

Family Patronage in Early Modern Genoa, Rome, Venice:1500–1750 (Rome, 8 Sep 14)

Rome, Sep 08, 2014

Deadline: Apr 15, 2014

Bettina Morlang-Schardon

"Family Patronage in Early Modern Genoa, Rome, and Venice (1500–1750)"

Study Day

Rome, Bibliotheca Hertziana—Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte

8 September, 2014

Deadline: 15 April, 2014

Among the increasingly monarchic arena of Early Modern Europe, the powerful Italian cities of Genoa, Rome, and Venice are exceptional. Genoa and Venice, the largest remaining republics in Italy, predominated the financial, mercantile, and military spheres of the Mediterranean. Rome's religious authority and historical cachet, along with its sizable territory, were the foundations of its leading position. All three of these cities stand out for their oligarchic power structures; while Genoa and Venice were led by governments elected from a restricted book of families, Rome fostered an aristocracy both parallel to and participating in the electoral principle of the Papal court. Therefore, in the absence of hereditary lords, power and prestige was shared among the ruling families. As a result, in all of these cities, the families could remain powerful even as the government changed.

Central challenges for these cities' aristocratic families were how to figure their relationships to local power structures and balancing their own interests against those of the communal state. The particular social-political contexts nurtured different forms and strategies of representation than those deployed in monarchic and ducal societies. The oligarchic aristocracy had to submit to an abstract concept shaped by values and virtues such as equality and liberty rather than to a dynastic authority. Each of these societies experienced turning points when their political structures shifted and opened to new families—be they from outside the city or from non-noble stock—and their ruling classes sought new methods of representation and patronage to assert their role in the changed social scene. The reforms of 1576 to Genoa's oligarchic government, the rising status of papal families in seventeenth-century Rome, and the opening of the Libro d'Oro in the context of Venice's wars against the Ottoman Turks in the late seventeenth century were all moments from which such changes arose.

Against this background, this study day seeks to compare the demands and strategies of art and architectural patronage among these non-dynastic aristocratic groups. Although Genoa and Venice have often been mentioned in chorus, they have never been directly and critically com-

pared. Because of their diverse political alliances and statuses, the differences in their governmental structures, as well as their differing territorial dispositions, two distinct types of an early modern republic developed. Furthermore, the exemplary role of Rome for the non-monarchic sphere—its permeable system of social ascension—still asks for a more differentiated view. While scholarship often focuses on the Papacy of Rome and likens it to a monarchy, we seek to understand the strategies of the ruling class while not in power.

We invite abstracts from scholars in all stages of their careers addressing key aspects and questions such as the following:

- How did individual families present themselves vis-a-vis rival families or the state?
- How and when did these representations take place?
- What were the spaces used for representation and how were they marked?
- How did these strategies change or shift through time or across political changes?
- Can we identify instances of collective patronage or patterns of patronage?
- Are there collective representations or patterns of representation?
- Did strategies differ between sacred and secular contexts? If so, how?
- How do we conceive of the dialectic of public – private in these societies?

Proposals for 25-minute papers should include the title of the paper, a 250–300-word abstract, the author's institutional affiliation, a one-page CV, and full contact information. Papers may be submitted in English, French, German, and Italian.

Proposals should be sent to both:

Benjamin Eldredge (Bibliotheca Hertziana) eldredge@biblhertz.it

and Bettina Morlang-Schardon (Bibliotheca Hertziana) morlangschardon@biblhertz.it

Reference:

CFP: Family Patronage in Early Modern Genoa, Rome, Venice:1500-1750 (Rome, 8 Sep 14). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 8, 2014 (accessed Jun 19, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/6956>>.