

Introduction

Just think what would have happened if Madonna Laura had gotten around to writing as much about Petrarch as he wrote about her: you'd have seen things turn out quite differently then!

Tullia d'Aragona¹

When Tullia d'Aragona (ca. 1510–1556) wrote these prescient words in her *Dialogo della infinità di amore* (1547), she forecast a critical literary dilemma regarding the voice of “the beloved,” the glorified female figure whom male writers of the period placed on a pedestal: her silence. Aragona herself, writing with the authority of a learned *cortigiana onesta*, embodied another critical literary dilemma: the sexualized link between voice and body for Renaissance women. Moreover, because she wrote in response to Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo di amore* (1542), partly to protest his stereotypical depiction of courtesans as incapable of any love higher than the carnal on the Neoplatonic ladder of love, she also hints at the ever-present double-standard underscored in men's lives and writing from this period regarding men's own sexuality and spirituality.² Her work, on its own a witty representative text of the Renaissance dialogue genre, becomes even more accessible to readers familiar with Petrarch's *Canzoniere* when viewed alongside Speroni's dialogue. Read in this broader literary context, Aragona's dialogue provides an intriguing glimpse into the “other side” of numerous issues related to women during this period, many of which are also examined by the diverse voices of other early modern Italian women writers. However, as in Aragona's case, the rich array of references in such women's texts can be best understood when their works are read alongside those of the men whose pronouncements permeate the literary milieu in which such women wrote. Read against these

1. Tullia d'Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, trans. Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 69.

2. Sperone Speroni, *Dialogo di amore*, in *Opere*, ed. Natale dalle Laste and Marco Forcellini (1740; reprint, Rome: Vecchiarelli, 1989), 1:1–45.

2 Introduction

prevalent lines of thought during this period, women's works reveal from both literary and historical perspectives why they should be an integral part of early modern literary studies: they bring to light the Other Voice that sometimes questions the dominant philosophies, sometimes colludes with them, but indisputably co-creates the literary society of the period.

Thanks to the availability of new editions and translations of their works and to contemporary scholars' interest in their existence, the works of Italian women writers from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are once again reaching a broad audience.³ Thus, it is important to bring into focus the cultural and intellectual contexts in which these works were written. Numerous questions about such contexts arise: What views were prominent regarding women's education, spirituality, and sexuality? How were women perceived by their male contemporaries? How, like Aragona's imagined Laura, did they respond to what men wrote about them? To which men's writing did they respond? In men's writing, what did they seek to imitate, and what did they reject?

In the first part of this volume, we explore often-cited male-authored texts that illustrate facets of the literary, social, and cultural stimuli that helped to shape the world of these women writers. In the second part, we provide case studies of specific male writers with whom such women writers were indeed "in dialogue" in some capacity. The goals of this volume are to illustrate the complexity and variety of contexts for sixteenth-century Italian women's works and to present a selection of texts that have not always been easily accessible in English that facilitate the reading and understanding of those works.

There is much to learn about early modern women's writing by examining texts that illustrate the ideological forces at work in their cultural moment. Traditionally, canonical Renaissance literature has mainly included works by authors such as Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ario-

3. For examples of the numbers of editions and print runs of the works of numerous sixteenth-century Italian women writers, see Diana Robin's *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 205–18.

sto, and Castiglione,⁴ men whose works have appeared in numerous translations and have been presented to readers as seminal representatives of Renaissance thought. No one would argue that the works of such major authors were not critical influences on the literary milieu of sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century women writers, but relying solely on the works of major canonical writers to approximate the worldview of women writers leaves large gaps in scholars' impressions of the historical moment. These gaps have too often been filled by timeworn assumptions that do little to illuminate the circumstances of women writers and sometimes even distort them.

Jacob Burckhardt's canonical, authoritative voice on Renaissance Italy assures us that to "understand the higher forms of social intercourse at this period, we must keep before our minds the fact that women stood on a footing of perfect equality with men" and that we "must not suffer ourselves to be misled by the sophistical and often malicious talk about the assumed inferiority of the female sex, which we meet with now and then in the dialogues of this time."⁵ Of courtesans, he writes, it is clear that they "were treated with no slight respect and consideration. Even when relations with them were broken off, their good opinion was still desired."⁶ Such facile pronouncements have been brought into question by much scholarship from the 1970s onward.

Most famously, perhaps, Joan Kelly interrogates Burckhardt's ideas in her 1977 essay, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?"⁷ Her answer to that question, in light of his assumptions, is an emphatic "no." However, as more recent scholars have realized, that answer should probably be a qualified "yes," but one quite different from that as-

4. In *The Italian Renaissance Reader* (New York: Meridian / Penguin, 1987), editors Julia Conaway Bondanella and Mark Musa present Francesco Petrarca, Giovanni Boccaccio, Leon Battista Alberti, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci, Baldessare Castiglione, Niccolò Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, Benvenuto Cellini, Michelangelo Buonarroti, and Giorgio Vasari as the "major Italian writers and influential thinkers of the Renaissance" in their subtitle.

5. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, trans. S. C. G. Middlemore (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 2:389.

6. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, 2:394.

7. Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19–49; see her note on Burckhardt, 47.

serted by Burckhardt. Beginning with the publication of the writings of Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466),⁸ and continuing through numerous works by Italian women writers of the sixteenth century, one finds, for example, a strong trend in profeminist thought that engaged with the dominant philosophies of the times. The letters of Laura Cereta (1469–1499)⁹ and Cassandra Fedele (1465–1558)¹⁰ provide examples of strong profeminist voices during this period, as do Moderata Fonte (1555–1592),¹¹ Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653),¹² and Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–1652).¹³ Olympia Morata's (1526–1555) classical education and Calvinist convictions may be seen to embody the humanist interests and religious controversies of her time.¹⁴

Numerous new editions of such women's works in *belles lettres* are currently available. Among those works never quite as "lost" as others are those of the courtesan-writers Tullia d'Aragona and Veronica Franco (1546–1591), whose poetry may be found along with that of several other early modern Italian women writers in recent translations.¹⁵ Franco's works have also been translated,¹⁶ as has Aragona's *Dialogue*

8. Isotta Nogarola, *The Complete Writings*, ed. and trans. Margaret L. King and Diana Robin, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

9. Laura Cereta, *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, ed. and trans. Diana Robin, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

10. Cassandra Fedele, *Letters and Orations*, ed. and trans. Diana Robin, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

11. Moderata Fonte (Modesta Pozzo), *The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men*, ed. and trans. Virginia Cox, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

12. Lucrezia Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men*, introd. Letizia Panizza, trans. Anne Dunhill, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

13. Arcangela Tarabotti, *Paternal Tyranny*, ed. and trans. Letizia Panizza, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

14. Olympia Morata, *The Complete Writings of an Italian Heretic*, ed. and trans. Holt Parker, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

15. *Women Poets of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. and trans. Laura Anna Stortoni and Mary Prentice Lillie (New York: Italica Press, 1997).

