TROUBLING DOUBLING, EXCEPTIONAL *Oeconomia*, AND
COMPENSATION IN *GL'INGANNATI*

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Summary: Recent studies of *Gl'Ingannati* have offered keen insights into its ground-breaking take on the intersection of gender confusion and erotic attraction, often locating the play's importance in its cross-dressing heroine, Lelia. Yet this research leaves room for considerations of the whole context of the performance event, especially in relation to *Il Sacrificio*, a performance presented earlier by the Accademici degli Intronati, and how specific moments were performed on stage. This article suggests that, as salient and significant an innovation as Lelia is, the Intronati's performance of *Gl'Ingannati* is even more conspicuous as a negotiation of anxieties arising from a troublesome combination of *oeconomia* and *eros* in performance. Reading the many aspects of the play in which non-normative gender and *eros* intersect with neoclassical comic theory and practice reveals anxiety about the implications of these intersections, in turn uncovering moments clearly created to compensate for those implications. Three means of compensation are legible in the play: the complicated depiction of the pedant, Messer Piero, as a sodomite; the repeated articulation of a fear that any male, young or old, could express sodomitical desire; and numerous graphic descriptions of virile heteroeroticism.

Perhaps the most widely circulated Italian comedy in its own time, *Gl'Ingannati* as a performance and publication event has the aura of legend about it. As the story goes, on the night of the Epiphany, 1532, the Accademici degli Intronati got into some deep trouble.¹ They were noble young men of Siena who had formed an academic society, dedicating themselves solely to study, an idea echoed later in one of Shakespeare's comedies, *Love's Labours Lost*. But unlike Shakespeare's King of Navarre, the Intronati, though their name ironically means dazed or slow-witted, were astute

¹ This is the account given in the prologue of *Gl'Ingannati*. Sienese governmental records note the preparations and performances as happening from Epiphany to the end of Carnival of 1531, which in modern dating equates to 1532, because in local practice the new year began on March 25; see Newbiggin's preface (*Gl'Ingannati* v-xix) for a thorough publication and performance history.

enough not to shun the society of women.² Quite the opposite in fact, theirs was a literary society whose worldly atmosphere as a sort of “imitation court” seemed to require a female presence.³ Unfettered by domestic demands, intelligent and cultured women played prominent roles, both intellectual and romantic, in the Intronati’s gatherings.⁴ But this dynamic seems to have changed when the knights of the Intronati put on a masque-like performance called *Il Sacrificio* (“The Sacrifice”), in which they rejected love by burning the gifts of their ladies in order to dedicate themselves to study. The women were reportedly so offended by this rejection of love tokens that the whole culture surrounding the Intronati’s academy was threatened. The mementos sacrificed held considerable emotional, erotic, and material value: a “handkerchief wet with tears,” a ring, a pillowcase, a gold chain, a lock of hair, a crown of pearls set in gold, a set of four sonnets, a mirror, a glove, a portrait, a pair of spectacles, a writing pen, a clock, a knife (Newbiggin, *Gl’ingannati con Il sacrificio*). The worth of these love objects made them more fineries and markers of elite status than trifles or tokens. In destroying such precious symbols, the Intronati rattled the very underpinnings of their “imitation court.” As legend would have it remembered, few months later, for Carnival, the Intronati collectively composed a play, *Gl’ingannati* (“The Deceived”), to make amends. Histories of the events of the Carnival season in Sienna that produced *Gl’ingannati* have become suffused in the complications of mimesis themselves. No historical evidence, aside from the scripts and their joint publication history, either supports or disproves the story of the great offense taken by the ladies of the Accademia degli Intronati in

² Guido Davico Bonino explains the academy’s appellation in this way in the introduction to his edition of *Gl’ingannati* (87). Some scholars—Geoffrey Bullough (2: 269-374) and Bruce Penman in the introduction to his translation of the play—translate “Intronati” as “Thunderstruck (by love)” on account of the facts I outline below from Bonino’s introduction; but Richard Andrews modifies this literal definition to the “local vernacular” meaning of “vague, thick-headed and slow in the uptake,” wittily translating the name as “The Academy of the Deaf and Daft” (*Scripts* 91).

³ Andrews uses the term “imitation court” to describe the Intronati’s academy as a system created by the aristocrats of Siena to “project their class dominance in terms of social behavior patterns and cultural production” and the notion that the Accademia’s very existence was a form of mimesis resonates nicely with the larger concerns of my argument (*Scripts* 91).

⁴ While this female presence was no doubt integral to the culture of the Intronati’s academy, Fahy makes the point that women were, with a single exception, not admitted as official members to the academy.

response to *Il Sacrificio*. Consequently, critics have presumed there to be a fictional quality to this context. The ladies were either playing along with a “game,” according to Nerida Newbiggin, a lighthearted part of a “long sexual debate” (*Gl’ingannati con Il sacrificio* xvi-xvii); or, as Nino Borsellino describes it in his edition of the play, the women were performing, too—“pretending” to be offended (197). The uncertain reality of this performance context, besides providing a fitting legacy for a genre so concerned with the ambiguities that arise between representation and truth, demands further consideration—even if it yields, like scholarly attempts to assign the play’s authorship to a single person, no definitive conclusions.⁵ It is worth weighing the implications of this story being “real”—that is, if the stakes were high, the intentions serious, and the reactions sincere—but also, the possibilities implied if the context were “fake,” if the offense on the part of the women was another in a series of performances that took place as much in the audience as on stage.

Whether the stakes of its success were fictive or not, however, this self-proclaimed apology piece proved pleasing enough to garner a widespread and enduring popularity in the *Cinquecento*. The play has even earned lasting historical, literary, and theatrical significance because of its particular innovations. The turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century saw new attention paid to *Gl’Ingannati*, as Italianist scholars, particularly those focused on gender and sexuality in early modernity, have explored the play and offered keen insights into its ground-breaking take on the intersection of gender confusion and erotic attraction, most often identifying the play’s intriguing aspects with its cross-dressing heroine, Lelia.⁶ This increasingly

⁵ Many potential authors have been theorized without much substantiating evidence, including Marcantonio Piccolomini or Alessandro Piccolomini—both members of the Intronati—or Lodovico Castelvetro. The most recent attempt at attribution is by Giovanni Aquilecchia, who suggests a collaboration between Francesco Maria Molza and Claudio Tolomei. No evidence, however, has been decisive enough to dispute the Intronati’s claim to collective authorship.

⁶ I discuss the scholarly focus on Lelia further below. The play’s far reaching success is evidenced by the fact of its speedy publication and multiple reprintings, numbering more than twenty by the end of the century, not to mention other Italian versions, French, Spanish, and Latin translations, as well as English imitations, most notably Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. *Gl’Ingannati* was published together with *Il Sacrificio* as early as 1534. Interestingly, this volume uniting the two was the first publishing venture by the Intronati, and this pairing of the two play texts consequently meant that they were confused for each other for most of the sixteenth century (Newbiggin, *Gl’ingannati con Il sacrificio* v-xii).

fruitful critical focus on the play, however, can be even further cultivated by reading these theatrical events through the lens of the comic theory of the times, and with a feel for comic performance practice as well. As insightful as recent research has been, it leaves room for considerations of the whole context of the performance event, especially *Gl'Ingannati's* relation to *Il Sacrificio* and how specific moments were played on stage by the *accademici*, thus leaving an important narrative in the culture of this unique group largely untold. Attention to the play's context, its implementation of comic theory, and the staging possibilities, reveals that there is more to Lelia than the fascinating novelty of a complex romantic heroine, and more to *Gl'Ingannati* than Lelia.

