

Introduction

THE OTHER VOICE: A REDISCOVERY AND A REVISION

The publication of a portion of *Le Nobiltà et Eccellenze delle Donne* (*The Nobility and Excellence of Women*) in 1979 rescued Lucrezia Marinella from oblivion.¹ The pages in which the author defended women's virtues against detractors, counterattacked by underscoring men's flaws, and advocated equal access to education, struck late twentieth-century readers for their boldness and erudition.

The contemporary rediscovery of the works of Moderata Fonte and Arcangela Tarabotti drew additional attention to a traditionally neglected period in the history of Italian women's writings. While Carlo Dionisotti deemed 1560 the *terminus ante quem* for their production, the years between the end of the sixteenth century and the middle of the seventeenth suddenly revealed an unsuspected ferment of intellectual activity.² And while women's literary output in the mid-sixteenth century had been largely confined to lyrical poetry, Marinella, Fonte, and Tarabotti offered a refreshing variety of voices and genres.

Anyone interested in the history of Italian women's writing owes gratitude to Dionisotti, who cleverly surveyed the field at a time when interest in the subject was virtually non-existent. The need to revise his outline, however, is a natural and healthy consequence of the progress the discipline has made in the past thirty years. Virginia Cox has recently argued that Dionisotti's sketch, however influential, is "notably flawed." Departing from the traditional view of the mid-sixteenth century as the heyday of women writers, Cox stresses the continuity in women's literary production from the end of the fifteenth century through to the early decades of the seventeenth, effectively

1. Ginevra Conti Odorisio prompted the rediscovery with the publication of excerpts of *Le nobiltà* in her volume *Donna e società nel Seicento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1979).

2. In a much-quoted passage, Dionisotti claimed that women 'fanno gruppo', that is, constitute a quantitatively significant presence, only in the literature of the mid-1500s. See Carlo Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1967), 191–92.

2 Introduction

providing a much-needed new timeline.³ Indeed, the triad of Fonte, Tarabotti, and Marinella alone points to the need to direct attention beyond the mid-sixteenth century and the lyric tradition.⁴

Compared with her contemporaries Fonte and Tarabotti, Marinella presents a more complex and elusive profile, despite the wealth of historical documents unearthed by Susan Haskins.⁵ It is now clear that *Le nobiltà*, which has earned the author the attention of modern scholars, can hardly be considered representative of a literary career in which it constitutes, on the contrary, an anomaly. The bulk of Marinella's works is in fact hagiographical and fits well within the Counter-Reformation goal of promoting devotion through literature. Her forays into other genres, however, demonstrate both her ambition and her desire not to be confined to one category. Indeed, it is the sheer range of her production, rather than her achievements in any single genre, that deserves recognition. Marinella is the only early modern Italian woman writer to move so freely among different genres, leaving behind a number of hagiographical works, a psychomachy, a philosophical tract, a pastoral novel, and an epic poem. Her last work, *Essortationi alle donne et a gli altri, se a loro saranno a grado* (*Exhortations to Women and to Others if They Please*, hereafter *Esortazioni*), which she published at the remarkable age of 74, allows critics to add yet another genre to this formidable list: the book of advice.

MARINELLA'S LIFE AND WORKS

Like many early modern Italian women writers, including Fonte and Tarabotti, Marinella lived in Venice. Customs regarding women's education and participation in public life were no more enlightened in

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

4. See for instance Laura Benedetti, "Saintes et guerrières: l'héroïsme féminin dans l'œuvre de Lucrezia Marinella," in *Les Femmes et l'Écriture. L'Amour Profane et l'Amour Sacré*, ed. Claude Cazalé Bérard (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris X, 2005), 98.

5. Susan Haskins "Vexatious Litigant, or the Case of Lucrezia Marinella? New Documents Concerning Her Life (Part I)," *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 1 (2006), 80–128, and "Vexatious Litigant, or the Case of Lucrezia Marinella? (Part II)," *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 1–2 (2007), 203–30.

Venice than in other Italian cities.⁶ In his introduction to Moderata Fonte's *Il merito delle donne* (*The Worth of Women*), Giovanni Niccolò Doglioni denounces "the false notion, so widespread in our city today, that women should excel in nothing but the running of the household,"⁷ while Arcangela Tarabotti decried the custom of forbidding women from attending university lectures.⁸ Yet the fact that some remarkable women of letters were able to emerge in this atmosphere suggests that this most learned of cities offered something of consequence even to its secluded female population. In the 1400s, Venice was home to Cassandra Fedele, who at age twenty-two was able to write in Latin the ornate *Oratio pro Bertucio Lamberto*; the 1500s witnessed the emergence of lyrical poets such as Gaspara Stampa and Veronica Franco; finally the 1600s produced the personalities of Marinella, Fonte, and Tarabotti, as well as that of the erudite Jewish poet Sarra Copia Sulam.⁹ Exactly twenty-five years after Marinella's death, yet another Venetian, Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, became the first woman in the world to be granted a university degree.¹⁰ Clearly, even women benefitted from the learned atmosphere of the Queen of the Adriatic, where in the mid-sixteenth century more books were produced and

6. For a comparison between women in Italy and women in other European countries see Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), 51. For the seclusion of women in Florence see the reaction of French traveler Grangier de Liverdes, quoted by Judith C. Brown, "A Woman's Place Was in the Home: Women's Work in Renaissance Tuscany," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 215.

7. Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women: Wherein is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men*, trans. Virginia Cox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 39.

8. Arcangela Tarabotti, *La semplicità ingannata*, ed. Simona Bortot (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2007), 292.

9. See Umberto Fortis, *Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa nel ghetto di Venezia del '600* (Torino: Zamorani, 2003), and Sarra Copia Sulam, *Jewish Poet and Intellectual in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, ed. and trans. Don Harrán. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

10. See Francesco Ludovico Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646–1684): The First Woman in the World to Earn a University Degree*, ed. Catherine Marshall, trans. Jan Vairo and William Crochetiere (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2007).

