Quella che troviamo esemplata nel *Morgante* potrebbe, cioè, essere una tecnica sorvegliatissima che sembra essere caotica e che, invece, è ordinata: tutto sta nel riconoscere la legge sottesa all'operazione letteraria praticata dal nostro autore secondo il quale, sembrerebbe, narrare in ottave - così come accadeva ai suoi colleghi spesso anonimi e sempre di rango inferiore al suo - non significava narrare ordinatamente. Mi riferisco in particolare a quanto è stato recentemente dimostrato da alcuni studi attenti alla comune pratica intertestuale adoperata dagli scrittori di poemi cavallereschi (si pensi, per fare due esempi significativi, all'*Ancroia* e all'*Uggeri il Danese* studiati da Marco Villaresi) i quali assemblavano i loro materiali narrativi così come, da par suo, fece anche Pulci. Il problema non è di facile soluzione e il volume fornisce una proposta la cui complessità e la cui profondità gli studi futuri non potranno ignorare.

ALESSANDRO POLCRI
Yale University

Maurizio Viroli. *Machiavelli. Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought*, 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. 247 pp. \$37.95

Machiavelli has garnered for himself near immortality—surely one which his humble offices later in life would not lead us to expect. However, until recently this reputation was largely based on variously misconstrued interpretations of his work. This resulted in a gamut of unjustified characterizations of Machiavelli, from that of the founder of political science to that of a demonic political predator—or so Maurizio Viroli would have it. In his latest book on Machiavelli, Viroli undertakes to set all aright by way of a fresh approach to Machiavelli's thought and work. As a first step, Viroli fleshes out the personal life and attitudes of Machiavelli. His novel conclusions support the methodology of the second step and indeed the crux of his argument: the interpretation of Machiavelli's political writings within the framework of classical rhetoric.

Viroli's study constitutes the first volume of a new series committed to an "accessible and historically-informed" reassessment of the work and central ideas of major political thinkers. Significant influence from Quentin Skinner has served Viroli well in this endeavour, especially from a methodological perspective. Thus we see again a commitment to revealing what the author meant to say and to accomplish with his text. This is Viroli's main point. Machiavelli, after all, advises. He uses words to bring people to act. In Machiavelli's case, rhetorical analysis appears to be the most direct route to his intended meaning. More specifically, it should be an analysis carried out in line with Classical Roman tradition, and, more specifically, according to Classical deliberative rhetoric, deemed most appropriate for such subject matter.

What surfaces from this rhetorical reading is the high regard Machiavelli has for the power of the word. Despite his ultimate advocacy of *ragion di stato*, for instance, Machiavelli nevertheless regards eloquence, not physical might, as the power with which to build and control communities. Or, in reference to Machiavelli's own writing, Viroli demonstrates that Machiavelli is not so concerned with the objective truth of the scientist, but rather with the effective truth of the rhetorician, as declared in his famous though often mistranslated phrase *la verità effettuale della cosa*. Therefore, by situating Machiavelli's thought in the attitudes of his private and public life, and his texts under the rubric of rhetoric, Viroli allows us to come to a full understanding of Machiavelli's discourse.

In this way we are able to understand rhetoric as a key to his ideas. If somewhat circular, this argument is nonetheless compelling. It effectively challenges weather-worn interpretations by grounding itself in the likely interplay of man's political, philosophical and rhetorical views in relation to the intended meaning of his works. Thus Viroli successfully dislodges the interpretations of the political scientist and the adherent of power politics, replacing the former with that of the classical orator and the latter with that of an advocate of persuasion. By his conscious steps to retrieve Machiavelli's thought by interpreting his work through his favoured rhetoric of the classical tradition, Viroli avoids the pitfalls of anachronistic attributions and makes a convincing restoration to the portrait of our much known figure.

SHEILA DAS
University of Toronto

Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485-1603*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. Pp. 322.

Founded in the thirteenth century, the University of Padua was one of the most important European centres of learning in the medieval and early modern period. Padua attracted students and intellectual figures from Italy and the rest of Europe. As scholars have long recognized, it established a special connection with England via its contribution to the development of political, intellectual and cultural Tudor life. Jonathan Woolfson's excellent work catalogues the astounding number of Englishmen who journeyed to the northern Italian town for education, cultural refinement and to escape from religious persecution. The result is a well-written and detailed account of the Tudor experience in Padua that is more complete than any previous scholarship on this topic.

The main aim of this book is to portray Padua as a microcosm of Italy in its cultivation of new strains of humanist thought and in its encouragement of scholarly subjects still nascent in England, such as studies in the Greek language, Aristotelianism,