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Reexamining the Public Realm

"Everyone knows, tortoises are slow! Everyone knows, tortoises are slow!" chanted Giacomo mockingly, emboldened by the relative strength in numbers offered by his fellow contradaioli, *even though they were now far afield in Pantera territory. "We will soon see on Sunday," came a reply from the first-floor window overlooking Via Tommaso Pendola. "Go back to your filthy dens, you sly Lupa bastards!"*

Hot though it was, Giacomo eagerly pulled on his velvet doublet for one final fitting before the big day. "Zia Giuliana really should buy an air conditioner," he mused. "The trouble with older people is that they are set in their ways . . . Oh well, I shouldn't complain," he went on to himself with a certain amount of pride. "When she gets done, I will look exactly like zio Umberto in the old photo on the sideboard."

"Shit! If I hadn't closed my eyes I wouldn't have dropped that damn flag during the alzata. *Stupido! And there in the Campo for all to see . . . My God, what will zio Umberto say?" "Don't worry, Giacomo," yelled Gianni at his side, as they were carried by the swarming crowd away from the piazza. "There is always next year!" "Yes!" thought Giacomo, taking at least some heart. "There is always next year."*

—Pietro Lupino, *Festa**

This book is about attitudes and an orientation toward the making and reshaping of urban public spaces that are civic in character, belonging to everyone and yet to nobody in particular. Of importance is how such places were created and the specific social, political, and cultural circumstances that brought them into existence. Also of importance is the shape and appearance of these places and how that was used to simultaneously represent, constitute, and enhance the daily lives of citizens. In short, this is a book as much about the broad processes and attitudes behind civic place making as it is about urban architecture per se, and it reflects a concomitant belief that civic place making cannot occur successfully without a propitious conjunction of local opportunity, community wherewithal, and design capability.

A good place to start examining both the social and physical aspects of viable civic places is with an incontestable example that has contemporary pertinence and has stood the test of time. Arguably, among all the likely candidates, Siena and its Piazza del Campo stand out as a place where civic life, civic aspirations, and civic responsibilities have been inscribed indelibly, encapsulating the themes that will run through the remainder of this book. To begin with, even during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Siena presented an array of social, political, and cultural dimensions of importance to any discussion of public and civic realms. Broadly, the political functions and suffrage of the city-state were divided into three broad categories. First, there was the government of elected officials, magistrates, and other bureaucrats. Then there was civil society formed by the nobility, the well-to-do, and the remaining middle and working classes—literally the citizens of Siena. Finally there were the populations marginalized within civil society and without the full rights and protections of citizenship, including foreigners and itinerant laborers. Far from being fixed, this three-part arrangement in the sharing of power and responsibility and the creation of mutual dependency was dynamic. Governments came and went. Regimes changed hands, and the fortunes of prominent and not-so-prominent families waxed and waned. Uprisings were fomented and the rights to representation were both increased and decreased accordingly. The institutional character of the three major social divisions also changed. Sometimes the government ruled with a full complement of offices, and at other times it did not. The guilds, the university, confraternities, neighborhood organizations, and other gatherings were both more and less influential, and the livelihoods available to both the poor and the prosperous typically varied with the economy and with changes in technology. Correspondingly, alliances within and between the sociopolitical divisions also shifted, as did the distinctions that could be made between the divisions themselves.

The most remarkable aspect of Siena during this period, however, was the overall continuity of the republic, ultimately formed by the give-and-take relationship among constituents of civil society, and, perhaps most important, by the relationship between civil society and the state. More germane still, the Piazza del Campo—or simply, *Il Campo* ("the field") as the primary setting for Sienese social, political, and cultural life, reflected and continues to reflect these relationships, as well as some of the changing alliances. In the authorship of its overall layout, spatial definition, decoration, and use, the Campo was a mixed enterprise, involving both the government and civil society. Yet it expressively captured the life, times, and civil circumstances of Siena, as well as reminding the Sienese—should any reminder have been necessary—of who they were and what was expected of them. In this last respect the Campo was more than public, more than a matter of access or of the right of expression and display. It produced an aura, recalled fine moments from the past, and provided palpable guidance about what form of public behavior was not only acceptable but preferred. In short, it was *civic.*

What is also clear from the case of Siena and the Piazza del Campo is the directness with which civic life and expectations were and continue to be represented. Again the design of the open space, the architecture of the buildings, the provisions made for use, and the general adornment were and remain clearly understandable without being seen as nostalgic, trivializing, or overly picturesque. The Campo both was and is, in a word, *real.* It had and still has a

ealism that encompasses everyday life, occasional events, solemn occasions, nd extraordinary celebrations. Nevertheless, like many great civic works the ealism also extends to the expressive means themselves. Architecturally, the Campo remains somewhat contained or autonomous in this respect. It may be strikingly beautiful like an illuminated script from the early period, but it also equires contemplation, knowledge, and a sense of architectural form to be nterpreted thoughtfully. The realism is thus removed and representational in one sense, and alive, literal, and constitutive in another. Certainly in strictly architectural terms, it extends beyond the usual stylistic label of realism—nowadays often confined to either state or corporate interests, such as "socialist realism," "photorealism," or "neorealism." Furthermore, the appearance of the Piazza del Campo involved many contributors, not only reflecting ideological aspects of the public and private sectors, but fundamentally expressing the common ground between government and civil society, including some inherent tensions and contradictions. In short, the realism here did more than merely illustrate and promote a particular class-based or political point of view. Unlike many other historical places, it also did more than augment the trappings of despotism, theocracy, or a manifest personal image. These generalizations, however, require the telling of a longer and more detailed version of the story before the underlying themes of this book can become clearer.

Following this clarification, the book proceeds with a definition of the civic aspects of places and useful distinctions that may be drawn with public spaces in general. This is followed, in chapter 3, by a discussion of realism and, in particular, of pertinent aesthetic and architectural dimensions of that concept. In chapter 4, the possibilities of individual spatial practices to define and reshape collective places are introduced, followed in chapter 5 by an exploration of how civic places must have the capacity to constitute as well as represent the civic aspects of our lives. To conclude, various interactive arrangements of by-then familiar concepts about civic realism are presented in chapter 6, along with balancing tests for sorting out good from not-so-good aspects of viable civic places. Ultimately this book is about enabling design practices, whereby any apparent decline in the presence of viable civic realms might be redressed constructively. In contrast to narrow definitions of what is or might be called civic in our cities—often corresponding to equally narrow definitions about the conduct of political life—the broad message of this book is that many publicly accessible spaces can have and should have a civic orientation that is direct, palpable, and there for the purposes of reminding us both of who we are and who we might become.

AN ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC AND CIVIC LIFE

During the thirteenth century, against the backdrop of what must have seemed like an interminable political struggle for power between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, there emerged a remarkable and even more durable civic phenomenon—the *comuni* or communes of northern and central Italy. These republican city-states not only played pivotal roles in the broader struggle of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, but also established a new benchmark in civil rule and popular government, the likes of which had not been seen since the Roman republic before Caesar Augustus.[1] Populous, highly urbanized, wealthy, and enterprising, these communes and the exploits of their citizenry are well known, especially through the two most influential, the republics of Venice and Florence.

