

THE SALA DELLE ASSE IN THE SFORZA CASTLE IN MILAN

by

Patrizia Costa

B.S. Industrial Administration and Italian, Carnegie Mellon University, 1989

M.A. History of Art, University of Pittsburgh, 1993

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2006

This dissertation was presented

By

Patrizia Costa

It was defended on

February 10, 2006

and approved by

Ann Sutherland Harris, Professor of Italian Baroque Art
Henry Clay Frick Department of the History of Art and Architecture

David Wilkins, Professor Emeritus of Italian Renaissance Art
Henry Clay Frick Department of the History of Art and Architecture

H. Anne Weis, Associate Professor of Ancient Greek and Roman Art
Henry Clay Frick Department of the History of Art and Architecture

Kathleen Wren Christian, Assistant Professor of Italian Renaissance Art
Henry Clay Frick Department of the History of Art and Architecture

Francesca Savoia, Associate Professor of Italian Languages and Literature
Department of French and Italian Languages and Literature

Dennis Looney, Associate Professor of Italian Languages and Literatures
Department of French and Italian Languages and Literature

Copyright © by Patrizia Costa

2006

This dissertation is dedicated to my children
Edoardo and Gianmarco

studio sapientia crescit

THE SALA DELLE ASSE IN THE SFORZA CASTLE IN MILAN

Patrizia Costa, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2006

This dissertation deals with two periods in the history of a room in the Sforza Castle known as the *Sala delle Asse*: the fifteenth-century, when Ludovico Sforza (1452-1508) commissioned Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) to paint it and the late-nineteenth-to-early-twentieth century when the *Sala* was re-discovered and subjected to a major restoration by the Italian architectural historian Luca Beltrami (1854-1933). Beltrami's participation in the *Sala's* re-discovery in 1893, the architectural and pictorial alterations he ordered in preparing the room for public view, and his monographic presentation of the *Sala's* fifteenth-century history will be discussed here using new archival evidence. The author will argue that Beltrami's interventions ultimately shifted attention away from the *Sala's* fifteenth-century circumstances and transformed it into a key component of the ambitious restoration scheme that Beltrami had formulated for the Sforza Castle as whole. This was a scheme that supported certain political and cultural ideologies about Milan at the turn of the twentieth-century. In an effort to provide an alternative voice for the *Sala* to that of Beltrami, the author will use new archival documentation to discuss the participation of Paul Müller-Walde, a German art historian who is credited with the actual re-discovery of the *Sala* but whose contributions remained curiously absent from all modern art-historical literature dealing with the *Sala*. Acting on the

premise that a more plausible and much needed interpretation for the *Sala*'s fifteenth-century history is needed, the author will offer a reconsideration of some of the *Sala*'s most basic problems such as dating, location and possible uses. The author will also deal with Leonardo's contributions and the perils of characterizing the *Sala* as yet another work that sprang fully from Leonardo's imagination, with little interference or direction from outside sources. Finally, the author will deal with Ludovico Sforza's reasons for commissioning the *Sala* and lay the groundwork for an expanded and alternative interpretative discourse intended to broaden the avenue of investigation of this important and unique commission in Renaissance art. This dissertation concludes with an extensive Register of Documents containing reproductions or transcriptions of important fifteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century documents for the *Sala delle Asse*.

If you wish to go to the top of a building you must go up step by step; otherwise it will be impossible that you should reach the top. Thus I say to you, whom nature prompts you to pursue this art, if you wish to have sound knowledge of the forms of objects begin with the details of them, and do not go on to the second [step] till you have the first well fixed in memory and in practice. And if you do otherwise you will throw away your time, or certainly greatly prolong your studies. And remember to acquire diligence rather than rapidity.

— *Leonardo da Vinci*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	xi
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	p. 1
A. The <i>Sala delle Asse</i> 's place in art-historical literature	
B. Factors pointing to a pattern of scholarly disinterest: public accessibility, physical condition and the interpretative framework forged by the Italian architectural historian, Luca Beltrami	
C. Arrangement and scope of the chapters in this dissertation	
D. The archival sources used in preparing this dissertation	
PART I - THE SALA DELLE ASSE IN THE LATE 19 th - AND EARLY 20 th -CENTURIES	
2. IN SEARCH OF LEONARDO AT THE SFORZA CASTLE: LUCA BELTRAMI AND PAUL MULLER-WALDE STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE.....	p. 26
A. Who was Luca Beltrami?	
B. Beltrami's ideas and philosophy on conservation and restoration	
C. Beltrami's political crusade for the Sforza Castle	
D. Paul Müller-Walde at the Sforza Castle: a partially-censored contribution?	
E. In search of Müller-Walde's personal archives	

3. FATTI E DISFATTI: THE SALA DELLE ASSE ACCORDING TO LUCA BELTRAMI.....p. 63
 - A. The 1902 transformation of the *Sala delle Asse*
 - B. The reactions of art critics and scholars
 - C. Making sense of the Sala delle Asse in the context of Beltrami's ambitions for the restoration of the Sforza Castle
 - D. Beltrami looks to documents in building a defense for his work on the *Sala delle Asse*

PART II - THE SALA DELLE ASSE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

4. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A FEASIBLE HISTORY OF THE SALA DELLE ASSE: PROBLEMS AND CONSIDERATIONS.....p. 93
 - A. Physical description of the *Sala delle Asse*
 - B. Interpreting the term "asse" in the name *Sala delle Asse*
 - C. The location and function of the *Sala delle Asse* under Ludovico Sforza
 - D. The four plaques in the ceiling of the *Sala delle Asse*
 - E. Establishing a time-line for the *Sala delle Asse*
 - F. The *Saletta Negra* and the *Sala delle Asse* as parts of a unified program
 - G. Payment for the *Sala delle Asse*
5. LEONARDO AND THE SALA DELLE ASSE: PROBLEMS IN ATTRIBUTIONp. 125
 - A. Leonardo da Vinci, painter and designer(?) of the *Sala delle Asse*
 - B. Leonardo's reputation in late-nineteenth-century Milan
 - C. Future considerations

6. TOWARD AN INTERPRETATION OF THE SALA DELLE ASSE.....p. 145

A. The Sala delle Asse's trees

B. The Sala delle Asse's golden cord and knots

C. Beyond mulberries and knots

D. Ludovico Sforza's goals as patron

REGISTER OF DOCUMENTS.....p. 186

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....p. 251

LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Aerial view of the Sforza Castle, Milan.....	p. 23
1.2	Leonardo da Vinci, <i>Sala delle Asse</i> , ca. 1498, Sforza Castle, Milan.....	p. 24
1.3	Portrait of Ludovico Sforza.....	p. 25
2.1	Luca Beltrami in a photograph from 1930.....	p. 62
4.1	General plan of the Sforza Castle, Milan.....	p. 122
4.2	Reconstructed ground plan of the first floor of the Ducal Court, Sforza Castle in the fifteenth century.....	p. 123
4.3	Reconstructed ground plan of the second floor of the Ducal Court, Sforza Castle in the fifteenth century.....	p. 124

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation grew out of a research paper for a graduate seminar on domestic room decoration in the Renaissance taught by David Wilkins in the spring of 1992 when I was still an M.A. student. In the company of such works as Raphael's *Villa Farnesina* (1511), Giulio Romano's *Palazzo del Te* (1527), and Andrea Mantegna's *Camera Picta* (1465), the *Sala delle Asse* presented itself as an anomaly: it was attached to a no-less-famous artist, Leonardo da Vinci, yet only a handful of studies had been published on it. Hopeful and, in retrospect, naive that I would somehow determine the symbolic significance of this complex work in one short semester, I dug as deep as I could into its fifteenth-century circumstances. When my efforts in iconographic interpretation failed to be fruitful, I shelved the project and returned to my usual scholarly concerns in seventeenth-century painting and drawing.

A year later, John Williams suggested to me that the *Sala delle Asse* merited additional attention. He had just finished reading Richard Turner's intriguing book *Inventing Leonardo* and could see —even before I did— that the *Sala* could lead to a fascinating Ph.D. topic and new understandings about Leonardo's role in the history of

art. I started asking myself the simple question of why the *Sala* had not enjoyed all of the attention of Leonardo's other known works. It was in satisfying this curiosity that a dissertation started to take form.

I am profoundly grateful to my doctoral committee (Ann Sutherland Harris, David Wilkins, Anne Weis, Kathleen Christian, Francesca Savoia and Dennis Looney) for having faith in me, for offering direction when needed, and for their ample doses of good cheer and friendship. Ann Sutherland Harris showed me the importance of reading works of art with sharpness of mind and eye. It has been a privilege for me to experience the intellectual and artistic richness of Italian art through her teachings. She took me under her wing as a Ph.D. student and taught me —with diligence, affection and much patience— one of the most important lessons in my graduate-school training: that critical evaluations are more intimately connected with the historically specific than it is popularly supposed, and that inadequacies in methodology can only be overcome through the disciplined practice of balancing both. In the spring of 2004, sensing that I was about to abandon my graduate studies, she took me out to lunch and ordered me to write. For this, I wish to extend heartfelt thanks.

For as long as I have known David Wilkins, my co-advisor, he has worn his erudition about Italian Renaissance art lightly. Through him, I came to realize that the Renaissance is not about a single history, as countless textbooks have alleged, but that it has, instead, many different histories. Patrons, artists, politics, social identities, and ideologies have all paraded through his lectures with due attention and were met with challenging questions. He supported my leap of faith into late fifteenth-century Milan and I thank him for his crucial recommendations on organization and priorities. He can only be credited with having inspired whatever is positive about the Renaissance arguments in this dissertation. Any errors in fact or interpretation are fully my own.

Deepest gratitude also goes to Anne Weis whose wisdom and clarity inspired me to trust my own intuition and abilities. She encouraged me to explore “unconventional” paths through the thrill of research. Her elegance of mind helped me to make the transition from a mess to something worthy of ink and paper on more than one occasion.

Francesca Savoia and Dennis Looney welcomed me into their seminars in the Italian Department even as an undergraduate at another university. Their commitment and enthusiasm for Italian studies is nothing short of contagious and they’ve generously sustained my efforts to examine art in an interdisciplinary context. Because

of them, Italian is not just a language I was fortunate to be born with *ma uno strumento per comunicare con l'arte e la cultura*.

Kathleen Christian graciously agreed to join my Ph.D. committee when the dissertation was already in an advanced stage. She encouraged me to expand my interpretation of the *Sala delle Asse* as a showcase for the Italian nation after the *Risorgimento* and the dissertation is now better than it would have been because of her suggestion. She also saved me from several infelicities in style and argument.

Due thanks go to Amedeo Bellini in the department of Architectural History in Milan's Politecnico and the insightful editorial staff at the Archivio Storico Lombardo for inviting me to write an article on the *Sala delle Asse* in 2002. Professor Bellini's kindness and generosity in sharing his impressive knowledge of Milan and the work of Luca Beltrami made many parts of this dissertation possible.

The following fellowships and travel grants enabled me to conduct preliminary research in Italy: the University of Pittsburgh Nationality Room Scholarship, the Friends of Frick Fine Arts Travel grant, and the Art History Fellowship in Memory of Dr. J.H. Dwyer and in Honor of David Wilkins. Hospitality and assistance was plentifully offered by the staff at the following institutions: the Archivio Storico in

Milan, the Archivio Storico in Mantua, the Biblioteca d'Arte and the Archivio Fotografico in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan's Soprintendenza dei Beni Architettonici, the Archivio Luca Beltrami and the library of the Ente Raccolta Vinciana. A special thanks is due to Teri Fields in the University Library at Texas Tech University and to Ray Ann Lockard and Marcia Rostek in the Henry Clay Frick Fine Arts Library. All three patiently helped me with countless interlibrary-loans and worked their magic for finding the unfindable. Barbara Götze, head archivist at the Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen in Berlin, provided invaluable assistance in locating of letters by Paul-Müller Walde and Giovanna Ginex, director of the Collezione Fotografica della Raccolta Beltrami, gave me permission to work in the archive before it was officially opened to the public so that I could move forward with my research. I also wish to acknowledge Cornelia Piok Zanon for her expertise in solving my German translation problems.

Last but never least, I thank: my husband Eldo whose love and support made the grueling experience of writing all the more tolerable; my parents Paolo and Nancy and my grandmother Maria whose unshakable faith in me strengthened my spirit through thick and thin; and my children Edoardo and Gianmarco —to whom this dissertation is dedicated— and whose love of learning has been a great joy to watch.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Sala delle Asse's place in art-historical literature • Factors pointing to a pattern of scholarly disinterest: public accessibility, physical condition, and the interpretative framework forged by the Italian architectural historian, Luca Beltrami • Arrangement and scope of the chapters in this dissertation • The archival sources used in preparing this dissertation

The Sala delle Asse's place in art-historical literature:

The debt incurred by art historians in trying to shed new light on most works by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) is enormous. So much literature has been devoted to this artist that his must constitute one of the largest bibliographies in the history of art. I am careful to say "most works" and not "all works" because we can still, surprisingly, refer to at least one exception: Leonardo's wall-paintings for a room in the Sforza Castle in Milan known from fifteenth-century documents as the "Sala delle Asse" (Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2). The wall paintings were commissioned in the mid-to-late 1490's by Ludovico Maria Sforza (1452-1508), then Duke of Milan (Figure 1.3). In spite of Leonardo's extraordinary fame, the rarity with which the medium of wall painting appears in his oeuvre, and the ingenuity of the *Sala's* composition, the bibliography on the *Sala's* fifteenth-century circumstances remains comparatively small.

The first – and for many reasons indispensable – historical account of the *Sala delle Asse* was published in 1902 by a Milanese architect and architectural historian named Luca Beltrami (1854-1933).¹ His monograph summarized the events leading to the *Sala*'s re-discovery in 1893 and led historians through a consummative discussion of pertinent fifteenth-century documents, including ones that linked the *Sala* to Leonardo.² Studies by Joseph Gantner (1959), Eva Börsch-Supan (1967), Volker Hoffman (1972) and Marie G. Aggàzy (1978) – although less than satisfying in their attempts to deal with the known documentation – marked the beginning of scholars' suspicions that a complex symbolism may have been featured in the *Sala*.³ They represent a courageous, but unsustainable, attempt to refute Carlo Pedretti's claim in 1956 that the *Sala*'s original iconography was "lost to us."⁴ Most other scholars and art critics have dismissed the *Sala* as an insignificant, decorative landscape. One critic even labeled it as an amusing

¹ L. Beltrami, *Leonardo da Vinci e la Sala delle 'Asse' nel Castello di Milano*, Milan 1902.

² The first time documents securely place Leonardo at work in the *Sala delle Asse* is in 1498. The information comes from a letter dated April 21, 1498 written by an assistant named Gualtiero Bescapè to inform Ludovico Sforza that "Magistro Leonardo" promised to finish the room "per tuto Settembre." (Archivio di Stato, Milan, Classe Belle Arti, *Autografi*, 102, fasc. 34. This letter was first transcribed and published by Gerolamo Calvi in 1869 but is mostly known from Beltrami, 1902, pp. 24 and 26). There has been considerable disagreement among scholars, however, on whether the date marks the beginning or a more mature stage in the commission.

³ J. Gantner, "Les fragments récemment découverts d'une fresque de Léonard de Vinci au Château de Milan," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 53, January, 1959, pp. 27-34. E. Börsch-Supan, *Garten-, Landschafts- und Paradies-motive im Innenraum*, Berlin, 1967, pp. 244ff. V. Hoffman, "Leonardos Ausmalung der Sala delle Asse im Castello Sforzesco," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, vol. 16, 1972, pp. 51-62. M. G. Aggàzy, "Locus amoenus et vinculum delictorum dans l'art de la Renaissance," *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 51, 1978, pp. 55-62.

⁴ C. Pedretti, *Leonardo: a Study in Chronology and Style*, Berkeley, 1956, pp. 76-77.

"capriccio" on the part of Leonardo.⁵ It was only in the 1980's and 1990's that scholars such as Pietro Marani, Martin Kemp, Dawson Kiang, John Moffit and Evelyn Welch began to view the *Sala delle Asse* as the product of a carefully calculated, program undertaken by Leonardo and his patron.⁶ Their interpretations differed, but all were based on a common assumption: the *Sala* was painted to evoke complex political, social and intellectual meanings to discerning viewers living in the fifteenth century. An unprecedented interest and curiosity in the *Sala*'s fifteenth-century circumstances began to grow – slowly, but steadily – throughout the general art-historical community. By the mid 1990's, the *Sala* could boast a brief mention in two popular university textbooks on Italian Renaissance art: Alison Cole's *Virtue and Magnificence - Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts* (1995) and John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke's *Art in Renaissance Italy* (1997).⁷

⁵ In 1981, Jurgis Baltrusaitis declared that the *Sala delle Asse* "c'est tout d'abord, un exercice d'adresse sur des formes pures, un jeu d'esprit." J. Baltrusaitis, *Le moyen age fantastiques. Antiquités et exotisme dans l'art gothique*, Paris, 1981, p. 86.

⁶ P. Marani, "Leonardo e le colonne *ad troncos*," *Raccolta Vinciana*, vol. 21, 1982, pp. 103-120. M. Kemp, "The Exercise of Fantasia," *Leonardo da Vinci. The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981, pp. 152-212; D. Kiang, "Gasparo Visconti's *Pasitea* and the *Sala delle Asse*," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 2, 1989, pp. 101-108; J. Moffit, "Leonardo's *Sala delle Asse* and the Primordial Origins of Architecture," *Arte Lombarda*, no. 92-93, 1990, pp. 76-90; E. Welch, *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan*, New Haven and London, 1995.

⁷ A. Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence. Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts*, New York, 1995, pp. 114-115 and J. T. Paoletti and G. M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, New York, 1997, pp. 318-9.

Factors pointing to a pattern of scholarly disinterest: public accessibility, physical condition, and the interpretative framework forged by the Italian architectural historian, Luca Beltrami:

Why did it take so long for scholars after Beltrami to take serious interest in the *Sala delle Asse's* fifteenth-century history? The temptation to blame the *Sala's* deteriorated physical condition and the fact that it was virtually inaccessible to the public for many centuries is strong. In 1499, French troops marched into Milan, removed Ludovico Sforza from power and converted the Sforza Castle from a noble and courtly estate into a military outpost. During this period of foreign occupation, there was little interest in preserving the *Sala's* paintings or in publicizing their existence to the outside world. This may also explain why no specific mentions of the *Sala* appear in early art-historical treatises or popular artist biographies such as Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*.⁸ Sometime after the late seventeenth-century, the *Sala* was also converted into a military stable.⁹ This conversion resulted in the loss of crucial architectural and pictorial components that could have facilitated a modern reconstruction of the *Sala* as it existed under Ludovico Sforza. The original window

⁸ However, the following statement by Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo is sometimes interpreted by art historians as an indirect reference to Leonardo's work in the *Sala delle Asse*: "negli alberi altresì si è trovato una bella inventione di Leonardo, di far che tutti i rami si facciano in diversi gruppi bizzarri, la qual foggia usò, canestrandoli tutti, Bramante ancora." G. P. Lomazzo, *Trattato della pittura*, 1584, p. 430.

⁹ I write "sometime after the late seventeenth-century" because, in 1661, two *ingegneri camerali* described the *Sala* as follows: *sala quadra con volta a lunette [e] dipinte, duoi fenestroni con suoi telaroni di rovere, invedriate a disegno, con suoi telari in quattro ante*. The phrase *lunette dipinte* may indicate that Leonardo's decorations had remained virtually unchanged until this time. *Relatione generale della visita, et consegna della fabbrica castello di Milano. Fatta dall' infrascritti ingegneri Regii camerali, per ordine dell' illustriss. Magistrato delle Regie ducali entrate ordinarie dello stato di Milano, l' anno M.DC.LXI*, Milan, 1661. The engineers' report is cited in Beltrami, 1902, p. 66.

casements, floor tiles and wall plaster up to about two meters from the floor were destroyed and replaced with other materials. The original entryways were closed and a new, larger opening was forced through one of the walls so that horses could pass through more easily. Leonardo's work on the upper walls of the *Sala* disappeared under heavy layers of whitewash. The *Sala* continued to function as a stable until the fall of 1883, when ownership of the Castle was formally turned over to the City of Milan and a major architectural restoration was launched under the direction of Luca Beltrami. It was during this process, and thanks to the zealous investigations of a German art historian named Paul Müller-Walde (1858-1931) that the surviving paintings of the *Sala delle Asse* re-emerged from the anonymity they were cast into soon after they were commissioned.

What did re-emerge, however, was in terrible condition. Leonardo – known for his impatience with the true fresco method – painted the *Sala's* motifs directly on dry *intonaco* using an oil tempera mixture whose composition is still to be determined. This technique produced the same disastrous results as in the *Last Supper*, located in the refectory of the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie: the dry *intonaco* did not absorb enough paint color to produce a fixed and permanent bond. From time to time, restorers are able to recover Renaissance frescos from under layers of paint or plaster in good condition. In this case, much of the paint that Leonardo applied to the *Sala's* *intonaco* flaked off with the passage of time or the application of new wall treatments.

More devastating is the fact that the *Sala delle Asse* incurred additional damage in 1901-1902, before the general public and art historians had an opportunity to see it. The City of Milan gave Luca Beltrami permission to direct a full re-painting of the vault and he made what appear to be arbitrary alterations and repairs below the vault as well. In 1954-55, a restorer named Ottemi della Rotta lightened these overpaintings but he did not remove them completely. It is not clear why della Rotta chose this course of action. Perhaps he feared that the original remains were too poor to be presentable. Nevertheless, visitors continue to experience the *Sala delle Asse* in this state. Unlike the *Last Supper*, the *Sala* has never benefited from a thorough scientific investigation, cleaning, or proper restoration.¹⁰

The *Sala's* lengthy disappearance and poor condition may explain some past disinterest on the part of art historians, but this is not the complete story. A brief comparison to the *Last Supper* and consideration of the state of Leonardo studies in the early twentieth century shows us why. The *Last Supper's* delicate and precarious state – not to mention its complicated restoration history – did little to discourage the curiosity of scholars or prevent it from becoming one of the most famous mural

¹⁰ On this fact, I checked with Dott.ssa Maria Teresa Fiorio, Director of the Castello Sforzesco Museum. She confirmed that there were no records or indication of restorations or cleanings after della Rotta.

paintings in the world.¹¹ Goethe, for example, went so far to describe the *Last Supper* as the key to the vault of all artistic thought! And we must also consider that the *Sala delle Asse* was rediscovered at a time when Leonardo studies in general were progressing with incredible interest and speed. Beginning in the late nineteenth-century, scholars such as Gerolamo Calvi, Giovanni Piumati, Charles Ravaisson-Mollien, and Jean Paul Richter were publishing facsimiles, transcriptions and translations of Leonardo's scattered, yet extensive, legacy of manuscripts. Others, like Paul Müller-Walde, Eugène Müntz, Francesco Malaguzzi Valeri, Wladerman von Seidlitz, and Giovanni Poggi, were giving systematic scrutiny to Leonardo's oeuvre and laying the groundwork for a firmly documented chronology. It was an extraordinarily productive time and one might have expected the re-discovery of the *Sala* to have taken Leonardo scholars by storm. It did not. As indicated by the brief historiography presented at the beginning of this chapter, another century passed before a handful of plausible iconographical interpretations actually surfaced. Unfortunately, efforts to reconstruct a history for *Sala delle Asse* based on fifteenth-century documentation have not advanced much beyond Luca Beltrami's original contributions.

Beltrami expressed his own disappointment over this situation in *Leonardo e i disfattisti suoi*, a small book he wrote under the pseudonym "Polifilo" seventeen years

¹¹ "Ein rechter Schlussstein in das Gewölbe der Kunstbegriffe." Written in a letter to Count Carlo Augusto dated May 23, 1788. Known to me from E. H. Gombrich's preface to P. Marani, *Il Genio e le Passioni. Leonardo e il Cenacolo. Precedenti, innovazioni, riflessioni di un capolavoro*, Milan, 2001, pp. 27.

after his monograph on the *Sala* was published.¹² Beltrami argued that "the process of complete discreditation that was applied to Leonardo as a painter was extended to his efforts in the Sforza Castle."¹³ He believed that the scholarship on the *Sala* had been boycotted by *disfattisti*, an Italian term he used to describe historians and critics that were intent on "liquidating Leonardo as much as possible" both as an architect and with respect to "whatever traces he might have left in the [Sforza] Castle in his capacity as decorator of the ducal rooms."¹⁴ For the most part, Beltrami's words still ring true today. The vast majority of scholars in the art historical community would be more inclined to dismiss Leonardo's contributions in the *Sala* than to investigate them further.

We have yet to answer the question posed a few paragraphs ago: why did it take so long for art historians to take a serious interest in the *Sala*? What is the source of the "discreditation" or *disfattismo* – to borrow the term used by Beltrami – that plagued the *Sala* after its re-discovery in 1883? This question troubled me considerably in the early research stages for this dissertation. Then, in the Fall of 2001, I paid a visit to several archives in Milan where documents and papers pertaining to Beltrami's work at the Sforza Castle are still preserved. It was there that I was finally able to formulate a clear,

¹² Polifilo, *Leonardo e i disfattisti suoi*, Milan, 1919.

¹³ "il metodo di sommaria demolizione, applicato a Leonardo come pittore, venne esteso all'intervento di Leonardo nel Castello Sforzesco." Polifilo, 1919, p. 181.

¹⁴ "liquida[re] ad ogni modo Leonardo, come architetto militare" and "nelle traccie ch'egli p[oteva] aver lasciato in Castello, quale autore di decorazioni nelle sale ducali." Polifilo, 1919, p. 182.

yet surprising, answer: much of the *Sala's* critical and scholarly misfortune has to do the interventions and interpretations orchestrated by Luca Beltrami himself.

The archival documentation I examined pertaining to (1) Beltrami's participation in the *Sala's* re-discovery in 1893, (2) the architectural and pictorial alterations he ordered before unveiling the *Sala* to the general public in 1902, and (3) his monograph on the *Sala* showed that Beltrami had ultimately transformed the *Sala* from a work that had quite a bit to say about life and art in Milan under Ludovico Sforza into an effective propaganda tool for supporting certain notions about Milan's social and political position at the end of the nineteenth century. By filtering the *Sala's* fifteenth-century history – even if at times unintentionally – through a contemporary and rather positivist agenda, Beltrami discouraged research by other art historians by conditioning their assumptions about the historical and visual evidence. In an ironic twist of fate, the *Sala delle Asse's* critical reception and "fortuna" became trapped in the biases and interpretative framework of the very person who had masterminded its rescue.

Arrangement and scope of the chapters in this dissertation:

The chapters of this dissertation are organized around the premise that there are two significant moments in the history of the *Sala delle Asse*: the late fifteenth century, when the *Sala* was created, and the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, when the *Sala* was essentially *recreated*. To learn more about the former, it is imperative that we first spend time unraveling the latter. Therefore, the dissertation begins

achronologically with two chapters on the history of the *Sala delle Asse* under Luca Beltrami and Paul Müller Walde. The remaining chapters seek to pave the way for a more thorough, more plausible and much-needed interpretation for the *Sala's* fifteenth-century history.

Because Luca Beltrami is not well known outside Italian architectural circles, Chapter 2 opens with a biographical sketch and a summary of the political ideologies that motivated his work as an architect and restorer. His participation in the *Sala's* rediscovery will be laid out. The chapter is also an attempt to provide an alternative voice for the *Sala*: that of Paul Müller-Walde. Beltrami credited this German art historian with the actual re-discovery of the *Sala*.¹⁵ In spite of this affirmation, Müller-Walde's opinions and investigations have remained curiously absent from all of the twentieth-century art-historical literature dealing with the *Sala delle Asse*. This is especially puzzling in light of Beltrami's statement that Müller-Walde dedicated nine years to his work in Milan and in the Sforza Castle!¹⁶ I will attempt to construct a chronology for Paul Müller-Walde's involvement in the re-discovery of the *Sala* on the basis of archival documentation found in Milan and Berlin. I will also speculate on Müller-Walde's treatment of the *Sala delle Asse* and on Beltrami's stake in the matter. These issues are worth investigating because Müller-Walde may be the only historian

¹⁵ The earliest was in Beltrami, 1902, p. 28.

¹⁶ "il Dott. Paul Müller-Walde, cui si debbono le prime pazienti indagini compiute or sono nove anni nella Sala." Beltrami, 1902, dedication page.

besides Beltrami to have examined the *Sala delle Asse* before it was altered, repainted and presented to the public in 1902.

Chapter three provides a discussion of the repainting of the *Sala delle Asse* in 1901-02 using new archival evidence. I will focus on the reactions of contemporary critics and show that the 1901-02 interventions discouraged further research into the *Sala's* fifteenth-century circumstances. For example, the repainting made it impossible to determine whether a botanical identity could be established for the *Sala's* trees based on the original fifteenth-century traces. This made some art historians hesitant to speculate about the *Sala's* symbolism and led others to question Leonardo's participation. Art historians could not reconcile unidentifiable trees with the fact that botanical studies were among Leonardo's major interests.

I will also argue in Chapter three that Beltrami transformed the remains of the *Sala* found in 1893 into a key component of the ambitious restoration scheme he formulated for the Sforza Castle as a whole. It was a scheme requiring the use of an architectural language that supported certain political and cultural ideologies in the late nineteenth-century. For the first time in centuries, Milan was free from foreign domination and three-cornered contests between Spain, France and Austria. Napoleon's rule had ended in 1815, the Austrian regime was expelled from Lombardy in the *Cinque Giornate* of 1848 and, in 1861, Milan joined all other territories on the Italian peninsula to form the nation of "Italy." But it would be well into the twentieth-

century before Italy began to feel like a nation, economically and especially. Without a unified history prior to 1861, there was no set of traditions on which to fall back. An "Italian character" had yet to be fashioned. A whole generation of political philosophers, economists, and intellectuals began to debate the best way to achieve an autonomous, yet united form of civil society. They needed to emancipate the forces of material and cultural development in an Italy that was largely rural and industrially inferior to the rest of Europe. As Italy's most "modern" city and because of its experience as the former capital of the Kingdom of Italy under Napoleon, Milan's impetus for reform initiatives was strong. The Milanese wanted to be recognized as leaders in Italy's modernizing mission. Beltrami contributed to this mission by empowering Milan's architectural landscape with a language of cultural primacy. The Sforza Castle became, for Beltrami, a convenient forum where these ideas could be played out.¹⁷ And as I will show in Chapter three, some of the interventions that Beltrami chose for the *Sala delle Asse* were specifically intended to contribute to the castle's cause.

Chapters four, five and six are the fruits of my investigations into the *Sala's* fifteenth-century history. Chapter four offers an introduction and a reconsideration of some of the *Sala's* most basic problems such as dating, location and possible uses. None of the archival information is new. Much has been published before, but often in

¹⁷ This argument was first proposed by architectural historian Amedeo Bellini in "Luca Beltrami architetto restauratore," in *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. ed. by L. Baldrighi,

obscure places. As a result, it has not been considered in conjunction with other evidence. My purpose in assembling this information is to build an effective framework of knowledge that will guide interpretative arguments pertaining to the *Sala's* fifteenth-century history, not only for this dissertation, but for the future.

In forming their opinions about the *Sala*, modern art historians have accepted Beltrami's reading of key fifteenth-century documents without challenge. Beltrami was well known for his scrupulous archival work. On the other hand, his methods were not foolproof or complete; nor did he purport them to be, considering the frustration he expressed in *Leonardo e i disfattisti suoi*. Much work has yet to be done with regard to the *Sala's* history and, as I will show in Chapter 4, some of Beltrami's initial conclusions need to be reevaluated. For example, most art historians have followed Beltrami's lead in assuming that a small room next to the *Sala delle Asse*, known from documents as the *Saletta Negra*, was painted "black" – as its name suggests – at about the same time that the *Sala delle Asse* was painted, in a period of mourning following the death in 1497 of Ludovico Sforza's consort, Beatrice d'Este. This idea, first proposed by Beltrami in 1902, continues to dominate modern interpretations of the *Sala* because of the *Sala's* supposed association with the *Saletta Negra*. As I will show, however, there is a distinct possibility that the *Saletta* had already shed its black décor when work was underway in the *Sala delle Asse* in 1498. Other problems discussed in chapter four include: the

Triennale di Milano, 1997, pp. 92-141.

significance of the term "asse" in the name *Sala delle Asse*, establishing a time-line for Leonardo's work in the *Sala*, Leonardo's compensation, and the lost text for the fourth plaque in the *Sala*. These are all issues that are worth investigating further in developing a feasible history for the *Sala delle Asse*.

Chapters four and five also deal with Leonardo's contributions to the *Sala delle Asse*. All too often, we art historians get caught-up in the erroneous, yet widespread, assumption that Leonardo created works in a vacuum and that his contributions outweighed those of his patrons. We are content to define the works of Leonardo as products of genius that sprang fully from his imagination, with little interference or direction from outside sources. The *Sala delle Asse* has not been spared this kind of characterization. For example, the most recent interpretation for the *Sala* invites scholars to concur on the following assumption: "it is now accepted that the design overall, and presumably even much of the tedious physical execution of this highly unusual decorative ensemble is to be credited entirely to the subtle mind and skilled hand of Leonardo da Vinci."¹⁸ The peril in this line of thinking is that it encourages scholars to ask limited questions, questions that have everything to do with Leonardo and the complexities of his extraordinary and creative spirit and less with the historical, political and cultural situations that may have governed the creation of the *Sala*. Leonardo's contributions cannot fully define the *Sala delle Asse*. It was a commissioned

¹⁸ J.F. Moffit, "Leonardo's *Sala delle Asse* and the Primordial Origins of Architecture," *Arte Lombarda*, no. 92-93, 1990, pp. 76-90.

work. An important and controlling patron was involved. Ludovico Sforza's reputation as a demanding patron has been well-documented and the *Sala* was created during one of the most difficult periods in his reign. As I discuss in Chapter five, Leonardo may also have to share credit for the *Sala*'s design with his friend Donato Bramante (1444-1514), who worked as an architect, painter and poet at the Sforza court around the same time as Leonardo.

Much of Chapter six deals with Ludovico Sforza's reasons for commissioning the *Sala delle Asse* and lays the groundwork for an expanded and alternative discourse that is, in my opinion, both historically feasible and appropriate. Ludovico's obsession with constructing a persuasive and effective visual language of power and legitimacy will be emphasized as a factor that was central to the *Sala*'s symbolism. The contributions and interpretations of other twentieth-century scholars with respect to this argument will also be taken into consideration. These include: Marie G. Agghàzy's reading of the *Sala* as a "locus amoenus," Martin Kemp's interpretation of the *Sala* as an exercise of Leonardo da Vinci's "fantasia," Pietro Marani's reading of the *Sala*'s truncated trees as a symbol of Ludovico Sforza's political aspirations, Dawson Kiang's argument that the *Sala* manifests courtly ideas similar to those of *Pasitea* (a poem written by the fifteenth-century poet Gasparo Visconti for Ludovico Sforza), and finally, Ludovico's economic stake in the Milanese silk industry.

None of the chapters in this dissertation pretend to resolve all issues concerning the *Sala's* commission or meaning. In the absence of confirming documents, interpretations of the *Sala* must remain tentative. It is my hope, however, that the suggestions made in this dissertation will broaden the avenue of investigation of this important commission. I also wish for the dissertation to make clear that the success of this investigation will rest partly on scholars' willingness to entertain considerations that go beyond Leonardo and involve Ludovico and his court in greater terms. My work here, in other words, will hopefully provide the tip of the iceberg.

An extensive Register of Documents follows Chapter six. The Register provides reproductions or transcriptions of important fifteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century documents for the *Sala delle Asse*. All of the fifteenth-century documents are known. They have been cited in other publications, but not always in connection to the *Sala*, nor have they been reproduced or transcribed in their entirety. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century documents are published here for the first time. All of these documents were crucial to the preparation of this dissertation. Scholars wishing to engage in future studies on the *Sala delle Asse* will hopefully benefit from having these documents assembled in one place.

The archival sources used in preparing this dissertation:

My earliest archival investigations began in the *Archivio di Stato* in Milan, trying to retrace Beltrami's steps there. Beltrami had scoured all of the collections in this

archive pertaining to Sforza family history, under both Ludovico Sforza and Galeazzo Maria Sforza. He did this first in preparation for his restoration of the Sforza Castle and later for his monograph on the *Sala delle Asse*. Beltrami's writings and publications show that he was a thorough and fact-minded historian, always careful to base his deductions on documentation. While this is something we have come to expect of all modern art historians, it should seem commendable in the case of Beltrami, because he worked in an age when most Italian art historians preferred to trust the methods of connoisseurship.

In the *Archivio di Stato*, Beltrami discovered documents linking the *Sala* to Leonardo and established an approximate date of origin for the work: around 1498. His account of the *Sala delle Asse* starts under Ludovico's predecessors as Duke, Gian Galeazzo and Galeazzo Maria. In my own zeal to be thorough, I compared Beltrami's transcriptions with the actual documents. I found no mistakes in his transcriptions that should alter the interpretations and conclusions Beltrami based on them. To my knowledge, no additional fifteenth-century documents have been published for the *Sala delle Asse* since Beltrami's book in 1902.

Luca Beltrami's personal library and archives are a crucial source for reconstructing the *Sala*'s twentieth-century history. He left a large volume of material pertaining to his work and research interests. Beltrami was a prolific writer and meticulous archivist. He took precise notes, saved newspaper clippings and drawings

pertaining to the projects he worked on, and even kept old drafts of the writings he later submitted for publication. After his death, most of this material was divided and donated by his heirs to various collections housed in the Sforza Castle: the Biblioteca d'Arte, the Gabinetto delle Stampe, the Gabinetto dei Disegni, the Archivio Fotografico Luca Beltrami, and the Ente Biblioteca Vinciana. Beltrami's heirs preferred to entrust his personal correspondence to private hands. This now constitutes the bulk of a collection called the Archivio Luca Beltrami, also in Milan. At the time of writing this dissertation, only the material in the Archivio Luca Beltrami was properly catalogued. It is my understanding, however, that Beltrami's photographic collection and the papers in the Biblioteca d'Arte are in the process of being catalogued in order to make them more accessible to researchers who wish to consult them in the future.

A word of caution about the material in Beltrami's archives: as extensive and as detailed as the material seems to be, it is important to keep in mind that the material is selective. Amedeo Bellini, who is professor of Architectural Restoration at Milan's Polytechnic and a well-respected Beltrami scholar, pointed out to me that Beltrami was well aware that his library and archives would someday go into public hands. Bellini believes that Beltrami took the time to "edit" the contents of his archives toward the end of his life. There are references in Beltrami's papers to large sets of correspondence that were no longer in existence at the time of Beltrami's death, when the archives were donated.

Another important archive for the late nineteenth and twentieth-century history of the *Sala delle Asse* is that of Milan's Soprintendenza ai Beni Architettonici. There, I was able to find information on the first restoration of the *Sala* in the form of photographs, payment records, correspondence with restorers, permission papers and technical reports. This material was extremely useful for my reconstruction of the *Sala*'s restoration history. It also served as a check against the material in Beltrami's archives because these archives, being those of an official institution, seem less likely to have been edited. For, example, it was in the Soprintendenza's archives and not in Beltrami's that Paul Müller-Walde's voice was most clearly preserved. In the Soprintendenza's archives, there is correspondence between Beltrami and Müller-Walde. The only document to or from Müller-Walde in the Archivio Luca Beltrami is an unsigned note in Müller-Walde's handwriting that Beltrami may have kept precisely because it was unsigned. The contents and significance of this note will be discussed in Chapter two.

My biggest disappointment in Milan was not finding any pre-restoration photographs of the *Sala delle Asse*. Both Evelyn S. Welch, lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Sussex, and Pietro Marani, president of the Ente Raccolta Vinciana and well-known Leonardo scholar told me that they remember coming across such photographs while doing research at the Sforza Castle. I looked very carefully through the Archivio Fotografico Luca Beltrami and the Ente Raccolta Vinciana with the help of Dott.ssa Giovanna Ginex (archivist in charge of the Collezione Fotografica della

Raccolta Beltrami) and found none.¹⁹ There were photographs of the restoration that took place in the 1950 in the Ente Raccolta Vinciana. Perhaps it was those photographs that Welch and Marani recalled seeing. I also checked the photograph files at the Sovrintendenza dei Beni Architettonici. There I found numerous photographs by a photographer named Giulio Rossi who documented some of the restoration work at the Sforza castle in the 1890's. Nevertheless, all of Rossi's photographs are of exteriors. None show interior spaces.

The absence of pre-restoration photographs for the *Sala delle Asse* is perplexing given the importance that Beltrami gave to photographs. He amassed a large collection of photographs during his career and made special arrangements prior to his death to will more than 5,000 photographs (covering the period between 1849 and 1928) to the Civici Musei at the Sforza Castle. Along with these photographs, he donated several hundred drawings, ink sketches and other images that were somehow connected to his photographic collection. Beltrami was fully aware of the important role that photographs played during the restoration process. He had been a member of the Circolo Fotografico Lombardo since 1894 and on more than one occasion expressed the opinion that photography was an indispensable form of documentation. For example, in November of 1899 he issued the following statement to the press on the virtues and benefits of preserving photographic documents subject to rigorous archival standards:

¹⁹ I visited the Archivio Fotografico Luca Beltrami in 2001 at a time when when the archive was about to undergo its first proper cataloguing since 1939. It would be worth checking the archives again once this

...it seems strange that, even though a copy of every printed publication has to, by law, be deposited in our State libraries so that it may be made available to the public, an analogous prescription does not exist for all image reproductions. The images have a documentary value to them equal to that of printed works and can contribute to the preparation of precious study materials. Why do we collect and catalogue in our public libraries every edition of a bad novel, one that was, perhaps, translated from a foreign language, and we do not collect and catalogue prints and photographs? The interest of these images may seem superficial in the present but it could take on a specific and unexpected value in a few years.²⁰

These considerations were, for the most part, respected by Beltrami when he carried out his restoration projects. According to Dott.ssa Ginex, Beltrami's entire photographic collection is "characterized by a precise philological rigor: before starting any preservation and restoration project, he studied the iconographic material available and commissioned photographic campaigns that now give testimony to the progress in his work."²¹ Why the *Sala delle Asse* seems to be an exception to this rule is puzzling indeed.

My archival research also took me to Mantua, home of the Castello San Giorgio.

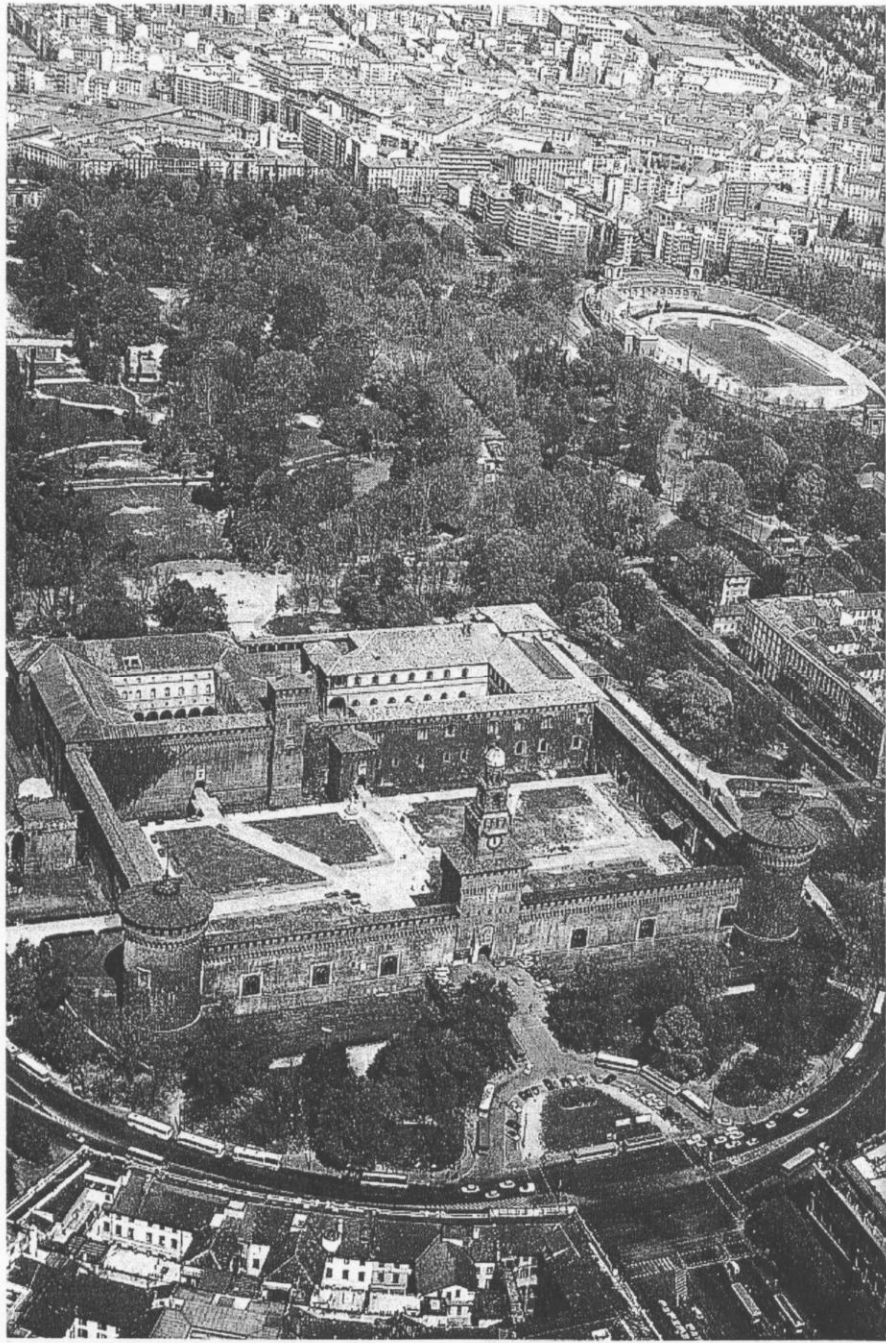
There, in Isabella d'Este's private apartments, a room exists under the name *camerino dei nodi* with knot decorations similar to those in the *Sala delle Asse*. Unfortunately, my

work is completed.

²⁰ "... non può a meno di sembrare strano come, mentre gli esemplari di qualsiasi pubblicazione a stampa debbano, a termini di legge, essere depositati presso le Biblioteche governative, a disposizione del pubblico, una analoga prescrizione non esista per tutte le riproduzioni grafiche le quali, al pari di uno stampato in tipografia, hanno carattere di documento, e possono concorrere a preparare un prezioso materiale di studio. Perchè si dovrà raccogliere ed ordinare in un pubblica Biblioteca qualunque ristampa di un romanzaccio, magari tradotto da un'altra lingua, e non si dovranno raccogliere e ordinare incisioni e fotografie, il cui interesse apparentemente superficiale di attualità, può invece assumere fra pochi anni un particolare ed inatteso valore?" In G. Ginex, "La collezione fotografica della Raccolta Beltrami," *Luca Beltrami e il Castello Sforzesco, exh. cat. Castello Sforzesco, Milan, November 29, 2000 to February 25, 2001*, p. 10.

²¹ "L'intera Raccolta e' caratterizzata da un preciso rigore filologico: Beltrami prima di affrontare qualsiasi progetto di restauro conservativo studiava le fonti iconografiche disponibili e commissionava campagne fotografiche specifiche che ora testimoniano il progresso del suo lavoro." Ginex, 2001, p. 12.

research in the archives of Mantua's Sovrintendenza did not reveal any new information on the *camerino*. Except for a few late-nineteenth or early twentieth century photographs of this room, the Sovrintendenza does not have much archival information pertaining to it. Finally, archives in Berlin and Leipzig (Germany) were consulted for information on Paul Müller-Walde. These findings are discussed in detail in Chapter three.



1.1 Aerial view of the Sforza Castle, Milan.



1.2 Leonardo da Vinci, *Sala delle Asse*, ca. 1498, Sforza Castle, Milan.



1.3 Portrait of Ludovico Sforza.

CHAPTER 2

IN SEARCH OF LEONARDO AT THE SFORZA CASTLE: LUCA BELTRAMI AND PAUL MÜLLER-WALDE STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE

Who was Luca Beltrami? • Beltrami's ideas and philosophy on conservation and restoration • Beltrami's political crusade for Sforza Castle • Paul Müller-Walde at the Sforza Castle: a partially-censored contribution? • In search of Müller-Walde's personal archives

This chapter will examine the circumstances leading to *Sala delle Asse's* re-discovery in 1893 under the direction of the Italian architect and historian Luca Beltrami (1874-1872) and with the participation of the German art historian Paul Müller-Walde (1858-1931). Because Beltrami is not well known outside of Italian architectural circles, this chapter begins with a biographical sketch. I will then discuss the political ideologies that influenced Beltrami's work as an architectural historian and restorer, particularly in the case of the Sforza Castle from 1883 to 1895. These ideologies are important to consider because, as we will see in Chapter 3, they had a profound effect on Beltrami's decisions for the first restoration of the *Sala delle Asse* and for the first monograph on the *Sala*. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to Paul Müller-Walde who is credited with the actual rediscovery of the *Sala*, but whose contributions remain absent from modern, art-historical literature dealing with the *Sala*.

Who was Luca Beltrami?

Beltrami was born in Milan on November 13, 1854 into a wealthy, bourgeois family who owned a lucrative silver manufacturing operation (Figure 2.1).¹ In spite of his family's deep-rooted interests in manufacturing and commerce, Beltrami opted for a profession in architecture.² In 1873 – after graduating from a *liceo scientifico* (a form of high school in Italy that specializes in science and math) – he enrolled in Milan's *Accademia di Belle Arti*. He grew quickly uncomfortable, however, with the school's insistence on humanistic approaches to architectural design. He yearned, instead, for the opportunity to exercise more scientific, engineering approaches. For Beltrami, architecture was most meaningful and useful when it was rational, scientifically definable, and measurable.³ When he learned that architecture courses were being offered through the engineering department at the nearby Polytechnic, he transferred. There, Beltrami reveled in designing architecture that appeared to be technically feasible and fully measurable even in its earliest design stages.

¹ The most recent and useful source for biographical information on Luca Beltrami is: *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by Luciana Baldrighi Triennale di Milano, 1997. See especially, Amedeo Bellini's essay "Luca Beltrami architetto restauratore." Also very useful is Bellini's "La figura di Luca Beltrami nell'architettura Lombarda del secondo ottocento" in vol. VIII of the series *Incontri in Biblioteca*, transcript of a conference held at the Civica Biblioteca d' Arte in the Castello Sforzesco, 2000.

² For information regarding Beltrami's education and training see G. Ricci, "Luca Beltrami allievo e docente," in *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by L. Baldrighi Triennale di Milano, 1997, p. 143-144.

³ Bellini, 2000, p. 1.

At the Polytechnic, Beltrami also fell under the intellectual spell of a professor named Camillo Boito (1836-1914). Boito was one of the most influential and politically-charged voices in the architectural community of his day. He had been a staunch supporter of Italy's unification in 1861 and dedicated much effort in the decades afterwards to convincing fellow architects and students to develop a nationalist style of architecture that mirrored Italy's new political identity. Boito had strong ideas about what approaches would be most effective in designing "nationalist" architecture. At the top of his list was the idea that "nationalist" architecture should draw from historic architecture, but modify its style to suit the needs of contemporary society. This mandate for architectural reform often took center stage in the interviews that Boito gave to popular trade journals. Here is an example from 1866:

We believe that the styles of the past can be adapted with reason and expression to modern buildings, if these are copied, without fail, within the organism and the decoration [of the building]. But we also firmly believe that it is possible to take a certain Italian style from past centuries and modify it in such a way as to make it suitable for representing our society, catering to its needs and demands. [...] The new style has to be one and only one. The new style has to be a national style. The new style cannot be a resurrection of old architecture. The new style cannot be old architecture that has been modified.⁴

⁴ "Noi crediamo che gli stili del passato si possano con ragione e con espressione acconciare agli edifici moderni, se si copiano senz'altro nell'organismo e nella decorazione; ma crediamo fermissimamente che si possa pigliare un certo stile italiano dei secoli trascorsi e modificarlo così da renderlo atto a rappresentare l'indole della società nostra, servendone i bisogni e le esigenze. [...] Lo stile nuovo deve essere uno solo. Lo stile nuovo deve essere nazionale. Lo stile nuovo non può essere la resurrezione di una vecchia architettura. Lo stile nuovo non può essere una vecchia architettura modificata." C. Boito, in *Il Politecnico*, vol. 1, 1866, p. 280. Known to me from L. Patetta, "L'architettura a Milano al tempo di Luca Beltrami," in *Luca Beltrami Architetto*, 1997, p. 58. The English translation of the original Italian text is mine.

Boito's theories had a profound and lasting effect on Beltrami's working methods and architectural philosophies. Through Boito, Beltrami came to believe that all restorative interventions – even the building of new architecture – had to serve primarily as a vehicle for social and political expression.

Beltrami graduated from the Polytechnic in the summer of 1876 with a degree in Civil Architecture.⁵ Soon after, he left for Paris – an architectural mecca in those years – to seek additional training. He passed the entrance exams for the *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts* and is said to have been the school's first Italian student.⁶ He also started to work as an apprentice in the atelier of two high-profile architects who specialized in the restoration of historic buildings in and around Paris: first Jean Louis Pascal and then Théodore Ballu. Under Ballu, Beltrami worked as "employé attaché temporairement au service d'architecture pour le travaux de l'Hôtel de Ville," a famous Renaissance building that had suffered damage during the uprisings of the 1860's.⁷

In 1879, Beltrami returned to Milan to participate in one of the most important monument commissions in Italy's modern history: a monument commemorating the famous *Cinque Giornate* or "Five Days" in March of 1848 when the soldiers of the *Risorgimento* succeeded in expelling all Austrian troops from Lombardy. The victory

⁵ Ricci, 1997, p. 145.

⁶ Baldrighi, 1997, p. 210.

⁷ Ricci, 1997, p. 146.

had been of pivotal importance in Italy's struggle for unification and a large number of architects and sculptors competed for the commission. It was made clear that the monument's purpose was not simply celebratory but very much political and propagandistic. The idea of Italy as a unified state had been slow to find acceptance. Italians were too accustomed to regional independence, both culturally and politically. Eighteen years after the unification of 1861, the Milanese were still questioning the idea of an Italian state. The *Cinque Giornate* monument was supposed to encourage its viewing audience – through the power of visual persuasion – to put regional preferences and loyalties aside and to begin taking pride in being "Italian."

Beltrami's proposal consisted of an enormous and elaborate triumphal arch crowned by an allegorical figure of Victory. It was an impressive design and the jury awarded it first place in the competition.⁸ Following the competition, however, a number of objections were raised with respect to the monument's cost and potential appeal to a more general and non-intellectual public. Fearing bad press and public discontent, the jury reassigned first place to a smaller and less pretentious design by the sculptor Giuseppe Grandi. Grandi offered a set of five allegorical figures in bronze, each representing one of the five days of the *Cinque Giornate*. To the surprise of both the jury and his colleagues, Beltrami pushed personal interests aside and lent support to the jury's decision. He even volunteered to design a base and an obelisk to complement

⁸ Bellini, 2000, p. 2-3.

the sculptural pieces. This willingness on the part of Beltrami to make or to adjust artistic decisions to further a perceived political or social goal is important to note because it became a hallmark of his professional career.⁹ It was especially evident in the rhetoric Beltrami used to explain his architectural or restoration decisions to the press or in his own publications.

Beginning in the 1880's, Beltrami turned most of his attention and a substantial portion of the wealth he had inherited from his family to the study, preservation and restoration of historic buildings. His most notable undertakings in Milan were: the Lazzaretto Court (1881), the Soncino Castle (from 1882 to 1885), and the Sforza Castle (1884-1902). All of these buildings had been slated for partial or full demolition. They were in poor condition and were thought to stand in the way of more promising urban plans. In the case of the Soncino Castle and the Sforza Castle, Beltrami was able to convince local administrators to authorize a full-scale restoration under his direction. In the case of the Lazzaretto, the City agreed to delay demolition long enough for Beltrami to document the building through detailed reports and survey drawings. The precision he achieved in these reports and drawings was apparently so unprecedented and remarkable that it set a new standard for architectural historians throughout Europe.¹⁰

⁹ Bellini, 2000, p. 3.

¹⁰ Bellini, 1997, p. 96.

It also sent a clear message to the Milanese community that historic buildings were, indeed, worthy of attention and preservation.

Beltrami's contributions to these early projects led to a series of important academic and government appointments. He served as Professor of Architecture and Geometry from 1880 to 1885 and Professor of Applied Architecture from 1885 to 1890 at Milan's prestigious Brera Academy. The underlying theme in many of his lectures for the Academy was the importance of preserving Italy's historic monuments. In 1885, Gaetano Moretti, then mayor of Milan, appointed Beltrami to the office of *Assessore Regionale all'Edilizia*. The appointment meant that Beltrami would serve as a sort of "regional councilor" for all matters pertaining to building construction. Shortly later, the national government asked Beltrami to serve as an official consultant on all conservation matters pertaining to Lombardy's architectural patrimony. When a permanent office for this position was established in 1892, Beltrami became its first director. The position can be regarded as the equivalent of the *Soprintendenti dei Beni Architettonici* of modern Italian cities which have responsibility for the city's artistic and cultural patrimonies. In its infancy, however, there were no set responsibilities for this position and Beltrami enjoyed great freedom in making decisions. More often than not, he was able to control all aspects of the architectural restoration projects he took on by acting as both chief architect and government-appointed inspector!

