

Gift Exchange and Art Collecting: Padre Sebastiano Resta's Drawing Albums

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"The fame of great men ought always to be estimated by the means they use to acquire it." So wrote François, duc de la Rochefoucauld, in his *Réflexions ou sentences et maximes morales* (1663), reflecting an aristocratic preoccupation with the methods of achieving reputation. His words elucidate why early modern Europeans perceived all transactions, including economic ones, as negotiated through a network of social relations, and thus as expressions of status. Nowhere was this more so than in the elite world of art collecting, where not only the size and quality of the collection but also the methods of its acquisition were understood to embody social rank. The genteel manner of acquiring a collection was through the exchange of gifts with friends and fellow-collectors. Thus, the acquisition of art was not a means to an end but an end in itself.

Although a widespread phenomenon throughout the history of art patronage, gift exchange nonetheless has been neglected by art historians.¹ Scholarly examination of gift-giving economies originates in anthropological literature with Marcel Mauss's justly celebrated book of 1925, *Essai sur le don, forme archaïque de l'échange*.² Under the powerful impact of Mauss's study, not only anthropologists and sociologists but also historians have taken up the theory of the gift. By contrast, art historians working with economic data on patronage and collecting have largely confined their analysis to the statistical. Through examination of gift exchange within art patronage, this paper seeks to move the economics of collecting beyond prices and purchases to a consideration of its social characteristics. The network of human relations through which art is exchanged, in any period, has much to tell about how audiences perceive and receive art objects. Thus, my study of gift giving also reconfigures art historians' understand-

ing of the history of reception, examining issues of audience response by looking through the prism of exchange.

Central to my analysis is a case study that epitomizes the social characteristics of gift exchange as an economic system in early modern Europe. Padre Sebastiano Resta, from Milan, but based in Rome between 1665 and his death in 1714, was one of the most discerning and ambitious collectors of artists' drawings in his day, amassing some 3,500 sheets collated into thirty albums ranging from the *primi lumi* to the late seventeenth century. His work as a collector is commemorated in various portrait drawings by artist friends from his circle of acquaintances. The Artist Carlo Maratta, for example, depicted Resta before an open album as if discussing a drawing with the viewer (Fig. 1).³ He inspired the English architect and agent John Talman to describe his work as follows:

I have lately seen a collection of Drawings the finest without doubt in Europe, for the method and number of rare designs . . . they are books that ought to be in the Q[ueen's] Library. . . . They were at first collected by the famous Father Resta, a Milanese, of the oratory of Philipppo Neri at Rome; a person so well known in Rome, and all over Italy, for his skill in drawings, that it would be needless to say any more of him, than that these collections were made by him. . . .⁴

Thanks to the rich archival sources concerning the formation of his collection, the case of Resta is particularly informative on his methods of making acquisitions, providing a rare window onto early modern collecting practices. Resta's extensive notes on the drawings in his collection often detail how he acquired individual sheets, and his correspondence with collectors up and down the peninsula includes long discussions of acquisitions. His letters reveal that his sources

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1. The issue has only been touched on; for example, J. Cunnally, "Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship during the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Collections*, vi, 1994, 129–43.

2. Translated as *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* by I. Cunnison, New York, 1967.

3. Chatsworth no. 584. The inscription in Maratta's hand reads, "Ritratto dell M.o Reverend.o Padre Sebastiano Resta della Congregazione del Oratorio di San Filippo Neri in Roma, che mostra all Sig. Carlo Maratt[i] il presente libro con le acutissime sue eruditioni, l'ultimo di Marzo 1689." Below, in Resta's hand, is written, "furto e dono dell' autore." It bears the Resta-Somers Lansdowne mark, k303, where Resta identifies the first inscription as by Maratta: "Di mano del Sig Carlo Maratti, così il disegno come i caratteri sotto." The drawing has recently been published by M. Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Italian Drawings: Roman and Neapolitan Schools*, London, 1994, 140, no. 261.

4. This letter was most recently cited by A. E. Popham, "Sebastiano Resta and His Collections," *Old Master Drawings*, xi, 1936, 4–6. Popham acknowledged that he had collated two extant published versions of this letter. The

whereabouts of the letter are unknown today, but a manuscript copy exists of the first part of the letter in John Talman's letter book, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. letters e.34, pp. 95–96. Talman kept copies of letters he sent to England during his Italian sojourn. The copybook letter is briefer and slightly different from that published by Popham, though the substance of the paragraph cited here is entirely the same, and I have taken the liberty of using parts of both.

Five albums from Resta's collection survive intact and have been published: A. E. Popham, "On a Book of Drawings by Ambrogio Figino," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance: Travaux et documents*, xx, 1958, 267–76; S. Resta, *Correggio in Roma*, ed. A. E. Popham, Rome, 1958; G. Fubini and J. S. Held, "Padre Resta's Rubens Drawings after Ancient Sculpture," *Master Drawings*, ii, no. 2, 1964, 123–41, repr. in A. W. Lowenthal, David Rosand, and John Walsh, Jr., eds., *Rubens and His Circle: Studies by Julius S. Held*, Princeton, 1982, 94–105; G. Fusconi and S.P.V. Rodinò, "Un'aggiunta a Sebastiano Resta collezionista: Il Piccolo Preliminare al Grande Anfiteatro Pittorico," *Prospettiva*, xxxiii–xxxvi, 1983–84, 237–56, which not only publishes Resta's album but also contains an important essay on Resta, his life and times; G. Fubini, ed., *Cento tavole del Codice Resta*, Fontes Ambrosiani, xxix, Milan, 1955; G. Bora, ed., *I disegni del Codice Resta*, Fontes Ambrosiani, lvi, Bologna, 1976. A further fourteen albums can be largely reconstructed based on an 18th-century transcription of Resta's notes, Brit. Lib., London, Lansdowne MS 802.



1 Carlo Maratta, *Sebastiano Resta Examining an Album of Drawings*. The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees

included figures such as Queen Christina of Sweden, the Spanish viceroy in Naples, the Marquis del Carpio, art critics Giovanni Pietro Bellori and Carlo Cesare Malvasia, and artists such as Maratta, Giuseppe Ghezzi, and Giuseppe Passeri.⁵ These collectors typically acquired objects through a system of gift giving.

Resta's collecting practice may seem paradoxical to us today, for his ambition was to sell his albums at a profit and donate the proceeds to charity. As an Oratorian at S. Maria in Vallicella,⁶ his collecting was a form of "good work" for the Catholic Church in raising alms for the poor. In the name of charity, he solicited gifts of drawings through his wide network of correspondence. He then collated the drawings into luxurious leather-bound albums and presented them to the highest echelons of European patronage: the Spanish king Philip V, Pope Innocent XII, and members of the Italian nobility, such as his fellow citizens from Milan, Cardinal Giberto Borromeo and Don Livio Odescalchi, and a Tuscan aristocrat and ecclesiastic, Cavalier Giovanni Matteo Marchetti, bishop of Arezzo. In return, the recipients were expected to give generously to Resta's charitable trust, which he termed his *opera pia*.⁷

While Resta's intention to give away his albums from their inception in aid of church charity was perhaps unusual among early modern art collectors, his gift-giving practice was not. Giorgio Vasari had acquired many of the drawings in his collection as gifts from artists who in return hoped for commemoration in his *Vite de' pittori*. . . .⁸ Across Europe, art objects commonly served as diplomatic gifts. Typically, gift giving was associated with issues of honor. Giulio Mancini's guide to collectors, written in 1621 for the Barberini court,

recommended gift giving as the preferred mode of exchange for princely collectors and others who aspired to noble status. Magnanimous gift giving, he wrote, "is for those who do not wish to be surpassed in courtesy."⁹ Seventeenth-century biographies of artists constantly refer to this type of artist-patron transaction; for example, Malvasia described Guido Reni as abhorring the mention of prices, preferring to offer his work as gifts to great princes who would send magnanimous gifts in response. Filippo Baldinucci described such an exchange between Charles I and Bernini, who, in return for his portrait of the monarch, received a diamond ring from the king's own hand.¹⁰

Modern theories of the gift formulated by Mauss and subsequent anthropologists have similarly identified gift giving in trading practices where the motive for gain is sublimated for the sake of aristocratic social pretensions. An object changes hands under the guise of a disinterested gift when in fact its intention, understood by both parties, is to procure a return. It is further distinguishable from other types of trade in that the return takes both a material and an immaterial form. The material benefit, or object received, is like that of any trade; the immaterial is prestige, power, honor, or status accumulated through this aestheticized form of exchange.¹¹

The difficulties involved in applying theories developed from the anthropological study of Trobriand Islanders to modern European historical periods are obviously legion. However, it was not the least of Mauss's contributions to point in this direction, for his book was not limited to the ethnographic study of existing so-called primitive societies from the Pacific region but also essayed a historical sketch of gift

5. Of Resta's surviving correspondence, three albums of Resta's letters to the Bolognese antiquarian Giuseppe Magnavacca are preserved in the Archivio della Biblioteca Comunale di Correggio (Reggio Emilia), cart. no. 116, and although cited in 20th-century literature on Resta, they remain largely unread. Some fragments of the Correggio letters were published or cited by G. Tiraboschi, *Notizie de' pittori, scultori ed architetti moderni*, Modena, 1781–86, 33ff; idem, *Bibliotheca Modenese*, vi, Modena, 1786, 234–302; L. Pungileoni, *Memorie istoriche di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio*, iii, Parma, 1821, 210ff; and G. Campori, *Lettere artistiche inedite*, Modena, 1866, largely based on Campori's reading of these earlier scholars, who used Resta's letters as a source for their study of Correggio. L. Sassi, in the *tesi di laurea* (dissertation) "Lettere di Padre Sebastiano Resta all'antiquario bolognese Giuseppe Magnavacca (1708–1714)" for the Università degli Studi di Bologna, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 1986, transcribed and edited the third volume of the Correggio letters. Another book of letters, most of which are to Giuseppe Ghezzi, is today in Rome at the Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Lincei e Corsiniana, cod. Cors. ms 1403 col. 31 B 9, a few of which were published by Cardinal Corsini's librarian, G. G. Bottari, ed., *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura, ed architettura scritte da' più celebri personaggi dei secoli XV, XVI, e XVII*. . . ., iii, Milan, 1822, 479–521. Bottari (ii, 96–116) also published some Resta letters to the Florentine collector Francesco Maria Gabburri, whose source I have not been able to locate. I found a handful of letters from Resta to Padre Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi in Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms 1865. This contains letters addressed to Orlandi by various artists and art critics across Italy. One of Resta's letters to Orlandi was cited by L. Frati, "Lettere autobiografiche di Pittori al P. Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi," *Rivista d'Arte* v, 1907, 63. Another letter in the Archivio di Stato in Napoli, Carte Farnesiane, f. 125—in fact, a copy of a letter by Resta transcribed by Abbot Venturini—was published by E. Robiony "Un presunto quadro del Correggio," *Rivista d'Arte* ii, 1904, 136–38. A further group of letters from Resta to Orazio Spada are in the Spada archives in the Archivio di Stato, Rome, cited by A. Pampalone, "Orazio Spada e la sua Cappella nella Chiesa Nuova," in *An Architectural Progress in the Renaissance and Baroque: Sojourns In and Out of Italy*, ed. H. W. Millon and S. Munshower, 2 vols., University Park, Pa., 1992, pt. 1, 352–69. Finally, I discovered two previously unknown files of Resta's letters to Bishop Marchetti of Arezzo in a private archive in Pistoia. One file, bearing a white cover, is entitled "Lettere di pittori dirette a Mons. Giovan Matteo Marchetti o nelle quali si parla di lui," the other bears an orange cover and is entitled "Marchetti / Resta lettere." I have

distinguished them with the letters W and O respectively.