Gl'Ingannati, like many erudite (or regular) comedies before and after it, involves representations of gender and sexuality that seem to contradict the classical moral and procreative drive of comedy and suggest a potentially disruptive mimesis, which invites exploration of the specific mechanisms of such non-heteronormative representations of gender and sexuality, and their cultural and historical ramifications.⁷ The play exemplifies the formal, neoclassical rules of comedy while simultaneously flouting the moral and didactic aspects of the rhetorical, Ciceronian function of comedy: to teach, to delight, and to move. One significant feature of neoclassical comic theory and practice, *oeconomia*, concerns the artful management of events and logic in the comic plot. An analysis of *oeconomia* in *Gl'Ingannati* illuminates the complicated workings of the academy's cultural structures, which both produced and depended upon gender play and erotic confusion as they encompassed play text and performance event. Furthermore, reading the many aspects of the play in which non-normative gender and *eros* intersect with comic theory and practice reveals anxiety about the implications of these intersections, in turn uncovering moments clearly created to compensate for those implications. As salient and significant an innovation as Lelia is, the Intronati's performance of *Gl'Ingannati* is even more conspicuous as a negotiation of anxieties arising from a troublesome combination of *oeconomia* and *eros* in performance.

From the start, *Gl'Ingannati* demonstrates a complicated relationship to the norms of neoclassical comic form and function. The play's prologue makes a point of announcing a remarkably atypical didacticism. Rife with

⁷ I should note here that I use the terms mimesis and mimetic to refer to a usually theatrical process of representation or imitation. Mimesis, used in this way, helpfully recalls the Classical Greek theories of Plato and Aristotle, while also encompassing Renaissance, humanist imitative practices.

erotic *double entendres*, the prologue presents the comedy solely as a means to placate the ladies in the audience who were offended by *Il Sacrificio*.⁸ In a staged afterthought, the script of the prologue self-consciously skips the standard statement of plot, or the *argomento*: “Oh! Or ch’io mi ricordo: non v’aspettate altro argomento perchè quello che ve lo aveva a fare non è in punto.” (“Oh yeah! I just remembered: don’t expect to hear the argument of the play, because the guy who was assigned to do it isn’t ready”).⁹ This admission of incompetence not only reinforces the Intronati’s ironic claim to dunderheadedness, but it also finishes off an intentional disruption of comic convention at work from the beginning of the prologue. Early on, the prologue ignores the moralizing half of the comic double goal of instruction and delight, identifying the Intronati’s sole purpose as pleasure:

come ella si sia, gli basta ch’ella piaccia a voi sole: alle quali essi, con ogni loro studio, si sono ingegnati sempre di piacere principalmente....

whatever this comedy may be, it’s enough for the Intronati that it pleases you ladies alone, since, in all of their studious endeavors, they have always sought to give pleasure more than anything else....

Such an adamant focus on pleasure above all else does more than potentially help to mollify offended female audience members. It brings to mind a tension in the humanism of the time between Christian mores, which classified as unnatural even heterosexual sex that was only for pleasure and not procreation, and the intense (homo)eroticism of the neoclassical texts

⁸ While prologue seeks to make amends and flatter the ladies in the audience, quite teasingly at times, it could not really be seen as proto-feminist in any way. In fact, it works hard to reinstate the Intronati into the role they had rejected in *Il Sacrificio* (that of courtly lovers at the mercy of their beloveds) and in doing so objectifies the ladies of the audience while ostensibly empowering them by emphasizing the control they have over the men. The pervasive erotic and phallic double meanings of the prologue could seem threatening, if it weren’t for the consistent self-deprecation on the part of the Intronati, and the expectation of what Andrews calls “sexual innuendo suitable for the last night of carnival” (*Scripts* 93).

⁹ All citations of *Gl’Ingannati* refer to Bonino’s edition, and the translations are mine unless otherwise noted. My translations aim for phrasing and tone that would work in performance, which sometimes amounts to taking a bit of theatrical license. Giannetti and Ruggiero’s translations in *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance* capture many of the performance possibilities, so I cite their version on several occasions.

on which humanist societies like the Intronati focused their studies.¹⁰

The double goal of comedy further gives way to *double entendre* when the prologue finally turns to the goal of instruction. It does so by first focusing again on flattering the ladies, and then by troubling the standard comic morality. Referring to the information that would have been covered in the abandoned *argomento*, the prologue states suggestively:

Laltre cose, io penso che voi siate così capaci che la materia v'entrerà per se stessa senza troppa fatica. Due ammaestramenti sopra tutto ne cavarete: quanto possa il caso e la buona fortuna nelle cose d'amore; e quanto, in quelle, vaglia una longa pazienza accompagnata da buon consiglio. Il che due fanciulle, con il lor saper, vi mostreranno;...

That other stuff? I think you're capable enough that you can fathom the point of the material without too much effort. Take away these two teachings above all else: how far chance and good fortune can go in matters of love; and in such matters, how valuable great patience accompanied by good advice can be. Two young ladies, with their knowledge, will demonstrate for you....

These few phrases function on a number of different levels. While praising the ladies' intelligence, the first statement also continues the prologue's remarkable use of language with bawdy double meanings; "entrerà" carries both the sense of physical penetration and engagement in discourse. Not only are the women smart enough to get the point of the play without much effort, they are capable enough that they will easily allow other points (the phallic ones) to penetrate, too. This alternate sexual meaning is rather tame compared to the language in the rest of the prologue, which has great fun with the double meanings of words like "lingua" 'tongue' and "punta" 'point'—not to mention a promise to let the ladies "star di sopra in ogni cosa e esser sempre le prime" 'always be on top and always come first.'¹¹ The placement of this *double entendre* is crucial, because the bawdiness undercuts the potential seriousness of the lessons that follow. Those two "ammaestramenti" seem straightforward enough, but not only are they preceded by erotically playful words, they also identify the *maestri* of these teachings as two female characters whose actions in the play demonstrate

¹⁰ See, for example, Giannetti's discussion of the neoclassical homoeroticism of founding Intronato Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria*, published the year before the *Accademia's* productions of *Il Sacrificio* and *Gl'Ingannati* (*Lelia's Kiss* 163-164).

¹¹ The English here is from Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero's translation of the play (207), which I think nailed it well.

significant breaks with the moral decorum of the time. Lelia, the heroine of the play, escapes her temporary convent home, disguises herself as a boy, takes the name Fabio and enters into the service of the young man she still loves, her former suitor, Flamminio. Isabella, Flammino's current love interest, immodestly pursues "Fabio" the messenger instead of the master. Crucially, the prologue does not present these women as providing bad examples that are not to be imitated, but rather, they are described as demonstrating (*mostrare*) with their knowledge (*sapere*). To reinforce the lessons alluded to in the prologue, the verb *ammaestrare* does show up again within the body of the play, not as the moral of the story once order is restored in the end, but early on, as a particularly indecorous example. Lelia recounts to her nurse Clemenzia how a young nun, Suor Amabile, taught her to dress and behave as a young man in order to get close to Flamminio: "amaestrommi del modo ch'io avevo tenere" 'she showed me how I should act' (1:3).¹² What is interesting about the prologue is that, while a certain amount of bawdry is fitting for a comedy during Carnival, such licentious freedom is usually contained by the matrimonial resolution of the comic plot, and its lessons—that is, the moral of the story. But the *Intronati* use their pose of ineptitude to brazenly avoid stating the plot and its supposed moral containment, and then invite the audience to await lessons that turn out to be especially immoral.

Much of the recent scholarship on *Gl'Ingannati* finds the play influential and groundbreaking in its time precisely because of its atypical characters, primarily Lelia.¹³ Each of these character-focused studies either counters or complicates the previously common assumption that, as Newbigin

¹² This is also Giannetti and Ruggiero's rendering.