Beltrami enjoyed his reputation as Italy's most sought-after advisor on matters of preservation and restoration for most of the 1880's and well into the early 1900's. His expertise was sought for such projects as the reconstruction of the *campanile* (or bell tower) in St. Mark's Square in Venice after its collapse in 1902. He directed restorations for the Duomo and Basilica of S. Ambrogio in Milan, the Ducal Palace in Mantua, Brescia's famous Loggia, and the Certosa in Pavia. Popular newspapers like *La Perseveranza*, *La Riforma*, *Rassegna d'Arte*, *Il Convegno*, and *L'Italia* asked Beltrami's opinion on matters of restoration and urban development and he was also a regular contributor to the *Corriere della Sera* — a newspaper of considerable national importance. He became part owner and director of the *Corriere* in 1896, four years after he founded and appointed himself editor of his own magazine: *L'Edilizia moderna*. The magazine became almost immediately an influential forum for architectural debates.

By the early 1900's, Beltrami's fame had spread beyond Italy's borders. In 1905, an anonymous English author published a commentary in the journal *Révue archéologique* in which he referred to Beltrami as "perhaps the ablest architect in all Italy." This author suggested that thanks to Beltrami and his supporters, Milan had become exemplary in the attention and care given to historic monuments and buildings:

Milan can boast a body of well born citizens as public spirited in matters of art and as prompt and generous in private initiative as any people in the world, who have carried out and are carrying out extensive schemes of restoration, reconstruction and preservation of civic monuments.

She can boast a group of private individuals who are more eager to buy than to sell [...]. Milan can boast an architect who perhaps has done more than any other one man for the preservation of national monuments.¹¹

In addition to restoration projects, Beltrami designed an impressive number of new buildings: e.g. Palazzo Marino (1894), the Palazzo dell' Esposizione Permanente in Via Turati (1885), the main offices for the Banca Commerciale at the end of Via Manzoni (1907), Palazzo Dario Biandrà located in Piazza Cordusio not far from the Duomo (1902), and the grand Assicurazioni Generali building (1899). Historians of modern architecture have criticized the design of these buildings as "modest" or "not very innovative," but they are true to Beltrami's reverence for the past, his devotion to the preservation of past architectural styles, and his faith in political and social reform through historical tradition.¹²

Beltrami continued to juggle appointments in architecture, journalism, academia and politics until 1924, when he was summoned by Pope Pius XI to become the Chief Architect of the Vatican. Beltrami spent the last nine years of his life restoring of the domes of the Vatican Pinacoteca (1928) and the Pantheon (1929), and making adjustments to the Vatican apartments. He died in Rome on August 8, 1933.

¹¹ "Italian Art and Milanese Collections", in *Revue Archéologique*, VI, 1905, p. 317. In R. Pavoni, "Gli artefici nell'opera di Luca Beltrami. Riflessioni per una ricerca sull'artigianato d'arte in Lombardia," in *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by Luciana Baldrighi, *Triennale di Milano*, 1997, p. 174.

¹² Bellini, 2000, p. 11.

On March 28, 1983 when Beltrami's remains were moved to the Cimitero Monumentale in Milan, his curriculum included the following additional honors: "Decoré de la Legion d'Honneur de France," "Honorary and Corresponding Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects," and "Senatore a Vita" in Italy's parliament in 1905.¹³ A few decades later, Antonio Cassi Ramelli, editor of a collection of Beltrami's writings on Milan's Duomo, asked the following: "What hasn't Beltrami been? To what profession has he not contributed as a master and authority?"¹⁴ But it is primarily for his contributions to Milan's architectural and cultural landscape that Beltrami will be best remembered; as the art critic Raffaello Giolli has observed: "without Luca Beltrami, Milan would not be today the great city that it is."¹⁵

Beltrami's ideas and philosophy on conservation and restoration:

The detailed survey drawings that Beltrami produced for his restoration projects give us a glimpse of his restoration methodology and philosophy. According to architectural historian Amedeo Bellini, these drawings are critically oriented and

¹³ Baldrighi, 1997, p. 196.

¹⁴ "Cosa non fu il Beltrami? In quale attività non riuscì ad affermarsi da signore e da padrone? Architetto, critico d'arte, acquafortista, storico, giornalista, uomo politico, deputato, senatore, chiamato nel suo paese a occuparsi del Castello di Milano, del Palazzo Marino e -a Roma- del Pantheon, di S. Pietro, degli aspetti del Lungotevere, del Vaticano. Noto a tutti, conosciuto da pochi. Un personaggio di misura eccezionale, arricchito internamente da una consuetudine non mai sopita e severa di autodisciplina, di silenzio, di sacrifici, di attività prodigiosa, di lavoro oculato e duro. Soltanto questo è risaputo. Ed è troppo poco." *Luca Beltrami e il Duomo di Milano*, ed. A. C. Ramelli, Milan, 1964, p. XXI.

¹⁵ V. Raffaello Giolli, "L. Beltrami nel Famedio," *L'Ambrosiana*, August 10, 1934.

historically interpretative.¹⁶ They provide evidence of design evaluations that go beyond aesthetic, technical or even empirical considerations. For example, Beltrami's reports for the Lazzaretto building appear to be much concerned with the effectiveness of the building's design in relation to fifteenth-century sanitation issues.¹⁷ Bellini concluded that this concern was indicative of a restoration philosophy in which architectural artifacts functioned as clues leading to a specific social, cultural or political past – and not simply as forms in need of recuperating their original structural integrity. This is not to say that Beltrami gave less attention to parameters that were purely architectural or aesthetic but his drawings show that these were only a means to an end. Beltrami believed that the aesthetic and architectural characteristics of buildings were chosen by their designers in direct correspondence to the buildings' intended socio-historical purposes. It seemed perfectly possible to him that by investigating the former he could establish the latter. Once he determined a building's intended purpose, he opted to restore its architectural and aesthetic components in ways that made its purpose more visually apparent, especially if he thought that this had not been done well by the original architect. There was plenty of room, in other words, for subjective interpretation in Beltrami's restoration philosophy.

¹⁶ Bellini, 1997, p. 96.

¹⁷ Bellini, 1997, p. 98. Beltrami's reports for the *Lazzaretto* were published as follows: "Il Lazzaretto di Milano," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, year IX, Milan 1882, p. 403-441; "Il Lazzaretto di Milano," *Milano e i suoi dintorni*, Milan, 1881, p. 263-266; *Il Lazzaretto di Milano. Ricordi di storia e d' arte (1488-1882)*, Milan, 1899.

Beltrami took liberties in determining the exact moment when a building's historical purpose was truest or most explicit. Modern restorers will typically assume that this moment is the same as the date when a building was first completed. Restorers dealing with buildings that have been substantially transformed over time might choose a later date if the historical significance of a later state seems to supersede that served by the original building. For example, a twentieth-century restorer might choose to restore a fifteenth-century building to its nineteenth-century state because the purpose served by the building during the nineteenth-century is considered more important than that of any other period.

In both of these restoration philosophies, the moment of truest or most explicit "historical purpose" corresponds to an actual historical moment. For Beltrami, it was, instead, perfectly acceptable to restore a building to a moment that never existed if he thought that the original building represented a compromised version of what was originally intended by the patron or architect.

As Professor Bellini has shown, Beltrami's drawings for the *Lazzaretto* project use proportions and measurements that do not correspond to any stage in the building's history. According to Bellini, that was a benign attempt on the part of Beltrami to simplify the drawing process. The adjustments were deliberate and intended to restore an aesthetic integrity that Beltrami believed to have existed in the building's design

phase but was compromised by the building process.¹⁸ Beltrami believed that these compromises were the result of a builder who had been too preoccupied with budget limitations to appreciate the aesthetic benefits of adhering to the architect's original intentions. Beltrami compensated for the builder's supposed negligence by making adjustments in his *Lazzaretto* drawings. These adjustments are historically incorrect; the building never existed as Beltrami drew it. Still, he believed that they were necessary because they corresponded to the moment when the building's historical purpose was "truest."

Beltrami restored the Sforza Castle to the moment of its "truest" yet never-realized purpose as well. In researching the Castle's history, he learned of a promise that the Sforza family had made to the Milanese people who were contributing to the costs of remodeling the Castle through heavy taxation. The promise was that the Sforza would transform the Castle's façade into something worthy of public pride by installing windows that were grandiose and noble in appearance. This promise was never kept. The façade assumed, instead, the character of a window-less fortress that was off limits to the general public. Beltrami saw an opportunity to make amends for the Sforza's trickery and redeem the Castle. He installed windows across the entire façade. In a statement published in 1900, Beltrami explained that it was of the utmost importance to

¹⁸ Bellini, 1997, p. 97-98.

him to emphasize the Castle's truest aesthetic expression ("la concezione estetica dell'opera"). Giving expression to the Sforza's "defiance" was not.¹⁹

Beltrami's political crusade for the Sforza Castle:

The Sforza Castle was in terrible condition when the Italian military turned it over to the City of Milan on October 25, 1883. Many of its original, fifteenth-century components had suffered crude alterations or extensive deterioration.²⁰ The City was eager to have the property redeveloped into something more useful. There were plans to tear down a substantial portion of the Castle in order to form an axis between two other landmarks, the Duomo and the Arch of Peace, located in the historic Parco Sempione, just the north of Castle.²¹ The intent was to replicate the effect of the wide boulevards radiating from the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. A number of areas within the castle – namely the Ducal Court, most of the *Cortile della Rochetta* and both the East and West towers – were to be spared but not without considerable alteration and with little concern for their architectural and historical integrity. The Eastern-corner tower for example, was slated to house a huge holding tank for the city's potable water. In addition to these modifications, there were proposals for developing large-scale

¹⁹ Beltrami, "I lavori di restauro al Castello Sforzesco di Milano negli anni 1899-1900," *Edilizia Moderna*, year IX, n. 9, Milan, September 1900, p. 65-67 and Beltrami, *Per il restauro della fronte del Castello Sforzesco verso la città*, in "Corriere della Sera," Milan, August 24-25, 1900. Both known to me from Bellini, 1997, p. 102 and note n. 15.

²⁰ Beltrami, *Resoconto dei lavori di restauro eseguiti al castello di Milano col contributo della sottoscrizione cittadina*, Milan, 1898.

²¹ Bellini, 1997, p. 100.

housing projects in close proximity to the Castle. These projects would have benefited the city and their respective developers, but they would have compromised the historic and artistic value of the area.

Beltrami embarked on a long crusade to save the Sforza Castle. The difficulty was not so much to persuade the local government, which was receptive when Beltrami promised to raise much of the money needed for the restoration himself. The real difficulty was public opinion of the castle. The Milanese people wanted to do away with the old structure. They could not forget that from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century, the castle had been used as a prison and military outpost by a series of foreign powers that included France, Spain, and Austria. The extent of popular hostility to the castle can be inferred from this 1796 manifesto, addressed to the General Commander of the Italian army at a time when Lombardy's *partigiani* were starting to fight for a united Italy:

GENERAL COMMANDER IN CHARGE
OF THE ITALIAN ARMY AND THE ALPS

A Fortress whose very construction threatens the People instead of defending it. A Fortress that has brought fear to the Milanese and desolation from more than one attack in our century. A Fortress that has rarely been able to resist the tactics of ancient attackers and cannot compete with those in our modern age. A Fortress that has already been crushed by the good Milanese people who first set their hopes on the possibility of liberty after the extinction of the Visconti Dukes. A Fortress resurrected from the illusions and power of an usurper named Francesco Sforza. This is the Castle in Milan that under your victorious arms recently renewed for us the inevitable damages of a siege laid to a Piazza where the assailants and the assailed became equally dangerous to the City.

What other name can, therefore, be given to a Castle of such nature other than Bastille of Lombardy? This word says it all to the son of a Republic who has created its own liberty; to a General whom we regard as the Father of ours [i.e. our liberty]. When your Armies came, the Castle of Milan was won over. At the sound of your voice, the Castle will be

demolished. This is the vote of the People, oh magnanimous General. And these are the auspices of our liberty if you seek the conquest of the Castle by permitting its demolition.

Milan 5. Fructidor year 4 of the French Republic one and indivisible.

[handwritten: August 11, 1796]

This is the vote of the undersigned.²²

A copy of this manifesto was given to Moretti and Beltrami on April 22, 1902 – a month or so before the opening of the *Sala delle Asse* to the general public – probably in recognition of the difficulties they were eventually able to overcome.²³

The Milanese had much contempt for the Sforza family who had inhabited the Castle from about 1452 to the first French invasion. The Sforza's reputation was that of a family that had tricked the Milanese Republic into letting them rise to power after the "misfortunes" and fall of the virtuous Visconti family - the same Visconti family whose

²² "GENERAL COMANDANTE IN CAPO DELL'ARMATA D'ITALIA E DELLE ALPI, Una Fortezza , che per la sua costruzione minaccia il Popolo invece di difenderlo. Una Fortezza, che ha portato ai Milanesi lo spavento, e la desolazione di più assedi in un secolo, ed è il nostro; una Fortezza, che rare volte ha saputo resistere alla tattica degli antichi assediatori, e ch non può far fronte a quella dei moderni; una Fortezza già altra volta stritolata dai bravi Milanesi al primo spirare de un'aura di libertà nella estinzione dei Duchi Visconti; una Fortezza risorta fra le lusinghe e la forza di un usurpazione qual fu Francesco Sforza; tale è il Castello di Milano, che di fresco sotto le vostre Armi vittoriose ha dovuto rinnovare sopra di noi i danni inevitabili di un assedio fatto ad una Piazza, dove e gli assediati, e gli assediati divengono quasi egualmente pericolosi per la Città. Ad un Castello di tal natura qual altro nome può dunque restare, fuor quello di Bastiglia della Lombardia? Questa parola dice tutto ad un figlio della Repubblica creatrice della propria libertà, ad un Generale, che noi già riguardiamo come il Padre della nostra. Al comparire delle vostre Armi il Castello di Milano fu vinto: ad un suono della vostra voce il Castello sarà demolito. Questo è il voto del Popolo, o magnanimo Generale; e questi saranno gli auspici della nostra libertà, se voi cercherete l'opera della conquista del Castello col permetterne la demolizione. Milano 5 Fruttidoro anno 4° della Repubblica Francesce una ed indivisibile.

[handwritten: "11 Agosto 1796"] Tale è il voto deli infrascritti " Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

²³ Moretti preserved the copy in the archives of the Ufficio General per La Conservazione dei Monumenti in Lombardia. The document is now preserved in the Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

descendants had played a crucial partisan role in Milan's recent liberation from Austria. Therefore, in the late nineteenth-century, the Sforza Castle stood as a symbol of oppression, not one of pride. It was a place where a greedy aristocracy had plotted its political schemes and where Milanese patriots had been forced to endure torture and long prison sentences.

What further disadvantaged Beltrami's cause was the fact that a number of architects and critics began fueling public sentiments by projecting their negative disposition to the Castle's formal and physical properties. In 1881, the Milanese architect Carlo Borghi described the Castle as a uniform, four-sided mass whose forms were needlessly large and "oppressive."²⁴ Beltrami responded that the Castle was a "historical document" and that a "document" does not have a morality or fault of its own. He suggested that greater public good would be served by using "historical documents" as a base on which to build and materialize society's virtues.²⁵

In keeping with this argument, Beltrami proposed a full-scale restoration wherein most of the Castle's interior spaces would be converted into spaces for municipal services: a museum dedicated to the history of the *Risorgimento*, a school of industrial arts, an art museum, an archaeology museum, a municipal archive, and office

²⁴ V. F. Seitz, *L'École Spéciale d'architecture 1865-1930*, Paris, 1995. In Bellini, 1997, p. 101.

²⁵ Bellini, 1997, p. 101.

spaces for both an historical society and a numismatic society.²⁶ Beltrami's proposal was accepted. He evidently convinced the Milanese that it would be possible to strip the Sforza Castle of all negative connotations inflicted by the past and to invest it with nobler purposes. Everyone looked forward to a transformation of the Castle into a powerful symbol of triumph and artistic pride. Local cultural agencies supported Beltrami's vision by renting the Castle for exhibitions and educational events. In 1884 for example, Milan's *Esposizione di Belle Arti* was held in the courtyards and in various rooms inside the Castle.²⁷ A national exhibition of oil and wine was held in 1894 in the rooms of the Ducal Court. In 1903, when work was completed on the last room in the castle to be transformed into a museum space (the *Galleria d'Arte Moderna*), Beltrami triumphantly declared that the castle had finally been freed of its "vulgar uses." He boasted success at having "redeemed [the castle] to the noble purpose of educating people about what is beautiful and to the memories of our past."²⁸

Paul Müller-Walde at the Sforza Castle: a partially censored contribution?

The rediscovery of the *Sala delle Asse* took place in 1893, thanks to the industrious efforts of the German art historian Paul Müller-Walde. Biographical information on

²⁶ Beltrami proposed the following allocations for the Castle's interior spaces: 17 rooms for the *Museo Artistico Municipale* and *Museo Archeologico*; 12 rooms for the *Archivio Municipale: Sezione Storica*; 8 rooms for the *Società Storica Lombarda*; 7 rooms for the *Scuola d'Arte Applicata all'Industria*; 6 rooms for the *Museo del Risorgimento*; 1 room for the *Società Numismatica Italiana*. Beltrami, 1989, p. 27.

²⁷ Beltrami, *Resoconto*, 1898, p. 14.

²⁸ "[dopo] volgari utilizzazioni, [il castello] si trova oggi rivendicato al nobile ufficio di educare il popolo al sentimento del bello, ed ai ricordi del passato." L. Beltrami, "La Sala del Consiglio ducale nel Castello Sforzesco," *La Perseveranza*, Milan, May 30, 1903.

Müller-Walde is scarce. The following details were presented by Marco Pozzetto in 1996.²⁹ Müller-Walde was born in Eberswalde (a town just north of Berlin) in 1858. He studied art history at the University of Zurich and graduated with a thesis entitled "Über das Riesentor am Stefansdom." From 1897 to 1901, he worked as an assistant curator and researcher under Wilhem von Bode, director of the division of Christian Sculptures and Paintings within the Königliche Gemäldesammlung in Berlin. Müller-Walde died in Berlin in 1931. Historians mostly remember him for his contributions to the wave of scholarship surrounding Leonardo Da Vinci at the beginning of the twentieth-century. His best known works are: "*Leonardo da Vinci Lebensskizze und Forschungen über sein Verhältniss zur florentiner Kunst und zu Rafael* (published first in 1889 and again in 1890) and "Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Leonardo da Vinci" published in the *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* (1899).

Müller-Walde went to Milan in the summer of 1890 with the intention of gathering a few bits of information necessary to conclude his first study on Leonardo da Vinci. Months turned into years as he immersed himself in the mass of unpublished documents and drawings available at the Ambrosiana, the Archivio di Stato, and the Trivulziana. He also took an interest in the active market for Renaissance paintings and drawings that characterized Milan in those days. In what survives of his

²⁹ "Associati e laureati alla scuola Viennese di storia dell' arte," appendix in *La Scuola Viennese di Storia dell' Arte*, ed. M. Pozzetto, acts from a conference held by the Istituto per gli Incontri Culturali Mitteleuropei, Gorizia 1996, n. 17 ("laureati con Thausing, S.261).

correspondence with Wilhem von Bode, it appears that he spent quite a bit of time helping Bode and other German curators enrich their collections with important Italian art.

In December of 1892, Müller-Walde asked Gaetano Moretti and the Ufficio Regionale dei Monumenti in Lombardy for permission to conduct scrapings in the Ducal Court portion of the Sforza Castle to see if he could locate fifteenth-century wall paintings under the existing layers of plaster. His request was timely. Beltrami had planned to investigate the possibility of wall paintings but had not had an opportunity to do so; he was preoccupied with the architectural restoration of the Castle and the military personnel had not yet vacated. As soon as the military personnel left the Castle (probably in September of 1893, according to a letter written by Müller-Walde), Müller-Walde was granted the permission he sought.³⁰ To the Ufficio Regionale's surprise and satisfaction, he helped to uncover quite a number of works. Close to the entrance of the Ducal Court, he found a Virgin Mary flanked by two angels holding her mantle. On a separate wall also close to the entrance was a Christ on the Cross flanked by saints and several kneeling figures. Müller-Walde determined that both works belonged to the period of Francesco Sforza (the 1470's).³¹ Above the entrance to the *Sala del Tesoro* (the Sforza treasury), Müller-Walde found a wall painting of a figure standing guard within

³⁰ Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde au W. Boden 9.12.1893, NL Boche 1893.

³¹ Müller-Walde argued this on stylistic grounds and also because one of the kneeling figures near the Christ seems to be a portrait of Francesco's castellan. Beltrami, 1898, p. 40.

a painted architectural frame. He believed this was a most exceptional representation of Mercury (the divine protector of money) and attributed the figure to Leonardo da Vinci (the figure) and the frame to Bramante. This iconographic attribution was overturned in 1898 when F. Novati argued, more reasonably, that the mythical figure was instead Argos (god of protection and custodianship). With time, however, art historians adopted the convention that Bramante was responsible for all of the painting and not just portions of it. On the walls of the Ducal Chapel, Müller-Walde discovered a number of full-length portraits of saints, including St. Jerome, St. George and St. Anthony. There were significant stylistic differences among these figures and this led Müller-Walde to conclude that the chapel was entrusted to group of artists rather than one.³² The lunettes and the main vault in the chapel featured an image of Christ rising from the tomb, with soldiers looking in disbelief. God the Father looked down on the scene, framed by a crowd of angels. These images are datable to the period of Galeazzo Maria Sforza because they correspond to a description that Müller-Walde discovered by a ducal assistant, Bartolomeo Gadio, in 1473.³³

After his discovery of the chapel paintings, Müller-Walde became interested in locating a series of small rooms known in documents from the period of Ludovico Sforza as "camerini." The German art historian suspected that Leonardo da Vinci had

³² Beltrami, 1894, p. 695.

³³ Beltrami, 1894, p. 696.

worked in these rooms in the spring of 1498 and he was impassioned by the possibility of what these might have to offer. It was easy enough to locate the *camerini* because the only small-sized rooms in the Castle were those in the North-Eastern part of the Ducal Court, next to the *Sala delle Asse* and over a *ponticella* (or moat) designed by Bramante. Disappointment set in, however, when it became clear that the original wall plaster in the rooms had long been destroyed. Müller-Walde located a few fragments of the original plaster under later sub-flooring, but it was not enough to make any conclusions about the motifs painted in these rooms. In a small space in between the *camerini* and the *Sala delle Asse* and under a staircase, he found a vaulted ceiling painted with four pairs of flying *putti*, each framed by an elegant and elaborate garland of fruits and foliage.³⁴ According to Beltrami, on one of the walls close to the ceiling there was also: "a small ornamental frieze with a motif of knotted and interlaced serpents."³⁵ Beltrami dated both the vault and the frieze to the last years of Ludovico's reign (but not necessarily to 1498) based on two premises: first, he had observed a style and handling that seemed inconsistent with the mid sixteenth-century, and second, he could not think of a reason why rulers following Ludovico Sforza would commission the painting of this small room independently from that of the adjoining rooms.³⁶

³⁴ Beltrami, 1894, p. 699.

³⁵ "un piccolo fregio ornamentale, nel quale si rileva il motivo originale di serpi annodati ed intrecciati." Beltrami, 1894, p. 703

³⁶ "Si nota una intensità di colore, una correttezza di forme, uno studio e diligenza di particolari, che non si riscontrano certo in pari grado nelle opere decorative della metà del secolo XVI...D'altronde, dopo la caduta del Moro, e dopo la relativa tranquillità del primo periodo della dominazione francese di Luigi XII, chi mai, ed a quale scopo avrebbe fatto eseguire in quel piccolo locale una decorazione, la quale non

Beltrami also noted that under this fanciful but monotonous décor, Müller-Walde discovered a layer of black *intonaco*. The latter then concluded that he had located the *Saletta Negra*, a small room mentioned in the same fifteenth-century document that first alerted scholars to Leonardo's participation in the *Sala delle Asse*: Gualtiero Bescapè's letter on April 21, 1498 to Ludovico Sforza.³⁷ Müller-Walde's conclusion proved to be wrong when additional discoveries in 1915 pointed to the first of the three *camerini* beyond this small space as the actual *Saletta Negra*.³⁸ However, for most of the 1880's, Müller-Walde expended much energy in trying to assemble a corpus of related documentation to support his theory.

In the *Sala delle Asse*, Müller-Walde scraped away at select spots in the ceiling, just enough to determine that a painted décor spread across the vault. It is not clear whether Müller-Walde was yet aware that he was working in the *Sala delle Asse*. The Italian historian Gerolamo Calvi had established a connection between Leonardo and the *Sala delle Asse* in 1869;³⁹ but, the actual location of the *Sala* was first worked out by Beltrami in

possiamo a meno di immaginare collegata allo sfarzo ed ed all'eleganza di tutte le altre grandi sale attigue?" Beltrami, 1894, p. 700.

³⁷ "A la Saleta negra non si perde tempo. Lunedì di desarmerà la Camera grande de le asse, cioè de la tore. M.ro Leonardo promete finirla per tuto Settembre..." Letter by Gualtiero Bescapè to Ludovico Sforza on April 21, 1498. Archivio di Stato, Milan, Classe Belle Arti, *Autografi*, 102, fasc. 34.

³⁸ Beltrami, 1919, p. 187.

³⁹ It was in this year that Calvi first published Gualtiero Bescapè's letter from April 21, 1498.

1894.⁴⁰ In that year, Beltrami described Müller-Walde's findings as indices to the "original concept of the decoration" - in other words, a sort of "blueprint" for the decoration that Beltrami would later bring to life with the help of an artist named Ernesto Rusca.⁴¹ It seems, therefore, unlikely, that Müller-Walde participated in the retrieval of the wall paintings in the *Sala delle Asse*.

In late 1893, Müller-Walde returned to Germany to work with his publisher in Munich on an article on the *amorini* as or *putt.* in the space he had mistakenly identified as the *Saletta Negra*.⁴² One of the most useful aspects of this publication would have been the inclusion of a large set of photographs that Müller-Walde had commissioned from a local photographer in Milan. In a letter from 1894, Müller-Walde mentioned that Beltrami turned over to him a set of very costly photographs and illustrations. This collection included other paintings inside the Sforza Castle in addition to the *amorini*. The Ufficio Regionale in Milan extended Müller-Walde exclusive publishing rights to these photographs for a limited time. He was anxious, therefore, to see his work in print, before his license expired. Unfortunately, he was never able to follow through

⁴⁰ Beltrami, 1894, p. 690.

⁴¹ "Concetto originario della decorazione, consistente in un grande motivo di intrecci di corde che, partendo dall' imposta, si vanno annodando verso la parte più alta della volta, dove a guisa di serraglia venne dipinto uno stemma ducale circondato da una corona. Il fondo della volta era tutto dipinto, con una finezza veramente eccezionale, in modo da rappresentare, cogli intrecci già accennati, un pergolato di rose." Beltrami, 1894, 696.

⁴² Several surviving letters that Müller-Walde wrote from Munich pertain to this very project. See Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preubishcher Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 20.3.1894 - 27.3.1894 - 10.4.1894 - 11.4.1894 - 12.4.1894 - 18.4.1894 - 19.4.1894 - 29.5.1894 - NL Boche 3809.

with his publication; it is not clear why. Problems with his publisher in Munich may be to blame.⁴³ In his 1899 publication, there is only one slight reference to the project that once seemed so dear to him:

I then returned to Germany to prepare the publication of Leonardo's Amorini that I had discovered and exposed. My thoughts were, however, mostly with the *Sala del Tesoro*...⁴⁴

The abandonment of the publication is a loss to art historians. This is especially the case, if photographs from the *Sala delle Asse* prior to its re-painting in 1902 were to be included. No such photographs were ever published by Beltrami or by any other scholar.

After leaving Germany, Müller-Walde went to England to study Leonardo's drawings at Windsor Castle in the hope that some of these would be related to the wall paintings in the Sforza Castle. Convinced he had found valuable information regarding the *Sala del Tesoro*, he returned to Milan in the early months of 1895. He spent the next year and a half concentrating his efforts on the *Sala del Tesoro*. He obtained permission to clean and restore the painting in exchange for the Ufficio Regionale's promise to grant him exclusive rights to the work. He was, thus, able to work without the fear that

⁴³ Müller-Walde complained at length of such problems in his letters from Munich.

⁴⁴ "Ich kehrte damals nach Deutschland zurück, um die Veröffentlichung der von mir entdeckten und größtenteils in der *Sala del Tesoro* und ich muss gestehen, ich bereute ein wenig die Voreiligkeit, mit der ich den Durchgang freigelegt, ohne vorderhand selbst die gesamte Umgebung desselben einer eingehenden Prüfung unterziehen zu können." Müller-Walde, 1899, p. 147.

another scholar would photograph or publish the work before he had an opportunity to do so.

Correspondence from this period indicates that Müller-Walde was concerned with the Ufficio Regionale's lack of appreciation for and inexperience with proper preservation methods. He referred to the need to import specialized tools from abroad because none were available in Milan. In January 1895, Müller-Walde pressed Beltrami to order special cleaning solvents and fixatives from a reputable supplier in England in lieu of other materials. On October 24, 1895, Müller-Walde sent a frantic message to Gaetano Moretti stating that upon coming to work that day, he found the *Sala del Tesoro* filled with smoke due to a fire that a group of workers had lit in one of the fireplaces. He pleaded with Moretti to put a stop to this right away because the smoke would cause irreparable damage to his "Mercury" painting. "The Mercury was painted using gouache," he explained, "and in this humid weather the intonaco will absorb all smoke and dust like a sponge. A few minutes of smoke is enough to destroy one of the most precious things in this world."⁴⁵ Müller-Walde had warned Beltrami of this kind of carelessness on the part of workers many months earlier and was upset that he had not been able to count on his promise that this sort of thing would not happen again. On still another occasion, Müller-Walde expressed his frustration over the fact that in his absence in 1894, thousands of people had been allowed to walk through the *Sala del*

⁴⁵ Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2999, AV137.

Tesoro and the rest of the Ducal Court to see an exhibition on oil and wine. It seems that the *Sala del Tesoro* was used to display some of the exhibition's main attractions. Müller-Walde's only comfort was that the doorway with the actual wall paintings was somewhat hidden from view by tall shelving displaying oil containers.⁴⁶

In search of Müller-Walde's personal archives :

Müller-Walde's concerns may lead us to speculate on the initial measures taken with respect to *Sala delle Asse*. This kind of information would be valuable to art historians trying to reconstruct the *Sala's* original composition and iconographical program. Curiously, neither Müller-Walde's publications nor any of the surviving documentation that I examined in the Castello Sforzesco, the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, the Archivio Luca Beltrami, and the Zentralarchiv der Staatliche Museen in Berlin address this question.

Beltrami and the Ufficio Regionale may not have felt obliged to document their procedures, but I am surprised that Müller-Walde's voice is silent on this matter. What, for example, did Müller-Walde tell Wilhelm von Bode about the *Sala delle Asse*? The tone in so many of Müller-Walde's surviving letters to Bode from 1890 to about 1901 suggests that he felt obliged to keep Bode informed on his progress on Leonardo and on art in Milan. In December 1893, he even invited Bode to visit him at the Sforza Castle to

⁴⁶ Müller-Walde, 1899, p. 148.

see "ceiling paintings by Leonardo." Their correspondence must have been extensive; but, only fifty-eight letters survive and only three of them are from Milan. The rest were sent from Munich. The letters are now preserved in the Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen in Berlin (see Document Section of this dissertation). Additional correspondence may have been preserved in the personal correspondence archives of Berlin's main Sculpture and Painting Gallery (the Gemäldegalerie), but these archives were destroyed in World War II.

In the end, it seems that Müller-Walde concentrated most of his efforts on the *Sala del Tesoro* and not the *Sala delle Asse*. Why? Did he have reservations about the work? Did he doubt Leonardo's participation in that room? Did he dismiss it as a less important work? Leonardo's interest in nature and botanical drawings were – apparently – of less interest to Müller-Walde than his figure studies. In his first book on Leonardo, he relegated his nature studies to an appendix in order to give more importance to the figure studies and other works in the main text. Or was Müller-Walde silenced by Beltrami and the Ufficio Regionale? Perhaps, he was at some point denied permission to participate in the retrieval and restoration of the *Sala's* paintings. It seems that the Ufficio Regionale acted as though it had a legal right to issue or deny proprietary rights to publication of the works of art inside the Sforza Castle. This may have limited Müller-Walde's contributions to a fifteenth-century history and proper restoration of the *Sala delle Asse*.

There is at least one instance in which Müller-Walde expressed his frustrations in having to deal with the administration at the Sforza Castle. In 1899, while recounting the arduous task of cleaning the "Mercury" wall-painting, he alluded to attempts to hinder his progress along the way:

Without [my] intent and despite all my caution, I was the victim of [hostile] actions from certain persons who will not allow a foreigner to be successful after years of intense labor.⁴⁷

Müller-Walde was careful not to name names and used, instead, the word "elements." However, their true identity may become obvious when we examine the footnote that accompanied his statement. In that note, Müller-Walde thanked a long list of people for their support and who continued to support him in his battles.⁴⁸ The list included: Gaetano Moretti, the Conte Adeodato Bonasi (Senatore del Regno), the mayor of Milan Pippo Vigoni and many other Milanese individuals but not Luca Beltrami. Did Beltrami obstruct Müller-Walde's work in some way? Did Beltrami limit Müller-Walde's work on the *Sala delle Asse* because he did not want a "foreigner to be successful?" Did Beltrami consider the discovery of the *Sala delle Asse* of greater political or national importance than the *Sala del Tesoro*? If the answer is yes, the idea of entrusting a politically-charged work or even sharing it too publically with a German national may have caused grumbling in the Italian art historical community.

⁴⁷ "Und habe ich auch unbewusst, trotz aller von mir gewährten Zurückhaltung, gegen mich das Treiben gewisser Elemente erregt, welche es dem Fremden nicht verzeihen können dass er nach dem Mühen langer Jahre einen Erfolg gehabt..." Müller-Walde, 1899, p. 153.

⁴⁸ Müller-Walde, 1899, p. 152.

Beltrami had found himself in this very position after Müller-Walde published his article on the "Mercurio." Some Milanese critics wanted to know why Beltrami had placed the "Mercurio" in the hands of a foreigner, while keeping its existence hidden from Italian art historians. Beltrami acknowledged these accusations in an article written in December of 1897 for the newspaper *La Perseveranza*:

Precautions [...] did not fail to bring upon me unjust accusations of favoritism for a foreigner, to the detriment of our own scholars, along with [accusations] of monopoly illegally granted over a portion of the city's artistic patrimony.⁴⁹

Then, to silence his accusers, Beltrami argued that, even if his critics were correct about the special accommodations, it would be best for them to refrain from pressing on this matter because, so far, Italian scholars had failed to provide a more intelligent study of the "Mercury" than Müller-Walde:

Today, seeing as how the terms of this supposed monopoly expired some months ago and how Dr. Müller-Walde's illustrated essay on the Sala del Tesoro was published some months ago – without in the meantime the display by any of our own scholars of any judgment or criticism of this work of art, I am relieved to be able to state that the just favoritism expended on a deserving foreign scholar did not, even involuntarily, constitute a reduction of rights or an impediment to open commentary by our local scholars.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "Precauzioni... non mancarono di procuarmi ingiuste accuse di favoritismo per uno straniero, a danno degli studiosi nostri, e persino di monopolio abusivamente concesso su di una parte del patrimonio artistico cittadino." Beltrami, "Il Mercurio del Castello di Milani," *Perseveranza*, Sunday, December 25-26, 1897.

⁵⁰ "Oggi, vedendo come già da molti mesi siano scaduti i termini di questo preteso monopolio, e da qualche mese ormai sia stata dal dottor Müller-Walde pubblicata la relazione illustrata riguardo alla decorazione della Sala del Tesoro, senza che nel frattempo siasi manifestato in alcun modo un giudizio od una critica su quell'opera d'arte per parte di studiosi nostri, mi è di conforto il constatare come il doveroso ossequio usato verso un benemerito studioso straniero non abbia, neppure involontariamente, costituito una menomazione dei diritti, od un intralcio alle libere manifestazioni degli studiosi cittadini." Beltrami, "Il Mercurio del Castello di Milani," *Perseveranza*, Sunday, December 25-26, 1897.

Right or wrong, it is doubtful that Beltrami would have risked falling prey to the critics for the *Sala delle Asse* as he had in the case of the "Mercury." He had already invested considerable effort in convincing the Milanese that the Sforza Castle should be treated as a symbol of civic pride and accomplishment. Furthermore, as I will discuss in detail in Chapter three, he had plans to use the *Sala delle Asse* to contribute to this symbolism in a way that did not include the *Sala del Tesoro*, the *Saletta Negra* or the other painted rooms in the Castle. The entrusting of the *Sala delle Asse* to a non-national would have been problematic in this regard. Nevertheless, because Beltrami wanted to be perceived as someone who was impartial to nationality when dealing with architectural commissions or scholarly matters, he chose his words carefully. It is only in rare instances such as in a open letter to Malaguzzi-Valeri in 1906, that we catch a glimpse of an unguarded Beltrami: "we Italians can boast greater ingenuity than the Germans with respect to historical studies, if not more exactitude than the French."⁵¹

In the course of investigating the circumstances and individuals surrounding the re-discovery of the *Sala delle Asse*, I have sometimes wondered why Beltrami and the Ufficio Regionale gave Müller-Walde access to the Sforza Castle. This question may be

⁵¹ "Noi italiani, possiamo lusingarci di essere negli studi critici più geniali dei tedeschi, se non più esatti dei francesi." L. Beltrami, "Uno Straniero Calunniato da un Italiano," *Perseveranza*, February 6, 1906. The entire article is reprinted in L. Beltrami, *In difesa di Edomondo Solmi* (1874-1912), Milan, 1918, pp. 39-46. Beltrami's letter was in response to a review of a work by the French architectural historian Paul Gauthiez that Malaguzzi-Valeri published with the title "Milano calunniata nel libro di uno straniero" ("Milan defamed in a book by a foreigner"). In his assessment of Gauthiez's work, Malaguzzi-Valeri argued that he did not have much sympathy for guides of Italian cities that are "almost always and very quickly written by foreigners who cannot understand the spirit and character of our art."

impossible to answer. And yet, there is the suspicion that the young, ambitious German scholar (he was only twenty-two when he charmed his way into the Sforza Castle for the first time in 1880!) might have served a purpose for Beltrami, beyond that of pinpointing the location of fifteenth-century wall paintings. Perhaps, Beltrami knew that through Müller-Walde, he would be able to "test the waters" so-to-speak about how Italian art critics and the general public would respond and what questions they might pose with regard to the discovery of works by Leonardo in the Castle. Based on this response and much like public relations professionals, Beltrami be better able to orchestrate a presentation of the *Sala delle Asse*. He would also have been able to put his foreign colleague out of the reach of questions more easily than he could have a fellow national.

This speculation would seem somewhat lavish on my part if it were not for a peculiar letter with a lengthy attachment that is still preserved in the correspondence files in the Archivio Luca Beltrami. The letter was sent to Beltrami by a high-government official and close friend named Luigi Luzzati (1841-1927). Luzzati was an important figure in Italy's political history. He was Minister of Finance under several administrations (1891-1892, 1896-1898, and 1902-1906) and, in 1910, he rose to the position of Prime Minister. Like Beltrami, he was a staunch advocate of Italian nationalism and was regarded as a leading inspiration in Italy's struggle for social and economic amelioration in the late nineteenth-century. Luzzati's letter reads as follows (the underlining is his):

Rabbi 26
Respond to me in Rome

Dear Beltrami,
Read very carefully ["profoundly"], just like when you are working at the Castle, these carefully [or "profoundly"] thought-out notes.
I do not much care for the man.
But does he or does he not have the ability to operate in a high and delicate service?
Nonetheless, he has the art empire on show.
Answer me openly and not guardedly; for some time now you have become overly cautious.
Let us care for one another
Your true friend,
Luigi Luzzatti ⁵²

With the letter, Luzzati enclosed four pages of notes that Müller-Walde wrote on Corrado Ricci (1858-1934), a well-known Italian art museum director, administrator, art historian and archaeologist. Müller-Walde did not sign the pages, but, when compared to other letters by him, the handwriting is, in my opinion, unquestionably his (see a copy and transcription of these notes in the Documents section of this dissertation). The notes provide a harsh review of Ricci's contributions as a curator, professor of Italian language and literature, art historian and translator of German art history. Müller-Walde spared no criticism in regard to Ricci's ability to write quality catalogues and monographs by comparison with German-trained art historians and connoisseurs. He described Ricci's publications as inadequate and inferior with respect to their historical

⁵² On stationary with the heading: Grand Hotel e Hotel Rabbi, Rabbi (Trentino) 1250 m. s. m. Rinomato luogo di cura climatica, idroterapica e terapeutica, Luigi Nodari, Propr., Stagione dal Settembre al Maggio, Grand Hotel "Bogliaco", Bogliaco (Lago di Garda), Rabbi. In Italian, the letter reads: "Rabbi 26. Rispondimi a Roma. Caro Beltrami, Leggi profondamente, come quando lavori nel Castello, queste note profondamente pensate. A me l' uomo è poco simpatico; Ma ha o non ha la virtù di governare in un'alto e delicato servizio? Niente meno ha l' impero dell' arte in mostra. Rispondimi aperto e non coperto; da qualche tempo sei diventato troppo cauto. Vogliamoci bene. Il tuo amico vero, Luigi Luzzatti." Archivio Privato di Luca Beltrami, *Corrispondenza*, Milan.

and critical information.⁵³ Of one monograph in particular he had this to say: "The monograph on the Ravenna [mosaics] is a shabby effort on the part of a *cicerone* [tour guide] who wants to show his city off to foreigners."⁵⁴

Müller-Walde and Luzzati had met in the Rabbi, a mountain resort area in the Trentino Alto Adige region of Italy, close to the Austrian border. No year appears on Luzzati's letter or Müller-Walde's notes. However, certain events mentioned in the notes are datable between 1903 to 1906 and indicate that the encounter must have taken place during those years.⁵⁵ The encounter prompted Luzzati to suggest to Beltrami that Müller-Walde be used in a "high and delicate service" despite the fact that he did not "care much for the man." Müller-Walde's tone of German superiority would not have meshed with Luzzati's sensibilities for Italian nationalism. Müller-Walde's overly-confident tone – the tone of someone who had "art empire on show" – would have seemed arrogant and inappropriate to Luzzati. Despite his reservations, Luzzati wondered whether Müller-Walde could be put to use in a "high and delicate service."

⁵³ "Corrado Ricci riordinatore di quadre di Parma, Milano e Firenze; delle due prime compilò I cataloghi assai poveri di notizie illustrative storiche e critiche" Undated note in Paul Müller-Walde's handwriting enclosed in a letter by Luigi Luzzati to Luca Beltrami from Rabbi after 1903, Archivio Privato di Luca Beltrami, *Corrispondenza*, Milan

⁵⁴ "La monografia di Ravenna è un meschino sforzo del cicerone che fa veder la sua città agli stranieri," Undated note in Paul Müller-Walde's handwriting enclosed in a letter by Luigi Luzzati to Luca Beltrami from Rabbi after 1903, Archivio Privato di Luca Beltrami, *Corrispondenza*, Milan.

⁵⁵ Müller-Walde mentioned Ricci's appointments as "Curator of picture galleries in Parma, Milan and Florence," the last of which he was appointed to in 1903. There is no mention of Ricci's appointment as Director-General of Antiquities and Fine Arts for all of Italy in 1906 until 1919, leading me to conclude that Müller-Walde and Luzzati wrote between 1903 and 1906.

It is not at all clear what specific "service" Luzzati had in mind. We can reasonably assume, however, that the task was not one that would have compromised or tarnished Beltrami's reputation or Beltrami would not have preserved Luzzati's letter and the accompanying notes in a personal library that he planned to make available to the public and scholars after his death.⁵⁶ Perhaps, Beltrami kept the letter and notes out of jealousy of Ricci's appointment in 1906 as Director General for all Antiquities and Fine Arts in Italy, an appointment that Beltrami may have believed he deserved more. In those days, the Director General oversaw some of Italy's important archaeological excavations and restoration, including the imperial Fora in Rome from 1898-1925 and the Baths of Diocletian. We may never know Beltrami's motivations for keeping the notes and letter. What is interesting, however, is that a supporter of Beltrami saw the opportunity to exploit Müller-Walde's somewhat naïve enthusiasm for the opportunities available in his profession.

It may be worth an art historian's time to look for additional information regarding Müller-Walde's position with respect to the *Sala delle Asse* in his personal archives and notes. This is not to say that his interpretations – if he truly offered any – might provide a more definitive or reliable fifteenth-century history than those of

⁵⁶ Prof. Bellini pointed out to me that Beltrami's surviving correspondence was probably edited. There is evidence that towards the end of his career, Beltrami took precautions to go through this process assuming that his correspondence files would someday be part of the Musei Civici collection of documents at the Sforza Castle. After Beltrami's death, his heirs preferred, instead, to donate the material to a private trust.

Beltrami in 1902 or those of later scholars. After all, he made grave mistakes with respect to both the *Saletta Negra* and the *Sala del Tesoro*. Nevertheless, in his work scholars may find clues, documentation, arguments, and images that could help in this process.

In letter dated November 6, 1909, Müller-Walde stated that the bulk of his scholarly material was in Leipzig.⁵⁷ It is my hope that this material is still preserved and that it will eventually become known to art historians. If an archive is still in existence, it is likely that it is in private hands.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ I thank Dr. Barbara Götze head archivist at the Staatliche Museen in Berlin for informing me about this statement (Wilhem von Boden Archive, I/SKS 180, letter dated November 6, 1909).

⁵⁸ I checked with all of the following public archives in Leipzig (and one in Bonn). All responded that they have no record of such material: Stadtarchiv Leipzig, Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig, Hochschule für Graphik und Bildkunst, Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Deutsche Bibliothek - Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Bonn.



2.1 Luca Beltrami in a photograph from 1930.

CHAPTER 3

FATTI E DISFATTI: THE SALA DELLE ASSE ACCORDING TO LUCA BELTRAMI

The 1902 transformation of the Sala delle Asse • The reactions of art critics and scholars • Making sense of the Sala delle Asse in the context of Beltrami's ambitions for the restoration of the Sforza Castle • Beltrami looks to documents in building a defense for his work on the Sala delle Asse

This chapter will use new archival evidence to examine the architectural and pictorial alterations that Beltrami ordered to prepare the *Sala delle Asse* for public view. I will argue that Beltrami's interventions ultimately transformed the *Sala* from an artifact of life and art in the Milan of Ludovico Sforza to a "monument" celebrating Milan's social and political position at the beginning of the twentieth century. In my view, Beltrami's reinvention of the *Sala* conditioned the assumptions of contemporary art historians and discouraged further research into the room's fifteenth-century circumstances.

The 1902 transformation of the Sala delle Asse:

In 1901, Luca Beltrami hired Ernesto Rusca — a painter whom he described as an expert in matters of "restoration and complementation" — to carry out a "renewal" of

the *Sala delle Asse* based on "original traces."¹ Rusca had trained at the Brera Academy under Luigi Cavenaghi, a key name in the history of restoration. Cavenaghi is credited with the first restoration to focus on "conservation" as opposed to repainting, that of Leonardo's *Last Supper* (1901-1908). In spite of his training, most of Rusca's professional experience was in decorative wall painting for which he had developed a style reminiscent of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. His work was especially popular among conservative art patrons like Beltrami, who disliked the Art Nouveau tendencies currently spreading through much of Europe.² Rusca secured many commissions for private apartments and public works, such as the interior of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele (next to Milan's Duomo) and a small cloister in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie.³ An itemized invoice that Rusca presented to the *Direzione per la Conservazione dei Monumenti* on May 20, 1899 for "fresco decorations done in the Castle of Milan" tells us that the *Sala delle Asse* was not Rusca's first or only commission in the Sforza Castle. Prior to the *Sala*, Beltrami had put him to work on the *ponticella* of Ludovico il Moro, a small *loggia* in the Ducal Court, and on arcades and stairwells, the

¹ "Il lavoro venne affidato al pittore sig. Ernesto Rusca, già favorevolmente noto per altri lavori congeneri di restauro e di completamento in decorazioni pittoriche del quattrocento." "Rinnovamento" and "sulle tracce originali" are the words Beltrami used to describe Rusca's task. Beltrami, 1902, p. 43-44.

² Beltrami detested Art Nouveau design because of its "unusual solutions and bizarre character." ("soluzioni insolite e della veste bizzarra"). Cited by O. Selvafolta, "Il ricordo e l'intuito: la decorazione nelle architetture di Luca Beltrami," in *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by L. Baldryghi Triennale di Milano, 1997, p. 152. According to Gaetano Moretti, Beltrami once commented that Art Nouveau should resign itself to dying off: "Ruskin visse abbastanza per vedere i confini della sua opera innovatrice... la tendenza floreale, compiuta come la farfalla la sua azione fecondatrice, deve rassegnarsi a morire." G. Moretti, *La Commemorazione di Luca Beltrami tenuta nel Castello Sforzesco*, Milan, 1936.

³ U. Thieme, F. Becker, *Künstler Lexicon*, Leipzig, 1935, *ad vocem*.

façade of the Ducal Court, the painting of faux bricks and terracotta tiles for the splays of the windows, and sections of Piazza d'Armi.⁴

Under Beltrami's supervision, Rusca repainted the entire ceiling and upper walls of the *Sala delle Asse* using whatever original traces were left as a guideline for new composition. Much of his focus was on creating unity and harmony to a work that time had fragmented into disassociated parts. Beltrami described the task as follows:

[Our task was] to recompose the general scheme of a decoration covering more than 400 square meters, comprised of a very intricate entanglement of branches that is further complicated by the contortion of ropes, taking fancy in forming themselves into knots. Therefore, for every trace of a branch, it was necessary to determine which trunk it came from and to follow its development as well as keep track of its alternating weavings. Once the skeleton of the composition was reconstructed, the work was far from over. We needed to retrace the foliage, to recompose their masses, movements, contours, and reintroduce a sky into the background. Finally, it was necessary to determine the original tonalities, the gradations of color, the intensities of light and shadow (another considerable part of the difficult task). It was as though there were three stages of difficulty that needed to be dealt with almost at the same time, since it was easy to see how the final effect rested on the harmonious equilibrium of these various phases of work.⁵

⁴ The invoice is preserved in the Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milan, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137. All areas are listed in the invoice with the exception of the *ponticella* which is, instead, mentioned by Rossana Pavoni in her essay "Gli artefici nell'opera di Luca Beltrami. Riflessioni per una ricerca sull'artigianato d'arte in Lombardia," *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by L. Baldrihi Triennale di Milano, 1997, p. 179.

⁵ "Ricompone lo schema generale di una decorazione estesa sopra più di quattrocento metri quadrati, costituita da un intricatissimo viluppo di rami, complicato dal raggirarsi di corde che si sbizzarriscono in nodi: occorre quindi per ogni traccia di ramo precisare il tronco da cui proveniva, seguirne lo sviluppo e tener calcolo altresì dell'alternato loro sovrapporsi. Ricostituita la ossatura della composizione, il lavoro era ben lungi dall'essere ultimato: bisognava rintracciare il fogliame, ricompone le masse, le movenze, i contorni, ristabilire allo sfondo il cielo: infine - parte ancora ragguardevole dell'arduo compito - occorreva riconoscere le tonalità originarie, le gradazioni di colore, le intensità di luce e di ombre. Furono come tre stadi di difficoltà, che si dovettero affrontare quasi ad un tempo, giacchè era facile comprendere come l'effetto finale fosse basato necessariamente sull'armonico equilibrio di queste varie fasi del lavoro." Beltrami, 1902, p. 46-47.

When Rusca completed his work in June of 1902, Beltrami invited the general art community to praise it with compliments:

And if in looking at the work, we become fascinated with the powerful mind that was capable of inventing and executing this composition, one whose richness and geniality is appreciated the longer we look, a sense of true admiration rises in our soul also for the artist who succeeded in recomposing and reviving a work that was certainly among the most distinguished in a period immersed in the most exquisite of artistic taste.⁶

The reactions of art critics and scholars:

Contemporary critics and art historians did not share Beltrami's enthusiasm. They were disappointed that a more faithful restoration had not taken place and wasted no time in voicing their reservations. The harshest of criticisms came, perhaps, from Adolfo Venturi, considered at the time to be among Italy's most respected art critics. He accused Beltrami and Rusca of carrying out interventions that were *falsat[e]* (meaning "false" or "counterfeit") and *copert[e]* (probably meaning "masked," "concealed" or even "covert").⁷ This criticism must have come as a shock to Beltrami. Just a few years earlier, Venturi had seemed willing to trust Beltrami with any and all restoration projects on Italian soil. In an interview published in 1885, Venturi remarked: "we hope that Italian monuments will have *illustratori* similar to

⁶ "E se, nel fissarvi lo sguardo, noi ci sentiamo affascinati dalla poderosa mente che seppe ideare e svolgere questa composizione, la cui ricchezza e la cui genialità sempre più si apprezza, quanto più l'occhio nostro si addentra, sorge nell'animo nostro un senso di viva ammirazione anche per l'artista che ha saputo ricomporre e ravvivare un'opera, che fu certamente tra le più elette di un'epoca imbevuta del più squisito senso d'arte." Beltrami, 1902, p. 47.

⁷ Venturi used the adjectives: "copert[e]" and falsat[e]." A. Venturi, *Leonardo da Vinci pittore*, Bologna, no date, p. 40 and *L'arte*, 1902, pp. 400-403.

Beltrami and defenders equal to him."⁸ The interventions that took place in the *Sala delle Asse* must have caused Venturi to change his mind. He accused Beltrami of having transformed the *Sala* into a sort of "Grambrinus Halle," an disorderly German beer hall, and having no respect for the remaining traces of Leonardo da Vinci's work.⁹

Twelve years later, Francesco Malaguzzi-Valeri criticized Beltrami's attribution of the *Sala delle Asse* to Leonardo da Vinci. Malaguzzi was an expert on Sforza history and the court of Ludovico Sforza in particular. In his three-volume work entitled *La corte di Ludovico il Moro*, he argued that:¹⁰

It is a bit risky to insist — as Beltrami does — that there is no doubt Leonardo took part in the decoration of the Sala. It doesn't come naturally to everyone to imagine a painter, known for his strong, passionate figure compositions, lending himself to a work of that nature... Maybe Leonardo went no further than to express a similar idea in his papers.

Again, Beltrami must have felt betrayed. Just a few days before the *Sala delle Asse* was unveiled to the general public, Malaguzzi had sent Beltrami a letter filled with enthusiasm for the success he was sure the *Sala* would enjoy. He also thanked Beltrami for having insisted on

⁸ "ci auguriamo che i monumenti italiani abbiano illustratori simili al Beltrami, e difensori al pari di lui" A. Venturi. Recensione di L. Beltrami, *Il Castello di Milano sotto il dominio degli Sforza. MCCCCCL-MDXXXV. Milan. 1885. (Archivio Privato di Luca Beltrami. Milan. Stampa I. 1884/1889).*

⁹ "Grambrinus-Halle, senza rispetto alle tracce lasciate dal sommo maestro, a cui si sono sostituite, per volontà del Beltrami e con suo grande compiacimento, foglie verdi tagliate con le forbici sull'azzurro stridente..." Venturi, 1902, p. 400.

¹⁰ "È un pò azzardato assicurare -come fa il Beltrami- che non ci rimane dubbio che alla decorazione di questa Sala abbia preso parte Leonardo. Non a tutti riesce naturale di immaginare il pittore dalle forti e passionali composizioni di figure, adattarsi a un lavoro di quelle sorte... Leonardo forse si limitò a fermare fra i suoi fogli un'idea analoga." F. Malaguzzi-Valeri, *La corte di Ludovico il Moro, la vita privata e l'arte*, vol. 1-3, Milan, 1913-1923.

the "best of Italy" in a period in which works of art by foreign artists seemed far more popular.

Malaguzzi's letter read:

Milan, May 12, 1902

Eminent *commendatore*,

Many thanks for your splendid and very interesting publication on Leonardo and the Sala delle Asse. It is especially impressive now that a cult for nature as well as for decoration have come back in style.

I don't know if someone plans to write on it in *Rassegna d'Arte*, featuring a reproduction of the room's ceiling [...] But I think that if you would allow that reproduction to be published you would be giving a true gift to *Rassegna's* readers, given that your publication is not for sale.

I will write about it in *Archivio Storico Lombardo* and in some newspapers.

I think it is worthy and useful to refer, at the present time, to all the boasting Italians do of work from outside the country that is excessively stylized and dare I say, fossilized. Still in our day, we admire what is mediocre because it is foreign and we forget about the best that is in Italy [...]

Your devoted and much obliged[servant],

F. Malaguzzi ¹¹

Criticisms like those of Venturi and Malaguzzi did not diminish with the passing of time. In 1954, art historian Giuseppina Fumagalli described the *Sala delle Asse* as "dubious and badly damaged material."¹² She expressed regret over the manner in which Leonardo's work was forced to disappear "under the heavy and exceedingly awkward decoration" of Ernesto

¹¹ On stationary printed with the heading: "Direzione of the Archivio di Stato di Milano": "Milano 12 maggio 1902. Egregio Comm.re, Grazie vivissime della sua splendida e interessantissima pubblicazione su Leonardo e la Sala delle Asse veramente impressionante ora che si battezza come nuovo il culto della natura e poi della decorazione. Non so se qualcuno intenda scriverne nella *Rassegna d'Art* riprendendo il soffitto della sala. [...] Ma penso che se Ella volesse permettere quella riproduzione farebbe un vero regalo ai lettori della *Rassegna* tenuto conto che la di Lei pubblicazione non è in commercio. Io ne scriverò nell' *Archivio Storico Lombardo* e in qualche giornale. Mi par opportuno e utile, nel momento presente, insistere sul vanto italiano di una lavorazione che, eccessivamente stilizzata, starei per dire, fossilizzata, si ammira fuori casa. Anche questa volta si ammira il mediocre perché è forestiero e si dimentica l'ottimo che è in Italia [...] Suo dev.mo, obb.mo F. Malaguzzi." Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, *Corrispondenza Vinciana*, RB, C IV.16, fol. 27-29.

