

Celinda, A Tragedy:

A BILINGUAL EDITION

VALERIA MIANI



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Iter Inc.
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies
Toronto
2010

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Valeria Miani and the Tragic Genre

The Other Voice

The dramatist and poet Valeria Miani (c. 1563–post 1620) is the author of the only tragedy penned by a woman writer in Italian before the eighteenth century, *Celinda*, published in 1611.¹ Other women writers may have written tragedies in the early modern period, but they were not sent to press and no manuscript has yet surfaced. Miani is also the author of a pastoral play, *Amorosa speranza* (Loving Hope), printed in 1604, which makes her chronologically the third early modern published female author in Italy to tackle the new, and soon extremely popular, genre of the pastoral.² In addition to the two works above, Miani published some poems here and there: two songs and a sonnet in a collection of 1609 entitled *Polinnia*;³ two epigrams in a collection of the same year by Ercole Manzoni entitled *Amorosi spirti*;⁴ and a “moral” madrigal in a collection of 1611 by the Accademici Orditi, entitled *Gareggiamento poetico*.⁵ She also wrote a religious

1. Valeria Miani, *Celinda, tragedia di Valeria Miani dedicata alla Serenissima Madamma Eleonora Medici Gonzaga, duchessa di Mantova, et di Monferrato* (Vicenza: Appresso Francesco Bolzetta libraro in Padova, 1611; and Vicenza: Appresso Domenico Amadio, 1611).

2. Valeria Miani, *Amorosa speranza, favola pastorale della molto mag[nifi]ca signora Valeria Miani* (Venice: Per Francesco Bolzetta, 1604).

3. *Polinnia, per l' Illustrissimo Signor Tommaso Contarini Cavaliere Conte del Zaffo, e Podestà di Padova*, ed. Martino Sandelli [?] (Padua: Bolzetta, 1609). Pages are unnumbered; works are in Italian and Latin. The editor's name does not appear in the text but Marco Callegari thinks that the idea of the collection came from Francesco Bolzetta, a well-known bookseller in Padua, who asked the priest Martino Sandelli to collect poems to honor Podestà Contarini. See *Dal torchio del tipografo al banco del libraio: Stampatori, editori e librai a Padova dal XV al XVIII secolo* (Padua: Il Prato, 2002), 49.

4. Ercole Manzoni, *Amorosi spirti. Seconda parte de madrigali di Ercole Manzoni, estense, filosofo, medico e cavaliere veneto* (Padua: Pasquati, 1609). Pages are unnumbered. Manzoni was connected with the world of theater and with both male and female musicians and singers.

5. Confuso Accademico Ordito, *Il Gareggiamento Poetico del Confuso Accademico Ordito. Madrigali amorosi, gravi e piacevoli ne' quali si vede il bello, il leggiadro, e il vivace dei più illustri poeti d'Italia*, 3 vols. (Venice: Barezzi, 1611). Still, even in the very book in which her poetry was published, Miani is referred to nonchalantly and imprecisely as “Valeria Maria.”

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madrigal, now in a collection of 1613 by Leonardo Sanudo, and works that have been lost, including at least two comedies mentioned by a contemporary city historian, an oration for which she became first known at age eighteen, and a book of poetry that the poet and critic Giovan Maria Crescimbeni, a founder of the Accademia dell' Arcadia in 1690, attributes to her.⁶ Miani's publishing career thus lasted a few years, but her intellectual pursuits, which place her consistently in Padua, predated her first publication by more than two decades.

Miani is the product of an extraordinary period of creativity by a number of women writers who were lucky enough to be born in Venice and the territories under the Serenissima's rule (Padua, Vicenza, Rovigo) and work in the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth. As the most recent scholarship reveals, these women were able to compose in all the different genres that defined the Italian Renaissance: poetry, philosophical prose, novella, romance, chivalric romance, epic, comedy, tragedy, pastoral, and musical composition. They even wrote pharmacopoeial treatises and engaged in scientific disquisitions, thus demonstrating once and for all that women who set their minds to producing intellectual work could in fact do so.

But all too typically most women writers could not single-mindedly pursue their careers, for unlike what we see in most well-chronicled male professions, women's literary productivity has often

Giovan Maria Crescimbeni corrects this: "Valeria Miani Padovana, wrongly called Valeria Maria in the *Gareggiamento Poetico*." See his *L'istoria della volgar poesia scritta da Giovan Maria Crescimbeni* (1698; Rome: Stamperia Antonio de' Rossi, 1714), 438. Unless otherwise noted, translations from Italian, here and throughout, are my own. Similarly, the Paduan Giulia Bigolina, who authored a prose romance and some novellas in an earlier generation, was referred to simply as "Giulia Padovana" in Pietro Paolo Ribera, *Le glorie immortali de' Trionfi, et heroiche imprese d'ottocento quarantacinque Donne illustri antiche, e moderne, dotate di conditioni, e scienze segnalate: cioè in sacra scrittura, teologia, profetia, filosofia, retorica, gramatica, medicina, astrologia, leggi civili, pittura, musica, armi, et in altre virtù principali* (Venice: Evangelista Deuchino, 1609), 287.

6. Leonardo Sanudo, ed., *Vita, attioni, miracoli, morte, resurrettione, et ascensione di Dio humano, raccolti ... in versi lirici da ' più famosi Autori de questo secolo* (Venice: Santo Grillo e fratelli, 1613). I thank Virginia Cox for this reference. Crescimbeni, *L'istoria della volgar poesia*, 438–39: "By her [Miani] we have a volume of poetry, a pastoral play entitled *L'Amorosa speranza*, and a tragedy entitled *La Celinda*."

been interrupted by biological destiny and social circumstances. Of course, there are the dramatic cases of early modern women writers who died in the Veneto during that most feminine job of childbirth, such as Moderata Fonte and Isabella Andreini, but I am thinking of more prosaic circumstances that forced women to put down their pens: the eventuality of marriage chiefly (Lucrezia Marinella, for example, stopped writing at least ten years during her marriage) or a sudden widowhood. In the case of Valeria Miani, following the death of her husband one or two years after the publication of *Celinda* she was left with five children to raise and a small property to live on and run. As mentioned above, she published no more.

