

## Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*

This book examines the heretofore unsuspected complexity of Lorenzo Ghiberti's sculpted representations of Old Testament narratives in his *Gates of Paradise* (1425–52), the second set of bronze doors he made for the Florence Baptistery and a masterpiece of Italian Renaissance sculpture. One of the most intellectually engaged and well-read artists of his age, Ghiberti found inspiration in ancient and medieval texts, many of which he and his contacts in Florence's humanist community shared, read, and discussed. He was fascinated by the science of vision, by the functioning of nature, and, above all, by the origins and history of art. These unusually well-defined intellectual interests, reflected in his famous *Commentaries*, shaped his approach in the *Gates*. Through the selection, imaginative interpretation, and arrangement of biblical episodes, Ghiberti fashioned multitextured narratives that explore the human condition and express his ideas on a range of social, political, artistic, and philosophical issues.

Amy R. Bloch is Associate Professor of Art History at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Her research focuses on Italian Renaissance sculpture, and she has published articles and essays on Ghiberti, Donatello, Michelangelo, and on the art and ritual of baptism in Florence. Her work has been supported by fellowships and grants from the Villa I Tatti (the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies), the Renaissance Society of America, and the College Art Association.

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Amy R. Bloch

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AMY R. BLOCH



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To  
*Evelyn Klein and the memory of Walter*  
and  
*Roslyn Bloch and the memory of Irwin*

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