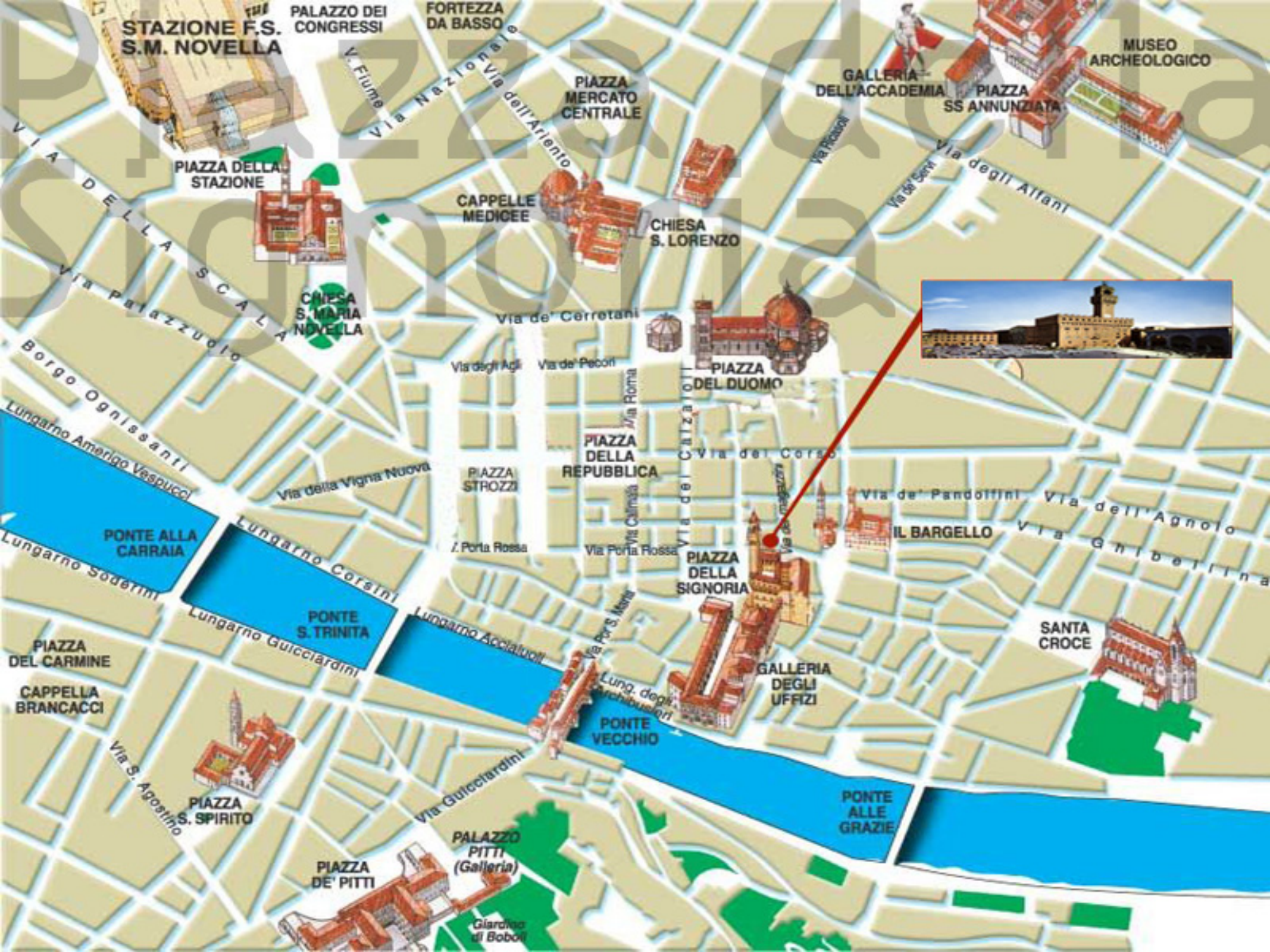


# Piazza della Signoria



Piazza della Signoria was first designed and supervised by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1299. It has been the political center of Florence, Italy since early in the republic's history (14th century). Today, the square is mainly dominated by the Palazzo Vecchio and the Loggia dei Lanzi. The tone is set by the sculptures placed here over the centuries, which have transformed the square into an open-air museum.







