

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The aim of this book is to draw attention to an interesting unpublished sixteenth-century source for the history of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem.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.

According to Petkov, Cambiano's dialogue had two aims. First, it sought to inform the Venetian public about the institutional nature of the order, its financial organization, its role in capturing and ransoming slaves, the workings of land revenues, and the importance of nobility for the order, the definition of which was not always in tune with Venice's understanding. Second, it tried to provide Giustiniano Giustiniani, trusted man of the order and of Venice, with a guide about the Venetian-Hospitaller case, and therefore a toolkit for being a brilliant Hospitaller official within the Venetian diplomatic and political framework. Furthermore, the dialogue is rooted in a particular and complex phase of the order's institutional transformation following the loss of Rhodes (1522) and the move to Malta (1530). It was a time when the order was trying to construct a new identity and enhance its territorial stability, a key point emerging in Cambiano's conversation about the debate as to whether the order should focus its resources on Malta or on Tripoli. At stake was the need to assert a new role in the eyes of the world as the last outpost of Christendom, but also the pressing need to maintain centuries-old traditions while changing enough to ensure its continuing attraction to recruit new members.

The first part of the book includes short notes by Petkov about various exemplars of Cambiano's work held in different repositories, and transcription and translation criteria. The second part of the book includes a full transcription in the original language (Italian), while the third part is an English translation. This is followed by the bibliography and the index. Petkov's work sheds light on an unpublished and little-known source that adds another piece of the complex mosaic of the order's story and archival trail across Europe. This book is a toolkit through which its readers can better understand the history of the Order of Saint John, but it also has a wider appeal. This is because Cambiano's text offers intimate insight into sixteenth-century state formation processes, religious issues, and maritime affairs across the Mediterranean.

Valeria Vanesio, *University of Malta*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.361

*Victory's Shadow: Conquest and Governance in Medieval Catalonia.*

Thomas W. Barton.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019. xviii + 412 pp. \$49.95.

---

In his first monograph, *Contested Treasure*, Thomas W. Barton examined relations between monarchy and aristocracy through the contest for jurisdiction over the Jewish communities of Tortosa. *Victory's Shadow* continues this examination, but instead of using Christian-Jewish relations as his prism, Barton looks through the Crown of Aragon's territorial expansion into the Ebro valley—namely, the Andalusí cities of Tortosa and Lleida (New Catalonia), and the kingdom of Valencia, between the