

## Mantua and Sabbioneta (Italy)

No 1287

*Official name as proposed by the State Party:* Mantua and Sabbioneta

*Location:* Province of Mantua  
Lombardy Region

### *Brief description:*

Mantua and Sabbioneta represent the two main aspects of Renaissance town planning, Mantua the renewal and extension of an existing city step by step and Sabbioneta the new foundation, based on theories of ideal city planning. Mantua has a basically irregular layout but with regular parts, showing several stages of growth, while Sabbioneta has a right-angular grid layout, illustrating a single period. Many buildings, paintings and open urban spaces bear witness to Mantua's leading role in the development of the Renaissance and to the life in Sabbioneta, dominated by the Renaissance court.

### *Category of property:*

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two *groups of buildings*. In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2 February 2005), Annex 3, paragraph 14, they are also *inhabited historic towns*.

## 1. BASIC DATA

*Included in the Tentative List:* 1 June 2006

*International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination:* None

*Date received by the World Heritage Centre:* 26 January 2007

*Background:* It is a new nomination.

*Consultations:* ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Town and Villages.

### *Literature consulted (selection):*

Benevolo, L., *La città italiana nel Rinascimento*, Bari, 1966.

Benevolo, L., *Storia dell'architettura del Rinascimento*, Bari, 1968.

Borsi, F., *Leon Battista Alberti. L'opera completa*, Milano, 1980.

De Fusco, R., *L'architettura del Cinquecento*, Torino, 1981.

Giovannini, A., Malacarne, G., *Sabbioneta. L'anima di un uomo*, Verona, 2006.

Tafari, M., *L'architettura dell'Umanesimo*, Bari, 1969.

Wittkower, R., *Principi architettonici nell'età dell'Umanesimo*, Torino, 1964.

*Technical Evaluation Mission:* 17-21 July 2007

*Additional information requested and received from the State Party:* ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 18 December 2007 asking the State Party for additional information on the rationale in associating the two cities in a single nomination; to strengthen the comparative analysis by including additional information on the similarities and differences, as well as possible influences, of the two nominated cities with regard to comparable cities outside Italy; to provide further information to strengthen the statement on Integrity and Authenticity, as required by the *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

On 26 February 2008, ICOMOS received additional information on the requested issues. This includes revisions of Chapters 1 (Identification of the Property) and 3 (Justification for Inscription) in the original nomination dossier. The specific information sought is discussed in the appropriate sections.

*Date of ICOMOS approval of this report:* 11 March 2008

## 2. THE PROPERTY

### *Description*

The nominated property in Mantua covers 175 hectares and consists of the historic core of the city, situated on a promontory, encircled to the north by the Mincio river which here widens into a series of artificial lakes. Originally this was a flat island. On the south is an area around the Palazzo Te, which was built as a villa outside the former walls and moat. The nominated zone has 13 433 inhabitants and the buffer zone 18 618.

The nominated property in Sabbioneta, some 30 kilometres south-west of Mantua, covers 60 hectares and consists of the complete historic city with its surrounding fortifications and a narrow zone of open land outside this. It is situated in flat country. The municipality has about 4 000 inhabitants; 512 living within the nominated area and 450 in the buffer zone.

The two cities are located in the lower Po Valley in the south-east part of Lombardy in northern Italy. The position of Mantua as the main administrative city of the area comes from controlling important waterways and trading routes from Lake Garda and further north, through the rich Plain of the Po, to the Adriatic. From the early 14<sup>th</sup> century up to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Mantua was ruled by the House of Gonzaga and in this period became one of the most important Renaissance cities. In 1478 the territory was, however, divided into several small independent states but still ruled by different branches of the Gonzaga family, Sabbioneta being one of these. Today's peninsula of Mantua was until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an island with a fortification wall and a wide moat marking the southern limits.

Palazzo Te was originally situated on a separate small island south of this.

Mantua reflects a long continuity of settlement and illustrates several stages of development, with a particularly strong and culturally important imprint from the Renaissance period. In the oldest part to the north-east some traces of the Roman layout remain, while the north half of the city shows a more medieval, irregular pattern. The late Middle Ages and the Renaissance period saw the creation of new open spaces and many new buildings. Today's Piazza Sordello and the Ducal Palace in the north developed from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

A second, late medieval growth ring extends from the Via Accademia – Via Cavour to the Rio canal and the protected harbour of Porto Catena at its eastern end. A third wide growth ring reaching the former moat developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This is characterized by longer, straighter streets, forming much larger blocks in a more regular pattern, and by many palaces. Gradually a central north-south axis developed from the Piazza Sordello to the Palazzo Te, passing many of the most important buildings, such as the two churches by Alberti, Sant'Andrea and San Sebastiano, and the House of Mantegna.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century developed a ring of wide streets, replacing the former fortifications and the very wide moat in the south, and areas combining a regular grid layout and diagonal streets. Incorporated within this is the Palazzo Te with surrounding parks. The historic gates and the roads leading into the city can still be traced.

There is a long list of individual buildings of particular merit historically, architecturally and in their interiors and paintings. Apart from the large complex of the Ducal Palace, over 20 public and private palaces occur, among them the Te Palace, the Andreasi House, the House of Giulio Romano, the House of Mantegna, and the San Sebastiano Palace. The listed 12 churches include Sant'Andrea and San Sebastiano, the Cathedral and the 11<sup>th</sup> century Rotonda of San Lorenzo. There are six medieval towers of important families in the city, as well as the Teatro Accademico, a baroque building built 1767–1769. Public spaces include the two centres of 12<sup>th</sup> century urban life, Piazza Broletto and Piazza Erbe, the Piazza Sordello and the Pescheria designed by Giulio Romano in 1546.

Sabbioneta can be described as a single period city, a complete whole, created in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of one person, Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna. After his death the city declined and very little has changed. The outline of the city is shaped by the fortifications in irregular hexagon form with six bastions at the corners. Only a section of the curtain-wall between the two bastions to the north has disappeared, while the rest of the fortifications are well preserved. The map shows some of the outworks remaining to the north-east, an open zone still outside most of the fortifications and the city surroundings of open agricultural land.