¹³ According to Laurie Shepard, "Lelia is responsible in large measure for the comedy's success" because of the novel and unique complexity of her character with respect to the comic tradition already in formation early in the sixteenth century: "unlike the majority of unidimensional characters in Renaissance comedy, Lelia becomes, by turns, confused, desperate, reckless and witty" (6). Similarly, Karen Newman highlights the play's divergence from previous transvestite comedies "in its emphasis on feeling and the internal development of its characters" (208). Laura Giannetti focuses her keen articulation of the importance of play in *cinquecento* drama on Lelia as well, noting that "Lelia is literally a major player, a female character who is courageous, clever and strong, an important model for an impressive number of later imitations in literature and on the European stage" ("On The Deceptions of the Deceived" 59) and places her at the center of her subsequent monograph, *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy*.

for example insists, *Gl'Ingannati* still adheres to the conservative goals of *cinquecento* comedy, despite the pioneering aspects of the play's characters and plot:

Neo-classical comedy cannot not be conservative, because according to all of its internal conventions, it presents love that overcomes obstacles in order to end in marriage. "Love" implies characters of the uppermost social classes, and a marriage between such characters can only take place between people of equal birth and means. (*Gl'ingannati con Il sacrificio* xvii)¹⁴

In other words, for Newbigin, the innovations of the play do suggest a certain empowering appeal to the women of both the courtly Sieneese audience and the larger European one, but the regularity of *Gl'Ingannati* implies that a certain social containment still occurs. Yet close attention to the Intronati's innovative use of comic forms reveals the play's conventional regularity to be as deceptive, as complicated, and as momentous, as Lelia's disguise and behavior. The conservatism of the play's regular structure is negated by the Intronati's radical implementation of the comic rules, and the play's simultaneous flaunting of comic form and flouting of the associated moral content is not achieved solely through the innovations of Lelia's character. Despite the play's typically restorative matrimonial ending, it is hard to see a purely conservative effect in a play that begins by announcing its defiance of convention and ends up almost single-handedly changing the face of European comedy for the next century. Whether as part of the performative fiction of a "game" or "sexual debate" or as a sincere response to a serious pseudo-courtly crisis, *Gl'Ingannati* seems at first glance to succeed as a remedy that allows the Intronati to have their cake and eat it, too. That is, they can produce an *imitatio* that both displays

¹⁴ "La commedia neo-classica non può non essere conservatrice, perchè secondo tutte le convenzioni interne, presenta l'amore che supera diversi ostacoli per risolversi nel matrimonio. 'Amore' implica personaggi dei ceti superiori, e un matrimonio fra tali personaggi può aver luogo solo fra persone di nascita e di beni uguali." Newbigin's point about the socio-economic conservatism of the comic form holds for *Gl'Ingannati*, but not necessarily for all of these comedies; Aretino's *Talanta* is an example of a highly regular comedy that manages to perform some class critique; Robert Henke's "Comparing Poverty: Fictions of a 'Poor Theater' in Ruzante and Shakespeare" explores the possibilities for theatrical representations of poverty to "transform the social consciousness of the internal audience, and possibly of the external audience as well" (213).

mastery of neoclassical comic form and theory, reaffirming their place as culturally elite humanists, and also present the innovation of a romantic heroine in active and successful pursuit of mature and courtly love, appealing to their audience of demanding, if not genuinely aggravated, female critics and lovers. This theatrical and social achievement depends upon the interweaving of performance text and context in the Intronati's 1532 carnival season performances. But at the same time, closer examination of the play text and its performance implications reveals how uneasy they are about that success. The supposed containment created by the play's comic ending may have reinforced the Intronati's "imitation court" as legend and legacy, but it carries along with it illuminating anxieties about the stability of that social structure. Far from serving a conservative function, the imbrication of comic theory and *eros* in *Gl'Ingannati* provides sites for the disruption of sixteenth-century gender norms, and not without provoking considerable anxiety along the way.

Such anxiety-provoking proficiency emerges from various performance economies, which are laced with gender and *eros* in both the comic theory of the time and the specific practice of *Gl'Ingannati* as a performance event. Economy was a concept that figured prominently in the neoclassical comic theory of the *Cinquecento*—the theory that humanist dramatists like the Intronati ostensibly sought to put into practice. *Oeconomia* is a rhetorical term, applied to drama and especially comedy in the early sixteenth century, that addresses the skillful disposition of plot and linking of scenes in comedies. Marvin Herrick points out *paraskeue*, or preparation, as one aspect of *oeconomia* particularly stressed by Terentian commentators.¹⁵ In order to create a tightly managed and elegantly disposed plot, the author must set up or prepare for coming events, so that each complication or obstacle (or resolution thereof) precipitates logically from what has previously been seen and heard on stage. The term *oeconomia* came into neoclassical comic theory from the influential *Institutio Oratoriae* of Quintilian, who in turn got it from the Greeks. As he enumerates the parts of oratory, in addition to placing a high value on "dispositione" 'arrangement,' Quintilian mentions that:

¹⁵ Herrick devotes considerable attention to these and other related terms (101-106). See also Lorna Hutson's insightful application of this term in *The Usurer's Daughter* 30-41, and Kathy Eden's illuminating relation of *oeconomia* to the ideal of readerly accommodation in *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and its Humanist Reception* 27-40.

Hermagoras places *judgment, division, order* and everything relating to *expression* under the heading of *economy* [*oeconomiae*], a Greek word meaning the management of domestic affairs which is applied metaphorically to oratory and has no Latin equivalent. (3.3.1-9)¹⁶

Earlier, when discussing whom the orator ought to read, Quintilian praises Latin authors for both their word choice and their *oeconomia*: “They are, too, more careful about dramatic structure [*oeconomia*] than the majority of moderns, who regard epigram as the sole merit of every kind of literary work” (1.8.9). *Oeconomia* for Quintilian encompasses holistic artistry, both structural and expressive, as opposed to witticisms that stand alone and do not serve the larger form or idea of the comedy. Crucially for an understanding of *Gl’Ingannati*, Quintilian also connects these authors’ admirable *oeconomia* to their “*Sanctitas ... et ... virilitas*” ‘purity ... and ... manliness’ (1.8.9). So *oeconomia*, as a prescriptive ideal for holistically integrated form and content, also further reinforces the gendered moral and didactic goals attached to *cinquecento* comedy. Part of what comedy is meant to teach its audience, while also delighting and moving them in accord with the Ciceronian dictum, is a highly masculinized moral strength and purity. Quintilian’s pairing of “*sanctitas et virilitas*” is revealing when set against the backdrop of the Intronati’s 1532 performances.

Gl’Ingannati turns out to exemplify *oeconomia* in its nearly flawless and delightfully executed comic plot.¹⁷ Yet many features of the play, such as the prologue with its pleasure-first approach to comedy and its disregard for the decorum of an *argomento*, threaten to distance the Intronati from the moral goal of purity, and steer the comic economy away from the gendered ideal of manliness as well. Highly and expertly structured, *Gl’Ingannati* seems the epitome of *oeconomia* as it came to be understood in comedy during the first half of the *Cinquecento*. This comic *oeconomia* also works as a systematizing of exchanges, or comic mistakings of one thing for another, the *quid pro quo* that fuels the increasing complexities of the comic plot. Various types of such exchanges support the extraordinary *oeconomia* of the play. Whether it is the servants Crivello and Scatizza mistaking Isabella forcing herself on Fabio/Lelia as consensual kissing, the old men Gherardo and Virginio mistaking Lelia’s long-lost brother Fabrizio for Lelia in disguise, or everyone mistaking Lelia for a boy, it becomes apparent that most of the comic exchanges of *Gl’Ingannati*’s *oeconomia* both depend upon and provide sites for gender-

¹⁶ The italics here and below are originally in the English translation of the Latin.

