

Identification

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| <i>Nomination</i> | The historic centre of Siena |
| <i>Location</i> | Tuscany |
| <i>State Party</i> | Italy |
| <i>Date</i> | 22 September 1994 |

Justification by State Party

Through its urban and architectural characteristics, the historic centre of Siena is testimony to human creativity and expresses human artistic and aesthetic capacity in material form. This strong, personal example of artistic civilization had a very strong cultural influence not merely on the whole territory of the Republic of Siena but also on Italy and Europe, especially in the 13th and 17th centuries.

Its architecture, painting, sculpture, and town planning in particular were exported culturally into neighbouring lands. The structure of the town itself and its evolution, interrupted over the centuries, along with a unity of design that has been preserved, made Siena one of the most precious examples of the medieval and Renaissance Italian town.

The historic centre of Siena is a natural heritage that is unique of its type. Within the defensive walls there survive large green open spaces that are perfectly preserved, in the form of old kitchen gardens and gardens which ensured the survival of the town when it was under siege in the Middle Ages. At the present time these areas are protected by means of special regulations under the provisions of Law No 1497 of 1939, and they form an integral part of the Gothic urban settlement to which they are linked historically. The urban enclosure was extended on several occasions between the early medieval period and the first half of the 14th century with the object of integrating open spaces of this kind.

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, Siena is a *group of buildings*.

History and Description*History*

The situation of Siena, between the Arsia and Elsa valleys, away from the main communication routes, does not favour the growth of a town. Nevertheless, a modest settlement, Etruscan in origin, entered history under the name of Colonia Julia Saena in 29 BC.

With the displacement of the road network joining northern Italy to Rome towards the centre of the peninsula Siena became an obligatory stopping place during the period of rule by the Lombards (568-774) and then the Franks. The development of the medieval town coincided with the route of the Via Francigena, taken by pilgrims on their way to Rome, becoming fixed around the year 1000. On the high ground adjoining Castelveccchio, site of the ancient *castrum*, to the east of the original core of the medieval town, and Santa Maria, see of the bishopric created in the first half of the 5th century, grew up the villages of Camollia to the north and San Martino to the south, both later to be brought within the walls of the town. The town centre moved from its ancient nucleus towards the *trivium* or Croce del Travaglio, where the roads from Rome, Florence, and the Maremma met. The Campo, at the crossroads of these routes, became the centre for trade and commercial activities. The

town's most important families lived in veritable fortified villages, built round a central courtyard, on the model of the feudal *curtis*, and in part surviving (Ugurgeri, Malavolti, etc).

In 1186 the Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederic I confirmed the independence of the city and granted it the rights of electing its own consuls and minting its own coins.

The definite urban structure of Siena evolved in just over three hundred years, from the end of the 11th to the beginning of the 15th century. The internal and external struggles of this period were more or less directly linked with episodes in the contest between the Empire and the Papacy. The Republic of Siena's policy of territorial expansions invoked the envy of its rival, Ghibelline Florence. From the first half of the 12th century the two cities engaged in a series of still famous battles, such as Montaperti (1260), as a result of which the victorious Siennese placed their city under the protection of the Virgin Mary, and Colle Val d'Elsa (1269), after which the Guelphs became established in Siena. The city owed its prosperity to the banking activities carried out by certain families at the Papal Court in Rome and on the great international markets of northern Europe, Marseilles, Champagne, and London. The streets named dei Banchi di Sopra and dei Banchi di Sotto preserve the memory of this past prosperity. Under pressure from the merchants who dominated its political life, the city was endowed with a network of secondary streets and public and private buildings in the Gothic style. Siena enjoyed relative political stability under the Council of the Nine (1287-1355), which left an enduring imprint on the structure and appearance of the city with, for example, the laying out of the Piazza del Campo and the construction of the Palazzo Pubblico. The Siennese school of painting manifested itself from the late 13th century in the work of its most famous representatives, Duccio di Boninsegna (1260-1318), Simone Martini (1284-1344), the Pietro brothers (*fl* 1305-48), and Ambrogio Lorenzetti (*fl* 1319-48). Siena maintained relations with Milan, Naples, and France. Simone Martini was in contact with the Angevin court in Naples and went to Avignon in 1339. Exchanges such as this involved Siena closely with the development of western art in the mid 14th century.