6. For details of Resta's biography, see G. Incisa della Rocchetta, "La 'Galleria Portatile' del p. Sebastiano Resta d. O.," *Oratorium, Archivum Historicum Oratorii Sancti Philippi Neri*, Rome, viii, no. 2, 1977, 85–96; and A. Paredi's introduction to Bora, 9–13, about the young Resta in Milan. See also Fusconi and Rodinò (as in n. 4), 237–48 and notes, for discussion of his social, artistic, and intellectual milieu.

7. Pier Leone Ghezzi composed a eulogy for the padre that spoke of his work for charity, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana ms Ottoboniano latino 3112. Here I cite evidence of Resta's donation to a charitable trust, or "Opera Pia," as Resta termed it, from his correspondence. The first reference to it occurs in a letter written from Naples to the Congregation of the Oratory on Sabato Santo 1683, preserved in the Archivio della Congregazione dell' Oratorio di Roma B.V.¹. In this letter, Resta spoke of the *opera pia* of the Chiesa Nuova, to which various fathers were making contributions. More specifically, he mentioned the "luoghi della Pietà e Trinità" as adjuncts to the main *opera pia*. Subsequent letters concerning the profits from sales of his drawings frequently speak of the "opera pia in tre luoghi," e.g., ABCC, ii, no. 62, Apr. 7, 1706. His Pistoia letters detail the "tre luoghi" as funds for three separate Roman churches: S. Crisogono, S. Francesco à Ripa, and SS. Trinità de' Pellegrini. All three churches were involved in charitable work, SS. Trinità de' Pellegrini being the most noted for its hospital and its alms to pilgrims. See Pistoia O, no. 12a, Sept. 12, 1699, Pistoia W, no. 19, July 24, 1700, Pistoia W, no. 54, Sept. 29, 1699, where S. Francesco à Ripa is cited as a beneficiary; Pistoia O, no. 14, Apr. 3, 1700, Pistoia W, no. 37, n.d., Pistoia W, no. 58, n.d. for SS. Trinità de' Pellegrini. ABCC, i, no. 46, May 28, 1698, and no. 57, Feb. 4, 1699, make reference to volumes at a monastery, deducible as S. Crisogono through other letters. It appears that Resta made promises to this "Opera Pia" in advance based on the expected profits from the sale of his albums. The monastery of S. Crisogono in Trastevere seems to have been involved in the administration of this fund for charitable works. Resta left volumes of drawings in deposit there to guarantee his intentions to donate the proceeds, and some of the profits accrued were left there. In ABCC, i, no. 26, 1695, Resta spoke of albums at the monastery; in no. 46, May 28, 1698, he related that the balance from his last sale had been deposited here; in no. 57, Apr. 21, 1699, he said that drawings, books, and money were in deposit at the monastery. This is deducible as S. Crisogono from ABCC, iii, no. 12, Aug. 8, 1708, no. 21, July 13, 1709, no. 25, Aug. 28, 1709.

giving's survival in the early literature of archaic Rome, India, and Germany.¹² Mauss thus opened the door to further historical inquiry.

Historians of medieval Europe have found anthropological literature on gift giving particularly fertile for the study of feudal economies.¹³ It has also stimulated work on Counter-Reformation Europe, particularly on France.¹⁴ The latter may, on the face of it, appear more surprising, since early modern Europe's overall economic development was of transformation toward capitalism. However, many historians have argued that Italy underwent a so-called refeudalization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The term *refeudalization* may be misleading—seventeenth-century Italy manifestly was not a feudal economy in Marc Bloch's sense—but it is appropriate to speak of an aristocratic reaction to the consequences of developing capitalism.¹⁵ This reaction placed an increased emphasis on social distinction and hierarchy. It took the form of a neofeudal veneer of noble behavior, expressed in dress, manners, and titles.¹⁶ For example, Norbert Elias's study of the social function of manners in Europe found a growing emphasis on etiquette as a means of distinguishing social class, which reached its apogee in the eighteenth century.¹⁷ Peter Burke noted the increasing elaboration and formality of language in Italy during this period, particularly in inflated modes of address and the rise of a new polite pronoun, the *lei*.¹⁸ Modes of exchange also reflected social rank; gift giving was an aestheticized form of trade appropriate to aristocratic mores.

Mauss noted that among the Trobriand Islanders nobles engaged in gift giving in order to accumulate what their

culture defined as status-symbol possessions. These objects, such as coveted shells, had no utilitarian function; their only use was that of pleasure, and so of majesty, the hallmark of elite consumption. The island nobility exchanged luxury items through a trade governed by the aristocratic pretensions of the gift in order to distinguish its noble status from that of other social groups. Direct trade in commodities of necessity, such as food, was considered beneath the aristocratic rank.

The collection of art in early modern Europe, like the Trobriands' shells, served to define social status. This was increasingly the case, as Krzysztof Pomian has argued, as objects moved from functional contexts to that of the collection. In making this transition, an object such as the artist's sketch shed one set of uses in order to gain another: from workshop tool used in the preparation of works in other media to elite collectable used to signify social distinction. Resta consciously sought to transform the drawing in this way, moving it from the workshop to the *studiolo* in order to ennoble the status of the artist's sketch, and so of himself as collector of objects with this semiotic power.¹⁹

Mauss stressed that gift giving could be set amid different kinds of exchanges carried out within the same society.²⁰ What distinguished gift giving, he found, was not different economic systems but different social aspirations. Elites engaged in a form of trade in which the motive for gain was sublimated to demonstrate that they did not depend on financially remunerative work. Gift giving perfectly expressed economic independence, for it took place as if exchange were not its purpose. Each "player" practiced trade through

8. A. P. Tofani, in *Il disegno: I grandi collezionisti*, ed. G. C. Sciolla, Milan, 1992, 20.

9. G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, ed. A. Marucchi, I, Rome, 1956, 129–40, "... essendo proprio di huomini di grand' ingegno o liberalità ... e trattandosi con compratori che non si voglion lasciar superare in cortesia, come sono i principi e gran signori. ..."

10. C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de pittori Bolognesi* ..., II ed. G. P. Zanotti, Bologna, 1841, 5–66; F. Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, v, Florence, 1974, 583–700. Most infamously, G. P. Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori, et architetti moderni* ..., Quaderni dell' Istituto di Storia dell'Arte della Università di Genova, no. 4, Genova, 1968, 37–129, recounted the miserable treatment of Annibale Carracci at the hands of the Farnese, who in rewarding the artist's great gallery fresco with a payment calculated as for a wage laborer rather than a courtier, ruptured the social bonds of patronage and precipitated the painter's nervous breakdown.

11. Anthropological literature on gift giving is vast: K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York, 1944; P. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, New York, 1964; M. Sahlins, "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange," in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, ed. M. P. Banton, London, 1965, 139–236; G. Dalton, ed., *Tribal and Peasant Economies: Readings in Economic Anthropology*, Garden City, N.Y., 1967; F. G. Bailey, ed., *Gifts and Poison: The Politics of Reputation*, Oxford, 1971; R. W. Firth, "Symbolism in Giving and Getting," in *Symbols, Public and Private*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1973, 368–402; A. B. Weiner, *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives in Trobriand Exchange*, Austin, 1976; M. Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, Berkeley, 1988.

12. Mauss, 46–62.

13. For example, G. Duby, *Guerriers et paysans: VII–XIII siècle, premier essor de l'économie européenne*, Paris, 1973; S. D. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France*, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988; B. H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Chluny's Property*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1989; W. I. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland*, Chicago, 1990.

14. See N. Z. Davis, "Beyond the Market: Books as Gifts in Sixteenth-Century France," *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, xxxiii, 1983, 69–88; S. Kettering, "Gift Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France," *French History* ii, 1988, 131–51. On England, see P. Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance*

Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament, Chicago, 1991, 29–66.

15. M. Bloch, *Feudal Society* (1944), trans. L. A. Manyon, 2 vols., Chicago, 1961. For the most concise statement of the refeudalization thesis, see P. Jones, "La riscossa aristocratica: L'Italia del Rinascimento," in *Storia d'Italia: Dal feudalesimo al capitalismo*, Turin, 1978, 355–72, who makes the case for both a social and a partial economic refeudalization in the early modern period. He describes a growing emphasis on rank and luxury expenditure as the signs of status and an aristocratic rejection of productive labor and trade, to which he attributes Italy's economic decline.

16. T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), rev. ed., London, 1992, describes the cultivation of manners and scholarly learning as aspects of conspicuous consumption. D. C. Stanton, *The Aristocrat as Art: A Study of the Honnête Homme and the Dandy in Seventeenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Literature*, New York, 1980, takes up Veblen's themes in a study of the *honnête homme* in 17th-century France, while L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (1965), 2d ed., Oxford, 1979, argues that the feudal tenet of conspicuous consumption survived among 17th-century English nobles, albeit in an altered form.

17. N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The Development of Manners* (1939), trans. E. Jephcott, New York, 1978.

