



The Badia of Florence: Art and Observance in a Renaissance Monastery

Anne Leader

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Santa Maria di Firenze, an ancient, venerable Benedictine abbey (called the Badia) located in the heart of Florence, is the subject of Anne Leader's new book. In 1418, 17 Benedictine monks journeyed to Florence from Padua to save one of their order's oldest houses from ruin. Realizing that reformed spiritual practice alone would not save the Badia, Abbott Gomezio di Giovanni commissioned the creation of a new cloister, to be decorated with vivid and engaging frescoes designed to motivate its residents. Leader's richly illustrated, interdisciplinary study examines the Badia during this crucial period of reform and rebirth. It reveals the renovated Badia as integral to the spiritual, political, and social life of early Renaissance Florence, as well as to the broader program of expanding Benedictine Observance throughout Italy.

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