



# Acoustemologies in Contact

Sounding Subjects and Modes of  
Listening in Early Modernity

EDITED BY EMILY WILBOURNE AND SUZANNE G. CUSICK



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# 9. ‘Now Despised, a Servant, Abandoned’

## Wounded Italy, the *Moresca*, and the Performance of Alterity

Nina Treadwell

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For one of the interludes in the said comedy [*Eutichia*] of Nicola [Grasso], Italy appeared, all lacerated by barbarians, and wishing to say some lamenting verses. Two times, as if in extreme pain, she stopped reciting and, as if lost, left the stage, leaving the spectators to think she had lost her ability to speak. But on presenting [Guidubaldo] Rugiero’s comedy on the other days, the same interlude was staged again; and when she [Italy] called to Francesco Maria [della Rovere, the Duke of Urbino] for help, with a beautiful presentation of a *moresca*, an armed person appeared with a drawn sword in hand, who with thrusts and other strokes, drove away all the barbarians that encircled Italy and had ransacked her. And returning to her in time with the music with a beautiful *moresca*, put a crown on her head, and dressing her again with a regal golden cloak, he accompanied her off the stage with the same [movements] in time to the music, which was a beautiful thing to see.<sup>1</sup>

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1 All translations are my own. I am indebted to Giulio Ongaro for his generous assistance with several translations in this study. An Italian transcription can be found online, in Augusto Vernarecci, ‘Di alcune rappresentazioni drammatiche alla corte d’Urbino nel 1513’, in *Archivio storico per le Marche e per l’Umbria*, ed. by M. Faloci Pulignani, M. Santoni, and G. Mazzatinti (Foligno: Direzione, 1886), III, pp. 181–191 (p. 189), <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=hu7Owx9YTBQC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA189>



With this short description, the Duke of Urbino's secretary, Urbano Urbani, compressed a series of complex musico-theatrical performances that occurred across the span of several days at the small city-state of Urbino during Carnival in 1513. Only briefly mentioned is the opening comedy *Eutichia*, which nevertheless addressed a subject close to the hearts of the Urbinate audience: the sacking of their city some ten years previously.<sup>2</sup> The related thread governing Urbani's account is the *intermedii* (interludes) inserted between the acts of the two comedies, foregrounding the theme of political distress through the personification of a ransacked Italy.

It was unusual for interludes to straddle performances of two separate comedies in this way. Italia's first appearance evidently left a sense of irresolution, a temporal burden of apprehension, perhaps, that may have tapped into political uncertainties experienced by the Urbinate audience and those on the Italian peninsula in general at this time. Urbani is quick to indicate that a (potentially) restorative re-appearance by Italia occurred, and the second half of his account is dominated by a blow-by-blow account of military expertise in the form of a soloist dancing a *moresca*.

In the second part of this chapter, I analyze the significance of the *moresca* as a response to Italia's call for help. In so doing, I re-think the *moresca* as a set of performative possibilities, and show how the Urbinate *moresca* was crafted to instantiate valorous action as an antidote to Italia's (and the peninsula's) frail constitution. I go on to interrogate the performance of martial prowess through the dance's enactment of performative closure, noting the cultural and political uncertainties that undergirded the Urbinate festivities as a whole.

To begin, I provide a context for the wounds that the Duke of Urbino's proxy — the *morescante* (*moresca* dancer) — attempts to eliminate by deftly covering Italia with a regal cloak and crown in an effort to (re)constitute her noble integrity. What does Italy's lacerated flesh represent, and how would the Urbinate audience have understood her disheveled appearance? Further, upon her reappearance several days

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2 What little is known of the second play, Guidubaldo Rugiero's comedy, is restricted to a brief aside in a letter by Castiglione to his friend Ludovico di Canossa. *Baldassarre Castiglione: Lettere famigliari e diplomatiche*, ed. by Guido La Rocca, Angelo Stella, and Umberto Morando, 3 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 2016), I, p. 265.

later in another play, Italia (re)gains her vocality; although Urbani's description only hints at the sonic dimension of her reappearance, Italy recited seven stanzas attributed to Baldassarre Castiglione (1478–1529).<sup>3</sup> What does Italy articulate sonically to explain her pain, first projected visibly to the audience through her lacerated flesh?

Close attention to aspects of Urbani's description and Italia's recitation go part way towards answering these questions, as can an informed re-imagining of the language of gesture and vocal expression that Italia may have employed. But the spectacle of ransacked Italy can be further understood through an explanation of what were, in other media, ubiquitous tropes, and the context and/or lived experience that accounted for the ubiquity of these tropes in the first place. The continued threat and realization of a divided and enslaved Italy — 'Ahi serva Italia' [Ah, servile Italy], as Dante Alighieri famously proclaimed in *La commedia* (c. 1308–1321) — was no mere literary trope, but for centuries plagued all those who called the Italian peninsula home, particularly during the decades that flanked either side of the 1513 performances.

## Divided Italy

Consistently conceived as a female body, 'Italy' was intrinsically divided: a conglomeration of contiguous geographical regions and entities but with differing social, linguistic, cultural, and economic configurations. So too, the internal political structures of communes, city-states, republics, and kingdoms that made up the Italian peninsula were frequently in flux, as were the political alliances and/or antagonisms between them. Humanist poets such as Dante (c. 1265–1321) and Francesco Petrarch (c. 1304–1374) lamented the internecine strife that characterized the Italian peninsula during their day, but the fear of foreign domination became particularly acute after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.<sup>4</sup> Coinciding with the invention of printing, the loss of the eastern Christian Empire was a shock wave that rippled throughout Western

3 Castiglione is best known today for *The Book of the Courtier* (henceforth *Cortegiano*), first published in 1528. The attribution of the stanzas to Castiglione is tentative. See Luigina Stefani, 'Le "Ottave d'Italia" del Castiglione e le feste urbinati del 1513', *Panorama* (1977), 67–83 (pp. 70–71 and 79 n. 5).

4 On the impact of Constantinople's fall to both the east and west, see Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanism and the Ottoman Turks*

Europe; on the Italian peninsula the news was circulated through both the publication and recitation of improvised *lamenti* (laments) from street to court to piazza. When disasters involved the sacking of an independent city, laments invariably personified the city as a violated woman. So too, in differing circumstances, the inverse was true: rich Venice, for example, could be personified as a queen in resplendent dress. The underpinnings of such reification articulated the patriarchal understanding of 'woman' in relation to the family, the household, and as the property of men. And as Lauro Martines notes, '[n]othing disgraced women, and hence the household, more than their [sullied] sexuality'.<sup>5</sup> It was thus easy for the figure of a disgraced woman to stand for disgraced households, including macro-households like a sacked city or peninsula.

