



THE *MANICA LUNGA* AND THE IMPERIAL APARTMENTS

The so-called “Manica Lunga” (literally “Long Sleeve” but meaning in this case the “Long Wing”) constitutes the south wing of the architectural complex of the Quirinale Palace. Construction on the first section of the long building was begun during the papacy of Sixtus V, born Felice Peretti (1585–1590) to accommodate the dwellings of the Pope’s Swiss Guards. Seen from the inner courtyard, the new houses did not look directly onto the garden but onto a long and narrow courtyard, which would later be called the Courtyard of the Swiss. After a few more interventions on the structure carried out under Urban VIII, born Maffeo Barberini (1623–1644), and Alexander VII, born Fabio Chigi (1655–1667), it was later more thoroughly redesigned between 1656 and 1659. Gian Lorenzo Bernini was entrusted with the task of designing the extension of the building until the gate leading into the Gardens, which still exists today, across from the church of Sant’Andrea al Quirinale. Thanks to the impulse of Pope Innocent XIII, born Michelangelo dei Conti (1721–1724), the work to further expand the wing designed by Bernini continued under the direction of Alessandro Specchi. The extension of the long wing was completed under the papacy of Clement XII, born Lorenzo Corsini (1730–1740), who commissioned Architect Ferdinando Fuga to build the final section that included the house of the *Segretario della Cifra*, the assistant of the Pope in charge of ciphering his secret letters.

The *Manica Lunga* instead underwent radical changes during the reign of the House of Savoy: the need to create new spaces made it necessary to add a storey to the whole wing and, in order to create a closed corridor internally connecting the Palace with the *Palazzina del Fuga*, which was designated to be the King’s private residence, the second open gallery overlooking the

garden was partially walled up and definitively compromised.

The *Bel Étage* of the Long Wing houses the Imperial Apartments, a suite of sixteen rooms that hosted, on two different occasions, first in 1888 and again in 1893, Emperor William II of Germany during his visits to the Quirinale Palace. This floor also gives access to the two Imperial Apartments and the four guest quarters, which are still used to accommodate guests paying official visits.

Furniture

The Audience Hall contains three tapestries of the “Love of the Gods” series. Starting from the wall adjacent to the Brustolon Hall and proceeding clockwise, they depict the loves and passions of Mars and Venus, Boreas abducting Orithyia and Bacchus and Erigone. Together with the tapestry featuring Bacchus and Ariadne, which can be found in the Tapestry Room, they were woven in the Beauvais factory between 1750 and 1752 from cartoons by François Boucher. Made to decorate the Ducal Palace of Parma, and subsequently moved to the Ducal Palace of Colorno after a short stop at the Royal Palace of Turin, the tapestries were brought to the Quirinale Palace to decorate this room in 1888. The third tapestry is the one portraying Psyche showing the treasures to her sisters, which forms part of the “Stories of Psyche” series.

It was woven at the Royal Factory of Beauvais from a cartoon by François Boucher roughly between 1748 and 1750.

Among the furniture, what stands out the most is a set of arm-chairs and sofas brought from Turin when the Imperial Apartments were being decorated. Originally made for the Ducal Palaces of Parma and Colorno by French woodworkers at the Court of Philip of Bourbon, Duke of Parma from 1748 to 1765 and married to Louise-Elizabeth, the daughter of King Louis XV, these pieces are upholstered with tapestry manufactured at the Royal Factory of Beauvais in the middle of the 18th Century.

The small room called the Japanese Parlour represents the iconic example of the Oriental taste in furniture, as it was interpreted and reproduced in the second half of the 19th Century. Even if it was called “Japanese” from the start, the panels lining the walls are of Chinese origin and are the spoils of the royal residences in Turin. The exquisite lacquers once decorated four

Rooms “à la Chinoise” in the apartments of the Dukes of Savoy in the Palace of Venaria, between 1753 and 1755. The room was downsized to the present dimension in order to alternate along the walls mirrors and lacquer panels depicting fluvial landscapes with pavilions, bridges, trees, buildings and bodies of water crossed by boats, set against a shiny black background. The panels on the lower portion of the lining, just above the base, feature imaginary animals. In the refurbishing work of the 19th Century, the ceiling was entirely covered with painted mirrors.

