

Introduction: Benefit-Cost Analysis

TO UNDERSTAND a game, we first identify the players. We then assess the range of actions each can take and the payoffs each can receive depending on the actions of the other players. For the art-commissioning game, in evaluating a patron's payoff, we should ask: what benefits did he seek to obtain when he engaged an artist, and what costs did he face? The latter include not only the financial outlay for a work but also the risk that a work might receive a negative reception. An understanding of these benefits and costs helps explain the choices made by the two featured players, the patron and the artist, or in the game-theoretic terminology presented in the previous chapter, the principal and the agent.

The benefit-cost framework provides significant insights into the appearance of commissioned art. While published research on patrons and monuments provides invaluable information about benefits (mainly social) and costs (mainly financial), the data are often scattered across studies whose main focus lies elsewhere. When art historians investigate these benefits and costs, they often use an anecdotal approach, without a systematic methodology. Benefit-cost analysis gives us a useful framework for systematic research on these payoffs, appropriate even when principals and agents acted intuitively.¹ Such analysis underlies the study of choice processes in economics and is particularly helpful when studies need to bring together a variety of elements that cannot be measured in financial terms.

The financial cost of a commission brought its own benefit. For a work of art to successfully convey certain desirable features, the production of the signal must have a high cost, at least sufficiently high to deter those who choose not to send it. For example, if a signal is to convey great wealth and power, the merely affluent and only important must find that signal very expensive to send. If all patrons could construct personal palaces or present themselves as heroes in bronze statues, the resulting architecture and art would convey little useful information. Unless the required expenditures are large enough to seriously dent the finances of patrons who choose instead to make smaller commissions, many others will make similar commissions. Beyond the financial cost of producing a signal, there is the potential of a negative reception cost. Few of us, even if we could afford to do so, would have ourselves portrayed

in a life-size bronze sculpture as a heroic ruler or champion athlete. Any patron, even the most affluent, will seek to avoid ridicule. A central lesson from signaling, discussed in the next chapter, is that high costs, be they financial or social, actual or potential, are necessary to obtain signaling benefits. In Renaissance Italy, patrons wanted value, but they were not hunting for bargains.

Benefit-cost analysis posits, quite simply, that a patron decides to commission a work when he expects—thanks to instinct or calculation, societal norms or past experience—that benefits will exceed costs. But another significant factor enters the calculation: constraints that operate on both the patron and the artist. These constraints came in many forms in Renaissance Italy and, for the most part, they were problems that could not be solved with money. In most churches, for example, even great riches would not allow a private patron to obtain the rights to the main altar. (If he did acquire this honor, that is, were he not subject to this constraint, that in itself would convincingly signal unusually high status.) Scholars regularly consider the practical limits on architectural projects, such as the physical conditions of the site or the availability of certain materials. This approach can be extended to include all commissions and a wide range of limitations. It provides a useful way to begin research on a commission, to clarify the options that were available.

In the Renaissance, the often unspoken rules of decorum imposed many of the most important constraints. These rules were subtle and complex; hence knowledge of them allowed viewers to differentiate between savvy patrons and inexperienced ones who clumsily followed in their footsteps. Today, it is a challenge to reconstruct these norms, but we can note the social cost that patrons faced when they violated social conventions. Given that most patrons followed the rules of decorum, an awareness of those constraints can help us identify who commissioned undocumented works of art. A recent study, for example, convincingly argues that a set of twelve marble heads depicting Roman emperors, made by Desiderio da Settignano for someone in Naples, must have been intended for the king. The sculptures would have been inappropriate for anyone except the ruler, even for the wealthy few who had the financial means to make such a purchase.²

A different type of constraint, one we all confront when we go shopping, is that of total financial resources. Even if a patron concludes that a given project is worth the money, that is, the expected benefits exceed projected costs, it still may be forgone if he considers his available funds alongside the costs of other potential commissions that may prove more valuable. A patron with one thousand florins to decorate his bedroom or chapel will select the commissions that give the biggest bang for his buck, subject to the limitation that he cannot blow his overall budget. Economists refer to such a process as maximization subject to constraint.³

Constraints, together with benefits and costs, constitute the three basic elements of our analytical framework. That framework reminds researchers to ask

a series of key questions, and to focus attention on important though often overlooked points. The systematic consideration of these three main elements facilitates the study of the choices made by both principals and agents, and thus the evaluation and comparison of artistic commissions.

Unfortunately, historical studies rarely allow us to ascertain all the benefits, costs, and constraints of any given project with any precision. Not only has most documentation been lost, at least of the Renaissance era, but many of the intangible benefits and costs never found their way into the written records. Fortunately, significant evidence does survive for a large number of commissions. When we consider the evidence provided by them collectively, strong conclusions emerge.

Before discussing benefits, costs, and constraints in depth, we illustrate how these elements can deepen our understanding of a major commission from the late fifteenth century (fig. 2.1): the chapel of the powerful Neapolitan cardinal Oliviero Carafa in the prominent Roman church Santa Maria sopra Minerva, decorated by the leading Florentine painter Filippo Lippi, and by Lombard sculptors.⁴

The Carafa Chapel in Rome

When Carafa sought a chapel for himself in the Dominican church of the Minerva, he presumably wanted the most prestigious one possible. Across Italy, patrons and viewers would agree that the most impressive chapel was the one behind the main altar. This certainly held true for the Minerva, given that the altar block contained the relics of one of the most important Dominican saints, Catherine of Siena. In this church, as was typical in the period, the religious order maintained, and was intent on keeping, control of this space.⁵ Thus the most prestigious chapel in the Minerva was not available to Carafa, though he was one of the most powerful cardinals in Rome at the time, and the cardinal protector of the Dominican Order. Had Carafa sought the rights to this chapel, he would have encountered a powerful constraint. (Significantly, a few decades later the first two Medici popes—Leo X and Clement VII—had their tombs erected in this very space. The difficulty of obtaining a burial place there signaled the extremely exalted status of the patrons.)

Carafa found a different way to demonstrate his exalted status. He used size and design to make a grand statement. In 1485 he purchased a small structure adjacent to the right transept, then had a large chapel constructed there; he thus replaced an existing altar, or perhaps a small chapel, dedicated to the Virgin Annunciate. Spatial constraints also led Carafa to a more daring decision: next to his main chapel he had a smaller one carved out of the wide buttress to create a vaulted burial chamber. In this way the patron obtained a prominent and honorable space for both burial and worship. To set the new

chapel off from the main body of the medieval church, Carafa commissioned an accomplished architect, perhaps Donato Bramante, to design a magnificent marble arch in an innovative style.⁵ The arch bears an inscription with the name of the patron, and the double dedication of the chapel. Carafa, evidently unsatisfied with the original dedication to the Virgin Annunciate, used his authority to add, unusually, a second. His chapel also honors Thomas of Aquinas, the patron's own ancestor and one of the major Dominican saints.

The cardinal's position also allowed him to overcome a constraint that most patrons would have faced; he secured the services of a leading artist who was already engaged. Shortly before he met Carafa, Filippo Lippi had agreed to paint the fresco for the chapel of Filippo Strozzi, the wealthiest man in Florence, in the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella. Fortunately for Carafa, Strozzi needed to remain on good terms with Lorenzo de' Medici, the political leader of Florence, who in turn needed the support of Carafa. Lorenzo wanted his thirteen-year-old son, Giovanni, to be named cardinal at that very time, but the powerful Carafa could have blocked this decision. Thus Lorenzo arranged for Filippo to work for Carafa in 1488, and Strozzi agreed to wait. Carafa incurred an obligation by thus obtaining the artist he wanted, as we learn from a fascinating letter of 1490. In reporting on progress in the painting of the Carafa Chapel, an associate of Lorenzo added: "I am certain that the Cardinal [Carafa] will remain indebted to you [Lorenzo] and content with him [Filippo]."⁷ Indeed, young Giovanni de' Medici had recently obtained his cardinal's hat, and he later became the first Medici pope, Leo X. Naturally the Carafa Chapel also brought the cardinal financial costs, conveniently spelled out in another Renaissance source. Vasari wrote that it was valued at two thousand ducats, an extraordinary sum that probably included both materials and labor.⁸ The fabulously wealthy Strozzi family, by contrast, spent about half that amount for all the decorations of the Strozzi Chapel frescoed by Filippo.⁹

Opposite page:
Fig. 2.1.
Carafa Chapel,
Santa Maria
sopra Mi-
nerva, Rome
(Photosevice
Electa, Milan)

Documents do not itemize other types of costs Carafa incurred for obtaining and decorating his chapel, much less the benefits he sought. These we must infer from contemporary norms, and from the nature of the commission itself. No doubt Carafa hoped for divine intervention to help him achieve salvation. The *Annunciation* of Filippo's frescoed altarpiece expresses this aspiration in visual terms: the kneeling cardinal is presented by Saint Thomas to the Virgin, who seems to turn and acknowledge the patron. Carafa's magnificent commission honored these two holy figures, and a papal bull of 1493 immediately transformed his recently completed chapel into a focal point for the cults of both. This decree—whose issuance was yet another reflection of Carafa's status—granted indulgences to worshippers visiting the chapel for the feasts of the Birth of the Virgin and of Saint Thomas. On the former event, the Brotherhood of the Most Holy Annunciation visited the Carafa Chapel as part of its annual procession. On the latter holiday, the pope himself conducted mass at the high altar, in the presence of the College of Cardinals. The annual

sermon was often given by scholars whose research on Thomas had been sponsored by Carafa himself. As the cardinals listened to these speeches, they could have admired the stories of Thomas depicted in Carafa's chapel. One of these, the *Miracle of the Speaking Crucifix*, is arranged to look best when seen from the high altar.¹⁰ After the mass, the cardinals visited the chapel itself.