The production of laments increased dramatically during the period of the so-called Italian Wars (1494–1559). Though internal strife and sackings had preceded the period of the Wars, by 1494 colonization by external forces was not just a fear but also a reality. From this time, nearly every European entity had some political involvement on the peninsula, especially the superpowers of France and Spain.<sup>6</sup> The date 1494 represents the descent of the French army (with Swiss mercenaries) led by King Charles VIII through Milan, Genoa, Florence, and other cities in a campaign to overthrow Naples. But both the French and Spanish crowns had hereditary claims to Naples; in fact, these two powerful and competing dynasties had claims to many Italian states and entities. Why? Because, to quote Martines again: 'Italy was not cast into crisis in the autumn of 1494: it was already there. [...] No other reasoning can account for the fact that the invader was often greeted with outright — not to say clamorous — approval'.<sup>7</sup> In other words, various Italian entities had already established complex alliances outside of the peninsula to manage rivalries and divisions among themselves.

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(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 60–63, <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812201291>

5 Lauro Martines, *Strong Words: Writing and Social Strain in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 242.

6 For an overview of the Italian Wars see Michael Mallett and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494–1559* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

7 Martines, *Strong Words*, pp. 249–250.

Divisions were such that even a person from a nearby town might be regarded as a *forestiero* (foreigner).<sup>8</sup>

Urbino's fate during the Italian Wars was integrally tied to both external and Papal intervention, in part because the entire Duchy occupied a strategic position within the Papal States. With the backing of his father the Borgia Pope Alexander VI and French King Louis XII, Cesare Borgia (newly minted as Duke Valentino by Louis), waged three major campaigns from 1499–1502 with the aim of subjugating central Italy. The Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, remained loyal to Cesare and the Pope as they lay claim to regions and cities flanking his Duchy. In 1502 a request for safe passage for papal artillery through his domain ended in deception when Cesare unexpectedly ordered his troops to converge on Urbino. Unprepared, Duke Guidobaldo escaped on horseback disguised as a peasant, with Borgia troops in hot pursuit, first to Ferrara, then finding refuge with his Gonzaga in-laws in Mantua. Several months later the Duke reclaimed his city, but only temporarily, before Cesare regained control. For the residents of the Duchy this tumultuous period affected every aspect of their lives. Cesare sacked the ducal palace and commandeered church property (including the bishop's palace) for his operations. With farming communities pillaged or completely destroyed, and general loss of life, property, and livestock, those who survived were in the hands of a colonizer well known for cruel and duplicitous behavior. Many at higher ranks were forced to actively cooperate or to seek refuge in other territories.

It is to this political moment that Grasso's comedy *Eutichia* gestures, performed some ten years later for Francesco Maria I della Rovere (1490–1538). Francesco became Duke of Urbino in 1508, a feat engineered by Julius II (a Della Rovere pope), when it became evident that Guidobaldo would produce no heir. Many in the audience would have experienced the previous attacks perpetrated by Cesare's troops first hand. A good number of local and nearby nobility and people from the mercantile class were present at the Carnival performances, including women. Indeed, Grasso spends considerable time in his prologue specifically addressing women in the audience;<sup>9</sup> many women from the Duchy

8 Mallet and Shaw, *Italian Wars*, pp. 2–3.

9 Nicola Grasso: *Eutichia*, ed. by Luigina Stefani (Messina and Florence: D'Anna, 1978), pp. 54–55.

would have likely witnessed or experienced sexual violation themselves when the city was sacked.

Set in the recent past, *Eutichia* revolves around the conventions of mistaken identity, which, when revealed, lead to the 'natural' pairing of the appropriate partners in marriage. The *argomento* (argument or plot set-up) tells us that: 'Ocheutico, a nobleman from Urbino, fled his homeland after losing his two children, a boy and a girl [*Eutichia*], due to the invasion of Cesare Valentino [Borgia]'.<sup>10</sup> The *argomento* is not part of the comedy proper, but, in the prologue that appears to have been recited by Grasso himself, he suggests that the audience had prior access to its contents, thus underscoring their knowledge of the play's background.<sup>11</sup> Also, during the play the audience is continually informed that the action takes place eleven years previously, which corresponded with the exact time of Cesare's invasions of Urbino (1502–1503). Further, the noble Ocheutico flees from Urbino to Ferrara, and then on to Mantua where he settles, paralleling exactly the route that Duke Guidobaldo took when fleeing Urbino.<sup>12</sup> These temporal and geographical correspondences in *Eutichia* would have also resonated with the appearance of a ransacked Italy in one of the interludes, reminding the audience of the sacking of their own Urbino.

## The Sight and Sound of Suffering

Castiglione was responsible for all aspects of staging the comedies during Carnival including the subject matter and hands-on technical expertise required to produce the *intermedii*.<sup>13</sup> Castiglione's decision to stage a personification of a debilitated Italy rather than the city of

10 Grasso, *Eutichia*, p. 53: 'Ocheutico, nobilissimo cittadino urbinato, per gli assalti di Cesare Valentino perduti doi figliuoli, un maschio e una femmina, fuggesi della patria'.

11 Grasso, *Eutichia*, p. 54.

12 On these and other related points see Stefani's introduction to Grasso's *Eutichia*, pp. 8–9.

13 Typically, a five-act comedy during this period would include four *intermedii*, one between each of the acts. There is little evidence about the nature of the other interludes performed for Grasso's *Eutichia* and the comedy by Rugiero that followed. The only clue comes from Castiglione's letter to Canossa which implies that other interludes were *intermedio non apparente*, meaning that only 'invisible' music would have been heard as the stage remained empty to mark off the acts of each play. Such a scenario would certainly explain the prominence given to Italia



Urbino was perhaps to make a broader point about strife on the Italian peninsula. It is likely, however, that many in the audience would have identified with their own experience of the previous sacking of their city, and most would have also been familiar with the *lamenti* trope of sacked cities figured as ransacked women. So too, audience members may have witnessed personifications of Italy or cities bound and captive on floats or in pageants in the course of other festivities, usually followed by Italia represented as free and triumphant.<sup>14</sup> But here, on the Urbinate stage, was an Italia that was both visible and audible. What might those in attendance have experienced somatically — through sight and sound — when confronted with Italy's in-the-flesh alterity?

Castiglione's representation seems calculated to elicit the audience's intense, bodily identification with Italia. When she first appeared onstage, the cue to her identity was her state of undress exposing her lacerated skin. Early modern Italians believed that skin was a complex sense organ communicating varied stimuli to the interior body.<sup>15</sup> Compromised skin (from flaying, for example) was an indication of extreme violation that put the coherence of the subject into question. A lacerated Italia both questioned the integrity of a unified Italy and foregrounded the pain wrought by its warring parts. Such excoriation raised the specter of the wounds of war generally, gesturing towards damaged bodies. But both the bodies engaged in battle and those commonly depicted as flayed were male; sacked cities (and ravaged Italy) were invariably gendered female, marking them as subject to ownership by men. Through witnessing Italia's ravaged skin on the stage, both male and female spectators (in differing ways) likely felt a bodily, sensorial impression of violated skin reminiscent of their own experiences. Daniela Bohde has argued that Cinquecento viewers experienced paintings such as Titian's *Flaying of Marsyas* in just this way, on the skin. She argues that

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by Urbani, as Italia's would have been the only in-person appearances. Castiglione, *Lettere*, I, p. 265.

