

# Medieval Towns, Traffic and Urban Planning Half a Century since the First Pedestrian Zone in Siena, Italy

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**Abstract:** The Italian town is known as a collection of walls, gates, towers, palaces and cathedrals. The lanes and the squares were created in the Middle Ages, with an urban fabric suitable for horses and carriages, not for motor cars. At the beginning of the 1960s, it was no longer possible to delay a solution to the problem of traffic and the first “pedestrian isle” was realized in the centre of Siena in 1965. Other towns in a few years followed this virtuous example. Acts against traffic avoided the building of urban motorways and the demolition of ancient buildings that would have given the “*coup de grace*” to several important historic centres.

**Key words:** Medieval town, urban environment, traffic and urban planning, transport history.

## 1. Introduction

Mobility growth began in Italy during the 1950s, when motor cars increased from 425,200 in 1951, to 2,449,100 in 1961, to more than 12 million in 1971. The period of the “golden age”, with the spread of consumerism, saw a fast increase of motor vehicles, which led to the mass motorization and traffic troubles. Many new motorways were built all over the country.

Italy was a country of ancient medieval towns. The myth of the Italian city was known all over the world, as a collection of walls, gates, towers, palaces, parish churches and cathedrals. In such an environment, the lanes and the squares were suitable for horses and carriages, not for motor cars and motor scooters.

During the 1950s, the problem of traffic was continuously debated and some politicians were favourable to great projects of renewal of medieval centres, in order to allow the car transit. A current of public opinion augured the building of urban motorways, with tunnels and bridges that would have given the “*coup de grace*” to several important historic centres. The failure of such projects has represented an important gain for Italian towns and

territories.

At the beginning of the 1960s, it was no longer possible to delay a solution to the problem of traffic and the first pedestrian precinct, named in Italy “pedestrian isle” (*isola pedonale*), was realized in the centre of Siena, a quaint little old town in the Region of Florence (Tuscany).

In 1962, the circulation around and the stop inside the main square (*Il Campo*) was limited (Fig. 1), and in 1965, the pedestrian precinct was widespread, but a lot of protests were made by tradesmen and other categories. The innovative measure was put into effect by the mayor in order to curb the degradation of the urban environment and to recover silence and security, despite the lack of a definite legislation.

Other towns, in a few years, followed the virtuous example, such as Alessandria and Novara in Piedmont; Milano, Como, Verona and Varese in Lombardy; Bologna, Reggio Emilia and Parma in Emilia; Firenze, Prato and San Gimignano in Tuscany and then Trento, Verona, Rome, Palermo.

However, the extension of zones reserved to pedestrians was very slow and contended, and remained limited to narrow places, as the main squares and streets of the city.

Several acts against traffic were then passed by the

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**Fig. 1** Stop inside the main square (*Il Campo*), before 1962.

Source: postcard collection of Stefano Maggi.

central and regional governments, but the problem has not been resolved even nowadays. We can say that the development of Italy, since the “golden age”, has been strongly linked to the culture of cars, much stronger than the culture of the environment.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. The Golden Age and Traffic Growth

Italy was mainly an agricultural country with slow development during the first half of the 20th century.

After the Second World War, economical growth changed Italy into an industrial country. The main symbol of this change was the automotive industry in northern Italy, above all, FIAT with its production of cars.

This growth was related to the internal migration from southern to northern Italy. A lot of villages, whose economy was based on agriculture, lost a large part of their inhabitants, who moved towards the suburbs of Milan, Turin and Genoa.

In Italy, producing and selling cars became a huge job sector. In 1951, the production of FIAT cars was 121,100, in 1961, 588,200, and reached a total of 2,001,900 in 1971.

This growth allowed FIAT to become the greatest national industry of manufacturing: The number of workers was 72,035 in 1951, 107,671 in 1961 and

182,501 in 1971.<sup>2</sup>

In 1961, people working in car factories—FIAT and other brands, were more than 110,000, while 1,700,000 people worked in activities related to the car industries, such as petrol stations, garages, tyre industry, commercial services and car insurances [4].

