A Poet at Court is not only an excellent analysis of Mendoza's life, his work, and the demise of his fame (attributed largely to a change in poetic sensibility away from courtly wit); it also provides substantial and illuminating material on the poetic and dramatic practices of the day. We are reminded that *conceptismo* is not a sudden literary phenomenon; it is the culmination of earlier manifestations in the same way that *culteranismo* marks the extreme of preceding tendencies. For anyone interested in the development of *conceptismo* and in the literary atmosphere of Philip III's court Dr. Davies's book will be an invaluable source. It is a scholarly work, but Dr. Davies displays his erudition modestly. Translations of Spanish quotations at the foot of corresponding pages substantiate Dr. Davies's desire to reach a wider audience; success in this aim is further enhanced by pertinent and judicious references to contemporary events or writers in English and French literatures.

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Mark Phillips. *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 195. \$17.50.

Although long recognised as one of the "great historians," Francesco Guicciardini remains under-studied compared to his contemporary, Machiavelli. Most of Guicciardini's work was published only between 1857 and 1869, when it aroused the shocked fascination of critics like de Sanctis and Symonds. His *Storia d'Italia*, which was probably written with publication most clearly in mind, first appeared in 1561, twenty-one years after his death; but Guicciardini's evident anti-Medici bias and his challenge to Florentine *campanalismo* made him unfashionable and early Italian and European editions appeared in expurgated form. Even today, despite translations of his major works, Guicciardini remains under-appreciated, and it is to end this relative neglect that Phillips addresses himself.

Phillips does not intend to present "a comprehensive study of Guicciardini's historiography," and throughout there is a refreshing concentration on the texts, with a minimum of distracting critical apparatus. Nor is this a biography, although biographical information is given to set out the relationship of Guicciardini's works, and to place the historian in his political and social background. Phillips, in his anxiety to break new ground by introducing the student to Guicciardini's 'craft' as a historian, makes clear his dependence on such fundamental studies as that of Ridolfi. Phillips considers that "the art of reading history has been neglected," and that the works of Renaissance historians have been approached by modern historians too exclusively as source material, with insufficient awareness of their value as works of literature or of how they were appreciated in their own day. While recognising Guicciardini's extensive use of primary sources in, for example, the *Cose Fiorentine* and the *Storia d'Italia*, Phillips is less interested in his reliability as a historian and more in his skill and pre-occupations as a minute narrator of events. Hence, in his *Storie Fiorentine* attention is placed on the effectiveness of Guicciardini's account of the Pazzi conspiracy rather than on what it adds to an understanding of the event.

This approach is welcome. Other historians have commented on Guicciardini's

style, but generally in rather superficial terms. Symonds, for example, acknowledged its precision, which he associated with Guicciardini's alleged lack of "moral sensibility." More generally recognised, and accepted by Phillips, is his eschewal, especially in the later works, of the kind of "purple passages" that make the writings of Machiavelli both more accessible and more readily memorable. This frequently-made point of comparison underlines the importance of the approach chosen by Phillips, first because it bears on Guicciardini's relative inaccessibility to the modern reader, and secondly, and more importantly, because it bears on Guicciardini's standing as a historian. Machiavelli's more immediate style with its "more energetic rhythms," has encouraged admiration for his understanding of history; an introduction to Guicciardini's more austere narrative techniques, to the "elaborateness and complexity of Guicciardini's slower moving sentences," awakens an appreciation of the greater depth of his inquiry, and his status as what Hale calls a "historian's historian."

After a biographical introduction, Phillips adopts a generally chronological treatment of Guicciardini's output. A slight exception is made in the case of the *Ricordi*, which were written over a number of years, and in discussing them, Phillips allows himself an essay in textual criticism, contained in an appendix, where he redates the composition of some of these maxims. The picture is the familiar one of a historian whose anxiety to master narrative to explain events led him away from the traditional Florentine historiographical interests in family and city (the *Memorie di Famiglia* and the *Storie Fiorentine*) towards an attempt to write a detailed history of Italy. Related to this widening of perspective, Phillips sees a development in technique in which Guicciardini abandons "set-pieces," such as his assessment of Lorenzo de Medici in the *Storie Fiorentine*, to integrate such observations into the narrative. In view of Guicciardini's own reticence as to his aims, this quest for the complete narrative has to be inferred. Only in a study for the *Storia d'Italia* does Guicciardini reveal explicitly his concern for narrative as a means of laying bare the multiple forces behind events.

