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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: VISUAL CULTURE, PERFORMANCE CULTURE AND THE ITALIAN DIASPORA IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

SHEARER WEST

Within the complex history of European cultural, political and social relations in the long eighteenth century (*c.*1689–1815), Italy holds a distinctive but problematic position. Italy was both cosmopolitan and narrowly local, a cultural lure and a site of economic and political fragmentation. In many ways, eighteenth-century Italy was a melting-pot, for its very weaknesses enabled foreign travellers, diplomats and royalty to enter it freely, test it, judge it and then return with intact value systems to their own homelands. Thus while Italy was being carved up in a string of pan-European succession wars involving principally the Bourbons and the Habsburgs, Grand Tourists entered its cities to admire and exploit its cultural heritage. Travellers from England, Germany, France, Scandinavia, eastern Europe and Russia poured into a handful of major Italian centres and imposed their own cultural values on local practices through their very presence as well as by constructing a persuasive fiction of modern Italian society through a plethora of travel writing.

Much twentieth-century academic attention has been devoted to this phenomenon: the cultural invasion of *forestieri* into various parts of Italy, the behaviour and reactions of these mostly wealthy or aristocratic Grand Tourists, and their writings and responses to ancient and modern Italy and its diverse cultural artefacts.[1] In studies of this period, Italy and the Italians become a backdrop for the actions and thoughts of visitors from more powerful or 'advanced' parts of Europe. Even the more sophisticated of these analyses persist in adopting an approach that takes the focal point of the foreign visitor: issues of moral geography, transgressing boundaries and negotiating 'contact zones' between cultures are inevitably viewed through the travel literature produced by northern Europeans who were at the very least literate and at best

[1] The catalogue of the Grand Tour exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1996 pointed out a number of key areas that had been omitted from the voluminous literature on the Grand Tour, including the fact that Italians have not been recognised as full participants in this cultural interchange. See Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini, *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, exhibition catalogue, London, Tate Gallery, 1996, pp. 32–3.

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self-consciously eloquent.[2] A focus on travel writing necessarily reinforces this perspective of privilege, and the lack of a similar quantity, consistency and richness of written sources produced by Italian singers, musicians, *commedia dell'arte* performers and artists has seemingly closed the door on understanding their cultural experiences and the relationships between their own patterns of life and work with those of their class superiors in other countries. The views of a dominant class, whether it be aristocracy, gentry or emergent bourgeoisie, continue to form the perspective from which we study European culture, and the presence of so many high-born northern citizens in Italy has skewed our understanding of Italian culture in the eighteenth century. Historical studies that make judgements on the basis of the perspective of the elite tend to marginalize the Italians themselves, who are seen primarily as fodder to help us understand the hegemonic or cultural aspirations of their northern contemporaries. What has received less systematic attention is the extent to which the Italians also moved across cultural and national boundaries, and the consequent infiltration of Italian cultural ideas and influences into northern courts and cities.

Some studies of eighteenth-century cultural interaction have devoted space to this 'diaspora'[3] of Italians, but such studies usually adopt an approach that gives only a partial view of the situation. For example, in his exhaustive books on the Italian Enlightenment, Franco Venturi attempted to open up the investigation of Italy's role within what had previously been seen to be a northern European cultural debate.[4] Venturi concentrates primarily on intellectuals of various sorts – politicians, philosophers, reformers – whose contributions to European culture were made largely through the printed word. Venturi's impressive research was designed to counteract the stereotype of Italians as primarily 'artisans' and to show therefore that they had a place in high culture, as well as low.[5] High culture has equally been the focus of art-historical studies of eighteenth-century Italians, from Francis Haskell's still unsurpassed *Patrons and Painters* onwards.[6] Although Haskell investigated an enormous range of visual culture, his work and the many art-historical studies that have drawn inspiration from it, have given precedence to the patronage of the more privileged classes of society, as well as to the creations of a handful of highly talented but by no means typical artists. In contrast to Venturi's and Haskell's broad analyses of high culture, monographs on the northern travels of individual Italian artists reinforce the focus on the particular, which occludes the wider picture of migratory tendencies,

[2] For a discussion of 'contact zones' in the eighteenth-century context, see especially Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, 1992; and, more recently, Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon, eds., *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography 1600–1830*, Studies in British Art 3, New Haven and London, 1996, pp. 31–47. Pratt refers to 'contact zones' as 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other' (p. 4).

