

The Poems and Letters
of Tullia d'Aragona
and Others

A BILINGUAL EDITION



Edited and translated by

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Iter Inc.
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies
Toronto
2014

Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance
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Iter and the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies gratefully acknowledge the generous support of James E. Rabil, in memory of Scottie W. Rabil, toward the publication of this book.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Aragona, Tullia d', approximately 1510-1556, author

The poems and letters of Tullia d'Aragona and others / edited and translated by Julia L. Hairston.
— A bilingual edition.

(Other voice in early modern Europe. The Toronto series ; 28)

Includes poems by: Alessandro Arrighi (flourished 1544), Benedetto Arrighi (died July 1550), Ercole Bentivoglio (1507-1573), Lattanzio Benucci (1521-1598), Giulio Camillo Delminio (1485-1544), Simone Della Volta (1506-1554), Antonfrancesco Grazzini, (1504-1584), Camillo Malpigli (flourished 1546), Latino Giovenale de' Manetti, (1485/6-1553), Ludovico Martelli (1500-1527/28), Niccolò Martelli (1498-1555), Ugolino Martelli, (1519-1592), Ippolito de' Medici (1511-1535), Francesco Maria Molza (1489-1544), Girolamo Muzio (1496-1572), Simone Porzio, (1496-1554), Filippo Strozzi (1489-1538), Benedetto Varchi (1503-1565).

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

Text in English and Italian.

ISBN 978-0-7727-2154-9 (pbk.).—ISBN 978-0-7727-2155-6 (pdf)

1. Italian poetry—Translations into English. 2. Lyric poetry—Translations into English. 3. Aragona, Tullia d', approximately 1510-1556—Correspondence. I. Hairston, Julia L., editor of compilation, translator II. Victoria University (Toronto, Ont.). Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, issuing body III. Iter Inc, issuing body IV. Title. V. Series: Other voice in early modern Europe. Toronto series ; 28

PQ4562.A9A2 2014

851:4

C2013-908558-0

C2013-908559-9

Cover illustration:

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Cover design:

Maureen Morin, Information Technology Services, University of Toronto Libraries.

Typesetting and production:

Iter Inc.

Introduction

Tullia d'Aragona (1501/5–1556)

Tullia d'Aragona used a variety of genres—lyric, spiritual, and occasional verse, prose dialogue, and epic romance—to establish herself as one of the most versatile, and prolific, of sixteenth-century Italian women of letters. Luminaries such as Bernardo Tasso, Benedetto Varchi, Girolamo Muzio, and Anton Francesco Doni extolled her as possessing “rare virtue,” and Jacopo Nardi even claimed in his 1536 translation of a Ciceronian oration that she was the “one and only heir of all Tullian eloquence,” punning on d'Aragona's and Cicero's shared name.¹ Yet alongside d'Aragona's persona as woman of letters thrived her reputation as a Roman courtesan. A whole other host of literati such as Pietro Aretino, Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio, and Agnolo Firenzuola spared no excess in their condemnation of d'Aragona as proud, presumptuous, and greedy.² From d'Aragona's initial appear-

1. As Anton Francesco Doni writes, “Many are the noble spirits and learned men who praise the fine manners and have written about the rare virtue of Tullia, thus my pen would do little to add to her fame, since the praise that she merits is much” (“Molti son gli spiriti nobili, e gli huomini dotti che lodano la creanza buona, e hanno scritto della virtù rara della Tullia, onde la penna mia sarebbe poca a darle fama, essendo molta la lode che la merita” [*La libreria* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari, 1550), 43r]). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. For Jacopo Nardi, see his letter to Giovanfrancesco della Stufa in which he writes that “perhaps you would say that with this useless effort of mine I have brought water to the sea dedicating an oration of Tully to Signora Tullia Aragona, whom everyone today would judge as the one true heir (just as in her name) of all Tullian eloquence” (“forse dirà ch'io habbia con questa mia inutile fatica portato l'acqua al mare dedicando una oratione di Tullio a la S. Tullia Aragona, la quale per se stessa hoggi dirittamente da ogni homo e giudicata unica et vera herede (così come del nome) di tutta la Tulliana eloquentia” [“Jacopo Nardi a Giovanfrancesco de la Stupha nobilissimo Fiorentino,” in *Oratione di M. T. Cicerone a C. Cesare per la quale lo ringratia de l'havere perdonato a Marco Marcello: Nuovamente tradotta in lingua Toscana* (Venice: Giovanni Antonio de Nicolini da Sabio, 1537), section A]).

2. Pietro Aretino, *Lettere libro primo*, ed. Francesco Erspamer (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo and Ugo Guanda Editore, 1995), 195; see also *Ragionamento del Zoppino fatto frate, e Lodovico, puttaniere, dove contiensi la vita e genealogia di tutte le cortigiane di Roma*, ed. Mario Cicognani (Milan: Longanesi, 1969), 45, a book that is variously attributed to either Aretino or Francisco Delicado. Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio wrote a novella in which he

2 Introduction

ance on the public stage, her persona is doubled and ambiguous; she is both a courtesan and woman of letters, an object of vilification and admiration. In truth, d'Aragona walked a thin line between ignoring or eliding these representations and turning them to her own advantage. Her self-fashioning is an excellent example of the concept of negotiation employed by early modern women writers as she picks and chooses when to emphasize her role as a courtesan and when, admittedly more often, she instead orchestrates her figuration as an author.³

D'Aragona was one of the so-called honest courtesans, of which Veronica Franco constitutes the best-known exemplar.⁴ As Georgina Masson pointed out long ago, however, d'Aragona carved a niche for herself as the “intellectual courtesan,” or, as Domenico Zanrè rephrased it, perhaps with a touch of irony, the “courtesan of the academicians.”⁵ Numerous of her poetic interlocutors commented on her intellectual qualities, and Duke Cosimo I even exempted her from having to wear the yellow veil required of sex workers owing to her “rare knowledge of poetry and philosophy.”⁶

paints an unflattering portrait of d'Aragona (*Gli ecatommiti, ovvero cento novelle* [Florence: Borghi, 1834], 43–47). Finally, see Agnolo Firenzuola, *Opere*, ed. Adriano Serloni (Firenze: Sansoni, 1958), 383, 941. This list of the authors who vituperated d'Aragona is partial.

3. On the concept of negotiation among early modern European women writers, see Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540–1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), esp. 2–6.

4. There is a Hollywood film, for example, based on Franco's life, entitled *Dangerous Beauty* (1998). For an excellent scholarly treatment, see Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

5. See Georgina Masson, “Tullia d'Aragona, the Intellectual Courtesan,” in her *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 88–131, and Domenico Zanrè, “Courtesans and the Academicians,” in his *Cultural Non-Conformity in Early Modern Florence* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 141–64.

