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Hidden Padova

Analysis of Locative Digital Media
and a Proposal for an Application

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Try out the free app made as part of this thesis: *Hidden Padova*.

Just point your phone at the QR code and follow the instructions.

This is a 'private' app – so you can't find it on the AppStore or Google Play.

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1. Introduction

The *Hidden Cities*' experiences are based on the use of digital technologies, such as Global Positioning System (GPS) and Augmented Reality (AR), to explore the urban settings of some European cities. Developed as part of this project, the itinerary proposed in the second chapter of this essay is set in the late-medieval era of the city of Padua, which at the time was governed by the da Carrara family. In *Hidden Padova*, users are brought to nine different locations. There, a virtual guide, Fina Buzzaccarini, narrates the story of the family of the *Signore* of the city, to whom she was married. The places explored by the tour titled 'The Ruling Family' are very different from one another. They include a church, a tower, a stone plate engraved on a wall, and the remains of the lords' palace, amongst others. The aspect shared by almost all these buildings is that people usually overlook them today. They are not commonly known and, most importantly, their interpretation has deeply changed since the 14th century. One of this project's aims is to call attention to some of the almost-forgotten material evidence of the past and provide it with a more accurate historical explanation. An interesting aspect of the project is that the guide is not a current-day professional, but a virtual person who lived in the era when the story is set. Thanks to this expedient, it should be easier for people to perceive the different meanings that spaces and objects acquire depending on who experiences them. Moreover, the app's purpose is to promote the enlargement of what is recognized as a heritage site.

Underlying this experience are the two concepts of 'Public and Digital History' and 'Spatial and Mobility Turn'. In the first two sections of the first chapter, an insight into these practices will be made to point out some of the main changes that characterized the study of history in the last fifty years. In particular, these innovative methodologies will be connected to the advancement of location-based and AR tools as these are the two main technologies used in the process of 'placemaking' carried out by the *Hidden Cities* apps. This specific

project will be addressed in the final part of the first chapter. Its evolution and key features will be illustrated to allow a complete understanding of the itinerary proposed in the following pages. Moreover, in the third chapter of the paper, a critical analysis of *Hidden Cities* will be carried out to highlight its best aspects and to suggest some improvements that could make these apps even more accessible and immersive.

Eventually, a deeper awareness of the new practices that, in recent years, have characterized the humanities should be achieved. Furthermore, the *Hidden Cities* project and its possible application in Padua should be understood together with its various benefits, as well as its weaknesses. Overall, this essay aims to determine whether site-specific storytelling enabled by digital technologies has an impact on the discovery of the past, and on widening the knowledge of history.

2. Location-based Technologies Employed in History

The term 'Public and Digital History' refers to a wide range of activities that encourage practitioners to find new ways to make history more accessible and relevant to a wider public¹. Using both primary sources and people's accounts, this methodology manages to reach a more profound knowledge of the past and discover new ways to direct important current-day questions². It is even thanks to the implementation of these practices that in the last decades, some scholars gave a closer look at the public realm and started to realize that space should not be seen as mere geographic points³, but as something that both shapes and is shaped by the social activities that happen in it. Urban spaces are now being examined and communicated through different digital tools, like location-based technologies. Thus, the past communities that inhabited those places can be better understood. The topics of 'Public and Digital History' and 'Spatial and Mobility Turn' will be addressed in the first two sections of this chapter to allow readers to better perceive what these concepts are and how they changed the way history is studied. In the last section, an example of a locative media device, *Hidden Cities*, will be analyzed to put into practice the principles explained before. This provides a common background for readers to understand the *Hidden Padova* app, which will be described in the following chapter.

¹ Sayer, F. *Public History. A Practical Guide*, p. 3

² Rosenzweig, R., *Everyone a Historian*, p. 178

³ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p.14

2.1. Public and Digital History

The practice of Public History can be considered a new subject (at least) in Continental Europe. Thus, this term and everything it implies remains unfamiliar to the wider public⁴. Indeed, this is a slippery concept, an unconventional methodology that does not have a unique way to be defined⁵. Intrinsically connected to it is the topic of Digital History. Broadly, this field includes all the methods that operate with «new communication technologies of the computer, the internet network, and software systems»⁶. However, this definition does not comply with all the aspects of this discipline. In this section, there will be an attempt at explaining what is meant by 'Public and Digital History'. Going through the milestones of this field's evolution, and analyzing some of its approaches should result in a better understanding of this rather new study. Its effects and goals will be mentioned on the following pages, however, this essay will not seek to arrive at a new fixed definition of 'Public and Digital History'. The study paths and methods that can be called by this name are many and deeply varied⁷. Thus, its practitioners have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to provide a «one-size-fits-all definition»⁸ of this field. Not only is this unthinkable, it is also unnecessary as the boundaries are flexible and always changing⁹. A rigid definition of 'Public and Digital History' would therefore, need continuous readjusting to respect new approaches and results. For what concerns this essay, it is believed that a precise and hopefully inclusive explanation of the topics and methods of this field is sufficient for readers to understand the core of this practice. To fulfill this aim, the initial focus will be on the Public History methodology, and only later will the concept of Digital History be considered. In a way, Public History

⁴ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices: Promises and Challenges of Public History*, p. 14

⁵ Liddington, J., *What is Public History? Publics and Their Pats, Meanings and Practices*, p. 84

⁶ Seedeldt, D., Thomas, W.G., *What is Digital History?* <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/may-2009/what-is-digital-history>

⁷ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 3

⁸ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 20

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_history

could be regarded as a necessary precondition to the advancement of Digital History. That is why, this order is deemed to be the most useful one in this analysis.

During the late 19th century and for the first half of the following one, History had become a professional discipline. It was circumscribed in the academic world, it preferred scientific communication media, and it had a specific and limited audience¹⁰. Once institutionalized, the social value of History was deeply limited¹¹. It would not, and could not connect with the broad public anymore. This trend started to shift during the 1970s as a result of some political, economic, social, and historiographical changes in North America¹². In particular, Public History lays its foundation in the employment crisis caused by the economic depression that occurred in those years¹³. When they started working also outside the academic world, historians began to reconsider the public sphere and became part of the public process again¹⁴. Eventually, Public History programs were implemented in some universities in Canada and the United States¹⁵. From this point onward, some historians have embraced the practices and methodologies sponsored by this movement. At first, these changes happened mainly in the Anglosphere¹⁶, but from the new millennium, they pragmatically developed in Europe as well¹⁷.

¹⁰ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 29

¹¹ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p.9

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_history

¹³ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 30

¹⁴ Liddington, J., *What is Public History?*, p. 85

¹⁵ <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>

¹⁶ The term 'Anglosphere' refers to those nations that have close political, diplomatic, and military cooperation. This group of countries, at which core are the United Kingdom, America, Australia, and New Zealand, shares close cultural and diplomatic links.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglosphere>

¹⁷ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 31

History had become an elitist environment, and some of its practitioners¹⁸ started a process to make it «less of a top-down enterprise» and to «transform history-making into a more democratic activity»¹⁹. Since the 1970s, amateurs and professional historians started cooperating, sharing experiences, and learning from each other. By embracing public-engaged practices, the study of history became less authoritarian and more open to different thematics. Taking inspiration from society and its battles, History began to represent all different classes, races, and genders²⁰. This collaboration and inclusion provided a «new two-way dialogue»²¹. On the one side, cooperation enabled History practitioners to gain more trust from the audience and, on the other side, it assured the public of an active role in this field. With their personal stories, people could provide better balance to the discipline and wider comprehension of the past.

It is inaccurate to think that Public History practices are based on people's memories of the past. As historian Thomas Cauvin showed in his *His(tree)* metaphor (fig. 1), primary sources are at the basis of these practices. In particular, the creation and preservation of sources, and their analysis and interpretation are compared to the roots and trunk of a tree. Without these preliminary steps, one could not communicate and use the results of his studies. At the same time, historical research is an essential part of the History process, but it should not be considered its final stage. Public inclusion is just as important as academic investigation to obtain authentic and comprehensive works²². Going beyond the single-person interpretation of the documents, grants History with more authenticity. This is a very subjective concept, as people have different criteria with which they define something as 'authentic';

¹⁸ In the essay *New Field, Old Practices* (p. 28), Cauvin explains that the term 'practitioners' is preferred to describe who participates in the Public and Digital History movement because not everyone is a historian. This term allows no one to be excluded.

¹⁹ Rosenzweig, R., *Everyone a Historian*, p. 181

²⁰ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 30

²¹ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 11

²² Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 36

nevertheless, historical narrations that incorporate personal accounts are more willingly accepted by the public than those detached from real-life events. Generally, a representation of the past that includes intangible elements of «nostalgia, [and] emotivism»²³ is perceived to be authentic by the broad public. Accepting non-academic people’s memories and interpretations means entering the field of ‘shared authority’. Michael Frish asserts that only the inclusion and valorization of the audiences’ points of view can demolish the boundaries of intellectual control and redefine the parameters of historical accuracy²⁴. The fact that the audience is allowed to bring cultural and lived anecdotes to the dialogue of Public History ensures achieving a more extended knowledge of the past and, more importantly, connecting it to the present²⁵.

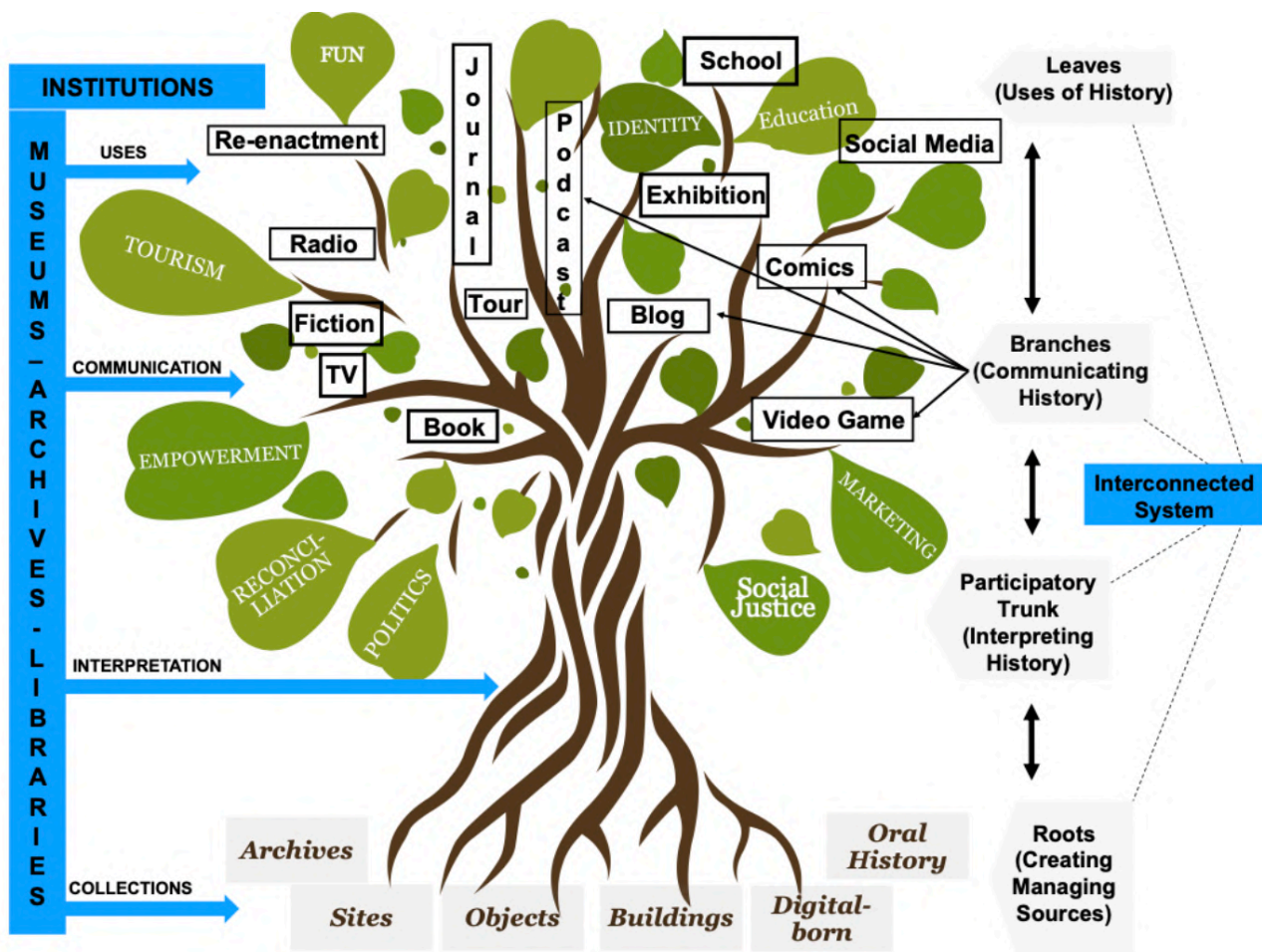


Fig.1 Public History Tree of Knowledge, Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p.23

²³ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 14

²⁴ Rosenzweig, R., *Everyone a Historian*, p. 181

²⁵ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 3

Looking again at Cauvin's *Tree of Knowledge* (fig. 1), it is clear that the phases of 'Communicating History' and of the 'Uses of History', which are respectively compared to the branches and leaves of a tree, are two of the most essential steps of the history-making process. Indeed, practitioners need to be aware that the ways and means that they use to share their considerations have an impact on society²⁶. With the rising of popular media, it has become increasingly easier to engage wider audiences in historical storytelling²⁷. In the previous pages, it has been acknowledged that Public History aims at democratizing the production of knowledge. Choosing new digital technologies enables practitioners to get closer to this goal²⁸. Digital History can, therefore, be defined as an approach that uses «digital media to further historical analysis, presentation, and research»²⁹. Not only did digital technologies widen the dissemination and interaction with others, but they also «expanded the range of sources [..], improved the ability to retrieve the sources [..], broaden imagination [..] and enlarged the spectrum of the uses»³⁰ of historical research. When the first computers were produced and reached the humanistic world, Digital History focused mainly on quantitative analysis. Little by little, inspired by social changes and new technological possibilities, cultural and qualitative studies started to be taken into consideration and, eventually, they became the main focus of this branch of History³¹. Technologies are always becoming more important in the work of public humanists, as they enable the creation of new spaces where knowledge can be shared not only within the academic field but with unusual and varied audiences³². As William Thomas states «Digital History should build environments that pull readers in»³³. In

²⁶ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 27

²⁷ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 9

²⁸ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 26

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_history

³⁰ Cohen, D., et al, *The Promise of Digital History*, p. 483

³¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_history

³² <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>

³³ Cohen, D., et al, *The Promise of Digital History*, p. 454

fact, by using digital media, different sensorial atmospheres can be created. These «multi-sensory public engaging activities»³⁴ have the power to facilitate emotional reactions, which is usually the key to reaching a wider range of people and having a deeper impact on them.

In conclusion, the Public History discipline implemented with the use of digital technologies, enables practitioners «to make the past more richly documented, more accessible, more diverse, more responsive to future researchers, and above all more democratic»³⁵. One way to reach this goal is to focus on location-aware media and virtual or augmented reality. Interestingly, while creating and exploring an immersive environment, people gain an «immediate, intuitive feel»³⁶ of the realm it represents. This power enables users to increase their awareness of the world and enrich their understanding of the past. In the next section of this chapter, the focus of attention will be on these spatial practices, which will be contextualized in the movement that scholars call the 'Spatial Turn'.

