

THE HISTORY

Cortona, town of medieval art and architecture set in the hills of the Val di Chiana, is home to the *Palazzone*, a monumental villa built by Cardinal Silvio Passerini (1469–1529). Bishop of Cortona and governor of Florence, protégé of Lorenzo de' Medici and friend of Giovanni de' Medici (future Pope Leo X), Cardinal Passerini had the villa constructed as evidence of the power obtained by his family. The *Palazzone* was built from 1521 to 1527 on a plan drawn up by the Perugian painter, architect and poet Giovan Battista Caporali (1476–1560?), pupil of Perugino and friend of artists of the period like Pinturicchio, Bramante and Signorelli. In 1968 the villa was donated by Count Lorenzo Passerini to the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa for its academic activities and conferences

HOW TO ARRIVE TO CORTONA

By airplane:
The international airport of Florence Peretola is about 120 km away; the national airport Perugia Sant'Egidio about 60 km.

By train:
Florence–Rome railway line: Terontola or Camucia Stations.
Terontola–Perugia–Assisi–Terni railway line: Terontola Station.
From the stations one can easily reach Cortona by taxi or with the bus service "La Ferroviaria Italiana Spa Arezzo" (timetables: www.lfi.it).

By car:
Coming from the north or south on the A1 motorway, exit at Valdichiana-Bettolle; continue on the Perugia-Bettolla link road (S75bis) in the direction of Perugia. Exit the link road at the intersection with road number SR71, and follow the signs for Cortona.



SCUOLA
NORMALE
SUPERIORE
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THE PALAZZONE IN CORTONA



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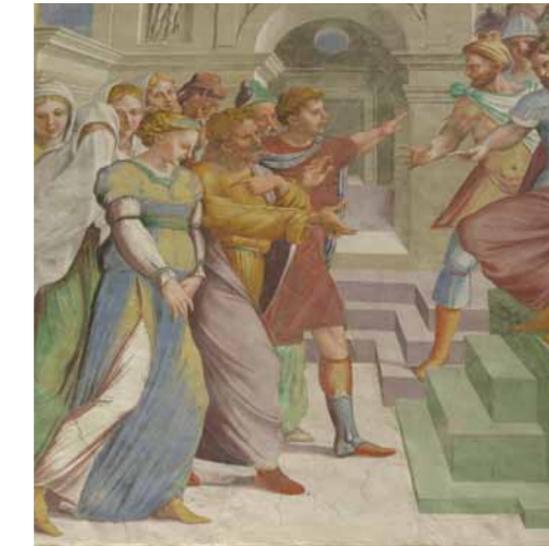




THE ARCHITECTURE

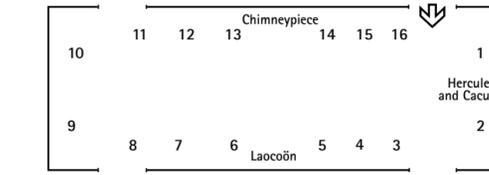
The building is located outside the town, near the Cumula Spring, surrounded by centuries-old cypress and olive trees. Although built during the Renaissance era, the *Palazzone* is reminiscent of the architecture of the Romanesque-city state period, reflecting a modern taste nourished by classical memories typical in the cardinals' courts of that time. The stately 48-meter tower and the battlement wall create an austere-looking fortified area, emphasizing the grandeur of the construction.

The villa offers splendid views over Lake Trasimeno and the Val di Chiana. In front of the building there is a large, elevated, grassy garden; in the back, a delicate Italian-style garden unfolds in front of a small Renaissance loggia.

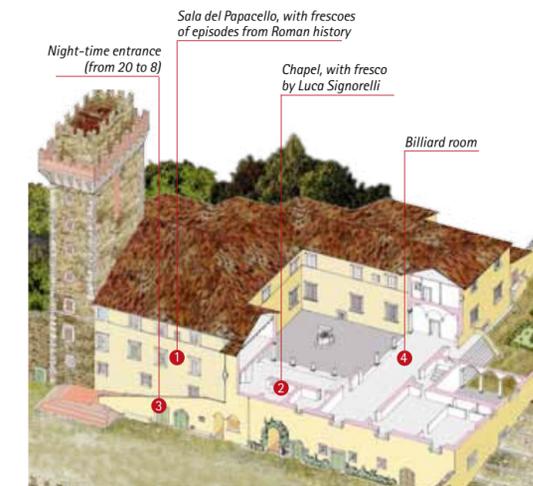


The drawing room on the *piano nobile* was decorated by Tommaso Bernabei, known as Papacello. The decorations are of great chromatic effect and compositional harmony: on the upper walls there are episodes of Roman history, and on the lower walls a trabeated loggia with Doric columns through which can be seen architectural scenes in perspective, stony landscapes and depictions of the sculptural groups of the Laocoön and Hercules and Cacus.

The frescoes by Luca Signorelli (1477-1559) depicting the Baptism of Christ, in the small chapel adjacent the internal courtyard, remained unfinished upon the death of the artist. The large billiards room, with broad glass windows overlooking the courtyard and its 16th-century sandstone well, is furnished with valuable paintings and furniture from various periods and styles, as are all rooms of the *Palazzone*. The Cardinal's bedroom, situated on the eastern side of the building, is decorated with frescoes painted in 1819 featuring pillars and rural scenes; at the center of the ceiling are depicted Apollo with the sun chariot, the zodiac and the four seasons.



1. Battle of the Lake Trasimene (with view of Cortona and the *Palazzone*)
2. The appointment of Cincinnatus as dictator
3. L. Junius Brutus at the temple of Delphi
4. The fight between the Horatii and the Curstii
5. The loyalty of M. Furius Camillus
6. The murder of Tarquinius Priscus by the sons of Ancus martius
7. Curius Dentatus refusing the offers of the Samnite ambassadors
8. Clelia and her companions fleeing across the Tiber
9. Mucius Scaevola placing his hand in the fire in front of Porsenna
10. Horatius Cocles defending the Sublician bridge
11. The rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius
12. Lucretia committing suicide in the presence of her husband and L. Junius Brutus
13. Marcus Curtius on horseback leaping into the chasm
14. Hasdrubal's head is thrown into the camp of his brother Hannibal
15. Sentence being declared on the innocent Virginia
16. The murder of Virginia by her father



THE ACADEMICS

The *Palazzone* hosts numerous events of national and international relevance, organized by the Scuola Normale Superiore. These include pre-university orientation courses, conferences and research summits, at times organized in conjunction with other university and research institutions. Besides the historic rooms which can be used for congresses, the *Palazzone* has 12 rooms with private baths for guests, along with a large dining hall on the same floor and various rooms furnished for studying, internet use and recreation.