6. See ASF, Magistrato supremo 4307, 69v–70r. Bernardo Tasso in a sonnet titled “Anima pura, di virtute ardente” published in his 1534 edition of the *Amori* referred to her “intelletto divino”; see his *Rime*, ed. Domenico Chiodo and Vercingetorige Martignone, 2 vols. (Turin: Res, 1995), 1:204. For other poems that refer to her intellectual abilities, see 51 and 94 in this edition. For fuller narration of the yellow veil incident, see Salvatore Bongi, “Il velo giallo di Tullia d'Aragona,” *Rivista critica della letteratura italiana* 3, no. 3 (1886): 85–95, and, more recently, Deana Basile, “*Fasseli gratia per poetessa*: Duke Cosimo I de' Medici's Role in the

D'Aragona thus managed two careers—as a courtesan and as a writer—and there are traces of both in the archives and libraries of Italy. She emerged early in the history of printed publications by living women, second only to Vittoria Colonna, Roman noblewoman and friend of Michelangelo, whose unauthorized *canzoniere* was published in 1538, and a year before the Neapolitan noblewoman Laura Terracina, whose work appeared in print in 1548.⁷ Although the question of whether women chose to publish their work or circulate it in manuscript was fraught with a number of different considerations based on rank and social networks, participation in a court milieu, geographical location, as well as concerns regarding reputation, it is undoubtedly true that printing—whether by choice or through the reality or the fiction of someone else promoting their work—meant a much wider circle of readers and therefore a greater possibility of influencing other writers, male and female.⁸

D'Aragona's *Poems by Tullia di Aragona and by Others to Her* (*Rime della signora Tullia di Aragona; et di diversi a lei*) represents the

Florentine Literary Circle of Tullia d'Aragona," in *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001), 135–47.

7. See Vittoria Colonna, *Rime della divina Vittoria Colonna, marchesa di Pescara* (Parma: [Antonio Viotti], 1538), and Laura Terracina, *Rime dela Signora Laura Terracina* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1548). Although Colonna was more famous, one wonders if Terracina actually might have been the more popular and widely read poet as EDIT 16 (Censimento delle edizioni italiane del XVI secolo) now lists forty-one entries for her works again Colonna's twenty-five (as of May 2012). Virginia Cox suggests that the publisher Giolito promoted both d'Aragona and Terracina as heirs to Colonna's poetic mantle (*Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008], 80–81). Francesco Bausi has suggested that in 1547, after Colonna's death, d'Aragona is being proposed (by her literary benefactors Muzio and Varchi) as Colonna's "legitimate" successor ("Con agra zampogna": Tullia d'Aragona a Firenze (1545–48)," *Schede umanistiche* 2, n.s. [1993]: 61–91, at 74).

8. On the difference between scribal publication and print publication, see the following works by Brian Richardson: "From Scribal Publication to Print Publication: Pietro Bembo's *Rime*, 1529–1535," *Modern Language Review* 95, no. 3 (2000): 684–695; *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 49–57, 77–80, 101–4; "Print or Pen? Modes of Written Publication in Sixteenth-Century Italy," *Italian Studies* 59 (2004): 39–64; and *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For its relevance particularly to women authors, see Cox, *Women's Writing*, xxvi–xxvii.

first example of the choral anthology in the Italian lyric tradition.⁹ The choral anthology differed from the lyric anthology, a genre that was to have an even wider diffusion in the sixteenth century, in its attribution to a single author, even though a number of different authors may have contributed to it; the lyric anthology comprised lyric poetry by many different authors and is usually catalogued under the editor's name. D'Aragona's *canzoniere* differs from other sonnet sequences, in that her text includes sonnets by a wide range of other authors, thus embodying and enacting the social nature of Petrarchism.¹⁰ She makes extensive use of the *proposta/risposta* (proposal/response) model of verse exchange in which she calls on others, and is herself called on, to exchange sonnets regarding a particular topic. Moreover—and this is d'Aragona's true novelty—she is the first to publish the sonnets side by side, thus reinforcing their dialogic nature. This literary dialogue with contemporary men of letters helps to buttress her own reputation as an author. Yet the effect is reciprocal. Many of these poets are remembered today thanks to their association with Tullia d'Aragona.¹¹ Until now, no modern edition or translation exists that replicates the order of d'Aragona's original *canzoniere* in its entirety.¹²

9. For the use of the term “choral anthology,” see Victoria Kirkham, “Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati's First Book of Poetry: A Renaissance Holograph Comes Out of Hiding,” *Rinascimento* 36 (1996): 351–91.

10. For an extensive discussion of how d'Aragona's text figures in the development of the structure of *canzonieri*, see my “‘Di sangue illustre & pellegrino’: The Eclipse of the Body in the Lyric of Tullia d'Aragona,” in *The Body in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Julia L. Hairston and Walter Stephens (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 158–75.

11. Ann Rosalind Jones gives fuller expression to the reciprocity of the *proposta/risposta* structure and of the mutual benefits afforded each of the poetic correspondents in her “Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's Lyric,” in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 74–95, “Enabling Sites and Gender Difference: Reading City Women with Men,” *Women's Studies* 19, no. 2 (1991): 239–49, and *Currency of Eros*, 81–82 and 103–17.

12. The only available modern edition of d'Aragona's poetry is the one that Enrico Celani put together in 1891: *Le rime di Tullia d'Aragona, cortigiana del secolo XVI*, ed. Enrico Celani (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1968 [1891]). As Ann Jones first noted, however, it dismantles the structure and order of the sonnets as they appeared in the sixteenth-century editions; see *Currency of Eros*, 212n35. More recently, Elizabeth Pallitto has also published an edition, with facing-page translation, but it is partial in that it does not include the fourth and fifth sections of d'Aragona's original edition; see Tullia d' Aragona,

A supplementary section to this edition also includes other poetic exchanges and a miscellany of recently discovered unpublished or virtually unknown sonnets, mostly from d'Aragona's later years. These poems are important because they provide us with information about her ongoing literary activities and search for patrons in the years subsequent to her return to Rome in October 1548.¹³ I have also included variant manuscript versions of poems by d'Aragona as well as the few spiritual poems that she published after the appearance of her choral anthology. Finally, this volume furnishes complete transcriptions and translations of d'Aragona's autograph letters to Benedetto Varchi, as well as a previously unknown autograph letter to Francesco de' Pazzi, a family friend of the Strozzi.¹⁴ Details about just how closely d'Aragona socialized with various members of the Strozzi family and over how many years marks another novelty of this volume.

The same year that d'Aragona published her *Poems by Signora Tullia di Aragona and by Others to Her* she also published a prose work entitled *On the Infinity of Love (Dialogo della signora Tullia d'Aragona della infinità di amore)*.¹⁵ As the title indicates, the interlocutors—Tullia d'Aragona, Benedetto Varchi, and Lattanzio Benucci—discuss whether it is possible to love within limits. They are at d'Aragona's home, presumably in Florence, and there are a number of other men

Sweet Fire: Tullia d'Aragona's Poetry of Dialogue and Selected Prose, ed. and trans. Elizabeth A. Pallitto (New York: George Braziller, 2005).