¹⁷ That “nearly”—the one flaw in the play’s *oeconomia*—turns out to be a particularly anxious and revealing moment, as I discuss below.

play and eroticism. Integral to *oeconomia* and especially *paraskeue*, comic exchange is tied to the basic problems of mimesis as well as *eros* and gender: *quid pro quo*, one piece of information for another, one body for another body, one gender for another gender, one set of signs for a (mostly) different one. The exchanges that distribute character, events, and information (in ways both chaos-inducing and restorative of order) for comic *oeconomia* rely on mistakes, if not deceptions. Having chosen to defy the expected moral lessons of a delightful comic plot, the *Intronati* executed the skill of *oeconomia* in such a way that they both disregarded and destabilized the purity and manliness Quintilian associated with it. *Gl'Ingannati*, through both its plot and its title, suggests that comic performance involves dangerous (mis)takings of one thing in exchange for another.¹⁸

The most self-conscious of these comic mistaken exchanges center, as might be expected, on the characters of Lelia and Fabrizio, not simply because one sibling is mistaken for the other in disguise, but because they were, as Richard Andrews argues in “*Gli Ingannati* as a Text for Performance,” written to be played by one actor. Such a doubling exemplifies one definition of performance economy—two characters for the price of one actor—but it also reinforces how such economies work to threaten the stability of gender and *eros* in *Gl'Ingannati* and in the broader social performance event. Along these lines, Laura Giannetti helpfully demonstrates the disruptive possibilities of *cinquecento* gender ambiguity and *eros*. She argues that instances of highly emplotted transvestitism in early *cinquecento* theater “suggest that authors deliberately wanted to have the audience reflect on the different meanings involved in the play of crossing gender boundaries” (“When Male Characters Pass as Women” 746). Noting a proliferation of laws regulating cross-dressing that occurred at the start of the *cinquecento*, she articulates how the interrelated anxieties underlying the various implications of cross-gender play “threatened the traditional notions of gender” on one level and “evoked fears of loss of masculine authority and of dangerously transgressive sexual behavior, especially sodomy” on another (749-50). While her article only addresses male characters who dress as women, the cultural implications that she teases out of such performances are clearly at work in *Gl'Ingannati* as well.¹⁹

¹⁸ See Giannetti's discussion of Ariosto's early comedy *I Suppositi* for an example of how such “exchanges” had homoerotic implications, both troubling and titillating, to the audience of the times (*Lelia's Kiss* 165-66).

¹⁹ Giannetti later focuses on “Women in Men's Clothing” in a chapter of *Lelia's Kiss*, noting again that the playwrights of several *cinquecento* comedies she studies seem cognizant that (feminine) gender attributes “deemed ‘natural’ or ‘nor-

Moreover, adding *Gl'Ingannati's* double casting of Lelia and Fabrizio onto the cross-gender casting further amplifies the diversity of signification that Giannetti posits, and creates resonances with the social performance events of 1532 Siena, revealing vibrant undertones of anxiety about those “different meanings”—that they denote associations with emasculating and homoerotic cultural practices.

A close analysis of *Gl'Ingannati* as a performance text bears out how the play creates these undertones by troubling the naturalness of gender. Simply outlining the multiple layers of gender performance demanded of the actor playing Lelia and Fabrizio, and the gender interpretations demanded of the audience, demonstrates how such a dizzying performance must have made apparent the constructedness of gender. However extensively gender attributes were perceived to be natural and essential in sixteenth century Italy, the more mistaken exchanges and layers of gender involved in the performance, the more gender attributes appear as arbitrary rather than essential. Lelia is supposed to be a girl playing a boy (Fabio), and the boy actor (one of the Intronati) who plays this girl (Lelia) playing a boy (Fabio) *also* plays a boy (Fabrizio) who is *not* playing a girl (Lelia) playing a boy (Fabio) but is mistaken for a girl (Lelia) playing a boy (Fabio). Or, slightly more simply, a boy (Fabrizio) gets mistaken (by Virginio and Gherardo, among others) for a girl (Lelia) playing a boy (Fabio). The original stage directions introducing each scene emphasize the performance acuity, gender awareness, and discursive specificity needed to keep this all straight. Unsurprisingly, Lelia is always described with relative verbosity—for example in act 2, scene 1 “Lelia da ragazzo sotto il nome di Fabio” ‘Lelia dressed as a boy going by the name of Fabio’ or finally in act 5, scene 3 “Lelia da femina” ‘Lelia in female dress.’ Nearly every main character in a given scene is introduced by a name and short descriptive early on, e.g. for act 3, scene 3 “Virginio vecchio e Clemenzia balia” ‘Old man Virginio and Nursemaid Clemenzia’ but then the modifier is soon omitted, as in act 4, scene 2 “Gherardo, Virginio e Pedante” ‘Gherardo, Virginio, Pedant.’ Lelia’s lengthier character descriptions, in contrast, remain throughout. Crucially, Fabrizio’s name is accompanied by the description “giovinetto” ‘young man’ with unusual consistency all the way until his two scenes in the fifth act, both of which demand that he look like Lelia in drag. In the first of these scenes, the opening of act 5, he is mistaken for Lelia in disguise as Fabio; in his next and final scene, act 5,

mal’ were largely cultural constructions—a relative convention rather than an absolute truth” (25).

scene 6, he has already consummated a relationship with Isabella, but she and Clemenzia remark that he “par tutto Lelia” ‘looks just like Lelia.’ The correlation of the length of these stage directions with levels of gender disguise and ambiguity highlights the varying types of gender performance expected of the actor, or at the very least, imagined by the reader.

That the Lelia/Fabrizio doubling troubles the naturalness of gender in particular is further supported by a rarely discussed quirk of this transvestite comedy. The confusions and complications that fuel the plot of *Gl'Ingannati* are explicitly—and unusually—*not* rooted in some preternatural physical similarity of Lelia and Fabrizio. *Gl'Ingannati* in many ways participates in the Plautine tradition of twins causing comic confusion, but unlike the identical characters in Plautus' *Menaechmi*, or Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena's seminal Plautine imitation, *La Calandra*, Lelia and Fabrizio are not marked as twins, nor does the play mention any physical similarity between the two—wondrous or otherwise. A quick look at the importance placed on the twins in *La Calandra* puts *Gl'Ingannati* in context. The *argomento* preceding Bibbiena's play begins by telling of a brother and sister, Lidio and Santilla who were astoundingly identical twins, “tanto di forma e di presenza simili che, dove il vestire la differenza non faceva, non era chi l'uno dall'altro cognoscere potessi” ‘so similar in form and bearing that, when they weren't dressed differently, there was no one who could tell one from the other’ (11). And later, the *argomento* makes a point of reminding the audience of the twins' identity, directly warning the spectators to be careful not to confuse the two because they look, dress, talk, and even laugh the same (12). The repeated announcements of Lidio and Santilla's mutual singularity are quite pronounced, and they underscore the absence of such a description (never mind an *argomento*) in *Gl'Ingannati*. This lacuna draws unusual attention to the gendering of Lelia and Fabrizio as something all the more confusing in itself, rather than something made confusing by the rare identity of twins. *Gl'Ingannati* is also unique in that the characters mistaken for each other do not appear in a scene together. The *Intronati* do not give their audience the chance to compare the appearance of Lelia and Fabrizio, to affirm (performed) gender differences, or similarities. *Gl'Ingannati* leaves its audience with no firm ground to stand on regarding the performance of gender; in the end, one young man's performance of a girl who plays a boy and of a boy who does not play a girl but is mistaken for a girl playing a boy, insistently asks: what belongs to masculinity, what to femininity, what to both, what to neither?

