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«E SOTTO ESSA LA CITTÀ NOSTRA» SIMONE MARTINI, THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENA, AND CIVIC IDENTITY

For centuries, ever since Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Commentarii*, countless literary sources mentioned, in lists of the main works by Simone Martini, a certain wall-painting that is now lost to us, but which, in the 1780s, albeit in an increasingly poorly-preserved state, Guglielmo Della Valle was still able to describe in minute detail¹. According to information reported by Ettore Romagnoli, it disappeared in the earthquake that struck Siena in 1798.²

Simone's work was external, and thus visible publicly, in the area of the cathedral (fig. 1). In one account it was mentioned as being «on the facade of Il Magnifico, facing Death» (Fabio Chigi), in another «opposite the Compagnia della Morte» (Girolamo Macchi), but more generally, and succinctly, on the «facade of Il Palazzo del Magnifico» (Filippo Montebuoni Buondelmonte, Uberto Benvoglianti), «in the palazzo del Magnifico in the upper part» (Giovanni Antonio Pecci), and «in the outer wall of Il Magnifico» (Pecci again, Giovacchino Faluschi), etcaetera.³ In a more detailed description, in his *Lettere Sanesi*, Della Valle said it was «above the steps of S. Giovanni on the upper facade of Palazzo del Magnifico, overlooking Piazza del Duomo», and, as stated, he gave the most extensive description we have of it.⁴

Simone Martini had depicted the Virgin Mary, in her capacity as the *advocata Senensium* and to whom the cathedral was dedicated, surmounted by flying angels making music, and with a retinue of saints at her side. This scene itself encircled a view of Siena («and, below her, our City», to quote Pecci), surmounted by the *tituli* «SALVET VIRGO SENAM VETEREM QUAM SIGNAT AMENAM» (to the left) and «SENA VETUS CIVITAS VIRGINIS | ALFA ET OMEGA PRINCIPIUM ET FINIS» (to the right), and accompanied by the city's armorial crest —the «Arma del Comun di Siena»— painted in the frame (again according to the account given by Pecci).⁵

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¹ The numerous sources are collected and discussed by Marco PIERINI, *Simone Martini*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 2000, p. 188-190; we should also bear in mind the considerations of Andrew MARTINDALE, *Simone Martini. Complete Edition*, Oxford, Phaidon, 1988, p. 202, and of Pierluigi LEONE DE CASTRIS, *Simone Martini*, Milano, 240re Cultura, 2003, p. 226, 293, note 18. A highly useful collation of written references to the painting —which, for the sake of economy, I shall refer to— is in the appendix to Paolo DI SIMONE, «La Maestà con i Santi Quattro Coronati di Simone Martini ritrovata: un disegno per Seroux d'Angincourt», in *Nuovi Studi*, núm. 23, 2017, p. 39-59, esp. p. 55-59.

² Ettore ROMAGNOLI, *Biografia cronologica de' Bellartisti senesi, 1200-1800 (ante 1835)*, Firenze, S.P.E.S., 1976, vol. I, p. 647.

³ P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 56 (CHIGI, 1625-1626: «ne la faccia del Mag[ist]ro verso la Morte»; MACCHI, end of 17th century-beginning of 18th century: «incontro alla Compagnia

della Morte»; MONTEBUONI BUONDELMONTE, 1633 circa; BENVOLGIENTI, beginning of 18th century: «on the "facciata del Palazzo del Magnifico»), p. 57 (PECCI, 1730, 1752 and 1759), p. 58 (FALUSCHI, 1784).

⁴ Guglielmo DELLA VALLE, *Lettere Sanesi di un socio dell'Accademia di Fossano sopra le Belle Arti*, vol. II, Roma, Generoso Salomoni, 1785, p. 98 («sopra la scalinata di S. Giovanni nella facciata superiore del palazzo del Magnifico che guarda la piazza del Duomo»).

⁵ The first quote is from the *Ristretto delle cose più notabili della città di Siena*, published by Pecci in 1759; the hand-drawn reproduction of the inscriptions, and the mention of the city crest, come from the *Raccolta universale di tutte l'iscrizioni, arme, e altri monumenti* compiled in 1730 (both the texts in P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 57).

⁶ P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 41ff, fig. 48. The drawing is glued to a page of ms. Vat. lat. 9843 (f. 49v [02]), a codex that brings together some of the materials bequeathed by Jean-Baptiste Seroux d'Agincourt to the Vatican Library.

⁷ P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 41 («un anonimo artista assai sensibile alla resa filologica dell'originale, al punto di rilevare le lacune e le abrasioni della pellicola pittorica, riproducendo le picchiettature dell'intonaco sottostante»).

⁸ P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 46-47.

⁹ P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 51, note 50 («la 'bella copia' realizzata in studio a partire da schizzi, rilievi e appunti presi a diretto contatto con l'originale, magari in vista della trasposizione su rame da cui ricavare delle stampe»). Regarding the climate surrounding the presence of Teodoro Matteini in Siena, and the assignment by Prince Chigi: Sandra PINTO, «La promozione delle



Fig. 1. The Cathedral of Siena.

It was, clearly, an uncommon painting, surrounded by the emblems of civic identity, and focusing on the topographical 'view' of one particular sector of the city (Della Valle mentioned «the bell-tower, and cathedral of Siena»). Today, finally, we also have a visual record of it (fig. 2), a drawing of a highly 'documentary' nature recently discovered by Paolo di Simone among the research materials of Jean-Baptiste Seroux d'Agincourt, the author of the great 18th century *Histoire de l'Art* dedicated to the medieval period, and illustrated *par les monuments*⁶. The drawing—as di Simone rightly saw—is the work «of an anonymous artist who was highly sensitive to the philological condition of the original, going so far as to record the lacunas and abrasions in the pictorial surface, reproducing the marks left in the underlying plaster where it had been chipped away».⁷ He suggested that this artist may have been Teodoro Matteini, a painter originally from

