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**'Padova *Urbs picta*', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles (Italy)**  
**No 1623**

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**Official name as proposed by the State Party**

'Padova *Urbs picta*', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles

**Location**

City of Padua, Veneto Region  
Italy

**Brief description**

The nominated property is composed of eight religious and secular building complexes, within the historic walled city of Padua, which house a selection of 14<sup>th</sup> century fresco cycles. Painted between 1302 and 1397, by different artists for different types of patron and within buildings of varying function, the fresco cycles maintain a unity of style and content. The nominated property includes Giotto's fresco cycle in the Scrovegni Chapel, considered to have marked the beginning of a revolutionary development in the history of mural painting, as well as other fresco cycles of different artists, namely Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini, Guariento di Arpo, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Altichiero da Zevio, Jacopo Avanzi and Jacopo da Verona. These fresco cycles are presented as a serial nomination of four components to illustrate, as a group, how, over the course of a century, fresco art developed based on a new creative impetus and understanding of spatial representation.

**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 four *groups of buildings*.

## 1 Basic data

**Included in the Tentative List**

22 January 2016

**Background**

This is a new nomination.

**Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission**

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 10-13 September 2019.

**Additional information received by ICOMOS**

A letter was sent to the State Party on 24 September 2019 requesting further information on the selection criteria for the serial composition, the comparative analysis, and the individual contribution of each of the four component parts – and within it each selected fresco cycle – to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS also requested further information on the arrangements for cooperation with the existing World Heritage property of Orto Botanico in Padua

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2019 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the authenticity of the Palazzo della Ragione frescoes, the management office structure and resources, arrangement for risk preparedness and disaster response, as well as the possibility of changing the name of the property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 26 October, 14 November 2019 and 14 February 2020, and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

**Date of ICOMOS approval of this report**

12 March 2020

## 2 Description of the property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

**Description and history**

The nominated property named as 'Padova *Urbs picta*', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles is composed of four components parts, all located within the inner walled city of historic Padua, namely: *Scrovegni and Eremitani* (1); *Palazzo della Ragione, Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated piazzas* (2); *Complex of buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony* (3); and *San Michele* (4).

These components are grouped as they contain 14<sup>th</sup> century frescoes, a particular type of mural paintings made of water-bound inorganic substances applied to freshly laid plaster. The selection is described as illustrating how Italian fresco paintings changed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in response to, and inspired by, the impact of Giotto's works, particularly the Scrovegni Chapel. The other fresco cycles included as part of the nominated property were painted by different artists for different types of patrons within buildings of varying function and are equally remarkable for their quality and scale.

#### *Scrovegni and Eremitani (1)*

This first component encompasses the Scrovegni Chapel and the Church of the Eremitani. The Scrovegni Chapel is a single nave chapel covered with a barrel vault and with an underground crypt. It hosts, extending over the entire wall space, one of Giotto's most famous and best preserved fresco cycles, composed of: 39 scenes from the Life of the Virgin and the Life of Christ occupying the side walls; 14 figures depicting Vices and Virtues, along the side walls; a star-strewn sky across the vault; and a Last Judgement on the west wall. They demonstrate his skill in the rendering of three-dimensional space and in depicting human emotions. The cycles in the Church of the Eremitani illustrate works of Guariento di Arpo and Giusto de' Menabuoi, from the 1330s to the 1370s, exploring themes such as the lives of the saints, the planets, the seven ages of man, and the Last Judgement.

#### *Palazzo della Ragione, Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated Piazzas (2)*

Palazzo della Ragione was one of the largest public buildings at the time of its construction and is characterized by its distinctive keel-vault roof. In spatial terms, the building contributes the largest fresco cycle of the nomination, with more than three hundred scenes divided into two sections. It was commissioned from Giotto by the Commune of Padua and executed by Giotto (1310-1317), Giusto de' Menabuoi (1380-90), and Jacopo da Verona (1390-97). Unfortunately, the original works were largely destroyed in a fire of 1420 but were then recreated by the artists Niccolò Miretto, Stefano da Ferrara and Antonio di Pietro in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, whose works remain visible today. The Chapel of the Carraresi Palace contains a fresco cycle with scenes of the Old Testament by Guariento di Arpo (before 1354). The Cathedral Baptistery illustrates an interior entirely decorated with frescos inspired by the history of human salvation. Painted by Giusto de' Menabuoi, it is considered his masterpiece and shows further developments in the use of perspective to create the illusion of three-dimensional space.

#### *Complex of buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony (3)*

Commonly known as *Il Santo*, the Basilica of St. Anthony is an important religious center in Padua. It contains Giotto's earliest works in Padua, namely in the Chapter Hall, the Chapel of the Black Madonna and the Benediction Chapel, all predating his work in the Scrovegni Chapel. In this complex one also finds a large fresco cycle by Giusto de' Menabuoi (1382) in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, and frescoes by Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo Avanzi in the St. James Chapel. Altichiero da Zevio also features prominently in the second building of this component, the Oratory of St. George, where he implemented a fresco cycle with scenes around the life of Christ, together with Jacopo da Verona (1379-84).

#### *San Michele (4)*

The fourth component, San Michele, contains the Oratory of St. Michael, in which the artist Jacopo da Verona created a fresco cycle around the life of the Virgin Mary in 1397.

