



Widow City

Gender, Emotion, and Community in the Italian Renaissance

by Anna Wainwright

DESCRIPTION

Widow City: Gender, Emotion, and Community in the Italian Renaissance investigates the ever-evolving role of the widow in medieval and early modern Italian literature, from canonical authors such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, to the numerous widowed writers who rose to prominence in the sixteenth century—including Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gamba, and Francesca Turina—and radically changed the conversation on public mourning. Engaging with broader intellectual discussions around gender, the history of emotions, the politics of mourning, and the construction of community, *Widow City* argues that widows served as key models demonstrating to readers not just how to mourn, but how to live well after devastating loss. At the same time, widows were figures of great anxiety: their status as unattached women, and the public performance of their grief, were viewed as very real threats to the stability of the social order. They are thus key to broader intellectual understandings of community and civic life in the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Paperback

9781644533598, \$46.95

Hardback

9781644533604, \$130.00

eBook

9781644533611, \$46.95

PDF

9781644533628, \$46.95

Date: May 2025

Pages: 218



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