2. Ambrogio Lorenzetti's "Good & Bad Government"

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Siena 1315-1340

- Simone Martini & Ambrogio Lorenzetti produced some of the greatest masterpieces of the 14th century.

- Stable economic/political situation

- Religious influence in all aspects of daily life

- Cathedral completed in 1290s and includes the work of Nicola & Giovanni Pisano - great Masters of the new realism based on observation

Duccio Da Buoninsegna (c.1255/60 - 1318/9)

- "La Maestà" for Siena Cathedral (1308-1311)
- Paraded round Siena on 9 June 1311 followed by 3 days of festivals.
- Cost 3000 Crowns
- Inscription: "Mother of God, give peace to Siena and life to Duccio who has painted You thus."
- Siena's 4 Patron Saints: Ananus, Savinus, Victor and Cresentius kneel in foreground.
- Catherine of Alexandria, Paul, John the Evangelist, Peter & Agnes; plus 18 Angels - features modeled on Classical Greek types.
- Combination of Byzantine hierarchy and Parisian miniature painting

Duccio, "La Maestà" - central panel - 1308-1311. Front panels, now dispersed, showed scenes of the Annunciation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi etc4

Simone Martini/Lippo Memmi?

"*Guido Riccio da Folignano*"- Siena Town Hall - usually ascribed to Simone Martini, but probably by Lippo Memmi. Large scale civic fresco celebrating the triumph of a Condottieri (Mercenary) after his victories at Montemassi (1328) Scansano, Arcidosso, Massa Marittima (1331) and Giuncarico (1332) for the Sienese.

Simone Martini/Lippo Memmi?
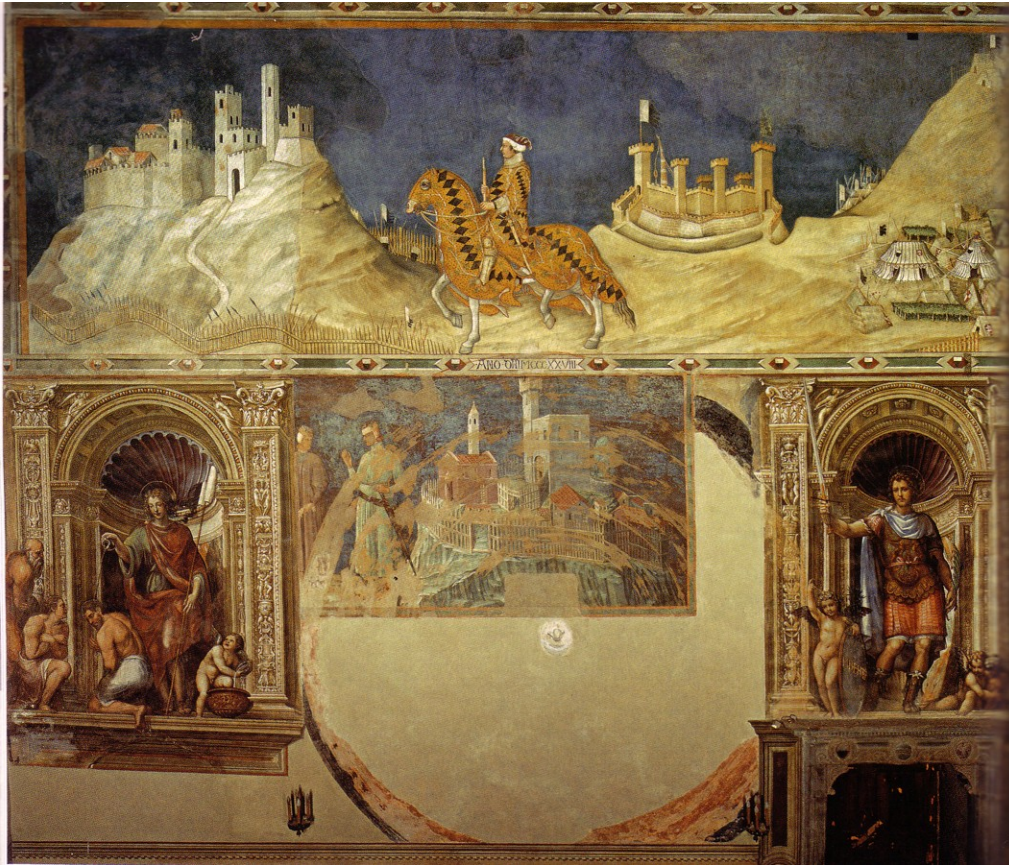
Guidoriccio was a Sienese General who secured the town of Montemassi in 1328. Simone Martini was paid in 1330 and 1331 for journeying to and depicting various Sienese towns.

