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of followers: a *sequela Francisci* or a *sequela Dominici* (a follower of Francis or of Dominic) should not replace a *sequela Christi*. Whereas Savonarola's followers, the *Piagnoni* (Weepers), forcibly denounced and silenced any attempt to move away from the stringent rules that they had instituted, Biondo renounced all claims to leadership: there would be no Church of Gabriele Biondo, only a Church of Christ.

Part II consists of editions of Biondo's most significant writings: his treatise on meditation and its deceptions; the *Commentarius* (a Latin translation of his *Ricordo*); and a long letter, entitled *De amore proprio* (On self-love), written for the nun Alessandra degli Ariosti. These texts are presented in chronological order, accompanied by helpful notes which shed light on obscure points. Each work is also preceded by an informative and readable introduction which offers a summary of its general theme. This editorial approach proves especially useful given the extraordinarily convoluted and oxymoronic style which Biondo used to express the paradoxes and intricacies that are characteristic of a certain kind of Christian mysticism. The volume ends with an index of manuscripts, an index of names, a map of Italy highlighting the main locations in Biondo's life, a family tree, and four illustrations from Biondo's own manuscripts. In conclusion, Michele Lodone has succeeded in saving Gabriele Biondo from oblivion, while at the same time making a real advance in historical knowledge and inviting further research.

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*D'Annunzio e l'edizione 1911 della 'Commedia'*. By LAURA MELOSI. (Biblioteca di bibliografia: Documents and Studies in Book and Library History, 211) Florence: Olschki. 2019. viii+108 pp. €20. ISBN 978-88-222-6674-3.

Laura Melosi's elegantly presented volume from the House of Olschki concerns a proposal to publish a prefatory essay by Gabriele d'Annunzio to accompany a resplendent edition of the *Divine Comedy*, eventually to be released with a publication date of 1911. The proposed edition was enthusiastically backed by Leo Samuel Olschki, ambitious to convert his Florentine Libreria Antiquaria into a greater publishing enterprise which might reflect the printing tradition of his Prussian ancestors. The essential text of the *Commedia* had been prepared by the enthusiastic Dante scholar Count Giuseppe Lando Passerini, at the time director of Florence's Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana and founding director of the *Giornale Dantesco*. Both men were eager to include d'Annunzio's name in what was to be a brief preface to a Life of Dante that might accompany their proposed monumental edition of 1911.

All three men had connections in the pleasant territory around Bocca d'Arno, Marina di Pisa, and Vallombrosa. Olschki and Passerini were permanent local residents with established families. D'Annunzio, burdened with debt but never willing to pay his creditors, was also a regular, if at times fleeting, tenant at the Pisan resort.

Olschki had broached the Dante topic with d'Annunzio during a reception at the Saltin, his villa in Vallombrosa. One of Melosi's many valuable finds is the note containing the invitation from Leo Olschki welcoming d'Annunzio to his 'modest and humble house', discovered in the Olschki archive in Florence. The poet accepted and, not untypically, brought along a guest of his own, Annibale Tenneroni, librarian of Rome's Biblioteca Nazionale. At the Saltin there was evidently some discussion of a proposed new edition of the *Divine Comedy*. Over-optimistic leaks to the press wrongly implied d'Annunzio's favourable inclination to the project, hinting too that Olschki was anxious to publish a biography of Dante. Some time after that first meeting, Olschki and Passerini concocted a draft agreement which the publisher sent to d'Annunzio later in 1906 (though with a wrongly pencilled, post-dated note of 19 October 1909). The proposal for the Dante edition would include a brief Life of Dante and 300 autograph signatures by d'Annunzio to encourage the sale of such authenticated copies of the work. For this the publisher offered 1000 lire with a further 1000 lire upon the successful conclusion of the contract. D'Annunzio replied after a slight delay, thanking Olschki for his hospitality at the Saltin but making no mention of any supposed biography of Dante. It is worthwhile noting that Olschki, hoping to move beyond these vague and one-sided negotiations and hasten the project to a successful conclusion, added other conditions to the proposal. Most importantly, the consignment date of d'Annunzio's manuscript was to be the beginning of December 1909. In return, d'Annunzio would receive a sumptuously bound edition of the volume and enjoy the remission of debts which he owed to Olschki and Company. Olschki then put the proposal in the nervous hands of Passerini and sailed immediately to America, hoping to expand his business there (the first of a dozen such journeys he made to foreign capitals). Olschki's frequent delegation of responsibility was a habit from which Passerini and other minions had to suffer. For the next three or four years d'Annunzio simply ignored those and other proposals. Thus began what Melosi aptly characterizes as an infinite series of silences on one side, and invitations to respect pledges on the other.