Not only does the doubling of Lelia and Fabrizio trouble gender conventions while exemplifying both comic *oeconomia* and spectacular econo-

my, it also points to the considerable performance skills that this actor/*accademico* must have possessed. This very proficiency in turn brings up classical anxieties about the negative consequences of that mimetic prowess—that is, it could lead to permanent effeminacy, or deceit. It is possible to read backwards for these concerns about disruptive gender performance from various aspects of *Gl'Ingannati* that seem to act as remedies or compensations for such anxiety. The skillfully interwoven deceptions that characterize the Intronati's *oeconomia* demand consideration not only because they act as illuminating refractions of the academy's socially-vested, heteroerotically-charged, aristocratic, intellectual society, but also because they seem to trigger uncomfortable associations with emasculation and homoerotic cultural practices. The economy of the *Gl'Ingannati*—the very economical proficiency of the playwriting and performance—while no doubt motivated by the Intronati's desire to demonstrate mastery of elite humanist *imitatio*, also constitutes a threat that must be dispelled when read along with the play's gender confusion and its atypical didacticism and eroticism. *Gl'Ingannati* is full of situations and characters that articulate sites for projection of, and compensation for, this anxiety.

Cultural historians make a strong case for the complexity of the anxiety surrounding homoerotic practices, labeled as sodomy, in early modern Italy. In his historical study of sodomy in Renaissance Florence (surrounding the Savonarola inquiries), *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*, Michael Rocke discusses the terms “sodomy” and “sodomite” in the early modern context, pointing out that the terms seem in some instances to have been used the way we use the words “homosexuality” and “homosexual;” however, his study finds that the terms refer more to specific acts, regardless of the biological sex of the participants. The label of sodomy, according to Rocke, depends especially on the gendered roles, the age and aggressiveness, of the persons participating (110). In another study, “Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy,” which discusses sexual culture on the Italian peninsula more generally, Rocke notes that “Same-sex relations, classified as sodomy, provide an especially revealing perspective on the construction of masculine identity” (165). Sodomy, which referred primarily to sex between men but could also involve non-procreative heterosexual acts, “was one of the most frequently prosecuted and heavily penalized crimes in Italy between 1400 and 1600” (166). But the largest extent of legal and social anxiety about sodomy stems from the ways in which it threatens the decorum of societal prescriptions of gender roles. The “passive” role in sex between men was

understood within a heterosexual frame, so that boys or young men who were anally sodomized by older males were referred to as women or wives, and generally given lighter punishments, if any at all (*Forbidden Friendships* 87-110). The most extreme punishments were reserved for adult men playing the “passive” role in sex, because they violated both heteronormative decorum, and a highly-gendered, “hierarchical pattern” that governed sexual relations between men (*Forbidden Friendships* 113-119). For a succinct description of this hierarchical cultural situation, Guido Ruggiero’s articulation of the liminal status of adolescent men in early modern Italy is worth quoting at length:

Reaching a certain sexual maturity at puberty that expected adult males to be sexually aggressive, and in general active rather than passive, a “youth” found himself passive in virtually every way—except, perhaps, in soldiering and expression of violence—until he was admitted to full manhood in his late twenties or early thirties with marriage... (“Marriage” 23-24).

Ruggiero also connects fears about “active” sodomy with the “particularly difficult time” of male adolescence, describing how a “subculture of sodomy evolved and emerged” (24). While no study of the Sienese academy provides evidence that some or all of the members of the Intronati who composed *Gl’Ingannati* participated in such a “subculture of sodomy,” several aspects of *Gl’Ingannati* suggest that the *accademici* were aware of, and using the play to respond to, aspects of this subculture that seemed too close for comfort. They were, after all, mostly young men during this transitional time of their lives, who founded an academy in order to shun the acts of war that constituted what was potentially their only legal and morally sanctioned outlet for aggression; then, they also rejected their heteroerotic role as courtly lovers—in a very public manner, whether feigned or sincere.²⁰ This anxiety is implied primarily by three means of compensation legible in the play: the complicated depiction of the pedant, Messer Piero, as a sodomite; the repeated articulation of a fear that any male,

²⁰ See Newbigin (*Gl’ingannati con Il sacrificio* vi-vii), for a concise but comprehensive account of the Intronati’s founding motivations, and Pettrachi Costantini, *passim*, for a more in-depth exploration.

²¹ In *Lelia’s Kiss*, Laura Giannetti labels such moments as “phallic revelations” and also connects them to the comic, and cultural, prescription that a young man mature into an “active and aggressive male” (19).

young or old, could express sodomitical desire; and numerous graphic descriptions of virile heteroeroticism.²¹

By the time *Gl'Ingannati* was written, the term “pedant” carried with it many associations and connotations, most of which were negative; originally, however, it was simply synonymous with pedagogue, or schoolmaster (Graf 171). A look at the tradition to which the pedant, Messer Piero, belongs—most concertedly studied by Antonio Stäuble—reveals what seem to be uncomfortable implications for the Intronati. These associated characteristics led to a fully developed character type, which unlike most other characters in comedies of the Italian Renaissance, had no precursor in the classical Roman theatre that inspired the *commedia erudita*. Instead, according to Stäuble, the pedant seems to have its possible origins in the humanistic satires which attacked authority figures and characters that, like the sodomitical priests ridiculed in the Pavese satire *Ianus Sacerdos*, represented an established and corrupt institution (15, 167). The pedant character of the sixteenth century comedies becomes the victim of various forms of joke and scorn. From the ruthless satire of early humanist comedy, the pedant emerges as a character remarkable in his lack of common sense, his laziness, incomprehensible language, and the worst kind of stupidity—that which comes with too much study (Stäuble 26). Ironically satirical characterizations like this clearly resonate with the irony and self-deprecation of the Intronati's chosen names, both collective and individual. Besides labeling the entire group as “The Dazed,” they gave themselves derogatory individual titles like *Lo Screddiato* (“The Discredited”), *Il Garoso* (“The Squabbler”), and *Il Sfacciato* (which Andrews brilliantly translates as “Cheeky” in *Scripts*; 92).²² As I allude to above, the prologue to *Gl'Ingannati* extends this self-deprecation to their performance skills as well, disclaiming (again with a double meaning) that the academic/actors may make “qualche errori nel muover della lingua” ‘some mistakes in using their tongues’ because “non l'hanno ancora ben preso” ‘they don't quite have the hang of it yet.’ It is as if the Intronati wanted to play humorously with the moral and erotic stereotypes about academic life, but did not want to seem too good at it.

Gl'Ingannati demonstrates that they were quite good at playing with comic form, especially *oeconomia*, and notably in ways that involve Piero and all of his problematic characteristics. Even though the pedant was frequently a main character, often a foil to the young lovers (an aspect that

²² Newbigin provides a list of the academic titles and the people attached to them (*Gl'ingannati con Il sacrificio* vii-ix).

evolved into the Dottore character in *Commedia dell'Arte*), he was often present mostly for laughs. Piero is certainly the butt of many jokes in *Gl'Ingannati*; his main occupation is the play is quarrelling with Stragualcia, a *zanni*-like character who spends every spare moment antagonizing and then ridiculing Piero precisely for his pedant characteristics. As he alternately rails at Piero and speaks to the audience, Stragualcia offers a prime example of how ridiculous the connotations of the word “pedant” are:

Doh pedante, arcipedante, pedante, pedantissimo! Puossi dir peggio che pedante? trovasi la peggior genia? ecci la maggior canaglia? trovasi esercizio peggiore? Forse che non vanno gonfiati perché altri gli chiama “messer tale” e “maestro quale?” [...] Comanda, messer caca, messer stronzo, maestro squaquara, messer merda? (4.1)

Oh pedant, King of Pedants, pedant, most pedant of all pedants! Can I say worse than pedant? Can there be a worse species? Is there a bigger scoundrel? Can you think of a worse occupation? Maybe if they didn't go around with their heads so swollen with pride because everyone calls them “Sir This” and “Professor That?” [...] Give your orders, Sir Ka-ka, Sir Asshole, Professor Diarrhea, Sir Shit!

