



COMUNE DI SIENA



Palio:  
the colors  
of Siena





# Palio: the colors of Siena

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Alessandro Falassi

# Palio: the colors of Siena

*editor*

Roberta Ferri



*Palio: the colors of Siena is published by the City of Siena to explain the traditions by which our city lives today and has for centuries. It highlights the values and passions that distinguish Siena and render it as unique in all the world.*

*The Palio of Siena is indeed an impassioned local festival, but it is not to be mistaken for some sort of pageant performed for tourists. Everything that transpires on the tuff in the Piazza del Campo has a precise significance, a clear importance that is profoundly felt and evident in the solemnity of the ancient rites which the Sieneese have proudly passed down from generation to generation.*

*The anthropologist Alessandro Falassi's seminal essay treats the reader to an authentic image of the Palio. It is complemented by a series of photographs which illustrate the preparations that precede the races of July 2nd and August 16th and the elaborate arrangements carried out by the city council. Also included are informative profiles on each of the 17 Contrade to identify the protagonists of the festival, followed by a selection of comments dedicated to the Palio from celebrated figures and numerous Sieneese people.*

*The purpose behind this latest edition, with these new images and citations, is to clearly outline the implications and nuances behind this trademark event of a city where identity is not merely an abstract concept, but rather a highly regarded precious possession.*

# A Municipality, a Festival and a City





## Myths, Legends, and the Linear Palio (1000-1300)



Quite when did the Palio begin? The question appears every summer in the thoughts of all

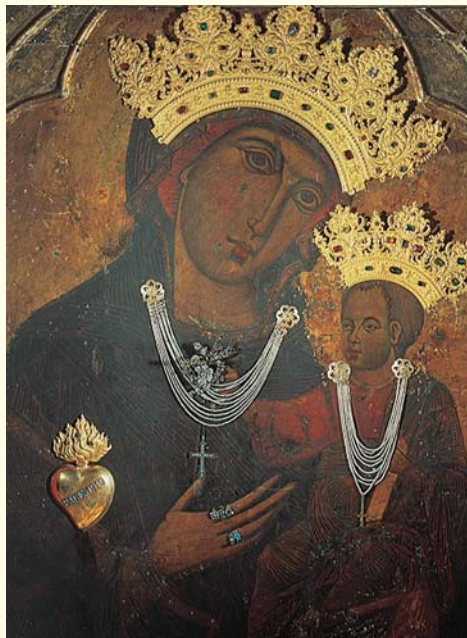
Sieneese. If no precise date exists, an answer still can be found: the Palio is as old as Siena, running through the city's myths, legends, and history. Over the centuries it came to be the distinctive element of the city, many would say to the point of becoming the fourth dimension of the city's reality, the indispensable, the primary mechanism moulding the city, giving meaning to all that the city is and does. The *Contrada* shapes the strong social identity of the Sieneese and the Palio gives them a model of how things are to be done. Even in politics, says a local proverb, the Palio is run all year long.

Siena was an Etruscan city, modest but well-connected to the major centers of Etruria: Fiesole and Chiusi, Cortona and Volterra. Many have pointed out fascinating analogies between the first Palios and the equestrian games of the Etruscans and earlier still of the Greeks. In Poggio Civitate, not far from Siena, there is a fragment of pediment, from the 6th century b.c., showing a series of horsemen lined up, riding bareback like today's jockeys and, like their modern

counterparts, they are equipped with riding crops and hats, all set to run their Etruscan Palio.

Another myth of the race's origins – favoring Siena as born from the rib of Rome and founded by the fugitive sons of Remus – depicts those men reaching the fateful place after a great race, chased by the horsemen of Romulus. Senio and Aschio thus founded Siena at the end of a mythic “linear Palio.” The insignia of the new city was to be white and black after their horses and the clouds of smoke that rose from the two sites where they offered their sacrifices to the gods.

The *Balzana* (the old Roman insignia in black and white) remained the Coat of Arms of Siena, perhaps because, as Geno Pampaloni wrote, it is the perfect symbol of the extreme character of the city. It seems the irreducible opposition of white and black, yet the *Balzana* in fact presents the fusion of all colors in the white and their absolute absence in the black.



The Madonna of the Vow (XIII c.), in the Cathedral of Siena, even today receives the homages of the *Contrade* and of the city



The Mayor Luigi De Mossi, on March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020, offered the keys of the city to the Madonna of the Vow asking her to protect Siena from the Covid-19 pandemic. This international emergency saw the cancellation, in the same year, of the Palio on July 2nd and on August 16th, an event that has never occurred since World War II.

The same is true of the Palio: the *Balzana* is omnipresent as the insignia of the Municipality and as a sign of everything, *reductio ad unum* of the agreeable disagreement, of the seeming harmony between between *Contrade* which, with their individual colors and flags, are divided and oppose each other, set themselves apart and clash. But they refind each other and unite in the *Balzana*, like the Sieneese people when they are happy to run into each other away from home or when they pit themselves against the rest of the world. The obsessively black and white marbles of the Cathedral, symbol to some of the glory and pain of the Madonna, render the building a kind of “sacred *Balzana*,” and thus the appropriate setting for the offering of candles, the benediction of the Palio banner, the Te Deum of victory, for the most intense and tumultuous moments of popular religiousness, which may be archaic in form, but fully

heartfelt as an indispensable and ever-current part of the Palio rites.

It was in the church-square of the black and white New Cathedral in the 1200s that the insignia of the City-State was placed to mark the finish line of the race of the barb horses, the linear Palio which in previous centuries had been run through the tortuous city streets all the way to the old Cathedral, dedicated to San Boniface, as recorded in documents from the 11th century. When Siena became one of the richest and most cultured cities in Medieval Europe, the Palio was the sporting event and culminating moment that crowned and concluded the splendid annual festivals in honor of Our Lady of August, Virgin Mary of the Assumption, queen and patron of Siena and of its State. To her was the city dedicated and entrusted. The keys of the city were offered to her in the most critical moments of the city's history, from the eve of the Battle of Monta-





According to tradition, the two poles inside the Cathedral are those of the Florentine Carroccio wagon of Montaperti

perti in 1260 to passage of the Front in 1944, and in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

For the Festival of the Assumption Siena became an “open city.” Arrests were suspended; exiles could return and freely walk the town; goods and livestock poured into the marketplace; streets came alive with musicians and minstrels, mimes and jesters who entertained the crowds; acrobats and strongmen, teeth-pullers and healers, trinket-sellers and harlots, wine-merchants and vendors offered their wares and their services. The city displayed tapestries and flags, decorations, festoons and garlands: in 1329 the City-State ordered 600 of these to be made. In 1378 monies were spent on fireworks, then considered a marvel.

The culmination was the offering of candles and tributes in the Cathedral, a religious and political rite, an act of Siennese devotion to the Madonna and of subordination to the vicars, the leaders of the City-State. The collective oath of allegiance was its own precise ritual: a scroll from 1200 describes it, referring to an article in an older statute, since lost. The quantity of fine waxen tributes to be offered varied according the importance of whoever made the offering, but all citizens (from 18 to 70 years old) were dutibound to make offerings, as were all institutions of Siena and its State, most notably the Municipality which offered a gold-leafed and painted candle, as it does today. In the years of the greatest splendor, the Siennese who packed the Cathedral watched as, before their Madonna to whom vows were offered, there kneeled former enemies, now become fellow citizens: the Counts of Scialenga and the Counts Gherardesca, the wise Aldobrandeschi and the Guidi, legendary warriors. The wax that the workers of the Cathedral amassed beneath the dome reached a

weight of 30,000 lbs., then redistributed to the small churches and parishes of the diocese, representing the ancient paradigm of the ritual donation, with the symbolic obligations of giving, receiving, and reciprocating. In the words of a saying much cherished by Boccaccio, “The Church is like the sea, from everyone it takes and to everyone it gives.” The Municipality played an analogous role in the secular aspects of the festival. Prisoners to be freed from the dungeons were drawn by lot, as were the names of virtuous and needy maidens whose dowries were provided for “at the public expense.” Public reconciliations between factions and families gave relief to feuds among the citizenry. Food and drink was provided for all. In the act of submission of Montelaterone (1205), the Municipality committed itself to giving victuals to anyone who brought a tribute of fine wax to Siena. This was the first documentation of the custom that was to continue in the banquet offered by the *Signoria* and today in the dinners on

the eve of the Palio sumptuously laid out on the streets for thousands of celebrants. In the period of the “culture of hunger” – experienced by even the most splendid cities such as Siena – the festival was a moment of liberation from the strict daily rations of bread and wine. The city found, gave, and abounded in food and drink for everyone, wines and meats, cookies and blancmanges, the precursors of *cavallucci* and *riccarelli*, *copate* and *panforti*, the Siennese delicacies of today.

To organize the Palio the Municipality annually nominated the Deputies of the Festival, mentioned in records from the 1300s with tasks and status greater than those of today. Running in the Palio were the nobles and notables on their battle-horses: the medieval games were mimed battles, training for war. The linear track ran from outside the walls all the way to the Cathedral, from the outlying fields to the streets, over muddy roads like Pantaneto to the marble of the Cathedral, from the country to the



The linear Palio at the Chiasso Largo (print from the XVIII c.)



city. The prize was the *Pallium*, a long piece of precious cloth, sometimes stitched in vertical bands, stuffed with hundreds of *vaio* fur pelts. The *Pallium* later gave its name to the race and then to the festival. This linguistic fact underlines a tie between sign and context, symbol and ceremony, meaning and the meaningful.

From the start the race was sensational and dramatic, full of accidents and events.

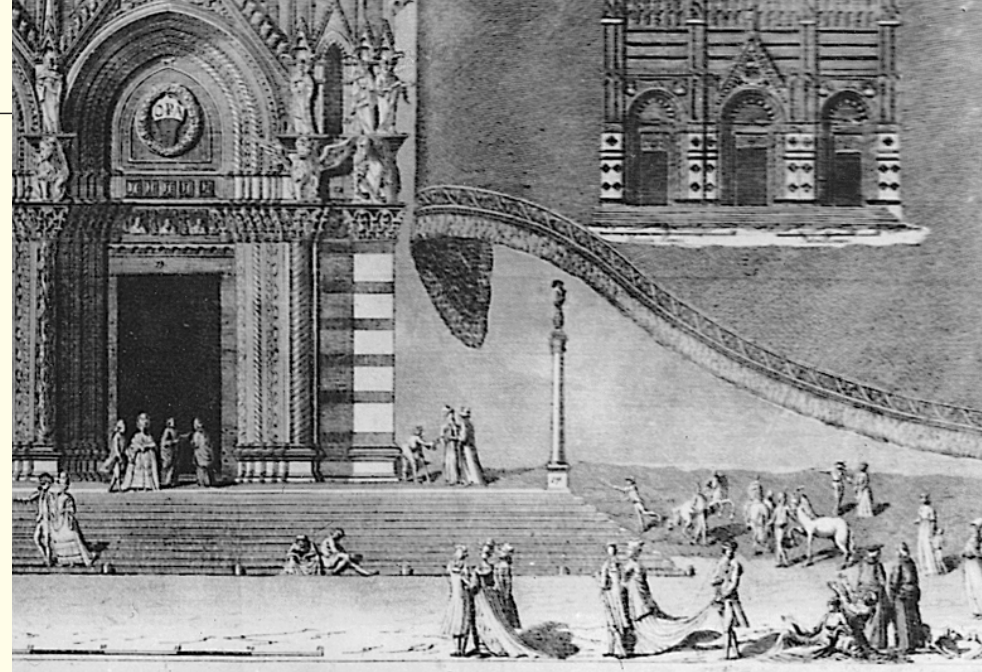
The oldest document recording the Palio, from 1238, deals with Palio justice. A fine of 40 farthings was to be paid to Ristoro di Bruno Ciguarde because “running in the Palio and having arrived last, he did not take the pig, the derisory prize assigned by the regulation to the most losing of all the losers” (at that time, last place; today, 2nd place). Such a “purge” helped define victory and defeat, establishing hierarchies of winners and losers, dictating the symbolic order of *homo ludens*.

Another sign of the times lies in the Constitution of 1262, in which it is decreed

that the *qui current eques*, the participants of the Palio, the noble jockeys of that era, could not be prosecuted for homicide or injury occurring during the race, because “*predicta maleficia non committerint studiose*” – “they didn’t do it on purpose.” What was asked of jockeys was above all a theatrical show of honesty.

These first Palios were an affair of the noblemen. The *Contrade* participated, instead, in the crude games in which masses of contestants opposed each other on the basis of territory (eg., *La Città* against Camollia and S. Martino). Siena was born plural, on three hills. The three primeval castles expanded into Thirds (Città, Camollia, S. Martino) growing until they met and almost dictated the site of the *Campus Fori*, the Piazza del Campo. The *Contrade* grew up within this 3-way partitioning, an Indoeuropean matrix there since the Etruscans and which in Siena stubbornly refused the 4-way partitioning laid out everywhere by the Romans.

The oldest documentation of the *Con-*



The finish of the linear Palio in the Piazza del Duomo (print from the XVIII c.)

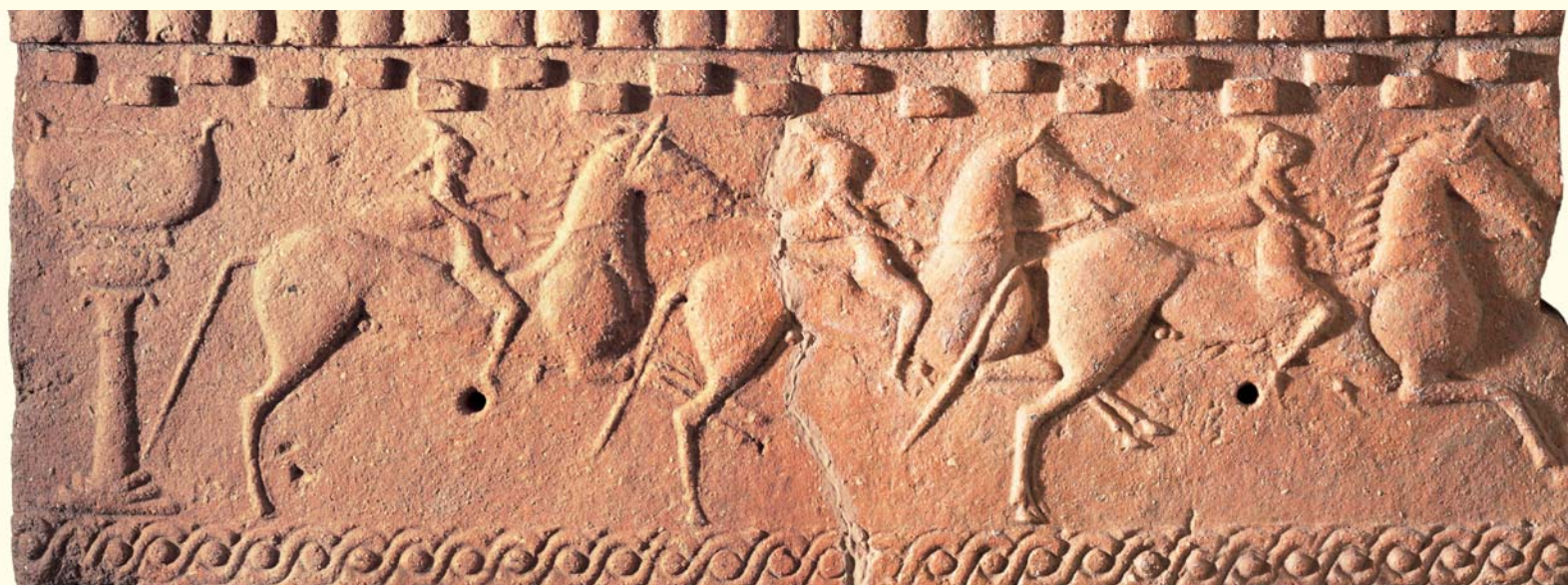
*trade* lies in the regulations of 1200, prescribing that all citizens were to bring a candle to the Cathedral *cum hominibus sue contrate*.

Historian Andrea Dei affirms that the Sienese “began to create companies in the city of the *Contrade*” in 1209. *Contrada* originally meant “a main inhabit-

ed street,” then “neighborhood,” and finally the association of a district’s inhabitants.

Giovanni Cecchini, authoritative writer on Palio historiography, notes, “the *Contrada*, as a territorial and administrative district, is as old as the city itself.” E. William Heywood, an important Palio historian, adds, “For the past 400 years the *Contrade* have been the distinguishing characteristic of life in Siena, the equivalent of which can be found in no other Italian city.”

The *Contrade* used to be far more numerous. After the Plague of 1347, their number was reduced to 42. They took their names from streets, gates, fountains, churches or illustrious families within their territories. They fulfilled religious, administrative, military, and recreational functions. The head of the *Contrada* was the *Sindaco*, the Mayor, who was directly answerable to the *Podestà*, aided by popularly elected counsellors. The *Contrada* was subject to taxes, it ran its own police force, saw to the upkeep of streets, and carried out other services for the public good. 🐾



The Palio of the Etruscans, coroplast of the 6th century BC, from Poggio Civitate (Siena)



## The Renaissance: Floats, Symbols, and Colors (1400-1500)



In the 1400s ever more frequent, consistent records report the modern names of the *Contrade*, which began to appear in the public festivities and to take part in the ritual games with groups of men in livery.

*Le pugna* was a kind of collective boxing match with hundreds of contestants, the heir of gladiatorial games and forerunner of modern boxing. In Siena this game was in vogue during the low Middle Ages, often banned because of the deaths and riots it regularly provoked.

In the *pugna* recorded by Gentile Sermini in a short story dating back to 1424, written in a style that anticipated live news-reporting, readers learn of the groupings of the Snail, of the Giraffe, and of the Val di Piatta (the modern day Forest). In the *pugna* games of 1494, mentioned in the Chronicles of Allegretto Allegretti, written in honor of the Cardinal of San Malò's visit to Siena, participating groups included the Snail, the Dragon, the Giraffe, the Wave, and Camollia (today's Porcupine). The game went on for a long time. In the 1800s Niccolò Tommaseo defined pugilism as "a game played in the style of *pugna*: much used among the Greeks and carried on up until the recent years among the Sienese." From the *pugna* arose the theatrical yet

virulent pugnacity that lives on today. *Le cacce*, "the hunts," marked the entry of the costumed representatives of the *Contrada* in the Piazza, along with allegorical floats of exotic or imaginary animals, symbolizing mythic events or noble virtues. In the transition from the 1400s to the 1500s, the *Contrade* completed the fantastic menagerie from which they took their emblems. Lacking precise records, one can hypothesize a spontaneous process by which *Contrade* came together to construct the machines. The *Contrade*, chose their emblematic animals from the heraldic repertory in vogue in Siena and throughout Italy, using ideas and symbols from the crests of kings and nobles, of mercenary companies, of the arts and professions, of towns and cities, or from Medieval "bestiaries," like those of Brunetto Latini.

One might reconstruct and hypothesize for



The oldest source and print of the Palio: It is an anonymous account in verse of the August festival of 1506. Siena, Library of the Intronati

each *Contrada* a path and process that is individual and different from all others. For example, the enterprise of the Borghesi was perhaps the source for that of the Dragon *Contrada*, the enterprise of the Marescotti for the Eagle *Contrada*.

In the case of the Caterpillar, the symbol is that of the art of the silk-makers, as documented in 1370. As for the Panther, historians have hypothesized a possible direct link with the presence in Siena of a colony of silk-makers from Lucca. And in the case of the Porcupine, composed of the men of Camollia, it is very possible to imagine a derivation from the emblem of the Ricci (literally "hedgehog") family, or from the emblem of King Louis XII of France.

Allegorical floats could be found in many cities. In nearby Florence, for example, a hunting procession included a wooden Giraffe-shaped machine, and in 1514 floats were to be seen in the shapes of a Porcupine and of a Tortoise.

These machines, with various men inside, served to frighten and to rouse the animals, and were used as shelters by the hunters who poked the animals from inside with spears around the Piazza, to create the impression that the wooden predators did battle with the real ones; totem against ferocity, myth against reality.

In Siena in 1482, according to the Histories of the erudite prelate Sigismondo Tizio, the inhabitants of San Marco built a Snail-shaped float and those of San Pietro a Ovile a machine in the shape of a Giraffe.

In 1506 the Eagle *Contrada*, the Snail, the Dragon, the Giraffe, the Porcupine, the Lionphant (today's Tower), the Ram, the Shell, the Goose, the Wave, and the Forest, each with its costumed representatives, took part in "hunting procession" in the Piazza del Campo held for the feast of Our Lady. In 1546, in the report on the feast of the Assumption drawn up and



The machine and the costumed representatives of the Porcupine at the bull-hunt (det. by Vincenzo Rustici, XVI c.). Siena, Headquarters of the Monte dei Paschi Bank



The machine and the costumed representatives of the Tower at the bull-hunt (det. by Vincenzo Rustici, XVI c.). Siena, Headquarters of the Monte dei Paschi Bank

printed by Cecchino Chartaio, all 17 of today's *Contrade* are named: the Eagle, the Caterpillar, the Snail, the Owl, the Dragon, the Giraffe, the Porcupine, the Unicorn, the She-Wolf, the Shell, the Goose, the Wave, the Panther, the Forest, the Tortoise, the Tower, and the Ram.

Their symbols were the same then as now. Their colors were to undergo a longer, more complex evolution. The Eagle and the Snail came out in 1546 with their present colors (but they were to vary occasionally); 5 other *Contrade* took on their



colors for the first time in the 1600s, 8 in the 1700s, and 2 last century. Over the centuries, all changed their borders and geometrical figures, their stripes and arabesques, proving that nothing about the Palio is ever unchanging.

The City-State had its own float as far back as the 14th century. The “Wagon of the Angels” was a machine holding up youths dressed as angels, and a complicated system of ropes and pulleys made them rise and fall around an image of the Madonna. A receipt from 1406 documents 36 farthings spent on the oranges the youths threw to the crowd as good-luck projectiles. On the Wagon of the Angels, and later on the *Carroccio* wagon, the Palio was carried, mounted on a painted pole topped by a silver lion.

The precious fabric of the “Great Banner” often came from elsewhere, from Florence or Lucca, from Bologna or Venice. To stuff the 1430 Palio with silk *rosado*, 18 “Sienese arms” long (13.42 meters), with fringe and bands of silk and gold, 1,400 *vaio* pelts were needed. In 1447 the Palio was made of crimson velvet, and 30 “arms” (22.38 meters) were purchased.

The Great Banners of this period are no longer in existence because, unlike those of today, they were functional, not merely symbolic, prizes. As a rule, they were used to make altar cloths, canopies, tapestries, and sacred vestments, yet one may suppose that they ended up being worn by the winners and by their earthly madonnas, who often in the days of the Palio wore precious stones and dresses of silk and velvet, making show of the luxury which ordinarily the sumptuary laws of the Republic did not allow. The days of the Palio were world events: to the city came the great names of Italy’s born and moneyed aristocracy, high prelates, and crowned heads of Europe (such as Emperor Sigmund who attended the 1432 Palio), the Borgias, Gonzagas, Medicis, Malatestas, the Marquises of Mantua, the



Vincenzo Rustici: *The Costumed Representatives of the Contrade at the Bull-Hunt in the Piazza del Campo (XVI c.)*. Siena, Headquarters of the Monte dei Paschi Bank



lords of Milan. Since the lords no longer participated personally in wartime battles (that work being delegated to mercenaries), they stopped running in the Palio, delegating the job to the jockeys. the Palio became for them a spectacle to be seen, the race an event to which they invited their racers and their color-bearers, *putti* or *ragatii* ("kids") with nicknames as picturesque as their blouses.

Running in the 1461 Palio were the rowdy youths called Paganinus Pagani of Romagna, Furaboscus of Cremona, Fallatutti Factinnanzi of Schiavonia, Tremalmondo of Ferrara, Setacchiappo Barilis of Montefiascone, Fiascus Barilis of Montefiascone. In 1492 the jockey of Cesare Borgia made a false start in the race and the Municipality awarded the Palio to the Marquis of Mantua. In 1514 Muccia Farasche won the Palio for his illustrious and bizarre patron Sodoma, riding a dark horse that was "decorated Turkish-style on its flanks and on its head." The other horses were two brown sorrels, a black roan, 2 bays and 2 greys.

But history stepped in to deal with Siena. In 1559, after a desperate and memorable war of siege, with a Government in exile in Montalcino, Siena received a condemning sentence with no chance of appeal from the tractate of Cateau-Cambresis, which gave a new territorial map to Europe.

Siena was reduced to a province of the Granduchy which, moreover, had its capital in the ever-unpopular Florence; Siena was no longer the master of its own fate, but was to be steered by Florence until the *Risorgimento*.

The festivities of mid-August, apart from the religious component, suddenly lost their political meaning of triumph for the city. Instead of receiving the annual homage from all lands and castles, from cities, hamlets and lords for the feast of its Madonna, Siena was forced to pay yearly homage to St John of the Florentines, in

a ceremony that Siena knew well, having been on the receiving end. Thus with a brusque "desemanticizing and resemanticizing," a turn-around of meanings, the feast was no more a celebration of the present but a reminder of the past – history and memory, dream and nostalgia for the golden age when Siena had been free, independent, and sovereign.

Perhaps it is from this end of the great feast that there arose, in the second half of the 1500s, the teeming festivities and games and neighborhood Palios which strengthened the invisible walls of the *Contrade*, making them definitively cities within the city, guardians of memories and traditions of a city that turned its back on history and closed itself within itself.

A probing example: the summer feast of 1581. Siena's Governor, Federigo di Montuato, wrote to Florence, "almost all the *Contrade* wanted to run their own Palio, some with horses, others with mares, others with mules... others with water buffaloes like the Roman custom."

The courtiers and costumed representatives were rich in whims, fables, stories, accompanied by lovely music and ingenious printed poems. The feasts included the dramatic presence of the maiden Virginia, a country girl who ran in the Palio (finishing 3rd) charming all with her grace and skill; Montuato gifted her a horse. The riotous joy was shared by all: "After the running of the Palios, the winners go around in triumph before everyone, visiting the most ancient *Contrade*, almost holding court decked with wines and tables." The *Contrade* paid dowries for needy maidens and freed prisoners from the dungeons, as the Municipality had done in the August festivities in the days of the Republic.



Below: *The Costumed Representatives of the Contrade in the Piazza del Campo (det. by Vincenzo Rustici, XVI c.). Siena, Headquarters of the Monte dei Paschi Bank*





## Il Seicento: il Palio in Piazza



Now in the first decades of the 1600s the Palio concluded its transfer to the Piazza del Campo and its transformation into a popular festival.

The proposal of running the Palio in the Piazza was officially made to the Municipality on 11 July 1695 by the Deputies of the Festival for the August Palio, Captain Sigismondo Santi and Knight Fortunio Martini. Various reasons supported the proposal: the Palio with horses running through the streets was dangerous and it was impossible to enjoy the entire spectacle. In the Piazza, instead, "everyone could see everything at once in a bigger space for as long as it lasts." The length of the race in the Piazza had to be equal to the distance from the Santuccio to the Cathedral, equal to what the length had always been. And if the Palio were to be run not by private people but by *Contrade* (as was already happening in neighborhood festivals), then the banner and the other prizes would remain in Siena. "The Palio staying in the city, donations would be made to the churches and to sacred places, as always used to be made by the *Contrade*, when they won in similar races." Beyond the increased spectacle, there would be a tangible increase of cultural goods for the city.



Tablet of Ownership (1693). Siena, *Contrada* of Tortoise

The idea immediately caused a breach among the Sienese. After other races in the Piazza of uncertain documentation, the 1632 print of Bernardino Capitelli gives a clear date and sure proof of a circular Palio run in the Piazza. In the image, the jockeys ride bareback; they are at the finish of the race and are exchanging furious blows with the *sovatto*, a kind of cat-o'-nine-tails with a handle in the shape of an animal paw, half-weapon, half-amulet. In the Piazza the *Contrada* members greet the victory, jumping down from the stands; the Masters of the Field rush on horseback to keep order. The circular Palio was run in the Piazza with ever-greater frequency, yet until the middle of the century it coexisted with the water-buffalo race popular in Siena and in all of Italy. Then in 1597 the Council of Trent launched its lightning bolts against the bull-hunts and other public games not so much because they were violent as because they were throwbacks to pagan rites (Dionysian and Bacchic) which the Council sought to remove from Italian customs once and for all. The water-buffalo races had been run in a circle around the Piazza. Presented by

the *Contrade*, the buffaloes were escorted by 12 goaders, armed with a long nail-studded staff. No one can be sure if these were used to prod the *Contrade's* own water-buffalo or to poke the animals and goaders of the rivals. The race, which lasted for 3 laps of the Piazza, started at the Vicolo S. Paolo, and the start was marked by a trumpet blast. Immense and heartfelt was the participation of the *Contrade*, even in the coarse donkey races which, on occasion, were held in the Piazza with a carnival-like atmosphere and a heated fighting spirit, run between donkeys painted in *Contrada* colors, pushed around the Piazza by *Contrada* members, while the donkeys of rival *Contrade* were subject to being pushed out of the track by every conceivable means.

In the end, in 1656, the Palio around the Piazza took on its definitive form, uniting the passions of the populace with those of the nobility. Add to this the final element that had been missing, in a city with such ignited mysticism: the dedication to the Madonna. Not the Madonna

of the Assumption, but to the Miraculous Madonna of the Trench, venerated for the graces received and for miraculous healings in the then infamous and lively Provenzano, the district inhabited by Spanish soldiery and by the prostitutes who gravitated around them.

The cult grew to great proportions when the story circulated of a drunken Spanish soldier who wanted to fire his harquebus at the sacred image; the harquebus exploded, instantly killing the sacrilegious miscreant. The festival pertaining to the grand church, which had been raised with unusual speed to house the sacred image, suddenly became the concern of its neighborhood and of the entire city; from 1656 onward the Miraculous Madonna of Provenzano had its own popular Palio, which was run in the Piazza del Campo by the *Contrade*, as a conclusion to the annual liturgical feast.

The Palio of Provenzano immediately took on a set form: from 1659 onwards it was organized directly by the *Biccherna*, the office of the magistrature that had the task of organizing ceremonies pertaining to civic continuity and representativeness. Supervision of the festival was

the duty of the three "Lords of the Merriment," who offered

90 thalers as a prize to the winning *Contrada*. One might assume they paid also to have their family crests placed on the Great Banner.

In 1657 the chronicler Flaminio Rossi wrote, "It was the first Great Banner with the image of the Holy Virgin of Provenzano, and the three noble coats of arms of the Lords of the Festival."

The jockeys were mercenaries from the start. They were the well-equipped horsemen who had competed in the tumult of



Masgalano in chiselled and embossed silver, won by the Tortoise *Contrada*, showing the rape of Europa (XVI c.). Siena, Tortoise *Contrada*



the water-buffalo races and who brought to the circular Palio a virulence that the aristocratic linear Palio had to a much lesser degree. If in the linear race the jockeys had run essentially halfway, in these circular races they did battle, even one against the other. The adolescent who had substituted the nobleman on horseback in the ancient Palios became an ambiguous *senex puer* of greater age, sometimes deformed and grotesque like the dwarves who in other cities fought in the terrible farsical bullfights of the Baroque period, or, clumsily, rode water-buffaloes. Such masques lived on in memory with crude and cruel nicknames: Stumpy, Lamé, Dry Mount, Epileptic, Twisted, and an array of *gobbi* (hunchbacks) - *Gobbo*, *Gobbo Chiarini*, *Gobbo Faenzi*, *Gobbo* of Empoli, *Gobbo Saragiolo*.

Immediately there arose the never-to-be-resolved problem of regulating the award relating to winning jockeys. Beyond a set

payment, jockeys received the power to request bonuses from the victorious *Contrada*. The request is recorded for 1657, whereas after the victory of 1666 the Wave brought into its assembly the jockey Domenico of Barberino and invited him to choose between a payment of 10 scudi as final settlement or 40 lira plus tips. The jockey chose the latter, which was voted upon and passed by 20 white balls among 20 voters.

In the first circular Palios inside the Piazza, the *Contrade* had to find their own horses, but to keep the chances of winning more even, from 2 July 1676 onward the *Contrade* each presented a horse, and the horses were then assigned by a drawing. In 1657 it was determined that jockeys would ride "alla bisdossa," bare-back, and that the victorious horse would follow its jockey into the Church of Provenzano for the Te Deum of thanksgiving, soon to become a hymn to the Madonna, over the centuries screamed

out in unison with only approximative words (*Maria Mater Grazie*, and so on). In the 1800s the very cultured Abbot Giuliani wrote that he had been scandalized by listening without having understood "a single healthy word."

In 1666 the College of Balìa deliberated that on the Eve of the Assumption, for the linear Palio, the horsemen should bring the barb horses to have them blessed at the portals of the Cathedral. Those that ran in the circular race came to be blessed within the churches of the individual *Contrade* in a ceremony which to many seems superstitious and pagan, but which instead perpetuates a very Christian ritual, the *benedictio equorum et animalium* of the Church since its first centuries.

The same period saw the rise of the "tratta" (from *trahere* or *tirare a sorte*, meaning to "to be drawn by chance"). The random drawing for the assignment of horses to the *Contrade* took place on the green of Camollia, outside the city walls. After a trial race from the Palazzo Diavoli to the Church of San Bernardino at the Antegate, the first horse received an award of a *testone*, but was discarded, as was the last to arrive.

Thus was born the custom, still very much alive today, of selecting an equally matched horse-race. The Drawing immediately took on great importance because in that period the order of assignment of the horses also determined the order of the entrance in the Piazza of the groups of costumed *Contrade* representatives in the procession before the race, and indeed the order of the line-up at the race's starting rope.

From the first codification of its regulations, the Palio embodied its endemic passion for chance.

