Pietro Bembo
and the INTELLECTUAL PLEASURES of a
RENAISSANCE WRITER and ART COLLECTOR

Susan Nalezyty
# Contents

Acknowledgments viii  
Introduction 1  

1 A Poet's Specialized Knowledge of the Visual 5  
Working, Writing, and Buying: Bembo's Courtly Mobility 5  
Curatorial Inscriptions: Intangible Ideas about Tangible Objects 13  
Favors and Gifts: Bridging Social and Geographic Distance 19  

2 Father and Son: Bernardo and Pietro Bembo 31  
Dedicated Public Servant vs. Author and Churchman 31  
Visiting Scholars: Linguistic Skill on Par with the Powers of Observation 45  
Politics and the Visual: A Subtle Economy of Obligation 53  

3 Portraits 69  
The Family's Memory Preserved 70  
Pietro Bembo's Changing Image over Time 74  
Faces of the Illustrious: Portraits of Writers 86  
Mementos of Affection 97  

4 Conserving and Exhibiting Sources for Emulation 103  
Imagines: Authentic Subjects Taken from Nature 104  
Signa: Representations from the Pages of the Ancients 120  
Visuality and the Inscribed Word 132  

5 Bembo's Studio 143  
Villa and Townhouse: Well-fitted Interiors and Exteriors 144  
Bembo's Domestic Items 158  
A Crowded House: Display and Exchange 167  

Appendix 1 Catalog of Object Descriptions 183  
Appendix 2 Chronology of Accounts on the Collection 189  

Notes 198  
Bibliography 246  
Index 266  
Photo Credits 276