Yet it is in Siena—the City of the Virgin, the smaller and less prodigious rival of neighboring Florence through much of this period—where probably the most extreme form of popular government, committee rule, and communal municipal administration could be found. Considered politically unruly to the point of being untrustworthy by many would-be allies, Siena for a period of some three hundred years—roughly between 1255 and 1555—clung tenaciously to its republican independence and belief in civic virtue. In the final years of the republic, during a terrible siege that brought the city-state to

its end, Siena fought on heroically and paid dearly for these beliefs. The city's population was quite literally decimated to about one-tenth of its original number in earlier more peaceful and prosperous times.[2]

The thirteenth century was a period of bewildering economic development and profound social change in northern and central Italy: the time and place bore witness to the dismantling of the feudal system, freedom from a subsistence economy, agricultural reform, and a significant rise in the importance and largesse of urban areas. Indeed, towns and cities renewed their functions as centers of exchange during this period, as consumers of agricultural products on the one hand, and as providers of services and manufactured goods on the other. Gone, or in a distinct minority, was the rampant and parochial exploitation by local lords, whose former fiefdoms could barely sustain their indigenous populations, even during the best of times. On the ascent was a mercantile class and a mercantile culture, together with peasant ownership of small farms and rural land holdings. The commune that emerged was an administrative fusion between city and countryside, covering unprecedentedly large expanses of territory. In practice what occurred was subjugation of this territory by city interests, the imposition of laws and administrative practices, along with the dismantling of the castles and fortresses of local nobility. The whole region was melded into one political entity. In short, the countryside (*contado*) and city (*città*) became one, with smaller towns and surrounding rural areas effectively replicating the political and social qualities of the larger city-state.[3]

This was also a period of high rural-to-urban migration. Invariably, urban areas were dense. In most places there was one townsperson for every one-and-a-half country persons, and in some towns, like San Gimignano, this ratio was reversed, with three townspersons for every two country persons.[4] No doubt the practice of requiring Sienese citizens to purchase property and build a house in town of a certain cost, as a prerequisite for suffrage, contributed to these urban densities and the rural-urban pattern of migration. Economic incentives of better jobs and potential advancement also played a strong role in reinforcing the trend. By contrast, the new less servile relationship that emerged between those who worked the land—the *contadini*—and those who owned the land maintained productively sizable numbers of the peasantry in the outlying territory. Contracts replaced the former feudal system of servile relations and there was considerable encouragement, especially for ordinary citizens, to own land.[5]

During the period of entrepreneurial growth in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Siena was both bourgeois and enterprising, as well as land owning and profitably territorial. In particular, this era saw the rise of many mercantile ventures and of banking. Moreover, Siena was at the forefront of these enterprises, although the Florentine florin emerged as the chief currency of Europe. For many years the Bonsignori family ran from Siena their *Great Table*, a banking interest of considerable breadth and dependability, until its collapse in the late 1290s and eventual bailout by the commune during the early fourteenth century.[6] The Sienese Chigi family were also heavily engaged in the banking business, eventually establishing themselves prominently in Rome, where their former palazzo now serves as the government headquarters for the contemporary Italian republic. In fact, the Monte dei Paschi, founded in 1624 and one of Italy's oldest existing banks, began life in Siena, where its main offices were located in the former Salimbeni palace on the main street running north and south through the city. Later on, and not altogether for the better, a system of agricultural sharecropping emerged, allowing these and other wealthy Sienese families of rentiers to exploit peasant farmers.

Geographically, the territory or city-state of Siena, especially at the height of its expansion around 1337, encompassed a sizable area of central-western Italy, roughly 50 kilometers in every direction. With Florence close by to the north, Sienese influence extended south as far as the Monti Volsini—approximately the modern border between the regions of Tuscany and Lazio. To the east, the Sienese encroached into the rich Val di Chiana, and to the west lay the Tyrrhenian Sea.[7] Although in those days precise boundaries were never clear and often contested, the metal-bearing hills immediately to the west of

Siena constantly remained a part of the city-state's dominion, whereas increasing sections of the Maremma to the southwest, with its valuable pastures and impressive salt and mineral deposits, were gradually subjugated and incorporated. The broken terrain of the Sienese contado made dominance over local landlords, such as the Aldobrandeschi of Sovana in the Maremma, difficult.[8] The lack of extensive waterways and a general shortage of fresh water were also constant problems, along with the absence of a home port, in spite of ill-fated efforts to develop Talamone on the Tyrrhenian Sea for this purpose at great public expense during the early fourteenth century.[9]

Administratively, the contado—the larger territory of Siena—was subdivided into three parts, each with different legislative requirements and responsibilities. At the center was the city itself or the commune proper, under direct rule of commune authorities. Next lay the *masse,* or suburbs—known then as *burgi* or today as *borghi*—incorporating the shantytowns that grew up outside the walls of Siena and surrounding townships dating from earlier periods.[10] The masse were also administered directly by the city, although often taxed separately. Finally, the remaining contado, or mosaic of towns and countryside, made up the third broad administrative unit, in many cases with some autonomy. Towns like Grosseto and Massa Marittima, for instance, were awarded special status and relief from taxation in return for allegiance to Sienese authority.[11]

The city of Siena was located about 300 meters above sea level along a westward spur of the Chiana hills. With a land area in 1300 of some 50 hectares, it was roughly half the size of Florence. Unlike some central Italian cities, such as Viterbo to the south, Siena was not an expanded Roman town, but was built from the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., along the ridge lines of prevailing terrain and adjacent to major roads, especially the Via Cassia, linking Rome to the south with France to the north. Eventually subdivided into three *terzi*—Città, San Martino, and Camollia roughly in that order of development—the first settlement at Castelvecchio occupied a prominent hill for obvious defensive reasons. Subsequent expansions favored other hills and high terrain. A successive walling in of communities with *castellacce* also occurred as the city expanded along and across neighboring hillsides. Adjacent to these walls and some thirty-five to fifty fortified gates were located the *carbonaie*—deep trenches with wood piled up for fires—to discourage rampart storming by anyone laying siege to the city.[12]

By the mid-thirteenth century the population of the city of Siena was about 30,000, growing rapidly to 50,000 in the first half of the fourteenth century, a peak not exceeded until well into the modern period, and then only barely. Another 15,000 people were added by the shantytowns that sprung up along the roads and up the hillsides on the outskirts of the fortified town, in addition to other settlements in the masse, with the surrounding countryside and annexed territories contributing a further 35,000 people. In all, the population of the Sienese city-state was about 100,000 before the Great Plague or Black Death of 1348, with the vast majority concentrated in and around the city itself. Not at all unique in these characteristics, Siena reflected the typical pattern at the time. Bologna, for instance, had some 12,000 people in the city and an additional 17,000 in the countryside.[13]

Unfortunately, this population expansion and concentration could not be supported, as the precarious balance between demands for food and agricultural production at the time could not be sustained, leading to recurrent famine and pestilence. With declining populations and corresponding incentives to maintain former territorial expanses, many of the civic works of the thirteenth century were undone. The Sienese marshes, for instance, lost around 80 percent of their earlier population during the last decades of the fourteenth century. Moreover, Siena was not alone in these losses. In San Gimignano fully two-thirds of the population perished in the plague, while in Pistoia the population was almost halved, from 36,000 to about 19,000, and the population of Orvieto, just beyond the southeastern outskirts of the Sienese contado, was reduced from about 3,000 at the turn of the fourteenth century to only 1,300 less than a century later.[14]

Far from homogeneous, Siena's population around its peak in the early fourteenth century was composed of nobles, merchants, tradespeople, industrialists, day laborers, clergy, and others from a broad range of callings, as well as

foreigners and immigrants from outside the city and its territories. Nevertheless, in a form very similar to Livy's class division of republican Rome, Siena's civil society was stratified into four reasonably distinct groups.[15] First, although not necessarily foremost, were the *casati*—the noble houses and families of aristocratic bearing such as the Tolomei, Salimbeni, Piccolomini, Ugurgieri, Sansedoni, Bonsignori, and Malavolti. Next were the *popolo grasso*, composed of upper-middle-class bankers, merchants, wool manufacturers, and other industrialists, as well as retailers, goldsmiths, and most professionals like doctors, judges, and academics. The majority of citizens—the *popolo minuto*—included master craftsmen, clerics, and farmers, together with other wage earners such as masons and soldiers. Finally, there were noncitizens, without complete rights and protections, such as servants and retainers of large households, foreigners, and some day laborers—in short, the majority of the population.

