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-

cle referenced in footnote 1 of the “Introduction” is also telling: “Teaching Virtue from the Ignoble Nobility: Alberto Alfieri’s *Ogdoas* (1421)”. Weinberg and Matter also provide an indispensable analysis of “Alfieri’s Humanism” detailed in the Milanese and Genoese context, which conditioned Alfieri’s work. From the former we learn that Alfieri subscribed to the Milanese interpretation of the classics (including Plato and Cicero) where “liberty” meant simply freedom from foreign intervention and from social disorder, a state attained by the secure position of the duke” (7), as opposed to the more republican favouring of the Florentine interpretation. Even though the Milanese context was more influential, the Genoese one is not to be discounted for “[i]n the end, the cultural context of Italian humanism is the *sine qua non* of the *Ogdoas*, just as one important legacy of Alfieri’s text is how it shows the reach of humanistic thought in the early fifteenth century” (12).

The above elaboration of the humanistic thought is indeed the strongest element of Alfieri’s contribution, as well as the aspect Weinberg and Matter expertly highlight. Pages 16-43 of the “Introduction” not only provide summaries of the *Ogdoas*’ content which in addition to the eight dialogues includes a Dedicatory Letter to Jacopo Adorno, an elegy addressed to Alfieri’s brother, and a Prologue in which Alfieri declares his intent to “show Italian statesmen the way to justice and consequently to eternal salvation” (16), they also provide the crucial context against which Alfieri’s work must be considered. The protagonists of the dialogue are substantially developed in these pages, permitting the reader to appreciate the full impact of Alfieri’s work. This would have otherwise been clumsily achieved via footnotes appearing in the actual text. Weinberg and Matter have left the presentation of the *Ogdoas* largely uncluttered with footnotes of a mainly philological nature that accompany their Latin transcription, and attribution of Alfieri’s sources, which instead grace their English translation.

The premise of Alfieri’s work revolves around the death of Gabriele Maria Visconti (illegitimate son of Gian Galeazzo, duke of Milan), the sole interlocutor to appear in all eight dialogues and his first appearance in the afterlife, making the internal time of the dialogue 1408 (20) versus the time of writing which is instead 13 years later in 1421 (25). What follows is a series of dialogues that take place between Gabriele Maria and his father (Dialogues 1, 2, 6, 8), his great-uncle Bernabò Visconti (Dialogue 3), his stepmother Caterina Visconti (Dialogue 4), his mother Agnese Monetagazza (Dialogue 5) and the Genoese statesman Antoniotto Adorno (Dialogue 7). A family tree can be found on page 46.

The topics covered in these dialogues include, but are not limited to, the contemporary political climate of Milan and Genoa, “predictions” of future events (as Alfieri was writing with the benefit of hindsight), a description of heaven, as well as an interesting allusion to the condemnation of slavery voiced in Dialogue 7 by the interlocutor Adorno who, in speaking of the greed of sea captains and merchants claimed they dealt with “unjustly gotten” (38) merchandise. If indeed Alfieri was referencing the slave trade present in Caffa, our editors claim this to demonstrate “a sensibility and conscience ahead of his time” (38).

Alberto Alfieri’s work, as presented by Carla P. Weinberg and E. Ann Matter, contains enough revelations that justify it as a worthy object of study. It does not

extol the virtues of a great literary text, a fact Weinberg and Matter easily acknowledge and are justified in labelling the “author’s intention to emulate Plato [...] an obvious failure” (42). However, for those of us who study dialogue, even a “bad” one is irresistible, as it often reveals much about how the genre was used and perceived during its most prolific time period. The praise of its writing is correctly deferred to those instances where Alfieri recounts conditions and historical events to which he bore witness either as a participant or an observer. They cite his “best and most credible pages” as those that outline “Milan after the death of Gian Galeazzo, Genoa at the time of Gabriele’s execution, and Caffa at the beginning of its political and economic decline” (43).

The *Ogdoas*’ contribution to political history is undoubtedly its greatest strength according to our editors who cite Alfieri’s list of consuls in the city of Caffa between 1409 and 1421 as “important details that fill a gap in the history of the colony” (43). In bringing Alfieri’s work to light, Weinberg and Matter have provided a valuable text of the Renaissance, which further reveals the thoughts and conditions of a people and a time whose fascination, continues unabated.

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Giovanni Botero. *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*. Translation and Introduction by Geoffrey Symcox. Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2012. Pp. xxxix, 95. ISBN 978-1-4426-4507-3. \$ 45.

The series “The Lorenzo da Ponte Italian library” welcomes Geoffrey Symcox’s new English translation of Giovanni Botero’s *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities* (1588). The work, originally published alongside Botero’s more famous *On the Reason of State*, is divided into three books with a dedication to Duchess Cornelia Orsini Altemps (†1643). This new translation is fitting with the book’s history; it was in fact translated into various languages, including French, German, English, and even Latin, relatively soon after its original publication in Italian. Symcox reminds us that *On the Causes* was translated into English at least twice—“by Robert Peterson in 1606, and by Sir Thomas Hawkins in 1635” (xiii)—and summarized by Sir Walter Raleigh in his *Observations Concerning the Causes of the Magnificency and Opulence of Cities*.

In the Introduction, the editor stresses the basic points of the work, and contextualizes it in Botero’s life and political career using as a guide the essays by the Italian historian Luigi Firpo. The latter wrote the biographical profile of Botero in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Vol. 13. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1971. 352-62), and published the first modern edition of *On the Causes* (Turin: UTET, 1948). Symcox based his own translation on Firpo’s edition with a single variation: chapter 2.7 (*On Industry*), which Firpo published in the *Reason of State*, was restored to its original place. Short but pithy footnotes accompany Botero’s text and help to clarify some of the more difficult passages. For example, Symcox points out the idea that Botero confuses Babylon with Baghdad when he