Carafa must have hoped that Saint Thomas and the Virgin would appreciate how Filippino's paintings of them inspired good deeds. According to Paolo Cortesi, as we observed in the previous chapter, the chapel frescoes did have this impact on the erudite. The group naturally included the cardinals and learned Dominicans. They could read the Latin inscriptions, surely provided by the patron or one of the scholars he supported, and could recognize their sources in Thomas's writing. Learned Dominicans would also have appreciated how Carafa revealed his support of one interpretation of Thomas through the details in Filippino's *Triumph of St. Thomas*. The cardinal endeavored to impress, influence, and inspire these erudite viewers while he promoted the cult of Thomas.

Carafa also entertained hopes that the College of Cardinals would elect him as pope; he nearly achieved this goal in 1492, and again in 1503. Though the cardinals obviously would not base their decisions primarily on art patronage, Carafa used his commissions to help create an image of himself as worthy of the Seat of Peter. Thus, the decorations of his chapel recall those in the Sistine Chapel, the recently completed chapel of Pope Sixtus IV, in a range of specific features, from the representation of the kneeling donor in the altarpiece and the inscriptions, to the pavement and balustrade.

In many of his commissions the cardinal expressed "the virtue of magnificence," to borrow the title from a 1498 treatise by Giovanni Pontano. The author, a humanist and statesman known to Carafa, succinctly identified another fundamental benefit sought by the cardinal in his art patronage. Noble people are particularly intent "to realize the long lasting of their name and reputation, for which man's desire is infinite."¹¹ As discussed in the next chapter, the display of magnificence requires grand expenditures; for Pontano, "magnificence is the fruit of money."¹² Though Carafa paid two thousand ducats for the Carafa Chapel, this did not represent a major sacrifice, since we can infer that his fortune was vast. Just a few years later, he is said to have spent fifteen thousand ducats for the construction and extensive marble decoration of a chapel in the Cathedral of Naples.¹³ Renaissance cardinals earned enormous amounts, and Carafa could have spent much more on his chapel in Rome. For example, he could have included a marble statue of himself, as he did in his chapel in Naples (fig. 2.2). Carafa also commissioned a marble relief, including a portrait, on a tomb for a family member in another church in Naples. Why did he forgo this in Rome?

Carafa's Roman chapel, however magnificent in some contexts, was strategically restrained in others; that is because he worked within the constraint

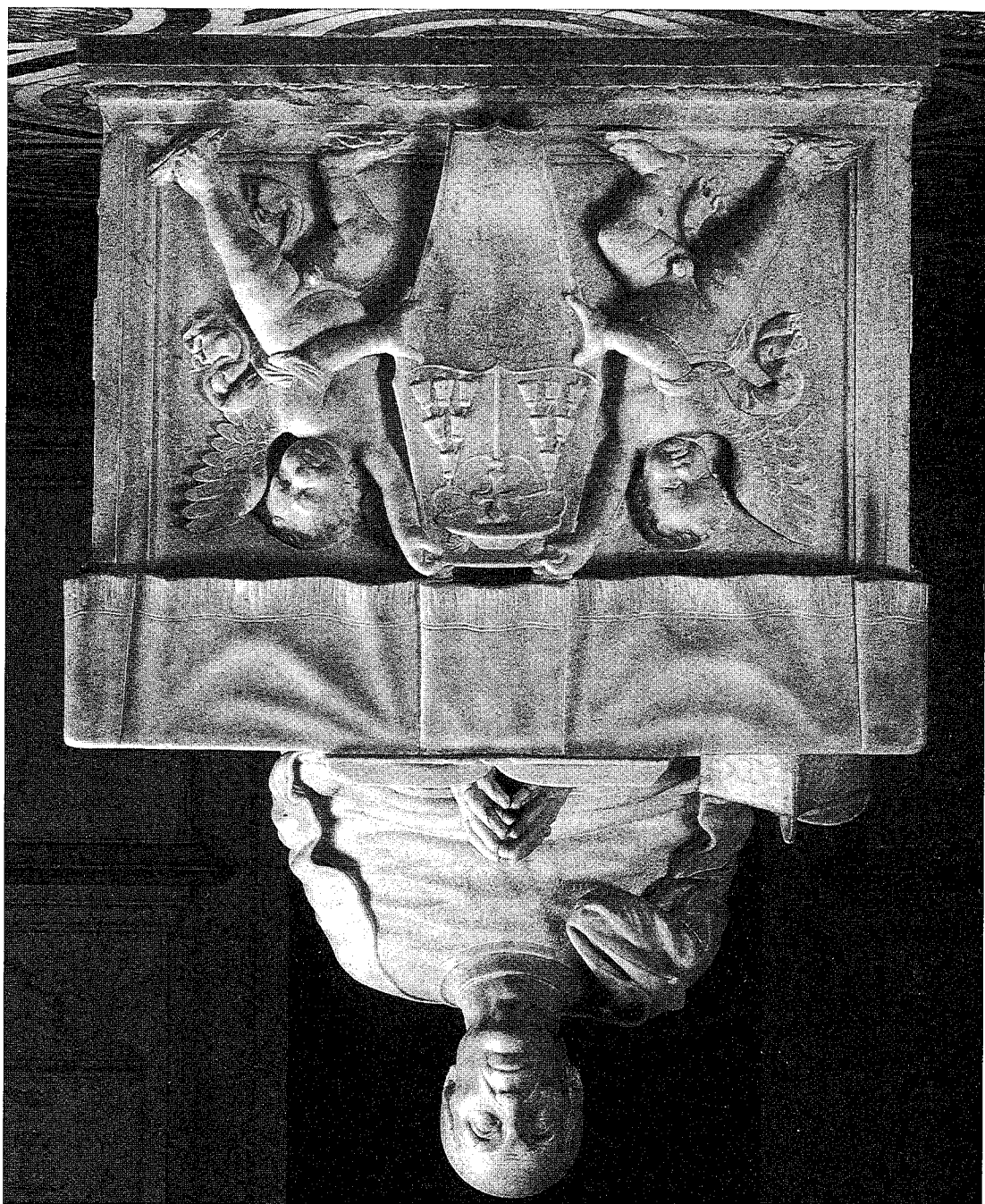


FIG. 2. Tommaso Malvito, *Portrait of Oliviero Carafa*, Succorpo Chapel, Duomo, Naples (Luciano Pedicini Archivio dell'Arte, Naples, Curia Archescovile, Naples)

of maintaining decorum. Because of the risk of incurring stiff social costs, he decided not to commission certain works in his Roman chapel, such as a large marble portrait. In the Sistine Chapel the patron appeared only once, as kneel-

ing in Perugino's frescoed altarpiece (now replaced by Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*). Perhaps Cardinal Carafa, who aspired to the same position as Sixtus IV, thought it would be inappropriate if he tried to "outdo" the pope. In Filippino's frescoes Carafa also appears only once, as kneeling in the altarpiece; the patron rejected the idea, reflected in the preparatory drawing for the *Triumph over the Heretics*, of including a second portrait. Most probably Carafa wanted to cultivate a reputation for modesty and frugality, qualities praised by his contemporaries. This might also explain why he only rented a palace in Rome, though it would have been less costly to purchase his own.¹⁴ In these ways Carafa avoided offending other cardinals. He presented himself as interested only in the glory of God, and not in personal vanities, a strategy to foster his (ultimately unsuccessful) candidacy to become pope. Nevertheless, he did this in such a way as to impress both contemporary and future visitors to the chapel with his importance and that of his family. The commission thus helped to realize one of the primary benefits of commissions in Renaissance Italy.

Social Benefits

Opposite page:
FIG. 2.3.
Domenico Ghirlandaio,
Tornabuoni
Chapel, Santa
Maria Novella,
Florence
(Photo Scala,
Florence). ©
1997. Photo
Scala, Florence

The benefits Carafa expected from his commission were hardly desired only by patrons of his exalted status. This aristocratic cardinal from Naples manifestly shared the goals expressed by Giovanni Tornabuoni, a Florentine merchant, in his contract of 1485 with Davide and Domenico Ghirlandaio. Tornabuoni specified that the frescoes in his chapel in Santa Maria Novella were commissioned "as an act of piety and love of God, to the exaltation of his house and family and the enhancement of the said church and chapel"¹⁵ (fig. 2.3). And in a now famous quote from a dozen years earlier, another Florentine patron and merchant, Giovanni Rucellai, explained in a memorandum for his descendants that his commissions brought him "the greatest contentment and the greatest pleasure because they serve the glory of God, the honor of the city, and the commemoration of myself."¹⁶

When discussing Rucellai's quote in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (1972), one of the most influential modern studies on Renaissance art, Michael Baxandall, argued that "it is not very profitable to speculate about individual clients' motives in commissioning pictures." We believe, however, that by identifying the desired benefits we can better understand the choices made by principals and agents (or clients and artists, in Baxandall's terminology). The desire to honor the city, for example, naturally resonated with civic patrons. In 1406, the governors of Siena deliberated that frescoes by Taddeo Bartoli in the town hall were intended "to decorate the chapel and honor our Commune."¹⁷ Private patrons, the primary focus of this volume, sought important benefits from their audiences in Heaven as well as those here on earth, the group to whom we now turn our attention.

