

Italian Art and the North

Exchanges, Critical Reception, and Identity, 1400–1700

Amy Golahny

Exchanges between artists north and south of the Alps took various forms, including inspired adaptation, outright plagiarism, and distant friendships. Northern artists, here indicating those from the Burgundian Empire (Netherlandish or Flemish), the Dutch Republic (Dutch), the Spanish Netherlands (Flemish), the Holy Roman Empire (German), and France, often traveled to the Italian peninsula to gain first-hand experience of antique and Renaissance art. Less frequently, Italian artists traveled north. Italy's attractions were many; foremost among these were the university and humanist centers of Padua, Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Naples. But undoubtedly food, fellowship, and fair weather also attracted northerners to journey south. Fascination with Greco-Roman antiquity formed a common background for those with literary and artistic interests. Courts throughout Europe provided employment for both native and foreign painters, sculptors and architects, and resulted in truly international centers of activity in Mantua, Florence, Milan, Naples, London, Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, Copenhagen, Prague, and Paris. This discussion of the reciprocity between northern and southern European artists describes the main developments, primarily in painting, and offers suggestions for further study. Our examination of the interaction among artists of different regions highlights the localized characteristics of Italian and Northern European painting. But it also reveals a more international view.

Three examples of incidents concerning artists from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries illustrate the variety of artistic exchanges and critical reception between artists of the north and south of Europe during the early modern era. One involves the confusion of authorship based on the viewer's expectations of the appearances of Italian and Netherlandish paintings; the second concerns both an artist's wish to protect his own images from close copying and his receptivity to the art of others; and the third reveals attitudes

about travel to Italy by northerners. (Dates given here are those of the artists' travels, of artworks, or of documents.)

In the first case, Marcantonio Michiel, the Venetian patrician who kept a copious diary in which he documented art owned by the foremost collectors, wrote in 1529 that in the house of Messer Antonio Pasqualino, "The little picture, representing St. Jerome robed as a cardinal and reading in his study, is ascribed by some to Antonello da Messina. . . but the great majority, with more certainty, ascribe it to John van Eyck or to Memlinc, old Flemish masters. . . . It really shows their manner, though the face may be finished in the Italian style."¹ The *St. Jerome in his Study* (ca. 1475; National Gallery, London; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) has pointed arches that evidently suggested the authorship of van Eyck or Memlinc to Michiel, rather than an Italian artist. But Michiel's choice of the word "manner" suggests Antonello's ability to emulate the northern technique of using oil painting to render minute details.

Giorgio Vasari tells us that Antonello da Messina, after seeing a painting by Jan van Eyck in Naples, went to Bruges to learn the secrets of painting in oil from that master. Antonello did not travel north, but viewers thought he must have done so, because his work so closely resembled van Eyck's, in luminous color and exquisite detail. Italian artists were intensely receptive to those northern paintings with which they were familiar, yet even so, Antonello's ability is an extreme case of emulation. This incident illustrates the Italian viewer's expectations of what a painting by Van Eyck should look like, and how a head rendered volumetrically was probably by an Italian, as Michiel noted. Oddly, Michiel did not note that the spatial construction of St. Jerome's study is organized according to the single-point perspective system popularized by the Italian theoretician Leon Battista Alberti – intended to create a fictive "window" into a mathematically consistent illusionistic space – which van Eyck did not follow. Modern viewers, for whom the stage-like setting is related to the inventions of Brunelleschi, Masaccio, and Ghiberti, would marvel at the jewel-like details, but would not be so easily convinced that the *St. Jerome* was by a Fleming.

The early sixteenth century also witnessed incidents that enrich our understanding of Italian attitudes towards the art of their northern counterparts. In our second case, for example, the Bolognese printmaker Marcantonio Raimondi engraved copies after some prints by the German artist Albrecht Dürer, because he recognized the commercial value of Dürer's imagery. In 1506–07, a frustrated Dürer, during his second trip to Venice, attempted to take legal action against the copyist. Vasari recounts how the Venetian Senate issued an injunction against Marcantonio, but refused to penalize him further.² Although Marcantonio's copies would deceive only the ignorant, they made Dürer's inventions widely available. Dürer was keenly interested in protecting his artistic authority, for his prints had already been copied without his permission in Germany. He was sensitive to the usefulness of others' designs in print, for he himself had earlier adapted motifs from the prints of Jacopo de' Barbari, Mantegna, and Leonardo da Vinci.

Dürer remained in Venice for some time to enjoy the company of some of the locals, who treated him with great respect. After studying Giovanni Bellini's paintings, he eagerly adapted aspects of Venetian technique. Bellini was among the earliest of the Venetians to exploit the tonal range of oil pigments for luminous effect. Dürer studied Bellini's coloristic brilliance, volumetric figures, and spatial arrangements, and demonstrated in his *Feast of the Rose Garlands* (1506; National Gallery, Prague; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) that he had appropriated Bellini's fluid brushwork, vivid coloring, and contrapposto figures.³

Dürer's knowledge of and deviation from Italian art had decisive consequences for his own work, on many other levels. Dürer's interest in Italian art focused on the system of perfect proportions, which he believed the Italians kept secret; in his 1504 engraving *Adam and Eve* (<http://commons.wikimedia.org>), Dürer demonstrated his mastery of the ideal nude, which he constructed on a geometric model. Years later, when he himself wrote a treatise on the human figure, he encompassed various and naturalistic body types. Dürer eventually chose to replace the ideal of physical types, rooted in antiquity and practiced by the Italians, with a range of nudes studied from life.⁴

