commodity trading, by date, product, commissioning agent, and even ship type; Seche's appendix of transcribed documents; and Gómez's numerical tables of Aragon's war financing, arranged by campaign, individual leader, and royal territory. Overall, this volume provides an important contribution to the scholarship on late medieval Sardinian commerce and finance from a grassroots perspective. One can only look forward to additional studies from the editors and contributors.

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*Kitchens, Cooking, and Eating in Medieval Italy*. Katherine A. McIver. Historic Kitchens Series. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. xii + 126 pp. $75.

Katherine A. McIver explores kitchens, cooking, food, and eating in medieval Italy by focusing her study on different sources (cookbooks, literary sources, and household inventories). She allows the reader to enter, understand, and appreciate food culture and history, which is not as easy or simple as one might think. Thanks to the richness and variety of the documentation, chapter by chapter the reader can imagine daily kitchen scenes, at whatever social and economic level: the hard work of the cook and his staff, the kitchen equipment, the preparation of meals and their ingredients, the idea of setting up feasts and banquets.

The author describes the Datinis' way of life as a model of a real Italian family of the fourteenth and fifteenth century and analyzes several letters between Francesco and his wife, Margherita, as well as the family's inventories. They represent a corpus of documents that the author compares with medieval cookbooks, poems, novellas, and images, such as the images of the *Tacuina sanitatis*. The method of analysis used by McIver is well suited to a field of research that needs an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating written sources as well as iconographic ones. It is then a perspective of research including a reflection on common people's style of life, from the highest social, cultural, and economic levels to the poorest ones.

In chapter 1, the author examines some important cookbooks such as the Angevins' *Liber de coquina*, the Venetians' *Libro per cuoco*, Maino de Maineri's health text—that is, the *Opusculum de Saporibus*—and, finally, Johannes Bockenheim's *Il registro di cucina di Papa Martino V*. The first two books have been written by anonymous authors (a characteristic of medieval texts in general). Recipes are conceived in a variety of ways, and, as the author stresses, it is interesting to analyze how and for whom they have been drawn up. In this regard, she mentions the well-known recipe of Torta parmeggiana and its variations. McIver devotes a paragraph to women who cook following the example of Margherita Datini in her letters to her husband, Francesco: one can

consider her recipes and her thoughts about food to be important testimonies of practical medieval cooking.

Chapter 2 concerns the cook and his staff. There was a very strict hierarchy in the kitchen of a noble household: at the top of it there was the housemaster, who oversaw all the activities in the palace and hired the cook. The cook, in turn, was responsible for those working under him: one or more staff members who helped him to prepare meals; those who saw to the kitchen's cleanliness; and those who ensured that foodstuffs, fuel, and utensils were always in adequate supply. Some elite households had more than one cook: Ludovico il Moro, the Duke of Milan, had four; Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, employed many stewards and had a carver, a *credenziero*, and other staff to attend to his table. Chapter 3 is about the kitchen equipment, such as hearths, gridirons, ladles, crockery, linens, and ovens. Iconography, such as the *Opera* of Bartolomeo Scappi, and household inventories are rich sources for this kind of investigation, providing valuable information on cooking food. Chapter 4 deals with ingredients and methods for food preservation—a crucial activity in the medieval kitchen. Finally, in chapter 5, McIver explains how medieval feasts and banquets were conceived, organized, and served: displaying culinary refinement and sharing meals with influential people was a typical custom of the upper classes.

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*The Intellectual Struggle for Florence: Humanists and the Beginnings of the Medici Regime, 1420–1440*. Arthur Field.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xiv + 368 pp. $127.50.

A new book by Arthur Field is to be welcomed, especially since its enticing title suggests it will take discussion of the Medici party's ideology to its beginnings, instead of limiting it to the decade 1454–64 that was covered in *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence*, published by Field thirty years ago. In fact, the subject of the new book was announced in Field's challenging article published in *Renaissance Quarterly* a decade later, "Leonardo Bruni, Florentine Traitor? Bruni, the Medici, and an Aretine Conspiracy of 1437" (51.4 [1998]: 1109–50), in which he declared that "the story of Bruni's relations with Medicean and anti-Medicean intellectuals still needs to be written." This is the story narrated in the book under review, which casts Bruni as an alienated member of the circle of "radical humanists" who sought to break with the cultural legacy of the Trecento.

It is useful to know this at the outset, since the reader is at once plunged in medias res—into lengthy citizen debates on topics (the *catasto* and *rimbotto*) that seem neither intellectual nor especially Medicean. The opening two chapters establish the terrain for