18. P. Burke, "Languages and Anti-Languages," in *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge, 1987, 90–91.

19. See K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise: XVI–XVIII siècle*, Paris, 1987, translated as *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice 1500–1700*, by E. Wiles-Portier, Cambridge, 1990, esp. his essay "Entre l'invisible et le visible: La collection," for discussion of how the collection transforms objects from the functional to the semiotic. See also J. Baudrillard, "For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign," in *Selected Writings*, ed. M. Poster, Stanford, 1988, 57–97, where it is argued that the production of signs of domination and social-caste privilege originates in the destruction of utility with conspicuous consumption. See F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: Art and Society in Baroque Italy* (1963), rev. ed., London, 1980, for a study of art collecting in 17th-century Italy as a form of "conspicuous consumption."

20. Mauss, 73. This has been the subject of continuing debate among anthropologists. For a recent thesis in agreement with Mauss on this issue, see A. Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, 1986.



2 Attributed by Resta to Correggio, *Deposition*, London, from *Correggio in Roma*, f. 8r. Trustees of the British Museum

making gifts, transforming the trader's labor into the nobleman's generosity.

Like Mauss's island chief, Resta made gift giving his preferred form of exchange in order to distinguish his aristocratic status from those economically dependent on trade. Although he sought to sell his albums of drawings at a profit, his trade was a noble one because he donated the proceeds to alms for the poor. From what his patrons bestowed Resta also made a return for the gifts of drawings he had received. He did this in two ways: through a material return of either some money or gifts of loose drawings remaining to him and through an enhanced social prestige conferred by association with Resta's noble project.

Whether through the extravagant spending of aristocratic patronage or, as in Resta's case, through donation to charity, the logic of the gift obliged the participant to give away in order to receive. Similarly, the receiver was honor-bound to return the gift; to fail to do so was to be beholden and so to lose rank. Resta understood that the obligation to give insured the continuous circulation of wealth. For example, in return for the many drawings received from his Bolognese fellow collector, Giuseppe Magnavacca, Resta promised funds to cover his friend's costs and made a small return of twelve drawings by Giulio Campi "so that you will send me more and I can finish my book."²¹ Magnavacca's gifts continued to circulate, for Resta placed the drawings in his albums and gave them to prospective patrons; in return, they made

financial donations to Resta's charity. Examples of gifts from Magnavacca include a pen sketch that Resta related to Correggio's *Deposition* (Fig. 2), part of an album that Resta was later to present to Bishop Marchetti.²²

With his patrons, too, Resta gave in order to receive. When Bishop Marchetti agreed to donate funds to the *opera pia* as a return gift for a number of Resta's albums, the padre responded with small presents, such as a book of drawings by Ambrogio Figino (Fig. 3) and a volume entitled *Correggio in Roma* devoted to a reconstruction of Correggio's stylistic development.²³ These were outright gifts in return for Marchetti's patronage; their monetary value was not calculated into the expected donation to charity, for they were "a gift of thanks, a token of my obligation," "a gift of thanks for your patronage." They were also, however, intended to prompt payments, previously agreed upon, that the bishop did not always honor: "to show my love for [Marchetti] and to remind him of his promise." When payments failed, Resta continued to send further gifts, gently chiding the bishop: "Although you do not make gifts to me, I will always make gifts to you."²⁴ He hoped they would shame Marchetti into respecting the obligation to give. Etiquette forbade pressing debtors directly, for this would belie the gift's very nature and so destroy its honorable return. Yet repayment from his patrons was necessary if Resta was to make charitable donations, as well as return the many gifts that he had received, in order to make good his own debts and so secure his social position. Even God was expected to return what he was given in church charity. Resta wrote philosophically to Magnavacca of a stolen drawing, describing it as an act of God that he would accept as remission for sins.²⁵

Like any trade network, Resta's economy was laced together by bonds of credit and debt. This extended not only laterally between friends but also up and down a hierarchy of patronage. Gift giving presented economic bonds as magnanimity and obligation to veil the intention of securing a return in both a material and an immaterial form. This was the paradox of the gift: its representation as disinterested in order to procure status, with its consequent bivalent intention both to solicit a return and to create obligation. In analyzing its implicit threat, Mauss noted that in the Germanic languages the word for *gift* also meant poison, and he suggested that overwhelming generosity masked competition for social status.²⁶ In a letter to the artist Giuseppe Ghezzi, a fellow collector and supplier, Resta thanked him for drawings sent, writing, "Your generosity tempts my soul into avarice with the frequency of your gifts." He hinted at the power of the gift to bond through debt that debases, at the same time represent-

21. ABCC, I, no. 53, Sept. 21, 1698, "... hò pensato di mandarli à V.S. con che mi mandi qlche altro disegno p.a che concludo il libro che ancora non hò concluso finchè non mi arrivano altri disegni."

22. Resta cites this drawing by Correggio as from Magnavacca in his album *Correggio in Roma*, preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, 1938.5.14.5 197*.d.8., f. 8r. A. E. Popham published the drawing in his 1958 edition of Resta's *Correggio in Roma* (as in n. 4), fig. 4, and in his book, *Correggio's Drawings*, London, 1957, no. 43.

23. The Figino head forms part of an album of drawings by Figino assembled by Resta, today preserved at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 1964.1. The *Correggio in Roma* album is in the Department of Prints and

Drawings, British Museum, London, 1938.5.14.4 197*.d.8.

24. Pistoia W, no. 34, n.d., "... gratuito dono, e segno delle mie obligationi. . ."; Pistoia W, no. 68, Apr. 27, 1701, "... in regalo dello studio. . . Sforzi dell' amore che il P.R. vuole . . . al donatario. . ."; Pistoia O, no. 13, Aug. 7, 1700, "... serve mostrar amore à Monsig.e di far diligenza per lui. . ."; Correggio, II, no. 3, Apr. 3, 1700, "Giache VSM non dona à me, io donaro à lei. . ."

25. ABCC III, no. 15, Sept. 15, 1708.

26. Mauss, 1967, p. 62. See also Bailey, ed., 1971.

27. BALC, 25, Mar. 19, 1698, "La generosità di VS tenta l'anima mia di

ing it as the munificence of friendship.²⁷ Similarly, when Magnavacca sent Resta a handsome gift of "many beautiful drawings" in return for an oil sketch called the *Donnine*, of the baby Moses found by the Pharaoh's daughter and her attendants, Resta acknowledged the peril to his soul and his noble status in accepting such an overgenerous return by comparing it to the sin of usury:

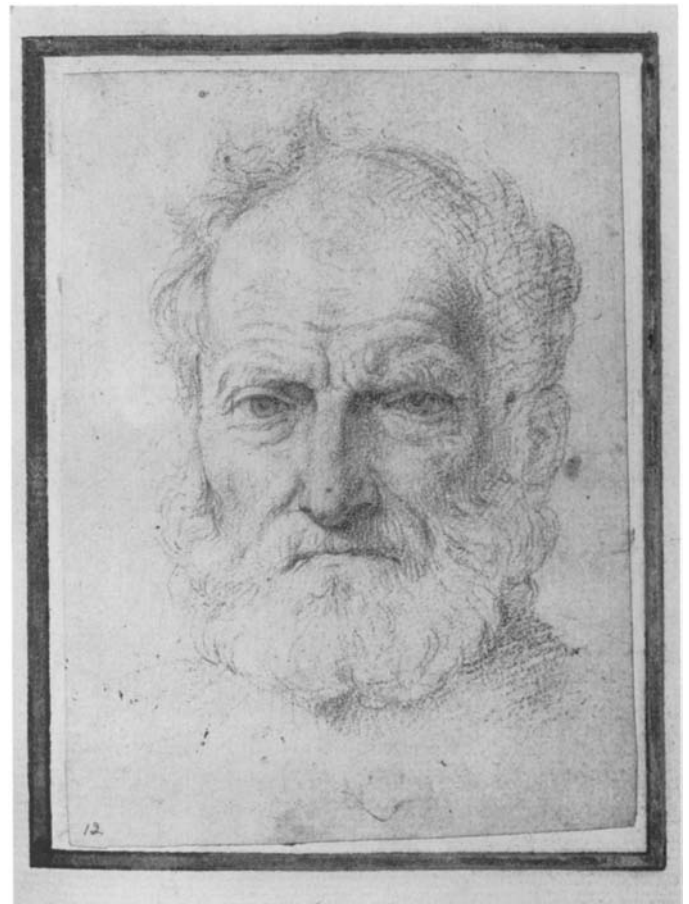
My fecund *Donnine* have given birth to many beautiful drawings. . . . I will have to ask for a confession for absolution from usury that you have made me commit. My *Donnine* were fishing for baby Moses, but have fished for me a great miracle. . . .²⁸

Resta pondered the menace of the gift in describing the beauty and value of one of his albums, a study of the Bolognese school entitled *Felsina vindicata contro Vasari* (Figs. 4, 5)²⁹: "I would give it with pleasure to a friend, to gratify him with its beauty. And with pleasure to an enemy, to avenge myself with its price."³⁰

Resta touched on all aspects of the gift in describing a volume of drawings that he gave to Philip V of Spain, unfortunately unidentifiable today. To the king he described the album as a small offering with thanks for such exalted patronage.³¹ In a letter to Marchetti, however, he stated his intentions as twofold: to pay homage to the new king and to stimulate Philip's desire for drawings and so open the way for future sales to Spain.³² While Resta would enjoy the heightened prestige gained through closer ties to such a revered patron, he also sought a badly needed financial return.

Marchetti's failure to keep his verbal promise of a gift in exchange for Resta's drawings brought out the suppressed intention of securing a return within a gift-giving economy. Prior to a souring of relations between himself and the Marchetti family, Resta often insisted that monies received were gifts, writing, "Perhaps it appears that I give and you pay. But I can give and you can pay as a form of gift."³³ Yet, as the expected funds from Marchetti were pledged to charity, when the promised return gift failed, Resta was in danger of reneging on his promise as well. Marchetti's failure to pay jeopardized the status the padre expected to acquire, both socially and in religious terms, through making contributions to alms.