13. See, for example, P. Renée Baernstein and Julia L. Hairston, "Tullia d'Aragona: Two New Sonnets," *MLN* 123, no. 1 (2008): 151–59, for more background on two of these poems.

14. For discussion of d'Aragona's letters, see Fiora A. Bassanese, "Selling the Self; or, The Epistolary Production of Renaissance Courtesans," in *Italian Women Writers from the Renaissance to the Present: Revising the Canon*, ed. Maria Marotti (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 69–82, and Maritere López, "The Courtesan's Gift: Reciprocity and Friendship in the Letters of Camilla Pisana and Tullia d'Aragona," in *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700*, ed. Daniel T. Lochman, Maritere López, and Lorna Hutson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 99–116.

15. For an excellent introduction to and translation of this dialogue, see Tullia d'Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, ed. and trans. Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). The most widely available modern Italian edition of the dialogue is "Dialogo della signora Tullia D'Aragona della infinità di amore," in *Trattati d'amore del Cinquecento*, ed. Giuseppe Zonta (Bari: Laterza, 1912), 185–248.

present, although these men never speak.¹⁶ Benucci himself only intervenes at the end of the discussion. The text represents a sustained and serious but also bantering and playful philosophical discussion between d'Aragona and Varchi that revises contemporary neo-Platonic tenets regarding the relation of the soul to the body.¹⁷ And indeed it is d'Aragona's point of view that prevails, perhaps unsurprisingly, and emerges as innovative.

Both these works—*Poems by Signora Tullia di Aragona and by Others to Her* and *On the Infinity of Love*—figure the author Tullia d'Aragona as an intellectual and, at the same time, a woman of the world, experienced in the ways of love. D'Aragona's own references to herself as courtesan are never overt or strident (which contrasts with how Veronica Franco, for example, represents herself, and—perhaps for this reason—d'Aragona has had less appeal for twentieth-century sensibilities than Franco), yet they are present nevertheless and play an important role in d'Aragona's management of her doubled public persona.¹⁸

In her last work, an epic poem entitled *The Wretch, Otherwise Known as Guerrino (Il Meschino, altramente detto il Guerrino)*, published posthumously in Venice in 1560 by Giovan Battista and Melchiorre Sessa, d'Aragona maintains this doubled representation of herself as courtesan and intellectual, but with a variation. In the preface to the text, where she speaks in her own voice, she compares her former, younger self to the woman she has become, noting that "I ...

16. For a discussion of the salon culture of d'Aragona, see Julie D. Campbell, "Tullia d'Aragona, Sperone Speroni, and the Inscription of Salon Personae," in her *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 21–49, and on the salon culture of sixteenth-century Italian women more generally, see Diana Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

17. See Lisa Curtis-Wendlandt, "Conversing on Love: Text and Subtext in Tullia d'Aragona's *Dialogo della infinità d'amore*," *Hypatia* 19, no. 4 (2004): 75–96, and Joan Gibson, "The Logic of Chastity: Women, Sex, and the History of Philosophy in the Early Modern Period," *Hypatia* 21, no. 4 (2006): 1–19.

18. Rinaldina Russell has pointed out two moments in d'Aragona's dialogue where she makes reference to herself as well-versed in the ways of love; see her introduction to the dialogue (27) and the passages and notes on 68 and 74; the corresponding pages in Zonta's edition are 201 and 207. For a similar reference in her verse, see sonnet 20.

in my earlier years had more experience of the world than now with more mature consideration I would wish to have had.”¹⁹ Thus, she still presents herself as a woman with experience of the world, yet one who is now wiser and penitent. This change may be partially explained by the reformation of the Catholic Church and subsequent responses to it in Italy and Europe at large. The late 1540s and early 1550s were years of change and realignment that preceded more pronounced forms of suppression, as the Council of Trent’s dictates spread and were reinforced. However, more personal reasons may account for d’Aragona’s changing self-representation, namely, her age.²⁰ Already in some of the sonnets published in 1547 (and because of their interlocutors, likely not composed earlier than 1546) she begins to make reference to her “changing locks” and to health problems.²¹ It is probable that she

19. “Io ... ho ne’ primi miei anni avuta più notizia del mondo, che ora con miglior senno non vorrei aver avuta.” Translation by John McLucas, see page 47.

20. Although it is true that in the preface she claims that her age is “not excessively mature age, but youthful and fresh” (“non soverchiamente matura, ma giovenile e fresca”), throughout the proems to the *canti* of the poem she ages as a narrator before our eyes, making reference to her need for vigor or her weakened strength or even the changing color of her hair; see cantos 9.2, 10.1; 17.1, 19.2, and 21.1.

21. Consider d’Aragona’s request for exemption from the yellow veil to Duchess Eleonora: “Most illustrious and excellent Signora Duchess, Tullia Aragona, most humble servant of your illustrious Excellency, having taken refuge in Florence because of the recent transformations in Siena, and not behaving as the other women do, *in truth hardly ever leaving her room, much less the house because she feels ill in both soul and body*, beseeches Your Excellency, so that she will not be forced to leave, that she may deign to confer pardon by the most excellent and illustrious Duke, your consort, so that she may, if not make use of those few clothes left to her, as she seeks in her *capitolo*, at least not to be held to observe the yellow veil. And she, placing this among the many great obligations that she has with Your Excellency, will pray to God that he preserve you healthy and happy” (“Illustrissima et Eccellentissima Signora Duchessa, Tullia Aragona, humilissima servitrice di Vostra Eccellenza Illustrissima, essendo rifuggita a Firenze per l’ultima mutazione di Siena, e non facendo i portamenti, che l’altre fanno, anzi *non uscendo quasi mai d’una camera, non che di casa per trovarsi male disposta così dell’animo come del corpo* prega Vostra Eccellenza affine, che non sia costretta a partirsi, che si degni d’impetrarle tanto di grazia dall’Eccellentissimo e Illustrissimo Signor Duca, suo consorte, che ella possa, se non servirsi di quei pochi panni, che le sono rimasi per suo uso come supplica nel suo capitolo, almeno, che non sia tenuta alla osservanza del velo giallo. Et ella, ponendo questo con gli altri obrighi molti e grandissimi che ha con Sua Eccellenza pregerrà Dio, che la conservi sana, e felice” [ASF, Magistrato supremo 4307, I filza di suppliche e lettere, n. 1118 (n. interno 133); my emphasis]). Clearly, in this request to

had already begun the composition of her epic while in Florence, yet I doubt she completed it until sometime in the early 1550s.²² Although some scholars have questioned d’Aragona’s authorship of *The Wretch, Otherwise Known as Guerrino*, this edition presents several possible references to it (as well as to her dialogue) that I point out in the footnotes. Thus in all three of d’Aragona’s works, she has taken care to present herself as both courtesan and woman of letters.

