

Historical Etiquette

“Annick Paternoster’s book is a timely, insightful and accessible contribution to the field of historical politeness research. Paternoster provides a fascinating insight into the realm of etiquette manuals in Europe, which is an important albeit regrettably neglected area of politeness research. The book is a must read for both academics and students with interest in the history of social interaction in Europe”.

—Dániel Z. Kádár, Ordinary Member of Academia Europaea,
Chair Professor, *Dalian University of Foreign Languages*, China, Research
Professor, *Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics*, Hungary

“This book sheds light on a past that countless novels, films and TV series have popularized: the world of nineteenth-century polite society, of dinners, receptions and dances, where the social skills of men and women were crucial for the establishment and maintenance of their place in society. That world obeyed strictly codified rules of appropriate behaviour—rules that the author investigates in a broad range of Italian, French, Dutch, British and American texts while placing them in accurate socio-historical perspective”.

—Marina Dossena, *University of Bergamo*, Italy

Annick Paternoster

Historical Etiquette

Etiquette Books in Nineteenth-
Century Western Cultures

palgrave
macmillan

Annick Paternoster
Istituto di studi italiani
Università della Svizzera italiana
Lugano, Switzerland

ISBN 978-3-031-07577-3 ISBN 978-3-031-07578-0 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07578-0>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG. The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

This book is very much a product of continuous COVID-19 lockdowns that affected the United Kingdom in 2020 and 2021. When the pandemic halted normal life, I decided to fill the disposable time by reading up on a long list of book titles that had grabbed my attention during a four-year research project on Italian etiquette and conduct books funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Once I had worked my way through a perfectly rewarding reading list, I decided to put it to good use and write a book proposal, the fruit of which, reader, is now in your hands.

I owe a big thank you to my family, who was near me when the initial idea took shape and have been very supportive throughout. I specifically thank Emma and Louis Schilders for giving me feedback on how the next generation understands contemporary etiquette.

On an institutional level, I would like to express my gratitude to Marco Maggi, Director of the Master in Lingua, letteratura e civiltà italiana at the Istituto di studi italiani, University of Lugano, who granted me a break from teaching my course on Retorica e stilistica. I especially thank my Lugano colleagues, Linda Bisello, Francesca Berlinzani and Chiara Cauzzi, for remaining close to me, even when 950 miles away. A big compliment goes to the staff of the BUL, Biblioteca universitaria Lugano: they were always punctual in assisting me, and distance was never an issue. Last but not least, a sincere thank you to Johan Verbeke, author of *Diplomacy in Practice* (Routledge, 2022), Senior Fellow of Egmont—the

Royal Institute for International Relations in Brussels and former Belgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom and the United States, for multiple conversations on etiquette and diplomatic skills and his comments on Chap. 8. All remaining errors are mine.

The cover illustration is an illustration of a scene from *La Petite* by Édouard Cadol, French author of theatre plays and novels (1831-1898). I was not able to verify the story behind the image, but I like to think that the woman is excited about entering the room where a ball or an evening entertainment is taking place. She seems slightly insecure, considering she has her right arm, as well as her left hand, on her partner's, maybe looking for support. The interplay of excitement and anxiety shows the multiple effects etiquette can bring about....

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	An Etiquette Revival	1
1.2	Etiquette Studies	8
1.3	Politeness Studies and Research Methods	11
1.4	Outline of the Book	21
	References	27
2	Etiquette Books	33
2.1	Introduction	33
2.2	Courtesy Books and Conduct Books	34
2.2.1	Courtesy Books	35
2.2.2	Conduct Books	38
2.3	Etiquette Books, Social Class and Women Arbiters	44
2.4	Etiquette Books as a Product	52
2.4.1	France	53
2.4.2	The United Kingdom	58
2.4.3	The United States	61
2.4.4	The Netherlands	64
2.4.5	Italy	67
2.4.6	Conclusion	69

