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-*

gola (ch. 5) to the tyrannicidal context and implications of Lorenzino de' Medici's *L'Aridosia* (ch. 6); from the Florentine exequies for Michelangelo (ch. 7) to the "death of comedy" in Francesco D'Ambra's *La Cofanaria* (ch. 8) and the "revenge of the Gothic" in Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogo dei giuochi* (ch. 9).

Throughout these chapters, the author claims to be following a line of development that moves from the rhetorical intentions of Jacopo Nardi to the oniric quality of Leonine Rome, where "images mattered more than facts" (81). Having delineated such a movement, Gareffi then proceeds to point out how "theatre, like a mirror, unites material reality with imagined reality" (99). Death, the great leveller, then enters on stage with the pageantry organized for Michelangelo's exequies. The author claims this event rings the death knell of the *festa*, just as Francesco D'Ambra's *Cofanaria* puts comedy to rest (303).

The volume is richly annotated, with ample and clear notes. They offer the reader a variety of further readings, both in primary and secondary sources. They also give a wealth of information that is, otherwise, not easily available. Given the amount of material covered by the author, it is not surprising that some slips have occurred — I will limit myself to one correction and one complaint. It has now been established beyond a doubt that Lorenzo de' Medici's play *Rappresentazione di SS. Giovanni e Paolo* was written and performed in 1491, not 1489 as Gareffi claims on several occasions. The correct dating was established by Hamilton A. Mathes in his "On the Date of Lorenzo's *Sacra rappresentazione di S. Giovanni e Paolo* Febr. 17, 1491" *Aevum. Rassegna di scienze storiche linguistiche e filologiche* 25.1 (1951): 324-28. Secondly, it is disappointing to find sexist references still present in contemporary scholarly writings. On several occasions in this volume Laura Battiferri, the most celebrated woman poet of sixteenth-century Florence, is referred to as "Ammannati's wife," with no mention of her own name. Surely Battiferri merited to be recognized on her own right as an individual, and not merely as a man's wife.

In its complexity and far-reaching views this volume provides a novel and inspiring contribution to our understanding of festive celebrations in the sixteenth century. Although the author has limited his observations to a Florentine context (which for him includes Leonine Rome), his conclusions can inform our understanding of theatre and festivity in much of Renaissance Europe.

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Daniel Javitch. *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of Orlando Furioso*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991. Pp. x, 205.

The gist of this important new study is neatly encapsulated in its title. The book examines how certain readers in the sixteenth century argued that Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was equal or even superior to the ancient classical epics which constituted one set of touchstones by which the poem was judged in the late Renaissance. This process of the poem's canonization as an authoritative text would eventually earn it the status of a classical work, even though it was composed in a vernacular language. The *Furioso* thus became the Italian tradition's first long narrative poem to be promoted as a modern classic.