

Introduction

Barbara K. Gold, Paul Allen Miller, and Charles Platter

This collection has two goals: to reclaim some long-neglected Latin texts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and to examine the representations of the feminine and the female body in these texts. The volume asks what ideological values are explicitly encoded by the feminine in these texts; what other, less-articulated values the feminine implies; and what is the role of the Latin tradition in communicating those values. It is our expectation that this interrogation of the figure of the feminine—women both as subjects and as rhetorical constructions—will shed light on the wider dialogue about feminism that now pervades many disciplines, bringing a new historical perspective to current theoretical disputes and demonstrating the importance of the Medieval and Renaissance Latin traditions to later literature. Thus, texts that have long been the preserve of a relatively small group of specialists, who are concerned either with strictly philological issues or merely descriptive studies, will retake their rightful place in the mainstream of contemporary scholarly discourse on the humanities.¹

The essays in this volume focus on works and authors from a long and important period of literature that has largely been excluded from both the college curriculum and modern debate. One result of this exclusion is that a vast amount of material on both women's history and the history of attitudes toward women has also been suppressed. The emphasis in this collection on the figure of the feminine will serve a twin function: it will provide a basis for discussion among scholars from various disciplines, and it will open up for Latin texts from the Middle Ages and Renaissance the kind of exciting dialogue that scholars of classical texts have already begun with critics of contemporary literature.²

There are complex historical reasons for the neglect of these Medieval and Renaissance texts. A full examination would require a volume of its own, but a general outline can be offered. The way that disciplinary boundaries have conventionally been drawn is partly responsible. Traditional studies of classical literature usually stop around the beginning of the fifth century

c.e., although Latin continued to be the dominant literary and intellectual language of Europe until the latter half of the sixteenth century. Consequently, most classicists ignore over a thousand years of the Latin literary tradition. The reason for this is not hard to find. The classical era is traditionally thought to end with the fall of Rome in 476 c.e. Texts produced after that date customarily fall under the rubric of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, which are generally pursued within the framework of the various modern language departments and their corresponding national language sections.

But the notion of a national culture is anachronistic throughout most of this period. Indeed, how can we speak meaningfully of a French, Italian, or German culture in periods when the very idea of France, Germany, or Italy was either nonexistent or only in its formative stages? The concept of national literatures fails to account for the textual production of the premodern era.³ The Middle Ages and Early Renaissance did not produce a set of ideal, homogeneous national cultures, but rather formed their cultural and ideological structures through an expansive and open-ended dialectical interchange. This interchange took place among various regional cultural centers and the larger international Latin culture whose primary, though not exclusive, mode of diffusion was the church.

Thus, although the Latin texts of the Medieval and Renaissance periods represent a huge, untapped scholarly reservoir, they tend to fall through the disciplinary cracks. On the one hand, they are postclassical and so outside the domain of classicists. On the other, the very international character of Medieval and Renaissance Latin culture defies classification according to the categories that were developed in the nineteenth century to chart the destinies of Europe's various national languages and literatures. As a result, these texts have been marginalized and seldom read. The progressive obscurity into which they have fallen has, in turn, provided modern scholars with a further *post facto* justification for their neglect.

This division of labor between Classical and Modern Language departments and their respective professional associations did, however, make some sense when it could be assumed that every educated person read Latin fluently. It was not at that time unreasonable to assume that scholars in French, Italian, English, and Spanish would read the Latin texts produced by those whom they claimed as their national authors. Today, however, we can no longer assume this level of linguistic competence. Few nonclassicists read Latin comfortably, and fewer still have a detailed understanding of the history of classical Latin literature, although a knowledge of this history was assumed by most Medieval and Neo-Latin writers, as well as by many of their contemporaries who wrote in the vernacular.⁴ For writers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the classical tradition was

frequently both source and springboard for their creative work. Thus an understanding of the Latin texts of those periods themselves and their companion works in the vernacular often assumes a horizon of cultural and linguistic interpretation that no longer exists.

