Anthony Molho, ed. *Social and Economic Foundations of the Italian Renaissance*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969. Pp. xi, 239. Cloth \$8.75. Paper \$4.35.

In this skillfully prepared collection of essays, the reader is presented with a clear and concise view of the problems and major historic issues that were an integral part of the Italian Renaissance. The aspects treated are grouped under eight topics that range from life in the city at the end of the Middle Ages to life at the court in the *Cinquecento*. W. K. Ferguson and Hans Baron reveal a keen insight into positive aspects of the period such as the new attitude towards wealth and the business expansion, while others look into the negative aspects such as the impact of famine and plague. Critical articles by prominent scholars in the Renaissance are reprinted here alternately with letters, documents and diaries of the time in translation, illustrating thus objectively the matters under discussion.

The structure of that basic Italian institution: the Commune, is richly documented in relation to growth of population in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, in the initial article 'Padua in the age of Dante' by J. K. Hyde and the magnificence of Florence is viewed instead through an excerpt from the Chronicles of Giovanni Villani. More ample attention is devoted to the growth of wealth and business techniques with seven studies that deal with the commercial revolution of the thirteenth century dwelling on the economic conditions in the Communes (Gino Luzzato), with detailed and witty information about procedures for investment and money-lending (F. L. Lane). The rise of the aristocracy in Milan, Genoa and the Veneto is closely examined with interest shifting from city-life at large to the family unit. A father's advice to his son by Giovanni Rucellai as well as a mother's advice by Alessandra Maccinghi negli Strozzi provide a colorful picture of a world in which all interests and concerns were entirely subordinated to the well-being of the family.

The editor, Anthony Molho, who is also the translator of several passages from the Italian, has presented a vivid and accurate portrait of life in the Italian Renaissance.

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REPORT

Friends of the Victoria (Toronto) Centre

Some years ago an enterprising colleague gave us a copy of a little pamphlet, *Friends of the Princeton University Library*. More recently, one of our Senior Advisors suggested the creation of a similar organization for the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies. Upon hearing last year of the temporary suspension of the Library Grants programme by the Canada Council he thought it urgent that the *Friends of the Victoria Centre* be established this year since our

Centre, along with many other library enterprises, will have to operate with greatly reduced funds for book purchases, although, we hasten to add, the basic strong financial support from Victoria University continues unabated. The effect of the present economic squeeze at a time of inflation makes it very difficult to build up the collection in a steady, systematic manner. Further, we like to have enough funds remaining to acquire those books, xeroxes, and microfilms urgently needed by local scholars and graduate students engaged in research closely related to our field of interests. To be sure, various