Most of these early modern women writers came from the upper middle class or the lower nobility, for writing required some humanist learning, whether acquired through a private tutor or through a connection to a university or academic environment by way of relatives. Lower class women with a sharp mind willing to sell entertainment and sex to the Venetian male nobility and clergy, such as the talented “honest” courtesans (“cortigiane oneste”), could toil to gain a refined taste and thereby enhance their chances for a better life. The list of Veneto women writers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is surprisingly long and growing by the day as more are discovered: Giulia Bigolina (c. 1518–1569) wrote novellas and prose romances; Gaspara Stampa (c. 1523–1554), Veronica Franco (1546–1591), Sara Copio Sullam (c. 1590–1640), and Veneranda Bragadin (c. 1566–post 1619) wrote poetry; Isabella Andreini (1562–1604), Maddalena Campiglia (1553–1595), and Miani herself wrote pastoral comedies; Moderata Fonte (1555–1592) and Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653) wrote chivalric romances, polemical treatises on the worth or excellence of women, religious plays, and pastoral romances.⁷ And then there are less-known cases, such as that of Isicratea Monte (c. 1562–1584), a poet who died way too young, or the scientist Camilla Herculiana, who worked in Padua at the Pharmacy of the Three Stars, or the alchemist and cosmetician Isabella Cortese,

7. Many of these writers have appeared or are going to appear in The Other Voice series. Further information on individual authors can be found in the text or notes below. For a study of their writings, see Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

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who saw her book on obstetrics and “women’s secrets” become an often reprinted bestseller.⁸ Many of these women knew each other and drew inspiration from the others’ work, for the success of one motivated another to strive for the same. Miani perhaps would not have written her *Amorosa speranza* were it not for the earlier examples of Andreini and Campiglia, whose pastorals, respectively *La Mirtilla* and *Flori*, came out in 1588. Likewise, she perhaps would not have chosen Duchess Eleonora de’ Medici Gonzaga as the dedicatee of her *Celinda* if Marinella, who was living in Padua in those very years, had not recently dedicated her *Arcadia felice* to the duchess.⁹

All these women writers also had the opportunity to congregate with talented men, whether members of their own family, affiliates of local academies, or simply fellow patrons of bookshops, for in the absence of cafés or even public libraries, bookshops were the *de facto* meeting places of educated locals as well as foreigners. Venice had chosen Padua as the site for the Republic’s flagship university and had heavily invested in the enterprise by appointing well-known professors, thus providing the city with a vigorous intellectual community. Galileo Galilei and Girolamo Fabrici d’Acquapendente, for example, were on the faculty at the time of Miani’s writing. As a result, Padua hosted an international community of university students coming from abroad, mostly from Germany, but French students came, too, escaping the aftermath of the St. Bartholomew’s slaughter, as well

8. On Issicratea Monte, see Marisa Milani, “Quattro donne fra i pavani,” *Museum Patavinum* 1 (1983): 387–412, and below. The apothecary Camilla Herculiana published *Lettere di philosophia naturale* (Cracow: Stamperia di Lazaro, 1584), dedicated to the queen of Poland. There she complained that much of her written work had been stolen by a male colleague and published under another name. As with Cortese, we do not know her dates of birth and death. Cortese’s book, *I secreti della signora Isabella Cortese* (Venice: Bariletto, 1561), is dedicated to the archdeacon of Ragusa in Dalmatia. Some interesting scientific digressions are also present in Book 2 of Moderata Fonte’s *The Worth of Women*, ed. and trans. by Virginia Cox, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (1600; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). It is also worth mentioning two female Veneto painters in this list, such as the Paduan Chiara Varotari (1584–c.1663), sister of the well-known painter Padovanino, who specialized in portraits, and the Venetian Marietta Robusti, Jacopo Tintoretto’s natural daughter (c. 1560–1590).

9. Susan Haskins has recently established that Marinella moved from Venice to Padua for a while upon her marriage in 1607. See her “Vexatious Litigant, or the Case of Lucrezia Marinella? (Part 2),” *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 1–2 (2007): 203–30.

as English and Polish students. And then there were intellectual tourists, like Philip Sidney and Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who came down from Venice regularly to bask in Padua's scholarly vitality. Visiting the city in 1608 Thomas Coryate made his first item of business a stop in a bookshop.¹⁰ The most important publisher and bookseller in Padua at the turn of the sixteenth century was Miani's editor and friend, Francesco Bolzetta, who promoted both scientific and literary authors, especially those connected to the university.¹¹ As for the academies, it was difficult for women to belong officially to one in Italy, but the university environment of a place like Padua may have fostered informal participation.¹² For example, in the public gatherings of the Accademia de' Ricovrati, founded in 1599 and which had among its members Galilei, women were invited, music was played

10. Coryate recounts that he met in this bookshop a young Italian so learned that he could even converse in Hebrew. See Michael Strachan, *The Life and Adventures of Thomas Coryate* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 37. For a reconstruction of the life and culture of Padua at the time, see Valeria Finucci, "Intellectual Tourism in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy: Costume and Manners in Venice and Padua," in *Mores Italiae: Costumi e scene di vita nel Rinascimento // Mores Italiae: Costume and Life in the Renaissance*, ed. Maurizio Rippa Bonati and Valeria Finucci (Cittadella: Biblos, 2007), 37–77.

11. Bolzetta had two centrally located bookshops in Padua but did not have his own print shop. Instead, he relied on printers in Padua (Pasquati), Vicenza (Amadio), and Venice (Francesco de' Franceschi). He published the medical works of Girolamo Fabrici, Prospero Alpini, and Fortunio Liceti. He also published Torquato Tasso's epic *Il Goffredo* (1616). For the editorial activity of Bolzetta in Padua, see Callegari, *Dal torchio del tipografo al banco del libraio*, 45–55. Miani's cooperation with Bolzetta echoes that of Lucrezia Marinella in Venice in those very years with the editor Ciotti, the publisher of Venetian academicians. See Stephen Kolsky, "Moderata Fonte, Lucrezia Marinella, Giuseppe Passi: An Early Seventeenth Century Feminist Controversy," *Modern Language Review* 96 (2001): 973–89, at 977.

12. On the almost nonexistent formal presence of women in literary academies, see Conor Fahy, "Women and Italian Cinquecento Literary Academies," in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000), 438–52. But Tarquinia Molza became a member of the academy in Modena, Isabella Andreini was made a member of the Accademia degli Intenti in Pavia in 1601 and was given an honorary degree, Laura Battiferra had a formal link with the Accademia degli Intronati in Siena, and Laura Terracina with the Incogniti in Naples. Veronica Gambaro was associated informally with the Accademia Corregiana. See Michele Maylander, *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia*, 5 vols. (Bologna: Capelli, 1926–30), 3:296 and 320. Veronica Franco and Gaspara Stampa seem to have also been informally associated with the Accademia della Fama, led by Domenico Venier in Venice. See Maylander, *Storia*, 5:446.