In 1682 it was established that the *Contrade* had to pay a "vettura," literally a "carriage," to each horse-owner in exchange for use of the horse; in 1698 they



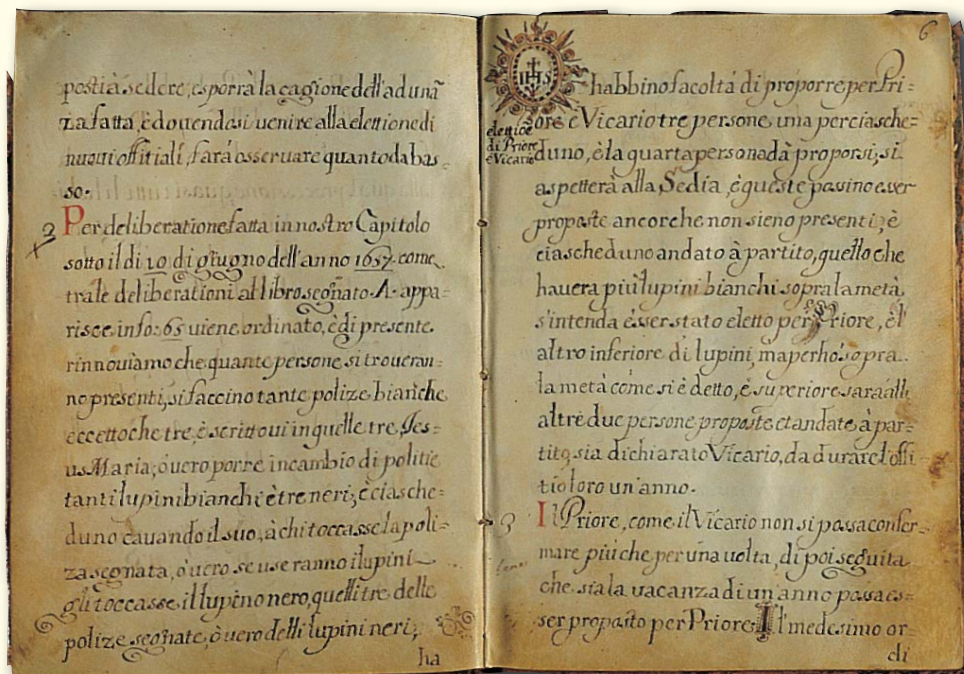
Tablet of Ownership (1693). Siena, Snail Contrada

had to repay owners for injuries to horses occurring during the Trials (today called the "prove," called the "comprove" back then) run at various hours throughout the day in the Piazza, which was covered with earth that year several days before the Palio.

As of 1685, the *Contrade* were obliged to run the Palio even if they had a poor horse. Participation became an honor and a civic obligation.

The *Contrade*, too, underwent their own process of evolution. On the one hand they began to give themselves statutory articles, or in other words true written constitutions, and on the other they became clearly differentiated from the militia companies (with which at times they had been confused), furthermore distancing themselves also from the laymen's companies with which they had once lived in a symbiosis that eventually proved uncomfortable.

For example, the brothers and sisters of



Contrada of the Snail: the oldest book of articles (1663)

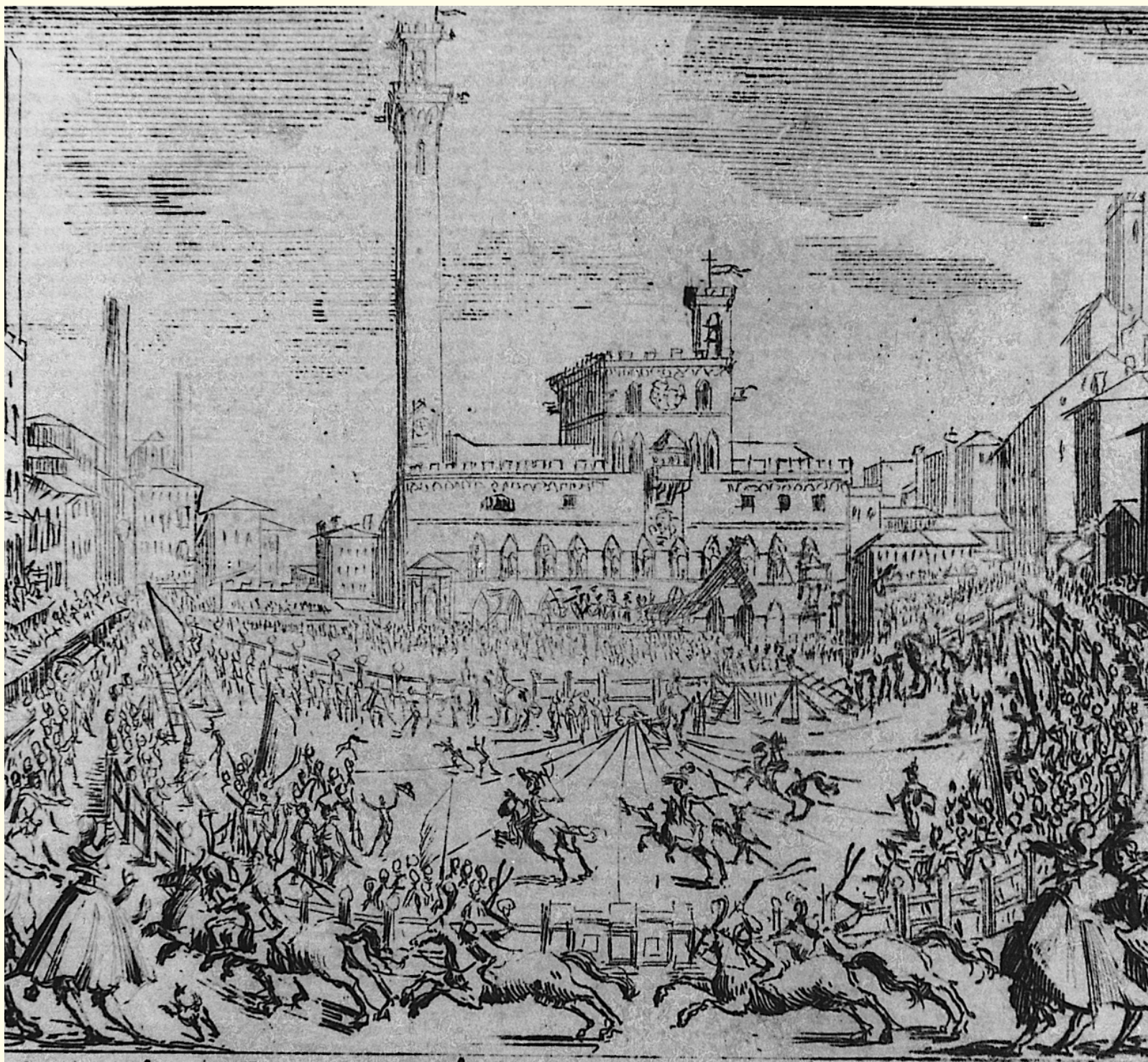


the laymen's company of St Catherine in Fontebranda, which held devotional and social services within the neighborhood as its aims, were also members of the *Contrada* of the Goose, the elected head of which, the Governor, assumed the title of Prior of the Companies, and the articles of the Companies were the same as those of the *Contrada*. In 1600 the Goose suddenly broke away altogether from the Company which remained within the domain of the Dominicans. Disagreements arose over guardianship of the relics of St Catherine (the "Sacred Head"). The disagreements grew into the Goose's attempt to seize the relics with great furor among the people during a procession for the Feast of St Catherine in May of 1609.

The first circular Palios were not short of drama and discord. Prince Mattias dei Medici, a great lover of horses, was made promoter of the Palio and occasionally judge of the victory, not without several clamorous errors of judgment. In 1664, during a Palio that was considerably "heated," the She-Wolf set off in first with the jockey Bacchino, who fell in the 3rd lap; the horse continued and won. But, as one chronicler wrote, "the Owl *Contrada*, for whom Mone was running, having come in second was awarded the Palio because so decided the imbecile Principe Mattias."

The chronicler explained the insult, "since good sense says that it's the horse who wins, not the jockey."

The rule of good sense was soon to become official after 3 centuries of controversy. Ever since, it is the horse who wins, with or without a jockey on its back. And a barb who wins "scosso," "riderless," is to the people of Siena the surest, most beautiful sign of fate and of joy. ❧



The oldest image of the circular Palio, etched in 1632 by Bernardino Capitelli. Siena, Library of the Intronati



## The 1700s: the Proclamation of Violante and the Rules of the Modern Palio



The century of the Enlightenment opened with the introduction of a second Palio of the *Contrade*

besides the *Palio alla lunga*, or linear Palio, continuing to take place on 15 August. Already the linear Palio had been unseated in the hearts of the Sieneese by the circular race, with its intimate theatricality.

The idea came from the Goose *Contrada*, winner of the Palio of July, 1701. The Goose asked to “rerun the Palio won,” to put the victory up for grabs, calling for another race to be run on 16 August for the Feast of the Assumption.

The ancient charm of the Feasts during which the Sieneese summer reached its zenith, the wish to give the Festivals new vital blood, the *Contrade's* desire to be more central in the holiday and in its organization, the proud ambition of a great people to declare itself *primus inter pares* by means of a gesture, a gift, an idea, all set the scene for the August Palio to begin its history. The Goose made available the 60 thalers it had won in money, 20 for expenses and 40 as a prize for the winning *Contrada*.

At the beginning the process was spontaneous, and if July's winner did not wish to rerun the Palio, there was always an-

other *Contrada* eager to step in as substitute with generosity and perhaps a hint of contentious emulation. When in 1747 the Goose declined, the Tower offered itself as substitute; in 1750, the entire citizenry opted to pay the expenses by general collection.

In 1774 the Municipality ratified the organization of the two Palios.

The Palio also took on its definitive regulations. On 16 May 1721 the College of

Balia declared a proclamation, laying down the first modern regulation of the Palio.

In 16 commandments, with an enlightened sense of fairness, the ordinances, and articles of the previous centuries were condensed and set down, creating an orderly and unequivocal system. “The Sieneese proclamation won't last a month,” says a nasty Tuscan proverb: Yet it has endured to our own time, even

with the continual updates of a festival ever a vital part and accurate mirror of the city.

- 1. The times of the Trials on the Eve of the Palio are set: 1 hour in the morning and 1 hour in the afternoon.
- 2. Stands may be erected only on the side of the Piazza where the shops are.



Niccolò Nasoni. *The Palio of August, 1713. Siena, private collection*



- 3. For the procession before the Palio, the *Contrade* must parade at least 24 representatives in costume.
- 4. In the procession, the jockey must parade, bearing the due insignia.
- 5. The jockeys must use only “an ordinary riding crop” and go to the starting rope after the *mortaretto* cannon is fired.
- 6. The pay awaiting the jockeys will be “only 10 lira, and 10 scudi if they should win the Palio and not in any other way.”
- 7. After the procession around the track, the representatives in costume must go to their assigned places.
- 8. No one from the ground may hit or incite the horses at the starting rope.
- 9. No one may help a fallen jockey to remount a horse.
- 10. The first horse to complete three circuits and to reach the Judges’ Stand wins.

- 11. The Palio will be claimed by official representatives of the winning *Contrada*.
- 12. The jockeys must stop when the *mortaretto* cannon is fired and also stop the horses in case of a false start, this too to be signalled by the mortar.
- 13. The *Contrade* must sign up for the drawing. 10 and only 10 will be drawn by chance to run in the Palio.
- 14. The *Contrade* must deposit a sum which will go to the owners of the horses.
- 15. The *Contrade* will follow the same predetermined sequence both in the procession and at the starting rope.
- 16. No one may bother the horses once the race has started.

Another proclamation was to be a milestone in the history of the Palio: the proclamation on the new boundaries of the *Contrade* issued in 1729 by Beatrice Violante of Bavaria, Governess of Siena, to put an end to the continual controversies between *Contrade* over boundaries and over their number and demographic entity.

In the second half of the preceding century, 6 *Contrade* disappeared, those with an ephemeral and irregular existence almost as “party societies” occasionally taking part in spectacles and public games. The legend that they were abolished for having insulted the judges – widely spread in oral tradition and also among some scholars – is highly improbable. Incorporated by their more active and better organized rival-neighbors, the Lion, the Viper, the Rooster, the Oak, the Bear, and Strong-Sword left the scene, dying of natural causes. Their knights parade even today in the Historic Procession, visor lowered on their helmets, bringing a carnival-like yet sinister tone to the com-

memoration of the Siena that once was, a “*memento mori*” like the reminders whispered in the ears of heroes in the triumphal processions of ancient Rome. The Eagle narrowly escaped the same fate after it had won the water-buffalo race in 1610 and then, from 1622 onwards, was a long time absent from public spectacles in Siena.

When in 1718 the Eagle wanted once again to participate in the August festival, it was met by the opposition of its neighboring *Contrade*, the Wave, the Tortoise, the Panther, and the Forest, who had made claims to the territory and population of a *Contrada* dormant for so long. The controversy went before the *Biccherna*, dragging on so long as to attract the attention of the decisive Governess of Siena. Her proclamation, which took into account also the need for demographic equilibrium, set the number and the boundaries of the 17 *Contrade*, “taking away the power to bring back old ones or to create new ones.” More than 250 years have passed, yet the Proclamation of Violante is still law in Siena, at least for the territory that it covers, the city within the walls. Made strong by this definitive division, the *Contrade* of the 1700s continued their growth. Each wrote up its own articles, or constitutions, to regulate the lives of these associations. They acquired, in perpetual rented use or in ownership, their headquarters and their churches, taking advantage of the elimination under Leopold of the laymen’s companies decreed between 1770 and 1780.

Commenting on Siena, Peter Leopold wrote a series of sober, enlightened and sharp observations: “The city of Siena is divided into many *Contrade*, each of which has its own Captain, insignias, and chapel, which is rarely officiated, but these serve to say the evening’s rosary and to deliberate on the race of the Palio. Long ago these were the places where

people met and under their insignia they went to war, and though no such reason exists any longer, the Sieneese remain very attached to their little private churches, which are rather more meeting halls for deliberations on the Palio race.” As the Grand Duke noted, the sacred and profane came together in a sort of “surrogate for the cult of patriotic independence” (as defined by Roberto Barzanti, noteworthy Palio historian). But the meetings in such sacred places were not marked by any passive devotion. One of many proofs of this is the document with which the ecclesiastical authority conceded the use of the Church of the Giraffe, advising that “...above all, in the case of meetings, there shall not be in the abovementioned chapel any tumults and so forth as often happens in such occasions.” Almost in response, many *Contrade* formed the habit of covering sacred images during meetings in the church, “so they wouldn’t see and they wouldn’t hear” what went on in the tumultuous meetings called together by the sound of the bell. In the meetings, then as today, the common good was sought and propositions were voted on using black and white balls, as in ancient times.

This form of popular, lay government, in which everyone participates and for which the *Contrade* have long prided themselves, did not stop the city from paying solemn honor to visiting high prelates or crowned heads with an impromptu day-off, with pageantry, torchlit processions, and with an extraordinary Palio.

For the entrance of Violante of Bavaria splendid festivities were held in 1717. The *Veridico Ragguaglio*, a “True Clarification,” illustrated and annotated recently by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, remains a primary source to learn about the history of the Palio.

In 1739, when Francesco II passed



An idealized portrait of Violante of Bavaria. Bust in alabaster (XIX c.). Siena, private collection



through Siena, an extraordinary Palio was run, and another was dedicated to him in 1745 when he rose to the imperial throne. On that occasion the prize reached the exceptional amount of 60 thalers. For Peter Leopold, a race was run on the 13th of May 1767 with especially supervised and well-prepared choreography. Together “the *Contrade* [entered] the Piazza in military fashion with pikes in hand, trimmed hats, and garments of various colors according to the colors of the insignia of each *Contrada*.” The allegories represented on the floats were unprecedented. “Along came a very beautiful wagon with Munificence, Happiness, Misery, festive Siena, and two rivers...”

An ever more attentive theatricality sent into the Piazza, along with historic and classical floats, new allegories dear to the Enlightenment and to its branches known to be dear to the sovereign and to his vision of the world: the floats became signs of their time. In the Palio of 1786 after the Temple of Happiness (by an unfortunate choice, the *Contrade* not running in the race took part) the Piazza witnessed the appearance of the personifications of Religion, Science, Agriculture, and Justice. Allusive written messages referred to the Granduchy and its cities: Ancient Siena, Beautiful Florence, Powerful Livorno, Florid Pisa.

In 1791 Public Happiness paraded in the Piazza among shepherds and shepherdesses and above all Commerce improved by Peter Leopold.

In contrast to the rarefied climate of the Procession and the abstractions of its allegorical floats, the circular race occurred according to the dictates of the roughest, most immediate expressionistic realism. The horses were often recruited forcibly by the Municipality which sometimes, to find the required number, obliged all the Post Offices of the surrounding environs to send at least one to each drawing,

which from 1761 onwards took place at the Palazzo, at the Biccherna door. Horses and horsemen in this century were rarely of noble origin. There was the horse of Savino the innkeeper, the bay horse of Signor Bagnacci, the white horse of Signor Mascagni and the brown horse of Signor Giannetti, the hatmaker in the Piazza nicknamed “the Bomb.”

The inclusion of the jockeys in the new Enlightened choreography and the new semiotic context of the Palio proved impossible, whatever steps were taken to shape them to the tastes of the time. An effort was made to oblige them to parade in full costume on the big parade horses. Giovan Battista Stratico, from the Accademia dei Rozzi, wrote in 1775 an Olympian ode to the victorious jockey. A few years later Vittorio Alfieri brought his horses to the Piazza and versified about Bastiancino and Carnaccia. In 1793 he wrote to Siena, asking “who is hero among the jockeys,” and the next year complained about his friend Bianchi, “not even after 15 August were two verses written to tell me how the festivities went? to tell me of the glories of Bastiancini, Batticuli, and the others?”

The jockeys of that era, in truth, were not the stuff of poems and Pindaresque odes. The *Contrade* were already suspicious about the secret clans of jockeys that fixed race results and divvied up the earnings, official or otherwise.


Among these clans, competition was anything but Olympian, and it appeared in riots and assaults, threats and furious fights such as those which, between 1787 and 1788 set the “clan of the Sienese” against “the clan of the Maremmans” the head of which was the Maremman Isidoro “Dorino” Bianchini who won 13 Palios for 9 *Contrade*. After clamorous reinings and furious whiplashes, with vendettas on the subsequent race, Dorino, Ciocio, and the jockey for the Panther met each other at the starting



rope on 2 July 1778 with such forceful whiplashes that they ended up on the ground where “they fought as if to kill each other if the civil troops hadn’t separated them, throwing the jockeys of the She-Wolf and of the Panther in jail.” The jockeys were released the next day, with an injunction to leave the city immediately.

But these wars were like the fights of the proverbial thieves of Pisa. In order to stay, Dorino, perhaps the greatest of the century, taken by the reins by the She-Wolf in 1787, ran for them the next year; whipped until he bled by the Owl, won a Palio for them two years later; having won the Palio for the Tortoise in 1786 he ran the following year for the archrival, the Snail, and though assaulted by the Tortoise, two years later he returned to run and win for them; solemnly whipped by the Wave in 1787, he wore their colors in 1787 and brought them a victory.

The Palio of the jockeys has always been the anti-Olympics *par excellence*: winning, not participating, is what counts. Yet the end of the century the Piazza del Campo witnessed events of greater drama and violence. After the French Occupation, the reactionary squadrons from Arezzo reached Siena in 1799, to cries of “Viva Maria!” In the Piazza, upon the pieces of the destroyed tree of liberty, 10 cadavers were burned. In July of 1799 the Palio was suspended for reasons of public order; soon it was understood that to protect public order it was riskier to ban the Palio than to let it be run.

The Banner with its Madonna of Provenzano was assigned to the August race. Yet again the Palio proved that the life of the city went on. 

Banner of July 1719. It is the oldest remaining. Siena, Contrada of Eagle



## The 1800s: From the Risorgimento to the Society of Mutual Aid



At the start of the century the Civic Community adopted two historic measures, the brainchildren in 1802 of Gonfaloniere Forteguerra. He ordained “that jockeys are not to hold back or beat each other until after the race has begun and the starting rope has dropped, and they have completely passed the Lord Judges’ Stand, upon penalty of imprisonment.” Thus ended the indecorous spectacle of jockeys whipping and hitting each other before the Start.

In another measure the Civic Magistracy divided into 2 parts the prize which had always been given to the winner of the linear Palio on 15 August, a crimson velvet drape worth 110 thalers. From then on, 70 thalers were given in cash to the winner of the linear Palio, and 40 to the *Contrada* winning the circular Palio. Thus the long, process of popularization of the Palio was concluded, renewing the aspect of a feast for one and all, an official celebration of the city.

A drastic change is found in the paintings on the Great Banners, caused by the French dominion over Tuscany. A reflection of the new egalitarianism from across the Alps, between 1808 and 1813 the heraldic symbols of the Great Banner were reduced to the simple, intertwined

initials of the Deputies of the Festival: soon, however, the monograms were overhung by the new enormous crest of Emperor Napoleon.

The height of political interference in the Palio came about in August, 1808, when the centuries-old celebration of the Assumption became a celebration of Saint Napoleon. Fortunately the innovation did not last.

The rock-bottom of misguided inventions was reached in April 1810. The decision was made to offer in the Piazza del Campo a great banquet for the paupers of the *Contrade*, each *Contrada* having to find and invite 6 such individuals. The paupers were set up in tents bearing the insignia of the *Contrade* to which they belonged, while a crowd of pharisaical curious onlookers watched them eat. In the center, a bigger pavillion brought together the paupers of the Eagle, the Panther, and the Tortoise. This union revealed the motivation of the grotesque event disguised as philanthropy: The colors of the 3 flags alluded to France, Austria, and the Empire, and to the recent political-dynas-



Margherita of Savoy in an embroidered portrait, late-1800s.  
Siena, private collection



1853 sketch of the costumes “in Piedmont-style” of the Giraffe. Siena, Historic Archive of the Municipality

tic wedding of Napoleon and Marie Louise of Austria.

The continuing homages to the sovereigns of the moment were paid willingly by the people (homages were a “toll” paid in order to have future Palios) and by the nobles (homages were occasions to show pomp and to meet otherwise unreachable sovereigns and notables). In the space of a few years there were celebrations for the French Revolution, the Kingdom of Etruria, Napoleon, Elisa Baciocchi, then in 1818 Ferdinand III of Lorena, and in 1819 Metternich was made welcome. What may appear flunkeyism or indifference in the case of the Siene-  
se came from their initially forcible and then endemic detachment from history, their ever more marked “dream of the Middle Ages”: despite the floats with neoclassical allegorical figures, in the procession of 1813 the *Carroccio* wagon reappeared, recalling even today the great, ephemeral triumph at Montaperti.

Siena’s passion for its own history and for the tradition of the *Contrada* as a small

*patria* never stopped the Siene-  
se from participating on the front lines of history. As an example of what recent anthropological reflection has dubbed “multiple identity,” the Siene-  
se of the 1800s were at once aware of their identity within the *Contrada* and staunchly patriotic throughout the Risorgimento. Virgilio Grassi, meticulous historian of the Palio, underlined the Siene-  
se *Contrade*’s contribution in the Risorgimento; a stone was placed on Palazzo Spannocchi in honor of the “helpful *Contrade* Dragon, Goose, and Forest.” The *Contrade* raised funds to support the volunteers in the Wars of Independence, as an “offering to the volunteers who, coming back from patriotic battles, find themselves in the neediest circumstances.” In July 1848 the Palio did not take place. The sum that would have been spent on the race went instead to the support of the volunteers who fought in Lombardy. In 1839, as a poster records, no military draft was necessary, so great was the influx of Siene-  
se volunteers under the tricolor flag.





Votive offering that the jockey for the She-Wolf had his wife paint as thanks for the grace he received in the Palio of 28/9/1862. The jockey, who fell at the Start, had been stepped on by the horses of the Ram, the Eagle, and the Panther. (Siena, private collection of Notary Magi)

The Risorgimento was mirrored in the flags of the *Contrade*. Though in 1845 the Municipality issued an ordinance that immutably codified the colors, their definitive arrangement had to await the Unity of Italy.

The Eagle never stopped unfurling its yellow insignia with the bicipital eagle, which according to tradition was given by Carlo V in person on one of his visits to Siena. For the whole Risorgimento the Eagle received upon its entry in the Piazza salvos of whistles, intended for the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The same happened to the Tortoise, which back then unfurled a yellow and black insignia that recalled the insignia of the Austrians. Full of enthusiasm for Pius IX, in 1847 the Tortoise substituted the black with white, thereby unfurling the papal colors. The whistles turned into applause. But two years later, liberal enthusiasm for the Pope having vanished, the insignia went back to yellow and black and the whistles started up again, hushed only in 1859 when the Tortoise took on its present colors.

The opposite fate touched the flag of the

Goose, which ever since 1791 had been green with white and red arabesques. The patriots who saw in the flag the Italian tricolor applauded warmly wherever the flag was seen, so much so that from 1849 to 1859 the authorities changed the colors to white, pink, and green.

Giuseppe Garibaldi, who attended the Palio in 1867 along with his Red Shirts, was particularly celebrated by the red insignia of the Tower, which along with its share of its applause received the fervent cheers of the “extreme party,” as note was made in a report by the King’s police.

Even Siena, though, was not without its Austria-lovers, who strongly opposed the adoption of the “Piedmont-style” costumes seen in the Piazza in 1836, and used later on other occasions.

The Risorgimento definitively liquidated the pretense of likening jockeys to the heroes of Olympus. The Siense knew the jockeys all too well. If the 1700s was the century of ferocious combat between jockeys, the 1800s saw their most savage and sensational betrayals.

The champion of this ilk was Francesco Santini, the *Gobbo* (“Hunchback”) Sara-

giolo, who changed flags for 30 years. He ran for 15 *Contrade*, flattered them, despised them, betrayed them all. He won 15 times for 7 different *Contrade*. When in 1855 with one of the favored horses he went straight at San Martino’s corner on purpose and was asked why, he burst out, “Why should I win for you miserable lot who gave me 140 coins when I earned 170?” Like Judah, someone noted, he had betrayed for the price of 30 coins. Sometimes, the roads not being closed off back then at San Martino and at the Casato, feckless jockeys left the Piazza at top speed and galloped off past the city gates. This was what Baicche did in 1877 and again in 1885. In 1896 Ansanello, in the middle of the night, went to ring the bell at the gates of the Monks of the Osservanza, still dressed in the racing jacket of the Tower. “There’s a man who wants to sleep here. He looks like a stick of sealing wax,” the amazed guardian father reported to his superior.

The horses were still the anonymous barb horses of previous times, but with a new difference: in the drawing of August 1837 mares were accepted, and in tact males were discarded to avoid “inconvenient anti-aesthetics.” Thus was instituted a



Flag of the Society of Mutual Aid and Education in Fontebranda, founded in 1870. Siena, Goose Contrada

custom that endures even today.

In the regulations of 1852, signed by Gonfaloniere Angelo Piccolomini, it was prohibited to give enlivening substances to horses, under the responsibility of the Captain. The legend of the *beverone* “great beverage,” half magical potion, half herbal tonic, philosophers’ stone of the *Contrada* stalls, was to last a long time, with its promise of the metamorphosis of a nag into a Pegasus.

In the second half of the century the first hero among horses appeared: Stornino of Belforte, noted for his intelligence and for his attachment to the Palio. Indeed stories were told that as he felt Palio time growing close, he changed personality, turning from the tranquil horse of a country curate into the barb worthy of the fiery ancient race. He won 18 Palios, the last in 1877, when he was 21. Upon his death the Academy of Physio critics embalmed him. With the Risorgimento completed, the *Contrade* showed their vitality. Yet again, faced with great changes in history, with the enigmas and uncertainties of new times, the *Contrada* members reassured themselves by huddling closely around their traditions.

Inside the *Contrade* of Siena, *fin-de-siècle* “associationism” developed, giving rise to myriad societies whose members rarely numbered more than 50. Several of these were in direct affiliation to the *Contrade*, others were based on neighborhood or occupation. In the first years, the main aim of such societies was mutual aid: assistance was offered to unfortunates, widows, invalids, and the elderly. These were the goals of the Fan of the Tower, or Romulus and Remus founded in the She-Wolf around 1870, of which Garibaldi was made honorary president. Others included public education and literacy programs among their aims. Among these there was the Society of Mutual Aid, Instruction and Education of the Star in the Wave. Other societies promoted confer-





Antonio Herculani. *Costumes of the Contrada of the Shell, 1845*

ences and debates: in 1893 at the Garden, a society arising in the Caterpillar, debates were held on the topic of female emancipation. The renewed role of the *Contrada* in the life of the city was evident when a proposed law sought to abolish the University of Siena, one of the oldest Athenae in Europe, as part of a general reordering of the Universities of the Kingdom. In January 1893, representatives of the *Contrade* called an assembly and a public demonstration, hanging posters everywhere. They protested individually as well: the Tower sent a telegram to Giolitti, the Goose to Crispi, the Shell to the King of Italy. The proposal, "unworthy of a government entrusted with the care of the liberal franchises," was in the end shelved forever.

The next year the 17 Priors of the *Contrade* founded the Magistrature of the *Contrade*, a body set up for direction, discussion, and coordination on all matters of common interest to the *Contrade*. In

1895 the Magistrature began its activities, ruled by a statute which even today prescribes the annual election of a Rector and of a Deputation of 4 members to assist the Rector.



In 1878, after a century of changes and experiments in the choreography of the Historic Procession, the Piazza costumes were given new life, inspired by the costumes of Siena in the 1300s. Sketches presented to the *Contrade* and approved by the Municipality were realized then by the *Contrade* themselves.

The Risorgimento over, the House of Savoy initiated a conscientious policy regarding the festivals and traditions of Italy. The royals made a Grand Tour of their new kingdom, encouraging the revival of ancient festivals. In Italy there was the reinvention of tradition. Legnano, Pontida, Barletta were treated like ancestors of the new state and of the much desired new monarchic and national-popular consciousness. The same, as the studies of George Mosse and of E.J. Hobsbawm show, happened throughout Europe between 1870 and World War I.

Humbert I and Margherita of Savoy came and returned to Siena, and after the visit of 1887 there appeared in the heraldic symbols of the *Contrade* the Savoy *trouvailles* that can still be seen today: Cyprus roses, knots and daisies, initials and collars of the Annunciation. The city expressed even greater affection for Margherita than for the King, making her its nth protectrix; it dedicated to her a variation on the medieval *panpepato*, the *panforte margherita*; it named her in coarse but affectionate popular songs; it sent its most beautiful children to offer daisies (*margherite*) and mumbled verses of poetry; she was offered the keys to the house of St Catherine.

Siena celebrated in its own way the Unity of Italy and responded to the festive politics of the Savoys: in the last decade of the century, 28 Palios were run.

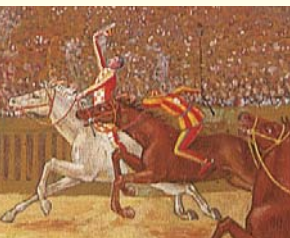
The legendary jockey Gobbo Saragiolo

Banner of the extraordinary Palio of april 27, 1860, won by the Contrada of the Wave





## The 1900s and the new Millennium: Stories, Memories, and Civic Identity



At the turn of the century the *Contrade* and the Municipality were caught up in a renewal of costumes which, in 1904, assumed definitively the Medieval-Renaissance look tested a generation before and which, between purism and *fin-de-siècle*, was rooted in Siennese tastes. In the oleographs and the overly derided “*pan-forte* style” dictating the architectural and furniture designs of that period, in everything from wrought iron to upholstery, the polar star was the Exhibition of Ancient Siennese Art in 1904. Called for by Mayor Alessandro Lisini (also a historian of the *Contrade*), the exhibition gathered in 40 areas of the Palazzo Comunale some 2,000 items from the 1200s to the 1700s, works of art both major and minor, sacred and secular. On 17 April Vittorio Emanuele III inaugurated the exhibition, sending echoes around the world. If among scholars the scientific study of art from Siena’s golden age was relaunched, the popular imagination of the Siennese set the mythic period of “Siena-ness” in a vision of the 1300s romanticized and embellished by fantasy. The new Historic Procession, inaugurated for an Extraordinary Palio, placed behind the *Carroccio* a 2nd wagon portraying the

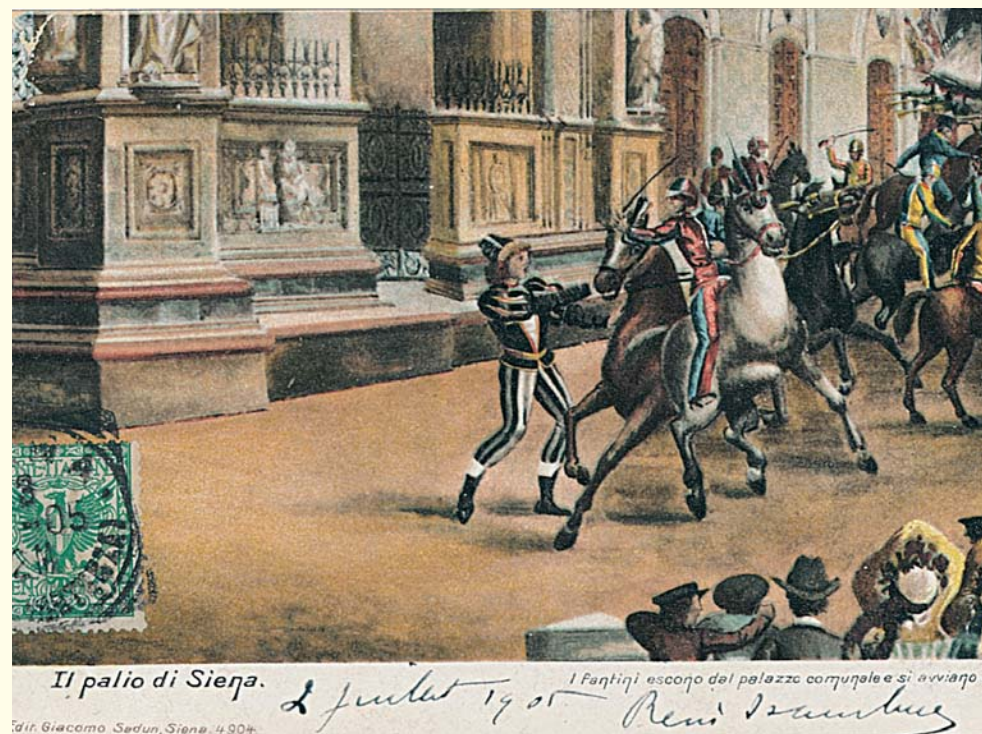
Allegory of Peace as painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Comunale. The Historic Procession, with its explicit conjuring of the erstwhile pomp of the city and the old City-State, expressed the historic memory of Siena’s identity, a past once again present and real. A sort of “myth of the eternal return,” such as those dear to Mircea Eliade, it was enacted in the Piazza del Campo, the “theater of the Siennese.”

