Filarete among Courts and Cities (Vicenza, 27-28 May 26)

Palladio Museum, May 27–28, 2026
Registration deadline: May 20, 2026

CISA Andrea Palladio

Antonio Averlino, known as Filarete, represents a paradigmatic figure of an alternative Renaissance—one that revives medieval traditions and implies a personal interpretation of Antiquity. Although he proudly identified himself as Florentine, he ventured well beyond the borders of his native city and engaged with all the major centers of north-central Italy. Like Brunelleschi, Francesco di Giorgio, Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo, Filarete embraced a Renaissance vision of artistic universality, where architecture was one of many practices and not necessarily the primary one.

Filarete emerged and faded from the artistic scene without definitive records of his birth or death. His biography and corpus remain in need of revision, still resting on numerous assumptions. The contempt expressed by Vasari a century later suggests that Filarete's work did not conform to the conventional model of Florentine renewal. Nothing is known about his training or his activity prior to the project for the bronze door for St. Peter's (around 1433), and only limited information has so far been reconstructed regarding his long—though possibly intermittent—stay in Rome. His later movements are more clearly documented: his wanderings across northern Italy after leaving Rome around 1447, and his arrival in 1451 at the court of Francesco Sforza in Milan, where he remained until the summer of 1465 before returning to Florence—still dreaming of new departures.

Distinct from Leon Battista Alberti in social background, education, and culture, Filarete was nonetheless a conscious interpreter, in the mid-fifteenth century, of the intellectual values of an architecture grounded in geometry and in a unique relationship with Antiquity. He presented himself as an architect capable of engaging in direct dialogue with his patrons. The range of artistic and political connections he was able to cultivate is exceptional for a maker of his time. As a court artist, he stands out as a figure who merits thorough historical investigation.

This seminar aims to explore the artistic environments in which Filarete worked, passed through, or from which he was excluded—such as Florence, Rome, Milan and Lombardy, Venice, and the cities of the Veneto. Without excluding renewed attention to his treatise—its proposals and the many pieces of information it contains, often the richest or even the only available source on his work and thought—it aims to better understand the originality of his career, his transition from sculptor to architect and the varying degrees of patronage he received in different political and cultural contexts across fifteenth-century Italy. At the same time, the close analysis of individual works—whether firmly or tentatively attributed to Filarete—can help to refine the known chronolo-

gy, shed light on his relationships with other artists, and introduce new interpretations.

Programme

Wednesday, 27th May, afternoon
Session I: Firenze e Roma

Chair: Matteo Ceriana, Filarete nel contesto delle botteghe fiorentine di fonditori

Arnold Nesselrath (Antiquitatum Thesaurus, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Filarete: Un fiorentino nato a Roma all'età di 33 anni?

Philippe Malgouyres (Musée du Louvre), Filarete et la renaissance du petit bronze à l'antique
Claudia Kryza-Gersch (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden), Il "Marco Aurelio" di Dresda: il primo bronzetto del Rinascimento?

Ulrich Pfisterer (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, München), L'antico in miniatura. Indagini sulle origini della riproduzione scultorea

Maria Beltramini (Università di Torino), Attorno a Filarete bronzista: la Pace di Linari e una proposta per una medaglia all'antica

Thursday, 28th May, morning + afternoon
Session II: Milano e Venezia

Chair: Luisa Giordano (Università di Pavia), Filarete a Milano

Maya Christodoulaki (Technischen Universität Wien), On Contingency and Necessity: A Joint Study of Georgios Amiroutzes, Francesco Filelfo, and Filarete

Berthold Hub (Universität Wien / BHT Berlin), Filarete a Milano: da scultore ad "architetto", dal successo al fallimento

Paul Davies (emeritus University of Reading) e Jessica Gritti (Politecnico di Milano), Nuove proposte per Santa Maria di Bressanoro a Castelleone

Chair: Richard Schofield, Filarete e la Serenissima

Guido Beltramini (CISA Andrea Palladio) e Davide Gasparotto (J. Paul Getty Museum), Filarete, Bergamo, Padova e la Croce di Bassano

Morgan Ng (Yale University), Filarete e la tomba di Cosimo il Vecchio

Session III: Filarete teorico
Chair: Francesco Paolo Fiore (emerito Sapienza Università di Roma), Filarete teorico

Marco Collareta, "… ogni cosa che si fa con mano consiste nel disegno": note sul filo rosso di un attivismo apparentemente dispersivo

Caterina Cardamone (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Una proposta per la lettura dei passaggi tecnico-

-costruttivi nell'"illeggibile" trattato di architettura di Filarete

Hans W. Hubert (Universität Freiburg), Filarete nell'opera di Vasari: da dannazione a plagio

Maria Beltramini e Francesco Paolo Fiore, Conclusioni

How to request admission.

The seminar is open to the public, subject to availability of seats. Presentations will be delivered in Italian or English. The seminar will be streamed live.
Requests to attend the seminar must be submitted by 20 May via the dedicated online form ("Registration form") and are required only for those wishing to attend in person. No registration is required to follow the seminar online.
For logistical reasons, participation may be subject to confirmation.

https://www.palladiomuseum.org/en/courses/filarete/registration

Reference:
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