also enabled subjects and eventually citizens to remake themselves in ways both legitimate (through naturalization) and illegitimate (through counterfeits and forged papers). So imperfect was this system that, in the late eighteenth century, Jeremy Bentham proposed the adoption of a more variegated nomenclature and even having each individual's personal details (name along with place and date of birth) tattooed on his/her body.

In our own era, as Groebner demonstrates in his engaging final chapter, similar paradoxes persist. The border guard authenticates not the tourist but her passport; the magnetic strip on our credit cards, meant to protect us, has made identity theft a major crime; and our own claims of identity are meaningless in the face of modern bureaucracy. These ironies are not likely to vanish in the future. In the Bush administration's push for the inclusion of biometric data in passports, Groebner glimpses the specter of medieval fantasies of identification and reminds us as well of the ubiquity of the *sans-papiers*, the undocumented, even in the most advanced societies. In the age of Big Brother, identity is likely to remain what it has been sense the Middle Ages: a "battleground." Ultimately, even in the dystopia of biometrics, surveillance, Groebner argues, "achieves its effects not through administrative perfection, but through arbitrariness, unpredictability, intimidation, and particularly through the collaboration of neighbors and selfish informers" (p. 249).

This brief review cannot do justice to the rich texture of a book that deftly manages to bring together a history of bureaucracies with striking examples drawn from literature and memoirs to underscore—as Antonio Manetti's famous fifteenth-century novella "The Fat Woodcarver" suggests—that our identities depend profoundly on who others say we are. Individuality, therefore, is less something that, as Jacob Burckhardt believed, we assert than something that we are assigned. Yet we too play a role in our self-fashioning, since both groups and individuals are able to turn the bureaucracies back upon themselves and use the very techniques of official documentation to create false identities.

This book should interest not only historians but also philosophers and anyone concerned with human rights. Groebner smashes the myth that governments had few ways of keeping track of people before the emergence of photography and fingerprinting. His discussion of the medieval concept of complexion in chapter five ("Nature's Way: The Color of Things") brilliantly explores (despite the author's misdating of Galen) how profoundly different the late medieval understanding of the person is from our own. He contributes, in his nuanced history of the passport, which King Louis XI made obligatory for certain groups of non-nobles for the first time in the mid-fifteenth century, to a deeper understanding of citizenship and nationalism. And he demonstrates how important narratives—not only our own but also those of others—are for our sense of who we are.

John Jeffries Martin
Duke University

Florence Buttay-Jutier. *Fortuna: Usages politiques d'une allégorie morale à la Renaissance.* Foreword by Denis Crouzet. (Collection Roland Mousnier.) PUPS. 2008. Pp. 556. $36.00.

This erudite and thought-provoking book challenges the view that the Renaissance's reformulation of humanity's relationship to God and the world was centered on a new conceptualization of *Fortuna*. In contrast with Aby Warburg and others who claimed that the Quattrocento downplayed the role of Providence while emphasizing the individual's capacity to endure and even prosper in the face of unpredictable change and turmoil, Florence Buttay-Jutier argues that Fortune was not an idea but "a banality" (p. 17). In six carefully argued chapters and a lengthy epilogue she shows that *Fortuna* was never a clearly defined concept but, rather, a rhetorical device and moral allegory, "an empty form" (p. 20) marked by multiple, polyvalent meanings that were reshaped to meet a variety of social, religious, and political concerns.

While *Fortuna* may have been conceptually empty, its history is nonetheless revealing, according to Buttay-Jutier. From Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* onward, the figure of *Fortuna* incorporated a range of classical and Christian references, and whatever rupture there was between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages, she argues, was captured in changes in Fortune's uses, not its meaning. Identified by her iconic wheel, which elevated men to the heights of wealth and power only to bring them crashing down, medieval *Fortuna* was an "*image de mémoire*" that impressed prudence and contempt for the world on young Christian souls. Beginning in fifteenth-century Italy, *Fortuna*'s visage began to change. The blindfolded woman in royal garb turning a wheel gave way to a more attractive figure. Blending attributes of Venus and Occasion, the Renaissance allegory of Fortune was often a nude, seductive young woman who balanced on a sphere floating on water while holding a wind-filled sail. This new image, which captured a compromise between the medieval confidence in Providence and the Renaissance's confidence in man spread northward to France by the early sixteenth century, first through the court of Francis I and then more broadly through missals and other printed works.

This new depiction, Buttay-Jutier stresses, did not signal a new idea of Fortune, nor was it a return to the ambiguously gendered classical goddess of fertility, military prowess, and royalty. Instead, the new blend of Venus and Occasion stressed the allegory's latent aspects, which had become more relevant in the era of the *condottiere*. In this context, Renaissance writers and artists transformed Fortune from a moral allegory into an element of political and polemical rhetoric.

