

## **Isabella di Morra's Poetry and the Transmission of a Textual Community**

This paper examines the transmission of the works of Sixteenth Century Italian poet Isabella di Morra (ca 1520-1545) and the remarkable textual community they generated. Her thirteen poems have had a unique journey to the press, beginning when they were discovered by the police after Isabella's brothers murdered her. The texts were then sent to Naples to be circulated and read in literary circles, and subsequently on to Venice, where they first ended up in print, seven years after her murder. Eight of her sonnets and one canzone appeared in Ludovico Dolce's anthology of 1552, and the remainder of her poems were then published in Dolce's second volume of 1556. It was at that point that Isabella's textual existence and community finally began, and grew to prosper in several important anthologies. Thus, by the 1560s she numbered among the six female authors whose work was most frequently printed in the Sixteenth Century.

As this paper will show, Isabella's participation in print culture generated a textual community which continues to flourish in a variety of texts such as André Pieyre de Mandiargues's play *Isabella di Morra* (1973) and more recently, in the lyrics of singer song-writer Alessio Lega.