Resta's donation to charity, for which he expected no financial remuneration, brought him compensation entirely in the immaterial form. Mauss described charity as wounding the receiver, for he is debased by accepting an overwhelming material generosity he cannot reciprocate. The corollary is that the giver exacts his own harsh return, achieving enhanced status through another's subordination. The gift's



3 Ambrogio Figino, *Bearded Man*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Stern

intention of securing such a return is commonly expressed in sentiments such as the Christian epithet that it is sweeter to give than to receive. Resta rejoiced in the alienation of his drawings to Marchetti in 1702, when the bishop agreed to fund his charities in return, expressing relief to his soul that Marchetti had taken on his *opera pia*, that he was now without canvases and drawings and enjoying the hardships of poverty with its merits.³⁴ In his later difficulties with the Marchetti family he sometimes flattered the bishop by appealing as a mendicant himself, asking for charity to pay his debts, claiming, "I am without linen, shoes, clothing."³⁵ His words resonate with religious morality about the virtues of poverty and alms giving. The return for the charitable donor was divine favor, and it was certainly this, as well as heightened prestige, that Resta felt he had achieved with the original Marchetti agreement.

However, Resta also assessed the value of this divine favor and prestige in monetary terms. The identification of his

sordidezza nella frequenza di regali suoi. . . ."

28. ABCC III, no. 17, Oct. 3, 1708, "feconde mie donnine che hanno figliato disegni sì belli. . . . dimandarò dalla Penitentiaria secreta l'assoluzione dell'Usura che V.S. mi hà fatto fare. Le donnine pescavano Mose bambino, ma l'han fatto pescar à me già grande operator de miracoli. . . ."

29. The Domenichino drawing is described by Resta, Brit. Lib., e91, as "Rara memoria di Dominichino per S. Andrea della Valle." The drawing is preserved at Chatsworth, no. 502, and was recently published as Domenichino by R. Spear, *Domenichino*, 2 vols., New Haven, 1982, no. 287. The study of a male nude, Brit. Lib., e46, is published in J. B. Shaw's *Drawings by Old Masters at Christ*

Church, Oxford, 2 vols., Oxford, 1976, no. 939.

30. Pistoia W, no. 30, n.d., "Li darei volentieri ad un amico per gratificarlo con la bellezza. Ma volentieri ad un inimico per vindicarmi col prezzo."

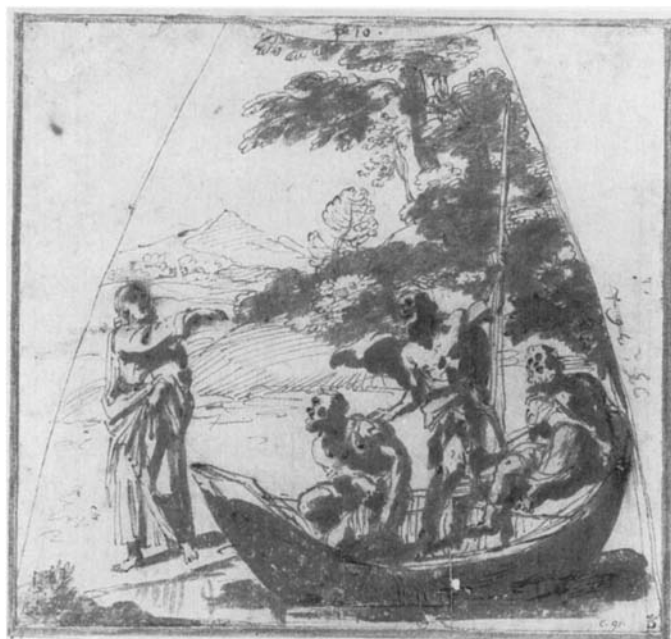
31. Pistoia W, no. 46, June 11, 1701.

32. Pistoia W, no. 68, Apr. 27, 1701.

33. Pistoia W, no. 73, Mar. 6, 1701, "Forse fa parere ch'io doni e VSM paga. Ma ben posso donare e lei pagare à titolo di regalo."

34. ABCC, II, no. 29, June 10, 1702.

35. Pistoia W, no. 48, Mar. 5, 1700, ". . . che sono senza biancaria, scarpe, veste, vestiti. . . ."



4 Domenichino, *The Calling of Saints Peter and Andrew*. The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees

drawings' value with a monetary price was central to Resta's economic thinking. This signals the fundamental way in which Resta's gift-giving economy differed from that of Trobriand Islanders and feudal Europe. While Resta sometimes made exchanges of drawings for drawings, his overall endeavor was to convert the value of his albums into funds, albeit for charity. By contrast, Mauss's islander exchanged his own carved shells for the carved shells of another, and feudal lords gave patronage in return for services. Resta's early-seventeenth-century counterpart Count Arconati of Milan, who gave his Leonardo drawings to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, in return was commemorated by a statue built in his honor.³⁶ Resta instead measured his success in financial terms.

While the failed Marchetti exchange laid bare Resta's judgment of prestige in terms of monetary success, it was an identification he sought to disguise. As if seeking absolution for his methods of trade he wrote, "God will judge according to the circumstances. The Lord works in many ways . . . all are trades for heaven so if one fails you can gain merit by another means, for by all these means we may become good merchants of glory."³⁷

Resta struggled with himself about which of these various paths to glory to take: "I am unsure whether I should give to the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, or sell and give the proceeds to the poor, or give to learned but impoverished gentlefolk for their benefit."³⁸ Overwhelmingly, however, he sought to sell and accrue funds for charity: "I thought of giving [a portrait of Charles V attributed to Titian] to the College in Milan . . . but it is better to sell it for my needs and those of others. Money for alms will be more useful than a hundred thank yous from a hundred officials."³⁹

It was this attitude of privileging prestige through profit over "a hundred thank yous" that distinguishes Resta from the feudal past. In the economic context of the late seven-

teenth century, money was the most powerful signifier of prestige and the means through which Resta achieved heavenly and earthly glory. He sought to alienate his wealth to the Church in the form of money rather than art because honor lay above all in his success as God's capitalist.

Overall assessment of Resta's gift-giving choices makes clear that although he considered other avenues to honor, financial remuneration was the most important to his definition of status. Nonetheless, Resta occasionally donated paintings and drawings to the Church as art rather than as funds. For example, he decided to give a tondo of the Madonna and Child attributed to Raphael to the church of S. Francesco in Perugia as he had not received a good offer for it. "It is better to give well than to sell badly," he wrote.⁴⁰ But he expected outright donation to secure another kind of financial return—divine favor for the sale of his albums. The corollary to his practice of making financial profits for the Church was that God should move his earthly patrons to give generously.

Resta's gift giving, then, was not antithetical to the evolving capitalist economy of early modern Europe. An awareness of market value distinguished Resta's situation from the so-



5 Attributed by Resta to Annibale Carracci, *Male Nude*. Oxford, Christ Church Gallery

6 Giorgio Vasari (attributed by Resta to Francesco Maria Rondani), *Baptism of Christ*. London, Trustees of the British Museum



called archaic societies described by anthropologists. Yet Resta's gift-giving economy cannot be subsumed under the rubric of emerging capitalist trading practices. Profit was its end, but its means amounted to an aristocratic reaction against that very purpose. Why did Resta attempt to resist the social implications of capitalist trade through gift giving while working within its economic system of exchange values?

Gifts as Bonds

To maintain economic transactions within social bonds Resta conducted his gift giving through a language of love, friendship, and noble courtesy. This was no empty rhetoric to be cast aside merely to reveal machinations for profit; to Resta language was an expression of the ties forged by a network of gifts and gifts in return that unmediated payment could not bring. Mauss, Arnold van Gennep, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and other anthropologists have stressed gift giving as a total social phenomenon, one not merely economic but also moral, spiritual, and aesthetic.⁴¹ In Resta's case, language was the

medium through which economic debts were transformed into social bonds.

Resta marveled at the gift's power to unite donor and receiver in social alliance. Thanking Magnavacca for his many gifts, he wrote, "Now we are bound together and I am bound to you."⁴² In another letter he described his gift-giving friendship with Senator Doria of Genoa as "an indissoluble bond" between their families.⁴³ Gifts of art acted as tokens of these relationships; on one drawing that Resta gave to the painter and collector Benedetto Luti (Fig. 6) he wrote, "Given by Padre Resta, whose greatest pleasure is to give."⁴⁴ The inscription, like the drawing, was a memento of Resta's generous affection for Luti and their consequent tie. Padre Giovanni Francesco Morelli of the Oratory in Perugia, a collector and art critic, sent Resta his last drawing by Giovanni da Fiesole because, he said, "I know you are *inamorato*," so articulating the gift's power to embody their relations.⁴⁵

Resta and his circle used a rhetoric of neofeudal patronage, on the one hand, and of love and friendship, on the other, to

36. Resta discussed this in Brit. Lib., f29.

37. Pistoia O, no. 22, July 3, 1700, "Dio provvederà. Si vede che dio lo travaglia in molte guise . . . sono tutti traffici per il cielo se in uno si scapita nell' altro si guadagna, e tutte le vicende ci renderanno mercanti buoni . . . di gloria."

38. ABCC, I, no. 57, Feb. 4, 1699, "Sono perplesso se io le deve donare alla Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano . . . ovvero . . . venderli e dar il prezzo à poveri, ovvero donarlo a persona erudita povera perche se n'aprofiti."

39. ABCC, III, no. 63, July 8, 1713, "... pensavo donarlo al Collegio di Milano . . . ma poi . . . sarà meglio venderlo per i bisogni miei et altrui. . . Un quattrino d'elemosina farà piu servizio che cento ringraziamenti di cento Iurisconsulti."

40. ABCC, III, no. 16, Sept. 28, 1708, and no. 18, Dec. 15, 1708, "meglio è donar bene che vender male."

41. C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. J. H. Bell and J. R. von Sturmer and ed. R. Needham, Boston, 1969; A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee, Chicago, 1960; Sahlins (as in n. 11).

42. ABCC, I, no. 62, Apr. 10, 1699, "Adesso si liga e io son legato. . . ."

43. ABCC, II, no. 93, Sept. 3, 1707, "... una lega indissolubile. . . ." Resta had apparently stayed in his house as a young man, and on one occasion had the chance to return this hospitality through a gift of money to Doria's son, who then wrote to his father of it.

44. "Del Rondani scolaro del Coreggio. dono del P. Resta che non gode mai che quando dona." P. Barocchi, *Vasari pittori*, Milan, 1964, 125–26, no. 13, identified the drawing as Giorgio Vasari for a lost *Baptism of Christ* painted in 1541 for the church of S. Giovanni in Florence.

