

Introduction

The Fake Husband as Other Voice

Licinio, the fake husband, the epicenter of the play of that name, is a woman—in Counter-Reformation Italy, a thing absurd, shocking, and unthinkable. Licinio is actually Brigida, maidservant to the ingenue Porzia, the two women having concocted the phony marriage to save Porzia from a coerced marriage to a man she did not love, and so enable her marriage to Lepido, the man she did. The lesbian marriage, therefore, even as it introduces the intriguing theme of same-sex empathy, is chiefly a stratagem toward a heterosexual resolution that could only be attained by profoundly disruptive means. In it is heard the Other Voice: the voice of women, bonded across class lines by their resistance to male tyranny, in search of freedom to pursue their own desires.

As the play unfolds, Porzia is paired with Giulia, whose desire to marry Flavio is threatened by her aged guardian Demetrio who—hoping to facilitate his own access to her—has agreed to give her in marriage to Gervasio, another old man. Giulia's maidservant Ruchetta, disgusted by the designs of the *vecchi* (old men) on her mistress, and more generally by men's abuse of women, joined by the manservants Trapola and the Scaramuccia, will assist Giulia in evading the trap set for her. In the end, the two *innamorate* (women in love) win their two lovers, the *vecchi* are defeated and humiliated, and the wily *zanni* (the lowborn servants) triumph in a struggle that has pitted women against men, young against old, and servants against their masters.

Ripe with these explosive themes, enacted onstage with outrageous buffoonery, physical humor, and sexual ribaldry, *Il finto marito* (*The Fake Husband*), published in 1618 by Flaminio Scala and translated here into English for the first time, was understandably a major success.¹ Scala, an experienced actor and director who had previously published in 1601 the play *Il postumio* (*The Posthumous Man*), and in 1611 the important collection of *commedia dell'arte* scenarios, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* (*Theater of Tales for Performance*),² expanded his authorial role to provide a fully written out script entitled *The Fake Husband*.

1. Flaminio Scala, *Il finto marito* (Venice: Andrea Baba, 1618; reprint Venice: n.p., 1619); modern edition in *Commedie dei comici dell'arte*, ed. Laura Falavolti (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1982), 225–365. The 1982 edition is cited henceforth as Falavolti.

2. *The Husband (Il marito)*, in *Theater of Tales for Performance*, in Richard Andrews, ed. and trans., *The Commedia dell'Arte of Flaminio Scala: A Translation and Analysis of Thirty Scenarios* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008), Day 9, at 41–52; volume cited henceforth as Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*. Original Italian text, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* (Venice: Giovan Battista Pulciani, 1611); modern edition by Ferruccio Marotti, 2 vols. (Milan: il Polifilo, 1976), containing *Il marito* at 1:101–9.

2 Introduction

Scala's source text was the scenario, *Il marito (The Husband)*, one of the most enduringly popular scenarios of the fifty published in the *Theater of Tales* collection.³

The original creators of the play *The Fake Husband*, therefore, were not only Scala who provided the dramatic fiction, but also the actors who by their improvisations collaboratively developed the action and dialogue, drawing on their experience and the resources of their imagination, while adapting the message to different audiences and according to the capacities of the performers.⁴ Among the latter, the female actresses were critically important; commedia actresses were the first professional women performers in the history of European theater.⁵ Supreme among them were Isabella Andreini and Silvia Roncagli, of whom more below. In writing the scenario *The Husband*, and subsequently the play *The Fake Husband*, Scala revives and memorializes the voices of the actresses who had invented these roles and performed them throughout the last decades of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries.

Scala's uncanny ability to capture the contribution of each actor to shaping the dramatic action enabled him to reveal the unique genius of each member of the ensemble. When he published the collection of scenarios, he defended not filling in the dialogue spoken by the characters on the grounds that he could not do them justice, since they all had their unique style of speech and gestures. As a result, because the scenarios were based on public performances, readers were invited to fill in the missing segments by recreating what they had seen performed on the stage. When Scala came to publish the scenarios, he put together a dream

3. The three-act scenario form used by the commedia dell'arte was created for the actors and provided a brief outline listing the characters and describing their entrances and exits, scene by scene, to indicate what actions they were to perform.