The Piffetti Parlour, which was originally designated to be the Office in the Imperial Apartments, still has at the centre the 1873 painting by Domenico Bruschi featuring the Allegory of Peace and War. This room contains the exquisite pieces of furniture crafted by the Turin-born woodworker Pietro Piffetti, all inlaid with ivory, bone, tortoise, mother of pearl and several more elements. The furniture was made to furnish the Apartments of the Royal Palace of the House of Savoy in Turin. They were later moved to Moncalieri Castle and finally transported to Rome precisely in 1888, to decorate the Imperial Apartments during the State visit of the King of Germany. Special notice should be taken of the drop-front secretary desk of 1738, which stands out for its many decorations and for its iconographic imagery. In decorating the scenes on his furniture, Piffetti drew inspiration from a host of ideas taken from Italian, French and Flemish paintings and engravings, often enriching them with mottos, phrases or educational and moralising inventions alluding to the qualities and skills of the King for whom the furniture was made.

On the short wall hang two tapestries portraying bucolic scenes called “Boscarecce”, and woven in the Royal Factory of Turin in the second half of the 18th Century.

The centre of the coffered ceiling engraved by Luca Seri features a canvas inside an octagonal frame portraying Venus and Cupid, painted by Cesare Biseo in 1888. The commode, by Jean-Pierre Latz, dates back to the middle of the 18th Century and is inlaid with flower patterns made with precious woods and decorated with gilded bronze elements. On the wall between the two windows hangs the Madonna and Child painted by Lorenzo Lotto between 1526 and 1529, which is documented in the art collections of the Castelporziano Castle.

The Tea Parlour’s ceiling was decorated in 1893 by Giuseppe Brugo with

themes drawn from two scenes in the story of Cupid and Psyche. The wall decorations were restyled at the end of the 1950s with five Chinese painted silk panels. The panels, dating back to the middle of the 18th Century and originally installed in the Royal Palace of Turin, were brought to Rome from the Royal Villa of Monza. Of rare and exquisite craftsmanship, these panels depict scenes of everyday life in China with people busy in different activities, set in a magnificent landscape. Another 18 panels of the cycle currently decorate the sky-lit Ante-chamber to the Presidential Palace.

The Tea Parlour directly opens up into the suite of rooms of the second Imperial Apartments. The Room, once named “Leonardo” or “Mosaic Room” (consisting of a sort of ante-chamber leading into the following room, which was set up as a Bedroom), is lined with a wall hanging that was installed during the latest restyling and that matches the lilac colour and the flower decorations of the original Lampas fabric. The wall hanging blends in well with the decorations on the corner of the ceiling panels, painted by Domenico Bruschi in 1893, featuring angels flying within sinuous frames.

The Bedroom is still decorated as it originally was in 1893. The room comprises what were once two adjacent rooms and a backroom used as an Alcove. The precious wall lining originates from the 18th Century decoration of one of the Oriental-style rooms in the Villa della Regina, the Queen’s Villa, in Turin. It consists of an impressive green lacquer wood panelling interspersed with golden frames encasing ivory-coloured fine paper panels decorated with thin blossoming tree branches enlivened with birds and butterflies. The wooden frame containing the painted paper panels was adapted to the room thanks to encasing elements crafted in the same style in order to adjust to the larger dimensions of this room compared to its original location in Turin. Access to the Alcove is through a lavish triple archway that stands higher than the original 18th Century panelling. A recent refurbishing unveiled the frieze which joins the wood panelling with the ceiling, which features medallions containing women’s monochrome busts. The wooden vault is painted in silver and decorated with blossoming tree branches, birds and butterflies that match the decorations below. In the centre, it features the Allegory of Dawn with several cupids that remove from the sky a pink-hued curtain, painted by Gioacchino Pagliei and Giuseppe Capranesi.

The vault of the Living Room, entirely restored by painter Emilio Retrosi,

features at the centre a painting by an anonymous 17th Century painter from Bologna, portraying King Salomon receiving the Queen of Sabah (originally in the Queen's Villa in Turin), between two floral compositions. On either side, painted figures look onto the event depicted in the painting at the centre of the vault. The walls are decorated with four tapestries of the Stories of Don Quixote series made in Naples between 1757 and 1779. The two console tables, from the collection of the Duke of Parma, were made in France in the middle of the 18th Century.