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Nicholas Scott Baker. *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550.* I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History Series. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013. x + 368 pp. \$49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-674-72452-5.

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To the many studies of political culture in the Medici dominated Florentine republic of the fifteenth century, and the Medici duchy of the sixteenth century, Nicholas Scott Baker adds a well-written and solidly researched narrative of the transition between these two epochs in the period circa 1480-1550. This was an active and turbulent period in Florentine history. It included the creation of the restricted council of seventy by Lorenzo il Magnifico in 1480, the expulsion of his successor Piero de' Medici at the time of the French invasion of Italy in 1494, and the institution of the large and inclusive Consiglio Maggiore that same year. It was during this era that Florentines witnessed the period of influence of Savonarola circa 1490-98, the period of Soderini as gonfaloniere in 1502-12, and the Medici restoration of 1512 with abolition of the Consiglio Maggiore and restoration of elements from the time of Lorenzo (the councils of seventy and one hundred). This period also included two Medici popes (Leo X and Clement VII); the revolution of 1527 and restoration of the Consiglio Maggiore; the siege of Florence by the army of Charles V and the city's surrender in 1530; the second Medici restoration for Alessandro de' Medici as leader of the republic; the new constitution of 1532 that abolished the Signoria and instituted a senate of forty-eight and council of two hundred; the assassination of Alessandro in 1537; and finally the succession of a distant Medici cousin, Cosimo I de' Medici, who consolidated the new duchy in the period that followed. Baker bases his treatment on existing studies and on two sources less commonly used: letters of members of the office-holding class (particularly letters of members of the Strozzi and Guicciardini families, and writings of Francesco di Piero Guicciardini)

and works of art that reflect the political situation (particularly by Ghirlandaio, Gozzoli, Michelangelo, Piero di Cosimo, Pontormo, Bronzino, and Salviati).

His detailed exposition presents a fresh and engaging picture of this period. He focuses on the development of opinion in the patrician office-holding class. His thesis is that a transition from the aims of more egalitarian civic republicanism of the fifteenth century to the aim of defense of the independence of Florence (and its office-holding class) was accomplished by and in favor of the Medici well before the defeat of 1530 and the new constitution of 1532. The contrast (in modern language) between a liberal democratic regime and an aristocratic monarchical regime was less sharp than current Anglo-American historians have tended to imagine. There was much more continuity through the transition than is sometimes realized. The letters and artwork used reveal the elite's engaged and developing discussion of contemporary politics, diplomacy, and constitutional choices for the city, and the symbolism involved.

Baker is scrupulous about details, although some well-known features of the story are skipped. For instance, there was a famous soccer (calcio) match in Piazza Santa Croce in February 1530 played out in full sight of Charles V's besieging army (trumpeters were stationed on the roof of the church to attract its attention). This detail would fit well into Baker's civic republican theme. The match was celebrated later, and when commemoratively reenacted in 1930, it incidentally contributed to the popularity of one of Florence's current summer tourist attractions: the Calcio in Costume.

Cosimo I added a more aristocratic coach race in Piazza Santa Maria Novella to the calcio matches, which under the duchy were played by patricians and became court spectacles.

Baker's study ends abruptly in 1549. It may be that he thinks the transition of the office-holding class from republican citizens into ducal courtiers was sufficiently established by then, although most of the new features of the ducal court emerged after the war that led to the conquest of Siena in 1557. Plots of republican exiles to assassinate the duke continued through the Sienese War and then with protection of Catherine de' Medici in France; the last plot, the Pucci conspiracy, was in 1572. As duke, Cosimo had moved from Palazzo Medici to the Palazzo della Signoria in 1540. The large remodeling of Palazzo Pitti, the new main ducal palace south of the Arno, began in 1561; the new ducal order of Knights of St. Stephen appeared in 1562; and the court then grew in size with the attraction of non-Florentine nobles, although Florentine patricians also soon appeared in the court rolls, and several received ducal fiefs. It was not until Cosimo's successors that Florence truly became a court society.

Two appendices of the book specify more concretely the membership of what Baker calls the office holding class throughout. The first provides a list of 555 surnames of family lineages identified from various sources to represent this class circa 1500. Although Baker avoids any statistical analysis of what he holds was a shifting group, one can tell from this list which were old and which new families, which were frequently priors and which more peripheral members, and which were still present at the time of the formation of the duchy. However, few of these names appear individually in the narrative. The second appendix displays the detailed office-holding experience of eighteen individuals from fifteen elite families who are mentioned frequently in the text: the Albizzi, Altoviti, Antinori, Buondelmonte, Cambi, Guicciardini, Lanfredini, Malegonnelli, Martelli, De' Medici, De' Nerli, Del Nero, Portinari, Strozzi, and Della Stufa. One can imagine their experience expanded to the larger group. In short, with a few limitations, this book is a valuable contribution to Florentine historiography and it is well worth reading by anyone interested in the development of the Florentine Renaissance.

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