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**Black, Robert and John E. Law, eds. The Medici: Citizens and Masters**

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**Black, Robert and John E. Law, eds.**

***The Medici: Citizens and Masters.***

Villa I Tatti Series 32. [Florence]: Villa I Tatti, 2015. Pp. xii, 432 + 51 ill. ISBN 978-0-674-08844-3 (paperback) US\$40.

This important new collection of essays expands upon the enduring intellectual legacies of Nicolai Rubinstein and Philip Jones. To Rubinstein, Medicean Florence had to be understood as the family working in an oligarchic, republican tradition. Jones cast the Medici as princely or even despotic masters akin to other north Italian rulers. Current scholarship still largely divides along these contrasting interpretations. The conference that Robert Black and John Law organized at Villa I Tatti in 2011 revisited these views and resulted in this handsome volume, accessible for senior undergraduate students and valuable for more established scholars. Twenty-two chapters organized into four thematic sections flesh out different aspects of the fifteenth-century Florentine regime, often within the broader context of northern Italy. Black's brief introduction is a vital starting point, ably explaining the collection's broader intellectual grounding as well as situating each chapter within its relevant scholarly tradition.

Eight chapters comprise "Part I: Power and Legitimacy," opening with Giorgio Chittolini's "Dominant Cities" and Gian Maria Varanini's "Medicean Florence and Beyond," tackling questions of political models and legitimation. Andrea Zorzi's chapter surveys the scholarship to understand the communal tradition's survival. Lorenzo the Magnificent's style of governance comes in for particular analysis by both Melissa Meriam Bullard and Riccardo Fubini, the latter drawing upon his deep knowledge of Lorenzo's correspondence to trace the gradual eclipse of his subject's presentation as citizen in favour of a princely image. Marco Gentile makes a case for a deep divergence in civic cultures even as he shows how both office holders faced existential threats to their traditional authority and dignity under Medici and Sforza rule. Jane Black's "Medici and Sforza—Breeds Apart?" minimizes parallels between regimes, arguing, instead, that Florence was far more subject to the ruler's will than was Milan. The section closes with Alison Brown's assessment of Piero's brief rule, highlighting his difficulties navigating between conflicting civic and princely, local and international demands.

Economic and religious elements of Medicean rule dominate the next two parts of the collection. Most of the essays here characterize the regime

in increasingly signorial terms over the fifteenth century. Franco Franceschi contributes an ambitious survey of “Medicean Economic Policy” that traces the rise of special prerogatives granted by successive Medici as a guiding force in the Florentine economy. Lorenz Böniger’s “Lorenzo de’ Medici and Foreigners” more narrowly treats the ways in which foreigners were subjected to reprisals or rewarded by the regime. In terms of religion, David S. Peterson explores how both the Albizzi and the Medici curbed Church prerogatives and exercised patronage so as to enhance perceptions of their political legitimacy. Change over time also drives Paolo Orvieto, who shows how Florentine literature reflected evolving religious sensibilities across the century, ending with examples drawn from Ficino’s Neoplatonic theology that underscore Medicean absolutism. David S. Chambers answers the question of why Florence had no cardinal for much of the era, through a step-by-step study of failed candidacies illustrating key factors from civic division to personal antagonism.

The collection’s final section, “The Medici and Their Image,” draws out an analytic theme latent throughout the volume: perceptions and promotions of the family. Dale V. Kent studies Cosimo’s cultural patronage for insight into his political ideology, arguing that works such as Ghiberti’s *Gates of Paradise* illustrate the first citizen’s passionate connection to republican tradition. Francesco Bausi similarly characterizes the Medici as defenders of liberty through a study of how the family’s rule was characterized by humanist authors from Bracciolini to Brandolini. Medicean theatre is Paola Ventrone’s interpretative focus to see the family’s patronage as necessarily framed by republican contexts, while Blake Wilson re-evaluates musical patronage to similarly emphasize civic traditions and influences in Florence. In “The Medici Question: A Rhetorical Special Case?” Stephen J. Milner reopens discussion regarding the family’s portrayal in rhetoric from the fifteenth century through to current times, sagely suggesting that the ongoing dispute says more about the speakers than about the subject.

The volume concludes with several stand-out analyses. Both Alison Wright and Amanda Lillie present significant arguments about Medicean pretensions in the visual record. White shows how time is evoked in art from friezes to frescos where both words and images helped make the Medici case for permanent rule. Lillie’s study of castellation documents a trend among fifteenth-century Florentine elites to rebuild and improve fortified country houses, giving the lie to professions of republican modesty. Machiavelli’s assessments of Cosimo de’

Medici and Francesco Sforza as both poisonous purveyors of private power is fodder for John M. Najemy's contribution. Carolyn James completes the volume with a telling essay showing that the Florentine dismissal of female authority stands in contrast to how signorial states empowered elite women. Capped with a robust bibliography, this collection updates the debate on the essential nature of Medicean rule, which will be vital for specialists and inviting for advanced students entering the debate.

JANICE LIEDL

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**Butterworth, Emily.**

***The Unbridled Tongue. Babble and Gossip in Renaissance France.***

Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2016. 233 p. et 7 ill. ISBN 978-0-19-966230-2 (relié) \$90.

Lorsqu'elle n'est pas tenue en bride, la langue, écrivent les théologiens moralistes, quitte rapidement le domaine de la vérité pour satisfaire inconsidérément son appétit de paroles, et de babillarde devient vaniteuse, sacrilège ou infamante. Après avoir consacré, il y a dix ans, un ouvrage à la diffamation en France à la Renaissance (*Poisoned Words : Slander and Satire in Early Modern France*, Londres : Legenda, 2006), Emily Butterworth se penche sur ce mal en amont qu'est l'incontinence verbale. Étroitement associés, les deux comportements langagiers demandent cependant des approches différentes : alors que la détraction se pense avant tout en termes légaux, le verbiage et le commérage, plus diffus, excèdent largement le cadre juridique. *The Unbridled Tongue* relève avec succès le défi que pose son objet multiforme en l'abordant à la fois sous un angle théologique, médical et légal. L'objectif est d'explorer les implications éthiques de la parole débridée et d'évaluer comment ses manifestations littéraires, souvent à forte teneur politique, témoignent des changements que connaissent les catégories du privé et du public aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Riche des réflexions suscitées dans le cadre du projet de recherche *Gossip and Nonsense : Excessive Language in Renaissance France (2012–2015)*, dirigé par Hugh Gerald Roberts, cette monographie s'inscrit donc dans la lignée