Revising Manners: Giovanni Della Casa’s «Galateo» and Antoine de Courtin’s «Nouveau traité de la civilité»

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Abstract

This article undertakes a cross-cultural comparison of Giovanni Della Casa’s *Galateo* Ovvero Trattato de’ Costumi e Modi che si debbono tenere o schifare nella comune conversatione (1558) and its seventeenth-century French heir, Antoine de Courtin’s *Nouveau traité de la civilité qui se pratiquent en France parmi les honnêtes gens* (1671) in light of the Renaissance concept of imitation. Courtin’s text functions in some ways as a “translation” of Della Casa’s *Galateo* but it is less a faithful reproduction than an adaptation with distinct differences in approach and authorial perspective. A close reading of each text reveals how *Galateo* both invites and resists imitation by Courtin and how the courtesy book form shapes this imitation.

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