

1 Luigi Del Sarto, plan of ground floor of the Tornabuoni-Corsi Palace, 1864, detail. Florence, Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze

PALAZZO TORNABUONI IN 1498 A PALACE 'IN PROGRESS' AND ITS INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT

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Introduction

The subject of this article is the palace, shown as number 198 on Stefano Buonsignori's 1584 map of Florence (Fig. 2), situated on Via Tornabuoni near the Strozzi Palace (no. 197).¹ It was begun as a very ambitious project in the 1460s by Giovanni Tornabuoni, but the palace was almost completely rebuilt in later centuries, seemingly with only the courtyard remaining from the fifteenth-century construction. Thus the problem for any discussion of Palazzo Tornabuoni heretofore has been that its original extent and configuration were unknown. This article will show how the palace developed, it will provide reconstructions of

the ground floor and *primo piano* in the fifteenth century, and it will identify the spaces in accordance with those listed in the important inventory of 1498,² all this establishing new bases for study of the building. The palace was one of the largest in the city, and its layout conforms in most ways to the Florentine norm, with anomalies, however, in the suite at the south, the quarters of Giovanni's son Lorenzo.

The palace was built in a block where in 1427 (date of the introduction of a new tax system, the Catasto, which greatly facilitates identification of citizens' real estate) most properties still were owned by families belonging to the great Tornaquinci *consorteria* (Torna-

¹ Modern names for streets are used in this study. For general treatments of the palace see Leonardo Ginori Lisci, *I palazzi di Firenze nella storia e nell'arte*, Florence 1972, I, pp. 223–231, and Francesco Gurrieri, *Il Palazzo Tornabuoni Corsi: sede a Firenze della Banca Commerciale Italiana*, Florence 1992. Many of the same issues confronted in the present article were alluded to in: Patricia Lynette Simons, *Portraiture and Patronage in Quattrocento Florence with Special Reference to the Tornaquinci and their Chapel in S. Maria Novella*, Ph.D. diss. University of Mel-

bourne 1985; the dissertation is available for free download at <http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/78007> (accessed on 1 August 2014).

² The inventory, dated 8 January 1497 (1498 modern style), is in ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 146v–150r; only selections of it have been published in the literature cited in note 33. The year often is mistakenly given as 1497, the date according to the Florentine style, in which the new year did not begin until 25 March.



2 Stefano Buonsignori, Map of Florence, 1584, detail of the Tornabuoni Palace and the surrounding area

3 Luigi Del Sarto, facade on Via Tornabuoni of the Tornabuoni-Corsi Palace, 1864. Florence, Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze

buoni, Popoleschi, Giachinotti, and others), which had settled in the area by the twelfth century. A remarkable document transcribed and analyzed by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber not only clarifies certain aspects of the Tornaquinci holdings but also indicates the family's deep sense for its history.³ Written by a Tornaquinci in the 1370s, the document has come down to us in a copy made more than a century later. It recounts a settlement from 1286 among the Tornaquinci that assigned joint ownership of the family tower (on the corner in Buonsignori's map) and the loggia at its base (not shown on the map) to eight branches, and it then apportioned the adjoining property on Via Strozzi to the four lines descended from one brother and that on via Tornabuoni to the lines of the other brother. Also mentioned in the document are two components that

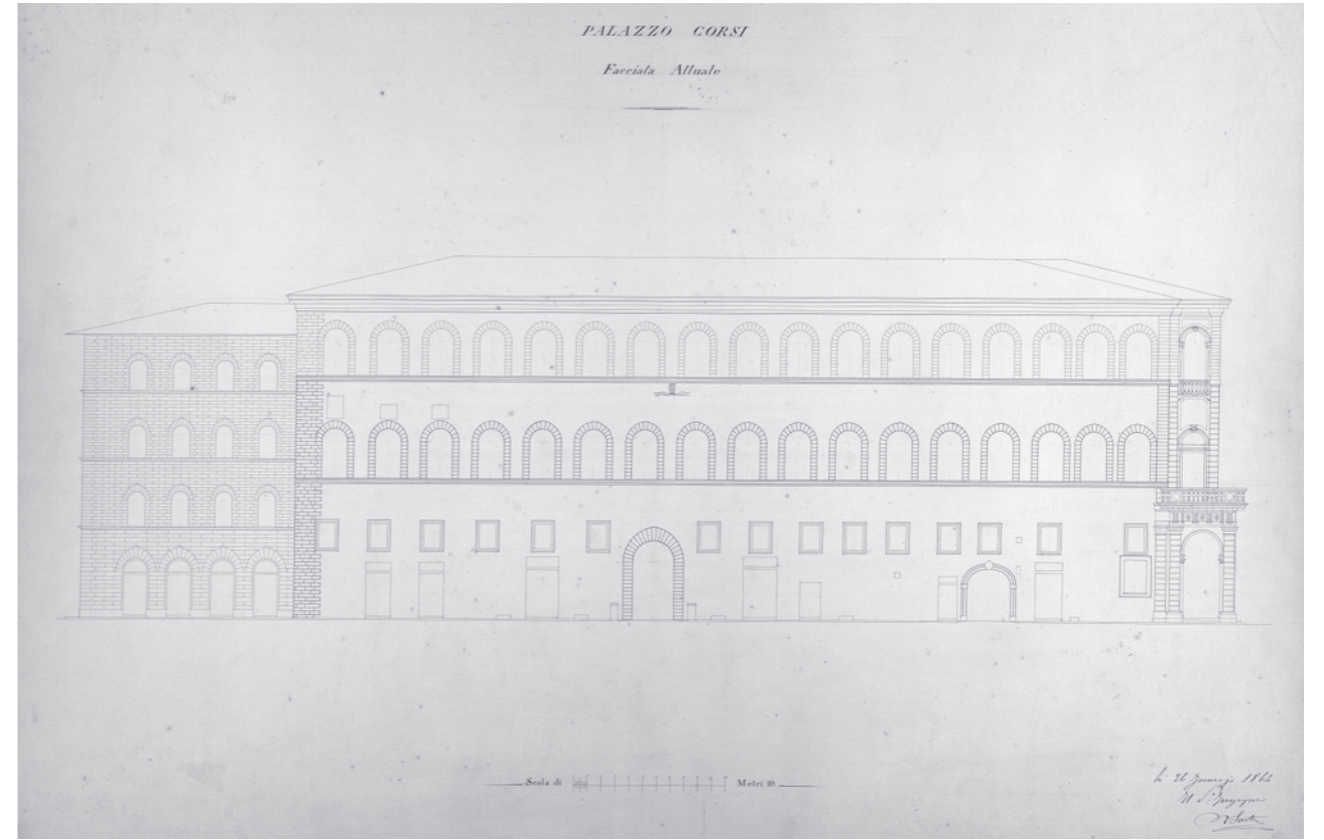
will be important in connection with the site for the fifteenth-century Tornabuoni Palace. The first was the "chorte comune" – the Corte de' Tornaquinci, which lay parallel to Via Tornabuoni in the western half of the block. The second component was a passageway from Via Tornabuoni near the tower that was to be kept open to reach that court.⁴

Giovanni di Francesco Tornabuoni (1428–1497) was the youngest but most dynamic of the many sons of a wealthy and politically active father. His sister Lucrezia married Piero de' Medici in 1443, and in the same year Giovanni started working for the Medici Bank in Rome, becoming head of the branch in 1465. He married Francesca di Luca Pitti in 1467, a year after he began construction of the palace, but it is far from clear just how much time the couple actually spent in Florence. Giovanni was in and out of the city, and Francesca may have traveled with him, as she died in Rome in 1477. Thus this is not just the story of a rich man building a house for his new wife. Giovanni evidently envisioned a truly grandiose palace, building the courtyard and the main rooms to produce a plan that had significant similarities in scale and layout to the Medici Palace. And in fact, the building frequently became the place where important visitors to the city were housed at communal expense.

References to the palace usually have repeated Vasari's assertion that the architect was Michelozzo ("at the canto de' Tornaquinci he built the house of Giovanni Tornabuoni, almost in every respect similar to the palace that he made for Cosimo, except that the facade is ordinary, not made of rusticated stone or with cornices above"),⁵ and, following Fabriczy's suggestion of 1904, the date of construction usually

largo tre bracc[i]a e alto c[i]oè sfoghato sei bracc[i]a e lungho insino alla chorte chomune il quale si potessi sempre usare per tutti quegli di messer Iachopo l'anticho ad andare eglino alle loro famiglie nella chorte chomune alle loro chase poste dal lato di drento in sulla detta chorte e dove a lloro piacesse" (Klapisch-Zuber [note 3], p. 406).

⁵ "[...] fece al canto de' Tornaquinci la casa di Giovanni Tornabuoni, quasi in tutto simile al palazzo che aveva fatto a Cosimo, eccetto che la facciata non è di bozzi né con cornici sopra, ma ordinaria" (Giorgio Vasari, *Le*



has been given as ca. 1450.⁶ Remarks about the fifteenth-century building itself have centered on the courtyard, with observations about the resemblance to the court of the Medici palace but also questions about the dates of some architectural details.⁷ Giovanni Fanelli added one element for an assessment, the measured drawing made of the facade on Via Tornabuoni before it was destroyed after 1864 (Fig. 3), and he linked the design to Michelozzo.⁸ However, consultation of the Catasto by Francesco Gurrieri and then by Miranda Ferrara and Francesco Quinterio has made clear that construction took place much later

than 1450; the dates derived from the account that follows, 1466–1469, make the attribution to Michelozzo unlikely, as he was absent from Florence already in 1461, before any activity had begun on the project, and he returned only in 1468 or possibly even in 1469, the last years of this first phase of the palace's construction.⁹ Even though Giovanni Tornabuoni went about his acquisition of land in a singularly methodical manner, apparently having a good idea of exactly what the contours of the palace would be, which might suggest that Michelozzo had given him some advice early on, I think it very unlikely that execution

³ Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "Les doubles fonds de la consorteria florentine: les Tornaquinci de Florence entre XIV^e et XV^e siècles" in: *Alberto Tenenti: scritti in memoria*, ed. by Pierroberto Scaramella, Naples 2005, pp. 381–410. The document is discussed also in Simons (note 1), pp. 150–154, and Carol Lansing, *The Florentine Magnates: Lineage and Faction in a Medieval Commune*, Princeton 1991, pp. 100–102.

⁴ The new owners of the first part of the palace on Via Tornabuoni, next to the tower, "dovevano sempre tenere sotto la detta parte uno androne

vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568, ed. by Rosanna Bettarini/Paola Barocchi, III, Florence 1971, p. 237).

⁶ Cornelius von Fabriczy, "Michelozzo di Bartolomeo" in: *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XXV (1904), Beiheft, pp. 34–110: 40.