Paradoxically the “metahistoricalness” of the Palio was not found in an unchanging ritual, but in continual innovations to keep the present in tune with the past. Innovation had to speak the language of tradition. Thus in 1919, after the War, for the veterans who attended the Palio the “flag-waving of victory” was introduced, performed by 17 Standard-Bearers, each in time to the beats of his own drummer, immediately before the horses came out into the Piazza from the Courtyard. The innovation immediately became ritual because it was congenial, because it represented the eruption into the Piazza of an excited “order-disorder” after the impeccable, studied, slow rhythms of the Historic Procession.

Representing “disorder,” the entropy that verges on throwing into crisis the rules and order of things, there were, as always, the chaotic Start and the race itself, which soon found new heroes. The jockeys came from the Plain of Empoli, Monte Amiata, the Maremma and upper Lazio. Among them, Angelo “Picino” Meloni excelled, one of the all-time greats. Coming from Canapina on

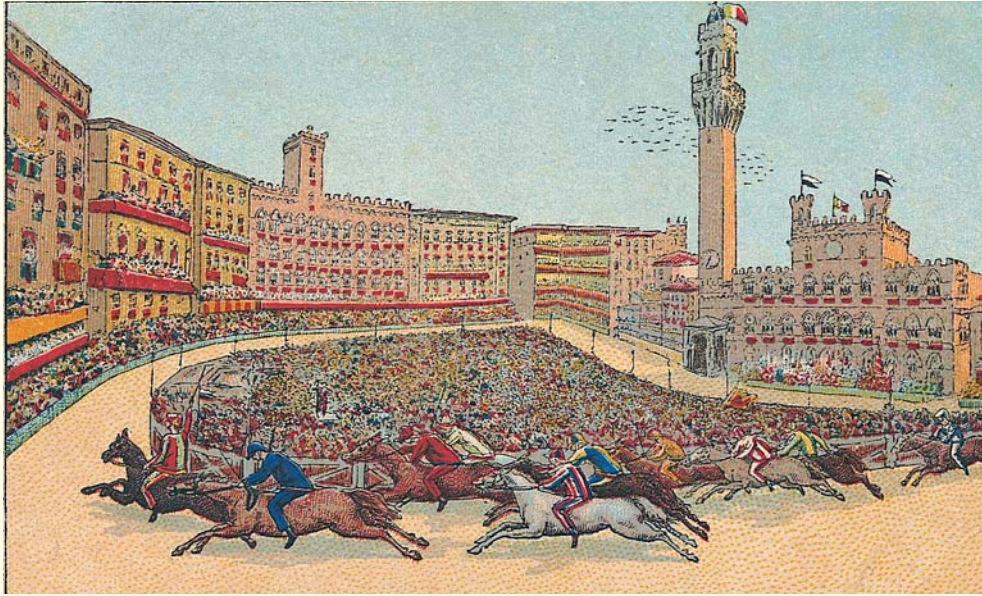


Costumes of the Tower Contrada in use from 1879 to 1904. Siena, Historic Archive of the Municipality



The horses coming out of the Entrone courtyard, souvenir postcard from 1907. Siena, collection of Pier Guido Landi  
Left: The Siennese bigeminal She-Wolf. Carving in wood (XIX-XX c.). Siena, collection of Giorgio Sartini





The victory of the Dragon Contrada. Souvenir postcard (det.). Siena, collection of Pier Guido Landi

Monte Cimino, he ran 52 times, wore the colors of 15 *Contrade*, won 13 Palios for 7 *Contrade*, 4 for the Goose to which he was closely attached. Meloni showed a rough and exceptional racing style and great physical strength. Despite a disabled arm, he rode with gusto, riding crop flying. In August 1909 he won for the Dragon, using his whip on the Shell and the Panther. The next year he won for the Ram, taking his whip to the Shell and the Wave. Artfully controlling his horse, he won for the Porcupine in 1913. His predominance in the Piazza was mitigated by the fact that in 1907, for fear of the secret clannish deals between jockeys, a rule was passed to bar close relatives from running in the same Palio: Meloni made room for “Meloncino,” his son Corrado, who went on to win two Palios. Meloni had several supporting actors. Domenico “Scansino” Fraduacono won twice for the Tower in 1896. Astride the turn of the century, *Scansino* ran 30 Palios, of which he won 7. Aldo “Bubbolo” Mantovani was a rarity: one of few jockeys to be a native Siennese. He first ran in 1910, took part in 31 Palios, and

won 4. Alduino “Zaraballe” Emidi used to introduce himself in a rather direct way, almost his personal slogan: “My name is *Zaraballe*, I come from Apulia, and I’ve got good thighs.” With those thighs, from 1902 to 1922, he rode 22 horses in the Palio, winning twice.

### Between the Two Wars

After the pause imposed on the Palio and the *Contrade* by the War, the community life of the Associations refound its vigor, but with the advent of Fascism it passed under the aegis of the National Recreational Organization. Historic seats and churches of the *Contrade* remained untouched. Change was not always peaceful; the new authorities disbanded the more riotous *Contrada* associations, such as the “Dawn” in the Caterpillar and the “Rhinoceros” in the Tower. To avoid the same fate, the “Castelmontorio” in the Ram *Contrada* disbanded itself. But new Societies were founded, negotiating with the new regime for their own kind of autonomy, in keeping with the always and

never true adage: “In the *Contrade* there are no politics.” During Fascism the *Contrade* made the occasional sortie from their natural context: they went to Rome in 1930 for the “princely wedding” of Humbert of Savoy and Maria José of Belgium, and to the Boboli Gardens in Firenze in 1936. There, mingling their own with other shows of “virile games” which the regime had resuscitated deeming them useful in forging “agile, swift, and eager” youth, the representatives of the Palio saluted Hitler and Musolini. Vittorio Emanuele III came often to the Palio, almost always privately. Siena became a frequent side trip during his vacation in San Rossore. The King watched the Palio from the Palazzo Comunale, from the window at which Carlo V had once appeared.

The jockeys all raised their riding crops to the King in July, 1937 before going to the starting rope, introducing an innovation still part of the Palio ritual. The 1936 Palio was dubbed “the Empire” for it celebrated the African enterprises of Fascism. The Banner won by the Giraffe was then autographed by the “Emperor King.” The Giraffe for that felicitous win and with the backing of the royal house, began to call itself “imperial.” With the calmness and distance the Palio has always shown to regimes, it described itself in its hymn as “royal, imperial, re-

Dario Neri:  
Poster for the Palio of 2 July 1928. Siena, Historic Archive of the Municipality







Federigo Joni: *The Carroccio Wagon of 1928* (painted on wood). Siena, private collection

publican once again!" The Palio sees regimes as ephemeral compared to the Palio itself: They belong to short-term history and to superficial structures; the Palio feels part of deep structures and of long-term history. "He will have to go and I will remain," Savonarola said about Lorenzo de' Medici, expressing a similar view.

Mussolini showed himself sensitive to the request of the Municipality of Siena, which even then sought to protect the Palio from other revivals that sprang up on the Peninsula. In answer to a request submitted by Podestà Bargagli Petrucci, a letter reached the Prefect of Siena in 1935, communicating that "the Duce has, by appropriate ordinance, decreed that the name Palio shall be reserved exclusively for the Palio of Siena." Yet Mussolini never came to the Palio. The joke went around that the Duce, believing himself unique, ill-tolerated the idea of coming to a city that already had 17 *Duci*.

Between the 2 wars the Historic Procession became ever more splendid and solemn. The renewal of the costumes and of the *Carroccio* wagon occurred in 1928, under the supervision of a commission of "artists and experts on the subject" presided over by the *Podestà*. Expenses, paid by the Municipality, by the Monte de Paschi Bank, by the *Contrade*, and by underwriting from private citizens amounted to more than a million lira. The style chosen for the costumes was that of the late 1400s, for in that time the *Contrade* had started to appear in the Piazza. The Procession thus began to quote its own past explicitly, closing itself off symbolically in a full-circle as had occurred in the transition from the linear to the circular Palio. The new *Carroccio* wagon, adorned with *Contrade* allegories painted by Federigo Joni, was pulled not by horses but by 6 *chianina* oxen, as if in homage from the Sienese countryside to the city. In 1936 figures were introduced standing for cor-

porations and the arts and the tribunal of the mercantile guilds. Spear-carriers of the Palazzo increased, escorting the *Carroccio* wagon, two drummers sonorously closing the Procession.

The theatrical activities of Silvio Gigli met with great popularity among the *Contrade*. Luigi Bonelli's operetta "*Rompicollo*" with its Palio setting was performed in Italy and abroad. In 1932 Alessandro Blasetti came to Siena to shoot "Palio," a mystery film (the script borrowed several short stories by Bonelli) shown in cinemas throughout Italy with success.

But the new phenomenon was the founding in the *Contrade* of sporting groups and football teams: in 1928, 11 such teams were active.

For the last time, some people read political allusions into *Contrada* colors: the red of the Tower against the tricolor of the Goose. But for the Sienese the Tower remained the neighborhood of Salicotto and the Goose the neighborhood of Fontebranda. In the Piazza, the Goose and the Tower faced each other as always, no punches held. The Goose was part of T.O.N.O. (*Tartuca, Onda, Nicchio, Oca*), the single, precarious *Contrada* coalition in Palio history. It won several

Palios but disbanded with rancor in 1934 when the Goose won against the agreements ("That of '34/ we've tied around our finger as a reminder/ of the Discombobulated Duck" the Shell sang bitterly). The Tower teamed up with Ganascia, the true successor to Meloni who beat his master with his own favorite weapon, the riding crop, in 1933 ("The whip of Ganascia/ is made round / to whip the Goose and the Wave" went a song of the Tower). Ganascia was loved for what appeared to be generous combativeness. In truth he was a meticulous calculator who tried to leave nothing to chance. His strategies were devised in endless sessions in the long winters of Monticello Amiata, where the twice victorious jockey Domenico "*Il Moro*" Leoni was born. Ganascia, too, wore the colors of almost all the *Contrade*, 15 in 20 years, winning 8 Palios, among which was the memorable "overcoat" (2 victories for 1 *Contrada* in 1 year) for the Tortoise in 1933, what's more on the same barb, the legendary Folco.

Folco was a sorrel with a mild temperament, one of the maremman half-breeds for decades making up the majority of barbs in the Piazza. Cattleman, similar to



Dino Rofi: *The Groom of the Goose* *Contrada*. Polychrome tile, 1932. Siena, private collection



Dino Rofi: *The Page of the Wave* *Contrada*. Polychrome tile, 1932. Siena, private collection





Federigo Joni: *The "Dead" Contrade*, 1928 (painted on wood). Siena, private collection

the cowboys of today, brought them to Siena, or the horse-traders who animated the livestock fairs in the Piazza d'Armi. The most famous horseman was Sor Ettore Fontani, doctor of law, farmer on his family's farm, livestock- and meat-dealer, and inspector for the Ministry of Agriculture for the area of Pisa. He returned to Siena to reconcile his needs with his passions: his *Contrada* and the Palio. Out of his stalls came many leading horses in the Piazza and at least as many famous jockeys, from Meloni to Aceto. Other famous names in Siena included Margiacchi, the Papis, and Dedo Pianigiani, luckiest of all, for he had the good fortune to be elected Captain of the Ram, have his own horse Belfiore assigned to him, and win with that horse. But none of the best horses of this period – la Giacca, Lina, Lola, Margiacchina, Ruello, or Wally (named in dubious homage to Simpson) – conquered Siene hearts as much as Folco, who found a friend in Pappio, groom of the Dragon. Many sto-

ries live on about their friendship. Folco followed Pappio without so much as a bridle, waited for him in front of taverns where he stopped for a glass and a chat, and people swear that the horse, when spoken to, replied with a friendly neigh. The War began and Folco was hidden in the woods of the Capriano estate by the owners, the family of Dario Neri who, as manager, would steer Sclavo and found the Electa publishing house, and who, as artist, would create the costumes for the Wave, the still-in-use Palio poster, a Great Banner, and an unsurpassed portrait of the Siene Chalkdowns., praised by such friends as Bernard Berenson and Carlo Emilio Gadda. World War II interrupted the activities of the Palio and of the *Contrade*; even in that grave moment the Palio was ever in the hearts of the Siene. On a Piazza del Campo drawn in the sand in a prison camp in Tunisia, 10 Siene ran their Palio in August 1943, wearing paper plumes. The cannon was a gasoline tin. The



Vittorio Giunti (1894-1962): *The Benediction of the Horse in the Church of the Goose Contrada*. (Oil on canvas). Siena, private collection

Caterpillar won, celebrated by little wine and much song.

### After the War

The War over, the Siene returned to their daily traditions. They remembered their war dead, welcomed returning veterans, and the *Contrada* Associations reopened their doors. The Eagle and the Tower held dinners for the 1939 victories the outbreak of war had stopped them from celebrating. And the Siene asked for an extraordinary Palio. The first peace-time mayor, caught up in other priorities arising from the important moment, incautiously uttered from a triple window in the Palazzo Comunale words that no mayor of Siena must ever say: "Citizens, either me or the Palio!" The replies of the noisy crowd in the Piazza are easily imagined. In the end the mayor stayed on, but the Palio of Peace was held on 20 August 1945. In the race a law student at the Siene

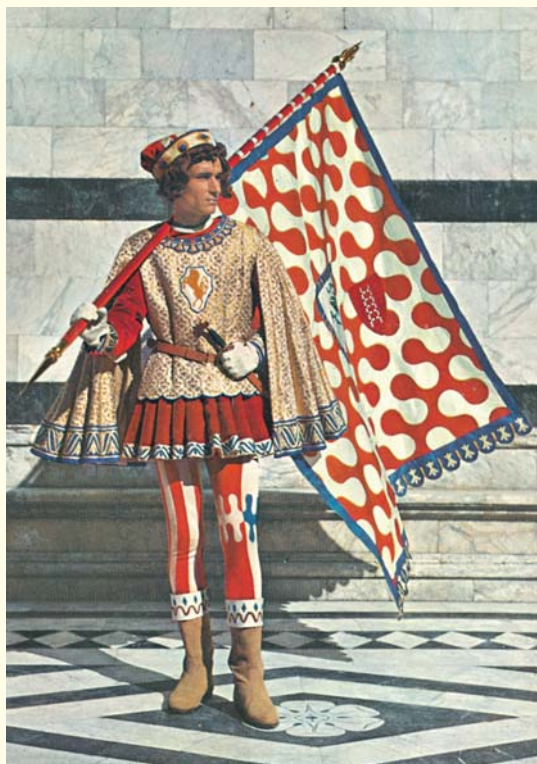
Atheneum triumphed, Gioacchino "Rubacuori" Calabrò, riding Folco, the old, much-loved hero. The Palio was particularly tumultuous. There were fist-fights in which soldiers of the Allied troops got involved. After the race, disappointed members of the Caterpillar chased *Rubacuori* and ripped the Great Banner to shreds. The Dragon keeps a copy they had painted at their own expense. In 1950, thanks to the initiative of the Friends of the Palio, the *Masgalgano* was reinstated, the prize given for the demeanor of the costumed representatives and for the skill of their Standard-Bearers and drummer. Designation of the winning *Contrada* was based on points awarded by commissioners around the track. That same year an important innovation modified the Start, which since then has been set on the Judges' Stand by a mechanical device invented by a Siene named Aldo Sprugnoli. The order is learned at the last moment, when the



horses are at the Casato and are headed toward the starting area. With this device the Start is determined by chance. Previously the mayor had prepared the order, filling out by his own discretion 3 lists, one of which was drawn.

In the Palio of August, 1946 the jockey from Manziana, Giuseppe "Ciancone" Gentili achieved the first of his 9 successes; he remained inarguably foremost among the jockeys of the Piazza until the rise of Andrea De Gortes. Gentili was a jockey of great intelligence and unsurpassed skill, loved and hated, feared and respected as few others in Palio history. His detractors called him "Beppe the Greedy," his admirers called him "the professor," a nickname then handed on to Aceto. Several of his winning races are remembered as having been perfectly run. But in 1961, running for the Goose, the starting rope found him in the 9th position. The Tower, eternal archrival, was 10th, the position of "the running start" that prompts the Start. Vittorino, jockey for the Tower, shot past Ciancone, brushing against him. Ciancone had no time to block the adversary or to show everyone that at least he had tried to get in his way. Vittorino proceeded to win. "My horse took a wrong step," Ciancone tried to justify himself to the furious members of the Goose who were ready to lynch him; the Tower, in mocking songs, sang of a raise in the price of betrayal for a turn-coat: 3, 5, 6 million. Gentili, despite his stuntman-like physique, felt the aches of the *Contrada's* wrath even 6 months later.

The same years also witnessed the lovely fable of Vittorino and Gaudenzia. Giorgio Terni came from Monte Amiata; in 1953 he arrived in the Shell, which became his *Contrada*, home, and workplace. He ran for the Shell in 10 races and won 3; all in all, he collected 21 races and 6 victories. Athletic, cool and with lightning-fast reflexes, he was famous for fiery starts after



The Senior Page of the Unicorn Contrada in the costume of 1955

unnervingly long waits. Vittorino was the trainer to Gaudenzia, a maremma dapple-grey mare who came into the Piazza at 10 years of age in 1952. Gaudenzia was docile and fast, precise and generous: ideal traits for Vittorino's gifts with which to make an unbeatable pair. In August 1954 luck and *Contrada* strategy divided Gaudenzia and Vittorino and had them run against each other. Gaudenzia lost her rider – on purpose, so they say – and for 2 circuits tried to pass Vittorino who was first and who tried to keep her behind. Despite the whiplashes, Gaudenzia passed him in the last meters of the race and won, with the Piazza in delirium. Vittorino went to hug her with tears in his eyes. Her adventure in the Palio ended in glory, Gaudenzia returned to the hills of Celsa, on the estate of Benito Giachetti, where she died at 30, surrounded by the *Contrada* members' love.

Gaudenzia was not the only heroine of those years. In August of 1957 the Eagle was represented by the jockey Diavola, the nickname for Rosanna Bonelli, once the stand-in for Diana Dors who, with Vittorio Gassman, filmed Luigi Zampa's "La ragazza del Palio" in Siena. Diavola made a great impression during the Trial Runs, and in the Palio she was third when she fell at San Martino's corner. The *Contrada* members feted her, despite her unfortunate race.

On the 2 July 1955 new costumes appeared in the Piazza, following the by now established rhythm of a renewal in every generation. The insignia of Montalcino has been paraded with special emphasis ever since because that spring the Sieneze held the first long march to that city in remembrance of the asylum received by the Government in exile of the Sieneze Republic. The march is repeated every 8 years.

The last structural change in the Palio took place between the 1950s and the 1960s, with the arrival of horses and then of jockeys from Sardinia.

The maremma horses were indeed becoming scarcer; breeding centers were closing and, with the rise of mass motorized transportation, work- and draught-horses had almost disappeared. The Palio, however, called for horses ever faster and more precise. Thus began the era of the Sardinian horses. The first of the great Sardinian horses was a mare called Uberta de Mores, who in 1960 and 1961 won 4 consecutive Palios. She was trained by Gentili, who ran her in the

province or with other horses and jockeys in the Palio of Cinecittà, giving her the chance to be among the "walk-ons" in the first spaghetti westerns. Soon the presence of Sardinian horses became predominant. In the August, 1962 Palio; 9 of the 10 horses were Sardinian. Up against them was the last legendary maremma horse, who often changed name and ownership: he was called Eucalipto, Ettore, Dragone, and finally Topolone. In 17 races he won 7 victories. Born in 1954, Topolone was big, powerful, short in the mid-section ("It's like sitting in an armchair," said jockeys who rode him), precise like few other barbs ever seen in the Piazza. His victorious race for the Shell won him the praises of singer, Gianni Brera, who in his epinicion wrote, "Ah, Topolone, Saracen devil! / Ah, my Topolone, ah Shell!" In 1969 Topolone won the fastest Palio until then, in 1 min. 15 secs, a record, so they said, unbroken since 1926. After him, in the 1970s, the Piazza greeted Urbino de Orzieri, a horse that was capricious and shadowy, nervous and victorious. Between 1978 and 1979 Urbino de Orzieri won 3 Palios, set a record for the track, and then left the scene, victim of the complex reasons connected to Palio strategy and, above all, of his inarguable superiority.



Knight representing the Ugurgieri Family in the costume of 1981



With the last venture of Gentili, winner for the Wave at 55 years of age, the era of the Tuscan-Lazial jockeys ended. Following the Sardinian horses, jockeys came from the same island in 2 great waves. The first was that of jockey-farmers who found their natural habitat in the agricultural, pastoral communities of Sardinians relocated *en masse* to the Siense Chalkdowns. The second wave was that of Sardinian jockeys who reached the Piazza by way of other race-tracks. Among them was Andrea De Gortes who would go on to earn the title “King of the Piazza” and to dominate the world of jockeys and the Palio scene for a quarter of a century.

From the start, Aceto showed an impeccable style, cool nerves and a great determination. He capitalized on his adversaries’ errors and his own good fortune, making several of his Palio victories absolutely sensational. In other Palios he triumphed by strength or by cunning. He bound himself to the Goose, but often managed to convince the same *Contrada* that the best strategy to make the rival Tower lose was for him to run for other *Contrade* to which chance had given the best horses. Struggling against him and helping him there were mainly 2 jockeys: Bastiano, a lanky Arcadian from Vescona in the Siense Chalkdowns, and Canapino, descended from the maremma cowboys, a great breeder of Palio horses on his ranch in the area of Asciano. In his outstanding career, Aceto would win 14 times wearing the colors of almost all the *Contrade*. Aceto became a nationally famous personality, to whom myriad articles, innumerable television interviews, and, today, 3 biographies have been dedicated. Aceto transformed the image of the Palio jockey. His requests were those of a professional who levelheadedly ne-



The *Contrade* and the rites of passage: *Contrada* baptism, wedding, and funeral

gotiates the terms of his services according to the laws of demand and offer. After a sensational divorce from the Goose, he joined up with the Tortoise, then with the Tower. Though he has stepped back from the Piazza, his influence in the world of jockeys remains, as does the national attention he attracts. Many fans await his return, his nth sensational gesture.

#### The *Contrade* Today

Beyond the Palio and the Piazza, the city changes. The center empties. Neighborhood life grows thin. The majority of *Contrada* members, about 90%, live outside the boundaries of their neighborhoods and only commute to it. But stopping the city from changing face altogether there is still the iron-like, invisible 4th dimension of the *Contrade*, a dimension in symbolic space. Today the *Contrada*, in the territory of its boundaries, has a series of meaningful places, first of all a symbolic “gate,” unmarked by special architectural signs but known by tradition, facing the center of town. The church, the most ancient place of the *Contrada*, serves as chapel for the religious ceremonies of the *Contrada* and of individual members. The *Contrada* Association is a vast recreational circle that is open every day, run by *Contrada* volunteers. Usually a wide green space is connected to the *Contrada*, owned by the *Contrada* or used with the liberal consent of the Municipality, wisely committed to defending the green valleys within the city walls, in the belief that the *Contrade* are the groups best equipped to guard them and to put them to socially important use. The Associations take on the task of the daily socialization among members through the organization and management of free time, creating and searching for new opportunities to promote social life in step with the times. Once societies open only to men, the Associations have become ever more clubs for “members and families.”





In the streets of the neighborhood, Sienese children play the Palio

A group of flag-makers of the Ram Contrada at work



Within the Associations groups of various ages and interests form and hold their meetings. Life in the Association has taken on the same functional and symbolic role held by life in the neighborhood in past generations. The Association is the secular arm of the *Contrada*. Fountains bearing the crests of the *Contrade* have spread throughout the city. They are used for baptism within the *Contrada*, and above all they constitute the most characteristic architectural sign of the *Contrada*; the tabernacles of the *Contrada* take on color and *Contrada* connotation once a year when the children decorate them

Left: The costumed representatives of the Owl Contrada prepare for the rounds of paying honors to the protectors  
Drummers and Standard-Bearers of the Eagle Contrada along the city streets







Crucial moments of the Palio: the Start, horses at San Martino's corner, the victorious finish with riding crop raised



with flowers and colors for the Feast of the Madonna on 3 September.

The Historical Seat/Museum is referred to by the members as the "Contrada" through antonomasia, and they refuse to think of it as "a museum." For them indeed, the building is a natural extension of home, a communal home that carefully houses and proudly displays objects of historic, artistic, and archival value purchased or donated by the members.

Similarly the population of the *Contrada* is considered by members as the natural extension of their biological family. To observers who have searched for analogies with other times, places, and cultures, the *Contrada* has appeared a metropolitan tribe, a Mediterranean clan, a modern junto or faction, a modern "clan" of mixed social classes. The Siense instead prefer to underline the *Contrada's* historic and sociological uniqueness.

The *Contrada* continues to take part in the Palio and to deliver rites of passage and of identity confirmation. It is there at births, weddings, and funerals with its page and its flag; on the special occasions





in the lives of its members, the *Contrada* sends cards of greeting, congratulations, solidarity, condolences.

The *Contrada* loves to posit itself as a small autonomous *patria*, a city in the Siense “confederation” of cities. In this light, after the War twinings between the *Contrade* and other Italian cities flowered: the Eagle and Aquila, the Snail and Venice, the Porcupine and Perugia, the Panther and Lucca, and so forth. But the consubstantial incompatibility of the *Contrada* with all that happens “outside” has left such twinings as mostly formal, practically inactive acts. It is Siena, following a European trend, that has twinned itself and carries on active cultural exchanges with Weimar, Wetzlar, and Avignon and intensive relations with Tartu, Siviglia, and the chinese cities of Nantong, Nanchino, Yangzhou in the district of Jangsu.

Traditionally one belongs to a *Contrada* in different ways. The oldest is *jus soli*, by birth within the boundaries of the *Contrada*. Many are the stories of puerperae taken to give birth in the right place, or of the soil of the *Contrada* spread under the hospital bed to reconstruct there the ancestral land. More recently, births in private homes having almost disappeared, *jus soli* applies to the *Contrada* in which the newborn has its legal address.

According to tradition one may belong to a *Contrada* also through *jus sanguinis*, direct descent from members. When parents belong to different *Contrade*, the membership of the children is carefully negotiated, taking into account the family tree of both parents and their importance within their *Contrade*.

*Jubilation of the victorious Contrada members before the Judges’ Stand, after the handing over of the Great Banner. In this photo from 1997 both Great Banners of the “cappotto” (“the overcoat,” or double victory in a single year) won by the Giraffe are clearly visible*

*After the victory the celebrating Contrada members bear the Great Banner to the Cathedral for the Te Deum of thanksgiving to the Madonna of the Graces*

*On the right: Milo Manara, banner of August 16<sup>th</sup> 2019, won by the Contrada of the Forest*







A third criterion is a sort of *jus affinitatis*, by custom, when neither of the above motives applies to become a member of the *Contrada* which one simply chooses to frequent, where one has close social relationships; this criterion applies also to people coming from other towns or countries, people who make their first Sienese friendships within a certain *Contrada*.

This custom, too, is ancient. In their first centuries the *Contrade* had "noble protectors" (representing the *Contrade* to the public authorities before the role and status of the Prior were broadened) who could even be resident outside the *Contrade's* territories. The Proclamation of Violante explicitly upheld the *Contrade's* right to seek and maintain protectors beyond their boundaries. Today each *Contrada* has a steady number of "protectors" who financially support it through voluntary contributions. The identity of such contributors is secret. The number of protectors is secret, too, but may be estimated between several hundred in the less populated *Contrade* and several thousand in those with greater populations.

The *Contrade*, highlight social, noble, and professional titles of their members, but at the same time they make a point of underscoring that within the *Contrada* people have always applied the notion calling each other by the informal form of the word "you," and no one has ever shied away from bold exchange of opinions. The *Contrada* thus represents both the real hierarchy of Sienese society and the ideal *communitas* in which all members have equal rights and responsibilities, freedom and dignity, and they face each other with their individual humanity. In the balance of these two contradictory characteristics lies the anthropological

*The victory dinner of the Wave Contrada in 1995. At the end of the summer the victorious Contrade celebrate with a grand dinner laid out in the streets of the neighborhood, at which a place of honor is reserved for the horse*

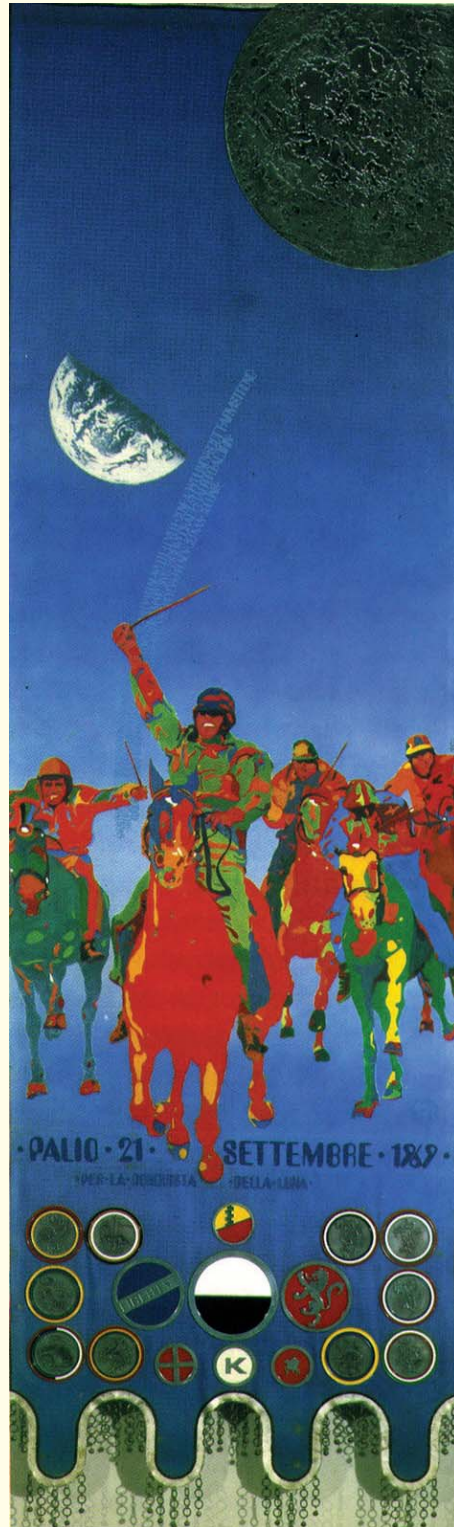


originality of the *Contrada* as complex social structure.

It is, the Sienese insist, a “democratic” structure, even if *Contrada* democracy has manners and features more easily recognized in the Renaissance than in the modern age. The *Contrada* demonstrates this, among other examples, in its electoral mechanisms and in the distribution of its offices. Elections are generally held every 2 years. Candidates are proposed by an electoral commission of 10 or so members, designated for election by the bodies in charge; the commission selects nominees for the list that will be voted on. A General Council is elected (usually 100 or so members) as is a Presidency of 15 or so members who govern the *Contrada*. The Prior is head of the *Contrada*, assisted by the Vicar. Concerning the Palio, the *Contrada* is led instead by the Captain, helped by 2 lieutenants, who, in various *Contrade*, are either elected or appointed by the Captain or by the assembly.

The Corrector, priest of the *Contrada*, is elected and then designated with the placet of the Curia. He officiates at all the religious ceremonies in *Contrada* life. A financial attaché coordinates the capillary work of the numerous appointees to collect the donation pledges – all of which are secret – for a “Palio victory” or for the “losing fund.” These funds cover the expenses related to every race and, hopefully, the expenses, not itemized, of making the adversary lose. A college of Notables, the *boni homines* of the *Contrada*, includes former Priors, former Captains, and notables, serving as a consulting body at the highest levels, ensuring continuity of policy and of intents and adherence to the constitutions.

Women’s groups and youth groups, ever more active and present, have brought to



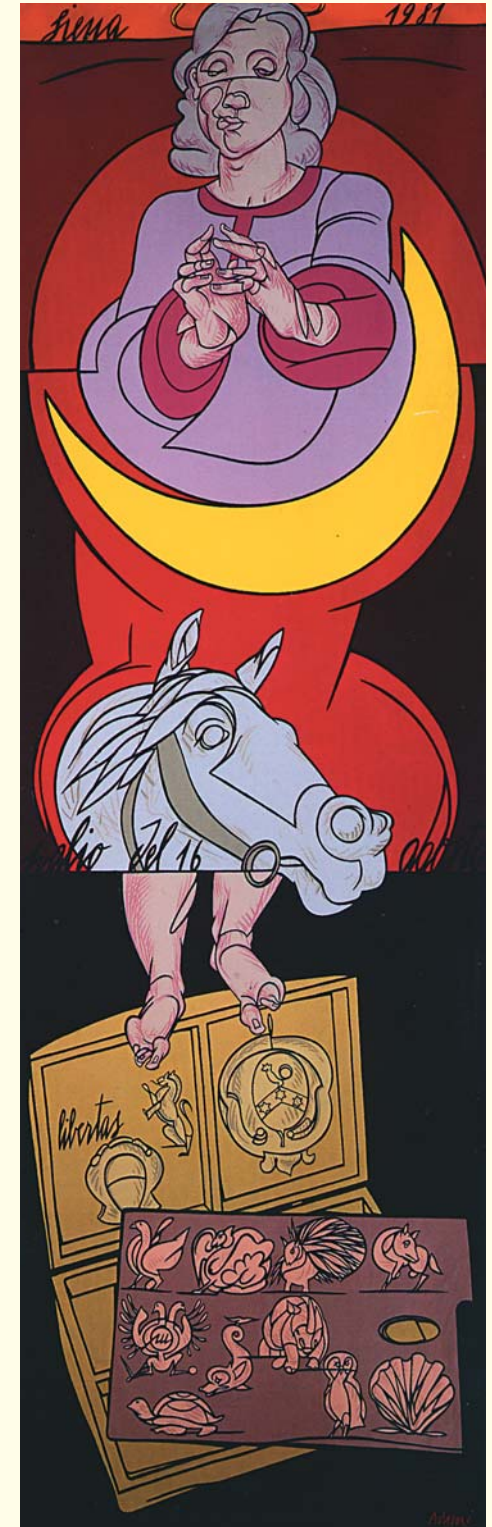
Mario Bucci “Marte”,  
banner of September 21st, 1969,  
won by the *Contrada* of the Goose

*Contrada* life the same innovative element that they stand for in contemporary Italian society. If the *Contrada*, guardian *par excellence* of tradition, may not strike some people as the avant-garde of the process of purification and social innovation of the past decades, it is nevertheless true that the *Con-trada* has punctually reflected every change in the social history of Siena and continues to do so today. Recently women have been elected to the office of President, Prior, and Captain. And the average *Contrada* director is ever younger.

