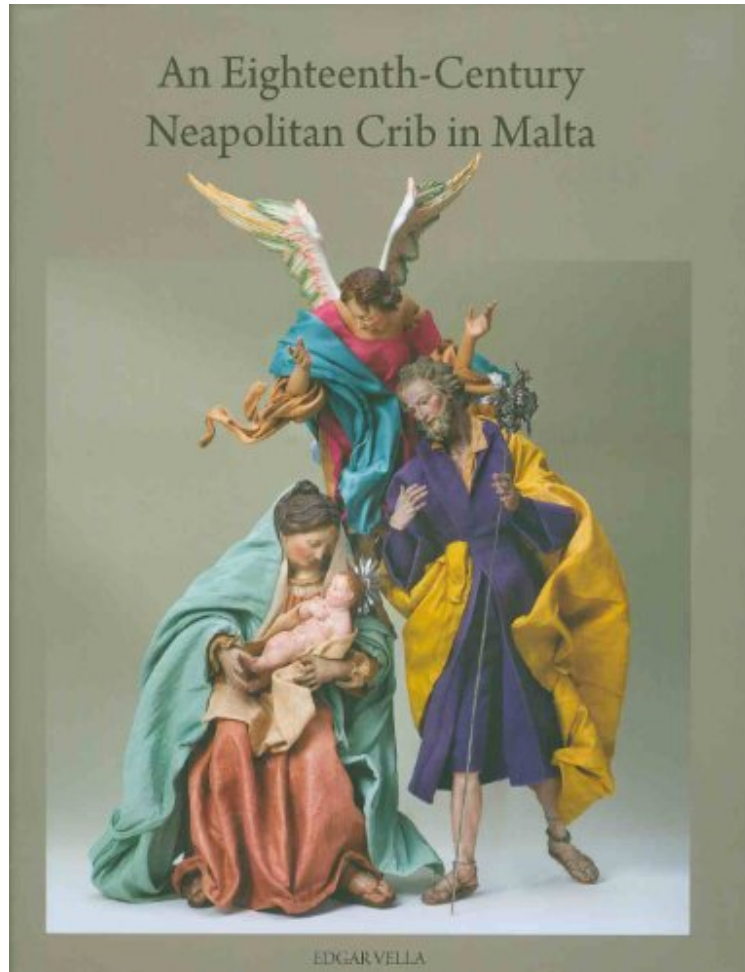


An Eighteenth-Century Neapolitan Crib in Malta

Edgar Vella

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Edgar Vella : An Eighteenth-Century Neapolitan Crib in Malta before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Eighteenth-Century Neapolitan Crib in Malta:

The history of Naples is dotted with priests enchanted by the Mystery of Christmas, such as saints like Cajetan of Thiene, Joseph Calasanzio, and Alphonse Maria De' Liguori. This book is about Fr Edgar Vella Neapolitan crib which knows its success mainly to three factors: light, form, and colour, that, fused together, reveal the infinite love of God towards humanity to the point of taking the form of man and being born poor among the poor, to redeem all in the same manner: the rich, the powerful, the underprivileged, the marginalized, the afflicted, the suffering, the downtrodden. This form of craftsmanship of the highest artistic value has always attracted the most varied personalities: from princes to sovereigns, from bankers to merchants, from prelates to humble priests, from devotees to unbelievers, but, above

all, it has created a dazzling and fable-like atmosphere that leaves both adults and children enchanted, and makes them live in paradise for the moment. In the early 1990s Fr Edgar acquired his first crib figures at antique markets in London, among which a Madonna by Lorenzo Mosca, a St Joseph by Nicola Somma, and a rustic figure by Genzano, truly lucky acquisitions. By time other acquisitions followed and, through meticulous observation, analysis, and research, other important names of crib sculptures from the Settecento came forth: Francesco Viva, Giuseppe De Luca, other pieces by Lorenzo Mosca, Giuseppe Gori, Francesco and Camillo Celebrano, Salvatore Franco, Nicola and Aniello Ingaldi, Francesco Capiello. Many crib figures are to be dated to the setting of the various workshops that emerged in eighteenthcentury Naples, some of which of extreme importance, such as that of Giuseppe Sanmartino, the caposcuola of Neapolitan sculpture. Fr Edgar's collection has grown throughout these years until it has reached a substantial number of figures. This fact gave rise to the need of exhibiting the collection to the general public and to communicate the joy of owning such works of art.