16. Veronica Franco, *Poems and Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

on the *Infinity of Love*.¹⁷ Some of the poetry of the similarly renowned noblewoman Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547) appears in a translation of *Sonnets for Michelangelo*,¹⁸ and the poetry of Laura Battiferra (1523–1589) has also been recently published in English.¹⁹ The musical *virtuosa* and poet Gaspara Stampa's (1523–1554) poetry has been translated in part, and a complete edition of her poetry appeared in The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe series in 2010.²⁰ Musical *virtuosa*, actor, and academician Isabella Andreini's (1562–1604) pastoral *La Mirtilla* has been translated,²¹ as has a selection of her poetry.²² Maddalena Campiglia's pastoral *Flori* has been published in translation,²³ and Giulia Bigolina's (ca. 1516–ca. 1569) prose romance and novella are available in two translations.²⁴ Fonte's chivalric romance is also now available.²⁵

17. Tullia d'Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, ed. and trans. Bruce Merry and Rinaldina Russell, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

18. Vittoria Colonna, *Sonnets for Michelangelo*, ed. and trans. Abigail Brundin, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

19. Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati, *Laura Battiferra and Her Literary Circle*, ed. and trans. Victoria Kirkham, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

20. Gaspara Stampa, *Selected Poems*, ed. and trans. Laura Anna Stortoni and Mary Prentice Lillie (New York: Italica Press, 1994); *Complete Poems*, trans. Jane Tylus, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

21. Isabella Andreini, *La Mirtilla: A Pastoral*, ed. and trans. Julie D. Campbell, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 242 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002).

22. Isabella Andreini, *Selected Poems of Isabella Andreini*, ed. Anne MacNeil, trans. James Wyatt Cook (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005).

23. Maddalena Campiglia, *Flori: A Pastoral Drama*, ed. and introd. Virginia Cox and Lisa Sampson, trans. Virginia Cox, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

24. Giulia Bigolina, *Urania: A Romance*, ed. and trans. Valeria Finucci, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); and Giulia Bigolina, *Urania: The Story of a Young Woman's Love & The Novella of Giulia Camposanpiero and Thesibaldo Vitaliani*, ed. and trans. Christopher Nissen, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 262 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004).

25. Moderata Fonte (Modesta Pozzo), *Floridoro: A Chivalric Romance*, ed. and introd. Valeria Finucci, trans. Julie Kisacky, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

This sample of recently edited and translated works by Italian women of the sixteenth century is by no means comprehensive; the works of numerous others have been or are in the process of being “recovered” and translated. The depth and breadth of the genres represented here, however, suggest that more was happening in the intellectual lives of learned Renaissance women than either Burckhardt or Kelly realized.

Numerous scholars have followed in Burckhardt’s and Kelly’s footsteps, investigating the contexts and characteristics of Italian Renaissance women’s lives from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Their findings have helped to flesh out details critically important to our understanding of the social and cultural milieus in which such writers lived. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber investigates “how a set of gender-based symbols came to be written into a good part of history” as she explores the material culture of society in Renaissance Florence.²⁶ She presents data suggesting that the chief value of Florentine women lay not in their erudition and eloquence but in their material wealth and physical necessity for childbearing. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari deconstruct Burckhardt’s views, noting that after the first passage from his work quoted above, “[b]arely masked inequalities emerge shortly thereafter.”²⁷ Their volume contains essays that further interrogate received notions about women of the Renaissance in history, art, and literature. Pamela Joseph Benson examines issues regarding female independence as it has been depicted in the literature of Renaissance Italy and England.²⁸ More recently, Benson and Victoria Kirkham have explored the seeming contradiction between the fact that in England, France, and Italy “during the Middle Ages and Renaissance ... contrary to Aristotelian and biblical injunction, women did not keep an obedient, humble silence,” and the fact that “women’s presence in national literary histories ... has been less stable than men’s, their niches more shallow or precarious, their memory

26. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), xiv.

27. *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 6.

28. Pamela Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

more quickly occluded by time.”²⁹ In a similar vein, Janet Smarr explores the dialogues of early modern Italian and French women who “wanted to insert their voices into the larger cultural conversation” even though of “the many hundreds of dialogues from this period ... few even included women speakers.”³⁰ Diana Robin has examined the thriving world of women writers’ engagement in the cultural history of this period, illustrating “the significant roles that Italian women played in tandem with men.”³¹ Sarah Ross has traced the rise of the “household academies and salons” in which numerous Italian women received humanist educations.³²

Studies that shine light on the vagaries of individual lives within broader historical contexts continue to emerge. Margaret Rosenthal explores the life of one of the most famous courtesans of the sixteenth century, Veronica Franco, examining the myriad ways in which her life and career bore little resemblance to the women Burckhardt describes.³³ Stanley Chojnacki has published a retrospective of his work from the 1970s to the 1990s in which he examines the “varied and unpredictable circumstances of individual experience” that affected the lives of men and women in Venetian patrician society.³⁴ With detailed attention to family financial and political issues, he gives the lie to Burckhardt’s blithe depiction of fathers giving equal treatment to sons and daughters in the upper classes.³⁵ Letizia Panizza has edited an array of essays that examine women’s relationships with church, state, court, stage, and literary society. These scholarly essays allude

29. Pamela Benson and Victoria Kirkham, “Introduction,” in *Strong Voices, Weak History*, ed. Benson and Kirkham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 1.

30. Janet Levarie Smarr, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 1.

31. Diana Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), xix.

32. Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3, 13.

33. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, 2:394; Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

34. Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

35. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, 2:389.

to numerous documents that help to contextualize the world of early modern Italian women writers. Panizza and Sharon Wood also have published an essay collection that provides a beginning outline of an alternative tradition and canon.³⁶ Most recently, Virginia Cox has completed a long-needed detailed history of the development of Italian women's writing during this period, as she introduces and contextualizes the work of numerous writers from across the social strata.³⁷

We take our cue from such new historical approaches as these as we address texts that facilitate readers' exploration of the intertextual resonances to be found in the interstices of the dialogue that exists between early modern Italian male and female authors. In part 1 we explore general contexts. We include a discussion of three influential canonical literary texts by Petrarch, Castiglione, and Tasso, in which we highlight the views of women they profess and the aspects of such texts that women writers both imitated and rejected. We also present three texts less easily available in English that illustrate a variety of views on issues pertaining to women, including religion, education, societal and family expectations (e.g., marriage, child rearing, and sexuality), the *querelle des femmes*, and Neoplatonic love philosophy. These include excerpts from Silvio Antoniano's *Three Books on the Christian Education of Children* (1589), Stefano Guazzo's *Civil Conversation* (1584), and Alessandro Piccolomini's *Raffaella, or Dialogue about Women's Good Manners* (1540).

Part 2 contains a series of case studies created by scholars familiar with the multifaceted nature of the contexts for early modern Italian women's writing. Each case includes an introduction to a writer and text along with a translation. The texts in question relate in a variety of meaningful ways to works by the women writers who were in dialogue with these male writers in some way. Throughout, we see instances of intertextuality regarding issues from the *querelle des femmes*, which writers treat sometimes as a kind of a literary game and other times as a legitimate forum for adulation and complaint. In either case, the impact regarding the subjection of women is the

36. *A History of Women's Writing in Italy*, ed. Letizia Panizza and Sharon Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

37. Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

same. Moreover, the texts give a sense of the enormity of “the woman question” as general subject matter for male writers during this period. Their concentration on how women should be, behave, and believe—in other words, how they should be contained, controlled, and valued according to social and religious norms—gives us insight into the intellectual climate within which women writers worked. Before the list of Works Cited, we include a bibliography of related texts readily available in translation.

The second part opens with a case by Lori Ultsch, who presents Torquato Tasso’s *Discorso della virtù femminile e donnesca* (1582), a key text in the Italian *querelle des femmes*. Tasso’s text was an impetus for the added chapters of the 1601 edition of *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men*, in which Lucrezia Marinella deconstructs patriarchal praise of women and thus provides some of “the first examples of feminist literary criticism.”³⁸ In the same vein, Tasso’s discourse also resonates with Moderata Fonte’s *The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Superiority to Men* (1600), another example of a critical feminist voice in early modern Italy. In his piece, Tasso demonstrates his mastery of the courtier’s duty to pay homage to his patron’s family—in this case the House of Gonzaga in Mantova, represented by Duchess Eleonora, to whom he dedicates his work—while he surveys philosophical thought regarding feminine virtue. The resulting text is, as Ultsch puts it, “a morally didactic survey of philosophical thought on virtues that most befit women.” She argues, however, that this discourse is actually “a prime period example of how the ostensible praise of virtuous women is in reality an insidious rehearsal of received notions of female inferiority handed down from Aristotle.”

Another case that overtly invokes the Italian *querelle des femmes* is that presented by Suzanne Magnanini, who translates excerpts from *I donneschi difetti* (1599) by Giuseppe Passi. David Lamari provides translations of the Latin passages in these excerpts. Magnanini points out that although Passi’s second published work would ironically be “a manual for speaking tactfully so as not to give offense to others, *The Defects of Women* deeply angered many readers and led to the publication of no fewer than three women-authored

38. *A History of Women’s Writing in Italy*, ed. Panizza and Wood, 73.

texts: Lucrezia Marinella's *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men* (1600), Moderata Fonte's *The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Superiority to Men* (1600), and Bianca Nardi's *A Response by Signora Bianca Nardi to a Letter from Giacomo Violati, Bookseller in Venice, Written on the Occasion of Thanking Him for Having Sent Her I donneschi difetti by Giuseppe Passi* (1614).³⁹ Although Passi would later write *La monstrosa fucina delle sordidezze de gl'huomini* (The monstrous smithy of men's foul deeds) (1603), he is especially remembered for his engagement in the *querelle des femmes* and the ire with which women writers responded to his work.

From these treatises, we move on to Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo di amore* (1542), translated by Janet Smarr. As noted above, this dialogue was the impetus for Tullia d'Aragona's *Della infinità di amore*. Speroni's work was inspired in part by his encounters with Aragona at salon gatherings in Venice around 1535.³⁹ He casts this dialogue in a salon setting and makes Aragona a key figure in the debate about the nature of love. While he gives a passing nod to the idea that his character Tullia should enjoy her Diotima-like status as a *cortigiana honesta*, that status is not reflected in his portrayal of her. On the contrary, his version of her character is that of a stereotypically lustful, jealous, wheedling courtesan who begs to be enlightened by the men in the group. Aragona's dialogue paints quite a different picture of herself; thus, as Smarr demonstrates, the two dialogues should be read together in order to fully understand the context for Aragona's work.

Next we include a dialogue that examines attitudes toward women and marriage. "Sopra del pigliar moglie" (1612) by Francesco Andreini is introduced and translated by Julie D. Campbell. Andreini is the husband of the celebrated actor, poet, and playwright Isabella Andreini. Together they led one of the most popular *commedia dell'arte* troupes, the *Gelosi*, during the height of this group's fame in the late sixteenth century. This *ragiomento* between Calistene, an old man, and Teofilo, the head of a family, is especially of interest for its subject matter: an old man giving a younger one advice on choosing a wife for his son. In the process, the two discuss the reasons why mar-

39. For more on Aragona, Speroni, and salon gatherings, see Julie D. Campbell, *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 21–49.

riage is more important than the state of virginity, the origins of marriage (beginning with Adam and Eve), the problems associated with marrying a bad woman, and the blessings associated with marrying a good one. In terms of the *querelle*, Calistene has the role of the misogynist, and Teofilo, who ultimately has the final word, is the defender of women. Yet, as was demonstrated in Ultsch's work above, here too the resulting impression this dialogue leaves is one of women as chattels. It is especially intriguing to consider that this piece is authored by a man married to one of the most autonomously famous women of the period, renowned for her intellectual acumen and traditional feminine virtue, as well as her talents for acting and writing. Their case underscores the ways in which the literary and social traditions of the *querelle* trumped expression of individual experience, a phenomenon common during this period, when imitation (with only minimal innovation) was highly valued.