During the seventeenth century, Netherlandish writers began to see Italian art as the standard-bearer by which all art should be measured. In our third example, even the precocious and gifted Rembrandt, it was believed, should study at the feet of Italian masters. Around 1630, Constantijn Huygens wrote that if Rembrandt would only spend a few months traveling through Italy to study the works of Raphael and Michelangelo, he would quickly surpass all ancient and modern artists and give the Italians reason to come to Holland! Rembrandt responded that there was plenty of Italian art to be seen locally, without the bother of traveling.⁵ Huygens's own travels to England and Venice in 1618 and 1620 were formative experiences, for he visited art collectors whenever he could, noted the paintings and sculptures which he found particularly impressive, and developed a keen aesthetic appreciation. But the youthful Rembrandt, heady with his early success, was ambitious to establish himself in Amsterdam and refused to leave the Dutch Republic. He proceeded to study intently the Italian art he saw in his immediate environs, and formed an extraordinary collection that included casts of ancient and modern sculpture, northern and Italian paintings, and the finest prints and drawings of Italian and northern masters. Huygens criticized Rembrandt for not being interested in seeing Italy at first hand. Yet throughout his work, Rembrandt made use of Italian compositions for formal solutions in his paintings, for examples of dramatic action and expressiveness, and for models to be exploited.⁶ Among his most direct challenges to Italian Renaissance art are two self-portraits, an etching of 1639 (<http://commons.wikimedia.org>) and a painting of 1640 (National Gallery, London; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>). These depend upon Titian's *Man in Blue* (ca. 1515; National Gallery, London) and Raphael's *Castiglione* (ca. 1515; Louvre, Paris; fig. 21.2), for both formal and expressive elements, and proclaim Rembrandt's own superiority to the Italians.

Antonello, Dürer, and Rembrandt each participated intensely in the longstanding dialogue between the art of northern Europe and of Italy, whether they traveled across the Alps or not. This dialogue involved appropriation, imitation, and emulation; it also involved personal contacts, patronage, business dealings, and artistic rivalry. For Marcantonio Michiel, the *St. Jerome* displayed the stylistic and technical qualities associated with Flemish painting, and so most likely had to be by a northerner, although the three-dimensionality of the head revealed it as Antonello's work. The myth that Jan van Eyck invented oil painting, instigated by Vasari, has long been unmasked; however, in the fifteenth century, the oil medium was most often identified with the Netherlandish painters, and the broad pattern that Italians used tempera and Netherlanders used oil as a binding medium for panel paintings remains valid.⁷ During the fifteenth century, as Italian artists began to use oil more frequently, they also tended to follow the interests of Netherlanders in reflective surfaces, wide landscapes, and saturated color. In the sixteenth century, Venetian artists, especially Giovanni Bellini, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto, exploited oil for its subtle colors and thick pigment, and provided models for later northern artists to apply paint directly onto canvas, without elaborate preliminary studies. After seeking the secret of the ideal nude from the Italians, Dürer eventually eschewed the ideal and embraced a system of human proportion based on observation from nature, although in the meantime, he adapted Venetian painting techniques. Also emulating the Venetians, Rembrandt applied oil pigment in thick, layered strokes; he pervasively adapted motifs from Italian art in order to demonstrate his own superiority in conveying movement, both physical and psychological.

The Opposition of the Natural and the Ideal

The foremost defining aspect of the Italian–northern comparison involves the differing approaches to imposing order on the visible world. Italians relied above all on the schematic representation of space, the volumetric rendering of figures by using light and shade, and the subordination of details to the whole. In contrast, Northern artists employed numerous details, rendered with careful observation. These two ways of constructing the visible world are fundamentally different.

Early Netherlandish artists regarded the picture plane as a surface presented to the viewer. The observer's eye was not fixed and moved over the picture surface to take in every part separately, as in the works of Jan van Eyck and Hugo van der Goes. Each detail deserved equal attention, on its own merit. By considering the placement of each component relative to the others, artists formed symbolic connections among the figures and objects, fostering a semiotic reading that produces religious symbolism and iconology through spatial arrangements (for semiotics as an art-historical method, see the Introduction to this book, at "Theory and Historiography;" for iconography, see chapter 17). Even paintings

with a single light source in a fixed location, such as van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*, did not consistently conform to that directional illumination. Thus, spatial representation in northern painting did not depend upon the ordered illusionism of Alberti's "window," but rather, on the cumulative effect of the fictive display of all things represented.

In contrast, Italian artists, beginning in the fifteenth century, conceived of the painted surface as a window, behind which the fictive pictorial event appears, presenting a cast of characters upon a stage. The viewer had a fixed position. Vanishing points created an ordered, illusionistic space, and tiled floors enhanced the effect of a measured area, with a predictable diminishing of the size of figures as they were placed in the distance. This stage-like construction encouraged the rendering of figures as three-dimensional forms illuminated by directed light. This method of considering the scene in its totality was articulated by Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, and Nicolas Poussin, among others, and was influential for centuries.⁸

Until the seventeenth century, Italian painters were only occasionally inclined to challenge the limitations of the picture-as-window. Giulio Romano's frescoed room of the *Fall of the Giants* (1534; Palazzo del Tè, Mantua; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) oppresses the viewer with the illusion that the painted giants will fall out of the picture and into the room. Parmigianino's *Madonna of the Long Neck* (ca. 1535; Uffizi, Florence; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) shows the Virgin's foreshortened left toe sticking out over a footrest, appearing in the viewer's face. In Caravaggio's *Entombment of Christ* (1603; Vatican Museum, Rome; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>), the stone seems to penetrate the audience's space, creating the illusion that, as the event occurs over an altar, Christ is symbolically lowered to become transformed into the Eucharist.

Northern artists from van Eyck to Rembrandt were less committed to this Italian brand of illusionism. Indeed, they repeatedly ignored or violated the staged window. For the most part, their concern for detail endured through the seventeenth century, even if a few exceptional painters, such as Frans Hals, developed a personal approach that generalized its appearance. They usually combined painstaking realism with oblique perspectives. For example, Rembrandt arrived at spatial solutions that confounded his viewers, as in the *Nightwatch* (1642; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, <http://commons.wikimedia.org>). Against an Albertian architectural stage setting, the central figures of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and his lieutenant appear to march right off the canvas surface into the viewer's space, creating a diagonal action against the background arch. Rembrandt portrayed the militia company in dynamic action and three-dimensionality, in marked contrast to the other group portraits of guards on display in the same room. According to the Dutch art critic Samuel van Hoogstraten (1678), these other paintings looked like stiff "playing cards" compared to the *Nightwatch*. While Rembrandt adapted devices for spatial representation from the Albertian stage and Caravaggesque figures located forward of the painting surface, he also maintained the scrutiny of the individual and the acute rendering of details in the Netherlandish tradition.

