CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

# INTRODUCTION

On January 9, 1537, the Senate of Florence elected Cosimo de' Medici successor of the hated Duke Alessandro de' Medici, his distant cousin, who had been assassinated two days earlier.[1] At first he was only permitted to bear the modest title "capo e primario del governo della città e del dominio." He was mistrusted not only at home, but also abroad. The French saw him as a henchman of their enemy Charles V, the Farnese Pope Paul III wanted Florence for his own family, and the Florentine exiles – those citizens who had fled when Alessandro came to power in 1531, supported by both the French and the Pope – regarded him as the perpetuator of Medici tyranny. Cosimo had little to defend himself against all this hostility, and even lacked the support of the Emperor. Charles felt he had been saddled with the young Medici scion, in whom he had little confidence. When the commander of the imperial troops in Florence occupied the city's Fortezza da Basso, it therefore seemed obvious the Emperor had turned against him, the more so when imperial troops seized the fortress of Livorno. It seemed there was nothing Cosimo could do to allay Charles's distrust. He even sought the hand of Alessandro's widow, the Emperor's daughter Margareta. The pressure on Cosimo only intensified when, in the summer of 1537, an army of exiles, with the support of Farnese troops, marched on Florence. Against all expectations they were stopped at Montemurlo, not far north of the city, and, on the 1st of August, defeated by Cosimo's troops. In the wake of this, his first great exploit, the Emperor finally honored his request for a hereditary title.

With his new power, the young Duke of Florence lost no time implementing what appeared to be a consistent political program. His goal was to integrate Florence and its dominion, thus forging a territorial state that would eventually free itself from imperial authority and become independent. In Florence itself, Cosimo sought to repress factional strife, while outside it, in the subject cities, he strove to extend his control to the local officials who had represented Florence since time immemorial. Following the example of his predecessor Alessandro, he surrounded himself with non-Florentines who lacked social pretensions.

Charles steadfastly refused to relinquish the fortifications of Florence and Livorno, just as he frustrated the Duke's pursuit of his daughter's hand. But the

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

Emperor was at least willing to scale back Spanish control of the fortresses and to seek another partner for the bachelor. Eleonora, the second daughter of the fabulously rich and powerful Pedro de Toledo, viceroy of the Kingdom of Naples, was an eminently suitable candidate. The couple's marriage on July 29, 1539, further strengthened the young Duke's hand. By 1540 the twenty-year-old was feeling so cocksure that, in a bold display of power, he took up residence in the Palazzo della Signoria – the former town hall – and made it his official palace. In the ensuing years he deftly reduced the influence of the Florentine patriciate and augmented that of his newly established bureaucracy. Cosimo was equally successful at consolidating his grip on the Florentine state. He ended internecine conflicts, assumed control of the local militias, and built a network of fortifications. By ending the Florentine monopoly on silk and wool, and by promoting industry in other parts of his dominion, he also promoted economic integration.

Having filled his coffers, the ambitious young Duke was in a position to assist Charles V – assistance that, in the wake of the Emperor's defeat in the Bay of Algiers and the renewal of his war with the French, was desperately needed. In 1543 Charles permitted Cosimo to buy back the fortresses of Florence and Livorno, which was a milestone in Cosimo's quest for power and left the Emperor with no foothold on Tuscan territory.

Now that the obstreperous Duke was finally lord and master of his own state he could focus on the administrative reforms that further bureaucratization and centralization entailed. In 1547 he formed the all-powerful Pratica Segreta, consisting of himself and his ministers. Lacking any constitutional basis, this institution was uncontrolled if only because it was uncontrollable. The following year he promulgated the draconian Legge Polverina, which prescribed severe punishments for challenging his authority. A network of spies and an extensive police force ensured law and order. At the same time Cosimo pursued his policy of harmonizing the administration, legislation, and jurisprudence of Florence and the rest of his dominion.