Patrizia Bettella explores examples of *poesia puttanesca*, the burlesque poetry of academicians and *letterati* who wrote verse about courtesans. She examines the lives and works of Anton Francesco Grazzini, Nicolò Franco, and Maffio Venier, three minor poets whose satirical poetry illustrates the popularity of attacking courtesans in verse. Bettella notes that while literary pieces written in honor of famous courtesans are widely published, the majority of satirical texts about them, particularly the *poesia puttanesca*, remain largely unknown today, in part because of the obscene language and graphic details inherent in such poetry. Given the marginal status of such poets, critics theorize that they sought to elevate their own standing in literary circles by denouncing courtesans—who sometimes were the more famous and accomplished poets.

Next, we include a selection of letters from Pietro Aretino (1492–1556), one of the most controversial literary figures of the age. Although he was especially well-known for his dialogues, translators have paid less attention to Aretino's letters, which illustrate his knowledge of and correspondence with women writers of the period. Here Christopher Nissen introduces and translates three letters from 1549 that Aretino wrote to Giulia Bigolina, author of the romance *Urania* (written ca. 1552). Nissen notes that Aretino's letters refer to something that Bigolina has sent to him, so it would appear that Bigolina

initiated their acquaintance, probably in an attempt to advertise her work and thus benefit her fledgling writing career. Nissen examines this epistolary bid for literary fame, commenting on the attitudes toward women writers apparent in Aretino's responses.

We conclude the volume with a sermon, "Predica predicata ... il giorno della festa di S. Maria Maddalena" (1539), by Bernardino Ochino, translated by Maria Galli Stampino. Ochino was a charismatic Franciscan monk whose sermons urging reform from within for the Catholic Church attracted the attention of both the great noblewoman Vittoria Colonna and the courtesan Tullia d'Aragona. Both Colonna and Aragona heard Ochino preach in Ferrara in 1537. Stampino points out that Ochino's extant texts are exceedingly rare because of their controversial religious nature. Ochino fled to Geneva and abandoned Catholicism, yet his spiritual influence continued to be felt in northern and central Italy. Regarding connections with women's texts, Stampino notes that linguistic ties have been established between the sermon translated here and some of Colonna's poems. Moreover, his references to the figure of Mary Madgalene seem to be reflected in Lucrezia Marinella's 1602 volume *Life of the Virgin Mary, Empress of the Universe*, recently edited by Susan Haskins for the University of Chicago Press's Other Voice series.

It should come as no surprise that so many of these texts reflect religious or moralistic concerns. The sixteenth century saw many debates on the nature and content of faith and its reflection in the lives of the faithful. Indeed, the culture prevailing in Italy (and in other Catholic countries, such as Spain, France, and portions of the Hapsburg Empire), especially in the second half of the century, reflected the stricter morality and more centrally organized structure of the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent (1545–63). The enclosure of nuns in monasteries was enforced, and weddings transformed from family affairs to a sacrament administered and controlled by the Church.⁴⁰ Such attitudes emboldened conservative thinkers to expound their views ever more forcefully—and in turn provoked women to pen their own answers. As Cox has pointed out, however, nonreligious factors were also present in the contexts for women writ-

40. See Gabriella Zarrì, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2000), 100–130 and 203–35.

ers during this century.⁴¹ A pervasive thread of the *querelle des femmes* was frequently combined with religious injunctions to provoke women's responses. Moreover, trends in oratory and literary production in general are reflected in their work.

The many texts now becoming available prove that many women chose to be actively involved in the culture of early modern Italy, rather than remaining passive and silent. To situate their voices, the texts in this volume are necessary, even vital. We hope that these texts will inspire readers to search out others that will help to provide a more complete picture of the cultural and social milieus in which these women wrote. The influences, reactions, echoes, filled interstices, dialogues, and other information that will be revealed will be invaluable for contextualizing the lives and voices of these women writers.

41. Cox, *Women's Writing*, 125–30.

*The Defects of Women*²³

GIUSEPPE PASSI

To the Benevolent and Gentle Readers, from the Author

There is no doubt, gentle readers, that the saying “truthfulness produces hatred” that people utter every day is true.²⁴ Because if someone, moved by charitable zeal, wants to reprove another for some notable error in order to turn him away from his sin or some perilous entanglement, immediately upon hearing the honest reproof of the wretch—no matter that the other had always been a true and faithful friend—becomes indignant, and once indignant he gets upset, and once upset he grows cruel, and once cruel, lo and behold, a friend has turned into a deadly enemy. With foolish words and a thousand rebukes he drives his friend away rather than embrace and give him endless thanks. This happens in thousands upon thousands of cases, but more often because of vain and lascivious women, about whom I intend to speak with you now, than for other reasons. Therefore, were we to wish to examine thoroughly and to discuss the countless incidents that have befallen men on account of women, we would be able sooner to count the stars one by one, or the sea’s innumerable grains of sand, and since one cannot do these two things, similarly it would be impossible to relate the countless evils of wicked women. If vain men do not want to take the advice of wiser men, it is for no other reason than a desire to live free and unbridled with unbridled and unchaste women. Then, for love of those women they drive their own houses to ruin, make their own children and disheartened family suffer, and so many times by following this path they dig early graves for their

23. All of the translations—Passi’s text, the citations from Latin and Italian texts, and the occasional Greek words—are our own. As explained above in the introduction, Passi most likely drew the majority of his citations from a few compendia or *selve*. In the footnotes, we have endeavored to identify each of the authors, texts, and passages Passi cites rather than the intermediary sources. We supply the standard numeration for these cited texts. Where Passi’s citation differs substantially from the current accepted reading, we have noted the variation.

24. Terence, *Andria*, line 68.

grieved fathers and very mournful mothers. Nor do they look out for their honor, which is worth much more than gold. What is worse, they give themselves over to death, like the most brute beasts. Now I do not want to say anything else about men, because I have chosen to speak about Women, particularly those who are in all things the cause of men's ruin. Although I will not be able to tell of each of their iniquities as I would like, because of the infinite number that I said they possess, at least I will say some small bit about their most notable defects, and I will also say something about their most minor sins, in order not to do the harm to them that they merit, even though I know that notable moral saying: "No woman is good." Nonetheless, I am not so arrogant, nor such a harsh and cruel enemy of the female sex, that I think of ignoring the authority of so many excellent and renowned authors who have sung to the Heavens the virtues and glorious deeds of famous and esteemed women whose names live and will live as long as the sun shines on the world.²⁵ I have been led to this only by my contempt for those who, loving little their own honor and even less that of their flesh and blood, are and have been the cause of innumerable evils. Therefore, Gentlemen Readers, let it please you to bestow your favor upon this weak offspring that is brought to you by one who aims only to be useful to you. Kindly do not let earthly beauty so cloud your reason that you do not regard those words of the Sage: "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain."²⁶ I beg you again that if you find something in this work that offends your ears, correct it kindly, rather than tear me apart, which would do you no honor. Live happily.

