

TUSCAN HILL TOWNS, PIAZZA & STREET ANALYSIS

MAIN PIAZZAS

	NAME	SOCIAL SPACE	CAMPANILE	SACRED STRUCTURE	CIVIC STRUCTURE	EMBLEMATIC ELEMENT	PASSIVE SPACE	GREEN SPACE	UNIQUE FEATURE
CHIUSI									BI-MODAL SQUARES
SIENA									THRESHOLD
PIENZA									
BAGNO VIGNONI									LOGGIA
CORTONA									RAISED SQUARE
MONTE PULCIANO									

TUSCAN AESTHETIC PALETTE

COLOURS



TEXTURES



DOORS



WINDOWS



DECORATIVE



SIENA



2 MAIN SQUARES:

Piazza del Duomo

Piazza d. Campo

The two main squares are linked in the sense that Duomo acts as a strong enough Goal Attractor to almost act as a special building in both piazzas.

The minor piazzas, marked in green, were typically occupied more by locals, and functioned as multi-layered spaces with a strong social inclination.

In particular, the strongest minor square was Indipendenza, with a civic space covered by a portico, facing out to a row of cafes with outdoor seating, not requiring arcades because of the shelter provided by the tall buildings.



**DUOMO ACTING AS
GOAL ATTRACTOR**



ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST
is **MODERATE to HIGH**, because
of varied palette and rhyme.

With more time, we would like to go back to this piazza and do a more in depth study of the **informal nature** of the space. It seemed to have a balanced mix of generations, and a nice mix of through traffic due to being straddled by dense commercial thoroughfare, and passive/social activity thanks to the shaded seating areas.

The proportion of the parking area was also probably one of the better executed uses of dead piazza space for this purpose, being located in an area that is mostly hit by the sun all day. This reflects a pattern that we have noticed of locals preferring to stay out of the sun during the day; notably, tourists seem to prefer the sun.

SIENA

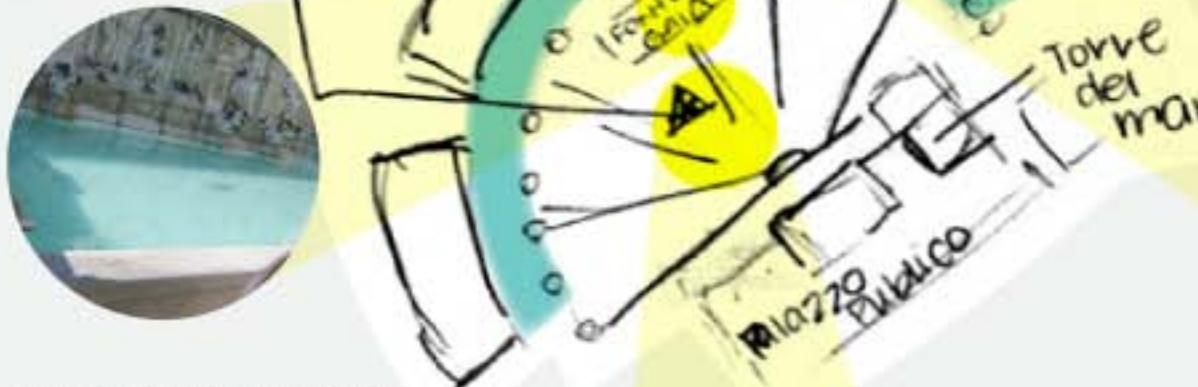
Piazza del Campo



FONTANA de GAIA

The fontana de Gaia is a strong emblematic structure, telling the story of the founding of the city, as well as depicting the Virgin Mary and child.

It is a strong reinforcer of civic identity, and also acts as almost a passive space during the day, providing a small respite from the rest of the square and the city.



TORRE MANGIA Shadow

Over the course of the day it is interesting to watch the flow of people in relation to the torre's shadow.

It was important to note that the majority of the locals stuck to the shade - it was mostly tourists who basked in the sun on the old paved amphitheater.

