

# Montechiarugolo's Castle



MONTECHIARUGOLO CITY GUIDE

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# **MONTECHIARUGOLO'S CASTLE**







## THE HISTORY

Located on the left bank of the Enza stream, the **Castle of Montechiarugolo** is located in a strategic position, on the border between the territories of Parma and Reggio Emilia, resting on a natural embankment from which the toponym of its name derives.

The Castle was built by Guido Torelli in the fifteenth century, just over Enza stream, on the ruins of an ancient thirteenth-century nucleus that was destroyed in 1313: it is an important example of both fortified architecture and noble manor.

It is possible to go into the crenellated structure from the drawbridge and admire the wonderful frescoed halls, where it is rumoured the legendary Fairy Bema's ghost still roams.





Born as a military outpost of the Sanvitale family, Montechiarugolo's dates back to its origins in the early 14th century.

After altering events in 1371 the Duke of Milan, Gian Maria Visconti, donates Montechiarugolo to Guido Torelli, one of the best leaders of the Viscontea army.

In 1406 Guido Torelli was awarded the fiefdom of Montechiarugolo by the Visconti and he completely restructured the castle.



Subsequently, during the 1500s, the Castle reaches the maximum splendor and becomes destination of a close circle of artists and famous guests, such as Pope Paul III and King Frances I of France.

In this time Pomponio Torelli, an important humanist and man of letters, gave it new splendor: he undertook the reconstruction of the fort, enriching it and giving hospitality to painters, musicians and men of letters.

WITH THE DEATH OF HIS SON PIO, THE TORELLI LORDSHIP ENDED AND THE FORTRESS WAS CONQUERED BY THE DUCAL CHAMBER.

IN 1867 THE ITALIAN STATE SOLD THE MANOR TO ANTONIO MARCHI AND THE DESCENDANTS ARE STILL ITS OWNERS.



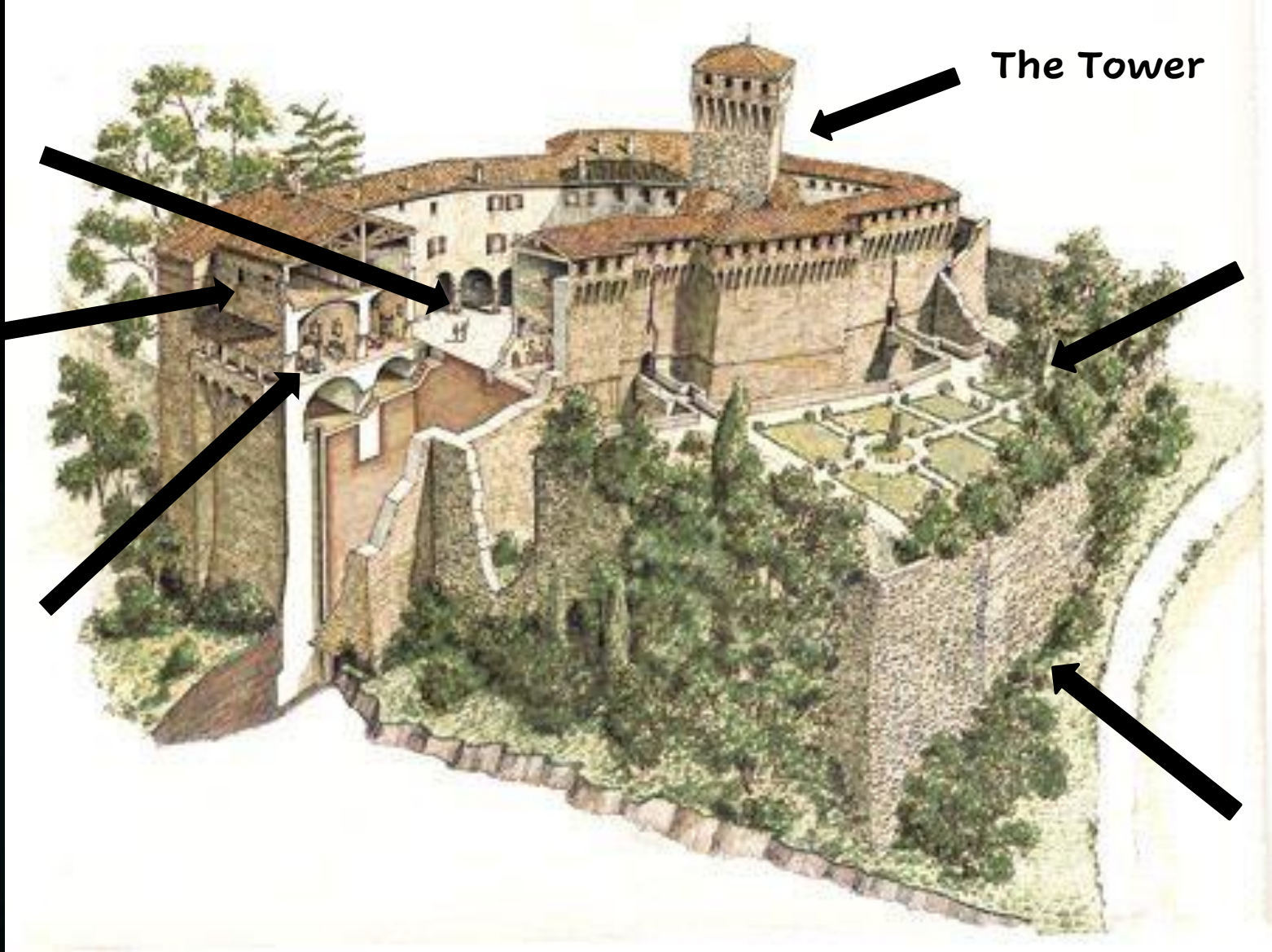
# The OWNERS OF THE CASTEL

- ▶ Sanvitale's family
- ▶ Visconti's family
- ▶ Torelli's family
- ▶ Marchi's family (current family)