25. Here Passi has in mind the popular genre of humanist catalogues of famous women such as Giovanni Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* (1362) and his contemporary Tommaso Garzoni's *Lives of Illustrious Women* (1588). See Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr.'s "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Introduction to the Series," in Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women*, xvii (and in all other volumes in this series published by the University of Chicago Press).

26. Proverbs 31:30.

JULIE D. CAMPBELL

As his character Teofilo recalls the "good memory of [his] most dear consort" in "Sopra del pigliar moglie," Francesco Andreini (ca. 1548–1624) mourns the loss of "Fillide," his "*Anima cara e Consorte ... carissima*," his soul and dearest consort, in his pastoral lament on the death of his wife, Isabella Andreini (1562–1604).¹ The marriage of these two actors who codirected the *Gelosi*, one of the most popular *commedia dell'arte* troupes of the period, was apparently a very successful one, as were their mutual careers. Their names appeared in theater records for the first time in 1578 in Florence upon their return from a tour in France,² and their fame increased throughout the rest of Isabella's life. Francesco is especially remembered for his role of Capitan Spavento da Vall'Inferna, the blustering, boastful soldier, while Isabella is renowned for her roles as Isabella and Fillide, beautiful *innamorate* who are highly educated and speak eloquent Tuscan, the language of lyrical poetry. Their names, along with that of their son Giovanni Battista Andreini, remain among the best known in the theater history of their time. Francesco retired from acting upon his wife's death, and the troupe dissolved shortly thereafter. During his retirement in Mantua, Francesco edited and published some of his wife's works, as well as his own, in effect memorializing their career.³ As Robert Henke has observed, he also did so to "show 'future actors the true way of composing and performing comedies, tragicomedies, tragedies, pastorals,

1. Francesco Andreini's lament is found in *Le bravure del Capitano Spavento*, ed. Roberto Tessari (Pisa: Giardini, 1987), 450. Isabella Andreini died in Lyon, France, from a miscarriage of her eighth child.

2. Clubb, *Italian Drama*, 262.

3. See *Fragments di alcune scritture della signora Isabella Andreini, comica gelosa ed academica intenta*, ed. Francesco Andreini (Venice: Giovanni Battista Combi, 1620). Isabella's pastoral tragicomedy *La Mirtilla* (1588) had already been published during her lifetime, as had as her first book of *Rime* (1601) and her *Lettere* (1602). Her second book of *Rime* was published in 1605. For a bibliography of Francesco's and Isabella's works, see MacNeil, *Music and Women*, 325–26.

intermedi, and other theatrical inventions.”⁴ Clearly, he understood that the Gelosi’s repertoire contained historically important material that resonated deeply in its cultural moment and that should be saved for posterity.

Regarding his own work, Francesco published his first collection of dialogues, called the *Bravure del Capitano Spavento*, in 1607; he published the second part of that work in 1615. Henke points out that these dialogues between Andreini’s famous stage persona Capitano Spavento and Trappola, his servant, constitute his “magnum opus” and that he continued to work on editions of them up to his death in 1624.⁵ In an indication of Andreini’s widespread fame, the *Bravure* were translated and published in Paris as *Les bravacheries du Capitaine Spavente* in 1608.⁶ In 1611, he wrote the introduction to Flaminio Scala’s famous compendium of *commedia* scenarios, the *Teatro delle favole rappresentative*, and he published two plays, *L’ingannata Proserpina* and *L’alterezza di Narciso*.⁷ The *Ragionamenti fantastici posti in forma di dialoghi rappresentativi* appeared in 1612. Between his retirement and the time of his death in 1614, Andreini had been writing, editing, and publishing his own works and those of Isabella, all the while remaining in close contact with Flaminio Scala, who would publish the *Fragmenti di alcune scritture*, a volume of Isabella’s writings edited by Francesco, in 1620.⁸ Andreini and Scala became literary lions of the *commedia* world during this period.

“Sopra del pigliar moglie” is from Andreini’s *Ragionamenti fantastici posti in forma di dialoghi rappresentativi*, a collection of fantastical arguments in the form of dramatic dialogues. It is the sort of piece that could be used as a building block for a *commedia* performance. Louise George Clubb writes that such “full-length dialogues or *contrasti scenici*”⁹ constitute “whole scenes” that could be “employed

4. Andreini quoted in Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia dell’arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 176.

5. Henke, *Performance and Literature*, 176.

6. MacNeil, *Music and Women*, 260.

7. See Henke, *Performance and Literature*, 176; MacNeil, *Music and Women*, 261–62.

8. See Henke, *Performance and Literature*, 176.

9. Richard Andrews examines the medieval roots of the *contrastisti scenici* in *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

as movable blocks of theatrical material usable in any number of plays.”¹⁰ Regarding its subject matter (choosing a wife) and the sentiments expressed by Teofilo and Calistene—Counter-Reformation platitudes mixed with traditional *querelle des femmes* references—this dialogue resonates with other texts included in this volume. Clubb points out that the professional actors of the *commedia dell’arte* were quite vulnerable to “political and ecclesiastical power”; thus, the content of their work was at times designed to avoid giving offense in the “official culture.”¹¹ Echoing Counter-Reformation ecclesiastical and Pauline pronouncements, Teofilo pontificates, “[M]arriage was contrived to preserve the human species, by having children to resemble ourselves, to restrain the disorderly carnal appetite, and to obtain glory and honor.”¹² Calistene, however, warns Teofilo that his son should not marry for marriage’s sake, especially with a beautiful woman. He argues that beautiful women are inevitably unchaste, not to mention greedy and spoiled, and he cites with apparent relish the example of the beautiful Fiammetta, from a tale in Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*, who was caught sleeping with two men at once.¹³ These two characters thus perform a debate constructed of numerous intertexts belonging to the Counter-Reformation and *querelle* traditions, designed to please contemporary tastes.