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between discussions, and refreshments and dances for the academicians and their guests often followed.¹³

Many of the academic discussions at the time of Miani's writing were related to theater, for literary theorists were passionately arguing the merits of the "ancients" versus the "moderns." Some of the hottest debates were notoriously taking place between the defenders and the accusers of Padua's native son, Sperone Speroni, regarding his choices of plot and verse in his controversial play *Canace*, composed on the model of Seneca's ancient Roman tragedy.¹⁴ Also at the core of the controversy between "ancient" and "modern" literary forms was the new genre of the pastoral, namely, Giambattista Guarini's *Il pastor fido*, as well as the issues of contamination, decorum, and ethics surrounding the reception of this hybrid theatrical piece.¹⁵ Consider-

13. See Attilio Maggiolo, *I soci dell'accademia patavina dalla sua fondazione (1599)* (Padua: Accademia Patavina di Lettere, Scienze ed Arti, 1983), 10. On the Ricovrati, see *Dall'Accademia dei Ricovrati all'Accademia Galileiana*, ed. Ezio Riondato (Padua: Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2001). A list of Ricovrati members shows that Miani may have known quite a few of them, from Tommaso Contarini, to whom is dedicated the collection *Polinnia* in which her poetry is printed, to Francesco Contarini, the author of *La finta Fiammetta*, of whom more later, and finally to Ottonello Descalzi, a founding member of the academy and husband of the woman to whom she dedicated her *Amorosa speranza*. The Ricovrati admitted some women in the seventeenth century, such as Madeleine de Scudery and the Venetian Elena Cornaro Piscopia, the first woman ever to graduate from a European university.

14. Sperone Speroni's *Canace* (1546) was reprinted in Venice by Giovanni Alberti in 1587 in a much talked about revised version, *Canace tragedia del sig. Sperone Speroni alla quale sono aggiunte alcune altre sue composizioni e una apologia e alcune altre lettioni*, sporting a finished prologue, a new division into acts and scenes, a partial chorus, and also for the first time Speroni's own *Apologia contra il Giudicio fatto sopra la Canace*. This is a short and incomplete defense against the detractors of his tragedy in which Speroni defended his selections. Faustino Summo, an Aristotelian professor of logic in Padua and a member of the Accademia de' Ricovrati, undertook the defense of Speroni, although he also objected to a number of Speroni's assertions as not sufficiently Aristotelian, in *Due discorsi l'uno intorno al contrasto tra il signor Speron Speroni et il giudicio stampato contra la sua tragedia di Canace e di Macareo et l'altro della nobilta dell'eccellente signor Faustino Summo padovano* (Padua: Meietti, 1590).

15. Giambattista Guarini, *Il pastor fido* (Venice: Ciotti, 1602). The author read his play in the house of the nobleman Zabarella in Padua around 1590. Summo wrote against the new genres of tragicomedy and pastoral in *Due discorsi di Faustino Summo padovano, l'uno contra le tragicomедie et moderne pastorali, l'altro particolarmente contra il Pastor Fido dell'ill.re sig.*

ing that the majority of plays at the time were written and published in the area of Venice, Padua, and Vicenza (there were 450 printers, publishers, booksellers, and print-dealers in the Veneto area alone in the sixteenth century), intellectuals in this area, within and outside the university and the academies, were keen to debate the formal aesthetics of plays and how they should be staged.¹⁶ It is quite likely that a woman dramatist like Miani would not have had the same chance elsewhere to think critically, compose, and publish for the stage.

Biography

According to the few historians who mention her, Valeria Miani was born, probably in Padua, around the year 1563. She is first mentioned for an oration she gave in 1581 at age eighteen for the festive pageantry that accompanied the visit to Padua of Dowager Empress Maria, widow of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II von Habsburg and daughter of Charles V, who was passing through the city on her way to Portugal, where her son, Rudolf II, was to take the crown.¹⁷ It was not unusual for women of an educated family background to be chosen by local authorities to deliver orations in honor of noble figures,

Cavaliere Battista Guarini (Padua/Vicenza: Bolzetta, 1601). For the controversies in Padua, see Giancarlo Cavazzini, "Padova e Guarini: la *Poetica* di Aristotele nella teoria drammaturgica prebarocca," in *Il diletto della scena e dell'armonia: Teatro e musica nelle Venezie dal Cinquecento al Settecento*, ed. Ivano Cavallini (Rovigo: Minelliana, 1990), 137–88. See also Lisa Sampson, *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy: The Making of a New Genre* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2006), 134–40; and more generally, Daniel Javitch, "The Emergence of Poetic Genre Theory in the Cinquecento," *Modern Language Quarterly* 59 (1998): 139–69.

16. On the array of Veneto presses and editors, see Ester Pastorello, *Tipografi, editori, librai a Venezia nel secolo XVI* (Florence: Olschki, 1924). For the specific case of Padua, see Marco Callegari, *Dal torchio del tipografo al banco del libraio*.

17. See Ribera, *Le glorie immortali de' Trionfi*, 335: "In the year 1581, as Empress Maria (who was the wife of Maximilian II and the mother of Rudolf, current Emperor) passed through Italy as she was called to Spain by King Philip to govern Portugal, she came to the Paduan region and a young woman of eighteen with a most noble talent, Valeria, daughter of Achille Miniani [sic], a lawyer, recited in her honor an oration which received plenty of applause from the listeners, considering also her sex and her age." I have found no printed record of Miani's speech. For more on this event, see Anton Bonaventura Sberti, *Degli spettacoli e delle feste che si facevano in Padova* (Padua: Cesare, 1818), 134. Sberti does not mention Miani.

especially female ones. We know of another seventeen-year-old poet, for example, Issicratea Monte, who delivered a moral speech on the same occasion as Miani and later published it.¹⁸

The name “Miani” is usually connected with Venice, for the Miani are listed in the Golden Book of 1298, and the family gave Venice more than one doge.¹⁹ Its Paduan branch is named twice in the 1590s by an unknown historian in a chronological compilation of noble and middle class families (“nobili ... et ... civili famiglie”) living in Padua. The Miani, he wrote, had inherited wealth (“beni di fortuna”).²⁰ More specific information is contained in the chronicles of February 1598 of a respected Paduan historian, Cesare Padoano. As he wrote in his *Cronichetta*,

They [the Miani], I believe, were once administering the property or living in the house of the noble Venetian family of Miani, although now they live by their means and also rent out to students. One of them is

18. Issicratea Monte's oration was published in *Dell'orazioni di diversi huomini illustri* (Padua: Paolo Meietto, 1581). Monte also read another oration three years earlier, when she was fourteen, in front of the doge, Sebastiano Venier. See *Seconda oratione di Mad. Issicratea Monte Rodigiana nella congratulatione dell'Invitiss. et Sereniss. Principe di Venetia Sebastiano Veniero, da lei propria recitata nell'Illustriss. et Excellentiss. Collegio à Sua Serenità* (Venice: Guerra, 1578). Moderata Fonte also had a dramatic dialogue performed in front of doge Nicolò da Ponte in 1581, when she was twenty-six. See *Le Feste. Rappresentazione avanti al Serenissimo Principe di Venetia Nicolò Da Ponte, il giorno di Santo Stefano 1581* (Venice: Guerra, 1581), soon to be available in a modern edition by Courtney Quaintance. A generation earlier, in 1556, another woman writer, Cassandra Fedele, was asked to deliver an oration in honor of the queen of Poland, Bona Sforza, who was passing through Venice on her way to Abano to address health issues. Even earlier in the 1440s, Costanza Varano spoke in honor of Bianca Maria Visconti.