[3] The word was used by Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', in *Storia d'Italia*, volume III: *Dal primo Settecento all'Unità*, Turin, 1973, p. 1034. See also Bernardina Sani, *Rosalba Carriera: lettere, diari, frammenti*, 2 vols., Florence, 1985, I, p. 21.

[4] Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, 5 volumes in 7 parts, Turin, 1969–90.

[5] See, for example, Venturi, 'L'Italia', p. 1036.

[6] *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque*, 2nd edn, New Haven and London, 1980.

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career structures and the workings of Italian migrant subcultures.[7] Only in studies of music and theatre performance has the richness, breadth and diversity of the travels and career patterns of practitioners been given sustained attention.[8] Furthermore, a tendency of cultural historians to rely on the taxonomies of individual creative professions – to see cultural artefacts in terms of their contribution to the baroque, the rococo, the genre of *opera buffa* or Arcadianism in poetry – means that wider contextual issues are sometimes not given enough prominence.[9]

Studies of the period thus offer important contributions to the understanding of transnational cultural interchange in the eighteenth century, but the concentration on consumption of high culture, or the cultural output of only one profession (whether it be painting, stucco making, acting or music), or Italian talent in single centres such as Dresden or Düsseldorf,[10] has excluded the consolidation of a larger view. While Italy was suffering economic hardship and political emasculation, it maintained, to an extent, its cultural hegemony. Although this implicit cultural authority endured in part because of the flood of Grand Tourists into Italy itself, the real cultural influence was cemented through the movement of Italian artisans northwards. I am including among artisans not simply the decorative artists who were responsible for stucco or fresco, but all of the performers and producers who were part of the Italian guild system or other closed systems of family-based professionalism. This infiltration of Italian music, art and theatre into the life of the gentry and aristocracy of pluralist Europe was no less significant than the more 'Enlightened' French high culture, to which many twentieth-century historians have attributed a greater impact. It is important to investigate this cultural interchange on a variety of levels in order to offer a more nuanced view on the last phase of Italian cultural hegemony, before national cultural concerns in individual European nations marginalised or assimilated the *italianità* that had once been accepted intact.

In order to redress the balance, it is necessary to look at the wider implications of Italian immigration, especially given that cultural interchange was a two-way process. As Lucio Sponza has pointed out in his study of nineteenth-century Italian immigrants

[7] For examples of studies on Italian artists in foreign courts, see, for example, Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandall, *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence*, New Haven and London, 1994; and George Knox, 'Antonio Pellegrini and Marco Ricci at Burlington House and Narford Hall', *Burlington Magazine*, 130 (1988), 846–53. For broader overviews, see Jane Martineau and Andrew Robison, eds., *The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century*, exhibition catalogue, London, Royal Academy, 1994; and Emilio Lavagnino, *Gli artisti italiani in Germania*, 3 vols., Rome, 1943.

[8] For *commedia* players, see Kenneth Richards and Laura Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte: A Documentary History*, Oxford, 1990; for singers, see John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession*, Cambridge, 1992.

[9] Some recent studies of Italian and French eighteenth-century culture show how stylistic developments and nomenclature need to be seen in the light of political, social and cultural developments. See, for example, Christopher M. S. Johns, *Papal Art and Cultural Politics: Rome in the Age of Clement XI*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 202, writing on Clement XI's cultural policies: 'this is not simply a rejection of Baroque aesthetics, but the development of a new sensibility predicated on a changed intellectual and cultural environment.'