¹² "Materia dubbia e devastata." G. Fumagalli, *Leonardo, Saggi e ricerche*, 1954, p. 413.

Rusca.¹³ What further exacerbated resentment was the way in which Beltrami had monopolized restoration decisions for the Sforza Castle. In October of 1893, an editorial published in the *Corriere della Sera*, accused Beltrami of having too much authority over the Castle:

Beltrami is a member of the Building Commission, he is a member of the Commission for the Restoration of Monuments, he is the Castle's historiographer, he is in short, a sort of Minister (!) on the subject.¹⁴

Beltrami's response to these criticisms was that he was just a normal citizen trying to be of service and that he could not help it if he was endowed with opinions that "mattered:"

What does having this high office, this Ministry, come down to? To have my own opinion, just like any other citizen. And if others happen to give value to this opinion, I should not be blamed.¹⁵

Was Beltrami right? Had his critics been unnecessarily harsh? When Beltrami accepted responsibility for the preservation and restoration of the castle he did not expect to uncover the wall paintings in the *Sala delle Asse*. Dealing with the Castle was a gargantuan task because of the technical and architectural challenges it presented and also the heavy pressure from public and private interest groups that had initially refused to support the project. It is impossible to know what fate would have befallen the *Sala delle Asse* had Beltrami not

¹³ "Sotto la decorazione pesante e goffa al massimo." Fumagalli, 1954, p. 413.

¹⁴ "Il Beltrami è membro della Commissione edilizia, è membro della Commissione conservatrice dei monumenti, è l'istoriografo del Castello, è, insomma, una specie di Pubblico Ministero(!) nella questione." Cited by Beltrami himself in: "Notizie Cittadine. Ancora due parole per la difesa del Castello," *La Perseveranza*, October 15, 1893.

¹⁵ "A cosa si riduce quest'alta tutela, questo Pubblico Ministero? Ad avere, come qualunque altro cittadino, la mia opinione. Se poi altri mi fa l'onore di attribuire a questa opinione qualche valore, io proprio non ne ho colpa." Beltrami, 1893.

intervened. None of the city's redevelopment proposals seem to have been concerned with the Ducal Court section of the castle where the *Sala delle Asse* is located.¹⁶ We can probably assume that the Ducal Court would have escaped harm initially but nothing guaranteed its preservation in the long term. For example, in 1882, the City sacrificed what remained of the *Lazzaretto* – a Renaissance building that had already been cut in two by a railroad path – in order to build a new residential community.¹⁷

We may also want to take into account that Beltrami's decisions for the *Sala delle Asse* were made at a time when restoration practices and theories about wall painting were just beginning to evolve into a "science." Restorers in late-nineteenth-century Italy were little inclined and not required to justify their work or to allow their interventions to be officially recorded. They regarded their profession as a highly skilled craft - one that was valid on artistic grounds rather than scientific ones. They sought to restore a work to its original state and firmly believed that they could do so. They rarely limited their efforts to "conservation." It would be decades before restorers would feel compelled to write reports on the physical condition of the pieces they were about to treat or to document the material they used in preserving or cleaning. They were never asked to reconstruct a preliminary "material history" of the work in question, nor were they prepared to carry out that kind of research. Manuals with guidelines for restoring paintings were starting to circulate – one manual exists from 1894, by an Italian restorer named Secco Suardo, written partly in 1866 and partly in 1873.

¹⁶ Bellini, 1997, p. 100.

Nevertheless, it would be years before government institutions would take serious interest in enforcing or regulating any of these guidelines.¹⁸ An office for the conservation of monuments, the Ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti in Lombardia, was established in Milan in 1891, but there were no laws regarding restoration methods for this office to enforce. Moreover, the Ministry had chosen to appoint Luca Beltrami as the first director of Milan's Ufficio Regionale. Beltrami was not actually in office when Ettore Rusca began working on the *Sala delle Asse*. In 1895, he turned the office over to his former Vice President, Gaetano Moretti. However, Beltrami's voice and preferences were no less heard through Moretti.

Beltrami believed that restoration methods could not be learned or standardized. They came best through "natural intuition" and experience. In 1892, Beltrami explained:

The process of training in restoration techniques is so delicate and complex that, for the most part, it is the fruit of a long experience and a set of norms and provisions which little by little is established and is transmitted more by means of natural intuition than through formal teachings.¹⁹

A decade later, Beltrami used the word "intuition" to describe the task he had put before Rusca for the *Sala delle Asse*: "This operation required patient work and special intuition."²⁰

¹⁷ Bellini, 1997, p. 96.

¹⁸ Giovanni Secco Suardo, *Manuale ragionato per la parte meccanica dell'arte del restauratore dei dipinti*, 2 vols, Milan, 1894.

¹⁹ "l'educazione nella tecnica del restauro è così delicata e complessa, che, nella sua maggior parte è il frutto di una lunga esperienza e di un complesso di norme e provvedimenti che lentamente si va formando, e si trasmette per intuitivo naturale più che per insegnamento." L. Beltrami, "La riforma dell'insegnamento architettonico in Italia," *L'edilizia moderna*, vol. I, 1, 1892.

²⁰ "quest'operazione richiedeva un' opera paziente ed uno speciale intuito." L. Beltrami, 1902, p. 45.

In spite of the fact that Beltrami was breaking ground in a field where no strict regulations or methodologies yet applied, the criticism voiced against his interventions in the *Sala delle Asse* was quite specific, for example Beltrami's lack of consideration for the true botanical identity of the *Sala*'s trees and the treatment of those portions of the *Sala* that were found intact or in fair condition. A lawyer and amateur art historian, Diego Sant'Ambrogio, was the first to point a finger at Beltrami for repainting the *Sala* without first determining to which botanical species the *Sala*'s trees belonged.²¹ Beltrami had, indeed, failed to address this important question. His earliest description of the *Sala* – written in 1894 – referred to a "canopy of roses." In later publications such as his 1898 *Resoconto dei lavori di restauro eseguiti al Castello di Milano* and his 1902 monograph, he mentioned nothing more specific than "large trees." These discrepancies and uncertainties led Sant' Ambrogio to question Leonardo da Vinci's participation in the *Sala*. He could not reconcile the generic nature of the *Sala*'s trees with the fact that botanical studies were among Leonardo's major interests:

It may seem petty to expect a fifteenth-century nature study not to offend any of the laws of botany -that is, if we weren't talking about a work inspired (and maybe even executed) by that great genius of the Renaissance who did not neglect plants and flowers in his studies.²²

Achille Manfredini, editor of a popular newspaper called *Il Monitore tecnico*, lamented that the *Sala*'s overpaintings were excessive because they extended to the fifteenth-century

²¹ D. Sant'Ambrogio, "Sulla flora della *Sala delle Asse*," *Lega Lombarda*, June 15, 1902.

²² "potrebbe sembrare una sottigliezza il pretendere che nel XV° secolo una imitazione dal vero non offenda in nulla le leggi della botanica, se non fossimo qui di fronte, ad opera ispirata, e fors' anche

portions of the *Sala* that were found intact. In doing so, Beltrami had robbed scholars of the opportunity to examine the fragments independently and come to their own conclusions. He wrote:

Our criticism has to do with the provisions that were taken to retouch the color even in those parts of Leonardo's old fresco that were discovered intact; this, in order to give the entire decoration — when finished — the appearance of a uniform and constant modernity. It would have been more appropriate with respect to the informational purpose that applies to the restoration of an original work of art to complete the decoration only in those sections where the original fresco had been destroyed, leaving, instead, intact those parts that had been uncovered. These would have served as irrefutable proof that that restoration was a refurbishment complementary to Leonardo's work and religiously respectful of those forms, attributed to the genius and the hand of that great artist, his protean and original mind. The opportunity for comparison was, instead, destroyed due to the method used. The very document that would have testified to the scrupulous job of the restorers of Da Vinci's work was, so to speak, erased, even as new life was instilled into it.²³

Indeed, Beltrami had made little if any effort to show what portion of the original paintings had actually survived. He published no photographs of the *Sala delle Asse* prior to its repainting and appears to not have made any.²⁴ When he wrote about the original remains he referred to the remains as templates or suggestions for Rusca to draw on as he "recompos[ed]

materialmente eseguita, da quel sommo ingegno del Rinascimento che tra le molte dottrine da lui coltivate non trascurò quella delle piante e fiori." Sant' Ambrogio, 1902, p. 1.

²³ "la nostra critica volge sul provvedimento che fu adottato di ritoccare nel colore anche quelle parti di antico affresco vinciano che si sono riscontrate intatte, si da dare a tutta la decorazione, una volta ultimata, una identica e costante apparenza di modernità. Sarebbe stato in quella vece più consono al vero concetto informatore del restauro di opere artistiche originarie il completare la decorazione in quelle parti soltanto dove l'affresco originario era distrutto, lasciando intatte invece le parti rintracciate, poichè esse avrebbero valso come documento irrefutabile a dimostrare come quella decorazione non era che un rifacimento ed un completamento dell'opera di Leonardo, nei quali erano state religiosamente rispettate le forme originarie dovute all'ingegno ed alla mano di quell'artista sommo, dalla mente proteiforme ed originale. Col metodo seguito si è invece distrutta la possibilità di raffronto, si è invece - per dir così - cancellato, pur rinvigorendolo, quel documento che avrebbe fatto fede dello scrupolo dei restauratori dell'opera vinciana." A. Manfredini, "La Sala delle asse nel castello di Milano," *Il Monitore Tecnico*, June 10, 1902, p. 245.

²⁴ A good portion of Beltrami's photography collection is preserved in *the Archivio Fotografico Luca Beltrami* in the Sforza Castle. I had the opportunity to consult this material in 2000 but found no photographs of the *Sala delle Asse* prior to Rusca's interventions.

the general scheme" of the *Sala*.²⁵ Here is an excerpt from Beltrami's 1902 monograph, referring to the original traces as "clues" to be gathered for the purpose of creating a newly-unified design scheme:

In May 1901, we were able to take up, again, the cleaning process [... to] gather other clues about the composition and the necessary elements for reconstructing one of the eight sections into which the vault is divided: that is, the grouping of the trunks, branches and the golden ropes that correspond to one eighth of the complex surface. At the same time, we were able to gather elements of secondary variants which contribute to give variety to the repetition of the grouping.²⁶

Beltrami may have been a trusted voice on matters of historic building preservation and restoration but he had no experience with wall-paintings or with the documented oeuvre of Leonardo da Vinci.²⁷ This fact often goes unnoticed. Modern biographers often identify Beltrami as an important Leonardo scholar without characterizing his limitations and strengths in this area. Over the course of his career, Beltrami published 120 publications on Leonardo - a number that, as Luciana Baldrighi has pointed out, may very well be more than he dedicated to any other subject.²⁸ Among these publications are a preface to one of the very

²⁵ L. Beltrami, 1902, p. 45.

²⁶ "nel maggio 1901 ... si potè riprendere il lavoro di ripulire diligentemente le tratte di intonaco che non erano state toccate nel 1893, il che permise di raccogliere altri indizi della composizione, per modo da avere gli elementi necessari a ricostruire fedelmente uno degli otto spicchi nei quali si può dividere la volta, vale a dire l'aggruppamento di tronchi, rami e corde dorate corrispondente ad una ottava parte della superficie complessiva: si ebbero a raccogliere al tempo stesso gli elementi delle varianti secondarie, che concorrono a dare varietà alla ripetizione dell'aggruppamento." L. Beltrami, 1902, p. 45.

²⁷ For additional information on Beltrami's artistic background, see R. Bossaglia, *La cultura artistica di Beltrami*, in *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by L. Baldrighi Triennale di Milano, 1997, p.

²⁸ L. Baldrighi, "Luca Beltrami: giornalista, scrittore e uomo politico," *Luca Beltrami Architetto. Milano tra Ottocento e Novecento*, exh. cat. edited by L. Baldrighi Triennale di Milano, 1997, p. 190.

first editions of the *Codex Atlanticus* and a full transcription of the *Codice Trivulziano*.²⁹ But as passionate as Beltrami may have been about Leonardo, his interest in the artist was mostly biographical. He contributed little, if anything, to the connoisseurship of his paintings and rarely participated in such discussions.

There is no surviving evidence to indicate that Beltrami solicited the opinion of Leonardo experts before or during Rusca's work in the *Sala delle Asse*. I examined Beltrami's personal correspondence and the correspondence of the Ufficio Regionale from the years in which Beltrami worked at the Sforza Castle, but found no evidence of such solicitations.³⁰ Constantino Baroni once imagined the participation of Rusca's teacher, Cavenaghi.³¹ This seems to be a reasonable assumption because Cavenaghi was a good friend of Beltrami. Nevertheless, as Baroni himself says, there is nothing to suggest that Cavenaghi's suggestions were ever taken into consideration.³² Paul Müller-Walde is the only other art historian whose presence can be documented in the early stages of work on the Sala. Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter 2, Beltrami did more to suppress than to encourage Müller-Walde's opinions on the *Sala delle Asse*.

²⁹ *Il Codice Atlantico di Leonardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1894 and *Il Codice di Leonardo da Vinci nella biblioteca del Principe Trivulzio in Milano*, ed. A. Della Croce, Milan, 1891 and 1897.

³⁰ The archives I consulted are the following: Biblioteca del Castello Sforzesco, Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Milano, Archivio Privato di Luca Beltrami (Milan).

³¹ P. Brambilla Barcilon, "I restauri al Cenacolo" in *Il genio e le passioni, Leonardo e il Cenacolo. Precedenti, innovazioni, riflessioni di un capolavoro*, edited by P. C. Marani, Milan, 2001, p. 444.

³² Baroni, p. 26.

After Beltrami and Rusca's interventions, the *Sala delle Asse* was reduced - to borrow a phrase used by M. Rosci- to a mere "tourist attraction."³³ It was as though the original wall paintings no longer aroused the curiosity of scholars to go beyond Beltrami's contributions. Why did this happen? Did Beltrami allow himself to get caught up in too idealistic a vision for the *Sala delle Asse*? Did this cloud his judgment in choosing a conservation and restoration approach for its wall paintings? The problem is not so simple. To understand Beltrami's decisions we must ask the following: first, were Beltrami's actions with respect to the *Sala* conditioned by the methodologies and ideologies that were put into action for the architectural restoration of the Sforza Castle? And second, did Beltrami trust the information provided by documents to the point that this information became a substitute for visual evidence, connoisseurship, or scientific investigation?

Making sense of the Sala delle Asse in the context of Beltrami's ambitions for the restoration of the Sforza Castle:

Amedeo Bellini has dealt with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history of Sforza Castle's restoration and with Beltrami's role as an architect, architectural historian and restorer.³⁴ Bellini has reconstructed a personality who armed himself with a "profound

³³ "Sottoculturale e turistica." M. Rosci, "La Sala delle Asse," in G. C. Argan, *Leonardo/la pittura*, Florence, 1977, p. 120.

³⁴ In addition to the previously cited works from 1997 and 2000, see also A. Bellini, "Conservazione dei Monumenti in Lombardia: 1892-1906," vol. 2 of the series *Incontri in Biblioteca*, Civica Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, Milan, 2000.

sense of the presence of the past in the present" and "a great confidence in reason."³⁵ Beltrami was a diligent researcher who based his decisions on factual data, rationally examined and organized. It is not difficult to find examples of this in Beltrami's writings: as an architect he tried to defend this ideology from scholars and critics who spent no time doing archival research and masked their deficiencies with respect to facts with "elegant" and "imaginative" prose. Here is an example from 1896, a period when Beltrami was still involved with restoration work at the Sforza Castle:"

This kind of [patient research], arduous in and of itself, can easily fall victim to the irritation of those who believe that ornate, elegant and imaginative writing can make up for any deficiency in scholarship. Just a few days ago, while sitting at my desk as a Deputy of the Parliament, I heard a comment from the mouth of a colleague, that stereotypically ironic comment about scholars "who descend in the apogee of the archives and begin to sing hosanna when they are able to discover the laundry list of a fourteenth-century washerwoman." And yet -if we really want to be able to write history- we have to resign ourselves to treasure even those documents that may appear insignificant.³⁶

The reconstruction of a work of art through archival research was, therefore, an indispensable component of Beltrami's restoration process. A restorer could not stop at design evaluations that were aesthetic, technical or empirical. His task was to participate in artistic evaluations that were critically and historically interpretative.

³⁵ "Profondo senso della presenza del passato nel presente" and "grande fiducia nella ragione." Bellini *Il Castello di Luca Beltrami*, in press, consulted in draft form.

³⁶ "Tale lavoro [di paziente ricerca], improbo per se stesso, si trova facilmente esposto alla facile irrisione di coloro i quali credono tutt'ora che la forma letteraria, ornata, elegante, immaginosa, possa supplire alla deficienza dell'erudizione. Ancora pochi giorni or sono, dal mio banco di deputato, udivo dalla bocca di un collega la ormai tradizionale ironia rivolta agli studiosi "i quali scendono negli apogei degli archivi, intonando l'osanna se riescono a scoprire la nota del bucato di una lavandaia del trecento." Eppure - se si vuole davvero scrivere la storia - bisogna rassegnarsi a far tesoro anche dei documenti apparentemente insignificanti." L. Beltrami, *Introduzione e Storia documentata della Certosa di Pavia*, Milano, 1896.

Bellini found evidence in the work of Beltrami for a restoration philosophy in which architectural artifacts functioned as clues leading to a specific social, cultural or political past - and not simply forms in need of recuperating their original structural integrity.³⁷ This is not to say that Beltrami gave no attention to parameters that were purely architectural or aesthetic. Even the most cursory examination of his surveys and drawings shows that he gave these parameters close scrutiny, but only as a means to an end. Beltrami believed that the aesthetic and formal characteristics of buildings and works of art in general were chosen by their architect in direct correspondence to their socio-historical purposes. It seemed possible to him that by investigating the former one could identify the latter. Once he determined the purpose of a work of art, he re-directed his focus to its formal components and restored them in such a way as to render this purpose more apparent. For Beltrami the relationship between a building and its historical purpose was always a fixed one. Restoration was the means by which this relationship could be made more apparent or explicit.

Bellini describes Beltrami as a person with an "eminently political" sense of purpose who was guided by an "ethical tension" that resolves itself by seeking what is good for a nation.³⁸ According to him, Beltrami tried to use restoration as a tool to "empower the message of art" in such a way as to make this message more accessible to all.³⁹ In Beltrami's

³⁷ "tutta la storia dell'architettura di Luca Beltrami è una storia sociale, in cui il dato costruttivo, anche nei suoi esiti formali, è l'ultimo risultato di un processo esterno," Bellini, 2000, p. 4.

³⁸ A. Bellini, *Il Castello di Luca Beltrami*, in press, consulted in draft form.

³⁹ A. Bellini, *Il Castello di Luca Beltrami*, in press, consulted in draft form.

mind this "empowering" was equal to performing a patriotic act. Beltrami believed very much in this task and felt he had an obligation to bring a restored work to the nation. The patriotic role that Beltrami assigned to the Sforza Castle was twofold: it was to become a symbol for the recovery of all that had been taken away from the Milanese *and* it would encourage the Milanese to become role models for cultural and intellectual excellence by housing the following entities: a school for applied and industrial arts, a municipal art and archeology museum, a museum dedicated to the *Risorgimento*, municipal archives, and offices for the Società Storica Lombarda and for a numismatic society.⁴⁰ When all of the restoration work for the Sforza Castle was complete, Beltrami expressed much satisfaction that a moral purpose had been restored to the Castle:

...the surprise of those who are seeing the Castle for the first time after four years accentuates not only its physical transformation but also its *moral vindication*. The walls that have endured three centuries of foreign domination have regained their ancient splendor. This was not to reaffirm the threats of other periods but to welcome the intellectual pursuits of our citizens. Some of the rooms that had been used as stables or as soldier's dormitories have been restored to their original form and, over the past two years, have been invaded by new troops: the young students enrolled in the School of Applied Industrial Arts. In their sternly elegant rooms, they are finding a call to a golden period, a time when art was inseparable from all manual work, however humble or modest. Other rooms are already full of furniture, frames, paintings, bronzes that are being catalogued. Along the walls, display cases are being lined up for textiles, ceramics, medals and ivory that comprise the collection for the Municipal Art Museum. These will provide the best teaching models for the adjoining School of Art. For almost two years, the public has been rushing to the Risorgimento Museum to see memorabilia from the events that led to Italy's unification. In other rooms, meetings are held by societies that — under the City's patronage — dedicate themselves to studying the history and art once belonging to the Duchy of Milan. So it is that a new life is being bred in the large building, almost rehabilitating it from its sad past.⁴¹

⁴⁰ L. Beltrami, *Resoconto dei Lavori di Restauro eseguiti al Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1898, p. 27.

⁴¹ "...la sorpresa di chi dopo quattro anni rivede il Castello si accentua più nel rilevare, assieme alla trasformazione materiale, la *rivendicazione morale* dell'edificio. Quelle mura che hanno ribadito tre secoli di dominazione straniera, riprendono l'antico splendore, non già per riaffermare la minaccia di altri tempi, ma per ospitare la vita intellettuale cittadina: alcuni locali, già scuderia o dormitori di truppa, ripristinati nella loro forma originaria sono da oltre due anni invasi da nuove schiere; quelle dei giovani allievi della scuola d'Arte applicata all'industria, che in quelle sale severamente eleganti trovano un immediato ed efficace richiamo all'epoca fortunata, nella quale l'arte era inseparabile da qualsiasi lavoro

The problem with this philosophy is that these commendable civic intentions affected Beltrami's treatment of the *Sala delle Asse*. In the end, the solutions he adopted for the *Sala* served more to form the identity that Beltrami wanted to construct for the Castle than to illustrate the fifteenth-century history that *he himself* had reconstructed for the *Sala* after a meticulous study of its archival documents. This is evident in his handling of two important details: the refurbishing of the *Sala* with custom-made benches and new wall upholstery and the insertion of a commemorative text in one of *Sala's* four plaques in honor of the benefactor named Pietro Volpi who had paid for the *Sala's* restoration. Let us examine each of these choices in more detail.

The archival research that Beltrami conducted led him to conclude that the *Sala delle Asse* derived its name from the fact that the room was once covered with wooden panels.⁴² Instead of covering the unpainted portions of the *Sala* in this manner, Beltrami installed a

manuale per quanto umile e modesto. Altre sale sono già ingombre di mobili, cornici, quadri, bronzi, che si stanno ordinando, mentre lungo le pareti si allineano le vetrine per le stoffe, le ceramiche, le medaglie, gli avori costituenti il Museo artistico municipale, destinato ad alimentare l'attigua scuola d'Arte coi migliori modelli per l'insegnamento. In altre sale e gallerie, da quasi due anni, il pubblico accorre visitare le memorie degli avvenimenti che condussero all'unità d'Italia, raccolte nel Museo del Risorgimento: mentre in altri locali si insediano società che, sotto il patrocinio del Comune, si dedicano allo studio delle memorie storiche ed artistiche del territorio che formava il Ducato di Milano. Così una nuova vita si va diffondendo nel vasto fabbricato, quasi a riabilitarlo tal triste passato." L. Beltrami, "Il Castello di Milano," in *Rivista d'Italia*, fasc. 5, Roma, 1898, p. 7. The italics in the quote are mine for emphasis.

⁴² This conclusion was based on information Beltrami found in letter from Ludovico Sforza to Bartolomeo Gadi in July, 1472: "...foderare de asse la Camera ch'è sopra la Camera deli Ducali in Castello, siamo contenti tu la facci foderare et solare come sta quella di sotto, ricordandoli che gli facci fare in cima la columbina con el razo, come sta quella de sotto..." (Archivio di Stato di Milano: Milano. *Registro Miss.* N° 105, fol. 95). The phrase "come sta quella de sotto" indicated that the first floor *Sala* in the tower (that is the *Sala delle Asse*) was already lined with wooden panels. See Beltrami's discussion of this document in Beltrami, 1902, p. 21.

series of ornate benches with high backs he had designed himself. Directly above the banquettes he hung an amaranth-colored brocade and lighting system. The décor chosen by Beltrami was not appropriate to the period of Ludovico Sforza. In 1955, Constantino Baroni described it as "symbolist" and "reminiscent of the period of D'Annunzio" in style.⁴³ It had nothing to do with the historical truth of the *Sala* that Beltrami had reconstructed with the help of fifteenth-century documents. The décor would, however, provide an attractive and practical backdrop for the works of art that were to be displayed in the room. The transformation of the *Sala delle Asse* into an exhibition or salon space fulfilled Beltrami's wish to transform the Castle into a place that nurtured and furthered the intellectual pursuits of Milan's citizens. Beltrami believed that this goal was integral to the restoration of the Castle. He wanted to transform the Castle into an asset for the nation. The utilization of the castle as museum/school/archive fulfilled this need. The restoration of the Castle was complete only after a transformation of this kind. The *Sala delle Asse* apparently had to contribute to this process by sacrificing a portion of its historical truth.

In a letter that Beltrami wrote to Pietro Volpi in March 1901, he explained that the restoration of the *Sala* was necessary to show Leonardo's work and to accommodate an art museum:

Beginning in 1893 and due to the fact that many, more urgent and [illegible word] projects needed to take precedence, the artistic obligations had to be put on hold. When the Art Museum was inaugurated in the Ducal Court, a cataloguing process began for the sculptures and other art objects destined for the Sala della Torre. This room is still off-limits to the public. The restoration

⁴³ Baroni, p. 22.

of its decorative paintings more than just of [...]interest is, therefore, a task that would enable our Municipal Administration to complete the museum, [...] and in the Sala della Torre the covering of the walls, in the same manner as the adjoining rooms of the Ducali and the Colombine will provide exhibition space for works of art that have been in waiting in storage for a year.⁴⁴

A letter sent to Beltrami in 1902 from G Carotti demonstrates how the transformation of *the Sala delle Asse* into an exhibition hall had become of great public interest:

Milan, May 7, 1902

My illustrious Sir and friend,

I wanted to wait to thank you until after I had an opportunity to review your new monograph on the sala delle asse, whose decoration you have illustriously proved to be a work by Leonardo.

I am indebted to you not only for the kind gift but also for having thought of me and for giving me one of only 300 copies for such a precious work. These copies will certainly go fast!

I read in your closing statements an indirect vote for putting il Moro and Beatrice's funerary sculptures in the great room. We need to return to Milan either the original statues or copies. In any case, I think it is also appropriate for me to express a vote: that the copies be in marble and not bronze. The Leonardesque form and modeling of these statues was designed and executed with marble in mind. I feel that this is what Cristoforo Solari wanted. An adaptation in bronze would make the figures look lifeless, soft and bloated.

When I'm in Florence and I pass by Or San Michele and see the bronze reproduction of Donatello's San Giorgio, I feel as though the soul of the great artist is turning [in his grave] with Dantesque anger because he would have wanted to model the statues made of bronze differently than those to be sculpted in marble.

Oh, how nice Bramantino's tapestries would look on the walls of the sala delle asse - even with a well-matched and large textile border! And how good would Iesus and Grammatica's illuminated manuscripts would look in addition to the armors, ceramics and textiles of the period. In this room we need to resurrect the art of Milan in the period of Ludovico il Moro. All people with means should be racing to donate or deposit something like, for example: count

⁴⁴ "Il ripristino di questa decorazione la cui tracce furono [ricoverate?] fin dal 1893, rimase sinora in sospenso in causa di molti altri lavori più urgenti e [parola illeggibile] impegno artistico cui si dovette attendere; e quale lo scorso anno si ebbe ad inaugurare i musei d'arte nella Corte Ducale si dovette incominciare a compiere l'ordinamento della scoltura ed oggetti d'arte destinati alla Sala della Torre, oggi ancora esclusa dalle parti accessibili al pubblico. Perciò il ripristinare la decorazione pittorica oltre all'interesse [...] è compito il quale mette nel lavoro l'amministrazione municipale in condizione di potere ultimare senz'altro inizio la sistemazione del museo, [...] nella Sala della Torre il facimento e quel rivestimento alla pareti che, come nella vicine sale, dei Ducali e delle Colombine servirà al collocamento delle opere d'arte che da un anno sono depositate in sale in attesa di ordinamento." Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milan, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

Cesare Magno, his flute player by Bart. Veneziano that is thought to be a portrait of Cecilia Gallerani (it is not, it doesn't matter because it is a work from that period); Dr. Grisani, his small chest with reliefs on *pasta di riso*; the Poldi museum the funerary *palliotto* for Ludovico and Beatrice and so on and so on... it costs nothing to dream.

Once again, I thank you very much.

Your much obliged, Carotti.

p.s. to my letter today. One thing leads to another. We should start to promote a month-long exhibition (and do it right away) in the same sala delle asse of paintings, armor, illuminated pages, tapestries, etc. lent by their fortunate owners and then at the closing of the exhibition we should attack with gentle but determined arms so that something will remain. This was done in 1874 for the Museum of Applied and Industrial Arts.

G.C. ⁴⁵

A second example of how Beltrami sacrificed the historical truth of the *Sala delle Asse* in order to obtain the restoration goals he had set for the Sforza Castle can be found in his

⁴⁵ [on stationary with the heading: "R. Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera"]:"Milano 7 maggio 1902. Illustre Signore ed Amico, Ho voluto aspettare, per ringraziarla, di aver scorso la sua nuova monografia nella sala delle asse e sulla sua decorazione, che ella prova luminosamente essere opera di Leonardo. Le sono non solo obbligato del dono gentile ma riconoscente di avermi ricordato e assegnato uno dei 300 soli esemplari di così prezioso lavoro esemplari che andranno certamente a ruba! Leggo nella chiusura un voto indiretto che le statue giacenti del Moro e di Beatrice vengono a completare la sala insigne. Abbiamo da ritornare a Milano le statue originali o ne vengano i facsimili, mi sia lecito ad ogni modo esprimere anch' io un voto: che i facsimili siano in marmo e non in bronzo. La forma e modellazione leonardesca di queste statue fu ideata ed eseguita in relazione alla materia marmorea, così sento e volle Cristoforo Solari: la traduzione in bronzo darebbe delle figure floscie, molli e gonfie. Quando a Firenze, passo vicino ad Or San Michele e veggio la riproduzione in bronzo di San Giorgio di Donatello sento che lo spirito del grande scultore deve aggirarsi li attorno dantescammente rabbioso perchè egli modellava diversamente le statue da fondere in bronzo da quelle da scolpire in marmo. Come starebbero bene nelle pareti della sala delle asse gli arazzi del Bramantino, anche con un orlo grande di stoffa ben intonata, se non abbastanza grandi! E come vi starebbero pur bene quei libri miniati del Iesus e della Grammatica, armature ed armi, ceramiche e stoffe di quel tempo. In questa sala dovrebbe risorgere l'apparizione dell'arte di Milano al tempo di Ludovico il Moro. Tutti i cittadini doviziosi dovrebbero andar a gara a donare o depositare qualche cosa, ad es: il conte Cesare del Magno, la sua suonatrice di liuto del Bart. Veneziano che si vuole sia il ritratto di Cecilia Gallerani, non l'è, ma non importa, è opera di quel tempo; il Dr. Grisani la sua cassetta con rilievi su pasta di riso, il museo Poldi il palliotto funereo di Ludovico e Beatrice e via, via... fantasticare costa niente. La ringrazio ancora vivissimamente
Il suo obbligato Carotti. p.s. alla mia lettera di oggi. Da cosa nasce cosa. Bisognerebbe cominciare dal promuovere una esposizione di un mesetto (e farla subito, subito) nella sala stessa delle asse, di quadri, dipinti, armi, miniature, arazzi ecc. ecc. ottendoli a prestito dai fortunati possessori e poi all'atto della chiusura si daranno gli assalti con armi cortesi ma irridiose e qualche cosa ne resterà; così sorse dopo l'esposizione del 1874 il Museo d'arte applicata all'industria." G. C. Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, *Corrispondenza Vinciana*, RB, C IV.16, fol. 21-26.

handling of one of the four plaques in the ceiling's vault. When the *Sala* was rediscovered, the inscriptions in these plaques were, for the most part, illegible. Fortunately, they were found to have been transcribed by a Venetian historian, Marino Sanuto (1496-1533). Beltrami, however, did not trust Sanuto's transcription for one of these plaques. The inscription referred to Louis XII's conquest of Milan and Ludovico's flight from Lombardy (a more detailed discussion of these texts is available in Chapter 4). Beltrami was convinced that Ludovico could have never ordered such an inscription. Therefore, in 1902, Beltrami replaced the text in the plaque with one honoring Leonardo, Rusca and Pietro Volpi. The inscription read as follows:

IN HONOR OF THE MEMORY OF ALESSANDRINA VOLPI BASSANI, PIETRO
WISHED TO HAVE THIS ROOM REFURBISHED FOR HIS CONSORT BASED ON THE
ORIGINAL AND BRILLIANT COMPOSITION BY LEONARDO. YEAR MCM I EX
RUSCA P.⁴⁶

As commendable as Beltrami's efforts were to bring the *Sala delle Asse* to public attention, by replacing one of the plaques with a new text, he ultimately misled historians about the *Sala's* history. Beltrami thought that Ludovico Sforza had commissioned the decorations in the *Sala delle Asse* in honor of Beatrice d'Este. The reference to Volpi's deceased wife, Alessandrina reinforced this interpretation and influenced studies of the *Sala delle Asse* by later scholars.

⁴⁶ AD ONORARE LA MEMORIA DI ALLESANDRINA VOLPI BASSANI IL CONSORTE PIETRO VOLLE RIPRISTINATA SULLE ORIGINARIE TRACCIE QUESTA GENIALE COMPOSIZIONE DI LEONARDO. ANNO MCM I E RUSCA P." The inscription was removed when the Sala was cleaned in 1955.

The reference to the King of France would have, instead, given scholars the opportunity to evaluate the possibility that a *Sala* was not *all* painted by Leonardo and to consider the possibility of an decorative program that was so overtly political in its message that it led the French to change it. However, for Beltrami, a plaque commemorating the French conquest of Milan would have been in disagreement with the patriotic role that he had assigned to the Sforza Castle. The castle was not supposed to serve as a reminder of foreign occupation. It was supposed to be a symbol of support for the recently-formed Italian State.

A text celebrating the French cause would have been especially problematic in the 1880's because relations between France and Italy had again become precarious. Italy's Napoleonic period had ended some eighty years before but the country was still economically dependent on France. Milan's Chamber of Commerce and the *Circolo Industriale*, therefore, convinced the Italian State to declare an economic war on France by adopting a tariff-based barrier against imports. "The economic war [with France] has begun" declared the newspaper *La Finanza* in 1886. "This war," it went on to explain, is "a natural consequence of the competition between these two Mediterranean countries."⁴⁷ It was everyone's hope that the barrier would give Italian industries a boost and free the country from its dependence on France. In March of 1889, Prime Minister Francesco Crispi congratulated Milan for showing Italy that battles fought in commerce and industry are no less glorious for the nation than military ones. "Patriotic wars mobilize and strengthen the people," he explained; "industry

⁴⁷ "La guerra economica è dichiarata... una conseguenza naturale della rivalità dei due paesi del Mediterraneo." *La Finanza*, luglio 17, 1886.

and commerce will emerge from the economic war we have started better than before. I applaud your patriotism."⁴⁸ Popular newspapers such as *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Lega Lombarda*, *La Lombardia*, *Il Secolo* and *La Perseveranza* – all newspapers to which Beltrami had ties or was a regular contributor – emphasized Milan's leadership in the battle against France. "We can safely say," wrote the *Corriere della Sera*, "that the main arsenal from which the government has found its weapons in the fight for tariff reforms is the relationship that it has with the Chamber of Commerce of Milan."⁴⁹

While Beltrami worked on the *Sala delle Asse*, Italy experienced the first repercussions of the embargo decision. Ex-patriots who had been working in France were forced to return to Italy in droves, victimized by tensions between the two countries. Italy worried whether it would be able to bear this unexpected rise in unemployment. Worse yet, the industrial boost everyone had hoped for did not occur. Consumer prices rose, worker salaries did not, and Italy began to question its role in the European economy and its foreign policy.⁵⁰ Fears that a true war with France would erupt began to spread. In July of 1889, Crispi warned his Minister

⁴⁸ "Le guerre patriottiche nobilitano e rafforzarono popoli; Industria e Commercio usciranno più gagliardi di prima dalla lotta economica ora iniziata; applaudo vostro patriottismo." G. Treccani, "La rottura delle relazioni commerciali con la Francia" *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 15: "Nell'Unità Italiana (1859-1900)," Milan, 1962, p. 247.

⁴⁹ "L'arsenale principale dove il governo ha preso le armi per far trionfare la riforma doganale furono, si può dire, le relazioni colla Camera di Commercio di Milano." *Corriere della Sera*, January 7, 1880. Repeated on January 8 and 9 in *Il Secolo*.

of War, Bertolè-Viale of this danger: "Europe is at present a volcano about to erupt at any time and we need to stand ready. Every day we wake up in fear that a war will break out [...] The neighboring Republic has prepared what it needs to squash us on sea and land."⁵¹ Crispi – who had served as one of the main architects of the revolution of 1860 and as Giuseppe Garibaldi's secretary of state – believed that Italy's best defense in the event of a real war was to not rely solely on its military forces but on its deep and pervasive sense of patriotism. For most of the 1880's and early 1890's,⁵² therefore, Crispi enforced a policy of "moral unity" and encouraged a political education of the masses that would bind them to the state. Crispi spread his religion of *la patria* in a number of ways including: the honoring of Victor Emanuel, Garibaldi and other heroes of the *Risorgimento* with statues and street names; the sponsoring of biographies to be used as textbooks by schoolchildren; the commemoration of anniversaries from the *Risorgimento* with lavish national celebrations or public holidays. Through a skilful manipulation of the press in 1888 and 1889, Crispi also managed to convince the Italian people that France *wanted* to attack Italy,⁵³ rendering it imperative that Italy stand united against its enemy: "France must now forget the history of the supremacy and influence which she once

⁵⁰ In 1888, the Italian newspaper *Economista* reported that "mentre per la protezione l'operaio paga da otto mesi più caro il grano, il vestito e gli utensili da lavoro, ed il più viene intascato dal produttore, il salario rimane lo stesso." *Economista*, November 11, 1888.

⁵¹ "L'Europa del presente è un vulcano, che può da un momento all'altro erompere, e bisogna trovarsi pronti. Ogni giorno ci svegliamo col pericolo che scoppi la guerra [...] La vicina Repubblica ha preparato, in mare e per terra, quanto occorre per schiacciarci." F. Crispi, *Politica Estera, Memorie e documenti*, ed. by T. Palamenghi-Crispi, Milan, 1912, p. 323.

⁵² Crispi served as prime minister from 1887-1891 and again from 1893 to 1896.

⁵³ C. Duggan, "Politics in the era of Depretis and Crispi, 1870-96," *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796-1900*, ed. J. A. Davis, Oxford, 2000, p. 177.

possessed on this side of the Alps. [France] should recognize that the Italian nation is as good as herself and must now be allowed to enjoy her independence and profit from it."⁵⁴

It was in this political climate that Beltrami decided to replace the French text in the *Sala delle Asse*. Faced with the question of whether to acknowledge the text as a document that belonged to the *Sala*'s history – a document open to the examination and interpretation of future art historians – Beltrami decided that it was best to do without it. He could not risk compromising the *Sala*'s "Italian" agenda. He had promised the Milanese people a castle worthy of their pride, a monument that would stand "in modern times" as a manifestation of a glorious past.⁵⁵

If Beltrami fell short of his goal, there may also have been consequences for the reputation of Milan. Since the unification, Milan had served as a "moral" (and social) example for the rest of the country. There was a large gap between what was "legal" Italy and what was "real" Italy. An Italian character had yet to be fashioned and the Milanese stepped up to the plate. Milan was Italy's most "modern" city in terms of architecture, urban development and public services. Commercially speaking, it was the wealthiest and it had made great strides in education: its illiteracy rate was 17% (down from 53% prior to the unification) while in other parts of the country, in the South especially, illiteracy remained a staggering 70% (down only

⁵⁴ D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1997, p. 145.

⁵⁵ "Debbo infine uno speciale ringraziamento all'on. Amministrazione Municipale, per l'interessamento che in ogni circostanza volle dimostrare nel nobile proposito di ridare a Milano un monumento il quale, in mezzo alle manifestazioni della vita moderna, sarà la efficace affermazione di un periodo di un certo non inglorioso del nostro passato." L. Beltrami, 1894, p. 13.

slightly from 80% to 90% prior to the unification).⁵⁶ Many believed that Milan should have been made the nation's capital in 1861 as Napoleon had made it the capital of the Kingdom of Italy under his rule. It settled, instead, for a key role in Italy's political and social education, helping to disseminate principles of "nationality" and "make" Italians.

Despite the fact that Beltrami spoke French fluently, that he had studied at the *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts*, and that he owed much of his early professional training to Parisian architects, there is no question but that he was a fervent supporter of his city and, through his membership in the Moderate Party, of Crispi's agenda. In 1890, the Moderates helped Beltrami win a seat in Italy's Parliament. In the weeks before Beltrami's election, the Moderates pledged their loyalty to Crispi through the popular press: "It would be highly unpatriotic [of us], not to support our government in the political agenda it has put forth for our country."⁵⁷ Crispi was no longer in office when Beltrami unveiled the *Sala delle Asse* to the public in 1902. He was forced to resign after a nation-wide banking scandal and four other prime ministers – each with their own distinct agendas – came in and out of office as Italy

⁵⁶ J. A. Davis, "Economy, Society and the State," *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. J. A. Davis, Oxford, p. 255.

⁵⁷ "al punto al quale siamo giunti, antipatriottica [sarebbe] qualunque manifestazione contraria alle nostre alleanze, e sommamente antipatriottico non appoggiare il Governo nella politica nella quale il paese è impegnato." This statement was issued by Giuseppe Colombo who ran on the same ticket as Beltrami and was also appointed by the Moderates to a seat in Italy's Parliament in 1890. Published in *L' Italia del Popolo*, November 1 and 2, 1890.

struggled through unstable times.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, it was Crispi's political ideals and deep enthusiasm for the democratic culture of the *Risorgimento* must have lingered in Beltrami's thoughts during the final stages of his work for the *Sala delle Asse* and the Sforza Castle.

Beltrami looks to documents in building a defense for his work on the Sala delle Asse:

In 1919, Beltrami tried to vindicate himself from the harsh attacks made on his work on the *Sala delle Asse* by publishing a small book entitled *Leonardo e i disfattisti suoi* in which he expressed his ill-feelings towards his critics. The phrases in *italic*, showing emphasis, are Beltrami's.

We go against Leonardo only to go against the person who shed light on a previously-ignored work. Ever since the decoration of that Sala first appeared to the public sixteen years ago, this new evidence for the genius of Leonardo has kept the defeatists awake at night.

One of Italy's most famous critics — let's go ahead and call him the most famous, just to make him happy —, could not help but find a resemblance to a Northern-style beer pub in describing the Sala delle Asse. I regret that I am not able to appreciate — not even today — this analogy because I am not among those that are frequent patrons of beer-drinking establishments. I can only conclude that these [comments] are not necessarily vulgar if the decoration [of these establishments] inspire such association.

Responsibility for the work is not just in the hands of Leonardo, but also in those who, according to the critics proceeded to destroy historic monuments (after "reconstructing, remaking or ordering monuments to be remade"). Among these is the "Sala delle Asse of Leonardo da Vinci, that has been almost transformed into a Gambrinus Halle, without any respect for the traces left by the great master" (*thank goodness that once in a while Leonardo is great!*). With Beltrami's "great complacency" — *naturally, out of respect for a colleague, the mention of honorable titles is out of respect for sum of their work* — green leaves were cut with scissors and superimposed "on a squeaky blue [sky]..." "The work of a house painter!" concludes the critic. This is the same critic who is happy to impart a well-deserved lesson on the person who dared to make known the gross mistake the critic made many years ago with respect to an earthquake in Milan. He took advantage of it to make up for the deficiencies in his education.

⁵⁸ Italy's prime ministers between 1896 and 1903 were as follows: Antonio di Rudini (March 1896- June 1898), Luigi Pelloux (June 1898 - June 1900), Giuseppe Saracco (June 1900 to February 1901) Giuseppe Zanardelli (February 1901-October 1903).

Leonardo's defeator echoed — much later — the above critic's judgement, a judgement that, unfortunately, affects the reputation of Leonardo — an accomplice who superimposed leaves — and what is worse, green leaves on a blue sky. Perturbed to have been caught by me, by surprise, with a bundle of gross errors when he thought he was correcting the inexistent errors of a scholar who had transcribed Da Vinci's manuscripts, he denounced the troublesome censor. The censor did not hesitate to recall for him the golden warning "*ne sutor ultra crepidam*" by pointing the finger at me for being guilty of "reducing the Sala delle Asse (and some would even say the same about the Sforza Castle) to the condition "that we all know about." This is a personal opinion and I know better than try to oppose it; just as I cannot oppose the judgement of a good Milanese who, in referring to Malaguzzi might say "he who reduced Leonardo (and some will even say to the Court of Ludovico il Moro) in the condition that we all know about." ⁵⁹

In his book, Beltrami took up, once again, the defense of the Sala delle Asse as a work by Leonardo. But this defense was not based on any visual evidence. Beltrami took refuge in an approach that was familiar to him: the reevaluation of facts he had

⁵⁹ Si dà addosso a Leonardo, tanto per dare addosso a chi ebbe a rimetterne in evidenza l'opera ignorata: giacchè, fin dal tempo in cui, or sono sedici anni, la decorazione di quella Sala apparve al pubblico, questa nuova testimonianza del genio di Leonardo ha turbato i sonni dei disfattisti.

Uno dei critici maggiori d' Italia — diremo anzi il maggiore per accontentarlo — menzionando a quell' epoca la *Sala delle Asse*, non potè a meno di trovarvi il richiamo di una birreria nordica. Dolente di non trovarmi in grado, nemmeme oggi, di apprezzare l' analogia, non essendo tra i frequentatori delle aule dei bevitori di birra, potrei solo concludere che queste non debbano essere tanto volgari, se la loro decorazione può suggerire tale richiamo.

La responsabilità dell' opera non spetta solo a Leonardo, ma anche a colui che secondo il critico, avendo "ricostruito, rifatto, o fatto rifare tanti monumenti" è giunto a guastare monumenti antichi, tra i quali "la Sala delle Asse di Leonardo da Vinci, trasformata quasi in *Gambrinus Halle*, senza rispetto alle traccie lasciatevi dal sommo maestro "(meno male, una volta tanto, Leonardo è sommo!) a cui, dal Beltrami "e con suo grande compiacimento (e questo era ben naturale, almeno per deferenza ai collaboratori, menzionati a titolo di lode, nel rendiconto dell' opera) si sono sostituite foglie verdi, tagliate con le forbici "sull' azzurro stridente...: fatica da imbianchino!" conclude il critico, lieto di aver così impartito la ben meritata lezione a chi si era permesso di rilevare una cantonata da lui presa, a proposito di un terremoto milanese di molti secoli or sono, del quale egli abusò per accomodare le deficienze della sua erudizione.

Al quale giudizio, che purtroppo coinvolge anche la riputazione di Leonardo, complice nell' avere ritagliato delle foglie — e quel che è peggio, verdi — sull' azzurro del cielo, faceva eco, molto in ritardo, il suo disfattista di Leonardo: il quale giorni sono — seccato a sua volta per esser stato da me sorpreso con un bel manipolo di spropositi, mentre credeva di correggere gli errori inesistenti di uno studioso, in materia di trascrizione di manoscritti vinciani — volle denunciare il molesto censore, che non si era peritato di richiamargli l' aureo monito "*ne sutor ultra crepidam*" additandomi come reo di avere "conciato la Sala delle Asse (e qualcuno dice addirittura il Castello Sforzesco) in quel modo "che tutti sanno": giudizio personale, al quale mi guarderò bene dall' oppormi, come non potrei mettere in dubbio il giudizio che qualunque buon milanese intendesse di pronunciare, dicendo del Malaguzzi "lui che ha conciato Leonardo (e qualcuno dice addirittura la Corte di Ludovico il Moro) in quel modo che tutti sanno."

extracted from Sforza documents. He even went so far as to give Malaguzzi-Valeri a lesson on how to read documents – the same Malaguzzi – Valeri who, based on his examination of the visual evidence, had attributed the *Sala delle Asse* to Bramante instead of Leonardo. But the criticisms of scholars and critics had never been about Beltrami's interpretations of Sforza documents. They have been concerned with his restorations and his manipulation of the original visual evidence. In spite of everything, Beltrami was never able to satisfy critics on these terms. For him, it was as if the only expression that really mattered for the *Sala delle Asse* was that written in documents. This insistence on documents ultimately compromised the possibility of having a more faithful reconstruction of the *Sala delle Asse*.

CHAPTER 4

THE SALA DELLE ASSE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

Physical description of the Sala delle Asse • Interpreting the term "asse" in the name Sala delle Asse • The location and function of the Sala delle Asse under Ludovico's reign • The four plaques in the ceiling • Establishing a time-line for the Sala delle Asse • The Saletta Negra and the Sala delle Asse as parts of a unified program • Payment records for the Sala delle Asse

This chapter provides a reconsideration of the *Sala delle Asse*'s most basic problems, including dating, location and possible uses. Not all of the information is new. All of the fifteenth-century documents discussed here have been published before, albeit in obscure places, and some have not been considered in conjunction with other evidence. My purpose in reassessing this information is to enlarge the existing framework of factual information available to guide interpretation of the *Sala*'s fifteenth-century history, both for this dissertation and also for future studies.

The archival material in this chapter will be quoted in first in Italian, followed by an English translation. This will enable the reader to examine primary sources in their original presentation before evaluating my interpretation of key wording.

Physical description of the Sala delle Asse:

The *Sala delle Asse* is a room of ample dimensions, measuring approximately fifteen square meters or an even twenty-five "braccia milanesi" (a form of measurement used by Milanese architects and engineers in the fifteenth-century). A Gothic-style, semi-ribbed vaulted ceiling begins about 6.6 meters from the floor and gives form to sixteen lunettes - each about 1.75 meters in diameter. The room receives light from two windows, one on the northwest side and the other on the northeast.

A complex, decorative scheme featuring sixteen trees occupies approximately 2,880 square feet of the upper walls and ceiling. The scheme appears to have been devised as to complement, rather than to compete with or serve as a foil for, the *Sala's* main vaulting system. The individual tree trunks create an illusion of structural support for each of the sixteen lunettes. All of the branches on the *Sala's* trees are rich with foliage and are cleverly intertwined to form a luxurious pergola.¹ A continuous golden cord provides further embellishment for the pergola, forming intricate knot designs at regular intervals. This regularity enhances the harmonious nature of the pergola. It also helps to convey the idea that the trees were pulled, or trained to grow into pergola-shape and were not a random grouping of trees in a forest or orchard. A large shield bearing a combination of the Sforza and the Este families' coat of arms crowns the center of the ceiling. This shield is set inside a golden ring that acts as an

imaginary oculus to a clear and open sky. Additional glimpses of this sky appear between the tree branches. The only interruption to this natural scene are four plaques. Each is positioned on a different wall and inscribed with references to historical and political events that took place during the reign of Ludovico Sforza. Their significance and function will be discussed later in this chapter.

Nothing remains of the original decorations for the lower half of the *Sala delle Asse*, with the exception of two fragments on the East wall and another on the West, both painted in monochrome. These are directly above an area that was identified by Luca Beltrami as the location of the room's original fireplace. One of the fragments offers a naturalistic rendering of tree roots penetrating several strata of natural rock. This is an unusual motif because, from what I have observed in my studies of Renaissance rooms, roots have no direct antecedents in full-scale decoration. The other fragment is a partial rendering of a tree trunk. It is not clear how these fragments were connected to the decorations on the upper walls and ceiling, if indeed they were. The illusion is one of trees breaking through the walls of the castle, replacing an indoor room with an outdoor space. The monochrome appearance of the lower walls may also suggest that a portion of the *Sala delle Asse* never progressed beyond the underdrawing stage.

¹ Two trees frame two windows in the room. Each of these trees begins as two separate trunks (one on each side of the window) but then come together above the window, forming a single a trunk. Thus, sixteen trees are visible within the main vaulting system.

Interpreting the term "asse" in the name Sala delle Asse:

Wooden panels now cover all of the lower wall-areas, except for the monochrome fragments. These panels were installed in the 1950's on the assumption that the name "Sala delle Asse" meant that the room's walls were at one time lined with wooden panels. It was not unusual for Renaissance palace rooms to be lined in wood because it helped to insulate the interior from dampness and cold drafts from the outside.² Such insulation would have been a welcome comfort in the Sforza Castle. In December of 1472, a *maggiordomo* complained that the temperature inside the castle was next to freezing and years later, a Venetian ambassador referred the Sforza Castle as the coldest palace he had ever visited.³ With two of its walls exposed to the outside and its high vaulted ceilings, the *Sala delle Asse* was surely one of the coldest rooms in the castle.

Besides offering insulation from the cold, wooden panels were used in Renaissance palaces as backdrops for the display of tapestries or temporary decorations. Temporary decorations provided a convenient way to transform a room for different

² On the furnishing and appearance of Renaissance rooms see Peter Thornton, *Italian Renaissance Interiors 1400-1600*, New York, 1991.

³ Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Carteggio Sforzesco 909*, Giovanni da Castronovate to Galeazzo Maria Sforza: "Queste cameriere che nuy facemo aparechiare qui in castello per comandamento de vostra excellentia che se gli incomensarse ad fargli dentro qualche fogo." Known to me from E. S. Welch, *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan*, New Haven and London, 1995 and C. A. Vianello, "Testimonianze venete su Milano e la Lombardia degli anni 1492-1495, *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, new series, IV, 1939, 408-23. Also known to me from Welch, 1995.

functions or occasions when time or expense was an issue. In the case of the Sforza Castle, it was also a way to maintain a multi-purpose function for many of its rooms. The Sforza court was short on space. When the Castle was built, at the end of the fourteenth century, it was designed to serve as a modern fortification, housing militia and government offices only. The Duke and his court lived, instead, in the Palazzo dell'Aregno next to the Duomo. In 1468, on the eve of Galeazzo Maria's wedding to Bona di Savoia, the ducal court moved to the Sforza Castle and transformed it into an aristocratic and signoral palace. By the time Ludovico Sforza came into power, it was home to at least two hundred people, many sharing cramped quarters.⁴ Compared with the numerous and extravagant spaces enjoyed by the courts in Florence, Mantua or Naples, space at the Sforza Castle was at a premium. When visitors were in residence, rooms had to be reappropriated and transformed into temporary kitchens, bedrooms or special event rooms. Practical means of supplying temporary decorations were, therefore, essential.

One of the most-frequently transformed rooms was, it seems, a large hall referred to in documents as the "Sala della Balla." It served as a courtier's dining room on some occasions and as an indoor tennis court on others. On January 24, 1491, Ludovico Sforza also used it as a theater for a celebration entitled the "Festa delle Donne." For this occasion, he ordered that the entire hall be decorated with a series of

⁴Welch, 1995, p. 220.

spectacular *historie* to serve as backdrops for the celebration. He insisted that the decorations be ready in less than a month and a large team of artists worked around the clock to produce a continuous mural of paintings on stretched canvases. The intent was to simulate an actual wall fresco but with the added convenience that the canvases could be removed afterwards.

For most of the fifteenth-century, the names of rooms in Italian palaces were determined by four conventions: by decoration or architectural treatment (i.e. *sala dipinta*), by size (i.e. *sala magna*), by function (i.e. *cancelleria* or *cucina*) or by location (i.e. *sala sopra la sala verde*). The *Sala delle Asse* falls into the first category. In doing so, it raises the question of whether there was something exceptional or unique about the *asse* that outweighed out all other possible nomenclatures. Before we try to answer, we should consider that the *Sala delle Asse* was not the only room in the Sforza Castle or in fifteenth-century documents to be described with the term *asse*. According to Francesco Malaguzzi-Valeri, a nursery for Ludovico's first legitimate son, Ercole Massimiliano, was described in documents from 1493 as a room with *asse* or more specifically *delle asse*.⁵ A letter dated December, 1471 (from the period of Galeazzo Maria Sforza) tells us that the room directly above the *Sala delle Asse* contained *asse*. It seems that the Duke had ordered a passage to be opened between the room directly above the *Sala delle Asse* and one next to it. The letter referred specifically to an "opening that goes from the

⁵ F. Malaguzzi-Valeri, *La corte di Ludovico il Moro. La vita privata e l'arte*, vol. 1, Milan, 1913-1923, p. 330.

room of your Lordship, i.e. the one that has been renovated above the other room with *asse*" (*un uscio che andasse da la camera de Sua S.ia cioè da quella chè fata de novo, suxo l'altra dele asse*).⁶ In 1473, a room reserved for Bona di Savoia was also lined with *asse*. This room was located next to the tower with the treasury.⁷ There are also references to *camer[e] de le asse* in Sforza residences outside of Milan. For example, in Monza, on July 28, 1474, Cicco Simonetta (the first official secretary of the Sforza court) recorded in one of his diaries that Galeazzo Maria held an audience for the Bishop of Asti in a room described as: "the upstairs room with *asse*" (*la camera del e asse de sopra*).⁸ The words *de sopra* may have been used by Simonetta to differentiate one room from a similar one on a floor below. Therefore, both in Milan and Monza, there were several rooms with *asse*.

