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Architecture in the Culture of Early Humanism: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Eloquence, 1400-1470

Christine Smith

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The impact of early Italian humanism on the development of Quattrocento architecture has received much attention in recent years. In these essays, Smith focuses instead on the place of architecture in humanist thought--on the ways that works of architecture or architectural imagery became important vehicles for the expression of the humanist's ethical, political, and cultural concerns. The essays in the first part focus on the thought of Leon Battista Alberti and his circle, covering topics ranging from Alberti's use of architectural imagery as allegory for the ideal moral state of spiritual tranquillity to how the rhetorical, philosophical, and theological ideal of *varietas* influenced the design of Pienza. In the second part, the emphasis shifts to the impact of Byzantine scholarship on Quattrocento humanists' attitudes

toward architecture.