The production of all fresco cycles within the nomination falls within the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a time when Padua was a wealthy centre of trade, art, culture and education, with an established university, and was strongly influenced by the Carraresi family, who ultimately ruled the city from 1318 until 1405, when they were defeated by the Republic of Venice. Their rule marked the beginning of a new period of prosperity for Padua as a city, in which not only trade and the arts flourished but also literature and the sciences, which all benefitted from the new patronage models of a network of private sponsors.

In this historic climate different secular and religious buildings were planned and constructed, at the request of illustrious local families, the clergy, the city commune and the Carraresi court. Each of these provided the architectural backdrop for the fresco cycles applied to the completed walls. Some of these buildings and architectural interiors, such as Scrovegni Chapel, the roof of Palazzo della Ragione (which was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1420), the interior space of the cathedral baptistery, and chapels in the Basilica of St. Anthony, were purpose-designed or modified for the frescoes they came to host, and form an integral part of the new depiction of three-dimensional space.

#### **Boundaries**

The area of the four component parts totals 19.96 ha, with a shared buffer zone of 530 ha. The boundaries of the component parts reflect the areas occupied by the eight religious and secular building complexes which contain the fresco cycles and as much as appropriate of the surrounding areas which are part of the cadastral property or access routes, such as gardens, archaeological zones and public spaces. The buffer zone covers the complete historic city of Padua *intra-muros* including the green or river corridors immediately outside the historic city walls. The buffer zone also includes the entire World Heritage property of the Botanical Garden (Orto Botanico), Padua, inscribed in 1997 under criteria (ii) and (iii).

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the four components include all the necessary elements that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. The designation of the historic city of Padua as a buffer zone, encompassing all the component parts, provides an adequate layer of protection to the nominated property. However, ICOMOS notes that this delimitation of the buffer zone will also encompass the entire World Heritage property of the Botanical Garden. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that in order for such a model to work in a meaningful way, the management authorities of the Botanical Garden (Orto Botanico), Padua, would need to be

involved with the management of the nominated property to avoid any conflicting issues between the management of the two properties.

In its additional information submitted on 26 October and 14 November 2019 respectively, the State Party suggests to include a representative of the Botanical Garden in the Management Steering Committee in an observer capacity. ICOMOS appreciates this suggestion and recommends that this proposal is formalized and that intensive communication on matters related to buffer zone management between the Padua City Council urban planning authorities and the two site management offices is ensured.

#### **State of conservation**

The nominated property is owned by four different entities. Each of them initiates and undertakes conservation measures according to their own competences but under supervision of the *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo*. Likewise, the *Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro* (ISCR) is a formal member of the management committee with the task of coordination and quality control of the conservation programme and initiatives. The conservation of Scrovegni Chapel has been under the authority of the Interdisciplinary and Scientific Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Scrovegni Chapel (ISCCMSC), founded in 1994.

All fresco cycles of the serial nomination have been subject to various conservation measures over the centuries. Since a full description of the history of conservation initiatives on this property would by far exceed the spatial restrictions of this report, only the latest interventions and the present state of conservation are considered. Since 2014 a systematic approach to conservation measures under a joint priority scheme aims at ensuring a consistent, high-standard and well-planned approach.

A major restoration of the frescoes and interior of Scrovegni Chapel was carried out between 1952 and 1970. A number of studies and prevention measures were implemented afterwards. In 2001 and 2002 minor consolidation works were carried out to address areas at risk of deterioration. In the Church of the Eremitani, conservation campaigns were carried out in 1999-2000 with the conservation of frescoes in the main chapel; between 2004 and 2012 there was extensive work on the overall refurbishment of the church. The fresco cycle of the Palazzo della Ragione was restored in 2000-2003. The chapel of Carraresi Palace underwent a series of interventions between 2001 and 2008 with a focus on cleaning and consolidation works. In 2008-2013, the Cathedral Baptistry underwent an overall project of restoration aimed at confronting the problems posed by: the architectural structure; the archaeological material discovered beneath the building; and the fresco cycle itself. In 2018, a restoration project for the uniformity of the fresco cycle as a whole was approved and scheduled to start in 2019, as well as restoration works on the exterior

of the building, which have already started. The exterior structure was scaffolded during the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission.

The Oratory of St. George's frescoes were restored during a campaign in 1995-1997. Works at the Oratory of St. Michael in 2016-2017 addressed damage on the building's floor and the safety of the structure.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the overall state of conservation of the nominated property is satisfactory. The conservation methodologies and techniques used during the most recent interventions are satisfactory and based on minimum intervention approaches, mostly focused on consolidation and cleaning.

#### **Factors affecting the property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the property are potential disasters from fire or water (in terms of flooding) as well as humidity due to rising damp and leakages. High visitor numbers can also make it difficult to maintain constant levels of temperature and humidity. Minor negative impacts may also arise from air pollution.

The site management authorities actively prepare for these risks, although a number of components, namely the Church of the Eremitani, the Cathedral Baptistry, the Basilica of St. Anthony and the Chapel of St. George, still lack detection and monitoring systems for relative humidity or fire, and in other buildings sprinkler systems installed for fire-fighting might likewise pose a risk of water damage in the event of appropriate or accidental function. ICOMOS recommends to consequently monitor relative humidity in all components, install fire detectors also in the church-owned properties, and ensure that fire-fighting installations are tailored to cause least possible negative impacts in the event of use.

