
The volume is the work of a group of twenty-two collaborators that includes Gianna Gardenal, Giorgio Pullini, and Marina Zancan. Sponsored by the government of the Veneto Region and the Commission for Equal Opportunity to combat discrimination, it aims not simply to serve the needs of scholars but also to bring to the attention of a wider reading public the contribution made by women over the centuries.

The individual chapters are arranged chronologically and deal with twenty-four women writers who were born or lived in the Veneto (with the exception of the Friulian Caterina Percoto). They range from Isotta Nogarola, the fifteenth-century author of a dialogue on Adam and Eve, to Giovanna Zangrandi (†1988), whose narrative describes life in the northern mountainous areas of the region and the problems of emigration. Each entry includes a bibliography of primary and secondary sources, an introduction of a few pages on the life and works of each author, and selections from her writings of approximately five to seven pages in length. The Latin texts from the humanist period are accompanied by Italian translations; all other selections are in standard Italian and the regional dialect appears only in a few words of dialogue inserted in modern works.

A quotation from Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own, regarding the different rooms occupied by women whose creative force has permeated the walls, constitutes the inscriptions at the front of the book; accordingly, in addition to treating the writer's involvement in the mainstream cultural movements of her time, each introductory essay highlights the particular context influencing the author; e.g. the convent, in the case of Arcangela Tarabotti who wrote L'inferno monacale in mid-seventeenth century, and the Jewish ghetto in which Sara Copio Sullam was born at the end of the Cinquecento.

The selections from the writings cover a great number of genres: orations, prose treatises, lyric poetry, pastoral literature, letters, plays, translations, lectures, journal and newspaper articles, essays of literary criticism, editions, historical tracts, memoirs, literary portraits, short stories and novels, writings on pedagogy and on religious and social reform. In many instances, the excerpts reproduced are those which provide commentary on the social status and personal situation of women; for example, Moderata Fonte's dialogue on Il merito delle donne (1600) is represented with a passage on the "malvagità dei mariti."

O.Z.P.


Questo ampio volume raccoglie diciannove saggi presentati al convegno fiorentino il cui lodevole scopo era quello "di portare un contributo di conoscenze nuove e approfondite" non tanto sul Bruni umanista e storico—su cui già esistevano diversi notevoli