POPES & PATRICIANS:
RENAISSANCE BOLOGNA & FERRARA

WEDNESDAY 23 – SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2022 (5 DAYS)

LECTURER: PAULA NUTTALL

£1975

- **Bologna is one of the great 'art cities' of Italy**
- **Fine medieval & renaissance architecture in mellow brick**
- **Wonderful paintings from the Carracci family & their followers**
- **Visit to the beautiful medieval & renaissance city of Ferrara**
- **Centrally located comfortable hotel with very good food & wine**

Bologna, Basilica di Santo Stefano

OVERVIEW

Pope Julius II was not a man to be trifled with - known as *"Il Terrible"* due to his volcanic temper, he made short work of rebellious Bologna in 1506, leading his army from the front and taking the city by force. His goal was to reincorporate it within the Papal States, from which it had been 'semi-detached' for some considerable time.

Etruscan in origin, Roman by conquest, then subject to successively Lombard, Frankish and Papal control, Bologna came to prominence in a period dominated by the ongoing and epic struggle between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. Nonetheless, Bologna grew rich as it was mostly governed as a free commune. As so often happened in Italy, individual families came to prominence taking their native or adoptive city into a form of "protective" custody. In Bologna's case the last of these ruling dynasties was the Bentivoglio family, that is until they came up against the implacable force that was Pope Julius who brought their rule to an end. Thereafter firmly under the control of papal governors, Bologna is best known for producing a group of artists who were to change the history of painting. The Carracci family, their associates and students were talented exponents of a direct style of narrative painting. This was quite different from the excesses of the preceding Mannerist styles of the sixteenth century.

Our visit to Bologna will introduce you first to the city's fine medieval architecture and second to its distinguished role in the history of painting. The historic city centre is a delight to stroll in, and its churches and picture gallery house many gems. Of course, no round of cultural exploration would function properly without adequate sustenance and Bologna is one of the great culinary cities of Italy. Our visit is further complimented by a visit to the fine walled renaissance city of Ferrara, the ducal home of the great art patrons, the Este family. We shall stay at the comfortable **4* Hotel Corona D'Oro**, located in the historic centre and within easy walking distance of all the places we plan to visit.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Wednesday 23 November – We fly from London Heathrow to **Milan**, arriving in the afternoon. We transfer by coach to Bologna and check into our hotel. Later that evening there will be a group dinner in a local restaurant. Wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Thursday 24 November – Just along from our hotel are Bologna's most important public spaces, **Piazza Maggiore** and its neighbour **Piazza Nettuno**, the latter dominated by a wonderful sixteenth century fountain dedicated to Neptune, the work of the famous sculptor Giambologna, best known for his work in Florence at the Medici court. Both spaces are surrounded by fine buildings. **San Petronio** is the city's most important church, indeed one of the finest Gothic churches in Italy. Its façade is decorated with early Renaissance sculptures by

Jacopo della Quercia, which profoundly influenced the young Michelangelo. Within, the highlight is the Bolognini Chapel, with Giovanni da Modena's extraordinary fresco depicting hell.

The dazzling Niccolo dell'Arca is at work in the nearby church of **Santa Maria della Vita,** where he made an arrestingly lifelike Renaissance *Lamentation* in terracotta. After our group lunch, we visit the unforgettable church complex of **Santo Stefano**, conceived as a 'virtual pilgrimage' to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Our final visit of the day is at **San Domenico,** founded in 1219 by St Dominic, who died here two years later. As the final resting place of one of the giants of medieval Christianity (only outshone by St Francis of Assisi in terms of popular devotion) the marble tomb of St Dominic, the Arca di San Domenico, is a masterpiece of medieval sculpture by Nicola Pisano, with later additions by – among others – the young Michelangelo. The evening will be free.

Day 3: Friday 25 November – Today, we travel to **Ferrara**, a truly lovely walled city, with its distinct, separate and atmospheric medieval and renaissance quarters. We admire the outside of the great **Castello Estense**, the former palace of the Este counts, marquises and dukes. We shall visit the **Duomo**, famed for its portal sculptures and with some good paintings inside, and the nearby **Cathedral Museum**. After lunch (not included), we continue to the **Palazzo Schifanoia**, a late fourteenth century palazzo retaining the newly restored *Salone dei Mesi*, renowned frescoes of the Months. These reflect the courtly and chivalric enthusiasms of Duke Borso d'Este who ruled in the second half of the fifteenth century. We return to Bologna after which the evening will be free.

Day 4: Saturday 26 November – We spend a morning devoted to Renaissance and early Baroque Bologna, beginning in the neighbourhood of the Bentivoglio, the Renaissance 'lords' of the city. In their parish church of **San Giacomo Maggiore** the Bentivoglio Chapel, frescoed by Lorenzo Costa, depicts members of the family participating in the Triumphs of Fame and Fortune. Next door, the beautiful **Oratory of Santa Cecilia**, commissioned by Giovanni II Bentivoglio, is one of the masterpieces of the Bolognese Renaissance, painted by Costa, the space is known as the 'Sistine Chapel' of Bologna. After a coffee break, we visit **Palazzo d'Accursio,** the centre of the city's government since 1287, and where Charles V stayed on the eve of his coronation as Holy Roman Emperor. The earlier parts incorporate several magnificent reception rooms which in their decoration bear witness to the city's transition from free commune to its reduced status under later Papal control.

Nearby, at **Palazzo Fava**, we have our first encounter with the Carracci family, who transformed painting in Bologna: Lodovico (1555 – 1619), his two cousins Agostino (1557 – 1602), and the younger and more famous Annibale (1560 – 1609). Here they painted a delightful set of reception rooms in the 1580s, with fashionable themes taken from classical mythology: the Rape of Europa, and the story of Jason. Lunch (not included) and the remainder of the afternoon will be free for private explorations of Bologna. Later that evening there will be a group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 5: Sunday 27 November – We conclude with a morning in the city's main art gallery, the **Pinacoteca Nazionale**. This is one of the great, but little-known, galleries of Italy. It houses an array of works from Bologna's churches and convents, including an altarpiece by Giotto and Renaissance masterpieces by Raphael, Parmigianino and Lavinia Fontana. It is also the best possible place to explore the art of Bologna's greatest and most influential artists, the Carracci family and their successor Guido Reni. After an early group lunch, we travel the short distance to Bologna for our early evening return flight to London's Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £1975 **Without Flights** £1830 **Deposit** £300

Single Supplement £235 (Double Room for Sole Use)
Couples/Two sharing in Deluxe Rooms

Hotel 4 nights with breakfast at 4* Hotel Corona D'Oro

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA562** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1140**, arrive Milan Linate **1445**
Return: **BA545** Depart Bologna **1920**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **2055**

Price includes 2 dinners & 2 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Paula & Geoffrey Nuttall

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 2 dinners & 2 lunches

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