[10] For Dresden, see, for example, Fritz Löffler, *Dresden im 18. Jahrhundert. Bernardo Bellotto, gennant Canaletto*, Würzburg, 1985; *Le vedute di Dresda di Bernardo Bellotto*, exhibition catalogue, Venice, 1986. For Düsseldorf, see Bernardina Sani, 'Pastelli e miniature di Rosalba Carriera nella collezione di Giovanni Guglielmo Pfalz', *Itinerari*, 2 (1981), 133–43.

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in England, Italians are too often accepted as a culturally homogeneous group who were passive players in the alien cultures they adopted; their own family background, career development and impact on non-Italian social and cultural life has been too often ignored.[11] To a certain extent, the problems created by such a monolithic approach to cultural interchange have been addressed and countered by postcolonial studies of travel and travel literature. But this more balanced view of 'transculturation' has concentrated primarily on interchanges between Europeans and 'subaltern' elements both within Europe and, much more frequently, outside it.[12] The cultural relationships among European nations – based as these were on centuries of struggles for political and economic dominance amongst countries at least theoretically benefiting from some shared cultural values – has not really been subjected to the same sort of analysis.

It is perhaps best to review Italian influence by concentrating on the issue of itinerancy, rather than simply travel. The tendency of Italian performers and artists to move north was not a new phenomenon in the eighteenth century. Indeed, *commedia dell'arte* troupes had travelled for work from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, and they touched base in Paris, Madrid, Vienna and England. The Viceroys of Spain employed Neapolitan artists from the seventeenth century, and castrati travelled to all major European centres from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.[13] The change that came about in the eighteenth century was the extent and volume of these travels, and the fact that itinerancy became a norm for artists and performers, rather than an exception. This greater propensity to travel grew from a number of social and economic factors, including the abolition of nepotism within the Catholic church (which initiated a decline in church patronage),[14] economic change in Italy itself, and the competitive courts and markets outside Italy that sought a continual stream of competent and innovative individuals of talent to fill cultural voids (see below). Italian artists and performers arrived in every major city, but they were especially prevalent in Dresden, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Mannheim, Munich, Prague, Vienna, St Petersburg, Stuttgart, and Warsaw.[15] Some cities showed more of a predilection for Italian music, while others were more receptive to visual culture, but in most cases, Italian music, performance and art flourished together. In nearly every instance, Italian professionals were employed because they were willing to move to places where they were needed, and they showed great versatility in adopting to local needs, however unusual or self-serving these happened to be.

[11] Lucio Sponza, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Realities and Images*, Leicester, 1988, especially p. 6. Although focusing on the nineteenth century, Sponza's observations are equally appropriate to the earlier period.

[12] See, for example, the groundbreaking work of Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York, 1994; Bhabha, ed., *Nations and Narration*, London, 1990.

[13] See Andrew Wilton, 'Dreaming of Italy', in Wilton and Bignamini, *Grand Tour*, pp. 39–42. For the castrati, see Angus Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera*, 2nd edn, London, 1975; for actors, see Richards and Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte*.

[14] For a discussion of this, see Hanns Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Régime*, Cambridge, 1990.

[15] I am using the 'north' here to refer to culture beyond the Alps, whether Protestant or Catholic. This book therefore considers a range of 'northern' perspectives, from Scandinavia to Spain.

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It is important to point out that Italians were not the only itinerants in northern Europe at this time. Artists and performers from France, the Low Countries and Germany also travelled for work, and it was quite normal for a court or city to have a multiplicity of foreign nationals from several different parts of Europe fulfilling its cultural desires. Italy's distinctiveness lay in the variety of needs its artists and performers were able to address; in its strong tradition of solid training in the arts; and in its cultural associations with both the ancient world and the Renaissance. Italians were able to exploit their family and community connections, as well as their tradition of excellent craftsmanship, to appeal to the increasingly pluralist marketplace of eighteenth-century Europe.