Imitation of surface appearances was typically the strength of northern painting, whereas the imagined ideal was often the strength of Italian painting.

In his words and works, Michelangelo articulated provocatively these north-south differences that especially apply to northern artists up to around 1500, but endure even in Rembrandt's work. Michelangelo cast the Netherlandish method of working "without selection" to gain an emotional response, against his own method of selecting the beautiful from all that he knew, and forming the image in the mind before beginning to draw. While the Netherlandish method involved closely observed reality, Michelangelo's involved the ideal, derived from a synthesis of nature and imagination. In this way, the divergent directions became apparent. Michelangelo conceived the figures created with symmetry and proportion, and then turned to life study, thus achieving a balance between the ideal and the real; he found Northern art did not meet his expectations of an imposed order on a messy reality. Indeed, the Northerners tended to emphasize observation of irregular bodies from life, even throughout the seventeenth century, as Rembrandt's nudes demonstrate. The Italian combined the image formed in the mind with study from nature, while the Northerner privileged observed nature without a mediating conception of the ideal nude. For example, even when Rembrandt based a female nude on a Raphael model considered to be among the most beautiful, he did not smooth the sagging flesh of an actual woman. Had Michelangelo known Rembrandt's nudes, he would have reaffirmed his opinion of the northerners' interest in unrefined nature.⁹ Yet Michelangelo admired some aspects of Netherlandish painting. He allegedly stated to Francisco da Hollanda (1548):

Flemish painting . . . will . . . please the devout better than any painting of Italy, which will never cause him to shed a tear, whereas that of Flanders will cause him to shed many; and that not through the vigor and goodness of the painting but owing to the goodness of the devout person. It will appeal to women, especially to the very old and the very young, and also to monks and nuns and to certain noblemen who have no sense of true harmony. In Flanders they paint, with a view to deceiving sensual vision, such things as may cheer you and of which you cannot speak ill, as . . . saints and prophets. . . and all this. . . is done without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skillful selection or boldness, and finally, without substance or vigor. . . . Flemish painting attempts to do so many things well (each of which would suffice for greatness) that it does none well.¹⁰

Michelangelo presumably formulated these observations after seeing works like Rogier van der Weyden's *Entombment*, which was displayed at the Medici villa at Carreggi in 1492 (after 1450; Uffizi, Florence; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>).¹¹ With its emotive figures with glistening tears and wrinkled skin, Rogier's *Entombment* would have been a prime example of Flemish painting. Michelangelo's response in his own work to such a painting is found in one of his earliest commissioned sculptures, the *Pietà* (1498–99; St. Peter's Rome; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>). The contract with French Cardinal de Villiers specified "a *Pietà*

of marble. . . a draped figure of the Virgin Mary with the dead Christ in her arms, the figures being life-size, for the sum of four hundred and fifty gold ducats.”¹² Michelangelo adopted a sculptural type that was popular in Germany and France but hitherto practically unknown in Italy, but in contrast to Rogier’s conception and such northern sculptural models, Michelangelo conceived a serenely youthful Madonna and a heroic Christ.

Knowledge of Italian and ancient art did not necessarily lead to a positive association with that ideal visual language. Pieter Bruegel, who went to Italy about 1550, deliberately parodied it, by maintaining wide horizons with discrete vignettes in opposition to Raphael’s stage-like space and unified figural groups. Yet Bruegel shamelessly adapted Raphael’s ideal models, and disguised his borrowings by plumping his short-limbed figures and covering them with rough clothing. From 1625–39, Pieter van Laer was in Rome, where he depicted the Roman city and countryside in order to parody classical values, to the dismay of the established Roman painters who formed the Accademia di San Luca. Two pupils of Rembrandt traveled abroad after having emerged in the Netherlands as independent artists: Samuel van Hoogstraten (Vienna 1651–55; Rome 1652–53; London 1662–67) and Willem Drost (Venice 1657–59). Before undertaking their journeys, both had familiarized themselves with the Italian art they saw in Amsterdam. Van Hoogstraten’s art remained unaffected by his Italian experience, and Drost adapted to the prevailing Venetian half-length figures with broad brushwork in generally dark tones.

Without traveling south, Dutch seventeenth-century artists appropriated Italian motifs, as did Rembrandt. Some evidently gave their patrons the impression that they had indeed seen Italy at first hand. Among these are Nicolaes Berchem and Philips Wouwermans, who made use of other artists’ drawings and prints of Italian sites and motifs; Wouwermans, aware that he was fatally ill, took care to destroy those drawings by Pieter van Laer that he had used. Carel Dujardin, who adapted Italian motifs long before he went to Rome late in his life (1675), similarly filled a need for Mediterranean scenes in the Dutch art market.¹³

Copying as Artistic Training and the Canon of Ancient Sculpture

Copying was essential to artists’ education, and sometimes the works copied were the “exotic” production from the other side of the Alps, disseminated in print. Two examples typify this, one each by an Italian and a Fleming. When he was about twelve years old, Michelangelo painted a copy of Martin Schongauer’s engraving, *The Torment of St. Anthony* (fig. 5.1). Among Rubens’s earliest works is a painted copy of *Adam and Eve* after Marcantonio Raimondi’s engraving after Raphael (fig. 5.2). In each case, the copyist added landscape elements and adapted the original to suit his own interests. Michelangelo gave Schongauer’s demons softer contours and his figures weightier bodies. Michelangelo’s St. Anthony has an air of patience in contrast to Schongauer’s original, with his tortured expression.



FIGURE 5.1 Michelangelo, *The Torment of St. Anthony* (after Martin Schongauer), 1487–88. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. Image from Wikimedia Commons.

Rubens represented a moment after the eating of the forbidden fruit, when Adam and Eve wear leafy coverings, and Adam glares and points accusingly at Eve; Raphael had shown Adam seeming to question the wisdom of eating the handful of fruit offered by Eve. In these youthful works, we can see both artists' future directions: Michelangelo went on to emphasize the sense of weight in the human form, and Rubens focused on expressiveness. These two examples reinforce the intrinsic qualities associated with Italian and northern art, respectively.

