

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.

Amanda G. Madden, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.299

*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

the kingdom, with a focus on both those of the central magistracies and those produced in the outer areas of the territory (petitions in particular). The accounting system of the general treasury of the crown of Aragon is analyzed by Enza Russo, who highlights its cultural characteristics and borrowings (in particular, from Catalan financial practices).

With the essays by Francesco Mottola and Pierluigi Terenzi, the focus shifts from written materials under the crown to those of the territorial bodies between Abruzzo and Molise. This includes not only the cities (L'Aquila above all) but small and medium-sized centers as well, where the authors also investigate practices of conservation and archivism. In reality, not all the territory was immediately subject to crown rule, and Lorenza Iannacci presents the case of a feudal lordship—that of the Orsini, counts of Manoppello. Rosanna Alaggio's contribution, meanwhile, focuses on the role and functions of the chancellery in the Orsini principality of Taranto—one of the kingdom's main baronial establishments.

The essays in the last section of the book effectively portray the continuity and discontinuity that existed between the Aragonese Mezzogiorno and the other Italian states of the time. Armand Jamme's piece concentrates on the writings of the Papal States between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: as the author shows, the development of a stronger and more pervasive model of territorial organization (culminating in the reforms of Cardinal Albornoz) also had direct and very significant consequences for the documentary systems of municipalities, cities, and provinces. Alessandro Silvestri analyzes the written materials and documentary system of Aragonese Sicily, the development of which appears closely linked to what the author convincingly calls "remote government."

The last two essays bring us to Northern Italy. The Tuscan case, in which one city in particular—Florence—dominates other cities and communities, is presented by Lorenzo Tanzini, who focuses on the exchange of letters as a crucial aspect of communication between the center and outlying areas. However, as Isabella Lazzarini observes, the development of new pragmatic scripts subservient to the needs of government was not at all unique to territories with municipal traditions. After all, as Lazzarini points out, the poet Fazio degli Uberti, in his *Dittamondo*, described—disapprovingly—the metamorphosis of many Italian lords, bitterly deploring "the tyrants, these being the modern lords, who sit night and day in their chambers with their notebooks doing their accounts" (325). Regret for an age that seems to have passed is very clear in the poet's verses—an age of lords "with spurs of gold" (325), who busied themselves only with their cavalry. But methods of government had changed profoundly, and, as Lazzarini shows, the lords played a significant part in that change.

Andrea Gamberini, *Università degli Studi di Milano*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.300