⁷ Miranda Ferrara/Francesco Quinterio, *Michelozzo di Bartolomeo*, Florence 1984, pp. 375–377.

⁸ Giovanni Fanelli, *Firenze: architettura e città*, Florence 1973, I, p. 238, and II, fig. 294, published the elevation drawing, attributing the architecture to Michelozzo and calling the design the prototype of palaces with simple facades covered with intonaco.

⁹ For the artist's return to Florence, see Ferrara/Quinterio (note 7), pp. 27f. and 50, note 89.

of the building could have been carried out without an architect's strong directing presence at the work site.

The palace that Giovanni Tornabuoni built occupied only a portion of the block, but as it passed to a succession of new owners it was vastly expanded. A short summary of the subsequent history sets the scene for the discussion that follows. Five months after Giovanni died in 1497, his only son, Lorenzo (1468–1497), was executed for participation in a plot to return Piero de' Medici to power, and the aforementioned inventory of the palace was made. In 1542 the building was sold by Lorenzo's grandson Leonetto to Lorenzo di Piero Ridolfi.¹⁰ Marco Spallanzani found account books from the 1540s and 1550s that give important insights into the new work being done by the Ridolfi, especially in the courtyard and garden, and these same books will be helpful as we puzzle through questions regarding the interior.¹¹ Financial difficulties led to the sale of the palace in 1571, and it was owned first by Cardinal Marco Sittico Altemps and shortly thereafter by Alessandro de' Medici, archbishop of Florence, whose heir in 1608 sold it to Bardo di Giovanni Corsi and the sons of his deceased brother Jacopo. The owners in the later sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries, especially Alessandro de' Medici and the Corsi, gradually incorporated neighboring properties into the complex, so that by the nineteenth century the palace and its appendages occupied most of the block bounded by Via Tornabuoni, Via Strozzi, Via de' Pescioni and Via de' Corsi (indicated as Via Teatina on Figure 4).

The fifteenth-century palace was rendered unrecognizable by the widening of Via Tornabuoni in 1864,

when in a major remodeling campaign a strip of about 6.5 meters was cut from the front with the result that the principal rooms towards the street were destroyed and were rebuilt with a new facade further back. Extraordinary survey drawings, not previously treated in the scholarly literature, were made in connection with this project; they depict elements in the traditional way: grey was used for walls that were to be retained, yellow for those that were to be destroyed, and red for new construction.¹² Study of the drawings in conjunction with an understanding of the components of the site and with the inventory of 1498 permits reconstruction of the palace's plan, and it is possible to identify the rooms named in the inventory and to get a sense for how the interior functioned in the fifteenth century. In order to understand what parts of the structure depicted in the drawings existed in 1498, we first must review the land acquisition. Francesco Gurrieri's book about the palace has the most detailed treatment of this topic, based on the Catasto reports.¹³ We can add notaries' records of rentals and sales, and an important document regarding the sale by the *Ufficiali della Torre* (communal officials in charge of the urban fabric) of a plot of land in the middle of the block.

Acquisition of the site and description of the palace's contours in the fifteenth century

Only a portion of the courtyard and one ground-floor room remain today of the fifteenth-century palace. But we can relate the drawings made in 1864 – especially the plans of all the floors, the elevation of the main facade, and the section going north-south

¹⁰ ASF, Not. antecos., 16323, Niccolò Parenti, fol. 220r–222r. Due to the precarious condition of the estate, Leonetto sold other properties as well.

¹¹ Marco Spallanzani, "The Courtyard of Palazzo Tornabuoni-Ridolfi and Zanobi Lastricati's Bronze Mercury" in: *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, XXXVII (1978), pp. 6–21. That major construction took place around the garden is suggested by mention in the documents of *veroni* and *pilastrini*, no longer extant but probably those evident on our Figure 4.

¹² The eleven drawings signed by Luigi Del Sarto are in the ASCFi with the shelf numbers car. 372/001–372/011; they are available online at www.comune.fi.it/archivistorico (ArchiDis, libera, palazzo Corsi, nos. 36/95–

63/95). The facade drawing mentioned above (36/95 of this set) to my knowledge is the only one that has been published. The present building does not follow in every respect the remodeling proposed in the drawings; for instance, the idea of inserting a new row of columns within the space of the court *loggia* was abandoned in favor of retaining this *loggia* and simply moving the court's west wall inward one bay to give the court two bays going east-west instead of three. For a short discussion of Del Sarto's project, see Emanuele Barletti, "La Loggia Tornaquinci a Firenze", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXXVII (1993), pp. 408–432: 421–424, 430f.

¹³ Gurrieri (note I), pp. 17–62.



4 Luigi Del Sarto, plan of ground floor of the Tornabuoni-Corsi Palace, 1864. Florence, Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze

through the building near the front – to the documents about the component properties and to the inventory. Identification of the portions of this vast complex that belonged to the early palace results in the layout of Figure 5 showing the part that was the subject of the inventory and the further houses that were owned by the estate in 1498. Key to the reconstruction of the plan is the recognition that most of the heavy bearing walls colored yellow or grey on the drawings were those of the fifteenth century.

That a coherent portion of the fifteenth-century palace was still existing at the core of the building in the nineteenth century is evidenced by the vaulting visible on the ground floor in the section A-B (Fig. 6), where stone corbels (*peducci*) are shown in the ground-floor suite to the left of the *androne* (Fig. 5) – in the *sala* (4), the *camera* (5), and the small *anticamera* (6) – as well as in the two rooms to the right of the *androne*;¹⁴ all these spaces can be further distinguished from the rest in being raised several steps above the level of the street. Behind was the courtyard, part of the same project, which like that of Palazzo Medici (Fig. 7) had four arcades of three bays each, and a *loggia* at the back; also, the main staircase was in the same location at the left of the entrance. Even in the fifteenth century a garden lay behind, again as at Palazzo Medici, though it was not yet as regular as the one shown on the plan of Palazzo Corsi (Fig. 4), which was the result of remodeling by the Ridolfi in the sixteenth century. The alley coming in from Via de' Corsi at the north led to a small stable, and the much larger room (7) on this side of the court was part of the first project, as is indicated by its basement and by its *peducci*, most of which are intact and are visible inside what is now the store Max Mara (Fig. 8). Giovanni owned Houses B and C, but only the first became part of his palace, though, as we shall see shortly,

¹⁴ Several *peducci*, presumably from the ground-floor *sala* or its *camera*, have been reused in the vaulting of the second new room to the left of the *androne*, now part of the clothing store Max Mara; the remaining *peducci* from the front of the palace apparently are lost.

its spaces were not included in the inventory. Further east, beyond the southern perimeter of the courtyard and garden, even though he purchased Houses D and E in 1483, not until far into the sixteenth century did later owners incorporate them into the complex. Thus the ground floor inventoried in 1498 consisted of a row of large rooms towards the street, the court with its *loggia*, a garden, the stair, and the wing at the north.

As so often was the case in Florence, the first component of the new palace was the house of the patron's father. In 1460 a division of real estate among the Tornabuoni brothers awarded to Giovanni most of the family's "casa grande" with a value of 1100 florins; the remainder, valued at 400 florins, went to the oldest brother, Niccolò, and sometime after 1462 Giovanni got control of that too.¹⁵ Giovanni's portion must have ended at the wall separating the two rooms on the facade to the south of the *androne* and continuing as the south wall of the courtyard. Niccolò's house occupied the next plot, while the rest of the block along Via Tornabuoni consisted of Houses B and C bought by Giovanni in 1477, the passageway into the Corte de' Tornaquinci, and the Tornaquinci tower and *loggia* at the corner.

Acquisition of the rest of the site was accomplished quickly, making possible the construction of an adequate palace, although clearly Giovanni anticipated expansion. The first, crucial, purchase was made in 1465 when, in a document that Caroline Elam shared with me many years ago, the Ufficiali della Torre sold 600 square *braccia* of land ("terreno") behind the family house, surely part of the Corte de' Tornaquinci, which had been the boundary on this side of Giovanni's father's house in 1427. (A *braccio* was equivalent to 58.4 cm.) This document, transcribed in the Appendix, is suggestive though problematical. The land sold was to

¹⁵ The document of division is in ASF, Not. antecos., 1584, Barone Baroni, fol. 1027r–1031r. In 1462 Niccolò bought a house on the west side of Via Tornabuoni; the purchase is referred to in ASF, Not. antecos., 18725, Francesco Sassoli, no. 338, where the price is said to have been

be defined first by a cord stretched from the southern corner of Giovanni's house ("dal canto ch'è dalla casa sua inverso la loggia"), straight back to a house owned by Maddalena Tornaquinci (House D). Giovanni was permitted to build along this line a wall that corresponds to the southern boundary of his new courtyard. Although I am unable to relate the other provisions to elements on the nineteenth-century drawing of the ground floor, a variety of documents makes clear that the large rectangular space that still in 1864 existed south of palace's court, and where the three-ramp staircase projected in Figure 4 was built, can be identified with the remaining part of the Corte de' Tornaquinci, and we can conclude that the land sold was a continuation of this to the north. An unresolved question regards the legal status of the court, for though the act involved public officials, meaning that this was not a private piazza like Piazza Strozzi,¹⁶ other data indicate that the property owners bordering on it were understood to control it. For instance, in 1452 a house in the area that later became the garden had been sold "cum usu dicte platee",¹⁷ and a similar concept still existed a century later, when in 1558 Lorenzo Ridolfi bought House D, which was sold "with the share that said house has in that other court owned in common with other shareholders in said court".¹⁸

At the end of the Ufficiali della Torre document is the stipulation that Giovanni reopen an entrance to the Corte de' Tornaquinci from Via Tornabuoni, the latter called "via che va dalla loggia de' Tornaquinci alla piazza di Santo Michele" (now the piazza of Santi Michele e Gaetano), to give access for the people whose hous-

1200 *fiorini di suggello*. He subsequently lived there and thus the portion of the family house awarded to him in the division became available to Giovanni.

¹⁶ Caroline Elam, "Piazza Strozzi: Two Drawings by Baccio d'Agnolo and the Problems of a Private Renaissance Square", in: *I Tatti Studies*, 1 (1985), pp. 105–135.

¹⁷ ASF, Not. antecos., 8521, Niccolò di Francesco Galeotti, under the date 9 June, 1452.