How artists studied the nude varied greatly north and south of the Alps. Ancient sculpture was so fundamental to the development of ideal human proportions in Italian Renaissance art that it sometimes supplanted living models. For Ghiberti and Masaccio, and later Michelangelo and Raphael, Greco-Roman sculpture offered an ideal figural vocabulary, whose values were reinforced by philosophical developments, including Neoplatonism. Northern artists, whose exposure to antiquity was more limited until later in the sixteenth century, relied less upon ancient sculptural models. Italian and northern artists developed diverse attitudes toward these models, which often provided guides for figural proportions and poses in life study. After 1600, there were enough antiquities north of the Alps so that traveling was no longer essential to provide access to antiquities.



FIGURE 5.2 Peter Paul Reubens, *Adam and Eve* (after Raphael), ca. 1598–1600. Rubenshuis, Antwerp. © Rubenshuis, Collectiebeleid.

Once northerners began to travel south in greater numbers from the early sixteenth century on, they shifted their attention to emulating models in modern Italian art as well as antiquities. The canon of ancient sculpture, however, developed over the early modern period, and was disseminated by publications, commencing with engravings produced by Marcantonio Raimondi and his associates. François Perrier's two books of 1637 (*Statuen*) and 1645 (*Icones et Segmenta*) provided a canon in small format. Soon after these print series appeared, Dutch artists copied them, indicating their popularity and usefulness.

Within the canon of ancient sculpture, Netherlandish artists favored certain ancient pieces. The *Capitoline Sybil*, for example, was more often used in Dutch studios than in Rome, and appeared in Michael Sweerts's *Artist's Studio* (1652;

Detroit Institute of Art; <http://www.dia.org/object-info/23a36c3e-a7f6-4784-ab51-4d205177fc3c.aspx?position=1>). The head of *Vitellius* was also popular in the north Netherlands, presumably because it was under this emperor that the Dutch Revolt against the Romans took place. Ancient sculptures, and occasionally those by Italian as well as northern Renaissance artists, were also known in small-scale copies, as shown in the cabinet paintings of Willem van Haecht, such as the *Cabinet of Cornelis van der Geest* (1628; Rubenshuis, Antwerp; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>).¹⁴

Travel and Patronage

Those northern artists who traveled had an advantage over those who did not. They were able to form international networks of patronage. During the sixteenth century, northern artists who traveled to Italy were predisposed to a humanist background. During the seventeenth, northern artists who went south often continued to travel, frequently as a result of contacts made during their journeys. Jan Gossart returned to the north with drawings of antiquities he saw in Rome (1509). His pupil Jan van Scorel traveled through Germany and Italy en route to Jerusalem (1518–24) and, back in Utrecht and Haarlem, taught Maarten van Heemskerck, who sojourned in Rome (1532–37). All three artists were highly educated. Their works reveal an antiquarian inclination to record actual sculptures and buildings, and to adapt subjects from Greco-Roman philosophy, history, and literature.

The artists who followed them include Hendrick Goltzius (1590–91), Jan Bruegel (1589–96), Peter Paul Rubens (1599–1608), Adam Elsheimer (1599–1610), Pieter Lastman (1603–07), Anthony van Dyck (1621–27), Nicolas Poussin (1624–65), and Claude Lorraine (1617–82). Bruegel spent a year in Milan, where he worked for Cardinal Federico Borromeo (1595–96), who continued to acquire his paintings after the artist's return to Antwerp. Elsheimer, Poussin, and Claude settled in Rome, where they produced work for admiring, prestigious patrons, including Cardinal Odoardo Farnese and Cassiano dal Pozzo. Lastman traveled to the larger cities in Italy, making drawings and acquiring printed material that would serve him upon his return to Amsterdam; presumably he shared this paper art with his most famous pupil, Rembrandt, so that Rembrandt himself felt no obligation to journey south. Lastman thoroughly assimilated the Italian experience, as is evident in his *David Giving the Letter to Uriah* of 1619 (fig. 5.3). He used Michelangelo's dome of St. Peter's for the Jerusalem temple and, for the figure of the king himself, Michelangelo's *Giuliano de' Medici* (1526–33; New Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence). Rubens and van Dyck moved among courtly circles, with an international clientele in Spain, England, France, the Spanish Netherlands, and the Dutch Republic, and, as a result of patronage, they continued to travel for specific commissions.

Steady employment at court determined how long an artist remained in Italy or elsewhere in Europe. In Urbino, Duke Federico da Montefeltro employed



FIGURE 5.3 Pieter Lastman, *David and Uriah*, 1619. Private collection, New York.

Joos van Wassenhove, known as Justus of Ghent (ca. 1470–ca. 1480). In Florence, the Medici gave court appointments to Giambologna (1550–1608), Johannes Stradanus (1550–1605), and Justus Sustermans (1621–81), among others. A stint in Italy often led to an appointment at a northern court. Adriaen de Vries assisted Giambologna in Florence, then worked for Rudolf II in Prague (1593–1612), remaining there after the emperor’s death to work for aristocratic patrons. After training in his native Munich, Christoph Schwartz spent the years 1570–73 in Titian’s studio. Upon returning home, he became court painter to Albrecht V. During his appointment at Vincenzo Gonzaga’s Mantuan court (1599–1608), Rubens managed to spend time in Spain and Rome. François Duquesnoy was funded in his travel to Italy by Archduke Albert, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and he also gained major commissions in Rome (1618–43).

Some of the northern artists who gained employment in Italy were specialists in landscape, a recognizably northern genre. Titian employed some “tedeschi” to paint landscape backgrounds, according to Vasari, who used this term not only to indicate Germans but anyone from the other side of the Alps. These included Lambert Sustris (ca. 1535–ca. 1584) and Dirck Barendsz (1555–62), both of whom also painted nudes and portraits in the workshop. The Antwerp brothers Matthijs (ca. 1575–83) and Paul Bril (ca. 1575–1626) settled in Rome and enjoyed success painting landscapes in various palaces, including the Vatican; their skill in fresco, a medium they must have learned upon arriving in Italy, is highly unusual for northern artists, but undoubtedly increased their employability.