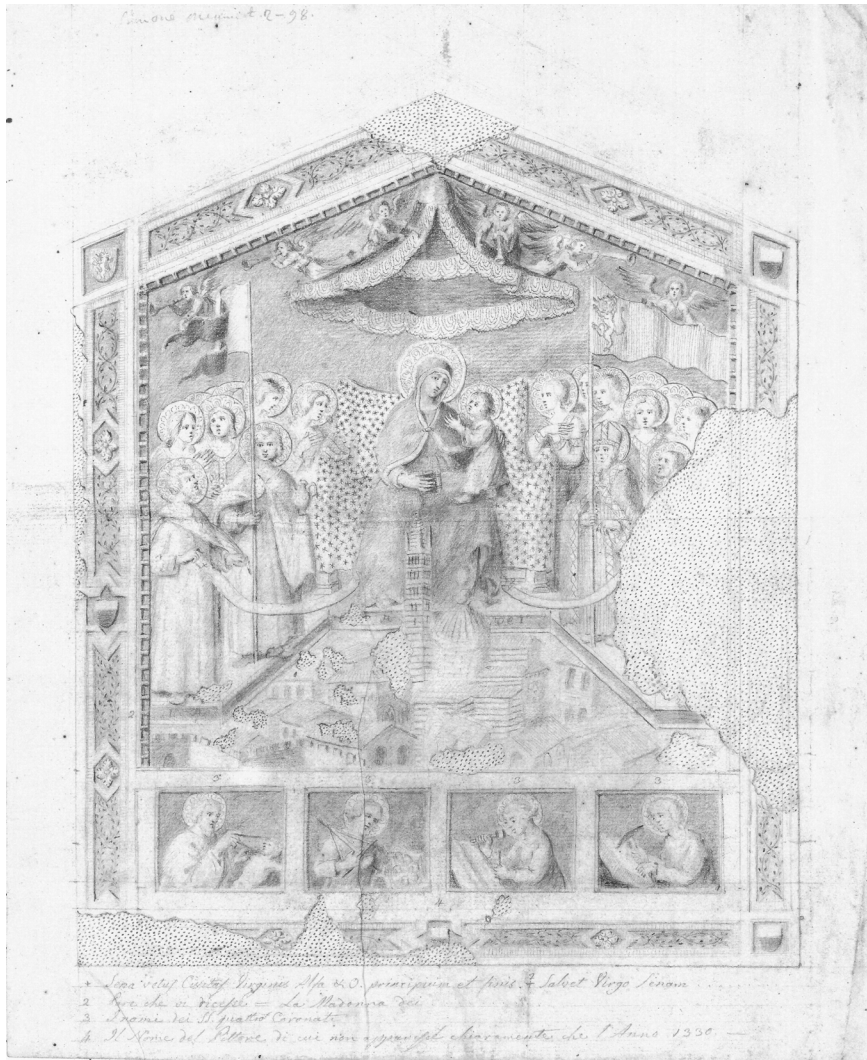


Fig. 2. Teodoro Matteini (?), hand-drawn copy of the *Maestà coi Santi Quattro Coronati* painted by Simone Martini on the former *domus* of the Opera del Duomo di Siena, Vatican City, Vatican Library, ms. Vat. lat. 9843, f. 49v.

Pistoia who settled in Rome as of 1770, where he specialized in copying works of art from classical and medieval antiquity intended for reproduction by engraving.⁸ He was well connected in the circles frequented by Seroux d'Agincourt. One of their mutual acquaintances must have been Prince Sigismondo Chigi, on behalf of whom Matteini was in Siena in 1787 to copy paintings by the ancient Sienese school, including, it seems, Simone Martini's *Guidoriccio all'assedio di Montemassi*, a number of parts of the

arti negli Stati italiani dall'età delle riforme all'Unità», *Storia dell'arte italiana*, vol. VI/2, Torino, Einaudi, 1982, p. 791-1079, esp. p. 851-852; Carlo SISI, «Eredità del Settecento: classicismo, filopatria e l'esprit del salotto Mocenni», Carlo SISI and Ettore SPALLETTI (eds.) *La cultura artistica a Siena nell'Ottocento*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 1994, p. 57-92, esp. p. 77-80; Carlotta GHIZZANI, «Il Prospetto della scuola dei pittori senesi: una proposta incompiuta di storiografia artistica illustrata», Carlotta GHIZZANI and Bernardina SANI (eds.), *La virtù sconosciuta. Scritti d'arte di Francesco Gori Gandellini, erudito conoscitore nella Siena di Alfieri*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2012, p. 51-83, esp. p. 62-63; Roberto BARTALINI, «La fama di Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Qualche considerazione preliminare», Alessandro BAGNOLI, Roberto BARTALINI and Max SEIDEL (eds.), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti* (exhibition catalogue, Siena, Complesso Museale di Santa Maria della Scala, 2017-2018), Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 2017, p. 19-35, esp. p. 25-27.

¹⁰ For the posthumous reception of the painting (especially of the foreshortened dais), see the cases reported by Andrea De Marchi to P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 45-46, figs. 61-63, 65. In a position matching that of the Virgin Mary, on the dais there was an inscription that the copyist transcribed as «MA[...] DEI», namely *Mater Dei*, commenting at the bottom of the sheet «It seems that it said the Madonna dei» («Pare che vi dicesse La Madonna dei»).

¹¹ As will be seen, it preceded by more than a decade the depiction of «civitas Florentie» at the foot of the *Misericordia Domini* in Palazzo del Bigallo in Florence, dating to 1342, and the urban scene, also Florentine, that appears in the *Cacciata del duca*

d'Atene formerly at the entrance to the Stinche prison, and now in the Palazzo Vecchio museum, datable to 1344-45 (on the two works, see the recent Klaus KRÜGER, *Politik der Evidenz. Öffentliche Bilder als Bilder der Öffentlichkeit im Trecento*, Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2015; Italian edition: *La politica dell'evidenza nel Trecento fiorentino. Pittura e immaginario pubblico*, Roma, Viella, 2020, p. 37-55, 69-86, with an extensive previous bibliography). The points of similarity between Simone's fresco and the 'political' paintings in the Sala del Consiglio in Siena's Palazzo Comunale, on the basis of literary accounts, had already been glimpsed by Martindale: «The presence of a 'portrait' of the Duomo and *campanile* forms an interesting parallel to the 'portraits' of the subject cities in the Palazzo Pubblico» (A. MARTINDALE, *Simone Martini...*, p. 202). Regarding the latter, see: Max SEIDEL, «"Castrum pingatur in palatio"». 1. Ricerche storiche e iconografiche sui castelli dipinti nel Palazzo Pubblico di Siena», *Prospettiva*, núm. 28, 1982, p. 17-41; Luciano BELLOSI, «"Castrum pingatur in palatio"». 2. Duccio e Simone Martini pittori di castelli senesi "a l'esempio come erano"», *ibidem*, p. 41-65.

¹² Although a full-scale civic cult is not documented before the late 13th century, the canon of the four —the martyrs Ansanus, Crescentius, Sabinus and Victor— was already isolated by 1190. This is attested in a deed dating to 21 April of that year, which lists, amongst other things, the bishop's duties with regard to the cathedral chapter-house on the occasion of the festivities «beatorum martiri Savini, Ansani, Crescentiis et Victoris» (the document is mentioned by Raffaele ARGENZIANO, «Corpi santi e immagini nella Siena medievale: i santi patroni», *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. CX,

Buon Governo cycle by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, and a panel by Lippo Memmi, and indeed di Simone is led to conclude that the reference sheet of interest to us constitutes «the 'fair copy' produced in the studio on the basis of sketches, measured drawings and notes taken from direct contact with the original, perhaps with a view to its transposition onto copper, from which the prints would be made».⁹

Accordingly, it is now clear that the Virgin Mary seated in the «upper heaven», and the saints at her side, were imagined as being above a three-dimensional aerial horseshoe-shaped dais, illusionistically rendered as a concrete object, left open to show —on the ground below— the city of Siena.¹⁰ This was summarily represented by a small group of buildings, a section of the city walls, and above all, standing diagonally across the focal point of the fresco, by the cathedral (with its large dome and towering two-colour bell-tower, which overlap with, and almost blend in with, the Virgin), designed to symbolize the whole city (fig. 3). Accordingly, it is a unique, unprecedented topographical 'view' —that matches and perhaps even surpasses the castles «as they actually appeared» painted in the Sala del Consiglio in the Palazzo del Comune¹¹ (fig. 4) — as naturalistic in its incidental details as it is 'symbolic' in its overall effect, in line with a logic and a syntax that would be explored, a few years later, by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in his *Effetti del Buon Governo in città e in campagna* in the Sala dei Signori Nove (fig. 5).