Full citizens of Siena, as Bowsky describes them, "were men who possessed a specified minimum of wealth, resided within the city, and demonstrated the ability and willingness to pay taxes and to perform real and personal services that the commune demanded of them."[16] In return they received the full and not inconsiderable measure of both privilege and protection that Siena and its commune could offer, with relatively minor liabilities. Indeed, histories of commune life are replete with references to the physical and economic safeguards offered to citizenry, including the Bonsignori bank stabilization mentioned earlier.

Within the ranks of citizens, the casati were expressly precluded from holding high state or municipal office through most of the period under discussion, for fear of a return to feudalism. By contrast to, say, Florence or Venice, long-standing rivalries between casati effectively meant that a monolithic *signoria* could not be easily established. Instead, the rival magnate families of Tolomei and Salimbeni, or of Malavolti and Piccolomini, could be balanced off in practice with great houses of the upper-middle class at the time, like the Montanini and Petroni.[17] Furthermore, it would be a mistake to think in modern class-conscious terms. The new bourgeois families did not see themselves as at odds with the older magnate families. For both there was a profound concern for peace and for limiting any magnate bellicosity and, if anything, accord was required. Other overlaps of interest also existed between the two groups. In commerce and industry, for example, guilds and other business associations flourished, although the commune, unlike the Florentines, took a dim view of guilds, largely because of their monopolistic tendencies and concomitant abilities to raise the prices of goods and services. Somewhat drastically (and wrongfully, as it turned out), all guilds were outlawed in 1305, except the Arte della Lana and the Mercanzia, an association of Siena's five major guilds.[18]

Family life, first and foremost, was patriarchal. Wives and children were expected to do their master's bidding. In practice, however, as we see from the delightful example of the Merchant of Prato, husband and wife could also be joined in a partnership of considerable give-and-take, mutual respect, and common direction.[19] Typically she was in charge of the household and he took care of the family business, although the interests in both domains often overlapped. Families of the well-to-do were also very large and extended to include relatives, retainers, servants, and even business associates, in addition to the immediate family. Child bearing and rearing was a priority, particularly in favor of male children who could carry on the name and traditions of the family. Lending assistance to needy or less fortunate family members was also a duty and thus commonplace. In addition, piety, especially in old age, was widespread, countenancing strong ties with the church, even over otherwise secular matters. In short, medieval families of Siena, particularly among the well-to-do, were very large, primarily preoccupied with their own destiny and day-to-day business, although certainly not to the exclusion of service to the larger community. They were also pious, formal, and even stern in outward public appearance, and, although not uncaring, much the same at home.

The predominant impression of the city of Siena, apart from the Duomo, or cathedral, and a few other ecclesiastical buildings, was one of dwellings with towers belonging to the casati. By the mid-thirteenth century some fifty-six such defenses and symbols of rank were in existence, although this number varied

as towers could be destroyed by the commune in punishment for transgressions by a noble family, or erected as part of a new dwelling.[20] Over time, fire and sheer neglect also took their toll, toppling most remaining towers of noble houses. Probably originally based on the watchtowers and fortresses of the countryside, these urban counterparts were mainly proud signs of power, ownership, and wealth. By contrast, dwellings of ordinary citizens were comparatively low, at two or three stories, and built primarily of timber and adobe, often with masonry front facades and protruding wooden balconies, or *ballatoi.* Generally, municipal buildings lagged behind private property improvements, with the result that council meetings and other governmental deliberations commonly took place in private palazzi, such as the Alessi palace, or in nearby churches. Other public works were often pursued vigorously, especially the aqueducts and channels—or *bottini*—which conveyed precious water from distant streams into the city. The duct feeding Fontebranda, for instance, a large neighborhood fountain near one of the gates to Siena, involved a 1,600-meter underground excavation.[21] In 1267, the commune even seriously considered a project to bring water from a spring some 25 kilometers away, abandoning it in the end as too expensive. The Florentine Dante Alighieri probably had a point when he mocked the Sienese about their constant search for the "Spring of Diana"—the mythical underground water source that would have solved all their problems.[22] Instead, numerous fountains and grottoes, both large and small, were scattered at low points in the terrain serving surrounding neighborhoods. These also became places for community gatherings, particularly in the evenings and on holidays, a tradition kept alive to this day. Dispersion of fountains throughout the city also served to help fight fires, a constant threat in medieval Siena, which were also contained by destroying buildings and creating firebreaks. Subsequently the commune paid property owners compensation for damages, although less so in the masse where they were trying to discourage makeshift and shanty settlements.

Overall, among the public works and the private buildings there was a sort of dialogue between the architecture of the commune and the proud display of palace-owning patricians, merchants, and industrialists. Public taste and the setting of standards was of mutual concern, as was the more general source of pride and self-respect that came from the city's appearance. To both ends, legislation and special municipal authorities proved to be quite effective. From 1290 onward three selected public officials, or *praetores,* controlled all new construction in the city, and routine inspections of streets for general cleanliness each Saturday could bring substantial fines for violators.[23] Sometimes sanitary legislation was also enforced through all-purpose denouncers, who were paid a small wage for being vigilant about matters of theft, garbage disposal, illegal activities, and the like. Municipal commonplaces of today, such as a fire department, were also organized during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Legislatively, community good usually overrode private interests. Demolition of old dwellings and reconstruction, for instance, had to be completed to the commune's satisfaction in a timely manner, and the taking of property for public purposes was an acceptable and well-respected practice. Again like today, debt financing was common in Siena, as elsewhere in Tuscany, as the commune pressed ahead with ambitious plans and public improvements to the city's and the contado's infrastructure. The last three decades of the thirteenth century, for example, saw massive concentrations in roadway improvements, bridge construction, street widening, and so on, not only to improve appearance but to better access and thus maintain the timely provision of relatively inexpensive foodstuffs and other consumer goods throughout the city-state. Similar motivations can also be found for justifying the extensive land reclamation and pasture improvement—or *bonifica*—that occurred at much the same time.[24]

Politically, the terzi—or tripartite divisions of the city mentioned earlier—were further subdivided into *popoli* and *contrade.* The popoli were administrative districts, drawing their names mainly from parish churches. In 1318 they numbered thirty-six, largely corresponding to the spatial distribution of population.[25] Overlapping these administrative units were the more numerous contrade or neighborhoods, reaching as many as sixty in number before the Great Plague of 1348, and before formally becoming rationalized to seventeen

in 1729 by decree of Princess Violante of Bavaria.[26] This division into contrade also gave Siena a bona fide sense of factionalism, unlike most other places, replete with symbolic references to birds and animals such as the goose, panther, tortoise, and caterpillar. Even today for a Sienese, one's first allegiance is to one's contrada and then to the city. Rivalries among *contradaioli* from different neighborhoods are fierce, and there are numerous stories describing family feuds over where children are to be born to couples from different contrade. More formally, contrade are social as well as political entities, with clubs, local bars, and even museums. Throughout the emphasis is on mutual aid and support for the contradaioli. Dues are levied and other fund-raising activities regularly take place to support the welfare of the contrada. Although remarkably classless in the deference and respect paid among members, the governing organization—Società di Contrada—is presided over by a top official or *priore*. Membership is by birth, or through bloodline relationships, and every major right of passage for a Sienese from birth to death falls within the contrada. Even today many baptisms, for example, are performed at the fountain of the contrada.[27]