4 *Introduction*

sold than in any other European center and where less expensive titles were affordable even for the average manual worker.¹¹

In examining the education imparted to young Renaissance women, Margaret King observes that its difference from the one received by men lay not as much in content as in outcome. While historical evidence suggests that educators did scrutinize with greater caution the materials to be used in women's intellectual development, what made the position of the woman of letters particularly precarious was that her humanist training and knowledge had no professional application and could even hinder her pursuit of the main occupations available to her, those of wife and mother:

Far from conferring upon women a new equality with men, a humanist education may well have created for women new and agonizing problems: for it opened up vistas of intellectual freedom among those whose sex confined them to traditional social roles in which intellectual attainment was unnecessary and, indeed, unwanted.¹²

King identifies two main patterns among women educated in the humanities, which are exemplified by the destinies of Isotta and Ginevra Nogarola. Pupils of Guarino Veronese, the two sisters earned enthusiastic praise in their youth but took different paths in adulthood. Isotta (1418–1466) “constructed within her mother’s house an austere and book-lined cell where in near solitude she combined religious devotions with the study of sacred letters.”¹³ Ginevra (c. 1417–1461/8) married a Brescian nobleman and ceased all intellectual activity. King discusses other humanist women who also fall into one of these two categories: they either remained unwed or took religious vows and

11. For data on book publication and distribution in Renaissance Venice see Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 3 and 14.

12. Margaret L. King, “Thwarted Ambitions: Six Learned Women of the Italian Renaissance,” in *Humanism, Venice, and Women: Essays on the Italian Renaissance* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2005), 282.

13. *Ibid.*, 286.

continued to pursue some form of learning, like Costanza Barbaro and Cecilia Gonzaga, or they married and abandoned their scholarly pursuits, like Cataruzza Caldiera and Cassandra Fedele, although Fedele managed to return to her studies after her husband's death.¹⁴

The pattern King identifies lasted well beyond the 1600s. A university degree and the title of "magistra and doctrix" did not spare Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia from facing the same dilemma that had haunted her humanist predecessors. For one, both her social status and her gender prevented her from being a "magistra" in the full sense of the word. Barred from teaching and therefore from serving as a model for future generations, she was destined to have her accomplishments die with her.¹⁵ Although she lived two centuries after the Nogarola sisters, her choices were no less stark, and she followed in Isotta's footsteps. A Benedictine oblate, Cornaro Piscopia "learned how to conduct her life with her family as if she were in a monastery," leaving the house only to visit the Abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore.¹⁶

This brief overview of the possibilities available to women in early modern Italy highlights Lucrezia Marinella's singularity. Unlike her humanist predecessors, she escaped the limitations of female adulthood. She was neither a courtesan nor a member of a religious order, yet she continued to write for most of her remarkably long life. Marriage slowed her down, but did not stop her.¹⁷ She did not fall into the "either/or" pattern that has influenced women's creativity well

14. Another possibility, which King does not take into consideration in her study, is that of the so-called "cortigiana onesta," a sort of high-end prostitute who combined physical attractiveness with refined conversation and some poetic and musical ability. Veronica Franco is the most famous example in this category which, however, fell out of favor in the more austere times of the Counter-Reformation. See Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

15. Indeed, Cornaro Piscopia's achievements convinced the Reformers of the University of Padua to issue a document that explicitly prohibited granting degrees to women. It would take more than fifty years for the University of Bologna to crown Laura Bassi, its first female graduate (1732), and almost exactly a century for Pavia to do the same for Maria Amoretti (1777). See Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia*, 83.

16. Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia*, 109.

17. Marinella was also lucky enough to escape the fate that befell Moderata Fonte and many other early modern women, who died during or soon after delivery. On the risks associated

beyond the seventeenth century.¹⁸ The circumstances that enabled her to achieve this significant feat deserve further scrutiny.

Giovanni Marinello, Lucrezia's father, is a fascinating figure, a man of science and letters whose publications included a tract on rhetoric (*La copia delle parole* [*The Abundance of Words*, 1562]), a manual on cosmetics (*Gli ornamenti delle donne* [*Women's Ornaments*, 1562]), and a treatise on gynecology (*Le medicine partendenti alle infermità delle donne* [*Medicines Pertaining to Women's Illnesses*, 1563]).¹⁹ In the introduction to this last volume, Marinello defends his project against possible objections. He justifies writing a medical treatise in the vernacular by pointing to natural philosophers such as Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna who also wrote in their own language. And in response to those who deride him for wanting to serve women, the author explains that his work addresses those who can most benefit from it.²⁰ Marinello introduces *Gli ornamenti delle donne* in similar terms, claiming to be the first to deal with this topic in the vernacular and rejoicing "in being born in an age which has women more noble in lineage and virtue than any who ever lived in the past: These women, I am most confident, will gladly read this work, the fruit of sweet labors I bore because of them."²¹

Marinello's preference for a female audience—which, he claims, had also enjoyed his vernacular treatise on rhetoric, *La co-*

with childbirth see Margaret L. King, "La donna del Rinascimento," in Eugenio Garin, ed. *Uomo del Rinascimento* (Bari: Laterza, 1988), 276.

18. For the persistence of the "either/or" model see Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Writing and Motherhood," in *The (M)other Tongue. Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, ed. Shirley Nelson Garner et al. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 360.

19. See Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Biblioteca modenese o notizie della vita e delle opere degli scrittori nati degli stati del serenissimo signor duca di Modena* (Modena: Società Tipografica, 1783), Vol. III, 159–60. Excerpts from *Le medicine partendenti alle infermità delle donne* have been published in *Medicina per le donne nel Cinquecento. Testi di Giovanni Marinello e di Girolamo Mercurio*, ed. Maria Luisa Altieri Biagi et al. (Torino: UTET, 1992).

20. *Medicina per le donne nel Cinquecento*, 46–7.

