THE PROBLEM OF THE SOURCES OF THE ORNAMENT ON THE SIENA CATHEDRAL FACADE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the sources and origins of the ornament on the west facade of Siena Cathedral are examined in order to find the artistic developments which influenced the Gothic style in Italy.

The ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade can be subdivided into two stages, one of which was influenced by French Gothic art, and one by Italian art, both Classical and Tuscan Romanesque architecture.

The form of the west facade wall at Siena Cathedral was modelled after French facade wall forms. Due to French influence brought into northern and central Italy by the constructions of the Cistercian monks, at Siena the Tuscan Romanesque facade silhouette was abandoned for the French facade silhouette of a nave projecting above the aisle roofs.

The first stage of ornament on the facade of Siena Cathedral is that of ornament which was influenced by French Gothic ornamental forms. The French Gothic ornamental forms which influenced the Siena facade ornament were not derived from French Gothic architectural ornament, but from the ornamental forms used to decorate the French Gothic carved ivory altarpieces. One such ornamental form is the tourelle e.g. Scenes from the Life of the Virgin and Childhood of Christ, French ca. 1300, Coll: Institutio de Valencia de Don Juan. That French Gothic ornament which was derived from an architectural source did not influence the Siena facade ornament is indicated by the fact that the role of the ornament on a French Gothic facade differs from that on the west
The Ornament on the West Wall of Siena Cathedral. The ornament on the west wall of Siena Cathedral creates a decorative screen which conceals the structure of the cathedral behind it. In French Gothic facades the purpose of the ornament is to create an easy transition from the sculpture to the structure of the facade, e.g. the facade of Amiens Cathedral. The supposition that the architectural ornament which was used to decorate Gothic ivories influenced the ornament on the Siena facade is supported by the fact that at Siena there appear decorative schemes which appear only (at first) in ivory altarpieces, e.g. the idea of the use of half-length figures in niches to create a border around a figure or scene of central importance is adopted at Siena to create a border around the west facade nave window.

The third stage of ornament found on the Siena Cathedral facade was derived from Italian sources, from Classical art and Tuscan Romanesque architecture. The profiles of the stringcourse and gables on the Siena facade are similar to that of a Classical cornice. The three equal sized arches over the three west facade doors were derived from the decorative arcades of the Tuscan Romanesque facade. At Siena the retention of the Tuscan Romanesque concept of the facade as a screen wall made it possible to incorporate into the facade design the diverse ornamental forms mentioned.

In conclusion, the form and ornament of the Siena Cathedral was found to be derived from primarily three sources, two of which were French, consequently the greater part of the Siena Cathedral facade design was influenced by French Gothic art. However, at
Siena there occurs no imitation of the French Gothic. The French forms are joined with Italian ones into a homogeneous decorative surface. It may be concluded from the evidence of the sources of the ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade that the Gothic style in Italy was based on French Gothic developments which were fused with native Italian developments so that the Gothic style in Italy appears as it did in France, a new development based on the country's Romanesque tradition.
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INTRODUCTION

Italian structures which have been classified as gothic differ in many important aspects from those in France to which the same term has been applied. Judging from this one can assume two possibilities. First, it can be assumed that since it was on the Ile de France that the Gothic style began and achieved its highest development, perhaps the architecture of thirteenth and fourteenth century Italy should not be termed gothic at all. Secondly, it could be assumed that the characteristics which French and Italian architecture of this period have in common indicate the Italians may have attempted to imitate French Gothic structures but were not very successful in carrying this out.\(^1\) If the term gothic, however, is not used in its narrowest sense, only applying to structures which adhere exactly in structure and detail to buildings erected in northern France during the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, it is evident that Italian structures of this period are gothic because they have the major gothic structural characteristic of the pointed arch and rib vault as the covering for the aisles and nave. The Gothic style in Italy forms a complete chapter in the history of Italian architecture; for the structures of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Italy are not similar to Italian Romanesque structures nor do they exhibit the characteristics of the early Renaissance style in Italy.
It is my purpose in this paper to analyse the ornament on the facade of Siena Cathedral and in this way to learn something of its origin and nature. This particular facade was chosen because, in the first place it was not an obviously imitative work of a foreign prototype as was, for instance, Milan Cathedral. Secondly, the decoration of the facade was carried out in a relatively short period from the late thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century. So all of the forms of ornament were those known to the gothic craftsman. And finally, the Siena facade was important in the history of Tuscan architecture, because its design provided a prototype for the facade of Orvieto Cathedral, (and to some extent for the facade of Florence Cathedral).

On the facade of Siena Cathedral there appear elements for which an Italian prototype or source cannot be found, such as the use of decorative arcades to create an easy transition between different parts of the structure for instance, between the nave projection and the two side towers; which can however be explained in terms of French influence: therefore, in order to obtain an understanding of all the sources of the facade of Siena Cathedral and the Italian gothic, in general, it is necessary to examine and weigh the significance in stylistic formation such phases and styles of architecture as Cistercian architecture, the French gothic facade and the form of French gothic ornament, Classical architecture and native Italian developments such as the Italian Romanesque facade and Cosmati work. The way to which this analysis will be carried out in this paper will be to break down
the facade of Siena Cathedral into its main component elements
and trace the stylistic origins of each of these. Then the
diverse origins of the facade will become evident, and perhaps
along with them the true nature of the Gothic style in Italy.

1. These two opinions are quite prevalent in writings
on gothic art dating from the early part and turn
of the century. C.H. Moore in The Development and
Character of Gothic Architecture (London: Macmillan,
1890), treats the subject of Italian gothic art as
a minor or inferior development. C. Enlart in his
work Les origines francaise de l'architecture
gothique en Italy (Paris, 1894), justifies in many
passages the validity and significance of the
phenomena of Italian Gothic architecture. In
other writings Italian Gothic architecture is seen
as an equally valid, although minor phase of the
evolution of the Gothic in Europe, e.g., P. Frankl,

p.175. re-Milan Cathedral notes that although the
proportions of Milan Cathedral are lower and wider
than those of most French cathedrals of the same
period, because of structural characteristics,
Milan still belongs to the same group of cathedrals
as do Bourges and LeMans Cathedrals.

3. Giovanni Pisano worked on the Siena facade from
1284 to 1300. The facade decoration was then left
and not begun again until 1369. Paul Frankl,
chronology of work on the Siena facade is as follows:
1284 Giovanni Pisano begins to work on the facade
decoration, 1300 the facade decoration is in the area
of the doors, 1369 work is once again begun on the
facade decoration and the upper sections of the facade
are decorated.

