirinale Palace 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.