9. Guidozagni Tower House (20 m) Via Albiroli, 1–3

This is the only surviving tower of the four once owned by the Guidozagni family, a member of a family of noble origins related to the Guelph party that took part in two Crusades (in 1094 and in 1291). Taking few steps down via Albi and turning to face the Coronata, the sight of these two towers so close to one another really allows to imagine how the tower–crowded Medieval Bologna must have looked like.

10. Two Towers Piazza Ravegnana

They are the landmark of the city. The taller one – Asinelli – was raised to the current 97.2 m when it became Municipal property (at the end of the 13th century). Originally, it had a height of about 60 m: from that point upward the walls actually became thinner, showing the builder’s intention to raise the tower’s height without overburdening it with a weight that could have made it unstable. Moreover, the current height would have been completely pointless for the tower’s original (defensive) purpose, while it served the need of the Municipality for a defensive means and, at the same time, a status symbol. There were a defensive means and, at the same time, a status symbol. There are more than 20 towers left of the original 100, nonetheless we know the exact position of 52 which are no longer in existence. The towers literally crowded the inner part of the first, and most ancient, line of walls, defending an area of almost 50 acres.

11. Alberici Tower (27 m) Via Santo Stefano, 29

The tower is a peculiar structure: a belvedere has been built on the top and, in the place of a selenite base, there is what could be the oldest shop in Bologna. It was in 1273 that the contract for the ground floor extension done by master craftsmen Aldrovandino and Bonaventura was stipulated.

12. The lost tower

Fifty-two are the “lost towers” of which we know exactly the location of. The Mussolini one for example, a Guelph family that, hard to believe, did not participate in the political life of the city. On the corner of Strada Maggiore (No. 42) and vicolo Bianchetti remains a section of stones with ashlar wall of almost 20 meters.

Written by Roberto Colombo
1. Arengo Tower (47 m)  Piazza Maggiore, 1
The Arengo tower boldly sits on the Volante del Palazzo del Podestà sustained by four corner pilasters. It was commissioned not by a noble family, but by the Municipality (in 1252) in order for it to house the bells used to assemble the citizens (the assembly was called arengo).

2. Clock Tower (48 m)  Piazza Maggiore, 6
The tower was part of the house of Accurso, who is maybe the most famous representative of the Bologna School of Glossators (the glossa, from the Greek word for tongue, is a brief marginal notation explaining the meaning of an unclear word or wording). The house was sold from his eldest son Francesco to the Municipality in 1287. A mechanical clock was installed on the tower in the 15th century; a wooden structure his eldest son Francesco to the Municipality in 1287. A mechanical clock was installed on the tower in the 15th century; a wooden structure his eldest son Francesco to the Municipality in 1287. A mechanical clock was installed on the tower in the 15th century; a wooden structure his eldest son Francesco to the Municipality in 1287. A mechanical clock was installed on the tower in the 15th century; a wooden structure his eldest son Francesco to the Municipality in 1287. 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3. Catalani Tower (16 m)  Vicolo dello Spirito Santo
Built in the first half of the 13th century, it was the Malavolti family tower house. It would later be known as Catalani tower from the name of Catalano, a podestà born approximately in 1210 who ruled in nine different cities.

Along with Loderingo degli Andalo’, he was a supporter of the Knights of the Jovial Friars), an order which was founded in 1205 with the purpose of pacifying the Guelf and Ghibelline factions. Loderringo and Catalano ruled Bologna twice and in 1266 they were appointed to rule Florence. They failed in their task though, and because of this Dante put them among the hypocrites – damned to listlessly walk along wearing gilded lead cloaks – in his Divine Comedy. The outer trave door with selenite corbels surmounted by a half-circular pediment with a brick arch.

4. Galluzzi Tower (30 m)  Corte de’ Galluzzi, 1
Corte Galluzzi keeps showing to this day how it happened that the most powerful families occupied public land and built fortifications on it in order to best protect the buildings they lived in. Sure enough, the tower, the houses, the warehouses, the stables, the well and also the family chapel used to look onto the courtyard, or curia. The early door of the Galluzzi tower can be clearly seen up over 6 m off the ground level; the entrance was commonly built above the ground level; in the eventuality of an attack, the floorboards on the entrance story used to be removed. A chronicle from the second half of the 13th century accounts of the love-story between Virginia Galluzzi and Malatesta, member of the rival family of Carbonesi: the brothers of the girl discovered their secret marriage and killed them both making it look like a double suicide.

5. Lambertini Tower (25 m)  Via Sant’Alò, 4
The Lambertini tower house, commissioned by one of the most important families in the city, was built in the first half of the 12th century and given to the Municipality in 1294. The most famous member of this family is Cardinal Prospero, who was one of the five popes from Bologna, and took up the pontifical name Benedict XIV (1740–1758). More difficult to locate is the Ramponi tower; standing between via Rizzoli and via Fossalta and long turned into a shop, it lacks the characteristic selenite blocks at the base, which have been removed as early as the 18th century.

6. Scappi Tower (39 m)  Via Indipendenza, 3
Legend has it that the Scappi family owes its name to an ancestor who, seeing king Enzo’s (son of Emperor Frederick II captured in battle in 1249 by the Bolognesi) blond hair peer out from inside a brentha (a sort of barrel carried on the shoulders thanks to leather straps), started yelling “Scappi! Scappi!” (He’s fleeing! He’s fleeing!) preventing him from successfully escaping.

7. Azzoguidi Tower (61 m)  Via Altabella, 7
Via Altabella [tal beauty] owes its name to the Azzoguidi tower, the only tower standing perfectly vertical. One of the member of the notable family is Baldassare, the first typographer (or editor) in Bologna: the first book he published was not, contrarily to what one might think, a law book, but Ovidio’s works (1471).

8. Prendiparte Tower (60 m)  Via Sant’Alo
The Prendiparte tower house, known as the Corona [the crowned one] for the crown-shaped risega (thinning in the thickness of the wall) it presents at about 50 m from the ground level. Cardinal Paleotti had it built in the second half of the 12th century and it was used as an extension of the Archepiscopal Seminar. Later, in 1511, when the Seminar was moved elsewhere, Cardinal Lambertini – Pope Benedict XIV – turned it into an Archbishopric Jail for crimes against religion.