14 On the representation of bound Italia at pageants see Julia Maria Cartwright, Baldassarre Castiglione, *the Perfect Courtier: His Life and Letters, 1478–1529*, 2 vols. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1908), I, pp. 329–330.

15 Daniela Bohde, 'Skin and the Search for the Interior: The Representation of Flaying in the Art and Anatomy of the Cinquecento', in *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. by Florike Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 10–47 (p. 11).

the visceral experience of the viewer must have been one of extreme shock, and that in this manner 'Titian addresses the spectator as body'.<sup>16</sup>

Like Titian, Castiglione displayed excruciating identificatory pain, but Italia's pain was also expressed through sounds, her faltering words. Her trauma was such that: 'Two times, as if in extreme pain, she stopped reciting and, as if lost, left the stage, leaving the spectators to think she had lost her ability to speak'. A common theme in laments was the inadequacy of words to capture the experiential horror of sackings; perhaps the start-and-stop quality of Italia's attempts to speak called attention to spectator-auditors' own speech organs. Upon the subsequent re-staging of the *intermedio* Italia informs us herself that she could not form words, and could only emit sighs, although Urbani implies that incomplete words or phrases were spoken *through* her pain.<sup>17</sup> What was the sound of the 'extreme pain' of which Urbani writes? It is difficult to know, but following the lead of poet and playwright Leone De' Sommi, one of few to write of such matters, sound emanated from 'the eloquence of the body'; as such the actor was expected to produce effects that '*give life to the performance [italics mine]*'.<sup>18</sup> Grief, for example, 'must be expressed in a vital manner'. For De' Sommi emotive flexibility of a *natural* voice was key; he states unequivocally that he would never give the role of a woman to someone with a deep voice.<sup>19</sup> (The implication is that in general men played women's roles, something with which those in the Urbinate audience were completely familiar.) The sounds and gestures of Italia's pain, then, would have almost certainly emanated from a cross-dressed male body with a naturally high voice. Continuing with a De' Sommiian reading, Italia would have incorporated gestures in accordance with her nuanced emotions, thus representing the state of

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16 Bohde, 'Skin', pp. 45–46.

17 Recent studies on the effects of trauma are strikingly similar to Urbani's account, including the fragmentary nature of memory. Foundational to Elaine Scarry's study is pain's inexpressibility and its ability to deprive the victim of language. Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

18 For an understanding of sound emanating from gesture in theatrical performance see Emily Wilbourne, 'Lo Schiavetto (1612): Travestied Sound, Ethnic Performance, and the Eloquence of the Body', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 63.1 (2010), 1–43, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2010.63.1.1>

19 Leone de' Sommi: *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, ed. by Ferruccio Marotti (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1968), p. 39.

her character at any given moment. One might imagine, for example, that with loss of speech came distraught facial expressions and attempts to connect with the audience through means other than speech, such as outstretched arms. Defeated by her attempts to communicate verbally, she finally abandoned the public stage, leaving auditor-spectators with the specter of a corporally violated woman, whose violation brought shame to the patriarchal household.

It was only during an interlude in the second comedy that Italia was able to galvanize her vocality and give full voice to the circumstances of her trauma. Her recitation consists of seven stanzas in *ottava rima*.<sup>20</sup> She begins by explaining the reason for her previous silence mentioning her inability to 'form words' because 'grief prevented [her] tongue from moving'.<sup>21</sup> In the first stanza's final couplet she depicts herself as a stunned, silent suffering lamb, as 'prey to wolves'.

Italia's tone changes dramatically in the second stanza from personal suffering to bitterness; she emphasizes the fleeting nature of all worldly endeavors, including efficacious sovereignty, as suggested by her reference to the transience of 'scepters, treasures, triumph and royal pomp'. A prior regal state — one associated with an idealized classical past — is fully articulated in stanza three, however, when the audience is instructed to imagine her (despite her dejected appearance) as a former queen who may rise again. One might imagine a gesturally bold Italia, confident in her vocality. She presents herself as an all-powerful queen of an expansionist Roman Empire subjugating 'others': strangers, itinerants, pilgrims and 'many [other] peoples and [foreign] kings'. These themes are reprised in stanzas five and six, but juxtaposed with a defeated Italy, suggesting the alterity embedded in fleeting triumphs.

First, however, stanza four embodies the flip side of Italia-imagined-as-queen by returning to her physical vulnerability: 'Now despised, a servant, abandoned'. The shift from an idealized position of strength to extreme vulnerability surely influenced the rendering of emotive declarations such as 'piango' (I weep). So, too, she may have gestured

20 A stanza in *ottava rima* consists of eight eleven-syllable lines with an ABABABCC rhyme scheme.

21 A reliable transcription of Italia's stanzas is published in Stefani, 'Le "Ottave d'Italia"', 67–69; see also Vernarecci, 'Di alcune rappresentazioni drammatiche', pp. 190–191. The translation given in Appendix A is my own.

to her mutilated body in the following verse ('I was lacerated by barbarians'), and in so doing bring past suffering into the present performance moment. For the first time, Italia directly addresses the past treatment that has resulted in her lacerated body. In the context of the Urbinate performance, and specifically the city's sacking ten years earlier, the *barbare* (barbarians) mentioned referred to Cesare's army, consisting of Louis XII's French troops and members of Alexander VI's papal guard.<sup>22</sup> In the context of the Italian Wars, the implications of having been ransacked (from Urbani's description) and the term *rapina* in stanza four (rape, or forcible abduction) indicated not just the theft of territory but a brutal rape, a frequent occurrence during the Wars in general.<sup>23</sup> In fact, Italia's sexual violation would have been in the forefront of the minds of audience members during her first *intermedio*, because her lacerations and state of undress evoked both the widely circulating *lamenti* written during the Italian Wars and Petrarch's poem 'Italia mia'. As Margaret Brose so eloquently demonstrates, 'Italia mia' is 'the founding text of a complex Italian poetico-political history of female *sparagmos*, in which figurations of a wounded and scattered female body sanction the construction of both poetic and political [male] subjectivity'.<sup>24</sup> Specifically, 'Italia mia' presents images of the sexual violation of a maternal body; Castiglione does likewise in his penultimate stanza when Italia declaims: 'Look there, alas, at your mother and nourisher / With torn hair and without clothes'. The reference to *nutrice* refers to the one who nourishes, the wet nurse, while the reference to lack of clothing and dishevelled hair iterates the theme of sexual violence.

22 The Turks were commonly referred to as *barbare* in humanist discourse, increasingly after the sack of Constantinople (see Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, pp. 70–73). However, the rhetoric of barbarism was just as commonly used to refer to French, Spanish, and German invaders, all of whom colonized the Italian peninsula during the Wars.