Because of the economic importance of this sector, the Italian Government took upon itself the burden of the expenses related to car traffic, improving the existing roads, building car parks and creating a road network dedicated to cars: the motorways. The success of the car for everybody was enormous, in fact, in 20 years, the number of cars registered increased from 425,000 in 1951 to over 12 million in 1971 (Tables 1 and 2).

The symbol of Italian cars at that time was the FIAT 600, whose production started in 1955. Thanks to this car, Italy began its mass motorisation. This happened after some attempts made by FIAT to invent a mass car similar to the Ford Model T. The first one was the FIAT Balilla in 1932, which did not have the expected success. In 1956, 126,099 FIAT 600 were registered, while the overall quantity of cars sold in Italy was 201,771.

However, the new scenario was not only Italian. In the same years, the growth of motorisation was strong also in the main European countries. France increased its presence of motor vehicles, passing from 2.4 million vehicles in 1951 to 7.8 million in 1961 and 15 million in 1971. West Germany passed from 1.1 million in 1951 to 6 million in 1961 and 16.1 million in 1971. The United Kingdom passed from 3.5 million in 1951 to 7.5 million in 1961 and 13.7 million in 1971 [3].

Great Britain, whose number of cars in 1951 was the highest among the European countries, started studying the consequences of using cars in the towns.

In November 1963, the volume *Traffic in Towns. A Study of the Long Term Problems of Traffic in Urban*

<sup>1</sup>Maggi, S. 2003. “La cultura della mobilità in Italia.” In *Storia e Futuro*, 1-9.

<sup>2</sup>*Fiat: le fasi della crescita. Tempi e cifre dello sviluppo aziendale*. 1996. Turin: Scriptorium, 112-3, 140-1.

*Areas* was published [5]. It was a study commissioned by the English Department of Transport and carried out by Colin Buchanan and his collaborators: That is why it was called the *Buchanan Report*. It included a clear and general analysis on traffic problems, which was also valid in other contexts outside Great Britain.

This study analysed the development of roads and traffic in the urban areas in relation to environment, foreseeing life and work conditions threatened by a massive presence of cars, whose number was highly increasing.

On the grounds of recent trends and of the USA's experience, they foresaw by 2010 the presence of more than 40 million motor vehicles, of which 30 million would have been cars. This was in strong contrast with the 10.5 million of 1963. This study showed a distressing situation, providing that automobiles would have become indispensable for mobility and that public transport would have diminished its importance. The access to towns and their traffic would have become more and more laborious, and traffic congestions would have made pedestrians uncomfortable while travelling.<sup>3</sup>

In Italy, the advent of mass motorization produced an imbalance in all those towns which still mostly kept the same urban plan as in the Middle Ages or in the Renaissance: towns characterised by streets just suitable for horses. These streets were too narrow to allow cars to pass in a double sense of circulation. The high palaces along these same streets created a sort of resonance box to the noise of engines, not to mention lanes, where cars and motorbikes tried to enter a space conceived for the access of pedestrians. In the Middle Ages, there was in fact a very clear division between horsemen and pedestrians. People who could afford to buy a horse lived in mansions along the main streets, where stables were at the ground floor. On the other hand, common people lived on narrow streets in lower flats, which were possible to enter just on foot. In the

<sup>3</sup>Bonfanti, E., and Mazza, L. 1965. "Il Traffico nelle Città: Discussioni sul Rapporto Buchanan." *Urbanistica* 44 (1965): 5-9.

towns suitable for pedestrians and horses, the use of cars caused a problem, due to the speed and noise of engines, but also to the space occupied for the parking.

### 3. Siena Emblem of the Middle Ages and the Mass Motorization

The difficulty of adapting the center to cars was perceived above all in Siena, the quintessential medieval town, a small centre in Tuscany, well known for its university, for its medieval festival named *Palio* and for the *Monte dei Paschi di Siena*, a bank established in 1472.

In 1948, the town of Siena had 52,878 inhabitants, while in its district, there were 279,392 residents.