2.5	A Self-built Digital Corpus of Etiquette Books	72
2.5.1	The French Corpus	74
2.5.2	The UK-English Corpus	80
2.5.3	The US-English Corpus	82
2.5.4	The Dutch Corpus	83
2.5.5	The Italian Corpus	83
2.6	Conclusion	83
	References	84
3	Defining Etiquette	97
3.1	Introduction	97
3.2	Etiquette and Politeness	99
3.2.1	A First Distinction	100
3.2.2	Politeness in Conduct Books	104
3.2.3	Politeness in Etiquette Books: On Varnish and Veneer	107
3.3	Definitions of Etiquette	114
3.3.1	The Customary Aspect	115
3.3.2	The Normative Aspect	116
3.3.3	The Gatekeeping Aspect	118
3.3.4	The Educational Aspect	121
3.3.5	Conclusion	122
3.4	Synonymy and Collocations of ‘Etiquette’ in My Self-built Corpus	123
3.4.1	The US-English Corpus	124
3.4.2	The UK-English Corpus	126
3.4.3	The Dutch Corpus	127
3.4.4	The French Corpus	130
3.4.5	The Italian Corpus	133
3.4.6	Conclusion	135
3.5	Conclusion	135
	References	137

4	The Origin of Etiquette	143
4.1	Introduction	143
4.2	'Etiquette' in Historical Corpora	145
4.2.1	US Data	146
4.2.2	UK Data	149
4.2.3	Dutch Data	151
4.2.4	French Data	154
4.2.5	Italian Data	159
4.2.6	Conclusion	161
4.3	'Etiquette' in Dictionaries	164
4.3.1	French Dictionaries	164
4.3.2	Italian Dictionaries	167
4.3.3	Dutch Dictionaries	169
4.3.4	English Dictionaries	171
4.3.5	Conclusion	173
4.4	Court Etiquette	175
4.5	Conclusion	184
	References	185
5	Scripts and Lines	191
5.1	Introduction	191
5.2	The Circumstances of Etiquette	195
5.3	On Choreographies and Scripts	200
5.4	The Drawing-Room Script	207
5.5	The Dining-Room Script	211
5.6	The Ball-Room Script	217
5.7	Script Lines	220
5.8	Conclusion	225
	References	227
6	Blunders	235
6.1	Introduction	235
6.2	Fear of Embarrassment	238
6.3	Debutants and Debutantes	244
6.4	Parvenus	249
6.5	Language Blunders	257

6.6	Destructive Rituals	261
6.7	Ease and Tact	265
6.8	Conclusion	272
	References	274
7	Precedence	281
7.1	Introduction	281
7.2	The Lesson of the Beef	285
7.3	Precedence and the Law	291
7.4	Precedence Scripts	294
7.4.1	Dining-Room Precedence	294
7.4.2	Drawing-Room Precedence	303
7.4.3	Ball-Room Precedence	307
7.4.4	Carriage Precedence	309
7.4.5	Riding Precedence	312
7.4.6	Promenade Precedence	313
7.4.7	Greeting Precedence	314
7.4.8	Introduction Precedence	316
7.4.9	Handshaking Precedence	316
7.4.10	Letter Writing: Expressing Deference	318
7.5	Conclusion	325
	References	329
8	Concluding Remarks	337
8.1	Introduction	337
8.2	Etiquette and Inclusivity	340
8.3	Etiquette and Morality	346
8.4	Etiquette Organisation	348
8.5	Etiquette and Unease	351
8.6	Conclusion	355
	References	356
	References	359
	Index	389

