

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.

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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

empirical knowledge developed in artists' workshops. The latter were already addressed by Ames-Lewis in his book and more recently have been expounded, with entirely new and experimental approaches, in the groundbreaking work of scholars such as Pamela Smith and Pamela Long. Recent studies on Renaissance Florence have also greatly benefited from a similar methodological approach linking theory and practice, with Amy Bloch's *Lorenzo Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise: Humanism, History, and Artistic Philosophy in the Italian Renaissance* (2016) as a good case in point. Dressen focuses instead specifically on textual knowledge: interestingly, her book's title differs from Ames-Lewis's in that the emphasis is not on the intellectual life of artists but rather on their intellectual education, with the latter taken to be a predominantly text-based pursuit that involved learning Latin grammar, developing reading and writing skills, working with the abacus, and eventually, at different levels and according to the different schools, being introduced to some fundamental texts in the curriculum.

This focus on text-based education is key to understanding one of the fundamental ideas of Dressen's book, which is articulated in her introductory text and summarized in her short conclusions. She proposes that looking at Renaissance art history through the lens of education may afford us a different periodization of art, which takes textual knowledge rather than style as its metric. "When specific knowledge entered society, it defined an epoch," and, for Dressen, "access to literature was fundamental" in this process. She links Renaissance art's major breakthroughs with the "three major translation periods" in which ancient sources were made available in the vernacular to a broader audience: the 1470s–80s, 1520s–30s, and 1540s–50s.

The book is divided into four thematic chapters: the first explores how Renaissance debates over the mechanical versus the liberal arts defined artists' education. The second focuses on educational places and opportunities for Renaissance Italian artists, while in the next chapter Dressen moves on to a discussion of literary sources, particularly the late medieval and early Renaissance "mediating texts"—as Dressen calls them—that "transmitted knowledge" on ancient mythology as well as on theological and philosophical questions. The book's last chapter engages with two defining texts for any Renaissance artist: Pliny's *Natural History* and Vitruvius's *De architectura*.

The book's most valuable contribution is its focus on "Educational Places and Opportunities" in the second chapter. Drawing on the fundamental work of scholars such as Paul Grendler, Dressen offers a generous overview of Renaissance artists' schooling and their participation in education broadly defined. Her focus on the different types of school in this chapter is helpful. She shows that beyond elementary schools, Latin grammar schools, and abacus schools, *studia* and the newly founded academies also played a crucial part in the education of artists. Also valuable is the section of this chapter devoted to the "oral apprenticeship" of artists, meaning the opportunities they had to learn about the most diverse topics by attending public and private lectures, the role of which, as Dressen highlights, was explicitly extolled by Renaissance artists like Francesco di Giorgio and Giovan Battista Caporali in their own writings.

Orality, this incredibly important facet of an artist's education, could usefully have received greater attention in this book. Within its chosen brief, Dressen's study offers an overview of her topic that will form the basis for discussion for future generations of art historians and scholars of intellectual history.

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Learned Physicians and Everyday Medical Practice in the Renaissance.

Michael Stolberg.

Trans. Logan Kennedy and Leonhard Unglaub. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022. xxvi + 614 pp. \$107.99. Open Access.

Stolberg's voluminous and engrossing book demonstrates the vital importance of everyday medical practice in early modern learned medicine. Until now, not much was known about the humdrum life of ordinary doctors in their practice and relationship with the medical community, patients, and their families. Stolberg gives us a comprehensive view of this scarcely investigated field by combing through thirty manuscript volumes of notes handwritten by a relatively obscure German physician, Georg Handsch (1529–78). Handsch studied medicine in Padua and Ferrara and became the court physician of the Austrian Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand II. Handsch wrote these notes for and to himself, never thinking of publishing them: this is why they contain information about his medical experience and that of other doctors, including unvarnished opinions about mistakes he and his colleagues made in diagnosing and treating illnesses or dealing with a patient. Stolberg found the volumes in the Austrian National Library of Vienna and states that Handsch's notes are unique in their abundance but are not the only references that helped him in his investigation: students' notebooks, physicians' notebooks and practice journals, and epistles that doctors exchanged outside of academia—available through a database of letters created under Stolberg's direction, written in German and Latin between 1500 and 1700—all contribute to the author's argument.

Thanks to this abundance of new manuscript material, Stolberg makes important discoveries that profoundly change the view of some long-held assumptions related to early modern medicine. His work confirms the pivotal importance of empirical knowledge and experimentation among the learned physicians of early modern Europe. Several discoveries, for instance, deal with the relationship between doctor and patient: early modern physicians did touch and inspect their patients' bodies—some, with tools to diagnose and treat illnesses. Contrary to the medical literature that condemned it, uroscopy was a daily tool used by early modern physicians and insistently requested by patients. Other discoveries questioned the traditional model of humoral balance with which early modern physicians explained diseases in the human body. In daily life, all