The vehicles circulating in its district were just 4,582. After the census of 1961, Siena had 61,358 inhabitants, while the number of people living in its district decreased to 270,062. In its district, in 1961, there were 50,266 circulating motor vehicles. In 13 years, the number of vehicles was more than multiplied by 10,<sup>4</sup> gathering above all into Siena, whose population increased significantly due to the migration from the countryside. Antonio Cederna, a famous journalist and ecologist, in 1954 wrote in the national magazine *Il Mondo*:

"Nowadays, people who arrive in Siena immediately feel the irresistible desire to kick the drivers of cars or motorcycles. In no other town, the uproar and the volume of traffic caused by engines seems to be so hostile, vulgar and barbaric: Cars and mopeds tear the air of those wonderful streets, while one of the most beautiful squares in the world has been changed into a car park.

One-way streets, no entry for cars, pedestrians walking on the left are only marginal measures. The growth of circulating vehicles in streets with a lot of

<sup>4</sup>Cataldo, M. 2005. "Pedoni a Sinistra. Motorizzazione e Politica del Traffico a Siena e nel Suo Territorio." In *Tra Innovazione e Conservazione. Infrastrutture e Servizi a Siena nel Novecento. Atti del Convegno 13 Novembre 2004*. Siena: Protagon, 187.

slopes, the changing of ground floors into shops, the building trade with no permission, the need of new palaces of public utility, streets conceived for pedestrians and for pack animals, private speculations and lobbies, etc., have brought the ancient town of Siena, a nearly intact example of a town of the 14th century. It has entered the most critical period of its history: has to decide if to survive intact or to be ruined forever".<sup>5</sup>

As long as there were just a few circulating cars, it was possible to bear discomforts caused by motorisation. Starting in the second half of the 1950s, this condition became more and more unbearable in Siena's medieval lanes and alleys. Siena was known all over the world as the pearl of the Middle Ages: For this reason, it had a lot of difficulties and tried to find a partial solution. There was a lively argument among those claiming the right to individual mobility, those who thought the historical centre was doomed to a social and economical decline without cars and those who expressed the need to protect the medieval shape of the town.

The town planning scheme (*Piano regolatore*), which approved in 1956, provided new residential areas outside the town centre and not near the medieval walls, but 2/3 kilometres apart in order not to damage the architectural image of the old town [6]. The expected small satellite quarters gravitated around the historical core of Siena. Therefore, it was necessary to re-examine the road network.

In this regard, the planners had foreseen that the motorcars coming from the state roads and from the suburbs could find new roads to enter the town in particular points. These new roads should have been two bypass roads around the historical centre and should have allowed vehicles to circulate close to the centre, reducing traffic into the narrow alleys.<sup>6</sup> However, the project of those streets foresaw the adaptation of buildings in the historical centre and

many demolitions, which were never realised in the following period because of their high costs and the possible damage to the fabric of the city.<sup>7</sup>

The association *Italia Nostra*, founded in 1955 for the safeguard of environment, history and landscapes, decided to examine the problem of traffic in 1964 by asking for a study to the architect Achille Neri, in this study, which was printed and sent to the institutions, he stated:

"As regard the town centre..., it is undoubtedly unsuitable for certain purposes in a modern way, given its scanty receptive capability of traffic. It will not be possible to obtain a satisfying solution to the problem of traffic if we just try to limit it with reductions, without trying at the same time to remove all those traffic generators that a medieval urban space cannot absolutely bear. As it is impossible to change the physical structure of the old town, the conflict between environment and traffic in the case of Siena is hardly remediable. Therefore, it is necessary to choose between a difficult situation for the pedestrian, which will become worse and worse due to the increase of circulating vehicles, and a traffic structure able to return people and the urban scene to the best environmental standard possible".<sup>8</sup>

This study expected the reconversion of the civic environment back into pedestrian circulation as much as possible, regaining the silence in the town and assuring a better security for people walking.

However, a drastic choice was necessary about the number, type, and speed of vehicles admitted into the town centre, as well as a clear choice of traffic itineraries and routes exclusively devoted to pedestrians.

In addition, it would have been necessary to exclude any car crossing in the town according to the principles of the *Buchanan Report*: The motorised traffic between the north and the south area had to be

<sup>5</sup>Cederna, A. 1954. "Il Giardino D'Europa. Un Piano per Siena." *Il Mondo*, November 30.

