

women in science and scientific institutions. And, as in this book, it also helps us to understand the lives of women *and* men in science.

It is worth mentioning that, in her discussion of the botanist Fiorini Mazzanti, Favino reveals hitherto unknown aspects of internationally renowned figures such as Giovanni Battista Brocchi (1772–1826). We discover that Brocchi, a friend of Fiorini Mazzanti's father, was a teacher/mentor to the young botanist. In the correspondence between the two, he sometimes engages in an exchange between peers; according to Favino, however, their relationship was perhaps more often characterised by the usual 'paternalistic and didactic' (p. 49) dynamics that seem to have permeated relationships between women and men in the academy, often afflicted by the Pygmalion complex.

Studies on gender and science and the history of women in science, technology, and medicine have taken hold globally since the 1980s, offering innovative points of view on historiography and sociology, ethnography, and philosophy, as well as science. In this context, the work of modernists such as Marta Cavazza, Paula Findlen, Massimo Mazzotti, Rebecca Messbarger, Katharine Park, Gianna Pomata, and Londa Schiebinger have contributed to rewriting entire chapters of Italy's cultural, social, and institutional modern history. This is the research context with which Federica Favino's work engages, offering us a book with a view: a new view on the making of the professional – male – scientist in mid-nineteenth-century Italy as seen from Rome, before the well-known era of Carlo Matteucci (1811–68) and Quintino Sella (1827–84). A view that gives back their voice to remarkable women scientists such as Elisabetta Fiorini Mazzanti and Caterina Scarpellini.

As is customary, I close by noting some details of the book. It is both a pleasure to read and accompanied by a rich iconographic apparatus that dialogues with the text, adding thought-provoking insights into science communication of the time. Taking full advantage of footnotes as a parallel channel of dialogue with the reader, Federica Favino offers a generous wealth of information on sources that will be useful for future research. The index of names is precious by virtue of its thoroughness and precision.

## Reference

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**Food and Women in Italian Literature, Culture and Society: Eve's Sinful Bite**, edited by CLAUDIA BERNARDI, FRANCESCA CALAMITA, AND DANIELE DE FEO, London and New York, Bloomsbury, 2020, x + 271 pp., \$115.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-3501-3778-3

This book presents a varied and complex study of the deep relationship between food and its highly symbolic value, through a variety of topics including history, anthropology, human relations and

the representation of food in film and literary narratives. The common denominator is that the subjects representing or relating to food are all women.

The essays have been contributed by 15 scholars, three of whom are also editors of the volume. The contents are divided into four main parts: 1. Gender and social norms in food writing; 2. Food, womanhood and the Italian South; 3. Food, gender and Italian identity; 4. Food, family and politics.

The chapters are preceded by a balanced and clear statement of the scope of the various sections by way of an Introduction (pp. 1–7) signed by the three editors, that offers ‘a close reading of the symbolic meanings associated with food and of the way these intersect with Italian women’s socio-cultural history and the feminist movement, addressing issues of gender, identity and politics of the body’ (p. 3). The first essay, by Daniele De Feo, deals with ‘The role of women in nineteenth-century taste’ and it is an excellent assessment of the position of food in Italian culture in the late nineteenth century, at a time when writers such as Paolo Mantegazza, scientist and anthropologist, and his wife Laura, had a prominent position in Italian culture. The fundamental role of Pellegrino Artusi’s *Science in the Kitchen*, published in 1891, is also rightly underlined. We learn that the first published ‘female penned Italian cookbook came out in 1897’ published by Giulia Ferraris Tamburini; though we could add that a very little-known collection of recipes aimed at the Italian community in London was published in 1890 or 1891. Titled *Recipes of Italian Cookery*, it was written, or simply translated, by Maria Gironci. The view that in the nineteenth century, women were largely considered by the dominant patriarchal ideology as ‘delicate’ beings needing protection, and ‘psychologically akin to children’, may have obfuscated in many cases the considerable contribution of women to the advancement of society. Numerous remarkable examples are discussed in this book, among which is included Marcella Hazan, whose contribution to bringing ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ Italian cuisine to an American audience is expertly investigated by Danielle Callegari (pp. 22–33). It was surprising to find the wrong date of publication for Bartolomeo Scappi’s masterful *Opera*, stated twice (p. 26 and p. 31) as printed in 1573, instead of the correct 1570. Georgia Wall deals with two books dedicated to cooking and the memory of Sicilian meals by Simonetta Agnello Hornby (pp. 34–45) in an interesting essay that represents an affirmation of the ‘non-traumatic’, in fact pleasurable and intense, experience of the deep meaning of food in the 1950s.

As the book proceeds one has the impression that the essays become more ideological and somehow politicised, creating a polarisation between North and South in Italy that seems exaggerated in today’s terms. However, Part 2 opens with an excellent essay by Luca Cottini focussing on a novel by Matilde Serao, *La virtù di Checchina*, published in 1884, giving a subtle analysis of the relationship between food and love or desire. Chapter 5 by Pia L. Bertucci deals with Naples soul food in the narrative of Matilde Serao and Elena Ferrante.

On the other side Chapters 6 and 7 seem weaker in their ‘analysis’ of love and death in Southern kitchens, and of a supposedly ‘greedy southern woman’: I found it difficult to understand why stereotypes should be exclusively ‘north-centric’, since some seem to derive from the pervasive ideology of the Catholic Church and, especially in the case of the essay by Marcello Messina and Teresa Di Somma (pp. 88–100), I felt that the conclusion did not really follow from the preceding argument.

However, in Part 3, Niki Kiviat, in a chapter dedicated to Sophia Loren (pp. 103–15) and based on serious, scholarly work by cultural historians, provides an in-depth analysis of the relationship between food, motherhood, and stardom. In Chapter 9, Rosella Di Rosa deals with Fabrizia Ramondino’s *Althénopis*, in which food ‘tastes good and subversive’. Part 3 closes with an essay by Laura-Marzia Lenci on the Italian-Somali writing of Igiaba Scego.

In the final section I learnt a lot from the clear and well-structured essay by Maria Grazia Scrimieri on the autobiographical writings of Clara Sereni, including an analysis of the deep conflicts and changes in the development of a woman coming from a Jewish family. I found it particularly refreshing because, instead of using some trendy clichés, it accepts the difficulties in the study of human behaviour and the relationship between food and politics.

Chapter 13, by Francesca Calamita, deals with the problems of anorexia and bulimia in Gianna Schelotto's book, *La ragazza che mangiava la luna*, and proves that the misuse of food becomes a way to communicate, usually to one's family, that individual freedom is being constricted in an oppressive way. The final essay by Claudia Bernardi focuses on 'food, politics and female friendship' with special reference to work by Silvia Ballestra. The focus on practical problems connected to food and on communication between women 'arguing from a specifically female language passed on from generation to generation' (p. 179) and the following discussion of the 'misogynistic backlash against women in Italian society ... in the years of Berlusconi's rule' (p. 180) are particularly noteworthy.

Overall an interesting collection, with a full, chapter-by-chapter bibliography (with occasional omissions).

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