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**“per queste cose ognuno sta in santa pace et in concordia”: Understanding urban space in Renaissance Siena’, in Santa Casciani ed., *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Siena* (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2018).**

**Abstract:**

This chapter offers a *longue durée* history of Siena’s urban development from the fourteenth century through to the early years of Medici domination (c. 1300-1600). As is well known, Siena offers a precocious example of urban design legislation around the piazza del Campo, which included paving, zoning rules, and rulings on the aesthetics of buildings facing onto the piazza. Such planning rules spread to encompass much of the city fabric through the fifteenth century, so that when the Medici took over the city, there is evidence of their surprise at the way urban improvement was enshrined as a core civic duty. While a focus of the chapter will look at urban planning legislation and its effects on the evolving built fabric over nearly three centuries, it will also consider how public urban space was used. Here too, there are continuities in the ritual practices that activated and inscribed meaning on the squares and streets as well as religious and secular buildings and monuments. It will be shown then that, as Bernardino da Siena’s commentary on Lorenzetti’s famous frescoes show, the built city is integral to the social interactions of its citizens.

**Illustrations:**

1. Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1338-40), Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena
2. Piazza del Campo with Palazzo Sansedoni and Fonte Gaia, showing market stalls in place in a photo by Paolo Lombardi, c. 1860 (photo: Kunsthistorisches Insitute, Florence)
3. Map showing *Maestri sopra all’ornato* interventions (1431-80); each block represents a building affected by *Ornato* interventions documented in ASS, *Concistoro* 2125 (map: Fabrizio Nevola and Yanel de Angel)
4. Map showing the location of she-wolf sculptures (map: Fabrizio Nevola and Yanel de Angel)
5. Map showing the arrangement of the Piazza Postierla and Via del Capitano area, c. 1480-1520 (map: Fabrizio Nevola and Yanel de Angel)

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“When I was in Florence I reminded Your Excellency in the name of these Gentlemen [the citizens of Siena], that there was a need to repave the streets of this city, which are for the most part in disrepair on account of negligence and the impossibility to attend to them in the past. And I told you that here the custom is as is also recorded in the written statutes, that the materials – that is the bricks – should be paid for by the owners of the houses that front on the streets, while the labour of the workers should be paid for from the public purse. You consequently ordered that work should commence. This did not happen because of the expenses committed to your Lordship’s other requirements. Now, on account of the fact that it seems to me that the streets are deteriorating daily, resulting in great public shame, I wanted again to draw this to your attention, in order that you might order the work to be done when you so desire. At the same time I wish to warn you that that the treasury will be much burdened by this, on account of the fact that the process of beautification will start from the main street, which is called the strada Romana, then the street that leads to the cathedral, and subsequently to the other most used streets”.<sup>1</sup>

Thus wrote Agnolo Niccolini, the Medici governor in Siena, to Duke Cosimo de’ Medici in January 1564, less than a decade following the city’s conquest by the troops of Emperor Charles V (1555) and eventual transfer to Medici control in 1557.<sup>2</sup> As emerges from the account, years of war had left their mark on the city’s infrastructure, with the brick-paved streets damaged and uneven. Niccolini’s correspondence also provides further details regarding local paving practices – today visible in the paving of the piazza del Campo – of laying large bricks (*mezzane*) in a herring-bone pattern, which was susceptible to damage if it was not maintained, as the bricks could easily slip out of place.<sup>3</sup> What is remarkable about the

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<sup>1</sup> ASF, Mediceo Principato, 503, f. 185 [19 January 1563/4] letter from: Agnolo Niccolini to Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici: “[...] Quando fui a Firenze ricordai a V. Ecc.za Ill.ma in nome di questi Gentilhuomini, che sarebbe di bisogno riammattonar’ le strade di questa città, che sono per la maggior’ parte guaste per la negligenza et impotenza dei tempi passati. Et le dissi che qui si era sempre osservato come ne apparivano anche le ordinationi scritte, che la materia, cioè le mezzane, fussino pagate da li patroni de le case, l’opera de maestri dal Pubblico. Lei allora si contentò che vi si dessi principio. Il che non si è fatto per le spese occorrenti nelli altri seritii suoi. Hor’ parendomi che le vadino ogni giorno in disordine maggiore, con indegnità pubblica, gliene ho volsuto di nuovo inducer’ a memoria, a fine che le comandi quanto le piacesse, con advertirla con si gravarà molto la Depositaria, perche si andrà facendo abellagio con incominciar’ dala strada principale, che è la Romana, e poi quella di Duomo, et successivamente le altre piu frequenti [...]”

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Donati, ‘Niccolini, Agnolo’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* – Vol. 78 (2013), consulted online <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/agnolo-niccolini> (accessed 20 December 2016).

<sup>3</sup> ASF, Mediceo Principato, 1871, f. 84 [1565, Aug 9] letter from: Agnolo Niccolini to Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici: “Non lassero anche con questa occasione di redurle a memoria il rassettamento delle strade della città, che sono in estrema destruttione, massime le principali della Via di Firenze, di Roma et del Duomo, così per non essere da molto tempo in quà rassettate, come per dissolversi facilmente questo modo dell’ammattionarle per coltello, che subito che se ne rompano o se ne toggano due o tre mezzane, l’altre facilmente si svolgono, come hanno già fatto qui per tutto, non essendo state attese da molti anni in qua.”

document however, and the subsequent correspondence that records an ongoing dialogue between the governor and the duke, is that the traditional cost-sharing strategy for urban improvement and maintenance – by which costs were shared between residents and the public authorities – continued to be observed in spite of the city’s loss of independence. In his answer to Niccolini, Duke Cosimo confirmed his approval of this cost-sharing policy and stated his wish that the work should be started “for the beautification and benefit of the city and utility of all residents.”<sup>4</sup> The spirit of Cosimo’s comments provide a further line of continuity from the city’s civic past, where the collective benefits of public spending on infrastructure and amenities were regularly described in terms of the same formulation of public good as defined in terms beauty and utility. It was these same ideals that had originally been expressed in Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s famous frescoes in the Sala dei Nove of the Palazzo Pubblico (fig. 1). While significant political changes altered systems of governance, transformed institutions, and eventually subjected the city to external power, a lasting policy that expressed collective responsibility for urban form was a distinctive characteristic of Siena over the *longue durée* of at least three centuries.

