The background of the entire cover is a monochromatic, teal-colored image of a woman's face and upper torso. She is wearing a light-colored headscarf with a dark, jeweled crown or tiara. Her expression is serene, and she is looking slightly to the right. The image has a textured, almost painterly quality.

Sarra Copia Sulam



**JEWISH POET AND
INTELLECTUAL IN
SEVENTEENTH-
CENTURY VENICE**

*Edited and Translated by
Don Harrán*



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*The Works of Sarra Copia Sulam in
Verse and Prose, Along with Writings
of Her Contemporaries in Her Praise,
Condemnation, or Defense*



*Edited and Translated by
Don Harrán*

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Sarra Cópia Sulam (1600?–1641)

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ix

x *Acknowledgments*

curious and uncommon teaching to provide a solution to my arguments" (Copia, *Manifesto*, B 1v).

Last but not least, I thank my wife and children for their support and understanding and Albert Rabil Jr., coeditor of this series, for his patience and encouragement.

Don Harrán



ABBREVIATIONS

App.	Appendix
Heb	Hebrew
Lat	Latin
Sp	Spanish
Ven	Venetian
Vlg	Vulgate

NUMERICAL REFERENCES

1. To books in Scriptures

Unless otherwise specified, the numbering is according to the Hebrew Bible, which differs variously from the Vulgate. Thus, as an example, Song of Songs 7:1 equals Vlg 6:13.

2. To sources in this volume

First number is for part, second for item, and third for page(s) or folio(s), thus:

1.1.113	Part 1, item 1, page 113
2.6.5r	Part 2, item 6, folio 5 <i>recto</i>

In part 1, item 3, however, the last number indicates one or more of twenty numbered references, thus:

1.3.4 (or 1.3.4, 6)	Part 1, item 3, reference 4 (or references 4 and 6)
---------------------	---

xii *Abbreviations*

L plus number refers to a particular letter, thus (together with other numerals):

1.1/L3.13	Part 1, item 1, letter no. 3, page 13
-----------	---------------------------------------

When the reference is to a poem and one or more lines, the following scheme is used:

No. 6:9–10	Poem no. 6, lines 9–10
------------	------------------------

or together with other numerals:

1.1/L3.15, no. 6:9–10	Part 1, item 1/letter 3, page 15, poem no. 6, lines 9–10
-----------------------	---

When the reference is to a letter and one or more pages, the following scheme is used:

Letter 11.30–31	Letter 11, pages 30–31
-----------------	------------------------

When the reference is to a stanza and one or more lines, the following scheme is used:

Poem 13, stanza 4:21	Poem 13, stanza 4, line 21
----------------------	----------------------------

or together with other numerals:

1.1.44, no. 13, stanza 4:21	Part 1, item 1, page 44, poem 13, stanza 4, line 21
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THE OTHER VOICE IN
EARLY MODERN EUROPE:
INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr.

THE OLD VOICE AND THE OTHER VOICE

In western Europe and the United States, women are nearing equality in the professions, in business, and in politics. Most enjoy access to education, reproductive rights, and autonomy in financial affairs. Issues vital to women are on the public agenda: equal pay, child care, domestic abuse, breast cancer research, and curricular revision with an eye to the inclusion of women.

These recent achievements have their origins in things women (and some male supporters) said for the first time about six hundred years ago. Theirs is the "other voice," in contradistinction to the "first voice," the voice of the educated men who created Western culture. Coincident with a general reshaping of European culture in the period 1300–1700 (called the Renaissance or early modern period), questions of female equality and opportunity were raised that still resound and are still unresolved.

The other voice emerged against the backdrop of a three-thousand-year history of the derogation of women rooted in the civilizations related to Western culture: Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Christian. Negative attitudes toward women inherited from these traditions pervaded the intellectual, medical, legal, religious, and social systems that developed during the European Middle Ages.

The following pages describe the traditional, overwhelmingly male views of women's nature inherited by early modern Europeans and the new tradition that the "other voice" called into being to begin to challenge reigning assumptions. This review should serve as a framework for understanding the texts published in the series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*. Introductions specific to each text and author follow this essay in all the volumes of the series.

TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF WOMEN, 500 B.C.E.–1500 C.E.

Embedded in the philosophical and medical theories of the ancient Greeks were perceptions of the female as inferior to the male in both mind and body. Similarly, the structure of civil legislation inherited from the ancient Romans was biased against women, and the views on women developed by Christian thinkers out of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament were negative and disabling. Literary works composed in the vernacular of ordinary people, and widely recited or read, conveyed these negative assumptions. The social networks within which most women lived—those of the family and the institutions of the Roman Catholic Church—were shaped by this negative tradition and sharply limited the areas in which women might act in and upon the world.

GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND FEMALE NATURE. Greek biology assumed that women were inferior to men and defined them as merely childbearers and housekeepers. This view was authoritatively expressed in the works of the philosopher Aristotle.

Aristotle thought in dualities. He considered action superior to inaction, form (the inner design or structure of any object) superior to matter, completion to incompleteness, possession to deprivation. In each of these dualities, he associated the male principle with the superior quality and the female with the inferior. "The male principle in nature," he argued, "is associated with active, formative and perfected characteristics, while the female is passive, material and deprived, desiring the male in order to become complete."¹ Men are always identified with virile qualities, such as judgment, courage, and stamina, and women with their opposites—irrationality, cowardice, and weakness.

The masculine principle was considered superior even in the womb. The man's semen, Aristotle believed, created the form of a new human creature, while the female body contributed only matter. (The existence of the ovum, and with it the other facts of human embryology, was not established until the seventeenth century.) Although the later Greek physician Galen believed there was a female component in generation, contributed by "female semen," the followers of both Aristotle and Galen saw the male role in human generation as more active and more important.

In the Aristotelian view, the male principle sought always to reproduce

1. Aristotle, *Physics* 1.9.192a20–24, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, rev. Oxford trans., 2 vols. (Princeton, 1984), 1:328.

itself. The creation of a female was always a mistake, therefore, resulting from an imperfect act of generation. Every female born was considered a "defective" or "mutilated" male (as Aristotle's terminology has variously been translated), a "monstrosity" of nature.²

For Greek theorists, the biology of males and females was the key to their psychology. The female was softer and more docile, more apt to be despondent, querulous, and deceitful. Being incomplete, moreover, she craved sexual fulfillment in intercourse with a male. The male was intellectual, active, and in control of his passions.

These psychological polarities derived from the theory that the universe consisted of four elements (earth, fire, air, and water), expressed in human bodies as four "humors" (black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm) considered, respectively, dry, hot, damp, and cold and corresponding to mental states ("melancholic," "choleric," "sanguine," "phlegmatic"). In this scheme the male, sharing the principles of earth and fire, was dry and hot; the female, sharing the principles of air and water, was cold and damp.

Female psychology was further affected by her dominant organ, the uterus (womb), *hystera* in Greek. The passions generated by the womb made women lustful, deceitful, talkative, irrational, indeed—when these affects were in excess—"hysterical."

Aristotle's biology also had social and political consequences. If the male principle was superior and the female inferior, then in the household, as in the state, men should rule and women must be subordinate. That hierarchy did not rule out the companionship of husband and wife, whose cooperation was necessary for the welfare of children and the preservation of property. Such mutuality supported male preeminence.

Aristotle's teacher Plato suggested a different possibility: that men and women might possess the same virtues. The setting for this proposal is the imaginary and ideal Republic that Plato sketches in a dialogue of that name. Here, for a privileged elite capable of leading wisely, all distinctions of class and wealth dissolve, as, consequently, do those of gender. Without households or property, as Plato constructs his ideal society, there is no need for the subordination of women. Women may therefore be educated to the same level as men to assume leadership. Plato's Republic remained imaginary, however. In real societies, the subordination of women remained the norm and the prescription.

The views of women inherited from the Greek philosophical tradition became the basis for medieval thought. In the thirteenth century, the su-

2. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* 2.3.737a27–28, in *The Complete Works*, 1: 1144.

preme Scholastic philosopher Thomas Aquinas, among others, still echoed Aristotle's views of human reproduction, of male and female personalities, and of the preeminent male role in the social hierarchy.

ROMAN LAW AND THE FEMALE CONDITION. Roman law, like Greek philosophy, underlay medieval thought and shaped medieval society. The ancient belief that adult property-owning men should administer households and make decisions affecting the community at large is the very fulcrum of Roman law.

About 450 B.C.E., during Rome's republican era, the community's customary law was recorded (legendarily) on twelve tablets erected in the city's central forum. It was later elaborated by professional jurists whose activity increased in the imperial era, when much new legislation was passed, especially on issues affecting family and inheritance. This growing, changing body of laws was eventually codified in the *Corpus of Civil Law* under the direction of the emperor Justinian, generations after the empire ceased to be ruled from Rome. That *Corpus*, read and commented on by medieval scholars from the eleventh century on, inspired the legal systems of most of the cities and kingdoms of Europe.

Laws regarding dowries, divorce, and inheritance pertain primarily to women. Since those laws aimed to maintain and preserve property, the women concerned were those from the property-owning minority. Their subordination to male family members points to the even greater subordination of lower-class and slave women, about whom the laws speak little.

In the early republic, the *paterfamilias*, or "father of the family," possessed *patria potestas*, "paternal power." The term *pater*, "father," in both these cases does not necessarily mean biological father but denotes the head of a household. The father was the person who owned the household's property and, indeed, its human members. The *paterfamilias* had absolute power—including the power, rarely exercised, of life or death—over his wife, his children, and his slaves, as much as his cattle.

Male children could be "emancipated," an act that granted legal autonomy and the right to own property. Those over fourteen could be emancipated by a special grant from the father or automatically by their father's death. But females could never be emancipated; instead, they passed from the authority of their father to that of a husband or, if widowed or orphaned while still unmarried, to a guardian or tutor.

Marriage in its traditional form placed the woman under her husband's authority, or *manus*. He could divorce her on grounds of adultery, drinking wine, or stealing from the household, but she could not divorce him. She could neither possess property in her own right nor bequeath any to her

children upon her death. When her husband died, the household property passed not to her but to his male heirs. And when her father died, she had no claim to any family inheritance, which was directed to her brothers or more remote male relatives. The effect of these laws was to exclude women from civil society, itself based on property ownership.

In the later republican and imperial periods, these rules were significantly modified. Women rarely married according to the traditional form. The practice of "free" marriage allowed a woman to remain under her father's authority, to possess property given her by her father (most frequently the "dowry," recoverable from the husband's household on his death), and to inherit from her father. She could also bequeath property to her own children and divorce her husband, just as he could divorce her.

Despite this greater freedom, women still suffered enormous disability under Roman law. Heirs could belong only to the father's side, never the mother's. Moreover, although she could bequeath her property to her children, she could not establish a line of succession in doing so. A woman was "the beginning and end of her own family," said the jurist Ulpian. Moreover, women could play no public role. They could not hold public office, represent anyone in a legal case, or even witness a will. Women had only a private existence and no public personality.

The dowry system, the guardian, women's limited ability to transmit wealth, and total political disability are all features of Roman law adopted by the medieval communities of western Europe, although modified according to local customary laws.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND WOMEN'S PLACE. The Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament authorized later writers to limit women to the realm of the family and to burden them with the guilt of original sin. The passages most fruitful for this purpose were the creation narratives in Genesis and sentences from the Epistles defining women's role within the Christian family and community.

Each of the first two chapters of Genesis contains a creation narrative. In the first "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27). In the second, God created Eve from Adam's rib (2:21–23). Christian theologians relied principally on Genesis 2 for their understanding of the relation between man and woman, interpreting the creation of Eve from Adam as proof of her subordination to him.

The creation story in Genesis 2 leads to that of the temptations in Genesis 3: of Eve by the wily serpent and of Adam by Eve. As read by Christian theologians from Tertullian to Thomas Aquinas, the narrative made Eve

responsible for the Fall and its consequences. She instigated the act; she deceived her husband; she suffered the greater punishment. Her disobedience made it necessary for Jesus to be incarnated and to die on the cross. From the pulpit, moralists and preachers for centuries conveyed to women the guilt that they bore for original sin.

The Epistles offered advice to early Christians on building communities of the faithful. Among the matters to be regulated was the place of women. Paul offered views favorable to women in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul also referred to women as his coworkers and placed them on a par with himself and his male coworkers (Phlm 4:2–3; Rom 16:1–3; 1 Cor 16:19). Elsewhere, Paul limited women's possibilities: "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3).

Biblical passages by later writers (although attributed to Paul) enjoined women to forgo jewels, expensive clothes, and elaborate coiffures; and they forbade women to "teach or have authority over men," telling them to "learn in silence with all submissiveness" as is proper for one responsible for sin, consoling them, however, with the thought that they will be saved through childbearing (1 Tm 2:9–15). Other texts among the later Epistles defined women as the weaker sex and emphasized their subordination to their husbands (1 Pt 3:7; Col 3:18; Eph 5:22–23).

These passages from the New Testament became the arsenal employed by theologians of the early church to transmit negative attitudes toward women to medieval Christian culture—above all, Tertullian (*On the Apparel of Women*), Jerome (*Against Jovinian*), and Augustine (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis*).

THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE. The philosophical, legal, and religious traditions born in antiquity formed the basis of the medieval intellectual synthesis wrought by trained thinkers, mostly clerics, writing in Latin and based largely in universities. The vernacular literary tradition that developed alongside the learned tradition also spoke about female nature and women's roles. Medieval stories, poems, and epics also portrayed women negatively—as lustful and deceitful—while praising good housekeepers and loyal wives as replicas of the Virgin Mary or the female saints and martyrs.

There is an exception in the movement of "courtly love" that evolved in southern France from the twelfth century. Courtly love was the erotic love between a nobleman and noblewoman, the latter usually superior in

social rank. It was always adulterous. From the conventions of courtly love derive modern Western notions of romantic love. The tradition has had an impact disproportionate to its size, for it affected only a tiny elite, and very few women. The exaltation of the female lover probably does not reflect a higher evaluation of women or a step toward their sexual liberation. More likely it gives expression to the social and sexual tensions besetting the knightly class at a specific historical juncture.

The literary fashion of courtly love was on the wane by the thirteenth century, when the widely read *Romance of the Rose* was composed in French by two authors of significantly different dispositions. Guillaume de Lorris composed the initial four thousand verses about 1235, and Jean de Meun added about seventeen thousand verses—more than four times the original—about 1265.

The fragment composed by Guillaume de Lorris stands squarely in the tradition of courtly love. Here the poet, in a dream, is admitted into a walled garden where he finds a magic fountain in which a rosebush is reflected. He longs to pick one rose, but the thorns prevent his doing so, even as he is wounded by arrows from the god of love, whose commands he agrees to obey. The rest of this part of the poem recounts the poet's unsuccessful efforts to pluck the rose.

The longer part of the *Romance* by Jean de Meun also describes a dream. But here allegorical characters give long didactic speeches, providing a social satire on a variety of themes, some pertaining to women. Love is an anxious and tormented state, the poem explains: women are greedy and manipulative, marriage is miserable, beautiful women are lustful, ugly ones cease to please, and a chaste woman is as rare as a black swan.

Shortly after Jean de Meun completed *The Romance of the Rose*, Mathéolus penned his *Lamentations*, a long Latin diatribe against marriage translated into French about a century later. The *Lamentations* sum up medieval attitudes toward women and provoked the important response by Christine de Pizan in her *Book of the City of Ladies*.

In 1355, Giovanni Boccaccio wrote *Il Corbaccio*, another antifeminist manifesto, although ironically by an author whose other works pioneered new directions in Renaissance thought. The former husband of his lover appears to Boccaccio, condemning his unmoderated lust and detailing the defects of women. Boccaccio concedes at the end "how much men naturally surpass women in nobility" and is cured of his desires.³

3. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio, or The Labyrinth of Love*, trans. and ed. Anthony K. Cassell, rev. ed. (Binghamton, N.Y., 1993), 71.

WOMEN'S ROLES: THE FAMILY. The negative perceptions of women expressed in the intellectual tradition are also implicit in the actual roles that women played in European society. Assigned to subordinate positions in the household and the church, they were barred from significant participation in public life.

Medieval European households, like those in antiquity and in non-Western civilizations, were headed by males. It was the male serf (or peasant), feudal lord, town merchant, or citizen who was polled or taxed or succeeded to an inheritance or had any acknowledged public role, although his wife or widow could stand as a temporary surrogate. From about 1100, the position of property-holding males was further enhanced: inheritance was confined to the male, or agnate, line—with depressing consequences for women.

A wife never fully belonged to her husband's family, nor was she a daughter to her father's family. She left her father's house young to marry whomever her parents chose. Her dowry was managed by her husband, and at her death it normally passed to her children by him.

A married woman's life was occupied nearly constantly with cycles of pregnancy, childbearing, and lactation. Women bore children through all the years of their fertility, and many died in childbirth. They were also responsible for raising young children up to six or seven. In the propertied classes that responsibility was shared, since it was common for a wet nurse to take over breast-feeding and for servants to perform other chores.

Women trained their daughters in the household duties appropriate to their status, nearly always tasks associated with textiles: spinning, weaving, sewing, embroidering. Their sons were sent out of the house as apprentices or students, or their training was assumed by fathers in later childhood and adolescence. On the death of her husband, a woman's children became the responsibility of his family. She generally did not take "his" children with her to a new marriage or back to her father's house, except sometimes in the artisan classes.

Women also worked. Rural peasants performed farm chores, merchant wives often practiced their husbands' trades, the unmarried daughters of the urban poor worked as servants or prostitutes. All wives produced or embellished textiles and did the housekeeping, while wealthy ones managed servants. These labors were unpaid or poorly paid but often contributed substantially to family wealth.

WOMEN'S ROLES: THE CHURCH. Membership in a household, whether a father's or a husband's, meant for women a lifelong subordination to others.

In western Europe, the Roman Catholic Church offered an alternative to the career of wife and mother. A woman could enter a convent, parallel in function to the monasteries for men that evolved in the early Christian centuries.

In the convent, a woman pledged herself to a celibate life, lived according to strict community rules, and worshiped daily. Often the convent offered training in Latin, allowing some women to become considerable scholars and authors as well as scribes, artists, and musicians. For women who chose the conventual life, the benefits could be enormous, but for numerous others placed in convents by paternal choice, the life could be restrictive and burdensome.

The conventual life declined as an alternative for women as the modern age approached. Reformed monastic institutions resisted responsibility for related female orders. The church increasingly restricted female institutional life by insisting on closer male supervision.

Women often sought other options. Some joined the communities of laywomen that sprang up spontaneously in the thirteenth century in the urban zones of western Europe, especially in Flanders and Italy. Some joined the heretical movements that flourished in late medieval Christendom, whose anticlerical and often antifamily positions particularly appealed to women. In these communities, some women were acclaimed as "holy women" or "saints," whereas others often were condemned as frauds or heretics.

In all, although the options offered to women by the church were sometimes less than satisfactory, they were sometimes richly rewarding. After 1520, the convent remained an option only in Roman Catholic territories. Protestantism engendered an ideal of marriage as a heroic endeavor and appeared to place husband and wife on a more equal footing. Sermons and treatises, however, still called for female subordination and obedience.

THE OTHER VOICE, 1300–1700

When the modern era opened, European culture was so firmly structured by a framework of negative attitudes toward women that to dismantle it was a monumental labor. The process began as part of a larger cultural movement that entailed the critical reexamination of ideas inherited from the ancient and medieval past. The humanists launched that critical reexamination.

THE HUMANIST FOUNDATION. Originating in Italy in the fourteenth century, humanism quickly became the dominant intellectual movement in

Europe. Spreading in the sixteenth century from Italy to the rest of Europe, it fueled the literary, scientific, and philosophical movements of the era and laid the basis for the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.

Humanists regarded the Scholastic philosophy of medieval universities as out of touch with the realities of urban life. They found in the rhetorical discourse of classical Rome a language adapted to civic life and public speech. They learned to read, speak, and write classical Latin and, eventually, classical Greek. They founded schools to teach others to do so, establishing the pattern for elementary and secondary education for the next three hundred years.

In the service of complex government bureaucracies, humanists employed their skills to write eloquent letters, deliver public orations, and formulate public policy. They developed new scripts for copying manuscripts and used the new printing press to disseminate texts, for which they created methods of critical editing.

Humanism was a movement led by males who accepted the evaluation of women in ancient texts and generally shared the misogynist perceptions of their culture. (Female humanists, as we will see, did not.) Yet humanism also opened the door to a reevaluation of the nature and capacity of women. By calling authors, texts, and ideas into question, it made possible the fundamental rereading of the whole intellectual tradition that was required in order to free women from cultural prejudice and social subordination.

A DIFFERENT CITY. The other voice first appeared when, after so many centuries, the accumulation of misogynist concepts evoked a response from a capable female defender: Christine de Pizan (1365–1431). Introducing her *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), she described how she was affected by reading Mathéolus's *Lamentations*: "Just the sight of this book . . . made me wonder how it happened that so many different men . . . are so inclined to express both in speaking and in their treatises and writings so many wicked insults about women and their behavior."⁴ These statements impelled her to detest herself "and the entire feminine sex, as though we were monstrosities in nature."⁵

The rest of *The Book of the City of Ladies* presents a justification of the female sex and a vision of an ideal community of women. A pioneer, she has received the message of female inferiority and rejected it. From the four-

4. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards, foreword by Marina Warner (New York, 1982), 1.1.1, pp. 3–4.

5. *Ibid.*, 1.1.1–2, p. 5.

teenth to the seventeenth century, a huge body of literature accumulated that responded to the dominant tradition.

The result was a literary explosion consisting of works by both men and women, in Latin and in the vernaculars: works enumerating the achievements of notable women; works rebutting the main accusations made against women; works arguing for the equal education of men and women; works defining and redefining women's proper role in the family, at court, in public; works describing women's lives and experiences. Recent monographs and articles have begun to hint at the great range of this movement, involving probably several thousand titles. The protofeminism of these "other voices" constitutes a significant fraction of the literary product of the early modern era.

THE CATALOGS. About 1365, the same Boccaccio whose *Corbaccio* rehearses the usual charges against female nature wrote another work, *Concerning Famous Women*. A humanist treatise drawing on classical texts, it praised 106 notable women: ninety-eight of them from pagan Greek and Roman antiquity, one (Eve) from the Bible, and seven from the medieval religious and cultural tradition; his book helped make all readers aware of a sex normally condemned or forgotten. Boccaccio's outlook nevertheless was unfriendly to women, for it singled out for praise those women who possessed the traditional virtues of chastity, silence, and obedience. Women who were active in the public realm—for example, rulers and warriors—were depicted as usually being lascivious and as suffering terrible punishments for entering the masculine sphere. Women were his subject, but Boccaccio's standard remained male.

Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* contains a second catalog, one responding specifically to Boccaccio's. Whereas Boccaccio portrays female virtue as exceptional, she depicts it as universal. Many women in history were leaders, or remained chaste despite the lascivious approaches of men, or were visionaries and brave martyrs.

The work of Boccaccio inspired a series of catalogs of illustrious women of the biblical, classical, Christian, and local pasts, among them Filippo da Bergamo's *Of Illustrious Women*, Pierre de Brantôme's *Lives of Illustrious Women*, Pierre Le Moyne's *Gallerie of Heroic Women*, and Pietro Paolo de Ribera's *Immortal Triumphs and Heroic Enterprises of 845 Women*. Whatever their embedded prejudices, these works drove home to the public the possibility of female excellence.

THE DEBATE. At the same time, many questions remained: Could a woman be virtuous? Could she perform noteworthy deeds? Was she even,

strictly speaking, of the same human species as men? These questions were debated over four centuries, in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and English, by authors male and female, among Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, in ponderous volumes and breezy pamphlets. The whole literary genre has been called the *querelle des femmes*, the "woman question."

The opening volley of this battle occurred in the first years of the fifteenth century, in a literary debate sparked by Christine de Pizan. She exchanged letters critical of Jean de Meun's contribution to *The Romance of the Rose* with two French royal secretaries, Jean de Montreuil and Gontier Col. When the matter became public, Jean Gerson, one of Europe's leading theologians, supported de Pizan's arguments against de Meun, for the moment silencing the opposition.

The debate resurfaced repeatedly over the next two hundred years. *The Triumph of Women* (1438) by Juan Rodríguez de la Camara (or Juan Rodríguez del Padron) struck a new note by presenting arguments for the superiority of women to men. *The Champion of Women* (1440–42) by Martin Le Franc addresses once again the negative views of women presented in *The Romance of the Rose* and offers counterevidence of female virtue and achievement.

A cameo of the debate on women is included in *The Courtier*, one of the most widely read books of the era, published by the Italian Baldassare Castiglione in 1528 and immediately translated into other European vernaculars. *The Courtier* depicts a series of evenings at the court of the duke of Urbino in which many men and some women of the highest social stratum amuse themselves by discussing a range of literary and social issues. The "woman question" is a pervasive theme throughout, and the third of its four books is devoted entirely to that issue.

In a verbal duel, Gasparo Pallavicino and Giuliano de' Medici present the main claims of the two traditions. Gasparo argues the innate inferiority of women and their inclination to vice. Only in bearing children do they profit the world. Giuliano counters that women share the same spiritual and mental capacities as men and may excel in wisdom and action. Men and women are of the same essence: just as no stone can be more perfectly a stone than another, so no human being can be more perfectly human than others, whether male or female. It was an astonishing assertion, boldly made to an audience as large as all Europe.

THE TREATISES. Humanism provided the materials for a positive counterconcept to the misogyny embedded in Scholastic philosophy and law and inherited from the Greek, Roman, and Christian pasts. A series of humanist treatises on marriage and family, on education and deportment, and on the nature of women helped construct these new perspectives.

The works by Francesco Barbaro and Leon Battista Alberti—*On Marriage* (1415) and *On the Family* (1434–37)—far from defending female equality, reasserted women's responsibility for rearing children and managing the housekeeping while being obedient, chaste, and silent. Nevertheless, they served the cause of reexamining the issue of women's nature by placing domestic issues at the center of scholarly concern and reopening the pertinent classical texts. In addition, Barbaro emphasized the companionate nature of marriage and the importance of a wife's spiritual and mental qualities for the well-being of the family.

These themes reappear in later humanist works on marriage and the education of women by Juan Luis Vives and Erasmus. Both were moderately sympathetic to the condition of women without reaching beyond the usual masculine prescriptions for female behavior.

An outlook more favorable to women characterizes the nearly unknown work *In Praise of Women* (ca. 1487) by the Italian humanist Bartolommeo Goggio. In addition to providing a catalog of illustrious women, Goggio argued that male and female are the same in essence, but that women (reworking the Adam and Eve narrative from quite a new angle) are actually superior. In the same vein, the Italian humanist Mario Equicola asserted the spiritual equality of men and women in *On Women* (1501). In 1525, Galeazzo Flavio Capra (or Capella) published his work *On the Excellence and Dignity of Women*. This humanist tradition of treatises defending the worthiness of women culminates in the work of Henricus Cornelius Agrippa *On the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex*. No work by a male humanist more succinctly or explicitly presents the case for female dignity.

THE WITCH BOOKS. While humanists grappled with the issues pertaining to women and family, other learned men turned their attention to what they perceived as a very great problem: witches. Witch-hunting manuals, explorations of the witch phenomenon, and even defenses of witches are not at first glance pertinent to the tradition of the other voice. But they do relate in this way: most accused witches were women. The hostility aroused by supposed witch activity is comparable to the hostility aroused by women. The evil deeds the victims of the hunt were charged with were exaggerations of the vices to which, many believed, all women were prone.

The connection between the witch accusation and the hatred of women is explicit in the notorious witch-hunting manual *The Hammer of Witches* (1486) by two Dominican inquisitors, Heinrich Krämer and Jacob Sprenger. Here the inconstancy, deceitfulness, and lustfulness traditionally associated with women are depicted in exaggerated form as the core features of witch behavior. These traits inclined women to make a bargain with the devil—

sealed by sexual intercourse—by which they acquired unholy powers. Such bizarre claims, far from being rejected by rational men, were broadcast by intellectuals. The German Ulrich Molitur, the Frenchman Nicolas Rémy, and the Italian Stefano Guazzo all coolly informed the public of sinister orgies and midnight pacts with the devil. The celebrated French jurist, historian, and political philosopher Jean Bodin argued that because women were especially prone to diabolism, regular legal procedures could properly be suspended in order to try those accused of this “exceptional crime.”

A few experts such as the physician Johann Weyer, a student of Agrippa's, raised their voices in protest. In 1563, he explained the witch phenomenon thus, without discarding belief in diabolism: the devil deluded foolish old women afflicted by melancholia, causing them to believe they had magical powers. Weyer's rational skepticism, which had good credibility in the community of the learned, worked to revise the conventional views of women and witchcraft.

WOMEN'S WORKS. To the many categories of works produced on the question of women's worth must be added nearly all works written by women. A woman writing was in herself a statement of women's claim to dignity.

Only a few women wrote anything before the dawn of the modern era, for three reasons. First, they rarely received the education that would enable them to write. Second, they were not admitted to the public roles—as administrator, bureaucrat, lawyer or notary, or university professor—in which they might gain knowledge of the kinds of things the literate public thought worth writing about. Third, the culture imposed silence on women, considering speaking out a form of unchastity. Given these conditions, it is remarkable that any women wrote. Those who did before the fourteenth century were almost always nuns or religious women whose isolation made their pronouncements more acceptable.

From the fourteenth century on, the volume of women's writings rose. Women continued to write devotional literature, although not always as cloistered nuns. They also wrote diaries, often intended as keepsakes for their children; books of advice to their sons and daughters; letters to family members and friends; and family memoirs, in a few cases elaborate enough to be considered histories.

A few women wrote works directly concerning the “woman question,” and some of these, such as the humanists Isotta Nogarola, Cassandra Fedele, Laura Cereta, and Olympia Morata, were highly trained. A few were professional writers, living by the income of their pens; the very first among them

was Christine de Pizan, noteworthy in this context as in so many others. In addition to *The Book of the City of Ladies* and her critiques of *The Romance of the Rose*, she wrote *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (a guide to social decorum for women), an advice book for her son, much courtly verse, and a full-scale history of the reign of King Charles V of France.

WOMEN PATRONS. Women who did not themselves write but encouraged others to do so boosted the development of an alternative tradition. Highly placed women patrons supported authors, artists, musicians, poets, and learned men. Such patrons, drawn mostly from the Italian elites and the courts of northern Europe, figure disproportionately as the dedicatees of the important works of early feminism.

For a start, it might be noted that the catalogs of Boccaccio and Alvaro de Luna were dedicated to the Florentine noblewoman Andrea Acciaiuoli and to Doña María, first wife of King Juan II of Castile, while the French translation of Boccaccio's work was commissioned by Anne of Brittany, wife of King Charles VIII of France. The humanist treatises of Goggio, Equicola, Vives, and Agrippa were dedicated, respectively, to Eleanor of Aragon, wife of Ercole I d'Este, duke of Ferrara; to Margherita Cantelma of Mantua; to Catherine of Aragon, wife of King Henry VIII of England; and to Margaret, Duchess of Austria and regent of the Netherlands. As late as 1696, Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal to the Ladies, for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest* was dedicated to Princess Anne of Denmark.

These authors presumed that their efforts would be welcome to female patrons, or they may have written at the bidding of those patrons. Silent themselves, perhaps even unresponsive, these loftily placed women helped shape the tradition of the other voice.

THE ISSUES. The literary forms and patterns in which the tradition of the other voice presented itself have now been sketched. It remains to highlight the major issues around which this tradition crystallizes. In brief, there are four problems to which our authors return again and again, in plays and catalogs, in verse and letters, in treatises and dialogues, in every language: the problem of chastity, the problem of power, the problem of speech, and the problem of knowledge. Of these the greatest, preconditioning the others, is the problem of chastity.

THE PROBLEM OF CHASTITY. In traditional European culture, as in those of antiquity and others around the globe, chastity was perceived as woman's quintessential virtue—in contrast to courage, or generosity, or leadership, or rationality, seen as virtues characteristic of men. Opponents of

women charged them with insatiable lust. Women themselves and their defenders—without disputing the validity of the standard—responded that women were capable of chastity.

The requirement of chastity kept women at home, silenced them, isolated them, left them in ignorance. It was the source of all other impediments. Why was it so important to the society of men, of whom chastity was not required, and who more often than not considered it their right to violate the chastity of any woman they encountered?

Female chastity ensured the continuity of the male-headed household. If a man's wife was not chaste, he could not be sure of the legitimacy of his offspring. If they were not his and they acquired his property, it was not his household, but some other man's, that had endured. If his daughter was not chaste, she could not be transferred to another man's household as his wife, and he was dishonored.

The whole system of the integrity of the household and the transmission of property was bound up in female chastity. Such a requirement pertained only to property-owning classes, of course. Poor women could not expect to maintain their chastity, least of all if they were in contact with high-status men to whom all women but those of their own household were prey.

In Catholic Europe, the requirement of chastity was further buttressed by moral and religious imperatives. Original sin was inextricably linked with the sexual act. Virginity was seen as heroic virtue, far more impressive than, say, the avoidance of idleness or greed. Monasticism, the cultural institution that dominated medieval Europe for centuries, was grounded in the renunciation of the flesh. The Catholic reform of the eleventh century imposed a similar standard on all the clergy and a heightened awareness of sexual requirements on all the laity. Although men were asked to be chaste, female unchastity was much worse: it led to the devil, as Eve had led mankind to sin.

To such requirements, women and their defenders protested their innocence. Furthermore, following the example of holy women who had escaped the requirements of family and sought the religious life, some women began to conceive of female communities as alternatives both to family and to the cloister. Christine de Pizan's city of ladies was such a community. Moderata Fonte and Mary Astell envisioned others. The luxurious salons of the French *précieuses* of the seventeenth century, or the comfortable English drawing rooms of the next, may have been born of the same impulse. Here women not only might escape, if briefly, the subordinate position that life in the family entailed but might also make claims to power, exercise their capacity for speech, and display their knowledge.

THE PROBLEM OF POWER. Women were excluded from power: the whole cultural tradition insisted on it. Only men were citizens, only men bore arms, only men could be chiefs or lords or kings. There were exceptions that did not disprove the rule, when wives or widows or mothers took the place of men, awaiting their return or the maturation of a male heir. A woman who attempted to rule in her own right was perceived as an anomaly, a monster, at once a deformed woman and an insufficient male, sexually confused and consequently unsafe.

The association of such images with women who held or sought power explains some otherwise odd features of early modern culture. Queen Elizabeth I of England, one of the few women to hold full regal authority in European history, played with such male/female images—positive ones, of course—in representing herself to her subjects. She was a prince, and manly, even though she was female. She was also (she claimed) virginal, a condition absolutely essential if she was to avoid the attacks of her opponents. Catherine de' Medici, who ruled France as widow and regent for her sons, also adopted such imagery in defining her position. She chose as one symbol the figure of Artemisia, an androgynous ancient warrior-heroine who combined a female persona with masculine powers.

Power in a woman, without such sexual imagery, seems to have been indigestible by the culture. A rare note was struck by the Englishman Sir Thomas Elyot in his *Defence of Good Women* (1540), justifying both women's participation in civic life and their prowess in arms. The old tune was sung by the Scots reformer John Knox in his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558); for him rule by women, defects in nature, was a hideous contradiction in terms.

The confused sexuality of the imagery of female potency was not reserved for rulers. Any woman who excelled was likely to be called an Amazon, recalling the self-mutilated warrior women of antiquity who repudiated all men, gave up their sons, and raised only their daughters. She was often said to have "exceeded her sex" or to have possessed "masculine virtue"—as the very fact of conspicuous excellence conferred masculinity even on the female subject. The catalogs of notable women often showed those female heroes dressed in armor, armed to the teeth, like men. Amazonian heroines romp through the epics of the age—Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532) and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590–1609). Excellence in a woman was perceived as a claim for power, and power was reserved for the masculine realm. A woman who possessed either one was masculinized and lost title to her own female identity.

THE PROBLEM OF SPEECH. Just as power had a sexual dimension when it was claimed by women, so did speech. A good woman spoke little. Ex-

cessive speech was an indication of unchastity. By speech, women seduced men. Eve had lured Adam into sin by her speech. Accused witches were commonly accused of having spoken abusively, or irrationally, or simply too much. As enlightened a figure as Francesco Barbaro insisted on silence in a woman, which he linked to her perfect unanimity with her husband's will and her unblemished virtue (her chastity). Another Italian humanist, Leonardo Bruni, in advising a noblewoman on her studies, barred her not from speech but from public speaking. That was reserved for men.

Related to the problem of speech was that of costume—another, if silent, form of self-expression. Assigned the task of pleasing men as their primary occupation, elite women often tended toward elaborate costume, hairdressing, and the use of cosmetics. Clergy and secular moralists alike condemned these practices. The appropriate function of costume and adornment was to announce the status of a woman's husband or father. Any further indulgence in adornment was akin to unchastity.

THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE. When the Italian noblewoman Isotta Nogarola had begun to attain a reputation as a humanist, she was accused of incest—a telling instance of the association of learning in women with unchastity. That chilling association inclined any woman who was educated to deny that she was or to make exaggerated claims of heroic chastity.

If educated women were pursued with suspicions of sexual misconduct, women seeking an education faced an even more daunting obstacle: the assumption that women were by nature incapable of learning, that reasoning was a particularly masculine ability. Just as they proclaimed their chastity, women and their defenders insisted on their capacity for learning. The major work by a male writer on female education—that by Juan Luis Vives, *On the Education of a Christian Woman* (1523)—granted female capacity for intellection but still argued that a woman's whole education was to be shaped around the requirement of chastity and a future within the household. Female writers of the following generations—Marie de Gournay in France, Anna Maria van Schurman in Holland, and Mary Astell in England—began to envision other possibilities.

The pioneers of female education were the Italian women humanists who managed to attain a literacy in Latin and a knowledge of classical and Christian literature equivalent to that of prominent men. Their works implicitly and explicitly raise questions about women's social roles, defining problems that beset women attempting to break out of the cultural limits that had bound them. Like Christine de Pizan, who achieved an advanced education through her father's tutoring and her own devices, their bold questioning makes clear the importance of training. Only when women

were educated to the same standard as male leaders would they be able to raise that other voice and insist on their dignity as human beings morally, intellectually, and legally equal to men.

THE OTHER VOICE. The other voice, a voice of protest, was mostly female, but it was also male. It spoke in the vernaculars and in Latin, in treatises and dialogues, in plays and poetry, in letters and diaries, and in pamphlets. It battered at the wall of prejudice that encircled women and raised a banner announcing its claims. The female was equal (or even superior) to the male in essential nature—moral, spiritual, and intellectual. Women were capable of higher education, of holding positions of power and influence in the public realm, and of speaking and writing persuasively. The last bastion of masculine supremacy, centered on the notions of a woman's primary domestic responsibility and the requirement of female chastity, was not as yet assaulted—although visions of productive female communities as alternatives to the family indicated an awareness of the problem.

During the period 1300–1700, the other voice remained only a voice, and one only dimly heard. It did not result—yet—in an alteration of social patterns. Indeed, to this day they have not entirely been altered. Yet the call for justice issued as long as six centuries ago by those writing in the tradition of the other voice must be recognized as the source and origin of the mature feminist tradition and of the realignment of social institutions accomplished in the modern age.

We thank the volume editors in this series, who responded with many suggestions to an earlier draft of this introduction, making it a collaborative enterprise. Many of their suggestions and criticisms have resulted in revisions of this introduction, although we remain responsible for the final product.



Figure 1. Shield from Sarra Copia Sulam's tombstone with two family devices, a scorpion for the Copias and a ladder for the Sulams.

You . . . nest within you a celestial soul / That, from exalted thoughts, spreads and scatters / Forever imaginative and eternally glorious works, / Through which you escape death and defy time.

Giacomo Rosa, "Sirena illustre che gli alteri lidi"



VOLUME EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The main idea of this volume, as its title suggests, was to integrate Copia into a larger narrative with all the individuals and events that relate to her biography; to delineate her traits and doings through her own and others' remarks; and, tangentially, to indicate the plight of a Jewish woman who, in early seventeenth-century Venice, uncommonly consorted with Christians and, because of her faith and sex and literary aspirations, encountered hostility not only from them but no less vehemently from Jews, of one mind with Christians in thinking she was "going too far."

If one accepts the basic principle that the book has works both by Copia and about Copia, the works themselves, almost all unknown in translation, fall into place as relevant to defining her identity. Ansaldo Cebà's correspondence, in part 1, is a series of letters in response largely to Copia's¹ that are no longer extant, and what Cebà says in *his* inevitably throws light on (much of) what Copia must have said in *hers*; hence my decision to reconstruct her *epistolario* if not in detail at least in summary.² Her *Manifesto* on the "immortality of the soul," which Copia was accused of denying, forms part of a highly charged personal and philosophical exchange of documents in part 2. They form a drama whose "plot" can be traced from an early letter of Baldassare Bonifaccio, the accuser, to Copia's response in a letter of her own, and then on to Bonifaccio's stinging *Discorso* where he thought he would put an end to the altercation but did not and could not: Copia replied in her *Manifesto*, to which Bonifaccio provided a counterreply, following it, a few months later, with a malicious report (in a letter to an acquaintance), as yet unpublished, on the woman who dared to defy him.

1. With some few exceptions noted below and clear, of course, from browsing part 1.

2. In the introductions to the separate letters.

In part 3, "Notices from Parnassus," a mixed biographical and fictitious account, Copia is defended against the false accusations of two persons who enjoyed her benevolence but turned against her while in her service and spread false rumors about her when she denounced them to the authorities. The "Notices" unfold an almost incredible story, of which a good part appears nevertheless to be true. Its contents have been described by Carla Boccato as coming "closest to the events" that occurred in Copia's life "between the years 1618 and 1626."³ The "Notices" constitute "the richest biographical source known, till now, for Sarra Copia Sulam. In their remarkable structure, multitude of individuals, colorful language, and many learned quotations, they are a truly significant document of the Italian Baroque from both a literary vantage point and as a review of social conventions."⁴

Copia may not be physically present in the "Notices," but she breathes behind their every word. It is amazing how emotionally wrought up their many characters become in defending her or inveighing against her enemies. Granted, at times they make long-winded speeches, or reiterate material as variations on a single theme, or get sidetracked into peripheral issues. But they say their piece with fervor and often grandiloquence, directing their efforts to the one end of exonerating the almost completely unseen and unheard protagonist ("almost," because she is heard in five of her sonnets). The manuscript assembles a string of minor local and major ancient and modern literary figures to speak exuberantly and passionately in Copia's favor. Some go into the ghetto, perhaps for the first time in the literature, to let us hear "the other side of the story" as relayed by Jews living in constant fear for their lives and possessions. Beyond the prose, the "Notices" present a colorful anthology of verses, half *popolareschi* and half *eruditi*, in Tuscan and sometimes Venetian, by Christians and, in a few instances, Jews who air their views on Copia and her enemies and recount the grisly details of what went on, behind her back, in an all-out attempt to rob, humiliate, and ridicule her. Among the *dramatis personae* are a number of those whom we encounter elsewhere (in Cebà's correspondence and in the items that pertain to Copia's *Manifesto*), most notably Cebà, Bonifaccio, Leon Modena, Copia's husband Jacob, and Giacomo Rosa.

Part 4 includes sonnets by Gabriele Zinano and Sarra's response to one of them, along with a preface, poem, and epitaph by Modena, the rabbi

3. Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia: episodi della sua vita in un manoscritto del secolo XVII," 106. The time frame can be delimited more specifically to the years 1622–24 (see below).

4. Boccato, "Un altro documento inedito su Sara Copio Sullam: il 'Codice di Giulia Soliga,'" 316 (*Soliga* an alternative spelling for *Solinga*). She did in fact publish the Italian version thirteen years later ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," specifically 122–218).

closely involved in her biography: Modena was privy to the content of the letters she wrote to Cebà and received from him and to her problems with her adversaries.

All in all, the four parts form a tight-knit contrapuntal web of persons and particulars that appear at different times, in different contexts, and under different circumstances. They tell a single story, Copia's. Added together, the various episodes in her life, as recounted by the authors, have the makings of a historical novel.

ANOTHER VOICE

Sarra Copia Sulam speaks in "another voice" mainly in two ways: as a Jewess and as a female. Her alterity was, in her time and place (late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century northern Italy), no less marked among non-Jews than it was among Jews. For non-Jews any religion other than Christianity was regarded as deviant, and in their male-dominated society women were seriously marginalized. The same holds for the Jewish minority, which in its own male-dominated community assigned a subordinate role to women and expected them to abide by the norms defined by Jewish religious law and indigenous social custom. Both non-Jews and Jews usually imposed silence on women. But Copia broke the rules: she did not limit the sphere of her activity to her family and household, nor did she stay in the background or guard her tongue. Rather she read, wrote, studied, and speculated; she opened her house to Jews and Christians; she sounded them out for their views on poetry, philosophy, and religion; she conversed and corresponded with them, forcefully arguing her own views; and she defended her person against slanderers and her faith against scoffers.

Copia found her voice in her womanhood and her Judaism; she molded it to her hopes and desires and, more specifically, to daily events and circumstances. It is with delineating her voice as projected in the writings assembled in this volume that much of the introduction will be concerned. I take "her voice" to mean the traits, talents, opinions, and singularities of her person revealed by herself and perceived by her contemporaries.

Copia's writings comprise everything that remains, as far as is known, of her verses and prose: fourteen poems (often in answer to those of others), two letters, and, in her own defense, a manifesto, recently described as "a unicum among the works of Italian Jews."⁵ Her correspondence must originally have been extensive, and to compensate for its almost total obliteration

5. Umberto Fortis, *La "bella ebrea": Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa nel ghetto di Venezia del '600*, 76. He goes on to say that "its double import, particular and collective, distinguishes and individualizes it

tion I have, as already said, attempted a summary refurbishment of the letters that prompted Cebà to write his own.

To Copia's works I have added all those that, again as far as is known, her contemporaries wrote to or about her until, as a cut-off date, her death in 1641, namely:

(1) Cebà's full correspondence with Copia (in all, fifty letters, plus one to her husband and two to a mutual acquaintance) and his references to her in twenty letters directed to others; (2) two letters by Bonifaccio, one to her, the other (of which I quote the relevant portion) *about* her, a number of selections from his lengthy treatise *against* her on the immortality of the soul, and his counterreply to what she wrote about this treatise in her *Manifesto*; (3) the complete manuscript of an extended work, "Notices from Parnassus," by one or more authors, in her praise and defense, and, in connection with its content and characters, excerpts from Numidio Paluzzi's *Rime* and the larger part of a report by Angelico Aprosio; (4) poems to or about Copia by Zinano; and (5) the dedication of a play to her by Modena and his epitaph for her tombstone.

Copia's writings are given in translation and in the original (kept together in the poetry for easy correlation, yet separated in her letters and *Manifesto*, for which the Italian can be found in the appendix). Half of Copia's poems were in reaction to others', which, again, are quoted in translation and in the original, to facilitate a comparison of their often common words and rhymes.

Her voice comes out loud and clear not only in her own writings but, as said, in those of her advocates or adversaries. Parts 1, 2, and 3 are sufficiently distinctive to have warranted individual publication. But as pieces of a whole they belong together (along with the brief part 4) in order for Copia's voice, with all the echoes it awakened in the remarks of her defenders and assailants, to be projected in its full registration. Read as an ensemble and for the first time in a complete translation, they allow one to piece together a partial "biography," more nuanced, perhaps, than any known to date; to evaluate Copia as she interacts with her acquaintances; to see how her mind works in handling the most serious philosophical question to challenge Renaissance scholars beginning with Marsilio Ficino, viz., the *immortalitas animae* (immortality of the soul); to gauge her skills as poet, epistolarian, and essayist; and to gain an overall sense, in retrospect, of her historical and literary importance. Many new details emerge about Copia, her family,

from every other defense or dispute of religious character in the many significant examples one finds of such in Italian Jewish literature" (*ibid.*).

friends, and foes; about her problems and concerns; about her disappointments and disillusion: all are stated or implied in the writings themselves.

Beyond Copia's fourteen poems, the volume draws from the relevant sources another ninety-nine, some of them in multiple stanzas (one canzone in twenty, another in fifty, a cycle of four sonnets), for a total of 184 items (including Copia's) by twenty authors plus thirty-seven by (who knows how many) unidentified ones. The larger part are sonnets, while the remainder are madrigals, canzoni, *stanze* (i.e., *ottave rime*), etc., in several languages (Italian, Venetian, Spanish, Latin, Hebrew), all of which have been fully translated. Hence the volume contains, beyond its prose portions, an extensive anthology of verses by and about Copia, some of them elegant and sophisticated, others earthy if not crass: Copia's "voice," in its broader sense as exemplifying her individuality, can be heard in them in its various sonorities. A sizable portion of the verses is by Cebà, constituting a seeming third collection to be added to the two known ones published under his name.

Copia's claim to fame rests, of course, on her literary works. To situate them in their proper ambience and individuate their author's voice, one asks: how many Jewish women in Italy cultivated prose or poetry before Copia? The answer is almost none, or to be more precise, if there were such women, "almost none" of their works has survived. Giustina Levi-Perotti was said by the early seventeenth-century writer Giacomo Filippo Tomasini to have sent Petrarch a sonnet to which he responded in his own.⁶ Her status as a famed fourteenth-century Jewish poet was reiterated in subsequent literature until, and even beyond, Medardo Morici, who, in 1899, qualified the sonnet as a sixteenth-century forgery and charged Tomasini with perpetrating a hoax.⁷ Exit Levi-Perotti. Two other women enter the discussion, both of them real, though, for lack of documentation, somewhat mysterious: Rosa Levi and Debora Ascarelli.

Born a Jew, Levi converted to Christianity in 1565, while probably in her early teens. Thus the one sonnet to her name ("Non più desire homai l'alma vi cinga"), written, six years after her baptism into the Church, to commemorate the victory of Venice in alliance with the Holy League over the Turks in the Battle of Lepanto (1571),⁸ may, along with Levi herself,

6. Hers began "Io vorrei pur drizzar queste mie piume" while Petrarch's did "La gola, il sonno e l'oziose piume" (*Canzoniere*, 7); after Tomasini, *Petrarcha redivivus* (1635), 111.

7. See his "Giustina Levi-Perotti e le petrarchiste marchigiane: contributo alla storia delle falsificazioni letterarie nei sec. XVI e XVII."

8. The sonnet was published in Luigi Groto's anthology *Trofeo della vittoria sacra, ottenuta dalla Christianiss. Lega contra Turchi nell'anno M D LXXI* (1571), 87r, and included by Luisa Bergalli, comp., in *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici d'ogni secolo* (1726), 242.

be dismissed as irrelevant to the discussion. She speaks in it as a Christian ("God gave victory, / Against invincible, bellicose Thrace [Turkey], / To the true worshipers of His faith").⁹

There remains the Jewess Debora Ascarelli, who, born in Rome in the early sixteenth century, translated four short sacred works from Hebrew into Italian and composed a single, diminutive Italian poem in two parts. They were collected by a later friend of the family (David ben Joseph della Rocca), who saw to their posthumous publication (in 1602).¹⁰ The first part of the Italian poem is about "chaste Susanna" who "dreams of nothing [wrong], / Nor harbors any thoughts against the Lord," while the second is about the author's own piety.¹¹ As Debora, or in Hebrew *devora*, meaning "bee," the author gathers the pollen from God's flowers:

Whatever heavenly features there are in me
Arise from Your flowers;
I absorb their soft and dewy moistures
While, happy and content,
I am intent on feeding on Your ambrosia.¹²

But Ascarelli is a shadowy figure—we know nothing of her life or motivations. She buried her own voice in translating the works of others. Even her one poem shows her as demure and withdrawn: like Susanna, she took pride in her selfless devotion. She has no "thoughts" or "words" of her own; rather she identifies with God's ("it is Your thoughts, Your words / That raise souls to the Creator of the Sun,"¹³ with the "Creator of the Sun" to be understood as the creator of Light, or Torah).¹⁴

By contrast, Copia was real and vibrant without being any less a Jewess: her individual voice resonates, as stated, in all her writings. They recount her troubles, they reflect her aims and anxieties. There is not a sentence in them that does not say something about Copia as one who acted or reacted,

9. For a bio-bibliographical report on Rosa Levi, see the entry on her, by Don Harrán, in *Italian Women Writers*. To her single sonnet one can add her response, in a distich, to a six-line poem by Groto (in his *Rime*, pt. 2, 71r).

10. [Hebrew title:] *Me'on ha-sho'alim by the learned rabbi Moses Rieti (may his memory be blessed), the supplication Barekhi nafshi*, [etc., followed by the Italian]: *Vulgarizati dalla Mag.[nifica] Madonna Devorà Ascarelli Hebraea*.

11. *Ibid.*, respectively 30r and 30v.

12. From second part of poem (30v).

13. From same.

14. On God as Sun, see Ps. 84:12, and on the precepts of His Law (*tora*) as Light, Prov. 6:23.

who thought or felt, and who suffered or sympathized. Copia is, to all appearances, the first Italian Jewess to excel in verse and prose and leave her personal imprint on them.

CONTEXT

Jews can be traced in Venice from the fourteenth century on. They grew in numbers and in 1516 were confined to a ghetto, the first of its kind in Europe.¹⁵ To get a feel for their peculiarity, one might view them through the eyes of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century foreign visitors¹⁶ who, curious about the Jews, recorded their impressions in travel diaries. They noted various features that serve as a sociocultural indicator of how Jews in Copia's time were perceived by non-Jews.¹⁷ What caught their attention was, first, the ghetto, which with its walls and bridges formed a city or an island within a city (see the map in figure 2 for the ghetto and further sites mentioned in this volume).¹⁸ When established, in an attempt to isolate the Jews from their Christian neighbors and control them for being infidels, it had some seven hundred Jews packed into its narrow confines (to the original Ghetto Nuovo, with its Italiani and Ashkenazi Jews, a new plot was added in 1541, the Ghetto Vecchio, to accommodate the influx of Levantine Jews and, after 1589, of Sephardi Jews).¹⁹ In the late 1620s their numbers had increased to almost three thousand, or two and a half percent of the total Venetian population. Problems of crowding were acute. To solve them, apartments

15. On its origins, see Benjamin Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background and Context of the Establishment of the Ghetti of Venice"; also as a concise introduction to the history of the Jews in Venice, idem, "The Venetian Government and the Jews"; and its topography, Ennio Concina, Ugo Camerino, and Donatella Calabi, eds., *La città degli ebrei: il ghetto di Venezia, architettura e urbanistica*. For a general study on Jews in fifteenth- to early seventeenth-century Italy, see Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, and with emphasis on Venice, idem, "A Cultural Profile," and more specifically in the early years of the Venetian ghetto, idem, "Kavim li-demutam ha-ḥevratit ve-ha-ruḥanit shel Yehudei ezor Venetsya be-reshit ha-me'a ha-16" [Profile of the Hebrew and spiritual character of the Jews of the Venetian area at the beginning of the sixteenth century].

16. Some of them Italian by birth, though residing abroad, as for example Gregorio Leti (see below).

17. I am grateful to the Folger Shakespeare Library, where as Fellow in 1998 I examined the literature cited below. See, in general, Boies Penrose, *Urbane Travelers: 1591–1635*, and Geoffrey Trease, *The Grand Tour*; and for travelers to Venice, Alberto Tenenti, "Venezia e il Veneto nelle pagine dei viaggiatori stranieri (1650–1790)," as well as Ravid, "Christian Travelers in the Ghetto of Venice: Some Preliminary Observations."

18. See Donatella Calabi, "The 'City of the Jews.'"

19. To which a third and final plot was added in 1633 at the request of the merchants.



Figure 2. Venice (in the 1630s), detail from a panoramic map etched and published by Matthäus Merian the Elder (d. 1650). First printed in Pierre d'Avity, *Neuwe archontologia cosmica, das ist, Beschreibung aller Käyserthumben, Königreichen und Republicken der gantzen Welt . . . auch mit den vornehmsten in Kupffer gestochenen Landt-Taffeln und Stätten gezieret, und verlegt von Matthaeo Merian* (1638), pl. 85 (and reproduced in two later editions [1646, 1695] and various other publications by Merian). Original measurement: two sheets of 9.9×11.5 feet each. For a full modern reprint, see Juergen Schulz, *Printed Plans and Panoramic Views of Venice (1486–1979)*, fig. 30. Key to sites mentioned in the present volume: 1, Ponte delle Guglie; 2, Ghetto Vecchio; 3, San Girolamo (sometimes Geronimo); 4, Ghetto Nuovo; 5, San Marcuola; 6, San Fantin; 7, Ponte dei Baretteri; 8, Ponte di Rialto; 9, San Salvatore; 10, Piazzetta San Marco (adjacent to the same named Piazza), more particularly the area used for executions (between the columns); 11, Palazzo Ducale; 12, Ponte della Paglia; 13, Prigioni Nuove. I am grateful to Piero Falchetta, head of the Cartographical Office at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, for guidance in plotting the sites. Courtesy of the National Library of Israel, formerly the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (Shapell Family Digitization Project, Eran Laor Cartographic Collection) and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Department of Geography, Historic Cities Project).

were subdivided and stories built upon stories in hurriedly and haphazardly assembled edifices of up to nine floors. Nicolas Audeber described the Jews as "all residing together in a single place enclosed by high walls that, on the outside, are removed from contact with the houses of the city, and there they are crammed as if in a cloister to keep them separated from the Christians. . . . In Venice it is called 'the ghetto' . . . there they are enclosed at sunset," upon which the gates were locked and the inhabitants "could only leave on the morrow at a certain hour." Should the Jews be found loitering in the city at night, they received corporal punishment, according to Audeber, though not according to other sources: they specify their liability to fines, imprisonment, or even banishment.²⁰

The second aspect that caught their attention was the Jews themselves. Observers noted the sign they wore to distinguish them from Christians, first a yellow head covering, then, from the late sixteenth century on, in Venice, a red one ("They are oblig'd to wear Red Hats").²¹ Their often "elegant and sweete featured" appearance belied the common notion that "To look like a lewe . . . meant sometimes a weather beaten warp faced fellow, sometimes a phreneticke and lunaticke person, sometimes one discontented"—it plainly "is not true."²² Yet elsewhere, by contrast, Jews are described, "no matter where they are, as fairly recognizable by their physiognomy, even without their having red or orange caps,"²³ and, in a motif that runs through the anti-Jewish literature from early times on, as having a foul smell, the so-called *foetor judaicus* ("their men . . . have for the most part a bad mark, which is that they smell quite bad from a disagreeable, penetrating odor. I will guard my tongue on whether it is because of the garlic they use on all their meats or because of another secret reason that some allege").²⁴

Many Jews worked at menial labors, as wandering vendors in the rag trade (*strazzaria*) or as water carriers, street cleaners, or porters. They "had

20. Audeber, *Le voyage et observations de plusieurs choses diverses qui se peuvent remarquer en Italie* (1656), 123. For a recent review of the sources, see Ravid, "Curfew Time in the Ghetto of Venice," esp. 241–51.

21. Maximilien Misson, *A New Voyage to Italy*, 5th enl. ed. (1739), 1:311 (from a letter dated 16 April 1688). On "red hats," see Ravid, "From Yellow to Red: On the Distinguishing Head-Covering of the Jews of Venice."

22. Thomas Coryate, *Coryats Crudities: Hastily Gobled up in Five Moneths Travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia*, etc. (1611), 232.

23. Audeber, *Le voyage*, 127–28.

24. *Ibid.*, 127. On garlic as a real or imagined Jewish odor, see Maria Diemling, "'As the Jews Like to Eat Garlick': Garlic in Christian-Jewish Polemical Discourse in Early Modern Germany."

the white from within their eyes often yellowish,"²⁵ perhaps from lack of sleep or overstrained reading of religious texts in minuscule characters and under poor light. Others were renowned as scholars, among them the rabbis,²⁶ of whom the polymath Modena, in this volume, is a stellar example. No less renowned were Jewish physicians. They "may take the Degree of Doctors in Medicine at Padua, and practice Physick any where in the City and State of Venice."²⁷ Because of their learning they were often summoned to the "principal houses of the Christians."²⁸ Moreover, "those Jews who exercise the profession of medicine earn a lot of money, much to the chagrin of the Christian doctors who could not ever stand in their way."²⁹ Jewish merchants were useful to the economy for having "a network of exchanges and [maritime] transports in many parts," whereby the Venetians sold their wares abroad to good profit—of these Jewish merchants, many were "very rich," as was Copia's father (see next section). Most affluent, among them her husband, were the generally despised Jewish moneylenders (pawnbrokers), who again were a mainstay of the economy.³⁰ "It is almost incredible," William Thomas tells us,

what gain the Venetians receive by the usury of the Jews, both privately and in common. For in every city the Jews keep open shops of usury, taking gages [i.e., pawns] of ordinary for fifteen in the hundred by the year, and if at the year's end the gage be not redeemed it is forfeit, or at the least done away to a great disadvantage, by reason whereof the Jews are out of measure wealthy in those parts.³¹

25. Audeber, *Le voyage*, 127.

26. For a general study, see Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*.

27. Misson, *A New Voyage to Italy*, 1:311. For Jewish graduates in medicine, see Abdelkader Modena and Edgardo Morpurgo, *Medici e chirurghi ebrei dottorati e licenziati nell'Università di Padova dal 1617 al 1816*, and, by David Ruderman, "The Impact of Science on Jewish Culture and Society in Venice (with Special Reference to Jewish Graduates of Padua's Medical School)" and *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, 100–117. For an extended study of one particular physician, Abraham Yagel, active in northern Italy, see Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic, and Science: The Cultural Universe of a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Physician*.

28. Gregorio Leti, *L'Italia regnante, ò vero Nova descrizione dello stato presente di tutti prencipati, e republiche d'Italia* (1675–76), 1:172–73.

29. *Ibid.*, 2:22 (the same for the next sentence). See Ravid, "In Defense of the Jewish Doctors of Venice, ca. 1670."

30. On Jewish moneylenders in Venice, see, for example, Brian Pullan, "Jewish Moneylending in Venice: From Private Enterprise to Public Service."

31. William Thomas, *The History of Italy* (1549), 69.

Jewish customs, from their dietary regulations ("from swines flesh they abstaine as their ancient forefathers were wont to doe")³² to their cessation of work on the Sabbath, were also noted. "They observe the day of the Sabbath with such great exactitude" that they have Christians prepare their meals in advance or do so themselves on Friday. Christian women are employed on the Sabbath to "set their tables and start a fire." Nor do their merchants engage in any kind of commerce on that day; rather they spend their time in prayer.³³ The week, for the Jews, starts on Sunday, but "by order of the police they are prohibited from working on Sundays or holidays," which keeps them, moreover, from awakening a scandal.³⁴

Visitors observed their denigrating treatment by the populace and the authorities. Jews were not allowed to purchase or own property.³⁵ "Though in some places they enjoy greater privileges than in others, still almost everywhere they suffer from abuse of the masses that treat them like dogs with insults and injuries." They were especially prudent in their encounters with their neighbors, submitting to their every will and showing them every courtesy "in order to avoid any slap on the cheek or any beating." Fearing the judicial administrators who, in their rigor, generally did not pardon them even "a smallest offense," they became "all the more enslaved to the laws of the land."³⁶ They were sometimes forced to sit through weekly sermons "to convince them out of their own Scriptures" for their conversion.³⁷ If they did not come, they were subject "to the heaviest fines"; and if they failed to listen, the sacristans who patrolled the church snapped them to attention by hitting them with "straps or sticks."³⁸ In Rome, during Carnival, Jews were forced to run naked on the thoroughfare known as the Corso, to the amusement of the crowd; or if not naked, with "some thing about their middles to hide Nature, that the Whores might not see all."³⁹

Striking were the strange sounds of the Hebrew language, in which the Jews prayed and often conversed. Maximilien Misson tried to write them

32. Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 233.

33. Leti, *L'Italia regnante*, 1:163–64.

34. Audeber, *Le voyage*, 125–26.

35. *Ibid.*, 126.

36. Leti, *L'Italia regnante*, 1:169.

37. Richard Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy: or, A Compleat Journey through Italy* (1686), 2:14.

38. Leti, *L'Italia regnante*, 1:163.

39. Francis Mortoft, *His Book, Being His Travels through France and Italy, 1658–1659*, 137. See also Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy*, 2:119–20.

down, but he found it impossible. "One were as good pretend to express with the Letters of our Alphabet the Cries of Animals, and the most hoarse, or odd Sounds," he confessed, "as to describe the Noise they [the Jews] make in their Nose, and their Throat, in some of their Pronunciations." He appears to be describing the nasal gurgle of the character ayin or the throaty gargle of the character het. If he invented "some New Characters" for their transcription, "it would be, even, necessary also to form our Ears, by a long Use, to be able to become the Echo of the Sounds they produce, before to put 'em down in Writing, with the said Characters."⁴⁰

As the Jews' place of worship, the synagogue obviously awakened considerable interest. "Wherever they are the Jews are allowed their churches, which they call synagogues."⁴¹ The one positive thing one might say about the authorities is that they permitted the Jews freedom of worship. Of the main synagogues in Venice there were, in Copia's time, three in the Ghetto Nuovo—among them the Scuola Italiana where Modena officiated as cantor from 1612 on—and two in the Ghetto Vecchio.⁴² Visitors were struck by the "infinity of candles lighted above the altar, or hanging from the ceiling, or set around the walls of the interior." They noted the proceedings in the sanctuary upon the arrival of the congregants, who, in the vestibule, "do not remove their hats. Rather they cover their heads [and shoulders] with a veil [Heb. *talit*]," and wash their hands, wiping them with towels. Only then do they enter the hall and take their seats.⁴³

The reporters were especially intrigued by their manner of prayer, which they usually found disorderly and disrespectful.⁴⁴ "No sooner do they enter their 'church' than they begin to shout with angry voices, turning their heads in every direction, making certain terribly foolish gestures, and thus they proceed to sit down with the same shouts, which beautiful music of theirs lasts until their rabbi begins his sermon in Italian, though reciting passages from Scripture in Hebrew."⁴⁵ They did everything that

40. Misson, *A New Voyage to Italy*, 2:142.

41. Leti, *L'Italia regnante*, 1:161, for this and the next quotation (about "infinity of candles").

42. For a general study on the five major synagogues in Venice, see David Cassuto, *Ricerche sulle cinque sinagoghe (scuole) di Venezia: suggerimenti per il loro ripristino*, and with respect to the early seventeenth century, idem, "He'arot hadashot 'al batei ha-kenesset be-Venetsya bi-yemei Yehuda Arye Modena" [New notes on the Venetian synagogues in the time of Leon Modena] (with twenty-one illustrations).

43. Audeber, *Le voyage*, 124.

44. See, for a general study, Joseph Kalir, "The Jewish Service in the Eyes of Christians and Baptized Jews in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries."

45. Leti, *L'Italia regnante*, 1:162.

proper churchgoers were expected not to do. "I wondered at first," Richard Lassels wrote,

that they had learned no more manners in these their Schools [i.e., synagogues], than to enter into them to pray, without either putting off Hats, lifting up Eyes, or bending of Knees to the great Jehova, whom they rather fear than love. Moses going to him [Jehova], put off his Shooes, and I expected, that these Men should at least, have put off their Hats at the entrance into their Synagogues: But they are Arch Clowns, and their fowl Towels, at the entrance into their Synagogues, told me as much.⁴⁶

No less clownish, for Thomas Coryate, was the alternate mumbling and fulmination of the rabbi, who spoke "before the congregation not by a sober, distinct, and orderly reading, but by an exceeding loud yaling [yelling], undecent roaring, and as it were a beastly bellowing of it forth." Little wonder if "the hearers can very hardly understand him."⁴⁷

Their weddings and circumcisions were also observed. John Evelyn, for example, said of a wedding he attended in 1646 that one of the two rabbis present held "a glasse of Wine in his hand, which in the midst of the ceremony, pretending to deliver to the Woman, he let fall, the breaking whereof, was to signifie the frailty of our nature, & that we must expect dissasters & crosses amidst all enjoyments."⁴⁸ Traditionally it is the bridegroom who breaks the glass⁴⁹ (often by trampling upon it), and though Evelyn may have erred,⁵⁰ there may have been exceptions, for which one can find some evidence in the rabbinical literature.⁵¹ No less interesting is his description of a

46. Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy*, 2:53.

47. Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 231.

48. See, for his report, *The Diary of John Evelyn* (originally 1645–46), 2:477.

49. E.g., Leon Modena, *Historia de' riti hebraici* (1638): "the empty glass is handed to the groom, who throws it hard on the ground and breaks it as a reminder, in one's happiness, of death, which breaks and shatters us like glass, lest one become swollen with pride" (4.3.4).

50. Or so E. S. de Beer, editor of Evelyn's *Diary*, maintained ("This account of the marriage ceremony is incorrect. The rabbis are only witnesses of the bridegroom's statement that he takes the bride as his wife; and it is the bridegroom who breaks the glass"; 2:477), yet one cannot always be certain about who did what (see continuation above).

51. E.g., Talmud, Berakhot [Blessings] 31a, about Rabbi Ashi who, at the marriage feast he made for his son, saw that the guests were becoming too boisterous, "so he brought a white crystal and broke it before them and they turned serious." The evidence is indirect to be sure, for the passage speaks of rejoicing during a "wedding feast" and not during *kiddushin*, or the marriage ceremony proper.

circumcision. With almost clinical exactitude Evelyn detailed the "divers Instruments" used in performing it, the praying, the singing, the cutting off of the prepuce—at which point "the miserable babe cry'd extreamely, whiles the rest continu'd their odd tone, rather like howling than singing," and so forth until the cauterizing of the wound and the swaddling of the child, only to conclude: "So ended the slovenly ceremony, and"—adding a personal touch—"the Rabbin cryes out to me in the Italian tongue perceiving me to be a stranger: Ecco Signior mio, Un Miracolo di dio [Look, Milord, a miracle of God]; because the child had immediately left crying."⁵²

Lassels said of a circumcision he witnessed that "it was so painful to the Child, that it was able to make a Man heartily thank God that he is a Christian." If the child could speak out, he believed, "he would wish . . . to be a Woman rather than a Man upon such terms."⁵³

Jewish women were also of interest. The reporters noted their separation from men in the synagogue. In one instance they were described as seated in a gallery "in such a way that [with its wooden latticing] they cannot be observed by those [males] who are in the 'church,' while they themselves are able to observe others."⁵⁴ Many of them appear to have been striking in their beauty, dress, jewels, and proud bearing. In the "loft or gallery proper to themselves only," Coryate tells us,

I saw many lewish women, whereof some were as beautiful as ever I saw, and so gorgeous in their apparel, iewels, chaines of gold, and rings adorned with precious stones, that some of our English Countesses do scarce exceed them, having marvailous long traines like Princesses that are borne up by waiting women serving for the same purpose.⁵⁵

Coryate concluded thereupon: "many of the lewes are very rich." The description of the women's looks, bearing, and station could well apply to the "bella Hebrea" Copia.⁵⁶

52. *Ibid.*, 2:293–94.

53. Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy*, 2:54.

54. Leti, *L'Italia regnante*, 1:163.

55. Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 233.

56. See Copia's sonnet ("La bella Hebrea") and Ansaldo Cebà's response in this volume (1.1.3–4, nos. 1–2).

LIFE

Seven years cannot be considered a life. But that is all we have for Sarra Copia Sulam: she came onto the scene in 1618 and disappeared from public view in 1624.⁵⁷ Seventeen years follow until her death, of which the date can be established from the inscription on her tombstone and two necrological records: 15 February 1641.⁵⁸ She is said in the same records to have died when "about forty years old." That would set her date of birth, for which there are no records, around 1600–1601 and not, as has been stated in the scholarly literature, anywhere from 1588 to 1592.⁵⁹

But there the problems begin. If Copia were born in 1600, she would have been eighteen years old when she started her correspondence with Cebà, which is a reasonable age for a bright, highly impressionable young lady to become so enthused over a poem as to wish to communicate her feelings about it, as she did, to its author. But Apro시오 contended that Copia's father, who died in 1606,⁶⁰ encouraged his daughter to open a literary salon in their home⁶¹—if she were born in 1600, she would have been six years old at the time of his decease! To get around this inconsistency, the scholars either looked the other way in the face of the statement, in the necrological records, that she died around the age of forty or presumed

57. The year of Copia's first letter to Ansaldo Cebà was 1618; the year in which the grisly events in her household, as related in the "Notices from Parnassus," came to an end was 1624.

58. Inscription on tombstone: see 4.3 below (and also fig. 12). Two necrological records: Venice, Archivio di Stato, Provveditori alla Sanità, Necrologie ebrei, register 996, for the year 1641 ("On 15 February 1641 there died Sarra, the wife, about 40 years old, of Jacob Sulam, from a fever that continued for three months; in the Ghetto Vecchio"); and Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, Università degli Ebrei di Venezia, "register of the deceased" for 1627–53 (G.[rande] F[ormato] 59), folder (*busta*) 11, under 1641: "Sarra Copia Sulam *isha maskelet* [in Hebrew characters, 'a learned woman'—first five words added by a later hand]: on the fifteenth of the said [month and year] there died Sarra, the wife, about 40 years old, of Jacob Sulam, after being sick with a fever that continued for about three months; in the Ghetto Vecchio." For the reproduction of the first record, see Boccato, "Lettere di Ansaldo Cebà, genovese, a Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa del Ghetto di Venezia," facing 172; for that of the second, Fortis, *La "bella ebrea,"* 165; and for the Italian of both, under footnote to 4.3 below.

59. Opinions vary: Moisé Soave has it "toward 1590" ("Sara Copia Sullam," 15:197), Leonello Modona "between 1588 and 1589" (S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti raccolti e pubblicati insieme ad al-quanti cemi biografici*, 11), Enzo Sarot "in 1590 or 1592" ("Ansaldo Cebà and Sara Copia Sullam," 140), Boccato "around 1592" ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto," 104), etc.

60. Venice, Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, Università degli Ebrei di Venezia, obituary notices: register for 1600–1627 (G.[rande] F[ormato] 57), folder (*busta*) 10, under 26 August 1606.

61. See 3.3.2:113.

that it was written in haste or as a value judgment and hence could not be trusted.⁶²

Yet an earlier date of birth does not tally with information gleaned from the sources. Modena, in the preface to his tragedy *Ester* (1619), described Copia as having "considerable knowledge in advance of both her years and her sex."⁶³ If she were born in 1600, she would have been nineteen years old when Modena wrote the preface, which fits in well with his notion of her precocious intelligence. Furthermore, Cebà said, in two letters from 1618 and three from 1620, that she was a "young woman,"⁶⁴ and the phrase recurs in the "Notices"—the events of which transpired in the years 1622–24, or four to six years later than Cebà's letters—in seven different passages.⁶⁵

But how does one define "young woman"? A girl in her late teens or early twenties might fit the bill, though certainly not one born in the late 1580s or early 1590s, as has been thought for Copia. For argument's sake, let us assume she was born in 1589. By this reckoning, she would have been 30 years old when Modena wrote his play, 29–32 in Cebà's letters, and 33–35 in the "Notices," ages that hardly warrant the designation *giovane*. When Petrarch first saw Laura, whom he called *giovane*, she was 17 years old; when she had aged, she became a "woman" (*donna*).⁶⁶

Nor does Copia say anything in the dedication of her *Manifesto* to her father that would imply an earlier year of birth than the one to be inferred from the obituary notices..

To conclude: Copia was probably eighteen or nineteen years old when she opened her literary salon; Aprosio appears to have spread misinformation about her having done so when her father was alive; if anyone encouraged her to open a salon, it was probably her husband. When Cebà remarked (in his first letter to her) that he "found it quite unusual for a young woman to be so captivated by a poem treating lofty matters as to be unable

62. Thus Giorgio Busetto in his entry on Copia for Alberto Maria Ghisalberto, ed., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* ("a hasty annotation . . . that seems to strain our credibility"; 28:582), or Boccato in "Lettere di Ansaldo Cebà" ("some perplexity remains over regarding an age estimate made by an official who transcribed a death certificate into the registers as having the weight of proof, inasmuch as the estimate could have been no more than approximate or completely erroneous"; 171 n. 5).

63. See 4.1.3.

64. 1618: 1.1.1, 5. 1620: 1.1.65, 77, 99.

65. "Notices from Parnassus," 5r, 7r, 8r, 11r, 52v, 73r–v.

66. His spellings were *giovane* and *giovenetta*. Laura is thought to have been born in 1310 and Petrarch to have first seen her in 1327, the year he began his *Canzoniere*. See there, nos. 30:1 ("giovane donna"), 121:1 ("giovenetta donna"), and 127, stanza 2:8 ("la bella giovenetta, ch'ora è donna").

to refrain from seeking out the acquaintance of the one who wrote it," he meant what he said: she was "young" and her curiosity was "unusual." He confirms what was intimated in the necrological records from 1641: having died at "about forty years old," Copia must, if reason stands on our side, have been born in 1600–1601.

Of the diverse spellings for Copia's name (Sara or Sarra, Copia or Copia or Copio, and Sulam or Sullam), "Sarra Copia Sulam" appears as the signature to her two surviving letters.⁶⁷ She spent her whole life in Venice, where her place of habitation was the ghetto—her father lived there,⁶⁸ as did her husband and all Jews in the city, by public ordinance, after 1516. Her mother's name was Ricca (alias Rebecca, Heb. Rivka), her father's Simon (Simone, Heb. Shim'on). All we know of Ricca is that she outlived her husband by thirty-nine years and her daughter by four (she died in 1645 at the age of seventy).⁶⁹ Simon was a merchant, as was his brother Moses (Moisè, Heb. Moshe), both of them considered among the richest Jews in Venice.⁷⁰ Documents testify to the two brothers' services, moreover, as maritime insurance brokers.⁷¹

The Copia (or Copio) family can be found in Venice from the second half of the sixteenth century. Its device was a scorpion (*scorpio* = *Copio* + *s* + *r*). It appears on Sarra's tombstone.⁷² Bonifaccio misconstrued the device, imprinted apparently on the seal affixed to her letters, as an ant, on the traits of which he expatiated with no little pomposity in his *Discorso*.⁷³ One wonders whether the scorpion also refers via the Zodiac to her time of birth

67. It is also the preferred spelling in the sources. *Sarra*: 198 times as against 17 for *Sara*; *Copia*, 37 as against 1 for *Copio*; and *Sulam*, 11 as against 3 for *Sullam*. The reason there are so many references to her first name as compared with her family or maiden name is that she is usually referred to as Signora Sarra. When varying from Sarra Copia Sulam, the spellings will be marked with *sic*.

68. Angelico Aprosio, 3.3.2:113.

69. On her tombstone, see Aldo Luzzatto, ed., *La Comunità Ebraica di Venezia e il suo antico cimitero*, 1:227, 418.

70. As Aprosio said of Simon, in unpublished portions of what was to be part 2 of *La biblioteca aprosiana*: Genoa, Biblioteca Durazzo, MSS A.III.4, 227 and A.III.5, 304; see also, in this volume, 3.3.2:113. Modena dedicated to Simon and Moses, relatives on his wife's side, his early book of sermons *Midbar Yebuda* [The Judean desert; after the author's Hebrew name Judah] (1602).

71. See Alberto Tenenti, *Naufrages, corsaires et assurances maritimes à Venise 1592–1609*, 141, 179, 186, 189, 229, 232; also Bernard Blumenkranz, "Les juifs dans le commerce maritime à Venise," 145.

72. Along with that of the Sulam family: see the detail in fig. 1 (p. xxxii; and, again, for the tombstone inscription, 4.3).

73. See below, 2.3.58–59.

(24 October to 22 November) or her temperament (intense, energetic, tenacious, deeply sensitive, highly emotional).

Simon, the father, was active in the affairs of the Jewish community and, upon his death in 1606 at the age of forty-eight,⁷⁴ left a sizable bequest to the Sephardic synagogue.⁷⁵ Copia revered him as "her most beloved parent."⁷⁶ He appears to have smothered her with affection, for by dedicating her *Manifesto* to him fifteen years after his death, she wished to "demonstrate somewhat the continuation of that inexpressible love that [he] always bore [her]." She hoped that looking down from above he would take pride in her achievements, rejoicing in "the little renown that accrues to [her] name," to compensate for the lack of sons, whom he "so fervently" wished he had. Her being a daughter appears to have weighed upon her conscience, and her every aim in life was to prove to her father that "having brought a woman into the world will be no less dear to [him], for the conservation of [his] name, than having brought a man into it."

But Copia was not an only child. She had one, perhaps two, sisters. The confusion over the number derives from the ambiguous inscription in the poem on her father's tombstone.⁷⁷ Lines 11–12 read "tsara elei Sara, bito kemavkira, / Raḥel ve-gam Le'a, Rivka ve-hi ishto" (Sara pains over him, as his firstborn daughter; / So do Rachel, Leah, and his wife Rebecca).⁷⁸ It is not clear what the lines owe to reality or to fabrication. For some commentators, Rachel and Leah were Copia's sisters;⁷⁹ for others, they were but two of the names that the poet reeled off to designate the four matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah).⁸⁰

Leah cannot be documented, but Rachel alias Stella or Diana definitely can. Apro시오 identified Stella and Sarra as the father's "two daughters,"⁸¹ say-

74. It was he who, according to Moisè Soave, was entrusted with Copia's education after her father's death: see his "Nuove note, aggiunte e correzioni alle 'Donne celebri Israelite,'" 68 (though no document is cited).

75. See Soave, "Sara Copia Sullam," 15:197.

76. For this and next quotations, see Copia's paean to her father in her *Manifesto* (2.4.A 3r–v).

77. Abraham Berliner, comp., *Luḥot avanim* [Tombstone inscriptions]: *Hebräische Grabschriften in Italien*, I: 200 *Inschriften aus Venedig*, 16. u. 17. *Jahrhundert*, 78 (epitaph no. 156).

78. The author puns on *tsara* (pains), which, removed of its *t*, becomes Sara, or *tsara* . . . *kemavkira*, after the same two words in "the distress [or pain] of her who bears her first child" (Jer. 4:31).

79. Soave, "Sara Copia Sullam," 15:197; Ernest David, "Sara Copia Sullam, une héroïne juive au XVII^e siècle," 37:694; Berliner, *Luḥot avanim*, 79; Luzzatto, *La Comunità Ebraica di Venezia*, 1:324.