Countless treatises, letters, and wills—here we provide but one example of each—reveal the role of art in establishing and burnishing an honorable reputation. In his treatise *On the Art of Building*, the humanist Leon Battista Alberti wrote that “we build great works so as to appear great in the eyes of our descendants; equally we decorate our property as much to distinguish family and country as for any personal display.”¹⁸ These words aptly apply to the commissions made by his own ancestors in the Florentine church of Santa Croce, as discussed in chapter 6. The Alberti family ordered, among other works, highly visible tombs in the church. Perhaps they were motivated by the rather surprising reasoning expressed by the merchant Filippo Strozzi, in a private missive about plans for the tomb of a deceased relation: “the honor gets assigned to us and not to the dead, and in making it beautiful we honor ourselves.”¹⁹ No doubt, these patrons also made their “artistic” decisions for religious reasons. In a similar vein Giovanni Grimani, the Venetian patrician and prelate, used his first will, of 1592, to order the sale of his antiquities. He was concerned that he had “offended God by collecting . . . and having spent on such vanities a great amount of money which could have been applied to works of charity.”²⁰ Nevertheless, the great collector had a change of heart six months later, and requested that the cameos and medals be given to his nephew “for the honor of our house of the Grimani.” Architectural monuments, marble tombs, and collections allowed patrons to obtain the high—for some the supreme—benefits of honor and distinction.

Writing in Naples, Pontano mentioned the aesthetic pleasure derived from “ornamental objects,” such as statues, paintings, and tapestries, but hardly emphasized this as a motivation for patrons. “Their appearance delights, and they bring prestige to the Lord [i.e., owner], because they are seen by many who fill the house.”²¹ Pontano explained how magnificent commissions trumpet the status of patrons, and how those notes echo: “such buildings, when made in this way, attract visitors from the most distant parts to admire them, and invite poets and writers to praise them.”²² Indeed, a vast body of poems—and, beginning in the sixteenth century, published letters, travel journals, and treatises as well—refer to specific works of art. Often, especially for portraits, tombs, and palaces, the patrons themselves are mentioned. Their fame traveled widely, thanks to the written word.

Already in the Renaissance we find the now familiar concept that a patron’s name is linked to that of a famous artist. In a letter of about 1569 to Bartolomeo Ammanati, a fellow sculptor-architect, Guglielmo della Porta, described his plans for a treatise:

There will be a short discussion about some of the illustrious princes who, with their great generosity, brought many of our profession to true excellence, such as the Magnificent Giuliano, the great Michelangelo; Duke [Ludovico il] Moro, Leonardo da Vinci; Pope Leo [X], Raphael of Urbino; [Pope] Julius II, Bramante;

[Pope] Paul III, Antonio da Sangallo; Signor Jeronimo Morone, Amadeo; the Prince of Orta [Andrea Doria], Perino del Vago; . . . the most illustrious [Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de] Granvela, Lionne [Leoni] Aretino . . . and others.²²

Given their interest in future audiences, these patrons would have appreciated that their prestige has spread not only far but long. Visitors today crowd museums and palaces to see magnificent Renaissance works whose patrons are often identified. These viewers can still discern, centuries later, the wealth and status of the people who spent so expansively on their artistic commissions.

The prestige brought by art was particularly important to patrons in late medieval and Renaissance Italy. As Goldthwaite has demonstrated, the powerful and wealthy Italian families lacked some valuable elements that were available elsewhere for impressing each other and the general citizenry.²⁴ Staged jousts were helpful, but these sporting events were pale imitations of the real battle victories that characterized the grandeur of nobles in northern Europe. The merchants had respectful servants but lacked both the vassals and huge retinues of the elites in England, France, and the Germanic states.

The status-claiming situation in Florence was especially complex because power and nobility had been severed. In the late thirteenth century the newly formed communal government excluded the old noble families, the magnates, from the most powerful political offices.²⁵ Over time, a new class of Florentine patricians arose that mimicked the behavior of the politically disenfranchised former nobles, much as wealthy New Yorkers in the late nineteenth century took on the habits and appearance of English gentlemen and ladies. The affluent merchants in Renaissance Florence, and to a lesser degree the elites across Italy, needed mechanisms to establish and validate their new status. Art provided a perfect opportunity for individuals to signal their status and to solidify their identity.

In Florence, several of the most important patrons of art and architecture came from families that suffered periods of banishment, as did the Alberti, Medici, and Strozzi. In the 1430s, after the Alberti had been exiled, the humanist Leon Battista Alberti wrote his his widely read book *The Family*. Significantly, when discussing expenditures that contribute to honor and status, he referred to the works described as commissioned by "our fathers."²⁶ His words helped trumpet the fame of these monuments, but the works carried their own message: they were decorated with the family arms and symbols, which were visible to all. Commissioning art and architecture thus provided a long-term publicity benefit not available through other forms of conspicuous consumption. Even when families fell into disgrace, their arms were rarely removed from buildings.²⁷

The frequent shifts in power in virtually all major cities made the concern for one's political status particularly important. The most powerful clan in Florence, the Medici, were exiled no less than three times in less than a cen-

ture. Would the banishments have been even more frequent, or for longer periods, if the lofty status of the Medici had not been widely proclaimed? Niccolò Machiavelli believed that the prudence, wealth, and lifestyle of Cosimo the Elder "caused him to be respected and loved by citizens in Florence, and held in wonderful consideration by the princes not only of Italy, but of all Europe."²⁸

Significantly, Cosimo constructed his massive town house just after returning to Florence from a brief exile. Given his recent absence, the Medici leader particularly needed to signal the solidity and importance of his family locally. Writing in the early sixteenth century, Francesco Guicciardini rightly predicted that the works Cosimo commissioned would last and keep his fame alive.²⁹ Art and architecture even helped the banker and merchant earn the respect of the landed gentry in northern Europe. The international status and renown of the Medici continued to grow and spread over the next century. It also allowed them to achieve success in the "marriage market," the golden ladder of social climbing in Renaissance Europe. In 1565, Francesco I de' Medici married Johanna of Austria, sister of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and a member of the prestigious Hapsburg family.

That grand public buildings help to ensure political stability had already been noted by Aristotle, and Galvano Fiamma, in a text dating to the early 1330s about the Milanese leader Azzo Visconti, elaborated this notion. "The people seeing wonderful residences, stand rapt in fervent admiration. . . . On account of this, they are convinced that the prince is so powerful that it would be impossible to attack him."³⁰ A century later, Alberti expressed a closely related idea: the special effect that beauty has on the public protects buildings against destruction.³¹ And in his book written for cardinals in the early 1500s, Cortesi stated that sumptuous architecture "easily restrains the admiring multitude from doing harm," and mentioned instances when mobs had destroyed buildings lacking architectural value. He recommended that his reader live in a building "which will dazzle the eyes of the people by its dignified splendor."³²

Another "political" benefit to patronage, as described by an ancient source, caught the attention of Giovanni Rucellai. The Florentine architectural patron noted in his private memorandum that Gnaeus Octavius "was made consul of Rome, the first one of his family, on account of his building a very beautiful palace . . . a palace imbued with great dignity and renown because it embodied good order and measure, and he understood that it was the reason for his acquiring the greatest goodwill and favor with the people."³³ Rucellai believed that magnificent commissions would also lead to a more general "goodwill." Surely the Florentine merchant and his contemporaries took this lesson to heart as they attempted to polish their reputations through patronage. Another Florentine author, writing a few years later in the 1460s, assessed a group of influential and anti-Medici Florentines who met at the new home of Luca Pitti:

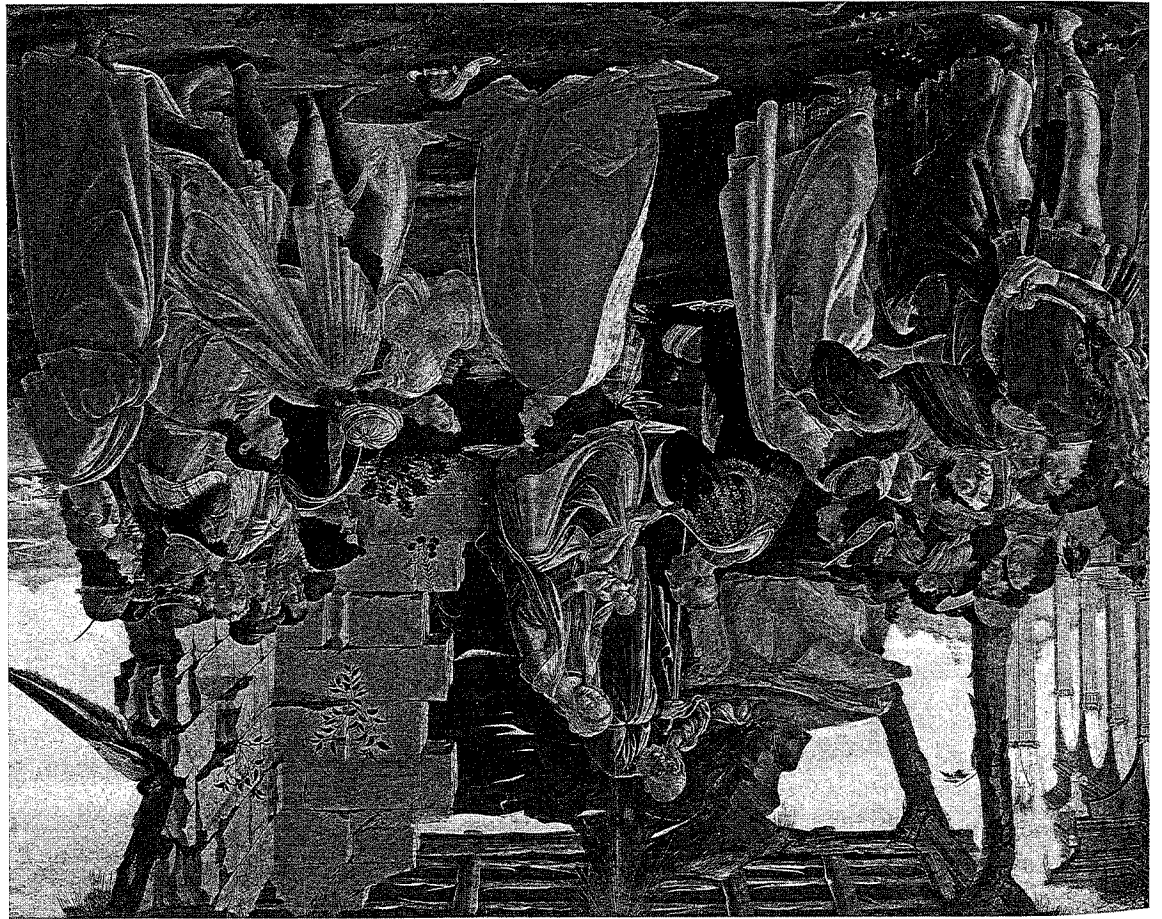


Fig. 2.4. Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (Archivi Allinari-Bridgeman, Florence)

“they consented to his having such prestige, and to increase it they too visited his house. And they did this to block Piero [di Cosimo] de’ Medici, to whom previously everyone was accustomed to going to consult on public affairs as well as private.”³⁴ Then, as today, certain visitors can both add to the status and flag the political affiliation of a host.

Botticelli’s *Adoration of the Magi* in Florence illustrates how a patron used

art in his attempt to obtain goodwill from the local rulers (fig. 2.4).³⁵ The painting includes several prominent portraits, including those of Cosimo de’ Medici, his son Piero, and grandsons Lorenzo and Giuliano. For most viewers, then and now, these effigies suggest that the patron, Gasparre Del Lama, a minor broker, had close ties with the family. In reality, Del Lama had no significant connections with the Medici, and he evidently used the altarpiece to flatter them. Lorenzo was the effective ruler of Florence, and his brother Giuliano belonged to the same guild as the patron. Authors generally assume that Botticelli carried out this work before Del Lama was tried and condemned for fraud in 1476.³⁶ In the end, no one raised a finger to help Del Lama, and perhaps the Medici, though open to pandering, found it unwelcome from frauds.

If the patron had had something special to offer the political leader, he might have fared better. In 1621, for example, when Nicolò Avellani was on trial in Mantua, he obtained a pardon from Duke Ferdinando in exchange for the "gift" of several prestigious paintings in his collection.³⁷ The Gonzaga dukes, in turn, like the rulers of other artistic centers, used their unique position to commission paintings and sculptures they could give as gifts to more powerful leaders. These works, such as Correggio's *Loves of Jupiter*, donated from Duke Federico II Gonzaga to Emperor Charles V, or Bronzino's *Allegory of Love*, given by Duke Cosimo de' Medici to the French king Francis I, not only communicated the sophistication of the patron but also brought him political benefits. In a similar way, as we have seen, Lorenzo de' Medici arranged for Carafa to obtain the services of Filippino, and thus the cardinal remained in debt to the Florentine leader.

Financial Benefits

Commissions did more than allow patrons to consolidate and improve their status. They helped signal political connections, which often led to economic benefits: a scholar might get a lucrative public appointment, a merchant a significant tax break. In the sixteenth century, we find several patrons across Italy who proclaimed their allegiance to rulers through inscriptions or symbols on the façades of their homes. Both the Lanfredini and the Pandolfini did this in Florence, for example, as did Leone Leoni in Milan.³⁸ In paintings, the most obvious way to curry favor was to embellish works with portraits of political leaders, as Del Lama attempted to do in Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*. The principals themselves probably made decisions of such delicacy, and certainly approved or rejected them if proposed by their agents.

Highly conspicuous commissions could yield economic benefits more directly. A letter discussed in chapter 7 demonstrates the impact of Leone Leoni's impressive home, servants, and horses. They convinced one of his contemporaries that the sculptor could be trusted with a large quantity of silver. Others surely felt the same way about conspicuous and costly commissions. Artistic investments conveyed success and financial stability, and sometimes were bread cast upon the waters effectively. These messages resonated particularly well in early modern Europe, whose economy depended on credit. Italy was far from an all-cash society; not only the most important banks and businesses, but also the small shops, employed a complex mixture of cash, barter, and loans. Though construction workers received regular wages, requiring patrons to have cash on hand, the wealthy enjoyed generous credit lines from merchants. "Personal appearances and household possessions were, therefore, not only signals about social standing and prestige," as Evelyn Welch recently demonstrated; "they were also key indicators of credit-worthiness."³⁹ Art and

architecture, we believe, served a similar function. A man who owned a grand town house in the center of town and had decorated a prominent family chapel would find traders, silk merchants, and fishermen more willing to accept his promises of repayment, and those of his servants and family, in exchange for their goods. Similarly, a home that did not include shops on the ground floor clearly signaled the wealth of the owner. (As an added benefit, in Florence at least, architecture used only for domestic purposes was exempted from taxation, a Renaissance tax break for the affluent.)⁴⁰ "Luxury" as Karl Marx observed, became "a business necessity" as "an exhibition of wealth and consequently as a source of credit."⁴¹

The need to keep up appearances also discouraged a patron from selling off property. In her analysis of Francesco Castellani, a Florentine merchant in the 1400s, Welch revealed that he "was forced to maintain his stature by a high level of consumption . . . his political and social credit depended in the most literal sense on what he and his family wore, ate, and gave as gifts to friends and potential allies."⁴² Whenever possible Castellani used his servants and friends to conceal actions, such as taking loans or pawning goods, that might reveal his precarious financial situation. The desire to conceal what he hoped would be a temporary shortage of funds might explain why Castellani did not sell off the prominent and valuable family chapel in Santa Croce, one of the city's most honored churches.⁴³ In 1486, Filippo Strozzi had paid the considerable sum of 300 florins (over fourteen years' pay for a laborer) to purchase a chapel in Santa Maria Novella from a family down on its luck.⁴⁴ Such a sale would immediately signal duress, and Castellani sacrificed to avoid sending such a message.

Financial Costs

The financial benefits of commissions were indirect, and hard to measure. Their financial costs were all too tangible. All art considered in this volume entailed high direct financial costs, though often not for reasons that a modern viewer would suspect. Until well into the sixteenth century, the materials for a large altarpiece often cost more than the labor, even for the efforts of famous artists. Gilded wooden frames were usually more expensive than the images they contained. Reflecting the cost of their materials, frescoes provided the cheapest solution for figurative mural decorations, and tapestries were the most expensive. In the Sistine Chapel, for example, Pope Julius II paid Michelangelo six thousand ducats for the labor and supplies needed for the vault frescoes; his successor, Pope Leo X, paid Raphael one thousand ducats for cartoons or full-scale drawings for the ten tapestries that hung on the side walls, but the total cost for the tapestry works, including weaving and the threads of gold and silver, was about fifteen thousand ducats.⁴⁵ When we turn

to building projects, in the Renaissance as today, payments to even major architects were but a small fraction of the total costs.

Reflecting the price of materials, Renaissance sculptures in marble and bronze cost far more than paintings of a similar or even much larger scale; this represents a neat reversal of current prices. For most Renaissance patrons, however, buildings constituted the most expensive genre discussed in this volume: a palazzo cost at least ten times more than an altarpiece but usually much more. Though exact prices are difficult to establish, we have considerable information about Renaissance Florence. In 1473 Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi estimated the value of his recently completed palazzo—purchased partly built in 1460 for two thousand florins (83 man-years)—at five thousand florins (212 man-years).⁴⁶ Goldthwaite calculated that the Bardi-Busini remodeled their palazzo in 1487 for 155 man-years, the Da Gagliano spent 103 man-years in the 1520s for a new façade, the Bartolini paid 611 man-years between 1520 and 1533 for a major palace, and for one of the largest Renaissance homes, Filippo Strozzi and his heirs paid for 1,333 man-years by 1506.⁴⁷ These costs in man-year equivalents exceed those of even the most fabulous private mansions today.⁴⁸

Often the original patrons never lived to see their buildings constructed. Such was the case of Luca Pitti, who complained of “a host of debts, hundreds and hundreds of florins,” and of Filippo Strozzi, who in the view of one contemporary was “lorded over” by his own palazzo.⁴⁹ Some Florentines even went bankrupt building; Giovanni Boni, for example, had to sell off his recently completed home. These events illustrate the extraordinary costs patrons were willing to incur, that is, the risks they were willing to take, to signal their wealth and status.