¹⁸ The document reads "unam domum cum palchis, salis, hapotecha subtus dictam domum, et curia et lodia et cum omnia ratha et parte quam

es faced on the court, substituting for a doorway near the property of Pero Tornaquinci, probably on Via de' Pescioni. The reconstituted entrance was the same as the one opened in 1286, shown on Figure 5 between Houses B and C.¹⁹

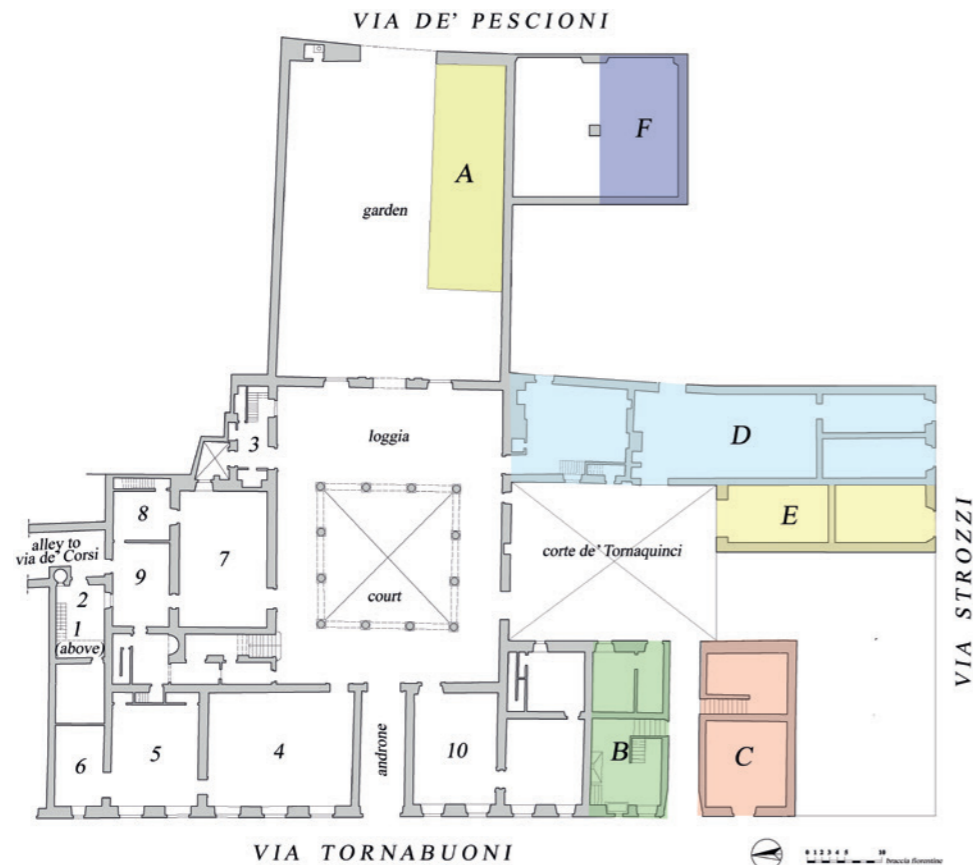
The purchase from the Ufficiali della Torre suggests that aspects of a plan for the palace already existed, and this is confirmed by the contract of September 1466 in which Giovanni purchased from the sons of Tommaso Giacomini the smaller of the two houses north of his own for 800 *fiorini di suggello* plus 25 *fiorini larghi*.²⁰ The boundaries given in the document of sale were Via Tornabuoni, the sellers' house of habitation (on the corner of Via Tornabuoni and Via de' Corsi at the north), "chiasso et in parte platea" on the east, and property belonging to Giovanni Tornabuoni on the south. The sale included "nine braccia of land beyond the alley which said sellers own" ("novem brachiis terreni vel circa ultra chiassolinum quod terrenum possident dicti venditores"). As with the 1465 document, we do not know precisely where this last plot was, but we can presume that it permitted the squaring-off of the small room at the end of the alley (Fig. 5, no. 8). The "platea" mentioned here probably was the same as the "piazzaola" that in 1458 formed one of the boundaries of the house of the painter Zanobi Strozzi, who lived nearby to the east, because that same boundary was given by Strozzi in 1469 as "Giovanni Tornabuoni".²¹ Thus this space too may originally have been part of the Corte de' Tornaquinci, which once may have extended much further to the north. The document of 1466 states that Giovanni was permitted to build

dicta domus habet in quadam alia curia pro indiviso cum aliis partionariis dicte curie, et cum omnibus et singulis pertinentiis dicte domus"; one of the boundries was "dicta curia comunis conperata ut supra pro dicta ratha" (ASF, Not. antecos., 16329, Niccolò Parenti, fol. 207v).

¹⁹ The basement plan made in 1864 of the Corsi palace shows that under this passageway the ground had not been excavated, a sure sign that the passageway dated from the earliest development of the area. See no. 46/95 in the set of drawings in the ASCFi (note 12).

²⁰ ASF, Not. antecos., 14198, Piero Migliorelli, fol. 563r–v.

²¹ ASF, Catasto, 816, no. 4, fol. 9r; Catasto, 920, fol. 801r.



5 Reconstruction of ground floor of the Tornabuoni Palace as inventoried in 1498 (drawing by Caterina D'Amelio)

Legend:

- 1 "sopra la stalla dal pozzo"
- 2 "nella stalla"
- 3 "chamera de' famigli"
- 4 "sala terrena"
- 5 "chamera di detta sala"
- 6 "antichamera di detta chamera"
- 7 "chamera terrena dell'arme"
- 8 "antichamera di detta chamera"
- 9 "timarta di detta"
- 10 "chamera terrena in su l'androne"

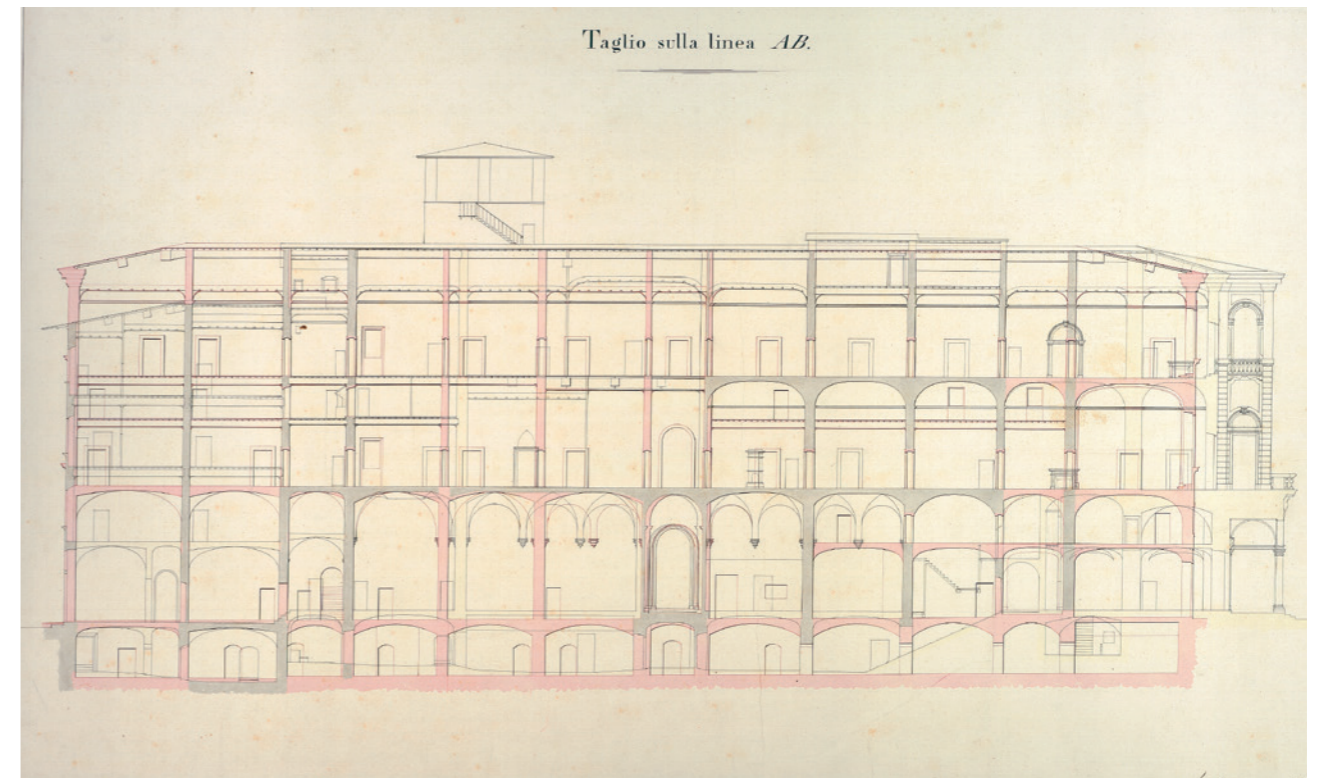
Other houses owned by Giovanni Tornabuoni:

- A Property bought in 1472 from Biagio di Bartolomeo di Piero and used for the storage of grain
- B House bought from Silvestro di Giovanni Popoleschi in 1477
- C House bought from Giovanni di Francesco di Tieri Tornaquinci in 1477
- D Larger house bought from Pippa, widow of Duccio di Chirico Tornaquinci, in 1483
- E Smaller house bought from Pippa, widow of Duccio di Chirico Tornaquinci, in 1483
- F "Fondachetto" bought from Girolamo d'Adovardo Giachinotti in 1494 and used for a stable

6 Luigi Del Sarto, section A-B near the front of the Tornabuoni-Corsi Palace, 1864. Florence, Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze

Legend:

- B House bought from Silvestro di Giovanni Popoleschi in 1477



a wall that would reach the house of Zanobi Strozzi, surely the north wall of room 8 on Figure 5 at the end of the alley. It can be stated that the space of the *anticamera* (6) of the suite on the palace's ground floor was part of the sale by the Giacomini, because it was built with the first palace, lying at the same level as the rest and vaulted in a similar manner.