⁶Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive, fogli staccati*, 1471, fol. 362. The letter refers to the *Sala delle Asse* as "Camera della Torre." However, Luca Beltrami has been able to deduce from other documents that the names *Camera della Torre* and *Sala delle Asse* were used interchangeably from at least 1469 to about 1472. See Beltrami, 1902, p. 20.

⁷"la camera fodrata d'asse della nostra Illma Madonna contigua alla Torre del thexoro, ch' è nel castello di porta Zobia de Milano." Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Pittori: Stefano de' Fedeli*. Known to me from Beltrami, 1894, p. 318.

⁸"Ex Modoetia Mediolanum, die mercurii 28 julii 1474. Questa sira, circha le XXII hore, el Signore se partite da Monza a l' imprevista, con doy o tri de li suoy et venne ad Milano. Questa matina, el reverendo monsignor..... de l' Abayo, vescovo de Aste, ha visitato l'Excellentia del Signore, in nome del reverendissimo Cardinale de Rohanno; et, presentate le littere de credenza, el Signore gli ha dato audientia ne la camera de le asse de sopra, nel castello de Monza; et nella espositione sua ha referto alcune cose de importanza. Da poy, ha tolto licentia et andato ad casa sua, in Aste." Cicco Simonetta's diaries are preserved in Milan's Archivio di Stato (*Registri delle Missive*, n. 111 A, B and n. 135). A transcription of these important diaries was commissioned by Luca Beltrami before 1900 from an archivist named Boggiano. A second transcription was later ordered by Count Luigi Fumi who was superintendent of the Archivio. It was not until 1949, however, that the transcriptions were finally published by the archivist A. R. Natale in segments in various issues of *Archivio Storico Lombardo*. See A. R. Natale, "I diari di Cicco Simonetta," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, ser. 8, vol. 3, 1951-1953, pp. 154-187; ser. 8, vol. 4, 1951-1953, pp. 186-217; ser. 8, vol. 5, 1954-1956, pp. 54-125; ser. 8, vol. 6, 1954-1956, pp. 292-318; ser. 8, vol. 7, 1957-1958, pp. 277-288. The July 28, 1474 entry can be found on page 199 of ser. 8, vol. 4, 1951-1953.

It would be useful for art historians to determine what relation the *asse* in the *Sala delle Asse* had, if any, to the painted portions of the room. Were the *asse* – which I understand to mean "panels" – utilitarian or were they decorated? What portions of the *Sala* did they actually cover? What was their purpose? Were they installed primarily for insulation? Were they used as backdrops for temporary decorations? What happened to the *asse* when Leonardo started painting the *Sala*? Were they taken into consideration in planning the painted portions of the room? The documents available at the time of writing this dissertation do not provide definitive answers to all of these questions. They do, however, limit the possibilities.

In July of 1472, seven months after Galeazzo Maria ordered the opening between the room above the *Sala delle Asse* and the one next to it, he asked his Ducal Supervisor Bartolomeo Gadio to:⁹

fodrare de asse la Camera ch'è sopra la Camera deli Ducali in Castello, et così del solare: dicemo che siamo contenti tu la facci foderare et solare et comença questo Augusto come tu scrivi, et la facci foderare et solare come sta quella de sotto, ricordandoti che gli facci fare in cima la columbina con el razo, come sta de sotto...

line with *asse* the room that is above the room of the Ducali in the castle as well as panel it. Let us say that we would be pleased for you to have it lined and paneled and start this in August as you write, and that you have it lined and paneled as the [room] that is below it (remembering to make the dove with the *razo* at the top as was done below)...

In the above passage, the *Sala delle Asse* was apparently referred to as "Camera deli Ducali." This is because in 1469, it featured two large ducal devices: the *cimero del foco*

⁹ Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registro Miss.* N.º 105, fol. 95.

or blazing lion with a bucket and the *colombine con i razi* or doves with radiating flames. The devices were an emblematic reference to Galeazzo and Bona di Savoia's union in marriage.¹⁰ Three years after these devices were painted, Galeazzo Maria asked that the upper room be lined (*fodrare*) and paneled (*solare*) with *asse*, "just like the room below." He also requested that the motif of a *colombina con el razo* be placed at the top of the ceiling.

The work in the upper room did not begin promptly. And it is only in September of 1472 that we find a report for the work in progress. The report reads:¹¹

Altre volte la V. Ill.ma Sig.a me impose facesse solare et fodrare d'asse tutta la Camera della Torre è in questo vostro Castello, così le lunette, sive voltayole, come lo celo quale è in volta. Et restandogli solum a fodrare lo celo, come po habere veduto V.a S.a, andando dicto celo circha ducento busi, sicondo dice Maestro Bartholomeo Stramito nel modo intendera da luy, per metere li calastrini per inchiodare le asse a dicto celo...

On other occasions your Illustrious Lord ordered me to panel and line with *asse* all of the Room of the Tower located in your Castle, and in this same manner the lunettes, the vaults and the ceiling that is in the vault. All that is left to do is to line the ceiling — as your Lord has seen — with approximately two hundred holes in the ceiling, according to Master Bartolomeo Stramito, for installing the supports for nailing the *asse* to said ceiling...

¹⁰ On May 29, 1469, Galeazzo Maria sent the following instructions to Bartolomeo Gadio regarding the completion of the *Sala delle Asse* here referred to as "camera della torre": "... la pictura se ha ad fare nella Saleta, Camera de la Torre, et Sala: La Saletta del Castello di Porta Zobia a Milano sij depinta tutta a zigli nel campo celesto, mettendo de le stelle tra l'uno ziglio e l'altro, e nella volta di sopra siano li zigli grandi con le stelle ut supra. La Camera della Torre, sij tutta rossa depincta con le secchie e il cimero nel foco, e tra l'uno zimero e l'altro gli siano razi; nella volta de sopra siano li zimeri grandi. La Sala sij verde, depincta a fazoli e nela volta de fazolo l'arco o sij nivola: e nela volta de dicta sala de sopra siano li fazoli grandi con l'arco ut supra." Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, May 29, 1469, fol. 335, t.º Additional instructions were issued in December of 1469 for painting the "saletta and "la sala verde." Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, Reg.º 91, fol. 68. Because this document does not mention the *Sala delle Asse*, scholars generally assume that it means that the painting of the *Sala delle Asse* or "camera della torre" was completed sometime between May and December of 1469.

¹¹ Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Sezione Storica*, Architetti, lettera, September 21, 1472. Known to me from Beltrami, *Leonardo e la Sala delle 'Asse' nel Castello di Milano*, 1902, p. 21.

From this report, we learn that the paneling extended beyond the walls of the room to include the following areas: the lunettes, vaults, and the ceiling in the main vault. The instructions in the 1472 letter for the motif of *the colombina con el raso* must, therefore, have been referring to a décor applied to paneling – whether painted or carved. A second report from Gadio – this one written in December of 1473 – suggests that the aesthetic appearance of the paneling was of particular importance. Gadio wrote:¹²

ceterum spero che questa presente settimana debia essere fornita de fodrare tutta la camera della Torre, et secondo che mi è refferto da quelli che lhano veduta, chè una bella cosa et piacerà a V.a S.a.

I hope that this week the paneling in the Camera della Torre will be finished and according to what I've been told by those who have seen it, it is a beautiful thing and your Lordship will like it.

No more mentions of *asse* or other remodeling work in the upper room or the *Sala delle Asse* appear until April 21, 1498 (three years after Ludovico Sforza is elected Duke of Milan). On this date, an assistant named Gualtiero Bescapè wrote to Ludovico Sforza to update him on Leonardo da Vinci's work in the *Sala delle Asse*:¹³

Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re mio [...] Lunedì si desarmarà la Camera grande da le asse, cioè da la tore. M.ro Leonardo promete finirla per tuto Settembre, et che per questo si potrà etiam golder: perchè li ponti chel fara lasarano vacuo de soto per tuto.

My Illustrious Lord [...] On Monday *si desarmarà* the large room of asse, that is of the tower. Master Leonardo promises to finish it by the end of September, so that it can be enjoyed: because *li ponti* that he will make will leave everything below open for all use.

¹² Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Sezione Storica*, Architetti, lettera 7 December, 1473.

¹³ Archivio di Stato, Milan, Classe Belle Arti, *Autografi*, 102, fasc. 34. The letter was first published by Gerolamo Calvi in 1869 but is better known through publications by Luca Beltrami. See L. Beltrami, *Il Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1894, p. 512 and L. Beltrami, *Leonardo da Vinci e la Sala delle 'Asse' nel Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1902, p. 24 and 26.

Luca Beltrami and many scholars after him interpreted the word *desarmarà* in the above passage to imply that scaffolding had been erected in the *Sala delle Asse* and that this scaffolding was about to be taken down. Beltrami concluded that arbitrary repairs had to be made to prepare the vault and ceiling with new plaster for painting, reading the passage as follows: "On Monday, the scaffolding will be taken down from the large room with *asse*, that is the one in the tower." Beltrami also reasoned that Leonardo had promised to start and complete all painting in the *Sala* in just five months. During this time, Leonardo planned to use an entirely new scaffolding system: *li pontichel fara*.

A second letter from Bescapè, this one dated just two days later, reported that *la Camera grande de le asse è disconza*. According to Beltrami, this meant that scaffolding had been taken down. The fact that it took only one or two days to take down the scaffolding is an indication, Beltrami argued, that we are dealing with a very simple or very temporary form of scaffolding, scaffolding suited to small repairs but not to the painting of a large vaulted ceiling.

But were there really two sets of scaffolding? With only five months to work, Leonardo needed to start working as soon as any new plaster used to make repairs had dried. The dismantling of one set of scaffolding and the erection of another seems like wasted effort and time. It is more logical to assume that any crew charged with making repairs would have used the same scaffolding used by Leonardo a few days later.

In my opinion, the phrase *lunedì si disarmarà la Camera grande da le asse* makes more sense if interpreted to mean that the *Sala's* paneling (not scaffolding) was going to be dismantled or removed.¹⁴ I am referring to the *asse* installed during the period of Galeazzo Maria which gave the *Sala* its name in the first place. Its removal may have been at the request of Leonardo. His preferred method of wall painting was, after all, oil tempera on dry *intonaco*, not paneling.

The location and function of the Sala delle Asse under Ludovico's reign:

Figure 4.1 shows a plan of the Sforza Castle under Ludovico Sforza's reign. The *Sala delle Asse* is located on the first floor of the northeastern tower and is indicated by the number 11. Directly behind the Castle, just beyond the nature-themed walls of the *Sala*, was a magnificent park filled with game. Under Ludovico's reign, this park measured an impressive 5161 *pertiche* (or 3,096,600 meters square in today's measurements).¹⁵ Access from the *Sala delle Asse* to the park was through a series of *camerini* or small-scaled rooms built over a moat with a loggia (see #14 in Figure 4.1). The moat and loggia were designed by Bramante in the late 1490's and must have at one

¹⁴ For the meaning of the word "disconza" in the fifteenth-century, see the word "sconciare" in the Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana, ed. S. Battaglia, Turin, vol. XVIII, 1996, p. 160. Common meanings for the word "sconciare" were: "guastare" (to ruin or dismantle), "rompere" (to break down) and "distruggere" (to destroy).

¹⁵L. Beltrami, *Il Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1894, p. 687-690.

time borne wall and ceiling paintings.¹⁶ The *camerini* are mentioned in documents from 1495, 1496 and 1498 (see documents for these years in the Register of Documents).

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show the *Sala delle Asse* in relation to other rooms in the court. Rooms #11 through 15 comprised spaces most accessible to the public. These were: the *Sala dei Ducali* or "ducal room" (#11); the main chapel (#12), the *Sala delle Colombine* or "room of the doves" (#13); the *Sala Verde* or "green room" (# 14) and the *Sala degli Scarlioni* or *Scaglioni*, meaning "room with zig-zag designs" (#15). On the opposite side of rooms #11 through 15 were a series of private spaces. For example, room #4 was a chancellery for Ludovico's personal secretary, Cicco Simonetta. Next to the chancellery, in room #3, was chapel dedicated to Saint Donato. Rooms #6 and #7 were Bona di Savoia's private chambers during Galeazzo Maria's reign and may, therefore, have served as Beatrice d'Este's chambers during Ludovico's reign. Ludovico's private quarters were, instead, those directly above the *Sala delle Asse*. Room #18 was a wardrobe. Finally, Room #17 was used to stage important ducal audiences, including meetings of the Court's Secret Council and meetings with ambassadors.

We know of at least one event that was celebrated in the *Sala delle Asse*: the appointment of Ludovico as guardian of his nephew Gian Galeazzo Maria, who became Duke in 1476 at the tender age of eight when his father, Galeazzo Maria was

¹⁶ On Bramante's *ponticella*, see Luca Beltrami, *Bramante e la Ponticella di Ludovico il Moro*, Milan, 1903.

murdered.¹⁷ This appointment was officially confirmed on November 3, 1480 *in Arce Castri Porte Jovis mediolani, in Camera majori residentiae prelibati Ill.mi domini Ducis*. The guardianship paved the way for Ludovico's subsequent promotion to the title of Duke in 1494.

The four plaques in the ceiling:

None of the texts set into the four plaques was intact when the *Sala delle Asse* was rediscovered in late nineteenth century. However, Luca Beltrami was able to reconstruct three of the texts using transcriptions he found in the diaries of a Venetian historian named Marino Sanuto (1466-1535).¹⁸ Sanuto visited the Sforza Castle in September 1499 and took note of "certain epigrams located in the Castle in Milan, in one of the rooms of Lord Ludovico, written in gold lettering" (*copia di certi epigrammi quali sono nel Castello di Milano, in una sala di habitatione dil Signor Ludovico, messi in lettere d'oro*). Sanuto's transcriptions are in Latin as follows:¹⁹

Ludovicus Mediolani Dux, divo Maximiliano Romanorum regi Blancam nepotem in matrimonium locavit et cum eo arctiorem affinitate ipsa benivolentiam injunxit. Anno salutis 93 supra 1400.

Ludovicus Mediolani Dux, Mediolani ducatus titulum jusque quod, mortuo Duce Philippo avo in gente Sfortiana obtinere non potuerat, ab divo Maximiliano Romanorum rege imperatoreque magnis cumulatus honoribus accepit. Anno salutis 95 supra 1400.

¹⁷ Beltrami, 1902, p. 57.

¹⁸ *I diarii di Marino Sanuto (MCCCCXCVI-MDXXXIII) dall'autografo Marciano ital. cl. VII codd. CDXIX-CDLXXVII*, ed. F. Stefani, G. Berchet, N. Barozzi, R. Fulin and M. Allegri, Venice, 1879-1903.

¹⁹ Sanudo, vol. 2, p. 1386.

Ludovicus Mediolani Dux cum Italiam Gallorum regis arma suspecta tenerent, cum Beatrice conjuge in Germaniam trajecit et ut divus Maximilianus rex Caroli conatibus in Italia se opponeret obtinuit. Anno salutis 96 supra 1400.

Ludovicus Sfortia, Alexandriam urbem X milia suorum militum praesidio munitam, triduo a Gallis expugnatam captamque cum rescisset, adhuc XL milia passuum hostium castris a se distantibus territus per alpinum juga cum liberis et amicis paucissimis in Noricorum laterbras aufugit. - Mediolanum ceteraque ejus ditionis urbes Ludovico XII Gallorum regi invictissimo ac duci eorum legitimo se dedunt. Anno salutis 99 supra 1400.

Each of these inscriptions describes events that were of historical or political importance to Ludovico Sforza. The first celebrated the marriage that Ludovico had arranged between his niece, Bianca Maria, and Emperor Maximilian in 1493. The second established the Sforza family's claim to the Dukedom of Milan after the death of Filippo Maria Visconti and emphasized the proclamation of Ludovico as Duke by Maximilian in 1495. The third recorded Ludovico's victory over Charles VIII of France at the Battle of Fornovo and his journey with Beatrice to Germany to conclude an anti-French alliance with Maximilian in 1496. The fourth transcription, now lost, referred to the first French occupation of Milan. It described the moment when Ludovico, his sons and close assistants fled from Milan after learning that the French troops had descended on the city of Alexandria. Beltrami considered this last transcription to be erroneous. He argued that Ludovico would never have ordered such a humiliating inscription and he argued that it was commissioned by King Louis XII after he took possession of the castle in 1499. It would have been a way for the King to affirm his conquest over Milan. Beltrami then speculated that the original plaque commemorated Ludovico's

marriage to Beatrice d' Este in 1491 or her untimely death in January of 1497.²⁰ Beatrice died at the age of twenty-three in childbirth. This elaborate display of devotion on the part of Ludovico is not, however, in keeping with the theme of the other plaques. As Martin Kemp observes, the conspicuous reference to Maximilian in the other inscriptions should make us wonder whether the original text originally referred to an event involving Maximilian,²¹ perhaps it was one that took place in 1494 in order to complete a perfect, four-year sequence with the other plaques: 1493, 1494, 1495 and 1496.²² On September 5, 1494 Maximilian issued an imperial diploma granting Ludovico legal right to become Duke but stipulating that the investiture had to be kept secret for the time being. It was only on May 26th 1495 that the actual ceremony for his assumption as Duke took place, as confirmed by the plaque with the text for the year 1495. I wonder, therefore, if it was the news of the much-anticipated diploma that was featured in the lost plaque.

One question that remains unanswered is why the French changed only one plaque. Surely, they did not sympathize with or appreciate Ludovico's triumphs or alliances with Maximilian. Ludovico and his family had robbed the French of their

²⁰ "la targa fronteggiante il ducale doveva probabilmente commemorare Beatrice..." Beltrami, *Leonardo e la Sala delle 'Asse' nel Castello di Milano*, 1902, p. 54.

²¹ "The conspicuous manner in which Maximilian features in all three inscriptions accurately reflects the way in which Ludovico was pinning his hopes at this time upon his *nephew-in-law* to counter the menace of French territorial ambitions." M. Kemp, "The Exercise of Fantasia," *The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 185.

²² "It is reasonable to assume that the lost text would have referred to an event in 1494." Kemp, p. 185.

legal right to rule over the Duchy of Milan many years earlier. On May 11, 1395, Milan was proclaimed a Duchy of the Holy Roman Empire and Gian Galeazzo Visconti was appointed its first ruler. In his will, Visconti specified that succession would proceed through a line of first-born males; if there were no direct male heir the duchy would pass to a female heir. When Gian Galeazzo Visconti died in 1402, the duchy passed, as planned, to his first-born son, Giovanni Maria. In 1412, Giovanni Maria was murdered and the duchy passed to Visconti's second and last son, Filippo Maria. When Filippo Maria died in 1447, the Duchy was supposed to pass to a successor through Gian Galeazzo's oldest daughter, Valentina. Because she was married to Louis de Valois, Duke of Orleans and brother of the King of France, the provision gave the French a legal right to Milan.²³ The ensuing conflict was resolved in 1450 when Francesco Sforza (1401-1466), husband of Visconti's second daughter, Bianca Maria, was proclaimed Duke instead of Louis De Valois. According to law, Bianca Maria and Francesco Sforza were not legitimate heirs. The fact that Bianca Maria was born out of wedlock should have excluded her from the succession by the provisions of Gian Galeazzo's will. In spite of this, Francesco Sforza's appointment was upheld by the Holy Roman Emperor.

Fully aware of the precariousness of his position, Francesco worked out a scheme to secure the trust of the Milanese people. He granted them new privileges and proclaimed Milan a hegemonic city. In exchange, the people of Milan agreed that he

²³ L. Osio, *Documenti diplomatici tratti dagli archivi milanesi*, vol. 1, Milan, 1864, p. 318-338.

would be allowed to pass the duchy on to his own heirs, whether male or female.²⁴ As an additional safeguard, Francesco destroyed Gian Galeazzo Visconti's will and testament, and replaced it with a forged deed of trust.²⁵ During this period, the state of Orleans did not have the military resources to defend their position. It was only in 1499 that the French were able to put an end to the Visconti-Sforza dynasty.

Within the context of this struggle for Milan, the French choice to leave three of the four plaques in the *Sala delle Asse* unaltered may seem strange. Why did they not replace all of the plaques with messages celebrating a French return or agenda? Perhaps it brought the French more satisfaction to show that Ludovico's successes (the three plaques) culminated in a cowardly act (the fourth plaque). The plaques also gave the French an opportunity to strip Ludovico of his title *Ludovicus, Mediolani dux*. In the fourth plaque, he became simply *Ludovicus Sfortia* (same as in the remaining three plaques).

Establishing a time-line for the Sala delle Asse:

Scholars have generally dated the near completion of the *Sala delle Asse* in the period before 1498 because Gualtiero Bescapè told Ludovico Sforza that Leonardo

²⁴ M. Formentini, *Il ducato di Milano. Studi storici documentati*, Milan, 1877, p. 178-192.

²⁵ P. Ghinzoni, "Sul testamento originale di Gian Galeazzo Visconti contenente il fedecommesso a favore dei discendenti della Valentina," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, vol. 9, 1882, p. 335-340.

promised to finish it by September of that year.²⁶ It is important to stress the term "near completion" because there is reason to believe that Leonardo never finished the work he was commissioned to do at the Sforza Castle. A note in one of his notebooks referring to Ludovico Sforza as patron reads as follows: *nessun opera si finì per lui*, no works were ever finished for him (*Ms I c. 1.-r*).

Scholars disagree, however, on when the project began. Beltrami thought that Leonardo began working on the room no earlier than Bescape's earliest letter (April of 1498). Evelyn Welch believed, instead, that work was already in process by the middle of 1496.²⁷ Pietro Marani has also pushed for a date earlier than 1498 but without suggesting a specific month or year.²⁸ Ellen Carol Kaplan proposed a date for the *Sala* in the mid 1490's because some of Leonardo's interlace drawings date to this period.²⁹ I agree with Beltrami because, if the reading that I proposed earlier in this chapter for the April 1498 letters is correct, Leonardo's work could not have begun before all of the paneling (*asse*) was removed from the *Sala*. This does not mean, however, that the room's design had not been underway for some time. Planning for the project may

²⁶ "Magistro Leonardo promete finirla per tuto settembre..." Archivio di Stato, Milan. *Autografi 102*, fasc. 34 "Leonardo da Vinci" April 21, 1498.

²⁷ Welch, 1995, p. 232.

²⁸ "Leonardo è all'opera nell' aprile 1498 (ma è probabile che già vi lavorasse da tempo), promettendo di finirla entro settembre." P. Marani, "Leonardo e le colonne *Ad Tronchonos*: tracce di un programma iconologico per Ludovico il Moro," *Raccolta Vinciana*, vol. XXI, 1982, p. 109.

²⁹ E. C. Kaplan, "La *Sala delle Asse* in the History of Taste," M.A. thesis, University of Los Angeles, 1986, p. 10.

have begun prior to or close to the first half of 1496, when an unnamed artist was reported to be working in the *camerini* next to the *Sala delle Asse*. A letter dated June 8, 1496 informs us that this anonymous artist stopped working on the *camerini* suddenly and unexpectedly due to a scandal:³⁰

El pittore quale pinzeva li camerini nostri, oggi ha facto certo scandalo per el quale si è absentato...

Today, the painter who was painting our camerini gave rise to a certain scandal and because of it he absented himself...

Scholars have not been able to determine the identity of this artist but many suspect that it was Leonardo. We know that Ludovico Sforza tried to replace this artist with Pietro Perugino.³¹ Several letters were written by the Sforza court between 1496 and 1497 inquiring about Perugino's whereabouts,³² and this may suggest that work in the *camerini* was at a standstill during this period. By April of 1498, work in the *camerini* and the *Sala delle Asse* was again underway, but by Leonardo and not Perugino.³³

³⁰ Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 101, June 8, 1496.

³¹ In 1496, Perugino was one of Italy's most sought-after artists and was especially known for his work in fresco. In the 1480's he coordinated one of the largest fresco projects of the century, the decoration of the Sistine Chapel for Pope Sixtus IV. At least 37 frescoes are known to have been executed by Perugino (see list of works cited in J.A. Bechere's *catalogue Pietro Perugino: Master of the Italian Renaissance*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997, pp. 304-309). Ludovico became interested in Perugino's work around 1490 when his agent in Florence wrote him a letter describing Perugino as: *el Perusino, Maestro singulare: et maxime in muro: le sue cose hano aria angelica, et molto dolce* (Perugino, an exceptional master, and particularly on walls. His things have an angelic air, and very sweet) in M. Baxendall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, 1982, p. 26).

³² See letters dated June 8, 1496; March 28, 1497; and November 9, 1497 in this dissertation's Register of Documents.

³³ With so many other patrons competing for Perugino's work and more commissions than his shop could execute, it was not possible for Ludovico to be persuasive. Even Isabella d'Este, then one of Italy's most persuasive art patrons and Ludovico's sister-in-law, did not find it any easier to compete for

The idea that Leonardo promised to complete a project as large as the *Sala delle Asse* in just five months (from April to September of 1498 as discussed earlier in this chapter) is a surprising one. Leonardo's reputation for using slow and painstaking methods of painting is well known. For example, in 1497, his work on the *Last Supper*, a work that he presumably started around 1495, was reportedly advancing at the pace of just a few strokes per day. This estimate has found support in technical studies.³⁴ A second example is Leonardo's time-line for the *Virgin of the Rocks*, a work commissioned by the Confraternity of the Conception of St. Francis in April 1483. The Confraternity had requested that the painting be completed within a two-year period. Leonardo, instead, delivered a first version in 1490. A fully acceptable version was not delivered until between 1506 and 1508.

To paint the *Sala delle Asse* in just five months, Leonardo must have, relied on the help of assistants. In the drafts for two letters addressed to Ludovico Sforza on ff. 914R and 867 R of the *Codex Atlanticus*, Leonardo complained that he had not received a salary in the last two years while having to support two masters and *sei bocche* (or six

Perugino's services. In 1497, she wanted Perugino to work on a panel for her studio in the Castello San Giorgio in Mantua. Perugino agreed in May of that year to do so but it took copious correspondence to persuade him to actually sign a contract in 1503 and complete the work in 1505. Between 1501 and 1502, Isabella exchanged more than fifty letters with friends concerning Perugino and the work she wanted from him (see Becherer, 1997). There is no documentation to show that Perugino ever came to Milan to work on the *Sala delle Asse*.

³⁴ See P. Marani, "Frammenti di un discorso critico e frammenti di una realtà pittorica," *Leonardo. L'Ultima Cena*, Milan, 1999, p. 53-69.

mouths).³⁵ These assistants are connected by Carlo Pedretti with the *Last Supper* and by Pietro Marani to the equestrian monument in honor of Francesco Sforza, but they could also have been involved with work in the *Sala delle Asse* and the *camerini* as well.³⁶ In more than one letter to Ludovico, Leonardo wrote about having to interrupt work that was already underway in order to take on, regretfully, a series of less important but paying projects. These outside commissions helped him support his assistants:³⁷

Assai mi rincresce che l'avere a guadagnare il vitto m'abbia forzato interrompere l'opera e soddisfare alcuni piccoli, - del seguitare l'opera che già vostra Signoria mi commise; Ma

³⁵ C.A. 867R (ex 315 v-a):

Assai mi rincresce d'essere in necessità, ma più mi dole che quella sia causa dello interrompere il desiderio mio, il quale è sempre disposto a ubidir vostra Eccellentia; forse che vostra Eccellentia no commise altro a messer Gualtieri crededo che io avessi dinari...

E mi rincresce assai che tu m'abbi ritrovato in necessità e che l'avere io a guadagnare il vitto, -m'abbi a interrompere...

Assai mi rincresce che l'avere a guadagnare il vitto m'abbia forzato interrompere l'opera e soddisfare alcuni piccoli, - del seguitare l'opera che già vostra Signoria mi commise; Ma spero in breve avere guadagnato tanto che potro soddisfare ad animo riposato a vostra Eccellenza, alla quale mi raccomando, e se vostra Signoria credesse ch'io avessi dinari, quella s'ingannerebbe; è tenuto 6 boche 36 mesi, e è avuto 50 ducati.

CA 914R (ex 335 v-a):

E se mi dato più alcuna commissione d'alcuna... del premio del mio seruitio, perchè no so da essere da... cose assegnationi, perchè loro àno intante di pe... tie che bene possono assettare più di me... no la mia arte, la quale voglio mutare ed... dato qualche vestimento si oso una somma... Signore, conoscendo io la mente di vostra Eccellentia essere occupa... il ricordare a vostra Signoria le mie piccole e l'arti messe il silentio... che 'l mio taciere fusse causa di fare isdegnare vostra Signori... la mia vita ai vostri serviti mi tie continuamente parato a ubidire... dal cavallo no dirò niente, perchè cognosco i tempi... a vostra Signoria com'io restai avere il salario di 2 anni del ... co due maestri I quali cotinuo stettero a mio salario e spesa... che al fine mi trovai avanzato detta opera circa 15 lire mo... opere di fama per le quali io potessi mostrare a quelli che veranno ch'io sono sta... sa per tutto maio io no so, dove io potessi spendere la mia opere a per...

L'avere io atteso a guadagnarmi la vita...

Per non essere informato io che essere io mi trova... si ricorda della commissione del dipingere i camerini... portavo a vostra Signoria solo richiededo a quella...

³⁶ C. Pedretti, *Leonardo. Studi per il Cenacolo dalla Biblioteca Reale nel Castello di Windsor*, Milan, 1983, p. 34-38. P. Marani, 1999, p. 19.

³⁷ The English translation used here is Jean Paul Richter and not my own. See *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edited by J. P. Richter, New York, vol. II, 1970, p. 399. Richter transcribed Leonardo's last sentence here to read: "6 men for 56 months" but Carlo Pedretti, Pietro Marani, and others believe that the correct transcription should be "36 months."

spero in breve avere guadagnato tanto che potrò soddisfare ad animo riposato a vostra Eccellenza, alla quale mi raccomando, e se vostra Signoria credesse ch'io avessi dinari, quella s'ingannerebbe; ò tenuto 6 boche [36] mesi, e ò avuto 50 ducati.

It vexes me greatly that having to earn my living has forced me to interrupt the work and to attend to smaller matters, instead of following up the work which your Lordship entrusted me. But I hope in a short time to have earned so much that I may carry it out quietly to the satisfaction of your Excellency, to whom I commend myself; and if your Lordship thought I had money, your Lordship was deceived. I had to feed 6 men for [36] months and have had 50 ducats.

It seems unlikely that the interrupted work was the equestrian monument although, as Marani pointed out, a great deal of technical assistance must have been required for this project. In a second letter, Leonardo specified that *del cavallo non dirò niente perchè cognosco i tempi*, "of the horse I will say nothing because I know the times [are bad]." Therefore, the comment must have been about a different project placed simply on hold. We can also rule out the *Last Supper* because recent technical analysis has revealed that Leonardo painted the whole work himself, leaving only the lunettes and some peripheral areas to assistants.³⁸ The *Sala delle Asse* is the only remaining large-scale work that required assistance to complete in a short amount of time. The repetitive knot formations and tree motifs in the *Sala* lend themselves to the use of assistants once Leonardo laid out the preliminary design.

In his letters to Ludovico, an apologetic Leonardo accepted responsibility for displeasing his patron by temporarily "silencing" his art-making skills: *e l'arti messe in siletio [...] che 'l mio taciere fusse causa di fare isdegnare vostra Signori[a]*, "the arts put to silence [...] that my silence might be the cause of making your Lordship scorn."

Leonardo also reminded Ludovico of the commission for painting the camerini: "si ricorda della commissione del dipignere i camerini..." These comments may very well refer to the scandalous situation described in the June, 1496 letter. In other words, a year or more after interrupting work in the *camerini* and planning for the *Sala delle Asse*, Leonardo may have written to Ludovico to apologize for his inappropriate behavior in the hope of being restored to the commission.

The *Saletta Negra* and the *Sala delle Asse* as part of a unified program:

It has often been assumed by art historians that the term "saletta negra," (appearing for the first time in known documents on April 21, 1498) meant that the *camerino* closest to the *Sala delle Asse* had been painted black or that a black background was planned. Indeed, in documents from March and May of 1495 and June of 1496 (the only other known documents for these rooms), these small rooms are referred to simply as "camerini."

Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re mio... A la Saleta negra non si perde tempo. Lunedì si desarmerà la Camera grande de le asse, cioè della tore. M.ro Leonardo promete finirla per tuto Settembre, et che per questo si potrà etiam goder.

My Illustrious Lord [...] In the Saletta Negra no time is being wasted. On Monday *si desarmerà* the large room of asse, that is of the tower. Master Leonardo promises to finish it by the end of September, so that it can be enjoyed.

The reference to a room with black walls was interpreted by Beltrami, Marie Agghàzy, Martin Kemp and others to mean that Ludovico as a widower in mourning and by

³⁸ Marani, 1999, p. 20 and pp. 53-69.

Evelyn Welch that the room was being prepared with a background suitable for hanging tapestries.³⁹ Since there has always been the suspicion that the *Sala delle Asse* and the *camerini* were part of a similar or related program, these assumptions influenced interpretations of the *Sala delle Asse*. In other words, the idea that Ludovico was in mourning led to interpretations of the *Sala delle Asse* as a sentimental tribute to Beatrice D'Este and the idea that the adjoining *Saletta* was to be painted black led to the assumption that Leonardo intended for his work in the *Sala delle Asse* to be a fictive piece of traditional wall-hangings that "challenged the court's preference for embroidered gold tapestries."⁴⁰

On the other hand, it seems equally possible to argue that the *Saletta Negra* was painted black immediately after Beatrice's death in January 1497 and that in April 1498 it was repainted with different motifs. In 1893, Paul Müller-Walde found traces of a black *intonaco* in a space next to the *Saletta Negra*, beneath a decorative scheme that, according to Beltrami, could not have been executed after Ludovico lost his castle to the French in 1499. The phrase *a la Saleta negra non si perde tempo* may mean that a team of artists were wasting no time in transforming a black room into a something different. This project may have been that ordered by Ludovico in 1496 but interrupted by the disappearance of the "scandalous painter." By 1498, Ludovico is likely to have put an

³⁹ See: Welch, 1995, p. 234; Kemp, 1981, p. 181; and M. G. Aggàzy, "Locus amoenus et vinculum delictorum dans l'art de la Renaissance," *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 51, 1978, p. 58.

end to his mourning; he was probably ready to resume the commissions that had been put on hold and to complete a project he had started two years before. Thus, we should not limit our interpretation of the *Sala delle Asse* to circumstances that arose in 1498. It would be useful to know whether the *putti*, garlands and "knotted and interlaced serpents" that Müller-Walde found between *the Sala delle Asse* and the *Saletta Negra* were also painted in 1498. If so, these motifs provide clues for identifying either the tone or the subject matter of the *Sala delle Asse* and of the adjoining *camerini*.

Payment for the Sala delle Asse:

No payment records have survived for the work in the *Sala delle Asse* but a document dated October 2, 1498 tells us that Ludovico Sforza gifted a vineyard measuring sixteen *pertiche* to a certain "Magistri Leonardi pictoris."⁴¹ This is a suggestive coincidence, in my opinion, because the timing of the gift matches the September 1498

⁴⁰ Welch, 1995, p. 235.

⁴¹ For detailed information on Leonardo's vineyard see: Amoretti, *Memorie Storiche della vita, gli studi e le opere di Leonardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1804, p. 85; L. Beltrami, "La vigna di Leonardo," *Illustrazione Italiana*, Milan, 1920; G. Biscaro, "La vigna di Leonardo da Vinci, fuori di porta Vercellina," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, ser. 4, vol. 12 1909, pp. 363-396; Calvi, *Notizie dei principali professori di belle arti che fiorirono in Milano durante il governo de' Visconti e degli Sforza*, part III, "Leonardo da Vinci," Milan, 1869, p. 94; Uzielli, *Ricerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci*, Florence, 1872, p. 161; Müntz, *Leonardo de Vinci, sa vie, son génie, son oeuvre*, Paris, 1899; E. Solmi, *Leonardo (1452-1519)*, Florence, 1900, p. 108; Milanese, *Commentario alla vita di Leonardo da Vinci del Vasari*, Florence, 1879, p. 72; Seidlitz, *Leonardo da Vinci*, Berlin, vol. 5, 1909, p. 285 and 445. For accuracy, we should note that it was not until April 26, 1499 that the gift of the vineyard was officially recorded by a notary. This delay has sometimes caused confusion among scholars about when the gift actually took place. According to Gerolamo Biscaro who studied some of the documentation on the vineyard, it was not unusual in those days for gifts or concessions to go into affect immediately after the duke expressed them verbally (Biscaro, 1909, p. 366). The process of registration was a long one and could sometimes take months.

deadline that had been established for the *Sala* and the sixteen *pertiche* match the number of trees in the *Sala*.⁴²

This vineyard had originally belonged to the monastery of S. Vittore near Porta Vercellina and was located a short distance from both the Sforza castle and the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie. As part of the gift, Leonardo was given permission to build a house on the property, although it seems that this was never done.⁴³

The vineyard was a substantial gift. The Duke had purchased the property in 1497 at a cost of 2108 *lire imperiali* and 11 *soldi*. Scholars have generally assumed that it was given for Leonardo's work on the *Last Supper*. Nevertheless, in a letter on fol. 315v. of the *Codex Atlanticus*, Leonardo referred to another payment of fifty *ducati* from Ludovico (*ò avuto 50 ducati*) and must be the *cinquanta scudi* that was reported by

⁴² ... *pertiche sedici de giardino, situate fora de porta Vercellina.*" Biscano, 1909, p. 373. The document is preserved in Milan's Archivio di Stato, Atti del notaio camerale Antonio dei Bombelli, busta 105. In today's measurements, the sixteen *pertiche* would be equal to approximately 9,600 meters².

⁴³ *Igitur ut etiam sedis et mansionis apud nos suae, quam nos hactenus gratam gratiorem etiam futuram in dies confidimus, initium faciamus; tenore praesentium ecc. eidem Leonardo edd. Damus, concedimus et donamus ecc.* Beltrami first raised the point that the construction probably never took place (see Beltrami, 1920, p. 32) because if Leonardo had built a home on the property such a dwelling would have been mentioned in later documents providing a physical description of the property. Beltrami was specifically thinking of Leonardo's will of 1519 (see note 62 below) or a document from 1507 (see note 60 below) with which the property was reinstated into Leonardo's possession by the French King for it had been taken away when Ludovico Sforza fell from power. Biscaro has suggested, instead, that Leonardo built a temporary sculpture studio for his model of the Francesco Sforza equestrian monument. See Biscaro, 1909, p. 385.

Gaspare Bugatti in 1570 as payment for the *Last Supper*.⁴⁴ It suggests that Leonardo's compensation for the *Last Supper* was monetary, leaving the vineyard payment open to other interpretations.

When Ludovico fell from power, a policy was adopted by the new Milanese state to void all concessions and gifts made by Ludovico Sforza after February, 1499. The vineyard was taken away from Leonardo – even though it was gifted in October 1498 – because the actual recording of the gift by a notary did not take place until April 1499. In 1507, the French King returned the vineyard to Leonardo as a sign of friendship, but not without damage.⁴⁵ According to Biscaro, the land that was worth around 2,000 *lire imperiali* at the time Leonardo acquired it, was not worth more than 1000 lire when it was returned to him only eight years later.⁴⁶ In 1519, Leonardo willed his vineyard – a *iardino che ha fora a le mura de Milano* – to two assistants, Battista de Villanis and Salaj.⁴⁷

⁴⁴[Ludovico il Moro] diede mille scudi l'anno a Giasone Maini, trecento a Giorgio Merula d'Alessandria storico, cinquanta a Leonardo da Vinci pittore eccellente fiorentino, che pinse il miracoloso Cenacolo di Cristo alle grazie. Gaspare Bugati, *Storia universale*, 1570.

⁴⁵ Decrees were issued by the king on April 20 and 27, 1499 stating that Leonardo would be given possession of the vineyard as *inante che gli fusse tolta per la camera*. The document is preserved in Milan's Archivio di Stato, *Registro Panigarola O*, fol. 183 and was published by Calvi, 1869, p. 103 and Uzielli, 1872, p. 178.

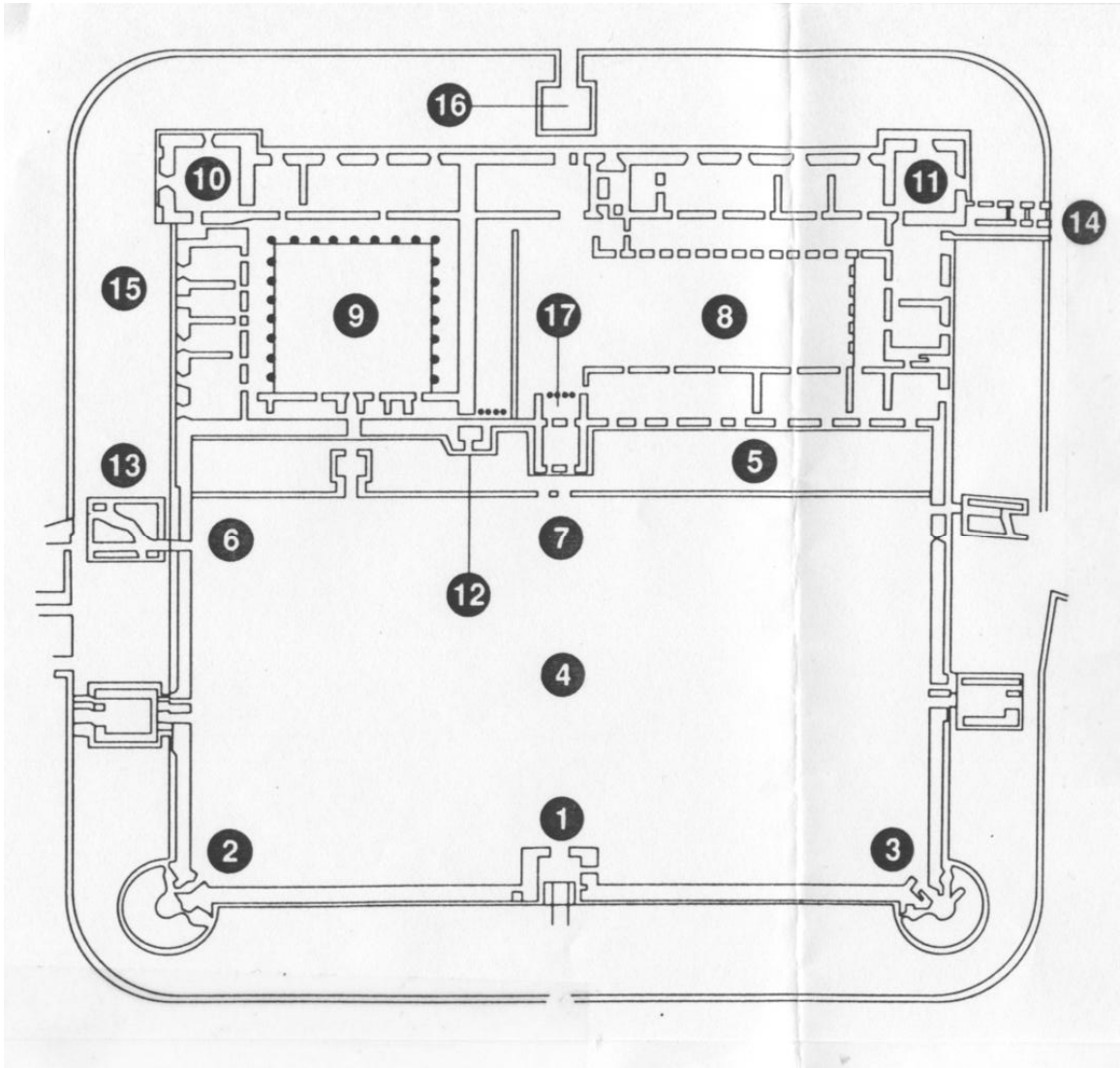
⁴⁶ Biscaro estimated the worth of Leonardo's property in 1507 based on surviving estimates for the adjacent properties. Biscaro, 1909, p. 392.

⁴⁷ Amoretti, 1804, p. 121; Calvi, 1869, p. 108; Uzielli, 1872, p. 202; Solmi, 1900, p. 219.

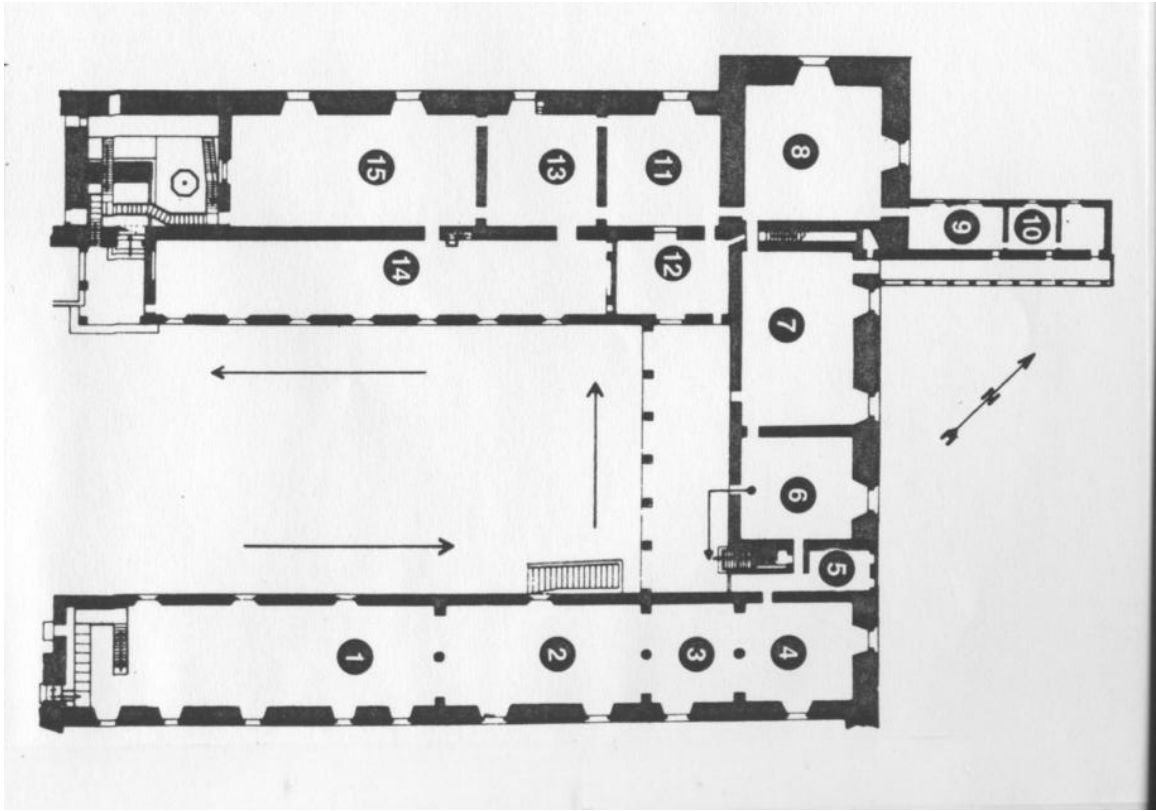
Luca Beltrami was able to determine the exact location of this vineyard in 1920 by studying old maps of Milan.⁴⁸ He published several photographs of the site, one of which illustrates the vineyard's close proximity to S. Maria delle Grazie.⁴⁹ It seems that the vineyard remained in plain sight until 1920, when the municipality of Milan gave permission to a developer to build a housing project on the land.

⁴⁸ For the exact location, see the plan on page 28 of Beltrami, 1920.

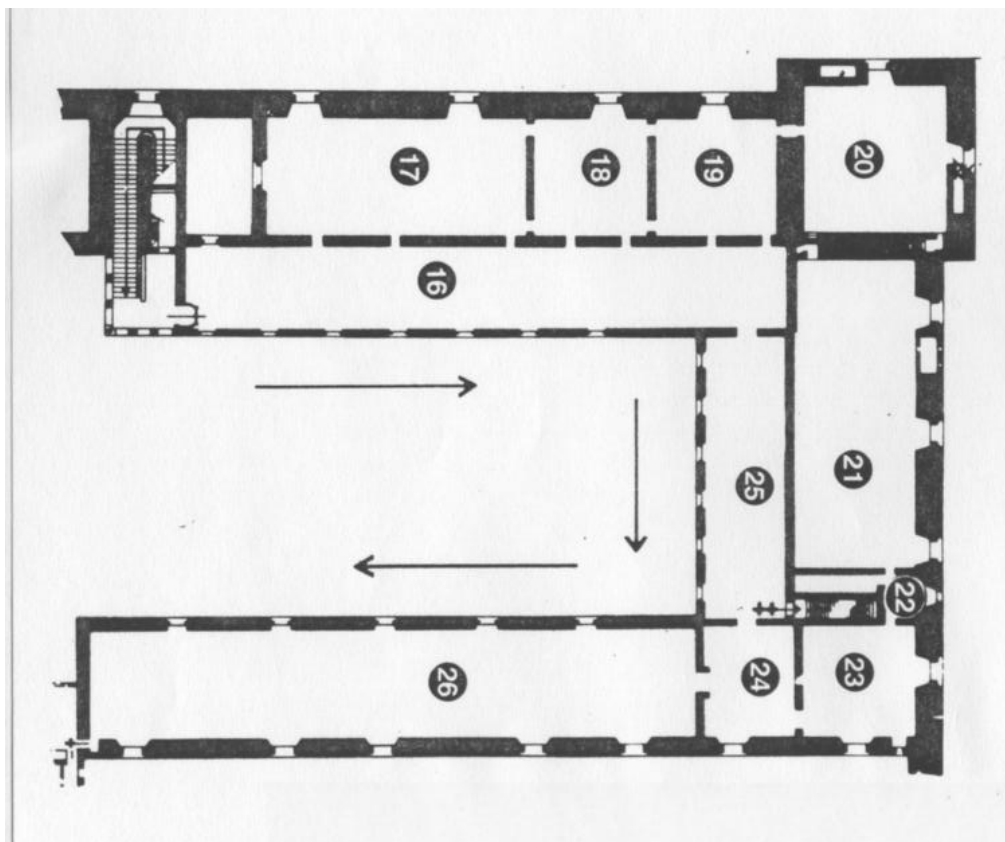
⁴⁹ Beltrami, 1920, p. 45 and 46.



4.1 General plan of the Sforza Castle, Milan.



4.2 Reconstructed ground-plans of the first floor of the Ducal Court, Sforza Castle in the fifteenth century.



4.3 Reconstructed ground-plans of the second floor of the Ducal Court, Sforza Castle in the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER 5

THE SALA DELLE ASSE AND LEONARDO: PROBLEMS IN ATTRIBUTION

Leonardo da Vinci, painter and designer(?) of the Sala delle Asse • Leonardo's reputation in late-nineteenth-century Milan • Future considerations

The resentment of critics and art historians who were not given an opportunity to examine the original fragments of the *Sala delle Asse* prior to its refurbishment in 1901-1902 could have opened the door to a wave of alternative attributions. It did not. After Beltrami, critics and art historians did one of two things: either they gave up investigating the *Sala delle Asse* altogether or – with the exception of Francesco Malaguzzi-Valeri – they accepted Beltrami's conclusion that Leonardo was responsible for all aspects of *Sala delle Asse*'s design and execution. In 1990, John Moffit invited his readers to dismiss the matter altogether: "it is now accepted" he wrote, "that the design overall, and presumably even much of the tedious physical execution of this highly unusual decorative ensemble is entirely due to the subtle mind and skilled hand of Leonardo da Vinci."¹ As I will show in this chapter, the acceptance of Beltrami's attribution is due more to a hesitance to challenge the idea of Leonardo as a "genius"

¹ J. F. Moffit, "Leonardo's Sala delle Asse and the Primordial Origins of Architecture," *Arte Lombarda*, no. 92-93, 1990, pp. 76-90

than a product of carefully-considered documentary and visual evidence. It is not my intention to dismiss Leonardo's participation in the *Sala*. I will, however, question the idea that he acted alone in its design.

Leonardo da Vinci, painter and designer(?) of the Sala delle Asse?

Soon after the *Sala delle Asse* opened to the public, Francesco Malaguzzi-Valeri suggested that its wall paintings should be attributed to Donato Bramante (1444-1514) because of Leonardo's notation *gruppi di Bramante* (on fol. CA 225Rb c. 1490). The notation, he argued, was a direct reference to the interlaced patterns in the *Sala*. In response, Beltrami acknowledged that Bramante shared Leonardo's interest in symbolic and geometric ornamentation but argued that the evidence in support of Leonardo's participation outweighed that for Bramante. Beltrami also accused Malaguzzi-Valeri of purposely misquoting fifteenth-century documents to support his theory, a theory that Beltrami believed he had concocted more out of personal spite than in the spirit of responsible scholarship. "The reason [for Malaguzzi-Valeri's attribution] is rather obscure; in other words it is not easily apparent to the reader who is reading in good faith. [Malaguzzi-Valeri] goes against Leonardo only to go against the person who shed light on a previously-ignored work."²

² "La ragione è alquanto recondita, o per lo meno è di quelle che non appaiono facilmente al lettore in buona fede. Si dà addosso a Leonardo, tanto per dare addosso a chi ebbe a rimettere in evidenza l'opera ingnorata." Polifilo, *Leonardo e i disfattisti suoi*, Milan, 1919, p. 193.

Was Malaguzzi-Valeri suggestion as inappropriate as Beltrami wanted scholars to believe? Let us take stock of the evidence in favor of Leonardo before returning to the question. For the sake of clarity, let me point out that many of the details offered here are in addition to those originally offered by Beltrami. First, there is the fact that Leonardo used the word *gruppi* – a fifteenth-century Milanese term for knots – to describe designs that were clearly of his own making and not simply by Bramante.³ Three examples are: *a fra Filippo di Brera prestai cierti gruppi* ("I lent certain knots to Filippo di Brera" in CA 225R-a);⁴ *molti disegni di gruppi* ("many knot designs," in a long inventory of drawings on CA 317 a);⁵ and *questa stapa sia fatta a gruppi* ("this stencil may be made in a pattern of knots," in describing a pattern he designed for a *vesta da carnovale* or carnival costume).⁶ Additionally, the term *gruppi* appears in miscellaneous notes such as: *Porfido - gruppi - squadra - Pandolfino* and *[Lattantio] [Libro di Benozzo] gruppi - legare il libro - Lucerna*.⁷ Secondly, a remarkable number of interlace drawings

³ On the meaning and use of the term *gruppi* in Milan see, in particular, a work published by Luca Beltrami himself: L. Beltrami, "Voci e termini del dialetto milanese nel Codice Atlantico," *Raccolta Vinciana*, I, 1905, p. 67-70.

⁴ Given by Richter, §1448, J. P. Richter *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, Commentary*, vol. 2, 1970, p. 435. Richter, however, interpreted the term *gruppi* to mean "groups" instead of knots.

⁵ Given by Richter, § 680. Richter, *Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 355.

⁶ Paris MS. I², f. 49 v, given by Richter, § 704. Richter, *Commentary*, vol 1, p. 361.

⁷ Respectively Arundel MS, f. 202 v, c 1503-4 or 1506-7, given by Richter, § 1420, Richter, *Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 428 and RL 12675 v, dated after 1504, probably 1506-7, given by Richter, § 1438, Richter, *Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 432.

fill Leonardo's notebooks from about 1482, when he first arrived in Milan, until 1498.⁸

None of these drawings is identical to the interlace patterns in the ceiling of the *Sala* but they are similar. The following list provides some examples:

In *Manuscript H*: folios, 11V, 12V, 32V, 33R, 35, 103V, and 116V.

In *Manuscript B*: folio 73.

In *Codex Atlanticus*: folios 18Rab, 68Vb, 83Vb, 279Vb, 306Rd, 358Va, 363Rc, 375R.

In addition to these drawings, Carlo Pedretti has pointed to folio RL 12351V, a "sheet with studies for the casting of the Sforza horse, [that] contains [...] drawings of interlaces somewhat like the ropes that tie together the tree branches in the decoration of the *Sala delle Asse*,"⁹ and to a sketch on CA 315Va with interlaces that may have been intended as transfers for embroidery patterns.¹⁰ Two drawings that could have been used for the design of floor tiles appear on CA 261Ra and Rb.¹¹ Drawings of interlaced branches and leaves appear, instead, on CA 322Va. These are usually dated to 1497-98, when Leonardo was at work in the *Sala*. Sketches of mulberry leaves appear on CA 252Va and CA 264Rb of as well as on folios 11V and 15V of the Codex on the Flight of

⁸ However, as Carlo Pedretti has shown, there is at least one example of an interlace drawing by Leonardo that dates to an earlier period: a knot on the verso of his drawing of the Arno valley (c. 1473). C. Pedretti, "A poem to Sculpture," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 2, p. 34, figs. 41-42.

⁹C. Pedretti, *Windsor Fragments: Leonardo da Vinci Fragments at Windsor Castle from the Codex Atlanticus*, London, 1957, p. 41.

¹⁰C. Pedretti, *Codex Atlanticus Catalogue. The Codex Atlanticus of Leonardo da Vinci. A catalogue of its newly restored sheets*. In 2 parts, New York, 1978-9, p. 154.