21. "E molto più mi debbo gloriare di esser nato in una età, la quale ha le più illustri donne per sangue, et per virtù, che forse nel preterito siano state: le quali vivo io certissimo, che volentieri leggeranno questi dolci affanni a lor cagione sostenuti." (Giovanni Marinello, *Gli ornamenti delle donne tratti dalle scritture d'una reina greca* [Venice: Francesco de' Franceschi, 1562], vii). Here and elsewhere, translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

pia delle parole—and self-imposed role as a popularizer support the hypothesis that he played a formative role in Lucrezia's education, in spite of the fact that nowhere does she provide details about his influence. The family environment was certainly learned and presumably stimulating. Curzio, one of Lucrezia's brothers, followed in his father's footsteps and became a physician and a writer.²² Lucrezia mentions both Giovanni and Curzio in her dedication of *Le nobiltà* to Lucio Scarano, a physician himself. Little is known of another brother, Antonio, a Servite monk at the monastery of S. Giacomo della Giudecca under the name "Fra Angelico," and of a sister, Diamantina, who married in 1594.²³ Lucrezia writes of them in affectionate if generic terms, without mentioning their relationship, at the end of *Vita del serafico et glorioso S. Francesco* (*Life of the Seraphic and Glorious St. Francis*). She describes Fra Angelico as a man who left the turbulent world to follow Saint Francis and Diamantina as a model of beauty, chastity, and goodness who showed mature judgment at a young age.²⁴ The information available on Lucrezia's father and siblings only underscores the mystery surrounding her mother, who is never mentioned and whose very name has not survived.

The origins of the family are not completely clear. In a letter that accompanies *Vita di Maria Vergine, imperatrice dell'universo* (*Life of the Virgin Mary, Empress of the Universe*) Lucrezia presents herself—somewhat instrumentally—as a servant and subject ("serva e suddita") of the duchess of Modena, on the basis of her father's birth in that city.²⁵ Other sources, however, point to a possible Southern origin. Giuseppe Tassini reports in fact that the Marinelli came from Naples,²⁶ while a list of Renaissance medical doctors suggests instead that Giovanni was originally from Mola, near Bari.²⁷

The entry concerning Marinella in the Register of the Dead in the Venetian Parish of Saint Pantaleone indicates that she died in 1653

22. See Tiraboschi, *Biblioteca modenese*, 157–58.

23. Haskins, "Vexatious Litigant," 2006, 92.

24. Marinella, *Vita del serafico et glorioso S. Francesco* III, 57–58.

25. See Tiraboschi, *Biblioteca modenese*, 161.

26. Archivio Storico Veneto, Miscellanea Codici I, Tassini, Busta 13, p. 1285.

27. Juliana Hill Cotton, *Name-List from a Medical Register of the Italian Renaissance* [Oxford: [s.n.], 1976], 78. I thank Daria Perocco for bringing this work to my attention.

at the age of 82. On this basis, it is often assumed that she was born in 1571. This assumption, however, contradicts Marinella's presentation of herself as a young woman in the dedication of the *Vita di Maria Vergine* (1602). Since it would have been odd at the time for a thirty-one-year-old woman to refer to herself as "young," her date of birth may be somewhat closer to the end of the sixteenth century, although it is also possible that Marinella was intentionally trying to create a younger authorial persona.²⁸ It is likely, however, that Lucrezia was the youngest in her family and lived for some time—presumably after her father's death and before her marriage—with her brother Curzio in Campiello dei Squelini, as reported in the census of 1591.²⁹

Marinella entered the literary scene in 1595 with the publication of *La colomba sacra* (*The Sacred Dove*). Dedicated to Margherita Gonzaga, duchess of Ferrara, this poem combines hagiography and the epic. While the title exploits the allegorical symbolism surrounding the name of the protagonist, Saint Colomba of Sens, the subtitle of "poema eroico" and the use of *ottava rima* are indicative of Marinella's fascination for the epic tradition.

This choice of topic seems curious for a writer who would later devote volumes to the celebration of much more famous religious figures such as Saint Catherine, Saint Francis, and the Virgin Mary. It is tempting to read Marinella's cautious first attempt at hagiography as an effort to follow the precepts Torquato Tasso outlined in *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*: while the subject matter for a heroic poem must derive from sacred history, it should be neither related to a dogma nor too recent. These conditions are essential to preserving what Tasso calls "la licenza del fingere," that is, the poet's prerogative to create characters and situations.³⁰ A recent event may also have influenced Marinella's choice. In 1581, the bishop of Rimini had brought back relics of Saint Colomba from the cathedral of Sens to his archdiocese, thus reinvigorating her cult.³¹

28. Giovanni Papa's portrait of the writer adds to the confusion by indicating that Marinella was twenty-two, rather than thirty, in 1601. See Haskins, "Vexatious Litigant," 2006, 83.

29. Haskins, "Vexatious Litigant," 2006, 92.

30. Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, in *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*, ed. Luigi Poma (Bari: Laterza, 1964), 4–10.

31. See Guy Chastel, *Sainte Colombe de Sens* (Paris: Gigord, 1939), 200n1.

A victim of Aurelian's alleged persecution of Christians, Saint Colomba lived in the third century and was killed in Sens.³² While most of Marinella's account follows the events as presented in a manuscript devoted to Saint Colomba's martyrdom,³³ one significant departure suggests another, more probable source. In *La colomba sacra*, the story takes place not in Sens, but in Scenoa, an imaginary Arab town on a tributary of the river Jordan (*La colomba sacra* I, 11). This surprising geographical transposition is found in the popular *Legendario delle Santissime Vergini*, which, first published in 1511, underwent several editions during the sixteenth century. The anonymous editor of the *Legendario* located the town of Saint Colomba's martyrdom in some generic region in the East ("nelle parti d'Oriente"), and italianized Senones—the Latin name of Sens—as Scenoua, which could in turn have become "Scenoa" in *La colomba sacra*. Marinella, seemingly intrigued by the possibility of merging Saint Colomba's story with Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, infused the confrontation between Aurelian and Colomba with the same, subtle erotic tension that marked the encounter between Aladin and Sophronia in the second canto of the *Liberata*.³⁴

Two years later, Marinella dedicated her second work to Cristina of Lorena, grand duchess of Tuscany. Once again, she chose a powerful woman as her addressee and neglected her ties to Venice. The *Vita del Serafico e Glorioso San Francesco, descritta in ottava rima, con un discorso del rivolgimento amoroso verso la Somma Bellezza* (*Life of the Seraphic and Glorious St. Francis, with a Discourse on the Loving Turn toward the Supreme Beauty*) is divided, as the title suggests, into two parts. The discourse that precedes the poetic account of St. Francis's life is remarkable for its vehement contempt for the body, described as a "ladro domestico [...] fracido cadavero [...] oscura tomba dell'anima" ("domestic thief [...], rotting corpse [...], dark grave for the soul") that those wishing to rise to the "infinita luce" ("infinite light") must despise and neglect. This paroxysmal aversion to all earthly at-

32. Modern historians are skeptical that such a persecution ever took place. See for instance Alaric Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 200.