80. So Abraham Geiger opined: see his "Sara Copia Sullam," 182.

81. Genoa, Biblioteca Durazzo, MSS A.III.4, 230 and A.III.5, 304.

ing that "both of them [were] intelligent," especially Sarra who "delighted in reading books of poetry and [on] various odd subjects."⁸² Modena tells us in his autobiography that he accompanied Diana (Stella) to Mantua for her wedding there, in May 1623, "to one of the sons of [Isacchino] Massarano."⁸³ Stella must have been a charmer, so much so that her husband suspected that "her eyes" were elsewhere. Here Apro시오 adds a gruesome detail, till now unknown. "Stella (Diana)," he writes, "was joined in matrimony to a fickle young man, who, thinking that her eyes were tinder for inflaming hearts, became jealous and, in a single blow, cut them out of her head with a pair of scissors."⁸⁴

Copia herself probably married around 1614,⁸⁵ at the age of fourteen or fifteen, as was customary for Italian Jewish girls at the time⁸⁶ (a child was born to her in 1615). Her husband, Jacob (Giacob) Sulam, was a banker, engaged in moneylending.⁸⁷ Members of the Sulam family—the name Sulam ("scale," in the sense of ladder) indicates distant origins in L'Escalette (Provence)⁸⁸—can be found in Mantua and, from the seventeenth century on, in Venice and its surroundings. Jacob, brother (it appears) of the Mantuan banker Moses Sulam,⁸⁹ himself the patron of the composer Salamone

82. See below, 3.3.2:113.

83. Modena, *Sefer hayyei Yehuda* [Book of Judah's life], 78–79. Isacchino was well known in Mantua as a musician, choreographer, and dancer: see Harrán, *Salamone Rossi, Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua*, 13, 16–17, 29–31, etc.

84. Apro시오, MSS A.III.5, 306 (also A.III.4, 230, without "in a single blow").

85. Opinions differ, with still earlier dates set on the (mistaken) premise that Copia was born around 1589: "toward 1612" (Soave, "Sara Copia Sullam," 15:198); "around 1612–13" (Luzzatto, *La Comunità Ebraica di Venezia*, 1:246, and Fortis, *La "bella ebrea,"* 33 [later revised to read "between 1612 and 1614," 35n.]); "around 1613" (Boccato, "Lettere di Ansaldo Cebà," 173); "at the beginning of 1614" (Meyer Kayserling, *Die jüdischen Frauen in der Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst*, 161); etc.

86. On their betrothal and marriage between fourteen and eighteen, see Kenneth R. Stow and Sandra Debenedetti Stow, "Donne ebreë a Roma nell'età del ghetto: affetto, dipendenza, autonomia," 71–72, and, after them, Howard Adelman, "Italian Jewish Women," 143. In both studies one learns that Jewish men, by contrast, usually married at 24–28 years of age. Bonfil was less specific ("some couples married very young, others later"; *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, 257), remarking that the information available on marital ages was still too inadequate to allow one to draw firm conclusions.

87. On his appointment as a banker, see documents for 29 October 1613, 20 December 1613, and 9 March 1614 in the *fondo* Inquisitorato sopra l'Università degli Ebrei, folder (*busta*) 19, in Venice, Archivio di Stato (after Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 104).

88. See Heinrich Gross, *Gallia judaica, dictionnaire géographique de la France d'après les sources rabbiniques*, 431.

89. For Moses, see Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*, under index of persons, esp. 885 (twelve entries from 1605 to 1627). Jacob is not mentioned in the Mantuan archives, but two other brothers, resident in Mantua, are (Rafael, Aaron).

Rossi,⁹⁰ appears to have been good-natured, indulging Copia in her intellectual aspirations. Cebà writes about him, in a letter to Copia, that in his "having had the good fortune to have [her] for his wife, he could not be anything but most genteel, so I believe."⁹¹ Jacob outlived Copia, as is clear from the epitaph on her tombstone: there the author (Modena), after identifying Jacob as Copia's husband, invokes the Lord to "protect and preserve him."⁹² Jacob's activities for the Jewish Italiani community are variously noted in its minute books.⁹³

Of the couple's children, all that is known is that a daughter, Rebecca (Heb. Rivka), doubtless named after Copia's mother, died in 1615 at the age of ten months.⁹⁴ The epitaph on the infant's tombstone identifies her parents:

Dawn disappeared before becoming Day:
Ten months old was she, her name was Rebecca;
Her father was Jacob Sulam, her mother Sarra:
They for her, and she for them, foresaw the darkness of
tragedy . . .⁹⁵

Copia had a miscarriage sometime before May of 1618 (as she informs Cebà in her first letter to him).⁹⁶ Since children are not mentioned thereafter, nor is there any reference on her tombstone to survivors except for her husband, she may perhaps, as a consequence of the miscarriage or for reasons of poor health, have been unable to bear them.

Things moved toward a crisis in 1622 when Copia hired a man named Numidio Paluzzi as her teacher, providing for his wants. Paluzzi picked up and left (without informing her) for Friuli, where he thought he would find

90. For Rossi's dealings with Moses Sulam, see variously in Harrán, *Salamone Rossi, Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua*, 17, 46–48, etc., and idem, "As Framed, So Perceived: Salamone Rossi *ebreo*, Late Renaissance Musician," 179, 180, 189–90, not to speak of the composer's dedication of his Hebrew collection ("The Songs of Solomon") to him (see his *Complete Works*, ed. Don Harrán, 13a:163–69, Hebrew with English translation).

91. 1.1/L8.20.

92. 4.3 (inscription).

93. See Daniel Carpi, ed., *Pinkas va'ad kebilla kadosha Italyani be-Venetsya 1644–1711* [Minute books of the Council of the Italiani Jewish Community of Venice, 1644–1711], numerous references from 1644 on.

94. Venice, Archivio di Stato, Provveditori alla Sanità, *Necrologie ebrei* (register 847); also Venice, Comunità Israelitica degli Ebrei, obituary notices (register for 1600–1627); G.F. 57).

95. Berliner, *Lubot avanim*, 79 (epitaph no. 158; in Hebrew).

96. See 1.1.2 (Cebà's marginal comment).

greener pastures. When he did not, he returned to Venice, and Copia (without a word of censure) reinstated him. She saw to his treatment in a steam bath, after which she provided lodgings for him in the house of her laundrywoman, Paola Furlana. Paluzzi connived with Furlana, her three sons, a Moorish kitchen maid, and his friend Alessandro Berardelli to plunder Copia's possessions. They concocted schemes to extort money and valuables from her. Her friend Giacomo Rosa found out Paluzzi's trickery and reported it to Copia, who denounced Paluzzi and Berardelli to the authorities, whereupon they brought out shameful writings in her vilification.⁹⁷

There are no documents for Copia in the years preceding 1618 and in those following 1624 until her death in 1641. Thus if she were born in 1600–1601, thirty-five years of her life remain uncovered. Yet the documents for 1618–24 testify not only to the breadth of her activities but also to her impact on her surroundings. One could only imagine the size of the present, already capacious volume if there had been enough material for a full biography! I interpret Copia's "life," given its temporal limitations, as, necessarily, more a description of her person than a biography proper.

Though Cebà never saw Copia, the reports he received from those who did see her sufficed for him to confirm her beauty. "I consider you beautiful of face," he writes.⁹⁸ He received her portrait, but was told that she was even more beautiful in real life.⁹⁹ Her beauty matched her "graces,"¹⁰⁰ or the way, presumably, she spoke, moved, and held herself ("graces" that Cebà compared to those of the Muses).¹⁰¹ Copia may have acquired her good looks and her poise from her father, described in his tombstone inscription as "beautiful beyond comparison . . . erect in his posture."¹⁰² Bonifaccio reminded her, however, that beauty is transient ("more ephemeral . . . than leaves / And much more fleeting . . . than wind"), and for all her pride in her person Copia concurred with him, saying that, in any case, she was more concerned with her soul than with her body.¹⁰³

What stood out apparently were (as with her sister) her eyes, or "lovely

97. "Notices from Parnassus," fols. 5r–14v, including three sonnets, one of them by Copia.

98. 1.1/L9.26.

99. 1.1/L23.77.

100. 1.1/L9.26 and L20.68.

101. 1.1/L23.77.

102. "Yofyo beli dimyon . . . tamar be-komato": Berliner, *Lubot avanim*, 78 (epitaph no. 156, as above).

103. See Bonifaccio, *Discorso* (2.3.61, no. 2:3–4); and Copia's *Manifesto*, where the poem is repeated, then followed by her *risposta* (2.4.D 1r–v, nos. 3–4). Giuseppe Veltri draws a connection between Copia's beauty and her probing of deeper philosophical questions, here the

lights":¹⁰⁴ Cebà remarked on their charms as he heard about them from others¹⁰⁵ and, after receiving Copia's portrait, as he saw them for himself. He was initially wary of owning the portrait, for he could not "help but be frightened" by the power her eyes might exercise over him (one of your friends, he wrote to her, "reported to me . . . that you know how to strike far better with your eyes than I could persuade with my verses").¹⁰⁶ "The wounds of your eyes," he admits, "would be most adequate for subjugating me."¹⁰⁷

No less noticeable were her "blond tresses"¹⁰⁸ that Cebà named among other striking attributes ("Beautiful is your cheek, soft your look, / Golden your hair, and gleaming your face").¹⁰⁹ He distinguishes her "golden head of hair" from his own silvery one and, in a conversionist spirit, urges her to bathe it "in the holy font" of baptism.¹¹⁰ There is, of course, a tradition of "golden-haired" females in Italian literature: Petrarch's Laura is an example.¹¹¹ Blond may not have been Copia's natural color: she is likely to have bleached her hair, as did other Venetian women (Titian's paintings are renowned for their golden-haired, yet dark-eyed *veneziane*).¹¹² Copia may have emulated them not only in their hair coloring, but also in their hair-styles¹¹³ and heavy makeup. Cebà suspected as much ("if you follow the customs of Venetian women . . . I fear very much that I would see you more painted than natural").¹¹⁴

A portrait of Copia was done in Venice, presumably by a Venetian painter, in early 1620. It was meant as an example of her likeness to serve the

immortality of the soul (in the sense that the notion of beauty leads to a consideration of divinity): see his "Die 'schöne Jüdin' und die Unsterblichkeit der Seele—Ein philosophisch-apologetischer Wettstreit im Venedig des 17. Jahrhunderts."

104. As Giacomo Rosa described them in a sonnet ("Notices from Parnassus," 3.1.40v, no. 7:3).

105. 1.1/L14.38.

106. 1.1/L20.68–69.

107. 1.1/L21.71.

108. Rosa's sonnet, as above (no. 7:4).

109. 1.1/L2.12, no. 5:1–2.

110. 1.1/L8.24 and L24.81.

111. See his *Canzoniere*, 12:5, 29:3, 37:81, 59:4, and so on.

112. *Flora and Venus of Urbino* (both in Florence, Uffizi), *Mary Magdalen* (Florence, Palazzo Pitti), *Venus with the Organ Player* (Madrid, Prado), *Young Woman at Her Toilet* (Paris, Louvre), etc.

113. She took great care over having her chambermaid part and braid her hair: see 1.1/L16.55–56.

114. 1.1/L38.107.

Genoese painter Bernardo Castello in preparing a second portrait (which, after the two corresponded, he had pledged to do). She sent it to Cebà in early April for him to pass it on to Castello, no doubt counting on him, as a close friend of the painter, to act in her interest.¹¹⁵ In the portrait, according to her description of it in a sonnet,¹¹⁶ she was depicted as having a "chain" (in the form of a necklace) for being a criminal in disobeying Cebà's orders not to dispatch him her image (for fear, on his part, of the amorous pleasure it might stimulate). The chain also confirms the bond established between Copia and Cebà via her reading of his epic poem about Esther and their exchange of letters, verses, and presents.

To all appearances, another portrait of Copia was done in Venice, if the "Notices" can be credited, by Alessandro Berardelli, around the same time as Castello's (1622).¹¹⁷ It was not she who requested it but, in the words of those who conspired against her in her household, a French prince, said to be her admirer, who, as it happens, did nothing of the sort.¹¹⁸

The question is whether Berardelli's portrait and the first one are identical.¹¹⁹ Their separation in time (by two years) and function (an aid for Castello, a gift for the prince) speaks for different works. But since they are untraceable, little more can be said of them. The situation with the portrait done by Castello is even more complicated. From its listing among Castello's belongings in an inventory drawn up some six weeks after his death in 1629¹²⁰ we know that it was in his house and that it measured "approximately five hands (*palmi*)," or about thirty inches. Afterward it seems to have disappeared. Relying on the inventory, Regina Erbenraut included the portrait in her catalog of the artist's works as no. 107V, with the designation "lost" (*verschollen*).¹²¹

115. 1.1/L21 (esp. 69–70). The Venetian portrait was completed in the two-month interim between letters 20 (15 February 1620)—in which, moreover, there is reference to Copia's correspondence with Bernardo Castello (68)—and 21 (11 April, on which date Cebà received it). On their friendship, which included Castello's request that Cebà be godfather to one of his children, see under letter 20.68 (footnote).

116. 1.1/L22.75, no. 21.

117. On the date, see below. For details on Berardelli, see 3.1.5r.

118. "Notices" (3.1.11r).

119. As thought by Fortis (*La "bella ebrea,"* 112).

120. Genoa, Archivio di Stato, Notai antichi, under the notary Marc'Antonio Lagomarsino, file no. 5498, document no. 559, 17 November 1629.

121. Erbenraut, *Der Genueser Maler Bernardo Castello 1557–1629: Leben und Ölgemälde*, 260–319 (Castello's works), esp. 314 (his portrait of Copia). Till now it has been assumed that Copia's portrait found among Castello's belongings after his death was painted by him. But does that make sense? Castello appears to have started work on it in 1622, after receiving her Venetian

Can it be found? Boccato suggested that a copy may have been made by Castello's son Valerio¹²² and, in fact, identified the portrait with an "allegorical figure" (so named) in a catalog, by Camillo Manzitti, of Valerio's works.¹²³ Manzitti described it as an oil on canvas measuring 75 x 65 centimeters (or 30 x 26 inches, which, coincidentally or not, corresponds to the size of the one done by the father) and as located "formerly in Genoa, private collection." Boccato justifies the attribution by noting, after Raffaello Soprani's *Vite* (1678–79), that it was Valerio's habit, as part of his training, to copy his father's works.¹²⁴ I would estimate the sitter as about twenty years old (which too, coincidentally or not, corresponds to Copia's age at the time of the first portrait).¹²⁵

But, as it turns out, the portrait was removed from the revised second edition of Valerio's works¹²⁶ for reasons of inauthenticity. In the interim it had been reassigned, by Alessandro Morandotti, to Antonio Lagorio, a painter of Genoese provenance and formation (floruit 1652–90).¹²⁷ Of its ownership Morandotti says, more specifically than Manzitti, that it was "formerly in Genoa, in the [Mario] Viezzoli collection." Its present whereabouts and proprietors are unknown, yet a nephew of Viezzoli kindly informed me that it remains in the family.

portrait as a model—in a letter dated 19 March 1622 Cebà informed Copia that he had handed over the earlier painting to Castello "quite some time ago" (early 1622?) (1.1/L52.128). See above for reference to letter 21, from which it is clear that Cebà received the Venetian portrait on 11 April 1620 and that (to judge from letter 52) he had kept it in his house for nearly two years before delivering it to Castello. Since it was being done for Copia, and she obviously paid for it, it seems only logical that after its completion, probably in 1622, he would have sent it to her. Could it be, then, that the portrait remaining in his house was the original Venetian one? Castello may have intended to return it to Cebà, but Cebà died in later 1622, perhaps even before its completion; which would explain why, if at all, Castello retained it thereafter.

122. Boccato, "Il presunto ritratto di Sara Copio Sullam."

123. Valerio Castello: *Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Camillo Manzitti (1972), 152.

124. Soprani, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti genovesi*, 1:340.

125. I thank David Rosand (Columbia University) for confirming my estimate, as I do for reviewing my comments on the portrait. For another example of a portrait with an unknown female sitter, whom David and Ellen Rosand identified as Barbara Strozzi, see their "Barbara di Santa Sofia and Il Prete Genovese: On the Identify of a Portrait by Bernardo Strozzi." As with Copia's portrait, so Strozzi's was copied. The painter, Bernardo Strozzi, no relation of Barbara, copied it to order for an admirer (as noted by Beth L. Glixon, after a notarial document in the Venetian state archives, in "New Light on the Life and Career of Barbara Strozzi," 312, 328). For Barbara's father, Giulio Strozzi, see the "Notices" (3.1.2r–3r).

126. Valerio Castello (rev. ed., 2004).

127. See Morandotti, "Studi sulla pittura barocca nell'età del Web/1: profilo di Antonio Lagorio," 81–92 (and for the portrait itself, pl. 91 at the end of the volume).

I corresponded with both Manzitti and Morandotti, who concur on denying an attribution to Bernardo Castello (though this was never an issue), because his style, unlike that in the portrait thought by Boccato to depict Copia, was typically manneristic. To my question whether Lagorio, with his Genoese background, could have made his own copy of Bernardo's painting or even a copy of Valerio's copy, Morandotti answered: "If there existed in Genoa a portrait of the Venetian Jewess, I do not exclude the possibility of its being known to Lagorio, a mysterious painter, but one definitely formed in Genoa around the middle of the seventeenth century."¹²⁸ He also confirmed the proximity of the two painters' styles ("in many cases [Lagorio] demonstrates how closely he abided by the works of Valerio Castello").¹²⁹ The portrait, according to him, may be dated to 1660–70.

That leaves the identification of the sitter completely open. Manzitti considered her various features and gestures too generic in female portraiture to indicate a specific woman.¹³⁰ But that is only one problem. Another is that Copia, in her sonnet, said that "with her left hand she supports love's weapons," presumably arrows, while with her right she "signals the place where she is wounded."¹³¹ In the painting the two hands are reversed: the right one holds what Copia considers weapons, the left one points to the heart. If this were a copy, it might seem legitimate for the painter, as his prerogative, to reverse the arms, though I have no iconographical evidence to support such a presumption. Or if an engraving of the portrait had been made, then the directions would have been reversed and any copy of the engraving, as a second portrait, would have reflected the change. But no such engraving is known to have been prepared or printed.

A more serious problem, however, is that the objects have been differently identified. Boccato viewed them through the *parti pris* of Copia's sonnet, hence "weapons" (which she said were arrows),¹³² a "chain," and a "wounded" heart. For Morandotti, however, one hand has its "fingers widely spread to cover the contours of the breast," and the other "seems to press a compass," from which he suggested that the sitter may have personified "the

128. Communication dated 4 May 2007.

129. See, further, "Studi," where Lagorio is said to number among Castello's avid followers (84) and, because of the stylistic proximity of their works, to have had many of them identified as Castello's; indeed, it was "under [the latter's] accommodating umbrella that [Lagorio] has remained in the shadows" (83).

130. In answer to a letter of mine dated 13 January 2007.

131. 1.1/L22.75, no. 21:5–7.

132. Boccato, "Il presunto ritratto," 197.

liberal art of geometry"; indeed, he titled the portrait "Allegorical figure (allegory of geometry?)"!¹³³

In the only available photograph of the portrait it is not clear if the sitter is holding arrows, nor is it clear what she has on her head. When I asked for further information from the owners (via my intermediary, the later member of the Viezzoli family), I was told that the sitter is holding two sprigs of laurel while on her head she has (as both Boccato and Morandotti indicated) a crown of laurel leaves. From ancient times on, laurel leaves were used in portraiture to designate outstanding poets. Copia said nothing of them directly in her sonnet, but she implied them: "love's weapons" were described as "your [Cebà's] poems" ("arme d'amore che fur tuoi carmi"). Thus, if the portrait were of Copia, not one but two poet "laureates" were being hailed: Cebà, whose "poems" were the weapons that Copia clutched in her hand yet that wounded her heart; and Copia, whose head was crowned by laurels in recognition of her own poetic achievements. Should the portrait be a later, hypothetical reworking, from the 1660s, of the first one done in Venice (1620) or of its copy done by Bernardo Castello in Genoa (1622), it remains close to the imagery in Copia's sonnet.¹³⁴ Great poets are assured of "immortality," a theme that, in retrospect, fits in beautifully with Copia's known literary prowess and with her noisy dispute with Bonifaccio over immortality. It would be wonderful to say: this is the portrait of Copia. But without further details on its evolution, no firm identification can be made.

I reproduce Lagorio's painting as conjecturably, then, a copy of Copia's portrait (fig. 3). Should the sitter turn out to be Copia, she appears as ravishing as she was said to be at the time of the original (1620). Reacting to her sonnet about it, Cebà wrote of her being "in the years of [her] greatest bloom."¹³⁵

Copia had a "delicate constitution."¹³⁶ Not only did she suffer a miscarriage, as already said, but she nearly died from it.¹³⁷ She appears to have been ill, sometimes gravely, during the years of her correspondence with

133. Morandotti, "Studi," 83 (he compared the portrait, in the depiction of its sitter's crushed garments and the wide aperture of her fingers, to that of Saint Lucy, one of various figures in an altarpiece that Lagorio did for Parma, Santa Croce; pl. 90 at end). For a second "allegorical figure" by Lagorio (though previously assigned to Sebastiano Mazzoni and then to Federico Cervelli), as uncertain in its content as the first (it has the subtitle "allegory of truth?"), see "Studi," 86 (and pl. 102 at end).

134. With the exception, of course, of the switching of hands (the left one in the sonnet becomes the right in the portrait and vice versa).

135. 1.1/L22.75, no. 22:5 (the letter is dated April 1620).

136. Cebà's words (1.1/L2.8).

137. See above, Cebà, 1.1/L1.2.



Figure 3. Portrait of a woman approximately twenty years old in a painting now thought to be by Antonio Lagorio (and dated to the 1660s): is she Sarra Copia as copied from an earlier painting? Formerly in Genoa, private collection.

Cebà. His letters refer to her having had health problems in 1618, between May and August, and again, with her life in danger, between September and December.¹³⁸ Writing to Copia at the end of 1619, Bonifaccio, seemingly aware of her infirmities, asks why one would want to live if death promises a better existence. He suggests fleeing this world as a solution with which Copia herself would concur, to judge from her "face and frame"—she must have looked wan and frail.¹³⁹ She complained of headaches in late August

138. 1.1/L4.15 (1 September) and L5.16 (1 December).

139. Bonifaccio, 2.1.12r.

or early September 1620;¹⁴⁰ she took sick again and stopped writing Cebà in December 1620 or January 1621; she renewed her letters—after recovering, one presumes—in February but suffered a relapse in March.¹⁴¹ In the *Manifesto* (July 1621) she admits to having “barely recovered from a grave illness that oppressed [her], for a long time, with the danger of death.”¹⁴² Sickness and aggravation took their toll on her: she lost weight, she became drawn—Bonifaccio spoke of her “cadaverous face and her limbs stripped of flesh” (December 1621).¹⁴³ Her death on 15 February 1641 was preceded by a sickness in which she ran a high fever for three months on end.¹⁴⁴

The salient traits of her character, as delineated in the sources, appear to have been modesty, compassion, naïveté, diligence, enthusiasm, sensitivity, and consciousness of her womanhood. Her modesty was noted by Cebà and Modena.¹⁴⁵ Self-effacing, Copia informed the readers of her *Manifesto* that she wrote it not for her own glory but to “to defend [herself] against the false accusations leveled at [her] by Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio.”¹⁴⁶ “Under compulsion” she did what she ordinarily would not have done: discourse on a topic that, upon her own admission out of humility,¹⁴⁷ exceeded her intellectual capacities. The readers, therefore, should “not anticipate any novelty of ideas, nor should [they] any copiousness of learning.” If she remonstrated with Bonifaccio, she did so by relying not on her own wits but rather on the shrewd opinions of her advisers, all of whom had seen his book.¹⁴⁸ Is there any point, she asks, “in challenging a woman” unaccustomed to entering a polemical arena or practicing such sciences as philosophy and theology?¹⁴⁹

In the eyes of her critics it was not modesty that guided Copia, but vanity. Cebà regarded her correspondence with him as intended for her own gain (“the poor girl is enamored not of me but of herself”).¹⁵⁰ For Bonifac-

140. 1.1/L32.96.

141. 1.1/L40.109 (13 March) and L41.111–12 (before 27 March).

142. 2.4.A 2v.

143. 2.6.5v.

144. See necrological notices as reported above (at outset of section on “Life”).

145. Cebà, 1.1/L2.7, L3.14, and L35.102; Modena, Hebrew inscription on tombstone (4.3), with *tsenu’a* (“modest,” or in my translation, “virtuous”).

146. 2.4.A 2r (to which the quotes in the next two sentences refer as well).

147. Which, real or not, she probably felt bound to feign to her readers as a rhetorical tactic.

148. 2.4.B 4r.

149. 2.4.A 4v, no. 2:5–6, and C 3v.

150. 1.3.17, also 20 (she is “concerned . . . with I-do-not-know-if-I-should-say my reputation or perhaps hers”).

cio, her manifesto on immortality was concerned less with pondering the immortality of the soul than with "perpetuating [her] honored name,"¹⁵¹ to which Copia responded that it was not she who acted out of self-interest, but Bonifaccio. The reason he labored over his *Discorso* was his vainglory in bringing out another publication.¹⁵² She herself was "hostile to exposing [herself] to the eyes of the world in print."¹⁵³ Still, she recognized some few achievements: her name was "not at all unknown" in Venice and elsewhere, and should it be remembered, she hoped it would be for "[her] intellect's creations," viz., her writings.¹⁵⁴

Copia could also be compassionate, generous, charitable, and loyal. Sympathizing with Cebà, Copia wrote a poem to commemorate his brother Lanfranco's death.¹⁵⁵ She was solicitous over Giacomo Rosa's health,¹⁵⁶ as she was over Paluzzi's, whose "discomfort was, for [her], like a flint / That struck [her] heart every hour."¹⁵⁷ Not only did she provide Paluzzi with medicine, but she put him in a sanitarium for his cure, clothed him, paid him a monthly salary, gave him pocket money for his everyday needs, and looked out for additional sources of income for him from proofreading.¹⁵⁸ After being released from the sanitarium, he was received "with extreme compassion by the Jewess."¹⁵⁹ "The unfeigned acts of her charity" and "their effects" were "without a mask of self-interest"; their renewal was "without a disguise of ostentation."¹⁶⁰

Copia helped the needy, she was "a jewel for the miserable, / And of every poor soul / A friend and companion."¹⁶¹ "Generous of heart and magnanimous in deeds," so Cebà described her, expanding on the phrase by noting that she was "as magnanimous in receiving little things" as she was "generous in giving big ones."¹⁶² While Copia exemplified "loyalty of . . .

151. Bonifaccio, *Discorso* (2.3.17).

152. *Manifesto*, 2.4.C 3r. On Bonifaccio's desperate search for recognition by his peers, see Fortis, *La "bella ebrea,"* 64–65.

153. *Manifesto*, 2.4.C 4v.

154. *Ibid.*, 2.4.A 2r, 3v (see below, epigraph to section on "works").

155. Cebà, 1.1/L10.29, no. 8.

156. Giving him "an extract of . . . medicine to cure [his] body" (1.1/L39.109).

157. From a poem by Copia in the "Notices from Parnassus": 3.1.83r, no. 31:5–6.

158. "Notices," 3.1.5v–7v.

159. *Ibid.*, 7v.

160. *Ibid.*, 17r.

161. From poem on her tombstone (4.3).

162. Cebà, 1.1/L9.26 and L10.28. See also L23.77 ("you have . . . a generous heart"). He admits, moreover, to having "presented" Copia, in his letters, "as generous" (1.1:†2v).

mind,¹⁶³ the persons who enjoyed her beneficence (Paluzzi, her domestics) or her admiration (Bonifaccio), as we know from the documents, were disloyal in return.

But she was also naïve, as most blatantly illustrated by her odd relations with Paluzzi. The reasons that led Copia to introduce him "into her household" and make him "her teacher" were no more than her having been "charmed by the false sound of his learning" and "enticed by that patina of knowledge that he seemed to show in his lively chatter."¹⁶⁴ Her unwavering belief in his integrity blinded her to his shenanigans while in her employ.

Copia was deep down a romantic. She said of Cebà's book "The Citizen" that it occupied a place in her heart and of his epic poem "Queen Esther" that she kept it on her pillow.¹⁶⁵ Esther, a person with whom she appears to have bonded, was, in her words, "the beautiful Hebrew woman" who holds "supreme minds . . . in her grip" and feels "her chastest passions unfold."¹⁶⁶ In seeking out and cultivating Cebà's acquaintance, Copia came close to writing him "love letters" (Cebà noted her "great desires"),¹⁶⁷ and the recipient responded in kind (he aimed to "make love to her soul").¹⁶⁸ Nor did Copia's "love" for him wane after his death ("now I love him [even] more. . . . As my love increases, so does the desire / To go to him [in heaven] with more devoted fervor").¹⁶⁹

Her enthusiasm led to verbal excesses: Copia was effusive and obsequious. She addressed Cebà as "Your Excellency," her "Sun" (Apollo), "prince," "master," "lover," and "father."¹⁷⁰ She compared him to Homer and his "Queen Esther" to Homer's *Iliad*.¹⁷¹ Cebà chided her for her "courtly ceremonies" and her "inflation of superlatives."¹⁷² "Your kindness," he remarked, "does not desist from making small men great" or "elephants out of ants."¹⁷³ When he had his servant Marco deliver her a present, she detained him, turning "a most ordinary servant . . . into someone so genteel" as to entertain him (by sing-

163. "Notices," 3.1.2r.

164. *Ibid.*, 5r.

165. Cebà, 1.1/L2.9 and 10.

166. 1.1/L1.3, no. 1:1, 4, 8.

167. 1.1/L23.87.

168. 1.1.†2r.

169. In response to a poem written by Zinano upon Cebà's death (4.2, no. 3:2, 5–6).

170. Cebà, 1.1/L2.5 (also 32.96), L20.65–66, L35.102, L20.67, L22.74.

171. 1.1/L25.81, L2.11.

172. 1.1/L2.6.

173. 1.1/L1.1, L9.25.

ing) and dignify him "with other displays more suited to the superabundance of [her] kindness than shaped to the lowness of his condition."¹⁷⁴ There is a point beyond which lavish praises make their recipient "more ashamed than honored."¹⁷⁵ But Copia could not be deterred from going to extremes. In her "enthusiasm" she plied Cebà with presents: dried fruits and honey, a comb case with a cover embroidered in her own hand, a crystal cup.¹⁷⁶

Her sensitivity was exhibited in her reactions to the vicissitudes in her correspondence with Cebà and to his often blunt assertions. She appears to have said to him that "[her] world came to an end when [she] remained without any letters from [him]" and that his silence was an act of cruelty.¹⁷⁷ One can only imagine how she reacted when, for one, he answered outright that she was "telling a lie" — "for six months," he reminded her, "you have been without my letters and you have been eating and drinking. Then you want me to believe that you need new ones?"¹⁷⁸ — or when, for another, he said that her letters were motivated not by affection and friendship ("I little believed that you love me so much") but by personal gain.¹⁷⁹ She must have exploded when, out of jealousy, Cebà implied that her relations with her "friends" bordered on the illicit. After she protested, he retracted by noting rather coyly that it did not "enter [his] mind that [she], in [her] house, engaged in any activities other than speculative and literary ones." He even made fun of her remark that she was "bloodthirsty toward anyone whose intentions . . . were less than honorable," saying that it was "an indication of [her] virility."¹⁸⁰

Copia was not a feminist; rather she appears to have adhered to the traditional conception of women as less educated, less versatile than men.¹⁸¹ Why pick on women, then? she protests to Bonifaccio. It is obvious that in matters of learning, "the field is all [his]," for him "proudly" to "walk through it, striking blows in the air" as a "courageous champion" and a "generous warrior," only to "shout to [himself]: victory, victory!" To test his mettle, he "should have challenged those of the caliber of Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Epicurus, [and] Aristotle." They would have slaughtered him, "curbing [his]

174. 1.1/L9.25.

175. 1.1/L10.28.

176. 1.1/L5.16, L6.17, L7.18, L13.36.

177. 1.1/L31.93–94, L52.127.

178. 1.1/L53.128–29.

179. 1.1/L44.117.

180. 1.1/L44.117–18.

181. For all but the last quotation in this paragraph, see Copia's *Manifesto*, 2.4.C 4r.

pride" and his "little modesty." That does not mean, however, that women are not entitled to study philosophy and theology and engage in their discussion. If she argues with Bonifaccio over the immortality of the soul, it is, as she says at the outset of her essay, because she "reckoned that such a procedure is legitimate for any person who pursues studies, let alone a woman, in this case a Jewish woman"¹⁸² (on Cobia as an "intellectual," see below). The inconsistencies in the thinking of her contemporaries about the roles and duties of women as compared with those of men probably came to the surface in her two books (now lost) on "Paradoxes in praise of women against men," on the assumption that Cobia did in fact write them.¹⁸³ For all we know, she may have adopted a more outspoken feminist position in them.

Cobia stood out for her "many *virtù*."¹⁸⁴ She was impressive for her inquisitive mind, good taste, knowledge, poetic skills, and musical gifts. Cebà remarked on her "lively intellect."¹⁸⁵ "I know that you are endowed with a subtle and noble mind . . . [and] that you place your glory in the one honorable quality of being ingenious and well-read."¹⁸⁶ Not content with invoking Scriptures, she recognized, according to Bonifaccio, that "other things, beyond the authority of Scriptures, are needed to make [her] liveliest mind be appeased."¹⁸⁷ In a word, Cobia craved rational explanations.¹⁸⁸ She was drawn to philosophy, particularly to the writings of Aristotle and Plato.¹⁸⁹ "Remember," Cebà warned her, however, "that the omnipotence of God can also make sense of those things that human reason cannot manage to understand."¹⁹⁰ To Cobia's objection that faith partakes of the supernatural, he answered that "the teachings of Aristotle or his philosophy" are of no value in matters of religion.¹⁹¹ But Cobia was committed to the principle of the "mind that informs man, in whom the immortal / Adjoins the mortal."¹⁹²

182. *Ibid.*, B 1v.

183. For this work, of which there is only a single contemporary mention, see 3.2.A 4r.

184. Various powers, distinctions, talents. Modena, dedication to his play *Ester* (4.1.3).

185. Cebà, 1.1/L23.77.

186. 1.1/L11.30.

187. Bonifaccio, *Discorso*, 2.3.7.

188. On Cobia's contraposition of rational arguments to Cebà's justification of Christianity by faith, see Corinna Fonseca-Wollheim, "Faith and Fame in the Life and Works of the Venetian Jewish Poet Sara Copio Sullam (1592?–1641)," 67–70.

189. Cebà, 1.1/L9.25, L11.30, and L35.101; Bonifaccio, *Discorso*, 2.3.5, 8.

190. Cebà, 1.1/L9.26.

191. Cebà, 1.1/L11.30.

192. From her sonnet "O di vita mortal forma divina" (*Manifesto*, 2.4.D 2r, no. 5:5–6).

Her good taste may be inferred from Modena's decisive statement about her being "a foremost lady of fine discernment"¹⁹³ and, obliquely, from the way she fashioned her poetry. As to her considerable knowledge, the rabbi said in 1619, when she was around nineteen years old (if we assume she was born in 1600), that in its being ahead of her age and her sex she became all the more "delightful" and "attractive" to "any notably intelligent person." In 1641, as a summary declaration for her tombstone, he called her "wise."¹⁹⁴ She knew languages: beyond Italian, Venetian, *giudeo-veneziano*,¹⁹⁵ basic Hebrew, and possibly Latin, she read and may have written and conversed in Spanish and French¹⁹⁶ and is said to have composed poetry in Venetian.¹⁹⁷ Aside from philosophy, her interests ran the spectrum from literature to theology and astrology.¹⁹⁸

Her skills in writing prose and poetry are evident in her letters, her discourse on immortality, and her verses. She appears to have achieved a name for herself "as one who relishes, understands, and practices Italian poetry."¹⁹⁹ Her musical abilities were signaled on more than one occasion. Cebà learned from his servant, who had visited her (see above), that she regaled him by singing verses from his "Queen Esther."²⁰⁰ Copia also knew how to accompany herself on an instrument ("in so charming a style of playing") and was adept at "composing songs with every exquisite excellence,"²⁰¹ though by "composing" one suspects that, as with the melody she used for performing the poem, improvisation was meant.²⁰²

193. Modena, 4.3, epitaph for her tombstone, line 3.

194. Modena, dedication to his play *Ester* (4.1.3); his epitaph to her tombstone (4.3, line 5).

195. One among various Judeo-Italian dialects: see Fortis and Paolo Zolli, *La parlata giudeo-veneziana*.

196. Spanish, from her father's background as a Sephardic Jew, her circle of Spanish-speaking (and writing) Jewish friends, and the one or more books that Cebà sent her in Spanish (see 1.1/L1.2–5 and L8.20); French, as the language in which she would have conversed with the French prince who visited her (3.3.2:114) and in which the letters were written to her in his name (3.1.10r, 11r).

197. See Cebà's marginal comment, 1.1/L20.67.

198. As emerges variously from Cebà's letters (for astrology, see, in particular, 1.1/L2.8).

199. Modena, dedication to *Ester* (4.1.3).

200. Cebà, 1.1/L9.25; see also L2.10, with his wish that, one day, he might hear her improvise a song to Andromache's lament from the same epic.

201. See "Notices," 3.1.39v.

202. Jewish female musicians were a rare breed. Copia, an amateur, should be compared with the professionals Madama Europa (a singer active in Mantua from the late 1580s to 1608) and Rachel (on whom there is some information as a singer and possibly instrumentalist in Venice during the years 1609–14). For the first, see Harrán, "Madama Europa, Jewish Singer in

The most remarkable testimony to Copia's intellectual proclivities is the *accademia* or literary salon she ran in her home. Though the documents refer to the years in which the salon was under her husband's roof, Apro시오 was of the opinion, as already said, that it was her father, Simon, who, "to please her," originally prompted her to open it in his own house (a claim refuted, above, on the grounds of its improbability). Rather it must have been her husband who urged her to inaugurate a forum, as she was so inclined, for discussing literature. Her contribution to the proceedings appears to have been significant. It was in Copia's salon that "men of letters convened," Apro시오 noted, "with the end of hearing her speak, coming not only from nearby but also from Treviso, Padua, Vicenza, and even farther places."²⁰³

Among the participants, at one or another time, were Bonifaccio, Paluzzi, Giovanni Basadonna, and Modena. They appear to have been charmed by her "honorable and genteel" speech.²⁰⁴ The conversations ranged from philosophy to literature. Poems and letters were read and reviewed; ideas were exchanged; the notion of the soul's immortality was debated. Yearning for knowledge,²⁰⁵ Copia probed the minds of the discussants. With Bonifaccio, for example, she raised, according to her own testimony, this or that "philosophical or theological difficulty . . . solely out of curiosity to hear from [him] some curious and uncommon teaching to provide a solution to [her] arguments."²⁰⁶ She encouraged and inspired, even acting as patroness. Paluzzi, for one, was a protégé. Modena dedicated his play *Ester* "to the very illustrious Signora, and [his] most respected patroness, Signora Sarra," as a token of "respect" and "reverence."²⁰⁷ Though limited in time and influence, Copia's salon has been qualified, in historical retrospect, as a forerunner of Jewish women's salons in nineteenth-century Berlin.²⁰⁸

Late Renaissance Mantua"; and for the second, Ravid, "Curfew Time in the Ghetto of Venice," 246–47. As to a certain Madonna Bellina, famed as a singer, instrumentalist, and composer from around 1550, she may have been an invention of Andrea Calmo (d. 1571), who, in a letter, raved about her (see Harrán, "Madonna Bellina, 'Astounding' Jewish Musician in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Venice").

203. Apro시오, letter about Paluzzi (3.3.2:113).

204. Modena, dedication to *Ester* (4.1.3).

205. See her sonnet "Quel desir di saper" in the "Notices" (3.1.83r, no. 31).

206. Copia's *Manifesto* (2.4.B 1v).

207. Modena, 4.1.3, 5.

208. Henriette Herz, Rahel Levin (Varnhagen): see Veltri, "Die 'schöne Jüdin' und die Unsterblichkeit der Seele," 55; and for their salons, Deborah Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin*, and Verena von der Heyden-Rynsch, *Europäische Salons: Höhepunkte einer versunkenen weiblichen Kultur*, 132–59.

Copia was proud of her Jewish past. To bolster her confidence she searched, in her readings, for examples of Hebrew grandeur. Cebà's epic poem "Queen Esther" impressed her because its heroine was one with whom she, as a beautiful, educated, and caring Jewess, could spiritually identify. Modena, who recognized the affiliation, presumed one with the biblical Sarah as well. "Our ancient mothers Sarah and Esther resemble each other": the first, by name a princess (its meaning in Hebrew), "holy and virtuous," "generated our race"; the second, by marriage a queen, "righteous and honest," "regenerated it by saving it from death."²⁰⁹ "There is no doubt" in Modena's mind that Copia sought "to imitate the two women in kindness, virtue, and magnanimity."

Copia was under constant pressure to convert, from "persons of much authority."²¹⁰ What Cebà could not achieve in his letters he asked his friends to do in their prayers (may my writings be replaced "by the sacrifices that . . . I have had many good people offer Him for your salvation").²¹¹ The lobby he created for this purpose included Marc'Antonio Doria and his wife, Isabella della Tolfa, on both of whom more below. Bonifaccio stepped up the pressure, as did Basadonna.²¹² Though Copia herself entered into discussions of theology out of intellectual curiosity, as "legitimate" for anyone male or female, Christian or Jew, who seeks knowledge, she admitted to being "continually drawn" into them "by persons who do not tire of converting her . . . to the Christian faith."²¹³

Yet Copia resisted the pressure.²¹⁴ She refused to view Christ as the Messiah,²¹⁵ arguing against Cebà's explanations of Christianity as her only road to salvation.²¹⁶ She declined his request that she pronounce the invoca-

209. See, for this and next sentence, Modena, dedication to his play *Ester* (4.1.6).

210. Copia, *Manifesto* (2.4.B 2v).

211. Cebà, 1.1/L4.15 (also dedication to the letters, 1.1.†2r–v).

212. Bonifaccio, in his various writings (and no doubt in conversation with Copia); Basadonna, as reported (after Copia) by Cebà (1.1/L45.120).

213. *Manifesto* (2.4.B 1v).

214. Yet not so in a recent play by Giuseppe Manfridi, who explored the hypothetical consequences—in a long, tortured monologue of the only character Sarra (there spelled Sara)—of her having converted. See *Arsa* ("burned," an anagram for Sara, who "burned" with love after reading Cebà's epic poem about biblical Esther and, because of her unshakable connection with Judaism, was destined to be "burned" by Christians after being suspected of backsliding); for details, see the volume editor's bibliography. I am grateful to the author for providing me with various written clarifications about play and contents.

215. Cebà, 1.1/L2.7.

216. See Cebà, 1.1/L20 and L21.

tion "Holy Mary, pray for me."²¹⁷ In matters of faith, she was bound to the synagogue.²¹⁸ She saw nothing wrong with being born a Jew.²¹⁹ To Cebà's call that she be baptized she countered with her own that he be circumcised.²²⁰ Having been born in the midst of watery Venice, she exclaimed, why would she need baptismal waters?²²¹ Why should she convert to Christianity when he could just as well convert to Judaism?²²²

Copia's stubbornness was a source of anguish for Cebà ("Oh, Signora Sarra, how much love and sorrow do you cause me at the same time!").²²³ "When I see this obstinacy . . . in your own person," he confesses, "it pierces my soul."²²⁴ Realizing that he was getting nowhere with her, he pulled out a secret weapon, which, he knew, Copia feared as much as his unrelenting missionary zeal: the threat to stop writing her. "From now on," he announces (in March 1619), "I will do my best to trouble you as little as possible." When she asked Cebà to desist from writing about her conversion, he answered (in May of the same year) that "inasmuch as I cannot talk to you about anything else when I write, I will even abstain . . . from writing to you" and (one month later) that "it is only reasonable that I no longer tire the kindness of your eyes." "Be content," he says (in October 1620), "with having this letter put the last seal on our discussions." But the discussions continued through another eighteen letters until, in the last of them (from April 1622), he issued the ultimatum: "If you do not intend to convert, stop your pen, for, without this purpose, I do not intend to use my own."²²⁵ Cebà brought the correspondence to a complete halt, though not without suffering remorse. In a letter to Marc'Antonio Doria, he admitted that try as he might to make good on his threat, he could not ("I often make the promise of my silence and seldom keep it").²²⁶

As stubborn as Copia was in upholding her Judaism, she was not deterred from maintaining contacts with Christians. Her openness was premised on the advantages of intellectual exchange between sharp-witted peers, hence

217. Cebà, 1.1/L21.72 and, on her objection, L25.84.

218. 1.1/L29.89.

219. 1.1/L33.97.

220. 1.1/L24.79.

221. 1.1/L26.85 (Cebà's marginal note).

222. 1.1/L12.34 ("do not get so enthused," Cebà said, "about making me become a Jew").

223. 1.1/L7.19.

224. 1.1/L2.7.

225. For the page references in the last sentences, see, respectively, 1.1/L10.27, L12.34, L14.38, L35.103, and L53.130.

226. Cebà, letter to Marc'Antonio Doria (1.3.10).

her meetings and correspondence with persons whom she valued irrespective of their faith. Her acquaintance with Christians was no more capable of alienating her from her Judaism than her reading of the New Testament.²²⁷ The only problem was that her unconcern with maintaining religious barriers put her in a tight spot in both Christian and Jewish circles.

Word got out about her correspondence with Cebà, and she began to fear for her reputation among his (Christian) friends. What are people saying, she wondered, about the fervent outpourings of a Jewess to an elderly Christian? Cebà assured her that in Genoa her name was untarnished.²²⁸ She asked Cebà to tone down his demonstrations of love, for they were suspect to many, including her husband, to which request Cebà replied, with tongue in cheek, that he rather suspected that "Signor Jacob might not look upon this traffic of our letters with particular enthusiasm."²²⁹ Her real preoccupation, however, must have been with the Jewish community, which is probably why she asked Cebà to desist from trying to convert her or draw her into religious discussions. Though she had her views on Christianity, she told him in no uncertain terms that she preferred to keep them to herself.²³⁰ He realized her problem, saying: "I have entered into the subject [of comparing religions], from which, you say, you wish to exit with your pen. . . . I truly would not want to get you into a difficult situation, for I do not know what might come of it."²³¹ But he continued, to her embarrassment, the barrage of his religious criticism. One of his letters appears to have been so harsh that Copia requested, for her own protection, that it be removed from the prospective publication.²³²

When Bonifaccio brought out his *Discorso* with its claim that she denied the principle of the "immortality of the soul" upheld by Jews no less zealously than by Christians, she feared for the repercussions it would have in the Jewish community. She hastened to respond to it and "publicly make it clear to everyone" that Bonifaccio's charge was erroneous. Her *Manifesto* was meant "to vindicate and acquit [herself] in the eyes of all those who, not knowing [her], might give some credence to [his] accusation."²³³ Tongues must have been wagging among the Jews, who had their hands full with

227. Cf. Cebà, 1.1/L2.7.

228. Cebà, 1.1/L37.105.

229. 1.1/L35.99–100.

230. 1.1/L12.33, L33.97.

231. 1.1/L35.100.

232. See her letter to Isabella della Tolfa (4.2), also Cebà, 1.1/L17a.

233. *Manifesto* (2.4.B 2r).

Jacob Sulam's volatile, intractable spouse. In an effort to silence them, Copia "hurriedly composed and published" her *Manifesto*, realizing that "it was not to [her] advantage to let an excess of time or an abundance of gossip intervene between the offense and [her] rebuttal."²³⁴ How difficult her situation was can be sensed from Bonifaccio's reference to her, in a letter written some five months after the *Manifesto*, as the heretic and heathen Jezebel. "After becoming notorious for impudence," Copia "lives on, odious to Jews themselves and subject to the ignominy she spreads among all her people."²³⁵

Thereafter Copia disappeared from public view. Her husband may have asked her, for her own and her family's sake, to keep a low profile. What happened in the years that followed remains shrouded in mystery. Copia, in time, may have recouped her status within the community, if Modena's words on her tombstone about her being a friend to the poor and needy are any indication.²³⁶ To clear her name of the "grave blemish . . . put on it"²³⁷ and redeem herself for posterity, she may have invested her efforts in charity. What better image could Modena portray of her, in his epitaph, than that, after Proverbs 31:10–31, of the virtuous Jewish wife (*esbet hayil*), said to be wise, kind, generous, and devoted ("let her works speak her praises at the gates")?

WORKS

If I am allowed to hope for *salute* [health/salvation] and life, it will be in my intellect's creations.

Sarra Copia Sulam, *Manifesto*

Cebà's Letters to Copia

Born in 1565, Cebà published his first work, a collection of secular verses, in 1596. Though ordained a cleric in 1605, he preferred, as time went on, to retire to private life. During the years 1612–15 he composed and published his major work, the epic poem *La reina Esther*, which, because of certain inaccuracies in the presentation of sacred history, was suspended by the Congregazione dell'Indice in 1621 as prohibited reading "donec corrigatur" (until corrected). Friends argued in its favor, but the opponents, irked by the author's reluctance to make changes, won out: in 1624 it was officially

234. Ibid. (2.4.A 2r–v).

235. Letter to Manfredini (2.6.5v). Copia's standing in the Jewish community would have been endangered further by her "Paradoxes in praise of women against men" (see above).

236. See 4.3, no. 1:6–8.

237. *Manifesto* (2.4.A 2v).

banned. Among his other works were a political tract, *Il cittadino di repubblica* (Citizen of a Republic), and various tragedies, of which one, *La principessa Silandra*, plays a part in his correspondence with Copia.²³⁸

The correspondence itself began on 19 May 1618—the author was fifty-three years old (and Copia, as said, about eighteen)—and continued until 30 April 1622 (Cebà died six months later on October 16).²³⁹ Of the fifty-three letters, all but three²⁴⁰ were directed to Copia, usually in answer to one or more of hers.²⁴¹ The correspondence was sporadic: it ranges over forty-eight months, with an average of one or two letters per month,²⁴² though eighteen months have none at all.²⁴³ Further information on the correspondence, or more precisely on Copia, can be gleaned from twenty references to her in as many letters published in a second collection.²⁴⁴

The letters to Copia, which Cebà dedicated, in their printed copy, to a dear friend, the philanthropist, avid republican politician, and literary enthusiast Marc'Antonio Doria, were conceived, at an early stage, as a work

238. 1.1/L47.121 and L49.124.

239. Confusion exists over the date of death, reported, in various sources, to have been in 1623 (Giovanni Battista Spotorno, *Storia letteraria della Liguria*, 4:131; Sarot, "Ansaldo Cebà and Sara Copio Sullam," 146; Emilio Zanette, "Su Ansaldo Cebà," 119), or in April 1623 (entry on Cebà in Chisalberto, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 23:184), or more specifically, in the same month and year, on the twenty-first (Giovanni Battista Gerini, *Gli scrittori pedagogici italiani del secolo decimosettimo*, 105; Luigi Grillo, *Elogi di liguri illustri*, 2:76; Piero Restagno, *Di un letterato genovese del secolo 17.^o [Ansaldo Cebà] e sue opere*, 36) or the twenty-second (Boccatto, "Il presunto ritratto di Sara Copio Sullam," 194 n. 7, also "Lettere di Ansaldo Cebà," 171). The inscription to Cebà's portrait in three of his publications from 1623 (including his letters to Copia) may have been the reason for the confusion. It states that Cebà "lived 58 years" (see below, 1.1.61, footnote), which, since he was born in 1565, would put his death in 1623. The correct date is 16 October 1622: Marc'Antonio Doria mentions it in a letter written six days later (on Saturday, 22 October). "Our Signor Ansaldo Cebà gave up his soul to his Creator on Sunday [16 October] at noon"; after Carmela Reale Simioli, "Tracce di letteratura ligure (1617–1650) nelle carte napoletane dell'Archivio Doria d'Angri," 326. It is indirectly corroborated by a letter that Copia wrote to Isabella della Tolfa on 8 January 1623: there she refers to Cebà as "that blessed soul" (see below, 1.2.12r).

240. Two of the three were written to Giacomo Rosa (nos. 39, 41) and one to Copia's husband Jacob (no. 36).

241. Of the fifty letters to Copia, ten were written not as responses but for other reasons (to report on what the author heard from those who had called on her, to prepare her for a visit of his servant, to show his concern over her health: nos. 3, 8–9, 45–48; to acknowledge the receipt of a present, to which Copia added an explanatory note: nos. 6, 7, 21).

242. Thirteen months are represented by one letter, another thirteen by two, four by three, and one by five (June 1621).

243. 1618: July–August, October–November. 1619: April, July, September, December. 1620: January, March, July. 1621: February, August–December. 1622: February.

244. *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano* (1.3.2).

for eventual publication. Though intended "to perpetuate [the] memory" of a woman "out of gratitude for the love" she "professed to bear [him],"²⁴⁵ the collection seems rather to reinforce the image that Cebà wished to project of himself as an innovator—how many authors dispatch letters to a Jewish female admirer? "Their novelty is so remarkable as to warrant their memorial through preservation."²⁴⁶ Cebà kept track of them, and when he forgot to make his own copy of one letter, he asked Copia to return it, justifying the request with the lame excuse that he originally wrote her in such haste as probably to have said "something absurd."²⁴⁷

Cebà plays at least three roles: servant, father, and lover. He pleads his servitude to Copia not just out of (feigned) modesty but to show how strongly she dominates him. Ever since her first letter, he admits, he chose her as his "mistress" and vowed to address her thus "for as long as [he has] strength to write."²⁴⁸ "Your servant am I, the lowliest of any you might have" or, elsewhere, as "grateful and merciful as any other servant you could have."²⁴⁹ Almost all the letters close with the formula "your (most) indebted" or "devoted" or "ardent" or "affectionate" servant. She is "my mistress," Cebà wrote to a friend; "hence I am obliged to write to her both when I want to and when I do not"²⁵⁰ (which explains why he found it so difficult to terminate the correspondence). After receiving her present of fruits arranged to be worn as a laurel, he remarked that "it is truly more commendable for the mastery of your hand than for being shaped to the servitude of my head."²⁵¹

He assumed the role of father when Copia sought out his counsel.²⁵² Even though he did not "generate" her as his daughter, he addresses her as one—"my daughter will I call you, then, if you approve"—in the hope that, by his advice, he will "regenerate" her as a Christian.²⁵³ It therefore was incumbent upon Copia to heed his words, for "fathers are bound to admonish and children to obey."²⁵⁴

245. "Letters," dedication (1.1.†2v).

246. Cebà, 1.1/L31.93.

247. 1.1/L33.98.

248. 1.1/L25.82.

249. 1.1/L12.33, L40.111.

250. Cebà, letter to Gian Battista Spinola (1.3.3).

251. Cebà, letter to Copia (1.1/L6.17).

252. 1.1/L35.99–102, L36.104, L37.105–6, etc.

253. 1.1/L35.99.

254. 1.1/L35.102.

It was as Copia's seeming lover, however, that Cebà struck a pose with particular relish. True, he clarified that his love was not physically oriented and that, as attracted as he was to her person, he would rather die than love her "with the intention [that Alcaeus] harbored in loving" Sappho: to seduce her.²⁵⁵ He wished "to make love to her soul" (for its salvation) and, in doing so, to observe decorum ("I love . . . and revere you as much as I am honorably permitted by my law [Christianity] and yours [Judaism]").²⁵⁶ Still, it is not always easy to draw the line between intentions and insinuations. Cebà plays with words for their subtleties. He says that he "makes love" to Copia "from afar"; that he "loves [her] as much as [his] soul"; that she is "the flame and the torch that kindle in [him] a loving tongue"; that in the time they have left they should "make love in earnest"; and, "regarding sexual relations," that they should "share a single room."²⁵⁷ On other occasions he uses love as an excuse to say things "against [her] will" or speak "somewhat roughly" ("I cannot give you a more adequate sign of love") or even keep silent ("I would not want you to think it is from not loving you constantly").²⁵⁸

As background, one should read Cebà on friendship and love in his *Cittadino di repubblica*, a book about a citizen's rights, duties, privileges, and education. He defines friendship as "a reciprocal and generous benevolence between those who love each other," meaning both "between equals" and "between superiors and inferiors."²⁵⁹ Of "all the blessings of fortune, the greatest and dearest is that of Friendship," based on "harmony," in which "a single soul . . . animates two bodies."²⁶⁰ He warns, however, of "the enticements of women,"²⁶¹ who, conversing with men, often conquer them with their beauty and blandishments. Speaking from experience, he admits

that we have formerly had occasion to extirpate from our own soul the vile principle against which we contend, and since truth often gains a power from one who proclaims it from experience, we who

255. 1.1/L23.76.

256. 1.1.†2r (cf. L23.77), L1.2.

257. Cebà, 1.1/L17.60, L21.70, L22.76, L35.99, L30.91.

258. 1.1/L8.20, L19.64, L22.74.

259. Cebà, *Citizen of a Republic*, 28.

260. Ibid., 111, 114. By friendship, Cebà refers only to that "between good men." It originates in "virtue, which is that mutual and candid benevolence that is founded on esteem and sustained by affection" (112).

261. Ibid., chap. 47, thus entitled. It is the longest chapter in the book (occupying pages 126–43).

have, to our misfortune, countenanced formerly this very error, as the public well know, may consequently merit more confidence in exposing it than if we spoke only of something of which we had no practical knowledge.²⁶²

By his "experience," he is referring to his ill-fated love for two women: Aurelia Spinola, who suffered an untimely death, and Geronima Di Negra, who, to Cebà's remorse, entered a nunnery.²⁶³ Copia appears to have been his putative "third love": she awakened youthful feelings of ardor that he thought he had overcome ("I live and write love letters, as if I were a highly energetic young man") and that he even asked Copia to overlook in reading his early poetry ("pardon the crimes of youth and be satisfied with an admission of repentance").²⁶⁴ Cebà was in a dilemma: on the one hand, he sensed his being "in love with no other lady than [Copia]";²⁶⁵ on the other, he had warned, in his *Citizen*, against sensual love, "which consists in nothing more nor less than an inordinate desire to enjoy an apparent beauty," only to "end in lust."²⁶⁶ The "citizen" should not "hold constant intercourse, or be particularly familiar with the female sex, otherwise he will infallibly incur the miseries we have recounted, and thus fail to render himself useful to himself and his country." Cebà would, therefore, have women "restrain their conversations more to their own sex."²⁶⁷ But Copia turned him around, altering his conceptions, so as "to form another judgment . . . than that which one ordinarily does of [her] sex."²⁶⁸

One of the reasons for Cebà's attraction to Copia was her unflagging enthusiasm for his works. He had had his share of criticism from the public, and now he encountered an adoring fan who unconditionally recognized his talents and, moreover, stirred her friends to proffer their compliments.²⁶⁹ He

262. *Ibid.*, 127.

263. Aurelia died in the same year that Cebà published his first collection, a set of love-inspired verses for her (*Rime*, 1596); Geronima roused him to prepare a second collection of poetry, though now on sacred topics (*Rime*, 1611).

264. Cebà, 1.1/L40.110, L2.10. See also L38.106, where the author admits that old age and his religion prevent him from making love to her.

265. Cebà, 1.1/L42.114.

266. Cebà, *Citizen*, 128. When yielding "to the clamors of lust," the lover loses reason, and little can "save him from plunging into vice" (129). The only proper union with women is through matrimony, for "the laws . . . countenance no union but in married life" (130).

267. *Ibid.*, 141.

268. Cebà, 1.1/L1.1.

269. See, for example, Cebà, 1.1/L1.3.

appears to have held on to Copia because she boosted his self-confidence. "I count myself most fortunate," he wrote her, "to possess the treasure of your grace."²⁷⁰ But, as her "lover," he was also jealous of others who approached her. "If my portrait [in your house] were . . . to see you make love to any other than itself, you may be sure that it would shout unto the stars."²⁷¹ It bothered him that Modena, grateful to Copia, dedicated to her his tragedy *Ester*; that Bonifaccio composed a Latin elegy for her; and that Basadonna met and talked with her. Should Basadonna be "scandalized by my jealousy," he wrote, "tell him that I am now over it."²⁷² Cebà wanted Copia to himself, and to tighten the bond he did as she did and exchanged presents, material and spiritual: he sent her fruit, books, poetry, and despite being "ashamed to appear before [her]" because of his old age and baldness, his portrait.²⁷³

On the reception of gifts from private individuals, Cebà declared, in his *Citizen*, that "it would seem a violation of friendship to refuse what one really stands in need of, and an evidence of rudeness not to accept what is given from courtesy." Yet he advised "great discretion . . . in accepting what administers more to pleasure than necessity."²⁷⁴ His most important "present" to modern readers is, of course, the unprecedented publication of his letters as an elderly Christian bent on converting a young Jewess. No less important is the treasure trove of his poems in them. Taken together, the twenty-one poems comprising eighty-nine stanzas constitute a "new" canzoniere by Cebà, allowing one to assess his notable poetic skills: not only does he write well, but he argues convincingly, sometimes even passionately for what he believes. One can imagine a similar if not greater number of poems written to him by Copia, but Cebà suppressed all but four,²⁷⁵ which, by comparison with his, seem more studied and strained.

Cebà's major concern was to win another soul for the Church. To do so would be "to improve the condition" of his own soul.²⁷⁶ Cebà did his best to convince Copia, in writing, of the merits of Christianity; he sent her books, e.g., by Fra Luis de Granada, asking her to read them attentively;²⁷⁷

270. 1.1/L21.72.

271. 1.1/L20.67.

272. 1.1/L11.31–32, L33.97, L35.99.

273. 1.1/L8.20–25, L15.38, and, for the portrait that Cebà sent her, L17.59–60, L18.62.

274. Cebà, *Citizen*, 159–60 (from a chapter entitled "Should the Citizen Take or Refuse Presents?").

275. For the poems and their separate stanzas, see below, index of poems. To those by Copia and Cebà should be added another by one of Copia's friends (possibly Jacob Uziel).

276. Cebà, dedication (1.1.†2r), also L19.64.

277. See, for example, 1.1/L42.114–15.

and he deputized his friends, among them the Dorias (Marc'Antonio and his wife Isabella) and Rosa, to "make love to [her]," i.e., work for her salvation (through prayers, letters, or, in the case of Rosa who visited Copia, conversation) in his stead. "What a great gentleman I am," he declared, "to share my mistress so easily with everybody!"²⁷⁸ Eventually, he hoped, she would "purify" her mind "in the furnace of Christian charity" and be reborn "in the fountain of the Holy Baptism."²⁷⁹ In the end, he reminded her, it was not his love she would receive in return, but Christ's. "If you were to come to the Faith of Christ," he asserts, "you would be seized with more desire to be wounded by his love than to wound others with yours."²⁸⁰ To inveigle her into accepting Christianity, he describes Esther, her hero, as one who, "in her time, would have believed in Christ to come"²⁸¹ (and thus Esther speaks, in the epic, via the figure of David!)²⁸² and Christianity as a religion that does not break with Judaism but improves it. By becoming a Christian, Copia would not be "worshiping another God than the one of Abraham" but rather "worshiping Him with other rites than those instituted by the ancient Jews."²⁸³ By Jews, Cebà meant the Hebrews of the Old Testament and not the Jews who, since the destruction of the Temple, had been wandering over the earth in exile and dispersion. Cebà spoke of the latter as "that scum of Jews who place the favors of fortune"—here he has his mind fixed on the image of the Jewish moneylender—"above the greatnesses of the soul."²⁸⁴ In his ardor, he was so brazen as to remind Copia's husband of what he "expounded to the wife. Come to the Faith of Christ," he exhorts him, ". . . if you wish to be saved."²⁸⁵

Cebà resorted to another expedient to arouse Copia's sympathy: he constantly complained of ill health. His body and mind were racked "in torments," his pain was so merciless as to "let [him] neither live nor die."²⁸⁶ "This creature whom you deify," he announced, "is the most miserable one

278. 1.1/L40.110.

279. 1.1/L1.2, L3.14 (also L11.31, L21.72).

280. 1.1/L24.80.

281. 1.1/L2.11, also L30.90.

282. In the verses (canto 19, stanza 57:5–8): "He [David] perceived a Son comprised in the fertile heart of the Father, . . . who wished to dress Himself one day in human flesh" (for more ample quotation, see below, under footnote to Ceba's letter 1.1/L1.2). Fortis said of this same passage that Cebà conceived Esther as, by nature, Christian (*La "bella ebrea,"* 50).

283. Cebà, 1.1/L25.82.

284. 1.1/L30.92.

285. 1.1/L36.104.

286. 1.1/L17.58, L29.87.

on earth.²⁸⁷ Despite his ailments, which were real, Copia remained firm in her Judaism. So, in the end, Cebà signally failed in his mission to win a new soul for the Church.

Bonifaccio's and Copia's Writings on the Immortality of the Soul

"Immortality? It is the most difficult and arduous matter," Copia admitted, "to be found in philosophy."²⁸⁸ She was drawn into the argument against her will, but in retrospect one can only be grateful that she was: she entered into the arena of one of the most controversial and hotly debated topics of her time, fending for herself and leaving her imprint on the discussion as a Jewess. Her *Manifesto* should be projected against notions of immortality in the writings of Plato and Aristotle; in the polemics of Marsilio Ficino, Pietro Pomponazzi, and others of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and, last but not least, in Jewish thought. Yet, as a forewarning, one should not expect to see Copia discourse on philosophical issues proper in her *Manifesto*, which is pure invective. Rather she does do so in the letter that incited Bonifaccio to write his *Discorso* and, to all appearances, in various letters to Cebà, who, in answering them, refers to their ruminative content.²⁸⁹

For Plato, who treated the topic of immortality in his dialogue *Phaedo*, the soul was imperishable. Upon death, he argued, the body and soul separate, and while the body as a compound disintegrates, the soul as uncompounded continues to exist. Its treatment in life determines its nature: persons who cultivate the mind have a purer soul; those who indulge in bodily pleasures, a coarser one. As regenerated after death, purer souls become implanted in human beings and coarser ones in animals, and thus they live on, in both cases, through transmigration. The process of cultivating the mind, i.e., acquiring knowledge, is one of recollecting things that were: abstracts, ideas, essences. Yet it is only after death that the soul, removed from corporal interferences, can exercise the full force of its intelligence, achieving thereby true knowledge of itself.

Aristotle, in his *De anima*, was more evasive on the subject of immortality. The soul, for him, was a substance, or "form," that animates the body and, depending on its nature, may to a certain degree be separated from it. The "sensitive soul," prey to the senses (sight, hearing, taste, etc.), is tied to the body. Not so the "rational soul," or at least some parts of it, which "may

287. 1.1/L33.97.

288. *Manifesto* (2.4.B 3v), perhaps after a similar remark by Aristotle ("To attain any assured knowledge about the soul is one of the most difficult things in the world"): *De anima* 1.1.402a.

289. See Cebà, 1.1/L11, L20, L34, L35.

be separable because they are not the actualities of any body at all."²⁹⁰ The mind is "separable, impassible, unmixed, since it is in its essential nature."²⁹¹ Yet Aristotle complicates the exposition by suggesting that the mind depends, nevertheless, on sense perceptions ("images") as preliminary to its cogitations.²⁹² When he recommends its cultivation, he does so not to assure it of immortality but to improve life on earth. Virtuous conduct offers its rewards in the here and now.

To sum up, Plato saw the soul as separable from the body while Aristotle conceded its separability as possible, though not ineluctable. It was against this dual model that the debate persisted in the later Middle Ages (in the works of Aquinas versus Averroës) and was relaunched toward the close of the fifteenth century. Ficino, who adopted a Platonist stance, demonstrated that the soul, as a substance unto itself, was, in its various functions (nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual), free from the body. In his extensive *De immortalitate animorum*, he renewed and reinvigorated the discussion, attempting to reconcile classical and Christian conceptions of immortality.²⁹³ With the publication, in 1516, of Pietro Pomponazzi's *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*, the discussion moved into a neo-Aristotelian camp. Its author staked the claim that for Aristotle the soul died along with the body, hence was mortal. He disputed Aquinas who, to accommodate Aristotle's views, had argued casuistically that Aristotle recognized both the soul's inseparability from the body (in dying) and its separability from it (in living after death). Such a reading was indefensible, he believed, on rational grounds. Yet, being a Christian, Pomponazzi was committed to the soul's immortality for doctrinal reasons, as covered by faith.²⁹⁴ His explanations initiated a "mass of publications" in agreement or protest. Among the critics Gaspard Contarini was particularly harsh, accusing Pomponazzi, in 1525, of failing to understand that for Aristotle the soul was unequivocally immortal.²⁹⁵

290. *De anima* 2.1.413a.

291. *Ibid.*, 3.5.430a.

292. "To the thinking soul images serve as if they were contents of perceptions . . . the soul never thinks without an image": *De anima* 3.7.431a.

293. See thereon Paul Oskar Kristeller's by-now classic study "The Theory of Immortality in Marsilio Ficino" and for the source itself, Ficino, *Platonic Theology*. The author's arguments for the soul's immortality occur principally in vol. 2, bks 5–8; vol. 3, bks 9–11; and vol. 4, bks 12–14.

294. Officially endorsed by the Church at the Lateran Council of 1512.

295. On this "mass of publications," see Étienne Gilson, "L'affaire de l'immortalité de l'âme au début du XVI^e siècle," also *idem*, "Autour de Pomponazzi: problématique de l'immortalité de l'âme en Italie au début du XVI^e siècle."

What of the doctrine in Jewish thought?²⁹⁶ With few exceptions, it is absent from Scriptures.²⁹⁷ The notion of resurrection at the end of time creeps into later books, for example Daniel. But those persons said there to be chosen for "everlasting life"²⁹⁸ were revived as they originally were: in both their body and their soul. Intimations of immortality for the soul, after separating from the body, can be perceived in the Talmud (completed around 500 C.E.), as in the passage that upon death "the souls of the righteous are stored under the throne of glory"²⁹⁹ or that in the heavens one finds "justice, law, and righteousness, the treasures of life, the treasures of peace, the treasures of blessings, the souls of the righteous, and the spirits of those yet to be born."³⁰⁰ Maimonides, in the late twelfth century, contended that in the world to come there are no bodies, only the souls of the righteous.³⁰¹ He assigned immortality to those who in life not only practiced virtue but also acquired intelligence, which, upon death, as with the Aristotelians, was absorbed into the Active Intellect.³⁰²

Copia's authority on the issue would have been Modena. In his *Historia de' riti hebraici*,³⁰³ first printed in 1637, yet incorporating what he must have preached at an earlier stage, he wrote that the immortality of the soul, along with notions of Inferno, Paradise, Purgatory, and the resurrection of the dead, is a "truth" generally accepted by all religions, including Judaism.³⁰⁴ When Jews die, it is considered a blessing for the faithful "to be present upon the departure of their soul," whereupon "by ancient custom one rips off a certain part of the garment."³⁰⁵ It is the soul that causes life, and without it the body disintegrates. But life subsists after death: in the Hebrew for cemetery, *beit ha-hayyim*, "house of the living," the dead are regarded as alive,

296. See Elio Toaff, "Morte ed immortalità secondo l'ebraismo"; Rifat Sonsino and Daniel B. Syme, *What Happens after I Die? Jewish Views of Life after Death*; Neil Gillman, *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought*; and Simcha Paull Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*.

297. The exceptions include Prov. 12:28, to the effect that a virtuous life on earth leads to immortality in the hereafter.

298. See Dan. 12:2 ("Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken to everlasting life").

299. Talmud, Shabbat [Sabbath] 152b, after Eccles. 12:7 ("And the spirit will return to God who gave it").

300. Talmud, Hagiga [Festival offering] 12b.

301. Maimonides, *Mishne Tora* [Second Torah], Teshuva [Repentance] 8.2.

302. Idem, *More ha-nevukhim* [Guide for the perplexed] 1.70, 72; 3.27, 51–52, 54.

303. On this landmark publication, see Mark A. Cohen, "Leone da Modena's *Riti*: A Seventeenth-Century Plea for Social Toleration of Jews."

304. Modena, *Historia de' riti hebraici* 5.1.111–12.

305. Ibid., 5.6.117–18.

Modena asserts, "because of their soul."³⁰⁶ After seven days of mourning, the bereaved "leave the house, and many are accustomed to light candles in the synagogue, and have prayers recited, and promise alms, for the soul of the departed."³⁰⁷ For eleven months the son daily recites the mourning prayer Kaddish in the synagogue "for the soul of the parent who died." The reason for these prayers, Modena explains, is to assure that "the souls of the good" be in Paradise.³⁰⁸ "Souls of the wicked" are placed in Inferno, where they are perpetually "tormented with fire and other punishments." Other souls end up in Purgatory, defined as a temporary stay of souls in Inferno. The resurrection of the dead, Modena alleges, forms a basic article of the Jewish faith, indeed, believers "expect that, at the end of days, all the dead are to be resuscitated, and their souls and bodies will be judged by God on the day of the universal judgment." According to Daniel 12:2 (which Modena quotes in Latin), some shall awaken "to everlasting life" and others "to shame and everlasting contempt." In this respect, it might be mentioned that Modena, as an optative close to his poem for Copia's tombstone, prayed that "her soul dwell at ease" until being reunited, upon the advent of the Messiah, with the body through resurrection ("On the day the Redeemer comes / God will say: / 'Return, return, / O Sulamite'").³⁰⁹

These were doctrines that would have been inculcated in Copia as part of her basic Jewish education. It is hard to understand, then, how she could have been charged with denying one as fundamental as the soul's immortality. But that is precisely what the dispute was about. It started with a letter that Bonifaccio sent to her at the end of 1619 with New Year's greetings for 1620. Bonifaccio had been a regular visitor to Copia's *accademia*,³¹⁰ where the subject of immortality came up in conversation.³¹¹ He renews it in the letter, asking how it is possible for men, now mortal of body, to have once been immortal of body and soul (in the Garden of Eden).³¹² The answer, he says, is that their immortality occurred before original sin, whereby the body became corrupt. Had "the soul remained obedient to its Creator," it could have "save[d] the body from corruption." Though the body will die, it is within

306. Ibid., 5.7.119.

307. Ibid., 5.8.122 (for this and next quotation).

308. Ibid., 5.9.123 (for this and following sentences).

309. See below, 4.3, close (lines 13–16). For Bonifaccio's words on resurrection as demonstrable in both Jewish and Christian spheres, see his *Discorso* (2.3.12).

310. He is said to have recited his own sonnets there in praise of Cebà's portrait (see Copia's letter dated 10 January 1620; 2.2.A 5r). For details on Bonifaccio, see 2.3.A 1r (footnote).

311. See Aprosio's letter (3.3.2:113).

312. Bonifaccio's letter (2.1.11v), for this and following references.

the power of man, Bonifaccio argues, to save his soul by using his intellect ("the rational form exceeds the proportions of corporal matter"). Christianity holds the key to its salvation, for Christ can "construct that temple in which, like a deity, there resides the human intellect."³¹³ Bonifaccio's New Year's wishes for Copia are therefore for her conversion.³¹⁴ "Let us think of renewing this temple, Signora, . . . for I wish your days restored to such brightness that clouds will be removed from your mind."³¹⁵

Copia responded in a letter so deep in its philosophical concerns,³¹⁶ yet so vaguely and sometimes carelessly worded, that Bonifaccio concluded—in his subsequent *Discorso*—that she repudiated the soul's immortality. Differentiating between individualities, or numerical distinctions (1 versus 2), and continuities (1 becoming 2), she argues that just as the old year does not end but connects with the new year, so man, in growing older, does not have an earlier part of him end, but rather, as a species, he is preserved in his integrity.³¹⁷ She implies—and here is where Bonifaccio found grist for his mill—that the body (matter), as a compound with the soul (form), is inseparable from it (though she soon contradicts herself); that matter is eternal and incorruptible, for in dissolving it forms new matter; that humans are similarly eternal and incorruptible ("how is it possible for one thing [life] to take its corruptible being from a part [matter] that, in itself, is eternal and incorruptible?"); and that if anything is corruptible, it is the soul! "If I speak of matter and form as two component parts . . . , and the first of the two [matter] lasts eternally and the second [form] vanishes [upon death], it will be reasonable to attribute corruptibility to the second."

What Copia meant is that individuals, who are different from one another because of their different souls, die, but not their species; and that their different souls vanish upon death only to be implanted, as Plato opined, in other creatures, thereby ensuring the souls of eternity. But she did not say so explicitly, thus calling upon herself Bonifaccio's wrath. It is clear, however, that she recognized immortality not for "transitory individuals, who . . . are not always the same," but for "the human species . . . [that] is always the

313. Ibid. (2.1.12r).

314. A point stressed by Veltri in "Die 'schöne Jüdin' und die Unsterblichkeit der Seele," 60–61.

315. Bonifaccio, letter (2.1.12r). He renews his plea for her conversion in his *Discorso*, e.g., 2.3.58, 61.

316. Veltri's study is, to date, the only one to review the philosophical issues addressed in Bonifaccio's original letter, Copia's response, and her *Manifesto*.

317. Copia's letter: 2.2.A 5r (for initial differentiation between individualities and continuities) and, more specifically, 5v (for this and following references in paragraph).

same.³¹⁸ Man, i.e., the human species, is immortal in both his origins and his continuation. "For what reason," Copia asks, would "the Creator not make man immortal by nature [at the beginning of time] if He intended to have him preserved as such?"³¹⁹ Men are created anew in order for them to realize "the potential for the immortality" they enjoyed from the start.

Copia concluded her letter by petitioning Bonifaccio "to excuse [her] boldness in having advanced these weak uncertainties from a desire to hear their elucidation."³²⁰ As a response to her invitation "to hear their elucidation" he wrote his extensive *Discorso*, pulling out every argument in the book to prove the immortality of the soul, which, he was convinced, Copia abjured. The virulence of his response seems to have been induced by his disappointment with her, after their conversations and written exchanges, for not heeding his pleas for her conversion. He tried to discredit her in the eyes not only of Christians but also of Jews. Thus he said that she denied such fundamentals as, for one, the viability of the Jewish covenant, preferring the philosophy of Aristotle to the law of Moses (the Pentateuch); for another, man's creation as "immortal in a state of innocence"; for a third, the afterlife of the soul, which she saw as "ephemeral and becoming extinct together with the body"; for a fourth, the separability of the soul from the body; for a fifth, the corruptibility of matter (the body) as against the incorruptibility of form (the soul); and, last but not least, and running through the *Discorso* at large, the immortality of the soul.³²¹ The only immortality that interested her, according to Bonifaccio, was "in perpetuating [her] honored name with the immortal works of [her] divine mind."³²² Should it be proven, he said, that the soul is ephemeral, he, as a Christian, was willing "to be declared a Jew." "But since it is most certainly perpetual," he continued,

you, who are a Jew, will declare yourself a Christian. Yes, yes, you will free yourself from the servitude of that most abject synagogue of yours and will verify your honored name Sara [*sic*], becoming "a lady and mistress of your own self," a dominion to be preferred to all empires.³²³

318. *Ibid.*, 2.2.A 6r.

319. *Ibid.*, A 6r (and next sentence as well).

320. *Ibid.*, A 6v.

321. From *Discorso* (2.3), in order: 5, 7; 5; 7 (also 5, where Copia is said to "strive to make men die with respect to their soul"); 8–9; 9; 5, 6, *passim*.

322. *Ibid.*, 17.

323. *Ibid.*, 58.

Bonifaccio tried hard, but no tricks of his formidable rhetoric, no syllogisms of his tightly constructed deductive arguments, and no examples of his demonstrative elucidations could make Copia convert. Rather they prompted her to write a *Manifesto* wherein she would "publicly make it clear to everyone that the charge [he] brought against [her] in [his] *Discorso*, namely, that [she] denied the immortality of the soul, is false to the extreme, unjust, and beyond any reason."³²⁴ It was her first work to appear in print and one she would never have written—she insisted—if she had not been forced to save her reputation.³²⁵ But did she write it?

Bonifaccio, in his counterresponse, named Modena as the author of the *Manifesto*, claiming that he could "recognize the peculiarities of his language and the same conceits he always has in his mouth."³²⁶ It infuriated him that Modena, instead of showing gratitude for the money that he and his relatives had lent him—probably at Copia's urging—to "relieve him of his bad fortune" (so we learn in an incredible, yet till now unnoted statement relevant to Modena's biography), "rewards [him] with sharp invective." Aprosio, on the other hand, ascribed the work to Paluzzi ("who masqueraded as a Jewess"), as did Paluzzi's friend Berardelli.³²⁷ Rosa was of the opinion, however, that Paluzzi only edited the *Manifesto* and that if he had any influence over its composition it was in making Copia adopt a "biting style."³²⁸ The scales seem to weigh in Copia's favor as author when one remembers that she dedicated the *Manifesto* to her father, long deceased, to make him proud, in the afterlife, of his daughter's achievements³²⁹—the dedication stands as one of the most moving and ardent testimonies of filial love in the literature. It is hardly likely for Copia to have passed off someone else's work as her own without losing her self-respect along with the fatherly respect she so craved. Moreover, should one detect echoes of others' ideas or voices in the *Manifesto*, Copia openly acknowledged that in writing it she was reporting what she had heard from those who, at her behest no doubt, had read the

324. *Manifesto* (2.4.B 2r).

325. *Ibid.*, A 2r.

326. See, for this and following statements, his *Risposta*: 2.5.A 2v.

327. Aprosio, letter, 3.3.2:114; Berardelli, "Notices from Parnassus," 3.1.72v (and for his intimation that Paluzzi was responsible rather for feeding Copia ideas or editing the writing or determining its invective, 25r, 31v, 51v, 72v, 73r–v; see next sentence above).

328. "Notices from Parnassus": 3.1.32r–v. See also 51v, where Paluzzi is said to have marked up Bonifaccio's *Discorso* with comments and criticisms to be used by Copia in preparing her rebuttal (since the book's margins did not suffice for their inscription, Paluzzi had them "widened in order to dilate, to his liking, the gall of his malicious heart").

329. *Manifesto*: 2.4.A 3r–v.