¹¹ C. Pedretti, *Leonardo Archietto*, Milan, 1981, p. 298-308, fig.s 456 and 457.

Birds. This last set pre-dates the compilation of the Codex (1505) and may date from the time of the *Sala delle Asse* or earlier.

Third, the famous six plates of the ACADEMIA LEONARDI VINCI were presumably made in the mid-to-late 1490's after designs by Leonardo, as described by Vasari:

[Leonardo] wasted time in designing a series of knots in a cord which can be followed from one end to the other, with the entire cord forming a circular field containing a very difficult and beautiful engraving with these words in the middle: Leonardus Vinci Accademia. ¹²

Fourth, Leonardo's work in the *Sala delle Asse* is confirmed in two documents, the Bescapè letter of 1498 and in Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Trattato della pittura* of 1584:

My Illustrious Lord [...] On Monday *si desarmarà* the large room of asse, that is of the tower. Master Leonardo promises to finish it by the end of September, so that it can be enjoyed: because *li ponti* that he will make will leave everything below open for all use.¹³

In the trees we find a beautiful invention by Leonardo, where all the branches transform themselves into bizarre knots, whose interlaced configuration Bramante also used.¹⁴

¹² A complete set of these engravings is preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan. G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, ed. J. C. Bondanella and P. Bondanella, Oxford, 1991, p. 286.

¹³ Archivio di Stato, Milan, Classe Belle Arti, *Autografi*, 102, fasc. 34.

¹⁴ "Negli arbori altresì si è trovata una bella inventione di Leonardo di far, che tutti i rami si facciano in diversi gruppi bizzarri, la qual foggia usò, canestrando gli tutti, Bramante ancora." G. P. Lomazzo, *Trattato della pittura*, 1584, p. 430. In the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries the word "ancora" was used to mean "anche" or "also" in English. See entry for "ancora" in the Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana, ed. S. Battaglia, vol. 1, Turin, 1961, p. 448.

This evidence – even if much of it is circumstantial – makes a strong case for Leonardo. Malaguzzi-Valeri's dismissal of Leonardo seems rash, therefore, and either biased (i.e. against Beltrami) or uninformed. But is the evidence enough to exclude the possibility of a collaboration between Leonardo and Bramante? Could Leonardo have executed a design for *gruppi* that he did not invent himself? Leonardo's status as a "genius" biases us against such questions. He is not the sort of artist we like to portray as a follower or collaborator. This line of thinking has been handed down to us by Giorgio Vasari, who praised Leonardo's "divine and wondrous" intelligence and reported that "nature so favored him that, wherever he turned his thought, his mind, his heart, he demonstrated such divine inspiration that no one else was ever equal to him in the perfection, liveliness, vitality, excellence and grace of his works."¹⁵ With divine inspiration guiding his every thought and stroke of the brush, it seems impossible that Leonardo could have gained anything from a collaboration with Bramante or any another artist but Leonardo may himself beg to differ. He acknowledged that he had a friendly, collaborative relation with Bramante. In Ms. M, Leonardo referred to Bramante with the nickname "Donnino," the same nickname that Bramante's parents used in their will.¹⁶ Leonardo specifically mentioned Bramante's help with a levy bridge: *Modo del ponte levatoio che mi mostrò Donnino* ("manner of the levy bridge that Donnino showed me," Ms M, 53V, ca. 1499). While in Milan, Bramante

¹⁵ G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, ed. J.C. Bandanella and P. Bondanella, 1991, p. 285-286.

¹⁶ F. Sangiorgi, "Bramante *hastrubaldino*," *Documenti per una biografia bramantesca*, Urbino, 1970, p. 45.

and Leonardo worked together on a number of important projects, including: Santa Maria delle Grazie, the Duomo in Milan and in Pavia, and the Castello in Vigevano.¹⁷

Today, Bramante is mostly remembered for his work as an architect, but when he arrived in Lombardy from his native Urbino in 1477 he worked primarily as a painter.¹⁸ Documents from the period refer to him as either *pinctor* or *magister*. Unfortunately, only a few of his paintings survive: a *Christ at the Column* for an abbey in Chiaravalle, the much-discussed *Argos* for the *Sala del Tesoro* in the Sforza Castle, and a poorly preserved fresco of *Armed Men* for a room in Gaspare Visconti's home (now in the Brera Gallery in Milan) that was once interpreted by Carlo Pedretti as an idealized portrait of Leonardo and Bramante.¹⁹ In addition to the *Armed Men*, it is possible that Bramante painted a second room for Visconti, now lost, featuring trees. An inventory of Visconti's possessions, drafted at the time of his death in 1500, lists one of the rooms in his home as a *camera de li arbori*, a description that recalls one of the main motifs in the *Sala delle Asse*. According to Richard Schofield, both the *camera de li arbori* and the room

¹⁷ On the rapport between Bramante and Leonardo see especially: A. M. Brizio, "Bramante e Leonardo alla Corte di Ludovico il Moro," and C. Pedretti, "Progetto originario per Santa Maria delle Grazie e altri aspetti inediti del rapporto Leonardo-Bramante," both in *Studi Bramanteschi*, Milan, Urbino and Rome, 1970, pp. 1- 26 and 197-203 respectively; L. H. Heydenreich, "Leonardo and Bramante. Genius in Architecture," *Leonardo's Legacy*, ed. C.D. O'Malley, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969, pp. 125-148.

¹⁸ For a thorough summary of the life and work of Bramante as supported by documentary evidence see R. Schofield, "Gaspare Visconti, mecenate del Bramante," *Arte, committenza ed economia a Roma e nelle corti del Rinascimento: 1420-1530*, Acts from the international meeting held in Rome, October 24-27, 1990, pp. 297-324.

¹⁹ Pedretti, 1981, pp. 96-98.

with the *Armed Men* comprised the most "public" areas of Visconti's house and were used to receive or to entertain guests.²⁰

Circa 1493, Bramante was appointed *ingenerius ducalis electus* by Ludovico Sforza and assigned to a number of architectural projects including the Duomo in Milan, the *Canonica* and cloisters for the church of Sant'Ambrogio, and a *ponticella* that connected the *Sala delle Asse* to a vast park surrounding the Sforza Castle.²¹ Bramante's role in these projects was more that of advisor and designer than that of executive architect. Schofield's interpretation of his position as an "occasional designer and supplier or ideas to others" seems fitting.²² There is evidence that this role extended to painting projects as well. In correspondence from 1495, Bramante is said to have been directing the painting of a room in the Sforza Castle in Vigevano (*fa dipinzere*).²³

As informal as the role of "occasional designer and supplier of ideas" may sound to us today, it must have been a highly-regarded position at the Sforza court because Bramante received a generous salary of five *ducati* per month.²⁴ When compared to the

²⁰ Schofield, 1990, p. 312-313.

²¹ R. Schofield, "Bramante in 1493: one-and-a-half new documents," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 122, 1980, pp. 763-764.

²² "progettista occasionale e fornitore di idee agli altri." Schofield, 1980, p. 303.

²³ F. Malaguzzi-Valeri, *La corte di Ludovico il Moro, Milan*, 1915, vol. 2, pp. 161-162.

²⁴ Bramante shared this information in a sonnet he wrote around 1490. See D. Bramante, *Sonetti e altri scritti*, ed. C. Vecce, Rome, 1995, p. 53 and note 8 on p. 93.

fifty *ducati* that Leonardo received over a period of three years for himself and his family of six assistants and servants, it becomes clear that Bramante was more highly-prized for his work than Leonardo. Unlike most artists at the court, Bramante was allowed to express his opinion directly to the duke about how a commission should progress. For example, when asked to produce *qualche digna fantasia da mettere in spectaculo* ("an *inventione* worth putting on stage"), probably for the baptism of Ludovico's first-born son, Bramante advised the duke not to overdo it out of concern for the expense and the limited time available.²⁵ Additional evidence of Bramante's position at the Sforza court is given by Visconti's *Paolo e Daria*: there Ludovico is praised for his appreciation of Bramante's work (I, 5) and the two men are depicted side by side engaged in conversation (a c. 1r, see Figure 5.1). As for Leonardo, Ludovico Sforza never created an official position for him as a painter or as sculptor. As Evelyn Welch has observed, goldsmiths and weavers were held in greater esteem at the Sforza court than was Leonardo.²⁶

Bramante was not the only person to hold a supervisory position at the Sforza court. Ludovico made provisions for a *commissario sopra i lavori ducali* and assigned this role to Bartolomeo Gadio, as his father Francesco and brother Galeazzo Maria had done

²⁵ Letter from Bartolomeo Calco to Ludovico Sforza on May 15, 1492, *Archivio di Stato*, Milan, *Fondo Autografici*, c. 98, f. 6. Known to me from P. De Vecchi, "Committenza e attività artistica alla corte degli Sforza negli ultimi decenni del quattrocento," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 2, Milan, 1983, p. 514.

²⁶ For a discussion on the status of artists at the Sforza Court, see Welch, 1995, p. 242.

before him. Gadio supervised most of the artistic projects at the court in the second half of the fifteenth-century, including Leonardo's work in the *Sala delle Asse*.²⁷ Unlike Bramante, Gadio was not a designer but a soldier with a talent for organizing construction and engineering projects. He acted as an intermediary between the duke and most of the architects, engineers, painters and sculptors who came to work at the court. He organized supplies and tried to keep the work on schedule. There is no evidence and it is doubtful that Gadio ever acted as an "artistic advisor," initiated projects or devised subject matter.²⁸ His role seems to have been that of administrative supervisor.

In characterizing Bramante, Milanese writers and historians of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries note that he was a man with cultural and intellectual interests that extended beyond architecture and painting. Domenico Maccaneo, referred to his skills as a "geologist," explaining that his knowledge of the rock and stone formations of Lombardy.²⁹ The poet Gaspare Visconti commented on Bramante's predilection for the works of Dante:

Non fu facto questo sonetto per voler giudicar

²⁷ On Gadio, see E. Motta, "Il testamento di Bartholomeo Gadio," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, 31 (1904), 459-61 and E. S. Welch, "The process of Sforza Patronage," *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, December 1989, 370-86.

²⁸ Welch, 1989, p. 370-371.

²⁹ On Maccaneo's *Chorografia lacus Verbani* from 1490, see Schofield, 1980, p. 305.

tra doi tanti huomini (Petrarca e Dante)
mal sol per motteggiar cun Bramante
sviscerato partigiano di Dante.³⁰

Bramante's interests in rock formations and Dante may provide new insight into the authorship of the *Sala delle Asse*. The first could have inspired the *Sala's* unusual rock motifs and it has been suggested by two scholars that the *Sala's* knot patterns were inspired by the poetry of Dante.³¹ If a connection is truly to be made between Leonardo's knot patterns and Dante it is likely that the connection was due to Bramante not Leonardo. Bramante viewed Dante's work as ideal and a strong inspiration for his own poetry.³² His sonnets are, in fact, full of phrases taken from Dante's *rime*. We know that Leonardo was familiar with Dante's work but it does not appear to have captured his interest as much as it did Bramante's. Dante's works are not included in the list of books that Leonardo scribbled on fol. CA 210Ra. Furthermore, poetry comprised a minuscule part of the thousands of entries in his notebooks.³³ Carlo Dionisotti counted about twenty and it is doubtful that any of these poems or excerpts are actually by Leonardo. Leonardo probably copied them from a variety of sources including anthologies.³⁴ Dionisotti has argued, plausibly, that we can only go so far as

³⁰ L. Beltrami, *Bramante poeta colla raccolta dei sonetti*, Milan, 1884, p. 8.

³¹ See for example, C. Pedretti, "Nec ense," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 3, 1990, pp. 82-90 and A. Coomaraswamy, "The Iconography of Dürer's Knots and Leonardo's Concatenations," *Art Quarterly*, vol. VII, 1974, p. 109-128.

³² See D. Fienga, "Bramante autore delle *Antiquarie Prospettiche Romane* poemetto dedicato a Leonardo da Vinci," *Studi Bramanteschi*, Milan, Urbino and Rome, 1970, pp. 417-426 and C. Vecce, 1995, p. 15.

³³ C. Dionisotti, "Leonardo uomo di lettere," *Italia medievale e umanistica*, vol. 5, 1962, p. 183-216.

³⁴ Dionisotti, 1962, p. 193.

to say that Leonardo had a "disposition to poetry." Leonardo seems never to have aspired to be a poet in his own right. Neither "poetry nor literature," explained Dionisotti, "made Leonardo salivate."³⁵ Bramante, on the other hand, won elaborate praises for his poetry from Milanese humanist circles and was referred to as *huomo singolare*.³⁶ In a poetry exchange between Visconti and Girolamo Tetavilla, Bramante is described as a capable arbiter and critic for the rhymes of all accomplished poets.³⁷

More support for Bramante's participation in the *Sala delle Asse* may be found in the *Stanza delle Segnatura* in Rome (1508-1511) (Figure 5.2). After the fall of Ludovico Sforza in 1499, Bramante moved to Rome and entered the services of Pope Julius II. There, he helped Raphael, a fellow countryman from Urbino, with the design of wall frescoes for the Pope's library. Art historians have long suspected that Raphael did not have the humanist or technical education to produce the room's complex intellectual and architectural schemes on his own.³⁸ Bramante may have offered assistance and this may

³⁵ "Il cibo che faceva gola a Leonardo non era fatto né di poesia né di letteratura," Dionisotti, 1962, p. 204.

³⁶ " Quanto a Bramante huomo singolare, ciascuno a questa estate il vede e intende, e si potrebbe più presto numerare nel ciel l'anime sante, che dir le cognition ch'a in se Bramante." In Gaspare Visconti, *Due Amanti*, book I, Milan 1495, Cfr. Mazzucchelli, *Scrittori d'Italia*, 1753, p. 1975, n. 11.

³⁷ "da l'altra parte il mio doctor Bramante / mi morde, quando el verso è grosso e umile" and "non sol me stupisse, ma Bramante, / qual sai che non è pur poeta umile." Visconti, *I canzonieri per Beatrice d'Este e per Bianca Maria Sforza*, ed. P. Bongrani, Milan, 1979, pp. 19-21, no. XXI-XXIII.

³⁸ This point has been most recently emphasized by C. Joost-Gaugier in *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 17. Among the exceptions who believe that Raphael is, instead, responsible for the *Stanza's* program is O. Fischel, *Raphael*, trans. B. Rackham, vol. 1, London, 1948, pp. 74-5, 79, and 91.

be the reason why Raphael included his portrait in the *School of Athens*.³⁹ Furthermore, the altar positioned in the lower half of the *Disputa* features the same knot motifs as in the *Sala delle Asse*. This may not just be a coincidence but a clever reference to Bramante or to what Leonardo called *gruppi di Bramante*. The detail seems to bear some importance because an unidentified young man on the far left of the fresco points in the direction of the altar while Bramante's favorite poet, Dante, stands nearby with a laurel crown.

Leonardo in late-nineteenth-century Italy:

Beltrami's refusal to entertain the possibility of an alternative attribution or collaboration between Leonardo and Bramante may seem rash on his part. After all, in his 1498 letter, Bescapè said only that Leonardo was at work in the *Sala*. Did Beltrami ever doubt his own hypothesis about the extent of Leonardo's participation? Why did he push so hard to establish the *Sala* as a work by Leonardo? We may want to consider that the attribution suited Beltrami's goals for the Sforza Castle. It brought honor to a castle that Beltrami had invested with a patriotic agenda. "It is the prestige of Leonardo's name that pushes us to revive the *Sala delle Asse*," he claimed in 1902.⁴⁰

Leonardo's reputation was, at that time, both that of an "ideal" artist and, to borrow a

³⁹ According to Giorgio Vasari, Bramante is depicted in the *School of Athens* in the guise of Euclid in the act of making a geometrical design with a compass. See G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, ed. J. C. Bondanella and P. Bondanella, Oxford, 1991, p. 313.

⁴⁰ "E il prestigio del nome di Leonardo che ci sospinge a rianimare questa Sala delle Asse." L. Beltrami, 1902, p. 69.

phrase by Richard Turner, that of an "apostle of the modern condition."⁴¹ During the nineteenth century, Leonardo gave rise to more critical literature than, perhaps, any other historical figure.⁴² In *Revolutions of Italy* (1848-52), for example, Edgar Quinet charged the Italians with the task of creating a new nation.⁴³ "The opportunity is unique," he wrote, "the voluntary servitude of France gives over to Italy the opportunity to seize with audacity the crown of civilization."⁴⁴ Quinet suggested that one of the ways they could do this was by modeling the soul of their nation after the ultimate modern man, Leonardo:

He had about him the distinctive trait of the Italian without a country, the same immense effort to not allow himself to be enclosed by any horizon, to be limited by any special form. Citizen of the world, he would wish to place himself in the foyer of the universe, to identify with the intimate genius of creation.⁴⁵

With sentiments such as these looming in the minds of many Italians, Beltrami must have been pleased to attribute the *Sala delle Asse* to Leonardo. Malaguzzi-Valeri's attribution to Bramante, whose reputation in the late-nineteenth century was not as important as that of Leonardo, would have done less to enhance the *Sala's* importance at

⁴¹ A. R. Turner, *Inventing Leonardo*, Berkely and Los Angeles, 1994, p. 172.

⁴² Turner, 1994, p. 100.

⁴³ Turner, 1994, p. 108. Quinet was a professor at the *Collège de France* and had been sympathetic to Italy's cause. Garibaldi supposedly referred to him as one of Italy's greatest patriots.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Turner, 1994, p. 107.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Turner, 1994, p. 105.

a time when Milan was trying to set an example for a nation that was still trying to craft an identity for itself.

Sentiments like those of Quinet were in the minds of many Italian art historians working in the second half of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth century. Let us consider, for example, the case of Edmondo Solmi (1874-1912), whose work on Leonardo Beltrami held in great esteem.⁴⁶ Just two years after the *Sala delle Asse* opened to the public, Solmi gave a lecture at a meeting of the *Società Fiorentina* entitled "La resurrezione dell'opera di Leonardo" in which he summarized Leonardo's accomplishments and commented on the current status of Leonardo studies.⁴⁷

Solmi characterized Leonardo as an extraordinary artist who remained loyal to his Italian roots after moving to France. Leonardo's time in Milan was, according to Solmi, an especially "happy time" in which he benefited from a splendid court and a prince who stood ready to invigorate the forces of his intellect.⁴⁸ Solmi gave no hint, for example, of Leonardo's frustrations with a patron who rarely paid him. Instead, he described the Sforza court as the place where Leonardo was encouraged to pursue

⁴⁶ In 1918, for example, Solmi had fallen victim to harsh criticisms by Malaguzzi-Valeri and Beltrami went so far as to publish a book in defense of Solmi's "intellectual patrimony" and "honesty in Leonardo studies." See L. Beltrami, *In difesa di Edmondo Solmi*, Milan, 1918.

⁴⁷ The text for the lecture was published as a book in 1939. E. Solmi, "La resurrezione dell'opera di Leonardo," *Leonardo*, ed. Garzanti, Milan, 1939.

⁴⁸ "La dimora milanese di Leonardo, dal 1482 al 1499, fu per l'artista "un felice tempo. Una corte splendida, u principe potente ringagliardirono le forze del suo intelletto." Solmi, 1939, p. 7.

uncharted territory: "he [was] admitted in Nature's most secret and divine world and uncover[ed] the origins of Nature for man."⁴⁹ Once Ludovico Sforza fell from power, Leonardo had no choice, according Solmi, but to live "day by day." Leonardo was "not able to be himself" in France and he waited for death to bring him eternal peace.⁵⁰

Solmi's Leonardo was history's greatest artist and greatest thinker.⁵¹ In the tradition of Giorgio Vasari, Solmi claimed that these virtues were made more obvious through his physical beauty, strength, and eternal youth:

Leonardo's contemporaries could not say enough about the beauty of his body and the splendor of his aura that could brighten any gloomy soul. Vasari confirms that his strength was great and that it was coupled with his dexterity...In addition to genius, nature had given Vinci longevity. Among Leonardo's unpublished sheets is a superb nude back that was drawn using a large mirror. The frame of the mirror is visible as are the lights of the glass itself. These are depicted very realistically by the artist. Did Leonardo amuse himself by drawing someone else's torso using a mirror? I do not think this is probable. That back — which resembles the back of an athlete with magnificent muscles — is really Leonardo's nude body as reflected in a mirror and depicted by the master himself... In contemplating that torso that is admirable and has a surprising vitality, we see a physical masterpiece of nature: a human body endowed with the most enviable strength and health.⁵²

⁴⁹ "Egli è ammesso dalla Natura nella più segreta delle sue divine dimore; egli scrope agli uomini l'origine della prima..." Solmi, 1939, p. 10.

⁵⁰ "Caduto Ludovico il Moro, la vita di Leonardo è *varia et indeterminata forte, sì che pare vivere a giornata*. Errante da Milano a Venezia, poi da Venezia a Firenze, dove dipinge la Sant' Anna e la Madonna de' Fusi; poi da Firenze col Valentino per le Romagne, poi di nuovo a Firenze ad attendervi (dietro ai suggerimenti di Nicolò Machiavelli) al cartone della Battaglia di Anghiari e ai ritratti di Ginevra de' Benci e di Mona Lisa, poi a Milano e per la Lombardia a servizio di Luigi XII, poi ancora a Firenze, a Roma, forse a Napoli, finalmente in Francia: egli no può trovare se stesso, e aspetta il riposo solamente dalla morte." Solmi, 1939, p. 11.

⁵¹ "oltre ad essere il più grande artista, fu anche il più grande pensatore del suo tempo." Solmi, 1939, p. 17.

⁵² "I contemporanei non sono mai paghi di celebrare la bellezza del suo corpo, non mai lodata abbastanza, lo splendore dell'aria sua che era bellissima e che rasserenava ogni animo mesto. La forza, ci afferma Vasari, in lui fu molta e congiunta con la destrezza, col braccio riteneva ogni violenta furia e con la destra

Solmi even had an explanation for Leonardo's shortcomings. For example, with regard to Leonardo's claim that he was *omo senza lettere*, Solmi explained that, in reality, no one had read or meditated on books more than he had.

This man had a curiosity about literature that was inextinguishable... With the garrulous swarm of the humanists, Leonardo entered the libraries in Florence, Milan, Pavia, Venice, Urbino, Pesaro and Rome. Here he hunched over codex and first editions, just as today's manuscripts reveal, and researched with anxiety the works of Plato, Aristotle, Archimedes, Vitruvius, Pliny, Dioscoridous, Heron of Alexandria, Frontino, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, Euclid and Theodosius. He was *omo senza lettere* due to his independence in judging other authors; he did not want to simulate the greats from the past; he did not want to become enslaved by their ideas — as the humanists were — he wanted, instead to own and dominate these ideas. He wanted to investigate everything with his own reason and he did not take truth for granted if it did not appear evident.⁵³

Because of Leonardo's infinite talents and perfections, Solmi called for a "resurrection" of the artist as an "apostle of art and science." No artist, in Solmi's opinion, deserved the attention of Italian scholars more than Leonardo. The study of his

torceva un ferro d'una campanella di muraglia ed un ferro di cavallo, com se fosse piombo... La natura aveva donato al Vinci oltre all'ingegno la longevità. Fra i fogli leonardeschi inediti si trova una superba schiena nuda, disegnata dentro ad un grande specchio. È visibile la cornice dello specchio, son evidenti le luci proprie del vetro, tradotte con fedeltà somma dall'artista. Leonardo si è forse diletto di disegnare un torso d'altri, dentro uno specchio? Lo peturo improbabile. Quella, che sembra la schiena di un atleta della magnifica muscolatura, è veramente il corpo nudo di Leonardo, veduto in uno specchio e ritratto dall'artista medesimo...Contemplando quel mirabile torso, di una vitalità sorprendente, si scorge un capolavoro fisico della natura, un corpo umano a cui era concessa la forza e la salute più invidiabile." Solmi, 1939, 19.

⁵³ "Leonardo era entrato, con garrulo sciame degli umanisti, nelle librerie di Firenze, di Milano, di Pavia, di Venezia, di Urbino, di Pesaro e di Roma, e quivi, curvo sui codici e sulle prime stampe, come oggi ci rivelano i manoscritti, aveva ricercato con ansia le opere di Platone e di Aristotele, di Archimede e di Vitruvio, di Plinio e di Dioscoride, di Erone di Alessandria e di Frontino, di Ippocrate e di Tolomeo, di Euclide e di Teodosio. Egli era *omo senza lettere* per la indipendenza del giudizio di fronte agli autori: aveva voluto avvicinarsi ai grandi del passato, non per rendersi schiavo delle loro idee, come gli umanisti, ma per possederle e dominarle. Tutto voleva investigare colla sua ragione, e nulla accettava per vero se non gli appariva evidentemente tale." Solmi, 1939, p. 12.

works was Italy's "ultimate and supreme responsibility."⁵⁴ This task was important because of the works' historic value and because of their educative potential for present and future Italian generations. "Vinci's notebooks are the best school anyone can hope for," wrote Solmi.⁵⁵ He claimed that Leonardo, like much of Italy after the unification, was dominated by two sentiments: hope for the infinite possibilities of the future and discontent for the insufficiencies of the present. Leonardo's talent was to not depend on the artistic ideals of the past – no matter how noble this past may have been – but to move forward and trust his modern sentiments:

As an artist, Leonardo was dominated by a sentiment for the undefined multiplicity of what is possible and one for the insufficiency of every present reality. He used his power to win insurmountable difficulties with respect to invention and technique. He devoted himself to the miracles of patience and virtuosity. He understood *more than anyone else* what true art was but he feared to confront it because he felt that it was intangible, sacred and infinite. He stood before the eurythmical and serenely luminous mindset of Greek art: divine proportion and a symmetry of times long past. However, he was condemned to suffer the curse of Tantalus to never be able to match it because to make Greek art one needed to have a Greek soul and Leonardo had, instead, a modern soul that was continuously at war with itself.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ "Ma quand'anche tutta l'opera leonardesca sarà edita... e speriamo che ciò sia fra breve un fatto compiuto, resterà ancora un dovere agli italiani, l'ultimo e supremo dovere." Solmi, 1939, p. 37-38.

⁵⁵ "Gli annali del Vinci sono la scuola più opportuna che si possa desiderare." Solmi, 1939, p. 38 and "L'opera scientifica e letteraria del Vinci non ha soltanto un valore storico per l'uomo che l'ha compiuta e per la conoscenza della formazione e dello sviluppo delle scienze: non ha soltanto un valore artistico per lo stile conciso ed efficace, per la lingua purissima, ma ha anche un valore altamente educativo per le generazioni italiche del presente e dell'avvenire." Solmi, 1939, p. 38.

⁵⁶ "Leonardo, come artista, era dominato dal sentimento dell'indefinita molteplicità dei possibili e dal sentimento dell'insufficienza d'ogni realtà presente. Egli adoperava le forze a vincere le difficoltà insuperabili di invenzione e di tecnica, egli si dava a dei prodigi di pazienza e di virtuosità, egli conosceva, più di ogni altro, l'arte vera, ma tremava ad affrontarla, perchè sentiva che è intangibile, sacra, infinita. Gli stava dinanzi alla mente l'eurythmia serenamente luminosa dell'arte greca, la divina proporzione, la simmetria prisca, ma egli era condannato alla pena di Tantalo di non poterla mai pareggiare, perchè per fare l'arte greca ci voleva l'anima greca, e Leonardo era un'anima moderna perpetuamente in lotta con se stessa." Solmi, 1939, p. 11.

When studying Leonardo, Solmi asked scholars to rely more on his drawings and notebooks than on his paintings, because "every attribution [to Leonardo's paintings] is disputable or subject to discussion." Modern critics and German art historians in particular – in their "inconsolable sorrow over the loss of Leonardo's masterpieces" – had attributed too many works to him.⁵⁷ With the bulk of Leonardo's manuscripts having recently been returned to Italy after Napoleon Bonaparte had "stolen" them from the Ambrosiana collection in Milan in 1796, and with the bulk of his paintings still in the Louvre or other foreign collections, Solmi asked art historians to limit themselves to material in Italy. He also suggested, this time more directly, that biographies of Leonardo written by Italian scholars were more reliable than those written by foreigners.⁵⁸ All of the following, foreign biographies were labeled as having "little or no consequence:" Braun (1819), Gallenberg (1830), Müller-Walde (1889-1890), Rosember (1898), Scongamilio (1900), Déléscluze (1841-1844), Rio (1855), Houssaye (1879), Koenig (1875), Clément (1882), Müntz (1899), Brown (1828), Heton (1874), Richter (1894), Volynski (1904), Grounau (1903), Mac Curdy (1904), and Muther (1907).

⁵⁷ "La Madonna col Bambino del museo di Dresda non è sua, la Madonna col cardellino del museo di Monaco tanto meno, la Madonna Litta peggio che peggio, di quelle del museo di Granata e del museo di Absburgo non se ne parli; la Resurrezione del museo di Berlino non convince proprio nessuno. Oh! Inesauribile fecondità dei critici, specialmente tedeschi. La critica moderna, inconsolabile della perdita dei capolavori del Maestro, ha cercato di colmare un vuoto così doloroso, ed ha generosamente attribuito al Vinci una serie di lavori, che riveleranno forse l'efficacia del suo genio, ma non sono opera delle sue mani." Solmi, 1939, p. 14.

⁵⁸ Only one foreign biography made Solmi's cut: that of a French scholar named Séailles from 1892.

Future considerations:

Our interest in Leonardo today may not be clouded by the need to use him as a role model for modernity as Beltrami and others viewed him in the late nineteenth-century but it would be wise, however, for us to examine our current assumptions about Leonardo before pressing on with our inquiries about the *Sala delle Asse*. Are we working with a view of Leonardo that reflects the Sforza Court's true conditions in the late fifteenth-century? How much autonomy and responsibility did Leonardo truly have there? His works and notebooks show that he was an imaginative designer but how often was he able to exercise these talents freely? What aspects of the *Sala delle Asse* can we connect to Leonardo's boundless energy? To what extent, if any, did Ludovico Sforza solicit his opinions with respect to the *Sala's* design? Or was Leonardo given a pre-set program to follow? The letter that Leonardo wrote in late 1481 or 1482, when the artist left Florence and recommended himself to Ludovico Sforza, seems confident in its wording. Surely, his ambition was to do great things at the court. How far did he succeed with the *Sala delle Asse*? Did the duke respect Leonardo's opinions as much as he seems to have respected those of Bramante? Questions like these are worth asking because they can steer us toward an interpretation of the *Sala* that is not built on a fictive Leonardo.

CHAPTER 6

TOWARD AN INTERPRETATION OF THE SALA DELLE ASSE

The Sala delle Asse's trees • The Sala delle Asse's golden cord and knots • Beyond trees and knots • Ludovico Sforza's goals as patron

Fifteenth-century documents have provided answers to some of the most basic questions about the *Sala delle Asse*, namely: who commissioned it (Ludovico il Moro); when it was done (the late 1490s); and who participated in its execution (Leonardo da Vinci and assistants). What documents have not yet revealed is the *Sala's* symbolic intentions, the reason(s) for its commission, or – as discussed in Chapter 5 – who was responsible for its iconographic program. Even though it is rare for programs to survive, we persevere in the hope that a document somewhere will answer this second set of problems.¹ In the meantime, we must content ourselves with a plausible of working hypotheses.

¹ And it may very well be in documents up to the middle of the seventeenth century that we may find answers. As Luca Beltrami has suggested, Leonardo's paintings in the *Sala delle Asse* may have remained virtually unchanged until the mid seventeenth-century. See Beltrami, 1902, p. 66. In 1661, two Spanish engineers named Richino and Pessina produced a report entitled *Relatione generale della visita et consegna della fabbrica castello di Milano. Fatta dall'infrascritti ingegneri Regii camerali, per ordine dell' illustriss. Magistrato delle Regie ducali entrate ordinarie dello stato di Milano, l'anno M.DC.LXI* (Milan, 1661, known to me from Beltrami, 1902, p. 66. In this report, the engineers described the *Sala delle Asse* as follows: "Segue la [sala] quadra con volta a lunette (e) dipinte, duoi fenestroni con suoi telaroni di rovere, in vedriate a disegno, con suoi telari in quattro ante." Most of this description is concerned with the Sala's shape and windows ("square room with vaulted lunettes," "two windows with an oak frame," "panes of glass framed on four sides"). But, it does refer to a painted room (*dipinta*). If the *Sala delle Asse's* paintings were not covered in whitewash until after 1661, it may very well be worth scholars' time and efforts to look for

The *Sala's* two most visible motifs, the trees and the golden cord, are generally explained in economic terms: the trees are mulberry trees and the cord that weaves in and out of the branches represents a precious silk thread that was manufactured only in Milan and under the control of the Sforza family. These assumptions are the contributions of modern scholars. In his 1902 monograph, Beltrami had gone no further than to explain the motifs as "large trees" and an "interlaced cord" inspired by Leonardo's predilection for nature studies and interlace designs.²

The Sala delle Asse's Trees:

The idea that the *Sala's* trees represent mulberries was first proposed by Pietro Marani in 1982.³ He pointed to the trees' large roots, colossal trunks, heart-shaped leaves and the practice of cutting the lower limbs to help the top of the trees flourish - all details that are present in the *Sala*. With the exception of William Emboden, Marani's theory has encountered little opposition. Emboden suggested that the trees are instead an artistic blend based on two different species: "a mixture of pinnatifidly compounded leaves as in ash, and small obovate entire leaves of some unidentified

descriptions of the Sforza Castle's interior in the guides and reports of visitors written and published before 1661. One of these sources may produce enough information to reconstruct a visual program for the *Sala*.

² "In favore di Leonardo, quale ideatore della composizione nella Sala delle Asse - oltre che la già ricordata sua simpatia per gli intrecci di corde adatti a schema geometrico - stanno gli studi di botanica, specialmente riguardo la legge di ramificazione negli alberi." L. Beltrami, *Leonardo da Vinci e la Sala delle Asse*, 1902, p. 34.

³ Marani, 1982, pp. 103-120.

genus."⁴ From a scientific standpoint, Emboden, a botanist by profession, may be right. The rendering of the trees is not specific enough to exclude all botanical species except mulberries. It is not yet clear, however, whether this is due to the distortion or suppression of details by Rusca in 1902 or whether this was already the case in the fifteenth-century. Be that as it may, the mulberry had a long history at the Sforza Court as a poetic and iconographic symbol. It is primarily for this reason that scholars have been willing to accept the *Sala's* trees as mulberries.

At his estate in Vigevano (located about 35 kilometers west of Milan), Ludovico expanded on an agricultural endeavor started by Filippo Maria Visconti (1402-1447) in the 1440's (Figure 6.1). In order to decrease Milan's dependence on imported raw silk, Visconti planted white mulberry trees (*morus alba*), the leaves of which are the preferred food of the silkworm.⁵ In January of 1442, Visconti also wooed an expert silk-maker, Pietro di Bartolo, from Florence to teach Milanese weavers his trade. The official decree outlining the specifics of this arrangement suggested that Filippo Maria went to great lengths to please Bartolo. He offered him a ten-year exemption from all state and personal tax, seventy *fiorini* a month as a subsidy for the stipends of his workers,

⁴ W. A. Emboden, *Leonardo da Vinci on Plants and Gardens*, Portland, Oregon, 1987, p. 134. See also the following botanical identifications suggested by scholars before Marani: holly (C. Baroni, "Tracce Pittoriche Leonardesche recuperate al Castello Sforzesco di Milano", *Rendiconto dell'Istituto lombardo di scienze e lettere*, vol. 88, 1995, pp. 21-36; ash (E. Müntz, "Leonardo de Vinci peintre et décorateur," *Bulletin de l'art ancien et moderne*, vol. 7, 1902, pp. 214-215; beech from the species "carpinus betulus" (D. Sant' Ambrogio, "Sulla flora della Sala delle Asse," *Lega Lombarda*, June 15, 1902, pp. 1-2.

⁵ R. Schofield, "Ludovico il Moro and Vigevano," *Arte Lombarda*, vol. 62, 1982, p. 95f. One of the earliest sources describing the Visconti and Sforza involvement in the silk industry is the *Libro dell'Estimo* by Simone [FINISH]

exemption from purchase-taxes on unprocessed silk, dyes, other raw materials, machinery and tools, and citizenship in the Milanese state for himself, his family, and his assistants.⁶ As generous as this may seem, Visconti considered these privileges a fair price to pay for the establishment of a *universum laborerium, totamque artem sirici* in his beloved city.⁷ The dream of this must have been brewing in Visconti's mind for a long time. According to economic historian Gino Barbieri, he had formed a special commission before 1440 to work on the problem of how to develop Milan's silk industry.⁸ Up to that time, Milan's most profitable industries were the production of wool textiles, leather goods, weaponry, and other metal-objects.⁹

From 1450 to 1462, Francesco Sforza built on the initial investments made by Visconti by granting Milanese citizenship to *magistri syrici or magist[i] de panno da seta*

⁶ Bartolo's decree made it clear that the special privileges he was being granted could in no way prejudicially disfavor the silk weavers that had already set up shop in Milan. This concern can be taken as further proof that a silk industry existed in Milan before Bartolo's arrival even if its production (or quality) must not have been great. See C. Morbio, "Storia dei Municipij Italiani," *Codice Visconteo-Sforzesco*, Milan, vol. VI, 1846, pp. 408-410

⁷ Ettore Verga has reported that the decree (dated January 1, 1442) belonged originally to the *Registri Panigarola* (now in Milan's Archivio di Stato), was later stolen "dalla mano avida di un collezionista," and eventually found its way into the archives of the marquis Costa di Beauregard in the Bibioteque Nationale in Paris where it still is today. E. Verga, "Origini dell' organizzazione dell' Arte della Seta in Milano - Secolo XV," *Comune di Milano. Annuario storico-statistico per il 1915*, year 32, vol. 2 of the second series, Milan, 1916, p. ix.

⁸ Barbieri, *Economia e politica nel ducato di Milano, 1386-1535*, Milan, 1938, p. 88.

⁹ A good source for information on Milan's economic history under Filippo Maria Visconti is P. Verri, *Storia di Milano del Conte Pietro Verri*, vol. 3, Milan, 1830, p. 77ff and in C. Cattaneo, "Notizie naturali e civili su la Lombardia," *Scritti Completi Editi ed Inediti di Carlo Cattaneo*, Milan, 1925, p. 69.

from cities like Cremona, Florence, Bergamo, and Genoa.¹⁰ In 1457, he issued an important incentive to bolster and protect Milan's silk industry, forbidding the sale in Milan of all foreign-made silk textiles. This embargo enabled local manufacturers to establish a monopoly in their territory and forced the Milanese gentry to stop purchasing silk in Venice, Florence and Genoa, cities famous for high-quality fabrics. By ensuring that his own silk workers would have exclusive access to Milan's most sophisticated clientele, Francesco Sforza established an incentive to improve quality. In a short time, Milan's silk products became the most sought-after in Italy and in many parts of Europe.

When Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1444-1476) became Duke in 1466, he continued to make the business of the silk industry a priority. By 1467, more than 300 silk workers were operating in Milan, according to census records. This number exceeded the number of workers in any other manufacturing industry.¹¹ Like his father, Galeazzo Maria also focused on quality. In 1468, he prohibited the use of counterfeit *aurum et argentum* in silk cloths. During much of the Renaissance, the finest silk cloths incorporated gold or silver threads in their weave. It was not uncommon, however, for weavers to try to cut costs by using gold- or silver-plated threads that were not easily detectable by consumers. When these deceptive practices started to raise concern over the quality of Milanese silk cloth, Galeazzo Maria took steps to assure consumers that

¹⁰ Verga, 1916, p. x-xi, notes 2-7.

they were purchasing a genuine product. Galeazzo also signed a law prohibiting the export of counterfeit goods and their sale to foreigners at competitive prices. These practices would have tainted the city's international reputation in the silk trade and lowered foreign demand for higher-quality and more expensive silk products.¹² Buyers of silk cloth were given the option of bringing their purchase – within three days – to an official inspector to check the quality of the cloth. If the inspector found the quality to be inadequate, the seller was forced to pay the buyer 125% percent of the original price.¹³

Galeazzo Maria also took steps to make silk-weavers independent by decreasing the need to import raw materials from outside Milan. On March 15, 1470, he issued a decree stating that each landowner was to plant five mulberry trees for every one hundred *pertiche* of land. Growers who did not comply with this order, would be fined twenty *lire imperiali* for every unplanted tree. On July 29 of the following year, the decree was reissued with the amendment that anyone found stealing mulberry leaves or cutting *morari* (the mulberry trees themselves) from the property of others would pay a fine of 10 *fiorini*. Two months later, another decree was issued, this time to regulate the sale of mulberry leaves. Growers were evidently manipulating the market by offering a reduced volume of mulberry for sale on some days and flooding the market

¹¹ Barbieri, 1938, p. 91.

¹² Verga, 1916, p. xvii.

¹³ Verga, 1916, p. xviii.

on others. By controlling supply and demand, they had greater control over sale prices and, ultimately, profits. The ducal government decided it would no longer tolerate such schemes, as the periodic scarcity of leaves translated into slower production. The decree demanded that all growers provide an officially appointed inspector with a written report stating the number of mulberry trees on their land along with their size and exact location. The inspector was to collect and purchase all the mulberry leaves available, at a rate of three *denari per libbra di 28 once*, except in situations where growers were themselves breeding silk worms.¹⁴ Through strict measures such as these, Galeazzo Maria was able to assure silk manufacturers a constant supply of raw materials.

Thanks to the efficient administration of his predecessors, Ludovico Sforza inherited a lucrative and well-regulated enterprise. He did not have to work as hard as they had to nurture the silk industry but he continued to further its expansion. In 1493, he made it easier for manufacturers and weavers to expand the physical space of their workshops. They were given a legal right to take their neighbor's house or dwelling - but with the understanding that they would reimburse the neighbor according to fair-market prices and that they would convert the newly acquired space into an annex. Ludovico also encouraged mulberry farming by personal example. According to a

¹⁴ Barbieri, p. 129.

sixteenth-century chronicler, he ordered a mass planting of white mulberry trees on his land in Vigevano:¹⁵

fece portare del Paese de Vincentia o Verona, ò meglio della Eugania, infinito numero de Piante more bianche ò voi moroni; anchor venire fece li homini et done alla cultura de quelli e insegnare alli terreni nutrire li Cavalieri ò ver Bombice.

When referring to his mulberry tree farm, Ludovico swelled with pride. Vigevano, his birthplace, was one of his favorite places for entertaining visiting dignitaries. He spent as much time as he could there, especially after his marriage to Beatrice d'Este, and he spoke of his enterprise in positive terms to his contemporaries. The following excerpt comes a letter sent to a certain Bianchino de Palude in 1497:¹⁶

Blanchino: you know what pleasure we have always had from the mulberries and silk that come from our Sforzescha. Because we are on such good terms, we would like for you to visit the Sforzescha sometime to see what is being done with this silk.

Mulberry trees played a more important role in representing Ludovico's personal image than they had for his predecessors because the Italian word for mulberry, "gelso *moro*" offered a pun on his nickname, "il Moro." At birth, Ludovico was christened "Lodovico Maurus" but this name was officially changed to "Lodovico Maria" at age five when his mother placed him under the protection of the Blessed Virgin to help him recover from a dangerous illness. Despite the change, the old name prevailed and the

¹⁵ Simone del Pozzo, *Libro dell'Estimo* (begun 1550) preserved in manuscript form in the Archivio Storico Civico of Vigevano and published in extracts by Alessandro Colombo, "La fondazione della Villa Sforzesca secondo Simone del Pozzo e i documenti dell' Archivio Vigevanasco," *Bollettino storico-bibliografico subalpino*, I, 1986, pp. 217-24, 370-9 (continued in vols. 2, 4, 7), p. 373 (f. 510 r). Known to me from R. Schofield, "Ludovico il Moro and Vigevano," *Arte Lombarda*, no. 62, 1982, pp. 95f.

¹⁶ "Blanchino: tu sai el piacere che sempre avemo havuto de li moroni et seta nostra che si fa li alla Sforzesca, et essendo noi in midesimo piacere volemo che qualche volte vaddi a la Sforzesca a vider quello che si farà sopra epsa seta. Archivio di Stato, Milan, Fondo Sforzesco, 1137." Known to me from Schofield, 1982, p. 96, note 15.

mulberry became a favorite motif in the mottos, allegories and devices invented for Ludovico by court poets and artists.¹⁷ In official portraits, such as the one in the Trivulzio Collection in Milan,¹⁸ Ludovico is shown wearing a gold "M" illustrating the pleasure he derived from that nickname.

Happily for Ludovico, mulberry trees had long been a symbol of wisdom, hardiness and resilience. In a well-known passage from Pliny (NH 16.25), the mulberry is called the wisest of trees because it waited to bloom until the chill of winter had completely left the earth, running no risks of frost:¹⁹

Of all the cultivated trees, the mulberry is the last that buds, which it never does until the cold weather is past; and it is therefore called the wisest of trees. But, when it begins to put forth buds, it dispatches the business in one night, and that with so much force, that their breaking forth may be evidently heard.

During the Renaissance, emblem designers like Andrea Alciati used the mulberry as a symbol of "prudence," or to the kind of wisdom that comes from knowing exactly when to act.²⁰

¹⁷ For a more detailed account of how Ludovico got his name, see J. Cartwright, *Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan*, London and New York, 1908, pp. 14-15 as well as E. McGrath's recent article "Ludovico il Moro and His Moors" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LXV, 2002, pp. 67 and 94.

¹⁸ Illustrated in Beltrami, 1902, p. 25.

¹⁹ Other well-known uses of mulberries as a symbol of wisdom and strength in antiquity include the Bible (Second Book of Samuel and in the Psalms) and Ovid (story of Pyramus and Thisbe, *Met.* 4.55-166).

²⁰ Marani, 1982, p. 116. Andrea Alciati's *Emblemata* was first published in 1550.

As Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti, Dawson Kiang and others have pointed out, writers and poets of the Sforza Court did not fail to take advantage of these associations to win Ludovico's favor. The Florentine poet Bernardo Bellincioni (1452-1492), who established himself at Ludovico's court in 1485, used the mulberry as a metaphor in his theatrical pieces, sonnets, and rhymes. According to Tissoni Benvenuti, Bellincioni may have been the first Milanese author to use mulberry symbolism in a literary context,²¹ having used the laurel tree (*lauro*-Lorenzo) in a similar way at the court of Lorenzo de' Medici as did many Florentine poets. The Milanese poet Gasparo Visconti went further than Bellincioni by interweaving the *moro*-Moro metaphor into the plot of his *Pasitea*.²² In the introduction of the play (vv. 17-24), Visconti (in the guise of the Roman writer Caecilius Statius, believed to have been from Milan) proclaimed that a messenger from Jupiter told him that Milan is protected by the virtuous shade of *un Moro*.²³ In Act V (vv. 17-24), Apollo tells Daphne that the mulberry tree ranks above the laurel.²⁴ Later in the same act (vv. 61-64), Apollo describes the moment when Pyramus and Thisbe die under a lofty mulberry tree in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and their blood turns a white

²¹ Tissoni Benvenuti, A., *Teatro del Quattrocento. Le corti Padane*, 1983, p. 339, and pp. 23f.

²² Kiang, D., "Gasparo Visconti's *Pasitea* and the Sala delle Asse," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 2, 1989, p. 102.

²³ Tissoni Benvenuti, 1983, p. 345.

²⁴ "Fra gli arbori gloriosi serai prima / exeptuato solamente il Moro / che per valor più inalzerà sua cima / el qual non solamente io Febo onoro / ma Jove che primer ne fa gran stima / e tutto quanto il cel de coro in coro / si che per sue virtù nel mondo rare / d'ogni altro il Moro serà più singulare." Tissoni Benvenuti, 1983, p. 388.

mulberry's fruit from white to dark red.²⁵ Leonardo da Vinci also contributed to the production of mulberry metaphors for the Sforza Court. He jotted down the following rhyme with no fewer than five references to Ludovico's nickname in the Codex Madrid (II, 14Ir): "O moro, io moro se con tua moralità non mi amori tanto il vivere m'è amaro" (O Moor, I shall die if, with your morals, you will not enamour me, so bitter will my existence be).

The mulberry metaphor also appeared in commissioned historical texts. One of the best-known examples is in an illumination for a Tuscan translation by Cristoforo Landino of Giovanni Simonetta's *De rebus gestis Francisci Sfortiae commentarii*.²⁶ In the frontispiece of the editions by Landino now in Warsaw, London, and Paris and illustrated by the artist Giovan Pietro Birago, Ludovico appears in the form of a mulberry tree.²⁷ Branches radiate from his head to help him shelter his young nephew Gian Galeazzo Sforza (1469-1494), who looks up in adoration. An inscription on the same page assures the boy that his uncle will always watch over him: *Dum vivis, tutus et letus vivo, gaude fili, protector tuus ero semper*. Landino's translation, published in Milan

²⁵ "Onde se 'l Moro è sempre innamorato / aver non se ne diè gran meraviglia, /chè 'l sangue degli amanti, non pur fuore, / ma tinto l'ha persino in mezzo al cuore." Tissoni Benvenuti, 1983, p. 339, note 3.

²⁶ For a discussion and introduction to Simonetta's work see G. Ianziti, "The first edition of Giovanni Simonetta's *De rebus gestis Francisci Sfortiae commentarii*: Questions of Chronology and Interpretation," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 44, 1982, pp. 137-147 and also by the same author, "The rise of Sforza Historiography," *Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations*, vol. 1, Acts of Two Conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1982 and 1984, Florence 1989, pp. 79-93 and *Humanistic Historiography under the Sforza - Politics and Propaganda in Fifteenth-century Milan*, Oxford, 1988.

²⁷ See *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts, Treasures from the British Library*, ed. T. Krens, New York - London, 1983, fig. 14c on p. 110 of London copy.

in 1490, was intended for a remarkably-wide distribution. It seems that the Tuscan-language edition outnumbered the prior Latin editions of 400 copies in 1483 and 400+ in 1486.²⁸ This kind of distribution was exceptional in a period when printing was still in its infancy and a very expensive endeavor.

A lesser-known but equally interesting example is a text by a writer from the city of Como named Muralto. In his *Annalia*, published in 1496 and again in 1499, Muralto rewrote history, alleging that Ludovico Sforza was the first person to introduce the mulberry tree to Milan: *infinitas mororum plantas, ad conficiendum setas seu sericas plantari fecerat, et illius artis in ducatu primus fuit auctor.*²⁹

In addition to literary, theatrical and historical texts, the mulberry appeared as a motif in everything from architecture to altar cloths. Twice in the roundels displayed in the Piazza Ducale in Vigevano, trees are used as a motto, although the written *divisa* that originally accompanied them is no longer legible. In an altar cloth given by Ludovico and Beatrice to the Santuario del Sacro Monte in Varese, the couple's combined coat of arms is encircled within a frame of mulberry leaves and fruits.³⁰ Both of these examples are well known to scholars. What is important to stress in relation to

²⁸ Ianziti, 1989, p. 80.

²⁹ Muralto, *Muralti Annalia*, 1496, p. 49 and 1499, p. 66. Known to me from Barbieri, p. 129.

³⁰ Illustrated in Welch, 1995, p. 237.

the Sala delle Asse is the frequency with which the mulberry appeared as a symbol in ducal commissions or in gifts by Ludovico.

The Sala delle Asse's golden cord and knots:

Dawson Kiang has suggested that the golden cord that weaves through the trees in the *Sala delle Asse* alludes to both the filament extruded by the silkworms and to the gold silk thread that was a Milanese specialty.³¹ This interpretation is likely, in my opinion, because the Sforza court advertised this specialty through the display of gold-embroidered vestments on special occasions as well as the careful choice of parade dresses on diplomatic trips. On November 12, 1493, for example, Beatrice wrote to her sister Isabella d'Este in Mantua to ask whether she had ever used a device of interlaces suggested by Messer Niccolò da Correggio; she was "thinking of having his invention carried out in massive gold, on a *camora* of purple velvet," for the marriage of her niece Bianca Sforza to Emperor Maximilian.³² In the same year, Isabella of Aragon wore a dress with embroidery in the form of "knots" on her first return to church after the birth

³¹ Kiang, 1989, p. 108.

³² This letter was first published by A. Luzio and R. Renier in "Delle Relazioni di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga con Ludovico and Beatrice Sforza", *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, xviii, Milan, 1890, p. 383. The following translation in English is, however, by J. Cartwright, *Beatrice D'Este Duchess of Milan 1475-1497*, London, 1928, pp. 208ff: "I cannot remember if your Highness has yet carried out the idea of that pattern of linked tracery which Messer Niccolo da Correggio suggested to you when we were last together. If you have not yet ordered the execution of this design, I am thinking of having his invention carried out in massive gold, on a *camora* of purple velvet, to wear on the day of Madonna Bianca's wedding, since my husband desires the whole court to lay aside mourning for that one day and to appear in colours. This being the case, I cannot refrain from wearing colours on this occasion, although the heavy loss we have had in our dear mother's death had left me with little care for new inventions. But since this is necessary, I have decided to make a trial of the pattern, if your Highness has not yet made use of it, and send the present courier, begging you not to detain him, but to let me know at once if you have yet tried this new design or not."

of her second child and Beatrice wore a cloth with smaller knots, circles and jewels.³³ In 1493, on an official visit to Ferrara, Beatrice wore a *camora* with the twin towers of Genoa and Anna Sforza wore a *vesta* with *lettere de oro masizo*.³⁴

Gold thread and knot motifs were also used in fashion accessories that were exclusive to Milanese dress. One example is a cap made of golden silk threads - *crepine*, *scoffie d'oro* or *ovete*- that elite women wore to keep their hair in place. Beatrice is shown in one in her bust by Cristoforo Romano, c. 1490.³⁵ A similar cap appears in Ambrogio dei Predis' portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza from c. 1443 and in a portrait he painted in c. 1490 of an anonymous lady who wears a belt with Ludovico's initials.³⁶ The embroiderers who supplied these accessories were among the wealthiest craftspeople in the court. Evelyn Welch has, for example, pointed to the example of two embroiders named Giovan Pietro and Niccolò Gerenzano. It seems that this father and son duo earned enough money to set up companies specializing in the manufacturing of gold leaf, gold and silver threads and luxury cloths and that they left sizable sums of money to their heirs.³⁷

³³ After Welch, 1995, p. 236.

³⁴ Luzio and Renier, 1890, p. 78.

³⁵ Now in the Louvre.

³⁶ Illustrated in Welch, 1995, p. 7.

³⁷ Welch, 1995, 260.

Knot motifs were also used as wall decorations. Documents from 1469 refer to a *camera delli gruppi* in the Sforza castle of Pavia that was, according to Evelyn Welch, located within the women's chambers.³⁸ In Mantua, I discovered a *camerino dei nodi* and a *camerino delle catenelle* in a section of the Palazzo Ducale that comprised Isabella d'Este's private apartments.³⁹ The rooms are adjacent and small in size. Nothing is known about their specific use, although Dr. Giuliana Algeri, *Soprintendente per i Beni Artistici e Storici* for Mantua, has suggested to me that the rooms may have provided an additional place of "intimate retreat" or "study" for Isabella, given their proximity to her well-known *studiolo* and the *grotta*.⁴⁰ In other words, Isabella may have used the *camerini* to house an additional collection of books, manuscripts and rare objects.

³⁸ Welch, 1995, p. 236.

³⁹ Cottafavi, C., "Palazzo Ducale di Mantova. Camerini Isabelliani di Castello," *Bollettino d'Arte del Ministero della Educazione Nazionale*, Milan-Rome, year 10, ser. 2, no. 1, July 1938, p. 279-281. I thank Prof. Creighton Gilbert for signaling this rare article to me.

⁴⁰ Personal correspondence from Dr. G. Algeri to me dated October 21, 1999, prot. n. 7374/VII, subject: "Mantova. Palazzo Ducale. Castello San Giorgio. Camerini delle Catenelle e dei Nodi." Additionally, Dr. Algeri had the following to report on the condition of the *camerini*: "Le attuali decorazioni dipinte sugli spicchi e le lunette della volte sono in gran parte frutto di restauri novecenteschi. E' assai probabile che le piccole targhe pendenti dagli intrecci ornamentali del camerino dei Nodi includessero motti ed emblemi isabelliani, che, attualmente, per l'aspetto assai sbiadito dei dipinti, non si riescono comunque ad individuare. Non si esclude che anche lo stesso motivo decorativo dei nodi e pure quello delle catenelle, nella stanza adiacente, possano alludere a particolari tematiche isabelliane." On the subject of decorative knots, the *camerini dei nodi* and *delle catenelle* and Isabella, I also consulted with literary historian Deanna Shemek (who is preparing an edition of Isabella's letters for the University of Chicago series *The Other Voice*) and art historian Clifford Brown. Dr. Shemek checked her database on my behalf for references to the *camerini* in Isabella's letters but found none. Thanks to Dr. Brown's help, I was able to locate C. Cottafavi, "Palazzo Ducale di Mantova - Camerini Isabelliani di Castello" the *Bollettino d'Arte* containing one of few published photographs of the *nodis* in Isabella's apartments.