When reading this particularly provocative *ragionamento*, “Sopra del pigliar moglie,” in dialogue with the work of Isabella and that of her female Italian contemporaries, we must recall that although personal relationships between men and women may have often been cherished unions, the social pressures that fostered the *querelle des femmes* strongly encouraged the production of misogynistic literary works such as this one, which in large part denigrates marriage. Moreover, the two traditional sides of the *querelle*—those who would attack

Press, 1993). He connects them to the religious *laude*, the devotional poems performed by religious confraternities that may have developed into dramatized moral debates, and possibly the acts of the *giullari*, the professional medieval entertainers who featured *contrasti* in their acts; Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios*, 22.

10. Clubb, *Italian Drama*, 267.

11. *Ibid.*, 270.

12. See 1 Corinthians 7.

13. See footnote 32 below.

women and those who would defend them—were painfully similar in their oppression of women, as Calistene and Teofilo so nicely illustrate. Calistene¹⁴ is a textbook case of an attacker of women; his approach echoes such classical predecessors as Hesiod and Juvenal, as well as more contemporaneous writers, such as Giovanni Boccaccio in his *Corbaccio* or Giuseppe Passi. From this perspective, women are evil, malignant beings whose only worth lies in their ability to bear children. Teofilo,¹⁵ on the other hand, is a traditional defender of women who praises them through his references to the “good” *exempla* of classical antiquity and biblical history, in a manner reminiscent of Boccaccio in his recounting of good women in *De mulieribus claris*. Even so, Teofilo is staunch in his assertion that women should obey their husbands without question and that those who misbehave should receive “slaps, punches, kicks, and blows equal to twenty gauntlets!” Clearly, neither of these characters is particularly sympathetic to women. Teofilo adopts the oppressive stance of the traditional defender of women with his pronouncement that “women pass from paternal authority to marital authority through their wedding: males by law of nature hold command over females even as they do over beasts.”

The same oppressive social impulses toward women that fueled the *querelle* and the misogynistic literature that propagated it also stigmatized women’s efforts to have public artistic careers. The result was that a *virtuosa* seldom escaped the label, or at least the reputation, of a courtesan. Thus, Isabella’s fame for her talent and virtue was, like her marriage, a rare phenomenon during this period. That marriage, a partnership between two famous artists, no doubt provided Isabella the protection and propriety that made her stellar career possible, and it was reputed to be a happy union. But the literary legacy that the Andreinis left for posterity provides an intriguing glimpse into the social complexities that a female artist and intellectual such as Isabella faced,

14. Calistene was a fairly common name in ancient Greek manuscripts. It was the name of Aristotle’s nephew, who was a historian during the time of Alexander the Great. The name means “beauty and strength,” particularly masculine strength. In the case of this dialogue, it may be a somewhat ironic choice, because here Calistene is an old man, deeply embittered toward women, who is ultimately impotent in his ability to change his friend’s mind.

15. Teofilo’s name means “God-loving.” It is clearly a fitting name for one such as this character, who quotes scripture and refers frequently to Christian tradition.

as well as a two-sided commentary on men's and women's anxieties about the state of matrimony.

While Francesco develops his *ragionamento* thematically along traditional misogynistic *querelle* lines that denigrate women and support their virtue only as it is manifested in the persona of a "Signorina Tranquilla"—that is, a young woman who exhibits the stereotypical characteristics of a good woman: silence, chastity, and obedience—Isabella's writing problematizes and broadens the scope of virtuous behaviors for women. It does so ostensibly to publish her own profeminist beliefs and to undergird her reputation for virtuous behavior in spite of the fact that she is indeed an actress. Although one could argue that Francesco's *ragionamento* is meant to be purely a work of comedy—and, in light of what is known about his marriage, it is probably not an accurate representation of his own notions about women—Francesco's inclusion of such a dialogue among others on such diverse topics as love ("Sopra amore"), the education of sons ("Sopra i figliuoli, che vanno alla scola"), and farmers and soldiers ("Sopra gli agricoltori, e soldati") illustrates not only how commonplace debates on the nature of women were but also the degree of complicity with which he willingly engaged in popular misogynistic literary traditions.

Isabella, however, took issue with such complicity. In *La Mirtilla*, she extensively explores questions about the nature of love and what constitutes a marriage between deserving partners. Her female characters, while virtuous with regard to issues of chastity, are most certainly not silent as they engage in witty dialogue, and they exhibit spunk and intelligence as they rescue themselves and their lovers from sticky situations.¹⁶ Stereotypical Signorina Tranquillas they are not. Moreover, Isabella openly critiques sexist social injustices in her *lettere*, as her "Lettera del nascimento della donna" ("Letter on the Birth of Women") and "Dei pensieri honesti di giovanetta da marito" ("Of the Honest Thoughts of a Young Woman to be Married") illustrate. In the former, she chastises a gentleman who complains about the birth of a daughter, and in the latter she communicates the fears of a young woman about to be married, who laments both the strictness of her upbringing and her parents' right to marry her off to a man whom

16. See 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, 3.4, 4.3, 5.1, and 5.3 of *La Mirtilla: A Pastoral*.

she dislikes and fears.¹⁷ The piece that most resonates with Francesco's "Sopra del pigliar moglie" is Isabella's dialogue "Sopra l'amor coniugale" ("On Conjugal Love"), an "*amoroso contrasto*" from *Fragmenti di alcune scritture*. In this dialogue the reluctant Hippodamia soundly interrogates her husband-to-be, Tarquinio, on their wedding day regarding the details of her future life in the home of his parents, and she expresses her fear of the "*tirannide*" (tyranny) that she knows a father can inflict upon his family.¹⁸

To begin, Hippodamia expresses her concern that fathers-in-law are typically not known for cherishing their daughters-in-law. Tarquinio immediately blames her doubts about marriage on her love of literature and the "*stravagante*"—extravagant, or, as John Florio puts it, "new-fangled"—material that she has been reading.¹⁹ Tarquinio complains that young women read books too much these days, declaring that life was much easier when they stuck to the needle and the spindle, "*all'ago*" and "*al fuso*."²⁰ Hippodamia, however, insists that her information comes from good authority and presses her case about fathers-in-law. She compares their rule to that of kings, explaining that the reign of a king can easily become tyrannous. She extends her metaphor to compare the state of a man's sons and their spouses to that of a tyrant's subjects. Tarquinio tries to ease her fears by counter-arguing that marriage can be a partnership between husbands and wives similar to that of magistrates and nobles who rule over a city-state or region, but Hippodamia argues that husbands usually prefer absolute rule. Tarquinio counters that he has heard of wives who do the same, but Hippodamia protests that one seldom encounters such situations, except perhaps when the wife in question is of higher birth or has greater wealth than her husband. She notes, however, that such would never be the case between Tarquinio and herself. Finally, she expresses her concerns that his mother and siblings will react badly to her being brought into the household, especially if they fear that she might cre-

17. See *Lettere della Signora Isabella Andreini, Padovana, comica gelosa, e academica intenta, nominata l'accessa* (Venice: Alla Minerva, 1647), 254–56.