Originally there were only two gates, Porta Vittoria in the north-west and Porta Imperiale in the south-east, but later two other entrances were opened. The town-plan is a right-angular grid layout with the main street forming a

central axis between the two original gates. For fortification reasons, however, it is not completely straight; after the first block inside the gates there is a slight turn sideways.

There are two squares. The rectangular Piazza Ducale in the north of the city, with the Ducal Palace at one end and the church on one side, is the centre of political, administrative and religious life. The Piazza Castello is situated next to the site of the former castle to the south-west and was the centre of private life of the duke. Here lies the Gallery of Antiquities and the Palazzo Giardino, and not far along the main street the Teatro all'antica. These buildings bear witness to the court and cultural life in the times of Vespasiano Gonzaga. There were also a learned academy, printing works and a mint. Generally, the original layout is preserved and the built environment preserves much of the original buildings and the character from its founding period in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The buffer zone of Mantua covers 1900 hectares, consisting of the lakes and a zone along the shore on the far side of the lakes. Apart from the area around the northern end of the bridge, the ground is generally not built upon. To the south some later urban areas are included, some of which are relatively sparse. The buffer zone of Sabbioneta covers 430 hectares and consists of a zone of mainly open, agricultural land around the city.

At the request of ICOMOS (December 2007), the State Party provided additional information to clarify the links between the two nominated properties and justify their inclusion in a single nomination. According to the State Party, Mantua and Sabbioneta are linked for historical reasons, not only because they formed part of the Gonzaga domains but also because they shared a culture of common government and common mentality. Both properties share architectural traditions linked to construction and materials, resulting in similar buildings in Mantua and its surrounding urban centres. The links are strengthened by a process that began in Mantua with the construction of the San Giorgio Castle, that continues with the complete transformation into a Renaissance town and that ends with the perfection of the "ideal city". It is also possible to follow the process that links Mantua and Sabbioneta by analysing the chronology of urban and architectural works carried out in the two towns between early 15<sup>th</sup> and late 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, explained in detail in the nomination dossier and in the additional information of February 2008.

ICOMOS is satisfied with the additional information provided by the State Party and considers that Mantua and Sabbioneta are indeed linked as parts of a cultural process undertaken by the Gonzaga family, with relevant impacts at territorial, urban, architectural and artistic levels. In this sense, the two properties testify to diverse types of urban and architectural actions based on Renaissance principles.

### ***History and development***

Mantua originated as an Etruscan settlement and developed in Roman times to a small fortified town. It was situated on the highest point of what was then an

island in a marshy area along the river Mincio. Some traces of the walls and main streets can still be found in today's urban fabric. In 804 AD Mantua was made a bishopric. Thanks to a relic of Christ's blood the city had become an important religious centre. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, new walls and a moat were built and, in 1115, Mantua became a free commune.

Through history water regulations have been very important to Mantua and distinguished hydraulic engineering was carried out on many occasions. In 1190, the system of lakes around the city was created with a dam and a bridge across the river, which raised the water level of the upper lake more than four meters. On the dam, twelve water-mills helped to regulate the water. To the south of the city, a canal (the Rio) was dug in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It soon became the limit of the extended city – the second ring of growth. At the eastern end of the canal a protected harbour, Porto Catena, was constructed. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century several towers and palaces were built in the city and two squares, today's Broletto and Piazza delle Erbe. In 1272, the Bonacolsi family seized power and carried on the building activities.

In 1328, Luigi Gonzaga staged a coup and his family then stayed in power up to 1707. In 1433, they obtained the title of marquis and, in 1530, duke. The territory was expanded, the navigability of the waterways improved and fortifications built. At the same time, agricultural productivity and trade rose. By the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Gonzagas had acquired sufficient properties for the gradual transformation of the present-day complex of the Ducal Palace. The end of the century saw the beginning of a third ring of growth to the south, with a wide moat, the Fossa Magistrale, marking the outer limit.

The rule of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga (1407–1444) prepared the way for the Renaissance and brought in new ideas through humanist studies, with Filippo Brunelleschi invited from Florence, contacts with Leon Battista Alberti and the works of Pisanello. This was also a period of urban renewal with the planning of urban spaces as a way of organizing the city and the building of palaces in the new area to the south.

The second part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the period of Ludovico II (1444–1478), gave Mantua a premier role in the development of the Renaissance. A series of architects, artists and artisans arrived in the city and a new artistic language was established. In 1459, Pope Pius II held a diet on the threat from the Turks, which brought many international delegates. In architecture, Leon Battista Alberti and Luca Fancelli were particularly important and, in painting, Andrea Mantegna played the main role.

In the 1460s and 70s a marked change took place. Many new palaces and other buildings were erected and alterations made to old ones. Streets and open spaces were paved. The two Alberti churches, San Sebastiano (1460) and Sant'Andrea (1472) were particularly significant architecturally and a central axis was created through the city. After the death of Ludovico II in 1478, the territory was divided into several small independent states, ruled by different branches of the Gonzaga family. In one of these Sabbioneta was built in the second part of

the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Mantua court remained as one of the foremost cultural centres of the Renaissance.

The development continued and consolidated the city, as in the previous century. In 1524, the architect and painter Giulio Romano came to Mantua from Rome and dominated the arts for the coming two decades. In 1525, work started on the suburban villa Palazzo Te outside the moat, marking the southern end of the central axis through the city. In both architecture and painting, this became one of the most influential Mannerist works. Romano was court artist as well as superintendent of works for the city and was responsible for many renewal schemes. City and cultural life flourished and, towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the number of inhabitants exceeded 40.000, almost the same number as today.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the city declined. The direct line of the Gonzaga family came to an end and a war of succession broke out. In 1630, Mantua was besieged and affected by a plague. After a war, Mantua came under Austrian rule in 1707 and entered a relatively calm period as a fortress city. Some new public buildings were erected, among those the Palace of the Academy. The dome was added to the church of Sant'Andrea, the monumental park of the Piazza Virgiliana was begun in 1797 and facades throughout the city were painted monochrome.

In 1866, Mantua was incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy and gradually the economy began to develop again. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fortifications were demolished and the moat was covered. There are now wide streets along the southern limits of the historic centre and the railway has been built along the west and south. Open spaces in the heart of the city have been restored and given back their historic character. In 1942 and 1950, plans for the historic centre were produced. In some places new buildings replaced old ones and the Rio has been partially covered.