33. The manuscript was published as an appendix to Chastel, *Sainte Colombe de Sens*.

34. For a more detailed analysis see Laura Benedetti, "Saintes et guerrières," 98–100.

tachment does not even spare one's family and children, mutable entities who serve as distractions from God, the "sommo sole" ("supreme sun").³⁵ Marinella also criticizes women's use of cosmetics, a striking departure from her father's recommendations on how women may improve their physical aspect. "I maintain that, although a woman may be beautiful," the elder Marinello wrote, "it is not inappropriate for her to try to improve her appearance, as nothing in this world is perfect."³⁶ Marinella's polemical stance would return in *Esortazioni*, which suggests a certain consistency of her views.³⁷ Another recurring feature of her career is her production of hagiographical works, both in prose and in rhyme. After *La colomba sacra and Vita del Serafico e glorioso San Francesco*, she wrote *Vita di Maria Vergine* (1602), *Vita di Santa Giustina* (Life of St. Justina, 1606), and *De' Gesti heroici, e della vita maravigliosa della Serafica Santa Caterina* (*The Heroic Deeds and Wonderful Life of the Seraphic Saint Catherine*, 1624).

The dedication of *Amore innamorato et impazzato* (*Cupid in Love and Driven Mad*, 1598) to Caterina Medici Gonzaga, duchess of Mantua, attests to Marinella's desire to strengthen her ties with the Gonzaga court. Recalling the favors and gifts already received ("titoli, e [...] magnificenza de' doni"), the author pledges all of her future works to the Gonzagas—a promise that she would not honor. Marinella introduces her poem, a psychomachy, with an explanation of its allegory: the protagonists Cupid, Iridio, and Ersilia respectively symbolize the struggle among the concupiscible, irascible, and rational parts of the soul, a battle that eventually ends with the triumph of rationality and faith.³⁸ In the poem's elaborate allegorical system, Venus, who asks Jupiter to forgive wayward Cupid, symbolizes the saint who intercedes with God on a sinner's behalf, while Cupid's cleansing

35. Marinella, *Vita del serafico et glorioso S. Francesco*, 7 and 10.

36. "Questo cotanto voglio dire, che, benché una donna sia bella; non le si disdica lo accrescere della sua bellezza: conciosia che niuna cosa sia al mondo perfetta" (Giovanni Marinello, *Gli ornamenti delle donne* vi).

37. In *Le nobiltà*, Marinella instead considers luxury a sign of women's superiority (26).

38. Plato discusses the tripartite structure of the soul in the *Republic* (see in particular 439e–441a).

in the fountain of Ardena indicates the importance of the “redeeming waves of confessions, sacraments and penance.”³⁹

Nothing about Marinella’s first steps into the literary world foreshadowed the ambitious treatise that she would publish in 1600 and that has earned her fame among modern readers: *Le nobiltà et eccellenze delle donne et i diffetti, e mancamenti degli huomini* (*The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Flaws of Men*).⁴⁰ This work appears to be inspired in part by the author’s desire to respond to Giuseppe Passi’s *I donneschi difetti* (*Women’s Defects*), a 1599 misogynist tract. In thirty-five chapters, Passi employed religious and classical sources to denounce women’s alleged shortcomings.⁴¹ In *Le nobiltà*, Marinella relied instead mainly on vernacular authorities to affirm women’s superiority and denounce men’s wrongdoings. The volume underwent two subsequent editions, in 1601 and 1621.⁴² The former is particularly important and often considered, implicitly or explicitly, to be the reference edition.⁴³ In this version the first part, which is in praise of women, concludes with an additional four short chapters that reject the opinions of Ercole Tasso and Arrigo of Namur, Sperone Speroni, Torquato Tasso, and Giovanni Boccaccio. The audacity with which Marinella confronts such established authorities makes these chapters particularly impressive. She debunks Torquato Tasso’s

39. “[...] l'onde salutifere delle confessioni, de' sacramenti, e delle penitenze.” Marinella, *Amore innamorato et impazzato* (Venezia: Combi, 1618), 221.

40. Several scholars have discussed this work in recent times, including Adriana Chemello, “La donna, il modello, l'immaginario: Moderata Fonte e Lucrezia Marinella,” in Marina Zancan, ed. *Nel cerchio della luna: figure di donna in alcuni testi del XVI secolo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1983), 95-170; Stephen Kolski, “Moderata Fonte, Lucrezia Marinella, Giuseppe Passi: an Early Seventeenth-Century Feminist Controversy,” in *The Modern Language Review* 4 (2001), 972-89; Prudence Allen and Filippo Salvatore, “Lucrezia Marinella and Woman’s Identity in Late Italian Renaissance,” in *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 4 (1992), 5-39; and Letizia Panizza, “Introduction to the Translation,” in Lucrezia Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men*, trans. Anne Dunhill (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 1-34.

41. Giuseppe Passi, *I donneschi difetti* (Venice: Somascho, 1599).

42. The 1601 and 1621 editions bear a slightly different title: *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne co' diffetti et mancamenti de gli huomini*.

43. Anne Dunhill’s 1999 translation is based on the 1601 edition. *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 1–2 (2007) includes an anastatic reprint of the 1600 *editio princeps*.

distinction between “female virtue” (*virtù femminile*) and “womanly virtue” (*virtù donnesca*), and proceeds to claim equal rights for all women, regardless of social class or public role.⁴⁴ These are the most revolutionary passages Marinella would ever write. She also considerably expanded the part devoted to men’s flaws, bringing it to thirty-five chapters—the same number in Passi’s tract.