Research by Thomas de Wesselow shows that the lower fresco, uncovered in the late 1970s includes an image of 'the turning world' painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (in 1345) and formed part of the Guidoriccio design.
The Guidoriccio was probably painted after the world map was already in place, and cannot therefore be by Simone Martini, who died the year before it was installed.
Lippo Memmi, Simone's assistant is the most likely author

Sano di Pietro (1405/6-1481)

- Sienese painter and illuminator - mixes Late mediaeval and early Renaissance styles
- "St Bernardino preaching in the Campo" (1425) celebrates the Saint giving seven sermons a day for seven weeks to a large crowd on the Sienese Campo.

Sano di Pietro (1405/6-1481)

Allegory of Good Government, Siena, (1474)   8

Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c.1288-1348)

Sala della Pace, (Hall of Peace) Siena Town Hall

- The defining achievement of Sienese painting

- Heir to 30 years of experimentation in the relation of figure to architecture undertaken by his master Duccio, his rival Simone and his brother Pietro.

- Dante: "The towns of Italy are full of Tyrants" (Purg.VI:124-5)

- Sources: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas Brunetto Latini, Cicero, Seneca

- 'The Nine' entered beneath Justice (Bricked up door still visible) and sat on platform below Allegory.

- Petitioners before the Nine faced: Peace, Fortitude, Magnanimity, Temperance and Justice; with Faith, Hope and Charity hovering above. On either side they could see the stark choice:Bad on the left(sinister) and Good on the right where the Commune creates a world in Harmony

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti, "Good Government" (1337-40) The central figure is Peace, calmly contemplating her work. The Sienese variants of Romulus and Remus are being suckled below right. On the right are soldiers and sinners. All look towards the window which opens out onto the open landscape of Sienese territory beyond the city walls. Justice raises her eyes to Wisdom. Justice rewards and punishes in just measure. From each of her Scales a cord descends, the two plaited together by a handsome figure who bears on her knee a massive carpenter's plane inscribed 'Concordium" She hands the double cord to a blue-robed man who turns to receive it; and so it is passed along the line of gowned and capped citizens,each laying hold of it, until it is finally tied around the writs of a noble grey-bearded figure. The letters around him CSCV identify him as Commune Senarum Civitas Virginis (Commune of Siena, City of the Virgin), otherwise called **'Ben Comun'**. The group of citizens, bound together by the twin cords of Justice and Concord and flanked by all the Virtues, serve the Common Good.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Good Government: Justice

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- The Angel in Justice's scales gives two kneeling merchants a large black object resembling a hat-box, recently identified as a *Staia* or Bushel - an instrument of just measure in their commerce.

- Concord's attribute, the carpenter's plane represents the 'levelling' aspect of taxation. To make more citizens more equal, smoothing out discord, and to 'shave' the over-mighty down to size.

- Text above the scales reads: "Love Justice. You who Judge the Earth". Below the panorama on the adjoining wall: "Turn your eyes to Her. You who Govern.. Look how many good things flow from her, And how sweet and reposeful is life/ in the City where she is served, That Virtue who outshines any other"

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti, "Good Government: Peace"

- Peace, lolling on her discarded armour, listens to the decisions of Justice to her left.

- Although the room has been called the "Sala della Pace", it is from Justice, from which all good government, (including Peace) derives.

- Throughout, the narrative reads from left to right: from Justice to Peace, and thence to the other Virtues, from Good Governance to a functioning City, and from a well ordered city to a well ordered countryside.