Sabbioneta was the capital of one of the smallest states in Italy, created when Mantua was divided into several parts in 1478. These parts were still ruled by different branches of the Gonzaga family. It has been known since Roman times as a locality along the Vitelliana road but, even though it has a long history, it can be considered a new foundation. Sabbioneta is the creation of one man, the ruler of the little state Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna (1531–1591). He had studied the writings and theories of ideal city planning but his aim was to build an impregnable fortress and functioning capital of the state. It is believed that he himself designed the plan and the fortifications with the help of military expertise. The work began sometime between 1554 and 1556.

Between 1588 and 1590, Vincenzo Scamozzi was employed to construct the Teatro all'antica. This is the first properly functioning modern indoor theatre, with specific spaces designed to fulfil the requirements of the theatre. After the death of Vespasiano, Sabbioneta declined. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century it came under Spanish administration but returned to the Gonzagas of Mantua in 1703. Five years later, however, it was annexed to Guastalla and, in 1743, taken over by the Habsburgs.

### *Mantua and Sabbioneta values*

Mantua and Sabbioneta exhibit values from historical, urban, architectural and artistic points of views. The historic centre of Mantua is testimony to the evolution of the town from the Roman Period to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although it is possible to find traces of every historical period, it is during the Renaissance that Mantua produced its most valuable urban, architectural and artistic contributions. In this sense, its principal values relate to different stages of the city's development, especially under the rule of the Gonzaga family; to the significant architectural pieces designed, among others, by Leon Battista Alberti and Giulio Romano and by the works of painters such as Andrea Mantegna. Mantua can therefore be considered to be one of the most prominent capitals cities of the Renaissance culture. It is also worth mentioning the relationship between the town and its setting. The hydrological works carried out over time, including canal, lakes and controlled water levels, constitute engineering works valuable in themselves that enhance environmental values.

Sabbioneta's values lie in its role as a materialised ideal city of the Renaissance. These values include the vision and aims of its founder, Vespasiano Gonzaga, a model of illustrious Renaissance rulers. From an urban standpoint, the town exhibits the concept of an ideal, modern, functional city typical of the Renaissance. Architectural values lie in the monumental buildings of prominent architects, such as Vincenzo Scamozzi.

### **3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY**

#### *Integrity and Authenticity*

##### *Integrity*

The nomination dossier includes a short section related to both authenticity and integrity. At the request of ICOMOS, the State Party provided further information to complete the statement on Integrity. According to the State Party, both properties conserve all the elements that make them capitals of the Renaissance. This is the basis for their historical, functional and visual integrity. Both cities are almost untouched; Mantua has kept the Renaissance urban scheme and the functional system of monumental buildings and Sabbioneta has conserved the character of a Renaissance ideal town: the defensive belt and the street pattern, the squares and the public palaces. Negligible changes were carried out after World War II in both properties; protection measures in place ensure the conservation of the urban and architectural features that distinguish the nominated properties.

ICOMOS considers that the historic and successive stages of development in Mantua, from its origins to today, can be perceived. The Renaissance town-planning and the many buildings of this period, which constitute the core of the nomination, are evident even though the perimeter of the Renaissance city has been altered through developments at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nominated area encompasses all necessary elements to express the range of values of the historic centre. Sabbioneta represents a complete development of one

specific period and has only experienced minor changes, keeping all necessary elements to express its values. Only a short section of the fortification has been demolished.

##### *Authenticity*

The nomination dossier states that Mantua and Sabbioneta are distinguished by the absolute authenticity of their structures and their state of conservation and gives a short list of legal instruments to secure this: laws on landscape protection, architectural protection and environmental protection and plans for the historic centres.

At the request of ICOMOS, the State Party provided further information to complete the statement on Authenticity. According to the State Party, the two towns today lie within a geographical and environmental location that remains authentic. The environmental character is not only evident visually but also functionally, through the layout of their buildings and public spaces, which have remained untouched since the Renaissance. The legal framework has conserved the original structures of public buildings, urban form and functional system, especially in housing, mixed social fabric and traditional productive activities. Only minor changes were introduced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and they were insufficient to jeopardise the authenticity of construction. In Mantua, interventions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were to improve sanitary conditions in degraded areas. Some reconstruction after World War II did not alter the general urban and architectural character of the town. In Sabbioneta, very few buildings were erected after World War II; their area is minimal within the whole historic city. Alterations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the main monuments show the efforts made to preserve their integrity and authenticity.

ICOMOS is satisfied by the additional information supplied by the State Party and considers that the many preserved buildings, open spaces and urban fabric, together with the high standard of protective measures, management and restoration guarantee authenticity.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.
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#### *Comparative analysis*

The comparative analysis relates Mantua to the development of Renaissance town-planning and urban renewal in Italy. It compares it with, in particular, Ferrara (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1995 and extended in 1999) and Urbino (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998), but also discusses links with Florence and Rome. A number of other cities are also mentioned, including Pienza, Padua, Brescia, Pesaro, Naples, Bolsena, Milan, and Venice.

The analysis mainly considers development in architecture and the monumental arts, and the imprints of the Renaissance in Mantua and Sabbioneta, discussing different approaches in urban planning, influences, similarities and differences, and a number of individual buildings, rulers, architects and artists.

In Mantua the programme for planning urban spaces as a way of organizing the city was initiated in the early 1430s, following Filippo Brunelleschi's works in Florence a decade earlier, thus bringing Mantua to the forefront in the development of Renaissance town-planning. In comparison, projects to renew urban fabric are mentioned in Rome (1447), Pienza (1459), Urbino (1447–1465), Ferrara (1451–1491), Padua (1453), and Brescia (1492). This period also saw the third ring of growth, an outer district of many noble palaces built on former gardens. This process intensified in the second part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and continued in the following centuries.

The works of Leon Battista Alberti in Mantua in the 1460s and 70s became very influential. Based on Alberti a classical architectural language developed in Mantua and spread to other places like Urbino, Pesaro and Naples. Luca Fancelli after leaving Mantua became the architect for Santa Maria dei Fiori in Florence, which became a source of inspiration throughout central Italy. In town planning, Alberti's idea of respect for the historic fabric was observed and interventions concentrated at nodal points. The situation in Mantua, Ferrara and Urbino is described as similar in many ways. They were capitals of modest states with princes as the driving forces in transforming their cities. They were active and innovative cultural centres, able to influence cultural development for a long time, and the urban fabric was of medieval origin.