Social Costs

Beyond the monetary costs of commissions, patrons had to bear “social costs.” These were usually incurred when the message received from a work of art differed from the patron’s expectation. At a minimum, an audience might miss the intended message of a commissioned work; at worst, an artwork might receive a negative reception. Consider four reasons why a work of art might fail to convey what the patron wished. First, commissions left incomplete for any reason often put patrons in a poor light. In Orvieto, the cathedral *opera* or board of works declared in a meeting that the group was “held in the lowest esteem” and suffered “disgrace” because a fresco cycle begun forty years earlier by Fra Angelico was still unfinished.⁵⁰ Though the views of their colleagues in Siena are not documented, the board members there must have felt even greater shame when the overly ambitious plans for the “new cathedral” were abandoned.

Second, a dramatic change in ownership, such as those resulting from the common afflictions of confiscation, political failures, or bankruptcy, inevitably changed the meaning of art. Often it delivered a blow to the status of the original patron beyond the mere loss of the opportunity to impress. Sometimes the new patron took credit for a work begun by others, as Pope Leo X did when he had his name prominently inscribed in Raphael's *Room of Herodorus*; the fresco cycle had been commissioned by Julius II and was nearly completed in his lifetime.

Third, the iconography could be too abstruse or complex, confusing the intended audience. In 1475, for example, when the humanist Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli attended a joust in Florence, he did not understand the meaning of the painted banner carried by Giuliano de' Medici. Though he described this in a positive light—"Everyone has a different opinion and nobody agrees with anybody else. This is more delightful than the pictures themselves"—the patron may have considered such iconographic ambiguity a cost.⁵¹ In a similar vein, a display of erudition might backfire, like a bon mot injudiciously placed or misunderstood. This fate befell Bartolomeo Valori at the very end of the sixteenth century. His decision to adorn the facade of his Florentine palace with portraits of famous Florentines as herms—stone posts with sculpted heads—stirred invectives from contemporary authors. One poet complained that these carvings insulted the very figures they were intended to honor by impaling them like criminals. He also found them ugly.⁵²

Works of poor style or quality were the fourth and most important example of art messages missing their mark. In a letter to the building committee of the Piacenza Cathedral, Leonardo warned that if the members rushed to select an artist to make their bronze doors, "some man may be chosen who by reason of his inadequacy may cause your descendants to revile you."⁵³ Leonardo's caution, though self-serving, was on the mark. Indeed, a member of a civic council in Prato expressed virtually the same idea during a meeting about a new painting for the town hall: "if the said work is not excellent . . . it will bring more dishonor than honor, and, even if obtained with a low cost, it will be completely useless."⁵⁴ To avoid this fate, the principals sought out a famous agent for the commission, Filippino Lippi.

The high reception costs of poor art were memorialized in a poem by Strazola from the 1490s titled "What Gentle Bellini's canvas said." The poem's telling line is: "Everybody who sees me so ill painted / Cannot restrain himself from laughing at me."⁵⁵ Such a reaction, the patron's worst nightmare, was just the price that Bartolomeo Valori paid for the facade of his palace. Especially in Florence, learned viewers wrote and even published attacks on prominent commissions they considered to be inappropriate or of low quality.⁵⁶ But even when a work incurred negative reception costs, there might be a silver lining. As decades or centuries passed, a patron's posthumous reputation often rose in the eyes of new audiences, sometimes because later audiences did not know

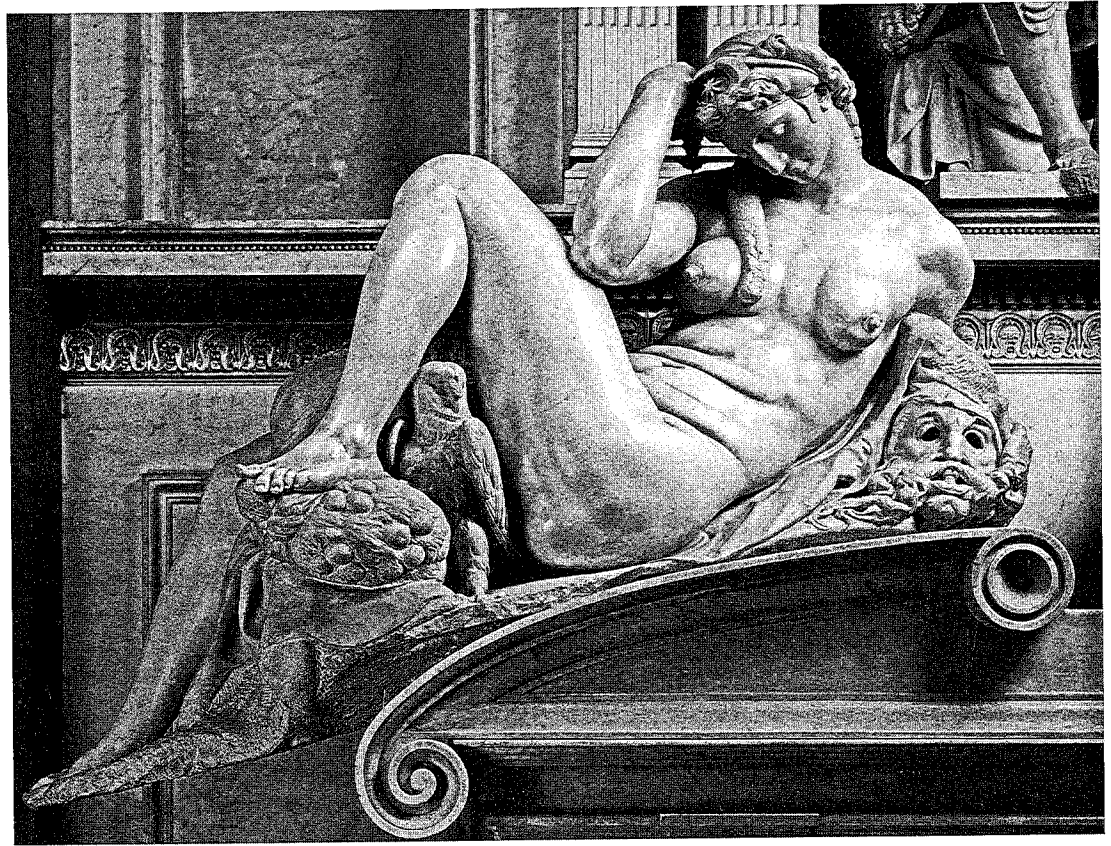


FIG. 2.5.
Michelangelo, *Night*,
New Sacristy,
San Lorenzo,
Florence (Ar-
chivi Alinari/
Bridgeman,
Florence)

the sources of embarrassment, sometimes because they had more receptive tastes. Today, admirers of Renaissance art would be thrilled to own a painting by Bellini or Valori's palazzo.

The allegory of *Night* (fig. 2.5), one of Michelangelo's marble sculptures in the New Sacristy, provides a fascinating glimpse at the shifting social benefits and costs of art in sixteenth-century Florence. When the commission begins we find the expected alignment between the aims of the agent and principal. Michelangelo created a number of impressive works intended to glorify the Medici in their funerary chapel at San Lorenzo. In his draft for the inscription, intended to be placed on the tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, Michelangelo gives voice to *Night* and her companion *Day*. The sculptures themselves state that they were rightly punished by Giuliano for having caused his early death. The artist thus showed *Night* in a fitful sleep and gave her the physical signs of breast cancer.⁵⁷

Before the sculpture was finished, however, Duke Cosimo de' Medici took over the city as a tyrant. Michelangelo turned against him, abandoned Florence, and left the New Sacristy sculptures incomplete. A few years later, he penned another poem about *Night*, published by Vasari in his 1550 *Life of Michelangelo*. In these verses, he exploited the ambiguous iconography of his own sculp-

ture, and reinterpreted it as a statement against Cosimo's rule. *Night* speaks again but asks not to be awakened, "as long as the hurt and shame endure." Michelangelo's friend Donato Giannotti was hardly alone when he recognized this passage as "very relevant to our times."⁵⁸ If many viewers had accepted Michelangelo's new explanation of *Night's* unusual appearance, the sculpture would have created a high social cost for the Medici. Instead, the artistic quality of the work constituted a benefit, and trumped Michelangelo's attempt at revisionism. In the late 1500s, Francesco Bocchi listed *Night* as one of the four most perfect works of art in Florence, and the enlightened patronage of the Medici is still acknowledged by the many visitors to the New Sacristy.

Constraints

Social and financial costs were not the only factors that limited a patron's choice of commissions. Patrons also worked within a number of limitations that we label constraints, following the terminology of economics. Some constraints were absolute and universal: chapels had only one altarpiece. Some applied to some donors and not others; thus Carafa was able to entice Filippino away from his prior commitments. Some, such as sumptuary laws, could be relaxed for a price. And some constraints could be violated, but only by taking a risk. If they were financial constraints, the risk was a reduced standard of living or political bankruptcy. If they were societal norms or other social constraints, the risk was severe social costs. Below we shall see examples of patrons who took such risks, lost, and suffered the results.

For Renaissance art projects, some constraints applied to commissions individually (such as ecclesiastical, civic, and social constraints on content, or the availability of an artist). Other constraints, such as limited space or financial resources, forced a patron to select one among several potential commissions. Though all patrons faced some constraints, better-placed patrons faced fewer of them. Thus, a patron's ability to contract for commissions beyond the reach of others, such as a painting by Raphael or a tomb in the high chapel of a major church, was an effective signal of one's status, quite apart from the resulting art itself.