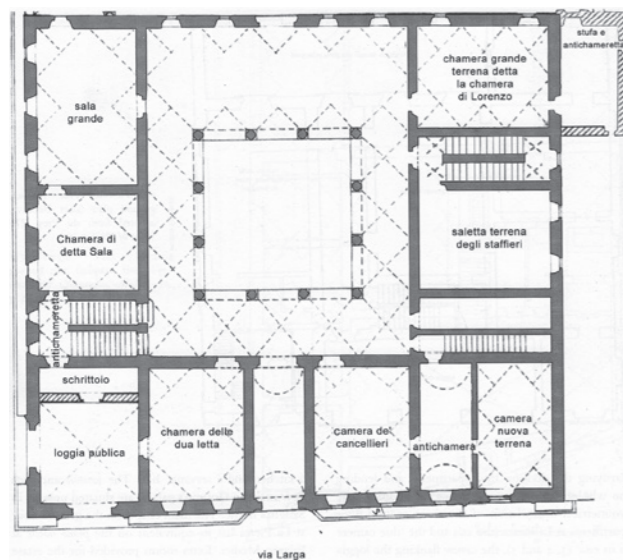
The garden was created from holdings towards Via de' Pescioni that in 1427 all had belonged to the sons of Pero Tornaquinci, although pinpointing the locations of the constituent houses is not possible because none of the dividing walls survive. First, in 1466

Maddalena, the widow of Chirico di Pero Tornaquinci, sold to Giovanni for 300 florins a collection of small houses located at the north.²² Early in 1468 Giovanni bought the adjacent house from Giovanni di ser Tommè Bracci for 550 florins.²³ By 1469 both properties had been incorporated into the garden, and in 1472 Giovanni made the third acquisition, from Biagio di Bartolomeo di Piero, whose father had bought the property (Fig. 5, A) in two portions from Maddalena Tornaquinci in 1463 and 1464.²⁴ For the inventory of 1498 this house, in the southern area of the garden, was still intact, one of the two "cha-

²² The properties of Chirico and Niccolò di Pero Tornaquinci, and of Chirico's wife, Maddalena, in 1427 are described in ASF, Catasto, 46, fol. 358r-v; 47, fol. 301r, 344v; 77, fol. 130r, 314r, 391r. In 1469 Monna Maddalena referred to the sale in ASF, Catasto, 922, fol. 134r, where the officials noted in the margin: "nella muraglia di Giovanni Tornabuoni"; the notary's document does not seem to survive.

²³ The sale contract of 1468 is cited by Bracci in ASF, Catasto, 929, fol. 439r, but the notary's books for that year do not survive.

²⁴ In 1469 Monna Maddalena, reporting that the property had been sold, gave first the boundaries when she sold it to Bartolomeo, and then the boundaries "oggi", with "Giovanni di ser Tommè" replaced by "Porto di Giovanni Tornabuoni" (ASF, Catasto, 922, fol. 134v). The notary's docu-



7 Palazzo Medici, plan of ground floor with spaces labeled according to the inventory of 1492, as identified by Bulst. From Amanda Lillie, *Florentine Villas in the Fifteenth Century*, Cambridge 2005, fig. 179

8 *Peduccio* in the "camera terrena dell'arme" (Fig. 5, n. 7)

ments for the sales to Bartolomeo are in ASF, Not. antecos., 18452, Antonio di Salamone, fol. 213r–214v, 215r–216v, while the sale of 1472 is in Not. antecos., 11846, Lodovico di Angelo da Terranova, fol. 146r.

²⁵ ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 146v.

²⁶ This purchase was initiated in 1478, but because of problems with renters it was formalized only in 1494 (ASF, Monte Comune o delle Graticole, Copie del Catasto, 73, fol. 415v; Not. antecos., 1924, Bartolomeo Bartolucci, fol. 254r).

²⁷ "Una chasa posta nel ghonfalone del Leone Bianco nel popolo di San Branchazio ch'è oggi quella cho 'll'altre chase avute da Giachomino, da mona Madalena di Chiricho Tornaquinci e da Giovanni di ser Tommè, tutte rigittate in terra e fatt'una chasa di nuovo chom' apresso dirò, che l'à rifatto Giovanni sopradetto tutta di nuovo; è per sua abitazione e della famiglia sua, chonfinata in quel modo, cioè I via 2 G[i]achomino di Balduccio e frategli,

sette dirieto ne' l'orto che lui si tiene per granaio e l'altra per istalla".²⁵ The other *casetta* (F), the stable, was the "fondachetto" not strictly in the garden, but somewhat south of its wall, acquired from Girolamo Giachinotti.²⁶

The tax report of 1469 for the Tornabuoni brothers, written when Giovanni was absent from Florence, states that Giovanni's residence consisted of a house that with others was rebuilt to form a new house for himself and his family, and clearly the building was habitable; thus its components were exempt from tax.²⁷ In 1477 Giovanni bought House B and incorporated it into the palace.²⁸ Because the section drawing (Fig. 6) shows that it was distinct from the rest in having a lower floor level and a different vaulting system, we have a secure *terminus ante quem* of 1477 for construction of the main portion of the palace. By 1498 the palace's facade stretched in 13 bays from the house that remained in Giacomini hands, at the north corner of the block, all the way to the passageway into the Corte de' Tornaquinci (Figs. 3, 4). The facade is likely to have gone up with the major construction, in which case the portal was off-center for a number of years; otherwise, the facade dates from soon after the purchase of House B.

Two subsequent purchases, and documents associated with them, raise questions about the strange plan shown in our reconstruction of the palace's ground floor in 1498 (Fig. 5). After Giovanni bought House C in 1477, the renter stated in his tax report of 1480

3 via, 4 chorte de' Tornaquinci, 5 Salvestro di Giovanni Popoleschi. Chome dicho di sopra, Giovanni l'à per suo abitare, e per sé e 'lla famiglia sua" (ASF, Catasto, 922, fol. 150r).

²⁸ The sale documents for this house and for House C are in ASF, Not. antecos., 1749, Antonio Bartolomei, fol. 50r and 96r. After the death of Lorenzo Tornabuoni the widow Ginevra di Bongiani Gianfigliuzzi (Lorenzo's second wife) was given House B, which thus became separated from the palace; only upon Ginevra's death did it revert to the Ridolfi. A statement in Lorenzo Ridolfi's account book in 1551 makes clear that already in the fifteenth century the palace facade included it: the house, "ritornataci", was "next to our house of habitation in Florence, and incorporated under the roof towards the canto de' Tornaquinci" ("a chantto alla nostra di nostra abitazione di Firenze e n'chorporata sotto al tetto di detta di verso el chantto de' Tornaquinci [...] [ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4358, fol. ccxiii]).

that he had to find other housing because Giovanni "vole murare".²⁹ And House D, bought in 1483, was rented out to a nephew with the provision that when Giovanni wished to expand his own house, the contract would be annulled.³⁰ The plan and the two documents thus permit the interpretation of this as a palace that as late as 1498 was still 'in progress'. Comparison of Figures 5 and 7 shows that the similarity of the plan to that of the Medici Palace would have been increased with the addition of the northern portion of House D, permitting replication of the Medici "camera grande terrena detta la camera di Lorenzo" south of Palazzo Tornabuoni's court *loggia*. Also, Palazzo Medici had a service court to the right of the main building,³¹ in a position analogous to that of the Corte de' Tornaquinci, and with ownership of Houses E and C Giovanni Tornabuoni was close to controlling the whole perimeter of the Tornaquinci court. While we do not know why he may have contemplated such a project nor why he did not continue his building, we can understand why Vasari put his emphasis on the plans of the two palaces. Palazzo Tornabuoni like Palazzo Medici had an *androne* centered on a square court, a double-ramped stair to left, a wide *loggia* on the far side of the court with a garden beyond reaching the street behind. On right there was the possibility of a room similar to Lorenzo de' Medici's "camera grande terrena" as well as a service court, like that of Palazzo Medici, with a passageway from the main street.³²

²⁹ ASF, Catasto, 1013, fol. 465r (fol. 429r mod.); a copy in better condition is in ASF, Monte Comune o delle Graticole, Copie del Catasto, 73, fol. 468r.

³⁰ The sales of Houses D and E are in ASF, Not. antecos., 13186, Iacopo Martini, fol. 55v–59v, the rental in ASF, Not. antecos., 1924, Bartolomeo Bartolucci, fol. 125r, the latter a reference shared by Rab Hatfield. After being sold by the syndics of Lorenzo Tornabuoni's estate at the end of the fifteenth century (ASF, Not. antecos., 18725, Francesco Sassoli, busta 8, no. 464), House D was bought in 1558 by Lorenzo Ridolfi (above, note 18), remaining a rental property at least until the time of Alessandro de' Medici. The smaller house, too, was listed among the items to be sold by the syndics, although I have not found the sale contract. In 1532 its owner stated that his father had bought it (ASF, Decima granducale, 3618, fol. 12 left); I have not discovered when it returned to the hands of the owners of the palace.

³¹ See Wolfger A. Bulst, "Die ursprüngliche innere Aufteilung des Palazzo



The spaces in the palace related to the inventory of 1498

The attention given in recent years to the palace has focused on the surviving works of art that can be identified in the inventory – Ghirlandaio's *Portrait of Giovanna degli Albizzi*, the same artist's tondo of the *Adoration of the Magi*, medals of family members – and also a group of *spalliera* panels with Tornabuoni and Albizzi coats of arms and two further panels by Biagio d'Antonio with scenes from the *Iliad*; all the latter paintings seem to have been incorporated in the woodwork and thus do not appear in the inventory.³³ Much interesting work has focused on the imagery of these works, and attempts have been made to relate them to the patrons, Giovanni Tornabuoni and his son Lorenzo; suggestions also have been

Medici", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XIV (1970), pp. 369–392: 375–378.

³² The garden and service court are not shown on Figure 7, but see the plan in Wolfger A. Bulst, "Uso e trasformazione del Palazzo mediceo fino ai Riccardi", in: *Il Palazzo Medici Riccardi di Firenze*, ed. by Giovanni Cherubini/Giovanni Fanelli, Florence 1990, pp. 98–129: 125, fig. 124.

³³ Essential recent bibliography on the objects listed in the inventory of the palace include: Everett Fahy, "The Tornabuoni-Albizzi Panels", in: *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Federico Zeri*, ed. by Mauro Natale, Milan 1984, I, pp. 233–247; Simons (note 1), pp. 158–169; Roberta Bartoli, *Biagio d'Antonio*, Milan 1999, pp. 158, 160–163, 166–171, 211f., 230; Jean K. Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio: Artist and Artisan*, New Haven/London 2000, pp. 256–258, 277f.; Susanne Kress, "Die camera di Lorenzo, bella im Palazzo Tornabuoni: Rekonstruktion und künstlerische Ausstattung eines Floren-

made about how the objects were placed in the various rooms of the palace. But with so little information about the building, and no plans, it has not been possible to say anything concrete about this setting.