2.2. The 'Spatial Turn' and its Effects

In History, it has always been clear that space had to be taken into consideration to explain some phenomena and events. Therefore in this discipline, places have always been contemplated as more than simple locations³⁷. Yet, spaces and especially the public realm have hardly ever been the focus of attention of historians³⁸. Only since the 1980s, have historical geographers begun to observe that there is, in fact, a deep connection between a space and the identity of the people who inhabit it. Eventually, it

³⁴ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 5

³⁵ Cohen, D.J., Rosenzweig, R., *Digital History. A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and presenting the Past on the Web* <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/finalthoughts/index.html>

³⁶ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 24

³⁷ Whithers, C.W.J., *Place and the 'Spatial Turn' in Geography and in History*, p. 640

³⁸ Nevola, F., *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*, p. 7

became clear that «place and meaning»³⁹ share a thick bond. Therefore, some historians started to promote the study of the public arena and the social activities that happen in it. This resulted in what has been defined as a 'Spatial Turn'. This intellectual movement «places emphasis on place and space in social science and the humanities»⁴⁰ and tries to explain how and why some particular cultures and traditions evolved in some specific places. As a consequence of this analysis, another shift occurred in the humanities field. The 'Mobility Turn' is a rather new paradigm that explores «the movement of people, ideas and things»⁴¹ in relation to concepts such as power, identity, and everyday social interactions. The exploration of space and movement has been deepened with the rise of location-aware tools and virtual and augmented reality technologies. In the following pages, the 'Spatial and Mobility Turn' will be explained through the analysis of the works of some esteemed theorists, such as Lefebvre, and de Certeau. These studies' evolution will then be put in connection with the progress of multimedia devices and the concept of digital 'placemaking' will be discussed. By the end of this section, a deeper and wider understanding of the background that lies behind the development of the *Hidden Cities* project will be achieved. Only then, this app will be investigated and presented to the readers.

As David Bodenhamer said, «space is everywhere» and «we are inherently spatial beings»⁴². From this awareness, a renewed interest in space and its material constitution arose⁴³, and a 'Spatial Turn' started to develop in the humanities. The overlap of culture, power, and space has been analyzed and mapped through many different approaches⁴⁴. Thanks to these various practices and inquiries, space is now being understood in a more varied and

³⁹ Whitters, C.W.J., *Place and the 'Spatial Turn'*, p. 641

⁴⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spatial_turn

⁴¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobilities>

⁴² Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 14

⁴³ Whitters, C.W.J., *Place and the 'Spatial Turn'*, p. 644

⁴⁴ Presner, T., et al., *Hypercities. Thick Mapping in the Digital Humanities*, p. 53

expanded way⁴⁵. Some historians realized that «the historical and its consequences» or, in other words, the past and present events that occur in a place, «become inscribed»⁴⁶ in it. For this reason, John Agnew suggested that space should not be perceived merely as a 'location', but also as a 'locale', meaning the scenario where people interact with each other. Subsequently to this way of experiencing space, its inhabitants develop a 'sense of place'. They have an «affective attachment»⁴⁷ to it. In fact, it has been proven that social activities are shaped by the public realm, especially by the morphology of streets and squares⁴⁸. Analyzing the spaces lived by a group of people provides humanists with the possibility to better perceive how the community orders its world and its everyday life⁴⁹. It is possible to conclude that, between space and humans, there is a mutual exchange. Public spaces are «the primary arena for social encounters and transactions» and because of them, «interpersonal, political, devotional, commercial and everyday interactions»⁵⁰ are structured in a certain way. At the same time though, it is the «interaction of ordinary people»⁵¹ that produces and continuously shapes spaces. Indeed, as the Danish architect Jan Gehl asserted, there was «first life, then spaces, then buildings»⁵². This means that for places to become something else than simple locations, people need to live in them. To attach meaning to a location, a series of fundamental everyday actions need to happen in it.

Walking is one of the most elementary and universal human activities⁵³, yet it has the power to make all of the different possible events that could happen in

⁴⁵ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 15

⁴⁶ Lefebvre, H., 'Plan of the Present Work' from *The Production of Space* (1991), p. 261

⁴⁷ Whitters, C.W.J., *Place and the 'Spatial Turn'*, p. 639

⁴⁸ De Vivo, F., *Walking in 16th-Century Venice: Mobilizing the Early-Modern City*, p. 116

⁴⁹ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 14

⁵⁰ Nevola, F., *Street Life*, p. 7

⁵¹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities. Urban Space, Geolocated Apps and Public History in Early Modern Europe*, p. 25

⁵² Nevola, F., *Street Life*, p. 8

⁵³ De Vivo, F., *Walking in 16th-Century Venice*, p. 115

a place exist. While wandering through a city, a person can not only actualize the purposes of a given place but also invent some more⁵⁴. Together with public space, movement through it also became essential in the humanities. Walking is an «unconscious act», but at the same time it «has meanings and functions that change across space and time»⁵⁵. That being so, to fully understand everyday life, historians had to start to consider this action and all its connotations. Michel de Certeau was one of the initiators of the 'Mobility Turn'⁵⁶, a term that derives from the above-explained 'Spatial Turn'. He compared the act of walking to the act of speaking, and concluded that «walking is a space of enunciation»⁵⁷. In his opinion, walking through the urban system has three fundamental functions: «it is a process of *appropriation* of the topographical system [...]; it is a spatial acting-out of the place [...]; and it implies relations among differentiated positions»⁵⁸. It is by moving in it, that space gets «modified by class, capital, gender, and race»⁵⁹. Therefore, only after it has been walked through, a place secretes social relations that can «produce a sense of identity»⁶⁰.

As spaces absorb experiences and events, they become exceptional learning tools⁶¹ that cover an increasingly important role in the study of history and culture⁶². To facilitate this learning process, one of the possible approaches is to use multimedia tools. These technologies are becoming crucial in the history-making process as, when combined with primary source analysis, they have a solid potential to investigate and show all the different dynamics that

⁵⁴ De Certeau, M., *Walking in the City*, p. 98

⁵⁵ De Vivo, F., *Walking in 16th-Century Venice*, p. 115

⁵⁶ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City Using Mobile App Technologies*, p. 187

⁵⁷ De Certeau, M., *Walking in the City*, p. 97

⁵⁸ De Certeau, M., *Walking in the City*, pp. 97-98

⁵⁹ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 14

⁶⁰ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 25

⁶¹ De Vivo, F., *Walking in 16th-Century Venice*, p. 115

⁶² Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 16

happen within a space⁶³. With the term 'creative misuse', John Farman «means that one creatively uses a technology in a way in which it was never meant to be used»⁶⁴. He suggests that through this process historians and their public can gain a deeper sense of a place and the human condition in it. Until recently, digital tools were mainly used for functional purposes⁶⁵. However, at least since the 2010s people have realized that everything can be easily organized through databases, and that information of any kind can be displayed as a virtual model. This stimulates «new understandings and experiences»⁶⁶ through which the past, present, and maybe even future stories of the city are presented in a way that was not possible before.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) was invented in the 1960s. However, it took some decades for it to become a popular tool used in all computers. Through it, all different kinds of spaces can be visualized. Moreover, once connected with a GPS, or with similar locative software, the representations can be attached to their exact position in the world using the correct coordinates⁶⁷. In recent years, these spatial tools started to be the focus of interest of various disciplines as they became available to the wide public. The first GPS-enabled smartphone was released in 2008⁶⁸, and since then these location-aware mobile devices had a «profound impact in fostering the democratization of, and open access to, geolocation services and associated infrastructures»⁶⁹. Actually, GPS and GIS have transformed the concept of 'maps', making them deeply advanced tools⁷⁰. Allowing to layer different levels of space and time, these technologies have enabled scholars to

⁶³ Calabi, D., *The Role of Digital Visualization for the History of the City*, p. 13

⁶⁴ Farman, J., *Site-specificity, Pervasive Computing and the Reading Interface*, p. 4

⁶⁵ Presner, T., et al., *Hypercities*, p. 17

⁶⁶ Calabi, D., *The Role of Digital Visualization*, p. 14

⁶⁷ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, pp. 16-21

⁶⁸ Zeffiro, A., *A Location of One's Own: a Genealogy of Locative Media*, p. 249

⁶⁹ Wilken, R., *Locative Media. From specialized preoccupation to mainstream fascination*, p. 244

⁷⁰ Presner, T., et al., *Hypercities*, p. 16

arrive at what is called 'deep mapping'. This practice attempts to note and show the various events that took place in a specific location through «juxtapositions and interpretations of the historical and the contemporary»⁷¹. To increase the efficacy of these digital maps, scholars started to link information of various kinds to some specific locations⁷² so that people could discover them while walking through an area. Combining different tools such as GPS, with audio, video, and text media enables the initiation of a process of 'placemaking'⁷³ which aims at transforming a location into something else. Thanks to this approach, users can explore the built environment of a city through an augmented experience, where past and contemporary stories are bounded together and explored in real-life⁷⁴. When Karlis Kalnins used the term 'Locative-Media' for the first time in 2003, he recommended that these «methods should necessarily encourage a re-engagement with one's imagination and surrounding environment»⁷⁵. Today, these devices are used to create site-specific narrations that allow users to «visualize, interpret, and access geographic information»⁷⁶ in a unique way. When combining them with AR, users can explore a place and integrate the different versions of its history and culture into their experience, arriving therefore at more objective and global knowledge⁷⁷. Moreover, the discovery of the city becomes a participatory adventure, as it is the users, through their movements, that trigger the different media and start the narration of the space's story.

By creating an embodied and participatory learning process, 'placemaking' tools democratize and enlarge the knowledge of the past, which is Public and Digital History's main aim. Through these digital technologies, «unique

⁷¹ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 26

⁷² Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 3

⁷³ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking are Driving Innovation for Heritage Sites*, p. 6

⁷⁴ Szabo, V., *Guide Books and Mobile Applications. A New Mode of Communication*, p. 100

⁷⁵ Zeffiro, A., *A Location of One's Own*, p. 258

⁷⁶ Presner, T., et al., *Hypercities*, p. 16

⁷⁷ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 26

qualities of a particular location»⁷⁸ can be discovered. Moreover, the typical set of objects classified as 'cultural heritage' can be increased as atypical inscriptions, both durable and ephemeral, can be the perfect link to tell a story⁷⁹. One of the possible ways to create this kind of event is to build a location-based app. These kinds of applications can make history three-dimensional and immediate. They can provide a multi-layered, shareable experience, and diversify the audience⁸⁰. These are some of the goals of the *Hidden Cities* project, which «explores how mobile technologies can offer historians a tool and a methodology for researching and conveying urban experience as a dynamic relationship between people and identity»⁸¹. This project is the topic of the rest of this chapter.

2.3. *Hidden Cities*. A Case Study

The worldwide diffusion of smartphones makes these items perfect to be used to increment the research of different study fields. In Public and Digital History, mobile phones are used to investigate the nowadays hot-topics of space and movement⁸². Different apps are especially useful to promote public-engaged practices that aim at presenting history from a diverse point of view. *Hidden Cities* is an almost ten-year-old example of using a digital approach to discover urban cultural heritage. As this essay's main purpose is to suggest a possible scenario to be implemented in the city of Padua, it is believed that the *Hidden Padova* proposal can be advanced (in chapter 2) only after explaining the general project which lies behind it. Therefore in the last section of this chapter, *Hidden Cities* will be used as a 'case study' to get closer to the mobile practices adopted in the Public and Digital History movement. By examining a

⁷⁸ Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 3

⁷⁹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 22

⁸⁰ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 7

⁸¹ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 187

⁸² Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 5

real work, a better grasp of the core principles of this rather new methodology can be reached. The general scenario and ideas that led to the development of the *Hidden Cities* apps will be unfolded first. Afterwards, the key elements on which these applications are based will be revealed and discussed. Thus, even those who are not familiar with GPS and AR-enabled devices should fully understand how these work.

The *Hidden Cities* project has its foundations in two aspects. First, its creators were aware and supportive of the 'Spatial Turn' that is happening in the humanities. In complying with this innovative methodology, they aimed at shifting people's attention from the domestic sphere to the public one. In their project, the focus is on the «material culture of public spaces»⁸³, especially on those signs of the past that are still present in the urban fabric. The purpose is to interrogate, complicate and expand «what is regarded as heritage»⁸⁴.

The second important aspect behind the evolution of this work is the problem of over-tourism. The awareness that some cities were not built to host a high number of visitors led to the desire to create something that could disperse tourists throughout the urban centers⁸⁵. Involving digital technologies in destination management projects allows the development of a more «agile [and] smart»⁸⁶ tourist flow toward overfilled cities.

In July 2014, the *Hidden Florence* app was released. This Florentine project was initially created by art historians Fabrizio Nevola and David Rosenthal⁸⁷ in collaboration with Calvium Ltd developers. Their work was funded by the British *Arts and Humanities Research Council* and published by the University of Exeter⁸⁸, where Nevola is a professor and the director of the Centre for Early

⁸³ Nevola, F., *Street Life*, p. 8

⁸⁴ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 35

⁸⁵ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 377

⁸⁶ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 371

⁸⁷ <https://hiddenflorence.org/about/credits/>

⁸⁸ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 204

Modern Studies. Eventually, the project grew and more researchers took part in it. Moreover, in 2019 it was decided to go beyond the city of Florence, and five other *Hidden Cities* apps were released⁸⁹. This was made possible also because this work entered the three-year-long project, *PUBLIC RENAISSANCE: Urban Cultures of Public Space between Early Modern Europe and the Present* founded by the *Humanities in European Research Area* (HERA) network⁹⁰. This EU program aims at starting a democratic dialogue between the Renaissance past and the contemporary age of some European cities. It explores how the past is still inscribed in the material items and traditions of urban life⁹¹. During this second phase, the *Hidden Cities* team worked closely with local heritage centers and institutions⁹². Providing users with new stories about museum objects in the urban system creates «a 'museum without walls' through AR and locative media»⁹³. Thus, streets are the setting of these apps, as they are the main urban spaces «on which actions and behavior inscribe meanings that accumulate over time»⁹⁴. These daily 'actions and behavior' happening in the public realm constitute what is referred to as 'street life'⁹⁵. The *Hidden Cities* project engages users in an adventure to (re)discover the material culture of public spaces directing the attention toward the overlooked features of the streetscape, which are contextualized in a chosen historical moment⁹⁶. Therefore, the city's cultural heritage should regain importance, and space should be perceived as «an active, socially constructed participant in how and why things happen»⁹⁷.

⁸⁹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 377

⁹⁰ <https://hiddencities.eu/partnerships>

⁹¹ <https://heranet.info/projects/public-spaces-culture-and-integration-in-europe/public-renaissance-urban-cultures-of-public-space-between-early-modern-europe-and-the-present-pure/>

⁹² <https://hiddencities.eu/partnerships>

⁹³ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 8

⁹⁴ Nevola, F., *Street Life*, p. 15

⁹⁵ Nevola, F., *Street Life*, p. 12

⁹⁶ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 193

⁹⁷ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 196

Hidden Cities are smartphone apps «in which a 'contemporary' character invites the users to go with him [or her] on a walk around the city»⁹⁸. These applications display some research-led itineraries set in the early-modern period of six cities⁹⁹. As stated above, initially the project took place only in the city of Florence. At first, in the *Hidden Florence* app, there were only two tours given by Giovanni, a late-15th-century wool worker. Since 2019, four more itineraries told by different characters have been provided. In the same year, five more applications were released. Now, citizens and visitors of the cities of Exeter, Deventer, Hamburg, Trento, and Valencia can download a *Hidden Cities* app to explore these urban centers in an adventurous, interactive, and immersive way. Exploiting GPS-enabled devices provides a deep investigation of the «complex and kinetic relationship between city dwellers and the built environment»¹⁰⁰. These apps aim to raise awareness of some locations which carry usually unknown signs of the past. To do so, researchers geotag the narration of some everyday life events to some of the cities' overlooked places¹⁰¹. Through site-specific AR, the experience of the real-world environment is enhanced¹⁰². The two AR features exploited in these location-aware applications are the historical map overlaid on the modern one, and the narration provided by the contemporary historical guide. Although the experience enabled by these two components cannot be considered to be fully immersive, as it will be explained in chapter three, their purpose is to «extend the perceptive field of users»¹⁰³.