4. "Arnolfo must have known the facade of the Cathedral of
Siena...." Paul Frankl, Gothic Architecture. (London 1960),
p.144. Arnolfo's work on the Cathedral of Florence
facade dates from ca.1294.
I

A: BRIEF HISTORY OF CISTERCIAN ARCHITECTURE IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN ITALY

According to Camille Enlart, it was the Cistercians who brought the first major French gothic influence into Italy just as they had into Germany and Scandinavia: "C'est aux Cistercians francaises que revient l'honneur d'avoir dote l'Italie de l'art gothique." There had been other examples of French workmen on French architecture in Italy, such as the French masons in the service of the Angevin kings in Naples, ca. 1266. Isolated examples also exist of French influenced gothic architecture in Italy, for instance, the church at Verceil in Piedmont, the Cathedral of Genes and the church at Barletta built by the canons of Saint Sulpice about 1199. However, the French influence brought into Italy by means of the Cistercian constructions was the most consistent and enduring, because Cistercian architecture was not imposed by the whim of a French or Francophile ruler, but it was connected with the spread of a popular reformed religious and monastic ideal; thus Cistercian architecture became naturalized in northern Italy and was, a short while after its introduction into Italy, no longer regarded as foreign. The Cistercian order was from its outset internationally minded. The Cistercians desired to spread their reformed monastic ideals into every region of western Europe which professed the Catholic faith. In order to ensure that the Cistercian brothers all over Europe should live under similar circumstances it was felt
necessary to identify each abbey with the mother house of Citeaux and not with regional or local models. Other orders such as the Clunacs followed the prototype of their mother house in their daughter abbeys but the Cistercians were more persistent and consistant in doing this. The various Cistercian houses, regardless of their distance from Citeaux, although with some degree of adaptation or modification, adhered closely in their plans to either that of Citeaux or the Abbey of Fontenay.²

The Cistercian form of monastic architecture was not, however, an innovation within the order to satisfy its own needs. Cistercian architecture does not form a school of architecture in the proper sense of the word as does, for instance, the Auvergne school. It is a combined form or a derivative of two forms of architecture, the monastic architectural forms of the Benedictine abbeys, and the architecture of Burgundy (the birthplace of the Cistercian reformed movement). When the Cistercians, with maps and plans reproduced the form of their mother house in Burgundy throughout Europe, they were spreading abroad the Burgundian form of architecture.

The development of Burgundian architecture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries falls into two phases. The first of these was that of the style of transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic, about 1150-1170 to 1225, the second phase, that of the Gothic, began in Burgundy in 1225. The period of transition was the period of greatest achievement in medieval Burgundian architecture. The architecture of the second phase was a hybrid
form consisting of the native or transitional form of Romanesque architecture modified by the innovations and achievements of the gothic of the Ile de France. In Burgundy the rib vault had been used during the period of transition; it is evident in Burgundian Cistercian architecture from as early as 1150. "In the course of the second half of the twelfth century, the rib vault appeared sporadically throughout this area (S.E. France and Yonne Valley) ... in the 1150's in the Yonne Valley and North East Burgundy. ... The ribbed vault was first employed in the Yonne Valley by the Cistercians."³ One of the earliest and most consistent uses in Cistercian architecture of the ribbed vault is in the chapter-house at Fontenay. The Burgundian builders were, however, slow to explore and develop the structural possibilities implied by the rib vault and only moved to a full development of its implications under foreign influence. The architecture of Burgundy including that of the Cistercians, up to 1225, can be seen as an amalgamation of the early form of the gothic rib vault with Romanesque structure. Although the rib vault was used in roofing the nave the rest of the church structure still adhered to Romanesque design and structural principles, and consequently may be called Ribbed Vaulted Romanesque.⁴ It was this early phase from 1150 to 1225 which was introduced into central Italy, for this height of Burgundian architectural achievement coincided with the period of greatest Cistercian European expansion.
Thus, the most important French influence for central Italy in the early gothic age was that of Citeaux, which in the construction of its abbeys adhered to burgundian Romanesque architectural forms. This explains why a form of gothic architecture based on the highly developed gothic form of the structures in the Ile de France does not appear in or influence central and northern Italy until later. Consequently during the period of the evolution and expansion of the gothic style in northern Europe, Italy was under the influence of the transitional Cistercian Burgundian gothic architecture. The second wave of gothic influence which penetrated into Italy was during the mid-fourteenth century when the great age of cathedral construction was already drawing to a close in northern France. The Black Death crossed Italy in the mid-fourteenth century and the economic deterioration which came with it prevented the complete construction of any significant structure in the late gothic style. The structure of the cathedrals in Italy which were built during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are in an early gothic style.

The first abbey built by the Cistercians was the abbey of Fossanova on the Appian way near Turacena. Work on it was begun in 1187 under the patronage of Frederick I. It was this abbey that was to become the source of the most important influx of Burgundian architecture into Italy. Its mother house was the Abbey of d'Houtecombe in Savoy. The Abbey of d'Houtecombe itself was a modest Romanesque structure in the local tradition; the builders of Fossanova could hardly have found here the source for the distinctly Burgundian style of the large new abbey.
of Fossanova was the first major Cistercian abbey in central Italy. It was intended to act as a mother house to Cistercian expansion. It is probable that the Chapter General of Citeaux in France drew up the plans and chose the master mason for Fossanova. The significance of the new abbey was such that Pope Innocent III presided over the ceremony of its consecration on June 18, 1208.

The Abbey of Fossanova for two main reasons developed into a significant artistic and intellectual centre. First, it was located on the Appian Way between Rome and Naples, and consequently it was frequently visited by travellers to or from the Holy City. Such was the expense of this hospitality for Fossanova that in the mid-thirteenth century Pope Alexander IV granted the already wealthy abbey a large sum of money to defray its costs. These multitudes of travellers stopping at Fossanova must have carried away with them impressions of the architectural form of the abbey which was in those days according to C. Enlart, "Une modele d'art plus parfait tout qu'elle avait va depuis l'antiquite." Secondly, the abbey had attached to it a Studium Artium, which may be termed a monastic university (or in France a Cathedral School), similar to the College of the Bernardines of Paris. (College des Bernardines de Paris.)

The existence of the school at Fossanova is supported by documentary evidence. There is recorded an argument between the Abbots of Valvescolo and Fossanova which notes the sum to be paid for the education of ten monks at the school of Fossanova: "Similarly it is ordained that the prior of the said abbey of Valvescolo is bound to return (give) to the abbey at Fossanova on the day of St. Stephen, or a week later, ten gold florins belonging to the previously
mentioned abbey of Valvescolo for the Study of Arts that he has at the said Fossanova. During the middle ages architecture was claimed as applied geometry and consequently it is almost certain that architecture was taught at Fossanova. This is supported by the fact that architects or masons who are recorded as having worked on churches which held resemblance to Burgundian or Cistercian architectural forms for the most part came from the town of Piperno, which is situated five miles from the abbey; they are Petrus Gulinari and his two sons Morisius and Jocobus who in 1291 terminated the church of Amasino, and Andreas de Piperno who was architect of the Church of the Annunciation in Terracine. The study of architecture at the school at Fossanova was not carried out by formal studies, but the students both monks and laymen, were apprenticed to monastic architects who instructed them by working on the site. It is only natural that the work of these men would in time be infused with characteristics of Cistercian architecture and in this way would be spread throughout Italy. The Abbey of Fossanova had, then, become a centre for building and dissemination of the new gothic style throughout Italy. However, the gothic influence was that of the Cistercians which tended to be conservative. The lack of direct systematic contact with different or more up to date forms of gothic architecture explain why Italy did not have a true high gothic phase in her architectural development: during the period of greatest development of the gothic in the Ile de France, Italy had little knowledge of it.
Fossanová established the Abbey of Casamari which was consecrated in September of 1217. Casamari in turn established first Santa Maria d'Arbons in the Arruzzi Mountains and then in 1224, San Galgano in Tuscany. It was the Abbey of San Galgano which was to have influence on the building of Siena Cathedral.