The inventory was compiled almost five months after Lorenzo was beheaded and nine months after Giovanni's death. It gives the impression that the only Tornabuoni living in the palace at this time was Giovannino, Lorenzo's son by his first wife, Giovanna degli Albizzi. No items associated with Lorenzo's widow, Ginevra di Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi, and with their children Leonardo, Francesca, and Giovanna are listed, permitting the inference that she had moved with them either to her family's palace on Lungarno Corsini or to House B, which had been given to her and in which in 1542 her presence was mentioned in the document of sale.³⁴ House B remained a separate entity from the palace until 1551, when Ginevra died and it devolved to the new Ridolfi owners.³⁵ Its spaces – within the walls of the third room south of the *androne* and going east as far as the Corte de' Tornaquinci – thus were not included in the inventory, and the house continued to be considered a separate property by the Ridolfi, even after 1551.³⁶

It is possible to correlate most of the spaces listed in the inventory with rooms shown on the plans (Figs. 5, 9). To start with the elements that are cer-

tain, on the ground floor the main suite consisting of *sala* (4), *camera* (5), and *anticamera* (6) can be seen at the front of the building, proceeding on the left of the *androne* from south to north. According to the inventory, the *sala* was fitted out with the standard built-in benches, and it had two very large tables but little else; here and in the *camera* and *anticamera* there is no reference to members of the family, and perhaps the rooms were used only occasionally – in the summer or by guests – as often seems to have been the case for such ground-floor apartments. On the other side of the *androne* from the *sala*, the “chamera terrena in su l'androne” (10) was the most elaborate room at this level, crammed with furniture, heraldic and jousting items, musical instruments, and also a portrait of Lucrezia Tornabuoni. Susanne Kress has suggested that this was a special room for guests,³⁷ and I concur. It occupied a position next to the *androne* analogous to that of the “chamera delle dua letta” in the Medici Palace, which Wolfger Bulst argued persuasively served this purpose; another example is a room with the same name, placement and occasional function in the Palazzo Datini in Prato.³⁸ Maria DePrano's focus on the contents of the Tornabuoni room has led her also to write that the *camera* was “used for entertaining”.³⁹ Not appearing in the inventory are the two rooms south of this, one on the street and the other behind it with a window on the

Corte de' Tornaquinci, even though we shall see that on the *primo piano* the spaces above these were important. The ground-floor rooms were called in 1559 “due antichamere terrene di verso il chantto de' Tornaquinci”,⁴⁰ and indeed they have the aspect of appendages to room 10. A possible explanation for their absence in the inventory, and that of the mezzanine room above the one at the back,⁴¹ is that at this time they had been appropriated for use by the occupants of House B. The remaining *camera* on the ground floor, the “chamera terrena dell'arme” (7), with its *anticamera* (8) and “timarta” (9), perforce is identifiable with the room north of the court and the smaller spaces to its north.

All three *camere* on the ground floor had the usual furnishings: a very wide bed fitted with canopy and curtains, an equally large *lettuccio*, quantities of bedding, as well as many chests. The listing in the inventory for the “chamera terrena dell'arme” includes items belonging to Giovanni, to his grandson Giovannino, and also “da donna”; in a basket was a group of cloth objects associated with altars, baptism and communion, all ornamented with gold. The location next to the courtyard suggests to me that the room – the only one from the fifteenth-century palace that survives intact – belongs to a type that in the sixteenth century came to be called the “camera della loggia”, a large ground-floor room that was not part of a suite with a *sala*, and that opened onto the court *loggia*.⁴² Restrictions in the site barred Giovanni Tornabuoni from having – in his initial building campaign – the classic *camera* next to his courtyard *loggia*, but

this “chamera terrena dell'arme” may have functioned in much the same way. Its great size and the elaborate stone *peducci* (Fig. 8) indicate that this was a space that was designed to impress, even though the inventory shows nothing extraordinary about the furnishings and decoration. It is logical to think that in a “camera della loggia” the palace owner met with people who had waited for him in the courtyard, where the *loggia* always had benches, although I have not found specific statements about such use. The *anticamera* listed next in the inventory would be in the eastern part of the space to the north of the room, while the “timarta” (9) next to it held arms, horse fittings and a very long piece of a cart; the word may be derived from the Turkish *timar*.⁴³

The remaining spaces listed for this floor were devoted to service – the stable (2) and the room above it (1) were adjacent to the well in the alley,⁴⁴ while the “chamera de' famigli” (3) may have been the small space north of the court *loggia*. One of the perplexing aspects of the fifteenth-century palace, given the fact that frequently it accommodated foreigners visiting the city and therefore must have seen a great deal of entertainment, especially in the courtyard and garden, is that the only kitchen was on the *secondo piano*. Thus the “chamera terrena dell'arme” seems to have had a short life as a room for the head of household, for it can be deduced that the Ridolfi moved the kitchen here: in 1543, less than a year after the purchase, interrelated work was being done in the kitchen and the alley, indicating that the kitchen was in this general location; and it was large, as

tinier Hochzeitszimmers des späten Quattrocento”, in: *Domenico Ghirlandaio: Künstlerische Konstruktion von Identität im Florenz der Renaissance*, ed. by Michael Rohmann, Weimar 2003, pp. 245–285; Caroline Campbell, “Lorenzo Tornabuoni's *History of Jason and Medea* Series: Chivalry and Classicism in 1480s Florence”, in: *Renaissance Studies*, XXI (2007), pp. 1–19; James R. Lindow, *The Renaissance Palace in Florence: Magnificence and Splendor in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Aldershot 2007, *passim*; *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, exh. cat. New York/Fort Worth, ed. by Andrea Bayer, New York 2008, pp. 303–306; Jacqueline M. Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace*, New Haven/London 2008, pp. 104f.; Maria K. DePrano, “Castitas, Pulchritudo, Amor: The Three Graces on Niccolò Fiorentino's Medal of Giovanna degli Albizzi”, in: *The Medal*, LIII (2008), pp. 21–31; *eadem*, “No Painting on Earth Would be More Beautiful: An Analysis of Giovanna degli Albizzi's Portrait Inscription”, in: *Renaissance Studies*, XX (2008), pp. 617–641; *eadem*, “To the Exaltation of His Family: Niccolò Fiorentino's Medals for Giovanni Tornabuoni and His Family”, in: *The Medal*, LVI (2010), pp. 14–25; Gert

Jan van der Sman, *Lorenzo e Giovanna: vita e arte nella Firenze del Quattrocento*, Florence 2010, first published in Dutch 2009; Maria K. DePrano, “*Chi vuol esser lieto, sia*: Objects of Entertainment in the Tornabuoni Palace in Florence”, in: *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior*, ed. by Erin J. Campbell/Stephanie R. Miller/Elizabeth C. Consavari, Farnham 2013, pp. 127–142.

³⁴ See note 10 above.

³⁵ See note 28 above.

³⁶ In 1551 the house was being rented to a member of the Doni family (ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4358, fol. ccxiii); a Doni was still renting it in 1561 (ASF, Decima granducale, 3782, no. 1398).

³⁷ Kress (note 33), p. 275, note 36.

³⁸ Bulst (note 32), p. 108. Margherita Romagnoli, “La dimora di un mercante pratese nel XIV secolo: palazzo Datini attraverso un'analisi dei documenti d'archivio (Parte I)”, in: *Arte cristiana*, LXXXXVI (2008), pp. 413–422: 414.

³⁹ DePrano 2013 (note 33), p. 128.

⁴⁰ ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4358, fol. cclxxvi.

⁴¹ See no. 52/95 in the set of drawings in the ASCFi (note 12).

⁴² For these rooms, present in numerous Florentine palaces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Brenda Preyer, “Non solo facciate: dentro i palazzi Pazzi, Lenzi e Ridolfi-Guidi”, in: *Palazzi fiorentini del Rinascimento*, ed. by Amedeo Belluzzi, Firenze 2008 (= *Opus Incertum*, 2 [2007], 4), pp. 6–17: 7–9. The first example that I know was Lorenzo de' Medici's “chamera grande terrena” (Fig. 7). Usually a “camera della loggia” was located near an area, like the alley at Palazzo Tornabuoni, where a doorway for quick and discreet entry and exit could be fashioned.

⁴³ The word refers to a concession of land in the Ottoman Empire to a man who distinguished himself in war, with the obligation to provide sol-

diers in further military campaigns (Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, Turin 2000, XX, p. 1035), although this significance does not explain its use here.

⁴⁴ According to the third boundary given for the palace in the sale to Lorenzo Ridolfi, in 1542 the stable was entered from the alley: “chiasus cohoptus et communis per quem itur ad portam stabulorum dicte domus magnie” (note 10 above). A note from 1553 in Ridolfi's account book refers to the same area: “in fare rachon[i]are el pozo da sma[]t[]t[]re che rescie a piè de l'uscio delle stalle del chiasolino a rincontro di Santo Michele” (ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4358, fol. cxl). It can be recalled that in the late fifteenth century there was also a stable in the “fondachetto” (F) near the garden.

a stone worker was paid for 19 braccia (11 meters) of material for the base of the storage cupboards.⁴⁵ Part of the space north of room 7 was transformed into a more commodious servants' room, and the second level – still existing – was built above room 8.⁴⁶ However, the present decoration of the “chamera terrena dell'arme” indicates that after becoming a kitchen the room reverted to more formal use after expansion of the palace permitted further relocation of the kitchen.

The principal rooms listed in the inventory on the *piano nobile* are easy to find on the plan (Fig. 9), although the first, the “chamera de l'androne di sopra” (11) in the southern end of the hallway (*ricetto*) at the top of the stairs, requires discussion, as it seems to have had several functions.⁴⁷ While it, like all *camere* in the palace, had a big bed and a *lettuccio*, it also contained quantities of tin dishes and other plates, as well as table linens. Its location signals that it gave passage from the southern suite at the front of the palace to the portion east of the court where, as we shall see, the family's eating seems to have been centered. One can hazard the suggestion as well that it could serve, as oc-

asionally in the Roman ambient, as an antechamber⁴⁸ leading from the *ricetto* to the next room in the inventory, the famous “chamera di Lorenzo, bella, in su la sala, in palco” (12) on the facade, a room with a door also from the *sala* (21). The contents of this room have been discussed amply by Kress, Lindow, Musacchio, and van der Sman.⁴⁹ Lorenzo had an *anticamera* (16), but first is listed the “chamera del palcho d'oro” (13), which I locate to the southeast of his *camera*. The evidence again comes from the Ridolfi account books, where in 1544, continuing to be identified by its wood ceiling decorated with gold, the room was called the “antichame[ra] del palcho messo a oro”, while in 1553 a room next to it was the “antichamera a chantto a quella del palcho d'oro”,⁵⁰ the same as the inventory's “antichamera di Lorenzo” (16), which with its “maghazino” (15) was adjacent to Lorenzo's *camera* on the facade, in a common location for major buildings, as in Figure 10.⁵¹ Thus these two *anticamere* lay above the two that were not included in the inventory of the ground floor, the “chamera del palcho d'oro” behind the “antichamera di Lorenzo” and looking out on the

⁴⁵ So in the related documents: “raconciorno [...] l'uscio di cucina e aconciorno la senice [= selice] del chiassolino”; “19 braccia di soglie per l'armario di cucina” (ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4378, fol. 10v, 39v).

⁴⁶ *Travi and correnti* “pel palco del tinello” were paid for in 1543, while iron bars were made for the windows on both levels (*ibidem*, fol. 17r, 18r, 19v, 22r).

