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Philip Jacks and William Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence: Fortunes of a Renaissance Merchant Family*. University Park, Penn., The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001, 418 pp., 12 colour plates, 145 black-and-white illus., 17 tables, $75 U.S., cloth

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self-fashioned philanthropic identities. Huneault presents striking contrasts among images of flower sellers and shop girls in the context of representations of urban modernity.

Chapter four addresses factory work, and chapter five adresses sweated labour in the home. Huneault describes the Watercress and Flower Girls' Mission as "a nexus for the three types of women's work ... domestic service, street selling and now manufacturing," the latter being the Mission's central concern, for which it recruited women from the streets (p. 105). Images of the Mission's activities in the press showed work as orderly and workers as docile and pretty. Huneault concludes chapter four with images of laundresses and the ever-present sempstress, ca. 1900. In chapter five she examines the 1906 exhibition in Queen's Hall, London, of sweated labour, anticipated by earlier exhibition demonstrations of workers at employers' displays in international exhibitions, which reconstructed domestic work places and presented workers in them (like colonial villages complete with native villagers that also figured in international exhibitions). The performances of sweated labour in this exhibition raised multiple issues around the "reality" of the performances, the victimization of the workers, and the "truth" of photographic images of poverty or labour. Huneault applies Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection to examine the reception, whether empathetic or reifying, of images and performances of sweated labour.

In chapter six Huneault turns her attention from the representation by others to working women's self-representation with a focus on union banners and photographs of women on strike. This trajectory appears on the surface more triumphant than it is, as Huneault makes clear. The ambiguities of depictions by artists and the press continue in working women's own self-representations through gesture and intertextual connections. Within trade unionism there was a wide range of responses to women's work, women working, and gendered tasks and hierarchies. Working women did, however, present assertive selves in public displays, in some trade union banners, and in photographs of strikes. Huneault notes the overlapping public marches and displays joining union women with suffragists. Her epilogue looks briefly at the posture of the working woman with arms akimbo, a posture found in photographs and paintings of working women. In the representations she examines, she finds this posture both defiant and naïve, another indication of the complexity, density, and ambiguity of possible readings of images of and for working women.

This study ventures into new territory and is richly illustrated and profoundly analysed. It is also a beginning for other studies, and Huneault notes some areas for future study in her introduction. Some examination of social contexts for Victorian photographic images of the poor and working classes might have helped in exploring late-century photographs. Huneault comments on some conventions of paintings of flower girls and servants, and photographs by 1900 would have registered their own conventions. Paintings by social realists (e.g., Luke Fildes, Hubert von Herkomer) are mentioned, and an image or two might have been worth including, even if they, like most images of workers, stressed victimization, not agency. Huneault examines her images carefully, finding visual contradictions within images and contradictions between press reports and the visual images that accompanied them. Each visual genre carried its own identity, its own political challenges, and its own gendered expectations. The social and political content of images of working women registered differently for artists of different genders and classes. She also explores changing meanings of labour and gender, as well as political interventions into labour activities (strikes, unionism) and labourers' assertive political actions. This book is a model study of visual culture across genres and of the interpenetration of theory and images that elucidate each other.

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Philip Jacks and William Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence: Fortunes of a Renaissance Merchant Family.* University Park, Penn., The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001, 418 pp., 12 colour plates, 145 black-and-white illus., 17 tables, $75 U.S., cloth.

Tommaso di Lionardo Spinelli (1398–1472) was an enterprising and intelligent Florentine banker and textile manufacturer who raised the fortunes of his family to a level not far below the Medici. His biography, pieced together from the rich documentary trove of the Spinelli family archive, supplies the chronological narrative that holds *The Spinelli of Florence* together. However, the book is much more. Resulting from a collaboration between architectural historian Philip Jacks and economic historian William Caferro, this substantial study of one wealthy entrepreneur and his patronage of architecture includes a surprising wealth of information on a variety of subjects central to the understanding of mercantile and social life in mid-Quattrocento Rome and Florence. Jacks and Caferro are also careful to frame their commentary on Tommaso Spinelli with reference to other recent documentary accounts of wealthy Florentine families and in relation to trends in historical studies.

The foundation for this study lies in the extensive documentary record of the Spinelli family, acquired for Yale University's Beinecke Library in 1988. Forty-eight of the most significant documents, transcribed with the help of Gino Corti, appear in

an appendix. Although the archives of the better-known Medici, Guicciardini, and Strozzi families are much larger, the Spinelli documents have survived remarkably undisturbed through the centuries. Jacks and Caferro handle these documents with scholarly sophistication to yield an unusually complete picture of a major Renaissance merchant-banker and his business, family, religious, and artistic concerns.