By the middle of the thirteenth century a populist government emerged in Siena.[28] It was not strictly democratic—certainly not by today's definitions and standards—but antimonopolistic, broadly representative, republican in spirit, and a strong departure from the earlier feudal seignorial system. For at least the first one hundred years or so, and with different specific organizations and ruling hierarchies at different times, regimes consisted of several basic components. There was, for instance, a broadly based council—the Council of the Popolo, or Council of the Bell—with citizen representation from the terzi and popoli. The post of Capitano del Popolo was created in 1252 and paid for by the commune. Often there was a Podestà who headed the Council and was the commune's supreme magistrate. By constitutional prohibition the Podestà was non-Sienese and typically served for a relatively short six-month term. Over the years Podestà were successfully recruited from other communes like Bologna, Modena, and Parma, where a similar experience in government could be found, but never from Florence, Siena's great rival close by to the north. There was also usually a war captain—the Capitano di Guerra—hired to lead Sienese mercenaries and other armed forces on defensive as well as extraterritorial campaigns. This became a permanent office in 1323, and was first held on an intermittent basis from about 1298. Again the term of service was relatively short, although perhaps the most famous holder of the office—Guidoricco di Niccolò da Fogliano of Reggio—served for six and a half years from 1327 and was recalled again in 1351, eventually dying in office in 1352. With the issue of civil order and peace uppermost in the commune's collective mind, all three of these offices—the Capitano del Popolo, the Podestà, and the Capitano di Guerra—assumed responsibilities and, especially during the conditions of famine, resulting civil unrest, and family feuding of the 1330s and 1340s, all three offices conducted regular searches for weapons, mounted patrols, and organized watches. In addition to these offices, there were other magistracies, including the Maggior Sindaco, or guardian of the constitution. Among other things, this magistrate conducted an audit of city officials dating from about 1270, held jurisdiction over building codes and other legislation, and informed the Council and other city officials about constitutional issues involved in their deliberations. Finally, there was the ruling oligarchy, priory, or *monti* itself, with responsibility for formulating policy and directing the affairs of the commune. Members of this group were drawn from numerous eligible citizens in the popoli and terzi, again serving relatively short terms during which they were frequently sequestered in the Palazzo Pubblico to avoid bias and corruption. Members of the casati, as mentioned earlier, were usually expressly precluded from holding these high offices. In contrast to the Florentines, who saw their politics in terms of groups, guilds, and business associations, or the Venetians with their closed-book seignorial form, the Sienese were conspicuously broad and inclusive in their legislative and administrative conduct.

Over the years this form of government evolved, but was invariably elected. Moreover, in spite of many tests of strength and will, it resisted overthrow and provided Siena with long periods of stability and prosperity. Beginning around 1236 there was the Regime of the Twenty-Four Priors, a

Ghibelline-dominated organization primarily of the bourgeoisie or popolo, with strong alliances to the Hohenstaufen and the Holy Roman Empire. In those days the Council was composed of fifty men from each terzo and headed by a Podestà. Failure of the Hohenstaufen regime brought about the eventual collapse of Ghibellinism in Tuscany and a return to Guelfist power. The death of Manfred, the Hohenstaufen Frederick II's son, in 1266, and the defeat of the Ghibellines at Colle Val d'Elsa in 1269, further accelerated the rise of Guelfism. In a transitional step toward a more stable and representative government, the nobles and popolo grasso seized power in 1271, abolished the office of the Capitano del Popolo and installed the Thirty-Six Governors and Defenders of the Commune of Siena. Shortly thereafter, the Capitano del Popolo was reinstated and the Regime of the Nine or Noveschi began in 1278, lasting the following seventy-seven years. These Nine Governors and Defenders of the People of Siena, as they were officially called, were given sweeping powers and responsibilities, and quickly became involved in all aspects of government. Over the years some five hundred citizens were office holders in the Noveschi, some serving as many as six to eight times, while the majority served at least two or three times. Consequently, some families, such as the Petroni and Montanini mentioned earlier, became closely associated with high office of the commune, and the specter of a ruling class system or hierarchy emerged. Peace was broken, however, in 1355 on the occasion of Charles IV's entry into Siena with some thousand knights and the successful revolt of magnates and popolo minuto against the Noveschi. The treasury, or Biccherna, was sacked along with the Palazzo Pubblico and the Mercanzia. Prisoners were set free and government records publicly burned in the Campo. A new regime of seven syndics and a Podestà was then selected, eventually becoming the twelve, and ushering in a period of political instability that lasted until the early fifteenth century. Subsequent communal rule by a monti, drawn from the city's three leading citizen groups, returned Siena to stability and relative prosperity, in spite of the political crisis and repression of the conspiracy lead by Antonio Petrucci in 1456. This regime was eventually replaced, toward the end of the fifteenth century, by a political aristocracy of nine monti, leading, finally, to the decline of the Sienese republic in the early sixteenth century and passage into Florentine hands.

For many years, the governmental style and administration of Siena was most strongly influenced by the regime of the Nine or Noveschi. In spite of their eventual deposition in 1355, most of their legislation and ways of doing things remained in practice for many years to come. Generally, the success of the Sienese government can be attributed less to innovation than to what Bowsky refers to as "pragmatic experimentation." Institutionalization and regularization of government actions were emphasized, and effectiveness and efficiency in resolving issues and providing services were frequently overriding aims. There was also the Nine's legacy of direct participation at all levels of government and in all manner of public offices, both high and low and with or without potential renumeration. To give some idea about the extensiveness of this participatory process, consider an outline of government office holding, say, in the first part of the fifteenth century.[29] At that time 9 men, plus a captain, were elected from a 42-man contrade to serve bimonthly terms between elections. The result was that a total of some 480 people were elected in an eight-year period of the regime. In short, 60 citizens ruled the commune in a year and, considering the number of eligible citizens, probably around one in six were in government at any given time. In addition there were many other official posts to be filled, especially outside of the city proper, in the contado. Small wonder that the magnates and the popolo grasso backed the regime during the rebellion of 1218. Their influence was pervasive. Nevertheless, this outbreak did broaden representation within official circles as the government continued to live in harmony with various elements of what today we might call civil society. The Noveschi in particular used to regularly consult business and opinion leaders through so-called secret councils, involving as many as fifty men per terzo. Through these consultations political ideas and plans could be explored prior

to any official action. Finally, success came from a strong if not sustained record of keeping the peace and providing food, shelter, and a sense of pride to Sienese citizenry.

Needless to say, civic values and aspirations permeated practically all aspects of Sienese life. Not only was civic duty required of all citizens—if nothing else, to keep the machinery of government running—but it was usually rendered with pride and enthusiasm. The three civic values of *iustitia, libertas, et honor*—justice, freedom, and honor—were paramount in the lives of most Sienese, even to the exclusion of many facets of private life.[30] While the first two of these values have already been elaborated upon, the last—*honor civitatis*—can be seen clearly in the symbiotic relationship between government and culture that flowered during much of the republican period. Artistic and intellectual development, for instance, flourished through special offices and supervisors of public works, such as the *operarii* of the cathedral, who were appointed for life. In addition, the University of Siena was founded in 1224 and, together with similar institutions in places like Padua and Modena, it remained independent of the church for some time as a center of Aristotelianism and objectivity.[31] Furthermore, for practical as well as cultural reasons, the role of the growing intellectual class became important and even vital to the commune, which often paid handsomely to attract scholars to Siena. Clearly as governance and administration became more complicated and far flung, the specialization that often resulted required new skills and knowledge. Also, by frequently traveling from one center of learning to another—an activity that became customary at the time—intellectuals could exchange information and keep the community of their employ abreast of current learning, cultural affairs, and other matters of the world. The moral and social consciousness of religion should not be underestimated, however, especially given the civic Christianity that grew up around Saint Catherine of Siena, in the middle of the fourteenth century, for instance, and around both San Bernardino and the blessed Ambrogio Sansedoni sometime earlier. Consequently, confraternities—societies of piety—were quite

common in Siena and the city's devotion to the Virgin Mary only emphasizes the reciprocal relationship that must have existed there between church and state.[32]

Not unexpectedly, over the years, much has changed in Sienese life. Both the city and the countryside around it have become truly modern in outlook and in many accouterments. Still, a specialized food industry flourishes, as it did in the past, as does banking and the city's fine university. Most notable, though, has been the persistence throughout of the contrade and the hold this form of local factionalism still has over the Sienese. It remains both a defining aspect of life and a driving force behind Siena's strong sense of civic pride.