However strong the allure of Italy was for northern artists, the great majority of them did not have the means to travel south, or the interest in doing so. Statistics survive only for the city of Utrecht during the seventeenth century, which indicate that twenty-five percent of practicing artists are documented as having traveled to Italy.¹⁵ We may cautiously apply such a ratio to other Netherlandish cities, recognizing that most artists in northern Europe probably did not experience the Mediterranean at first-hand. Some Dutch artists may also have traveled to England, France, and Germany, and would have broadened their education with that experience, which undoubtedly included viewing ancient and Italian art.

Generally, Italian artists went north only for specific commissions or patronage. This was the case with a few associates of Raphael, notably Tommaso Vincidor, who was sent to Brussels in 1520 by Pope Leo X to produce tapestries for the Vatican. In bringing Raphael's designs to Brussels, Vincidor had a major role in affecting the painterly language of those northerners who did not travel, notably Barent van Orley, court painter to Margaret of Austria. Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini worked in England (1708–13), Düsseldorf, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and The Hague (1716–18), where he made canvases for a number of residences, including the Mauritshuis.

Spain, France, and England imported artists from all over Europe. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the Spanish court employed artists from the Netherlands, France, and Germany, including Jan van Eyck, who visited Alfonso of Aragon in 1428, and Juan de Flandes, who worked for Queen Isabella I of Castile from 1496. Spanish artists also went abroad for training, as Luis Dalmau studied under van Eyck (1431–36), and Fernando Yañez de la Almedina worked under Leonardo da Vinci (1505). Hispano-Flemish painting was not homogeneous; it tended to blend, in varying degrees, the passionate expressiveness associated with Spanish painting with the perceived realism characteristic of the Netherlands. Spanish monarchs patronized foreign artists on a lavish scale. Charles V and Philip II collected so many paintings by Titian that the artist's presence was felt in Spain through his work, and they employed the Milanese sculptor Leone Leoni and his son Pompeo, who established a bronze foundry in Madrid. Philip II appointed the Cremonese painter Sofonisba Anguissola to his court (1559–73). Under Philip III and Philip IV, El Greco and Velázquez participated on an international level and fostered the training of local artists; however, Philip IV hired Rubens for the huge project of decorating his hunting lodge, the Torre de la Parada, with over fifty mythological paintings.¹⁶

At the French court, King François I commissioned the Italian artists Francesco Primaticcio, Rosso Fiorentino, and Benvenuto Cellini to decorate his palace at Fontainebleau (1531–40). In the following century, Henri IV and Marie de' Medici recognized that it was in their interest to send their native artists to Rome, and then employ them at court. Simon Vouet (1611–27) was among the first whose travels they sponsored (see chapter 26). This practice eventually developed into the founding of the French, British, and eventually the American academies in Rome.

The English had a particular fondness for foreign artists when it came to portraiture and grand decorations. For example, the Florentine sculptor

Pietro Torrigiano had a peripatetic career in the Netherlands (1507), England (1507–20), and Spain (1520–28). His tomb for Henry VII in Westminster Abbey achieved a rigorous likeness of the king. This and other sculptures for the Abbey, even in damaged condition, are considered among his best works. Hans Holbein the Younger spent the prime of his career portraying aristocratic England under King Henry VIII (1526–28; 1532–40). The Flemish miniaturist Levina Teerlinc served first as court painter to Henry VIII (1545) and then to Elizabeth I. Among those artists employed by Charles I are Orazio Gentileschi (1626–39) and his daughter Artemisia Gentileschi (ca. 1639), Gerard van Honthorst (1628–30), Rubens (1630), and van Dyck (1635–41), all of whom were engaged in palace decorations on a grand scale.

But although Italian artists themselves generally did not travel north without employment, their works did. The Mouscron brothers purchased Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child* immediately upon its completion in 1505 and placed it in Bruges Cathedral, where northern artists diligently studied it. Caravaggio's Roman altarpieces profoundly affected artists from all over Europe who viewed them *in situ*, but artists could also find his paintings in private collections in England, the Dutch Republic, and Flanders. Most famously, his *Madonna of the Rosary* (1606–07; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>), owned by Louis Finson, was in Amsterdam by 1617. Finson also made a copy of it, which was then owned by another painter, Abraham Vinck. When Caravaggio's altarpiece became available on Vinck's death (1619), a group of Antwerp artists led by Rubens and Jan Brueghel lost no time in acquiring it for the Dominican church of that city. As a major altarpiece in Amsterdam and then Antwerp, the *Madonna of the Rosary* was a sensation, regarded as truly remarkable for its arrangement of figures on various levels around a central core. Rubens adapted this structure in his *Apotheosis of Henri IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Medici* (1622; Louvre, Paris; <http://www.wga.hu>). For Pieter Lastman, who had earlier studied Caravaggio's work in Rome, the renewed study of Caravaggio's paintings in Amsterdam during his later years, 1617–33, caused him to emulate Caravaggio's devices, shifting away from a planar stage to a diagonal figural arrangement. For Rembrandt, the *Madonna of the Rosary* provided a grand example of Italian art that he could view on his own turf, an excuse for not going to Italy, and an arrangement of figures that he could adapt for his own use. Among his early paintings, the *Judas Returning the Silver* (1629; National Gallery, London; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) most clearly owes a debt to Caravaggio in its circular arrangement of figures on varying levels.¹⁷

Italian Collectors' Receptivity to Northern Art

By the mid-fifteenth century, several notable Italian collectors owned paintings by Rogier van der Weyden and Jan van Eyck. In 1454, the humanist scholar Bartolommeo Facio described attentively several works in Naples, including van

Eyck's *Annunciation*, *St. Jerome*, and a *Bath of Women*, and van der Weyden's *Woman Bathing*, *Adam and Eve*, and *Deposition*.¹⁸ In Florence, Piero de' Medici owned another van Eyck, *St. Jerome in his Study*, by the 1460s.¹⁹ By 1500, many more Flemish paintings were in private collections and prominent churches in Italy: Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Triptych* (ca. 1475; Uffizi, Florence), among those works commissioned by Tommaso Portinari during his years in Bruges, arrived in Florence in 1483 and was installed in the family's chapel in Santa Maria Nuova. These are only a few of the securely documented paintings that Italian collectors acquired; we may infer that there were many others.

