

Hankins, James. *Political Meritocracy in Renaissance Italy: The Virtuous Republic of Francesco Patrizi of Siena*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 2023. 430 pages. Hardcover, \$55.00.

Professor James Hankins continues to demonstrate complexity and nuance in underserved areas in the study of Renaissance Italian thought. *Political Meritocracy in Renaissance Italy: The Virtuous Republic of Francesco Patrizi of Siena* is a prime example of Hankins working to get the academic discourse to set its sights on using existing methodologies in novel situations. This book stands as a vital addition to the academic analysis of Italian humanist thought.

The author has two main goals for the work. At a surface level, the goal is to highlight and analyze the concept of political meritocracy as developed by Francesco Patrizi, emphasizing its significance within Renaissance Italian humanist thought and its implications for governance and political systems. On a deeper level, *Political Meritocracy in Renaissance Italy* can be read as a call to action for Italian Renaissance specialists to innovate and search for more nuanced questions rather than rehash the same old discussions.

In *Political Meritocracy in Renaissance Italy: The Virtuous Republic of Francesco Patrizi of Siena*, James Hankins utilizes a variety of methodologies to thoroughly investigate the subject matter. Through meticulous research of primary sources, including Patrizi's writings, Hankins gains deep insights into the political and intellectual landscape of Renaissance Italy. He employs a contextual approach, considering the social, political, and intellectual influences that shaped Patrizi's thinking. Furthermore, Hankins adopts a comparative analysis, examining Patrizi's concept of political meritocracy in contrast to prevailing political systems of the time. The book embraces interdisciplinary perspectives, drawing from history, political theory, and philosophy. Hankins also prioritizes accessibility by employing a clear writing style, making

complex concepts comprehensible to a broad readership. Together, these methodologies contribute to a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the topic at hand.

Hankins' writing style is engaging and accessible, allowing readers to navigate complex concepts with ease. He avoids unnecessary jargon and provides clear explanations, making the book accessible to a wide range of readers. Additionally, the author's ability to present flashpoint examples that illustrate the profound influence of Patrizi's work further enhances the readability and relevance of the book. Through its thorough analysis of political meritocracy, its call for innovation, its interdisciplinary approach, and its accessible writing style, Hankins' work expands our understanding of Renaissance thought and inspires further exploration and scholarly engagement.

Michael Tomaselli, MA
Independent Scholar
Raleigh, North Carolina