

Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno XCIV, Gennaio-Aprile 2010, Fascicolo I

Abstracts

EUGENIO DI RIENZO, La Croce di Lorena un simbolo della disunità francese

Introduced in France by the House of Anjou, become dukes of Lorraine in 1431, the double cross was eventually adopted as the emblem of Duchy of Lorraine and hoisted during the campaign led with support of Charles the Seventh and Joan of Arc against the English. In 1477 during the battle of Nancy this ensign appeared as a rallying symbol of the Lorrain troops, which defeated and killed Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold. Since then this icon represented the national unity of France. As a matter of fact the cross of Lorraine was the symbol, rather and more often, of only a part of the country in arms against the other ones. Antony of Lorraine used it as a flag during the bloody repression against the Alsatian peasant's revolt in 1525. Later the House of Guise adopted the double cross as a sign of recognition of the Catholic League against the spreading of Calvinism, which would have turned into the first *franco-françoise* war. The St. Bartholomew's day massacre, starting on 23 August 1572, was decided in Hotel de Guise, where the monumental stairs were decorated with golden crosses «à double traverse». After the incorporation of Lorraine to Prussia following the 1870 war, the cross of Lorraine became a symbol of memory and resistance of *France éternelle*, but also the emblem of the *Action Française* against the legitimate government of the Third Republic. The «croix à double traverse» resurfaced in June 1940 when it was adopted as the emblem of *France combattante* of General de Gaulle to be opposed to the Nazi *Swastika*, to the Vichy *Francisque*, to the republican symbols of France (the *Marianne* and the *Coq Gaulois*) and the Hammer and Sickle of the French Communist Party.