The central Florentine branch of the Spinelli family became known by the early 1300s in minor aspects of Florentine political and business life, coming to much greater prominence by the mid-fifteenth century. In Medici Florence, Tommaso Spinelli had the most public and successful career of any of his family during the early Renaissance, distinguishing himself in banking and in the distribution and sale of luxury commodities, becoming a close financial advisor to popes and a personal friend to members of the papal court, and also emerging as a significant patron of architecture. As Jacks and Caferro illustrate in the initial chapters of the book, it was Tommaso Spinelli's combination of business acumen, patient hard work, political savvy, consistent and trustworthy behaviour, and strategic self-positioning that enabled him to build up the family fortune and reputation to an elite stature within the Florentine patrician class.

Starting in the early 1430s, Spinelli gained a reputation as a wise and wealthy banking manager by forming strategic alliances with prominent, affluent, and well-placed bankers, including the very rich Venetian Galeazzo Borromei, a trusted banker to the Visconti dukes of Milan. With immense foresight and perseverance, Spinelli sought to locate his operations in Rome within the orbit of the papal circle and to make himself indispensable to the papacy. Already by 1435 Spinelli was handling the financial needs of Pope Eugenius IV and other high-ranking prelates, and was appointed Depositary General, the highest office possible for a private banker. The intimate connection to the papal circle resulted in a huge upsurge in Spinelli's business wealth and reputation, which he was able to maintain to a considerable extent through the extremely challenging vicissitudes of three papacies – Eugenius IV, Nicholas V, and Calixtus III. Such closeness to three popes put Spinelli, however, at great financial risk. As fiscal administrator, he was compelled to mount heavy financial backing for the wars waged by the papacy. Eugenius IV forfeited on loans given by the Spinelli bank in his war against the Milanese Sforza, and Tommaso, who was personally close to Eugenius, found a way to swallow his resulting frustration and debt. Calixtus III, however, virtually broke Spinelli financially and left him embittered when he defaulted to the tune of 5,000 florins on a huge loan that Spinelli had been compelled to mount to support the pope's crusade against the Turks. Spinelli's response was to diversify. He returned to Florence, established silk and woolen manufacturing workshops, and enlarged upon his already lucrative business in the import and sale of highly priced luxury items targeted primarily at the papal court.

The story of Spinelli's remarkable business career provides Jacks and Caferro with an opportunity to discuss aspects of wider-ranging significance beyond the boundary of one rich merchant and his orbit. The subjects on which Jacks and Caferro focus generally encompass their own academic interests in economic history and the history of architecture. For example, in chapter four, amidst commentary on Spinelli's establishment of workshops for the production of silk and woolen textiles in Florence following his departure from Rome in 1454, Jacks and Caferro have inserted a very informative synopsis of the practices involved in silk manufacturing during the Renaissance period in Italy (pp. 82–90). The fifth chapter, which focuses on Tommaso Spinelli's establishment of his family life in the ancestral palaces in Florence in the neighbourhood of Sta Croce, opens with a very interesting introduction to the social and architectural history of the Florentine *palazzo*, to pave the way for Jacks's detailed consideration of the Palazzo Spinelli later on in the chapter. Jacks describes the family *palazzo*, which Tommaso had renovated at considerable expense, as a symbol of the ambitious banker's personal aspirations for his family stature and presence in Florence. On the basis of documentary and stylistic evidence, Jacks assigns to Michelozzo the renovation of medieval palaces along Borgo Sta Croce to form the Palazzo Spinelli.

Tommaso Spinelli's involvement in art and architecture is featured throughout the study. Because a biographical and documentary approach is taken by the authors, works of art and architecture enter the narrative when they appear in the archival record. For instance, documents from Spinelli's period in Rome occasionally reveal how Tommaso's close association with the papal circle gave him access to highly esteemed works of art and literature. In March 1455, the dying pope Nicholas V instructed Spinelli regarding a commission of five tapestries from the celebrated French weaver Jacquet d'Arras. We also glimpse how Spinelli's contact with learned men close to the pope stimulated his own collecting of treatises. Spinelli's financial journals record the purchase of Latin treatises by classical authors, works by Petrarch, and religious texts.

On the other hand, Spinelli's own patronage of architecture and art seems less distinguished, driven by concern for personal and family stature, as well as by a business man's sense of functionality. The commissions of Tomasso Spinelli for which documentary or material evidence survive range from palace and villa renovations in Florence and Rome to payments for religious imagery and furnishings for religious institutions he patronized, including Sta Croce in Florence.