SIENA'S PIAZZA DEL CAMPO

Of all the places in Siena, the Piazza del Campo remains in a category by itself—one usually reserved for only the most venerable of religious sites. Even from antiquity, when it was still architecturally a relatively undeveloped site, the phrase *Campum Fori,* or Forum in the Roman sense, was reserved for it as a term of special dignity.[33] In fact, through much of its medieval past, a special office, known as *procustodia campi fori,* kept the piazza clear of stones, bricks, timber, dirt, and other rubble, and prevented unwanted activities from occurring, such as animal slaughtering and skinning; the prohibition extending to nearby streets.[34] Like many temporary marketplaces, proper stalls could be erected at appropriate times within the Campo for the sale of all manner of commodities. After marketing, however, all was to be removed. Even bankers were discouraged from operating in public for fear of an unseemly display of usury in this city of piety and civic virtue.

According to an authoritative statute of 1262, the Campo was originally divided into two parts—a lower Campo del Mercato, or marketplace, and the upper Campo di San Paolo.[35] At that time, the original church of San Paolo and a thin row of houses ran roughly through the middle of the present piazza. Nearby, today's Palazzo Pubblico is located on the former site of a customshouse and gate in the city wall, which provided access from a long valley stretching to the south between the hilly mass of the Castelvecchio and the developing ridge line of San Martino. Nevertheless, even in its early piecemeal form, the Campo was the meeting place of the terzi—the three major political divisions of the city mentioned earlier—and literally the symbolic and geographic center of Siena. Work to clear the site and extend the Campo began in 1290, culminating in most of what we see today by the middle of the fourteenth century.[36] This period also roughly coincides with the rule of the Nine—Siena's most influential government regime—and corresponding displays of public wealth and grandeur. For the first time, the building program of the commune and other state-sponsored cultural activities began to rival and outstrip those of the nobles and the church. These distinctions are less important, however, when we remember the mixed scheme of government and participation largely without reference to class. Clearly the Sienese magnates, along with the wealthy *popolani,* identified strongly with the commune and even sought personal satisfaction in its glorification.

The statute of 1262 also set out nineteen articles indicating the manner in which the Campo could be developed. Gradually restrictions were placed on the height and other appurtenances of surrounding buildings, as well as conditions of entry and egress. Later, in 1297, a further public prescription was made requiring bifurcated windows and other architectural features around the piazza.[37] By now the Piazza del Campo was quite large, measuring some 140 meters by 100 meters, and surrounded in an almost semicircular arc by the palazzi of the Chigi, Sansedoni, and Elei, together with the Casino dei Nobili, which formed part of the Mercanzia. These buildings also accommodated a substantial grade change of at least one story from the Via Banchi di Sotto and Via di Città immediately to the north. In fact, far from flat, the Piazza del Campo slopes over 2 meters in the north-south direction and is inclined upward from the center of its radius over 4 meters in an easterly direction and over 3 to the west.

In 1343 the Fonte Gaia—fountain of joy—was constructed on the northern edge of the Piazza del Campo, fed by an aqueduct measuring some 20

or so kilometers in length and underlining Siena's capacity to overcome its almost total dependence on external sources of water supply. The present Fonte Gaia is a copy made by Sarocchi in 1868 of an original version installed by Jacopo di Pietro (or Jacopo della Quercia) between 1409 and 1417.[38] The fountain's sculpture celebrates the two primary symbols of Siena—the *lupa*, or she-wolf from the founding myth, not unlike Rome's, and the Madonna. In 1346 the surface of the piazza was paved in a fishbone pattern of brick, divided into nine segments radiating from a sculptured central drain—*gavinone*—at the lowest point on the site. Not coincidentally, the Fonte Gaia was relocated in the middle of the radiating segments of paving opposite the gavinone. Before that it was located on one of the *costole*, or ribs, dividing the paving into segments. Clearly the nine-part divisions is a direct reference to the Noveschi. Only a little less directly, it also reflects the symbolic and geographic joining of the terzi at this central location within the city.[39]

The adjoining Palazzo Pubblico forms the frontispiece to the piazza along the south and the focal point for the radial paving pattern and general layout of the Campo. It was originally occupied by offices of the Podestà, the Nine, the Biccherna, and other magistrates, with adequate courtyard and reception areas to conduct audiences with Siena's citizenry. The building was completed between 1297 and 1310 and remains a splendid example of medieval civic architecture. Fittingly, inauguration of the project was, in the words of the day, "for the honor of the Sienese commune and the beauty of the city."[40] Some time later, in 1325, the cornerstone was laid for the elegant tower rising over 80 meters to one side of the palazzo—the Torre del Mangia—reputedly named for Giovanni di Duccio, popularly referred to as the "profit eater" or simply *mangia* (eater) for his role in ringing the tower bells, with was thought to be a superfluous ceremonial frill by many at the time. The square brick chimney of the tower was built by the brothers Minuccio and Francesco di Rinaldo from Perugia, after which rises the travertine and marble crowning piece affording views over the city and off into the distance, as far away as Monte Amiata.[41] Later still, the elaborate Cappella di Piazza was constructed, adjoining both the tower and the palazzo, to commemorate release from the Great Plague of 1348. Begun in 1352 by Domenico d'Agostino, work on the chapel was complete around 1376 by Giovanni di Cecco, who saw to the final positioning of th pillars and the roof.[42] Throughout the early stages of planning and constructior Giovanni Pisano, the head of works for the nearby Duomo from 1284 until 1295 was influential in advising on the layout and design of the Campo and th surrounding buildings.[43] In spite of the grandeur of the fourteenth-centur building program, however, the original two-part division of the public spac remained, with the Palazzo Pubblico separating the Piazza del Campo abov from the new marketplace and customshouse further down the hillside. Under standably, project costs were high, although justified to the aim of glorifyin the commune, and included adequate compensation for owners of dispos sessed property.

In addition to this external celebration of commune life, the interi rooms of the Palazzo Pubblico were adorned with paintings of heroic momen from Siena's rule of the contado, such as Simone Martini's magnificent landscap depicting Guidoriccio da Fogliano riding victorious over rebel forces in 132 and political allegories calling attention to civic virtues. No less a place tha the Sala dei Nove—the meeting room of the Nine—contained Ambrogio Loren zetti's three extraordinary frescoes: "Effects of Good Government," "Effects Bad Government," and "Good Government in the City and Good Government the Countryside."[44] In the first of these representations of civic political philos phy, the ruler of Siena, dressed like the city's coat of arms in black and whit can be seen flanked on the right by the seated figures of "Magnanimity," "Ten perance," and "Justice," representing cardinal virtues, and on the left by oth figures depicting "Prudence," "Fortitude," and "Peace." The figure of "Justice on the far left, balances scales with the aid of angels and the oversight "Wisdom," representing "distributive justice" on the one hand and "commut tive justice" on the other. Clearly these are Thomistic and Aristotelian theme Beneath these eight main figures are other symbolic references to Sienese civ life, including the she-wolf suckling two infants—an obvious connection

Roman republican virtues. Also under the figures on the left-hand side are twenty-four citizens representing the pious rulers of Siena during the Ghibelline Signory between 1236 and 1271. On the right-hand side are soldiers holding bound prisoners and other noncitizens of the city. Even without the written explanation across the base of the frescoe—the *cartello*—the Noveschi undoubtedly would have had the cultural insight necessary to enjoy the intellectual game posed by Lorenzetti's frescoes as they deliberated on the matters of state before them.[45] Noticeably, Siena was different in these regards from other Tuscan and northern Italian communes, with its insistent institutional orientation away from individual aggrandizement and toward *bonum comune*—the common good.