It is equally clear that, in an eminent position among the saints, were the civic patrons.¹² The martyr Ansanus is in the position of honour, imme-

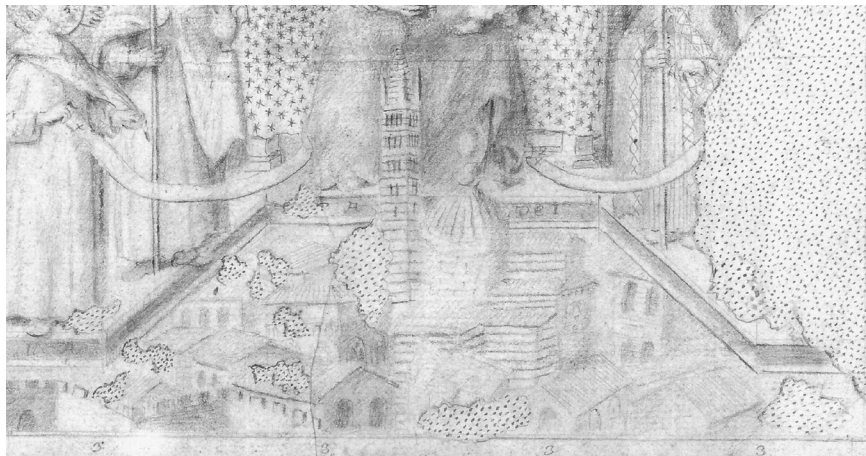


Fig. 3. Teodoro Matteini (?), hand-drawn copy of the *Maestà coi Santi Quattro Coronati* painted by Simone Martini on the former *domus* of the Opera del Duomo di Siena (detail), Vatican City, Vatican Library, ms. Vat. lat. 9843, f. 49v.



Fig. 4. Simone Martini, Guidoriccio at the siege of the castle of Montemassi (detail), Siena, Palazzo Pubblico.



Fig. 5. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, The effects of good governance in the city (detail), Siena, Palazzo Pubblico.

2003, p. 214-239, esp. p. 220). Regarding worship of the patron saints in Siena, see the recent work: Anna BENVENUTI, «"Sena Vetus, Civitas Virginis"». Cattedrali, altari e culto dei santi nell'universo di una città medievale», Pierantonio PIATTI and Raffaella TORTORELLI (eds.), *Omnia religione moventur: culti, carismi ed istituzioni ecclesiastiche. Studi in onore di Cosimo Damiano Fonseca*, Galatina, Congedo Editore, 2006, p. 19-32; Alessandra BARTOLOMEI ROMAGNOLI, «Pier Pettinaio e i modelli di santità degli ordini mendicanti a Siena tra Duecento e Trecento», *Hagiographica*, vol. XXI, 2014, p. 109-154, esp. p. 114-115. Regarding the iconography of the protector saints, see especially Raffaele ARGENZIANO and Fabio BISOGNI, «L'iconografia dei santi patroni Ansanus, Crescenzo, Savino e Vittore a Siena», Franca Ela CONSOLINO (ed.), *I santi patroni senesi fra agiografia e iconografia*, Siena, Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1991, p. 84-115; the section dealing with St Ansanus, by Bisogni, is republished under the title «L'iconografia di Ansanus», in Fabio BISOGNI, *Lo specchio della storia, anzi la storia allo specchio*, Siena, Nuova Immagine Editore, 2016, p. 152-168.

¹³ On the two paintings: P. LEONE DE CASTRIS, *Simone Martini...*, p. 242-249, 274-286, 358 (n. 26), 361-362 (n. 32). An extensive list of images of St Ansanus, distinguished «by iconographically homogeneous groups», from the earliest occurrences in the first few years of the 14th century up to the beginning of the 17th century, is found in F. BISOGNI, «L'iconografia di Ansanus...», p. 167-168, note 53.

¹⁴ Roberto BARTALINI (ed.), *Scultura gotica senese, 1260-1350*, Torino, Allemandi, 2011, p. 351, n. 36. The attribute is patently borrowed from the iconography of St John the Baptist; although poorly preserved, one

also sees the palm leaf of martyrdom, held up in his left hand. Removed from the doorway, the sculpture is today inside the Palazzo Comunale, and will be displayed in the new civic museum, in the process of being established. For a colour illustration: Roberto BARTALINI and Gabriella PICCINI (eds.), *Il Palazzo Pubblico e il Campo di Siena. Disegno urbano, architettura, opere d'arte*, Livorno, Sillabe, 2020, p. 123, fig. 4.

¹⁵ F. BISOGNI, «L'iconografia di Ansanus...», p. 168.

¹⁶ On the iconographic tradition of St Sabinus: R. ARGENZIANO and F. BISOGNI, «L'iconografia dei santi patroni...», p. 90-93. Dating to the second quarter of the 15th century is a «small number of representations» in which Sabinus «instead of the crozier, holds a standard with the emblem of the people of Siena [...] as a parallel to Ansanus, who holds a standard with the city's crest»: *ibidem*, p. 91. The image of the saint depicted by Simone thus constitutes the archetype. On p. 91-92 of the same work by R. ARGENZIANO and F. BISOGNI there is a list of 15th century occurrences, all in 'official' contexts: the *Arte della Lana* altarpiece by Sassetta, the Arliquiera in the sacristy in the Santa Maria della Scala hospital, by Vecchietta, the frescos by Sano di Pietro and Vecchietta in the Palazzo Pubblico.

¹⁷ According to the argument put forward by Alessandro BAGNOLI, *La Maestà di Simone Martini*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 1999, p. 88-93.

¹⁸ The hexameter «SALVET VIRGO SENAM VETEREM QUAM SIGNAT AMENAM» constituted the legend on the official seal of the city, attested since 1266, and on the seal that the Signori Nove renewed in 1298, the impression of which, in the Palazzo del Comune, appears in the frame of Simone Martini's *Maestà* and on the large shield

diately to the right of the divine group, and he holds aloft the banner with the coat of arms of the Comune («troncato d'argento e di nero»), the attribute, which became established down the centuries, which Simone Martini himself codified as the saint's distinguishing feature in the polyptych formerly on the altar of the Cappella dei Nove in the Palazzo del Comune, and later on in the altarpiece designed for his altar in the cathedral, the famous *Annunciazione coi santi Ansanus e Massima*, executed in 1333¹³ (fig. 6); but in this instance the painter gave Ansanus a further attribute, a jug, prominently held up on the palm of his left hand, alluding to the fact he was venerated as the 'baptizer' of the Sienese: a 'sign' that was therefore



Fig. 6. Simone Martini, *Annunciation with Saint Ansanus and Saint Maxima*, Florence, Uffizi Galleries.

