

*Circulation des idées et des pratiques politiques France et Italie (XIIIe–XVIe siècle).*

Anne Lemonde and Ilaria Taddei, eds.

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The study of Franco-Italian relationships between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries constitutes a classic area of study in French historiography. In the search for an ontological model for modern identities in art, culture, and politics, from the French perspective, Italy has served various processes of nationalistic legitimation, including comparisons with the humanistic cultures of the Italian Peninsula or analyses of an

anti-Italian feeling that was constitutive of the early modern French political culture. It is precisely this binary stereotype that the editors and the authors of this volume have tried to deconstruct. Via examples that focus on the circulation of ideas through political practices across varied sources like iconographic programs or chancellery documents, each contribution breaks with a traditional comparative history that limits itself to the question: what does France owe to Italy?

With an ambitious chronology, the editors have focused on the exchanges of men and ideas, putting at the center of their introduction and conclusion the concept of individual experience. Each article demonstrates how cultural and political models that circulated through French and Italian territories were in fact the result of constant negotiations. Faced with the impossibility of tracing well-defined political models passing back and forth across the Franco-Italian frontiers, the editors instead organize the volume in three thematic parts. The first part focuses on how exchanges were conceived by historical agents, while the second part maps the dynamics of exchange, underlining the role that political organizations like autonomous cities, principalities, dynastic ensembles, and consular formations played in the flow of ideas between Italy and France. This second part shows a new map of the many regions across which Franco-Italian exchanges took place. The last section focuses on the political discourses produced by exchange, giving a vivid picture of the chance encounters that engendered a Franco-Italian political culture during the late medieval and early modern period.

The volume complicates the very notion of intermediaries by highlighting the role played by diplomat-notaries and prince and princesses *passseurs* among the more traditional of cultural brokers, in a Franco-Italian interactive history. Each contribution offers a critical point of view about the phenomena of rejection, adaptation, and appropriation of the political exchanges, showing that any study of the relationship between France and Italy must rely on a nonnationalistic model of constant and asymmetric interactions through individual experiences.

The volume makes a significant contribution to the study of connected history, although it is limited to the Franco-Italian case and does not take into account the mediation of other politico-cultural realities. The study of the processes of migrations and the creation of hybrid and transnational identities would have added another scale that could have contributed to thinking about French and Italian areas as part of a polycentric and global map of political interactions. More analysis of processes of politico-cultural miscegenation and collaborative networks, such as that of the republic of letters, for example, would have helped create a more nuanced typology of the agents that contributed to the circulation of political ideas between France and Italy from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Considering more broadly the imperial, Iberian, and Mediterranean worlds would have allowed a richer context, one which could have included an analysis of linguistic translation, political fidelities and dissidence, and territorial connections and disconnections.

These minor criticisms do not take away from the suggestive avenues the editors have opened for reframing a very traditional area of study in French historiography. As a whole, the volume shows the diversity of experiences that shaped political communication across

Europe during a long Renaissance. This volume echoes recent research in other fields, such as the European projection of the pluri-Continental early modern Iberian monarchies. It is part of an editorial line from the *École française de Rome* that tends to think about the composite realities of France and Italy as hubs of interactions rather than centers of production of national political models. The recent publication, in the same series, of the volume *Hétérodoxies croisées: Catholicismes pluriels entre France et Italie, XVIe–XVIIe siècles* (2015) by Alain Tallon and Gigliola Fragnito deepens chronologically and thematically this line of research (by incorporating the religious component) and opens the study of Franco-Italian relationships to more complex spatial and political interactions.

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