

QUEEN'S ANTECHAMBER

Historical names: Queen's Antechamber (17th century),
Wardrobe/Fifth Room (18th century),
Room called King Jan's Wardrobe/King's dressing room (19th century),
Queen's Antechamber (20th century),
Years of origin: 1677-1679
Architect: Agostino Locci, 17th century.
Artists: Jerzy Eleuter Siemiginowski - plafond "Autumn", painting of the
plafond, frieze, 17th century

Description:

Queen's Antechamber is, along with both bedrooms, one of the most important royal rooms. Only the ceiling decoration and the frieze circling the upper part of the walls survived from the 17th century decor. In the first half of the 18th century the room was significantly reconstructed on the orders of Elżbieta Sieniawska's daughter - Maria Zofia. The door leading to the Queen's Bedroom was then moved to the centre and the stove was replaced by a fireplace in the corner. The walls were covered with patterned fabric of Genoese type and white wainscoting.

The successive owners tried to preserve the historical design of the interior, so apart from necessary maintenance they did not significantly influence the decoration of the room.

The Queen's Antechamber is an interior that is analogous in function, size and design to the King's Antechamber. The room is related to royal bedrooms by an artistic programme and the decoration is subordinated to the theme of Autumn presented in allegoric form on the plafond.

The composition consists of two areas. The lower one depicts Vertumnus, the god of ripening and transformation, and goddess Pomona in her autumnal incarnation with a basket of fruit and a willow tree devoid of leaves. The couple is surrounded by: putti with fruit, a small satyr, a drunken young man referring to retinue of Bacchus and a monkey taking the fruit - the symbol of taste. In the upper part of the representation there is a group of six female figures - an image of Virgo constellation, where one of the stars marked the beginning of grape harvest. To their right there are symbols of autumnal Zodiac signs: Sagittarius, Scorpio and Libra, autumnal winds flying out from behind the clouds and ascending putti with a fabric shielding Pomona from fierce blasts.

Plafond is surrounded by a richly gilded frame and coving paintings imitating sculpturally rendered figural groups of amused putti and satyrs; cartouches with clamshell ornamentation and architectural details covered with gilding on a blue background.

The upper part of the walls is surrounded by a painted frieze depicting putti holding fruit garlands. Small sphinxes in the corners are similar to the creatures rendered in stucco coving in the Queen's Bedroom. Pairs of putti in the middle of the sides of the frieze hang fabrics with depictions of scenes from rural life illustrating quotations from Virgil on banderoles placed above them.

Quotations from Virgil's *Georgics* on relief banderoles above paintings with rural scenes:

Eastern wall - Harvesting honey from beehives

*Dulcia mella premes nec tantum dulcia,
Quantum et liquida et durum Bacchi **domitura** saporem.*

(G.IV, 101-102) - in Wilanów incorrectly: *elomitura saporem*.

When heaven brings round the season, thou shalt strain Sweet honey, nor yet so sweet
as passing clear,

And mellowing on the tongue the wine-god's fire.

North wall - Picking the soil for sowing

*Rara sit an supra morem si densa requires
Altera frumentis quoniam favet altera Baccho.*

(G.II, 227-228)

Dost ask if loose or passing firm it be -

Since one for corn hath liking, one for wine

West wall - Stubble burning

*Saepe etiam sterilis incedere profuit agros
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.*

(G.I, 84-85)

Oft, too, 'twill boot to fire the naked fields,

And the light stubble burn with crackling flames;

North wall - Ox ploughing

*Illa seges **demum** votis respondet avari
Agricolae, bis quae solem, bis frigora sensit.*

(G.I, 47-48) - in Wilanów incorrectly: *domum*

That land the craving farmer's prayer fulfils,

Which twice the sunshine, twice the frost has felt;

Selected literature:

Fijałkowski Wojciech, *Vademecum Wilanowa*, Warsaw 2011.

Karpowicz Mariusz, *Jerzy Eleuter Siemiginowski, malarz polskiego baroku*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow – Gdańsk, 1974, pp. 100-105.

Karpowicz Mariusz, *Sztuka Warszawy czasów Jana III*, Warsaw 1987, p. 76.

Strycharczyk Barbara, *Georgiki Wergiliusza - źródło cytatów w Wilanowie*

http://www.wilanow-palac.pl/georgiki_wergiliusza_zrodlo_cytatow_w_wilanowie.html