"Good Government" in the Town - The Spectator would read the scene from left to right. Good governance of the town leads to good governance of the countryside. In the well-ordered commune. One of the largest uncompartmented paintings prior to the 19th-century panoramas - over 14 meters long. Its ratio is over 5:1. Depicts the right hand side of the City and a vast curve of landscape to its right, implying two concentric circles, seen from above. The space and architecture are treated in a pre-perspective enabling both proximity and distance simultaneously: The lecturer at his podium and the distant sea. Renders our experience of space more truthfully than single-point perspective.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: "Good Government: The Town"(detail) Dance of Harmony - Nine dancers and a tambourine player.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, "Good Government: The Town" - Trade, education and mercantile activities within the city walls
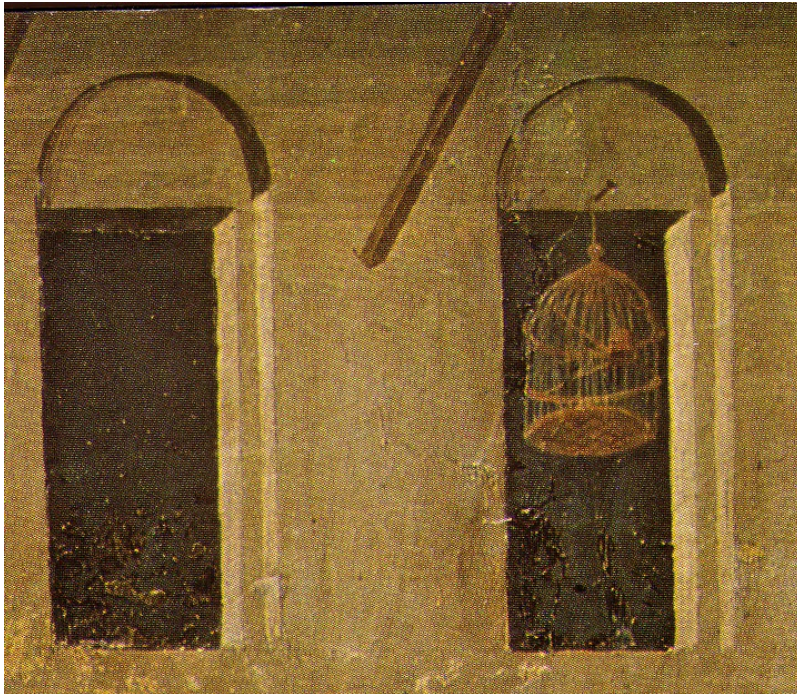
Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- Roofers at work
- Lorenzetti appears to relish the chance juxtapositions of people, objects and spaces

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- Windows with a Birdcage

- The small details make for a more realistic scene and reflect a Franciscan attention to the marginal and seemingly unimportant aspects of life

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- A tavern, Merchant and a Weaver's shop

- Donkey's heads are 'cut-off' by walls or the peasant's shoulders. We catch half-glimpses of activities in interior spaces together with finely observed details from everyday life, like the hams hanging in a rail in the tavern.

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- Lecturer at his podium
- As well as mercantile activity, intellectual concerns thrive in the well-ordered society and citizens are eager to be educated.