It is of course well known that Lorenzetti gave visual expression to a series of ideals of urban form and civil society that had been codified in the city’s statutes from the thirteenth century, and most significantly in the vernacular *Costituto* of 1309.<sup>5</sup> From as early as 1169, Siena’s central public space was associated with trade and markets, and the city government supported this through acquisition of land to enlarge the piazza and boost this commercial vocation, while at the same time beginning to provide a distinctive form to the topographically-determined shell-shaped “Campus fori.”<sup>6</sup> While trade was a key vocation for the space, its aesthetic appearance was also tightly controlled. Paving of the piazza del Campo was initiated in 1262, well before the city hall was built, and was completed in the early fourteenth century, when a succession of legislative measures improved the ambience of the area by prohibiting various trades from the market square on the grounds of aesthetics and hygiene.<sup>7</sup> The statutes of 1309 furthermore established that the piazza should not be used to

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<sup>4</sup> ASF, Mediceo Principato, 219, f. 267 [3 Feb, 1563/4], letter from Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici [in Pietrasanta] to Agnolo Niccolini, “Ponetelo in esecuzione per ornamento e beneficio di detta città e per commodo degli habitatori.”

<sup>5</sup> The definitive edition is M. S. Elsheikh ed., *Il Costituto del comune di Siena volgarizzato nel MCCCIX-MCCCX*, Città di Castello, 2002 (2 vols.); for a recent collection of essays on the statutes see *Siena nello specchio del suo costituito in volgare del 1309-1310*, ed. Nora Giordano and Gabriella Piccinni, Pisa: Pacini, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> See Maurizio Tulliani, ‘Il mercato del Campo ed il commercio ambulante a Siena dal XIII al XV secolo,’ in *La millenaria storia del mercato di Siena. Il commercio ambulante da piazza del Campo a viale XXV aprile*, Siena: Cantagalli 2010, 11-34, 13-7. See also Berthold Hub, “‘Vedete come è bella la cittade quando è ordinata’: Politics and the art of city planning in Republican Siena’, in *Art as Politics in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena*, ed. Timothy B. Smith and Judith B. Steinhoff, Farnham and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2012, 61-82, 63-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Il costituito del comune di Siena dell’anno 1262*, L. Zdekauer ed., Milan: Hoepli, 1897, dist. III, rubric 47. For a selection of documents on the Campo see Fabrizio Nevola, ‘Ordering the piazza del Campo in Siena,’ in *Medieval Italy: A Documentary History*, ed. K. Jansen, J. Drell and F. Andrews, Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania Press), 2009, 261-4; also Wolfgang Braunfels, *Mitteralterliche Stadtbaukunst in der Toskana*, Berlin 1951 with documentary appendix. Max Grossman has recently proposed a precedent for the relationship of the city hall and Campo in the original layout of the palazzo Tolomei and its adjacent piazza, in ‘A Case of Double Identity: The Public and Private Faces of the Palazzo Tolomei in Siena’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 72 (2013), 48-77, esp. 62-5.

store building materials, straw or hay, and even regulated to prevent “chairs, or work-benches or any other movable goods” from occupying any more than 2 *braccia* from the front of buildings facing onto the square. Aesthetic considerations were even more to the fore in commanding that all new buildings erected with facades on the piazza should follow the model of the newly built Palazzo Pubblico, an unprecedented ruling that established the city hall as the stylistic centre-piece of the principal civic public space (fig. 2).<sup>8</sup>

The Campo set the benchmark for well-ordered urban space. As the civic centre-piece it benefitted from a sequence of monumental interventions, from the Palazzo Pubblico (from 1297) to its prominent bell tower of the Torre del Mangia (from 1325), the chapel consecrating the entire piazza from the Cappella del Campo (from 1353), the magnificent stone fountain of the Fonte Gaia (from 1409) and the notaries' loggia (from 1423).<sup>9</sup> As we have seen, legislation carefully regulated commercial activities on the piazza and ensured that it was kept clear and well ordered. These legal provisions were enforced by various officials (*custodi*) whose specific task it was to police the piazza to ensure that it was well maintained, to oversee the market, and to check that traders did not infringe prohibited activities such as the slaughter and butchering of livestock.<sup>10</sup> Thus we can observe that just as built form and architectural monumentality were valued, so too were the very public commercial functions of the market piazza that was immediately adjacent to the governmental heart of the city – a spatial dynamic between the productive base of the polity and the institutions that articulated communal power was therefore inscribed into the physical and social ordering of this central urban space. Moreover, both the symbolic language of architecture and the practical actions of policing by government officials tightly controlled that space and maintained order through surveillance. That this was a longstanding government priority is confirmed in the revived civic statutes of 1545 reiterating the need to “police the public order of the piazza so that no conflicts should arise there between those that come there to sell their goods”.<sup>11</sup>

It is precisely this vision that is conjured up in Lorenzetti's view of the city at peace, and indeed by contrasting negatives, in the view of the city at war which faces it across the Sala dei Nove.<sup>12</sup> For example, the city at war reveals an urban landscape where the physical

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<sup>8</sup> Nevola, 'Ordering the piazza', 261-4 (1309: *Costituto*, dist. III rubrics 37, 40-43).

<sup>9</sup> For a review of these main monuments see T. Benton, 'Three Cities Compared: Urbanism', in D. Norman ed., *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion, 1280-1400*, New Haven-London 1995, II, 7-28 and chapter 1 of Fabrizio Nevola, *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City*, New Haven-London 2007. For recent work on the notaries loggia, see Gabriele Fattorini, 'Gentile da Fabriano, Jacopo della Quercia and Siena: the 'Madonna dei banchetti'', *The Burlington Magazine*, CLII (2010), 152-61.