⁴⁷ The only parallel that I know for this sort of space is a room in an inventory of 1496 cited by Lindow (note 33), p. 146; the inventory itself, of the estate of Salvestro di Zanobi di Mariano, *cartolaio*, in ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 31r–34v, is notable for the quantity of art in the house, but it gives no special insights regarding the “chamera nuova in chapo a l'androne” on the *piano nobile* (fol. 32r).

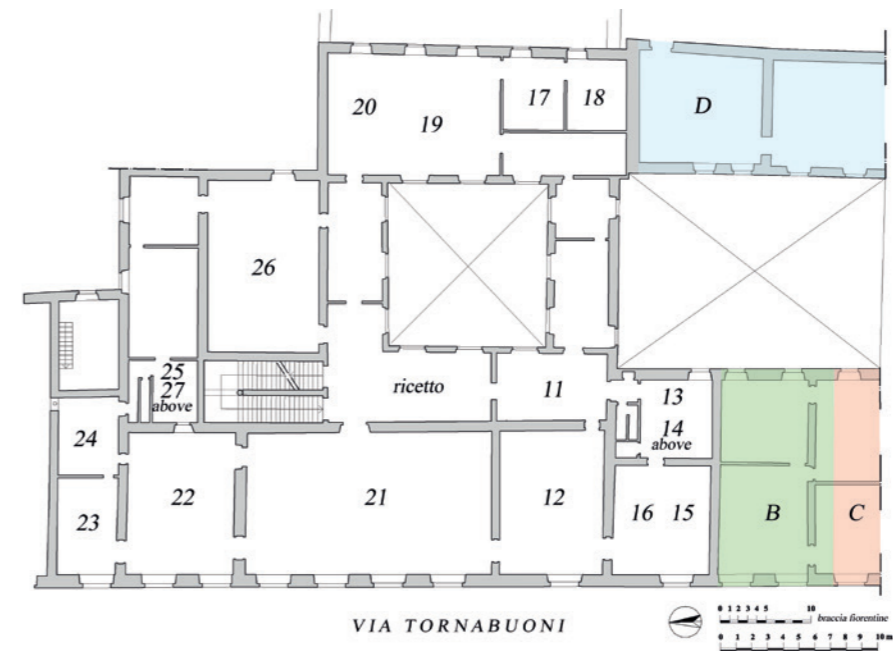
⁴⁸ For the antechamber in sixteenth-century Rome see the brief comments in Christoph Luitpold Frommel, *Der römische Palastbau der Hochrenaissance*, Tübingen 1973, I, pp. 72f. In the fifteenth century Pius II's description of his palace in Pienza alludes clearly to the sort of space present in Palazzo Tornabuoni, functioning as an antechamber, though at Pienza it was very large (an *aula*): Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *Commentarii*, ed. by Luigi Totaro, Milan 2004, II, pp. 1750, 1752.

⁴⁹ For these references, see note 33. The contents of the “chamera bella”, transcribed in Kress, pp. 269f., can be summarized thus: “uno tondo chon chornicione d'oro di Nostra Donna e Magi che ofersono a Christo, una lettiera chon lettuccio e chappellinao apichato a chassone tutto di nocie chon più lavori e messo d'oro e ariento di braccia 4½ in circha, [bedding and

accoutrements], una segiola choperta di velluto tanè chon frangie e palle d'ottone dorate, 2 bambini dorati abbracciati insieme, uno bronchone dorato in una bassetta, uno schudo chon l'arme del Re di Francia, 2 [m]appamondi chon chornicie dorate, uno descho di braccia uno½ a 4 piè suvi uno tappeto di braccia 2½ nuovo, una tavola d'albero senpricie di braccia 3 con trespoli, uno tappeto di braccia 4 vecchio, 2 forzieri da spose dorati e di pino chon ispolliere dorate e dipinte, uno forziere di nocie chon prospettiva e altri lavori di nocie chon dette spalliere choperto di tela azzurra, 5 predelle da sedere e 5 segiole, [fireplace items], una chassapancha di nocie a 4 serrami chon ispolliere di nocie, 2 vasi di Murano cristallino chon lavori, uno deschetto chon la spalliera, 2 armari chon chasse di nocie, [fine bedding and textiles], uno specchio in uno tondo dorato chon più lavori, uno piattello grande di maiolicha, [clothing]” (ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 148r).

⁵⁰ ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4358, fol. 57 (1544), ccxxxiii (1553). Maria Strozzi Ridolfi's account book has three more references, for 1543 and 1544: “due palle d'ottone, servirno per l'armario de l'anticamera d'oro”; “per fattura d'uno specchio per l'anticamera del palco d'oro”; and “tarsia servi per gli uscuioli del camino de l'anticamera d'oro” (ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4378, fol. 7v, 9v, 96r).

⁵¹ At the Medici and Gianfigliuzzi palaces, the *anticamera* was located on the main facade after the *sala* and the *camera* as the third component of the suite; while still lined up with the other rooms it lay along the side facade at the Strozzi Palace and at the palace of messer Benedetto degli Alberti. See Bulst



9 Reconstruction of *primo piano* of the Tornabuoni Palace in 1498 (drawing by Caterina D'Amelio)

Legend:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 11 “chamera de l'androne di sopra” | 20 “maghazino” |
| 12 “chamera di Lorenzo, bella, in su la sala, in palco” | 21 “sala grande” |
| 13 “chamera del palcho d'oro” | 22 “chamera di Giovanni vecchi[o] in su la sala” |
| 14 “chamera de l'arcipresso” | 23 “antichamera di detta chamera” |
| 15 “maghazino dell'anticamera” | 24 “chamerina di detta antichamera” |
| 16 “antichamera di Lorenzo” | 25 “schrittoio” |
| 17 “chamera in su la saletta, di Giovannino” | 26 “audienza dello spenditore” |
| 18 “chamera dove dorme Giovannino” | In stair landing above <i>primo piano</i> : |
| 19 “salotto di sopra” | 27 “schrittoio in chapo alla schala” |

Corte de' Tornaquinci; in 1543 Maria Strozzi Ridolfi referred to glass windows “di camera grande et delle 2 sua anticamere”.⁵² The “camera grande” here, or in 1544 the “chamera grande principale”,⁵³ was Lorenzo's *camera*, already called the *camera principale* in 1542: in a separate act immediately following the purchase of the palace, the Ridolfi also acquired for 300 florins all

the furnishings and works of art, including “a gilded tondo of Our Lady in the camera principale”.⁵⁴ The tondo, Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Magi*, in 1498 had been listed in Lorenzo's *camera* and we can conclude that it had not been moved. When the palace was first built, the *camera principale* would have been in Giovanni's suite spread along the Via Tornabuoni facade to the

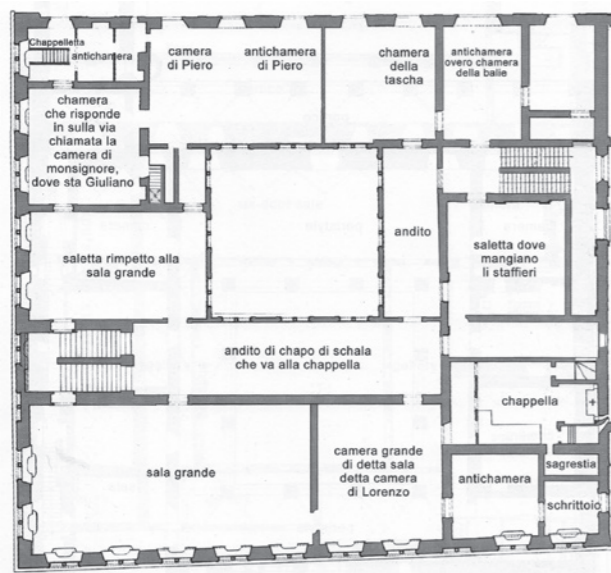
(note 31), pp. 378f. and fig. 4; Brenda Preyer, “Around and in the Gianfigliuzzi Palace in Florence”, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XLVIII (2004), pp. 55–104: pp. 74, 81 and fig. 14; *eadem*, “Il palazzo di messer Benedetto degli Alberti, e di Leon Battista”, in: *Il testamento di Leon Battista Alberti [...]*, ed. by Enzo Bentivoglio, Rome 2005, pp. 89–92: 90 and plan on p. 91. For the Strozzi Palace the payment in 1503 “per manifattura di uno palco di una anticamera in sul canto verso la piazza degli Strozzi”

clearly refers to the small room at the southeastern corner of the *primo piano* (ASF, Carte Strozziiane, ser. V, 64, fol. 56r).

⁵² ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4378, fol. 25v.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, fol. 83r.

⁵⁴ “[...] omnia et singula mobilia existentia in dicta domo magna [...] videlicet tutte le panche, tavole, scranne, legnami da letti di gualunche sorte, di cuccie, lettucci, sedili, chassoni, chasse, forzieri d'ogni sorte, banchi, cornici,



10 Palazzo Medici, plan of *primo piano* with spaces labeled according to the inventory of 1492, as identified by Bulst. From Amanda Lillie, *Florentine Villas in the Fifteenth Century*, Cambridge 2005, fig. 180

north (21–25),⁵⁵ but already when the inventory was taken, the fact that the first room (II) listed on the *primo piano* was next to Lorenzo’s *camera* indicates the shift in importance from the father’s quarters to the son’s. The center of gravity of the palace remained in the southern part under the Ridolfi.

The 1864 plans show a mezzanine level above the “*chamera del palcho d’oro*”,⁵⁶ and according to my reconstruction it held the “*chamera de l’arcipresso*” (14), so named for the wood of its paneling, chests, and bed.

