ARTISTIC CENTERS OF THE

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

ROME

This volume provides a comprehensive overview of the arts in Rome – architecture, sculpture, painting, and the decorative arts – within their social, religious, and historical contexts from 1300 to 1600. Organized around the patronage of the popes, it examines the decline of the arts during the period of the Great Schism and the exile of the popes in Avignon, and the revival that began with Pope Nicholas V in the middle of the fifteenth century, when Rome began to rebuild itself and reassert its leadership as the center of the Christian world. During the second half of this century, artists and patrons drew inspiration from the ruins of antiquity that inhabited the city. By the first decade of the sixteenth century, under the visionary guidance of Pope Julius II and the humanists of the papal court who surrounded him, Rome reestablished itself as the Christian reembodiment of the Roman Empire. The works created by Bramante, Raphael, and Michelangelo, among others, define the High Renaissance and were to have an enduring influence on the arts throughout Italy and Europe. Despite the challenges posed by the Reformation and the secession of the Protestant churches in the early sixteenth century, the Roman Church and the art establishment transformed themselves. By the last quarter of the century, a new aesthetic inaugurated the Roman baroque and was put into the service of the Counter-Reformation and the Church Triumphant.

The most up-to-date assessment of the arts of early modern Rome, this volume is richly illustrated with 219 halftones and 32 color plates.

Marcia B. Hall is Professor of Art History at Temple University in Philadelphia. A recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment of the Humanities, the Fulbright Commission, I Tatti, and the Institute for Advanced Study, she is the author and editor of a number of publications, most recently *The Cambridge Companion to Raphael* and *Michelangelo's "Last Judgment*."

ARTISTIC CENTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

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ARTISTIC CENTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

ROME

EDITED BY

MARCIA B. HALL

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

Rome is the first volume of the new Cambridge series *Artistic Centers of the Italian Renaissance.* Five volumes are planned, the others on Venice, Florence, Naples, and the courts and communes of northern Italy. Each will cover the period 1300–1600. Beatrice Rehl, Senior Editor of Arts and Classics, invited me to serve as editor, and we planned the series together in light of what we saw to be the condition of Renaissance scholarship at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Since the nineteenth century, historians of the Renaissance have traditionally focused on the spectacular achievements of a group of revolutionary artists who, according to the accepted narrative, revived the use of classical models, which were inventively adapted and reconceptualized for contemporary religious, civic, and humanistic needs. For the formative period of the fifteenth century, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Massaccio, Ghiberti, and a handful of other artists working in and around Florence are considered to have led the way out of the Middle Ages; whereas Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Bramante are usually considered to characterize the aims of the High Renaissance in central Italy, as were Giorgione and Titian in Venice. The narrow focus on the achievements of a few artists has resulted in a somewhat skewed account of historical events. Only recently have scholars attempted to place their output in a broader context, including variations in stylistic trends, patterns of patronage, the larger intentions and functions of the works, the interaction of the visual arts in a monument, and regional artistic traditions. All of these approaches have gained favor in the past generation of scholarship, but there has been as yet no attempt to synthesize this material or to offer a comprehensive view.

A significant and new challenge in Renaissance studies, therefore, is to understand the coexistence throughout the early period (1300–1500) of what initially appears to be contradictory impulses, that is, the lingering of Gothic tendencies at a time when classicism and naturalism offered new formal and expressive possibilities. The production of artists working outside of Florence in such centers as Milan and Naples has for too long been misunderstood – indeed, deemed to be "deficient" because it does not look Florentine. Even the scholarship on Florentine developments of the period does not sufficiently take into account an entrenched Gothic tradition that can be felt as late as the final decades of the fifteenth century and for which there was obviously strong support. Nor have the regional differences in patronage and collecting patterns between the Florentine oligarchy and the leaders of such courtly centers as Milan, Naples, as well as the smaller courts like Mantua – to say nothing of Rome – been examined critically.

The sixteenth century in central Italy is arguably the most studied period in the entire history of art, yet attention has been focused on the first quarter of the century, principally on the works of Bramante, Michelangelo, and Raphael. The final decade of the century, dominated by Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci, has been preempted by baroque scholarship. Looking at the Italian peninsula and the century as a whole, we are presented with a fascinating array of adaptations of classical and High Renaissance models.

