Interpreting Italians Abroad (Erlangen, 24-25 Apr 20)

Erlangen, Apr 24–25, 2020
Deadline: Jan 10, 2020

Dr. Sarah W. Lynch

Interpreting Italians Abroad:
The Migration of Ticinese Architects across Europe in the Early Modern Era

From at least the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries architects (including painter and sculptor-architects) from Ticino and northern Lombardy migrated and worked in great numbers across Europe. Their movements extended from the Iberian Peninsula to Russia, and they were also active throughout Italy itself. These architects moved in extended family networks, often bringing whole teams of masons and other artists on their journeys abroad, and many returned to their home valleys each winter. Despite the prevalence of these migrations throughout Europe and the high number of artists and architects involved, there has not yet been a comprehensive study of their movements, their effect on the regions in which they worked, or the influence of these different environments on the Ticinese themselves. The absence of such a study is particularly acute for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as it has long been assumed that the Ticinese and Lombards were key agents in the development of Renaissance architecture in other regions of Europe.

The earliest attempts to quantify this migration consisted mainly of lists of architects and where they worked and were often colored by a nationalistic interpretation of their role in European art history (most notably their inclusion in the series from the 1930s, L'opera del genio italiano all'estro). Later studies (such as those by Crivelli, 1966-1971) turned away from such overtly politically motivated interpretations, but still failed to address key questions why such migration was desirable from the point of view of either the artists or their patrons, what exactly was their effect on the regions in which they worked, and how they related to local architects and craftsmen.

Contemporary studies have consisted mainly of focused case studies of individual architects or families working in a specific region but have tended to isolate these figures from their local environments. Although Ticinese architects worked in great numbers throughout Italy itself, specific studies of their activities have been comparatively limited, with a focus mainly on Genoa. Other studies address outstanding figures such as Carlo Maderno, Francesco Borromini, and Domenico and Carlo Fontana, whose fame has seemingly allowed them to transcend their Ticinese origins.

This workshop proposes to address the totality of the phenomena of Ticinese artistic migration across Europe in light of recent developments in migration studies, network studies, center-and-periphery studies, and studies of cultural and stylistic transfer. Both finished papers and

works-in-progress are welcome.

Some themes that might be addressed include:

- What affect did Ticinese architects have on their environments? How were they changed by their new surroundings?
- What relationship did the migratory architects have to local colleagues and professional bodies such as guilds?
- Why were the Ticinese desirable as architects and workers?
- How were their professional networks structured and how did they function? Can professional connections beyond extended family networks be identified?
- What facilitated their movement in some regions (Central Europe, Spain and Portugal, Italy) more than others (France, England, the Netherlands)?
- What role did the Ticinese architects play in the development of Renaissance forms in architecture across Europe? Can this influence be evaluated against other sources of knowledge such as prints and books or travel to Italy itself by patrons and foreign architects?
- How does “influence” or “stylistic transfer” actually work in a given environment? What individuals or cultural factors are at play in this process?
- How can the idea of the Ticinese as agents of the Italian Renaissance be reconciled with the fact of their stylistically plural work (for example their work in Gothic or Netherlandish styles)?

The workshop will take place at the Institute of Art History in Erlangen, Germany on 24-25 April 2020. Please send an abstract in either English or Italian (max. 300 words) and a short CV to Sarah W. Lynch (sarah.lynch@fau.de) by 10 January 2020.

Reference:
CFP: Interpreting Italians Abroad (Erlangen, 24-25 Apr 20). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 27, 2019 (accessed Nov 17, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/22186>.