The aim behind this edition is thus not only to provide a complete and correctly organized corpus of poems by Tullia d’Aragona (along with several little known poetic exchanges between her and Benucci) and all extant letters to date but also to emphasize the layering of significance behind her own self-representations. In short, I hope to contextualize her as a woman who was active socially and culturally in the turbulent world of sixteenth-century Italy, whether it be Florence, Ferrara, Venice, or Rome.

Other Voice

Whether Tullia d’Aragona deserves a seat at the feminist table has been a question of discussion in recent years. While Constance Jordan has said that d’Aragona “did not engage in overt protest,” Janet Smarr has theorized instead that a “broader feminist argument is also explicitly

the duchess, d’Aragona’s self-representation may well have been part of a larger rhetorical strategy, yet there are also several sonnets in which she refers to aging; see 50 and 58. Finally, in something of a backhanded compliment, Niccolò Martelli, in his second letter book (in manuscript), makes reference to her age only to say that she is still lovely: “Grace and virtue, generous Lady, because they are characteristics and enrichments of the mind and share more with the divine than with the human, do not succumb to the violence of years. Given that you are still young and beautiful, rather very beautiful, for the shape of your delicate face has the same lineaments that the Angel first had and kept until the last hour [...]” (“La gratia et la virtù, generosa signora, per esser doti et ricchezze del animo et partecipare più del divino che del humano, non sogghiaccono alla violenza degli anni. Dato che anchora et giovane et bella sete, anzi bella tanto, ch’l disegno del viso delicato ha quelle medesime sembianze che prima d’Angelo s’havea, et haverà per insino a l’ultima hora [...]” [BNCF, Magliabechiano VIII 1447, f. 118]). The letter is dated 6 March 1546 (thus 1547 because in Florentine dating, the year began on March 25).

22. For an argument that she had begun the *Meschino* in Florence, see Gloria Allaire, “Tullia d’Aragona’s *Il Meschino* as Key to a Reappraisal of Her Work,” *Quaderni d’Italianistica* 16, no. 1 (1995): 33–50. Allaire’s hypothesis is corroborated by sonnet 110.

part of her agenda.”²³ Smarr is referring to d’Aragona’s *On the Infinity of Love*, and indeed it seems that most scholars who characterize her as feminist are referring primarily—if not solely—to her dialogue.²⁴ D’Aragona’s role as a courtesan may have shaped her contribution to the history of feminism and even limited the extent to which some scholars have allowed consideration of her participation in it.²⁵ Yet although she dons both the mantle of the courtesan as well as the garland of the woman of letters, it is perhaps her persistent, might one say obsessive, search for fame as an intellectual and woman writer that provides her best credentials. Smarr has rightly emphasized that “Tullia repeatedly—in her volume of poetry as well as here [in her dialogue]—sought to position herself in the center of a circle of admiring intellectuals, whose praises legitimized her participation in their intellectual and literary exchanges.”²⁶ Clearly d’Aragona’s primary objective—fame—could only have been garnered through a cultural elite that was largely masculine.

Fame—from the Latin *fama*—is double-faced however, for notoriety can derive from high poetic praise as well as from dirt-mongering gossip. This volume adds Tullia d’Aragona’s own voice to the sixteenth-century figuration of who she was—a courtesan and a woman of letters. For readers—both then and now—this text offers an “other voice” of a woman author from a different social sphere than the other preeminent women authors of the time—the noblewomen Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gambara. Although the poetry of d’Aragona touches on different topics, the idiom in which all three

23. Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 173, and Janet L. Smarr, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 107.

24. The other authors who discuss d’Aragona’s dialogue as contributing to feminist debate include Curtis-Wendlandt, “Conversing on Love” and Gibson, “The Logic of Chastity.” The characterization of the dialogue as feminist makes an interesting counterpoint to the idea that Varchi was the primary author of the dialogue, as suggested by Aurelio Andreoli in *Intorno alla paternità di un dialogo del secolo decimosesto* (Pavia: Marelli, 1904).

25. Sarah Gwyneth Ross, for example, excludes queens, nuns, and courtesans on the basis that they are not the “culturally normal learned woman” in her *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3.

26. Smarr, *Joining the Conversation*, 112.

wrote was remarkably similar—Petrarchist verse. Moreover, even though there were other courtesans who were writing and circulating their work before or at the same time as d’Aragona, she is nonetheless different from them too. Camilla Pisana, Imperia, and Francesca Baffa may have circulated their verse in manuscript or had a sonnet or two published, but the bulk of their production is lost to us.²⁷ None of them, it would seem, produced the magnitude of literary texts that d’Aragona did. Moreover, they did not present themselves as authors nor did their readers perceive them that way, whereas d’Aragona ardently strove to fashion an identity as author for herself, a quest that was quite successful.

Biography

Much of d’Aragona’s early biography is based on literary sources, primarily Girolamo Muzio’s pastoral eclogue *Tirrhena*, which first appeared in d’Aragona’s choral anthology and then in a 1550 edition of his own *Eclogues*.²⁸ Muzio (1496–1576)—courtier, linguist, arbiter on

27. Camilla Pisana mentions a book of hers (“el mio libro”) in a letter she write to Francesco Del Nero; see Angelo Romano, ed. *Lettere di cortigiane del Rinascimento* (Rome: Salerno, 1990), 34. Bandello claims that Imperia “was particularly fond of Italian poetry, wherein she had as teacher and stimulator our most genial friend Domenico Campana, called Strascino. She profited so much by his instruction that she composed and set to music, very agreeably, some sonnets and madrigals” (“Savoir-Vivre in a Courtesan’s Parlor,” in Morris Bishop, ed. and trans., *A Renaissance Storybook* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971], 121–22) (“non mezzanamente si dilettaua de le rime volgari, essendole stato in ciò essortatore e come maestro il nostro piacevolissimo messer Domenico Campana detto Strascino; e tanto già di profitto fatto ci aveva che ella non insoauemente componeua qualche sonetto o madrigale” [*Le quattro parti de le novelle del Bandello*, ed. Gustavo Balsamo-Crivelli, 4 vols. (Turin: UTET, 1911) 4:84]). Francesca Baffa is the only published author among the other courtesans that I have mentioned, although very little is known about her; indeed, it’s not known whether she was in fact a courtesan. Two of her sonnets appeared in Domenichi’s *Rime di molti* in 1545 (see Cassola’s 1544 madrigals). She also appears as an interlocutor in Giuseppe Betussi’s dialogue on love, which Giolito published seven times in the sixteenth century (the first edition was published in 1543).