Knot motifs once adorned the walls of one room in the home of Ludovico Sforza's mistress, Cecilia Gallerani, whose portrait Leonardo painted around 1489-90. When this décor was rediscovered in 1891, it was described as "a fragment of fifteenth-century polychrome decoration with a row of alternating black and white rhombi, a frieze of flowers on a black background, and a wall with panels of various geometric motifs."⁴¹ Nothing remains of the décor today. It seems that it was covered again soon after its discovery and no visual record was kept.⁴²

Like Isabella, Gallerani also had a passion for intellectual and artistic activities. She opened her house to intellectuals, artists and poets on many occasions. Matteo Bandello (1485-1561) once described the ambiance of her house as follows:

Here military men discuss the soldier's art, musicians sing, architects and painters draw, natural philosophers pose questions, and the poets recite their own and other compositions, in such a way that everyone who delights in excellence or in talking or listening to discussions finds food met for his appetite, since in the presence of this heroine, pleasant, virtuous and gentle things are always spoken of.⁴³

When Kasimierz Kwiatkowski examined x-rays of Gallerani's portrait in 1955, he interpreted several spots just above Gallerani's left shoulder as a door or arched window, suggesting, perhaps, that Leonardo had originally intended to represent her

⁴¹ In C. Pedretti, *Leonardo Architect*, New York, 1981, p. 80.

⁴² Pedretti, 1981, p. 80.

⁴³ Pedretti, 1981, p. 81.

within her house.⁴⁴ Carlo Pedretti then reasoned that the golden knot motifs that appear on Gallerani's garments are "surely a reflection of the taste and predilections of the owner of the house."⁴⁵ But was the inclusion of the knots simply a reflection of the sitter's predilections? Or was the choice more deliberate in its intention? In other words, was it important for Leonardo to include a substitute for the background he decided to abandon in the final stages of the portrait – a background that would have showed the knot motifs known to be in Gallerani's home? If yes, the knots may have had an important symbolic meaning just like her ermine did.⁴⁶ We will return to the possibility toward the end of this chapter.

Beyond mulberries and knots:

Although there is basic agreement concerning the symbolism of the trees and knots, the program of the *Sala delle Asse* and the reasons for its commission are still disputed. Some scholars, including Beltrami, Marie Aggházy and Martin Kemp, have favored an interpretation of the *Sala* as a room commemorating the union of Ludovico and Beatrice d'Este. As Kemp suggests, this commemoration "assumed a new kind of

⁴⁴ K. Kwiatkowski, "*La dame à l'hermine*" de Léonard da Vinci: *Etude technologique*, Wrocław, 1955, 14, figs. 13-15.

⁴⁵ Pedretti, 1981, p. 81.

⁴⁶ According to Marani, the ermine in the portrait alludes to the sitter's honest and virtuous character and it is also a reference to the title of "Italico Morel, bianco Ermellino" ("Italian Moor, white Ermine") that Ludovico Sforza received in 1488.

meaning after Beatrice's death:⁴⁷ the couple's joint coat of arms appears at the center of the ceiling and, in the period of Galeazzo Sforza, the alternation in the room of the emblems of Galeazzo and Bona di Savoia established a pattern of conjugal themes. Other scholars, like Pietro Marani, emphasize the room's political overtones, a characterization that goes beyond the four plaques in the ceiling to create an iconographic program underlining Ludovico's role as defender and protector of the state.⁴⁸ Marani and Kemp suggest that the *Sala*'s column-like trees – an image they believe was borrowed from Bramante's Milanese cloister of S. Ambrogio – and the association of the mulberry with "prudence" were intended to illustrate Ludovico's ability to act as a provider and supporter of the state. Other art historians view the *Sala* as a reflection of Leonardo's broad interests. Martin suggests the possibility of a specific interest in the "exercise of fantasia" or more precisely, in "an imaginative extension of the inventive process which [Leonardo] used in his science for rational demonstration."⁴⁹ John Moffit identifies it as an exceptional example of Leonardo's interest in the theoretical origins of architecture.⁵⁰ Welch suggests that Leonardo

⁴⁷ Kemp, M., "The Exercise of Fantasia," *The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981, pp. 186.

⁴⁸ Marani, 1982, p. 117-118.

⁴⁹ Kemp, 1981, p. 177.

⁵⁰ Moffit, J., "Leonardo's Sala delle Asse and the Primordial Origins of Architecture," *Arte Lombarda*, no. 92-93, 1990, p. 76-90.

undertook the commission partly to challenge the court's preference for embroidered gold tapestries.⁵¹

A fascinating characteristic of art is that it can embody multiple meanings and values at the same time. It is possible, therefore, that all of these interpretations are to some extent correct for the *Sala delle Asse*. Nevertheless, interpretations become more or less likely depending on the historical context that art historians use to support them. In the following pages, I discuss interpretations of the decorative program of *Sala delle Asse* that are problematic because of the historical context proposed.

In 1978, French art historian Marie Aggházy argued that the *Sala delle Asse* commemorated the death of Beatrice d'Este on January 2, 1497, and that the decorative program reflected a liturgical adaptation of the classical idea of a *locus amoenus*.⁵² According to Aggházy, many of the funerary rites performed in fifteenth-century Milan included a special prayer service (*liturgia commendatio*) in which a priest recommended the souls of the dead to God's "locus amoenus" or heavenly paradise. The purpose of the prayer was to ask that those souls be liberated from their *vinculum peccatorum* or the "bonds of their earthly sins." Aggházy argued that it was precisely this prayer service that was represented in the *Sala*: *ainsi donc c'est le feuillage de la tonnelle de la Sala delle*

⁵¹ Welch, 1995, p. 235.

⁵² M. G. Aggházy, "Locus amoenus et vinculum delictorum dans l'art de la Renaissance," *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, 51, 1978, pp. 55-62.

*Asse qui est le locus amoenus, mais attaché par des liens du vinculum [...] peccatorum.*⁵³ In other words, the *Sala*, was Ludovico's way of recommending Beatrice's soul to heaven.

Milan's liturgical tradition called for a repetition of the prayers for deliverance from the *vinculum peccatorum* at various calendar intervals: on the seventh and fortieth day after a person's death, on November 2 (All Saints Day), and on the one-year anniversary of the death.⁵⁴ In Aggházy's opinion, Gualtiero Bescapè's reassurances on April 21, 1498 that Leonardo promised to finish his work in the *Sala* by September of that same year should be interpreted as an indication that Ludovico was eager to have the *Sala* completed for one of these anniversaries.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Bescapè's letter uses the word *golder*, indicating that the Duke was expected to "enjoy" the *Sala*: *M.ro Leonardo promete finirla per tuto September, et che per questo si porrà etiam golder*. Would Bescapè have chosen this word to describe a room that was to be used for a funerary rite? Would a secular space be used for this ceremony instead of the Cappella Ducale, which was located only a short distance from the *Sala*? Moreover, by the fifteenth-century, the imagery used to represent a classically-inspired *locus amoenus* in the visual

⁵³ Aggházy, 1978, p. 58.

⁵⁴ Aggházy, 1987, p. 59

⁵⁵ "Nous possédons un document écrit concernant les circonstances de la naissance de la fresque de Léonard: en avril 1498 le maître promet à Lodovico il Moro de terminer son travail pour septembre de la même année. Étant donné que la date de la mort de Beatrice d' Este, femme du seigneur de Milan, est le 2 janvier 1497, les textes des cérémonies funéraires devaient être entendus depuis peu et par le mécène et par l' artiste. C' est ce qui pourrait fournir l' actualité à l' apparition du *locus amoenus* dans la sala de la forteresse." Aggházy, 1978, p. 58.

arts and poetry was more complex than that chosen for the *Sala delle Asse*.⁵⁶ This imagery usually called for a mixed forest, mythological characters, and often a meadow, a spring or a brook. Birds, flowers and fruit were occasionally added. The components of the *Sala delle Asse* do not appear to have been part of a typical *locus amoenus* tradition.

John Moffit's 1990 study, "Leonardo's *Sala delle Asse* and the Primordial Origins of Architecture," argued that, in the *Sala delle Asse* architectural metaphors represented Leonardo's interests in the theoretical origins of architecture:⁵⁷

The visual evidence alone tells us that, basically, the underlying theme directly has something to say about a general inclusive theme, what we might call "Wild Nature Tamed into Architecture." This idea in turn suggests that one is dealing with a kind of metaphorical and rather rudimentary "History of Architecture" but one exclusively viewed in its very earliest stages, or primordial origins.

Moffit went on to suggest that these metaphors were derived from the text of Vitruvius.⁵⁸ He argued that Leonardo knew Vitruvius' text and venerated it – a conclusion inferred from Leonardo's famous drawing of the *Vitruvian Figure* (c. 1490) which appears on the same sheet as an autograph commentary and paraphrasing of Vitruvius (3.1.1). Moffit concluded that Leonardo was familiar with Vitruvius' canonical text before his work on the *Sala* and for him, the text represented a "compilation of truly authoritative art-theoretical statements" – statements that

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the nature, flora and landscape components in traditional "locus amoenus" from classical to Renaissance poetry, see E. R. Curtius, "The Ideal Landscape," *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask, Princeton, New Jersey, 1967, pp. 183-202.

⁵⁷ Moffit, 1990, p. 78.

⁵⁸ "...before 1500, the only published architectural treatises were those by Vitruvius and Alberti, a factor neatly restricting the field of necessary inquiry." Moffit, 1990, p. 82.

"conformed to the very workings of Nature" and constituted a proper vehicle for the practice of *ekphrasis*.⁵⁹ According to Moffit:⁶⁰

The *Sala delle Asse* can now be understood to represent just another *ekphrasis* by Leonardo, in this case another one derived from Vitruvius' canonic text, specifically *De architectura, libri decem*, Book I, chapter 1, articles 1ff. The larger topos (as *Rahmenthema*) embraced by Vitruvius is "the primordial hut" itself representing the primordial origins of all (human) architecture.

It was Vitruvius' theory that all architecture has its origins in a rustic hut made from barely-trimmed saplings. In *De Architectura* 3.1.1.1, he explained that the first vaulted structures were literally "walls of trees" supported by lateral supports. Moffit took special care to point out that these trees had to be living and still-rooted —like those in the *Sala delle Asse*— because Vitruvius referred to "trees enclos[ing] the space for the dwelling" rather than processed elements such as posts, branches or trunks. This metaphor extended to the historical origins of architecture because Vitruvius' huts eventually encompassed "houses with foundations, having brick or stone walls."⁶¹

Was Vitruvius' idea of the primordial hut or of primitive architecture common knowledge in the artistic community of which Leonardo was part? Moffit argued yes, on the basis of Bramante's "living-tree-columns" in the Canonica of S. Ambrogio, Alberti's fondness of *colonne fatte ad imitazione di tronchi d'albero* described in *De re*

⁵⁹ Moffit, 1990, p. 82.

⁶⁰ Moffit, 1990, p. 82.

⁶¹ Moffit, 1990, p. 83.

aedificatoria 9.1 of 1485, Filarete's *Trattato di Architettura* (fol. 5 r and v ca 1461–1464), which illustrated the primitive hut and identified it as the source of all later architecture, Piero di Cosimo's depiction of Vitruvius' hut in an easel painting of c. 1495.⁶² There were also suggestive connections to the Sforza court: Bramante worked for Ludovico on several architectural commissions, Filarete dedicated his text to Ludovico's father, Francesco Sforza, and the Piazza Ducale in Vigevano had been reconfigured in 1492 in strict conformance to Vitruvian principles.⁶³

Leonardo's notes (Ms. B, f. 28v) on the ornamentalization of a rib-vaulted architectural structure with living, interlaced shrubs and trees also caught Moffit's attention.⁶⁴ He argued that Leonardo's notes showed his awareness of Vitruvian construction methods but cautioned the reader against taking the passage from the

⁶² "it becomes evident that the historicizing, wholly Vitruvian-derived, arboreal-primeval architectural motif had become common knowledge in Italy by the end of the fifteenth-century." Moffit, 1990, p. 85. The subject of Piero di Cosimo's depiction was identified by Erwin Panofsky as representing *Vulcan and his faithful disciples and helpers: The origins of the Arts of Mankind*.

⁶³ This last observation is actually one proposed by W. Lotz, "The Piazza Ducale in Vigevano: A Princely Forum of the Late Fifteenth-Century," *Studies in Italian Renaissance Architecture*, Cambridge, MA, 1981, pp. 117-39. Moffit was especially concerned with p. 123-25 of Lotz where Lotz argues that all "the new distinctive formal aspects of the piazza in Vigevano [...] all the features are found in Vitruvius."

⁶⁴ The section with which Moffit was most concerned reads as follows: MODO COME SI FANO I ARMATURE PER FARE ORNAMENTO DI EDIFITI. Modo come si debbono mettere le pertiche per legare i mazzuoli de' ginepri sopra esse periche, le quali sono confitte sopra l'armatura della volta e lega essi mazzuoli con salci e sù per fare cimerosa colle forbici e lavora le con salci. Sia da l'uno all' altro cerchio uno 1/2 braccio e'l ginepro si da; regiere colle cime in giu cominciando di sotto. A questa colonna li lega d'intorno 4 pertiche, dintorno alle quali s' inchioda vinchi grossi un dito, e poi si fa da pie e vassi in alto legando mazzuoli di cime di ginepro colle cime in basso cioè sotto sopra." Moffit, 1990, p. 86. The transcription used for this text was that of Jean Paul Richter's in J. P. Richter, ed., *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol II, no. 762, p. 70.

notebooks as an actual reference to the *Sala delle Asse*. To Moffit, it seemed more likely that this text anteceded the execution of the paintings in the Sala delle Asse.⁶⁵

The corpus of evidence assembled by Moffit suggests that Leonardo was interested in the architectural theories of Vitruvius. Nevertheless, his argument that the decorative scheme of the *Sala delle Asse* became an illustration of these ideas seems tenuous at best. For this to have been the case, Ludovico Sforza would have to have ordered the execution of this program because *he* —and not just Leonardo— had an interest in it and/or Ludovico would have to have been sufficiently supportive of Leonardo's interests in architecture or Vitruvius that he gave him permission to exercise his interpretations on the walls and ceiling of one of the largest rooms in his Castle. Moffit understands Ludovico to have been a patron actively involved in the unfolding history of architectural theory and one who would have been flattered to be chosen as recipient of Leonardo's labors and experiments. Moffit describes Ludovico's position as follows:⁶⁶

Ludovico il Moro, the flattered patron of Leonardo's subtle artistic statement, must have then seen himself as an instrumental figure in a continuing story first told by Vitruvius. His own place in this historical sequence was then being concretely exemplified by his active participation, as architectural patron, in the building projects of both the Cathedral of Milan and the Piazza Ducale in Vigevano.

Was Ludovico the ambitious, intellectual architectural patron that Moffit reconstructs?

It is difficult to reconcile this characterization with the frustrations that Leonardo

⁶⁵ Moffit, 1990, p. 87.

expressed in his notebooks about what it was like to work under Ludovico's strict guidelines, limited resources, and lack of appreciation. And there is nothing to suggest that, in the fifteenth-century, architects were considered worthy of great recognition or that architecture was regarded as a discipline on par with other noble arts. According to Liliana Grassi, who has studied fifteenth-century attitudes toward architects and architecture in Lombardy under the Sforza regime: "In this period, the architects of Lombardy did not fully achieve the autonomy of a protagonist, as Alberti and Filarete had already wished for, nor was the discipline of architecture accepted in the liberal arts instead of the mechanical arts."⁶⁷

Grassi's conclusion is supported by the difficulty that scholars have encountered in attributing authorship to many of the architectural commissions that took place in Milan under Ludovico Sforza. In this period, architecture seems to have been viewed more as an opportunity to provide specialized solutions to functional problems rather than as a opportunity for artistic or intellectual statements. According to Grassi, the Milanese were not particularly interested in ancient architectural models and most fifteenth and early sixteenth-century architects were inclined towards early-Christian and medieval rather than classical models. The intent was to elaborate on a tradition

⁶⁶ Moffit, 1990, p. 88.

⁶⁷ " La figura dell' architetto non raggiungerà a pieno, in questo tempo lombardo, l'effettiva autonomia del protagonista, già auspicata dall' Alberti e dal Filarete, né sarà nella pratica accettata l' appartenenza stessa della disciplina architettonica all' ambito delle artes liberales piuttosto che a quello delle artes mecanicae." L. Grassi, "Trasmutazione linguistica dell' architettura Sforzesca: splendore e presagio al

believed to be unique to Milan and not the development of new styles by experimenting with ancient models.⁶⁸ It seems unlikely that Ludovico Sforza devoted resources and attention to transforming the *Sala delle Asse* into an illustration of architectural principles that he was not cultivating in his own city through actual commissions and urbanization plans. Vitruvian design principles may have sparked Leonardo's curiosity but there is no evidence that they received Ludovico's enthusiastic support.

Our unsatiable curiosity regarding Leonardo's interests may cause us to secretly yearn for the opposite to be true. How wonderful it would be if in the *Sala delle Asse* we could find a road map explaining his architectural interests or, better yet, a clear application of these interests. For now, we have to settle, as Richard Turner once suggested, for "a cumulative impression [...] of Leonardo as a designer with few practical achievements."⁶⁹ For as many brilliant sketches of elevations and plans that Leonardo made and for as many notes and commentaries that Leonardo wrote on architectural theory, not a single building remains that can be attributed to him; nor can we safely argue that any of his major designs were ever executed. He leaves us,

tempo di Ludovico il Moro," *Milano nell' età di Ludovico il Moro*, acts from international conference held by the Comune di Milano, vol. 1 and 2, Milan, 1983, pp. 417-501.

⁶⁸ "L'accoglimento [a Milano] della lezione della *maniera antica* appare pertanto fortemente filtrato, sì da dar luogo ad un suggestivo e caratterizzante sincretismo. In tutte le opere sorte nel periodo che va da Francesco a Ludovico, dalla Cappella Portinari al Castello Sforzesco, a varie parti della Certosa di Pavia, a S. Maria Incoronata, per citare soltanto le più note, si individua questa specificità, per la quale, indipendentemente dalla qualificazione delle singole opere, si deve riconoscere la presenza di una sorta di codice comune e il sommarsi di elementi concordati che permettono di delineare un' area in cui è possibile considerare realtà proprie, segnate da secolare tradizione." Grassi, 1983, p. 426.

⁶⁹ A. R. Turner, *Inventing Leonardo*, Berkely and Los Angeles, 1992, p. 37.

instead, with the impression that the opportunity to implement or to illustrate his discoveries was a privilege that his patrons rarely granted.

In his thought-provoking book *Leonardo da Vinci, The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man*, Martin Kemp argued that the *Sala delle Asse* provides a unique opportunity to learn more about Leonardo's "boundless fertility of mind." Kemp is particularly fascinated by Leonardo's talent for balancing "carefully rational invention" on the one hand and "the poetic exercise of creative fantasy" on the other.⁷⁰ He describes the *Sala* as an "exercise of fantasia" and fantasy "acted for Leonardo as an imaginative extension of the inventive process which [Leonardo] used in his science for rational demonstration."⁷¹ The key here is "imaginative extension," a term implying –I assume – that there was never a negation or strongly compromised alteration of Leonardo's more rational or scientifically observed efforts. Rather, Leonardo's "imagination is an output process of the human mind, dependent upon an accurate understanding of the observational input but transcending the orderly data or rational induction."⁷² This characterization serves in part to rescue the *Sala* from the dismissals of earlier scholars who have described the *Sala* as a form of amusement with no other purpose other than to delight its maker and audience.

⁷⁰ Kemp, 1981, p. 177.

⁷¹ Kemp, 1981, p. 161.

⁷² Kemp, 1981, p. 160.

But if the *Sala* is to be credited with a serious and more complex purpose, it is not easy to understand from Kemp what that purpose should be. Kemp's *Sala* is the output of a model of invention based on intangibles that seem to have no time, place or specific source of origin outside of Leonardo's mind. What exactly comprised the "rational input" for the *Sala*? What "orderly data" or "rational induction" did Leonardo "transcend"? Is it possible to argue for a rational process of induction when there is no definable point of origin or input? What means of comparison would help us to evaluate the various stages in the evolution of a rational process or to provide indication that the evolution has indeed progressed in a rational manner? Kemp's hesitation to define or even suggest the existence of a process of invention based on "inputs" and "data" that are both real (i.e. based on actual historical, cultural or social factors) and retrievable – rather insisting on intangibles locked in an impenetrable, timeless vacuum – leaves us uncertain of the *Sala*'s true history.

For Kemp, the *Sala*'s history seems synonymous with the history of Leonardo's thought process because nothing was more real to him than Leonardo's thoughts. In other words, the *Sala* is primarily of interest as a representation of the projected images of Leonardo's mind. Kemp's *Sala* has no history of its own. There is nothing to learn *about* it; only things to learn *from* it. A transparent presence of the *Sala* is preferred to one based on historical facts, documentation, or more carefully reasoned interpretations. It is probably because of this "transparency," I would argue, that Kemp

ultimately – but surely unintentionally – returns the *Sala* to the same meaningless world of *capricci* from which he tried to rescue it. This step is apparent through Kemp's choice of words in describing the *Sala's* motifs. He, in fact, uses the word “caprice” to describe its motifs, suggesting the absence of a serious set of intentions or complex purpose.⁷³

Enter Ludovico Sforza. Kemp writes in full realization that the *Sala* was an officially-appointed court commission and that its patron's circumstances have a place in the *Sala's* history: “to understand the decoration and significance of this room, I believe it is necessary to look at the personal circumstances which lie behind Ludovico’s remodeling of this corner of the castle for his personal use during the later 1490’s.”⁷⁴ Still, it was Leonardo's ambitions and expectations – not those of Ludovico – that preside as Kemp delves deeper into the *Sala's* meaning: “The [*Sala's*] remarkable conception is unquestionably his [Leonardo's]”.⁷⁵ Kemp is of the opinion that Ludovico's involvement in planning the *Sala's* design was limited to his request to incorporate a set of personal symbolisms or allegories. As Kemp explains, Ludovico' had a “considerable appetite for personal *imprese* and allegorical representations.”⁷⁶

⁷³ “Enough of the vault decoration has survived... to convey at least some impression of Leonardo’s invention: his caprice of intertwined branches through which a meandering gold rope performs a series of geometrical arabesques.” Kemp, 1981, p. 182.

⁷⁴ Kemp, 1981, p. 181.

⁷⁵ Kemp, 1981, p. 182.

⁷⁶ Kemp, 1981, p. 164.

However: There is no reason to suspect that he [Leonardo] ever felt himself seriously out of tune with the general character of court iconography, as he appears to have satisfied many of Il Moro's tastes in this direction with real conviction and pleasure.⁷⁷ In other words, Kemp suggests that any adaptations or consent for outside guidance should be regarded as a willingness on Leonardo's part to suit his patron and not the result of unhappy compromise or the execution of a prescribed task. In Kemp's interpretation, as in that of Moffitt, we have a *Sala delle Asse* that is locked in the impenetrable realm of Leonardo's preoccupations.

Ludovico Sforza's goals as patron:

To determine the programmatic intentions of the *Sala delle Asse*, we need to consider Ludovico's goals as patron. Ludovico exercised much control over the works he commissioned. He paid close attention to their development and made important decisions about the creative processes they entailed. He was also well aware of the renown that could be had through an astute exploitation of the arts. As scholars have shown, there are plenty of indications of his awareness in his castle in Milan, Vigevano, and Padua.⁷⁸ Still, most art historians treat the *Sala delle Asse* as though it sprang from

⁷⁷ Kemp, 1981, p. 154.

⁷⁸ On Ludovico Sforza's patronage, see for example: Welch, E. S., *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan*, New Haven and London, 1995; Moffatt, C. J., "Merito et Tempore: The Imprese of Lodovico Sforza at Vigevano," *Emblematica*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1988, pp. 229-263. Moffatt, C. J., *Urbanism and Political Discourse: Lodovico Sforza's Architectural Plans and Emblematic Imagery at Vigevano*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992. De Vecchi, P. "Committenza e attivita' artistica alla corte degli Sforza negli ultimi decenni del quattrocento," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 1, Milan, 1983, pp. 503ff.

the mind of Leonardo and was independent of the complex patronage circumstances surrounded it.

Ludovico often commissioned works to rally support for the Sforza dynasty and his position as Duke of Milan. This propagandistic goal was certainly the motivation for the equestrian horse in honor of Francesco Sforza and the translation into Tuscan of Simonetta's *Commentarii*. The horse project was abandoned but the commitment shown to the *Commentarii* shows how important this goal was to Ludovico. The *Commentarii* offered an account of the deeds of Francesco Sforza from the Sforza point of view. By highlighting his worthiness, Ludovico's own position was indirectly legitimized and raised in prestige. In one oration, the following analogy was offered:

Equally worthy of praise is this: that you [Ludovico] with such zeal so avidly revive the memory of your father, the undefeated Francesco Sforza, one never to be named without the King of Kings, and that you model yourself on him, copying his character, his sayings, his deeds, to the extent that anyone could recognize you from your father, and your father from you.⁷⁹

To make the *Commentarii* persuasive, Ludovico employed humanist writers and encouraged them to adopt an audacious narrative, one in which the truth was constructed anew for the sake of relating a more acceptable history.⁸⁰ This kind of license was not yet known to humanist historical writing. Propagandist elaborations

⁷⁹ *Commentarii*, p. cix. As translated by Ianziti, 1988, p. 233.

⁸⁰ For a detailed characterization of the form of the humanist historical writing used in the *Commentarii*, refer to Ianziti, 1988.

had been mostly confined to laudatory literature (orations, funeral speeches, letters) with which historical or contemporary figures were praised.

Planning for the *Sala delle Asse* started soon after the *Commentarii* were published and it is possible that the two projects served a common purpose within the framework of Sforza propaganda. However, Ludovico's political situation had changed; he became the first and only Sforza Duke to be invested by Emperor Maximilian.⁸¹ The legitimization he had longed for had finally been confirmed. In the diploma drafted for the investiture, Maximilian gave his reasons for preferring Ludovico to his nephew Gian Galeazzo Sforza or his brother Galeazzo Maria: Ludovico was the first son to be born after Francesco Sforza became Duke. Maximilian is said to have honored Ludovico with the following statement: "we have judged you to be the only person worthy of being raised to this high rank."⁸² The ceremony in which Maximilian read the act of investiture and presented Ludovico with the Ducal insignia took place on May 26, 1495 in Piazza Duomo. With this title in hand, Ludovico aspired to a greater goal: forming an alliance with other Italian states against foreign powers and becoming the ruler of a united Italy. Viewed in this context, the *Sala delle Asse* can be interpreted as a symbol of stability, power and political accomplishment rather than as a symbol of his right to rule.

⁸¹ Gian Galeazzo Visconti's investiture in 1395 by Emperor Wenzel was the only one to precede Ludovico's. The state of Milan had reverted back to the Empire with the death of Filippo Maria Visconti. It was, therefore, Maximilian's prerogative to bestow the fief on whomever he wished.

⁸² B. Corio, *Storia di Milano* (1503), ed. A. Morisi Guerra, 2 vols., Turin, 1978.

In my opinion, the political context for the *Sala's* decoration has not been stressed enough. Preoccupations with Leonardo's interests in the *Sala* and the assumption that painted scenes of gardens in Renaissance interiors are domestic in character have drawn attention away from the role of palace décor in state art. Nevertheless, ideal gardens have been associated with rulers and positions of power since antiquity. In ancient Mesopotamia, for example, trees were so highly valued that they were sometimes taken as plunder and replanted in palace gardens as a sign of victory. Circa 1100 BC, Tiglar Pilezar I recorded that "cedars and box, alkanu-wood have I carried off from the lands I conquered, trees that none of my forefathers have possessed."⁸³ In Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 BC) built the Hanging Gardens in an otherwise flat landscape, a construction and engineering feat, and the Greek epic poet Homer describes several walled gardens with fruit-bearing trees - reminiscent of the *Sala delle Asse*. In *Odyssey* 24.225ff, Odysseus's father Laertes had an orchard with pear trees, fig trees, olives, grapevines and leek beds.⁸⁴ Alkinöös' gardens (*Od.* 7.112ff) contained:⁸⁵

fruit trees are grown tall and flourishing, pear trees and pomegranate trees and apple trees with their shining fruit, and the sweet fig trees and flourishing olive. Never is the fruit spoiled on these, never does it give out, neither in winter time nor summer, but always the West Wind blowing on the fruits brings some to ripeness while he starts others. Pear matures on pear in that place, apple on apple, grape cluster on grape cluster, fig upon fig... Such are the glorious gifts of the gods at the house of Alkinoös.

⁸³ In S.N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer*, 1958, p. 112-14. Known to me from L. Farrar, *Ancient Roman Gardens*, Goucestershire, 1998, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Homer, *Odyssey*, 24.225ff.

⁸⁵ Homer, *Odyssey*, 7. 112ff.

In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, Socrates explains that Persian kings excelled in the arts of war, governance and the cultivation of gardens. In the following passage, Xenophon used the word Παραδεισος for garden⁸⁶ Socrates then tells a story, first told by the Spartan, Lysander, commander of the Peloponnesian fleet. In 407 BC, Lysander visited the Persian king Cyrus the Younger at his palace in Sardis. When Cyrus showed him his pleasure garden, Lysander wondered at it – that the trees should be so fine, the plantings so regular, the rows of trees so straight, the angles so finely laid, and that so many pleasant scents should accompany them as they walked – wondering at these things, he spoke, “I Cyrus, am full of wonder at the beauty of everything, but much more do I admire the one who has measured out and ordered each kind of thing for you.” A much-pleased Cyrus responded: “All these things, Lysander, I measured out and ordered myself, and there are some of them that I even planted myself.”⁸⁷

The idea of the royal garden prevailed in the Renaissance alongside the Medieval idea of gardens of love for amorous encounters. In Dante's *Divina Commedia* the reader goes from an opening scene in a *selva oscura* or *selva selvaggia e aspra e forte* in *Inferno* I to the Valley of Princes (*Purgatory* VII and VIII), a paradise in the ancient sense of a royal park – full of princes and rulers whose preoccupation with earthly things impedes

⁸⁶ See Xenophon, *The Oeconomicus*, trans. by Carnes Lord *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse, An Interpretation of the Oeconomicus*, Ithaca and London, 1970, pp. 19-22.

⁸⁷ Quoted by Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden in Persia and Mughal India*, New York, 1979.

them from attending to their spiritual salvation. There is a garden that resembles Eden in splendor, but combines nature and artificial intervention. Only in this garden can the pilgrim come to terms with his/her secular concerns and with the fear that these detract from higher concerns. The Valley of Princes is, in other words, a necessary preparation for the final journey to Eden.

I do not suggest that Ludovico consciously modeled his behavior on a specific ancient tradition or on a literary garden. I do suggest, however, that there are parallels between the *Sala delle Asse* and ancient rulers' use of nature to create a sense of fertility, prosperity and order through rational intervention. All of these conditions were encoded in the *Sala delle Asse*: the symmetrical and systematic arrangement of the trees around the perimeter of the room, the rhythmic appearance of the golden knots between the branches (order) by comparison with the lush and expansive foliage (fertility and prosperity). The same interplay is apparent in the balanced elements of the vault of the *Sala* and the wild, powerful roots that appear to burst through walls.

This interpretation of the decorative program as political allegory is supported by Ludovico Sforza's interest in actual gardens. During his reign, he expanded the hunting parks that were developed by his father Francesco Sforza and his brother Galazzo Maria. In Vigevano, a plaque on one of the buildings associated with the Sforzesca states that Ludovico had dedicated himself to the peaceful pursuit of

agriculture and ensured that the earth of his villa became fruitful: VILIS GLEBA FUI MODO SUM DITISSIMA TELLUS.⁸⁸ More than an example of an individual preoccupied with the rich man's occupation of gardening, Ludovico's endeavors may have inspired an elaborate and sophisticated gardening tradition in his city. By the mid-1500's, Milanese gardens were stylistically among the most advanced of their time. In no other Italian city – including Venice, Florence, Rome or Naples – was such a varied garden topography to be seen as in the Milanese countryside and alongside its *navigli* (canals).

While the *Sala's* trees seem to fit easily enough into a tradition of gardens as political allegory, the *Sala's* golden cord and knots are more difficult to pin-point as a specific type. There is, of course, a long-standing tradition for the sub-division of space in walled gardens into geometric partitions or so-called "knot-gardens." And pergolas – which the *Sala's* trees happen to form – were often depicted as an ornamental motif forming arabesque patterns. However, both of these traditions were more ornamental than functional or allegorical in nature. Were the *Sala's* golden cord and knots originally designed as an ornamental complement to the trees – one that alluded, at the same time, to the prestige and wealth of his silk empire? Or do they represent an allegorical tradition of their own? Let us first consider that the application of knot designs in late fifteenth-century Lombardy was not unique to gardens but included a

⁸⁸ L. Giordano, "Ditissima Tellus Ville quattrocentesche tra Po e Ticino" *Bolletino della Società Pavese di Storia Patria*, vol. 40, 1988, p. 268.

wide range of media. In addition to the embroidery work and wall décor mentioned earlier in this chapter there were: decorative frames in illuminated manuscripts, *intarsia*, *pietre dure*, book covers, initial capital letters (as, for instance, the 1499 edition of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*), inlaid floor tiles and paintings. Nowhere was the use of knot motifs in the late-fifteenth century as popular as in Lombardy.⁸⁹

Let us also consider that a number of Renaissance artists – Leonardo, Bramante, and Dürer especially – saw the practice of drawing knots as an opportunity for demonstrating artistic virtuosity. By the 1520's it was even described as a science or theory ("la scienza del far di groppi").⁹⁰ Some scholars have suspected that the practice was, perhaps, an extension of the games of mathematics and logic or *ludi geometrici* that Luca Pacioli said were practiced by Leonardo and others. Apparently, there was much interest in teaching the design of interlaces and methods for doing so. The execution of knot designs required considerable "eye-hand coordination" and elegant designs were difficult to achieve. Teaching manuals sometimes exalted the process of learning of these designs as a "virtue." For example, a manual by Giovanni Antonio Tagliente in

⁸⁹ Knot motifs were also popular in the Veneto but were mostly confined to book covers, borders and initials.

⁹⁰ In 1527, Giovanni Antonio Tagliente published a book entitled *Esempio di reccammi* in which he wrote extensively about what he called "la scienza del far di groppi." For more detailed information on the practice of designing knots as a science or theory see, C. Bombach Cappel, Leonardo Tagliente and Dürer: la scienza del far di groppi," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. IV, 1991, pp. 72-98.

1527 told artists: *venite alla academia / che ui chiama Per adornar / ui de uirtu et fama* ("come to the academy that beckons you to adorn you with virtue and fame").⁹¹ This association thrived because by the sixteenth century, calligraphy manuals and embroidery pattern books became, according to Carmen Bambach Cappel, "ripe with exhortations to virtue."⁹²

But what interest would Ludovico Sforza have had in supporting the specialized and "virtuous" practice of knot drawing? Why would he want to put this tradition on show in the *Sala delle Asse*? Even if the golden knot motif was meaningful to him on a personal level as a reference to his silk empire, he must have surely considered that, for other viewers, the *Sala's* motifs could have easily recalled broader traditions. Did Ludovico wish to fashion himself as a patron or nurturer of "virtuous" intellectual endeavors? With his problems of political legitimacy finally under control, he may have been ready to invest in a new image; that of a ruler presiding over a culturally superior and intellectually thriving empire. His reasons for commissioning the *Sala delle Asse* may very well lie in this realm of possibility. By the 1490's, informal intellectual gatherings were starting to take place at the Sforza court to discuss art, letters, and the sciences. According to Pacioli, a "praiseworthy scientific duel" was organized at the Sforza Castle on February 19, 1498, a short time after *the Sala delle Asse's* originally-scheduled September deadline. Churchmen, scholars, theologians, doctors, astrologers,

⁹¹ As translated by Carlo Pedretti and Carmen Bambach Cappel in Bambach Cappel, 1991, p. 92.

and lawyers participated, as did "Leonardo da Vinci, our Florentine compatriot, most discerning architect, engineer and inventor of new things, who with sculpture, casting and painting makes his surname come true." There is no evidence to suggest that the meeting took place in the *Sala delle Asse*, although I wonder if this might have been the case.

It may not be a coincidence that knot motifs appeared in other residences in Milan and nearby towns where intellectuals associated with the Sforza court held meetings. I mentioned the homes of Cecilia Gallerani and Gaspare Visconti earlier in this chapter. There was also the home of Giacomo and Vincenzo Atellano, two brothers who served, respectively, as a ducal squire and a key member of Ludovico's *Consiglio Segreto*. A ceiling in the Atellano home features intricate knot patterns around a series of Sforza family portraits by the artist Bernardino Luini (c. 1522).⁹³ The residence was a gift from Ludovico to the Atellani family. It is located on Corso Magenta directly across *Santa Maria delle Grazie* and some have speculated that Leonardo took residence there while working on the *Last Supper*.

Knot motifs also appear in a number of church spaces where intellectual and theological discussions could have taken place: a small room in the abbey of Viboldone

⁹² Bambach Cappel, 1991, p. 92.

⁹³ Reproductions and schematic diagrams of the ceiling are featured in L. Beltrami, Luini, 1512-1532, 1911, pp. 280, 281, and 283.

(Fig. 6.20, a ceiling in the church of the Velate, a ceiling in *San Sigismondo*, and a ceiling in a room possibly designed by Bramante in 1497: the Old Sacristy of *Santa Maria delle Grazie* (Fig. 6.21).⁹⁴

Isabella d'Este's *camerino dei nodi* is, to my knowledge, the only fifteenth-century example outside Milan, of a room featuring knot motifs. It may have been inspired by the Milanese trend, on which Isabella kept a close watch. There are also knot motifs in the arches of at least one entry-way in the Sforza Castle in Vigevano (Fig. 6.22) where Bramante and Leonardo both spent time working.

Because Ludovico Sforza's political stability after the investiture was short-lived and the French took possession of the castle in 1499, we cannot establish a reliable pattern of intended uses for the *Sala delle Asse* after 1498. Also lacking is a history of contemporary reactions and Leonardo's own opinions on the decor. Ludovico's political circumstances around the time of the commission are, however, more clearly delineated and are subject for thought. Scholars are also starting to make great strides on the history of Milan's intellectual culture in the late fifteenth-century, a field that traditionally dismissed as not worth studying because it did not fit into the well-

⁹⁴ See "La sagrestia delle Grazie ha nel suo insieme caratteristiche che preannunciano alcuni modelli del primo Bramante romano; ad esempio quelli del refettorio degli ambienti del convento di Santa Maria della Pace." A. Bruschi, *Bramante Architetto*, Bari, 1969, pp. 213 and 317.

established, Florence-centered model of Italian Renaissance culture.⁹⁵ Let us, therefore, press on with both of these subjects, remembering that the circumstances of a patron and the co-operation of local talents are, in fact, essential to a Renaissance work of art, including its content. It may very well be in this context that crucial aspects of the *Sala's* fifteenth-century history will manifest themselves.

⁹⁵ For comments on the "Florentinitis" that has plagued Milanese studies, see V. Ilardi, "The Visconti-Sforza regime in Milan: Recently Published Sources," *Renaissance Quarterly*, xxxi, 1978, pp. 341-342.

REGISTER OF DOCUMENTS

This register contains seventy-one documents pertaining to the history of the *Sala delle Asse*. Many of the documents presented here were cited and discussed in the chapters of this dissertation. Others may be useful for future studies. Whenever possible, the documents are presented in their original form through reproductions or photocopies. If a reproduction or photocopy was not available at the time this dissertation was written, a full or partial transcription was offered instead. For transcriptions borrowed from secondary sources, the source is cited in bold in the bibliography section under each document. If none of the citations in a bibliography section appears in bold, it means that the transcription used was my own. For the sake of brevity, bibliographic sources are noted only with the author's last name and date of publication. Complete references may be found in the main bibliography section of this dissertation. None of the documents in this register have been translated from their original Italian or Latin to avoid problems in meaning that could occur through the interpretative process of translation. The documents are arranged in chronological order and grouped by year. A brief description of each document's contents serves as an introduction. Complete archival references have also been provided. The archives that were consulted in compiling this register are as follows: Archivio di Stato (Milan), Archivio Luca Beltrami (Milan), Biblioteca d'Arte Castello Sforzesco, Biblioteca della

Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici (Milan), Zentralarchiv der
Staatlichen Museen (Berlin).

LIST OF DOCUMENTS IN THIS REGISTER

1468

- *November 27, 1468* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Classe Architetti*, letter, November 27, 1468.
-

1469

- *May 29, 1469* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, May 29, 1469, fol. 335, t.^o
► *December 1, 1469* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, Reg.^o 91, fol. 68
► *December 4, 1469* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, Reg.^o 91, fol. 75
-

1471

- *December, 1471* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, fogli staccati, 1472, fol. 362
► *December 15, 1471* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, fogli staccati, 1472, fol. 362
-

1472

- *July, 1472* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registro*, Miss. N.^o 105, fol. 95
► *1472* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Classe Belle Arti*
► *1472* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 96, fasc. 1
-

1473

- *April, 1473* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, fascicolo staccato, Classe Belle Arti
► *September, 1473* Bartolomeo da Cremona to the Duke
► *September 21, 1473* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Sezione storica*, Architetti, Lettera, September 21, 1472
► *October 20, 1473* Letter from Bartolomeo da Cremona to the Duke
► *December 7, 1473* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Sezione storica*, Architetti, Lettera, December 7, 1473
-

1474

- *1474* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cat. 96, fasc. 1
► *July 27, 1474* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registri delle Missive*, n. 111 A, n. 111 B and n. 135.
-

1476

- ▶ *Before December 1476* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 96, fasc. 1
 - ▶ *Before 1476* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 96
-

1482

- ▶ *After 1482* Codex Atlanticus, fol. 308 b.
 - ▶ *After 1482* Codex Atlanticus, 328 b.
-

1490

- ▶ *Between 1490-1498* Institut de France, Cod. I, fol. 138 v.
 - ▶ *After January, 1490* Biblioteca Estense, Modena, *Raccolta di varii monumenti istorici e varie narrazioni*, "Feste in Milano 1490," Cod. Ital., n. 521, a J. 4, 21.
 - ▶ *June 8, 1490* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi 102*, fasc. 34 "Leonardo da Vinci"
-

1495

- ▶ *March 24, 1495*, Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Ingegneri*.
 - ▶ *May 14, 1495*, Archivio di Stato, Milan, Reg. 199, fol. 204.
-

1496

- ▶ *June 8, 1496* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 101
 - ▶ *June 24, 1496* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi - Pittori*
 - ▶ *November 12, 1496* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi- Pittori*
-

1497

- ▶ *March 28, 1497* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi- Pittori*
 - ▶ *March 28, 1497* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi- Pittori*
 - ▶ *June 29, 1497* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registro Ducale*, fol. 162
 - ▶ *1497* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Fondo Religione*, parte antica: Conventi, cart.a 547.
 - ▶ *November 9, 1497* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi-Pittori*
-

1498

- ▶ *March 22, 1498* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, fasc. 34.
 - ▶ *April 20, 1498* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, fasc. 34.
 - ▶ *April 21, 1498* Archivio di Stato, Milan, Classe Belle Arti, *Autografi*, 102, fasc. 34
 - ▶ *April 23, 1498* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, fasc. 34.
 - ▶ *June 16, 1498* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cat. 97, Registro Ducale, 123.
-

1499

- ▶ *April 26, 1499* Archivio Civico (see C. Amoretti, *Vita di Leonardo*)
 - ▶ *April 26, 1499* Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, f. 34.
-

After 1499

- ▶ *After 1499* Cod. L., fol. I r., Institut de France, Paris
-

1513

- ▶ *April 30, 1513* Archivio di Stato, Florence, Delib. Op Palazzo, filza 25, fol. 24
-

1550

- ▶ *1550* Giorgio Vasari, "Lionardo da Vinci Pittore e Scultore Fiorentino," *Vite degli architetti pittori et scultori di Giorgio Vasari aretino in Firenze MDL.*, 1550.
-

1584

- ▶ *1584* Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato della Pittura*, 1584, p. 430.
-

1661

- ▶ *1661* Relatione generale della visita et consegna della fabbrica castello di Milano. Fatta dall' infrascritti ingegneri Regii camerari, per ordine dell' illustriss. Magistrato delle Regie ducali entrate ordinarie dello stato di Milano, l' anno M.D.C.LXI, Milan, 1661.
-

1893

► *December 9, 1893*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 9.12.1893, NL Boche 1893.

1894

► *March 20, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 20.3.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *March 27, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 27.3.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *April 10, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 10.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *April 11, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 11.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *April 12, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 12.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *April 18, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 18.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *April 19, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 19.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

► *May 29, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 29.5.1894, NL Boche 3809.

1895

► *January 1, 1895*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

► *January 4, 1895 and April 1, 1895*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

► *January 8, 1895*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

► **January 10, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.

► **February 5, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.

► **January 12, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.

► **October 24, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.

1896

► **November 4, 1896**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.

1899

► **May 20, 1899**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.

1901

► **March 6, 1901**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.

► **July 28, 1901**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.

1902

► **April 22, 1902**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.

► **May 3, 1902**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco* 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.

► **May 6, 1902**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

► **May 7, 1902**

Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, *Corrispondenza Vinciana*, RB, C IV.16, fol. 21-26.

► **May 7, 1902**

Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, *Corrispondenza Vinciana*, RB, C IV.16, fol. 27-29.

► **June 29, 1902**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

1468

► **November 27, 1468**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Classe Architetti*, letter, November 27, 1468.

Earliest known mention of the *Sala delle Asse*. Designated here not as *Sala delle Asse* but as *Camera della Torre*. Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza writes to his official court architect, Bartolomeo Gadio, to ask about a clock he had forgotten to take on his trip and mistakenly left in the *Camera della Torre*.

...quello horologio è in la camera de la Torre, cioè quello che altre volte porta dietro.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 17.**

1469

► *May 29, 1469*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, May 29, 1469, fol. 335, t.^o

Galeazzo Maria Sforza sends instructions to Bartolomeo Gadio for painting the *Sala delle Asse*. Once again, as in the document dated November 27, 1468, the *Sala delle Asse* is referred to as *Camera de la Torre*. Galeazzo Maria asks that the room be painted in red with the device of the *cimera nel foco* alternating with that of *de li razi*, two devices which he and his wife Bona di Savia favored. He also asks that the *cimiero* be painted in the vault but bigger in size.

... la pictura se ha ad fare nella Saleta, Camera de la Torre, et Sala:

La Saletta del Castello di Porta Zobia a Milano sij depinta tutta a zigli nel campo celesto, mettendo de le stelle tra l'uno ziglio e l'altro, e nella volta di sopra siano li zigli grandi con le stelle ut supra.

La Camera della Torre, sij tutta rossa depincta con le secchie e il cimero nel foco, e tra l'uno zimero e l'altro gli siano razi; nella volta de sopra siano li zimieri grandi.

La Sala sij verde, depincta a fazoli e nela volta de fazolo l'arco o sij nivola: e nela volta de dicta sala de sopra siano li fazoli grandi con l'arco ut supra.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 18.**

► *December 1, 1469*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, Reg.^o 91, fol. 68

Galeazzo Maria Sforza orders Bartolomeo Gadio to paint the *Saletta* and *la Sala Verde*. Luca Beltrami has suggested that because the *Sala delle Asse* (or *Camera della Torre*) is not mentioned in this document, it means that the *Sala* was painted sometime between May and December of 1469, in accordance to the instructions in the May 29th letter.

...et per questa prima fiata non se curano che li colori sieno fini, perchè un'altra volta la faremo dipingere più ad nostro modo.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 19.**

► **December 4, 1469**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, Reg.^o 91, fol. 75

Galeazzo Maria Sforza writes to Bartolomeo Gadio asking him to paint the rooms next to "the tower;" the bigger one in green and with *li fazoli* and the other with *scarlioni bianchi e morelli*. He specifies that his consort's rooms are painted in the same manner.

...in quella forma et modo che stano nel paramento dela nostra Ill.ma consorte
quale troveray in la guardaroba sua.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 20.**

1471

► *December, 1471*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, fogli staccati, 1471, fol. 362

Galeazzo Maria Sforza orders that a passage be opened between his room -located above the "other one with *asse*"- and the treasury. The letter, therefore, signals the existence of more than one room in Galeazzo's private apartments with "asse."

...uno uscio che andasse da la camera de Sua S.ia cioè da quella chè fata de novo, suxo l'altra delle asse, in la Camera del Tesoro, e quel uscio se facesse de sarizo in modo chello fosse forte.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 20.**

► *December 15, 1471*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, fogli staccati, 1472, fol. 362

Bartolomeo Gadio reports on the opening of the passage ordered by Galeazzo Maria a few days earlier.

...domani comincierò ad fare rompere el muro, et torò tanti spezapreda che rompano dicto muro, et ordinario li sarizi vano a fare dicto uscio.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 20.**

1472

► July, 1472

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registro*, Miss. N.º 105, fol. 95

Galeazzo Maria Sforza gives instructions to Bartolomeo Gadio for paneling the room above the *Sala delle Asse*. The *Sala* is here referred to as *Camera deli Ducali*. The term *dei Ducali* was used -in addition to the name *Camera della Torre-* under the period of Galeazzo Maria due to the large devices of the *cimero* painted in the vault along with the doves. The work ordered in this letter may not have taken place before 1473 because payment for the *asse* was only dispensed in April of 1473 (see letters from 1473 in this Register).

...al fodrare de asse la Camera ch'è sopra la Camera deli Ducali in Castello, siamo contenti tu la facci foderare et solare come sta quella de sotto, ricordandoti che gli facci fare in cima la columbina con el razo, come sta quella de sotto...

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 21.**

► 1472

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Classe Belle Arti*

List compiled by Galeazzo Maria for decorations to be painted in the Castle. The list includes instructions for painting a room next to the *Sala delle Asse*, here referred to the "tower" room.

Lista de le cose vole il nostro Ill.mo Signore se dipingono in Castello ecc...

...item, che la Camera che sta apresso, alla torre, sia tutta indorata, salvo che in cima si depincto un Leone grande con le secchie.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 22.**

► 1472

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 96, fasc. 1

List of estimates for painting *la sala, saletta, et camare quali sono desopra ala sala verde nel castello di Milano.*

Bibliography:

1473

► *April, 1473*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Missive*, fascicolo staccato, Classe Belle Arti

Order to dispense payment for paneling the *Camera della Torre* and other work.

... spendere in far fare la Cappella quale va depincta quì nel Castello de Milano,
et far foderare d'asse la Camera della Torre et altri lavori...

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 21.**

► *September, 1473*

Letter from Bartolomeo da Cremona to the Duke reporting his intention to change the paneling around the windows in the *Camera della Torre* and two adjacent rooms.

Volemo che alle finestre dele camare ove [...] abitamo nel [...] alla camera della
torre et alle due proxime che sono verso la sala dipinta fari fare le ante nove con
li carbenazi novi similmente faraz ad quella camera dove dormino nel castello de
Vigevano, et cosi nela proxima ed quella vs ne la guarda camera.

Bibliography:

► *September 21, 1473*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Sezione storica*, Architetti, Lettera, September 21, 1472

Letter from Bartolomeo Gadio to Gian Galeazzo Sforza describing the installation of *asse* in the *Sala delle Asse*, here referred to as *Camera della Torre*.

...altre volte la V. Ill.ma Sig.a me impose facessi solare et fodrare d'asse tutta la
Camera della Torre è in questo vostro Castello, così le lunette, sive voltayole,
come lo celo quale è in volta. Et restandogli solum a fodrare lo celo, come po
habere veduto V.a S.a andando in dicto celo circha ducento busi, per mettere li
calastrini per inchiodare le asse a dicto celo...

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 21.**

► **December 7, 1473**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Sezione storica*, Architetti, Lettera, December 7, 1473

Letter from Bartolomeo Gadio to Gian Galeazzo Sforza estimating that the installation of *asse* in the *Camera della Torre* will be finished later in the week.

...ceterum spero che questa presente settimana debia essere fornita de fodrare
tutta la camera della Torre, et secondo che mi è refferto da quelli che lhano
veduta, chè una bella cosa et piacerà a V.a S.a.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 21.**

1474

► 1474

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cat. 96, fasc. 1

Order for *la pictura che se ha ad fare nel muro castelano de la sala de Milano*.

Bibliography:

► July 27, 1474

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registri delle Missive*, n. 111 A, n. 111 B and n. 135.

Entry from the diaries of Cicco Simonetta, Galeazzo Maria's Ducal Secretary. Simonetta reports of an audience that the Duke granted a cardinal in the upper *camera de le asse* in his Castle in Monza.

Ex Modoetia Mediolanum, die mercurii XXVIII julii 1474.

Questa sira, circha le XXII hore, el Signore se partite da Monza a l'imprevista, con doy o tri de li suoy et venne ad Milano.

Questa matina, el reverendo monsignor... d l'Abayo, vescovo de Aste, ha visitato l'Excellentia del Signore, in nome del reverendissimo Cardinale de Rohanno; et, presentate le littere de credenza, el Signore gli ha dato audientia ne la camera de le asse de sopra, nel castello de Monza; et nella espositione sua ha referto alcune cose de importanza. Da poy, ha tolto licentia et andato ad casa sua, in Aste.

Bibliography: **Natale, 1951-1953, p. 199.**

1476

► *Before December 1476*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 96, fasc. 1

Order for *pinctura se ha da fare nel Castello de Milano*.

Bibliography:

► *Before 1476*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 96

List of things that the Duke wishes to be painted in his castle and especially in the *sala grande sopra la sala verde e nella saletta e nelle camere contigue*.

Bibliography:

1482

► *After 1482*

Codex Atlanticus, fol. 308 b

Leonardo da Vinci writes to Ludovico Sforza mentioning financial problems as an excuse for not being able to complete work already in progress. It seems that Leonardo, "having to earn [his] living," was "forced to interrupt the work and to attend small matters."

Assai mi rincresce d'essere i neciessità ma piu mi dole che quella sia causa dello interropere il desiderio mio, il quale è sempre disposto a ubidir vostra Eccellentia; forse che vostra Eccellentia no commise altro a messer Gualtieri crededo che io avessi dinari...

E mi rincresce assai che tu m'abbi ritrovato in neciessità, e che l'avere io a guadaniare il vitto, m'abbi a interronpere...

Assai mi rincresce che l'avere a guadagniare il viutto m'abbia forzato interrompere l'opera e di soddisfare ad alcuni piccoli, del seguitare l'opera che già vostra Signoria mi commise; Ma spero in breve avere guadagniato tanto che potrò soddisfare ad animo riposato a vostra Eccielenza, alla quale mi raccomado, e se vostra Signoria credesse ch'io avessi dinari, quella s'ingannerebbe; ò tenuto 6 boche 56 mesi e ò avuto 50 ducati.

Bibliography: **Richter, § 1344**; Codex Atlanticus, fol. 308 b.

► *After 1482*

Codex Atlanticus, 328 b

Leonardo da Vinci writes to Ludovico Sforza and refers to a "commission for painting the *camerini*."

E se mi dato piu alcuna commissione d'alcuna del premio del mio seruito, perchè no so da essere da... cose assegnationi, perchè loro anno intante di pe... tie che bene possono assettare piu di me... no la mia arte, la quale voglio mutare ed... dao qualche vestimento si oso una somma... Signore, conosciedo io la mete di vostra Eccellentia essere occupa... il ricordare a vostra Signoria le mie piccole e l'arti messe in siletio... che 'l mio taciere fusse causa di fare isdegniare vostra Signori... la mia vita ai vostri seruiti mi tiè continuamente parato a ubidire... del

cauallo no dirò niete, perchè cognosco i tepi... a vostra Signoria com' io restai avere il salario di 2 anni del... co due maestri i quali cotinuo stettero a mio salario e spesa... che al fine mi trovai avanzato detta opera circa 15 lire mo... opere di fama per le quali io potessi mostrare a quelli che verranno ch'io sono sta... sa per tutto ma io no so, dove io potessi spedere le mia opere a per... l'avere io atteso a guadagnarmi la vita... per non essere informato io che essere io mi trova... si ricorda della commissione del dipigniere i camerini... portavo a vostra Signoria solo richiededo a quella...

Bibliography: **Richter § 1345**; Codex Atlanticus, 328 b; Beltrami, 1919, pp. 41-42, no. 73.

1490

► *Between 1490-1498*

Institut de France, Cod. I, fol. 138 v.

Two examples of allegorical representations for Ludovico Sforza, *il Moro*, invented by Leonardo da Vinci.

Il moro in figura di ventura coi capelli e panni e mani innanzi a Messer Gualtieri con riverente atto lo pigli per i panni da basso venendogli della parte dinnanzi.

Ancora la povertà in figura spaventevole corre dietro a un giovanetto: il Moro lo copra col lembo della veste e colla verga dorata minacci tale mostro...

Bibliography: **Beltrami. 1919, pp. 28-29, no. 43.**

► *After January, 1490*

Biblioteca Estense, Modena, *Raccolta di varii monumenti istorici e varie narrazioni, "Feste in Milano 1490,"* Cod. Ital., n. 521, a J. 4, 21.

Description of the Festa del Paradiso that took place on January 13, 1490 in honor of the Duchess Isabella of Aragon and Gian Galeazzo Maria. According to Edmondo Solmi, the feast was held in the *sala verde superiore*.

Hordine de la festa et rapresentatione, che ha factto fare lo Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re L[udovico] in honore et gloria de la Ill.ma et Ex.ma M.a duchessa Isabella, consorte de lo ex.mo et felicissimo S.re Jo: Ghaleaz[zo] Maria sfortia divis[simo], al presente duca di Milano, e per darli solazo et piacere: la quale festa et reapresentatione s' è factta mercordì a dì XIII de zenaro 1490: la quale è stata tanto bene ordinata et conductta, et con tanto scilento et bono modo, quanto al mondo sia possibile a dire et exprimere con lingua, como evidentemente qui de sotto se vederà per hordine; et prima dirò de la sala et adobamento suo, dove è stata facta ditta festa et reapresentatione.