The two main causes of this change were not, as many have claimed, new merchant sensibilities or the Italian wars. Rather, this book argues, that they reflect fundamental changes in Europeans' perceptions of time. With the widespread introduction of the mechanical

clock, the author notes, time became increasingly secularized and fragmented into discrete moments, making each "precious and counted" (p. 130). Time thus became a series of occasions requiring continuous judgments about the best course of action. This, in turn, fostered the second major factor behind *Fortuna*'s politicization: the revival of an imperial ideology. Like Augustus and his successors, who transformed Fortune into a princely virtue that ensured perpetual victory, Renaissance writers and artists depicted *Fortuna*'s favor as a sign of the ruler's elect status and his unmediated relationship with God. *Fortuna* thus became part of a deliberately political iconography. Depending on circumstances, it could legitimate political ruptures when a "new" prince took power through conquest or usurpation, or underwrite the authority of an established dynasty. Fortune also justified the seemingly sudden rise of families and individuals by casting them as exemplary figures while highlighting their humility and devotion to the ruler's service.

Fortune also proved useful in explaining the world and how one should behave in it, making it central to a new pedagogy of power. The book ends with an exploration of *Fortuna*'s place in the period's changing historical and religious thought. Renaissance historians' use or avoidance of *Fortuna*, Buttay-Jutier argues, was not tied to their beliefs about Providence's role in human affairs. Fortune, she observes, could be reconciled with either position, not to mention any intermediate view. Meanwhile, *Fortuna* was readily adopted by both Protestants and Catholics despite suspicions about its pagan origins. This was partly because the allegory had long encapsulated fundamental questions about predestination and free will central to sixteenth-century religious conflicts. At the same time, it was also an effective "image of combat" with which to defame opponents.

This is an impressive book that ranges broadly across late medieval and Renaissance literature, philosophy, religion, art, and politics. Its argument is learned and confident. Nonetheless, two questions remain. How does this new understanding of *Fortuna* alter our understanding of the Renaissance? And what impact did Fortune's politicization have for the following period—most notably in the elaboration of absolutist ideology and rhetoric? These questions aside, scholars from across the disciplines will be richly rewarded by this history of a banality.

Michael P. Breen
Reed College

Margaret Meserve. *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought.* (Harvard Historical Studies, number 158.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2008. Pp. 359. $49.95.

Jacob Burckhardt, in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), celebrated the Italian humanists' development of an objective, critical approach to the world around them and to the texts that they read. In writing history, for Burckhardt and other writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the humanists made a break with their medieval predecessors, crusaders who saw history as a working out of God's inscrutable plan for humanity and who showed little skepticism regarding their sources. Renaissance historians, it was thought, developed and applied critical methods of source analysis and moved towards rational secular explanations of history: the Renaissance heralded the birth of the science of history. Recent scholarship on European perceptions of the Muslim world, on the contrary, strongly influenced by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), has shown how the humanists' portrayal of Muslims, far from being "objective" or "scientific," was colored by the political and military motivations of the day, in order to encourage or justify military opposition (or alliance) with the Ottomans or with a host of other Muslim polities (Mamluks, Safavids, etc.). At the outset of this well-crafted study, Margaret Meserve asks two questions: how and why did humanists use history writing to make sense of the "problem of Islam"? What do the histories they wrote tell us about their ambitions in Renaissance scholarly and political circles?

Through a careful, close study of how humanist authors wrote the histories of Turks, Arabs, and Persians, Meserve contextualizes their work. Writing history is a political act, she reminds us. Moreover, there was no such thing as a "professional" historian in quattrocento Italy. Meserve places each of the texts she analyzes in its specific contexts of politics and patronage: humanists struggled against clerical university professors, but perhaps above all among themselves, to consolidate the reputations on which their livelihoods depended. This helps explain, for example, how Giovanni Mario Filelfo and Giorgio Merula could invest much time and energy in a bitter dispute over the proper spelling of Turk (*Turci* or *Turcai*), even as Mehmet II conquered a foothold in southern Italy. "It was not just the future of Christendom that hung in the balance; academic reputations were also at stake" (p. 124).

European writers of history from at least the time of Isidore of Seville sought to understand the nature of peoples through their historical genealogies, and the authors of the quattrocento were no exception. To this they added their preference for using classically attested names to refer to peoples: hence, some authors eschewed the non-classical term *Turci* for the classical *Teucri* (Trojans). Yet most authors preferred granting the Turks a far less flattering pedigree, making them descendants of barbarian Scythes, particularly after the capture of Constantinople in 1453. Meserve shows how authors like Filelfo, Favio Biondo, and Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini perused medieval chronicles, extracted information useful to their image of Scythian/Turkish barbarism, and ignored or transformed passages favorable to the Turks. The Turks' putative Scythian forbears interested these chroniclers far more than their true predecessors, the Seljuk Turks of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, who carved out polities for themselves in Anatolia and Syria. Far from presenting a "secular"