### **3 Proposed justification for inscription**

#### **Proposed justification**

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

- The new artistic language which Giotto introduced in Padua, in his Scrovegni Chapel frescoes, initiated an artistic revolution that marked a turning-point in the history of art. The revolutionary form of the scenes depicted and architectural features interacted with the actual architecture of the building. This opened the way to a new tradition in fresco painting which would be developed in an original and independent way by other artists working in Padua,

throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and is best represented by the proposed series;

- The frescoes illustrate the historical change in the relationship between commissioning patron and artist in that patrons were integrated in the scenes, playing the roles of characters in the biblical scenes, including some of the first-known cases of female patrons;
- Padua alone gathers a high number and quality of frescoes testifying to the above-presented changes in artistic style and language and the roles of patron and artist and, accordingly, needs to be seen as the 'world capital of fourteenth-century frescoes'.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS suggested to the State Party the need to consider changing the name of the nominated property, in order that the name of the property reflects well the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property. ICOMOS considered that the title "Padova *Urbs picta*" was not fully clear as the series of fresco cycles is neither a painted city nor do the frescoes depict the city of Padua as their prime motif. In addition, the name of Giotto within the title does not seem fully relevant as the artist contributed to just a few of the frescoes within the property. The State Party acknowledged that the name "Padova *Urbs picta*" does not fully correspond to the identified attributes of the property. It accordingly suggested renaming the property: "Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and the fourteenth-century fresco cycles in Padua", highlighting that the name of Giotto remained of critical importance to the serial proposal.

ICOMOS acknowledges that Giotto is the most renowned artist who contributed to the Padua fresco cycles, and Scrovegni Chapel the best-known individual component, but Giotto did not contribute to all components and one architectural structure may not need to be singled out among the others. In ICOMOS' view it would therefore be creating an imbalance within the series it considers of Outstanding Universal Value, if one component is identified with the building and artist's name, while others are not. In consequence, ICOMOS suggests removing the notion of Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and retain as the name of the serial property "Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles".

### **Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis aims to compare the nominated property with other fresco cycles and artistic productions of a comparable chronological and regional framework, that is Mediterranean artistic production of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The methodology further establishes that while Europe could be considered the regional scale, only the Mediterranean parts of Europe, or in fact the Italian Peninsula, created architecture which facilitated the production of larger fresco cycles. ICOMOS considers that while the international comparisons drawn in the nomination file are appropriate to highlight other larger frescoes of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the focus on Italy as the appropriate scope for comparison is acceptable. Fresco cycles require

walls of a certain size, therefore Gothic architecture in Italy was particularly suitable in this regard since it was not built to great heights and had few window openings.

Within the Italian context, the comparative analysis is structured around six aspects said to make Padua's fresco cycles exceptional, namely: technique and composition; date; authorship; innovation in the rendition of pictorial space; innovation in the depiction of states of feeling; and the new role of a commissioning patron. ICOMOS in its request for additional information on 24 September 2019, asked the State Party to further elaborate its comparison among the most relevant fresco cycles in Northern Italy.

In its response received on 24 October and 14 November 2019 respectively, additional comparisons with the works of Giusto de' Menabuoi in Padua, fresco fragments in Treviso, works by Altichiero da Zevio in Verona and Guariento in Venice have been added. The authors also reviewed several other northern Italian towns which were centres of influence and trade in the 14<sup>th</sup> century to illustrate that no comparable frescoes are preserved within these historic centres.

As regards the selection of the component parts of the series, ICOMOS requested information in its first letter on the rationale for the selection of the component sites within Padua. The State Party replied in the additional information submitted on 14 November 2019, with tables which illustrate that although there may be quality differences between the frescoes which form the serial nomination, all selected frescoes have the capacity to make distinct contributions to the attributes identified.

ICOMOS considers that the augmented comparative analysis has successfully demonstrated the exceptionality of the Padua ensemble of 14<sup>th</sup> century frescoes and that no equivalent collection of fresco cycles exists elsewhere in terms of quality and concentration, nor in terms of the sizeable group of talented artists working within a defined spatial and chronological context.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this serial property for the World Heritage List.

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### **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 the fresco cycles in the nomination of 'Padova *Urbs picta*', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles are an example of extraordinary creative genius initiated by Giotto, which resulted in rejuvenating the tradition of

fresco painting through a new depiction of pictorial space, a new attention to the portrayal of human feelings and emotions, and the adaptation of sacred art to serve the secular celebration of prestige and power.

ICOMOS considers that while the justification provided might apply to Giotto's masterpiece of fresco cycles in the Scrovegni Chapel, it is difficult to see all components of the series as a completely new impetus to illustrations of perspective and the depiction of human feelings. Whilst applying great skills and mastery, the subsequent artists of the later works drew on initial examples of new trends in the earlier references and elaborated largely in the differences of variations and content. As such, not all the component parts and the fresco cycles included in it can be considered to reflect the same high level of creative impetus and mastery. ICOMOS considers that criterion (i) has not been demonstrated for the series as a whole.

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 nominated property illustrates the extraordinary interchange of ideas, which existed between leading figures in the worlds of science, literature and the visual arts. The courtly climate setting of the Carraresi family in Padua, which has often been described as 'pre-humanist', fostered also a certain competitiveness between different patrons, who might hold political or religious power, all striving to leave behind great works of art.

