

Shaping "Spanish" Sicily (Rome, 5-6 May 22)

Rome (Italy), May 5–06, 2022

Deadline: Jan 7, 2022

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Shaping "Spanish" Sicily: Spaces of Interaction and Dynamics of Power, Society and Visuality
Workshop, Bibliotheca Hertziana Max Planck Institute for Art History

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Reign or colony? Charles V's succession to the Spanish Crown (1516) and the inclusion of Sicily into the domains of the empire visibly affected the socio-political and cultural conditions of the island. As the last frontier before the threat of the Turks, Sicily played a pivotal role in the imperial politics insofar as it hosted the triumphs for Charles V's victory in Tunis (1535). Highly regarded for its strategic role in the first decades of Hapsburg government, the centuries-long autonomy of Sicily was guaranteed by Charles V and his viceroy through the concession of numerous privileges responding to local needs. A drastic change of scenery can be observed with Philip II's succession to the Spanish throne (1554). Deeming Sicily as one of his other colonial domains, Philip II changed his attitude towards the government of the island and limited its autonomy.

Persistent military and political tensions changed the Mediterranean equilibrium over the sixteenth century. New trading networks and commercial relationships began to emerge, and Sicily assumed a new role within this socio-cultural context, which can be visualised in contemporary maps and views (*vedute*). At the same time, city walls, fortifications, sites of representation of both lay and religious power – such as squares, fountains, buildings, and ephemeral architecture – temporarily or permanently changed the urban fabric. Similarly, painting, sculpture and architecture, the choice of specific artistic languages and artists, and patrons' tastes provide some insights into some of the answers to these altered socio-political conditions. These transformations may be interpreted both as manifestations or consequences to the Hapsburg presence on the island, and as forms of expression of local communities' identities.

Recent studies have tended to insert Sicily into the imperial and Hapsburg context by focussing on how the viceregal patronage changed the facies of the island. This workshop seeks to analyse how space and its representations, artistic practice, and objects display the changes in the relationship between locals, and the Hapsburg rulers' representatives and supporters in Spanish Sicily between the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. This workshop will participate in this discussion by addressing both specific case studies and larger discourses on the proposed themes which engage with visual or textual sources allowing a deeper understanding of this mutation in the physical space and its representations.

The topics of the talks may include, but are not limited to:

- cartographic representations (maps, nautical books, views (vedute), etc.),
- artistic production, choice of artistic languages, artists, artisans and patrons, and their movements and networks,
- urbanistic and architectural interventions,
- ephemeral architecture and dimension of festivity.

We invite researchers to submit proposals for 30-minute papers in English, Italian or Spanish, by sending an abstract of max. 350 words and a short CV (max. 2 pages) to giusa@biblhertz.it and balzarotti@biblhertz.it by 7th January 2022. The Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History will cover travel and accommodation costs for the speakers according to the German Federal law for travel costs refund (BRKG).

Reference:

CFP: Shaping "Spanish" Sicily (Rome, 5-6 May 22). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 23, 2021 (accessed Mar 16, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/35401>>.