This is not to say that important work on women in Medieval and Renaissance literature has not been done. The past two decades have seen a large number of books devoted to women in Medieval and Renaissance vernacular literatures.⁵ This work indicates a wide interest in the topic. Yet these studies largely ignore the influence of Latin culture. As a result, although they are valuable, they tend to be incomplete. Our volume will offer a partial corrective to this deficiency and suggest directions for further research.

More recently, classicists and neo-Latinists working on Medieval and Renaissance texts have begun to devote some attention to women writers and characters in literature and to feminist issues. For example, a volume from Routledge in 1993 on *Feminist Theory and the Classics* is the first explicitly theoretical work on the intersection of feminism and classical literature (both Greek and Latin).⁶ Two anthologies and descriptive treatments of women writers in the Medieval period have also appeared,⁷ and there are now several more specialized works (translations of works on women, articles on women and medicine in the Medieval period).⁸ Nonetheless, little work exists on the figure of the feminine (both author and character) in the vast body of Medieval and Renaissance texts written in Latin and almost nothing of an interpretive or theoretical nature. The few interpretive works that are available cover only the Medieval period. Thus a growing body of work addresses gender issues in the Middle Ages and Renaissance in an increasingly theoretically sophisticated manner, yet too often it is innocent of Latin and the rich tradition that informs it, at the same time, the works currently produced on Medieval and Renaissance Latin texts remain largely untouched by both feminism and theory.

It is to this double lacuna that the present collection addresses itself. The essays deal with three interrelated topics in Medieval and Renaissance Latin literature: the status of women as writers, the status of women as rhetorical figures, and the status of women in society. The time period covered ranges from the fifth to the early seventeenth century c.e.; the papers proceed in chronological order. The aim of the volume is to make this vast body of literature better known to contemporary scholars and to demonstrate its relevance to current debates on feminism, the canon, and the nature and history of the western tradition. At the same time, the texts examined are interesting for their ability to problematize issues like originality and imitation that are now, since the publication of works like Gian Biaggio Conte's *The Rhetoric of Imitation*, in the forefront of the current

critical reappraisal of Latin literature.⁹ A more detailed knowledge of the heavily imitative texts of Renaissance and Medieval Latinity will deepen any Latinist's understanding of the intertextual relationships that produce literary imitation and of the interpretive problems that arise from it.

Finally, feminist theory often examines the terms of women's existence in a society dominated by men and male institutions. Several different approaches to this issue are possible: for example, an analysis of images of women created by men, whether in the texts of literature, philosophy, politics, art, or any other means of cultural production; and a focus on the voices of the women themselves. The latter introduces the difficulty of self-representation while using a language in which the domination of women has been encoded.

This volume addresses all these issues pragmatically, offering essays both about masculine representations of women and about women who speak in their own voices. It presents to feminist theorists a concrete body of work about women, available in most cases for the first time in English, which will contribute to the ongoing debate about the status of women in a male-dominated society. We hope that this volume will serve as a catalyst for Medieval and Renaissance Latin studies and will encourage more academicians to include Medieval and Renaissance women writers and works with a strong female presence in their classes and in their own work.

The first paper, "By Woman's Tears Redeemed: Female Lament in Saint Augustine's *Confessions* and the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise" by Nancy A. Jones, starts by establishing in the works of Saint Augustine the centrality of the figure of the feminine in the iconography and symbolic economy of the Middle Ages at the very beginnings of the postclassical epoch. According to Jones, women's tears are a primary but deeply ambiguous form of power in late antique and Medieval literature. They signal women's roles as witnesses and intercessors in the scheme of salvation and thus identify women with a type of spiritual agency and authority. In this way, too, they figure in the climactic episodes of autobiographical conversion narratives. In her reading of two exemplary texts, Saint Augustine's *Confessions* and Peter Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum*, Jones shows that these narratives not only offer a framework for female authority within Medieval theology, but also continue a cultural discourse that seeks to contain the disturbing personal dimensions of lamentation and represents conversion as a fundamentally male experience. These are themes that will recur throughout the volume, with particular relevance to the character Augustinus in Petrarch's *Secretum* and the theology of the feminine as expounded by Cornelius Agrippa (see the essays by Paul Allen Miller and Diane S. Wood in this volume).