Once a year, between spring and the end of summer, the *Contrada* celebrates its titular festival in honor of its Patron Saint or of a Marian epiphany. On the Saturday evening there is the “reception of the *Signoria*”: the Prior, the Pre-sidency, and the Notables of the *Contrada*, along with costumed representatives and members of the population receive the Priors of *Contrade* that are allies or “aggregates,” as an ethnocentric-sounding term calls them. Prayers follow, officiated by the Corrector and sometimes co-celebrated by other Correctors, with the singing of psalms and hymns. After a drinks reception everyone moves to the streets where an open-air dinner takes place, leading into songs, musical entertainments, and traditional games such as the Palio of the *Barberi* (colored balls in lieu of the horses) with gastronomic prizes, the Palio of the Children, target-firing, and the Greased Pole. Streets are lit up by hundreds of wall-sconces.

On the Sunday there are the “rounds” of paying honor to the protectors residing outside the territory. Groups of costumed representatives make rounds of the countryside, always in regions not far from the city.

Valerio Adami, banner of August 16th, 1981,  
won by the *Contrada* of the Shell







All other *Contrade* may be visited (except the adversary): the churches are opened, and homage is paid to sister organizations. Allied *Contrade* offer sumptuous receptions. *Contrada* visit the graves of members buried in the city's 2 cemeteries and celebrate a mass for the dead. The morning closes with the *Contrada* baptism which the Prior bestows upon newborns, upon the adults who have so requested, with the water of the *Contrada's* fountain.

The rounds conclude with a gathering of the costumed representatives, directors, and *Con-trada* members in a certain point of the city, forming a procession that returns to the *Con-trada*, flags unfurled, through the streets to the accompaniment of a musical band. A closing dinner finishes the festivities.

### Beyond the Year 2000

At the beginning of this new millenium, the Palio once more seeks its new face. Taking on an ever more important role is the Consortium for the Guardianship of the Palio, intervening with punctilio against abuses of images, commercial manipulations, and publicity exploitations of the Palio and of the *Contrade*. The Magistrature of the *Contrade* celebrates its 100th anniversary, the Committee of Friends of the Palio the 50th anniversary of its activities.

Territories outside the city walls are once again a question of high priority. The idea of dividing the territory in the entire Municipality into slices has been debated for decades. In 1994 a document was discussed in all 17 sovereign assemblies of the *Contrade*: the great majority came out against the hypothetical assignment to the *Contrade* of 17 territo-

Leonardo Cremonini, banner of August 16th, 1985  
won by the *Contrada* of the Wave

ries outside the city walls to cover the whole Municipality of Siena. All the *Contrade* instead reiterated the need to revitalize the historic territories as a measure to protect against their progressive depletion.

Palio justice remains a much-debated topic. Disagreement concerns the concept of the objective responsibility of the *Contrade*, stated in the Article 101 of the regulations. Opinions differ between 2 extremes: some would have *Contrada* responsibility applied at all times and in all places, others only during the Palio and in the space of the Piazza.

Since the year 2000, a member of the City government singles out possible breakings of the Palio rules and proposes penalties against jockeys, *Contradas*, and *Contrada* member. Against such proposals, it is possible to present defensive evidence or memoirs within 10 days. Later, the City Government delivers a judgement without appeal.

The Start of the race remains at the center of many discussions and recriminations, above all regarding the role of the Starter with respect to the "running start" of the 10th horse. According to the present rules, over the 9 jockeys between the starting ropes, the Starter has absolute power. Over the jockey entrusted with the "running start," the Starter has only the power of veto: he may only stop him from entering when the alignment of the other horses between the starting ropes is not, in his judgment, satisfactory. But when the alignment is as it should be, it is the 10th jockey who chooses the moment of his own entry between the starting ropes, signifying the start of the race. Consequently the Palios of recent years have marked the growth of long, exasperating waits.

Riccardo Tommasi Ferroni, banner of August 16th, 1986,  
won by the *Contrada* of the Giraffe





In the last several years the world of the jockeys has witnessed the reign of Aceto divided into a diarchy of 2 Sardinian jockeys, Salvatore "Cianchino" (because he reminds many of the legendary Ciancone) Ladu and Beppino "Pesse" Pes. But besides them, new jockeys make their clame to fame. Some of them are Tuscans, such as De'; a few are from Siena, such as Gigi Bruschelli "Trecciolino", the true heir of Aceto, for his outstanding abilities - athletic, strategic, diplomatic. Trecciolino runs an important horse stable in the Sienese hills. Between 1996 and July 2012 he won 13 times. The Pantheon of Palio horses welcomes its most recent heroes. Panezio, trained by Canapino, has become the emulator of Folco: like Folco, Panezio ran 20 races in the Piazza. Between 1973 and 1983 he

won 8 times. Benito dominated the Piazza in the 1980s, peremptorily winning 5 races, 2 of which were "riderless" victories. After these, no others have been admitted yet to the circle of the Greats. The animals coming to the Piazza often prove themselves poorly adapted to a race that was not made for horses with too pure a blood or too fast a speed, fragile and nervous as many of them are today. Accidents on the track prompt repeated arguments. The Municipality, in cooperation with other organizational bodies of the Palio, applies constant pressure that all horses be scrutinized to ascertain not only their state of health but also their physical suitability to the Piazza. Facilities have been built for the care of injured horses.

Since the year 2000, the City has instituted a "Book of Palio horses" with the aim to create a set of horses specifically apt to the Palio. Since the same year, a city ordinance rules that the only horses admitted to the Palio will be the half-bred (that is with up to 75% of English blood).

The safety of horses and jockeys remains constantly the main preoccupation of the Palio organizers.

Annually, the City Council approves an "Equine Protocol" through which, among other things, the Municipality aims to create and spread a culture respecting and protecting the animal, with particular reference to the optimization of its psychophysical conditions.

In 1999 the City's technical office put on place the new cushions for the San Martino turn.

They are studied to absorb the different impacts of horses and men.

In the crash-tests made by specialized firms in Northern Italy, the sienese wooden dummy shaped like a horse shared the testing grounds with formula one race cars. The palio seeks actively even high-tech expertises to obtain the highest possible safety.

The colors of the Palio become ever more vivid. Artists of international renown have been called upon in recent years to paint the Great Banners. It began in 1969 when Marte, a Sienese graphic artist who had emigrated to Zurich, gifted to the Palio a Great Banner done in the style of great European Pop Art. Mino Maccari and Renato Guttuso followed, the latter of whom for the August, 1971 Palio painted a Great Banner that satisfied (though not immediately) the cultured and the unsophisticated alike. Later came artists such as Cagli, Decca, Attardi, Sassu, Treccani, Vespignani, Cremonini, Tadini. Among the sienese painters, Marco Antonio Tanganelli has remained unforgettable. In 1981 the Banner by Valerio Adami prompted clamorous arguments, but will remain a yardstick for later artists. Sandro Chia painted the Banner of August, 1994 and executed for the Porcupine and the city a large bronze horse with its colt, standing in the Lizza gardens, symbol of the Palio's continuity from father to son. In 1975 the first foreign artist was commissioned to paint the Banner, the Japanese Sho Chiba, followed then by the French Gérard Fromanger, the Spanish Eduardo Arroyo, the British Joe Tilson, the Belgian Jean-Michel Folon. In 2000 the painter is the American Jam Dine; in 2002 the Colombian Fernando Botero.

Presenting the later to the Sienese, the Major comments that finally the most famous festival in the world has met the most famous living artist in the world.

In August 2004 Igor Mitoraj paints a palio dominated by a Madonna before a pegasus and a group of bystanders, a work of great sculptural profile. The following year, Rita Petti, sienese artist and art historian, receives the unanimous vote of the jury in the competition for the painting of

Sandro Chia: *Horse with Colt*. Cast in bronze (1994) standing in the Lizza gardens. Siena, Porcupine Contrada



Emilio Tadini, banner of July 2nd, 1997, won by the Contrada of the Giraffe



the banner dedicated to Pope Pius II. Her sacred 'balzana' is cultured and intellectual, painted with the bibliography of the Pope written on the banner, and on the bar his words for the canonization of St. Catherine of Siena. The Pope holds his pastoral staff, the horse rears up and the Madonna of Provenzano surprisingly comes down among his people.

In August 2005 the big international art protagonists return with Manolo Valdes, one of the greatest contemporary Spanish painters. The banner is painted in line with the great Iberian iconographic tradition, but with the style and bold colors of international pop art, of which he is an undisputed protagonist.

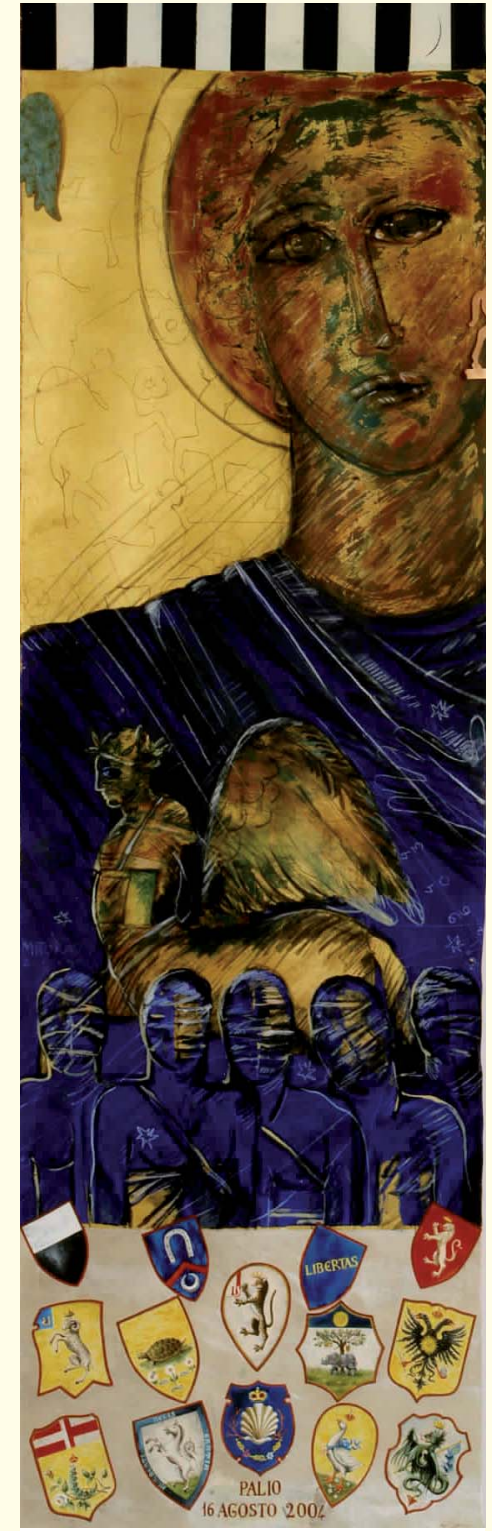
The horizon of Palio widens further when in July 2010, the task goes to Ali Hassoun, a Lebanese by birth and Italian by adoption. His banner on the anniversary of Montaperti, a mythological and epic battle, represents St. George by Mantegna, but with a keffiyeh in the colors of the 'balzana', to let him play as one of the legendary Muslim 200 archers who probably were in the battle on the side of Siena. On the crown of the Madonna, there are together the cross, the star of David and the crescent of Islam. The assignment, given in a spirit of great cultural openness to a painter who produces his works with the theme of the encounter between East and West, arouses controversy and passionate debates. In August 2011 Francesco Carone, a Siennese painter, makes an unusual Palio, refined, white, almost monochrome, almost a response to the Siennese who often repeated "we like to win the Palio even if it is an all-white ban-



*Jim Dine, banner of July 2nd, 2000, won by the Contrada of the Porcupine*

*Fernando Botero, banner of August 16th, 2002, won by the Contrada of the Tortoise*

*Jgor Mitoraj, banner of August 16th, 2004, won by the Contrada of the Tortoise*





ner". Claudio Carli wins the competition in 2012 for the Palio dedicated to St. Francesco. The banner has the poor patched habit of Francesco applied to spill on the festive silk of the sienese: strength and spirituality, happy poverty and simplicity are represented around the Francesco's stick, which miraculously blooms in all colors of Siena.

In one of her essays, Judith Hook portrayed Siena, the Palio, and the *Contrade* as an everlasting trinity. Others, more critically, have identified the three parts of the Sienese trinity as municipalism, tribalism, and narcissism.

One thing is certain: without the Palio (and the *Contrade* that participate in it and hand it on) Siena today would be only a beautiful city in Tuscany.

To the ever more numerous guests who come to Siena to understand its reason and its secret, the Sienese ultimately reply, "Because in Siena there's the Palio," "Because in Siena there are the *Contrade*." ❧



Rita Petti, banner of July 2nd, 2005, won by the Contrada of the Caterpillar

Ali Hassoun, banner of July 2nd, 2010, won by the Contrada of the Forest

Francesco Carone, banner of July 2nd, 2011, won by the Contrada of the Giraffe

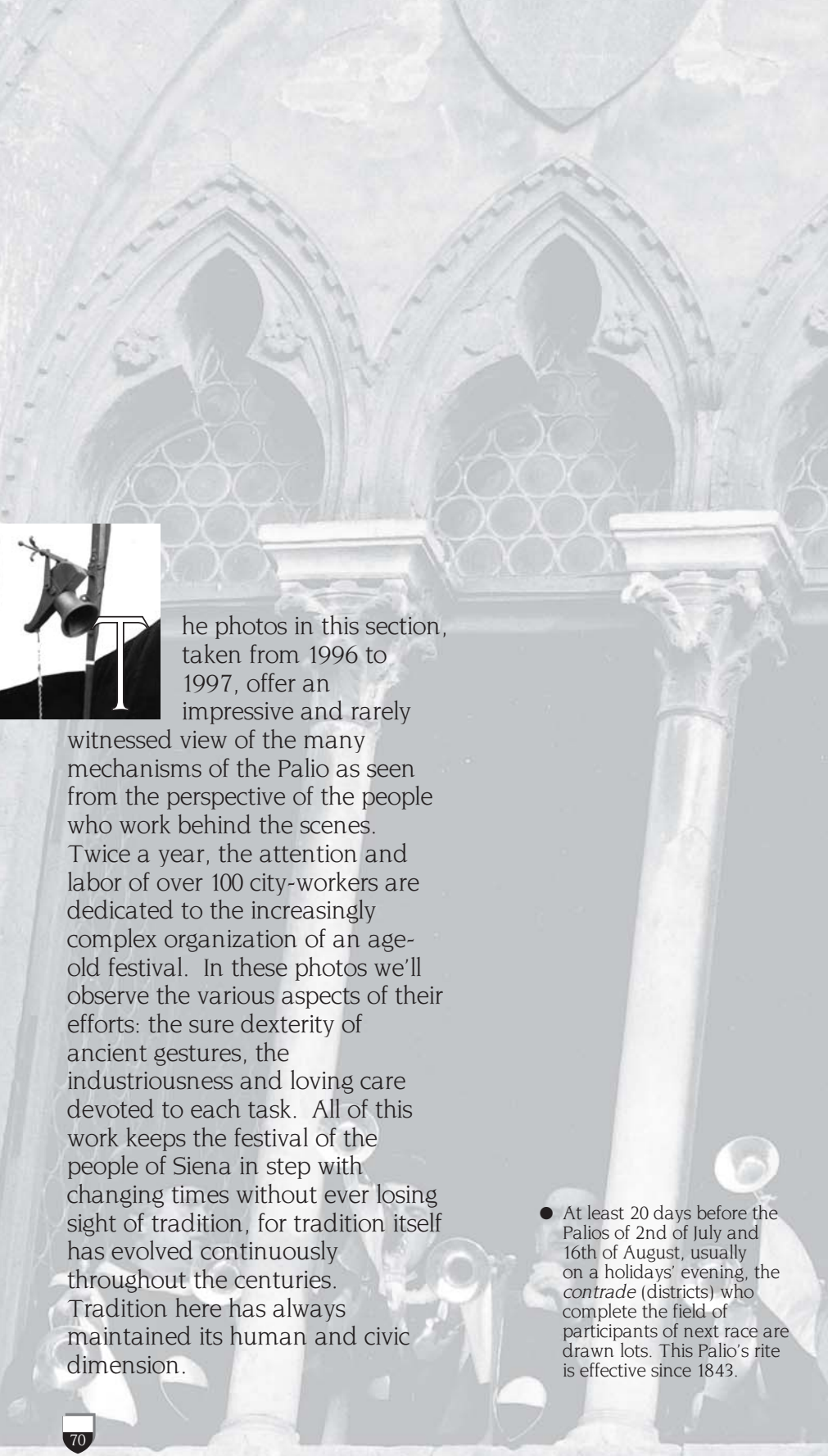






BEHIND THE  
SCENES  
AT THE PALIO





The photos in this section, taken from 1996 to 1997, offer an impressive and rarely

witnessed view of the many mechanisms of the Palio as seen from the perspective of the people who work behind the scenes.

Twice a year, the attention and labor of over 100 city-workers are dedicated to the increasingly complex organization of an age-old festival. In these photos we'll observe the various aspects of their efforts: the sure dexterity of ancient gestures, the industriousness and loving care devoted to each task. All of this work keeps the festival of the people of Siena in step with changing times without ever losing sight of tradition, for tradition itself has evolved continuously throughout the centuries.

Tradition here has always maintained its human and civic dimension.

- At least 20 days before the Palios of 2nd of July and 16th of August, usually on a holidays' evening, the *contrade* (districts) who complete the field of participants of next race are drawn lots. This Palio's rite is effective since 1843.





● During the check-up, which takes place in June before the July Palio and at the beginning of August before the second Race, a team of specialists devotes great care to monitoring the condition of the horses...

● The check-up includes X-rays of every animal. Each horse's general state of health is examined, with special attention paid to those structures responsible for motion

● The cardio-circulatory condition of each horse is tested. Ultrasound technology is used, whenever necessary, to provide a thorough clinical overview of every animal











- The medical-veterinary facilities used for the check-up and for treatment include an operating theatre...
- ...as well as state-of-the-art instruments for surgery and for rehabilitation. New recovery techniques have been experimentally tested in Siena with noteworthy success





● A week before the Palio, the Judges' Stand is assembled. The current stand has been in use since 1996





- The “little banner” or *bandierino*, serving as the finish line of the race, is attached to one of the gates that mark off the inside of the Piazza. The railing, documented in official reports as far back as 1468, is attached to the 71 columns made of Siennese travertine



- A protective leather covering is attached to the interior angle at the corner called the Casato



- Painted panels are put up to divide the exterior from the track itself. This barrier was introduced in 1853, painted with a balustrade motif, to replace an earlier canvas version





● Before the Judges' Stand, earth is laid in the Piazza by hand, just as it was in antiquity. Approximately 400 cubic metres of tuff earth are used. Since 1698 the Piazza has been covered with earth a few days before the Palio. The ring of tuff earth measures 319 metres closest to the inner railing. The optimal circuit taken by horses during the Race may even be as long as 339 metres







- Special machines are used to spread and press the tuff earth, thus ensuring ideal consistency, elasticity, and drainage
- A vibrating apparatus perfectly levels the layer of tuff earth...
- which is contained in the rear of the machine
- A double-rolled compressor makes the earth of the track compact
- All work is then retouched by hand





- Since 1841 a bank of cushions has been attached to the outside rim of San Martino's corner. The cushions, today made of foam rubber, form a protective surface approximately 50 metres long and 2 metres high to buffer any possible impact on the part of either horses or jockeys
- The explosive blasts of the "little mortar" or *mortaretto* cannon will signal the most important moments of the Palio
- The "Great Banner" or *drappellone* is mounted on its supporting pole. From the top hang two ribbons and two tassels in the colours of the *Balzana*, the emblem of Siena

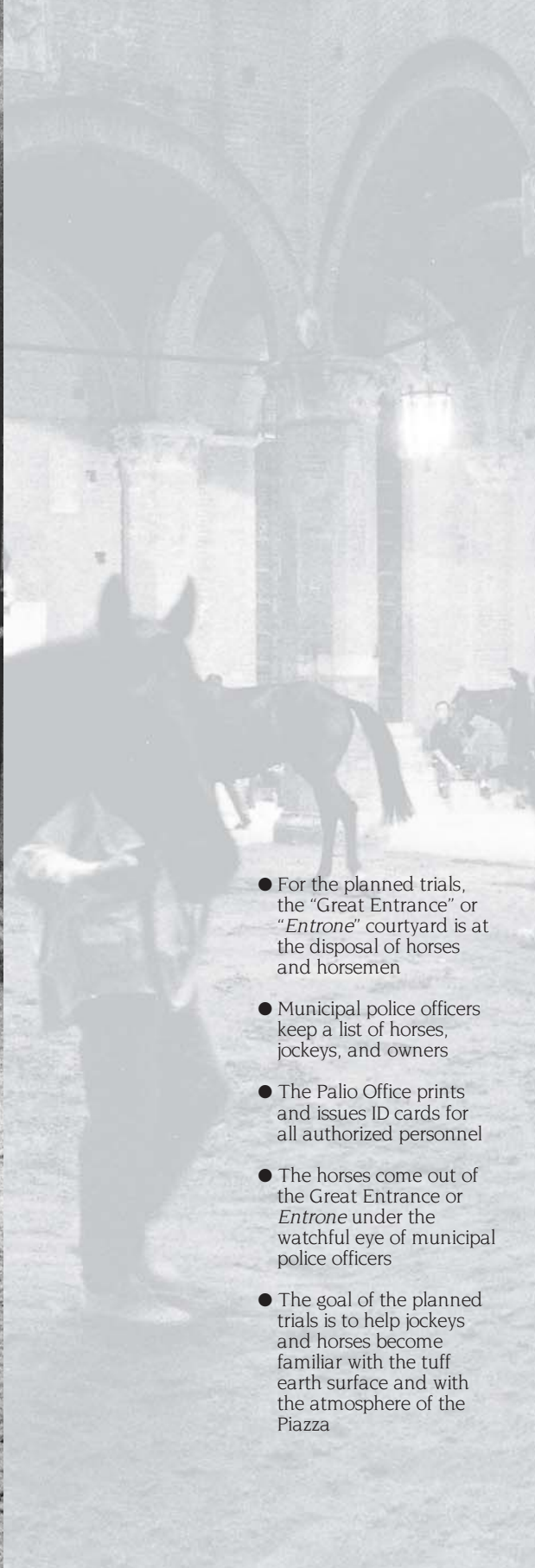
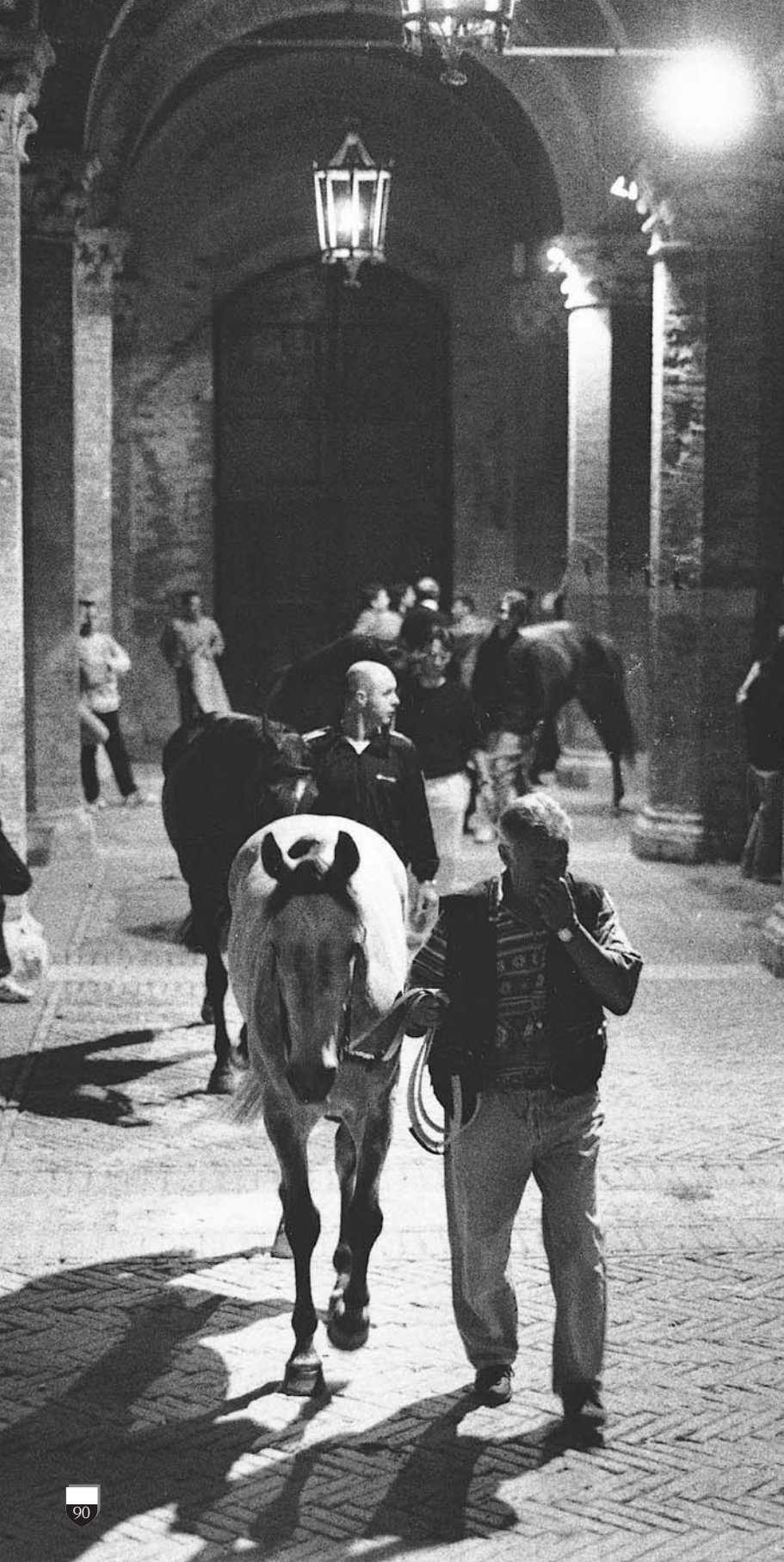


- Some days before the Palio, the *drappellone* banner is solemnly presented by the Mayor in the courtyard of the *Palazzo Comunale*. This ceremony started in August, 1984. The call of six silver trumpets opens and concludes the event. In the middle of the picture, above, the Mayor Nicoletta Fabio with the banner of July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 by Roberto Di Jullo, and, below, with the banner of August 16<sup>th</sup> 2023 by Marco Lodola



- Next to the *drappellone* banner there is the Insignia of the Magistracy of the *Contrade* (Districts), created following the design made in 1951 by the Sienese artist Dino Rofi





- For the planned trials, the “Great Entrance” or “Entrone” courtyard is at the disposal of horses and horsemen
- Municipal police officers keep a list of horses, jockeys, and owners
- The Palio Office prints and issues ID cards for all authorized personnel
- The horses come out of the Great Entrance or *Entrone* under the watchful eye of municipal police officers
- The goal of the planned trials is to help jockeys and horses become familiar with the tuff earth surface and with the atmosphere of the Piazza

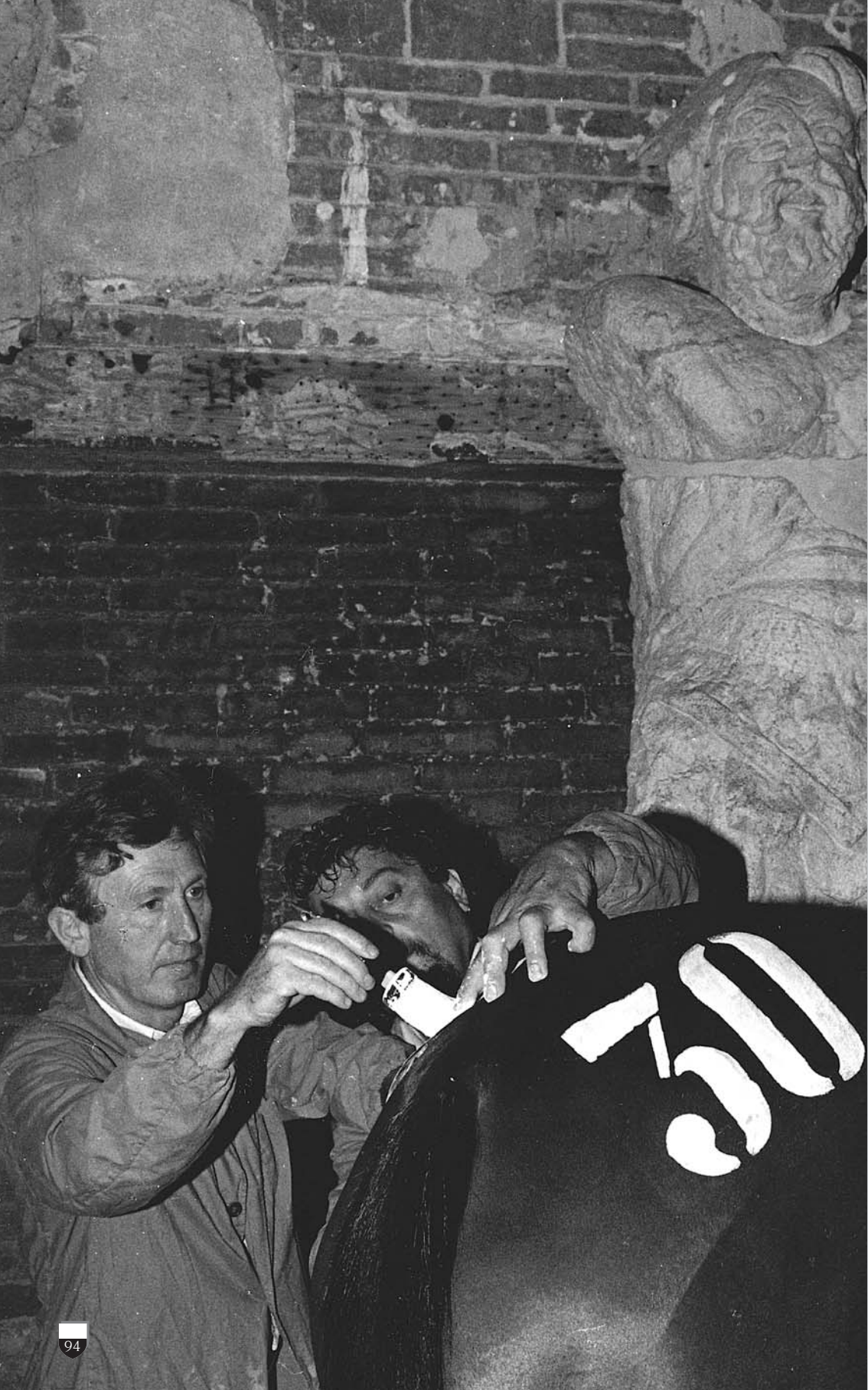






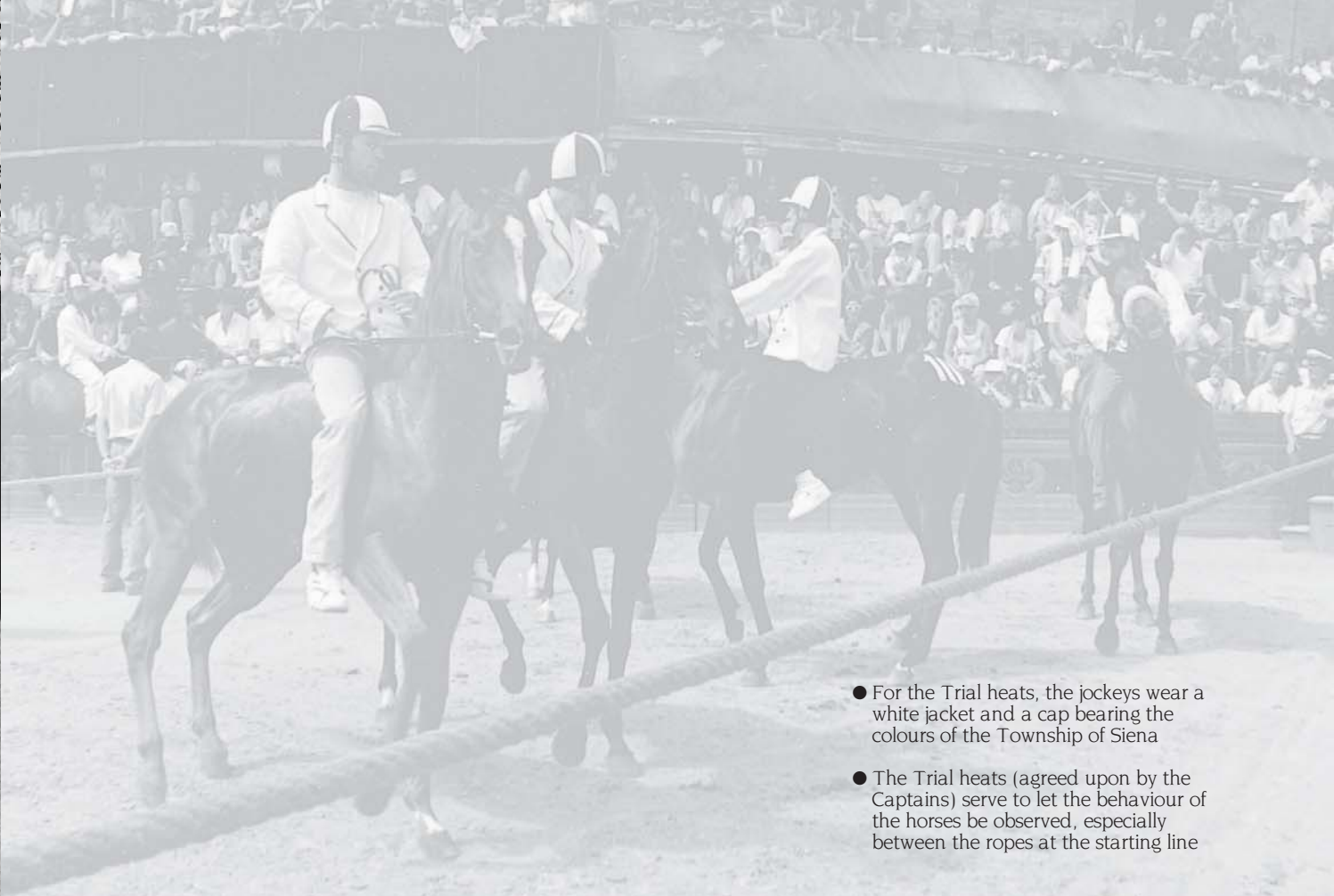
- The azure insignia of the ancient Republic of Siena is hoisted on the battlements of the *Palazzo Comunale*. The insignia bears the legend "Libertas" written in gold