<sup>10</sup> Tulliani, 'Il mercato del Campo', 17-8 for thirteenth-century *custodi* and 1309 provision for two guards.

<sup>11</sup> Laura Vigni, "Perché la piazza sia carica di pollami, piccioni, ravaggiuoli, caci e frutti d'ogni sorta...": Organizzazione e problematiche del mercato in piazza del Campo dal Cinquecento ai primi anni dell'ottocento', in *La millenaria storia del mercato di Siena*, 35-70, 39-41, cites the 1545 statute: "invigilare al buon ordine della piazza e che in quella tra le persone che vi vengono a vendere non ne seguino sconcerti"; the full statute is published in M. Ascheri ed., *L'ultimo statuto della Repubblica di Siena (1545)*, Siena: Accademia degli Intronati, 1993.

<sup>12</sup> These frescoes have received extensive scholarly attention, some of which is reviewed in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 5-8; see also C. Jean Campbell, *The Commonwealth of Nature. Art and poetic community in*

environment shows evident signs of disrepair, with many buildings damaged and building materials dumped in the street – these, as we have seen above were precisely aspects that the city authorities sought to avoid. In turn, given the situation of implied civil unrest, the public space that fills the foreground is ostentatiously occupied by city officials policing the streets (albeit that it is implied they are exercising their powers unjustly). The allegorical figure of “timor” (fear) presides over the city gates, which are shown to be solid and controlled by an armed guard. Thus, while in this view of the city the forces of surveillance and control are turned against the interests of the public good, it is nonetheless important to note that they are visually codified through the same principles and personnel that the statues established to protect those spaces and ensure the “*securitas*” (safety) that is encoded in the view facing it across the room. Here, in the city at peace, it is again the streetscape that provides a vision of the practical outcomes of the regulations and good government of the city’s elected rulers. As with the discussion of the Campo above, it is trade and commerce that stands out in this remarkably industrious public space, where various trades can be observed in the numerous *botteghe*, while raw materials and livestock move freely through the permeable diaphragm of the city’s gates and the productive rural landscape beyond. The hand of government is here less visible, although it is ever present and expressed in the orderly conduct of everyday life that is documented by the scene.

While these frescoes appear to offer two distinct views of the city, they nevertheless both speak to the same set of ideals and underpinning principles – that urban form was a visual expression of good government, and that legislation and its enforcement ensured certain behaviours and practices in relation to the built environment. Such concerns were not restricted to the area around the piazza del Campo, however. Special attention was afforded to various elements of the city’s infrastructure, from the walls and gates that enclosed the urban community and regulated access to it, through to the elaborate system of underground aqueducts (the *bottini*) and monumental fountains that provided the most precious amenity of water, for both personal and industrial needs.<sup>13</sup> So much was this the case that there was a perception that such provision was a reason for just civic pride, as expressed in February 1397, when the city officials stated that “your city has always been the most delightful and clean in the whole of Tuscany, and with the most beautiful fountain, on account of which all foreigners that come here wish to see the Fonte Branda”.<sup>14</sup>

The city authorities were also largely responsible for financing the city’s main religious and charitable institutions, from the cathedral to the famed hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, as well as regularly providing material support for the religious orders and their new convent

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*the age of Dante*, University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008, whose discussion of the complementarity of the two scenes adds a subtle new reading to their usually polarised opposition.

<sup>13</sup> Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 12-27, for a more detailed survey of infrastructure (urban armature).

<sup>14</sup> D. Balestracci and G. Piccinni, *Siena nel Trecento. Assetto urbano e prassi edilizia*, Florence: Clusf, 1977, 17 quote: “La vostra città è sempre stata la più dilectevole e necta città di Toscana e co’ la più bella fonte, per la qual cosa tutti e’ forestieri che ci venghono vogliono vedere Fonte Branda” (ASS, *Consiglio Generale*, 198, fol. 39, 2 Feb 1397).

buildings.<sup>15</sup> And yet, just as the hand of the *Comune* appears to have touched these most vital and visible of the city's built elements, so too they also maintained a constant attention for its public spaces, and a particular regard for streets and alleyways. From at least 1290 a group of building professionals – the *Viarri* – had officiated over the management and maintenance of the streets; within the walls they had a particular remit to ensure that the main streets were paved, and to attempt to limit the filth and dirt that secondary unpaved streets brought into the city centre.<sup>16</sup> Numerous interventions throughout the fourteenth century sought to widen streets, to provide greater access to light, and where possible to correct alignments of facades to create more regular pathways. All these modifications, which actively affirmed rights over the public realm, were understood to express most clearly a pervasive sense of the “order and rule of the entire city”.<sup>17</sup>

Streets and public spaces were thus an important venue for the formulation of civic values and the ideals of the *bene comune*, and it was within the framework of the rights and duties of citizenship that the principle was established that residents who benefited from street improvements should participate in a share of the associated costs.<sup>18</sup> These policies, well-established by 1309, were reaffirmed in both legislation and enacted polices throughout the fifteenth century for the maintenance of streets, as well as for the day-to-day activity and costs associated with street-cleaning.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, by the early fifteenth century preventative legislation that, for instance, had originally prohibited private individuals from invading public space by building or storing goods on publicly-owned land, was extended by increasing the penalty for infringement to the expropriation of offending properties by the government.<sup>20</sup> A further step was taken when the same powers of expropriation were extended to buildings identified as being in poor repair and “causing great damage and shame

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<sup>15</sup> Balestracci and Piccinni, *Siena nel Trecento*, 103-112; also W. M. Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune. Siena Under the Nine, 1287-1355*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981, 260 ff. for discussion of “civic religion”.