The Ambrosiana in Milan was founded by Cardinal Federico Borromeo as a museum and library in 1618. He especially collected works by artists from the Spanish Netherlands who had spent time in Italy. These included eleven landscapes by Paul Bril and over twenty-one paintings by Jan Bruegel the Elder. Keenly aware of the differences between these northern artists and those of Italy, the cardinal particularly prized Bruegel's landscapes and flower still-life paintings for their "imitation of nature."²⁰

Such deliberate collecting of northern art continued through the seventeenth century. The future grand duke of Florence, Cosimo III de' Medici, made several visits to the Dutch Republic in the 1660s. There he purchased paintings by Gerard Dou, Frans van Mieris, and others. His uncle Leopoldo focused on drawings, and his acquisitions (beginning ca. 1657) formed the nucleus of the Uffizi's collection, with around 400 sheets by northerners (out of a total of 12,000).²¹ In Venice, by 1663, Nicolò Sagredo owned Rembrandt's *Concord of the State* (1642; Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam) and also many of his prints. In Messina, Don Antonio Ruffo assembled a painting and print collection of works by contemporary artists, both Italian and northern, that demonstrated an eager embrace of foremost internationally known artists. He placed Rembrandt's works alongside paintings by Guercino, Artemisia Gentileschi, and Mattia Preti.²²

Italian Artists' Responses to Northern Art

As soon as Flemish paintings began arriving in Italy, they attracted the attention of Italian artists, who often appropriated northern motifs for their own paintings. In his earliest surviving painting, the *Tarquinia Madonna* of 1437 (Galleria nazionale dell'arte antica, Rome; [http://www.frafilippolippi.org/Madonna-with-Child-\(Tarquinia-Madonna\)-1437.html](http://www.frafilippolippi.org/Madonna-with-Child-(Tarquinia-Madonna)-1437.html)), Filippo Lippi adopted an architectural framework that approximates a van Eyckian background. Domenico Ghirlandaio's emulation of northern paintings pervades his work of the 1480s. His fresco of *St. Jerome* (1481; Ognissanti, Florence; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) evidently reflects van Eyck's *St. Jerome* owned by Piero de' Medici.²³ Ghirlandaio's portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni, née Albizzi (1488; Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) blends the profile type, adapted from antiquity, with Netherlandish elements: the shelves, fictive paper labels that the



FIGURE 5.4 Piero della Francesca, *Senigallia Madonna*, ca. 1470. Galleria nazionale delle Marche, Urbino / The Bridgeman Art Library.

Italians called *cartellini*, jewels with precious highlights, and luminous fabrics. Immediately upon seeing the Portinari triptych, Ghirlandaio, like other Florentine painters, adapted its landscape and figures, as in his *Adoration of the Shepherds* (1485; Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>). Ghirlandaio's contemporaries, including Baldovinetti, Verrocchio, and Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo, shared his interest in northern art.

We could continue to list instances of Italian appropriation of northern motifs and approaches without exhausting this material. Piero della Francesca, who worked alongside Justus of Ghent in Urbino, combined meticulous renderings of jewels and fabrics with volumetric figures in an spare interior in his *Senigallia Madonna* (fig. 5.4). Parmigianino's *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror* (ca. 1524; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) owes its inventiveness and interest in light effects to one of the van Eyckian paintings with a convex mirror that were in Italian collections. Caravaggio repeatedly studied Dürer's prints for various motifs, but he also plundered less famous northern artists. His *Christ Calling Matthew* (1600; Contarelli Chapel, San Luigi de' Francesi, Rome; <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) was influenced by a woodcut attributed to Jörg Breu that appeared in a 1533 German book on drinking.²⁴ Scholars often note these Italian adaptations of northern motifs to consider them aberrations or novelties; however, these Italian artists so profoundly assimilated



their northern sources so that these models may be considered formative, rather than incidental, to their art.

Contacts across the Alps

The famed 1515 exchange of drawings between Raphael and Dürer reveals what each considered most appropriate to give the other.²⁵ Although it is not clear who initiated the exchange, it is certain that Dürer was keenly interested in the work of the renowned Italian artists of his time. He sent Raphael a painted self-portrait (now lost). For the German master, portraiture was a cumulative series of sharp observations of the person portrayed. His gift to Raphael may indicate that he regarded the Italians as uninterested or even deficient in that area. Raphael's gift, a drawing of three male nudes, may suggest that he considered northerners ignorant of anatomy and deficient in rendering the human body. The drawing, which prepared a figure in the *Battle of Ostia* fresco (1515; Vatican Museum, Rome), displayed the artist's anatomical skill. Dürer's inscription on Raphael's gift to him reveals that he perceived the drawing in precisely this way. He wrote: "1515 Raffahell of Urbin, who was held in such high esteem by the Pope, he made these naked figures and sent them to Albrecht Durer at Nuremberg to show him his hand."²⁶ Thus, although these artists never met one another, they were clearly aware of each other and participated in an exchange defined by their respective superior talents.

Other long-distance exchanges involved commissions. In London, van Dyck painted a triple portrait of Charles I in 1636, to serve as a model for a marble bust by Gianlorenzo Bernini (Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II). Bernini customarily portrayed his sitters in drawings and clay from life. Here, he valiantly captured the features of Charles I in a sculpture that delighted the king, but which scholars consider less vivacious than his usual portraits. The cultural significance of such exchanges between artists, as these two examples offer, belongs to the broad field of personal contacts, social customs, travel, and patronage.