- Three days before the Palio, at about six o'clock, the Trials begin with the assignment of the horses at the door of the Great Entrance or *Entrone*. In the past this procedure was conducted in the Piazza d'Armi and then, from 1761 onward, at the Biccherna door of the *Palazzo Comunale*. The Mayor and the Palio Office supervise the operations
- A brief pause at the foot of the Mangia. This is the last of many automated mechanisms that struck the hour upon the Torre del Mangia tower since the 1300s. Sculpted in Siense travertine in 1759, it has stood in the courtyard of the Palazzo Comunale since 1927
- The horses are numbered on their hind quarters in the order of presentation





- For the Trial heats, the jockeys wear a white jacket and a cap bearing the colours of the Township of Siena
- The Trial heats (agreed upon by the Captains) serve to let the behaviour of the horses be observed, especially between the ropes at the starting line





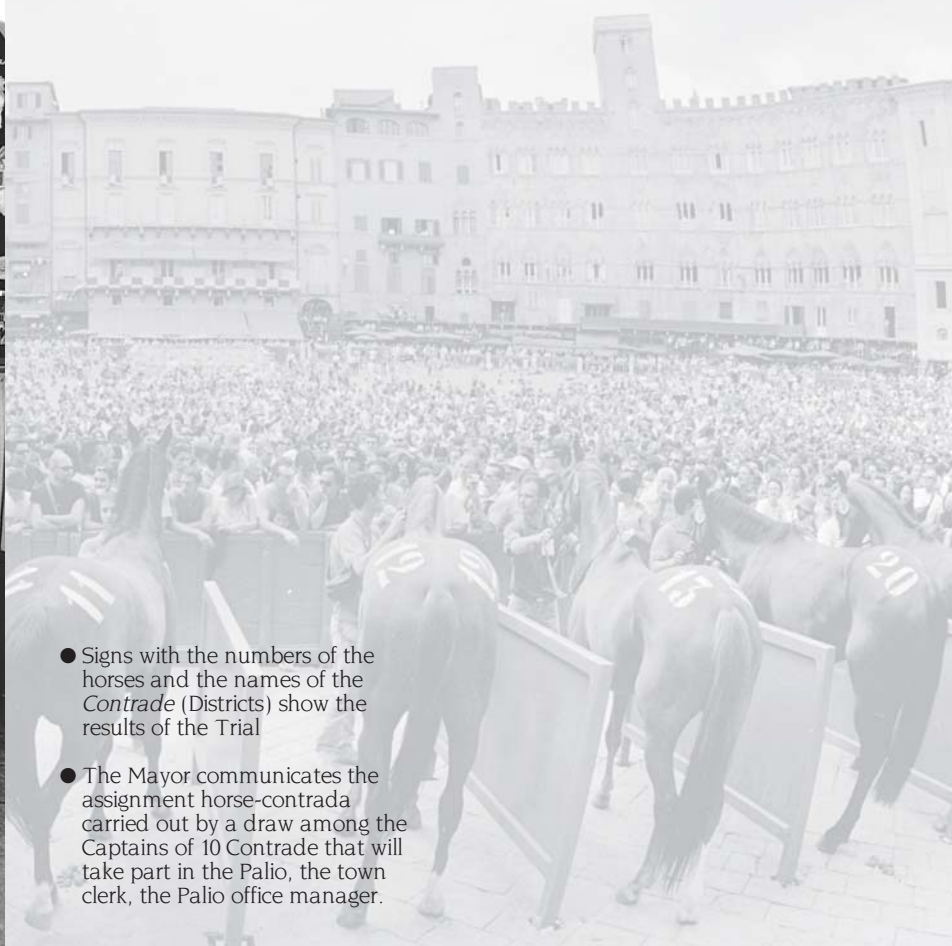


- After the Trial heats, the horses await the draw through which they will be assigned to the 10 *Contrade* (Districts) that will take part in the Palio

- The ballots or “acorns” with the names of the horses and of the *Contrade* (Districts) are placed in two tumbler ballot-boxes on a stand set up especially for the occasion, since 1936, in front of the *Palazzo Comunale*







- Signs with the numbers of the horses and the names of the *Contrade* (Districts) show the results of the Trial
- The Mayor communicates the assignment horse-contrada carried out by a draw among the Captains of 10 *Contrade* that will take part in the Palio, the town clerk, the Palio office manager.







● The procession of August enters the Cathedral, where the banner is blessed

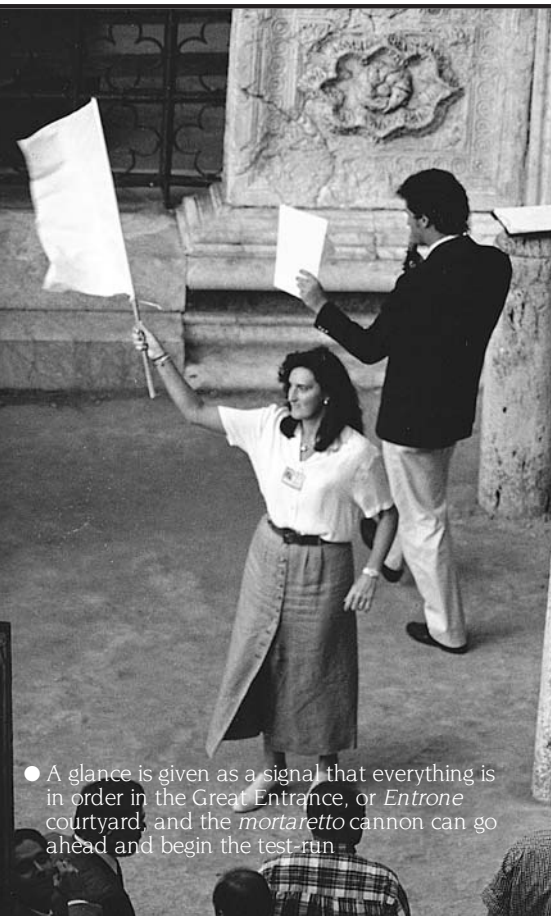




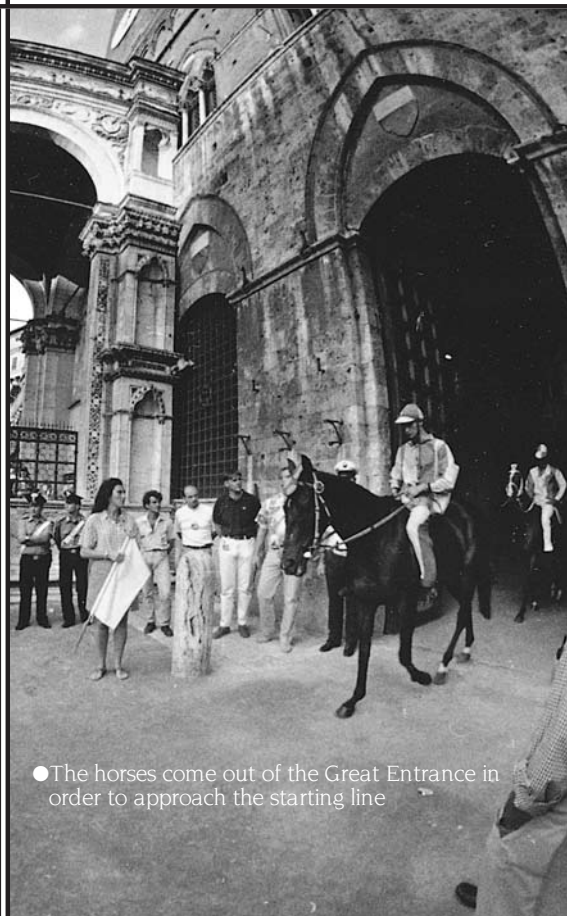
● The test-runs: The horses are led to the Great Entrance or *Entrone*



● The official Starter together with workers from the Township on the "Verrocchio" platform, an updated version of the one originally introduced in 1838



● A glance is given as a signal that everything is in order in the Great Entrance, or *Entrone* courtyard, and the *mortaretto* cannon can go ahead and begin the test-run



● The horses come out of the Great Entrance in order to approach the starting line



● Before the Palio, the banner is solemnly blessed in the Basilica of Provenzano (July) or in the Cathedral (August). On the day of the race, the banner is taken back to the Civic Palace





- In the day of the Palio, before the historical Procession, the horses are blessed by the priests of each contrada saying: "go and come back winner"
- The mechanical device to start the race, in use since 1950, is checked with the utmost care
- The parade horses, or *soprallassi* draught horses, arrive in Orto de' Pecci near Piazza del Mercato. In the procession there will be 24 parade horses, plus the 10 *barberi* racehorses that will run





● In the costume room at the back of the Palazzo Comunale, outfits are stored for the 311 Palio participants who appear in full dress







- The "Carroccio" is taken from the place where it is housed on Via del Casato. This triumphal wagon recalls the one captured from the Florentines at Montaperti in 1260. The Carroccio wagon has been pulled by four gigantic oxen since 1928.

- Written on the back of the Carroccio wagon are the words, "O Regina Patris Summi Dignata Corona Perpetuo Senam Respice Virgo Tuam"

- In the picture (on the right) banner of August 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 by Elisabetta Rogai

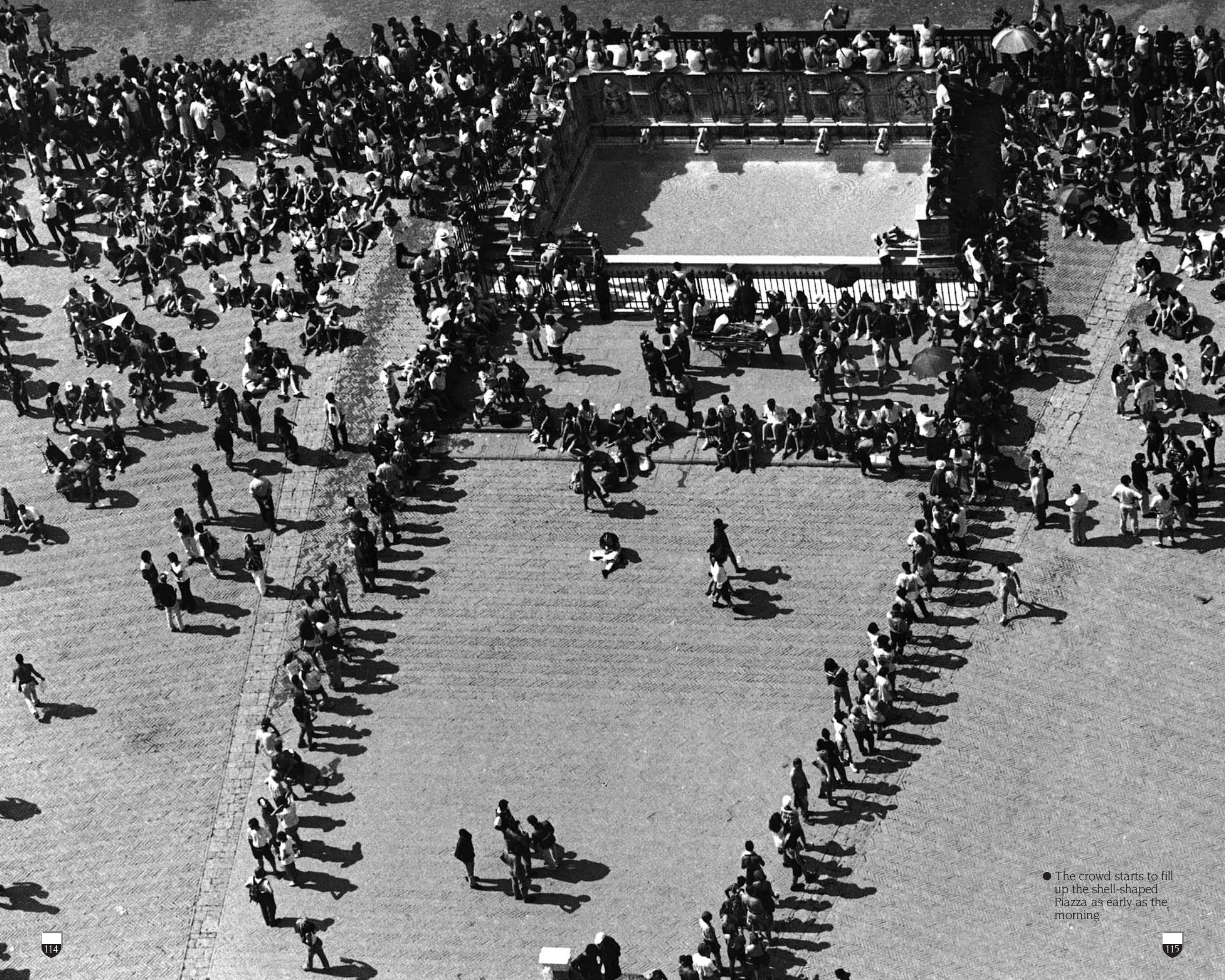






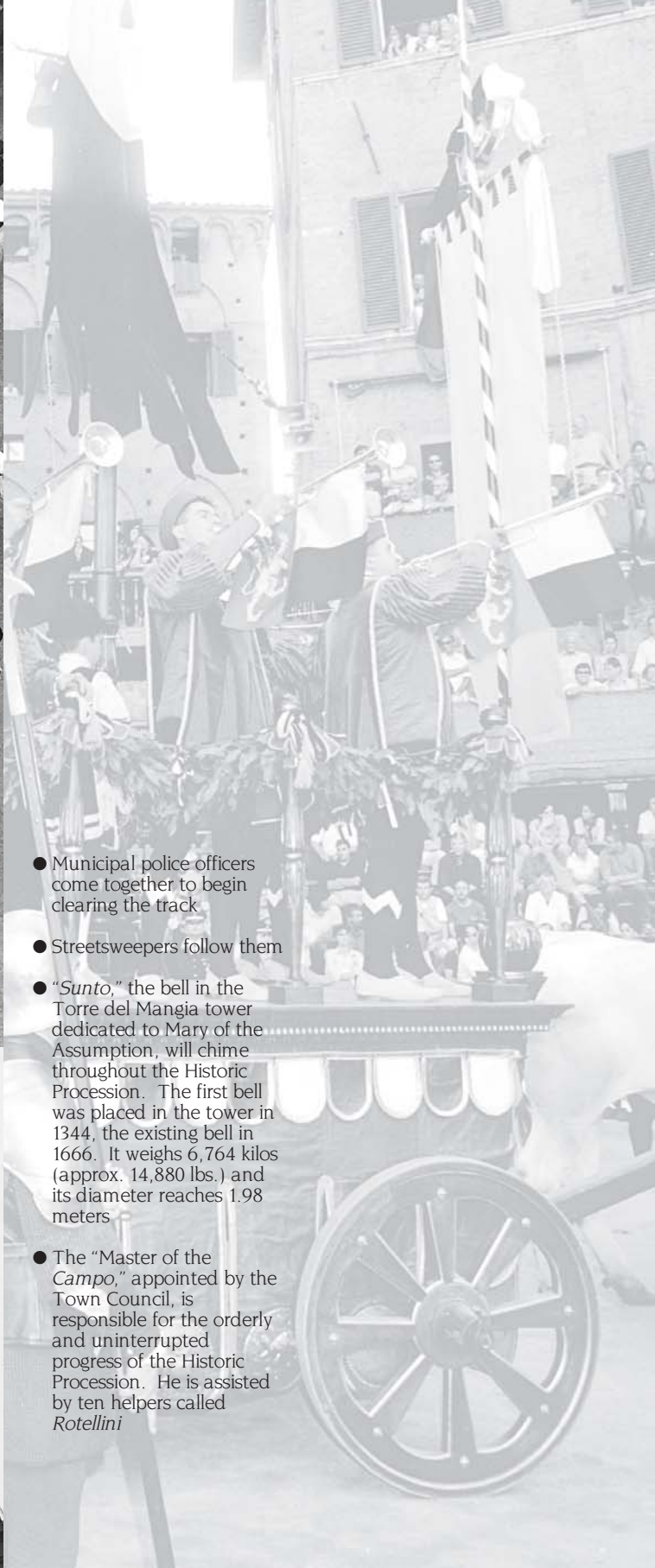
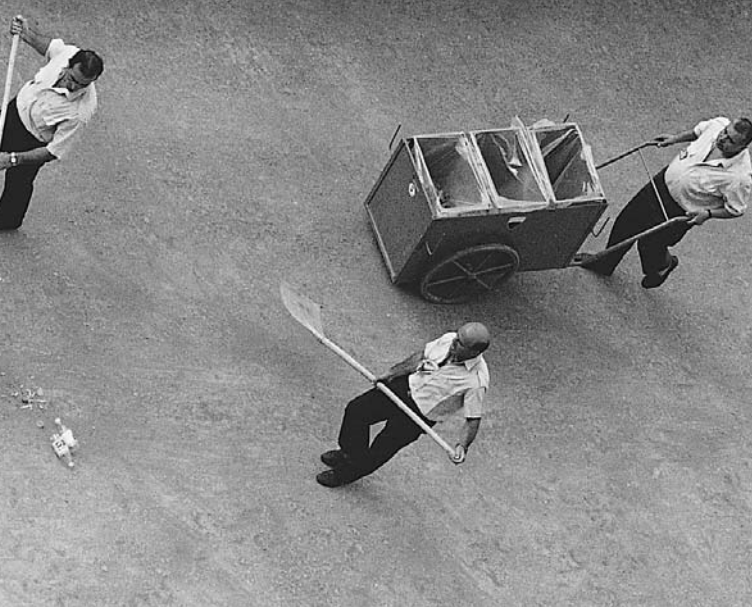
- The black and white *Balzana* emblem is hoisted on the *Carroccio* wagon. Records of this ancient coat of arms of the Government of Siena can be traced back to 1040





● The crowd starts to fill up the shell-shaped Piazza as early as the morning





- Municipal police officers come together to begin clearing the track
- Streetsweepers follow them
- “*Sunto*,” the bell in the Torre del Mangia tower dedicated to Mary of the Assumption, will chime throughout the Historic Procession. The first bell was placed in the tower in 1344, the existing bell in 1666. It weighs 6,764 kilos (approx. 14,880 lbs.) and its diameter reaches 1.98 meters
- The “Master of the *Campo*,” appointed by the Town Council, is responsible for the orderly and uninterrupted progress of the Historic Procession. He is assisted by ten helpers called *Rotellini*



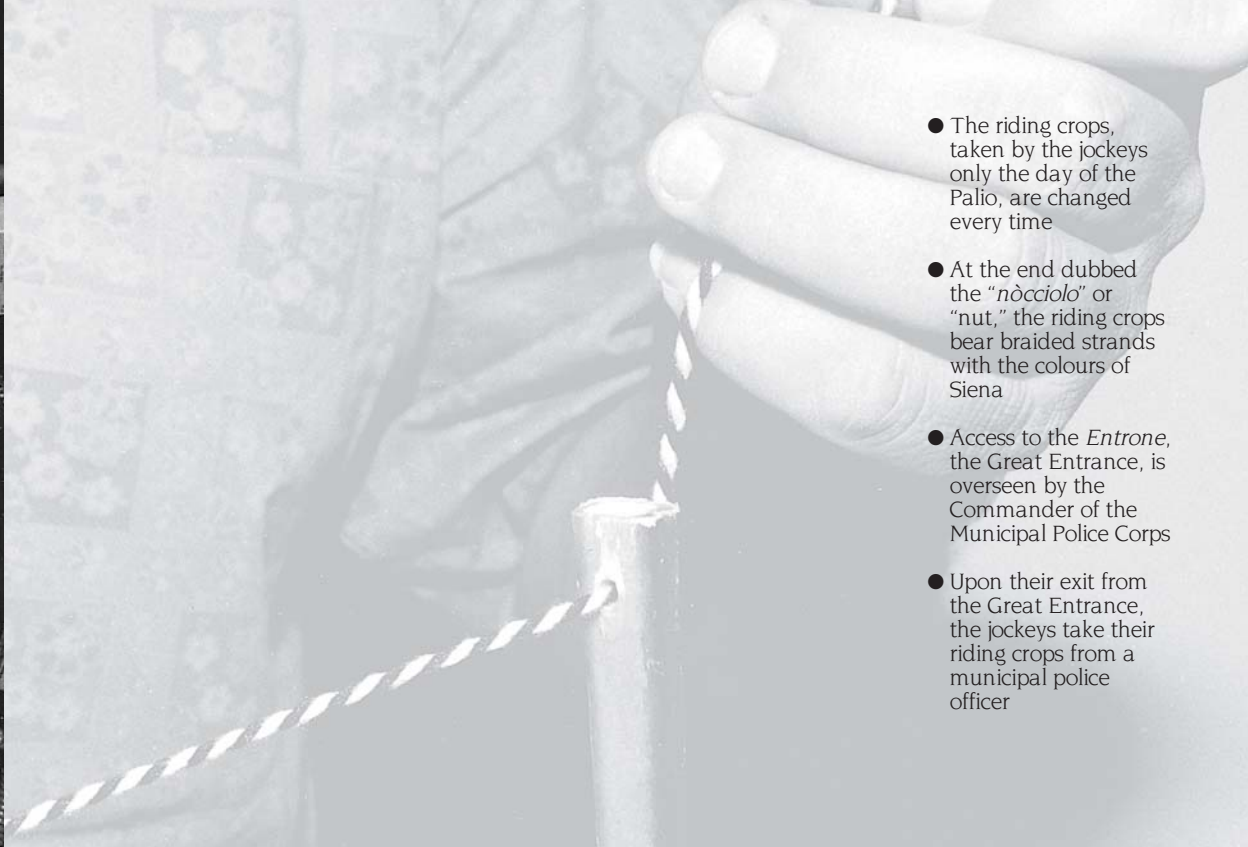


- On the *Carroccio* wagon there are the *drappellone* or Great Banner, the *Balzana* emblem of Siena, four people in costume who represent the *Balia* (the ancient supreme magistracy of the Republic), an attendant who bears the Palio banner (the *drappellone*)

- ... and a pageboy who rings the "martinella" bell







- The riding crops, taken by the jockeys only the day of the Palio, are changed every time
- At the end dubbed the "nòcciolo" or "nut," the riding crops bear braided strands with the colours of Siena
- Access to the *Entrone*, the Great Entrance, is overseen by the Commander of the Municipal Police Corps
- Upon their exit from the Great Entrance, the jockeys take their riding crops from a municipal police officer







- Up on the Judges' Stand the three Deputies of the *Festa* prepare the envelope with the order for the Start...
- ... which is then handed to the official Starter by a municipal police officer
- In front of the "Verrocchio" platform, the starting rope – called the "canapo" – is stretched taut by means of a gearwheel winch







● The start



● The race

● "Give it to us!" The celebrating District members, or *contrada* members, or *contrada* members, or *contrada* members, claim the *drappellone*, the Great Banner, they've just won







● The night after the Palio, some 160 flaming *pignatelle* torches are lit on the battlements of the Palazzo Comunale

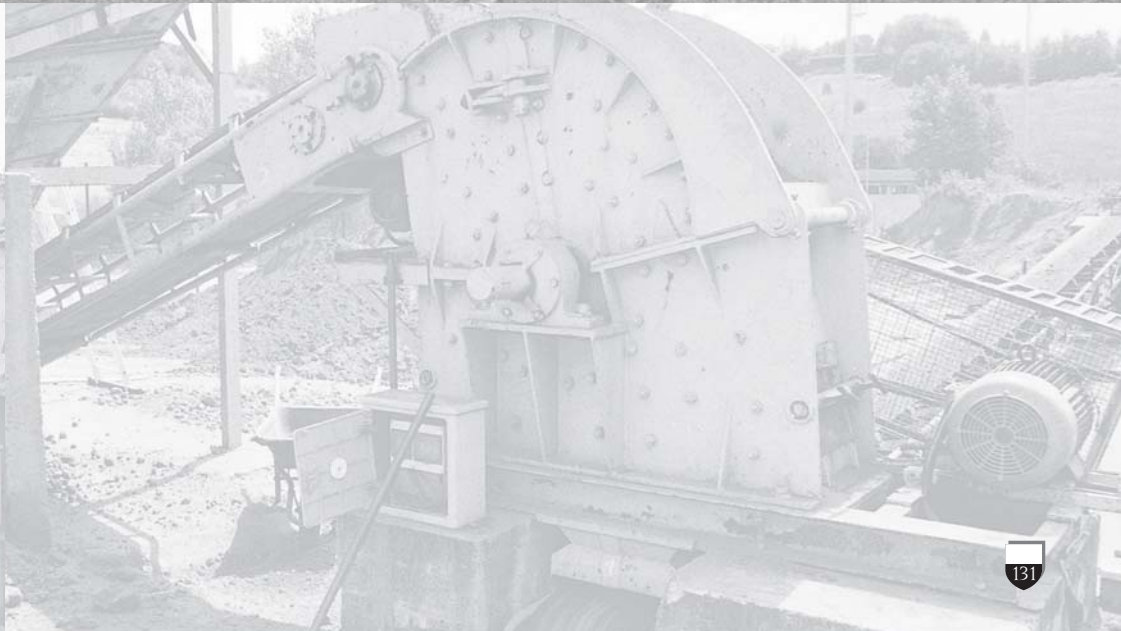
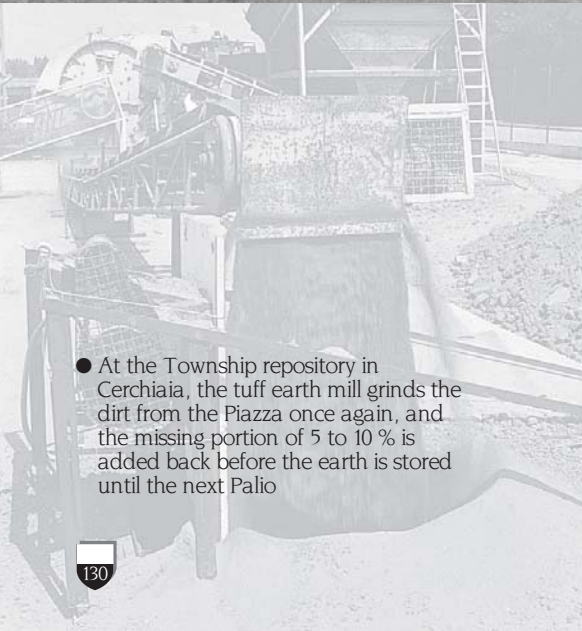




- The day after the Piazza is swept clean, earth is removed and the track washed

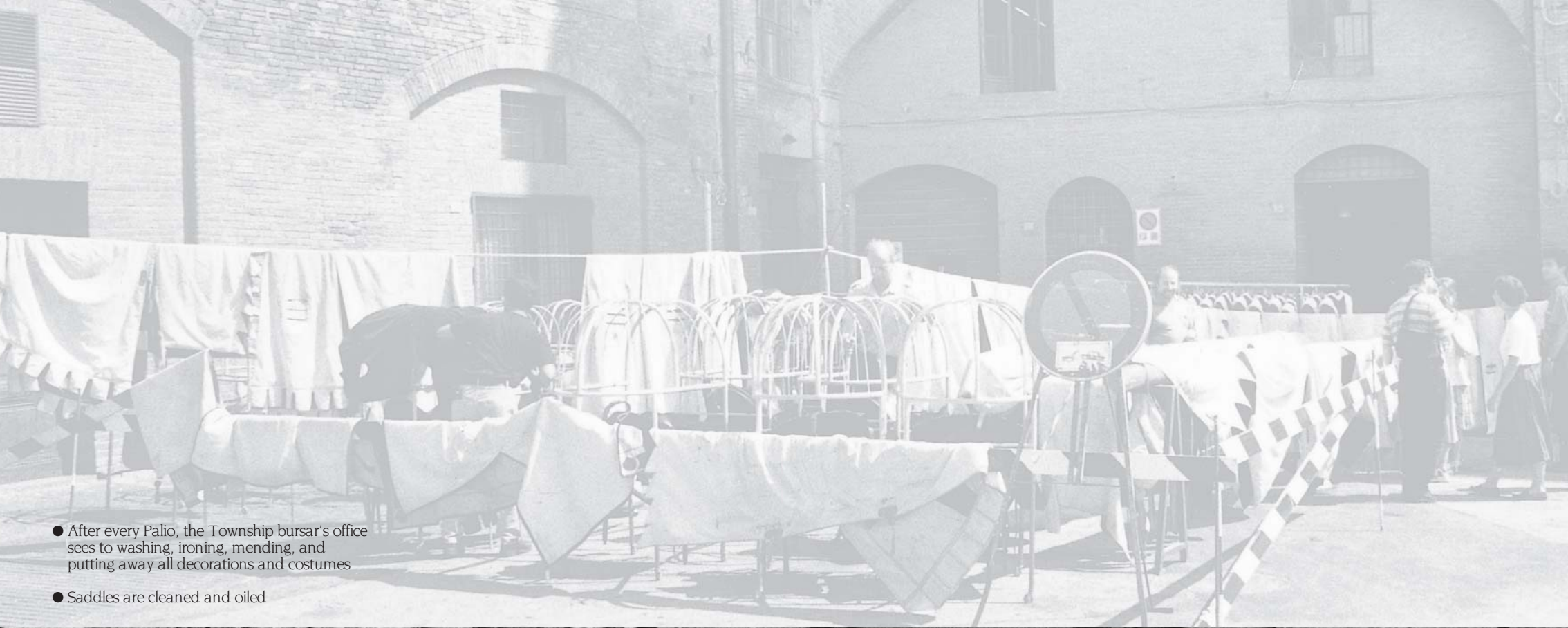






● At the Township repository in Cerchiaia, the tuff earth mill grinds the dirt from the Piazza once again, and the missing portion of 5 to 10 % is added back before the earth is stored until the next Palio





- After every Palio, the Township bursar's office sees to washing, ironing, mending, and putting away all decorations and costumes
- Saddles are cleaned and oiled







- Following the 1991 agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and the Township of Siena, the public-owned Caggio Centre serves as a "retirement home" for Palio horses that stay there for rehabilitation and for breeding



The Contrade  
cities within the city





# The Noble Contrada of the Eagle "Aquila"



Gold Coat of Arms, a black, two-headed eagle surmounted by an imperial crown, grasping in its talons a scepter, a sword, and an imperial globe; the whole set against a radiant golden sun charged with the initials UI (Humbert I).



Colors: Yellow with black and cobalt blue stripes.



*Motto:* "The beak, the talon, and the wing of the Eagle."

*Significance:* Combativeness.

*Military Companies:* Aldobrandino del Mancino, Casato di Sopra, San Pietro in Castelvecchio.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* The Holy Name of Mary, 12 September.

*Oratory:* Church of St John the Baptist, in Via del Casato. Formerly belonging to the *Congregazione dei Tredicini*, the church was designed by Flaminio del Turco and granted to the *Contrada* by the Curia in 1788.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Casato di Sotto 82. ●

*Contrada Association:* "Il Rostro," Vicolo del Verchione 6. ○

[www.contradadellaquila.com](http://www.contradadellaquila.com)



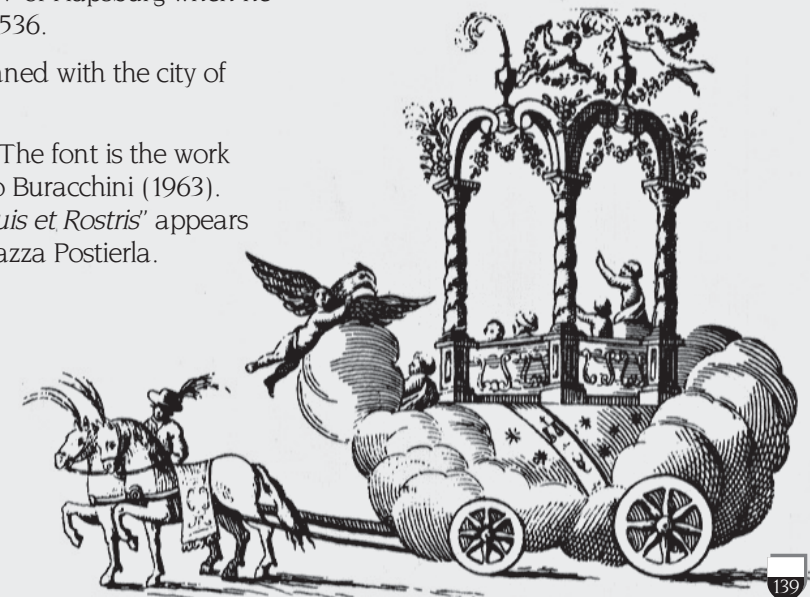
The *Contrada* has the title "Noble" in recognition of the magnificent reception it gave for Charles V of Hapsburg when he visited Siena in 1536.

The Eagle is twinned with the city of L'Aquila.

*Baptismal Font:* The font is the work of sculptor Bruno Buracchini (1963). The motto "*Unguis et Rostris*" appears on its base, in piazza Postierla.

*Allied Contrade:* The Owl, the Dragon.

*Adversary:* The Panther.







Gold Coat of Arms, with a caterpillar on a leafy rose branch, with a flower surmounted by a crown. The chief part of the emblem is quartered red and argent, with a quartered cross in argent and red, courtesy of King of Italy Humbert I.



