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production that ultimately displaced the primacy of neo-Latin poetry in favour of vernacular poetry. In so doing, she also exposes the social, economic, and political motivations that promoted this shift. All of this is accomplished through careful analysis of the vernacular poetry collections published during this fifteen-year period, and through critical literary analysis of the texts that were included in them. In other words, the author achieves that often-elusive balance of material context and textual analysis without privileging one over the other.

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Sanson, Helena, and Francesco Lucioli, eds.

Conduct Literature for and about Women in Italy 1470–1900: Prescribing and Describing Life.

Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016. Pp. 437. ISBN 978-2-406-05916-5 (paperback) €32.

Conduct Literature for and about Women in Italy traces the genre's evolution from the last decades of the fifteenth century to post-unification Italy. Conduct literature is defined as an expansive genre that includes any text prescribing female behaviour, such as didactic treatises and manuals in prose, letters, dialogues, edifying novels, and biographical tracts.

Helena Sanson and Francesco Lucioli's work is a welcome one. Until now, relatively little space has been dedicated in literary histories to works on female conduct, unless written by well-known male authors. Here, Sanson and Lucioli's analysis focuses on lesser-known works, with a particular emphasis on printed texts written in the vernacular and aimed at women readers.

In Italy, conduct writing flourished in the Middle Ages and treated such topics as domestic life, marriage, the education and upbringing of children, public and private mores and manners, conversational skills, household management, prayer life, and suitable hair and makeup. Ultimately, the purpose of a conduct text was for women to comply with patristic models of self-control. Although this purpose may seem foreign to our own day and time, Sanson points to modern women's magazines, social media, etiquette guides, and

beauty guides as proof that, while the format may have changed, the conduct book is still alive and well, prompting the reader to reflect on contemporary society's role in prescribing women's behaviour.

Chronicling conduct literature from 1470 to 1900, Sanson and Luciola's text is divided into four thematic sections: writing about women's conduct; conduct books written for and by women; implicit conduct books; and the relationship between conduct literature, women, and work. This division is advantageous, as it highlights the rich variety of sub-genres present in Italian behaviour literature.

The first section of Sanson and Luciola's collection commences with Sanson's examination of Giulio Cesare Cabeo's *Ornamenti della gentildonna vedova* (1574). Being unattached to the male counterpart by which a woman was typically defined, the sixteenth-century widow was a potentially disruptive force while she remained unmarried. Cabeo's approved "vera vedova" (true widow) is thus a demi-saint who devotes herself to prayer and to rearing her children. Gabriella Zarri's article on male-authored conduct writing looks at sixteenth- and seventeenth-century guidebooks on monastic life that originated in the Lombardia region of Italy. Another contribution to the geographically comprehensive outlook of the volume is Ann Hallamore Caesar's absorbing analysis of how Pietro Chiari's novels shaped the conduct genre in eighteenth-century Venice.

In the section on behaviour writing authored by women, notable Italian female writers such as Moderata Fonte and Lucrezia Marinelli are examined alongside lesser-known contemporary authors such as Maddalena Campiglia. Written specifically for female readers, these women's works provide alternative models of behaviour based on inventive symbolic heroines. Of particular note is Lucy Hosker's study of La Marchesa Colombi (*La gente per bene*, 1877), Anna Vertua Gentile (*Come devo comportarmi?*, 1897), and Matilde Serao (*Saper vivere*, 1900), whose works represented a pivotal moment in conduct literature. Hosker's article is a sophisticated analysis of how these women transformed the conduct text from its Christian, moralizing origins to an essential tool through which to define social structures in post-unification Italy. The flourishing genre of female-authored works that advocated women's emancipation was an articulate response to the literature of the early nineteenth century: namely, magazines, school manuals, and conduct books that pigeonholed women as domestic figures.

A particularly intriguing aspect of *Conduct Literature for and about Women in Italy* is its study of so-called conduct books “in disguise.” Here, works that conceal their didactic, prescriptive nature in style or content are featured. Brian Richardson employs a refreshing critical approach in his examination of well-known paratexts by Boccaccio, such as *Fiammetta* (composed 1343–44) and the *Decameron* (composed 1349–51); he contends, for example, that Boccaccio’s mostly male readership suggests that Boccaccio sought not only to provide advice to women but also to shape men’s notions of how women in their own lives should appear and behave. Also of great interest is Francesco Lucioli’s study of eighteenth-century anatomy books of the female heart and brain—books that were used to justify women’s nature and function based on the highly problematic and stigmatizing science of physiognomy.

In the section on conduct, women, and work, Carmela Covato studies the transformations in Italian women’s relationship to education in the nineteenth century, while traditional stereotypes were still being upheld by bourgeois morals and the Catholic religion in which these values were rooted. Meanwhile, Inge Botteri perceptively explores the dichotomy between the theories espoused in conduct literature and women’s realities in late eighteenth- to early twentieth-century Italy; in particular, the lived experiences of Italian working-class women.

The strength of Sanson and Lucioli’s volume is its breadth of topics and its analysis of lesser-known authors and works. As readers, we are therefore provided with a more balanced, diversified account of conduct literature, which heretofore focused largely on texts written by male Renaissance authors, such as Machiavelli, Ariosto, and Castiglione. Also, by analyzing the conduct genre across such a wide timeframe, we are given an inclusive overview of the genre, including its origins and how its format and function evolved in response to women’s changing roles and realities across Italian history.

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