

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Residences of the Royal House of Savoy (Italy)

No 823

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy
<i>Location</i>	Piedmont Region, Turin and Cuneo Province
<i>State Party</i>	Italian Republic
<i>Date</i>	28 June 1996

Justification by State Party

The Palazzo Reale with its buildings in the "Command Area" and the complex of villas outside the town for the purposes of "entertainment and hunting" are a cultural property of universal value, and constitute material evidence of the importance accorded by the House of Savoy to town planning and architecture as support to the political and military commitment that brought it over three centuries from the Duchy of Savoy to the throne of the united Italian state.

The absolute monarchy asserted its presence and its model for governing the territory by means of its Turin palace and the buildings designed for government as well as its residences outside the town.

The capital was organized and developed along the axes defined by the "Command Area". It is surrounded by the villas, creating a "ring of pleasure" which gave form to the countryside and protected it from the claims of the sub-alpine patriarchy.

The employment of artists who made distinguished contributions to the history of European culture and the role played by the Savoy dynasty and by Piedmont in Europe serve to reinforce the supranational value of this part of the region's historical and artistic heritage.

Although other European capitals are characterized by even larger monuments, none has been distinguished by so large a phenomenon on a national scale, developed in a logical continuity over so a long period of time.

The State Party nominates the property under cultural criteria i, ii, iv, and v, and also introduces the concept of the designed cultural landscape (*Operational Guidelines* (1997), paragraph 39 (i)).

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, these Residences of the Royal House of Savoy form a *group of buildings*.

History and Description

History

When the Duke of Savoy, Emmanuel-Philibert (1553-80), decided to move the seat of his court from Chambéry to Turin in 1562, he assigned an unexpected and decisive role to the latter. The new capital of the Duchy was still a small, fortified medieval town that had remained on the fringes of the main cultural developments of the Renaissance. As a result of the impetus of Emmanuel-Philibert, his successors developed a vast building programme throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, giving the town and its region a Baroque style, the pivot of which is the residences. These pleasure and hunting residences, built in the countryside along the Po, on the hills, and further away in vast wooded areas, also serve as reference points in a system of large estates important in both economic and strategic terms. This programme was the symbol of the absolute power of the Savoy rulers, who built a state and a European capital. They acquired the throne of the Kingdom of Sicily with Victor-Amadeus II (1713) and that of the Kingdom of Italy with Victor-Emmanuel II (1861), which they kept until the foundation of the Republic in 1946.

The construction of these buildings involves a town planning system that provides links between one palace and another and between the palaces and the villas, at the same time giving an architectural unity and solemnity to the areas that house the seats of power. Thus the group of buildings in the "Command Area," which are connected with each other starting from the ducal residence and where central power was exercised in its different political, administrative, and cultural forms, together with the palaces of the House of Savoy (Palazzo Madama, Palazzo di Carignano), form the central node, which has a direct relationship with the outlying residences by means of a radial plan, the form of which can be traced from its centre, Turin. They are rapidly accessible from the capital through a network of straight tree-lined roads, which ensure the cohesive and the functional aspects of the ensemble.

This system is underpinned by large-scale planning projects. Although the organization of the defences of Turin was Emmanuel-Philibert's major preoccupation, he succeeded in establishing

his residence in the former bishop's palace. Between the end of the 16th century and the 18th century, his successors carried out three large expansion projects centred on the Piazza Castello. The first urban and architectural renovation schemes, launched by Charles-Emmanuel I to the plans of the architect Ascanio Vitozzi (late 16th/early 17th century), were designed to create a "Command Area" to the north-east of the city that would be more in keeping with princely rank and be more practical in defensive terms. The former ducal palace, which was slightly away from the centre, was rebuilt on a new orientation so as to be in direct contact with the Piazza Castello. It was also linked with the southern part of the city by opening a new road (1612-15, the present Via Roma) in the direction of the Mirafiori ducal residence in the country (now demolished). This project was a major innovation, since it established bipolarity in urban and territorial terms.

In 1673, Charles-Emmanuel II (1638-75) commissioned Amedeo di Castellamonte to extend the town eastwards in the direction of the Po. The new main axis, the Via Po, linked the Piazza Castello with the bridge crossing the river in the direction of the hills where the Villa della Regina was built. The opportunity was also taken to extend the Piazza Castello eastwards, and the State Secretariats and the Royal Theatre were later built along its sides.