<sup>16</sup> Balestracci and Piccinni, *Siena nel Trecento*, 41ff: quote the first statute collection of the *Viarri*: “strate civitatis Senarum sunt siliciate et quedam vie sunt que mistunt in stratis et intrant et non sunt siliciate ob que deturpantur strate ita quod sozzura et lutum ipsarum viarum redeunt in stratam” (ASS, *Viarri*, 1, r. cxxii, fol. 23). For further discussion of the work of the office see Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 13-18.

<sup>17</sup> Balestracci and Piccinni, *Siena nel Trecento*, 45 focus on the improvement of the streets “a dare a tucta la città ordine e regola” (citing ASS, *Consiglio Generale*, 160, fol. 37 [22 Dec 1357] on the improvement of the via del Casato). See also Donatella Ciampoli and Thomas Szabó eds., *Viabilità e legislazione di uno stato cittadino del Duecento. Lo Statuto dei Viarii di Siena*, Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> Balestracci and Piccinni, *Siena nel Trecento*, 48: “semper consideratione habita quod cui plus commode offertur ex ampliatione [...] plus solvat, et cui minus commode consequitur minus solvat” (citing ASS, *Consiglio Generale*, 143, fol. 32, 23 October 1349). See also comments on the participation of citizens in the enactment of public policy Lando Bortolotti, *Le città nella storia d'Italia: Siena*, Bari/Rome: Laterza 1983, 43-6.

<sup>19</sup> ASS *Statuto di Siena* 47, fol. 140 (23 September 1415): “debba provvedere che le strade et vie della cipta non se guastino ma quelle provvedere di fare mantenere et acconciare come vedranno essare di bisogno”; ASS, *Statuto di Siena*, 2, fol. 286r-v (17 Feb 1443/4), ‘De stratis et viis’, officials to ensure that “provveduto che la città stia netta et monda e senza brottura alcuna” and fol. 287r-v (15 June 1469)” per li antichi statuti di Siena i quali ancho oggi si osservano provveduto che chi assalta e robba alla strada caggia in pena arbitraria dello ufficiale”; ASS, *Consiglio Generale* 231, fol. 268 (9 March 1466) renewed powers and duties of the *viarii*.

<sup>20</sup> Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 51-3; also discussed by Patrizia Turrini, ‘Per honore et utile de la città di Siena’. *Il comune e l'edilizia nel Quattrocento*, Siena: Tipografia senese, 1997, 43-81

to the city”.<sup>21</sup> A new government office – the *Petroni* – was established to identify properties and enforce the legislation, with a single surviving volume of their records listing over 200 derelict buildings identified 1448-1500, and reporting on the restoration work that they were able to enforce.<sup>22</sup> The significant principle that the activity of the *Petroni* reveals, is a shift from the identification of public property and its maintenance away from the open spaces of streets and piazzas, to a more all-encompassing vision that considered the image of the city to be shaped by the collective effect of private property as much as by the city’s public spaces and monuments.

So then, when the preaching friar and later saint Bernardino of Siena gave his sermons on the piazza del Campo in 1425 he was able famously to comment on the images represented in Lorenzetti’s frescoes: “and turning to the image of peace, I see merchandise all around, I see dancing, I see buildings being restored [...] and on account of these things everyone is in blessed peace and harmony.”<sup>23</sup> The image to which he referred was nearly a century old, and yet it continued to be meaningful to the Sieneese viewing public. While some scholars have preferred to view the frescoes as precisely representing the Campo, no topographic specificity is provided; instead the fresco, like Bernardino’s remarks, set out a framework for understanding how social practices and the built environment contributed to ensure that the polity might enjoy a life in “pace et in concordia”.<sup>24</sup> During the fourteenth century the principal location in the city where such values were “performed” and enforced was the public space of the Campo, though by the following century Siena’s rulers were intent on extending their management of the urban environment beyond the civic square. The work of the *Petroni* sought to improve the city’s housing stock, by intervening to enforce the restoration of buildings that had been abandoned by their owners, who in many cases sought to make a small profit by selling off the building materials from their derelict houses.<sup>25</sup> Maintenance of the everyday housing stock – for Lorenzetti as for Bernardino – was an indicator of the city’s prosperity and good government and thanks to the work of the *Petroni* a large number of houses and palaces, as well as the public spaces around them (all too often also occupied by rubble and building materials) were cleared up at their owners’ expense.

There is some evidence to suggest that the policies enforced by the *Petroni* may have been directly connected to plans to beautify the city around the time that the council of Pavia officiated by Pope Martin V was relocated to Siena (from 1423), although more broadly their policies gave expression to the government’s growing concern for the appearance of the city as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Following the return of the papacy from Avignon to Rome, throughout the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. and ASS, *Biccherna* 1060, fol. 2r-v (18 April 1444), “grande danno e vergogna alla cipta.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche volgari. Predicazione del 1425 in Siena*, ed. C. Cannarozzi, Florence, 1958, II, 266 – cited in Maria Monica Donato, ‘La “bellissima inventiva”: immagini e idee nella Sala della Pace’, in *Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Il buon governo*, E. Castelnuovo ed., Milan: Electa, 1995, 23-42, 36: “voltandomi a la pace, vego le mercanzie andare atorno, vego balli, vego racconciare le case [...] per queste cose ognuno sta in santa pace et in concordia.”

<sup>24</sup> Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 5-12 for analysis of Bernardino’s account of the frescoes and discussion of subsequent changes to the fresco, which include the addition of the Duomo.

<sup>25</sup> ASS, *Biccherna* 1060, fol. 2r-v.

