

Gaspara Stampa, The Complete Poems: The 1554 Edition of the "Rime," a Bilingual Edition. Edited by Troy Tower and Jane Tylus. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe.* University of Chicago Press 2010. xxix+443. ISBN: cloth, 9780226770710; paper, 9780226770727; e-book, 9780226770734.

IN ONE OF HER more well-known sonnets, the sixteenth-century poet Gaspara Stampa confided in her readers a hope that "someday I will be renowned and praised" (139). Five hundred or so years after her death, Stampa's wish is being fully realized. After falling into relative obscurity, aside from a brief surge of interest in her work during the eighteenth century, Stampa's work has become increasingly well known in the past few decades. Thanks to this growing body of research amply attested to in the bibliography, we now have the most complete edition of her work to date—Jane Tylus and Troy Tower's bilingual edition and translation of the 1554 edition of her *Rime*.

Born in Padua ca. 1523 to Bartolomeo Stampa, a prosperous merchant, and his wife, Cecilia, Gaspara received an exemplary classical education; an education that she put to excellent use as is abundantly clear in her work. After her father's death, Gaspara, her mother, her younger sister Cassandra, and her brother Baldassare moved to Venice and entered the city's famous literary scene. At this point, her road to fame took a slightly different path from her contemporaries. Unlike her fellow poet Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa never married, despite marriage or the convent being the desirable paths for women of her status. Moreover, despite the controversy her single status caused, and whether this was by choice or necessity, there is no indication that Stampa took up as a courtesan as did her fellow authors Tullia d'Aragona and Veronica Franco. This part of her life and an inability to neatly categorize her has afflicted scholarship since the first eighteenth-century edition of her work. Tylus handles these issues deftly and with a careful attention to detail in both her translation and introduction.

As is clear from this edition, Gaspara was a young woman of considerable talents, and she showed a particular aptitude for music. Proficient enough to capitalize on this, as a young woman she made her musical debut in Venice's salons. She quickly became famed as a renowned *virtuosa* (skilled artist) in Venetian circles associated with noted patrons like Domenico Venier, also patron of Veronica Franco. Building upon her musical training, she began composing poems for her performances—mostly sonnets, but also capitoli and madrigals—which lent themselves well to improvisation with stock melodies. She also began circulating her work in poetic exchanges with other Venetian luminaries.

While gaining acclaim in this artistic and literary milieu, Stampa met her muse—the Trevisan Count Colallino di Collalto. A landed aristocrat, soldier, and patron of the arts who performed music and wrote poetry of his own, Collalto enraptured and seduced Gaspara. The two were to carry on a love affair that informed much of her poetry until her death in 1554. More importantly, her relationship with Collalto and a few other lovers, her status as *virtuosa*, and her frank poetic discussion of love and desire all contributed to a complicated reputation that lingers to this day, a reputation only made more complex by the depth and richness of her poetry.

Jane Tylus lays out these contradictions of Stampa's life in her introduction nicely without the need to fit her into any one category while neatly synthesizing the growing body of scholarship on the poet. Following the 1554 posthumous edition compiled by Gaspara's sister Cassandra closely, Tylus makes every effort to respect both Gaspara's life and the spirit of her work. Tylus pays careful attention to rhyme and meter in her translation of Stampa's poetry—a difficult feat that she balances nicely. The fruits of this approach to translation are radically apparent and give a much richer feel and sense of the musicality of the poetry. Those who choose to read Stampa in the English will note the rhythm as much as those who read Stampa in the Italian.

This edition will doubtless solidify the increasing interest in Gaspara's work. It is fitting to consider this masterful edition of Gaspara Stampa's *Rime*, the penultimate work before the series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe's* move to the University of Toronto Press, as exemplary of just how much the series has grown in the last fifteen-plus years. If you were to peruse the series' impressive catalog of editions of works written by or about women between 1300 and 1700, you might be inclined to answer Joan Kelly's question, "Did Women have a Renaissance?" with a far more affirmative answer than Kelly did herself in her seminal article. In part, this modified picture and understanding of women's writing is due to this influential series and the impact it has had on the study of premodern women writers in the past two decades.

Since the publication of the original translation of Henricus Cornelius Agrippa's *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex* (1996), the series has published a total of sixty titles under the auspices of the University of Chicago Press. Now housed at the University of Toronto Press, there are plans to finish the series with an impressive combined total of one hundred and seventy-seven volumes. Not only have these editions enormously benefited scholarship on premodern women writers, the texts themselves are designed to be accessible to those without specialized knowledge and lend themselves

perfectly to use in the classroom. Each text is complete with a series introduction, an editor's or translator's introduction, and an explanation of the edition. Jane Tylus's edition, the first complete translation of the *Rime*, reflects just how far we have come. In short, Tylus has produced a masterful edition full of rich context and an ample bibliography, all with a clear understanding and deft handling of the challenges not only of translating but contextualizing such a complex woman and her works. Like many of the editions in this series, this one is sure to be enjoyed and studied for decades to come.

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