

## [The Theatines and Architecture \(XVI-XVIII Centuries\) \(Rome, 22-23 Mar 22\)](#)

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Call for Papers

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Architecture and Architectural History, Religious Studies and Theology, Italian History / Studies, Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Spanish and Portuguese History / Studies

### **“Circa vestimenta”: The Theatines and Architecture (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries) International Conference on the Architectural History of the Order of Clerics Regular Theatines**

First among the religious orders born in the climate of the Catholic Reformation and rooted in the sensibility of *Devotio moderna*, the order of Clerics Regular Theatines was officially founded in 1524 by Gian Pietro Carafa (1476-1559, elected pope with the name of Paul IV from 1555), Gaetano Thiene (1480-1547), Bonifacio de' Colli (□ 1558) and Paolo Consiglieri (1499-1557). After settling in Venice (from 1527), Naples (from 1538) and finally in Rome (from 1555), between the end of the Council of Trent and the middle of the seventeenth century the order became widespread in Italy, at the same time as it began expanding in Europe and evangelizing in non-Christian territories, mainly in the Caucasus and the East Indies.

In spite of the importance of Theatine houses and places of worship, and the relevance of Theatine patrons and architects, the order has not enjoyed the kind of critical reception enjoyed by other early modern orders, such as the Jesuits, the Barnabites or the Oratorians. The dispersion of a large part of the order's documentary heritage and, in particular, the scarcity and unevenness of the drawings and other architectural evidence held in the Theatine general archives at Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome have certainly been among the reasons that have hindered attempts to produce synthetic studies of Theatine architecture.

In recent years new data and questions have emerged from an increasing amount of research, partly published in the journal of the order, *Regnum Dei. Collectanea Theatina*, and discussed in specific, limited forums, such as a first international conference dedicated to the Theatine foundations in Sicily (2003) and a study day on the history of the Venetian church and house of San Nicolò da Tolentino and the alterations that have affected it (2017). Today it finally seems possible to think of a scholarly gathering in which to relate some of the many histories regarding the Theatines and architecture. Starting from the architectural enterprises and evidence associated with the order of Clerics Regular Theatines between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, this conference intends to create an initial framework within which to investigate the urgent issues and historiographic problems facing historians today. Namely:

- the settlement strategies of the Theatines in relation to urban context, to economic choices, and to the process of reuse and appropriation of sites;
- the particular role of great promoters, financial backers, and patrons in respect to the expansion of the order and their effects on the development of the order's sites for churches and houses, with particular reference to sacred space;
- the role of Theatine priests as patrons or architects of buildings outside the order;
- the circulation and migration of models, techniques, and architectural experts and amateurs among Theatine building sites and/or Theatine commissions;
- the dynamics of the "center-periphery" relationship, understood as the relationship between the Roman mother house and the other foundations of the order, through investigation of the genesis and design process of Theatine buildings;
- the knowledge, skills, and theoretical and scientific debates regarding architecture in the Theatine context, also considering the books held in Theatine libraries and the publications of the order's priests;
- the effects of the order's spirituality on the selection of building materials, on architectural and decorative solutions, and on the relation of these to antiquity;
- the relationship between tradition and experimentation (typological, architectural and in relation to construction techniques) in Theatine buildings;
- the differences and distinctive features in design approach, in functional organization, in management of the building sites, and in the choices of material and manner of construction when comparing the houses for religious, buildings intended for teaching, and those destined for worship;
- when and how celebrations, processions and ephemeral apparatuses transformed Theatine sacred space and its relation to the urban context.

The possibility of researching and identifying any unique characteristics of the architecture of the Clerics Regular Theatines – both going back to the problems they faced as the first order founded in the early modern era, and in relation to the production of other orders founded around the same time – certainly invites wider reflection than themes strictly related to architecture. One of the keys to understanding this could be found in the "arma apostolica" that Carafa requested from Clement VII in 1533, "tam circa vestimenta quam circa alias cerimonias," with which the first Theatines, anticipating the difficulties related to evangelizing in distant lands, had the opportunity to flexibly adapt to different, geographically distant cultural realities.

The conference will be hosted by the Generalate of the Theatine order at the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome and will take place from 22-23 March 2022. Given the uncertainty of the evolving public health situation, the organizers plan to hold the event in hybrid format, both in-person and online.

The proceedings of the conference will be published in a special issue of the journal *Lexicon. Storie e Architettura in Sicilia e nel Mediterraneo*, a biannual periodical of studies in architectural history, classified as class A for the assessment sectors 08/C1, D1, E1, E2, F1 of the Italian national agency for the evaluation of universities and research institutes (Anvur).

Those interested in participating should send a biography of approximately ten lines and a long abstract of no more than 700 words, accompanied by a reference bibliography of no more than ten items, to the email address [convegno.architetturateatina@gmail.com](mailto:convegno.architetturateatina@gmail.com) by 15 December 2021. Abstracts will be accepted in Italian, English, French and Spanish. No registration fees are required.

For clarification of any questions, please contact [convegno.architettureatina@gmail.com](mailto:convegno.architettureatina@gmail.com)

**Timeline:**

1 November 2021 - Call for papers

15 December 2021- Deadline for submission of biography and long abstracts

15 January 2022 - Notification of acceptance

22-23 March 2022 - Conference

Contact Info:

**Conference Organizers and Committees**

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