45. ABCC, II, no. 15, Nov. 3, 1700.



7 Giuseppe Passeri, *Presentation Drawing Showing the Presentation of Resta's Albums to Bishop Marchetti*. The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees

resist the freedom and anonymity of capitalist trade and to soften the social consequences of a changing economy. Their use of this language did not register differences in economic position within a trade transaction but instead worked to reinforce traditional social hierarchy. For example, in drafting the letter to Philip V of Spain cited above, Resta described his album for the crown as a "small vassallage . . . to a great monarch and my King," to express "homage in memory of His Majesty's benign kindnesses and to exalt Your Eminence."⁴⁶ He also addressed his lesser patrons, Marchetti, Borromeo, and the Florentine collector Francesco Maria Gabburri, as feudal lords according to a neomedieval language of fealty. For example, a language of homage is present throughout Resta's letters to Marchetti. Similarly, in presenting an album entitled the *Galleria portatile* to Borromeo and his book of drawings by Figino to Gabburri, Resta described the offering as homage (*ossequio*) as he had done with Philip V.⁴⁷ However, he referred to his clients, those who supplied him with drawings, in the same way. His letters to his patron Marchetti and to his suppliers Magnavacca and Ghezzi were linguistically similar despite the very different nature of their

economic relations. Letters to patron and suppliers alike began, "Most munificent and reverend Lord, and my patron" or "My most munificent Lord and greatest patron," and signed off as "Your most humble, dutiful and loyal servant", "Your most humble and devoted servant," or "Your most humble and dutiful servant, from the heart."

Resta used a language of fraternal love and friendship to represent his relations with such clients and patrons alike.⁴⁸ Each drawing or album sent was an ambassador for the giver, conveying his love for the receiver in transactions described through a rhetoric of brotherly affection. For example, Resta thanked Magnavacca for his frequent gifts, which he interpreted as "a sign of love," saying, "I no longer ask you where you get the heart, only where you get [the drawings] you give me. . . ."⁴⁹ Just before his death Resta wrote to Magnavacca with thanks for all the drawings he had given, recalling him as one of two people most deserving of his love, "the most sincere and faithful friends I have known."⁵⁰ When asking Ghezzi for a drawing, Resta concluded, "I know that, if you do not give it to me, it is because you cannot, and I won't ask why for I know how much you love me."⁵¹

Resta referred to his patron Borromeo as "my friend" and presented his *Correggio in Roma* album, returned by Marchetti, to Odescalchi as "a gift of long love and friendship."⁵² When he sent the *Correggio in Roma* album to Marchetti earlier, he termed it "the fruit of the love I bear for the subject and my patron."⁵³ His small book of Figino drawings was originally intended "to show my love for [Marchetti]," for he asserted, "my greatest pleasure is your pleasure [in my gifts] tokens of my love for you."⁵⁴ When he presented a four-volume series to Marchetti, Resta gave his patron a presentation drawing by his friend the artist Giuseppe Passeri (Fig. 7) to commemorate the arrival of Resta's albums at the Marchetti palace.⁵⁵ It depicts the reception of the drawings by Marchetti in the loggia of his palace and their perusal by the bishop, his brother, and Resta. It was included in a volume recorded with the title *Nostri quondam libamen amoris*, Resta's offering of love to his friend and patron Marchetti.⁵⁶

In keeping with this language of friendship, Resta and his friends simultaneously met through another form of gift giving. This was a traffic above all in information found through research, attributions, *postille* (marginalia), as well as books and occasional loose drawings. It typified Resta's relations with other religious brothers, connoisseurs, art critics, and artists such as Morelli and Padre Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi of the Bolognese Carmelites, Maratta, and Passeri. In this circle of trade, drawings and information were exchanged for like goods and friendship, not money or patronage.⁵⁷ Exchange of information moved between a closed group, within which all were treated as social equals. In this way bonds of friendship were also exchanged and solidified through the network. For example, in 1691 Resta passed on to Bellori a drawing attributed to Parmigianino that came to him from a Bolognese painter, Guaini, only to receive it back at Bellori's death.⁵⁸ Documents were exchanged as well: for instance, Orlandi and Magnavacca both sent Resta their transcription of the commissioning document for Correggio's *Notte*.⁵⁹ The network is well illustrated by Resta's exchange of information with Morelli: Resta read Morelli's

text on the history of art in Perugia and sent the author his notes.⁶⁰ At the same time, Resta sent Morelli his manuscript commentary on Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice*. Morelli replied to Resta thanking him for corrections to his book on the artists of Perugia and commented on Resta's notes to Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice*. Finally, Resta annotated Morelli's letter on Malvasia and sent it on to Ghezzi.⁶¹ Later, Resta sent Morelli his notes for two of his albums entitled *Parnaso de' pittori* and *L'arte in tre stati*, asking for his criticism.⁶² Similarly, Resta sent his notes on Orlandi's *Abecedario* to Magnavacca, to Ghezzi, and eventually to Orlandi himself, who used Resta's corrections in his second edition of 1719.⁶³ Commenting on this exchange among friends, Resta reflected, "I have extracted my notes from the [Orlandi's] *Abecedario*. . . [made] always with love of the author my friend, because really I am obliged to him. . . he glued and ordered drawings for me with great love. So I send you my notes. . . ."⁶⁴

Furthermore, Resta gave his copy of the *Abecedario* to the painter Piccinetti, while Bellori gave Resta his copy of Giovanni Baglione's *Vite de' pittori*. . . (1642).⁶⁵ Other members of Resta's group followed suit: for example, Orlandi wrote to Gabburri that he had received information from Girolamo Barrufaldi on the painters of Ferrara and sent Gabburri the fruit of his own research on Bologna.⁶⁶ Resta described himself as exchanging information on artists with the aging

Pietro da Cortona, and he sought from and gave attributions to his friends Magnavacca, Ghezzi, and Maratta.⁶⁷

With gifts of drawings from friends such as Magnavacca and Ghezzi, however, Resta's more usual return was to seek higher patronage for them through his albums.⁶⁸ He enshrined the memory of his friends' gifts by acknowledging his source in the notes to the drawings. He promised this in advance to Ghezzi when asking for a drawing: "If you can send it to me, I will write underneath of the gift you made me."⁶⁹ Sometimes the drawing itself was inscribed to this effect. On a Guido Reni drawing (Fig. 8) Resta wrote, "given to me by Paolo Albertonio, Cignani's student";⁷⁰ on a Carracci (Fig. 9), "a gift from M. Fanti, 1705."⁷¹ Here, Resta acted as broker to his circle, securing higher patronage on their behalf. In further recognition of his bond through debt, Resta wrote thank-you letters telling his donors what he had done with their gifts: "I think I will begin the *cartellone de correggeschi* [album] with your gift. . . I haven't yet found a place for the marvellous Mantegna head, but I will."⁷² Occasionally, Resta passed on individual drawings to preeminent patrons. For example, Magnavacca gave Resta a drawing attributed to Michelangelo, which the padre handed on to Cardinal Colloredo, who in turn presented it to the pope. Resta then wrote to Magnavacca, "You see how well I have placed the gift you gave me."⁷³ In return for their gifts of individual drawings, Resta procured

46. Pistoia, W, no. 46, June 11, 1701, "... piccolo vassallaggio del mio genio pittoresco à si gran monarca, e Monarca mio. . .", "... il mio vivacissimo inesplicabile ossequio con cui vive alla memoria delle sue benignità ed al eccelso merito del suo grand'essere al godimento di si alto Protezione. . ."

47. See Resta's letter to Gabburri, Figino album, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1964.¹, "Sempre à riserva di miei div[otissim]i ossequi alla virtuosa persona ma che tanto mi favorisce"; and the *Galleria portatile*, BA, "... in ossequio del virtuoso diletto dell'ill[ustrissim]o e Rev[erendissim]o Monsignor N.N. Possessore di questa Portatile Galleria."

48. A language of *amicizia* had typified client-patron relations in Italy for at least several centuries. See A. Molho, "Cosimo de' Medici: *Pater Patriae* or *Padrino*?" *Stanford Italian Review*, 1979, 5-34, esp. 18. For a discussion of *amicizia* within the realm of art patronage, see E. Cropper and C. Dempsey, *Nicolas Poussin: Friendship and the Love of Painting*, Princeton, N.J., 1996.

49. ABCC, II, no. 19, Feb. 2, 1701, "... qlche poco gratitudine alla buontà di V.S. che si freq[ue]nte mi regalo, segno dell'amore. . ."; I, no. 22, "Non dimando più dove habbia trovato il cuore, ma dove trovi la robba di regalarmi."

50. ABCC, III, no. 70, Apr. 1, 1714, "A Due emoli zelatori dell'Amor mio . . . de più sinceri e fedeli amici che habbia conosciuto. . ."

51. BALC, p. 24 n.d., "... perche sò che se V.S. non me la dà, sarà segno che non può, ne vado à cercar perche mentre sò quanto V.S. mi ama."

52. ABCC, II, no. 62, Apr. 7, 1706, III, no. 40, Sept. 25, 1710.

53. ABCC, II, no. 35, Dec. 6, 1702, "... sforzi dell'amore che il P.R. vuole al soggetto e al donatario"; Pistoia W, no. 68, Apr. 27, 1701, "... sforzi dell'amore che il P.R. vuole . . . al donatario. . ."

54. ABCC, II, no. 35, Dec. 6, 1702, "... serve per mostrar amore à Monsignore. . ."; Pistoia W, no. 34, n.d., "... ben godo che VSM li goda per amor mio."

55. Chatsworth no. 634. The drawing was published recently by Jaffé (as in n. 3), 156-57, no. 279. The drawing is signed and dated Apr. 25, 1698, by Giuseppe Passeri.

56. As described in Talman's letter, published in Popham, 1936, 6.

57. On information exchange-networks in early modern Europe, see A. Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750*, New Haven, 1995, 4-34.

58. Brit. Lib., b54.

59. In ABCC, II, no. 12, Sept. 10, 1700, Resta mentioned that Orlandi had sent him a transcription. In BALC, p. 80, Resta sent on to Ghezzi a letter dated May 3, 1713, from Magnavacca in Bologna including a transcription of the commissioning document. This was published by Bottari, III, 506, no. 112.

60. G. F. Morelli, *Breve notizie delle pitture che adornano l'augusta città di Perugia*, Perugia, 1683.

61. BALC, p. 107, Jan. 30, 1700, Morelli to Resta, with Resta *postille*, which Resta then sent on to Ghezzi. This must be a manuscript of notes now at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, commenting on specified pages of Malvasia's text. This manuscript is not in Resta's hand, but the first page announces

it as "Annotazioni del Padre Resta e d'Ant.o Armano alla Felsina Pittrice dal Conte Cesare Malvasia." The content of the notes is entirely in keeping with Resta's style of commentary and there is no reason to doubt that they were a collaborative effort, as indicated. The hand is surely that of Resta's collaborator, Antonio Armano. My thanks to Elizabeth Cropper, who noted a reference to Resta in the Beinecke Library card catalogue.