4. Commedia dell'arte troupes began to appear around 1545 when companies incorporated themselves to tour around to various Italian cities and perform in the piazzas. Typically, a troupe included two pairs of master-servant duos: the old patriarchs: the Venetian merchant Pantalone and the Bolognese doctor Graziano were paired against the crafty Zannis. Soon specialized Zannis such as Arlecchino (Harlequin), Pedrolino (Pierrot) and many others made their character masks famous. Later, the two pairs of young lovers called by names such as the male Flavio and Orazio and female Isabella and Flaminia made it possible to perform romantic comedies. The maidservant and the Spanish Capitano (captain) brought the troupe to the standard ten.

5. By the 1560s, female performers had become established members of the troupes and through their great talents and rhetorical skills revolutionized the commedia dell'arte stage. The appearance of women on the professional stage for the first time in western theater history seems to have happened for many reasons connected with the growth of a market economy and also the Counter-Reformation church's attack on the "honest courtesans" (refined female companions) whose training in the fine arts and rhetoric provided the new actresses with a model to follow. The actresses took over the roles of the young female lovers (*innamorate*), previously performed by young male actors, and quickly became dominant members of the troupes, often acting as company directors. The saucy maidservant role also became increasingly famous as female performers took it over from male actors.

team of all-star players, mainly from the company of the Gelosi.⁶ For readers who had been frequent spectators over the years, several of the characters were associated with famous actresses who had included those roles in their repertoire. Such was the case with Isabella Andreini (1562–1604), the first great international *diva*, who not only played the *innamorata* and a transvestite page, but was also co-director of the Gelosi with her equally famous husband Francesco Andreini. Scala's inclusion of Isabella Andreini in so many of his scenarios provides an invaluable record of her acting range.⁷ Unlike most of her fellow actresses, Andreini's stellar accomplishments also include published works: the pastoral play *Mirtilla*, two volumes of *Rime (Poems)*, and collections of lovers' speeches and stage dialogues in the *Lettere (Letters)* and *Frammenti di alcune scritture (Miscellaneous Writings)*.⁸

Less known today but highly regarded in her time, Silvia Roncagli (1547–after 1603), having joined the Gelosi in the 1570s, became known for her bold interpretation of the cynical maidservant Franceschina, wise in sexual knowledge and the ways of the world. Scala includes her, as he does Andreini, as a vital character in many scenarios.⁹ Married to the actor-playwright-scholar Adriano Valerini in 1584, she participated in performances at the Medici wedding in 1589¹⁰ and in the Gelosi's last tour to France in 1603.¹¹

By honoring the outstanding performances of trained actresses, and representing them as emotionally convincing subjects with self-knowledge and strong desires, Scala reveals how greatly he valued their contribution to making the *commedia dell'arte* into a “theater of excellence.”¹² He strengthened the female voices in the scripted *Fake Husband* by providing them with full dialogue, paying tribute to the actresses who had developed these roles as members of an ensemble. The dialogue that Scala provides for individual actresses evokes their personal experi-

6. The Gelosi (1568–1604) were one of the most famous early companies who toured across Italy and France, performing for the public and the courts alike.

7. Isabella's versatility as an actress included her well-known performance of the transvestite page Fabrizio, who makes a sustained appearance in five of the fifty scenarios in *Theater of the Tales*, Isabella remaining in her male disguise throughout the entire play. It became a very common theatrical device to have female actors take on male roles. See “Transvestite Heroines” in Rosalind Kerr, *The Rise of the Diva on the Sixteenth-Century Commedia dell'Arte Stage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 82–101.

