

TORRE  
DI  
SOPRA

# A HISTORY

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# THE TORRE IS OLDER THAN MOST OF FLORENCE DATING BACK AT LEAST FROM 1070



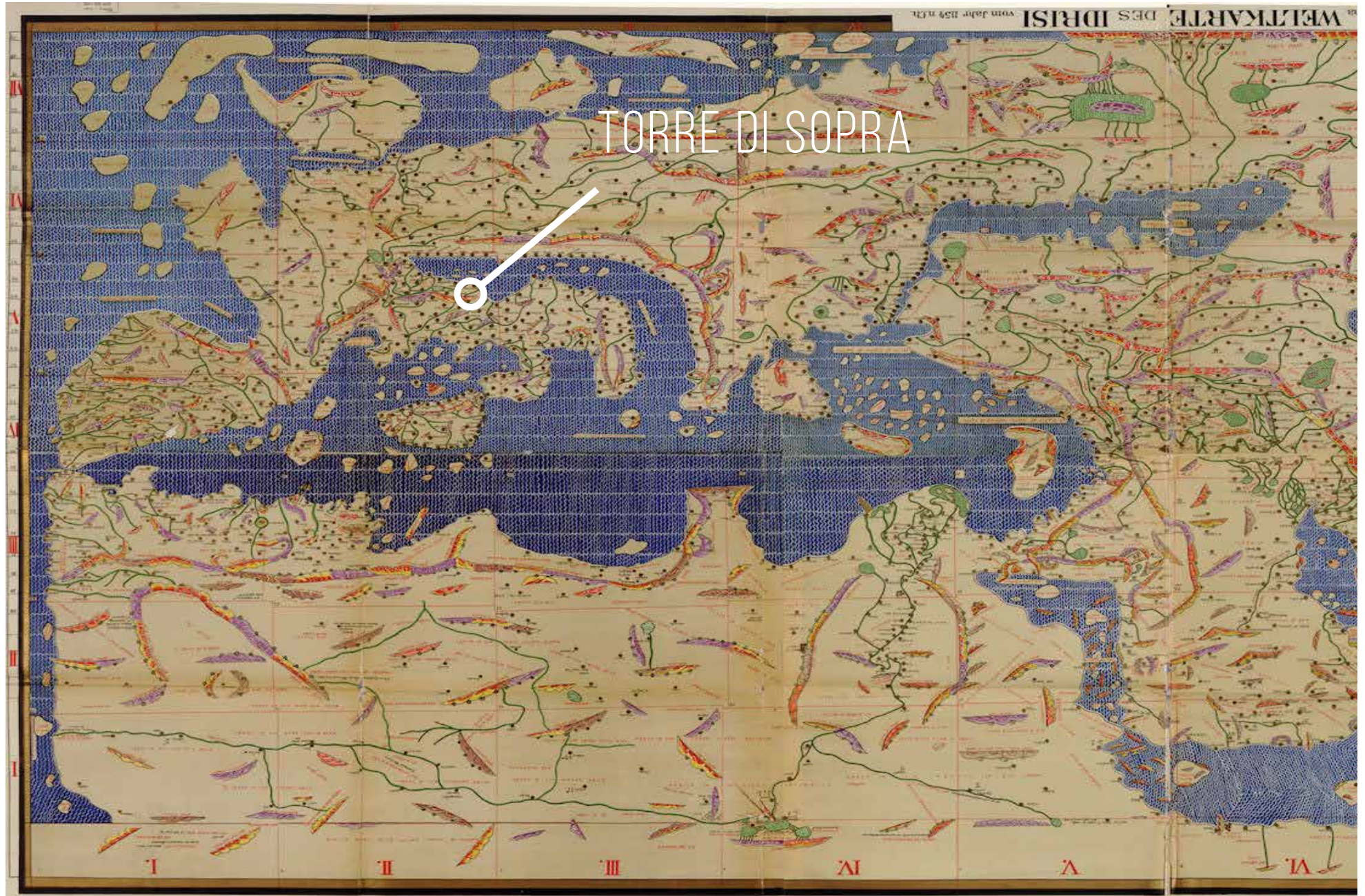
In 1975 the “Torre” was renovated in a very modern style, by avant garde Italian architect Bruno Sacchi, as his family home.

Listed as one of the Architects of the Italian 20th Century - Wikipedia

The property has a remarkable history. And we postulate, that over the years it has hosted an influential list of visiting dignitaries.

We will make the case that Dante Alighieri, Giotto di Bondone, and Giovanni Boccaccio came for tea.





1154 Al Idrisi Tabula Rogeriana (upside-down - This was the most advanced map of it's time.

← 1200 Spedale del Bigallo 1 Km. \*

The torre di sopra was part of a BORGO, a small holding of 3 towers



At this strategic vantage point, one could look out towards Siena and Rome.

