



the completed sections show the elongated lines and elegant poses typical of his work.

In the late 1530s, the church members who had commissioned the paintings for the Steccata church became frustrated with Parmigianino's lack of progress. They had the painter jailed briefly, and then barred him from working on the project. Parmigianino fled to the nearby town of Casalmaggiore, where he worked on various other pictures. Still hoping to return to Parma and finish the Steccata altarpieces, he died at age 37. (See also **Art; Art in Italy.**)

Pastoral

* **Flemish** relating to Flanders, a region along the coasts of present-day Belgium, France, and the Netherlands

* **medieval** referring to the Middle Ages, a period that began around A.D. 400 and ended around 1400 in Italy and 1500 in the rest of Europe

* **genre** literary form

* **romance** adventure story of the Middle Ages, the forerunner of the modern novel

* **epic** long poem about the adventures of a hero

Artists and writers of the Renaissance often portrayed the countryside as a perfect place, far from the corrupt life of the city and the court. This style, known as the pastoral, became one of the most popular forms for art and literature. Such noted Renaissance figures as English playwright William SHAKESPEARE, Spanish author Miguel de CERVANTES SAAVEDRA, and Flemish* painter Peter Paul RUBENS all created works in a pastoral style.

The pastoral developed out of a variety of ancient and medieval* forms. In particular, it drew on the ancient Roman poems called eclogues, which focused on conversations between shepherds. In the 1200s and 1300s, the Italian poets Dante Alighieri, PETRARCH, and Giovanni BOCCACCIO created new Latin works in this form. Later writers produced eclogues in Italian, and in time the pastoral form spread throughout Europe. Artists also adopted pastoral themes in their works, often placing biblical stories in a country setting.

The Renaissance pastoral was not really a single distinct genre*. Writers used pastoral themes in a variety of forms, including poetry, prose, and drama. For example, Italian playwright Giovanni Battista Guarini used the pastoral style in his play *The Faithful Shepherd* (1590). Guarini believed that the pastoral's rural setting, far removed from the customs of city life, made it an ideal form for social, political, and even sexual experimentation. Other works, such as Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, combined the pastoral style with elements of the romance* form.

The pastoral became extremely popular in England in the late 1500s. English writers produced many famous pastoral works in a variety of literary forms. Edmund SPENSER created a book of eclogues called *The Shepheardes Calender* and also used pastoral themes in his epic* *The Faerie Queene*. Philip SIDNEY produced *Arcadia*, a pastoral romance, and Shakespeare adopted the pastoral style in his comedy *As You Like It*. (See also **Drama, French; Italian Language and Literature; Poetry, English.**)

Patronage

Much of the glorious outpouring of art in the Renaissance was the result of *patronage*. The term traditionally refers to the support that people of wealth and influence provided to artists, scholars, and writers. Rulers, popes, and prosperous merchants hired artists to adorn



their homes and public spaces, and scholars to translate ancient Greek and Roman texts. *Patronage* can also apply to other types of social and political ties. Many aspects of Renaissance life involved bonds of mutual support between individuals and groups.

PATRONS AND CLIENTS

Patrons, usually individuals or groups with power and substance, assisted their clients—those who followed or served them—in various ways. They might provide clients with jobs in the church or government or supply them with a steady income. Patrons also offered protection and helped clients if they were in trouble with the law. Clients, in turn, gave patrons their loyalty and support. The same person could be a patron (provider of assistance) in one situation and a client (someone needing assistance) in another.

The Renaissance system of patronage evolved out of ancient and medieval* traditions. The words *patron* and *client* came from the Latin terms *patronus* and *cliens*, which date back to ancient Rome. In the late 1400s, some Italians with classical* training began using these words to refer to the patron-client relationships of their day.

In many cases, client-patron relations included strong elements of friendship or even kinship. Members of the English gentry* often referred to their close associates as “cousins,” while Italians spoke of their “kinsmen, friends, and neighbors.” In some cases, patronage extended or made formal the ties that already existed among neighbors and relatives. Although clients and patrons usually came from different ranks of society, their relationship could include a degree of equality.