Hidden Florence was the first cultural application to use a pre-modern map¹⁰⁴ (fig. 2). This locational AR tool lets users navigate the present «by the way of

⁹⁸ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 187

⁹⁹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*

¹⁰⁰ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 189

¹⁰¹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 23

¹⁰² Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 372

¹⁰³ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 6

¹⁰⁴ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 190

the past»¹⁰⁵ as it should allow people to walk through the cities while experiencing space as it was in the Renaissance. The experience is historicized and users are able to gain a deeper level of immersion in the scenario presented by the historical character who is guiding them¹⁰⁶. As people can quickly switch from the ancient map to the contemporary one (fig. 3) and vice versa, they have the possibility to compare the two representations of the city and see all the urban changes that happened over the centuries. Therefore, users should perceive how «spatial practices of pedestrian movement adapt to the palimpsest of urban morphologies»¹⁰⁷.

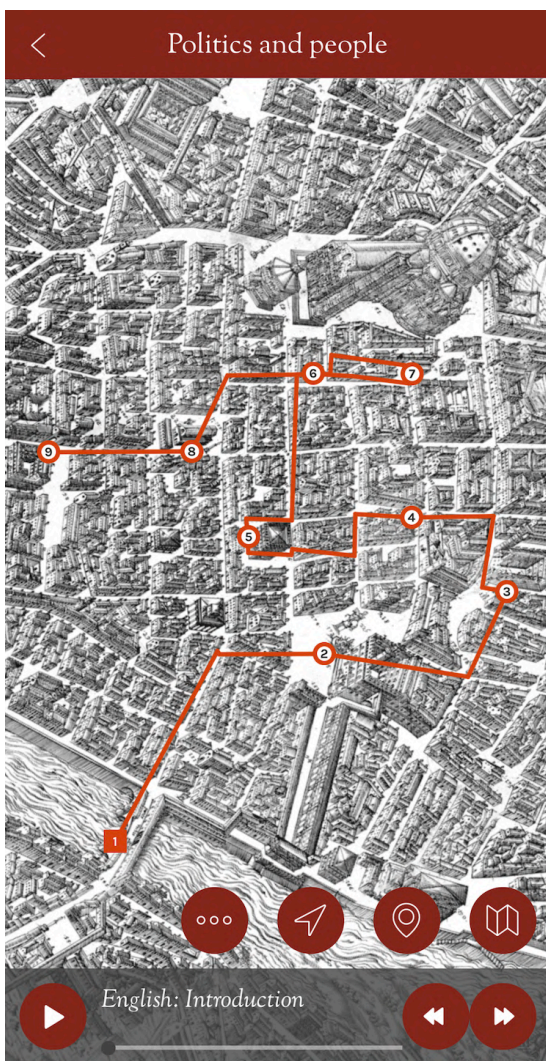


Fig.2 *Bonsignori Map* used for the 'Politics and people' tour in *Hidden Florence*



Fig.3 Modern digital map used for the 'Politics and people' tour in *Hidden Florence*

¹⁰⁵ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 15

¹⁰⁶ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 192

¹⁰⁷ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 6

Even if some of the *Hidden Cities* apps include only one itinerary, most of them populate the landscapes of the different urban environments with various unusual figures¹⁰⁸ that directly speak to the users. Based on their location, different specific sound content is delivered. This content is encoded into a place by its coordinates and it is triggered once the user moves close enough to the spot¹⁰⁹. Listening to the narration of their virtual guides, people are encouraged to use their imagination to give life back to the places where they stand¹¹⁰. The experience is thought to be something more than a traditional guided tour as personal anecdotes of 'real' characters create a different feeling of the place and assure more authenticity, as it was explained in the first section of this chapter. Sometimes the virtual guides are real people from the past, other times they are made up by the researchers; in any case, the delivered content is carefully selected and curated to precisely tell stories of «historical periods, personalities, [and] places»¹¹¹. Moreover at each location, users are provided with one additional third-person audio that offers a «contextualizing commentary»¹¹² to the story told and balances the fictional narration of the first-person character.

Based on the awareness that the urban morphology and the social practices that happen in the public realm are fundamental factors to consider when studying History¹¹³, *Hidden Cities* aims to revolutionize the role of space due to the strategic combination of various digital technologies¹¹⁴. Complying with Public and Digital History practices, this project intends to communicate «to larger, non-academic audiences through multiple media» moving «away from

¹⁰⁸ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 23

¹⁰⁹ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 192

¹¹⁰ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 14

¹¹¹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 373

¹¹² Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 28

¹¹³ Nevola, F., *Street Life*, p. 268

¹¹⁴ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 24

the academic style to become more user-friendly and engaging»¹¹⁵. As people are brought to the exact place where the narrated event happened, the storytelling should gain a deeper meaning and better influence the 'sense of place' of its listeners¹¹⁶. Moreover, using AR can attract younger audiences that usually prefer interactive, digital ways of learning rather than school books or traditional guided tours¹¹⁷. By exploring the six cities through these apps, users can engage with the past in a new, more dynamic way.

Even if it is improbable that the sole implementation of locative media could radically change visitors' behavior¹¹⁸, these projects can contribute in various ways to urban management. For example, they can help promote a slower and more conscious form of tourism that focuses on a wider range of products and services offered by the city, even outside its 'honey-pots' sites¹¹⁹.

When people walk through a city using these kinds of tools, they are not disconnected from the 'real' world, as people might think. Using mobile media storytelling apps can result in a deeper connection with space and with the other people who inhabit it¹²⁰.

As *Hidden Cities*, apps can be «infinitely extensible»¹²¹, new itineraries in different places around Europe can be continuously implemented. To prove this, a proposal for an application of this project in the city of Padua is described in the following chapter.

¹¹⁵ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 24

¹¹⁶ Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 7

¹¹⁷ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 4

¹¹⁸ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 385

¹¹⁹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, pp. 218-219

¹²⁰ Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 6

¹²¹ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 203

3. *Hidden Padova*: Proposal for an Application

On a random day in the year 1372, a gentleman is on his way to visit the city of Padua. It is his first time there, but he had an epistolary exchange with the lord of the city, Francesco I da Carrara. As the visitor is getting closer to the city gates, he is approached by a man. After introducing himself as a servant of the *Signore*, the man quickly explains that Francesco I will not be able to meet his guest at the walls, as he had promised. Nevertheless, an adequate welcome will be granted to him. However, the servant quickly runs back to his lord's house and leaves the visitor confused. It does not take long for the gentleman to arrive at *Porta San Giovanni*, where he finally understands what the servant was referring to. There, he has the pleasure to meet the generous and charming Fina Buzzaccarini who, he comes to know, is the wife of Francesco I. This is the starting point of the itinerary of *Hidden Padova*, the location-based app through which users can explore the late-medieval history of the city. The second chapter of this paper reflects on the process of making this itinerary come to life, from the choice of the character who is the virtual guide for the users, Fina Buzzaccarini; to the explanation behind each stop she makes during the tour. Moreover, all the historical themes mentioned during the story will be connected back together to provide a more complete picture of the experience.

It is important to point out, that this is a mere proposal for an application of the project *Hidden Cities* in Padua. Anyhow, everything has been carried out as if the itinerary suggested here was part of a real app, licensed and accessible to the wide public. Deep research through various types of sources initiated the process of creating this experience. Though, it could not have been possible to complete it without several on-site investigations, which led to the identification of those places that could best fit the story. The nine selected locations made it possible to create a coherent and appropriate narration. The

itinerary was developed keeping in mind that the virtual guide is the noblewoman Fina Buzzaccarini, who was the 'First Lady' of the city at the time. Most likely, everything would have been different if another character had been used. However, this will be better explained in the following pages of this chapter.

As explained in the first part of this essay, one of the *Hidden Cities* project's main purposes is the rediscovery of some urban signs that are rarely acknowledged. In Padua, there is not much evidence of the 14th-century urban environment. Above all, not much of the family that ruled the city at that time has been preserved. However, the da Carrara *Signori* were similar to any other Italian lords of the late-medieval or early-modern period. They were driven by the desire of creating a united and politically powerful state, that could compete with all the other contemporary European kingdoms and republics. To achieve this goal, they used war as a response to any dispute. This family was also fascinated by knowledge¹²². The Paduan University had been founded at least a century before this family came to power¹²³. Therefore, many educated men used to spend much of their time in the city, where essential and revolutionary topics were discussed in the main streets and squares daily. For example, one of the scholars who lived in Padua was a doctor, Pietro d'Abano¹²⁴. After studying and teaching in the most important cultural hubs of his time, like Constantinople and Paris, he returned to his birth city, Padua, and became a distinguished professor of Medicine at the University. Here, he performed one of the first autopsies of the modern era right in the streets of the city¹²⁵. Together with him, many other eminent men lived in and visited Padua. The three best-known names are those of Dante, Giotto, and Petrarca. As the latter will be central in Fina Buzzaccarini's narration, his figure will be better discussed later. As will be explained, the poet Francesco Petrarca was

¹²² Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi nella Padova del '300*, pp. 133-135

¹²³ <https://800anniunipd.it/la-nostra-storia/>

¹²⁴ https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pietro_d%27Abano

¹²⁵ Panetto, M., *Le lezioni di Pietro d'Abano a 700 anni dalla morte*
<https://ilbolive.unipd.it/it/news/lezione-pietro-dabano-700-anni-dalla-morte>

the one who brought the ideologies of Humanism to Padua, which received a lot of attention from the *Signori*¹²⁶. Following this cultural wave, patronage was used by the da Carrara to make their city one of the most important centers for the development of knowledge in Italy¹²⁷. During his lordship, Francesco I was able to make his court a rich and festive place¹²⁸. Moreover, thanks to the support that the *Signore* provided to every sector of the economy, the wealth of its State grew rapidly at least until 1372¹²⁹. In the 14th century, this city was at the same cultural and economic level as Verona ruled by the Scaligeri, or Milan under the Visconti. However compared to those other families, the da Carrara one is lesser known. The almost-total unfamiliarity with the Carraresi is the consequence of the war that Francesco I and his son, Francesco II, initiated and lost against the Republic of Venice. During the second half of the 1300s, the Serenissima lost many territories in the Mediterranean Sea and, therefore, it started to better protect its terrains on the mainland¹³⁰. At this point, the interests of the Republic and those of the da Carrara family no longer matched, and they started a war¹³¹. This conflict ended only with the collapse of Padua and the quick and brutal murder of all the members of the da Carrara family in 1405. To eliminate every trace of such a powerful and beloved family, the Venetian attempted a complete *damnatio memoriae* of this dynasty¹³². As a matter of fact, they destroyed every reference to the lordship in Padua, changed laws and traditions, and deported books and artworks which belonged to or referred to the da Carrara. Scholars think that this brutality can be explained by the fact that the Venetians knew that this family had great importance and a big impact on society¹³³. From this awareness develops the

¹²⁶ Pastore Stocchi, M., *Il modello umanistico: gli uomini illustri dell'antichità*, pp. 229-230

¹²⁷ D'Arcis, F., *L'arte alla corte dei carraresi*, p. 22

¹²⁸ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara. Verona e Padova. Due uomini, due città a confronto nella seconda metà del secolo XIV*, p. 22

¹²⁹ Collodo, S., *I carraresi a Padova: Signori e storia della civiltà cittadina*, p. 28

¹³⁰ Moro, F., *Il sogno dei Carraresi. Padova capitale (1350-1406)*, p. 52

¹³¹ [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-conquista-della-terraferma_\(Storia-di-Venezia\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-conquista-della-terraferma_(Storia-di-Venezia)/)

¹³² Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 82

¹³³ Moro, F., *Il sogno dei Carraresi*, pp. 5-9

project of the first *Hidden Padova* tour. As mentioned above, its first aim is to make people familiar with the Padua governed by the da Carrara dynasty. To do so, this app uses the two levels of explanation supported by the *Hidden Cities* project. Fina Buzzaccarini stops at places that are significant either for her or the visitor. In the 'Find Out' audio, she describes the locations through her own experience, always adding a subjective comment. Then, her words are explained and reinforced by the 'Discover More' section. These are meant to be insights and critical explanations of what the guide mentions.

After describing the historical context that is in the background of the whole story, the first part of this chapter will focus on the character of Fina Buzzaccarini; in particular, on the reasons why she was chosen as the virtual guide of this tour. The second part of the chapter will talk about the itinerary itself and its themes. The topics covered by Fina, and by the 'researcher' audio will be contextualized in the situation of Padua in the second half of the 14th Century.

3.1. Fina Buzzaccarini

This project's main purpose is not to depict the inequality between men and women in the Middle Ages. However, using a female character enables people to focus also on this issue. Choosing a woman as the representative of the past allows for having a particular insight since «women's historical experiences [usually remain unknown] to a broad-based audience»¹³⁴. Moreover, Fina Buzzaccarini (fig. 4) was not just any woman. She was a noblewoman and, more importantly, she was the wife of the lord of Padua. By extension, she was the *Signora* of the city. Her point of view drastically differentiated from that of men, as well as from the perspective of lower-class women. Because of her origins and her family conditions, Fina knew that she had to promote the cult

¹³⁴ Rombough, J., Strocchia, S., *City of women. Mapping movement, gender, and enclosure in Renaissance Florence*, p. 170

of the *Signoria*¹³⁵. All the work she sponsored in the city was done to celebrate her husband and his family. The itinerary through the Medieval city suggested on *Hidden Padova* takes its cue from this remark. As a virtual guide, Fina accompanies users on a path that touches various kinds of locations, like churches, palaces, and city gates, which are relatively unknown today. At the time of the da Carrara family, though, these nine spots were some of the hubs of social life. In the story introduced by this app, the locations facilitate the discussion of one important topic each. Eventually, through the voice of Fina, supported by the 'Discover More' audios, users will be able to get closer to Paduan history.



Fig.4 Fina Buzzaccarini in the Baptistry of Padova.

By 1372, Francesco I da Carrara, also known as *il Vecchio* (the Elder), had been the lord of Padua for the previous twenty years. In that year, he began a war against Venice over the difficult issue of the borders between the two states¹³⁶. At the highest moment of his reign, he embarked on a conflict, which

¹³⁵ Montobbio, L., *Donne famose della signoria carrarese*, p. 31

¹³⁶ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 64-65

marked the beginning of the Carrarese decline. Though, as he was not an inexperienced man, before starting this war, he gathered the 'General Council' to try to find another way to solve the disputes within the borders¹³⁷. Precisely during one of these meetings, the story of this project takes place. The war still hadn't started, but it was forthcoming. In this chaotic context, it is not difficult to imagine that the lord and his most trusted men were occupied with more important matters than welcoming a visitor, no matter how prestigious he was.