The nearby Antico Spedale del Bigallo, (Also 13th C.) A Pilgrim's rest stop 1 days walk from Florence offered hospitality and shelter.



The the three tower defences, would have been much higher and from a distance would have resembled San Gimignano as an example.

1000 years of Ownership of Torre Di Sopra.

## Florence State 1000-1299



It all started as a watchtower complex and well in 1070 looking out for enemy troops advancing on Florence.

The Tower would have been at least 2 stories higher and would have been in line of sight with 2 other towers.



## Peruzzi Family 1299-1470



After the end of the Guelf Ghibelline war, The Peruzzi converted the tower to a "casa da signore" - adding the courtyard and the affrescos.

Horses below and living quarters upstairs. Similar in style to the Bargello in Florence.



## Guasconi Family 1470-1945



The Guasconi expanded the property and added the second courtyard and the wing known as the casina courtyard wing.



## Piquet Family 1945-1976



During this period the property was abandoned and fell into disrepair.

## Sacchi Family 1976- present



In 1975 an up and coming architect, his wife and 2 young children leave Florence to take on a fixer upper.

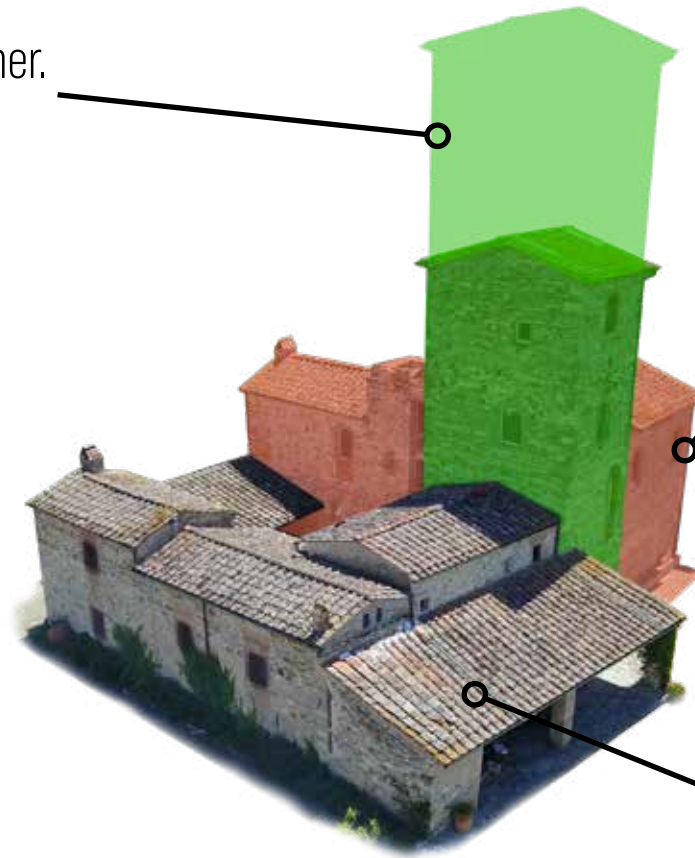


2015 - Garden designer Jane Sacchi - adds the pool and starts the development of a sustainable 'dry garden' that can survive the harsh tuscan summer droughts.



# STAGES OF EXPANSION

1070-1200 - Starts off as a military watch tower at least 2 storeys higher.