Colors: Yellow and green with cobalt blue stripes.



*Motto:* In the battle be proud, noble Contrada of bold people

*Significance:* Industriousness.

*Military Companies:* San Pietro a Ovile di Sotto.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* Madonna of the Greatest Penitence, 2 July.

*Oratory:* In Via del Comune, built in 1680, it is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via del Comune 44. ●

*Contrada Association:* “L’Alba”, Via del Comune 44. ○

[www.nobilcontradadelbruco.it](http://www.nobilcontradadelbruco.it)



The *Contrada* has the title “Noble” for the valor of its soldiers in the battle of the Croce del Travaglio against Charles IV of Bohemia (1369) and in recognition of its having instituted a new Siense government in 1371, which was marked by greater popular representation (the *Monte del Popolo*).

*Baptismal Font:* The work of Lorenzo Borgogni (1978), the font is part of a sculpture by Angelo Canevari depicting Barbicone, the legendary leader of the Caterpillar. It is located in front of the top of Vicolo degli Orbachi.

*Allied Contrade:* The Porcupine, the Shell, the Tower.



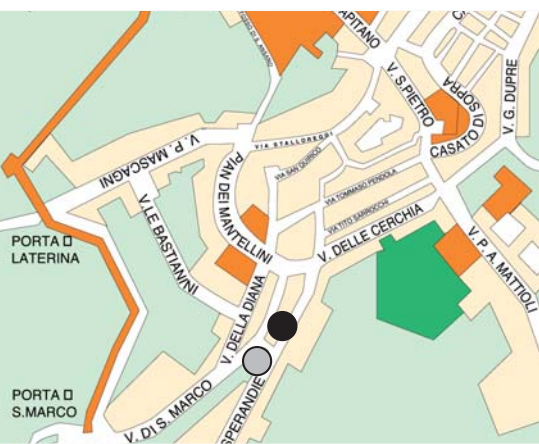




Argent Coat of Arms with a slithering snail studded with the initials U and M (Humbert I and Margaret of Savoy) and red and white roses of Cyprus



Colors: Red and yellow, with cobalt blue borders.



*Motto:* “With slow and heavy step, the Snail enters the field to win.”

*Significance:* Prudence.

*Military Companies:* San Marco, San Quirico, Monistero.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, 29 June.

*Oratory:* Erected on the foundation of the 14th-century Convent of St Paul. It was reconstructed according to a plan drawn up by Flaminio del Turco and granted to the *Contrada* for the celebration of its religious functions in 1814.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via San Marco 31. ●



*Contrada Association:* San Marco, Via San Marco 77. ○

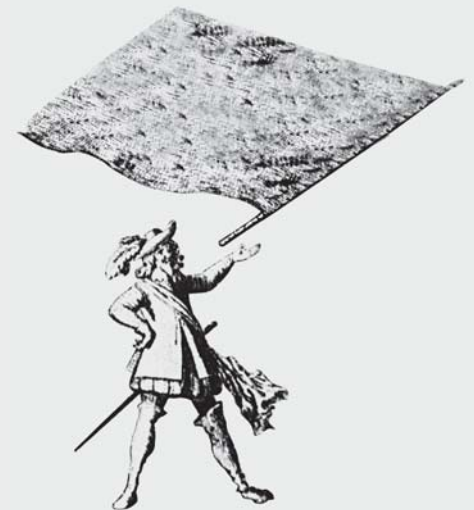
[www.contradadellachiocciola.it](http://www.contradadellachiocciola.it)

*Baptismal Font:* The first *Contrada* baptismal font to be installed, it is the work of sculptor Fulvio Corsini (1947). The inscription on its base reads: “When victory smiles on the Snail, good wine will flow from this fountain.” It is located in front of the *Contrada*'s oratory.

The Chiocciola is twinned with the city of Venezia

*Allied Contrade:* The Porcupine, the Panther, the Forest.

*Adversary:* The Tortoise.







Coat of Arms: Party crest of black and red. An owl seen frontally with two small cobalt blue crests charged with the initials U and M (Humbert I and Margaret of Savoy).



Colors: Black and red with white stripes.



*Motto:* "I see in the night."

*Significance:* Astuteness.

*Military Companies:* San Vigilio, San Pietro in Banchi, San Cristoforo.

*Patron Saints and Feast Day:* St Anthony of Padua and St. Bernard Tolomei, 13 June.

*Oratory:* Built in 1930 within the castle of the Ugurgieri, Via Cecco Angiolieri, and consecrated after World War II.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via Cecco Angiolieri 16. ●

*Contrada Association:* "Cecco Angiolieri," Via Cecco Angiolieri 16. ○

[www.contradadellacivetta.it](http://www.contradadellacivetta.it)



The Owl was conferred the title of "Prior" in recognition of its having hosted the first meeting of the Magistrates of the seventeen *Contrade*, which convenes to discuss issues of common interest.

*Baptismal Font:* The font was planned by Donato Martelli and made by Adolfo Micheli

*Allied Contrade:* The Eagle, the Porcupine, the Giraffe, the Panther.

*Adversary:* The Unicorn.







Argent Coat of Arms, with green dragon, crowned and bearing a small blue pennant with the initial U (Humbert I) in gold.



Colors: Red and green with yellow stripes.



*Motto:* “The ardor in my heart becomes flames in my mouth.”

*Significance:* Ardor.

*Military Companies:* Sant’Egidio, San Donato ai Montanini.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* St Catherine of Siena, last Sunday of May.

*Oratory:* Church of St Catherine, in Piazza Matteotti, formerly occupied by the nuns of Paradiso, given to the *Contrada* by a granducal decree in 1787.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Piazza Matteotti 18. ●

*Costumes’ Museum:* Via del Paradiso 21 ●

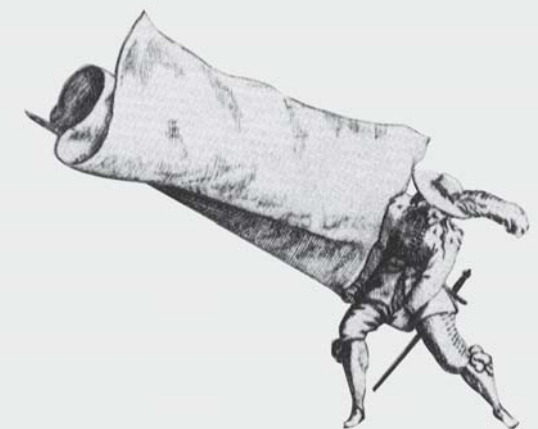
*Contrada Association:* “Camporegio”, Via Camporegio, 2 ○

[www.contradadeldrago.it](http://www.contradadeldrago.it)

*Baptismal Font:* The font is the work of sculptor Vico Consorti (1977). It bears the inscription: “The *Contrada*’s love of the artwork of Vico Consorti hands on to the Dragon *Contrada* members yet to be born the memories of the great Priors Mario Calamati and Alberto Rossi.” It is situated in Piazza Matteotti in front of the historic seat.

Since 1970, the *Contrada* of the Dragon has been recognized as the Moral Board of Canonical Law.

*Allied Contrada:* The Eagle.





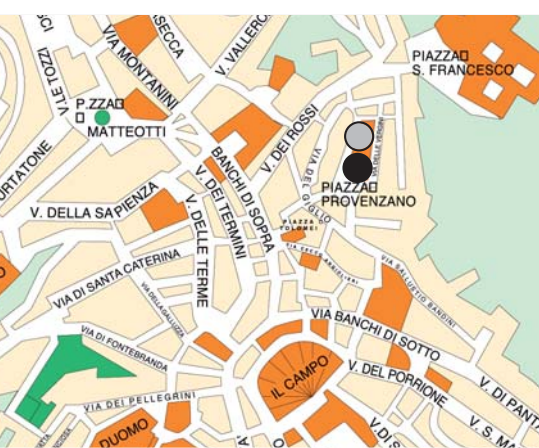
# The Imperial Contrada of the Giraffe “Giraffa”



Argent Coat of Arms, with giraffe led by a blackamoor in Turkish costume, surmounted by a ribbon inscribed with the Motto: UMBERTUS I DEDIT.



Colors: Red and white.



*Motto:* “The higher the head, the greater the glory.”

*Significance:* Elegance.

*Military Companies:* San Pietro a Ovile di Sopra.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* Virgin Mary of the Visitation, celebrated on the first Sunday of June.

*Oratory:* Church of the Suffrage, in the crypt of the Collegiate Church of Provenzano. In 1969, the Giraffe was declared Moral Board of Canonical Law.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Piazzetta della Giraffa 2. ●

*Contrada Association:* “Società della Giraffa”, Via delle Vergini 18. ○

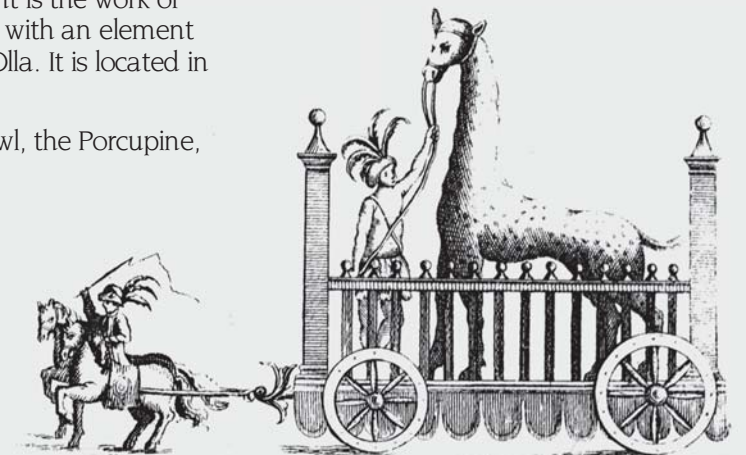
[www.contradadellagiraffa.it](http://www.contradadellagiraffa.it)



The title “Imperial” was conferred by decree of Victor Emanuel III for the Contrada’s victory in the Palio of July 1936 which was dedicated to the Empire.

*Baptismal Font:* The font is the work of Salvatore Bocci in 1970, with an element in bronze by Pier Luigi Olla. It is located in Piazzetta della Giraffa.

*Allied Contrade:* The Owl, the Porcupine, the Panther.





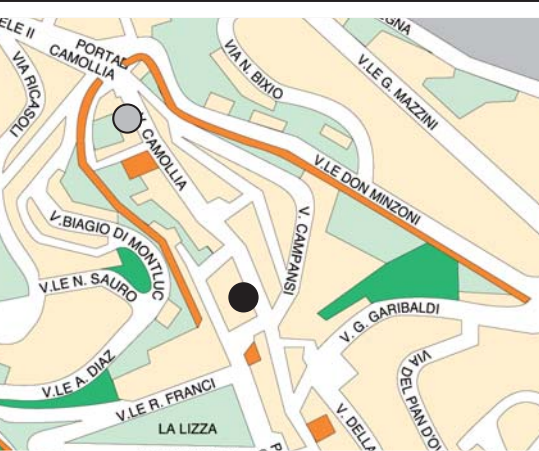
# The Sovereign Contrada of the Porcupine "Istrice"



Argent Coat of Arms. A porcupine standing on a tuft of grass, bearing a crown surmounted by two red Cyprus roses, a blue Savoy knot, and the octagonal cross of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, in white on a red field.



Colors: White with black, red, and cobalt blue stripes.



*Motto:* "Only in defense do I use my quills to wound."

*Significance:* Sharpness.

*Military Companies:* Santo Stefano, San Vincenzo, la Magione, San Bartolomeo.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* St Bartholomew, 24 August.

*Oratory:* Via Camollia, formerly the Church of Sts Vincent and Anastasius (1144). Following numerous restorations and alterations, the Church was granted in perpetual use to the members of the Porcupine in 1849.



*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via Camollia, 89-86 ●

*Contrada Association:* "Il Leone", Via Camollia, 207/209 ○

[www.istrice.org](http://www.istrice.org)

The *Contrada* was conferred the title "Sovereign" in 1980 by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which had its headquarters in the Camollia quarter since the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

*Baptismal Font:* The font is the work of Vico Consorti (1962). It bears the motto of the *Contrada* and is located in Via Malta.

The Porcupine is twinned with the city of Perugia.

*Allied Contrade:* The Caterpillar, the Snail, the Owl, the Giraffe.

*Adversary:* The She-Wolf.











Argent Coat of Arms, the She-Wolf of Rome with Romulus and Remus on a grassy field, surmounted by a crown. The red and silver border is charged with alternately red and silver crosses.



Colors: Black and white with orange stripes.



*Motto: Et Urbis et Senarum Signum et Decus.*

*Significance: Loyalty.*

*Military Companies: San Donato allato alla chiesa, Sant' Andrea.*

*Patron Saint and Feast Day: Saint Rock, on the first Sunday in September.*

*Oratory: In Via Vallerozzi, the 16<sup>th</sup> century church that originally belonged to the brotherhood of Saint Rock. At its side there stands a She-Wolf-crested column offered by the city of Rome.*

*Historic Seat and Museum: Via Vallerozzi, 63 ●*

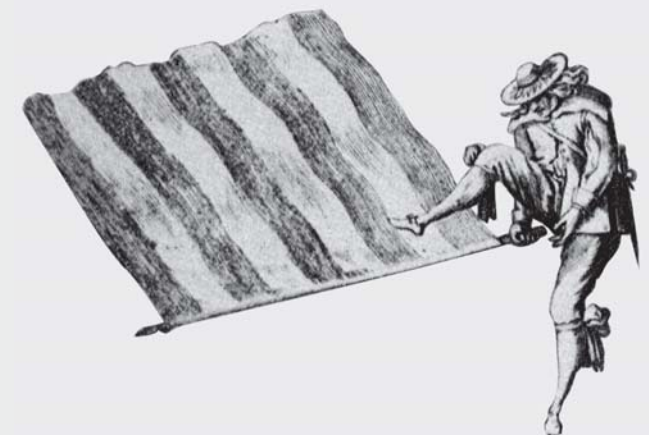
*Contrada Association: "Romolo e Remo", Via di Fontenuova, 1 ○*

[www.contradadellalupa.it](http://www.contradadellalupa.it)

*Baptismal Font: The font is the work of architect Giovanni Barsacchi, with a bronze She-Wolf by Emilio Montagnani (1962).*

The She-Wolf is twinned with the city of Rome.

*Adversary: The Porcupine.*







Blue Coat of Arms. A silver shell surmounted by a granducal crown between two branches of red coral, three Savoy knots, and two roses, one red, the other silver.



Colors: Cobalt blue with yellow and red stripes.



*Motto:* "It is the red of the coral that burns in my heart."

*Significance:* Discretion.

*Military Companies:* Abbazia nuova di Sopra, Abbazia nuova di Sotto.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* St Gaetano of Thiene, 7 August.

*Oratory:* Between Via de' Pispini and Via dell'Oliviera, built in 1680 by the *Contrada* members and dedicated to their patron saint.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via dei Pispini 68/70. ●

*Contrada Association:* "La Pania", Via dei Pispini 112. ○

[www.nobilecontradadelnicchio.it](http://www.nobilecontradadelnicchio.it)



*Baptismal Font:* Fountain of Pispini (16<sup>th</sup> century).

The *Contrada* was given the title "Noble" for the valor its troops showed at Montaperti (1260) and at Porta Pispini (1527); for having brought water to the ward in 1469 and to the Fountain of Pispini in 1534.

The Shell is twinned with the town of Asciano.

*Allied Contrade:* The Caterpillar, the Wave, the Tortoise.

*Adversary:* The Ram.







Gold Coat of Arms, with a goose royally crowned upon a lawn, the Savoy cross suspended on a blue ribbon at its neck.



Colors: Green and white with red stripes.



Motto: "Clangit ad arma."

Significance: Wariness.

Military Companies: Sant' Antonio, San Pellegrino.

Patron Saint and Feast Day: St Catherine of Siena, 29 April. The Contrada celebrates her during the month of May.

Oratory: Built between 1464 and 1474 by the residents of the Fontebranda quarter, on the ground floor of the house where St Catherine was born in 1347.

Historic Seat and Museum: Vico del Tiratoio, 13. ●

Contrada Association: "Trieste", Via Santa Caterina, 55. ○

www.contradadeloca.it



The Contrada was given the title "Noble" in recognition of the valor its soldiers showed in the battles of Montemaggio (1145) and Montaperti (1260) after which it was awarded the title of preceptor, and in the war of Siena (1552-1555), as well as for having built at its own expense the Bottini aqueduct.

Baptismal Font: The Contrada baptism takes place at the Fontebranda Fountains (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century) located in Via Fontebranda.

The Goose is twinned with the city of Trieste.

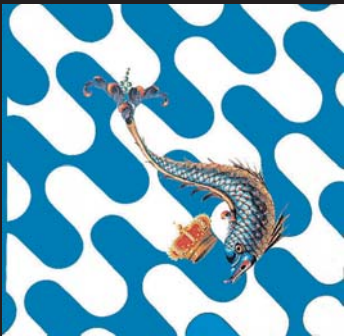
Adversary: The Tower.







Argent Coat of Arms, with a dolphin surmounted by a crown and swimming in a blue sea.



Colors: White and azure.



*Motto:* "The color of the sky, the might of the sea."

*Significance:* Bliss.

*Military Companies:* Casato di Sotto, San Salvatore.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* Our Lady of the Visitation, 2 July.

*Oratory:* The 16th-century church, attributed to Baldassarre Peruzzi, stands at the Arch of St Joseph, and was granted to the Contrada by edict of Grand Duke Peter Leopold II in 1787.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via Giovanni Duprè, 111. ●

*Contrada Association:* "Giovanni Duprè", Vicolo San Salvatore, 24. ○

[www.contradacapitanadellonda.it](http://www.contradacapitanadellonda.it)



*Baptismal Font:* The font was designed by Algero Rosi. The insignia on it were made by Vittorio Conti. The bronze sculptures are by Alfonso Buoninsegni (1972). It is located in front of the oratory at the beginning of Via Fontanella.

*Allied Contrade:* The Shell, the Tortoise, the Ram.

*Adversary:* The Tower.

The Wave is twinned with the town of Talamone.







Argent Coat of Arms, with rampant panther in natural colors. In the upper left-hand quarter appears the initial U (Humbert I) on a white and blue background.



Colors: Red and blue with white borders.



*Mottoes:* “The Panther roared and the people stirred.” / “My pounce knocks down all obstacles.”

*Significance:* Audacity.

*Military Companies:* Stalloreggi di Dentro, Stalloreggi di Fuori.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* St John the Baptist Beheaded, 29 August.

*Oratory:* The *Contrada* currently uses the church of the Carmel in Pian de' Mantellini, officiated by the Carmelites and linked to their friary.

*Historic Seat and Museum:*  
Via San Quirico, 26 ●

*Contrada Association:* “Due Porte”,  
Via San Quirico, 9 ○

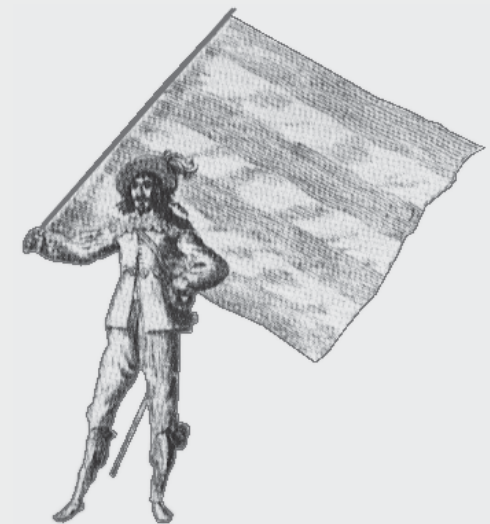
[www.contradadellapantera.it](http://www.contradadellapantera.it)

*Baptismal Font:* Work in bronze by sculptor Giulio Corsini (1977). The *Contrada* motto is inscribed on the travertine base. It is located in Piazza del Conte.

The Panther is twinned with the city of Lucca.

*Allied Contrade:* The Snail, the Owl, the Giraffe, the Unicorn.

*Adversary:* The Eagle.







Argent Coat of Arms, a rhinoceros at the foot of a leafy oak tree, with hunting trophies on the limbs; the whole is surmounted by a radiant golden sun charged with the initial U (Humbert I) against a cobalt blue field.



Colors: Green and orange with white stripes.



*Motto:* "The first Forest in the Field."

*Significance:* Strength.

*Military Companies:* Vallepiatta, San Giovanni, Porta Salaia.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, 15 August. It is celebrated on the fourth Sunday in August.

*Oratory:* The 16th-century church of St Sebastian, formerly belonging to the Jesuate nuns, in Via Franciosa.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Piazzetta della Selva, 5 ●

*Contrada Association:* "Società della Contrada della Selva (once Rinoceronte)", Via Vallepiatta, 26 ○

[www.contradadellaselva.it](http://www.contradadellaselva.it)



*Baptismal Font:* The work of sculptor Vinicio Guastatori (1965), the font is surmounted by a rhinoceros. It bears the motto of the *Contrada* and is located in front of the historic seat.

The Forest is twinned with the city of Cuneo.

*Allied Contrade:* The Snail, the Tortoise.



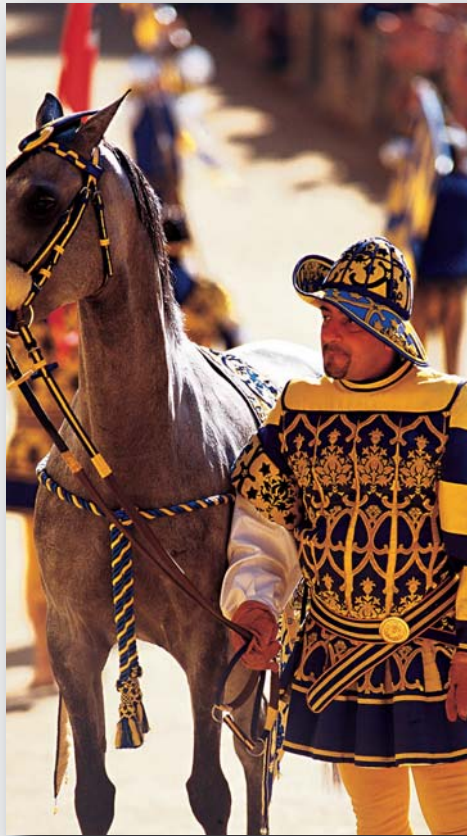
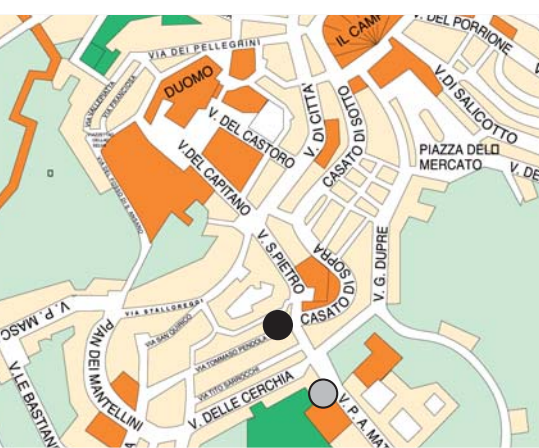




Gold Coat of Arms, a tortoise on a gold field strewn with blue Savoy knots alternated with daisies.



Colors: Yellow and cobalt blue.



*Motto:* “Strength and perseverance I harbor.”

*Significance:* Steadfastness.

*Military Companies:* Porta all’Arco, Sant’Agata.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* St Anthony of Padua, 13 June.

*Oratory:* In Via Tommaso Pendola. Constructed by the *Contrada* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via Tommaso Pendola, 21 ●

*Contrada Association:* “Castelsenio”, Piazzetta Silvio Gigli, 2 ○

[www.tartuca.it](http://www.tartuca.it)

*Baptismal Font:* The font is the work of sculptor Bruno Buracchini (1951), and is located in Via Tommaso Pendola.

The Tortoise is twinned with the city of Trento.

*Allied Contrade:* The Unicorn, the Wave, the Shell, the Forest.

*Adversary:* The Snail.







Gold Coat of Arms, with an elephant standing on the grass bearing a red caparison with an argent cross and a topped tower flying a red pennant with a silver cross.



Colors: Red with white and cobalt blue stripes.



*Motto:* "Power as well as might."

*Significance:* Strength.

*Military Companies:* Salicotto di Sopra, Salicotto di Sotto, Spadaforte, Rialto, San Giusto.

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* St James the Greatest 25 July and St Ann, 26 July. They are celebrated on the last Sunday in July.

*Oratory:* Erected in Via Salicotto by the Republic of Siena in memory of the victory against the armies of de' Medici and those of the pope in the battle of Porta Camollia in 1526. The building was completed in 1530 and mass has been celebrated there since 1536.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via Salicotto, 76 ●

*Contrada Association:* "L'Elefante", Via Salicotto, 92 ○

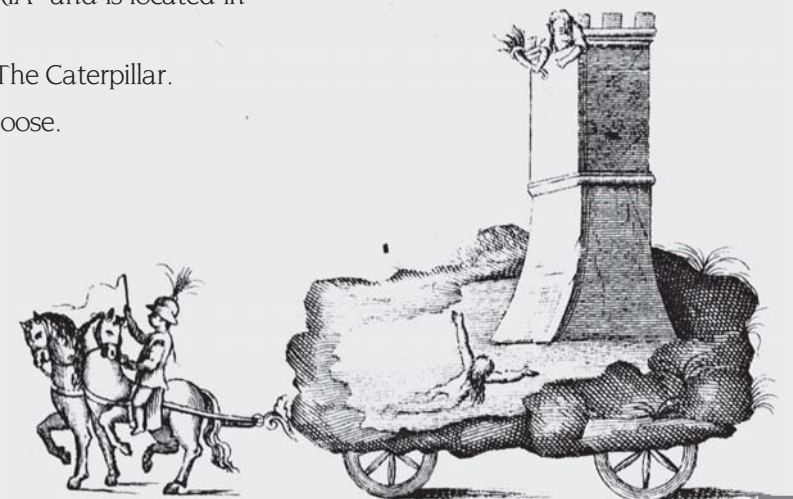
[www.contradadellatorre.it](http://www.contradadellatorre.it)



*Baptismal Font:* The font is the work of sculptor Mauro Berrettini (1984); it replaced the one sculpted by Fausto Corsini in 1954. It bears the *Contrada's* motto of "VICTORIA" and is located in Via Salicotto.

*Allied Contrade:* The Caterpillar.

*Adversary:* The Goose.





# The Contrada of the Ram "Valdimontone"



Gold Coat of Arms, with rampant ram bearing an imperial crown. In the upper left-hand quarter appears the letter U (Humbert I) in gold against a blue field, surmounted by a royal crown.



Colors: Red and yellow with white borders.



*Motto:* "Under my blow, the great wall crumbles."

*Significance:* Perseverance.

*Military Companies:* Borgo Santa Maria, Sant'Angelo a Montone, Samoreci (San Maurizio).

*Patron Saint and Feast Day:* Madonna of the Good Counsel, celebrated 26 April.

*Oratory:* Church of the Holy Trinity, granted in perpetual use to the *Contrada*, which celebrates its mass there every Sunday.

*Historic Seat and Museum:* Via di Valdimontone ●

*Contrada Association:* "Castelmontorio", Piazza Manconi, 6 ○

[www.valdimontone.it](http://www.valdimontone.it)

*Baptismal Font:* Baptism is celebrated in the *Contrada's* oratory on its feast day.

*Allied Contrade:* The Wave.

*Adversary:* The Shell.





## Quotable quotations

COMMUNITY	<p><b>Luigi De Mossi</b> (Mayor of Siena) At first glance, our community might appear to be split into rival factions when in fact it is remarkably cohesive. Originating in our central piazza and emanating outwards to embrace our distinctive colors and shared points of view, our collective values always travel with us, beyond our city walls, remaining a pillar of strength amidst the turmoil of the world. Our Sienese way of life endures, transcending any one individual life and linking all those who went before and those who have yet to be born. This is why Siena is so unique. When we speak of community, we look around and recognize ourselves in each other, even within those rivalries which are in some ways as precious as the alliances that unite us.</p>	<p><b>Umberto Eco</b> (semiotician) For which we honor the image of Hermes that adorns the floor of the Cathedral of this noble city. But against his seduction let us remember that, if one must run in the Palio, a horse is a horse is a horse. (1992)</p>
STANDARD-BEARER	<p><b>Arrigo Pecchioli</b> (journalist, essayist) And the Standard-Bearer is the wonder of the <i>Contrade</i> of Siena, for he mimes a dance of silk, repeats the swordfights of the ancient master defenders of the insignia from the 1600s, raises the flag in the air to the cheers or the jeers of the crowd, drapes his body in it... at the end he furls it and turns to hurl it, but with greater violence and boldness, into the sky... (1974)</p> <p><b>Enrico Toti</b> (Standard-Bearer in the Piazza from 1962 to 1975) In the Palio the Standard-Bearer has a privileged role. Indeed he translates strength, passion, identity, and the pride of belonging by means of the refined, silky arpeggio of his flag. (1998)</p>	<p><b>Luca Luchini</b> (journalist, essayist) But those who speak ill of the Palio and of the Sienese, what do they know about how a horse might feel as it parades along the yellow earth in the Piazza before thousands of spectators, or about the joy that can be felt when the tears of <i>Contrada</i> members are mixed with one's own sweat?</p> <p><b>Roberto Morrocchi</b> (journalist) The horse is the true protagonist of the Palio. A hero without flaw, loved, pampered, desired, cried over. Guardian of the <i>Contrada</i> member's dreams: the horse runs for him with all its strength and courage, braving the perils of a track that is at once magical and unyielding. The horse never sells out, never feels fear, makes no calculations. It never lets its... hoof be held by all-too-human feelings. The horse alone may enter by right into myth, into legend. Side by side with the horse go the memories of triumph, the disappointments of a scorching defeat... (1998)</p>
LOVE	<p><b>Piero Bargellini</b> (writer) Love for one's <i>Contrada</i> does not take away from love for Siena; to the contrary, it makes it stronger. Beyond love for Siena, love for Italy as well. "I love Italy," a distinguished citizen told me with great seriousness, "because I love Siena, because I love my <i>Contrada</i>. The roots of my love reach deeper than do those of any other Italian." (1961)</p> <p><b>Gianna Nannini</b> (rock singer) Those who don't live in Siena can't understand. If someone doesn't belong to a <i>Contrada</i>, he can't know how we Sienese love horses. We also have an horses retirement structure, does any other town have it? (2011)</p>	<p><b>Á COMPLEX</b> <b>Ezra Pound</b> (poet) "And down there they've had their Palio..." "Let's not descend to this Calvary," said the priest - upon the damnably hard bench awaiting the horses - and the parade and the Carroccio wagon and the game of the flags - the waving of the flags of the Palio - "It's not a '<i>ontrada</i>, it's a complex" - explained an expert to one less expert - making reference to what was left of the guilds or the arts - (1937)</p>
AUTHENTICITY	<p><b>Giuliano Catoni</b> (historian) The Palio continues to be experienced intensely because it has refused to fall into the pattern of "modern" festivals, all of which are born from the same unfailing original sin: namely, that of having been scripted by the authorities on high. (1982)</p>	<p>CONFEDERATION <b>Giulio Pepi</b> (essayist, journalist) ...to have a precise vision of Siena, we would do well to make clear that we are dealing not so much with a city as with a confederation of seventeen cities. And this is so true that the territory is divided by boundaries established first by habit and then by a law of the State (1729) which had and which still has full legal value. (1974)</p>
FLAG	<p><b>Giancarlo Galardi</b> (Standard Bearer in the Piazza from 1949-1958) The flag... if I could I would have hurled it above the rooftops of Siena, so that everyone could see the purity of the colors that are the image of my <i>contrada</i>. (1998)</p> <p><b>Alfredo "Ciappata" Donnini</b> (Standard-Bearer in the Piazza from 1954 to 1962) Being a Standard-Bearer is the most beautiful thing. You enter from the Casato with the colors of the Goose <i>Contrada</i> on your body and in your heart. You carry out one, two, three flag-waving routines with the terror of making a mistake... and with the confidence of being the best. Then all seventeen of you line up from San Martino's corner to the Casato for the last hurl. And there you give yet another great effort to throw the flag of the <i>Paperone</i> [the Goose] higher than all the rest, all the way to the turrets of the Palazzo, to touch the sky. And then you are happy. (Circa 1980)</p> <p><b>Pope John XXIII</b> Your flaming flags, your glorious and historical Palio, are symbols of perennial youth, of hearty discipline, of sincere patriotic love. (1959)</p>	<p>BOUNDARIES <b>Walter Tyndale</b> (writer) I had been in Siena for barely an hour when I witnessed a dispute over the question of whether our <i>pensione</i> stood in the <i>Contrada</i> of the Goose or in the <i>Contrada</i> of the Dragon. It was a true enigma, even more so when I realized that the lodgers who had their rooms in the Goose believed themselves much greater than those in the Dragon.</p> <p>CONFLICT <b>Federico Fellini</b> (director) You people of Siena have a precious thing, and it's singular how in the conflict between the <i>Contrade</i> there lies your union. All the world is flaking away, but there you are with the aliveness of these rites and with your loyalty to the centuries. I believe you are the only example in Italy. There's a sort of mysterious cord between you and the Sienese of every other age. It's beautiful, very beautiful! (circa 1970)</p>
BATTLE	<p><b>Luigi Gianoli</b> (journalist for <i>La Gazzetta dello Sport</i>) They're off. Thus, I believe, do the devils gallop in hell: it's not a race, but a ferocious red-hot battle in the midst of a storm of whiplashes; the sharp curves do not break the flight, but seem to add pique and rancour. (1952)</p>	<p>CONTRADA <b>Alda Merini</b> (poet) Hear, hear / weary <i>Contrade</i> / heralds of love and war that run / in the name of the Virgin / to the mouths of lions. / Rejoice, hear, / beautiful <i>Contrade</i> / full of fairies and / balconies bursting forth with love and the audacity of Tuscany. / Drink wine and water to invigorate yourselves / and hope that then / you can surrender to the glory of life. (2007)</p> <p><b>Piero Misciattelli</b> (essayist) Siena lives for and thanks to its <i>Contrade</i> not only in the days of the Palio, but for the entire year. They perpetuate among the citizens customs and habits that are outstandingly communal. They reaffirm religious and civil ties. (1932)</p>
BLESSING	<p><b>Gaetano Bonicelli</b> (Archbishop of Siena) But how can you be amazed that in Siena the horses are blessed? Perhaps on the Feast of Saint Anthony in all the cities, in all the towns, the cows are not blessed? Maybe the priest never enters the stall, especially in certain rural areas? And in the churches, even the smallest animals are not to be blessed? (1996)</p> <p><b>Renzo Cassigoli</b> (journalist for <i>L'Unità</i>) What a happy city is one that blesses not jockeys but horses. (1998)</p>	<p><b>Guido Piovene</b> (essayist) Attachment to the <i>Contrada</i> has got nothing to do with ideas, with political parties, with personal interests. It depends exclusively on the place of birth, on ancestry, on everything before birth; it is not thought, but passion agreed to by simple entry into the world. The man from Siena feels for his <i>Contrada</i> more deeply than for anything else that which was called "the demon of belonging."</p>
BELL	<p><b>Sandro Scali</b> (journalist for <i>Il Carroccio</i>) The voice of the Sunto bell is great. The sound is that of a bell of war, harsh. The two tones are dark. From far away, only he is heard. After the last chime, the silence is loud. (1992)</p>	<p>Judith Hook (historian) The Palio is essential to the life of the <i>Contrade</i>. The <i>Contrade</i> in turn are essential to the life of Siena. The Palio, the <i>Contrade</i>, and Siena thus constitute a virtually interdependent trinity. (1979)</p>
THE RACE	<p><b>Augusto Mattioli</b> (journalist for <i>AGI</i>) The only true thing about the Palio is the few seconds of the race, in which reason gives way to instinct. (1998)</p>	<p><b>Daniele Magrini</b> (journalist, essayist) In a world in which interpersonal relationships become ever more difficult, in a society in which myths and certainties fall down one by one, in Siena the <i>Contrada</i> remains. (1986)</p>
HORSE	<p><b>Paola Fallaci</b> (journalist for <i>Oggi</i>) Having been to Siena to see whether or not they treat the animals cruelly, I decided to be reborn as a mare... Yes, it's good to be reborn as mares. I say mares because the male horses are geldings, which is the only unpleasant trick that's played on them. (1986)</p> <p><b>Marguerite Henry</b> (writer) Man seeks to set up everything, but the horse... the horse knows only one law: that of winning! This is the most beautiful and most bitter lesson of the Palio. (1960)</p>	<p>THE RACE <b>Paolo Cesarini</b> (journalist, essayist) "Sell out! Come on, come on. Go, go, go. Give it to 'em. Whip 'em, get its back straight. Tower, Tower, <i>Torrina Benedetta Santa Caterina</i> give strength to the Goose. God wants you to kill him at Saint Martin's Corner. Hold tight, hold tight damn it. Come on, go, whip 'em. Pass him, pass him. Sell-out assassin, he's holding back, look how he's holding back. Saint Antonio, do a grace and break the legs of the Snail. Great Giraffe. Mamma, mamma, it's the Forest, the Little Forest, the Great Forest. They're closing in on him, they're closing in on him; cowards, they threw him against the mattresses. The Shell is coming back, go Shell, you're in first, go Shell, keep them behind you with the whip, take it wide, stay on top, keep with it, keep with it, now come on. <i>Madonnina</i> protect him. Oh God he's going down, Oh God he's falling. Sell out. He threw himself off, he threw himself off the horse. I'll kill him." (1960)</p>



