

Reviews

Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City, eds. Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen J. Milner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xiv, 371 pp., 82 ill., 1 table. ISBN 0-5218-2688-8. US.\$ 95.

This exciting volume appears following a conference (12–13 November 1999) at the National Gallery, London, that accompanied the exhibit “Florence and the 1470s: Contexts and Contrasts,” curated by Pat Rubin and Alison Wright. Although many of the collection’s twelve essays do have a link to Florence, its focus stretches geographically from the duchy of Milan to the kingdom of Naples, and chronologically from 1400 to 1550. The editors state that the book aims at the revision of Burckhardtian historiography, substituting an analysis of cultural exchange for the traditional “taxonomy of national culture” (p. 2). This tradition is impossible to uphold in the face of a peninsula awash with differentiation. The reference to “translation” in the volume’s title seeks to reveal the strategies and circumstances of differentiation employed by Italian cities through the vestiges of artistic influence, literary imitation, religious orthodoxy and clientage in sociopolitical relations.

The volume divides into three sections, each pertaining to an issue linked with “translation”. The first section, “How to Translate,” contains essays that show how the requests of clients, often geopolitically defined, are transformed by artists based on their own need for continuous patronage or the demands of popularity. In particular, Shelley E. Zuraw’s chapter deconstructing Mino da Fiesole’s construction of a tomb for Cardinal Niccolò Forteguerra († 1473) shows the integration of Florentine tomb design with Roman sepulchral iconography spurred by the change in status faced by the deceased cardinal’s family. Following Zuraw, Luke Syson presents Bertoldo di Giovanni, an instructor in the famed Medici sculpture garden, as aiding Lorenzo il Magnifico in creating a “Florentine visual vernacular” (p. 124) through his dissemination of Donatello’s models.

In the second section, “Regional Identities and the Encounter with Florence,” three essays reveal the varied relationships that Medicean Florence had with surrounding states. Stephen J. Milner explores the Medici appropriation of a Pistoiese commission established to build a domestic sepulchral monument to the same Cardinal Forteguerra. Milner shows how the commission evolves to become part of Lorenzo’s attempt to assert personal control over the subject city during the 1470s. Writing from another perspective, Stephen J. Campbell’s chapter suggests that the unlegitimated Lorenzo sought to emulate the practices of Ferrara’s Duke Ercole d’Este, as one who carved a seigniorial state out of a papal vicariate. This essay suggests quite persuasively that historians re-evaluate their current conceptions of centre and periphery. Georgia Clarke presents the interesting case of Giovanni II Bentivoglio: a man whose enterprises balanced the cultural

translation of courtly and *all'antica* motifs with the influence of several neighbouring states, while maintaining a *bolognese* image throughout. Other essays by Deborah L. Krohn and Bruce L. Edelstein round out the section by providing discussions of the translation of political identities in the artistic portrayal of civic hagiography and landscape design respectively.

The third section, "Negotiating the Cultural Other," includes three essays that examine attempts to include traditionally alien groups and topics in the orthodox city. Morten Steen Hansen shows how an Armenian merchant in Ancona symbolically submitted himself to contemporary political powers through ecclesiastical artistic patronage, simultaneously asserting his conversion and heterodox identity. Brian A. Curran illuminates the extensive, but frequently ignored, relics of interest in Egyptianism that remain in Rome from the pontificates of Alexander VI to Leo X. Christopher S. Celenza returns the volume's focus to Florence in his examination of Marsilio Ficino's journey from the intellectual centre to the periphery, as his study of Platonic sources continued into the 1490s, growing more esoteric and further at odds with the Savonarolan regime.

Confraternity enthusiasts will find with pleasure a couple of essays that relate directly to their field. Michelle O'Malley's contribution discussing the negotiation of artistic subject between clients and artists describes, though briefly, the experiences of a few sodalities, while Megan Holmes examines the increased demand for personal devotional portraits of the Madonna, through an investigation of the workshop of the Lippi and Pesellino Imitator during the late Quattrocento.

This volume provides a fascinating entrée into the diversity of Italian cities and the creativity they and their inhabitants exercised to meet a variety of demands. Campbell and Milner should be congratulated for organizing a well-researched collection of essays that happily concludes with a valuable "Selected Bibliography" (pp. 355–66).

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