The imminent war also had another consequence that is essential to the story's context. It has caused investment in land holdings to slow down. Thanks to her family of origin, Fina Buzzaccarini owned many territories in the areas that today are the towns of Arzercavalli, Brugine, and Noventa Padovana¹³⁸. Even though she had always shown great interest in managing these villages, they were dangerously close to the places affected by the conflict. So, she was forced to put this business aside and focus on another plan. It was precisely in 1372 that Fina began to finance the construction and decoration of churches and chapels around the urban center of the State¹³⁹. 'The Ruling Family' tour focuses on buildings or parts of them, that date back to the 14th century. Even if started later, the two main works sponsored by the noblewoman, the *Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Servi*¹⁴⁰, and the *Battistero*¹⁴¹, have been conceived in this emblematic year. To summarize, the year 1372 was chosen because it was at this moment that Fina Buzzaccarini began to take a greater interest in the city and its issues. Moreover, the fact that the *Signore* and his *consilium* were busy with a matter as important as the possibility of a war, makes it not too difficult to imagine that the only person available that Francesco I entrusted was his wife, Fina Buzzaccarini. However, to understand the multiple reasons why she

¹³⁷ Collodo, S., *I carraresi a Padova*, p. 40

¹³⁸ Lamon, R., *Le donne nella storia di Padova*, p. 16

¹³⁹ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p. 18

¹⁴⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Maria_dei_Servi,_Padua

¹⁴¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padua_Baptistry

is the guide of this itinerary, it is important to better describe her figure and her relationship with her husband.

Fina Buzzaccarini was the descendant of one of the oldest and most powerful families in Padua, which continued its history even after the Carrarese period and was designated with noble titles in the later centuries¹⁴². Her date of birth is not known, but scholars think that it could be set around the year 1325¹⁴³ so, in 1372, she would have been about 47 years old. Placing her in this scenario at this age is surely within the realm of possibility. In the few documents that focus on her person, she is usually described as a «virtuous, family-loving, pious, and charitable woman»¹⁴⁴. Besides, her grandfather Dusio and her father Pataro were extremely rich. So, she was also coveted by many gentlemen because of her family fortune. In 1345 Jacopo II, father of Francesco I, arranged the marriage between his son and Fina. Thereby, the da Carrara family secured the loyalty of one of the city's most prominent and well-liked families¹⁴⁵. Her origins played an important role in her choice as a guide. Usually, rulers married daughters of other states' lords to secure some international alliance, however, Francesco I chose a *padovana* for himself. Fina grew up in the center of Padua, as her family had a house in the Saint Urban district¹⁴⁶, which was located in the very heart of the city¹⁴⁷. Therefore, she was probably used to walking these streets since she was a child. As she took part in many social events and was very loved by the citizens of Padua¹⁴⁸ she kept visiting her city and her people even after marrying Francesco I. To go back to the scenario of this app, she most likely would have had no problem guiding a foreigner from the city gates to his Inn.

¹⁴² <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buzzaccarini>

¹⁴³ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p. 21

¹⁴⁴ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 147

¹⁴⁵ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p. 14

¹⁴⁶ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p. 15

¹⁴⁷ Collodo, S., *Una società in trasformazione. Padova tra XI e XV Secolo*, pp. 265-266

¹⁴⁸ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 66

Even if it will be better explained in the second section of this chapter, at this point it is necessary to make a reflection on women's conditions during the late Middle Ages. As Silvana Collodo states in her essay entitled *Le facce della diversità*¹⁴⁹, it is true that even at that time women lived in the shadows of men. They did not have any political or, in general, public roles. However, women were not recluse inside their homes, with no duties or rights¹⁵⁰. At that time, women of all social classes were granted some important rights, such as the right to property and to paid work. For example, Fina was a successful and skillful landowner. When her father Pataro died, he left her and her siblings not only some already existing estates but even a large sum of money that enabled them to buy many more domains¹⁵¹. She knew that her most important task was to support her husband and provide an heir to the dynasty¹⁵². However, she was not just a good wife and mother; using a modern term, she could also be described as a resourceful and brave 'businesswoman'.

Francesco I certainly had high regard for his loyal wife as proven in her last wishes. Benjamin Kohl¹⁵³ asserts that Fina redacted her will just a few days before dying in 1378. This document is interesting as it shows that Fina was allowed to break some rules that had been dictated by her husband. Normally, a wife could not dispose of her fortune completely freely. In particular, she could only decide what to do with her own dowry. If she had some, a woman had to bequeath her children or grandchildren both the belongings she had purchased and those she had received as an inheritance. Fina Buzzaccarini was relieved of this obligation. She decided what to leave and to whom. Kohl points out that Padua had also another law that prohibited leaving something to people who did not live in the state anymore¹⁵⁴. Fina could break this rule as

¹⁴⁹ Collodo, S., *Le facce della diversità: ruoli femminili a confronto*, pp. 47-55

¹⁵⁰ Lamon, R., *Le donne nella storia di Padova*, pp. 9-10

¹⁵¹ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p. 16

¹⁵² Montobbio, L., *Donne famose della signoria carrarese*, p. 31

¹⁵³ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, pp. 18-19

¹⁵⁴ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, pp. 18-19

well. She was able to pass something on to her daughters who lived in Saxony and in the Croatian city of Krk. These concessions had been made to her only as the wife of the lord of the city. This leads to the conclusion that Francesco I and Fina Buzzaccarini had a close relationship, as similar privileges were not granted to most of the rulers' wives. Furthermore, Francesco I outlived his wife of fifteen years, as he died in 1393¹⁵⁵. Although many problems troubled Padua during that period, Francesco I could have remarried, as he was only 53 years old. Before him, all the da Carrara lords had chosen another spouse if the new marriage could guarantee more order and stability in their city¹⁵⁶. To settle some disputes with an enemy state, or to strengthen the bond with an ally, the *Signore* could have married someone else. However, he did not. One of the potential explanations is that he did not want to because of his late wife. It is clear that Francesco I and Fina Buzzaccarini shared an exceptional relationship¹⁵⁷. It is thought that this can be enough to justify the presence of the Lady in public, and her role as a chaperone both for the prestigious guest and for the users of the *Hidden Padova* app.

3.2. Themes of the Itinerary

Nowadays the traces of the Middle Ages in Padua are few and largely hidden. The main cause of the loss of most of the medieval constructions was demolition by later governments. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, once the Venetians conquered Padua, they destroyed most of the evidence left by the *Signoria* of the da Carrara. Moreover, even different town managements of the 19th and 20th centuries decided to take down some historical buildings to replace them with those we see today¹⁵⁸. At the time, less attention was given to the signs of the past, but this resulted in a general lack of knowledge

¹⁵⁵ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 197

¹⁵⁶ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 46, 50, 54

¹⁵⁷ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 66

¹⁵⁸ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 62

of the late-medieval epoch in Padua. For the most part, the ancient past of the city remains untold, and not many widely-accessible initiatives have been done to change this condition. Complying with the efforts of Public and Digital History, the *Hidden Cities* project aims to rediscover and appreciate what is left of the early-modern age in different European urban centers. Assuming that this project was implemented in Padua, it would help fill the gap of knowledge in an interactive way, which would be new to this city. One of the main goals of *Hidden Padova* is to track down buildings and elements that were accessible even in Fina Buzzaccarini's time. The medieval traces present around Padua are the focus of attention of this application. To find locations that come as close as possible to what the medieval condition was, different sources were used and several tours of the city have been done. Though, it was not always possible to choose a 14th-century building or item. However, in guiding users around Padua, Fina Buzzaccarini stops at those places that, once connected, could give a coherent and realistic portrait of the 14th-century city. Each location triggers the narration about a different cultural and social aspect of medieval Padua. The second section of this chapter discusses the main topics covered by the app's audio and, in doing so, it focuses also on the analysis that lies behind the selection of the nine locations.

The main theme of 'The Ruling Family' itinerary is the 14th-century past of the city. Once listened to the eighteen audios, users should be able to better understand how Padua was during the *Signoria* age. High consideration is given to pure historical facts, and the main steps of the Carrarese rise are explained. The aspects of the female condition and economic and cultural situation are also essential for achieving the purpose of this app. However, only if users are familiar with the historical events behind Padua ruled by Francesco I, they can feel to be immersed in it. Thus, the first half of the tour (especially stops 3, 4, and 5) has the task to explain these circumstances. The remaining audios are used to address the subject of the society of Padua during the first twenty years of the lordship of Francesco I. This section will follow the same

logic, and will therefore explain the story of the da Carrara family first, and the condition of their state later.

Before starting, one last matter needs to be discussed to clarify the story's scenario. As stated above, in 1372, the year when the tour takes place, a war was started by Francesco I to settle the matter of the borders with Venice¹⁵⁹. The situation of Padua in that year has already been explained in section one of this chapter. Here, it is important to notice that both Fina Buzzaccarini and the lord's servant refer to the users as a gentleman who is visiting their city. This decision was not random. It may seem atypical for a ruler, or actually for his wife, to wait for a visitor at the city gates. However, it is proved that on at least one occasion Francesco I went to welcome one of his guests at the entrance of Padua. In his letter of July 21st, 1368, the poet Francesco Petrarca wrote that the *Signore* decided to wait for him at the city gates¹⁶⁰. Knowing this episode, it is possible to imagine that the lord or his wife may have treated other distinguished guests the same way. To recreate these circumstances, the



Fig.5 San Giovanni's Gate (stop 1)

¹⁵⁹ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 64-65

¹⁶⁰ Ronconi, G., *L'immagine dei carraresi nella letteratura del tempo*, pp. 239-240

users, or better the gentleman, are welcomed by Fina at one of the entrances of the city, San Giovanni's Gate (stop 1). Even if the building that is seen today (fig. 5) is not the exact one that was standing there in 1372, it was built in its original location. Francesco I had completed the external ring of walls of the city in 1359¹⁶¹; but, at the beginning of the 16th century, the Republic of Venice decided to construct a more geometric and safe defensive system¹⁶².



Fig.6 Vincenzo Dotto (1623), *Padova circondata dalle muraglie vecchie.*
 San Giovanni's gate is circled in red.
 From: Wellcome Image, Wikimedia

Comparing the two maps drawn by Vincenzo Dotto (fig.6 and fig.7), it is noticeable that the position of this city door was not modified by the Venetians, so the starting location of the itinerary can be considered to be accurate enough. No matter what they have already done in Padua, passing by this

¹⁶¹ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 126

¹⁶² Lorenzoni, G., *Urbanistica ed emergenze architettoniche*, pp. 95-97

hardly-ever-noticed entry monument, users will most likely perceive this stop as the beginning of something different and will be ready to step into the Medieval city.



Fig.7 Vincenzo Dotto (1623), *Padova circondata dalle muraglie nuove*. San Giovanni's gate is circled in red.

<https://www.muradipadova.it/guida-delle-mura-di-pd/396>

Before the formation of the *Signoria*, Padua was a free municipality. With this government, there was a plurality of forces and different institutions were in charge of governing the city¹⁶³. People from different social classes would gather together to discuss different issues and they had to come down to an agreement. They could have diverging ideas, but everyone was granted the same rights. The chief magistrate was the *Podestà*, who was a foreigner with the task of controlling the different assemblies, and to assure that the *bene comune* (the common welfare) was granted¹⁶⁴. Fina's third stop is in front of the house that was provided to the *Podestà*, which was changed every year, by

¹⁶³ Collodo, S., *Una società in trasformazione*, pp. LIV-LVI

¹⁶⁴ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 90

the city¹⁶⁵. The building located at via Soncin 27 (fig. 8) is still present and, looking at it, people are brought back to another era as its paintings are typical of the medieval epoch. This is a unique house still decorated with some floral frescoes dating back to the 14th century¹⁶⁶. In front of this medieval institutional house, the differences between the municipality and the *Signoria* are told both by their virtual guide and by the 'researcher' audio. With the institution of the lordship, the da Carrara dynasty was in charge. Contrary to what had happened during the commune, one person had all the power¹⁶⁷. Nevertheless, it was still impossible for the lords to rule completely alone. The most important institutions of the *comune* still existed and a strong exchange between all these different organizations continued to take place¹⁶⁸.



Fig.8 House of the 'Podestà' (stop 3)

¹⁶⁵ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 175

¹⁶⁶ Fantelli, P.L., *Appunti sulla decorazione d'interni a Padova tra due e trecento*, pp. 47-51

¹⁶⁷ Collodo, S., *Una società in trasformazione*, pp. 313-314

¹⁶⁸ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 120

Even if the main institutions were kept, in July 1318, it was decided to establish a *Signoria*. Jacopo I da Carrara was elected «*difensore, protettore, governatore e capitano generale*»¹⁶⁹ of the city. The acquisition of power by the da Carrara family did not happen overnight. Their rise was facilitated by the unstable condition of the State, which was threatened by Cangrande della Scala, lord of Verona¹⁷⁰. Indeed, internal and external conflicts were tearing apart the commune's organizations and Jacopo da Carrara was able to create the perfect space for himself in contemporary society. Eventually, everyone considered him to be the only man capable of saving Padua¹⁷¹. Halfway through the itinerary, users are brought to the *Torre del Bo* (fig. 9). This tower had been erected already in 1239¹⁷². In the 14th century, it was part of the



Fig.9 Bo Tower (stop 5)

¹⁶⁹ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala e Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 119 (Eng.: «general defender, protector, governor, captain»)

¹⁷⁰ Collodo, S., *Una società in trasformazione*, p. 169

¹⁷¹ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 30-31

¹⁷² https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torre_del_Bo

complex of buildings that belonged to the da Carrara family. As explained in the fifth audio of the app, it was chosen as the official residence by the first lord of Padua¹⁷³. This location is essential to the story for two more reasons. First of all, even though this tower has been modified many times, its medieval essence remained the same. Therefore, it exemplifies the outlook of the city in the early-modern period. As seen in the painting of Giusto de' Menabuoi (fig. 10), many towers were erected in the urban center of Padua¹⁷⁴. This is just one of the few examples that survived over time. The second essential aspect behind the choice of this place is that the houses belonging to the da Carrara family were converted into the *Hospitium Bovis*, the most luxurious Inn in the city¹⁷⁵. It is here that the imaginary gentleman of the app's narration is supposed to stay during his time in Padua. Only in the late 15th century, when the da Carrara had already been deposed, these buildings became the main seat of the University¹⁷⁶.



Fig.10 Giusto de' Menabuoi (1382), *Sant'Antonio annuncia al Beato Luca Belludi la liberazione di Padova dalla tirannia di Ezzelino III da Romano*, Padova, Basilica di Sant'Antonio

¹⁷³ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 45-46

¹⁷⁴ Lorenzoni, G., *Urbanistica ed emergenze architettoniche*, p. 108

¹⁷⁵ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 132

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.unipd.it/palazzo-bo>

To gain and maintain power, the Carraresi sometimes used violence and abuse. Especially, the *Signori* used to ban all enemies from their State. Those who had some hostility towards the da Carrara were allowed back into the city only after swearing loyalty to the lord¹⁷⁷. This condition is briefly mentioned by Fina in her final speech. When she is in front of the Baptistery (stop 9), she mentions the Scrovegni family. After the expulsion of Enrico Scrovegni, the customer of the chapel painted by Giotto, his son Ugolino was able to get back to Padua after allying with Francesco I¹⁷⁸. However, even after all of these precautions, in 1328 Marsilio I da Carrara was forced to surrender and give the city to Cangrande¹⁷⁹. He was only able to regain control of Padua thanks to the alliances that he had made with Venice and Florence¹⁸⁰. One of the reasons for this loss was internal betrayal. Users are told about the fatal treason of Nicolò da Carrara while they stand in the same place where he used to live (stop 4). Since 1372, in the same area there is the *Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Servi* (fig. 11). In front of the main portal of the church, Fina explains that family betrayals characterized the da Carrara reign from its beginning¹⁸¹. The house of the traitor Nicolò da Carrara was set on fire by the Paduans after Nicolò left for Verona¹⁸². As she explains in the app, Fina Buzzaccarini sponsored the construction of this church in that exact location hoping to get redemption from the sins of her corrupted family members. Usually, the church is accessed from the main street, via Roma, through the door under the porches. However, those two elements, the porch, and the main portal, were added some centuries after the construction of the main body of the building ¹⁸³. It would have been odd to have the users stand in a spot that was not there at Fina's time. Moreover, the choice to place the listening point in front of this lesser-

¹⁷⁷ Collodo, S., *Una società in trasformazione*, p. 184

¹⁷⁸ [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scrovegni_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scrovegni_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/)

¹⁷⁹ Vasoin, G., *La Signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 49

¹⁸⁰ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 51-52

¹⁸¹ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala e Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 144

¹⁸² Lamon, R., *Le donne nella storia di Padova*, p. 16

¹⁸³ [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Santa_Maria_dei_Servi_\(Padova\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Santa_Maria_dei_Servi_(Padova))

known door was made so that the audience does not stand in the middle of the city's busiest street. People can calmly listen to the app's narration, without the background noises. Lastly, many medieval documents depict Padua as a very dense city, where there hardly ever was a broad and complete facade view of churches¹⁸⁴. Standing in this narrow square, users will observe this notorious *chiesa* from a different perspective. Though, this way is more consistent with the medieval situation.