Patronage played an important role in the Italian republics* of Florence, Venice, and Genoa, where changes of government or regime* were frequent. To protect their position in these shifting societies, people attached themselves to the *gran maestri*, or “big shots,” who dealt in political power. Patron-client relations could become the basis for stable political factions*. Ambitious party leaders and rulers used their patronage to draw power to themselves. For example, the MEDICI family ruled the city-state of Florence by building one-party regimes made up of their friends and clients.

Beginning in the 1460s, Italians began to use the term *maestro della bottega* (boss of the shop) to describe leaders, including rulers and private citizens, who were masters of the art of political patronage. As these political figures grew in power, their relationships with their clients became increasingly unequal. Clients showed greater deference toward them and spoke of them in more respectful, even fawning, terms. Nonetheless, patronage remained a two-way relationship. Great lords frequently went out of their way to “serve” quite humble friends and supporters, knowing that they needed their clients’ devotion to maintain their reputations and perhaps their armed support to defend their regimes.

Women, who had little formal power in Renaissance politics, managed to exert quite a bit of influence through the informal workings of

* **medieval** referring to the Middle Ages, a period that began around A.D. 400 and ended around 1400 in Italy and 1500 in the rest of Europe

* **classical** in the tradition of ancient Greece and Rome

* **gentry** people of high birth or social status

* **republic** form of Renaissance government dominated by leading merchants with limited participation by others

* **regime** government in power at a particular time

* **faction** party or interest group within a larger group



PATRONAGE

patronage. Most female patrons focused on helping other women or the poor. Noblewomen, wives and mothers of party leaders, and women who headed important convents all used the culture of patronage to their advantage.

ARTISTIC PATRONAGE

Patronage of the arts took place within the larger context of social and political patronage. Most patrons commissioned artworks not for the art itself, but because it contributed to the splendor of their domains. They sought works that would proclaim their wealth and rank to the world. Patronage could raise the status of the artist as well as the patron. Those who served powerful patrons often acquired prosperity and fame.

Patrons possessed considerable influence, even control, over the artists they hired. Because they were paying, they had the right to dictate the subject matter and style of a piece. Patrons often requested works in their honor. However, patrons and artists could also influence each other through shared ideas, and the works produced under such a partnership are sometimes associated with the names of both patron and artist. The politician Giorgio Trissino, for instance, introduced the architect Andrea PALLADIO to humanist* education and promoted his career. Similarly, artists sometimes functioned as patrons. When MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI worked on the church of San Lorenzo in Florence, he chose boyhood friends, relatives, and neighbors to assist him in the task.

Royal and Papal Patrons. Rulers and popes were the leading patrons of the arts during the Renaissance. Not only did they have the most wealth at their disposal, but they also had the greatest need for artworks. They relied on the splendor of their courts and their possessions to display their power to their subjects and to other princes*. To demonstrate their magnificence, Renaissance rulers commissioned and built grand palaces, churches, and monuments. They also purchased costly decorative items such as jewelry, dishes, luxurious tapestries, and richly embellished armor and weapons. They adorned their clothes with pearls, gems, and embroidery, and their homes with paintings, statues, and manuscripts in lavish bindings.

Among the greatest Renaissance patrons were the dukes of BURGUNDY, who ruled northern France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Two of these dukes, Philip the Good (ruled 1419–1467) and Charles the Bold (ruled 1467–1477), gained fame for their magnificent courts and ceremonies. Many masters of arts and crafts served the dukes, including painter Jan Van EYCK. The dukes also collected books and assembled an exceptionally fine choir of musicians.

Several Holy Roman Emperors* of the HABSBURG DYNASTY were noted patrons of the arts. Emperor MAXIMILIAN I (ruled 1493–1519) sought to glorify his family through art. He planned a vast monument that was to feature more than 40 life-size statues of his ancestors, including Julius Caesar, as well as 100 statues of Habsburg family saints. Maximilian also

* **humanist** referring to a Renaissance cultural movement promoting the study of the humanities (the languages, literature, and history of ancient Greece and Rome) as a guide to living

* **prince** Renaissance term for the ruler of an independent state

* **Holy Roman Emperor** ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, a political body in central Europe composed of several states that existed until 1806



wrote literature praising his own deeds and had the works illustrated by major artists. In addition, he collected tapestries, gold work, and armor—he was probably the greatest patron of armor-makers in his day. Maximilian's grandson, CHARLES V, preferred science and technology. He collected globes and maps, scientific instruments, and illustrated books on astronomy and anatomy.