Over the decades, Spinelli took considerable effort, despite

his frequent distance from Florence and his extremely busy working life, to maintain his family stature in the Florentine community, in part through astute and impartial business and political relationships, but also through other matters of family business. His paternal concern is reflected in aspects of social life, such as the desire for a male heir (his only son died tragically in infancy) and the effort to marry his daughters well. By offering a huge dowry, Tommaso won for his youngest daughter, Elisabetta, marriage to a son of the well-placed Soderini family, in an arrangement negotiated with the help of Cosimo de' Medici.

Spinelli's efforts to establish his family in a manner appropriate to his political and business connections with popes and princes also encompassed, as Jacks and Caferro explain in detail, the building and decoration of luxurious homes. Documents attest to Tommaso's vast expenditure of time and money on palaces and villas in the city and surrounding countryside of both Rome and Florence. As a patron of architecture, the archive reveals the day-to-day concerns of the man of business who was paying for each stage of the production of the building. Whereas traditional histories of architecture of the Renaissance period emphasize artistic creativity and innovation in the design of palaces and villas by a sequence of famous architects, by contrast, the archival record of Spinelli (and of other similarly situated patrons) exposes the pragmatist's preoccupation with details of utility and longevity.

Ernst Gombrich, in his classic article on the artistic patronage of the early Medici, painted a picture of the Medici as both the most wealthy and powerful family in Florence and as the arbiters of excellent and enduring aesthetic taste.[1] Yet as more recent art historians of the Quattrocento period have discovered, wealthy contemporaries of the Medici often did not patronize the most innovative or excellent artists. One well known example involves the hugely rich Palla Strozzi, who chose the famous courtly artist Gentile da Fabriano for his family altarpiece in Sta Trinità (*Adoration of the Magi*, 1423), and thereby allied himself with both the pope (for Gentile was closely associated with Martin V) and with learned humanist sentiments. Prominent humanists, particularly Fazio at Naples, praised Gentile da Fabriano above all other artists for his realism and naturalism. Strozzi's son-in-law, the far less wealthy Felice Brancacci, made the more unusual choice to have Masaccio's avant-garde paintings feature strongly in the Brancacci Chapel in Sta Maria del Carmine.

In a league with Strozzi, but less discerning, Tommaso Spinelli commissioned in 1441 the far less talented and moderately priced Florentine Bicci di Lorenzo and his young associate Stefano d'Antonio de' Vanni to paint fresco scenes from the legend of his patron saint, St Thomas, for the exterior of the convent of Sta Croce. Bicci di Lorenzo and his workshop painted in a late medieval style still popular with many patrons. Spinelli's primary concern seems to have been the iconographic content of the imagery, not the style. Indeed, the imagery of St Thomas dominated his pictorial commissions. Jacks and Caferro do not venture to explain whether Spinelli's commissions originated from a spiritual desire to honour his patron saint, or to what extent self-interest and self-promotion were involved.

Although Jacks and Caferro do mention Spinelli's religious conviction throughout the study, almost as a matter of course, a deeper analysis of Spinelli's religious behaviour would have proved interesting. His faith does seem to have acted as a touchstone for Spinelli. When he suffered the huge financial loss as a result of Calixtus III's flagrant abuse of his generosity and indenture, Spinelli turned to his Christian beliefs to gain understanding of his predicament, and came to see himself as burdened by the sin of another rather than by a situation of his own making. Also in his last years, after a sequence of defaulted loans had a crippling effect on his banking business, Spinelli turned to religion for consolation. His account books show that Spinelli gave consistently and generously throughout his career, including in his most affluent of times to chosen religious institutions. Despite his very complete immersion in the financial world of monetary loans and the import and sale of luxury goods, Tommaso Spinelli seems to have believed strongly in, and relied psychologically on, the structures and institutions of the Catholic faith as a true refuge.

The Franciscan complex of Sta Croce was the primary focus of his patronage of religious art and architecture in Florence, as Jacks and Caferro discuss in chapter six. In the tradition of the prominent early banking families, the Bardi and the Peruzzi, Spinelli (whose first wife had been a Peruzzi) purchased in 1460 sole title for his family in a burial chapel close to the high altar of Sta Croce. The Spinelli Chapel had been originally frescoed by Giotto with a cycle devoted to the life of the Virgin. Spinelli was allowed to add only the family *stemma* on one of the chapel walls. The chapel decoration, however, was largely lost during subsequent refurbishment, beginning with Vasari's extensive renovation campaign. Despite the huge losses of material evidence over the centuries, however, it is remarkable how effectively Jacks and Caferro have been able to resurrect Tommaso Spinelli for readers with the support of the rich and varied archival record.

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Note

1 Ernst Gombrich, "The early Medici as Patrons of Art," in *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1966), 35–57.