1299 - Peruzzi bankers expand it and add Affresco's

1975 - Renovated by Bruno & Jane Sacchi

1945 - Expanded by Guascone Family



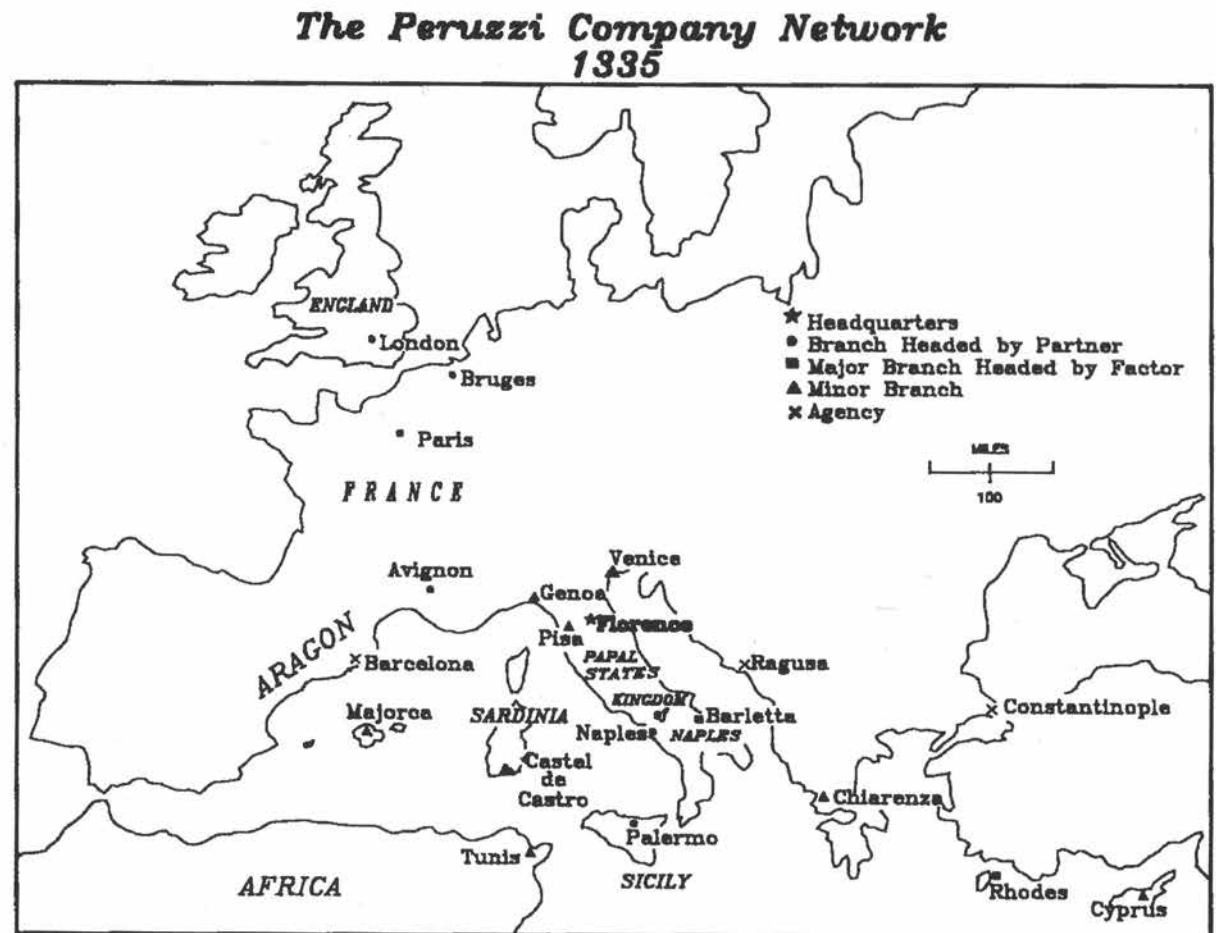
In 1299 the property became the weekend retreat of a banking family that were bigger than the Medici.

But you most likely have never heard of.

The Peruzzi.



By the 1330s, the Peruzzi bank was the second largest in Europe, with fifteen branches from the Middle East to London.



Peruzzi capital had been amassed in the textile business that was the main engine of Florence's prosperity. English wool finished as high-quality cloth in Bruges was bought by Peruzzi agents (fattori) and distributed to the luxurious courts of Paris, Avignon or returned to London.

Peruzzi connections with the Knights Hospitallers gained them important local leverage in Rhodes, the economic capital of the Aegean and a shipping port for silks, drugs, spices and luxuries from the East. Trade beyond Italy required agents and instruments of credit, extending the family business beyond its extended membership into an international network.

They developed the double-entry bookkeeping that made such complicated financial transactions possible.

By the beginning of the 14th century, the main activity of the Peruzzi had switched to wholesale commodities trading on a very large scale, especially in grain exported from France to the central Italian cities—for which they were granted a monopoly—and to banking, the field for which they are remembered: popes, nobles, bourgeois, towns and abbeys drew loans from the Peruzzi. But great clients incurred great risks. In 1343 the Peruzzi consortium collapsed and was bankrupt in 1345, with their partners in risk-capital, the Bardi family.



The Banco (Table) is the origin of the word "Bank."



Peruzzi & Medici Heraldic Stem.



Torre Peruzzi near Santa Croce - At the time this was close to the East boundary of the city.



Interesting fact. Bruno Sacchi the architect responsible for the restoration of the Torre Peruzzi also designed the interiors of the Red Garter when it first opened in the 1970's.

10 Years after the end of the Guelf Ghibelline war the Peruzzi were able to purchase a series of towers in line of sight with their palazzo in Florence.





1493 view of Florence

The Peruzzi add the  
affrescos











Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi is a fountain in the Piazza Navona in Rome, Italy. It was designed in 1651 by Gian Lorenzo Bernini for Pope Innocent X whose family palace, the Palazzo Pamphili, faced onto the piazza as did the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone of which Innocent was the sponsor.