In Mantua, the Ducal Palace is pointed out as showing the extraordinary historic stratification, politically and culturally, and representing the long development from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This has created a complex configuration unmatched in European civic architecture. It houses a series of uses and artistic expression illustrating the passage of the time. All this is the product of the one family.

The Te Palace stands as a contrast in its homogeneity; here there are hardly any changes. Its complementary character lies in its location outside the historic city and its original architecture and paintings. It is understood that development in Ferrara and Urbino was different, even if it is not explained in detail.

Sabbioneta is at the general level of numerous urban works in the group of independent areas of the Gonzaga family (the one specifically mentioned is Rivarolo Mantovano). It is found to be foremost as the only one properly preserved. The ideological background in the 15<sup>th</sup> century treatises on ideal city planning by authors such as Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Leon Battista Alberti is stressed. It is also pointed out that Sabbioneta does not fit these models completely, as there were practical motives as well.

Compared to the rebuilding of Pienza (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996) and its "ideal" square, Sabbioneta is more adapted to practical realities and is a more "complete" and complex capital and fortified city. The various functions of the city were more diversified and differently distributed. They included a variety of military buildings as well as a learned academy, the Academy on Greek-Latin Letters, the Teatro all'antica, printing works and other expressions of humanist culture.

Furthermore, the city's sitting on the plain adds another character. The 16<sup>th</sup> century fortified cities of Palmanova and Karlovac (Croatia) differ in their symmetric layout and their fortifications are of a later stage of development.

While appreciating the comparative analysis presented by the State Party and the primary role of Italy in the original development of Renaissance culture, ICOMOS invited the State Party to extend the study to include other cases outside Italy.

According to the State Party, in respect of the hydraulic engineering works carried out at the end of the Middle Ages, Mantua is difficult to compare with other towns in the world. Its condition is similar to that of fortresses, minor forts or small settlements isolated by waters because of fluvial flooding or tides (like Mount Saint Michel), but it displays the dimensions of a town. In this sense it could be compared with Venice, but Venice's lagoon is open to the sea and different from the lakes system that isolates Mantua in the vast Po's plain. And, unlike Venice or Amsterdam, the town is not traversed by channels.

As to urban features: the tradition of Italian squares linked to civil palaces continues in Mantua, but is renovated. In Lyon, a comparable urban transformation was carried out in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. Antwerp Town Hall was also erected in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. With regard to architecture, the influence of architects like Alberti and Giulio Romano is evident. The triumphal rhythm used by Alberti in Sant'Andrea was introduced in France ("Travée alternée"); it was used in the Lescot wing of the Louvre Palace (16<sup>th</sup> century) and later in the Escorial (Spain) and the Tower of the Five Orders in the Schools Quadrangle at Oxford (United Kingdom). The influence of Giulio Romano is notable in the Landshut Palace (Bavaria), Charles V Palace (Grenade, Spain) and Residenz Antiquarium (Munich). The theoretical influence of these architects is important through academic manuals.

As to Sabbioneta: the fortifications are linked to the development of military architecture that arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century based on the theories of Daniel Speckel and, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, on the works by Vauban. The development of regular geometric town layouts is seen especially in the colonial towns founded by the Spaniards in the Americas (Cartagena, Guayaquil, Buenos Aires, Concepción, Bogotá, Santiago, Caracas) but also Guetaria in Spain (1597). In considering a grid plan within a polygonal walled belt, it is possible to compare Sabbioneta with Zamosc (Poland, Bernardo Morando, 1578). Some reflection of Sabbioneta may also be seen in the extension of Nancy (1588), Turin (1599) and Charleville (1606).

ICOMOS thanks the State Party for the additional information provided and is satisfied with the extension of the comparative study.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated properties for inscription on the World Heritage List.
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### *Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value*

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The two cities of Mantua and Sabbioneta provide strong testimony to the cultural development of the Renaissance, with close links to some of the most important personalities and artists and with a ruling family as the driving force.
- The town-planning and historic development of the two cities differ but remain closely linked and complementary; each in its way exemplary. Sabbioneta is considered to be an example of the ideal city planning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century - a new city built to a uniform idea under the rule of one man. Mantua is the product of the 15<sup>th</sup> century urban vision showing “the possible city” which was gradually modernized under a series of rulers.
- Mantua preserves a remarkable number of emblematic and influential buildings and pieces of art, which are indispensable for the complete picture of this key period of European culture and its world of ideas. These include the Ducal Palace (its 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century development), the churches of San Sebastiano and Sant’Andrea (Leon Battista Alberti 1460 and 1472), the House of Andrea Mantegna (1476), and the Te Palace (Mannerism model example 1525).
- In Sabbioneta there are many important historic buildings, illustrating the origin of the city in the period of Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna, above all the Teatro all’antica (Vincenzo Scamozzi 1688).

#### *Criteria under which inscription is proposed*

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iii).

*Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Mantua and Sabbioneta represent two of the foremost expressions of the Renaissance ideal of the perfect city, as the synthesis of the figurative arts, architecture, town-planning and hydraulic engineering. A number of buildings in the two cities put this utopia into concrete form, preserving some of the most important masterpieces of humankind: in Mantua the Ducal Palace, Sant’Andrea, San Sebastiano and Palazzo Te, and in Sabbioneta the Teatro all’antica.

ICOMOS recognises that some buildings and painted interiors within the nominated properties represent some of the highest expressions of the Renaissance and that Sabbioneta is one of the ideal built cities of the period. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the arguments proposed by the State Party are not sufficient to demonstrate that the two properties could be considered as masterpieces of human creative genius as a whole.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

*Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the two cities exhibit the most eminent examples of Renaissance town-planning and urban development: the evolutionary model and the new foundation. In this way, they have served as points of reference for much of town-planning up to modern times.

ICOMOS considers that the two cities are outstanding examples of the two main forms of renaissance town-planning, on the one hand new foundation based on the ideas of ideal city planning and on the other the transformation of existing towns. They are closely linked through their history and connection to the Gonzaga family and complementary, thus justifying a serial nomination. The importance of the cities is based on town-planning as well as architecture, technology and monumental art.