8. See “The Making of a Diva,” in Kerr, *The Rise of the Diva*, 102–46.

9. Franceschina appears in at least twenty of Scala's fifty scenarios. See *Thirty Scenarios*, 333.

10. For detailed coverage of this wedding gala, see James Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

11. M.A. Katritzky, *The Art of Commedia: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte, 1560–1620, with Special Reference to the Visual Records* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 246, 250–51.

12. Elena Tamburini uses the term “*commedia di eccellenza*” as a more accurate translation of “*commedia dell'arte*.” See *Culture ermetiche e commedia dell'arte: Tra Giulio Camillo e Flaminio Scala* (Rome: Aracne Editrice, 2016), 10.

ence while it universalizes their voices, which speak on behalf of the female sex by identifying the injustices from which women suffered. Despite the comedic tone, his play is full of social commentary concerning the treatment of women of different social classes as they try to escape forced marriages and unwanted sexual attentions.

Scala wanted *The Fake Husband* to serve many purposes: among them, to showcase the importance of the actresses; to portray everyday human behavior accurately by including actual women in female roles; to raise the standards of the commedia dell'arte; and to make it representative of contemporary Italian society. By providing a five-act script with a unified plot and well-developed characters speaking standard Italian, he also intended to prove that the commedia dell'arte could vie with the formal academic theater.¹³ To bring the play closer to dramatic literature, Scala chose literary names for the characters that were not immediately identifiable with the commedia actors and actresses who had played them in the scenario: thus Isabella becomes Porzia, and Franceschina, whose male persona was Cornelio, becomes Brigida/Licinio.¹⁴ While Porzia and Licinio are in ultimate control of the plot, Scala puts together a strong ensemble cast to work with them. Most notably, Pedrolino, the mastermind servant in the scenario, is replaced by Scaramuccia, who is in all likelihood a version of Scala himself in his role as *capocomico* (company director).¹⁵ Assisting Scaramuccia in overturning the patriarchal oppressors and supporting the subterfuge is the cunning maidservant Ruchetta, who gives voice to all the injustices that she and other women endure.¹⁶

By including a version of himself as the director, Scala is able to show how the actors worked together to move the script forward, thus adding a metatheatrical dimension that requires the reader's participation in following the various subterfuges that are activated. The audience is also guided to realize that, although *The Fake Husband* is a fully scripted play, it is still connected to the performance text recorded in the scenario *The Husband*. In his two prologues, Scala invites

13. In *The Fake Husband*, Scala shows how the commedia dell'arte can respond to the convergence of oral, written, and print cultures, while he seeks at the same time to share his playmaking techniques with as wide an audience as possible and to respond to the increased demand for printed texts. Henry Jenkins discusses how media convergence flows across multiple media platforms involving cultural shifts owing to their competitive economies that encourage consumers to seek out new information and make new connections; see Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 2–3.

14. See Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, xxxi and xxviii respectively.

15. I have chosen to keep the Italian *capocomico* instead of company director because it involves much more than the English term implies, since the *capocomico* was usually also a lead actor who had to keep the other company members in line as well as perform not only directorial tasks but also run interference with patrons, including renting halls and looking after booking and travel arrangements, and much more.

16. Ruchetta takes the place of Olivetta, the actress Isabella Cima; Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, xxviii.

readers and spectators to see what the differences are between the scenario and the play text, and so appreciate the living, breathing imitation of life that made the *commedia dell'arte* more emotionally powerful than most scripted plays.