Through Nancy Jones' careful analysis, we discover how Augustine in his *Confessions* intertwines his mother's spiritual ordeal with his own. While Augustine praises his mother's "sacrificial tears" as a principal agent in his conversion, the rhetorical strategy of his text uses them to intensify the magnitude of the son's sins and, by extension, the importance of his conversion. In Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* and the *Letters of Direction* addressed to Heloise and the nuns of the Paraclete, he imposes a Christological meaning on Heloise's expressions of grief and thereby perpetuates the hierarchical structure of their earlier relationship. He thus moves gradually from a stance of humility to one of authority, and he remains the subject of salvation within their common narrative. As is true of Monica and Augustine, so Heloise, despite having become Abelard's "sister" in their conversion, remains the instrument of his salvation. In both cases, the women's tears serve as a sign pointing the way towards salvation, but also function as vanishing mediators whose momentary presence is quickly reappropriated by the master narrative of masculine salvation.

In our second essay, "Hrotswitha Writes Herself: *Clamor Validus Gandeshemensis*" by Barbara K. Gold, we see that the figure of the feminine is central to men's writings but also occupies pride of place in the discourse of women themselves. Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, a tenth-century Saxon canoness, is the first known dramatist of Christianity and the first Medieval poet consciously to have attempted to remold the image of the literary depictions of women. Her six plays, in which her stated aim is to glorify the Christian church and to exalt the ideal of chastity, make extensive use of the Roman comic playwright, Terence. In this essay, Gold first discusses Hrotswitha's reputation as a female playwright and the misreading of her work as a result of various forms of bias in the scholarship. She then explores Hrotswitha's self-presentation in the prefaces to her plays and its echoes in her characters. Next Gold examines Hrotswitha's relationship to her male classical/pagan and hagiographic sources, as well as the role played by Hrotswitha's audience. Finally, she analyzes one of Hrotswitha's dramas, the *Passio Sanctarum Virginum Agapis Chioniae et Hirenae (Dulcitius)*. In her plays and prefaces, Hrotswitha vindicates her female protagonists, with whom she and her audience would presumably have identified, and establishes a space to define herself and the women's culture in which she lived. She thereby becomes a chronicler of women's tales and a creator of women's history, capable of shaping and influencing women's ways of knowing.

The understanding of the construction of a feminine voice begun in the investigation of Hrotswitha is continued in a more complex form in Phyllis Culham's "Gender and Negotiating Discourse: Mediated Autobiography and

Female Mystics of Medieval Italy." Culham discusses the vitae of Margherita of Cortona and Margherita of Faenza, as well as the Sermones of Umiltà of Faenza and the *Liber* of Angela of Foligno calling them "mediated autobiographies." In each case, the female "author" dictated her thoughts to a male who admits in the extant text to having edited what he was told by "removing excess words" or rearranging the text to improve the sense. The women associated with the texts deny all intentionality either as authors or as subjects of their own narratives; it was, they said, divine will that directed their thoughts and the making of the record. These women claim that their knowledge of divinity is direct and absolute but that their lengthy descriptions of the divine nature are deceptive. The male mediators claim no firsthand, mystical contact with the divine but still assert that the documents they generated are an absolutely authoritative source of knowledge.

In the past, various forms of historicist, phenomenological, and psychological criticism have been applied to these problematic texts with disappointing results. Phyllis Culham here presents a forceful case for the superior heuristic value of an archeological approach based on the works of Michel Foucault in examining these complex, many-layered documents. Culham suggests that, using a method derived from *Discipline and Punish*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and volume one of the *History of Sexuality*, we can see how these mediated narratives participate in the negotiation of power and knowledge within their episteme. Foucault believed that the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 sparked a revolution in where and how people looked for the truth, and Culham argues that these texts continue that revolution. They seize the genre of the confession back from the confessor. They supply models for the assumption of religious authority by a prosperous urban elite, especially by wives and mothers who failed to conform to the earlier model of the saintly virgin. They move previously public shame and confession out of the squares of the communes into the vicarious experience of texts.