<sup>6</sup>Cataldo Pedoni a Sinistra, 169.

<sup>7</sup>Anon. 1965. "Quali Erano le Premesse alla Chiusura del Traffic." *La Nazione*, July 16.

<sup>8</sup>Mazzini, A. 1967. "Siena da Due Anni il Centro Storico è Pedonale." *Palatino*, XI, 1 (1967): 88.

channeled into the ring roads out of the town medieval walls, adapting them to the new traffic flow, as it would not have been possible to drive through the town.

A solution could be found only by a new philosophy about traffic, which means by observing how we usually move and shift inside buildings, where there are more or less complex systems of passages and rooms with adequate space. The principle remains the same in an office and a kitchen: Each room is separated from the other one and is devoid of the crossing movement.

The way to reach this goal was represented by some barriers, which should have prevented cars from crossing all the city centre, thus, dividing the old part of the town into two “rooms”, each one with a door opening onto a system of external corridors. In this matter, the two rooms of the historical centre were all divided and they were only opened towards the outside. This was made in order to discourage the use of cars (Fig. 2) [7].

It was a new idea. The city plan (1956) involved the demolition of many buildings to create roads to make

room for the cars. The new idea (1965) was to restrict traffic in the city center to preserve its medieval surroundings.

#### 4. Siena Closes to Traffic the Heart of the City

In the early 1960s, a solution became urgent to the problem of growing individual motorisation and traffic due to the institutions present in the town, such as *Monte dei Paschi di Siena*, the hospital, and the university, which attracted a great deal of traffic inside the boundaries of the medieval walls. People worried a lot about the pollution caused by cars, because of the narrow streets surrounded by high buildings leaning against one another: This produced a sort of gas chamber.

A research of the University of Siena on the cause and destination of the traffic pointed out that 1/3 of the traffic in the old town centre only concerned crossing displacements. A further research, carried out by the Institute of Health and Microbiology of the University, recorded the presence of toxic gases: The atmospheric pollution in the town centre was greater than expected.

The town council, which took office in January 1965, was supported by the Communist Party with the help of socialists and led by the Communist Mayor Fazio Fabbrini [8]. In the programmatic document of the town council, presented on June 7, 1965, was shown the intention to face the problem of traffic as a priority, developing the works needed to pass from the planning stage to the realisation of the pedestrian precinct. In the document, it was written: “The administration will take a first necessary measure and it will be the partial closing of traffic into the old town centre, in order to give again to the city all its original incomparable beauty”.<sup>9</sup>

The decision had an echo not only in Italy, but even in Europe. *The Times* of London wrote on June 25, 1965:

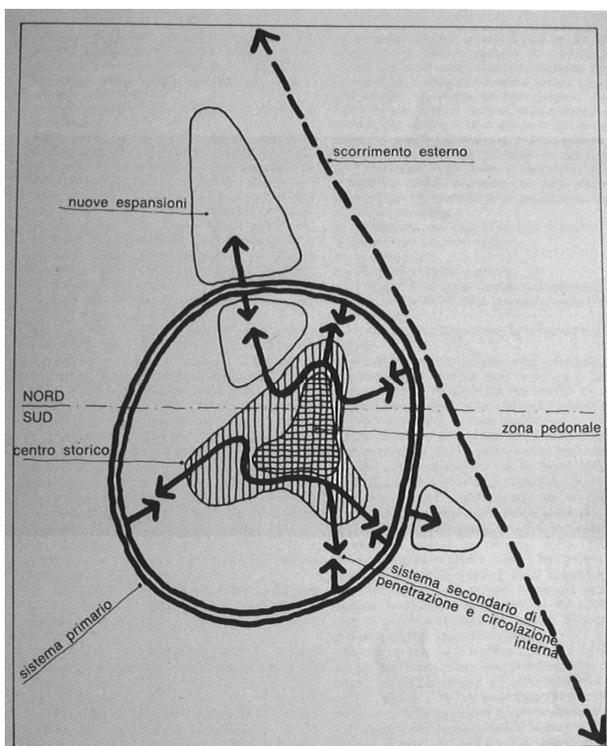


Fig. 2 Scheme of work for the closing traffic in the historical centre of Siena [7].