The artist played a vital role in the patron's attempt to maximize returns on his commission, and thus had to attend to the constraints the patron faced. When seeking the best solutions to a principal's needs, agents had to work within those constraints while attempting to bolster benefits, and at the same time controlling both financial and social costs. The artist also had to remain attentive to his (or occasionally her) own aesthetic concerns. When we can identify the various limitations impinging on a commission, we can better appreciate the artist's achievement.

Constraints on space, the availability of materials, or finances are relatively

straightforward. The most subtle constraints related to rules of decorum. The rewards from presenting oneself as above one's station might be great if one was not caught. Both ancient and Renaissance authors often stressed the importance of commissioning works commensurate with the patron's social condition; they evidently thought the temptation to violate this constraint was high. In his treatise on architecture, Filarete even included plans for houses suitable for certain ranks of society.⁵⁹ Pontano provided a useful example, derived from ancient texts, to illustrate how a commission could lead to derision. Licinus, a barber, became so wealthy and famous that he built himself a rich tomb, but all his contemporaries found such a noble setting inappropriate for someone of such low social condition. Thus the taunting epigram, "Licinus lies in a marble tomb, while Cato is in a small one, and Pompeius has none at all. Can we believe in the existence of the Gods?"⁶⁰

A similar fate befell the Renaissance poet Bartolomeo Aragazzi, as recounted in an amusing letter by his contemporary Leonardo Bruni. Bruni saw the now celebrated sculptures carved by Michelozzo for Aragazzi's tomb (fig. 2.6) being transported with great effort by workmen. One of them cried out "May the gods damn all poets!" Why? Because "this poet who died recently, well known to be stupid and puffed up with conceit, ordered a marble tomb to be made for himself."⁶¹ Bruni further argued that a man's fame should rest on his praiseworthy works, not a tomb, and he reserved special scorn for the lowborn patron who commissioned a grand monument: "I wonder, what actions, what deed will you have inscribed? That your father drove asses and goods around the fairs?" Even if such a patron could meet the production costs for such a commission, the work would be received poorly by his contemporaries. We can discern the motivations behind Bruni's attack from the notes to his translation of the *Economics*, then attributed to Aristotle: "Wealth will lend adornment and honor . . . if we make our outlays opportunely and gracefully."⁶² Bruni evidently considered the grandeur of Aragazzi's tomb to be excessive. For many Renaissance viewers, the reputation, not the mere wealth, of the deceased constituted a significant differential cost for commissioning an honorable tomb. Many tombs, quite apart from money, would be too expensive in social costs for all but the true elite.

Even elites needed to be careful. The title of a short dialogue from the mid-1400s, "Against the Detractors of Cosimo de Medici's Magnificence," indicates that some people objected to the ambitious building campaign of the Florentine leader.⁶³ The author, Timoteo Maffei, defended Cosimo's magnificence from attacks made against his vast architectural expenditures. Maffei, a canon of the Augustinian order, was hardly a disinterested author. His unpublished text supported Cosimo's decision in 1456 to finance the rebuilding of the Badia at Fiesole, given to Maffei's order in 1439. Already in 1463, Pope Pius II wrote in praise of Cosimo's building projects, but noted the objection to these works from some who considered the patron a tyrant.⁶⁴ In 1525, Machiavelli observed

Fig. 2.6. Michele
Lozzo, *Aragazzi
Montment,
Cathedral,
Montepulciano*
(Photo Scala,
Florence). ©
2002. Photo
Scala, Florence



that Cosimo was always extremely prudent, because he knew that extraordinary works have the danger of attracting envy.⁵⁵ Vasari's *Life of Brunelleschi*, written a quarter century later, provides a concrete example. Here we learn that Cosimo rejected the initial plans for a large and sumptuous palace "more to avoid envy than by reason of the cost."⁵⁶ Thus the expected reception costs of the contemplated commission, not the monetary outlays they would require, were the prohibitive factor. As Cosimo realized, magnificent commissions can stir envy; works of art can even become the focus of public rage. After the Florentines banished Piero de' Medici, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, they confiscated the art collections in the Medici palace and melted down the silver votive images depicting Lorenzo and his mother in the church of the SS. Annunziata.⁵⁷ When the ruling Bentivoglio family was driven out of Bologna in 1507, their palace was destroyed by the townspeople.⁵⁸ Patrons understood that they had to pay attention to the sensibilities of

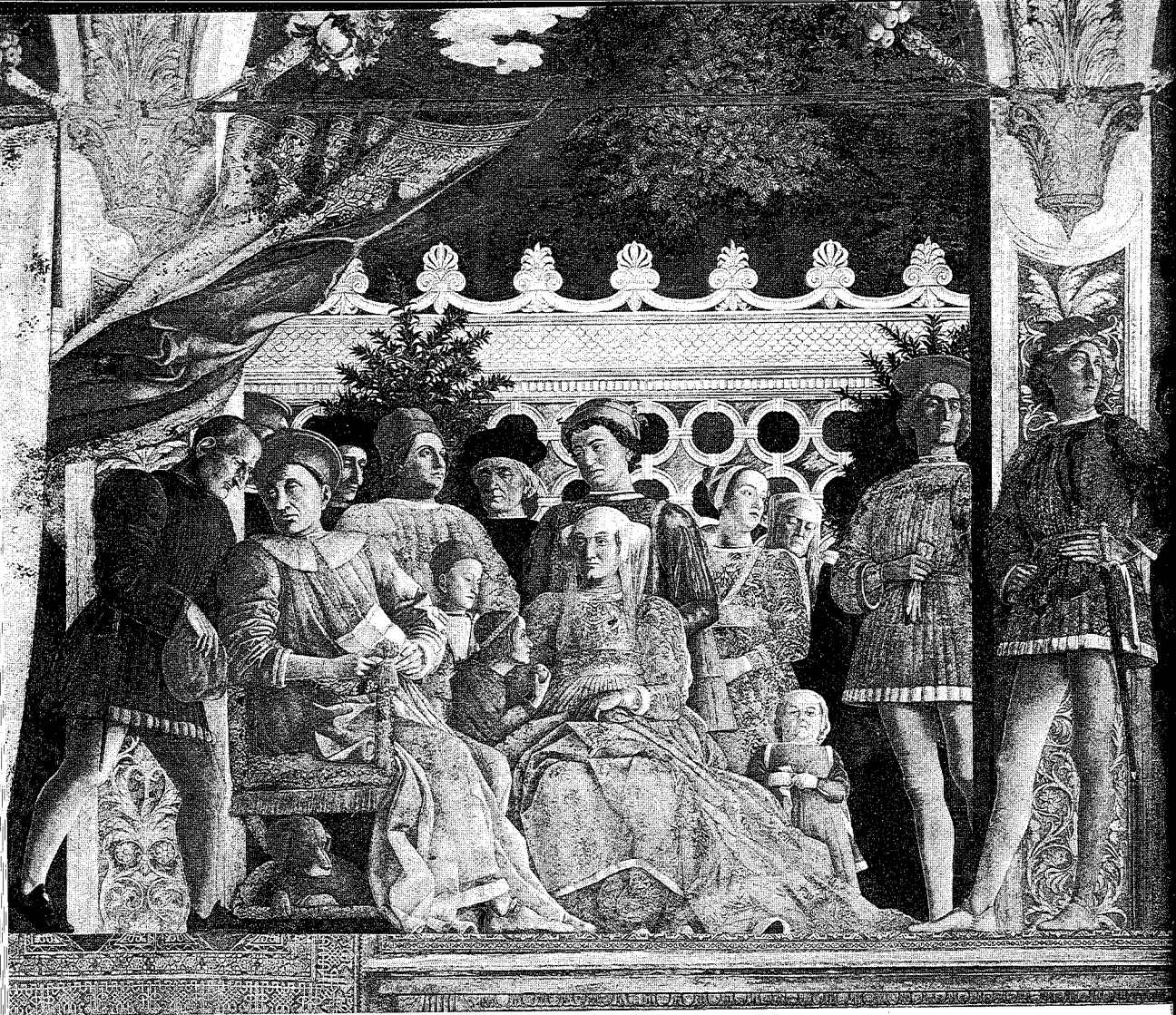


FIG. 2.7.
Mantegna,
*The Gonzaga
Court*, Camera
degli Sposi,
Ducal Palace,
Mantua

their audiences: their social equals, their inferiors, and especially their superiors. For example, when the bishop of Trent commissioned a fresco cycle from Dossi Dosso, he rejected the artist's suggestion to depict the sack of Rome. As the bishop wrote in 1531, the scene would be highly inappropriate should the pope ever decide to visit.⁶⁹ Soon after the Marquis of Mantua commissioned Mantegna's fresco cycle in the Camera degli Sposi (fig. 2.7), complete with portraits of his family, the emperor, and the king of Denmark, he received a worrying letter from his ambassador in Milan. The latter relayed that the Duke of Milan "is not a bit pleased that your lordship did not have his Excellency himself portrayed in it."⁷⁰ The marquis replied that the emperor was his superior and the king his brother-in-law, and he did not change the fresco. Might the reply have been different had the emperor himself requested that a portrait be added?