Discorso.³³⁰ If the unladylike "biting style" is a problem, one commentator said that despite its being "somewhat sarcastic and pungent" it is no less Copia's in being "plain," "modest," "spontaneous," "frank," and "convincing."³³¹ Still, the argument over the authorship remains open: not so much whether Copia wrote it as whether she did so under the guidance or instruction of her advisors.³³²

Copia's *Manifesto* was less a treatise on the immortality of the soul than an apologia pro vita sua. It is, as has already been said, far less philosophical than her original letter that spawned the controversy.³³³ Her arguments for immortality, in the *Manifesto* itself, were rather simplistic: for one, "the soul of man . . . is incorruptible, immortal, and divine, created and infused by God into our body"; for another, the principle of its immortality is commonly accepted by Jews and Christians, who admit to its being "certain, infallible, and indisputable."³³⁴ Its denial, then, is "as far removed from [her] thinking" as Bonifaccio's "capacity to know the inside of hearts is removed from all his knowledge."³³⁵

More incisive were her criticisms of Bonifaccio's *Discorso*: (1) What point was there for the author to write a treatise about something that is clear to all?³³⁶ (2) His aim was to "become immortal in fame by treating the immortality of the soul" and, further, to add another publication to his name ("nothing induced you to make such long and vain efforts except that vain little ambition that makes you willingly run to the press in the belief that fame consists in having many books published").³³⁷ (3) How could the author discourse on a subject as sublime as the immortality of the soul when,

330. *Ibid.*, B 4r.

331. Modona, S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti*, 26.

332. A notable exception is Giorgio Busetto, who sustained Bonifaccio's claim that Copia's letter to Bonifaccio as well as her *Manifesto* were the work of Modena: see his essay "Sara Copio Sullam" for the anthology Antonio Arslan, Adriana Chemello, and Gilberto Pizzamiglio, eds., *Le stanze ritrovate: antologia di scrittrici venete dal Quattrocento al Novecento*, 111. Modena could well have had a hand in suggesting, or revising, their formulations, which might confirm Bonifaccio's assertion about recognizing his language in them (see above). Boccato's last word on the subject is that Copia's *Manifesto* was probably "touched up" (*rimaneggiato*) by Modena ("Le Rime postume di Numidio Paluzzi: un contributo alla lirica barocca a Venezia nel primo Seicento," 116). One might add, however, that the main task of editing it, as was remarked in the "Notices," went to Paluzzi, who thereby performed, for this and other works of Copia, the duty for which he was hired by her in the first place.

333. Veltri, "Die 'schöne Jüdin' und die Unsterblichkeit der Seele," 68–70.

334. *Manifesto*: 2.4.B 1r.

335. *Ibid.*, A 2r.

336. *Ibid.*, B 1r–v.

337. *Ibid.*, B 2r, C 3r.

by profession a doctor of canon and civil law, he was "neither a Philosopher nor a Theologian"?³³⁸ It was pretentious of him to think that the Lord God chose him, of all men, to expound the subject because of his "elevated intellect."³³⁹ (4) The treatise burgeons with learned quotations, yet Bonifaccio "badly understood" and "even more poorly reported" them, hence revealed his "crass ignorance."³⁴⁰ (5) He flaunts a knowledge of Hebrew without having learned it.³⁴¹ (6) His arguments are weakened by inanities and contradictions—were Copia to show "the defects and imperfections" of his essay she would need "not a short folio but another volume." It contains "erroneous conceptions of terms, twisted and badly understood meanings of writings, erroneous forms of syllogisms, bad connections between matters and strange transitions from one to another of them, inappropriate quotations of authors, and, finally, errors of language."³⁴²

Copia acted quickly, composing her *Manifesto*, if not "after two days of meager efforts" (or so she claimed in order to ridicule the "two years" of "nightly vigils" that Bonifaccio kept over his *Discorso*),³⁴³ at least in haste. "It was not to my advantage," she explained, "to let an excess of time or an abundance of gossip intervene between the offense and my rebuttal, for there was a danger of my incurring damage as a result."³⁴⁴ Bonifaccio acted no less quickly, framing his own rebuttal within one or two weeks. There he deflates Copia's charges by pleading his ignorance ("I know even less than nothing") and pretending his friendship ("despite your calling me an adversary, you will not make me stop being a true friend to you").³⁴⁵ In his counterattack he makes several points: Copia did not write the *Manifesto*; rather it was clear from its language that "the architect" who "fabricated it in two days" was Modena; Modena, in addition, "dictated to [her] the first letter" (dated 10 January 1620) to which Bonifaccio responded in his *Discorso*; Copia was misinformed by Modena, as Bonifaccio demonstrated by

338. *Ibid.*, B 3v, 4v.

339. *Ibid.*, B 2v.

340. *Ibid.*, B 3r.

341. *Ibid.*, C 1r. To the credit of Bonifaccio it should be said that he showed more feeling for the kabbalistic interpretation of Hebrew words (see his *Discorso*, 2.3.7, on *ruah*, *neslama*, *nefesh*) than did Copia who read them literally (under the influence perhaps of Modena, known as an antikabbalist).

342. *Manifesto*: 2.4.C 2r–v.

343. *Ibid.*, B 2r.

344. *Ibid.*, A 2v.

345. Bonifaccio's essay in rebuttal: 2.5.A 2r, then 2v.

referring to what he termed Modena's false ideas on the Sadducees;³⁴⁶ she failed to prove that Bonifaccio made "many mistakes of language" by not giving a single example of them; and she was oblivious to his basic concern, in the *Discorso*, over her welfare—"I have sought your salvation, for which I will not cease to offer God my continuous prayers."³⁴⁷ He saved his trump card for the end, where he reproduced *Copia's* original letter from which he had inferred her denial of the soul's immortality—there it was for all to see, he hoped, that his conclusion was not unfounded. But, as we know, the same letter was ambiguous in its wording; moreover, Bonifaccio had said, as just noted, that it was not hers, but Modena's.

It must have irked Bonifaccio that *Copia* had the gall to answer him in so incisive a tone. He thought he had "finished her off" in his *Discorso*, but she sprang back in her *Manifesto*, marshaling arguments that showed him in an unfavorable light. In a wrathful letter written a few months after his counterresponse he gives vent to his frustration, calling her Jezebel and condemning her not only for denying the immortality of the soul but also for embracing "a dozen similar heresies against the doctrines of her faith, as she inadvertently stated them in her *Manifesto*."³⁴⁸

One wonders: was the accusation of heresy on the lips of her coreligionists too? As it happens, the Jewish authorities were shaken, in the same years, by an even more conspicuous denial of the soul's immortality in the writings of the converso Uriel da Costa, resident at the time in Amsterdam: he was branded a radical and excommunicated.³⁴⁹ *Copia* had reason to worry about her standing in the community.

346. *Manifesto*: 2.4.B 4v; Bonifaccio's reply: 2.5.A 3v.

347. Bonifaccio, variously, 2.5.A 2v, A 3v, A4r–v.

348. Bonifaccio's letter to Umberto Manfredini: 2.6.5r.

349. See thereabout Adelman, "Success and Failure in the Seventeenth-Century Ghetto of Venice: The Life and Thought of Leon Modena, 1571–1648," 599–603, and for da Costa's writings (and Modena's connections with them), 1029–30; Fortis, *La "bella ebrea,"* 53, 67; and Veltri, "Die 'schöne Jüdin,'" 70. Da Costa first arrived in Amsterdam in 1614 and in the years 1614–15 resided in Hamburg. There he promulgated eleven theses in refutation of rabbinic law (about which see Adelman, "Success and Failure," 540–45). Upon request, Modena reviewed these theses and published a response to them in 1616 (*ibid.*, 549–52). Writing to the Jewish authorities in Hamburg, he recommended that unless da Costa remained silent he ought to be excommunicated. The rabbis in Hamburg and Venice did in fact excommunicate him, along with other dissidents, in 1618. In the early 1620s da Costa wrote of the soul's immortality, qualifying it as a principle unsupported by biblical precedent (*ibid.*, 599–603). His manuscript was filched by Samuel da Silva who, before the author could publish it, confuted its allegations in his *Tratado da immortalidade da alma* (Amsterdam, 1623), whereupon the Jewish leaders in Amsterdam issued an official edict for da Costa's excommunication as a heretic. The incident caused noticeable commotion in European rabbinical circles.

The controversy left its impact on the music of Salamone Rossi. It can be shown that Modena and Copia relate biographically and conceptually to the formation of Rossi's collection of Hebrew polyphonic works, his "Songs of Solomon" (*Ha-shirim asher li-Shelomo*, thirty-three in all), published in 1623.³⁵⁰ Beyond being the first printed collection of its kind, the "Songs" end, most unusually, with a wedding ode by Modena, written to celebrate the nuptials of Copia's sister Diana (Stella) to a son of the Mantuan Isacchino Massarano.³⁵¹ Not only does the ode contain verses that seem to have been intended for Copia via references to Esther,³⁵² but, more significantly, it declares *urbi et orbi* that the soul is immortal. The presence of an epithalamium, as the concluding item in a collection of what otherwise were standard liturgical pieces, is incongruous enough. Clearly, Modena and Rossi intended to relay a message. The first stanza speaks of "souls" (*nefashot*) that enter into wedlock as "a man with a maid" (*ke-gever be-^ʿalma*). *ʿAlma* reads (playfully) in Italian as "soul," and *be-^ʿalma*, in Hebrew, as both "with a maid" and "for eternity." In the last stanza, the final word is, deliberately, *u-le-^ʿalma* (and for eternity), a slight variation on the previous *be-^ʿalma*: God is beseeched to bless the newlyweds "for eternity," a concept reinforced by "forever" (*le-^ʿolam*), "without cease" (*li-veli dai*), and "without end" (*le-²ein kets*). *U-le-^ʿalma* means only one thing in Hebrew, "and for eternity," while in Italian, again, the last two syllables suggest "soul."

What Modena and Rossi are doing is, to all intents, corroborating the "immortality of the soul" as a tenet fundamental to Jewish doctrine, thus responding unequivocally to the vitriolic discourse by Bonifaccio who accused Copia of its denial and, at the same time, exonerating Copia, in verse and song, as blameless. Copia, then, seems to have been the moving spirit behind the piece. What is certain is that, in this final wedding ode, Rossi, Modena, and, as a referent, Copia come together not only in one of the

350. See Harrán, "A Tale as Yet Untold: Salamone Rossi in Venice, 1622."

351. Already mentioned under "Copia's family." See, for the discussion of this piece, Harrán, "Marriage and Music as Metaphor: The Wedding Odes of Leon Modena and Salamone Rossi," esp. 15–21; and for Modena as the author, David Magid, "Shir lo noda' me'et rav Yehuda Arye di Modena" [An unknown poem by Rabbi Leon Modena].

352. Knowing Copia's "passion" for the story of Queen Esther, as she read it in Cebà's epic (1615) and in his own play *Ester* (1619), Modena may purposely have alluded to Esther, in the wedding ode, in stanzas 1 ("To whom would I desire to pay tribute?"; Esther 6:6) and 4 ("Great is the wealth of him who sells everything he has in order to take her [Esther] unto himself as a daughter"; Esther 2:7, also 2:15). Modena dedicated his play to Copia as his "most respected patroness" and mentioned their discussions of Cebà's poem (see 4.1.3–4). For Esther as a thematic link between Modena and Cebà with Copia as an intermediary, see Marina Arbib, "The Queen Esther Triangle: Leon Modena, Ansaldo Cebà, and Sara Copio Sullam."

most remarkable pieces in the music literature but also in a sweeping statement of the soul's immortality.

"Notices from Parnassus"

... a real, depraved world, in the face of which
the moral elevation of Sarra shines out all the more.

Umberto Fortis, *La "bella ebrea"*

The "Notices" are a mixture of prose and verse preserved in an extended manuscript of a hundred plus folios.³⁵³ They relate the events that transpired after Copia appointed Paluzzi as her teacher and advisor in matters of language and a seeming editor of her works.³⁵⁴ She rewarded him generously for his services, yet Paluzzi,³⁵⁵ together with his valet friend Alessandro Berardelli, the laundress Paola Furlana, her three sons, and a young black kitchen maid (Arnolfa by name), originally a Spanish Moor who under duress converted to Christianity,³⁵⁶ systematically robbed her of her possessions (money, jewelry, household objects). Knowing Copia's interest in magic, they said, when questioned about the disappearance of the goods, that an "aerial spirit" must have visited the house and absconded with them.³⁵⁷ They had fictitious letters sent to her by a "great [French] prince," who, after visiting Copia, returned to Paris and requested her portrait.³⁵⁸ To extort money from her, they advised her to honor the prince by having a handsome gold-encrusted jewel box made for him: she paid them for the expenses and they probably sold the gift for lucre. Informed of their machinations on 9 July 1624, Copia dismissed Paluzzi and denounced the archthief Berardelli to the authorities.³⁵⁹ Out of revenge, the two spread false rumors about Copia in their *Sareide* (Satires on Sarra), which they appear to have printed as pamphlets and read and distributed in public places, among them the ghetto.³⁶⁰ Paluzzi is said to

353. One or more are missing; see the comment (and footnote) at the end of 3.1.88v.

354. "Notices from Parnassus": 3.1.5r.

355. For details on him, see variously above and under 2.2.A 5r (footnote), also 3.1.1v (footnote).

356. "Notices," 3.1.90v (for the name). She is referred to there as variously the female Moor (*la Mora*), the black girl (*la Negra*, also *la nera*), and the black Marrano girl from Granada (*la negra marana di Granata*). On her origins and on Marranos as both Jews and Moors (Muslims) forced to convert to Christianity in Spain after the Reconquista, see "Notices," 8r (footnote).

357. "Notices," 3.1.8v, 9v, 11v, etc.

358. *Ibid.*, 10r, 11r (here and next sentence).

359. *Ibid.*, 48v.

360. *Ibid.*, 16r, 18r, 22v, 30v, etc.

have "denied her fame with wicked falsehoods, reviled her honor with dirty lies, stained her reputation with detestable fabrications, impugned her innocence with execrable slander, crushed the truth with iniquitous calumnies," and so on.³⁶¹ Berardelli followed suit with his own "infamous libels, filthy denunciations, and untruthful accusations."³⁶² The "Notices," compiled and copied around 1626, recount the stories of their deceptions and, by having the characters praise Copia throughout for her goodness and honesty, firmly belie the said "libels," "denunciations," and "accusations."

The authorship of the "Notices" is uncertain. For Emmanuele Cicogna the author was "whoever either composed or transcribed the prose and poetry."³⁶³ Yet things are not that simple. Of the seventy-one poems in the "Notices," thirty-five can be identified (or hypothesized) for their authors, sixteen in all.³⁶⁴ With few exceptions (Traiano Boccalini, Garcilaso de la Vega, Modena), the authors were minor figures, of Venetian and Genoese provenance.³⁶⁵ The prose parts are less easily traced. Only one name is mentioned in them, Giulia Solinga, who notes her having "collect[ed] these writings from various originals."³⁶⁶ Beyond composing one of the poems and presumably others,³⁶⁷ she signed the dedicatory letter and, in a byline, is said to have written the foreword.³⁶⁸ Yet doubts arise about her authorship of the letter and foreword, not to speak of other prose sections, when, in the same foreword, the reader is told that two of its episodes were "recorded by Signora Solinga in her chapters" and that for their "better understanding" and "more information" he or she should consult the same chapters and her sonnets;³⁶⁹ as if the author of the foreword, by adverting to Solinga, were not Solinga but someone else. These doubts are reinforced

361. Ibid., 25v–26r.

362. Ibid., 34v.

363. In a handwritten annotation to his catalog notice for the manuscript: *Catalogo dei codici della Biblioteca di Emanuele Cicogna di Venezia*, 1:85r.

364. Identified (twenty-four examples), because the authors' names are mentioned; hypothesized (eleven), because, contextually, their authorship seems likely. Thirty-six poems are yet to be attributed.

365. The Genoese among them would have been Annibale Grimaldo ("Notices," 3.1.84v) and, seemingly, Giacomo Rosa, a friend of Cebà, at whose bidding he visited Copia and witnessed the events that were related—to a large part by himself—in the "Notices" (10v–11r, 26r–34v, 39r, 40v, 48v). It could be that Cebà (mentioned on 26r, 39r, 56v) was the author of one or more of the anonymous poems (not to speak of certain prose sections; see below).

366. "Notices," 3.1.1v. For details on Solinga, see 3.1.1r (footnote).

367. See index of poems and, variously, "Notices," 3.1.3r–4v, 51r.

368. "Notices," 3.1.1r–2v, 5r.

369. Ibid., 10r, 11v.

by the continuation, spoken in the plural ("we would have gladly avoided" or "we are forced to uncover," etc.). Solinga's role as "author of the chapters" is cited on three further occasions,³⁷⁰ but are the chapters the "Notices"? Did Solinga prepare the "Notices," as one might infer from the dedication of one of their sonnets to her as their "author" ("sonnet . . . to the author of the 'Notices'")?³⁷¹ Or did others use her chapters and sonnets as source material in compiling the "Notices" as their own work? When Copia referred to Solinga as "a Muse who stirred song on its path / And shook the woods of the others' infamies,"³⁷² did she have her sonnets in mind? Or her chapters or "Notices"? When, again, Cino da Pistoia, a (fictitious) character in the "Notices," said that "many honored and skilled authors" had written "in behalf of that worthy lady [Copia]," and that their works included "a most learned discourse of that most illustrious gentleman"—presumably Ansaldo Cebà—"who loved" her "as a daughter,"³⁷³ was he referring to their writings, among them a seeming "discourse," if there were such, by Cebà, as reworked in the "Notices"? Were "the honored and skilled authors" those persons who frequented her salon? Did they include notables in Genoa, where, according to Cebà, Copia had made "such friends . . . as might sustain [her] in [her] need"?³⁷⁴ Were the authors of the prose sections chiefly women, as might be suggested by the heavy female representation in the "Notices" (Solinga and, to buttress Copia as a poetess, the fabled Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Isabella Andreini, and, in times of old, Sappho and Corinna)? Did Copia herself write some of the anonymous verses?³⁷⁵ What part, if any, did Copia's staunch advocate Modena play in the production of the manuscript? All these are questions that remain open. I shall expand on the last of them.

It was Boccato who raised the possibility of Modena's collaboration as either the copyist of the manuscript or its compiler.³⁷⁶ She even asked whether Modena might have been its author, though she concluded from the "noticeable stylistic differences between the various parts" that not one

370. *Ibid.*, 38v, 40v, 52r.

371. *Ibid.*, 79v.

372. *Ibid.*, 86r, no. 37:10–11.

373. *Ibid.*, 73r.

374. Cebà, 1.1/L14.37.

375. With which she was familiar enough to compose sonnets. See Cebà, 1.1/L20.67, footnote.

376. Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto," 114–15. Adelman sustains her ideas on Modena as copyist ("Boccato's assertion that this *codice* was written by Leon Modena cannot be dismissed. The writing does appear to be his . . ."; "The Educational and Literary Activities of Jewish Women in Italy during the Renaissance and the Catholic Restoration," 23).

but probably several writers were involved in its preparation.³⁷⁷ To uphold the notion of Modena as copyist she cited the similarity between the script in the codex (datable, as said, to around 1626; see fig. 10 below) and that in a document in his hand from 1637.³⁷⁸ I myself compared the codex to various letters (in Latin characters, as distinguished from the lion's share of his letters in Hebrew) written by him in 1638–39.³⁷⁹ There are resemblances, but they are not compelling enough to establish Modena as its copyist. I was sustained in my conclusion by Laura Nuvoloni and Louis Waldman, who, at my request, compared the same documents for their paleography: they were unanimous in rejecting the handwriting in the codex as Modena's.³⁸⁰

Did Modena "compile" the manuscript? Boccato said that he might have "collected and ordered" the texts of its various authors according to their contents.³⁸¹ But, as noted, it was Solinga who claimed to have "collected" them (and, if she did, would have "ordered" them as well), after which, she informs us, she chose a dedicatee for them.³⁸² With no further information, however, her statements cannot be challenged for their veracity.

377. Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto," 115–16.

378. After Modena was charged with publishing certain heresies in his *Historia de' riti hebraici* (1637), he submitted a report in self-defense to the Holy Office: autograph in Venice, Archivio di Stato, Santo Ufficio, Processi, folder (*busta*) 94. For an Italian letter in his hand (from 1639), see illustration in Harrán, "Was Rabbi Leon Modena a Composer?" 210.

379. London, British Library, MS Or. 5395.

380. Laura Nuvoloni, curator, Department of Manuscripts, British Library, noted that "the Venetian manuscript is written in a very formalized hand (possibly that of a professional scribe), very regular and *distesa* [large], with occasionally looped ascenders and both ascenders and descenders inclined toward the right. Modena's hand is much less formal, more irregular, and also more compact, somehow pointed, and set upright (with no inclined ascenders or descenders). In its treatment of *d* and *b* ascenders it differs from that of the other scribe in the codex, as it does in its treatment of the minims [downward vertical strokes] of *m* and *n*." Louis Waldman, Art Department, University of Texas, and author of *Baccio Bandinelli and Art at the Medici Court* (2004), in which paleographical order was made in numerous documents from the private archives of the Bandinelli family, said, in a similar vein, that "the writer of the codex is a more facile penman, with a pronounced forward slant; his writing is very graceful but shows no wasted effort. Modena's handwriting is of a type common among people who were not professional copyists; it is slower and the writer tends to make the same letter or group of letters in different ways as whim strikes him," and so on with eight detailed examples from the codex and letters set in comparison. Waldman follows up his report with the conclusion: "Not only are there a great many differences between the individual letter forms each writer favors, but the overall handling of the pen is individual. The writer of the codex was a fluent penman, showing an efficient, speedy, but regular script. Modena, by contrast, writes a slow, careful, workmanlike cursive that is less regular, less showy, and a bit less elegant than the hand of the codex scribe (a professional writer?)."

381. Boccato's words in reference, specifically, to Modena ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto," 116).

382. "Notices": 3.1.1v–2r.

But the last word has still not been said on whether Modena had some part in the authorship of the codex, or if not Modena, then other Jews who rushed to Copia's defense. The evidence for a Jewish "presence" lies less in the inclusion of the first-century Jewish historian Josephus Flavius as a character in the narrative—his works were known from a slew of editions and translations read by erudite Christians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—than in various positive or sympathetic references throughout to Jews, the ghetto, and Jewish customs. Copia is pitied for her plight³⁸³ or said to be an honored woman or honored Jewess³⁸⁴ or praised for being virtuous, compassionate, shrewd, and genteel;³⁸⁵ her husband Jacob is described as a good and righteous Jew;³⁸⁶ Modena is named as the person with whom the wicked Berardelli will have to settle accounts.³⁸⁷ It is because of Berardelli that the Jews in the ghetto fear for their lives—he steals from them, he "would have the ghetto destroyed," he enters its premises to recite or distribute his abusive *Sareide*.³⁸⁸ The "Jews [are] racing in their boots to spread the news" of his coming; they "lift the bridge to escape [his] thefts and robberies"; they are advised to have at least two persons on guard "to observe the thief's steps and claws."³⁸⁹ Purim is hailed as a feast day on which, "by ancient custom," the Jews "not only are . . . wont to distribute alms to their poor . . . but they exchange splendid presents among themselves," which is basically the way Modena described it in his *Historia de' riti hebraici*.³⁹⁰ Who was it that addressed the Jews, in three of the poems, as "brothers"?³⁹¹ Or that spoke of Jerusalem as a metonym for the ghetto and of Israel as one for the Jews?³⁹² Or that advised the release of servants after six years of custody (as prescribed in Exod. 21:2 and Deut. 15:12)?³⁹³ It had to be a Jew, and chances are that as a leading figure in the community and as a friend and supporter of Copia it was Modena. But, at this stage, nothing conclusive can be said

383. Ibid., 2r, also 50r.

384. Ibid., 12v, 15r, 16r, 17v, 18v, 19r, 24r, 25v, 26r–v, 39r, 43r, 44r, 58r, 72r, etc.

385. Virtuous: ibid., 5r, 50r; compassionate, 7v, 22v, 66r; shrewd, 56r; genteel, 75v.

386. Ibid., 96r, 98r.

387. Ibid., 90r.

388. Ibid., respectively, 93v, 96r, 100v; 90r; and 49r.

389. Ibid., 98v, 96v, 96v.

390. Ibid., 10r; *Historia de' riti hebraici* 3.10.85: "On that day alms are amply distributed, in public, to the poor, and presents of things to eat are sent by one relative and friend to another, by pupils to teachers, by masters to servants, and by elders to minors."

391. "Notices," 3.1.90r, 98r, 100v.

392. Ibid., 90r, 96v.

393. Ibid., 5v.

about his participation. Even so, because of the Jewish emphases in some of the prose and poetry, particularly the sonnets in the last twelve folios, one or more Jews are almost certain to have written parts of the manuscript.³⁹⁴

One might even go one step further and ask whether the whole manuscript was a Jewish concoction, following up on the brazen suggestion that Modena might have been its author (see above)—it was made by Boccatto, then rejected by her, to repeat, on grounds of style, not substance. There is really no firm distinction in the contents of the "Notices" between things already defined as ostensibly Jewish and others that could have been Christian. It is within the realm of possibility that a group of Copia's Jewish friends, among them Modena, banded together to compose the work in her defense. Were this the case, the names of the almost completely unidentifiable authors of the prose sections and of the seventy-one poems may, with but four exceptions,³⁹⁵ have been fictitious or anagrammatic so as to provide a disguise for their Jewish identity.

The three main characters in the work are Copia, Paluzzi, and Berardelli. It was in defense of Copia that the "Notices" were composed, yet she does not speak out in them except in her five sonnets. Paluzzi appears to have visited her salon as early as 1620, but only in July 1622 did she choose him as her teacher and advisor in literature (poetry and prose), an arrangement that lasted until July 1624, when he was expelled from her house for his trickeries.³⁹⁶ Bonifaccio, once his friendship with Paluzzi had soured, referred to him as a "most despicable proofreader, who, after being a *bipodidascalo* [classroom assistant] for many years, gloried in finally having become a *ludimagistro* [schoolmaster]" to his new patroness.³⁹⁷ Paluzzi was not the one to initiate the tricks played on Copia to despoil her of her belongings; rather he was drawn into them by the washerwoman Furlana and her kitchen maid accomplice. But no sooner did he get the hang of things than he willingly "fell into the muck of their deceptions."³⁹⁸ It is strange that Copia bestowed her favor on a person who, beyond suffering from syphilis,

394. To be distinguished from other parts of seemingly Christian authorship, as in the statement that the "honored lord" Cebà died before actualizing his "holy thought": to convert Copia to Christianity ("Notices," 3.1.26v). Yet on the ambiguity of the Christian component in the "Notices," see below.

395. Traiano Boccalini, Garcilaso de la Vega, Numidio Paluzzi, Giacomo Rosa.

396. 1620: Copia's letter (2.2.A 5r); also references, in the "Notices," to "five years or more" of Copia's generosity to Paluzzi (3.1.45v), to two years of his service (1622–24; 8r), and to his dismissal at the end (48v).

397. Letter (from December 1621): 2.6.5r.

398. "Notices": 3.1.8r, 32v.

was described as having a "soot-covered mug," the "voice of a hermaphrodite," and the "leer of an evildoer."³⁹⁹ None of this deterred her: she doctored him, fed him, clothed him, and paid him handsomely.

No less despicable was Paluzzi's friend and accessory to the deceptions, Berardelli, a Roman poet and painter described as

that panhandling scullery boy, that filthy ruffian, that contemptuous lawbreaker, that incestuous blockhead, that obscene stable boy, that cupbearer of the obnoxious, that Adonis of the kitchen! . . . that herald of infamy, that witness to lies, that shelter of perfidy, that portrait of impudence! . . . that arrogant subject for any Last Supper should its painter in fact lack an idea for expressing a true traitor [Judas]!⁴⁰⁰

It was Berardelli who, in his malice, and with the assistance of the no less malicious Moorish scullery maid, "cut off the Jewess's belt, . . . stole from her so many pieces of gold both minted as coins and worked in several shapes [as jewels], . . . [looted] so many pieces of furniture, . . . despoiled her house," and so on.⁴⁰¹

So far the real characters (not to speak of Rosa, on whom more below). There follows a long list of imagined ones: Colonna and Gambara were chosen by Apollo to serve as judges (along with Corinna and Sappho) in trying Paluzzi and Berardelli for their crimes; Pietro Aretino acted as prosecutor and Andreini as interrogator; Cino da Pistoia was counsel for Paluzzi, whose supporters numbered Angelo Poliziano and three members of the Medici family (Giovanni, Lorenzo, and Cosimo); Boccalini and Garcilaso de la Vega pressed for his indictment, and when they got into a heated argument over the system of justice in Venice Baldassare Castiglione stepped in to restore calm; still other men of letters were involved in the proceedings, among them, as guests at the final banquet, Petrarch, Pietro Bembo, Giovanni della Casa, and Giovanni Guidiccioni. The reason for assembling all these illustrious poets and prose writers was to emphasize Copia's rightful place among the literary greats of all time.

The "Notices" divide into nine parts. *Part 1*. Dedication by (supposedly) Solinga to Marco Trevisan on the theme of a patron betrayed by a protégé (Trevisan by Giulio Strozzi), in anticipation of Copia's betrayal by Paluzzi

399. *Ibid.*, 16r.

400. *Ibid.*, 35r–v.

401. *Ibid.*, 20v.

(fols. 1r–4r, including three sonnets, one of them written “in the person of the Jewess”).

Part 2. Foreword by (supposedly) Solinga “to the kind readers,” who are told the story of betrayal behind the “Notices” (for details, see above, under “Life”; fols. 5r–14v, including three sonnets, one of them by Copia).

Part 3. Paluzzi (already dead) is summoned by Apollo to appear on Mount Parnassus before the investigating judges Colonna and Gambara; the reason for the convocation is a recently published book of Paluzzi’s poems with a blasphemous foreword, in Copia’s defamation, by Berardelli;⁴⁰² the judges examine the minutes of Berardelli’s trial (as preserved in the offices of the Signori di Notte al Criminal)⁴⁰³ and other documents; interrogated by Andreini, Paluzzi relates the story (as we already know it) of how he came to Venice and was hired by Copia and performed his trickeries, yet in the same breath he praises Copia for her favors and feigns shame for his infamy; he places the blame for writing and disseminating the satiric *Sareide* on Berardelli, who, in his opinion, professed to be a friend, but, in reality, was a liar, villain, thief (of Copia’s belongings, of Paluzzi’s writings), and traitor—he sullied Paluzzi’s name behind his back, he avenged Copia for her public charges and the trial she instituted against him, spreading the word that not she but Paluzzi was the author of the *Manifesto* (fols. 15r–25r).

Part 4. Responding to Paluzzi, Aretino, as prosecutor, accuses him of passing on the blame to Berardelli in order to escape punishment; Paluzzi, he says, cannot hide his villainous ways; as evidence for his guilt Aretino has a letter by Rosa read out loud—the letter (2,930 words in translation!) recounts the story, now for a third time, though in different detail, of what we were told in parts 2 and 3 above, adding to it, as a denouement, how Rosa found out Paluzzi’s trickery and reported it to Copia; Aretino expands on the letter, saying that it shows Paluzzi and Berardelli for their impiousness and ungratefulness; he lambastes Berardelli, becoming increasingly furious with him in the course of his tirade, as if to prepare the final part (no. 9 below), an anthology of “anti-Berardellian” poetry; the judges debate the kind of punishment to be meted out to Paluzzi and Berardelli; we then encounter Paluzzi’s supporters, among them an unnamed “great person in arms and letters,” three members of the Medici family, Poliziano, and Cino da Pistoia (fols. 25r–57v, including seven sonnets, of which five are about Berardelli).

402. Not to speak of a blasphemous dedication: see below, 3.2.A 2r–4v.

403. For details on the Signori di Notte (and the incomplete records in their offices), see under “Notices,” 3.1.15v.

Part 5. A brawl between an Italian, Boccalini, and a Spaniard, Don Garcilaso de la Vega, over the question of justice: by highlighting the failings of the Venetian judicial system for not having properly punished Berardelli, de la Vega so angered Boccalini that he challenged him to a duel; if Berardelli got away with less than he should have it was, as Boccalini explained, because Copia lacked experience in judiciary matters, received poor legal counsel, and, anxious for quick results, kept changing lawyers, and because the lawyers themselves, poorly informed, did not present a compelling case for Berardelli's conviction; de la Vega added insult to injury by referring to Giovanni Boccaccio's description of Venice as "the harbor of every wickedness";⁴⁰⁴ Boccalini responded by delivering a long, impassioned harangue about the glories of Venice; a major confrontation between the two would have erupted were it not for the intervention of numerous poets who, led by Castiglione, reconciled their differences (fols. 57v–69r, including ten sonnets, of which eight are about Berardelli).

Part 6. Pleading in Paluzzi's favor, Cino da Pistoia names Berardelli as the main culprit and entreats the judges to be merciful in imposing punishment on Paluzzi (fols. 69r–76v).

Part 7. The judges render their verdict: Paluzzi was to be branded on the forehead; an effigy of Berardelli was to be hanged (fols. 76v–78r).

Part 8. The worthies convene for a final banquet, accompanied by music and followed by dance (fols. 78r–79r).

Part 9. The "Notices" close with a hefty anthology of verses: forty-three sonnets (four of them by Copia), three octaves, and one madrigal, most of them in castigation of Berardelli (fols. 79v–100v).

The "Notices" exemplify a mode of composition in vogue at the time, particularly in political satire: Parnassus literature. Ruling an imaginary government on Parnassus, Apollo is surrounded by renowned writers, artists, and princes of all ages; they discourse on a wide range of topics. Cesare Caporali inaugurated the genre in his *Viaggio di Parnaso* (1582), a full-length account of various literary figures on a journey to Parnassus, and in a shorter poem, "Gli avvisi di Parnaso" (from the mid-1580s), about lyrics as appraised by authors firmly ensconced on its mount. Other examples are by Giulio Cesare (*Viaggio di Parnaso*, 1621, in Neapolitan dialect, about the decline of poetry in a corrupted society), Marc'Antonio Nali (*Avvisi di Parnaso a' poeti toscani*, 1644, in praise of Tuscan poetry as "the nectar that inebriates the souls of the talented and the ambrosia that assures immortality"),⁴⁰⁵ and, as the most outstanding

404. Ibid., 62r.

405. Nali, *Avvisi di Parnaso a' poeti toscani*, a 6v. Of all Tuscan poets, Petrarch is said to be the greatest ("a swan descending from heaven, the rival of Apollo, the first patrician of Parnassus,

and influential representative of the genre, Boccacini, who figures, certainly not by chance, among the protagonists in the manuscript under discussion.

Boccacini's *Ragguagli* ("reports," otherwise *avvisi*, "notices") *di Parnaso*⁴⁰⁶ were published in two volumes with a hundred "reports" in each (1612–13). Most of the persons named or active in Solinga's "Notices" can be found in them, including Andreini, Aretino, Lodovico Ariosto, Bembo, Annibale Caro, Castiglione, Cino da Pistoia, Colonna, Lodovico Dolce, Gambara, Girolamo Muzio, Oddi Sforza, and Petrarch. The contents cover an array of topics: the dangers that poets incur in beholding beautiful women (Colonna, Gambara, and Laura Terracini, after having been admitted to the Accademia degl'Intronati, were ordered by Apollo to be removed, for the academics there were so taken by their charms that they began to write inappropriate poetry); how it is that the Muses sometimes inspire furor poeticus in the minds of the ignorant; the disadvantages of munificence ("Apollo, recognizing the ills that excessive riches cause in his poets, exhorts the magnanimous king of France, François I, to moderate the profuse liberality he was accustomed to shower on them"); the extent to which the maxim *Ubi bonum ibi patria* (your country is wherever you feel at home) is relevant to determining one's residence; if women have to bear shame for adultery, then is it not right for "adulterous married men" to bear it too?; it is not enough to live in a country, one should love it too; fame is acquired not by having good intentions but by exercising good judgment;⁴⁰⁷ and so on.

Assuming that one or more Jews played a role in collecting or composing portions of the "Notices," one could make a case for the Hebrew *makama* as still another genre that influenced their redaction. Like the "Notices," the *makama* is constructed as a series of stories in prose with metrical verses variously interspersed in them. Known from medieval Spanish Arabic literature, it passed on to Jewish writings, among them, in Spain, *Tabkemoni* (The Wise Man, after 2 Sam. 23:8) by Judah ben Solomon Alḥarizi (d. 1225) and, in Italy, the *Mabbarot* (Notebooks, a cognate for "reports") by Immanuel ha-Romi (d. c. 1330).⁴⁰⁸ The extent to which the *makama* did in fact operate to shape the "Notices" remains an open question. Even without an answer to it, however, the "Notices" as they stand constitute for the practiced reader a unique blend of influences and traditions, diverse in their origins, compelling in their amalgamation.

the secretary of Love, and one who, with the balsam of his purged pens, has eternalized his own name in the memory of all centuries"; 9).

406. The title changes in various editions; see under volume editor's bibliography.

407. *Ragguagli di Parnaso* (ed. Giuseppe Rua): vol. 1, nos. 22, 27, 45, 51, 70, 99; vol. 2, no. 30.

408. For editions, see volume editor's bibliography.

As literature, the "Notices," when compared with other compositions of the sort, are impressive not only in their length and singular content but also for their mixture of apologetics (in defense of Copia), narration, and, after the example possibly of the Hebrew *makama*, prose and poetry. The poetry itself forms a rich anthology of examples, seventy-one in all. Beyond their interest as works in praise of Copia or in deprecation of Paluzzi and Berardelli, they command attention for including five sonnets, unique in their material, by Copia herself; for having certain irregular forms (sonnets with a three-line envoi or five extra tercets); for comprising verses in dialect (Venetian); for covering a wide thematic spectrum framed, at its extremities, by the serious and the vulgar;⁴⁰⁹ and, in many instances, for entering the ghetto, as an almost unprecedented move in Italian letters, to tell a tale of woes as perceived from a Jewish vantage point.⁴¹⁰ The contents are full of surprises; and the characters, in relating them in verse or prose, get carried away by their anger or zeal—everything they say is exuberant, passionate, very Baroque.

As biography, the "Notices" are important, first and foremost, for relaying the story of Copia's betrayal by Paluzzi and his accomplices in all its amazing and often horrific episodes. "Though essentially a work of literature," Boccato writes, "the codex draws on events that really occurred, transforming them by poetic invention."⁴¹¹ The same events are indirectly confirmed by other sources, particularly a report by Apro시오.⁴¹² There one reads about the French prince who visited Copia and, after his return to France, wrote letters that Paluzzi fabricated in his name;⁴¹³ about Copia's infatuation—true or not—with the prince (a point absent from the "Notices"); about Paluzzi's abuse of her courtesy; and about her having entered Paluzzi's lodgings to filch his writings, including hers (lest they be discovered to be of Paluzzi's authorship),⁴¹⁴ though, if Copia did enter them, it was probably to retrieve whatever slanderous works she feared Paluzzi had written about her and, with their uncovering, could be to her disadvantage.

409. "Vulgar," as might befit the contemptible actions of the culprits, particularly Berardelli: see poems 12 (3.1.54v: "A cock . . . fell into a latrine"), 19 (67r: "sack of manure"), 21 (68r: "empty the urinals"), 23 (69r: "discharge my bowels"), 25 (80r: "filthy latrines"), 69 (99v: "so that his soul may exit from his bottom"), etc.

410. See "Notices," poems 45 (3.1.89r), 47 (90r), 52 (92v), 61–62 (96v), 63 (97v), 66 (98r), 67 (98v).

411. Boccato, "Un altro documento inedito su S. C. Sullam," 308.

412. 3.3 below.

413. As reported in the "Notices," 3.1.10r.

414. See *ibid.*, 22r, 31r, 45r, 46r, 67r–v, etc. (Berardelli spread the story in the dedication and foreword to Paluzzi's *Rime*, about which see below).

As bibliography, the "Notices" shed light on the contents of Paluzzi's *Rime*, a publication that, till recently, was thought to have disappeared but that, in an exciting turn of events, has resurfaced in two copies.⁴¹⁵ Not only that, but without the *Rime* the "Notices" are unthinkable: it was after the book was dispatched to Parnassus, where even in advance of its arrival it caused "a big stir," that Apollo decided to institute a trial against author and editor.⁴¹⁶ The one or more individuals who composed the "Notices" seem to have had the book open before them, referring to specific works in it by page and to its fivefold statement of the accusation that Copia plagiarized Paluzzi's writings.⁴¹⁷ Not only that, but they were so familiar with the mechanics of its construction as to know the reasons for dedicating the poems in one way or another or the maneuverings of author and editor in borrowing, revising, and passing off others' works as their own. Of the participants in the "Notices," the one most likely to have had inside information on the *Rime* would have been Rosa, Paluzzi's friend turned foe. Whatever the case, the "Notices" are no less a condemnation of Paluzzi and Berardelli (and their cohorts) than they are a scathing review of Paluzzi's *Rime* as edited by Berardelli. No wonder: the *Rime* consisted of "incomplete compositions" that Berardelli collected after Paluzzi's death, then ordered and edited for publication in such a "mutilated and lacerated" form as would assure any poet of denigration.⁴¹⁸ They are said to be "a mishmash of politics, tragedy, and polemics."⁴¹⁹

Twelve items in the *Rime* are identified in the "Notices" and, with the rediscovery of the book itself, can be verified for the accuracy of the references:

1. The opening dedication of the *Rime*, by Berardelli, to the "most illustrious senator" Giovanni Soranzo;⁴²⁰ according to the "Notices," Berardelli complained there that "the Jewess stole the better and larger

415. For details, see under 3.2 (footnote at beginning).

416. "Notices," 3.1.15r–v.

417. On the works, see continuation; and on the accusations, "Notices," 3.1.67r–69r (and nos. 1, 2, and 11 below), in relation to *Rime*, A 2v, A 4r, 72, 98, 120 (all of which are transcribed under 3.2).

418. "Notices," 3.1.19r–v; see also 41v, 42v, 53r.

419. *Ibid.*, 24v. Despite their failings, the works have been favorably appraised, by Boccato, for their "thematic originality and stylistic elegance" ("Le *Rime* postume di Numidio Paluzzi," 112; see also 126, where Paluzzi's language is said to be "limpid and flowing" and his images "effectively highlighted and incisive").

420. *Ibid.*, 58r (for "most illustrious senator") and 44r–45r (for mention of dedicatory epistle). For the dedication itself (in the *Rime*), see 3.2.A 2r–3v.

part of the verses [by Paluzzi]"⁴²¹ and that by denouncing the author, she caused him "distress" and did "notable damage to [his] reputation."⁴²² Rosa said of the dedication that it was "particularly worthy of being placed at the front of [Paluzzi's] compositions to serve as a fitting decoration for them and as a meritorious trumpet for hailing [his] filthy actions."⁴²³

2. A letter "to the readers":⁴²⁴ there Berardelli, to quote the "Notices," "renews the same accusation,"⁴²⁵ assails Copia's "virtuous . . . fame . . . with explicit lies and execrable slurs,"⁴²⁶ "rambles on about [Paluzzi's] work on a 'Manifesto,'"⁴²⁷ and arouses the readers' sympathy by telling the story of Paluzzi's final days ("when he was strangled by the noose of discomfort and the rope of privation").⁴²⁸
3. A sonnet by Paluzzi: the "Notices" say that the inscription by Berardelli refers to Paluzzi's having written and sent it to him while he (Berardelli) was in prison, where "he was being held on a false charge."⁴²⁹ Paluzzi denies ever having "conceived, let alone composed" such a sonnet,⁴³⁰ implying that Berardelli was its author. Yet Boccacini, who prepared his own sonnet in response to it for the "Notices," confirms in the inscription that it is a work by Paluzzi to be found in his *Rime* on page 106.⁴³¹
4. A sonnet by Zinano: according to the "Notices," it was dedicated to Berardelli, who is alleged, in the inscription to it, to have "suffered damages and dangers for his friend Signor Numidio."⁴³²

421. "Notices," 3.1.45r, also 67r ("From within two bulky packages did the Jewess steal / The larger part of the [poet's] writings").

422. *Ibid.*, 48r.

423. *Ibid.*, 30v.

424. *Ibid.*, 15v. For the distinction between the dedicatory letter and a foreword, see 73v, and, further, 67r–v, viz., the heading to poem 19 (with reference to *dedicatoria*) versus the one to poem 20 (with reference to "the letter directed to the readers"); and for the foreword itself, 3.2.A 4r–v.

425. *Ibid.*, 73v.

426. *Ibid.*, 15v.

427. *Ibid.*, 31v. In the foreword to the *Rime*, Berardelli mentions the *Manifesto* as one among several other works that Paluzzi supposedly wrote for Copia (3.2.A 4r).

428. "Notices," 3.1.45v (cf. *Rime*, A 4r).

429. "Notices," 3.1.58r, no. 14:10–11.

430. *Ibid.*, 20r.

431. *Ibid.*, 66r (together with Boccacini's *risposta*).

432. *Ibid.*, 20v, in reference to the sonnet in Paluzzi, *Rime*, A 5v. For details on Zinano, see, again, "Notices," 20v (footnote, with information, moreover, on the same sonnet as later printed in Zinano's *Rime diverse*).

5. A sonnet beginning "Altri spatiar tra le dilitie e gli agi": from Berardelli's inscription to it in the *Rime* one learns that Paluzzi wrote it for Berardelli "when . . . imprisoned."⁴³³ But everyone knows, Paluzzi declares in the "Notices," "that I composed the sonnet two years before his imprisonment occurred" and that it was meant "to praise the beneficence" of Copia for having installed him in lodgings where he had "the greatest piece of mind." By writing a misleading inscription, Berardelli intended, according to Paluzzi, "to conceal" Copia's high regard for him.
6. A sonnet that Paluzzi directed to Copia as his "beautiful idol" ("Un bel Idolo adoro"): in the "Notices" Berardelli is accused of having disguised her identity, in his inscription to the sonnet, by claiming that its verses are in praise not "of the beautiful Jewish woman" but rather of the "beautiful Turkess." Paluzzi protested: it was common knowledge "that [the sonnet] was composed for the Jewess and that it was dedicated to her."⁴³⁴
7. A single scene from a tragedy: the "Notices" say that Berardelli wrote, in the inscription to it in the *Rime*, that "this scene was what could barely be found of this tragedy little short of being completed."⁴³⁵ Paluzzi claims that there was also a prologue, perhaps his "best work," charging Berardelli with having appropriated it as his own.⁴³⁶
8. A sonnet entitled "Sirena illustra che gli alteri lidi": the "Notices" claim that Rosa wrote it in praise of Copia, that Paluzzi revised its tercets, and that, thus altered, they were included in the *Rime* in a poem, written by Paluzzi or fabricated by Berardelli, with a new octave.⁴³⁷ Only someone familiar with Paluzzi's craft and Berardelli's editing could have known these details of the sonnet's evolution.
9. A set of verses: in the "Notices" Paluzzi designates them as an "Idyll" (and Aretino berates their author for his ineptitude and the debility of their contents).⁴³⁸

433. See, for the remarks that follow, "Notices," 3.1.21r–v (and for the sonnet, Paluzzi, *Rime*, 106).

434. "Notices," 3.1.21v. For the sonnet (*Rime*, 56), see 3.2, no. 1.

435. "Notices," 3.1.74r; for the scene itself, see *Rime*, 98–101, and for its inscription (slightly different from the one in the "Notices," 74r), 3.2.98 below.

436. "Notices," 3.1.22r.

437. *Ibid.*, 38v, 39v–41r. See, for the original sonnet (by Rosa), 40v; for its revised tercets, 41r–v; and for the tercets (in their second revision) as incorporated in a different sonnet (beginning "Non con tal vanto, a mortal vista espone"), Paluzzi, *Rime*, 12.

438. "Notices," 3.1.42v; printed in *Rime*, 107–17 ("Idillio").

10. Copia's sonnet "O di vita mortal forma divina": we learn from the "Notices" that it appears in her *Manifesto* in the revised version supposedly approved by Paluzzi and, five years later, with but a single word change, in Paluzzi's *Rime* as, startlingly, a work of his own (or so Berardelli may purposely have published it).⁴³⁹
11. An unfinished canzone that Paluzzi wrote for the duke of Savoy: according to the "Notices," Berardelli in the *Rime* inscribed it with a heading in which he made the same "mendacious allegation" that he had already spread elsewhere, namely, that Copia stole Paluzzi's works.⁴⁴⁰
12. A sonnet by an uncertain author: the "Notices" identify it as the next-to-last item in Paluzzi's *Rime*.⁴⁴¹

Aprosio, in his letter about Paluzzi, adds one further detail, no less accurate than the twelve above: he described the volume of *Rime* as having six folios, by which he meant a duodecimo format with each of the six folded over to constitute twelve ($12 \times 6 = 72$ folios, or 144 pages).⁴⁴²

One further point of bibliographical interest: the translation of the "Notices" in this volume is the first English one, since the early eighteenth century, of a work in the Parnassus mode. Boccalini's *Avvisi* alias *Ragguagli di Parnaso* enjoyed a notable success in mid-seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century London: it appeared in three or more translations as *Advices from Parnassus* or *Advertisements from Parnassus*.⁴⁴³ But these and kindred works have largely been forgotten by English readers. Perhaps the "Notices," as trans-

439. "Notices," 3.1.50r (and *Manifesto*, 2.4.D 2r). Whether there were in fact two versions may be questioned: Cino da Pistoia says only that Berardelli "removed the sonnet . . . from the 'Manifesto' composed by the Jewess and placed it in the *Rime*," where he attributed it to Paluzzi ("Notices," 73r-v; in reference to *Rime*, 83). The only difference between the version in the *Manifesto* (as printed by Antonio Pinelli) and that in the *Rime* lies in one relatively immaterial word (see under 3.2.83; and for a more significant variant introduced in the two separate printings by Giovanni Alberti, under 2.4.D 2r, note to line 5 of the translation). Fortis regards the same sonnet, by the way, as "the most important" of Copia's poetic compositions and "the synthesis of so many doctrinal discussions held in her salon" (*La "bella ebrea,"* 77).

440. "Notices," 3.1.68r, 74r; and for the canzone, Paluzzi, *Rime*, 72–74 (and its inscription, 3.2.72 below).

441. "Notices," 3.1.65v, and for the sonnet, Paluzzi, *Rime*, 130 ("Formar d'inchiostri candida figura"), to which Boccalini responded in his own sonnet with the same end words ("Notices," 66v).

442. See, for Aproso's description, 3.3.115, and for details of the foliation (and contents), 3.2, footnote at beginning.

443. *Advices from Parnassus*: 1705, 1706, 1727; *Advertisements from Parnassus*: 1656, 1657, 1669, 1674, 1724.

lated here, will renew interest in them as both literature and a subject of critical inquiry.

Copia's Poetry

Of the fourteen examples of Copia's poetry that survive,⁴⁴⁴ seven were in response to poems by others (among them Bonifaccio and Zinano) and four elicited responses by Cebà. The *risposte* observe the same rhymes as the original call poems, or *proposte*, and in some cases reproduce their end words, though usually in irregular order. Leonello Modona was the first to collect, edit, and publish the fourteen as a set.⁴⁴⁵

While the responses are determined, in their content, by the call poems, the free-standing ones are either in reaction to subjects or situations in the letters sent to Copia or the writings directed against her or in reaction to the trickeries played on her. A number of themes can be delineated, among them Copia's praise of Cebà as a poet (his "song" is so powerful as to rule her heart or, like that of Orpheus, to move the elements);⁴⁴⁶ her sympathy with him over his brother's death;⁴⁴⁷ immortality, to be achieved through works and actions;⁴⁴⁸ the soul as sublime and beyond human comprehension;⁴⁴⁹ self-portrayal, namely, of one's features and feelings;⁴⁵⁰ an appeal to God for His protection;⁴⁵¹ and, most often, the pains one suffers from betrayal and slander.⁴⁵² Her correspondence with Cebà and Bonifaccio put her on the defensive; hence the proliferation of militant vocabulary (gladiator, warrior, weapons, darts, arrows, spears, blows, stabs, wounds, shields, war, combat, arena, trophy, slaughter)—"I gird myself for defense."⁴⁵³ One can only speculate on the kinds of themes Copia would have emphasized in her

444. Of all critics, Fortis provides the most sensitive and detailed reading of the poems for their style, structure, and imagery: see *La "bella ebrea,"* esp. 101–41.

445. In a pamphlet meant to honor a couple on their nuptials (S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti*); see below under "Reception."

446. "La bella Hebrea" (1.1/L1, no. 1) and "Se mover a pietà" (1.1/L16, no. 17).

447. "Signor, pianto non merta" (1.1/L10, no. 8) and, again, "Se mover a pietà."

448. "Ben so che la beltà" (2.4, no. 4:10–11); see also "Amai, Zinan" (4.2, no. 3, esp. lines 9–11).

449. "O di vita mortal" (2.4, no. 5, esp. line 11).

450. "L'imago è questa" (1.1/L22, no. 21).

451. "Signor che dal mio petto" (2.4, no. 1) and "Con la tua scorta" (2.4, no. 2).

452. "Quasi a coturno diè" (3.1, no. 5); "Quel desio di saper" (3.1, no. 31); "A vile e indegno oggetto" (3.1, no. 33); and "Se può vil nube" (3.1, no. 35). Copia became so troubled that she stopped writing poetry ("Tace, è gran tempo," 3.1, no. 37, esp. lines 1–4).

453. *Trace, guerrier, armi, strali, faretra, telo, colpi, ponte, ferita, scudo, guerra, tenzone, aringo, trofeo, scempio, "m'accingo a la difesa"* (variously in six of the poems).

poetry if she had not been pressured on all fronts to explain, justify, and "fight" for her rights.

It is amazing how often her thoughts turn to the afterlife: even without her *Manifesto* one can formulate, on the basis of her verses, a clear statement of the soul's immortality, or if not that, then of the desire for immortality. Copia discourses on "heavenly stars" and the "empyrean heavens";⁴⁵⁴ on how "in heaven" one "enjoys glory" for having led an exemplary life ("if virtue opens the doors of heaven, I . . . take hope in going there to rejoice");⁴⁵⁵ on "souls [in] the highest heaven";⁴⁵⁶ on their "happy state";⁴⁵⁷ on "the blessed [who] live" on high⁴⁵⁸ or "the blessed [who], in heaven," discard an "earthly veil";⁴⁵⁹ on "putting [one's] foot in the eternal room";⁴⁶⁰ on "aspiring to the heights";⁴⁶¹ on the permanence of fame ("nor will heat or cold consume it")⁴⁶² and "the desire to leave to the world, immortally, a living memory of one-self."⁴⁶³ In a sense, Copia thought that through her poetry she might "escape the hand of death with the favor of the Muses."⁴⁶⁴ The question of immortality was ever immanent in her thoughts and actions. When she spoke of Cebà's brother Lanfranco as being taken up, after death, into heaven, where, with his "pure soul," he was "transformed into a shining, bright ray,"⁴⁶⁵ she must have been speaking of her own soul. Having properly cultivated it while she was alive, she would have hoped for it, as a consequence, to live on (in "purity" and translucence) in time to come.

Copia had a natural talent for composing verses; indeed Cebà complimented her on their strength and sweetness.⁴⁶⁶ She appears to have worked hard on them⁴⁶⁷ so as to achieve a name for herself in literary circles—the man of letters Gian Vincenzo Imperiale, who visited her in 1622, summed up his impressions in a single phrase: "a Jewish poetess of considerable

454. "La bella Hebrea" (1.1/L1, no. 1:3, 13).

455. "Signor, pianto non merta" (1.1/L10, no. 8:3–4); "Amai, Zinan" (4.2, no. 3:12–14).

456. "Se mover a pietà" (1.1/L16, no. 17:4).

457. *Ibid.*, line 13.

458. *Ibid.*, line 11.

459. "Amai, Zinan" (4.2, no. 3:2–3).

460. *Ibid.*, lines 10–11.

461. "A vile e indegno oggetto" (3.1, no. 33:7).

462. "La bella Hebrea" (1.1/L1, no. 1:11).

463. "Ben so che la beltà" (2.4, no. 4:10–11).

464. "Amai, Zinan" (4.2, no. 2:9–10).

465. "Signor, pianto non merta" (1.1/L10, no. 8:7–8).

466. Cebà, 1.1/L10.28, L23.76.

467. Or so she admitted in a letter to which Cebà responded in letter 40 (see note to page 110 there).

fame.⁴⁶⁸ Yet as elegant and carefully constructed as her verses are, and as often as they testify her perspicacity and ingenuity,⁴⁶⁹ they are hampered here and there by a certain obscurity. Modona, their editor, saw the reasons for it as lying in the restrictions imposed upon Copia by following the *proposta* in its rhymes or contents. "It is to be regretted," he noted, "that, in her age, the widespread use, or rather abuse, of *risposte* fashioned after set rhymes . . . forced her sometimes to contort sentences in such a way as to harm their clarity."⁴⁷⁰ Yet, it may be added, the freestanding poems are no easier to understand. Take "La bella Hebrea," for example. Copia's intention was to praise Cebà for his epic poem about Esther, who, as a "beautiful Hebrew woman," is said, in Copia's verses, to have "implored the exalted choirs for their grace" and, "midst heavenly stars, in sacred fires," to hold "supreme minds . . . in her grip." Are the "choirs" the Muses? Why are they being asked for "their grace"? To protect Cebà from his critics? Is it only in the heavens, after death, that "supreme minds" penetrate the subtleties of his epic? Does Esther assure Cebà, via his poem about her, of immortality? Where does the person of Esther leave off and that of Copia begin? Is Esther a surrogate for Copia, who strives for her own immortality?⁴⁷¹

It is almost impossible for the reader to penetrate Copia's verses without previous knowledge of the biographical circumstances surrounding them. Especially trying, for Modona, are her five sonnets in the "Notices." What he failed to note is that they depend for their apprehension on the details of her betrayal by Paluzzi and Berardelli, hence are inseparable from the "Notices" themselves as a viable narrative for their interpretation. Not only do the "Notices" lift their shadows, but they help to account for their sometimes violent, repugnant locutions ("despicable . . . object . . . despicable contest . . . despicable enemy"; "impious calamity . . . domestic monster, a new Hydra . . . contemptible man . . . snake in their breast"; "boorish heart . . . impious ingrate . . . infernal Megaera"; and, with especial crudity, "despicable cloud . . . despicable ox . . . shady ways of an infamous monster . . . despicable heart . . . loathsome customs . . . filthy pig in stench . . . the odious breaths and fumes of impious jaws"; etc.).⁴⁷²

468. For Imperiale (d. 1645) and his and Cebà's relations as joint members of the Genoese Accademia degli Addormentati ("Sleepers"), see Renato Martinoni, *Gian Vincenzo Imperiale politico, letterato e collezionista genovese del Seicento* (and for the particular comment on Copia, as transcribed by Martinoni from Imperiale's *Viaggi*, or travel diary, 50).

469. See Guido Baldassari, "'Acutezza' e 'ingegno': teoria e pratica del gusto barocco."

470. S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti*, 33.

471. On the semantic problems in this poem, see notes to its redaction below (1.1/L1, no. 1).

472. See, variously, "A vile e indegno oggetto" (3.1, no. 33); "Quasi a coturno diè" (3.1, no. 5); "Quel desio di saper" (3.1, no. 31); "Se può vil nube" (3.1, no. 35).

But obscurity may be seen as a virtue: Copia's poems challenge the reader, who has no alternative but to engage in semantic analysis. The author may purposely have clouded the contents: she hails the advantages of poetry that hides its meanings in ambiguities ("the Muse . . . protected by disguises within an impenetrable veil").⁴⁷³

One is grateful for the fourteen poems that remain, but an accusing finger must be pointed at Cebà for all those he received from Copia, yet apparently destroyed.⁴⁷⁴ Would it not be a stroke of fortune to uncover the many verses with which Copia, to quote Cebà, "so lavishly enriched [him]," as many, in fact, "as reflect the extent of [her] kindness"?⁴⁷⁵ They include a seventy-seven-line "canzone composed out of tears"⁴⁷⁶ and who knows how many other gems.

RECEPTION

A great woman . . . the honor and pride of Italian Judaism.

Giorgio Bassani, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*

With three exceptions, little was said of Copia in later criticism—by "later" I mean after her death in 1641—until 1726. From then on, her appearance in the scholarly literature is almost uninterrupted to the end of the nineteenth century, though certain gaps might be noted: one cluster of writings (six in all) is from 1726 to 1763, followed by a single work for 1802; a second cluster (sixteen in all) is from 1824 to 1897. After 1897 Copia falls into seeming oblivion, only to reappear in modern scholarship from the 1950s on.

Certain general points bear mention at the outset. Apart from "one negative voice" and its faint echo in one or another later writing, Copia was favorably, sometimes enthusiastically appraised in the critical literature—hers was, all in all, a success story. While the early writers on Copia were Christians, from the mid-nineteenth century on they were mainly Jews, as reflects the influence of the newly founded discipline of Jewish scholarship. The works considered in the reports on her were usually Cebà's letters, her *Manifesto*, and a selected number of her poems—nothing was known of

473. "A vile e indegno oggetto" (3.1, no. 33:9–11).

474. Or, if not that, then purposely hid from view by omitting them from the publication of his letters to Copia.

475. Cebà, 1.1/L20.67, L17.61.

476. 1.1/L15.38 (also Cebà's letter to Gian Battista Spinola, 1.3.1).

the "Notices from Parnassus" until the mid-1860s and, even thereafter, the source (in manuscript) was rarely consulted.

The "one negative voice" belonged to Aprosio. It can be heard, in this volume, in part 3, item 3: stirred by a report received in 1637, Aprosio referred to Copia in uncomplimentary terms in a letter meant as an entry on Paluzzi for Prospero Mandosio's *Bibliotheca romana seu romanorum scriptorum centuriae* (where it appeared in volume 2, 1692).⁴⁷⁷ Yet her name came up earlier in part 1 of Aprosio's own *Biblioteca aprosiana: passatempo autunnale* (1673): there, on page 504, the author mentions her quarrel with Bonifaccio, yet defers its discussion until "a more appropriate place" could be found for it, namely, part 2.

Though never published, ample material for part 2 remains in four manuscript volumes (undated, though obviously written before Aprosio's death in 1681), of which two include the author's criticisms of Copia, till now unexplored,⁴⁷⁸ as follows: (1) The only thing Copia cared about was "to acquire the name of a great woman in letters," and "for a person who does not lack for money it is not difficult to do so," hence she hired Paluzzi to achieve her goal.⁴⁷⁹ (2) Her prose works and poetry were not hers but Paluzzi's, and by passing them off as her own, "in little time she built up her reputation not only in Venice but also in neighboring parts as an erudite woman."⁴⁸⁰ (3) She entered into a controversy with Bonifaccio over the "immortality of the soul"—and here we find the comment that Aprosio, in part 1 of his *Biblioteca aprosiana*, had promised as forthcoming—"not because she believed in this tenet but . . . to make a show of intellect."⁴⁸¹ (4) To make sure that nobody discover the real author of her works after Paluzzi's death, she sneaked into his lodgings to filch his writings ("she took from him, in two big packages, the larger and better part of his *Rime*, political compositions, and a tragedy. Nor should one be surprised that she strove to have his writings in her own

477. See under 3.3 for details.

478. Genoa, Biblioteca Durazzo, MSS A.III.4–7, and specifically for Copia, A.III.4, 227–30, and A.III.5, 304–6 (except for minor differences, basically the same). The four manuscript volumes appear as nos. 23–26 in Dino Puncuh, ed., *I manoscritti della raccolta Durazzo*.

479. A.III.4, 227 (also A.III.5, 304). In the report for Mandosio's *Bibliotheca romana*, Aprosio wrote of her that unable "to live up to the widespread rumors of her reputation for being gifted, she recognized her need for help" (2:113).

480. A.III.4, 228 (also A.III.5, 304). Though Aprosio praised her *Manifesto* for its "folios" which, though "few," were "sprinkled with much salt and no little vinegar," he maintained that "the author of this as well as all other compositions coming out of Copia's house was Numidio Paluzzi" (A.III.4, 229, also A.III.5, 305).

481. A.III.4, 228 (also A.III.5, 305). In the report for Mandosio's *Bibliotheca*, Aprosio said he knew "that she was not that smart after all" (2.3.113 below).

hands, inasmuch as they were the originals of whatever she wrote to Cebà and others").⁴⁸²

Yes, Aprosio did have one positive thing to say about Copia, namely, that she was a dazzling conversationalist,⁴⁸³ and yes, he did have one negative thing to say about Paluzzi, namely, that "as a Christian, he should not have masqueraded as a Jew in writing her letters and the *Manifesto*."⁴⁸⁴ But the general impression remains that Paluzzi was the victim and Copia the culprit.

Aprosio was censured for his disparaging opinion of Copia by Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli, who, sometime before 1706 (the year of his death), had access, as he himself admitted, to the manuscripts of Aprosio's (unpublished) part 2. In his *Biblioteca volante* (of which twenty-three separate fascicles appeared from 1677 on),⁴⁸⁵ Cinelli Calvoli suspects Aprosio of having been misled by someone "spiteful and jealous of the same lady," citing Leon Modena's judgment of "her singular qualities and many virtues and . . . her considerable knowledge in advance of both her years and her sex" as accurate and deserving of credence.⁴⁸⁶ Cinelli Calvoli, then, in his widely read leaflets on recent literature, removes the one jarring dissonance from Copia's early appraisal and sets a precedent for her usually affirmative treatment thereafter.

The coverage of Copia in general Italian literary studies is limited mainly to the 1730s–60s, during which Copia appears, albeit only briefly, in three major works. Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni and Francesco Saverio Quadrio mentioned her, in connection with Cebà, in their histories of poetry, as did Giovanni Maria Mazzuchelli, in connection with Bonifacio, in his bio-bibliographical survey of "Italian writers." She was praised, by the first two, for her beauty and learning and, by the third, for her lively mind.⁴⁸⁷ But her Judaism was ever a problem. Crescimbeni said of her,

482. A.III.4, 229–30 (also A.III.5, 306).

483. A.III.4, 228 (also A.III.5, 305): everyone was impressed by "the brilliance [*brio*] of her discourses."

484. A.III.4, 229–30 (also A.III.5, 306). For a similar statement, see the report to Mandosio (2.3.114).

485. I consulted the second, compilative edition, in four volumes, from 1734–47, specifically vol. 3 (1746), 344.

486. *Biblioteca volante*, 3:344 (for reference to Modena, see below: 4.1.3).

487. Crescimbeni, *L'istoria della volgar poesia*, 6 vols. in 4 (1730–31), 2:485–86; Quadrio, *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia*, 7 vols. (1739–52), 2:278 (vol. 2 was printed in 1741); Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia*, cioè *Notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani*, 6 vols. (1753–63), 5:1647 (vol. 5 was printed in 1762).

for example, that "she was lacking in nothing except the light of faith."⁴⁸⁸ He may have found it difficult to reconcile her Jewishness with her strivings as an "Italian" poet; hence the condescending formulation that "she is very keen on *our* poetry, which she wrote *rather* well."⁴⁸⁹ Crescimbeni thus creates a faith barrier between *her* (Copia the Jewish poet) and *us* (Italian and Christian poets), expressing seeming wonderment that, despite her identity, Copia achieved a passable literary standard. Quadrio adopted the same exclusionary formula ("very keen on our poetry"), but dropped the words of esteem. Without emphasizing that Copia was handicapped by her Judaism, Mazzuchelli implied it by calling her "a dabbler in literature" (*dilettante della Letteratura*). He appears to have read Aprosio's report as printed by Mandosio, for speaking of Copia's *Manifesto*, he says, as a follow-up to his remark on her amateurism, that "it is believed to be a work not by her but by the Roman Numidio Paluzzi."⁴⁹⁰ Mazzuchelli's denial of her authorship may have led to Copia's omission from Girolamo Tiraboschi's important and still widely consulted *Storia della letteratura italiana* (first published, in thirteen volumes, in 1772–82) and from almost all subsequent general surveys.⁴⁹¹ Clearly, Copia was, for their authors, too minor a figure to warrant discussion. Moreover, by being Jewish and female she was not easily accommodated to the largely Christian and androcentric orientation of mainstream Italian literary criticism. Her identity became so dubious in time that an unnamed person with the initials N. G. asked the question, in the first volume of the *Giornale degli eruditi e curiosi* (1882), whether Copia

488. Crescimbeni, *L'istoria della volgar poesia*, 2:485–86. Apostolo Zeno wrote similarly, in his annotated edition of Giusto Fontanini's *Biblioteca dell'eloquenza italiana . . . con le annotazioni del Signor Apostolo Zeno storico e poeta cesareo cittadino veneziano*, 2 vols. (1753), that Copia blindly persisted in her Judaism despite Cebà's attempts, in his letters to her, "to open her eyes to the light of evangelical truths" (1:106).

489. Crescimbeni, *L'istoria della volgar poesia*, 4:136.

490. Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia*, 5:1647.

491. Among them, in chronological order: Giuseppe Zonta, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, 3 vols. (1928–32); Francesco Flora, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, 3 vols. in 5 (1950); Benedetto Croce, *La letteratura italiana per saggi storicamente disposti*, 4 vols. (1956–65); Natalino Sapegno, *Compendio di storia della letteratura italiana*, 3 vols. (1966–67); Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana* (1967); Luigi Malagoli, *Seicento italiano e modernità* (1970); and, most recently, the otherwise thorough *Storia della letteratura italiana*, directed by Enrico Malato, 14 vols. (1995–2004). One exception, though inconsequential (and partly inaccurate) in its content, is Antonio Belloni, *Il Seicento* (1903 and various later editions, of which I consulted the one from 1947): it is "curious," Belloni writes, "that Cebà's verses, which strike us today as cold and colorless, won him the love, albeit platonic, of a lady . . . the Venetian Sarra Copia Sulam. In reading [his epic poem *Ester*] she fell in love with the author and had an assiduous correspondence with him, [the letters of] which were published [sic] in the same year in which the Genoese writer died" (153). Belloni failed to note the most unusual thing about Cebà's correspondent: her being a Jew and a poet.

was real or a "mystification."⁴⁹² But to put things in perspective, it should be said, with regard to Tiraboschi, that the two outstanding sixteenth-century female poets Vittoria Colonna and Gaspara Stampa are barely discussed in his work,⁴⁹³ nor do they fare much better in later surveys.⁴⁹⁴

It is in Jewish studies and in female studies that Copia did find a place for herself in literary criticism. She was first introduced into the Jewish bibliographical canon by the Christian Hebraist Johann Christoph Wolf, in volume 3 (1732) of his path-breaking *Bibliotheca Hebraea*. Wolf emphasized her erudition and, despite earlier opinions to the contrary, her authorship of the *Manifesto*, referring for confirmation thereof—now for the first time—to a Jewish source ("so I learned," he says, "from the letters of the Venetian Rabbi Jacob Aboab to B. [Theophil] Unger").⁴⁹⁵ But Copia's "Jewish" contribution was only slowly acknowledged. Seventy years were to pass until the Christian Hebraist Giovanni Bernardo de Rossi published his no less significant "historical dictionary of Jewish authors and their works" (1802).⁴⁹⁶ To Copia's *Manifesto* Rossi added her poetry, referring for examples of it to Cebà's letters and to anthologies by Zinano and Luisa Bergalli.⁴⁹⁷ Like Crescimbeni, Quadrio, and Modena, he says that "she cultivated poetry and the sciences and, in her time, made a name for herself." Another long period (of forty-seven years) elapsed until Copia passed, mainly via Wolf's *Bibliotheca*, into a similar work by the German Jewish Hebraist and orientalist Julius Fürst (*Bibliotheca Judaica*, vol. 1, 1849), "a bibliographical manual of the entire Jewish literature." There she is described as "a famous poet and writer at the beginning of the seventeenth century."⁴⁹⁸

"Officially" recognized by Wolf, Rossi, and lastly Fürst as a Jewish

492. P. 403, to which Andrea Tessier responded positively in a report on "Sarra Coppia" (468–72).

493. Colonna, 7:1179–81; Stampa, 7:1184.

494. One major exception is the recent *Storia della letteratura italiana* (as above), where the two are treated at length.

495. Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea: sive, notitia tum auctorum Hebraicorum cujuscunque aetatis, tum scriptorum quae vel Hebraice primum exarata vel ab aliis conversa sunt, ad nostram aetatem deducta* . . . 4 vols. (1715–33), 3:1162 (Aboab's letters to the Christian bibliophile Theophil Unger are preserved in Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 318, [pt.] 3 [formerly 335, 3]).

496. Yet Rossi gleaned much of his information for it from Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebraea*. See his *Dizionario storico degli autori ebrei e delle loro opere*, 2 vols. (1802), and specifically for Copia, 1:95.

497. For her poem in response to Zinano's, see 4.2, no. 3, and for Bergalli's anthology, more below.

498. Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica: bibliographisches Handbuch der gesamten jüdischen Literatur mit Einschluss der Schriften über Juden und Judentum und einer Geschichte der jüdischen Bibliographie nach alphabetischer Ordnung bearbeitet*, 3 vols. in 2 (1849–63), 1:186.

woman of letters, Copia eventually made her way into a new series of writings, now by Jewish authors, who, in the meantime, had read and were influenced by Alexis-François Rio's enthusiastic profile of her (1856), on which more below. Jewish scholarship was now being put on a disciplinary footing under the label of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and Copia, it was felt, made a worthy addition to its subjects. Moritz Abraham Levy aimed to bring Rio's work, originally intended for a Christian audience, to "the attention of our Jewish literary historians" and thereby "perform a service for Jewish scholarship."⁴⁹⁹ Addressing the readers, he says: "I should like to present you the short biography of a woman who deserves our greatest admiration as a poet in her native tongue as well as an expert in our venerable religious sources . . . and yet is scarcely known to us by name."⁵⁰⁰ Levy's long, often rambling report follows Rio's in both content and order of presentation. As did Rio, so Levy hailed Copia as "a heroine of faith."

Heinrich Graetz, in volume 10 (1868) of his monumental eleven-volume "history of the Jews from oldest times until the present," projects a similar image of Copia, mainly after Levy, as mediated, again, by Rio. The big difference is that while Levy sets her within the modest frame of a periodical article, Graetz incorporates her into a large-scale work that, for decades, was to be the standard account of Jewish history.⁵⁰¹ He says little, however, that was not previously noted by his predecessors, Italian and Jewish. Thus, for him, "Frau Sara Copia" was charming and brilliant; outstanding in her learning by comparison with persons of her age and sex; a poet who wrote "well-formed, delicate, smooth verses"; and, as a new point borrowed from Rio, a singer who, to the admiration of all, charmed her listeners with a resonant, well-trained voice.

Moisè Soave adopts a more considered approach. He undertook research on Copia at the request of Levy, who asked him to check the sources for Cebà's letters and Copia's *Manifesto*, works that he himself had never seen, yet quoted from Rio. After examining them and searching for adjunct material, Soave realized that his findings, among them, in time, a new document (dated 1605) with Copia's father as one of its signatories, might be of

499. Levy, "Sara Copia Sullam: Lebensbild einer jüdischen italienischen Dichterin aus dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert" (1863), esp. 67 (where he acknowledged Rio's work as "the chief source for our study").

500. *Ibid.*, 70, for this and next quotation.

501. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, 11 vols. (1853–76), 10:146–48, or in its third edition, also consulted (1896), 10:134–36, where, beyond Rio, Levy, and Wolf, new items were added to the bibliography (Geiger, Kayserling, Berliner; see below).

interest to an Italian audience, hence his first communication (in 1863–64) for *Il corriere israelitico* (to be followed by others there in 1876–78).⁵⁰² He reports in it on Cebà's correspondence with Copia (quoting from various letters, including the one to Jacob Sulam); on Copia's controversy with Bonifaccio (quoting from her *Manifesto* and including, for the first time in later print, three of her four poems there);⁵⁰³ and on the frequent though abortive attempts of Christians to convert her. Copia became (and here Soave temporarily dropped his usually reticent speech for a more dramatic presentation):

an object of homage and, one might almost say, of adoration among those noble Venetian men of letters who visited her in her home. But those lords, whether more out of pettiness or pride I cannot say, would whisper in her ear the usual insolent refrain: "Too bad you were born a Jew." They try then, in a thousand ways, be it with persuasions, or generous promises, or the incentive of [achieving] glory, to convince her to embrace Christianity. . . . To no avail: a weak young girl . . . knew how to repulse energetic, enticing, and incessant assaults with admirable dignity and with virile, nay for her honor I would say feminine constancy.⁵⁰⁴

Soave's study was followed by another that, like his, attempted to weigh the evidence in the balance: by Abraham Geiger.⁵⁰⁵ He evaluates previous writings (Levy's is praised for "freeing us from the dark prison of Rio's book," even though, as far as I can see, his account is so close to Rio's as to seem rather "imprisoned" in its conceptions; Graetz's is criticized for assembling a collection of dubious data; Soave's is commended for its careful examination of the sources; etc.) and highlights certain details that others usually did not: Copia's removal of one *p* from the name Coppia (her original spelling of it) after Cebà's comment about their making a good "couple"; her sister Di-

502. The new document (discussed in one of the later communications, specifically *Il corriere israelitico* 15 [1876–77]: 196–98) was a circular that requested the support of "the Jewish communities in Italy, Poland, Bohemia, Germany, and Turkey" for a novel, though short-lived college (in Conegliano, about thirty miles from Venice), where, with free bed and board, Jewish youths, to improve their education, were to study "sacred writings by day and night" (197).

503. Nos. 2, 4–5 ("Con la tua scorta," "Ben so che la beltà," "O di vita mortal"): Rio anticipated Soave by printing the first of them ("Signor che dal mio petto") seven years earlier (1856; Levy, after Rio's example, reproduced it, moreover, in 1863).

504. Soave, "Sara Copia Sullam," 2:158.

505. Geiger, "Sara Copia Sullam" (1869).

ana's marriage to a member of the Massarano family; Bonifaccio's unfounded accusations; and Copia's slipping into anonymity after Bonifaccio's reply to her *Manifesto*. The initial reason for writing his report was the realization that, by his time, Copia "had entered into the orbit of Jewish history."⁵⁰⁶

In later communications for *Il corriere israelitico*, in the years 1876–78, Soave quotes, as he did in his earlier piece, ample portions from the sources (Cebà's letters, the *Manifesto*, Modena's epitaph for Copia's tombstone, Apro-sio's letter as reported by Mandosio), thus providing material for a more solid appraisal of Copia's life and works.⁵⁰⁷ Still, his writings, for all their concern with "sources," were lacking in what, by modern standards, would be considered scholarly rigor. It was not Soave who inaugurated modern research on Copia but, as will be seen below, two others.

The foundations for a feminist approach to Copia's writings were laid at the very beginning of her reception history, in a collection compiled by Bergalli of works by female poets, among them Copia. Published in 1726, the collection was the first to anthologize three of her lyrics (in Cebà's letters).⁵⁰⁸ There, according to its title, Copia was ranked alongside "the most illustrious female poets of all times,"⁵⁰⁹ and, to Bergalli's credit, her Judaism seems to have been irrelevant to her inclusion. With no less enthusiasm, Francesco Clodoveo Maria Pentolini assembled a collection of his own verses (printed in 1776–77) to honor "illustrious women." Though proceeding nondenominationally in the choice of dedicatees, Pentolini momentarily slipped, remarking, in his otherwise complimentary *ottava* about Copia ("famous" and "learned," exuding "great ardor"—from love of Cebà—in her writings), that she was unwilling to convert.⁵¹⁰ Ginevra Canonici Fachini included Copia in her "biographical survey of Italian women renowned in literature from the fourteenth century down to this day" (1824).⁵¹¹ Similarly,

506. *Ibid.*, 178.

507. See *Il corriere israelitico* 15 (1876–77): esp. 198, 220–22, 245–48, 272–74, 275 and 16 (1877–78): esp. 5–7, 28–29.

508. "La bella Hebraea" (1.1/L1, no. 1); "Se mover a pietà" (1.1/L16, no. 17); "Limago è questa" (1.1/L22, no. 21). Copia's fourth poem ("Signor, pianto non merta," 1.1/L10, no. 8) had to wait until Modona's anthology (1887) for its first modern printing (the reason it was sidestepped by "Jewish historians" appears to have been its outspoken praise of the Christian Lanfranco Cebà).

509. Luisa Bergalli, comp., *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici d'ogni secolo* (1726), with three poems by Copia in pt. 2, 125–26.

510. Pentolini, *Le donne illustri*, 2 vols. (1776–77), 1:226, especially the last line. For translation, see below, epigraph to part 1.

511. *Prospetto biografico delle donne italiane rinomate in letteratura, dal secolo decimoquattro fino a' giorni nostri* (1824), 148, 291.

Bartolommeo Gamba designated a place for her in his collection of "letters by Italian women of the sixteenth [*sic*] century" (1832). By Copia's "letters," which Gamba stretched to mean "belles lettres," as, moreover, he stretched the time frame to encompass the early seventeenth century, he intended Copia's *Manifesto*. Having chosen this work, born as it was of a controversy over Jewish versus Christian conceptions, he could not resist the temptation to remark, as did Pentolini before him, that Copia failed to embrace Christianity.⁵¹²

The four publications established Copia as an "illustrious" Italian female poet, writer, and, more generally, woman. Their authors or compilers sustained their choice of her by signaling her distinctions, personal and professional: Copia was "a most worthy Venetian Jewess," beautiful, "famous," "learned," "skilled in music," a "good poet," a writer whose "letters do honor to her talents."⁵¹³ Her standing as a Jewish female author appears to have been recognized by them as unique, or so one might infer from Canonici Fachini's survey, in which, from the time of Copia until the date of its publication some two hundred years later, no additional Jewish women were mentioned.⁵¹⁴ True, the works spread a modicum of misinformation (Pentolini says that Copia was active around 1600, Canonici Fachini that like Cebà's letters to Copia, so Copia's to Cebà were published).⁵¹⁵ Still, they implant her firmly in the feminist literature and are important, moreover, for providing sizable excerpts from her works, or at least as many as the anthologists knew,⁵¹⁶ to demonstrate her skills. The list was soon to be expanded in Pietro Leopoldo Ferri's important "library," i.e., bibliography, of Italian female literature (1842): there, as Copia's works, we find all four sonnets in Cebà's letters, her *Manifesto* (with reference to two of its three printings), and

512. Bartolommeo Gamba, ed., *Lettere di donne italiane del secolo decimosesto* (1832), 251–65. The reason for including the *Manifesto*, "even though it belongs to the seventeenth century, [was] to crown the present collection of 'letters by illustrious ancient Italian women' with a document characterized by a lively exposition and by good, solid reasoning" (252). Copia's *Manifesto* was later included in a similar collection edited by Franz Kobler: *Letters of Jews through the Ages: from Biblical Times to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (1952), 442–48 (along with part of Modena's dedication of his tragedy *Ester* [438] to Copia and two letters to her by Cebà [438–41]).