La sala dove è stata factta ditt[a] festa et representatione è nel Chastello de porta Zobia, è quella che è in capo della scalla, che se va suso a chavallo, che è dinanzi a le Chamere del preditto ex.mo duca de Milano, et dove è dentro la cappella dove aude messa la sua ex. La quale sale haveva un cielo de sopra, da uno capo all' altro, factto de verdura a feste, et zascuno festo haveva dentro la sua arma, le

quale erano tutte le ducale et de quisti Ill.mo S.ri Sfortischi et de la sagra M.ta del Re Ferdinando. Atorno atorno el cielo de ditta sala era una cornise a verdura pur con ditte feste et arme. Le mure de sopto da dicta cornixe erano tutte coperte de rasi con certi quadriti de tella, dove era dopinto certe ystorie antiche et molte cosede quelle che fece lo Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re duca Francesco.

Como se zungeva dentro in ditta salla, a mano manca era uno tasello, el quale tochava terra, che era lungo circa xx braza, et andava sempre montando a modo uno monte fino appresso el tasello, a tanto che se potesse per un gran homo in cima stare in piedi, et de grado in grado haveva li suoi scalini a fine che li gentilomini, li quali li erano suso, potesseno tutti ben vedere, el quale ponte era benissimo adobato de tapezarie: dinanti al ditto tasello, lontano circa x braza, era una sbarra de asse alta circa due braza, in capo de la quale era uno taseletto, dove steva li sonatori, el quale era molto bene adornato. Nel mezo de ditta sala, a amno manca, era uno tribunale de tanta eminentia che se montava a tri salini: el quale era coperto de tapidi et così li scalini con el suo capocello et sponde a la dovisa ducale de brochado d'argento, cioè bianco et morello factto a quarti. Apreso al ditto tribunale era scanne et banche de ogni lato per altri S.ri consiglieri et magistrati. Apreso al ditto tribunale era certi cosini, a man manca, per la Ill.ma Madre, M.a Bianca e M.a Anna et altre S.re et gran M.e. A riscontro del ditto tribunale era preparato de banche et de cosini, dove haveva a stare tutte le altre zentildonne et cortexane.

In capo de ditta sala, dove era l'altare, era il Paradixo, el quale haveva dinanti uno panno de raso che non se poteva vedere cosa alchuna, dinanti al quale panno era alchune banche, dove haveva a stare le livree de le mascare, che comparivano suso la festa. Como zagasse el Paradixo non ne dirò, riservando a farne mentione al luocho suo.

De tri zorni avanti la sopra ditta festa, questo ex.mo s. duca de Milano fece invitare circa cento damiselle et gentildonne de le più belle et più ricche de questa città. Et così tutti li Horati, Consiglieri, Magistrati et Gentilomeni per ozi a hore xx, tutti vestiti de colore honorevolmente: li quali al ditto tempo tutti se recolseno a la Camera de lo Ex.mo S. m. L[udovico], et tutte le donne a la Camera de M.a duchessa Isabella, dove etiam se redusse la Ill.ma et Ex.ma M. duchessa Bona, M.a Anna et M.a Bianca.

Recholto le brigade, lo ex.mo S. m. L[udovico] venne fuora del Chamarino suo, vestito a la spagnola, in questo modo: uno vestito de veluto piano murelo, fodrato de gibelini a la spagnola, con una capa de panno negro a la spagnola, fodrata tutta de brocado de horo in campo bianco così el capino. Et andò di sopra a la Chamera de lo ex.mo duca de Milano con la sopra ditta compagnia. El qual ex.mo duca era vestito de brocato de horo rizo molto bellissimo, in campo cremexino: el quale haveva al collo uno grandissimo balasso et ne la bretta uno gran diamante in puncta con una grossissima perla. Stati così un poco lo ex.mo S. M. L[udovico], lo Ill.mo S. m. Ghalez[zo] et alchuni consiglieri andarno a livare de Chamera le predilette Ex.me M.me duchessa Bona, M.a duchessa Isabella, M.a B[iancha] et M.a Anna, et veneno ne la camera del S.re duca et tutti de compagnia andorno in sala, et homini et donne furno aseptati a li luochi suoi, secondo el loro grado. Nel mezo del tribunale a man drita se aseptò M.a duchessa Bona, el duca de Milano apreso: M.a duchessa Isabella et poi lo ex.mo S.re m. L[udovico]: apreso la prefactta M.a duchessa Bona era lo horatore del Papa, lo horatore venetiano, et lo horatore fiorentino: a man manca apreso lo ex.mo S. m. L[udovico] era lo horatore regio, lo horatore del duca de Chalabria et lo Ill.mo et ex.o S. m. Ghalez[zo] da Sanseverino: le preditte M.e M.a Bianca et M.a Anna se aseptorno a li loro luochi, apreso el tribunale, como è ditto de sopra ne lo adobamento de la sala.

Aseptato ogno homo, se comenzò a sonare per li pifari et tromboni. Sonato un pocho che haveno ditti pifari, furno factti restare de sonare: et fu comandato a certi sonatori de tamborini, che sonassero certe danze napolitane.

La Ill.ma et Ex.ma M.a duchessa Isabella, per dare principio a la triumphante sua festa, acompagnata da lo horatore regio, discese zoso del tribunale, vestita a la spagnola, con un mantello di seta bianca sopra la zuba, quale era de brochato d'oro in campo bianco, adonixato d'altri coluri, como se costuma a l'usanza spagnola, con gran numero de zoglie et perle intorno: la quale era bella et pulita che pareva un sole: et andò nel mezo de la sala, dinanti al tribunale, dove venne tre sue Chamerere, et ballò due danze: et retornò al luocho suo: et finì de sonare li tamburini.

Stato così un poco, venne otto maschare vestite a la Spagnola, quattro da homo et quattro da femina, acompagnati insieme uno homo et una donna; li quali erano vestiti con cape factte a quarti, mezo brochato d'oro et mezo veluto pian verde; et le donne spagnole erano tutte vestite di seta, con li suoi mantelli de varii

coluri, con molte zoglie intorno. Li quali se apresentorno dinanti a M.a Isabella duchessa, et li disseno alchune parole da parte de la regina et del Re de Spagna, che furno, in substantia, che havendo inteso le loro M.tà de la triomphante festa, che faceva sua Ex., li havevano mandati ad honorarla. Ditti tamburini comenzorno a sonare, et ditti spagnoli et spagnole comenzorno a balare insieme, et balorno due balli molto bene et pulitamente. Finito el ballo, furno posti a sedere, secondo è ditto de sopra, e fu poi comandato a li pifari che sonasero, et le altre mascare, che erano venute suso la festa, balorno uno ballo overo più d' uno, come se costuma qui de farne tri e quattro de balli l' uno dreto a l' altro.

Finito ditto ballo, venne quattro maschare vestite a la polacha, con caviare in testa lunghete arizate, con una grilandeta d' erba verde in testa con le pene de scargeto factte a punta lunga. Et se apresentorno a la Ill.ma M.a duchessa Isabella, et li feceno l'ambasata de la substantia dicta de sopra, che havendo inteso la M.tà del Re et de la Regina de Polachia de la fama et gloria sua et de la bella festa, che la faceva, li havevano mandati ad honorarla. Furno posti a sedere apresso li Spagnoli, et se comenzò a sonare, et le maschere balorno uno ballo.

Finito il ballo, venne circa sei chioppe de mascare, con dui moriti inanti che portavano le seminate inanti a ditte mascare, le quale mascare, erano tutte vestiti a la ungharescha molto honorevolmente, con turche de brochato d' oro rizo et de seta, con le caviare in testa, con le grilandete d' erba suso li capilli, et parte con le scophie de seta con molte zoglie. Le quale se apresentorno dinanti a la Ill.ma M.a duchessa Isabela, et li feceno una ambasata da parte del Re et de la regina de Ungaria, como li havevano mandati ad honorare la festa sua. Furno messi a sedere apreso a le altre mascare, et se fece balare le altre mascare uno ballo.

El quale finito, zunse uno horatore del Turcho con in compagnia a cavallo, vestì secondo a la turchescha, molto honorevolmente, el quale con li compagni smontò dinanti la tribunale con una maza in mano, et li suoi servi, vestiti a la turchescha, menorno via li chavalli, li quali anchora loro erano vestiti al turchescha, che era uno pulito et bello vedere. El quale ambasciatore fece intendere a la Ill.ma M.a duchesa Isabella, como el grande turcho suo S.re non era usitato a mandare ad honorare feste de cristiani et maxime in Italia, ma per havere inteso de la fama, grandeza et gloria sua, et de la triomphante festa che la faceva fare, lo haveva mandato ad honorarla. El quale horatore fu posto a sedere in terra suso li cosini, come se costuma in loro paixi. Fu comisso a li sonatori che sonaseno, et così se ballò per le maschare più balli.

In questo mezo lo ex.mo S. m. L[udovico] se parti de suso la festa et se mutò de panni, et retornò con una turcha de horo tirata, la quale era molto bellissima.

Finito li balli, venne uno chavalaro de lo imperatore con el segnale suo: el quale notificò a la predictta ex.ma M.a duchessa Isabella, como la M.ta de lo imperatore mandava alchuni d suoi S.ri et baroni ad honorare la sua festa. La quale li disse che venissero. Et così venne quattro chioppe de maschare, vestiti tutti de panno verde, et così le calze con certi mongini facti a la todescha fino a la polpa de la gamba, le quale erano tutte tagliuzate, et sotto v'era brochato d' oro, che faceva uno bello vedere, in testa havevano Chaviare lunghe arizate, como porta li todischi, con uno retorto sopra ditti chapilli: nel quale dinanzi havevano penne de scargette, con uno balasso dentro ne la fronte, et con le scarpe da le punte lunghe. Et se apresentorno una littera, la quale M.a dette al Chavalaro, che glie la ligesse, per essere scripta in todesco, et che gli la spianasse in taliano. El quale la spianò. Et ditti S.ri et baroni, per interpreto, li fecero intendere, come havendo intesto lo imperatore suo S.re de la bella et magnanima festa, che faceva sua Ex., li havevano mandati ad honorarla et a magnificarla. Finita la ambasata furno aseptati a sedere suso li scalini del tribunale, dinanti a la sua Ex. Tutte le mascare, che erano venute li, li fu comandato balasseno, et così faceno per una grossa hora.

Finito el ballo, zunse uno Chavalaro de la M.ta del Re de Fransa, el quale notificò a la preditta M.a duchessa Isabella, che la M.tà del Re et de la Reina de Franza mandavano alchune sue damiselle et baroni a la sua Ex. Li comisse che venisseno et, così stando un poco veneno: che furno quattro mascare, vestite da homo a la francese, con turche de veluto piano negro, con cadene d' oro a la traversa, como è quelle da cane, le quale havevano a braze zaschuno di loro una donna, vestita a la francese de veluto piano negro con le code lunghe fodrate de armelini, con alchune putine vestite a la francese, che li portavano la coda. In capo ditte donne havevano pezi de drappo negro, con grandissimo numero de perle intorno grossissime et de gran valuta, con quattro sonatori, inanti da tamborini et staphette, vesiti de tafetto, et tutti coperti ditti vestiti de trimolanti, li quali sonavano molto bene, et facevano uno bello vedere et audire. Inanti a ditti sonatori era Piero da Sorano con uno vestito et calce, tutti de trimolanti carichi, con uno scapuzino intesta caricho anchora lui de trimolanti, con due penne negre, cha andava balando et saltando con li suoi salti soliti. Ditti franzosi feceno intendere a la preditta Ill.ma et ex.ma duchessa Isabella, como la sagra M.tà del

Re et de la Regina de Franza haveva inteso de la nobilissima festa, che la faceva fare, et che per honorarla et exaltarla li haveano mandati a quella. Furno factti sonare li suoi sonatori, et balorno dui balli a la francese insieme con le sue donne. Finiti li balli furno posti a sedere suso li scalini del tribunale, apreso a li horatori et baroni de lo imperatore.

La Ill.ma M.a Ixabella comandò che ogni homo balasse, et così poi ogni homo balò mesedatamente insieme spagnoli, polachi, ungari, todischi et franzosi et altre mascare, et così se balò multi balli.

Suso le XXIIJ hore, venne in suso ditta festa circa otto maschare, con cape de raxo, le quale havevano solamente le Chamise suso el cibone, et comenzorno a balare a la pina: li quali erano actissimi et molto suso la vita, li quali feceno molte partite de cavriole, scambiiti et salti, che per un pezo feceno uno bello vedere.

Finito el ballo, la prefecta Ex.ma M.a duchesa Isabella comandò che alchune sue Camarere balesseno, le quale feceno alchuni balli fra loro donne a la napolitana overo spagnola molto gentilmente.

Finiti ditti balli lo ex.mo S. m. L[udovico] comandò a li spagnoli che balasseno con le sue donne spagnole, et così balorno due balli a la spagnola. Di poi comandò a li franzosi che balasseno con le sue donne francese, li quali feceno duo balli a la franzosa, e perchè de quisti dui balli glie ne era uno che piaque molto a la sua Ex., quella volse lo facesseno due altre volte.

Finito ditti balli se fece restare li soni, che era circa hore XXIIIJ 1/29 et se de' principio a la representatione.

El Paradixo era factto a la similitudine de uno mezo ovo, el quale dal lato dentro era tutto messo a horo, con grandissimo numero de lume rontro de stelle, con certi fessi dove steva tutti li sette pianiti, secondo el loro grado alti e bassi. A torno l' orlo de sopra del ditto mezo tondo era li XIJ signi, con certi lumi dentro dal vedro, che facevano un galante et bel vedere: nel quale Paradixo era molti canti et soni molto dolci et suavi.

Trete certi schioppi, et ad uno tratto cade zoso el panno de razo che era dinanti al Paradixo, dinanti al quale remase uno sarzo fino a tanto che uno putino vestito a

mo' de Angelo have annuntiato la ditta representatione. Livro de dire le parole cade a terra ditto sarzo, et fu tanto sì grande ornamento et splendore che parse vedere nel principio uno naturale paradixò, et così ne lo audito, per li suavi sono et canti che v'erano dentro. Nel mezo del quale era Jove con li altri pianiti apreso, secondo el loro grado. Cantato et sonato che se have un pezo, se fece pore scilentio ad ogni casa; et Jove con alchune accommodate et bone parole rengратиò el summo Idio che li avesse conceduto de creare al mondo una così bella, legiadra, formosa et virtuosa donna come era la Ill.ma et ex.ma M.a duchessa Isabella.

Apollo, che era disopto, se ma(ra)vigliò de le parole che disse Jove, et se dolse che avesse creato al mondo una più bella et formosa creatura di lui: Giove li respose che non se ne doveva meravigliare perchè, quando lo creò lui, se riservò de potere creare una più bella et formosa creatura di lui, et che fin qui la haveva reservato per concederlo et donare a la Ex.ma M.a duchesa Isabella, et che voleva discendere in terra per exaltarla et gloriarla. Et così discese del Paradiso con tutti li altri pianiti, et andò in vetta de uno monte, et de grado in grado ditti pianiti se li poseno a sedere apreso. Come furno tutti aseptati, mandò per Mercurio a noctificare a M.a preditta, como era disceso in terra per honorarla et exaltarla et magnificarla et per donarli le tre gratie et acompagnarla da le sette virtù cioè iustitia, temperanza, forteza et altre sue compagne; et così Mercurio andò da sua ex., et con molte bone parole li noctificò la venuta de Giove in terra; et poi retornò a Giove la risposta. Audito questo li 6 pianiti, et inteso la raxone perchè era venuto in terra, tutti a uno a uno rengратиorno Jove de la revelatione che li haveva factto de una tanto bella et virtuosa donna che haveva creato al mondo, confermandolo ne la sua volontà de doni li voleva fare, et zashuno de loro, per hordine, li offerse la virtù et posanza sua. Giove comandò a Mercurio che andasse per le tre gratie et per le sette virtù. Ne lo andare che el fece, Apollo se dolse a Giove, et concluxe se pur haveva deliberato de farli un tanto dono che a lui concedesse gratia che el fusse quello che glie le presentase; et Giove li concesse la Gratia. Retornò Mercurio con le tre gratie ligate in un caestro con sette nimphe et sette virtù, le quale nimphe havevano zashuna de loro una torza bianca in mano. Giove comandò Apollo che le menase a la Ill.ma et Ex.ma duchesa Isabela, et per sua parte gliene facesse un presente. Apolo andò da M.a et con molte parole dolce et suave ie apresentò a la sua Ex. per parte de Giove et ditte le parole li donò uno libretto, nel quale libretto era Alchuni soniti factti in laude et gloria de potentati suoi de li horatori, che li erano presenti, et così de loro proprii, et a tutti ditti horatori, che li erano presenti, et così de loro proprii, et

a tutti ditti horatori ne fu dato un oper zaschuno de la sua ex. Le tre gratie comenzorno a cantare, cantò le sette virtù in laude pur de sua ex., et acompagnorno quella in camera insieme con le tre gratie. Et fu finito la festa; la quale fu tanto bella et bene hordinata quanto al mondo sia possibile a dire: di che tutti quilli che si sono trovati presenti a vedere ditta festa ne hanno a refferire gratie al nostro S.re Dio et a la Ex.mo S. M. L[udovico], che li ha dato tanta gratia et piacere di havere visto una tanta festa così triumphante et bella.

Bibliography: **Solmi, 1924, p. 8-14.**

► **June 8, 1490**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi 102*, fasc. 34 "Leonardo da Vinci"

Postscript in a letter written from Ludovico Sforza to Bartolomeo Gadio asking him to summon *Magistro* Leonardo da Vinci to Milan.

Postscripta. Rechedendo ancora ancora M[agist]ro Leonardo fiorentino e M[agist]ro Io. Antonio Amadeo, operate che vengano loro.
Dat. Ut in litteris.

Idem. Ludovicus Maria Sfortia etc.

Bibliography:

► **June 10, 1490**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Duomo di Milano*

Bartolomeo Gadio's response to Ludovico Sforza's request to summon Leonardo da Vinci to his court.

Mag.ro Leonardo Fiorentino me ha dicto sarà sempre aparechiato omen volta sij richiesto: sichè como se invii el senese venra anchora luy. Mag.ro Jo Antonio Amadeo dubito non li potrà essere, perchè se ritrova sul laco de Como, per impresa de non picol momento: non dimeno quando V.a Ex.a volesse omnino chel li fusse, se potrà chel venga. Recommandandomen a quelle de continuo.
Mediolani x junij 1490.
Ser.or Bartholomeus Chalcus.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, p. 31, no. 49.**

1495

► *May 14, 1495*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, Reg. 199, fol. 204.

Ludovico Sforza from Vigevano to Ambrosino Ferrari, Ducal commissioner of works, with instructions for preparing the *camerini* and the passage between the *camerini* and the *Camera della Torre*.

Ambrosino Ferrario Commissario generali laborer.

Perchè la septimana che vene se ritroveremo ad Milano non mancherai de fare talmente che troviamo forniti li nostri camerini et che luschio per il quale se andera de la camera de la torre in dicti camerini, sii facto et fornito nel modo hara ad stare.

Viglevani 2 may 1495

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1998, p. 492.**

► *March 24, 1495*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Ingegneri*.

Ambrogio de Ferrari informs Ludovico Sforza on the progress of the work on the *camerini* behind the *Camera de la Torre*. He mentions painting the exterior of the *camerini a quadranzini* (with a square pattern).

Ill.mo et Ex.mo s. mio

In executione de littere dela Ex.tia vostra [...] Le gronde de camerini de dre la Camera de la Torre se v`a dreto depingendo, et gi`a glie dato el bixio et sef ara alla similitudine de quello de rocha. La parete de for a via faro parendo alla ex.tia di depingere a quadranzini che farano bel vedere, veder`o se in milano se atrouano le Collone per voltare el Transito dela piancheta et Atrouandoli non li mancaro de fare che la signoria v. lo atrouara alla venuta sua voltato et Coperto [...].

Mediolani, die 24 martij, 1495.

fidelis servus Ambrosius de Ferraris

Bibliography: Beltrami, 1894, p. 491; Beltrami. 1919, p 39, no. 67; **Villata, 1999, p. 346, n. 21.**

1496

► **June 8, 1496**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 101

Ludovico Sforza writes to Guido Antonio Arcimboldi in Venice asking him to speak with *magistro Petro Petrusino* to convince him to come to Milan to work at the Castle.

D.o Archiepiscopo Mediolani. Mons.re El pictore quale pinzeva li camerini nostri, ogi ha facto certo scandalo per el quale si è absentato, e avendo noi adesso pensare ad altro pictore per fornire l'opera e satisfare a quello de che se ne servivamo cum lopera de questo chi è absentato, e intendendo che maestro Petro Perusino si trova lì, ce è parso darvi cura de parlarli, e intendere da luj se vole venire a servirci, cum dirli che, venendo, li faremo condizione tale chel si poterà bene accontentare. Ma in questo bisognerà advertire chel non si trovasse obbligato a quella Ill.a Sig.ra [Veneta] perchè in tal caso non intendemo farne parola, anzi sel fosse qui lo voriamo rimandare lì. E però risguardereti a questo, e parlando ad epso maetro, ce aviserete de quello chel ne risponderà, e sel vi parerà se possa sperare de averlo. Datum Mediolani, VIII Iunij, 1496.

Ludovicus Maria Sforzia. B. Calchus.

Anglus Dux Mediolani etc.

Bibliography: **Richter § 1345**; Codex Atlanticus, 328 b; Beltrami, 1919, p. 40, n. 70; D' Adda, 1875, pp. 167-168; Villata, 1999, p. 346, n. 22 a-b.

► **June 24, 1496**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi - Pittori*

Guido Antonio Arcimboldi responds to Ludovico Sforza's letter of June 8th by saying that Perugino is no longer in Venice and could not, therefore, contact him

Ill.mo et Ex.mo s. mio obs.mo Andai heri da la Ill.ma S.a et li significai poso le altre cose quello me haveva scripto la S. vostra del desiderio haveva la S. Vostra de havere m.ro Petro Perusino scontro del pictor quale se e absentato da Milano. Et havendo inteso el desiderio de la S. Vostra credo che questa Signoria l' haveria concesso alla Ex. Vostra etiam chel fosse dicto chel haveva tolto ad far alcuna opera da questa S.a: ma lo Ill.mo principe dixè chel non era in questa terra, et per

questo non sapevano come poterlo havere: perchè erano sei mesi chel se partise ne sapeuano dovi el fosse andato...

Venetiis die XIII Junij 1496.

Ex. V. serv. Guidantonius Archiepiscopus

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 41, n. 71.**

► **November 12, 1496**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 230 fasc. 17.

Ludovico Sforza's castellan, Bernardino da Corte, reports on the preparations of a room to be used by Beatrice d'Este for giving birth to their second son. He also reports that the *camerini* will be ready for Christmas and that Bramante has started on a drawing *dele terre del Signore Virginio*.

Ill.mo et Ex.mo s. mio

Benchè io non sia mancato de sollicitudine alchuna per fare fornire presto la Camera che si fa cum el serrare el portico per la Ill.ma Consorte dela Ex.a V.a, tamen inteso el desiderio dela Sua Ill.ma S.a, farò quello serà possibile per farla del tuto fornire presto cum le sue stamegnie, per fare che il foco la possi bene asugare, et serà fornita questa septimana proxima. Medesimamente al dicto tempo serano fornite le cuxine.

Ali Camerini in capo del Zardino non li mancherò de sollicitudine per fare che siano forniti ad Natale.

Ho facto questa sira comenzare ad Bramante el disegno dele terre del Signore Virginio, el quale farò fare secundo el desiderio dela Ex.a V.a et gli lo mandarò...

ex Arce porte Jovis mediol. XII novembr. 1496

V.ro S.or Bernardinus de Curti Castellano.

Bibliography: Müller-Walde, 1897, p. 164; **Beltrami, 1895, p. 502**; Beltrami, 1919, p. 41, no. 72; Villata, 1999, p. 346, n. 23.

1497

► **March 28, 1497**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi- Pittori*

Letter of Ludovico Sforza soliciting the services of Pietro Perugino.

Mediol. 28 martij 1497

Mag.cis Guidonj et Rodulpho de Balionibus

Per satisfare alcune cose quale habiamo designato desideramo havere qui la persona de M.ro Petro perusino: perchè essendo pictore eccellente voriamo valerse delopera sua alla satisfacione del desiderio nostro: ce e parso aduncha di questo scriverne alla M. V. et pregarle che per nostra contenteza vogliamo confortare et indure el dicto m.o Petro a venire qui et farli Intendere che venendo riceverà tal tractamento da mychel si accontenterà sempre de esser venuto...

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, p. 42, no. 74.**

► **June 29, 1497**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registro Ducale*, fol. 162

Dominio Marchesino Stange

Noy ti hauemo dato la cura de mandare ad executione le cose che se contengono in la introclusa lista: et anchora che te ne habiamo facto commissione ad bocha, nientedimeno per più satisfacione nostra hauemo voluto scriuere queste poche parole con dirte che si como hauemo summamente a core la expeditione de queste tale cosse, cussì receueriamo singul.mo piacere da te quanto più presto ne farai vedere lo effecto, per el quale te caricamo ad non volerli mancare de omne solitudine et cosse necessarie, perchè habiamo ad restare satisfacti. Mediolani, penultimo junii 1497.

Ludovicus M.a Sf.

B.C.

Memoria delle cose ad fare M. Marchesino

P.o de fare mettere el ducale de marmoro facto con le sue littere ad porta Ludouica, poso el quale Ducale siano poste dieci medalie de bronzo con la testa del S. Duca.

Item de solicitare le prete vano alli edifici del stato et ad Mombrayo, excepte quelle vano nel Castello de Milano: de le quale ne ha cura m. Bernardino da corte, et poso ciascaduna desse pietre siano poste dece medalie.

Item de vedere sel Gobbo oltra la sepultura potesse fare parte de laltare in l'anno presente, per el quale se intenda se tutti li marmori li sono, et se ne mancasse parte, se mandino ad tore de presente, a Venezia o Carrara.

Item perch' la sepultura sia finita tutta in uno tempo se solliciti el Gobbo ad laurare el coperchio et ad attendere ad tutte le altre cose li vano. In modo che quando sera finito el Navello, sij fornito el resto della sepultura.

Item de solicitare Leonardo Fior.no perchè finischa lopera del Refittorio delle gratie principiata, per attendere poi ad altra Fazada d' esso Refitorio, et se faciano con luj li capituli sottoscritti de mane sua che lo obligano ad finirlo in quello tempo se conuenera con luj.

Item de sollicitare che se fornisca el portico de S.to Ambrozio al quale sono sono deputati li 200 ducati.

Item de sollicitare la medietate d laltro portico uts. Per il quale el S.r. Duca li ha assignati 300 ducati.

Item de hauere tutti li più periti se trouino ne la architectura, per esaminare et fare fare uno modello per la fazada de S.ta Maria da le gratie, hauendo respecto ad lalteza in la quale se ha ad ridurre la ecclesia proportionata alla capella grande.

Item la strata da corte, el S Duca ha dicto volerla vedere.

Item de fare far la testa della quondam m.na Duchessa per metterla in Medaya insieme con quella del S.

Item de fare aprire la porta, che responde ad S.to Marco et se intituli la porta Beatrice, et se li faccia mettere uno Ducale simile ad quello de porta Ludouica, Facendoli le littere al proposito per la p.ta Duchessa.

Item de fare le littere adorate in marmoro negro che vano alli retrati della capella. Mediolani penult.o junij 1497.

Ludovicus Ma Sf.

B.[artolomeo] C. [alco]

Bibliography: Malaguzzi-Valeri, II, 1915, p. 182; **Beltrami, 1919, pp. 43-44, no. 76**; Villata, 1999, pp. 346-7, n. 24.

► 1497

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Fondo Religione*, parte antica: Conventi, cart.a 547.

Item per lavori facti in lo refectorio dove depinge Leonardo li apostoli, con una finestra... L. 37, 16, 5.

Libro del capomastro ducale, c. 8a-9a, in minuta mss del Padre Vincenzo M.a Monti.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, p. 45, no. 78.**

► **November 9, 1497**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Studi-Pittori*

Mediolani 9 novembre 1497

Guidonj et Rodulpho de Balionibus

Desideramo havere el servitio del perusino pictore per esserne significato che la peritia sua nel pingere e tale che resteriamo bene satisfacti in alchune cose quale habiamo in animo. E dal ademplatione del desiderio nostro non ce pare possibile usar mezo miliore de le M. V. le quale se persuademo possino multo de epso perusino. E però nel ritorno del messero quali li porta le altre nostre littere, la ci e parso pregarle che se ce vogliono fare questo piacere de operare che habiamo epso perusino per stare de continuo al servitio nostro o per servirne a tempo limitato.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, p. 47, n. 80.**

1498

► *March 22, 1498*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, fasc. 34.

Alo Ill.mo et Vn.co S.re mio lo ex.mo S.re Duca de Mediol.
Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re mio.
Non hauendo Cosa alcuna necessaria de lauiso ala Ex. V. non gli tacero che li
Ill.mi Figliolini soy tuti stano benissimo. Così lo R.mo Cardinal e che ali laurerii
de le gratie non si perde tempo alcuno per modo che Credo: atenderano li
magistri alae promesse facte [...].
Et a la bona gratia de la Ex. V. mi raccomando.
Mediolani 22 martij 1498.
De V. Ill.ma S.ria servullo Gualtero.

Bibliography: Müller-Walde, 1897, p. 168; **Beltrami, 1919, p. 49, n. 84**; Vallata, p. 347, n. 26.

► *April 20, 1498*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, fasc. 34.

Gualtiero Bescapè writes to Ludovico Sforza regarding the decorative work for the "saletta negra" in which Magristo Leonardo is participating.

Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re mio
Questa mattina ritrovai lo magn.o oratore de Ferrara, al qual fezi intendere
quanto la Excel.ia V.a me commisse; per la imprestanza de li 50 homini d'armi de
lo Ill.mo S.re don Alfonso, et la paga de li 150 ringratia la Ex.a V.a
A la Saleta Negra se è facto quanto la comisse, non solo ficto sul muro la
corona, ma metutogli quella o vero parte se è remutata tuta de misura, d'acordio
messer Ambrosio con mag.ro Leonardo per modo che la stae bene et non si
perdera tempo a finirla...
Datum Mediolani XX aprilis 1498.
Servul.lo Gualtero
A lo Ill.mo et Unico S.r mio lo Ex.mo Sig. Duca de Milano etc.

Bibliography: Calvi, 1869, p. 92; **Beltrami, 1919, p. 49-50, n. 85**; Villata, 1999, p. 347, n. 27.

► **April 21, 1498**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, Classe Belle Arti, *Autografi*, 102, fasc. 34

Gualtiero Bescapè writes to Ludovico Sforza regarding the "Camera grande da le Asse" mentioning a Magistro Leonardo who promises to finish the room by September.

Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re mio...

... A la Saleta negra non si perde tempo. Lunedì si desarmarà la Camera grande da le asse, cioè da la tore. M.ro Leonardo promete finirla per tuto Septembre, et che per questo si potrà etiam golder: perchè li pontichel fara lasarano vacuo de soto per tuto.

Domani se gli manderano le littere se hanno a ponere in la saletta con la forma de la petra: in duy modi per far quello che più piacerà ala E.a V.a et credo sarà bene potendo abbreviare le lettere perchè la tavola non potrà esser mancho de quella che è a le gratie del putino, che pur è grande...

Mediolani 21 aprilis 1498.

Servl.lo Gualtero.

A lo Ill.mo ed Unico S.r mio lo Exc.mo Sig. de Milano.

Bibliography: Calvi, 1869, p. 94; Beltrami, 1894, p. 512, Beltrami, 1902, p. 8, **Beltrami; 1919, p. 50, n. 86**; Villata, 1999, p. 347, n. 28.

► **April 23, 1498**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, fasc. 34.

Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re mio.

Per exeguire quanto me comete la Ex. V. ho parlato [oggi] con lo calzeler del Marchese... Li Ill.mo Figliuolini soy stanno bene: messer lo texorero sta meglio, ma molto stracho. Messer Bergonzo con la sua febbre alquanto in lizientia. La Camera grande de le asse è disconza, et alo camarino non si perde tempo, et a la bona gratia de la Ex. V. mi racomando.

Mediolani 23 aprilis 1498.

De V.ra Ill.ma S. Servullo Gualtero.

Bibliography: Müller-Walde, 1898, pp. 19-20; **Beltrami, 1919, p. 50, n. 87**; Villata, 1999, p. 347, n. 29.

► **June 16, 1498**

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cat. 97, Registro Ducale, 123.

The painter Ambrogio "Bellazo" is charged by Ludovico il Moro to redo the ducal devices in all the cities and lands of the duchy after the death of Gian Galeazzo Sforza.

Bibliography:

1499

► *April 26, 1499*

Archivio Civico (see C. Amoretti, *Vita di Leonardo*)

Ludovico gives Leonardo da Vinci 16 "pertiche" of land.

Ludovicus Maria Sfortia dux Mediolani dono dedit d. Leonardo Vincio Florentino pictori celeberrimo, pert. N. 16 soli seu fundi ejus vineoe quam ab Abate seu Monasterio S. Victoris in suburbano porte Vercelline proxime acquisierat, ut in eo spatio soli pro ejus arbitrio aedificare, colre hortos, et quidquid ei, vel posteris, ejus, vel quibus dederit ut supra libuerit, facere et disponere possit.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, p. 58, n. 95.**

► *April 26, 1499*

Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Autografi*, cart. 102, f. 34.

A copy of this document can be found in the Archivio di Stato, Milan, *Registro Panigarola* 15, ff. 182v-183 r: Littere donationis m.ri Leonardi Guintij Florentini.

Dux Medioalni etc. Leonardi Guincij Florentini pictoris celeberrimi virtutem nulli veterum pictorum tum nostro cum etiam peritissimorum judicio profecto cedentem ijs plane testantibus, que multifariam jussu nostro opera agresus est, mirum artificis ingenium si consumaverit longe uberius testatura. Nos usque adeo promeriusse non inficiabimur: ut nisi eum aliquo munere ornaverimus, parum nobis ipsis satisfacere posse censeamus. Igitur ut etiam et mansionis apud nos sue quam nobis hactenus gratam gratiorem etiam futuram in dies confidimus initium faciamus. Tenore presentium ex certa scientia motu proprio et de potestatis nostre plenitudine omnibusque alias modo jure via causa et forma quibus validius et efficacius fieri potest eidem Leonardo ratione benemeritorum de nobis suorum et ad rarissimae virtutis ornatum, pro se ejusque filijs et discendentibus ac eius heredibus in infinitum et quibus dederit quovismodo damus concedimus et donamus titulo pure, mere et irrevocabilis donationis inter vivos perticas numero sexdecim soli seu fundi eius vinee quam ab Abbazia seu Monasterio sancti Victoris in suburbano porte Vercelline huius

inclite urbis nostre Mediolani, canonica et apostolica dispensatione intercedente proxime adquisivimus, ut in eo spatio soli pro eius arbitrio edificare, colere hortos et etiam quidquid ei vel posteris eius vel quibus dederit ut supra, libuerit facere et disponere possit de quibus perticus sexdecim terre ita concessis terminos et circostanteas coherentes alteris nostris aperte declaramus. Transferentes in ipsum Leonardum omnia jura omnesque actiones reales personales mixtas et ipothecarias utiles et directas nobis et camere nostre quomodo cumque spectantes et pertinentes ac spectantia et pertinentia in dicto solo seu fundo vinee sibi ut supra concessio ac ipsum Leonardum procuratorem in rem propriam constituentes ipsumque ponentes ac ponimus in locum jus et statum nostrum pro dictis bonis ut dictum est donatis. Constituentesque nos eius nomine ipsorum bonorum possessionem tenere donec ipse eam corporaliter apprehenderit cuius accipiende liberam ei ex nunc potestatem facimus. Et apprehensa possessione de ipso spatio ut frui gaudere et in eo coli facere et disponere pro ut sibi libuerittamquam de re propria et pro ut nos possemus si presentem donationem non fecissimus, suppletes omnem defectum cuiuslibet solemnitates tam juris quam facti que in premissis intervenire debuisset. Mandantes magistris Intratarum nostrarum utriusque Camere et ceteris omnibus officialibus Magistratibus et subditis nostris presentibus et futuris quibus spectet quatenus ipsum Leonardum ipsarum sexdecim perticarum terre vinee superdicte possessione ponant et ipsum eiusque filios, et descendentes et eius successores et quibus dederit sic libere disponere possit ut de re propria ut dictum est conservet et has nostras concessionis et donationis litteras observent et faciant inviolantes observari. In quorum fidem etc.

Datum Mediolani, die XXVI aprilis 1499.

Subscriptum Lodovicus Maria Sfortia et signatum Jo Ja. Ferufinus cum sigillo ducati in cera alba soluto.

Bibliography: Amoretti, 1804, p. 85, n. 1; Calvi, 1869, p. 94, **Beltrami, 1919, p. 58-59, n. 95**; Villata, 1999, p. 348.

AFTER 1499

► *After 1499*

Cod. L., fol. I r., Institut de France, Paris

Paolo di Vannoccio in Siena.

La saletta di sopra per li apostoli.

Edifiti di Bramante.

Il Castellano fatto prigionie.

In Visconte strascinato e poi morto il figliuolo.

Gian della Rosa toltoli i danari.

Bergonzo principiò e non volle, e però fuggì le fortune.

Il duca perso lo stato e la roba e libertà, e nessuna sua opera si finì per lui.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, pp. 61-62, n. 100.**

1513

► *April 30, 1513*

Archivio di Stato, Florence, *Delib. Op Palazzo*, filza 25, fol. 24

A Francesco di Chappello legnaiolo lire 8, s. 12 per br. 43 d'asse di 0/3 d'albero levo Rinieri Lotti disse per armare intorno le figure dipinte nella Sala grande della guardia, di mano di Lionardo da Vinci, per difenderle che le non sieno quaste.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1919, pp. 136-137, n. 216.**

1550

► 1550

Giorgio Vasari, "Leonardo da Vinci Pittore e Scultore Fiorentino," *Vite degli architetti pittori et scultori di Giorgio Vasari aretino in Firenze MDL.*, 1550.

[...Leonardo] perse tempo fino a disegnare gruppi di corde fatti con ordine, e che da un capo seguissi tutto il resto fino all' altro, tanto ch s' empiesi un tondo; che se ne vede in istampa uno difficilissimo e molto bello e nel mezzo vi sono queste parole: LEONARDUS VINCI ACADEMIA.

Bibliography:

1584

► 1584

Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato della Pittura*, 1584.

Negl' arbori altresì si è trovato una bella inventione da Leonardo di far, che tutti I rami si facciano in diversi gruppi bizzarri, la qual foggia usò canestrando gli tutti Bramante ancora.

Bibliography: Lomazzo, 1584, p. 430; **Beltrami, 1919, p, 184, n. 263 section 6.**

1661

► 1661

Relatione generale della visita et consegna della fabbrica castello di Milano. Fatta dall' infrascritti ingegneri Regii camerali, per ordine dell' illustriss. Magistrato delle Regie ducali entrate ordinarie dello stato di Milano, l' anno M.D.C.LXI, Milan, 1661

Sala quadra con volta e lunette (e) dipinte, duoi fenestroni con suoi telaroni di rovere, invedriate a disegno, con suoi telari in quattro ante.

Bibliography: **Beltrami, 1902, p. 66.**

1893

► *December 9, 1893*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preubishcher Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde au W. Boden 9.12.1893, NL Boche 1893.

Letter from Paul Müller-Walde in Milan to William Boden in Berlin inviting him to visit him at the Sforza Castle to view newly-discovered and exposed "ceilings paintings by Leonardo" and Vincenzo Foppa, etc. He also mentions "other significant discoveries" in the castle (without specifying, however, what they are).

Bibliography:

1894

► *March 20, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 20.3.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes from Munich to William Boden in Berlin and sends photographs of the "puttini" at Sfoza Castle for his review and opinion. He also expresses his urgency to publish on the Saletta Negra by April of this year or he will run the risk that the Italian government will not be able to prevent others from publishing on this subject.

Bibliography:

► *March 27, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 27.3.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes from Munich to William Boden in Berlin to discuss his intent to publish his research on Leonardo and the Castles in Milan and in Vigevano. He specifically mentions the Saletta Negra in this regard. He also mentions photographs of knots in the Ambrosiana and states that he is in a great hurry to get the material published. It seems that Müller-Walde has "lots of new and original material" for the publication.

Bibliography:

► *April 10, 1894*

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 10.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes to William Boden in Berlin expressing dissatisfaction with delay in publishing his work on Leonardo and the Sforza Castle. He mentions the hiring of a photographer to take photographs of Leonardo drawings in the Codex Atlanticus. There are extreme difficulties or "gradually-conquerable obstacles, it seems, for Müller-Walde in Milan.

Bibliography:

► **April 11, 1894**

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 11.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

This letter is a continuation of the April 10th letter. Paul Müller-Walde writes to William Boden in Berlin again expressing his fear that if he does not publish on Leonardo's work in the Sforza Castle soon, someone else will. He describes in detail his difficulties with the publisher and threatens to withdraw the publication. He also mentions the investigations at the Castle in Milan, with Beltrami raising his [i.e. Müller-Walde's] hopes that he will find the *camerini*.

Bibliography:

► **April 12, 1894**

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 12.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes to William Boden in Berlin also to ask him to return the materials he sent him for review for the chapter on Leonardo in the Castle in Milan because they are his only copies and he is pressed for time. He specifically requests material on the *Saletta Negra* and the *Sala delle Asse* to be returned to him.

Bibliography:

► **April 18, 1894**

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 18.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes to William Boden in Berlin, soliciting once again his advice on the Saletta Negra and the puttini. Müller-Walde also begins to worry that his photographs never reached Bode and that they may have gotten lost in the mail. He is still anxious to publish as soon as possible on the Saletta Negra but needs to recover the photographs first.

Bibliography:

► ***April 19, 1894***

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 19.4.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes to William Boden in Berlin and continues to complain about his publisher, Hirth, who is only interested in art when he can exploit it for his own personal gain and glory. The letter is mostly about letters from the publisher, the content of which is not revealed.

Bibliography:

► ***May 29, 1894***

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Briefe Paul Müller-Walde an W. Boden 29.5.1894, NL Boche 3809.

Paul Müller-Walde writes to William Boden in Berlin again complaining about his situation with the publisher Hirth and fears that if there are any more delays he will lose his rights for publishing the wallpaintings in the Castle. In the letter, he also mentions sketches/drawings/photographs given to him by Beltrami.

Bibliography:

1895

► *January 1, 1895*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Letter from Paul Müller-Walde to Luca Beltrami suggesting the names of reliable English supply houses from which a fixative substance could be ordered for preserving the wall paintings in the Sala delle Asse and other rooms in the Sforza Castle. Enclosed with the letter was a page from the Reeves & Sons catalogue featuring a description of the fixative.

Milano, li 3/I [1]895

Onorevole Sig. Beltrami,

Ho ricevuto questa mattina il di Lei biglietto.

E le mando qui il foglio del catalogo della ditta Reeves & Sons, 113

Cheapside London, presso la quale ho trovato dopo lunghe ricerche un eccellente fissativo.

Altre ditte sarebbero: Rowney & Co, 64 Oxford Street; Ackerman, 191 Regent Street, Winson and Newton, 37 Rathbone Place.

Reeves and Sons sono produttori nella City e mi parono onestissimi, però potrebbe domandare anche presso un'altra ditta, quanti litri manderebbero di far venire insieme una dozzina di "diffusers."

Ringraziandola, mi stima il di Lei serv.mo

W. Paul Müller

Bibliography:

► *January 4, 1895 and April 1, 1895*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Letter addressed to Gaetano Moretti asking for permission on behalf of an engineer named Luigi Rossati to visit the Sforza Castle. On the same paper, there follows a note in Luca Beltrami's handwriting in response. The note grants permission for Rossati to visit any area of the Castle except those in which Paul Müller Walde had already been given permission for exclusive access.

[on letterhead stamped: "Francesco Gnechi, 10 via Filodrammatici, Milano"]

Milano 25, 2, 1895

Egregio Sig. Moretti,

Tempo fa le avevo chiesto un biglietto per visitare il Castello a nome del Ing. Luigi Rossati.

Probabilmente ciò le è sfuggito dalla memoria; ma non ricordo sfuggito dalla memoria di chi lo attendeva e venne domandare nuovamente fatta richiesta, mi permetto rivolgermi nuovamente a lei.

Chiedendole scusa alla noja, La ringrazio ancora apertamente

Colla mano [illegibile]

F. Gnechi

4/1 [18]95

Il Castello Municipale e il Castello di Milano è pregato di concedere al Sig. Luigi Rossati il libero ingresso al Castello e a quei locali che non sono soggetto di alcuno degli impegni assunti dal Comune di Milano verso il Sig. Müller Walde. per il Direttore

Bibliography:

► **January 8, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Letter from the London-based art supply company Reeves and Sons to Luca Beltrami informing him of the availability for purchase of 31 liters of fixative solution. This is the same fixative suggested by Müller-Walde in the January 3rd letter.

[On letterhead printed: Reeves & Sons, Limited, Manufacturers & Exporters of Artists Colors and Materials, Established 1777]
113 Cheapside, London]

le 8 janvier 1895

Monsieur Luca Beltrami
Palais Brera
Milan

Nous avons bien reçu votre honorée lettre du 4 di e en réponse nous avons l'honneur di vous informer que pou la somme de L. 16.8.0 nett suivant facture ci si joute nous pourrions vous adresser 30 douz Boités ce qui servait équivalent a environ 31 litres.

De reçu de v. remise sur Londres nous v. adresserons la merch.ase immédiatement.

Agreez monsieur nos salutations empressees.

E. Molly

Bibliography:

► **January 10, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Note by Luca Beltrami regarding the ordering of a liquid fixative for the restoration of paintings in the Sforza Castle, as per the request of Dr. Müller Walde.

Nota dell'ordinazione di liquido fissativo occorrente per il restauro della pittura in Castello di Milano secondo la domanda fatta dal Sig. D. Müller-Walde.

10/1 - 95

L. Beltrami

Bibliography:

► **February 5, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Letter from the London-based art supply company Reeves and Sons to the Ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti di Lombardia in response to a letter sent on January 7th. The letter informs them that the price of the fixative is actually slightly higher and that they are also able to provide 51 liters instead of only 31.

[On letterhead printed: Reeves & Sons, Limited, Manufacturers & Exporters of Artists Colors and Materials, Established 1777]
113 Cheapside, London]

le 5 janvier 1895

Ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti di Lombardia Milano - Italia

Répondant aux demandes qui nous ont été adressées le 7 janvier écoulé par votre Mons. Luca Beltrami et le 4 di par Mons. Dr. Paul Müller au sujet de notre fixatif, nous avons l'avantage de vous adresser sous ci pli facture s'élevant a L. 16.13.0.

Ces Messieurs nous ont demandés d'envoyer une quantité qui correspondent a peu près á la valeur de 400f et nous vous y sommes conformés autant qui possible.

Ou lieu d'employer de boites en fir blanc mnous vous adresserons le fixatif en grandes bouteilles qui contiennu 1 quart ou environ litre 1.135 chacun car la liquide se conserve mieux ainsi - En fir blanc elle purrait deteriorer. Dans nos lettres precedentes nous avons dit que nous pourrions livrer environ 31 litres pour la somme de 400f mais examen fait nous trouvons que nous poissons fournir litres 51.075.

Nous tenons la marchandise prete et emballé a votre disposition et aussitát que nous recuons votre cheque valeur L. 16.13.0 sur Londres nous vous l'adresserons.

Agréez monsieur nos salutations dinstinguées.

E M

P.S. Veuillez observer que nous vous accordons notre escompte maximum de 10% pour li comptant. E M

Bibliography:

► *February 12, 1895*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Letter from the London-based art supply company Reeves and Sons to the Ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti di Lombardia to confirm shipping of the fixatives.

[On letterhead printed: Reeves & Sons, Limited, Manufacturers & Exporters of Artists Colors and Materials, Established 1777]
Cheapside, London]

le 12 fevrier 1895

Al Signor Direttore dell'ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti di Lombardia

Monsieur

Nous vous exprimons de vous accuser réception de votre estimée lettre du 8 de des plis de laquel le nous avons retiré un cheque valuer L. 16.8.0 que nous allons encaisser y vous creditons pour soldat á ce jour.

Nous vous occupons activement de l'emballage de la merchandise que nous vous feron parvenir par petite vitesse...

E. Molly

► **October 24, 1895**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137.

Letter from Paul Müller-Walde to Gaetano Moretti, Vice Director of the Ufficio Regionale dei Monumenti della Lombardia complaining about the fact the damaging smoke situation around the Mercurio in the Sala del Tesoro.

Castello di Porta Giovia
24 ottobre, [1]895

Egregio Signor Moretti,

Entrando nel Castello adesso trovo nell'anticamerino della Sala del Tesoro i muratori occupati a aprire il camino che va giù nella Cantina cooperativa ed il camerino anche

La Sala del Tesoro pieno di fumo entrato nel gran buco fatto già. Mi prendo gran libertà di pregarla di dar subito l'ordine di evitare un bel gran pericolo della

pittura a murale il Mercurio di inestimabile valore. Il Mercurio è dipinto a guazzo ed in questo tempo umido intonaco imbeve com'una spugna tanta la polvere che specialmente il fumo. Una fumata di pochi minuti basterebbe di distruggere una delle più preziose cose del mondo.

Se questo lavoro nel camino è inevitabile, si dovrebbe prima coprire la pittura - in ogni caso prima avvisarmi per poter far i passi necessari. Mesi fa ho parlato al Sig. Beltrami su questo pericolo del fumo delle Cantine e l'Onorevole Sig. Beltrami mi ha detto che la cooperativa non ha nessuno diritto di accendere il fumo in quel compartimento.

Commettendomi nel suo caldo interesse pei monumenti di pittura.

Mi dia il si Lei.

Servitissimo.

Dr. Paul Müller Walde

1896

► *November 4, 1896*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900*, 2994, AV137

Note on a business card from Vespasiano Bignami to Gaetano Moretti informing him that the mayor has granted him permission to use the rooms in the Castle in the spirit of "national-artistic" purposes.

[on business card printed "Vespasiano Bignami, Milano, Solferino 11]

Caro Moretti,

Ti aspettavo ieri in Commissione per annunciarti che il Sindaco mi ha concesso l'uso delle Sale in Castello in virtù della sua gentilezza e dello scopo artistico nazionale, nonchè della tua dichiarazione che io non ostacolerò i lavori di restauro. Ringrazio dunque anche te con una simbolica stretta di mano in supplemento a quella reale che ti avrei dato se non *biggiavi* la seduta.

Arriverderci,

Mercoledì, 4 Nov. '96

Bibliography:

1899

► *May 20, 1899*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1895-1900, 2994, AV137.*

Invoice from the painter and decorator Ernesto Rusca to the Direzione per la Conservazione dei Monumenti della Lombardia for decorations carried out at the Sforza Castle.

[on form printed: Rusca Ernesto, Pittore - Decoratore, Via Solferino, 36, Milano]

Milano, li 20 maggio 1899

Onorevole Direzione per la Conservazione dei Monumenti della Lombardia

Decorazioni a fresco eseguite nel Castello di Milano

Decorate a fresco metà della parete inferiore della loggetta - a scaglioni - nella Corte Ducale.

Decorate a fresco le volte dello scalone che mette alla loggetta con orifiammi e stemmi sforzeschi alternati.

Pareti a scaglioni con colonette alternate posanti sullo zuccolone pure a scaglioni e velature.

Totale L. 390.00

Velature alle facciate della Corte Ducale Piano Terreno - Velature alle terre cotte e finti mattoni agli sguarci delle finestre.

Sguarci delle finestre a finti mattoni verso la corte Piazza d'Arme -

Velature alle pareti dell'atrio che mette allo scalone Sforzesco - ritocchi alle arcate. L. 95.00

Totale L. 485.00

Liquidati in complessiva L. 450 -

(lire quattrocentocinquanta)

Milano 1 giugno 1899

Arch.to G. Moretti

Bibliography:

1901

► *March 6, 1901*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

Letter (in draft form) in Luca Beltrami's handwriting to Pietro Volpi who later donated the necessary funds for repainting the Sala delle Asse.

Milano 6 marzo 1901

All'illustrissimo Sig. Avv.o Pietro Volpi

Egregio Amico,

In relazione al di Lei gentile pensiero di voler onorare la memoria della comparsa di Lei consorte con un'opera di restauro artistico nel Castello Sforzesco, ed a complemento della intelligenza scambiata nel nostro colloquio di ieri, reco adesso di indicarle di modo per darvi attenzione.

L'opera che maggiormente si presta alle di Lei intenzione è quella del ripristino della decorazione pittorica nella Sala terrena della Torre nella Corte Ducale, sala denominata anche delle Asse per il rivestimento in legno nella zona inferiore delle pareti, al disopra del quale si [...] una ricca e geniale decorazione pittorica collegante le pareti colla volta mediante il motivo di grandi tronchi di alberi che all'altezza dell'imposto della volta, si ramificano per formare un ampio pergolato, il cui intreccio di rami era completato con intrecci a nodi di corde: [...] grandi stemmi ducali sulle lunette ed [...] alla [...] della volta, si ramificano per formare un ampio pergolato, il cui intreccio di rami era completato con intrecci a nodi di corde: [...] grandi stemmi ducali sulle lunette ed [...] alla [...] della volta, quattro grandi targhe con iscrizioni a lettere d'oro nei [...] mediami di ognuno al lato della Sala complementando questo motivo di straordinaria ricchezza decorativa, nel quale non è difficile nè [...] un concetto [...] e diretto dello [...] Leonardo da Vinci è difficile nè [...] un concetto [...] e diretto dello [...] Leonardo da Vinci è tale da assicurare un'eccezionale effetto di grandiosità e quella data che era la principale, quella d'onore, nell'appartamento ducale.

Il ripristino di questa decorazione la cui tracce furono [ricoverate?] fin dal 1893, rimase sinora in sospeso in causa di molti altri lavori più importanti e [...] impegno artistico cui si dovette attendere; e quale lo scorso anno si ebbe ad inaugurare i musei d'arte nella Corte Ducale di [...] incominciare a compiere l'ordinamento della scoltura di oggetti d'arte destinati alla Sala della Torre, oggi ancora esclusa dalle parti accessibili al pubblico. Perciò il ripristinare la decorazione pittorica oltre all'interesse [...] è compito il quale mette nel lavoro l'amministrazione municipale in condizione di potere ultimare senz'altro inizio la sistemazione del museo, [...] nella Sala della Torre il rifacimento e quel rivestimento alle pareti che, come nelle vicine sale, dei Ducali e delle Colombine servirà al collocamento delle opere d'arte che da un anno sono depositate in sale in attesa di ordinamento.

Volle fortuna che anche di un particolare non secondario, certo non indispensabile per il ripristino del motivo decorativo, mi fosse dato di [...] gli elementi; poichè di una sola delle iscrizioni a lettere d'oro che stavano nelle sucitate grandi targhe si possa trovare qualche frammento nell'inverno del 1893 da me riportato a pag. 697 della p.a. Origini del Castello di Milano; mi [...] o Diari di Marin Sanuto [...] or fino che anni a trovare non solo il testo completo dei quelle iscrizioni, ma anche quello di tre altre, pare un elogio alla politica e alle alleanze di Lodovico il Moro, mentre la quarta iscrizione risulta essere stata soppressa subito dopo la invasione francese nel 1499. Così [...] di tre fra iscrizioni fatte apporre da Ludovico nella Sala della Torre sarà possibile di ripristinare il testo a completamente dell'originaria decorazione mentre la quarta delle targhe si presenta a ricordare il gentile pensiero di cui avrà avuto origine la ricostruzione della Sala al suo [...] splendor d'arte.

Quando si [...] ad iniziare [...] ritardi il lavoro preparatorio di ritoccare le tracce rimaste per [...] il disegno d'assieme, sarebbe possibile di approfittare della stagione favorevole e di portare a termine per l'autunno prossimo il restauro della Sala della Torre. L'insieme del lavoro è tale da parte [...] dell'Ufficio Tecnico Municipale, come [...] di restauro artistico nel Castello Sforzesco. Ella quindi non avrà che a mettere gradualmente la somma occorrente al restauro decorativo a disposizione dell' Ufficio Regionale il quale [...] a come gli spetti a pari, l'opera e [...] al lavoro al quale a mia volta non mancherò di interessarmi personalmente.

Quindi Ella, [...] in tale piano di attenzione del gentil pensiero abbia di questo dato [...] Amministrazione Municipale, [...] Regionale non [...] tutti gli [...] occorrenti a porre mano all'opera.

Con favorevole stretta a cui [...] gesto [...]
Luca Beltrami

L. Beltrami

Bibliography:

► *July 28, 1901*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

Telegram sent by Director General Fiorilli in Rome to Gaetano Moretti and Luca Beltrami in Milan. Fiorilli was Minister of Education (Ministro della Istruzione Pubblica) an entity that also governed the "Direzione Generale per le Antichita' e le Belle Arti")

ARCH. PROF. GAETANO MORETTI MYLAN
S S MYL ROM IP 1284 35 28 19 45
MANDO RIVERENTE AFFETTUOSO SALUTO AL BELTRAMI A LEI AD
ARCAINI UNITI IN UN OPERA CHE SUGELLA L AMOR DI PATRIA COL PIU
FINE SENSO DELL ARTE = DIRETTORE GLE FIORILLI

1902

► *April 22, 1902*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.*

Note in Gaetano Moretti's handwriting documenting the donation of a text from 1796 on the Sforza Castle. A copy of the original text follows.