<sup>26</sup> Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 51; Turrini, ‘*Per honore et utile*’, 43-81.

fifteenth century Siena came increasingly to be a transit-point for pilgrims and élite travellers of all sorts (emperors, kings, popes, ambassadors, as well as merchants) on their way to and from the Eternal City.<sup>27</sup> These travellers, users of one of the most significant pilgrimage routes of pre-modern Europe, the via Francigena, were increasingly understood by the Sieneese authorities to be instrumental in communicating the fame and identity of the city abroad, and as such it was at least in part for their benefit that many urban improvement policies of the fifteenth century were introduced and enforced. It is indeed surprising to note the frequency with which the enabling legislation and decisions of the city's government offices refer not just to the declared aim to beautify the city, but that it was outside visitors as much as local residents who were the intended beneficiaries of such improvements. Furthermore, the most compelling evidence that points to the fact that there was an active policy to favour the part of the city that was most visible to the eyes of outside viewers is the fact that it was along the main artery that cuts through the city from the Porta Camollia in the North to the Porta Romana in the South, that the majority of interventions were focused. This central thoroughfare, the urban section of the via Francigena – known in Siena as the Strada Romana – emerged through the latter part of the fifteenth century as the priority for government-led urban improvements spearheaded by the appropriately named “ufficiali sopra l'ornato”.<sup>28</sup>

The *ornato* was an office of nine men whose main purpose was to enforce policies for the improvement of the urban fabric and, in particular, to encourage (and to some extent oblige) private property owners to renew their properties following certain criteria of ‘ornato’ (beauty or decorum). Established in 1458, perhaps following the advice of Pope Pius II Piccolomini, their remit was, in their own words, “to work incessantly and oblige all citizens without exception to improve the civic image (*honore publico*) and renew the city's appearance by appropriate and beautiful works”.<sup>29</sup> This they appear to have done for over a quarter century, with a notable energy directed at the removal of jetties or overhanging balconies that projected out from the façades of buildings above street level. The *Ornato* had no budget, but they could appeal to the government on behalf of property-owners in order to secure partial subsidies for the building interventions that they recommended. Almost without exception, the subsidies that they were able to leverage were fairly small as compared to the overall cost incurred for rebuilding an entire house façade, the almost inevitable consequence of removing balconies of this sort.

From as early as 1309 statute regulations had legislated against balconies with very few practical results, so that the *Ornato* interventions are particularly interesting, as they mark a

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<sup>27</sup> Numerous processions and visits to Siena are discussed in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*; a valuable source remains Agostino Provedi, *Relazione delle pubbliche feste date in Siena negli ultimi cinque secoli*, Siena: Bindi, 1791.

<sup>28</sup> I have written extensively about the work of the *ornato* and will here limit the footnotes to specific examples discussed in the text; for a full discussion see Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 91-145 and “‘Ornato della città’: Siena's Strada Romana as Focus of Fifteenth-century Urban Renewal”, *Art Bulletin*, 82 (2000), 26-50; also Petra Pertici, *La città magnificata: interventi edilizi a Siena nel Quattrocento*, Siena: il Leccio 1995. Hub, “‘Vedete come è bella’”, 71-2 proposes precedents for such activity managed through the tax office of the *Biccherna*, following Braunfels, *Mitteralterliche Stadtbaukunst*, 40 and 96-7.

<sup>29</sup> ASS, *Concistoro* 2125, fol. 39 (18 December 1465; cited also by Pertici, *La città magnificata*, 89); for the office's enabling legislation see ASS Statuto di Siena 40, fol. 137 (11 October 1458). See further Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 98-100.



significant change in the enforcement of government-mandated urban improvements which required a financial outlay by private individuals.<sup>30</sup> It is clear that subsidies alone are not enough to explain the widespread application of *Ornato* decisions, and we need instead to look at the rhetoric that surrounded the process of urban improvement that they favoured, in order to consider the meaning of 'ornato' and how it was applied. The term 'ornato' defies an easy translation, for it coincides with both an aesthetic value of beauty and decorum, but also a collective qualitative judgement defined by the ideal of the well-ordered and dignified city, where beauty is a civic value that overcomes the shame of squalor and disrepair. 'Ornato' therefore can perhaps be understood to have a moral quality, much in the same way that it has been argued that 'magnificentia' (magnificence) was an underpinning value that fuelled the building boom of private palace-construction in Quattrocento Florence.<sup>31</sup> While the values of magnificence also applied to élite palace patronage in Siena, the qualities associated with the concept of 'ornato' were far more socially inclusive and far-reaching. In fact, the *Ornato* officials full title was "ufficiali sopra l'ornato della città," which identified their remit quite specifically as touching the entire city. The deliberations of Siena's great council are packed with decisions to enact the officials' recommendations that would increase 'ornato' and counteract the shame (*vergogna*) derived from buildings left in a state of disrepair.<sup>32</sup>

Petitions mediated by the *Ornato* officials involved élite patrons such as the Spannocchi or Piccolomini, but more often identified the run of the mill housing of unexceptional citizens for improvement, especially when these were located on the Strada Romana or the street leading from the central Campo up to the cathedral precinct. The primacy assigned to these streets was clear from the outset, and is constantly repeated in petitions that refer to these areas in terms of their visibility, such as in a document of December 1465 that described the need to focus work on the "street of Camollia, because visitors to the city see that street more than any other".<sup>33</sup> A few years later in February 1469 it was the house of Giovanni di Pietro on the Strada di Camollia (the northern portion of the Strada Romana) that was identified for improvements as it risked collapsing and was "a reason for great public shame to the city as it is close to the gate of Camollia".<sup>34</sup> Giovanni was one of many to receive a subsidy to renew the façade of his house, and the combination here between the language of public shame (*vergogna* and a related term often used, dishonour, *disonore*) and the location of the house close to one of the city's main gates, speaks clearly to the very public ideal of 'ornato' that

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<sup>30</sup> 1309: *Costituto*, dist. III rubric 5. See also David Friedman, 'Palaces and the Street in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in *Urban Landscapes, International Perspectives*, ed. J. W. R. Whitehand and P. J. Larkham, London: Routledge, 1992, 69-113, esp. 74-86.

