

## Objects, Sociability, and the Spaces of Collection in Fifteenth-century Italy

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The emergence of a space dedicated to collecting in fifteenth-century Italy was a result of not only developments in humanist learning, but also coincided with the expansion of trade and diplomatic routes, which brought novel objects into Italian households. Spaces of collection such as the *studiolo* also developed as sociable spaces, particularly in the courts in the fifteenth century. The literature on collecting has often focussed on one patron and his or her particular sensibilities and personality in relation to the objects collected. Rather than viewing collectables as static objects or simply the reflection of a patron's tastes, this study will investigate the ways artefacts connected diverse individuals across space and time through new forms of association.

Material possessions will be examined not only as repositories of monetary value, but objects, which could be imbued with political meanings, memories, and obligations. Objects in the fifteenth century, as this paper will argue, became sites of sociability in themselves, in addition to the spaces and places they were viewed, collected, and engaged with. By focussing on specific examples from the Italian courts, notably Ferrara and Naples, this paper will reveal that both men and women participated in collecting and it was through this activity that new associations were formed, giving rise to proto-publics around particular things or types of things. Collecting, and associated consumption practices, thus prompted new forms of sociability, but also articulated new relationships between people and their possessions.