ICOMOS considers that the serial property indeed exhibits an important interchange of human values, both by illustrating an entirely new way of depicting allegorical narratives in spatial perspectives influenced by the latest studies in the science of optics, and a new capacity to capture human emotions. A group of artists striving for innovation gathered within a single city at the same time and within this proximity exchanged ideas and know-how leading to a new style in fresco illustration. This new fresco style not only influenced Padua throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century but formed the inspirational basis for centuries of fresco work in the Italian Renaissance and beyond. As such it testifies to the distribution of a technology and stylistic approach in artistic production over a span of time and within a cultural area. Likewise, the ideas which the frescoes convey in relation to 'pre-humanist' conceptions of life and destiny had a strong influence in the development of art in the centuries to come. ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) 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 fresco cycles bear witness to a fundamental moment in the history of art, when Giotto initiated a rejuvenation of the ancient technique of fresco painting, in both technical and formal terms. With the exceptional technical abilities possessed by the artists who followed him, the Padua fresco cycles became a model for others which proved remarkably resistant to the passage of time.

ICOMOS considers that while the arguments presented under this criterion are largely valid, art history cannot be considered a civilization or cultural tradition as intended to be captured by criterion (iii). ICOMOS considers that notions of the influence and change in artistic technology and style as well as their model character in Padua are better recognized under criterion (ii) and that accordingly criterion (iii) is not justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (ii) for the entire series, and that criteria (i) and (iii) have not been demonstrated.

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### **Integrity and authenticity**

#### **Integrity**

In ICOMOS' view the fresco cycles in the four component parts proposed present an overall shared approach in terms of techniques, themes, dating and style, and bear witness to new programmes of narrative and figurative choice. The works of Giotto, Guariento di Arpo, Altichiero di Zevio, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Jacopo Avanzi, and Jacopo da Verona, illustrate the artistic revolution in the field of mural painting throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The serial nominated property brings together a variety of narratives based on different biblical and mythological references; they combine both public and private, religious and secular structures, as well as aristocratic and merchant commissioners, both male and female. It can therefore be concluded that the series completely covers and represents the various contexts of commissioning as well as structural implementation in which this new style of 14<sup>th</sup> century fresco painting in Padua occurred.

In terms of the four serial components, ICOMOS confirms that the boundary delineation ensures that all architectural structures which carry the frescoes and all other constructional walls or supporting elements needed for their long-term preservation are within the nominated property. The intactness of the frescoes is satisfactory and the monitoring systems designed for their continuous observation are, in some cases, exemplary. ICOMOS therefore concludes that the

integrity of the serial components as well as the overall series has been demonstrated.

#### Authenticity

ICOMOS considers that in all components, except for Palazzo della Ragione, the property preserves fully the fresco cycles, the material support on which the frescoes are painted, the plaster surfaces, the pigments and binding agents used in genuine fresco work, and the paints themselves. Although fragments of these frescoes have in the past suffered localized detachments, for example in Scrovegni Chapel, the Cathedral Baptistery, or Carraresi Chapel, these fragments were all replaced in their original positions during past conservation treatments.

Only one of the fresco cycles was extensively altered, which is the one in Palazzo della Ragione. After a fire in 1420 the upper three bands of frescoes originally painted by Giotto were lost and subsequently reconstructed by Niccolò Miretto, Stefano da Ferrara and Antonio di Pietro in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly, the spatial majority of the fresco cycle within Palazzo della Ragione cannot be said to reflect the same time period nor has it been able to be proven beyond doubt that the present appearance is indeed a truthful recreation of the Giotto imagery or whether we may in the future find traces of earlier motifs below the present frescoes.

ICOMOS considers that while the inclusion of Palazzo della Ragione is justified as it contributes as being the only public administrative building of the series and the only fresco cycle which is not primarily based on religious motifs, ICOMOS also considers that the upper three bands of square-shaped paintings do not meet authenticity in relation to their 14<sup>th</sup> century original production. This issue was highlighted in the ICOMOS Interim Report.

The State Party reiterated that Giotto worked on the original frescoes and that these, based on 14<sup>th</sup> century texts, were illustrations of the same motifs visible today. However, no trace of these frescoes survived the fire of 1420 according to the present knowledge. Non-invasive studies have now commenced to gain a better knowledge of what lies beneath the paintings by means of mapping of the frescoed walls using structured-light 3D scanners, multi-spectrum imaging and IR thermography. Unfortunately, no results from these studies were available to be taken into consideration by ICOMOS.

The State Party highlights that, whilst not painted by Giotto and not even 14<sup>th</sup> century productions, the upper rows of frescoes complete the narrative behind the nominated serial site, and are essential to an understanding of the internal decoration of Palazzo della Ragione as a whole.

ICOMOS recommends to the State Party to highlight explicitly in the local interpretation of the property component that the upper three bands are a restoration of the original frescoes after a major fire, which reconstructed an appearance of the 14<sup>th</sup> century frescoes but may not be iconographically authentic.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity have been met for the series and that authenticity overall has been demonstrated. However, the upper three bands of frescoes in Palazzo della Ragione reflect reconstructions carried out in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and need to be interpreted and presented as such.