Mercator - Map of the North Pole 1595

"Rupes nigra et magnetica" A black magnetic rock with a circumference of 33 French miles described by Mercator.

# THE LIBRARY



This geometric pattern when viewed  
by candlelight transforms into a three  
dimensional blanket of stars.

This was state of the art Virtual Reality  
circa 1335.





DINING ROOM

# A DINING ROOM FIT FOR A KING

The design of the fresco in this room is known as Vaio. It represents the ermine fur placed on the inside of noble war tents to insulate from the cold.



Vaio affresco



Ermine fur



Ermine fur producers



King Richard III in 1395 with Ermine.



The original Bow & Arrow slits.

This central beam was a 100 year oak in 1070.



Queen Elizabeth II with Ermine.



DID DANTE, GIOTTO AND  
BOCCACCIO COME HERE?

IT'S QUITE PROBABLE.

THE PERUZZIS WERE PATRONS  
TO ALL OF THEM.

Maybe they were all invited for  
a sunday picnic and a game of  
ping pong?

# DANTE



We know that the Peruzzi family were patrons of Dante Alighieri because Dante mentions them in his Divine Comedy, specifically in his Purgatorio. He praises their generosity for supporting him in his writing and other works, and expresses his gratitude for their patronage.

# GIOTTO



We know the Peruzzi family were patrons of Giotto because documents from the time period refer to them as such. For example, a document from 1320 references a payment made by the Peruzzi family to Giotto for work on the Peruzzi Chapel in the church of Santa Croce in Florence. Additionally, a document from 1321 mentions the Peruzzi family making a payment to Giotto for the decoration of the Peruzzi Altarpiece in the same church.

# BOCCACCIO



Boccaccio worked as a banker for the Peruzzi family in the 1340s, and it is believed that he was influenced by their wealth and social standing.

Boccaccio dedicated several of his works to members of the Peruzzi family.



Dante:  
Those of the pear, "DELLA PERA"

## GIOTTO



1305 c Madonna  
Ognissanti

Uffizi Gallery



1325 Peruzzi Chapel Santa Croce



1337 Campanille di Giotto

## DANTE



1320 The Divine Comedy

## BOCCACCIO



1352 The Decameron



# DANTE



Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) was an Italian poet, philosopher, and political theorist.

He is best known for his epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*, an allegorical journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, which is often cited as one of the greatest works of world literature.

He also helped to develop the Italian language and to promote the philosophy of Humanism.

Dante's influence was immense inspiring many authors, including Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton, and T.S. Eliot.

# GIOTTO



Giotto di Bondone (1267-1337) was an Italian painter and architect. He is considered to be the father of Western painting and one of the most influential artists of the 14th century. Giotto's work was characterized by its lifelike figures, realistic depictions of space, and attention to detail. He is best known for his frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua and the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. Giotto's influence can still be seen in the works of many later painters.

These include the Early Renaissance painter Masaccio, the High Renaissance painter Raphael, the Mannerist painter Pontormo, and the Baroque painter Caravaggio. Giotto's influence can also be seen in the works of many 19th-century painters, such as the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists.

# BOCCACCIO



Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) was an Italian author and poet. He is best known for his collection of stories, the *Decameron*, which is considered to be one of the most influential works of the Middle Ages. Boccaccio was born into a wealthy family in Florence and received a thorough education. He wrote a variety of works, including poetry, biographies, and works of moral philosophy. He was also a prominent figure in the development of the Italian language.

Dante painted by Giotto



Giotto Inspired:

## MASACCIO



1425 Cappella Brancacci

Piazza Del Carmine

Giotto Inspired:

## RAPHAEL



1508 School of Athens

Vatican

Dante inspired:

## CHAUCER



The Canterbury Tales

Still in print

1070

Torre di Sopra starts as a military watchtower.



1100

1128 Florence Baptistry completed



1202 Liber Abaci - FIBONACCI INTRODUCES ARABIC NUMERALS. THE FIBONACCI SEQUENCE, GOLDEN SPIRAL.

1200

1207 San Miniato a Monte completed



1216 BUONDELMONTE DEI BUONDEL-MONTI, IS MURDERED. STARTING THE GUELF Ghibelline WAR.



1235 The Silver Florin Minted

1252 The Gold Florin Minted

1255 The Bargello started.



1294 Santa Croce started

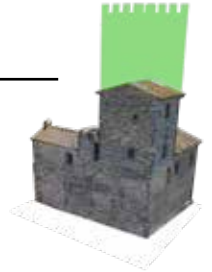


1289 END OF THE GUELF Ghibelline WAR. PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA CREATED BY RAZING TO THE GROUND THE PALAZZO UBERTI THE LOSING Ghibelline FAMILY.