28. Girolamo Muzio, *Egloghe del Mutio iustinopolitano* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito, 1550), 25r–30v. Muzio also dedicated six other eclogues to d’Aragona in his volume; see 4r–24v. Celani included these in his edition of d’Aragona’s *canzoniere*; see 136–90. I did not include them in the present edition. For the *Tirrhena*, see pages 153–181 of this edition. For

questions of chivalry, and author of poetry and prose—was perhaps d’Aragona’s greatest advocate and champion. He claims responsibility for shepherding her dialogue to publication and wrote numerous poetic compositions to and about her. Muzio declared that there was no more fitting place for such a glorious birth as that of Tullia d’Aragona than Rome: “a less illustrious place would not be fitting/ for such a grand conception, and glorious birth/ than the honored, triumphant riverbanks/ of the lofty Tiber.”²⁹

According to Muzio, d’Aragona’s mother, Giulia, had come to Rome from Ferrara, city of her birth.³⁰ Recent discoveries have brought to light new elements regarding her identity. Up to now, d’Aragona’s mother has always been called Giulia Campana, as she was named in a floor tomb in the Church of S. Agostino placed there in 1549.³¹ Yet a Sienese notarial document from 17 January 1519 names Giulia as the daughter of the Ferrarese Orsino Pendaglia, presumably a member—either natural or legitimate—of the noble family of Ferrara, where the family palace Palazzo Pendaglia still stands.³² The same document also stipulates that Giulia Pendaglia was married to Africano Orlandini, a member of Sienese nobility, and that in the event of her husband’s death, the third part of a house that was being donated to him by another member of the Orlandini family would

a modern edition of Muzio’s poems to d’Aragona, see Girolamo Muzio, *Rime per Tullia d’Aragona*, ed. and annot. Anna Maria Negri (Pavia: Croci, 1996).

29. “Et non si convenia men chiaro loco/ al gran concetto, e al glorioso parto,/ che l’honorate piagge triomphali/ de l’almo Tebro.” See 178 for the Italian and 179 for the translation.

30. As for her Ferrarese origins, Muzio refers in his *Tirrhena* eclogue to “questa tra le sponde/ nata del Re de’ Fiumi” (“she, who had been born by the shores/ of the King of Rivers”); see 178 and 179. In addition, a document in the ASR calls both Tullia and her mother Ferrarese (Notai AC 4516, 65r). My sincerest thanks to James Nelson Novoa for apprising me of this document.

31. Campana’s surname was only recorded in a floor tomb that existed in the Church of S. Agostino before the Vanvitelli restoration of 1756–60; see Vincenzo Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d’altri edifici di Roma dal secolo 11 fino ai giorni nostri*, 14 vols. (Rome: Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche, 1869–84), 5:47.

32. ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 1107, n. 1315. I thank Orsetta Baroncelli for the transcription of this document. Moreover, I am infinitely grateful to Philippa Jackson for sharing with me her various archival finds regarding d’Aragona, which include this document, among others, and her expertise regarding Siena more generally.

devolve to the “respectable girl Tullia, daughter of Costanzo of the Palmieri of Naples and daughter of Lady Giulia, wife of the aforesaid Africano” as her future dowry.³³ One must assume thus that Giulia later married again into the Campani family, but further research is needed.³⁴ Unfortunately, these documents came to light long after this volume had been completed, and so I look forward in the future to delving further into the identities of these individuals instrumental in Tullia d’Aragona’s adolescence.

Giulia Pendaglia’s social status and respectable marriage make it difficult to paint her as the typical courtesan who then mandates that same destiny for her daughter, as the traditional narrative warrants. Although she clearly married well, something happened in the years after she set up the dowry for her daughter with the help of Enea Piccolomini.³⁵ As is common with sex workers, she has simply been called Giulia Ferrarese in later documents, both historical and literary.³⁶ One particularly amusing tale regarding a “Giulia Ferrarese”

33. “honeste puelle Tulie, filie Constantii de Palmeriis de Neapoli et filie dicte domine Iulie, uxoris dicti Africhani”; see Notarile antecosimiano 1107, n. 1315. Unfortunately, d’Aragona had to fight for many years to receive what had been legally donated to her, yet her petitions to various Siense courts were ultimately successful, and in 1545 she was awarded a sum commensurate with the amount named in 1519, namely 600 florins.

34. There is, in fact, a Siense noble Campani family and Lattanzio Benucci’s mother was named Girolama Campana.

35. See ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 696. I thank Philippa Jackson for informing me of the existence of this document and Orsetta Baroncelli for its transcription.

36. The instability of surnames in this period aside, sex workers (as indeed many lower-class workers) were known by their name followed by their geographical origin, thus Camilla Pisana, Angela Greca, or even the fictional Lozana Andalusia. The Roman census of 1527 already lists two Giulia Ferraresi; see Egmont Lee, ed. “*Descriptio Urbis*”: *The Roman Census of 1527* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1985), 284–85; see also the 1549 tax on sex workers used to pay for the reparation of the S. Maria bridge, known today as the Ponte Rotto (ASR, camerale I, fabbriche, registro 1514, f. 13. I take this opportunity to correct what I said in my “Out of the Archive: Four Newly-Identified Figures in Tullia d’Aragona’s *Rime della Signora Tullia di Aragona et di diversi a lei* (1547)” (*MLN* 118, no. 1 [2003]: 257–63) about putting the hypothesis to rest regarding whether Tullia’s mother was Giulia Ferrarese. In the documents that I consulted she is indeed often called that, without her surname, but there were many women called Giulia Ferrarese, and thus it will usually be difficult to tell when a given Giulia Ferrarese is Tullia d’Aragona’s mother or not.

whom some scholars have assumed to be Tullia's mother, is narrated by Lodovico Domenichi:

Fu fatta la strada del Popolo in Roma, lastricata di tributi che le puttane pagavano, nella quale scontrando la Giulia Ferrarese una gentildonna, l'urtò un poco. All' hora la gentildonna alterata cominciò a dirle villania. Rispose la Giulia Madonna, perdonatemi, che io sò bene, che voi havete piu ragione in questa via, che non hò io. SFACCIATO.³⁷

(The street named Popolo was made in Rome, paved with the taxes paid by whores, in which Giulia Ferrarese, encountering a noblewoman, bumped her a little. Then the noblewoman, angered, began to speak rudely to her. Madonna Giulia responded, pardon me, for I realize that you have more rights in this street than I do. CHEEKY).

The year of d'Aragona's birth is open to conjecture—but it was likely somewhere between 1501 and 1505. A sonnet by Ercole Bentivoglio that was published in Giolito's 1545 lyric anthology and addressed to d'Aragona indicates that she was thirty-six at the time of its composition.³⁸ If we consider that d'Aragona frequented Bentivoglio from her arrival in Ferrara in June 1537 through no later than circa 1541, then she would have been born between 1501 and 1505.

Her father's identity has been the subject of much debate. Muzio indicates that d'Aragona's father was Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona (1474–1519), an illegitimate grandson of King Ferrante of Naples, also

37. See Lodovico Domenichi, *Facetie, motti e burle di diversi signori e persone private* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1562), 11v.

