1 General

On the Importance of Being an Individual in Renaissance Italy. Men, Their Professions, and Their Beards, ed. Douglas Biow, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania u.p., 311 pp., revitalizes the much-studied topic of the individual in the Renaissance, distancing itself from Burckhardt’s view of the individual autonomous agent. In the light of early modern Italy’s patronage systems and increased investment in professionalization, B. investigates, in five chapters, how male identity was conceptualized in Renaissance Italy. The first two chapters are of particular relevance for this survey: Ch. 1 deals with the value of Ars and Arte in Castiglione and Cellini, whereas Ch. 2 includes readings of Machiavelli, Guicciardini and Tasso. This book may interest scholars working in the field of cultural and intellectual history.

Sherry Roush, Speaking Spirits. Ventriloquizing the Dead in Renaissance Italy, Toronto u.p., 263 pp., offers a comprehensive view of the uses of the rhetorical device of the eidolopoeia, the rhetorical figure by which the dead are made to speak. Beyond its much-studied adaptation in the classics, R. broadens the spectrum with a detailed analysis of works by Vincenzo Bagli, Jacopo Caviceo, Girolamo Malipiero, and Girolamo Benivieni, arguing that this device claims authority for the authors’ messages by coming from esteemed spirits.

Cities

Medici Women: The Making of a Dynasty in Grand Ducal Tuscany, ed. Giovanna Benadusi and Judith C. Brown, Toronto, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 380 pp., focuses on the female line of the Medici dynasty and its role in the court, culture, and political empowerment of the Florentine state, from a city-state republic to a principality. Remaining in northern Italy, Julius Kirshner, Marriage, Dowry, and Citizenship in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy, Toronto u.p., 448 pp., collects nine essays published over a 26-year period, from 1985 to 2011. As the author acknowledges, given their diverse origins, the studies are built upon a common focus on three interrelated subjects: marriage, women’s property, and citizenship in medieval and Renais-
sance Italy (1200–1550), with particular focus on Florentine customs and legal practice (Ch. 3–5, pp. 55–130).

Classical Reception and Neolatin Poetry

Literature and the Visual Arts
Steven Stowell, The Spiritual Language of Art. Medieval Christian Themes in Writings on Arts of the Italian Renaissance, Leiden, Brill, 406 pp., is an in-depth analysis that explores the literature on art from the 15th and 16th cs, highlighting the intense and profound link between visual art and spiritual experiences of art during the Italian Renaissance. It also questions and revises their intellectual sources, claiming the importance of Christian and classic texts. Offering close re-readings of many important writers, among them Leonardo and Vasari, the study deepens and nuances our attitudes toward art and spirituality in the Italian Renaissance, in order to ‘show how multiple voices and intellectual traditions have shaped writings on art’ (p. 2).

Erin E. Benay and Lisa M. Rafanelli, Faith, Gender and the Senses in Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art. Interpreting the Noli me tangere and Doubting Thomas, Burlington, Ashgate, 282 pp., examine visual and literary representations of Mary Magdalene’s encounter with Christ and of Christ’s post-Resurrection appearance to Thomas. The authors broaden the spectrum of existing literature, focusing on the experience of haptic and arguing about how its representation was differentiated and delimited according to gender. The authors have indeed considered how gender, social class, and level of education were pivotal factors in shaping those particular moments in the eyes of artists and beholders. Whereas Thomas became a symbol of devotional enquiry and empirical investigation in the public sphere, Mary Magdalene provided a more private model accessible to women, to be