with the Bentivoglio group (of which Andrea is here the chief figure), as opposed to the closing years of the century.

Minutelli next considers the social position of the participants. They address their stories to Andrea Bentivoglio, whom Sabadino is able to honour in desirable surroundings, whereas the ruler, Giovanni, and his wife, Ginevra, had preferred to go elsewhere in the countryside. The critic points out that, of the sixty-two narrators, fifty were upper class, and, of the fifty, eleven were women. Since Sabadino was a lawyer, it is not surprising that he assumed the role of a “dottore” and included a merchant among the narrators. This attitude led to criticism of Sabadino’s unheard of sociological impudence. As in his early work De Civica Salute, Sabadino opposed the mundane activity of priests. Minutelli analyses the nature of the “villeggiandi,” who are depicted in a fashion which illustrates the author’s manner of writing. She describes the characteristics he attributes to the women and the subject matter of their stories. Though Sabadino includes an “araldo” and an “oste” among the storytellers, “l’atteggiamento della brigata, dunque, di là dalla signorile condiscendenza iniziale . . ., si dimostra recisamente intransigente rispetto delle distanze gerarchiche: la stessa libertà viene accordata per poterla poi umiliare, per ribadire capricciosamente il recinto aristocratico del circolo narrativo” (186). Stories of doubtful morality are allowed and the humble are sometimes protagonists. The storytellers are depicted realistically, since Sabadino adhered to reality at all times (witness his letters), and was not a great philosopher or master of theology.

It is impossible to convey the depth of Minutelli’s work and its many comparisons between Sabadino’s attitudes and depictions with those of the numerous other writers she cites. It certainly clarifies his position as a “novelliere.”

At the end of her book, Minutelli provides an ample bibliography: she lists the complete editions of Le Porretane, modern selections of some of the stories, the surviving manuscripts of Sabadino’s minor works together with published editions of some of them, his lost works and those of doubtful attribution. In addition to a list of his published and unpublished letters, there is a selection of biographies and of criticism of Le Porretane and of the minor works and letters. All in all, Minutelli’s book is extremely useful for researchers.

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Observing the more than 800 page bulk of Silvia Ruffo Fiore’s Niccolò Machiavelli: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism and Scholarship (Greenwood, 1990), one might ask whether another lengthy study of the author’s work is necessary. In particular, the past decades have seen a significant interest in Machiavelli as an historiographer, illustrated in the studies of Felix Gilbert, Mark Phillips, Sydney Anglo, Mark Hulliung and Peter Bondanella, just to record those which come readily to mind. However, the value of Matucci’s contribution to this enormous scholarly industry becomes apparent in the reading of his text. The significance results partly from the fact that Matucci has not merely crafted a linear analysis of Machiavelli’s development as
an historiographer—this has been done before and more than once—but more from his skillful elaboration of what he defines as a new genre of style in Florentine historiography in which Machiavelli appears as the creator. For Matucci, Machiavelli is the author who unites into a single literary form both narrazione and discorso and establishes the perspective of the omniscient observer of events who not only can describe them from many points of view as they occurred but also can abstract from this narration of individual and collective deeds and personalities general conclusions which transcend the immediate circumstances of the situation recorded to become if not absolute laws of the human condition and experience then at least widely applicable principles which can be used again to help understand other events, other personalities, and other situations.

To accomplish this feat of historical exegesis, Matucci spends the first part of his book not writing of Machiavelli at all but of the Florentine historical tradition beginning in detail with the Villanis and progressing through both the indigenous vernacular tradition and the Latin humanist discipline. The great names of still read Florentine chroniclers and historians appear as contributors to his thesis: the Villanis, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, Marco and Piero Parenti, Giovanni Morelli, Gregorio Dati, Giovanni Rucellai, Bartolomeo Cerretani, Francesco Guicciardini, among many others. Through his detailed discussion of these writers and their various contributions to the development of a peculiarly Florentine historiographical tradition, Matucci is able to build, layer upon layer, a complex foundation on which his reading of Machiavelli will stand. Standard concepts appear, such as the influence of imaginative literature—especially Boccaccio—on historical style in the narrative tradition and the important role of the merchants’ ricordanze in defining the concrete, practical lessons to be learned from the experience of other men and other places.