Scholars have begun to recognize the importance of two new features that contributed to the reshaping of the entire artistic landscape at this time. During this period the hegemony of the Italian regional states was challenged by the consolidation of political power into modern monarchical states. In the artistic sphere, their autonomy was invaded by the circulation of prints. Reproductions of the masterpieces of Raphael and Michelangelo became available everywhere, and their authority, like that of the emperor, Charles V, and the French king, François I, became impossible to ignore and difficult to resist. The style of the Roman masters invaded all artistic quarters, just as the power of Charles V's empire was felt everywhere.

Classicism was put to many different uses, political as well as humanist. The authority of Roman imperial iconography and style proved useful to these courts struggling to present an image of power in the face of actual French or imperial domination. Within the Church, humanists embraced the marriage of classical and Christian art, while conservatives rejected the "paganization" of religious structures, images, and ceremonies. Protestant protest against the worldliness of Renaissance papacy, its ambition to challenge and surpass ancient Roman grandeur, and its use of pagan models, fueled the conservative cause, until finally the Council of Trent (1545–63) laid down guidelines that would redirect the course of the Church – and of Renaissance art. A divide between secular and sacred art was instituted for the first time, and different criteria began to be applied in the two spheres. How these radically changed conditions were handled in each region needs to be studied in systematic ways that will permit comparison.

One of the problems with the approach of traditional art history is that it concerned itself by preference with the moments of artistic excellence and neglected those times and places that were regarded as inferior in aesthetic quality. Recent scholarship has been much less elitist and more pluralistic, but individual studies remain isolated and sometimes difficult to access. Moreover, the rise and fall of these artistic centers over the three-hundred-year period of the Renaissance have yet to be documented and clarified. Even more important, in the fervor to explore context the object has sometimes become lost. The present series strives to fill these gaps, to synthesize this scholarship, but to return the focus to the work of art.

Thus, in designing the series it seemed obvious to us that it should be divided by region. A focus on social history and patronage, which would illuminate the art by filling in the contextual background, offered an approach that accorded with the recent trend of scholarship. Unlike such series undertaken in the past, we would study architecture, sculpture, painting, and the decorative arts together. The volume on Florence, where much of the new scholarship has been focused, would undertake to incorporate it while returning attention to the object. The volume on Venice, a region increasingly well studied, would address the entire Veneto, incorporating those neglected portions of the mainland in the ambience of the Serene Republic.

In addition, we wanted to present a revised and extended corpus of images, and especially to make available images of monuments that have not been properly photographed or published. Toward this end we were awarded a generous grant by the Kress Foundation. It is our intention, where possible, to present images of the works in context, rather than in splendid (modernist) isolation, either by locating such images or by commissioning new photography.

The aim of this series is to open the way for future studies of early modern art in Italy (in general) as well as to open up areas – such as Naples and the northern courts – that have been excluded from the traditional literature, but that were important centers and critical to our understanding of the complexities of early modern Italy.

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I would like to thank the editors of the other volumes in the series who have labored longer than any of us would have thought possible at the start of this project to bring these volumes to fruition. They each possess the peculiar blend of creative scholarship needed to conceive the volumes and management skills needed to accomplish the task that editing of this kind requires.

Ian Verstegen, now Director of the University of Georgia Studies Abroad Program in Cortona, was the photo researcher. We had help from three knowledgeable and good-natured people in Rome, Costanza Barbieri, Simonetta Serra, and Ulrike Tarnow, in tracking down hard-to-find images and in replacing some that got lost in the mail at the very last moment.

We have been well served by our production editor, Michael Gnat, who combines a sharp eye, a demand for precision, erudition, and thank heaven, a sense of humor. He has made the drudgery of editing (almost) fun.

Above all it is the authors who deserve thanks for their hard work, gracious attitude, and patience.

It has been my enormous good fortune to have worked with Beatrice Rehl, Senior Editor of Arts and Classics, now on six books. Her wisdom and good sense, together with her professionalism, have sustained me through some bleak moments, and we have shared many joyful ones.

Sheryl Reiss read my chapter and made numerous suggestions that I have incorporated and that saved me from embarrassing gaffes. I appreciate Linda Wolk-Simon's assistance on problems related to Perino del Vaga and the early 1520s.

Sarah Kozlowski, who is now a doctoral candidate at Yale, served as my research assistant in Rome in the summer of 1999, when she was the recipient of Wheaton College's Davis International Fellows Program, and when I wrote most of my chapter. We worked together in the library of the American Academy, where she showed, already as an undergraduate, an uncanny skill as a researcher. It was one of the most fruitful experiences of my research life.

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