

liminally as the colossal persona of Michelangelo himself at the same time that it expresses the grandeur and fierceness of his original patron, Pope Julius II, and the ire of Moses upon his descent from Mount Sinai. Indeed, one might say (and I embellish the words of one of Michelangelo's finest scholars) that the statue is in its aura of power and ferocity an amalgam of Moses, Pope Julius II, and Michelangelo—all wrathful. To adapt Vasari's words, *terribilissimi principi*. As Vasari wrote, Michelangelo presided over the *principato* of the arts. Even in its reduced form, the tomb of Pope Julius II is not only a compelling work of art. It is a crucial image in the forging of Michelangelo's grandiose, mythic persona.

Paul Barolsky, *University of Virginia*

*L'anticamera Benintendi: Morale et politique dans la peinture domestique à Florence vers 1523.* Cécile Beuzelin.

Pocket Library of Studies in Art 40. Florence: Olschki, 2015. xxiii + 172 pp. €28.

---

*L'anticamera Benintendi* examines a decorative ensemble constructed in the 1520s in Giovan Maria Benintendi's antechamber to a bedroom in his Florentine palace. Although mentioned by Vasari, much of the decoration is lost. Like most such chambers it was a deliberately manufactured environment with pictures fitted into a decorative scheme of wainscoting and paneling that filled the walls and ceiling of the small room. All that remains are four (or perhaps five) pictures: Franciabigio's *David and Bathsheba*, Bachiacca's *Legend of the Dead King* and *Baptism of Christ*, and Pontormo's *Adoration of the Magi*. John Sherman had suggested that a *Saint John the Baptist* by Andrea del Sarto in the Pitti originally belonged to the antechamber. Evidence for this supposition rests in the painting's donation by the Benintendi family to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici in 1553, and its subject anchored the theme of the room. Beuzelin is not convinced that the del Sarto was part of the antechamber, noting that it is differently shaped and not mentioned by Vasari (24), but she points out the centrality of the saint in the iconography of the series later in her essay (136). No final conclusion is drawn.

The author is convinced that the patron preferred artists with elements of "Northern" style, and reiterates the quotations from various Northern prints in each of the works. She also contends that small-scale domestic cycles such as the Benintendi rivaled contemporary Roman ones in their complexity and didactic impact upon spectators, although it remains unclear what measure of impact is being used as the Benintendi room would not have been seen by other than close friends and family.

Beuzelin builds upon and extends the research and comparisons previously advanced by Alessandro Cecchi, Susan McKillop, and Robert LaFrance. She notes that in Franciabigio's *David and Bathsheba* not only can one see the escutcheon of the Medici, but also that of the Benintendi. Furthermore, she connects the date inscribed on that paint-

ing, “1523,” with the election of Giulio de’ Medici as Pope Clement VII on November 19 of that year. Benintendi was a staunch supporter of the Medici and related to them via marriage. These new observations set up the major contribution of the book, the argument that the cycle in the antechamber could be read in light of the politics surrounding Clement’s election. Specifically, Clement’s birth status was clouded as he was the child of Giuliano de’ Medici and his mistress. In contemporary political discourse some questioned whether Giulio was eligible to become pope. Benintendi is known to have supported Giulio’s election from an anecdote told by Benedetto Varchi, according to which he bet against another man that Giulio would be elected.

Based on these facts Beuzelin draws attention to a theme of legitimacy in the paintings, starting with Franciabigio’s *David and Bathsheba*, in which a woman taken in adultery does in the end produce a legitimate heir (Solomon) and establish the house of David. The attempts by David to get Bathsheba’s husband Uriah to recognize the child highlight the theme of recognition, which is developed in the panel by Franciabigio, the *Legend of the Dead King*. This subject had no precedent in Florentine art, again suggesting that a patron who desired a collection of subjects to verify the legitimacy of Clement had to take recourse to Northern prints and artists who could easily translate them into the imagery he required. In this episode Beuzelin equates the king, who intuitively from beyond the grave how to find his true/good son among his many sons, with both Solomon and Pope Clement. This painting is followed by Pontormo’s *Adoration of the Magi* (the recognition of the Son) and Bachiacca’s *Baptism of Christ* (recognition of the Son by the Father). A series of complex and traditional iconographical associations underpinning the whole are also discussed.

Sometimes the small illustrations hamper the telling of the story and the archival sources are elementary, but the new proposal does suggest a cohesive interaction among the paintings, something that has been lacking to date.

Elizabeth Pilliod, *Rutgers University–Camden*

---

*The Bargello Palace: The Invention of Civic Architecture in Florence.* Amee Yunn. London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2015. 268 pp. €125.

---

Amee Yunn’s impressive monograph on the Bargello fundamentally reassesses the building’s medieval construction chronology. Previous scholars—Luigi Passerini, Giovan Battista Uccelli, and Walter Paatz—held that the building was realized in three main phases, with Paatz offering a more intricate chronology than the others. First, Florentines built a massive wing on Via del Proconsolo in the 1250s. Later, they added an arched courtyard and heightened the palace. More recently, Luca Giorgi and Pietro Matracchi have suggested the two halls of the Via del Proconsolo front wing date to