513. Variousy gleaned from Pentolini, Gamba, and Canonici Fachini.

514. Though she does mention, as Jewish female writers preceding Copia, the (fictitious) Giustina Levi-Perotti (*Prospetto biografico*, 69, there as Perotti-Levi) and Debora Ascarelli (*ibid.*, 144), about both of whom see the beginning of this introduction.

515. Pentolini, in a footnote annotation to his poem (*Le donne illustri*, 1:226); Canonici Fachini (*Prospetto*, 291).

516. Three poems from Cebà's letters in Bergalli's anthology (2:125–26); the *Manifesto*, though without its preface, dedication, final paragraph, and concluding poems, in Gamba's (esp. 253–65).

her letter that Bonifaccio included in his counterresponse (see part 2, items 2 and 5 below).⁵¹⁷ It was further expanded, in 1863–64, to include her four sonnets in the *Manifesto* (after studies by Rio and Soave) and, in 1864–65, all but one of her fourteen sonnets (as enumerated in a substantial study by Cicogna, on which more below).

To the early “feminist literature” on Copia one might add, as a natural complement, more recent studies, as, for example, those by Boccato, who features her as “a poetess in the ghetto of Venice,” or by Howard Adelman, who assesses her importance in an article on “the literacy of Jewish women in early modern Italy.”⁵¹⁸ One might also add latter-day anthologies: in one of them, by Natalia Costa-Zalessow, Copia figures among “Italian female writers of the thirteenth to twentieth centuries”; in another, by Antonia Arslan and others, she is included among “Venetian female writers from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries.”⁵¹⁹

Of all critics, Alexis-François Rio was most influential in changing the perception of Copia in writings by Christians and Jews after the 1850s. His interest in Copia was an epiphenomenon of his interest in Cebà as a martyr—the theme of martyrdom had already occupied his attention in studies on Christian poetry and art.⁵²⁰ Now the author dealt with its taxonomy by designating four types of martyrs. Cebà exemplified the one whose actions were directed by “charity,”⁵²¹ meaning, in his case, that he worked and “pained” for the salvation of Copia’s soul. Drawing the story of his “martyrdom” mainly from his letters to Copia, he retold his attempts to convert her as an obsession that “devoured the last years of his existence.”⁵²² “This conversion,” Rio asserts, was “the last and perhaps most ardent passion of his life. . . . He worked on it for four consecutive years with a zeal . . . that never dampened.” But it caused him anguish—torn between spiritual and personal desires, “he aggravated his physical suffering and came to know moral suffering.” Without her conversion, “he was tormented by the fear of being separated from her,” after death, “in the world to come.”

In describing Copia, Rio made her bigger than life. He said of her first (unpreserved) letter, in which she reacted to Cebà’s epic poem on Esther,

517. Ferri, comp., *Biblioteca femminile italiana* (1842), 128–29.

518. See under volume editor’s bibliography.

519. See under Costa-Zalessow and Arslan in volume editor’s bibliography.

520. *De la poésie chrétienne* (1836), *De l’art chrétien* (1855).

521. Rio, *Les quatre martyrs* (1856), viz., “Ansaldo Ceba ou Le martyr de la charité,” 95–163. The other types were those of truth, humility, and soldiery (each represented by a single figure, as was charity by Cebà).

522. For this and next quotations, see *Les quatre martyrs*, 102, 111, 112, 119.

that it came from one "whose imagination was familiar with great historical perspectives and whose heart overflowed with tenderness."⁵²³ "The natural elevation of her [Copia's] soul," he continued, "as combined with the extent and variety of her knowledge, had enlarged her historical horizons and encouraged her to give free rein to her intellectual faculties." Copia was endowed "with the graces of her mind and the splendor of her beauty." She was so skilled in poetry and music that "in these two languages she could, at one and the same time, immediately express all the feelings that exalted or affected her soul."

Rio paraphrases Cebà's letters, embellishing their contents with fabrications born of his own imaginative reading of them. While Cebà said that he sent his servant Marco to Copia with a present, for which she "celebrated [Cebà] . . . as if [the present] were that of a prince," and that she honored his "most ordinary servant" by entertaining him with her singing,⁵²⁴ Rio swelled the account by turning a present (singular) into presents (plural) and by emphasizing Copia's "rapture," "graciousness," "beauty," "generosity," "enthusiasm," and "ravishing" music making, and the servant's "rapture," "intoxication," "emotions," and "tears":

But it was difficult for the messenger to give an account [to Cebà] of each detail [of the visit] because of the rapture with which they [the presents] had been received. It was only with difficulty that he could find words to express his own [rapture] when he came back. He had departed, prepared to share [with Copia], to the best of his abilities, the enthusiasm of his master, and he returned intoxicated from the gracious reception he had received, intoxicated from what his eyes had seen, intoxicated from what his ears had heard, for never had he seen so much beauty joined to so much generosity, just as he had never heard music as ravishing as that with which this incomparable woman had accompanied her singing, in his presence, of the most beautiful stanzas from the poem of Esther, doing so with an enthusiasm impossible to describe. The old servant's head had been turned, and the acuteness of his emotions was betrayed by the tears that interrupted his report.⁵²⁵

No doubt about it: Rio's study is full of inaccuracies and misunderstandings and exaggerations—it borders on historical fiction. Even so, it com-

523. For this and next quotations, see *ibid.*, 102–3, 109, 108, 110.

524. See Cebà, 1.1/L9.25.

525. *Les quatre martyrs*, 117–18.

mands attention for drawing a rich, detailed portrait of Copia in all her unique physical and sensual traits without saying a single word about her obstinacy in remaining a Jewess or about the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Indeed, its almost philosemitic approach is what made it so attractive to Jewish writers,⁵²⁶ among them Ernest David, as he himself acknowledges. Rio, according to David,

speaks of the Jews with a rare indulgence on the part of a Christian; he sympathizes with their sorrows and regrets the oppression and the persecutions to which they were exposed; he does not treat them as outcasts and does not believe in the curse that fanatics as blind as they are ignorant have chosen to hang over them as punishment for their pretended deicide.⁵²⁷

David, in his exposé, covers the same ground as Rio while "correcting," so he claims, after his reading of Soave, "several of Rio's errors or omissions."⁵²⁸ Though his account is bolstered by extensive quotations from Cebà's letters, Copia's poetry (David was the first to print her sonnet "Signor che dal mio petto" from the *Manifesto*), and prose portions of the *Manifesto*, it is, when all is said and done, no less bombastic than Rio's. Indeed, it goes even farther in the direction of Copia's apotheosis, casting her (in its title and contents) as a "Jewish hero,"

as pure as she is beautiful, as great a musician as she was an inspired poet, as familiar with ancient writings as with those of her time, as great of heart as she was ravishing in her face and manners, a woman who had sufficient moral energy to resist, imperturbably, the obsessions [of those intent on saving her soul] and all kinds of enticements put into operation in order to make her abjure her religious faith and convert to Christianity.⁵²⁹

Other Jewish writers followed in David's footsteps, among them Meyer Kayserling (1879), who described Copia as a "heroine who has been celebrated by Italian poets and literary historians . . . for being a scholar and

526. Rio saw such an approach as immanent in Cebà's epic poem about Esther, which, he implied, explains Copia's enthusiasm (it derived from "a sort of passionate gratitude to one [Cebà] who seemed to beckon Christians to be a little more reminiscent, in their literary compositions, of the great achievements that God's people [the Jews] had made"); *Les quatre martyrs*, 103.

527. David, "Sara Copia Sullam, une héroïne juive au XVII^e siècle," 37:378–79.

528. *Ibid.*, 380, in reference to Soave's study "Sara Copia Sullam" (1863–64; see above).

529. *Ibid.*, 378.

a poet" (as compared with Cebà, a "spiritually lifeless and sickly Christian poet"!)." ⁵³⁰ In a much more popular vein, Nahida Ruth Lazarus Remy, fueled by fantasy (and plagued by inaccuracy), states that Copia "remained faithful [to Judaism], as every noble mind will remain faithful to that which it has learned to know to be superior"; that her *Manifesto* "is like a dainty but firmly welded chainlet, of which every link fits perfectly"; that if her letters had not been destroyed, they would have become "a source of encouragement and elevation . . . for the faint-hearted and the wavering in their belief"; that they "fell into the hands of the Inquisition"; that even though Copia "suffered for Judaism, and vindicated it, her own coreligionists were incited against her as being an apostate"; and so on. ⁵³¹ In Remy's account the process of Copia's romanticization reached its zenith.

The foundations of modern scholarship on Copia were laid in two works: a general study by Cicogna and an edition by Modona. Cicogna's inquiry (1864–65) was the first to piece together a carefully assembled biography of Copia from the evidence available in the sources and to draw up an annotated list of almost all her writings (minus one poem and one letter) and a bibliography of studies relevant to her life and works. It was also the first to call attention to the "Notices from Parnassus" as a new source (that, by the way, Cicogna owned and, along with the other manuscripts in his library, eventually bequeathed to the library of the Museo Correr, Venice). ⁵³²

Modona's edition brings together, under one cover, all of Copia's poetry: fourteen sonnets (seven of them for the first time), ⁵³³ footnoted for much of their tricky vocabulary, arranged according to what Modona believed to be their chronological order, and assessed for their characteristics ("her poetry stands out for its masculine vigor of style, its disdainful nobility of feelings, its nimbleness of verses, and, in accord with the literary conventions of the times, its well appropriate contrasts and the brilliance and liveliness of its imagery," etc.). ⁵³⁴ The poems are preceded by biographical data, mainly

530. Kayserling, *Die jüdischen Frauen in der Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst* (1879), resp. 170, 160.

531. Remy, *The Jewish Woman*, esp. 142, 150, 151, 144, 148.

532. Cicogna, "Notizie intorno a Sara Copia Sulam coltissima ebrea veneziana del secolo XVII" (1864–65); for the biography, see 227–34, and for the bibliography, 234–42 (followed by footnotes). The bibliography is divided into three parts: Copia's writings; those of hers that are lost (her letters to Cebà, the verses she sent him) or still unedited (viz., her sonnets in the "Notices from Parnassus"); and writings by "authors who speak of our Jewess in works that [Cicogna] himself examined."

533. All five poems from the "Notices"; "Signor, pianto non merta" from Cebà's letters (1.1/L10, no. 8); and "Amai, Zinan" from Zinano's anthology (4.2, no. 3).

534. Modona, ed., *S. C. Sullam, sonetti editi e inediti raccolti e pubblicati insieme ad alquanti cenni biografici (per le nozze Todesco-Treves)* (1887), 33 (the edition was printed in thirty-five copies only, as

after the report in Cicogna's study, yet with some additions ("data . . . unknown to Cicogna at the time of his writing").⁵³⁵

Modern writings on Copia, among them Boccato's several articles on varied subjects,⁵³⁶ Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim's dissertation on her life and works,⁵³⁷ Umberto Fortis's recent monograph on her poetry and prose works,⁵³⁸ not to speak of the present volume, are unthinkable without these two fundaments.⁵³⁹

A NOTE ON THIS EDITION AND TRANSLATION

Copia's writings are given in the Italian and in translation: the two appear successively in her poetry, though not in her prose, of which the originals are in the appendix. When her poems are in response to those of others (as happens in seven examples) or initiate others' responses (as happens in four), originals and translations of both are kept together in order for the reader to discern in situ the often intricate correlation of words and rhymes between *proposta* and *risposta*. Writings about Copia by her contemporaries are given in translation only.

The transcription of the original follows the source in all details, correcting typographical errors without further ado or signaling orthographical variants with *sic* in brackets or, if necessary, a footnote comment; retaining the punctuation in the three prose compositions in the appendix, yet changing it in the poetry (by Copia and others) when signs are needed to clarify the syntax (as when "La tua Signor ch'a" becomes "La tua, Signor, ch'a");⁵⁴⁰ adding accents or removing them in conformity to modern usage (thus *piu*

a festive booklet for the nuptials). Of the dates assigned to the sonnets, the only questionable ones—because they exceed the supposed *terminus post quem non* for the completion of the "Notices"—are those for the last two ("Se può vil nube," 1627; "Tace, è gran tempo," 1630–35): for Modona's reasoning thereabout, see his introduction, 31–33.

535. *Ibid.*, 9.

536. See under volume editor's bibliography.

537. See "Faith and Fame" and the article deriving from it, "Acque di Parnaso, acque di battesimo: fede e fama nell'opera di Sara Copio Sullam."

538. Fortis, *La "bella ebrea,"* poetry (annotated), 100–141, prose works (unannotated, in three appendices), 145–57.

539. To which one might add still another one, of cardinal importance for Jewish scholarship: Abraham Berliner's publication of tombstone inscriptions in the Jewish cemetery in Venice (*Luhot avanim: Hebräische Grabschriften in Italien, I: 200 Inschriften aus Venedig, 16. u. 17. Jahrhundert, [1881]*). Its two hundred inscriptions are drawn, in large part, from a manuscript inventory, with over four hundred, by Moisè Soave (see, for details, under 4.3, footnote).

540. "Se mover a pietà" (1.1/L16, no. 17:3).

becomes *più*, *frà* becomes *fra*; altering *che* to *ché* when the meaning is not "that" but "for" (i.e., "because," [*per*]ché, or "since," [*poi*]ché) and *ne* to *né* when the meaning is not "of it" or "us" but "neither" or "nor"; and capitalizing the first letter of names or places (thus *stige*, for the Styx, becomes *Stige*) and the first word of successive verses. Special problems relating to orthography, syntax, or wording are addressed in the footnotes.

When the transcription is of Hebrew, the character *bet* (pronounced more or less as *ch* in the German *doch*) appears as an *b* with a subscript dot (*ḥ*), along with the silent consonant aleph (*ʿ*), and the silent, though slightly guttural consonant ayin (*ʿ*): thus *ḥokhma* (wisdom) or *bavūʿa* (reflection) or *yeshūʿa* (salvation).

Editorial additions are limited mainly to the numbering of the poems and their verses (in Cebà's letters and elsewhere) for easy reference; the indication of the author's name or the verse type (sonnet, madrigal, elegiac verse, etc.) when missing; the addition of characters when inattentively omitted (thus Mar'Antonio becomes Mar[c]'Antonio); and the expansion of abbreviations or acronyms (thus *Ill's-ma* becomes *Ill[ustris]s[i]ma* and *V.S.* becomes *V.[ostra] S.[ignoria]*).

Many of the formulations in the originals were dense. Their wording may have been clear to Cebà, Copia, and others, but for the modern reader it is often impenetrable. Some of the obscurities lie in references to unfamiliar persons and events. Obviously, the only way to achieve transparency in the translation is to come to grips with the lexical difficulties in the original, if not by completely unraveling them, then at least by suggesting an interpretation. It followed, as a corollary, that names, places, and quotations had to be identified as fully as possible.

To get a feel for the individuality of the original, I tried to stay close to it in its vocabulary and syntax. The deficiencies of a literal rendering were easily remedied: when single words are missing to complete a thought, they have been inserted in brackets; when several are needed to do so, they have been suggested in footnote.

Yet—most will agree—a translation *ad litteram* should not be at the expense of comprehensibility. However cumbersome the original was, it seemed imperative, for the reader's sake, to cast its translation in idiomatic English. The concession to fluency was mainly in matters of syntax: some of the texts had sentences that went on for paragraphs (though there were hardly any paragraph markings in the original), with clauses within clauses and subclauses within subclauses, only to yield the unavoidable result—opacity and, on the reader's part, bewilderment. Editorial intervention (by creating paragraphs, dividing sentences, and on occasion shifting components) was required to remove (or at least try to remove) the confusion.

Some words, often simple ones, caused particular problems: how does one translate *grazia* (grace, favor?), *animo* (mind, intent, spirit?), *virtù* (virtue, power, virtues, talents?), *ingegno* (mind, intellect, ingenuity?)? Whenever I could, I employed a single term for the same vocable, thus "kind" for *cortese* (and "kindness" for *cortesia*) or "kindly" for *benigno* (and "kindliness" for *benignità*). But decisions regarding one translation or another had sometimes to be made on contextual grounds, especially when the authors purposely used words for their different connotations. An example is *gentile*, denoting both "gentle" (or "genteel") and "Gentile." Thus Cebà wrote to Copia: "Even if you appear to me to be a Gentile," "you do so much more in the sense of the Italian word than in the meaning of the Greek one."⁵⁴¹ The pun was well known. Shakespeare delighted in playing on the ambiguity of this adjective (or noun), whether in a simple formulation ("gentle Jew") or a more clever (and complex) one, such as: "We all expect a gentle answer, Jew" or "If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven, it will be for his gentle daughter's sake."⁵⁴²

Giudeo has been translated as "Jewish," while *ebreo*, which could be either "Hebrew" or "Jewish," has been translated as one or the other depending on context. When appearing alone, or together with a person's name, *Signore* and *Signora* are left as they are. For *Donna*, when saluted, I wrote "Madam," and for *Ser*, *Sier*, *Messer*, or *Messere*, "Mr."⁵⁴³

The selection of extracts from Bonifaccio's *Discorso* was based mainly on their importance to the exposition (opening and closing sections), their direct involvement with Copia (all portions where she is addressed by name or as *Signora*), and their relevance to points that Copia touched upon in the letter that preceded (and spurred) the *Discorso* and the *Manifesto* that followed (and scathed) it.

One major editorial addition was the reconstruction of Copia's letters to Cebà for their basic content (as summarized in the introductory blurbs to Cebà's). Of Cebà's fifty-three letters, forty were in direct response to one or more received from Copia and cited by Cebà, in thirteen instances, for their dates.⁵⁴⁴ What Copia said in them may be inferred from the points that

541. 1.1/L12.33.

542. *The Merchant of Venice*, resp. 1.3.190, 4.1.35, 2.4.37–38 (in reference to Shylock and, in the third example, to his daughter Jessica).

543. Examples of both—altogether twelve—are confined to the "Notices" (for "Madam," for instance, see 3.1.82v, and for "Mr.," 3.1.38r).

544. Six from 1619—24 February (see Cebà, no. 10), 26 April (no. 12), 21 June (no. 15), 28 August and 20 September (no. 17), 11 October (postscript to no. 17); one from 1620—29 August (no. 31); and six from 1621—27 March (no. 42), 23 April (no. 44), 23 June (no. 49), 9 July (no. 50), 8 August (no. 52, in delayed response), and 31 December (no. 51).

Cebà touched on in his replies. Take letter 1, for example. From Cebà's mention of her "making small men great" and "the praises" she heaped on him as "honoring him far more than [he] deserves," it is clear that she spoke in superlatives; from his mention of her being "so captivated by a poem treating lofty matters as to be unable to refrain from seeking out the acquaintance of the one who wrote it," that Copia explained that the reason for writing Cebà was her admiration for his epic poem "Queen Esther"; from his mention of gratitude to the person "who honored [him] with Spanish poetry," that she referred to her request of an acquaintance to compose verses in his praise, which verses she enclosed in the letter; from his mention of her own sonnet in Italian, that she too sent him verses, which she may have described as well; from his mention of "not recognizing any defect in the content" of the sonnet, that she probably apologized to Cebà, in advance, for its failings; from his mention of his hoping she would have "the good fortune to carry and bear children," that (as he himself says in a footnote) "she complained of having been close to death from a miscarriage." The reconstruction of this and other "letters" makes no pretense to be the letters themselves. Its advantage, if any, is to provide a connecting thread between the various exchanges between Cebà and his Jewish devotee.



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I

SARRA COPIA AND ANSALDO CEBÀ

The poem about lovely Esther—a remarkable, noble
Work of that illustrious Genoese spirit—
Awakened flames of love in the genteel heart
Of the famous and no less learned Sara [*sic*];
Unable to endure the hard, harsh suffering,
She revealed her great ardor to that bard,
And he would have extinguished the cruel fire
If only, because of the work, she abandoned the Jewish cult.

Francesco Clodoveo Maria Pentolini, *Le donne illustri, canti dieci*

1. LETTERS TO SARRA COPIA FROM HER CHRISTIAN
CORRESPONDENT ANSALDO CEBÀ (1618–22)

Cebà's Lettere . . . scritte a Sarra Copia e dedicate a Marc'Antonio Doria¹ was published in Genoa by Giuseppe Pavoni in 1623.² Its fifty-three letters include two to Giacomo Rosa (nos. 39, 41), who visited Copia, and one to her husband, Jacob Sulam (no. 36). They cover the period 1618–22. Of the poems they contained, Cebà reproduced four sonnets out of what must have been a considerably larger number by Copia, one son-

1. Descendant of a distinguished Genoese family traceable to the twelfth century, Marc'Antonio, like his father Agostino Doria (doge of Genoa from 1601 to 1603), was active politically in the affairs of the republic. For details, see Carlo Bitossi, "Famiglie e fazioni a Genova 1576–1657," 59–135 (from 1613 to 1650 Marc'Antonio held the offices, at various times, of Governatore-procuratore and member of the Trenta Elettori). At Cebà's behest, Sarra Copia was in correspondence with Doria's wife, Isabella della Tolfa (see below). For sixty letters that Cebà wrote to Marc'Antonio, see variously in his *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano* (1623).

2. Permission was granted for publication after rigorous inspection of the contents by "Brother Giovanni Vincenzo Bottazzini of Mantua, lecturer in sacred theology and vicar-general of the Holy Office of Genoa," who, "by order of Monsignor R. P., Inquisitor," wrote as follows: "After having diligently read the book entitled 'Letters Written by Ansaldo Cebà to Sarra Copia,'

net by an unnamed person from her circle of friends,³ and, of his own authorship, thirteen sonnets, six madrigals, and two multistrophic canzoni (one in twenty stanzas, the other in fifty). Though no longer extant, the original letters by Cópia and Rosa have been partially reconstructed from Cebà's responses.

[FOLIO †2r] ANSALDO CEBÀ'S DEDICATION TO
MARC'ANTONIO DORIA

My poem about Queen Esther⁴ moved a noble Jewish woman to covet my friendship, as discussed in these letters. I did not refuse to make love to her soul in order to improve the condition of mine. After a period of four years,⁵ however, I realized that I was making little progress with hers and gaining nothing for my own. Unable to make my speech effective, I decided to leave the undertaking to someone with an even more fervid heart of charity.⁶ [†2v] It is true that out of gratitude for the love this lady professed to bear me I wanted, in some way, to perpetuate her memory in the present letters. In writing them I strove to make her known with my pen, despite my never having seen her with my eyes. Notwithstanding my efforts to this end, I feel I have but only poorly discharged my obligation to you, Signor Marc'Antonio. It is to you, therefore, that I dedicate this book. Should it lead you to exercise your charity, please see to it that the Jewess, whom I presented through my letters as generous, be acknowledged through your prayers as Christian.⁷

I have found it contains nothing contrary to the Holy Faith or to public morals. As the distinguished product of a great intellect it is, in my judgment, worthy of publication, and in witness thereof, etc., I, the above-mentioned Brother Giovanni Vincenzo, write in my own hand: 'Let it be printed'" (the approval is countersigned by "Brother Eliseo Masino, Genoese Inquisitor"); verso of title page.

3. Yet see under letter 1 for his possible identification.

4. Ansaldo Cebà, *La reina Esther*, 1st ed. (Genoa, 1615).

5. Almost exactly: the first letter is dated 19 May 1618 and the last 30 April 1622.

6. Namely, his patron (as clear from the continuation).

7. Cebà then writes a section "to the reader" (†3r–†4r), with forty comments to statements in Cópia's letters (as quoted by Cebà). The section begins thus: "Because these letters broach things that could not be fully understood without knowing the reason for my mentioning them, certain places in Signora Sarra's letters have been annotated here in order to assist the reader in understanding mine. Seeing some numerical sign in the margin, the reader can then check the corresponding place here and become apprized of the wanted explanation. Still, it may be assumed that not as much care has been expended as might be required to this end and that, accordingly, various other places that should have been annotated have been overlooked" (to which one might add that it is unfortunate that they *were* overlooked, for many references to Cópia's letters remain vague, if not unintelligible). The forty annotations then follow: they will be included below, in their respective places, in footnote.

[PAGE 1] LETTER 1 (19 MAY 1618)

In answer to a letter (probably from early May 1618) in which Copia told why she was writing Cebà. She read his epic poem "Queen Esther" and was so impressed by it that she wished to become acquainted with its author. She praised Cebà for his achievement. The tone of her letter appears to have been obsequious: Copia framed her speech in superlatives. She enclosed two sonnets in Cebà's honor: one by herself and another, at her urging, by an unnamed Jewish friend,⁸ who wrote in Spanish (Cebà reproduced both of them at the end of his letter). On a personal note, she admitted to having suffered a miscarriage from which she nearly died.

Most genteel Signora Sarra,⁹

The fruits of Your Ladyship's mind are so noble that they compensate for the delay in their growth¹⁰ by the sweetness of their taste. In my worth I am little suited to deserving them. But your kindness does not desist from making small men great. Though the praises you bestowed on me do not make me greater than I am, they honor me far more than I deserve.

I found it quite unusual for a young woman to be so captivated by a poem treating lofty matters as to be unable to refrain from seeking out the acquaintance of the one who wrote it. Thus I feel obliged to form another judgment of you than that which one ordinarily does of your sex and, at the same time, to rejoice at my book's having had the fate of falling into such generous hands.

I do not know, Signora, what face or figure you have, for I have never seen you. But I clearly understand that you have such a gentle mind that without looking any further I can be content with your portrait alone.¹¹ I promise to carry it in my heart as long as I have the breath of life.¹² Since there can be little hope of our seeing each other down here, I will ardently

8. On his identity, see footnote to the inscription of his poem (no. 3 below).

9. In using the word *gentilissima* or elsewhere *gentile*, the author appears to be playing on its double sense as genteel (or gentle) and Gentile, here a pagan or heathen (the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* [1612] says of "gentili" that it refers to "those peoples who, before the coming of Jesus Christ, worshiped idols," 381) or, more pointedly, an infidel. I alternate, in the translation below, between "genteel" and "gentle" according to context. As noted in the volume editor's introduction (under "A Note on This Edition and Translation"), the word "kind" will be reserved for *cortese* (and "kindness" for *cortesia*) and "kindly" for *benigno* (and "kindliness" for *benignità*).

10. Number 1 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "Signora Sarra, via the metaphor of fruit tardy in its growth, apologizes for having been tardy in her writing" (†3r).

11. Here "portrait" in the sense of Copia's own self-description, a reading confirmed by a similar statement in letter 17.60 below ("I am satisfied, though, with having seen the image of your mind"). Later on, Copia does in fact send Cebà her portrait (see letter 21).

12. Which was not that long: Cebà died four years later on 16 October 1622 (and not on 21 April 1623, as is usually stated). For Copia's portrait that Cebà carries in his mind or thoughts, see below, letter 15, no. 12, stanza 1:4 (also letter 8, no. 7, stanza 7:40–42).

pray God to use His powerful hand to let us recognize one another in Paradise, to which both you and I are equally summoned and, if nothing prevents us, equally slated to repair.

In the meantime, I ask you to persevere in your reading of "Queen [2] Esther" and for my sake to ponder what she says about David in canto 19, beginning with stanza 57.¹³ It would not be of any great consequence whether it was your Lord or mine who inspired me in that passage to make Esther speak into the ear of Sarra.¹⁴

For the rest, I thank in prose that genteel spirit who honored me with Spanish poetry and I answer him in verse with what I have been ordained to say by my Christian profession.¹⁵ I will do the same to you for your Italian sonnet. Just as I did not recognize any defect in its content other than the lowliness of my name, so I ask you to condemn no other fault in the freedom of my response than the overabundance of my love. I love you, Signora Sarra, and revere you as much as I am honorably permitted by my law and yours.

Since you have not disdained to become enthused with passion for my poem, I would also like you to be satisfied with my becoming aroused with longing for your grace. I am eager for it, for I believe that you have a mind enamored of lofty matters and I hope that one day perhaps you will purify it in the furnace of Christian charity. Thus may it please God to grant you the bounty of His grace and, meanwhile, allow you the good fortune to carry and bear children,¹⁶ as is necessary for you and them to live happily, for a long time, to His glory. Genoa, 19 May 1618.

Your Ladyship's devoted and most indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

13. Cebà might have been referring to the series of stanzas, in the same canto, beginning not with stanza 57 but rather with 43 (in which he first speaks of David), then continuing until 57 or even 58; *La reina Esther* (1615), 289–90. Here are some excerpts, in translation, from the final stanzas: "(55) What David then did while holding, in his hand, the scepter of Judah and the kingdoms of Israel and what he played, with the glorious plectrum, [on his lyre] . . . time would not allow me to say. (56) . . . As a privilege, the same God of heaven tied him [David] to Himself with such a tight bond that, upon disclosing hidden and true senses [to him], He made him reveal His thoughts [in his psalms]. (57) . . . He [David] perceived a Son [Christ] comprised in the fertile heart of the Father, . . . who wished one day to dress Himself in human flesh. (58) Then he saw a maiden [Mary] . . . from whose immaculate and beautiful flesh the eternal Word was to form the limbs; . . . and he fathomed the bitter and cruel death that for others' salvation he [Christ] had to suffer."

14. I.e., Cebà speaks to Sarra via his intermediary Esther.

15. Though the author was Jewish, Cebà asked him, strangely, to exercise his influence over Copia to join the Church (or did he detect an inclination toward Christianity in the author's praise of Cebà's "Christian valor" [poem 3:8]?).

16. Number 2 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She complained of having been close to death from a miscarriage" (†3r).

[3] P.S. May that kind author of the Spanish sonnet forgive me if, perchance, I made gross errors in using his language. In truth, except for this one occasion, I have never written any verse or prose in that tongue even though I managed at one time to gain some modest knowledge of it. May Signora Sarra believe me when I acknowledge my being obliged to her, not only for having honored me with her own pen, but also for having had others honor me with theirs.

1. SONNET

BY SIGNORA SARRA COPIA

La bella Hebreà, che con devoti accenti
Gratia impetrò da più sublimi chori,
Sì che fra stelle in ciel ne i sacri ardori 3
Felice gode le superne menti:
Al suon che l'alme da i maggior tormenti
Sottragge, Ansaldo, onde te stesso honori, 6
Spiegar sentendo i suoi più casti amori,
I mondi tiene a le tue rime intenti.
Quindi l'immortal Dio, che nacque in Delo 9
A la tua gloria, la sua gloria acqueta,
Né la consumerà caldo, né gelo.
Colei ancor, che già ti fé Poeta 12
Reggendo questa, da l'empireo Cielo
Darà per sempre a i carmi tuoi la meta.

With devout accents the beautiful Hebrew woman
 Implored the exalted choirs for their grace,
 Indeed, midst heavenly stars, in sacred fires, 3
 She holds supreme minds happily in her grip:¹⁷
 Upon the sound that removes souls from the greatest
 torments,¹⁸
 In order to honor you alone, Ansaldo, 6

17. The beautiful Hebrew woman is Esther. Lines 3–4 can be read in two different ways: Esther is (as suggested by line 13) already in the heavens, to which she lifts poets when they are inspired by her story; or (as translated above) all great poets are there by virtue of their creative powers. In either case, Esther holds their minds “in her grip,” as she did with Cebà’s (see his response, lines 1–4). The grace she requests of the heavenly choirs is (it would seem) for Cebà to be immortalized.

18. The sound of her voice.

She holds the worlds intent on your verses
 While feeling her chastest passions unfold.¹⁹
 Therefore the immortal god who was born in Delos 9
 Acquires, through your glory, his own glory,
 Nor will heat or cold consume it.²⁰
 She who already made you a poet 12
 Ruling this one will, from empyreal heavens,
 Forever set your poems as the goal.²¹

2. SONNET IN RESPONSE

BY ANSALDO CEBÀ

Mosse l'antica Esther le voci ardenti,
Ond'io ritrassi in carte i suoi splendori:
Movi tu, nova Sarra, i miei fervori 3
A farti luminosa in fra le genti.
Nobil, cred'io, sei tu, tu rappresenti
 [4] *De la sposa d'Abram gli antichi honori,* 6
E forse ancor col nome i bei colori
De la sua guancia a gli occhi altrui rammenti.
Ma tu porti però su gli occhi un velo 9
Che ravvisar ti toglie il gran Pianeta,
Onde di vero amor ferisce il telo.
Tu feconda di gratie bai l'alma e lieta, 12
Ma non t'avvedi, oimè, ch'errante zelo
Misericordia il passo al Ciel ti vieta.

[3] Ancient Esther roused burning voices,²²
 Whence I portrayed her splendor on paper;
 May you, new Sarra, rouse my passions 3
 To make you gleam midst the nations.²³
 Noble you are, I believe; you represent

19. Copia is vicariously describing her own "chaste passions."

20. Cebà's glory, like Apollo's, will thus be eternal.

21. I.e., Esther made you a poet who rules Sarra. Meaning perhaps that by revealing heavenly insights Ansaldo's verses are unsurpassed; or that his poems mark "the goal" that all authors strive to reach.

22. Inspired me with poetic fervor.

23. By praising her, Cebà will spread her fame.

Than that of Terpsichore, Urania, and Melpomene,³⁰ 3
 They ought to help us with their tongue and hand.³¹
 Let Greek, Andalusian,³² and Tuscan poets be silent;
 May their fame now cease and resound in you, 6
 For your knowledge comes as a wonder
 To set an example of Christian valor.³³
 The beautiful Esther would not be distressed: 9
 From such a talent as causes astonishment
 She obtained a gold mine of a huge sum.³⁴
 Fortunate is the mine in which the beautiful Jewish woman 12
 Shows how clever you are, Cebà,³⁵
 For your pen is much more than gold.

4. SONNET

RESPONSE BY ANSALDO CEBÀ³⁶*Señor incierto, pido al Soberano*

Unknown lord, I ask the Sovereign,
 Who sounds His voice so sweetly in you,
 To lead you, more than the voices of Urania and
 Melpomene, 3
 [5] To lend a hand to Judaism.³⁷

30. Terpsichore, the Muse of choral song and dance; Urania, of astronomy (hence the sounds of the spheres, as described by the ancients, among them Pythagoras, Ptolemy, and Plato); Melpomene, of tragedy.

31. In order to praise you properly.

32. The Spanish has the adjective *Bethico*, from the Latin substantive *Baetica*, a province in Andalusia.

33. Though Jewish, the author oddly lauds "Christian valor."

34. *De alta suma*, which translates, more idiomatically, as "worth a fortune." The literal wording "a huge sum" was retained for it is countered by "a meager sum" in the next sonnet. Esther earned the "huge sum" as the beneficiary of Cebà's poetic eloquence.

35. It fell to Esther, upon whom Cebà lavished his skills as a writer, to illustrate his greatness. For the reader, however, the "beautiful Jewish woman" (line 12) could have been Copia, who praises Cebà for his ingenuity. Yet the author intended otherwise: he identifies her, in his response, as Esther (no. 4:9, 12).

36. The poem is in Spanish.

37. As he does with Copia, so here, too, Cebà tries to influence the author to convert and set an example for Jews to follow.

A much finer author than a Greek or a Tuscan
 Will make your name resound among us 6
 If from heaven the fire comes to you
 For a generous Jew to turn into a Christian.
 Esther, if I may say so, is distressed: 9
 Of her people she sees, with much fright,
 Such a meager sum come before God.
 Believe me, in vain do you call her beautiful, 12
 For until you remove as much [fire] from the heavens
 There will be no flattery for her in your pen.³⁸

LETTER 2 (10 JUNE 1618)

In answer to a letter Còpia wrote at the end of May or the beginning of June 1618. Again she praised Cebà to the skies, using the epithet "Your Most Excellent" and others like it in addressing him. She defended her Jewish faith from Cebà's attacks by noting its primacy: Judaism came first, Christianity followed. What is old and venerable, she argued, is superior to what is new and questionable. While she deferred to others' authority in secular matters, she professed to be sufficiently informed to discern right from wrong when it comes to religious ones. There was no chance, then, that she would convert. She admitted rather begrudgingly to having read the New Testament, though she had no inclination to return to it to deepen her acquaintance with the life of Christ as told in the Gospels. By no means did she recognize him as the Messiah prophesied by the Hebrews. He was no more, she insisted, than a plain human being. Not his story but the stories of other heroes appear to have moved her, for she enthusiastically related her impressions from having read them. Còpia said that she had recently taken up astrology, expending considerable time and effort on its study. She commended Cebà on his book "Citizen of a Republic": it was so precious to her that she lodged it in her heart. Nor could she part with his poem "Queen Esther"; indeed, she kept it on her pillow, comparing it, in its sublimity, to Homer's Iliad. She had a yen to improvise melodies to its verses.

I noticed, Signora Sarra, that you are much less delighted with my love than I am with yours, for among lovers, as you know, titles are not used. You nevertheless overwhelm me with them. But I know, by contrast, that when it comes to love, you are right in not becoming overfamiliar with me, for you, as far as I understand, are young and beautiful, and I, as far as you might have been told, am neither the one nor the other. Yet if, by special grace of your

38. Cebà seems to be telling the author that only if he succeeds in converting Jews to Christianity will Esther truly be recognized as beautiful.

kindliness, you should still wish to make love to me, however I may be, let us both, if you agree, maintain an amorous decorum and leave the use of those "Your Most Excellent" expressions to those miserable persons who evoke the greatness of men by the vanity of words. I know that you are of honorable birth and that you have all those talents that would make you recognizable as most noble. With your good grace, though, I would like the esteem that I bear you [6] to consist in something other than courtly ceremonies. I will ask you then to show me what you bear me, however far from the truth it may be, not by an inflation of superlatives but otherwise. Ansaldo Cebà is my name quite bare of merits. Since it is only right for me, though, from having become your servant, to have been given some light, I rely on you, if it pleases you to give me the title I give you, to do so with discretion.³⁹ I declare to you that whatever my birth or condition may be, I will always consider myself more honored by you the less honorably you address me.

Turning to your most gracious letter, I confess to you that it has multiplied my reasons for loving you. But I cannot deny that it still does not give me new grounds for sympathizing with you. The law that we observe, my Signora, is not so new as not to have been in the mind of the Supreme Legislator from eternity and as not, through an ordered succession, to have come to reveal itself in the fullness of time. Whether it be called new or old,⁴⁰ though, it is not of a kind as would have to submit to the proverbs of the multitude.⁴¹ Proverbs, as you know, are adjudged to be false not only by divine provisions but also, very often, by human accidents. Say a person reads the life story of Christ and sees in it the qualities so explicitly described as of the Messiah and notes the excellence of his virtues and perceives the effectiveness of his miracles. It is quite a new form of obstinacy for him or her to persist in observing those rites that may have been appropriate to another era, yet were varied by God not through inconstancy of mind, but by order of providence, according to the variety of times and [7] humans. But when I see this obstinacy not only in the remainder of the Jews, for whom the charity of Christ teaches me to have compassion, but also in your own person, Signora Sarra, I confess that it pierces my soul, for I certainly love and

39. Cebà referred on various occasions to Copia's gleaming face (see, for example, the sonnet "Mosse l'antica Esther" in letter 1, no. 2:4, 7–8), hence her "light," and Copia no doubt addressed him with the "lustrous" term *illustrissimo*, or something similar.

40. Respectively, the New and Old Testaments.

41. Number 3 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had condemned the novelty of the Christian law with the following proverb: *Chi'l vecchio camin pel novo lascia / Spesso s'inganna, e poi ne sente ambascia* [He who leaves the old path for the new / Is often mistaken, then feels distressed]" (†3r).

respect you much more than I can express in words. It weighs on me to no end that you, who see so much where (by virtue of modesty) you think you see nothing, would see so little where (out of excessive confidence) it seems to you that you are lynx-eyed.⁴²

You say you have not disdained to read the New Testament, as if you greatly debased yourself by proceeding to a similar reading. I do not want to answer you with what the zeal of the faith I keep would dictate to me, for instead of helping you I would perhaps offend you, and offending and loving do not tolerate each other. Despite your not recognizing in the person of Christ the features of the Messiah you await, I would like to ask you, nevertheless, whether you do not find anything heroic and marvelous in his actions or manners. I would like to question you as to why you are impressed by reading about those otherwise imperfect virtues of some men who neither were Hebrews nor recognized the God of the Hebrews and why you do not lose your head in beholding the perfect ones of him who, even when considered a simple man, as you insist, was all the same an Israelite, as you are too; and who, as far as religion is concerned, revered the same God as did your elders.

Amend your ways, most genteel Signora Sarra. If you do not want to recognize our Savior as the true son of God, admire him at least as the most righteous, innocent, [8] and holy man ever to have been born into the world. Nor should you refuse to read the story of his life. Rather, search in it for examples to help you perfect your own life. Should you do that, it may yet come to pass, one day, that you receive light from heaven. Then you will clearly realize how blind you were. As a result, you would not regret having degraded yourself to seek out my acquaintance. I am so eager for it to be of service to you in whatever pertains to your salvation that I do not abstain from saying to you things even contrary to your will, by which I otherwise am most prepared to regulate my words. Yet I do not forget how much I am bound by the profession of charity to show you that I do still remember how much I owe to the law of courtesy.

I praise you, for the rest, for having begun the study of astrology. But since I feel you are of a very delicate constitution, and I would like you to live a long time, perhaps by beholding yourself in the mirror you would recognize how the stars are made and thus study that art with less effort.⁴³

42. Number 4 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said she was lynx-eyed [i.e., sharp-sighted] in matters of religion" (†3r).

43. Since you yourself are like the stars, you would not have any trouble studying them.

But these are not ideas for making love after my fashion,⁴⁴ even though you might hear them without risk of vanity, from which I believe you are so far removed that, for this reason, I thought I gained enough by having become worthy of your grace. To speak frankly, then, the knowledge of astrology is truly a noble thing. But if, as you say, you are acquiring it to learn the ways of heaven, I believe you would sooner unravel them by learning to love God. If I understood this art and you thought [9] you needed it, I assure you I would give you greater satisfaction than those astrologers, who, sometimes holding their eyes up to the heavens and submitting the will of men to the course of the stars, run miserably only to hasten into an abyss. But leaving aside these thoughts, which, for your temperament, smack perchance of melancholy, I would not want you, my Signora, to overexert your mind in meditation on the sciences, for in the end you are playing with your health. I know what I am saying, although I do not do what I advise. To study is a nasty occupation, thus your sage described it,⁴⁵ and he spoke not inaptly, seeing as it weakens constitutions. But since all other occupations, except for that of serving God, are, for other reasons, much worse, I would not want someone who has a noble mind to ruin it completely; rather one should study with moderation. You who have a husband and the care of a family also have a good opportunity to be temperate.

My book "The Citizen"⁴⁶ has truly occupied an important place for you if it has occupied the most precious room of your heart.⁴⁷ I hope you will excuse me, however, if I now send you some other books of mine to occupy the same lodging. Should it so happen that you already have all of them, I would nevertheless be greatly honored were you to have them all from my hand. "Citizen of the Republic" will not be inappropriate when his nobility comes to be recreated in your genteel conversation.⁴⁸ If I remember rightly,

44. His "fashion" would be "to make love to her soul," as Cebà wrote in the dedication to Marc'Antonio Doria (†2r).

45. Copia appears to have made a remark about the difficulties of studying, as she heard it from the rabbi (and "sage") Leon Modena.

46. Full title: "Citizen of a Republic" (*Il cittadino di repubblica*, 1617).

47. Number 5 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had written that she placed the book of 'The Citizen' in her heart" (†3r). The word "placed" (*allogato*) may have been a misprint for "lodged" (*alloggiato*).

48. Cebà's "citizen" was meant to exemplify his high station (the second edition of the book was entitled "The Noble Citizen of a Republic" [*Il cittadino nobile di repubblica*, 1620]). By his "nobility" as "recreated" in Copia's "genteel conversation," Cebà appears to be referring to her discussion of this work with the literati in her salon.

Pericles, at times, did not leave the house of that worthy woman⁴⁹ without learning some rule for properly governing his republic.

In [10] reading my verses you will perhaps condemn their art and censure their procedure.⁵⁰ I will not apologize for the failings of the one nor will I for those of the other. Yet I will ask you only to pardon the crimes of youth and be satisfied with an admission of repentance.

The poem about that most glorious queen, which won me the treasure of your grace, will in no way be reason for your criticism. Rather, should you sometimes accompany the harmony of its verses with the sweetness of your voice, do not refuse to do so for my sake. Not only do I not refuse, but I consider myself most honored to bind my wishes to your commands. Oh, what a sweet relief it would be for my efforts if, one day, I were to hear you bring to life that lament of Andromache over the body of Hector!⁵¹

But your graces, in fact, have nothing to do with my merits. I will not think it is of little consequence that you, so far away, retain some faint memory of me and that without my being able to hear or see you in my presence I at least hear and contemplate you in your letters. Though I do not deny my being eager for them, I ask you nevertheless not to favor me with them except when you do not have to spend your time on a better occupation.

49. Aspasia, his mistress (Plutarch, *Lives: Pericles*, 24.1–6).

50. Cebà appears to be referring to his early book of amorous verses (*Rime*, 1596).

51. Andromache's lament for her husband, the Trojan leader Hector, killed by the Greek Achilles, occurs toward the end of canto 8, specifically stanzas 104–19 (*La reina Esther* [1615], 121–22). The description of their battle, followed by her lament, forms part of a theatrical spectacle for entertaining Queen Esther and her husband, the king of Persia, Ahasuerus (stanzas 76–127, concluding with the words: "The king rose and with his new consort and counterpart left the august theater"). For stanzas 104–19 in the original and in translation, see Don Harrán, "Doubly Tainted, Doubly Talented: The Jewish Poet Sara Copio (d. 1641) as a Heroic Singer," 411–18. Here are some excerpts from the plaint, to show the various emotions with which Cópia, in Cebà's mind at least, would have fully identified in her rendition: "(104) Then with a voice, where anguish and weeping sometimes check and break the flow, [she said]: '... The glory that so increased in you is interrupted—woe is me!—by a mortal stab. ... (105) Light of my eyes, how I gaze at you longingly! ... (107) Oh, it would have been better if I had spent my blooming years on Theban lands as a female virgin, declining nuptials. ... Now, at any rate, I would not be forced to see this sad and inhuman spectacle and see you, my light and comfort, pierced by a savage knife and dead. (108) ... Then why did these very wounds, which severed the thread of your life, not let me, with the announcement of the unexpected and wicked news, join my death to yours? (109) Not only a husband but a father were you to me, respite for my soul, splendor unto my eyes. ... Thus into the sea of contrary misfortunes is it only right that, deprived of you, I eventually stumble. ... (112) I will be faithful to you for as long as I have breath. ... The severest and cruelest blow that pierces my heart in its grief is that ... I see you, alas, lose your life and your reign. (115) ... I satisfy extreme anguish with tears while you do with blood.'"

Surely there remain great opportunities for me to dwell on your gentility without having to arouse my memory by new stimuli.

May I entreat you again to persevere in your reading of "Queen Esther." It really seems to me that you expect too much of this poem when, keeping it on the pillow of your bed,⁵² you assert [11] that the same symmetry exists between it and Homer's *Iliad*⁵³ as perchance exists between the greatness of your thoughts and Alexander's magnanimity.⁵⁴ But it is where the excellence of my art did not reach that you will doubtless find the sublimity of that princess. Just as I am most certain that she, in her time, would have believed in Christ to come, so I most insistently pray to God for you, in yours, to believe in Christ who came. In my doing this, even if I in some way deserved to write about the distinctions of the one and secure the salvation of the other,⁵⁵ may the Lord allow me, through the intervention of these two most noble and generous Jewish women, to come to see His face and praise Him with them forever. Genoa, 10 June 1618.

Ansaldo Cebà, as devoted a servant of Your Ladyship as any other could be

P.S. This script was not made to appear before a lady such as you. But forgive me, for at present I am in a rather poor state of health. I wished, in any case, to write to you in my own hand. Having done so with exceptional toil, I see it is impossible for me to make another copy.⁵⁶ But if you love me a little, I know that you will not rebuke me for similar failings and that, even though I wrote to you in my own hand, you will be satisfied with the way in which I was able to do so. I feel ill, my dearest Signora Sarra. But however well or ill I feel, I am your servant. If it should please God, in His infinite kindness, to summon me to a better life, rest assured that I [12] will remember you for as long as I retain hope of being able to help you with what you need most.

52. Number 6 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that she kept the poem about Esther on the pillow of her bed" (†3r).

53. In being two epic poems.

54. A quality emphasized by the historians, among them Plutarch, in writing about Alexander the Great, one of whose favorite books, moreover, is said to have been the *Iliad* (cf. Plutarch, *Lives: Alexander the Great* 1.8.2).

55. The one is Esther and the other is Sarra.

56. He had already made a copy, which he saved for prospective publication.

5. SONNET

Bella è la guancia tua, soave il guardo

Beautiful is your cheek, soft your look,
 Golden your hair, and gleaming your face;
 You speak sweetly in formal and free style,⁵⁷ 3
 And every sound of yours sweetly vibrates an arrow.
 But the ear you have is too hard [of hearing] and tardy,
 And you have proudly wrapped your heart in ice, 6
 While, with your foot removed from the true Leader,
 You follow another standard with a false guide.⁵⁸
 You do not answer Christ and he calls you; 9
 You place the Faithful after the Circumcised,
 And he awaits you, and admonishes you, and loves you.
 Ah, how can you, Sarra, keep your heart 12
 Separated from him who, if you have beauty and fame,
 Elevates your name and illumines your face?⁵⁹

LETTER 3 (23 JUNE 1618)

This letter seems to have been written not in response to one by Còpia but as a report of what Cebà had heard about her, a week or so earlier, from the person he had asked to visit her. Còpia may have suggested to the caller the need for a more accurate edition of Cebà's "Queen Esther" than the one reprinted in Milan and her own willingness to attend to its preparation (see letter 9.26–27).

Most noble Signora Sarra,
 After the second letter I wrote you several days ago, the friend who visited you on my behalf returned from his trip. He told me the many ways he was honored by your kindness and, in my presence, went on to recount in minute detail what you had largely indicated to me in your letters. Accept my most heartfelt thanks for the courtesies you showed him.

As concerns the endowments of your body and mind, I pray to God

57. Verse and prose.

58. The "true Leader" being Christ, "another standard" Judaism, and its "false guide" Moses.

59. "Elevates" her name, once having converted, "illumines" her face, once having seen the "light."

that, since you are not currently inclined to become a Christian, He not allow you to incline [13] others to become Jews, for as far as I can understand, you have the ability not just to make people follow Jewish customs but even to lead them perhaps to worship idols. Nor do I think that that Homeric honey fell as sweetly from the mouth of Nestor to restrain the fury of armies⁶⁰ as does the honey descend from your mouth to tyrannize the will of men.

But beware, for all that, of becoming thereby more overconfident than you should, for let me tell you, one soldier wearing the cuirass of Evangelical Law is enough to repel all your arrows. Nor did the severe tenets of Zeno⁶¹ ever teach how to fight against one's own passions with as much strength and effectiveness as does the doctrine of Christ teach how to eradicate them.

Now the reason I continue to bother you with this letter is to forewarn you of the books that it accompanies and that I promised in my other one.⁶² If you were to look them over and read them willingly, I would be most satisfied, nor need you go to the trouble of giving me any other answer than the one you owe to the most sincere love that I bear you, for it is unreasonable that I release you in any way from doing so. Should you ask him who has greater dominion over your person,⁶³ I am absolutely certain that he too would not release you from doing so.⁶⁴

In the Genoese print of the poem "Esther" I was poorly treated in matters of typography. But in the Milanese reprint I have been assassinated by revisions.⁶⁵ I deserve perchance some scolding for the defects of the former, for I did not have the patience to wait.⁶⁶ But I think I am definitely worthy of great compassion for the defects of the latter, for I feel I have been coarsely misrepresented. [14] Should you wish to have the book reissued in Milan,⁶⁷

60. Wise, eloquent Nestor dispensed his counsel to the Greeks in their expedition against Troy; cf. Homer, *Iliad* 1.248 ("Nestor, sweet of speech, the clear-voiced orator . . . from whose tongue speech flowed sweeter than honey"; trans. A. T. Murray).

61. Zeno, a pre-Socratic philosopher (488–425 B.C.E.), followed his teacher Parmenides in expounding a rigid doctrine according to which all being is static and unchangeable.

62. Letter 2.

63. A reference to either Copia's husband or her rabbi friend Modena.

64. Her husband or Modena would insist that she acknowledge the receipt of the books, if for no other reason than out of courtesy.

65. Cebà complains of the faulty Milanese edition in a letter to Cardinal Federigo Borromeo (in his *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 138–40).

66. Meaning, perhaps, that anxious to see the publication in print, Cebà may have read the proofs too hurriedly.

67. In a corrected third edition.

I would ask you to compare it with the one from Genoa and correct it thereafter.

Do not be surprised at my making so much of such things, for neither can the cheek of Queen Esther endure any disfiguration nor ought the eyes of Signora Sarra to behold any impropriety. Hence, if a certain little book of mine that I mean to see in your hands⁶⁸ should be the fruit of my youthful passions, I implore you not to have any scruples about worshiping idols and to make a sacrifice of it at present to Vulcan,⁶⁹ for surely, midst the excesses of the one who wrote it and the errors of the one who printed it, it is a reading unworthy of both your modesty and your gentility.⁷⁰

May my eyes, by God's will, be fixed on your gentility so effectively as for me, before I die, to see your rebirth in the fountain of the Holy Baptism and your radiance in the throng of Italy's greatest women. Genoa, 23 June 1618.

Your Ladyship's devoted and most indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

6. MADRIGAL

Dolci son le parole

Sweet are the words,⁷¹

Sarra, that you dispense;

But contrary to the words are their meanings. 3

You deny the highest Sun

Who once hid, for your salvation and mine,

In Mary's womb. 6

Alas! I do not know how

You can speak and look down so low⁷²

[15] If, while discharging your words and rays, 9

You carry pearls in your mouth⁷³ and sun in your eyes.

68. The book is his early collection of secular verses, already mentioned in letter 2.10.

69. Meaning to cast the book into the flames.

70. Even so, Cebà wanted her to read it, perhaps to show her how far he had come from his youthful "excesses," of which he now repented.

71. Rhyme scheme and verse lengths (in iambic meter): *abB/acC/ddEE* (majuscles are for eleven-syllable verses and minuscules for seven-syllable ones).

72. Instead of directing her glance upward.

73. Meaning her words are filtered through shiny teeth.

LETTER 4 (1 SEPTEMBER 1618)

In answer to a letter that Copia may have written in later August (1618) and forgotten to sign. She mentioned having been ill (which might explain the gap of more than two months between Cebà's last letter, from 23 June, and the present one), yet assured her correspondent that she since had fully recovered. The books and letters that Cebà sent her at the end of June seem not to have arrived. Copia, in any case, either said they did not or failed to acknowledge their receipt.

If you are that Signora Sarra who, without any signature, made me write, I answer you that I sympathized with you in your infirmity and rejoiced over your now having recovered. But if any books and letters that I sent you at the end of June fell into the hands of someone else, I cannot but regret that I was so poorly served in their delivery.

Rest assured, however, that as long as my heart resides in you, I care little whether my writings are lodged there too. Rather I pray to God for their replacement by the sacrifices that, after getting to know you, I have had many good people offer Him for your salvation. May the prayers be of value, and though I be a sinner, I promise you to continue with them myself until my final breath. Meanwhile, because my law teaches me to return good for evil,⁷⁴ even though your hand was guilty of having denied me two signatures,⁷⁵ I kiss it as if it were innocent and wish you the opportunity to use my law for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind. Genoa, 1 September 1618.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most devoted servant

[16] LETTER 5 (1 DECEMBER 1618)

There was a gap of three months between the last letter (1 September 1618) and this one. Copia, again, was ill: her life seems, in fact, to have been in danger. Even so, she wrote once, on 16 November, if not twice or more in the interim. Cebà refrained from answering, perhaps because he sensed her being as adamantly opposed as ever to conversion (see the first sentence below). What made him decide to take up his pen again was that in her letter from 16 November she mentions having sent him a present. It could be that she noticed a change of attitude in her correspondent and hoped that the present would improve relations. Cebà had still not received it, yet he thanked her out of courtesy.

74. See, for example, Luke 6:27–30 and Romans 12:14, 17, 21.

75. By two he means either the two words Sarra and Copia or the failure to sign two letters.

My dearest Signora Sarra,

I have not written you for some time now because you are not very happy with what I have to say to you and I am little happy with what I would like to hear from you. I really was greatly upset to read that your life was in danger. I prayed to God that He return you to your former health and open your eyes to recognize what He asks of you with admonishments no different from mine. Then your letter of 16 November came into my hands, with mention of a present that, although it still has not arrived, I consider much more praiseworthy for your generosity than appropriate to my condition. I therefore express my greatest thanks to you while allowing myself to say something more to you about it after having seen it.

In the meantime, however, I cannot conceal from you that I would love you much more for feeling *inclined* to give me presents than for actually giving them to me. I do not think you could give me anything as precious as what you already did by granting me your grace, and the more you underestimates yourself for doing so, the more greatly I feel honored.

Though I am late in writing you, I am prompt in loving you and will also be ready to serve you if you should ever give me an occasion to do so. Meanwhile, I pray to God that along with so many other graces that He bestowed on you, He also set you on the road where in the end one sees Him. Genoa, 1 December 1618.

[17] *Ansaldo Cebà, as devoted a servant of Your Ladyship as there could ever be*

LETTER 6 (15 DECEMBER 1618)

The present duly arrived, which prompted Cebà to acknowledge its receipt. Còpia apparently added an explanatory note saying that she was sending him some flowers and water, a seeming metaphor for dried fruits and honey, and that the "flowers" were so arranged as to form a garland to be placed on his head.

Most generous Signora Sarra,

The present you mentioned has finally arrived. It is truly more commendable for the mastery of your hand than for being shaped to the servitude of my head. I lack as many words, however, to thank you for it as would correspond to the abundance of your kindness to favor me with it.

You sent me, in your opinion, some flowers and some water. But I received, in my judgment, some fruits and some nectar. Lest they disturb my stomach little accustomed to similar delicacies, I will keep them, without touching them, for as long as I live. After my death I will leave them as they

are to my nephews,⁷⁶ to serve as a recollection of how much you honored me and as a stimulus to how much they ought to revere you.

For the rest, I am, as ever, your servant; and I love you and prize you as much as the gentleness of your mind deserves and I am compelled by my inclination. If I could indulge this inclination to my liking, rest assured that you would not regret having desired my acquaintance. May God, however, supply whatever I can not; and may He give you the light needed for you, one day, to recognize Him. Genoa, 15 December 1618.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

[18] LETTER 7 (19 JANUARY 1619)

Sometime after the last letter Cebà received another gift from Copia, a comb case with a covering embroidered in her own hand. She probably added a note of explanation, saying she hoped it would please him. It is not clear if it was in that note or an earlier letter that she mentioned something about God as not being incarnated in human form, a statement that Cebà now countered, as may be expected, by affirming that He was.⁷⁷

How could you doubt, most gracious Signora Sarra, my highly appreciating your gift, both in itself and for its giver? But as I intimated to you in another letter, you really ought in the future to abstain from proceeding any further in this direction. Though you are abundant in the will to give, I am deficient in the power to receive. I think of myself as so happy with the little I happen to have that anything incremental is completely superfluous.

I know you will condemn me for baseness of mind, and perhaps you are right, for beyond being your servant, I certainly do not recognize in myself any quality one could call greatness. But I would not want you to scorn me as much for confessing my being small as you forgive me for regretting that I am not great. When I speak of greatness, I mean that of virtue, for I evaluate all its other kinds by the teachings of moral and Christian philosophy.

It is nonetheless true that I hold the comb case you sent me so dear that, though I have been greatly tempted to give it to someone more receptive to your delights, I have held onto it, reckoning that as a work wrought by your hand it is, for me, so much a part of you as, perchance, you might not have thought.

76. Originally *nipotini*, which could refer to nephews or grandchildren, though here it does to the former, for Cebà did not marry or have children.

77. On the same date as this letter from Cebà, it might be mentioned, Copia wrote Baldassare Bonifaccio a letter that, in its seeming denial of the soul's immortality, prompted him, so he tells us, to write his *Discorso* (see below, 2.2–3 and 5).

Because these sentences will appear somewhat harsh to you, allow yourself to smooth them over with [19] a gloss.⁷⁸ I could send it to you right now, but I will not until such time as having disposed of my older poems you might want to savor one of my new ones.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, I pray God to make you understand that He made himself physically seen on earth for your salvation too.⁸⁰ Softened by so much humanity, you might one day render him that Faith,⁸¹ which, had I seen it along with the other virtues in your embroidery,⁸² would, I believe, have made me beside myself from happiness.

Oh, Signora Sarra, how much love and sorrow do you cause me at the same time! Think, I entreat you, of what is most important to you. Seek advice thereon from someone who has no prejudice; and, with no obligation to reply, do keep me in your memory. Genoa, 19 January 1619.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

LETTER 8 (26 JANUARY 1619)

No letter seems to have been received from Còpia in the seven days between nos. 7 and 8. Cebà wrote now to prepare her for a forthcoming visit of his servant, Marco. He had entrusted the servant with delivering the letter along with two other items: a book by an unnamed author about Christianity⁸³ and, as a work of his own, a poem in which he expanded on the "virtues" depicted in the embroidery on the comb case she had sent him (Cebà quotes the poem in full).

Most generous Signora Sarra,

Even though I have visited you many times through my letters, in which I demonstrated as many signs of my affection and esteem for your person as I could, I could not refrain from sending you an old servant of mine to pay

78. The gloss would be a statement of Christian doctrine, which Cebà defers making until Còpia is ready for it.

79. Cebà refers to the poems in his second, sacred collection (*Rime*, 1611), as compared with those in the first, secular one that Còpia already had (see letter 2.10).

80. Number 8 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had written that God cannot be represented in this life and that one cannot get a physical idea of Him" (†3r-v). Còpia thus invoked the Second Commandment (Deut. 5:8). In line with Cebà's marginal comment, the pronoun *him* in the next sentence above designates Christ as a godly "representation" and "physical idea."

81. Thus capitalized in original.

82. Number 9 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had portrayed some [of the Seven Cardinal] Virtues on the comb case she sent" (†3v).

83. Probably the one by Luis de Granada (see note below).

his respects and dispatch the present letter. I have spoken to him very little of myself, yet he will tell you how frequently he has heard me talk of you with many persons much worthier of [20] your acquaintance than I, who am expelled to a corner of this city where I remain of little use to myself and of no use to others. Lend him your credence, however, should he tell you that I am your great servant; and if he brings you some few pieces of fruit to place on your table during this season of Carnival, accept them not as delicate⁸⁴ but as unusual. Utilize their novelty in lieu of their goodness, for there certainly would be no need, in giving you the good and the beautiful, to resort to anything else but your dispensation.⁸⁵ I have ordered the same servant to greet your husband on my behalf. Having had the good fortune to have you for his wife, he could not be anything but most genteel, so I believe.

I am also sending you a book composed by its author in Spanish. Though I have already read it in that language, right now I was not able to find it except in Italian.⁸⁶ What I ask is that you have the patience for my sake to read it and, when you get to the last part, to dwell on it with greater attention, then tell me, at your convenience, what you think and feel about it.

You will say that I am being excessively importunate. But you will never be able to say that my importunateness is not prompted, as its cause, by love. Love, my dearest mistress, makes me speak rather often against your will. Love, too, has drawn from my heart a poem: even though, by being mine, it cannot honor you as much as yours would honor me, namely, by being signed with your name, I am still quite certain it will not be to your dishonor. Read it attentively, then, I beg you; and if you find it has something to please you, recognize its origin as solely in you, who not [21] only have the strength to make my verses charming but can also render my person and name most honorable.

If you give a letter of yours to my servant Marco, I will read it most gladly. But if it is inconvenient for you to write, I will be quite content with your remembering to love me. I kiss your hands. Genoa, 26 January 1619.

Your Ladyship's devoted and most indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

84. The description of the fruits as "delicate" could be in reference to something said by Copia about the ones she sent Cebà (see letter 6.17).

85. Obscure: the servant seems to have brought some fruits with which Copia was unfamiliar, hence their "novelty"; they may not have had any nutritional value (to make them "good"), yet were attractive ("beautiful"), hence to be enjoyed. Copia would be the first, Cebà implies, to sanction any combination of good and beautiful, in which she has her share ("dispensation").

86. The author, in all likelihood, was Luis de Granada (see letter 42.115). Works of his were printed in Venice, in Italian translation, from the 1560s on (as separate volumes or under the

7. CANZONE

TO SIGNORA SARRA COPPIA [SIC],⁸⁷ IN REGARD TO THE COMB
CASE SHE SENT AND ITS DEPICTION OF SOME VIRTUES (AMONG
OTHER THINGS)

1

O se, come al vivo espressi

Oh, if, just as you represented so many faces⁸⁸
Lifelike with a needle,
I, too, knew how to color your beautiful image 3
With my pen,
How many hearts would I ignite
With your love through my verses! 6

2

Ma però quel bel lavoro

But that beautiful work
With which my style could not compete,⁸⁹
You, more learned imitator, 9
Weave with silk and gold;
And you show me in varying beams
Your face and your habits. 12

collective titles *Tutte l'opere*, or *Le opere*, or *Opere spirituali*). Perhaps Cebà is referring to the *Breve trattato aggiunto, nel quale si dichiara la maniera che si potrebbe tenere in proporre la dottrina della nostra Santa Fede, & religione christiana alli novi fedeli* (Venice, 1590), or in its original Spanish edition *Compendio de doctrina Christiana* (Lisbon, 1559).

87. For Còpia's eventual reaction to this double *p*, see letter 17.59.

88. Cebà referred to this poem in stanza 19 and letter 9.25 as a canzone, yet in the brevity of its stanzas it is better designated a (multistrophic) *canzonetta*. Rhyme scheme (all verses have eight syllables in trochaic meter): stanza 1, *abbacc*; stanza 2, *deedff*; etc.

89. Originally "that does not allow my style to try" (*Cb'al mio stil tentar non lice*).

3

Questi fior bianchi e vermigli

	These white and crimson flowers	
	That, in stitching, you represent and simulate,	
[22]	These rays that you force	15
	Roses and lilies to flash,	
	Bring out, I see very well,	
	The beautiful colors in your face.	18

4

E le perle, onde spargendo

	The pearls, in which you display	
	Now this, now that part	
	With graceful and noble art,	21
	Seem to me gradually to uncover	
	The treasure you hide	
	Within the red tints of your lips. ⁹⁰	24

5

E quell'oro, onde girando

	That gold ⁹¹ you twist	
	To decorate the outline of the shapes	
	Makes them lights ⁹² and pictures,	27
	From which I can imagine to myself,	
	Without anyone telling me,	
	The splendor of your hair.	30

90. Thus "the pearls" of line 19 now signify white teeth when the "lips" are parted.

91. "Gold" here as thread, though in line 30 it becomes the color of her hair.

92. Originally *faci*, "torches."

6

E la luce ardente e viva

The burning and living light	
That the jewels and gold diffuse,	
If I am unable to portray it elsewhere,	33
Comes to show me in part	
The light with which the sun	
Of your beautiful eyes, Sarra, strikes and assaults.	36

7

*Ma de l'alma il bel sembante*⁹³

While you place before me the Virtues	
Bright and luminous	
Midst privets and roses,	39
You present to my thoughts	
The beautiful appearance of your soul	
In a true and vivid portrait.	42

8

La Giustitia, ché sei giusta

Justice, ⁹⁴ for you are just,	
And Prudence, for you are prudent,	
And Temperance [<i>Honestà</i>], for you are continent,	45
And Strength [<i>Fortezza</i>], ⁹⁵ for you are robust,	
[23] Are, in the end, revealed by the whole chorus [of Muses],	
For you have kindled your soul with all of them.	48

93. In the translation, the *capoverso* becomes line 41.

94. In this stanza, the poet names the four natural or Platonic virtues. Of the three theological ones (faith, hope, charity), he refers to faith in stanzas 9–10 and to hope briefly in stanza 13.

95. In the sense of courage.

9

Una sola al mio cospetto

Only one virtue, Sarra,	
Still does not come into sight,	
The one alone whereby each of them	51
Beautifies its own appearance:	
I gaze upon all the others in you,	
But Faith, alas, I do not see.	54

10

Né dich'io che disleale

Nor am I saying that you are	
Disloyal to your husband,	
Or that you are uncaring	57
About your obligations to others;	
Rather I am saying, and it really saddens me,	
That you still do not believe in Christ.	60

11

Nacque Christo in terra e visse

Christ was born, and lived, on earth;	
He conversed with your people;	
What he did and what he said	63
Conquered human minds;	
Yet you, Sarra, who see so much,	
Still do not believe in Christ.	66

12

Sarra illustre e generosa

Illustrious and generous Sarra,	
Oh, if, as your splendor	
Has wounded my heart with love,	69

You have a loving soul for me,
 Why, while love rules us,
 Do we maintain a different law? 72

13

Non ti sembra adunque assai

Does it not seem enough to you, then,
 For the Sun to smile upon your face
 And here intent and fixed on you 75
 To hide its rays from my visage,⁹⁶
 If you do not also share your thoughts
 While I believe and you hope? 78

14

Non ti par gran differenza

[24] Does it not seem quite a difference
 For you to bear a golden head of hair
 And for me to have a silvery one 81
 Without, alas, your declaring open war on me
 For my believing
 In the presence of Christ on earth? 84

15

*Con la neve del mio crine*⁹⁷

Whatever your reddish cheeks
 Have removed from the Dawn
 Could perhaps still complement 87
 My snowy head of hair,

96. Obscure: "Sun," previously used for Christ (letter 3.14), might be construed here as "beauty," which Còpia has but Cebà does not; or perhaps Còpia's face radiates beauty, but not upon Cebà's; or perhaps Còpia cannot share her beauty with Cebà because, as a Jew, her thoughts and expectations are different from his (see next two lines).

97. The *capoverso* becomes line 88 in the translation.

But if Faith in us is dual⁹⁸
 We will never make a beautiful "couple" [COPPIA].⁹⁹ 90

16

La mia Fede è tanto vera

My faith is so true,
 And my love so very pure,
 That I beg and entreat you 93
 To leave the Hebrew ranks
 And, with a firm and strong hand,
 Draw your husband along with you. 96

17

Vieni, honor del secol nostro

Come, honor of our century,
 Come, love of my soul;
 Believe in the son of Mary, 99
 Offer me a more living ink¹⁰⁰
 Whereby, with other hymns,¹⁰¹ I might now
 Rise with you to heaven. 102

18

Poco è quel che detto havemo

Little, till now, is that which we have said,
 Sarra, of your distinctions;
 But if, one day, you come into our midst, 105
 You will see how we release

98. "Dual" (Christian and Jewish), originally *doppia*.

99. So capitalized in original; facetious reference to Sarra's maiden name (for her reaction, see letter 17.59).

100. Meaning, perhaps, a poem about Christ Incarnate.

101. *Carmi*, also "poems." Cebà may be saying that were Copia to write about her change of faith he might be inspired to dip his pen into "ink" to compose verses in her praise.

From the common prisons
The worthiest woman among Jewesses.¹⁰² 108

19

Dove siede in grembo a l'acque

In that city that sits in the bosom of the waters
And ailing or tired
[25] Never had an easy path of existence 111
From the day it was born,¹⁰³
Bow respectfully, Canzone,
Before the queen of my heart.¹⁰⁴ 114

20

E la man ch'infuse e sparse

The hand that shed and spread
As many lights on that embroidery
As we have combined in you¹⁰⁵ 117
And that cannot show itself to me¹⁰⁶
Is for you to kiss:¹⁰⁷ as a token
Of my love, present yourself to Sarra. 120

LETTER 9 (23 FEBRUARY 1619)

The letter was not in answer to one by Còpia but in reaction to what Cebà had heard about the overly exuberant way she greeted his servant. He had come in the interim, as we already know, to deliver letter 8 and its added canzone, which she found "charming." In an

102. Perhaps to be construed as "release our praises of the worthiest woman among Jewesses from the common prisons of our reticence" ("Little, till now, is that which we have said," line 103).

103. Refers to the wars and turmoil that plagued Venice over the centuries.

104. As distinguished from the "queen" of his epic poem (Esther).

105. "You," a personification of canzone, or "song"; "as we have combined in you," meaning "as we have included in your content."

106. Because Còpia is in Venice and he in Genoa.

107. Cebà's canzone now personifies its author, hence may kiss Còpia's hand on his behalf.

earlier letter, or perhaps in conversation with the servant, Cópia had said that she modeled her conduct on examples from Plato and that to understand the advantages of Christianity she needed rational explanations: Cebà appears to have marred his arguments to prove its superiority over Judaism with what for her were too many uncertainties. Cebà rushed to his own defense by invoking the principle of faith: one need not see things clearly to believe them, as pre-Kantian a statement as any. Perhaps for reasons of health, Cópia was not a regular correspondent, which is why Cebà asked if she had received three particular letters, dispensing her from a full reply if she were not up to providing one.

May it please God, my most genteel Signora Sarra, to let me have the skill to transform the things that you have, for I would certainly form such a new figure from your person that, by beholding yourself not in Plato's mirror, which is not without its blotches,¹⁰⁸ but in Christ's, which is most transparent, you would be enamored of your own self.

I sent you a meager little present of even lesser value than a peasant's. But you, who know how to make elephants out of ants, celebrate me for it as if it were that of a prince. The bearer was a most ordinary servant of mine, and you turned him into someone so genteel that you did not demur at making him hear my verses harmonized by your voice and at honoring him with other displays more suited to the superabundance of your kindness than shaped to the lowliness of his condition.

It is true that I wrote you a canzone.¹⁰⁹ But beyond being charming, as you describe it, it is as splendid [26] and luminous as the colorful graces of your mind and body are exquisite. Despite the obscurity of my writing, they [the graces] spread a light over it, making you gloriously portrayed for perhaps even centuries to come. This canzone, I confess to you, seemed to me seasoned with another sugar than the fruits I sent you. I assure you that it came from my heart for no other purpose than to reveal sincerely what I believe you are and to show you freely what I wish you were.

I consider you beautiful of face, generous of heart, and magnanimous in deeds. But I feel you are marked with a character disturbing the clearness of as many virtues as you have, namely, from your being a Jewess out of season.

108. Number 10 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had written that she looked at herself in the mirror according as Plato advised." The reference to Plato is to his dialogue *Phaedrus*, where, in one passage (256d), the lover, beholding his beloved, sees a self-reflection in the mirror ("So he is in love, but he knows not with whom; he does not understand his own condition and cannot explain it; . . . he sees himself in his lover as in a mirror, but is not conscious of the fact"; trans. H. N. Fowler).

109. Poem 7 in twenty stanzas at the end of letter 8.

Pray think of your own situation, Signora Sarra; and if there should occur to you any uncertainty that, it would seem, might not be resolved with natural light, consider that believing is more characteristic of faith than seeing. Remember that the omnipotence of God can also make sense of those things that human reason cannot manage to understand.

For the rest, since I do not wish to burden you with having to write more than you are able, it will be enough for me if, when you get any letter of mine, you make it known to me without delay, using these words alone: I have received your letter of such and such a day and month. To begin doing so, please tell me, in answer to the present letter, if you received a letter from the twenty-third of June, 1618 [letter 3], in which I asked you to correct the poem "Esther," most incorrectly reprinted in Milan, according to the one reasonably [27] correct version that I sent to you as originally printed in Genoa. Let me know as well if you received another one from the nineteenth of last January [letter 7], which I dispatched by regular mail a few days before I sent Marco to visit you and deliver the letter written on the twenty-sixth of the same month [letter 8].

Above all things, take greatest care with your health; and not offending God, willingly embrace those opportunities¹¹⁰ that might let you live happily. Be assured that, beyond their making you a Christian, I could have no better news than hearing that you are just as healthy of body as I am convinced you are robust of mind. Genoa, 23 February 1619.

Your Ladyship's devoted and most indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

P.S. My servant obeyed what I obliged him to.¹¹¹ I ask you to forgive him and blame me. But do not give me reason to commit another fault, for I am fully resolved not to serve you for any other reward than your grace.

LETTER 10 (9 MARCH 1619)

In answer to a letter dated 24 February and partly anticipated in letter 9, for we already know that Còpia was especially lavish in praising the gift she received from Cebà, yet complained that his servant was unwilling to accept her own gifts to him in return. She appears to have been needled by Cebà's constant preaching, from which she asked him more than once to abstain. Part of the letter was probably in reaction to Cebà's brother

110. For conversion.

111. Number 11 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had complained that the servant Marco did not wish to accept her presents."

Lanfranco's death, about which she wrote a poem (reproduced below). She might, in referring to Cebà's own verses, have made a slightly critical remark, at which the author took umbrage.

Of females there are plenty, most noble Signora Sarra, but of ladies, few. Do not be surprised, then, if I, who have found one dear to my heart, willingly seize upon every opportunity to reason with her. From now on I will do my best to trouble you as little as possible. But I cannot, this time, pass over in silence your lovely [28] letter of 24 February, in which, not content with what you had written me elsewhere, you elevate the lowness of my present in such a way as to make me feel much more ashamed than honored. Still, I would not say any more of it to you than my being glad to find you as magnanimous in receiving little things as I have known you to be generous in giving big ones.

As regards the reluctance of my servant,¹¹² I reply to you that he was not disparaging your favors but observing my commands. In this respect, I will not keep from you a proverb that circulates in our parts: "Love your friend despite his faults."¹¹³ I would ask you, moreover, to apply it to me, assuring you that your powers could never so increase as for me to change my inclination, unless in the end you were to become queen¹¹⁴ and want me for your secretary, whereby I would be content with your paying my wages by enriching my ears with the treasure of your thoughts.¹¹⁵

For the rest, I am very flattered by your having honored the memory of my brother, the Commendatore,¹¹⁶ with, as evidence, your verses,¹¹⁷ in which I have recognized as much power as you will find weakness in mine. But if I were able to conquer you in one thing only,¹¹⁸ it would be to my glory for you to surpass me in all others.¹¹⁹ To a woman who understands

112. His "reluctance" to accept her presents.

113. "Ama l'amico tuo col vizio suo"; said to be an ancient adage (Salvatore Battaglia and Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti, eds., *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 1:391).

114. In reference to Queen Esther.

115. Cebà may be saying that the only thing that would make him deflect from his missionary course would be her conversion, after which she would rule over him as a queen over her servant.

116. Lanfranco, Cebà's younger brother, achieved the rank of Commendatore in the chivalrous order of the Knights of Malta. Cebà memorialized him in an extended "epitaph" (*Epitafio d'Ansaldo Cebà per la memoria del Commendator Fra Gian Lanfranco suo fratello* [1619]; 71 pages!).

117. Quoted below (poem 8).

118. The "one thing" would be his making her convert.

119. Refers possibly to Copia's superiority over Cebà not only in her physical and mental assets but more particularly as a poet.

well I say few words, and to whoever can make you fulfill what you understand,¹²⁰ I offer my most fervent prayers. Genoa, 9 March 1619.

Your Ladyship's devoted and indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

8. SONNET

[29] BY SIGNORA SARRA COPIA

Signor, pianto non merta il gran Lanfranco,
 Ché s'ei, mentre già fu nel human velo,
 Illustrò d'opre il mondo, hor gode in Cielo, 3
 Giunto al porto, di gloria, invito e franco,
 Se per calle d'honor già non mai stanco
 Mostrossi in terra, ardor spreggiando e gelo, 6
 Hor fiammeggia alma pura, in puro zelo
 Converso in raggio rilucente e bianco.
 Rivolgi gl'occhi, Ansaldo, all'oriente 9
 E vedrai scintillar fiamma novella,
 Ond'è che sol de gli empi il cor pavente,
 Del tuo fido german la luce è quella, 12
 Che contra il Trace ancor cometa ardente
 In ciel si mostra e minacciante stella.

Signor, the great Lanfranco does not deserve weeping,
 For if he illuminated the world with his works while once
 in a human veil,
 Now in heaven, having reached the harbor, 3
 And being unconquered and free, he enjoys glory;
 If, in treading the path of honor on earth, he never showed
 Any fatigue, scorning fire and ice,¹²¹ 6
 Now flaming as a pure soul, in pure zeal,
 He has been transformed into a shining, bright ray.
 Turn your eyes, Ansaldo, to the East 9
 And you will see a new flame sparkle,¹²²

120. That is, bring about your conversion.

121. Fire being the passions of love (Lanfranco appears to have been celibate), and ice, the difficulties of aging (see below); more generally, the word pair indicates the hardships of life (in poem 17:8, on page 57, it becomes "heat and the winter"; see also poem 1:11, on page 3, with "heat or cold").

122. The flame, or the sun that rose from the East, is the light radiated by his brother on high (see line 12).

Whence only the heart of the wicked need fear;
 The light is that of your faithful blood brother: 12
 It shows in heaven, and opposes the gladiator,¹²³
 As yet a burning comet and a threatening star.

9. SONNET IN RESPONSE

BY ANSALDO CEBÀ

*Non piango, o Sarra, il mio fratel Lanfranco,
 Perché sia rotto il suo corporeo velo,
 So ch'a volar speditamente in cielo 3
 Sciolse lo spirito avventuroso e franco.*
*Ma piango, oimè, che, mentre infermo e stanco
 De l'estrema stagion m'appresso al gelo, 6
 Non veggo lui che con fraterno zelo
 Miri 'l mio volto impallidito e bianco.*
*Ver'è ch'al suo cader, ne l'Oriente 9
 Risorge a gli occhi miei fiamma novella,
 Ond'esser pò che 'l Thrace ancor pavente,
 Ma de' begli occhi tuoi la luce è quella 12
 Che per minacciar lui cometa ardente
 E per consolar me s'è fatta stella.*

I do not weep, O Sarra, over my brother Lanfranco
 For his corporal veil having been ruptured;
 I know that in his swift flight to heaven 3
 He released his adventurous and free spirit.
 Rather, while, sick and tired, I approach
 The ice of the final season, I weep, alas, 6
 For not seeing him who, with fraternal zeal,
 Would behold my face, pale and white.¹²⁴

123. Originally *Trace*, in the sense of a fierce warrior; cf. Battaglia and Squarotti, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 21:110 ("In ancient Rome, a gladiator who fought with a crooked-bladed knife and a small, square shield"). But here *Trace* appears to be a metaphor for the enemy, or more specifically the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul, or Constantinople, which extended, on the European side of the Bosphorus, into Thrace). As a member of the Knights of Malta, Lanfranco fought against the Turks.