38. See Bentivoglio's "Benché l'invidia età col duro morso" in which he writes "you have the space of six winters/ And six lustra by now lived" ("ch'abbiate lo spazio di sei brume/ E di sei lustri omai vivendo corso" [*Rime diverse di molti eccellentissimi autori* (Giolito 1545), ed. Franco Tomasi and Paolo Zaja (Turin: RES, 2001), 180]).

known as Ferdinand I.³⁹ D’Aragona’s wedding certificate in Siena’s state archives, however, identifies her father as Costanzo Palmieri d’Aragona.⁴⁰ Enrico Celani suggested that perhaps Giulia married a familiar of the cardinal’s retinue for money, which would have provided a mask for the cardinal’s illicit activities.⁴¹ No evidence has been found that Giulia Pendaglia married Costanzo Palmieri d’Aragona, although in another Sienese document Tullia is called her “legitimate and natural daughter” suggesting that she was born in wedlock.⁴²

According to Muzio, at some point at an early age, d’Aragona left Rome for Siena, although is not known for how long she and her mother resided there.⁴³ We might presume that by 1523, she had returned to Rome. Philippe Verdelot, the French Duomo chapel master of Florence, visited Rome in 1523–24 to perform for Clement VII, recently elected Medici pope.⁴⁴ During this sojourn Verdelot apparently composed two madrigals that refer to Tullia by name—“Non

39. “Now among the many who have issued from the illustrious blood/ was a grand shepherd, who adorned his locks/ and sacred brow with purple bands/ As love desired, one day wandering on the banks/ of the lovely Tiber his eyes/ fell upon the graceful vision, and new,/ of the beautiful IOLE (“Or fra molt’altri uscio del chiaro sangue/ Un gran pastor, che di purpuree bende/ Ornato il crine, e la sacrata fronte,/ Com’amor volle, un giorno per le rive/ Del vago Tebro errando, a gli occhi suoi/ Corse l’aspetto gratioso, e novo/ De la bella IOLE”). Iole is the pastoral name that Muzio gives to Giulia, d’Aragona’s mother.

40. See ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 2357, f. 287.

41. Celani, introduction to *Le rime di Tullia d’Aragona*, xxxi–xxxiii.

42. ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 696. Although the expression “legitimate and natural” seems contradictory, as “natural” is sometimes an adjective meaning “illegitimate,” it’s not: the birth was legitimate because it occurred in wedlock and it was natural in that she was Giulia’s biological daughter.

43. “She lived at a tender age near the rippling/ of the most beautiful spring that honors Tuscany.” (“visse in tenera etade presso a l’onde/ del più bel fonte, che Thoscana honori”); see sonnet 61. The *Ragionamento del Zoppino fatto frate* also corroborates this information; see 44–45. Some scholars have suggested that it was Cardinal Luigi d’Aragona’s trip to Germany in 1517 that prompted Giulia to depart from the Eternal City, although I suspect she left before then; see Guido Biagi, “Un’etera romana: Tullia d’Aragona,” *Nuova antologia*, 4.16, s. 3 (1886): 678.

44. See Alexandra Amati-Camperi, “A Fresh Look at the Life of Verdelot, Maestro di Cappella at the Duomo of Florence,” in *Atti del VII centenario del Duomo di Firenze*, ed. Timothy Verdon and Annalisa Innocenti (Florence: Edifir, 2001), 97; see also H. Colin Slim and Stefano La Via, “Philippe Verdelot,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and*

mai donna più bella” and “Ardenti miei sospiri”—and, in addition to mentioning Tullia, both compositions also make reference to Rome.⁴⁵ Given that both Verdelot and d’Aragona were a part of the Florentine cultural milieu in Rome (the Strozzi were later patrons of Verdelot), it is likely that the two met him through her relationship with the influential Florentine aristocrat and banker Filippo Strozzi (1489–1538).

We do not know exactly when d’Aragona began to frequent Filippo Strozzi, but it was plausibly during the early to mid-1520s. In a letter written from Rome on 30 June 1526, Filippo Strozzi confesses to Francesco Vettori “I will not deny that I gladly spend time with Tullia,” an affirmation that reveals not only a certain regularity of association but also that their relationship had been in place for some time.⁴⁶ Recently uncovered documents reveal that their bond was indeed quite long lived, as I trace in due time, cut short only by Strozzi’s capture at the battle of Montemurlo in August 1537.

On 30 January 1531 Tullia and her mother Giulia signed a three-year contract to rent a vineyard they owned in Rome near the Basilica of St John the Lateran to Jacopo from Cremona.⁴⁷ He was to reap half of the harvest of the vineyard and was given permission to

Musicians (London: Macmillan, 2001). I thank Philippe Canguilhem for first advising me of d’Aragona’s association with Verdelot.

45. See Alexandra Amati-Camperi, introduction to Philippe Verdelot, *Madrigali a sei voci*, ed. Alexandra Amati-Camperi (Pisa: ETS, 2003), xxx. “Non mai donna più bella” is found with its score in Philippe Verdelot, *Madrigals for Four and Five Voices*, ed. Jessie Ann Owens (New York: Garland, 1989), 75–83; the text of “Ardenti miei sospiri” is found in *Madrigali a sei voci*, 5; the score is on 15–22. Moreover, considering Filippo Strozzi’s close connection to Clement VII and Tullia d’Aragona’s association with Strozzi, documented from 1526 on, this hypothesis regarding the venue and dating of Verdelot’s madrigals seems plausible. For Filippo Strozzi’s close ties with Clement VII, see Melissa Bullard, *Filippo Strozzi and the Medici: Favor and Finance in Sixteenth-Century Florence and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). For the musical patronage of both Filippo and his son Ruberto Strozzi, see Richard J. Agee, “Ruberto Strozzi and the Early Madrigal,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36, no. 1 (1983): 1–17, and Richard J. Agee, “Filippo Strozzi and the Early Madrigal,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, no. 2 (1985): 227–37.

46. “Non negherò di non passare tempo volentieri con Tullia”; see Alessandro Bardi, “Filippo Strozzi (da nuovi documenti),” *Archivio storico italiano* 14 (1894): 3–78, at 46.

47. ASR, Notai AC 4516, ff. 65r–66v. I thank James Nelson Novoa who found this document and shared it with me.

dig in it for travertine, metal, or lead, or any marble figures or parts thereof. The contract, drafted at the women's home, according to the notary, was witnessed by none other than Roberto Strozzi, Filippo's second-born son.⁴⁸ A second witness present was Paolo Emilio Orsini, a Roman nobleman who appears in other documents regarding d'Aragona.⁴⁹

A letter of 25 November 1531 reveals that d'Aragona had plans to go to Venice the following spring together with Filippo Strozzi.⁵⁰ Although it is assumed that d'Aragona spent a fair amount of time in Venice, no Venetian archival materials (that I am aware of) have surfaced to tell us exactly when or with whom. Literary documents place d'Aragona in Venice in the early 1530s in the company of writers such as Bernardo Tasso and Sperone Speroni.⁵¹ Bernardo Tasso, father of the better-known Torquato, addressed a number of sonnets to her. Speroni by contrast adopted her as an interlocutor in his *Dialogo d'amore*.⁵² Just as we do not know exactly when d'Aragona arrived in Venice, so too it is unknown when she departed.

