



Paternal Tyranny (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe)

Arcangela Tarabotti

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Sharp-witted and sharp-tongued, Arcangela Tarabotti (1604-52) yearned to be formally educated and enjoy an independent life in Venetian literary circles. But instead, at sixteen, her father forced her into a Benedictine convent. To protest her confinement, Tarabotti composed polemical works exposing the many injustices perpetrated against women of her day.

Paternal Tyranny, the first of these works, is a fiery but carefully argued manifesto against the oppression of women by the Venetian patriarchy. Denouncing key misogynist texts of the era, Tarabotti shows how despicable it was for Venice, a republic that prided itself on its political liberties, to deprive its women of rights accorded even to foreigners. She accuses parents of treating convents as dumping grounds for disabled, illegitimate, or otherwise unwanted daughters. Finally, through compelling feminist readings of the Bible and other religious works, Tarabotti demonstrates that women are clearly men's equals in God's eyes.

An avenging angel who dared to speak out for the rights of women nearly four centuries ago, Arcangela Tarabotti can now finally be heard.

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