124. While *bianco* (white) was used in Copia's poem (no. 8:8) for "bright," now it is used for "pallid."

It is true that, with his fall, in the East 9
 There rises a new flame in my eyes,¹²⁵
 Whence it could be that the gladiator again is fearful;¹²⁶
 But the light is that of your beautiful eyes, 12
 Where it has become a burning comet, to threaten him,
 And a star, to comfort me.

[30] LETTER 11 (30 MARCH 1619)

In answer to a letter that Copia wrote sometime after 9 March. She referred to Cebà as a scholar and philosopher. But she disputed his views on faith, invoking Aristotle, perhaps, to the effect that faith counts among the supernatural virtues.¹²⁷ She reacted, moreover, to Cebà's comment about her being "a Jewess out of season" (letter 9.26). Beyond Aristotle, Copia deferred to the authority of Leon Modena. She quoted his opinion of Cebà's epic poem "Queen Esther" and sent Cebà a copy of Modena's own play about the queen. Modena had dedicated it to Copia, as Cebà discovered to his chagrin (see part 4, item 1, for the dedication).

I am neither a scholar nor a philosopher, as you make me out to be, my Signora. But I am so well enlightened by God as to realize that in matters of religion I need not be ruled by the teachings [*doctrina*] of Aristotle or his philosophy.¹²⁸ Although I willingly take him for a guide in those sciences where he saw things, I dismiss him equally willingly in those others where he was blind. Still, even conceding to you that every faith causes imperfection in the intellect, as was his opinion,¹²⁹ I respond that had he taken notice of the Christian faith he would have pronounced his judgment with greater reserve.

If you thought that it [faith] numbers among the supernatural virtues, which you yourself exclude from imperfection, you would not have assaulted me with an argument that shows a greater desire *in you* to debase the Faith of Christ than anything *in its constitution* to warrant its being debased. Oh, Signora Sarra, well do I know that you are endowed with a subtle and noble

125. The "new flame" being Copia.

126. Because Copia has the power to conquer the enemy (i.e., gladiator), here any belligerent soul.

127. As an empiricist who ponders the senses and experiences of a natural world, Aristotle regarded faith as belonging to the supernatural.

128. Number 12 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had quoted Aristotle in matters of faith" (†3v).

129. As may be inferred from Aristotle's general emphasis, in his writings (*Categories*, *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, *Physics*, etc.), on reason as the source of knowledge.

mind. But I see that, in this matter, your subtleties are fractured. I regret that she who possesses such a large part of my soul makes use of her intellect to plunge into the shadows of perdition. Your desire is to know, but does not knowing for you mean a philosopher,¹³⁰ who feeds your mind with some speculations, and a poet,¹³¹ who stirs your spirit with some marvels? Well do I notice, my mistress, that they steal away your heart. I seem to understand that you place your glory in the one honorable quality of being ingenious and well-read. [31] Still, everything is vanity except for loving God and believing and doing whatever is necessary for getting to see Him.

I am not saying this, however, to reprimand you for the study of letters, but rather because I would not want you to establish as an end what you ought reasonably to set yourself as a means. Similarly, I did not say that you were a Jewess out of season by reason of the few graces that rain today upon your people,¹³² but rather because circumcision has yielded its place to baptism now that the Messiah promised by your law has come. To baptism, Signora Sarra, I pray God to call you effectively. It was just this week, during which we celebrated the anniversary of His son's Passion,¹³³ that as many prayers were offered for you as the prickly spurs driving me to long for your salvation. These, Signora, are the noblest offices you could expect from my acquaintance. Though they please you little at present, I am not without hope that, one day, they may also make you recognize me as a friend.

Friends are not those who meet with you for the sole delight of your conversation, but rather those who, infatuated with the generosity of your heart, long to see you honored in this world and blessed in paradise. Among the latter friends I like to believe that I hold the foremost place. Yet I think that the poet who dedicated his tragedy to you¹³⁴ likes to believe that *he* is the one who holds it. Since he is Jewish though, as you are, he more than I can well honor you with his pen among the living. But he cannot set you, as I already do, on the road to glory [32] among the blessed.

May that kind rabbi forgive me.¹³⁵ I am beholden to him, even so, for

130. Aristotle.

131. That the poet is Leon Modena becomes clear over the next two pages (31–32).

132. Number 13 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "Thus she had interpreted the words 'you are a Jewess out of season' in letter 9.[26]" (†3v).

133. On Good Friday, during Holy Week.

134. Modena, *L'Ester, tragedia tratta dalla Sacra Scrittura* (1619); for dedication, see below, 4.1. 3–7.

135. For my remarks.

his judgment of my poem, just as I am obliged to you for the copy you sent me of his: its frontispiece signed with your most noble name¹³⁶ will not be among the lesser reasons for making me read it willingly. Indeed, most willingly will I always hear that among Jews and Christians you are praised by praised persons.

Let as much suffice as an end to this letter. If you perchance feel offended by it, apologize for me to your Sage. *Meliora sunt vulnera diligentis* [Better are the wounds of a friend].¹³⁷ Rest assured that I love you so dearly that if God were to inspire you to avail yourself of my means for your conversion, you would perhaps find that a man who is and can do nothing would be and could do everything for you. Genoa, 30 March 1619.

Your Ladyship's devoted and most indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

LETTER 12 (11 MAY 1619)

In response to a letter that Còpia wrote on 26 April. She was upset by Cebà's relentless badgering of her to change her ways (his letter 11 was particularly annoying). To counter his missionary zeal, she spoke for the superiority of Judaism. When pressed to express her views on Christianity, she declined out of reticence, though admitted to having a lot to say about it in private. To Cebà's claim that she was blind, she answered that the Mosaic faith sufficed for her to see the light. His demands, she asserted, were one-sided: why must she become a Christian while he did not contemplate the option of becoming a Jew?

Most noble Signora Sarra,

I was truly afraid that my letter of 30 March might smack of bitterness to your taste. But it seemed to me that I wrote it with a heart so sweet that it never entered my thoughts that you might be disturbed by it, as from your letter of 26 April I gather you were. These are the dangers to be incurred in friendships, and should they be [33] true, they are rather easily overcome with good intentions as a remedy.

Unfortunately, you are, I believe, a Jew and not a Gentile.¹³⁸ Even if you appear to me to be a Gentile, you do so much more in the sense of the Tus-

136. Her name appears not on the frontispiece but at the head of the dedication (see below, 4.1.3).

137. Prov. 27:6. Continuation: *quam fraudulenta oscula odientis* [than the false kisses of a foe]. The Sage is Modena.

138. Number 14 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that she was a Jew and not a Gentile and that she exalted the dignity of her law" (†3v).

can word than in the meaning of the Greek one.¹³⁹ I am not saying that the Mosaic law, in its nobility, is not great. Rather I maintain that it is greater when corrected by the Christian one. Regarding the latter, it may seem to you that you cannot speak freely, yet by censuring it for its inappropriate and mysterious composition it does not seem to me that you can discuss it while in captivity.¹⁴⁰

I will omit saying whether such a license¹⁴¹ is proper for Jews in addressing their masters. But I will indeed say to you that it is unseemly for you in addressing your servants. Your servant am I, the lowliest of any you might have. Were I your master, which cannot be, I think I would but little understand what greatness of mind is if, forbidding you to say what you feel, I should want, as you do, to avail myself of a similar advantage.¹⁴² Expel everything you still have then from the confines of your chamber,¹⁴³ for if what you say is similar to what you have said, the freedom of your speech will not defile the purity of our Faith.

Answer me, if you choose, that I have exceeded the limits with you, and order me, if you please, to put a brake on my prayers.¹⁴⁴ For me will your insults be graces and your prohibitions incentives. I confess to you, though, that you have not been able to sweeten those prohibitions with the promise of honoring me for other virtues so as to prevent the latter from proving most bitter to my taste. Certainly, [34] I do not recognize in myself any virtues for you to appreciate beyond the one that prompts me to desire your salvation.

Believe me, Signora Sarra: your salvation is beyond hope if you do not wake up; and the reasons that might waken you have been said so clearly

139. The Tuscan would be "genteel" and, for those who worshiped pagan gods before the coming of Christ, "heathen," but this second meaning is apparently not the one that Cebà intended here; the Greek would be "a Gentile," i.e., foreigner.

140. Antiphrastic play on the words "freely" (*con libertà*) and "in captivity" (*con servitù*). By Copia's "captivity" Cebà meant her being enslaved by Judaism.

141. To censure Christianity.

142. Cebà seems to be saying that masters have the right to criticize whereas servants are bound to keep silent. But he questions the custom: is it right to take advantage of superiority and prevent a servant from responding?

143. Number 15 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that she could not speak against our Faith, except when she was alone in her chamber" (†3v).

144. Number 16 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had refused the prayers for her conversion unless they were duly reciprocal" (meaning that prayers should be said for Cebà's conversion too) (†3v).

by the one who knows more than I do¹⁴⁵ that it is unnecessary for me to say them again. Be attentive in reading the book that I sent you, especially its last part;¹⁴⁶ search for other ones [books], of which there is no lack; add some live voices if you hesitate;¹⁴⁷ and pray to God that He grant you that light of which you think you have little need, though you have the greatest. Then make whatever speech you like in my regard, but do not get so enthused about making me become a Jew, for, some time ago, I spared you this effort: Jewish was my God's mother, whom I view as an advocate in heaven; Jewish was Queen Esther, whom I chose as the subject of my poem; Jewish are you yourself, whom I have made the mistress of my wishes. Hence, without my ceasing to be Christian, you can with good reason consider me most Jewish. But you should certainly not be disturbed if the love I bear you can not be idle, nor should you reprove me if the dread of your danger moves my bowels to feel compassion.

Since I realize, however, that the latter subject¹⁴⁸ does not appeal to you, I will put an end to talking to you about it in the future. Nay, inasmuch as I cannot talk to you about anything else when I write, I will even abstain, with your good grace, from writing to you, the more so since I know that you do not answer me without annoyance and that while loving you I cannot cause you annoyance without my feeling it too.

Well [35] do I promise you to keep the most honorable memory of your person; and if you should hear of me alive or dead, I beg you to remember me, in hearing my name, with some affection for my being not a friend or an ordinary acquaintance but a most devoted and affectionate servant. Genoa, 11 May 1619.

*Ansaldo Cebà, a true friend and most ardent servant of the valiant Signora Sarra Còpia [sic]*¹⁴⁹

P.S. Without any obligation to reply.

145. The author of the book that Cebà sent her (see next sentence).

146. To all appearances, the book by Luis de Granada mentioned in letter 42.115, where, too, Cebà asked Còpia to ponder its last part; see also under letter 8.20.

147. Refers to his and others' praises of Christianity.

148. Namely, "the dread of your danger."

149. For Còpia's removal of one of these *p*'s, see letter 17.59.

LETTER 13 (8 JUNE 1619)

In response to a long letter that Copia wrote between 11 May and 8 June. She complained about having been insulted by Cebà and asked him to stop talking about the need for her salvation. His words made her shed tears. Thinking perhaps she might mitigate his criticism or restore what she perceived as his gradually waning favor, she prepared to send him another gift, a crystal cup.

Most genteel Signora Sarra,

I will briefly respond to your long letter, not because I lack material, but because I have an overabundance of it.

I did not intend to remove my favor¹⁵⁰ from you, for I do not recognize my having any favor to be bestowed; and even if I did, I bestowed it on you in such a way that I am not free to take it back. Indeed, I told you that I no longer wanted to write to you, for it seemed to me that in writing I might offend you. Whether this is the same as depriving you of my favor I will let *you* decide. Just as you have not erred in judging other things, so you should take into account that I have never warned you about your salvation without sweetening the warning with love and that I have never written any warning without tempering freedom¹⁵¹ with courtesy.

I render you many thanks, then, for the pleasures [36] you so lavishly have offered me. In doing so, however, you have had more regard for your kindness than consideration for my status, for it is reasonable for your servants, whether you treat them well or ill, to recognize their condition and not to be offended by what you could not do without reason.

In conclusion, I entreat you to abstain, by all means, from sending me the crystal cup you prepared. If it is true that you have shed some tears for my sake, you could not give me a crystal of such value as would not be surpassed by the one of your eyes. Thus may it please God that you make use of it [the crystal], some day, on a better occasion. Meanwhile, rest assured that whether you are named or not in my letters,¹⁵² you will always be inscribed in my memory. May you live happily. Genoa, 8 June 1619.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent friend and servant

150. Originally *gratia*, both here and in the continuation.

151. That is, freedom of speech.

152. Said otherwise, whether I write to you or not.

LETTER 14 (22 JUNE 1619)

In answer to a letter that Còpia wrote after 8 June. She mentioned that at Cebà's suggestion she had been corresponding with the Genoese noblewoman Isabella Doria (the wife of Marc'Antonio Doria, to whom Cebà dedicated the present letters; Cebà appears to have engaged her as an assistant in his efforts to secure Còpia's conversion).¹⁵³ Her attitude toward Isabella was one of reverence. She continued to complain to Cebà of his nagging. What he expected of her, she said, was neither reasonable nor realistic.

Most gracious Signora Sarra,

Out of respect for me, I believe, you commemorated my brother in your genteel verses. I feel obliged to inform you, then, that even if he deserved your honoring him, he did so more on his own account than on mine. I am sending you an epitaph that I wrote to repay him the debt of my affection¹⁵⁴ and show the world the evidence of his virtues.¹⁵⁵ [37] Read it over, please, to favor me, at least once. Recognize in it what the virtues of Christ are capable of doing to one who truly is registered in the catalog of his militia.

For the rest, I am most delighted that you have become so fond of our city as to have found in it a lady to revere as your divinity.¹⁵⁶ She, though, I am quite certain, would most willingly renounce such veneration were you prepared to bend your knees to the one to whom she bends both her knees and her mind. Her hand,¹⁵⁷ more delicate than mine, should appeal to your will¹⁵⁸ more gently than I have been able to—I completely defer to it in the future. I am honored to have been if not the cause, then at least the occasion for having made you acquire such friends in this city as might sustain you, in your need, with more sweetness and greater discretion.

It could perhaps be that I was lacking in discretion in speaking to you of your conversion. But in no way was I lacking in liberality in giving you my love. Nay, if I may be allowed to say what I feel, I would say that my affection exceeds yours by far, for mine certainly does not seek anything else but you whereas yours demands everything else but me. It is quite true that what it demands comes from so noble a desire that, although it appears to

153. For Isabella Doria alias Isabella della Tolfa, see letter 17a and 1.2 below.

154. *Epitafio d'Ansaldo Cebà*, etc. (see above).

155. Here and in next sentence originally *virtù*, in the singular, which ordinarily would mean "power."

156. Marc'Antonio Doria's wife Isabella (see above); she is named in the next letter.

157. That is, the script of her hand.

158. That is, persuade your mind.

me that your love for me is by accident, your accidents, for me, are substantial in their every reason.

Thus I remain most content with both that part of your mind it pleases you to offer me and the causes for which, I believe, you offer it to me. In return, I would like you to be satisfied with both my speech and, [38] no less, my silence; and to be assured that the debt I daily repay you with my mind cannot compare to the one I repay you with my pen. From the latter you have had till now so many images of my mind [*animo*] that it is only reasonable that I no longer tire the kindliness of your eyes, for if you have such beautiful ones, as I am told, my writings are an object hardly appropriate to them. The love that I bear you is appropriate instead for earning a place in your memory. Were you to give me that place, I would recognize it as a grace; and were you to withhold it from me, I would not regard it as an insult.

May the Lord make of your person whatever will give light to the blindness of the Jews; and may He add fervor to the moderation of the Christians.¹⁵⁹ Genoa, 22 June 1619.

Ansaldo Cebà, Signora Sarra's most ardent servant

LETTER 15 (10 AUGUST 1619)

Copia wrote a letter on 21 June, one day before letter 14. She appears to have indicated her willingness to spare the recipient any suffering by sacrificing her life for his. To the letter she appended a plaintive canzone (no longer extant), in seventy-seven verses, where, beyond beaping her usual praises on him, she spoke of her tears (Cebà responded in 356 verses, or poems 12 and 13 below).¹⁶⁰ Several weeks elapsed, and Copia, probably annoyed by Cebà's insistence on her conversion, refrained from writing him. Cebà must have been piqued by her silence, the more so since, for one, Copia failed to acknowledge the book he had dispatched along with his letter and, for another, she had written to Isabella Doria in the interim.

My most genteel Signora Sarra,

On 22 June I wrote you a letter and sent you a book. Though I have heard nothing from you about them, I trust you received them, for several weeks ago you answered a letter that Signora Isabella Doria sent to you via the same bearer. I am telling you this, however, not because I expect to have an answer from you (for I remember having released you from that obligation) but be-

159. By which he means the ability to convince Copia by the vehemence of their arguments.

160. We know the length of the poems—if, in fact, these are the poems in question—from a passage in a letter that Cebà addressed to Gian Battista Spinola and included in his *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 148–49: see 1.3.1, though there Cebà mentions 331 verses (to all appearances, a *lapsus calami*).

cause, if the one who delivered [39] Signora Isabella's letter forgot mine, which I doubt, you might see to recovering it upon the receipt of the present one.

Yes, it is true that I got a letter of yours from 21 June, with a canzone composed out of tears. Though I have yet to answer it, you should know, as I do, that I actually have answered it so abundantly¹⁶¹ that by offering me the cup of your tears¹⁶² you seem to have had in mind the words of Isaiah: *Inebriabo te lacryma mea* [I will inebriate you with my tears].¹⁶³ Since I hesitated to offend you in any way with this inebriation, however, I have abstained from appearing before you¹⁶⁴ for all of last month.

After considering, in the end, that your splendor can be increased by my pen, and that it has indeed been increased most amply thereby, I concluded that you ought, out of gratitude at least, to bear with me patiently if my devotion to celebrating you is accompanied by my inclination to converting you. As enclosures, therefore, I am sending you some poems, among them a quadrangular crown¹⁶⁵ that will perhaps be more suitable as an ornament for your hair than was the contraption¹⁶⁶ you sent me as an assistance to my head.¹⁶⁷ Read and criticize them as you please, noting, however, that when I speak of myself as composing poetry I am not saying what I choose but what my Muse commands. It has been so courted by me that I think it wants to grant me with a royal hand¹⁶⁸ what it feels I have been denied by the world with a common one.¹⁶⁹

But I have spoken too much of my verses when I should be speaking of yours. You praise me in them so marvelously that if you had written [40] them for any other, you certainly would have done him the greatest honor. But to

161. In 356 verses!

162. Number 17 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that the crystal cup that was refused [and that Cebà had insisted, in letter 13, that she not send to him] was transformed to such [viz., a cup of tears] from her weeping" (†3v).

163. Isa. 16:9.

164. In script.

165. Poem 12 below, a "quadrangular crown," for it consists of four intertwined sonnets: the *capoverso* of the first sonnet returns as the concluding verse of the last (line 1 = line 56) and the last verse of each of the first three as the *capoverso* of the one that follows (14 = 15, 28 = 29, 42 = 43). For *corona* as a chain poem, see Battaglia and Squarotti, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 3:798 (definition no. 21). Cebà meant for the "crown" to be placed on Còpia as his (seeming) Queen of Hearts.

166. Originally *arnese*, which Cebà may have used sarcastically for "thingamajig."

167. For this headpiece, made of dried fruit so arranged as to form a garland, see above, letter 6.17.

168. Hence the "quadrangular crown."

169. Originally [*mano*] *popolare*: Cebà implies that he has not won public fame.

honor me, who deserve so little, your efforts have been in vain (pardon me). Though I thank you infinitely for exerting them, I beg you to save them in the future for one who has qualities that might better call for them. Meanwhile, since I do not have anything of greater value, I return my verses for yours.

But what can I say, in the end, of the desire you expressed to prolong my life with your death? To be sure, I have never had anything so noble to gloat over. It is true, all the same, that no greater mishap could befall me than what you propose. Your life is so dear to me that though I speak and write of you, it is only out of the desire thereby to perpetuate yours. Should it please God that I achieve my ends, be assured that I would procure your life as willingly with my death as I secure it with my mortification.¹⁷⁰ May my dearest Signora Sarra live, then; and may anyone die who can not be useful to the world, as you would be if whatever persons remain in the synagogue today were to prepare themselves, with your guidance, to make a crusade under the banners of the Church.

To be frank, I feel increasingly burdened every day with sufferings in my body and my mind.¹⁷¹ Yet for me to forget you and your gentility is impossible, which makes me believe that whether my feelings are welcome or unwelcome to you, I am in any case committed to live and die as yours. I beg you to keep this commitment of mine constantly in mind, even though you may not see my letters. If it should happen that henceforth I desist from writing more often than you would like, you may be sure that it is not out of [41] vengeance for the way you have affected me.

Though I may have released you only once from the duty of answering me, it has seemed to me most reasonable, as long as we were both equally obliged to write to each other, for the mistress to maintain her decorum by keeping silent and the servant to recognize his condition by speaking. In this same silence do I beseech you to continue with me in the future.

If you should want to favor me by acknowledging the receipt of this letter, do so only when you have occasion to write to Signora Isabella. I am exceptionally happy that you have replied to her letters, both because she is a lady who deserves your friendship and because she has as a husband a gentleman who is not displeased with mine. May the Lord allow her to work for your salvation; and may He bestow on you the grace needed for her work not to be wasted. Genoa, 10 August 1619.

Your Ladyship's devoted and most indebted servant, Ansaldo Cebà

170. By denying himself the pleasures of the flesh.

171. Read "sufferings in my mind [*animo*]" as perhaps "mental anguish," from the little success that Cebà had with Copia's salvation (see letter 17.58: "the bitterness of my sufferings, among which . . . your persisting in Judaism is one of the greatest").

P.S. Forgive me and be understanding if I have not been able to write in my own hand.

10. MADRIGAL

*Ancor ch'io ricusassi*¹⁷²

Although I refused¹⁷³
 To touch your crystal with my mouth,
 I did not at all do it, Sarra, to refuse something sent by
 serious fault.¹⁷⁴ 3
 My lips were embittered
 By the burning¹⁷⁵ voices
 I have uselessly sent to the winds 6
 [42] For your salvation;
 Thus I rejected, in distinct and clear words,
 Any exchange of your bitter crystals for sweet ones.¹⁷⁶ 9

11. MADRIGAL

*Trar le pietre Anfione*¹⁷⁷

Amphion was able to stir stones¹⁷⁸
 With his sweet-sounding lyre,
 As was Orpheus to move animals with his. 3

172. This madrigal is more properly a *ballata*, because of its structure (*ripresa*, two *piedi*, and final verses) and rhymes (*aBB/cdcd/EE*, in iambic meter).

173. Number 18 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had complained that the crystal cup she wanted to send was refused" (†3v).

174. Originally "to refuse a serious fault," by which Cebà seems to be referring to a breach of etiquette, namely, her having sent him the cup.

175. In the sense of amorous.

176. Verses 8–9 are obscured by the uncertain usage of *cristallo* (in line 2) as a crystal cup or possibly a drop of liquid or a tear and, similarly, of *cristalli* (in line 9) as liquid matter or possibly tears. The poet may be saying that he refused to drink from the crystal cup that Còpia sent him because his lips were so embittered from her obstinacy that he did not want to sweeten them by tasting its liquid, or that he refused to taste her bitter tears lest, in his own embitterment, he find them sweet.

177. Rhymed as *aBb/acdC/DEE* (in iambic meter).

178. Number 19 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had compared the author to Amphion and Orpheus"

Sarra, how could you
 Compare me to them
 If I have not yet stirred or moved you 6
 To adore that God whom I adore?
 Oh, perhaps they were able to do more than I can,
 Or if they could not do more, then you, with your
 hardness, 9
 Conquer and transfix animals and rocks.

12. FOUR SONNETS IN A QUADRANGULAR CROWN¹⁷⁹

1

Di poche lagrimette un gran torrente

A great torrent from few little tears,¹⁸⁰
 Sarra, do you release to irrigate the fame
 Of one who esteems and loves you beyond measure 3
 And who carries you as a portrait in his mind.
 But the name you confer on me is brighter
 Than the one the world recognizes or calls me by; 6
 And though our craving¹⁸¹ rises to heaven,
 Opinions are slow perhaps in sustaining it.
 I am not a swan if that songful bird 9
 Did not make my name rather well-known
 When I sang of yours, charming and beautiful.
 But I can well testify that Apollo, instead 12
 Of shrinking the beautiful platoon of the Muses,¹⁸²
 Has increased it for your sake from nine to ten.¹⁸³

(†3v). According to myth, Amphion and his brother Zethos built the walls of Thebes to the sound of Amphion's lyre, whereby the stones moved into place of their own accord (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 9.5.6–7).

179. See explanation in footnote to the first mention of this crown at 1.1.39.

180. Number 20 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had called one of her canzoni written in praise of the author a lament [*pianto*]" (†3v; or better, "a tearful lament," since *pianto* also means weeping, as emphasized in the first and last sonnets—it is no wonder that the *capoverso* here returns at the end).

181. To be poets or achieve fame.

182. Capitals here and below (for Muses, Death, Fame, Font) are after original.

183. Apollo, that is, has added Copia to the Nine Muses as a tenth. The last line of this first sonnet is the same as the first line of the next, and similarly for the following two sonnets.

2

Cresciuto per tu'amor di nove in diece

Increased for your sake from nine to ten
 Was the chorus of Muses by the fair-headed Apollo;
 [43] But the name, which he elevated by its increase, 3
 Is still not allowed to be heard by the ears of the people.¹⁸⁴
 Well do I know that for remaking what Death
 Already unmade with a miserable blow,¹⁸⁵ 6
 And for binding your pearls to our neck,¹⁸⁶
 He remade your lights and language and lips.¹⁸⁷
 That you are a Muse, a nymph, graceful, proud, and grand, 9
 Is what Fame carries and spreads about
 As a happy and noble burden;
 It [Fame] says that you have beautiful eyes and beautiful
 tresses, 12
 It relates that you have great and venerable skills,
 But it still does not name your Muse.¹⁸⁸

3

Ma la tua Musa ancora però non noma

But it still does not name your Muse,
 As one hears the names of Urania or Clio;¹⁸⁹
 And perhaps the high office was assigned to me 3
 By him¹⁹⁰ who wishes that I carry you from Zion to
 Rome.¹⁹¹

184. Meaning that though Còpia has all the potential for greatness, by not converting she still is not great, therefore cannot be called a Muse.

185. That is, Christ's death changed the world order, replacing Judaism with Christianity. Cebà may have been referring, in this and the next verse, to words or ideas in Còpia's written "lament."

186. Said otherwise: for adding Còpia's ornaments to the necks of Christians.

187. Meaning, perhaps, that when Còpia began to correspond with Cebà, her "language" changed, her "lips" uttered new words, and the "lights" of her fame brightened.

188. "Name your Muse," that is, call you a Muse by name, is one reading. Another is that Cebà himself was her Muse: having said (in the first sonnet) that he failed to achieve public success, he may be referring here to his being Còpia's unnamed, i.e., unacclaimed Muse.

189. Urania, the Muse of astronomy; Clio, the Muse of history.

190. Apollo, head of the Muses, or possibly Christ, to whom Cebà is indebted as his own Muse.

191. To convert you from Judaism to Christianity.

It is true that to name you with the speech
 He advises me to use I am still not able 6
 If, as you tamed my will,¹⁹²
 You have not persuaded and tamed your wish.¹⁹³
 The name is ready to be said; live and shining 9
 Are the graces he¹⁹⁴ displays on her brow;
 And beautiful is what he hears or writes.
 But it is futile for my lips to be prepared 12
 To give you a name equal to that of the other goddesses
 If I do not bathe your head in the sacred Font.¹⁹⁵

4

S'io non ti bagno il crin nel sacro Fonte

If I do not bathe your head in the sacred Font,
 I am not able to give your Muse the name
 That, as a marvel of beauty exceeding others' limbs, 3
 Would make your virtues manifest and esteemed.
 [44] But if, to change the Cocytus and Acheron,¹⁹⁶
 You prepared yourself for the river¹⁹⁷ where I have often 6
 Submerged and sunk your heart,
 I will arrange for Urania to fall¹⁹⁸ and for you to rise.
 Courage, O beautiful Jewess: the pupil of your eye 9
 Did you, for my sake, compassionately allow
 To be bathed with some drops;¹⁹⁹
 Bathe, for your own sake, your blazing tresses²⁰⁰ 12

192. By inducing Cebà to enter into correspondence with her.

193. To convert.

194. Apollo via Cebà.

195. Of baptism.

196. Two rivers in Hades: the Cocytus connects with the Acheron, over which Charon ferried the dead (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10.28.1–2). "To change" the two is to divert the course of death.

197. Of baptism.

198. Read as, I will change the course of history.

199. For shedding tears.

200. In the baptismal font ("blazing," for golden).

And, kindled by another spark, increase
A great torrent from few little tears.²⁰¹

13. CANZONE

1

*Io non so, se tu piangessi*²⁰²

If you wept, I do not know
Why you would want
To die for me;²⁰³ 3
Our reputation would be excessive
If your weeping
Erupted into such a great stream.²⁰⁴ 6

2

Chi son io, che, per coprire

Who am I, taking cover
From the wrath
Ignited and incited by Fate, 9
With her life wounded
By a ferocious love,
To oppose such a great personage?²⁰⁵ 12

201. The other spark is Christianity. As in the first verse of sonnet 1 in this cycle, so here Còpia increases the few tears she sheds on Cebà's account to make them a torrent in her *lamento*, thereby spreading his fame as a writer and Christian.

202. This poem, in the brevity of its stanzas, is more properly a *canzonetta* than a canzone. That Cebà considered it a canzone, however, is clear from his having so designated the previous multistrophic one (1.1/L8, no. 7, stanza 19:113, and letter 9.25, at the end). Its rhyme scheme is: stanza 1, AaB/CcB; stanza 2, DdEffe, etc. (in trochaic meter; here majuscles are for eight-syllable verses and minuscules for four-syllable ones).

203. Number 21 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that she wept out of longing to die for the author" (†3v).

204. "Excessive" (line 4), because their names would be known to all if Còpia died for Cebà.

205. Obscure: by Fate, originally *la Parca*, Cebà seems to be referring to one of the three female divinities (*Moirai*) who, in ancient myth, presided over human destiny; or even figuratively to

3

Io son un ch'in quel che scrissi

I am one who, though I opened,
 In what I wrote,
 The deep bosom of the Muses,²⁰⁶ 15
 And though I disdain
 Jewels, kingdoms, and crimson garments,
 Is poorly regarded by the world.²⁰⁷ 18

4

E tu pregi chi s'estolle

You esteem the one who rises
 On that hill,²⁰⁸
 Only for Lethe to sigh in vain;²⁰⁹ 21
 [45] But, if you stoop to comparisons,
 You prefer
 The one whom the world elsewhere admires.²¹⁰ 24

Death "her"self, as if to say that wounded by (the arrows of) lovers, Death fills with anger and cuts their life strings. Perhaps Cebà was making a parenthetical statement about Copia's love, hence "her life" would indicate Copia's, or to retranslate the stanza: "Who am I, taking cover / From the wrath / That Fate ignites and incites / When her [Copia's] life is wounded / By a ferocious love, / To oppose such a great personage [Death]?" The stanza can also be read in relation to stanza 46:271 below, where Christ is wounded by love: as Christ, so Cebà.

206. He gained the support of the Muses, touching their heartstrings.

207. Again Cebà complains about not having won public acclaim.

208. Obscure: perhaps Cebà was referring to Moses, who climbed Mount Sinai; or even to himself, who climbed toward Parnassus, the abode of Apollo and the Muses.

209. Lethe: a river in Hades with the power to cause forgetfulness in whoever drinks of its waters. Cebà may have been saying that even though Moses died, his memory could not be obliterated; or if he was referring to himself, that to Lethe's regret Copia could not be induced to forget him.

210. Obscure: possibly in reference to Leon Modena, "admired" in certain circles; in which case Cebà may have been saying that Copia preferred Modena over Moses or over himself (Cebà).

5

E morir per chi non tieni

To die for one whom you do not expect	
To radiate	
The splendor that the world craves	27
Shows in you a great semblance	
Of great constancy,	
But it has the great face of a lie.	30

6

Ben cred'io che vivo humore

I really believe that from love	
You might pour	
A lively liquid from the eyes into the bosom; ²¹¹	33
But love, which gave you the waters, ²¹²	
Arose perhaps	
For me too to fall in love.	36

7

Che vuoi tu d'un peregrino

What do you want from a stranger ²¹³	
Who already feels	
The way ²¹⁴ is escaping him?	39
Oh, I well know what you want;	
You cannot	
Conceal what I understand. ²¹⁵	42

211. Better, from your eyes into your bosom.

212. That is, made you weep.

213. *Peregrino*, possibly a pilgrim.

214. To be understood as either "the way to secure your salvation" or "the way to prolong my life."

215. What she wants, as Cebà tells us in the next stanza, is for him to immortalize her in verse.

8

Tante gratie e tante doti

So many charms do you possess, so many gifts,
 So many earnest desires,
 So many honors lifting you on high; 45
 But since you are not allowed to disclose them
 In a song of yours, you want me instead
 To reveal them in one of mine. 48

9

Vuoi ch'io scopra quelle rose

You want me to disclose those roses
 That, hidden,
 Would parch in Jewish gardens 51
 If it did not fall to my verses
 To adorn Dawn's locks with them
 [46] In the early frost. 54

10

Vuoi ch'io mostri quelle palme

You want me to show those laurels
 You always win
 By triumphing over souls; 57
 You want me to make those courageous persons
 Whom you have wounded
 Appear among the living and the dead.²¹⁶ 60

216. Meaning, be acknowledged while alive and memorialized for times to come.

11

E ch'io dica come miri

You want me to say how you behold them,	
How you lure them,	
How you give them delight and joy;	63
And to exclaim how you seize them,	
How you kindle them,	
How you cause them anguish and anxiety.	66

12

Né men calda è quella brama

No less warm is that desire	
That bids you	
To call me, O Sarra, a friend	69
So that I might write that while grasping	
And grabbing	
You remain chaste of heart.	72

13

Né men forte è quel talento

No less strong is that talent	
That flames (I feel)	
Within your breast	75
While you wish, with our arts, ²¹⁷	
To be lifted	
To the heights where Sappho has an eternal name.	78

217. Our writing skills.

14

Soperchiar de' nostri carmi

With the weapons of our hymns	
You wish to overcome	
That ferocious and great Tyrant	81
Against whom, in the end, names have no shield	
If a noble trumpet	
Does not thunder. ²¹⁸	84

15

Qui mirar le lagrimette

	You wish to watch the little tears	
[47]	Transform, against me here,	
	Into arrows	87
	And precipitate a burning flame,	
	Hidden in a beautiful torrent,	
	Into my heart.	90

16

Questa fu la nova vena

This was the new style	
That bound me,	
Surrounding my heart in its plenitude;	93
And that broke down all resistance,	
Pushing my soul, fully inflamed,	
Into yours.	96

218. On the Day of Judgment a trumpet will awaken the dead to resurrection (1 Cor. 15:52, 1 Thess. 4:16). The "ferocious and great Tyrant" is Death.

17

Che vuoi tu che più ti dica?

What more do you want me to say to you?

As a great enemy

You have girded my heart with great weapons; 99

You fought and overpowered me,

You subjugated me,

And in the end, by weeping, you conquered me. 102

18

Ardo, gelo, impallidisco

I burn, I freeze, I turn pale,

I fear, I take courage

When that weeping reaches me; 105

But the flame, from which I burn and die,

Seeks alone, for relief,

For you to live in heaven. 108

19

Vivi al mondo e mori al cielo

You live in the world and die in heaven²¹⁹

As long as the veil,

Wrapped around your eyes,²²⁰ 111

Makes you refuse, alas, to give tribute,

With your knees,

To him who has already come.²²¹ 114

219. Obscure. One reading might be: you will be known while living on earth, but when you die and your soul ascends to heaven you will be forgotten. Another reading follows from the assumption that the verse, as worded, is deficient, hence should be so emended: "You live in the world but [will not] die in heaven."

220. Whereby you become blind to the light of Christ.

221. Christ, the Messiah.

20

Quel tributo che tu senti

The same tribute that you notice
 So many people
 Offer at all times 117
 [48] And so many monarchs
 Unsparingly give,
 You, O Sarra, do not yet render. 120

21

Mira là, dov'altra legge

Look over there where another law²²²
 Alone alters
 The will and a resistant heart, 123
 And you will see, here and there,
 New lovers, to their new glory,
 Lift the Cross. 126

22

Quel che sembra a voi sì grave

That which seems to you so strenuous
 Becomes so sweet
 To the fiercest barbarians;²²³ 129
 They stand for entire days and nights
 With their faces steadily fixed
 Upon the Crucifix. 132

222. That of the New Testament.

223. Even savages converted to Christianity.

23

E s'avvien che d'arme e lampi

If it happens that, with weapons and flashes of light,²²⁴
 The Indian warrior²²⁵ advances over the fields
 And takes them, or descends from the mountain, 135
 He then goes down into the crowds,
 And riding forward,
 Carries the Cross to the front, at all times. 138

24

E se 'l Barbaro Fedele

And if the Faithful Barbarian²²⁶
 Summons the Unfaithful
 To battle in the field, 141
 He as much lifts the most dreadful spears
 Toward heaven
 As he carves the Cross on them. 144

25

E se 'l Duce de le squadre

And if the leader of the troops
 Wants to display
 The royal emblems 147
 With greater nobility,
 He will want a bloody, distressing
 [49] Cross impressed and marked on them. 150

224. Originally *lampi*, perhaps "torches."

225. Christians proselytized in India from the first century on (among them, by legend, Saint Thomas the Apostle), though with particular fervor, after the mid-sixteenth century, in the missionary work of the Jesuits. Cf. John Correia-Afonso, *The Jesuits in India, 1542–1773*.

226. The same Christianized Indian savage (capitals here and in next line after original).

26

E chi vuol la pace in terra

He who wants peace on earth
 In the war
 That equips reason with sagacity 153
 Displays no other standard²²⁷
 To meet the dart
 That refuses to wound his heart.²²⁸ 156

27

Questo grave e gran vessillo

This grave and great pennant
 Makes the bosom so calm
 And the soul so secure 159
 That Catherine felt unperturbed
 When she was dismembered
 Upon the wheel.²²⁹ 162

28

Questo fu del sesso infermo

For the weaker sex
 It was so great a protection
 From irons and torches 165
 That it maintained a steadfast heart for maidens
 Midst the weapons and ravages
 Of tyrants. 168

227. Than the Cross.

228. Obscure: Cebà seems to be saying that the Cross alone suffices to prevent the "dart," or weapons of the enemy, from causing damage.

229. Meaning that the belief in Christ was so strong as to fortify martyrs. The reference is to Saint Catherine of Alexandria, condemned by the Roman emperor Maximinus, in the year 310, to die on the wheel.

29

Questo diè la forza a Pietro

It gave strength to Peter	
When, standing behind	
His dear and faithful escort ²³⁰	171
And having his limbs turned downward, ²³¹	
There opened	
The pearly gates to heaven. ²³²	174

30

In quel sangue avventuroso²³³

He who increases his step	
On the golden road toward heaven	
Submerges the virtues of his soul	177
In that propitious ²³⁴ blood	
That floods	
The painful wood from head to foot. ²³⁵	180

31

Le virtù che l'alma a Ciro

	The virtues that colored
[50]	The soul of Cyrus

230. Probably refers to Paul, celebrated along with Peter in the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29).

231. Origen reports on Peter (after Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea, *Historiae ecclesiasticae libri decem*, 153) that "coming to his end in Rome, he was fastened to a cross, with his head set upside down."

232. Jesus promised Peter the keys to heaven, thereby appointing him as its gatekeeper (Matt. 16:19).

233. The *capoverso* becomes line 178 in the translation.

234. *Avventuroso*, in its now obsolete meaning as fortunate or favorable; see Battaglia and Squarrotti, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 2:893 (definition no. 2).

235. Meaning that each martyr carries a crucifix and, when slaughtered, takes comfort in his blood.

Would have shown another face 183
 If our Lamb
 Had depicted them
 With the paintbrush of his blood.²³⁶ 186

32

La virtù che ti sublima

The virtue²³⁷ that lifts you on high
 As the foremost woman
 To elevate the Jewish name in our time 189
 Would elevate you, with those colors,²³⁸
 To join those Choirs²³⁹
 That Orpheus knew not how to darken.²⁴⁰ 192

33

Scoti, Sarra, il fier Lethargo

Shake off fierce Lethargy,²⁴¹ Sarra,
 The eyes of Argus
 Do you have, indeed, for penetrating [secrets],²⁴² 195
 The babe is given and born,
 As was said:
 "And the Word was made flesh."²⁴³ 198

236. Cebà may have chosen the figure of Cyrus the Great (580–529 B.C.E.), the first Achaemenian emperor of Persia, as one who would particularly appeal to Copia: not only was he famed for his benevolence but, after conquering Babylon, he freed the Jews from their captivity (537 B.C.E.). His noble actions would have been enhanced, Cebà seems to be saying, had he known Christianity.

237. Here in the sense of distinction.

238. Here the ones painted by Christ.

239. Of angels in the heavens (the capitalization of "choirs" [*cori*] is after original).

240. Cebà says, then, that had Copia joined the Church she would have sung not among the heathens (as represented by Orpheus) but among the angels (whose vocal skills Orpheus, try as he might, could never emulate).

241. Thus personified via the capital.

242. Argus is said to have had a hundred eyes, ever on watch, except for two that alternately guarded and slept (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.625–27).

243. John 1:14.

34

Volgi gli occhi a quella siepe

Turn your eyes to that bush	
That encircles	
The manger of Bethlehem; ²⁴⁴	201
Search within those caverns	
To see if night there	
Is much brighter than day. ²⁴⁵	204

35

Tien l'orecchie a quelle lodi

Keep your ears glued to those praises,	
Hear the modes, ²⁴⁶	
Note the songs and harmonies,	207
To release which, upon the great Nativity,	
The celestial hierarchies	
Flapped their wings. ²⁴⁷	210

36

Mira là quei Coronati

Behold there those crowned ones, ²⁴⁸	
Who, prostrating themselves humbly on the ground,	
And bent over,	213
[51] Offer chosen and precious gifts	
On the altars	
Of him, the greatest of infants.	216

244. Instead of the Burning Bush, where Moses made contact with God (Exod. 3:2), Cebà invents a bush surrounding the newborn Christ.

245. Obscure: Cebà seems to be saying that by searching for light in the dark, Còpia would find the New Testament, "much brighter" than Mosaic law.

246. In the sense of scales.

247. For angels who, on the heights, bring tidings of joy and sing praises to God upon the birth of Christ, see Luke 2:10–15.

248. The Magi, or eastern kings, who visited Christ, bringing him presents.

37

E s'avvien che non ti scenda

If it should happen that no new blindfold
 Descend upon you
 To chase away the sun from your face, 219
 Within the confines of those walls²⁴⁹
 Imagine
 The King of Paradise having descended. 222

38

Ben è ver che se conduci

It is quite true that if you guide
 Your lights²⁵⁰
 To behold his disgrace, 225
 You will regard
 Whatever I related to you about him
 As perhaps the error of a daydreamer. 228

39

Piaghe, morti e sepolture

Wounds, deaths, and burials,
 Beatings,
 Jeers, sneers, insults, and crosses 231
 Will appear to you an empty semblance
 Of that reign
 That our voices attribute to him. 234

249. That surround the manger.

250. Read, eyes.

40

Odi, Sarra, e ti confondi

You hear me, Sarra, and are confused;	
My Muse expands	
Upon the deeper meanings:	237
If my God carried other weapons	
To save me,	
He would be neither God nor great.	240

41

Grande e Dio (ci ritrattiamo)

Great and God (according to our portrayal)	
Could, we confess,	
Still be something else;	243
But no imaginably equal marvel	
Would make us blink	
[52] Our lashes.	246

42

Più stupor fu ch'ei cadesse

More wondrous was it that he fell,	
That he wasted away,	
To gain victories and spoils;	249
More fervent was it that he suffered,	
That he died,	
To make man an heir to heaven.	252

43

Le sue vie son più sovrane

His ways are superior,	
For human	
Minds cannot raise their wings;	255

What he ordains and thinks
 Lowers mortal rays
 With its immense light. 258

44

Soggiogar con regio arnese

An armed troop can often subjugate
 A great country
 With royal weapons; 261
 But no one, midst crosses and mockery,
 Can conquer eternal kingdoms
 Except God alone. 264

45

Discoprir qualche semblante²⁵¹

He who gives and does not suffer
 Can reveal
 A certain semblance of a lover; 267
 But to give fame and blood
 For one who languishes
 Is the only arrow that wounds God.²⁵² 270

46

Questo Dio d'amor ferito

This God wounded by love
 Has destined me
 To open his path to you; 273
 Restrain your misdirected foot, Sarra;
 A persistent
 Cloud, alas, hides the truth from you. 276

251. The *capoverso* becomes lines 266–67 in the translation.

252. That is, to sacrifice one's name and life for Christ is the only way to arouse God's love.

47

Il mio Dio dal tuo diverso

[53]	My God (though sprinkled	
	With blood and saddened)	
	Was never different	279
	From yours; but with that aura ²⁵³	
	That revitalizes	
	He is altogether three and one. ²⁵⁴	282

48

Trino ed un l'adora adunque

Thus adore him, three and one,	
With whatever	
Strength of arms you feel you have;	285
And bend the wounds and nails	
That a divine	
Hand, through me, portrays to you.	288

49

Io ti spiego una bandiera

I show you a flag	
That a severe	
And pious cross stretches upon itself;	291
But if I show it and pray by making a vow, ²⁵⁵	
I let you know	
That you are my cross.	294

253. Capitalized in source, the word *aura* refers to divine afflatus.

254. The union of three in One in the Holy Trinity.

255. The "vow" being, perhaps, to assure Còpia's salvation.

Croce a me però sì cara

Though harsh, the cross is
 So dear to me
 That if one day it rises to heaven, 297
 A new laurel for my locks
 And a new name²⁵⁶
 Will it give me midst the sons of Eve. 300

14. MADRIGAL

*Un pietoso delfino*²⁵⁷

A merciful dolphin,²⁵⁸
 Without a shield or shining coat-of-mail,
 Saved a gentle singer on its back.²⁵⁹ 3
 Upon the wandering sound
 Of your voice then, O Sarra, even I bend down
 For my shoulders 6
 To remove you from the path of Jewish rites.²⁶⁰
 Yes, it is true that to save yourself,
 [54] You will assemble your locks in bathing;²⁶¹ 9
 But Arion did not hesitate to save himself
 By precipitating his limbs into deep water.

256. Acquired from greater fame.

257. This madrigal is in iambic meter, with the rhyme scheme: *aBB/cCdD/cEFF*.

258. Number 22 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had made mention of Arion in connection with the author" (†3v).

259. According to the myth, a dolphin saved the singer Arion from drowning, carrying him on its back into safe harbor (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 194).

260. Which rites, Cebà is saying, would otherwise destroy her.

261. Obscure: Cebà seems to be saying that when bathing Copia pins up her hair lest it pull her under, but she does not realize that more drastic measures need to be taken to "save herself" (next line), namely, her conversion. Her hair would then be bathed in a baptismal font (see letter 24.81, no. 24:2).

15. SONNET

Musa già ti chiamai, chiamarti ancora

A Muse I once called you; to call you
 By yet another name,²⁶² O Sarra, my heart presses me
 If your foot carries you one day to take up residence 3
 In a place to which your fame among us already
 pushes you.
 Your forehead will be our Dawn²⁶³
 When it [Dawn] drives more live roses²⁶⁴ toward heaven; 6
 And your locks will be our Sun when it gilds
 And girds the earth with more splendid rays.
 Oh, come and see, and take the lofty name²⁶⁵ 9
 That by inaugurating another style for your Muse
 Will teach you how to tread a greater path.
 Our soil is never without a flower, 12
 Nor does our sea flow without a helmsman;²⁶⁶
 But our banks lack a Siren.

16. MADRIGAL

*Cigno forse son io*²⁶⁷

Perhaps I *am* a swan,²⁶⁸
 Not only because my song rivals the swan's in its
 expression,
 But because it lends me the repute of a soothsayer. 3
 With sweet and singular notes
 Does the swan predict its own end,

262. As a Christian.

263. Dawn (*Aurora*) and later Sun (*Sole*) and Siren (*Sirena*) so capitalized in original.

264. Than those of hers that dried up in Jewish gardens (see above, poem 13, stanza 9). Her "forehead," i.e., face, is as beautiful as roses, which, opening at dawn, lift their petals toward the heights.

265. Of a Christian.

266. Christ.

267. In iambic meter, with the rhyme scheme: *aBB/CcdDEE*.

268. The poem links with no. 12:9, where the author claimed that he was *not* a swan. Number 23 appears in the margin, referring to the comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had called the author, by name, a swan" (†3v).

And I, who know 6
 Such great torment from knowing that you, Sarra, are
 a Jewess,
 Am, by lifting a new harmony toward heaven,
 Perhaps announcing to you my own death. 9

LETTER 16 (31 AUGUST 1619)

*Two months seem to have elapsed before Copia's next letter written after 10 August 1619. While praising Cebà, as ever, in lofty language, she tried to influence him to convert to Judaism. To parry his criticism that she had not seen the light, she asserted that she had enough light to last her for centuries to come. She appears to have described how artfully her chambermaid braided her hair, perhaps in connection with Cebà's remark (in poem 14) about her locks being assembled while bathing. In a still earlier letter from the end of January or thereafter—it is referred to below—she may have mentioned that after receiving fruit from him and tasting it she sighed from longing.²⁶⁹ Up to now, Cebà employed the familiar *tu* form in addressing Copia, starting with letter 16, however, he switched to the more formal *voi* form, as if wanting to distance himself.*

My fleet travels rather often over the Adriatic Sea, most genteel Signora Sarra.²⁷⁰ But [55] you make very little use of its goods. You speak to me in beautiful words and confer on me noble praises. But, when all is said and done, you do not want from me what you need and I receive from you what I do not require.

"Tis a new way of making love to be sure, this way of ours, when each of us seeks out such different things. I would like you to be Christian and you would like me to be idolatrous. But until now my rhetoric cannot compare with yours, not only because you would have me adore another God than the one of the Christians, but because you force me to revere you with the devotion of Gentiles. I am telling you this, however, with no thought to lifting you beyond your merit or lowering myself beyond mine, but for you to see what you have done to my will: without my ever having seen or known you, you compel me to speak of your person with such magnificence that I could not do any better.

It is true that you have made me great and marvelous offerings.²⁷¹ But until

269. See above, letter 8.20, where Cebà wrote that a servant will bring her some fruit.

270. Number 24 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had compared her desire to receive letters, etc., to that of whoever waits for a fleet from the Indies" (†3v).

271. Praises and gifts, presented as if oblations upon an altar.

now you have not been capable of the only one to make me happy. If, one day, you were prepared to make such an offering, I assure you that your name would not have to fear the ravages of time. But you will say to me that you do not lack torches to make a light for yourself in centuries to come; and I will answer you with something that would not be inappropriate if it were not that I do not want to appear to cast doubt on what you want me to hold for certain.

I really would like to warn you that my taste for your writing is not perchance what you imagine; and that if I came to visit you, you would please me much more [56] with your locks wrapped up²⁷² on your head without the labors of your hands than with them parted and arranged by the artifice of your chambermaid. But these are riddles to be unraveled more with your interpretation than with mine. Should you ask me for mine, however, I will give it to you with the sincerity that the love I bear you demands.²⁷³

To return to the subject, though, do not think me arrogant when I promise to make you glorious in writing: it is not difficult for me to be convinced of being able to speak of you worthily if you offer me such worthy material as would illumine the blindness of the Jewish remnant with the light of your conversion. But, for God's sake, what you wish to do, do quickly, for my life is threatened by ruin and yours is not without danger. A piece of fruit, in days past, gave you reason to sigh;²⁷⁴ and some other occurrence might unexpectedly give you reason to weep.

In this city you have friends who, in your service, would do more than you think, and you retain a servant²⁷⁵ who would not let you regret having followed his advice. I ask you, Signora Sarra, to pardon my importunity. Bear with me if the fear I have of losing you forces me to speak to you more in compliance with my zeal than in conformity to your desire. While I maintain that you could not be saved without baptism, it would not appear to me to do you the office of a friend, but rather of a traitor, if I were to talk to you otherwise. Continue with your favor to me, then, without being disturbed by my freedom; and if you wish me a little bit [57] of happiness, consider that what I write to you is because I wish you a lot of it. Genoa, the last day of August, 1619.

Ansaldo Cebà, more than ever Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

272. That is, turned up in a bun.

273. The interpretation of the riddle is probably that Cebà would prefer Còpia to be homely and not handsomely coiffed, lest he submit to her seductive powers. See letter 38.107 about his dislike for women wearing makeup.

274. Number 25 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had written of having eaten a piece of fruit from which she was almost reduced to the point of death" (†3v).

275. Cebà himself.

17. SONNET

BY SIGNORA SARRA COPIA

Se mover a pietà Stige et Averno
Poteo con mesto suon famosa lira,
La tua, Signor, ch'a maggior gloria aspira 3
Può l'alme anco ritrar dal ciel superno.
Fermar veggio ogni sfera il moto eterno
Ch'i grati accenti del tuo pianto ammira 6
Per l'estinto germano, et ei sospira,
Ché tornar teme a soffrir caldo e verno.
Teme ch'al tuo languir pietoso il fato 9
Renda il suo spirto alle mortali spoglie
E ponga indugio al viver suo beato.
Deb frena il pianto e 'l duol ch'in te s'accoglie, 12
Odi ch'ei dice in sì felice stato
Che 'l pianger tuo dal suo gioir lui toglie.

If a famous lyre, with sad sound,²⁷⁶
 Could move the Styx and Avernus²⁷⁷ to pity,
 Yours, Signor, that aspires to greater glory 3
 Can even withdraw souls from the highest heaven.²⁷⁸
 I see every sphere stop its eternal motion
 To admire the pleasant voices of your weeping 6
 For your extinct full brother; and he sighs
 From fear of returning to suffer heat and the winter.
 He fears that, with your pitiful languishing, fate 9
 Will return his spirit to mortal spoils
 And cause a delay in his blessed living.²⁷⁹
 Oh, restrain your weeping and the grief that gathers in you; 12

276. The "famous lyre" is that of Orpheus, who, singing to its accompaniment, grieved, at the entrance to the underworld, over his dead wife Eurydice and, because his plaint was so "moving," achieved her release. Elsewhere Copia compared Cebà to Amphion and Orpheus, and Cebà answered in a madrigal (letter 15.42, no. 11).

277. Two rivers in Hades.

278. If Orpheus could remove Eurydice from Hades, Cebà could remove Lanfranco from heaven.

279. That is, a disruption in his immortal condition.

Hear him say that while he is in such a happy state
Your weeping removes him from his rejoicing.²⁸⁰

18. SONNET IN RESPONSE

BY ANSALDO CEBÀ

- Non fu pietà giamai che de l'Inferno*
Giungesse a superar l'orgoglio e l'ira;
Né soave armonia rapisce o tira 3
Dov'ha Pluton le proprie Muse a scherno.
- Il moto de le sfere è sempiterno,*
Né le miserie nostre attende o mira; 6
[58] *E l'alma di colui ch'in ciel respira*
Non risospinge in terra amor fraterno.
- O se tornar potesse al corpo usato,* 9
Non per racconsolar le nostre doglie
Ritornerebbe il mio fratello amato,
Ma per veder l'Hebrea che mi discioglie 12
Da l'amorosa lingua un suon sì grato
E chiude in sen sì pertinaci voglie.
- [57] There was never any pity that succeeded
In conquering the pride and wrath of Hell;
Nor can sweet harmony snatch or pull anyone 3
From the place where Pluto²⁸¹ holds the Muses themselves
in scorn.
- The motion of the spheres is everlasting,
Nor does it relieve or behold our misery; 6
[58] And fraternal love does not push back to earth
The soul of him who breathes in heaven.
Oh, if he could return to his worn-out body, 9
My beloved brother²⁸² would reappear

280. Said otherwise: Lanfranco would rather be in heaven than return to earth; do not weep then, but be happy, as he is, for his being on high.

281. The god of the underworld.

282. Cebà included six letters to his brother Lanfranco in his *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 35–36, 56–57, 74–77, 98–99, 112–13, 113–14, addressing him as “fratel mio dolcissimo” (35) and “fratel mio carissimo” (56, 112).

Not for comforting our grief;
 Rather he would for seeing the Jewess who releases 12
 A sound so pleasant from my amorous tongue
 And shuts such persistent wishes²⁸³ within my breast.

LETTER 17 (18 OCTOBER 1619)

In answer to two letters dated 28 August and 20 September. Cebà may have delayed his response because he was irked by their content (Copia affirmed her unshakable commitment to Judaism) or because he wished to "retaliate" for her not having answered his earlier letters (see remarks in letters 15–16) or, most likely, as he himself explains, because he was feeling ill. In poem 7, stanza 15:90 he had written that as long as she remained a Jew they could never make a good "couple" (coppia), to which Copia now reacted by demonstratively removing one of the p's from Coppia to sign her name as Copia. She pleaded how insignificant her letters were in comparison with Cebà's. Despite her obduracy in failing to comply with his request to mend her ways, she concluded her letters with fawning expressions of servitude. Never having seen her correspondent, she asked that he send her his portrait. After writing letter 17 on 18 October, Cebà heard from Copia in a letter dated 11 October (as he acknowledged in a postscript).

Most genteel Signora Sarra,
 I have to answer your two letters of 28 August and 20 September; and I would like to do so in detail. But the reason that made me keep silent until now will, I am afraid, also make me speak very little: I am not wanting in torments, Signora Sarra, of both my body and my mind.²⁸⁴

As a consequence of having little inclination for those things²⁸⁵ of which I ought though to have the greatest, the more I feel tormented by various afflictions, the more I take consolation in the memory of your gentility. The thought of knowing that my service is agreeable to you is, for me, the loveliest sugar to sweeten the bitterness of my sufferings, among which—I do not want to tell you again—your persisting in Judaism is one of the greatest. But I have already spoken to you about this more than you would like.

What I really want to tell you, however, is that a piece of news I heard from a person who called on me several days ago increased my compassion

283. For her conversion.

284. See letter 15.40 for a similar confession. Read "torments of . . . my mind [*animo*]" as "mental anguish."

285. Namely, the courtesies of properly answering letters.

for your misery. A young Jewish girl named Esther,²⁸⁶ most abundantly endowed with the gifts of nature and [59] fortune, converted with such fervor to the Faith of Christ, in the city of Modena, that she made the whole court marvel at her courage. Will not my Signora Sarra, who is blessed with such a noble intellect, allow herself to be persuaded in a matter that makes one pay, as a penalty for obstinacy, with nothing less than an eternity of pain?²⁸⁷ Oh, I cannot think about it without grieving over it, nor can I grieve over it without letting you know as much; indeed, though I am aware of wasting fuel²⁸⁸ (as one says) and labor, I cannot refrain from showing you the love I bear you, and if I did not do so, you would think me your worst enemy.

At the outset I wished myself luck from your surname, hoping we could make a "couple" as a Christian and a non-Christian. But you no sooner removed a consonant from it, reducing it from Coppia to Copia,²⁸⁹ and thus gave me to understand that you refused to be my equal in matters of Faith. Rather you wished to be overly bountiful in expressions of kindness, which you practice, I see, in your letters. I do not think they are poor, as you say, for honoring me greatly.²⁹⁰ But I do consider them inadequate for leaving me little satisfied. Unravel the riddle: it will not be the first.²⁹¹

In short, I bear you a grudge, Signora Sarra, though I am certain to mellow. If we should confront one another someday, the result would be different from what you believe. You would recognize a quite stupid man and I would perceive a most gracious lady. For this reason I am so ashamed to appear before you as to have had [60] second thoughts about sending you the portrait you indicated you would like. Nevertheless, considering that my condition toward you is that of a servant, I did not think I would be able, without reprimand, to disobey your orders. I have had it copied from real life²⁹² so that you will not be deceived by the desire you have to see

286. Whether true or not, the story about this Jewish convert would probably have aroused Còpia's interest because of her name, Esther (or so Cebà hoped).

287. The Italian had *pena* for "penalty" and *pene*, plural, for what I translated in the singular as "pain" (there being no single substantive for both in English).

288. Read, energy.

289. Number 26 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had first signed her name as Coppia, but afterward did so as Copia" (†3v).

290. Còpia seems to have said that though Cebà deserves to be properly honored, for want of ability she can only do so poorly.

291. Explication: her letters are "rich" in flattering the recipient, but "poor" in meeting his expectations.

292. Probably by Bernardo Castello, on whom more below. See figure 4, where it forms the frontispiece, now as an engraving done from the painter's cartoon, to the publication (in 1623)

what I am.²⁹³ Please, I ask you to keep it covered as much as possible, lest there be reason to condemn you for your judgment and me for my presumption. Nor should you feel you are doing harm by hiding it, for it would make you no less distant from the real person,²⁹⁴ who, through a severe thinning out of his hair, is oftentimes obliged to keep his head out of the air.²⁹⁵

For the rest, I know very well that were any other to make love to you from afar, as I do, he would not miss such a good opportunity to ask you for your likeness. But I will refrain from doing so with all my power, for if you wounded my heart without my having seen you, I am most certain you would stab it if I *did* see you. I am satisfied, though, with having seen the image of your mind and am not inclined to see that of your body in any other place than in Paradise.

What makes me really sorry is having to recognize the gradual diminution of my hopes day by day. I see that your signatures as my servant and slave, which are so inappropriate to me, are yet most appropriate to you as long as you persevere under the yoke of a law so contrary to your salvation as to force me, with all the bowels of my heart, to shout to you: *Solve vincula colli tui, captiva filia Sion* [Release the chains from your neck, o captive daughter of Zion]²⁹⁶ and immediately to pray God to show you His grace. Genoa, 18 October 1619.

[61] P.S. After having written you, and withheld the letter, waiting for an occasion to send it to you along with the portrait, I unexpectedly received yours dated 11 October and accompanied with as many verses as reflect the extent of your kindness, which, in doing honor to me, knows neither mea-

of Cebà's two collections of letters (and his poem *Furio Camillo*), with the added inscription: *Ansaldus Ceba vixit ann.[os] LVIII nunquam moriturus* (Ansaldo Cebà lived fifty-eight years, ever to be immortal, or more correctly, "fifty-seven years," as remarked in volume editor's introduction, under "Works," notes to second paragraph). The same engraving appears (without the inscription) in Giovanni Francesco Loredano, comp., *Le glorie degli incogniti, ovvero gli huomini illustri dell'Accademia de' Signori Incogniti di Venetia* (1647), 70.

293. Not *who* I am, but *what* I am, in all my decrepitude.

294. Originally *dal naturale*, namely, Cebà himself ("in the flesh").

295. The original construction was no less cumbersome than obscure, namely: "who, by a severe distillation of his head, is oftentimes obliged to make himself little seen by the air" (*dall'aria*, which pairs, perhaps, with *dal naturale*). Cebà may be saying that his increasing baldness forces him to wear a hat for protection from the cold air and that with his head covered, he would be "little seen."

296. Isa. 52:2.

sure nor limit. I reciprocate with my most heartfelt thanks. But I should not forget to tell you that although the waters that you crave are precious,²⁹⁷ by comparison with those that I offer you they are turbid. If, by accepting them, you were prepared to have your tomb where you did not have your cradle,²⁹⁸ rest assured that you would think you quenched your thirst more gloriously. I pray to God, however, that He give you light; and I commend myself unto your grace.

Ansaldo Cebà, more than ever Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

19. SONNET

Il mio crin, la mia guancia e 'l mio sembiante

My hair, my cheek, and my semblance
 Portrayed on paper by a vagrant hand,²⁹⁹
 Without my being able to raise a greater trophy to you, 3
 Are what I present, O Sarra, before your eyes.
 An errant paintbrush does not change my face,
 Nor does it distinguish or divide its color from mine; 6
 But nature dictates and art inscribes
 The new pallor of an untimely lover.
 It is true that the feigned image has no heart 9
 To spread before you a lake of tears
 In representing my grief;
 But the craftsman could not give it a heart 12
 If Love, happy and satisfied with your traps,
 Kept it from me by imprisoning it in you.

297. Number 27 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had a craving more for the waters of Parnassus than for those of baptism" (†3v).

298. Number 28 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that she wanted a tomb where she had her cradle; that is, since she was born a Jew, she wanted to die a Jew" (†3v).

299. The translation of *pellegrina* as "vagrant" would seem to be intended by the parallel locution *errante*, "errant," i.e., wandering (though possibly "erroneous"), in line 5. A "vagrant hand" is one that roams over the canvas.

LETTER 17A (1 NOVEMBER 1619)

In a letter dated 8 January 1623 (and reproduced in item 2 below), Copia requested Isabella della Tolfa, elsewhere Isabella Doria (see letters 14–15:37–39), to intervene with her husband (Marc'Antonio Doria) to have a letter that Cebà wrote on 1 November 1619 removed from the publication of his letters to her, and he followed suit. Cebà's letter must have been particularly offensive, thereby reinforcing the hard line already taken in letter 17.

[62] LETTER 18 (9 NOVEMBER 1619)

Copia appears to have written two or more letters since her last one (11 October, acknowledged in the postscript to letter 17). In letter 18, more a brief introductory note to the portrait that Cebà was sending her than a letter proper, the portrait is said to be its own lengthy response to her "letters."

Most noble Signora Sarra,
 Ansaldo Cebà, as painted [see fig. 4],³⁰⁰ left a few days ago to come and pay his respects to you; and Ansaldo Cebà, as alive, is giving you notice thereof, lest you be taken by surprise. Since my face is more likely to frighten than comfort, I did not want you to see it without being prepared. If I had been closer to you, I would have come and stood before you with that ornament you deserve.³⁰¹ But being too far from you, I had to come to you with whatever I deserve.³⁰² Please forgive me if I speak bluntly out of necessity: remember that I am your great servant but, even so, that I am a Christian and you are a Jewess. Genoa, 9 November 1619.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

P.S. Via the portrait, I wrote you at length in response to your letters. It was more than a year ago that I composed the sonnet that I am sending you along with the present note. Since its style appeared to me rather too

300. The portrait was to have been sent along with letter 17, dated 18 October 1619 (see the postscript [61]: "After having written you, and withheld the letter, waiting for an occasion to send it to you along with the portrait," etc.). For some reason, Cebà decided to delay its expedition until a few days before letter 18. Strangely, the portrait does not seem to have reached Copia until much later, for clearly she would have expressed her thanks by the time of letter 19 (23 November), and Cebà, in the same letter, would have acknowledged them, yet he does not. The first notice of Copia's having received the portrait is in letter 20.67, dated 15 February 1620. Thus the portrait arrived sometime between later November 1619 and early February 1620.

301. The "ornament" is perhaps a smile or pleasant greeting of Cebà himself.

302. Perhaps a look or cry of disappointment on Copia's part.



Figure 4. Ansaldo Cebà in an engraving (after a portrait by Bernardo Castello) placed as the frontispiece to his "Letters to Sarra Còpia" (and two other publications, all from 1623). Chicago, the Newberry Library, E 5 .C32473 (lower inscription has been removed). Courtesy of Chicago, the Newberry Library.

poetic, I did not want it to shadow the story of our friendship. But I have known you since to be so discreet that I am sure you will interpret it only in such a fashion as befits the condition of my person and the quality of yours.³⁰³ Do not go to the trouble of answering me, yet do retain the memory of loving me.

20. SONNET

Quando a toccar de la mia vita estrema

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------------|
| [63] | When I am already close to having my foot touch
The threshold of my life's end,
A woman who hopes and has no belief
Attempts to make me sigh and moan for her sake.
With novel grace and beauty supreme
She flatters and requests my desires;
But without pity or Faith residing in her person
I need not fear the restraints of her dominion.
Ever in the dark of Jewish rites | 3

6

9 |
|------|---|---------------------------------|

303. His "condition" would be old and ailing, her "quality" would be kindness.

She does not know how to see a Latin or Greek torch³⁰⁴
 That would reveal to her eyes what it opens to mine.
 If it were not that heaven provides my protection, 12
 No good would it do me in the end to resist the darts
 That a boy hurls for a blind woman.³⁰⁵

LETTER 19 (23 NOVEMBER 1619)

In answer to a letter that Copia wrote sometime in November. There she had fretted over the increasingly fewer letters she received from Cebà, wondering whether he purposely saw to reducing their number as Pharaoh did to the Hebrews. Could it be, she mused, that he doubted how important his letters were to her? Or that he considered her presumptuous for having sent him so many verses of her own, as if she wanted to challenge his competence as a poet? Or that he tired of her obsequious praises? She asked him to explain his silence, assuring him that she was ever his servant.

Pharaoh's thought was very different from mine, Signora Sarra. It disturbed him that the Hebrew people increased whereas it displeases me that your name decreases.³⁰⁶ To my judgment, your name may have decreased within the narrow confines of my letters. But by slowing down their composition I give you reason to enlarge it within the dimensions of those by others.³⁰⁷ Precious things should not be touched except by worthy hands,³⁰⁸ and my hands are worthy only when they are clasped in prayer to God for your salvation. Since you do not value them³⁰⁹ for this reason, I do not see any other reason for you to appreciate them.³¹⁰

This explanation in defense of my silence ought to satisfy you. Yet even if you wanted some other one, give thought, I pray, to a man who suffers

304. Meaning, perhaps, the Old Testament (Jewish rites) as a "revelation"—next line—of the New (in the "Latin" Vulgate and the "Greek" Septuagint).

305. The boy, of course, is Cupid, whose usual blindness is now conferred on Copia.

306. Number 29 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had feared that a decrease in letters to her might indicate that their author proceeded with her as did Pharaoh with the Hebrew people in his determination to prevent their increase" (†3v–†4r).

307. Among them, Isabella della Tolfa.

308. By "precious things" Cebà appears to be referring to Christianity, of which Copia, by not converting, is still unworthy.

309. I.e., his efforts (via his hands "clasped in prayer") to save her.

310. "Any other reason" would probably be using his "hands" to write letters to her.

from living, and [64] you will not find it strange that he tires from speaking. I will speak to you, though, much more than I do to others. Nobody has so much place in my heart as a Jewish woman most kind and gracious in her words, but so very selfish and scornful in her deeds: she makes me despair of ever getting what I most desire. Allow me, my dearest mistress, to speak to you somewhat roughly at times, for I cannot give you a more adequate sign of love. But if, to show your resentment, you think it would be right to deny me those expressions of adoration used so lavishly for showing me your kindness, I would gladly receive this punishment as a pleasure, hoping that by abandoning the vice of idolatry you may abide by the virtue of religion. But, please, do not speak to my person so graciously and against your own so stubbornly. You give me, I well realize, words in order to have words;³¹¹ and I, too, have given you words and will give you many more than you wish. But, for God's sake, do not keep refusing me some deeds. The greatest deed I would have you perform is to become a Christian. Because I feel, however, that you are presently not so inclined, the best "word" you could give me is to pray to God that He make you so inclined. If you do me this grace, it will be dearer to me, I confess, than any other. Though I consider myself most honored by the favor of your letters, I would reckon myself even happier by saving your soul.

Since I have reasoned with you more than you would want me to about such an eventuality, I will, if you like, suspend the use of my pen for a certain time. Beware, in the meantime, of suspecting [65] that you offended me with the abundance of your verses,³¹² for I never thought of you as being so base of heart that it would occur to you to compete with me;³¹³ and if I *had* so thought of you, I would also have thought of your having supremely honored me. Live happily, most generous Signora Sarra; and know that in my sufferings I find no sweeter comfort than recalling my being counted among your servants. Genoa, 23 November 1619.

Ansaldo Cebà, Signora Sarra Còpia's most fervent servant

311. Meaning, you write me "words," that is, letters, in order to have letters from me in return. But, in the continuation, Cebà's "words" to Còpia are not only letters but also admonishments, which, therefore, are more than she "wishes."

312. Number 30 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had suspected that she offended him by multiplying her verses, as if she wished to compete with him" (†4r).

313. As a poet.

LETTER 20 (15 FEBRUARY 1620)

During the nearly three months that elapsed following letter 19, Copia wrote Cebà two or more letters, referring to him in at least one of them as her Sun (Apollo). She requested that he send her more of his poetry. More substantially, she countered his arguments in support of Christianity with her own in its denial, though not with an easy mind: she hesitated to speak openly, she said, for fear of offending him. To preempt such an eventuality she appears to have reassured him that she valued his opinions and that, as "her master," he was free to say what he chose. Sometime between letters 19 and 20 Cebà's portrait arrived, and Copia reacted, as might be expected, with words of admiration in prose and verse (two of her lyrics were in Venetian). She solicited laudatory poems from her friends, of whom one wrote, moreover, that if Cebà could see Copia's image, he would fall in love with her. Her eyes, he declared, were stronger in their impact than the verses of any poet. Copia seems to have toyed with the idea of having her own portrait done, and to this end may have asked Cebà to intercede on her behalf with the Genoese painter Bernardo Castello. Castello answered in the affirmative, which led to an exchange of letters between him and Copia. He kept Cebà abreast of their content.

We are in Carnival time, my Signora Sarra, yet I observe Lent, for I am so afflicted in both my body and my mind that I can barely open my mouth to laugh. Your letters, nevertheless, compel me to forget my misfortunes and reassure me that I am not yet so completely wasted as to be thrown to the dogs. Indeed, charming young woman that you are, you have chosen to give me the title of your Sun.³¹⁴ The truth is, however, that in wishing to compare the opinion you have of me with the one the mirror holds, I have found that they are not easily reconciled. I see infirmity, deformity, old age, with all the rest, as an extravagant Sun for my life.³¹⁵ If you had sons to test in my looking glaze, I assure you that although they might not have the force of your eyes,³¹⁶ they would nonetheless hold up, rather boldly, under the weakness [66] of mine.³¹⁷ May God forgive you for this, my mistress; and, in the future, may He make you use hyperboles that do greater honor to your writings. But even if you were to persist in considering me worthy

314. Apollo, leader of the Muses.

315. Here "Sun" refers not only to Copia's exaggerated view of Cebà as her Apollo but also to Copia herself, who, as a shining light for Cebà, gives him reason to live.

316. Whereby Copia sees things that are not.

317. The passage is obscure and liable to two different readings: Cebà, despite his poor eyesight, would see others as they are; or, conversely, others would see Cebà as he is and as he too, despite his poor eyesight, sees himself, namely as senescent, ailing, and decrepit.

of this name, remember, at the same time, that my Sun is not very far from Sunset and rejoice in my providing you with another one to shine forever upon Sunrise.³¹⁸

Do you not want me then to give you something worthy of yourself before I die? How can my friendship serve you if it does not serve to make you immortal? You do not have any need of my verses for this reason, for they cannot do that much. But you are in great need of my Faith, for without its help you run the same risk as those of whom *perijt memoria cum sonitu* [the memory perished with their sound].³¹⁹

In this matter I ask you to consider if perhaps from two propositions with which you are familiar one can infer a conclusion with which you are not. The major one reads *In memoria aeterna erit iustus* [In eternal memory will he be righteous] to which the minor one adds *iustus autem ex fide vivit* [but the righteous lives from his faith].³²⁰ Therefore he who does not have faith, I conclude, cannot hope for his memory to be eternal. Have faith, then, Signora Sarra, if you wish to become immortal; and not just any faith, but the Christian one. For its verification we have many more reasons than the subtle arguments you have for its contradiction.

Here I avail myself of the freedom of speech that you most graciously accorded me and that—I was not so stupid as not to notice in one of your letters—you regarded as an indication of the authority I believe I have over your person.³²¹ If this evaluation is true [67], it is for you alone to say, after having considered that I am your servant and you are my mistress. Indeed, I tell you that of my opinions, if you so like them, the principal one is that I do not view as friends those who, in order to correct any defect of mine, do not, when they should, speak to me harshly themselves. I do not know if you have defects, but I do know that you have many virtues. Hence I cannot endure their being commended among humans and not being glorified among the blessed. This is the reason that makes me use the same freedom in my dealings with you as I would willingly have others use in theirs with

318. I.e., even if Cebà deserves to be called her Sun, he is now at a stage of sunset, hence of little value to Còpia when compared to the other Sun (Christ) he offers her in his stead. For "sunrise" Cebà wrote *orto*, which also means "garden" and, figuratively, the Church and the congregation of the faithful. See, for example, Dante, *Divine Comedy*, Paradise 12.103–4: "Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi / Onde l'orto catolico si riga" (From him were made diverse streams, / Whereby the Catholic garden is watered).

319. Ps. 9:7. Cebà probably quoted the hemistich from his own "memory," for he omitted *eorum* after *memoria*.

320. Ps. 112:7/Vlg 111:7; Hab. 2:4.

321. As a master over a servant.

me. By nature I am so inclined to this freedom that if my portrait, which does not have a tongue, were, for example, to see you make love to any other than itself, you may be sure that it would shout unto the stars. Should you ever have a fancy to do me some little wrong in this matter, I advise you, then, to be on your guard against it.

I am indeed pleased that even in its presence you do not deny the gift of your grace to those gentle spirits who have honored it with their verses.³²² Nor does it irk me that to serve a lady of your merit I have been assigned such estimable companions, to whom for now I confess my debt in prose, hoping to repay it, on another occasion, in verse. To you who have so lavishly enriched me with your poems together with theirs I render those thanks deserved by nobility of style and demanded by an excess of kindness (*E zò che digo, digo da buon cuor / Perche me dise che vel diga Amor* [And what I say, I say from a good heart, / For Love told me to say it]).³²³

An idolater would you make me, says one of your poets, if I were to see you. It could be. But you can well say to him that even without my seeing [68] you, you have made me a Venetian. This transformation, in whatever sense you wish to understand it, can not do my person anything else but great honor. What weighs on me is that I am not able to make you a Genoan, for, if I were able to, it would not pain me to have lost a name in my country,³²⁴ yet enhanced my country by gaining such a noble share in yours.³²⁵ But this undertaking³²⁶ is for Signora Isabella, who loves you no less than I do and can do much more than I can. Listen to her willingly, please, if you are fond of me; and if you are really fond of me, restrain yourself from doing such honor to my image, which surely is as penurious in graces as you—so everyone tells me—are abundant in them. Thus I am most certain that if those who support you by writing about it [my image] did not sym-

322. Among them Bonifaccio (see 2.1, last paragraph, and 2.2, first paragraph) and Numidio Paluzzi, who wrote a sonnet "for the portrait of Signor Ansaldo Cebà" (*Rime*, 48, beginning "L'immagine è questa, ò pur il volto stesso").

323. The poems that Cebà received included two by Copia in Venetian, whereby his reaction to them here (is he quoting her words?). Footnote number 31 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She, too, had written two Venetian poems" (†4r).

324. By not succeeding in converting Copia, Cebà tainted his reputation in his own "country" (*patria*), Genoa.

325. By being known in Venice, he, as a Genoan, added luster to Genoa. The word *accreciuta*, translated as "enhanced," may have been a misprint for *accreciuto*, in apposition to *nome* (name), in which case Cebà would have been saying that though he lost his good name in Genoa, he gained, in return, a reputation in Venice.

326. Namely, to make Copia a Christian of good name in Genoa.

pathize with your melancholic humor,³²⁷ they would reserve their verses for another subject. But our Castello³²⁸ would not save the use of his colors if, one day, he could approach you, for though he knows that the only thing I do not wish is to see you portrayed, still, I maintain, he would want to do you the honor with his paintbrush that you have done him with your pen. To brief you on how much he appreciated the favor of your writing, I refer to what he himself will explain in his letters.

As far as pertains to my own mind, however, I would have you know that it is so enamored of yours that it urges me to contemplate you through my intellect far more than to see you through my eyes; so much so that I cannot help but be frightened by what one of those friends of yours reported to me when he says that you know how to strike far better with your eyes [69] than I could persuade with my verses. Igniting old wood, as you know, does not require much effort; and being ignited and consumed are almost the same thing. It will be appropriate for me, then, not to know how you are made until such time as your beauty finds that I have more courage to confront it than I now have strength to sustain it. Meanwhile, I will be content with imagining you through your letters; and you will be satisfied with recognizing me through mine. With my letters I perchance do not portray to you the thoughts of a mind less vividly than Castello, with his colors, would disclose to you the features of a face.³²⁹

For the rest, may it please God to grace me one day with saving your soul, midst contemporaries, by having spoken so magnificently of your ancestors.³³⁰ If that were to happen to me, my poem would not be less fortunate for converting one Jewess than it is magnificent for exalting another. Genoa, 15 February 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

327. Her seeming despondency over Cebà's brusque responses.

328. Bernardo Castello (1557–1629), a major painter, on whom more below (and in letters 21 and 52); "our," because he is a native Genoan. For details, see the entries on him in Alberto Maria Ghisalberto, ed., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 21:781–86, by Giuliana Biavati, and the *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 17:202–4, by Regina Erben-traut, and, at length, Erben-traut, *Der Genueser Maler Bernardo Castello 1557–1629*, particularly 229–30 for his friendship with Cebà.

329. Cebà's face? Till now, Cebà has not named Castello as the painter of his portrait (as he may have implied here). Yet the passage might be read otherwise, to mean that Cebà's letters are just as vivid in describing his thoughts as the famed Castello's colors are in capturing the faces of his sitters.