* **papal** referring to the office and authority of the pope

* **facade** front of a building; outward appearance

* **diplomatic** having to do with formal relations between nations

Popes emerged as powerful patrons of the arts in the 1500s, and the papal* court became a leading center of culture. Perhaps the most ambitious was Pope JULIUS II (ruled 1503–1513), who sought to restore the lost glories of ancient Rome. He hired architects and artists to turn medieval Rome into a classical city, rebuilding entire sections of town and creating broad avenues bordered with palaces. His successor, LEO X (ruled 1513–1521), was a member of the Medici family. Leo devoted great energy and resources to restoring his family's power through artistic projects. He commissioned Michelangelo to build a huge marble facade* for the church of San Lorenzo in Florence and RAPHAEL to decorate his private dining room in the Vatican. Popes, like worldly rulers, commissioned artworks not only for personal use but also as diplomatic* gifts. Leo X sent the king of France two of Raphael's paintings.

Other noted patrons of the Renaissance included the monarchs of England, France, Naples, and Spain, the dukes of Milan, and the influential ESTE and Medici families. HENRY VIII of England (ruled 1509–1547) spent great sums on his palaces. His 55 residences were furnished with more than 2,000 tapestries, 2,028 items plated in silver or gold, and 1,800 books. FRANCIS I (ruled 1515–1547) of France turned an old hunting lodge into the glorious Renaissance château of Fontainebleau. He bought many Italian artworks and attracted artists, such as LEONARDO DA VINCI and Benvenuto CELLINI, to decorate his flourishing court. Several female rulers also gained fame as patrons. The Spanish queen ISABELLA OF CASTILE (ruled 1474–1504) supported architecture, art, and literature. MARGARET OF AUSTRIA, the daughter of Maximilian I, collected tapestries, gold work, manuscripts, and paintings by such artists as Hieronymus BOSCH. Isabella d'Este of Mantua commissioned a variety of pieces, ranging from floral tapestries to musical instruments.

Other Patrons. Members of the nobility imitated the grand rulers by practicing artistic patronage on a smaller scale. They built mansions, decorated their homes with artworks, and wore expensive clothes and jewelry. They also assembled libraries and sponsored religious architecture, especially private chapels for their families.

Many merchants, bankers, and court officials rose to wealth and prominence in the service of powerful rulers and became patrons themselves. Agostino Chigi, a banker in the Italian city of SIENA, provided funds to three popes and managed business for the papal court. He owned a palace in the center of Rome and a lavish suburban residence modeled on the villas* of ancient Rome. Another notable patron, Nicolas Rolin, rose from a middle-class background to enormous power in the service of the dukes of Burgundy. He commissioned an elaborately adorned hospital in the city of Beaune and Jan van Eyck's painting *Virgin with Chancellor Rolin*.

* **villa** luxurious country home and the land surrounding it

**Letters of Recommendation**

Many letters exist from one Renaissance patron to another recommending the services of a particular client. Often clients brought such letters to potential patrons by way of introduction. Letters of this type often referred to the relationship between the patron and the client in terms of kinship, with the two calling themselves “loving brothers” or a gentlewoman describing herself as an “elder sister.” Religious metaphors were also common in these letters. A powerful patron might call his or her clients “obedient lambs,” while the client might promise to honor the patron as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

* **guild** association of craft and trade owners and workers that set standards for and represented the interests of its members

* **epic** long poem about the adventures of a hero

* **masque** dramatic entertainment performed by masked actors, or a ball or party at which all guests wear masks or costumes

Even members of the middle class served as patrons of the arts on a modest scale. People with limited means bought artworks made of inexpensive materials, such as wood, pewter, clay, paper, and brass. Most such items, however, were not commissioned but produced on speculation—that is, to be sold at public markets or in the artist’s workshop. As a result, the personal connection between patron and client, so important at the higher levels of artistic patronage, did not exist.