The final paper on the Medieval era is, "The Saint of the Womanly Body: Raimon de Cornet's Fourteenth Century Male Poetics" by St. John Flynn. Flynn's paper begins with the observation that the figure of the feminine is always open to a variety of appropriations. Indeed, from Eve to Pandora, to Dido, to the elegiac *domina* in the works of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the icon of the feminine has been used to represent a variety of complex and often contradictory notions. The early fourteenth-century troubadour Raimon de Cornet was one of only two Medieval Provençal poets to write both vernacular and Latin lyrics. His two Latin pieces are testimonies to his Cistercian vocation: one a litany to the Virgin Mary, and the other a eulogy of the life of the great Cistercian founding father Bernard of Clairvaux. Using the theories of contemporary

French feminists such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, Flynn seeks to show how both pieces are examples of male sexual poetics born of patriarchal sexual discourses. In each poem, Raimon seeks to establish a link between the figure of the Virgin and the Cistercian saint; in the litany Bernard provides a textual model for the Virgin, and in the eulogy the Virgin serves as a model for the life of Bernard. The figure of the Virgin is, therefore, a male poetic construct. She is not real in any subjective, autonomous sense but becomes a means of expressing Raimon's admiration for Bernard of Clairvaux. The male poet appropriates the female body of the Virgin such that she becomes what Cixous describes as "the uncanny stranger on display." As in secular poetry from the Medieval Provençal troubadours to the present, patriarchal strategies are used to present an idealized female who reflects the male. There is then a continuity between the practices of Augustine as outlined by Nancy Jones in the volume's opening essay, where his mother's tears are the sign of his own salvation (and hence a reflection of him rather than her), and those of Raimon, where the Virgin reflects the male Saint rather than vice versa.

The volume continues with two essays on Petrarch, the transitional figure from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and, in many ways, the most widely read of the authors treated here. The first of the two papers is "Petrarch's Sophonisba: Seduction, Sacrifice, and Patriarchal Politics," by Donald Gilman. It argues that Petrarch's presentation of various female characters is particularly important to our understanding of the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. In most of the scholarship on Petrarch's *Africa* (1339–43), Petrarch is seen as reworking Livy's account of the Second Punic War, extolling the heroism and piety of Scipio Africanus while denouncing the subversion and snares of Sophonisba. Such a view is accurate but incomplete, and an analysis of Sophonisba within the contexts of patriarchal prerogatives elucidates the role of this problematic character in the *Africa* and so more fully defines Petrarch's thoughts on the place and function of women in early Renaissance society.

In the first section of the paper, "Neither Sinner nor Saint," Donald Gilman examines the portrayal of Sophonisba as a stereotypical seductress (e.g., Eve, Delilah) and a tragic victim (e.g., Phaedra, Dido). In the second segment, "From Marginalization to Legitimacy," Donald Gilman investigates Sophonisba's predicament in terms of patriarchal politics. Her allegiance to Carthage and her defiance of Roman rule compel her to shift from the domestic domain of women to a public arena reserved for men. Existentially, she assumes a legitimacy, but her suicide "neutralizes" and "naturalizes" her actions, consigning her to the eternal enclosures of Hades. In the third part, "Everywoman," Gilman compares her actions to those of Petrarch's representations of Medusa and Lucretia, who, through similar

suffering, assure the restoration of temporal order. Finally, like Eve, who, according to patristic commentaries commits a *felix culpa*, Sophonisba reflects the condition of humankind that accounts for sin and sacrifice in the redemptive and recreative process of a divine design. Thus while her role is marginalized and problematized to a greater extent than what we have already seen in the cases of Monica's tears for Augustine or the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Raimon de Cornet, the actions of Sophonisba, delineating both a character and a subject position, ultimately find their justification in their ability to insure male salvation (as in the case of Monica or Heloise; see Jones' paper in this volume). The real difference between the case of Sophonisba and that of her predecessors is that, in Sophonisba's case, the cost of male redemption is female damnation.

