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Legal Visuality. Exegesis, Ambiguity, and Dissimulation of the Donation of Constantine in the Early Modern Period

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, Harvey Miller, 2026 Hardback, Pages: viii + 422, Size:225 x 300 mm, Illustrations:9 b/w, 211 col., Language: English. ISBN 9781915487643.

Commentaire : Summary This study is the first to explore the reasons for the intriguing proliferation of the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine in the early modern period and the implications of the theme for the global politics of the papacy. The (in)famous Donation, a document forged in the eighth century, stipulated the endowment of the papacy with the entire "West" by the first Christian emperor Constantine the Great (306-37). Instead of looking at related visual material as application of the vivid politico-religious argumentation over the matter, the book demonstrates the significant and original contribution of images to this early modern debate on the Donation of Constantine (and its corollaries). Moreover, it interrogates both the presence and the absence of this controversial episode from Constantinian imagery. Departing from iconographic methodology, the study proposes political art and, what the author calls, legal visibility as the overarching concepts. The book deals with issues of intermediality, bridging over two centuries and over conventional geographical divides, situating Italian art in a larger European context especially through diplomatic art. It analyzes familiar artworks from new perspectives (like pieces by Raphael and Bernini in the Vatican or Rubens' tapestry designs) as well as many little-studied but equally revelatory images (like prints, medals, and cabinets). **TABLE OF CONTENTS** Introduction 1. Competing Views and Evidence of Constantine's Fundamental Deeds 2. Gregory XIII and Tommaso Laureti's Explanation of the Donation of Constantine in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican 3. New Exegesis at the Lateran under Sixtus V and Clement VIII: Appropriation, Prescription, and Ambiguity 4. Genealogies of Donations to the Papacy: The Frescoes in the Novum Archivum Vaticanum and Bernini's Constantine 5. The Foundation of Constantinople, or the Translatio Imperii ad Orientem, as a Proxy for the Donation of Constantine: The Life of Constantine by Rubens and Cortona Epilogue Appendixes List of Illustrations Bibliography

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