<sup>31</sup> As formulated in A. D. Fraser Jenkins, 'Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Concept of Magnificence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33, 1970, 162-70. Hub, "Vedete come è bella", 73-7 proposes a theologically-informed reading of urban beautification as striving for the ideals of the *civitas Dei* described by St Augustine.

<sup>32</sup> See the volumes of ASS *Consiglio Generale*, e.g. *Deliberazioni* 231, fol. 100 (116), of 26 March 1466 for the demolition of overhangs near San Giorgio "erano vergogna di tutta quella contrada maxime essendo la Streda Romana".

<sup>33</sup> ASS, *Concistoro* 2125, fol. 39 (18 December 1465); quoted in full in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 99 (Pertici, *La città magnificata*, 89).

<sup>34</sup> ASS, *Concistoro* 2125, fol. 86 (8 February 1468/9): "minaccia ruina [...] molto vergognosa ala citta et allentrata dessa porta Kamollia".

underpinned these policies.

Under the aegis of the *ornato* officials, a concerted policy was pursued for the renovation of housing stock along the Strada Romana and via di Città, which removed jetties, balconies and other wooden appendages from house façades and renewed the street with brick-built houses as well as many new elegant palaces.<sup>35</sup> The spatial implications of this policy are clear. Where previously the primary focus of government policy for urban beautification had been on the civic centerpiece of the piazza del Campo and its religious counterpart around the cathedral, the work of the *Ornato* extended the government's remit to shape the built form of the primary artery that cut through the city, connecting the centre to its principal gates. There can be little doubt that *Ornato* activity pinpointed the Strada Romana, with a spike in their activity in the 1460s which was primarily directed at overhang-demolitions.<sup>36</sup> This activity was supplemented with a series of zoning provisions that altered the commercial makeup of the street, discouraging noisy or filthy industries (such as pan-makers and butchers) from working along the Strada, just as they provided incentives for luxury retailers (such as goldsmiths, wool and silk merchants) to locate their shops there.<sup>37</sup>

Zoning regulations altered the distribution of trades operating on Siena's main street, showcasing luxury products that appealed to mobile élites and projected an image of industry and prosperity, while the *Ornato* renovations contributed to a radical architectural overhaul of that same street. As can be observed from a map of *Ornato* interventions (fig. 3), it was the entire course of the Strada Romana that was modified, making of it the city's main showcase, lined with elegant new palaces and well-maintained houses. This process coincided with a growing attention to civic ceremonial rituals and, in particular, the Renaissance revival of the classically-inspired triumphal entry. Perhaps not surprisingly, it was along the Strada Romana that elaborately staged entry ceremonies were staged for a succession of visitors, including Pope Pius II, King Charles VIII of France, and the Emperors Frederick III, Maximilian and Charles V, among others. While elaborate ephemeral constructions, including Roman-style triumphal arches, were a regular feature of these ceremonies, it was the permanent built fabric of the renewed street that formed the primary setting for these entries. Likewise, just as ephemeral heraldic displays honoured the visitors, permanent sculptural imagery was subtly deployed by the Sienese authorities to project a civic and collective identity along the street. Coinciding with the work of the *Ornato*, a series of she-wolf sculptures were erected on columns in significant parts of the city as well as on the gates, communicating thus quite clearly Siena's classical origins and connections with Rome, while at the same time providing a clear civic cohesion to the city's renewed main street (fig. 4).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> For a detailed treatment see Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 91-145.

<sup>36</sup> Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 209 for a table based only on documented cases in ASS, *Concistoro* 2125. Numerous others can be traced from the *Consiglio Generale* and other records.

<sup>37</sup> For additional evidence and examples, see Fabrizio Nevola, "Più honorati etuntuosi ala Republica": *Botteghe* and Luxury Retail along Siena's Strada Romana', in *Buyers and sellers: Retail practices in medieval and early modern Europe*, ed. B. Blondé, P. Stabel and J. Stobbart and I. Van Damme, Turnhout (Belgium): Brepols, 2006, 65-78.

<sup>38</sup> Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 140-2 and 147-55. Marilena Caciorgna and Roberto Guerrini, 'Imago Urbis. La lupa e l'immagine di Roma nell'arte e nella cultura senese come identità storica e morale', in *Siena e Roma. Raffaello, Caravaggio e i protagonisti di un legame antico* (exhibition catalogue, Siena, Santa Maria

Through offices such as the *Ornato* and the *Petroni* Siena's government was thus able to harness the duties of citizenship to propel and finance an extensive process of urban renewal. Whether through penalties such as the threat of expropriation, or the more subtle process of peer pressure exercised on entire neighbourhoods to ensure that all participated and accepted the duty of house-maintenance, the concept of "ornato della città" was pursued as an active government policy. There can be little doubt that members of the urban élite benefitted from these policies through tax benefits, land concessions and other incentives that supported their ambitious plans for grand new domestic palaces.<sup>39</sup> By contrast, it is all too easy to overlook the myriad minor interventions on the more everyday domestic housing stock of the city which were an equally important result of those policies. It is nonetheless the combined effect of the grand acts of architectural patronage as well as these more prosaic interventions that stands out as formulating a distinctive patronage process. The civic values associated with 'ornato' in fifteenth century Siena should thus be understood to have underpinned a process of collective patronage, whereby all citizens were expected to contribute to the shared endeavor of urban renewal and beautification.

Urban space in Siena, as it was pictured by Lorenzetti in the frescoes of the Palazzo Pubblico, and described by San Bernardino in his sermons on the piazza del Campo, can therefore be understood as a built expression of the ideals of good government, consciously fashioned by careful planning decisions that were overseen by dedicated officials. While the city's political instability is the subject of other contributions to this collection, it is nonetheless clear that the most dramatic break from the communal tradition that prevailed in the city from the thirteenth century was the period of *Novesco* ascendancy from July 1487, leading to the brief *signoria* of Pandolfo Petrucci (d. 1512) and his heirs (to 1525).<sup>40</sup> As has been widely noted, the processes of decision-making and government changed significantly during this period, with a narrowing of the executive and increased reliance on the extraordinary powers of the *Balia*, a body closely identified with the tight oligarchy that surrounded Petrucci. This relatively short-lived institutional shakeup had far reaching consequences for Siena's place in the fast-changing geopolitics of the Italian peninsula, but also altered significantly the processes of collective patronage that had given built expression to the civic ideals that shaped the city for over two centuries.