Fig.11 Church of *Santa Maria dei Servi* (stop 4)

Marsilio I da Carrara died in 1338, only eight months after he had regained control of the city¹⁸⁵. After him, Ubertino I and Jacopo II promoted a policy of

¹⁸⁴ Lorenzoni, G., *Urbanistica ed emergenze architettoniche*, pp. 108-109

¹⁸⁵ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala e Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 19

strengthening and renewal¹⁸⁶. In the tombstone of the latter, who had been assassinated by another relative¹⁸⁷, the poet Francesco Petrarca wrote that Jacopo was an excellent gentleman, unmatched in greatness¹⁸⁸. However, it was with Francesco I that Padua reached its golden era¹⁸⁹. Francesco's predecessors had started many processes of change, but only with him, the *Signoria* was fully consolidated¹⁹⁰. During their reign, the da Carrara protected local artifacts and transformed the city from an agricultural State to an industrial one. They especially cared for the wool industry¹⁹¹. Under Francesco I's government, the textile industry underwent a great advancement, which he supported with every means he had¹⁹². The importance that was given to work and, in particular, to commerce changed deeply the shape of society¹⁹³. When on her sixth stop Fina is in front of the della Seta's house (fig. 12), she introduces users to the changing situation of the economy and society of that time. In the second half of the 1300s, merchants had become an essential element in the society of this city. They formed an influential and educated middle class that would frequently interact with the aristocracy¹⁹⁴. In fact, Fina mentions that her husband, the noble ruler of Padua, was a good friend of a silk vendor's son. Additionally, Lombardo della Seta did not become a merchant himself. He was a famous literate of the time and the assistant of Francesco Petrarca¹⁹⁵. Actually, Lombardo was the one appointed to finish the famous work titled *De Viris Illustribus* after the poet died¹⁹⁶. The figure of Lombardo is

¹⁸⁶ Ongaro, G., *La medicina durante la Signoria Carrarese*, p. 195

¹⁸⁷ Vasoin, G., *La signoria carrarese*, pp. 59-60

¹⁸⁸ Ronconi, G., *L'immagine dei carraresi nella letteratura del tempo*, pp. 238-239

¹⁸⁹ D'Arcis, F., *L'arte alla corte dei carraresi*, p. 22

¹⁹⁰ Collodo, S., *I carraresi a Padova*, p. 24

¹⁹¹ Collodo, S., *Una società in trasformazione*, pp. 343-352

¹⁹² Vasoin, G., *La signoria carrarese*, pp. 122-123

¹⁹³ Collodo, S., *I Carraresi a Padova*, pp. 35-37

¹⁹⁴ Vasoin, G., *La signoria carrarese*, p. 123

¹⁹⁵ Vasoin, G., *La signoria carrarese*, p. 101

¹⁹⁶ Ronconi, G., *L'immagine dei carraresi*, p. 240



Fig.12 Della Seta's House (stop 6)

interesting to understand another essential aspect of 14th-century Padua. In one of his letters, he wrote that Francesco I had an inclination toward culture. The writer stated that the *Signore* used to welcome many educated people into his court with enthusiasm and generosity¹⁹⁷. In the second half of the 14th century, Padua became a lively and culturally rich city¹⁹⁸. Francesco I himself was a well-educated man¹⁹⁹; moreover, thanks to the presence of the University, he ruled a State that was already one of the most important centers for the development of culture in the Western world²⁰⁰, as explained in the first part of this chapter. Even if the *Studio Patavino* was an independent institute, many men that studied or worked there actively participated in the administration of the State²⁰¹. Additionally, scientists, intellectuals, and artists contributed to enriching the city with some beautiful artifacts. One example is

¹⁹⁷ Vasoin, G., *La signoria carrarese*, pp. 101-105

¹⁹⁸ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala e Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 22

¹⁹⁹ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala e Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 92

²⁰⁰ Bortolami, S., *Il castello "carrarese" di Padova*, p. 120

²⁰¹ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala e Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, pp. 90-91

the Dondi's clock located on the tower in piazza dei Signori (fig. 13). Ubertino I, the third lord of Padua, was gifted this ingenious astronomical clock by Jacopo and Giovanni Dondi in 1344²⁰². Users get to be face-to-face with it in the seventh stop of 'The Ruling Family' tour. Actually, what is seen today is the copy of the first astronomical clock to ever be made, as the original one was destroyed in some battles during the Milanese occupation of the city from 1388 to 1390. The replica has been made following the book that the two scientists wrote when they created the authentic one, and the quadrant is probably original²⁰³.



Fig.13 The Clock Tower (stop 7)

During the da Carrara *Signoria*, the tower where the original clock was placed, mastered the east entrance to the *Reggia* complex, which was surrounded by a

²⁰² Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, pp. 33-34

²⁰³ Berti, E., *Astronomia e astrologia da Pietro d'Abano a Giovanni Dondi dell'orologio*, p. 184

defensive wall. Thus, its appearance was very different than what is seen today from the square. However, the palace's entrance was in the same position as the clock tower. To have a better grasp of how the *Reggia* looked, users are brought in front of its last remaining medieval part²⁰⁴, the *Loggia Carrarese* (fig. 14). These arcades belonged to the oldest part of the complex, the one that had been constructed by Ubertino I in 1343²⁰⁵. Initially, the palace was meant to be the mere house of the *Signore* and its family. However, Jacopo II and Francesco I decided to increase its perimeter to include the offices of the State administration²⁰⁶. Interestingly, this complex of buildings was not called *Reggia* at the time. Its original name was *Curia magnifico domini Francisci de Carrara*²⁰⁷. In 1446, Michele Savonarola wrote an in-depth study on the conditions of the *Reggia*²⁰⁸, where he stated that it was a building unmatched



Fig.14 Carrarese Loggia (stop 8)

²⁰⁴ Visentin, G., *La reggia carrarese*, p. 17

²⁰⁵ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, p. 107

²⁰⁶ Vasoin, G., *La signoria dei Carraresi*, pp. 107-111

²⁰⁷ Sivieri, M., *Antonio della Scala, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara*, p. 66

²⁰⁸ Bortolami, S., *Il castello "carrarese" di Padova tra esigenze di difesa e rappresentazione simbolica del potere (sec. X- XV)*, p. 138

in beauty. Most of its rooms were decorated with profane pictorial cycles. The most fascinating one was realized by Giusto de' Menabuoi. Probably inspired by Francesco Petrarca, the room *degli Uomini Illustri* was decorated with the figures of thirty-six notorious men from ancient Rome. This was the largest profane pictorial cycle ever made in Europe up to that moment²⁰⁹.

To perceive the splendor of Padua during the *Signoria*, users are invited to see one of the best examples of medieval decorations of the city at the last stop of Fina's itinerary. At the end of her speech, the virtual guide makes one last suggestion to the foreign gentleman, and therefore to the app's users. She asks if he would like to follow her inside the Baptistery (fig.15) as she, a pious and devoted woman, wishes to pray. Inside, the paintings she commissioned to Giusto de' Menabuoi around 1375²¹⁰ are still visible. Even though users have been listening to Fina speaking about the condition of the medieval city for the whole tour, seeing the outstanding paintings will truly make them understand how rich and beautiful Padua was under the *Signoria* of the da Carrara family.



Fig.15 The Baptistery (stop 9)

²⁰⁹ Pastore Stocchi, M., *Il modello umanistico: gli uomini illustri dell'antichità*, p. 227

²¹⁰ Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p.18

As *Hidden Padova's* itinerary tries to explain Fina's « lifetime in the day»²¹¹, it starts and finishes with a focus on her figure and the female condition of women during the medieval times in Padua. On her way from the city gate to the urban center, the virtual guide makes a stop in front of a rather anonymous building, which she acknowledges as her family house (fig. 16). At least since 1339, the Buzzaccarini family lived in *Contrà S. Urbano*²¹². This corresponds to the nowadays via S. Martino e Solferino²¹³, which is very close to via del Vescovado, where the building in front of which Fina does her second stop is located. Even if it was not possible to confirm that this exact building was Fina's childhood house, this palace actually belonged to her family at one point. It was Marquise Augusta de Buzzaccarini who decided to bequeath her family home to the University of Padova in 1989²¹⁴. In front of this palace, the condition of women at that time is briefly explained. It is important to notice



Fig.16 Buzzaccarini Palace (stop 2)

²¹¹ Nevola, F., Thursday 22 November 2022

²¹² Kohl, B., *Giusto de' Menabuoi*, p. 16

²¹³ [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Sant'Urbano_\(Padova\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Sant'Urbano_(Padova))

²¹⁴ <https://www.dissgea.unipd.it/dipartimento/sedi-e-strutture/palazzi-luzzatto-dina-e-jonoch-gulinelli>

that, females were not considered less important than men in society, they just were perceived as different²¹⁵. Therefore, there was a complete division of male and female worlds and their roles. While men were busy taking care of the political institutions, women were responsible for the house and the family members. Mothers were the fulcrum of family life. During the 13th and 14th centuries, it was normal to entrust mothers with the guardianship of children, in anticipation of the father's premature disappearance due to wars and epidemics²¹⁶. If at the second stop Fina speaks of herself and of her roots, at the end of the itinerary users are brought outside the Baptistery (fig. 14), the place where Fina was buried in 1378. Unlike their predecessors, Fina and Francesco I chose this very central location as the place for their burial because they wanted to strengthen the bond between the *Signore* and his city²¹⁷.

Proving that the relationship between Padua and the da Carrara dynasty was, and still is, essential to the city was the purpose of the *Hidden Padova* project. Through Fina's voice, the nine 14th-century artifacts connected with this tour should come back to life. They regain a 'soul'²¹⁸, and users get to know these traces of the past from a different point of view. By taking its users around the city to experience the chosen locations, this app aims at making people come to know the medieval past of Padua. As Sandro Bortolami stated, this is essential not only «*per mero diletto accademico, ma per sforzarsi con passione e umiltà a riannodare i fili spezzati di una più lunga memoria cittadina*»²¹⁹.

²¹⁵ Lamon, R., *Le donne nella storia di Padova*, p. 10

²¹⁶ Collodo, S., *Le facce della diversità*, p. 49

²¹⁷ Rigon, A., *I funerali carraresi nella cronachista*, p. 246

²¹⁸ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 8

²¹⁹ Bortolami, S., *Il Castello "Carrarese" di Padova*, p. 144 (Eng. «for mere academic delight, but to strive with passion and humility to reknit the broken threads of a longer city memory.»)

4. Critical Analysis of the Project

How historians approach their research and how they communicate it to the public²²⁰ influences how people perceive the past and what they know about it. Since the methodologies of Public and Digital History became more international, they have changed the general impression of the historical field²²¹ showing that history is important even for common people's everyday life. Non-academics are usually more interested in family history and daily events happening in their cities²²², and the new digital technologies are providing interesting and easy ways to explore and access this type of past material²²³. Among others, mobile applications are one of the best ways to investigate urban heritage²²⁴, and implementing these tools with site-specific storytelling enables users to explore cities unconventionally and uniquely²²⁵. After describing the *Hidden Cities* apps and the scenario that could be realized in the city of Padua, a critical analysis of this project has to be carried out to highlight not only its strong points but also what could be done to improve the users' experience.

Thanks to the wide and open dialogue between scholars and people that has been opened up by Public History, its practitioners have learned that telling stories of «national greatness»²²⁶ is not always useful to their audience. To engage people with different versions of the past, the virtual guides in *Hidden Cities* come from various backgrounds. This can be seen, for example, in the Florentine version, where the itinerary told by Cosimo de Medici, the 'city boss'

²²⁰ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 1

²²¹ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 40

²²² Rosenzweig, R., *Everyone a Historian*, p. 186

²²³ Cohen, D., et al, *The Promise of Digital History*, p. 472

²²⁴ Szabo, V., *Guide Books and Mobile Applications.*, p. 100

²²⁵ Presner, T., et al., *Hypercities*, p. 30

²²⁶ Rosenzweig, R., *Everyone a Historian*, p. 180

as he is called in the app, can be compared with the torus given by the other four characters, who come from lower social and economic positions. Thus, in this project themes such as «class, gender, disability, migration, and communication in the urban world»²²⁷ are addressed from different points of view and a more general and inclusive knowledge is reached. The multiplicity of voices that are present in some of this project's apps show users that there is no unity in history and that a site can mean different things depending on who is experiencing it²²⁸. To fully achieve this goal, increasing the number of itineraries of every *Hidden Cities* app would be beneficial. In addition, overlapping some of the stops from different itineraries helps to reach a more varied sense of the past. Digital tools have enabled the ability to create multiple stories that can be «layered in one single site in order to gain a deeper connection with that space»²²⁹. Assuming that some users could partake in more than one virtual tour, attaching two or more stories to the same location or within a close area, allows people to easily recognize that numerous events happened in the same place. This occurs, for example, in *Hidden Exeter*, where a stop at the city's Guildhall is included in all three itineraries provided in the app. Elizabeth, Joan Redwood, and Thomas Greenwood speak about different episodes connected with this building, making users aware of its various meanings. If done consistently and well highlighted, the overlapping of points of view would clearly show that subjective perception changes the way a place is experienced.

The *Hidden Cities* apps enable users to «imagine themselves in the past»²³⁰. As a matter of fact, having 'real' characters telling their personal stories provides authenticity to the narration²³¹. As a result of the first-person voice, the subconscious distance, that is usually present when history is told by a

²²⁷ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 28

²²⁸ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 4

²²⁹ Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 6

²³⁰ Cohen, D., et al, *The Promise of Digital History*, p. 454

²³¹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 205

scholar, is for the most part eliminated²³². This barrier is also broken by user engagement, which is necessary to make these apps work at their best. One could navigate through the suggested itineraries even if they are not in the city where these are set in²³³. However, the complete experience is reached while walking through the streets and directly looking at the material evidence that triggers the narrations²³⁴. When used in the urban setting, the adventure provided by the ancient map and the characters' voices, encourages users to «picture the people and places»²³⁵ they hear about while, at the same time, focusing on the space around them. The aural and local augmented reality functions create a temporary immersive environment that continuously communicates with the current shape of the city and with its crowd²³⁶. While discovering the early-modern period, people are walking in the contemporary, physical urban environment; they are not inside a virtual system where the past conditions have been digitally recreated by some experts²³⁷. The experience of the city is real, and people picture the past through their imagination. Thanks to this particular condition, *Hidden Cities* share narrations of the past that can be relevant to its users even in the present²³⁸.