similar to the baptismal bowl displayed by the *Sant'Ansanus* on the main doorway of the Palazzo Pubblico, carved by Giovanni d'Agostino just before 1340,¹⁴ and a forerunner of the attribute later given to the saint two centuries later by Sodoma in the Sala del Mappamondo, also in the Palaz-

zo Pubblico, and by Il Riccio in the funerary bier of San Donato, in the paintings on which St Ansanus is depicted in the act of baptizing.¹⁵ On the other side of the fresco, in a position matching that of Ansanus, Simone placed St Sabinus, distinguished by the canonical symbols of episcopal status, but —and this too is a unique feature in the saint's 14th century iconography— in the act of holding a banner with the arms of the People of Siena (a rampant lion). As in the case of St Ansanus, therefore, also for St Sabinus Simone Martini prefigured a distinctly civic iconographical *facies*, which was developed later on, and, significantly, mostly in public contexts.¹⁶

Lower down were Crescentius and Victor, with a less imaginative number of attributes (in the case of the saint on the left, only the palm of martyrdom is evidenced, while only the head of the one on the right survives), but —replicating the solution adopted by Simone himself in the *Maestà* in the Sala del Consiglio Comunale, on the occasion of the «reactatione» of 1321¹⁷— having two long cartouches above the city, in a way that seems to 'bind' the sky and the earth, which (according to the clear account given by Della Valle) bore the 'civic' hexameters transcribed by the sources: «SALVET VIRGO SENAM VETEREM QUAM SIGNAT AMENAM» (on the left), and «SENA VETUS CIVITAS VIRGINIS | ALFA ET OMEGA PRINCIPIUM ET FINIS» (on the right), namely the wording of the *sigillum publicum*, and the legend on a local coin, the silver «grosso».¹⁸

The celestial court of the Virgin Mary (and 'her' city) were imagined as lying beyond a marble frame dotted with floral ornaments and packed with heraldic bearings (again, the city crest and the lion of the People, as well as the Capitoline she-wolf)¹⁹. So obedient is it to the laws of three-dimensional illusion, typical of post-Giotto painting, that only on three sides does it show the indentations that reinforce the perception of its thickness. Indeed, the calculated point of view of 'looking up from below' meant that the indentations of the horizontal surround were hidden by the parapet below, composed of four decorated *trompe-l'œil* panels, simulating carved stone reliefs. And here, in an extraordinary and unexpected touch, were represented the Santi Quattro Coronati (Four Crowned Martyrs), each intent on their work: one with a pair of compasses, another with a bow drill, another with a mallet and chisel, and the last with a double-headed hammer. Thus, to cite Della Valle again, of the saints depicted one was measuring «the size of a statuette», another was adorning «a column capital with ornaments», and the other two were dressing a moulded cornice, in an unprecedented, significant celebration of the work of sculptors.²⁰

One is forced to wonder: what was the context in which such an extraordinary work, with such powerful civic resonance, and with such a plurality of meanings, came into being? Who commissioned the work

supported by the Comune/Ben comune in the allegory painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in 1338 in the Sala dei Nove. For the *sigillum publicum*, known from the impression attached to a document from 28 May 1266, and for the one reproduced in Simone's *Maestà*, see Elisabetta CIONI, *Il sigillo a Siena nel Medioevo* (exhibition catalogue, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, 1989), Siena, Comune di Siena, 1989, n. 2, and A. BAGNOLI, *La Maestà...*, p. 76. The inscription also appeared at the top of the *Maestà* formerly in the loggia on the third floor of the Palazzo Pubblico, also a work of a markedly civic nature painted in 1340 by Ambrogio: see Roberto BARTALINI, «La *Maestà* della loggia del Palazzo Pubblico di Siena», A. BAGNOLI, R. BARTALINI and M. SEIDEL (eds.), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti...*, p. 298-305, n. 23. Tradition states that the other *titulus* adorned a «bandellone» (hatch) of the war chariot of the Senese army that was victorious in the battle of Montaperti (most recently, Duccio BALESTRACCI, *La battaglia di Montaperti*, Bari, Laterza, 2017, p. 85), the chariot being conserved in the 14th century in the cathedral (Fulvio CERVINI, «Tutela e memoria di due campi di battaglia medievali: Campaldino e Montaperti», Paola MAFFEI and Gian Maria VARANINI (eds.), *Honos alit artes. Studi per il settantesimo compleanno di Mario Ascheri*, Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2014, vol. II, p. 251-258, esp. p. 254); it functioned as the legend found on the obverse and reverse of the silver «grosso», worth two *soldi* (Giuseppe TODERI, «Le monete della Repubblica di Siena [1180-1559]», Beatrice PAOLOZZI STROZZI, Giuseppe TODERI and Fiorenza VANNEL TODERI (eds.), *Le monete della Repubblica senese*, Cinisello Balsamo [Milano], Silvana Editoriale, 1992, p. 283-387, esp. p. 293), this coin being present, among the emblems of

the civic identity, also in the frame of Simone's *Maestà* in the Palazzo Pubblico.

¹⁹ In his *Raccolta universale di tutte le iscrizioni* (in P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 57), Pecci noted the presence, in the lower frame, also of the «She-Wolf with Twins», namely the Capitoline She-Wolf, which he incorrectly viewed as the «Arms, or rightly the seal of the Regents of the Republic». Previously depicted in the frame of the *Maestà* completed in 1315 by Simone, this constituted a reference to membership of the empire, and an allusion to Siena's Roman origins, a myth that flourished in the Noveschi era. On this point, Michele PELLEGRINI, «Prima della lupa. Miti cittadini, uso e coscienza del passato nelle scritte dell'Italia protocomunale: alcune considerazioni a partire dal caso di Siena», Gregoria CAVERO DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.), *Construir la memoria de la ciudad: espacios, poderes e identidades en la Edad Media (XII-XV)*, I, *La ciudad publicitada: de la documentación a la Arqueología*, León, Universidad de León, 2015, p. 145-169, esp. p. 149-150, 164-165. On the civic nature of Marian worship in Siena, a lucid summary is to be found in Gabriella PICCINI, *Nascita e morte di un quartiere medievale. Siena e il borgo nuovo di Santa Maria a cavallo della peste del 1348*, Pisa, Pacini Editore, 2019, p. 106-108, with information on specific studies in the attached notes.