19. See Marco Barbaro, *Arboro de' patritii veneti*, Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter ASV), Misc. Codici, s.1: Storia Veneta, at 21.

20. *Historia cronologica delle cose antiche di Padova et delle famiglie nobili di essa et di molte altre civili famiglie, da incerto autore composta intorno l'anno 1598 et fedelmente trascritta da Vincenzo abb. Zacco I. C. figlio del qm. Bartolomeo nell'anno 1694*, Biblioteca Civica di Padova (hereafter BCP), BP 250, at 328. Another contemporary Paduan historian, Cesare Malfatti, briefly mentions the Miani family in *Descrittione particolare della città di Padoa et del territorio padoano con la descriptione in brevità di famiglie di gentiluomini kora fioriscono in detta città ...*, in BCP, BP 1352, II, at 42.

a lawyer; he teaches and also houses students. There is also a son, a priest and doctor of philosophy, and a daughter named Isabella, a very learned woman. She has sent to print a pastoral entitled *L' amorosa speranza* and is composing a tragedy and two comedies. She will compose more if God grants her life.²¹

Here Miani is called Isabella and not Valeria, which I will come to below. But all other information given by Padoano corroborates what we know about Miani from a variety of sources.

Her father, Vidal (Vitale) Miani (or Emiliani, in its latinate spelling) was called “dottore” in the marriage certificate of his daughter Valeria and was listed as living in Padua in the parish of San Tomio, which is close to the heart of the university and to the grandiose, Mantegna-frescoed Church of the Eremitani.²² As Padoano wrote, Vidal made money practicing law and teaching it, as well as by housing stu-

21. “Questi credo che siano stati o Gastaldi o habitatori delli Miani Nobili veneziani, basta si come si voglia ora vivono vita civile delle loro rendite, et anco del tenir scolla e dozenanti, essendovi uno di loro dottore di legge tiene scholla, e li dozenanti; ha uno figliuolo prete e dottore in filosofia, et una figliola nominata Isabella donna molto letterata. Ha mandato in stampa una Pastorale chiamata L' Amoroza speranza, compone una tragedia, et doi comedie, et altre opere componerà se Dio le darà vita.” In Cesare Padoano, *Cronichetta, ovvero Epitome delle famiglie che hora sono nella città di Padoa, composta da me Cesare Padoano di famiglia Nobile, composta qui in Padoa questo anno della Salute nostra 1598, 24 febraro. In casa mia a Santa Sofia io scrissi*, BCP, BP 1239, 15, no page number. The information is in a chapter entitled “Casate o Famiglie de Padoani honorati, non pervenute ancora al grado dell' antidette [nobili]: vero è, che ve ne potrebbero essere dell' altre, che io non le sappi, però se qui non saranno, questo non sarà per malignità, ma per non le saper tutte.”

22. Ribera is wrong in identifying Miani's father as Achille, a lawyer (“dottore di legge”) from Bologna (see earlier note), but Miani herself has since appeared in biographies of Bolognese writers. In recording women's work of the past, for example, Sarah Josepha Hale lists Miani together with three other Bolognese women intellectuals as having “achieved that difficulty some male skeptics arrogantly refuse to feminine capacity—a successful tragedy.” In Sarah Josepha Hale, *Woman's Record: Sketches of All Distinguished Women from the Beginning Till A.D. 1850* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853), 209. Miani's name also appears in compilations of Bolognese writers, such as in Antonio Pellegrino Orlandi's *Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi e dell' opere loro stampate e manoscritte* (Bologna: Pisarri, 1714), 255; and Giovanni Fantuzzi's *Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi raccolte da Giovanni Fantuzzi* (Bologna: Stamperia d' Aquino, 1788), 17–18.

dents enrolled as *Legisti* in the Paduan “Studio.”²³ Galilei too housed students in those very years and in the same city, and we know that the practice was widespread. In this educated environment, it would not be out of the ordinary for a family to have a son with a degree and a daughter composing literary work.²⁴ There were, moreover, other intellectuals in the Miani family at large, more or less of Valeria’s age, to judge from the time of publication of their works, such as Giovanni Luigi Miani, “a poet like Valeria,” in the words of the Paduan biographer Giuseppe Vedova,²⁵ and Giovanni Alvise Miani, a published playwright.²⁶

At thirty years old, quite late for a woman of her time, Miani married Domenico (Menego) Negri (the name is also variously spelled de’ Negri or Neri).²⁷ The date was September 22, 1593, and the wedding took place at the Eremitani, after an original marriage

23. Vidal Miani did some work as a lawyer (he is referred to as “Ch.mo Avogador”) for the confraternity of L’Annunziata dell’Arena (which was lodged close to the Church of the Eremitani, and thus close to the Miani) in 1578–79. See Archivio di Stato di Padova (hereafter ASP), *Scuole Religiose: Annunziata dell’Arena*, vol. 5, fols. 145r–146v. I thank Katie Rees for this reference.

24. There were perhaps other children in the family, beyond Valeria and her brother. Padoano does not name them, because they were not living at the time in Vidal Miani’s home, but given that the son mentioned is a priest, there was probably another son not connected to the clergy in charge of continuing the family line and (perhaps) the father’s profession. Katie Rees has also found a daughter, Cornelia, who in May 6, 1615, filed a tax return (a short one in which she appears far from rich). In ASP, *Estimi* (year 1615), vol. 37, no. 3343.

25. Giuseppe Vedova, *Biografia degli scrittori padovani*, 2 vols. (Padua: Coi Tipi della Minerva, 1832), 1:602. Giovanni Luigi Miani edited a collection of poems, *Poesie varie di gravissimi autori raccolte dal Sig. G. Luigi Miani* (Padua: Martini, 1619), which includes poems of a number of friends of Valeria. Some of them show a link between the author and the theatrical world, such as a sonnet to honor an actress, “Alla Sig. Delia Comica,” and a sonnet to a singer turned nun, “Bella cantatrice eletta monaca.”

26. Giovanni Alvise Miani published *La prigioniera* (Padua, n.p., 1618) and *La fama* (Padua, n.p., 1624). He also appears in a collection of poems, *L’urna d’oro colma delle sovrumane lodi delli Ill.mi Rettori di Padova i signori Gio. Batt.a Foscarino et Antonio Barbaro* (Padua: Trivellari, 1614). I have been unable to establish a clear relationship between either Alvise or Luigi Miani and the writer Valeria.

