

through expansionism. The fourth posits a contradiction between the theory of princely virtues in *The Prince* and the portrait of the Medici family, from Salvestro to Lorenzo, in the *FH*: while the author seems to admire the Medici as “successful princes” (100), she also points out how Machiavelli urges readers to skeptically consider their staging of a theater of “pro-social values” (131). The fifth posits personal influence and networking as the sources of the Medici’s political power by rereading Cicero’s dialogue *On Friendship* and by focusing on the portrait of Manlius Torquatus in both Livy’s *History of Rome* and Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy*. The sixth associates Machiavelli with some basic notions of the doctrine of liberal pluralism and briefly tries to draw the Florentine into contemporary debates on the methodology of the history of ideas—and in political theory, specifically, debates over “the value of party spirit” (166), “civic friendship” (167), and “the ideal of political trust” (168).

The author, a political scientist by training, crosses disciplinary boundaries by devoting more attention than usual in her field to twentieth-century Italian Renaissance historiography: the influence of Dale Kent’s works on Medicean political patronage and instrumental friendship is here particularly striking. Nonetheless, if the author advocates an approach of political ideas that intertwines political history and the history of political thought, she reads a relatively limited number of primary sources: even the 2013 edition of *La legislazione antimagnatizia a Firenze* is not part of her bibliography. The author emphasizes, rather, Machiavelli’s use of “multivocality,” defined, in Straussian fashion, as “a term that denotes the capacity of a single utterance to convey different meanings to different audiences” (19). This notion sometimes helps the author overcome the stern resistance that Machiavelli’s texts pose to the commentator’s interpretive agenda. But when such resistance proves too strong, the author evades this difficulty by simply avoiding engagement with the most pertinent texts—most notably, when she treats Machiavelli’s views on economic and social inequality, or on Christianity, which is the topic of *FH*’s introductory book.

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Il corpo della città: Politica e parentela a Torino nel tardo Medioevo.

Marta Gravela.

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Both family history and political history continue to retain their prominence among historians of Italy, and *Il Corpo della città: Politica e parentela a Torino nel tardo Medioevo* is a recent and worthy contribution to both. In this concise and well-written study by an emerging historian, Marta Gravela reconstructs the kinship groups of the conciliar elites of late medieval Torino and outlines the practices they used to maintain

economic and political power. Economic influence was one of the keys to political participation, and in Torino, as elsewhere, the elites began changing their inheritance practices to keep the patrimony intact. This shift included the movement from a more corporate model of partible inheritance toward the practice of primogeniture, which favored single lineages. Gravela argues that these shifts ultimately led to the weakening of Torinese kinships and resulted in their political decline. Thus, paradoxically, the very inheritance strategies the Torinese elite used to consolidate their power also contributed to their demise. The identification of this process is one of the book's main contributions.

The author uses a range of sources to reconstruct the demographics and political structures of Torino in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and begins the work with a useful methodological overview and discussion. This is particularly helpful as the work interweaves two parallel lines of inquiry—the study of the state and the study of the family. Gravela draws evidence from an impressive range of sources—municipal records, episcopal records, and state records, including wills, town council minutes, census records, civic statutes, and court cases. Nuancing ideas of kinship group versus family, Gravela addresses the terminology and the conceptual framework used by family historians and anthropologists. This proves useful when looking at inheritance patterns as a component of family strategies, and the author provides a typology of inheritance between the spectrum of partible and nonpartible. These patterns are also illustrated by residential patterns, which Gravela depicts with useful maps and tables. This is contextualized nicely in the anglophone, French, and Italian historiography of the family, and the chapter would be particularly useful to a wider audience interested in European inheritance patterns and could provide much-needed comparisons with Italian practices.

As noted, inheritance patterns were often about power. In order to demonstrate this relationship, the author presents several case studies of politically influential families that moved toward the model of nonpartible inheritance to maintain their status and keep the patrimony intact. While nonpartible inheritance strategies could initially consolidate political influence, they were also risky. This strategy often worked during the course of one or two generations, but could easily lead to the extinction of the lineage, as several of the cases attest. Alternatively, other politically prominent kinship groups simply lost their political influence as various branches of the family consolidated their resources into one line, and they were either dispersed or subject to changes in fortune due to a lack of cohesion. Conflicts among heirs were both symptoms and results of these changes from the horizontal to vertical model of inheritance. And by the sixteenth century, the Torinese elite no longer looked the same. While this was partly due to the influx of a new bureaucratic class of elites and recent arrivals, the strategies of the former elites only hastened their demise. It should be noted that this is an important and interesting argument that would have benefited from a bit more contextualization within political history and comparison with various Italian states.

On the whole, the book is exceptionally clear and well written; it is concise and easy to read, and it draws upon a wide range of sources. While scholars often study the political changes inherent in state formation separately from shifts in inheritance patterns, Gravela looks at how these processes worked in tandem. Doing so offers a fuller and more coherent picture of the impact of familial strategies on the formation of the state. The author has given us a detailed, nuanced book that will be of use to both historians of the family and political historians—two groups whose objects of inquiry don't always overlap.

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Istituzioni, scritture, contabilità: Il caso molisano nell'Italia tardomedievale. Isabella Lazzarini, Armando Miranda, and Francesco Senatore, eds.
I libri di Viella 259. Rome: Viella, 2017. 368 pp. €38.

The volume contains the proceedings of a conference held in 2015, and the goal of its three editors—Isabella Lazzarini, Armando Miranda, and Francesco Senatore—is to explore the potential of a research approach, the documentary history of institutions and society, that stands at the intersection of a variety of disciplines (constitutional history, the history of political cultures, the history of writing, etc.).

The case study examined is that of Molise, a region that, at the end of the Middle Ages, was part of the Kingdom of Naples. The research here, however, is not limited to the study of this particular territory, and in order to bring out general characteristics and trends, the case of Molise is compared with the situations in other Italian states—something that is certainly one of the reasons to regard the work with interest. This explains the internal structure of the book, which begins with essays focused on Molise, continues, as the perspective broadens, with the rest of the Italian south, and opens out in the last section to include comparisons with the Papal States, Florence, and the territory of Este.

The result is a very coherent and well-balanced work. Bruno Figliuolo provides a historical overview to start off, outlining the institutional structures of the Molise region in the Aragonese period. Armando Miranda, meanwhile, concentrates on the condition of sources, in particular those stored in the State Archives of Naples. The essay by Serena Morelli is dedicated to one particular source, and analyzes the *subventionis generalis* (a form of taxation) of 1320. This is a very detailed, information-rich document that originated from the comparison between what the *universitates*, the southern municipalities, owed to the crown and how much they actually paid.

In the second section, dedicated to the *Regnum* as a whole, Francesco Senatore's contribution offers a classification of the typologies of documentary and written materials in