that the general purpose of the study, which is to show that Florentine women used their patronage to make their voices heard, is somehow lost as the reader's focus settles upon one voice in particular. Hence, chapters seven and eight, which study the patronage of La Crocetta, seem to break with the central idea of the preceding chapters. In the general conclusion, however, the author reminds the reader of her purpose and brings together the arguments of all eight chapters. On the whole, the slight imbalance of the introductory chapters does not impair the quality of a well-written book that is of great interest to gender studies and cultural history, and an example of high quality research in that field.

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Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti, ed.

Renaissance Florence: A Social History

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The past decade has seen an explosion of books about the space and spaces of the Renaissance—the sacred space of shrines, the planned space of squares, the aural space of music, the mystical space of pilgrimage, the legal space of ritual. Where much of this work has appeared in essay collections that juxtapose spaces from the Upper Tiber to Lower Braunschweig, Roger Crum and John Paoletti have here brought together nineteen essays that centre on the extended, imagined, and constructed spaces of Florence from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. The scholarship is new, innovative, and international, and demonstrates why Florence itself remains compelling and instructive; perhaps not the most typical of Renaissance cities, but certainly one of the most fascinating. Florence has always attracted historians eager to test inter-disciplinary models and this collection offers a focused examination—the most informed, well-rounded, and integrated to date—of space in its many dimensions as a tool of historical analysis.

The book's six sections map the topic. Opening with "The Theater of Florence," John Najemy first shows how political battles of the late communal period altered the physical layout of Florence. Demolishing an opponent's argument in the Signoria may have brought intellectual satisfaction, but demolishing his house or driving a road through his neighbourhood meant future generations could follow your logic and ratify your point with every step they took. Sharon Strocchia looks at how Florentines shaped their daily lives performatively in the spaces thus created, and how streets, corners, piazzas, and walls shaped the staging of their social contacts.

Najemy and Strocchia map the whole, and in subsequent sections we zoom in on distinct areas and dimensions.

Stephen J. Milner opens “The Public Realm” at the city centre with the Piazza della Signoria. However much various authorities aimed to invest it with particular meaning, it was a “practiced space”: open, accessible, and so resonant with Florentine traditions that it could never be captured or defined by a single group but remained ever open to opposite uses and interpretations. Sarah Blake McHam then moves from the square into the Palazzo della Signoria itself, and the constructions, reconstructions, and decorations that left it a palimpsest of Florentine political history from the many turnings of guild and oligarchical republicanism and on to the Medici dynasty. Philip Gavitt ranges further out into the city and the institutional sites of its legendary charity, seen both in particular monumental sites like Orsanmichele and the Ospedale degli Innocenti and in recurring forms like the loggia. With guild and familial patronage providing the funds, charity was above all performative. Performance was even more the cartography of the poor; David Rosenthal explores the territoriality of the artisinal groups called *potenze*, whose ritual activities marked particular spaces and times, and who lived and died in a zone of transgression and disorder that rendered them alternately popular, manipulable, and dangerous until they, like so many other social groups, were killed by Medici kindness in the early seventeenth century. Adrienne Atwell retraces the geography of commerce by setting out the routes a visiting merchant would take when aiming to buy Florentine woolens. Abandoning foreign fairs, the wool guild instead drew merchants into their awe-inspiring palace in the very centre of the city and then sent them on four specific itineraries to all licensed vendors before finalizing a sale.

From the public realm of politics, charity and economy, we move on to the mixed public/private world of “Relatives, Friends, and Neighbours.” Nicholas Eckstein articulates the many dimensions of neighbourhood, and particularly the sixteen administrative districts known as *gonfalon*i; he refracts sociability through the lens of space to offer a multi-hued analysis of how people lived their social and political lives in and through the *gonfalon*i. This sets the stage for two essays that move further into the domestic world: Michael Lingohr looks at palaces and villas, and how shows how status concerns and business needs trumped aesthetic innovation by the later fifteenth century, dislodging Florence from its position as an architectural leader at the very point when wealth and ambition were spurring a building boom. Roger Crum and John Paoletti then move into these same domestic spaces. Families built palaces as repositories for material goods, sets for kinship rituals, and scenes for dynastic and political negotiations that made these homes

paradoxically both stage and refuge. If shifting political winds blew the doors shut, they could also become prisons of internal exile.

Space was inevitably gendered, and the section “Men and Women” includes Guido Ruggiero on “masculine” spaces of work and sexuality, and Natalie Tomas asking “Did Women Have a Space?” Tomas moves between time and function, embracing piazza protests, liminal windows, funerary rituals, and streetwalkers’ tracks to show how and why women negotiated space outside the fixed walls of the home. Space also transcended the physical, and in “Spaces of the Spiritual” we have Robert Gaston on the liturgical spaces of Florence’s numerous and vast churches and Jonathan Katz Nelson on the more restricted and privatized spaces of memorial chapels within these churches. Peter Howard maps the aural spaces of preaching—worlds visualized, occupied, patronized, and promoted—while Saundra Weddle locates the places and privileges of the multiplying monasteries and convents (66 by the late sixteenth century), at once refuges from and markers of terrestrial politics. The final section “Across Space and Time” seems like the leftover odds and ends, and unfortunately so since Anabel Thomas’s discussion of collaborative artistic production in workshops and Andrea Bollard’s examination of the move from workshop to academy as site of training are valuable pieces that work very well together. Their fit with the balance of the volume is less clear, as is also the case with Patricia Emison’s excellent article on the multiplying forms of artistic replicas. Space is incidental in all three papers which, however, explicate the contexts of artistic production very well.

This is an excellent collection with many superb papers, abundant illustrations, and a generous and helpful bibliography. Its flaws are few but include, inexplicably, the lack of a single good map, all the more annoying when authors frequently note specific streets, corners, and neighbourhoods (though the articles by Atwell and Weddle have many helpful maps). The title has a regrettable and almost misleading blandness to it—this is simply not “a social history.” It ought to be trumpeted more definitely as an extraordinary achievement in integrating spatial, visual, and historical analysis. Fault for these flaws should perhaps be laid at the publisher’s door, which further hobbled the collection with frequent delays, a staggering hardback price, and no simultaneous paperback edition that would allow its adoption as a class text.

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