The site on which the Abbey of San Galgano was built had been the hermitage and death place of a repentant worldly knight named Galgano. After the knight's death miraculous cures were effected on his tomb. In 1185 when the knight had been canonized, the Bishop of Volterra conceived of the idea of letting the new cult serve as the basis for a monastic foundation. He communicated with the Cistercians, whose reputation at this time was at a zenith, and a few monks were sent from Citeaux to settle in the wilds of Mount Siepi. (No significant building was done on this site.) Henry IV, in 1191, safeguarded the position of the monks, for his chancellery issued the edict that he, the sovereign, took these monks under his patronage and warned his neighbours not to "violate our munificence with temperarious audacity." Along with this came a guarantee of complete liberty in internal affairs and freedom from local taxation. In 1206 the monastery's complete legal safeguard was arrived at, Pope Innocent III reaffirmed the monks' freedom from taxation and immunity from sentences pronounced in Courts of Bishops and Secular Rulers. In addition to this the monks were given the right to elect their own bishops and govern themselves as a sovereign body. With these royal and papal safeguards it was decided to enlarge the monastery; thus monks were sent from Fossanová to increase the number of brothers in Mount Siepi and to help construct
an abbey. San Galgano then became the most influential monastic establishment in the district.

The link between the Cistercian monks and the Sienese occurred through the monks of San Galgano. At first the Sienese consulted the monks only in civilian affairs but later in artistic ones; that is, on the problems of the construction of the town's new cathedral. In 1257 a monk was sent from San Galgano to Siena to supervise the financial matters of the town. This practice of having a monk from San Galgano fill the position of the treasurer of the city was kept up for the next one hundred years. As a return of favour in 1262 the Podesta of Siena took the monastery of San Galgano under the protection of the city "at the demand of my Lord Abbot I shall give notice by messenger and letter to the lords and people of the region near which the possessions of the abbey are situated, that the said abbey of San Galgano and its goods are under the protection of the Commune of Siena, and I shall extend the affectionate request to them that they inflict no injury upon it or any of its goods seeing that we of Siena are held to aid the monks and to defend them as if they were our fellow citizens."

On February 11, 1259 (the new year began in Siena on March 25th), a meeting of the Consiglio della Campagna was held in the church of St. Christopher to decide on what was to be done about the city's cathedral. The position of Siena had increased in importance during the last decade; she held a considerable number of towns in allegiance to her, and it was decided to build a cathedral which would reflect the citizens' pride and the town's importance. A committee
of nine good men was formed (three from each of the local Terzi of the town) whose duty it was to appoint a master mason to begin the construction of a new cathedral and to act as an intermediary between the mason and the town council. As the Sienese had close connections with the monks of San Galgano and the monks had experience in building in the new style, it is not surprising that on February 20, 1259, Fra Vernaccio was appointed master mason of the new cathedral works. Fra Vernaccio does not seem to have proceeded very far with the new work, for his successor Fra Melano, another Cistercian monk from San Galgano, was ordered to erect a vault over the first bay of the nave and to complete the nave and east termination of the church. Fra Melano's name appears for the last time in Sienese building records in 1268. He seems to have returned to his abbey and worked on Cistercian construction from 1271 to 1274. In 1284 the master builder of the works was again a Cistercian monk, this time a Fra Maggio. The first work on the Siena Cathedral facade proper dates from 1284 when Giovanni, the son of Nicola Pisano, was given the task of creating sculpture decoration for the facade. The town by now felt that the cathedral was inadequate and a new scheme was devised to enlarge the barely completed structure. A new nave was to be built at a right angle to the cathedral so the present nave would become the transept of the new church. This grandiose task was begun in 1340, but was terminated in 1348 due to the plague. The work had progressed only as far as the construction of a vault over the east aisle and a south facade. The decoration of the doors and windows of these
bays is of a purer form of gothic than anything up to that date in Siena. This indicates that in the period from the completion of the cathedral proper to the beginning of the plague there had been a new penetration of Italy by the gothic, this time from the Ile de France, which influenced the ornamentation of the cathedral facade.

As the work on the Cathedral of Siena was for a great part of the time directed by Cistercian monks, it is not surprising that the building has structural affinities with Cistercian architecture. The square termination of the east end of Siena Cathedral follows the Cistercian plan. The round archways and the two tiers of three single lights surmounted by a rose window in the east wall recall the French Burgundian manner of handling the east wall. Since the interior of Siena Cathedral was influenced by Cistercian architecture it is not surprising that the facade form of the Cistercian church influenced the surface division of the Siena Cathedral facade.


2. As this paper deals with facades and not with plans, the variations of the basic Cistercian plan will not be dealt with here. This material is covered in Marcel Aubert, *L'Architecture Cistercienne* (Paris, 1957), pp.151-226.


5. Work continued on both Florence and Milan Cathedrals on into the 15th century. In the case of Milan the exterior of the Cathedral was not completed until the 19th century.


II

ANALYSIS OF FACADE FORMS WHICH HAVE A RELATIONSHIP TO THE SIENA CATHEDRAL FACADE

The basic component part of the Siena west facade, or that which is left remaining after all decorative elements have been taken away, is a flat wall surface which follows the outline of the aisles and the higher nave between them. This is the simple basic form similar to the Early Christian Basilica and the Italian Romanesque Church, but in the basic surface division of the facade at Siena there has occurred a shift in emphasis or a re-organization of the sub-division of the facade. An analysis of the form of the Siena facade and a comparison of it with the form of the central Romanesque Facade and to the facade of the Cistercian Abbey of Fossanova will show that the shift or change in the subordination of the component parts of the facade at Siena occurred because of the French influence brought into Italy by the Cistercians.¹

The basic form of the west facade at Siena is that of a rectangle surmounted by a square (see Figure 1). This form is subdivided horizontally into two stories and vertically into three divisions. The horizontal division of the facade into two is made by a stringcourse across the width of the facade at the level of the aisle roofs. The vertical division into three is of a more complex nature for it is carried out differently in both of the horizontal divisions. The lower horizontal division of the facade is divided equally into three by the gabled arches over each of the doors in a ratio of 1:1:1. The upper section of the facade is divided into
three by an arcade at either side of the nave protrusion in a ratio of 1:2:1. The facade at Siena then consists of two basic shapes, the rectangular shape of the main body of the church and the square shape of the higher pitched roof nave extension. The two horizontal members of the Siena facade are brought into a state of balance because of the compensation of value which is achieved by the variation in the shape of the two component parts.

The basic shape of the central Romanesque facade may be represented by the shape of the west facade at Pisa Cathedral; it consists of a high rectangle with slanting sides (the aisle roofs) which touch a higher but smaller form of the same shape (the nave protrusion with its pitched roof) (see Figure 2). The main emphasis of the Pisa facade (and the central Romanesque facade) is on the lower section of the facade which closes off the nave and the aisles. The accentuation of this part of the facade is achieved by the use of superimposed rows of arcades to decorate the whole surface of the facade. The arcades in the lower emphasized section of the facade are high and widely spaced. As the rows of arcades ascend to the gable they are decreased in size and are more closely spaced until the nave projection contains nothing but a diminished version of the arcades. Thus, attention is focused on the lower levels of the facade because it is here that there occurs the most complete form of the facade arcades. Also, the use of arcades to decorate the entire facade wall surface integrates optically the nave protrusion into the lower sections of the cathedral facade creating the effect that the facade consists of one single unified shape.
It will have been noted from the above description of the west facades of Siena and Pisa Cathedrals that the facade of Siena is not similar either in shape or surface division to the facade at Pisa (i.e., the central Romanesque facade). The main points of divergence between the two facades is in the section of the facade which is emphasized. At the Siena facade emphasis is not placed on the nave as is at the Pisa facade, here (at Siena) there is an overall integration of the facade surface through equality of shapes, not through subordination of shapes as at Pisa. Second, the facade at Siena has divisions both vertically and horizontally, but the facade at Pisa does not have these divisions; here there is a one uniform surface covered with one repeated design, i.e., bands of arcades.