23 I thank Jessica Goethals for confirming that *saccheggiata* (ransacked) be interpreted as sexual violence in the context of the Italian Wars. The term *violata* was more commonly used. The definitions for *rapina* are drawn from John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (London: Melch. Bradwood, 1611), p. 421.

24 Margaret Brose, 'Petrarch's Beloved Body: "Italia mia"', in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Linda Somperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 1–20 (pp. 1–2). For the continued prevalence of these Petrarchan tropes, see Natalia Costa-Zalesow, 'Italy as Victim: A Historical Appraisal of a Literary Theme', *Italica*, 45.2 (1968), 216–240, <https://doi.org/10.2307/478303>

The opening of stanza five introduces an emotive soundscape of grief and bitterness. Italia's repeated 'o' is a vocalization of wishful grief for the loss of successful Roman commanders. Castiglione was drawing on the type of sonic interjections commonly (and more profusely) used in *lamenti* to plead in defense of Italian liberties, and to invest listeners with a sense of involvement.<sup>25</sup> After 'foreign nations' have regained their autonomy, a glorious past is rendered almost irretrievably lost. Italia questions once-victorious leaders with an accusatory tone: 'Where are you now?' and the concluding quatrain takes a bitter turn by declaring that even the names of great commanders are barely remembered, they are 'naked shadows'.

The penultimate stanza is dominated by imperatives that demand attention and action: 'wake up', 'look there', 'take up again now those noble swords'. The urgency of Italia's injunctions are enhanced by the repetition of 'ormai' (now). (Creating a sense of urgency was also typical of laments.) Italia's demands are juxtaposed against her dejection: her 'horrendous and sorrowful weeping' is actualized in verse five with the interjection of 'ahimè' which breaks up the narrative flow. The 'ahimè' of *lamenti* derive from similar terms that mark Greek tragedy, and, as Nicole Loraux remarks, the vocalization 'opens to a world where it has no other sense than the sound itself'.<sup>26</sup> Put another way, Italia's vocalization of 'ahimè' was a sonic embodiment of her pain where sound, not sense, was prioritized. In the final couplet, Italia's reference to conflict is deflected elsewhere (to 'distant countries') as it was in stanza four (to 'foreign nations'). While the call to take up 'noble swords' might be interpreted as rekindled expansionism, I suggest that the deflection of the place of warfare *away* from ancient Rome (and its hoped-for corollary, the Italian peninsula) enables the Empire to maintain its idealized integrity, with Italia-as-woman-defiled metaphorically carrying the burden of the peninsula's colonization. As such, alterity is only deflected, never entirely suppressed.

25 Florence Alazard, 'Ahimé, ahi, o, deh: Interjections and Orality in *Lamenti* during the Italian Wars', in *Interactions between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture*, ed. by Luca Degl'Innocenti, Brian Richardson, and Chiara Sbordoni (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 67–80 (pp. 76–78), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315589190-5>

26 Cited in Alazard, 'Ahimé', pp. 72–73.



## Hearing the Call: The *Moresca* and Performative Valor

The final stanza that Italia recited also follows the trajectory of the lament, which typically concluded by imploring Italian princes or states to come to the victim's defense.<sup>27</sup> Italia's call to action is specifically directed to the attendant Duke: 'And you beloved son, Duke of Urbino, / In whom I feel true valor reborn / Avenge my Latin blood [Roman heritage]'. Her delivery in earlier stanzas, perhaps anguished or tentative, may now have embodied the strength and certainty that would ultimately be attributed to the Duke himself through bodily enactment. The final quatrain takes the tone of an apotheosis with references to his divinity and immortality — creating a 'space' that is off-limits from the actual brutality and physical violence of war — and concludes with a call to secure her freedom.<sup>28</sup>

While performative *lamenti* did not allow for an immediate response to cries for help, the musico-theatrical context at Urbino facilitated a response in the form of a *moresca*. Coming hard on the heels of Italia's final apotheotic quatrain, both Castiglione's stanza and Urbani's description leave no doubt that the 'armed person' who appeared on the stage was intended to personify the Duke of Urbino. The young Duke Francesco — at the time only twenty-one years of age — already had a distinguished military career of which Castiglione had first-hand knowledge. Francesco had proved his military prowess from an early age. At sixteen he was leading men-at-arms for his father-in-law Francesco Gonzaga (1466–1519) in military action against Bologna, and after becoming Duke of Urbino in 1508, he and Castiglione were involved in active warfare together against Venice.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the call to a valorous Duke was not only fitting within the theatrical circumstance, but also resonated with the reputation he had already established as a noble warrior.<sup>30</sup>

27 Ibid., pp. 76–78.

28 The reference to the 'divine bird' in this stanza would usually indicate the eagle, which could signal both the standards carried by Roman legions with the conquering eagle as well as the eagle in the Duke of Urbino's coat of arms. I thank Giulio Ongaro for suggesting this interpretation to me.

29 See Cartwright, *Baldassare Castiglione*, I, pp. 265–271.

30 The terms nobility and honor were almost interchangeable in the Cinquecento. See Richard Wistreich, "'Real Besses, Real Men': *Virtù* and Virtuosity in the

How did the performance of valor on the Urbinate stage intersect with the designation *moresca* in Urbani's account? Before answering this question, a brief re-thinking of the *moresca* is needed, especially in light of recent literature contesting aspects of the genre.<sup>31</sup> I circumscribe my approach by relying on sources from the early- to mid-Cinquecento, although I hope my general approach may provide a useful template for understanding aspects of the genre in different socio-political and geographical contexts.<sup>32</sup> Most scholars seem to agree that in a musico-theatrical context, a *moresca* was a costumed dance requiring considerable agility, with a focus on individual action (almost always performed by men, as soloists or in a group), which distinguished the dance from (partnered) court dance. Beyond this general definition, individual *moresche* can be most productively understood by asking, as John Forrest has already done in relation to the English Morris dance: who is dancing and for whom?<sup>33</sup> If *moresca* performances are considered contextually, as a response to the environments in which they were staged, then any contention over their signifying capacity falls away, as

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Construction of Noble Male Identity in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Trossinger Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik*, 2 (2002), 59–80 (pp. 61–62).