While it is only correct to stress Guicciardini's growing maturity as a historian and master of narrative, this emphasis tends to belittle or set aside earlier works in favour of the *Storia d'Italia*. Hence the admitted freshness and impact of passages of the *Storie Fiorentine* are explained in terms of a "comparatively superficial view" of events. The treatment of individual works does not always concentrate on questions of technique. For example, the *Dialogo del Reggimento* and the later *Considerazioni sopra i Discorsi di Machiavelli*, neither of which fits into the genre of narrative history, are summarised with little reference to the "historian's craft." Again, while demonstrating convincingly in Chapter Two the changing nature of the *ricordi* from the point of view of the author's developing ideas and treatment, in Chapter Three Phillips tackles the purpose of these collections, discussing sympathetically Guicciardini's pre-occupations with such problems as the conflicting pulls on human behaviour exerted by honour and self-interest.

The greatest space is given to the *Storia d'Italia*. This is understandable, not only because it is seen as the culmination of Guicciardini's development, but also because its length, its ambitious and unprecedented scope and the evident care lavished on it all suggest that "there is no doubt that Guicciardini intended his history as the supreme witness of his thoughts." Again, more than matters of style are dealt with.

After setting out the circumstances of its composition, Phillips discusses Guicciardini's central theme, "the progressive disintegration of a political system, revealed stage by stage through the discovery of the weakness of its guardians and the ineffectiveness of its institutions." Phillips points out how Guicciardini, in his painstaking search for explanation, presents a "swirling mass of influences" that can range from man's greed to the still inscrutable workings of Fortune, but that can, in their often unordered multiplicity, leave the reader unenlightened. Then Phillips moves on to aspects of Guicciardini's technique: how the all-pervading theme of change gives structure to the work, how the concept of *impeto* captures the historian's preoccupation with change, and how the focus of his narrative can bear effectively on both minor incidents and major issues.

In keeping with the general emphasis on Guicciardini's development, the concluding chapter concentrates on the *Storia d'Italia*. Alexander's telling observation that Guicciardini's basic meaning lies in his qualifications is cited, a style of writing that Phillips well describes as one that "gathers and sifts." It is surprising, however, after his own analysis of the *Storia d'Italia*, to see him revert to the Symonds-like judgment that Guicciardini's style is "analytic to the point of bloodlessness, it conveys no colours, paints no landscapes." It is also surprising that Phillips is so dismissive, here and throughout, of the possible influence of classical historians. To contemporaries, such influences would have formed a central place in a historian's "craft." It is true to point out how Guicciardini, in his criticism of Machiavelli, revealed a distrust of superficial acceptance of classical historians. It is also correct, as Chabod and others have shown, to argue that Guicciardini, with his restless questioning, broke with the greater assurance of humanist historiography — a point that Phillips illustrates with an interesting analogy to the fine arts. But a more positive approach to possible direct classical influences would have been useful. Guicciardini, like the humanist historians, was following Cicero in his concentration on war and diplomacy, and an investigation of how such influences, and the example of Livy and Tacitus in such areas as battle-pieces and set speeches, would increase our appreciation of Guicciardini's understanding and mastery of the "historian's craft."

This last point is really to suggest that Phillips does not go far enough. His theme that "the art of reading history has been neglected" is a welcome one that challenges modern conventions that "departmentalise" history and literature. But more could be made, for example, of Guicciardini's use in the *Storia d'Italia* of metaphors of storm, sickness and conflagration to illustrate his "craft" and the expectations of his audience. In general, however, Phillips succeeds. He writes with evident sympathy and enthusiasm. Throughout, well-chosen quotations demonstrate his command of the sources. He certainly heightens one's perceptions when reading Guicciardini, effectively discrediting the invented story of the criminal who preferred the galleys to reading Guicciardini's account of the Pisan wars. This study does much to challenge the long accepted view that Guicciardini is neither a literary nor a readable historian.

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