Some patrons were not individuals but groups. Local governments, guilds*, churches, and various religious groups commissioned a variety of artworks and buildings. Town officials were responsible for the construction of bell towers, town halls, fountains, and city walls. Guilds and religious organizations built meetinghouses and chapels and adorned them with artworks. Michelangelo’s colossal statue *David*, for example, was a commission from the board of directors of the Florence cathedral. In addition, guilds and other groups ordered decorations, floats, and entertainers for public events.

LITERARY PATRONAGE IN ENGLAND

A complex system of literary patronage developed in Renaissance England, where booksellers paid very small sums to the authors whose works they published. As a result, most writers who were not independently wealthy had to seek a patron to support them. The luckiest authors found positions as secretaries or librarians, either with noble patrons or with the government, which allowed them to pursue their literary efforts as part of their job. Those who could not obtain regular employment struggled along by writing poems or other works on request for the wealthy.

Some authors dedicated their literary works to prominent figures in the hope of being rewarded with money or work. English monarchs—most notably ELIZABETH I and JAMES I—often received such dedications. This method sometimes met with success. After dedicating the first three books of his epic* *The Faerie Queene* to Elizabeth I, Edmund SPENSER received a yearly pension of 50 pounds for life. John DONNE was less fortunate. Dismissed from his patron’s service because of a marriage regarded as unsuitable, Donne spent 14 years unable to find steady work. He eked out a living by writing poems to or for various patrons.

Another form of literary patronage involved the theater. Because authorities in London often took a hostile attitude toward plays and the acting profession, acting companies had to seek the aid of powerful nobles or even monarchs. Royal and noble patrons extended their protection to the actors and sometimes hired playwrights directly to provide entertainment for public occasions. The best example of this practice is the elaborate court masques* of the early 1600s.

The patronage system was one of the most important influences on literary production in Renaissance England. It affected the types of works that writers produced, causing some of them to concentrate on works most likely to flatter or please possible patrons. It also led to fierce competition among authors. Patronage not only made the profession of



writing possible but also helped determine the form that profession would take. (See also **Architecture; Art; Art in Italy; Books and Manuscripts; English Language and Literature; Literature; Luxury; Parades and Pageants.**)

Peasantry

About 90 percent of the people in Renaissance Europe were peasants—rural laborers who planted crops and tended animals. Agriculture was the most important economic activity throughout Europe, and the peasantry produced the food consumed by people living in cities.

During the Middle Ages most European peasants were serfs, legally bound to the land they worked. Serfdom began to decline in western Europe in the 1300s, and by the late 1500s it had largely disappeared. As a result, Renaissance peasants enjoyed much greater freedom. Many peasants moved to other villages, to other regions, or to towns and cities in search of a better life. Those most likely to migrate were the young and the landless. Adult peasants often became seasonal migrants, helping to harvest crops in areas far from their own villages—or even in foreign countries.

Peasant villages served as the economic and political foundation of Renaissance society. Each village had a local assembly or council to govern it. Outside authorities, such as nobles and the church, granted villages a large degree of local self-rule because they recognized the need for local decisions about some issues. In theory, all citizens could participate in village government on equal terms. However, wealthy landowners or merchants often dominated local assemblies.

Village councils regulated the use of local resources such as forests, pastures, and farmland. They also took charge of building and maintaining roads, wells, and anything else that would benefit the community as a whole. Village governments also played a role in the hundreds of peasant rebellions that took place in the Renaissance. These revolts often resulted from the growing power of nation-states, which cut into time-honored peasant rights.

Rural society during the Renaissance was quite varied. Many peasants not only worked in agriculture, but also labored as shopkeepers, artisans*, or traders. Furthermore, the boundaries between rural and urban society were often unclear. All towns and cities had residents who worked in the surrounding countryside. The social and economic life of the villages often overlapped with that of nearby cities. Beginning in the 1400s, many peasants started growing cash crops for sale, rather than merely producing enough for their own needs. A few of these peasants became wealthy and bought up their neighbors' lands, while others moved into trade and other businesses. These changes made rural society more diverse and weakened traditional peasant life. (See also **Agriculture; Artisans; Daily Life; Economy and Trade; Nation-state; Peasants' War; Population; Revolts; Social Status.**)

* **artisan** skilled worker or craftsperson