- 31 For example, see Barbara Sparti, 'The Danced *Moresca* (and *mattaccino*): Multiformity of a Genre. From the Palaces of Cardinals and Popes to Enactments by Artisans in the Streets of 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Rome', in *Early Modern Rome 1341–1667*, ed. by Portia Prebys ([Ferrara]: Edisai, 2011), pp. 324–330 and Barbara Sparti, '*Moresca* and *Mattaccino*. Where are the Spanish Antecedents? Where are the Moors?', in *Passi, tracce, percorsi: Scritti sulla danza italiana in omaggio a José Sasportes*, ed. by Alessandro Pontremoli and Patrizia Veroli (Rome: Aracne, 2012), pp. 17–31. These articles are a response to the work of Anthony Cummings who suggests that a Roman entertainment from 1521 symbolically evoked the threat of the Turks. He later modifies this assertion somewhat to non-European 'others' to encompass metaphoric readings of *moresche* in general. See, in this order, Anthony M. Cummings, 'Leo X and Roman Carnival (1521)', *Studi musicali*, 36.2 (2007), 289–341; 'Music and the "Islamic Other": Public Festivals and Triumphal Entries', in *The Lion's Ear: Pope Leo X, the Renaissance Papacy, and Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), pp. 13–44; and 'Dance and "The Other": The *Moresca*', in *Seventeenth-Century Ballet: A Multi-Art Spectacle*, ed. by Barbara Grammeniat. (USA: Xlibris, 2011), pp. 39–60. During the Italian Wars, the 'other' cannot automatically be assumed to be an 'Islamic other'. The term *barbare* was frequently used by Italians to refer to the brutality of French, Spanish, or German soldiers that invaded the peninsula.
- 32 In light of the scope and purpose of this chapter, it would take me too far afield to cite the numerous sources I have consulted. However, I thank Suzanne Cusick for pushing me to think deeply about the function and purpose of Italian *moresche*.
- 33 John Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458–1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 25–26, <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442681453>

does Barbara Sparti's repeated contention that the *moresca* is ultimately 'elusive'.<sup>34</sup> Quite simply, I suggest that the dance is inherently labile, from its movements and accoutrements — which consisted of a set of possibilities, some more commonly employed than others — to its signifying capacities, both of which facilitated the *moresca*'s utility in a number of contexts, including in a performance designed to create a perception of valorous action.

A relationship between valorous action and a *moresca* may seem surprising in light of more commonly cited references to *moresche* as fierce and furious or exotic, but this is exactly my point. Different types of *moresche* were deployed to present the differing status and affective qualities of particular character types that could even co-exist within the course of a single entertainment such as an *intermedio*, as I will later show. Although a demonstration of efficacious swordsmanship was sometimes incorporated as part of a *moresca* (as in our example), with groups of *morescanti*, quite commonly swords or other implements were simply but deftly wielded in time to the music, although sometimes no implements were incorporated at all. Movement in time to the music by a dancer or dancers appears to be the prime determinant of *moresche* performed during the early decades of the sixteenth century, whether through (unspecified) bodily movement in general (as the Urbino example illustrates), footwork (which is very rarely specifically mentioned, but may have been assumed), and/or the wielding of implements, often weapons (but not exclusively). Other features such as circle formations or entering the stage in single file (when groups of dancers were involved) were not essential features, but were selectively employed for specific purposes related to the overarching conception of individual *moresche*.<sup>35</sup>

The relationship of *moresche* to sound is complex. Sources do not always mention musical instruments; when mentioned the *tamburino* (pipe and tabor) is most commonly cited, but practices varied widely. The percussive dimension of the *tamburino*, performed by a 'one-man

34 Sparti, 'The Danced *Moresca*', p. 325 and Sparti, '*Moresca* and *Mattaccino*', pp. 17 and 29.

35 I am indebted to dance scholar Jennifer Nevile for her timely responses to my queries, and helping me to think through a number of quagmires related to the early- to mid-Cinquecento *moresca*.

band', supported tempo maintenance, a crucial aspect of the dance. But in light of the inherent athleticism and other frequent components of the dance, it seems important to relate embodied action to sound. In some *moresche*, implements were used to beat time, adding to the overall sonic effect. Also, some performances incorporated the clash of real weapons; De' Sommi comments upon the magnificence of a show due to the use of *real* weapons in the *moresca*, but we cannot assume that 'fake' weapons (without sound capacity?) were most commonly used. (For example, in a letter of 1502, Duchess Isabella d'Este comments on the use of 'fake armor and implements' in a *moresca* she witnessed in Ferrara.<sup>36</sup>) It is also notable that while fencing, striking the small shield (buckler) with one's weapon was a common gesture, so it is possible that when 'real' shields were employed they may have been utilized for percussive effects.<sup>37</sup>

No Italian dance treatises discuss the *moresca*'s footwork, and only a few eyewitness accounts mention footwork specifically. A lengthy description of an entertainment designed by Giulio Romano in 1542 notes that '[a]s they [the *morescant*i] all entered, they gathered in a circle going around the hall with certain steps which I can neither explain nor do', suggesting the complexity of the footwork.<sup>38</sup> He also summarizes the compelling parts of the entertainment as a whole, with reference to *agilità* (agility) and *destrezza* (dexterity) coming in for special mention. Another source from 1524 mentions that when '*limiting themselves* to the characteristics of *moresche*, they jumped up with many beautiful leaps [*italics mine*]'.<sup>39</sup> These are relatively rare examples; what they perhaps

36 See *Isabella d'Este: Selected Letters*, trans. by Deanna Shemek (Toronto: Iter Press; Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017), p. 183.

37 Regarding striking the buckler with one's weapon during fencing, see Dori Coblenz, "'Maister of al artificiall force and sleight': Tempo and Dissimulation in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*", *Italian Studies*, 73.1 (2018), 53–65 (p. 58), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00751634.2018.1411091>

38 'Poichè tutti furono usciti, et si hebbero radunati in cerchio girando intorno alla sala con certi lor contrapassi, ch'io non so discernere nè far'. Cited in Forrest, *Morris Dancing*, p. 85. The term *contrapasso* appears in fifteenth-century dance treatises and refers to a specific type of step, related to, but not the same as a double step, as it required a special type of timing. The term could have had various possible meanings within the context of a *moresca* from 1542 (which are beyond the scope of this paper to amplify), so I have simply translated the term as steps.

39 '[P]oi stringendosi su alcuni punti moreschi, butorono molti belli salti'. Marino Sanuto, *Diarii*, 58 vols. (Venice: Visentini, 1879–1903), IIIVI, p. 119, <http://asa.archiviostudiadriatici.it/islandora/object/libria:84206#page/72/mode/2up>

reinforce is the agility and skill required to dance a *moresca*. However we cannot deduce from the latter excerpt that leaping was characteristic of all Cinquecento *moresche*; in fact, reference to leaps and contorted body movements in both written and iconographical sources is more characteristic of northern European sources, as Barbara Sparti has already noted.<sup>40</sup> Yet given the evidence presented, it is more likely than not that the early Cinquecento *moresca* incorporated sound that was produced by the dancers in at least one or more of the ways suggested above. This would be in stark contrast, for example, to the courtly *bassadanza* (low dance), a graceful, opposite-sex partner dance, with gliding movements that were low to the ground, presumably producing little, if any, sound. In the context of the Urbinate performance, the sounds of the *moresca*, including its music, would nevertheless have provided a sonically gendered demarcation between Italia's lament (a genre long associated with women's voices) and the non-vocalic display of the masculine body, synced in time to the music.

