

CASTELLO SFORZESCO



THE TRIVULZIO COLLECTION AT THE CASTELLO SFORZESCO



**MILANO
MUSEO
CITY**
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Archivio
Storico Civico
Biblioteca Trivulziana



Leonardo da Vinci's *Notebook* at the Sforza Castle A significant episode of Milanese collecting

Leonardo da Vinci's *Notebook* (Codex Trivulzianus 2162) is a paper manuscript, small in size, dating back to 1487-1490 during the artist's first stay in Milan, in which the artist drew physiognomic sketches, architectural drafts for the Duomo and other Milanese buildings, and also mechanical sketches and designs for war machines. On seven of the pages there are drawings made using a metal stylus that are clearly visible when the pages are illuminated at a low angle. In some cases the impressions have been drawn over, imprecisely, by another hand. The manuscript is distinctive for its long lists of words written in Leonardo's characteristic cursive script from right to left. The lists record the artist's attempt to enrich his vocabulary with words of Latin origin, so as to make his scientific writings appear more authoritative and so as to be able to better grasp the writings of other humanists and men of science.

After the death of the artist, the *Notebook* was left to his pupil Francesco Melzi. Together with other Leonardo's manuscripts, the *Notebook* came into the possession of Pompeo Leoni. In 1632 it was acquired by Galeazzo Arconati, who then donated it to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in 1637, taking it back at a later date in exchange for another of Leonardo's writings, Manuscript *D*.

All traces of the codex are lost until the mid-18th century, when Don Carlo Trivulzio (1715-1789) bought it from Don Gaetano Caccia of Novara in exchange for a second-hand "silver repeating clock".

Codex Trivulzianus 2162 is today housed in the Sforza Castle, in the *Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana* (Historic Civic Archive and Trivulziana Library), together with a rich collection of books belonging to the Trivulzio family, which was acquired by the City of Milan in 1935.

On the occasion of **MuseoCity**, two multimedia stations installed in 2012 with the financial support of the Bank of America Merrill Lynch make it possible to visit the Weil Weiss Room to virtually leaf through the Da Vinci's manuscript (including the notes of Don Carlo Trivulzio), reproduced in high-definition thanks to a project elaborated by the Historic Civic Archive and Trivulziana Library in collaboration with the company Haltadefinizione.

One station is always accessible to visitors of the Castle Museum in the Asse Room.



Giuseppe Weil Weiss Library at the Sforza Castle Artistic bindings in the collection of a bibliophile

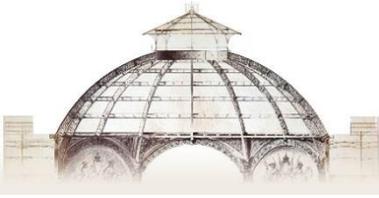
In 1936 Giuseppe Weil Weiss (1863-1939), baron of Lainate, expressed his desire to bequeath to the Historic Civic Archive and Trivulziana Library his own precious book collection of about 7000 volumes, which were transferred to the Sforza Castle in 1950. Hence the Trivulziana was graced with elegant artistic editions, mostly printed in France, that Weil Weiss often had embellished by commissioning the creation of bindings from some of the most talented and famous Italian and foreign bookbinders.

This is therefore a rich collection that, if on one hand it gives the idea of the taste and passion for collecting of a refined bibliophile, on the other it enables us to outline the history and evolution of artistic bindings, above all in Italy and in France between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Also worthy of note are the internal plates and the endpapers – in silk, parchment, or marbled paper – which contribute to the enrichment of the volumes and where it is sometimes possible to find the baron's ex libris.

In the room devoted to Giuseppe Weil Weiss in 1951 – which houses, in addition to his precious book collection, also some of the furniture from his library and the sculpture in marble that portrays him, a work by Werther Sever – the Historic Civic Archive and Trivulziana Library proposes the exhibition of the books in this collection on a rotational basis as a solution that offers visitors the opportunity to appreciate the extraordinary artistic quality of the bindings inherent to it.

The ideal itinerary, which the ex-director of the Trivulziana Giulia Bologna had called 'the Weil Weiss's binding museum', inaugurated during **MuseoCity**, starts with a selection of bindings created by Pio Colombo and by the Florentine *bottega* of Giulio Giannini, who worked in Florence as early as the mid-19th century.



An exhibition within the civic collections

SOTTO IL CIELO DI CRISTALLO

Un racconto della Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II a 150 anni dall'inaugurazione

Milano, Castello Sforzesco
Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana
Sala del Tesoro
21st December 2017 ~ 18th March 2018

“Magnificent hall”, “splendid and opulent place”, “enchanted atrium” – thus wrote journalists in Milan of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, which opened to the public on 15th September 1867. Its architecture caught the imagination of writers and journalists and inspired the satisfaction of the municipal administrators, aroused the admiration of citizens and, inevitably, some criticism. Only two and a half years of work had been necessary for an enterprise that had required unheard-of financial, technical and artistic resources, had completely redefined the city centre, and had projected Milan towards an international horizon of modernity.

In September 1867 the Galleria was not quite finished, since the triumphal entrance arch from Piazza del Duomo was still missing, but it was immediately ready for use and a hive of activity, becoming the favourite place to visit for locals and foreigners.

Featuring in all the tour guides, its fame spread throughout Europe, due to its lively shops and meeting places, its impressive atmosphere, and its fascinating crystal sky, its lights and colours. “It is the heart of the city. People flock there from all over”, observed Luigi Capuana in 1881, in what is perhaps the most eloquent passage ever written about the Galleria, capturing the sense of this excellent urban location, where the many facets of Milan were represented: fashion, science and technology, art and decoration, economics and finance, trade and industry (L. CAPUANA, *La Galleria Vittorio Emanuele*, in *Milano 1881*, Milano, Giuseppe Ottino, 1881, pp. 407-417).

For all these aspects the Galleria can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but of great interest is the study of how it came to be decided upon, designed and built.

150 years after the inauguration, this exhibition aims to briefly review the administrative, architectural, technical and urban history of the Galleria through a selection of the numerous documentary materials belonging to the Civic Collections: drawings, letters, legal documents, printed matters and manuscripts, photographs and paintings, objects and relics of various kinds, which allow us to present a significant cross-section of Italy’s most famous gallery. “The best covered street known in Europe”, claims the *Guida per Milano e pei laghi* of 1871, in sincere appreciation of a city place that has never lost its charm. Then, or now.

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<https://trivulziana.milanocastello.it>