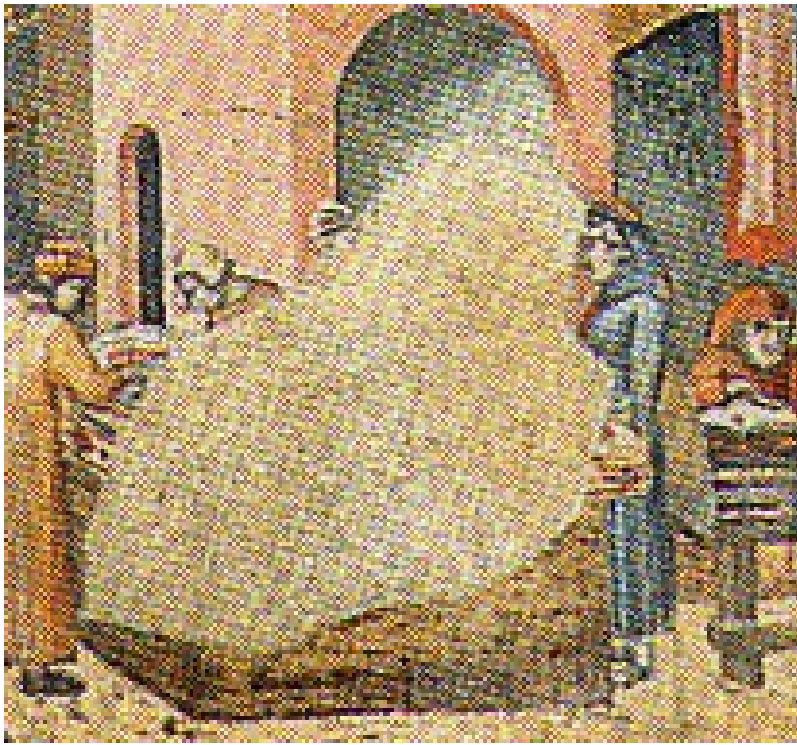# Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- Hosier's shop with a customer
- Customers' daily needs are catered for as well as those of the merchants
- Good trade requires smooth production, transport/distribution and for purchasers to have money for goods and services.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City
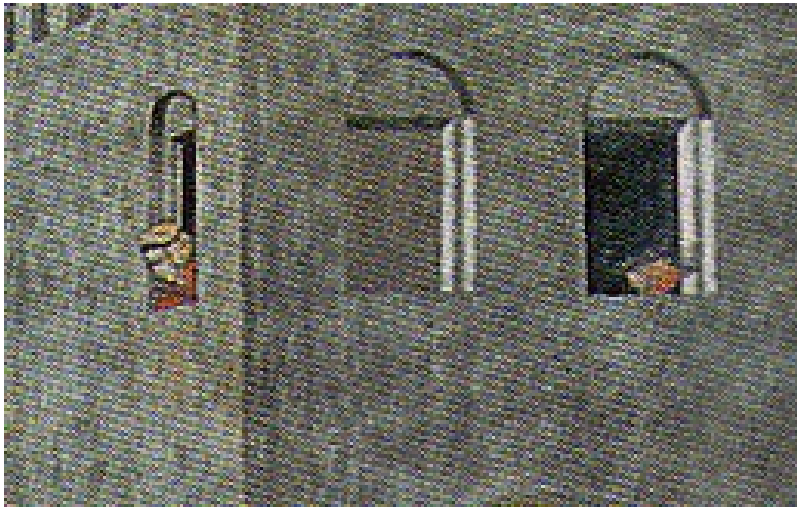
- Woman looking out of a Window and a Vase on a window ledge, suggesting a peaceful well-ordered interior and a curiosity about urban life
- 'Snap-shots' of everyday life in the City render the scene life-like and believable.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- Men on the left engaged in a board game? (partially destroyed)

- Leisure activities also thrive under good governance and are socially beneficial / cohesive.

# Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: The City

- The City is conceived of as a compressed mass of irregular buildings, based on detailed architectural drawings.

- Details and building types are precise but not precisely topographical

- Subtle palette of colours: pink, grey, brown, burnt sienna, golden ochre, blue, black, white.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, "Good Government": the gate between the town and the countryside"

- Complex construction of the Gate in the centre of the right wall: triggers complex spatial organisation.

- Middle of composition - acts like a caesura in verse - inside and outside.

- Section of dark wall reaches down on the right plunges us back into space; the pale line of the ledge behind the unguarded castellations out of sight in the foreground, leads us to a little door in the gate. From this gate we move leftwards to the city or outwards along the road and down to the bridge.