²⁰ G. DELLA VALLE, *Lettere Sanesi...*, p. 98: «E sotto la Vergine in quattro scompartimenti si vedono i quattro Santi incoronati, de' quali la Storia ecclesiastica parla, quali di eccellenti scultori. Essi stanno lavorando in diverse foggie il marmo. Uno col compasso misura la dimensione di una statuetta, l'altro col trapano carica d'inezie un capitello &c. Sotto di essi Santi vi erano i loro nomi, de' quali appena io potei leggere

from Simone Martini? Given the series of emblems of the sovereignty of the Comune and of civic identity, it could only have been a public institution. Accordingly, it will prove crucially important to identify the building on which this *Maestà* by Simone was to be painted, and what its function was at the time of the commission. Questions which have long gone unanswered, and which have remained thus even after more specific and more recent studies.²¹

However, there can be no doubt, on a close and thorough inspection of the references in the sources, that the fresco occupied the facade of the building housing the Opera della Cattedrale, la *Domus Operis Sancte Marie*²². In the mid-15th century, Lorenzo Ghiberti described Simone's *Maestà* as «above the door of the Opera»²³, while Giovanni Antonio Pecci and Giovacchino Faluschi located it with extreme precision. The former, in 1730, said it was «Opposite the Arch of the Cathedral extension, at the top of the marble steps that take one to San Giovanni Battista, on the Palazzo del Magnifico in the upper part».²⁴ The «Cathedral extension» is the build of the so-called new cathedral, the extension begun in 1339, and so the «Arch [...] at the top of the marble steps» is the gateway in the eastern side of the uncompleted new cathedral, the so-called Portale di Vallepiatta, that stands precisely opposite the steps that descend towards the baptistery of St John²⁵ (figs. 1, 7). This 'topographical situation' is abundantly confirmed in 1784 by Giovacchino Faluschi, who described the fresco as being «On the outer wall of the building known as Palazzo Il Magnifico, and directly opposite one of the massive gateways, that were to serve for the expansion of the new part of the Cathedral [namely the Vallepiatta gateway]».²⁶

Accordingly, Simone Martini's work appeared on the facade of the building, which still stands today, situated opposite the Vallepiatta gateway, and on one corner of the monumental steps connecting the cathedral area to the Vallepiatta di Sotto area below, and to the baptistery of St John (fig. 8). This was the large house bought in 1262 on behalf of the Opera del Duomo by the Cistercian lay brother Fra' Melano — the chief official (Operaio) of the Opera at the time — from the grammar teacher Teobaldo d'Orlandino, and intended as the institutional headquarters and offices of the Opera di Santa Maria, and for the «taglia» (stone-cutting) of *magistri lapidum*, a building that was later extended with the addition of two further parts, to the left and right.²⁷ The *domus* still retained its original twin function as late as 1420, namely as the headquarters of the Opera and as a place of work for stone masons, in view of the fact that, in the inventory drawn up in December of that year, it was called «the cutting-house, in which there is the residence of the Operaio and of the camerlengo».²⁸

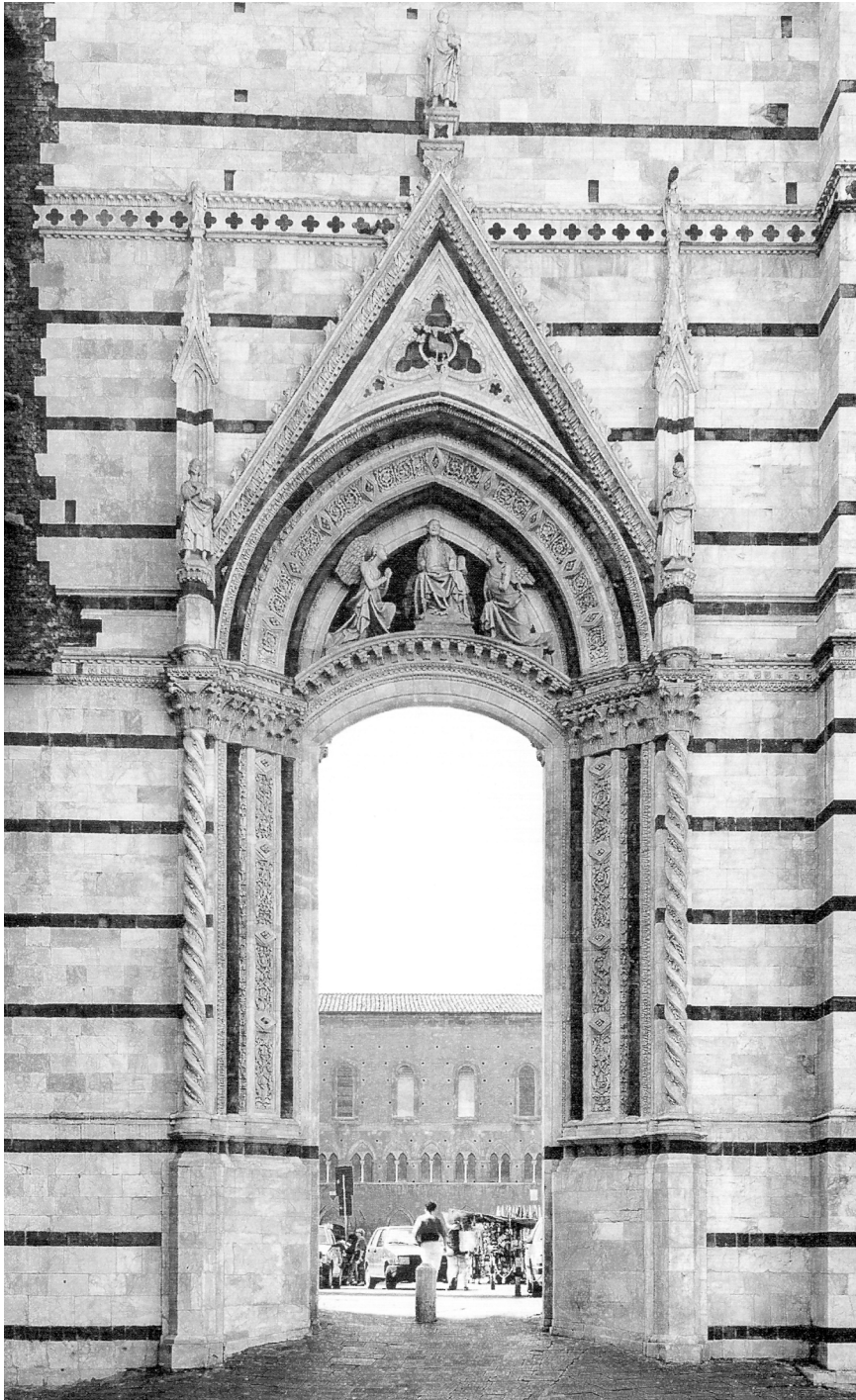


Fig. 7. The eastern portal (the Portale di Vallepiatta) in the extension of Siena Cathedral.

queste parole: NICOSTRATUS». Hagiographic tradition celebrates as Four Crowned Saints the marble-masons Sempronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus and Castorius, Christian martyrs venerated in Rome since the 4th century, to whom the basilica on the Caelian Hill is dedicated.

²¹ P. LEONE DE CASTRIS, *Simone Martini...*, p. 287, 293 (note 17); P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 40, 45, 50 (note 24).

²² I have mentioned this conclusion in my work *Il duomo nuovo di Siena. La fabbrica, le sculture, i maestri, le dinamiche di cantiere*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 2019, p. 20.

