



CICERONI
T R A V E L

POPES & PATRICIANS: A WEEKEND IN RENAISSANCE BOLOGNA

THURSDAY 26 – SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2020 (4 DAYS)

LECTURER: PAULA NUTTALL

£1435

- **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**
- **Many newly restored palaces & excellent museums**
- **Short visit in 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 Terribile*” 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, until they came up against the implacable force that was Pope Julius, who brought their rule to an end. Though he did his best to obliterate all traces of the Bentivoglio, their beautiful Renaissance family chapel survives, testifying to their ambitions – and their hubris.

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 of painters, 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. Their hero was Raphael and they sought to champion a new approach to painting based on the work of this great master, particularly the monumental style he created during his Roman period from 1508 until his death in 1520.

Our weekend visit to Bologna will introduce you first to Bologna’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, surprisingly little known. Of course, no round of cultural exploration would function properly without adequate sustenance and Bologna is one of the great culinary cities of Italy.

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. There is a wonderful selection of restaurants located nearby, so we could not be better placed for our explorations of this fine Italian city.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Thursday 26 November – We fly from London Heathrow to **Bologna**, arriving late afternoon. We transfer by coach into the city 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: Friday 27 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 and our day's explorations will be concentrated largely in this part of the city. **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.

After some free time for lunch, not included, we visit **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. Another of its sculptors, the dazzling Niccolò dell'Arca, in the nearby church of **Santa Maria della Vita**, made an arrestingly lifelike Renaissance *Lamentation* in terracotta, which will conclude our day's visits. After our return to the hotel the evening will be free.

Day 3: Saturday 28 November – We spend a morning devoted to Renaissance Bologna, 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, known as the 'Sistine Chapel' of Bologna. Taking us back to medieval Bologna, our morning concludes with a visit to the unforgettable church complex of **Santo Stefano**, conceived as a 'virtual pilgrimage' to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

After lunch, not included, 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. Later that evening there will be a group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 4: Sunday 29 November – We conclude our visit to Bologna 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 – a native of Bologna and one of the first female artists to make a name in her own right. It is also the best possible place to explore the art of Bologna's greatest and most influential artists, the Carracci family, who paved the way for the Roman Baroque, and their successor Guido Reni, perhaps the most famous of all Baroque painters? After a group lunch and some free time, we meet at our hotel and travel the short distance to Bologna and our early evening return flight to London's Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £1435 **Without Flights** £1295 **Deposit** £275

Single Supplement £30 (Single) £180 (Double Room for Sole Use)

Hotel 3 nights with breakfast at 4* Hotel Corona D'Oro

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA542** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1425**, arrive Bologna **1735**

Return: **BA545** Depart Bologna **1920**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **2040**

Price includes 2 dinners & 1 lunch with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Paula & Geoffrey Nuttall

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 1 dinner & 2 lunches



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