

In general, this book instead offers several specific reasons why Jael imagery exceeded and inflected the predictable meanings of female virtue and male downfall: increasing attention among the audience of such prints to syphilis, eloquence, and the engraver's burin, among others. This extensive catalogue will be of great use, especially, one hopes, to scholars continuing to build feminist accounts of the Northern Renaissance.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.18

Cimabue and the Franciscans. Holly Flora.

Renovatio Artium: Studies in the Arts of the Renaissance. London: Harvey Miller, 2018. iv + 288 pp. €140.

Holly Flora's insightful and richly illustrated book opens up many new avenues of inquiry regarding the early Renaissance Italian artist Cimabue and his multifaceted engagement with the Franciscans.

Cimabue has not received the extensive scholarly attention given to Giotto, with whom he worked on his most significant scheme, the basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. One reason for this becomes apparent in the first chapter, where Flora interrogates Cimabue's unwittingly disastrous use of lead white which resulted in the severe degradation of many of the Upper Church frescoes. Her detailed and well-marshaled evidence points to the artist's aim to exploit the pigment's brilliance and clarity to better express the Franciscan's spiritual affinity with light. Her meticulous visual analysis of the works and her commitment to put forward important new ideas comprise the main strengths of this book. Knowing that each chapter will provide a fresh perspective or thought-provoking suggestion helps the reader through some of the more challenging and convoluted sections on Franciscan exegesis.

The book is divided into two parts, "Transformations at Assisi" and "Art, Memory and Experience." In six chapters Flora explores the multiple functions and meaning of Cimabue's frescoes, mosaics, and panels, predominantly at Assisi but also in Florence, Arezzo, and Pisa. Each chapter builds on existing scholarship, fully acknowledged by Flora who notes her particular debt to the work of Chiara Frugoni, Donal Cooper, Janet Robson, and Joanna Cannon. The book includes a comprehensive bibliography which draws effectively on recent scholarship.

However, what makes this book so valuable to Cimabue scholars are the author's new methodological approaches which allow her to highlight the innovative nature of the artist's practice. For example, Flora engages with somaesthetic theory to explore "Sensory Engagement and Contemplative Transformations: The Assisi Transepts," and in "The Virgin Made Church" she makes a case for a new interpretation that links aspects of

Marian imagery to the depictions of the four Evangelists and their distinctive and intriguing personal cityscapes. In "Place and Memory: The Franciscan Maestà," Flora sets out an original argument regarding Cimabue's influential manipulation of the iconography of the Maestà genre to emphasize specific links between the Virgin and the Order.

The underlying premise throughout is that Cimabue assimilated and mediated Franciscan doctrine to a remarkable level to create new visual forms which best represent the Order's ideals and serve to promote the specificity of Saint Francis and his role as an *alter Christi*. Flora's careful research and her understanding of Franciscan writings, most notably those of Bonaventure, provide real insights into the relationships between image and text. She rightly raises the vexed issue of agency, and this is hard to resolve. She proposes the necessity of "a protracted dialogue between the artist; members of his workshop and the friars themselves" (19) and there is what may be an inevitable blurring of these boundaries throughout the book. How far can Cimabue be considered responsible for the innovations with which he is credited here and how far might he have been minutely directed by the Friars? Whatever the answer, Flora makes persuasive arguments regarding how the formal elements support and enhance the subtlety and nuance of the spiritual, doctrinal, and propagandist messages expressed and shows the artist's central desire and ability to heighten the viewer's experience.

The book is richly illustrated with images of Cimabue's works and those of artists preceding, concurrent with, and following him. Providing what must be an almost complete catalogue of Cimabue's oeuvre, perhaps for the first time, is very welcome. That so many of the Assisi works are damaged makes it hard to identify some details in the images discussed, but enabling cross-referencing with such a wide range of other works is a great achievement and will greatly benefit scholars. A significant weakness, for this reader, is the lack of dates in the captions. Having to constantly go back to the text, which is sometimes on a different page than the image, is frustrating.

In this impressively researched book Flora reclaims Cimabue's importance and demonstrates the dynamic, innovative, and influential nature of early Renaissance art and its symbiotic relationship in Italian cultural and spiritual life.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.19

Mantegna and Bellini. Caroline Campbell, Dagmar Korbacher, Neville Rowley, and Sarah Vowles, eds.

Exh. Cat. London: The National Gallery Company, 2018. 304 pp. £35.

The book that accompanies the London-Berlin exhibition *Mantegna and Bellini* is not by any means a catalogue, since it follows the fashion of recent years in