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A pair of Girandole Mirrors with figures of Hercules & Omphale
boldly carved and gilt frames relieved with blue Mother O'Pearl

The Gold Room would have been lit with a pair of “Girandole mirrors”; curving, gilt framed mirrors attached to a candelabra. “Girandole” is a derivative of the Latin word for “curving”, used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to describe this type of mirror. These mirrors would have likely been on either side of the mirror above the fireplace, reflecting and projecting the light from the candles into the rest of the room.



The frames were gilt in gold, with highlights of blue mother of pearl, depicting the mythological figures of Hercules and Omphale, his owner and later, wife. Hercules was sentenced to serve Omphale after accidentally committing murder. During his servitude, he and Omphale would often wear each other’s clothes and perform roles typical of the opposite gender. Omphale is often depicted holding Hercules’ club and wearing the Nemean Lion. After his sentence, Hercules and Omphale married and had children.

(Above): Excerpt from *Harlaxton Manor Inventory 1876*
Louis Jean Francois Largened, *Hercules and Omphale*, 1776
(Below): Paul Highnam, *The saloon, modelled in the French taste*, 2018, virtual reconstruction of Gold Room with Girandoles

The playful iconography of these mirrors would have been in concert with the putti and allegorical figures painted on the ceiling. This extravagance is typical of the Rococo. Based on what we know of Gregory’s stylistic preferences, these ostentatious mirrors would have harmonized well with the rest of the décor. Many of the permanent features of the Gold Room are also gilt in gold with great detail. Based on the existing architectural decoration, the mirrors must have been small enough to fit on the blue and gold panels around the fireplace. Since there was no creator listed in the inventory, finding the original mirrors that were once in the Manor is difficult. Additional issues tracing the mirrors stem from their small size as they would have been easy to move.