330. As, for example, in his epic poem *La reina Esther*.

LETTER 21 (11 APRIL 1620)

In the two months that intervened between letters 20 and 21 Copia's portrait was completed, probably by a Venetian. Her intention seems to have been to provide something for the painter Castello to use in preparing his own portrait of her, which he eventually did (for her earlier correspondence with him, see letter 20.68, and for Castello's work itself, begun only two years later, 52.128, and a possible copy of it, fig. 3).³³¹ Copia sent the portrait to Cebà, and it arrived on 11 April, hence letter 21 in acknowledgment of its receipt. In a letter that accompanied the package or was separate from it Copia explained why she had herself depicted with a "chain": for being a criminal in disobeying Cebà's orders not to dispatch him her image. Cebà was requested to be frank in sharing his opinion of her looks: Copia hoped he would find her appealing, though it would be vain of her, she noted, to say as much. In the same letter, or another, she continued to resist Cebà's attempts at her conversion, arguing against it as unnecessary for her well-being. If he really loved her, why, she asked, did he speak so harshly? But she contradicted herself, remarking that her being bound to him as a servant granted him the authority to act as he chose. She pleaded for further letters and poems from Cebà, who had slowed them down to such an extent that she felt he had forgotten her. In a dream she had, she saw the same letters and verses she so craved. Cebà's ailments caused her no little concern, to which she gave expression in various poems she sent, thinking her correspondent might reciprocate by sending poems of his own.

A great father of mercy is our God, most noble Signora Sarra, inasmuch as He never sends suffering to purify souls without accompanying it, in remembrance of human fragility, with consolation. He visited me a few days back with the death of my very sweet sister; and He restores me today with the image of my [70] very dear mistress. For this present I say few thanks to you with my pen, because my words are insufficient. But I feel infinite thanks in my heart, because my feelings are excessive. Nor would I want you to be surprised by my holding in such great esteem a present that I had refused, for the reason that induced me to refuse it was prudence and the impulse that drives me to accept it is love. I could therefore not be so philosophical³³² as not to have felt the greatest joy in beholding the portrait of a person whom I love as much as my soul.

You may perhaps think that all this is big talk; and, to be sure, it is not

331. According to the "Notices from Parnassus" (3.1.11r), Copia had her portrait done by Alessandro Berardelli upon the request of a great French prince, said to be her admirer. Since it was a hoax perpetrated by Paluzzi more than two years after Cebà's letter 21, one thing is clear: the portrait sent to Cebà was (almost) certainly not by Berardelli (provided, of course, the dating of events in the "Notices" is not inaccurate).

332. Meaning, so heartlessly rational.

small. But if you consider how much I have striven to convert you, you will find it no less veracious than big. I am really sorry to sense how little you recognize this love of mine, which is the noblest I could offer you. But I would not deprive you of it on that account. If my explanations and my arguments are to no avail, then my prayers at least and my tears will help me, while I am alive or dead, to labor for your salvation, which, out of Christian charity, I desire as much as every other's. But as I am stimulated by my inclination toward the generosity of your mind, I seem to crave your salvation with so much thirst that if you could fathom my intentions, you would certainly feel bound to my love with a more powerful chain than the one you show me in your portrait.³³³ Even so, I will not deny that I find it [the chain] honorable.³³⁴ But the chain gives me little authority, I well see, to dispose of your person in a way that I would need for it to give me the greatest [authority]. May the Lord see to it that [71] just as I, at any time moreover, am ready to abide by your wishes, so you will not continually dispute my motives in this business of your salvation.

It is unreasonable for me to speak to you too plainly of the emotion I felt upon uncovering your image, for you are an enemy of vanity and I am one of shame. Let me tell you though that not only did you appear before me as a criminal to be condemned by my judgment,³³⁵ but you assaulted me as a warrior for me to be placed under your jurisdiction. Although the wounds of your eyes would be most adequate for subjugating me, you have also chosen to add the blows of your hands, on which I would definitely have been able to take some revenge with my mouth.³³⁶ But since I was afraid of losing more than I would gain, I did not risk touching them except soberly with my eyes. Your portrait, therefore, will be held in my house with the same esteem in which the original is held in yours; and from the respect that my descendants will prove they have for it, they will be accustomed to reckoning it among the greatest adornments of my patrimony.

Regarding the compassion that you show for my ills, I can only thank you for it immensely. But I would really have you do your best, for my own sake, to forget about them, for you certainly cannot sympathize with me without redoubling my suffering. The path of hardships in my law is the

333. Number 32 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had had herself portrayed in chains" (†4r).

334. Meaning, Còpia acted honestly in confessing her disobedience.

335. Number 33 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said that she presented herself with a chain as a criminal condemned for her disobedience in having dispatched her portrait" (†4r).

336. By kissing Còpia's hands, he would weaken their blows.

surest for leading this voyage to a good end;³³⁷ and my Captain has facilitated it [the path] for me in such a way that unless I am especially feeble, I know I can cross it successfully. But this philosophy is not very well [72] understood by those who stand outside the bosom of the Catholic church and is sometimes even barely acknowledged by those who are within it. May it please God, in His goodness, that I not number among the latter and that you not be excluded by being among the former. Since no such thing³³⁸ is possible without baptism, I entreat the most blessed Virgin (to whom not a day passes without my commending you) for you to obtain grace through her intercession. If the fervent love I bear you deserves something from you in return, I ask you as earnestly as I can to recite daily the words *Sancta Maria, ora pro me* [Holy Mary, pray for me].³³⁹ Though you do not recognize her as the mother of my God, you can imagine her, with no harm to the Hebrew law, as a holy woman of your nation. Do it, most generous Signora Sarra; and bind my heart with a chain of another obligation than that by which, against my judgment, you claim that I have bound yours.³⁴⁰

At another time will I answer your verses with mine; and as long as I do not answer them, form some other opinion of me than that of thinking you have been forgotten by one who would rather forget himself. I cannot make myself do everything I would like to, my mistress, for if I could, then what you saw in a dream, perhaps, would you notice as well in a vigil.³⁴¹ I speak and do not know what I am saying to myself. But do not be surprised, because dreams can only be explained in dreaming. It will never be a dream, however, that you are as dear to me as is my soul and that I count myself most fortunate to possess the treasure of your grace. Make God see to it that just as the force of love has united our wills on earth, so [73] the power

337. His law is the New Testament.

338. As salvation.

339. A variation on the Hail Mary ("*Ave Maria, ora pro nobis*") in Marian devotions. *Sancta Maria*, etc., occurs in the *Rituale romanum* (first written in 1614 under Pope Paul V), particularly in the prayers of the dying who entrust their soul to Christ ("Into your hands, Lord, do I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus Christ, lift my spirit. *Sancta Maria, ora pro me*. Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, protect me from the enemy and lift me in the hour of death," etc.); for the Latin, see *Rituale monasticum: secundum consuetudinem Congregationis Beuronensis, ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, ed. Raphael Walzer, bk 5 "On the rites for the sick and the deceased," chap. 6 ("Instructions for commending the soul"), 388–409, esp. 409.

340. Refers to the chain in Copia's portrait as here the bond that Cebà established between himself and Copia with his epic poem on Esther, his letters, and his verses.

341. *Vigilia*, or vigil, in its alternative sense of *veglia*, wakefulness. See *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612), there as *veggbia*: "From *veggbiare*, to stay awake; in Latin, *vigilia*" (923).

of Faith might join our souls in Paradise. May you live happily. Genoa, 11 April 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, as indebted a servant of Your Ladyship as there ever was and one who, if he were able, would much prefer to write you in his own hand

LETTER 22 (18 APRIL 1620)

Starting with letter 21 Còpia and Cebà communicated more or less on a weekly basis (until letter 25). Còpia may have remarked to Cebà that the “smallest thing” he could do, meaning perhaps the least imposing on his time or efforts, would be to acknowledge her portrait by letter, which, as we know, he had already done. Yet she would also have him send his verses in response to hers (see examples of both at the end of letter 22). The various titles of lover, father, and servant, to which Cebà reacted, could have come up in one or more of her letters, as they did, by insinuation, in her poem below. There Còpia described his verses as weapons of love, which, *ipso facto*, would turn Cebà into her “lover”; she asked for his help, as a daughter might ask of a “father”; and she offered him her “chain”—a necklace—to bind him to her, though bondage obviously is the lot of a “servant.” Being bound by a chain, she considered herself, so she said (in the poem at least), his prisoner, and with Cebà bound by it as well, he would qualify, she may have said (in her letter), as hers. She seems to have pleaded, as before, for a less missionary tone to his letters and may have observed that there were instances, in writing to her, where it would be better to remain silent than to exhibit vanity.

Most genteel Signora Sarra,

I answered in prose no sooner than I had your portrait; nor did it seem to me I was doing so small a thing while the occupation of my eyes³⁴² prevented the exercise of my mind. I will make up for it now in verses, not in that number that I would find appropriate, for I am indebted to you for several, but in that measure that you would find adequate, for you have already been provided with many.

We have finally seen each other, Signora Sarra, in painting; and between you and me I do not know who ends up more satisfied. You, with an expression of kindness, have said great things, and I, with a mind to strict truth, ought not to say to you lesser ones. But it will suffice for now if I point out that while I live it does me no good to see you either painted or real. Peace I need in this last stage of my life; and you have assaulted me from so many directions that I cannot escape from your hands. Prose, verses, presents, portraits, graces, favors: *perijt fuga a me* [there is no escape for me],³⁴³

342. In looking at the picture.

343. Ps. 142:5/Vlg 141:5.

I think I could say along with one of your own people. Since you are sure of my prison, I would also think you could be happy without doubling my chains.

[74] A harsh chain for my condition is this business of letters, through which I see that I give you nothing and that you give me too much. Were you to think about loosening it [the chain] in some way, however, it might not be so out of place. To sustain the figure of your lover, I am too old and infirm; to practice the one of your father, you are too wise and wary; and to exercise the one of your servant, we are too separated and far apart. Not able to call myself by any of these names, then, I do not know what reason I have left to trouble you with letters.

But I do, indeed, have reason to take pride in your grace and to pray to God that from the fervor of my servitude he might, one day, see to procuring the treasure of your freedom. Prisoners we are both, dearest Signora Sarra. But I am bound with a chain of gold and you are with one of iron. Break it for love of God before you break off life; and if I can give you a hand to help you here, you might give me a word or two to let me know.

Do not be disturbed by what I told you about the names I can not assume or about the letters I ought not to write. Without having some hope of saving so generous a soul, I will call myself as you want me to and will write you more than you wish me to. But if I should be silent at times in order not to speak vainly, I would not want you to think it is from not loving you constantly. The image that I carry of you in my heart is sculpted in another guise than the one painted on canvases, for which image, again, I return my infinite thanks. I pray to the Omnipotent that, whenever it be, He let me recognize the original [75] in Paradise. Genoa, 18 April 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

P.S. Praised be God that I visit you this time in the script of my own hand.

21. SONNET

BY SIGNORA SARRA COPIA

<i>L'ímago è questa di colei ch'al core</i>	
<i>Porta l'ímago tua sola scolpita,</i>	
<i>Che con la mano al seno al mondo addita:</i>	3
<i>"Qui porto l'Idol mio, ciascun l'adore."</i>	
<i>Sostien con la sinistra arme d'amore</i>	
<i>Che fur tuoi carmi, il loco ov'è ferita</i>	6

- La destra accenna; e pallida e smarrita*
Dice: "Ansaldo, il mio cor per te si more."
 Prigionera se 'n viene a te davante 9
Chiedendo aita, et a te porge quella
Catena ond'è 'l mio amor fido e costante.
 Deb, l'ombra accogli di tua fida Ancella 12
E goda almeno il finto mio semblante
Quel che nega a quest'occhi iniqua stella.
- The image is that of her who, in her heart,³⁴⁴
 Carries, sculpted, your image alone;
 And who, with her hand on her breast, indicates to the
 world: 3
 "Here I carry my idol, let everyone adore him."
 With her left hand she supports love's weapons
 That were your poems; her right hand signals 6
 The place where she is wounded; pale and bewildered,
 She says: "Ansaldo, my heart is dying for you."
 She comes before you as a prisoner 9
 Asking help and she offers you that
 Chain from which my love is faithful and constant.
 Oh, accept the shadow of your faithful handmaiden,³⁴⁵ 12
 And may my feigned appearance enjoy, if anything,
 What an inauspicious star denies these eyes.³⁴⁶

22. SONNET IN RESPONSE

BY ANSALDO CEBÀ

- Felice stella a l'infelice ardore,*
Ch'a vedermi da presso il cor t'invita,
La tua da la mia vista ha dipartita 3
E chiusa la mia notte al tuo splendore.

344. On the identification of this sonnet, a description of Còpia's Venetian portrait, with a painting done in Genoa, after its example, by Bernardo Castello (and copied there, possibly, by others), see at length under volume editor's introduction (and fig. 3).

345. The portrait being only a shadow of her real self.

346. By "what," Còpia means the look that Cebà directs to her image and that fate, by their separation, denies her sight.

- Tu sei de gli anni tuoi sul più bel fiore*
Et hai la guancia ardente e colorita, 6
 [76] *Io son sul terminar de la mia vita*
Et ho le fiamme dentro e 'l ghiaccio fuore.
- Ché se pur luminosa e sfavillante* 9
La voce mia da lunge e la favella
Ti sembra risonar per l'aria errante,
Tu sei la fiamma, o Sarra, e la facella, 12
Onde s'accende in me la lingua amante,
Mentre che solo il tuo bel nome appella.
- [75] A lucky star that, with its unlucky burning,
 Stirs your heart to see me from near
 Has separated your sight from mine 3
 And closed my night to your splendor.³⁴⁷
- You are in the years of your greatest bloom
 And have a burning and glowing cheek; 6
 [76] I am near the end of my life
 And have flames inside and ice outside.
- Even if my voice from far away and my speech 9
 Seem to you to be luminous and sparkling
 And to resonate in the moving air,
 It is you, O Sarra, who are the flame and the torch 12
 That kindle in me a loving tongue
 To call out your fair name alone.

LETTER 23 (25 APRIL 1620)

One or more letters or poems appear to have been sent, though Cebà did not specify their content. Copia may have objected to the strong blows his words inflicted on her ears (to quote Cebà) and to the suffering they caused her.

Most gracious Signora Sarra,
 The sweetness of your verses instigates so many uprisings in my mind that I am almost obliged to quote a certain Jewish prophet and ask of you as follows: *Aufer a me tumultum carminum tuorum* [Remove from me the commotion of

347. Cebà seems to be saying that Copia has a "lucky star," because it prevents her, so young and beautiful, from seeing him, so old and decrepit; and that the same star is, however, unlucky in its "burning," because it cannot satisfy her (burning) desire to meet him.

your songs].³⁴⁸ Last week I answered the last words of your sonnet³⁴⁹ while this week I answer the first ones.³⁵⁰ But I still have so much to say that I do not see how I can finish.

I would like you to know that if I demanded of you what Alcaeus demanded of Sappho,³⁵¹ you would feel your ears wounded by other blows. But he was a heathen, and I am a Christian, which means that though I feel most attracted to your person, I would prefer to let myself die than love you with the intention he harbored in loving that poetess. I would select the story as one of the arguments to prove to you the excellence of Christian law, which not only prohibits every vice and commands every virtue but, further, provides strength to execute the ordinances of the one and the other. Even if that [story] were not so, you can be sure that, however incongruous it may sound, [77] I would, in reasoning with you, have served my own cause more than yours.³⁵²

You are young and, as confirmed by those who have seen you, more beautiful than the representation in your portrait; you have a noble mind, a generous heart, a lively intellect, and great desires; beyond every other virtue, you possess the grace of the Muses. These circumstances assail my mind with such force that if it were not for the shelter I mentioned,³⁵³ you may be certain that, as old and misfortunate as I am, I would not be satisfied with only seeing you depicted. But may God not allow the love I bear you to be motivated by another purpose than the exaltation of your name and the salvation of your soul.

The Lord, as I said to you before,³⁵⁴ summons me to Himself through the way of tribulations; and it is a great tribulation for me to have to rouse you with words of warning, as required of friends, instead of writing to you with those of tenderness, as suited to lovers. But it can be as great as it wants, for I am ready to endure it bravely for the sake of Christ. You could

348. Amos 5:23. *Carmina* (nom. pl.) as both "songs" and "poems."

349. Letter 22.74, no. 21:14 ("What an inauspicious star denies these eyes"), leading to the content of his *risposta* (no. 22).

350. Namely, the first quatrain of the same sonnet, particularly the words "image," "heart," "sculpted," "indicates," "idol," and "adore."

351. Both Alcaeus and Sappho were lyric poets, born in Lesbos in the early seventh century B.C.E. Aristotle reported that Alcaeus was about to make bold advances to Sappho, who, humiliated, reproved him for his evil thoughts (*Rhetoric* 1.9).

352. Meaning possibly that he would have strengthened his determination not to fall prey to his emotions.

353. Christian law.

354. Letters 20.65, 21.71.

well decrease it for me by removing the temptation of your letters. But if that were to assure my respite to the detriment of yours, write me then as much as you like, for I am sooner prepared to feel my suffering from your speech than to hear you complain of my prohibition.³⁵⁵

It is true that I am requesting your permission to deal with you as with a person most needy of light for seeing the way to be saved. I ask you to be lenient with a man who by nature is so very restrained in speaking with others, yet could have become so expansive in conversing with you, [78] for no impediment and no resolution could ever impose silence on him today. Just as you ought not to be surprised if I seek to gain your will through over-indulgence in love, so you ought to appreciate my behavior in this regard as "valuable": the way I enrich you is through the ardor of my charity that drives me to wish for your salvation no less than mine. Let us save each other, most generous Signora Sarra, to the extent of our power; and because we are unable to see each other on earth except as painted, let us work toward recognizing each other alive in Paradise. Since we have no reason to be there as long as you are an infidel and I am a sinner, let us strike each other, if you agree, with the whip of correction in order for our friendship, which perhaps will serve us at some time for the acquisition of fame, to serve us further in eternity for the possession of glory. Genoa, 25 April 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

23. SONNET

Un'imagin la tela, un'altra il core

One image does the canvas show me, another does my heart:

On the first it is painted, in the second it is sculpted;
And the one and the other direct me to that face of yours, 3
Sarra, that I worship on earth as an idol.

Reason objects, love fights back;
The soul is both strong and wounded; 6
Virtue resists and is bewildered;
Understanding lives at times and dies.

Though you tempt me, when I stand before you, 9
To appeal now to this image, now to that,
Virtue reigns secure and my heart remains constant;

[79] And if I render you my soul in part as a handmaiden, 12

355. Against writing further letters.

It is because in your dear and beautiful semblance
There gleams a Sun that conquers every other star.

LETTER 24 (2 MAY 1620)

In answer to a letter in which Cópia said she was so heartbroken from what Cebà wrote as to want to die. She appears to have countered his plea that she be baptized with her own plea that he be circumcised. His poetry won her exaggerated praises.

What can one do, Signora Sarra, in order for your heart, which you claim is dying for my sake, to live? Should I come to Venice to become circumcised or should you come to Genoa to become baptized? Tell me freely your will. Consider, however, that I have no need to shed blood, for it gets me nowhere, and you have good reason to search for water, for you are lacking it.³⁵⁶

Oh, how many things does the love that you bear my verses make *you* say! And how many does the craving that I have for your salvation make *me* say! I admit that because of it I also feel incited by a certain passion that perchance is not so criminal. But, for me, it is so suspect that if you were where I am, you would recognize the consequences of my servitude, yet not see the features of my face.³⁵⁷ Since, I believe, you care very little about them though, I know that you would not be pained if I did not make you a "copy" [*cópia*] of them.³⁵⁸ You indeed make the world a "copy" [*cópia*] of so many virtues that you compel me to say: *cui assimilabo te filia Sion?* [to whom could I liken you, daughter of Zion?]³⁵⁹ and constrain me to regret that the beauties of your mind might not be glorified anywhere else but on earth.

This last thought makes me keep the promise I made to you³⁶⁰ about writing to you more than *you* would like and encourages me to send you a sonnet that *I* would like to have exert the same power over *your* heart as your

356. "Shed blood," through circumcision; "search for water," through baptism.

357. Obscure: Cebà may be saying that his pain would make a greater impression on the viewer than his face.

358. By "if I did not make you a 'copy' of them" (with *cópia* here, and in next sentence, the usual pun on Cópia's name) Cebà appears to be saying "if I did not show them to you." But he may also have alluded (no less jocosely) to another sense of "making a copy" as *prodigarsi per qualcuno* ("to give of oneself for someone") and, by extension, *congiungersi carnalmente* ("to have sexual intercourse with someone"): see *Il nuovo Zingarelli*, 11th ed., 457 (*cópia*¹). It is not clear what he meant by Cópia's disregard of his face, unless he was hurt by her seeming failure to mention its features in writing to him about his portrait.

359. Lam. 2:13. Properly *filia Hierusalem*: Cebà appears to have confused the end of the first hemistich with the end of the second (*filia Sion*).

360. In letter 22.74.

image [80] does over *mine*. Even though it [the image] is less beautiful than your natural one, it has more strength³⁶¹ to make me raise my eyes to behold it than I would like it to. If the painter who made it thought of making it less delicate,³⁶² to prevent it from penetrating my soul, I am grateful to him for his charity. But I would have him know that it has made such inroads into it that I feel it much more in my heart than I see it with my eyes.

In a word, you wanted to close me in from every direction, Signora Sarra. Nor did it enter your mind that a man who has to fight all the time against infirmities of the body could not have the strength to conquer affections of the mind. We will conquer them nevertheless, if God does not abandon us; and God will not abandon us if, to remember Him, we undertake to forget our own selves.

You will say that these words of mine are lovely but that if you could get me to ponder them, they do not correspond to the facts.

Everything is possible, my mistress, but it is also possible that if you were to come to the Faith of Christ, you would be seized with more desire to be wounded by his love than to wound others with yours. Come here while he stands with his arms open to receive you; and keep in mind that though crucified by the Hebrews, he himself was a Hebrew in his flesh and a son of the God of the Hebrews in his divinity. But if you are not inclined to confess that he was, then be inclined to deprive me of your grace. While I maintain one Faith that you decline, it is not reasonable for you to honor a man who disagrees with you. I disagree with you and will always disagree with you as far as the profession of Judaism is concerned. But for the rest I make you [81] and will always make you as much a mistress of my will as you may be of yours. Genoa, 2 May 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

24. SONNET

Che pensi, Hebrea, che fai? nel sacro Fonte

What are you thinking, Jewess, and what are you doing?
 Do you not bathe your golden hair yet in the holy fount?
 Are you shutting your charming, beautiful eyes 3
 At the sight of the Sun that blazes upon the mount of
 Calvary?

361. Here *virtù* in the singular, as against its use in the plural ("virtues") above (last sentence of last paragraph).

362. *Men delicata* in the sense of "less elegant" or "less comely" than the original.

The Sun I show your rebellious thoughts	
Is not just one that falls or sets,	6
Rather it is a beam that shines midst scourges	
And a light that appears midst disgraces.	
Ah, what an infernal cloud obstructs you	9
If you are not able to see the pearls and the ornaments	
That the holy wood offers your eyes!	
The Cross that you decline and disdain	12
Outshines gems and crowns	
By flashing, in glory, before kings.	

LETTER 25 (9 MAY 1620)

Copia appears to have sent two letters. In the first, she enclosed a sonnet, wherein she compared Cebà to Homer. As Cebà's servant, she claimed, her indebtedness was only intensified by his verses. She complained about his long-winded chidings of her Judaism. In the second letter, which Cebà acknowledged in a postscript as just having received, she hastened to assure him that he need not worry about his age, for it did not detract from his achievements, which, when weighed, were more valuable than jewels. This time, instead of criticizing Cebà for his sermonizing, she guarded her tongue, saying only that she hoped her explanations (about her Judaism) would satisfy him and that she was ready to divest herself of every quality that displeased him.

I do not know, Signora Sarra, what Homer had in mind when he gave to Vulcan, whom he describes as quite unfortunate, a band of handmaidens, whom he depicts as most charming.³⁶³ But I think I understand what you had in mind when, following Homeric fantasy, you wished, with your sonnet, to court me under the same author's name. You expected to be called my mistress when, with your appearance so set as to face [82] my own paltry one,³⁶⁴ you called yourself my servant. But even without this stratagem, to be sure, you were chosen by me as my mistress the first time you wrote me and I will continue to address you in that way for as long as I have strength to write. It is true that the chain I see wrapped around your portrait does not particularly match the power you have over my person.³⁶⁵ Considering what could be done to break it [the chain], I found that if, as you say, it was made from my verses, my verses might also unmake it. Read, then, what the Muse

363. Homer, *Iliad* 18.415–20.

364. When he stood in front of her portrait.

365. Meaning that by being enchained, Copia would ordinarily be prevented from dominating others.

dictated to me so many times for the benefit of your freedom, for perhaps you would shake off the yoke that presses your neck, not from any violence that might have been inflicted upon you by my love, but from the tyranny that has been brought to bear on you by your law.

But why do I say tyranny? The Hebrew law does not tyrannize you if, having promised the coming of the Messiah, who did in fact come, it does not remove from you those consequences that rationally should have followed upon a so conceived antecedent. I am not saying, however, that a consequence of Christ's coming is worshiping another God than the one of Abraham. Rather it is worshiping Him with other rites than those instituted by the ancient Jews. Though the Messiah had still not come for them, they held the same opinion of his incarnation, life, and death as the Christians hold, and by sharing a similar faith³⁶⁶ they are secure.³⁶⁷ But in this matter I refer to what some of our own write about this, knowing that you have and can have "copious copies"³⁶⁸ of their works; and apart from some general explanation, I do not want to mention particulars about which another [83] pen can convince your intellect much more than mine.

I ought not to hide from you, though, a suspicion that occurred to me in this regard, for, should it be true, it would do great damage to the enterprise that I am pursuing for your salvation. I have been afraid that you might interpret my unremitting insistence on your conversion as an act of vainglory on my part, to achieve renown in the world for having persuaded a lady of your merits to become a Christian. But beware, Signora Sarra, for if you *do* believe this, you are under the greatest delusion. My law does not coerce me to exercise charity for gaining worldly glory, but only for glorifying God. Thus, provided you number among the Faithful, I would be most content with having the honor conferred on another hand than mine, using my own only for recording for posterity what effect the spirit of God and the persuasion of others may have on you.

Because I have written you enough about this matter, and I do not know what to say to you about any other, I ask for your license to remember you, in the future, more with my heart than with my pen, the more so since I

366. In his coming.

367. Probably in the afterlife. But, till now, the whole point of Cebà's pleadings was to demonstrate that the Jews, by being deprived of salvation, were definitely *not* secure. Or maybe Cebà was referring to "ancient Jews" in the time of the patriarchs (among them Abraham), who, born before Christ, relied on God Almighty for His salvific powers.

368. Originally the singular *copía*, as Cebà's customary pun on her name. The translation "copious copies" was an attempt to capture its double meaning here as "copy" and "plenty." "Some of our own" are Christians.

have no less work to prepare myself for dying as a Christian³⁶⁹ than to dissuade you from living as a Jewess. May it please God to favor me in my expectations for the one and the other; and may it please you, though only after having answered words with deeds,³⁷⁰ to persevere in chastising my loquacity through your silence.³⁷¹ Genoa, 9 May 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

[84] P.S. After having written you, I received a letter of yours that speaks, as usual, more for me than for you.³⁷² I thank you for it and for your verses with as many thanks as I can; and I accept, in place of highly precious jewels, the words you speak to honor the defects of my old age. As a response to the rest, I would like you, for now, to be served by my silence, which, I am certain, will make you much happier than what, out of kindness, you appear to indicate.³⁷³ I will only say to you that if you are ready to divest yourself of every quality that displeases me, know that every quality in you pleases me immensely, except for your being a Jewess. Please think about this point; and do not wish you have offered me through words what, by inclination, you do not wish to grant me through works.³⁷⁴

Sancta Maria ora pro ea [Holy Mary, pray for her]³⁷⁵ I will say as long there is breath in me, since you yourself do not wish to say it, most cruel, most implacable enemy of your own salvation.

LETTER 26 (23 MAY 1620)

In answer to a letter where, again, Còpia heaped words of praise on Cebà. Referring to his portrait, she compared the gray hair on his head to precious silver. She countered his call for her baptism (in letter 24.79) by remarking, it seems, that being born in the middle of aque-

369. Meaning, perhaps, that Cebà must subdue his feelings for Còpia lest he violate the tenets of his faith.

370. Specifically, *my* words with *your* deeds.

371. Meaning one of two things perhaps: either that once Còpia converted, she would no longer have to reprimand Cebà for his "loquacity," i.e., incessant preaching, therefore would keep her "silence"; or that Còpia had not written as many letters as Cebà would have liked her to, which made him suspect her of punishing him for his "loquacity" by her "silence."

372. Meaning, perhaps, that Còpia spoke more praises of him than she earned for herself.

373. Còpia may perhaps have been offended, if not infuriated, by Cebà's letters, but out of courtesy she concealed her feelings.

374. Còpia hoped she would win Cebà's sympathy by explaining rather than changing her faith.

375. For *Sancta Maria ora pro me*, see letter 21.72 (and respective note).

ous Venice she had no need of it. His chidings, she may have said, brought her no closer to baptismal waters. Rather they filled her eyes with water of another kind: tears, making her want to die. In a sonnet appended to her letter she appears to have spoken about wearing a garland on her head.

Most noble Signora Sarra,

When the time and place are right, I will observe the promise I made to you about keeping silent.³⁷⁶ In the meantime, I thank you with a few of the many words you wrote me in my honor. But I cannot refrain from telling you that I make very little capital of the silver you find on my head, for it [silver]³⁷⁷ does not help to purchase your wares.³⁷⁸ I realize that your rabbis, in accordance with their beliefs, hold them [the wares] in great esteem. But you ought to know that without being aware of it they [the rabbis] deceive both you and themselves.

May God give you the light [85] you need and may He let you understand that in the midst of those blanks with which you are girded,³⁷⁹ you sustain water in such scarcity as could ravage you.³⁸⁰ The left eye does its duty, as far as I can see from the front of your head, by peering most amply over the regions of worldly glory.³⁸¹ It is for the right one to extend its glance over other countries,³⁸² but I fear it may fall, as prophesied by Zechariah: *oculus dexter eius tenebrescens obscurabitur* [his right eye will be utterly darkened].³⁸³ What will be then, Signora Sarra, after having girded the temples of the forehead you mention in your sonnet?³⁸⁴ A little bit of earth and ashes

376. See letters 19.64 ("suspend the use of my pen for a certain time") and 25.83 ("remember you, in the future, more with my heart than with my pen").

377. Here, jokingly, both gray hair and money.

378. Cebà wrote, pleonastically, "the merchandise of your wares" (*la derrata delle vostre merci*). By "wares" he refers to the articles of Judaism that Copia as it were put up for sale, but he would not buy.

379. Meaning one of two things perhaps: the empty spaces that surround her on her portrait or the shallow lagoons that surround her in Venice.

380. Number 34 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had written, answering letter 24, that she had no need for water, for she was born in the middle of the sea, by which she meant that one did not administer [the sacrament of] baptism to her" (†4r). Copia is referring to her having been born in Venice, the city of lagoons.

381. Said otherwise, it was directed downward, to terrestrial achievements.

382. The heavens.

383. Zech. 11:17.

384. One of the verses in Copia's sonnet appears to have referred to a laurel placed on her forehead, as a sign of victory.

will confound the pride of your triumphs. Let us see, though, I beg of you, to aiding the soul that does not die; without its salvation let us regard the swelling of names³⁸⁵ as smoke.

I do not pretend to have such merit in your estimation as for you to open to me the treasure of your graces. But if loving you as much as myself might earn me something, it would not be right for me then to attempt to wash your hair in order to save your life while you stubbornly continue to bathe my eyes in order to hasten my death.³⁸⁶ Wipe away for me your tears, I beseech you, with the promise of converting, for you will see me pour rivers on the subject of our celebrating it. Genoa, 23 May 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

LETTER 27 (6 JUNE 1620)

Còpia wrote Cebà that she had heard he was coming to Venice (see also letters 29:88 and 39:109). Because he did not respond to her letters as often as she thought he should, she believed he was denying her his favor. Having declared herself his servant, she expected masters to acknowledge the labors of their subordinates. She turned to one or more rabbis for advice on theological doctrine.

Whoever assured you I would be coming to Venice hardly considered how I might depart [86] from Genoa. The infirmity from which I suffer does not permit you to speak to me from near, Signora Sarra. Yet it does not at all prevent me from serving you from far.

In this business of your salvation, you might want to try me, to see if I lack means to confirm words with deeds.³⁸⁷ In the meantime, though, do not vex me by saying that I wish to deprive you of my grace. It is not the same thing to stop one's hand from writing and restrain one's heart from loving. Moreover, I do not see how you could presuppose that I have any grace to give or remove when I see that all graces reside in your person.

I think you are right in saying that you are a poorly received servant of mine, because receiving pertains to your superiority and serving to my con-

385. That is, the importance that accrues to the names of persons through their achievements.

386. Cebà tries to get her to the baptismal font, but she weeps in protest at his needling.

387. Obscure. Cebà may be saying at least three different things: why not give me a chance to confirm *my words* on the value of Christianity by *your deeds* once you have embraced it? Or why not judge me for *my deeds* as a corroboration of *my words*? Or why not let me illustrate *my words* by adverting to *others' deeds* (as performed by martyrs or simple believers)? For the exhortation to prove words by deeds, see end of letter 25 (and its postscript).

dition.³⁸⁸ I am as ardent a servant of yours as any other could possibly be. If you could see what portrait of your soul I carry in mine, you would find that what I wrote about you with my pen falls short, by far, of what I feel about you in my heart. But servants, my Signora, sometimes become worthy enough to hear the secrets of their masters. Thus if you were to disclose your own secrets in the matter at hand, I would not say that the advice you will receive from me will be prudent, but I can well assure you that it will be no less faithful, I would think, than the advice you received from your own theologians. Should theirs be different, though, I pray God that it so combine the doctrine of truth with the fervor of charity as for you not to open your ears to the one [i.e., truth] without igniting your heart for the other [i.e., charity]. [87] Genoa, 6 June 1620.

*Ansaldo Cebà, a greater servant of Your Ladyship
when he is silent than when he writes*

P.S. I made a great effort to write this letter in my own hand. But what would I not do for such a gracious mistress when love tyrannizes my soul!

LETTER 28 (20 JUNE 1620)

Two weeks elapsed without any word from Cebà, and Copia, bothered by his intentional silence, asked that he break it. She had her friends write him adulatory letters, expressing their concern, as she did hers, over his poor health. One of these friends composed a sonnet in his honor, addressing him in its verses by name. Instead of sending Cebà a copy of the sonnet, as he ordinarily would have done, he sent him the original.

You will have a hard time removing me from the dust,³⁸⁹ Signora Sarra, even though you write and have others write of me with such concern. Restrain your style and the others', I beseech you; and see to it that anyone who cited my name until now expatiate on yours in the future. The greatest grace I could be done is that you be praised and revered by all. Nonetheless, I thank that gentleman who made mention of me in his sonnet, which, because I see it is in his own handwriting, I return to you together with his letter. Nor will I proceed any further in answer to yours, for I am in such a poor condition of health that it is better for me today never to practice more than I can

388. Superiors, that is, are used to receiving the services of their subordinates, who, conversely, are used to offering them to their superiors.

389. Cebà may be saying that it will be difficult either to prevent him, in his infirmity, from returning to the dust or, if the locution "from the dust" is a metaphor for impassiveness, to make him reverse his decision to be silent.

promise. May God provide you with a more vigorous servant than myself, in whom I do not recognize greater grace than the disgrace of my infirmities. Genoa, 20 June 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most indebted servant

LETTER 29 (15 AUGUST 1620)

In response, after a break of two months, to one or more letters in which Còpia, at the beginning and end, conferred overly flattering titles on Cebà. She described the tears she wept on his account as the ink for her letters. Someone appears to have spread the rumor that Cebà would be coming to Venice (see letter 27.85): Còpia, at any rate, expressed her excitement over the prospect of his visit.³⁹⁰ In the "flood of [her] thoughts" she wrote a letter so constructed, she said, as to resemble an ark, meaning perhaps that like Noah, she filled it with whatever she could for purposes of preservation, in her case presumably her thoughts and feelings. But she put the letter aside, sending instead a poem in which she spoke of languishing and dying for Cebà. It might have also contained a reference to the hem of her dress. She reassured Cebà that she would be more considerate of his life than hers, yet reminded him that in matters of faith she was bound by the synagogue.

I suffer pain, Signora Sarra, that lets me neither live nor die. Still, do not be [88] surprised if I say so little to you, for I say even less to myself. I retain a full and ever continuous memory of your person and love it, I assure you, with more tenderness than you do mine.

Though you honor me in the salutations and conclusions of your letters with titles and courtesies, I know that in using them you are just as "copious" with whoever is lesser than I and even more "copious" with whoever is no greater than I.³⁹¹ If I thus must tell you what I feel, it is that you seem to me more kind than enamored. Enamored, indeed, am I, who, in celebrating you, know neither term nor measure; and who, if I had to write about the queen of France, would spend my coins with greater thriftiness. But for what you deserve I seem, nonetheless, to be giving you little and for what I deserve I appear to be receiving too much, for, under the circumstances, I can only think of myself as inferior to all others.

You would do me no harm, then, by stopping your hand from honoring me. If you do not stop it, I fear that your enterprises, about which one could say of you that *manum suam misit ad fortia* [she stretched out her hand to the dis-

390. Giacomo Rosa, writing to Cebà in a letter dated 15 November 1620, explains the source of this misinformation: see introductory note to letter 39 (undated), in belated response to him.

391. The quotation marks around "copious" are for the pun on her name.

taff], will come to an end, about which one might add *et digiti eius apprehenderunt fusum* [and her fingers grasped the spindle].³⁹² Let us stay within our limits, Signora Sarra. Make those tears, which serve you for writing to me, or so you say in a most courteous lie, serve you, in strict truth, as repentance for having written to me. Reserve that stratagem, by which, pretending I was in Venice, you invited me, in a genteel way, to come to you, for someone who, in visiting you, can enlarge on the subject of your distinctions. I certainly would not deny how willingly I would have kissed [89] the hem of your dress from nearby. But since that would be more for my honor than your glory, I am patiently resigned to having the ailments of my body remove my doing so from the cravings of my mind. Nor would I deny how willingly I would have seen the letter that you say you constructed, in the flood of your thoughts, as an ark. But my soil was, as far as I can see, not worthy of being fertilized with your rains. The damage that I sustained through the loss of prose,³⁹³ however, was subsequently restored through the gain of verses, in which you say you languish and die for my sake. But I see from them instead, rather clearly, that you have a better understanding of poetry than of history.³⁹⁴

Forgive me, my Signora, if I tell you what runs through my mind; and do not take it as an insult if I find it hard to believe that you, whom I otherwise recognize as a lady of such great merit, would prefer my life to yours. My life is of little worth for serving you and my tongue of even less for honoring you. But life has no greater reward than its subjection to your rule, nor does the tongue have any greater value than its declaration of your glorious victories. To increase them you will need to know the face of Christ, I would think, much more than mine. Thus I pray his most holy mother to favor you, on this day, with her grace. On this day, I say, for though the shouts of your synagogue are hostile, the voices of our church resound the words *Assumpta est Maria in coelum* [Mary was taken up into heaven].³⁹⁵ Genoa, 15 August 1620.³⁹⁶

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

392. Prov. 31:19. Cebà seems to be saying that Copia got no farther in weaving her cloth than touching the spindle.

393. In the end, Copia decided not to send the letter.

394. History, meaning the actual course of events.

395. From the Alleluia of the Mass for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (cf. *Liber usualis*, 1603). The notion of Mary's intercession for the living appears in the Postcommunion ("quaesumus, ut, meritis et intercessione Beatae Virginis Mariae in caelum assumptae, ad resurrectionis gloriam perducamur"; *ibid.*, 1604) and in the Marian antiphons *Ave Regina caelorum* ("Et pro nobis Christum exora"; *ibid.*, 274–75) and *Regina caeli laetare* ("Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia"; 275).

396. The date of the letter corresponds to that on which the feast of Mary's assumption is celebrated, which explains Cebà's twofold statement "on this day."

25. MADRIGAL

*Gran luce hai tu ne gli occhi*³⁹⁷

- [90] Great light do you have in your eyes
 If it is true what Fame
 Recounts of you, O Sarra. 3
 But, alas, a greater cloud,
 The Hebrew error, spreads over your soul.
 Light ignites your rays, 6
 The cloud obstructs your heart;
 And light and the cloud bring you to such a point
 That you grant your beams to others while you yourself
 are blind.³⁹⁸ 9

LETTER 30 (22 AUGUST 1620)

Letters 30 to 33 followed at weekly intervals. The first one was in answer to a letter in which, among other things, Còpia may have complained about the generally unfriendly tone of Cebà's communications. Otherwise it is hard to understand why his response was so vehement, as if to say: if you want to get letters from me, you will have to get used to my recriminations. Còpia might have referred to "bread" in one or another context, for Cebà picked up on the word.

The heart works when it wants to and the intellect when it can, Signora Sarra. Thus my love for you never ceases and my letters sometimes stop. Last week, though, I began to set them on a regular course. But I do not know how long this will last. Take what you can from me, then; and for the rest, be paid from the bank of Queen Esther, who (if I may speak without vanity) can sate your greediness for poetic marvels.³⁹⁹

Still, you would prefer to read about Sarra, not about Esther. Have I not written enough about Sarra to satisfy you? You are insatiable, my mistress; yet, as an enemy of my law, what more could I say about you? Indeed, I have said so much as to cause general wonderment. If you want me to say more,

397. In iambic meter with the rhyme scheme: *abb/cCddEE*.

398. Since the author intended "blindness" as the antonym of "light" (lines 1, 6, 8), i.e., sight, another translation would be: "to such a point / As to make you seen by others while you yourself are blind."

399. Said otherwise: as a supplement to my letters, read my epic poem "Queen Esther," about which you so raved.

become a Christian, for without the help of Christ you can not unleash my imagination as did, with the same help, Queen Esther. Queen Esther, if you did not know it, was a Christian, for she believed in Christ to come; and you are I-would-not-say Jewish, but stubborn, [91] for you do not believe in Christ already come.

Thus do lovers speak among themselves in my house while they do otherwise in yours. If you consent, let us become a single house, for only thus will we speak with a single tongue. My house is in the womb of the Catholic church and yours is in the bosom of the synagogue. But because one of them has wider grounds than the other, come over, once, to live in the Church, for I assure you that the sun of your virtues will find greater space for spreading its rays. You are, I do not deny it, a very great woman and I am a rather unimportant man. Regarding sexual relations, however, reason stipulates that if we are to share a single room, you should come into my room and not I into yours.

What do you say of the way I write, Signora Sarra? Do you think it shows a sick vein or a healthy one? It is for certain that were you to experience the suffering of my person, you yourself would not compose such letters [as I do].⁴⁰⁰ Hear me out plainly,⁴⁰¹ for I do not mean to praise myself as an eloquent person; rather I wish to reveal myself as a loving one. I make love with an image of you that I carry in my heart, which image, if I must tell you the truth, I much prefer to the one you sent me on canvas. Though the sufferings of my body oftentimes repress the urges of my mind, they cannot prevent me from continually being drawn to it [your image]. Because this life, in its brevity, promises me little time for courting it, I am trying to make you a Christian so as to prolong my joy in that other life.

You will say that, in this respect, my love is honorable. May my love be as honorable as you wish, provided it combine with your gain. Oh, what [92] a gain, Signora Sarra! But it is a gain with a loss,⁴⁰² you will add. Oh, what a loss unworthy of being pondered by you! You are not of that scum of Jews who place the favors of fortune⁴⁰³ above the greatnesses of the soul. Rather you are of that stock of Israelites who have placed the dictates of the flesh below the admonitions of the spirit. Have courage, most generous

400. From the next sentence it is clear that by "such letters" he meant "such eloquent letters."

401. Originally *sanamente*, in reference to the previously mentioned "healthy vein" (*vena sana*), though *sanamente* also means "clearly" (or as translated here, "plainly").

402. Namely, the loss of her Judaism.

403. Cebà is referring to Jews who loan money for their own gain.

lady: whoever gives to Christ for Christ cannot possibly remain a beggar. I have given you, because I know you, a lot of praise. But I want, in the end, to give you still more, as when, after hearing people say of women *mulierem fortem quis inveniet?* [who could find a more virtuous woman?],⁴⁰⁴ I could respond, with good reason, that I have found Signora Sarra.

You will not read this letter very eagerly, my mistress. But do as you wish, for I wish to say what should be said. When it is a matter of serving, I know how to perform the offices of a servant. But when one gets into advising, I cannot do it except as a friend. A friend to you am I, the most ardent one you have ever had. Thus, out of duty, you ought not to be my adversary. Reason shirks, as does my condition, from asking you what lovers crave. But my misery and your necessity are conducive to obtaining what friends seek. You have more need of light than of bread, Signora Sarra. Lift your eyes, then, to see the road to your salvation and prepare your heart to start climbing it. Genoa, 22 August 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

26. SONNET

Domò Giuditta un Capitan feroce

- [93] Did not Judith repress a ferocious captain
 Who had repressed Hebrew forces?⁴⁰⁵
 Did not Esther confound the atrocious violence 3
 Of Haman's perverse and wicked fits of rage?⁴⁰⁶
 And what will you do, Sarra,
 Having no heart or no voice to conquer plebeian
 glories⁴⁰⁷ 6
 And, having been born at the foot of the Adriatic Sea,
 To defeat Thetis and the other goddesses?⁴⁰⁸
 Either you raise a war on those who nailed 9

404. Prov. 31:10.

405. The story is told in the apocryphal Book of Judith.

406. For examples of his rage, see Esther 3:5 and 5:9.

407. Said otherwise, Sarra has no inclination to overcome her craving for earthly recognition.

408. By "defeat[ing] Thetis and the other goddesses," all of them water nymphs, Còpia, born in Venice, would control its waters, directing them to a Christian end: baptism.

That God who was born and who lived among you,
 To the wood of the Cross, between two thieves;⁴⁰⁹
 Or, by keeping yourself under dark and dusky veils⁴¹⁰ 12
 That close your mind to what he did and said,
 You will never be a daughter of those mothers.⁴¹¹

LETTER 31 (29 AUGUST 1620)

In a letter dated 21 August, Copia heaped her usual praises on Cebà. She must have received Cebà's last two letters (nos. 29 and 30), though she failed to acknowledge them, or perhaps she did not receive them, since she mentioned how desolate she became without any word from the one for whom, she declared, she was willing to die. His letters, she appears to have said, were her lifeblood. She included a sonnet in which she pretended to be reduced to beggary in their absence.

You abound in gallantries, Signora Sarra, and I in miseries. But I am never that defeated as to renounce my pen, though most of the time my strength fails me. On the fifteenth of this month I wrote you a letter and on the twenty-second another one. I am surprised you did not acknowledge the receipt of the first of them in your letter of the twenty-first, for from my experience with so many others I sent I would not suspect it got lost. Please let me have word from you about the one and the other, because if you did not receive them, which I do not believe, copies will be prepared to be resent to you. Nor should you be surprised at my keeping count of our dialogues, for their novelty is so remarkable as to warrant their memorial through preservation.⁴¹²

You say that your world came to an end [94] when you remained without any letters from me. Big words are these, to be sure. But they are not so convincing as for me to believe them. Maybe you could construct some sort of life from my letters. But the one life that joins the body with the soul would I have you establish on other foundations. Let us leave aside the hyperboles, my Signora; and stop thinking that you are so ready to die for

409. Cebà seems to be saying that Copia should rebel against her people, for, as reported in the Gospels, it was they who clamored for Jesus's crucifixion (cf. Matt. 27:22–23, and regarding the "two thieves," 27:38).

410. For "dusky" the original had *adri*, which should be *atri*, though Cebà purposely misspelled it to relate it to Adria (Acts 27:27), here the Adriatic Sea.

411. A daughter of either Christian women in general or Judith and Esther (lines 1–4) in particular.

412. Cebà thus reveals his intention to publish the correspondence, of which, as is clear from the previous sentence, he retained copies.

me when I see that you are so anxious to live for yourself.⁴¹³ It is true that by dying you reduce yourself, in your sonnet, to beggary,⁴¹⁴ though you seem to be acting there more out of duty.⁴¹⁵ But you did not correct yourself that much as to have been smart enough to repair the lie in your verse, for otherwise you would have had a hard time covering yourself from the blows of truth.⁴¹⁶ Oh, how different is the opinion that you appear to hold of yourself from the one that, without flattering you, I hold of you! You make a pretense of being poor without my letters; and I, consequently, hold you to be rich with yours,⁴¹⁷ for in my greed to have some of them I can not become detached from you. Yet it is true that among your displays of abundance you also suffer, without being aware of it, from some want. Little light shines on your intellect, Signora Sarra; and though even less shines on mine, we can endure having *nox nocti indicet scientiam* [night reveal knowledge unto night]⁴¹⁸ when our darkness covers different matters.⁴¹⁹ Please accept from your servant what he can give you of his light in the absence of yours; and rest assured, moreover, that he believes and will always believe he has been illumined by you. Genoa, 29 August 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, *Your Ladyship's most indebted servant*

[95] LETTER 32 (5 SEPTEMBER 1620)

In answer to a letter in which Copia addressed Cebà as "His Excellency." She enclosed a poem that one of her learned admirers, presumably Baldassare Bonifaccio, composed for her in Latin elegiac verse. It is probably not to be identified as the argumentative item that Boni-

413. She stubbornly rejects his pleas to join him in Christianity.

414. Cebà seems to be saying that the sonnet was so written as to show that in dying she was brought to beggary. Why "beggary," though? Perhaps because without Cebà's letters Copia would be deprived of spiritual nourishment. The formulation should probably have been reversed: Copia died from being deprived of Cebà's letters.

415. Cebà appears to be saying that Copia's description of herself as destitute was merely a figure of speech, hence a poetic sham.

416. Obscure: Cebà may be saying that Copia only pretended to be destitute (see above), and if she did not correct herself it was because, deep down, she realized that (without Cebà's letters and their promise of salvation) she actually was. Copia usually did not retract statements, yet aware that the present one would not hold up under closer scrutiny, she reformulated it elsewhere in the same sonnet.

417. "Consequently," because the result of her being deprived of his letters is his being enriched with hers.

418. Ps. 19:3/Vlg 18:3. Vulgate has the indicative *indicat*, which Cebà changed to the subjunctive *indictet* because of the particular construction of the Italian as noun clauses.

419. Copia was in the dark until receiving (Christian) light from Cebà, while Cebà was there until encountering the radiance of Copia.

faccio eventually placed at the opening of his "discourse" (see fig. 8).⁴²⁰ On the subject of poetry, Copia promised Cebà to send him more of her own verses in return for his, and on a personal note, she complained of suffering from headaches.

Whether you are liberal or stingy to me with titles, you can neither give me nor take from me anything,⁴²¹ Signora Sarra. Treat me as you wish in this regard, for I could not care less about appearing big or small in your letters provided I be portrayed as a servant and a lover at your disposal. But you who are so very noble would not perchance suffer a common lover. I do not know what I am and I rely on anyone who might better know how to assess me. If you are so inclined, let me have a word from you about it, please, for who knows if I could ever find a pair of witnesses to ascertain such nobility in my person as for you not to be averse to dressing me in your clothes?⁴²²

I have a great desire for you to honor me with a cross, my mistress, in order for people to recognize me as a knight of your order. Since I cannot bear receiving without giving, however, I would like you to be satisfied by taking from me another [cross], for he who knows how to carry it causes people no damage at all.⁴²³ What do you say, Signora Sarra? Will you refuse my things, then, when I ask, with such affection, for yours? Ah, do not do it, for the love of God, for you would find it too difficult to convince me that you die for me⁴²⁴ when I feel that you are reluctant to accept what can make me live for you.⁴²⁵

If you hesitate over what you should rightly do, take counsel with that doctor⁴²⁶ who has written you Latin verses,⁴²⁷ for I am certain that he will

420. Nor is it to be identified with the shorter (and thematically similar) one beginning "Numen eris" (Rovigo, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, MSS Silvestriana, 226, fasc. 20:4v; in five distichs), which, as it turns out, was dedicated to Paluzzi in his *Rime* (1626), A 6v.

421. Cebà seems to mean either that Copia is unable to give him anything *he* needs or take from him anything *she* needs; or that however lavishly or sparingly she addresses him, she cannot make him any different from the way he is.

422. Obscure: Cebà may be saying that since he is unimportant, he doubts anyone would attest to his being noble enough to be dressed, as Copia is, in clothes of nobility and that the only person who *would* do so is Copia herself.

423. Meaning, perhaps, that unlike the "knight" (in the previous sentence) who destroys, the Christian saves.

424. As she said before (letter 31.94).

425. Cebà, that is, will not give up so easily: he intends to continue to work for Copia's conversion as being essential to his own welfare.

426. In the sense, it would seem, of a learned figure or, more specifically, of a doctor of letters, medicine, or law.

427. To all appearances, Bonifaccio, who, beyond the present verses, wrote the Latin elegy (in fourteen distichs) later placed at the head of his *Discorso* (2.3 below).

side with me in reasoning with you [96] about the Christian cross as much as I side with him in commending him on his composition in elegiac verse. If you, out of gratitude for this poem, were to consent to unloading that title "His Excellency" from my shoulders onto his, you would do me no wrong, for I am a doctor neither of medicine nor of law. I recall that he who was either the one or the other in his studies in Padua also had people favor him with the same title.⁴²⁸ Thus *ius suum cuique tribuitur* [everyone should be attributed his right],⁴²⁹ since we are speaking of laws; but since you are troubled by head pains, be content (I say this jokingly) with my having taken care to ease them for you.⁴³⁰ Remember, however, that *ridentem dicere verum nil prohibet* [nothing prevents a laughing man from telling the truth].⁴³¹

I am sending back the verses of the doctor from Vicenza,⁴³² because they belong to you; and I thank you for those you promise in exchange for mine as I do for those already received. Nor do I want you to suffer pain in your head from seeking to delight my ears.⁴³³ I am more concerned with your health than with your poetry; and if you were concerned with as much on my account, I would give you no reason to accuse me of little faith.⁴³⁴ But since I cannot do much else for you, I will ask you at least not to give God any reason to condemn you for having none.⁴³⁵ To His protection do I recommend you with all my heart. Genoa, 5 September 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

428. Bonifaccio did in fact pursue early studies at the University of Padua, where in 1604, at the age of eighteen, he received a doctoral degree in jurisprudence.

429. From a statement of the Roman jurist Ulpian (Dometius Ulpianus, d. 228), incorporated into the "Digest," or second part (from 533) of Justinian's *Corpus juris civilis* (*Digesta* 1.1.10).

430. Means either that by defining himself as a nobody Cebà made it easier for Cópia to write to him, for she need not labor over her speech; or that by having her adopt a new faith, he would relieve her of her "head pains."

431. After Horace, *Satires* 1.1.24 (there as *ridentem dicere verum quid vetat*).

432. Presumably the same "doctor," Bonifaccio, author of the Latin poem, though, as far as known, Vicenza was not a station on his professional itinerary. Cópia may have erred in her geographical reference (for it is she who mentioned Vicenza and Cebà picked up on the word); or Bonifaccio may have had some limited association with the city; or the poet may have been someone else (Fonseca-Wollheim identifies him, in "Faith and Fame," 64, as Gianfrancesco Corniani, Bonifaccio's cousin, though does not say why; on Corniani, see under 2.2.A 5r).

433. By laboring over your poetry to increase its refinements.

434. For not sending you my own poetry.

435. That is, no faith.

LETTER 33 (12 SEPTEMBER 1620)

In answer to a letter where Copia spoke of her reverence for Cebà. As for herself, she asked why her having been born a Jew was thought to make her defective. She refused to discuss Christianity in writing.

Judaism and idolatry do not form a good league, Signora Sarra.⁴³⁶ You know the punishments your ancestors had as a result.⁴³⁷ Stop [97] the veneration you say you show me, for you profess Judaism; and I say "you say you show me," because I am not so demented as to believe that you actually do. In matters where the effect is prohibited, it is not reasonable for words to be permitted.⁴³⁸ This creature whom you deify is the most miserable one on earth. In his body he has nothing but misfortunes; in his mind, nothing but sufferings; in his works, nothing but defects. If it were not for his deriving comfort from the hope of a future life, the difficulty of supporting the troubles of the present one would be too great. Weigh me, then, my Signora, on a scale that is right for me; and moderate the excesses of your adulation by imagining my miseries, from which, though, I exclude, do understand, my being loved by you—having this grace alone, I cannot think of myself as hapless. It is quite true that if the love you bear me gives me so little rule over your will, my feeling of being fruitlessly loved by you only serves to increase the extent of my misfortunes.

I do not consider your being born a Jew to be a defect in your person,⁴³⁹ for where there is no choice, there can be no defect. But I do believe you have no excuse for not becoming a Christian, for then you would have light to visualize the Faith of Christ. Since you say you do not wish to speak of this faith with your pen, I will ask you to discuss it at least with your heart. May I recommend you to the charity of that noble person from Vicenza as

436. Number 35 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had said she was idolatrous for loving, etc." (†4r). The catchall abbreviation *etc.* may be expanded to "her Genoese correspondent."

437. Of their idol worship, as prohibited by one of the Ten Commandments, viz.: "You shall have no other gods but Me. You shall not make unto yourself any graven image or any likeness," etc. (Exod. 20:3–4).

438. Cebà seems to be saying that since Copia is prohibited from worshiping other gods, she should not deify him by her praises.

439. Number 36 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had regretted that her being born a Jew was regarded as her having a defect" (†4r).

one who knew so well how to admonish you through the harmony of his verses.⁴⁴⁰ Genoa, 12 September 1620.

*Ansaldo Cebà, not an idol or a lord
but Your Ladyship's most devoted servant and subject*

[98] P.S. Last week I wrote in such haste that it seems almost impossible for me not to have said something absurd. In any case, send me back that letter of 5 September [letter 32]. Once I have seen it, I promise to return it to you.⁴⁴¹

LETTER 34 (3 OCTOBER 1620)

Three weeks passed before letter 34. In the interim, Cópia wrote two letters, for which she requested a response. In the first of them she expanded, philosophically, on the nature or destiny of the loving soul, referring to Plato as her authority. In the second she denied the benefits that Cebà attributed to prayer, as perhaps a retort to his remark that her only hope, to save herself, was to pray. She interpreted the cross he offered her in a way that differed from the one he intended. Moreover, if he really wanted her to have it, he should come, she said, and give it to her himself. Of the two poems she appended to her letters, one was her own and the other, in Cebà's honor, by a protégé, Giovanni Basadonna.

Most genteel Signora Sarra,
I have two of your letters at the same time; and if it were not for your pressuring me to respond, I would, for the time being, have put them aside. In the first you philosophize about the amorous peregrinations of the soul.⁴⁴² Since it is time that I begin considering eternity, I willingly let others engage in these Platonic speculations. In the second you pronounce a negative judgment on learning prayers. Because we proceed from different premises, I would not want to lose time in arguing over this. The cross that I offered

440. See letter 32.95–96 for reference to this "doctor" (presumably Bonifaccio) and his verses (not to be confused with those later set at the opening of his "discourse"). One detects a soupçon of jealousy.

441. The postscript clarifies that Cebà was planning to publish his letters, one of which he forgot to copy before dispatching it. Thus the request to return the letter so as to check whether he had "said something absurd" was an excuse for retrieving what he needed for compiling his collection.

442. In anticipation ex post facto of Cópia's *Manifesto*, published a year later, on the immortality of the soul (Cebà, in the next sentence, speaks presciently of "eternity").

you is not as you interpret it; and if it were the same, I could hardly give it to you by hand if I cannot approach you by foot.

I like your verses because I like your person. But those of Basadonna⁴⁴³ frighten me, for his surname frightens me.⁴⁴⁴ If he were to leave it [his surname] outside the door when he comes to visit you, though, I think I would speak of him with a more pleasant taste in my mouth—that, for now, is the only thing I can tell you jokingly. But speaking respectfully, I thank that distinguished gentleman⁴⁴⁵ for the honor he did me in his tongue,⁴⁴⁶ and I assure him that if I could, I would not be stingy in reciprocating in my own.

[99] As for what I can do, however, I carry your name on my head;⁴⁴⁷ and I would ask you to prepare yourself to carry my cross in your heart. Genoa, 3 October 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

LETTER 35 (10 OCTOBER 1620)

Copia reported that Giovanni Basadonna was shocked by what he felt to be Cebà's jealousy of him for having received her attention. She might have asked Cebà to tone down his demonstrations of love, for they were suspect to many, including her husband, who was not particularly happy with their correspondence to start with. Her ideas on religion, she noted, were firm, but she was reluctant to discuss them in writing, fearing her letters might get her

443. Giovanni Basadonna, described by Agostino Superbi (for the year 1628) as "an earnest senator and a great savant in these times, . . . indefatigable in public affairs and admirable in private ones, excelling in Latin letters and highly intelligent in vernacular writings, rich in the benefits of his mind and of good fortune as well," etc.: *Trionfo glorioso d'heroi illustri, et eminenti dell'inclita, & maravigliosa città di Venetia li quali fiorirono nelle dignità ecclesiastiche, nell'armi, & nelle lettere* (1629), 3:93–94. On his oratorical powers in the Senate, with a quotation from one of his speeches (for 1624), see Giovan Battista Nani, *Historia della Republica Veneta* (originally 1663), 4th impression (1686), 1:234–36; also (for the same year) Giacomo Diedo, *Storia della repubblica di Venezia dalla sua fondazione sino l'anno MDCCXLVII* (1751), 3:37. Ottavio Ferrari, in a letter dated 1637, hailed him as no lesser a figure in the Venetian republic than Cato in the Roman one: *Ottavii Ferrarii prolusiones vigintisex. Epistolae. Et formulae ad capiendi doctoris insignia. Item variae inscriptiones*, 2nd rev. & exp. ed. (1668), 386–87.

444. *Basadone*, in Venetian, means "a light, but chilly and nippy breeze": see Giuseppe Boerio, comp., *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, 2nd rev. & enl. ed. (1856), 66 ("basadone, s.m. brezza . . . Picciol vento ma gelato e crudo"). Cebà must have read the word as "shameful woman" (*donna bassa*).

445. Originally *quel Clarissimo*.

446. A jocose parallel to the previous "in my mouth." The "tongue" in which Basadonna composed his verses is perhaps Venetian, yet it could refer, more generally, to his style of speech.

447. Can be read in different ways: either Cebà honored her; or, as suggested by the continuation of the sentence, her situation as an infidel weighed on his mind.

into trouble (she had already said as much, see letter 12.33). She appears to have continued her musings on Platonic conceptions of love (to which Cebà reacted in letter 34.98), asserting, for example, that without the soul she gave Cebà she was dead, for no body can survive without a soul. In contravention of Platonic ideas on immortality, however, she hoped to reunite her body with her soul, which, she believed, could come about only by receiving further letters from Cebà. She wondered whether there was such a thing as amorous death, whereby lovers die by thinking about whom they love. Though she called Cebà her prince, she complained about being more hurt than helped by the Christian hand he offered her with his admonitions and explanations, which, she said, she did not need. Her only need, she emphasized, was for him to show her his love, in which case she would willingly kiss the same hand that wounded her.

Let us grab time as it comes, Signora Sarra, and let us make love in earnest. Last week I do not think I fulfilled my duty. I would like to make up for this. But when I search for the names in use among lovers, I do not know how I was led by my pen, and not by my soul or by hope, to greet you with the title of daughter. What a strange beginning, you will say, for speaking amorously with one's lady! Strange it is without doubt and unfitting as well. But if I consider your locks and mine, I cannot, without making people laugh, commence with a better one. Although Anacreon gives me courage with his subtle argument about lilies and roses,⁴⁴⁸ the truth is that in discussions between an old man and a young woman words of love do not make a pretty sight. My daughter will I call you, then, if you approve, for even though I did not generate you, I still have some hope left of regenerating you. Listen, now, to what your father says to you.

448. It is not clear what particular "subtle argument" (*sofisma*) Cebà had in mind, though it might have concerned the power of nature to invigorate the aged. Roses (among other flowers) appear often enough in Anacreon's poetry (from the sixth century B.C.E.), usually in connection with spring and love; thus roses as an emblem of renewal. See, for example, such passages as "Do you see . . . with the return / Of the odiferous season / How the Three Loving Virgins [the Three Graces] / Abound with roses?" or "I sing praises to the most youthful season, / Rich in garlands, / And also sing praises to the rose, / For the rose is the honor of every other flower, / The sweet fragrance of the gods / And the pleasure of men," etc. (translated from Anacreon, *Anacreonte e altre versioni poetiche*, 18–19 [no. 37], 61–63 [no. 53]). At the same time, we are reminded that the rose pricks, thus hurts, as in the passage: "In the bosom of the fresh rose / There lay a hidden bee. / To pick the lovely flower / Imprudent Love / Sets his finger on the golden bush, / But withdraws it wounded," whereupon Love (Cupid) ran for comfort to his mother (Venus), who remarks: "If the prick of the bee, / Tell me, can so burn you, / How much more do you think / You could prick mortals with your rays?" (*ibid.*, 48–49 [no. 40]). Both notions of the rose would apply to Cebà's situation: his love for Còpia rejuvenates him in his old age, but little gratification does he receive in return, for her unflagging adherence to the synagogue is a "thorn" in his flesh.

If that noble Venetian⁴⁴⁹ was scandalized by my jealousy, tell him that I am now over it and that it little bothers me that you have friends from Basadonna Palace,⁴⁵⁰ since I have no fear of having diadems from Cornaro Palace.⁴⁵¹ In short, I do not want the love that I bear you to put me in [100] disfavor with many people who, without your fault, would perchance like to become familiar with you. I say "without your fault," because (speaking respectfully) I consider you, for this reason, just as severe in your opposition to lascivious loves as I hold you gracious in your exercise of continent ones. I rather suspect, though, that your husband, Signor Jacob, might not look upon this traffic of our letters with particular enthusiasm, not because he minds the assaults of a lover who is old, but because he fears the attacks of a man who is Christian. I should like to know what to do to win his grace. But since I cannot do otherwise,⁴⁵² tell him, in good faith, that both the Christians and the Jews are reckoned as belonging to the generation *quaerentium faciem Dei Iacob* [of those who seek the face of the God of Jacob].⁴⁵³

Here I have entered into the subject from which, you say, you wish to exit with your pen though you know how to speak about it with your voice. I truly would not want to get you into a difficult situation, for I do not know what might come of it. Still, I should tell you that I would be frightened by the sweetness of your talk much more than by the effectiveness of your reasons. Although I may not have the eloquence to answer, I would have ideas to repudiate them. But however matters stand, I do not think it is bad for us not to speak to each other except via letters.⁴⁵⁴ If you, moreover, were

449. Probably Basadonna, already mentioned in letter 34.98; see continuation of sentence.

450. Ca' Basadonna, a palace in Venice on the Canal Grande (in the Dorsoduro district), belonging, successively, to the Basadonna, Priuli-Scarpon, and Giustinian-Recanati families: see Elena Bassi, *Palazzi di Venezia: admiranda urbis venetae*, 354.

451. Ca' Cornaro, or in Venetian, Corner, a palace in Venice on the Canal Grande (in the San Polo district), formerly the Ca' Mocenigo, though owned, after 1458, by Marco Cornaro and his brother Andrea. Marco's daughter Caterina married James II Lusignan, king of Cypress, in 1468; upon his death five years later she ruled alone as queen, ceding her realm to Venice in 1489. In a portrait by Gentile Bellini from around 1500 (presently in the Szepmuveszeti Museum, Budapest) she is depicted as wearing headbands and necklaces, which might explain the mention of "diadems." Cebà may be saying that his jealousy of anyone in the Basadonna family is unfounded, for he realizes that Copia will never reward him with such jewels as belonged to Caterina of the Cornaro family. In this connection "having diadems" from the Cornaro Palace (emphasis on *Cornaro*) could be read as a reference to cuckold's "horns" (*cornua* in Latin, *corni* in Italian): as Copia's "lover," Cebà feared competition from her friends. For Marc'Antonio Cornaro, the church dignity to whom Bonifaccio dedicated his *Discorso*, see below, 2.3, note 1.

452. Meaning, perhaps, that he cannot help but refer to the religious question.

453. Ps. 24:6/Vlg 23:6.

454. Clumsy formulation. Cebà appears to be saying: "I do not think there is anything wrong about discussing religion in writing."

to grant me permission to abstain from writing them, I think you would show your love for me. I, for my part, certainly would not keep still without countering my will, and countering one's own will is one of the noble deeds commanded by Gospel law.⁴⁵⁵ Do not make your calculations, then, in such a way as to forget mine; or, if you wish [101] to think of yourself alone, consider at the same time that if, in writing you, I favor my will, you will be the mistress of a cowardly servant and that if, by not writing you, I oppose it, you will have rule over a valiant knight. Were you to do me this grace, you would really need to assure me of it with your silence, for if you persist in speaking, I do not know how to sentence you to keeping silent.

But I recall that, according to Platonic conceptions, you think of yourself as dead from having your soul bide its time with me,⁴⁵⁶ yet you beg for my letters as a means perhaps to reunite it⁴⁵⁷ with your body. I do not want to consider right now if the lover dies when he thinks about the thing that is loved.⁴⁵⁸ But I would want to warn you that even if your notion of amorous death were true, my letters would poorly resuscitate you. Indeed, if the soul is not where it animates, but where it operates,⁴⁵⁹ I would give you, in writing, so much reason to think about me that your soul would be more in Genoa than in Venice.⁴⁶⁰ What do you say, my love? Do you think I have convinced you by using your own arguments?⁴⁶¹ I certainly do not know what defense you would take. But because you pride yourself on not beg-

455. Perhaps the most salient example of self-restraint is the parable of Jesus's resistance to temptation as recounted in Matt. 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–13.

456. In reference to a point that Còpia appears to have made in the first of the two letters to which Cebà responded in letter 34. There she discoursed on the transmigration of the soul, referring to Platonic ideas thereabout: in arguing for the immortality of the soul, Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedo*, takes off from the premise that in dying the soul separates from the body. Còpia, on numerous occasions, declared that she would die for Cebà or that from the pain he inflicted he was already making her die: see letters 15.40 (also poem 13, stanzas 1 and 5), 24.79, 29.89, 31.94, and 32.95.

457. One might argue over what "it" (here the feminine object pronoun *la*) qualifies: her soul (*anima*)? or, as implied by "with me" (*con me*), Cebà's? Of the two, Cebà must have had the first in mind, for Còpia appears to have said that the only way for her to function properly would be to have her soul return from its moribund sojourn with Cebà to "reunite" with her body. She failed to note that by being restored to its carnal frame, the soul, in contravention of Platonic concepts, was prevented from realizing its immortality.

458. An idea that Còpia seems to develop in her letter.

459. Obscure: Cebà may have picked up on the notion of "animates" (*informa*) versus "operates" (*opera*) from one of Còpia's letters, as a variation on the conventional binaries of form versus matter or ideas versus actions.

460. In other words (perhaps), the soul, not being in Còpia's body, but operating upon Cebà's, would be away in Genoa, with Cebà.

461. Originally "convinced you with your very own principles" (*v'habbia convinta co i vostri medesimi principij*).

ging for reasons,⁴⁶² respond then, if you wish, for I assure you of not replying to you.

My conscience would bother me if I did not talk to you about a doctrine that I learned in the school of Christ, for it made me leave the school of Plato: namely, that in the matter of spiritual deaths, one has only to fear that doctrine whereby, in sinning, the soul loses divine grace.⁴⁶³ Because *I* believe that *you* believe that you have been provided with such grace, you do not have any reason to worry about death, which you say you suffer from [102] having set your soul within my borders [Genoa], particularly since you would notice that my soul is not far from yours. Hence even if each of us could say we are dead without our own soul,⁴⁶⁴ by having the soul of a friend, however, we could only consider ourselves alive. Let us live, then, each in the other,⁴⁶⁵ my delightful daughter; and if you do not dislike this new name I have found for you and do not object to what it entails, remember that fathers are bound to admonish and children to obey. Even so, I unhesitatingly absolve you from kissing the hand which, you say, has wounded you, unless you do it in the spirit of my law, which is to return good for evil. In such a case, in order to have the delight of your generosity, I would not be disturbed by your kissing both my hand and my foot. I want you to know, though, that whatever the reason for this humbleness of yours, you are not doing more for me than I am doing for you. While you attempt to kill me with the arrow of your graces and I strive to revive you with the flame of my prayers, if you give me kisses in return for wounds, I give you life in return for death.

As to the title, moreover, that you say you give me because you consider me your prince, we are not in agreement, for I hold you for my queen. As long as our dispute is unresolved, however, let us stop with honors of words, if you will, and let us embrace one another with displays of deeds. I believe you have had me perform the deed you ask of *me*, but I do not see that you want to perform the one I ask of *you*. Let us settle our accounts, Signora Sarra; and if what I request for myself seems to you a large outlay of capital, [103] remember that the revenue is to stay with you, nay, that the capital and the revenue are to serve for your salvation and glory.

462. An expression that must have come up in Copia's letters, perhaps in a statement that Cebà could dispense with the various "reasons" he adduces for proving the superiority of Christianity, for none of them would make her change her faith.

463. The notion of "divine grace," Cebà appears to be saying, is foreign to Plato's ideas on the immortality of the soul.

464. In line with Plato's contention that the body is dead without a soul.

465. That is, with my soul in yours and yours in mine.

You have aspired to fill me with love for your gentility and you have succeeded; and I have attempted to arouse your desire for my Faith and I have failed. My Faith does not allow me to reason with a Jewish woman for the sole delight of loving and being loved. Dearest and sweetest part of my soul, I have already performed for you the office appropriate for a Christian servant and have already opened to you, with as much effectiveness as I could, all the bowels of my heart. I beseech you, therefore, to be content with having this letter put the last seal on our discussions and to persuade yourself that the silence of the pen will never do damage to the remembrance of the heart. Nay, the heart will always bear the image of your virtue and retain the memory of my devotion. Genoa, 10 October 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent servant by both choice and necessity

LETTER 36 (7 NOVEMBER 1620), TO JACOB (GIACOB) SULAM

Copia answered Cebà, saying that she did not mind his calling her by the name of daughter. Nearly a month passed until letter 36, in which he apologized for responding not to Copia's letter but rather to what may have been remarks quoted in it as having been said by her husband, Jacob Sulam.⁴⁶⁶ The latter appears to have indicated that he was not averse to receiving letters from Cebà or to extending him his friendship. He may have expressed an interest in reading what Cebà had to say about the achievements of the ancient Hebrews. Since Copia presented both her husband's views and her own, she drafted her letter in as tactful and attractive a manner as possible, to judge from Cebà's compliment about its eloquence.

To Jacob Sullam [sic]:

It was only right, Signor Jacob, that being the husband of a woman as distinctive as Signora Sarra, you would show such qualities as correspond to her gentility. She proved how gracious she was when she took pleasure in searching out my friendship; you prove how kind you are in not [104] being displeased to offer me yours. The kindliness of both of you consists in having wished to grant the will what would have sufficed through works.⁴⁶⁷

I really wanted to write about your ancients according to the greatness of their dignity, but I succeeded in doing so only in conformity to the weakness of my intellect. All the same, I am most obliged to you for having re-

466. There is a vague possibility that Sulam himself might have written Cebà a letter, to which letter 36 is his response.

467. Cumbersome formulation for saying: not only did you do kind things, but you wanted to do them.

warded me for my desire.⁴⁶⁸ The only way I can release myself from the obligation is to remind the husband of what I expounded to the wife. Come to the Faith of Christ, Signor Sullam [*sic*], if you wish to be saved; and pardon me if, to satisfy you with what I owe you, I agree to admonish you with what offends you. But do not regret having wanted me as a friend, for you could not choose someone who appreciates you more than I do. You have qualities in yourself to please everyone; and if you did not have them, the very merits of your spouse would make you honorable everywhere. Out of respect then for both you and her, I am most ready to offer you my services.

I ask my Signora Sarra to pardon me for not answering her letter, for it is written with such eloquence that I could not find the courage to confront it. Well do I thank her for the honor she conferred on me by wishing to accept me as her father, and because you, perhaps, will not object to doing the same, I give all my blessings to both of you and commend myself, as affectionately as I can, to your grace. Genoa, 7 November 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, most eager to serve Your Lordship

[105] LETTER 37 (12 DECEMBER 1620)

Almost five weeks passed until letter 37, in response to a letter that Copia wrote, though Cebà only tardily received. She wondered what people were saying of her in Genoa: was she being defamed for too little modesty? Was this the reason why Cebà had stopped writing her? If he only knew, she said, how much pain his silence caused her! Had she not reassured him that, come what may, she was willing to die for him? She implored Cebà to renew his letters, for she needed his advice in his capacity as "father."

Most noble Signora Sarra,

Your letter was slow in reaching my hands, and my response will be late of arrival, moreover, in reaching yours. I am prompted, in answering you, by what you brought up again in regard to your reputation, about which, I assure you, one does not speak in this city except most honorably. This being so, I never intended to keep silent with you,⁴⁶⁹ for I can not abandon you for being hardly modest,⁴⁷⁰ but must well oppose you for being overly Jewish. Because opposing you without gaining something is of no use to me or to

468. By your interest in what I might have to say.

469. Copia suspected that Cebà might have stopped his correspondence because of her possible disrepute among the Genoese.

470. With "hardly modest" (*poco modesta*) Cebà is probably picking up on Copia's own words in her letter.

you, I thought it would be better to speak to you more with my heart than with my pen. Nor did I believe that in so doing I would cause you so much grief: though you wish me no little good, I do not believe that you would so die for my sake as for the lack of my letters to cause a great alteration in you. If I play the part of father to you, and you play the one of daughter to me, the love that runs between us can not ignite any other desire than to feel healthy and happy. Since we can be aware of such a feeling without much writing, it would not be bad for you to reserve your pen for a more noble subject and for me to use mine on a more crucial occasion. I would really like to please you with the admonitions you request of me as a father, for I do think you need them. Here is one that I would like to offer you: were you to ponder it, you would realize that none could ever be any better for you. It is: *Audi filia*, [106] *et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et obliviscere populum tuum* [Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget your people]. I would also say *et domum patris tui* [and the house of your father], if you were to understand father as a Jewish and not a Christian one.⁴⁷¹ The latter not only does not want you to forget his house but, together with everything else in his possessions and powers, offers it as especially prepared for your commands and asks of God that you have all the treasures of His favors. Genoa, 12 December 1620.

Ansaldo Cebà, most ardent servant and subject of Your Ladyship and all her belongings

LETTER 38 (9 JANUARY 1621)

In the month that passed until letter 38, Còpia wrote to Cebà at least once, complimenting him in her typically flattering manner. She appears to have made two remarks that stirred him to break his vow of silence. One might have been that she hoped to subjugate him by her love, though not turn him into a servant, and another, that she was bothered by his abrupt or overly brief responses to her letters, which, by contrast with his, must, one can only imagine, have been effusive and extensive. Còpia appealed to Cebà to favor her by writing more often, yet reminded him that she did not want to get involved in discussions aimed at proving the superiority of one religion over another. Not only did she fear for herself in speaking her mind, but she feared for the welfare of her friends. Describing herself, Còpia is apt to have said, out of modesty, that she was little different from other Venetian women.

In faith, Signora Sarra, if I were not Christian and white-haired, I would be taken, at your doing, by a fancy to make love to you out of duty, so sweet

471. Quotations in these two sentences from Ps. 45:11/Vlg 44:11.

are the words you have written to me. But precisely my religion and my age advise me to think of other things. I would not want to be lax, however, by failing to woo you for as much time as I can. It is not because I believe that you are palpitating for my love, for, if that were the case, you would let me know. Rather it is because you are particularly deserving in my eyes if, not loving me except for reasons of diplomacy, you lead me to think you love me out of tenderheartedness. I doubt very much that I could surpass you in having such a quality [as tenderheartedness], though my desire would be to fall short of you.⁴⁷² But since, with as much of it as I have, I feel I am being transformed into you, I will see to it at least that, along with our apostle, I will be able to say: *Et factus sum Iudaeis tanquam Iudaeus, ut Iudaeos* [107] *lucrarer* [I became a Jew to the Jews so as to win the Jews].⁴⁷³

It is true that you so vigorously resist the gain to which I aspire that you leave me little hope of achieving it. But I am prepared, for all that, not to lose heart: I will make use of the love that I bear you to make you want the love that you do not bear yourself.⁴⁷⁴ I will write you, then, as often and as fondly as you wish. If I do not do so through all the months of the year, please do not condemn me for being lukewarm, for you warm me more than I would like. Rather sympathize with me for being languid, for my infirmity weighs on me more than you think. Even though it is the major reason for my being prevented from visiting your person, you should know that if I were young and active, I would be on even greater guard. When I am far from you, I see to loving you according to the law of reason; and if I were close to you, I would be afraid of loving you according to the one of the senses. It is my fortune, then, not to see you except by way of your image,⁴⁷⁵ which, moreover, resembles you very little, as far as I have been told.

Perhaps I would not be losing anything by our not being introduced, for if you follow the customs of Venetian women, and I were in fact to come and see you in person, I fear very much that I would see you more painted than natural, which is something that contradicts my taste. Indeed, it does to such a degree that it would be enough to make me fall out of love both with you and with my own self, to which I think I bear more love than I did before, the reason being that I now feel qualified to meet the conditions of

472. Cebà seems to be saying that it is enough for Copia to pretend to be tenderhearted for him to want to reciprocate with similar tenderheartedness. Yet he prefers to be less tenderhearted than she is (or pretends to be) in order to escape the dangers of physical attraction.

473. 1 Cor. 9:20.

474. Meaning, perhaps, that Copia, for her own benefit, will eventually want to have Christian love.

475. Her portrait.

your love.⁴⁷⁶ It is so forceful that I need not say anything to you about it: you see its effects.

I had proposed [108] keeping my silence with you; then a few words you wrote me made me realize that I propose and you decide. But what will be in the end after you have subjugated me? Of my servitude you cannot make great capital for yourself, for I have little time left to live; and even if I had much more, I do not know of what value I would be for satisfying so gracious a mistress. My mistress, nevertheless, are you going to have to be for as long as I live.