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#### Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

ICOMOS considers that the serial nomination of 'Padova Urbs picta', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles meets criterion (ii) of the World Heritage criteria. The arguments presented for the justification of criterion (iii) are better captured under criterion (ii) and criterion (i) cannot be applied to the series as a whole. A convincing justification for the selection of the series and comparative analysis have also been presented. The nominated property meets the necessary conditions of integrity. Authenticity has been successfully demonstrated for the overall series; however, the 15<sup>th</sup> century reconstructions of the original works of Giotto, destroyed by fire in 1420 in the Palazzo della Ragione, cannot be considered authentic and must be interpreted as a later restoration aimed at recreating a homogenous appearance of the fresco cycle.

#### Attributes

The attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are predominantly contained within the wall and paint layers of the fresco cycles. However, the Outstanding Universal Value is not exclusively represented by layers of art work but extends into the walls and the structural architecture of the buildings which house these frescoes. Frescoes are inseparable from the walls which form their architectural base and the three dimensional perspectives of these frescoes communicate and interact with the architectural spaces around them. It is therefore in the interaction between architecture and artwork that the attributes become legible.

The specific attributes within the frescoes relate to the painting techniques, the composition of complex narratives, the innovation in the depiction of three-dimensional space, the expressive conveyance of emotions in human faces and gestures, the illustration of commissioning patrons within the cycles as part of the religious or mythological human depictions, as well as the frescoes' artists' attribution, including signatures and their dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The 15<sup>th</sup> century reconstructions of the original frescoes in Palazzo della Ragione, although contributing to the overall significance of the property, cannot be considered as attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The attributes include both architectural structures and specific frescoes within four serial components, namely: the Scrovegni Chapel and the entirety of its internal frescoes; the Church of the Eremitani and its frescoes in the Great Chapel, Cortellieri Chapel, Chapel of St. Antony Abbot and Spisser Chapel; the Palazzo della Ragione and its frescoes in the lower fresco cycles up to the arched band; the Chapel of the Carraresi Palace and the fresco cycles on its western and eastern walls; the Cathedral Baptistery with the entirety of its frescoes; the Basilica and Monastery of St. Anthony and its frescoes in the Chapel of the Black Madonna, the Chapter Hall, the St. James Chapel and the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi; the Oratory of St. George including its entire fresco cycle, as well as the Oratory of St. Michael with its interior frescoes.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property is supported by its comparative analysis, demonstrates criterion (ii) and meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity.

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## 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

### Conservation measures

Since 2014 all conservation measures in the property have been coordinated by the nomination partners and in close cooperation with the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities. Conservation activities are carried out in a systematic and coordinated manner. The Scrovegni Chapel conservation is led by the Interdisciplinary and Scientific Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Scrovegni Chapel (ISCCMSC), founded in 1994. Its members are MiBAC (Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities), the Padua City Council, ISCR, the University of Venice, the University of Padua, Veneto Institute for Cultural Heritage and the International University of Art. In the Management Plan, it is stated that it is envisaged that this model shall be applied to all components of the serial nomination.

Concrete conservation measures planned in the short term concern the fresco cycle at the Cathedral Baptistery. Detailed monitoring projects, with consolidation wherever required, are foreseen for the frescoes in the Chapter Hall of the Saint Anthony Basilica and the Chapel of the Carraresi Palace. The latter shall also be further researched and its iconography be explored by an international conference. ICOMOS considers that the conservation planning and coordination is acceptable and will be further improved as soon as the anticipated formal agreement with ISCCMSC has been signed and it will be involved in conservation planning of all property components.

### Monitoring

The nomination file presents a monitoring system which is implemented by three tiers: the MiBAC, the ISRC and Padua City Council. Since 2018 all property components have been monitored by means of a joint monitoring

system with the same monitoring categories applied to each building and fresco cycle. Only the frequencies of monitoring differ based on the vulnerability of the concerned structure.

The monitoring process, undertaken for the most part annually, considers the state of walls, doors and window frames, flooring and roofing in the buildings concerned. With regard to the fresco cycles, attention is given to paint-film cohesion, salt efflorescence, infiltrations, paint-film peeling and biological aggression. Despite the joint approach, the location of the monitoring records varies based on property ownership. However, a digitized version is compiled in a joint database (see Documentation below).

ICOMOS considers that while the areas of concern and periodicity, as well as responsible institutions, have been identified, no concrete monitoring indicators were presented. ICOMOS further notes that risks mentioned as risk factors in the nomination, such as visitor numbers, relative humidity and air pollution, are not considered within the monitoring system. ICOMOS therefore recommends that apart from investigating the condition of the frescoes, the monitoring of prevalent risk factors is integrated within the monitoring system and that measurable or qualitative indicators are developed. Streamlining the monitoring system with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire is also advisable.

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ICOMOS considers that conservation planning is acceptable and that the monitoring system and its indicators should be expanded. Creation of synergies with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire is advisable.

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## 5 Protection and management

### Documentation

The eight religious and secular building complexes with painted fresco cycles which have been included in the nomination belong to four different owners, including state, private institution and ecclesiastical bodies. In the past, these owners undertook research and documentation on their own initiative. However, since the start of the nomination initiative in 2014, a joint database has been created which contains all historic information on restorations and academic studies as well as the results of ongoing monitoring exercises. This database is hosted held by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and aims at bringing together all data concerning the property, as well as all existing graphic, photographic, photogrammetric and 3D records.

### Legal protection

All four component parts are submitted to the maximum protection regime provided by the Italian legislation (Legislative Decree 22 January 2004, n.42, known as the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape) as protected cultural properties (listed buildings). Furthermore, they must also respect regional, provincial and local (city level)

legislation with regard to instruments for territorial administration, here in particular the overall protection of the historic city centre of Padua.