With no further response from d'Annunzio, the approach of the target date of 1911 increased the nervous tension of the organizers, particularly for 'il solito Passerini', as Melosi justifiably refers to him. Passerini, indeed, in desperation proposed using his own published *Laude di Dante*, assuming that they could get permission from the publisher Treves for a reprint. At this point Olschki entered the fray on 27 May 1911 with new authority and with anger in his heart. He declared that in order to defend the dignity of his name and the decorum of his printing house he wished to instruct d'Annunzio's lawyer, Francesco Coselschi, to inform his client that if he did not fulfil his obligations and send his *De Comoedia Dantis* before the final printing date he would be sued for damages. In addition, Coselschi should also warn his client that Olschki would publish in the newspapers an account of d'Annunzio's failure to keep his word of honour. D'Annunzio might have been able to write brief notes on Dante's life (at one stage the desperate Passerini said that even one page might suffice!) but he would have regarded

it as a second-rate exercise for his talents. Indeed, when, amazingly, in August 1911 d'Annunzio finally managed to send a draft of his article to Olschki, he half apologized for the long delay, implying the impossibility for him (or anyone) of compressing into a small compass anything new concerning the grandeur of Dante. More immediately, however, creditors had formed noisy queues outside the gates of his baronial mansion, the Capponcina, where auction sales of his goods, including all furnishings and ornaments, were organized for the beginning of 19 June. Melosi shows how preoccupied the nervous Passerini became in his analysis of the mood in Florence, where, he reported to d'Annunzio, bets were being laid on whether or not he would accept the contract.

Disdain and discomfort forced d'Annunzio to take refuge in flight using the temporary pseudonym of Gerard d'Argan. He continued on to Genoa and then to Paris, where he stayed for six months on the fourth floor of the Meurice, in Rue de Rivoli (fellow guests in the hotel were Guglielmo Marconi and the Italian Ambassador Tittoni). In secrecy, and under another assumed name, Guy d'Arbes, d'Annunzio left Paris for Arcachon.

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*Writing the Self, Creating Community: German Women Authors and the Literary Sphere 1750–1850.* Ed. by ELISABETH KRIMMER and LAUREN NOSSETT. Rochester, NY: Camden House. 2020. viii+328 pp. £80. ISBN 978-1-64014-078-3.

In this varied and accessible collection of essays, conventional period boundaries are subordinated to the steady rise of women writers and readers to become significant factors in German-language literature for the first time. While not ignoring canonical literary movements or the persistent opposition to women's authorship during these years, its contributors concentrate on exploring and celebrating the roles—both historical and imagined—that women of letters were able to create for themselves and the networks in which they participated. A good balance is struck between well-known figures (Sophie von La Roche, Karoline von Günderode) and investigation of largely forgotten authors; the fascinating Polyxene Büsching, for instance, whose brief stint as literary confidante of Catherine the Great is analysed by Ruth P. Dawson, together with her letters to fellow poet Johanna Charlotte Unzer as a female community of practice (pp. 87–115).

Variety as a characteristic of the collection also applies to its methodological approaches and the appeal its essays will have for readers. Some will be particularly useful as teaching resources as they provide introductions to the history of reading, women's education, and the overall social and political context as well as to the author in question (for example, the two opening articles by Monika Nenon and Lauren Nosssett on La Roche). Others are more speculative and aimed at a more specialist audience in their detailed focus on individual texts or re-