62. BA, Morelli to Resta, Sept. 12, 1705.

63. As pointed out by G. Nicodemi, "Le note di Sebastiano Resta ad un esemplare dell' *Abecedario pittorico* di Pellegrino Orlandi," in *Studi storici in memoria di Mons. Angelo Mercati*, ed. A. Giuffrè, Milan, 1956, 265, based on Bottari, III, 353, Orlandi to Ghezzi, Nov. 15, 1715, in which the Carmelite asks Ghezzi for the Resta *postille*. This letter is to be found in BALC, p. 77, dated Nov. 13, 1715.

64. ABCC, III, no. 22, July 31, 1709, "Hò cavato sin hora dall'Abecedario le mie note marginali d'A.B.C. . . sempre però con l'amore all'Amico autore, perche veramente li son obligato. . . m'incollava i disegni e me li ordinava con un amor immenso. Le mie note adunque io le mandarò à V.S. . ."

65. ABCC, III, no. 21, July 13, 1709; and Orlandi, in Nicodemi (as in n. 63), which bears Resta's dedication of the book to Piccinetti. Resta's dedication to his copy of Baglione, now at the BALC, states the book was a gift from Bellori.

66. Bottari, II, 138-39, no. 59, Orlandi to Gabburri, Sept. 25, 1723.

67. Orlandi, in Nicodemi (as in n. 63), 188.

68. With regards to the distinction between two different systems of gift giving, that between friends and that between patrons and clients, Mauss's insistence on the complementarity of different types of exchange within any given society is helpful. Sahlins (as in n. 11), 141, distinguishes two models of exchange termed reciprocity and redistribution, noting that the two types merge. While Resta's traffic in information was a reciprocal exchange network in which friends exchanged like goods for like goods, his gifts to patrons in return for money and honor, which he then passed on to his contributors, was a network of redistributive exchange moving up and down a social hierarchy.

69. BALC, p. 24, n.d., "... se me lo può mandare ci scriverò sotto il dono che me ne fa. . ."

70. Resta's inscription reads, "donatomi dal Sig. Paolo Albertonio scol[ar].o del S. Cignani." J. Bean and F. Stampfle, *Drawings from New York Collections II: The Seventeenth Century in Italy*, exh. cat., Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 1967, no. 21, published the drawing as by Guido Reni. They did not, however, identify the inscription as by Resta.

71. BA, 206, Resta's inscription reads, "dono di M. Fanti 1705." Bora, no. 206, accepted Resta's attribution to Annibale Carracci.

72. BALC, p. 86, n.d., "Penso cominciar il *cartellone de coreggeschi* dal suo regalo. . . All' altra mirabil testa di Mantegna non hò trovato ma troverò luogo."

73. ABCC, III, no. 19, Jan. 16, 1709, "Ecco come è ben collocato il dono fattomi di V.S. . ."



8 Guido Reni, *Headless Body of Holofernes*. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



9 Annibale Carracci, *Landscape with the Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, from *Galleria Portatile* 206. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana

honor and status for his friends by acknowledging them in his notes, thus insuring that they, too, were patronized by the recipients of his volumes. The gift of the Michelangelo drawing extended the pope's patronage network from Resta to Magnavacca. Similarly, Borromeo became indebted not only to Resta but also to all who had contributed drawings when he acquired the lavish *Galleria portatile* album (Figs. 9–11).⁷⁴

Despite his concern for profit Resta worked without fixed selling prices, for to do so would have meant a loss of social rank. He nonetheless recognized that any profit accrued from his albums was related to his skill and labor as a connoisseur and as a trader in securing drawings for less than he sold them. For example, in discussing a picture he attributed to Correggio, Resta understood that his study of the artist would “make the painting grow in fame for its erudition, and

consequently in price. . . . this is how [Correggio's] virtue, his fame, and so his prices, are formed.”⁷⁵ More frequently, however, Resta sought to disguise this connection: “I don't want to discuss prices for my volumes, because it was I who compiled them.”⁷⁶ Consequently, Resta had a price in mind, although he would not ask it of his buyer. He often used the term *imprezzabile* (priceless) for his volumes, yet he could equate this quality with a monetary sum. He described an album of drawings attributed to Correggio of the Assumption of the Virgin (Fig. 12) as priceless, then typically constated its worth in financial terms as something that not even two or three thousand scudi could buy, so he preferred to “give” it to Marchetti.⁷⁷ The *Galleria portatile* album, also “priceless,” could be remunerated by Borromeo's gift of one hundred scudi more than his original offering price.⁷⁸

74. *Galleria portatile*, 45, 202, published by Bora, no. 45, 202.

75. ABCC, III, no. 32, Jan. 9, 1710.

76. Pistoia W, no. 84, June 18, 1701, “. . . non vorrei entrar io nei prezzi essendo tutti compilati da me.” This was in direct contrast to his frank discussion of prices when, as sometimes happened, he acted as intermediary, merely passing on prices set by others. Since he received no financial benefit from performing this service, listing prices did not compromise his aristocratic caste. This was more often the case with paintings than drawings; in fact, his letters to Marchetti are filled with prices for paintings, which could form a separate study of prices for paintings at the end of the 17th century in Italy.

77. Pistoia O, no. 16, Feb. 9, 1700. The drawing, a copy after Correggio's

fresco, is preserved at Chatsworth, no. 322.

78. ABCC, II, no. 62, Apr. 7, 1706.

79. Christ Church Gallery, Oxford, 1160, published by Shaw (as in n. 29), no. 78.

80. “Ho messo 100 scudi per metter qualche cosa, ma chi lo può stimare?”; “Ho messo 12 scudi solamente ma vale più”; “. . . non lo [academy nude by Annibale] darei à mio gusto per 80 scudi, la metto 25”; “poi il resto arbitrarà VSM.” This long letter has been broken up among the Resta papers in Pistoia. However, it is easy to recognize that Pistoia W, no. 22, n.d., describes pages 1–10, 13–24 of the album, while Pistoia W, no. 21, n.d., describes the missing pages 11 and 12.



10 Raphael, *Study of the Virgin for the Disputa*, from *Galleria Portatile* 45/2. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana



11 Attributed to Daniele Crespi, *Child's Head*, from *Galleria Portatile* 202. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana

In a long letter to Marchetti offering him an album entitled *Senatori in gabinetto*, Resta described the drawings in some detail and assigned a monetary value to each one. These valuations were then veiled in phrases such as, "I put 100 scudi [for a Raphael drawing] so as to put something, but who can estimate its worth?" (Fig. 13);⁷⁹ "I only put 12 scudi [for a Polidoro da Caravaggio drawing] but it's worth more"; "I wouldn't give it [an academy nude by Annibale Carracci] for 80 scudi, but I've put 25." Despite these disclaimers, he totaled his *stime* to the sum of 841 scudi, but asked Marchetti to send him only thirty scudi at once and another one hundred scudi the following month, "as for the rest, it is as you please."⁸⁰ The *stime* he had given were not asking prices but what Resta represented as market values outside of gift giving. Their function was to make Marchetti aware of his indebtedness

to Resta and his network of friends who had contributed to the albums. This in turn redounded to Resta's honor by establishing him as a patronage broker within his circle.⁸¹

Such explicit valuations, let alone prices, were unusual for Resta. More often he had a figure in mind but did not communicate it, preferring the buyer to name his own price. In offering several albums of drawings by Correggio (Fig. 14)⁸² to the Bolognese Academy as a prospective patron, he wrote, "I have not kept track of the cost, but [the Academicians] will know their value better than me."⁸³ When he presented an album called the *Anfiteatro pittorico moderno* to Borromeo he wrote to Magnavacca: "I hope Mr. Novitio will take this [album] also, naming the price himself, and that this price will be enough to pay those three debts to charity that Marchetti was to have paid."⁸⁴ In fact, he had a precise figure

81. See S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*, New York, 1986, 4, for a definition of a broker, as distinct from a patron, in gift-giving patronage/clientage relations. P. Littlewood's "Strings and Kingdoms—The Activities of a Political Mediator in Southern Italy," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, xv, 1974, 33–51, argues that patrons are brokers by definition, that a patron's position does not depend on his possession of goods or money but rather on his ability to bring his clients into contact with others who could pay.

82. Musée du Louvre, Paris, 5943, published recently by M. di GiamPaolo and A. Muzzi, *Correggio: I disegni*, Turin, 1989, no. 31.

83. ABCC, III, no. 33, Jan. 18, 1710, "Io non hò tenuto conto dello speso, ma lor Sig.ri hanno la stimativa miglior della mia." Further examples of Resta's refusal to name a price abound: ABCC, II, no. 6, May 8, 1700, in which Resta writes that he has said nothing to Marchetti about the *Parnaso* and *L'arte in tre stati* and instead has sent them to him to let him decide what to pay.

84. ABCC, II, no. 64, Apr. 17, 1706, "... e spero che M.e Novitio prende anche questo ... facendoli lui stesso il prezzo e con esso prezzo che mi darà finirò di pagare quei tre luoghi pii de' quali m' havevse il peso M. Marchetti. ..."



12 Attributed by Resta to Correggio, *Assumption of the Virgin*. The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees



13 Attributed by Resta to Raphael, *Female Head*, from Brit. Lib., c12. Oxford, Christ Church Gallery

in mind—one thousand scudi, as he had received for the *Galleria portatile*. Borromeo disappointed him, first with a low offer, then with an outright refusal of the “gift.” Of the former, Resta wrote to Magnavacca: “I thought this buyer would offer more. . . . It pleases me to ask for nothing more. . . .”⁸⁵

When Resta was the buyer, however, he insisted the seller set a price. In a letter to Gabburri concerning two small paintings the Florentine wished Resta to procure on his behalf, Resta wrote that the seller, an Abbot Pace della Pace, had asked the buyer to name his price. Resta replied, “When I am buying I do not wish to set the prices.”⁸⁶ Honor was clearly at stake here, as the two struggled to give each other the indignity of naming a price and fenced around the social impropriety of valuing art in monetary terms. Thanking Magnavacca for three drawings his friend had recently sent him, Resta wrote: “As to the price, I will send you what you ask for. I will fight with you to make you name a price.”⁸⁷ Once again, Resta sought the moral high ground of forcing the other party to name a price for what was supposed to be priceless.

