

*Le Duché de Milan et les commanditaires français (1499–1521)*. Frédéric Elsig and Mauro Natale, eds.

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*Le Duché de Milan et les commanditaires français (1499–1521)* is a miscellaneous work, and the partial proceeds of a conference held in Geneva on 30–31 March 2012. Both book and conference, funded by the National Switzerland Fund for Scientific Research, are part of a broader scholarship concerning the building of cultural identities in Lombardy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

As editors Frédéric Elsig and Mauro Natale write, the book can be divided into four main parts, linked by a common topic: cultural continuity or discontinuity from the Sforzas' dominion to the French government in Lombardy. The first part is dedicated to monumental architecture. Here Francesco Repishti analyzes what remains from the Sforza period and what architectural innovations in Milan persisted during the French government. Grégoire Exterman focuses his attention instead on the “peripheral” town

of Genoa, and the sculptures and commissions there. Also included in this first part is an essay concerning French influences in illuminated manuscripts by Pier Luigi Mulas.

The second part of the volume is characterized by particular attention devoted to painting and to Leonardo da Vinci's influences on it. Laure Fagnart thus analyzes how strong King Louis XII's admiration was for the *Cena* by Leonardo, and how this royal favor influenced painting commissions. Leonardo's influences are also the topic of Edoardo Villata's essay, while Maria Cristina Passoni investigates Bernardino Corio and his works during the transition from the Sforza to the French dominion in Milan, with particular attention to his role as portraitist. The third part is entirely dedicated to commissions and to the men who carried them out. Edoardo Rossetti pays attention to the role of Cardinal Bernardino Carvajal as buyer, while Cristina Quattrini focuses on the commissions in Santa Maria's church construction. Sandra Galloni investigates the commissions and the influences linked to the cult of the Maddalena.

The fourth and last part concerns the influence of Lombard painting in France, not forgetting the role of Leonardo in it. Claudia Gaggetta starts with an analysis of the frescoes in Saint Cécile Cathedral at Albi, and studies what had come from the Lombard culture in France, while Frédéric Elsig investigates the role of Da Vinci in French culture. Elsig calls his essay the epilogue of the entire book, but, truly, it cannot be considered an end: his work can really be a starting point for future researches. Indeed the whole book has been conceived and created to open or strengthen the ways in which the relation between France and Milan during the Italian Wars period is investigated. It is the main purpose of all the authors to invite scholars and colleagues to not only focus on political and military topics, but to also include cultural ones, especially those of commissions and artistic works first, with a particular attention to the influence of arts in political affairs.

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