By having Scaramuccia invent and orchestrate the immensely complicated series of bed tricks that will punish and reward everyone according to their deserts, Scala demonstrates the new commitment of the troupes to put the play's aesthetic cohesion ahead of individual star performers. Several times in the play, we are alerted to Scaramuccia's controlling influence as well as his difficulties in keeping the other characters on track.¹⁷ By letting himself eventually be outmaneuvered by the lesbian couple of Porzia and Licinio, Scala's Scaramuccia shows that even the *capocomico* must submit to the demands of the plot, and bow to the even greater deception practiced by the female players. In this way, he celebrates the importance of both the carefully crafted buffoonery of the *zanni* and the refined eloquence of the *innamorati*. Scala's *Fake Husband* offers a play that preserves the full comic range of the *commedia dell'arte* while achieving a more disciplined and refined status in a scripted form that is still closely aligned with the vision of the actresses who first crafted its message.¹⁸

Flaminio Scala (1552–1624): Life and Works

Flaminio Scala was born on September 27, 1552,¹⁹ to a noble Roman father, as evidence suggests, named Iacomo Scala.²⁰ Francesco Andreini, the husband of Isabella Andreini and himself a famous *commedia dell'arte* performer, refers to Scala's noble parentage in his Letter to the Readers prefacing the *Theater of Tales*:

I shall just say this, that Master Flaminio Scala, known on stage as Flavio, in order to do justice to these aforesaid principles which have been so commended by great Philosophers, dedicated himself in his youth to the noble practice of the Stage (in no way detracting from

17. Giovanni Battista Andreini, et al., *Comici dell'arte: Corrispondenze*, ed. Siro Ferrone, Claudia Burattelli, Domenica Landolfi, and Anna Zinanni, 2 vols. (Florence: Le Lettere, 1993), 1:441–42. Cited henceforth as *Corrispondenze*.

18. Siro Ferrone describes how after Scala's collection appeared, improvisation gradually came to be replaced with premeditated dialogue; see Ferrone, "Don Giovanni impresario," in Ferrone, *Attori, mercanti, corsari: La commedia dell'arte in Europa tra Cinque e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), 174–75.

19. This birthdate is confirmed by a comment he makes about turning sixty-six on September 27, 1618; *Corrispondenze*, 1:500–501; letter 38, note 1. His father's name is mentioned in a will he drew up in 1616: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notarile testamenti, Beacian Fabrizio, b. 56, n. 236, 3 cc. unnumbered; see *Corrispondenze*, 1:445.

20. Tamburini cites evidence that Iacomo was probably a relative of a nobleman Giacomo Scala who held an office in the Roman government, as documented in 1615 by Giovanni Pietro Caffarelli who wrote about the family; see Tamburini, *Culture ermetiche*, 201n 64.

his noble birth), and made such progress in this profession that he deserved to be classed as a great actor, among the most excellent of his profession.²¹

Theater scholars have been inclined to see Andreini's parenthetical comment as flattery, especially since the noble birth Scala claimed did not provide him with an income, but recent scholarship suggests that some outstanding actors are likely to have had noble ties since their accomplishments are consistent with the erudition and refinement associated with elite status.²² Certainly they were well aware of the need to acquire court patronage in order to enhance their status as performers and succeed economically and socially.²³ In his early years in Rome, Scala may have frequented elite academic and dramatic circles where artists of all kinds—architects, painters, sculptors, musicians and poets and writers—vied with each other to claim supremacy for their own art form, and engaged often in theater arts to try out their skills in imitating real-life action. Professional actors mingled with noble amateurs in the academies where many members were accomplished in more than one fine art.²⁴ While Scala had left Rome before the *Accademia degli Umoristi* was founded in Rome in 1600,²⁵ he was probably involved with other Roman academies in existence in the last quarter of the sixteenth-century, and hence well-prepared to thrive in Venice, where theater was enthusiastically supported.

Scala's activity is not documented until quite late in his career, after he had spent many years coming up through the ranks as a company member. It is not until May 1597 that, as a member of the Desiosi troupe, he obtained permission from the Genoese senate for a three-month performance contract.²⁶ His petition

21. English translations in Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, 2.

22. Tamburini cites the claims of Francesco Andreini, Isabella Canali, Vincenza Armani, Adriano Valerini to noble birth; see Tamburini, *Culture ermetiche*, 14, 201.