**Manuela Audisio** (journalist for *La Repubblica*)

"...a minute-and-a-half orgasm which lasts and has been prepared for a lifetime. Like feeling too hot under the covers." (1985)

**Jean Pierre Clerc** (journalist for *Le Monde*)

"The horse race is an incredibly intense moment, experienced as such by the Sieneese, none of whom would be elsewhere for all the gold in the world; a moment the intensity of which could not fail to excite even the coolest of foreigners, yet it lasts no longer than a flash of lightning..." (1987)

**Duccio Balestracci** (historian)

Now the horses come out from the Great Entrance and they go to the starting rope: don't say anything, don't ask anything. It's the most terrible moment for anyone born here: respect it. They enter the starting area: watch and be quiet. They're off. Around you anything can happen. The Palio is this, too. Experience it, understand it, but don't try to be part of it yourself. You'd only manage to give life to parody: spare yourself and spare us. It's only a little more than a minute: now it's all finished. (1998)

**Vincenzo Tessandori** (journalist for *La Stampa*)

Three times around the Campo on an improvised track, wild cheering, the most intense minute and a half in the world lived by an agitated crowd. Man can only lose and the one who wins is the horse, for he can win even "scosso," riderless. And then, the horse is the *Contrada*. (1998)

MONEY

**Beatrice Schlag** (journalist for *Sports*)

"Where, outside of Siena, does a race exist in which hundreds of thousands of marks change hands while nothing is earned except honor? ...and where else, at the end of the day, can one lose a race in which one hasn't even participated? ... It's the toughest race in the world." (1987)

WOMAN

**Simonetta Losi** (journalist for *Il Carroccio*)

Women within the *Contrada*: The other side of the flag. A different color, indispensable, which, stitched to the male component, forms a unique whole. Passion for the *Contrada*, visceral, has no gender. What's special, if anything, is the solicitousness for "our men" when they become protagonists of the ritual. Women in the background only for the Palio as a metaphor for war: always more present in the Palio and in the *Contrada* as a metaphor for life, even in managerial roles. (1998)

**Maria Pia Corbelli** (journalist for *La voce del Campo*)

Women have an important role also in the Palio, the inimitable Palio, an uplifting rite which brings back to the present the history of the Republic of Siena. Watching the past and present episodes in which women have been active participants, we see women Captains, Priors, and Jockeys parade by on the screen. Among them all we note, for the indispensability of her participation, Violante of Bavaria. (1998)

**Maria Grazia Testi Botteghi** (Prior of the Porcupine *Contrada* from 1990 to 1992)

As in social life, women in recent years have achieved equal opportunity even within the environment of the *Contrada*, an emblematically fixed institution on the one hand but on the other hand dynamic and not at all cut off from our time. The *Contrada* has known how to appreciate women's abilities and gifts so much so that women have been assigned ever more important and prestigious tasks.

**Sonia Corsi** (journalist for *Il Nuovo Campo*)

Women and the Palio: a relationship in continual evolution and, though holding fast to the traditional notion that the Palio is a masculine festival, women and the Palio have a relationship in continual evolution. Though tradition dictates that our festival is dedicated to a woman even if it is made up of men, as time passes, the world of women has not been denied its own important space. (1998)

AFTER  
THE PALIO

**Guido Parigi** (journalist for *Il Nuovo Campo*)

The Palio was getting close. In a long meeting my collaborators explained to me what was to be done and to whom the various facets of the four-day kirmess should be assigned. As for the after-Palio interviews, "No problem. I'll take care of them," Carlo Fontani said with certainty. He wasn't worried. The good Fontani was an excellent, seasoned, trusted journalist. But his *Contrada* won, and it was only a week later that I saw him. The interviews were never written. (1998)

THE GREAT  
BANNER

**Renato Guttuso** (painter of the Palio of August 1971)

In my opinion it is a classic popular picture, that is, made for the people, like the paintings on the wagons in my native Sicily: rest assured, I will do everything in the right way, but I'll take old habits away from people.

**Corrado Cagli** (painter of the Palio of August 1972)

The Palio either in some ways becomes a painting, a representation of life, if only in allegorical form, or it becomes a kind of tapestry, an abstract and geometrical composition of symbols and references consecrated by tradition.

**Cesare Olmastroni** (painter of the Palio of July 1982)

Painting the Palio was a great thrill, which I had dreamed of ever since I was seven years old and I saw the race for the first time. Such a thrill I would wish for all painters. I've had the good fortune of meeting all the painters who have painted the Palio in the last twenty-five years (because I procured material for them on behalf of the Municipality of Siena), from Maccari to Guttuso, from Adami to Tadini. I saw all of them, as soon as they came to Siena to attend the festival, as they were moved by the fact of having made a people happy.

**Eduardo Arroyo** (painter of the Palio of August 1991)

"I want to paint a Palio that will make the people happy."

JOCKEY

**Paolo Maccherini** (journalist for the *RAI*)

In the person of the jockey, active instrument of all passion and of all suffering, the Sieneese unconsciously incarnate and recognize themselves, in the sometimes mortifying, other times uplifting, dimensions of the present that matters. (1998)

**Bino Sanminiatielli** (writer)

The jockeys, armed with a riding crop of toughened bull tendons, are at the starting gate. They have the shirts and long trousers of convicts. From underneath their helmets appear sinister grins, coarse faces, all rips and patches. (1960)

**Aldo "Bubbolo" Mantovani** (jockey)

For this Piazza you need three things: heart, liver [meaning, "courage"], and hocks. (circa 1930)

SECTARIANISM

**Giorgio Batini** (journalist *La Nazione*)

Sectarianism and tolerance are starting up again. Sworn political adversaries hug each other in the *Contrada*, long-time non-believers donate gifts to the church, praying to the Madonna of Provenzano and to Mary of the Assumption, Patron of Siena. They would let themselves be torn to bits to win the Great Banner with the sacred image. (1966)

**Joseph Forsyth** (educator)

The strongest tie between Italians is the coming together of hatred. Never had the Tuscans been unanimous except to hate the other Italian states; the Sieneese always agreed with each other when it came to hating the other Tuscans; the citizens of Siena the Sieneese provincials; and in the same city the same passion has found a way to split itself up among the various *Contrade*. (1802)

FAZZOLETTO

**Claude Lévi Strauss** (anthropologist)

The neckerchief is the personal flag of the Sieneese. (1977)

PHOTOGRAPHY

**Luca Betti** (publisher)

There are many beautiful photos to be seen of the Palio... Almost none, however, helps us understand the true essence of the festival, almost as if one were to photograph a flower and expect to smell its fragrance.

FEAST

**Pino Di Blasio** (journalist)

The extraordinary edition of the Palio for the end of the World War One extended the sieneese summer, giving the warmest day in the autumn 2018. The sun always shines in the Palio's world, the feast's soul drives away all the clouds, changes the circadian and seasonal rhythms, wins over generations.

FIRE

**Gianni Brera** (journalist, essayist)

Guardians of a dream realized from the fire on the hill that chose for itself a different maternal she-wolf, thus do the Sieneese share hate and love like bread and bile. Meanwhile our blind Mistress history makes us run the Palio among *Contrade* ever more hostile and far apart. (1969)

COMPETITION

**Leonardo Olmi** (photojournalist for *Playboy*)

A competition that is unique in the world and unrepeatable in any other place or city that isn't the ring of tuff earth around the shell of Siena's Piazza del Campo. (1998)

PLAYFULNESS

**Emilio Giannelli** (designer)

The Palio today has been somewhat dramatized, especially by the young generation... Today friendly teasing is mistaken for provocation and often gives rise to violence. In my opinion everything should be steered back to the playfulness which little by little, in time, has disappeared. (1996)

JOURNALISTS

**Aligi Cioni** (journalist for *ANSA*)

The Sieneese are, on average, cultured, touchy, ironical. Journalists (non-Sieneese, I mean) leave them neither hot nor cold; they are "foreigners." Let them fend for themselves. No red carpets and, thus, the rule for everyone is: You want to report on the Palio? Try to understand it, do your homework, study. Come before it begins, sniff the air of the festival in the *Contrade*... Then, maybe, you might manage to report on it, the great race, the drums, the procession, the colors, the continuous cry that goes with the three long, long laps around the Piazza del Campo. (1998)

GIUSTIZIA  
PALIESCA

**Gianni Roggini** (journalist)

It's rare for measures decided upon by the Municipality concerning the *Contrade* and the jockeys to be accepted calmly. But it's rarer still for someone to get the idea of taking the problem elsewhere, for example by appealing to the TAR [Regional Administrative Court]. The great majority of *Contrada* members think that suffering a possible injustice at the hands of the Municipality of Siena is always better than receiving questionable justice from the Florentine courts. (1998)

WAR

**Tonino Virone** (journalist *Testimonianze*)

In 1946 J. Huizinga in his *Homo ludens* expressed a quantity of facts so weighty... as to make one take into serious consideration the notion that play and not work was the primary deciding element in human cultural background.

And it is exactly this that happens between the *Contrade* throughout the year and during the days of the Palio. They "simulate" war and, by so doing, in reality achieve social peace. (1990)

IDENTITY

**Nicoletta Fabio** (Mayor of Siena)

The Palio doesn't recall an embalmed history, in an immutable before, always and in any case evokes an after, another opportunity and at the same time endless metaphors, unpredictable weaving between chance and will, probable contradictions, changing views, is an incessant reconnection of one's roots to the expectations of the future.

The Palio, that thrills and distresses us, merciles game that torments and excites us like life with its fierce beauty, remains a synthesis of the founding myths of our culture, Christian and secular, code and map of our identity, of our way of thinking about ourselves.

This is tradition, not the testimony of a ended past in the repetition of spectacular customs but a deep power that gives life to the present and shapes the future. (2023)



	<p><b>Gaia Tancredi</b> (journalist) To explain to the world who we are, let's try to move from the end. From the moment on which the Contrada's native leaves this world, wrapped on the flag that waved for him and for everyone endless times in the smart colours' whirl, pushed by able hands, to write ideally on the air the pride of people that it represents. (2011)</p> <p><b>Mariano Maugeri</b> (journalist) It is difficult to characterize a people who since 1262 have upheld formal statutes on urban planning and civic beauty. In the 800 years since, they have not yielded in their quest – barring a few recent exceptions – to ensure that external appearances equal their internal sense of wonderment. Abandon all hope of ever understanding, ye who enter Siena. (2014)</p> <p><b>Vittorio Sgarbi</b> (art critic) It is of the utmost importance to this city that the Palio be recognized as a symbol of civilization and culture. The Palio deserves the Unesco distinction. Only the former Minister of Tourism could rejoice over its exclusion and criticize this spectacle which, after Venice, Florence, and Rome, should be considered the fourth wonder of Italy. Do the horses get injured? That would be like canceling Formula One because a driver dies every so often. I would become Mayor of Siena just to stop Michela Vittoria Brambilla from ever entering the city. (2015)</p> <p><b>Mauro Berruto</b> (volleyball coach) What really matters, beyond victory or defeat, is belonging, or rather, to be a part of something that is bigger and more important than any single one of us. This can happen through a political party, an ideology, a religion, a soccer team. It most definitely happens in Siena from the day of baptism into a Contrada with the symbolic tying of the neckerchief, whose knot must never be undone. A strong sense of identity is instilled and an idea of "otherness" is constantly nourished. This sense of "us" is defined when we distinguish who the "others" are, but then we understand that without "them", "we" could not exist. (2019)</p> <p><b>Mario Caligiuri</b> (University professor) This is the only city which, at birth, offers two countries: the Municipality and the Contrada. So, thank you Siena, place of wonder, where time has stopped because it goes beyond, and it let us, Google's contemporaries, to feel in the center of a big history once again. (2011)</p> <p><b>Massimo Lippi</b> (artist) An unique people who lets the Palio to be a thin bridge between heaven and earth, where the more brave souls cling to rise to the majesty of God. (2009)</p> <p><b>Gaia Tancredi</b> (journalist) To explain to the world who we are, let's try to move from the end. From the moment on which the Contrada's native leaves this world, wrapped on the flag that waved for him and for everyone endless times in the smart colours' whirl, pushed by able hands, to write ideally on the air the pride of people that it represents. (2011)</p>	
IMAGINATION	<p><b>Omar Calabrese</b> (semiologist) "One often arrives in Siena with the spirit of the ethnologist who comes to study, without wanting to admit it, a primitive people, a population of wild men, a people of anachronistic fanatics. And then one finds oneself caught up instead in an extraordinary adventure of the imagination." (1986)</p> <p><b>Enrico Campana</b> (journalist for <i>La Gazzetta dello Sport</i>) "Faithful to his script for a Pirandello-style race, in which reality is punctually superior to imagination..." (1987)</p>	
FREEDOM	<p><b>Titus Burckhardt</b> (historian) The Palio is the ultimate manifestation of the history of a proud, free city.</p>	
A. LORENZETTI	<p><b>Heinz Joachim Fischer</b> (journalist for <i>Frankfurter Allgemeine</i>) Palio, the Campo, and the festival seem in the end to conform to the spirit of Ambrogio Lorenzetti... The impressive scenes in the city and in the country, the allegorical figures, the churches and the palaces; everything follows the moral instruction, and indeed the principle expressed through works of art, that, for the good of the whole, private interest must be subordinated to the common interest. In the Palio this goal is pursued by the citizens themselves. (1990)</p>	
MADONNA	<p><b>Mino Maccari</b> (painter of the Palio of August 1970) "But the Madonna, how shall I do her? I've painted only women who are cheerful and covered with makeup. Perhaps I'll paint her like an angel at the last moment!"</p> <p><b>Barbara Alberti</b> (author) The Madonna of the Palio, portrayed in the banner and floating above all, is the Virgin Mary who understands human nature, who accepts us as we are: exposed, sweaty, happily desperate, frenzied, yelling. A Madonna who does not judge us. (2004)</p>	
MAGIC	<p><b>Massimo Biliorsi</b> (journalist, essayist) In Siena, magic is quick to meet the Palio, a vital expression that allows neither hint nor reply, through formulas and rites that mark living side-by-side with the past, with comparisons. There's always someone who, to exorcise fate, lets himself be taken to secret places, drinks wine that's about to go off, only to be led then to the woods by a witch who seduces him. (1991)</p>	
MILAN	<p><b>Anna Mosca</b> (writer) Yet if, for example, we wished to recommend this recipe for peace in Milan, dividing that great city into so many sectors to turn its neighborhoods into good families in the style of Siena, the thing wouldn't work. The Palio would be missing. It would be missing. The spiritual hyperbole of the Siennese people... (1967)</p>	
	<p><b>MYSTERY</b> <b>Roderick Conway Morris</b> (journalist, <i>International Herald Tribune</i>) What makes the Palio so gripping is the element of mystery that it hides, a mystery that perhaps not even the most thoughtful of the Siennese might ever explain completely. The Palio is man-made, it is a work of art, but a work made by many hands through many generations, each of which has added something, though the greater part of the contributions remains anonymous. And the ability of the Palio to adapt to changing times has been astonishing. (1998)</p> <p><b>MONTAPERTI</b> <b>Idilio dell'Era</b> (essayist) For the Palio is nothing but a symbolic race through the history of one of the proudest republics that Italy ever had, a phantasmagorical flight of noise and costumes to rediscover youth, rich in art and faith, in enthusiasm and devotion anchored to the banks of the Arbia: at the end of the day it is nothing other than a spectacle of thanksgiving to the Madonna for the victory won over the Florentines at Montaperti on 4 September 1260. (1960)</p> <p><b>THE LITTLE CANNON</b> <b>Alfredo Bonaccorsi</b> (musicologist) The chimes stop at the beginning of the race when the Little Cannon explodes violently, filling the Piazza and all adjacent streets with echoes; afterwards there lingers an indistinct buzzing which, after so much clamor, gives the idea of silence, of a silence inundated by vibrations of anxiety, of dismay, stretching out towards the race... (1928)</p> <p><b>DEATH</b> <b>Eugenio Montale</b> (poet) ... The stands groan when the dilapidated horses pass by, greeted by a single cry. It's a flight! And you forget. Forget death. (1939)</p> <p><b>START</b> <b>Sergio Profeti</b> (journalist, essayist) But the most illogical aspect of the illogical race is demonstrated in the Start. The Start assumes a diabolical meaning in the Palio, an altogether particular charm. Only the passage of time knows how to create a spectacle within the spectacle, an illogic within the illogical. (1985)</p> <p><b>CONTRADA MUSEUM</b> <b>Mauro Civali</b> (Director of the Civic Museum of Siena) Siena boasts a national record for the number of museums found within its territory, thanks above all to the exceptional series of historic seats of the <i>Contrade</i>. The <i>Contrada</i> museum is very modern, where the memory of every aspect of the life of the Siennese "city state" is rigorously, yet affectionately, preserved and documented. (1998)</p> <p><b>WHIPLASHES</b> <b>Momo Giovannelli</b> (vernacular poet) But leave things as they used to be! / When there was less sentiment / but also less fiction and hypocrisy / By giving heed to the dandies / We'd run the Palio on compliments: / "Me, pass? But what are you saying? After you!!" (1968)</p> <p><b>NOSTALGIA</b> <b>Geno Pampaloni</b> (writer) Religious devotion and warlike bravery are the components of the civic spirit, which was the root and the nourishment of the <i>Contrada</i>. The Palio today is the symbolic transposition of all this. The fury of passions which still blazes around the Piazza when "there's earth in the Piazza"... is itself another manifestation of Siena's nostalgia for its past as a free and bold City-State. (1986)</p> <p><b>THE OLYMPICS</b> <b>Paolo Vagheggi</b> (journalist for <i>La Repubblica</i>) "The important thing is winning the Palio. Yes, because the Palio is either won or lost. At the Palio, you don't come in second or third. The Palio is the Anti-Olympics. Winning, not participating, is the important thing."</p> <p><b>OWNERS OF THE STANDS</b> <b>E.A. Brigidi</b> (historian) ...Out come the cries "To the good seats! Here they are! Here they are!" from the owners of the stands who invite the spectators, each boasting his own good position, and packing the crowd in like sardines in a jar. (1875)</p> <p><b>PALIO</b> <b>Filippo Tommaso Marinetti</b> (writer) "The Palio is a diamond fist to hold up against any of Italy's enemies." (circa 1930)</p> <p><b>Tommaso Landolfi</b> (writer) Here the city walls seem cut from some precious material; scorched and brilliant... The fates hand themselves over to the Palio, and the Palio marks, for whoever is full of heart, an era of the soul. (1939)</p> <p><b>Mario Jsmalee Castellano</b> (Archbishop of Siena) Telling the Siennese not to take part in the Palio is like telling fish not to live in the sea. (1991)</p> <p><b>Mario Castelnovo</b> (singer) The Palio is a waltz and the dancers are Life and Death, two lovers who part ways, only to find each other again in an endless pursuit. Who wins lives and celebrates; who loses, metaphorically speaking, dies. But there is always another Palio and a chance at rebirth, or at least, one can hope there will be. (2015)</p> <p><b>Matteo Salvini</b> (Politician) With all due respect to the opinions and feelings of others, I must say, "Hands off traditions, hands off our history, and hands off the Palio of Siena". (2018)</p> <p><b>Alessandro Lorenzini</b> (journalist) The Palio is a painted life with the Contrade colours. It's the sublimation of daily brush strokes. The Palio is all and nothing, the community and the individual, it's a seventeen people feast that becomes a cry of joy for only one. It's a mild and dreamy sleep lasting a year turning into a 90 seconds sudden awakening. It's a rhythmic life broken by a breathless beat. It's a dream and a nightmare. It's hate and love. It's a charming and repelling passion, it's a thrill keeping you alive. It's a glass of vintage wine shaking in your hand. The Palio is the most beautiful way of killing time making it endless. (2020)</p>	



	<b>Andrea Bianchi Sugarelli</b> (journalist) The Palio is the only value of our life, that makes us long for the future (2020)		<b>Aldo Cairola</b> (art historian) The relationship between “sacred” and “profane” is present in the <i>Contrada</i> from its very origins, and it finds particular expression in all parts of the Palio. (1981)
PARADOX	<b>Davide Vecchi</b> (journalist) Day and night, life and death, joy and sorrow, divided on the tight thread like a tightrope walker who decides every fate. This is the Palio. (2020)	FEASTS	<b>Roberto Barzanti</b> (historian) “Like any organism that lives off human blood, the Palio lends itself to no guidebook oversimplifications. Like any festival rooted in intrigue with a long and ancient history, the Palio maintains its combative significance, in no way commonplace. It calls for intelligence without rhetoric, it fears the banality of anecdote, it shies away from slogans that might reduce it to yet another invention, to yet another of the many mundane feasts in fancy dress that fill up the boot [the Italian peninsula].” (1972)
THE PEOPLE	<b>Emilio Ravel</b> (journalist “RAI”) Whoever might wish to “see” the Palio for real must do so also through the eyes of paradox and mystery. Otherwise the essence and the deepest heartbeat are lost. (1997)	DISCOMBOBULATED	<b>Alberto Comucci</b> (writer) The Palio lifts and drags the people to delirium, fed by a storm of passions unleashed from their soul almost to the point, in certain moments, of churning its sense of reason, or, as they in Sieneese, of making them “ <i>sciaborditi</i> ” [“discombobulated”]. (1926)
THE SQUARE	<b>Giuseppe La Farina</b> (man of letters) In Siena the people are not, as in almost all other parts of Italy, spectators of the festival; rather they are its leading actors. (1842)	DEFEAT	<b>Mario Celli</b> (journalist <i>Il Campo di Siena</i> ) The Palio, though to the non-Sieneese it may be and appear a spectacle (a spectacle of the crowd whose love and passion sweats in the burning struggle of the ten protagonists), is to the Sieneese and to the <i>Contrada</i> members a matter of suffering, of enthusiasm or of disappointment. The Palio is not to be seen, but is to be suffered, and there is no joy more immense than triumph and no cup more bitter than that of defeat. (1974)
	<b>Gerardo Righi Parenti</b> (writer) The Palio is the grandiose, magnificent poem of this Siena, and it is the very soul of its people. (1926)	RIDERLESS	<b>Vasco Pratolini</b> (writer) ... turning toward the track I saw a faraway red and black blur roll off and a horse with free bridle follow the panting cloud of other gallopers, suddenly made glad and light, freed, as it was, of its rider... (1939)
	<b>Carlo Nepi</b> (architect) But the imagination goes beyond and transforms this space into a gigantic theater, the stage all around, with the audience in the center and along the sides those who attend their own festival, their own performance; and then the earth, hidden beneath the stone skin, re-emerges and unveils the “naturalness” of the place that becomes the theater of the animal struggle, of the race of horses and men. (1998)	SIENESE SPIRIT	<b>José Saramago</b> (Nobel prize 1998) Here it is Siena, the beloved one, the city where my heart is really pleased, land of lovely people, place where everyone drank the milk of human goodness, I put you before Florence for ever...I watch the old palaces of Siena, very old houses where I would like to live one day, with a window all mine, over-looking on clay colour roofs, on green shutters, as attempting to decode where this secret, that Siena whispers, is coming from; a secret that I will continue to feel, however I don’t understand it, until the end of my life.
	<b>Augusto Mazzini</b> (architect) From inside the piazza, because of the consistency of its spacial quality, the size of the city appears unknown. It may be immense or indeed non-existent. But above all else behind the Palace, even because of the relationship between that building and the sky, one senses the expanse of a great emptiness. The country is perceived as a vacuum, to which the city, with its Palace, turns its back. (1989)	SIGNIFICANCE	<b>Aldous Huxley</b> (essayist, writer) No, the Palio is really a performance; without any particular significance, but by the simple fact of being traditional yet vital, it signifies infinitely more than English events which are stillborn, with all their Parker-style free verse and their dramatic implications. For these pages, these soldiers, these standard-bearers are straight out of the age of Pinturicchio. (1925)
	<b>Franco Fortini</b> (poet, essayist) In the Piazza there is something like an emphasis: but not in the order of the grandiose. It’s hard to define. Something similar can be found perhaps in Venice, in certain unexpected expanses. It’s a sort of warning. It is one of the aspects of Siena that could be called religious. (1989)	SILENCE	<b>Gianni Tiberi</b> (journalist for <i>La Nazione</i> ) And then there’s an instant in which sound stops. Waiting for the horses to come out through the Great Entrance, all those heads turned in unison toward the Palazzo Pubblico stand for its most intimate essence. The Palio as waiting, as hope. A glance toward the future, finding in the victories of the past the impetus and eagerness to win again. To understand the Palio, the race isn’t necessary. (1998)
	<b>Albert Camus</b> (Nobel prize 1957) I would like to see Siena rising in the sunset with its minarets, like a perfect Constantinople, to arrive there by night, without money and all alone, to sleep near a fountain and to be the first on Piazza del Campo, a palm shape, which is like a hand which offers what man, after Greece, has made greatest.	SIENESE SPIRIT	<b>Francesca Inaudi</b> (actress) To understand the Palio, you have to stay into the Piazza hearing the silence of all those people waiting for the starter, who is that person setting the order of the Contrade on the start. (2011)
PAINTING	<b>Bruni Santi</b> (Superintendent of Artistic and Historical Heritage) How to reconcile the formal dignity, the balance, and the composure of the composition of the paintings of the high Italian Renaissance with the lights and color and movement in the dynamism of Futurism at the beginning of the 1900s? No spectator at the Palio of Siena can help but reconstruct in his memory a vast temporal arc of our country’s figurative art, immersing himself in the images offered by the Festival. (1998)	DREAM	<b>Margherita di Savoia</b> (Queen of Italy to her Lady of Honor the Marchess of Villamarina) “The Palio is a vision of a poem by Ariosto made real! Oh, Marchess, it is like waking up from a dream of having lived a day in another era.” (1861)
TRIAL RUNS	<b>Senio Sensi</b> (journalist for <i>Il Carroccio</i> ) You follow the horse with a mixture of pride, of ostentation, of power, and of service that carries with it some risk. It is only after having marched and battled for your <i>Contrada</i> that you feel you truly belong to it. (1990)	SIENESE SPIRIT	<b>Pavel Muratov</b> (author) Siena has never lost its ancient grace and dignity, just as the Sieneese people have never lost the kindness in their hearts. (1911)
NEIGHBORHOOD	<b>Aldo Lusini</b> (historian) With incense and blasphemy, exultation and silences, triumph and defeat, this is the neighborhood: that which you are glad to remember from far away along with the face of “your” madonna – every time that at the crossroads of worlds a voice from Siena crossed paths with your own, and a sincere hand was held out to you: “But you, tell me... Which <i>Contrada</i> are you from?” (1960)	SOLITUDE	<b>Giovanni Guiso</b> (writer) In Siena, more than anywhere else, thanks to a subtle network of feelings, solitude is conquered more easily. It’s not only a question of the city’s size but of the quality of relationships that blossom in the genuine mixture of diverse social strata which, levelled by culture, live together in mutual respect, helped along by the everpresent spirit of <i>Contrada</i> membership. (1993)
RISORGIMENTO	<b>Massimo D’Azeglio</b> (patriot) The <i>Contrada</i> of the Goose won, and seeing as how it has our colors, there was general jubilation. They wanted to name me one of the protectors of the <i>Contrada</i> , using this as an excuse for putting on a demonstration of the flag. (1858)	SMILE	<b>Aldo Palazzeschi</b> (writer) Shouts, rebukes, threats... intrigues, betrayals... a few lashes that fly and fall, the slightly dented skin of a jockey, perhaps a couple of drops of blood... but a smile on everything, I thought the following day, after a scene of color more beautiful than any I had ever seen, while the train ran along, taking me far away from those city walls that some miracle has preserved for our eyes, and where the most outspoken speakers of Italian play at discord with such grace. (1926)
RITE	<b>Mario Verdone</b> (writer) Ceremonies and civic events, births, funerals are constantly accompanied by the presence of the <i>Contrada</i> ’s page at least, if not by more copious representation in full costume, as a perennial sign of identification of the Palio with the very life of the city and its inhabitants, in each of their solemn moments. (1986)	SUSPENSION	<b>Tommaso Strambi</b> (journalist) To wake up in this city during the Palio days, it means for a moment to be able to put apart what is happening in the rest of the world. (2011)
SACRED AND PROFANE	<b>Faiza Mahari</b> (journalist for <i>Le matin du Sahara a du Magreb</i> ) “The Palio is not a simple horse race, but the rite of a city, the culminating moment of a civilization and a symbol – so very significant – of a republican military glory. (1989)	PLUME	<b>Corrado Govoni</b> (poet) ... And run, oh poetry the finish line is already in sight: run even with only the plume of my betrayed springtime! (1953)
	<b>William Heywood</b> (historian) This, dear reader, is the Palio. And going over again its curious mixture of religious rites and of purely profane enthusiasm, we do well not only to remember its origins, but also to keep in mind the fact that, in the words of a modern historian, Italy is, more than any other country, the homeland of human nature – simple, imperturbable even in the presence of its Creator. (1899)		
	<b>Indro Montanelli</b> (journalist, essayist) The race is not the ultimate act of the Palio, even if it is the most spectacular. What makes up the most interesting human side is its preparation. But unfortunately one needs to be Sieneese, or at least Tuscan, to fully understand the mixture of the emotional and the rational, the passionate and the calculated, the sacred and the profane that inspires the various propitiatory rites. (1974)		



HISTORY	<p><b>Gabriella Piccinni</b> (historian) The Sieneese combine maximum attraction with maximum ignorance of their own history. It is the fruit, for example, only of the popular imagination that Siena had always been full of the indomitable Ghibelline spirit, just like the myth that has grown up around the battle of Montaperti, great ephemeral victory for the Ghibelline Italians and for Siena. The Palio and Montaperti resemble each other: they are both memories of civic grandeur that found a foothold during the age of decline. (1998)</p> <p><b>Paolo Ligammari</b> (journalist) You do not need a space-time portal like those theorized by Stephen Hawking to time travel in Siena. (...) The historic city center, a sliver of the Middle Ages trapped in a piece of amber, is incomparable. Siena is not just the Palio; it is a treasure chest filled with so much to be savored and enjoyed. Siena is a mystical experience, oscillating between the sacred and the profane. (2020)</p>
SOUND	<p><b>Luigi Bonelli - Felice Boghen</b> (musicologists) Topographically the Campo is shell-shaped: thus it has the schematic form of an instrument. The palaces around it enclose it like a perfectly shaped sounding board... The repercussion of sounds and noises that vibrate simultaneously and without interruption in various points of the piazza seems to be increased and disciplined by this immense, vibrating, concave instrument, to the point of becoming a symphony... (1928)</p>
DRUM	<p><b>Antonio Zazzeroni</b> (writer) The art of playing the drum isn't taught at school. You play it if you love it, and love for the instrument is born and grows hand in hand with love for your <i>Contrada</i>. The classroom for your study is the street and the little square of your neighborhood. (1985)</p> <p><b>Alberto Giannini</b> (Drummer in the Piazza from 1934 to 1945) Beating the drum is a great satisfaction to a Sieneese because the drum marks the time of various occasions within the <i>Contrada</i>. I would say I had a rather natural inclination for the drum, and I had the joy of playing it for thirteen different <i>Contrade</i>. When I made my first entrance into the Piazza with the drum, I was seized by a powerful emotion. I will always remember it as a special occasion in my life. (1998)</p>
TIME	<p><b>Luigi Testaferrata</b> (journalist for <i>Il Giornale</i>) "Being in Siena for those days is like being inside the quintessence of the world: as if you had taken the ideal ship and it had set out to circumnavigate all the experiences, adventures, risks, wild dares, exaltations, abstractions, sublimations, sinkings that have ever taken place in the history of man... (1986)</p> <p><b>Marco Falorni</b> (journalist for <i>Il Cittadino</i>) The Palio is one of those moments in which life is viewed as in a film. No technology, however sophisticated, could ever manage to concentrate in such few instants so great a legacy of memories, clear and wonderfully fused into the surrounding reality. In Siena, as everyone knows, life is measured in terms of Palios, and thus every <i>Contrada</i> member keeps his own personal memory "meter," from one victory to the next. (1998)</p>
CHEERING	<p><b>Walter Veltroni</b> (Minister of Cultural Heritage) Go to Siena, let's go there together, there are many things to learn and there's a wonderful spectacle to see. But please, don't make waves. And don't cheer for <i>Contrade</i> that don't belong to us.</p>
TUSCAN SPIRIT	<p><b>Tommaso Ciuffoletti</b> (journalist) The sacred and the profane keep themselves hand in hand in that mocking and funny way, so typical of tuscan people. And Siena is the more tuscan of all other cities. Siena's soul is that thing called Palio.</p>
JUBILATION	<p><b>Silvio Gigli</b> (radio journalist for the RAI) Siena triumphs immortal in a jubilation of flags... In this jubilation of banners and flags, Siena triumphs as always immortal. (circa 1970)</p>
TRADITION	<p><b>Henry James</b> (writer) To explain a bit of tradition takes a lot of history. (1909)</p>
TOURISM	<p><b>Carlo Cassola</b> (writer) Undoubtedly the Palio of Siena has a life of its own: it's had no need of more or less self-interested endowments to keep it on its feet. This is different from the cases of the Palio of Ferrara, or of the Saracen Jousting in Arezzo, or of Football in Costume in Florence, or of other public displays revived and kept alive by the hope of tourist speculation. (1946)</p>
MOOD	<p><b>Liz Harris</b> (journalist for <i>The New Yorker</i>) The mood, now that the day of the race had finally come, was positively kept in check; there were few chants and cheers and almost no aggression. You couldn't call it a calm atmosphere; rather it was like breathing in a mass numbness."</p>
UNIQUENESS	<p><b>Mauro Barni</b> (former Mayor) About the missing insertion by Minister Brambilla in "Italy's heritage" list: "On my opinion, she has done well not to recognize the Palio, for the simple reason that she doesn't compare it to the other festivals. (2011)</p>

USEFULNESS	<p><b>Franco Cardini</b> (historian) But the worst lie is that the Palio is useless. Better to get rid of it altogether, this disagreeable category of the <i>useful</i> which has caused so much harm – and we see it every day – to the modern world. Useful why? Useful how? Useful to whom? The Palio is useless like art, like good cheer, like love, like eating well: if usefulness is synonymous with grey functionality and with profit for its own sake, then the Palio is certainly useless." (1988)</p>
VICTORY	<p><b>Beppe "Ciancone" Gentili</b> (jockey) Nothing is like winning the Palio of Siena. You can't say it with words. (1969)</p> <p><b>Andrea "Aceto" de Gortes</b> (jockey) Because in Siena there's this strange habit that if you don't win the Palio, you lose it. (circa 1980)</p>

**SOURCES:**

For each author, see the corresponding entry in the bibliography, with the following exceptions:  
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**Accavallatura** - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Aculeo** (The Quill) – The periodical of the Porcupine *Contrada*.