Though you accuse me of writing to you in haste, you will not make me stop revering you at leisure. But you could make me abstain from calling you by the name of daughter if I see that you do not set great store by the warnings of a father who, born and wishing to die a Christian, can not endure leaving to the world a Jewish daughter. But please, my sweetest and most gracious Jewess, since God calls you to baptism with the voice of a Christian, answer him⁴⁷⁷ for once with that of a Hebrew: *ego autem non contradico* [I have not been rebellious].⁴⁷⁸ Meanwhile, with no harm to your present friends, preserve the memory of me as a distant servant of yours and live happily. Genoa, 9 January 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, along with all those deputies⁴⁷⁹ who might better persuade the mind of my dearest Signora Sarra

LETTER 39 (PROBABLY FROM EARLY JANUARY 1621), TO
GIACOMO ROSA

In answer to a letter (from 15 November 1620, though not received until 2 January 1621) of Giacomo Rosa,⁴⁸⁰ one of the "deputies" whom Cebà enlisted in his campaign to win over Còpia to Christianity (see closure of letter 38). Rosa, to all appearances a citizen of Genoa,

476. Obscure: Cebà seems to be saying that he has a better opinion of himself now that he knows that his age does not disqualify him for Còpia's love, as once he thought it did.

477. The object pronoun could be Him (God) or him (Cebà, whose voice God uses for her conversion).

478. Isa. 50:5, a verse that begins with "The Lord God opened my ear." The Hebrew verb for being rebellious was not in the present, as is the Latin, but in the past (and so it has been translated).

479. His friends whom he appointed to work for her salvation.

480. From archival documents Rosa appears to have been an organist: see Venice, Archivio di Stato, Atti del notaio G. Clasio, folder (*busta*) 321, will (*testamento*) dated 3 November 1630, and Atti del notaio Erizzo, folder 1178 (details after Carla Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia: episodi della sua vita in un manoscritto del secolo XVII," 110n; the author suggests he may have been a priest). Rosa was the one who told Còpia, in 1624, that

traveled to Venice, probably in early November. There, at Cebà's behest no doubt, he paid his respects to Copia. He heard from her how she was led or possibly duped to believe that Cebà would be coming to Venice. She may have asked Rosa to correct Cebà's false impression thereabout: in letter 29.88, it will be remembered, Cebà decried the rumors of an impending Venetian sojourn as a figment of Copia's imagination. She must have been offended, but her respect for Cebà remained so strong, Rosa may have said, that his own respect for him increased many times over. Copia described Cebà in her typically enthusiastic language, making him "appear to be what [he was] not," while Rosa, for his part, described Copia as having such fine qualities that he could not help but honor her. He was particularly moved by her solicitude over his health: after telling Copia about the various bodily ailments from which he suffered, she hastened to provide him with medicinal ointments for their cure.

To Giacomo Rosa:

Do not be hurt, Signor Giacomo, by my late answer to your letter from 15 November [109] of last year, for I only received it on 2 January of *this* year. I see that in writing it, you exalt the qualities of Signora Sarra Copia. You are certainly right, for they are extraordinary. I am particularly happy to have you respect me because you see me respected by her, who, with the light of her grace, can make me appear to be what I am not.

As pertains, however, to my failure to come to see her, I most willingly accept your correction.⁴⁸¹

If she were to give me an extract⁴⁸² of her will to save her soul, as she gave you an extract of the medicine to cure your body,⁴⁸³ it would not be difficult for me to put my temporal life at risk out of the desire to make her win an eternal life. Pray, I beg you, and have prayers said for her, for she has more need of salvation than you do of health. Honor her, for the rest, and worship her as much as you can, for beyond your doing what she deserves, you will gratify the wishes of all those who are members of my household. Through your kindness, you show your devotion to them, whom I present as most eager to be of service to you. May God grant you every happiness. Genoa. [After 2 January 1621.⁴⁸⁴ No signature.]

various persons in her household had conspired, with her teacher Paluzzi as their mastermind, to defraud her of her belongings (see below, 3.1.28v–29r).

481. Rosa apparently explained that it was not Copia who invented the rumor of Cebà's impending visit, but rather someone else.

482. Italian has *quinta essenza*, in the sense of a highly distilled chemical ointment.

483. Number 37 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "He had written that he received from Signora Sarra a certain extract as a remedy for a bodily ailment" (†4r).

484. Because the letter, as said in its first sentence, is in response to one received on 2 January 1621.

LETTER 40 (13 MARCH 1621)

Cebà's correspondence with Copia came to a halt with letter 38, apparently because she herself was sick and not up to writing. After an interval of two or so months she sent Cebà a letter sometime in February (see letter 42.113), giving an account of her illness, yet assuring him that she was now feeling better. She may have complained that whenever and whatever she wrote, his answers were inevitably tardy and curt. Speaking of Judaism, she believed her devotion to it exemplified the virtue of constancy. Her letter included verses in which she accused Cebà of being cruel and ungrateful. It probably closed with wishes for his health and longevity.

Let us start with what is most important, my dearest Signora Sarra. The news of your illness upset me *very much* because my love for you, to be sure, is not *very little*. But your letter, from which I concluded that you are out of danger, was of great consolation [110] to me.

What is less important is that I myself feel so awful that I do not know how I can live. Yet I live and write love letters, as if I were a highly energetic young man. It is true, however, that when you play on certain strings of mine I do not respond with that counterpoint that my Muse would dictate to me if my law were not against it. I am telling you this of my own will in order for you to know that if, sometimes, I do not answer you in verses, I am impeded much more by reason than by inspiration. Were I to let the latter run its course, you would hear me speak of your locks in such a way that jealousy of others would not enter your mind.⁴⁸⁵ But let us leave this office,⁴⁸⁶ if you consent, to our Rosa, who, it would not surprise me, is probably familiar with the music of Parnassus, for more than once did he detail your person in overly poetic outlines.⁴⁸⁷

Before now, I loved him for his kindness. But now I certainly love him even more, because I notice that he reveres you very much more.⁴⁸⁸ Greet him for me, please, when he comes to see you, and give him permission to make love to you on his own, for the refinement of his ways proves to me that you will be able to favor him without your harm or mine.

What a great gentleman I am, to share my mistress so easily with every-

485. Obscure: Copia may have heard that Cebà spoke of another woman and she became jealous, which may be the reason why, in letter 42, he assured her, "I am in love with no lady other than you."

486. Namely, of preaching Christian doctrine.

487. As if by prescience on Cebà's part, Rosa plays an important role in the "Notices from Parnassus" (3.1 below).

488. The contrast of "even more" with "very much more" is based on the comparative and superlative forms *assai più* and *assaisimo*.

body! But do not be scandalized, Signora Sarra, for your treasure was not made to enrich the poverty of a single person. What is good is even better when it is shared. Let each one, then, be a participant in your graces; and since you see that I am content with this, include me in the same batch with the others.

As to what happens next, it could very well be [111] that shortly you will be given some books of mine. If that is the case, read them to do honor to me. I know, however, that you do not approve my doctrine enough to learn it, for if you approved it, you would not praise yourself for having a virtue of constancy that I condemn in you as a defect of obstinacy.

Pardon me, please, for speaking freely, my most delightful daughter. Or if you do not pardon me, deprive me of the authority you granted me over your person.⁴⁸⁹ To exercise it I believe it is appropriate for me to forget sometimes that I am your servant and to remember that I am your father.

I have written both more belatedly and more briefly than I would have liked, for my ill health causes me more distress than you might think. Wish me, I beg of you, not health or life, but patience and submission to the will of the Lord. I entreat Him to remember, as He looks into the depths of His mercy, both you and me, in our greatest needs. Genoa, 13 March 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, not ungrateful or cruel, as you call me in your poetry, but as grateful and merciful as any other servant you could have.

LETTER 41 (PROBABLY BEFORE 27 MARCH 1621), TO
GIACOMO ROSA

Cebà's letter was in response to one by Rosa, who reported either that Copia had not fully recovered from her illness or that she had had a relapse. Rosa remarked on the coloring of her face, which he might have compared with its image in the portrait that Cebà already owned. Copia was interested, it seems, in having a second portrait done, this time by Castello—she had broached the subject in earlier letters (to which Cebà responded in letters 20–21); she may have asked Rosa for his help in prompting Cebà to let Castello use the first portrait as a model. Castello received it, and did his own portrait, a year later (see letter 52.128).

To Giacomo Rosa:

Signora Sarra's illness is not particularly beneficial to my own, Signor Giacomo. [112] By many signs have I shown my tender love for her, but my being distressed over her illness, I confess to you, is not among the lesser

489. The subject of the father-daughter relationship came up in letters 22.74; 35.99, 102; 36.104 (see also initial rubric to the letter); and 37.105–6.

ones. Visit her, if you wish me well, in my name; and tell her that if I were close by I would as earnestly serve her with my hand as I grieve for her, while I am far away, with my heart. As regards the colors of her face,⁴⁹⁰ I rely more on your testimony than on others'. I would like her to abstain from making further portraits of herself for me to see, for it does not help me to know the features of her face; those of her mind do I know so well as to make me content. May she live, then, in all safety, for I love her as my soul⁴⁹¹ and no good or bad can come to her from my not sharing in her face or her mind. I truly do not know what I can do for her at the present juncture. But I ask you to assure her that I wish I could do everything, and I commend myself, affectionately, to her grace and to yours. Genoa. [Before 27 March 1621.⁴⁹² No signature.]

LETTER 42 (10 APRIL 1621)

In answer to a letter of Còpia from 27 March. She may have written it after hearing from Rosa that he had already informed Cebà of her continuing illness. Expecting a sympathetic note from him but not receiving it, she accused him of indifference, forgetting perhaps that sometime in February she had written him to the effect that though she had been sick, she was now feeling better. As unconcerned as he seemed to be over her health, she, by contrast, was definitely concerned over his, asking him thereabout. Turning to his writings, she recommended that a certain revision be made in one of them and argued for her own understanding of various religious questions they treated. In the course of her letter, she referred to her hair and to that of others, presumably in connection with Cebà's incessant reminder that her hair had best be bathed in a baptismal font. Somehow the image of hair got associated, in her mind, with her fear of his failing love (see below). She might have mentioned how much she depended on his support for her good name. In closing, she emphasized her readiness to be of service to him and his friends in any way she could.

If it were not for my loving you, Signora Sarra, with all my heart, I would not at all speak to you this time, you can be certain, with a mouth full of sugar. You write me off as negligent and indifferent in your letter of 27 March. I know, though, that as soon as I was informed of your sickness, I appealed to our Rosa to go and visit you on my behalf. I wrote him a letter, and if you

490. That Rosa described to him; see above for her face as "gleaming" (*luminoso*) and as having "varying beams," "beautiful colors," and "a burning and glowing [*colorita*] cheek" (letters 2.12, 8.21, 8.22, 22.75).

491. On the notion of the soul as residing in the body of the person who is loved, see letter 35.101–2.

492. 27 March is the date of Còpia's letter to which Cebà responded in letter 42.

saw it, which you probably did, I do not know how you could have thought that I do not care about your troubles.

It is [113] true that at the time I received your letter from the I-do-not-know-which-particular-day of February, and learned from it that you were out of danger, I was preoccupied by my own usual poor health, therefore was late, more than I ordinarily am, in answering you. But if you had known the way I was then, I believe you would have granted me permission to abandon the profession of both writing and reading.

At present, since you ask me about myself, I feel slightly better. But I want you to know that my ailments, sometimes more troublesome, sometimes less, are continuous; and that if you knew the misfortunes I suffer, you would have more desire to feel sorry for me than to argue with me. Learn from me, then, Signora, to take care of your health, for if I had done so with mine, the many calamities that rain upon me might have been prevented. Had you taken notice of them, you would have considered it most inappropriate to engage in a dialogue using amorous words.

But do not think I am implying that for love of me you are being undone, for I know that love does not get bogged down in matters of propriety.⁴⁹³ I see that you depend on me for your whole reputation.⁴⁹⁴ If you felt the fire of love blazing in your veins, it is certain that even without having my letters you would not let a week pass without making me see yours. I am speaking of those composed with the sole strength of amorous passion, for as far as pertains to those "affected" ones, not one word in them, to my recognition, smacks of love. I wanted to tell you this, however, more for you to know that I am aware of how the world turns than for you to be annoyed by writing me more than you need to,⁴⁹⁵ which, if you did so do, would cause me displeasure. Moreover, it would be [114] mere vanity on your part, if you have no reason to fall in love with my person, to continue to speak to me in any other way than by reading my books.⁴⁹⁶

493. Obscure: *l'amore non sta su puntigli* (which translates, in colloquial English, as "love does not stand on ceremony"), in reference to the impropriety (in the previous sentence) of love between young women and old men. Cebà may be saying, as he did about himself in a letter to Gian Battista Spinola, that when someone is truly in love, he does not insist on receiving letters before dispatching them (see below, 1.3.3).

494. Copia might have said so in her letter. Or if she did not, then Cebà implied, for one, that in corresponding with him she was looking out for her own interests, which were to make herself known in wider circles, and, for another, that with a discontinuance of his letters she feared her name would be tarnished.

495. Meaning perhaps: by writing me sham love letters.

496. Or rephrased: instead of writing me love letters you might "speak to me . . . by reading my books" (among them "Queen Esther").

On the subject of my books, however, I see that you ask me in your letter to exclude a certain part⁴⁹⁷ and that you speak to me of faith and some other things in a way I could not have meant for you to understand. It occurred to me that you may be imitating a custom of Aristotle, who, though clear in his teachings where he strikes hard to refute those of others with a short explanation, turns out sometimes to be enigmatic. But I would rather believe that the defect, for all that, was mine, for I do not have brains particularly proportionate to the subtleties of your own explanations. I think I understood, though, what you added about your hair and others'; and, as a response, let me tell you that I am in love with no lady other than you⁴⁹⁸ and that my love is so generous that it has much more regard for your person than for mine.

If I were as self-concerned as is, perhaps, any other who courts you, I think I would be too unfortunate in not being able to come to visit you and experience that delight that your virtue, I know, would be reluctant to grant me and that my reason would be farthest away from desiring. Since I love you, then, with so much sincerity, it is only right that you, for love of me, do something more than you have done till now.

I already gave you some books of mine⁴⁹⁹ to read and little by little will give you still others. Since I hold for certain, however, that their reading can not exclude you from the number of those whom our Apostle describes as [115] *semper discentes et nunquam ad scientiam veritatis pervenire valentes* [always learning, but never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth],⁵⁰⁰ I would like you, as an act of particular grace, to read attentively, and more than once, what Brother Luis de Granada⁵⁰¹ writes in the book that I already sent you:⁵⁰² start with the third or at least the fourth part of it. I shall be content with your reading it as leisurely as you please, provided you ponder every item.

So what do you say, my Signora? Will you not give me this satisfaction?

497. From one of them. It is not clear whether, by *particella*, Cebà meant literally "a certain part" (sentence, paragraph) or merely "a word or two." One wonders whether Cópia's request for a revision was in reference to Cebà's play *La principessa Silandra* (see letter 46).

498. In seeming reference to the remark, in letter 42:110, about Cópia's locks of hair and her jealousy.

499. From his library.

500. 2 Tim. 3:7.

501. Granada (spelled here, and earlier, Granata; 1504–88): Spanish Christian mystic, famed for his preaching and prolific writings, many of which were translated into Italian (details in letter 8.20, note). For a *vita*, see Alvaro Huerga, *Fray Luis de Granada: una vida al servicio de la iglesia*.

502. Probably the *Compendio de doctrina christiana* (letters 8.20, 12.34). Other relevant books are his *Introducción del symbolo de la fe* and the *Guía de pecadores* (see under volume editor's bibliography).

If you will not, what point is there in your granting me such liberal jurisdiction over your will? I relinquish everything you could do, in any other form, for me or for whoever may in some way depend on me; nor do I wish the service I do you to be the least kind of burden to you. But I really seriously hope that you will not let your will interfere, in any way, with pleasing me when I, with feelings of so much charity, ask you to do something that concerns your benefit more than my interest.

If I urge you to become a Christian and you refuse, I am not so undiscerning, however, as to let myself be offended. I know that in a matter of such great importance all elements of your choices and your inclinations must converge. But I am sensitive enough to realize that I am not being treated by you as the love I bear you deserves if I ask you to show some concern for [your] becoming enlightened and you do not show any. I know, for all that, that you would not want to mistreat me, for you are too gracious. Thus I will be waiting for you, when time comes, to tell me something about the books I offered you for reading. Meanwhile, I pray God that they make the same impression on your mind [116] as the desire to know you are happy in this world and see you are glorious in Paradise made on mine. Genoa, 10 April 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, most ardent servant of your virtue and your gentility

LETTER 43 (12 APRIL 1621)

The following letter does not seem to be in answer to one by Copia. Rather it came as a follow-up, two days later, to letter 42. Yet Copia, to all appearances, did write a letter, and Cebà may have been referring to it in two comments: one about his having sent Giovanni Benedetto Spinola not only to deliver books but to assure her of his continuing love (which she feared was waning; see letter 42.112); another about her being especially interested, as she doubtless said, in poetry and politics (the latter perhaps as exposed by Plato or Aristotle in their writings thereon).

Most noble Signora Sarra,

Two days ago I wrote you, at length, by regular mail. I take this occasion to write you again, now briefly, as a follow-up to sending you some shorter books I own. You will receive them from Signor Giovanni Benedetto Spinola, a longtime friend of mine and a gentleman having the most honored virtues.⁵⁰³ I have asked him to visit you on my behalf and to assert how much you are loved and respected by me.

503. The Spinola family was one of four main Genoese houses (*Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, 32:378–79, where several names are mentioned, but not that of Giovanni Bene-

The books that I am sending you are not for your needs.⁵⁰⁴ Therefore, I repeat my request to concentrate on reading the one about which I last wrote to you. Should you want to spend some time on the others, do it when you have a desire to labor more for me than for yourself, for what you need are not poetic or political teachings⁵⁰⁵ but spiritual and Christian instructions. I pray God that He so open your ears to the same instructions as for you to penetrate, through them, to that truth without knowing which you can not be saved. I kiss your hands. Genoa, 12 April 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, *Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant*

[117] LETTER 44 (1 MAY 1621)

In answer to a letter dated 23 April. Còpia was stung to the quick by the strident tone and insulting content of letter 42. It "pricked" her, as had previous letters, by spreading false notions about her person and casting a "slur" on her name (for the words in quotation marks, see below). Referring to letter 38, she told Cebà how offended she was by his remarks about her inferior semblance as represented in her portrait and about her probably being no different, if he ever saw her, from overly painted Venetian women.⁵⁰⁶ She adverted to still other letters before and after no. 38, noting that she was no less offended by their insinuations that, for one, she was amorously involved with her "friends"⁵⁰⁷ and that, for another, she composed many of her so-called love letters not out of true friendship but for personal gain (letter 42.113). Yes, he was no doubt curious, she said, about the people with whom she met and exchanged letters. But how could he be so callous, she continued, as to suspect that what went on within the walls of her house was not limited to purely intellectual activities? She seems to have emphasized that she was ever a model of respectability, rebuffing anyone who made illicit advances. Though inclined to use harsh words of reproof in answering him, she held back from doing so, she asserted, mainly because of her generous disposition, whereby she wanted to spare him verbal "punctures." Despite her wounded pride, she included verses in praise of Cebà by someone in her entourage.

detto). Forty-two letters that Cebà wrote to seven members of the family (including fourteen to Giovanni Battista, not to be confused with Giovanni Benedetto) appear in his *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*.

504. Spoken sarcastically, for, two sentences later, one learns that Còpia thought she "needed" only poetry and "politics."

505. Cebà seems to be referring to a statement that Còpia made, in her last letter, about her recent readings on poetics and statecraft. More specifically, he might have had in mind the literary guidance she received from Paluzzi and her studies of Plato's or Aristotle's political writings.

506. She had asked for it by noting that she resembled other Venetians (letter 38.107).

507. See various references to her "friends from Palazzo Basadonna" (letter 35.99), to her being "hardly modest" (37.105), and to her "treasure" meant to be "shared" by others, among them Rosa ("Give him permission to make love to you"; 40.110).

Signora Sarra,

To answer your letter of 23 April properly, I would need to be what I am not and to love you less than I love you, for while you complained that I pricked you, I felt that you pierced me. But since I cannot alter my condition or inclination, I will make every effort to defend what I wrote rather than blame you for what you answered.

My jokes were never intended as a slur (to use your term) on your reputation. Read my letters in any way you please, and you will see that you are as exalted in them as any woman ever was. But you will not find that, speaking of lasciviousness, I ever judged you to be anything less than most continent. Nor was what I said about paintings or cosmetics meant to offend you or what I touched on concerning friendships or goings-on meant to insult you. Rather I took an opportunity, in all of this, to laugh a bit amidst so many things that my misfortunes always make me weep about.

To confess the truth, if I must, I am not that curious, despite what you think, to inquire whether you negotiate with persons from Venice or communicate with persons from Genoa. Apart from regarding you as most respectable, I am so busy with my ailments and occupations that I have no occasion to be jealous and am left with no time to lose. It is quite true that I little believed that you love me so much, but I did not think that you fell in love with someone else. Nor did it enter my mind that you, in your house, engage in any activities other than speculative and literary ones. [118] In matters concerning modesty and honesty, to be brief, I have always spoken and written of you with as much regard as owes to the good opinion I hold of you. The generous disposition that you say you have was the principal reason for making me wish you would have it as a Christian disposition as well.

For these reasons I would have expected from you some other letter than the one you wrote me.

It seems to me that the punctures that you mention you spared me and that you say you would have given someone else add to your generosity a quality that I do not find in your King David, though he too was most generous: when provoked by the insult of Michal,⁵⁰⁸ he vented no other expression of feeling than the words *Et ero humilis in oculis meis* [And I will be humiliated in my own eyes].⁵⁰⁹ As pertains, finally, to your remark about having been bloodthirsty toward anyone whose intentions to you were less than

508. Michal, Saul's daughter, was wed to David (1 Sam. 18:27). When David danced before the Ark wearing only a loincloth (2 Sam. 6:14), Michal, who looked out the window, was filled with scorn (6:16), shouting: "How honorably does the king of Israel behave today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of his servants' handmaids as someone vain!" (6:20).

509. 2 Sam. 6:22.

honorable, not only did you definitely give me an indication of your virility, but you also warned me to restrain my desire, if I should ever have it (which I do not believe), to get to know you. Indeed, I am so scantily provided with blood that if it were drawn from me, your daggers would need only a little wound to leave me with none [no blood].

This is as much as I can think of for now in response to your letter; and I will probably think of even less if I see another one like it. I kiss the hands of that noble Venetian who commemorated me in his verses.⁵¹⁰ With all my heart I commend myself to your good graces. Genoa, 1 May 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, *Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant*

[119] LETTER 45 (5 MAY [RECTE JUNE] 1621)

Letter 45 appears to have been misdated one month earlier, to judge from the following evidence: (1) Cebà asked Copia, in letter 45.120, signed 5 May, to thank Giacomo Rosa, when he visited her, for his letter dated two weeks later (29 May); (2) he referred, in letter 48.123, to the same letter (48) as being the fourth of those he sent during the month of June, or counted backward, letters 48 (26 June)—fourth, 47 (19 June)—third, 46 (12 June)—second, and 45 (5 [June])—first; (3) and he specified the dates, in letter 49.124, of five letters that Copia left unanswered, namely, those of 1 May and 5, 12, 19, and 26 June (letters 44–48). The error can probably be explained as typographical. Copia must have been peeved at letter 44, in answer to hers from 23 April. Not being well, she stopped writing for two months. Her next letter, dated 23 June, spurred Cebà to respond in letter 49. Letters 45–48 were composed, then, not in reply to Copia but in reaction to reports he heard about her or out of his own anxiety over her health. Copia appears to have told Giacomo Rosa, who visited her toward the end of May and relayed her words to Cebà in a letter dated 29 May, that she was convalescing after her illness and that his letter 44 came as a great disappointment to her. She complained of the author's language in it as being so sharp that it nearly stabbed her like a dagger. If Cebà did not know it, she may have said, he was not alone in trying to make her convert: she was under pressure to do so from someone among her Venetian protégés (Cebà's letter leaves us to infer that it was Basadonna, whom Cebà named in the continuation). She informed her confidant (Rosa) that now that she was feeling better, she had resumed her literary and philosophical pursuits.

The love that I bear you has too much strength, Signora Sarra. I had resolved to keep my silence until such time as you had fully recovered. But I need to speak to you even while you are convalescing. Refrain from answer-

510. Name unsaid, though perhaps the Venetian Basadonna, who would have composed the verses at Copia's request.

ing, however, that you do not feel you have regained your strength, for the silence you would impose on me thereby is one you would not like.

In the meantime, attend to living happily, for it is the greatest joy you could cause me after that of converting, which, I see, God summons you to do through another voice, which is not mine.⁵¹¹ I ask you, for His compassion, to open your ears to it and consider that to die a Jewess is equivalent to condemning yourself not to see His face for all eternity. I think that such a misfortune would weigh upon a soul as gentle as yours much more than the atrocious pains that one who dies without the water of holy baptism must rightfully sustain without end.

For the rest, leave your studies and speculations for a better time. Even then, engage in them moderately if you do not want to reduce yourself, while alive, to the unhappiness that I now experience. I pay a big fine for the sins I committed in this domain without actually having had any pleasure or real satisfaction from them. Loving God and hating the world is the wisest advice that, midst human miseries, a noble mind could heed. Because it can be followed without the reading of many books, I do not know how anyone who has any brains could sustain the sins that make him lose his health and life.

I conclude, [120] then, that your Genoese lover is devoid of the common sense he would need in order to be deserving of your grace and that were you to agree to exchange him for a Venetian, he would not think that you are doing him an injustice.⁵¹² I really hope the intentions of the new lover will not be different from those of the old one.⁵¹³ Because I feel that Illustrious Basadonna has very similar ones, I relinquish all my explanations as second to his. If you feel he succeeds in convincing you, do not show him that harshness that, until now, you have maintained with me. I bear a great affection for that gentleman, for it seems to me that he wishes you well. Nor do I bear a lesser one for our Rosa, for I see that he does not respect me for anything beyond seeing me respected by you. When you see him, greet him dearly, then, on my behalf and tell him how much I appreciated the news he gave me of you in his letter of 29 May, to which I will not reply, for there is no need to. I would like him to know, however, that I love him much more on his own account than he appears to appreciate me on mine.⁵¹⁴

511. Cebà appears to refer to the "voice" of Copia's protégé Basadonna, who tried to "talk" the Jewess into her conversion.

512. The "Genoese lover" is Cebà himself. One detects a trace of jealousy on Cebà's part.

513. The "new lover" is Basadonna.

514. Obscure: Cebà appears to be reacting to a comment in Rosa's letter. Rosa may have praised him for his literary achievements without referring to his virtues as an individual, which

As to you, finally, I do not know what more to say, Signora Sarra, because it does not seem to me that calling you my life, my heart, and my soul can be without detriment to that gentle spirit to which I have yielded. I do not see that naming you my daughter, if you are Jewish and I am Christian, would be very appropriate. I will say then, with the good grace of my successor [Basadonna], that you are as much the pupil of my eyes as I wish my Faith were the light of yours. If this is a stab,⁵¹⁵ I confess that I do not know how to talk to you without wounding you. [121] I offer you my bare chest for you to take revenge on me. Genoa, 5 June 1621.⁵¹⁶

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

LETTER 46 (12 JUNE 1621)

Letters 46–49 followed at weekly intervals. The first was presumably in reaction to a verbal or written report on Copia from one of Cebà's friends, possibly Rosa. She is quoted in it as having described her tears, of which, for some reason, she may have enumerated four, and as having criticized Cebà for failure, in one of his dramatic works, to observe accepted rules of composition.

Most genteel Signora Sarra,

A Hebrew queen once gave you some pleasure when you saw her portrayed by me in a heroic manner.⁵¹⁷ I would now like a Spanish princess⁵¹⁸ to give you a little sorrow while you see her represented in a tragic manner. This kind of poetry, as you know, demands tears of compassion. If I could obtain four of them from you,⁵¹⁹ I would not think I had composed a tragedy without observing the regulations of art.⁵²⁰

Read it, please, after you have completely recuperated. If you feel moved by the circumstances of my Spanish woman, may you have so much

led Cebà to write that he likes Rosa for who he is whereas Rosa likes him less for who he is than for what he does.

515. Number 38 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had called 'stabs' some words written to her" (†4r).

516. Originally dated 5 May: see introductory remarks to the letter.

517. The Hebrew queen is Esther.

518. In reference to Cebà's tragedy *La principessa Silandra* (1621, though written around 1618). See his *Tragedie*, ed. Marco Corradini, 7–131. Cebà sent it as an enclosure—see letter 49.

519. Why specifically "four" tears? The answer probably lies in Copia's letter.

520. Obscure: Copia appears to have criticized Cebà for his failure to abide by the conventions of tragedy; and Cebà, for his part, appears to have answered that were Copia to weep over the fate of *Silandra* she would realize that expressing feelings is more important than following rules.

pity over the circumstances of your Genoese friend as to prepare yourself, since you have poisoned him with your stubborn adherence to the Jewish religion, to treat him with the antidote of the Christian one. Genoa, 12 June 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, as ardent a servant of his overly cruel Jewish lady as ever there was

LETTER 47 (19 JUNE 1621)

Nothing seems to have prompted letter 47 (following letter 46 by a week) beyond the author's apparent concern over Copia's health. I say "apparent," for if her well-being were so important to Cebà, he would not have badgered Copia in his letter with a call for her conversion (one wonders whether he was as concerned over her health as he probably was offended by her calculated silence, which deprived him of the opportunity to continue on his missionary crusade).⁵²¹ He wished her well, yet referred back to her last letter (from 23 April) as an indication of how Copia, by speaking cruelly, could hardly wish him the same in return.

My heart tells me that you are not well, Signora Sarra; and since I cannot serve you with my presence, [122] love compels me to visit you with my pen. I do not really know what your ailment is and how it started. But you who *do* know should please take every care to recover and keep healthy. Your life is dear, from what I think, to many people; but from what I feel, it is exceptionally so, I assure you, to me.

I cannot help but say, though, that you hardly appeared to recognize me in your last letter.⁵²² But whether you choose to recognize me or not, I will ever want to be the same servant to you that I devoted myself to being from the beginning. I intend to bequeath the inclination I feel toward your person to whoever, through either kinship or friendship, feels as much toward mine. Take great care of your health, then, my noblest mistress, so that you can also honor the remains of my patrimony. If you are not prepared to make me rejoice over your conversion while I am alive, remember, at least, to console me therewith when I am dead. Thus if it pleases God to receive me into the number of the chosen, may there be added to the essential beatitude of seeing His face that incidental one of my being certified that you, too, might experience it [beatitude] in seeing the face yourself. I

521. On Cebà's suspicion that her silence was intentional, see letter 48.123 ("more from choice than necessity").

522. Her "last letter" dates presumably from the beginning of May. Cebà responded in letter 24 (5 May).

infinitely commend myself, with as much affection as I can, to your good graces. Genoa, 19 June 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, most ardent servant of his Signora Sarra

LETTER 48 (26 JUNE 1621)

Letters 45–49, as already noted, followed at weekly intervals. In letter 48, which Cebà counted as the fourth of those he sent during the month of June (nos. 45–48), Còpia is said not to have written for “several weeks,” leaving him without any news of her and with the suspicion that, from her point of view, the correspondence was over.

I do not know what to say, Signora Sarra. Several weeks have passed without the receipt of news from you. Though I had already been informed of your convalescence,⁵²³ [123] still, not having heard anything more of your health, it was only natural for me to be anxious about you.

Of the letters I wrote you this month, this will be the fourth. I entreat you, in answering it, to give me an idea of the state you are in, so that if it is a good one, I can be glad of it, and if it is the contrary, I can be sorry for you. Things are such that, as you should know, whatever your fortunes are, they drag my own after them, with amorous violence.

But since it may be that your silence proceeds more from choice than necessity, arrange for me please to get some word of you, for only when I know that you have recovered from your infirmity will I willingly consent to there being put an end to our letters, seeing that you are not prepared to have them bring anything good to fruition.

You know the kind of fruition I would like. The days your prophet predicted have already come: *Ecce dies venient, dicit Dominus, et feriam domui Israel, et domui Iuda foedus novum, non secundum pactum, quod pepigi cum patribus vestris* [“Behold, the days will come,” the Lord said, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers”].⁵²⁴ With God protecting you, you might “couple”⁵²⁵ what Jeremiah announced with what Christ did; and you will find that prediction has given way to fulfillment and that the New Testament has succeeded the Old. My sweetest hope is that you will do so without fail. Do not let yourself come any closer to the point of dying on earth, though, without having your soul imprinted with the script⁵²⁶ whereby you

523. See rubric (second paragraph) to letter 45.

524. Jer. 31:31–32.

525. Originally *accoppiate*, in playful reference, as ever, to Sarra's maiden name *Còpia*.

526. Of the New Testament.

might live in heaven. Remember that he who gives you this advice does not love your person *verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate* [with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth].⁵²⁷ Genoa, 26 June 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

[124] LETTER 49 (3 JULY 1621)

Written a week later in answer to a letter by Copia dated 23 June, the first of hers after two months of silence. In the interval she would have received letters 44–48 (including a play sent along with letter 46).

Thanks be to God, Signora Sarra, that with your letter of 23 June I know you are alive. If I must tell you the truth, these last few days I had some doubts about it; and in my incertitude regarding your health I could not conceal my tender affections for you. Keep well, my dearest beloved, both for yourself who have need of light to see and for me who have need of food to live.

Do not go to the trouble of answering my letters, for I do not want you, in attending to my satisfaction, to put your health in danger. I only wish you would let me know if the following letters reached you, namely, one from 1 May and four from 5, 12, 19, and 26 June; and if you received my tragedy⁵²⁸ along with the one from 12 June. I cannot help but be doubtful of their delivery, since, in the aforementioned letter of yours, I did not see you say anything about them.

For the rest, I would have you know that in my body no part is healthy except for my heart, which, I feel, loves you with such force that I can only think of it as vigorous. My heart, then, do I dedicate to you, once again,⁵²⁹ with as much affection as I can muster. If my gift seems to you of some value, I entreat you to reimburse me for it, not by making yourself an idolatress for my vainglory, but by becoming a Christian for your salvation. I ask of the Omnipotent that He shed His grace on you before I die. Genoa, 3 July 1621.

[125] *Ansaldo Cebà, most ardent servant of your gentility*

527. 1 John 3:18.

528. *La principessa Silandra*.

529. See, earlier, the closure of letter 44.118, not to speak of numerous references to how he was bound to Copia in his heart (as, for example, in letters 4.15, 9.26, 19.64, 22.74, 25.83, 30.91, 35.103).

LETTER 50 (17 JULY 1621)

Two weeks passed until letter 50, in answer to one by Copia dated (as we learn from letter 51.126) 9 July. There Copia brought Cebà up to date on the latest news, namely, that toward the end of June Baldassare Bonifaccio had published a blasphemous tract in which he attacked her for denying the immortality of the soul (see part 2, item 3). It was her intention, she continued, to prepare a response in her own defense (part 2, item 4). She closed her letter with best wishes for Cebà's well-being.

Most genteel Signora Sarra,

You wish me health/salvation and life⁵³⁰ at the end of your letter. Health/salvation and life do I ask for you at the beginning of mine. But since my prayers can have only little effect without your preparedness, prepare then, for the sake of God, to wish in all truth to be saved and to live so as one day to receive some fruits of my efforts.

The road you follow, believe me, is not the right one for your becoming eternally blessed. Change it, I beg you, while you still have time. Save the defense you are preparing to make against the charges of one who called you an infidel in adhering to the Jewish law⁵³¹ and "convert"⁵³² it into sermons in which you fight for adherence to the Christian one.

I would not think that a creature whom I loved with such tenderness could, on account of me, have an increase of suffering in another life. Yet it is true that if my many pleadings with you to become a Christian do not persuade you, they, by themselves, will doubtless multiply your sufferings.

Read Brother Luis de Granada, if you wish me well.⁵³³ It is more important for you to be at peace with God, I assure you, than for you to seek honor by devising arguments for waging war against men. I am sorry, though, that without your fault you have been blamed by these men, but at the same time I take consolation in the thought that the stars of heaven were sometimes

530. Copia used the formula "health [*sanità*] and life [*vita*]" earlier (see letter 40.111; it reappears in letters 45.119 and 47.122). She altered it, however, to "*salute* and *vita*" in the letter to which letter 50 is a response. *Salute* means both health and salvation, as is clear from this and the next sentence, and especially the third, where Cebà latches onto the word in its salvific sense ("be saved").

531. Refers to Bonifaccio's diatribe against Copia, issued in Venice, a few weeks earlier, under the title *Dell'immortalità dell'anima discorso* (see below, 2.3).

532. Without quotation marks in original.

533. Cebà already referred to his writings in letter 42.115.

called its stains.⁵³⁴ To the embarrassment of whoever said it, [126] we see them, nevertheless, continually shine in it. Laugh then, my Signora, while you have a clear conscience, at anyone who attempts to sully your reputation and decline to answer anyone who lacks reason.⁵³⁵ Nor should you even open your ears to listen to any such one.

I would like to know how to practice what I preach when I have reason to do so, but I am aware, in fact, of my being a philosopher more of words than of works. May it please the Lord that I so alter my ways because of the suffering that racks me at present as to keep silent with you—please forgive me—for a certain time. I assure you that what I suffer will never remove the memory of your person from me except when I am led to forget my own. Genoa, 17 July 1621.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most ardent servant

LETTER 51 (21 JANUARY 1622)

In letter 50 Cebà said that he was going to keep silent "for a certain time," which explains the lapse of nearly six months until letter 51, in answer to one by Copia dated 31 December (though received, according to him, only on 21 January). After her letter from 9 July (misdated, in her communication, as written on 9 August), to which Cebà answered in letter 50, she sent another letter (dated 8 August, as we learn from letter 52.128) and a copy of her Manifesto written and published in later July in response to Bonifaccio's libelous tract (dated 25 June). Neither the letter nor the Manifesto appears to have reached the addressee. Copia, too, maintained her silence, yet asked that Cebà not construe it as her having forgotten him.

Signora Sarra,

Your letter of 31 December reached me only today, which is now 21 January. The one that I got before it was not of August, as you say, but of 9 July, and I responded to it in a letter from the seventeenth of the same month. After that, I got neither the *Manifesto*, which you mention to me, nor any other letter, except the aforementioned one of 31 December.

You say that in your silence you have not forgotten me and I assure you that in mine I have remembered you. Thus may God see to it that you remember yourself in your greatest need. In the [127] meantime, be content

534. In reference to lunar or solar stains, as discussed, for example, by Jacopo Mancini in his *Tre lezioni . . . sopra alcuni versi di Dante intorno alle macchie della luna* (1590) and by Galileo Galilei in his *Istoria e dimostrazioni intorno alle macchie solari e loro accidenti* (1613).

535. By "anyone" Cebà implies Bonifaccio.

with my changing letters of love into prayers of charity. May you live happily. Genoa, 21 January 1622.

Ansaldo Cebà, *Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant*

LETTER 52 (19 MARCH 1622)

Two months passed until letter 52, in delayed response to a letter by Cobia from 8 August—for some reason it reached Cebà, as did the copy of her Manifesto, only on March 1—and in acknowledgment of her gift of a fish delicacy. She described the silence Cebà kept by not writing her as an act of cruelty: perhaps the gift was meant to break it. Cebà's reassurance (in letter 52) that Castello had already started work on her portrait was probably in answer to Cobia's question about what progress had been made.

Few letters was I prepared to write you, Signora Sarra, for I see that my expectations do not harmonize with yours. But you, by presenting me as being of another will,⁵³⁶ have made me set my will to not writing you any. Such things happen in this world.⁵³⁷ But how could you not let yourself be corrected in this respect by what my servant proved to you once in deeds⁵³⁸ and by what I asked of you more than once in words?⁵³⁹ As far as I can see, you are doing your deed more than mine, that is, you take greater account of exercising your kindness than of favoring my satisfaction.⁵⁴⁰

In order not to appear rude, I thank you, nevertheless, for the slices of botargo⁵⁴¹ you sent me. Those who eat them will thank you for them more

536. Cobia must have said that it was Cebà's will to punish her (for not complying with his call for her conversion) by keeping silent.

537. Originally *Può far il mondo*.

538. Cebà, as a sign of his esteem for Cobia, had sent his servant Marco to bring her letters and gifts. See, for example, letter 8.19–20, where Marco, moreover, is said to have told Cobia that Cebà spoke favorably of her to his acquaintances and that he considered himself her "great servant."

539. See, for example, the end of letter 35.103, where Cebà writes: "be content with having this letter put the last seal on our discussions," etc.

540. Said otherwise: you prefer to show me your kindness instead of complying with my request (to convert).

541. Botargo, or in Italian *bottarga*, is a kind of caviar made from the roe of mullet or tuna that, after being pressed, dried, and salted, becomes a slab, for use as a condiment after being sliced or grated. Since Cebà refers to it in the plural (*delle bottarghe*), he probably received "slices of botargo." For various definitions, see John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words, or, Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues* (1611): "fish eggs"; Giuseppe Marco Antonio Baretti, *A New Dictionary of the Italian and English Languages* (first edition, 1760): "a food made on coasts of the Mediterranean of the roes of a species of sturgeon"; and, in a recent Italian Jewish cookbook by Edda Servi Machlin, *The Classic Cuisine of the Italian Jews: Traditional Recipes and Menus and a Memoir of a Van-*

than I, for, as for myself, my ailments have brought me to the point where it is right for me to abstain from foods of Lent and those of Carnival as well.⁵⁴²

The days of my life are becoming shorter, Signora Sarra,⁵⁴³ and from what I suffer in my mind and my body I am surprised they are not already over. Let me die, however, without being vexed any more by your letters, for if I have to prepare to die properly, I need to become detached from the love of earthly things. You are one of them by [128] keeping me attached to the earth more than I would like: not just because I might love you as commanded by the law of the senses, but because I speak to you more than allowed by the rule of reason. With my person I know you do not wish to do anything; and if you wished to do something with my books, I believe you have so many that you are overwhelmed by them. I say "I believe," because as to some of them I am not even sure you acknowledged their receipt.

I do indeed acknowledge the receipt of your apologia,⁵⁴⁴ which, together with your letter of 8 August, was finally delivered to me on the first of this month. Likewise, your portrait was given quite some time ago to the painter Castello,⁵⁴⁵ which is something you appear not to have known, although he said, if I recall well, that he had already notified you.⁵⁴⁶ Thus of your face we have a most adequate "copy,"⁵⁴⁷ but of your conversion a most unremitting deficiency. Think about this point, please, more than you have done till now. Remember that it is not enough for you to believe that

ished Way of Life: "the roe of the mullet, salted and dried in its own skin, and pressed. It is served as an appetizer, sliced very thin, with a sprinkle of olive oil on it" (1:45). On "the passion" of Italian Jews, in early times, for *bottarga*, see Ariel Toaff, *Mangiare alla giudia: la cucina ebraica di Italia dal Rinascimento all'età moderna*, 83, also 84 ("that the Jews, particularly the Italian Jews, were ravenous of *bottarghe* is an irrefutable fact. There was in fact no celebration or religious holiday, public or private, even minor or insignificant, in which they were not displayed on the table").

542. Number 39 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had written that she sent foods of Lent to temper those of Carnival" (†4r). Copia wrote her letter, then, during Carnival, sending fish as one of the "foods" that Catholics traditionally eat during Lent.

543. Cebà died seven months later.

544. Her *Manifesto* in rebuttal of Bonifaccio's assertions that she denied the immortality of the soul.

545. The portrait that Castello received was the one that Cebà already possessed: it was meant to give him an idea of Copia's likeness (and thereby help him make his own "copy"; see below).

546. On Copia's portrait by Castello, see at length under the volume editor's introduction.

547. Originally *copia*, Cebà's usual pun on Sarra's name.

the soul is immortal⁵⁴⁸ if you do not also follow the road needed to have it blessed. Genoa, 19 March 1622.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

LETTER 53 (30 APRIL 1622)

Nearly six weeks passed until letter 53, in answer to a letter in which Còpia accused Cebà of lacking "Christian charity" by not writing her. Is it not clear, she might have asked, that his letters are vital to her welfare? that her loving feelings for him are sincere? and that without his letters or a show of his affection she is so miserable as rightly to be pitied? In the course of her letter she addressed Cebà as "Most Illustrious" and may again have referred to her Manifesto⁵⁴⁹ in confirmation of her belief in the immortality of the soul.

You say that I am deficient in Christian charity, Signora Sarra, if, knowing how to give you life by writing to you, I still refuse to write you. Jewish sincerity, I fear, will get you nowhere if you know how to tell a lie and, for all that, [129] fail to abstain from telling it. For six months you have been without my letters and you have been eating and drinking. Then you want me to believe that you need new ones? Think this over another time if you would, for the love I bear you is not of a kind that offers a glimpse of things but of one that assures their knowledge.

I know everything you are and what you want of me; and many times I satisfy your desire with my pen. But I am never mistaken in forming an opinion of the reason that stirs you to want to be friends with me.⁵⁵⁰ I praise you for being a woman of noble and genteel spirits. But I do not pity you for being incited by tender and loving affections. The affections are all mine, as far as I can see; and lest you be mistaken, they consist in nothing else but the inability to persuade you to come to that Faith that would enrich your soul with treasures beyond the name you obtain in your ambition for worldly glory. Glory in the world is what you seek while, by way of writing letters, you strive to separate yourself from common women. But the world, as you know, cannot provide something stable; and even if it could, it would be of

548. Number 40 appears in the margin, referring to the author's comment, so numbered, in his preface "To the reader," namely: "She had protested that she upheld the immortality of the soul against someone who had said of her the contrary" (†4r).

549. See, earlier, letters 51.126 and 52.128.

550. Namely, as Cebà understood it, her desire to "use" him in her search for immortality (see the remainder of this paragraph).

little consequence that your name be remembered for many centuries when your soul is tormented for endless ones.

Let us speak frankly for once, Signora Sarra, and let us leave loves and idolatries to one who has a greater inclination to believe them than I do and a lesser intention to talk about them than you do. Let us exchange reasoning about immortality, if you think I speak well, for that about the salvation of the soul: you have no need of the first and suffer from a want of the second. Consider [130] what that book that I sent you⁵⁵¹ says on the subject of Jewish and Christian law. If you have any difficulties with either one, take them up with whoever has the learning to make you know how to resolve them. Be persuaded by no other arguments than those of your Scriptures that you can not be saved unless you place your faith in ours.⁵⁵² Our Scriptures, my Signora, so firmly recommend the virtue of charity that there can be no good Christian who does not look after the salvation of souls.

Do not be surprised, then, if I touch this string of your conversion more than you would like. Were you prepared to promise me your conversion, I guarantee it would gladden my mind much more than the title, with which you have inflated me, has delighted my ear. Believe me that I would be satisfied with your calling me "Most Obscure" if I saw in you the light to designate you "Most Illustrious."⁵⁵³ For all that, I consider you worthy of some title; and if I do not amply show it in my letters, it is because I think it would be harmful to the sincerity of love if I were to mix sincerity with courtly ceremonies. You may be sure, however, that what you have from me can most greatly honor you; and you may hold for certain that the more familiarly you treat me, the more I think I would be honored by your gentility.

But if you do not intend to convert, stop your pen, for, without this purpose, I do not intend to use my own. I really intend to pray more than I ever did for your salvation; and only by fulfilling this [131] duty can I be sure of having sufficiently complied with every other. Thus I beg you, with the utmost insistence, to be persuaded; and I wish for you, from heaven, all heavenly blessings. Genoa, 30 April 1622.

Ansaldo Cebà, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant

551. Probably the book by Luis de Granada (see letters 42.115 and 50.125), though on the Christian (and sometimes secular) books that Cebà sent Copia at large, see, further, letters 2.9, 3.13, 4.15, 8:20, 15.38, 40.111, and 43.116.

552. Cebà is referring to such passages in the Old Testament as seem to prefigure the New.

553. Copia addressed him, in the letter, as *Illustrissimo*.



2. LETTER FROM SARRA COPIA TO ISABELLA DELLA
TOLFA (8 JANUARY 1622 IN VENETIAN STYLE OR 1623 IN
GREGORIAN CALENDAR)

Copia asked Isabella della Tolfa's help to see to it that her husband, Marc'Antonio Doria, remove a particularly offensive letter by Ansaldo Cebà, already deceased, from the prospective publication of Cebà's correspondence with her.¹ It could be that the letter raised certain doubts about her integrity as a Jew and that Sarra, in consequence, feared for her position within the Jewish community.²

Most illustrious Signora and most respected patroness:³

True, mortals resort, with all their affection, to divine goodness when they wish for some favor of great importance to their needs. I do the same with Your Most Illustrious Ladyship, to whom I resort with great affection because I am stirred by a concern that greatly weighs upon me. Nor do I think Your Ladyship will be offended by such a comparison,⁴ for it is an honor for our humanity to imitate divine operations.

Some time ago I entreated His Most Illustrious Lordship, your husband, to be so inclined as to do me the grace, when the letters of my Signor Ansaldo are printed, of attending to the omission of one written to me on 1 November 1619.⁵ Since I have not received an answer from His Most Illustrious Lordship, I am beginning to fear that my note suffered a mishap.

1. Source: Naples, Archivio di Stato, fondo Doria D'Angri, part 2, folder (*busta*) 688, "Letters without names of addressees," 1609–98, 12r (see fig. 5). For the Italian, see appendix. The letter to be suppressed was dated 1 November 1619; it has been assigned a numerical reference in 1.1 above as letter 17a.

2. The idea was suggested by Umberto Fortis in *La "bella ebrea": Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa nel ghetto di Venezia del '600*, 68.

3. Isabella della Tolfa may be identified as the wife of Marc'Antonio Doria, the dedicatee of Cebà's *Lettere* (she is mentioned in letters 14, 15, and 20). For the present letter, along with many others by Cebà and Marc'Antonio in Naples, Archivio di Stato (and Modena, Archivio di Stato, as well as Biblioteca Estense), see Carmela Reale Simioli, "Tracce di letteratura ligure (1617–1650) nelle carte napoletane dell'Archivio Doria d'Angri," 321–39, esp. 332–33.

4. Of mortal needs and divine benevolence.

5. It is clear that Copia knew about Cebà's intention to release his letters in a printed collection and, further, that Marc'Antonio Doria, the dedicatee, had final say over which letters were to be included. Doria obviously complied with Copia's request, for the letter that Copia asked Doria to omit was in fact absent from those published in 1623.

Allora i nostri ricorsi con ogni loro affetto alla divina bontà, quando
 bramas alcuna grazia de nobis religiosi a i loro bisogni, così f'io
 con M^{ra} alla quale ricorro con nobis affetto, perché si acca
 intendo che molto ne pene, se li guardi con carità, visto che non
 per esagerare, perché è parso alla sua bontà, l'incogni le
 diverse operazioni, supplire alle povere persone M^{ra} sig. suamano
 che si adora sua grazia, visto l'ingegno di lei, che del suo sig.
 Ansaldo, fanno lasciare fuori una a me scritta alle 17. de
 Novemb^{re}, e perché non solo risponda le 15. M^{ra} e la diffidenza
 che la sua fama era andata in vanto, ma in l'istesso suppone
 orag^{gi} a pagar del suo fante d'oro M^{ra} e se si hanno debito le
 sue cose contra la fama e adorna del sig. Ansaldo, più ha
 la parolera del sig. Martinis avicinarsi che quella buona
 donna solo ved^{re} di tali impressioni più per honorare me sua persona
 che per propria ambizione e se ricorre quist'ora per la si accesse
 in bona ob^{re}, se era l'infirmità, poi ricorre accareggi^{re} adobe
 due le 15. riv^{iste} alle quali faccio l'ambasciata uncinata
 vostra li 15. de' Jan

Sarra Copia

Francesco de' Anelli, scrivano
 Sarra Copia, Subano

Figure 5. Letter, in Sarra Copia's hand, to Isabella della Tolfa (1623). Naples, Archivio di Stato, fondo Doria D'Angri, part 2, folder (busta) 688, "Letters without names of addressees," 1609–98, 12r. Courtesy of Naples, Archivio di Stato.

Thus, with similar confidence, I come to request the same favor of Your Most Illustrious Ladyship.

Should Your Ladyship have any fear of doing something against Signor Ansaldo's good name and his will, Signor Marc'Antonio can well be reassured, in his caution, that that blessed soul⁶ gave the order to print them more to honor me, his servant,⁷ than to satisfy his own ambition.⁸

If I receive this grace, it will extend my new obligation, if in fact anything infinite⁹ is susceptible to extension, to apply to both Your Most Illustrious Lordship and Ladyship, to whom I humbly pay my respects. Venice, 8 January 1622 [*more veneto*, hence 1623 in Gregorian calendar].

*Your Most Illustrious Ladyship's most devoted and humble servant, Sarra
Còpia Sulam*



3. REFERENCES TO SARRA COPIA IN A SECOND COLLECTION OF ANSALDO CEBÀ'S LETTERS (1623)¹

Of the twenty letters in which the references occur, four are to Gian Battista Spinola² and sixteen to Marc'Antonio Doria. The references confirm yet personalize what we know about the author's attitude toward Còpia.

6. Cebà died on 16 October 1622 (see volume editor's introduction, in the section "Works," under notes to second paragraph).

7. Còpia appears to have designated herself as Cebà's servant early in their correspondence. Cebà writes, for example, in letter 17: "your signatures as my servant and slave . . . are so inappropriate to me" (1.1.60); or in letter 25: "You expected to be called my mistress when . . . you called yourself my servant" (1.1.81–82). Yet he assures her that not she, but he is the servant ("you were chosen by me as my mistress the first time you wrote me and I will continue to address you in that way for as long as I have strength to write"; letter 25, continuation). He signs himself as *servo* in the closing to all his letters to her (with one exception: no. 38), referring to his servitude, moreover, in their middle portions (nos. 2, 7–8, 12–13, 15–18, 20, 22, etc.).

8. Còpia appears to have been told by Cebà or someone close to him that honoring her was his intention, as he himself declared in the dedication ("I wanted, in some way, to perpetuate her memory in the present letters. . . . I strove to make her known with my pen"; 1.1.†2v).

9. It is in their kindness that Marc'Antonio and Isabella are "infinite."

1. This second collection, *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano* (Genoa: Giuseppe Pavoni, 1623), has 234 unnumbered and undated letters by Cebà to over fifty correspondents, among them 4 to the dedicatee, Pallavicino; 27 to persons unidentified; and the lion's share—60—to Marc'Antonio Doria (the dedicatee of Cebà's collection of letters to Sarra Còpia). From the content of the references to Còpia, some of the letters in which they appear may provisionally be dated (see below).

2. One of seven Spinolas with whom Cebà corresponded in the collection (for a total of forty-two letters to them) and the dedicatee of his *Essercitii academici* (1621; various lectures for the

From Four Letters to Gian Battista Spinola

1. [148]³ In the meantime I would have you know that I answered 77 verses of Signora Sarra with 331 of my own.⁴ Hence I seem to proceed—marvelously—according to the words of a certain Florentine who, wishing to denounce my poem⁵ for lengthiness, said that one could become rich from its superfluities.⁶ Upon your return we will have something to read. If, perhaps, you prefer Lombardic omelets to Florentine ones, I will not serve you [149] any dish to stuff you.

2. [212]⁷ . . . a certain fancy that entered the head of Signora Sarra,⁸ namely, that I would be in Venice, from which I think she means that it would not do me any harm⁹ to go there. In all faith, I am more than prepared to appear before her. [But how?] Three quarters of my life are spent in coughing and the last quarter in complaining about it.¹⁰

3. [212]¹¹ . . . you did well to awaken me with your letter, Signor Giovanni Battista, for on the subject of corresponding with friends I confess to slumber sometimes more than I should. I said "with friends": from these I exclude Signora Sarra, who is my mistress [*padrona*], as you know. Hence I am obliged to [213] write to her both when I want to and when I do not. Nor should you or anybody else put her on the same level as others. After a period of two months I got a letter in which she deifies me as usual, without her realizing that I know only how to cough and spit. Oh what a deity to

Accademia degli Addormentati, Genoa). The seven do not include Giovanni Benedetto mentioned in 1.1/L43.116.

3. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 148–49.

4. Seems to refer to the lengthy poem that Copia sent Cebà in a letter dated 21 June 1619 and to even lengthier ones that Cebà sent her in return: see above, 1.1/L15 (10 August 1619). For discrepancies in the number of verses, see 1.1/L15.38 (initial rubric; Cebà speaks of having "answered it [Copia's canzone] so abundantly," L15.39).

5. "Queen Esther."

6. Originally "my superfluities" (*de' miei avanzi*).

7. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 211–12.

8. For the rumor that Cebà would be coming to Venice (it spread in the summer of 1620), see part 1, letters 27, 29, also 39.

9. For my health.

10. For Cebà's endless complaints of his ailments, see letters 2, 15, 17–18, 21, 28–30, 32–33, 42, 50.

11. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 212–13. From the mention of the illness that prevented Copia from corresponding with Cebà for two months and of his play *La principessa Silandra*, which had just been published, one may date the letter to June or July 1621. See 1.1, letters 45–46 (illness), 46 and 49 (play).

stir the devotion of a people! To speak more respectfully, [I should mention that] she has been as close to dying as she is far from converting. I, for myself, feel for her troubles, and wish her well, and I regret her obstinacy, yet remain her friend. Help her, for pity's sake, with your prayers. Let us do everything possible to guarantee that so noble a soul not be excluded from seeing the face of Him who created her. The ecclesiastical advisor¹² approved the book,¹³ with no exception; I do not know what the secular authorities will do, but I will keep you informed, in due course, of their decision. In the meantime, I am sending you a copy of *La principessa Silandra*.¹⁴

4. [213]¹⁵ The world is changing face, my Signor Giovanni Battista: you noticed it in the city of Pavia, where you found none of those with whom you were previously acquainted; and I would notice it in that of Padua, if, someday, I had enough strength to set forth on a trip to see it again.¹⁶ I am sure I would not return to our hometown¹⁷ with the feeling of melancholy you had, for Signora Sarra would so console me with her face¹⁸ that I would have to rejoice [214] for a time. So here I am again on the subject of my Jew-ess. Though she spoke to me in one of her letters, some months back, a little roughly, I have, as one says, turned a deaf ear and not failed to move ahead on the course of my expectation.¹⁹ Yet in the end I doubt I will hear her express a different opinion. Be that as it may, I at least cannot be deprived of credit for not having made love, for once in my life, honorably.²⁰ Were someone to read this letter without knowing anything else, he would pray perhaps for my mental health. But were he to see it together with the other

12. Appointed, as censor, on behalf of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Genoa.

13. Either Cebà's tragedy *Alcippo Spartano* or his poem *Furio Camillo*, both of which were issued posthumously in 1623. One may rule out the prospective publication of his letters to Copia, for, if the present communication dates from June or July 1621, they were not completed until nine months later (30 April 1622).

14. Fresh off the presses.

15. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 213–16. From the mention of Copia's portrait it is clear that the letter to Spinola was written after 11 April 1620, on which date the portrait was received; see 1.1/L21. Perhaps it can be matched to 1.1/L44 (1 May 1621), in answer to Copia's recriminations.

16. Cebà studied, in the later 1590s, at the University of Padua, in which city he published his first work (*Rime*, 1596).

17. Genoa.

18. In the portrait she sent him.

19. That she convert.

20. Unlike the sometimes lascivious verses in his first publication (*Rime*; see above). They refer to his love for Aurelia, the sister of his friend Leonardo Spinola (Cebà addresses her as Lelia, a name he may have deployed for its sonic resemblance to Petrarch's Laura).

ones I write to my mistress [*padrona*], I am sure he would not pass me off for a madman. But let us put aside matters of love . . .

From Sixteen Letters to Marc'Antonio Doria

5. [156]²¹ . . . and you have recruited a noble party to remind me of my duty, criticizing me,²² and to admonish Signora Sarra of hers,²³ indicating to her that the rule she would have obtain for my being venerated in my own city is not to be understood without considerable qualification.

6. [168]²⁴ I would ask you kindly . . . to recommend the salvation of our Jewess to the strivings of Signora Isabella, to whom, for the time being, I pay, with my pen, those respects that when I come, if I may, I am bound to pay with my person.

7. [191]²⁵ My Signor Marc'Antonio: I believe that yesterday you prayed, along with the Church, & *pro perfidis Iudaeis* [for the faithless Jews].²⁶ I think it is reasonable for Signora Sarra to come, out of gratitude,²⁷ to wish you a Happy Easter.²⁸ May you and Signora Isabella show her a nice greeting! If

21. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 155–57. May refer to a letter in which Copia expressed her concern over her reputation in Genoa and, possibly, the damage it might do there to Cebà's. See 1.1/L37 (from December 1620) thereabout, also letter 35 (from October 1620), in answer to one where she appears to have asked Cebà to tone down his demonstrations of love lest others think ill of him; and, still earlier, letter 20 (from February 1620), where Cebà remarks that "it would not pain [him] to have lost a name in [his] country." For those whom Cebà enlisted to pray for Copia's salvation, see, for example, letters 4 and 11.

22. For, perhaps, being too lenient to Copia.

23. To attend to her salvation by embracing Christianity.

24. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 168–69. For the efforts of Isabella Doria, Marc'Antonio's wife, to convert Copia, see 1.1/L14, L15, and L20.

25. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 191–92 (written, as is clear from the reference, the day after Good Friday, on Holy Saturday). Cebà asked the Dorias to work for Copia's conversion (no. 6 above). For prayers said on another Good Friday, a year before her portrait was done, see 1.1/L11 (13 March 1619: "It was just this week, during which we celebrated the anniversary of His son's Passion, that as many prayers were offered for you as the prickly spurs driving me to long for your salvation"); for the portrait itself (received on 11 April 1620), letters 20 and 21; and for its only partial resemblance to her person, or so Cebà was told, letter 38.107.

26. From one of the prayers for Good Friday ("Let us also pray for the faithless Jews: may it so be that our God and Lord remove the veil from their hearts and that they acknowledge Jesus Christ, our Lord," etc.).

27. Presumably for all the efforts the Dorias expended on opening her eyes to Christianity.

28. It was not Copia who came to the Dorias, but her portrait, possibly the new one done by Bernardo Castello after March 1622 (see 1.1/L52.128), meaning that the present letter to Marc'Antonio would have been written one or two months later. The formulation is typically Cebà's, as clear from the announcement—four years earlier—that his own portrait, sent to Copia, "left a few days ago to come and pay [its] respects" to her; 1.1/L18.62).

the gentlemen Giovanni Francesco [Spinola] and Agostino Spinola show up at your house, ask them whether the painter drew her true to life.²⁹

8. [199]³⁰ I am glad you had a good trip to Savona,³¹ and I thank you for having remembered to let me know, if, indeed, the initiative came from you more than from Signora Isabella. I have noticed that she [200] holds me in some esteem because of my high regard for Signora Sarra. With works she could do much more for her conversion than I am able to do with words.³² May God bless her together with your whole family.

9. [202]³³ Signora Sarra did not take very well to a particular remark I made about abbreviating our writings. For this reason, I believe, she recently has been speaking to me somewhat more about the business of her salvation.³⁴ If only the results were better than previous ones! May it please God to make her fall in love with the marvels of Calvary³⁵ as much as she appears to have taken a fancy to the vanities of Parnassus.³⁶

10. [202]³⁷ May indolence die, my Signor Marc'Antonio! I wanted to return the visit you had Gian Angelo³⁸ pay me, yet it could also be that I am doing no worse to you than I am to Signora Sarra, to whom I often make the promise of my silence and seldom keep it.

29. The two Spinolas may, on one or another occasion, have seen the "real" Copia in Venice.

30. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 199–201. For Cebà's solicitation of Isabella Doria's aid in working for Copia's conversion, see above, no. 6.

31. Southwest of Genoa, and under its jurisdiction, Savona is a commune where Doria seems to have officiated as governor; see Carlo Bitossi, "Famiglie e fazioni a Genova 1576–1657," 94 ("governatori di Savona" for the years 1606–57).

32. It is not clear what kind of "works" Isabella might have performed: saying prayers for Copia? urging her daughter (see below) to do so? having friends visit Copia in Venice and "work" on her conscience by explaining the advantages of Christianity?

33. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 201–2. For Cebà's suggestion to terminate the correspondence ("I beseech you . . . to be content with having this letter put the last seal on our discussions"), see 1.1/L35 and, as a continuous motif, earlier and later ones (12, 15, 19, 38, 48, 50, 53); for Copia's ruminations on the destiny of the soul, after Plato, letter 35; and for her preference for the waters of Parnassus over those of baptism, letter 17 (viz., Cebà's marginal annotation no. 27).

34. In her musings over the soul after death. See previous note.

35. The salvation of mankind as a "marvell[ous]" consequence of Jesus's crucifixion (on the hill known as Calvary, or Golgotha); cf. Matt. 26:28, Luke 24:46–47.

36. Copia's concern with achieving a name for herself as a woman of letters.

37. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 202–5. For Cebà's intimations of terminating his correspondence, see no. 9 above; for his failure to do so one has the (obvious) evidence of his fifty-three letters.

38. Could not be identified (possibly a member of the Spinola family).

11. [218]³⁹ Meanwhile, I can not tell Signora Isabella anything else about our Jewess except the usual things, [219] namely, that she is more interested in getting on with the business of poetry than in converting. May the Lord grant her the powers of light.

12. [224]⁴⁰ What I wrote confirms my ills: my coughing increased furiously over a good many days, then largely subsided from its fury, but till now has not returned to normal. . . . Signora Sarra is, as far as I can perceive, under the illusion that I am coming to visit her in Venice, and if she could only add this demonstration of reverence to the evidence of the same in her verses, I believe one could [forget this illusion and] be content with letting each of us attend, thereafter, to his own affairs. Her thought is, without doubt, poorly founded, for I cannot substantiate it with my visits. But it is certain that if I could, the thought of doing so would not be that of a base mind.⁴¹ What displeased me is that she praises me without satisfying me and that I exalt her without converting her: I do wonders, she does wonders, and, in the end, one of us is [225] Christian, the other is Jewish. Sister Maria Margarita⁴² could unravel this complication if she were to deal with it in that place I cannot reach.⁴³ Urge her, then, I beg you, to do her charity,⁴⁴ over which you have control;⁴⁵ and may God see to it that you and she and all your household know happiness.

13. [249]⁴⁶ . . . and I return to you the note [I received] from Sister Maria Margarita, [your daughter], in whose thoughts, I assure you, it does me much more good to be than in those of Signora Sarra: while the one remembers me as an idol, the other recalls me as a sinner. Look! without even thinking about it, I let you hear that our Jewess outwardly professes to idolize my love. But I do not go around bragging about her veneration so much

39. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 218–19. For Copia's preference for poetry over baptism, see no. 9 above.

40. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 223–25. For Copia's impression that Cebà was about to visit her in Venice and for Cebà's complaints of his aches and pains, see above, no. 2.

41. Meaning that he would not come "to make love" to her.

42. Marc'Antonio's daughter (Margarita) who entered a nunnery in 1617 (whereupon she assumed the name Maria).

43. Apparently the nunnery, where she offers prayers for Copia's conversion.

44. By praying?

45. Her father can influence her "to do her charity."

46. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 248–49. For Copia's exuberant praises of Cebà and his criticism of her for exaggerating, see 1.1/L1, L2, L7, L10, etc. For his steadfastness in seeking his goal: her salvation, see 1.1/L12: "I do not recognize in myself any virtues for you to appreciate beyond the one that prompts me to desire your salvation."

as to hold the praises she bestows on me to excite my vanity in preference to the prayers that your daughter disperses to free me from my misery.

14. [264]⁴⁷ I see the great compassion you have for me and your great desire for my salvation. May it please God that I have the same desire for that of Signora Sarra, to whom I make love, though everything transpires in words.

15. [310]⁴⁸ About the printing I will tell you in due course; about Signora Sarra I do not have anything to tell you; and about myself I have told you enough.

16. [312]⁴⁹ About Signora Sarra I cannot tell you anything of substance. I could perhaps tell you many incidental things about her if it were not that I propose to do so only when I have so exhausted the subjects of necessity as to allow you time to pay heed to those of choice.

17. [323]⁵⁰ Pray the Lord to give me patience to withstand the tremendous affliction I suffer in my flesh. If Signora Sarra were fully aware of it, her wish to make love with a man more dead than alive would surely evaporate. I tell you this in passing for you to know *that* she writes me and *what* she writes me. The poor girl is enamored not of me but of herself, as I have told you several times; and she needs to see the light that I strive in vain to give her. Persist, I beg you, in recommending her to God and in retaining me in your grace.

18. [335]⁵¹ About Signora Sarra I cannot tell you anything else but that she perseveres in writing to me amorously. But love does not make her, for all that, multiply her letters beyond what suits her reputation, of which, from what I discern and various others tell me, she takes most diligent care. The conversations that pass between us are oftentimes enough to make one

47. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 263–65. See above, 1.1.†2r, for the failure of Cebà's words of affection ("I did not refuse to make love to her soul. After a period of four years, however, I realized that I was making little progress, . . . unable to make my speech effective").

48. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 310. Cebà has nothing to report about Copia, for, he implies, she remains as committed to Judaism as ever before. See, for example, 1.1/L12, in answer to a letter in which she adamantly defends her faith.

49. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 310–12. For Cebà's having nothing new to report about Copia, cf. no. 15 above.

50. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 322–23. For Cebà's complaints of his ailments, see nos. 2 and 12 above; for Copia's concern with her own image, see 1.1/L11, L35, L37, L42, L50, L53 (for example, "You place your glory in . . . being ingenious and well-read" [11.30]; "I see that you depend on me for your whole reputation" [42.113]; "Glory in the world is what you seek" [53.129]); for others' prayers for her salvation, see nos. 5 and 6 above.

51. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 333–36. For Cebà's complaints of his ailments, see nos. 2, 12, and 17 above; for Copia's self-preoccupation, no. 17.

laugh, but the outcome is such as ever to make one cry. To speak to you in greater detail you would need to get hold of our writings,⁵² which, until the termination of [your office in] the government [of Savona], I do not know if you would have time to read. It seems to me that Sampierdarena⁵³ would be a more appropriate place for them. We will save them, then, if you so approve, until your return,⁵⁴ when it will be most opportune for me to see my dearest friend again. It will not be less felicitous for you not to have to see more letters of lamentation: you have had great patience with me, Signor Marc'Antonio. If it were not that the charity of Christ has made you forget the teachings of Seneca, I do not know how you have been able to suffer, as a friend, a man *omnia deplorantem, & cui nulla non causa in querelas* [336] *placet* [bewailing everything and delighting in nothing else but having reason to complain].⁵⁵

19. [352]⁵⁶ Father Menochio⁵⁷ gave me news of you; and I give you news of Signora Sarra, who shows that she wishes me well, for she accompanies my infirmities with mention of hers.⁵⁸ From what I have heard, she has been in danger of dying and, what is worse, dying as a Jewess, which, I fear, she will finally have to do unless she looks out for her situation more than I think she does. If she at least, with that little charity I show her, were the reason to make me die a better Christian, what more could one ask for? But when I go about drawing up my final accounts, I find there is work to be done for all. May the Lord provide for her need and for mine; and may you, with your usual charity, persevere in praying for each of us. I pay my respects to Signora Isabella and kiss your hands.

52. It is clear that Cebà saved not only the letters of Copia (at least for the time being) but also the originals of his own letters, from which he made fair copies to be sent to her.

53. District in Genoa with the Villa Doria, the residence of Marc'Antonio Doria and his family (the villa, originally constructed in the sixteenth century, is now the Civico Museo Navale).

54. From Savona to Genoa.

55. Seneca, *De tranquillitate animi* 7.4. Seneca's original was formulated in the plural: *deplorantes . . . quibus . . .* (and was preceded by *Praecipue tamen vitentur tristes et*, "Yet one should especially avoid sad persons and [those bewailing]," etc.).

56. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 351–52. For others' prayers for Copia, see nos. 5, 6 above; for reports of her infirmities, 1.1/L1 (she almost died from a miscarriage), letters 4–5, 21, 32, 40–41, 45, 47; for the danger of her dying as a Jewess, letter 45 ("to die a Jewess is equivalent to condemning yourself not to seeing His face for all eternity").

57. Giovanni Stefano Menochio (d. 1655), eminent Jesuit biblical scholar, ecclesiastical superior (for a certain period) in Genoa, and author of several works, among them an eight-book monograph on the Israelite "republic" (*De republica Hebraeorum*, 1648). On his correspondence with Cebà, see Girolamo Bertolotto, "Liguri ellenisti: Ansaldo Cebà," 292–96.

58. Cebà speaks sarcastically.

20. [361]⁵⁹ About Signora Sarra, since you continue to ask me about her, I cannot say anything else except her being Jewish (as usual) and also concerned (as usual) with I-do-not-know-if-I-should-say my reputation or perhaps hers. Many days have passed since I had any letters from her: I heard she was somewhat ill. May the Lord heal her in His goodness and grant you every increase of His favor.

59. Source: *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 358–61. For Copia's concern with her outward image, see nos. 17 and 18 above; for her poor health, no. 19.



II

A CONTROVERSY ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

... in intellects there is no distinction of sexes.

Baldassare Bonifaccio, *Discorso*

I would not want to let anyone think that by opposing your explanations I might in some way oppose the truth of your conclusion.

Sarra Copia, *Manifesto*

1. LETTER FROM BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO TO SARRA COPIA (END OF 1619)

Bonifaccio (fig. 6) sent Copia New Year's greetings for 1620 and, as a supplement absent—unfortunately—from the extant manuscript, three sonnets written, at her bidding, in praise of Ansaldo Cebà's portrait. Copia first asked Cebà for his likeness in a letter from August or September 1619, and Cebà did in fact agree to have it copied, entrusting the work, it seems, to Bernardo Castello (for its presumed later engraving, see fig. 4).¹ After receiving the finished portrait sometime between November and the end of December 1619,² Copia must proudly have displayed it to those who visited her, among them Bonifaccio, urging them to register their impressions in poetry. Whereas Bonifaccio, in his letter, mentions only one sonnet (see last paragraph below), Copia, in her response, mentions three, which the author appears to have recited in her salon before sending them to her in writing (see item 2, first paragraph).

1. See 1.1/L20.60, footnote to "copied from real life."

2. See 1.1/L17.59–61, L18.62. In letter 20 (dated 15 February 1620) Cebà mentions laudatory verses that Copia solicited from friends who saw the portrait (1.1.67). Why the end of December 1619 as a terminal point? Because the sonnets were included in the letter with Bonifaccio's New Year's greetings for 1620.



Figure 6. Baldassare Bonifaccio, from an engraving in *Le glorie degli incogniti, ovvero gli buomini illustri dell'Accademia de' Signori Incogniti di Venetia*, as compiled by Giovanni Francesco Loredano (1647), 74. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, BE.11.Q.6. Courtesy of Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

[Folio 11r]³ To Signora Sabba, the Jewess:⁴

Signora Sabba, the year rejuvenates and we become old. The only one who knows how many years are yet to be counted for us is He who, standing in the endlessness of eternity in such a way as not to be circumscribed by it,⁵

3. Source: Rovigo, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, MSS Silvestriana, 226, fasc. 21:11r–12r (for the beginning on 11r, see fig. 7).

4. *Signora Sabba giudea*. It is not clear where Bonifaccio picked up his Hebrew learning, but *sabba*, as a variant of *sava*, refers in the midrashic literature to Jacob, renamed Israel (Gen. 32:29), hence *Yisra'el* [Israel] *sava* (or *sabba*) meaning the people of Israel (*Midrash be-resbit* [Genesis] *rabba*, from the sixth century, in various sections: 68, 70, 73–74, etc.). By addressing Copia as *Sabba giudea*, i.e., *ebrea*, roughly “the Jewish Israelite,” he emphasizes not only that she is a Jewess but that her sympathies lie with her people. Had a Christian come upon the letter, he might have read the salutation differently, seeing the two b’s in *Sabba* as perhaps a purposeful jocular distortion of the two r’s in *Sarra* (which is the way Cebà spells her name, and Copia herself, though *not* Bonifaccio, who spells it with one *r*: see under 2.1.3). Still another possibility comes to mind: namely that *Sabba* was intended as a sly allusion to the Jewish Sabbath, itself a metonym for Judaism, over which Christ, in his own words, claimed authority (“the Son of Man is master of the Sabbath”; Matt. 12: 8). One wonders, then: what was Bonifaccio up to? It was on the Sabbath that (according to Luke 4:16–19) Christ, after entering the synagogue, preached the words of Isa. 61:1–2 about “bringing good tidings to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives, giving new sight to the blind,” and inaugurating a “year of favor.” Bonifaccio’s letter, it should be remembered, was written to Copia as a New Year’s greeting. The author expressed the hope, toward the end, that just as the New Year replaces the old, so Copia would replace the “clouds” of the Old Testament with the “brightness” of the New (“I wish your days restored to such brightness that clouds will be removed from your mind”).

draws time from ages and orders it for measuring and numbering motion.⁶ Nor can we [11v] hope that our being will be perpetually preserved.

Since there is no matter with an inclination to one form only, except for the matter of heaven, the first propagators of human generation would necessarily have had to be preserved in their original righteousness if their posterity was to be preserved as immortal. The sin of the first father has been punished in all his descendants: within the loins of Adam all the human lineage became corrupt, as when a whole stream is poisoned from its source and a whole plant is infected from its root.

But if in things that are different in species there is no passage from one to another of them, and if the corruptible differs in its species from the incorruptible, how can it be that man at one time might have been immortal if all men nowadays are mortal?

The answer is that the rational form⁷ exceeds the proportions of corporal matter. Thus, for as long as the soul remained obedient to its Creator, it had from Him a supernatural power to save the body from corruption. By nature, the body would have been subject to dissolution, but it could have been preserved through the grace divinely communicated to the soul.⁸ If, on the other hand, the soul becomes wasted through sin, its recovery through penitence is due not to the effect of immortality but only to the remission of guilt and to subsequent gains in glory.⁹

From then on,¹⁰ the mass of our flesh remained so spoiled that among mortals there neither was nor will there ever be anyone who could still hope for I-would-not-say immortality, but rather longevity. The proposition stated by the woman of Tekoa is too true in its universality, namely, *omnes morimur et quasi aquae dilabimur* [we all die and are spilt like water].¹¹ It is to be

5. "Circumscribed" in the sense of "delimited": one who is ruled by eternity from within, yet can rule eternity from without, namely, the Almighty.

6. Meaning, we move in life from one thing to another, and thus our "movements" can be temporally calculated. In the *Discorso* we read that the soul, being immobile, cannot become corrupted, for "corruption occurs through motion" (2.3.55), which is to say that movement engenders bodily decay, ending in death (from which the motionless soul may be spared).

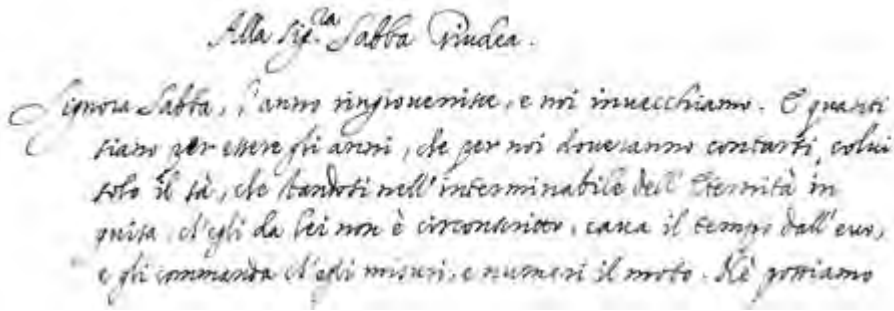
7. Namely, the mind.

8. If humans, that is, had continued in their original perfection, God, by grace, would have prevented their corporal mortality.

9. Said otherwise: the soul is not assured of immortality through repentance. Rather the most one can hope for in confessing sins is that they be pardoned and that a good name be earned for one's works.

10. That is, ever since original sin.

11. 2 Sam. 14:14. As translated from the Hebrew, the whole verse reads: "For we will die like water spilt on the ground and not collected; and the Lord will not raise up a soul, rather His



Alla Sig.^{ra} Sabba giudea.
 Signora Sabba, l'anno ringioveniva, e mi invecchiava. E quasi
 siamo per essere gli anni, che per noi dovevamo contarsi, colui
 che si fa, che banditi nell'inesaminabile dell'eternità in
 quisa, d'egli da lei non è circonscritto, cerca il tempo dall'ero,
 e gli comanda d'egli misuri, e numeri il moto. Ne' primario

Figure 7. Beginning of the present letter in which Baldassare Bonifaccio addresses Sarra Copia as "Signora Sabba giudea" (1619). Rovigo, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, MSS Silvestriana, 226, fasc. 21:11r–12r. Courtesy of Rovigo, Accademia dei Concordi.

noted that the sacred writing said that we pass like water. Therefore, just as water, by being a mean between the elements of earth and air, participates in the one and the other, so man, by standing midway as it were between the angel and the brute, becomes a partner of the first in his intellect and of the second in his sensations. To continue: just as the heavier parts of water assemble in the earth and the finer parts evaporate in the air, so, with man, his material part, by passing over earth, is corrupted in the grave, and his spiritual part, by penetrating the air, is preserved [12r] in heaven. It follows that even though our life is extremely short, it can, however, be called a moment on which infinite time depends and an instant to which eternity can be related.

Nature did not give us a room in this world for permanent residence, but rather for temporary lodging. Let us not be snails in leaving our house. We should not just exit; rather we should flee, and quickly too, for it is a broken-down hovel and the threat of ruin is on every side. I feel it in my bones, nor can I take shelter in a room or a hall, for I do not have an accommodating head or stomach for this any longer. I believe that you too feel it, if your face and frame do not deceive me and if your studies and speculations are not poorly known to me.¹²

thoughts are concerned with returning the expelled who were expelled from Him." Said otherwise: once humans die, they disappear, and since the Lord has no interest in restoring their souls to life, He turns his efforts to restoring sinners to the faith. Bonifaccio seems purposely to have omitted the continuation, for it speaks against immortality.

12. The implication is, for one, that, from illness perhaps, Copia looked wan and frail, and, for another, that with her philosophical bent of mind she probably came to the conclusion that the threat of mortality should make us attend to our salvation.

Doctors make a profession of patching the ruinous construction of the human body. But experience, the teacher of even lunatics, has taught me only too well that of the mason's art they [the doctors] have merely learned how to destroy without knowing how to reconstruct. Only my Christ, the divine architect who built the universe, can destroy and construct that temple in which, like a deity, there resides the human intellect. Moreover, he said and, in his work, confirmed the words *possum destruere templum hoc et in triduo reaedificare illud* [I can destroy this temple and rebuild it in three days].¹³

Let us think of renewing this temple, Signora, while the year is being renewed, for I wish your days restored to such brightness that clouds will be removed from your mind.

