De Raedt, N. (2023). Magnificence, Dignity, and the Sociopolitical Function of Architectural Ornament: Cortesi's Discussion of the Cardinal's Architectural Patronage. *Renaissance Quarterly, 76*(1), 1-38. doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.435

Abstract :

By concentrating on Paolo Cortesi's discussion of the cardinal's architectural patronage in “De Cardinalatu Libri Tres” (1510), this article shows how Cortesi considered the construction of a sumptuous residence not as a sign of “magnificence” (“magnificentia”) but as a necessary operation to establish “dignity” (“dignitas”). Cortesi thus distinguished between the ethical and political-aesthetic dimension of magnificence, defining virtuous patronage in terms of honoring God and being of service, and sumptuous display as a means to acquire authority. This distinction also sheds new light on Cortesi's treatment of the exterior architectural ornament that should be applied to the cardinal's residence.