

Lucrezia Marinella. *Enrico; or, Byzantium Conquered: A Heroic Poem.*

Ed. Maria Galli Stampino. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. xxvii + 477 pp. index. append. bibl. \$90 (cl), \$35 (pbk). ISBN: 978-0-226-50547-3 (cl), 978-0-226-50548-0 (pbk).

Maria Galli Stampino's work offers a partially edited and translated version of Lucrezia Marinella's Italian epic poem *Enrico, ovvero Bisanzio acquistato*, published for the first time in Venice in 1635 by Imberti. Stampino provides an extensive and detailed introduction to Marinella's life and work and to the peculiar historical and cultural context in which the *Enrico* was conceived. She argues that the poem is "the most anomalous of all Marinella's texts" (2), "'foreign' in Venice for many additional political and cultural reasons" (3) and differs in several ways from the previous epic and chivalric models. She then summarizes the poem, with particular attention attributed to female protagonists, who are — according to the editor — the most important. Particularly useful is the "Glossary of the Principal Characters," where the main characters of the poem are introduced and the numbers of the cantos in which they appear are given. Before the translated cantos, a concise and selected volume's bibliography is also provided.

Marinella's poem is very long: it includes twenty-seven cantos, 2,471 octaves that narrate the events of the Fourth Crusade (1202–04), which — according to the Venetian tradition — led to the conquest of Byzantium by Enrico Dandolo, doge of Venice. The length of the poem likely forced Maria Galli Stampino to select the parts she wanted to be published. Although the poem is not entirely translated, the editor does not omit the most important epic moments and closely follows the episodes linked to the most interesting female figures. Moreover, she provides a summary of all omitted sections and cantos. The notes of the text explain the most difficult passages and link some of the episodes with the previous tradition. This book, in line with others from the University of Chicago series *The Other Voice*, is not a bilingual edition and thus does not give the original Italian version of the text, which would have expanded the already large volume. Yet the final appendix offers a selection of cantos, or excerpts from cantos, in Italian. Since the translated octaves are in prose, this appendix gives an example of how the verses would sound in the original version.

A modern Italian edition of the *Enrico* is not yet available. The publisher Antonelli printed the last one in Venice in 1844, and while an electronic version of the poem has been available on the website Italian Women Writers of The University of Chicago (www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/IWW) for several years, it is a pity that, once again, a published translation is made available before a modern

edition of the original Italian. Of course, Anglo-American scholars and readers seem to be more interested than Italian publishers in rediscovering the history and work of early modern women writers, and thanks to the series *The Other Voice*, Marinella's text is now available to an international public. However, in a prose translation of a poetic text — even an accurate one like Maria Galli Stampino's — literal references to the text of the previous tradition and the musicality of the octaves risk inevitably being lost. This is the reason why both international and Italian scholars urge an Italian version of the poem. Fortunately, Maria Galli Stampino is filling this gap, since she is also editing the Italian text to be published by Mucchi in 2011.

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