27. The marriageable age for women of similar background in the Veneto area at the time was around sixteen to eighteen. Other women writers also married late: Fonte was twenty-eight and Marinella thirty-five.

contract was signed in Venice, the groom's city of origin.²⁸ The Negri were from the nobility and were well connected to the university; there was also a playwright in the family, Marin Negro, who earlier had published an important polyglot comedy, *La Pace*.²⁹ Domenico was still alive in 1612 when he is mentioned together with Valeria in a power of attorney document (*procura*) on behalf of his daughter Isabella. The address of the couple is given as near the Ponte Pidocchioso, a neighborhood close to Miani's childhood home.³⁰ But by 1614 he is listed as *quondam* (dead) in a deed in which provisions are made, perhaps in place of a will, for his daughters' dowries.³¹ The couple had three daughters, Lucretia, Isabella, and Isabetta, and two sons, Giulio and Anzolo, but without more precise documentation we do not know whether all these children were from the couple's marriage

28. Katie Rees has found the marriage certificate among the documents regarding the parish of San Tomio. See Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile di Padova, Parrocchia S. Tomio: Matrimonii, 1582–1606, *ad vocem*. Domenico's father, Gasparo, may have also been a lawyer, like Miani's father. A Gasparo Negro, who may or may not be the same person, is in fact mentioned as having matriculated in law in Padua in 1546. See Angelo Portenari, *Della felicità di Padova. Libri Nove*. (Padua: Tozzi, 1623), Bk. 7, *ad vocem*.

29. Marin Negro, *La Pace. Commedia non meno piacevole che ridicolosa* (1561; Venice: Cornetti, 1584). There is also an Antonio Negro, a university doctor created knight and count by Pope Clement VIII when he worked in Rome. He was also a member of the Accademia de' Ricovrati and of the Accademia Delia in Padua. See Maggiolo, *I soci dell'accademia patavina dalla sua fondazione*, 218. The family name Negri appears in the Consiglio Nobile in Padua. See Giovanni Battista Di Crollalanza, *Dizionario storico-blasonico delle famiglie nobili e notabili italiane estinte e fiorenti*, 3 vols. (Bologna: Forni, 1965), *ad vocem*. A Domenico Negri performed as an actor in the Compagnia degli Uniti under the stage name of Curzio in places like Mantua and Milan, and was active between the years 1614 and 1634. Domenico played with the famous actress Virginia Rotari at the Gonzaga court in Mantua on June 6, 1611 (a month before Valeria Miani sent her *Celinda* to her dedicatee, Eleonora de' Medici Gonzaga). See *Comici dell'Arte. Corrispondenze: G. B. Andreini, N. Barbieri, P. M. Cecchini, S. Fiorillo, T. Martinelli, F. Scala*, ed. Claudia Burattelli, Domenica Landolfi, and Anna Zinanni (Florence: Le Lettere, 1993), 52.

30. ASP, Archivio Notarile, 4352, fol. 96r–v. The Ponte Pidocchioso area ("Pontis Pidochiolii") is in the heart of the university, near the church of Santa Sofia. See Giovanni Saggioli, *Padova nella storia delle sue strade* (Padua: Piazzon, 1972), 272–73.

31. In the document his daughter Lucretia is referred to as "figlia del q. Menego Negro e consorte di s. Zuane." In ASP, Archivio Notarile, 3140 (Sardini), fol. 320r. I thank Katie Lees for alerting me to this document. Since the *procura* is made in Lucretia's name, she may have been the couple's oldest daughter.

or from previous relationships.³² In any case, daughter Isabella was born in 1598 (the time in which Padoano had written about the Miani's household and had mentioned a woman writer named Isabella, apparently confusing the names of mother and newborn daughter). We know this from her death certificate on August 31, 1618: "Signora Isabella, daughter of signora Valeria de' Negri, twenty years old, having been sick for the last six months and consumed by high fever, died tonight in the Parish of San Lunario, being visited by the Most Excellent Vigonza."³³ Isabella left a daughter, Massimila, for whom Valeria cared for a couple of years and who was subsequently placed in the Convent of Santa Sofia in Padua (thus close to Miani's home) until it was time for her either to marry or enter a convent. As we read in a document of February 12, 1620, if Masimila chose to marry in due time, Valeria was to provide for some of her dowry; if she chose to become a nun instead, her father alone, the nobleman Giulio Noale, would have been in charge of the smaller dowry traditionally paid before entering a convent.³⁴

Although we do not know when Valeria died or whether she died in Padua, we know from the eighteenth-century critic Francesco Saverio Quadrio that she may have spent part of her life in a well-known vacation spot and farming community named "Carpi." This can be gathered from a letter of presentation for her play, *Celinda*, to her dedicatee sent from there. In the early modern period this village, once referred to as Carpi Veneziana and now as Villa Bartolomea, sported a number of country estates owned by Venetian and Paduan families like the San Bonifacio, the Barbarigo, the dal Verme, and the Donà delle Rose, who built their *terraferma* palaces in the area. Miani may either have had a house in Carpi or may have been a guest of

32. For Isabella, Giulio, and Anzolo, see ASP, Archivio Notarile, 1717, fol. 416r-v; for Lucretia, see ASP, Archivio Notarile, 3140, fol. 320r.

33. ASP, Ufficio di Sanità, Busta 467, *Registro dei morti (1598-1618)*, *sub indice*. I thank Marco Callegari for help in locating this document. The registers of births and deaths of the parish of San Lunario (or Lunardo/Leonardo) in the archbishopry of Padua, which could have offered more crucial biographical information on the family, start unfortunately later in the century. The parish was next door to that of San Tomìo, where the Miani originally lived.

34. ASP, Archivio Notarile, 1716, fol. 416r-v. Isabella may not have married Giulio, for he is not mentioned in her death certificate as her husband. Also Masimila is referred in the later document as Valeria's "mezza figlia naturale." I thank Katie Rees for this reference.

noble friends summering in the area.³⁵ Her *Amorosa speranza* and *Celinda* contain clues suggesting that both plays were staged more or less in the area, the first along a canal not far from Padua (Carpi lies one hour south of the town along La Chirola, a tributary of the large river Adige), and the second in the Euganean Hills, also south of Padua and a favorite spot of Petrarch. Entertainment connected to reading aloud, recitations, singing, performances, or a wedding banquet (the case of *Amorosa speranza*) was an anticipated feature of the weeks the nobility spent leisurely *in villa*. The famous eighteenth-century Venetian writer Carlo Goldoni, for example, was for many summers a guest of the aristocracy in countryside villas around Padua and had his comedies performed there in makeshift halls and gardens. The practice of musical and dramatic entertainment in country houses (especially with pastorals, which were often acted by the nobility itself), was so widespread both inside and outside Italy as to become almost a central feature of summertime.³⁶

