significantly the way we read him in the future.

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Gian Carlo Garfagnini, ed. *Lorenzo de' Medici. Studi*. Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento (Studi e Testi 27). Firenze: Olschki, 1992. Pp. xii, 353.

This collection of essays emerged from the great editorial project of the complete letters of Lorenzo de' Medici (*il Magnifico*). The purpose was to place the letters in a broader context, to enrich our knowledge of Lorenzo by connecting him to his historical, political and literary environment so that the letters would be even more meaningful. The result is a wonderful series of nine papers in English and Italian prepared by two generations of scholars of the Florentine Renaissance which provide deep insight into specific elements of the life, character and times of the magnificent Lorenzo.

Some of these essays provide a broad perspective on Lorenzo, Florence and the Renaissance. Melissa M. Bullard's "Lorenzo de' Medici: Anxiety, Image Making, and Political Reality in the Renaissance," for example, is a splendid study of Renaissance self-fashioning, placing Lorenzo in the "theatre culture" of the Renaissance. It is innovative, provocative and important work which offers a profound analysis of the nature of Lorenzo's relationship to his city and other states and his ability to cultivate an image which associated his own personal rule with the success of Florence itself.

Other papers are more specific, dealing with particular aspects of Lorenzo's life. Nicolai Rubinstein applies his unparalleled knowledge of the operation of the Florentine Republican constitution to "Lorenzo de' Medici [and] the Formation of His Statecraft." Paula Clarke discusses the relationship of Lorenzo with Tommaso Soderini; and Christine Shaw investigates Lorenzo's dealing with his kinsman by marriage and *condottiere* in the employ of Florence Niccolò Orsini. War is, obviously, an important element in this paper and the theme of Florence's diplomacy and policy in time of conflict is rehearsed from different perspectives in Humfrey Butter's "Florence, Milan and the Barons' War (1485-1486)" and Michael Mallett's "Diplomacy and War in Later Fifteenth-Century Italy."

Individual significant aspects of foreign policy are carefully studied (with many relevant documents provided in appendices) by Riccardo Fubini in his "In margine all'edizione delle 'Lettere' di Lorenzo de' Medici, I: La visita a Firenze del duca di Milano nel 1471, II: L'ambasciata a Roma di Alamanno Rinuccini nel 1476." Alison Brown addresses Lorenzo's domestic authority, especially his consolidation of power in the city, and offers clear and convincing proof of his use of public funds for his private gain in "Public and Private Interest: Lorenzo, the Monte and the Seventeen Reformers."

Finally, Mario Martelli in "Un caso di 'amphibolatio': la canzone a ballo 'Ragionavasi di sodo'" reads the several layers of meaning in Lorenzo's poetry, ranging from obscenity to divine spirituality, to illustrate the complexity of his literary work and the profundity of his thought. Martelli also puts his selection of Lorenzo's poetry into the context of the work of Ficino and Florentine Neoplatonic concepts of love, as well as broader intellectual interests.

Taken together, these nine essays succeed in revealing Lorenzo's character, policies and times. Consequently, they do indeed help in the elucidation of the author of the vol-

umes of the *Lettere*, as well as the last decades before the French invasions of 1494. Michael Mallett, in offering another important insight into the value of the edition of the *Lettere*, might well have been speaking about this collection as well. He writes: "One of the great advantages of the work on Lorenzo's letters is that it has concentrated the mind of the researchers involved on specific moments in the period and isolated them to some extent from the Guicciardinian 'crisis of Italy'" (235).

It is not an accident, then, that several of the contributions in this volume remark on the instability of the Italian state system after the Peace of Lodi (1454) and the Italian League of the next year. The dangers of war, such as the Neapolitan Barons' War or the War of Ferrara, illustrated how fragile the peace of Italy really was and how self-interest rather than any kind of wise and altruistic statesmanship was the dominant factor in Italian affairs. The cataclysm of 1494, then, was not the singular event which led to the collapse of Italy; rather it was but another element in the often confused and dangerous period of the late fifteenth century. Lorenzo does not emerge from these essays as the wise, benevolent statesman crafting policies for the well-being of Florence and the general peace and prosperity of all Italy. He instead appears as a much more real figure locked into political, military and diplomatic manoeuvring which was driven by self-interest and necessity.

This collection will not destroy the myth of Lorenzo de' Medici. It will, however, ensure that he is approached in a more realistic manner. Moreover, the general situation in Florence and in the peninsula as a whole will have to be taken more into account before the rule of *il Magnifico* can be judged and the disaster of 1494 fully understood.

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Andrea Gareffi. *La scrittura e la festa. Teatro, festa e letteratura nella Firenze del Rinascimento*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991. Pp. 411.

In his introduction to the volume, the author clearly states his premise: that Renaissance comedies are not to be read or judged as works of literature. They were, in fact, a complex amalgam of text, stage set, performance, costume, music, spectacle, and so forth — not to mention politics. Gareffi points out that even Machiavelli, author of the most celebrated sixteenth-century comedy, saw his *Mandragola* as a piece of theatre, not as a work of literature, and therefore did not consider it for publication (8). It follows, then, that any scholar who examines only the written text (the script) of the performance will not appreciate the diverse elements and dynamic vitality that brought such performances to life for contemporary audiences.

In an effort to avoid a strictly literary analysis, Gareffi thus turns to examine the wider context of sixteenth-century theatre and festivities. As a result, he moves freely from the comedies of Jacopo Nardi (ch. 1) to the 1513 formal cavalcade of Pope Leo X from the Vatican to St. John Lateran (ch. 2); from saying a few words about a number of Florentine individuals such as Luigi Alamanni, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, Girolamo Savonarola (a Florentine?), and Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi (ch. 3) to the 1519 *banquet macabre* hosted by Lorenzo Strozzi at his house in Rome (ch. 4); from some considerations on the figure of the friar and the Turkish threat in Machiavelli's *La Mandra-*