By the beginning of the Renaissance, then, woman's traditional position in the divine symbolic economy has begun to erode. Her relation to both male and female salvation has become much more problematic. It is this increased interrogation of the feminine that constitutes the focus of the second paper on Petrarch, "Laurel as the Sign of Sin: Laura's Textual Body in Petrarch's *Secretum*," by Paul Allen Miller. In this paper, Miller argues that the birth of humanism's commitment to rediscovering an authentic antiquity, stripped of the allegorical anachronisms of the Medieval world's reading of classical texts, is inseparable from the increasing problematization of the feminine's symbolic power in Petrarch's own textual economy. Miller argues that the *Secretum* is characterized by a fundamental ambivalence over the semiotic status of woman and that this ambivalence is a function of the poet's problematic historical position between the ideological and social worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Paul Allen Miller begins by noting that Petrarch's simultaneous commitment to a world of piety and secular learning is particularly problematized in book three of the *Secretum*, where Augustine, in the character of Augustinus, tells the poet that he is bound by two chains that insure his damnation: love for Laura, and the pursuit of poetic glory. Miller maintains that the necessity of this collocation is inscribed in the epistemological, ideological, and sexual tensions that structure the *Secretum*. Laura, he argues, functions within Petrarch's work as a signifying body. Her physical beauty, Petrarch admits, is what makes possible her signifying function, but through that signifying function, Petrarch contends, he has been led from the love of Laura to the love of God. Augustinus replies that the poet has the order reversed: he should not love the creator because of the creature, but the creature because of the creator.

The debate between them centers around Laura's function as signifier both in Petrarch's life and his work. Does she make the ultimate transcen-

dental signified, God's Logos, manifest to the senses, or does she deflect the poet's thoughts from the eternal to the merely temporal? In the light of such questions, the relationship between Petrarch's love of Laura and his pursuit of poetic glory comes into sharper focus. For poetry, like Laura, is a text that seduces by its beauty, while promising its lover the possibility of a transcendental signified in the form of a revelation of some fundamental truth or hidden meaning. If Petrarch is to give up one, he must also give up the other. The dialogue ends with his accepting the intellectual and theological force of Augustine's arguments but refusing to draw the necessary consequences from them. He will continue to write poetry and continue to love Laura, come what may.

Our next essay, "Woman, Space, and Renaissance Discourse" by Diana Robin, launches a discussion of Renaissance women's space as articulated by the discourse of women themselves. The essay begins with Foucault's intriguing suggestion that a whole history of spaces, that would at the same time be a history of powers, remains to be written. Robin notes that the humanism of Petrarch and those who followed in his wake was increasingly practiced by women, as well as men, although their work was not accorded the same prestige as that of their male counterparts. The same period also sees a growth in the production of "catalogues and encyclopedias of women's lives." These two phenomena, Robin argues, played key roles in what she labels "the literary production of women's space," a notion that she interprets in light of Kristeva's concept of the *chora*.

Diana Robin commences her investigation by noting that, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the first printed encyclopedias of eminent women's lives began to appear in Italy. Like most learned source books in the Renaissance, they were in Latin. These biographical encyclopedias were, in turn, a logical consequence of the enormous interest in autobiography on the part of both readers and writers from the late fifteenth century onward. After Petrarch, it became almost de rigueur for writers to publish their familiar letters in Latin. These edited books of personal, Ciceronian letters (usually spanning several decades) offered an autobiographical portrait of their authors, among whose ranks were a few renowned women. Gender and the production of the figure of the feminine are focal concerns in both women's letter-books and encyclopedias of their lives. Both genres represent reactions, in one way or another, to the great European controversy of the period on the nature of woman, the *querelle des femmes*, and to Boccaccio's very influential *De Claris Mulieribus* (*Concerning Famous Women*). In this article, Robin argues that the Latin letter-books of two fifteenth-century Italian women in particular, Cassandra Fedele and Laura Cereta, represent alternately attempts within the format of the courtly

Quattrocento letter-book to respond to, or to accommodate and contest, certain older, Boccaccian traditions about gender difference and women's "nature." The result is the creation of a uniquely feminine literary space.