35. Francesco Saverio Quadrio, *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia*, 7 vols. (Milan: Agnelli, 1739–52), 1:78. The letter has not surfaced. Carpi Veneziana sits between the southern border of the province of Padua and the northern one of Rovigo (now it is part of the province of Verona). Today the Villa Ghedini/Panziera, built between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, that is, during Miani's possible sojourn there, is all that remains of the original "*insula Carpi*," but its main church still has a painting by Palma il Giovane testifying to the town's Venetian connections. Parish documents of birth and death of Villa Bartolomea prior to 1630 were burned during that year's plague; therefore, we do not have any archival information on the Miani/Negri, but the name Negri is still present in the area. For more on Carpi, see Piergiovanni Mometto, *L'azienda agricola Barbarigo a Carpi* (Venice: Il Cardo, 1992). I would like to thank Renato Altobello of the Biblioteca Comunale of Villa Bartolomea and Valeria Tomasi for their help in navigating the history of Carpi Veneziana. According to the historian Fra' Tornini da Carpi, Quadrio must have referred to this Venetian Carpi rather than to the more famous Carpi in the province of Modena, whose history he was writing down, because Miani did not die there, he argued, and the names of Miani and Negri did not appear anywhere in the province. See *Rappresentanti della città di Carpi*, in *Archivio Storico di Carpi*, Archivio Guaitoli, Filza 246, 3 vols., 2:294. I would like to thank Lucia Armentano of the Archives of the Civic Library in Carpi for this information. The misidentification of the real "Carpi" may be another reason, besides the identification of her father as a lawyer from Bologna, for why the name Miani appears in lists of Bolognese writers, for Carpi is not far from Bologna.

36. For a similar avenue open to women dramatists in England, see Marion Wynne-Davies, "My Seeded Chamber and Dark Parlor Room': The English Country House and Renaissance Women Dramatists," in *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History and Per-*

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It would be an understatement to say that the panorama of the Italian stage toward the end of the sixteenth century was complicated, for not only was there an unprecedented flourishing of hybrid genres, but there was also confusion about how to name them and what the difference in naming really meant. Canonical tragedies and comedies in five acts were often supplanted by an array of new forms, some of which soon disappeared. Tragicomedies (that is, tragedies with a happy ending), rustic plays, eclogues, tragic and heroic operas, satyric drama, musical comedies, pastoral drama, mythological and maritime fables, sacred representations, and moral plays constitute just some of the ephemeral terms referring to this crowd of performances.³⁷ Some cross-mixtures offered music, ballets, and intermezzi; others presented only discursive texts. In this panorama, two genres proved particularly difficult for women writers to produce, comedy and tragedy, while the pastoral was much less problematic for them to craft.

In comedy, the public's preference for marriage plots meant that playwrights had to present some sort of sentimental, and later sexual, liaison for their young female characters, and some transgression of paternal authority that could eventually be redressed and accommodated through a marriage. This proved challenging for women writers, for their output, whatever the content, was inevitably read autobiographically. Moreover, the preference at the time for staging in the open air, often in well traveled piazzas, spelled problems for

formance, 1594–1998, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London: Routledge, 1998), 60–68. Sampson also cites performances by noble ladies in *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy*, 105–06.

37. On the mixing of genres, see Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 2:679–84. The librettist and poet Ottavio Rinuccini called his *La Dafne* (Florence: Marescotti, 1600) a pastoral fable, and his *Euridice* (Florence: Giunti, 1600) a tragedy. Now we call them both operas and wonder whether there is a real difference in genre between the two. I use “genres” in a fluid sense, as having the property of “stackability, switchability, scalability, ... for they too can be layered on one another, flipped back and forth, maximized or minimized, with chance associations.” See Wai Chee Dimock, “Introduction: Genres as Fields of Knowledge,” *PMLA* 122.5 (2007), 1377–88, at 1379.

authors planning on showcasing women, because there were few plausible reasons for marriageable women to be caught, hopefully alone, outside their own homes. This often translated into plots involving women's (and men's) cross-dressing, or plots that gave a larger emphasis to older women and bawdy female servants.³⁸ It comes as no surprise then that when actresses began to appear on stage (sometime in the 1560s) and women writers started to publish plays (in the late 1580s), suddenly a new prop became all the rage: the window, because this allowed "innocent" innamoratas, and thus young and realistically playable women, to renegotiate their place in society and further their causes directly on stage. It also allowed professional actresses of the newly fashionable Commedia dell'Arte companies to play them.³⁹ The earliest known actresses, such as Vincenza Armani and Flaminia Romana, were celebrated for their stagecraft whether dressed as women or cross-dressed as men. Half the city of Mantua, we are told, showed up in 1567 to see Flaminia playing the role of Marganorre's daughter-in-law from Ariosto's chivalric romance, *Orlando furioso*.⁴⁰ For her

38. To limit myself to two cases, Ludovico Ariosto's *La Lena* (Venice: Sessa, 1533) is titled after the old go-between Lena; in Nicolò Machiavelli's *Clizia* (Florence: Giunta, 1548), the young woman Clizia never even appears on stage.

39. For the role of windows in developing parts for women, see Jane Tylus, "Women at the Windows: *Commedia dell'Arte* and Theatrical Practice in Early Modern Italy," *Theatre Journal* 49.3 (1997): 323–42. On the social difficulties accompanying women's desire to perform, see Bernadette Majorana, "Finzioni, imitazioni, azioni: donne e teatro," in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1996), 121–39. More generally on Commedia dell'Arte and early modern actresses on stage, see Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85–105; Richard Andrews, "Isabella Andreini and Others: Women on Stage in the Late Cinquecento," in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Panizza, 316–33; Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Pamela Brown, "The Counterfeit *Innamorata* or the Diva Vanishes," *Shakespeare Yearbook* 10 (1999): 402–26.