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"Good Government" - Its effect on the countryside - The Spectator would read the scene from left to right. Good governance of the town leads to good governance of the countryside, in the well-ordered commune.
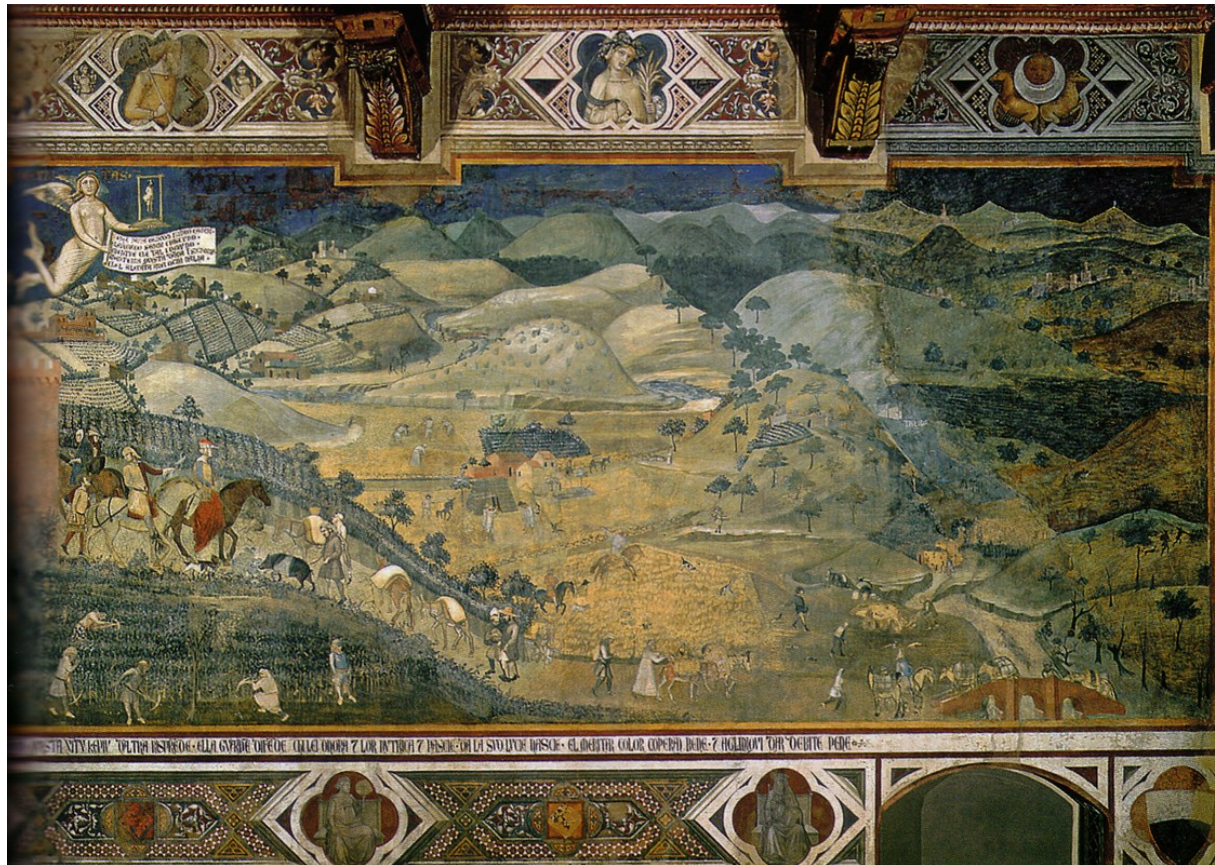
Palm Sunday: Christ's Entry into Jerusalem: Left to Right: Duccio, Byzantine, Mediaeval & Renaissance MSS

Duccio di Buoninsegna, Siena Cathedral

Anonymous Byzantine

St Aethelwold's Benedictory, 970 AD

British Library of Illuminated MSS

Ambrogio Lorenzetti,"Good Government: The countryside"- '**Security**' above the gate, with farming and husbandry below.
The flow of trade along the road was crucial to Siena's economy, and two-thirds of Sienese taxpayers owned property in the countryside.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti,"Good Government: The countryside"- '**Security**'(detail)
Her scroll reads: "Every man can travel freely without fear, and each can till and sow, so long as the Comune keeps this lady (Justice|) as sovereign, for she has stripped the wicked of all power". In her other hand she bears the gibbet that is her sanction.

Echoes Virgil's Fourth Eclogue: "Time has conceived and the great Sequence of the Ages starts afresh. Justice, the Virgin, comes back to dwell with us."

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: the City

- The blind beggar outside the gates, framed by the horse's head. His hat seems of Mongolian/Chinese origin.

- Tuscan cities in the 13th century had a substantial population of Mongolian slaves.