1299 Palazzo Vecchio started



1299 Peruzzi bankers purchase the Torre and expand it.



1300

By the 1330s, the Peruzzi bank was the second largest in Europe

1320 Dante publishes the Divine Comedy



1325 Cappella Peruzzi S.Croce with Affrescos by Giotto.



1325 The Affresco's at Torre Di Sopra date back to this period.



1345 Ponte Vecchio re-built



1353 Boccaccio's Decameron



1397 Medici Bank Founded by Giovanni.



1337 Peruzzi and Bardi families make the fateful loan to Edward III King of England to finance the 100 Years war. (The King doesn't repay the debt.)

1346 Peruzzi bankrupt



c.1387 Chaucer's Canterbury Tales



1368 Great Wall of China Started

# 1400

1425 Masaccio Brancacci Chapel



1434 Brunelleschi's cupola completed



1454 Guttemberg bible

1469 Lorenzo "il Magnifico" de Medici comes to power



1478 Spanish Inquisition



1482 Botticelli "Birth of Venus", (Scandalous)



1496 Savonarola, Bonfire of the Vanities



1420 CUPOLA STARTED 1440 PRINTING PRESS INVENTED

# 1500

1504 David di Michelangelo placed in Piazza della Signoria



1508 Raphael School of Athens



1522 Caterina De Medici introduces haute cuisine to France.



1545 Michelangelo completes Sistine Chapel



1587 Venice Rialto Bridge built



1590 The Tomato introduced to Europe and later to Basil & Mozzarella.



1508 The new Continent Named America first appears on a map.

1580 DRAKE CIRCUMNAVIGATES EARTH

1582 GREGORIAN CALENDAR, POPE GREGORY XIII ALTERS TIME

# The Peruzzi tower visible across the way copied the turrets on Torre di Sopra.

in 1846 After marrying secretly, the English poets Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett come to live at this Peruzzi tower and restore it.

Browning used Torre di Sopra as a reference for the Turrets.

At the time Torre di Sopra was still standing in its original state.

Our tower was later brought down in 1890 by an earthquake. And now the browning copy remains as a reference.



The Guelf turrets are not original. Added in 1800. So by Italian standards considered fake,

We still have some original Guelf Turrets, "Merli" visible below these very words.



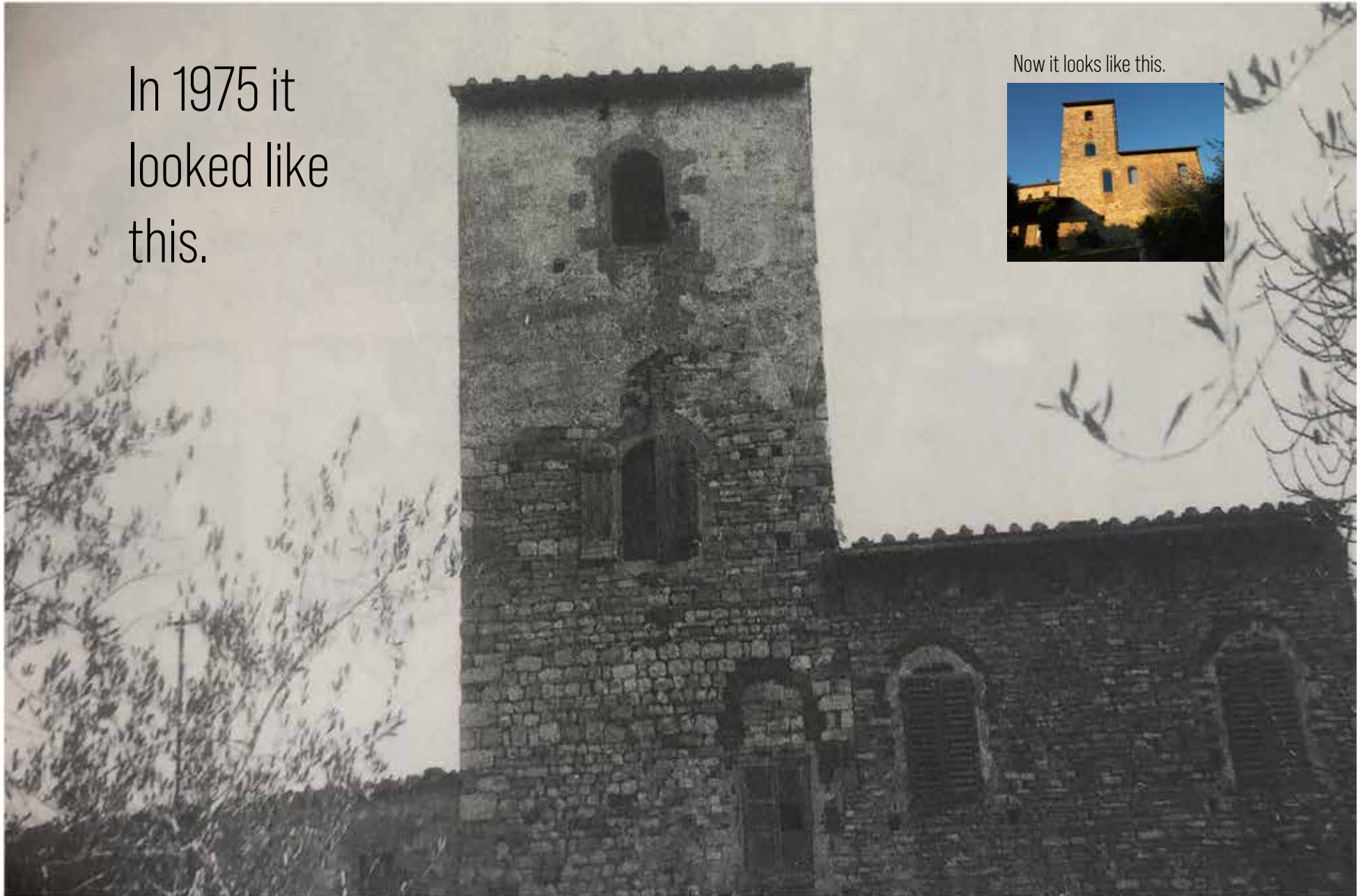
Ghibelline Turrets for reference below in the giardini Torrigiani.





