

than simply divorce them, their husbands, to symbolically reestablish their power and honor, resorted to what the authors call a “coup de souveraineté” (337) in executing them and publicizing their deaths. Deeply researched, *Décapitées* contributes richly to historical, familial, social, cultural, and gender studies of late Trecento and Quattrocento Italy.

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Machiavelli's Florentine Republic. Michelle T. Clarke.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xii + 192 pp. \$99.99.

Machiavelli's Florentine Republic is concerned with Machiavelli's interpretation of the Florentine communal experience during the medieval period, as presented in his last major work, the *Florentine Histories* (*FH*).

In 1520, Machiavelli was commissioned to write a history of Florence, as previous humanist chancellors of the republic (including Leonardo Bruni) had done. At that time, the regime, born out of the 1512 coup, was still contested, and the government was supervised by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who became Pope Clement VII in 1523. The *Istorie Fiorentine*, published in 1532, stops at the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, in 1492. However, enough evidence suggests that when Machiavelli presented his manuscript to Clement VII (in 1525), he considered continuing beyond that date, at least until the fall of the Medici regime, in late 1494. Clarke does not speculate on the reasons why Machiavelli did not continue the work, confining the analysis of “Machiavelli's Florentine Republic” to the chronological limits of the *FH*—thereby excluding the experience of the Great Council Republic (1494–1512). Her central contention is that “Machiavelli's republicanism is best understood as a critical response to the successes and failures of his own city's republican project” (5). According to Clarke, the republican project of Florence would be better defined through an understanding of the Ordinances of Justice against the magnates (1293). She holds that in 1434, with Cosimo de' Medici's recall from exile, “after a century of aggressive popular reforms, Florence had succumbed . . . to what was, in all but name, a form of princely rule.” And the “key objective” of her work is specifically to try to “make sense” of this “climactic event” from the point of view of the history of the Republican ideas (7).

Following an introduction, the book's second chapter compares *FH*'s book 2 with Bruni's *Panegyric of Florence* and his *History of the Florentine People*, emphasizing Machiavelli's critique of the ideological function of humanist discourse. The third aims at identifying a Machiavellian concept of modernity compatible with a neo-Augustinian view of history, according to which the corruption of modern times derives not from the advent of Christianity but from the Roman desire for worldly glory

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