23. Scala was on the lookout for a secure court position at all times and maintained his connections with the Mantuan court even while under the patronage of Don Giovanni de' Medici. The records also show that in 1618, as the envoy Cosimo Baroncelli wrote to his master Don Giovanni de' Medici from Florence, Scala wanted above all to be given a permanent post in the Florentine court; see *Corrispondenze*, 1:494n6.

24. Tamburini mentions several examples in Rome and around Venice of intersections between academicians and theater artists; see *Culture ermetiche*, 69–78.

25. Elena Tamburini, "Dietro la scena: Comici, cantanti, e letterati nell'Accademia romana degli Umoristi," *Studi secenteschi* 50 (2009): 89–112. Although the Umoristi were not officially formed until 1600, there was already considerable crossover between the various literary and visual arts taking place in various circles under patrons.

26. For biographical details, I will rely mainly on *Corrispondenze*, 1:437–49. Other important sources are Marotti, "Introduzione" to *Teatro delle favole*, xiii–lxii; Ferrone, "Don Giovanni impresario," which details his close dealings with Scala and the Confidenti troupe during the period 1615–1621;

reveals his leadership role and ability to argue on behalf of comedy's classical merits.²⁷ The following April he was again in Genoa, negotiating on behalf of the Uniti for a similar contract.²⁸ In 1600 to 1601, he was with the Accesi troupe, performing in France with a group of outstanding actors who had developed individualized character masks: Fritellino (Pier Maria Cecchini), Arlecchino (Tristano Martinelli, the first to play that role), the prima donna (Diana Ponti), and Capitan Matamoros (Silvio Fiorillo). In January 1601, he published a play, *Il postumio*, in Lyon, identifying himself as author only by the initials I. S.²⁹ Although remaining anonymous in this instance suggests he still regarded himself as part of the ensemble, he allowed his stage name, Flavio, to appear on the frontispiece. In January 1606, he was in the employ of the Mantuan court, a connection he strove to maintain even after 1615 when, as will be seen, he came under the patronage of Don Giovanni de' Medici. What his position was at this time is not documented, since he seemed to move back and forth between different troupes with considerable ease. His difficulties with the authorities in one instance, however, is documented: in March 1610, he and his troupe were prohibited from performing in Mantua for an entire year by Cardinal Bonifacio Caetani, whom they had offended.³⁰ Although the offence is not spelled out, it had to do with something they did or said in a performance which the Cardinal considered to be unforgivable.

Scala's publication of *The Theater of Tales* the following year could be regarded as a counterstroke intended to silence his critics and cement his reputation as one of the foremost theater artists in Italy. Besides dedicating the volume to Count Ferdinando Riario,³¹ Scala also drew attention to his connections to the Mantuan court by identifying himself as an actor in the employ of the duke of Mantua, Vincenzo I Gonzaga. The six dedicatory verses testify to the general esteem he had earned by his many accomplishments. In them, for example, the Mantuan state secretary Ercole Marliani compliments him on bringing to his

and Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 181–85.

27. Marotti, "Introduzione" to *Teatro delle favole*, xlvi. In his excellent treatment of Scala, Henke notes that Scala is referencing both Cicero's definition of comedy as an imitation of life, and Horace's praise for it as both teaching and pleasing; see Henke, *Performance and Literature*, 182n19.

28. These career details are from *Corrispondenze*, 1:445.

29. Flaminio Scala, *Il postumio: Comedia del signor I. S. posta in luce da F. S. detto Flavio, Comico Acceso* (Lyon: Appresso Giacomo Roussin, 1601). The mysterious "Signor I. S." is now thought to refer to Scala; they are the initials of his father's name, Iacomo Scala.

30. Scala's performance had offended the Cardinal to the point where the Cardinal felt "il maggior disgusto che possa darmi huomo della sua conditione" (the greatest disgust that a man of Scala's low rank could give him). See Henke, *Performance and Literature*, 183. The power of the Cardinal to legislate against commedia performances in Mantua reveals their opposition to the theater and their frequent interference.