Exchange values are difficult to establish for Resta’s drawings, not only because he sought to disguise this equation but also because he varied prices depending on the patron.⁸⁸ The variables were many: the social status and wealth of the patron, whether Italian or non-Italian, Catholic or no, the proximity of friendship with Resta—in short, the type and amount of immaterial, as well as material, return Resta could expect. A currency of honor was thus estimated into a scale of acceptable offers. For example, Resta judged a portrait attributed to Raphael worth 600 scudi or more, but was willing to take 400 from a Pallavicino or a Corsini if they would then make it a gift to the pope.⁸⁹ He “gave” a painting attributed to Correggio to Milan for 1,600 scudi, notwithstanding a Genoese offer of 3,000, “for love of my *patria*.”⁹⁰ For an oil painting on copper that he attributed to Correggio, Resta sought 3,000 scudi from an interested English “milort,” but expected only 1,500 scudi from Marchetti.⁹¹ With the *Felsina vindicata contro Vasari* album, Resta decided it should fetch 1,000 scudi from a foreigner but wanted to “give” it to Marchetti for an unnamed, considerably lower offer.⁹² After Borromeo failed to offer the hoped for amount of 1,000 scudi for the ill-fated *Anfiteatro pittorico moderno* album, Resta looked to the duke of Orléans, who was seeking a gift for the French crown. He was prepared to accept an offer of 800, only 100 more than estimated costs of 700,⁹³ but once again, his hopes

85. ABCC, II, no. 70, July 21, 1706, “. . . che me lo pagarebbe molto di più. . . . mi piace il non demandar niente di più. . . .”

86. Bottari, II, letter xlii, 97, Resta to Gabburri, Feb. 9, 1704, “. . . quando io dimando di comprare, non voglio far io i prezzi.”

87. ABCC, II, no. 67, May 15, 1706.

88. A similar argument is made by S. K. Cohn, “The Movement of Landed Property in the *Contado* of Siena: Relations between City and Country, 1295–1450,” 45, (in *Studi storici*, forthcoming) which found that “the social distance between the transactors . . . determined price as much if not more than the economic characteristics of the properties themselves.”

89. ABCC, II, no. 60, Mar. 24, 1706.

90. Brit. Lib., k84, “. . . per amor della patria. . . .”

came to nothing. When Borromeo renewed his interest two years later Resta wrote to Magnavacca that he would settle for 400, enough to pay his debts, though he was still asking 1,000 from anyone else.⁹⁴ Resta thus adjusted his prices according to the social position of the receiver, factoring in the immaterial return of closer association through patronage.

However, Resta also appears to have varied prices according to whether he saw his patron as a social superior or an equal to himself. From social superiors, he was prepared to accept, indeed, sought, patronage in the form of a generous offer; he patronized a social equal by "giving" the albums at less than their estimated value. In seeking a patron in the king of Spain, Resta wrote that he valued a four-volume series of drawings at 5,000 scudi for the crown but at 3,000 for a friend.⁹⁵ In this case, he could accept patronage in the form of money from the king because the social gulf between them was so great that to do so did not undermine his own position. With the friend, by contrast, Resta had to balance financial return with its consequences for his social status.

Establishing prices also entailed the connoisseur's judgment concerning the quality and attribution of the work in question. Resisting the pressures of a weakening Italian market at the end of the seventeenth century, Resta frequently turned down offers if he thought they were too low, claiming they denigrated the reputation of the artist. Prices, too, could be represented as noble or ignoble. To "give" a drawing at a price somewhat below its market value was to patronize and so acquire status. But to sell substantially under price was to deprecate both oneself and the work, and thus lose prestige. Resta was aware that accepting a low offer in order to promote a quick sale jeopardized the status of the art market as a whole, and he felt a responsibility to his community of collectors to maintain "just price," that is, prices that reflected their elite status and that of the commodity they traded in.⁹⁶ For example, Resta solicited offers for a portrait attributed to Raphael, seeking a price of no less than 600 scudi, for "to go lower would be to denigrate Raphael's work."⁹⁷ When Vendome offered only 100 scudi, Resta responded, "... my years of experience told me this was not the price for Raphael."⁹⁸ To accept such a low price implied admitting doubts as to the attribution, therefore lowering the reputation of the painting and the seller. "It is so important to me, for the sake of the painting's reputation, to maintain its value," Resta wrote to Magnavacca.⁹⁹ Worse yet, such a price threatened to devalue Raphael.¹⁰⁰ It was this fear that made Resta decide to make an outright gift of his Raphael tondo of



14 Correggio, *Seated Christ*, from Brit. Lib., 1145. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins

a Madonna and Child to the church of S. Francesco in Perugia, where it could not be "ill-treated by Roman prices."¹⁰¹ The good reputation of the collector-broker, the price fetched, and the future provenance of his collection were inextricably linked in gift giving; for this reason it was "better to give well than to sell badly."

An attribution carried an importance far beyond the moment of exchange in a gift-giving economy, for the gift was the materialized expression of the relationship between giver and receiver. Because gift giving established social bonds, the attribution and consequent value quantified their proximity. A doubtful attribution was a liability in a gift-giving transaction, for it could be interpreted as a slight to the receiver. For

91. Pistoia W, no. 19, July 24, 1700.

92. Pistoia W, no. 49, Mar. 3, 1700.

93. BALC, p. 50, July 16, 1707.

94. ABCC, III, no. 18, Oct. 15, 1708.

95. Pistoia O, no. 21, Jan. 28, 1699.

96. The term *just price* connotes a long-standing debate in Italian economic history of the early modern period, on which see R. de Roover, "The Concept of the Just Price: Theory and Economic Policy," *Journal of Economic History*, xviii, 1958, 418–34. What appears to lie behind Resta's prices is, in the first place, a consideration of the social status of the "buyer" and, in the second place, a consideration of the relationship between Resta's rank and that of his would-be patron, and how the transaction might affect it. In this context see also M. Sahlins's rereading of Mauss with regard to the *hau* of Trobriand gift

exchange, "The Spirit of the Gift," in *Stone Age Economics*, London, 1972, 149–83. Sahlins claims the return gift was a return of the fruit of the original gift—in a capitalist context, its profit margin. He argues that the Trobriands were obligated to return not the gift itself, but any profit accruing. Not to do so was to be guilty of unrightful gain.

97. ABCC, II, no. 50, Oct. 16 and 17, 1705.

98. ABCC, II, no. 91, Aug. 24, 1707.

99. ABCC, I, no. 44, Mar. 16, 1698, "... m'importa assai per reputazione del quadro che si mantegna la stima."

100. ABCC, II, no. 49, Sept. 12, 1705.

101. ABCC, III, no. 18, Oct. 15, 1708, "... per non vederlo strappazzato nei prezzi in Roma."

example, Orlandi promised to send Resta a drawing by Raphael, which the padre intended to give to another. When it arrived, however, Resta disagreed with the attribution, calling it a Garofalo. "I had thought of giving the Raphael to a friend, but under the name of Garofalo it will diminish the worth of the gift and so the warmth. . . ." ¹⁰² A few months later, he received a Raphael drawing from the Vatican, which he decided to send to the library of the Cistercian monastery of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan "to compensate for another drawing I gave them years ago sold to me by Carl'Antonio [Galliani] as Raphael but now in doubt." ¹⁰³ A fallen attribution required a further gift if the relationship was to maintain its former level and Resta's reputation to remain intact.

The gift, like the price, was flexible for Resta. It could mean a gift in which no money was involved, or it could require a handsome financial return. Sometimes, gift meant the potential for profit, as when Resta sold at less than what he considered market value. A "gift" might consist of an album exchanged for the value of the drawings therein, whereby Resta donated his labor freely. This was the case with his offer of the *Correggio in Roma* album to the Bolognese Academy. Magnavacca was to arrange the transaction, so Resta wrote to him saying he would give his writings and his labor freely, asking recompense only for the value of the drawings. ¹⁰⁴ In the same vein, he often gave financial compensation for the drawings he received as gifts from his network of friends. In a letter to Ghezzi, Resta asked for a Bernini drawing and offered five scudi for it. The money, he wrote, was simply compensation for what it had cost and so did not affect its status as a gift between "huomini honorati," while the gift of parting with the drawing for the sake of a friend would be worthy of commemoration. ¹⁰⁵

Resta incurred many such small debts as "gifts" flowed in from various sources for his albums, although he rarely indicated the amounts involved. It was these debts that he spoke of, as well as his debts to charity, in his increasingly urgent letters to the Marchetti family concerning its failure to pay as promised. At the heart of Resta's loss with the Marchetti lay the collapse of a process of gift giving to which all parties were honor-bound. As studies of the sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries have shown, termination was not unusual in client-patron relations based on gift giving. ¹⁰⁶ Both parties then moved on to find other patrons/clients, as Resta

tried to do. What distinguishes Resta's case, and points to a future of trade relations increasingly freed from the social bonds of a patronage hierarchy, was his failure to secure another patron. The Marchetti affair was only the final and most devastating case of such collapse. Resta had also suffered reversal with his patron Borromeo over the album entitled *Anfiteatro pittorico moderno*, who reneged on his verbal agreement to patronize the volume. Moreover, in a letter dating from 1700, Resta wrote of an outright refusal of gift giving by none other than the Albani pope, Clement XI.