Marinella’s attitude toward Aristotle is complex. The philosopher provides the foundation for her arguments—especially as far as the definitions of virtues and vices are concerned—but is also chastised as “tiranno et pauroso” (“a tyrant and a coward”) and “uomo di poco ingegno” (“man of little wisdom”).⁴⁵ She mockingly calls him “buon compagnone” (“good buddy”) and “cattivello” (“mean little guy”),⁴⁶ a man whose judgment was ultimately obfuscated by negative personal experience. Plato, on the contrary, is celebrated as wise, a great man, and truly fair (“saggio”, “grande uomo, in vero giustissimo”)⁴⁷ for his support of women’s participation in public life and access to education, especially in the fifth book of *Republic*.

Apart from customary references to the classics, Marinella’s work displays a considerable degree of familiarity with the vernacular tradition, from Dante and Petrarca to Ariosto, Tansillo, Tasso and Fonte. She amasses quotes and examples, demonstrating her awareness of the tradition’s preference for erudition over originality. As the first Italian woman to experiment in this genre Marinella needed to convince readers of her credentials, and she successfully accomplishes that goal.

The ambitious *Le nobiltà* constitutes a parenthesis in Marinella’s outpouring of devotional literature, which resumed in 1602 with the publication of *La vita di Maria Vergine imperatrice dell’universo*. Forgetting her pledge to the Gonzagas, Marinella addressed this new work to the Venetian doge and Senate. *La vita* presents its subject in two formats, poetry and prose, and judging from the number of edi-

44. Marinella’s answer to Tasso is discussed in Laura Benedetti, “Virtù femminile o virtù donnesca? Torquato Tasso, Lucrezia Marinella ed una polemica rinascimentale,” ed. Gianni Venturi, *Torquato Tasso e la cultura estense* (Firenze: Olschki, 1999), 449–56.

45. Marinella, *La nobiltà* (1601 edition), 32.

46. Marinella, *La nobiltà* (1601 edition), 27 and 119.

47. Marinella, *La nobiltà* (1601 edition), 33 and 32.

1. THIS EXHORTATION WILL SHOW THAT SECLUSION SUITS SUPERIOR BEINGS SUCH AS GOD, PRINCES, AND WOMEN. NATURE AND THE FIRST CAUSE PRESCRIBED SECLUSION TO WOMEN MORE THAN TO MEN.

Gorgias of Leontini, that most famous legislator, left us a maxim as worthy and precious as those left by the oracle of Apollo in Delos: a woman's reputation must not leave the walls of her home.⁷ He considered a woman's reputation so fragile and valuable that were it to leave the home and become the object of men's conversation—which is always full of lies and cowardice—it would return offended and disparaged. This, I believe, was that great legislator's thought and opinion. The virtue and goodness that proceeds from the good deeds one performs at home must be kept within those walls as a just and decent thing. I cannot but praise the thoughts and words of such a great man, and condemn the ambition of some women who, because of some noble and high virtue that does not suit them, desire their names to circulate in the city and among men. They do not realize that, once they leave their homes, they are like the targets archers use in their practice—pierced and ripped apart by everybody and from all sides. Neither do they realize that, as I said earlier, their reputation is divine. Like the whiteness of a swan, it can be darkened by the slightest shadow.

7. Marinella may have found Gorgias's ideas on women in Plutarch's *Mulierum Virtutes* (*Bravery of Women*), which had been translated into Latin by Alamanno Rinuccini in 1485 and had enjoyed great success, particularly in Giovanni Tarcagnola's Italian translation, *Opuscoli morali* (Venezia: Comin da Trino, 1567). See Maria Luisa Doglio, ed. Torquato Tasso, *Discorso della virtù femminile e donnesca* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1997), 74. However, Gorgias's ideas are reported quite differently by Plutarch, who at the beginning of *Bravery of Women* states: "I do not hold the same opinion as Thucydides. For he declares that the best woman is she about whom there is the least talk among persons outside regarding either censure or commendation, feeling that the name of the good woman, like her person, ought to be shut up indoors and never go out. But to my mind Gorgias appears to display better taste in advising that not the form but the fame of a woman should be known to many." (Plutarch, *Moralia*, 242E–F, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt [Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1968], 3.475).

The sun, however bright, can be dimmed by a small cloud. Therefore, it is good to flee all things that cause damage, particularly to one's honor. The remedy is seclusion. You will keep your reputation in the secrecy of your house. Seclusion is perhaps worthier than is commonly believed. All precious things flee the gaze of others, as it seems that in showing themselves they would lose value and worth. Nature hides gems, gold, silver, and other treasures in the depths of the earth because they are precious and coveted. All things of beauty flee people's sight because, if they manifested themselves, they would appear less important, and even vulgar. This is the reason the ancient wise men hid the beauty of their Gods in the rough guise of ugly monsters. In this way, their excellence would not be revealed to everyone. Only on occasion, when their rough cover was open, did people understand their wonderful and venerable nature. Tasso discusses this in the eighth canto of his *Goffredo*:

When a rustic Silenus opened,
The people of old saw wonders.⁸

From these lines, we realize that seclusion and secrecy are to be revered. Sacred matters, worthy of respect and praise were kept under the veil of silence, and the Gods remained hidden behind various images and mysterious guises. The Ancients wanted only priests and few others to understand the greatness of their Gods.

8. Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli (Milano: Rusconi, 1982) XVIII.30: "Tal ne l'aprir di un rustico Sileno / Maraviglie vedea l'antica etade." Here and elsewhere, translations are mine unless otherwise noted. A series of references to *Jerusalem Delivered*—also known at the time as *Goffredo*—attests to Marinella's long-standing familiarity with and admiration for Tasso's masterpiece. It is impossible to determine which of the many editions of the poem circulating at the time she used, except to note that it is *not* the second Bonna edition published in 1581 that modern editors consider the most reliable and that in this particular instance reads: "Già ne l'aprir d'un rustico sileno / meraviglie vedea l'antica etade." It is also possible that Marinella relied on her memory, which would explain why she erroneously situates the passage in the eighth canto, rather than in the eighteenth. Here and elsewhere, I report Marinella's quotes from Tasso verbatim, while pointing out occasional major discrepancies between them and modern editions. Tasso is referring to the hollow statues of Silenus, which contained small golden statues of the gods beneath their ugly appearance. Alcibiades compares Socrates to a Silenus in Plato's *Symposium* 216e-217a.