1492 Erdapfel Globe - The most advanced map of it's time.

In 1975 it  
looked like  
this.



Now it looks like this.







THE PROPERTY  
WAS RESTORED  
WITH A VERY  
UNORTHODOX  
PROJECT



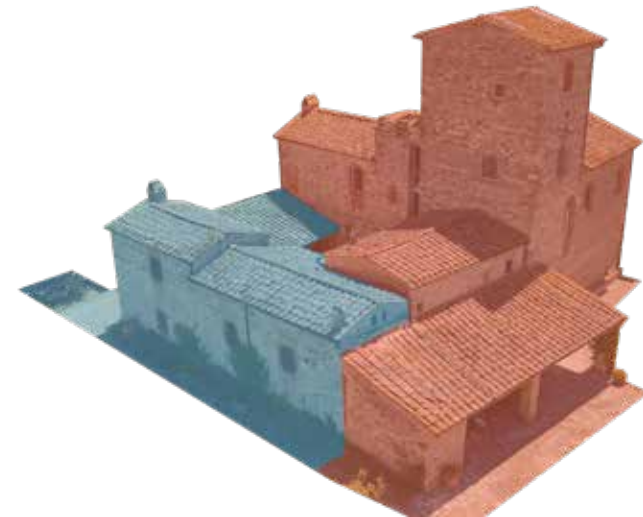


## CUBO BEDROOM

A playground for kids . The cats liked it too.

The structure is held up off the floor by the trasversal steel girders distributing the weight onto the outside walls.







# BRUNO SACCHI ARCHITECTURAL THEMES



## Shards of light

Il Taglio - The shard of light used to separate and highlight the tower from the rest of the structure.

## H-Beam (orange or blue)

For strength and simplicity. Usually painted orange, sometimes blue. (The two default colours of the protective industrial undercoat.)

## Furniture & Interior Design

Bruno also designed tables, beds, shelves, cupboards all items of interior design to complete his architectural solutions.

## Suspended Stairs

In order to NOT transfer weight onto the original floor - he designed an ingenious suspended stair solution, visible throughout the Torre.

## Travertine marble floor & walkways

Juxtaposed with black slate. Access in and out of the tower is made on separate walkways. "Ponti."