Returning now to Urbani's brief account, he provides us with several clues regarding the enactment of graceful valor through the *moresca*.<sup>41</sup> Urbani uses the adjective *bellissimo* three times to describe the dance. Although a catch-all term, the repetition of the word is significant. Throughout, the *morescante* needed to demonstrably evoke Duke Francesco's noble status — exhibited by the actual Duke through on-going valor on the battlefield — by distinguishing himself from the barbarians who had previously ransacked Italy, and now encircled her on the stage.

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40 Sparti, 'Moresca and Mattaccino', pp. 19 and 23. So, too, the use of bells attached to dancers' legs (and blackface) was relatively rare in Cinquecento Italian sources by comparison with English and French descriptions.

41 The *moresca* as a demonstration of valor can be found in other descriptions, including those described, though not devised, by Castiglione (*Lettere*, I, pp. 556–557). For example, during Carnival at Rome in 1521, Castiglione writes of several *moresche* danced within the course of one entertainment. In two instances an (unnamed) lady requested that eight well-dressed youths demonstrate their valor, suggesting a chivalric connotation. In the first instance she wished 'to determine if they were worthy of her love [... whereupon] they began to dance the *moresca* again'. She then 'asked that they demonstrate how valiant they were at arms. And thus each took a two-handed sword and with it danced a beautiful *moresca*'. When asked for a specific demonstration of valor at arms, the dancers complied by using a longer and heavier sword in their *moresca*, which needed to be maneuvered with two hands. I thank Giulio Ongaro for alerting me to this differentiation in the second dance.



Urbani's account indicates that the *morescante's* assault was both forceful and expeditious. On one level, the 'thrusts and other strokes' the dancer employed would have been necessarily forceful because he was outnumbered by his opponents. (While we might tend to assume that Urbani's words were visually motivated, we cannot completely rule out a sonic component.) The fencing master Pietro Monte who, it has been argued, is a relatively silent but influential figure in Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, is mentioned as embodying the highest qualities of his craft through both *forza e leggierezza* (force and sleight).<sup>42</sup> The latter term intersects with the former by suggesting the dissimulation required for effective fencing. Urbani seems to have noticed variety in the *morescante's* swordsmanship by mentioning 'thrusts and other strokes' and possibly the necessary deceptive qualities (not just brute force) suggested by the word *colpo*.<sup>43</sup> The *morescante* also demonstrated mastery of the spatial field, another trait associated with artful fencing: Urbani's description notes how the dancer first proceeded to encircle Italia, then 'drove away all the barbarians' (thus indicating his own move away from Italia), and then his subsequent return to her. The dancer returned 'in time with the music' indicating the characteristic synchrony between the dancer's movements and the music frequently noted in early-Cinquecento *moresca* descriptions. Indeed, the ability to maintain tempo was a key aspect of both efficacious fencing and the *moresca* — De' Sommi even refers to a specific *tempo di moresca* — and keeping tempo is arguably a key aspect of Castiglione's conception of *sprezzatura* enacted through timely, and at times, antagonistic, dissimulatory interpersonal interactions in his *Cortegiano*.<sup>44</sup> On the stage, the solo *morescante* representing the Duke must have had the ability to delicately modulate between the combative skills necessary to represent the expulsion of numerous adversaries and *sprezzatura* to ensure the entire dance event appeared effortless.<sup>45</sup>

42 Coblenz, 'Tempo and Dissimulation', 61.

43 In addition to *colpo* meaning 'a blow, a stroke, [or] a hit', Florio also states 'a trick' or 'a pranke'. John Florio, *World of Words* (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1598), p. 77 and Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, p. 110.

44 De' Sommi, *Quattro dialoghi*, pp. 70–71. Coblenz brings the importance of tempo to the fore in both fencing and her reading of *Cortegiano* in 'Tempo and Dissimulation'.

45 *Sprezzatura* is a dense term suggesting a complex set of behaviors that cannot be satisfactorily translated as effortless. Nevertheless, the implication of showing no labor or effort in a dance context that required considerable physical agility, including swordsmanship, is relevant here.

For *sprezzatura* to have meaning it must involve (seemingly effortless) *difficoltà* (difficulty) and risk, as the singular *morescante*'s confrontation with a group of barbarians appears to suggest. Further, as Richard Wistreich has shown, as far as noble soldiering was concerned, 'regular and continuous repetitions of deeds of valour' *that were witnessed* was essential to maintaining the ontological status of the courtier as valorous warrior.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, through her reading of *Cortegiano*, Dori Coblentz has foregrounded the temporal dimensions of both artful conversation and fencing; regarding the latter, for example, an action *fuori di tempo* (out of time) denoted a failed action, 'one that misse[d] the opportune moment' by failing to parry a thrust. What the practice-informed research of Wistreich and Coblentz shares, then, is the ability to convey (historical) understandings of actions that are grounded in temporality; as such, actions understood to take place through time are always contingent, and therefore involved risk. So, too, as a representation of valor enacted through time and *in time* on the Urbinate stage, the *moresca* must signal *difficoltà* and therefore risk for its efficacy.

After driving away the barbarians, the task before the Duke of Urbino's *morescante*-proxy was to reinstate Italia as queen. The dancer thus placed a crown on Italia's head and re-attired her violated body with 'a regal golden cloak'.<sup>47</sup> Did this rapid metamorphosis enact performative closure by literally removing from the audience's view the signs of distress inscribed on her body? Put another way, did this momentary action eviscerate the memory of ransacked Italy who alone had dominated the first *intermedio*? The temporal stretch between Italia's two appearances is important here. Urbani indicates that she first left the stage (alone) unable to fulfil her objective (speaking), leaving spectators invested in her performance in a state of irresolution, perhaps even with a sense of foreboding. Castiglione seems to have orchestrated Italia's appearances so that the spectre of her lacerated body would have remained with the spectator until her (unexpected) reappearance several days later, dishevelled as before, to recite her lament. Though now envoiced, themes of contingency and alterity were infused into her multi-stanza recitation, which oscillated between complete dejection and the glimmer of hope offered by a triumphant past. When her male

46 Wistreich, 'Virtù and Virtuosity', 59–60.

47 Urbani uses the term *revestita* [*rivestita*] suggesting the act of re-clothing Italia.

rescuer finally accompanied her off the stage, expertly syncing his *moresca* to the music, was her transformation complete? The damage inflicted on the Italian peninsula by the so-called Italian Wars, including the collective sexual assault of Italian women by French and Spanish soldiers, continued for another forty-five years.<sup>48</sup> But Castiglione was acutely aware not only of foreign domination, but of warring Italian constituents inculcated in these struggles, which he made a point of communicating to the audience at the conclusion of the third and final play he supervised during Carnival.