31. Marchese di Castiglione di Val d'Orcia and Bolognese senator, an important patron.

writing the skills of a warrior, ruler, and lover, while his close friend Francesco Andreini lauds his exceptional powers of invention.³²

The Theater of Tales contains scenarios of forty comedies and ten mixed-genre pieces, giving for each an outline of the dramatic action on the basis of which a performer could reenact the performance, or a reader imagine it. To claim authorship and preemptively protect his creations from being performed by others without acknowledgment, Scala put his stamp on them by including expository explanations that fill in background details, and by this expansion brought the scenarios closer to dramatic literature.³³ Groundbreaking as the only collection of scenarios to be edited and put into print by an author who was also an actor and impresario, it remains a foundational document that establishes the dramatic range and performative genius of the commedia dell'arte,³⁴ providing its readers with models for creating theater spectacles featuring characters from the different classes and regions of contemporary Italian society,³⁵ and dealing with the vagaries of Love as a never-ending game.³⁶ Imitating Boccaccio's division of

32. "Del Signor Ercole Marliani to Flaminio Scala"; "Di Francesco Andreini, Capitano Spavento." Scala, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative*, ed. Marotti, 11, 12.

33. Marotti discusses several of these ideas and makes a comparison between Scala's "theatre of the knowable" offering us a universe of possible theater pieces with Giulio Camillo's "universe of the knowable" in his *Teatro della memoria*; see Marotti, "Introduzione" to *Teatro delle favole*, xlvii–liii. Although the great celebrity Camillo (1480–1544) belonged to an earlier generation, his vast influence continued to be felt and put into practice by visionaries like Scala whose goal was to use the art of memory to create a shared cultural heritage.

34. Scala might be considered to be ahead of his times in opting for print while most scenarios still circulated in oral and written forms, implying that he was aware that print was probably more efficient in spreading ideas and offering techniques that aided collective memory. Lisa Gitelman notes that we need to look for "meanings that arise, shift, and persist, according to the uses that media, emergent, dominant and residual familiarly have." See Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 9.

35. In his defense of the theater, Giovan Battista Andreini described it as a mirror in which the public was offered the privilege of seeing human actions from a wise, informed perspective that offers remedies for many adverse conditions. See the excerpt from Giovan Battista Andreini, *La ferza contra l'accuse date alla commedia* (Paris: Nicolas Callemont, 1625), in Ferruccio Marotti and Giovanna Romei, eds., *La commedia dell'arte e la società barocca*, Vol. 2: *La professione del teatro* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1991), 489–534, at 490.

36. Scala mentioned a second volume that never materialized which would have brought the scenarios up to Boccaccio's one hundred. Lina Bolzoni proposes that Camillo's method of "making knowledge visible" through "the science of images" required the acquisition of a great deal of information on different topics that could be organized and remembered through certain techniques which often included memory games. Games became a big part of sixteenth-century culture, and such works as Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, Pietro Bembo's *Asolani*, and Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* are all examples of narratives that unpack literary and cultural conceits in the form of games. See Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*, trans. Jeremy Parzen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), xiv–xxi.

the one hundred tales of the *Decameron* into ten chapters, signifying the ten days over which the stories are told, Scala assigns a day to each scenario.

Not only did Scala write *Theater of Tales* to capture the range of the *commedia dell'arte*'s repertoire, he also wanted his audiences to reimagine the gestures and dialogue used by the actors who had become known to a broad general public. Since troupe members had improvised their roles in highly individualized ways, shading them differently each time, Scala deliberately omitted providing written versions of their widely varying regional languages and dialects on paper. In his preface, he explained, saying that since language was not his specialty, he would leave it up to the experts.³⁷ Francesco Andreini's second preface explains more fully that Scala certainly could have supplied the words verbatim, but had decided that since the published scenarios were a brand-new product, he chose to "leave the task of adding the words to all the fine talents who were born with just such skill in language."³⁸ While this remark implies that both dilettantes and professionals who wanted to perform the scenarios were free to improvise their own dialogue, it also recognized that performers might make the texts their own through spontaneous gestures and speech. Such sentiments echo the belief of Giulio Camillo, an early theorist of the dramatic art, in the alchemic change that occurs when actions and words unite to make hidden meanings visible.³⁹

