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Scarci, Manuela (ed.).

Creating Women: Representation, Self-Representation, and Agency in the Renaissance.

Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2013. Pp. 205. ISBN 978-077272146-4 (paperback) \$21.50.

The treat of reading this volume lies in the thorough way each article unearths and analyzes the ideas, choices, works, and voices of certain Renaissance women. The articles illustrate, among other things, the changes these women set in motion through the experiences they negotiated for themselves within the shifting political, religious, and social arenas of their patriarchal societies. The book is divided into four sections, spanning from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century. As the section titles suggest—"Women and their Fiction," "Women and Their Writings," "Women and their Bodies," and "Women and their Agency"—the volume progresses in an organic manner, from fiction to action or from theory to practice. Scarci thereby foregrounds the realization of hopes and ideals that these women nurtured and promoted as the trajectory from the fictive to the real—creating a story of Renaissance women's attainments marked with milestones, mishaps, triumphs, and disappointments.

It is impossible to give a detailed account of every article and discuss critically the many captivating points they raise. In the first section, Jean-Philippe Beaulieu argues that during the political turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century, Suzanne de Nervèze and Charlotte Hénault gave legitimacy to their literary personae by fashioning them after Joan of Arc. Through the "Joanian model," both authors ensured that the qualities society assigned to lower-class women mirrored France's political beliefs. Diane Desrosiers examines more closely the manner in which de Nervèze used fictional voices of females afflicted by misfortunes, or those of nuns, to venture into the world of male authors. These stratagems enabled de Nervèze, as well as other female authors, to address political figures, take on the interest of the bourgeois, and voice her own political beliefs. Renée-Claude Breitenstein's engaging contribution focuses on Madeleine and Georges de Scudéry's work on famous women from classical history and literature. Departing from the genre's tradition, de Scudéry's women use first-person speeches. This sets the work in a class of its own through its display of female mastery of oratorical skills. From a scholarly perspective, this is the most rewarding article of the first section.

In the second section, Jane Couchman draws a detailed picture of the manner in which four women from powerful Renaissance families contributed to the establishment of the Reformed Church in France. By fusing the “public” and the “private” through epistolary rhetoric, the four gave life to public personae that influenced the political and cultural landscape of their times. Patricia Demers zeroes in on three women’s commentaries on the *Miserere*. This rich article argues that their commentaries on sin and salvation mirror the women’s personal experiences. The authors’ bold approach is substantiated by their respective attempts to break into the male-only universe of letters. Anne Lake Prescott’s analysis of women’s printed works illustrates the manner in which pseudonymity made it possible for female authors to appear in print. At the same time, through the English translations of Marguerite de Valois’s memoirs, Lake Prescott shows that in spite of the *nom de plume*, the author did not alter the substance of her ideas.

From a historical and sociological perspective the articles in the third section are the most rewarding. Dana Wessell Lightfoot delves into the laws that governed the husbandly honour as connected to wifely bodies in fifteenth century Spain. She convincingly shows that husbands were considered the sole proprietors of their wives’ bodies. Bridgette Ann Sheridan’s fascinating essay on the changing conception of midwives’ roles in seventeenth century France juxtaposes the writings of two women: Bourgeois and de la Marche. Through her stirring analysis, Sheridan demonstrates that while for Bourgeois, women embodied the skilled, empathetic practitioner grounded in both experience and theoretical knowledge (the latter of which was generally ascribed to men), for de la Marche midwives solely personified the experience that male doctors lacked. The starting point of Cristian Berco’s captivating piece is “confession,” a means to control female behaviour during the Spanish Inquisition by bending women’s will to the male confessor’s authority. Yet Berco takes confession a step further, showing that in its eagerness to shape obedient women through self-imposed discipline and repression, the Inquisition caused the opposite effect. The notion that a morally compromised (albeit powerful) society cannot force dehumanizing moral standards on powerless people lends force to this article.

In the last section, Elena Brizio’s analysis of Sieneese women—as architects of their kin’s economic and political life—provides unexpected (and welcome) evidence of the independence they possessed. By drawing from archival documents, Brizio masterfully sheds light on the layered and complex model of

Sienese women who, unlike their Florentine counterparts, protected and preserved their interest and their rights. Francesco Divenuto's essay, which closes the volume, demonstrates the central role Maria Amalia of Saxony played in the planning of Caserta's royal palace. More than this, Divo shows that the queen's taste for innovation not only prevailed over the king's—and his architect's—preferences, but also significantly affected the palace's architecture.

Altogether, the result is a lively and original volume, full of striking details and offering an immersive, sustained analysis of Renaissance female voices across times and cultures. The topics are, in many cases, under-represented in the genre of Renaissance women's study. Still, they accurately illustrate, albeit to different degrees, the pulsing determination, imagination, and innovation that molded the representations, self-representations, and agencies of women—the “other” shapers of the Renaissance.

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Selderhuis, Herman J. (éd.).

A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy.

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 40. Leyde: Brill, 2013. 689 p. ISBN 978-9004236226 (relié) 277 \$US.

C'est un véritable monument que Herman Selderhuis et ses collaborateurs viennent d'ériger dans une collection dont la vocation est avant tout synthétique. En dix-huit chapitres thématiques, distribués en trois parties, les acquis les plus récents de la recherche dédiée à l'histoire et à la théologie de l'orthodoxie réformée, mais aussi les pistes de travail qui s'ouvrent actuellement aux spécialistes du sujet, sont clairement et méticuleusement exposés.

Le titre de l'ouvrage, et plus précisément l'emploi du terme « orthodoxie », mérite cependant d'être remis en question. H. Selderhuis, conscient de l'enjeu et des débats que peut susciter l'utilisation d'un mot fortement connoté, aborde lui-même le problème dans l'introduction qu'il donne à ce volume. Comment définir l'orthodoxie, se demande-t-il ? La formulation d'un corps de doctrine systématique, produit de la pensée des différents réformateurs, a vite été indispensable. L'orthodoxie, dans le cadre de ce volume, est donc le processus