

tween the great work and the *donum Dei*, divine sanction for the quest. Purš grounds this in contemporary perspectivist practices, which make clear the illustration's intentionality and its iconographic intertextuality.

Jiří Michalík introduces us to the life and alchemical context of the today-obscure Wenceslaus Lavinius of Ottenfeld, a Silesian Lutheran physician who was educated at several European universities before settling in Moravia as personal physician to the prominent noble politician and member of the Czech Brethren, Charles the Elder Žerotín. Michalík centers his presentation on Lavinius's *Tractatus de Coelo Terrestri*, a short tract that was included in volume 4 of the 1613 alchemical collection *Theatrum Chemicum*. The genealogy of this text is not well understood—Lavinus may have appropriated it from an earlier text of French provenance, or the other way around—but this, along with Michalík's discussion of Lavinius's role in procuring manuscripts for his patrons and his place in the social network of late sixteenth-century alchemy, serves to elaborate the complexity of alchemical culture in the period.

*Tractatus de Coelo Terrestri* took up an important theme that runs through the alchemical literature that engages in metaphysical discussion—namely, the relationship between celestial and terrestrial natures in substances and how this may relate to the adept's acquisition of powers to separate them, which were presumably used by God in the creation of the world, as described in Genesis. Michalík places this in the broader discussion of the relationship of art to nature in the late Renaissance, a subject treated at length by William Newman in *Promethean Ambitions* (2004). Lavinus blended this aspect of matter theory with a Paracelsian consideration of material perfection aimed at a hermaphroditic unification of identity, which Michalík interprets as a stand-in for discussion of the philosophers' stone, which is unnamed in the treatise as such.

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*The "De Subtilitate" of Girolamo Cardano.* Girolamo Cardano.

Ed. and trans. J. M. Forrester. 2 vols. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 436. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2013. xlii + 1,058 pp. \$125.

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This is the first complete translation in English of the 1560 edition of Cardano's *De Subtilitate*. Cardano planned this as an exoteric work, covering everything from elemental physics to the visible natural world and its inorganic and organic constituents—humans, their attributes, and their arts and sciences, with a stress laid on mathematics and mechanics, ending with the spirit world, the universe, and God. An earlier edition of Cardano's encyclopedic work had been rendered into French in 1556 within six years of its first publication by a professional translator, Richard Le Blanc, whose introductory dedication to the sister of Henri II indicates that it

was produced for a nonacademic, probably courtly, readership curious about intellectual innovation.

John Forrester's version is aimed at those with an academic interest in Renaissance intellectual history. The scope of Cardano's undertaking poses a considerable problem for an aspirant translator. Le Blanc allowed himself considerable freedom, and delivered his version in a jaunty style that disguises the approximateness of the rendering. Forrester, a medical man with training in classical Latin, decided in his retirement to serve the interests of the non-Latinate scholar. He first undertook something in his own field, two works by the Neoplatonist physician Jean Fernel; with Cardano, he has had to grapple with broader and very different academic domains. What has resulted is, in the self-deprecating words of the translator and editor, a "modest effort to speed Cardano studies up" (xii). Together with the introduction, co-written with John Henry, it will help those who need an English version in order to approach the text with some confidence. Forrester has had to come to terms with Cardano's quirky, even idiosyncratic, Latin, whose obscurities he discusses with great honesty in the footnotes. Much of the text consists in descriptions and anecdotes that, being relatively straightforward, are faithfully rendered. There are also sections that are devoted to a range of specific disciplines, all with their terms of art and their characteristic modes of argument. For the mathematical sections of the text, Forrester was able to call upon the help of the late Jackie Stedall, and her grasp of Cardano's allusive and often casual geometric and algebraic excursions is shown here in the footnotes to book 15, where Cardano attempts to reconfigure Euclid, and book 16, on the "scientiae." Ideally, the translator should have had various other experts at his elbow (not least, a student of Neoaristotelianism), but he had to manage without them. As a result, logic and philosophy are dealt with in a less satisfactory way.

Forrester translates the initial definition of *subtlety* as "the feature ('ratio quaedam') by which things that can be sensed are grasped with difficulty by the senses, and things that can be understood are grasped with difficulty by the intellect" (15). One may note here that "ratio"—a crucial term in the book—is polysemic (Le Blanc rendered it with two words); it sometimes means a mathematical ratio or proportion, sometimes logical coherence, sometimes a cause. There are other such terms that Forrester renders informally: "ridiculous" for "absurdam/absurda" (799–800), "splitting up" for "dividendi ratio" (819), "type" for "species" (in contexts where it relates to definition: e.g., 821). One way such terms of art might have been dealt with would have been to retain the Latin term, and supply the different meanings in footnotes. The additions and modifications made to the text over the two reworkings engaged in by Cardano (in 1554 and 1560) are informally alluded to in the notes, without a rigorous identification of the three strata of the text.

These are reservations about the translation that will immediately strike a specialist; they should not disguise the fact that this translation offers a valuable starting point to those not equipped with the full range of requisite linguistic and philosophical skills,

and will allow them to embark on a reading of the original text. It should be welcomed principally on these grounds.

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*Venezia e la nuova oikoumene: Cartografia del Quattrocento / Venedig und die neue Oikoumene: Kartographie im 15. Jahrhundert.* Ingrid Baumgärtner and Piero Falchetta, eds.

Venetiani 17. Rome: Viella, 2016. 290 pp. €29.

Broader in scope than the subtitle suggests, this volume deals with Venice's role in geographical thought and exploration from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. Taken together the articles offer a kaleidoscopic view of Venice's culture of space and cartography during a period when the European understanding of the world was changing rapidly. The reader has to invest some effort in making connections between the articles, although the process is aided by an introductory survey of the individual contributions, abstracts in English, and an index of modern authors (although an index of historical figures would have been equally, if not more, helpful). This collection brings together discussions of many important maps, texts, people, and issues. It is exciting to see the fifteenth century receiving more attention from historians of cartography and spatial thought; the volume is thus worth careful attention by scholars who read Italian and German for the insights offered by the individual articles and the many new research directions they point toward.

The majority of the articles explore Venice's intellectual community and its various engagements with geographical thought. Patrick Gautier Dalché contrasts the work of two Venetian scholars: Pietro Tommasi, a well-connected humanist who focused on philological issues serving to explain ancient texts, and the more creative Giovanni Fontana, an Aristotelian who tried to synthesize and discriminate among geographical information from all sorts of sources, ancient and modern. Laura Federzoni's study of the editions of Ptolemy's *Geography* points similarly to the bifurcated reception of the text from the more critical and cartographic (including the move to include modern maps) to the more humanist and philological, the second of which she sees as the framework for the Venetian editions of the sixteenth century. Daria Perocco explores the ways in which the circle around Pietro Bembo, with its commitments to humanist Latin, nonetheless encouraged the publication of Ramusio's travel accounts in Italian, while also embracing the experience of the maker (specifically the important cartographer Girolamo Gastaldi). Venice's web of Mediterranean connections is the background to Giampiero Bellingeri's assessment of the so-called Hadji Ahmed world map as a Venetian product, masquerading as the work of a Muslim North African. This fabrication reminds us of Venice's position as a meeting point between European