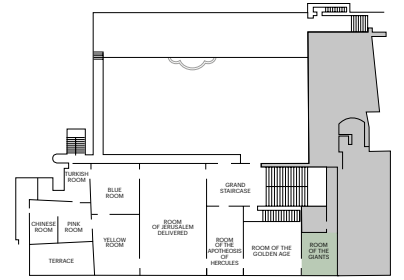
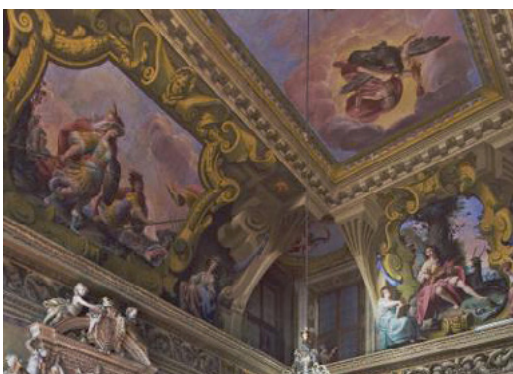


THE ROOM OF THE GIANTS



The Room of the Giants and the Room of the Apotheosis of Hercules were the final two rooms in Palazzo Moroni to be decorated by Gian Giacomo Barbelli. The frescoes are based on two well-known episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Here the painter was not co-ordinated by Donato Calvi – who, in his book *The Mysterious Paintings of Palazzo Moroni*, makes just one reference to the Room of the Giants, noting only the spectacular illusionary effect. **The depiction of *The Fall of the Giants* in the fresco is charged with a deep moral significance, as a warning for the family to always try to steer clear of pride, a sin capable of bringing down even the most virtuous of men.**



DID YOU KNOW...?

The events depicted in the Palazzo Moroni frescoes all have a moral significance and alternate between allegory and symbolic elements. Typically for the baroque art of the time, the images served as a means of communication and a method of persuasion. This conception of art, which was introduced to Bergamo by none other than Gian Giacomo Barbelli, was viewed in the city in the mid-17th century as a great innovation. Another imposing example of Bergamo baroque is the Terzi Palace (left) which was also decorated by Barbelli at around the same time.



Giulio Romano, *Fall of the Giants* (detail), Mantua, Palazzo Te



Evaristo Baschenis and his workshop, *Still life with musical instruments* (detail), 1660-1670



Roman School, *Portrait of Giuseppe Alessandro Furietti*, c. 1760, Room of the Giants

The frescoed decoration of the Room the Giants was carried out in 1654 by **Gian Giacomo Barbelli**, who was responsible not only for the figures but also for the architectural features, as he did not employ a specialist *quadratura* artist. The fresco is similar to that by Giulio Romano in Palazzo Te in Mantua, but in addition it betrays the influence of a 1644 engraving by Cesare Bassano (1584-1648), based on a painting by Guido Reni (1575-1642).

Notable among the paintings in the Room of the Giants is a *Still life with musical instruments* by Evaristo Baschenis and his workshop, part of the original core of the collection. Also of interest is the landscape by Herman van Swanevelt (1603-c. 1655). This work provides the earliest significant evidence of Pietro Moroni's love for landscape painting, a genre that first appeared during the early 16th century, spreading from out Venice, and flourished in

subsequent centuries. There is also a painting in the Roman mode, very different in taste and style from the rest of the collection, but nevertheless with links to the Moroni family. It is the *Portrait of Cardinal Giuseppe Alessandro Furietti*, whose sister, Ottavia, married Giovanni Moroni (1689-1719) in 1715. The painting has not always hung in this room, a pencilled note on the back indicating that it was previously sited in an antechamber.



Bartolomeo Coriolano, *Fall of the Giants*, after Guido Reni, 1638, chiaroscuro



Herman von Swanevelt, *Landscape* (detail), 17th century, Room of the Giants



Rear view of the Roman School painting with the note indicating it was originally in an "antechamber"