Scala's artful method here is to write down his scenarios from the past quarter-century using an imaginary cast of famous players that he based on the greatest contemporary performers he had known. His goal in doing so was to celebrate their illustrious careers and preserve their particular acting skills in the memories of their audiences across Italy and Europe who had seen them perform their highly individualized characters, each represented by a distinctive mask. These include (Giulio Pasquato of Padua) who played Pantalone; (Ludovico da Bologna), Dottore Graziano; (Simone da Bologna), the Zanni; (Gabrielle da Bologna), Francatrippa; (Giovanni Pellesini), Pedrolino; (Orazio de' Nobili), Orazio; (Silvia Roncagli from Bergamo), Franceschina; (Isabella Andreini of Padua), Isabella, Prima Innamorata, and (Francesco Andreini), Capitano Spavento. To these famous Gelosi players, Scala added (Tristano Martinelli), who played Arlecchino, but was not listed as a Gelosi member.⁴⁰ The prominence in the cast lists of most of the scenarios of performers who were members of the Gelosi company—including the power couple, Isabella and Francesco Andreini—has led

37. "Original Prefaces to the 1611 Volume," in Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, 1.

38. Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, 1–2.

39. See Tamburini, *Culture ermetiche*, 208.

40. Francesco Andreini included this list of his illustrious company in *Ragionamento 14*, in *Le bravure del Capitano Spavento* (Venice: Giacomo Antonio Somasco, 1607); in Kenneth Richards and Laura Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 72. Andrews includes a discussion of the standard roles and their models in *Thirty Scenarios*, xix–xxxii.

to persistent rumors that Scala performed with the Gelosi. Capitano Spavento, made famous by Francesco, appears in all but four of the comic scenarios in the collection,⁴¹ and Isabella, the ruling prima donna, appears in a wide range of roles, including the cross-dressed heroine. For several centuries afterwards, it was argued that Scala must have been a Gelosi member because of his close friendship with the Andreinis who were co-directors of the company from 1576 until it disbanded in 1604 on Isabella's tragic early death in Lyon.⁴² However, although Scala included his Flavio mask as one of the male lovers in his collection, it seems unlikely that he ever performed with the Gelosi.⁴³

The only significant mention of a Flavio is as the perfidious lover in the Gelosi performance of *La pazzia d'Isabella* (*The Madness of Isabella*) at the Medici wedding gala of 1589 held to celebrate the marriage of Tuscan Grand Duke Ferdinando I to Cristina di Lorena. Since Scala was the only *innamorato* using the stage name of Flavio, there is a distinct possibility that he performed with Isabella on this special occasion. The famous record of the unforgettable impression that Isabella Andreini made on the audience in her signature mad performance has led to a search for the scenario outlined by Giuseppe Pavoni, the envoy from Bologna, who was in attendance.⁴⁴ Although this scenario has never been found, similar ones confirm how familiar Scala was with the trope of madness. His scenario of the same name, "The Madness of Isabella" (*Theater of Tales*, Day 38), is very different from the one performed at the Medici wedding, but shows his facility for conveying madness through impassioned actions and heightened nonsensical speech.⁴⁵ This signature representation of madness demonstrates Scala's "poetic furor"⁴⁶ and suggests that he may have witnessed Isabella's mad turns in 1589, especially the second one capturing the bizarre range of languages that characterized each of these comic masks:

41. Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, xxxii

42. Marotti looks over the tradition that circulated in eighteenth-century theater history accounts but then shows that the archival evidence doesn't confirm Scala's membership in the Gelosi; see Marotti, "Introduzione" to *Teatro delle favole*, xviii–xxxii.