18. "Sopra l'amor coniugale," in *Fragmenti di alcune scritture*, 79.

19. "Sopra l'amor coniugale," 78. For "*stravagante*," see "Florio's 1611 Italian/English Dictionary: Queen Anna's New World of Words," <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/florio>.

20. "Sopra l'amor coniugale," 78.

ate a financial burden. Ultimately, Tarquinio reassures Hippodamia on each of these accounts that all will be well in her new home after she is married and that he will be a willing partner in their union.²¹

Isabella expressed the woman's point of view on marriage in a number of contexts in her work, which suggests that she felt passionately about the subject, as did other women writers of the period. In *The Worth of Women* (1600), Moderata Fonte has her group of ladies debate the merits of marriage, and Lucrezia Marinella in *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men* (1600) critiques misogynistic views of wives. Concern over the state of marriage was not limited to the literary confines of the *querelle*, however. Isabella's comparison of the rule of fathers to political rule strikes an intertextual note not only with Francesco's comic dialogue but also with political and legal situations related to patriarchy during the period. Stanley Chojnacki writes that "patriarchy was the principle that linked governmental and private spheres in securing elite hegemony. The ideology of Florence's increasingly aristocratic government after 1382 was modeled on the patriarchal family; in Venice the authority of fathers was enhanced by their inscription as channels of government authority to the family. Moreover, the new documentary initiatives reinforced patriarchy not just for the ruling class but for all fathers, whose status as family heads was enhanced by the official recognition it received from registration in fiscal censuses."²²

For Francesco's characters, contracting a marriage is a business negotiation that is also encumbered with ramifications for a family's reputation and status. Their fear of choosing a daughter-in-law who is angry, proud, and diabolical ("*nuora arrabbiata, superba, e diabolica*") suggests their insecurities about taking into the family a woman who might bring shame to them, thus undermining their patriarchal power, status, and right to "promote social order among the populace," as Chojnacki puts it.²³ Isabella's dialogue, on the other hand, expresses the fears that beset women regarding their lack of agency and recourse in matrimony, as well as in the homes of their fathers or fathers-in-law. Considered together, Isabella's and Francesco's

21. *Ibid.*, 77–81.

22. Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice*, 31.

23. *Ibid.*

dialogues provide insight into the anxieties of both women and men regarding the institution of marriage and what it meant personally and politically for their lives.

On Taking a Wife

FRANCESCO ANDREINI

From *Ragionamenti fantastici*

Calistene, an old man, and Teofilo, the head of a household²⁴

Calistene: Good day, Signor Teofilo.

Teofilo: Good day and a good year withal, Signor Calistene.

Calistene: A good day would be encountering good fortune!

Teofilo: Everyone has his fortune from the day he is born.

Calistene: The important thing is in knowing how to recognize it.

Teofilo: Crazy is he who does not recognize it!

Calistene: And who is that sage who recognizes it?

Teofilo: He who is wise and prudent.

Calistene: Many things have the aspect of goodness that are not good.

Teofilo: And what are those? Tell, that I may know them.

Calistene: There are many, and particularly that of taking a wife, because sometimes a man thinks he's taking a lady and takes [instead] a hellish fury.

Teofilo: You have completely confused me with your last words!

24. See footnotes 14 and 15 above.

- Calistene: Why is that?
- Teofilo: Because it was my intention to give a wife to my son, and now I am all confused. I don't know what I should do!
- Calistene: As for me, I would say that you should proceed with more consideration, that you should think it over carefully, because once the thing is done, it is no longer possible to undo it, and so much more is it with marriage, which only death dissolves.
- Teofilo: I went so far with promises that I wouldn't know how to retract my commitment to the marriage between the daughter of Signor Teodosio Tranquilli and my son, already nearly contracted and settled.²⁵
- Calistene: If Signorina Tranquilla has a mind consistent with her name, it will be a good thing for her and for your son, but otherwise, it will be bad for the one and worse for the other.
- Teofilo: Oh, that I had never gotten into this! Even so, I am not entirely sorry, because I have always heard it said that marriage was contrived to preserve the human species, by having children to resemble ourselves, to restrain the disorderly carnal appetite, and to obtain glory and honor, as the Apostle²⁶ says.
- Calistene: It is true that the marital state is much more necessary (for increasing the human lineage) than the state of continence and virginity; nevertheless, there are some

25. For discussions of the history of negotiating and contracting marriages in Renaissance Italy, see Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual*, 181–96, 247–60, and Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice*, 53–75, 132–52.

26. Teofilo refers to the Apostle Paul. See 1 Corinthians 7 regarding Paul's pronouncements on marriage.

who prefer to withdraw from the world rather than to live married.

Teofilo: It seems to me that everyone should marry, and the reason is this: it was God who instituted marriage to glorify man and to make him live by His law. God commands²⁷ marriage; thus, it is good, and one must observe His commandment. Another reason I find is that marriage was instituted in a most worthy place, since it had its beginning in His Paradise. Marriage is none other than a mystical body in which there are two bodies in the same flesh: God joins them together, and that which God joins together man cannot separate.²⁸

Calistene: That is a most lofty speech; yet for all this, we have seen many repudiations and separations [in marriage].

Teofilo: These aren't valid objections. We hold that marriage was ordained when Adam and Eve, our first parents, had their consciences pure and clean, and after the Flood (sent by God to punish the wrongdoers) only married persons were saved in the Ark to signify and demonstrate the excellence of inseparable marriage.²⁹

Calistene: I understand you. You mean that having a beautiful wife and beautiful children is the greatest happiness; but the business does not go this way; on the contrary, it goes quite another way.

27. The Italian text reads, "Dio comanda il manda il matrimonio." Here, "*il manda*" is an obvious printing error. It is omitted in the translation.