Vis-à-vis foreign powers Cosimo comported himself as an equal. To the Pope he made it clear that he was in charge of his territory and, if need be, would not scruple to send cardinals to the gallows. Only toward the end of Paul III's papacy (1534–1549) and more especially during that of Julius III (1550–1555), whose candidacy Cosimo supported, were there signs of improvement in relations with Rome. With respect to Charles V, Cosimo hazarded greater independence as well, even going so far as to make overtures to France. He hoped his strategy would make it easier to expand his territory. Elba was granted him in 1548, but Siena, which bordered the duchy of Florence to the south, proved more elusive. Notwithstanding the city's status as an independent republic, Charles V maintained a garrison in the city and, in 1552, announced plans to build a fortress. In the revolt that this triggered, the Sienese repelled the Spanish and joined forces with the French. The Emperor pressed Cosimo for help to bring the city back into the fold, but the Duke refused to cooperate: He was not an imperial vassal,

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

he insisted, and had no obligation, especially in view of the debts Charles owed him. Should he decide to help, he would do so of his own free will. Not until the following year, 1553, did Cosimo agree to act – provided he could retain Siena until Charles had paid his debts. At that point he would surrender it, but not without compensation.

In June 1554 an army led by Cosimo's commander Gian Giacomo de' Medici launched an assault on Siena. The French troops garrisoned in the city and the King's representative, the Florentine exile Piero Strozzi, were taken by surprise and ultimately defeated in the Battle of Marciano. After an eight-month siege, the city surrendered to Cosimo on April 17, 1555, and was restored to the Emperor. Unwilling to leave it at that, the Duke then appointed a governor, seized the fortresses, and drove off the last of the French troops. There seemed to be no stopping him until, that same year, Charles abdicated in favor of his son Philip II, whom he placed in charge of Siena. It was clear that the Sienese themselves had had a hand in this, as they would have preferred anything to annexation by their arch enemy Cosimo. This called for swift and resolute action. Pointing to the enormous debts that his father had accumulated, the Duke demanded that Philip enfeoff him with Siena, under threat of an alliance with the French and the new, anti-Spanish pope Paul IV. The imperial vicar acquiesced and, on July 3, 1557, Siena was ceded to Cosimo on perpetual loan. Besides Duke of Florence, he was now also granted the title "Dux Senarum," having de facto expanded the old state of Florence with a substantial new territory, thus becoming a prince of truly European stature.

In 1559 Cosimo broke Siena's resistance once and for all by defeating the hill town of Montalcino, where the last representatives of the free Sienese republic had taken refuge. It was then that Philip officially confirmed his authority over Siena and granted Cosimo permission to call himself "duke of Florence and Siena."

The year 1559 also witnessed the death of Pope Paul IV and the succession of Pope Pius IV. Cosimo had supported the new pontiff's candidacy and, in the years that followed, his relations with the papacy improved dramatically. In October 1560 he traveled to Rome with Eleonora and made his triumphal entry to Siena en route. The principal goal of his mission was to have the Pope crown him king of Tuscany, which would have placed him above the other Italian princes and closer to the level of Philip and other European monarchs. In the event, fearing Italian and more especially Spanish and Viennese opposition, Pius balked at his request. His hopes of acquiring the hand of Philip's daughter, Isabella of Portugal, for his son Francesco, which would have improved Cosimo's chances of promotion, were not fulfilled, either.

After returning to Florence in December 1560, Cosimo pursued his policy of consolidating Florentine territory and harmonizing the administration of Florence with that of the rest of his dominion. By the same token, he reformed the administration of Siena and ordered the construction of a large fortress to strengthen his hold on the city, as he did in the Sienese possessions of Grosseto

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

and Radicofani. These same years also witnessed frequent forays into the countryside to check on the progress of land reclamation, agriculture, resettlement, and fortification projects.

In 1561 Cosimo established the Order of the Knights of St. Stephen in Pisa, thereby betraying his royal aspirations. The official purpose of the Order was to combat the Turks and patrol the Tyrrhenian Sea, but for the Duke it was a means of uniting the old and new Tuscan elites under him.