The uses of the Piazza del Campo were and continue to be numerous and varied, commensurate with its significance and central role within the city. It was, for instance, an open-air hall or church where clergy like San Bernadino would conduct discussions and give sermons. Similarly, it was frequently used for secular ceremonies and as a political forum. Certainly throughout much of the thirteenth century the piazza was large enough to accommodate Siena's entire urban population, which it did on occasions of severe duress, when the populace prayed together for deliverance. As mentioned earlier, the piazza also served as a regular marketplace and more informally as a meeting place for individuals from all walks of life. Today the Campo maintains a similar character and serves a similar function as the site for cafe life, as a venue for promenading by well-to-do Sienese women in their finery, accompanied by escorts, or simply as a refuge amid the crowd. In spite of the paving, it also preserves in use its original fieldlike quality, with tourists often found picnicking on the Campo floor as they might in an open field. As we might expect from such a large and venerable place, it remains the site of festivals and public ceremonies.

The Piazza del Campo also served, for a time, as part of a vast underground storage for grain, desperately needed during periods of siege and famine.[46] A depiction from a Biccherna tablet shows the allocation of grain from pits below ground in the Campo, managed by the city treasurer. In addition, records show that the custom of selling flour *a le tine*—by the tub—to the poor at low prices in the Piazza was very common, especially during times of duress. More generally, enclosed spaces beneath or within public rights-of-way, as well as warehouse facilities in institutions like the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, or even in private palazzi, were used to store grain as part of *monizione*—a universal set-aside program contributed to by citizens. The practice of subterranean storage, began at twenty-five points around the city in 1460, came at the suggestion of Pius II, a native of nearby Pienza, formerly known as Enea Silvio Piccolomini and a member of one of Siena's great magnate houses. Test results were so favorable, with preservation up to seven or nine years, that storage was expanded to 200 locations under piazzas and streets, with a total capacity of some 32,000 bushels of grain.[47]

In the everyday life of the medieval Sienese, the Piazza del Campo was also the site of "war games"—a ritualized "blowing off of steam" on the part of an often otherwise restless population, especially among the youth. In one game—*Pugna*—a sort of organized fistfight took place between sparring factions, invariably representing different contrade or neighborhoods.[48] Each faction, at a prearranged signal, would enter the piazza, usually from the main streets on the lower side, and try to force the opposing faction to retreat from the Campo, thus "abandoning the field," so to speak. Afterward, participants would all join hands and dance as a sign of camaraderie. Similar war games with sticks and lances, called *Elmora*, or stone throwing, called *Battaglia de' Sassi*, also took place, as well as ball games, such as *Pallone*, where the ritual would start by dropping a ball from the Mangia tower high above the Campo. Indeed, a French mercenary captain was astonished to discover at the height of a siege that Sienese youth dropped their arms and engaged in a game of Pallone. The ritual of Pugna continued at least until 1816, although the Elmora and Battaglia de' Sassi were banned as being too dangerous certainly by the end of the thirteenth century. Pallone, by contrast, was played as recently as 1904 and

1909. In keeping with similar rituals in other places, the Campo was also the site of bullfights—*caccia de' tori*—and bull races, as well as other live spectacles involving men and animals.[49]

Finally, the Campo is probably best known for its horse race—the *palio,* or more specifically the *palio alla tonda,* as distinct from the earlier *palio alla lunga,* which was not run around the piazza but from point to point through city streets.[50] The term palio derives from the latin *pallium* and refers to a rectangular piece of cloth, honoring a patron saint or, in this case, The Virgin, and offered as a prize in a tournament or race. In Siena the two remaining regular palios both honor the Madonna in different ways. The first, held on July 2—the day of Visitation—celebrates the time in 1594 when, during famine and pestilence, the Sienese turned for deliverance to the Madonna in the Via dei Provenzani (also an area notorious for prostitution at the time), where miracles had been witnessed. The palio was first run in 1659. The second, held on August 16—a day after the Assumption—is a part of that traditional celebration and was first run in 1709, becoming a regular event after 1802. Over the years additional palios have been held to celebrate extraordinary events for the Sienese, such as the end of World War II, the 600th anniversary of Saint Catherine's birth in 1947, the lunar landing in 1969, and the 500-year anniversary of the Monte dei Paschi bank in 1972. The earliest palio run in the Campo seems to date from 1583, although there is some disagreement about that fact. Certainly, regular events took place from 1656 onward, and in 1935 Mussolini decreed that the term "palio" would be reserved for the Sienese event.[51]

