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(such as Brian P. Copenhaver) are referred to, their more recent publications on the topic are not cited. In many cases, Walton refers to important primary sources only from secondary literature; and it is hard to understand why, because Walton has considerable philological skills—at times translating from Hebrew or Middle High German.

For this reviewer, *Genesis and the Chemical Philosophy* remains in many ways as hermetic as the sources it seeks to elucidate. Yet, for a limited circle of true adepts of the art, Walton's book may well contain grains of philosophical gold—there for patient mining.

SERGIUS KODERA, *University of Vienna*

Wolff, Martha (ed.).

Kings, Queens, and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France.

Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago / New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. Pp. 208 + 190 ill. ISBN 978-0-300-17025-2 (hardcover) \$60.

The art of France in the years 1480–1515, a transitional period between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, has often been overlooked in favour of the works created after 1515 during the reign of Francis I, a true Renaissance monarch. A major exhibition of the art of all media (painting, sculpture, metalwork, stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, printed books, and tapestry) which travelled in 2011 from Paris to Chicago sought to restore the balance. Rarely seen in public, objects in a style that unites flamboyant late Gothic forms with a new antique vocabulary were brought together in an exhibition that presented the opportunity for a general audience and scholars alike to explore in depth the French artistic culture from around the turn of the sixteenth century.

Kings, Queens, and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France—the beautifully illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition—is the first full treatment of this subject in English. It contains four main essays and eleven short articles, in addition to detailed entries on each object, including information on provenance, technical aspects, and a comprehensive bibliography. The texts, by distinguished American and French scholars, give an excellent though brief overview of the historical, political, and economic situation in France during

the reign of Charles VIII and Louis XII, two ambitious kings whose military conquests in Italy strengthened cultural ties between the nations and enriched French art, up to then dominated by the Northern Gothic style, with new Italian Renaissance vocabulary.

A pivotal topic of discussion is the subtle relationship between artists and their patrons, as well as the choice of imaginary intended to elevate the status of French royalty and their court. “French patronage” is the key to understanding this ensemble of artworks; royal support is what makes the collection French, since the majority of the artists working for the court were not French, but Flemish or Italian. Royal patronage and close collaboration with the artists regarding the use of imaginary was of paramount importance: France, at that time, was uniting into a nation state and needed to trumpet French national spirit. Other crucial topics are also addressed in this catalogue: centres of artistic production (Paris, Loire Valley, Burgundy), biographical information about major patrons and artists, the role of aristocratic women as patrons (especially Anne of Brittany, the wealthiest lady of her time and the wife of both Charles VIII and Louis XII—a lady with exceptional power!), analyses of artistic styles prevalent at the time, the migration of artists from the Low Countries and from Italy, new media (Gutenberg’s revolution was in full swing), new techniques (painted enamel), and new ways of disseminating works of art.

The essays provide an insightful introduction to the detailed descriptions of over 100 precious objects gathered from almost 50 institutions and private lenders. Some, like the “Little Book of Love” by Pierre Sala, or “Madonna of the Yarnwinder” by Leonardo (and workshop), are well-known. Others (which constitute a majority of the collection) are presented for the first time in a critical examination. Treasures in a variety of media, which, because of their disparate locations, were previously known only to a narrow circle of scholars, are now grouped in a single opus, thus enabling us to compare them and to investigate the links between different media (particularly stained glass, prints, and tapestries), as well as to explore complex networks of artistic influences.

Many of these artworks were made by sophisticated court artists, renowned in their own time but today almost completely forgotten. Among them are the (apparent) inventor of the portrait miniature, Jean Fouquet; the illuminator to four kings, Jean Bourdichon; the sculptor whose work bridged the late Gothic and Renaissance styles, Michel Colombe; multitalented painter and draftsman working for the royals, Jean Poyer; and a remarkable painter

(probably of Netherland origin), the “Master of Moulins,” only recently identified as Jean Hey. Hey was employed by the powerful Bourbon dukes who, through his work, used the medium of painting in support of their dynastic pretensions.

Significant recent research brings new attributions to the oeuvre of Jean Hey. For the first time, his ten exquisite paintings gathered from collections held in Chicago, Glasgow, Paris, London, Autun, Munich, New York, and Brussels are put side by side and analysed in detail by Martha Wolff, Curator of European Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, and general editor of the book. Similarly, the output of Jean Poyer is reconstructed and examined in depth. In addition, numerous artists who contributed to the decoration of several manuscripts are reclaimed from near-oblivion, and the names of various masters of sculptural works are rediscovered.

This book is an excellent introduction to the art of the closing decades of the Middle Ages, with emphasis on French royal patronage. It establishes an understanding of the tension between two contradicting traditions (medieval and Renaissance) which were, as the authors convincingly demonstrate, often reconcilable. The book, superbly written, will enlighten undergraduate students and general audiences approaching the art of this period for the first time, by telling the story through an astonishing array of precious and rare artworks and through insightful essays which brilliantly capture the spirit of the age of transformation; yet at the same time, graduate students and readers familiar with the subject will find new and fascinating discussions, especially regarding attributions and the migration of the artists. This is a valuable source of information for the general audience as well as for scholars in many fields.

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