ICOMOS also considers that the two cities exhibit an important interchange of human values in their important role in the diffusion of the Renaissance and Renaissance ideal, not only within Europe, but as a main element of European culture carried to other parts of the world. Sabbioneta is primarily regarded as the early Renaissance ideal city-plan in concrete form, adapted to practical reality, and in this way illustrates and inspires, without itself acting as a direct model for other cities. The extended comparative analysis provided by the State Party in February 2008 allowed for verification of the significance of the nominated properties.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

*Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the masterpieces which the artists have produced in the two cities have led to realization of the ideals of the early Renaissance, as well as contributing decisively to the international diffusion of a movement which influenced and shaped the whole of Europe.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated properties are exceptional testimonies to a particular civilisation during a specific period of history, art and culture. The Renaissance ideals are expressed in their morphology and in their urban, architectural and artistic features, which have been preserved to a high degree over time.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated properties meet criteria (ii) and (iii) and that their Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

#### 4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

##### *Development pressures*

The State Party identifies the main problems as the decreasing and aging population and the rise of tertiary activities and private traffic. The province and the two municipalities have the legal instruments to control changes to the physical environment. In Mantua, the first plans for traffic and parking were introduced in the 1970s and a plan on noise is to be approved.

##### *Visitors / tourism pressures*

According to the State Party, the flow of visitors was 125,000 in Mantua and 4,400 in Sabbioneta in 2005. Statistics show an increase in visitors in Mantua in 2006. ICOMOS considers that tourism is adequately managed in Mantua, where the main monuments are concentrated in a small area, and that visitors do not represent a risk in Sabbioneta. If there were a rise in visitor numbers, visits to monuments would be controlled, as most are fragile in respect to mass tourism.

##### *Environmental pressures*

According to the State Party, the nominated properties are not directly affected by major sources of pollution or other risks to built heritage, fauna or flora. In Mantua's proposed buffer zone, in Frassine, there is a refinery and a polluted site at national level. A sanitation plan is currently being implemented. Soon, all productive activities will have an instrument of management, innovation and improvement for environmental conditions.

##### *Natural disasters*

Diverse types of risk exist within the properties, all of them targeted by special prevention measures. The site is classified as low danger for seismic risk.

##### *Impact of climate change*

The impact of climate change is not discussed in the nomination dossier.

##### *Risk preparedness*

For the municipality of Mantua, a general Emergency Plan was approved in 2001, for the major risks (industrial, hydrological, forest fire, seismic, transport of dangerous goods, road accidents or dense fog). The seismic risk in the Lombardy Region is classified as low for this area and kept under observation. The nominated property, particularly Mantua, lies within the Po river-basin and it is compulsory to deal with the hydrological risks in municipal planning. Under regional provisions, sites must update geological studies and seismic composition, within the local seismic danger map for classification purposes.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are related to motor traffic in Mantua and the potential increase of visitors in both properties.

#### 5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

##### *Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone*

Following recommendations by the technical on-site mission, ICOMOS invited the State Party to reconsider the boundaries of the nominated and buffer zones. The additional information provided on 26 February 2008 includes revised boundaries for the nominated properties and their buffer zones.

The nominated zone in Mantua (175 ha) encompasses the historic centre, where most architectural monuments are located. The nominated zone in Sabbioneta (60 ha) includes the complete historic town, its surrounding fortifications and a narrow zone of open land outside this. The buffer zone in Mantua (1900 ha) includes an urban area next to the historic centre, part of the lakes surrounding the peninsula and a portion of the territory on the opposite shore of the lakes, including both urban and open areas. The buffer zone has been defined for its visual relationship with the nominated area, with the aim of its protection. The buffer zone in Sabbioneta (430 ha) encompasses the area surrounding the nominated property, including built up and agricultural areas and visual protection is guaranteed by the plans in place.

ICOMOS considers that the revised boundaries of the nominated areas are adequate to express their outstanding universal value. The proposed buffer zones are adequately designed to ensure the protection of the nominated areas and their urban and natural surroundings.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the core and buffer zone of the nominated property are adequate.

##### *Ownership*

Ownership is divided among local organisms (the communes of Mantua and Sabbioneta), public organisms, ecclesiastic institutions (dioceses and parishes) and private owners.

##### *Protection*

###### *Legal Protection*

According to the State Party, both cities enjoy protection at regional and local level. In Mantua, the nominated area is protected by the obligations of environmental and landscape safeguards that include the Regional Park of Mincio, the banks of the Mincio River and of lakes Mezzo and Inferiore, the historic Centre and Citadella, the area of archaeological interest (Cathedral, Ducal Palace and Sant'Andrea) and the monumental ensemble. The buffer zone is also protected by different norms. In Sabbioneta, Decree 42/2004, modified by Decree of 24 March 2006, declares the external area of the city's walls and some 30 buildings to be of remarkable public interest.

According to the Italian legal structure, protective instruments are included in the urban and parks plan. Some current plans contribute to the protection of the properties; among them:

- *Regional Territorial and Landscape Plan of Lombardy Region (1999, 2001)*. This Plan governs territorial changes, aiming to safeguard diverse types of landscape units and the structure of present settlements. The Plan establishes specific regulations on regional territorial areas considered of particular landscape or environmental interest, determines criteria and guidelines for planning and defines areas of special attention for in depth studies.
- Among landscape and territorial areas, the Plan identifies humid parts of the natural landscape (Mincio Valley and Mantua lakes), urban landscapes, historic centres (Mantua), perceptive components of the landscape, fortifications (Sabbioneta), places related to local identity and historic road systems. For some components the Plan establishes specific safeguarding measures, whose implementation is defined by more precise subordinate plans.
- *Territorial Coordination Plan of Mincio Regional Park (PTCPRM)*. Some zones of the Park are included in the buffer zones of Mantua county. The Plan identifies different zones with specific norms for their safeguarding.
- *Territorial Plan of Provincial Coordination (PTCP)*. The Plan aims to promote and guide territorial transformation and economic development processes at provincial level. The urban form is determined by the identity of the places. The plan establishes criteria to balance conservation of the landscape and environment with the location and dimensions of the settlement. In this Plan, the historic centres of Mantua and Sabbioneta are considered urban centres of ancient origin. According to the Plan, detailed analysis will be carried out to determine adequate forms of interventions.
- *Directive Document of Mantua Commune (2001)*. Its main objective is the conservation and enhancement of the historic centre through a series of actions to be developed by the local government according to a comprehensive rather than sectoral approach.
- *General Regulatory Plan of Mantua Commune (2004)*. The objectives are to control historic, artistic and environmental values and to strengthen and rationalise the functions of the historic centre as an urban pole. The Plan controls the built heritage by identifying historic buildings and establishing degrees of protection. Any intervention that compromises the external aspect of historic buildings must be approved by a real estate commission. As part of the Plan, the Services Plan aims to improve urban and territorial accessibility, strengthen cultural and

training initiatives, support differentiated ways of tourism and residential and productive balance.

