never expelled from it for his allegedly heretical beliefs, Polcri convincingly suggests interpreting the poem not only as a literary composition enriched with allegorical structure in the attempt to entertain its readers but also as a poem representing allegory with moral and religious significance that clearly reflects Pulci's intention to profess genuine religious cannons.

Along with offering a new approach to re-evaluate Pulci's *Morgante* and sonnets, Polcri compiles indispensable sources of extant documents, letters written in Latin and Italian, and scholarly works concerning both Pulci's biography and literary compositions written throughout the centuries. The meticulous work of compiling such valuable information for his research certainly demonstrates that Polcri's analysis is based on substantial evidence. This book, therefore, should be a great resource for further examination of Pulci's literary compositions especially his minor works that still wait to be thoroughly studied.

Pulci's literary works, namely his masterpiece *Morgante* and controversial sonnets have inspired literary intellectuals to produce scholarly works throughout the centuries; however, the majority of these scholarships is conducted in Italian. Hopefully, the appearance of this book will increase Anglo-American Renaissance scholars' interests in examining further Pulci's literary compositions and perhaps encourage translation of his minor works into English.

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Rothman, E. Natalie. *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012. Pp. 323. ISBN 9780801449079. \$ 45.00 (Hardback).

E. Nathalie Rothman's *Brokering Empire* challenges the common scholarly assumptions on the important, and yet often bastardized concepts of subjecthood, otherness and belonging in the early modern Venetian and Ottoman empires. To do so, the author proposes to move beyond mainstream, and elite-based, analysis and conceptualizations of Venetian society as divided into patricians, citizens and plebs (11). Instead, Rothman introduces the concept of 'trans-imperial subjects' in order to "explore the complex networks of alliance and interest, hierarchies of authority, and modes of interaction between the various groups and individuals that helped draw political, religious, and linguistic boundaries in early modern Venice" (3). Borrowing from post-colonial theory and language, the author brilliantly underscores the relevance of these 'trans-imperial' actors whose multiple social formations and interactions pertained to, and helped shape, the shifting boundaries between the Venetian and Ottoman empires between the mid-fifteenth and the late seventeenth centuries. In other words, Rothman claims that the study of persons and groups that populated and articulated the complex web of networks of interrelatedness underscore the necessity to comprehend the import of their "in-betweenness" so as to better approach certain a priori social, religious and political categories and boundaries (13-4).

The book is divided into four thematic sections, the first three investigate the roles of specific groups of trans-imperial subjects, whereas the last and forth section assesses their interactions and articulations. Specifically, Section I looks at commercial brokers as constituents, participants and builders of borders and institutions within and throughout the Venetian and Ottoman empires (34). In this respect, Rothman pays close attention to the institution of *suppliche* or petitions put forward by these trans-imperial commercial brokers and “how they claimed membership in metropolitan Venetian society while in fact expanding the meaning of such membership well beyond the boundaries of legal citizenship” (83). Indeed, this first part accurately presents the extent to which legal categories did not properly match the actual roles and conceptualizations of belonging and foreignness as part of the societies and groups under study.

Section II looks at religious converts—mostly Jewish, Muslim and Safavid—in early modern Venice and how they shaped, and were shaped by, the boundaries of religious inclusion and exclusion (131). Here, Rothman introduces a sensitive analysis of the *House of Catechumens* of 1557 and its role in the integration of converts into networks of patronage. Rothman further highlights the fundamental political and imperial role the *House* by connecting the metropole with colonies and subjects abroad (125-6). Indeed, the author shows how the *House* played the role of a “trans-imperial institution, geared to producing loyal juridical and social subjects rather than merely saving souls” (160).

The third thematic section pertains to the role of dragomans or official interpreters employed by the *Venetian Board of Trade* and how “they merged the practices of self-representation and engaging officialdom that typified metropolitan Venetian elites with ones developed by dragomans in Istanbul around the same time” (165). These trans-imperial dragomans, moreover, impersonated the tension *citizen vs. foreigner* as they played a fundamental role in defining who and what could be deemed ‘foreign’ in Venice (186).

