more information. Overall, the author has accomplished his purpose, that of giving us a reliable survey of a fascinating era of intellectual history.

PAUL F. GRENDLER, *University of Toronto*

Michael Baxandall. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972. Pp. 165, ill. \$11.95.

The purpose of this concise and tightly written book is to show "how the *style* of pictures is a proper material of social history." Mr. Baxandall's argument is this. Believing that the symbolic structures used by a society at any given moment are reflected in all the modes of expression that appear in that society, Mr. Baxandall is concerned to show how our understanding of painting—which in the Renaissance was an obviously important expressive language—can be enriched by reference to material derived from other areas of activity. And it is a highly rewarding investigation.

He begins with an account of the forms of patronage recorded in the fifteenth century, these being, in his words, the customer's participation in the creation of the work of art. And he concludes with an interpretation of the critical terms to be found in three somewhat different late fifteenth-century texts on art—the *Trattato di pittura* (1509) of Francesco Lancilotti, the *Cronaca rimata* (after 1482) of Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael, and, most importantly, those parts of the *Comento . . . sopra la comedia di Dante Alighieri* (1481) where the author, Cristoforo Landino, includes a lengthy and modestly ambitious account of the state of the arts in Florence. But it is in the second section of the book, entitled "The Period Eye," that Mr. Baxandall keeps closest to his brief, recalling one by one the assumptions by which the fifteenth-century viewer, while realising with Boccaccio that painting is "actually just a little colour applied with skill to a panel," still wished to interpret the expressive meaning of the panel placed before him. Some of this material might seem to be obvious. We know, of course, of the representational conventions that allowed the structure of space to be defined as it was in the Brunelleschian system of "artificial perspective." And we are aware, if perhaps to a lesser extent, of the religious traditions that the painter, "the professional visualiser of holy stories," could draw upon to express the themes that his commission laid upon him. But the extreme virtue of this book lies in the material that Mr. Baxandall has been able to assemble to give evidence of these conventions, and the acute comment with which he interprets it. We read, for example, in the anonymous *Zardino de Oracion* (1494), of the suggestion that the pious recreate in familiar surroundings the events of the life of Christ, and we might think immediately of a work like the *Pitti tondo* of Fra Filippo Lippi. Or we read, in the *Prediche vulghare* (1491) of Fra Roberto Caracciolo, of the almost pedantically precise analysis of the various stages of the Annunciation by which the varied representations of this subject could be interpreted. We read in the *De arte saltanti et choreas ducendi* by Domenico da Piacenza of a scheme by which we might interpret the language of gesture in Quattrocento painting. And finally, in a commonplace treatise on mensuration like the *De arimethica* (1481) by Filippo Calandri, we read of techniques that seem to speak in more mundane circumstances of the feeling for solids and voids that, in the work of Giotto or Masaccio, was baptised as evidence of a "tactile sensibility."

Little of this is easy reading. The chapters of this book are derived from lectures that Mr. Baxandall prepared for students of history at London University, and there is a certain casualness about the language that makes some of the reasoning a little elusive. And we may not entirely agree with the point of his thesis. But what Mr. Baxandall is talking about in this book is new and important material, and there are few readers who will not find their comprehension of Renaissance painting sharpened and enriched by the material included here and the analysis that Mr. Baxandall provides for it.

DAVID CAST, *Yale University*

Andrew Martindale, *The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972. Pp. 144, Ill. \$6.75 (softcover edition \$4.75).

This is a brief, concise book. The material in it appeared first as part of a large, lavish volume entitled *The Flowering of the Middle Ages* that was published by Thames and Hudson in 1966. Since then the text, in the words of the editor, has been "roused, stretched and shaken into a new and somewhat enlarged shape," the plates have been re-arranged and the whole is now presented as an independent contribution to the study of the complex problem of the social position of art and of artists at the end of the Middle Ages onwards, that is to say from about 1250 to 1400.

In one immediate way such an enterprise is obviously worthwhile, for it places material in the hands of readers who could hardly have expected to buy the larger and more expensive book. And the plates in this new version are not, on the whole, inferior to those of the original. But judged as an independent book, it is only partly successful. It is not possible to fault the general account Mr. Martindale provides of the gradual and patchy accumulation of authority that artists enjoyed from the end of the thirteenth century onwards. Nor the divisions—Town, Court, Cloister—under which he presents his evidence. Nor the careful and precise interpretation with which he brings his facts before us. But he is caught by the terms of his own brief. The material he uses is haphazard and generally unfamiliar—names like Jacques Cavael or Girart d'Orléans appear as frequently as do more familiar ones like Giotto, Gislebertus and Melchior Broederlam. And his interpretations are often drawn from appropriate, but difficult sources such as inventories, or the terminology of court offices, or the statutes of the guilds of painters. This leads, I think, to a disturbing imbalance. For the general reader—someone like the "mediocriter literatus" envisaged by Erasmus in his *Adagia*—there is too much taken for granted in our knowledge of social history and social structures. And for the scholar, to whom such matters would be known, there are suggestions and connections made here by Mr. Martindale that without documentation are a little frustrating. Obviously this is not to say that Mr. Martindale's text is without interest. Given to readers sufficiently acquainted with the social history of the late Middle Ages—let us say, advanced undergraduates—this book could well be used to open up a range of possible questions for study. But despite Mr. Martindale's modest claims, this is not merely a survey of the available material; it is more than that. And it is to be hoped that at some time Mr. Martindale will produce a larger, more expansive book on this interesting subject. What we have here is merely a