List of Figures

Fig. 2.1	Title page (Breton de la Martinière 1808). Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	55
Fig. 3.1	Title page (Nogent, Mme de 1886). Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	100
Fig. 3.2	Word Cloud showing the top 40 hits in the Sketch Engine Thesaurus for the noun 'etiquette' in the US-English corpus	125
Fig. 3.3	Word Sketch in Sketch Engine for the noun 'etiquette' in the US-English corpus	126
Fig. 3.4	Word Cloud showing the top 40 hits in the Sketch Engine Thesaurus for the noun 'etiquette' in the UK-English corpus	127
Fig. 3.5	Word Sketch in Sketch Engine for the noun 'etiquette' in the UK-English corpus	128
Fig. 3.6	Word Cloud showing the top 40 hits in the Sketch Engine Thesaurus for the noun <i>etiquette</i> in the Dutch corpus	129
Fig. 3.7	Word Sketch in Sketch Engine for the noun <i>etiquette</i> in the Dutch corpus	130
Fig. 3.8	Word cloud showing the top 40 hits in the Sketch Engine Thesaurus for the noun <i>étiquette</i> in the French corpus	131
Fig. 3.9	Word cloud showing the top 40 hits in the Sketch Engine Thesaurus for the noun <i>savoir-vivre</i> in the French corpus	132
Fig. 3.10	Word Sketch in Sketch Engine for the noun <i>étiquette</i> in the French corpus	133

Fig. 3.11	Word Cloud showing the top 40 hits in the Sketch Engine Thesaurus for the noun <i>etichetta</i> in the Italian corpus	134
Fig. 3.12	Word Sketch in Sketch Engine for the noun <i>etichetta</i> in the Italian corpus	134
Fig. 4.1	Frequency of ‘etiquette’ in American English (2012) (Google Books Ngram Viewer)	147
Fig. 4.2	Frequency of ‘etiquette’ (per million words) across 20 decades from 1820s to 2010s (COHA)	148
Fig. 4.3	Frequency of ‘etiquette’ in British English (2012) (Google Books Ngram Viewer)	149
Fig. 4.4	Frequency of ‘etiquette’ (per million words) across nine quarter centuries from 1700 to 1924 (CLMET3.1)	150
Fig. 4.5	Relative frequency of <i>etiquette</i> and <i>etikette</i> in Dutch from 1500 to 2022 (DBNL Ngram Viewer)	152
Fig. 4.6	Frequency of <i>étiquette</i> in French (2012) (Google Books Ngram Viewer)	155
Fig. 4.7	Frequency of <i>étiquette</i> (per million words) across 34 decades from the 1580s to the 1910s (Frantext)	156
Fig. 4.8	Title page (Aulnoy, <i>Baronne d’</i> 1691). Reproduced from Google Books UK	157
Fig. 4.9	Frequency of <i>etichetta</i> in Italian (2012) (Google Books Ngram Viewer)	159
Fig. 5.1	<i>Les visites</i> ‘visits’ (Orval, <i>baronne de</i> 1901 ⁶ : 93). Illustration by M. Chatelaine, reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	197
Fig. 5.2	The procession (Orval, <i>Baronne d’</i> 1901 ⁶ : 168). Illustration by M. Chatelaine, reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	214
Fig. 5.3	<i>Le bal de société</i> ‘the society ball’ (Boitard 1862/1851: 13). Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	217
Fig. 7.1	French table setting with numbered seating plan according to precedence (G.-M. 1908: 42–43). Reproduced from Gallica.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	302
Fig. 7.2	<i>À pied, à cheval et en voiture</i> ‘walking, riding, driving’ (Burani 1879: 115), reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France	311
Fig. 7.3	Street Etiquette (Houghton et al. 1883 ⁷ /1882: 94). Reproduced from Internet.archive and Smithsonian Libraries	315

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Popular US etiquette Twitter accounts with Twitter handle and number of followers (numbers correct as per 7.2.2022)	4
Table 2.1	Word count and number of books, in the subcorpora and in total	74
Table 2.2	The French corpus	75
Table 2.3	The UK-English corpus	77
Table 2.4	The US-English corpus	79
Table 2.5	The Dutch corpus	81
Table 2.6	The Italian corpus	82
Table 4.1	Overall occurrences of <i>etichetta</i> and occurrences of <i>etichetta</i> ‘label’, per time slot (DiaCORIS)	161
Table 5.1	Topics in etiquette books containing max. 11 different chapters	195