28. This description of marriage is paraphrased from words attributed to Jesus in Matthew 19:4–6.

29. The account of Noah and the flood is found in Genesis 6–9.

- Teofilo: And how does it go? I know very well that men who are not ignorant, who have sound intellect, should marry their children nobly, in order that they then be able to have the fruits so dear to God, the fruits of wedlock, which are legitimate children.
- Calistene: It is usually said that marriage makes a man wise, destroys his vices, and restrains him.
- Teofilo: I am not satisfied by these words alone; however, all the same, my determination to give a wife to my son increases.
- Calistene: You could repent of it, as others, too, have done. But, before you begin to repent without knowing why, I want to tell you what I understand about getting married. You know, sir, that it would be very much better to die quickly than to be married to an evil woman, who continually keeps you in suffering and torment: the husband dies all the time, and does not know why; he languishes and is not able to die; and finally he calls on death to relieve him of his suffering life. Where can one find a more harmful friend? A prison more dreadful than to have continually at home a foul-tempered wife, who always seeks to wear you down?
- Teofilo: Signor Calistene, you are too hard on the poor women!
- Calistene: Listen carefully, Signor Teofilo: if a man (as it happens) falls and is caught in some error against justice, and then he tells his wife about it, as he would a trustworthy friend, as soon as she is informed of such a misdeed, and as soon as she has received some offense or some small indignation, then she immediately runs off to accuse him, whence follows the ruin or unexpected death of the poor husband!

- Teofilo: God save my son from so wicked an encounter!
- Calistene: Observe, dear sir, how a man runs a great risk in taking a wife, the first risk being that he takes a person whom he does not know, because if he knew her to be a wretch and knew her customs, he would not take her for all the gold in the world! But because he only knows what he hears about her, and from her closest relatives, he takes her blindly, and instead of finding her nice, sweet, courteous, and amiable, he finds her full of haughtiness, pride, [and] arrogance, scornful, complaining, spiteful, envious, a gossip, a slanderer, and finally, that she has all the evil traits!
- Teofilo: Oh me, oh me! What do I hear? My most dear and fondly remembered consort was never thus with me as long as she lived; because living, she was a Giulia, a Claudia, a Cassandra, a Nesterre, a Judith, and a Tamar of goodness and honor!³⁰
- Calistene: You had great luck in finding such a woman, since it is good luck to be the first to find something good

30. Borrowing a strategy popular in the *querelle des femmes*, Teofilo argues for the goodness of his late wife by comparing her with virtuous classical and biblical *exempla*. Julia, the daughter of Julius Caesar and Cordelia, was renowned for her goodness and virtue. Claudia was a Roman vestal virgin to whom miraculous occurrences were attributed. Cassandra was the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, and she was famous for her powers of divination. Nesterre remains unidentified, although it might be a version of Nestor, the Homeric hero who, as king of Pylus and Messenia, was known for his prudence, eloquence, and wisdom. Interestingly, male figures are seldom included in lists of *exempla* for women, but the virtues for which he was famous do fit Teofilo's theme. For these classical references, see Lemprière, *Lemprière's Classical Dictionary*, 337, 170, 144, and 439. With Judith and Tamar, Teofilo turns to apocryphal and biblical *exempla*. Judith, whose story is in her eponymous book in the Apocrypha, was the beautiful and virtuous widow who beheaded Holofernes, the leader of the Assyrian army besieging her city. The Tamar of whom Teofilo is probably speaking was the daughter-in-law of Judah. Her story is found in Genesis 38. She seduced Judah through trickery and gave birth to twin sons, Perez and Zerah. Through Perez, she became an ancestor of Jesus in the line of King David; see Ruth 4:18–22 and Matthew 1:1–6.

before others. My Signor Teofilo, do not want (I pray you) to marry off your son so young, who, drawn by his senses, will not put up any resistance, but like a harebrained fellow will give his “yes” right away, not knowing that after it’s done he’ll regret it and for it he’ll always live malcontent and full of displeasure. Remember that choosing a wife is not like buying a horse for goodness and beauty; if later one finds it full of defects, one may sell it, trade it, or give it away, but when the man is bound [in marriage], he is bound in that way until death.

Teofilo: I believe that the daughter of Signor Tranquilli must be, or, to put it better, is goodness itself, being a most beautiful young girl, since the beautiful and the good turn into each other.³¹

Calistene: You fool yourself, because beneath beautiful faces can also be hidden many vices. Everyone seeks to have a beautiful wife, permitting himself to be fooled by his own senses and desire, not realizing that sometimes these sorts of women are accustomed to wanting everything they can think of!

Teofilo: You hint at something—I don’t know what, but I don’t like it!

Calistene: I know that you understand me, and to a good listener a hint is enough: but again I offer that if a beautiful woman is not such [i.e., spoiled and all-desiring], you will never convince her jealous husband.

Teofilo: You are putting me to the test!

31. Here Teofilo echoes arguments about connections between goodness and beauty put forth by classical philosophers. In Plato’s *Lysis*, for example, Socrates says, “I declare that the good is the beautiful”; *Plato III: Lysis Symposium Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 49.

Calistene: Think a minute about that *novella* by Ariosto, about the worthy Fiammetta, who knew so astutely how to please her lover, yet she was in bed with *two* other lovers!³²

Teofilo: Beauty doesn't last forever, since it is no other than a deceitful flower, which, if it lasts for a while, it is a short while. It is like a rhetorical pretense.³³ When old age or infirmity arrives, what a joke: soon that once beautiful body is changed and becomes ugly and droopy!

Calistene: You speak to me in *sdrucchiolo*,³⁴ my Signor Teofilo, which seems to me to be appropriate among those Arcadian shepherds who sing *sdrucchioli* lines to the sound of their pipes and make their wooly sheep run and leap.

Teofilo: Now you make me laugh with these fables of yours! I tell you, what you tell me about beautiful women is hard for me to believe.

32. In canto 28.1–74 of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* [trans. Guido Waldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974)], an innkeeper tells Rodomont a story about women's inability to be chaste. In the tale, Astolfo, king of the Lombards, and Jocondo, the brother of the king's Roman knight, Fausto, decide to leave their cheating wives and do unto other men as has been done unto them. Eventually, seducing other men's wives becomes too dangerous, so they take up with a young woman called Fiammetta, whom they magnanimously decide to share between them. She, however, manages to entertain yet another lover while Astolfo and Fausto lie sleeping on either side of her.

33. Andreini refers to the negative aspects of sophistry and rhetoric. Here he compares them to beauty's ability to lead men astray.

34. A *sdrucchiolo* line contains an extra syllable vis-à-vis the *piano* line that prevails in Italian versification; the construction is thus rare in Italian and is considered artificial and belabored.