Yet while he clearly works as a humor-inducing object of ridicule in the play, following traditional depictions of the pedant, Messer Piero functions as much more than just an object of humor in the play. He also serves key functions of comic *oeconomia*. It is Piero who guides Fabrizio through town, who searches out and finds Fabrizio and Lelia's father, and who finally sorts out some of the major confusions of the plot. Moreover, his role in the plot means that his most ridiculous characteristic, deviating slightly from the character's tradition, is not that he is thunderstruck (like the *Intronati*) into stupidity through devotion to study; otherwise, he could not manage the reasoning required of him as the vehicle for so much of the play's resolution.

This ridiculing of stock characters, in effect making them serve as bad examples, people *not* to be imitated by the audience, fulfills the didactic aim outlined for comedy by the Terentian commentators; but still, Piero occupies a more complicated position than simply supporting the structures and goals of the comic tradition or providing extraneous comic relief. This character emerges as a manifestation of an anxiety about sodomy circulating throughout the androgyny-fueled mistaken exchanges of *Gl'Ingannati*'s comic *oeconomia*. Another general characteristic of pedants in the sixteenth century is moral, specifically erotic, corruption; they are always chasing after the lady of the house, the maids, and the young boys

they teach (Graf 186). Whether attached to a family or a grammar school, the pedant character was strongly associated with sodomy and specifically pederasty, presumably taking advantage of so much time spent around young boys.²³ Offering another historical illumination into the association of the pedant and sodomy, Rocke notes that, while it seems fairly common that young boys could expect “being sodomized by their masters” to be “occasionally part of their schooling experience,” the factual evidence of the time “belies the over-worked parody of the pedant-sodomite in late medieval and early modern literature” (*Forbidden Friendships* 140). Whether or not this “parody” had a factual basis, it certainly had a cultural one, which manifests itself distinctly in Messer Piero of *Gl’Ingannati*. Some evidence suggests that the name “Piero” (or “Pietro”) was specifically associated with the “pedant-sodomite.” Of particular note in Rocke’s discussion is the mention of a notorious sodomite and schoolmaster, Piero di ser Bramante, as well as the famous sodomite of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Pietro di Vincolo (*Forbidden Friendships* 4, 299).

So while *Gl’Ingannati*’s Piero typifies the pedant in many ways, it is, interestingly, sodomy and pederasty that most often and most significantly characterize this pedant. Pederastic desire and sodomy comprise the one insult hurled at him by Stragualcia that Piero openly corroborates, or at least, that he cannot refute. When chiding Stragualcia for his drunkenness, Piero enters into a verbal sparring match which he must acknowledge that Stragualcia wins:

PEDANTE. Imbriaco! Imbriaco!

STRAGUALCIA. Pedante! Pedante!

PEDANTE. Lassa ch’io trovi il padrone...

STRAGUALCIA. Lasciate ch’io truovi suo padre!...

PEDANTE. Oh! A suo padre che puoi dir di me?

STRAGUALCIA. E voi che potete dir di me?

PEDANTE. Che tu sei un gaglioffo, un manigoldo, un infingardo, un poltrone, un pazzo, uno imbriaco, posso dire.

STRAGUALCIA. E io che voi sète un ladro, un giocatore, una mala lingua, un

²³ The particular association of the *maestro* and sodomy goes as far back as the *Commedia*, where Dante’s revered teacher is condemned to the seventh circle of Hell for being a sodomite. Rocke also notes that Dante refers to the Latin grammarian, Priscian, whom “early commentators” saw as representing “all grammar teachers” (*Forbidden Friendships* 135). This aspect of the pedant character has not been a very popular one for scholars to investigate, though recently Giannetti has taken up the topic in her chapter cited above “Pedants, Candlemakers, and Boys: Sodomy and comedy” (*Lelia’s Kiss* 153-192).

barro, un mariuolo, un frapattore, un vantatore, un capo grasso, uno sfacciatto, uno ignorante, un traditore, un sodomito, un tristo, posso dire.

PEDANTE. Noi siamo conosciuti.

STRAGUALCIA. Voi dite 'l vero. (4.1)

PEDANT. Drunk! Drunk!

STRAGUALCIA. Pedant! Pedant!

PEDANT. Just let me find the master...

STRAGUALCIA. Just let me find his father!...

PEDANT. Oh! What can you say about me to his father?

STRAGUALCIA. And what can you say about me?

PEDANT. That you are a scoundrel, a rascal, a slacker, a loafer, a nutcase, a drunk, I can say.

STRAGUALCIA. And me, that you are a thief, a gambler, a gossip, a swindler, a scoundrel, an impostor, a braggart, a fat-head, a disgrace, an ignoramus, a traitor, a sodomite, a wicked man, I can say.

PEDANT. So we've met.

STRAGUALCIA. You got that right.

Much of the humor of this interchange comes from Stragualcia's parrotting and mocking of Piero, but of particular note is the way the language is used; placed just before the summarizing "un tristo," "sodomito" gains a special importance, and the comedy comes in Piero's inability to object to Stragualcia's insults. The language of Piero later implies that he has also found a willing participant in his pupil, Fabrizio. When Messer Piero finally finds Fabrizio's father, he tries to get money out of him by describing what a good pedagogue he is, but his language hints at more than academic studies:

Padrone, io non dico per vantarmi; ma io ho fato per il vostro figliuolo...so ben io. E n'ho avuta cagione; ch'io no lo richiesi mai di cosa che subito egli non s'inchinasse a farla. (4.2)

Master, I don't mean to brag, but what I have done for your little boy...I know well. And I have good reason to know, for there is nothing I ask him for that he doesn't immediately bend over to do.

The choice of the verb *inchinare* by a pedant to describe what his pupil does for him would not have held the most innocent of connotations for the audience, highlighting sodomy once again as Piero's distinguishing pedant feature.

The laughter produced by Stragualcia's manipulations of Piero's erotic inclinations seems almost gentle and tolerant at times, but other moments of mockery take on a darker quality. When Piero hopes the master will have Stragualcia beaten for letting Fabrizio wander off alone, the servant

counters with a brutal description of the older sodomite's standard punishment if convicted:

E voi doveria far caricar di scope, di solfo, di pece, di polvere e darvi fuoco.... (4.1)

And he should have you loaded up with kindling, sulfur, tar, and gunpowder and set you on fire....

In a similar manner, later in the scene, Stragualcia shares with the audience why Messer Piero should not complain about the servant's loafing behavior:

Sa che non fece mai tristizia ch'io non sappia e che, s'io volesse, il potrei fare ardere, e pur mi sta a rompere il culo.

He knows that there isn't any wicked act he's done that I don't know about, and if I wanted to, I could have him burned, and he's still gonna bust my ass!