²³ «Ancora è sopra la porta dell'Opera una Nostra Donna col fanciullo in braccio e di sopra è uno stendardo con agnoletti volanti che llo tengono e con molti altri Santi intorno, fatta con molta diligentia»: Julius VON SCHLOSSER, *Lorenzo Ghiberti's Denkwürdigkeiten (I Commentarii)*, Berlin, Julius Bard, 1912, vol. I, p. 42. Similarly, following Ghiberti, l'Anonimo Magliabechiano (Carl FREY [ed.], *Il Codice Magliabechiano cl. XVII. 17 contenente notizie sopra l'arte degli antichi e quella de' Fiorentini da Cimabue a Michelangelo Buonarroti*, Berlin, G. Grote'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892, p. 84); and, ever since the first edition of his work, Giorgio Vasari (R. BETTARINI and P. BAROCCHI [eds.], *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, vol. II, Firenze, Sansoni, 1967, p. 193-194).

²⁴ «In faccia all'Arco dell'accrescimento del duomo, a capo le scale di marmo p(er) le quali si v(a) a S(an) Gio(vanni) Batt(ist)a, nel Palazzo del Mag(nif)ico dalla parte di sopra» (in P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 57).

²⁵ On the Vallepiatta gateway, created at the top of the same thoroughfare which, between the

12th century and the start of the 14th century, terminated in the access to the cathedral from the area below the presbytery, the area where the new baptistery was erected: R. BARTALINI, *Il duomo nuovo...*, p. 90ff.

²⁶ «Nella muraglia del Palazzo detto Il Magnifico, e dirimpetto a una delle grandiose porte, che servir doveano per l'accrescimento della nuova fabbrica del Duomo» (in P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 58).

²⁷ On the *Domus Operis*: Andrea GIORGI and Stefano MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale. L'Opera di Santa Maria di Siena tra XII e XIV secolo*, München, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2005, p. 77, 140-141, 235. The purchase contract is published by Andrea GIORGI, in Walter HAAS, Dieter VON WINTERFELD *et alii* (eds.), *Der Dom S. Maria Assunta. Architektur* [A. RIEDL and M. SEIDEL (eds.), *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1], München, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006, vol. 3.1.1.2, p. 732-733, n. 27. For a concise analysis of the building: Marie-Ange CAUSARANO, *La cattedrale e la città. Il cantiere del duomo di Siena tra XI e XIV secolo*, Sesto Fiorentino (Firenze), All'Insegna del Giglio, 2017, p. 163.

²⁸ «La chasa del taglio nella quale instà la risidenza dell'operaio e chamarlengo» (A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 239, note 248).

²⁹ The sale contract, dated 9 March 1512, is published by Monika BUTZEK, in W. HAAS, D. VON WINTERFELD *et alii* (eds.), *Der Dom...*, p. 813-814, n. 218. See also A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 239 and note 249. The two Operai and commissioners of the Opera were Paolo di Vannoccio Biringucci and Giovan Battista di Francesco Guglielmi, Pandolfo Petrucci «eorum tertio collega».

³⁰ A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 239.

³¹ For the institutional history



Fig. 8. The former *domus* of the Opera del Duomo di Siena.

This enables us to easily explain why modern sources locate the fresco on the facade (or «outer wall») of «Palazzo del Magnifico»: the former «chasa del'Opera sancte Marie» in March 1512 was sold to Pandolfo Petrucci («Il Magnifico») —who at the time was the *de facto* lord and master of the city, and member of the council which, as of 1505, replaced the cathedral Operaio—and included in the so-called «Palazzo del Magnifico», which at the time was still in the process of being organized and expanded.²⁹ And only afterwards, in the context of the reorganization of the area of the cathedral inspired by Petrucci himself, was a new, imposing building created, designed to house the headquarters of the Opera³⁰. This was achieved by walling up the first three bays of the eastern aisle of the uncompleted new cathedral: the building, indeed, that still houses it today, along with the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.

After the purchase by Fra' Melano in 1262, the *domus* formerly belonging to Teobaldo d'Orlandino had a significant role in the institutional history of the Opera del Duomo, the organization that was increasingly taking on the appearance of an offshoot of the power of the Comune³¹. It had a dual significance, as a building that was the permanent home of the officials of the

Opera (and the prime nucleus of its property assets), and as an indoor place of work for the group of stone masons in charge of cathedral building works, as well as for storing stone materials for the fabric of the cathedral. It thus became the place set aside for «cutting» («domus in qua retinetur tallia et morantur magistri ad laborandum»), as the physical site of the work of that complex unit formed by skilled master masons in charge of cathedral building works, and it ended up generally symbolizing, as noted by Giorgi and Moscadelli, the role of the Opera del Duomo in the urban context.³²

For a brief period, the *Domus Operis* was also the residence of the Biccherna officials of the Comune, and it soon acquired representational functions, which explains why, before June 1326, Pietro Lorenzetti was commissioned to produce a cycle of paintings for the interiors («le storie che si fecero ne la chasa del'opara sancte Marie»³³). Soon thereafter, the officials and the Operaio (who at that time was Segna di Lino, except for the first half of 1330, when Bono di Campuglia was elected)³⁴ had to decide to also create a very visible iconic apparatus on the facade of their official building. Indeed, it seems to me that we may conclude, with good grounds, that Simone Martini painted the *Maestà* on the *Domus Operis* in 1330.

Since the sources differ on this point, stating in some cases that the fresco, as well as the name of the artist, also bore the date of 1330 underneath (Chigi, Piccolomini), while in other cases declaring the year to be 1335 (Della Valle), judgment has been suspended, and the question has been left unresolved. However, the conflicting statement by Della Valle, who gave the year as 1335, the only one to do so, in volume two of his *Lettere Sanesi*, published in 1785, is undermined, as recently noted by Alessandra Caffio, by the previous account given by Pecci, who in 1730 said that the inscription and the date were by then scarcely legible.³⁵ There is thus nothing to seriously invalidate the 17th century accounts by Fabio Chigi and Giulio Piccolomini, who, in agreement with each other, but independently so, indicate the year 1330 for Simone's work.

The 'protagonism' of the patron saints in the *Maestà* ordered by the Opera del Duomo is thus to be seen as going hand-in-hand with the grandiose programme of polyptychs for the altars of the patrons Ansanus, Sabinus, Crescentius and Victor inside the cathedral, which was got under way at that very time, and which the Opera would continue work on until after the middle of the century, by first engaging Simone Martini himself (in 1330, for the Sant'Ansano altarpiece), and then — after the former left for Avignon — Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, and finally, after the two brothers died, Bartolomeo Bulgarini.³⁶

More generally, the commission came into being at a time that was as crucial as it was delicate in the history of Siena, and also in the history of

of the Opera di Santa Maria: A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 124ff.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 236-237.

³³ The painter received full payment on 27 June 1326 («Ancho xx libre a ma<e>stro Petro di Lorenzo dipegnitore, dipegnitura le storie che si fecero ne la chasa del'opara sancte Marie. Anco 6 libre i quali denari demo in oro et i<n>daco e in azuro e in cinabro e in altri colori che s'adopararo per la sopra detta istorie»): ARCHIVIO DELL'OPERA DELLA METROPOLITANA DI SIENA, 173 (328), cc. 43v-44r, published in part by Gaetano MILANESI, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, Siena, Onorato Porri, 1854-1856, vol. I, p. 194, and later on by Carlo VOLPE, *Pietro Lorenzetti* (posthumous edition by Mauro LUCCO), Milano, Electa, 1989, p. 58, and Michela BECCHIS, *Pietro Lorenzetti*, Cinisello Balsamo, Milano, Silvana Editoriale, 2012, p. 161; see also A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 235, note 232.

