

limitations of agency for at least some Mediterranean women. It also illuminates the often-ignored lives of women on Venice's imperial periphery and is an important contribution to scholarship on imperial domesticity and intimacy more generally.

The story of Colotta, Coppo's wife, is both more familiar and more opaque than Cyruō's. Her property and status opened professional, intellectual, and financial opportunities for her husband that he would not have enjoyed had he remained in Venice. His marriage elevated him from a minor patrician colonial official to a privileged member of the local elite, and this in-betweenness provided him a distinctive perspective and influence in both Venice and Istria. In contrast, Bembo's unorthodox marriage and the disorder that erupted from a scandal within his household during his governorship of two Aegean islands led ultimately to his political and social marginalization. For both men, the impact of empire on their intimate and professional lives was tightly intertwined and had far-reaching effects on their families and their careers.

Doing microhistory is hard work, particularly when dealing with marginal individuals, yet Maglaque has done a laudable job in teasing out a wide variety of archival and printed sources, including ego literature, travel accounts, epigraphy, humanist treatises, marginalia, and letters, and has buttressed these with a broad reading in the relevant historiography. There is a certain density and opacity to the prose that can obscure at times, and occasionally it seemed the author was perhaps pushing her analysis a bit. Overall, however, Maglaque is to be commended for excavating the details of these unexamined but not insignificant lives in ways that significantly advance our understanding of humanism, empire, and family in the early modern Venetian *stato da mar*.

Eric R. Dursteler, *Brigham Young University*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.359

*Alfonso il Magnanimo: Il re Rinascimento che fece di Napoli la capitale del Mediterraneo.* Giuseppe Caridi.

Profili 81. Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2019. 376 pp. €25.

---

Alfonso the Magnanimous (V of Aragon, I of Naples, ca. 1396–1458) is synonymous with Renaissance Naples and the Italian balance of power. Most anglophone students associate him with Ryder's monographs, the triumphal arch at Castel Nuovo (Hersey), that palace's library and school, and with humanists like Panormita, Valla, Pontano, and Facio (Bentley). More recent Italian studies focus on his creation of an early modern state, his projection of *maiestas* (Cappelli), and his reconfiguration of that state's governance, bureaucracy, and ideology (Senatore, Delle Donne).

Caridi specializes in the early modern Mezzogiorno. This work is part of a series profiling famous historical figures, and he therefore focuses on a detailed political narrative

of Alfonso's life. The great virtue of this book is that Caridi places him within the wider historical contexts of the Crown of Aragon and Iberian dynastic conflict, its ever-expanding role in the Mediterranean, and—as ruler of Sicily and Sardinia and adopted heir to Naples—within broader Italian developments. The author skillfully deploys his sources to demonstrate Alfonso's simultaneous ambitions and challenges as he balanced interests in Iberia with those in Italy as part of a larger strategy for enhancing the place of the Trastámara dynasty within Christendom. The king thus successfully played a major role in the Italian balance among Milan, Venice, Florence, and the Papal States. Unlike his Angevin predecessors in Naples, especially the two Giovannas, Alfonso took great advantage of the ongoing papal schism to apply pressure on Rome to secure his claims to Naples. The author makes clear Alfonso's wider perspective as he variously allied or broke relations with the other emerging Italian states and further afield with Burgundy, France, and the empire. Caridi's detailed account also demonstrates Alfonso's patient and long-term policy of gradually winning over the high nobility of the Regno—and the loyalty of Italy's condottieri—to secure and keep his throne. Meanwhile in Iberia, he had to contend with the constantly shifting loyalties and rivalries of his own family's cadet branches in Valencia, Castile, Navarre, Aragon, and Portugal.

Given the restrictions of this series, the reader will find no discussion of sources or methodology, little analysis of Alfonso's intellectual and artistic patronage, and scant discussion of his religious life and values, of his attempts to radically transform Naples's urban plan, or of wider social and economic trends. Caridi does carefully track the hundreds of thousands and millions spent by Alfonso and his rivals on war and diplomacy, vast resources that became available to emerging monarchies. While the author makes ample and skilled use of primary sources—including Iberian ones and diplomatic correspondence—his account is both limited by this adherence to narrative history and lacking in a broader use of other types of work, such as the urban chroniclers most recently analyzed by Senatore, Montuori, De Caprio, and others, which might have broadened his account with a variety of polarities and perspectives.

Despite these limitations—and Caridi's reticence to go beyond the narrative sources—several important themes emerge. Foremost is the question of Alfonso's intentions in seizing the throne of Naples and conducting decades of warfare securing it. While his narrative reinforces claims that Alfonso's long-term goal was to incorporate the Regno into a realm that would include all the Western Mediterranean and then dominate Italy, Caridi agrees with Galasso's arguments that the king sought balance, not hegemony. He also demonstrates how Alfonso's ambitions belied the chivalrous nature of much of the king's declared intentions and behavior. This is not to say that Alfonso acted cynically, but that he reflected a cultural shift in the Quattrocento that gradually replaced feudal, and chivalric, considerations of rule (so well projected by Robert the Wise in the Trecento or by Alfonso's rival René of Anjou) with a new and self-conscious *raison d'état* that predated Machiavelli and provided that writer with much of his intellectual

context. In this Alfonso well exemplifies Cappelli's analysis of Neapolitan political thought under the Aragonese as the avant-garde of the new nation-state.

Caridi's account is clear and dynamic, granularly detailed, and well documented with endnotes. This volume is an important resource for early modern Neapolitan and broader Mediterranean political history.

Ronald G. Musto, *Italica Press / University of Bristol*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.360

*The Maltese Dialogue: Giuseppe Cambiano, History, Institutions, and Politics of the Maltese Knights (1554–1556)*. Kiril Petkov.

London: Routledge, 2020. vi + 120 pp. \$140.

---

The aim of this book is to draw attention to an interesting unpublished sixteenth-century source for the history of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. It provides a transcription and translation of the exemplar preserved at the British Library, while also making reference to another manuscript of the same work held at the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano. As explained in the introduction, this “comprehensive and detailed exposé of the history of the Order of the Knights of Saint John” (1), called by Petkov the *Maltese Dialogue*, is a treatise written in the form of a dialogue, a literary genre popular in the sixteenth century (see, for example, Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*), by the brilliant character of Fra' Giuseppe Cambiano.

Receiver, procurator general in Rome, and ambassador of the order to the Holy See, Cambiano is introduced through a synthetic but detailed biography that shows us what the perfect model of one of the most important officials of the order at the time should have been like. Cambiano's interlocutors are introduced as well: Giustiniano Giustiniani, a prominent member of the order in Venice, and Girolamo Querini and Bernardo Giustiniani, Venetian patricians immersed in the political and diplomatic life of the Serenissima. These four engage in a conversation about the history, financial situation, constitutions, rituals, and legal nature of the order tailored to the Venetian noble class. Indeed, the ambiguous and centuries-old relations between the order and Venice are the complex backdrop against which this sixteenth-century dialogue takes place. The institutional differences and similarities between the Republic of Venice and the Order of Saint John periodically led both sides to fight for their respective and conflicting interests in the Mediterranean, or to be natural allies in the face of a common enemy, usually the Ottoman Empire. (See the works of Anthony Luttrell, Angelantonio Spagnoletti, Victor Mallia-Milanes, and Luigi Robuschi.) This complex and undulating relationship could be observed through the interactions between members of the order and Venetian patricians, on which the *Maltese Dialogue* offers an intimate perspective.