<sup>9</sup> Document in Historical Archives Comune of Siena. *Postunitario I*, 85, *Deliberazioni del Consiglio Comunale*. 1965, II, 884-900.

“The City of Siena has now staked its claim to become the first place in Italy to do something about the fraying of nerves by cars by announcing a plan to make over the centre of the city almost exclusively to pedestrians...

The needs of the traffic itself were studied, particularly the increases to be expected soon when the highway to Florence is completed, and the branch highway to the *Autostrada del Sole*”.<sup>10</sup>

The plan for a new regulation of traffic into the town centre was based on two main aspects:

- to create a central area reserved for the pedestrian circulation;
- to abolish the transit of vehicles through the town centre.

It was necessary to introduce no transit areas in some streets and one-ways into some others. In that way, the north-south and east-west circulation was forbidden inside the centre. In order to drive from north to south and from east to west, it was necessary to use the existing ring roads, while small ring roads, most of them just one-way roads, guaranteed the local traffic of residents’ cars, which in the town centre were the 40% of the whole inhabitants of the municipality of Siena.

The central area was closed to the traffic for 24 hours a day, with particular rules for buses, taxis, ambulances, and morning openings only for vehicles with special permissions to re-stock shops. It was possible to load and unload the goods from 7.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. A special permission for vans was issued by the municipality, which was valid just in some periods and which specified the direction to be observed in every street.<sup>11</sup>

On July 6, 1965, the mayor issued an order with “the new rules of traffic into the town centre”, which became effective after July 11, 1965. The mayor’s ordinance, a measure fast, avoided continuous and

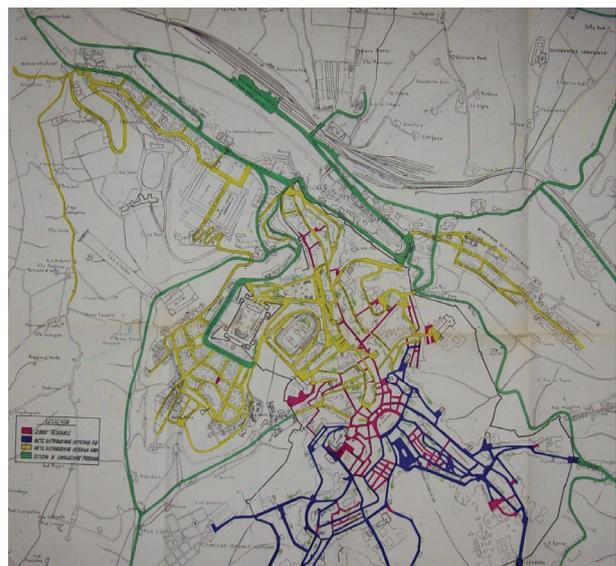
unproductive debates inside the town council that could have brought a cross-veto at the moment of the accomplishment.

Following the closure, it was necessary to find new parking areas in order to contain the cars turned away from the town centre; In the more distant areas, there should have been permission of free parking but only a timed or a paid parking in the central areas. In perspective, it should have been necessary to move those institutions, such as the hospital, that were attracting traffic into the historical centre.

In 1962, it had been already forbidden to have circulation in the upper ring of *Piazza del Campo*, the main square of the town. The prohibition was now introduced in the inner part of the town centre, the so-called “red area”, closing to car access to the four main streets of the centre: via Montanini, via Banchi di Sopra, via di Città, via Banchi di Sotto and other small streets surrounding them (Fig. 3).

The new rules divided Siena in two “rooms” by isolating them from the red area while connecting one to the other only by the ring roads, outside the border of the medieval walls.

Despite the debates among the political forces and the city press, the provision of closing town centre to



**Fig. 3** Map of the new traffic rules with the red zone, closed to traffic.

Source: Historical Archives Comune of Siena. *Postunitario I*, 85, *Deliberazioni del Consiglio Comunale*. 1965, II, 884-900.

<sup>10</sup>“Siena Proposes to Keep Cars Out of Ancient Streets.” *The Times*, June 25, 1965.