COURT AND MARKET

The first framework that needs to be established in order that the practices and implications of Italian itinerancy in the eighteenth century can be understood is where artists and performers found work and why they were drawn to particular places. In investigating this question, we are immediately faced with a vast and fragmented set of possibilities in a Europe that was becoming increasingly diverse in both its political structures and cultural practices. To a great extent, eighteenth-century Europe was still dominated by monarchies and court cultures, but it is misleading to categorise all such monarchies as a single entity, or to contrast the patronage practices of more traditional court cultures (such as some in Germany and eastern Europe) too readily with the 'free market' ethos of a country like England.[16] Instead, it is worth outlining the major centres of patronage of the arts to investigate the ways in which their activities encouraged Italian involvement.

There is little doubt that Italian culture was valued by most European centres that still maintained a court ethos. At their most lavish, courts such as those of Augustus II at Dresden or the Elector Palatine at Düsseldorf devoted themselves to a promotion of music and visual culture that drew a large supply of artists, musicians, poets and even physicians from Italy.[17] Augustus II went so far as to set up a building programme on the Elbe which was designed to make this river resemble the Venetian Grand Canal, although, in an interesting confusion of messages, Dresden became known as the Florence, rather than Venice, of the Elbe. Such cultural programmes could be developed over the long or the short term, but many of them were initiated in the wake of Louis XIV's holistic approach to the court at Versailles. In Spain, for example, Philip V began a building scheme after the War of Spanish Succession, and his activities were enhanced by those of his successors Ferdinand VI (1746–59), Charles III

[16] See Matthew Craske, (*Art in Europe 1700–1830*, Oxford, 1997, p. 19), who argues for a pluralism of markets in Paris, London and Dresden in opposition to the entrenched court patronage systems of courts in southern and eastern Europe and Scandinavia.

[17] See, for example, *Le vedute di Dresda*.

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(1759–88) and Charles IV (1788–1808).[18] Similarly in Russia, the cultural westernisation introduced by Peter the Great was carried on in the architectural programmes of a number of his successors, most notably Elizabeth (reigned 1741–62; see below), with her particular affection for Italian rococo architecture.

Italians would frequently be called to such courts, where they would remain for short or long periods and fulfil commissions that served the cultural aspirations of the local king and/or court, but they would also be imported for particular occasions. Indeed, various court entertainments and festivals inevitably involved the skills of Italian professionals. For example, when the Elector Palatine married Maria Luisa, daughter of Cosimo III de' Medici, the artist Antonio Bellucci was called to commemorate this event at the Schleissheim palace. Similarly, the castrato Cusanino was brought specially to Prague for the coronation of the Emperor Charles VI in 1723, and another castrato, Caffarelli, was summoned to Spain in 1739 to sing at the wedding of Don Philip, the brother of the King of Naples.[19]

This promotion of Italian culture was not confined merely to the larger and more prosperous courts. In the German states, in particular, a multiplicity of courts – many of them very small and without any appreciable power or influence – resulted in a competitive climate that meant that any available funds were poured into the importation of foreign talent. In Germany alone, there were imperial and free, ecclesiastical and secular, states. This diversity demonstrates another factor that is not negligible in discussions of patronage – that is, the relative balance between the spheres of church and state, and which influences were exerted when artists or performers were employed by a court. However, this fragmentation also meant that a less powerful political entity might have the edge in cultural terms, and Italians were instrumental in helping promote the aspirations of insignificant princes. For example, it has been frequently noted from David Hume onwards that Tiepolo's stunning and overwhelming staircase frescos at the Würzburg Residenz commemorated the apotheosis of the minor and powerless Prince-Bishop Carl Phillip von Greiffenklau.[20]

All this would suggest that the court dominated patronage of Italian artists and performers, and indeed it is clear that Italians and *italianità* touched most of the major and minor courts in eighteenth-century Europe. But the picture is not as simple as this, nor is it possible to make too strong a contrast between the court patronage functioning in Germany, Poland, Spain and Russia, and the patronage of individuals – both of aristocratic heritage and the 'middling sort' – who were more active in England, France and the Low Countries.[21] It is important here to consider Iain Pears' compel-

[18] Jeremy Mulvey, 'Palace Decoration at the Spanish Bourbon Court during the Eighteenth Century', *Apollo*, 114 (1981), 228–35; and Catherine Whistler, 'G. B. Tiepolo at the Court of Charles III', *Burlington Magazine*, 128 (1986), 199-203.