43. Although Scala continued to appear in the lover's role as Flavio well into middle age, he also added in another character role as Claudione, an Italianized Frenchman, who appears in Days 26, 34 and 37, despite the presence of Flavio as well. See Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, x.

44. Giuseppe Pavoni, *Diario descritto da Giuseppe Pavoni delle feste celebrate nelle solennissime nozze delli Serenissimi sposi il Sig. Don Ferdinando Medici e la Sig. Donna Christiana di Loreno Gran Duchini di Toscana* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1589).

45. Andrews, "The Madness of Isabella," in *Thirty Scenarios*, 225–38. He includes the Pavoni version for comparison as an appendix to Day 38.

46. The Platonic concept of "divine madness" as the source of poetic inspiration that took artists out of themselves and transmuted them to meld with the Divine was regarded as an alchemic mystery that led to the production of great art. For Isabella's performance, see Anne MacNeil, "The Divine Madness of Isabella Andreini," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 120 (1995): 195–215.

She then turned to imitating the speech of all her colleagues in the company, such as Pantalone, Dottor Graziano, Zanni, Pedrolino, Francatrippa, Burattino, Captain Cardone, and Franceschina—all with such natural conviction, and with such senseless utterances, that no tongue can express the power and talent of this lady.⁴⁷

Scala and Venice

If Scala was present at the 1589 wedding gala and performed the role of the lover Flavio, it makes it possible to assume that he was familiar with the Gelosi performances during the 1580s and 90s. While we have scant evidence of his relationship with the Gelosi during those years, it is possible to comment on his life in Venice where he became a longtime resident. He based himself there because it was a cosmopolitan city with a vibrant and diverse culture, resistant to the papal Inquisition that elsewhere curtailed the activities of the professional theater condemned by the post-Tridentine church.⁴⁸ In addition to his busy life on the road as an actor and company director, Scala was the proprietor of a perfume shop located on the Rialto.⁴⁹ The Rialto was the hub of the mercantile life of the city, where native and foreign merchants mingled easily, and alongside of their commercial activity, exchanged ideas on literary, scientific, religious, and occult topics. Scala's perfume shop provided a place where artists, literati, and alchemists could gather to discuss the structure of the heavens as revealed by the newly-invented telescope, and delve into alchemy and other scientific and occult areas of knowledge. Scala may also have brought aspects of the secret knowledge he pursued there into his theatrical practice.⁵⁰ Interested in the complete sensory experience that theater offered, his knowledge of combining various elements to make perfumes and potions, as well

47. Andrews, *Thirty Scenarios*, 237. It is important for our purposes to note how dominant the zanni and related comic marks are here, including the maidservant Franceschina. Several of these masks are noted as performers involved with the Academy of the Blenio Valley (Accademia del Val di Blenio.) Since there is no direct evidence to tie Scala to the Academy of the Blenio Valley, this line of inquiry has not been pursued except for one further reference; see *The Fake Husband*, note 10.

48. In Venice such important political reformers as Paolo Sarpi were engaged in a long fight to keep Venice independent and powerful enough to resist interference from Rome. Sarpi was connected with Scala's mentor Don Giovanni de' Medici through the War of Gradisca, 1615–1617. For Sarpi, see David Wootton, *Paolo Sarpi: Between Renaissance and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

49. The first mention of the perfume shop occurs in a letter written in November 1615, but he may have owned it for some time before; see *Corrispondenze*, 1:454–56.

50. Landolfi mentions how knowing “secrets” dealing with the preparation of soaps, perfumes, etc., were foundational to Scala's profession, as is evident from a famous treatise published in Venice in 1555: Giovanventura Rosetti, *I notandissimi secreti de l'arte profumatoria, a fare ogli, acque, paste, balle, moscardini, uccelletti, paternostri, e tutta l'arte intiera* (Venice: per Francesco Rampazetto, 1555). See *Corrispondenze*, 1:582n1; letter 106, May 9, 1624.