To be known by common people degrades and humiliates the greatness of the divine majesty and honor. Marsilio Ficino writes:

Here and often elsewhere it is forbidden to spread the deepest theological mysteries among common people, so that they not conceive false and vain opinions because of their faulty judgment.⁹

This is the reason why excellent things should not be exposed to people's desire or judgment. For this reason, the Ancients hid their superhuman deities under marvelous guises, preserving them from the rough and paltry wisdom of the masses. Women must bask in the glory of seclusion because they are to be kept like something sacred and divine. We notice how emperors, kings, and great princes do not show themselves to people every day, thereby making their presence common. On the contrary, as they partake of the divine, they hide themselves and only rarely consent to being seen by others. Rarely does the king of Spain manifest himself, and the same is true of people of great dignity.

In my most noble city, Venice, a newly elected Serene Doge, having gathered new inner strength, rarely fulfills people's curiosity by showing himself. Seclusion brings majesty and honor to those destined by fortune or their own merit to achieve superiority and regal heights.

It seems that God and nature have assigned such seclusion to women more than to others. Women will keep their looks, beauty, and reputation in their solitary homes and exercise their peaceful occupations within the domestic walls. Please consider, my beloved ladies, the greatness of your dignity and how much honor and respect this seclusion brings to your virtue and status.

Let us also consider how God—the First Cause, the Eternal Agent, He who is excellent above all excellence, He who attracts and moves every perfection and beauty and who presides over divine

9. "Hic et saepe alibi vetat secretissima theologiae misteria inter profanos effundere propter iudicii defectum, ne falsas vanasque opiniones concipiant." See Marsilio Ficino, "Dionysii Areopagitae *De Mystica Theologia Translatio*," in *Opera Omnia* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1959-60) II.1015-16.

beauty—refuses to be known by us, except in the effects of his clemency. His dignity cannot be comprehended by our lowliness, for it would thereby lose prestige (*evilesceat utique*). He therefore not only shields Himself from our sight behind many celestial spheres, but also resides in the laps of Cherubim, as far above the sky as the sky is far from hell, as the aforementioned poet says of God in the first canto of *Goffredo*:

And as far as from the stars to the depths of hell,
so far is He above the starry sphere.¹⁰

The virgins who, like sacred creatures, devote themselves to God in the solitude and secrecy of their monasteries, lead lives that are dear to Heaven and can never receive sufficient praise. When he wanted to exalt Sophronia, that same poet mentioned her seclusion. Of her many qualities, he says, she deserves the most praise for keeping her worth hidden:

She hides her worth within the narrow cage
Of a small house, so far the worthier.¹¹

Later on, he praises her, saying that while Love allowed Olindo to see her, she led a secluded life, far from the sight of other people, protected by a thousand guards:

Although a thousand sentinels are placed
you lead his glances from haunts most chaste.¹²

The Vestal Virgins, who lived pure and chaste lives, loved secluded, enclosed, and remote places. They loved solitude because it

10. Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, I.7: “E quant’è da le stelle al basso Inferno / Tant’è più in su da la stellata sfera.” The English translation comes from Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered* (*Gerusalemme liberata*), trans. Anthony M. Esolen (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 18.

11. Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, II.14: “Il suo pregio maggior che tra le mura / d’angusta casa asconde i suoi gran pregi.” Trans. Esolen, 38.

12. Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, II.15: “Tu per mille custodie entro i più casti / Verginei alberghi il guardo altrui portasti.” Trans. Esolen, 39.

fostered virtue, contemplation, and wisdom. They were worshiped and honored as people who longed for the divine. Claudia, a Vestal Virgin who did not practice solitude and seclusion, was believed to be unchaste. For this reason, the magistrate condemned her to death. To prove her innocence, she carried water in a sieve before the judges. As Petrarch writes:

Among the others was the vestal maid
Who that she might be free of ill report
Sped boldly to the Tiber, and from thence
Brought water to her temple in a sieve.¹³

The Goddess Vesta was believed to be a virgin and a lover of solitude, as Virgil writes in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*:

By the Lar of Assaracus, and by hoary Vesta's shrine.¹⁴

Notice that, here, Virgil uses the word “penetralia” to indicate secluded places, remote from the crowd. Praising Laura for her solitude, Petrarch says in a *canzone*:

Within there could be seen a lofty throne
of diamond squarely cut, without a fault,
on which the lovely lady sat alone.¹⁵

13. Petrarch, *Trionfo della pudicizia*, 148–51: “Fra l’altre la vestal vergine pia, / Che baldanzosamente corse al Tibro, / E per purgarsi d’ogni fama ria / portò del fiume al tempio acqua col cribro.” (Petrarca, *Opere. Canzoniere, Trionfi, Familiarum Rerum Libri con testo a fronte*, vol. I. [Firenze: Sansoni, 1990]). For the English translation see Petrarch, *The Triumphs*, trans. Ernest Hatch Wilkins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 45.

14. Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999–2000) IX.259, p. 133: “Assaracique larem et canae penetralia Vestae.” In this passage, Ascanius solemnly addresses Nisus by invoking the deities of his household (the Lar of Assaracus) and Vesta’s shrine. Marinella is interested in Virgil’s use of the word “penetralia.”

15. Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata (Milano: Mondadori, 1996), 325.23–26. “D’un bel diamante quadro et mai non scemo / Vi si vedea nel mezzo un seggio altero, / Ove sola sedea la bella donna.” The translation is from Petrarch, *The Canzoniere, or Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 449.

