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Abstracts

MARIA CONCETTA CALABRESE, Messina e la *honra* della «Palazzata» nel Seicento

During the Spanish domination, Messina experienced a massive population increase. As custom demanded at the time in all great cities both European and Italian, it was structured as if it were a scenography or a theatre – a magnificent background where a play of the powers could take place. The city itself became a theatre to the eye of spectators, and travellers arriving from the sea. The vision of the “Palazzata” (a crescent of marble palaces), characterised by all its monumental patrician buildings with their decorated entrances and gateways to the city, was amazing.

When, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Emanuele Filiberto expressed his desire to have the crescent built, the most powerful, noble families responded zealously to the governmental proposal and seized the opportunity to occupy that great space, which was both desirable and privileged. It would be the mark of the city, the “honra”, the symbol of the city and its governing class. Unmistakably, that was meant to be a political strategy by the people of Messina towards the city of Palermo. Indeed, due to its richness, Messina had always had the political ambitions to become the other “capital city”. However, its tragic revolt, occurred in 1674-78, against the Spanish Crown, resulted in a bloody suppression of the opponents, which led to the loss of the previously granted privileges. Although the “Palazzata Operation” did not succeed from a political point of view, the classic scene remained the symbol of the city in paintings and literature from that day forward.

Keywords:

Seventeenth Century

Messina

Monumental Patrician Buildings