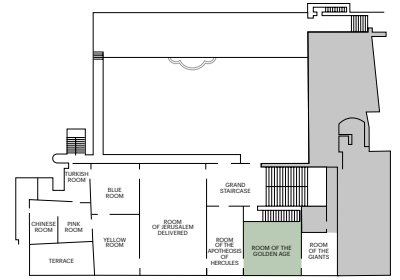


# THE ROOM OF THE GOLDEN AGE



The frescoes in the Room of the Golden Age celebrate an era of purity and joy achieved through virtue. The inspiration came from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The figures are framed by complex architectural features consisting of highly decorated columns and four bronze *colossi* by Domenico Ghislandi (1620-1717). The scene is dominated by the figure of Saturn, sovereign of the Age of Gold. He is surrounded by four female figures personifying qualities from a mythological age. Along the frieze the artist depicts carefree bucolic scenes with shepherds and nymphs. Taken as a whole, the decoration appears to reflect the long journey taken by the Moroni family towards social recognition. **The Renaissance paintings in the collection are found in this room, including the masterpieces by Giovanni Battista Moroni (1521 ca.-1579/1580).**



## DID YOU KNOW...?

The chronology of the Palazzo Moroni frescoes can be reconstructed thanks to a written record in the family archive dated 1646-1666. The document is entitled *Fabrica a Porta Penta* (Workshop in Porta Penta) but is often referred to as the accounts ledger. It lists the costs, the names of the artists and artisans involved, and includes the dates on which the works were carried out – in this case 1649-50.



Gian Giacomo Barbelli, *Abundance*, preparatory sketch, Lovere, Museo Tadini



Gian Giacomo Barbelli, *Abundance*, 1649-50, Room of the Golden Age



Andrea Previtali, *Family Portrait* (detail), c. 1523, Room of the Golden Age

The fresco decoration of the Room of the Golden Age dates from 1649-1650. **Gian Giacomo Barbelli** was responsible for the narrative episodes, and **Domenico Ghislandi** for the framing.

*The god Saturn* appears on the ceiling surrounded by four allegorical figures: *Happiness*, *Simplicity*, *Abundance* and *Peace*. The room also houses three masterpieces by Giovanni Battista Moroni, *The Gentleman in Pink*, *the Portrait of Isotta Brembati* and *the Portrait of an Elderly Woman*

*in Black*. **Isotta Brembati** (c. 1530-1586) was a poetess, renowned orator and member of an important literary circle. The painting by Moroni is thought to show her on the occasion of her marriage (c. 1553) to Count Lelio Secco d'Aragona di Calcio. Her second husband, Gian Girolamo Grumelli (1536-1610) appears in the next portrait. *The Gentleman in Pink* (1560) is one of Moroni's best-known works due to its excellent use of colour, its realism and its tactile rendering of the clothes.

The other paintings in this room include an old copy of *The Zingarella* (*Gypsy Girl*) by Antonio Correggio (1515-1516) and a *Family Portrait* by Andrea Previtali (1480-1528), which depicts a mother and father giving their son a sheet of paper with their instructions. There are also two Milanese works: *St Catherine of Alexandria* and *Mary Magdalene*, attributed to the school of Bernardino Luini (1480/82-1532) and Giovan Pietro Rizzoli, known as Giampietrino (1480/85-1553).



Giovan Pietro Rizzoli and assistants, *Mary Magdalene* (detail), early 16<sup>th</sup> century



Workshop of Bernardino Luini, *St Catherine of Alexandria* (detail), c. 1530-40



Antonio Allegri (copy by), *Madonna with Child* (*Gypsy Girl*) (detail), 17<sup>th</sup> century.