Between 1420 and 1555, when the Republic of Siena came to an end, there was a succession of governments operated by merchants, interrupted by the attempt by Pandolfo Petrucci (1487-1525) to introduce a nobility and the intervention of the Emperor Charles V (1530). The events of the city's internal political life became more closely linked with the relations between the Empire and France. In 1552 the Imperial garrison that had occupied the city for two years was driven out by the Siennese, who remained faithful to the French side. The defensive walls were strengthened, some of the gates were reinforced, and the suburbs were razed. At the end of the siege of 1555 the city was surrendered to the Imperial forces by its defender, Blaise de Montluc. Philip II offered Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici, who merged it into his Grand Duchy of Tuscany while respecting its autonomy. The crisis that overtook its banking and commercial activities plunged the city into economic stagnation. Its efforts became concentrated on developing agricultural activities in its lands. Urban development had reached its peak before the Black Death of 1348, when the population was cut from 25,000 to 16,000 inhabitants. Projects began to reconstruct or enlarge palaces, churches, and monasteries. The prestige of Siena was restored in 1457, when its Bishop, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, was elected Pope under the title of Pius II. The Franciscan Bernardino Albizzeschi and Catherina Benincasa, the pride of the city in the 14th century, were canonized. Despite the role of the Piccolomini family in spreading Renaissance art (the Loggia del Papa, the Palazzo Piccolomini, the Palazzo Piccolomini delle Papesse), Gothic persisted in most 15th century works (Palazzo Marsili, 1458) and even later (Archbishop's Palace, 1718).

After rejoining the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Siena was integrated into the Kingdom of Italy in 1849, but it was not touched by the industrial development of the 19th century. Expansion took place outside the walls and in small nuclei, often sited on hills away from the historic centre.

Description

The area proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List, the historic centre of Siena, is delimited by a 7 km enceinte of ramparts (14th-16th centuries), the route of which follows the contours of the three hills on which the city is built. These walls, with their bastions and towers, are pierced by gates that are double at the strategic points, such as the Porta Camollia on the road to Florence. To the west they embrace the Fort of Santa Barbara, rebuilt by the Medici in 1560 and reconstructed in 1580. The walls themselves, which have been enlarged on several occasions, also include part of the 25 km network of galleries, the *bottini*, which evacuate the spring waters distributed by the public fountains. Siena doubtless benefited from the experience of the monks of the Cistercian abbey of San Galgano. The main fountains (Fonte Branda, Fontenuova, etc), mostly from the 13th century, are veritable buildings in their own right, constructed like Gothic porticoes. Wide open green spaces also form part of the urban fabric and nowadays contribute to the embellishment of the city.

The historic centre developed along the Y-shaped segments defined by the three main arteries that meet at the Croce del Travaglio, represented by the Piazza del Campo, and on to which the network of minor roads are grafted. Houses and palaces follow one another in rows along the main streets, creating a characteristic urban space with certain notable elements.

The *Piazza del Campo*, sited at the junction of three hills, is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable urban open spaces in all Italy. Its formation coincides with the growth of the medieval city and the assertion of communal power. Financial and commercial activities were concentrated halfway along the Via Francigena, the entire lengths of the present-day Via dei Banchi Sopra and Via dei Banchi Sotto, and the market-place proper was located in the Piazza del Campo, at that time divided into two sectors. At the end of the 12th century the communal government decided to unite the two sectors to create a unique semi-circular open space, and promulgated a series of ordinances (1262 and 1297) which regulated not only commercial activities but also the services and dimensions of the houses their style (twin-arched or triple-arched windows), in order to make the facades around the Piazza uniform. The building of the Palazzo Pubblico (1293-c 1310), the seat of the communal government, began at the same time. Its gently incurving and crenellated facade is highlighted by the Gothic triple-arched windows. There is a number of masterpieces of medieval painting inside, such as the *Maestà* of Simone Martini (1315) and the allegorical cycle of Good Government of Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1337-43). Once the public authorities were installed in the Palazzo Pubblico, work began on embellishing the Piazza with the laying down of the paving, construction of the Fonte Gaia, decorated by Jacopo della Quercia (1309-19), the Torre del Mangia (1325-44), and the Cappella della Piazza (1376), the latter two built up against the Palazzo. Under the Medici the Piazza became the ideal setting for spectacular festivals and was opened up to the Palio. Works carried out in the 17th and 18th centuries (raising the height of the wings of the Palazzo Pubblico, restyling of the Palazzi Chigi Zondadari and Sansedoni).

