



Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600

By Richard A. Goldthwaite

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Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy represents a departure from previous studies, both in its focus on demand and in its emphasis on the history of the material culture of the West. By demonstrating that the roots of modern consumer society can be found in Renaissance Italy, Richard Goldthwaite offers a significant contribution to the growing body of literature on the history of modern consumerism—a movement which he regards as a positive force for the formation of new attitudes about things that is a defining characteristic of modern culture.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This book is essentially a lengthy and well-organized response to the deceptively simple query posed in the introduction: Why did Italy produce so much art in the Renaissance? Renaissance scholar Goldthwaite (*The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History* , LJ 2/1/81), here examines the remarkable proliferation of art in early modern Europe and the preeminence of Italian art during that period. What is really unique here is the author's meticulous placement of Italian art--a subject nearly always considered from an aesthetic point of view--within its larger economic context. After setting the scene in an introductory chapter describing the economic background of Renaissance Italy, Goldthwaite analyzes at length the need for art production within the milieu of the church as well as in the secular world. Although the book is written in a dense, academic style, this study of both art history and economic history is at once groundbreaking and authoritative. Highly recommended for academic and art libraries.

- Douglas F. Smith, Oakland P.L., Cal.

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Review

"Will surely elicit much discussion and reexamination of older theses about the connection between Italian economic, social and political life and the amazing culture we know as the Renaissance."

(*American Historical Review*)

"A remarkable achievement."

(*Art History*)

About the Author

Richard A. Goldthwaite is professor emeritus of history at the Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History* and *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300–1600*, both also published by Johns Hopkins.

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