A male defense of women from the same period is the topic of Diane S. Wood's "In Praise of Woman's Superiority: Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's *De nobilitate* (1529)." Here we see that the *querelle des femmes* continued to occupy a central position in Renaissance humanist debates. Wood focuses initially on the rhetorical techniques used by Agrippa in his *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus* (1529) to undercut traditional and especially biblical injunctions that limited women's freedom and opportunities. Agrippa argues that the contemporary treatment of women is contrary to both divine and natural laws. According to him, laws, customs, and education all contribute to the suppression of women. Changing such human constructs is his implicit goal in writing the *De nobilitate*. Using both logic and hyperbole, his arguments subvert the rationale for the officially sanctioned gender oppression that had developed from the misogyny inherent in the writings of the early Church Fathers. Wood contends that an examination of his rhetoric illuminates his strategies and clarifies why his work is at the heart of the *querelle des femmes*. His arguments are used and reused throughout the sixteenth century, making an understanding of his approach vital to those interested in women's status during the period. Not content with proving that women are equal, Agrippa sets out to demonstrate their inherent superiority to men and thereby ensures through his rhetorical exuberance the great popularity of the *De nobilitate* among the partisans of women in the *querelle*. He reverses the conventional binary oppositions that are normally used to support the argument for male superiority in order to demonstrate the opposite view, and he thus reveals himself to be a kind of deconstructive feminist *avant la lettre*.

The next essay examines the intersection of classical imitation and sexual identity that was to remain problematic for humanists from the time of Petrarch to the end of the sixteenth century. Charles Platter's, "The Artificial Whore: George Buchanan's *Apologia pro lena*," focuses on the elegiac and erotic poetry of George Buchanan. This portion of Buchanan's oeuvre has received little critical attention compared to his political history and religious writing. Yet these poetic writings should be of considerable interests to all students of Renaissance literature, since they are among the clearest examples of Buchanan's intimate knowledge of and dialogue with the tradition of Latin poetry. One of the longest and most impressive examples of this erotic and elegiac strand in his poetry is his *Apologia pro lena*, an elegy written and circulated privately probably in the 1540s. The diction of this poem is so heavily laden with borrowings from Latin elegy that, at first glance, it might appear to be simply repetition rather than

creative imitation. A closer reading, however, indicates that, although Buchanan appropriates all the machinery of elegy, he then transforms it to suit his rhetorical purposes.

The primary way in which this imitative strategy finds expression is through his construction of the *lena*. In Roman poetry, she is a sexually ambivalent figure, both a procuress and an obstacle who threatens the poet's exclusive possession of his *puella*. Buchanan attempts to reduce this power by depriving her of her ability to dispense sexual favors arbitrarily. He does so by first investing the *ars lenae* with the values and attributes of poets and poetry as described by Augustan elegy. At the same time, he downplays her status as a procuress in such a way that her "art" is, at times, indistinguishable from the connubial Venus she supposedly supplements. Charles Platter shows that, through these two strategies, Buchanan's poem attempts to reconstitute the Roman *lena* in such a way as to preserve her elegiac shape while simultaneously depriving her of sexual authority over poets. The poet thus achieves mastery over his medium, as defined by the humanist doctrine of classical imitation, without having to submit to the mastery of the *lena* or the elegiac *domina*, as was the case in Buchanan's Latin predecessors. As we saw in the works of Petrarch, sexual and literary agonistics are ultimately found to be one.

Our next essay " 'She Never Recovered her Senses': *Roxana* and Dramatic Representations of Women at Oxbridge in the Elizabethan Age" by Elizabeth M. Richmond-Garza, demonstrates how the figure of the feminine was bound up in concepts of national, as well as literary and historical, identity. Richmond-Garza begins by pointing out that, although many critics place the universities on the margins of Tudor England, Elizabeth I's own frequent and elaborate visits suggest that they occupied a central position in its intellectual and political construction. They produced a rich and ignored body of texts whose most outrageous examples are the plays presented by, and for, academic and aristocratic audiences. Often more incendiary than anything that could have been played on the London stage, these legitimate "exercises in rhetoric" were praised and funded by the authorities. Consistently politically irreverent and even subversive in their content, all the plays present challenges to modern critical expectations of what material was permitted a public hearing. In the contexts of the long period of female control represented by Elizabeth's reign and of the rapid international commercial expansion of the Elizabethan economy, one Cambridge play of 1592 stands out.