40. Letter of Luigi Rogna, court secretary in the Gonzaga court, of July 6, 1567, in Eric Nicholson, "Romance as Role Model: Early Female Performances of *Orlando furioso* and *Gerusalemme liberata*," in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 246–69, at 246–47. The Marganorre episode is in Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, trans. Guido Waldman (1532; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), canto 36.

part, Armani, the first ever diva of the Italian stage, sent male spectators into delirium whether she was singing or looking like an armed Mars, a furious Zeus, or a talkative Hermes.⁴¹

Numberless pamphlets soon started to deplore the threat that unbridled femininity produced on the comic stage. Reflecting Counter-Reformation angst, Cesare Franciotti argued that actresses' gesticulation, "whorish adornments," and songs were sufficient "to infect the world" and inflame all men in the audience—and his treatise was published the same year as Miani's *Celinda*.⁴² A bit later and along the same lines, Giovanni Domenico Ottonelli denounced all sorts of actresses, for in his judgment they constituted a public enemy for every township.⁴³ But the actor-writer Nicolò Barbieri, an acute apologist of mimetic theater, dismissed the notion that actresses in loving or adulterous plots inflamed men in the audience, because fornication does not lead to rape in real life, he argued, nor adultery to incest.⁴⁴ Actresses of various Commedia dell'Arte troupes, a mostly

41. I am paraphrasing from the poem: "vince delle Muse il canto, // se si mostra tall'hor in viril manto / cinta la spada, sembra Marte armato, / se s'adira tall'hor par Giove irato, / e parlando a Mercurio toglie il vanto." In Adriano Valerini, *Oratione...in morte della Divina Signora Vincenza Armani* (1570), in *La Commedia dell'Arte e la società barocca: La professione del teatro*, ed. Ferruccio Marotti and Giovanna Romei (Rome: Bulzoni, 1991), 31–41. This may go a long way toward explaining Armani's tragic premature death by poison in 1568.

42. Franciotti's treatise is in *La commedia dell'arte e la società barocca: La fascinazione del teatro*, ed. Ferdinando Taviani (Rome: Bulzoni, 1969), 177–78. Domenico Gori argued likewise in *Trattato contro alle commedie lascive* (1604), now in *La commedia dell'arte e la società barocca: La fascinazione del teatro*, ed. Taviani, 136–44.

43. Giovan Domenico Ottonelli, *Della Christiana Moderatione del Theatro. Libro I detto La Qualità delle Commedie* (1646), in *Il segreto della Commedia dell'Arte: La memoria delle compagnie italiane del XVI, XVII e XVIII secolo*, ed. Ferdinando Taviani and Mirella Schino (Florence: Usher, 1982), 169. There was also no masculinity on the Italian stage, the intellectual tourist Thomas Nashe opined, for "the players beyond the sea [are] a sort of squirting baudie Comedians, that have Whores and common Curtizens to playe womens partes, and forbear no immodest speech, or unchast action that may procure laughter." See Thomas Nashe, "Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the Divell," in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald McKerrow (1592; Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 215.

44. See *La supplica. Discorso Familiare* (1636), in *La Commedia dell'Arte e la società barocca: La professione del teatro*, ed. Marotti and Romei, 610.

Veneto phenomenon, were by then the rage, not only in Italy but also in France.

Discounting the comedic-religious theatrical production of the convent, which was in any case never meant to be performed outside pious institutions (a good example by Sister Beatrice del Sera was published a few years ago),⁴⁵ and aside from the production of parish dramas and sacred representations, such as those of Antonia Pulci⁴⁶ and of Moderata Fonte,⁴⁷ the first example of a female authored comedy could be considered *L'interesse* by the actress Vittoria Piissimi of the Compagnia dei Gelosi. Piissimi was famous on stage as Isabella Andreini's counterpart, and she was so admired that the French Henry de Valois, journeying through Venice in 1574 on his way to be crowned King Henry III, asked specifically for her performance during his celebrated sojourn there. But this comedy has not surfaced.⁴⁸ Officially, the first published comedy by an Italian woman writer is *Li buffoni* by Margherita Costa, a Roman actress, singer, and poet, and also, tellingly, a courtesan, who flaunted even in print all rules of feminine decorum. Thanks to the protection of Grand Duke Ferdinando II de' Medici, she published her play in 1641.⁴⁹ A few years later, she

45. Beatrice del Sera (1515–1585), *Amor di virtù*, ed. Elissa Weaver (Ravenna: Longo, 1990); and more generally on conventual production, Elissa Weaver, *Convent Theater in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

46. Antonia Pulci (1452–1501), *Florentine Drama for Convent and Festival*, ed. James Wyatt Cook and Barbara Collier Cook, trans. James Wyatt Cook, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

47. Moderata Fonte, *La passione di Cristo descritta in ottava rima* (Venice: Guerra, 1582).

48. She also wrote a now lost pastoral, *Fillide*. See Jolanda De Blasi, *Le scrittrici italiane dalle origini al 1800* (Florence: Nemi, 1930), 105–13.

49. Margherita Costa, *Li Buffoni: Commedia ridicola* (Florence: Massi e Landi, 1641). A modern edition of this play is in *Commedie dell'Arte*, ed. Siro Ferrone, 2 vols. (Milan: Mursia, 1996), 235–359. There are, however, still doubts about the real author of this play. See Ferrone's bibliographical note to the play in *Commedie dell'Arte*, 2:236–37. For an eloquent assessment of Costa's poetic output, see Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy*, 212–15; on her innovative approach, see Marcella Salvi, "Il solito è sempre quello, l'insolito è più nuovo': *Li Buffoni* e le prostitute di Margherita Costa tra tradizione e innovazione," *Forum Italicum* 38.2 (2004): 376–99.

published a mythological play, *Gli amori della luna*.⁵⁰ A Venetian comedy by Orsetta Pellegrini, *Il serraglio aperto ovvero le malattie politiche del Gran Sultano*, was also published in 1687.⁵¹

If comedy was less welcoming as a genre to women writers than we might have expected, tragedy was even less accessible, for it required a grandiose cast, expensive outfits, and a plot of sensational carnage at a time when women were not even allowed to perform tragic roles.⁵² It does not surprise, then, that Valeria Miani is the first—and unless new documentation becomes available also the

50. Margherita Costa, *Gli amori della luna* (Venice: Giuliani, 1654).

51. Orsetta Pellegrini, *Il serraglio aperto, ovvero le malattie politiche del gran Sultano* (Venice: Nicolini, 1687). Orsetta is mentioned in Nicola Mangini, "La tragedia e la commedia," in *Storia della cultura veneta: Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, 6 vols. (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1983), 4/1: 297–326, at 317. An author named Angelita Scaramuccia, who published the comedies *La stratonica* (1616), *Gli amori concordi* (1618), *La schiava di Cipro* (1624), and *La Rosalba* (1638), is actually not a woman but a man with a Spanish-style first name. He continues to be mistaken for a woman by a number of critics who rename her "Angelica." For a convincing rebuttal, see Antonella Calzavara, "'Istoria' e 'Comedia' nell'opera di un autore marchigiano del XVII secolo: Angelita Scaramuccia," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 171 (1994): 534–52. Leopoldo Ferri included in his collection a set of later works by the countess Maria Isabella Dosi-Grati, who wrote seven comical works in Bolognese dialect under the pseudonym of Dorigista, such as *Le fortune non conosciute del dottore. Commedia* (Bologna: Sarti, 1688); *Il padre accorto della figlia prudente. Commedia* (Bologna: Sarti, 1690); and *La Fortunata* (Bologna: Longhi, 1706). See *Biblioteca femminile italiana raccolta, posseduta e descritta dal Conte Pietro Leopoldo Ferri, Padovano* (Padua: Crescini, 1842), 148–49.