## “IL TAGLIO” THE SHARD OF LIGHT

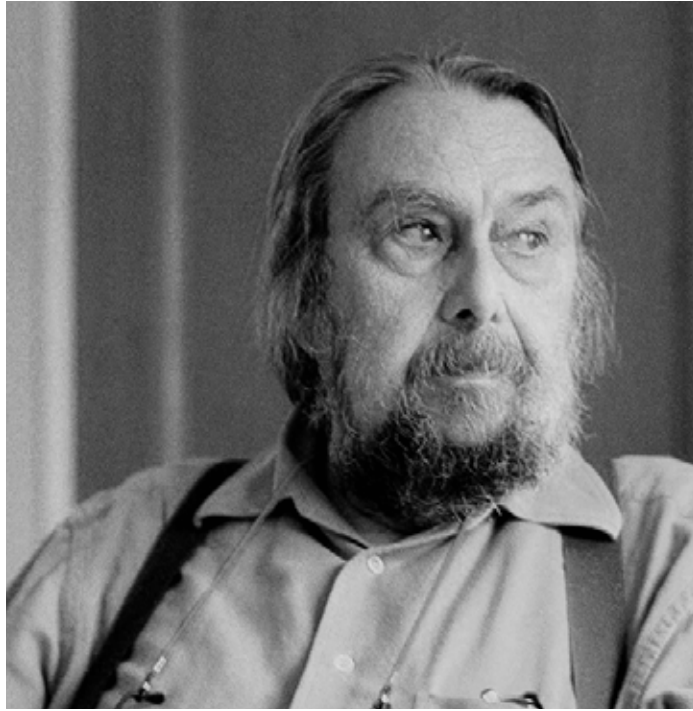


One of the key elements to the restoration are the shards - highlighting the original tower structure.

The tower stands alone, surrounded by light as it once was.



The central tower complex is accessed via a series of walkway bridges.



Born in Mantova in 1931, Bruno studied architecture at Florence University, before forming the architect's collaborative Studio Forte 63. He later became right hand man to Italy's most eminent post-war architect, Giovanni Michelucci, co-signing projects with him.

## BRUNO SACCHI 1931 - 2011



1972 - Henry Moore, Bruno Sacchi, Giovanni Michelucci - Meeting for a project to create a monument to Michelangelo in the Space Era.

It was decided Michelangelo did not need another monument.



Possibly his best work are the Private houses: Villa Scarpa, Villa Asso, Casa Sicari, Casa Antognoni, Casa Zuccari, Casa Guidetti, Casa Bufalini, Casa Matteini, Casa Zuffa, Casa Bray, Casa Connory, Casa Guinness, Casa Orlando, Casa Passalacqua and Casa Borgherout in Florence, Casa Righi at Forte dei Marmi and Villa Cambi and Casa Bottari in Prato.



He went on to design the Marino Marini Museum in the church of San Pancrazio in Florence and work on the Palazzo del Tau in Pistoia - originally a monastery, restored by Bruno, who also designed the museum and neighbouring chapel - as well as doing extensive work for the Contrada di Valdimontone in Siena and numerous private projects, many of which were in Casa Vogue.

Bruno's project for the Torre was innovative and ahead of its time in its solutions to the technical problems of a building of its age. It took three years to transform it into an exceptional family home, during which period Bruno often wandered about with a hammer and chisel picking plaster off the walls to expose the frescoes. He took time to consider each space and how the light falls at different times of day, making every angle, aperture and window a picture in itself. He created contemporary interiors that managed to contrast with and yet enhance the ancient setting. On the first floor of the tower, he discovered the frescoes with a cross-shape motif. It is here that, when faced with the technical challenge of delicate flooring unable to support more weight, he ingeniously designed the hanging staircase that is suspended from the beam above.

BRUNO'S PROJECT IS SO  
RADICAL PLANNING PERMISSION  
PROVES DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN.

THE MINISTER RODOLFO  
SEVIERO FORTUITOUSLY  
INTERVENES AND THE PROJECT  
RECEIVES THE GO AHEAD.



RODOLFO  
SEVIERO 007  
DIES 3 YEARS LATER



1980 *The Marino Marini Modern art Museum.*

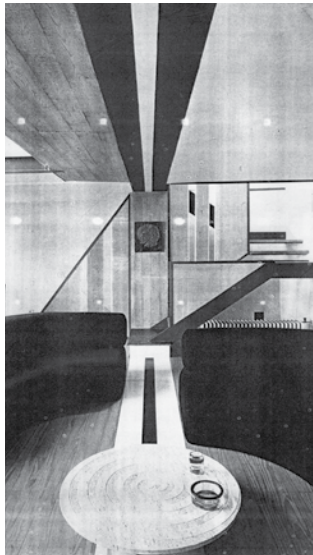


1975- 1977 *The Torre di Sopra*



1980's *The Marino Marini Museum, is housed in the ancient church of San Pancrazio, Florence*

*Jane & Bruno's Borgo San Jacopo apartment in Florence was published in Casa Vogue, Issue 5, November 1970 and House and Garden, Issue 9, November 1972.*

