

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Gambara, Veronica. *Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition*. Ed. and trans. Molly M. Martin and Paola Ugolini. Critical intro. Molly M. Martin

Benedetta Lamanna

Volume 40, numéro 1, hiver 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086316ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i1.28461>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Lamanna, B. (2017). Compte rendu de [Gambara, Veronica. *Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition*. Ed. and trans. Molly M. Martin and Paola Ugolini. Critical intro. Molly M. Martin]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(1), 256–258. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i1.28461>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2017

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

éru  
dit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

use, and also gain some creative ideas for building these performances into lectures and learning activities. I especially appreciated Sheila T. Cavanagh's critique of these recordings as conforming to a "happy ending" view of the play, along with her suggestions about how "to take pedagogical advantage of this relative uniformity" (181). This collection provides engaging, balanced, and creative perspectives on a play that features regularly in theatre repertoires and classroom syllabuses alike.

MARGARET JANE KIDNIE

Western University

### **Gambara, Veronica.**

***Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition.* Ed. and trans. Molly M. Martin and Paola Ugolini. Critical intro. Molly M. Martin.**

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 34. Toronto: Iter Inc. / Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014. Pp. xiii, 168. ISBN 978-0-7727-2168-6 (paperback) US\$39.95.

This bilingual edition of Veronica Gambara's complete poetic works is the first of its kind. Until now, Allan Bullock's noteworthy 1995 volume was the only modern critical edition of Gambara's complete poetry; however, in Bullock's text, Gambara's poems appear solely in Italian.

Written by one of the first female poets to emulate the Petrarchan model, Gambara's poems were not assembled into a single printed edition until 1759. Their rhetorical originality helped Gambara forge important political alliances and establish her reputation as the voice that honoured Brescia and as the "Sappho" of the early sixteenth century.

The cover image of *Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition* features Antonio Allegri's (named Correggio) *Portrait of a Lady*, a stunning painting that mediates the absence of images within the text. The text itself begins with a comprehensive, stimulating critical introduction to Gambara's life by Molly M. Martin, who sheds light on the uneasy balance between cultural currency and political power that dominated Renaissance Italy, and in turn, Gambara's poetry. Tracing significant similarities between Gambara and fellow poet and noblewoman Vittoria Colonna, Martin is careful to stress what makes

Gambara unique: while Colonna steadfastly established her identity as a widow throughout her writing, only three poems by Gambara centre on widowhood. Emphasizing the public and political realms that dominate Gambara's poetry, Martin provides us with rich detail on Gambara's appointment as regent dowager of Correggio after the death of her husband. While the assumption of a woman to power in the absence of a legitimate male heir was common in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, Gambara cultivated an image of chastity in her poems, transferring her devotion from her husband to God. Martin correctly evaluates how this shrewd and innovative self-representation enabled Gambara to defend her political authority.

The introduction also provides an absorbing account of the development of Gambara's writing. While her early works focus on individual meditations that often present the poet-persona suffering because of the emotional caprices of love, her later poems emphasize her virtue and respectability as a widow. Martin astutely evaluates Gambara's use of a triangular narrative framework in her mature writing—a structure that enables the poet to write of a couple's amorous intrigues while protecting her public image as a pious widow.

In a note on the translation, Martin and Paola Ugolini assert their intention to adhere as closely as possible to Gambara's ideas, as opposed to her poetic form. The often intricate lyrical language and syntactical complexity of Gambara's Italian justify the editors' decision. Nonetheless, additional clarification is provided in specific instances in order to reflect the polygonal meaning of Gambara's lexicon, thereby avoiding the risk that certain tropes become lost in translation for modern readers.

A remarkable choice made by Martin and Ugolini was to provide a prose translation of Gambara's poetry. At first glance, this decision seems unconventional; however, upon a close reading, the prose format enables Gambara's singular voice and elevated, erudite style to be preserved. Further, because of the difficulty of dating several of Gambara's compositions, poems are presented thematically (as opposed to chronologically) according to the following categories: love, place, correspondence and *encomia*, politics, spirituality, and the *Stanze*. This artificial division of poetry establishes a pleasant flow, which is particularly useful to the novice. On the other hand, the advanced scholar will appreciate the invaluable footnotes that highlight the overlap across thematic divisions, ensuring that the complexity of Gambara's poetry is not erroneously oversimplified.

The footnotes provide particularly insightful examinations of the links between the poetry of Gambara and that of Petrarch and Lorenzo de' Medici. They also offer an intriguing hypothesis regarding Gambara's exploration of the theological doctrine of predestination, and examine her support of the Medici rule throughout her tenure as Countess of Correggio.

Regarding the debate as to whether certain poems were penned by Gambara or Colonna, Martin and Ugolini abide by Bullock's 1995 catalogue. One notable exception is "Vinca gli sdegni e l'odio vostro antico" (May the holy and sacred name of Christ overcome your outrage and your ancient hatred), which Martin and Ugolini attribute to Gambara, citing the poem's publication history as evidence of authorship.

Poems appear first in Italian, followed by an English prose translation. This accessible format is only problematic for the *Stanze*, a lengthy ottava rima for which a facing translation would have made for easier reading.

In conclusion, Martin and Ugolini's bilingual edition of Gambara's complete poetic works is a much needed and highly opportune addition to early modern literary studies.

BENEDETTA LAMANNA

University of Toronto

### **Goodrich, Jaime.**

***Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England.***

Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014. Pp. xi, 244. ISBN 978-0-8101-2938-2 (paperback) US\$39.95.

In her dynamic study of women's authorial agency in early modern England, Jaime Goodrich argues for a reevaluation of early modern translation and the possibilities it afforded for women's cultural, political, and religious engagement. Broadly, Goodrich contests the view that translation yielded fewer opportunities for expression than original authorship, especially for women, maintaining that translation instead provided "an extreme form of polyvocality" (191) that opened powerful avenues of articulation. More specifically, Goodrich focuses on women's religious translation, a body of work