ignores the established view that Timoteo is one of those greedy friars populating the *novellistica* and the theater of Renaissance Italy. And, his assertion that in *The Prince* "you" (for which Machiavelli uses the singular pronoun *tu*, or the plural *voi*, depending on the context) refers to one person (p. 32), disregards studies that have argued for distinct functions of the two pronouns. Also, commenting on the October 1525 letter to Guicciardini, De Grazia writes that Machiavelli finally "turns his attention to his literary efforts, to the history of Florence he is still working on" (p. 343). Actually Machiavelli had already presented the work to the Pope in May of that year.

These reservations are minor points vis-à-vis the scope of De Grazia's well documented study of Machiavelli's life and thought. Indeed the book is a biography, an intellectual biography to be specific, pieced together, like a mosaic, mainly from Machiavelli's own works, including references seldom seen before. De Grazia's encyclopedic knowledge of the Machiavellian text helps to produce a biographical tour de force unprecedented in Machiavellian scholarship. The result is a complete picture of Machiavelli, the family man, the citizen, the individual with all his beliefs and views, with all his habits and contradictions. The personal traits and mental patterns serve as the base for the book's central argument which seeks to place Machiavelli's political philosophy within the context of christian morality.

Certainly, the book would have gained considerably from a critical apparatus that would take into account past and present scholarship. However, its absence does not detract from a book that affords easy and pleasurable reading partly because the reader is not interrupted by constant references to other sources. Reading is also facilitated by De Grazia's decision to keep the text all in English, placing the original Italian in the notes. His translations from the Italian are flawless. Although De Grazia's study may not be the last word on Machiavelli's life and thought, it is nonetheless an important critical contribution to Machiavelli scholarship and should have a place not only in every library but on the shelves of every Machiavelli scholar.

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Peter Pierson. *Commander of the Armada: The Seventh Duke of Medina Sidonia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989. Pp. xiii, 304.

Perhaps the most welcome result of anniversary celebrations for significant historical events is the interest they stimulate in researching and reinterpreting old subjects. Certainly, this is the case with the recent 400th anniversary (in 1989) of the Spanish Armada, which has produced a number of important new books and articles based on fresh approaches and new evidence. One such book is Peter

Pierson's sympathetic biography of the commander of the Spanish fleet, the duke of Medina Sidonia, the first account in any language of the life of this significant historical figure. A solidly researched book that draws heavily upon previously inaccessible sources from the Medina Sidonia archives, it offers a detailed look at the duke's long career, tracing his involvement in the administration and politics of late sixteenth-century Spain.

Pierson's thesis is that the duke of Medina Sidonia's reputation has been treated unfairly by generations of historians who have blamed him for the Armada's failure. Forgetting his years of service to the Spanish Crown, it is generally concluded that in appointing Medina Sidonia to command the fleet, "the Prudent King acted imprudently and must have based his choice on the Duke's wealth or some other reason that was less than satisfactory" (p.xi). On the contrary, Pierson argues convincingly, a close examination of Medina Sidonia's administrative career reveals a loyal royal servant of logistical and organizational skill, considerable personal initiative and much strategic good sense in maritime affairs, which made him a respected adviser to the king and a reasonable choice as Captain General of the Ocean-Sea.

Pierson begins his biography with a detailed examination of Medina Sidonia's background as head of the greatest noble family of sixteenth-century Spain. The author traces the duke's lineage and his family's rise to prominence in detail, as well as the responsibilities – both feudal and familial – that he inherited as a grandee of Spain. Having thus laid the background of Medina Sidonia's heritage, with its political connections and inherited obligations, Pierson examines the duke's early career, concentrating on his part in Philip II's seizure of the Portuguese succession in 1580, his role in Spanish-Moroccan affairs, his organization of Andalusia's coastal defences and his active involvement in the administration and preparation of the annual Indies fleets. Understandably, the campaign of 1588 dominates the central chapters of the book, given Medina Sidonia's initial tasks in preparing the fleet and his subsequent appointment as its commander. Here Pierson pays close attention to Philip II's choice, touching on Medina Sidonia's own misgivings over his qualifications to lead. And he provides an extensive analysis of the Armada campaign (supported by maps and rich detail on the rival fleets and their movements) from the Spanish point of view, dealing with the English side only as necessary. Pierson then picks up the duke's career after his return to Spain, his activities during the English sack of Cadiz and his last years as a respected elder statesman who still enjoyed the confidence of his monarch.

What emerges from Pierson's work is a portrait of the duke as a man of his age, deeply involved in the regional and national government of Spain. Dedicated to the Crown he served loyally and well, Medina Sidonia was proud of his family heritage and jealous of its interests; he was also as ambitious as other contemporary noblemen for high royal appointment, but he was responsible, too. For he

recognized his own shortcomings and refused high office when he felt it beyond his experience or personal capacities. Furthermore, he was an able and clear-sighted administrator whose advice was sought eagerly on national, imperial and maritime affairs, even after his retirement from active service.

But this portrait is gained almost exclusively through inference. Although Pierson explicitly evaluates the duke's military or naval and administrative talents, he rarely deals with the intimate man, his personal outlook or motivations, leaving the reader with an incomplete impression of the duke. Instead, Pierson's admitted focus is on Medina Sidonia's official career. The problem with this approach is, however, that at times the duke seems only to be an incidental figure in the drama and not the principal actor. In Chapter VI, for example, he almost entirely disappears in the welter of detail over the final preparations for the Armada. As a result, some ideal opportunities to probe deeply the duke's mind are missed, especially his reluctance to accept the Armada's command. This seems to suggest that Medina Sidonia is important only in relation to the background of great events and is therefore not worthy of study beyond his official life.

But it is easy to criticize. The fact remains that Pierson's book is an important one. In reconstructing Medina Sidonia's career, the author provides extensive details on the organization of sixteenth-century Spain's coastal defence. Also valuable are Pierson's brief sketches of the men associated with Medina Sidonia and the internal workings of Philip II's government through connections of family and clientage. As for Pierson's reinterpretation of the Armada campaign, it is exciting and fresh. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he restores the reputation of the commander of that failed "Enterprise of England," giving him his just due.

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Thomas F. Mayer, *Thomas Starkey and the Commonwealth. Humanist Politics and Religion in the Reign of Henry VIII*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Pp. x, 316.

Office maketh man. Most of Starkey's years were spent in preparation for a brief period "in the kingis familye" (p. 211). This was not sufficient to support the ambition of a shining *vita activa*, and his was "not a life of outstanding accomplishment" (p.3). He is remembered not for his dashed hopes but by an intended instrument of their fulfilment, the unfinished Dialogue (see Professor Mayer's edition, Camden 4th ser. vol. 37, 1989), the bulk of which is assigned to 1529–32, not a little later as many have thought. The implication of that alone gives us a new Starkey, but there is much more in this splendid book, a skilfully constructed study of the man and his thought, which manages to be positive despite the author's