Victor-Amadeus II (1675-1730) commissioned Michelangelo Garove, Antonio Bertola, and (from 1716) Filippo Juvarra to carry out the third extension. This was in the direction of the western access to the city, running from the Porta Susina to the Castello di Rivoli and the Palazzina di Stupinigi.

Charles-Emmanuel III (1730-73) inherited several projects from his father. He planned the Palazzo Reale, the State Secretariats, and the theatre on the Piazza Castello, and organized a vast rebuilding and extension programme for the residences, involving Filippo Juvarra, followed by Benedetto Alfieri when Juvarra left Turin in 1735.

The relationships and dynastic links that the House of Savoy established with the royal courts in Paris, Lisbon, Madrid, Munich, and Vienna as well as the towns of Italy created a cosmopolitan artistic and cultural milieu at the court of Turin. Emmanuel-Philibert laid the foundations of a court tradition that had not previously existed in Turin. As the two superb volumes of the *Theatrum Sabaudiae*, published in 1682, demonstrate, the Dukes of Savoy were tireless builders. With ceaseless perseverance, they enriched their family heritage and commissioned internationally famous architects, artists, and gardeners such as Ascanio Vitozzi, Carlo and Amedeo di Castellamonte, Guarino Guarini, Filippo Juvarra, Michelangelo Garove, Benedetto Alfieri, Daniel Seiter, Francesco Solimena, Sebastiano Ricci, Charles André Vanloo, Claudio Francesco Beaumont, Francesco Ladatte, Michel Benard, and many others.

Description

The nomination includes twenty-two buildings in Turin and its surroundings:

The "Command Area" (Turin)

- Palazzo Reale
- Palazzo Chiabrese
- Royal Armoury - Royal Library
- Palazzo della Prefettura (former State Secretariats)
- State Archives (former Court Archives)
- Former Military Academy
- Riding school and stables
- Mint
- Facade of the Royal Theatre

Urban and country residences

- Palazzo Madama (Turin)
- Palazzo Carignano (Turin)
- Castello del Valentino (Turin)
- Villa della Regina (Turin)
- Castello di Rivoli (Commune of Rivoli)
- Castello di Moncalieri (Commune of Moncalieri)
- Castello di Venaria (Commune of Venaria)
- Castello della Mandria (Commune of Venaria)
- Palazzina di Stupinigi (Commune of Stupinigi)
- Castello d'Agliè (Commune of Agliè)
- Castello di Racconigi (Commune of Racconigi)
- Pollenzo Estate (Commune of Bra)
- Castello di Govone (Commune of Govone)

The vast "Command Area" was planned in relation to the new spaces created by extensions to the city. The Palazzo Reale defines the structure of this complex. The decision to create it by reorganizing and enlarging the former bishop's palace was taken by Emmanuel-Philibert in the 1570s. The project was taken up more decisively by Charles-Emmanuel I, and the commission for the work was given to Ascanio Vitozzi, the court architect. At the end of the 17th century the palace acquired its permanent appearance, and the buildings (powder magazine and cannon foundry) separating the Piazza Reale and Piazza Castello were replaced by a portico (in which the Holy Shroud was displayed on special occasions) and then two centuries later by a gate. The main changes in the 18th and 19th centuries were refurbishment and decoration of the apartments, in particular by Filippo Juvarra (Scala delle Forbici and the elegant Chinese cabinet) and Pelagio Pelagi. The quadrangular-plan brick palace was built around a courtyard, with porticoes opening behind on landscaped gardens between the bastions. The main facade, clad with plaster painted in light colours, was decorated with plaster strips, bands, and alternating triangular and semi-circular pediments above the second floor windows. The courtyard facades, which have retained their unplastered brick facing, partially

continue this decorative style with the same restraint. The monumental staircase in the palace leads to the royal apartments, which are still sumptuously decorated with paintings, stucco work, and priceless furniture.

The Palazzo Chiabrese and the wing housing the famous Royal Armoury and Royal Library are on the Piazza Reale and are connected with the Palazzo Reale by means of a system of internal passages. This is also the case in most of the other buildings in the "Command Area" constructed to the east of the palace or on the Piazza Castello (former State Secretariats, facade of the Royal Theatre). Although Filippo Juvarra drew up plans for the Royal Theatre, the stables, and the court archives wing, he only built the last of these (1731-32). Benedetto Alfieri continued this programme at the end of the 1730s by integrating the Military Academy built by Amedeo di Castellamonte (1675-80). The school consists of a circular hall roofed by multi-centred vaulting and a vast rectangular hall with a vaulted roof made up of surbased arches. Only the facade of Alfieri's Royal Theatre survived the fire that destroyed the building in 1936. It has been integrated into the current theatre, opened in 1973.