William Alabaster's *Roxana* assaults his audience not only with one of the bloodiest and most savage of revenge actions but also with a double problematic: its two antagonists are women, Atossa and Roxana, fighting over a single husband/lover, and their weapons are seduction, infanticide,

and decapitation. The story takes place in Bactria, involving both a European orientalist representation of the Near East and its own internal xenophobic text: Roxana is from India. The play combines a consideration of the problems of the representation of women within the codes of marriage and alliance with an attempt to construct a new view of "the East" for an English audience. Richmond-Garza shows that this play, anticipating the comments of critics like Edward Saïd on the complicity of these two projects, challenges its voyeuristic male audience, who would have viewed the atrocities acted by and upon women necessarily within a perspective informed by the policies and self-construction of their own female monarch.

The volume concludes with a chapter by Holt Parker: "Latin and Greek Poetry by Five Renaissance Italian Women Humanists." This is a project in making visible. Even with the current revival of knowledge about the education of women, the existence of Latin and even Greek poetry from the hands of women remains largely unknown. They are absent from anthologies of Renaissance Latin poetry by reason of their sex and from anthologies of women's verse by reason of their language. They present a microcosmic view of the more general problems that this volume is meant to address. After a brief introduction outlining the place and importance of verse composition in humanist education and life, Parker provides short biographical sketches of five women educated in humanism: Angela Nogarola (fl. c. 1400), Isotta Nogarola (1418–66), Costanza Varano (1426–47), Alessandra Scala (1475–1506), and Fulvia Olympia Morata (1526–55). The sketches are followed by texts and translations of their surviving Latin and Greek poetry. In addition, he provides information for further research on the works of Luisa Sigea of Toledo (c. 1522–c. 1560), Elizabeth Jane Weston (1582–1612), and Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, the first woman to win the Ph.D. (Parma, 1678).

Notes

1. See, for example, Jozef Ijsewijn's very useful *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies, Part I: History and Diffusion of Neo-Latin Literature* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990). This is an immense work of true scholarly devotion, but its primary appeal is to fellow specialists.

2. See, for example, Helene Foley, ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (London and New York: Gordon and Breach, 1981); Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt, eds., *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London: Croom Helm, 1983); John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan, eds., *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Marilyn B. Skinner, ed., *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity*, *Helios*

13.2 (1986); three special issues of *Helios: Studies in Roman Women* parts. 1 and 2. 16.1 and 16.2 (Spring-Fall 1989) and *Helios* 17.2 (Autumn 1990); Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin, eds., *Feminist Theory and the Classics* (London: Routledge, 1993).

3. As the disciplines of comparative literature, semiotics, and postcolonial studies, as well as the current debates on the canon, show, it is not clear that the concept of national literatures is much more useful for modern texts.

4. Oswyn Murray, "The Idea of the Shepherd King from Cyrus to Charlemagne," *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Oswyn Murray and Peter Godman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 2.

5. Joan M. Ferrante, *Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Eileen Edna Power, *Medieval Women*, ed. M. M. Postan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Susan Mosher Stuard, ed. *Women in Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976); Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983); Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Susan Mosher Stuard, ed. *Women in Medieval History and Historiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds. *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988); Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley, eds. *Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings: Essays in Feminist Contextual Criticism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See also Nancy F. Partner, ed., *Studying Medieval Women: Sex, Gender, Feminism* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1993), a collection that interrogates the role of sex, gender, and feminist thought in medieval studies today.

There are also many journals that carry important reviews, updated bibliographies, and articles on women in Medieval and Renaissance vernacular literatures. See, for example, the list of journals and reviews in Partner, *Studying Medieval Women*, pp. 171–75.

6. See note 2.

7. Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: a Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (d. 203) to Marguerite Porete (d. 1310)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

University Press, 1984), a presentation of selected Latin texts by women from the third to the thirteenth centuries and an appreciation of those texts; and Katharina M. Wilson, ed., *Medieval Women Writers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), a collection of essays on women writers in the Medieval period (of whom only two write in Latin).

8. Helen Rodnite Lemay, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus's "De secretis mulierum" with Commentaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Monica Helen Green, "Women's Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe," *Signs* 14.2 (1989): pp. 434–73.

9. Gian Biaggio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, ed. and trans. Charles Segal (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).