

the Christian meaning of so many images and figures (for example, the long discussion of the god Mercury in chapter 3, or the discussion of the Graces in chapter 4). Sometimes the author's own points are repeated nearly verbatim a couple of pages apart (for example, regarding the inscription on Battista Sforza's portrait, pp. 148 and 150), suggesting the book would have benefited from tighter editing. Nevertheless, those flaws are more than counterbalanced by several engaging insights—for example, DePrano's identification of Tornabuoni and Albizzi family emblems in many of the works—and by the author's effort to be exhaustive, a feature that specialist readers will greatly appreciate.

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Fra Angelico: Heaven on Earth. Nathaniel E. Silver, ed.
Exh. Cat. London: Paul Holberton, 2018. 248 pp. £45.

In early 2018, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum mounted a small but significant exhibition of works by Fra Angelico, focused on four painted reliquaries executed by the Dominican painter between 1424 and 1434. These reliquaries, painted with scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, formed a set for use in the sacristy of the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence, and stayed together in that space from their creation until the early years of the nineteenth century and the suppression of the monastery in the Napoleonic occupation of Italy. Three of the reliquaries stayed in Florence, eventually entering the collection of the Museo di San Marco. The fourth surfaced in a private collection in Florence, passed to the heirs of the collector, in England, and, in 1899, was purchased by the firm of Colnaghi & Co. on speculation of sale, successfully realized, to Isabella Stewart Gardner. The 2018 exhibition brought together all four reliquaries and produced the accompanying volume, *Fra Angelico: Heaven on Earth*, which is a collection of essays and an exhibition catalogue providing a critical history, description and analysis, and relevant technical information.

The essays in the volume include studies of the provenance of the four reliquaries—chapters by Jeremy Howard and Chiara Pidatella, with an archival discovery by the latter that finds the reliquaries attributed to Fra Angelico and described by subject matter in a 1652 inventory of the sacristy of Santa Maria Novella—and, by Marilena Tamassia, a history of the Museo di San Marco, describing the historical circumstances that resulted in the museum becoming a repository for works by Fra Angelico, including the three reliquaries that remain in Florence. Gianfranco Pocobene and Alexa Beller provide a technical study of Gardner's reliquary *Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin* and map a chronology of physical changes made to the painted panel over its long history as a material object.

The remaining chapters are dedicated to consideration of Fra Angelico, the artist, and the various contexts within which he and his art are to be understood. Carl Brandon Strehlke plots the training and development of the artist, from his earliest work, under Lorenzo Monaco, through his subsequent association with the Dominicans to his work for Santa Maria Novella. Nathaniel Silver finds corollaries between the artist's innovations in form and subject and the qualities praised by his contemporary, Leon Battista Alberti, in the latter's treatise on painting, *Della pittura*. Particularly noteworthy is Silver's description of Alberti's *historia* as a "qualitative distinction" (88), which manifests "in the mechanisms by which an image conveys meaning successfully" (89), rather than simply as a depiction of a narrative episode. This distinction allows Silver, ultimately, to relate Angelico's innovative style to Albertian principles and Renaissance humanism. In another chapter, Beth Williamson finds precedents for Angelico's forms and narrative structures in Siennese examples of the Trecento, and very rightly draws our attention to the set of altarpieces painted for the cathedral of Siena as a possible source of inspiration for the series of narrative scenes painted on his four reliquaries for Santa Maria Novella. William Hood looks to an emotive streak in the Dominican order and frames Fra Angelico as a fervently pious member of the Order of Preachers, who sought to craft an innovative visual language for his brethren out of the model of more-traditional examples available in Florence and Siena.

There is no single view or unified perception of Fra Angelico that emerges from the varied essays presented in the volume, but this is not to say the studies are incompatible. The careful reader may appreciate the opportunity to consider aspects of the artist and his work, the contexts within which he lived and painted, and the subsequent histories of his paintings and of the institutions in which they are now displayed. The volume is beautifully produced, with color illustrations and fine details presented throughout.

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Florentiner Malerei: Alte Pinakothek: Die Gemälde des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts.
Andreas Schumacher, Annette Kranz, and Annette Hojer, eds.
Collection Cat. Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2017. 744 pp. €78.

Weighing over four pounds, and 744 pages long, this recent catalogue of the Florentine paintings of the fourteenth through the sixteenth century at the Alte Pinakothek of Munich constitutes an important reference tool for anyone with an interest in this field—for a scholarly work of this type, with fifty-six catalogue entries, and numerous illustrations spread over more than 550 pages, is more often consulted than read from cover to cover. The group of Central Italian pictures in question includes works by artists who are of critical importance to the development of Italian