[19] Heriot, *Castrati*, pp. 111–12, 141–54.

[20] See Michael Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 2nd edn, New Haven and London, 1994, pp. 34 and 228; and Alpers and Baxandall, *Tiepolo*, p. 101.

[21] For examples of middle-class patronage of Italian artists, see Bernard Aikema and Ewoud Mijnlieff, 'Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini: A Venetian Painter in the Low Countries 1716–18', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 44 (1993), 215–42. For a

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ling argument that patronage, in the strictest sense of the word, was in decline in the eighteenth century: artists and performers were less frequently under the protection of a single monarch or court, but they floated freely between courts and cities, accepting commissions when and where they could.[22] The professionalisation of artists, musicians and performers was developing, while in some parts of Europe traditional ideas about patronage were still being maintained with varying degrees of success. What resulted was a series of uneven situations which more often than not were positive for the artists concerned, as they were able to take advantage of the variety of opportunities at their disposal. A typical example of this was the state of Italian music, especially opera, in London. The Royal Academy of Music was set up in 1719 with a small court subsidy but partly with private funds. It was intended to be a profit-making venture, despite the court support that lay behind its foundation. After it suffered financial collapse in 1728, the Opera of the Nobility (1733–8) locked Italian opera into a system of private aristocratic patronage. Meanwhile, much of the Italian opera in London continued to be managed by impresarios, and it was a system of private management that eventually took over from noble intervention.[23]

The tendency of artists to control and manipulate such unstable situations can be seen very clearly in the career patterns of painters such as the Venetian Pellegrini, who moved from one major court commission to another, as well as spending time in England dividing his time between aristocratic patrons. Similarly, while Canaletto tried to capitalise on the open market of London to sell his *vedute*, his nephew Bernardo Bellotto chose to remain in Dresden, Vienna and Warsaw, possibly because he felt that, however unstable they might be, courts would provide more systematic and predictable commissions.[24] Many artists took advantage of the benefits available through court patronage, but they could suffer badly if they failed to be strategic in manipulating their environment. Indeed, Catherine Whistler has suggested that it was Tiepolo's inability to exploit the existing administrative systems of the Spanish court that meant that his experience there was less satisfactory than that of his rival Mengs, who had learned how to capitalise on the loopholes of court practice.[25]

Italian artists and performers showed a sensitivity to the changing needs of their

fascinating analysis of cultural consumption and its class dimensions in England, see John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1997.

[22] Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England 1680–1768*, New Haven and London, 1988. Frances Haskell, in *Patrons and Painters*, sees the decline of papal patronage as responsible for the shifting nature of patronage in the late seventeenth century, but it is perhaps even more appropriate to suggest, as Pears does, that the very notion of patronage was altogether a thing of the past.

[23] Elizabeth Gibson, 'Italian Opera in London 1750–1775: Management and Finances', *Early Music*, 18 (1990), 47–59; Donald Burrows and Robert D. Hume, 'George I, the Haymarket Opera Company and Handel's *Water Music*', *Early Music*, 19 (1991), 323–41; Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers 1706–1715*, Carbondale, 1982; and especially Curtis Price, Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, volume I: *The King's Theatre, Haymarket 1778–1791*, Oxford, 1995.

[24] See John Eglin's chapter in this volume, and Craske, *Art in Europe*, pp. 72–3.

[25] See Whistler, 'G. B. Tiepolo at the Court of Charles III', pp. 200–01.

