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**D’Aragona, Tullia. The Poems and Letters of Tullia d’Aragona and Others: A Bilingual Edition. Ed. and trans. Julia L. Hairston**

**Ann Crabb**

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article et qui témoignent qu'alors, parler de Marie, c'était parler du monde comme il devait aller, un monde où Dieu ne se cachait pas.

MARIE BARRAL-BARON

Université de Franche-Comté

**D'Aragona, Tullia.**

*The Poems and Letters of Tullia d'Aragona and Others: A Bilingual Edition.*

**Ed. and trans. Julia L. Hairston.**

The Other Voices in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 28. Toronto: Iter Inc. / Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014. Pp. xii, 352. ISBN 978-0-7727-2154 (paperback) \$39.95.

Tullia d'Aragona (1501/5–56) used a variety of genres—lyrical, spiritual, occasional verse, prose dialogues, and epic romance—to establish herself as one of the most versatile and prolific women of letters in the sixteenth century. This edition of her writings is printed on high-quality paper, with even the bookmark reproducing the cover image. An introduction is followed by the complete corpus of 139 poems from and to d'Aragona in Italian and in English translation, and then her ten extant letters. The volume—offering extensive notes throughout—ends with an index of first lines in Italian, a bibliography, and a general index. It does not include the “Dialogue on the Infinity of Love,” which can be found in English elsewhere, or “The Wretch, Otherwise known as Guerrino.”

Julia Hairston's introduction gives biographical information about d'Aragona and makes general comments about the poems (incorporated later in the discussion of d'Aragona's poetry). She contextualizes d'Aragona as a woman who was active socially and culturally in the sixteenth century. D'Aragona built on a career as a highly educated courtesan, that is, as the paid companion of elite men, of whom the banker Filippo di Filippo Strozzi was the most important. She was the daughter of another courtesan, a usual career path, but in this case her mother had fallen away from a respectable background. D'Aragona operated first in Rome but later frequented various Italian cities. When she was about forty she married a Ferrarese gentleman, although marriage was never a big part of her life. She also had one or two children during her life. By the

1530s, she sought fame as an author, and negotiated an identity between that of courtesan and that of writer, and her most important literary patron, Giroloamo Mutio (Muzio), arranged for the publication of her work. As a courtesan, she continued to be threatened by the sumptuary laws requiring sex workers to wear a yellow veil, but she used her contacts to avoid it.

The bulk of the book contains d'Aragona's poetic choral anthology, which is divided into five sections: (1) poems by Signora Tullia, (2) sonnets by her accompanied by responses from other literary figures, (3) sonnets to her by others with her responses, (4) Muzio's biographical pastoral poem, "Tirraneia," written in her honour, and (5) sonnets to her by others without responses. There is also a group of miscellaneous poems and writings from later in her life. Most of d'Aragona's poems are directed to others—some to political figures, like Duke Cosimo de' Medici and Duchess Eleanora di Toledo de' Medici, and some to literary figures. They are mostly poems of praise, with few private musings—unlike, this reviewer notes, those of Petrarch himself. Hairston has arranged the verse in the same order as the original sixteenth-century editions, which had been changed in Celani's nineteenth-century version. She has deliberately made the English translations as close to the sixteenth-century reading experience as possible—ornate and at times convoluted rather than streamlined and modern. The notes to the Italian often point out the rhyme scheme.

D'Aragona, like the other well-known women poets Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gambara, composed in the Petrarchan sonnet form, tinged by Neoplatonism, that was popular at the time. The Petrarchans followed the linguistic theories of Pietro Bembo, who advocated the use of the archaic Italian of Petrarch and Boccaccio as a literary language. One of Bembo's most important promoters was Benedetto Varchi, the Florentine poet, historiographer, and linguist who was d'Aragona's friend and mentor. D'Aragona sent him copies of her sonnets for stylistic correction, which has led to criticism that her poetry was overly dependent on Varchi. However, this criticism does not take into account the many other poets who also sent their poems to Varchi for comment without being accused of loss of authorship. The Petrarchans formed a community of writers, who continually circulated their works to each other, providing each other with editorial advice, and Hairston emphasizes that d'Aragona was a full participant in this movement. The "responses" in which d'Aragona and her co-writers answered each other's poems are a sign of this group approach. Furthermore, the way d'Aragona placed the responses immediately after the

poems was innovative, since previously responses had all been gathered together after the poems.

As mentioned, the book includes ten letters by d'Aragona, nine of which are to her "dear patron" Varchi. Although quite general, the letters have some biographical and literary interest. Hairston believes there are more letters out there in the Italian archives ready to be discovered.

ANN CRABB

James Madison University

### **Dillon, Anne.**

#### ***Michelangelo and the English Martyrs.***

Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. Pp. xxvii, 356 + 81 ill. ISBN 978-0-7546-6647-5 (hardcover) \$134.95.

Anne Dillon's *Michelangelo and the English Martyrs* is a rigorous and illuminating study of an Italian broadsheet from the mid-sixteenth century on the execution of (Catholic) Carthusians in Henrician England. Created in Rome in 1555 by key religious, intellectual, and artistic figures whose respective activities and spheres of influence converge in the figure of Michelangelo, the print as explicated by the author offers a rare and surprisingly comprehensive glimpse of life in Rome in the 1550s.

A truly compelling analysis of a sophisticated print, Dillon's book opens with all the excitement of an erudite whodunit by a seasoned investigator. Much like a work of micro-historical detective fiction, the study begins *in medias res*; in the opening acknowledgements, readers learn how the author made use of forensic photographic resources at the Metropolitan Police Service's labs in London to assist in determining the print's identifying watermark.

The mystery surrounding the broadsheet's production history is evocative of the enigmatic features in and behind the work itself. Dillon's scholarship is uniquely impressive in its interweaving of precise (and abundant) historical detail with focused textual and visual analysis, on the one hand, and broad yet informative overviews of daily life, scientific research, and currents of thought in Rome in the 1550s, on the other. Dillon convincingly argues that the print, destined for an erudite readership, doubled as a descriptive device with