The rooms for Lorenzo’s oldest son are listed next in the inventory; the “*chamera in su la saletta, di Giovannino*” (17) and the “*chamera dove dorme*

Giovannino” (18), were near the *saletta*, or *salotto* (19) – the words were used interchangeably in Florence in the fifteenth century – on the eastern side of the court and above the court *loggia*, as at the Gianfigliuzzi Palace.⁵⁷ The space shown east of the court on Figure 9 is vast, larger than the *sala principale*, and little certainty is possible about this area; our plan suggests that a portion towards the south was partitioned off for Giovannino. Certainly, the phrase “*dove dorme Giovannino*” is unusual, and the best explanation is that the boy’s rooms had been created recently in an area that had not been designed initially for accommodation of a member of the family. (As can be seen on Figure 10, also at the Medici Palace the arrangement of spaces above the court *loggia* and towards the garden looks a bit improvised, in contrast to the careful planning and thick walls of the portion towards the front of the building; and here too were new rooms for the oldest son of the deceased owner.) In the Ridolfi period children continued to be housed in this zone: Maria Strozzi Ridolfi’s account book refers to the “*camera del salotto*”, which may be the same as Giovannino’s *camera*, and the “*soffitta del salotto*”, surely identical with the “*soffitta delle fanciulle*” and “*soffitta delle putte*” that appear three pages later;⁵⁸ the word *soffitta* normally refers to a mezzanine level, so maybe this space had been built above the “*camera del salotto*”. Giovannino, about ten years old, had in both his rooms the same sort of large and rich furniture, fittings and works of art found elsewhere in the palace, and probably because he was the only Tornabuoni living in it, more clothing is listed. The next room was the “*salotto di sopra*” (19). Usually the specification “*di sopra*” signifies that a room was on the *secondo piano*; but that

seems not to be the case here, as it would mean that the people making the inventory went upstairs and then immediately down again, which is less likely than the possibility of an oversight by the scribe. Indeed, because the “*salotto di sopra*” apparently served as the main area where the family ate, it must have been on the *primo piano*. It had several large tables, and in its *magazzino* (20) were items relating to food and eating – thence the suggestion that the dishes and linens in the “*chamera de l’androne di sopra*” (11) were used both in the *sala* (21) and here. As in the “*chamera terrena dell’arme*” (7), the *salotto* also contained items associated with religious devotion, including a “*pine table 3 braccia long on trestles for use as an altar*”.⁵⁹

The suite of the elder Giovanni, listed next in the inventory, was above the ground-floor suite in the northern part of the building, starting with the “*sala grande chon panche e spalliere intorno*” (21), the very large room on the facade in the customary position near the top of the stairs. The contents of the *sala* were remarkably sparse, with the usual fireplace and *acquaio*, but just a few eating utensils and only small tables (“*deschetti*”). Next to it was the “*chamera di Giovanni vecchi[o]*”⁶⁰ in su la *sala*” (22). The first item listed, “*una Vergine Maria di marmo dipinta in uno tabernacolo*”, may correspond to a work by Antonio Rossellino that Vasari wrote was “*in casa de’ Tornabuoni*”, though the reference could be to a house of one of Giovanni’s relatives.⁶¹ Four more works of art are listed, followed by the bed with bedding, and other big furniture, which included two *cassoni* with the arms of the Tornabuoni and the Pitti. More figurative art was in the next room on the facade, the “*antichamera di detta chamera*” (23).

This room and the “*chamera di detta antichamera*” (24) both had beds 4½ braccia wide, but the *chamera* had no *lettuccio*. The *chamera* and the “*schrittoio*” (25) cannot be located precisely on the plans. Perhaps the *antichamera*, *chamera* and *schrittoio*, all small rooms, were lined up west to east; alternatively, the last room may have been north of the main stairs. Among the few items listed here was “*una chassettina d’arcipresso che v’è dentro più medaglie chon teste di rilievo*”.⁶² Also on the *primo piano* probably was the “*audienza dello spenditore*” (26), a type of room not found in other fifteenth-century palaces and surprising for this floor. Despite its name the contents related mainly to cooking and eating, so it may have functioned as an adjunct to the main *sala* and to the *salotto*, and perhaps it was the big room north of the court. The three small spaces to the north of this, not treated in the inventory, may or may not have existed at the time.

The next item in the inventory, the “*schrittoio in chapo alla schala*”, indicates that the makers of the inventory had moved up the palace’s stairs, to a *schrittoio* at the top of the first ramp.⁶³ Then, on the *secondo piano*, is listed the kitchen, far not only from the *sala* on the ground floor and *piano nobile*, but also from the *salotto*, the garden and the court *loggia*, all places where food was consumed, especially during festivities; one can understand why a new kitchen would have been fashioned downstairs in the sixteenth century. Other service rooms on this floor were those for the female servants, for making bread, and for the schoolmaster. No information is given to help determine the locations, though I would imagine that the service rooms were towards the north, near the alley. The “*sala grande*” on this

cornicioni, [cancelled tonidi] e un tondo di Nostra Donna nella chamera principale dorato [cancelled con bellis . . .], charte ove[ro] tele di provincie dipinte et ogni altra pictura existenia in dicta casa grande” (ASF, Not. antecos., I6323, Niccolò Parenti, fol. 222r–v).

⁵⁵ This interpretation is at variance with that of Kress (note 33), pp. 251f., who suggested that at first Giovanni occupied the southern apartment, and that he moved out only upon his son’s marriage.

⁵⁶ See no. 58/95 in the set of drawings in the ASCFi (note 12).

⁵⁷ See Brenda Preyer, “The Florentine *casa*”, in: *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, exh. cat., ed. by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim/Flora Dennis, London 2006, pp. 34–49: 36f. for the *saletta* or *salotto*; for the example at the Gianfigliuzzi Palace, see *cadem* 2004 (note 51), p. 80 and fig. 14, and the documents on deposit in the library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (call number L I030 vg).

⁵⁸ ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4378, fol. 40r, 42r, 33r, 36v.

⁵⁹ “un descho di pino di braccia 3 con trespoli per uso d’altare” (ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 149r). Philip Mattox discusses the religious items briefly in “Domestic Sacral Space in the Florentine Renaissance Palace”, in: *Renaissance Studies*, XX (2005), pp. 658–673: 669, although I would give less emphasis than does he to the religious character of this room.

⁶⁰ Written “vecchia” in the manuscript.

⁶¹ Vasari (note 5), p. 392.

⁶² ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 149v. For

some of the medals, see the contributions by DePrano 2008 and 2010 (note 33).

⁶³ The situation as described in 1824 may not have changed much since the fifteenth century: “Secondo piano. Due altre branche della scala principale che vi ascendono sono intermedie da un ripiano, dal quale si ha l’accesso ad una stanza ad uso d’archivio” (ASF, Deputazione sopra il Catasto, vol. 12484 [numero provvisorio] [Tavole di stima dei fabbricati di Firenze], particelle 3613, 3614, 3630. “Numero comunale 961. Possessore: Corsi,

floor again was in the center towards the facade,⁶⁴ while the “chamera in su detta sala” and “antichamera di detta chamera” could have been above either Giovanni’s or Lorenzo’s suites; this *anticamera* held items – jousting paraphernalia and also fifty books in Greek and Latin – that are best associated with Lorenzo, and the quantity also suggests that it was above his larger *anticamera* on the facade. Not appearing in the inventory are the other rooms towards the facade shown on the nineteenth-century plan of the second floor.⁶⁵

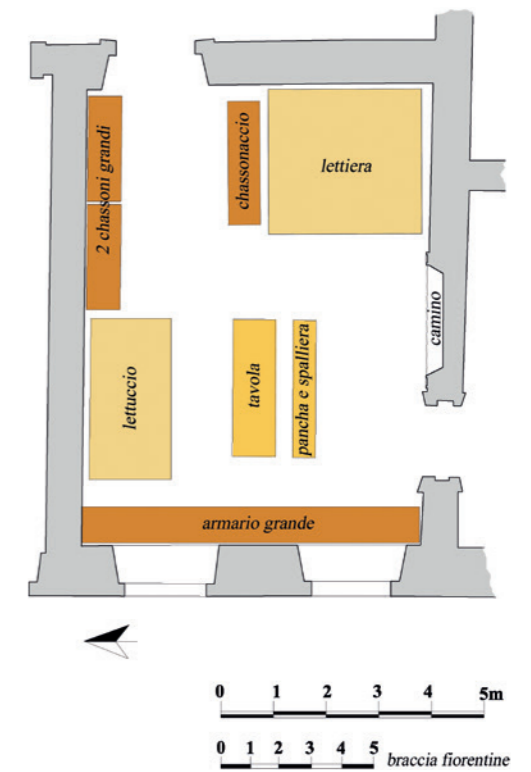
In the interest of giving a better sense of the functioning of the spaces, some remarks about the suites are in order, and they will bring to the fore also the question of changes in the use of rooms through two generations. The palace as it was built between 1466 and 1469 was designed for a family consisting of different components from those who lived in it in 1497. Giovanni Tornabuoni married Francesca Pitti in 1467. In 1468 Lorenzo was born, in 1476 his sister Lodovica; Francesca died in 1477 and Giovanni remained a widower. In 1486 Lorenzo married Giovanna degli Albizzi; she died two years later after bearing Giovannino in 1487, and in 1491 Lorenzo married Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi, with whom he had three children. Giovanni’s living quarters from the beginning would have been located on both floors towards the north: the “chamera dell’arme” on the ground floor was his, and on the *primo piano* the inventory associates him with the *camera* of the main apartment consisting of *sala*, *camera*, *anticamera* and *scrittoio*. The wing to the south, next to the other side of the *sala*, consisted of a second large *camera* and – exceptionally – two *anticamere*, with a mezzanine above the one at the back, in addition to the “chamera

de l’androne di sopra”. After 1477 and before Lorenzo’s death, it comprised two more rooms situated in House B, again with a mezzanine above the one at the back, resulting in a suite unlike any other that I know in other Florentine palaces. There is a slight possibility that the whole area was designed to accommodate Francesca Pitti; as a matter of fact, beginning in the 1460s some palaces in the city, for example those of the Gianfigliuzzi and of Jacopo Pazzi, were built with a separate room that I have concluded was for the wife of the owner.⁶⁶ Like the *camera principale* it was large and adjacent to the *sala*. The many extra rooms at Palazzo Tornabuoni present problems for the suggestion that the suite was for Giovanni’s wife. Nevertheless, if perchance it was, maybe when Francesca died nine-year old Lorenzo moved into his mother’s quarters. Alternatively, he took over the suite when he married in 1486. Before that date another interpretation is possible. Lorenzo’s *camera* (I2) was above the “chamera terrena in su l’androne” (I0), the ‘guest room’ downstairs, and given the fact that this palace more often than other private houses in Florence lodged foreign visitors, perhaps this entire side of the building was destined initially for such a purpose.⁶⁷ Patricia Simons gives a list of most of these guests, starting in 1478, but there seem to be no indications about where inside they and their retinues were installed,⁶⁸ and little evidence can be marshalled for a coherent hypothesis about whether the palace’s layout was affected by the fact that many visitors to the city stayed here. This is a question that will bear further study.

As for the situation after Lorenzo’s marriage, the question arises again about whether his wife had her

own room. Susanne Kress has suggested that the inventory of 1498 indicates that Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi occupied the main *anticamera* (I6) of Lorenzo’s suite, which contained items “da donna”.⁶⁹ If the assumption is correct that the doorways existing in the nineteenth century (as shown in Figure 9) were the same as those in the fifteenth century, the “chamera de l’androne di sopra” (I1) gave direct entry to the two *anticamere* (I3–I6), without the need to pass first through Lorenzo’s *camera* (I2), and one or both rooms may have been the residence first of Giovanna and then of Ginevra. The inventory tells us that the portrait of Giovanna degli Albizzi by Ghirlandaio was in the “chamera del palcho d’oro”; probably painted posthumously, had it been placed there as a memorial to Giovanna’s presence in the room? And if Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi later inhabited this room, as well as room I6, there would be a certain logic to the presence in the inventory of items “da fanciulli” in the “chamera de l’arcipresso” above.