The Courtyard  
The Loggia  
Accommodation



The Tower

The Garden

The Walls protection



A long paved road is a walkway flanked by walls with windows and Ghibelline battlements; inside there is a large hall frescoed by Baglione with heraldic coats of arms of the Torelli family: a loggia overlooks the wide panorama of Val d'Enza and a bedroom is derived from what was probably the famous library of Count Pomponio.

Characteristic is the contrast between the patrician elegance of these halls and the austere aspect of the external walls, which welcomes the visitor in a perfectly Renaissance atmosphere. Outside we find the central courtyard with its portico of terracotta columns which leads to the small courtyard of the well and the square tower.

From the central courtyard you can access the Castellazzo, a magnificent garden connected by a terracotta bridge, replacing the original drawbridge; magical place and suitable for recollection, during the spring period there is a splendid flowering of roses and peonies.



From the courtyard, reached via a bridge over the moat, a doorway leads to a huge vaulted hall, decorated with frescoes, heraldic emblems and grotesques attributed to Cesare Baglione.

Also in the "Sala degli Elementi" vaults are spangled with putti scattering flowers, attributed to a local 17th century painter. The bedroom is decorated with allegories of human endeavour and representations of the stages of day in the lunettes, dating back to the end 16th century.





# Inside the Castel

- ▶ Party hall
- ▶ Ancient room
- ▶ Mermaid hall
- ▶ Middle room
- ▶ The loggia
- ▶ Walkways







You can still see today the round turret with smoothed off corners, covered by a wooden roof with trusses, the lounge decorated in cave like forms, the rows of rooms and the splendid loggia with thin columns made of stone which support the ceiling made of wooden beams from the 14th Century.

Elegant is the design of the green and red lozenge within which are painted the Torelli and Visconti stems, which decorates the wall and the parapet.

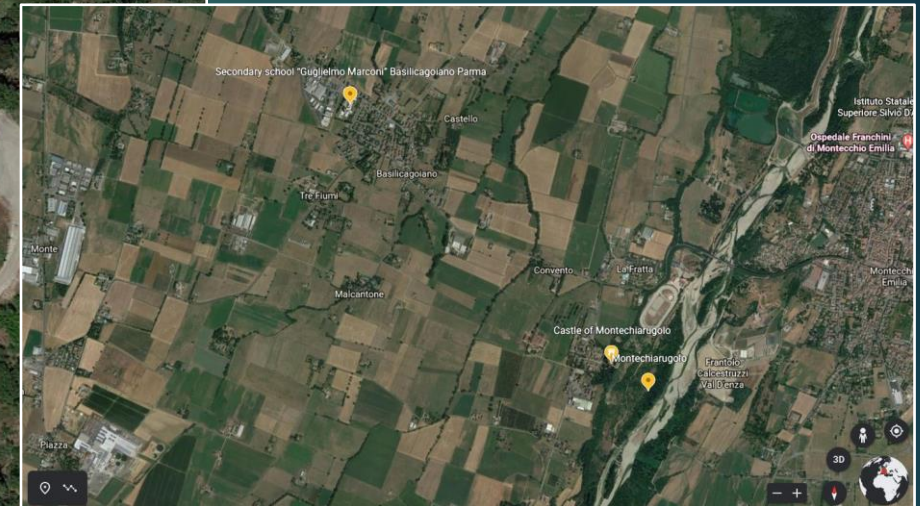


From the beautiful loggia visitors can enjoy a magnificent view of the Enza valley and the castles of the Canossa family.



# ▶ Let's go to see Montechiarugolo from the sky with Google Earth

<https://earth.google.com/web/@44.69298809,10.42364276,115.54140706a,826.68860124d,30y,0h,0t,0r/data=MickJQojCiExYnczOVd4cVRQbmVKamkwemZoSHFpWHhpRmt1d1d4d04>





# The Bema Fairy



There is a legend about a fairy, named Bema, who visits the castle...

The story tells of Bema, a young girl, born towards the end of the sixteenth century. She was good, beautiful and with magical powers.

Bema arrived in Montechiarugolo in 1593.

Bema was employed at the Torelli court for home management. The girl and Pio Torelli ended up falling in love.



But the Duke of Parma, Ranuccio Farnese, after being overcome by the fear of being charmed and manipulated by Bema, decided locking her up in the prison of the Rocchetta, in Parma.

Shortly after the Duke accused Pio Torelli of conspiracy and had him arrested: Pio Torelli will die decapitated.

This is therefore the story of the good and beautiful fairy Bema who, from death to the present day, returns to manifest herself in the castle on May 19 of every year to mourn her love lost so tragically.





## Sitography

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castello di Montechiarugolo](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castello_di_Montechiarugolo)

<https://www.castellodimontechiarugolo.it/>

<https://www.castellidelducato.it/castellidelducato/castello.asp?el=castello-di-montechiarugolo-regno-fata-bema>

<https://www.parmawelcome.it/en/place/explore-the-area/museums-and-places-of-interest/castles/castle-of-montechiarugolo/>