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**Falkeid, Unn, and Aileen A. Feng, eds. Rethinking Gaspara  
Stampa in the Canon of Renaissance Poetry**

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**Falkeid, Unn, and Aileen A. Feng, eds.**

***Rethinking Gaspara Stampa in the Canon of Renaissance Poetry.***

Women and Gender in the Early Modern World. Routledge: New York, 2016. Pp. xiii, 222. ISBN 978-1-4724-2706-9 (hardcover) US\$83.96.

One common pitfall of scholarship on early women writers is to emphasize a female author's biography at the expense of her writing. While Gaspara Stampa's biography is fascinating and thus extremely tempting in this regard, the volume under review successfully manages to emphasize Stampa's artistry. Comprising various articles from the fields of philology, history, gender and women's studies, philosophy, literature, and eco-criticism, Falkeid and Feng's collection builds upon the pioneering studies of the late 1980s and early 1990s by examining how Stampa was in conversation with defining cultural movements of the Renaissance.

To provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of Stampa's poetry, articles are arranged in relation to the wider intellectual movements with which they are connected. Section 1 focuses on Stampa's dialogue with concepts of the sublime and Cinquecento Neoplatonism. Section 2 concentrates on Stampa's participation in both real and imagined communities. Section 3 examines Stampa's interpretation of the notion of *personae*.

A particularly noteworthy study is conducted by Jane Tylus's comparative article on Stampa and Sappho. Arguing that Stampa had a sophisticated knowledge of Sappho, Tylus explores Stampa's anxieties regarding her ability to "compete" with Sappho, whose presence dominated sixteenth-century Europe. Tylus intriguingly explores Stampa's sense of inferiority with respect to gender and class, while affirming Stampa's authorial self-confidence. Hence, our understanding of Stampa is simultaneously destabilized and enriched.

Tackling the much-debated topic of how Stampa both assimilates and rejects Neoplatonism in her *Rime*, Unn Falkeid's study explores Stampa's

sublime realism. Falkeid identifies the Neoplatonic traditions from late Antiquity and Franciscan spirituality of the fourteenth century as two possible sources of sublime realism. As a result, our perception of Stampa's unique brand of eroticism is more deeply rooted in history and thus more comprehensive. By deconstructing overly neat categories of sacred and profane, Falkeid helps to highlight the ambiguity that makes Stampa such an inimitable voice in Italian Renaissance poetry.

Mimetic desire and female *invidia* set the stage for Aileen A. Feng's analysis of Stampa's *Rime*. Feng analyzes how Stampa's poetry incorporates the theme of female jealousy through the presence of a speaking female rival, an inclusion that complicates questions of subject, object, and desire. Examining the role of female-homosocial bonding, Feng evaluates how Stampa challenges the traditional concept of jealousy as a damaging, distinctly female trait that impedes dependability and intellect in women. Feng's article augments the collection through its innovative insight into how female rivalry can in fact help forge new bonds of female community.

Another significant article in Falkeid and Feng's volume is Ann Rosalind Jones's study of Stampa's use of vocabulary relating to the social contract of marriage; *Rime* 178, 179, and 186 are the focus of Jones's article, being the poems in which Stampa condemns Collatino di Collalto for his proposed marriage. Jones's analysis provides new knowledge regarding the intended audience of Stampa's *Rime*. Her findings are also relevant to understanding the degree to which Stampa went beyond the traditional boundaries of Petrarch, and how the poems in question relate to other poems on jealousy found in the *Rime*. Jones's article is an excellent companion to Feng's study for its examination into female jealousy. It sheds new light on Stampa's use of plural audiences, notions of private writing and public reception, and the complex relationship between Stampa and other women at the heart of Stampa's leitmotif of a gendered brand of envy.

In keeping with the volume's extension of past literary criticism on Stampa, Ulrike Schneider explores the *Rime* with respect to existing Petrarchan models: specifically, Stampa's use of *personae* to redefine theories of poetry and genre. In her article, Schneider offers a layered analysis of Stampa's alter ego "Anassilla," and the ambiguity and validation that this alter ego contributes to Stampa's oeuvre. Schneider reveals how Stampa's use of a literary alter ego fits within the larger context of the popular academies and *ridotti* of the Cinquecento.

The strength of this collection lies in the focused, carefully nuanced analyses of its authors, and the thoughtful organization of its editors. The volume thus successfully moves beyond previous tendencies to highlight Stampa's work solely vis-à-vis her female contemporaries, offering instead a refreshing analysis of Stampa's work vis-à-vis the male-female literary culture of the Renaissance.

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**Feitler, Bruno.**

*The Imaginary Synagogue: Anti-Jewish Literature in the Portuguese Early Modern World (16th–18th Centuries).*

Leiden: Brill, 2015. Pp. 216 + 41 ill., 1 table. ISBN 978-90-26410-16 (hardcover) US\$138.

The new book by the Brazilian scholar Bruno Feitler joins a growing scholarly literature considering the specificity of Iberian anti-Jewish polemical texts in the early modern period. This study provides a general overview for a production of works that spanned the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and whose readership extended to the confines of the Lusophone world. It has the great merit of making known polemical works and their authors, largely unknown to English-speaking readers, such as Vicente da Costa Matos, Fernão Ximenes de Aragão, Francisco Paez Ferreira, Francisco Machado, and Antonio Isidoro da Nóbrega, to name but a few. These works, which are obscure even for Portuguese readers, are considered by Feitler in the context of the changing political situation of Portugal from the period of the Iberian union (1580–1640), to its struggle for Independence from Spain, to Portugal's renewed international political and cultural importance in the eighteenth century and that of the shifting policies regarding the New Christians—descendants of Portugal forcibly converted to Christianity in 1497—culminating in the elimination of the Old/New Christian distinction under Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, the Marquis of Pombal, in 1773.

Divided into four chapters, the book goes about identifying the basic topoi present in these works over the centuries as a result of the social strife that ensued