

The Land between Two Seas: Art on the Move in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea 1300–1700. Alina Payne, ed.

Leiden: Brill. xiv + 394 pp. \$119. Open Access.

The book comes as an interesting surprise and a significant academic work due to the multidisciplinary perspective on the strong riverine ties that connect the Mediterranean seas. This system of connections encompasses the Western Mediterranean through the Sea of Marmara, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and the hinterland. In this concise study, different authors use a wide range of sources to reconstruct the artworks, spaces, and stories that characterize the territories north of the Danube, such as Poland, Eastern Hungary, and parts of Transylvania; the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean, namely the Dalmatian and Illyrian coasts; and the Black Sea, which includes its eastern neighbors. In the introduction to the book, the editor cites Evliya Çelebi, a seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler who described the rivers as a system of capillaries, flowing gently one into the other, swelling the seas as they connect the world.

One of the keys to comprehending the spatial and historical contexts in which the Mediterranean system must be understood is the examination of political, artistic, and economic influences. The principalities, kingdoms, and fiefdoms examined in this work embodied this essential hybridity. They were employed as a kind of buffer or cultural switch system that could assimilate, translate, and particularly link the cultures of Central Asia with those of Western Europe. This role was of main importance because these principalities straddled cultures and religions, the majority of which were Eastern Orthodox (with the exceptions of Hungary, Dalmatia, and Poland) and Slavic-speaking (excluding Romania). The historical time frame encompasses an extremely wide period from 1300 to 1700, which includes two major art movements in the West, the Renaissance and the Baroque.

The volume is divided into three main parts. In the first, “The Adriatic,” the authors provide a geographical background of the Adriatic as a cultural system, with a general overview of the military architecture in Dalmatia. The essays by Darka Bilić (“Daniel Rodriга’s Lazaretto in Split and Ottoman Caravanserais in Bosnia: The Transcultural Transfer of an Architectonic Model”) and by Joško Belamarić (“The Villa in Renaissance Dubrovnik: ‘Where Art Has Tamed Wild Nature’”) raise questions about architecture by analyzing closely migration and architectural models in Dalmatia.

In the second part of the book, “The Black Sea from the Dardanelles to the Sea of Azov,” the authors declare how reverberations of the classic sites beyond Mediterranean shores and into the Continent are fundamental to understanding the concept of the connectedness so widely portrayed by Braudel. The sources investigated in this chapter enlighten readers about the mobility of population, the circulation of ideas and Renaissance models in architecture, but also of the artistic language in the northern Black Sea shores, that indicates how the Danube regions was not isolated from the

cultures of the Mediterranean shores. Collectively, these components provide a solid insight into the historical ties that existed between Venice and the Danube.

The final chapter, “The Danube and Beyond,” offers a final set of summative reflections. The multifaceted approach reveals mobility and cultural transfers in many artistic fields in the Danube area and beyond, and provides a wealth of anthropological knowledge on architectural and artistic exchanges, on sociability, on the roads of communication and merchant networks, on politics, and on lifestyle, as specified in the essay by Alexandr Osipian about Ottoman and Persian luxury. Ultimately, the book delivers what its title promises. It sheds light on the Western Mediterranean area, assuming a transregional approach with a wide appeal. Here the attempt to reconstruct the culture of these fluid spaces is tangible and needs to be studied: this fascinating world was, in effect, characterized by a complex period of unstable and short-lived hegemonies, and connections between different artistic and architectural fields created new historical categories of regional identities, as well as originality.

Valentina Burgassi, *Politecnico di Torino*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2024.27

The Intellectual Education of the Italian Renaissance Artist. Angela Dressen.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. x + 386 pp. \$99.99.

Angela Dressen’s book tackles Renaissance artists’ access to education, including schooling and other forms of more or less institutionalized knowledge that developed in Italian cities. While the chosen subject is broad, Dressen’s interest in the topic is targeted at determining artists’ access to canonical literary texts in both Latin and the vernacular, beyond what we now know was the case for such major figures as Leonardo and Michelangelo. As she argues in her introduction, whenever a work of art depicts a “more demanding or a literature-derived” topic, scholars tend to conjecture that a learned advisor had helped the artist devise their work. Yet Dressen demonstrates that artists and artisans alike would often have had firsthand access to their literary sources, some of which they had originally learned about sitting in a classroom. She aims to show that a literary education was more widespread among Renaissance Italian artists than has been so far accepted by scholars, and that major and minor artists—famous or less so, rich or poor—equally partook in this broader social phenomenon.

Dressen acknowledges the contributions of scholars who have shaped this field of inquiry, including Bernard Roeck and the art historian Francis Ames-Lewis, whose seminal *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist* (2000) is echoed in the title of Dressen’s book. Compared to previous scholars, Dressen draws more strongly from the cognate field of the history of education; she also places greater emphasis on the literary foundations of learning, while choosing not to engage with forms of