48. In the archival material I consulted, his name appears as both Roberto and Ruberto; he is not to be confused however with Ruberto, son of Michele and father of Carlo Strozzi.

49. Paolo Emilio Orsini was a Roman nobleman of the Monterotondo branch of the Orsini family. During these same years, Orsini also signed a document declaring his intent to defend d'Aragona from any potential detractors; see note 109, in which I discuss this document more fully.

50. In a letter, Filippo Strozzi tells Zanobi Bracci that "I will not be in Florence so soon, for Tullia, if I accompany her to Venice this spring, has promised to come with me there [to Florence] and to stay the whole summer" ("Io non sarò costì [in Florence] così presto, ché la Tullia, se io vo seco in questa primavera a Vinetia, ne ha promisso venirsene poi meco costì et starsi tutta l'estate" [Bardi, "Filippo Strozzi," 46]). The original letter can be found in *Carte strozziane*, s. 1, 336, ff. 230–33. The comment regarding d'Aragona is on f. 231v.

51. On Bernardo Tasso and d'Aragona, see note 155.

52. For an English translation of Speroni's dialogue, see Janet L. Smarr, "Love as Centaur: Rational Man, Animal Woman in Sperone Speroni's *Dialogue on Love*," in *In Dialogue with the Other Voice in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Literary and Social Contexts for Women's Writing*, edited by Julie D. Campbell and Maria Galli Stampino, 195–264 (Toronto: Iter and the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011). The Italian text may be found Sperone Speroni, "Dialogo di amore," in *Opere*, 5 vols. (Venice: Domenico Occhi, 1740; rpt., Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 1989), 1:1–45.

On 10 March 1535, Penelope d'Aragona was born.⁵³ It is unclear whether she was born in Adria, a small town between the Adige and Po rivers in the Veneto, or in Venice. The confusion derives from the name itself: Adria is a small town in the Veneto in the province of Rovigo, but it is also the poetic name for Venice in much sixteenth-century Italian poetry.⁵⁴ Penelope's parentage too is shrouded in uncertainty. Although the epitaph on her floor tomb in the Church of S. Agostino in Rome claimed that her mother was Giulia Campana and her sister was Tullia d'Aragona, Salvatore Bongi, d'Aragona's most exhaustive and accurate biographer, hypothesized that she was, in reality, Tullia's daughter, considering the twenty-five to thirty years that separate their births as well as Muzio's suggestion that Tullia was Penelope's guide, educator, and inseparable companion.⁵⁵ In his eclogue on Penelope's death, entitled with her pastoral name Argia, Muzio writes about Tullia that "by nature, sister, because of her love/ and her care she was to her mother and teacher" ("per natura sorella, per amore/ et per studio le fu madre e maestra"). In the same poem Muzio describes d'Aragona as treating Argia "with maternal affection" ("con materno affetto"). Several months after Penelope's birth, however, d'Aragona is back in Rome, as attested by a previously unknown autograph letter of 21 July 1535 to Francesco de' Pazzi.⁵⁶

A secret informant of Isabella d'Este, marchesa of Mantua, recounts d'Aragona's arrival in Ferrara in June 1537. Apollo, alias for Battista Stambellino, writes that

è sorto in questa terra una gentil cortegiana di Roma,
nominata la Signora Tullia la quale è venuta per stare
qualche mese per quanto s'intende. Questa è molto
gentile, discreta, accorta et di ottimi et divini costumi

53. For Penelope's date of birth, see Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese*, 5:47.

54. Bongi argues against Biagi's claim (see "Un'etera," 684) that Penelope was born in Venice by reasoning that since Muzio's "Argia" eclogue uses the term "l'horribile Adria" in reference to Penelope d'Aragona's birthplace, it would never have passed Venetian censorship ("Rime della signora Tullia di Aragona; et di diversi a lei," in *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari*, 2 vols. [Rome: Presso i principali librai, 1890], 1: 150–199, at 162).

55. Bongi, "Rime della signora Tullia," 161.

56. See letter 1.

dotata; sa cantare al libro ogni motetto et canzone, per rasone de canto figurato; ne li discorsi del suo parlare è unica, et tanto accomodatamente si porta che non c'è homo né donna in questa terra che la paregi, anchora che la Illustrissima Signora Marchesa di Pescara sia eccellentissima, la quale è qui, come sa Vostra Eccellenza. Mostra costei sapere de ogni cosa, et parla pur sieco di che materia te aggrada. Sempre ha piena la casa de virtuosi et sempre si puol visitarla, et è riccha de denari, zoie, colanne, anella et altre cose notabile, et in fine è bene accomodata di ogni cosa.⁵⁷

(a noble courtesan from Rome has arrived in this land, named Signora Tullia, who has come to stay for a few months, as far as I know. She is extremely courteous, discreet, astute, and graced with excellent, sublime manners; she knows how to sing every motet or song from a partbook, that is to say polyphony; in her conversation she is unique and carries herself so gracefully that there is no man or woman in this land that equals her, even though the most Illustrious Signora Marchese of Pescara is most excellent, who is here, as Your Excellency knows. This one [Signora Tullia] seems to know everything and can speak with you about any material that you please. Her house is always full of virtuosi and one can always visit her, and she is rich with money, jewels, necklaces, rings, and other notable things, and in the end she is highly adorned with everything.⁵⁸)

57. ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1251, ff. 191r–192v. This letter was published in the late nineteenth century; see Alessandro Luzio, “Un’avventura di Tullia d’Aragona,” *Rivista storica mantovana* 1, nos. 1–2 (1885): 179–82. Costantino Cipolla and Giancarlo Malacarne have more recently published a complete transcription of this letter, but they misread the name as “Talia” (see their *El più soave et dolce et dilectevole et gratioso bochone: Amore e sesso al tempo dei Gonzaga* [Milan: Angeli, 2006], 409–11)—curiously enough as that is a name that d’Aragona had also asked Muzio to use for her. A sonnet by Ercole Bentivoglio adds that d’Aragona had come to Ferrara from Rome; see his sonnet 101.

58. “Cantare al libro” meant that d’Aragona could both read and sing music. It was common in the sixteenth century to give each singer a partbook with their score so that they could all

This letter makes an explicit comparison between Vittoria Colonna and Tullia d'Aragona, a comparison that was to be made again by others, once d'Aragona had established her literary reputation. While for a host of different reasons—status; livelihood; personal interests—the two women could not have been further apart, they were occasionally paired as paragons of literary excellence.⁵⁹

Tullia d'Aragona likely remained in Ferrara longer than Isabella d'Este's informant alleges.⁶⁰ There, in 1537, d'Aragona begins the process of transformation that takes her from being a courtesan—albeit a witty, learned, intellectual one—to being a woman of letters, a process that gains speed and substance as she ages. It is probably during this period that she first met Girolamo Muzio, one of her most prolific promoters and the author of the pastoral eclogue that provides a mini-biography of her. It is also in Ferrara that she likely first met the poet Ercole Bentivoglio; he too wrote poems in her praise and was the first poet to refer unequivocally to her talent as a poet.⁶¹ Bongi indicates that she remained in Ferrara at least until 1541, when Muzio departed for Milan on a mission for Duke Ercole II of Ferrara.⁶²

D'Aragona did, however, return to Rome after her stay in Ferrara, as Stambellino's letter claims. Sometime after November 1540 (and likely before 25 March 1541) she sent three poems to the

sing together; given that they are singing in a group, Stambellino mentions "canto figurato" which is polyphonic music. I thank Kathryn Bosi for this explanation.