The new type of facade division which is found at Siena Cathedral where the nave termination is clearly set off from the lower sections of the facade as an independent yet integrated unit is a French architectural characteristic found with some degree in all early and developed French Gothic Cathedrals. In order to find the source or prototype for the basic surface arrangement of the Siena Cathedral facade it is necessary to examine the west facade of the Abbey Church of Fossanova and compare it with the west facade of Siena Cathedral. Because of historical fact an examination of the facade of the Abbey of San Galgano might be more to the point but the comparison of the Siena and Fossanova facades is not illogical when it is remembered that this abbey was a training centre for
architects and the builders of San Galgano came from this abbey. Also, the basic form of all Cistercian abbey facades is similar, that is, in all abbeys the nave projects above the aisle roofs which abut against it. The wall surface itself is plain, broken only by four pilaster buttresses and windows. Variation which occurs in the Cistercian facades is in the handling of the facade windows. The west facade may have a rose window as does the west facade of the Abbey of Silvicane or two rows of arch topped windows as has the west facade of the Abbey of Fontenay. Consequently the west facade of the Abbeys of Fossanova and San Galgano must have been fairly similar in appearance.

The basic shape of the west facade of the Abbey of Fossanova is similar to that of most Cistercian churches. The west facade at Fossanova consists of a lower rectangular form of the nave proper which has above it, and divided from it by a stringcourse at the level of aisle roofs, the nave projection. The nave projection's square shape is marked off at the bottom by the above mentioned stringcourse at the top by the base of the pediment above it (see Figure 3).

Certain aspects of the facade at Siena differ from those of the facade at Fossanova, e.g., the aisle roofs of Fossanova are slanting while they are flat at Siena; and the arches over the doors of the Siena facade are equal in size, while the arch over the central door on the facade at Fossanova is larger than are the two side ones, although the basic surface division of both facades is similar.
It can be stated, therefore, that at Siena the acceptance of the French facade surface division and deviation from accepted central Romanesque facade surface division occurred because of the French influence brought into Italy by the Cistercian monks.

However, as the Cistercians had very little or no tradition of architectural decoration, other sources of influence must be found for the ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade.

1. See footnote No. 2 for further discussion of this term.

2. Central Romanesque is the term used by C.A. Cummings in A History of Italian Architecture when he discusses the Romanesque Architecture of the cities of Central Italy - Pisa, Lucca, Florence, Pistoia and Toscanella.

3. This type of facade decoration is termed by John White in Art and Architecture in Italy: 1250-1400, p. 70, as the Pisan - Lucchese scheme. This facade type according to White, is a variant of the free-standing screen facades of the Romanesque and Early Gothic churches of Lombardy and Emilia.
III

ORNAMENT ON THE SIENA CATHEDRAL FACADE: FRENCH INFLUENCE

The most significant part of the ornament on the Facade of Siena Cathedral has been influenced by French Gothic ornamental forms. The Cistercians did not have a tradition of architectural ornamentation, consequently the French Gothic influenced ornament found on the Siena Cathedral facade could not have been derived from this source. The decoration of the exterior and interior of Cistercian abbeys was decreed against by Bernard of Clairvaux,¹ for in part it constituted the worldliness of such orders as the Benedictines whose rule the founders of Citeaux had reformed.² Sculpture and other ornament was rarely used by the Cistercians to decorate their abbeys. The earliest extant example of Cistercian sculpture is a Virgin and Child (ca. mid-fourteenth century), from the Abbey of Fontenay. The appearance of sculpture in the Cistercian abbeys at this late date indicates how well the Cistercians adhered to the rule which prohibited decoration, for approximately one hundred years had to pass before derivation from the rule occurred. The only embellishment of the west facade of Cistercian abbeys consisted of a decorative moulding or arch around the central doorway or window of the facade. For instance, the facade embellishment of the Abbey of Fontenay (Figure 4) consists of a compound arch around the central nave doorway and of an arch supported by two columns over the largest of the nave windows. The Cistercian builders of Siena Cathedral, with their meagre tradition of architectural ornament could not have provided the prototype for
As Cistercian architecture did not provide the model for the French Gothic ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade, another source of French architectural ornament must have influenced it. A comparison of the manner in which the ornament is used on the Siena Cathedral facade and on a French Gothic facade suggests that the role of the ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade differed from the role which it had on the French Gothic facade. This difference indicates that only the form of the architectural ornament on the Siena facade was derived from French Gothic architectural sources. As the form and not the function of the ornament on the Siena facade is similar to French Gothic ornament I believe that the prototype of the ornament on the Siena facade did not come directly from a French architectural source, but from some intermediary source which also used architectural ornament for embellishment, for example from the minor arts, especially French Gothic carved ivory altar-pieces.  

The ornament, other than the sculptured figures, on the facade of the French Gothic cathedrals may be called or termed structural ornament. This term, structural ornament, is meant to designate ornament which is used to enhance the structural elements evident on the cathedral facade and at the same time create an easy transition from the more ornate sculpture to the less ornate structure. In other words, structural ornament embellishes the purely mechanical aspects of the facade so that they will integrate with the sculpture of
the facade to achieve an overall homogeneous wall surface. The west facade of a French Gothic cathedral, for example, Amiens Cathedral, is supported by four buttresses which correspond to the wall divisions of the nave. The presence of these buttresses on the facade allowed for the construction of porches between them which in turn provided the necessary additional space for the figures of the sculptural cycles. The greater part of the ornament which can be termed structural ornament is located on these buttresses to integrate them with the sculpture of the porches beside them. On the facade of Amiens Cathedral, pinnacles decorated with crockets located on the stepped off stage of the facade pilaster provide an example of structural ornament. The pinnacles decorated with crockets add richness to the structural pilaster and make it possible for the pilaster to integrate or fuse with the gallery of kings in the facade wall alongside of them. Without this decoration the pilasters would stand apart from the rest of the facade; they would soar to the roof as blank strips which would divide the facade arcade, and above it, the gallery of kings, into three short segments and the horizontal integration of the facade would be lost. The facade would remain divided into its two component parts, structure and sculpture, instead of being integrated into one overall ornate surface.

On the facade of Siena Cathedral the ornament cannot be called structural ornament for it does not have the role of integrating the structure and the sculpture of the facade. At Siena the total effect of the facade is created by means of ornament without regard to internal structure. Before the ornament was applied the facade was
merely a flat blank wall surface. Thus the role of the ornament at Siena Cathedral was not to integrate, but to create a decorative screen for the nave wall. On the facade at Siena Cathedral the designer was free to embellish the walls around the entrance of the church in the same manner that a craftsman embellished the container for a saint's relics or the moulding around an ivory panel depicting the life and Passion of Christ.

Architectural ornament forms were adopted in this period by most of the French minor arts; illuminated manuscripts, reliquaries and carved ivory panels were embellished with gables, crockets and pinnacles. It was possible for the Siennese to derive their architectural ornament from a minor art source such as the carved ivory panel because they had behind them the Tuscan Romanesque architectural decorative tradition of applied ornament. The hypothesis that the architectural ornament used in the minor arts, especially in the carved ivory altar piece provided the prototype for the ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade, is confirmed by the fact that there appear decorative elements on the Siena facade which are not found in the decorative scheme of the French Gothic facades but which do appear in the decoration of the carved ivory altar-piece. Amongst these (which will be discussed in greater detail later) may be included the Tourelle, and Cusped Square.