52. There were exceptions, of course. Vincenza Armani, for example, acted the role of Tragedy herself in Mantua in 1567, to great applause, as her biographer Valerini lovingly recalled: "At the end of the play she would come out wearing a lugubrious black dress which represented Tragedy itself and sing some stanzas summarizing the poem's subject ... and once her singing stopped, one would hear a loud roar, a manifest applause rising to the sky, and the people in the audience, astonished and motionless, would not know which way to turn." In Valerini, *Oratione ... in morte*, in *La Commedia dell'Arte e la società barocca: La professione del teatro*, ed. Marotti and Romei, 36. We also know that a nun, the noblewoman Donna Giulia Camilla Castigliona, played a tragic role in Luigi Grotto's *Adriana* in 1584. See Mangini, "La tragedia e la commedia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, ed. Arnaldi and Pastore Stocchi, 323 n17. Traveling in Italy in 1728, Charles de Montesquieu noticed that male students dressed as women performed on the Roman stage, but that tragedies in Jesuit theaters used women rather than men to play female parts—not for the sake of verisimilitude, as we might infer, but as a response to moralistic concerns. See *Viaggio in Italia*, ed. Giovanni Macchia and Massimo Colesanti (Bari: Laterza, 1995), 166.

only—Italian woman author of a tragedy until the eighteenth century when the Venetian Luisa Bergalli published *Teba, Tragedia* (1728).⁵³ Maria Fortuna, a writer from Pisa, then published *Zaffira* (1771) and *Saffo* (1776).⁵⁴

Unlike comedy and tragedy whose female-authored history I have traced above, the pastoral play offered fertile ground for the talent of women writers, of actresses, and also of female singers, for once the realism central to court comedy ceased to preoccupy the stage—and women became nymphs and men melancholic shepherds—sex could be taken out of the picture and female patrons could both sponsor pastoral performances and play in them.⁵⁵ The playwright Angelo Ingegneri even argued that the pastoral was in fact the only genre in which young women could appear on stage:

With their rustic apparatus and scenery, and with costumes more elegant than pretentious, pastorals are most pleasing to the eye; and with their soft verse and delicate sentiments, most beautiful to the ears and the

53. Luisa Bergalli, *Teba, tragedia* (Venice: Cristoforo Zane, 1728). Curiously this piece is dedicated to “his excellence Marco Miani.” The plot, which has a happy ending à la Giraldi Cinzio, tells the story of Teba, whose husband, Alessandro, the tyrant of Fere, condemns to death in order to marry another woman, Ismene. For a reading of this tragedy, which was staged in Venice and well received, but soon forgotten, see Pamela Stewart, “Eroine della dissimulazione: Il teatro di Luisa Bergalli,” *Quaderni veneti* 19 (1994), 73–92, at 82–83. Bergalli also published musical dramas, such as *Agide, re di Sparta. Dramma per musica* (Venice: Rossetti, 1725), while the Milanese Francesca Manzoni Giusti wrote a religious tragedy, *L’Ester* (Verona: Tumermani, 1733). Interest in tragedies was lively then and some women writers translated French tragedies, such as Bergalli and Manzoni Giusti as well as Elisabetta Caminer Turra, who directed on Venetian stages the plays she translated.

54. Maria Fortuna, *Zaffira. Tragedia* (Siena: Rossi, 1771); Maria Fortuna, *Saffo. Tragedia* (Livorno: Falorni, 1776). The information was compiled following the list of Ferri in *Biblioteca femminile italiana*, and it is by no means complete for the eighteenth century.

55. That was the case for Tasso’s *Aminta*, for example, staged in 1580 at the Medici court, as related in a letter by Caterina Guidiccioni, mother of the poet and writer of (lost) pastorals, Laura Guidiccioni: “This carnival the princesses and the ladies of the court themselves will play young Tasso’s [“Tassino”] pastoral and would like some madrigals to be set to music.” In Warren Kirkendale, “L’opera in musica prima del Peri: le pastorali perdute di Laura Guidiccioni ed Emilio de’ Cavalieri,” in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell’Europa del Cinquecento*, ed. Giancarlo Garfagnini et al., 3 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1982–83), 2:370.

intellect. In permitting onstage young maidens and honest women who are forbidden from comedy, they give a voice to the noblest of affections, not to be disdained by tragedy itself.⁵⁶

Female dramatists gave a voice to the genre right away: Isabella Andreini, as mentioned above, published *La Mirtilla* in 1588;⁵⁷ and Maddalena Campiglia joined her the same year with *Flori, favola boschereccia*.⁵⁸ Miani herself, with the publication of *Amorosa speranza* in 1604, is the third woman writer in this genealogy *au féminin* to publish a pastoral with musical intermezzi. A later writer is Isabella Coreglia, perhaps a singer native of Lucca, who produced *La Dori, favola pescatoria* (1634), and *Erindo il fido, favola pastorale* (1650).⁵⁹ She may have belonged to the same circle as Eleonora Bernardi Bellati (1559–post 1627), also from Lucca, who may have written *Clorindo*, now lost.⁶⁰ Recently the manuscript of a pastoral play by Barbara Torelli Benedetti, an author from Parma, who wrote *Parthenia* by 1587, has

56. Angelo Ingegneri, *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche*, ed. Maria Luisa Doglio (Modena: Panini, 1989), 7.

57. Isabella Andreini's play is now available in both Italian and English translation as *La Mirtilla*, ed. Maria Luisa Doglio (Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 1995); and *La Mirtilla: A Pastoral*, ed. Julie D. Campbell (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002). On Andreini, see also Anne MacNeil, "The Divine Madness of Isabella Andreini," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 120 (1995): 193–215; and Sampson, *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy*, 98–128.

58. For a modern edition, see *Flori: A Pastoral Drama*, ed. Virginia Cox and Lisa Sampson, trans. Virginia Cox, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

59. Isabella Coreglia, *La Dori, favola pescatoria* (Naples: Montanaro, 1634); and *Erindo il fido, favola pastorale* (Pistoia: Fortunati, 1650). See Virginia Cox, "Fiction," in *A History of Women's Writing in Italy*, ed. Letizia Panizza and Sharon Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 52–64, at 55. See also *Bibliografia universale del teatro drammatico italiano con particolare riguardo alla storia della musica italiana*, ed. Giovanni Salvioli and Carlo Salvioli (Venice: Ferrari, 1903).

60. For a useful list of all performed and printed pastorals, see Marzia Pieri, "La breve stagione della drammaturgia," in *La scena boschereccia nel Rinascimento italiano* (Padua: Liviana, 1983), 151–80.