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: The Countryside

- Reaping, animal husbandry and transport to Market.
- Across the panorama, 56 figures and as many animals can be counted.
- Landscape is unmistakably Sienese, with its villas and vines, but some evidence that fifty years after Marco Polo's return from the East in 1298, Chinese embroidery and landscape scrolls may have influenced the design. The 'Merchant's Handbook (c.1340) declared The Silk Road, "Perfectly safe by day or by night"
- Spring and summer/sowing and harvesting occur in same landscape

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: The Countryside

- Threshing corn; haystacks and cockerels.
- Variety of types and activities. Scale not consistent- foreground threshers are smaller than harvesters behind
- The 'feathery' touch of Lorezetti's brushwork is sustained over the entire surface and cannot be the result of prior planning, but must rather be a sustained feat of improvisation over the surface.
- **Pieter Brueghel**, passing through Italy twice in 1552-3 probably encountered Lorenzetti's paintings; and his landscape panoramas continued The Sienese Master's vernacular style. 31

# Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: The Countryside

- Falconers descending to hunt
- And a nun riding a donkey about to enter the city

- Leisure pursuits and the exchange of ideas are enabled by a smoothly functioning city.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Good Government: The Countryside

- Farming
- Orderly fields, well controlled planting, irrigation, judicious husbandry, planting and timely harvesting are essential to manage the food supply.
- An active market is required to stimulate production and satisfy needs.

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti: "Allegory of Bad Govermnent", Siena Town Hall, Left wall.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti:"Allegory of Bad Government", Siena Town Hall (detail)
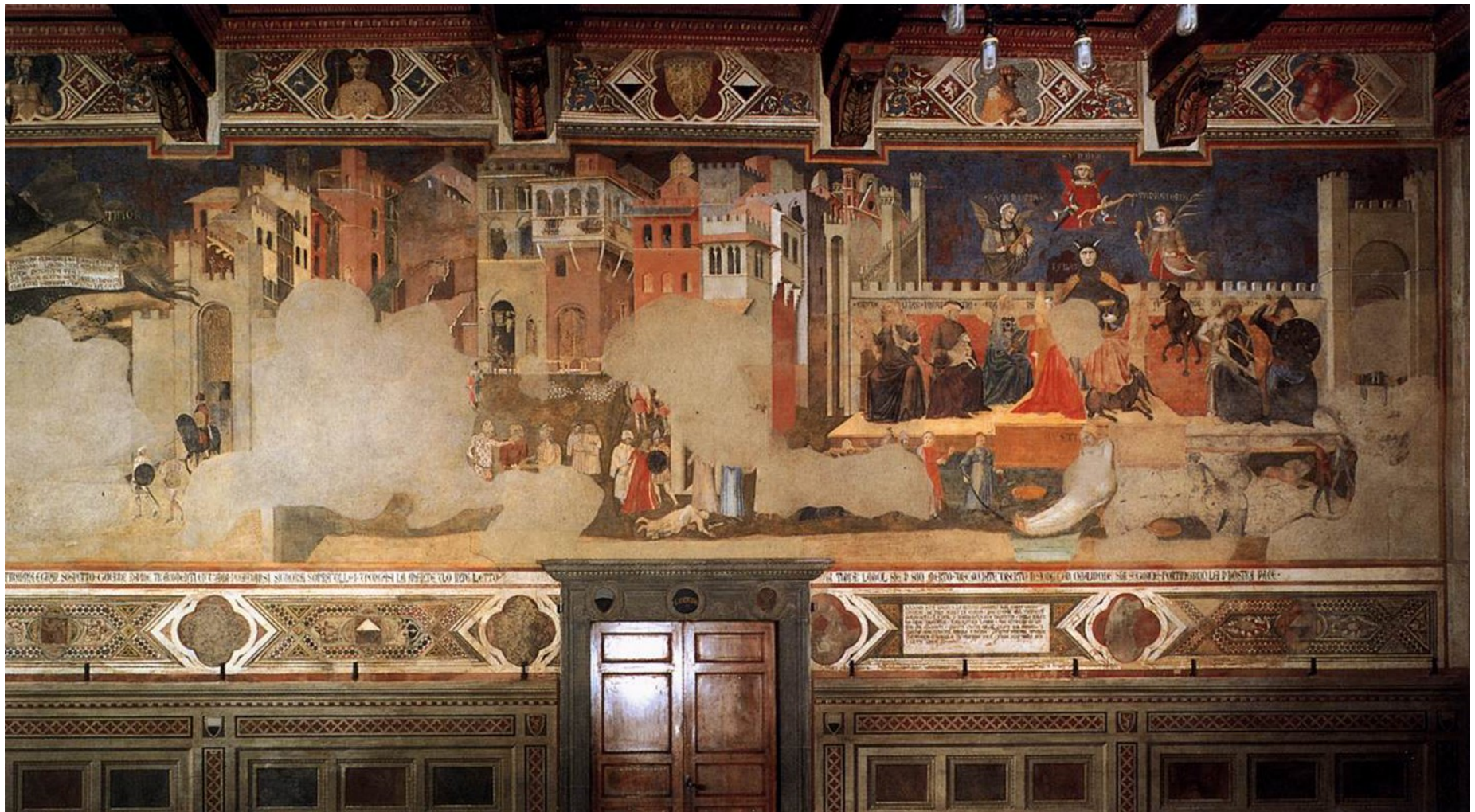
Allegory of Bad Government", Siena Town Hall