Likewise, the buffer zone is defined by the perimeter of the historic city designation, protected as an area under special protective measures according to Padua's City Council ordinance. Any intervention or development within this area has to be explicitly approved by the concerned cultural heritage authorities (MiBAC) and needs to be compatible with the conservation of the city's historical, artistic and architectural values. The City Council has approved the Technical Implementation Regulations (NTA) and Building Regulations (RE), which provide for a series of specific provisions for the implementation of various interventions. For the property areas, only those interventions which do not impact in any way on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, are permitted. ICOMOS considers that the protection of the property is at the highest national level and that the protection of the buffer zone is equally adequate.

### **Management system**

In July 2016 the owners of the eight religious and secular building complexes, Padua City Council, Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Pontifical Delegation for the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua and Diocese of Padua – along with the University of Padua, the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, and the Regional Government of the Veneto – joined forces in the "Committee for the nomination". This Nomination Committee became the Steering Committee with the submission of the nomination and is the first nucleus of the management system, for which it elected Padua City Council as the lead body and its coordinator. In 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding for the Drafting and Implementation of a Plan of Administration for the proposed serial property was signed by all partners to solidify this arrangement.

Within the four participating owner institutions, different staff structures with multiple units are involved in the management of the property. The management coordination is to be undertaken by a Secretariat within Padua City Council's Culture Department, acting as the site management office. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to provide assurance that the coordination office is formally established and provide details concerning its exact role and permanent staff structure in the management plan. In response to ICOMOS' request, the State Party provided further details on the formal establishment, staffing and resources of the department, which has been given the title of the World Heritage Office. In ICOMOS' view, the data provided suggests adequate resources for management coordination among the participating partners.

The management plan was developed in a participatory process which commenced through regular Round Tables (*Tavoli di Idee*), later involving other stakeholders, such as associations, communities and

individual citizens. The plan develops a so-called vision and mission, introduces the governance structure and presents an action plan with a limited number of reference projects described in more detail. Projects are identified as short-, medium- or long-term. In ICOMOS' view, it would be desirable to augment the management plan towards more concrete strategic objectives and action timeframes to allow for the assessment of its progress in implementation and to include missing subjects such as visitor management as well as risk preparedness and disaster management, as indicated by the State Party in the additional information provided in February 2020.

### **Visitor management**

The frescoes are frequently visited, with at least two sites already at risk of potential overcrowding: the Scrovegni Chapel and the Basilica of St. Anthony, both also visited by devotional visitors in larger groups, receiving approximately 300,000 visitors annually. The serial approach is seen as a chance to redistribute visitor flows away from the places of greatest tourist affluence to the currently lesser-known buildings with fresco cycles. A visitor circuit has been developed as a tool to guide visitors to the different components and can be explored by means of a leaflet or a smartphone application.

### **Community involvement**

In the preparation of the nomination and the drafting of the management plan, the Steering Committee made efforts to broadly involve other stakeholders beyond the members of the Committee, including community associations and individual citizens. Special open round tables were arranged when determining key priorities of the management plan and were themed around specific topics, e.g. research and conservation (53 participants), training and education (55 participants), communication and promotion (75 attendees), as well as exploitation and valorization (84 participants). Padua City Council also aims to continuously involve the public via the nomination's website and dedicated social media channels.

### **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the protection and management of nominated property**

ICOMOS notes that the documentation of the property is extensive and that the legal protection is adequate. The management coordination body within the Padua City Council, called the World Heritage Office, has been formally established. The management plan outlines governance processes in terms of large-scale decision-making but provides less information on its actual supervision and implementation. A restricted number of priority projects are introduced, but without clear objectives, timeframe, as well as at times responsible body and success indicators.

Important management concerns such as visitor management or risk preparedness and disaster management are completely or largely absent. The State Party has committed to include these in the



forthcoming revision of the management plan. ICOMOS therefore recommends augmenting the management plan to include all relevant areas of concern and develop strategic objectives with measurable success indicators for assessment of the plan's successful implementation.

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ICOMOS considers that the overarching management system of the serial property is well established but that the forthcoming revision of the management plan should provide specific implementation guidance and integrate missing areas such as visitor and risk management.

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## 6 Conclusion

The serial nomination of 'Padova *Urbs picta*', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles presents eight contexts of 14<sup>th</sup> century fresco cycles, which constitute an exceptional group of artworks and architecture, which illustrates major innovations in the artistic language and canon of fresco painting in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In the context of a pre-humanist environment foreshadowing the Italian Renaissance, the fresco cycles of several well-known artists who worked throughout the century illustrate in an entirely new way the depiction of allegorical narratives in spatial perspectives influenced by the latest studies in the science of optics of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They further exhibit a new capacity in capturing human figures, including individual features displaying feelings and emotions, the composition of complex narratives, and other aspects which were influential in the development of art over a span of time and within a geographical area. ICOMOS considers that the property justifies criterion (ii) and that the proposed criteria (i) and (iii) are not justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity whilst noting that the frescoes in the upper three bands of fresco scenes in Palazzo della Ragione are 15<sup>th</sup> century reconstructions of the earlier Giotto frescoes, which were destroyed by fire in 1420. ICOMOS recommends communicating this clearly in the site's interpretation strategy.