The variation in the tone of humor at the expense of the pedant and potential sodomite—from gentle teasing to violent threats—creates a particularly complicated overall position for Piero in *Gl'Ingannati*. Piero and references to sodomy seem to function, to a certain extent, like the Spanish soldier Giglio and references to the Spanish, as an outlet for animosity and compensation for a lack of control of current events.²⁴ Yet crucially, Giglio is never mocked in a gentle manner, and never in a way that implies complicity on the part of the Sienese citizenry. In three scenes—those that, out of all of the play's scenes, are the least linked to the *oeconomia* of the plot—Pasquella unapologetically and unmercifully swindles a rosary out of the lustful and lazy Spanish soldier, Giglio. He is nothing but the butt of humor in these scenes, not engaged in the *oeconomia* at all. Both the Giglio / Pasquella and Messer Piero / Stragualcia scenes are supposed to be extraneous to the main plot, but in fact, the *Intronati* created an *oeconomia* in which Messer Piero is fully enmeshed. Though his quarrels with Stragualcia do not directly impact the heteroerotic structuring of events, the two often appear together in “linked” scenes, during which information crucial to the romantic plot is disclosed. Thus the pedant Piero and the Spanish soldier Giglio, while

²⁴ Both Shepard and Newbigin (“Politics and Comedy”) offer politically-informed readings of the play, particularly in light of the Spanish occupation of Siena. Giannetti explains the relative popularity of the pedant as sodomite in *cinquecento* comedies as likely an effect of the lack of power students had relative to teachers, whose role “had the upper hand and often exercised it with stern discipline” (*Lelia's Kiss* 173).

both part of secondary plots or scenes less connected with the *oeconomia* of the main plot, work in significantly different ways. Giglio fulfills a fairly straightforward need to take the invading Spaniards down a notch, but Piero's function is less simple and less stable, ultimately suggesting itself as a compensation for an anxiety about the consequences of the Intronati's amorally erotic, and suspiciously virtuosic, comic economies.

While Stragualcia alternately mocks and threatens Piero for his sodomitical inclinations, at several points throughout the play, characters express the fear described by Rocke and Ruggiero that young men and older men, not just the pedant, could articulate, and act on, sodomitical desire. These expressions of anxiety all spring from the gender ambiguities that fuel the economical complications of the play's plot. Lelia relates to the audience that it would serve her right if, because she is dressed in men's clothes, "qualcun di questi gioveni scapestrati mi pigliasse per forza e, tirandomi in qualche casa, volesse chiarirsi s'io son maschio o femina!" 'one of the young men roving the streets took me by force into some house to find out for himself if I was a boy or a girl!' (1.3). Lelia's nurse, Clemenzia, upon learning that her charge has been dressed as a boy and serving Flamminio, asks Lelia what she would do "Se, una notte, tentato dalla maladetta tentazione, ti chiamasse ché tu dormisse con lui" 'if one night, tempted by a damnable temptation, he calls you to sleep with him?' (1.3). Even more illuminating is the moment when Gherardo mistakes Fabrizio for Lelia in disguise. He calls him his "moglie" 'wife' which in turn leads Fabrizio to comically assume Gherardo is an older man who wants to sleep with him and exclaims "Che moglie? Vecchio bugia... bugiardo!" 'What do you mean wife? You old fag... faker!' (3.7). Fabrizio's self-adjusted insult points to an unease about the association of young noble men with sodomy, and in particular with the passive designation. While the servant Stragualcia makes open and graphic reference to sodomy and its punishments, and Messer Piero acknowledges (albeit indirectly) his sodomitical and even pederastic desire, Fabrizio has to alter his discourse in order to avoid a specific accusation of sodomy. Perhaps most revealing here is how Fabrizio's exclamation transforms sodomy into deception ("bugiardo" translating literally as "liar").²⁵ The unintentional semantic effect of this self-conscious shift betrays the underlying anxiety even further. In transforming his accusation from calling Gherardo a sodomite to calling him

²⁵ There is a certain play on words here, but note that "bugia" meaning sodomite—which I render as "fag" for the alliteration—and "bugia" meaning lie (the root of "bugiardo") are false cognates, the former deriving from "bucare" (to pierce) and the latter coming from various Romance language terms for deceit. See Nino Borsellino's gloss on this passage in his edition of *Gl'Ingannati* (260).

a liar, Fabrizio in effect accuses the old man of accusing *him* of being a passive sodomite, a “moglie” ‘wife,’ so that, as if to emphasize the highly fraught intersection of the erotic and the mimetic, his defensive attempt at a discursive move away from sodomy ends up coming right back around to it.

Several instances of graphic eroticism comprise another aspect of *Gl'Ingannati* that reveals an underlying insecurity on the part of the Intronati. The first of these occurs in the fourth act, after the old men have locked Fabrizio (mistaken for the wayward Lelia in disguise) in with Isabella for safekeeping. Isabella, of course, has been yearning for such a moment with “Fabio” so it is not too much of a surprise when Pasquella, Gherardo's servant, comes on stage alone to complain of something that scared her out of the house. She announces that she will relate her story to the “donne” ‘ladies’ only, since if she didn't tell them, “voi nol sapreste” ‘you wouldn't know anything about it.’ This set up recalls the unusual “ammaestramenti” promised in the prologue, and the rest of Pasquella's story is certainly educational:

Que' due vecchi pecoroni dicevan pur che quel giovinetto era donna; e rinserroronlo in camera con Isabella mia padrona; e a me dieder la chiave. Io vòlsi entrar dentro e veder quel che facevano: e trovai che s'abbracciavano e si baciavano insieme. Io ebbi voglia di chiarirmi se era o maschio o femina. Avendolo la padrona disteso in sul letto, e chiamandomi ch'io l'aiutasse mentre ch'ella gli teneva le mani, egli si lasciava vincere. (4.5)

Those two mutton-headed old men said for sure that the young man was a woman, and they locked him in the bedroom with my mistress Isabella, and they gave me the key. I wanted to go back inside and see what they were up to, and I found them hugging and kissing each other! Well, that made me want to find out for myself if it was male or female. My mistress, having forced him down on the bed, called me to help while she held onto his hands, and he was letting her win.

Pasquella's recounting moves away from the subtlety of erotic innuendo, right into direct description of a sexual event. With the man pinned down and relinquishing power, this described encounter seems counter-normative and reminiscent of the gender deviance of sodomy by sixteenth century standards, but it also recalls the innuendo of the prologue's boast that the Intronati's ladies must: “star di sopra in ogni cosa e esser sempre le prime”

²⁶ *Gl'Ingannati* 97; the English here is again from Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero's translation of the play in *Five Comedies*. The “always come first” part of this avowal also figures in act 5, scene 5 when another, much more naïve, servant girl describes noises coming from the bedroom into which Lelia and

'always be on top and always come first.'²⁶ Given the unsettling of gender norms here and elsewhere, the rest of Pasquella's fearful account suggests an attempt at hyper-masculine compensation on the part of the Intronati:

Lo sciolsi dinanzi: e, a un tratto, mi sentii percuotere non so che cosa in su le mani; né cognobbi se gli era un pestaglio o una carota or pur quest'altra cosa. Ma, sia quel che si vuole, e non è cosa che abbia sentite la grandine. Come io la viddi così fatta, fugge, sorelle, e serra l'uscio! (4.5)

I undid him in front, and right then I felt something whack the back of my hands; I couldn't tell if it was a big pestle, a carrot, or even that other thing. But, whatever it was, it certainly wasn't tiny. When I saw how huge it was, I ran, sisters, and locked the door!

A simple bawdy phallic reference here is not enough; Fabrizio's manhood must large enough to confuse and frighten the experienced Pasquella. And in fact, Gherardo reaffirms the amazing size of Fabrizio; after walking in on his daughter and Fabrizio, Gherardo responds to Pasquella's sarcastic baiting remark:

PASQUELLA. Vedeste voi ogni cosa? Eh! Mirate che gli è femina.

