

tionship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Here the connection between the individuals and the historical process is much more muddled, with the result that the chapters are dominated more by personality than politics.

A Lost Sense of History

In a sense, this lowering of the level of discussion reflects what happened “objectively” in American history, as the intellectual descendants of Franklin and Washington were kept out of power for

the bulk of the first half of the Nineteenth century. This is where the question of the Carey family, starting with Mathew, comes in. Mathew Carey, with his publication of Hamilton’s work, and his own seminal *The Olive Branch* in 1819, provides the link which leads, along with the work of John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and others, into the second American Revolution accomplished by Abraham Lincoln.

It is surely a good thing that *Founding Brothers* made it onto the Bestseller List

for many weeks, and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. For an American population which has so obviously lost its sense of historical identity, this is a positive sign. But, to get the true picture of what the American Revolution represents, one is still required to read the works of the LaRouche movement on that history—not to mention original sources of the leading individuals themselves. One hopes that reading this book will provoke more individuals to do just that.

—Nancy B. Spannaus

‘Great Projects’ of the Golden Renaissance

Political scientist Roger Masters has developed an obsession: He must uncover all he can about one of the most fascinating collaborations in all history—the working relationship and apparent friendship between Leonardo da Vinci (at the time, the greatest artist and scientist in the world) and Niccolo Machiavelli, then the world’s leading political theorist. For Masters’ readers, at least, this obsession is a very useful one.

This is Masters’ second crack at the subject. In 1996, he produced *Machiavelli, Leonardo, and the Science of Power*, a book that began with a competent, if unacceptably broad, sketch of the Leonardo-Machiavelli collaboration, but then suddenly careened into a bizarre, “politically correct” disquisition on the relationship of political science to sociology.

One likes to think that Masters realized that his first book had done injustice to the subject. For whatever reason, he has clearly spent the next three-plus years widely reading in this area. The result is a solidly researched synopsis of much of the best literature on both Leonardo and Machiavelli. In fact, one could easily recommend Masters’ new book to a reader who wanted a short, undemanding dual biography of the two geniuses.

The Arno River Project

Masters pivots his study around Leonardo and Machiavelli’s plan to divert the course of the Arno, the river that con-

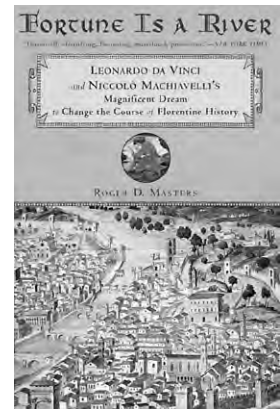
nects the great mercantile and manufacturing city of Florence to the Mediterranean Sea. Arno diversion was an old dream for Florence, for both economic and military-political reasons. In the 1440’s, a generation before Leonardo and Machiavelli, at the height of that flowering of human optimism which we would later call the Renaissance, people began to think that diversion was finally, technically possible, and the city’s best minds, including the genius architect Filippo Brunelleschi, began to plan in earnest.

Masters begins with an exciting proposition: “The history of public works that control rivers is . . . a good summary of the process of civilization.”

He then weaves an entertaining narrative that pieces together just about every scrap of what tragically little information we now know about the Arno project, starting with Leonardo’s early fascination with the river during his days at the court of Milan, and while training with the great geometer Luca Pacioli. This fascination fueled Leonardo’s map series of the Arno valley (whose uncanny detail and accuracy would satisfy a modern reconnaissance satellite interpreter), and also, as Masters rightly emphasizes, gave Leonardo the ability to include the famous “bird’s eye view” of an imaginary river valley in the background of the *Mona Lisa*.

Leonardo’s interest in Arno diversion was, thus, fully developed by the time he met Machiavelli, then the Secretary of the “Ten of War” (the top

diplomatic and intelligence post in the Florentine republic). On the face of it, as Masters amply documents, Machiavelli wanted Leonardo to divert the river for purely military reasons: to ensure the defeat of the neighboring city of Pisa, which also fronted the Arno. However, it seems clear, especially in the context of Machiavelli’s many later comments on the ability of man to use technology to correct the “deficiencies of nature,” that the politician shared the scientist’s understanding that river diversion (and concomitant irrigation and flood control schemes) could



**Fortune Is a River:
Leonardo da Vinci and
Niccolo Machiavelli's
Magnificent Dream
To Change the Course of
Florentine History**
by Roger D. Masters
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288 pages, paperback, \$12.95

transform the political economy of Northern Italy. Surprisingly, Masters, who is willing to speculate freely on other matters, bristles at contemplating Machiavelli's understanding of a "great project" that would surely contribute to his own long-held dream of uniting Italy politically and economically.