Two outstanding and representative urban-scale projects of the period are the renewal of the via del Capitano, a street leading from piazza Postierla to the cathedral, and the via del Casato, a primarily residential street on the southern edge of the piazza del Campo. What the two projects have in common is that they were renewed in the decades following 1487, largely through the patronage of individuals closely associated with the new ruling group. While at

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della Scala, Palazzo Squarcialupi, 25 Nov. 2005 – 5 Mar. 2006), ed. Bruno Santi and Claudio Strinati, Siena: Protagon, 2005, 99-118.

<sup>39</sup> Numerous instances are documented in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*.

<sup>40</sup> This period of Sienese history has been the subject of numerous studies by Christine Shaw, Giuseppe Chironi, Philippa Jackson and Petra Pertici among others; a detailed study of the architectural and urban development through the period from 1487 is in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 157-207.

first sight these projects may appear to have adopted comparable strategies to those employed for the Strada Romana, they should instead be understood as exclusive developments which led to the creation of élite residential enclaves of palace streets. This was especially the case at the via del Capitano, a mixed-use street up to the latter part of the fifteenth century, where the grand Pecci palace flanked much less prestigious properties belonging to the nearby hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, which rented these out on life-leases to employees and other deserving citizens.<sup>41</sup> Following the return to Siena of the *Nove* in 1487, many of the hospital properties were forcibly sold off to individuals closely associated with the city's new government.<sup>42</sup> Thus Giacoppo Petrucci secured the site for a new palace "built from the foundations" on the corner of the cathedral square, buying six houses from the hospital, which included properties occupied by a deacon at the hospital, Antonio Alberti of Orvieto, a canon named Pietro Antonio di Gheri, as well as the house of the artist Neroccio di Bartolomeo. His neighbour on the street was Antonio Bichi, a central figure of the new élite, who also secured a site by forcing the hand of the widow and heirs of the Santa Maria della Scala physician Alessandro Sermoneta, as well as through property sales by the cathedral. Further along the street at piazza Postierla, Borghese Borghesi also benefitted from advantageous land concessions by the cathedral for his new palace, while the immensely wealthy banker Agostino Chigi also secured property rights and permits for a new palace in 1503 (fig. 5). Evidently the rapid redevelopment of the via del Capitano as a street lined with the palaces of Siena's new élite was achieved by a process of forced acquisitions that transferred into private hands properties that had previously been held as assets belonging to public institutions. Just as these institutions had come under the direct control of committees drawn from the city's new élite, so the new street that emerged can be understood as an expression of the transformed dynamics at play in the city.

The via del Capitano stands out as the clearest example of how political change altered the dynamics of urban renewal, arresting a continuous and collective civic urban process that had operated from the thirteenth century, and replacing it with a system that favoured the interests of a small ruling group. The street is constituted as an exclusive space, where property ownership was achieved thanks to the exercise of power, and where palace architecture provided a unifying site and style for the new élite. While less dramatic, the situation in the via del Casato appears to have been similar. The Casato had an established position as a preferred residential street for many of the city's leading families, partly at least as it was centrally-located and had easy access to the commercial and political centre around the Campo. Following the return of the *Nove* in 1487, there is some evidence of property turnover in the street, as returning *noveschi* were able to buy up properties there that had been confiscated from exiled opponents of the new regime.<sup>43</sup> More significantly, at some point after 1488 the street appears to have become more desirable for élite residents, and by the early 1500s it had clearly become a centre for the city's bankers, with well documented palaces

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<sup>41</sup> ASS, *Ospedale Santa Maria della Scala*, 172 (Usufrutti, depositi, preste) for leases.

<sup>42</sup> For these examples and the documents, see Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 177 ff.; ASS, *Ospedale Santa Maria della Scala*, 172 fol. 90 and *Ospedale Santa Maria della Scala* 528, fol. 94 for sales to Giacoppo Petrucci.

<sup>43</sup> Further discussion and sources in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 184-7.

belonging to the Chigi, Venturini, Benassai, Ghinucci and probably also the Spannocchi. Tax evidence further suggests that in the years around 1500 the street became a significant focus for *Ornato*-mediated renovations, with tax returns of 1509 showing nearly 30 per cent of residents on the street (31 out of 115) involved in renovating their homes or palaces.<sup>44</sup> While no documentary evidence has emerged to shed light on why the *Ornato* officials pinpointed the Casato for improvement after 1487, it seems plausible to suggest that the street was identified as a new residential enclave for merchant and banking élites connected to the new regime, and as such that the *Ornato* intervened to support the process of its quite rapidly-executed renovation.

Such an interpretation would conform to comparable uses of the principle of 'ornato' to improve other enclaves exclusively associated with the *Novesco* regime and the Petrucci. Among these, the most significant was the reordering of the urban context of Pandolfo Petrucci's palace on via del Pellegrino (adjacent to the Baptistry) by means of a series of zoning restrictions, overhang demolitions and street-straightening policies, enforced from September 1507 "pro maiori etiam ornamento publico".<sup>45</sup> These modifications to the street connecting the 'Palazzo del Magnifico' (as Pandolfo's palace was known) to the nearby piazza del Campo sought to create an axial alignment between the seigneurial residence and the traditional site of Siena's political centre in the Palazzo Pubblico. Combined with unexecuted plans (from 1508) to encircle the Campo with a portico that would have masked the civic buildings with a homogenous classicising façade, these urban interventions reveal the underlying politics of city planning, by revealing the new ruler's ambition to reorient the *locus* of power in the city to the Petrucci residence. Such plans were short lived however, and with the death of Pandolfo and the political demise of his weak son Borghese (1514), the focus of Petrucci power returned to the via del Capitano residence adjacent to the cathedral, a building whose associations with government meant that it was chosen as the Medici governor's palace following Siena's loss of independence.<sup>46</sup>