In the thirteenth century, carved ivory panels were joined together to make small portable altars which were used for private or monastic devotion. These altar-pieces were precious objects and
were widely exchanged as gifts on diplomatic and other missions. Several European courts employed ivory carvers to make altar-pieces for them; for instance, Philip LeLong employed Jean Le Scelleur; Charles V, Jean LeBraillier, and Philip Le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, and Charles VI both employed Jean Aubert.

Very little documentary evidence exists concerning the location of the workshops and methods of production of these ivory altar-pieces. The centre of carving can be surmised to have been in the Ile de France. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the trade must have prospered here for the craftsmen who carved ivories attained a position of enough significance to have their names specially noted in the Paris *Le livre des Metiers.* The pieces themselves however, do not bear inscriptions to identify their carver or place of origin.

From the earliest stages of the development of the carved ivory altar-piece architectural ornament was used for the frames of the panels. The form of the Gothic carved ivory altar-pieces have been divided into three basic types according to the type of surface division which is used on the panel. However, the form of the ornament used in the decoration of all three types of ivory panels was similar in origin, that is, all of it was derived from architectural ornament.

In the treasury of Milan Cathedral there is an ivory cup decorated with gabled niches containing figures representing the liberal arts. This cup is assigned by Kochelin to the same atelier as the Dyptych of Soissons. The cup was in Milan before 1440 for
it can be identified with a cup in the inventory of this year of the church of San Gottardo Milan. In 1440 this cup along with the rest of the San Gottardo treasures was transferred to the treasury of Milan Cathedral. The significance of the cup is that it indicates that some of the earliest products of the French ivory carvers ateliers were present in Italy. "The existence of a product of the atelier of the Dyptych of the Treasury of Soissons at this date in Milan makes it reasonable to assume the presence in Italy of other works of this atelier."  

Most of the ornament used in the decorative scheme on the Siena Cathedral facade may have been derived from the architectural ornament used to decorate the French Gothic carved ivory altar-pieces. However, although the architectural ornament which appears on the Siena Cathedral facade is derived from a source once removed from architecture the ornament on the facade is not totally divorced from its original architectural location, i.e., crockets still retain their original function of decorating the straight edges of gables.

The ornament derived from the Gothic ivories on the Siena facade follow in broadest outline the form of the French Gothic cathedral facade. What occurred in the design of the Siena Cathedral facade was the adaptation of French architectural ornament known to Italian craftsmen via the French carved ivory altar-piece to create a facade which was not an attempt to imitate the French Gothic facade,
but was a re-creation of the essential form of the French Gothic facade in decorative terms.

The ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade which has been derived from the ornament on the French Gothic ivory altar-piece can be divided into two main divisions. First, the lower section of the facade up to the level of the stringcourse. Here the ornament is used in its original architectural role. Second, the upper section of the facade, here the ornamental forms which were devised by the ivory carvers from architectural ornament for their own specific decorative needs, are fused into a single ornamental surface. It is in this area on the Siena facade that the most original handling of the ornamental forms occurs.

The lower level of the French Gothic cathedral's west facade up to the gallery of kings consists of three deeply recessed portals. On the walls of these portals are located the greater part of the figures of the cathedral's sculptured iconographical cycle.

At Siena Cathedral the lower level of the facade also has three gabled portals. Unlike those of the French Gothic facade these portals do not fit between the pilasters which support the west wall (see footnote 4). The portals of Siena are not based in structure. The doors are shallowly recessed and the area from the springing of the arches over the doors to the stringcourse consists of subordinated bands of ornament. In this section of the facade decorative members have been substituted for structural ones.

The prototype for the handling of architectural ornament on a flat surface at Siena was provided by the carved ivory altar-piece,
for here architectural ornament had already been adapted to a flatter use. On the Siena facade the empty flat wall spaces between the gables of the aisle doors and the side pilasters were decorated in a similar manner to which the empty spaces between the gabled arches and the frames of the carved ivories were decorated with triquitas. Each of the gables on the Siena facade is made to appear as if it overlaps a rectangular panel by the triangular light coloured border at either side of the gable. This creates an effect similar to that of the gable of an arcade overlapping or being enclosed by the edge of a leaf of a diptych. Compare, for instance, the handling of the edges of the panel and triquitas in the Coronation of the Virgin and Crucifixion, a French ivory (ca. 1300), by the Master of the Virgin, Wernher collection (Figure 5) to the handling of space in the area of the gables on the Siena facade. The section of the Siena facade from the springing of the doorway arches to the stringcourse resembles the type of ivory triptych in which each of the leaves contains a single narrative incident.

On the French Gothic facade the gables over the arches of the portals are free standing units for they are located at the outer edge of the deeply recessed facade portals. Thus the French Gothic facade could not have provided the precedent or example for the flat handling of these elements on the Siena facade. The ivory carvers had, however, used the gable as an almost two dimensional ornament. It is, in fact, the most commonly found architectural ornament in the whole of ivory carving. This is the source which
most likely provided the prototype for the shallow, ornamental handling of the gables over the doors on the Siena Cathedral facade.

At the level of the peak of the central, i.e., highest porch gable on the French Gothic cathedral facade there occurs the first step-back of the four facade buttresses, e.g., Amiens Cathedral. The step-back area is decorated with one large or several small pinnacles which have both a decorative and structural purpose. The face of the pilaster at this level is decorated with tracery to integrate it with the sculpture and ornament of the portals. At Siena the pinnacled step-back buttress is recreated in decorative terms. The tourelles, which in ivory carving formed the decorative counterpart of the buttress pinnacle, are found on the Siena facade instead of the structural stepped-back buttress and pinnacle. The tourelles on the Siena facade are located as they were on the carved ivory altar-piece between the gables. On the Siena facade the tourelle-gable relationship is similar to the tourelle-gable relationship found along the tops of the gabled narrative niches of the carved ivory altar-pieces. (Figure 6)

However, the form of the tourelle itself on the Siena facade is not identical with that of the tourelle found on the carved ivory altarpiece. In ivory carving the tourelle consists of two parts, a pinnacle decorated with crockets supported by a cubical form or four columns which represent the counterpart of the west facade pilaster before it has been stepped-back: e.g., the tourelles on top of the gables of the central panel of The Virgin and Childhood of Christ on the Siena facade; the second part of the tourelle has been
abandoned, or has been replaced by an arch which fits the tourelle pinnacle into the gable. The arch also extends downward to the level of the springing of the door arches to form a niche for a sculptured figure.  

Thus, on the lower level of the Siena facade the form of the French Gothic facade was recreated in decorative terms whose elements seem to be derived from the French Gothic ivory altar-piece.

The form of the upper part of the Siena Cathedral facade, as has been previously noted, was derived from Cistercian architecture and consequently it was different in form from the upper sections of the French Gothic west facade. Due to these form differences there does not occur in the upper level of the Siena facade (to the same extent) the imitation in decorative terms of the French Gothic facade. Because of this in the upper section of the facade the ornament forms which are derived from the French Gothic carved ivories are handled more freely and with greater innovation than they were in the lower sections of the facade. Elements derived from French architecture still appear on the upper sections of the facade; for instance, an arcade is used to bridge the area of the aisle roofs, that is the space from the side buttress to the nave projection. However, decorative elements derived from ivory carving have been combined with the arcade to give it a final form different from that of the French architectural arcade.