The property boundaries and shared buffer zone are adequate. An existing World Heritage property, the Botanical Gardens (Orto Botanico) in Padua is part of the buffer zone of this nominated property. With both World Heritage properties located in the respective buffer zone of each, ICOMOS considers it essential to establish effective communication on management issues between the two site administrations. ICOMOS welcomes the suggestion of the State Party to make a representative of the World Heritage property Botanical Garden a permanent observer of the Steering Committee.

ICOMOS notes that the overarching management body has been well established but that the strategic management planning and implementation of management at the site's components provides

opportunities for improvement. ICOMOS notes that the envisaged Executive Secretariat or management coordination body of the property has been established under the title of World Heritage Office and is adequately resourced in human and financial terms.

The management plan should further be augmented as committed to by the State Party, to contain currently missing contexts including visitor management, risk preparedness and disaster management strategies. Disasters of fire or water constitute the most significant risks to the property and all installed fire-fighting systems should be reviewed as to their best suitability in the specific context. In view of anthropogenic risks, it is imperative that relative humidity is constantly monitored in all components of the property. The monitoring system presented would benefit from more precise indicators and the inclusion of the key risk factors in the monitoring catalogue. The facilitation of synergies with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire is advisable.

In light of the revised name suggestion submitted by the State Party "Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and the fourteenth-century fresco cycles in Padua", ICOMOS suggests removing the specific mention of "Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel" as it would create undue imbalance by singling out one architectural structure and artist in a serial nomination of several others. ICOMOS suggests retaining as the name of the serial property: "Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles".

## 7 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that 'Padova *Urbs picta*', Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles, Italy, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (ii)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### Brief synthesis

The fresco cycles housed in eight complexes of buildings within the old city centre of Padua illustrate how, over the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, different artists, starting with Giotto, introduced important stylistic developments in the history of art. The eight building complexes are grouped into four component parts: Scrovegni and Eremitani (part 1); Palazzo della Ragione, Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated Piazzas (part 2); Complex of Buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony (part 3); and San Michele (part 4). The artists who played a leading role in the creation of the fresco cycles were Giotto, Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini, Guariento di Arpo, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Altichiero da Zevio, Jacopo Avanzi and Jacopo da Verona. Working for illustrious local families, the clergy, the city commune or the Carraresi family, they would – within buildings both

public and private, religious and secular – produce fresco cycles that gave birth to a new image of the city.

Whilst painted by different artists for different types of patron within buildings of varying function, the Padua fresco cycles maintain a unity of style and content. Within the artistic narrative that unfolds in this sequence of frescoes, the different cycles reveal both diversity and mutual coherence.

The property illustrates an entirely new way of depicting allegorical narratives in spatial perspectives influenced by advances in the science of optics and a new capacity in capturing human figures, including individual features displaying feelings and emotions. Innovation in the depiction of pictorial space involved explorations of the possibilities of perspective and trompe-l'oeil effects. The innovation in the depiction of states of feeling is based on a heightened interest in the realistic portrayal of human emotions and the integration of the new role of commissioning patron as the patrons begin to appear in the scenes depicted, and ultimately even take the place of figures participating in the biblical narrative. In effect, the works illustrate the adaptation of sacred art to serve the secular celebration of the prestige and power of the ruling powers and associated noble families.

**Criterion (ii):** The Padua fresco cycles illustrate the important interchange of ideas which existed between leading figures in the worlds of science, literature and the visual arts in the pre-humanist climate of Padua in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. New exchanges of ideas also occurred between clients commissioning works and the artists from other Italian cities that had been called to Padua to collaborate on the various fresco cycles inspired by scientific and astrological allegories or ideas on sacred history gleaned from contemporary intellectuals and scholars. The artists showed great skill in giving these ideas visual form and their technical abilities allowed the Padua fresco cycles not only to become a model for others but also to prove remarkably resistant to the passage of time. The group of artists striving for innovation who gathered within Padua at the same time fostered an exchange of ideas and know-how which led to a new style in fresco illustration. This new fresco style not only influenced Padua throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century but formed the inspirational basis for centuries of fresco work in the Italian Renaissance and beyond. With this veritable rebirth of a pictorial technique, Padua supplied a new way of both seeing and depicting the world, heralding the advent of Renaissance perspective. The innovations mark a new era in the history of art, producing an irreversible change in direction.

#### Integrity

The four component parts comprise eight complexes of buildings in the centre of Padua – some publicly, some privately owned, some secular, some religious – which present an overall shared approach in terms of techniques, themes, dating and style, and bear witness to new programmes of narrative and figurative choices

in fresco painting. They illustrate the complete range of the various aspects of innovation in Italian frescoes in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The institutional bodies (Padua City Council, the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, the University of Padua) that own the different sites have promoted research, maintenance and restoration work necessary to maintain the various fresco cycles in a good state of conservation. Such work means that each of the single parts can still be read and understood, both individually and in relation to each other.

#### Authenticity

The attributes of the property illustrate authenticity in material, design, in particular workmanship, setting and to a certain extent spirit and feeling in relation to the religious concepts they evoke. The authenticity is further expressed in the inseparable bond between the frescoes and the interior architectural spaces they are part of as well as the architectural construction of the historic buildings. All components retain authentic evidence of the fresco cycles, the material support on which the frescoes are painted, the plaster surfaces, the pigments and binding agents used in fresco work, and the paints themselves. Although fragments of these frescoes have in the past suffered localized detachments, for example in Scrovegni Chapel, the Cathedral Baptistry, or Carraresi Chapel, these fragments were all replaced in their original positions during past conservation treatments.