The Palazzo Madama, which used to be linked to the Palazzo Reale by an arcade, is in the centre of the austere Piazza del Castello. This complex building provides a concise history of the town through all its many transformations and its combination of different styles. The Marquis of Monferrat built a fortified house in the second half of the 13th century over the remains of the Porta Decumana of the Augustan ramparts, the two polygonal towers of which have been preserved on the western side. In the 15th century the Princes of Acaja gave it the impressive appearance that it still retains by adding two more towers on the eastern side. It became the home of Marie-Christine of France, widow of Victor-Amadeus, who was known as Madama Reale, and it was she who refurbished and redecored it (1638-42). Marie Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours commissioned Filippo Juvarra to reface and redesign the exterior of the palace complex completely, so as to create the idea of a monument in the heart of the town. The project was restricted to the building of a facade, a monumental staircase, and an atrium (1720-21). Filippo Juvarra commissioned work from the sculptor Giovanni Baratta, the painter Domenico Guidobono, and talented stucco artists. The palace remained the residence of the princes of Savoy until the end of the 18th century. It then became the seat of several administrations and has housed the Municipal Museum of Classical Art since 1934.

The polygonal shape of the palace results from the combination of a central trapezoid body with the protruding rectangular body of the facade which incorporates the Roman towers. The juxtaposition of styles and building methods can be clearly seen on the sides of the building. On the east there are plain brick walls and protruding polygonal medieval towers, while on the west there is

Juvarra's admirable baroque facade. The continuous bands of bosses in the lower part of the facade and the wide pilasters form a solid base for the pilasters and fluted columns, with large windows between them interrupting the walls on every storey. The verticality of the supports, temporarily interrupted by the entablature and the frieze, extends into the balusters, the allegorical statues, and the vases on the balustrade. The atrium located behind the central body of the facade and the banisters of the staircase take advantage of the light from the large windows to highlight the stucco decorations on the vaults and walls. The work by Juvarra and his collaborators continues in the living rooms linked to the staircase, where the architecture and decoration participate in creating open spaces. The apartments have retained their 17th and 18th century decoration.

Guarino Guarini gave his personal touch to Turin's Baroque architecture with the Palazzo Carignano (1679-85), which was built for Prince Amedeo di Carignano, the younger branch of the House of Savoy. The architect built one of the most attractive and impressive 17th century Italian palaces. He adopted a U-shaped plan to which he gave a new interpretation (the side opening on the garden was closed later) by integrating into the central part of the facade an oval rotunda surmounted by a drum, concave on the street side and convex on the courtyard, giving an undulating movement to the facade. A two-storey private chapel is set into the centre of the convex part. Two monumental orders articulate with the wall, which is pierced with impressive windows that are decorated, among other motifs, with stylized Indian figures, a souvenir of Carignano's travels in North America. The decoration of the courtyard facades is equally exuberant, with pilasters and bands of stars. On the ground floor the oval building acts as a vestibule whose two elliptical staircases lead to the Parliament Hall on the first floor. The sumptuous decoration of the apartments and arcades is attributed to Legnanino (1660-1713).

Places for relaxation and festivities are located in the countryside around Turin's countryside corresponding to these working places where authority is exercised. Residences for pleasure and hunting were created by modernizing existing structures, such as the Castelli di Rivoli, Racconigi, Agliè, Moncalieri, Pollenzo, and Govone, which were medieval fortified buildings. Others were new constructions, such as the Villa della Regina, Villa Venaria, and Villa Stupinigi. They offer a great variety of architectural and interior styles, which can be related to progressive changes in hunting and leisure activities. However, the successive generations of architects who embellished the residences in the 17th and 18th centuries managed to give them a surprising degree of homogeneity. It is undeniable that they share high - sometimes exceptional - quality in their architectural and interior design (monumental staircases and apartments decorated

with paintings, stuccowork, sculptures, and valuable furniture).

Equal attention was given to the gardens and parks, which are integral components of the residences. They were also included in the successive embellishment schemes for each of the residences. The Agliè garden is on three levels, with an English garden, flower beds, and a hanging garden, with ornate conservatories decorated with paintings (*trompe l'œil* architecture, grotesque, allegorical, and mythological figures, etc.) opening on them. André Le Nôtre (1640) designed the park at Racconigi; it was modernized by Michel Benard in 1746 and partially transformed into a English garden at the end of the century. New buildings were added at the start of the 19th century, such as the Gothic-style greenhouse (the Margaria).