Cosimo's abdication in 1564 merely signified the transfer of his routine obligations to his son Francesco. This freed him to concentrate on the consolidation and further elevation of his new state and his own position. He went on reclaiming land, building roads, and, above all, constructing fortifications, including Terra del Sole, on the border with Romagna, and the enormous Sasso di Simone, on the border with Urbino. His tireless efforts to arrange a strategic marriage for his son were eventually rewarded. In 1565 Francesco married princess Joanna of Austria, one of the daughters of the late emperor Ferdinand.

Even before his abdication, Cosimo resumed his pursuit of a royal title. It seemed to be within his reach when, in July 1564, Ferdinand died and was succeeded by his son Maximilian. The new emperor did not share his late father's opposition to Cosimo's papal coronation. But no sooner had this final hurdle been eliminated than Pope Pius IV breathed his last. His successor, the dogmatic Pope Pius V, was willing to cooperate only in return for full compliance with Counter-Reformational reforms. The Duke lost no time implementing the decrees of the Council of Trent, which concluded in 1564. In a further bid to mollify Rome, in 1566 he extradited Pietro Carnesecchi, who had long since been convicted of heresy but had never been handed over to the Inquisition. In December 1569 his efforts finally bore fruit when Pius made him grand duke. The next year the pontiff placed the crown on his head, marking the birth of the grand duchy of Tuscany.

In the course of his reign Cosimo I de' Medici commissioned a long list of buildings and art works that still determine the appearance of Florence to a large extent. In the art and architecture he ordered in the city, art historians have consistently traced his development from a minor player on the Italian political stage to a powerful, absolutist prince. Kurt Forster did just this in 1971, in an influential article on the portraits of Cosimo.[2] Forster's thinking resonates in any number of books and articles on the Duke's patronage, even if they do not always deal with the subject from the beginning to the end of his regime. In particular, the view that the commissions awarded in the 1560s reflect his absolute, princely power is shot through the literature. The most salient examples are two somewhat older monographs – *Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence* by P. W. Richelson (1977) and *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X and the Two Cosimos* by Janet Cox-Rearick (1984) – and two more recent ones: *Arts*

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

*of Power. Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300–1600* by Randolph Starn and Loren Partridge (1992) and *Patronage in Sixteenth Century Italy* by Mary Hollingsworth (1996).

However, careful analysis of the major works of art and architecture Cosimo commissioned during his reign shows that they do not reflect his steady increase of power in a one-to-one fashion. As the present volume seeks to demonstrate, Cosimo preferred emphatically royal, dynastic, and territorial imagery at first, when in fact he was still only an elected leader whose power, notwithstanding his ducal title, was limited. Then, starting in 1559, by which time his annexation of Siena had taken his power to new heights, he charted a radically different course. He embraced the city's republican tradition, which prized the *bene comune* and *virtù civile*. When he was made grand duke in 1569, he grafted his new dignity onto the republican, florentinist decorum that he had adopted in 1559. As I shall argue, not only Cosimo's commissions but also, in a more general sense, the cultural policy of his regime, which his patronage was part of and which has never been properly understood either, reflect these shifts in tenor.[3]