How can knowing something about the interior of the palace be put to use by scholars interested primarily in the objects contained within? Certainly the character of the individual ambient – everything from its size to its spatial relationship to other rooms – would have importance for the visual impact of the artworks. For instance, the dimensions of Lorenzo’s *camera* (I2), about 6.6 meters by 9.2 meters, with a wood ceiling 7 meters high, were within the normal range for rooms of the type in this period, but entry to it was more complex than usual. As was customary one could enter from the *sala principale*, but also one could bypass the *sala*, going through the “chamera de l’androne di sopra”; a further opening existed from the *anticamera* (I6) on the facade. Knowing the location of the window and having a sense for the locations of the doors in this “chamera bella”, we can wonder in a manner more specific than was possible before about the placement of the furniture with



11 Mock-up showing the large furniture in Palazzo Tornabuoni’s “chamera terrena in su l’androne” (Fig. 5, no. 10) in 1498 (drawing by Caterina D’Amelio)

regard to the works of art, although obviously no certainty is possible. And we can think about the quality of the light, which came in from the west, through one large window the base of which was 1.8 m from floor. Finally, as is clear from the short discussion above, I think that changes in the use of rooms could have an effect on the objects contained within.

For one room in the palace, the “chamera terrena in su l’androne” (I0) on the ground floor, the inventory has measurements for almost all the furniture, and a mock-up of these big pieces within the space gives a sense for the density of such rooms (Fig. 11).⁷⁰

Francesco Antonio d’Amerigo”. I am most grateful to Francesco Martelli of the ASF for facilitating consultation of this volume containing descriptions of property in preparation for the new Catasto Generale Toscano.)

⁶⁴ See for the plan of the *secondo piano* no. 61/95 in the set of drawings in the ASCFi (note I2).

⁶⁵ Cfr. *ibidem*.

⁶⁶ See Preyer (note 51), pp. 80f. and *eadem* (note 42), pp. 10f. An initial exploration of the question is in my article: “The ‘Wife’s Room’ in Florentine Palaces of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries”, in: *Patronage, Gender and the*

Arts in Early Modern Italy: Essays in Honor of Carolyn Valone, ed. by Katherine A. McIver/Cynthia Stollhans (in press).

⁶⁷ In 1495 the inventory of the house of Amerigo di Simone Carneseccchi listed on the *primo piano* a “camera de’ forestieri in su l’la sala”; the room seems to have been on the other side of the *sala* from the *camera principale*, the same location as Lorenzo’s “chamera bella” (ASF, Not. antecos. 9644, Giovanni di Marco da Romena, fol. 217r–230r: 225r, a reference for which I thank Alison Brown).

⁶⁸ Simons (note 1), II, p. 116, note 182; pp. 131f., note 47.

⁶⁹ Kress (note 33), p. 263; ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 148v.

⁷⁰ Here follows an abbreviated list of the room’s contents, with the furni-

ture included in the mock-up printed in bold type: “Una Vergine Maria di gesso dorata in uno tabernacolo, 3 telai con più figure fiandresche di tela lina, uno quadretto d’una testa e busto di monna Luchrezia de’ Medici, una

Fundamental for the reconstruction is the “armario grande”, apparently included in the sale of furnishings to the Ridolfi in 1542. While its length is not given in the inventory, in 1551, when the Ridolfi were restoring it, it was said to measure 11½ braccia or 6.7 m, very close to the width of the room, and I suggest that it was placed against the facade wall under the high window.⁷¹ The mock-up then shows a possible arrangement for the other large furniture. While we have no evidence for the details, the overall impression is of a crowded space, just as is revealed by mock-ups of the *camera principale* in the Medici Palace and the one in the Gianfigliuzzi Palace.⁷²

The striking similarities to the Medici Palace and phrases in some of the documents suggest that Giovanni Tornabuoni anticipated expanding the palace into the houses that he bought in 1477 and 1483 (Houses B, C, D, E), but that for some reason he

abandoned the project, leaving the palace ‘in progress’. This question and that of the housing of guests at the palace both deserve further discussion. But these are issues peripheral to the main points of this article, clarification of the genesis of Palazzo Tornabuoni, and explanation of the arrangement of the palace’s interior. With the layout established and the rooms that are named in the inventory now identified on the plans, a next step would be for historians interested in the art made for the Tornabuoni to work anew with the objects within this context.

I am grateful to Linda Pellecchia, whose careful reading of an earlier version of this article led to its restructuring. Caroline Elam also made many useful suggestions. Essential assistance came from Caterina D’Amelio for drawing the plans reconstructing the palace and from Gabriella Battista for collaboration in transcription of the documents. The personnel of the store Max Mara were gracious and courteous during my many visits to their spaces.

targietta dorata cho’ l’arme di chasa, uno schudo da giostra, uno diamante di giesso con figura, uno cimiere da elmetto chon melagrane d’orpello, una spera in uno diemante, una **lettiera** choperta di nocie e tarsia di braccia 5 e channaio e trespolo, panchette basse intorno, [*bedding*], una **chuccietta** di braccia 4 in circa, [*bedding*], uno **chassonnaccio** vecchio a l’antica di braccia 4, uno tappeto vecchio di braccia 4½ in circa, uno **lettuccio** e chappellinaio choperto di nocie a chassa di braccia 5, [*bedding*], 2 **chassoni grandi** a sepoltura choperti di nocie di braccia 3½ l’uno, uno **armario grande** choperto di nocie a 2 serrami, una **tavola** di nocie di braccia 4½ con trespoli e lavori a tarsia, una **pancha e spalliera** di nocie di braccia 4½ chon tarsia, 2 segiole di legnio, 2 deschetti choperti di quoio, [*fireplace tools*], 2 spade chon pomi lavorati d’argiento in ghuaie, uno brocchiere soppannato di veluto brochato rosso, una meza testa forte e 2 ghuanti di maglia, [*cloth items, small objects*], una viuola con l’archetto, 2 zufoli e uno schacchiere, uno chorno d’osso con

lavori, una finestra impannata, [*more armor*]” (ASF, Magistrato dei pupilli avanti il principato, 181, fol. 147v). As is evident, there is no space for the “chuccietta” on this plan, and I can only assume that it somehow was stored under the bed.

⁷¹ Payment was made, not for fabrication, but for “inpialac[i]atura di 4 armari in una fila di braccia 11½ inpialic[i]ati di noce per la camera terena di verso e’ Tornaquinci” (ASF, Libri di commercio e di famiglia, 4358, fol. 205 left).

⁷² The mock-ups, made from published plans and transcriptions from the inventories, have not been published. For the plans and inventories see *Il Palazzo Medici Riccardi* (note 32), p. 127, fig. 137; Marco Spallanzani/Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, *Libro d’inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Florence 1992, pp. 26–33; Preyer (note 51), fig. 14 and Doc. 19 in the packet on deposit in the library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut (see note 57).

Appendix

1465, 1 July. Approval of the sale by the Ufficiali della Torre to Giovanni Tornabuoni of 600 square braccia of land (ASF, Signori e Collegi, Deliberazioni in forza di ordinaria autorità, 88, fols. 3r–v).

[*In left margin: approbatio*]

Antedicti domini priores et vexillifer iustitie una cum eorum collegis adunati ubi supra obtempo partito inter eos per 28 fabas nigras et servatis servandis approbaverunt et confirmaverunt in omnibus et per omnia venditionem factam die primo presentis mensis Julii per Offitiales Turris Comunis Florentie Iohanni Francisci domini Simonis Tornabuoni civi florentino de quodam terreno posito in populo Sancti Michaelis Berteldi de Florentia retro domum de’ Tornabuoni, el quale terreno è confinato: in prima si metta una corda che muova dal canto ch’è dalla casa sua inverso la loggia e vada adirectura insino al canto d’una casa ch’è oggi di monna Maddalena, dona fu di Chiricho di Pero Tornaquinci; e al lato a decta casa di monna Maddalena confina Bartholomeo di Piero fabro. E per quanto [è] decta corda decto Giovanni possa fare uno muro, el quale muro confina con la piazza ch’è dove finisce la fornacie. E di poi metta un’altra corda al muro della casa de’ Tornabuoni che confina con Piero Giachomini, che sarà lunga braccia 22½ [= 22½] giù [*sic*] circa a squadra e vada a trovare la divisa d’una casetta ch’è di decto Giovanni che con questa confina Giovanni di sere Tomè. E tucto questo terreno misurato è di lungheza braccia 16 e in tucto decto terreno è braccia 600 in circa, per pretio fiorini 20 di sigillo, dichiarando che decto Giovanni Tornabuoni abbi a aprire una entrata e uscita che per anticho andava in sulla via che va dalla loggia de’ Tornaquinci alla piazza di Santo Michele, che tale entrata tucti e’ parziali di decta piazza possino entrare e uscire liberamente. E questo si faccia per cambio d’una porta che vi s’usciva prima inverso le corti di Pero, cum promissionibus et aliis consuetis de qua venditione constat manu ser Angeli Cinozii notarii dicte Turris.⁷³

Abbreviations

ASCFi	Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
Not. antecos.	Notarile antecosimiano

⁷³ The act is not in the surviving books of the notary.

Abstract

The Tornabuoni Palace, built in the 1460s by Giovanni Tornabuoni, a brother-in-law of Piero de’ Medici, is familiar to many because of the reference to it by Vasari and because an inventory made in 1498 lists many works of art, including two well-known paintings by Ghirlandaio; several extant *spalliera* paintings are thought also to have been in the palace. However, nothing but the courtyard and one room remain today of the original building, and thus scholars have known very little about its configuration and layout. Just before the remodeling of 1864, detailed survey drawings were made, and in the article they are used, in conjunction with study of the components of the site and consultation of the inventory, to reconstruct the plans of the ground floor and *primo piano* in the fifteenth century. The surprising results show a palace ‘in progress’: the palace as reconstructed already had significant similarities to the Medici Palace, and Giovanni Tornabuoni owned almost all the surrounding property necessary to expand it, but he did not pursue the project. In the article the spaces listed in the inventory are identified on the plans, and comments are made about the functions of the various rooms. While for the most part the interior follows common practice in Florence, some unusual aspects of the upstairs living quarters perhaps can be linked to the fact that in the palace many important visitors to Florence were housed at the expense of the commune.

Photo Credits

Su concessione dell’Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze: Figs. 1, 3, 4, 6. – Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max-Planck-Institut: Fig. 2. – Caterina D’Amelio: Figs. 5, 9, 11. – Amanda Lillie: Figs. 7, 10. – Author: Fig. 8.