³⁴ A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 440.

³⁵ Alessandra CAFFIO, «I perduti affreschi della facciata dell'ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala a Siena», A. BAGNOLI, R. BARTALINI and M. SEIDEL (eds.), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti...*, p. 363-373, esp. p. 368. Pecci wrote: «Nella parte di sotto del contorno si scorge a pena che vi erano altri caratteri, dove facilmente vi sarà stato l'anno, e il nome del Pittore, che la dipinse, ma p(er) essere quasi affatto estinti non si rende possibile il leggerli» (in P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 57). The fact that the date recorded by Della Valle has no great foundation is also shown by what is stated by the painter who made the drawing in the Vatican Library: despite the fact that he was aware of the description of the fresco included by Della Valle in his *Lettere Sanesi* (for an ex-

PLICIT reference to this: cf. P. DI SIMONE, «La Maestà...», p. 43), he had no hesitation in contradicting his words, in transcribing, at the bottom of the sheet, what little he was able to read of the inscription: «4. Il Nome del Pitore di cui non apparisce chiaramente che l'Anno 1330».

³⁶ The bibliography is now extensive. For our interests here, see especially Monika BUTZEK, «Le pale di Sant'Aniano e degli altri Protettori nel Duomo di Siena. Una storia documentaria», Alessandro CECCHI (ed.), *Simone Martini e l'Annunciazione degli Uffizi*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 2001, p. 35-59, as well as the recent overview by Federica SIDDI, «"Anno Domini MCCCXLII": la tavola di Ambrogio Lorenzetti per l'altare di San Crescenzo nel duomo di Siena», A. BAGNOLI, R. BARTALINI and M. SEIDEL (eds.), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti...*, p. 427-447 (with extensive bibliography). According to the interpretation, backed up by Carla Zarrilli, of Kavin M. FREDERICK («The dating of Simone Martini's S. Aniano Altar-piece: a re-examination of two documents», *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. CXXXI, 1989, p. 468-469), the first payment to Simone Martini for the painting dates back to the year 1330.

³⁷ On the demographic development of Siena, see the summary by Gabriella PICCINNI, «Siena nell'età di Duccio», A. BAGNOLI, R. BARTALINI, L. BELLOSI and M. LACLOTTE (eds.), *Duccio. Alle origini della pittura senese* (exhibition catalogue, Siena, Complesso Museale di Santa Maria della Scala, 2003-2004), Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), Silvana Editoriale, 2003, p. 27-35, esp. p. 28-29; for the plans to expand the city walls: Fabio GABBRIELLI, *Siena medievale. L'architettura civile*, Siena, Protagon Editori, 2010, p. 206ff.

³⁸ Regarding the urban population in these years, and the cit-

its cathedral and of the Opera del Duomo. In the previous decade the increase in the urban population of Siena reached its peak, and this had eloquent repercussions in the programme to expand the outer walls, and for the construction of new, grandiose monumental gateways.³⁷ In this context there came, as of 1323, the foundation of a new borgo behind the palazzo del Comune, namely in the val di Montone area below, the heart of an urban expansion project based not on simple immigration but on *cives novi*, in other words on the naturalization of part of the recently urbanised population and, thus, on the expansion of the citizenry.³⁸ In the following decade, the borgo of Santa Maria saw a growth in the number of houses that were built, and the construction of a new church, and it is within this selfsame framework —without losing sight of the symbolic aspects, and the desire for self-representation that was a part of the Noveschi government— that, in large sections of the urban *élite*, there was an ever stronger desire to build a *maior ecclesia civitatis* in response to the growing size of the urban population and the prestige of the city, in other words, a colossal new cathedral that would have meant that Siena could boast one of the largest churches in Christendom.³⁹ In these years, the Opera acted very swiftly in carrying out its campaign to buy up property in the Piano di Santa Maria, namely a series of buildings due to be demolished in order to make room for the new cathedral, despite the fact that this campaign temporarily stalled in 1332.⁴⁰

As in several other Tuscan city-states, also in Siena the cathedral had for some time no longer been just the church of the bishop, but rather —in a very real sense— the *maior ecclesia civitatis*, the most important urban church, the place where the patron saints were worshipped (the Virgin Mary as *advocata Senensium*, and the saints Ansanus, Sabinus, Crescentius and Victor), and thus the church of civic identity, financed by the *civitas*, and its decision-making and administrative bodies (the Opera) had for some time effectively been controlled by the Comune.⁴¹

Accordingly, there was a desire to see the facade of the «chasa del'Opera sancte Marie» distinguished by an extraordinary emblem of the strictly civic and identity-defining role that the cathedral now played. The officials of the Opera, as has been seen, found in Simone Martini —who had been the painter of the Signori Nove for more than a decade⁴²— an artist who was unrivalled in achieving their aim. On the facade, the Virgin, the prime advocate of the Sienese, and to whom the cathedral was dedicated, with the patron saints at her side and surrounded by the symbols of civic identity and the sovereignty of the Comune, dominated an exceptional panoramic view of the city, the heart and the key element of which was represented by the cathedral, viewed surprisingly from the apse zone, the very

zone that overlooked the «chasa del'Opara». And below —more than 80 years prior to the tabernacle commissioned from Nanni di Banco for the exterior of the Orsanmichele church by the consuls of the Florentine guild— the illusionistic marble frame was decorated by the Santi Quattro Coronati, the patrons of the guild of stone masons brought together in the *domus*, setting a visual seal on the civic value attached to their work as the builders of the *maior ecclesia civitatis*.⁴³ Clearly, then, what took shape on the *domus* of Siena's Opera del Duomo was a notable example of «evidence politics», in the sense explored recently by Klaus Krüger,⁴⁴ underscoring once again the fact that the culture of the Comune, in later medieval Italy, systematically used the eloquence of images in the construction of public discourse.

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izenship policy of the Signori Nove: William M. BOWSKY, *Un comune italiano nel Medioevo: Siena sotto il regime dei Nove, 1287-1355*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1986, p. 53-56; on the borgo di Santa Maria and, generally, Siena in these decades: G. PICCINNI, *Nascita e morte di un quartiere medievale...*

³⁹ On the undertaking to expand the cathedral, and the background to it: R. BARTALINI, *Il duomo nuovo...*, p. 9ff.

⁴⁰ A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 93, 433-435 (Appendice II); R. BARTALINI, *Il duomo nuovo...*, p. 15-17.