I subscribe to the view that Cosimo used his official commissions to specific propagandistic ends. This point has been challenged by various prominent scholars. Elizabeth McGrath questioned what GiorgioVasari himself had said in his *Ragionamenti* about his frescoes with the genealogy of the gods in the Quartiere degli Elementi in Palazzo Vecchio and which, until then, art historians had always taken at face value. Vasari claimed that the gods in the cycle stood for Cosimo himself and his Medici ancestors whom he, Vasari, had immortalized on the floor below, the Quartiere de Leone X. McGrath surmised that Vasari drew the comparison only after the fact, as a sort of flattering, courtly exegesis. In her eyes, the cycle was nothing more than a conventional genealogy of the gods *à la* Boccaccio, with no further implications. If there is anything unusual about Vasari's genealogy of the gods, McGrath would have us attribute it to the Duke's iconographic advisor, Cosimo Bartoli, and not to any motive on his patron's part. What Cosimo allegedly wanted was simply an attractive, spirited painting that was otherwise conventional.[4] Not only in the case of the Quartiere degli Elementi, but also in that of other major works that Cosimo commissioned, scholars have recently minimized the notion of topical messages having been conveyed by these works. Take, for example, the frescoes and pictures that Vasari painted for the Sala Grande in the same Palazzo Vecchio. In contrast to previous students of the Sala, Charles Hope assigned very little weight to the program's specific political meaning. Rather, he contended that the hall reflected a tendency on the part of virtually every sixteenth-century Italian state to disguise the state's political impotence by trumpeting its prominence. As Hope himself put it, "all these states (Ferrara, Venice, Mantua, Florence) [ . . . ] drew in much the same manner on exemplary historical precedents and all of them invoked standard political virtues such as justice, peace and concord. Under the princely regimes it was implied that these desirable qualities were fostered by the ruler, while in republics they

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

were supposedly protected by individuals who placed the common good above personal interest." The best place to propagate this high-flown message was of course the palace hall (in the case of a prince) or the council chamber (in that of a republic). Hope therefore likens the Sala Grande to other, similar halls and sees no significant thematic differences between their decorative programs. The Florentine hall was only really distinguished by "the specific style of Vasari and his fellow Tuscan painters and the specific archeological interest of (Vincenzio) Borghini," the program's author.[5]

This view of the Duke's patronage shifted the spotlight from him to the iconographic advisor and in fact Vincenzio Borghini has been the subject of a whole series of fascinating studies in recent years.[6]

But is Cosimo's role really so negligible? In light of the same Quartiere degli Elementi and the Sala Grande, I think not. Genealogies of the gods may have been conventional, but not the theme's location in this case. According to contemporary decorum, the theme was certainly more appropriate to a country or suburban villa than an urban palace. To choose it for the attic of the former town hall of Florence was unprecedented, almost outrageous. A more unconventional approach to convention is hard to imagine, and the only one who would have dared such a thing is of course Cosimo himself. Why else would Cosimo have had the attic of the former town hall populated with the dynasty of the ancient gods and the floor below it with the Medici dynasty, if he did not intend to cast himself and his forebears as "dei terrestri," to quote Vasari?

Nor was there anything predictable about the choice of the city and republic of Florence, her glory, and her history, as the subject of the Sala Grande. After all, by the time Cosimo awarded the commission, the council hall had long since been transformed into a "Sala ducale," and thus a symbol of his new, princely authority. Left to their own devices, Borghini and Vasari would therefore presumably have seen to it that the hall exalted this princely status, the more so because it was now more elevated than ever. But they were not the ones who determined the general tenor of the program. As they themselves attest, it was none other than the Duke himself, who was loath to leave the hall's appearance to convention.

When it came to choosing subjects and modes of representation, Cosimo quite often expected his advisors and artists not to follow their own traditional sense of decorum, but, with all their erudition, they had to make the best of his idiosyncratic instructions. In his iconographical work for Cosimo, Borghini in particular was regularly overruled or misled. Rarely did he know beforehand what his patron expected, and he counted himself fortunate on those occasions that he did. In a revealing confession to Vasari (who knew whereof his friend spoke), Borghini wrote that it was vital "to discover the intent, the fantasy and the taste of His Excellency, which opens the doors to many things, and smooths and facilitates the path [ . . . ]. As you know all too well, when one does not know whether something appeals to our patron, one must feel one's way along."[7] The iconographer's own words are the most compelling evidence of just how flawed

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

the image is of Borghini as the brain behind the plans for Cosimo's commissions.[8] It was Cosimo who came up with the plans and Borghini who elaborated them, a distribution of parts which was stressed by Cosimo Bartoli in a letter he wrote Vasari from Venice in 1569: "God has given us Duke Cosimo, for the preservation, increase and edification of Florence and He has given him you [i.e., Vasari and Borghini] who, as though you were his arms and hands, are capable of carrying out the honorable, extremely appropriate and very praiseworthy concetti of His Highness. Rejoice therefore in such a Patron. Do enthusiastically your best to honor His Highness and yourselves and to let what is said become reality, that namely Florence is not only the most beautiful city in Italy, but that she will further outdo herself still every hour in beauty."[9]