CHAPTER TWO



58

Church regulations often imposed constraints on principals and agents.⁷¹ Chapel decorations, for example, had to identify and thus celebrate the holy

figure to whom the altar was dedicated. Especially after the Council of Trent, imagery deemed to be offensive could be transformed or destroyed. In Venice, Paolo Veronese had to face the Inquisition to defend the artistic choices he had made in a painting of the Last Supper, though rather than remove several details considered unacceptable, he merely changed the title.⁷² In Rome, Michelangelo's student Daniele da Volterra had to add clothing to several figures in the *Last Judgment* that the master had represented as nude. These "indecorous" images inspired widespread criticism of the fresco, and nearly led to its destruction.⁷³

Often, the authorities responsible for specific churches did not grant patronage rights for the most prestigious locations. In 1447, Castello Quaratesi offered to pay the board of works of the church of Santa Croce, Florence, the remarkable sum of 100,000 florins (4,154 man-years), in order to build an honorable facade. When his request to adorn the structure with the symbol of his family was refused, Quaratesi shifted the focus of his patronage: he paid for the construction of a new church outside the city walls, San Salvatore al Monte. This building bears his coat of arms on the facade, and within, the patron is buried at the crossing, in front of the high altar.⁷⁴ Giovanni Rucellai was able to obtain the right to adorn the facade of an old and highly prestigious church in the center of Florence, Santa Maria Novella, with his name and symbols.⁷⁵

The patrons of private chapels—major sites for commissions and status signaling—tried to avoid the censure of the clergy, unless the expected benefits from the potential offending action exceeded the expected losses from punishment. As we shall see in chapter 5, these spaces displayed substantial and colorful indications of ownership: names, coats of arms, emblems, and banners, plus of course images of the owners. Fra Girolamo Savonarola and many like-minded churchmen had strong negative feelings about the family and personal symbols emblazoned on the frames and bases of religious paintings and statues. Several reformers attempted to combat what they saw as the vainglory of tombs in churches. A 1530 regulation in Venice sought to reduce the number of such tombs but made exceptions for saints, prelates, rulers, princes, and benefactors.⁷⁶ This last category included all patrons, rendering the norms little more than symbolic. In his 1542 regulations on church burials in sacred places, the bishop of Verona, Gian Matteo Giberti, condemned those who erected artful and expensive tombs in eminent places that "exceeded" the altars themselves.⁷⁷ Patricians paid lip service to his new directives but built tombs in churches much as before. In Milan, Archbishop Carlo Borromeo introduced strict new regulations in 1565 for future tombs. He even considered having Leone Leonis elaborate bronze tomb of Gian Giacomo de' Medici removed from the Duomo in Milan, along with other "vain trophies" as a good example to the diocese, though this was never done.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, patrons surely realized the reception-cost threat implicit in such statements.

Some church and social conventions were less constraining than others; that is, they were enforced flexibly, with money frequently enhancing elasticity. Flexible conventions, even those for which exceptions must be purchased, are not constraints. A range of regulations could be lifted for a price. For example, across Italy the severely worded sumptuary laws, which prohibited such vanities as the ostentatious display of jewels or lace, in practice often merely required that wealthy wearers pay a fine. When Florence revised its laws, it allowed the sale of exemptions to constraints on consumption.⁷⁹ Such “paying for the pomp,” to use the Venetian phrase, transformed the civic regulation from a constraint to a cost.⁸⁰ As we shall see in the next chapter, the differing abilities to pay such costs provided a further means to distinguish among wealthy Venetians.

Great demand for an artist often created an availability constraint; artists could and did turn down uninteresting offers, such as one from an undistinguished patron. The most successful and established figures, such as Michelangelo, Titian, or Raphael, worked almost exclusively for the most elite members of society. A run-of-the-mill patron could not engage a “superstar” for even a very well-paid commission.⁸¹ Throughout history, commissions of a superstar have provided a very effective signal of status. The commission, though expensive, was often something money alone could not buy. Naturally, the very status of the famous artist generated interest in his works, thus providing patrons with attributes skill alone could not guarantee: increased visibility and implied status.⁸² In some cases, as the letter to Ammanati reminds us, the fame of elite patrons remained bound to that of the artists they supported.

In the Renaissance, the availability of some materials also constituted a constraint. Today a wealthy patron can purchase virtually any building material, but in the period under discussion some stones, such as colored marbles or porphyry, were available only from distant countries or ancient monuments. Access to these materials indicated that the patron had connections or power, or both. In 1585, for example, Pope Sixtus V prohibited the excavation of porphyry in and around Rome.⁸³ This constraint forced most patrons to obtain imitation porphyry, or specimens of poor quality. Those who ignored the law not only obtained the finest product but signaled their high status by disregarding the pope.

Regulations on commissions imposed “permissibility constraints.” On the streets of Florence, a private tower could be no higher than the town hall; at the church of Orsanmichele, only selected guilds obtained the right to adorn the external pillars with statues of their patron saints.⁸⁴ One practical constraint that limited all commissions was location. Though wealthy patrons could find a range of settings for a home, tomb, or chapel—and within a house many walls might be available for paintings in the bedrooms and antechambers—few of these spaces were considered prestigious, and prestige was always a prime consideration. The location constraint often did not impose on all equally,

creating just the type of differential costs that permit signaling. Such differential location costs applied frequently to commissions in public settings. For example, wealth alone could not buy a plot of land to develop on the most important street. As a result, the desirable setting signaled highly positive qualities about the patron, such as belonging to an old family, or enjoying the favor of churchmen or municipal authorities.

Within given locations, space itself constituted a significant constraint; a chapel had room for only one altarpiece, and only one sculpted portrait bust could sit above any given door in a private palace. By selecting or commissioning a work for these settings, the patron "used up" the opportunity; this had a cost, but not one that could be rendered in financial terms. Space also constituted a major constraint *within* works of art. A painting could contain only so much information, such as likenesses of specific people or scenes from the life of the patron. With its portraits, the painting could pay homage to some prominent citizens, but the honors had to be limited lest the story get lost, the honor be diminished, or aesthetic quality fall.

In theory, patrons would have liked to choose all commissions for which benefits exceeded costs. However, when constraints on the total were binding they made commissions that both met the constraints and maximized the difference between total benefits and total costs. For patrons of moderate means, financial costs would have been the major consideration. Such costs also influenced wealthy patrons, the group studied in this volume, but for them financial costs were less of a concern. They sought the status benefits that could come from commissions that were prestigious, not merely expensive. And thus, over centuries, bronze busts, painted altarpieces, and magnificent palaces were produced in great numbers. They served as effective signals of status, the subject to which we now turn.

Notes

1. Anthony Boardman et al., *Cost-Benefit Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 2nd rev. ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001).
2. Francesco Caglioti, "Fifteenth-Century Reliefs of Ancient Emperors and Emperesses in Florence: Production and Collecting," in *Studies in the History of Art: Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Penny and Elke D. Schmidt (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, forthcoming), 66-109, esp. 68-70.
3. Edith Stokey and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *A Primer for Policy Analysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 134-58.
4. On Carata and his chapel, see Gail Louise Geiger, *Filippino Lippi's Carafa Chapel: Renaissance Art in Rome* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986), and Jonathan K. Nelson, "I cicli di affreschi nelle Cappelle Carafa e Strozzi," in *Filippino Lippi*, ed. Patrizia Zambrano and Jonathan K. Nelson (Milan: Electa, 2004), 513-55, 579-83 cat. no. 39.

5. For central Italy, see Christa Gardner von Teuffel, "Clerics and Contracts: Fra Angelico, Neroccio, Ghirlandaio and Others: Legal Procedures and the Renaissance High Altarpiece in Central Italy," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 62, no. 2 (1999): 190–208. For Venice (where patricians did often obtain the right to burial in front of the high altar) and Florence, now see two essays in *Lo spazio e il culto: relazioni tra edificio ecclesiale e uso liturgico dal XV al XVI secolo*, ed. Jörg Stabenow (Venice: Marsilio, 2006): Riccardo Pacciani, "Il coro conteso: rituali civici, movimenti d'osservanza, privatizzazioni nell'area presbiteriale di chiese fiorentine del Quattrocento," 127–51, and Martin Gaier, "Il mausoleo nel presbiterio: patronati laici e liturgie private nelle chiese veneziane," 153–180.

6. Silvia Catitti, "L'architettura della Cappella Carafa in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Roma," *Annali di architettura* 16 (2004): 25–43.

7. Melissa Meriam Bullard, "The Magnificent Lorenzo: Between Myth and History," in *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of H. G. Königberger*, ed. Phyllis Mack and Margaret C. Jacob (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 49.

8. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere, ed. David Ekserdjian (London: Everyman's Library, 1996), 1:568 (Life of Filippino). Vasari claimed, however, that the figure did not include the cost of assistants or of the expensive blue pigment. Ducats had roughly the same value as florins.

9. For the Strozzi Chapel, see Eve Borsook, "Documents for Filippo Strozzi's Chapel in Santa Maria Novella and Other Related Papers," *Burlington Magazine* 112, no. 813 (1970): 738 note 20; and see the discussion in chapter 5 of this volume.

10. The composition of the frescoed lunette above the *Triumph of Saint Thomas* appears oddly lopsided when viewed from within the chapel, but those looking at it from the high altar can see only the left-hand scene, the *Miracle of the Speaking Crucifix*. The miraculous painting itself is now in the Carafa Chapel in San Domenico, Naples, and may have been in the family's possession in the late 1400s.

11. Giovanni Pontano, *I libri delle virtù sociali*, trans. and ed. Francesco Tateo (Rome: Bulzoni, 1999), 180.

12. *Ibid.*, 164.

13. Diana Norman, "The Succorpo in the Cathedral of Naples: 'Empress of All Chapels,'" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 49, no. 3 (1986): 355.