This is, however, a simplistic reduction which does damage to the very complex and subtle analysis Matucci develops. He investigates, for example, the movement from private history (the ricordanze tradition) to public history in writers such as Morelli; he traces the development of the authorial voice in historical writing; he illustrates the growth of a self-conscious literary style creeping into historical writing, including vernacular histories, under the influence of Latin humanist models in which the imperative to delight is as great as to instruct. Bruni is viewed in the context not only of humanist, classical models based on Livy and informed by Ciceronian rhetoric but also of official history, in which the liberty and republicanism seen as the foundation of Florence take on a quality not unlike that of the role of God’s plan for mankind through the Christian dispensation evident among earlier, vernacular writers. The hegemony of the Medici resulted as well in a necessary change in historiographical style, given that it became difficult to offer negative assessments of the regime and expect advancement. Indeed, Matucci suggests that history itself became a prisoner of the factional struggles within the Republic, and older concepts, such as divine retribution or classical hubris, affected the growth of the disengaged, balanced historian seeking only to record events through a careful study of cause and effect.

Early in his book, Matucci begins a theme he will elaborate throughout the text until it culminates in his study of Machiavelli (and even beyond, in the works of Francesco Guicciardini): the relationship between historical analysis and historical context. Matucci states—and no practicing historian could disagree—that different moments in history require different models of history to record or investigate them.
In its simplest form during the fourteenth century, this is seen as the usefulness of the chronicle tradition in a Florence ruled by merchants still very active in trade personally and running the city as an extension of their mercantile interests. However, in his later discussion of Machiavelli, in particular, this observation assumes a fundamental importance, because Florence at the very end of the fifteenth century, after the French invasions of 1494, the expulsion of the Medici, the hegemony of Savonarola, the collapse of the Italian state system in place from at least 1454, and the instability of the Soderini regime all required a sophistication in analysis and even narration that militated against simply applying old historical—or even literary—genres to the task.

It is here that Matucci comes closest to making a significant new contribution to Machiavelli scholarship. He argues that Machiavelli had to develop not so much just a new method of historical analysis—he did this, of course—but that this new analysis resulted in a new literary genre of history in which the omniscient narrative voice of the author not only records events but simultaneously comments on them, making judgments and digressions that turn the situation discussed from a single moment in time into a general rule which can be applied elsewhere with profit: narrazione is fused with discorso. Matucci suggests that this alteration is not the result of historical technique as much as literary style and he spends some considerable space illustrating his contention through his discussion of Machiavelli’s correspondence with Francesco Vettori in the period after the fall of Soderini (the so-called “peace correspondence”). Added to this is a close analysis of The Prince and of The Discourses to conclude that Machiavelli has altered both the direction and the style of Florentine historiography towards a more sophisticated and elaborate complex, the consequence of two centuries of historical—and literary—writing. (Indeed, Matucci even draws connections between Machiavelli’s episodic style in the Discorsi and Ariosto.) Machiavelli, then, is the product equally of the lengthy tradition of Florentine historiography and the complex, chaotic time in which he himself lived and which required a style of history capable of comprehending it.

Matucci has, therefore, truly made a significant addition to our understanding of Machiavelli. He has also forced his reader to consider always the relationship between the literary genre and the technical discipline of history. The notes are extremely rich indicating that Matucci has read virtually all of the pertinent bibliography in Italian and even in English, the result of 30 years of British and American work on Florence. The book itself is well-organized, carefully and clearly argued and divided into easily accessible chapters. My only complaint in the scholarly apparatus is the lack of a bibliography to assist future students in using the vast array of articles and books Matucci assembled for this fine, interdisciplinary study.

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The present study is a precise reconstruction and detailed analysis of pope Leo X’s 1515 entry into Florence. The carefully orchestrated event, structured according to contemporary tastes and interests for the triumphal processions of ancient Rome, marked the apogee then attained by the Medici family—the elevation of one of its