The highest point of the town is crowned by the *Cathedral of Santa Maria*. Substantial alterations were made to the early Romanesque structure of the late 12th century over nearly one hundred and fifty years. The Cistercian monks of the abbey of San Galgano, who led the work at the Cathedra between 1258 and 1314, were doubtless not unconnected with the introduction of certain Gothic elements in the new projects. The facade, the lower part of which is the work of Giovanni Pisano (1284-96), was completed by Giovanni di Cecco (1376) after construction of the Nuovo Duomo (New Cathedral), a vast project inspired by the Gothic cathedrals of north of the Alps and only a few arcades of which survive, along with the imposing facade wall, had been abandoned. The Cathedral preserves a remarkable pavement in marble marquetry made between the 14th and 16th centuries and the pulpit carved by Nicola Pisano (1265-68). In front of the Cathedral stretches the long facade of the *Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala*, the oldest and largest hospital in the city, founded in the 11th century.

Siena preserves several of the oldest churches with the basic function in the territorial organization of medieval society of acting as rallying points for the *popoli* (military societies) and later of the *contrade*, such as the churches of San Cristoforo and San Paolo. The churches of the great Dominican and Franciscan monasteries opening out on the Sienese countryside are more monumental. San Domenico (began after 1309) and San Francesco (begun in 1326) are large brick buildings, typical of Tuscan Gothic architecture.

The Palazzo Pubblico was in all probability the model for the Gothic palaces of the great families of the nobility or the merchants (Palazzo Tolomei, Palazzo Buonsignori), which are characterized by an increase in breadth, the use of brick, large windows (often three-arched), and the so-called "Cuelph" crenellation.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The elements making up the property nominated for the World Heritage List are variously public properties belonging to the State, the Catholic Church, and the local authorities, or to private individuals and bodies.

The historic city is protected at several levels, municipal and national: a. the intra-mural medieval city; b. the land of the commune, in its entirety, and c. individual historic buildings:

- a The historic centre is protected by the conservation standards of the Master Plan for the City. No intervention (alteration) on historic buildings and their settings may take place without the prior approval of the competent authorities.

- b The whole territory of the Commune of Siena, which includes the historic city and the surrounding landscape, is protected by national Law No 1497 of 26 June 1939 and by the decrees of 1956. The cultural landscape of Siena, of which the historic city centre forms an essential component, is recognized in terms of its natural aesthetic values. Landscape protection covers the whole territory of the Commune, but also extends to other municipalities. Special attention is given to the use of existing structures, and very strict control is exercised over new buildings. In order to limit urban growth, the Siena Master Plan, prepared after World War II, defines precise zones for the construction of modern residential complexes, a hospital, and a railway station. In this way the characteristics and identity of the historic walled city have been preserved.
- c Isolated historic buildings are protected under the provisions of the national laws for cultural property, No 364 of 20 June 1909 and No 1089 of 1 June 1939, which are implemented by State agencies, the Superintendence for Architectural Property and the Superintendence for Artistic Property.

Management

Management and planning of the historic city and its structures are the responsibility of the city and the State. The Communal Building Commission (*Commissione dell'Edilizia del Comune di Siena*) is responsible for buildings standards: it deals with requests for building permits at municipal level and monitors to ensure that projects respect the building and planning standards. Another municipal commission, the Commission for Aesthetics (*Commissione per l'Estetica*), was created recently to manage changes or improvements at street level. It is particularly concerned with the appearance of streets and of buildings up to a height of 4 m. It also controls signs, advertising material, and television aerials (satellite antennae are forbidden in the historic centre). Many street facades have preserved their original facing, whilst on others it has disappeared or never existed. The city has recently commissioned a study, the *Piano del Colore*, which will develop a strategy for controlling the elevations of buildings and their treatment, taking account of the historical value of buildings, their contexts, and their state of conservation.