The last and fourth section introduces the broader picture of the project, that is, the interactions amongst the three genres of trans-imperial subjects – commercial brokers, religious converts and dragomans, their function in the process of “boundary-making” “and their embeddedness in specific institutions and genres” (189). In demonstrating how Venetians conceived difference, Rothman does a superb job, for instance, at tracing the conceptual history of the hypernym *Levantine* and how the articulation and meaning of this concept shifted over time to the point that it was employed, first, to define the local Jewish community to then designate a rather broader series of sojourners—Venetian, Safavid as well as Ottoman (212). In deploying this category, the author claims, trans-imperial subjects provided “a corrective to the Eurocentric and top-down genealogy of Orientalism” (213).

Overall, *Brokering Empire* not only results in a bright challenge to mainstream historical scholarship on the subject but also pursues a novel and arguably fresh methodological path that includes sensitive historical, textual and conceptual evaluation of subjecthood, otherness and belonging. Perhaps, one question that is prompted by Rothman’s own work, and that remains unanswered, is how trans-

imperial subjecthood, if ever, was regarded by the elites in the Venetian metropole. That is, one wonders how pre-existing structures of power may have played a role in the complex network of trans-imperial creation of boundaries and consequently how this interplay of forces shaped the static top-down social and political structure of the Republic of San Marco.

Nevertheless, this book is an example of careful research ranging from the archival study of *suppliche* and trials to the linguistic diachronic analysis of the concept of *Levantini*. By introducing and elucidating novel paths for the understanding boundaries, by challenging mainstream scholarly assumptions on the tension *local vs. foreign*, and by pioneering an arguably inter-disciplinary approach, Rothman's *Brokering Empire* deserves to be read attentively and categorized as a 'classic in the making' in the field of historical studies.

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Marie-Françoise Piéjus, Michel Plaisance, Matteo Residori (eds.). *Alessandro Piccolomini (1506–1579): Un siennois à la croisée des genres et des savoirs: Actes du Colloque International (Paris, 23–25 septembre 2010)*. Paris: Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, 2011. Pp 304. ISBN 9782900478318. € 30.

The editors of this new and very rich collection of essays focused on the life and work of Alessandro Piccolomini, note that the Renaissance personality was a major figure both in Italy and Europe, but that his legacy remains largely unstudied. (9) Piccolomini is known for his dialogue "*Della bella creanza delle donne* (sometimes called "*La Raffaella*") (11) as well as occupying a place in the Academies of Sienna (*L'Accademia degli Intronati*) and Padova (*L'Accademia degli Infiammati*).

Part I of the volume opens with a contribution by Franco Tomasi titled, "*L'Accademia degli Intronati e Alessandro Piccolomini: Strategie culturali e itinerari biografici*." Tomasi argues, and successfully so, that the *Cento sonetti* of Piccolomini are not only a literary work, but also yield insights into significant chapters of Piccolomini's life, at least up until the 1540's. (23) In order to prove his thesis, Tomasi examines the discontinuity and re-founding of the *Accademia degli Intronati*, various academic lessons and lectures, the questions of love, writings in the vulgate, and lyrical texts. Salvatore Lo Re's, "*Piccolomini tra Varchi e Speroni*" examines how the work of both Varchi and Speroni influenced Piccolomini's own project of popularization. The third essay by Paul Larivaille, "*Piccolomini et L'Arétin, Une amitié légendaire?*" questions the assumption of the supposed reciprocal literary relationship between Piccolomini and Aretino. The essay demonstrates that critics have rightly shown the influence of Aretino on Piccolomini, but the reverse is not the case. (62) Matteo's Residori's essay "*Enseigner la morale. Réformer l'écriture: L'Institutione (1542) d'Alessandro Piccolomini*" argues that though one can read Piccolomini's works of translation as a commitment to popularizing edifying ideas and works of ancient authors, they also can be read as commentaries on writing and expression in the Tuscan tongue. Residori shows us how