14. On the cost of housing, see D. S. Chambers, "The Housing Problems of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976): 21–58.

15. D. S. Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 173–75.

16. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 2.

17. Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 105.

18. Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 291.

19. Creighton E. Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500: Sources and Documents*, 2nd rev. ed. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992), 411-12. Similarly, Pontano, *I libri*, 192, wrote about twenty years later that patrons of tombs must consider how best to preserve the fame not only of the person to whom the tomb is dedicated but also of the person who dedicated it.
20. Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 292.
21. *Ibid.*, 232.
22. Pontano, *I libri*, 184.
23. Werner Gramberg, *Die Düsseldorf Skizzenbücher des Guglielmo della Porta* (Berlin: Mann, 1964), 1:126. The name of Michelangelo's patron is presumably an error for Lorenzo the Magnificent, Giuliano's brother. For mention of Morone, in a very rich essay on literary references to art, see Giovanni Agosti, "Scrittori che parlano di artisti, in Quattro e Cinquecento in Lombardia," in Barbara Agosti et al., *Quattro pezzi lombardi (per Maria Teresa Bimagni)* (Brescia: Edizioni L'Obliquo, 1998), 89 note 146.
24. Richard Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 200.
25. John M. Najemy, "Florentine Politics and Urban Spaces," in *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, ed. Roger J. Crum and John T. Paolotti (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25-26.
26. Patricia Lee Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 19.
27. *Ibid.*, 20. We find a parallel in modern-day philanthropy, given that donor names usually remain on buildings even after they encounter severe legal difficulties.
28. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Istorie fiorentine*, ed. Franco Gaeta (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1962), 462.
29. Patricia Lee Rubin, "Magnificence and the Medicis," in *The Early Medicis and Their Artists*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis (London: Birkbeck College, 1995), 47. In a similar vein, Francesco Barbero encouraged Cosimo to donate funds to a Venetian church because that would contribute to his fame in both Venice and Florence; A. D. Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage and the Theory of Magnificence," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 164. On magnificence, also see Rubin, *Images and Identity*, esp. 34-42.
30. Paula Spilner, "Giovanni di Lapo Ghini and a Magnificent New Addition to the Palazzo Vecchio," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 52 (1993): 458.
31. Goldthwaite, *Wealth*, 219.
32. Kathleen Weil Garris and John F. D'Amico, "The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's *De Cardinalatu*," in *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture: 15th through 18th Centuries*, ed. Henry A. Millon (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1980), 89.
33. Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patrons' Oeuvre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 220.
34. For citation and discussion, see Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 12.
35. Rab Hatfield, *Botticelli's Uffizi "Adoration": A Study in Pictorial Content* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

36. Though this dating and reasoning remain plausible, we should also consider that Del Lama, immediately after his disgrace, would have had a good reason to ask Botticelli to include the Medici portraits.

37. For this and other examples of forced gifts in exchange for political favors, see Guido Rebecchini, "Il mercato del dono. Forme dello scambio artistico a Mantova tra Cinque e Seicento," in *Tra committenza e collezionismo: studi sul mercato dell'arte nell'Italia settentrionale durante l'età moderna*, ed. Enrico Maria dal Pozzolo and Leonida Tedoldi (Vicenza: Terra Ferma, 2003), 113–22, esp. 115–17.

38. For the Florentine examples, see Michael Lingohr, "Palace and Villa: Spaces of Patrician Self-Definition," in *Renaissance Florence*, 269. For Milan, with references to other examples in northern Italy, see chapter 7.

39. Welch, *Shopping*, 92.

40. Lingohr, "Palace," 253.

41. As quoted in Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 287 note 21.

42. Welch, *Shopping*, 226–27.

43. Though it is possible that Francesco Castellani did not have the authority to make this sale, the need to keep up appearances probably kept many impoverished chapel owners from ceding their patronage rights.

44. J. R. Sale, *The Strozzi Chapel by Filippino Lippi in Santa Maria Novella* (Ann Arbor and London: Garland, 1976), 104–8. We estimate a "man-year" of unskilled labor at about 130 lire; see discussion in the introduction.

45. Charles De Tolnay, *Michelangelo II: The Sistine Ceiling* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 109–10, appendix no. 90, 248–49; John Shearman, *Raphael's Cartoons in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen, and the Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 13.

46. Brenda Preyer, "Around and in the Gianfigliuzzi Palace in Florence: Developments on Lungarno Corsini in the 15th and 16th Centuries," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 48 (2004): 55–104, esp. 66.

47. Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 399–400. For these buildings he evaluated a man-year of unskilled labor as 150 lire.

48. If an unskilled construction worker earned \$40,000 per year, 155 man-years would be \$6,200,000, and 1,333 would be \$53,320,000.

49. For the quotes by Luca Pitti and Luca Landucci, see F. W. Kent, "Palaces, Politics and Society in Fifteenth-Century Florence," *I Tatti Studies* 2 (1987): 50.

50. O'Malley, *Business*, 107.

51. Salvatore Settis, *Giorgione's Tempest: Interpreting the Hidden Subject*, trans. Ellen Bianchini (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 128.

52. Robert Williams, "The Façade of the Palazzo dei 'Visascci,'" *I Tatti Studies* 5 (1993): 225.

53. Leonardo da Vinci, *Leonardo on Painting: An Anthology of Writings*, ed. Martin Kemp, trans. Martin Kemp and Margaret Walker (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 257 no. 617.

54. O'Malley, *Business*, 104.

55. Gilbert, *Italian Art*, 193; Norman E. Land, *The Viewer as Poet: The Renaissance Response to Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 95-97, with reference to other "poems of blame." For the many poems attacking the obscure painter Ombone, see Agosti, "Scrittore," 88.
56. See, for example, Louis A. Waldman, *Baccio Bandinelli and Art at the Medici Court: A Corpus of Early Modern Sources* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004), for the many criticisms of Bandinelli's *Hercules*; and Michael Wayne Cole, "Grazzini, Allori and Judgment in the Montauti Chapel," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 45 (2001), 302-12.
57. On the *Night* and its reception, see Jonathan K. Nelson, "The Florentine *Venus and Cupid*: A Heroic Female Nude and the Power of Love," in *Venus and Cupid: Michelangelo and the New Ideal of Beauty*, ed. Franca Falletti and Jonathan K. Nelson (Florence: Giunti, 2002), 29-40, and Jonathan Nelson and James Stark, "The Breasts of *Night*: Michelangelo as Oncologist?" letter to the editor, *New England Journal of Medicine* 343, no. 21 (November 23, 2000): 1577-78.
58. For the poem (Girardi n. 247), with discussion, see *Michelangelo: Poesia e Scultura*, ed. Jonathan K. Nelson (Milan: Electa, 2003), 18, 168.
59. Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage," 168.
60. Pontano, *I libri*, 182.
61. Gilbert, *Italian Art*, 166-67.
62. Quoted and discussed in Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 36.
63. Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage," 165.
64. Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, ed. Luigi Torati (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1984), 1:353-55, also mentioned in Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage," 165.
65. Machiavelli, *Istorie*, 459, also mentioned in Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage," 165.
66. Vasari, *Lives*, 1:353. For a similar comment see his *Life of Michelozzo*, 1:379.
67. K.J.P. Lowe, "Patronage and Territoriality in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence," *Renaissance Studies* 7, no. 3 (1993): 262. For other politically motivated attacks on art, see Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 123-24.
68. William E. Wallace, "The Bentivoglio Palace: Lost and Reconstructed," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1979): 97-114.
69. Creighton E. Gilbert, "What Did the Renaissance Patron Buy?" *Renaissance Quarterly* 51 (1998): 433, who rightly emphasizes that the artist, not the patron, proposed the subject.
70. Gilbert, *Italian Art*, 131.
71. See discussion in chapter 5.
72. Robert Klein and Henri Zerner, *Italian Art 1500-1600: Sources and Documents* (1966; reprint, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 129-132.
73. For this intervention, and sixteenth-century criticism of the fresco, see Bernardine Barnes, *Michelangelo's Last Judgment: the Renaissance Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
74. Giampaolo Trotta, "Le vicende della 'fabbrica' in San Salvatore al Monte: *Anti-quae elegantiae per un' acropolis laurenziana* (Florence: Becocci Scala Editore, 1997), 11.

75. Rab Hatfield, "The Funding of the Façade of Santa Maria Novella," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 67 (2004): 81-127.

76. Martin Gaier, *Facciate sacre a scopo profano: Venezia e la politica dei monumenti dal Quattrocento al Settecento*, trans. Benedetta Heinemann Campana (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2002), 59.

77. Kathryn B. Hiesinger, "The Fregoso Monument: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Tomb Monuments and Catholic Reform," *Burlington Magazine* 118, no. 878 (1976): 283-84; Gaier, *Facciate*, 59.

78. Hiesinger, "Fregoso," 287; Gaier, *Facciate*, 61.

79. Sharon T. Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 62, 212, about funerary regulations.

80. Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 123.

81. Sometimes, of course, a patron of middling status ordered a work by an artist who later became a superstar, e.g., Del Lama's commission of Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*.

82. Rab Hatfield, "The High End: Michelangelo's Earnings," in *The Art Market in Italy, 15th-17th Centuries*, ed. Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003), 1996.

83. Suzanne B. Butters, *The Triumph of Vulcan: Sculptors' Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1996), 1:43.

84. Najemy, "Florentine Politics," 21-32.