l'UQAM. Elles retiennent neuf auteurs : Pomponius Mela, Tite-Live, Suétone, Appien, Silius Italicus, Dion Cassius, Hérodote, Arrien, et Flavius Josèphe. L'occasion de rappeler aussi l'importance du rôle joué par la dynastie des Estienne dans la production de ces ouvrages.

J. Biron décrit avec précision l'exemplaire de la *Sacra Bibliotheca Sanctorum Patrum* (1589) de Marguerin de La Bigne, seconde édition des écrits des Pères de l'Église, la première datant de 1575. J. Biron rappelle la genèse de cette entreprise collective, et elle en compare les exemplaires existants pour révéler la disparité du collationnement qui figure dans les catalogues.

Enfin, B. Beugnot s'arrête sur le *Syntagma tragædiæ latinæ* (Anvers, Plantin, 1593) du Jésuite Martin Del Rio, un érudit proche de Juste Lipse. B. Beugnot fournit une description matérielle du gros volume in-4° et souligne la diffusion importante dont il jouit jusqu'au premier quart du xvii^e siècle.

Dans la seconde partie de ce volume d'actes, les auteurs ont eu la bonne idée de reproduire les notices et les illustrations des ouvrages exposés à l'UQAM de décembre 2005 à mars 2006 et sur lesquels portent leurs analyses. Ce Catalogue d'exposition (161–87) constitue le parfait complément aux études qui le précèdent.

On le voit, l'intérêt scientifique des contributions et le soin apporté par les éditeurs à leur publication recommandent la lecture de cet ouvrage. On attend avec curiosité et impatience la poursuite des travaux de l'équipe de Montréal qui révéleront sans doute d'autres trésors qui dorment dans les fonds anciens québécois.

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Amanda Lillie

Florentine Villas in the Fifteenth Century: An Architectural and Social History
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xv, 353.

This study of the villas and farms of two prominent (non-Medicean) Florentine families is highly recommended for those interested in the *quattrocento* city's development of its surrounding countryside. It is based on extensive archival research on land investment, and detailed archaeological investigations into construction histories. As someone who has done similar kinds of research, I took much pleasure in the mundane particularities of estate ownership, as opposed to the older typological generalizations of art history. One of the virtues of this book is its recognition of the continuing role of what Torgil Magnuson called, with respect to medieval domestic structures, "functional planning," by contrast with an emerging formalist order in

Florentine urban residences.

In what follows, I would hope that my comments might be construed as, first, several rather minor personal quibbles, and, second, suggestions for a broadening of horizons in what one hopes will be future publications.

Quibbles, to begin. The subtitle offers an examination of “architectural and social history.” Better would have been “architectural and economic history,” given that the author purposely avoids the kind of anecdotal accounts of social customs widely available in non-archival narrative sources, both primary and secondary, as well as countless book illustrations. Lillie’s strong points are statistical data and architectural comparisons. Further, the material is presented as a challenge to traditional idealizations of the villa as pastoral idyll and exclusive pleasure resort for the urban moneyed class. I had the impression that this claim to novelty might have been the result of advice from the publisher, for in fact the writer contradicts it herself. The truth is her contribution can very well stand on its own merits. Besides, the pastoral fantasy has been out of fashion for years and a utilitarian methodology fairly well established.

Suggestions next. A focus on pragmatic needs *per se* and a sense of the villa as pleasure resort are not mutually exclusive as Lillie seems to believe. Human enjoyments and jocularity were valued in medieval and Renaissance medical theory as significant psychological antidotes to melancholy and its debilitating effects on physical health. This was especially the case as regards the black plague, one of the exacerbating symptoms of which was a deep despondency. A group’s escape to the country in the midst of an epidemic to benefit from the salubrious outdoors and to amuse one another with diverting tales served as the inaugural premise of Boccaccio’s *Decamerone*. And the mirth-provoking activity of catching thrushes from concealment inside an evergreen grove also had its purely prosaic component. Maestro Martino of Como’s famed *The Art of Cooking* contained several mouth-watering sauce recipes for roasted thrush.

There can be no doubt about Lillie’s principal thesis that the villa phenomenon was a business venture, one blessed with numerous side advantages such as fresh food, wood, cloth, and bricks. Yet *villeggiatura* was a potent social force not only among the well-to-do, but also among urban workers with their modest *case coloniche*. First of all, vacationing at a country home twice a year—late spring and early autumn—had behind it long-standing custom, with roots in the mores of the feudal nobility of Tuscany. At Eastertide, and from *Calendimaggio* on up to the major Florentine feast of John the Baptist (24 June), it was usual to declare *corte bandita*, both in the city and outside at the great castles. These celebrations included the formation of costumed

brigata, the entertainment of foreign dignitaries and others at extravagant banquets, jousts, horse races, and knightings, in addition to amatory rituals and weddings, as attested by early literary as well as historical sources. Additionally, since the timing of *villeggiatura* was also determined by prohibitions of the chase during the mating season for small and large game, the autumnal exodus had to coincide with the open hunt. At the pragmatic level, Florence basically shut down at such times, and there would have been little to do in the city. The absence of leading citizens in the country necessitated legislative and government closures. Even workers and tradesmen would regularly shutter up and head for the provinces, to delight in a few days with wives and children, when several civic or religious holidays fell together on the calendar.

Lillie's exclusive reliance on verbal meanings of words for cultivated villa enclosures such as *orto* and *giardino*, which are indeed used with a certain lack of precision in sources and documents, leads her to the mistaken conclusion that they had no clearly defined real-world referents. In fact, classical and Renaissance agricultural treatises reveal their exact characteristics. Each sort of cultivated space was distinguished by specific plant attributes, watering and drainage requirements, arrangements to ensure compatibility between species, and varied human prerequisites.

Finally, Lillie's argument that Florence was tied to its countryside by an identity of interests and values ignores the reality that the two were linked also by mutual differences. That is, the drawbacks of one were compensated by the advantages of its counterpart. Familiar to most historians is the fact that Florentine investors could make a great deal of money in business and government funds, and more rapidly so than in rural real estate, but the latter, slow and steady, entailed fewer risks. While the villa afforded a therapeutic restorative for the effects of the pestiferous environment of the city, especially during recurring episodes of plague, the *contado* held its own dangers, from a floating population of rogues and charlatans to—in times of war—marauding troops bent on destroying crops and burning private buildings. The walls of Florence were then safer for both landlords and farm hands. The city could also boast many perks in terms of public service, high culture, education, and conviviality, but rural getaway made for a temporary respite from the rat race, and a permanent absence of distraction for writers, and for the elderly who had retired from commerce to prepare themselves for death through a regimen of prayer and atonement for capitalist excesses.

As with most historical studies there can be numerous illuminating methodological points of view. Lillie's take on the Florentine villa is one of several rewarding instances.

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