However, as «vision is the most developed of the five senses»²³⁹, implementing some of the explanations with visual augmented reality features might help to prove the guides' narrations and to set a solid basis on which people can build with their imagination. As mobile devices are now deeply used in everyday life, their «interface often disappears»²⁴⁰ and they do not disturb our perception of the physical environment. On the contrary, using some visual augmentation

²³² Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 3

²³³ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 372

²³⁴ Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 193

²³⁵ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 205

²³⁶ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 30

²³⁷ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 25

²³⁸ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 2

²³⁹ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 13

²⁴⁰ Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 5

could be a strong tool to enhance the perception of the real location, adding a layer of the past to it. This does not mean that AR markers should be attached to the locations and used to discover the position of the triggering element like in some other locative apps²⁴¹. The process of playing music when in proximity to the precise spot is more interesting and incisive. Taking as an example 'The Ruling Family' tour, it is believed that using visual augmented reality in some of the stops could help recreate the atmosphere of the late-medieval city. In particular, attaching some visual information to the eighth stop of the Paduan itinerary might complement the aural experience. There, users are told that they are in front of the only remaining 14th-century section of the *Reggia* (fig.14), which at the time was completely different than what is seen today. However, it might be difficult for the public to visualize a 1300s palace in its original shape. Upgrading this stop with some digital reproduction of how the Carrarese house might have looked could escalate the immersive experience, making it more significant and accurate.

In *Hidden Cities*, the creators «made no intention to invent an 'authentic' period voice»²⁴². Once again, the fact that the guides are using current-day language helps demolish the boundary that is usually present in historical storytelling. Though, to raise the level of immersion, speakers should have the correct accent of the city from where the fictional characters originate. For example, in the Italian version of Giovanni's itineraries around Florence, the character speaks with the typical Tuscan accent. This helps users to perceive its narration as authentic. On the contrary, in the English version of the tour, the person who recorded the audio was an English native speaker. The fact that he does not pronounce Italian terms correctly might contrast with the setting of the story, and therefore, users might find it more complicated to picture the wool worker in the Florentine scenario. Thus, in *Hidden Padova*, it was preferred to use an Italian speaker even in the English path. This might be

²⁴¹ Szabo, V., *Guide Books and Mobile Applications.*, p. 107

²⁴² Nevola, F., Rosenthal, D., *Locating Experience in the Renaissance City*, p. 197

a worthy experiment to make in a real *Hidden Cities* app to understand if this minor change would help to increase the credibility of the virtual guide. Music is another element that captivates and engages users. Accompanying the guides' voices with relevant sounds might help to better evoke past scenarios²⁴³. Hearing a more complex soundscape might «provide whole new ways of experiencing, understanding, and feeling history»²⁴⁴. Notably, a clear voice is more understandable, however, the virtual guide's narration could be perceived to be detached from past reality. Adding background sounds to the characters' voices could make the story more accurate. Moreover, as the noises would be different from those heard today, they would help to better locate the experience in the early-modern epoch.

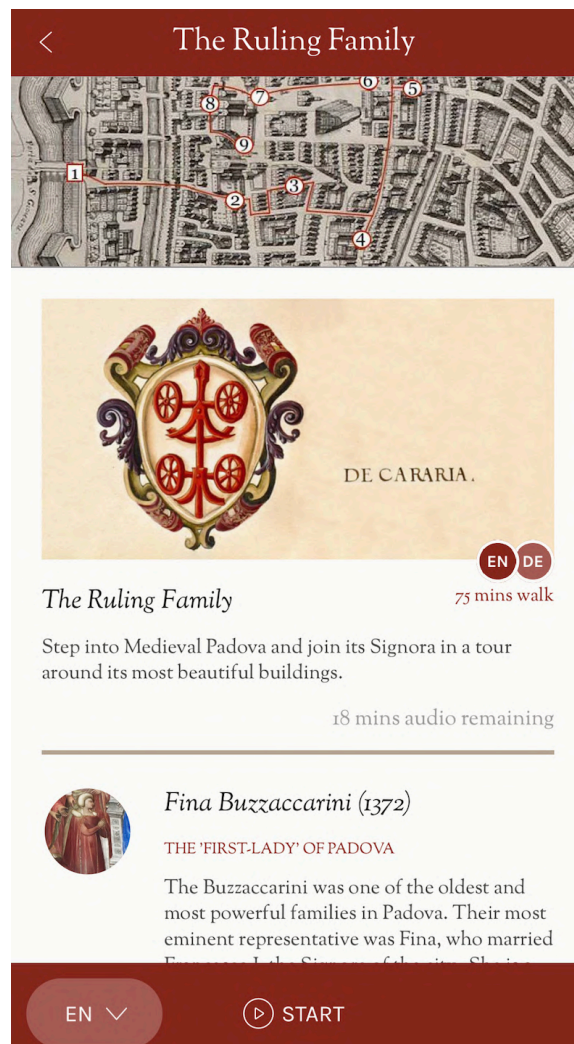


Fig.17 Screenshot from *Hidden Padova*

²⁴³ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 24

²⁴⁴ Graham, S., et al., *Hearing the Past*, p. 224

The second augmented reality feature is that of the ancient map. This element is not present in the project proposed by this paper, as the didactical Content Management System does not include it. To get around the technical constraint, in *Hidden Padova*, the ancient map was uploaded as the 'Static map image' that appears on the top of the page dedicated to the specific itinerary (fig.17). The users may not be able to navigate through it, as it is a fixed image, however, they can have a glimpse at what the itinerary would look like in early-modern Padua urban setting. In the published applications, the flexible interchange between the modern GPS map and the old one creates an interesting contrast, from which users can learn about the past layout of the cities. However, it is possible to dynamically interact with it only when inside one of the itineraries. If possible, overlaying the initial, general GPS view (fig. 18) with the ancient map would perhaps increase its legibility and usefulness.

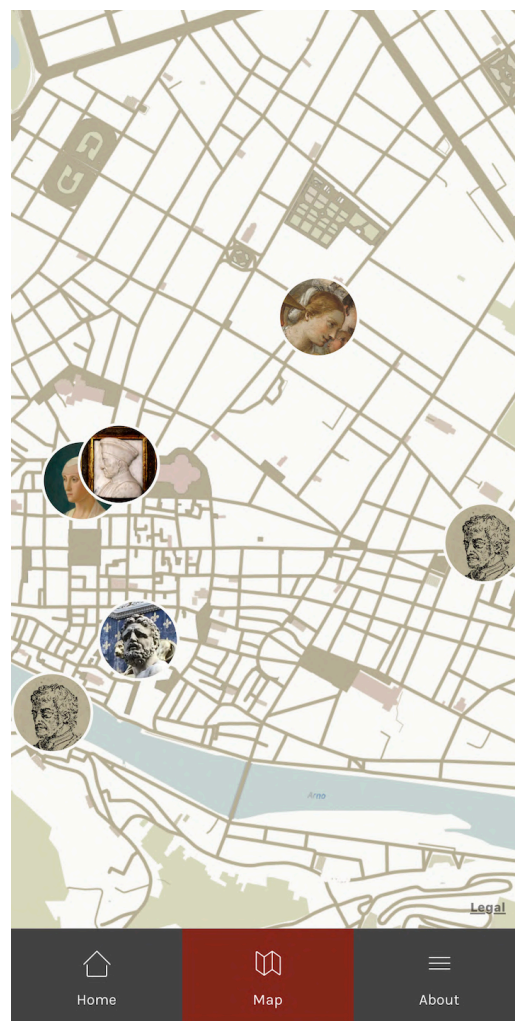


Fig.18 Screenshot from *Hidden Florence*

Users could spend some time navigating the map itself, focusing on what is depicted and not on the itinerary they are following. People do not usually think of maps when thinking of ancient artifacts, as they are perceived to be 'simple' representations of an environment²⁴⁵. This small variation might benefit the Renaissance maps to enter the field of 'cultural heritage' as well.

Jo Morrison states that the «best heritage apps are sophisticated but simple, easy to use»²⁴⁶. The *Hidden Cities* project is based on some highly refined technical tools implemented in a user-friendly application. Its tidy and intuitive layout makes users easily understand what steps they have to take to make this app work. However, the audios lack accessibility as they are not dynamic enough. As of now, it is possible to pause the narrations, however, there is no way to go back and forth to maybe listen again to something that was not clear at first stream. Moreover, even if this project is based on the concept of aural augmented reality, providing users with the possibility to read what their guides are saying might result in a generally better understanding. These changes are thought to be essential to increase the apps' accessibility and, therefore, to reach a wider range of people who can engage in this experience and learn from it.

Overall, the *Hidden Cities* apps have a rather uncommon way to involve users in a discourse about the past. Through the voice of the 'contemporary' virtual guides and people's movement, this project «represent[s] the world as a culture and not simply mapped locations»²⁴⁷. These applications show how important it is to reconnect the past to objects that are located in the present-day urban environment²⁴⁸. This enables both researchers and users to better understand the story of the various figures that inhabited a place at different times. It also better contextualizes the material traces of history in the urban

²⁴⁵ Whitters, C.W.J., *Place and the 'Spatial Turn'*, p. 649

²⁴⁶ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, p. 16

²⁴⁷ Bodenhamer, D.J., *The Potential of Spatial Humanities*, p. 23

²⁴⁸ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 8

environments. Hopefully, more town governments will understand the potential of site-specific storytelling in complementing their heritage infrastructures and will embed these tools in their cultural and tourism strategies²⁴⁹. It might be useful to implement a consistent satisfaction survey in the app to prove the potential of the Hidden Cities project. To comply with the GDPR, little data about users can be collected. However, spontaneous answers from people could be used to clearly show the potential of this location-based, AR app «for the production, consumption, and management of visitors' experience»²⁵⁰.

²⁴⁹ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Cities*, p. 225

²⁵⁰ Nevola, F., et al., *Hidden Florence Revealed?*, p. 372

5. Conclusion

As cities are the backbone of European history²⁵¹, greater attention should be paid to their spaces and the behaviors of their inhabitants. Some of the new practices of historical studies have focused on these essential aspects to broaden the awareness of the past as well as the impact that History can have on modern society²⁵². Moreover, thanks to digital technologies it is now possible to explore and visualize space and time in a way that was not possible with analog tools. Taking inspiration from other fields, historians have realized that location-aware devices enabled with some AR features are useful to engage the physical surroundings in an innovative way²⁵³.

The previous chapters of this paper explained the ideas underlying the recent interest in public spaces. Moreover, the *Hidden Cities* project was used as a case study to explain how the 'Spatial and Mobility Turn' has influenced contemporary historical research. Proposing a new itinerary and explaining the analysis of the sources on which it has been developed, should prove that Public and Digital History programs do not focus merely on communication and media²⁵⁴; on the contrary, deep research is essential to the creation of accurate and pleasant experiences. As *Hidden Padova* exploits site-specific narratives, it aims to demonstrate that it is important for people to learn about the past inside the classrooms and in connection with the urban environment. Indeed, standing on the site where an event took place²⁵⁵ amplifies people's perception of that fact.

²⁵¹ Calabi, D., *The Role of Digital Visualization*, p. 13

²⁵² Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 4

²⁵³ Morrison, J., *How AR, Apps, and Digital Placemaking*, pp. 2-4

²⁵⁴ Cauvin, T., *New Field, Old Practices*, p. 34

²⁵⁵ Farman, J., *Site-specificity*, p. 7

Normally, people are used to visiting historical sites, however, their experience can be enhanced by interactive digital technologies²⁵⁶. Apps like *Hidden Cities* have the possibility to attach an «infinite number of non-simultaneous histories»²⁵⁷ to the streets and buildings of many cities. If they are easy and interesting to use, they can reach a wide range of people and not only entertain but also instruct them. The goal of this project can be achieved if it communicates efficiently with its users by sharing strong, uncommon, and credible stories. Working with digital technologies and with the public, these media devices should be continuously improved in order to provide a valid tool to explore the past. It is important to pay attention to the people, to understand what they need, and how to make these tools as accessible and user-friendly as possible. If these principles are met, the result is that site-specific storytelling enabled by digital technologies can enhance the history-making process and enlarge its public.

²⁵⁶ Sayer, F. *Public History*, p. 15

²⁵⁷ Presner, T., et al., *Hypercities*, p. 28

Appendix

The itinerary 'The Ruling Family' develops around the urban center of the city of Padua. As seen in Fig. 19, nine locations are included and the tour lasts approximately one hour. In this section, the trail will be described stop by stop. First, the main themes debated in each location will be stated. Next, the scripts of both Fina's audio and the 'Discover More' will be reported. Readers will have, therefore, a complete overview of what happens in the app. It is important to notice that the itinerary of *Hidden Padova* is provided both in English and Italian. However, in this section, only the English scripts will be included.

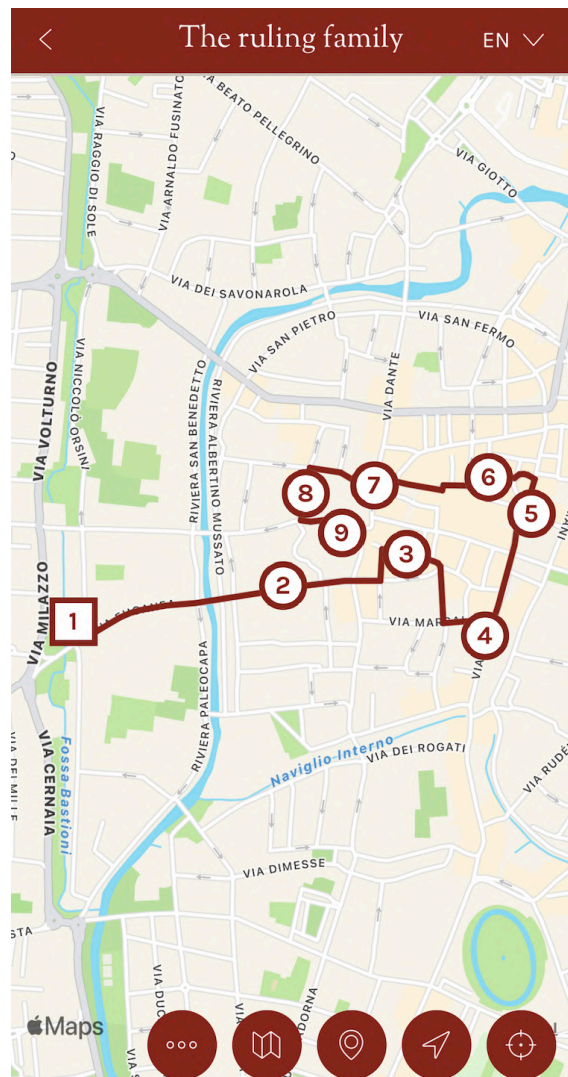


fig.19 Screenshot from *Hidden Padova*

The experience begins with an **introductory audio** which introduces the users to the scenario. A prestigious gentleman is on his way to the city of Padua when he is approached by a man who introduces himself as the servant of the *Signore*. He instructs the visitor that the lord will not be able to meet him at San Giovanni's Gate, as previously established. However, someone will be there to bring him to his temporary accommodation.

Servant:

«Sir, good morning! I am a humble servant of the magnificent *Signore* Francesco I. Uh, I am out of breath because of the rush to get to You. Fortunately, I found you before You reached the entrance to our city.

The lord himself sends me to warn you that he will not be able to meet You at San Giovanni's Gate. For other pressing commitments, he must break the promise he had made to You. Do not worry, though, You will be guaranteed a welcome worthy of your illustrious name.

I have to leave You now. I'm running back to the da Carrara *Domus*. Someone really needs to work here! I'll see You later Sir, may God be with You!»

Once in front of the city gate, Fina Buzzaccarini starts to speak. She is the wife of Francesco I da Carrara, the lord of Padua, and she is going to be the gentleman's chaperon. At the **first stop**, the users are introduced to the situation of the city in the year 1372, when the tour takes place. Both Fina (fig. 20) and the 'Discover More' audio (fig. 21) explain the tough situation that Padua was in at the time. A war with Venice was about to start, and the lord and his *consilium* were gathered in the 'General Council' to decide how to act.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Pleased to see you, Sir!