The Castello di Pollenzo, which was added to the Savoy estates later (mid 18th century) and neglected in the ensuing decades, remains an isolated case among these residences. At the start of the 19th century Pelagio Pelagi added neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic extensions to the 14th century building.

Hunting was always the favourite leisure activity of the Dukes of Savoy, a taste that was shared with the main European courts, particularly the French one. This activity was a substitute for war during times of peace and became a special event, with all the splendours of the court deployed.

A few decades before Stupinigi, the court architect, Amedeo di Castellamonte, made the designs for Duke Charles-Emmanuel II's grandiose scheme for Venaria Reale (1659). Planned to celebrate the Duke's magnificence through the ritual of hunting and completing the ring of residences (Amedeo di Castellamonte, *Venaria Reale*), the Castello di Venaria was a veritable sanctuary dedicated to the cult of princely hunting, where Emanuele Tesauro was responsible for the iconography. Venaria Reale is also an experiment in urban planning transposed to the country, with the construction of a small town linked to the residential area by straight roads opening on semi-circular public squares. After it was partially destroyed by the passage of French troops in 1693, several reconstruction and planning projects were made for the Castello and its park but never completed. The following architects were involved: Michelangelo Garove (1698-1713), Filippo Juvarra (1716-30), Benedetto Alfieri (1739-68), Giuseppe Batista Piacenza and Carlo Randioni (1780-1830). They built a vast L-shaped complex developing from the Reggia di Diana (the residential part of the house) and integrating the Gallery of Diana, St Hubert's church, the ingenious orangery-cum-stables (the work of Filippo Juvarra), and Benedetto Alfieri's new stables and riding school. The plain brick external architecture of the complex creates a striking contrast to the refinement of the interior architecture of the majestic Gallery of Diana and St Hubert's church decorated with stuccowork and

sculptures by talented architects directed by Juvarra.

In 1729, a few months before he abdicated in favour of his son, Victor Amadeus II gave Filippo Juvarra a new opportunity to exert his talent by creating the Stupinigi hunting residence, which provides a "surprise" in the context of the infinite spaces that were so important in the Baroque. It was designed by the Duke as a simple hunting pavilion, but it became a truly 18th century residence in the hands of the architect, infused with the breath of Arcadia and influenced by theatrical design. Filippo Juvarra completed an ambitious project in which architecture, painting (the brothers Giuseppe and Domenico Valeriani, Giovan Battista Crosato, and Charles Vanloo), the decorative arts (cabinet-makers Pietro Piffetti and Luigi Prinotto), and the design of the garden and park (Michel Benard) were planned down to the finest details, with all the elements fitting in with each other using the same standards of excellence. The architects who continued the work in the side wings after the departure of Juvarra for Madrid in 1735, Giovanni Tommasso Prumotto, Benedetto Alfieri, and Ludovico Bo, remained faithful to the spirit of the initial project. The residence opening out to the countryside offers the dynamic, open design of the central pavilion, from which the four wings of the cross of St Andrew radiate. Two of them are joined together to form the main courtyard. The constant dialogue between architecture and landscape also applies to the interior, which is decorated in rocaille style. Both through his architecture and through his ornamentation, Stupinigi made a profound impact on research in 18th century Europe. The ring of residences is thus completed with a modern accent.

Management and protection

Legal status

Most of the Residences of the Royal House of Savoy belong to the State, with the exception of the Castello di Rivoli and the Castello della Mandria, which belong to the Region of Piedmont, the Palazzina di Stupinigi, which belongs to the order of St Maurice and St Lazarus, the Castello di Govone, which belongs to the Commune, the Castello di Pollenzo, which is privately owned, and the palace of the former State Secretariats, which belongs to the Province of Turin.

The majority of the residences are protected by the provisions of Italian Law 1089/1939 covering the artistic and architectural heritage of the Italian state. This law stipulates that approval by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici of Piedmont (Turin) must be sought for any interventions in the buildings concerned.