- *General Regulatory Plan of Sabbioneta (1974, 1994, 1995)*. According to this Plan, only interventions that protect the defined built heritage within the nominated area are permitted; increases in volume and alterations to architectural features are not permitted. The safeguarding of green spaces is compulsory, especially tall trees.

At the same time, several executive plans and projects have been defined and implemented.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated properties is guaranteed.

#### *Traditional Protection*

The nomination dossier includes no specific information on traditional protection.

#### *Effectiveness of protection measures*

The protective instruments and structures have been demonstrated as effective, since the properties exhibit an acceptable state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the protective measures for the properties are adequate.

#### **Conservation**

##### *Inventories, recording, research*

According to the State Party, the inventory of protected properties is constantly updated with new safeguarding decrees approved by the Ministry of Cultural Properties and Activities.

As the nominated properties are very important examples of the origin and development of the Renaissance culture, they are constantly a target for research and study. The abundant existing bibliography, including works by outstanding scholars of history of art and architecture, establishes that sufficient research and dissemination of information have occurred, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

##### *Present state of conservation*

The State Party reports that the general state of conservation is good. Since the 1970s, active policies for upgrading heritage have been established in Italian historic centres and this has led to a good state of conservation for the historic environment as a whole as well as for public and private buildings in Mantua and Sabbioneta.

ICOMOS considers that conservation criteria applied are adequate and conservation or restoration projects reflect accepted standards. An effective conservation policy has been in place for years in both towns; this has allowed not only the proper conservation of buildings but also good quality services in the historic towns. Protected



monuments are in a good state of conservation as a result of appropriate conservation or restoration works.

#### *Active Conservation measures*

Projects and works related to conserving the urban, architectural and artistic components of the nominated properties are constantly elaborated and executed. In the programmes of the local governments of Mantua and Sabbioneta, both communes have urban planning instruments that govern every possible transformation of the nominated properties. Several initiatives on heritage conservation and enhancement have been launched and are already being executed, especially in the cultural and artistic components of both cities.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated properties is adequate.

#### **Management**

##### *Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes*

The management structure is based on regional, provincial and local governmental levels. At regional and provincial levels, the Lombardy Regional Administration and the Province of Mantua have prepared their respective plans, including a study on the territory and its diverse aspects and the definition of management rules for existing cultural heritage.

Both local governments have also elaborated their own planning and management instruments, discussed in the section *Protection*.

##### *Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation*

As explained above, the Italian legislation includes protective measures in the urban plans. The management of the nominated properties is based on a series of regional and local plans, as described in section *Legal Protection* since they include the protective measures.

A Management Plan for Mantua and Sabbioneta, dated December 2006, has been prepared and included in the nomination dossier. The objective is to conserve and enhance the nominated properties including all their historic and cultural aspects. The primary objective is the conservation of the cultural heritage in both towns, within the framework of a global strategy of sustainable development for the whole territory concerned.

Tourism management is included in several regional and local plans. Visitors are welcomed and assisted by the Tourism Information Services offices (IAT). Museums and public structures make available library services and tourism guides. Lodging and gastronomy are assured by a structure distributed throughout the territory. Cultural and traditional events are also organised; over the last years, some international cultural events took place in Mantua, thus enhancing its role as cultural tourism destination.

ICOMOS considers that the Management Plan is complete and details all guidance for planning and

development. The State Party should proceed to the urgent implementation of the Management Plan as a means of completing the existing management structure and ensuring the common management of the two nominated properties.

#### *Involvement of the local communities*

Since the two properties are well known cultural assets, there is considerable awareness by the local communities of their historic, urban, architectural and artistic values. In Mantua, the Master Plan includes the action of a real estate Commission, consisting of experts, whose mission is to assess projects that could affect the external appearance of buildings.

Both towns organise cultural and traditional events, some of international scope. The local communities participate, as well as visitors, in these manifestations that enhance the historic and cultural values of the nominated properties.

#### *Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training*

Offices and employees related to the management of the nominated properties belong to different sections of the General Direction of Lombardy, and to administrative and cultural institutions. The nomination dossier includes no information on the number or levels of staff.

The Regional Direction of Cultural and Landscape Properties of the Lombardy Region is the competent institution for training and capacity building in conservation techniques and cultural heritage management. The Direction has laboratories and technical officers who contribute to the conservation of cultural properties by supervising works undertaken by private owners.

The Lombardy Region and the Province have training institutions in the fields of restoration. In Mantua, the School of Architecture has, since 1997, specific teaching on building restoration and conservation and a Master on cultural, environmental and landscape resource management. The School-Laboratory of Santa Paola Institute offers training in the conservation of cultural properties, especially architecture and wall decoration.

Financial resources are provided by the two local governments and by the province of Mantua. Financing resources for specific projects are provided by the Lombardy region, the Italian state and the European Community.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate. ICOMOS commends the Management Plan but recommends that it be urgently implemented as a means of ensuring the common management of the two nominated properties.

#### **6. MONITORING**

The nomination dossier includes a set of indicators to measure the state of conservation of the properties: the number of new constructions and restoration or

rehabilitation works, the tourism flux and the number of interventions financed by public agencies. The periodicity of measures is annual and developed, respectively, by the local governments, the competent tourism services and the Lombardy Region. No specific information on administrative arrangements has been provided.