The State services, the *Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici* and the *Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici*, are responsible, according to the statutory measures applied, for specific protected historic buildings.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Siena has been operating an integrated policy for the protection and restoration of buildings, leading to good conservation of the inhabited urban environment. Among the various restoration campaigns, those of the Salicotto quarter (1930-35) and the Bruco quarter (1976-92) are worthy of mention. Since the city has been successful in restricting modern commercial activities in the historic centre, the buildings on the main streets have also retained their historic character and have undergone only slight modifications. Two large restoration and rehabilitation projects are in progress. One is directed towards the defensive walls and the restoration of a route along them. The other is concerned with the rehabilitation of the buildings of the municipal hospital, Santa Maria della Scala, in front of the Cathedral, which is intended to house several museums and cultural services.

Authenticity

Taking into account its present-day state of conservation and its historical authenticity, it has to be said that Siena is a rare example of a medieval historic town of this size. This can be explained in part by the fact that the city has not suffered serious war damage and has been spared modern industrial development. Account should also be taken of the conservative attitude of its inhabitants and its administrators so far as the maintenance of the character of the city, its identity, and its relationship with the surrounding landscape are concerned. It has also remained outside the large development areas designated in Italy. The number of inhabitants has remained relatively low and corresponds with that of the medieval period; it has not led to large-scale urban extensions.

The environs of the city have been subjected to only small-scale interventions, among them the planning of a residential area, a hospital, and a small railway station. These projects have been planned in such a way as not to disturb the relationship with the landscape to be found in famous 14th century paintings. The authenticity

of the urban fabric of the historic city with its main architectural groups is undeniable. State and municipal authorities are carrying out an active and continuous conservation and restoration policy. As a result of this policy it is possible for Siena to absorb the restoration carried out in the 19th century, which have become integral parts of its present historical authenticity, whereas they have altered the historic fabric of other towns.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Siena in January 1995. The ICOMOS International Committee on Historic Towns and Villages was also consulted.

Qualities

The historic centre of Siena has preserved its Gothic appearance over the centuries. This continuity of the Gothic style is explained by the wish of the Sieneese to conserve this characteristic architecture as the cultural identity of the city. They have doubtless wished to distinguish Siena from Florence, where Renaissance architecture flowers. More recent interventions on certain monuments, such as the Palazzo Pubblico and the Palazzo Sansedoni, have respected the established criteria. In this context, the 19th century restoration movement is more related to the renewal of arts and traditions than pure restoration. The restoration work of Giuseppe Partini in the 1870s in the Piazza Salimbeni fits well into the continuity of the "Gothic Dream" that Siena represents.

Siena is a characteristic urban space whose origins lie in the evolution of the town in the 12th and 13th centuries. The city in its entirety is treated like a monument.

Comparative analysis

Italy has several hundred medieval urban centres, among them San Gimignano, already inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, in this context Siena represents a unique medieval urban creation which stands apart from others by virtue of different characteristics such as its size. Siena has retained a medieval core within the dimensions of a town, unlike other medieval historic centres such as San Gimignano or Carcassonne (France), which are more fortified villages (*bourgs*), or castles surrounded by large defensive walls, such as Mont Saint-Michel (France) or Dover (United Kingdom).

Siena served as the model for building defensive structures throughout the Middle Ages, and in particular in Tuscany. Siena also developed an artistic identity. The concept of the cultural landscape became a concept in the history of art throughout the paintings of Duccio, the Lorenzetti brothers, and Simone Martini, who, along with Giotto, laid the foundations of Italian art of the period, which had an international impact.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

