



ROOM OF THE BEES

Though today it is a simple connecting room, in the 1700s it was used by the popes to impart their blessing to the faithful through a window looking onto the Courtyard of Honour.

The bees which give this room its name are found at the centre of the vaulted ceiling. They were painted in the 1600s to represent the coat of arms of a great pope from the Baroque period: Urban VIII Barberini. The remaining part of the vaulted ceiling was decorated in 1907 with grotesques and busts of figures from ancient Rome.

The stucco frieze is from the Napoleonic period and is dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici, who was held as a model for his patronage of the arts – namely the economic aid given to artists by rich landowners – his capacity for good government and his non-aristocratic origins, all virtues much appreciated by Napoleon. The author of the 1812 frieze was Francesco Massimiliano Laboureur, a Roman-born sculptor who had always been close to French cultural circles.

Among the room's furnishings it is worth noting the bust of the Emperor Commodus, dating back to the 2nd Century AD, and the Parisian tapestry from the late 1700s dedicated to an episode of French history.