Documento a stampa del 1796 riguardante il Castello di Milano. Donato al [...] del Castello il 22 Aprile 1902 dal Sig. Ing. Carlo Clerici e destinato a figurare a un tempo fra [gl]I eventi storici del monumento.
G. Moretti

Bibliography:

► *May 3, 1902*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.*

Letter from the Mayor's office asking that the date of the public opening of the Sala delle Asse be changed to June 10, 1902.

Bibliography:

► *May 6, 1902*

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910, 2994, AV137.*

List compiled by Luca Beltrami of invitees to the public opening /inaguration of the Sala delle Asse. Included in the list are newspapers, friends and colleagues, Milan's Building Commission, the Società Storico Lombarda, the administrative staff of the Archeology Museum, the planning committee for the Umberto I monument, and the Conservation Committee. Also with the list is a copy of the actual invitation printed.

Bibliography:

► *May 7, 1902*

Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, Corrispondenza Vinciana, RB, C IV.16, fol. 21-26.

Letter from Giulio Carotti to Luca Beltrami regarding the use of the Sala delle Asse as an exhibition space.

[on stationary with the heading: "R. Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera"]

Milano 7 maggio 1902.

Illustre Signore ed Amico,

Ho voluto aspettare, per ringraziarla, di aver scorso la sua nuova monografia nella sala delle asse e sulla sua decorazione, che ella prova luminosamente essere opera di Leonardo.

Le sono non solo obbligato del dono gentile ma riconoscente di avermi ricordato e assegnato uno dei 300 soli esemplari di così prezioso lavoro esemplari che andranno certamente a ruba!

Leggo nella chiusura un voto indiretto che le statue giacenti del Moro e di Beatrice vengono a completare la sala insigne. Abbiamo da ritornare a Milano le statue originali o ne vengano i facsimili, mi sia lecito ad ogni modo esprimere anch'io un voto: che i facsimili siano in marmo e non in bronzo. La forma e modellazione leonardesca di queste statue fu ideata ed eseguita in relazione alla materia marmorea, così sento e volle Cristoforo Solari: la traduzione in bronzo darebbe delle figure floscie, molli e gonfie. Quando a Firenze, passo vicino ad Or San Michele e veggio la riproduzione in bronzo di San Giorgio di Donatello sento che lo spirito del grande scultore deve aggirarsi li attorno dantescamente rabbioso perchè egli modellava diversamente le statue da fondere in bronzo da quelle da scolpire in marmo.

Come starebbero bene nelle pareti della sala delle asse gli arazzi del Bramantino, anche con un orlo grande di stoffa ben intonata, se non abbastanza grandi! E come vi starebbero pur bene quei libri miniati del Iesus e della Grammatica, armature ed armi, ceramiche e stoffe di quel tempo. In questa sala dovrebbe risorgere l'apparizione dell'arte di Milano al tempo di Ludovico il Moro. Tutti i cittadini doviziosi dovrebbero andar a gara a donare o depositare qualche cosa, ad es: il conte Cesare del Magno, la sua suonatrice di liuto del Bart. Veneziano che si vuole sia il ritratto di Cecilia Gallerani, non l'è, ma non importa, è opera di quel tempo; il Dr. Grisiani la sua cassetta con rilievi su pasta di riso, il museo

Poldi il palliotto funereo di Ludovico e Beatrice e via, via... fantasticare costamente. La ringrazio ancora vivissimamente

Il suo obbligato Carotti.

p.s. alla mia lettera di oggi. Da cosa nasce cosa. Bisognerebbe cominciare dal promuovere una esposizione di un mesetto (e farla subito, subito) nella sala stessa delle asse, di quadri, dipinti, armi, miniature, arazzi ecc. ecc. ottendoli a prestito dai fortunati possessori e poi all'atto della chiusura si daranno gli assalti con armi cortesi ma irridiose e qualche cosa ne resterà; così sorse dopo l'esposizione del 1874 il Museo d'arte applicata all'industria.

Bibliography:

► **May 12, 1902**

Biblioteca d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, Corrispondenza Vinciana, RB, C IV.16, fol. 27-29.

Letter from Malaguzzi Valeri to Luca Beltrami thanking him for a copy of his monograph on the *Sala delle Asse* and congratulating him on a job well done with the *Sala*. He also discusses his plans to publish a portrait by Ambrogio Preda of Bianca Maria Sforza

Milano 12 maggio 1902.

Egregio Comm.re,

Grazie vivissime della sua splendida e interessantissima pubblicazione su Leonardo e la Sala delle Asse veramente impressionante ora che si battezza come nuovo il culto della natura e poi della decorazione.

Non so se qualcuno intenda scriverne nella Rassegna d'Arte riprendendo il soffitto della sala. [...] Ma penso che se Ella volesse permettere quella riproduzione farebbe un vero regalo ai lettori della Rassegna tenuto conto che la di Lei pubblicazione non è in commercio. Io ne scriverò nell' Archivio Storico Lombardo e in qualche giornale. Mi par opportuno e utile, nel momento presente, insistere sul vanto italiano di una lavorazione che, eccessivamente stilizzata, starei per dire, fossilizzata, si ammira fuori casa. Anche questa volta si ammira il mediocre perché è forestiero e si dimentica l'ottimo che è in Italia.

Vorrei pubblicare la lettera relativa al ritratto di Bianca Maria Sforza fatto da Ambrogio Preda e portato all'imperatore Massimiliano: mi pare [...] mostrata ultimamente e ando inedita. Potrei accompagnare la pubblicazione (per la Rassegna d'Arte con la riproduzione del [...] del ritratto di Bianca che ella ha ora pubblicato? Ella che si è occupato nell'Emporium del 1896 degli sponsali di Bianca Maria Sforza dovrebbe avere la cortesia di dirmi dove potrei trovare l'elenco esatto e possibilmente la riproduzione di tutti i ritratti di Bianca? La lettera di cui parla dice che il Preda diede un disegno a carbone: saprebbe dirmene nulla?

Suo dev.mo obbl.mo
F. Malaguzzi

Bibliography:

► **June 29, 1902**

Biblioteca della Soprintendenza per I Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, Milano, *Castello Sforzesco 1901-1910*, 2994, AV137.

Copy of monetary disbursements that took place in 1901 for work at the Sforza Castle, including the *Sala delle Asse*.

Bibliography:

After 1903

► *Undated*

Archivio Privato di Luca Beltrami, *Correspondenza*, Milan.

Letter from Luigi Luzzati while visiting the resort town of Rabbi (in the Trentino Alto Adige region of Italy) to Luca Beltrami. The letter accompanies extensive notes on Corrado Ricci written by Paul Müller Walde. Luzzati's letter is undated but it probably dates to after 1903 because Müller-Walde mentions Ricci's position as curator of the Uffizi in Florence (a position he took on in 1903).

[on stationary with the heading: Grand Hotel e Hotel Rabbi, Rabbi (Trentino) 1250 m. s. m. Rinomato luogo di cura climatica, idroterapica e terapeutica, Luigi Nodari, Propr., Stagione dal Settembre al Maggio, Grand Hotel "Bogliaco", Bogliaco (Lago di Garda), Rabbi]

Rabbi 26

Rispondimi a Roma

Caro Beltrami,

Leggi profondamente, come quando lavori nel Castello, queste note profondamente pensate.

A me l'uomo è poco simpatico, ma ha o non ha la virtù di governare in un'alto e delicato servizio? Nientemeno ha l'impero dell'arte in mostra.

Rispondimi aperto e non coperto; da qualche tempo sei diventato troppo cauto.

Vogliamoci bene

Il tuo amico vero,

Luigi Luzzati

[on stationary with same heading as above]

Corrado Ricci

Riordinatore di quadrerie di Parma, Milano e Firenze; delle due prime compilò i cataloghi assai poveri di notizie illustrative storiche e critiche: sono indici per esposizioni temporanee d'arte moderna anzichè guide sicure attraverso le insigni raccolte. Inutile negare il fatto che il Woermann a Dresda e il Bode a Berlino insegnarono anche il modo di raccogliere questi difficili libri con un metodo rigorosamente scientifico. Se il riordinatore di gallerie non dev'essere da noi, che un tappezziere di buon gusto può proclamare, fra le ammirazioni, che la Medusa

fiorentina, detta di Leonardo, è opera fiamminga, perchè dipinta su legno di quercie! I tedeschi lo sapevano e il Frey lo disse, due anni fa, nelle sue lezioni!

C.R.

è professore di lettere italiane; godette dell'intimità di Enrico Panzacchi. e dell'esteta bolognese fu freddo imitatore anche in poesia.

Dov'egli abbia erudita la sua mente nella storia dell'arte nessuno sa; ne ha scritto poco e non bene; pochi, fra i quali il novellatore Parmarini, credono e scrivono che ne sappia molto, dopo un fortunato acquisto di quadri per le gallerie di Firenze.

Il suo Michelangelo, tradotto in francese dal Crozalis è citato dal Reinach; i tedeschi non ne parlano mai e non a torto.

C. Ricci aiuta un rivista d'arte poco importante, rivista che con molte pretese bibliografiche vorrebbe emulare la [?] dal Sachs e contrastar la giusta fortuna dell'Arte del Venturi.

C.R.

Storico dell'arte; di molti articoli rappezzati sui giornali e su le riviste non he ha fatto alcun libro pregevole, e nel suo breve lavoro su Michelangelo manca la suffucienza di preparazione ad aver governato si grande e si studiato. Forse egli volle riunire un manevole che non uscisse dalla piccola mole del Pantheon del Barberos, ma rimane inferiore persino allo Knackfuss, l'inesauribile tedesco divulgatore delle popolari biografie degli artisti; chi ha ponderato le opere del Gimmi, del Symonds, del Wöfflin, del Frey e del Rhode non tiene in gran conto questo lavoruccio e ripensa volentieri al Condivi e al Vasari, perdonando loro gli errori del tempo e del metodo.

La monografia di Ravenna è un meschino sforzo del cicerone che fa veder la sua città agli stranieri.

C.R.

Traduttore non è troppo prudente; è già uscito il II volume del manuale di A. Springer da lui fatto italiano su la IV edizione tedesca, mentre in ogni antiquariato di Germania si vende da più di un anno la VII!!! L'Italiano e lo stile sono ineleganti.

L'Apollo, del Reinach, tradotto dall'idioma che moltissimi sanno leggere, e tradotto sciattamente perdette il suo gaio garbo e, opera leggiera come fu destina al maggior traffico di un giornale,

Come alcuni volumi del povero Müntz.

Se gli studiosi fossero più ignoranti del tedesco si potrebbe, a preferenza, far italiano il manuale del Woermann (*Geschichte der Kunst*) del quale son pubblicati due volumi. O quello del Lübke-Semrau (Harnack) 5 volumi.

Bibliography:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abulafia, D., ed., *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494-95, Antecedents and Effects*, Aldershot, Hampshire and Brookfield Vermont, 1995.
- Ady, C. M., *A History of Milan Under the Sforza*, London, 1907.
- Agghazy, M. G., "Locus amoenus et vinculum delictorum dans l'art de la Renaissance," *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 51, 1978, pp. 55-62.
- D' Ancona, M. L., *Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Renaissance Painting*, Florence, 1977.
- Annioni, A., "Leonardo as Decorator," *Leonardo da Vinci*, New York, 1956, pp. 307-314.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci*, New York, 1955, originally Novara, 1939, p. 307ff.
- Arata, A., *Niccolò da Correggio nella vita letteraria e politica*, Bologna, 1934.
- Archivio di Stato di Milano, *Ludovico il Moro: la città e la sua corte (1480-1499)*, Como, 1983.
- Baldacci, A., *Il mondo delle piante in Leonardo da Vinci*, Bologna, 1940.
- , *La botanica di Leonardo da Vinci desunta dai manoscritti della biblioteca dell'istituto di Francia*, Bologna, 1916.
- , *La botanica nel Codice Atlantico di Leonardo da Vinci*, Bologna, 1916.
- , "Le piante di Leonardo da Vinci nel Codice della Biblioteca Reale del Castello di Windsor," *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle scienze dell' Istituto di Bologna*, vol. 10, Bologna, 1923, pp. 79-82.
- Bambach Cappel, C., "Leonardo, Tagliente, and Dürer: la scienza del far di groppi," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 4, 1991, pp. 72-98.
- , and Whitaker, L., "The Lost Knots," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 4, 1991, pp. 107-110.
- Barbieri, G., *Aspetti dell' economia lombarda durante la dominazione Visconteo-Sforzesco. Rassegna di documenti*, Milan, 1958.
- , *Economia e politica nel ducato di Milano 1368-1535*, Milan, 1938.

- , *Origini del capitalismo lombardo. Studi e documenti sull'economia milanese del periodo ducale*, Milan, 1961.
- Barcilon, P. B. and P. Marani, *Le lunette di Leonardo nel refettorio delle Grazie*, Milan, 1990.
- Barni, L., "Ricerche intorno all'opera di Leonardo e del Bramante in Vigevano," *Annuario dell R. scuola complementare G. Robecchi in Vigevano*, Vigevano, 1926-1928, pp. 46-55.
- Baroni, C., "Tracce pittoriche leonardesche recuperate al castello sforzesco di Milano," *Rendiconti dell'istituto lombardo di scienze e lettere*, vol. 88, 1955, pp. 21-32.
- Battistini, F., "La gelsibachicoltura e la trattura della seta in Toscana (sec. XIII-XVIII)," *La seta in Europa, Sec. XIII-XX*, acts from conference held by the Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Datini in Prato, May 4-9, 1992, ed. S. Cavaciocchi, 1992, pp. 293-299.
- Bazardi, A., *La botanica nel pensiero di Leonardo*, exh. cat. Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnica, Milan, 1953.
- Baxandall, M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Oxford, 1974.
- Bechener, J. A., *Pietro Perugino, Master of the Italian Renaissance*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997.
- Belloni, G., *Il Castello Sforzesco di Milano*, Milan, 1966.
- Beltrami, L., "Ancora due parole per la difesa del Castello," *Perseveranza*, October 15, 1893.
- , "Appunti Bibliografici. Dott. Paul Müller-Walde, Leonardo da Vinci. Sua vita e ricerche intorno alla sua relazione con l'arte fiorentina e con Raffaello, Milano, 1889," *La Perseveranza*, May 3, 1889.
- , *Bramante e la ponticella di Lodovico il Moro nel Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1903.
- , *Bramante poeta colla raccolta dei sonnetti*, Milan, 1884.
- , *Il Castello Milano sotto il dominio dei Visconti e degli Sforza (1368-1533)*, Milan, 1894.
- , *Il codice di Leonardo da Vinci nella biblioteca del principe Trivulzio a Milano*, Milan, 1891.
- , "In difesa del Castello di Milano," *La Perseveranza*, October 13, 1893.
- , *In difesa di Edmondo Solmi (1874-1912)*, Milan, 1918.
- , *Documenti e memorie riguardanti la vita e le opere di Leonardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1919.
- , *Guida storica del Castello di Milano 1368-1894*, Milan, 1894.
- , "Leonardo da Vinci del Dott. Paul Muller- Wälde," *La Perseveranza*, May 31, 1889.

- , *Leonardo e i disfatti suoi*, Milan, 1919.
- , *Leonardo e la Sala delle 'Asse' nel Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1902.
- , "La novella opera di Leonardo da Vinci," *Il Marzocco*, Florence, vol. 19, May, 1902.
- , "Il Mercurio del Castello di Milano- I," *La Perseveranza*, December 25-26, 1897.
- , "Il Mercurio del Castello di Milano- II," *La Perseveranza*, December 31, 1897.
- , "Un opera ignorata di Leonardo da Vinci: la Sala delle Asse nel Castello di Milano," *Corriere della sera*, Milan, vols. 10-11, May 1902.
- , "La sala dei Maestri d'Arme," *Rassegna d'Arte*, Milan, vol. 7, July 1902, pp. 97-103.
- , "La sala delle asse nel castello di Milano decorata da Leonardo da Vinci nel 1498," *Rassegna d'Arte*, vol. 2, 1902, pp. 65-68, 90-93.
- , "Lo stile nuovo del secolo," *La lettura*, vol. 1, 1901, pp. 22-25.
- , "La vigna di Leonardo," *Illustrazione italiana*, Milan, 1920, pp. 6-46.
- , *La vita nel Castello di Milano al tempo degli Sforza*, Milan, 1900.
- , "Relazione annuale dell' Ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti in Lombardia (secondo anno finanziario 1893-94)," *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 3, vol. 2, 1894, pp. 207-225.
- Beltrami, L. and G. Moretti, *Resoconto dei lavori di restauro eseguiti nel Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1898.
- Bentley, R. and H. Trimen, *Medicinal Plants*, vol. 4, London, 1880, n. 229 "morus nigra."
- Benvenuti, A. T., "Il teatro volgare nella Milano Sforzesca," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 1, Milan, 1983, p. 348ff.
- Benvenuti, A. Tissoni and M. P. Mussini Sacchi, *Teatro del quattrocento. Le corti padane*, Turin, 1983.
- Berghaef, V., "Les origines de la place ducale a Vigevano," *Palladio*, vol. 14, 1964, pp. 165-78.
- Bergamaschi, Maria Bettelli, *Seta e colori nell' alto medioevo*, Bologna, 1994.
- Bescapè, G., *Arte e storia dei giardini di Lombardia*, Milan 1978.
- , *Mostra storica dei giardini di Lombardia*, exh. cat., Milan, 1959.

- Bezzola, M., "Problemi leonardeschi nella Sala delle Asse del Castello Sforzesco," *Famiglia meneghina*, Milan, vol. 2, March and April, 1955, pp. 1-2.
- Binaghi Olivari, M. T., "La moda a Milano al tempo di Ludovico il Moro," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 2, Milan, 1983, p. 633ff
- Biscaro, G. "Le colonne del portico di Bramante nella canonica di S. Amrogio," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 37, 1910, pp. 226-228.
- , "La vigna di Leonardo da Vinci fuori porta Vercellina," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, vol. 12, 1909, pp. 363-396.
- La biscia e l'aquila. Il Castello di Vigevano: una letteratura storico-artistica*, Piacenza and Vigevano, 1988.
- Boas, G., "The Mona Lisa in the History of Taste," *Journal in the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, 1940, pp. 208-216.
- Bognetti, G. P., *La seta in lombardia*, Rome, 1922.
- Bondioli, P., "Una descrizione inedita del Castello di Cusago al tempo di Lodovico il Moro," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 1, 1931, pp. 336-347.
- Bongrani, P., "La poesia lirica alla corte di Ludovico il Moro," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 1, Milan, 1983, p. 215ff
- , *Lingua e letteratura a Milano nell'età Sforzesca. Una raccolta di studi*, Parma, 1986.
- Börsch-Supan, E., *Garten-, Landschafts- und Paradies-motive im Innenraum*, Berlin, 1967, pp. 244-251.
- Boulton, D' A. J. D., "Insignia of Power: the Use of Heraldic and Paraheraldic Devices by Italian Princes, c. 1350-c.1500," *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy: 1250:-1500*, ed. C. M. Rosenberg, Notre Dame and London, 1990, pp. 103-127.
- Bratchel, M. E., "The Silk Industry of Lucca in the Fifteenth Century," *Tecnica e società nell'Italia dei secoli XII-XVI*, acts from conference held by the Centro Italiano di Studi di Storia e d'Arte in Pistoia, October 28-31 1984, 1987, pp. 83-173-190.
- Brion, M., "Le thème de l'entrelacs et du labyrinthe dans l'oeuvre de Léonard de Vinci," *Revue d'esthétique*, vol. 5, 1952, pp. 18-38, 35ff.
- Brizio, A. M., *Leonardo l'artista*, Florence, 1981, p. 62ff.
- , "Leonardo Pittore," *Leonardo*, ed. Ladislao Reti, Milan, 1974, pp. 20-55.

- Brown, D. A., *Leonardo's Last Supper: The Restoration*, exh. cat. National Gallery of Art, Washington D. C., 1983.
- Brumbacher, von C., "Psichari als Novellist," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, vol. 57, March 9, 1894, pp. 1-7.
- Bruschi, A., *Bramante*, Bari, 1973.
- , *Bramante Architetto*, Bari, 1969.
- Bueno de Mesquita, D. M., "The Conscience of the Prince," *Art and Politics in Renaissance Italy*, ed. G. Holmes, New York, 1993, pp. 159-184.
- , "The Sforza Prince and his State," *Florence and Italy. Renaissance Studies in Honor of Nicolai Rubinstein*, eds. P. Denley and C. Elam, London, 1988, pp. 163-172.
- Bugati, G., *Historia universale*, Venice, 1570.
- C. C., "Aneddoti di Lodovico il Moro," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, vol. 1, 1874, pp. 483-487.
- Caffi, M. "Di alcuni maestri di arte nel secolo XV in Milano poco noti o male indicati," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 5, 1878, pp. 82-104.
- Caimi, A. "Il Corredo Nuziale di Bianca M. Sforza-Visconti sposa dell' imperatore Massimiliano I," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, vol. 2, 1875, pp. 51-75.
- , "Di un documento in cui è ricordato Leonardo da Vinci," *Bollettino della consulta archeologica*, supplement to *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 2, 1875, pp. 114-117.
- Callman, E., *Beyond Nobility: Art for the Private Citizen in the Early Renaissance*, exh. cat. Allentown Museum, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1980.
- Calvi, F., "Il Castello di Porta Giovia e sue vicende nella storia milanese," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 13, 1886, pp. 255-259.
- Calvi, G., "Il Castello di Porta Giovia e le sue vicende nella storia milanese," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 13, 1886, pp. 229-297.
- , "Contributi alla biografia di Leonardo da Vinci (periodo sforzesco)," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 3, 1916, pp. 416-508.
- , "Un'allegoria di Leonardo", *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 2, 1904, pp. 482-483.
- , *Storia del Castello di Milano detto di Porta Giovia: dalla sua fondazione al di 22 marzo 1848*, Milan, 1892.
- , *Notizie*, vol. 111, 1869.

- , *I manoscritti di Leonardo da Vinci dal punto di vista: cronologico, storico e biografico*, Bologna, 1925.
- Carnevali, V., *La Sforzesca. Città e diocesi di Vigevano*, Vigevano, 1952.
- Carotti, G., "La decorazione di Leonardo nella *sala delle asse* nel castello di Milano," *L'arte*, Rome, 1902, pp. 122-123.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci: Pittore-Scultore-Architetto*, Turin, 1921.
- Carracci, G., *Palazzo Davanzati*, Florence, 1910.
- Catalano, F., *Storia di Milano*, vol. 7, Milan, 1956, pp. 3-508.
- Cartwright, J., *Beatrice D'Este Duchess of Milan 1475-1497*, London, 1928.
- Catalano, F., *La Storia di Milano*, Milan, 1956.
- Chambers, D., *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*, London, 1970.
- Clark, K., *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist*, Cambridge, 1939.
- Cermenati, M., "Intorno al *mappello* di Leonardo da Vinci: contribuzioni agli studi vinciani ed alla storia della botanica," *Annali di botanica*, Rome, vol. 5, no. 3, 1907.
- Coceva, G., "L' iconografia di Beatrice d' Este," *Archivio storico dell' arte*," vol. 2, 1889, pp. 264-267.
- Cole, B., "The Interior Decoration of the Palazzo Datini in Prato," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, vol. 13, 1967, pp. 61-82.
- Collingwood, G. H. and W. D. Brush, "Knowing Your Trees," *American Forestry Association*, Washington, D.C., 1979, pp. 276-277.
- Collison-Morley, L., *The Story of the Sforzas*, New York, 1934.
- Coomaraswamy, A. K., "The Iconography of Dürer's 'Knots' and Leonardo's *Concatenation*," *Art Quarterly*, vol. 7, 1974, pp. 109-128.
- Cortesi, F., "Leonardo botanico," *Sapere*, Milan, n. 95, 1938, p. 387 and 1952, p. 27.
- , "Leonardo da Vinci botanico," *Italia forestale e montana*, Florence, n. 5, September and October, 1952, pp. 239-250.
- Costa, P., "La Sala delle Asse di Luca Beltrami," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. VII, 2001, pp. 195-217.

- Cottafavi, C., "Palazzo Ducale di Mantova. Camerini Isabelliani di Castello," *Bollettino d'Arte del Ministero della Educazione Nazionale*, Milan-Rome, vol. 1, July 1938, pp. 279-281.
- Courajod, L. and C. Ravaisson-Mollien, "Conjectures à propos d'un buste en marbre de Béatrix d'Este au Musée du Louvre et Étude sur les connaissances botaniques de Léonard de Vinci," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, October, 1877, pp. 330-354.
- Cruciani, M. T. Boriosi, "Il giardino lombardo," *Antichità viva*, vol. 5, no. 5, 1966, pp. 27-42.
- Curtius, E. R., "The Ideal Landscape," *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. from the German by W. R. Trask, Princeton, N.J., 1967, pp. 183-202.
- D'Adda, G. "Lodovico Maria Sforza e il convento di Santa Maria delle Grazie, documenti, decreti, inventari, ecc." *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 1, 1874, pp. 25-53.
- Dandolo, V., *Storia dei bachi di seta*, Milan, 1817.
- Da Vinci, L., "Botany for Painters and Elements of Landscape Painting," *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. and trans. by J.P. Richter, vol. 1, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977.
- , *Treatise on Painting*, trans. and annotated by A. Philip McMahon, 2 volumes, Princeton, 1956.
- Davis, J. A., ed., *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, 2000.
- De Toni, G. B., *Le piante e gli animali in Leonardo da Vinci*, Bologna, 1922.
- De Vecchi, P. "Committenza e attività' artistica alla corte degli Sforza negli ultimi decenni del quattrocento," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 2, Milan, 1983, p. 503ff
- Di Felice, E. "Leonardo naturalista," *Leonardo: numero speciale del Bollettino dell' Istituto industriale L. da Vinci di Firenze*, Florence, 1952, pp. 26-29.
- Dionisitti, C., "Leonardo uomo di lettere," *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, vol. 5, 1962, pp. 183-216.
- Dell'Acqua, G. A., *Arte lombarda dai Visconti agli Sforza*, Milan, 1959.
- , *Gli Sforza a Milano*, Milan, 1978, pp. 148-152.
- De Toni, G., "Botanica artistica," *Le piante e gli animali in Leonardo da Vinci*, Bologna, 1922, pp. 15-27.
- Dina, A., "Lodovico Sforza detto il Moro e Giovan Galeazzo Sforza nel canzoniere di Bernardo Bellincione," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 1, 1884, pp. 716-740.

- Dini, B., "L'industria serica in Italia. Sec. XIII-XV," *La seta in Europa, Sec. XIII-XX*, acts from conference by the Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Datini in Prato, May 4-9, 1992, ed. S. Cavaciocchi, 1992, pp. 40-123.
- Dini, B., "La manifattura di battiloro nel quattrocento," *Tecnica e società nell' Italia dei secoli XII-XVI*, acts from conference held by the Centro Italiano di Studi di Storia e d'Arte in Pistoia, October 28-31 1984, 1987, pp. 83-111.
- Emboden, W. A., *An Extraordinary Renaissance Botanist: Leonardo da Vinci*, Los Angeles, 1973.
- , "A Renaissance Botanist: Leonardo da Vinci," *Ortolus aliquando*, vol. 1, 1975-1976, pp. 13-29.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci on Plants and Gardens*, Portland, Oregon, 1987.
- Errera, P., "L'academie de Leonard de Vinci," *Annales del l'Academie Royale d'archeologie de Belgique*, vol 2, 1900, pp. 198-212.
- F. N., "I restauri al Castello di Milano," *La Perseveranza*, July 16, 1898.
- Farrar, L., *Ancient Roman Gardens*, Gloucestershire, 1998.
- Ferriolo, M. Venturi, "Homer's Garden," *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 9, no. 2, April-June 1989, pp. 86-94.
- , *Nel grembo della vita. Le origini dell' idea del giardino*, Milan, 1989.
- Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. M. Rogers, Aldershot, England and Brookfield, Vermont, 2000.
- Filippini, F., "La tomba di Lodovico il Moro e Beatrice d'Este," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 2, 1937, pp. 198-201.
- Fossati, F., "Lodovico Sforza avvelenatore del nipote (Testimonianza di Simone del Pozzo)," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 2, 1904, pp. 162-171.
- Freedberg, D., *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago and London, 1989.
- Freud, S., *Leonardo da Vinci: a Psychosexual Study of an Infantile Reminiscence*, trans. A. A. Brill, New York, 1916.
- Frigeni, M., *Ludovico il moro: la vita e le avventure del signore*, Novara, 1990.
- Fumagalli, G., "Allegorie Vinciane," *Il marzocco*, Florence, 1913.
- G. R., "In difesa del Verde," *Il Corriere della Sera*, Milan Edition, October 12, 1893.

- Galeazzi, G., *Della maniera di far nascere e di nutrire i bachi di seta, trattato del Sig. Abb. Boissier de Sauvages*, vols. 1-3, Milan, 1765.
- Galletti, A., *Niccolò da Correggio nella vita letteraria e politica del tempo suo (1450-1508)*, Bologna, 1934.
- Gantner, J. "Les fragments récemment découverts d'une fresque de Léonard de Vinci au Château de Milan," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 53, January 1959, pp. 27-34.
- "Die Landschaften im Abendmahl und in der Sala delle Asse," *Von der Sintflut und vom Untergang der Welt*, Berlin, 1958, pp. 131-136.
- Garberi, M., *Leonardo e il castello di Milano*, Florence, 1982.
- Garin, E. "La cultura a Milano alla fine del Quattrocento," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 1, Milan, 1983, p. 21ff.
- Gelli, J., *Divise, motti e imprese di famiglie e personaggi italiani*, Milan, 1976.
- Giamatti, A. B., *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1966.
- Il giardino a Milano, per pochi e per tutti. 1288-1945*, exh. cat. Milan, 1986.
- Gibbons, F., *Dosso and Battista Dossi, Court Painters at Ferrara*, Princeton, 1968.
- Giordano, Luisa, ed., *B.F. e il Maestro di Paolo e Daria. Un codice e un problema di miniatura lombarda*, Binasco 1991.
- Gli Sforza a Milano*, Milan, 1978.
- Goldscheider, L., *Leonardo da Vinci, Landscapes and Plants*, New York and London, 1952, cat. no. 20.
- Goldthwaite, R., *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600*, Baltimore, 1993.
- , "Finding the Self in a Renaissance Palace," *Fenwey Court: Imaging the Self in Renaissance Italy*, 1990-1991, pp. 60-66.
- , "The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture," *American Historical Review*, vol. 77, 1972, pp. 977-1012.
- Grassi, L., "Trasmutazione linguistica dell'architettura sforzesca: splendore e presagio al tempo di Ludovico il Moro," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 2, Milan, 1983, p. 417ff.
- Grayson, C., "La letteratura e la corte Sforzesca alla fine del Quattrocento," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 2, Milan, 1983, p. 651ff.

- Gremmo, L., "Il restauro del castello di Vigevano: osservazioni, documenti, ipotesi," *Bolletino d'arte*, vol. 66, 1981, pp. 123-138.
- , L., "Il castello di Vigevano alla fine del secolo XV. Osservazioni emerse dai restauri in corso," *Arte lombarda*, vols. 86-87, 1988, pp. 146-159.
- Grillo, P., "Le origini della manifattura serica a Milano (1400-1450)," *Studi storici*, no. 4, vol 35, 1994, pp. 896-916.
- Herzen-Monod, E., "Le probleme de la Sala delle Asse (Lambris a Milan) de Leonard de Vinci," talk given at l'Academie des Beaux-Arts on January 25, 1961, Paris.
- Hoffmann, V., "Leonardos Ausmalung der Sala delle Asse im Castello Sforzesco," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, vol. 16, 1972, pp. 51-62.
- Hughes, D. O., "La moda proibita. La legge suntuaria nell' Italia rinascimentale," *Memoria*, 1984, no. 11-12, pp. 82-105.
- Ianziti, G., "A Humanistic Historian and His Documents: Giovanni Simonetta, Secretary to the Sforzas," *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 34, 1981, pp. 492-501.
- , *Humanistic Historiography under the Sforzas. Politics and Propaganda in Fifteenth-century Milan*, Oxford, 1988.
- , "Patronage and the Production of History: the Case of Quattrocento Milan," *Patronage Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. F. W. Kent and P. Simons, Canberra and Oxford, 1988, pp. 299-311.
- , "The Rise of Sforza Historiography," *Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations*, Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence, vol. 1, pp. 79-94.
- I diarii di Marino Sanuto (MCCCCXCVI-MDXXXIII) dall'autografo Marciano ital. cl. VII codd. CDXIX-CDLXXVII*, eds. F. Stefani, G. Berchet, N. Barozzi, R. Fulin and M. Allegri, Venice, 1879-1903.
- Italian Art, 1250-1550: The Relation of Renaissance Art to Life and Society*, New York and Cambridge, 1987.
- Italian Manuscripts in the Piermont Morgan Library*, ed. M. Harrsen and G. K. Boyce, New York, 1953.
- Jacini, C., "E' diventata bianca la Saletta negra," *Corriere lombardo*, Milan, n. 150, June, 27-28, 1956, p. 8.
- Joost-Gaugier, C. *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura: Meaning and Invention*, Cambridge, 2002.

- Kaplan, E. C., "La Sala delle Asse in the History of Taste," M.A. thesis University of California, Los Angeles, 1986.
- Kellum, B., "The Construction of Landscape in Augustan Rome: The Garden Room at the Villa ad Gallinas," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 76, no. 2, June, 1994, pp. 211-224.
- Kemp, M., "The Exercise of Fantasia," *The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981, pp. 181-189.
- Kern, H., *Labirinti: forme e interpretazioni 500 anni di presenza di un archetipo*, Milan, 1981.
- Kiang, D., "Gasparo Visconti's Pasitea and the Sala delle Asse," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 2, 1989, pp. 101-108.
- Kliemann, J., *Gesta dipinte. La grande decorazione nelle dimore italiane dal quattrocento al seicento*, Milan, 1993.
- Knowledge, Goodness and Power: The Debate over Nobility among Quattrocento Italian Humanists*, ed. A. Rabil, Jr., Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, Binghamton, 1991.
- Ladner, G. B., "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of the Renaissance," *De Artibus opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. M. Meiss, 2 vols., New York, 1961.
- Lauterbach, I., "The Gardens of the Milanese *Villeggiatura* in the Mid-Sixteenth Century," *The Italian Garden. Art Design and Culture*, ed. J. D. Hunt, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 127-159.
- Lazzaro, C., *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, New Haven and London, 1990.
- Leonardo da Vinci, Selected Scholarship*, ed. Claire Farago, 5 vols., "Bibliography and Early Art Criticism of Leonardo da Vinci," "An Overview of Leonardo's Career and Projects Until c. 1500," "Leonardo's Projects c. 1500-1519," "Leonardo's Writings and Theory of Art," 1999.
- Leonardo da Vinci "Botany for Painters and Elements of Landscape Painting," *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. by J. P. Richter, vol. 1, New York, 1970, pp. 203-240.
- Levi D'Ancona, M., "The Botanical Garden of the Renaissance," *Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting*, Florence, 1977, no. 104 "mulberry" p. 233.
- Longhi, R., *Arte lombarda dai Visconti agli Sforza*, exh. cat., Milan, 1958.
- Lopez, G., *La roba e la libertà: Leonardo nella Milano di Ludovico il Moro*, Milan, 1982.
- Loudon, J. C., "Morus. The Mulberry Tree," *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britanicum, The Trees and Shrubs of Britain*, vol. 3, London, 1844, pp. 1343-1360.
- Lubkin, G., *The Court of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan (1466-1476)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University California, Berkeley, 1982.

- Lubkin, G., *A Renaissance Court. Milan Under Galeazzo Maria Sforza*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1984.
- Ludovicus Dux*, ed. L. Giordano, Vigevano, 1995.
- Luzio, A., "Isabella d'Este e la corte Sforzesca," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 28, 1901, pp. 145-176.
- Luzio, A. and R. Renier, "Delle relazioni di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga con Ludovico e Beatrice Sforza," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 17, 1890, pp. 74-119, 346-399, 618-674.
- , "Il lusso di Isabella d'Este," *Nuova antologia*, Rome, 1896, vol. 63 pp. 441-469, vol. 64 pp. 294-324, vol. 65 pp. 261-286.
- , "Isabella d' Este," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 7, 1890, p. 388.
- Lydecker, J. K., *The Domestic Setting of the Arts in Renaissance Florence*, Ph. D. Dissertation Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1987.
- Mack Smith, D., *Modern Italy*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1997.
- Mainoni, P., "La seta a Milano nel XV secolo: aspetti economici e istituzionali." *Studi storici*, no. 4, vol. 35, 1994, pp. 871-896.
- Malaguzzi-Valeri, F., *La corte di Ludovico il Moro, la vita privata e l'arte*, vols. 1-3, Milan, 1913-1923.
- Malaguzzi-Valeri, G., "Ricamatori e arazzieri a Milano nel quattrocento," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 19-30, 1903, pp. 34-63.
- Manfredini, "La Sala delle Asse nel Castello Sforzesco," *Monitore tecnico*, vol. 8, no. 16, June, 1902, pp. 244-245.
- Manfredini, "Cronaca cittadina. Il restauro delle Sala delle Asse al Castello Sforzesco," *Monitore tecnico*, vol. 8, no. 14, May, 1902, p. 617.
- Marani, P., "Leonardo e le colonne ad tronchonos: tracce di un programma iconologico per Ludovico il Moro," *Raccolta vinciana*, vol. 21, 1982, pp. 103-120.
- , *Leonardo. L'ultima cena*, Milan, 1999.
- , *Leonardo una carriera di pittore*, Milan, 1999.
- Marinoni, A., *I rebus di Leonardo da Vinci raccolti e interpretati*, Florence, 1954.
- Martindale, A., "Painting for Pleasure – Some Lost Fifteenth-Century Secular Decorations of Northern Italy," *The Vanishing Past. Studies in Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology*

- Presented to Christopher Hohler, ed. A. Borg and A. Martindale, Oxford, 1981, pp. 109-131.
- Mastronardi, L., *Il dominio degli Sforza e l'opera di Leonardo da Vinci a Vigevano*, Vigevano, 1952.
- McCabe, J., "Leonardo's *Curvilinear Stars*," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, vol. 83, March, 1974, pp. 179-186.
- McGrath, "Ludovico il Moro and his Moors," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 65, 2002, pp. 67 and 94.
- Meyer, E. P., *First Lady of the Renaissance: A biography of Isabella d'Este*, Boston, 1970.
- Miglio, M., *Il giardino storico italiano. Problemi di indagine. Fonti letterarie e storiche*, Florence, 1981.
- Moffatt, C. J., "Merito et Tempore: The Imprese of Lodovico Sforza at Vigevano," *Emblematica*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1988, pp. 229-263.
- Moffatt, C. J., *Urbanism and Political Discourse: Lodovico Sforza's Architectural Plans and Emblematic Imagery at Vigevano*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992.
- Moffit, J. F., "Leonardo's *Sala delle Asse* and the Primordial Origins of Architecture," *Arte lombarda*, vols. 92-93, 1990, pp. 76-90.
- Molà, L., "L'industria della seta a Lucca nel tardo Medioevo: emigrazione della manodopera e creazione di una rete produttiva a Bologna e Venezia," *La seta in Europa, Sec. XIII-XX*, acts from conference held by the Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Datini in Prato, May 4-9, 1992, ed. S. Cavaciocchi, 1992, pp. 434-444.
- Le monde vegetal (XXIIe-XVIIe seicles) savoirs et usages sociaux*, papers presented at Villa i Tatti (Harvard University), Florence and Saint-Denis, 1993.
- Monti, A. and P. Arrigoni, "Sala delle Asse," *La vita nel Castello Sforzesco attraverso i tempi*, Milan, pp. 69-75.
- Moretti, G. *La Commemorazione di Luca Beltrami tenuta nel Castello Sforzesco*, Milan, 1936
- Morley, B., "The Plant Illustrations of Leonardo da Vinci," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 121, 1979, pp. 553-560.
- Moynihan, E. B., *Paradise as a Garden in Persia and Mughal India*, New York, 1979.
- Müller-Walde, P., "Beitrage zur kenntnis des Leonardo da Vinci," *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preußischen Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, pp. 54-169.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci Lebensskizze und forschungen über sein verhältniss zur florentiner Kunst und zu Rafael*, Munich, 1890.

- Muntz, E., "Leonardo de Vinci peintre et décorateur," *Bulletin de l'art ancien et moderne*, vol. 7, 1902, pp. 214-215.
- Nardelli, F. P., "La biblioteca Visconteo Sforzesca. Ubicazione e disposizione del materiale librario," *Bibliofilia*, vol. 97, no. 1, 1995, pp. 21-33.
- Natale, A. R., "I diari di Cicco Simonetta," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 3, 1951-1953, pp. 154-187; vol. 4, 1951-1953, pp. 186-217; vol. 5, 1954-1956, pp. 54-125; vol. 6, 1954-1956, pp. 292-318; vol. 7, 1957-1958, pp. 277-288.
- The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology III*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978, pp. 867, 869, "tree."
- Novati, F., "Scoperte artistiche. Argo nel Castello Sforzesco di Milano (a proposito d'un dipinto recentemente scoperto ed attribuito a Leonardo)," *Emporium*, 1898, pp. 154-160.
- Oberty, F., "La botanica in Leonardo da Vinci," thesis, University of Florence, 1949.
- Ottino della Chiesa, A., *The Complete Paintings of Leonardo da Vinci*, 1985, Penguin Classics of World Art, originally Milan, 1967.
- Oxford Encyclopedia of Trees of the World*, Oxford, 1981, p. 158ff.
- Panofsky, E., *Studies in Iconography: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York, 1972.
- Paolini, C., "La camera da letto tra quattro e cinquecento: arredi e vita privata," *Itinerari della casa fiorentina del Rinascimento*, ed. E. Nardinocci, Florence, 1994, pp. 22-45.
- Papini, R. "Leonardo contempla la natura," *Italia forestale e montana*, Florence, vol. 5, September and October, 1952, pp. 227-238.
- Parker, D., "Ideology and Cultural Practice: the Case of Dante's Treatment of Beatrice d'Este," *Dante Studies*, ed. C. Kleinhenz, vol. 61, New York, 1993, pp. 131-147.
- Patrone, G. "Osservazioni di Leonardo sull'accrescimento degli alberi," *Italia forestale e montana*, Florence, pp. 272-275.
- Pavari, A., "Una nuova scienza: la cronologia anulare," *Monti e boschi*, Florence, no. 10, October, 1952, pp. 435-441.
- Pedretti, C., *Codex Atlanticus Catalogue. The Codex Atlanticus of Leonardo da Vinci. A Catalogue of its Newly Restored Sheets.*, 2 vols., New York, 1978-1979.
- , *I disegni di Leonardo e della sua cerchia nella biblioteca reale di Torino*, Florence, 1989, p. 112.
- , "Landscape in Leonardo as a Political Allegory," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 3, 1990, pp. 153-160.

- , "Le 'fantasie dei vinci'" *Almanacco italiano*, vol. 78, 1978, pp. 122-131.
- , *Leonardo architetto*, Milan, 1981.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci, Nature Studies from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle*, London, 1983.
- , "L'organizzazione simbolica dello spazio nelle cartelle dell'Accademia Vinciana," *Prospettiva rinascimentale: codificazioni e trasgressioni*, ed. M. Delai Emiliani, vol. 1, 1980, pp. 261-266.
- , "Nec ense," *Achademia Leonardi Vinci*, vol. 3, 1990, pp. 82-90.
- , *Leonardo. A Study in Chronology and Style*, London, 1956.
- , *Leonardo Studies for the Last Supper from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle*, Milan, 1983.
- , "Newly Discovered Evidence of Leonardo's Association with Bramante," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 32, 1973, pp. 30-42.
- , "Il progetto originario per Santa Maria delle Grazie e altri aspetti inediti del rapporto Leonardo-Bramante," *Studi bramanteschi. Atti del convegno internazionale, Milano-Urbino-Roma*, 1970, Rome, 1974, pp. 197-203.
- , *Richter Commentary. The Literary Works of Leonardo*, ed. from the original manuscripts by J. P. Richter, London, 1977.
- , *Studi per il cenacolo*, Milan, 1984.
- , *Windsor Fragments: Leonardo da Vinci Fragments at Windsor Castle from the Codex Atlanticus*, London, 1957.
- Peebles, R. J., "The Dry Tree: Symbol of Death," *Vassar Medieval Studies*, ed. C. F. Fiske, New Haven, Connecticut, 1923, pp. ?.
- Peroni, A., M. G. Albertini Ottolenghi, D. Vicini, L. Giordano, *Pavia: Architetture dell'età Sforzesca*, Turin, 1978.
- Piccaluga, G. F., "Gli affreschi di casa Panigarola e la cultura milanese tra quattro e cinquecento," *Arte lombarda*, vol. 86/7, 1983, pp. 14-25.
- Pittura murale in Italia. Il Cinquecento*, ed. M. Gregori, Turin, 1997.
- Pittura murale in Italia. Il Quattrocento*, ed. M. Gregori, Turin, 1996.
- Pochat, G., *Der Exotismus während des Mittelalters und der Renaissance. Voraussetzungen, Entwicklung und Wandel eines bildnerischen Vokabulars*, 1970, Stockholm, pp. 37-38.

- Pomilio, M. and A. Ottino della Chiesa, *L'opera completa di Leonardo pittore*, series: *Classici dell'Arte*, vol. 12, Milan, 1967, pp. 99-100, no. 24.
- Popham, *The Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci*, London, 1945.
- Porro G., "Frammento d'una cassa nuziale Sforzesca," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 7, 1880, pp. 483-533.
- , "Lettere di Galeazzo Maria Sforza," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 5, 1878, pp. 107-129; vol. 5, 1878, pp. 254-274; vol. 5, 1878, pp. 637-668; vol. 6, 1879, pp. 250-268.
- , "Nozze di Beatrice d' Este e di Anna Sforza," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 9, 1882, pp. 483-534.
- Porteous, A., *Forest, Folklore, Mythology and Romance*, New York, 1928.
- Portioli, A., "La nascita di Massimiliano Sforza," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 9, 1992, pp. 325-334.
- Pozzo, S. del, *Libro dell'Estimo*, begun 1550, preserved in manuscript form in the Archivio Storico Civico di Vigevano. Published in extracts by Alessandro Colombo, "La fondazione della Villa Sforzesca secondo Simone del Pozzo e i documenti dell'Archivio Vigevanasco," *Bollettino storico-bibliografico subalpino*, vol. 1, 1986, pp. 217-24, 370-9 (continued in vols., 2, 4, 7), p. 373 (f. 510 r).
- Rabil, A., "Humanism in Milan," *Renaissance Humanism, Foundations, Forms and Legacy*, vol. 1 "Humanism in Italy", ed. A. Rabil, Philadelphia, 1988, pp. 236-263.
- Rafinesque, C. S., *American Manual of the Mulberry Trees*, Philadelphia, 1839.
- Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts, Treasures from the British Library*, ed. T. Kren, New York and London, 1983, p. 110, fig. 14c, right border.
- Renier, R. Gaspare Visconti, *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 2, 1886, pp. 509-562; vol. 3, 1886, pp. 776-824.
- Resta, G., "La cultura umanistica a Milano alla fine del Quattrocento," *Milano nell'età di Ludovico il Moro. Atti del convegno internazionale, 28 febbraio-4 marzo 1983*, vol. 1, Milan, 1983, p. 201ff.
- Reti, L., *The Unknown Leonardo*, New York, 1988.
- Richter, J. P., *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci*, New York, 1970.
- Robey, D., "Humanist Views on the Study of Poetry in the Early Italian Renaissance," *History of Education*, vol. 13, 1984, pp. 7-14.
- Robin, D., *Filelfo in Milan - Writings 1451-1477*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1991.

- Rosci, M., "La sala delle Asse," *Leonardo, la pittura*, Florence, 1977, pp. 115-125.
- Rosenberg, C, ed., *Art and Politics in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Notre Dame, 1990.
- , "Courtly Decorations and the Decorum of Interior Space," *La corte e lo spazio: Ferrara estense*, ed. G. Papagno and A. Quondam, Rome, 1982, pp. 529-544.
- "La Sala delle Asse di Leonardo da Vinci nel Castello Sforzesco," *Emporium*, vols. 15-16, 1902, pp. 475-477.
- Sabatini, G., *Tutto Leonardo a Milano*, Rome, 1988.
- Sangiorgi, G., "Contributi allo studio dell'arte tessile," Milan and Rome, no date, (article "Velluti aulici," from *Rassegna d'Arte*, 1920), p. 66.
- Sant' Ambrogio, D., "Nel Castello di Porta Giovia, La decorazione a scarlioni," *La lega lombarda*, Milan, vol. 30, nos. 11, 1, 12, 1902.
- , "Nel Castello di Porta Giovia, Il pavimento a marmi policromi della sala delle Asse," Biblioteca d'Arte Castello Sforzesco, OP-B 519, 13093.
- , "Il Mercurio del Castello di Porta Giovia," *La lega Lombarda*, January 16-17, 1898.
- , *Il pallio ricamato ed in stile leonardesco del Santuario di Santa Maria del Monte di Varese*, Milan, 1907.
- , "Sulla flora della Sala delle Assi," *La lega lombarda*, Milan, vol. 15, no. 6, 1902.
- Santangelo, A., *A Treasury of Great Italian Textiles*, New York, 1964, p. 53.
- Schiapparelli, A., *La casa fiorentina e i suoi arredi nei secoli XIV e XV*, ed. M. Sframeli and L. Pagnotta, 2 vols, Florence, 1983.
- Schofield, R., "Gaspere Visconti, mecenate di Bramante," *Arte, committenza ed economia a Roma e nelle corti del Rinascimento: 1420-1530*, Acts from the international meeting held in Rome, October 24-27, 1990, pp. 297-324.
- , "A Humanist Description of the Architecture for the Wedding of Gian Galeazzo Sforza and Isabella d'Aragona (1489)" *Papers of the British School at Rome*, vol. 56, 1988, p. 219.
- , "Ludovico il Moro and Vigevano," *Arte lombarda*, vol. 62, 1982, pp. 93-140.
- Seidlitz, von J., "Die illustrierten Handschriften der Hamilton Sammlung zur Berlin," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 7, 1884, p. 83.
- Severi, F., "Leonardo naturalista, biologo e geografo," *Il Vasari*, Arezzo, 1959, pp. 3-11.

- Shearman, J., *Only Connect: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*, Princeton, 1992.
- Solmi, E., "La festa del Paradiso di Leonardo da Vinci e Bernardo Bellincione (13 gennaio 1490)," *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 4, vol. 1, 1904, pp. 75-89 and in *Scritti Vinciani*, Florence, 1924.
- , E., "La politica di Lodovico il Moro nei simboli di Leonardo da Vinci," *Scritti vari in onore di Rodolfo Renier*, Turin, Milan and Rome, 1912.
- , E., "La resurrezione dell'opera di Leonardo," *Leonardo*, ed. Garzanti, Milan, 1936, pp. 3-45.
- Solmi, M. *Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)*, Florence, 1920.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci nel castello e nella sforzesca di Vigevano*, Vigevano, 1911.
- , "Su una probabile gita di Leonardo da Vinci in Genova il 17 marzo 1498 per visitarvi quel porto," *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 4, vol. 14, 1910, pp. 438-450.
- Starn, R., "Seeing Culture in a Room for a Renaissance Prince," *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt, Berkeley, 1989, pp. 205-232.
- Starn, R. and L. Partridge, *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1992.
- Steinberg, Leo, *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper*, New York, 2001.
- , "Leonardo's Last Supper," *The Art Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 4, Winter, 1973, pp. 297-410.
- , *Leonardo's Last Supper*, Detroit, 1973.
- Steinitz, K., "A Forest in a Castle," *Terra: the Quarterly Magazine of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1973, pp. 18-22.
- Strocchia, S., *Death and ritual in Renaissance Florence*, Baltimore, 1992.
- Symonds, G., *The Tree Identification Book*, New York, 1958, master pages 60-61, fruit 2.
- Szafranska, M., "The philosophy of nature and the grotto in the Renaissance Garden," *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 9, no. 2, April-June 1989, pp. 76-85.
- Tessuti serici italiani, 1450-1530*, exh. cat. Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata/Centro Italiano per lo Studio della Storia dei Tessili, Milan, 1983, cat. no. 28.
- Tetel, M., et. al, *Life and Death in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, Durham, 1989.
- Thornton, P., *The Italian Renaissance Interior 1400-1600*, New York, 1991.

- Tinagli, Paola, "The identity of the prince: Cosimo de' Medici, Giorgio Vasari and the *Ragionamenti*," *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. Mary Rogers, 2000, pp. 189-196.
- Tissoni Benvenuti, A., "I modelli fiorentini e la letteratura a Milano all'epoca degli Sforza," *Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations*, Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa i Tatti, Florence, 1989, pp. 41-55.
- Tomei, L., "La committenza degli affreschi Bramanteschi: un problema da aprire," *Storia dell'arte*, vol. 22, 1974, p. 22ff, Appendix.
- Treccani, G., *Storia di Milano*, vol. 7 "L'età Sforzesca (1450-1500)", vol. 15 "Nell'unità Italiana (1859-1900)", vol 16 "Principio di Secolo (1901-1915)", Milan, 1962.
- Trexler, R. C., "Ritual Behavior in Renaissance Florence: the Setting," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, vol. 4, 1973, pp. 125-144.
- Turner, R. A., "Leonardo da Vinci," *Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1966, pp. 16-38.
- Trutty-Coohill, P., "Leonardo's Sala delle Asse and Sullivan's Organic Architecture," *The Origins of Life*, vol. 1: "The Primogenital Matrix of Life and Its Context", ed. A. T. Tymieniecka, Belmont, MA, 2000.
- Vallata, E., "Appendice documentaria," *Leonardo una carriera di pittore*, ed. P. Marani, Milan, 1999, pp. 342-352.
- Vasari, G., *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architetti*, vol. 8, Florence, 1889.
- Vecce, C., *Donato Bramante, sonetti e altri scritti*, Rome, 1995.
- Venturi, A., *La critica e l'arte di Leonardo da Vinci*, Bologna, 1919.
- , "Leonardo da Vinci pittore," *L'arte*, 1902, pp. 400-403.
- , *Leonardo da Vinci pittore*, Bologna, 1912.
- , "Relazioni artistiche tra le corti di Milano e Ferrara nel secolo XV," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 2, 1885, pp. 252-254.
- , *Storia dell'arte italiana*, vol. 6, Milan, 1908, pp. 1130-1131.
- Venturi, G., "Picta poësis: ricerche sulla poesia e il giardino dalle origini al Seicento," *Storia d'Italia, annali*, Turin, 1982, vol. 5, pp. 663ff.
- Verga, E., "Il comune di Milano e l'arte della seta dal secolo decimo quinto al decimottavo," *Annuario storico-artistico del comune di Milano*, vol. 31, 1915, pp. ix-lix.

- , "Le corporazioni delle industrie tessili a Milano: loro rapporti e conflitti nei secoli xvi-xviii," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1909, pp. 64-101.
- , "Le leggi suntuarie milanesi," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 9, no. 25, 1898, pp. 5-79.
- , "Origini dell' organizzazione dell'Arte della seta in Milano – Secolo XV," *Annuario storico-statistico per il 1915*, ed. Comune di Milano, vol. 32, no. 2 of the second series, Milan, 1916, pp. ix-xxv.
- Verheyen, E., *The Paintings in the Studiolo of Isabella d' Este at Mantua*, New York, 1971.
- Vianello, C. A., "Testimonianze venete su Milano e la Lombardia degli anni 1492-1495," *Archivio storico lombardo*, vol. 4, 1939, pp. 408-423.
- Visconti, G., *I canzonieri per Beatrice d' Este e per Bianca Maria Sforza*, ed. Paolo Bongrani, Milan, 1979.
- , *Li due Amanti Paolo e Daria, Rime (1495)*, ed. Philippus Mantegatius, Milan, 1983.
- Watson, P. F., *The Garden of Love in Tuscan Art of the Early Renaissance*, Philadelphia, 1979.
- Weissman, R., "Taking Patronage Seriously: Mediterranean Values and Renaissance Society," *Patronage Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. F. W. Kent and P. Simons, Canberra and Oxford, 1988, pp. 25-46.
- Welch, E. S., *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan*, New Haven and London, 1995.
- , "Galeazzo Maria Sforza and the Castello di Pavia 1469," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 71, no. 3, 1989, pp. 352-375.
- , "The Process of Sforza Patronage," *Renaissance Studies, Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1989, pp. 370-386.
- Wilber, D., *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions*, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, 1962.
- Wilkinson, A., "Gardens in Ancient Egypt: their locations and symbolism," *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 10, no. 4, October-December 1990, pp. 199-208
- Woods-Marsden, "Images of Castles in the Renaissance: Symbols of 'Signoria' / Symbols of Tyranny," *Art Journal*, vol. 48, 1989, pp. 130-137.
- Woodville, W., "Morus Nigra," *Medical Botany*, London, 1832, pp. 712-714.
- Zanoboni, M. P., "De suo labore et mercede me adiuvavit. La manodopera femminile a Milano nell'età sforzesca," *Nuova rivista storica*, vol. 78, 1994, pp. 103-122.
- Zubov, V. P., *Leonardo da Vinci*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, originally Moscow, 1961, p. 262.

Zwijnenberg, R., "The Cartelle," *The Writings and Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci. Order and Chaos in Early Modern Thought*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 181-187.