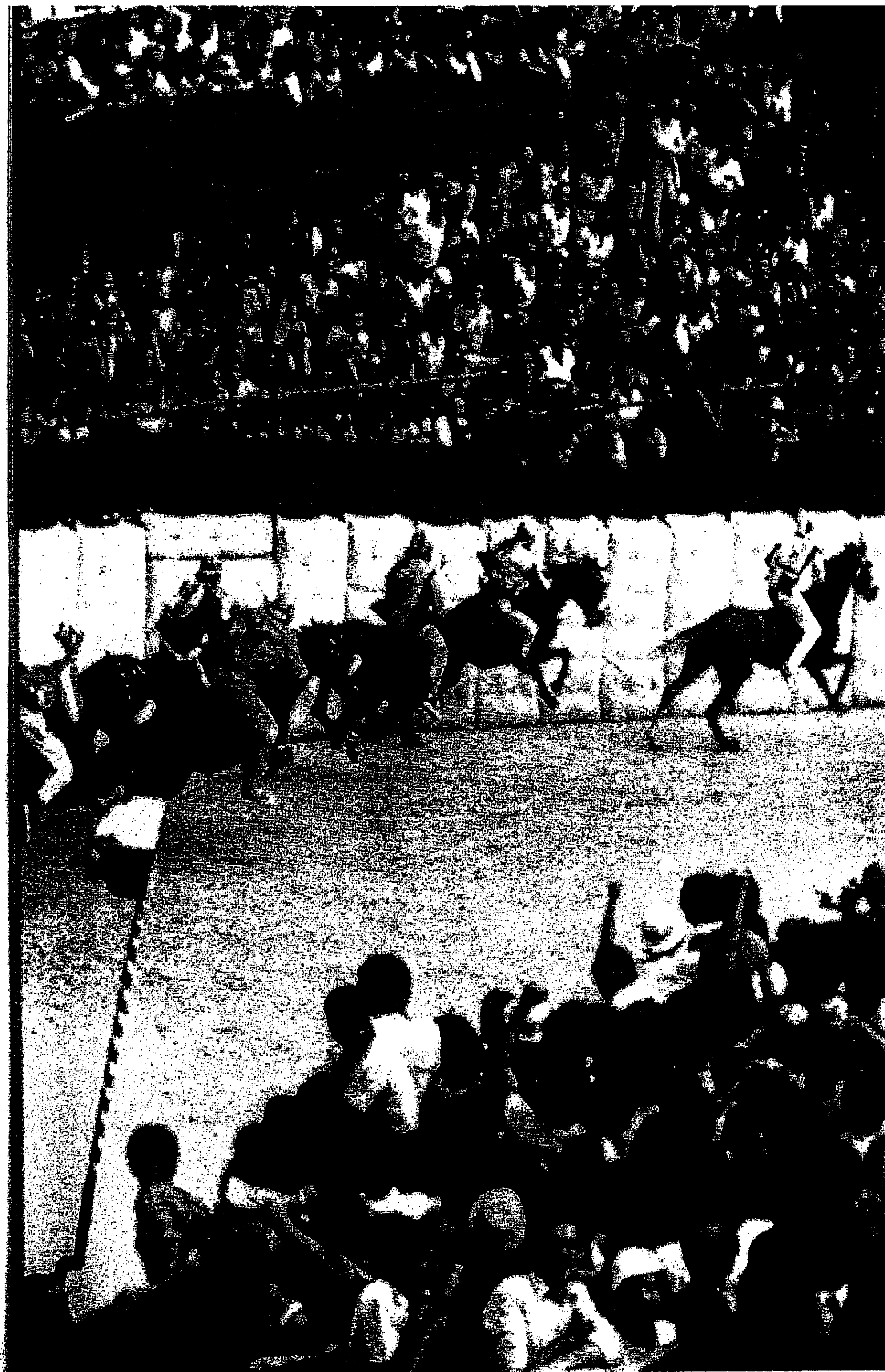
As a competition the palio is contested, nowadays, among ten of the seventeen contrade in a horse race run three times around the Campo in a centripetal clockwise direction. The event begins, however, three days earlier with the assignment of horses by lot—the *Tratta*—among the competing contrade. Several trials, or *prova,* are then conducted before the final event, in order to judge the likely outcome of the race and, therefore, the tactics to be employed by each competitor, as well as allowing the jockeys, or *fantini,* to become familiar with their mounts. The piazza is also transformed for these events and the race proper into a sand-covered track around its perimeter wit barricades and viewing platforms to mark out the course and bring some sem blance of order to the enormous crowd of spectators. Race day begins with spectacular parade of young men representing each contrada, the *alfieri,* alon with the horse, its jockey, and other symbol bearers. As they move slowly aroun the track, pairs of alfieri perform very graceful and yet acrobatic moves, i unison, with large flags bearing the crest of their contrada. In moves like th *alzata* the flags are thrown some two stories in the air, while in others lik the *sottogamba* the flags almost brush the surface of the Campo. At the end c the parade the palio banner, depicting the Virgin and symbols of each of th ten competing contrade, is displayed before the public on an ox-drawn car After a sequence of complex starting procedures the race is under way, th combatative jostling for position begins, and an eventual winner emerges, some times without its rider. Intrigue among competitors is so intense that the fantir are hired from outside of the city as independent agents of the contrade. Thi arrangement also avoids the internal discord of blame being placed on anothe Sienese for failure to achieve an acceptable result. Interestingly, second plac in the race is usually considered the greatest loss because presumably th horse could have won, and teamwork often takes place among representative of strongly allied contrade, especially when one is claimed to have a bette chance of winning.[52]

As a metaphor, the palio sums up many aspects of Sienese life, charac ter, and tradition. Among other things, it represents processes of constant re newal, the triumph of life and death and with it, the longevity of the republic as well as a reordering of prestige among the competing contrade.[53] More liter ally, with the surrounding suckling symbolism of the pacifiers worn and use by winning contradaioli, the ever-present images of the she-wolf with the tw sons of Remus and the Madonna del Latte, rebirth is an essential part c the ritual, together with closely associated gender-specific themes involve with rites of passage and courtship. This is clearly evident during the compe tition itself and the preceding *passeggio,* replete with phallic and other sexu

references. Related aspects concerning the sacred and profane are also not inconspicuous.[54] The "Virgin-harlot" association, for instance, is present in the origins of the celebration of the Madonna of Provenzano; in addition to being called the City of the Virgin, Siena was also known as *Civitas Veneris*—the city of carnal love. Finally, the "principle of limited good," referring to a type of civic virtue whereby one gains but only at another's expense, is intrinsic to the competition and the bragging rights that go with winning. Quite apart from being an engaging event, the palio is a ritual of rejuvenation for the city and a reconfirmation of its civic tradition.

The shape and appearance of the Campo—the setting for all these events—can be accounted for by several interpretations. One explanation is simply evolutionary. Available property parcels were assembled by the commune. Selected buildings were then removed or refurbished to create a space that was eventually paved and architecturally adorned in a sequence of building operations over time. In most respects, this explanation closely follows what is known to have transpired. Another explanation would portray the Piazza del Campo and the Palazzo Pubblico together as simply a larger and more grandiose version of the common practice among well-to-do Sienese of building a palatial residence, a tower commensurate with position and rank, and a fine piazza, with adjacent interior courtyard, setting off the whole composition. Again the typological argument involved befits the time and was certainly well known and accepted during construction of the Campo. It is also consistent with the underlying communal idea of a close association between civil society and government, as well as simply repeating the two-part division of the Campo that existed before—albeit at a much larger scale.

At a more detailed level though, the reminders of republican rule and republican virtue are expressively incorporated within the Campo and the facade of the Palazzo Pubblico. The nine segments of paving, for example, converging at the center of the piazza's composition, clearly invokes the sociopolitical idea of a model of unity built on diversity. This interpretation is further underlined by the elaborate architectural rendering of the drainage



The running of the palio in Siena's Piazza del Campo.

opening, where all the separate flows of water from across the Campo converge and become one. It is also an obvious direct reference, as already noted, to the Noveschi, and the constant expressive reference to "threes" immediately recalls the locational logic of the piazza at the merger of the terzi and, therefore, at the center of Sienese life; the accepted civic practice of well-to-do women enjoying the passeggio with two servants walking in front and behind; the Holy Trinity, and so on. Finally, the shape of the Campo can be seen as the symbol of a single event, in this case the unlikely triumph of the Sienese and their way of life against the Florentines during the Battle of Montaperti in 1260. At one point in this conflict, or so it is told, a heavenly light appeared above the City of Siena, as seen from the battlefield, which was immediately attributed to the protection of the Madonna hovering overhead. The iconography immediately calls to mind images of the Madonna della Misericordia with her outstretched cloak sheltering the populace and City of Siena below, as well as the shape of the *mantello* in part of Lorenzetti's masterpiece, the *Maestà*. As at least one historian has pointed out, there is a strong correspondence between the arched outline of these cloaked figures and the plan shape of the Campo.[55] Eventually, in a reversal of fortune from Montaperti, time, circumstances, and an independent way of life ran out for the Sienese. Between 1555 and 1559 the republic collapsed and the Florentine Medicis were installed in quite a different form of government. Fortunately this course of events did not end there in downfall and ignominy. Many of the institutions and civic artifacts of that republican period persist today, including a fine university, a continuing legacy of good government, and socially cohesive neighborhoods with their own symbolic identities—not to mention the unusual horse race.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF CIVIC REALISM

The rest of this book is also about what appropriately might now be called *civic realism*—a concept based on the belief that it is along the politico-cultural division between civil society and the state that the urban architecture of the public realm is made best, especially when the reach of both spheres extends simultaneously up to a civilization's loftier aims and down to the needs and aspirations of its marginalized populations. By contrast, the other alternatives, which have been operating for some time in many parts of the world, are not very attractive. On one side there are the enclaves, exclusive precincts, and private realms commonly found in corporately dominated urban and suburban circumstances. On the other are state edifices and places of authoritarian rhetorical splendor. Frequently the state bungles when it builds exclusively in its own image or at variance with the rest of society—an error that is painfully evident, for example, in public housing. Unsatisfactory results also often occur when the city building process is turned over to the market forces of civil society. Consequently, the current perceived crisis in public space making is often less a matter of inadequate design technique as it is a muddled uncertainty about appropriate relationships between the state and civil society. In some places and at certain times, the private sphere appears to be on the ascendancy, whereas in other places and times it seems to be of diminishing influence. By contrast, during more exaggerated moments of interaction between the two spheres—either through the resurgence of one relative to the other, or because of comparable strength—the making of public space seems to have been that much easier and more obvious than at other times. As we shall see, this was definitely the case in post-Franco Barcelona and, for different reasons, in Mitterrand's Paris, as well as in New York City both before and after the turn of this century. Certainly the aftermath of great sociopolitical conflagrations, like revolutions and World Wars I and II, can become such moments, as was the case in both Ljubljana and Rome, respectively.

