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**Cox, Virginia. Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance**

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part 3 deal with Erasmus's controversies with Luther and with the reformers in Zürich and Basel. The chapters in part 4 are on more focused themes of Erasmus's reform ideals, including one on the observance of Christian rituals, one on peace and war, and a final one on women. These are oft-explored themes in the scholarship on Erasmus in the twentieth century, yet the author gives them new focus and insight. They serve as a poignant conclusion to this portrait of Erasmus.

There is a tendency among scholars of early modern Europe to find a particular moment or personality that marks the shift to a particularly modern way of thinking. Stephen Greenblatt's *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* is a recent example of a long-standing genre. If this book goes too far in that direction for this reviewer's liking (despite hiding the emphasis on Erasmus's "modernity" with the ambiguous "new"), the author's erudition and insights more than make up for it.

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**Cox, Virginia.**

***Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance.***

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi, 455. ISBN 978-104214-0888-0 (paperback) \$29.95.

This anthology presents the English translation of a compelling body of poetry authored by Italian women during the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation. It not only features well-known poets such as Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, and Veronica Franco, all of whom have received a great deal of critical attention; it also gives ample space to lesser known authors, such as Amedea degli Aleardi, Camilla Scarampa, and Francesca Turina, who have been completely ignored or mentioned only *en passant* in previous anthologies or studies on women. The key criterion for inclusion in the anthology was the literary quality of the poetry. Not surprisingly, the majority of authors included are those who engaged with the poetic model established by Petrarch. Cox's volume complements her previous two books, *The Prodigious Muse: Women's Writing in Counter-Reformation* (2011) and *Women's Writing in Italy*,

*1400–1650* (2008), both of which very much helped to shape and advance the field of women's studies.

The anthology is prefaced by a long (sixty-seven pages) detailed introduction that covers a range of topics. Cox carefully considers the various contexts that influenced the production of these poems—such as contemporary politics, religion, society, and literature—in order to demonstrate that these women writers did not exist in a void nor were they only temporarily present on the literary scene, as Carlo Dionisotti suggested in an earlier study. They were, in fact, fully engaged with the world around them. A comprehensive and well-documented account of the evolution of lyric poetry from the late fifteenth to the seventeenth century is also provided. Among this study's many merits is Cox's careful analysis of Petrarchism, the dominant lyric model in the sixteenth century. Through a perceptive and in-depth examination, Cox goes beyond cursory overviews and provides, instead, profound insights into the phenomenon. She fleshes out the intricacies of Petrarchism through a rich interweaving of previous and contemporary sources and studies. She traces its advent, the main characteristics that shaped it as lyric idiom, its culmination into the dominant poetic language between the 1520s and 1530s, and finally its transformation after the Council of Trent and the ensuing Baroque period. The poems in the anthology make it evident that Petrarchism not only offered women poets a model for the composition of their poetry but also helped to foster and sustain women's writing.

What makes this anthology stand out among other similar works is that it does not present the individual poets separately, but integrates them into the major themes of sixteenth-century lyric poetry. In so doing, it offers many valuable insights on the nature of their lyric output, with a special emphasis on the interplay of poetic structures, topics, and motifs. As a result, Cox presents women's literary output as a collective enterprise. This novel approach is in stark contrast with traditional anthologies that present poets in a strict biographical manner. By grouping the poems thematically, Cox shows that poetic expression in the early modern period did not rely solely on the practice of imitation of the Petrarchan model, but also took into account the poets' lived realities (their lives, loves, and experiences). Another strength of this anthology is that its compiler expands on the women poets' lyrical disquisitions on love and friendship to include their involvement in a series of other areas, such as religion, patronage, politics, and marital and family life, and even motherhood.

This allows the reader to compare the spectrum of these women's writings within a common theme.

The volume is to be admired for its meticulous archival research, its limpid and concise style, and its readable and fluent English rendering of complicated Italian syntax and ambiguous lexical constructions. Not only the translation, transcription, and editing criteria but also the notes on metre, rhythm, and rhyme make this collection accessible to a wide range of readers. Cox's inclusion of previously excluded poems accompanied by literary analysis and metrical schemes will help a broader audience understand these poets' lyric production. It will also allow scholars to consult these poems in their original language. This is particularly useful since some are available only in manuscript or in difficult-to-find early modern printed editions.

This superb anthology represents a refreshing formalist approach to these writers and a useful engagement with texts unfamiliar to many scholars. It constitutes a major advance in our understanding of secular and religious lyric poetry in the Renaissance. With its valuable introduction and commendably readable translation, this book can be assigned in classes on early modern poetry, at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

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**Dooley, Brendan.**

*A Mattress Maker's Daughter: The Renaissance Romance of Don Giovanni de' Medici and Livia Vernazza.*

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv, 454. ISBN 978-0-674-72466-2 (hardcover) \$49.95.

In Catholic grand-ducal Florence ruled by Christine de Lorraine and Maria Magdalena of Austria was it possible to have a love story involving different social classes and a Medici scion?

Brendan Dooley offers a compelling example, while showing that the price paid by the two lovers was so high as to make their own belief in the possibility and legitimacy of their love truly astonishing. Don Giovanni de' Medici, an illegitimate son of Cosimo de' Medici and Eleonora degli Albizi,