ers in detail the construction of Brahe's *Globus Magnus Orichalcicus* and its use as a repository of astronomical information and a display of astronomical mastery. The image of the heavens displayed on the great brass globe itself provided the basis for a series of celestial globes covered with printed paper maps, further demonstrating the relationship between instruments and printed books. In both cases, astronomers and instrument makers sought to safeguard their rights to the information and techniques embodied in the instruments by obtaining royal privileges, legitimating their rights to astronomical discoveries.

Bearing the Heavens concludes with a consideration of the travels that these other forms of astronomical communication provoked and enabled: the movement of itinerant astronomers between different sites of astronomical work. These travels were a vital part of the process by which students of astronomy came together as a community, providing opportunities to exchange information, techniques and equipment. In his "Hortatory Ode," Brahe calls upon astronomers, adjuring them to a collective task: "Come with me to ascend Olympus with forces redoubled, / Let us now hasten to close the cracks that have lately been broken, / Firm up the coffered ceiling of heaven with sturdy new crossbeams." This excellent account of the complex negotiations and exchanges that underpinned Brahe's titanic astronomical project similarly brings together materials and approaches from diverse modern scholarly communities, providing a new and more expansive vision of early modern astronomical work.

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John M. Najemy

A History of Florence 1200–1575

Malden, MA and London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Pp. xi, 515

John Najemy's lengthy and scholarly survey of almost four hundred years of Florentine history provides much-needed perspective for scholars of the city on the Arno. Forty years have passed since the publication of Gene Brucker's *Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1969) and over a quarter century since the appearance of a briefly revised edition. In the interim, the field of Florentine historiography has witnessed a veritable explosion as historians, art historians, and scholars of Italian literature have plundered the seemingly never-ending riches of Florence's archives. Najemy does more, however, than simply synthesize this wealth of research. He places it at the service of a focused and coherent explanation for the longevity and

political vibrancy of Florence's Renaissance republic as well as for its eventual decline and collapse.

The thesis that Najemy presents in *A History of Florence* expands and enriches one that he has rehearsed in earlier articles and essays: that the course of Florence's political evolution occurred as a "dialogue of power," principally between what he identifies as the elite class (the powerful, wealthy merchant aristocracy) and the *popolo* (the more modest local merchants, retailers, and artisans). Such an argument consciously echoes Machiavelli's famous identification of class conflict as the source of Roman greatness. Najemy is careful to elucidate that the Florentine conflict was not socioeconomic in nature—both the elite and the *popolo* were merchants and shared a commercial orientation and outlook. The struggle instead occurred between competing political cultures. The culture of the elite valued family as the central political force in society, encouraged private violence and the practice of vendetta as vehicles for the resolution of conflict, and asserted a right to power based on might, lineage, and charisma. The culture of the *popolo* was based in trade guilds. It valued collective action, elective government, and written statutes, and promoted ethical behavior and institutional justice for the resolution of disputes. The genius of Florence, Najemy argues, lay in the merging and commingling of these two cultures through centuries of dialogue and confrontation, as the elite gradually adopted the language and institutions of the *popolo* while simultaneously depriving the guilds of political power.

A History of Florence presents a political narrative of the city from the earliest emerging of the commune to the apotheosis of the Medici principality, via the suppression of the last "republican" plot against the family's rule in 1575. Four synchronic chapters punctuate what is otherwise a diachronic analysis of the city's political currents and changes. The first two, the opening chapters of the book, examine the central protagonists in Najemy's dialogue of power, the elite and the *popolo*. Later chapters—"Family and State in the Age of Consensus" and "The Luxury Economy and Art Patronage"—interweave advances in social and cultural history into the narrative. The story that unfolds around these chapters examines the shifting balance of power in the city, the evolution of Florence from a medieval commune to a Renaissance state, and its transformation from republic into principality.

Conflict between the classes always features as the driving engine of political development and change in the city. Najemy presents the story, however, not as a static binary opposition between elite and *popolo*, but as a nuanced and shifting triangular conflict. In the fourteenth century, the struggle occurs between the elite, the *popolo*, and the disenfranchised laboring class. In the fifteenth and early

sixteenth centuries, it shifts to take place between the elite, the *popolo*, and the Medici family. Traumatic, catalytic events, in Najemy's analysis, proved decisive in the transition from one group of antagonists to the next as well as in altering the nature of Florentine politics. The rebellion of workers and artisans in 1378 and the brief radical, guild republic that followed it, he argues, put paid to any future thought of a political alliance between the *popolo* and laboring classes against the elite. The radically popular government that emerged in 1527, following the third expulsion of the Medici from Florence, and the catastrophic ten-month siege of the city that ended its rule, correspondingly destroyed any illusions of an alliance between the *popolo* and the elite against the Medici. On each occasion, fear and hatred of rule by social inferiors drove first the *popolo* and then the elite into political choices they had tried to avoid. The *popolo*, at the end of the fourteenth century, accepted the neutralization of the guilds and a corrupted electoral system dominated by the elite as the price to avoid political concessions to the disenfranchised workers. For their own part, the elite recognized the need for adopting the style, if not the substance, of *popolo* culture in order to preserve their power. By 1530, however, fear and detestation of the government of the *popolo* drove the elite into a final "fateful embrace" with the Medici that spelled the end of the republic and the institution of princely government.

Based on wide reading of the available secondary and printed sources, *A History of Florence* represents the achievement of a lifetime's devotion to the study of the city. Moreover, Najemy's categories of analysis should provoke debates and conversations for future lifetimes. In particular, the distinctions that he makes between the elite and the *popolo*, and the question of the extent to which internal, self-sustaining political dynamics operated independent of the social conflicts that serve as the driving force of Najemy's argument deserve attention. Magisterial in its style and unrivalled in its substance, *A History of Florence* will provide an essential point of reference for scholars and students of Florence for decades to come.

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Kevin Siena, ed.

Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe

Toronto: Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2005. Pp. 292.

This collection takes on an important brief by focusing its varied essays on Europe's responses to venereal illnesses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The seem-