PIAZZA d. CAMPO



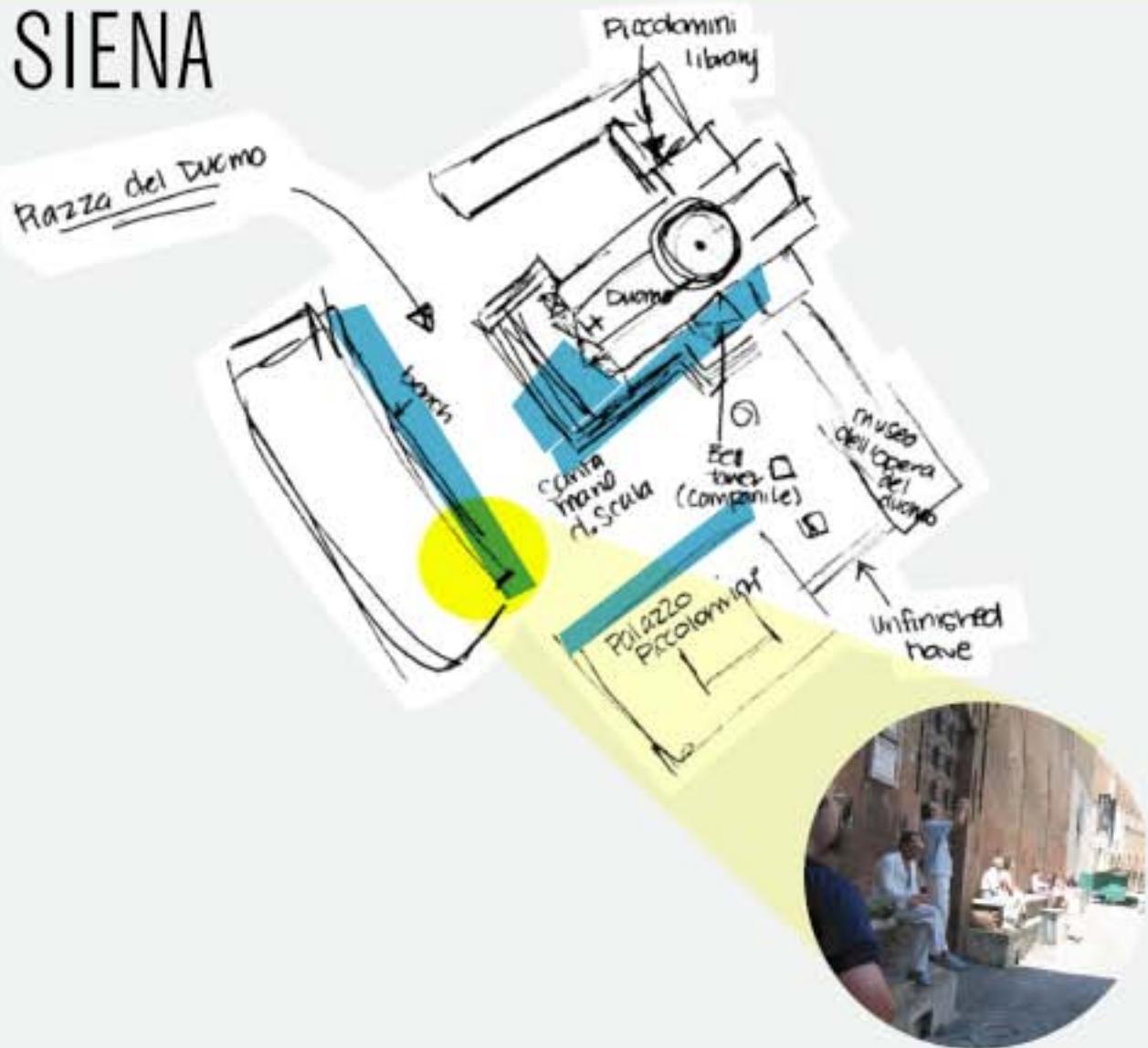
COMMERCIAL ARCADE around the perimeter

One of the drawbacks to the Campo that we found was the saturation of the surrounding arcade with tourist-gearied Ristorantes, Cafes, and souvenir stands. On the other hand, this still created a substantial amount of complexity at eye-level which was counterpoint to the austere and well-regulated Sienese red-brick masonry of the secular buildings.

