(82). Little is known about women’s patronage because self-identification on commissioned works was often not permitted: “Widows did not draw attention to themselves by including portraits on votive images,” and “the opportunity to place her image on a large item of church embellishment, visible to all, was not often granted a widow” (184-85). And what of courtesans as patrons? King notes that documented evidence of their patronage is scant; but in northern Italy records are abundant of their commissioning funerary chapels for themselves, owning their earnings, beautiful homes, and being free of legal guardians. Patronage, the creation and consumption of art, and architecture, then, was an essentially gendered activity, embracing all levels of economic and social standings. Though women as patrons only rarely worked with artists of Vasarian reach and scope, King argues that there remains, notwithstanding, a great deal to be discovered about the numerous, perhaps less stellar makers of Italian culture, whose works grace canvases, churches, cemeteries, and cities.

Women with disposable capital have played a very real role of leadership in this historical period in the broad definition of art history as it related to makers, buyers and users of art, as well as to later collectors and cultural consumers. For our own century when increasingly more women have disposable income, King offers inspiring examples of how Italy’s lay and ruling women created indelible artistic imprints. This study makes a signal contribution by bringing to light the social religious and legal situations in which women could participate in the making of art and architecture, an area of research which has vast implications for students of art and cultural history, gender, and Italian studies.

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The reprint of Mark Roskill’s full-scale critical edition of Lodovico Dolce’s *Aretino* is a felicitous occurrence for Italian Renaissance studies. Even though the editor begins the Preface by saying that inevitably, “three decades after its first appearance, my edition of Dolce’s *Aretino* calls for some emendation or revision of emphasis”(vii), the volume has definitely stood the test of time well enough to warrant a second edition with relatively minor revisions. The new Preface contains references to more recent studies (of the last thirty years or so) related to rhetoric, dialogue, painting technique, etc.

Roskill engages such terms as “grazia,” “sprezzatura,” “ingegno,” among others in order to clarify imprecision. For example, he corrects any possible misinterpretation regarding “energia” and “enargeia.”

The term *energia*, which I translated as “dynamism” (128f.), represents in fact a technical term in rhetorical theory, meaning an emphasis on the force of effective detail, that lends itself to hyperbole. (viii)
This concept is key to much debate regarding the Renaissance dialogue as well, in particular with later theorists such as Torquato Tasso, so the attempt to add precision to the term(s) is a good indication of the editor's far-reaching interest and scholarship. There are many such examples in the Preface (vii-xiii) but it should suffice to say that from the topos of humility that opens it to the closing exhortation that "[o]ther similar errors of my youth may be left for the reader to catch" (xiii), Mark Roskill has thoroughly looked over his edition of 1968.

It is left for us to discover why a second edition of this particular work is necessary. To begin, the 1557 dialogue by Lodovico Dolce, the Venetian polignato who rubbed elbows with men of high intellectual and artistic merit, may be seen as an interesting portrait of mid-sixteenth-century Venice itself. As with many works of art of this period, the art and artifice (or the attempted art of concealing art, sprezzatura, as it were) are worthy indications of its value. While some reasons for this research are presented in the original Preface (1-4), much more in-depth information is offered in the Introduction (5-61). Roskill tells us in his unaltered Introduction that "[f]rom inspection of a cross section of Dolce's output, one gains a picture of his intellectual personality, which has no great attractiveness or strength" (6). In terms of the intellectual content, Roskill declares the following:

The philosophy included in the Dialogue does not require any lengthy analysis. What appears here and there in the way of metaphysical argument consists, generally speaking, of a weak compound of Platonism and Aristotelianism (10).