Each of the residences is protected by other legislation: the provisions of the Piano Regolatore Generale of Turin (1993) for the palaces and villas located in the city and the relevant Piano Regolatore Generale for the Communes of Rivoli,

Agliè, Govone, Racconigi, Moncalieri, and Venaria. The provisions of the 1939 Italian National Law 1497 on the protection of natural and panoramic beauty apply to Stupinigi, Rivoli, Govone, Racconigi, Pollenzo, Venaria, La Mandria, and Agliè. Regional Law 43 (1975) on regional parks and nature reserves applies to Stupinigi, Venaria, and La Mandria.

Management

The Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici of Piedmont is responsible for managing residences belonging to the State. The owners of the other residences are responsible for managing them through their respective administrations: Piedmont Regional Council, Turin Provincial Council, Govone Municipal Council, and the Order of St Maurice and St Lazarus, together with the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici of Piedmont and Turin Municipality.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The competent authorities have for many years carried out a systematic, ambitious restoration policy for each of the residences. Some of these have been completed, some are in progress, and others have not yet started.

Thus several building projects have been undertaken over the last few years in the Palazzo Madama (replacing the electrical installations and heating, restructuring the Municipal Museum of Classical Art, recovery of Roman remains) and the Palazzo Carignano (architectural restoration and restoration of the stucco on the monumental staircase and refurbishment of the Risorgimento Museum).

Restoration schemes to save them from irredeemable loss have been conducted over the last fifteen years on the Castello di Venaria and the Villa della Regina, which greatly suffered in the former case from inappropriate use and in the other from a long period of abandonment. The rehabilitation plans for the two residences which are currently being processed, that for the Castello di Venaria, for which an application has been submitted to a government commission, and that for the Villa della Regina submitted to the Province of Turin, will result in additional public funding being available to complete the works.

Among the buildings that have not yet been restored mention should be made of the former Military Academy, the riding school, the stables, the Turin Mint, and the Castello di Govone.

The authorities responsible for conservation of the residences are also involved in their rehabilitation by proposing new uses which expanding their original ones. The Court Archives have thus become the State Archives, the former Royal Library has been opened to researchers, the former Royal Theatre (rebuilt in 1973) is the setting for intensive artistic activity, and the

Castello di Rivoli has become an international museum of contemporary art.

It has been possible to open new areas in each of the residences to the public as a result of regular conservation and restoration work. The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy are a living group of buildings.

Authenticity

The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy are undeniably authentic. The conservation and restoration work undertaken is based on patient stratigraphic research, archive studies, scientific analysis, and the analysis of structures. The work is also designed in some cases to bring to light elements that had been hidden by previous refurbishments and to correct some previous building work.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

A mission in February 1997 covered the residences of the Royal House of Savoy. ICOMOS has also consulted an eminent French art historian of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Qualities

The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy are an extensive body of buildings which provide an important and detailed chapter in European architecture. They also offer examples of rich painted and carved interior decors in many of the residences, and have finally found their place in the roll of important gardens. The series of residences emphasizes the immense work of creation and homogenization, ornamentation and improvement, carried out in the course of a "Baroque episode" spanning the 17th and 18th centuries. The Dukes of Savoy had a sense of continuity and a long-term vision in terms of architecture. These two virtues give very striking visual and stylistic cohesion to the functional rigour of the palaces and villas. They also make these buildings one of the most complete and prestigious examples of the strategies and styles of the European Baroque. These palaces and villas are all of consistently high quality, and in some cases they may be considered to be outstanding. Over many decades they brought together a chain of the most outstanding architects, from Ascanio Vitozzi to Alfieri via Castellamonte, Guarini, and Juvarra, the quality and excellence of whom is proclaimed by their projects and by their present condition.

They constitute a dynastic heritage that is both complex and unitary. It is a true symbiosis between culture and nature through its mastery of urban space and its planning of vast tracts of countryside.

This major heritage displays a remarkable degree of order and concentration, resulting from consistent political and family rationality: a concentric authoritarian organization that

guarantees the continuous, rapid, and centrifugal access to all the residences. The heart of this heritage is naturally the heart of Turin itself, which in every sense of the word governs a veritable ring of buildings.

This series of buildings extends the control of the state and guarantees both the actual and the symbolic control of the territory characteristic of modern absolutism through the cells making up the system and their distribution in space.

Comparative analysis

The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy are an important part of the history of Europe of the *Ancien Régime*, in the same way as the French and German residences.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

ICOMOS invites the State Party to continue its effort in preserving and protecting the residences of the Royal House of Savoy with the same respect that it has shown so far for their historical, aesthetic and landscape value.