Nevertheless, clearly it would be wrong to put everything on hold or to use past formulae for making public places. These are, after all, different times, but times with needs nonetheless. Nor does it seem appropriate to retreat into the rapidly expanding virtual worlds of information and communication, in spite of their superficial egalitarian appeal and apparent ideological freedom.[56] It is not at all clear, for instance, that many of the present disparities between

"haves" and "have nots" in society won't become exaggerated further. By contrast, it is reasonably obvious that particular regimes control these information-based worlds, thus not structurally altering the existence of power arrangements and their expressive needs. Furthermore, the "talking heads" aspect of this mental habitat effectively denies the bodily engagement with public space so essential to a full liberating and edifying experience of the public realm.[57] Even if this partial experience was to change appreciably, the question of what the public realm should be like would still remain open. Therefore ways of seeing, speculating about, appreciating, and even guiding the cultural politics involved in shaping civic places are always useful and, given the alleged disappearance of the public sphere, quite timely.

Having laid claim to the idea that civic realism can be both inherent to the public realm in general as well as specific to particular times, places, and arrangements between a state and its people through civil society, the rest of this book explores relationships between urban architectural expression and democratic sociopolitical practices, ultimately arguing against the idea that as the world changes, so somehow organically does architectural expression. Rather than simply being a matter of from a set of forces to a form—consistent with some positivistic doctrines—there is usually a discontinuous cultural development at work. Until relevant and coherent aesthetic principles are devised or appropriated, new expression cannot be given to broad and perhaps mounting societal pressures, even when the arbitrariness of architectural signs can be overcome in the first instance. Instead, nothing much will happen, or there will be simply an extrapolation of past aesthetic practices, often with strained effects like the classical postmodernism and reduced modernism of recent years. In short, cultural activities do not march in lock-step fashion with sociopolitical and economic orders. The urban grid of New York City, for instance, was convenient, utilitarian, and somewhat abstract until given more palpable and visceral meaning during, say, the Victorian period. Similarly, as we have already seen, the populist government in Siena was firmly ensconced before the Piazza del Campo was constructed. By contrast, the planning strategy and design concepts for the urban public places of Barcelona, as we shall discover, were well developed long before they emerged publicly with the end of Franco's Spain. No doubt a certain amount of avant-gardism can be useful in expanding design thinking and pushing it along, although it is by no means fully consistent with other requirements of civic realism. In the case of Paris, Mitterrand's challenge of the *Grand Projets*, for instance, was already in place well before the designing began.

Both the physical character and program of the Piazza del Campo clearly reflected aspects of what might be looked for in good civic realism. First, while expressing many changing aspects of government and civil society, certain long-lived and transcendent qualities remained common, thus providing a civic face for Siena that markedly influenced generations to come. The strong overall shape of the piazza, for instance, with its relatively plain surfaces, as well as historical and mythical references, formed a robust framework for all manner of uses. The wide-open and semi-abstract pavement continued this theme by allowing many events to take place without functional constraints, yet requiring each of them to adhere to a certain decorum. Even the exuberance and pell-mell of the palio was ordered, ritualized, and enabled by the space of the Campo, and the surrounding architecture with specific decorative programs, icons, and heraldry provided a broad historical narrative of the place, a common thread of which was civic pride, independence, and duty. Second, the self-same size, scope, grandeur, public iconography, and program of the Campo was and remains a constant reminder to future governments and societies of their civic responsibilities. The literal homilies to good and bad government offered explicit advice and criticism, yet clearly affirmed the veracity of community rule and the role of different constituents of civil society. In other words, the urban and architectural expression of the Campo presented an interpretable and rather constant challenge to governments, while holding fast on the very idea of civil rule itself. Third, the program, form, and symbolism of the Piazza del Campo

embraced everyday life, provided an appropriately formal setting for government, projected a sense of civic well-being, and yet, at the time anyway, was innovative while somehow remaining familiar. Further, the Piazza del Campo amply provided a place for collective practices and rituals, like the pugna of old, the palio, and the passeggio, as well as a place for individual habitation and experience.

Setting Siena aside for a moment, it is also clear that locations and sites for civic realism can be varied and should not be expected only in overtly state-oriented circumstances or by contrast, in prosperous semiprivate situations. As we shall see, the scale and scope of sites and programs will vary, including the overall streetscape and public squares of a city. They cover scattered public places of different sizes and types, such as those found recently in Barcelona; the development of new quarters on the urban periphery, as in post–World War II Rome; central places within cities, like the Piazza del Campo or Rockefeller Center in New York; renewal of abandoned or deteriorating urban precincts, as in contemporary Paris; and improvements in public infrastructure, such as those so clearly evident, for instance, in post–World War I Ljubljana. Nevertheless, one of the important lessons of the Campo is precisely this issue of size and scope. The Piazza del Campo served as the principle civic realm for a relatively local population, certainly in the central Italian context. By contrast, many other large metropolitan public spaces may have had aggrandized state or corporate sponsors, but failed to become truly civic realms in the very necessary senses of sustained local use, collective comprehension, memory and, therefore, attachment. Indeed, Siena is a very pointed reminder that a strong sense of community and civic pride is first and foremost a local phenomenon. The fiercely partisan behavior of the contradaioli still provides and promotes the sociopolitical rationale for the Piazza del Campo, as it did in the past, allowing the Campo, in turn, to become the common property of all seventeen contrade. Clearly, without this factionalism Siena would not be the city it is today and the Campo would not be the place it is either. The lesson to be learned is the necessity of an indivisible localism and an immediate sense of neighborhood or local turf in any larger civic enterprise, suggesting the idea of both practical and conceptual limits in the physical expanse and other related characteristics of viable civic realms. Without seeming to contradict earlier comments about virtual worlds, this notion of local physical participation might be combined with the not too far-fetched concept of virtual communities, operating with comparable civilizing tendencies at a broader urban, megalopolitan, and international scale. In any regard, civic realism is also about different populations within civil society, as well as on its margins, and this is part of their story.

"Things haven't really changed all that much," said Umberto Montadini to himself during a break in proceedings. "It's all a matter of how you see it, and following a few basic principles of good government. . . . Those old farts in the picture had it right. You balanced things on one side, then on the other, and wherever the balance falls, you decide." The council chamber was now full, with various claimants waiting expectantly. "What also hasn't changed is our business," Umberto thought to himself. "It's all about who gets what and where. Take that proposal for the tourist camp on the outskirts of town. . . . The trouble now, though, is how to decide. . . . Is a tourist camp worth a field of olives, a month's maintenance on the Campo, what? I wish Giacomo hadn't dropped the damn flag for his own sake," he mused, changing subjects abruptly. "But he is still young. There's lots of time."

—Pietro Lupino, *Festa**