instead of the present for the whole of Sofronia's monologue (G 22-23) in which she contrasts her husband's past behaviour to his present one. Sices 317-319 has maintained the distinction between the verb tenses correctly.

There are still a few mistranslations in both English versions discussed here that need to be corrected: the adjective *rispettivo* (II 4) used by Sofronia to describe the Nicomaco of old, translated as 'respectful' (G 21) and 'considerate' (S 317), should be 'prudent'; *santarello* (II 3) applied to Fra Timoteo, and rendered as 'a little saint' in both translations (G 21, S 315), could be 'almost a saint'; Pirro who *rideva più di Siro* (V 1) was laughing more than Siro, not laughing at him (G 53, S 377) (correct in Hale's version 112); *nuovo caso* (V 3), 'new case' (G 57) or 'new events' (S 385) should be 'strange event'.

Although Gallagher's translation was not designed necessarily for the stage, as was the one by Sices (who aimed at the "speakability" of the lines and exchanges for the actors playing the work", Translator's Note 40), it would have benefited from more idiomatic phrasing. It should certainly have been based on more recent editions of the original text, which divide the scenes in the last act in a different manner.

There are also some instances of odd English in the translation: 'this latter' (G 60) for 'the latter' (V 5); 'Slow up [instead of slow down] a bit!' (G 15). A few examples of awkward phrasing, word order and syntax in Faulkner's introduction should also be noted: "recurring to" (xii); "known . . . as deep", "take seriously a comedy" (vii); "overturn" used as a noun (xx). The only typos are the accents missing on *onestà* (xviii and ?) and *disonestà* (xv; p. 4 n. 9).

Gallagher's text does, however, add useful stage directions which help the reader to visualize the action. As a textbook, this translation with the introductory essay, is still to be recommended since it is a free-standing and fairly inexpensive text. It can easily complement the translations available for other works of Machiavelli and thus serve as a useful teaching text.

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Parker, Deborah. *Bronzino. Renaissance Painter as Poet*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Pp. x, 233. Ill. 29.

With this volume Deborah Parker has jettisoned the traditional image of Agnolo Bronzino as a cold, technical painter of distant and aloof subjects to reveal, instead, a warm, thoughtful, considerate, multifaceted human being with a lively, witty, not

to say ironic view on life. She accomplishes this by stepping fearlessly into the irrepressible and ambivalent world of Bronzino's poetic writings and by accepting the possibility that the ground under her feet will not necessarily remain still long enough for the journey.

Bronzino's poetry, in fact, is not easy to pin down. It is the expression of a complex individual whose ambivalence was matched by his devotion, and whose propriety was more than counterbalanced by his lubricity. While it may be difficult, at times, to reconcile the salaciousness of Bronzino's burlesque poetry with the quiet, respectable life he led in the bosom of his adopted Allori family, this ambiguity provides a point of entry not only into his works, but into the artistic and cultural world of mid-sixteenth-century Florence. In fact, turning the pages of Parker's book we discover a network of artists, writers, and thinkers who, like Bronzino, were quite prepared in mid-sixteenth-century Florence to push the envelope a little further than expected. Neither moribund nor destitute, the cultural community of Cosimean Florence finds in Parker's Bronzino a ready emblem of its versatility, inquisitiveness, fantasy, and originality.

In the very first chapter Parker takes the bull by the horns and tackles the transgressive nature of Bronzino's artistic imagination. By focusing on the *Rime in burla*, a series of satirical compositions that leave few double entendres unexplored, Parker brings to the forefront, let alone to the surface, Bronzino's wickedly salacious wit and unabashed sense of sexual play. These rime underscore the writer's insouciant sensibility, his frank treatment of sexual relations, his delight in titillating his readers, his penchant for subverting all that is proper. Having let the beast out of the cage, Parker then dedicates the second chapter to reining it in. Here she focuses on Bronzino's lyric poetry and points out the other facet of his personality: the elegant, refined poet whose carefully crafted sonnets respected and reflected the socio-literary institution of Petrarchism. In this chapter we discover a Bronzino who treasures the friendship of *literati* and intellectuals, thrives in their midst and finds his rightful place among them. The third chapter connects the poetic and the artistic sides of Bronzino's life by extricating from his poetry the author's musings on art and on contemporary artistic practice. At this point the diversity inherent in Bronzino's two favourite poetic mediums, the Petrarchan sonnet and the burlesque *capitolo*, gives the poet-artist the opportunity to express a variety of views on his craft and its practitioners. Parker points out Bronzino's critical takes and links them quite effectively to his own visual works. The fourth and last chapter examines the poetics of Bronzino's paintings by focusing on two complementary works: the well-known, but not well understood, *Allegory of Venus* (National Gallery, London) and the little-known and even less studied allegorical poem *'Il piato'*. Divided into eight *capitoli*, this last work, the longest and most complicated of Bronzino's poetic endeavours, presents a bewilder-

ing array of motifs and situations. Yet, despite its heterogeneity, the poem holds together well and works. Under Parker's scrutiny 'Il piato' serves as an illustration of Bronzino's fecund allegorical imagination, pointing the way to how the artist handles symbolic representation, manipulating the traditional sources and moving far beyond them. An extraordinary work in its own right, the poem epitomizes the profound sense of equivocation that, by the time we reach the final pages of the book, has clearly become the hallmark of Parker's own view of Bronzino's aesthetics.

In her brief conclusion Parker asks "To what does an art like Bronzino's point?" The answer, she posits, lies in the two very different worlds around which Bronzino's poetry revolves: the idyllic realm of noble sentiments, on one side, that emanates from the Petrarchan lyrics and in which Bronzino is part of an amiable coterie of gifted friends, and the carnivalesque cacophony of the burlesque capitoli on the other side, where anything is fair game for a rebellious Bronzino who spares nothing and no-one from his witticisms. Parker concludes that Bronzino's simultaneous pursuit of two such different poetic venues should inspire us to approach his works not as the reflection of a single aesthetic ideal, but as the fluid creative process born of two very different, but intensely personal forms of expression.

Parker's contribution certainly advances our understanding of Bronzino as a poet and as a painter. It proposes an interpretive model based on the artist's complex and contradictory personality and attuned to the diversity inherent in the cultural world of mid-sixteenth-century Florence. After reading Parker's book it will be difficult to look at a Bronzino portrait again and not see the poet-artist smiling at the viewer from behind the canvas.

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***Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy. Ritual, Spectacle and Image.* Eds. Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Pp. Xiv, 314. Illustrations.**

The eleven interdisciplinary essays in this collection are devoted to the study of confraternal painting, sculpture, architecture and religious theatre in Italy and span the period from the Quattrocento to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although some Renaissance confraternities were devoted exclusively to youths or to women, most were made up of men and women of varying ages and from a range