The facade arcade in French Gothic architecture consists of columns carrying arches the tips of which touch upon a stringcourse, e.g., the arcade of the west facade of Notre Dame in Paris. The
arcade of the Siena facade is tipped with a foliated ornament which does not touch against an edge (stringcourse). The wall behind the gables is of striped marble; this creates an effect of the arcade as a three dimensional free standing row of arched columns between the side towers and nave protrusion of the facade. (Here the arcade, then, is no longer thought of as a device to fill in space between two horizontal wall surfaces.) The arcade at Siena is gabled and has tourelles located between the gables. The form of the arcade as found at Siena Cathedral has a prototype in the arcades of the French Gothic ivories which are used to break up or separate the incidents in the bands of narrative. Here the arches are surmounted by gables and are flanked by tourelles. The individual gabled arches form free-standing units by the manner in which the figures of the narrative move in front of and behind the arcade. For instance, in the ivory panel, The Scenes of the Passion, in the scene of the crucifixion the arms of Christ disappear behind the gabled arch (implying that the arch is in front of Christ). In the scene of the Resurrection in the same ivory the arch is behind the figure of Christ. The supposition that the arcade in the upper stage of the Siena facade was derived from a prototype in the carved ivories is confirmed by the fact that to the Siena arcade have been made additions of an ornamental form which was devised by the ivory carvers for their own particular decorative needs. The ornamental form may be best described as, or termed, a cusped square for it consists of a square with interior quatrefoil cusping. The ivory
carvers used these cusped squares as border decoration or to add decorative interest to an area where other decoration could not be used successfully. Ivory panels in which cusped squares were used extensively are called pierced panels; an example of these pierced panels exists in the Victoria and Albert Museum. On the Siena facade the cusped squares are located between the columns of the facade arcade. Here the cusped squares have essentially the same function of decorating a border, just as they had in the carved ivory altar-pieces. On the Siena facade the ornament is very closely spaced and every possible area is embellished to achieve a total overall richness of wall surface. If the columns which support the facade arcade had been allowed to descend to the stringcourse as mere clean lines the arcade would not be coordinated with the remainder of the facade ornament. The arcade would not fulfill its function of integrating into the ornament of the facade the empty area of the aisle roofs. The cusped squares enrich the base of the arcade and together with the enlarged heavily ornamented capitals of the arcade reduce to a minimum the length of unornamented column. This makes the area of the aisle roofs an area of rich ornament which adds variation to the facade design by virtue of its appearance of having a three dimensional free standing character.

The form of the area of the termination of the nave protrusion at Siena Cathedral was derived from Cistercian architecture. The question of decorating this area posed a considerable problem, for the Cistercians did not decorate their abbey facades and the French Gothic facade could not provide a prototype because the extent of
decoration in this area on the French Gothic facade consisted of an ornamental moulding around the rose window, because this section of the facade was enclosed between the gallery of kings, a decorative arcade and the two western towers, e.g., Amiens Cathedral. As architecture had no tradition of decoration in this area the carved ivories did not possess a decorative counterpart from which a design could have been derived for the Siena facade. The ornament used to decorate the termination of the nave projection consisted of an innovation in the use of the two dimensional gabled arcade. A band of arcading was applied along side each of the edges of the nave protrusion; this created a sculptural square around the circular nave window. Within each of the gabled niches of the arcades were placed half-length sculptured figures of saints or prophets.

Other less explicit similarities may also be found between the ornament on the Siena facade and French Gothic carved ivory panels. For instance, the form of the crocket used in the decoration of the gables and tourelles of the facade are derived from the crockets used in ivory carving instead of in architecture. By the middle of the thirteenth century the small compact crocket form of architecture decoration had begun to become elongated and open until it became an almost frame like ripple along the edge of the late Gothic gable. In ivory carving the close heavy crocket form continued to be used long after it was abandoned in architecture. The crockets on the Siena facade are heavy in form, that is, similar to the crockets used in the decoration of ivory panels. See Figure 7.

French Gothic ornament played a major role in the decorative scheme of the Siena facade. However, the ornament was not derived
directly from architectural sources, but from the minor arts.
Thus, we may say that the ornamental forms of the French minor arts played a significant part in the embellishment of the Siena facade. But, French ornament is not entirely responsible for the total form of the Siena facade. Native Italian architectural forms must also be accounted for in the decorative scheme of the facade at Siena Cathedral.

1. In his letter to the Cluniacs, St. Bernard expressed his views about ornate and splendid churches. The letter ends "the church is resplendent in her walls, beggarly in her poor; she clothes her stones in gold and leaves her sons naked." G.G. Coulton, Art and the Reformation, Part II, The Fate of Medieval Art in the Renaissance and Reformation (New York, 1958) Appendix 26, pp.iv-vi.

2. St. Robert, Abbot of Molesme, in 1098 founded a monastery in the forest of Citeaux: where monks lived under the reformed rule of St. Benedict. The new monastery only began to flourish in 1112 when St. Bernard entered the order.

3. As far as I am aware the influence of French Gothic carved ivory altar-pieces on the ornament of the Siena Cathedral facade has not been previously discussed. The only mention of the influence of the minor arts on architectural decoration which I encountered during my research for this paper was in R. Sturgis, History of Architecture (see ftn.5).

4. As the Cathedral of Siena is vaulted in stone, it would appear that the problem of stress on, and support of, the facade would be similar to that faced in French Gothic cathedrals. However, the Cathedral at Siena was lower than the French Gothic cathedrals and the problem of stress could be handled in a different manner than through application of pilaster strips to the wall. At Siena a wide pilaster was placed at each corner of the nave and again at each corner of the nave protrusion.
5. R. Sturgis in his *History of Architecture* (New York, 1917), discusses in relationship to the facade of Orvieto Cathedral the idea of embellishment of the cathedral with a screen facade is derived from the minor arts. Sturgis arrives at this idea because so many of the craftsmen working on Italian cathedral facades had been trained as goldsmiths.


7. Loc. cit.


11. For further discussion of this point see appendix.

IV

ORNAMENT ON THE SIENA CATHEDRAL FACADE: ITALIAN INFLUENCE

The second source which influenced the ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade was Italian; that is, Classical architecture (Roman) and Tuscan Romanesque architecture.

On the Siena Cathedral facade the classical method of handling the cornice was adopted in the decoration of the string-course and other straight edges on the facade such as the undersides of the gables and over the arches of the doors. The cornice in a classical order consists of several subordinated, usually five, rows of ornament. At Siena, although the profiles of the stringcourse or gable do not exactly coincide with that of a classical cornice, they do, however, consist of several subordinated rows of ornament. The prototype for this manner of handling the stringcourse may have come from classical architecture.¹ In French Gothic architecture the stringcourse consists of a drip moulding which is made up of a steeply sloping upper surface and a deeply undercut lower surface which has at its base a single row of ornament of either tooth or ball flower design (see Figure 8). Thus the profile of the French Gothic stringcourse is unlike that of the profile of the stringcourse on the facade of Siena Cathedral and it could not have provided the model for the handling of the stringcourse or gables of the Siena facade.