I am *Madonna* Fina Buzzaccarini, the bride of the *Signore* of Padova, Francesco the Elder da Carrara. Did You have a safe journey to arrive in our beautiful city? I hope You are not too tired and can to make it at least as far as Your accommodation.

My lord, Francesco, offers his apologies for not coming to welcome You in person here at the city gate, as he had promised You in his last letter. It is about the difficult matter with Venice. The *Signore* and all his most trusted men are gathered in the 'General Council' to decide whether to start a war or make peace. So Francesco has instructed me, his faithful and devoted bride, to meet you here and take you to the place where you'll be staying. You have no idea how much thought the tensions with Venice give me. If it were up to me, we would always be at peace, just as the good Lord wants. But my husband says that sometimes war is a good thing. We must defend our people, even those in the countryside far from Padova, and claim our rights and strength. Never again will our city be invaded, and our people abandoned in the hands of the enemy. The Carraresi have sworn to protect Padova, and they act only to honor this promise.

But enough of these worries, You should not be concerned. You are here to be our guest, and we will show you only the best of Padova. You have no idea how generous my spouse is to all the foreigners who come to visit us. He demanded to have the most sumptuous room prepared for You. Come on, follow me. As promised, I will take You to the entrance of Your Inn, the *Hospitium Bovis*. You can trust me. I am a true *padovana*, and I have always loved walking these streets since I was a child. You are in good hands!»

Expert Insight: The difficult matter with Venice

«By 1372, Francesco I also known as *il Vecchio*, the Elder, had ruled the city of Padua for 22 years. In this period, he managed to consolidate the da Carrara dynasty by making himself well-liked by his citizens and forging strong relationships with many other states. His goal was for his city to assume regional dimensions and centrality in the political framework of the time. Since the Scaligeri of Verona had lost power and Venice was interested in dominating the sea, there would have been no problem, according to him, in expanding both West and East.

However, in those very years, the Serenissima Republic lost several strategic territories in the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, they began to consider the

control of the mainland as essential and, thus, to fear Francesco's expansionist wishes. Taking the issue of not-well-defined borders as an excuse, the two States declared each other war in 1372. The conflict was resolved the following year with Venice's victory, which imposed harsh peace terms on the Paduans. From here, the slow but inexorable decline of the *Signoria* of the Carraresi began. They succumbed right to Venice in 1405.»



Fig.20 Stop 1 'Found It' Image



Francesco I da Carrara

Fig.21 Stop 1 'Discover More' Image

At the **second stop**, people enter the heart of the narration and are told more about the society of Padua during the *Signoria*. As some of the houses in via del Vescovado are similar to each other, to make users clearly understand which house they should stop in front of, it was chosen to upload a 'Found It' picture, the face depicted in the portal's cornice (fig. 22). Halting in front of her presumed family house, Fina narrates the achievements of her relators. She makes it clear that a person could be successful only by supporting the da Carrara. Her grandfather, father, and brother were all within the circle of the lords' close friends, and thanks to this coalition, they covered important roles in the city's government. At the end of her narration, Fina introduces the theme of the female condition in the Middle Ages. Bearing in mind that she was a privileged noblewoman, people understand that she had essential tasks within her family. She had to take care of the children's education and support

her husband in all of his decisions. This topic is better clarified in the 'Discover More' audio (fig. 23), which focuses on women's roles in 14th-century Padua and Fina's impact on her contemporary society. She was a charitable person, who inspired others to care for social problems and needs as well.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Look, this is the house of my birth family, the Buzzaccarini. Isn't it *bella*? From the time of the Romans, with pride, all my ancestors have brought prestige and magnificence to the family, and I try to do the same.

Immense virtues had my grandfather and my beloved father. They understood from the very beginning what honors the house of da Carrara was worthy of. They devoted their whole lives to the service of the lords de Padova and solved various diplomatic matters on their behalf. My *nonno* told me great stories about Jacopo I, the only valiant man capable of saving our city from the hands of its own citizens.

Like a true Buzzaccarini, my brother Arcano also chose to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors and be loyal to my husband, Francesco I, and his descendants. He has been admitted into the inner circle of the *Signore's* friends and is now a captain in his army.

Ah, what an honor to have been chosen to be Francesco's bride. Among all the noblewomen who aspired to him, my *Signore* wanted me because he is aware of the loyalty of my family, and how much the *padovani* have always cherished us. So I, faithful wife, have the task of devoting what is left of this life to honor my spouse and the da Carrara family.

For my children, I have chosen the best instructors, who have been brought in from all parts of the world. What they must truly understand is that they have a duty to strive for their name. Especially Francesco the Younger, my only boy, who will have to continue to make Padova great as his ancestors did before him.»

Expert Insight: I have the task to honor my spouse

«In the 1300s, women weren't completely subject to male power, a condition that characterized the following centuries. Indeed, at that time there was a clear distinction between the roles of the husband and those of the wife, who was the focus of domestic life. It is interesting to recall that medieval women were granted the rights to property and the right to paid work. Due to epidemics and wars, the 14th century was characterized by high mortality rates, especially for men. In the event of the premature death of the head of the family, women could be executors of wills, becoming the point of reference for the continuation of family life.

Fina Buzzaccarini was a pious and generous woman, who grew up in Padua. Her childhood house was in the central Saint Urban district, which was very close to this street. She had two main passions: investing in land property, and building and decorating churches and chapels in the city. As a charitable and art-sensitive woman, she became a role model in the court of the da Carrara. After her, various noblewomen became engaged in solving social problems and needs.»



Fig.22 Stop 2 'Found It' Image



Buzzaccarini's Coat of Arms

Fig.23 Stop 2 'Discover More' Image
From: Threecharlie, Wikimedia

During stops three, four, and five, users learn about the story of the coming to power of the da Carrara family. Standing in front of the authentic house of the *Podestà*, at the **third stop**, Fina compares the *Signoria* to the municipality that

ruled until 1318 (fig. 24). Through her biased comment, people understand that the main difference between the two forms of government is the number of people that were ruling. While during the commune hundreds of people operated all together, with the establishment of the lordship, the plurality of forces was eliminated. Fina says that during the municipality, there had been numerous clashes between the different parties, as everybody was interested in their own good, and not in the bene *comune* anymore. The 'researcher' audio (fig. 25) clarifies that, although the *Signore* was the only one in power, it was still impossible for the da Carrara to rule completely alone. The most important institutions of the commune still existed during their lordship. For example, the *Podestà* was still appointed every year and he was assigned the house where users are brought to. The choice of location was made also because of the wall paintings that decorate this building, as floral and geometric paintings were typical adornments in the 14th century.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«I hope You don't mind if, on the way to your shelter, I sometimes stop to show you some beautiful buildings and to tell you about the history of my beloved city. I am sure my *Signore* would have done the same thing, proud as he is of what his family has done for Padova. And how could he not be?

Before the da Carrara family, Padova was an independent commune. Many men ruled all together. They met in numerous assemblies and councils and discussed any matter of public interest. To resolve it, there were votes, and what the majority preferred was done. But tell me, in Your opinion, is it possible for hundreds of men to agree on matters of life and death? And above all, is it possible that they are all disinterested in their own good, to govern the city and its people well? Perhaps You will tell me about similar situations that continue to exist elsewhere. But here in Padova, everyone was minding his own business, not really caring about the people anymore. In doing so, the commune lost the city twice. Ghibelline tyrants came to control and slaughter the *padovani*. There was also the *Podestà*, the chief magistrate, who was a foreigner like you and was supposed to provide order and dialogue, but few

listened to him. Even now we have a Venetian *Podestà*; this is his home. But now foreigners no longer decide for us. After that Veronese Can della Scala subdued us for many years, only the Carraresi were able to defeat him with strength and courage. They brought Padova back into the hands of its rightful citizens. Francesco has a large number of advisors, all of whom have sworn loyalty and friendship to him. However, in the end, everybody knows that only his decision matters.»

Expert Insight: They swore loyalty to him

«Up until the year 1318, Padua identified itself as a Guelph municipality. However, there started to be great clashes between the most powerful families in the city. Eventually, there was a complete split between the Guelphs and the Ghibelline. Having legitimately become the *Signori* of Padua, the Carraresi wanted to suppress the contrapositions. Therefore, they started to banish their enemies. In the end, only the *amicus* of the da Carrara were left in the city. Francesco I only had a few collaborators as part of its *Consilium Domini*, and most of them were linked to the *Signore* through kinship relations.

Although with the establishment of the *Signoria* Carrarese the plurality of forces was overcome, it was still not possible for the lord to rule completely alone. He still had to rely on some institutions. However, their function was no longer legislative. They simply helped with the State administration. The *Podestà*, the chief magistrate who changed every year, was assigned this house. The floral and geometrical wall paintings are typical decorations of 14th-century houses. »



Fig.24 Stop 3 'Found It' Image



Padova's Emblem since the 12th Century

Fig.25 Stop 3 'Discover More' Image

Stop four is in front of the portal of *Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Servi*, a building that Fina herself sponsored. The construction of the church began right in the year the story is set, 1372. Usually, it is accessed from via Roma, through the door under the porches. However, those two elements, the porch, and the main portal, were added some centuries after the construction of the main body of the church. The choice to place the listening point in front of this lesser-known door was made also to keep the audience away from traffic on the city's busiest street. People can calmly listen to the app's audio, without the background noise. Here, one of the Carrarese family's weaknesses, internal betrayal, is explained through two different episodes. Fina (fig. 26) tells about the failed assassination attempt on her husband, Francesco I. Whereas, on the 'Discover More' audio (fig. 27), Nicolò da Carrara's betrayal is explained. At the beginning of the resistance against the Veronese army, Nicolò had fought alongside his family, however, he suddenly decided to betray the city and side with Cangrande della Scala, who managed to win, and strictly controlled Padua for almost twenty years. His story is essential because his palaces once stood in the place where the Church of *Santa Maria dei Servi* was built, as Fina wanted it to be an act of redemption so that God could forgive the da Carrara family for these sins.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Do not think, Sir, that being part of such an eminent family is an easy thing. Oh no no, the worst enemies are always inside your home. I hope it is not the same for You, but among the da Carrara family, there has always been evil competition. Many of them committed acts unworthy of their name and stained their hands with blood.

I also risked losing my husband, You know. That vile uncle of his, Jacopino III, with whom Francesco ruled the city for the first few years, was jealous of how able and beloved my *Signore* was. And that wicked wife of his, Margherita Gonzaga, instigated Jacopino to get rid of my husband before I could even give him a male heir. They had even bribed a close friend of Francesco's, who was supposed to poison him. But my spouse is far more intelligent than his uncle and easily discovered the betrayal. He sent the traitor's wife back to Mantova and imprisoned his uncle. For the past seventeen years, Jacopino has been in the impregnable fortress in Monselice and he will never come back out alive.

For may God forgive the sins of our corrupted family members, I myself am having a church built. It will be right here, where there were the palaces of Nicolò, the first traitor of the da Carrara who went with the *veronesi*. I pray so much that my son, Francesco the Younger will not have to reckon with such anguish. I hope that he will understand that the dynasty matters more than anything else; and that when it is time, everyone will get what they deserve.»

Expert Insight: The worst enemies are inside the house

«At the beginning of the resistance against the Veronese army, Nicolò da Carrara, grandfather of Francesco I, had fought alongside his family. However, he suddenly decided to betray the city and side with Cangrande della Scala. It was also thanks to him that the Veronese conquered the fortified city of Este, and was able to threaten Padua dangerously. Eventually, Marsilio I was forced to offer possession of the city to his enemy. He reconquered Padua only ten years later, in 1337. After Nicolo's betrayal, the houses he owned were burned down and he and his direct descendants were exiled. Only his sons, Jacopo II

and Jacopino III managed to regain the trust of the da Carrara family and returned to the city. Later, they both became lords of Padua.

In 1372, Fina Buzzaccarini financed the erection of a church on the site where once were the possessions of Nicolò, the traitor. Once completed, this was handed over to the confraternity of the Servants of Mary.»



Fig.26 Stop 4 'Found It' Image



Fig.27 Stop 4 'Discover More' Image

Halfway through the itinerary, at **stop five**, users are brought to the Bo Tower where the gentleman that Fina is guiding around Padua is supposed to stay during his time in the city (fig. 28). This medieval *torre* was part of the complex of buildings owned by the da Carrara. Before becoming the *Hospitium Bovis*, the most luxurious Inn in town, it had been the family residence. In Particular, Jacopo I decided to move there once he became the 'general defender, protector, governor, and captain' of Padua (fig. 29). After praising the first *Signore*, Fina asks the visiting gentleman to continue their walk to tell him more about her family.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Here You are, Sir, at your accommodation, the *Hospitium Bovis* owned by the da Carrara family. Francesco wanted to have prepared for you the best room in the most luxurious Inn in Padova. I told you, no man is more generous than my *Signore*.

This building is one of the most well-known in the whole city. It has long been part of the Carraresi property and has only recently been transformed into an *albergo*. It was within these very walls that lived Jacopo, the first lord of Padova. As he was a clever and prudent man, he was interested only in the benefit of this city, unlike the other nobles who risked destroying it as they waged war against each other. The people of Padova themselves recognized Jacopo da Carrara as the only right man to settle the disputes and appointed him *Capitano Generale*. A wiser choice has never been made. He was the only one that could have been the worthy successor of Antenor, the brave Trojan, founder of our city. I was not yet born, but my *nonno* told me many times how everyone was desperate when the humble captain died. Jacopo I had ordered to open the doors of his house, of this very house in front of You. This way, everyone could enter. Not only to praise him but also to reproach him for his faults.

Oh, Sir, I beg You to grant my request to continue this pleasant walk with me. I am enjoying visiting my city so very much today. In the meantime, I can continue to tell You the stories of the one family that made Padova great.

Please, leave Your belongings here, I will be waiting for You at the house of the family della Seta. You can't miss it, You will see a silk drape etched in the wall.»

Expert Insight: The people recognized him as the right man

«When Cangrande della Scala became lord of *Verona* and began an expansionist policy, things changed dramatically for northern Italy. In 1311, the Veronese conquered the city of Vicenza and later succeeded in invading most of the countryside, and threatened Padua itself. Under the pressure of war and internal conflicts, people felt the need to have one single man in government. Jacopo da Carrara was a skillful and prudent man and had succeeded in creating the conditions for him to be seen by the people as the guarantor of freedom. In July 1318, Jacopo was appointed 'general defender, protector, governor, and captain' of Padua. He decided to move to one of the three palaces owned by the Papafava branch of his family, which were located

in the present-day site of the University. The family changed its residence only in the 1340s under Ubertino I.»



Fig.28 Stop 5 'Found It' Image



Jacopo I da Carrara's Coat of Arms

Fig.29 Stop 5 'Discover More' Image
From: Biblioteca Estense Universitaria

The **sixth stop** is in front of the house of the della Seta family. Although the building has undertaken many changes, a few medieval elements have survived. In particular, the engraved plaque on top of the central column of the porch belongs to the 1300s. It represents a silk drape tied in the middle, and it is therefore perfect as a triggering item used to speak about the cloth industry during the da Carrara *Signoria*. Fina lauds the beauty of the clothes made in Padua (fig. 30). As she is a woman, she does not know much about how these fabrics were realized. However, she assures that clothes as beautiful as these are made in no other State. The 'Discover More' audio (fig. 31) explains that Francesco I and his predecessors decided to initiate a policy of protection of local artifacts to transform their state into an industrial one. They especially cared for the wool industry, which underwent great advancement.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Oh, here You are, welcome back. I hope You did not get lost walking alone through these narrow alleys.