- The Left wall is the most damaged, generally less compelling visually.
- Bad government is ruled over by the unfavourable planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury,and by Tyrants, including the Emperor Nero. This 'sinister' wall must be read from right to left - against the norm.
- Tyrany is flanked by Cruelty and Deceit (bearing a sheep with a scorpion's tail); by Fraud, Fury and saw-wielding Division(whose black and white costume is inscribed "Sì" and "Nò"); and by War in black armour.
- Avarice, Pride and Vulgarity are airborne above.

- At the foot of the throne lies Justice, abject, her hands tied, her scales broken.
- The cord of community lies slack and neglected.
- The inscription reads: "There, where Justice is bound, no-one is ever in accord
- with Ben Comun, nor pulls the cord straight"

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Allegory of Bad Government": The City

- The Gate of the ill-governed city is aligned precisely opposite that of the well-governed. When we pass through the city itself we enter a world where "nothing fits" (C.White)

- Disharmony is everywhere, Tyrany'a city falls into ruin: windows have lost their colonettes and gape hollow

- At the top, two men demolish the house they stand in

- A sinister clown pulls st the collar of a civilian, drawing his dagger.

- To the left a horseman moves through the empty streets to the gate, to join the army assembling without

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: "The effects of Bad Government: the city"

- Ruins and demolition
- Windows crumble and pillars are missing.
- To the right two men are engaged in the folly of demolishing the balcony on which they are standing.
- In the badly-run city, folly and neglect are the norm

- The only industry to be seen is the armourer's, hammering his forge in the foreground

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Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The effects of Bad Government: The City

- Abduction and murder

- Close by, two soldiers lay hold of a red-gowned woman, another lies dead at their feet.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The effects of Bad Government: The City

• Above the figures gathering about the Gate flies **Timor** - sword in hand, teeth bared in a wolf-like grimace.

• Her inscription reads: "Because each sees only his own good, in this city, Justice is Subject to Tyrany; Nobody passes along this road without Fear"

• If the 'Good' landscape is made up of concentric circles, returning us to Ben Comun, the 'Bad' space is an endless extension, petering out in a dark landscape of utter desolation:
"Where there is Tyrany, there are great Fear, wars, robberies, treacheries..

Two armies advancing towards the green river are rendered spectral against the blackened vegetation, silhouetted close to the burning village. The red flames extend upwards to wispy smoke towards the hillside crowned with ruins, under a sky that has lost most of its blue, and is becoming crimson.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The effects of bad government in the countryside: Winter of Discontent. Armed men descending

Siena Cathedral and the Campo

In 1339, Lorenzetti's frescoes were nearing completion. The Nine began their most ambitious project: The building of a new Cathedral incorporating the existing huge nave as merely the new transept; and the paving of the entire sloping Campo in nine brick sections separated by stone runnels to carry away the rain. The latter was completed in 1347. The next year the regime would be irreversibly crippled by the Black Death.