FOREWORD

This special issue is devoted to the Renaissance, a period of great interest and even of specialization for many scholars in Italian studies, one that is well represented in the submissions regularly made to *Quaderni d'italianistica*. The issue covers a wide range of topics both chronologically and thematically and includes discussions of texts written throughout the Renaissance from the early Quattrocento to the late Cinquecento, from the tale of the Grasso Legnauolo to Tasso's *Aminta*. The contents may be divided into two main sections. The first, consisting of five articles, relates to the interconnected themes of sleep, dream, and vision, and closes with a linguistic analysis of the origins of terms used in the Romance languages to designate those phenomena. The second, consisting of two further contributions, deals with late sixteenth-century theories of romance and with the challenges faced in the modern staging of Renaissance plays.

The first group of papers, all refereed, were prepared for and, save in the case of one essay, were delivered at the international conference on "Sleep, Dream, and Vision in the Renaissance," held at the University of Toronto on 25-26 September 1997. Bringing together scholars from Canada, the USA, and Europe, in particular Italy, it was one of the very first conferences sponsored at the University of Toronto by the Emilio Goggio Chair in Italian Studies. As Chair of the Department of Italian Studies and incumbent of the Goggio Chair at the time, I co-hosted the event together with Stefano Cracolici (now an Assistant Professor of Italian at the University of Pennsylvania), who had organized the conference. Generous support was provided at that time by the Emilio Goggio Chair, which was established in Italian Studies at the University of Toronto in 1995 by members of the U.S.-based Goggio family to honour their mother Emma and their father Emilio, the latter of whom had been Chair of the then Department of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese from 1946 to 1956. Additional sponsorship for the conference came from other University of Toronto constituencies, namely University College, the School of Graduate Studies, the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University, the Northrop Frye Centre, and the Graduate Students Association of the Department of Italian Studies.

Many persons have contributed to the preparation of these articles for publication. Stefano Cracolici gathered the conference papers initially.

Mario D'Alessandro translated those by Luca D'Ascia, Raffaele Girardi, and Carla Marcato, originally written in Italian. Some of the translations of Latin quotations into English in several papers were provided by Deana Basile and Edward Moore; numerous bibliographical references were checked in the library by Dario Brancato; and Grace Wright's computer expertise was of considerable help during the early stages of the editorial work. Anna Moro of McMaster University was also consulted in connection with linguistic terminology and two University of Toronto colleagues, namely Gabriele Scardellato and Guido Pugliese, assisted with the reading and editing of some of the papers. Suggestions for revisions made by the anonymous external readers of the original conference papers, and those received from other colleagues for the two more recent submissions, were also of great value. Sincere thanks go to all of these collaborators who have shared in the preparation of this special issue of *Quaderni d'italianistica*. The members of the Editorial Board, and most notably the Editor himself, Konrad Eisenbichler, who has added the book reviews dealing with the Renaissance, merit grateful acknowledgement for their support of this endeavour.

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LORENZO BARTOLI

“I don’t know whether I’m dreaming now,
or if I dreamed what I’m about to tell you”:

FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF
SLEEP IN THE *NOVELLA OF THE FAT WOODCARVER*

A fundamental characteristic of the Florentine figurative tradition at the beginning of the fifteenth century — a characteristic which emerges, for instance, from Filippo Brunelleschi’s perspective panels or from Lorenzo Ghiberti’s concept of measures of the eye — is that it considers the work of art as a scientific exposition of the master’s vision, an exposition which can be confirmed by its principles of measurability and hence by its implicitly collective value. An example of this is the introduction to the vernacular version of Leon Battista Alberti’s *Della pittura* (*On Painting*) (1436).¹ Here the mathematical premises of the book are announced through its evocation of a group of Florentine artists who were Alberti’s contemporaries. The figure of Filippo Brunelleschi, to whom, it should be recalled, Alberti dedicated the vernacular version of his *Della pittura*, is the *nomen agentis* of such a generation, and the construction of the dome of the cathedral in Florence is its *nomen actionis*:

Ma poi che io dal lungo essilio in quale siamo noi Alberti invecchiati, qui fui in questa nostra sopra l’altre ornatissima patria ridotto, compresi in molti ma prima in te, Filippo, e in quel nostro amicissimo Donato scultore e in quegli altri Nencio e Luca e Masaccio, essere a ogni idata cosa ingegno da non posporli a qual si sia stato antiquo e famoso in queste arti.

.....

Chi mai sì duro o sì invido non lodasse Pippo architetto vedendo qui struttura sì grande, erta sopra e’ cieli, ampla da coprire con sua ombra tutti e’ populi toscani, fatta senza alcuno aiuto di travamenti o di copia di legname, quale artificio certo, se io ben iudico, come a questi tempi era incredibile potersi, così forse appresso gli antichi fu non saputo né conosciuto? (7)

(Since then, I have been brought back here [to Florence] — from the long exile in which we Alberti have grown old — into this our city, adorned above all others. I have come to understand that in many men, but especially in you, Filippo, and in our close friend Donato the sculp-

tor and in others like Nencio, Luca and Masaccio, there is a genius for [accomplishing] every praiseworthy thing. For this they should not be slighted in favour of anyone famous in antiquity in these arts. (39)

Who could ever be hard or envious enough to fail to praise Pippo the architect on seeing here such a large structure, rising above the skies, ample to cover with its shadow all the Tuscan people, and constructed without the aid of centering or great quantity of wood? Since this work seems impossible of execution in our time, if I judge rightly, it was probably unknown and unthought of among the ancients.) (40)

In the scientific and civic attitude which characterizes Alberti's treatise on painting and which represents the more general cultural climate of the age, vision also has social implications, in so far as artistic expression is reaffirmed in a new way. It invokes the participation of the observers, their point of view being the ultimate verification of the measurability of the work of art. Artistic expression, in other words, requires an artistic community or a community of art connoisseurs ("gli intendenti"); it requires a collectivity who will know how to deal with the mathematical implications and the measurements expressed in the work of art.

The affirmation of artistic individuality in the Renaissance was achieved, in fact, in the context of the group, within which a few protagonists would emerge and define themselves thanks to both the exceptionality of their artistic experience and also the recognition of the same exceptionality by the other members of the group.² As it is made abundantly clear in the dedication of Alberti's treatise on painting, Filippo Brunelleschi best represented such a situation. His genius elevated him to heights which were inaccessible for most of the members of his circle; but the confirmation of his superiority is nevertheless ineluctably linked to the mathematical verifiability of his architectural constructions. Significantly, Brunelleschi's perspective panels, which played such a major role in the evolution of the science of vision (and not only in art), did not represent just any old object; rather they reproduced the collective space par excellence in the civic consciousness of fifteenth-century Florence, that is, the Baptistry, seen from the Duomo (cathedral), and the Piazza della Signoria.³

The role played by Brunelleschi in the context of the cultural development of Florence in the first part of the fifteenth century is illustrated clearly in the extraordinary story known as the *Novella del Grasso legnaiuolo* (*The Tale of the Fat Woodcarver*).⁴ The third version of this novella has been attributed to Antonio di Tuccio Manetti by Giuliano Tanturli on the basis of arguments which can be considered definitive. The attribution has