The Critical Response

The admiration and even-handed treatment for both northern and Italian painting expressed by the Italian authors Facio and Michiel is a measure of how these, and presumably other, connoisseurs looked at art around 1500. When later writers began to chronicle the arts in depth, they tended to favor one region over another. Vasari privileged Italians above artists from the other side of the Alps, and the systematic approach of his compatriot Tuscan–Roman painters over the more spontaneous approach of the Venetians. More interested in mental conception than bodily perception, he favored the central Italian creative process often summarized as *disegno*, which balanced drawing from life with classicizing idealization based on mathematical ideals of proportion and repeated preparatory



studies, against the Venetian emphasis on *colorito*, which besides its exploitation of sensuous color taught artists to build up their images directly on the canvas with free and expressive brushstrokes. Vasari wrote not only to promote the values of central Italy, but also to establish worthy models for artists to follow. Within this critical framework, he recognized that the northerners were admirable for their landscapes, prints, and ability to include extraordinary detail on a small scale, but he set all Italians above northern artists. In Vasari's hierarchy, Michelangelo represented the apex of art, and those associated with that master were above reproach. Among these was Pontormo, whom Vasari considered exemplary until he appropriated some figures from Dürer's prints in his frescoes, now sadly in ruinous condition, of the *Passion of Christ* for the Certosa outside Florence (1523–25). Vasari could not reconcile Pontormo's elegance with his adaptation of Dürer's angular and foreshortened figures. Appropriation of others' inventions was acceptable, but the result needed to be subsumed into the artist's own language. Vasari criticized Pontormo for deviating from the "correct Michelangelesque" path:

For Pontormo to have imitated Dürer in his inventions (*invenzioni*) is not in itself reprehensible. Many painters have done so and still do. In this he certainly did not go astray. However, it is extremely regrettable that he took over the German manner lock, stock, and barrel, down to the facial expression and even in movement. For through this infiltration of the German manner his original early manner, which was full of beauty and grace and which with his innate feeling for beauty he had completely mastered, was transformed from the ground up and utterly wiped out. In all his works under the influence of the German manner, only slight traces are recognizable of the high quality and the grace which had previously belonged to his figures.²⁷

Vasari thought that Pontormo's formerly graceful style had been destroyed by his reliance on Dürer's inventions.

The northerners countered Vasari's biases, against both the Venetians and the Netherlanders. Dominique Lampson defended Netherlandish art in a series of letters, one to Vasari, and in his life of the artist Lambert Lombard (1565). Lampson particularly noted the superiority of northern engravers, recommended Cornelis Cort to Titian, and proclaimed Lombard the equal of Vasari as a painter.²⁸

Karel van Mander regarded his own Italian sojourn (1574–77) with some ambivalence. Recognizing its benefit to the young artist, he also knew that Rome was full of distractions for young men. In his *Groot Schilder-Boeck* (1604), he corrected Vasari's disparagement of the Venetians, for he did not view *disegno* and *colore* as mutually exclusive principles; to him, both were viable. Van Mander stated, "In Rome, one learns to draw, and in Venice, to paint." Updating Vasari's *Vite* with lives of the Italian artists active during 1570–1604, Van Mander wrote the earliest biographies of Federico Zuccaro, Palma Giovane, Jacopo Bassano, and Caravaggio, among others. For Dutch readers, these biographies were informative and authoritative. The Italians, however, paid no attention to this

Dutch-language publication, and evidently were content to wait decades for these artists' biographies to appear in Italian by Giovanni Baglione (1642) and Carlo Ridolfi (1648).

Generally, Italian writers, such as Vasari, championed their own particular region, often giving short shrift to artists from another province. The Florentine Filippo Baldinucci (1686) is an exception to this tendency, and gave accounts of several Dutch and Flemish artists, notably Rubens and Rembrandt. The northerners van Mander (1604) and Joachim von Sandrart (1675–78), compiled lives of artists from both north and south of the Alps, thus providing a more comprehensive set of biographies. Authors were responsible for publicizing artistic achievements; their advice to young artists was as crucial as visual examples in providing models for emulation, qualities valued in the arts, and qualitative distinctions in interpreting northern and southern artists and their production.

Suggestions for Further Study

The foregoing survey has focused on major painters, such as van Eyck, Dürer, Raphael, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Rembrandt, to indicate specific cases of exchanges and critical response. Just as the Alps are a physical barrier between northern and southern Europe, so languages create cultural divisions. In the writings of chroniclers of the arts, this fact is particularly apparent in the Italo-centric historiography of the early modern era. Vasari's shadow still looms large, although recognition for the Dutch and German authors is growing. The bifurcation through language similarly needs a corrective.

The media of architecture, sculpture, and manuscript illumination within the broad context of Europe – north/south and east/west – are in need of further study. Italian architects, who developed a formal and technical vocabulary out of the ubiquitous Roman ruins, traveled for work or sent their designs throughout Europe; their effect on northern architecture has not been sufficiently acknowledged. Northern architects who traveled south studied the same ancient ruins, as well as the books of Vitruvius, Sebastiano Serlio, and Andrea Palladio; they adapted aspects of antiquity and the classicizing Italian Renaissance to the local terrain and patrons' demands. In the Dutch Republic, this development occurred only after 1630, with Pieter Post and Jacob van Campen's Mauritshuis (1637); among the grand buildings that most obviously pay homage to the heritage of the Italian Renaissance are Jacob van Campen's Amsterdam Town Hall (1648). Meanwhile, throughout northern Europe, aristocratic and royal patronage produced grand buildings that reflected ancient and Italian Renaissance architecture to various degrees.

The relationship of northern sculpture to classical and Italian models has been studied primarily through the works of single artists like Giambologna, Adriaen de Vries, and Hendrick de Keyser. Similarly, manuscript illumination has been examined with the focus on individuals, such as the Fleming Simon Bening and the Croatian Giulio Clovio. A productive course of study would examine the

processes by which the artists and their works traveled, the reception of their works, and the mapping of their various networks of acquaintances and collectors.

Categorizing by regional origin is the traditional means of imposing order on a messy collection of artists, their works, and their repositories. It is one essential organizing structure, taking into account chronology, style, subject, patronage (see chapter 1), and iconography (see chapter 17). Yet once we recognize the movements of artists and their works, and their interest in art outside their own region, such geographical categories become less useful. A desideratum would be to eliminate, or at least lessen, the bifurcated study of this material by geography, language, and media. The study of the long Renaissance has often been considered an Italo-centric field, justified by the historiography of the early modern period that emphasizes the revival of antiquity. Future considerations should include the Mediterranean region as a whole, to include Crete, Croatia, and Turkey, for the south, and Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Russia for the north. A more fluid method of organizing this material would be productive, and would eventually consider the broader consequences of globalization during this period.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Arthur J. DiFuria for his perceptive comments on an early version of this essay, and the editors for their care in shaping it.