GHERARDO. Io dico che gli è maschio e basterebbe a fare due maschi. (4.8)

PASQUELLA. You saw everything? Huh! Look, it could be a woman.

GHERARDO. I'm saying he's male and he'd be enough to make two men.

As a potential compensation, this extreme virility of Fabrizio's reportedly double dose of manliness correlates nicely with the extreme ambiguity of the actor's double performance.²⁷

Such graphic and bawdy descriptions reveal an anxious compensation for not merely the gender and erotic ambiguity caused by the economical performance of the actor playing Lelia and Fabrizio, but also for the staged moments of eroticism that place that actor in an emasculated position all-too-reminiscent of the passive sodomite. Fears about the disruptively-gen-

Flamminio have retreated; she imagines that they must be getting ready to go somewhere, because one says, "Aspettami" 'Wait for me' and the other says, "Fa' presto tu ancora" 'You come soon, too, then.'

²⁷ Giannetti argues that similar references to the heterosexual excitement and "the extraordinary phallic attributes" of male characters successfully passing as women in *cinquecento* comedies might be both a means of proving that feminine dress did not endanger adult masculinity, and a way to get away with homoerotic play on stage ("When Male Characters" 760), and extensively discusses the phenomenon of "phallic revelation" in *Lelia's Kiss* (142-152).

dered hierarchy of sodomy also emerge in moments of marked eroticism in the play. The first of these moments, when Lelia as Fabio is repeatedly kissed by Isabella, might not appear at first glance to pose the serious threat that sodomy does.²⁸ Repeatedly entreating the servant (Lelia in disguise as Fabio) to come closer to her, it is Isabella who kisses a protesting Fabio, complaining at first “Oh! Voi sète salvatico!” ‘Oh, you’re so uncooperative!’ and then apologizing for behaving like a “poco onesta fanciulla” ‘a dishonest girl’ (2.6). On the visual level, Lelia is dressed in masculine and Isabella in feminine attire, so the kisses seem normatively gendered. But both characters are played by male actors, and most significantly, the male actor who is actually wearing masculine attire is figured as the sexual object. And later on, the actor playing Lelia, this time finally dressed as a woman, gets kissed in a rather tongue-in-cheek marriage to Flamminio. The dialogue in this scene is intriguingly ambiguous, though it does suggest a rather bawdy rendering in performance.

FLAMMINIO. Clemenzia, io non voglio aspettare altro tempo, ché qualche disgrazia non m’intorbidasse questa ventura. Io la vo’ sposare adesso, se gli è contenta.

LELIA. Contentissima.

CRIVELLO. Oh ringraziato sia Dio! E voi, padrone, signor Flamminio, sète contento? E avertite ch’io son notaio; e, se nol credete, eccovi il privilegio.

FLAMMINIO. Tanto contento quanto di cosa ch’io facesse mai.

CRIVELLO. Sposatevi e poi colcatevi a vostra posta. Oh! Io non v’ho detto che voi la baciare, io. (5.3)

FLAMMINIO. Clemenzia, I don’t want to wait a minute longer, in case some dark cloud should cast a pall over my good fortune. I want to marry her now, if that makes her happy.

LELIA. Most happy.

CRIVELLO. Oh God be thanked! And you, master, Lord Flamminio, are you happy? I’ll have you know that I am a notary, and, if you don’t believe it, here’s my license.

FLAMMINIO. I’m as happy as I’ve ever been to do anything.

CRIVELLO. You wed each other, and then you bed each other. Oh! I didn’t tell you to kiss her!

This exchange marks a disruptive point where the elegant logic of the play’s *oeconomia* breaks down, the final layer of gender performance adds up, and the troubling eroticism surrounding that performance heats up. Crivello, as a servant, could not have plausibly held the esteemed and prof-

²⁸ As the title suggests, Giannetti’s *Lelia’s Kiss* places primary importance on this moment (6).

itable post of notary.²⁹ His sudden authority is characteristic of the exact opposite of Quintilian's pure and virile *oeconomia* in which each event in the plot unfolds naturally from previous preparations; it is no more than an excuse for some bawdy gestures and overtly erotic stage business. Though Crivello's presentation of his "privilegio" could refer to a paper prop representing a certificate, the tone set up by the prologue and continued throughout the play would suggest instead that Crivello performed some sort of gesture to accompany this line—something certainly sexual, probably phallic.³⁰ The last line of this interchange, about kissing, can be interpreted in two ways; either Crivello has just realized he forgot to prompt the traditional kiss to seal the union, and Flamminio kisses Lelia after this line; or, Crivello is reacting to the liberty Flamminio has taken in kissing Lelia without prompting, and Crivello is trying to assert his mock authority.³¹ The latter option would be the most racy, especially in combination with Crivello's bawdy rhyme "sposatevi... colcatevi" and the lewd gesture that most likely represented his gratuitous "privilegio" in performance. Whether Flamminio waited to kiss Lelia or not, the fact that Clemenzia speaks the next long line suggests that the kiss is a prolonged one. So in this one moment virile *oeconomia* dissolves, bawdiness flares, the actor playing Lelia and Fabrizio emerges in fully feminine attire, and he also ends up on the receiving end of a presumably passionate and extended kiss, with another *giovannotto*, the Intronato playing Flamminio. With all that to compensate for, no wonder Fabrizio's masculinity had to double up.

In *Gl'Ingannati* then, three dynamics are at work: Messer Piero's complicated presence, a concern about the ubiquitousness of sodomitical desire fueled by gender ambiguity, and vividly descriptive attempts to reclaim the heteroerotic ground of virility. These features present themselves as evidence of a pervasive anxiety about what the Intronati implicated themselves in by performing both the destabilizing anti-heteroerotic, anti-comedic *Il Sacrificio* as well as the formally adept but morally indecorous comedy of *Gl'Ingannati*. The identity claimed by the Intronati in *Il*

²⁹ See glosses on this line in both Bonino (179) and Ruggiero and Giannetti (*Five Comedies* 281).

³⁰ In fact, this moment likely echoes one of the bawdier performances in the prologue, when the actor refers to his "mandato ampio, in buona forma" 'large mandate, in good shape' while presumably, as Giannetti and Ruggiero suggest, "[looking at his crotch]" (206).

³¹ Ruggiero and Giannetti's translation assumes the first version (281) while the second option is taken by Penman (274).

Sacrificio aligned the *accademici* with the homoerotic overtones of the sodomitical tradition, and also separated them from the heteroerotic, intellectual, aristocratic social indicators that sustained the “imitation court” of their academy. The virtuosic *oeconomia* of *Gl’Ingannati*—directed with bawdry and flattery towards the ladies who attended the Intronati’s gatherings—successfully exemplifies the high fashion of humanist *imitatio* and seems to restore the Intronati’s courtly society. Yet the very excellence of the economical performance in *Gl’Ingannati* also reinforces humanist associations with effeminacy and sodomy. It seems the Intronati were afraid that they could not have their cake and eat it, too: that they could not excel at the titillating delight of a well-structured comedy, which relies on proliferate and bawdy gender confusion, and also avoid implicating themselves in a “subculture of sodomy.” In performing *oeconomia* for its erotic pleasures rather than its moral profits, the Intronati seem concerned that they have implicated themselves in the dangers of mimesis—effeminacy especially as it was perceived to translate into the realm of *eros*, that is, sodomy—while also simultaneously retreating from the defensive moral high ground claimed for comedy by classical and neoclassical performance theory.

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