Traces of Cosmati work can be found in the decorative scheme on the facade of Siena Cathedral. The centre for Cosmati work was
Rome. In twelfth century Rome the name Cosmati was applied to all craftsmen who worked marble mosaic into floors and altars. These craftsmen were noted as practicing the *arte cosmatesca*. The term was first applied to four or five families and several independent workmen. The practitioners of the *arte cosmatesca* moved far afield from Rome, for there exist examples of their work in Canterbury Cathedral (the floor of St. Thomas Chapel) and in Westminster Abbey (the floor of the sanctuary). There also exist examples of cosmati work in Tuscany.² The pavement of the nave of Pisa Cathedral was of cosmati work. The Campo Santo and the Baptistry at Pisa also bear traces of cosmati mosaic. At Siena Cathedral the nave floor shows evidences of inlaid marble work, although it is probably a local imitation of cosmati ornament. All of the above cited examples of cosmati work are floors but, cosmatesque ornament was also used as a decoration in the minor arts and cathedral facades, especially in Rome and in southern Italy. The facade of San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, Rome, is decorated with cosmati work: the entablature of the portico is decorated with a band of marble mosaic. At Civita Castellana, the entablature of the colonnade which flanks the facade's triumphal arch is decorated with Cosmati work. The area of decoration on a true cosmatesque facade was along the base of a straight edge such as an entablature or stringcourse. The tracery of wheel windows was often also in the cosmatesque facade
decorated with marble mosaic, but this was decoration independent of the rest of the facade, i.e., it was conceived as a piece of minor art or special decoration aside from the rest of the facade. The location of the cosmati ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade is similar to its location on the true cosmatesque facade. However, the cosmati ornament on the Siena facade, we can almost say definitely was not actually executed by Roman marmori workers; it was imitation by local workmen. The cosmati ornament on the Siena Cathedral facade consists of a narrow band of diamonds filled with squares, which runs along the top edge of the stringcourse. This is not, however, a continuous band of ornament for it is interrupted by the two aisle arcades and by the arcade filled with sculpture which runs along the base of the nave projection. A similar segmented mosaic band of decoration appears underneath the pedestals of the sculptured figures located at a lower level on the facade. The source for the carved band of ornament which runs alongside the vertical arcade of the nave protrusion is also found in cosmati work, for the individual forms are like those of cosmati work, only they are carved in marble.

The role of the cosmati-like ornament in the decoration of the Siena Cathedral facade was a secondary one, to fill in areas where it would be difficult to use another type of ornament. Its presence on the facade however, does give an indication of the diverging sources of the ornament which was to create the screen facade for the cathedral.
The Siena facade also adheres, in certain respects, to the central Romanesque facade. The arches over the facade doors are a modification of the arcades which decorate the facades of such churches as San Miniato Al Monte and Pisa Cathedral. Romanesque striped marble work is used to decorate the pilasters at the extreme edges of the facade. The element most significant to the form of the Siena facade which was derived from central Romanesque architecture was not the retention of an ornamental type but the retention of an architectural concept. This concept was that the exterior of the church need not reflect the interior. This meant in practice that any form of ornament or decorative scheme which was found to be aesthetically pleasing could be applied to the west wall of the nave. Because of the retention of the concept of the west wall as a screen it was possible at Siena Cathedral to adopt decorative elements from widely diverging sources and to weld them together into a single ornate wall surface.

1. The stringcourse on the Siena Cathedral facade has a similarity to the mouldings on the Pisa Cathedral pulpit on which Giovanni Pisano worked. A discussion of this point occurs in the Appendix. A diagram of the profile of the Pisa Cathedral pulpit moulding appears in Fig.7.

CONCLUSION

If that which is Gothic can only be defined according to the characteristics of the structures which were built on the Ile de France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, then Italy did not experience a gothic phase in its architectural development. However, if a broader definition of Gothic architecture is accepted, then Italy did have a Gothic phase which perhaps did not last as long or was as highly developed as it was in some regions of Europe.

The nature of the Gothic in Italy became evident through the examination of the component parts of Siena Cathedral facade. There are three main component parts in the design of the Siena Cathedral facade. First, the basic shape of the facade. The basic shape of the Siena facade was derived from a French source, from Cistercian architecture. Second, the form of the ornament used on the facade. The form of the ornament on the Siena facade was also influenced by French source, not by French Gothic architectural ornament however, but by the architectural ornament used on the embellishment of French Gothic carved ivories. Third, the elements on the facade derived from Italian sources. These in turn can be divided into three. First, the classical cornice which provided a prototype for the handling of the stringcourse and gables of the Siena facade. Second, Roman Casmati work which influenced the sections of inlaid marble on the facade. And third, central Romanesque architecture which provided the prototype for the arcade over the nave doors and
most important, from it was derived at Siena the concept of the west facade as an ornamental screen wall.

From this evidence it can be concluded, first that the Gothic style in Italy was an independent development for it still had bonds with its native Romanesque tradition, and second, the Italian Gothic did adopt French Gothic characteristics and innovations, but changed them to suit its own aesthetic; for instance, much of the ornament on the Siena facade is derived from French Gothic ornamental art, but here it is fused with natural ornamental forms to achieve an end result which is different and more elaborate than anything found in France.

Italian Gothic architecture was nourished by French Gothic art but it developed in relative independence and consequently it must be received as a parallel development to French Gothic art.
APPENDIX.

The decoration on the facade of Siena Cathedral forms a unified design, however the authorship of the facade design poses a considerable problem. Several names are associated with the construction of the Cathedral but there does not exist enough specific documentary evidence to definitely attribute the facade design to anyone person. Lorenzo Miatani commenced work at the Siena Cathedral during the last decade of the thirteenth century and continued to reside in Siena for twenty years after 1310, the year he was appointed Universalis Caput Magistro at Orvieto Cathedral.\(^1\) The "Shadowy"\(^2\) Romano di Paganello was also in Siena ca. 1288; it would be tempting to attribute to him a part of the Siena facade design, for the Orvieto Cathedral records note Paganello as coming from over the mountains in France. However, of all the personalities mentioned in connection with the construction of Siena Cathedral, the contribution of Giovanni Pisano, to the facade design, is most clearly documented.

Giovanni Pisano's name appeared in the Siena Cathedral works records for the first time in 1284 (without association with his father's name). At the time Pisano commenced work at the Cathedral, a Cistercian monk, Fra Maggio was master builder. Fra Maggio continued in this position until 1287 when Pisano succeeded him as master builder. Pisano held this position for nine years, until 1296; his last recorded visit to Siena occurred in 1314. From this period of work at the Cathedral (1287-96) there exist fifteen
sculptured figures and four sculptured symbolic animals which Pisano executed for the Cathedral facade. This sculpture was located on the spandrels of the arches, with the poses of the three figures on each of the nave walls being oriented to the figures of the facade proper. The figures have been subsequently moved, not only shifted in position, but altogether removed from the facade. The original sequence of the sculptured figures, from left to right, may have been: a) North wall of nave: Haggi, Isaiah, Baalam; b) the Cathedral facade: Plato, Habbakkuk, a sybil, David, Solomon, Moses, Simeon, Joshua; c) south wall of nave; Mary, sister of Moses, and Aristotle. 3 Fig. IA.

The iconographical scheme of the facade sculpture was centred around the Virgin to whom the Cathedral was dedicated. The figures represent persons in biblical history who told of the coming of the Virgin and Christ. Although the sculptural cycle is not as complex or extensive as the French Gothic iconographical programs, it does bear some relationship to them.

The decorative scheme on the facade of Siena Cathedral can be divided into two parts: the ornamentation around the facade portals stands out as a stylistically separate unit from the rest of the facade. This indicates that two different designers worked on the problem of decorating the facade. It is generally assumed that Giovanni Pisano did more work with Siena facade than just create the above mentioned sculpture; however, exactly which additional sections of the facade Pisano did design is open to two interpretations. First, the most generally accepted point of view is that Giovanni
Pisano was asked to design the total facade but the work progressed only as far as the decoration of the doors and the sculpture on the spandrels. According to this interpretation the aesthetically most successful part of the facade decoration was carried out in the early fourteenth century. The second possibility that exists is that Pisano designed and supervised the execution of the facade decoration from the figures on spandrels upward to about the level of the aisle roofs.