Notes

- 1 Klein and Zerner, *Italian Art*, 29.
- 2 Richardson, *Renaissance Art Reconsidered*, 135.
- 3 Luber, *Albrecht Dürer and the Venetian Renaissance*.
- 4 Golahny, *Rembrandt's Reading*, 88.
- 5 <http://www.essentialvermeer.com/history/huygens.html>.
- 6 Golahny, *Rembrandt's Reading*, 114.
- 7 Graham, *Inventing Van Eyck*; Vasari, *Le vite*, 1:184.
- 8 Richardson, *Renaissance Art Reconsidered*, 8, 51.
- 9 Golahny, "Rembrandt's Early 'Bathsheba,'" 672.
- 10 Klein and Zerner, *Italian Art*, 34.
- 11 Meijer et al., *Firenze e gli antichi Paesi Bassi*, 98.
- 12 Holt, *A Documentary History of Art, Vol. II*, 3.
- 13 Harwood, *Inspired by Italy*, 30.
- 14 Van Suchtelen and Woollett, *Rubens and Brueghel*, 91.
- 15 Harwood, *Inspired by Italy*, 12.
- 16 Brown, *Painting in Spain 1500–1700*, 62 ff., 179 ff., 190 ff.
- 17 Golahny, "Rembrandt and Italy," 117.
- 18 Richardson, *Renaissance Art Reconsidered*, 188; these paintings are not identified with certainty.
- 19 Meijer et al., *Firenze e gli antichi Paesi Bassi*, 90.

- 20 Van Suchtelen and Woollett, *Rubens and Brueghel*, 13.
 21 Kloek and Meijer, *Fiamminghi e olandesi a Firenze*, xii.
 22 Rutgers, *Rembrandt in Italië*, passim.
 23 Meijer et al., *Firenze e gli antichi Paesi Bassi*, 86.
 24 Kloek, “Two Northern Examples.”
 25 Nesselrath, “Raphael’s Gift to Dürer.”
 26 Nesselrath, “Raphael’s Gift to Dürer,” 376.
 27 Friedlaender, *Mannerism and Antimannerism*, 3.
 28 Denhaene, *Lambert Lombard*, 25 ff.

Bibliography

- Bradshaw, Marilyn. *Italian Renaissance Art: A Sourcebook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2009.
- Brown, Jonathan. *Painting in Spain 1500–1799*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Denhaene, Godelieve. *Lambert Lombard, peintre de la Renaissance, Liège 1505/06–1566: Essais interdisciplinaires et catalogue de l'exposition*. Liège: KIK/IRPA, 2006.
- Enggass, Robert and Jonathan Brown. *Italian and Spanish Art 1600–1750: Sources and Documents*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992.
- Friedlaender, Walter. *Mannerism and Antimannerism in Italian Painting 1500–1600*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Golahny, Amy. *Rembrandt’s Reading: The Artist’s Bookshelf in Ancient History and Poetry*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003.
- . “Rembrandt and Italy: Beyond the *disegno/colore* Paradigm.” *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen Neue Folge* 51 (2009): 113–20.
- . “Rembrandt’s Early ‘Bathsheba’: The Raphael Connection.” *Art Bulletin* 65 (1983): 671–75.
- Graham, Jenny. *Inventing Van Eyck: The Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age*. New York: Berg, 2007.
- Hall, Marcia B. *Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Harbison, Craig. *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in its Historical Context*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994.
- Harris, Ann Sutherland. *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.
- Harwood, Laurie B. *Inspired by Italy. Dutch Landscape Painting 1600–1700*, London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2002.
- Holt, Elizabeth G. *A Documentary History of Art, Vol. II: Michelangelo and the Mannerists: The Baroque and the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1958. <http://www.essentialvermeer.com/history/huygens.html>.
- Klein, Robert, and Henri Zerner. *Italian Art 1500–1600: Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966.
- Kloek, Wouter Th. “Two Northern Examples for Caravaggio.” In *‘Aux Quatres Vents’: A Festschrift for Bert W. Meijer*, edited by A. W. A. Boschloo et al., 287–92. Florence: Centro Di, 2002.

- _____. and Bert W. Meijer. *Fiamminghi e olandesi a Firenze: Disegni dalle collezioni degli Uffizi*. Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi 96. Florence: Olschki, 2008.
- Luber, Katherine Crawford. *Albrecht Dürer and the Venetian Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Mander, Karel van. *Het Schilder-Boeck*. Haarlem, 1604. Reprint, New York: Broude, 1980.
- Meijer, Bert W. et al. *Firenze e gli antichi Paesi Bassi 1430–1530. Dialoghi tra artisti: da Jan van Eyck a Ghirlandaio, da Memling a Raffaello....* Exh. cat. Florence: Palazzo Pitti, 2008.
- Nesselrath, Arnold. "Raphael's Gift to Dürer." *Master Drawings* 31 (1993): 376–89.
- Nuttall, Paula. *From Flanders to Florence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Paoletti, John T. and Gary M. Radke. *Art in Renaissance Italy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2005.
- Richardson, Carol M. et al. *Renaissance Art Reconsidered: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Rutgers, Jaco. *Rembrandt in Italië: Receptie en verzamelgeschiedenis*. Utrecht: privately printed, 2008.
- Smith, Jeffrey Chipps. *The Northern Renaissance*. London: Phaidon, 2004.
- Stechow, Wolfgang von. *Northern Renaissance Art 1400–1600: Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999.
- Van Suchtelen, Ariane and Anne T. Woollett. *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship*. Zwolle, NL: Waanders, 2006.
- Vasari, Giorgio. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi. 9 vols. Florence: Sansoni, 1981.
- Woods, Kim W. *Making Renaissance Art*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.