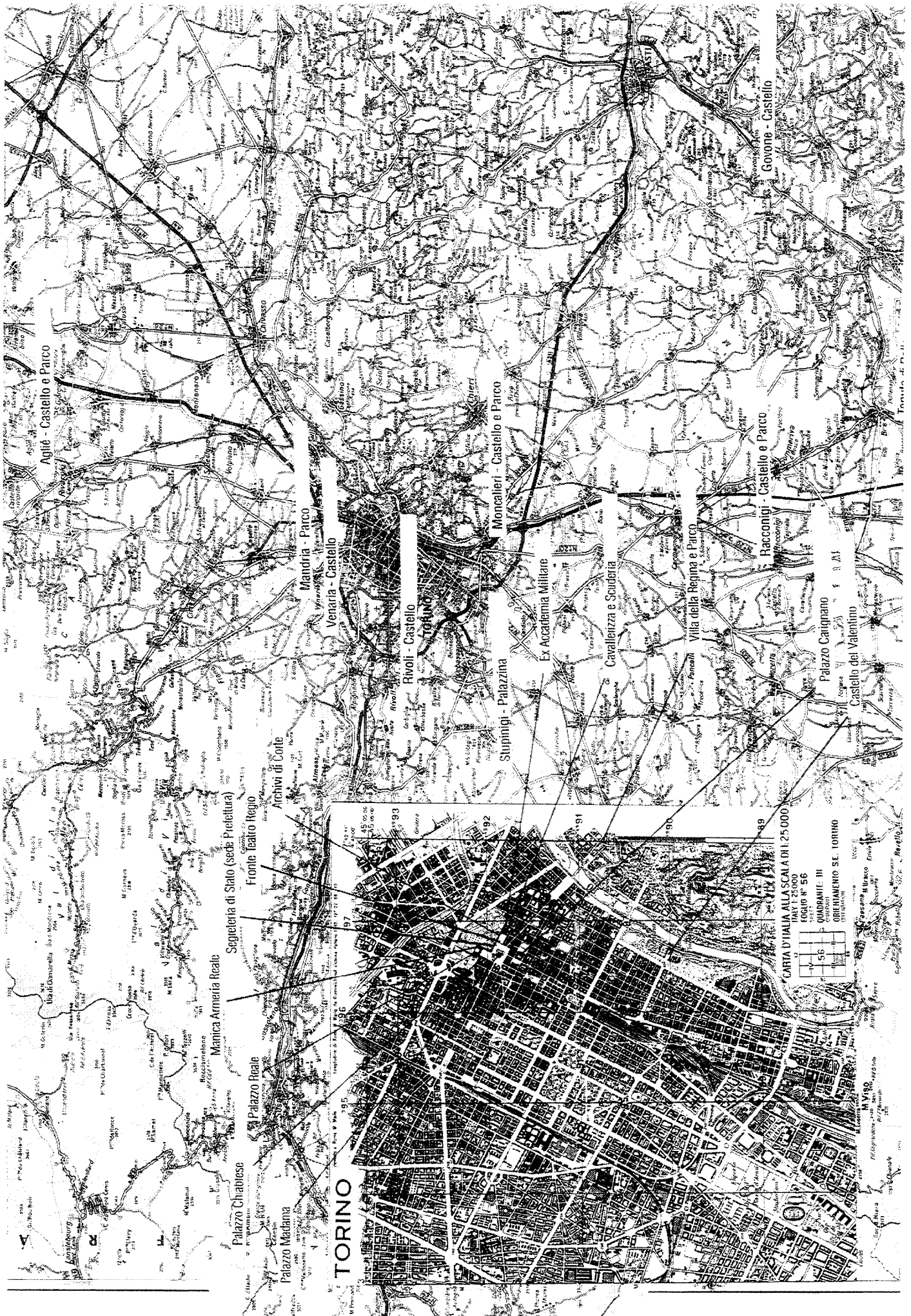
ICOMOS draws the attention of the State Party to the need to associate the gardens and parks more decisively with the conservation projects for buildings.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria i, ii, iv, and v*:

The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy in and around Turin represent a comprehensive overview of European monumental architecture in the 17th and 18th centuries, using style, dimensions, and space to illustrate in an exceptional way the prevailing doctrine of absolute monarchy in material terms.

ICOMOS, September 1997



Résidences des Savoie / Residences of the Royal House of Savoy :
Carte indiquant la localisation des résidences proposées pour inscription /
Location map of the nominated Residences



**Résidences des Savoie / Residences of the Royal House of Savoy :
Palazzo Carignano**