ICOMOS considers that the set of indicators is insufficient to measure the various aspects related to the values, integrity and authenticity of the nominated properties. Recognising the pertinence of the indicators proposed by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that two relate to architectural components and the other to the impact of tourism, but only focusing on the flux. Taking into account the nature of the nomination, indicators related to, inter alia, open spaces and motor traffic should be considered.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system in place is not sufficient to measure the state of conservation of the properties and recommends designing and implementing a more complete set of key indicators taking into account the various components of the urban properties.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS recognises the importance of the nominated properties as examples of the impact of the Renaissance culture on the development of urbanism, architecture and fine arts. The relationship of the two nominated towns is also important with historical events, especially those related to the role of the Gonzaga family, who ruled Mantua and its hinterland between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The additional information provided by the State Party in February 2008 has clarified the links between the two properties and justifies their inclusion in a single nomination to the World Heritage List. The extension of the comparative analysis has verified the influences of the properties, in the process of spreading Renaissance culture over Europe and the Americas, in both urban and architectural issues. The additional information also offered a better comprehension of the current conditions of integrity and authenticity.

### *Recommendations with respect to inscription*

ICOMOS recommends that Mantua and Sabbioneta, Italy, be inscribed on the World Heritage List, on the basis of *criteria (ii) and (iii)*.

### *Recommended statement of outstanding universal value*

Mantua and Sabbioneta offer exceptional testimonies to the urban, architectural and artistic realizations of the Renaissance, linked through the visions and actions of the ruling Gonzaga family. Mantua, a town whose traces stem from the Roman period, was renovated in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries - including hydrological engineering, urban and architectural works. The participation of renowned architects like Leon Battista Alberti and Giulio Romano, and painters like Andrea Mantegna, makes Mantua a prominent capital of the Renaissance. Sabbioneta represents the construction of an entirely new town according to the modern, functional vision of the

Renaissance. The defensive walls, grid pattern of streets, role of public spaces and monuments all make Sabbioneta one of the best examples of ideal cities built in Europe, with an influence over urbanism and architecture in and outside the continent. The properties represent two significant stages of territorial planning and urban interventions undertaken by the Gonzagas in their domains.

**Criterion (ii):** Mantua and Sabbioneta are exceptional witnesses to the interchange of human values of the Renaissance culture. They illustrate the two main forms of Renaissance town planning: the newly founded town, based on the concept of ideal city planning, and the transformed existing town. Their importance relates also to architecture, technology and monumental art. The properties have played a prominent role in the diffusion of the Renaissance culture in and outside Europe.

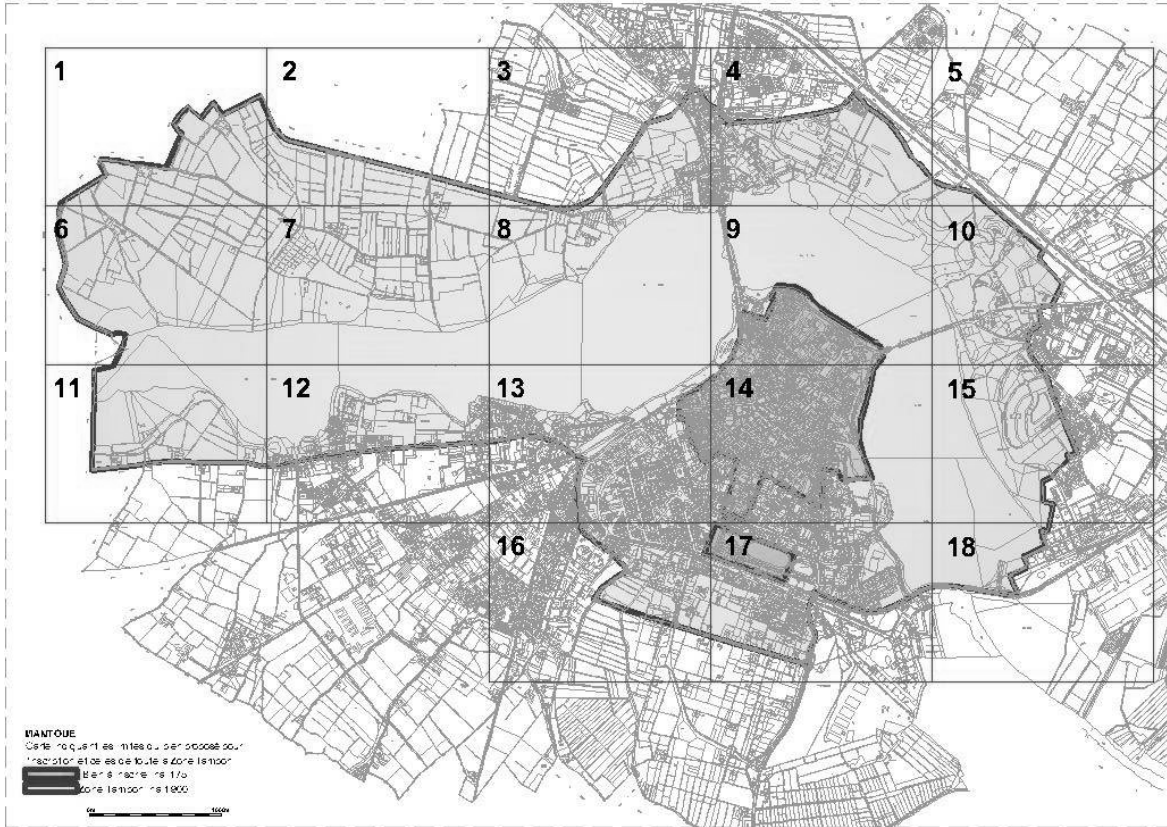
**Criterion (iii):** Mantua and Sabbioneta are exceptional testimonies to a particular civilization during a specific period of history, with reflections on urbanism, architecture and fine arts. The ideals of the Renaissance, fostered by the Gonzaga family, are present in their urban morphology and architecture, their functional systems and traditional productive activities, which have mostly been preserved over time.

Both properties meet the required conditions of integrity and authenticity, since their most significant urban and architectural components have been preserved over time, as has their relationship with their settings.

The legal protective structure and management system are adequate, as both properties exhibit a good state of conservation.