<sup>11</sup>“Parziale Chiusura del Centro Storico.” *Il Campo di Siena*, July 9, 1965.

traffic was successful even against the pressure of those who wanted to let it open, such as the Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Hoteliers and the Medical Association.

The shopkeepers feared to be destined to fail without the possibility of customers to nearly enter the shop with their own car,<sup>12</sup> while it seemed impossible for doctors to visit and examine their patients. The Medical Association even approved a document which “focused the attention of the provincial health officials and general authorities onto the unpredictable inconveniences that could have happened. For these problems, the order of doctors denied liability”.<sup>13</sup>

The Medical Association, the Italian Automobile Club and the Opera Metropolitana Museum, together with some private citizens, promoted a petition to the Ministry of Public Works against the mayor’s ordinance, who had to justify more than once the issued order, also thanks to some famous jurists.

A newspaper from the opposite political party evoked even the Berlin Wall:

“Along this period, we asked for new roads and new accesses, but they did not listen to us till when, as we expected, the communist administration decided, under some political necessities which were becoming bigger and bigger, to close and divide the town in two parts like in a small Berlin”.<sup>14</sup>

The order of limitation of traffic was very strong, but it represented the start of a new period. The closing of the town centre not only symbolised an environmental protection, but it also resulted in a new social aggregation into the town centre, allowing people to stroll in the streets free from traffic.

Obviously, problems were not completely solved, as the cars circulating in the following years continuously increased, while traffic driven out of the

inner ring of the town was displaced all around, into many areas which were not designed to house cars.

The closing of the town centre to cars became a case to be set in the political arena and the socialists’ support to the mayor became less constant. The socialists began to blame the order, while the Christian Democratic Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*) asked to reconnect the two traffic areas divided by the red zone.

The motion of *Democrazia Cristiana*, which was the opposition party, supported by the socialists’ assent, did not object against the mayor’s order, but it wanted to rectify “its gravity thanks to two amendments able to make easier traffic towards the hospital and to remove the inconceivable division of the town by banisters which were only removed to let municipal vehicles pass. Furthermore, they requested to stop the traffic prohibition during night hours”.<sup>15</sup>

After an experimental period, at the beginning of 1966, the town council held a series of consultations to make a balance of mayor’s order: Nobody was completely against it, but it received a lot of criticisms about specific points, in particular with regard to the obstruction of the north-south traffic through the town centre. This was the most scientific part of the ordinance, concerning with rooms and corridors in the model of *Buchanan Report*.

The following crisis of the local administration brought to the mayor’s resignation in May 1966. He was soon replaced by the prefect’s commissary, which drew back on this point: The north-south traffic corridor was partially re-opened to traffic on September 19, 1966, all due to the petitions to the Ministry of Public Works.<sup>16</sup>

However, the town centre closing and the creation of the pedestrian precinct did not come into discussion again: In fact, in the following years, the pedestrian

<sup>12</sup>“La Chiusura del Centro Storico.” *Il Campo di Siena*, June 17, 1965.

<sup>13</sup>“L’Assurda Divisione della Città Delineata Dall’Assemblea dei Medici Operanti in Siena.” *Il Campo di Siena*, July 22, 1965.

<sup>14</sup>“Le Conseguenze Dell’Immobilismo Comunale.” *Il Campo di Siena*, October 12, 1965.

<sup>15</sup>“Al Consiglio Comunale. Definitiva la Divisione della Città in Siena est e Siena Ovest.” *Il Campo di Siena*, February 11, 1966.

<sup>16</sup>“Nuovo Esperimento di Circolazione Dopo la Chiusura del Centro Storico. Via dalle Strade i Posticci Colonnini.” *Il Campo di Siena*, September 21, 1966.