⁴¹ For the history of the Opera in Siena, see above, note 31. Regarding the mechanisms of civic funding of cathedral building works in Tuscany in the age of the Comuni: regarding Pisa, the oldest by far, Mauro RONZANI, «Da aula cultuale del vescovato a *Ecclesia maior* della città: note sulla fisionomia istituzionale e la rilevanza pubblica del duomo di Pisa», Ottavio BANTI (ed.), *Amalfi, Genova, Pisa, Venezia. La cattedrale e la città. Aspetti religiosi, istituzionali e urbanistici*, Ospedaletto (Pisa), Pacini Editore, 1993, p. 71-102; for Siena: Andrea GIORGI and Stefano MOSCADELLI, «*Quod omnes cerei ad Opus deveniant*. Il finanziamento dell'Opera del Duomo di Siena nei secoli XIII e XIV», *Nuova Rivista Storica*, vol. LXXXV, 2001, p. 489-584; A. GIORGI and S. MOSCADELLI, *Costruire una cattedrale...*, p. 122-123; for Arezzo: Roberto BARTALINI «"Signori al tutto d'Arezzo". Alcune considerazioni sui Tarlati al potere e la loro committenza», Arturo Carlo QUINTAVALLE, *Medioevo: arte e storia*, proceedings of the international study conference (Parma, 2007), Milano, Electa, 2008, p. 554-563, esp. p. 554; for Massa Marittima: Roberto BARTALINI, «Antefatti. La *Maestà* di Duccio per il duomo di

Massa Martittima», A. BAGNOLI, R. BARTALINI and M. SEIDEL (eds.), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti...*, p. 98-106, n. 1, esp. p. 98.

⁴² A close examination of this point in P. LEONE DE CASTRIS, *Simone Martini...*, p. 222ff.

⁴³ In 1368 an agreement was apparently reached to establish, in the cathedral of Siena, a specific chapel dedicated to the Santi Quattro Coronati, situated under the legal patronage of the Stone Masons' Guild (the documentation is newly published by Monika BUTZEK, in W. HAAS, D. VON WINTERFELD *et alii* (eds.), *Der Dom...*, p. 789-790, n. 157), later painted by Agostino di Marsilio (G. MILANESI, *Documenti...*, vol. II, p. 320) and again, in the early 16th century, by Il Riccio (*Ibidem*, vol. III, p. 122-123).

⁴⁴ K. KRÜGER, *Politik der Evidenz. Öffentliche Bilder als Bilder der Öffentlichkeit...*

«E SOTTO ESSA LA CITTÀ NOSTRA». SIMONE MARTINI, LA CATTEDRALE DI SIENA E L'IDENTITÀ CITTADINA

Una delle opere un tempo celebri di Simone Martini è da tempo scomparsa. Era un affresco visibile pubblicamente nell'area della cattedrale di Siena. Descritto da molte fonti letterarie, oggi ne conosciamo anche una testimonianza visiva, un disegno realizzato nella seconda metà del XVIII secolo. L'opera raffigurava la Madonna col Bambino attorniata dai santi protettori della città, posti al di sopra di un'eccezionale veduta di Siena. Nella cornice e all'interno del dipinto erano disseminati i diversi emblemi dell'identità cittadina e della sovranità del Comune. È possibile identificare l'edificio sul quale Simone Martini fu incaricato di dipingere l'affresco: era la sede dell'Opera del Duomo di Siena (la *Domus Operis*), deputata agli organi di governo della fabbrica della cattedrale e sede di lavoro dei maestri di pietra impiegati nel cantiere (la «taglia»). Emerge così lo spiccato valore politico del dipinto in un momento assai particolare nella storia di Siena e della sua cattedrale, teso anche a celebrare il valore civico del lavoro dei maestri di pietra impegnati nella costruzione della *maior ecclesia civitatis*.

Parole chiave: Arte italiana, Pittura gotica, Pittura gotica senese, Simone Martini, Pittura civica.

«E SOTTO ESSA LA CITTÀ NOSTRA». SIMONE MARTINI, THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENA, AND CIVIC IDENTITY

One of Simone Martini's once famous works has long since disappeared. It was a publicly visible fresco in the area of Siena Cathedral. Described in many literary sources, we now also know a visual record of it, a drawing made in the second half of the 18th century. The work depicted the Madonna and Child surrounded by the city's patron saints, placed above an exceptional view of Siena. In the frame and inside the painting were scattered the various emblems of the city's identity and the sovereignty of the Comune. It is possible to identify the building on which Simone Martini was commissioned to paint the fresco: it was the headquarters of the Opera del Duomo di Siena (the *Domus Operis*), seat of the governing bodies of the cathedral site, and the place of work of the stone masters employed on cathedral building site (the «taglia»). The painting's strong political value thus emerges at a very particular moment in the history of Siena and its cathedral, also aimed at celebrating the civic value of the work of the stone masters engaged in the construction of the *maior ecclesia civitatis*.

Keywords: Italian Art, Gothic Painting, Sienese Gothic Painting, Simone Martini, Civic Painting.

«E SOTTO ESSA LA CITTÀ NOSTRA». SIMONE MARTINI, LA CATEDRAL DE SIENA I LA IDENTITAT CÍVICA

Una de les obres de Simone Martini que va gaudir de fama va desaparèixer fa temps. Era un fresc visible públicament dins de l'àrea de la Catedral de Siena. Descrita en nombroses fonts literàries, actualment també en coneixem un testimoni visual: un dibuix realitzat a la segona meitat del segle XVIII. L'obra representava la Verge i el Nen envoltats dels sants patrons de la Ciutat, situats a sobre d'una excepcional vista de Siena. Al marc i a l'interior de la pintura eren dispersos els diferents emblemes de la identitat de la Ciutat i de la sobirania del Comune. Hom pot identificar l'edifici en què Simone Martini va rebre l'encàrrec de pintar del fresc: era la seu de l'Opera del Duomo di Siena, seu dels òrgans de govern de les obres de la catedral i lloc de treball dels mestres de la pedra empleats en la talla («taglia»). Així, el marcat valor polític de la pintura emergeix en un moment molt particular de la història de Siena i de la catedral, atès que també celebra el valor civíc de l'obra dels mestres de la pedra dedicats a la construcció de la *maior ecclesia civitatis*.

Paraules clau: art italià, pintura gòtica, pintura gòtica sienesa, Simone Martini, pintura cívica

«E SOTTO ESSA LA CITTÀ NOSTRA». SIMONE MARTINI, LA CATEDRAL DE SIENA Y LA IDENTIDAD CÍVICA

Una de las obras de Simone Martini que en su momento gozó de fama desapareció hace tiempo. Era un fresco visible al público en el área de la Catedral de Siena. Descrita en numerosas fuentes literarias, actualmente también contamos con un testigo visual, un dibujo realizado en la segunda mitad

del siglo XVIII. La obra representaba a la Virgen con el Niño rodeados de los santos patronos de la ciudad, situados sobre una excepcional vista de Siena. En el marco y en el interior de la pintura se hallaban dispersos los diferentes emblemas de la identidad de la ciudad y de la soberanía del Comune. Puede identificarse el edificio en el que Simone Martini recibió el encargo de pintar el fresco: era la sede de la Opera del Duomo di Siena, sede de los órganos de gobierno de las obras de la catedral y lugar de trabajo de los maestros de la piedra empleados en la talla («taglia»). Así, el marcado valor político de la pintura emerge en un momento muy particular de la historia de Siena y de la catedral, puesto que también celebra el valor cívico de la obra de los maestros de la piedra dedicados a la construcción de la *maior ecclesia civitatis*.

Palabras clave: arte italiano, pintura gótica, pintura gótica sienesa, Simone Martini, pintura cívica.

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