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clients and audiences, and the ability of artists to adapt their modes to a mixed audience often had a positive impact on the development of styles and genres. The *commedia dell'arte* is the perfect example of this: it had its roots in popular entertainment, then became part of the staple diet of court culture; and then, in the eighteenth century, was transformed in its details and practices in response to a more mixed audience of court and bourgeoisie.[26] The development of *opera buffa* in different parts of Europe has been partly attributed to the tastes and desires of similarly mixed audiences, who found the classical allusions and moral tone of *opera seria* unpalatable. The same could be said for the growing popularity of *vedute*, which were portable, easily comprehensible and had a greater market and audience than the major decorative schemes for which Italian artists were so renowned.

Traditional court culture, as well as new markets and market situations, were thus equally enabling to Italian artists and performers who were seeking work outside Italy. While instability and diversity of practice could cause uncertainty and unreliability, it could also create situations where artists could operate more effectively and move easily from one system to another as it suited them. The ability of Italians to be flexible and adapt themselves to new situations (a point I will return to below) meant that they were in the best position possible to use their skills to their own advantage. However, a factor which made this advantage even more effective was another eighteenth-century paradox: the greater internationalism of Europe was constantly countered by a continued familialism at all levels of society. If Italians could play off market and court and begin to direct and professionalise their own activities, they could also rely on family structures and networks to give them a greater presence internationally. It is this second paradox which I would now like to investigate.

FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, SUBCULTURES, NETWORKS

The unstable relations between the practices of traditional courts and new markets were not the only changes that enabled the profitable itinerancy of Italian artists and performers in the eighteenth century. A paradox that was equally important to their success was the continued influence of family life at both high and low levels, even while Europe was becoming more obviously international in its diplomatic relations, disputes and cultural life. Economic developments and the greater centralisation of some administrative and political systems did not prevent small kinship groups from continuing to hold an unquestionable power over social and cultural life. These groups did not just consist of immediate families, but could comprise networks of families that managed to maintain a remarkable coherence despite emigration and transculturation.

This worked from both the top down and the bottom up. It would take another

[26] For the full story, see Richards and Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte*; for its implications for art, see Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, New Haven and London, 1988.

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book to outline fully the marital and blood kinships that existed between all the ruling families of Europe in the eighteenth century. The fact that there were three major succession wars during this century (Spanish, Polish, Austrian) reinforces the value attributed to dynastic power and relationship in European politics of the time. However, it is worth noting that although Italy itself was not actually a power in all these interchanges, it became a significant bargaining point, and many European rulers had Italian family connections either by marriage or through martial conquest. For example, Philip V of Spain was married to Elizabeth Farnese, who exerted both a political and cultural influence through her own interventions as well as that of her protégé, Abbe Giulio Alberoni. When the Medici dynasty died out in Florence in 1737, the Habsburgs took over as Grand Dukes of Tuscany, and while the Habsburgs dominated Tuscany, the Bourbons, in the person of Philip V's son Don Carlos, took control of Naples and Sicily. Minor rulers also had Italian marital or family connections, most famously the Elector Palatine, Johann Wilhelm von Pfalz, who married the daughter of Cosimo III de' Medici. In each case, these marital and dynastic connections resulted in some importation of Italians and Italian cultural influence into northern courts.

But familialism also worked at a level lower down the class scale, and here too its functionings served to enable and maintain the smooth exportation of Italian skills. In most parts of Italy, a guild system was still functioning strongly well into the eighteenth century, and guild membership was based on a closed-shop system, which was primarily, if not exclusively, made up of families of craftspeople.[27] When Italian artists and performers travelled, they frequently took their children with them as apprentices or assistants: this can be seen, for example, in the case of *commedia dell'arte* players, who often intermarried and travelled in family units. Painting and decorating were also family businesses. Tiepolo, for instance, travelled to Würzburg and Madrid with his two sons Domenico and Lorenzo; the Colombo, Carlone and Scotti families of painters and stuccoists worked in many European courts, sometimes together and later in separate locations.[28] Although some courts were all-encompassing in their employment of Italian talent, others could focus more on one art or skill than another: there were, for instance, a surfeit of Italian musicians at Mannheim, and whole families of Italian diplomats and administrators in Vienna.[29] It is interesting to note as well that these patterns of movement and settlement, as well as specialisms, were often rooted in particular regions of Italy: thus many decorative artists came from Lombardy.[30]

