serve as a reference companion to a survey of Italian literature course. Since all primary sources are in translation, no knowledge of a Latin or Italian is needed.

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Konrad Eisenbichler. *The Sword and the Pen. Women, Politics, and Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Siena.* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012. Pp. 392. ISBN 9780268027766. \$32. (Paperback)

This meticulously argued study presents and contextualizes the poetic production of a group of patrician women in Siena in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. *The Sword and the Pen* offers modern editions and English translations of 79 poems, some previously published by the author. Eisenbichler shows how Petrarchism becomes the means to engage in the poetic discourse of the larger community of male poets, and for these poets to express themselves distinctively on a wide variety of topics. The scholar's patient research underscores the aptness of Virigina Cox's assertion that "much of women's writing before the 1540s circulated in manuscript, not in printed form."

The poets are bound by relationships of kinship, admiration, and communality of religious beliefs or political interests. The scholar uses the metaphor of a "virtual academy" to describe the community, comparable to academies like the *Intronati* of Siena. Besides the poetry, documents suggest discussions among women, as well as between men and women, on topics ranging from Dante's *Paradiso* and Leone Ebreo's Platonic philosophy, to astronomy, theology and moral philosophy.

The Sword and the Pen opens with two pieces that set the scene. The first has a male protagonist: Alessandro Piccolomini, who, in the summer of 1540, makes a pilgrimage to the tomb of Petrarch in Arquà, then circulates a sonnet of homage, *Giunto Alessandro a la famosa Tomba*, in Siena and elsewhere. Women and men respond in *tenzone*, including six Siennese women whose responses raise questions of spirituality and the social restraints that prevent women from pilgrimages like those of the young student, among others. The second piece is more provocative: it is a 1538 dialogue by Marc'Antonio Piccolomini in which several women discuss whether beauty is the consequence of chance or design, leading them to debate the role of Providence and free will, and eventually, the necessity of Purgatory. One of the interlocutors, Laudomia Forteguerri, assumes decidedly heterodox positions, only to be guided back to orthodoxy, inviting us to ponder why a young woman of social prominence would be portrayed in this way.

The Sword and the Pen then focuses on three poets known for their beauty, charm, and wit: Aurelia Petrucci, Laudomia Forteguerri and Virginia Martini Salvi. Reliable historical information on the three poets is scarce, leaving the scholar to conjecture frequently. Although only two poems by Aurelia Petrucci (1511-1542) survive her call for unity among the warring Siennese factions, *Dove sta il tuo*

valor; *Patria mia cara*, won her lasting fame. The surviving corpus of the second poet, Laudomia Forteguerri, (1515- c.1555), consists of six sonnets. Considered a woman of legendary intelligence, beauty, autonomy and audacity, Forteguerri is said to have led the women of Siena in the defense of the republic in 1553; she was a student of Dante's *Paradiso*, and she wrote love poetry for Margaret of Austria, the natural daughter of Charles V. Eisenbichler compares her "same-sex" love poems to Michelangelo's sonnets for Tommaso Cavalieri, and finds them inferior in emotional intensity. However, Alessandro Piccolomini thought them significant enough to deliver a commentary on one sonnet at the *Infiammati* in Padova in 1541, the first time that a work written by an Italian woman was accorded this distinction.

Virginia Martini Salvi (1510- post 1571), an able and innovative Petrarchan poet, is the most prolific of the three writers presented at length. The record of her interrogation for sedition in 1546 establishes biographic details. Forty-five of Salvi's works were published by Lodovico Domenichi in his 1559 anthology of women poets, many more than by prominent and established writers like Vittoria Colonna. Her octave sequence, *Da fuoco così bel nasce il mio ardore*, a gloss on Petrarch's *Pace non trovo e non ho da far guerra*, was known in Italy and the Imperial court of the Netherlands, and set to music by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, the most prominent musician in Rome. Salvi also wrote extensively on the political situation in Siena, urging the French king to save the republic's ancient liberties. If her poetry did not move the French royal family, it did circulate among Italian literati, including Pietro Bembo. Exiled to Rome in 1556, Virginia Martini Salvi continued to campaign for influence, sending epistolary sonnets to a group of powerful cardinals.

An epilogue brings together what is known of an additional 8 poets: Cassandra Petrucci, Lucrezia Figliucci, Francesca B, Atlanta Donati, Silvia Piccolomini, Ermellina Arringhieri de' Cerretani, Pia Bichi, and Onorata Tancredi Pecci, and is an invitation for further research. Also attached is an appendix of works with translations by Emellina Arringhieri de' Cerretani, Francesca B, Pia Bichi, Ortensia Scarpi, Atalanta Donati, Laudomia Forteguerri, Lucrezia Digliucci, Cassandra Petrucci, Silvia Piccolomini, Virginia Martini Casolani Salvi and Onorata Tancredi Pecci.

The Sword and the Pen is of general interest to the student of sixteenth century Italian culture, a unique lens that refracts the turbulent political history of Siena and Italy, the spread of religious ferment, the founding and functioning of academies (official and virtual) in various cities of Northern Italy, the practice of circulating texts among friends and prominent people of both genders, and the cultural roles of figures like Alessandro Piccolomini, Benedetto Varchi and Luca Contile. It offers a vision of women as autonomous thinkers and actors, and as persons of prestige whose "friendship" enhanced the stature of male intellectuals in the period.