59. See sonnet 111, likely by Benedetto Arrighi, in which the last line proposes to "make VITTORIA a moon and TULLIA a sun" ("far VITTORIA una Luna, et TULLIA un Sole"). See Bausi, "Con agra zampogna," 74 and Cox, *Women's Writing*, 80–82.

60. Apollo states that d'Aragona "has come to stay for a few months as far as I can tell" ("è venuta per stare qualche mese per quanto s'intende"). Later in the same letter, he recounts that d'Aragona claims that "once this season is over she wants to return towards Rome" ("passata questa stagione se ne vuol tornar verso Roma") she intends to return to Rome. See Luzio, "Un'avventura," 179–80, and Cipolla and Malacarne, *El più soave*, 409.

61. See his sonnet 101 in which he speaks of the "learned words that Euterpe inspires in you" ("i dotti accenti che vi ispira Euterpe"). This sonnet was written just after d'Aragona's arrival in Ferrara in June 1537; however, it is possible that Ippolito de' Medici's sonnet 97 in which he refers to her "sweet song" ("dolce canto") may refer to her poetic abilities, as well as to her musical talents. He died in August 1535 and thus his sonnet likely predates those of Bentivoglio.

62. Bongi, "Rime della signora Tullia," 172.

Florentine Accademia degli umidi (Academy of the Damp), and the dedicatory line of the manuscript copy states specifically in that they were from Rome.⁶³ Two of the sonnets are addressed to Cosimo I and the third to Maria Salviati de' Medici, his mother.

D'Aragona next surfaces in Siena in a notarial document rendering official a negotiation whereby a Jewish man named Aaron, red haired and around thirty-six years old, agreed to accept as payment from d'Aragona the sum of thirty-five julians from an unnamed Spaniard who owed the money to her. The document was notarized on 14 April 1543 and witnessed by two Siennese noblemen, Antonio Marcello Sanzio and Orazio Pecci.⁶⁴

Less than nine months later, on 8 January 1544, d'Aragona married in Siena Silvestro Guicciardi, a "Ferrarese gentleman," although nothing else is known about the identity of this man.⁶⁵ Muzio, however, on occasion of d'Aragona's marriage, offered as a gift a *Treatise on Marriage (Trattato di Matrimonio)*, whose dedication to her reads as extremely ambiguous and convoluted in its intentions.⁶⁶

Several months later, however, on Pentecoste, d'Aragona was denounced for wearing a *sbernia*, a cloak of luxurious fabric or fur that was closed on the left shoulder, usually with a jeweled pin, in violation of Siennese sumptuary legislation.⁶⁷ The accusation specified

63. See BNCF, Magliabechiano VII 195, ff. 75r–76r; see sonnets 116–18 in the present edition. The poems are not dated, however; I base my dating from the Umidi's foundation to the birth of Francesco de' Medici, as the manuscript in which they are found seems to be organized chronologically. It is, of course, possible that the poems were sent somewhat later even though they are addressed to the Umidi, since even as late as 1547, Pietro Aretino wrote to Varchi about what he called the "sect of the Damp" ("setta de gli Umidi") (Benedetto Varchi, *Lettere, 1535–1565*, ed. Vanni Bramanti [Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008], 132n).

64. ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 2357, f. 207.

65. ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 2357, f. 287. Firenzuola quipped that Tullia let her husband starve to death (*Opere*, 383). Emmanuel Rodocanachi published a partial inventory in which a "widow's dress" ("veste da vedova") appears (*Cortigiane e buffoni di Roma*, trans. Nino Della Casa [Milan: Pervinca, 1927], 49). Of course, this dress could have been used for other purposes.

66. See Girolamo Muzio, "Trattato di matrimonio alla Signora Tullia d'Aragona," in his *Operette morali* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito, 1550), 50–60.

67. Thanks to Luca Marozzi for identifying the holiday of Pentecoste. For information on Siennese sumptuary legislation, see Maria Assunta Ceppari Ridolfi, "Un caso toscano:

that she was in the company of Ottaviano Tondi, Orazio Pecci, and Gaspare, servant to Don Juan de Luna, the imperial commander of Charles V.⁶⁸ In the deliberation of the judges who ruled on this denunciation, which was only issued in February of the following year, d'Aragona was exempted from the legislation because she had produced documentation proving that she was married and because she led a "vitam honestissimam" and was thus allowed to live wherever she so chose and wear whatever clothes she might like.⁶⁹

Although during these years, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had sent representatives to rule Siena, republican political aggregations remained nonetheless that continually jockeyed for position and power. Ottaviano Tondi was an active member of the Noveschi faction, but he had to go into hiding for having killed a popular soldier of the Popolani faction and apparently died soon after. Tumults ensued when the Popolani revolted, at which point many Sienese Noveschi fled to Florence. Judging from her Sienese poetic correspondents, d'Aragona supported the Noveschi, and because of their waning political fortunes, d'Aragona also fled Siena for Florence in the winter of 1545–46 to seek refuge in the court of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.⁷⁰ D'Aragona actively participated in the cultural life of Florence, corresponding with poets and philosophers as well as maintaining a salon at her home.⁷¹ Many of those same figures appear in her choral

Siena," in *Disciplinare il lusso: La legislazione suntuaria in Italia e in Europa tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli and Antonella Campanini (Rome: Carocci, 2003), 59–73.

68. ASS, Capitano di giustizia 75, f. 53; this document was published by Bongi, "Documenti senesi su Tullia d'Aragona," *Rivista critica della letteratura italiana* IV, no. 6 (1887): 186–88, at 188. Ottaviano Tondi apparently died in tumults between the Noveschi and Popolani faction. D'Aragona wrote a sonnet of condolence to his brother (Emilio Tondi) that she included in her collection; see sonnet 26. This is the second time we encounter the nobleman Orazio Pecci, who was present at the notarization of the agreement with Aaron; see note 64. Don Juan de Luna (often Italianized to Giovanni di Luna) was the imperial commander at the time in Siena.

69. ASS, Gabella 758, ff. 12–14. It is interesting to note that in this same document she is repeatedly referred to as "nobilis," that is, "well known," but perhaps also "noble."

70. See her sonnets 4 and 5 to Duke Cosimo.

71. This salon provides the backdrop for d'Aragona's dialogue *On the Infinity of Love*; Benucci calls the salon a "universal and prestigious academy" because of all the "gentlemen, the host