Sharon Dale, Alison Williams Lewin, and Duane Osheim, eds. *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy.* University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007. xix + 332 pp. index. bibl. $85. ISBN: 978–0–271–03225–2.

This book features eleven essays by American, Canadian, Australian, and European scholars, including the contributions of its three editors. The collection's main theme is the production of historical accounts in the form of chronicles, annals, and *historiae*, that record the events of highly localized communities — communes, cities, dynasties — on the Italian peninsula between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries. Each essay is divided into two parts: discussion of texts that are then exemplified in an appendix. The essays are ordered chronologically, starting with Edward Coleman's analysis of annals from Cremona that span the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries and ending with Nicoletta Pellegrino's consideration of the fifteenth-century humanist Flavio Biondo's work and his emphasis on the city of Rome as the "world capital of the true religion."

The essays deal with texts produced in different areas of Italy (including some that do not appear often in scholarly studies) and reveal the variety of ways that authors of chronicles, annals, and histories showed in recording the remote and more recent past. This variety is the consequence of both the political fragmentation of medieval Italy and the different social and cultural backgrounds of the "overwhelmingly secular" writers (ix). Coleman analyzes the annals of anonymous notaries that focus on the Lombard city of Cremona; Sharon Dale, the fourteenth-century chronicles of Milan under the Visconti family by the Dominican friar Galvano Fiamma and the notary Pietro Azario; John Melville Jones, the fourteenth-century chronicle of Venice by the Venetian patrician Antonio Morosini; Benjamin G. Kohl, fifteenth-century Paduan chronicles by Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna and Pier Paolo Vergerio; John Dotson, twelfth- and thirteenth-century Genoese annals by various authors from the patrician Caffaro of Caschifellone to Jacopo Doria and Jacopo da Voragine; Paula Clarke and Duane J. Osheim, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Florentine and Luccan chronicles by the members of the Villani family and the merchant Giovanni Sercambi; Pellegrino, fifteenth-century texts about Rome by the humanist Flavio Biondo; Graham A. Loud, recordings of the twelfth-century Kingdom of Sicily by the abbot Alexander of Telese, the notary Falco di Benevento, and the so called "Hugo Falcandus," "an

insider with a close personal knowledge of the personalities of the court and of the workings of the royal administration" (46); and Alison Williams Lewin, texts on the Holy Roman Empire under Frederick II as described by the Franciscan Salimbene de Adam.

These essays show the reader the development of the form with which authors recorded and celebrated the past between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries. Coleman clearly explains the difference between chronicles and annals in the first essay. Chronicles and annals, records of the lives of kings, emperors, and local lords seem to leave space in the fifteenth century to more structured texts that enhance the humanist interest for the critical analysis of the sources, as the authors of the last three essays make evident. However, Kohl, Pellegrino, and especially Ianziti, make abundantly clear that the authors of these texts are also influenced by the audience for which they composed, thus showing their ideological stance and a strong link with the social context of their time.

Indeed, "returning a text 'to its social and political context'" (xvii–xviii) is the explicit aim of the collection, as the editors state in their introduction, referring also to the works of Gabrielle Spiegel, James Fentress, and Chris Wickham on the study of the interconnection between social and linguistic realities and on the notion of social memory (xvii). Medieval and early modern chroniclers, as late as sixteenth-century chroniclers in Bologna and Ferrara, derive their set of linguistic representations from their social context and the political and social organization in which they were active. As the editors state in the introduction, chroniclers are deeply biased in their recording of the past, but through their deformed vision of previous periods one can glimpse the "worldviews and civic identities" that chroniclers shared with their audience (xviii).

Even though the essays of this collection are not all at the same level for interest and originality, they all make the reader aware that chronicles must not be read solely for factual events, but also for the way they document and are "part of the very history they are describing" (xix).

MONICA CALABRITTO
Hunter College, The City University of New York