If the Pope accepted gifts I would not speak ill of him thus. But even as a Cardinal he refused them. I remember once at an evening *oratorio* at the Chiesa Nuova he was there . . . then as Cardinal Albani. We happened to speak of Barocci of Urbino, Cardinal Albani's compatriot, and the happy thought occurred to me of giving him a landscape drawing by this artist of his *patria*, but he absolutely refused to accept it. It made me so upset I could not prevent myself from rejoicing angrily . . . "Do you fear I expect a benefice in return for this?" He replied that perhaps I sought an indulgence. . . . fortunately the *oratorio* began which prevented us from arguing further, and I have never spoken of it since except to my confessor, to atone for my bad temper. . . . I only wanted to let you know that the Pope does not accept gifts. ¹⁰⁷

Resta's altercation with the pope, no doubt affected by Clement's intention to reform papal nepotism, was not an isolated event. Like the Marchetti fiasco, it signaled a breakdown in gift giving and forced Resta to resort to other forms of trade. In a desperate attempt to make good his own debts from the Marchetti affair, Resta sold most of his albums outside a patron-client network to the English Whig Lord John Somers, through his agent in Italy, John Talman. In offering them to an English agent, destined for a "heretic," Resta could harbor no illusions about the agreed payment as a return gift to the Catholic Church. Somers paid in order to buy the drawings, not to patronize Resta or his charitable trust. That Resta donated the money to charity was, for Somers, a matter of indifference. ¹⁰⁸

Resta's once warm relationship with the Marchetti as friends and patrons degenerated into one of strife and

102. ABCC, III, no. 10, June 28, 1708, "il che diminuisce la stima del dono et il calore. . . ."

103. ABCC, III, no. 18, Oct. 15, 1708, ". . . penso mandarla alla Biblioteca de Monaci Cistercensi di S. Ambrogio di Mil.o per ricompensare un altro disegno che anni sono li donai vendutomi per raffaele da Carl'Ant.o et ivi messo in dubio."

104. ABCC, III, no. 32, Jan. 9, 1710.

105. BALC, p. 24; published in Bottari, III, 492, no. 105.

106. Kettering (as in n. 14), 143.

107. Pistoia W, no. 12, Oct. 4, 1700, "Se il Papa pigliasse regali si potrebbe parlar in un altro modo. Ma non li pigliava neanche da Cardinale. Io mi ricordo che in Ch[iesa] N[uov]a ad un orio di notte v'era il n[ost]ro il Card[inale] [] e S[ignor] C[ardinale] Albano . . . si venne à parlar di Barocci d'Urbino, paese del C[ardinale] Alb[an]o con lode, li volsi come à paesano donar un paesino [i.e., a landscape drawing] . . . e non lo volse mai. Mi saltò la bile e lo strappai in loro presenza dicendo, crede V.C. ch'io voglio da lei un benefico? Mi rispose potesse voler una bolla d'indulgenza. . . . comincio l'oratorio ne più si parlò ne doppo di questo scherzo degno di sferza, se no al confessore per la mia bestialità. . . . Voglio haverle solo accennato che il Papa non piglia regali. . . ." The Albani pope, Clement XI, was celebrated for his efforts to reform papal government and rid it of nepotism, and Resta's comment

appears to reflect this change in papal policy. At the same time, Clement XI's success in this regard is surely the result of, as well as a stimulus to, broader changes in socio-economic relations in this period.

108. This is not to suggest, however, that English society was without a mix of nascent capitalism and the partial survival of feudal values. See Stone (as in n. 16), who indicates to the contrary. John Talman's letters to his English patrons demonstrate this. In speaking of purchasing from the Italians, Talman was concerned to secure the lowest price possible. However, in writing to Lord Somers after the close of the Marchetti purchase, Talman spoke in the language of honor and patronage: "I only desire my expenses and as for the rest I am proud of the opportunity of serving my Lord," Talman letter book (as in n. 4), p. 177, Feb. 7, 1711. As to the question of religious belief, Talman's faith has recently been thrown open to conjecture by Graham Parry and Hugh MacAndrew, "The Talman Letter-Book," *Walpole Society* LIX, 1997, 6-7, who suggest he may have converted to Catholicism.

109. ABCC, III, no. 2, Jan. 21, 1708, "n' vorrei morire con debiti. . . . con l'amarezza d'haver perduta l'amiciia."

110. Pistoia W, no. 47, Xbre. 18, 1698, ". . . questi miei debiti repullulano come i peccati. . . ." Debt was a major preoccupation in Resta's attempts to make a will, for he sought to avoid leaving either drawings or debts in his name

bitterness. Debt, Resta found, could not only forge social bonds; it could also rupture them. Of the Marchetti affair he wrote, "I don't want to die with debts. . . . I am bitter at the loss of a friendship."¹⁰⁹ Resta was not prepared to pass this on to his circle of collectors and charities, which would jeopardize the prestige of his position within these groups. Despite the financial hazards, he clung to the definition of his trade as an honorable one. In spite of his misfortune with the Marchetti, Resta struggled to pay his debts in order to avoid the complete collapse of his network of patrons and friends. He agonized about debts constantly, referring to them as sins—"my debts horrify [me] as if they were sins"—because they were not just an economic misfortune but a social, religious, aesthetic, and moral loss as well.¹¹⁰

While stressing the nature of the gift as a total cultural phenomenon, I have also sought to bring out the historically fractured nature of Resta's gift-giving economy. The collapse of the Marchetti relationship left Resta stranded between old forms of patronage and new forms of demand. Resta's mode of exchange did not amount to a consistent refusal of an art market increasingly freed from the bonds of patronage, however. He valued art as well as patronage and friendship in market terms and sought financial return over other types of compensation from his patrons because he saw this as the most powerful expression of prestige. Yet to the end, and in spite of disappointment, the preservation of social bonds in which to wrap economic transactions remained crucial to him. The aristocratic neofeudal language of love and noble honor through which Resta conducted his gift giving was central to his self-fashioning.

Through gift giving Resta used the drawing as a medium for expressing social bonds between men.¹¹¹ Maratta's portrait sketch of the padre, which Resta notated *furto e dono dell'autore* (Fig. 1), epitomizes this process.¹¹² Each friend gave an object that embodied his spirit as a token that pledged him to the other. Maratta's eye "stole" Resta's likeness in order to capture it on paper; the painter returned it as a gift to the sitter in a drawing that likewise captured his essence through the personal character of his artistic style. These feelings of love and indebtedness to the giver were transferred to the object given; the successful transaction was one in which the art object was seen as the fruit of their affections and the embodiment of their tie. Speaking of a gift he had received

from an artist "with a love for my family," Resta described it as "a jewel . . . that I, without children, would happily give to the whom it pleases as much as it pleases me," so describing the gift as creating ties like those forged through the marriage of offspring.¹¹³ In thanking Magnavacca for the many drawings he had sent, Resta both regretted he had no gifts to send his friend and rejoiced in the close bond this debt created. In a passage that fully reveals the social function of the drawing in this gift-giving network, Resta again spoke of Magnavacca's gifts as forging bonds like those of marriage:

I have neither women [*donne*] nor gifts [*doni*] to give in order to forge bonds of kin [*parentado*]. It saddens me that I cannot make such gifts to you and so bind you to me, since you have given me your very blood. But if it is blood that creates such bonds, then we are closely knit, for I have received your blood from you abundantly.¹¹⁴

Like an exchange of women in marriage, gift giving of art forged "kinship" bonds between collectors.¹¹⁵ Drawn together through their shared love for art, they expressed this tie through a language of *amicizia*. Within this network art functioned as a status symbol and consequent focus of love and desire whose value could be traded in return for friendship, patronage, and service. It had the power to bind the viewer into alliance with its giver through a shared experience of visual delectation. Because of this it incited a language of love and delight among fellow collectors, mediated by the feudal nostalgia that shaped their gift-giving practice. Thus, human qualities of femininity were attributed to the drawing as a metaphor for its socioeconomic function within this network. For example, Resta spoke of art as a woman whose good reputation must be carefully guarded, on whose behalf he sought to make appropriate "marriages" through judicious placement with suitable patrons. Art was cast as precious, desirable, and lovable beyond monetary terms; for instance, Resta characterized a drawing as abducting with his eye and termed the desire to collect an insatiable delight.¹¹⁶ "These drawings seduce me," he protested, "they make my heart beat and excite the emotions"; "art steals the heart, moving it to palpitations."¹¹⁷ Borrowing from a language of ecstasy and transport, he described a drawing as "carrying him away" with love.¹¹⁸ The drawing thus became a

at his death as they would prove an embarrassment to his order; ABCC, II, no. 102, Dec. 27, 1707.

111. On the role of culture in forging such homosocial bonds, see E. K. Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York, 1985.

112. See n. 3 above.

113. Brit. Lib., k303, "e come questo pittore voleva bene a casa mia et io l'havevo favorito a mio potere quando era a Roma me la dono piu tosto che vende vedendo il mio rapimento, e veram.te e un gioello di gabinetti che essendo io senza figli la trasmetterei volentieri a chi se la facesse piacere tanto quanto piace a me."

114. ABCC, I, no. 23, Nov. 26, 1695, "... non ho parentado di donne ne di doni, mi spiace bene di non haverle per non poter haverlo con V.S. massime doppo haver dato V.S. del suo sangue; ma se per il sangue si fa parentado, tanto lo saremo fra di noi perche confesso d'haverne io ricevuto da lei in abbondanza. . . ."

115. C. Lévi-Strauss (as in n. 41), 52–68, chap. 5, "The Principle of Reciprocity," discusses the social aspects of exchange. As is well known, 478–98, chap. 29, "The Principles of Kinship," argues that all marriage is exchange whereby sisters, daughters, and so on are exchanged by men for like commodity, wives. Lévi-Strauss's notion that the function of the incest taboo

was to promote out-marriage and so establish extrafamilial social relations remains generally accepted, but other aspects of his work have been severely criticized and substantially rewritten, particularly by feminist scholars. See, for example, G. Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes towards a Political Economy of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. R. Raiter, New York, 1975, 157–210. J. Goody, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge, 1973, greatly refined Lévi-Strauss's linking of economic exchange with the exchange of women by distinguishing among the different types of exchange that can accompany marriage. With regard to the analogy Resta made between gift objects and the bonds of marriage, see Weiner (as in n. 14), 144, who notes that *kula* trade in shells was often described as marrying shells as a means of expressing the alliances forged through exchange. On the issue of gifts as children, see Fumerton (as in n. 14), 29–66, for discussion of the exchange of children as wards among aristocratic families of Elizabethan England.

116. BA, 87, of a drawing by Correggio that "insensibilmente rapisce l'affetto"; *ibid.*, 85, where Resta described a fellow collector, Valerio Polazzi, as an "insatiabile et intelligente diletante amico mio."

117. ABCC, I, no. 42, Sabato Santo 1698, "mi rapisce . . . nel cuore mi fa . . . moto e palpitatione."

118. Pistoia W, no. 27.

“court lady,” the collector her “courtier.” Within Resta’s web of gift giving the art object functioned as an elite collectible used to forge homosocial bonds. This culture of gift exchange nurtured a critical reception of the drawing typified by aristocratic longing for a feudal past of patronage and courtly chivalry, a nostalgia only intensified by the precipitate breakdown of gift-exchange systems under the onslaught of an increasingly capitalist art market.

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