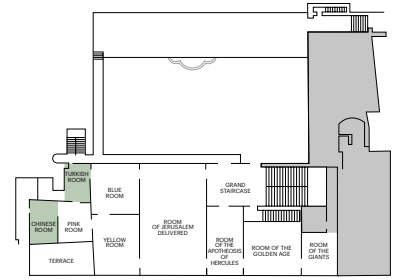


THE CHINESE ROOM AND TURKISH ROOM



The Chinese Room and the Turkish Room are testaments to the success in Lombardy of **Oriental themed decorations**, which were particularly in vogue in the third quarter of the 18th century, when the taste for the exotic became *de rigueur* at the court of Maria Theresa of Austria. The celebrations in Milan for the marriage of Archduke Ferdinand to Maria Beatrice d'Este in October 1771 consecrated the interest in Chinese art. On that occasion, the decorations, carriages and costumes were imbued with a marked exoticism, as seen in the *Description of the Celebrations in Milan for the Wedding of their Royal Highnesses* (1775) by the poet Giuseppe Parini (1729-1799).



DID YOU KNOW...?

Chinoiserie became an international fashion for the first time at the court of Versailles, driven by King Louis XIV, before spreading right across Europe. Various reasons underpinned its success: on the one hand, there was the desire for exoticism, and on the other the fact that Chinese art was considered the product of a great empire, and could therefore implicitly allude to the kingdom of the Sun King. Last of all, there was the economic benefit: thanks to the East India Company, the French court received Eastern artefacts cheaply, which it could then sell at a profit on the market.



Turkish room, close-up of the wall



Turkish room, decorated ceiling



Turkish room, frescoes detail

The fashion for the exotic survived into the Conservative Order; during this phase, new influences from the Ottoman world would take their place alongside the traditional themes. Lombard examples of decorations inspired by Arab and Middle-Eastern art are to be found at Villa Caroli Zanchi in Stezzano and at Palazzo Trecchi Gradellini in Cremona (very early 1840s): **the presence of a Turkish Room at Palazzo Moroni is, therefore, precocious and betrays a desire on the part of the clients and the interior designers to keep up with the latest fashions.** Previously inaccessible to visitors due to its very

small dimensions, **the Chinese Room is a little 19th-century jewel.** Here, every detail seems to belong to the far-off Orient: from the ceiling, which depicts the Zodiac, via the frieze, which features visionary landscapes, inhabited by dromedaries, figures, vessels and unreal buildings, all the way to the furniture, entirely inspired by the Oriental world. The room and its furnishings are a perfect example of *chinoiserie*: excluding works on the walls in “pith paper” (material made from the pith of a shrub common in Taiwan and southern China), sold in Europe in the late 18th and early 20th centuries, and a small number

of porcelain pieces on display in the cabinet, all of the objects conserved here were created by European factories and offer forms and subjects typically associated with the Orient, liberally adapted and mixed with Gothic, baroque and rococo elements. Whereas the Chinese Room has been perfectly preserved over the years, the Turkish Room has been refurnished by the FAI. Nevertheless, the decorations have been properly conserved: on the ceiling, pastel-shaded squares feature polychrome decorative elements with a Middle-Eastern feel, while the walls play host to exotic scenes and animals.



Chinese room, detail of the frieze



Chinese room, the display case



Chinese room, the furnishings