ICOMOS further recommends that:

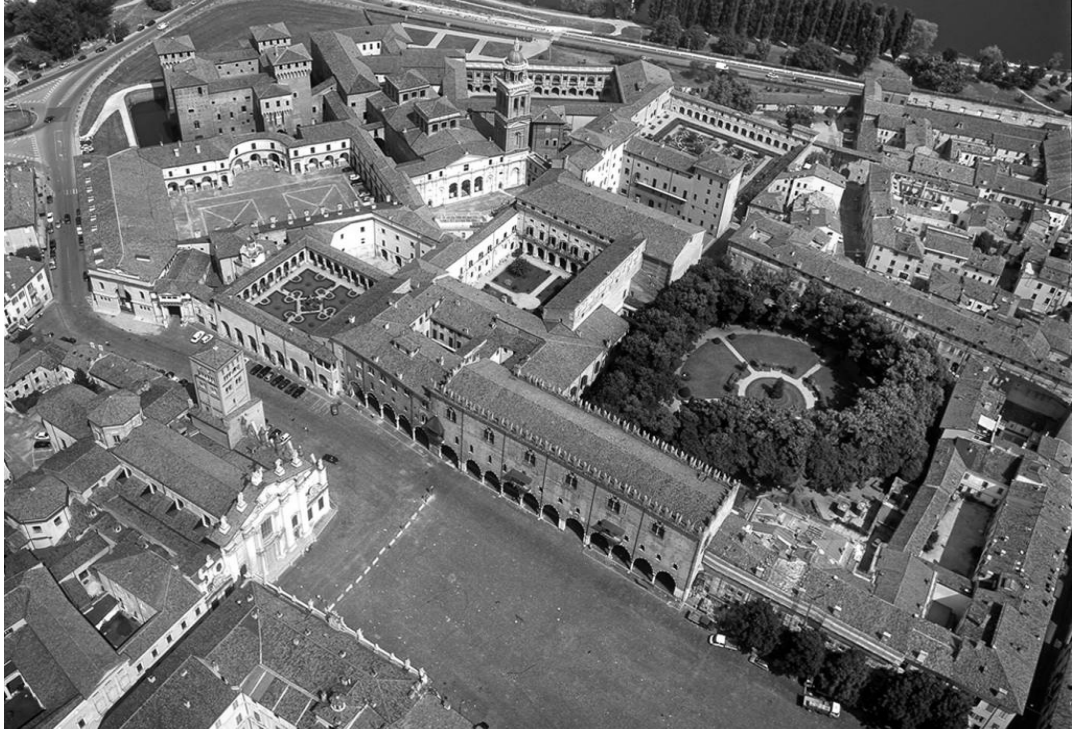
- In order to ensure the optimisation of the current management system and the common management of the two properties, the State Party should implement the Management Plan included in the nomination dossier.
- A more complete set of key indicators, taking into account the various components of the urban properties, be defined and implemented to complete the proposed monitoring system.



**Map showing the revised boundaries of Mantua**



**Aerial view of Mantua**



**Mantua, Ducal Palace**



**Basilica of Sant'Andrea**



**Map showing the revised boundaries of Sabbioneta**

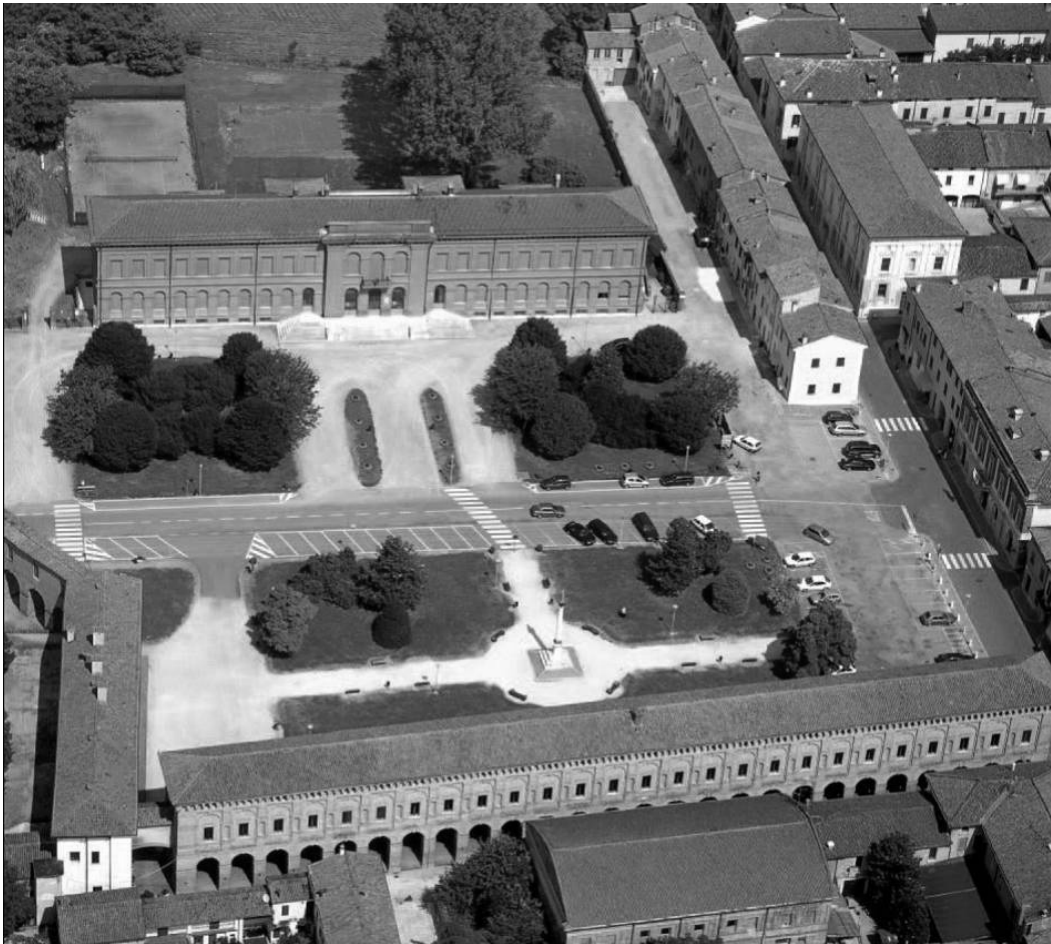


**Aerial view of Sabbioneta**





**General view of Sabbioneta**



**Sabbioneta, Piazza Castello**