With the end of the Petrucci *signoria*, Siena returned to republican rule (1525), albeit as a minor player in the complex European military and geopolitical struggles that were being fought out in Italy during this period. The city's independence, celebrated with the successful defence of the city from the Florentines at the battle of Porta Camollia (1526), came increasingly to be articulated through spending on fortifications.<sup>47</sup> While Domenico Beccafumi's frescoes for the Sala del Concistoro in the Palazzo Pubblico revisited the civic ideals that underpinned Lorenzetti's frescoes of almost two centuries earlier, Baldassarre Peruzzi returned to Siena from Rome to take up the post of cathedral architect, leading various interventions that renewed the ideal of civic religion through publicly-funded

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<sup>44</sup> In this instance the evidence for *ornato* activity is reported in tax records where individuals record liabilities incurred as a result of construction work resulting from *ornato* decisions (as opposed to the evidence originating from official *ornato* records).

<sup>45</sup> ASS, *Balia* 253, fol. 240 (16 September 1507) discussed in Nevola, *Siena: Constructing*, 202.

<sup>46</sup> M. Morviducci, 'Dai Petrucci alla Provincia. Il Palazzo del Governatore come sede del potere a Siena', in F. Bisogni ed., *Palazzo della Provincia a Siena*, Rome: Editalia 1990, 55-108.

<sup>47</sup> Judith Hook, 'Fortifications and the end of the Sienese State', *History*, 62 (1977), 372-387 and Nicholas Adams and Simon Pepper, *Firearms and Fortifications: Military Architecture and Siege Warfare in Sixteenth Century Siena*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986.

patronage at the Duomo.<sup>48</sup> However, growing financial pressures on the public purse to meet the considerable costs of fortification of both the city and *contado* were undoubtedly the primary focus of government budgets and policy throughout the period leading up to the final loss of independence. As city architect from 1527-35, Peruzzi's principal activity was that of designer of fortifications, intended both to secure the city from external aggression, but also to prevent a return of the *Novesco* faction to power.<sup>49</sup>

The history of Siena's urban development in the three decades between the end of the Petrucci *signoria* and the wars that led to its loss of independence and transfer to the Medici duchy remains to be written. Nevertheless, the grand civic projects for the cathedral and city hall which aimed to re-establish the patterns of civic patronage that had prevailed through its earlier republican past were matched by the reassertion of the city's legislative framework, significantly marked by the compilation of a new set of statutes, drawn up in Latin in 1545.<sup>50</sup> These statutes give some indication of the political will to restate the values that underpinned the institutions that had shaped the city up until the Petrucci interlude, overturning those changes that had been effected during that period. Not only were offices such as the *Viarri* reconfirmed in their mandate to manage the city's street and rural road network, but the role of the *Ornato* was also given formal recognition.<sup>51</sup> The new statutes expressed the ambition to renew the ideals and honour of the public weal ("maiestas publici honoris") by recasting the city's legislation in a classical language that echoed the erudite references in Beccafumi's frescoes or Peruzzi's classical re-imagining of the cathedral.<sup>52</sup> And yet, as was noted at the outset, behind the classical language, many of the practices, offices, institutions and regulations remained largely unchanged from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when principles such as the cost-sharing arrangements for street maintenance and improvement had first been established.<sup>53</sup> Thus, when Niccolini noted in 1565 that "according to the laws of this city, it is the practice that private individuals pay for the materials, and the public purse pays for the labour," he referred to a long-documented practice that had been both transmitted and renewed throughout the city's long republican history.<sup>54</sup> Though a seemingly minor legislative detail, this practice enshrined a key principle of the Siennese republic, that

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<sup>48</sup> Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Political Ideas in Siennese Art: the Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), 179-207; Gabriele Fattorini and Jennifer Sliwka, 'Domenico Beccafumi and the Siennese tradition', in Luke Syson et al., *Renaissance Siena: Art for a City*, exh. cat. National Gallery, London (October 2007 – January 2008), London: National Gallery Publications 2007, 296-299; Ann C. Huppert, *Becoming an Architect in Renaissance Italy. Art, Science and the Career of Baldassarre Peruzzi*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2015, 33-5.

<sup>49</sup> Adams and Pepper, *Firearms and Fortifications*, 57-8; Huppert, *Becoming an Architect*, 36-40. Nicholas Adams, *Baldassarre Peruzzi: Architect to the Republic of Siena*, Ph.D. thesis, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University 1977, remains unrivalled for its archival research and interpretation.

<sup>50</sup> Mario Ascheri ed., *L'ultimo statuto della Repubblica di Siena (1545)*, Siena: Accademia degli Intronati, 1993.

<sup>51</sup> *L'ultimo statuto*, 120-1, "De viariis et eorum officio" (l. 213) and 404, "Ornatum civitatis pro viribus attendentes" (IV, 81).

<sup>52</sup> As observed by Mario Ascheri, 'Siena nel primo Cinquecento e il suo ultimo statuto', in *L'ultimo statuto*, xxix (quote from 1545 statutes, IV.17).

<sup>53</sup> Ascheri, 'Siena nel primo Cinquecento', xxix-xxxvi for continuities in spite of the translation into Latin.

<sup>54</sup> ASF, *Mediceo Principato*, 1871, f. 84 [1565, Aug 9] letter from: Agnolo Niccolini to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici: "secondo li ordini di questa città, erano consueti li privati mettere la materia, cioè le mezzane, et il pubblico l'opera."

the city was a built expression of good government, and that consequently contributing to the 'ornato della città' was a duty enjoined on every citizen.

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