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

# ONE:

# DYNASTY AND DESTINY

Cosimo I had only just been made duke when, in 1537, he turned his attention to the villa that his ancestors Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici had bought at Castello, on the slopes of Monte Morello. It was Niccolò Pericoli, called Il Tribolo, whom he asked to enlarge the garden behind the villa along the lines of those of the Roman aristocracy he had sent the artist to see. By the time of Tribolo's death in 1550, the garden – the young Duke's first major commission – had been transformed into a sumptuous park of monumental proportions.[1] An essential part of the project was an elaborate system of aqueducts to bring water from Monte Morello, which transformed the garden into an oasis. A rectangular wall, punctuated by fountains in niches, was built around the garden to symbolize the confines of the Florentine state as well as its mountains and rivers, especially Arno and Mugnone. The garden was thus a microcosm of the burgeoning state Cosimo envisioned once his regime had tamed the torrents that had done so much damage to Tuscany, and turned them into a blessing.[2] The garden's iconography also symbolized Cosimo's rulership in a broader sense, especially his attitude toward Florence. The most prominent features were the two large, sculptural fountains, one of which stood in the very center. Completed in 1545, it consisted of a round basin with a bronze statue on a simple pedestal. Modeled on a design by Tribolo, the statue represented Flora, and is most probably identical with the one by Zanobi Lastricati that is now in the Jardin de la Isla in Aranjuez, Spain. Lastricati's Fiorenza, in the guise of a Venus Anadyomene, is identified by the Florentine lily and the Medici *palle* on her diadem.[3] The pedestal on which the statue stood bears the symbols of the towns in the Florentine dominion and is decorated with satyrs as well as fruit and plant motifs – allusions to the dependence of fertility on water. The base is also decorated with Capricorn, Cosimo's adoptive ascendent. Around the fountain the Duke ordered a labyrinth of cypress, arbutus, laurel, and myrtle to conceal the ensemble.

The other fountain was likewise situated on the central axis of the garden, but much closer to the villa and in the open. Larger than the first, it too featured a bronze statue, *Hercules and Antaeus*. Tribolo had planned the statue from the

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

outset, but it was not actually delivered by Bartolommeo Ammanati until 1559. The gleaming white marble pedestal, on which Capricorn also figured, was higher and more intricate than its counterpart. The basin's placement on a raised stone platform of its own made the fountain even more impressive. Together, the two fountains gave unequivocal expression to the respective roles of Cosimo and Florence. The Venus – Fiorenza fountain symbolized the city, reposing demurely in the beneficent shadow of the new regime, in hopeful anticipation of the benefits that the Duke would bestow. On the other hand, the fountain of Hercules and Antaeus stood for Cosimo and, more especially, his victory over his enemies and his establishment of a prosperous, peaceful realm.[4]

Twelve allegorical sculptures in niches on either side of the garden were conceived by the historian Benedetto Varchi. These were to convey the notion that Florence, under Cosimo's virtuous guidance, was destined for a brilliant future as the capital of a nascent Tuscan state. The statues on the one side were to stand for Justice, Piety, Courage, Nobility, Wisdom, and Liberality. A bust above each niche was to represent that member of the Medici family who embodied the corresponding virtue. The allegories of Law, Peace, Arms, Sciences, Letters, and Arts were to occupy the niches on the other side. The Four Seasons, in the niches at either end, recalled the eternal cycle of time. In Vasari's words, the virtues signified the "grandezza e la bontà della casa de' Medici"; united in Cosimo, they augured the future prosperity of Florence. The city's laws flowed from the Duke's justice, her peace from his piety, her arms from his courage, her sciences from his nobility, her letters from his wisdom, and her arts from his liberality.[5] That the statues were never realized hardly diminished the garden's exaltation of the task that Cosimo set himself.