Nonetheless, Dolce was still among illustrious company and corresponded with many other intellectual and artistic heavyweights. It is precisely through his company and consequent engagement in such topical discussions as the disegno vs. colore debate, as well as the literary and linguistic discussions of the period that the dialogue becomes relevant. As Roskill points out, the Aretino is typical of the dialogue of the period in that it draws inspiration from antiquity (principally from Cicero) and contemporary sources. As analysed in the Preface, among the contemporary sources is Castiglione's Book of the Courtier (hence, the reference to sprezzatura) and, of course, many works by Pietro Aretino (24-34). Since it is a book about contemporary artistic issues, contemporary references will abound. Not only will there be ample mention of Raphael, Tintoretto, Michelangelo, Titian, and Giorgio Vasari but also the de rigueur references to contemporary literature and the parallels between the two arts. It is not by chance that the interlocutors are Pietro Aretino, a philo-Venetian poet, dialogist and dramatist, and the Florentine grammarian Giovan Francesco Fabrini.

Needless to say, with such a mingling of literature and painting in the dialogue, Roskill must pay careful attention to his own translation, especially since he chose to have the original text on the facing page. Despite the difficulty of the task, especially regarding the translation of verse, he claims to have enjoyed the experience (1). As an example, we turn to the following passage in which, with reference to Lodovico Ariosto, Dolce has Aretino say:

Con bionda chioma lunga, & annodata;
Oro non è, che più risplenda e lustri.
Poteva l’Ariosto nella guisa, che ha detto chioma bionda, dir chioma d’oro: ma gli parve forse, che avrebbe avuto troppo del Poetico. Da che si puo ritrar, che ’l Pittore dec imitar l’oro, e non metterlo (come fanno i Miniatori) nelle sue Pitture, in modo, che si possa dire, que’ capelli non sono d’oro, ma par che risplendano, come l’oro: il che se ben non è cosa degna di avvertimento, pur piacemi averla tocca. (132)

The translation is rendered thus:

Her long blond hair was knotted — there could be
No gold which gleamed with greater radiance.

Ariosto could well have written “golden hair,” instead of saying “blond hair” in the way he did; but perhaps he thought that this expression would have had too poetic a ring. One can deduce from this that a painter ought to imitate gold, and not (as miniature painters do) actually include it in his pictures—thereby enabling one to say that, while this hair is not made of gold, its shine does give it the appearance of gold. This may not be a point worth noticing, but I am pleased all the same to have touched on it. (133)

The translation is clear and understandable, rendered in a realistic English. However, as the author himself feared, at times the verse is translated with more difficulty. This becomes evident in a verse of Ariosto’s quoted in the Letter of Dolce to Gasparo Ballini. Here, Ariosto’s “Michel piu, che mortal, Angel Divino” (200) is translated as “Michael called Angel, godlike superman” (201). These infelicities are very minor potential drawbacks in an otherwise superlative edition.

The Aretino is rather important as a compendium of popular knowledge related to painting and literature and, while never presuming to rank among the philosophical dialogues of the era, it does engage in popular debates and exhibits a certain familiarity with current trends. It also exerted a certain amount of influence at the time and with subsequent writers. This is borne out by the very useful “Appendix A,” subtitled “The subsequent history and influence of the Dialogue” (63-73). Its companion, “Appendix B,” “On artistic relations between Venice and Central Italy, 1500-1557” (75-82), completes the picture of the importance of the text. What follows is the lengthy Text and Translation of The Dialogue on Painting (83-195), the Dedicatori letter of the Dialogue (196-199), the Letter of Dolce to Gasparo Ballini (pp. 200-211) and the Letter of Dolce to Alessandro Contarini (212-217). Comprehensive and helpful commentaries on the dialogue (pp. 219-341) and the letters (341-351) round out the volume. The book closes with a section outlining the abbreviations used (353-354).

Mark Roskill’s new edition of Lodovico Dolce’s Aretino is an example of sound research that has stood the test of time yet still benefits from a constructive dialogue with the present. Its user-friendly quality for non-experts and/or non-Italian speakers does not detract in any way from its scholarship. This is a wonderful edition that merits broad praise.

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