Paula C. Clarke. *The Soderini and the Medici. Power and Patronage in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. Pg. 293.

In presenting the politics, patronage, and power operating in fifteenth-century Florence, Professor Clarke could not have hoped for a better study in contrasts than the careers of two unlikely brothers, Niccolò and Tommaso Soderini.

Niccolò and Tommaso were the sons of Lorenzo Soderini, himself the illegitimate son of Messer Tommaso di Guccio Soderini. The grandfather, a Florentine merchant who had amassed a fortune in Avignon during the 1360s, had returned to Florence by the 1370s, weathered the Ciompi revolt, and become a powerful figure in the Albizzi regime of his time. His son Lorenzo, on the other hand, badly bungled a fraudulent attempt to prove himself legitimate and ended his days at the hands of the executioner. Lorenzo's two young boys were left in such a desperate economic situation that their mother was obliged to place the youths and their small inheritance under the wardship of the *Ufficiali dei Pupilli*. Physically separated and socially alienated from their clan's support network, the youths were nevertheless able to capitalize on their inherited right to hold public office. As soon as they reached legal age, they embarked on a political career that, in the course of time, lead them both to hold the post of Gonfalonier of Justice, the highest elected office in the Florentine government. The economic resources and social prestige they acquired eventually lead one of the brothers, Tommaso, to supplant the legitimate branch of the family as the undisputed leader of the Soderini clan. Tommaso had hitched his star to the Medici wagon and was thus able to rise to be the second most politically influential citizen of Florence. His son, Piero, eventually became Gonfalonier-for-life during the so-called Soderini Republic (1502-1512). The other brother, Niccolò, chose instead to oppose Medicean political manoeuvres, eventually fell out of favour and power, and ended his life in exile.

In narrating the story of the two brothers' diverging careers, the author has provided the reader with a revealing view into the complex functioning of Florentine politics and into the manner in which three generations of Medici – Cosimo the Elder, Piero the Gouty, and Lorenzo the Magnificent – maintained control of the Florentine political system. Her history of the two brothers' careers, and especially her insightful analysis of Tommaso Soderini's rise to power, reveals that friendship and support for the Medici was "more instrumental than sentimental" (p. 262), in that loyalty to the Medici was always dependent on the rewards and benefits to be accrued from it. While Tommaso's career points to the success to be achieved from careful and non-dogmatic real-politik, Niccolò's fall from power points instead to the temporary quality of friendship bonds and the severe repercussions to be suffered from a reactionary stand on principles.

The volume's scholarly apparatus is superb, if not enviable. In compiling this detailed history of Florentine power and patronage networks the author has made

excellent use of a vast range of manuscript sources – government documents, minutes of meetings, ambassadors' reports, letters – from archives in Florence, Milan, Ferrara, Mantua, Modena, Pisa, Venice, Rome, Paris, and London. Such extensive and thorough archival work is evident in the high quality of the research and the precision of the scholarship that imbues not only the narrative, but the notes as well. One is left to wait eagerly for Professor Clarke's next in-depth study.

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Medieval & Renaissance Drama, V, edited by Leeds Barroll and James Shapiro. New York: AMS Press, 1991. Pp. xiv, 461.

This series, which invites articles of a length appropriate "to the task at hand" on any topic concerning English drama before 1642, does not attempt to pursue a single theme in each volume. Obviously this volume's sixteen articles, one review article, and eighteen reviews focus on English literature, but some show multidisciplinary interests, particularly in connection with historical, political, and social concerns. In "*Respublica: Rituals of Social Elevation and the Political Mythology of Mary Tudor*," Douglas F. Routledge analyzes the play's structure in the light of anthropological theory to reveal its political purpose of portraying Mary as the restorer of order after a period of festive inversion and misrule. Theodora A. Jankowski is also interested in social and political perceptions of a Tudor Queen, but finds that Lyly failed in his purpose of flattering Elizabeth in *Sapho and Phao* because he lacked "a coherent discourse of female rule" (p. 75) to draw upon, and instead attempted unsuccessfully to employ "the romance's language of female flattery" (p. 81). At the end of the sixteenth century, *Sir John Oldcastle* appears to Larry S. Champion to reveal new approaches to historical inquiry, in that it seems to allow a double perception of historical events, one of which ratifies the aristocratic status quo and one which questions and subverts it.

Economic history is part of the subject of two articles. Roslyn L. Knutson offers a reinterpretation of the significance of Henslowe's records of partial payments for playtexts, arguing that they show the Admiral's men seeking to exploit the commercial opportunities arising from the establishment of the Chamberlain's Men across the road, rather than taking desperate measures to cope with the new competition. Similarly S. P. Cerasano reinterprets the economic facts of Henslowe's and Alleyn's *Mastership of the Bears*, demonstrating that the post was lucrative and prestigious, and that bearbaiting was both exciting and attractive in itself, and associated with other specularly entertaining and "artistic" effects.

Alan Somerset and C. E. McGee, both editors of volumes in the REED series, offer substantial articles based on fresh documentary evidence. Through an analysis