The Duke's next major commission, involving the festivities surrounding his marriage to Eleonora of Toledo in 1539, in which Tribolo also played a major role, echoed the garden project. The high point of the bride's joyful entry into Florence was a theatrical presentation during the banquet in the courtyard of the Medici palace. The performance of Apollo and the muses was followed by that of Fiorenza, her two rivers Arno and Mugnone, and five nymphs representing her *contado*. Fiorenza held a baton in token of her territorial domination, but the Medici *palle* on her mantle and the ducal *mazzocchio*, or coronet, on her head betokened her own subservience. Next on the program was a song sung by Apollo: "Here, Milord," it began, "is she whom you love so much; here is your homeland Florence, she who hopes, in the shade of your holy boughs, to flee the influence of every enemy star."[6] Then Flora and her nymphs serenaded the Duke with a *canzone* of their own: "Lovelier and more beautiful than ever, burning in sweet hope, Cosimo, Flora comes today to honor you as a faithful Handmaiden."[7]

At the end of the performance, having presented the Duke with the Florentine state, Apollo repeated the theme one last time: "Behold, exalted Duke, your devoted Empire / Behold the faithful handmaidens of Flora. / And as they

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521837227 - Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture
Henk Th. van Veen
Excerpt
More information

give you their pure and sincere Hearts / With their most precious and most beautiful dowries, / Love them as a Father, just and true."[8]

In both the performance at the Medici palace and the garden at Castello, Florence is consistently subordinated to the new regime. Just as she holds sway over the other cities, she in turn is dominated by Cosimo, who is presented as the ruler of a territorial state. The central tenet of this propaganda was of course that the state belonged to the Medici rightfully and historically. This was made particularly clear in the decoration of the Medici palace for Eleonora's entry. Likening Cosimo's virtues to those of his forefathers, it celebrated the dynasty's return and the legitimacy of their rule – visualized in scenes of Cosimo il Vecchio's return from exile in 1434 and Pope Leo X's triumphal entry into Florence in 1515 – as well as the dawning of the golden age.[9] The Duke belabored the dynastic theme not only to justify his territorial rule, but also to trumpet his determination. To this end he pointed to the fearsome reputation of his father, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, whose memory was vividly conjured by the ephemeral monuments along the route. The first, an arch before the Porta al Prato, showed episodes from the life of the famous *condottiere* that exemplified his fierceness toward his foes.[10] The base of an enormous equestrian statue in Piazza San Marco showed Giovanni about to bludgeon an opponent, and was adorned with scenes of his military exploits – a scarcely veiled warning to the foes of his son. The wedding festivities of 1539 ended on the same note: He would never tolerate the subjugation of his state. The theme of the spectacular fireworks on the Piazza della Signoria was the unsuccessful attempt of the Giganti to wrest Heaven from Jupiter. The ominous allusion to Cosimo's victory over the *fuorusciti* at Montemurlo would not have been lost on his subjects.[11]

The years that followed Cosimo's momentous move from the Palazzo Medici to the Palazzo della Signoria in 1540, which was accordingly renamed the Palazzo Ducale, witnessed the conception of many more projects for Florence, several of which were actually carried out. The scale and symbolism of these projects were designed to equate the Duke's advent with the creation of a dynastic Tuscan state. Though planned for the city, the projects were really intended to exalt the state to which the city had been subordinated. After all, a magnificent court capital redounded to the honor and glory of a prince.

In 1546, the area between the Palazzo della Signoria and the Arno was razed and cleared. Government offices, shops, and warehouses were planned along the new street, but the area remained empty until the construction of the Uffizi commenced in 1560. Only recently have scholars begun to realize that the clearance of this area was part of a much larger, more comprehensive urban scheme. Though most of it was never implemented, the scheme is no less valuable for the light it sheds on the regime's vision of what had been nothing less than the administrative heart of the city since the days of the medieval commune – with its wealth of