

CHAPEL

Historical names:	Treasury? (17th century), Vestibule/Staircase to the Upper Floor (18th century), Side Staircase/Chapel (19th century), Chapel (20th century).
Years of origin:	of the 19th century
Architect:	Agostino Locci (walls), 17th century. Francesco Maria Lanci and Enrico Marconi (conversion into a chapel), mid-19th century.
Artists:	Vincenzo Gaiassi - statue in the altar, wall decoration in Carrara marble, Luca Caramini - altar baldachin, wall decoration in Carrara marble, 1857-1861, Salvatore de Rossi - the tabernacle, 1857-1858 Julius Troschel - red marble stoup, 1857-1858, Józef Klimczak - stucco decoration of the dome, 1861, Jean-Baptiste Lavastre –reliefs on the door, 1853.

Description:

The room was originally one of the cabinets belonging to the chambers of King Jan III. It was most likely used subsidiarily to store books or other art objects used in the library, hence its 17th century name - the Treasury. In the 18th century, the room was converted into a staircase leading to the first floor, similarly to the cabinet in the north-western bower (The al Fresco Cabinet), situated to it symmetrically with respect to the Grand Vestibule. The idea for this reconstruction probably came from Maria Zofia Czartoryska, daughter of Elżbieta Sieniawska, or Augustus II, and it was carried out by Johann Sigmund Deybel.

The palace chapel was arranged here in the middle of the 19th century designed by Francesco Maria Lanci and Henri Marconi. The idea of setting up a chapel in the palace was influenced by the legend of the death of King Jan III in this very place. Aleksandra Potocka was the initiator of this project. The interior was given a Renaissance Revival design reminiscent of the royal burial chapels at Wawel.

The square-shaped cabinet was surmounted by a semicircular dome with an oculus at the top, through which light enters the interior. The walls are enclosed by double pillar arcades with portals to the Antechamber and the King's Library to the north and west, a semi-circularly closed window with return window framing at the bottom to the south, and an altar with a semi-circularly closed niche with a statue of Madonna and Child to the east. Up to the height of the cornice, under the arches of the arcades, the walls are lined with Carrara marble; the decoration above is in stucco and lime mortar. The door and window frames and the altar niche are decorated with subtle pearl ornamentation; the lintels of portals with Ionic cymatium. The dome is filled with quadrilateral and multilateral coffers with floral decoration and single rosettes. All ornaments of the decoration and furnishings were made in flat relief. The marble wall altar and tabernacle are decorated with ornaments and inlay of coloured stones.

The chapel's current design is mainly the work of Italian artists Vincenzo Gaiassi and Luca Caramini. In addition to detailing the Carrara marble walls, they also accomplished the altar baldachin (Caramini) and the statue modelled on Raphael's Sistine Madonna (Gaiassi). The mosaic door to the tabernacle with the scene of *the Resurrection of Christ* was made in Rome by Salvatore de Rossi and the two red

marble stoups by Julius Troschell. The stucco decoration covering the interior of the dome, in the type of the Italian Renaissance master Jacopo Sansovin, is the work of a peasant from nearby Powsinek - Józef Klimczak.

The bronze cast doors, then called "eternal", come from the Warsaw workshop of Karol Minter, and the four reliefs with Gospel scenes are signed by an unknown artist - F. Lavastre. They present *the Healing of the Sick*, *the Resurrection of Lazarus*, *the Wedding Feast at Cana* and *the Miraculous Catch of Fish*.

An alabaster urn in the corner holds the heart of Marianna Potocka, the wife of Warsaw governor General Alois Friedrich von Brühl, who died in 1780.

Selected literature:

Fijałkowski Wojciech, *Wnętrza pałacu w Wilanowie*, Warsaw 1986, pp. 91, 94-95, 147-148.