Under the supervision of the Cistercian builders the area of the facade portals was decorated. The Cistercians traditionally embellished this part of their structures, and the decorative motif of subordinated rows of twisted and carved columns to supporting rows of subordinated arches over the facade doors is found frequently in Italian Romanesque churches. The City Fathers probably realized that the Cistercian builders would not be able to create a satisfactory decorative scheme for the facade of the cathedral which was to be the embodiment of their civic pride, and Pisano was called in to create the facade design. The three years period from 1284 to 1287 when Fra Maggio and Giovanni Pisano both worked at the Cathedral was a period of transition; the Cistercians finished their work while Pisano prepared to take over the task. The transition between the two decorative schemes is very skilfully handled. The arches of the tourelles on the facade extend downward to form niches for the figures located on the spandrels of the arches over the doors.

The chronology for the decoration of the Siena Cathedral
facade, I feel should read as follows: 1284-1287 Fra Maggio supervised and completed the decoration of the facade portals; 1287-1296 designed decorative scheme for the upper part of the facade and carved nineteen pieces of sculpture for it; 1370, minor additional decorative work is carried out on the facade.

This chronological sequence can in part be supported on stylistic grounds. The facade of Orvieto Cathedral was begun around 1330. When the facades of Orvieto and Siena Cathedrals are compared it becomes evident that by 1330 a new aesthetic is evolving in architectural design. The Orvieto facade is characterized by a new dramatic sense of space and horizontality. At Orvieto to reduce verticality the piers which support the facade wall are narrower than those at Siena and to emphasize flat planes (to achieve a sense of space), the embrasures of the facade doors are flatly splayed. The greatest change in the Orvieto facade design however is in the shift away from an interpenetration of a few simple shapes (Siena facade) to a multiplicity of clearly delineated minor elements; form units at Orvieto are built up or created by the interaction of rectangular components, e.g., the enclosure of the rose window within three rectangular units. This creates one form in which all the parts can clearly be recognized. At Orvieto the decoration of forms, e.g., gables with crochets, is also reduced to a minimum so as not to detract from the clarity of delineation of the design elements. In his discussion of the Orvieto facade John White writes "the new diversability, the clarity of separation (of form), and the consequent
measurability of the minor parts ...... reflect an attitude that
prepares the way for the modular architecture of the early
tFlorentine Renaissance". Consequently to design and to construct
a facade such as that at Siena Cathedral in which the key emphasis
is on infinite richness of detail, after 1310 would be an anachronism.
The facade of Siena Cathedral was probably designed by Giovanni
Pisano who was influenced by French Gothic art, e.g. the Pisa Cathedral
Pulpit, and was executed in the late thirteenth century when the
influence of French Gothic art in Italy was quite strong. The facade
of Orvieto cathedral built fifty years later, already shows the waining
of this influence and the beginning of a new aesthetic. Fig. 2 a&b.
However, there does not exist enough published documentary evidence to
conclusively indicate exactly which part of the Siena facade Giovanni
Pisano did design.

1. J. Harvey, The Gothic World (London 1936)
2. The term "shadowy" because records mention this sculptor
   but no definite works have been attributed to him.
3. John Pope-Hennessy in Italian Gothic Sculpture (London 1955),
   p.179., attributes these figures to Pisano and gives their
   location in the Siena facade.
   p.179., seems to accept this break-down of the facade design.
5. The quality of the decoration on the buttresses and gables of
   the roof seems somewhat inferior to that on the rest of the
   facade. There is record of work in the facade in 1370. It
   is possible it was this one that was then decorated.
   p. 293.
PLAN OF SIENA CATHEDRAL

- ORIGINAL CATHEDRAL
- CATHEDRAL EXTENSION
  OF 1339 (begun). IT WAS
  TO FORM THE NAVE OF
  A LARGE CATHEDRAL. THE
  ORIGINAL STRUCTURE WOULD HAVE
  BECOME THE TRANSCEPT
  OF THIS STRUCTURE.

J. White, Art and Architecture in Italy

PLAN OF SIENA CATHEDRAL
FIG I  BASIC FORM OF THE WEST FACADE
OF SIENA CATHEDRAL.
FIG. 2  BASIC FORM OF THE CENTRAL ROMANESQUE FAÇADE.
FIG 3 BASIC FORM OF THE ABBEY OF FOSSANOVA FACADE
ABBEY OF FONTENAY
X AREA OF FACADE DECORATION

FIG. 4 DECORATION OF FACADE OF CISTERCIAN ABBEYS
LOCATED ON THE FACADE WALL
BETWEEN THE GABLES OVER
THE FACADE DOORS AND TOURELLES

A. SIENA FACADE

B. CARVED IVORY ALTAR-PIECE
THE CRUCIFIXION
MASTER OF THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN
FRENCH, CA. 1330
COLL.: BABOIN

FIG. 5. COMPARISON OF THE LOCATION AND DECORATIVE
FUNCTION OF TRIQUITRAS.
A FRENCH GOTHIC GABLE
NORTH TRANSEPT PORTAL
NOTRE DAME, PARIS

B SIENA CATHEDRAL
ON GABLE OVER THE FACADE PORTALS.

C CARVED IVORY ALTAR-PIECE
SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN AND CHILDHOOD
OF CHRIST
FRENCH CA. 1300
COLL: INSTITUTIO DE VALENCIA
DE DON JUAN

FIG. 6 COMPARISON OF CROCKET FORMS
A. CLASSICAL
B. FRENCH
C. SIENA CATHEDRAL
D. PISA CATHEDRAL PULPIT

FIG. 7 COMPARISON OF MOULDINGS
THE FACADE OF SIENA CATHEDRAL

J. POPE-HENNESSY, ITALIAN GOTHIC SCULPTURE
LONDON 1955  FIG. 15

THE CRUCIFIXION
MASTER OF THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN
FRENCH, CA. 1330
CARVED IVORY, 5 3/4 x 4
COLL: BÀBOIN
J. NATANSON, CARVED IVORIES, LONDON 1951  FIG. 31
SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN AND CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST
FRENCH, CA. 1300
CARVED IVORY, 4\times 6 \frac{3}{8}
COLL.: INSTITUTO DE VALENCIA DE DON JUAN
OP. CIT. FIG. 20.

SCENES OF THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN
ENGLISH 15\textsuperscript{th} C.
CARVED IVORY, 7\times 9 \frac{3}{8}
COLL.: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
OP. CIT. FIG. 63.
ORIGINAL LOCATION OF SCULPTURE ON THE SIENA CATHEDRAL FACADE

NORTH WALL:
- A HAGGI
- B ISAIAH
- C BAALAM

FAçADE:
- D PLATO
- E HABBAKKUK
- F A SYBIL
- G DAVID
- H SOLOMON
- I MOSES
- J SIMEON
- K JOSHUA

SOUTH WALL:
- L MARY, SISTER OF MOSES
- M ARISTOTLE
Fig. 2a Facade of Siena Cathedral
J. White, Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400
(London, 1966) Pl. 29
FIG. 26. FACADE OF ORVIETO CATHEDRAL

J. WHITE, ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN ITALY 1250-1400

(LONDON, 1966) PL. 135.


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   Vols. I and II.

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