aperto contrasto con le razionalizzazioni metafisiche degli Scolastici, l’“umanesimo della parola” di Petrarca, per usare un sintagma che ben profetizza il Poliziano per il quale è stato coniato, rappresenta uno dei momenti di maggiore consapevolezza dello spirito creativo dell’uomo. È con questa base che il testo petarchesco è analizzato; il Verbo che si fa azione è incarnato in Scipione che così assume una dimensione cristologica; ne consegue la caratterizzazione demonica di Annibale e, infine, una dimensione cosmologica esistenziale nella vittoria di Roma su Cartagine.

Per concludere, questo impegnativo lavoro del Colilli presenta una straordinaria ricchezza di accostamenti significativi e di stimoli esegetici che lo fanno meritevole dell’attenzione dello specialista come di ogni studioso di teoria della letteratura. Resta aperta la questione della consapevolezza del Petrarca nell’operare con i tre specifici modelli allegorici; mentre di per sé l’accertamento non è criticamente determinante (siamo nell’area del probabile-non provabile), pone comunque urgentemente di fronte al problema della contemporaneità delle tre “allegories of writing” e quindi di una visione singola e globalizzante che abbracci coerentemente l’intera opera del Petrarca.

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Mark Phillips has produced not only a life of Marco Parenti but also a history of his times. Although much of the material from which this remarkable work of historical reconstruction is fashioned was left by Parenti himself, the credit for recreating the rich life and world of the fifteenth-century Florentine belongs to Phillips. Marco Parenti was a member of a lesser patrician family who had the good fortune to marry into one of the great families of Florence, the Strozzi. This marriage was only possible because the Strozzi men were exiled by the Medici and the women were consequently less attractive as marriage alliances to families as eminent and rich as their own. Parenti was aware of these considerations, of course, and consequently appeared to assume the perspective and ambitions of his kin by marriage, especially the cause of having the banishment of his brothers-in-law reversed by Piero de’ Medici.

It is the story of this struggle and the insight Parenti provides into the events of the anti-Medici conspiracy of 1466 which give the book its structure. However, its value is far greater than just these elements, instructive as they are. Phillips has succeeded in constructing a view of mid-fifteenth-century Florence seen through the eyes of a keen and sophisticated observer. Although not of the first rank of politicians, Parenti played important roles in the government and the society of his city. He was chosen as gonfaloniere; he held many other, minor offices; and he was close to a number of the major figures in the city, such as Luca Pitti, Dietisalvi Neroni, his Strozzi relations in Naples, and even indirectly Piero himself, despite his hostility to the Medici faction. He attended on royal visitors from Naples; he kept close to politics and politicians in a transitional period in the history of the city, as the Medici hegemony moved closer to personal rule; and he recorded and commented upon these events as he saw them in the genres so representative of his education, his class and his time.

The major sources for Phillips’s book are the letters he exchanged with his Strozzi relations, largely concerning the quest to have their banishment revoked, his ricordanze
and his incomplete vernacular history or memoir. Together these three documentary sources create a particularly rich mosaic of Renaissance Florence. Because the purposes, literary traditions and perspectives of these various documents are so varied, we are left with an unusually textured view of the period they discuss. Moreover, the very personal nature of such material and the curious position Parenti occupied as a keenly interested but somewhat removed player and observer in the midst of great events result in a clear and honest insight into the most difficult of Renaissance experiences to study or reconstruct with confidence or full understanding: kin and factional relations.

Indeed, among the most useful aspects of the book are those relating to family matters. Parenti's letters concerning his connections with the Strozzi, his role as a go-between in the negotiations for an appropriate wife for his brother-in-law in exile, and his associations of personal, family and factional concerns all add greatly to our understanding of how the society of Medicean Florence actually worked.

The book is divided into three sections: the first is based on the ricordanze of Parenti and deals with personal matters reflected in this intimate source; the second is drawn from the correspondence with his Strozzi relations and deal largely with the years 1464-1466; the third is a study of the vernacular history which Parenti left, a study which places the document in its temporal and historiographical context. All of these sections must be seen, however, to function interdependently, except perhaps the last which on occasion leaves Parenti behind as the author exercises his own interest—and profound knowledge—of Florentine Renaissance historiography in a way which sometimes blurs the focus of the study at hand.

An advantage of this paperback edition of the book is that it provides a cheap ($9.95 US) and very useful classroom text from which students interested in the social and political history of Renaissance Florence can learn a great deal. However, if the paperback edition was intended as a teaching text, it is unfortunate that fuller explanatory notes (or a biographical appendix) were not added and that a bibliography was not included to assist students working independently.

Still, Mark Phillips has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of mid-quattrocento Florence by bringing back to life Marco Parenti as a guide to the complex period in which he lived.

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Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1990, this volume makes a significant contribution to Machiavelli scholarship. The author de Grazia adopts a novel approach: he sheds light on his subject in part by interweaving personal experiences with the more salient external events of the period and by utilizing the relevant evidence provided by contemporaries, but he draws the greater portion of his information from Machiavelli's own words. All of his works are taken into consideration; only the dialogue on language, commonly attributed to him, has been omitted. On the basis of these verbal data, de Grazia attempts to determine what must have been both Machiavelli's frame of mind and feelings at various moments in his life as well as his thoughts and ideas on many subjects.