This volume is, nevertheless, a welcome addition to the critical writings on Aelfric and Wulfstan: although Professor Gatch touches upon the literary traits of the sermons, his chief concern is to study the doctrine these sermons contain. In doing so, he reveals clearly that the works of these men merit the attention of historians of theology as well as of literature. Dom David Knowles' assessment of Aelfric, that he was "one of the most distinguished figures in the history of Western theological learning in the centuries immediately before the renaissance of the eleventh century," is given good illustration in Professor Gatch's book. That he is less successful with Wulfstan is due in part to the smaller corpus of writings with which he can deal and to the ecclesiastical situation, different from that of Aelfric, in which Wulfstan was writing, but also to the narrow limits Professor Gatch has set for his investigation. His hypotheses regarding kinds of preaching, the liturgical setting for preaching and the place of the vernacular are interesting and suggestively, if cautiously, stated; scholars concerned with the history of preaching — substance, art and circumstances — will find much that is challenging here.

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Gene Brucker. *The Civic World of Early Renaissance Florence*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 526. \$25.00.

No topic so dominates the terrain of Renaissance history as that of the uniqueness of the Florentine experience. A generation of American scholars has studied the problem of exactly what forces made Florence such a precocious entity in the Tre and early Quattrocento. The primary emphases have been on the nature of "civic humanism" and the corresponding changes in the social and political make-up of Florence. If on occasion more heat than light has resulted, we have as a result of this research probably a deeper knowledge of what took place in Florence than we have of any other late medieval commune. All the theories produced have helped to delineate both the problems and the solutions.

Professor Brucker in his new book continues his analysis of the Florentine state begun in his *Florentine Politics and Society 1323-1378* (Princeton University Press, 1962) with a detailed study of the *reggimento* which came to power in 1382 after the upheavals resulting from the Ciompi revolt. Brucker characterizes this new regime as elitist in contrast to its predecessor which was a corporatist, guild government. It did not effect changes in the "constitution" of the city since Florentines were too conservative to allow any radical innovations. Rather, their appeal was to the needs of the Republic and not to the vested interests of the individual guild. External politics as well as internal economic and social considerations necessitated rational and sophisticated analysis, often resulting in a critical review of traditional Florentine allegiances which had revolved around the old corporatist structure. The elite had the political expertise and self-confidence to accomplish this reevaluation. While not a democratic regime, the elite did take into consideration the *popolo* and their claims. Although the tenure of the regime did not begin auspiciously it

had a rather long and successful rule. The elite was able to make reforms such as the introduction of the long-awaited *catasto*. However, the elite was limited by their native Florentine conservatism — they could not break away completely from private associations and demands. The result was the development of factions replacing the old corporate allegiances. However, the Medici proved to be the most able manipulators of these new factions and not the members of the regime.

Brucker's primary tool of analysis is the *pratiche*, the debates held by the regime in determining policy. In them he finds political sophistication and rationalism — a dependence on logic and the force of rhetoric — displayed in attempting to determine what choices to make. In debating their future the valid needs of the Republic constantly came to the fore. Reasoned, independent policy rather than old allegiances were presented as the motive force for governmental action. Brucker knows this source well and handles it with ease.

Brucker's Florentine elite is not as well defined as might be desired. He avoids an in-depth study of its economic and social makeup and how it differed from that of the guild rulers. Of course, Brucker and other scholars, especially Witt and Kent, have been analyzing the constitution of the elite in specialized studies. However, an expanded discussion of the background of the elite members and their bases of power would have been helpful. Brucker handles a complex narrative well; however, the picture is at times a cluttered one, with events tending to run into one another. Although Brucker is not concerned directly with the intellectual history of Florence, he has valuable things to say about the use of the humanists' rhetorical tools in the actual debates involving the actions of the government. In so doing, he sees the changes which Baron has outlined emerging a decade later.

Brucker's book is a valuable continuation of his own work as well as that of other scholars. In chapter one he sums up well the recent historical studies on the social and political relations within Florence and tries to provide a careful over-all picture in the body of the book. He avoids polemics and concentrates on the flow of events. This book will be required reading for the understanding of the dynamics of Florentine society on the eve of the Medici.

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The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft., ed. Sydney Anglo. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977. Pp. viii, 258. \$16.50.

Recent research into the European witchcraft crisis of the early modern period has been concentrated on the social and cultural aspects of the problem, and is based primarily on trial records and popular folklore. This approach has tended to ignore the well-known witchcraft tracts of the period which long constituted the main source of information on the witch "craze." *The Damned Art* is composed of ten essays on this literature that are written by eight English scholars, most from the universities of Sussex and Wales. All the essays are well written and interesting and, as a group, give us an informative new look at this important literature.

Sydney Anglo, known for his work on English court festivals, edited this work and wrote two of its chapters. In the first essay, he effectively demolishes the