Please excuse me, but the devout Lombardo had mentioned to me a wonderful fabric that his brothers, experienced silk merchants, had just brought home. I

knew I would find Lombardo outside his house. Besides studying and writing, he likes to talk with anyone. So, I thought I would take advantage of our walk to remind him to bring the red silk with him the next time he comes to visit my husband. He often comes to our palace because the *Signore* likes to surround himself with men with whom he can discuss literature, philosophy, and history. Also, both Francesco and Lombardo are fond of playing dice.

But let me ask You a personal question, have You ever worn clothes made in Padova? Oh, You have no idea how fine the *padovani* fabrics are. Francesco cares very much about all the stuff made by the citizens of Padova. He supports all artisans and merchants, especially those who deal in textiles. Mills have been built near every bridge and in many of the countryside towns. I asked Francesco if he didn't think all these mills were too many, but he replied that to have soft and compact clothes, they have to be treated with these machines that work only through the mills. Don't ask me for more information though, I don't know anything about these jobs. But Sir, please believe a *Madonna* like me, who has been lucky enough to wear clothes created from the finest fabrics in the world. Neither the English, the Tuscans, nor even the Veronese produce such soft cloth. Try going to one of the workshops or the market in the squares nearby, You will surely agree with me!»

Expert Insight: Mills have been built

«When the da Carrara family came to power in the early 14th century, the economy was heavily based on agriculture and the trade of foreign products. Above all, the lords of Padua sponsored the textile guild, especially the wool one. Although this was a privately initiated industry, the lords directed and regulated it with strict laws. Many fulling mills were built in the city and the countryside. Francesco, I agreed to the creation of a '*Fondaco dei panni del Signore*', the warehouse of all the cloths produced in Padova, and the site of the administration of this market. Most of the people based their financial resources on wool production and trade. The della Seta family was one of the most important families in the textile trade. The house where they used to live changed a lot over the centuries. Nevertheless, the two stone plates on the

external wall date back to the 14th century. The one on the left depicts the family's coat of arms. Whereas, in the one on the right, there is a knotted silk cloth, another symbol of the family.»

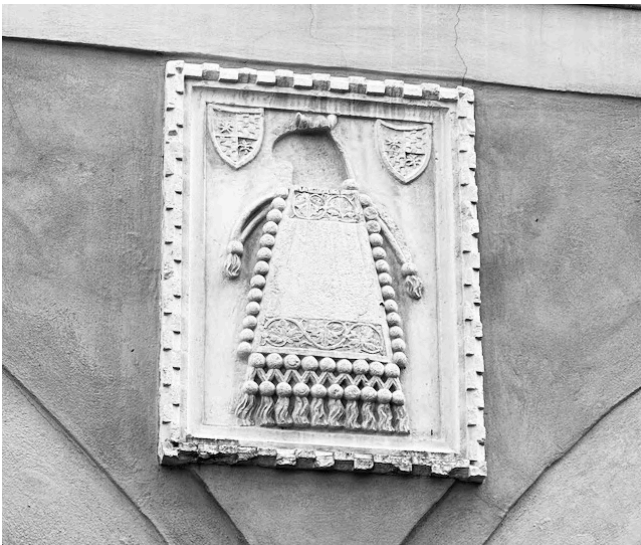


Fig.30 Stop 6 'Found It' Image

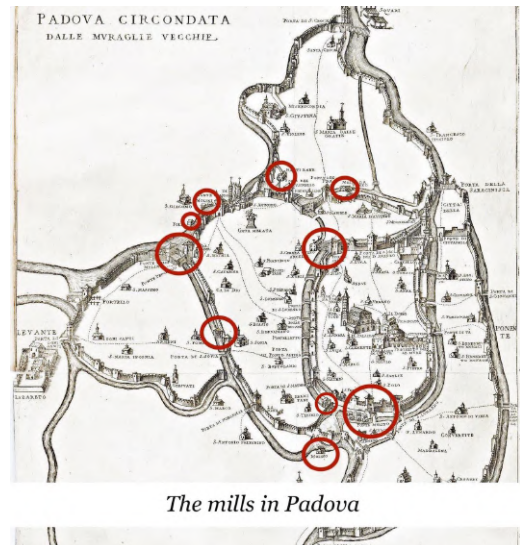


Fig.31 Stop 6 'Discover More' Image
From: Wellcome Images, Wikimedia

Another characteristic feature of medieval Padua was its University. As explained in the 'researcher' audio (fig. 33) at **stop seven**, even if the *Studio Patavino* was an independent institute, many men that studied or worked there actively participated in the administration of the state. Scientists, intellectuals, and artists contributed to enriching the city of Padua. Fina (fig. 32) asserts that, as her husband is very kind and hospitable, many of the sages who attend the university decided to create some artifacts to honor the family. She takes the astronomical clock made by the Dondi as an example of the magnificent things that were built during the Carrara era.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Tell me, why did You choose to visit our city? To get to know the mighty *Signore* who governs it? Or because You are eager to meet the cultured men who live and work here? Let me guess, You want to go to Arquà to pay a visit to the poet Petrarch. I am sure that Your wishes will be granted, and that You will have the opportunity to discuss with some of the most intelligent men You

have ever met. You will surely know what an educated man Francesco is and that he always wants to surround himself with well-read people to learn new things. He is interested in bringing wise men to Padova to increase the love for culture of all its citizens. So, many of those wise men decide to stop here, in our city, to continue seeing our family and to become teachers of the young people who attend the University here. You know, it has been more than a hundred years now that young men from all over the world have flocked here, to Padova, to be instructed in law, science, and theology. Every day of Your staying here, You will hear conversations on every subject that is dear to You. Who knows, maybe even a distinguished Sir like You will learn something new in Padova.

Given the *Signore's* kindness and hospitality, many of these sages are grateful to him. Therefore, they create great works to honor the family. Like this clock. The Dondi family created it just for Padova, and Ubertino decided to put it on this tower. It tells you the precise minute, hour, day, and month. It even shows astronomical constellations. Have You ever seen something so ingenious during Your many travels?

Please, follow me. I will allow You to enter the house of the da Carrara family. We will pass through this door under the clock, and go through the largest court. I want to show You my favorite spot.»

Expert Insight: Francesco likes to learn new things

«The Paduan University had been established at least as early as 1222. It was an independent institute where young men from all over the world were trained. Initially, law courses were taught, however, classes in medicine, sciences, arts, and theology were integrated soon. The organization of the University has not changed since its formation: even with the da Carrara, this remained a free association of students and teachers. However, the Carraresi lords, especially Francesco I, cared a lot about the Institute, as they were well-educated. In fact, there was a deep connection between the government and the University. Many teachers also occupied important roles in state management and administration. In the 14th century, the University of Padova

did not have a unique location. Students and teachers met in different places, mostly at the houses of the professors themselves. Today's seat, which is located where the *Hospitium Bovis* was at the epoch, was established only at the end of the 15th century.»

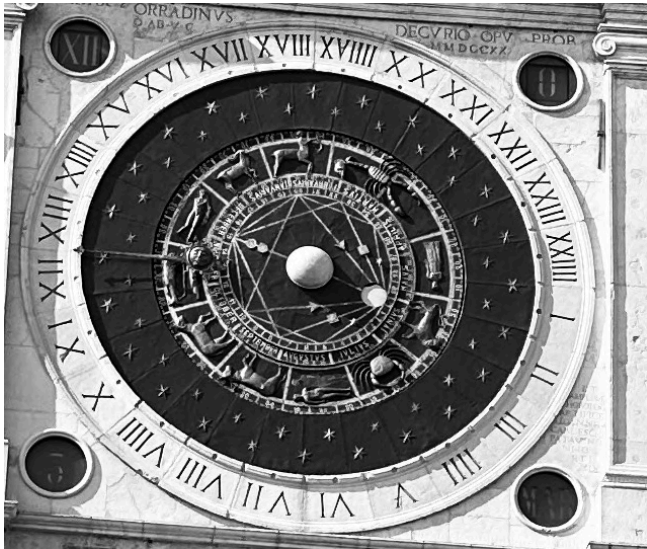


Fig.32 Stop 7 'Found It' Image



Fig.33 Stop 7 'Discover More' Image

After passing through piazza del Capitaniato, which used to be the main courtyard of the Carraresi Palace, at the **eighth stop** users are brought in front of the last remaining section of the *Reggia*. From the street, the loggia is visible through one of the entrance arches. This was the largest profane pictorial cycle ever made in Europe up to that moment. This was the oldest part of the complex, the one that had been constructed by Ubertino I in 1343. Initially, this was meant to be the mere house of the *Signore* and its family. However, Jacopo II and Francesco I decided to increase its perimeter to include the offices of the State administration. The main topic covered both in Fina (fig. 34) and the 'Discovery More' audio (fig. 35) are paintings. The *Reggia* had been painted mostly by Guariento, but the most fascinating room, the room *degli Uomini Illustri*, has been realized by Giusto de' Menabuoi and inspired by Francesco Petrarca, a friend of Francesco I. It was decorated with the figures of thirty-six notorious men from ancient Rome, who had to be taken as an example by the men of the da Carrara family. This explanation is useful as an introduction to the last stop on the itinerary.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«It is thanks to the great-grandad of my spouse, Ubertino I da Carrara, that our family lives in these magnificent *Domus*. It was he who decided to move from the building where your *Hospitium* now is, to this wonderful house. Do not think that we keep all the rooms just for ourselves. Everything happens within these walls. It is here that my husband Francesco I holds assemblies with his *consilium*. All our servants and even our horses live here. You know, we also have our private chapel. I mean, for every event there is a dedicated room. It took a long time to build all this. When my *Signore* took me as his wife, in 1345, only this area where we now stand, the western one, was built. He and his father, Jacopo II, continued to build new buildings so that everything our family needs is here, within easy reach.

It is simple to get lost here. I sometimes get confused by the presence of so many people. Fortunately, I have found my favorite place where I can be quiet and reflect in solitude. It is this little garden. The rooms that overlook it, just beyond those columns You see, are where we live. I'm sure Francesco would love to show You some of our rooms. You would be impressed by the paintings he has had done. He always personally chooses all the scenes and calls the best artists to make his ideas become a reality. In his opinion, every subject that is depicted should instruct, and make the person who enters a room understand which is the right way to honor the da Carrara family. What a noble art, that of painting. I too am completely fascinated by it. Isn't it wonderful how some men can represent with their own hands all that God has created?»

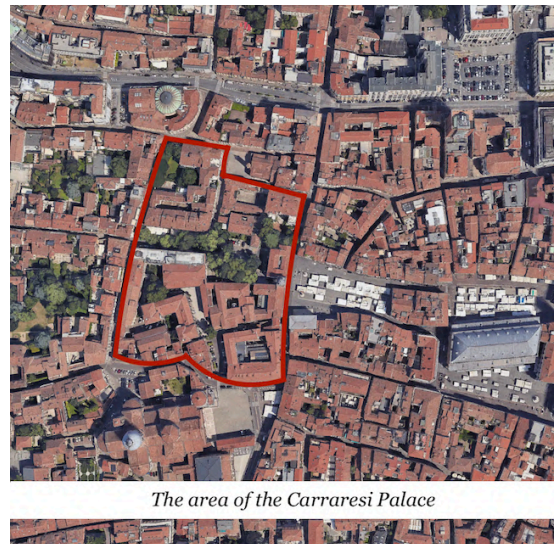
Expert Insight: Everything we need is within easy reach

«In 1343 Ubertino I, the third lord of Padua began the construction of the Carrarese palace. Jacopo II and Francesco I continued to enlarge it by adding more palaces and buildings. Not only it was the lord's home, but this was also the actual seat of government. A three-meter-high wall, now almost completely destroyed, surrounded the entire complex. It was an *insula* in its own right, a city within a city.

Many of the main rooms were frescoed with innovative pictorial cycles. The subjects were almost always secular, depicting some of the extraordinary exploits of the da Carrara family, or scenes from classical mythology. Of absolute prominence, was the room *degli Uomini Illustri*, the illustrious men, inspired by *De Viris Illustribus*, the unfinished work by Francesco Petrarca. The poet personally advised the lord of Padua on the choice of theme. The 36 men of Roman history depicted in this room had to be taken as an example by the men of the da Carrara family. This was the first extensive painting cycle based on a classical subject, but unfortunately, it has been completely redone over the centuries.»



Fig.34 Stop 8 'Found It' Image



The area of the Carraresi Palace

Fig.35 Stop 8 'Discover More' Image
From: GoogleEarth

At **stop nine** Fina brings the users in front of the Baptistry of the Cathedral of Padua. Here, she explains that she plans to commission the painter Giusto de' Menabuoi with a series of frescoes (fig. 36). The 'Discover More' audio (fig. 37) explains Fina's intention was to transform the Baptistry into the family's mausoleum to bind present and future Paduan citizens to the da Carrara family. Lastly, the users are invited to enter the *Battistero*, where they can see their guide painted on one of the walls and one of the best examples of medieval decorations in Padua.

Fina Buzzaccarini:

«Thank You Sir for kindly accompanying me all the way here. Whenever I leave my room, I like to come to the city's main church to thank the good God.

Pardon me, are You intrigued by this little building? It is the Baptistery. It fascinates me very much; I find it to be a mystical place. Any *padovano*, whether poor or rich, passes through these very walls and is bathed by the water of this spring. Only then is he forgiven of the original sin.

But tell me, would You mind giving me Your opinion on a subject that is very close to my heart? I think it is incumbent upon me to leave something to this city of mine, which has protected and loved me all my life. I was thinking about this place, so essential and powerful. I want to make it beautiful. Have You ever heard of the private chapel of the Scrovegni family? Yes, yes, You've heard of those people already, and You know that they were usurers and traitors. But Ugolino Scrovegni was admitted back into town because he has pledged allegiance to my *Signore*.

Dear me, it is a shame to admit it, but I am almost envious of that beautiful little church that they have all to themselves. I only happened to visit it once, and I remained speechless. I was told that a Tuscan painter, Giotto, frescoed it many years ago. At court, we have now another Florentine artist. Everyone appointed him as the disciple of that Giotto. His name is Giusto, and he has already worked for my husband and many of our friends.

Here tell me, would You ask this artist to paint the walls of this holy place? I would like something unique to be created here, something to remind people how great God is, and how powerful the da Carrara people are.

Do You mind if I get in? I'm going to pray. What will You do Sir? Go back to Your *Hospitium* or come in with me?»

Expert Insight: I want to make this place beautiful

«By order of Fina Buzzaccarini, the artist Giusto de' Menabuoi began painting the walls of the Baptistery of the Cathedral of Padua in 1375. Here, various scenes from the Old and New Testaments are depicted. To honor his patron, in the fresco titled 'St. John the Baptist Entrusts Fina to Our Lady' Giusto painted

the *Signora* of Padua kneeling to the left of the *Madonna*. Fina's project, however, did not stop with the decoration of this sacred place. In her intention, the Baptistery had to become her family's mausoleum. To have their tombs placed in a place so relevant to the lives of Paduan citizens is a powerful act. Her predecessors had preferred to be buried in secluded churches frequented by the city's elite. Fina and Francesco wanted to bind present and future Paduan citizens to the da Carrara family. Thus, they chose the Baptistery as the place of their burial. The funeral of the pious and generous Fina was sumptuous. It involved the whole community, who wanted to remember and celebrate her as a true queen.»



Fig.36 Stop 9 'Found It' Image



Inside the Baptistery



Fig.37 Stop 9 'Discover More' Image

Acknowledgments

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