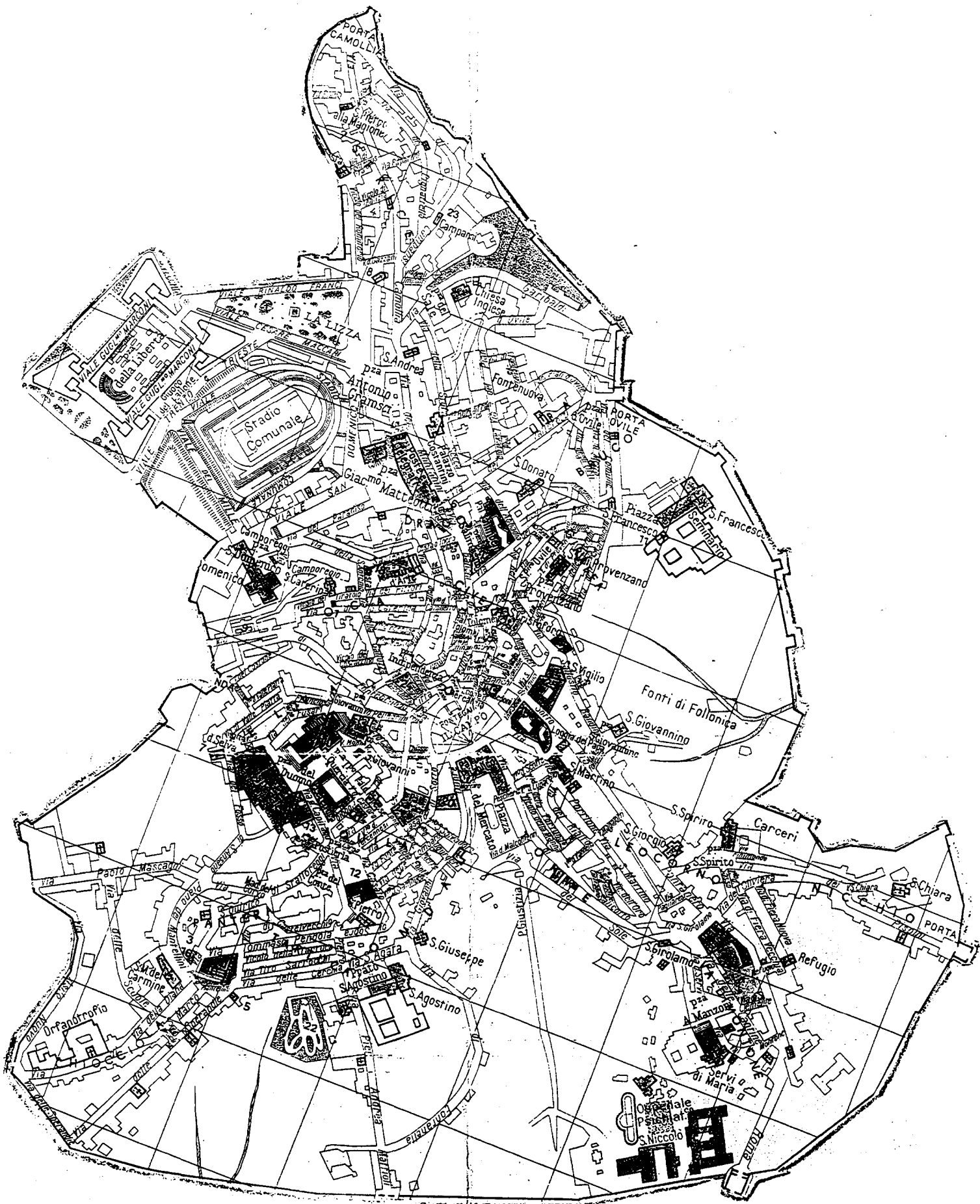
ICOMOS has taken note of the comments in the nomination dossier about the care needed in the conservation of the sculptural decoration of the monuments, such as the statuary of the Cathedral and the Cappella della Piazza, which are threatened by atmospheric erosion. It urges the responsible authorities to give the highest priority and resources to the work urgently needed in this area.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria i, ii, and iv*:

Siena is an outstanding medieval city that has preserved its character and quality to a remarkable degree. Its influence on art, architecture, and town planning in the Middle Ages, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, was great. The city is a work of dedication and imagination, in which the buildings have been designed to fit into the overall planned urban fabric, and also to form a whole with the surrounding cultural landscape.

ICOMOS, September 1995



Sienna : plan de la zone proposée pour inscription
Siena : Map of the area nominated for inscription



Sienne : vue panoramique /
Siena : Panoramic view



Sienna : le Palazzo Pubblico et la Piazza del Campo /
Siena : Palazzo Pubblico and Piazza del Campo