Oh, how pleasing solitude is! She was sitting alone, accompanied only by her thoughts. When you are sitting, your mind is resting and is not harassed by the senses. It can therefore retrieve the truth of the most secret things Nature hides in her womb. In this peace, your mind becomes perfect. This is why many men, indeed the most learned philosophers and inventors of the arts, embrace seclusion that they might contemplate the secret Essences and penetrate nature's hidden treasures. Nothing raises our minds to the heights of understanding more than withdrawing from common practices. Withdrawn into itself, our mind opens its eyes, which are as sharp as the lynx's in the darkness.

So, too, will you, valorous women, be able to fully understand what is useful and what is dangerous in your home's affairs by remaining within the domestic walls. As your mind is not perturbed by the confusion that always fills the world, with industrious ways you will find various ornaments to make your house shine and enrich it with new excellence. If you desire to be known for your wise womanly activity, you can rest assured that your fame will not be confined within narrow walls, but will spread in such a way that its brilliant light will shine throughout the entire universe. The fire that burns enclosed in a grand palace shows its splendor through an opening, and it appears more beautiful and noble when it emerges like a secret from its surrounding walls. Diamonds are no less precious in their native dwellings than when they are mined and artfully prepared to adorn royal crowns.

Some people believe that women are secluded because men want to keep them locked up, that they might remain inexperienced in the affairs of the world and become inept and of little courage and worth. I myself made such a claim in my book *The Nobility and Excellence of Women*. After considering this issue with more mature judgment, however, I now conclude that women's condition has not been devised or brought about by resentful souls, but rather derives from natural and divine providence and will. We can easily prove this to be true. Were women's seclusion the result of violence, it would not have lasted for so many centuries and millennia. Violent practices do not last long.¹⁶ Some may object and claim that, according to historians,

16. In this remarkable passage, Marinella recalls the bellicose tract of her youth only to retract its proud pronouncements. In claiming that "violent practices do not last long,"

the Amazons were under their own rule for a long time.¹⁷ To them I reply that compared with the time the Amazons spent with men, their independent rule did not last long. Indeed, what comes from Nature and God cannot be taken away.

Therefore, we maintain that women were kept within domestic walls not by men's evil desire to dominate them or by some other external force, but by God and Nature. With the same immense knowledge out of which He created everything, God, who built the universe with wisdom and providence, gave natural and different tasks to the male and the female. He knew that were they assigned the same tasks, they would not achieve a perfect life. In light of their different duties, He gave them different constitutions, making men the stronger and tougher of the two. Women also possess strength, but theirs is of a more modest and gentle kind, that they might be happy in ruling over everything in their houses and rest satisfied without complaint. Stronger and more resilient, men can withstand danger, travel, and other difficulties to gain all that is necessary for the home and family. Sweat would be wasted, fatigue and tribulation would be useless, and all profit would be lost had they been given equal strength and virility and were both keen to gain things, while neither attended to preserve what had been gained. Preservation is as praiseworthy as acquisition. Therefore God and nature, who never lack in what is necessary and never act uselessly, created one to be strong and able, and the other to be gentle and not as strong. This was done in light of the benefits these different tasks provide. While the woman takes care of the house, the man conducts commerce and deals outside of the house, that these different tasks might result in harmonious peace and civil happiness.

As I said, God gave courage and audacity to one of these creatures and beauty and grace to the other. As women are tender and delicate, it is not appropriate for them to travel, suffer, and exhaust themselves. The excessive suffering that travel entails does not agree

Marinella may have remembered the Latin phrase "nil violentum durabile" Boccaccio used to introduce Symiamira's demise in *De mulieribus claris* XCIX, 14.

17. Marinella could be referring to Strabo, who in *Geografia*, XI.5.1–4 describes the Amazons' habits and self-governing practices (Strabo, *Geography*, trans. Horace L. Jones [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928, rpt 1988], vol. 5, 233–39). Alfonso Bonaccioni had published an Italian translation of Strabo's work in Venice in 1562.

with their nature. This is why Virgil's Gallus tells Lycoris, who is leaving to follow Antonius to France:

While you, far from your native soil—O that I could but disbelieve such a tale!—gaze, heartless one, on Alpine snows and the frozen Rhine, apart from me, all alone. Ah, may the frosts not harm you! Ah, may the jagged ice not cut your tender feet!¹⁸

This is what Gallus, in love and tearful, said for fear that suffering would make his beloved's beauty disappear. He did not think it appropriate for her delicate nature to remain in such a rough environment. He believed that, in her beauty and delicacy, she should preserve such treasure in the shade, tranquility, and peace of her home. Guarding the harvest is no less laudable than harvesting. The labor of accumulating wealth would be pointless if that wealth were not guarded and preserved. This is how households prosper, and households are part of the city. Many households form hamlets, which in turn form fortified villages and cities. Every city is made of households, as Aristotle says.¹⁹

Acquisition and preservation bring forth wealth, which produces liberal and magnificent deeds, such as the building of temples and palaces and the establishment of public places devoted to virtues, studies, and noble actions. Silver and gold are the foundation of nobility and wealth, and they allow for great and wonderful works.

Different tasks make for a happy union between man and woman, giving rise to famous and excellent households that, in turn, form cities and glorious and praiseworthy civil societies. This is why God and His minister Nature have established that women spontaneously—and not out of obligation—exercise their virtue at home. For

18. Virgil, *Eclogues*, X.46–49: “Tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere tantum) / Alpinas, a! dura, nives et frigora Rheni / me sine sola vides. a, te ne frigora laedant! / a, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!” Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 93.

19. Aristotle, *Politics*, I.i.7 (1252b16): “Omnis enim civitas ex domibus constat.” Marinella always quotes Aristotle's *Politics* in Latin using the translation by Leonardo Bruni (*Politico-rum libri VIII latine ex versione Leonardi Aretini* [Roma: E. Silber, 1492]), which includes the commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas.

civil society to be perfect, acquisition and preservation are equally necessary.

