

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
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The Cavassa's patronage in Saluzzo and Carmagnola, (Piedmont- Italy)

by Manuela Franchetto

Tutor: Giulio Ieni

The thesis shows the vicissitudes of a family that – between the 4th and 5th century – wanted to leave a mark of her wealth, her prestige, her love for art and culture in places where she lived and in sepulchral chapels. Rich and powerful men, sometimes unscrupulous, lover of arts, Cavassa family passed their days searching for the most important artists and increasing their thirst of knowledge. The library in which there were over 170 books shows that. We don't forget that in 1503 Francesco had printed to his own cost the *Aureum Opus de veritate contritionis* of the dominican Gian Luigi Vivaldi. Their love for art is shown by the large number of artists who worked for them to beautify their houses, their chapels, their tombs: from Hans Clemer to Gian Martino Spanzotti, Matteo Sanmicheli, Pietro Dolce *da Savigliano* and Francesco Cugiano *da Chieri*.

The storical age has been studied too, concerning also Marquisate and marquises who governed in those years. Ludovico II and Margherita di Foix's politics, Saluzzo who became a diocese, the presence of the most powerful religious group influenced on the choices of these men who were vicars, podestàs, ecclesiastics. The long and endured construction of the chapel of a marquis in *S. Giovanni* church was very important at that time, for which the marquis called artist as Antoine Le Moiturier and Benedetto Briosco.

Cavassa family's luck started when Enrico (who was spices' merchant and lived in Carmagnola) bought a feudal house near the place and obtained the investiture from the marquis Ludovico I.

After buying a site in *Cherche* suburb, he built his house, now called "*elephants palace*" because of a fresco who decorates the façade.

For his last will and testament, the heirs built a chapel in *S. Agostino* church and another chapel in *S. Maria di Viurso* church in Carmagnola. When he died, his daughters Caterina and Glorizia and his nephew Bartolomeo inherited a very big fortune.

In about 1550 Tommaso, Bartolomeo's son, bought a house in *S. Agostino* square and the painter Francesco Cugiano *da Chieri* made the frescos.



Carmagnola. Sundials House. Frescos

In 1450 Glorizia had married Galeazzo's cousin and had moved with him to Saluzzo. Here, Galeazzo became general vicar of the Marquisate and he received a rich house, which the son Francesco changed according to the Italian Renaissance canons.



Saluzzo. Cavassa House. Matteo Sanmicheli's portal

At the beginning of 1500, Francesco (general vicar of the Marquisate too) obtained S. Girolamo's chapel from dominicans, where he placed his father's mausoleum which was made by Sanmicheli.



Saluzzo. S. Giovanni Convent. Cavassa Chapel. Galeazzo Cavassa's mausoleum

He built a chapel in S. *Agostino* church with his brother Ilario.

Feliciano, another brother, built a chapel consacrated to the Vergin in *Collegiata* church in Carmagnola and maybe for this chapel he ordered to Gian Martino Spanzotti an ancona; in that church there was another chapel of Cavassa, built by Giovanni's (Galeazzo brother) sons.

Unfortunately there is a little number of testimonies: century with wars, sacks, negligence modified the architectonic structure, ruined frescos, lost pictures, took away altars, destroyed chapels.

The documents too had the same end: the only original acts that remain are the inventory of Saluzzo Palace and some parchments about Galeazzo and Francesco's purchases. For this reason, it has been indispensable to consult Cadasties and *Ordinati*, minutes of Pastoral Visites, and also the testimony left by historian of the immediately following age.