In 1494, Ferdinando de' Medici commissioned the bronze equestrian statue to be erected as a memorial to his dead father, Cosimo I. The work was done by Giambologna and it conveys the powerful foresight and dignity of the Grand Duke and also reinforces the ruling family's dynastic claims.



Grand Duke  
Cosimo I

As a tribute to Cosimo's naval feats in 1565, the city's biggest fountain was built with the sea god Neptune rising from the water. Bartolommeo Ammanati's sculpture was not very popular among Florentines however. They mockingly referred to the enormous sea god as the "biancone" meaning "big whitey"



Neptune  
Fountain



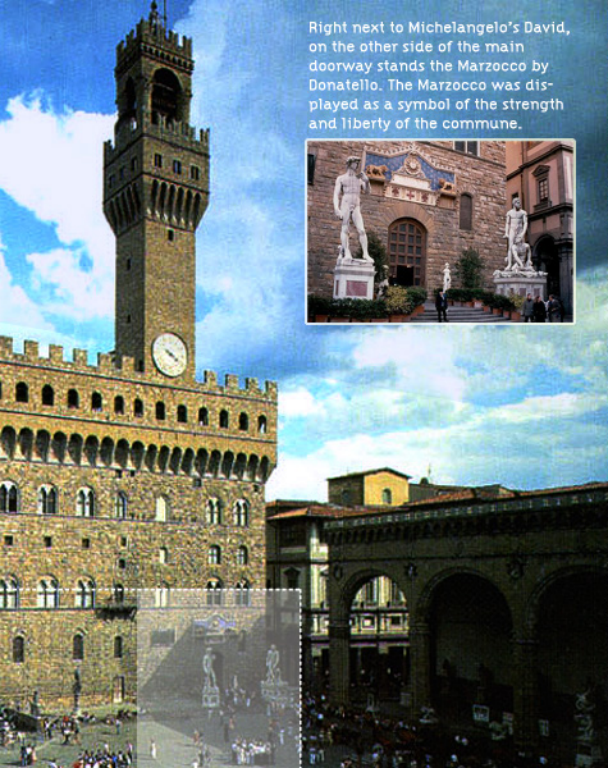
The front area of the Palazzo Vecchio is referred to as the arringheria. The famous David of Michelangelo is positioned to the side of the main doorway to symbolize the victory of democracy over tyranny. The statue of David portrays the ancient hero who killed the fierce opponent Goliath by using a simple slingshot. Michelangelo sculpted David as he would have looked before the fight, with a slingshot over his left shoulder, standing tall and focused. The statue was completed around 1504 and put on display in front of Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.



# David



Right next to Michelangelo's David, on the other side of the main doorway stands the Marzocco by Donatello. The Marzocco was displayed as a symbol of the strength and liberty of the commune.



Palazzo Vecchio (The Old Palace) is the main complex in Piazza della Signoria. In 1540, Cosimo I of the Medici family converted the palace into the residence of the Dukes of Florence. Major attractions inside Palazzo Vecchio include Room of the Lilies, Elenora di Toledo's Rooms, the inner courtyard with the Putto Fountain, and Michelangelo's statue of the Victory. In addition to a museum, parts of the city administration are still accommodated here today.