These two great makers of the world, God and His servant Nature, mindful of the good, comfort and universal happiness of the human being, imposed different burdens upon those with a strong constitution and those with a pleasant and light one. The stronger, braver person cannot remain in the peace of the home because he cannot tolerate extended rest. By the same token, the more delicate and gentle person can tolerate neither excessive suffering nor travel and danger. Not everyone is like Mithridates's wife who, disguised as a man, followed her banished husband and, overcoming her nature, triumphed over hardship, adversity, and misfortune.²⁰

Rejoice in your loneliness, my friends, and know that you enjoy a gift, namely, a happy life that is far from the world's troubles, a life in which resides God's greatness and that of sacred things, kings, emperors, and all those in positions of dignity and supremacy. They all avoid showing themselves to the masses and refuse to satisfy other people's desire to see them. They believe that by showing themselves, they will gain not in honor, but in obscurity, like small lights that appear to lose their splendor when overcome by a greater light.

Nature always keeps and shelters the best and most important parts in the best places, such as the heart which, being the noblest part, is the sensitive principle that rules over the senses' operations. As the origin and principle of life, the heart is more important than other parts, and this is why Nature put it in the safest and most protected part of the body. Man imitates nature by hiding and concealing gold and precious gems, which are desired and loved, from greedy hands.

In the same way, our soul, although it is said to be "entire in the whole body and whole in every part,"²¹ nevertheless resides in the heart because of its dignity and purity.

20. Hypsicratea, Mithridates's wife, who followed her husband in the war against the Romans, was a proverbial example of marital love and courage. See for instance Giovanni Boccaccio, *Filocolo*, ed. Enzo Quaglio (Milano: Mondadori, 1967), I.23.

21. "Tota in toto et tota in qualibet parte," Marinella writes. Raymond B. Waddington summarizes the history of this concept, which can be traced back to Plato (*Sophist*, 244e–245d) and was discussed by St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa contra gentiles*, 2.72). "By the beginning of the sixteenth century, this doctrine had crystallized in a standard Latin formula, *tota in*

Seclusion is desired not only by very wise men but also by an infinite number of the friends of heaven, such as Hilarion and Paul, the first hermit,²² and many others who, like shining gems, adorned the beauty of Paradise in the solitude of abandoned hermitages. Far from noise and crowds, these happy men could devote their minds to God and know and desire the goodness of His eternal providence, which is the supreme contemplative happiness. In the same way, women, in the tranquility of their seclusion, can enjoy the rewards of contemplation and lift their minds to God, comprehending the greatness of His mercy in the products of His clemency. They should therefore praise, rather than despise, Gorgias of Leontini, who honored women so much that he wanted the reputation born from their actions to live within domestic walls, where all excellence is hidden and sheltered.

In regard to women's nobility, Francesco Patrizio said that women should rarely leave their homes because they are too precious.²³ He does not approve, therefore, of their going outside their homes. It is inside the home that the results of their activity must be witnessed, and here also that their reputations, which is based in preserving wealth with prudence and wisdom and without complaint, must be kept. They must consider that had God, the Great Master, formed men and women of equal physical strength such that both were capable of traveling and conducting business and neither ruled over wealth and acquisition, all gain would be in vain. But, as the

toto, et tota in qualibet parte, and become a philosophic commonplace. It was available, broadly speaking, through two lines of intellectual descent, one more scholastic and Christian in its bearings and the other more humanistic and Neoplatonic" (Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr: Sexuality, Satire, and Self-Projection in Sixteenth-Century Literature and Art* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004], 112–13).

22. Marinella might have been familiar with St. Jerome's accounts of the lives of St. Hilarion and St. Paul the Hermit. For a modern edition see *Vita degli eremiti Paolo, Ilarione e Malco* (Roma: Città nuova, 1996).

23. "Mulieres raro egredi e domo debent," Marinella quotes. I was unable to find the exact reference. Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597) studied medicine at the University of Padua, was an active participant to the literary and philosophical debates of his times, and spent several years in Venice, where he could possibly have met members of the Marinelli household. He is always quoted as an undisputed authority in *Exhortations*. See Lina Bolzoni, *L'universo dei poemi possibili. Studi su Francesco Patrizi da Cherso* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1980) 17–26, and Cesare Vasoli, *Francesco Patrizi da Cherso* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1989), IX–XIII.

home must also be ministered, women were formed such that they adjust to tranquility and are satisfied with ruling over the accumulated wealth, while men were granted strength and vigor, that they might make their households happy and prosperous with their toil and with women's help, prudence, and skills.

Households are part of the city. If they are wealthy, well administered, and rich in virtue, so, too, will be the cities. It is necessary for the parts to correspond to the whole. Therefore, for the city to be strong and praiseworthy, the households must be likewise strong.

You have heard me praise the excellence of solitude and seclusion. I also want you to know that men envy the tranquility of your peace. Tell me in faith, my most beloved ladies: Do you think that Achilles would have donned a woman's skirt had he not loved seclusion? But as he desired your peace and rest, he found refuge among the daughters of King Lycomedes. That Thetis hid him to shelter him from the Trojan War is false.²⁴ Your peace, my friends, which is the goal of labor and effort, is too sweet. We labor that we might rest, just as we fight that we might enjoy peace. But you, without much effort, enjoy the peace that God gave you at creation.

Even Hercules, who held the skies on his shoulders, retired in Omphales's sweet seclusion, and took more pleasure in that woman's solitary peace than in her beautiful face.²⁵ Many other men retreat to solitude with women and learn embroidery and quilting, taking pleasure in this art and in the rest it provides. If not publicly, then at least privately, they can enjoy womanly glory and consolation.

24. See Statius's unfinished epic *Achilleid* where Thetis, afraid that her son Achilles will die in the Trojan war, hides him among the daughters of King Lycomedes. Notice however that Marinella, departing from Statius, attributes Achilles's stay among women to his choice. See Statius, *Thebaid*, *Achilleid*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), I.207ff (Loeb, 329ff).

25. Apollodorus narrates how the oracle of Delphi condemned Hercules, guilty of murder, to live as a slave. Omphales bought him, dressed him as a woman, and obliged him to perform domestic chores. In this case, as in that of Achilles, Marinella attributes the hero's adoption of a woman's lifestyle to his personal and free choice, a departure from her sources. See Apollodorus, *Library*, trans. Sir James George Frazer, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, 1979), vol. 1, II.vi.3–4 (Loeb 241–45).