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precinct was enlarged. In August 1972, after the long period of the commissary prefect, the new Mayor Roberto Barzanti newly enlarged the area forbidden to the car circulation, blocking the access to the town from the San Domenico area and then re-establishing the interruption of the north-south corridor for traffic. A booklet, signed by the mayor and prepared for the

occasion, entitled *Siena per Passeggiare (Siena Suitable for Walking)*, explained the reasons of this intervention:

“The order, with which from the beginning of August 1972, the municipal administration has enlarged the pedestrian precinct, forbidding the access to the town from San Domenico and interrupting again

**Table 1 The Italian road network, 1955–1975.**

Years	Motorways	State roads	Provincial roads	Local roads	Total
1955	479	24,341	43,126	107,229	175,175
1960	1,169	29,453	73,819	87,958	192,399
1963	1,428	35,293	82,260	77,054	196,035
1966	2,132	38,982	89,207	137,395	267,716
1969	3,474	42,011	90,073	148,090	283,648
1972	4,616	43,550	96,561	143,475	288,202
1975	5,329	44,235	100,873	142,156	292,593

Source: Ministry of Transport and Navigation, 1995. *General Management Planning Organization and Coordination*. National transport account, Rome.

**Table 2 Circulation of motor vehicles in Italy.**

Years	Car	Lorry	Bus	Total
1946	146,649	137,260	1,706	288,615
1947	184,060	186,138	2,927	373,125
1948	218,539	192,643	4,090	415,272
1949	266,928	209,672	9,600	486,200
1950	342,021	223,520	11,596	577,137
1951	425,283	236,513	13,373	675,169
1952	510,189	257,923	13,880	781,992
1953	612,944	285,240	15,740	913,924
1954	690,728	290,187	16,753	997,668
1955	861,319	316,783	18,299	1,196,401
1956	1,030,663	332,985	19,283	1,382,931
1957	1,231,663	344,267	20,576	1,595,925
1958	1,392,525	353,970	22,563	1,769,158
1959	1,658,810	405,734	23,227	2,087,771
1960	1,976,188	429,927	25,056	2,431,171
1961	2,449,123	477,135	26,577	2,952,835
1962	3,030,056	521,495	28,671	3,580,222
1963	3,912,597	578,075	30,894	4,521,566
1964	4,674,644	612,229	32,421	5,319,294
1965	5,472,591	631,675	32,746	6,137,012
1966	6,356,578	666,328	33,087	7,055,993
1967	7,294,578	712,653	34,476	8,041,707
1968	8,266,434	775,228	35,420	9,077,082
1969	9,173,699	831,911	37,504	10,043,114
1970	10,181,192	890,507	38,856	11,110,555
1971	11,370,090	952,515	40,610	12,300,215

Source: Anfia, *Car Data 1995*. Turin.

the circuit for vehicles created after the changes made to an ordinance of 1965, thanks to which a larger pedestrian precinct had been set up in Italy for the first time, deserves a further explanation.

In fact, this order raised some complaints and claims because of the lack of suitable parks and efficient ring roads. All the same, before taking it, the administration had to courageously answer some questions. Would it been better to wait for the building by ANAS (National Public Corporation for Roads) of the west ring road, thanks to which the fast flowing traffic and above all, the heavy traffic would have been deviated? Or was it better to take this provision immediately with its inevitable difficulties?

So we decided not to wait anymore, as we believe in the capability of car drivers, town inhabitants, and guests to understand the value in perspective and the urgency of the provision we took.

The aim is to discourage the indiscriminate use of cars and to restore the wonderful urban space of Siena to man's measure.

For these reasons, the provision we take is also beneficial to many tourists, who can travel in this way to Siena with the certitude to visit a town unimpaired in its urban fabric and sumptuous in its own space. This is really a great thing nowadays<sup>17</sup>.

The following year, in September 1973, a national meeting about the old towns' historical centres was

held in Siena, because Siena seemed to be in the lead with regards to the environmental fight, as it firstly adopted the measure of closing centre to cars. This provision received a lot of internal criticisms, but had a strong outside appreciation due to its virtuous example.<sup>18</sup>

During the following years, pedestrian precincts spread in other medieval centres and prevented the creation of new large streets and the demolition of narrow lanes and ancient buildings, so contributing to the safeguarding of historical urban fabric, which began to be preserved as an important heritage.

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<sup>17</sup>Booklet *Siena per Passeggiare* by Roberto Barzanti, mayor of Siena.

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<sup>18</sup>«Toscana. Convegno Sui Centri Storici." *Il Globo*, September 28, 1973.