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**Kent, Francis W. Princely Citizen: Lorenzo de' Medici and Renaissance Florence. Ed. Carolyn James**

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**Kent, Francis W.**

***Princely Citizen: Lorenzo de' Medici and Renaissance Florence.* Ed. Carolyn James.**

Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies 24. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013. Pp. viii, 369. ISBN 978-2-503-54171-6 (hardcover) €80.

Francis Kent was working on a retirement opus, a biography of Lorenzo the Magnificent, at the time of his unfortunate diagnosis with cancer in 2008 and his subsequent passing in 2010. In a moving and fitting tribute to this archival master, Carolyn James of Monash University has collected and edited a series of essays, mostly previously published, that served as preparatory and complementary materials to this grand biographical project. These essays form a cohesive whole that is almost biographical, which places Lorenzo's unique character into the deeply social and political Florentine world in which he grew up, ascended to power, and became *Il Magnifico*. Kent's archival work is masterful, and the essays are based on a career's reading of Laurentian and Medicean correspondence, administrative records, petitions, and other documents. *Princely Citizen* ranges far and wide in Lorenzo's life, connecting the disparate threads of his upbringing, the women in his life, his artistic patronage, and his increasingly autocratic politics to the development of the Medici regime and Lorenzo's sure-footed navigation of its complexities.

The first three essays in *Princely Citizen* portray the young Lorenzo as born to rule, always preparing for power but uncomfortable with his future role. Kent makes the case effectively that Lorenzo really began actively preparing to take the reins of power upon the death of his grandfather, Cosimo de' Medici, in 1464, though he had been introduced to the practice of patronage even earlier. Lorenzo's well-known romantic side (Kent describes Lorenzo scaling the walls of the convent of *Le Murate* to prove its nuns' chastity) was also a political tool, as his dealings with the wives of powerful Florentine men are revealed to be as calculated as his shrewdest business deals. However, Kent argues that Lorenzo was also a truly romantic man, whose life was shaped to a great extent by two major love affairs: with Lucrezia Donati, his youthful *amore*, and with Bartolommea Nasi, the patrician wife of Giovanni Benci with whom Lorenzo was involved in the 1480s. Lorenzo, Kent argues, favoured women who were intelligent and articulate, who did not adhere to the contemporary Florentine advice that women should remain silent and domestic. Kent's third

essay attributes this preference to the deep relationship between Lorenzo and his mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni. A patron in her own right, Lucrezia was a formative influence on and a guide to the young Lorenzo, much as a widowed matriarch might officially play the role of regent in the more princely courts of Lombardy and northern Europe. These essays give coherence to Lorenzo's character by revealing sources and influences for the seeming contradictions of his behaviour: a man born to rule, but wary of the responsibility at first; a lover of women, but only those who spoke; a devoted son who nevertheless was happy to dally with the wives and mothers of colleagues and friends or rivals.

The second section of the collection explores Lorenzo's patronage of ecclesiastical spaces, of architectural projects, of arts (particularly northern polyphonic music), and of people in his role as *maestro della bottega*, the "boss of the shop," a phrase that Kent traces from its assumed Machiavellian origins to an obscure passage in Benedetto Dei's *Cronaca* of ca. 1470 (271). The patronage activity explored in this section is linked back to the lessons taught to the young Lorenzo by his grandfather Cosimo and his mother, Lucrezia, both of whom were well aware of the need for Medici support for republican projects. In particular, Lorenzo's sponsorship, almost anonymous, of the rebuilding of the convent of *Le Murate* following a fire in 1471 is shown to be a shrewd work of Medicean politics in traditionally oppositional Santa Croce. Kent also, in this section, shows how from early on Lorenzo established, and increased, a Medicean presence in the Arte della Lana and the Operai del Duomo, traditional republican institutions through which Lorenzo inserted Medicean iconography in the Duomo's exterior and interior decorations; the success he had in this regard was temporary, and the changes Lorenzo wrought on Santa Maria del Fiore were reversed by subsequent republican bodies. In this case, as in the case of his purchase of the villa at Poggio a Caiano, Lorenzo's careful cultivation of a network of obligation and dependency, learned from his mother and his grandfather, proved indispensable tools in achieving his aims.

The final section of this book explores the different bases of Medicean partisanship and how Lorenzo solidified these groups' support. The five short essays here demonstrate how Lorenzo cultivated support among multiple social classes, from the *uomini da bene* from which his own clan emerged in the fourteenth century to the "lads at the Millstone Corner" who formed a troop of vigilantes in the aftermath of the 1478 Pazzi attack on the Medici (271). Of particular interest in this section is a brief essay on "unknown voices" from the

*Archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato*. The wide range of petitioners encountered here show that Lorenzo maintained personal ties with Florentines of all social and economic classes; here, more than anywhere, he might be shown to be the “princely citizen” Kent envisions.

Well-written and clearly edited, these essays are the work of a master reviewing a fruitful career. James’s editing is primarily for consistency and clarity in language and formatting; additional bibliographies have been added, along with unpublished manuscripts in footnotes. The archival work here is thorough and clear-headed, and Kent is careful to balance assertions with evidence, or with tentative hedging where evidence is thin, and to support his arguments with ample reference to a wide body of English, French, and Italian scholarship. Minor repetitions or confusions between essays reflect the fact that they were written in different periods, for different purposes, and do not detract from readability. Demonstrating how Lorenzo’s rule over Florence was the product of a lifetime’s training and practice, Kent shows how Il Magnifico was able to balance the contradictory roles of prince and citizen.

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**Kusukawa, Sachiko.**

***Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany.***

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. Pp. xvii, 331 + 120 ill. ISBN 978-0-226-46529-6 (hardcover) \$45.

It is often noticed that Andreas Vesalius’s *De humani corporis fabrica* and Nicolaus Copernicus’s *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* were published in the same year, 1543, and the two books are sometimes paired together as marking the beginning of a new era. Less attention has been devoted to the fact that Vesalius’s book followed Leonhart Fuchs’s *De historia stirpium* (1542) by only one year. While scholars have acknowledged both Fuchs’s and Vesalius’s impressive visual and intellectual accomplishments, they don’t usually consider their works under the same rubric. *Picturing the Book of Nature* pairs them as the representatives of a moment in which images became “integral to the object,