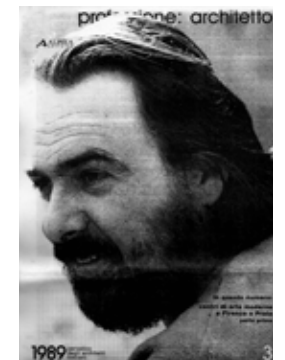


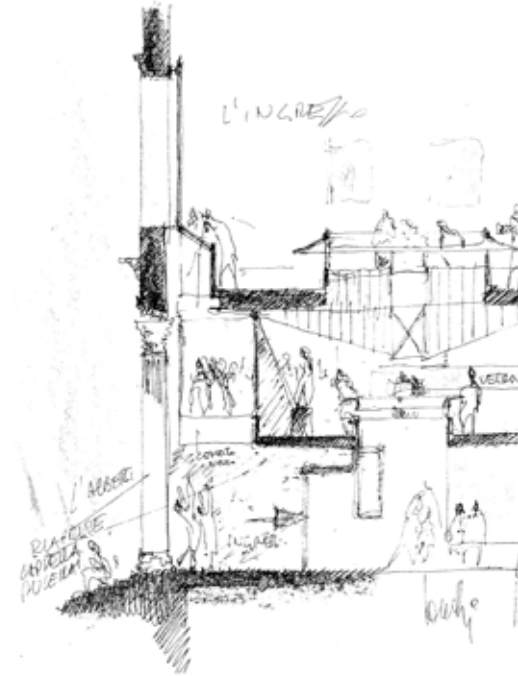
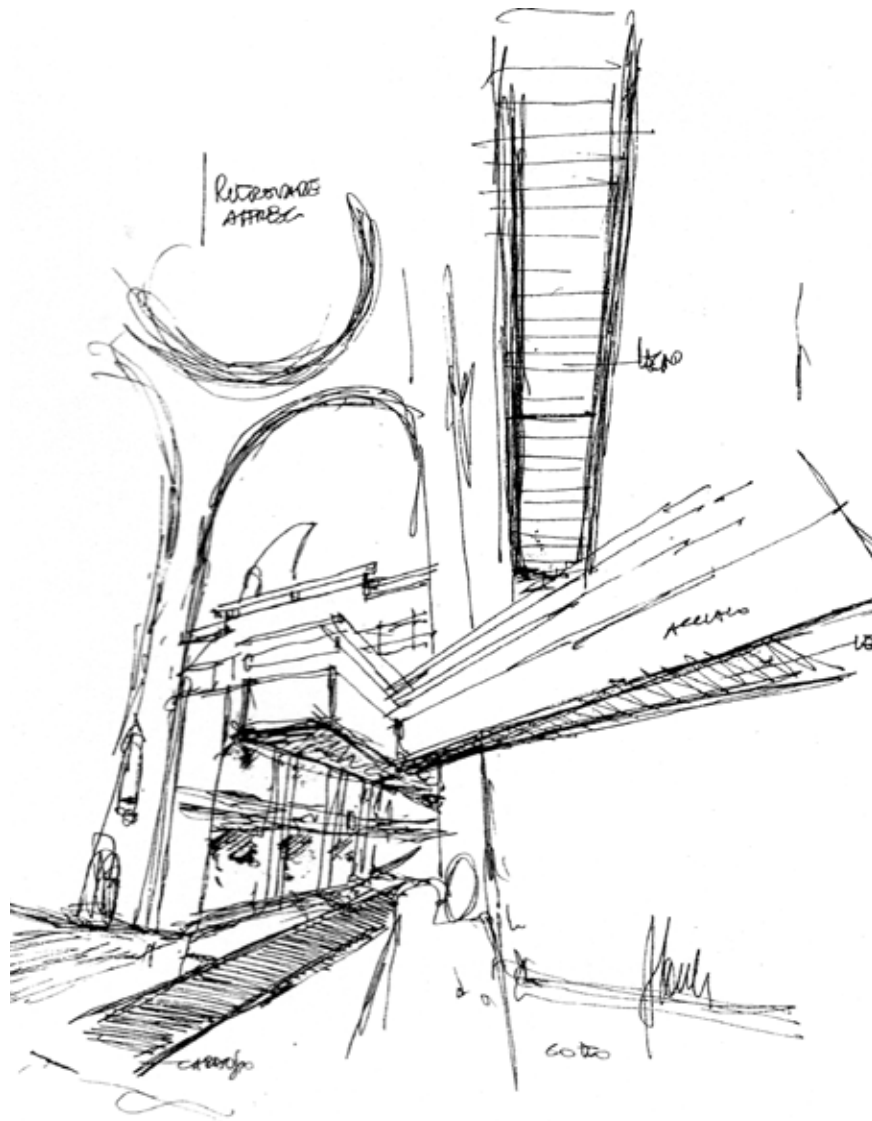
1973-1983 - *Sede del Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Colle Val d'Elsa, con Giovanni Michelucci*



*The Best of Casa Vogue]' by Isa Vercelloni, 1985 (front cover)*

1989 *Front Cover of Professione Architetto.*





1980 The Marino Marini  
Modern art Museum.  
signed sketch.



The Marino Marini Museum.  
Piazza S.Pancrazio





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