THRESHOLD

The nicest feature of the piazza is the attention to the experience of entering the space. You descend from the north side as if entering a stadium, and are met with the vertical strength of the campanile. From the south you reach the crest of a slight hill to find the expansive space of the piazza, anchored by the Fontana de Gaia.

SIENA



PIAZZA d. DUOMO



BENCHES in DUOMO SQUARE

The benches across from the Santa Maria d. Assunta are a well-utilized social offering. They are well shaded throughout the day, and offer a well proportioned view of Italy's first gothic facade. Without the benches, it's possible that the space would only act as a connector through to other spaces, as it feels intimidating to stand in the center of the square against a building so demanding of attention. The muted palette and low level of competing complexity from the surrounding secular buildings is an important counterpoint, and another strong testament to Siena's thoughtful attention to urban planning.

SIENA CONCLUSION

BIG CITY = LOTS OF STUFF

SMART CITY = LOTS OF GOOD STUFF

Because Siena was one of the first towns to focus on the people as a key agent in government, the evolved urban landscape bears the marks of a highly designed public experience.

If you look at the way the Via de Citta snakes through the town, it provides an effective pipeline to both major piazzas, and connects to the minor piazzas and commercial thoroughfares. The distribution of public Piazza space - to major ones connected by minor capillary roads and piazzas - strikes a nice rhythm of proportion as you walk the streets, contributing to an architectural buildup - Smith's hierarchical profile.

The goal attractors vault pleasantly above the secular complexity of the townscape, and the vibrant common Tuscan colour palette that is present in the more disconnected streets would always mute itself when humbled in the presence of important civic or sacred structures.



BAGNO VIGNONI



Country Folk, Sitting Sitting

REWARDS OF CHANCE

Bagno Vignoni stands in stark contrast to the highly evolved and regimented urban language of Siena, whilst at the same time retaining a lot of the key Tuscan forms.

Where Siena has grown and developed a firm order to keep complexity in check, Bagno Vignoni (with no more than a 2-3 block urban radius) has had the luxury of an informal clustering. The small surface area of the town means that there is a lot of overlap between 'zones' that are kept disparate in larger towns.

There is less of a need for Goal Attractors, due to inadequate space for a proper hierarchical profile; there is only a 1 block threshold of cityscape before you hit the main town square - Piazza della Sorgenti.

Another benefit of this circumstance is that the Fatigue Factor is negligible, and the 'quaintness' of the town encourages the visitor to walk around new corners, knowing they will never be far from the entrance.

BAGNO VIGNONI



BATHS



LOGGIA



COMPLEXITY



REWARD



PERIMETER

ELEMENTS OF AESTHETIC

Though there's no heavy handed binary counterpoint of vertical tower elements with secular horizontal buildings, the concept of phi is still at play in the town square.

If you look, you'll notice that there is a subtle but intentionally placed element to anchor your eye. In the perimeter picture, you see the overhang of the restaurant on the right working with the more ornate entrance at the end of the walkway.

With the 'reward' picture, you see a tower off in the distance balanced by a small bare tree. This tree has been purposely planted in the center of the bath complex on the hill, likely for this effect.

You can also see that there is a sufficient level of complexity around the baths to keep the eye interested for the duration of the walk around.

BAGNO VIGNONI



MAIN BATH



LOGGIA



COMPLEXITY



REWARD



PERIMETER

POTENTIAL DIRECTION FOR FUTURE STUDY

RULE FOR GOAL ATTRACTORS

From our piazza studies, it appears to us that a pattern has emerged with the larger towns requiring more goal attractors, and the smaller towns actually requiring less.

While it seems like a fairly obvious principle of common sense, it would be worthwhile to develop a closer study of exactly what the limits are of geographical space to density of goal attractors / critical fixes.

As we are handicapped by resources, we aren't able to check Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language for a corresponding pattern, but at the very least, his methodology would be a fitting point of departure for such a study - we are reminded particularly of the pattern for suggested area of a piazza relative to the expected density.