**Affogasanti** (Lit. “The Saint-Drowners”) - 1) Humorous popular name given to members of the Snail *Contrada*, thus named for their having thrown into a well an image of St Anthony at the end of the last century. 2) The periodical of the Snail *Contrada*.

**Alfiere** (Standard-Bearer) - One of the participants who carry out the Flag-Waving Display.

**Alzata** (The Raising) - The Standard-bearer’s hurling on high of the flag at the end of the Flag-Waving Display.

**Anatroccoli** (Lit. “Ducklings”) - Group of young members of the Goose *Contrada*.

**Ancalena** - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Aquila** (The Eagle) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Aquilino** - Member of the Eagle.

**Asinata** (The Donkey Round) - A game of the 17th century; donkeys bearing the colors of the *Contrade* were pushed around the Piazza.

**Assemblea Generale** (General Assembly) - The sovereign people of the *Contrade* called together, as in ancient times, by the sound of the bell.

**Asso** - Synonym of *Soprallasso*, the draught-horse used in the Historic Procession.

**Ásta** (Pole) - 1) Support for a flag. 2) Pole to which the Palio banner is connected, decorated with a double black and white spiral, crowned by a spear-headed point.



**Baco Bello** (Lit. “The Beautiful Worm”) - Joking popular name for the Caterpillar *Contrada*.

**Balzana** - Black and white emblem of Siena, the upper half of which is white and the lower half black.

**Bandierino** (The Little Flag) - A small Balzana emblem made of iron, attached to the inner rim of the race track. It marks the Palio’s finish line.

**Bandierone** (The Big Flag) - The large official insignia of each *Contrada*, carried by the Senior Page.

**Baratto** - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Barbaresco** - Official groom entrusted with looking after the *Contrada*’s horse from the moment of the horse-selection procedures (*tratta*) onwards; he cares for the horse until handing the animal back to its owner.

**Bàrbero** (Barb, from the *bèrbero* horse of Barberia) - 1) Race horse. 2) One of the little balls painted in sections using the colors of the *Contrade*. Children from Siena play with these around the time of the Palio.

**Barbicone** - 1) A legendary leader of the Caterpillar. 2) Title of the periodical of the Caterpillar *Contrada*.

**Battesimo contradaio** (Baptism within the *Contrada*) - A lay ceremony officiated by the Prior, the Baptism takes place once a year on the feast day of the *Contrada*’s patron saint. It marks the rite of passage by means of which one becomes a full *Contrada* member for all effects and purposes.

**Beverecchia** - Originally the tip given to jockeys to cover their living expenses during their participation in the Palio.

**Beverone** ( Lit. “The Big Drink”) - In the 1800s, a mixture given to the horses with the intention of either stimulating or calming them. The term may be used in reference to any substance administered to horses, orally or otherwise. It was sometimes called “a bomb.”

**Bianco Rosso** (White and Red) - Title of the periodical of the Giraffe *Contrada*.

**Biccherna** - Ancient Sienese magistrature’s office, repository of the books containing the city’s accounts.

**Bilanciere** (Balance-keeper) - Member of the Presidency of the *contrada*; the balance-keeper draws up the annual accounts.

**Braccialeto** (Little Sconce) - Several-branched sconce made of wood or metal, painted with the *Contrada*’s colors. On it are the lightbulbs that illuminate the streets of the *Contrada* on the feast day of the Patron Saint, on days of celebration for a victory, and on other festive occasions.

**Brenna** - A horse of no value with scant hopes of a victory.

**Brucaiolo** - A member of the Caterpillar.

**Bruco** (The Caterpillar) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Bufalata** - The Palio raced by water buffaloes in the 17th century.



**Cadenza di sbandierata** (Flag-waving Cadence) - The drum rhythm performed in the Piazza to accompany the Flag-Waving Display.

**Camarlengo** - Treasurer of the *Contrada*, thus named because in antiquity the *Camarlengo* had access to the “camera” or treasure chamber.

**Camollia** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Porcupine (Porta Camollia, Via Camollia).

**Campanina** (The Little Bell) - The bell in the oratory of the *Contrada*.

**Campanone** (The Great Bell) - The bell in the Mangia Tower, called “Sunto” because it is dedicated to the Virgin Mary of the Assumption into Heaven. The bell is rung throughout the Historic Procession.

**Campo** (Lit. “The Field”) - The Piazza in Siena where the Palio is run.

**Camporegio** - The name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Dragon.

**Canapo (Canape)** (Starting Rope) - The taut rope that marks the starting gate of the race.

**Cancellato** - The wooden barrier that marks off the inner rim of the track. It encompasses the area reserved for spectators.

**Cancelliere** (Chancellor) - Secretary of the *Contrada* and member of the Committee. The *Cancelliere* keeps the minutes of meetings of the Presidency, of the Council, and of the Assembly, and furthermore oversees the system of communications and meeting convocations within the *Contrada*.

**Capitano** (Captain) - An elected position with varying terms of office (from one to three years) in the *Contrade*. The Captain takes command of the *Contrada* during the days of the Palio, taking care of all matters concerning the race, the horses, and the jockeys.

**Cappotto** (Overcoat) - Nickname given to a single *Contada*’s victory in both runnings of the Palio in the same year.

**Carriera** - A running of the Race.

**Carroccio** - Triumphant decorated wagon pulled by oxen. It carries the great Palio banner itself along with Siena’s *Balzana* emblem during the Historic Procession. According to popular tradition, the *Carroccio* represents the wagon captured from the Florentines at Montaperti in 1260.

**Casato** - 1) One of the eleven streets that lead into the Campo. 2) The Casato curve, an uphill curve of the track, which is one of the most crucial points of the race. 3) Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Eagle

**Castellare** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Owl (Castellare degli Ugurgieri).

**Castelvechio** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Tortoise.

**Cena della Prova Generale** (Dinner of the Final Trial Run) - Good-luck banquet held in the streets and in the piazzas of the various neighborhoods on the evening before the Palio.

**Cencio** (Lit. “The Rag”) - False disparagement. Popular term used affectionately in reference to the *Drappellone*, the Great Banner of the Palio itself.

**Cenino** (The Little Dinner) - Dinner held in the *Contrada* during the days of the Palio or in occasion of victory.

**Cero** (Altar Candle) - Large decorated candle offered in solemnity by the Municipality of Siena to the Madonna for the Feast of the Assumption.

**Chiocciola** (The Snail) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Chiocciolino** - A member of the Snail.

**Cittino** - 1) A baby. 2) The popular nickname given to the newly won Palio banner, the *Drappellone*.

**Ciuccio** - A baby-bottle or rubber baby-pacifier sucked by celebrating *Contrada* members in their triumphal parade throughout the city’s streets following a victory.

**Civetta** (The Owl) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Civettino** - 1) A member of the Owl. 2) Title of the periodical of the Owl *Contrada*.

**Comparsa** - The group of costumed participants who represent their *Contrada*.

**Comune (via del)** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Caterpillar.

**Conservatore dei beni** (Keeper of the Estate) - In several *Contrade*, the person charged with the custody of the *Contrada*’s assets.

**Conservatore dei Capitoli** (Keeper of the Articles) - Ensures that the activities of the *Contrada* are in keeping with its Articles. (*Contrada* of the Caterpillar.)

**Conservatore della legge** (Keeper of the Law) - Ensures that the activities of the *Contrada* are in keeping with its Statutes. (*Contrada* of the Dragon.)

**Consiglieri del Governatore** (Governor’s Advisors) - Appointed by the Governor to offer him their advice and recommendations. They are part of the General Council. (*Contrada* of the Goose.)

**Consiglieri del popolo** (People’s Advisor) - A seven-member body elected by the Assembly, making up part of the Presidency. (*Contrada* of the Shell.)

**Consiglieri del Rettore** (Rector’s Advisors) - Former Rectors, Captains, and some Notables nominated by the Rector; they offer the Rector non-binding advice and recommendations.

**Consiglieri di Sedia, Consiglieri di Seggio** (Presidency Advisors) - Elected members who together make up the Presidency.

**Consiglio** (Council) - Body that acts as a *Contrada* parliament, elected periodically by all *Contrada* members or by the Protectors. The Council serves advisory and executive functions.

**Consiglio del Castellare** (Castle Council) - Group of advisors elected every two years, whose duty is to assist the Presidency and to ensure adherence to the *Contrada* articles. (*Contrada* of the Owl.)

**Consiglio direttivo** (Directive Council) - (General Council, People’s Council) The Great Council.

**Consulta generale** (General Cabinet) - In the Porcupine *Contrada*, the committee made up of Notables (*Maggiorenti*) and Executive Cabinet Members.

**Contradaio** - A member of a *Contrada* by birth or by choice.

**Contrade** - The seventeen cities within the City in relation to the territorial division of Siena.

**Correttore** (Corrector) - Clergyman who acts as custodian of the *Contrada*’s Oratory and who officiates at religious ceremonies for the *Contrada* or for individual *Contrada* members. He is appointed by the *Contrada*, with the approval of the religious authorities.

**Corteo storico** (Historic Procession) - The parade around the Campo piazza of the seventeen groups of costumed representatives of the *Contrade*, plus representatives of the social, political, and military groups that belonged to



or owed allegiance to the ancient Republic of Siena. This "cortège" in costume, composed of more than 500 participants, takes place before the race.

**Cortile del Podestà** - Courtyard of the Palazzo Pubblico where the ten horses and their respective jockeys await the start of the trial runs and of the Palio race.

**Cuffia** (Lit. "The Bonnet") - Ironic and symbolic attribute of the "grandmother," that is, the *Contrada* that has not won a Palio for the greatest number of years.

**D** **Dàccelo** ("Give it to us!") - Traditional cry of the victorious *Contrada* members in front of the Judges' Stand when they ask to be given the newly one Palio banner.

**Delegati di Sedia** (Delegates of the Presidency) - Assist the Pro-vicars with operative functions, granted by delegation.

**Deputati della Festa** (Deputies of the Festival) - Three citizens of Siena chosen by the Municipality for every Palio to assist the Administration in each phase of the festival. They present a final written report which is a historic document serving also as a basis for later sanctions or recommended improvements regarding all aspects of the Palio.

**Deputazione di Sedia** (Deputation of the Presidency) - In several *Contrade*, the restricted Council presided over by the Prior. The deputation may have advisory or executive powers.

**Dragaiolo** - A member of the Dragon.

**Drago** (The Dragon) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Drappellone** (Lit. "The Great Banner") - Grand standard of painted silk. It is the prize for the winner of the race.

**Duce** - Commander of the *Comparsa*, the uniformed *Contrada* representatives in the Palio ceremonies; the *Duce* parades wearing armor.

**E** **Entrone** (Lit. "The Great Entrance") - Popular term in reference to the Courtyard of the *Palazzo Pubblico*.

**F** **Fantino** (Jockey) - Usually not Sieneese, rides bareback representing one of the ten *Contrade* participating in the Palio race.

**Farfalla** (Butterfly) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Figurino** (Lit. "Little Figure") - Synonym for Page.

**Figurino Maggiore** (Senior Figure) - Synonym for Senior Page.

**Fioretto** - A movement of the flag, or a maneuver executed by the Standard-Bearers during the Flag-

Waving Display. The fioretti have traditional names. Each *Contrada* has its own repertoire of fioretti and its own set of words used to describe the movements.

**Fontebranda** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Goose. (Derived from the Fountains of Fontebranda.)

**Fonte Gaia** (The Fountain of Gaiety) - Situated in the upper part of the Campo piazza. It is a copy, made by Tito Sarrocchi in 1868, replacing the original made by Jacopo Della Quercia. The original is now housed in the loggia of the *Palazzo Comunale*.

**Fonti di Follonica (Le)** - Title of the periodical of the Unicorn.

**G** **Gallo** (The Rooster) - One of the six *Contrade* no longer in existence. Its territory was incorporated into those of the Forest, the Goose, and the Owl.

**Gavinone** - Drainage canal, located at the lowest point of the piazza, to collect rainwater.

**Giraffa** (The Giraffe) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Giraffino** - A member of the Giraffe.

**Giro** (Lit. "A round") - The route of the visits made to "pay honor" to the Protectors with drums and flags for the Feast Day of the Patron Saint.

**Governatore** (Governor) - Elected head of the *Contrada* of the Goose.

**Grattapassere** - Title of the periodical of the *Contrada* of the Panther, taking its name from a famous jockey in the 1930s.

**Gualdrappa** - Caparison used to cover the Barb during the Historic Procession.



**I** **Infamona** - Popular name for the *Contrada* of the Goose.

**Istrice** (The Porcupine) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Istriciaioli** - Members of the Porcupine.

**L** **Lampione di Costa Larga** - Title of the periodical of the Eagle.

**Lecaiolo** - A member of the Unicorn.

**Legatus** - Representative of the Eagle outside of the city walls.

**Leocorno** (The Unicorn) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Leone** (The Lion) - One of the six *Contrade* no longer in existence. Its territory was incorporated into that of the Porcupine.

**Lupa** (The She-Wolf) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Lupaiole** - A member of the She-Wolf.

**M** **Maestro dei novizi** (Master of the Novices) - Entrusted with the training of young *Contrada* members.

**Maestro delle cerimonie** (Master of Ceremonies) - Entrusted to oversee the festivals and the ceremonies of the *Contrada*.

**Maggiorenti** (Notables) - Former Priors, Captains, and other notables of proven generosity and faithfulness within the *Contrada*, meeting together in a body which, in the various *Contrade*, is referred to by such names as Council, College, Cabinet, or Seat of the Nobles; the body serves primarily to act as guarantors for the *Contrada* institutions. The body offers the Presidency non-binding opinions and recommendations.

**Magistrato delle Contrade** (Magistracy of the *Contrade*) - College of the Priors of Siena's seventeen *Contrade*. It is presided over by a Rector.

**Malavolti** - Title of the periodical of the Dragon. It takes its name from the ancient hilltop of the Malavolti.

**Malborghetto** - 1) Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Wave. 2) Title of the periodical of the Wave.

**Mangia** - Antique automated device that struck the hour on the Tower of the *Palazzo Pubblico*, later dubbed the Tower of the Mangia.

**Mangino** - One of the two or more assistants of the Captain who work with him year-round to keep track of horses and jockeys, and to draw up pacts and agreements, called "partiti," in the hopes of bringing a victory to the *Contrada*.

**Martinella** - The little bell on the *Carroccio* wagon, that rings continually during the parade in the Piazza.

**Masgalano** - From the Spanish: *mas galante*. It is the prize given to the best *Comparsa* group that distinguishes itself because of its elegance, the dignity of its bearing, and the coordination it demonstrates during the parade in the Historic Procession.

**Materassi** (Mattresses) - The padding attached to the outer bank of the dangerous San Martino corner to cushion any falls.

**Mattutino** - Solemn evening function held in the *Contrada's* Oratory on the eve of the Feast of the Patron Saint.

**Mazzieri** - The participants who open the Historic Procession.

**Monte** - Political faction of medieval Siena. In the modern Palio, the secret association of the *Contrade* or, more frequently, of the jockeys, to determine the outcome of the race and to set the sharing of the eventual earnings.

**Montonaiolo** - Member of the Ram.

**Montone** - Synonym of "Valdimontone," or the Ram.

**Mortaretto** (The Little Mortar) - Short-barrelled cannon placed at the starting line that is fired. The detonation serves to signal the clearing of the track and the exit of the horses and jockeys from the *Entrone* courtyard. The *Mortaretto* is also fired when there is a false start and when the winning horse crosses the finish line.

**Mossa** - 1) The place where the race begins and ends. 2) The true start of the race that takes place when the Starter drops the starting rope.

**Mossiere** (Starter) - The only refereeing official placed at the starting rope. The *Mossiere* is designated by the Municipality with the approval of the *Contrade*.

**Mulinello** (Little Mill) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Murella Cronache** - Title of the periodical of the Tortoise *Contrada*.

**N** **Nappa** - 1) Group of silk ribbons bound to the top of the flags of the Standard-Bearers. 2) Black and white decorations of the Palio standard.

**Nerbo** - Riding crop given to jockeys upon their exit from the *Entrone* courtyard immediately before the Palio race. It is made of the dried and stretched organ of a bull.

**Nicchiaiolo** - A member of the Shell.

**Nicchio** (The Shell) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Nobili Protettori** (Noble Protectors) - A position of honor bestowed upon eminent personalities. The title lasts for life. (The *Contrada* of the Eagle.)

**Nonna** (The Grandmother) - The *Contrada* that has not won a victory for the greatest number of years.





**Oca** (The Goose) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Ocaio** - A member of the Goose.

**Olio di ricino** (Castor Oil) - Traditional purge among the losers, once voluntarily taken quite literally, today symbolically.

**Onda** (The Wave) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Ondaio** - A member of the Wave.

**Onoranza** (Paying Honor) - The homage offered by the *Comparsa* group of *Contrada* representatives to the "Protectors" upon the Feast Day of the Patron Saint.

**Oratorio** (Oratory) - Church used for the *Contrada's* devotional practices.

**Orso** (The Bear) - One of the six *Contrade* no longer in existence. Its territory was incorporated into that of the Owl.

**Otto, otto stretti, otto a penna** - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.



**Paggio** (Page) - A costumed figure who represents the *Contrada* in the Palio and in other official and ceremonial occasions.

**Paggio Maggiore** (Senior Page) - The most striking Page with the most richly elegant costume. He carries the official insignia of the *Contrada*.

**Palafreniere** - Page who leads the parade horse by the bridle.

**Palazzo Pubblico** - The seat of the Municipality of Siena, located in the lower part of the Campo piazza.

**Palcaio** - Owner and caretaker of the Stands (*Palchi*).

**Palco** (Stand) - Gallery of seats and platforms erected around the outer rim of the Piazza.

**Palciata** - A raucous and disorderly race among youths.

**Palio** - 1) The traditional race between ten of the seventeen *Contrade*, taking place in the Campo piazza on 2 July and 16 August in honor of the Virgin Mary. The July race is called the Palio of the Madonna of Provenzano, or the Palio of Provenzano; the August race the Palio of the Assumption.  
2) Standard of hand-painted silk upon which the following images are always depicted: a) the Virgin; b) the insignia of the ten *Contrade* running in the race; c) the coats of arms of the Municipality and of the city. This banner is given as the prize to the winner.  
3) The Festival, understood as the series of ceremonies.

**Pantaneto** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Unicorn.

**Pantera** (The Panther) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Panterino** - A member of the Panther.

**Partito** - Secret agreement between *Contrade* and jockeys based on unwritten word of honor with the intention of gaining victory for the *Contrada*.

**Passaggio di collo, passaggio di vita** (Pass at the neck, pass at the waist) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Passaggiata Storica** (The Historic Walk) - Synonym for the Historic Procession.

**Passo di marcia** (March Step) - Drumbeat that accompanies the normal progress of the *Comparsa* group.

**Passo a processione** (Procession Step) - Slow drumbeat for transfers.

**Passo a vittoria** (Victory Step) - Drumbeat that celebrates or wishes for victory.

**Passo della Diana** - Solemn drumbeat that accompanies the progress of the *Comparsa* group in the Piazza.

**Pè'oro** - Popular name for the Ram.

**Piatto** (The Plate) - Silver plate mounted atop the Great Banner of the Palio. It is given temporarily to the winning *Contrada* which then returns it to the Municipality after the final celebration of victory, the "Dinner of the Plate" in January, with the date and name of the victorious *Contrada* inscribed.

**Pignattella** - Lamp, consisting of animal fat held in a terracotta receptacle, with a wick lit in the neighborhood during the days of the festivities. It is located in the sconces.

**Pispini** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Shell (from Porta Pispini).

**Pochi ma boni** ("Few but Good") - Title of the periodical of Ram *Contrada*.

**Priore** (Prior) - Highest office of the *Contrada*, elected by the people for a term the duration of which varies from one *Contrada* to the other, from two to four years. During the days of the Palio, the Prior hands over command to the Captain. The Goose has a Governor, and the Caterpillar has a Rector.

**Protettore** (Protector) - Benefactor member who contributes to the maintenance of the *Contrada* by means of a liberally determined annual quota.

**Protonotario** - *Contrada* archivist. (The Ram.)

**Prova** (Trial Run) - One of the six races that take place in the morning and in the evening on the three days leading up to the Palio.

**Provaccia** (Lit. "The Nasty Trial") - Sixth and final trial race. It is run on the same day as the Palio. So-named because the horses are held back from running freely, thus saving their strength for the Palio that will take place in the afternoon.

**Prova Generale** (General Trial) - Fifth trial run, held on the evening before the Palio.

**Provenzano** - 1) Collegiate church where the image of the Madonna is venerated; it is to Her that the 2 July Palio is dedicated. 2) Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Giraffe (from the Collegiate Church of Provenzano).

**Provicario** (Pro-Vicar) - Substitute and right-hand man of the Vicar.

**Provveditore all'oratorio** (Superintendent of the Oratory) - Curator of the *Contrada* church. (The Eagle.)

**Provveditori** (Superintendents) - Managers of the *Contrada's* assets. (The Goose, the Ram.)

**Pulito, far pulito** ("Clean, make it clean") - The clearing of the track in preparation for the race.

**Purga** (The Purge) - Punishment (self-inflicted) of the losers, once literal, today symbolic. The winner is said to "have given the purge" to the losers.



**Quercia** (The Oak) - One of the six *Contrade* no longer in existence. Its territory was incorporated into that of the Snail.



**Raddoppio** (Redouble) - Double roll of the drum.

**Rettore** (Rector) - Supreme elected leader of the Caterpillar *Contrada*.

**Rettore del magistrato** (Rector of the Magistracy) - Elected annually to preside over the Magistracy of the *Contrada*.

**Rincorsa** - The tenth *Contrada*, whose horse enters the starting area last, at full speed, thus initiating the race.

**Rinserrata (Rinserratura)** - Maneuver to block a following horse by cutting in front of it.

**Ripurgarsi** (To Purge Oneself) - To lose, or to aid in the victory of an adversary. (See "Purga.")

**Rivenduto** (Sell-Out) - A jockey who favored an adversary, for money.

**Romolo e Remo** (Romulus and Remus) - Title of the periodical of the She-Wolf.

**Rospo** (Toad) - Also called "The Armor-Plated Toad," popular name for the Tortoise *Contrada*.

**Rotellini di Palazzo** - Participants in the Historic Procession, with the colors of the *Balzana* emblem, who are on guard to maintain order during the Historic Procession and to ensure its orderly progress.



**Salicotto** - 1) Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Tower. 2) Title of the periodical of the Tower *Contrada*.

**Salto del Fiocco** (Jump of the Bow) - Jump of the flag.

**Salto dell'Alfiere** (Jump of the Standard-Bearer) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Salva** - Economic agreement between the *Contrade* and the jockeys meant to cover the jockey's expenses pertaining to participation in the race.

**San Marco** - Name of the neighborhood and the *Contrada* of the Snail. (Porta San Marco, Via san Marco.)

**San Martino** - Downhill corner of the track where the outcome of the race is often decided.

**Sbandierata** (Flag-Waving Display) - A series of moves and maneuvers, called "*fioretti*," performed with the flags of the Standard-Bearers.

**Scambio di posto, scambio di bandiera** (Exchange of place, exchange of flag) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Scartoccio** - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Scosso** - A horse that continues the race even after its rider has fallen off. A riderless horse can still win the Palio.

**Sedia (Seggio)** (Presidency) - Executive body that governs and administers a *Contrada*. It is elected periodically.

**Selva** (The Forest) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Selvaio** - A member of the Forest.





**Servi** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Ram (Basilica dei Servi).

**Sganascino** - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Siam delle Fonti** - Title of the periodical of the Goose.

**Signoria** - Committee of former directors that guarantees institutional and statutory regularity and integrity. (The Goose.) Presided over by the *Maestro della Signoria*.

**Signore del brio** (Lord of Merrymaking) - In ancient times, he had the onus and the honor of organizing festivals and ceremonies for both the *Contrada* and the city.

**Soprallasso** (Draught Horse) - Parade horse mounted by a jockey during the Historic Procession so as not to tire the Barb that will run the race.

**Sorte (uscire a)** (Chance: come out by) - A *Contrada*, not automatically part of the group of seven necessarily participating in the race by rotation, may "come out by chance" in a public drawing. Through such a procedure the participating *Contrade* grow in number to ten to run the Palio on 2 July and 16 August.

**Sottogamba** (Under-the-leg) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.

**Spadaforte** (Strong Sword) - One of the six *Contrade* no longer in existence. Its territory was incorporated into that of the Tower.

**Spannocchia** - 1) Popular nickname of the Shell. 2) Title of the periodical of the Shell.

**Spennacchiera** (Feather Arrangement) - Ornament, with the colors of the *Contrada*, worn on the forehead of the horse; thus called because in the past the ornament was an actual plume.

**Stalloreghi** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Panther (Via Stalloreghi).

**Stramburata** - Roll of the drums.

**Sunto** - The name of the big bell in the Mangia Tower, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven.

**Sventolo** (Waving) - A maneuver in the Flag-Waving Display.



**Tamburino** - Palio participant with a drum, who sets the rhythm for the Standard-Bearers during the Flag-Waving Display.

**Tamburo** (Drum) - The "Drum of the Rounds," small and light, is used when making the rounds of paying honors. The "Drum of the Piazza" is used only during the days of the Palio. The drumbeats are called "Steps," except for the "Cadence of the Flag-Waving Display."

**Tartuca (The Tortoise)** - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Tartuchino** - A member of the Tortoise.

**Terra** (Earth) - Layer of tuff earth laid over the Campo piazza as the ground for the track upon which the Palio race is to be run. "Earth in the Piazza" is synonymous with "Time for the Palio."

**Terzo or Terziere** (Lit. "A Third") - One of the three ancient territorial subdivisions of Siena: Camollia, San Martino, and City.

**Torraiolo** - A member of the Tower.

**Torre** (The Tower) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Tratta** - A series of ceremonies and operations pertaining both to the selection of the horses that will take part in the Palio and to the assignment of the horses to the *Contrade*.



**Valdimontone** - (The Ram) - One of the seventeen *Contrade*.

**Vallepiatta** - 1) Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the Forest. (Via di Vallepiatta.) 2) Title of the periodical of the Forest.

**Vallerozzi** - Name of the neighborhood and of the *Contrada* of the She-Wolf. (Via Vallerozzi.)

**Verrocchino** - Wooden staff, set in the ground, that holds up the second starting rope stretched behind the first.

**Verrocchio** - 1) Winch that holds the starting rope. 2) Fenced off pedestal where the Starter takes his place. It is here that the Starter, at the moment of the start, releases the starting rope by stepping on a pedal.

**Vicario** (Vicar) - Aid, substitute, and representative of the Prior.

**Vipera** - One of the six *Contrade* no longer in existence. Its territory was incorporated into that of the Tower and of the Unicorn.



**Zucchino** - Metal helmet worn by jockeys during the Palio race as protection against lashes from adversaries' riding crops and against falls.







his bibliography, which is necessarily selective, serves as an initial orientation, seeking to encourage further reading and research in various fields related to the Palio. It highlights a sampling of institutional publications (published by the Township, the Magistrate, the Consortium, and Friends of the Palio), paying special attention to titles published by, edited by, and for on behalf of the Contrade. These editions are important not only as a sign of the proud care and century-old affection that the Contrade devote to the traditions of the Palio, but also as a proof of the keen awareness on the part of the Sienese people of the Palio's social and cultural values, an awareness that, ever since the time of Gutenberg, has moved ahead boldly even in the modern era of multimedia communication.

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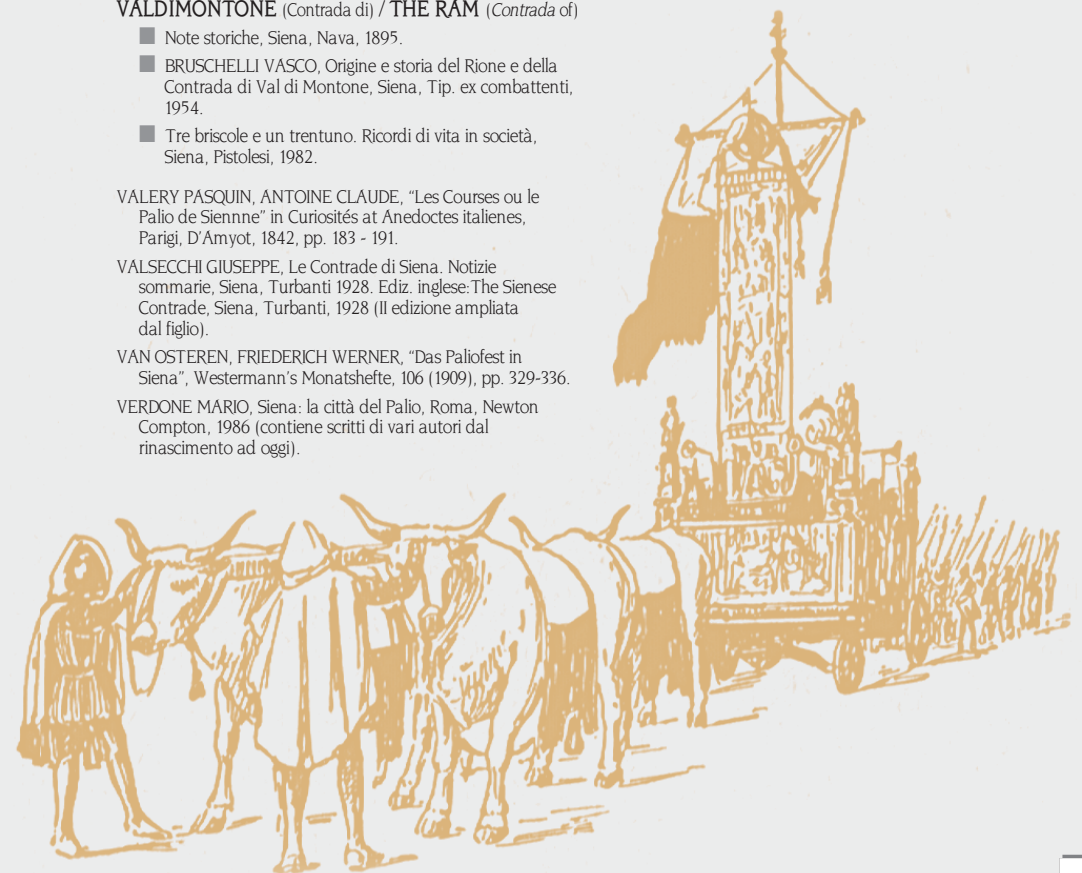
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