### Coda: Performing Alterity

The final comedy that Castiglione oversaw during the Urbinate Carnival was Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena's *La Calandria*.<sup>49</sup> Though not mentioned by Urbani, Castiglione discussed the play's staging and its *intermedii* in a private letter to his friend, Bishop Ludovico Canossa. He described the first *intermedio* as follows:

The first [interlude] was a *moresca* of Jason, who appeared on the stage from the side, dancing, armed in the ancient style, beautiful, with a sword and a very beautiful shield. From the other side two bulls were suddenly seen, so lifelike, that many people thought they were real: they were shooting fire from their mouths, etc. The good Jason approached them and made them plow, by placing the yoke of the plow on them. And then he sowed the teeth of the dragon, and little by little men armed in the ancient style were born on the stage, so cleverly, as much as is possible, I believe. And they danced a fierce *moresca* in order to kill Jason; and then, when they were at the entrance they killed each other, one by one, but one couldn't see them dying [on the stage]. Jason entered from behind them, and he immediately exited with the veil of gold [the Golden Fleece] on his shoulders, dancing most excellently. And this [dancer] was [nicknamed] the Moor, and this was the first interlude.<sup>50</sup>

48 On the sexual violence perpetrated by foreign troops, see Yael Even, 'On the Art and Life of Collective Sexual Violence in Renaissance Italy', *Notes in the History of Art*, 23.4 (2004), 7–14, <https://doi.org/10.1086/sou.23.4.23207989>

49 Bibbiena's play has garnered considerable critical attention due to its innovations as a trend-setting comedy.

50 'La prima [intrinseca] fu una *moresca* di Iason, il quale comparse nella scena da un capo ballando, armato all'antica, bello, con la spada et una targa bellissima. Dall'altro furon visti in un tratto dui tori, tanto simili al vero, che alcuni pensorno che fosser veri: che gittavano foco della bocca, etc. A questi s'accostò il buon Iason,

As the heroic figure that acquired the Golden Fleece, Jason is a symbol of authority and kingship. Castiglione's description emphasizes the dancing Jason with all the accoutrements of a fine warrior, using the term *bello* and its derivatives as descriptors, very much like Urbani's account of the *moresca* performed by the Duke of Urbino's proxy. Jason's harnessing of the fearsome bulls is accomplished with valorous ease. Conversely, the men who appear, though also 'armed in the ancient style', dance 'a fierce *moresca* in order to kill Jason', but instead end up killing each other. As mentioned earlier, the *moresca* was commonly deployed to convey differing affective states, and a dancer's comportment could easily reflect those attributes — from gracious and valorous to furious but ultimately inept — while also engaging in recognizably *moresca*-esque movements and, in this case, swordsmanship.<sup>51</sup>

Castiglione's description is a standard representation of the Jason myth, down to minor details that mimic the classical tradition, such as not having the 'armed men' actually die on the stage. It may come as a surprise, then, that Castiglione had the troubled state of the Italian peninsula on his mind when he conceived these *intermedii*, which he communicated to the Urbinate audience directly:

After the comedy [*La Calandria*] ended, one of the little Cupids that we had seen before [in the second *intermedio*], in the same costume, suddenly appeared on the stage and explained the meaning of the *intermedii* with a few stanzas, explaining that they were all tied together [thematically] and separate from the comedy. And this was: that the first [*intermedio*] was the battle of those worldly [i.e. not mythological] brothers, as now we see that the wars are a reality, and between neighbors, and between

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et feceli arare, posto loro il giogo e l'aratro. E poi seminò i denti del dracone: e nacquero a poco a poco del palco huomini armati all'antica, tanto bene, quanto credo io che si possa. Et questi ballorno una fiera *moresca*, per ammazzar Iason: e poi, quando furno all'entrare, s'ammazzavano ad uno ad uno, ma non si vedeano morire. Dietro ad essi se n'entrò Iason: e subito uscì col vello d'oro alle spalle, ballando eccellentissimamente. Et questo era il Moro, et questa fu la prima intromessa'. Castiglione, *Lettere*, I, p. 265.

- 51 A notable example of a dancer separating himself out through his bodily demeanor (and costume) occurred in a *moresca* performed in Rome for the wedding celebrations of Alfonso d'Este I and Lucrezia Borgia. Hosted by her father, Pope Alexander VI, the *moresca* included Lucrezia's brother, Cesare Borgia. Duchess Isabella d'Este was informed that Cesare Borgia was easily recognized and distinguished from his fellow dancers 'because both *his manner* and his gold and velvet brocade attire were more pompous [*italics mine*]'. Barbara Sparti, 'Isabella and the Dancing Este Brides, 1473–1514', in *Women's Work: Making Dance in Europe Before 1800*, ed. by Lynn Brooks (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), pp. 19–48 (p. 34).

those who should make peace. And to represent this the fable of Jason was used. Then came Love [in the second *intermedio*], whose holy fire first kindled humankind and the earth, then the sea [in *intermedio* three] and the air [in *intermedio* four], to drive away war and discord, and to unite the world in harmony. This [representation] was rather a hope and a conjecture: but that of the wars was unfortunately true, which is to our misfortune.<sup>52</sup>

Castiglione emphasizes the thematic continuity of the *intermedii* and their collective relationship to the on-going Italian Wars by explicitly stating that all four were linked together by the theme of the Wars, constituting a separate 'plot' from Bibbiena's comedy. By redeploying one of the Amorini from the second *intermedio* to communicate to the audience, Castiglione essentially breaks the frame between a world of mythic possibility and the current fractious and bloody circumstances on the Italian peninsula. It is difficult to know whether the audience would have interpreted the *intermedii* in this way had Castiglione not insisted on clarifying their meaning at the end of the show. Yet through this gesture, Castiglione brought a reality check to the final play of the festivities, which he had also overtly signalled by way of Italia's ransacked appearance over the course of the first two comedies. In this way, Castiglione projected a kind of temporal arch of alterity across all three Carnival plays, never entirely allowing the audience to forget past and current uncertainties.

Though Castiglione (through the Amorino) appears to confine his remarks to internecine strife, both Castiglione and his audience were aware of the interlocking nature of internal rivalries and foreign domination on the peninsula. The Dukes of city-states such as Urbino did not have absolute power; by de jure they were papal fiefs, which complicated their autonomy. A change in papal rule would invariably lead to instability. Throughout the Urbinate Carnival, news of the Della Rovere Pope Julius II's rapidly deteriorating health would have cast a

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52 'Finita poi la Comedia, nacque sul palco all'improvviso un Amorino di quelli primi, e nel medesimo habito, il quale dichiarò con alcune poche stanze la significatione delle intromesse, che era una cosa continuata e separata dalla Comedia. E questa era: che prima fu la battaglia di quelli fratelli terrigeni, come hor veggiamo che le guerre sono in essere, e tra li propinqui, e quelli che dovriano far pace. Et in questo si valse della favola di Iason. Dipoi venne Amore, il quale del suo santo foco accese prima gli huomini e la terra, poi il mare e l'aria, per cacciare la guerra e la discordia, et unire il mondo di concordia. Questo fu più presto speranza et augurio: ma quello delle guerre, fu pur troppo vero, per nostra disgratia'. Castiglione, *Lettere*, I, p. 266.



