Renaissance Letters and Learning. In Memoriam Giovanni Aquilecchia. London; Turin: The Warburg Institute-Nino Aragno Editore, 2012. Pp. 216. ISBN 978-1-908590-42-8. Np.

This fine collection of scholarly essays gives a complex and nuanced portrait of the life and work of Giovanni Aquilecchia (1923-2001), distinguished Renaissance scholar and former Professor of Italian at the University of London. Aquilecchia is widely regarded as one of the most important Italianists, philologists, and literary historians of the second half of the twentieth century.

Edited by Dilwyn Knox and Nuccio Ordine, with contributions by a number of leading scholars, the book begins with a biographical introduction that draws on Knox's 2001 obituary, published in *The Guardian*, following Aquilecchia's death from heart failure. In these pithy few opening pages, Dilwyn Knox and Laura Lepschy give their readers a very personal sense of a scholar who, when ordered by his cardiologist to leave a seminar he was leading and to go immediately to the hospital, went first to apologize to his audience, since, "for the first time in his life, he could not keep a commitment" (4).

Aquilecchia's commitments, both professional and scholarly, were many throughout a long and dedicated career. His legacy is considerable and, indeed, the occasion for this volume, a welcome commemoration of the scholar's work. Published by the Warburg Institute, a source of inspiration to Aquilecchia throughout his life, this collection will be of particular interest to an international community of Renaissance scholars.

Many of the collected essays are versions of papers given at a conference held at the Warburg Institute in November 2002 and thus retain the stylistic mark of lectures later published as essays. It comes as no surprise that the majority of contributors were Aquilecchia's friends and colleagues. Indeed, the book's many scholarly voices express a collective eulogy for the man and a sense of gratitude for his work; they rightly acknowledge the lasting contributions that Aquilecchia made to a number of fields.

In this spirit, some of the essays begin and end with personal reminiscences about the scholar's life. Most compelling are those that specifically address Aquilecchia's achievements in relation to the contributor's topic of research. Among these are Conor Fahy's fine piece on Aquilecchia's editorial work as a textual critic and Hilary Gatti's essay on Aquilecchia's contributions to the history of science. Less relevant are the papers that draw little more than a tangential connection between Aquilecchia and an author whom he himself had studied. Although illuminating, Carlo Ginzburg's paper on Machiavelli, a preliminary sketch of a work in progress, is one such example: it makes no real connection between Machiavelli and Aquilecchia's legacy. Readers may question its place within this volume.

Machiavelli was but one of Aquilecchia's many scholarly interests. Others—Aretino, Tasso, Campanella, Giustiniani, and Bruno—are also given ample space in a number of engaging essays. The study of Bruno, it is well-known, was Aquilecchia's lifelong scholarly pursuit. It is surprising that only one essay in the

entire volume is dedicated to Aquilecchia's considerable contributions to Bruno studies: Miguel Granada's study of *La cena de le ceneri*, Bruno's famous dialogues on Copernican theory, with regard to Dante and St. Augustine. In other essays, only cursory mention is made of Aquilecchia's work on Bruno. Exceptions are Fahy's considerations of Aquilecchia's 1955 critical edition of Bruno's *La cena de le ceneri* and Gatti's persuasive, albeit unexplored, suggestion that Aquilecchia's greatest contributions to the history of science are two of the 1990 papers that he published on Bruno's mathematics.

In this volume, one might have hoped for a more ample discussion of Aquilecchia's research on Bruno, in light of its significance in having debunked commonplace myths surrounding this complex Renaissance thinker—misconceptions that have persisted in the scholarship from the nineteenth century on. The collection does well, however, to remind us that Bruno provided the reason for which the young Aquilecchia, in search of those dialogues that Bruno had published in London centuries earlier, first traveled to the Warburg Institute in the 1950s. It is fitting that, more than sixty years following the scholar's having first set foot in London, this same Institute should now honor Aquilecchia's distinguished career.

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***Education, Civic Virtue, and Colonialism in Fifteenth-Century Italy: The Ogdoas of Alberto Alfieri.* Edited and translated with an introduction by Carla P. Weinberg and E. Ann Matter. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011. Pp. 194. ISBN 978-0-86698-413-3. \$ 55.**

Carla P. Weinberg and E. Ann Matter provide the first ever translation of the Latin *Ogdoas*, a series of eight dialogues written by the fifteenth-century author Alberto Alfieri. While neither the author nor his work are particularly well-known, Weinberg and Matter set out, not only to rectify this lacuna, but more importantly, to justify its importance in Renaissance studies; two goals they deftly accomplish. The extensive introduction to the *Ogdoas* begins with a biography of Alfieri (1-4): a grammar teacher who, at the time of writing, the *Ogdoas*, resided in Genoa in the colony of Caffa, in modern Crimea, and who was, by birth, a Milanese subject. Alfieri himself provides these geographical touchstones in the *Ogdoas* prologue, which are utilized to date both Alfieri and his text. Milanese and Genoese political events figure prominently in the *Ogdoas* as well as their ruling families, the Visconti and Adorno respectively. This is of primary interest because the dialogues purport to have taken place in the afterlife among the deceased members of these ruling families as they muse on subjects of civic virtue and just leadership. The irony of this is not lost on our editors who acknowledge the historical inaccuracy or, more precisely, historical omissions, which they attribute to Alfieri's bias "particularly when it concerns the lives and deeds of statesmen with whom the author wants to ingratiate himself" (42). The title of Matter's 2005 arti-