Discovery of America

To his credit, however, Masters concludes his discussion of the ultimately failed Arno project with a fine statement that betrays his actual appreciation of what Leonardo and Machiavelli were trying to accomplish: "In the Twentieth century, the Army Corps of Engineers built the Boulder Dam, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and other dams and river projects that transformed America, uniting engineering and technology with pure science and public policy. It is worth wondering if history would have changed had Leonardo and Niccolo succeeded in transforming Florence into a seaport and irrigating the Arno valley."

Indeed. But, Masters' general reticence to "wonder" precisely here, leads to the only real disappointment with his book. One cannot look at the idea of "great projects" spawned by the

Renaissance, without taking note of the greatest of all those projects: the exploration of the New World. Both Machiavelli and Leonardo (in ways upon which we can now only speculate) were involved in the great enterprise to refound European civilization across the Atlantic. Masters documents much of the relevant known information on this, but shies away from drawing out the implications.

For instance, he details the close relationship which both Leonardo and Machiavelli had to the Vespucci family. It was, of course, the explorer Amerigo Vespucci who would lend his name to our "American" hemisphere. Leonardo befriended Amerigo himself when they both studied with Paolo Toscanelli, the geographer whose maps would later be used by the Florentine emigré Columbus. At the same time, Machiavelli's personal assistant was Amerigo's cousin Agostino. When Machiavelli commissioned Leonardo to paint a mural commemorating the battle of Anghiari (never completed), he ordered Agostino Vespucci to provide a report on the battle for the artist's use; this report, in Agostino's handwriting, still exists in Leonardo's notebooks.

Masters would have done well to

investigate Machiavelli's deep and abiding attention to anything having to do with maritime trade and oceanic exploration. Also unexplored is Machiavelli's relationship to another famous Florentine family, the Dei, which is illustrative. The Dei were bankers with branch offices across Europe; Machiavelli used them as confidential informants for his intelligence network. The Dei branch in Spain provided the currency transfer through which Spanish Queen Isabella funded Cristoforo Colombo's voyage.

When Machiavelli was writing his masterwork, the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, he could think of no more appropriate metaphor than the voyages of Columbus, then echoing in the mind of every thinking European, as he opened the First Book of that work: "Although the envious nature of men, so prompt to blame and so slow to praise, makes the discovery and introduction of any new principles and systems as dangerous almost as the exploration of unknown seas and continents, yet, animated by that desire which impels me to do what may prove for the common benefit of all, I have resolved to open a new route."

—Michael J. Minnicino

An Awful Irony of the Twentieth Century

Martin Goldsmith, the host from 1989 to 1999 of "Performance Today," the daily classical music program broadcast on National Public Radio, has written a biography of his German-Jewish parents' life in Nazi Germany. *The Inextinguishable Symphony* details the history of his family, from the turn of the Nineteenth century, through his parents' chance meeting as young musicians in the symphony orchestra of the Frankfurt Kulturbund Deutsche Juden (Cultural Association of German Jews), to their eventual escape to the safety of the United States in 1938.

Goldsmith's book is a rivetting love story which, in addition, illustrates the impact of the Classical revolution of the great philosopher and Orthodox Jew Moses Mendelssohn and his collabora-

tor, poet/dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in shaping the universal culture of the German nation. Unfortunately, it would appear that the author is unfamiliar with this history, to which leading elements of both Christian and Jewish society, including his own family, made significant contributions.

The 'Berlin Socrates'

Mendelssohn—who was known as the "Berlin Socrates"—and Lessing devoted themselves to shaping a new German society, using the ideas of Leibniz and Plato. They were supporters of the American Revolution, and their work in philosophy and the arts established the foundation upon which the great Classical German period of Goethe and Schiller followed.



The Inextinguishable Symphony:
A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany
by Martin Goldsmith
New York, John Wiley, 2000
346 pages, hardcover, \$24.95