The links between these networks of aristocratic and artisan families were made in several ways. Firstly, northern European courts with Italian family connections would

[27] For a discussion of this in the context of Renaissance Venice, see N. S. Davidson, '"As Much for its Culture as for its Arms": The Cultural Relations of Venice and its Dependent Cities, 1400–1700', in Alex Cowan, ed., *Mediterranean Urban Culture, 1400–1800*, Exeter, forthcoming.

[28] For examples, see Lavagnino, *Gli artisti italiani*.

[29] Adam Wandruszka, *Österreich und Italien im 18. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1963, p. 99.

[30] See Lavagnino, *Gli artisti italiani*; and Sponza, *Italian Immigrants*, pp. 32ff.

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often import Italian artists and musicians on the recommendations of family members who remained in Italy. Secondly, this system of importation was eased by a network of scouts, impresarios and middlemen who developed a semi-professional status in both art and music during the eighteenth century. As early as the late seventeenth century, when Peter the Great decided to bring western European cultural influences back to Russia, he sent envoys to Italy to scout for talented singers. It is clear that such scouts played a crucial role in fostering cultural interchange and the movement of Italian musicians and artists. We know little about these middlemen, but there are some very famous and notable ones who have left us with enough information to reconstruct the importance of these sort of networks for eighteenth-century cultural interchange. They include Francesco Algarotti, who worked as art scout for Augustus II; Pierre Crozat, whose knowledge of Italian art helped form the taste of French court society in the first decades of the eighteenth century; and Handel, who even sought Italian singers in Dresden, when he was sent to the Continent from London on behalf of the Royal Academy of Music in 1719. Many of these agents visited or lived in Italy and were expected to target Italian talent.

Familial court culture, the self-protectionism of family-based guild systems, and the existence of middlemen with their gazes firmly fixed on Italian talent all encouraged the success of Italian artists in northern Europe. But this success was consolidated by further networks established informally among itinerant or expatriate Italians at the various centres where Italians were particularly welcome. There are numerous instances of clear subcultures of Italians at European courts and cities throughout the eighteenth century, and these networks did not confine themselves to a single profession but involved a cross-section of artists, musicians, architects and poets.[31]

In Düsseldorf, for example, the sculptor Antonio Lione, the poet Stefano Pallavicini, the architect Conte Matteo Alberti, the painter Antonio Pellegrini and many others all worked together. Angela Pellegrini's letters to her sister Rosalba Carriera reveal a clear social circle that involved regular social contact as well as predictable petty jealousies.[32] In Dresden, the collection of Italians was even more diverse, with the sculptor Lorenzo Mattielli, the theatre architect Alessandro Mauro, the naval engineer Giulio Papaete, the singer Faustina Bordoni (who was married to Johann Adolf Hasse, the director of music there), the court poet Giovanni Ambrogio Migliavacca, and even the King's personal physician, Filippo di Violante.[33]

But Italians did not simply live in the same cities and contact each other informally;

[31] As Price, Milhous and Hume put it (in reference to the Italian subculture surrounding the King's Theatre in London): 'To attend the King's Theatre in the late eighteenth century was to encounter a small part of Italy transported on to the south-west side of the Haymarket' (*Italian Opera*, p. 1).

[32] See, for example, the letter from Angela Pellegrini in Düsseldorf to Rosalba Carriera in Venice during the spring of 1714, in which the competition between Sebastiano Ricci and Bellucci is the point of discussion (*Lettere*, I, p. 269), and another letter from the Arcadian poet Rapparini to Carriera of 3 June 1714, when he is jokingly offensive about the Italian court architect Conte Alberti (*Lettere*, I, p. 282).

[33] *Le vedute di Dresda*, p. 33.

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