The Padua fresco cycles are still fully legible, and the iconography used within them can be identified as authentic works of known 14<sup>th</sup> century artists. All frescoes are still in their original locations, which means the very place in and for which they were painted. The overall context within which they exist – that is, the area containing the buildings which house the different cycles – is still that which was the heart of the city enclosed within the old city walls and now coincides with the centre of the historic city.

#### Protection and management requirements

All of the buildings and complexes of buildings which house the frescoes in the property are under the strictest protective measures laid down by Italian law (listed buildings), the main expression of which is the law decree 22/01/2004 n. 42, known as the *Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio* (Code for the Cultural Heritage and Landscape). There are further protective measures in the instruments for territorial administration that exist at both regional, provincial and city level, all guaranteeing the protection and conservation of the buildings and their surroundings. The buffer zone is bound by the perimeter of Padua's old city centre, an area that comes under special protective measures laid down in Padua City Council's "Works Ordinance".

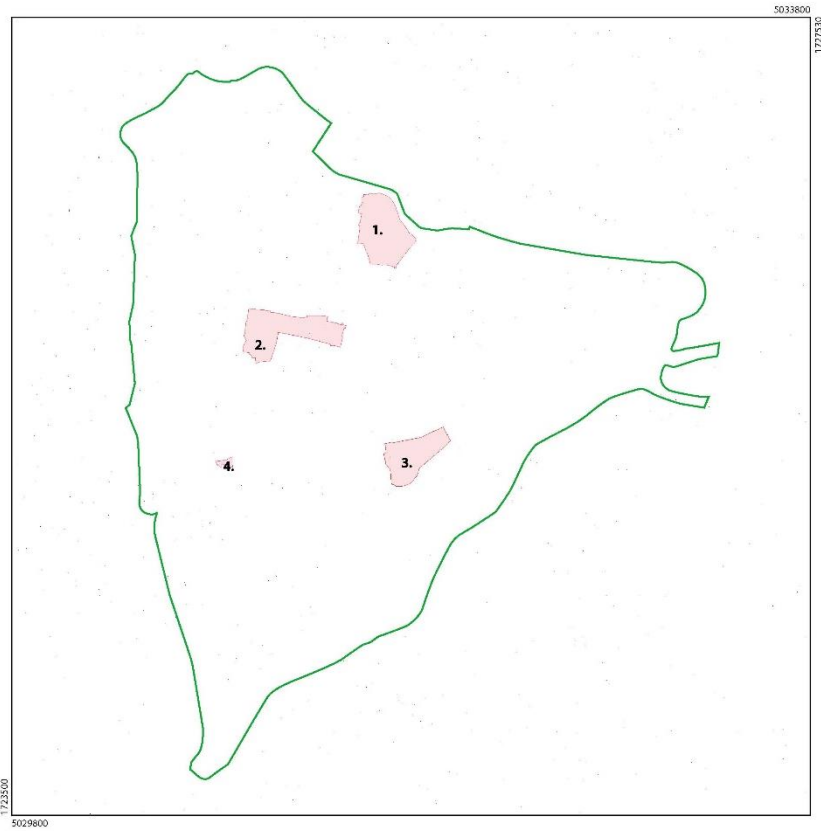
An overall management system has been introduced, establishing close coordination between the different bodies that own the complexes of buildings which house the fresco cycles. Thus from independent management by four different bodies, a model of co-governance has been established, in which the City Council presides over a Committee whose members represent those bodies as well as representatives of the Regional Government of the Veneto, the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, the University of Padua (present as scientific consultants) and the Orto Botanico. The overall coordination of the partners is facilitated by the Council's Cultural Affairs Department, through a specially-created agency, called the World Heritage Office, which acts as a secretariat to the management group. A Memorandum of Understanding for the joint implementation of a management plan has been signed. The management plan is under elaboration based on a first draft document submitted.

#### **Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Augmenting the management plan to include concrete strategic objectives and timeframes, which allow for the assessment of its progress in implementation and to include missing subject areas such as visitor management as well as risk preparedness and disaster management,
- b) Consistently monitoring relative humidity in all components, including spaces where visitors are not currently expected to cause negative impacts, and augment the monitoring system to ensure monitoring of all prevalent risk factors based on measurable or qualitative indicators,
- c) Installing fire detectors also in the church-owned properties and ensure that fire-fighting installations are tailored to cause least possible negative impacts in the event of use,
- d) Clearly communicating in the interpretation of the property component of Palazzo della Ragione that the upper three bands of fresco cycles reflect 15<sup>th</sup> century reconstructions aimed at recreating the content of the earlier Giotto frescoes, which were lost due to fire in 1420 and were painted by Niccolò Miretto, Stefano da Ferrara and Antonio di Pietro;

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to changing the name of the property to become: "Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles".

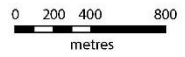


**MAP 00**  
Map of the Buffer Zone with the four Component parts



**Legend**

-  Buffer Zone (about 530 ha)
-  Nominated Property
-  1. Scrovegni and Eremitani (7,18 ha)
-  2. Palazzo della Ragione Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated Piazzas (7,34 ha)
-  3. Complex of Buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony (5,19 ha)
-  4. San Michele (0,25 ha)



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property