The Apotheosis of Frederick William ("the Great Elector") (1682)

Abstract

The apotheosis, or transformation, of rulers into gods or demigods dates at least back to ancient Greece. The Baroque era saw the revival of this pre-Christian practice. In this painting, a stern-looking "Great Elector" is cast among heavenly muses, who strive to capture his image. Frederick William is portrayed as a prince of peace and a patron of the arts. Minerva (on the left edge of the canvas) and Apollo (next to her, with a lyre) crush evil creatures underfoot, while a heavenly messenger (top left quadrant) trumpets the ruler's *immortalitas* – his immortal fame.

Source

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