

Contents

I.	Introduction	7
II.	Petrarchism and motives for its pre-eminence in the sixteenth century	9
III.	The sixteenth-century woman	13
IV.	Female poetry and its individual features in a selection of representative poets	
IV.1.	Female and 'emancipatory' themes	
IV.1.1.	The theme of love and eroticism with reference to the autobiographical backgrounds	25
IV.1.2.	Education and the intellect	69
IV.1.3.	Self-confidence as 'donna', 'cortigiana', and 'poetessa'	91
IV.1.4.	Female symbolism in the description of nature	135
IV.2.	Scholarship and religion in female poetry	
IV.2.1.	Poetry as a means of communication with scholars, literati, and public figures	161
IV.2.2.	Religious poetry and religious themes	193
V.	Language used by the poetesses: scholastic Petrarchism or self-confident originality?	
V.1.	Language and style: original or conventional?	215
V.2.	Mechanical, imitative, or interpretative borrowing from Petrarch?	241
VI.	Conclusion	261
VI.	Bibliography	267