shadow over the festivities; Julius himself, the so-called warrior pope, had engineered the installation of Francesco della Rovere I as Duke of Urbino in 1508. While Francesco's proxy rescued Italia by performing a valorous *moresca* and covering her wounds, outside of the theatrical context no such efficacious remedy was forthcoming. With Julius' impending death, and (non-Della Rovere) cardinals in Rome jockeying for the papacy, the writing was already on the wall: the Duchy of Urbino would once again find itself in precarious circumstances. Julius II died shortly after Carnival during the night of 20–21 February 1513, and within less than a month a Medici pope was installed, Pope Leo X, a development that ultimately cost Francesco his dukedom.<sup>53</sup>

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An almost mandatory gesture in historiographical work on early modern Italian festival has required tipping our hats to the magnificence and *meraviglia* (wonder) of court spectacles designed as manifestations of cultural prestige and political power. But the ways in which Castiglione allowed current political realities and anxieties to filter through into the 1513 Urbinate Carnival may give us pause for thought. The Italian Wars are not commonly foregrounded in musico-theatrical events but, as literary scholars have begun to teach us, the trauma and displacement produced by events such as the Sack of Rome in 1527 inevitably found their way into cultural production, even if today we have to look a little harder to find materials that engage with these unpleasant realities.<sup>54</sup> At the risk of sounding sententious, when considering the realities of colonization, slavery, or racial profiling, early modern Italy is not the first place that generally comes to mind, at least in the fields of musicology and literary studies. But for those of us who have found an historiographical home there over the years, it seems important to continue the work in our own back yards, and in so doing create a space for other voices to be heard.

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53 Francesco Maria lost his jurisdiction over Pesaro as a result of Leo X's installment and was ultimately excommunicated and ousted as Duke of Urbino in 1516.

54 See, for example, Jessica Goethals, 'Vanquished Bodies, Weaponized Words: Pietro Aretino's Conflicting Portraits of the Sexes and the Sack of Rome', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 17.1 (2014), 55–78, <https://doi.org/10.1086/675763> and Laurie Shepard, 'Siena 1531: Genesis of a European Heroine', *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 26.1 (2005), 3–19.

## Appendix A

[1] Tanto dal duol oppresso ho 'l cor nel petto  
 Che dil mio mal non so formar parole  
 E muta sino qui per questo effetto  
 Son stata, come il cielo e 'l destin vuole.  
 Sospiri sol mandava il cor astretto,  
 Ché la lingua il dolor impedir suole,  
 Come preda di lupi agno innocente  
 Senza lamento al mal fui paziente.

[2] Ben false son queste speranze umane  
 Che la Fortuna sì spesso interrompe,  
 Passan come ombre le glorie mondane  
 Scettri, tesor, trionfi e rege pompe,  
 L'opre nostre qua giù debole e vane  
 L'edace morso dil tempo corrompe  
 Tal che ogni cosa è alfin caduca e frale,  
 E ciò che è sotto il ciel tutt'è mortale.

[3] Dil mondo fui regina e mio pensiero  
 Fu stabil regno aver e senza fine,

The heart in my chest is so oppressed,  
 In such pain, that I cannot form words.  
 It is also for this reason  
 That I have been silent, as the heavens and destiny wish.  
 My constrained heart emitted only sighs,  
 Because grief prevented my tongue from moving.  
 As an innocent lamb, prey to wolves,  
 Without lamenting, I suffered.

These human hopes are false  
 That Fortune so often interrupts,  
 Worldly glories pass as shadows  
 Scepters, treasures, triumphs and royal pomp,  
 Our labors down here are feeble and vain  
 The greedy bite of time corrupts  
 So that everything in the end is fallen and frail,  
 And all that is under heaven is mortal.

I was queen of the world and my intention  
 Was to have a stable reign without end.

A tante forze e a sì eccelso impero  
 La terra reputai stretto confine,  
 Tutti obedian al mio scettro altero  
 Populi strani e genti peregrine  
 E stavano a' miei piedi ingenuchiati  
 Populi molti e regi incatenati.

[4] Or vilipesa, serva, abbandonata  
 Mi truovo afflitta, misera e mischina,  
 Poverella, mendica e sconsolata  
 Piango la mia crudel alta ruina,  
 Barbare genti m'hanno lacerata  
 E fatto d'i mei membri aspra rapina  
 E quei che mi dovean, or chi mil crede,  
 Deffender, m'han tradita e data in prede.

[5] O Cesari, mei Fabii, o Scipioni  
 Che tante palme già mi riportasti  
 Dove sete or che esterne nazioni  
 M'han tolto quel che voi già mi donasti?  
 Ormai non è chi più di voi ragioni

With so many forces, and such a distinguished Empire  
 I deemed the border of my country too limited.  
 All obeyed my almighty scepter  
 Strangers and pilgrims  
 And kneeling at my feet there were  
 Many peoples and kings in chains.

Now despised, a servant, abandoned  
 I find myself an afflicted, wretched and poor servant girl,  
 Wretched, begging, and disconsolate  
 I weep for my cruel, profound ruin.  
 I was lacerated by barbarians  
 And they robbed all they could of my parts  
 And those who ought to have defended me (who can  
 believe this now?)  
 Betrayed me, and gave me in prey.

O Caesars, my Fabii, o Scipioni  
 That already brought me back many victories  
 Where are you now that foreign nations  
 Took away from me what you already gave me?  
 By now nobody talks about you any more

Ch'i nomi vostri a pena son remasti. Ahi lassa, altro non sete che ombre ignude E poca cener che vil urna chiude.	And your names alone are barely left. Alas, you are only naked shadows And the little ash that the vile urn encloses.
[6] Anime chiare, si qualche radice Dill'eterno valor al mondo resta, Resvegliatevi ormai all'infelice Voce dil pianto mio, orrenda e mesta, Movavi vostra, ahimè, matre e nutrice Cum le chiome stracciate e senza vesta, Repigliate ormai quelle alte spade Ch'in paesi lontan vi fier le strade.	Bright souls, if some foundation Of eternal valor remains in the world, Wake up, now, to the unhappy Sound of my horrendous and sorrowful weeping Look there, alas, at your mother and nourisher With torn hair and without clothes, Take up again now those noble swords That in distant countries burned a path for you.
[7] E tu amato figliol, duca d'Urbino, In cui vero valor rinascere sento Fa' vendetta dil mio sangue latino E dil nome che è quasi in tutto spento, Rinnova l'ali dil tuo ucel divino, L'insegna triunfal spiegando al vento, Ch'acquistarai in giovenile etate Cum tua gloria immortal mia libertate.	And you beloved son, Duke of Urbino, In whom I feel true valor reborn. Avenge my Latin blood And my name that is almost completely extinguished. Renew the wings of your divine bird Spreading to the wind the triumphal sign So that in your youth you will acquire Immortal glory, by securing my freedom.