# Palazzo Vecchio



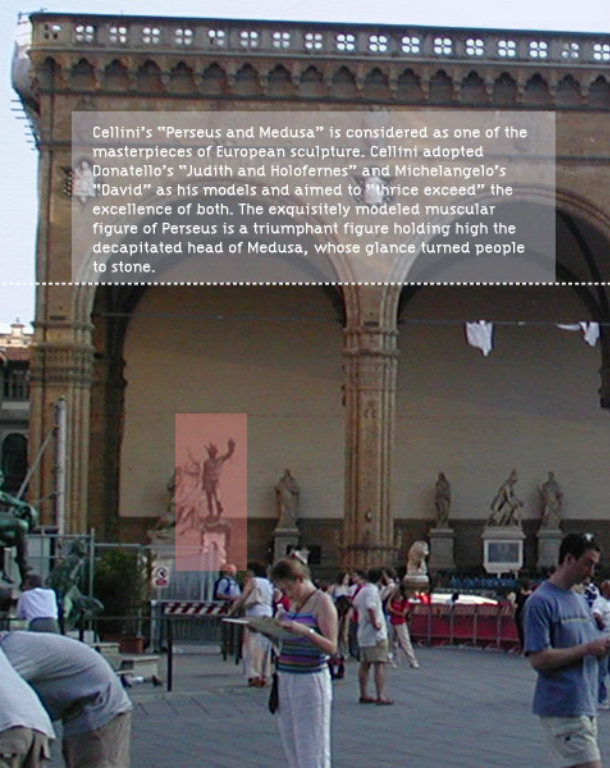
The Loggia di Lanzi was an outdoor auditorium facilitating public debate of politics. It is named after the bodyguards of Cosimo I. Lanzi refers to the Swiss guard of Lancers that Cosimo had stationed there at one time. Underneath the Loggia, you can find Cellini's **Perseus** and Giambologna's **Rape of the Sabines** among with many others.



# Loggia di Lanzi



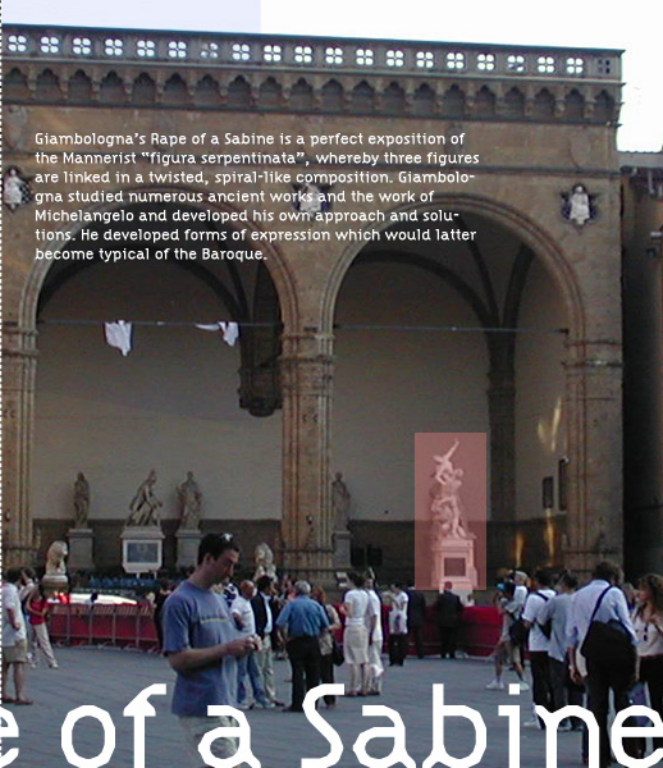
Cellini's "Perseus and Medusa" is considered as one of the masterpieces of European sculpture. Cellini adopted Donatello's "Judith and Holofernes" and Michelangelo's "David" as his models and aimed to "thrice exceed" the excellence of both. The exquisitely modeled muscular figure of Perseus is a triumphant figure holding high the decapitated head of Medusa, whose glance turned people to stone.



Perseus  
& Medusa




Giambologna's Rape of a Sabine is a perfect exposition of the Mannerist "figura serpentinata", whereby three figures are linked in a twisted, spiral-like composition. Giambologna studied numerous ancient works and the work of Michelangelo and developed his own approach and solutions. He developed forms of expression which would latter become typical of the Baroque.



# Rape of a Sabine





The Uffizi Gallery in Florence houses the richest and most important art collection in the world. The building, located in the Piazza della Signoria close to the banks of the River Arno, was designed in the 16th century by the painter and architect Giorgio Vasari to house Florence's government offices (uffizi), and was bequeathed to the gallery as the Medici art collection in 1737, on the condition that it should never leave the city. The gallery's wonderful collection is arranged to illustrate the evolving story of Florentine art. Some of the most famous pieces are: Botticelli's Birth of Venus, Titian's Venus of Urbino, Michelangelo's Holy Family and Piero della Francesca's Duke & Duchess of Urbino. Wander along the banks of the Arno towards the Ponte Vecchio.

# Uffizi Gallery