



Andrea del Sarto

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Harry Cooper



Sydney Freedberg, *Andrea del Sarto* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pl. 1:
Madonna enthroned with four saints. FA3908.3.40.

IT WAS 1977, THE FALL OF MY FRESHMAN YEAR AT HARVARD, AND PROFESSOR Sydney Freedberg's course on the High Renaissance (FA 154) got me into the Fine Arts Library for the first time. The book I remember most was a two-volume catalogue raisonné of the work of Andrea del Sarto. I didn't know what a catalogue raisonné was, and I didn't notice at first that my professor was the author. But I had decided to write my final paper on the artist, and this was the biggest book on him, and it could not be checked out, so there I was. I remember the smell of the coated pages, the feel of the cloth cover. It was a new world for me. I studied the plates and the text, became an initiate into matters of the picture plane, formal rhythms, the illusion of sculptural relief. Little did I know how much these matters would occupy me when I finally decided to study modern art a dozen years later! I have used the Fine Arts Library many times since then, as a graduate student and a curator, and have gotten to know several of its wonderful staff over the years, but the first time for me, a lonely and insignificant freshman, was the best. I would read for a while at one of the big wooden tables, and then take a break to climb to the balcony and look down on where I had been.

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