

I TESORI DI VILLA ARCONATI-FAR

#11 – Raphael's bed and the Chambers of the Seasons

Waiting to open wide the doors of our little Versailles to welcome again the visitors who love it so much, we take this opportunity to let you know better the "treasures" that Villa Arconati-FAR guards and that few still know.

Today we are talking about an authentic treasure, which unfortunately is no longer found in our noble rooms: a beautiful antique four-poster bed, which superbly furnished a bedroom adjacent to the Sala della Caccia.



According to a study by the Marquis Gerolamo D'Adda, which appeared in the French magazine "La Gazette des Beaux Arts" in August 1876, this bed was made by Giovanni da Udine, a pupil of Raphael on a drawing by Raphael himself!

The Marquis, a man of art and letters known in the nineteenth century for his erudition, must have had no difficulty in going to the Villa, as he was the father-in-law of Maria Busca, younger sister of the Countess Luisa Sormani Busca, owner of the Castellazzo at the 'era.

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In the study it is said that the bed was made with a precious blue velvet and damask (which over the years turned to green) and by delicate silk and gold threads that created a decoration with grotesques and arabesques: griffins, chimeras, birds and volutes of foliage.

At the center of the backrest and on the sides of the bed there is a winged figure, whose lower limbs are lost in the arabesques; open arms with closed fists hold a veil in the form of a garland. Its superb decoration is completed by the embroideries, made with blue tone on tone and gilding, true masterpieces of painting.

The most spectacular peculiarity of this bed, however, according to the Marquis D'Adda, was the wooden structure that supported the canopy, completely covered with fabric and therefore invisible.

The canopy, therefore, seemed to float in the air, as if by magic.

THE ROOMS OF THE SEASONS

Raphael's bed was in a bedroom adjacent to the Sala della Caccia and followed by another bedroom with a study. Opposite the Sala della Caccia, which was a smoking room, there was another bedroom, namely the Sala dello Zodiaco. All these rooms formed the apartment of the "fourth" of the south-east, whose decoration is characterized by pastel tones on the walls, bas-relief stuccos and gilding.

This wing of the Villa was built between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century for the count Giuseppe Maria Arconati, which we remember was defined antiquitatis illustrator, for the love of classical art, which seems to have confirmation also in these environments.

The recurring theme in the decoration of these rooms seems to be that related to the Seasons, also modulated through figures from classical mythology.



Spring depicted on the vault of a bedroom in the southeast quarter

The first room of the apartment is the Sala dello Zodiaco, where we find medallions that illustrate all four seasons.

We then find ourselves in the Sala della Caccia probably dedicated to autumn.

We continue, then, in Raphael's room: here we find on the vault - decorated with stucco with gilding - a carriage on which a female figure is seated to which a putto holds out a basket of fruit. The fruit is also found on the over door, always decorated with stucco and gilding. This mythological female figure could be Ceres, the personification of Summer.

The next bedroom - the last of the wing - is dedicated to Flora, the personification of Spring, who holds a cornucopia full of ivy and flowers in her hand.

This room is one of the brightest in the Villa, as it has a double exposure to the east and south.

At the back of the room there is also a small study, which was probably used for writing and correspondence. On the four corners of the vaulted ceiling it is decorated with gilded stuccos depicting the Arts: painting, architecture, sculpture and music.

Due to its position and its shape, this room was certainly one of the most prestigious in the Villa and was certainly granted to the most distinguished visiting guests.

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