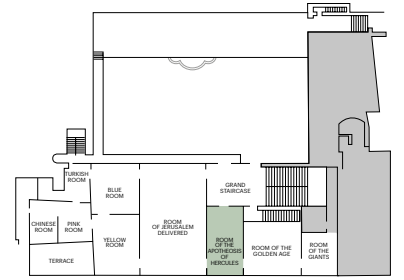


THE ROOM OF THE APOTHEOSIS OF HERCULES



Inspired by two well-known episodes recounted by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, the Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules and the Room of the Giants are the final two spaces decorated by Gian Giacomo Barbelli. In both rooms, the painter worked without Donato Calvi's input: the choice of subject probably came from the patron himself.

Indeed, the *Apotheosis of Hercules* is an explicit glorification of Francesco Moroni. *The Effete Hercules*, by Almerico Passarelli, set to music by Maurizio Cazzati, was performed for the first time in Bergamo in 1653 at the Palazzo della Ragione. This opera was dedicated to Francesco Moroni himself.



DID YOU KNOW...?

The architectural framing of the fresco was heavily reworked in the neoclassical style in 1835. This intervention necessitated the repainting of some of the characters.

Because of these changes, today the fresco no longer embodies the precise style and original compositional choices made the painter, Gian Giacomo Barbelli.



Antonio Tempesta, *Apotheosis of Hercules* (detail), 1606, etching



Gian Giacomo Barbelli, *Apotheosis of Hercules* (detail), 1654, Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules



Giuseppe Zais, *Landscape* (detail), late 18th century, drawing

The decoration and fresco of the Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules were completed in 1654 by **Gian Giacomo Barbelli**, creator of both the figures and the imaginary architectural background. And, indeed, in this room as in the preceding one, the painter does not rely on the help of an illusionistic specialist. Throughout his career, when creating scenes and characters in his frescoes, Barbelli drew inspira-

tion from etchings. While in his early works his dependence on these iconographic sources was all too apparent, with time the relationship with etching became much freer. Such ease is evident in the cycle in this room, with clear references to other artists, especially the Florentine Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630). Within the Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules is a varied ensemble of paintings and drawings from the

baroque period: two genre paintings of little people by Enrico Albrici (1714-1775), landscapes by Giuseppe Roncelli (1661-1729), Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli (1730-1800) and Giuseppe Zais (1709-1784), as well as a character study of a head from the school of Piazzetta, an example of a popularly successful genre from the Veneto region during the 18th century.



Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules, close-up of the wall



Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli, *Landscape*, 18th century, Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules



Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (attributed to), *Boy's Head*, 18th century, drawing