In the meantime, I greet you and send you the sonnet that I composed for the portrait of Signor Ansaldo, whose mute image will perhaps better speak to you in its colors than can the tongue of my pen in the voice of these inks.¹⁴



2. SARRA COPIA'S LETTER IN RESPONSE (10 JANUARY 1620)

Copia's letter (dated 1619 according to the Venetian calendar: see close) was reproduced by Bonifaccio, in his reply to her Manifesto, as evidence for his claim that Copia denied the immortality of the soul. Far more philosophical in its tone and arguments than the Manifesto itself, it gives one an idea of the heady discussions held in Copia's salon. For the original Italian, see appendix 2.

[Folio A 5r]¹ To the very illustrious Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio:
From the gentlest mind of Your Lordship² I could not expect but the kindest effects. That was the case when, in your letter, you wished me happiness upon the entrance of the New Year, only to accompany your message, as a threefold favor, with the three sonnets in which it was your pleasure to honor, through my intercession, the meritorious portrait of my Signor

13. Matt. 26:61.

14. The letter is undated, but the date (end of 1619) may be inferred from Copia's response (2.2 below).

1. Printed, on two folios (A 5r–6v), at the end of item 5 below (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1621).

2. In the formula *V[ost]ra S[ign]oria* (Your Lordship) Copia addresses Bonifaccio in the second person plural, yet elsewhere she employs the third person *Lei* ("da lei recitati") and, as a pronominal substitute for *Vostra Signoria*, the more formal *Ella* ("se ella stima," "che ella adduce," "e compiaciassi ella"); see the original in the appendix.

Ansaldo.³ Although they were not completely new to me,⁴ with new admiration did I contemplate their beauty, which, when you once hastily recited them to me, barely flashed upon my weak cognition. Yet I know⁵ that upon the sudden appearance of objects that cause surprise our intellect remains blinded in precisely the same way that eyes are wont to remain darkened upon exiting from shadows into unexpected light.

I thus now render Your Lordship the thanks that I withheld at the time, absorbed as I was in respectful and observant silence; and I entreat you to accompany the other honors you do me with those of your commands as well, for I will not fail to revere your merits on every occasion.

I will not keep from telling you further that your letter was notably remarked and commended for its lofty scholarship by Signor Paluzzi.⁶ He turned up at my house here, in the company of Signor Corniani,⁷ to hear it read, which gave me an occasion to discuss it in more than one conversation with him.

I cannot imagine how Your Lordship could show a certain envy of the New Year in saying that it rejuvenates, yet we become old. If you consider renewal the disappearance of one year upon the succession of another, then man enjoys this very same happiness that much more fully the more its duration is not terminated by a single turn of the solar planet,⁸ as in a year that, via the number 2, we now know is no longer the first.⁹ By the year's taking on the being of the number 2,¹⁰ what is lost is also the being of the

3. The portrait of Cebà arrived probably in the early part of 1620. Though Copia mentions three sonnets that Bonifaccio wrote in its honor, Bonifaccio himself (in the letter above) only does one.

4. Before receiving the sonnets in written form, Copia was familiar with them, as stated in the continuation, from their recitation, by the author, in her salon.

5. The original read "Yet it knows," in reference to cognition.

6. Numidio Paluzzi (1587–1625), Roman poet and prose writer who, along with his friend, the painter and poet Alessandro Berardelli, frequented Copia's literary gatherings during the years 1618–24. After 1622, Copia provided him with a monthly stipend and other amenities as an instructor in belles lettres. Paluzzi eventually turned against her, and his machinations are recorded at length in the "Notices from Parnassus" (3.1 below). His only known publication is a volume of *rime* edited, after his death, by Berardelli (1626; for excerpts, see 3.2).

7. Gianfrancesco Corniani (1582–1646), Venetian poet and cousin of Bonifaccio (they collaborated on the publication *Sinodia*, 1612). See Emmanuele Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane raccolte ed illustrate*, 5:340–42.

8. The author is saying that the happiness of one year continues into the next. She exposes a Ptolemaic conception of temporal change as depending on solar revolution.

9. A *New Year*, that is, can be considered a *second* year, which "we now know is no longer the first."

10. As the sum of being added to the previous year.

individual, which appears in numerical distinction.¹¹ So clear is this that its demonstration would be superfluous.

[A 5v] Thus if Your Lordship thinks it a virtue for the year to be preserved in species and to disappear in numbers,¹² you ought not to complain that man too, in aging, also does the same.¹³

Do not reply to me that being is only in species and that individuals differ in nothing else but accidents,¹⁴ which could be a true opinion according to some philosophy. I will say, however, that if the essence of one man were not distinguished from the essence of another,¹⁵ it would follow that with the essence of Socrates lacking, that of Plato would also be lacking, and so on with that of others, in such a way that with the death of one individual all would die.¹⁶ That the reason for this corruptibility¹⁷ lies in matter is a widespread teaching and an accepted judgment of the Peripatetic schools, yet one, I believe, more difficult to approve than to state.¹⁸

If matter is an intrinsic, substantial part of the compound,¹⁹ and is eternal,²⁰ how is it possible for one thing²¹ to take its corruptible being from a part that, in itself, is eternal and incorruptible? That matter is such²² can expressly be seen, for what remains of any compound, were it to dissolve and be corrupted, is always matter, if in no other way than at least in its prime sources, which are the elements.²³

11. Or each year as separate from the other. But now, with one undivided from two, there is continuity.

12. "Species" would be seasonal changes that recur, as a constant, from year to year, while "numbers" would be variable figures for designating the years individually (1, 2, 3, etc.).

13. Man, who continues as a species, viz., human being, need not be reckoned by numbers, viz., years.

14. All men, that is, are alike, except in subsidiary features: Aristotle discourses on essence (substance), species, and accidents variously in his *Categories*, *Topics*, and *Metaphysics*.

15. The author appears to distinguish between being as species and essence as difference: all men are identical in their being, therefore belong to the same "species," yet they are "essentially" different from one another in their individuality.

16. Said otherwise: if men were the same, one man's death would be everyone's. From their separate deaths the author concludes their separate beings.

17. The deterioration of man, leading to his death.

18. Peripatetics were Aristotelians. The original has the phrase in reversed order ("more difficult to state than to approve"), a slip of the pen.

19. Of man as matter and form.

20. An enthymeme: Copia has yet to establish that matter is eternal. Moreover, her claim about its being eternal is obviously a bone of contention.

21. A living organism.

22. Namely, eternal and incorruptible.

23. "What remains of any compound" would therefore be matter in a solid, liquid, or gaseous state. By maintaining that matter continues after death, and not form, which, for Aristotle, in-

Therefore if I speak of matter and form as two component parts that we see in natural things, and the first of the two lasts eternally and the second vanishes, it will be reasonable to attribute corruptibility to the second.²⁴

It is precisely the matter of heaven that can help us, without our resorting to the sophistic doctrine of Telesio,²⁵ to understand this truth, *pace* Aristotle.²⁶ If, when considered, the inability to be corrupted in heaven derives from the inability to receive another form, it follows that heaven has one form unreceptive to corruptibility. Thus if that form that it has were not eternal, it would be necessary, to satisfy the eternity of matter, for another to take its place, and if the latter should become corrupted, still another, and so on ad infinitum.

Hence the same potency and an infinite desire for matter to be formed connotes the little durability of those forms in satisfying such an appetite, which does not happen in heaven. There one single form with its [eternal] duration fulfills every desire [A 6r] of matter. Were matter abandoned by form and therefore compelled to remarry,²⁷ it would be a sign that, for its own part, it cannot admit nonbeing.²⁸ If the blame, then, for this abandonment is in form, why ascribe it to matter?

Wanting to do harm to the Aristotelian doctrine of conceding a beginning to generation,²⁹ we could well admit that the corruption of the human language [*recte* lineage]³⁰ had its beginning in the loins of the first man. But

vests matter with being, Copia provides Bonifaccio with evidence for what he construed as her denial of the principle that the soul (or in Aristotelian terms, form) is immortal.

24. Copia's proposition that form is corruptible only strengthened Bonifaccio's conviction that Copia held a negative view of the soul's immortality.

25. Bernardino Telesio (1509–88) advocated an empiric study of nature, outlining his approach, as against the rational methodology of Aristotle, in his treatise *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia* (1565). While matter, for Aristotle, is potency, for Telesio it forms the passive, unchanging substratum of all physical activity and may be perceived through the senses.

26. For one, because Bonifaccio invokes the name of the non-Aristotelian Telesio; for another, because Aristotle himself was more interested in the earth than in the heavens and, when he did treat the latter (in *On the Heavens*), did so astronomically as one of many planets.

27. Link up, that is, with another form.

28. From the premise that the being of matter is unchanging it follows that any variation in its form signals nonbeing.

29. The doctrine that every living organism has its beginning in procreation (as against original creation); see Aristotle, *On the Soul* 2.4, and more generally, his treatise *On Generation and Corruption*.

30. "Human language" (*humano linguaggio*), a typographical error for *lignaggio humano* (as in Bonifaccio's letter above: 2.1.11v), though one might argue for its reading as "human race," after the older usage of *linguaggio* for "nation" (cf. Salvatore Battaglia and Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti, eds., *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 9:111–12: "official idiom of a nation . . . ; by extension, a nation, people, or the territory of a nation").

for what reason did the Creator not make man immortal by nature if He intended to have him preserved as such?³¹ Or if He did not establish his being to be so preserved, why constitute him miraculously into a being in which he did not have to last?³²

I say "miraculously" because Your Lordship attributes to the virtue of supernatural grace the potential for the immortality that man enjoyed in his primal state.³³ If man had been preserved in this state in such a way as to have actually derived from it an incorruptible being, would generation, I would like to know, have had to continue, as it did?³⁴ And in case it had to, where would a place have been given to the infinite in a world bound by [finite] quantity?³⁵ Even if generation did *not* have to continue, it seems to me that the sociability of man's being as the highest good would have ceased.³⁶ Any way of constituting a thing³⁷ into a being in which it is impossible for it to subsist seems intolerable in men, not to speak of God.³⁸

Let it be granted, then, as one might conclude from the same propositions of Your Lordship, that man was always of a mortal nature and that he therefore would not have proceeded from one to another species³⁹ after falling from his original state; and let it consequently be granted that *quasi aquae delabimur* [we are spilt like water],⁴⁰ which, indeed, is a most remarkable

31. Here Bonifaccio doubtless garnered further evidence for (what he construed as) the author's heterodox views: Copia asks how one can reconcile the creation of man prone to sin with the doctrine of preserving his soul through immortality. She implies that for his soul to be so preserved, he should have been immortal from the beginning (see next sentence as well).

32. "Being" refers to matter, which, as Copia has already informed us, is eternal (in its embodiment in the human species), thus her quandary: how can man have eternal matter, yet not be eternal from creation? It would take a "miracle" for him to be so "constituted."

33. Before committing original sin, which, in Catholic doctrine, deprived him of grace. Thus the "miracle" is that man was redeemed through "supernatural grace."

34. Copia is asking hypothetically how Christianity would have explained generation if humans had been preserved in their original state of immortality, thereby precluding further generation.

35. If humans, that is, had not lost their immortality, they would be infinite; but Copia asks as another provocative question, how could anyone assured of immortality find a place in a world delimited by finitude?

36. For "sociability" the original has *communicabilità*. Copia seems to be asking whether, in a situation of nonproliferation, men would no longer be bound by the laws that assure them of social harmony as the "highest good."

37. Read, organism.

38. Put otherwise: all matter should be so formed as to realize its potential for eternity.

39. Namely, from mortality to immortality.

40. 2 Sam. 14:14. Words that the woman of Tekoa spoke to King David, as already quoted by Bonifaccio in his original letter, though there preceded by "we all die" (2.1.11v).

passage in the Holy Scriptures. Just as a running river represents to us, as its viewers, waters that flow and immediately pass by, yet is always that river and not always those same waters,⁴¹ so the human species shows us transitory individuals who, at every hour, are not always the same although their species is always the same.

For the reasons indicated we will clearly report that neither the year nor any other corruptible essence can be renewed or rebuilt, as you yourself testify in your own example [A 6v] of the mason,⁴² who, if he formed a new building from a destroyed house, could never say that the house is the same, but only that it is made from the same matter.⁴³

Thus, my Signor, nothing remains to be desired in the being of our individual selves except duration,⁴⁴ which is so short that we can infallibly say that time is not the measure of motion, as it appears to the Philosophers.⁴⁵ Rather motion is the measure of time: with the motion of clocks one measures hours; with the motion of the burning sun one counts days; with the motion of the moon one distinguishes months;⁴⁶ and with the motion of the natural sun⁴⁷ one numbers years, of which may it please Heaven, in its influence upon prosperity, to make Your Lordship enjoy as many as Nestor saw.⁴⁸

Kindly excuse my boldness in having advanced these weak uncertainties from a desire to hear their elucidation, in due time, by Your Lordship and by that Lord⁴⁹ who is always a divinity. Venice, 10 January 1619 [*more veneto*, or 1620 in Gregorian calendar].

Your Very Illustrious Lordship's most affectionate and obliged
Sarra Copia Sulam

41. Said otherwise: the stream does not change, but the waters that flow in it do; after the words that Plato reported as having been said by Heraclitus: "It is not possible to step twice into the same river" (Plato, *Cratylus* 402a).

42. As it appears toward the end of Bonifaccio's letter (2.1.12r).

43. Said otherwise: no years or persons or houses can be restored in their particulars, but they can in their species. It follows, in line with Copia's thesis, that individuals are not immortal, but human beings are.

44. Individuals, then, can only hope they will have a long life.

45. Thus capitalized, to designate the Aristotelians. On time as the measure of motion, see, particularly, Aristotle, *Physics* bk 4: it marks the passage of matter into form, as concerns its beginning and ending, no less than its quality, quantity, and movement from one place to another (via locomotion).

46. Copia refers to the Hebrew lunar calendar.

47. The revolution of the sun about the earth, in Ptolemaic astronomy.

48. Nestor, in mythology the wise king of Pylos, lived to a ripe old age, as reported by Homer (*Iliad* 1.250ff.) and Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 12.187f.)

49. Better, by insight into the ways of that Lord, here the Lord God.



3. EXCERPTS FROM BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO'S "DISCOURSE ON
THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL" (JUNE 1621)

In his reply (item 5 below) to Copia's Manifesto (item 4) Bonifaccio insisted that her letter, reproduced above, "pushed and forced" him to compose his "discourse" in refutation of what he deemed her false beliefs.

1. ELEGIAC DISTICHS

[FOLIO A 1r]¹ BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO² TO SARA [SIC] COPIA³

Morte carent animae: verba haec praeunte magistro

"Souls are deprived of death": these are the words of a
foremost teacher,

1

1. Bonifaccio's discourse was printed in Venice by Antonio Pinelli and signed by him with the date 25 June 1621. It is set up as follows: fol. [A 1r], title page, and verso, dedicatory poem; A 2r–v, printer's letter of dedication to Monsignor Marc'Antonio Cornaro (abbot of Gavello, a Benedictine monastery near Rovigo, and *primicerius* of San Marco, in Venice, from 1619 until 1632; Cornaro died in 1634); pp. 1–4, index; 5–61, the discourse proper. Copia told Ansaldo Cebà about the discourse in a (lost) letter dated 9 July 1621, as clear from his response (1.1/L50.125; for the date of Copia's letter, see L51.126).

2. Bonifaccio (1586–1659) was active mainly in the Veneto: he received a degree in jurisprudence in Padua; taught civil law in Rovigo; was ordained a priest in 1611 (Copia refers to him as *sacerdote* [2.4.B 3r] and Bonifaccio to himself as *prete* [2.5.A 2r]) and became archpriest of Rovigo in 1615, archdeacon (one step below the rank of bishop) of Treviso in 1623, and, from 1653 on, bishop of Capodistria; while in Rovigo he was invited by the Signoria, in 1620, to settle in Venice to teach law in the Accademia de' Nobili, inaugurated in 1619. His works (in Latin and Italian) range over a large number of topics: the fullest compilation occurs in Giovanni Maria Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia, cioè Notizie storiche e critiche intorno alle vite e agli scritti dei letterari italiani*, 2:1646–50. Five chapters in his *Historia ludicra* (1652) are in mockery of the Jews (bk 20, chaps. 4–8; 776–88).

3. This poem consists of fourteen distichs in Latin elegiac verse (see fig. 8). Because of its argumentative content, it is probably not to be identified with the presumably flattering poem (in elegiac verse) that Bonifaccio wrote for Copia, who then passed it on to Cebà; for details, see 1.1/L32.95–96. "Morte carent animae" might be compared with still another elegy by Bonifaccio, beginning "Numen eris, sentis ipsum id portendere nomen" (Rovigo, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, MSS Silvestriana, 226, fasc. 20:4v), in five distichs. The last of the five reads "Mortal of body, divine of mind, I will call / Both a man a half-god and a god a half-man," thus recalling distichs 11, 12, and 14 above. But there the similarities end: "Numen eris" is not about the afterlife; rather it emphasizes man's godly potential ("You will be a divinity . . . / Choose which god you want to be: you will be a divinity. . . ." Choose, and do not wish

For it was Pythagoras who said "souls are deprived of death."⁴
 Is this to be explained by reason? A simple assertion of so
 great 2
 A savant has the force of solid reason.
 What the Samian oracle⁵ proclaimed will, he said, be its
 own proof 3
 And demonstration; and if the master himself said it,⁶ it
 should be enough.
 But to me the teacher relies on more subtle evidence 4
 That requires faith⁷ to confirm his sayings.
 The subject is to be treated in arguments.⁸ Those chains
 that we tightly bound together 5
 Should you flee, Sara [*sic*], if you can release them.⁹
 If you cannot, then say while you are reckoned among the
 rest of the goddesses:¹⁰ 6
 "We do not all die; a good part of us 'is deprived of
 death.'"¹¹

for [your] god to be only of the gods / And not to have anything of the human condition," etc.). It appears with a dedication to Numidio Paluzzi in the latter's *Rime*, 6v.

4. See Pythagoras, *Pythagorae: The Religious, Moral, and Ethical Teachings of Pythagoras*, for relevant quotations, among them: "the soul of man is eternal: it is incorruptible for it never had a beginning . . . [it] was with God from the beginning, so it never can have an end. . . . The soul of man is immortal . . . : when it departs from the body it retreats into the soul of the world" (28–29) and "our souls are deathless . . . Death is only of the body, and not of the soul; for the soul is immortal" (31–32). For Pythagoras's view of the soul's immortality, see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers: Pythagoras* 8.20. His words "souls are deprived of death" (*morte carent animae*) are quoted by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* 15.158.

5. That is, Pythagoras, who was born on the island of Samos.

6. For the expression "the master himself said it" (*ipse dixit*) in reference to Pythagoras, see Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.5.10.

7. Faith both as trust in a general sense and, more specifically, as belief in Christian doctrine.

8. In the discourse that follows. Bonifaccio seems to be saying, in answer to his question "Is this to be explained by reason?" (distich 2), that for those who do not believe "on faith" in the doctrine of immortality, rational disputation will be necessary for its proof.

9. "Quae strinximus arcte / Vincula, si poteris solvere, Sara, fuge": the chains of servitude in our existence on earth. Cf. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* 3.12.3–4: "Felix potuit gravis / Terrae solvere vincula" (Happy is he who could, of heavy / Earth, remove the chains). Said otherwise: by clinging to life one fails to prepare the soul for salvation.

10. Muses; also half-gods (see below).

11. Quotation marks are editorial, to emphasize the words spoken by Copia, including the repeat of those by Pythagoras. It is not clear whether her portion ends here, as it has been treated in the translation, or continues on to the end of the poem.

Nothing hinders the long life of the human mind,	7
That spirit of God remaining for all time. ¹²	
Sun and man beget a man, ¹³ but no other than God himself	8
Can be regarded as having the name of Sun.	
The sun next to this Sun, from the light of which it shines, ¹⁴	9
Is like a small spark of an immense torch.	
God is the producer of the mind: its perceptions sprout	10
From seed, as steam arises from a tepid stream.	
Thus did Sun and man beget ¹⁵ in turn	11
Half-men and gods, half-gods and men.	
The ancients gained their fame from their seeds, ¹⁶ whereby	
they became	12
Half-gods and men, half-men and gods;	
"An era fills with seeds," says the Ascrean. ¹⁷ But the impious	
Diagoras	13
Denies there are gods anywhere. ¹⁸	
Let him deny the gods above, ¹⁹ but he shall have to	
acknowledge the middle ones, ²⁰	14
For it appears that for as many men as there are, there	
are gods. ²¹	

12. On the mind as embodying a divine spirit, see the first part of the *Discorso*, below.

13. Man, that is, is a by-product of Sun alias God (in mind) and of man (in body).

14. The human mind, in its illumination, reflects the sun of God.

15. Creation here as partly divine, partly human.

16. Of partly divine, partly human origin.

17. Hesiod, known from the name of the Boethian village Ascrea in which he resided. On various myths of insemination, as they concern different generations of men and semigods, see his *Works and Days* 109–69b. There, for example, with seeds becoming fruit, the first generation is described as a creation of the deathless gods on Olympus (they made men who, like gods, knew no sorrow and lacked nothing, "for they had abundant fruit from the fruitful earth") and the fourth, as a creation of Zeus (it was a "godlike race of hero-men called half-gods," who lived along the shores of the Ocean as heroes, for whom the earth lavishly bore its fruit).

18. On the poet and philosopher Diagoras (fl. 466 B.C.E.) as an atheist, see Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.1.2, 1.23.63, 1.42.117.

19. Namely, the pagan gods on Olympus.

20. "Middle" for being half men and half gods.

21. The poet implies that by having a soul, man is partly god.

AD SARAM COPIAM. BALTHASSAR BONIFACIUS.

MORTE CARENT ANIMAE; verba haec praecunte
magistro.
MORTE CARENT ANIMAE, Pythagoras ait.
Quaeritur hic ratio simplex assertio tantum
Doctores solida vim rationis habet.
Quod tripos ediderit Samius, tecmarion, inquit.
Atque apodixis erit; dixerit I P S E, sat est.
At mihi momento pender leuiore magister;
Exigat ille fidem, qui sua dicta probat.
Res argumentis agitur: Qua firmimus arte
Puncta, si poteris solvere, S.A.R.A, fuge.
Sin aliter, die tu reliquis ascripta Deabus:
Non toti morimur; pars bona morte caret.
Humana menti longum nihil officit aenum,
Spiritus ille Dei tempus in omne manet.
Sol, & Homo gignunt hominem: Sed nomine SOLIS
Censeri hic alius, quam Deus ipse, nequit.
Sol apud hunc SOLEM, de cuius lumine fulget,
Est velut immensa parua fauilla facit.
Ingenij Deus est autor: de semine sensus
Pulsulat, ut tepido surgit ab amne vapor.
Sic igitur, sic SOL, & Homo genuere vicissim
Seminisq; Deos, semideosq; viros.
Semonibus nomen veteres fecere, quod essent
Semideiq; homines, semihominesq; Dei.
Aera Semonibus replet, hisce Aeraus: at usquam
Diagoras Superos impius esse negat.
Esse neget Superos; Medios fateatur oportet,
Nam quot sunt homines, tot patet esse Deos.

Figure 8. Latin ode dedicated to Sarra Copia in Bonifaccio's *Discorso* (1621), A 1r. Genoa, Biblioteca Civica Berio, Sezione di Conservazione, Fondo Canevari, C. Misc. 44(3). Courtesy of Genoa, Biblioteca Civica Berio.

BEGINNING OF THE DISCOURSE

[PAGE 5] ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, A DISCOURSE BY
BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO FOR SIGNORA SARA [SIC] COPIA

I am honored to have found such a learned teacher as you; nor do I refuse to learn from a woman, for in intellects there is no distinction of sexes. If Plato was not ashamed of having Diotima²² reveal to him some secret of natural science, why should I, so much inferior to Plato, be averse to being instructed by you, so much superior to Diotima?

Most wrongly did Lucretius say that Epicurus was the Sun of the Philosophers, yet I will say, quite rightly, that you are the Moon of the Female Philosophers.²³ I am only sorry that your moon prefers to receive an obscure beam from that dark sun than to receive the brightest light from the Sun that cannot be eclipsed;²⁴ and that after thousands of years you alone among Jews disavow faith in the infallible covenant that God inscribed in His own hand,²⁵ calling into question the truth of the Holy Writ and placing the authority of Aristotle before the oracles of the Prophets. As a result, it also happens that you in no way agree with me that man was created immortal in a state of innocence.²⁶ Rather you resolutely support Eve in what she contested.²⁷ You are more harmful than she to the human lineage, not only because of this, but also because of something else: while that woman, by yielding to the soft words of the serpent, was the reason for men's dying with respect to their body, you, by giving ear to the pestiferous doctrine of

22. At the end of Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates quotes the words of the legendary priestess Diotima as a summary statement of his metaphysic of love (201c–212b).

23. *Filosofi* versus *Filosofesse*, thus capitalized. Lucretius (d. 55 B.C.E.) based his *On the Nature of Things* in large part on the physical and moral theories of Epicurus (d. 270 B.C.E.); "most wrongly," because Epicurus was a pagan philosopher. As the "Moon of the Female Philosophers," Copia shines at night but, as far as religion is concerned, remains in the dark. In the proem to book 3 of *On the Nature of Things*, Epicurus is praised for being the first of the Greeks to "shed light" on nature, and in the proem to its book 5, as the prime inventor of "that plan of life" called philosophy, whereby light emerges from darkness.

24. The "dark sun" would be the sinister information propagated by Epicurus and philosophers at large.

25. The original covenant was the one that God made with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 15:9–18). It was renewed on Mount Sinai when Moses received the Decalogue, inscribed (by fire) on the two tablets of the law (Exod. 20; Deut. 5). Its commandments were set forth in specific ordinances (Exod. 21–23) that, as a "book of the covenant," were unanimously ratified by the people (Exod. 24).

26. That is, before Original Sin.

27. Eve "contested" the need to remain innocent.

a venomous teacher,²⁸ strive to make men die with respect to their soul, as if there were no benefits to natural death that you could not destroy with the arrows of your sharply pointed syllogisms.

I would gladly stand far away from them [your syllogisms] in order not to become a target for a person's thrust of darts if only I were either permitted [6] to resist God's spirit that incites me here or able to refuse the challenge, yet retain my honor, when provoked by you. Not being obliged, however, to enter into a duel with you by fighting body to body, but rather by fighting soul to soul, I entertain fair hope that your soul will remain dead because it is mortal and that mine will sustain no injury at all because, in being immortal, it becomes invulnerable. Thus I need not a shield but only a sword, and the latter will be sharpened not by Vulcan in the Lethe²⁹ but by the Eternal Craftsman in the forge of charity. I am stirred by charity to kill your mortal soul so that it may rise up again as another immortal one not generated by nature but created by God. This sword of mine will be the very one that the prophet Jeremiah gave to the good Maccabee, saying to him: "Take the holy sword, God's gift, with which you will strike down the enemies of our people."³⁰ This sword is certainly not of iron for injuring, but of gold for enriching, hence the Holy Writing does not say that it was gilded, but rather that it was from gold.³¹

Now if Pythagoras ordered that at the beginning of any of our human undertakings we invoke the name of God,³² how much more so should we invoke it at the beginning of a battle, so important and dangerous in its exploits? In the fray with the Samnites, Marcus Attilius Regulus,³³ before attacking, raised his hands to heaven and with a clear voice invoked Jupiter

28. Aristotle.

29. Obscure: neither does the infernal river Lethe appear in Vulcan's story, nor does its implied venue Hades. By Lethe, the waters of which, when drunk, cause oblivion, Bonifaccio may have been referring to the god's concern with the future, as if the past were over and forgotten: Vulcan decorated the shield of armor constructed for Aeneas with images of the warrior's forthcoming triumphs (Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.608–29). For Vulcan's connection with Hades, a tangential one at best, one might mention the location of his forge in "lower" regions: once in an underwater grotto (Homer, *Iliad* 18.395–409) and another time in the bowels of the volcanic island Lemnos (ibid. 1.586–94).

30. 2 Macc. 15:16. The "good Maccabee" would be Judas.

31. 2 Macc. 15:15 ("Jeremiah stretched out his hand and gave Judas a golden sword").

32. See *Pythagoron*, 85 ("Invoke God as a witness to whatever you do. . . . Before you do anything, think of God for His light to precede your energies") or, as one of Pythagoras's "golden verses," 194 ("Before you approach a task, pray to the gods to complete it").

33. As consul in 294 B.C.E., Marcus Attilius Regulus (not to be confused with an earlier consul of the same name) fought the Samnites, who occupied central Italy before the Romans conquered them. The Samnite Wars are reported by Livy (see below).

Stator,³⁴ whence the political precept observed in all wars by all nations: *Acie nunquam, nisi prius invocato Dei nomine, confligendum* [No army should ever fight without first invoking the name of God].³⁵ The prophet David was once tested as regards the immortality of the soul,³⁶ and the Tester³⁷ put him in a tight spot, because with an impenetrable wall of arguments³⁸ He had so bound his intellect that there appeared to be no machine to open a breach for him to escape. Then petitioning God, he delivered that speech that I too am about to deliver at the beginning of this poetic contest of ours: "Lord, light my wick, which is all tinder, and illumine my shadows, for me, with Your kindness, to be removed from trials and to leap over the wall."³⁹

Here a great light is needed, exceeding that of the sun seven times over,⁴⁰ for I have to pass through foggy inquiries and through darkness much more dense and palpable than in the Cimmerian caverns.⁴¹ I protest to you, though, that, as if a new Orpheus, I am stirred to enter this profound abyss only to remove you, beautiful Eurydice, from the chasm of Inferno.⁴² While

34. One of Jupiter's titles, meaning "the stayer." On the earlier and later temples erected to Jupiter Stator, see Livy, *History of Rome*, respectively 1.12.3–8 and 10.36.11 (the second of which translates as "raising his hands to heaven and speaking in a voice loud enough for him to be heard, the consul [Regulus] vowed a temple to Jupiter Stator if the whole Roman army 'stayed' its flight [*si constitisset a fuga Roma acies*] and, once the battle was renewed, killed and conquered the legions of the Samnites").

35. The statement, which shares the word *acies* with the passage above in Livy, could not be traced (it is absent from Livy and Vergil, among others). Bonifaccio may have framed it as a general apothegm.

36. Appears to refer to David's suffering at the hands of Saul, to whose son Jonathan the young warrior confided that "there is but one step between me and death" (1 Sam. 20:3). God tried David, surrounding him with the "waves" and "snares of death" (2 Sam. 22:5–6).

37. Original had small *t* for "tester" (*tentatore*), in reference to the Lord.

38. Arguments should probably be read as conflicting thoughts.

39. After 2 Sam. 22:29–30. Bonifaccio's paraphrase of what originally read (as translated here from the Hebrew): "For You are my lamp, Lord, and the Lord lightened my darkness; and by You do I run down a troop and by my Lord do I scale a wall." See verse 1 as well: "David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day the Lord rescued him from the hands of all his enemies and from the hands of Saul."

40. Vague reference to Isa. 30:26 ("The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days," etc.). Though Bonifaccio capitalizes Sun (*Sole*), he is referring not to God, whom he has already described as radiating "the brightest light . . . that cannot be eclipsed" (see above), but (after Isaiah) to the sun as a luminous celestial body.

41. In reference to Cimmeria, a mythical country of mist and gloom: Homer described its people, the Cimmerians, as dwelling in perpetual darkness (*Odyssey* 11.14).

42. Bonifaccio proposes to rescue Copia from the dark of Inferno where she is held captive by both her Judaism and tenets drawn from the philosophers.

I argue, no desire to threaten you, no ambitious arrogance, and no proud temerity should be perceived in me:

[7] *Sed me iussa Dei, quae nunc has ire per umbras,
Per loca senta situ cogunt, noctemque profundam,
Imperijs egere suis.*⁴³

But God's commands, which now force me to go through
these shades,
Through rough places on the earth and through deep
night,
Drove me on in their injunctions.

If the soul of man is ephemeral⁴⁴ and becomes extinct together with the body, what was that breath of life,⁴⁵ I would like to know then, that God with His own mouth, so to say, breathed into the face of Adam?⁴⁶ And how true is it that man was created in the image and likeness of God?⁴⁷ As to the soul, no, man could not have been so created if it dies; as to the body, no, he could not have been so created, because God has no body, unless the foolishness of the Anthropomorphites⁴⁸ has made you lose your mind.⁴⁹

In no way should one hold the authentic faith of Moses, who was God's secretary, to be suspect. Nevertheless, one might add to it the testimony of Socrates, who says, in Plato's writings: "Let us concede that the soul most closely resembles divine nature in being eternal, rational, uniform, and indissoluble and that the body, on the contrary, is completely similar to what is ephemeral, irrational, multiform, and dissoluble."⁵⁰ Even if we accuse the latter, who was wisest among the Gentiles, of ignorance,⁵¹ how could we not revere the authority of the former, who was wisest among the Hebrews?

43. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.461–63 (Aeneas's words upon Dido's death).

44. See Bonifaccio's concluding sonnet (2.3.61, no. 2:3).

45. *Spiracolo*, which, below, becomes *spirito*.

46. "And He blew into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7); for "breath" the Hebrew has *neshama* (see below).

47. Gen. 1:27.

48. Those who conceive God as having the body and attributes of humans.

49. Bonifaccio is saying two things: man was created in the image of God in his soul, but not in his body, for God is bodiless; the soul, like God, is immortal, but the body, being human, is mortal.

50. *Phaedo* 80a–b.

51. For not knowing God.

How could we consider anyone who drew his testimony from the wisdom, not of a pagan deity, but of the true God to be crazy? "You return," he says, "the dust to its earth, from which it came; and you return the spirit to God, who gave it to you."⁵²

That breath of life, and that rational mind that God breathed into man, the divine Scriptures call *nesbama*.⁵³ The sensitive soul of animals is called *nefesh* and was not breathed forth by God but produced by the elements, because it is drawn from the potency of matter. Here the Scriptures say: "Let the waters and the earth produce the soul (*nefesh*) of beasts and fishes."⁵⁴ When Solomon distinguishes man's spirit from his body, which is material, he calls it *ruah*, a word that throughout Scriptures always signifies an immaterial substance, nor was the soul of any brute animal ever called *ruah*.⁵⁵ But the human mind, the angelic mind, and the divine mind are indeed called *ruah*.⁵⁶ Hence one also infers, from the propriety of your language,⁵⁷ which you call sacrosanct for being invented by God, that just as the human intellect has a resemblance to the divine, so it has no correspondence whatsoever to the soul of beasts.

But other things, beyond the authority of Scriptures, are needed to make your liveliest mind be appeased. I proceed then to the explanations,

52. Eccles. 12:7. The Hebrew here for "spirit" is not *nesbama*, as in Gen. 2:7, already cited, but *ruah*; see below. Thus the "he" of "he says" refers not to Moses but to the wise man (sometimes thought to be Solomon) of Ecclesiastes. For a similar passage spoken by God, cf. Gen. 3:19, and for another spoken by Job, Job 34:14–15. Bonifaccio reads "dust" as the body and "spirit" (*spirito*, elsewhere *spiracolo*) as the rational soul.

53. On the three kinds of soul (or mind), in descending order: *nesbama* (rational or intellectual, processing knowledge), *ruah* (sensitive, responding to emotions or perceptions), and *nefesh* (animal, attending to bodily needs), in Hebrew (and Neoplatonist) writings, see, for example, Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 154–57, also Arthur Green, *A Guide to the Zohar*, 113–14. Bonifaccio probably gained his knowledge of the three from Christian Hebraic writings on Kabbalah, among them, for example, Francesco Zorzi's *De harmonia mundi totius cantica tria* (2nd ed., 1545), in the portion "Quid agat spiritus in homine ultra animam" (3.5.3; 385r).

54. Free rendering of Gen. 1:20–21, 24.

55. The reference to Solomon appears to be as the presumed author of Ecclesiastes (see above). Contrary to Bonifaccio's claim, the same author speaks of animals and men as equally endowed with *ruah* and destined to die (Eccles. 3:19–21: "as the one dies, so does the other; they all have one *ruah* . . . All go unto one place; all were from dust and all return to dust. Who knows if the *ruah* of men goes upward and the *ruah* of the beast goes downward to the earth?"), then, changing his vein in the last chapter, he has bodies return to earth and the *ruah* return to God "who gave it" (12:7).

56. See Gen. 1:27 on God's creation of man in His image and Ps. 8:6 on His placement of humans "little lower than the angels" (on which more below).

57. Hebrew.

though shall first destroy the foundations that you have laid in order to build my edifice on your own ruins.

[8] If souls are immortal, you say, in the everlasting world to which Aristotle introduced you, the infinite will exist right now in nature, as against the teaching of the same philosopher in the third book of his *Physics*.⁵⁸ I have not sworn, Signora, by the words of your teacher. If he is in fact the teacher of those who know, I am content for now to be among the idiots. I deny that the world is eternal. Should he wish to persuade me to the contrary by arguing that nothing can be created out of nothing,⁵⁹ I will say as much of nature, but not of God.

But if you wish for me, out of kindness, to concede to you the eternity of the universe, I will say to you further that even proceeding from such a supposition, your argument has the threads of a spider web. Nor is it contrary to the principles of Aristotle that, like the soul, the infinite exist right now in spiritual things, because their infiniteness, by not occupying space, does not come to imply a contradiction with local finiteness. Furthermore, Averroës says that immaterial substance cannot be called either finite or even infinite, because it is unmeasurable: the finite and the infinite are properties of quantity.⁶⁰

Nor should one reply by saying to me: if souls are immortal, they therefore will be of an innumerable number, which is something that cannot be tolerated in nature. Because my answer will be that number, itself a species of quantity, is found only in quantifiable and particular things. The soul is not among them: in being abstracted from all matter it does not have quantity. Nor is it numbered among particulars, for it is a substance that receives

58. Aristotle refers to the general opinion that the soul is spread throughout nature (*On the Soul* 411a1) but argues that since nature changes, the infinite, which is unchangeable, cannot be actually present (*Physics* 3.200b–206a).

59. After Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 1.155.

60. In his commentary to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Averroës (Ibn Rushd, d. 1198) wrote, for example, that after "having shown that there is one eternal immaterial substance," Aristotle went on "to inquire whether there is one such existing substance or many, and if they are many, how many? . . . He [Aristotle] then mentions the view of the partisans of ideal Numbers concerning their number and says: 'concerning Numbers they sometimes express themselves as if they were infinite, and sometimes as if they were limited to ten.' He means: the partisans of ideal Numbers are found to defend two opinions concerning their number: firstly, the opinion of those who say that they are infinite, and secondly, the opinion of those who say that their forms are limited to the dyad, the triad, the tetrad, and so on up to the decad" (30.42); after Averroës, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics, a Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, *Book Lām*, by Charles Genequand, 169.

universals. Aristotle taught that in immaterial things any multiplication of number is inexistent, for the cause of numerical multiplication is none other than matter in its division into several parts. *Quae sunt numero plura* [Things that are several in number], he says in his *Metaphysics*, book 12, *ea materiam habent* [have matter].⁶¹ Thus your first objection⁶² has been destroyed.

Nevertheless, if Aristotle maintains that every number is numerable,⁶³ he would otherwise have to admit, as a manifest contradiction, that it is numerable and innumerable at one and the same time. Yet I would like him to tell me if, with the world having existed (as he claims) from eternity,⁶⁴ the days that have passed are infinite. Surely they are. Therefore they could be successively numbered; and, therefore, infinite number can also be numbered.⁶⁵

Now let us see how important a possible second argument of yours could be, namely: no agent can function without operating; the soul which is an actuation of the body⁶⁶ could not operate without it; therefore the soul cannot be separated from the body. The minor premise⁶⁷ can be proven in this manner: the soul⁶⁸ does not understand without phantasms;⁶⁹ the separated soul does not have phantasms; [9] therefore the separated soul does not understand. In the latter set of propositions, the minor premise⁷⁰ is proven by this further argument: phantasms are not without a body; the separated soul is without a body; therefore the separated soul does not have phantasms.

61. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12.1074a.

62. That souls exist in nature and, like nature's parts, are measurable.

63. *Metaphysics* 12.1066b.

64. Aristotle's idea of an eternal universe, without beginning or end, underlies his treatise *On the Heavens*.

65. Bonifaccio seems to be saying that if "infinite number can . . . be numbered," souls can exist in an "infinite number."

66. Actuation (*atto*) here in the Aristotelian sense of soul as a realization of corporal potentiality.

67. In this deductive argument the minor premise would be that "the soul which is an act of the body," etc.

68. Here, and below, "soul" is used in the sense of "mind."

69. Roughly "sensations"; on *fantasmi* or, in the singular, *fantasma*, see Battaglia and Squarotti, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 5:648–50, esp. definition 1: "Image, subjective representation of an object, of a reality perceived through the senses (in Aristotelian philosophy)." The term is ambiguous: section 12 of Plutarch's *Opinions of the Philosophers*, for example, revolves around the difference between *phantasia* (perception), *phantaston* (the object of perception), *phantastikon* (imagination), and *phantasma* (sensation).

70. Namely, that "the separated soul does not have phantasms."

I answer that just as the human compound⁷¹ has two manners of living and of being fed: one before it was born (while in the maternal womb), the other after birth (once having left the maternal womb), so in the soul there are two manners of being and consequently two manners of operating. The soul united to the body understands by turning to the phantasms of the bodies that are in the corporal organs.⁷² But the soul separated from the body understands by turning to those things that are purely intelligible, precisely in the way the same things understand all other abstract substances, [namely], by converting themselves into the superior objects and not into the inferior ones.⁷³

If you want me to, I will elucidate this to you even further. The soul conjoined with its body understands by way of the intelligible species⁷⁴ it derives from things by means of the imaginative faculty. But the separated soul understands by way of the various species it receives from the influence of the divine light, participating in them [the species] as do the other intelligences, though in an inferior mode, because human intellect is the last in the order of the Intelligences. We say, accordingly, that for a conjoined soul understanding is an unstable and incomplete operation, but that for the separated soul understanding is a stable and complete operation. Simplicius says, moreover, that the latter can be called "action" and the former "passion."⁷⁵

I think this second knot⁷⁶ has been loosened in supposing, along with you, that the conjoined soul does not understand without phantasms, which is something, though, that with solid reasons you could be shown to refute, as we shall see in good time.

Let us attend, for now, to undoing the third knot, which seems more intricate than the others, yet is not so tight as would prevent Alexander from disentangling it by putting his hand to his sword.⁷⁷

71. Of body and soul (or matter and form).

72. Here Bonifaccio is referring to the sensitive soul.

73. By "superior objects" Bonifaccio is referring to the rational soul.

74. Species, as mental images, or perception.

75. Active and Passive Intelligence, of which the first relates to souls that move on their own, therefore are separated from the body, and the second to souls moved by the body itself, from which they are inseparable (Aristotle, *On the Soul* 3.3–5). The sixth-century commentator Simplicius makes numerous references to active and passive forms of intellect as they concern the soul and its separability: see Simplicius, *Simplicius' on Aristotle's On the Soul* 3.1–5, under "subject index" (185–88).

76. That is, second objection, to the effect that the soul is inseparable from the body.

77. The Gordian knot, so called because Gordius, ancient king of Phrygia, predicted that it would be untied only by the person who ruled Asia; in time, Alexander the Great cut the knot with his sword.

All compounds, you say, consist of form and matter, and just as matter cannot be generated, so it cannot become corrupted. Thus form is what becomes corrupted. In the compound of man, then, the soul, which is form, becomes corrupted, and not the body, which is matter.

Very differently did the good king Cyrus argue, as far as Xenophon writes about it. In dying he said to his sons that he could never be induced to believe that that "thing" which, being in the body, was the only reason for the body to live would die after having left the body:⁷⁸ it would have been intolerably offensive for the soul to receive death from the body as a reward for the life [10] it gave it. Socrates said, similarly, that if the soul always vivifies everything to which it is joined, it is impossible for it to receive in itself the contrary of what it contributes to others.⁷⁹ In defining death, Chrysippus, according to Plutarch, said it would be not a corruption of form or matter but a separation of the one from the other.⁸⁰ Θάνατος ἐστὶν ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος διάλυσις, he used to say, though we would say: "Death is the division of soul and body."

This separation does not proceed from any defect in form inasmuch as it is form. Rather every corruption always derives from one of two things: the participation of form in matter, for no immaterial form becomes corrupted; or the contrariety that is in matter, for when there is matter without contrariety, as in the case of the celestial bodies, form never becomes separated from it.

I could summarize what I suppose to be your argument against the truth of this latter Peripatetic teaching in such a manner: everything composed of contrary parts becomes corrupted; the being of humans is composed of contrary parts; therefore it becomes corrupted. On the other hand, I might mention that whatever does not have contrariety does not become corrupted; our mind in itself does not have contrariety; therefore it does not become corrupted.

That the soul does not have contrariety is proven in this manner: each one receives according to the mode of his being; things received in the soul are without contrariety; therefore the soul is, similarly, without contrariety. The minor premise⁸¹ can be incontrovertibly proven, for it rests on the

78. On Cyrus's words to his sons about the state of his body and soul after death, see Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.7.17–22.

79. Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 105c–d.

80. The Stoic philosopher Chrysippus (d. 207 B.C.E.) is quoted from his treatise *On Providence*, bk 1; see Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1052 c–d.

81. Namely, "things received in the soul," etc.

knowledge of contraries in our soul and, in this knowledge, the explanations of contraries are without contrariety.⁸²

Here, however, you could remonstrate with me as follows: if form in man⁸³ does not become corrupted, the corruption of man is solely accidental, because his essential beginnings do not become corrupted—that is, matter lasts in its sources and form does in its own substance;⁸⁴ therefore man makes the appearance of dying and does not die. May it please God that one die more as a joke than out of common sense!⁸⁵ Oh, death does too much out of duty while joking with us.⁸⁶

I answer that accidents do not become corrupted alone, but along with the composed substance that results from the union of the body with the soul; and that this corruption of the composed substance occurs not through the destruction of the two component parts but rather through the separation of the one from the other. Yet, if I see straight, I clearly recognize that when man dies, the matter of which his body is composed most truly [11] becomes corrupted. Let us grant that it perpetuates itself in its beginnings.⁸⁷ Even so, in losing its form it becomes corrupted, because matter deprived of form is pure potency, and being, in itself, corresponds to form which is actuation: being leads the potency of matter to actuation. Thus just as matter receives its being in actuation when it receives form, so it loses the being of its actuation when it loses form.

Why should any other proof be necessary if we can prove with good sense that matter, in this frail body of ours, becomes corrupted every day and, were it not continually restored by us with food at all times, would quickly precipitate the destruction of what we are losing every day? Your shining eyes will become bleary, let us not be mistaken; your breasts will wither; your skin will wrinkle. The body will become a corpse only to remain, in the end, stench and mud. Not so the soul, which is proven to be

82. All explanations, that is, are unanimous in confirming that the soul is not affected by contrariety.

83. Form being his soul.

84. In other words, both matter and form do not become corrupted, hence are eternal.

85. Difficult passage: even Copia had trouble with it, as clear from her comment in the *Manifesto* (2.4.C 1v) and Bonifaccio's counterreply in his *Risposta* (where we are told that for the passage to be properly construed, it should be read "for its irony"; 2.5.A 4r). Bonifaccio seems to be saying that if someone is so deprived of "common sense" as to think that dying is "a joke," and God agrees to humor him, so let it be a joke!

86. Put otherwise: what a heavy task death has to perform as a deception!

87. In the sense that matter exists as a continuation of something that had earlier "beginnings."

incorruptible not only for the reasons mentioned but for many others that can be argued and demonstrated.

To my judgment, Signora, we have emptied the threshing floor and cleared the field. Let us begin, if you would, by laying the foundations of our building in the name of that Great Architect who, from nothing, constructed the universe. Because one should start, in every teaching, from things that are probable as well as from those that have first been expounded for our apprehension, I will say that the probable is of three varieties:

1. Probable is that which is believed indiscriminately by all. It rests on principles known in themselves and always turning out to be true. When there is evidence of a manifest truth, all men agree by having one opinion, of which our individual intellects become persuaded by the common intellect that always enlightens us regarding the truth.
2. Probable is that which is generally believed by the wise. For the same reason, it also always proves true to us, for it concurs with the principles that, in themselves, are known to the intelligent.
3. Probable is said to be that which is dialectically confirmed by many: in accordance with their reputation, it is often true, yet sometimes also false. . . .

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AMONG THE JEWS

[12] Even if the resurrection of the dead has not been proven in philosophy, it can be demonstrated to us by examples. Keeping silent about our own examples,⁸⁸ I will mention only those that all Jews consider to be most true. Read the sacred story, in Kings,⁸⁹ about Elijah restoring to life the son of the widow who lodged him. After him, Elisha, his disciple, resuscitated the son of the Shunammite.⁹⁰ What is beyond all wonder is that the corpse of Elisha returned the breath of life to another corpse that had touched it.⁹¹ If, therefore, the soul can be reunited with the body, it certainly does not become corrupted in separating from its body. . . .

88. The examples being Christian.

89. 1 Kings 17:9–24, esp. 17 on.

90. 2 Kings 4:8–37, esp. 34 on.

91. 2 Kings 13:21: "It happened that they brought a man for burial and behold! they saw one of the platoons [of the Moabites], whereupon they threw the man into the grave of Elisha; no sooner did the man touch Elisha's bones than he came back to life and stood up on his feet."

IS DEATH PREFERABLE TO LIFE?

[14] If the soul were not immortal, death would never be more desirable than life; sometimes death, for just reasons, is to be preferred to life; therefore the soul is not mortal. The consequence⁹² can so be proven: every appetite conforming to nature is just; every man has a natural appetite for the preservation of being; therefore the desire for the preservation of being is just.

Now turn the premises around and argue the other way. Every appetite contrary to nature is bad; the desire not to be preserved is contrary to nature; therefore it is bad. Thus the consequence within the major premise of the principal argument⁹³ remains proven.

Now it is to be proven within the minor one, namely, that man, for just reasons, should sometimes choose death over life. It is a premise of your Aristotle in the third book of his *Ethics* and in the seventh of his *Politics*.⁹⁴ There he proves that the generous and magnanimous man ought to place death before life when a relevant occasion demands it of him. It is a principle so manifest that, in truth, it has no need of proof, for who does not praise Codrus?⁹⁵ Who does not celebrate Curtius?⁹⁶ Who does not commend Samson?⁹⁷ Who does not admire the Maccabees?⁹⁸ The supreme dis-

92. Or the third proposition in the same syllogism (viz., "the soul is not mortal").

93. Better said: the consequence that derives from the major premise of the first syllogism. To recall, the major premise was that "if the soul were not immortal, death," etc. (see above).

94. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.6.8. The reference to the seventh book of Aristotle's *Politics* appears to be erroneous: Bonifaccio may have had book 5 in mind, particularly section 8, paragraph 17, where Dion (408–353 B.C.E.), unconcerned about his own life, marched against the Thracian king Dionysius ("if it should befall him [Dion] to die as soon as he had just set foot in the country, death would satisfy him").

95. As the half-mythical story goes, the Dorians, invading Athens, had been promised victory over it, by oracle, if they spared its king Codrus (eleventh century B.C.E.). To prevent their rule, Codrus, disguised as a woodcutter, invited death by picking a quarrel with them. For details, see the speech of the Athenian statesman Lycurgus (d. c. 325 B.C.E.), *Against Leocrates* 84–87.

96. Curtius was a brave warrior who leaped with his horse into what was once the chasm in the Roman Forum. He did so, according to one report, in order to close the chasm, which would happen, it was predicted, only by making a noble sacrifice; cf. Livy, *History of Rome* 7.6, and Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 15.78.

97. To avenge himself on his captors (the Philistines), Samson shook the pillars of the temple in which they had assembled, saying, "Let me die with the Philistines"; it came crashing down, killing its occupants and Samson too. See Judg. 16:23–30.

98. They rebelled against the kings of the Seleucid dynasty that ruled Judea, with an iron hand, during the second century B.C.E. (see 2 Macc. 8–15). Of the many Maccabees who were killed in battle, Judas was especially renowned for his heroism.

tinction of these and a thousand other men resided in that disposition of the mind that fears infamy more than death and appreciates life less than glory. It makes a big difference, as the elder Cato used to say, if he who chooses to die of his own volition has little esteem for life or if he greatly appreciates virtue.⁹⁹

Therefore not all those who equally disdain life and death are magnanimous and generous, but only those few who have such a high regard for virtue [15] that for its sake they consider as lowly that "thing" which, above others, we ought to hold dear. . . .

DOES STRIVING FOR A GOOD NAME ASSURE IMMORTALITY?

[17] Plato argues in this manner: if good fame is to be esteemed by wise men, the soul is not mortal;¹⁰⁰ good fame is to be esteemed; therefore our soul is not mortal. The major premise¹⁰¹ can be proven thus: bad fame does not harm nor does good fame help anyone who has no feeling for it; man after death, if the soul does not survive, does not have feeling; therefore fame after death is not to be esteemed. The minor premise of the first argument¹⁰² is validated by the ancient religion of the Athenians and the Romans who revere good Fame as a goddess.¹⁰³ It is confirmed by the divine precept that says to everyone: "Take care to have good fame, for life is only a number of days while a good name lasts forever."¹⁰⁴ Nor is it necessary to exert a lot of effort to prove this when one sees how very eagerly all well-born men endeavor to retain good fame after death, for they undoubtedly set life and possessions at a lesser value.

99. The "big difference" is in having a good reason to die (as opposed to merely wanting to die). Cato the Elder (Marcus Porcius Cato *Censorinus*, "the censor"; d. 149 B.C.E.) should be distinguished from Cato the Younger (Marcus Porcius Cato *Uticensis*, "of Utica"), his great-grandson, on whom more below. The epithet *censorinus* was added because of his concern with public and personal morals; so we are told by Plutarch, who, in writing his biography, emphasized his moderation and self-control. See Plutarch, *Lives: Cato the Elder* (written around 75 C.E.) 19.3 (where a statue is said to have been erected in his honor with the inscription that "when the Roman state was tottering to its fall, he was made censor, and by helpful guidance, wise restraints, and sound teachings, restored it again"; trans. Bernadotte Perrin).

100. See Plato, *Phaedo* 106d–e, also *Republic* 10.621c–d.

101. "If good fame is to be esteemed," etc.

102. "Good fame is to be esteemed."

103. The Greek Pheme and the Roman Fama: a personification of public renown or popular rumor.

104. Book of Sirach 41:15–16.

If you, Signora, did not want fame after death, and did not believe you would have any feeling for it in the other life, you would not invest so much energy into perpetuating your honored name with the immortal works of your divine mind. . . .

ARE YOU CONVINCED BY MY ARGUMENTS, SIGNORA SARRA?

[24] I am guessing, Signora, that the explanations I have provided till now will not satisfy you, for instead of being demonstrative and proper,¹⁰⁵ they are common and dialectical. Know, however, that the immortality of the soul, as many philosophers have believed, cannot be proven with those explanations that produce such a firm and sure cognition of things as to be called "knowledge" of them.¹⁰⁶ Thus if I have proven what the subject matter implies, I have sufficiently succeeded in proving it.

Even Aristotle agrees with me here, saying that it belongs to a wise man to search for exact proofs to the extent that the nature of the thing allows them.¹⁰⁷ It would be equally foolish for one to be content with a mathematician who uses persuasion and for one to demand of an orator that he resort to demonstration.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, I will now more willingly address the opinion of those who have reckoned that the immortality of the soul can be proven demonstratively.¹⁰⁹ If you do not regret being with me, then, and are not satisfied with those explanations I offered, let us see if there are some better ones. We shall have acted as soldiers who, before entering the fray, skirmish a little; or if you are offended by a metaphor taken from the war of Mars, let us take one from the war of Love: we shall have imitated doves who, before mating, coo and circle about from afar. . . .

105. In the sense of particular, as opposed to universal, or "common" (in the continuation).

106. Explanations that rely on hard evidence for imparting knowledge.

107. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 11.1063b, for a similar passage: "As for those to whom the difficulties mentioned are suggested by reasoning, it is not easy to solve the difficulties to their satisfaction, unless they will posit something and no longer demand a reason for it; for it is only thus that all reasoning and all proof is accomplished, and if they posit nothing, they destroy discussion and all reasoning" (trans. Hugh Tredennick).

108. That is, inductive argumentation.

109. Aristotle deals with demonstration, at length, in his *Posterior Analytics*. The difference between the arguments presented so far and those that Bonifaccio addresses in the paragraphs that follow is as that between deductive and inductive reasoning.

ON THE POWER TO FORESEE THE FUTURE AS A SIGN
OF IMMORTALITY

[27] Favorinus said that the only difference between man and God was that God knew future things and we do not.¹¹⁰ Even if man does know future things, he still is not God, for the divine [28] intellect grasps them in the present and our mind foresees them in the future. God knows them all and we do but a small part of them. He knows them at one moment and we do in succession. He knows them through themselves, without others suggesting them to Him, and we do through divine instinct. There is no doubt that the prophets among the Hebrews, the sibyls among the Gentiles,¹¹¹ the saints among the Christians, and, in short, some others among all the nations have foreseen and foretold future things.

Hence we can argue: every substance that foresees the future is immortal; the human intellect foresees the future; therefore it is immortal. Or: every power [*virtù*] that is not limited to present time is perpetual; no power that foresees the future is limited to present time; therefore every power that foresees the future is perpetual. Or: he who sees what is not yet, sees what is far from the sense [of sight]; the soul foresees what is not yet; therefore the soul sees what is far from the sense [of sight], and therefore it operates without a bodily instrument, and therefore it is separable from the body and consequently immortal.

Fine, you will say, but how does one prove those two major premises that every substance that foresees the future is immortal and every power that is not limited to present time is perpetual? . . .

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES CORPORAL HARMONY ASSURE THE
SOUL OF IMMORTALITY?

[33] All incorporeal substances are immortal; the soul is an incorporeal substance; therefore it is immortal. Here one must first prove that the soul is an incorporeal substance.

Empedocles said that the soul was a harmony of contrary qualities.¹¹² Its

110. Favorinus, second-century rhetor born in Arles though active largely in Rome. See *Les Cyniques grecs: fragments et témoignages*, 215 ("being a man, never try to predict what will happen tomorrow, and if you see a happy man, to say how long he will be so," whereby Favorinus implies that it is only within God's capacity to know what will be).

111. In reference to the various female oracles or prophets in ancient heathen cultures.

112. Empedocles (d. 432 B.C.E.), a philosopher whose works *On Nature* and *Purifications* exist in more than 150 fragments. For his notion of the soul as an agreement between opposites, see

harmony results from the symmetry of the well-organized body, as does motion result from the gear wheels and other well-arranged pieces of the clock's machinery: the same motion in the clock comes to resemble the harmony of the soul in the body. Similarly, Epicurus, followed by Galen, said that the soul was a good tuning of the four primary elements, which perhaps would reflect the opinion of Hippocrates,¹¹³ who called it a "constitution."¹¹⁴

Hence it is necessary to prove that the soul is always simply incorporeal, because if it moves the body, it must touch it; and by touching it, it is a body, for the only contact that can be made is between bodies. Moreover, if it is not the prime mover, who thus would be God, it must, in moving, be moved; and thus it will be a body, for every moved thing is a body.

That the soul is not the "constitution," [34] temperament, or harmony that those above said it was will be proved only when we prove that it is an incorporeal substance, for if it is an incorporeal substance it cannot in any way be an accident.¹¹⁵

Nevertheless, this badly formed opinion becomes demolished by still other considerations. A "constitution" is composed of contrary qualities; the soul does not have contrariety, because nothing is contrary to incorporeal substance; therefore the soul is not a "constitution." Still more: what moves living things by locomotion is not a "constitution"; the soul moves man by locomotion; therefore the soul is not a "constitution." Still more: if the soul were a "constitution" of different members, with each member having its own particular "constitution," for as many members as there are there would be as many souls; the soul is one only; therefore the soul is not a "constitution." Still more: if the soul were a "constitution," it would not be able to resist the passions resulting from the "constitution";¹¹⁶ it resists, in its continence; therefore it is not a "constitution."

Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.404b, also 408a, 410a. Copia reports on his conjectured death, after Horace, in her *Manifesto* (2.4.C 3v).

113. Epicurus (d. 270 B.C.E.), Galen (d. after 210 C.E.), Hippocrates (d. 377 B.C.E.): all three, in their writings on medicine, were concerned with the mind as an organ of the body, relating its humors to the four elements (fire, air, water, and earth).

114. Rough translation of the ambiguous *complezione*, for which, beyond "constitution," i.e., formation, Battaglia and Squarotti, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, has as a second (obsolete) definition: "character, disposition, temperament, moral personality"; and as a third (older) one: "constitutive essence, substance, nature, quality of a thing" (3:413); doubtless after *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612): "temperament or disposition and state of body (Latin *habitus*, *corporis habitus*, *corporis constitutio*)" (201).

115. "Accident" meaning contingent on external events or circumstances.

116. Or better, resulting from the different temperaments of the members within the "constitution." See below for these temperaments as "humors."

That the soul is similarly not harmony may be argued as follows: harmony is drawn out and slows down;¹¹⁷ the soul is not drawn out, nor does it slow down; therefore it is not harmony. Moreover, the harmony of the humors,¹¹⁸ when they depart from equilibrium, becomes disturbed; the soul does not become disturbed; therefore it is not harmony. Moreover, harmony is a compound; the soul is simple; therefore it is not harmony. Finally, harmony receives more and less;¹¹⁹ the soul does not, because incorporeal substance receives neither more nor less; therefore the soul is not harmony.

Do not contradict me by saying that Plato, following Pythagoras, called the soul harmony, for they both meant that it was a harmony of its own proper parts, not of bodily ones.¹²⁰ Despite that, they rather improperly called it so, using a simile appropriate to the body, as when one says that health is a harmony of the humors and that strength is a harmony of muscles and nerves and that beauty is a harmony of colors and features.

Thus one would not properly say of the soul that it is a harmony of external and internal senses, and much less would one say of it that it is a harmony of intellect and will. . . .

SUMMARY ARGUMENTS FOR THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

[54] Till now, Signora, the immortality of the soul may be proven with the authority of Holy Scriptures, of all philosophers, all laws, and all peoples; with the resurrection of the dead;¹²¹ with the apparition of souls;¹²² and with the ecstasy of the contemplative.¹²³

The immortality of the soul may be proven in other ways too, for if the soul were mortal, man would be unfortunate beyond all other animals; our

117. By "drawn out," the author seems to mean sound extended through its resonance, and by "slows down," its gradual diminution, or fadeout.

118. Galen's four "humors," or bodily fluids: blood, phlegm, choler, and black bile.

119. Harmony, that is, is modified in one way or another by accidents.

120. For Plato on whether or not the soul is harmony, see his *Phaedo* 85e–86d, 91c–95a; *Republic* 3.401d–402a/d–e, 9:591d; and in reference to Pythagoras, *Timaeus* 36e–37c. For various sayings of Pythagoras to the effect that it is, see, under his name, *Pythagoricon*, 26, 33, 34, 176, 178, 181.

121. See above, page 12.

122. On pages 12–13 Bonifaccio speaks of "souls of the dead who appeared to their friends and disclosed occult things and predicted future ones," etc.

123. That is, dreamers, mystics: on page 13 Bonifaccio says that "since ecstasy is a miraculous thing, one cannot deny that some holy men are seized by those mental raptures in which the soul speculates freely without any use of feelings and without the application of any corporal organ," etc.

soul would have its completion in the senses rather than in the mind; death would never be preferred to life; man would achieve his end in this world without actually achieving it; all [55] moral virtues would perish; vice would be followed more than virtue; God would be unjust; good fame would not be valued; customs would necessarily be shaped by the temperament of the body;¹²⁴ we would function according to two principles, nature and habit, with no place for reason as a third one; celestial influxes would exert their force on us; free will would be destroyed; reason would not control lust; and man would not be able to perform diverse and contrary acts, but only uniform ones.¹²⁵

It may further be proven thus: the soul is a divine substance; by nature, our soul has been placed in the middle, between animals and Intelligences; the intellect arrives at the cognition of eternal truth; with the passions of lust calmed, the intellect chalks up greater earnings in wisdom; its completion¹²⁶ consists in a certain withdrawal from the body; the learning of universals, which is that property whereby man is distinguished from other animals, has something incorruptible about it; being intelligible is more durable than being sensitive;¹²⁷ the intellect brings intelligible things to realization, making them eternal; it divides, by withdrawal, corporal forms from matter; it does not become weaker, nor does it become older with the body; it is impassible; it foresees future things; it can be moved by God alone; it addresses an infinite object; it understands universals, which are incorporeal; it comprises innumerable things; it has purely spiritual modes of understanding; it never tires in its operation; it never suffers injury from objects overly distinctive;¹²⁸ it naturally desires immortality; it is an incorporeal substance; it understands abstract subjects; and it is completely immaterial and independent of matter.

It may further be proven thus: the intellect does not receive any quality of heat, nor does it of cold;¹²⁹ it is a substance that functions on its own; it is immobile and indivisible; it has its own operations performed without an instrument;¹³⁰ in the human body there is no organ through which the

124. Meaning, its humors.

125. Because his soul is regulated by harmony.

126. Whereby intellect exerts its full powers.

127. In the sense of "sensuous."

128. In their appearance, meaning perhaps that it is never jealous of material advantages (wealth, titles, possessions, power).

129. Said otherwise: it is affected by neither heat nor cold.

130. That is, without mediation (unlike matter, where one thing causes another).

operation of the intellect is set in motion; and without speculating, the intellect understands phantasms.

It may finally be proven thus: our soul cannot become corrupted, inasmuch as it is immobile—corruption occurs through motion; each form¹³¹ becomes corrupted either through the destruction of a subordinate part or through the action of a contrary tendency, but our soul does not have contrariety or a corporal subordinate; and in being [56] subsistent it can never lose its being, which is perpetual.

I think my heart must have been covered with steel in having ventured to furrow an ocean so vast and deep. Were it not for the North Wind of God's spirit that directed my navigation,¹³² I would, with no escape, have either drowned or gone astray. Indeed, many men of an excellent mind, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius, categorically declared that in no way can one know what the soul is.¹³³

Aristotle said: *Undequaqua atque omnino difficillimum esse fidem aliquam de ipsa tandem accipere* [All in all, then, it is exceptionally difficult to obtain any certainty, in the end, about it].¹³⁴ There is no lack of reasons to lead us to suspect that our intellect may not understand itself.¹³⁵ Since it is necessary for potency, which has to know,¹³⁶ to be divested of that nature which must be known,¹³⁷ and since the intellect cannot be divested of itself, it follows that it cannot know itself.¹³⁸

Nevertheless, if what the Philosopher asserts in the third book of *On the Soul* is true, namely, that in immaterial things what knows and what is known are one and the same¹³⁹ (about which Averroës said that *Ex intellectu et intellecto fit magis unum quam ex materia et forma* [There is greater unity in the

131. "Form" in an Aristotelian sense as the actuation of matter in its potential for being.

132. Cf. Song of Songs 4:16 ("Awake, North Wind, come, South Wind, and blow upon my garden," etc.).

133. Cicero, in his *Tusculan Disputations*, 1.9.18–11.23, 25.60; Seneca (d. 65 C.E.), in his *Epistles* 4.4, 11.9, and especially 121.12; Lactantius (d. c. 320), in his *De opificio Dei* 4.2.115–17, 14.8.29–32, 17.1.93–97.

134. Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.1.

135. Aristotle reviews the contrary evidence, quoting Anaxagoras, moreover, on whether it is possible for the mind to perform cognitive operations. Yet he abides by the principle of the intellect as capable of self-understanding. See *On the Soul* 3.4.

136. Because the potential of matter (the body) is to acquire knowledge, whereby it forms a soul.

137. In this case, the mind being "divested" of its own "nature," about which it seeks cognition.

138. Again Aristotle raised the difficulty, though settled it in the continuation.

139. Aristotle, *On the Soul* 3.4.

intellect and what has been understood by it than in matter and form]),¹⁴⁰ then, since the human mind is without matter, it needs in some way to understand itself.

Moreover, he who knows the realization can also know the beginning that produces that realization. The intellect knows its realization, for, as Aristotle says, *Sentimus quoniam sentimus et intelligimus nos intelligere* [We feel because we feel and we understand that we understand].¹⁴¹ Therefore the intellect can know itself.

Moreover, what pertains to matter in material things equally pertains to intellect in intellectual things, as Averroës says;¹⁴² matter is known through its realization, which is form; therefore intellect is also known through its realization, which is understanding.¹⁴³

Indeed, it is true that intellect knows itself, not just directly but obliquely. Direct cognition is when from the beginning of knowing the intellect is led directly to the thing known; and the thing known, which is the end of knowing, does not become the beginning of cognition.¹⁴⁴ But when, on the contrary, what was the beginning of cognition becomes the end, and what was an end becomes a beginning, cognition is oblique. It is as if after having directly known reasonableness through laughableness one turned around to know laughableness through reasonableness.

Now, with this oblique cognition, our intellect knows itself, as when, after having understood some other thing, it goes back to know what the beginning of its cognition was. First it understands the information that relates to its species.¹⁴⁵ Afterward it understands that it [57] understands, i.e., it is aware of understanding. Furthermore, it knows that it has sufficient beginnings for such an operation of understanding, which beginnings are the intellect itself and the intelligible species. Finally, the intellect succeeds in gaining cognition of itself through the consideration of the intelligible species, whereby the intellect understands that the intelligible species is immaterial, since by means of the same species it understands universally.

140. Cf. Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, 115:9–13.

141. Aristotle, *On the Soul* 3.8–9.

142. Averroës, *Middle Commentary*, specifically the statement that the intellect is to intelligibles as light to colors (116).

143. Averroës writes, to this effect, that it is the intellect that “actualizes intelligibles” (ibid.).

144. That is, does not mark the start of self-understanding. For Aristotle, the process of intellection has two stages: knowledge about something as an end in itself, which is the first actuality of the potential to know (direct knowledge); rational awareness of what is known, which is the second actuality of the same (oblique knowledge; see continuation).

145. Species, as the mental images (or perceptions) it forms of things.

This is what Aristotle meant in the passage cited above, declaring in what way the intellect can know itself.¹⁴⁶ *Intelligendo alia in his enim, quae sunt sine materia* [By understanding other things in those things that are without matter],¹⁴⁷ he said, *intelligens, et id quod intelligitur, est idem* [understanding and that which is understood are the same]. It is as if he wanted to say: in being without matter, the intellect becomes the thing understood, since, in the manner of Proteus,¹⁴⁸ *natus est omnia fieri* [it was born to become all things], as Aristotle moreover said.¹⁴⁹ Hence, by understanding other things, it understands itself.

If the celebrated maxim "Know yourself"¹⁵⁰ truly descended from heaven, as Juvenal asserts,¹⁵¹ it is hard to believe that God charged us with doing something impossible. When illumined by a divine ray, the human intellect no doubt can know itself. Just as this cognition is beneficial to everyone, a knowledge of others, however, if we believe Menander, is no less profitable,¹⁵² particularly when someone gives us advice and we can discern whether he is prudent, unbiased, and faithful; whether he loves us out of duty; and whether he regulated his own life so well as to make himself a model for others. Salutory above all other precepts is that one of Seneca: *Omnia cum amico delibera: sed de ipso prius* [Consider all things with a friend, but, before that, consider yourself].¹⁵³

Know yourself then, [Sarra],¹⁵⁴ not only in so far as you are a sentient human being¹⁵⁵ and a human animal, so to speak, along with Plato.¹⁵⁶ Rather

146. In relation to the statement, above, that "in immaterial things what knows and what is known are one and the same" (and Averroës's comment thereon).

147. "Other things," etc., being the deeper meanings behind intelligibles.

148. In classical mythology, a sea god who, when seized, had the power to assume different shapes.

149. Aristotle remarked on the rational soul that it identified with the objects of its intellection (*On the Soul* 3.4) and on the nutritive soul that it comprehended all living things from their birth to their death (*ibid.* 3.12).

150. As quoted by Socrates from the words inscribed above the temple to Apollo at Delphi (*Gnotbi seauton*); cf. Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* 20c–21a and *Phaedrus* 229e. Bonifaccio writes the Italian in capitals (CONOSCI TE STESSO).

151. Juvenal (first and early second century C.E.), *Satires* 11.27.

152. Menander (d. 292 B.C.E.), from a fragment of his play *Thrasyleon* (*The Principal Fragments*, ed. Francis G. Allinson, 60/61: "the saying 'Know thyself' is not well said. It were more practical to say: 'Know other folks'").

153. Seneca, *Epistles* 3.2.

154. Though missing, her name is implied in the feminine reflexive pronoun for "yourself" (*voistessa*).

155. Originally "man" both here (*uomo sensibile*) and in next sentence (*uomo intelligibile*).

156. Refers perhaps to Plato's *Timaeus* 30c–d.

know yourself, further, in so far as you are an intelligible human being and a rational soul. If God created you¹⁵⁷ lower than angels, as David said,¹⁵⁸ you should not lower yourself below beasts. Do not commit something that would corroborate in your person the words of the Prophet:¹⁵⁹ "Man, being honored, did not know it, and he compared himself to donkeys."¹⁶⁰ Man would in fact be similar to donkeys if our soul were mortal.

If the story of the soul unfolded in such a manner, Christ would have destroyed me, saying that I "ought not to fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul."¹⁶¹ Nay, he would have been mistaken when, on the Cross, he said the words of the Prophet: "Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my soul."¹⁶² In dying, what soul would he have commended to the Lord if the soul did not live after death?

I could, therefore, with good reason, exclaim with Jeremiah: "You have enticed me, O Lord, and through Your words I have come into [58] derision and mockery."¹⁶³

Hence I, who am a Christian, would like to be declared a Jew if our soul were ephemeral. But since it is most certainly perpetual, you, who are a Jew, will declare yourself a Christian. Yes, yes, you will free yourself from the servitude of that most abject synagogue of yours and will verify your honored name *Sara* [sic], becoming "a lady and mistress of your own self,"¹⁶⁴ a dominion to be preferred to all empires. Yet if you are *Sara* [sic], which signifies "odiferous,"¹⁶⁵ with your particularly shrewd mind you will easily

157. "You" as a feminine past participle (*vi ha creata*).

158. Ps. 8:6.

159. Thus capitalized, as below. David is meant.

160. Ps. 49:21.

161. Matt. 10:28. The passage is obscure, but Bonifaccio may be saying that the words "cannot kill the soul" would have been senseless if man were a donkey.

162. Luke 23:46, after Ps. 31:6, also Job 12:10. The Prophet is again David.

163. The original Hebrew read: "You have enticed me, O Lord, and I have let myself be enticed [into performing my mission as a prophet]; you have overpowered me and prevail. I have become a daily laughing-stock, everyone mocks me" (Jer. 20:7).

164. As understood by *sara*, meaning (in Hebrew) ruler or minister.

165. *Odoratrice*, which, one might suspect, was a misspelling for *adoratrice* (worshiper, admirer). But it is sustained by the verb, in the next clause, *subodorere* (translated above as "you will gain a whiff"). It is not clear how Bonifaccio determined the equation *sara* as odiferous. *Sara* has at least two Hebrew roots, one for "struggling" or "fighting" (from the verb *la-sur*, with the form *sara*, in the present and past tense, as third person feminine singular; cf. Hos. 12:4), the other for "leading" or "ruling" (from the verb *la-sor* or *li-seror*, with the same feminine singular *sara*, itself a substantive for a female "leader" or "ruler"; cf. Judg. 9:22 or Isa. 32:1 for the verb and Judg. 5:29 or 1 Kings 11:3 for the noun), which accords with Bonifaccio's wording "lady and mistress of your own self." Yet *s* and *sh* were often interchanged in ancient Hebrew, hence *sbara* alias *sara* as "singing" (from the verb *la-shir*) or, more relevantly, as "seeing" or "looking" (from the verb

get a whiff of how little honorable are the thoughts of whoever goes around sowing those unworthy beliefs in your mind.¹⁶⁶

As I hold your letter in my hand and see on it the imprint of the ant, which you carry sculpted on your seal,¹⁶⁷ as if you were lightly reproving others' lions and eagles,¹⁶⁸ I take this occasion, along with Solomon, to urge you to approach your ant: by considering the movements of that little animal you will learn wisdom from it.¹⁶⁹ Do not refuse to have a similarly constructed teacher. The wise man¹⁷⁰ would say of it that by being smallest on earth, it is wiser than even the wisest.

The ant foresees the future storm¹⁷¹—may you foresee the horrible judgment of God! The ant, in summertime, stores its provisions for winter—may you, in your present life, gather the harvest of good works for the future one! The ant is an earthly animal, yet puts on wings and soars¹⁷²—may you, who are of earth in your body, put on the wings of true philosophy to climb with the soul to heaven! The ant in old age is strengthened, and the more it gets on in years the harder it becomes—may you learn that your soul, when your body gets older, gains in power!

Mediterranean ants are black, but on the island of Pephnos they are white.¹⁷³ Your soul, by staying within the soil of your native law,¹⁷⁴ will always be dark and foggy, but by being separated from the continent and surrounded by the sea of Baptism it will become white and shiny.

Let us proceed further. If Callicrates made his ant so small that its feet were not seen,¹⁷⁵ would you like to condense your soul so much as to reduce

la-sbur; cf. Job 34:29). By stretching "seeing/looking" to signify "sensing" (smelling), Bonifaccio could obliquely have arrived at "odiferous."

166. Namely, the rabbis and one in particular: Leon Modena, to whom Bonifaccio refers below. There he is said to have "dictated" to Copia the letter that occasioned Bonifaccio's discourse on immortality (A 2v).

167. Bonifaccio mistook a scorpion for an ant (see 4.3, first footnote). It is not clear if the device on the seal affixed to her closed letters also appeared on her stationery.

168. Lions on devices of Venice and eagles on those of princes.

169. Prov. 6:6.

170. Solomon.

171. For this and following remark about ants, see Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 11.36.

172. Here Bonifaccio appears to rely on Aristotle, who recognized both winged and wingless ants (*The History of Animals* 4.1, also *On the Parts of Animals* 1.3), whereas Pliny the Elder classified them as wingless only.

173. Pephnos is an island off the coast of Lakedaimonia (near Thalamai). On its white ants, see the Greek traveler and geographer Pausanias (second century C.E.), *Description of Greece* 3.26.3.

174. Judaism.

175. On the Greek artist Callicrates (fifth century B.C.E.), who carved ants and small animals in ivory, see Pliny, *Natural History* 36.4.43, also 7.21.85.

it to nothing? Ants, alone among animals, bury their mates,¹⁷⁶ having some thoughts, to a certain degree, about what might happen after death; and do you only care about your present life? Ants have more strength than elephants; and does your soul have less durability than that of a crow?¹⁷⁷

In the house of Tiberius ants killed a serpent;¹⁷⁸ and [59] in your heart will you not kill a serpentine belief? When I consider this at length, however, your belief is even worse than serpentine. Whereas the ancient serpent said to human souls: "You will not at all die, rather you will be like gods,"¹⁷⁹ you say to them the opposite: "You will surely die and be like asses."

But let us proceed further. Some Philosophers,¹⁸⁰ admiring the marvelous industry of ants and bees, and considering to their great astonishment the particularly sensible arrangement of their well-ordered republics, thought they must have an immortal soul.¹⁸¹ Vergil, remarkably, said of bees:

*His quidam signis, atque haec exempla secuti,
Esse apibus partem divinae mentis, et haustus
Aetherios dixere.*¹⁸²

Guided by these signs and these examples,
Some said that bees have received a part of the divine
mind
And the draft of the heavens.

Will you thus deprive men of what the sages granted these tiniest of little animals?

The island of Aegina was rid of its inhabitants because of the plague. But Jupiter, wanting to repopulate this deserted country, as the Greeks relate the fable, converted ants into men.¹⁸³ I will say, without fables, that because

176. After Pliny, *ibid.* 11.36, as, also, the following remark about the ants' strength.

177. Seemingly in reference to Aesop's tale about a fox that tricked a dim-witted crow; cf. *Aesop's Fables*, 212 (no. 203).

178. After the story of Tiberius Nero Caesar (d. 37 C.E.) as told by Suetonius (d. c. 122) in *Lives of the Caesars* 3.72.2.

179. After Gen. 3:4–5.

180. Thus capitalized.

181. Aristotle remarked on the intelligence of ants and bees in *On the Parts of Animals* 2.2 and on their acute olfactory sense in *The History of Animals* 4.8.

182. Vergil, *Georgica* 4.219–20.

183. The men were known as Myrmidons, after the Greek for ants *myrmekes* (or for ants' nests *myrmedones*). For the tale, see Hyginus, *Fabulae* 52, and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.622–43.

one part of heaven was evacuated upon the betrayal of the rebellious angels,¹⁸⁴ God wants to convert the ants of our souls into angels, to refill those glorious seats. Do you, then, by removing immortality from souls, want to make heaven become a desert?

Jupiter, who was God, if we still want to talk deliriously along with the ancients, turned himself into an ant for the sake of a woman.¹⁸⁵ Will you, who have turned yourself into an ant, not turn yourself back into a woman for the sake of God?

The Isthmians used to sacrifice the ant to the Sun.¹⁸⁶ Will you refuse to sacrifice the ant of your soul to that Father of Lights who constructed the Sun and the Dawn?

Would you, I ask, like to know who this Sun is? It is he who, speaking with your Jews, said truly: "I am the light of the world."¹⁸⁷ He revealed the truth of these words of his when, in departing from the world, he removed the usual light from the sun. With the tragic death of its Maker, it appeared on the stage of heaven dressed in brown and girded not only with dark clouds or a thick fog but with the darkest night and shadiest horrors.¹⁸⁸

I would not at all want you, Signora, to say to me that I am coercing you into doing something most difficult, which is, according to Thales, to know yourself, while I myself am doing what is easiest, which is, according to him, to give advice to others.¹⁸⁹ Even if all that were true, still you should not stop applying yourself, [60] with every solicitude, to this most

184. For fallen angels, see Gen. 6:4 and, with reference to Lucifer, Isa. 14:12–15; for rebellious ones, Luke 10:18, Acts 26:18, and 2 Cor. 2:11, 11:14.

185. Assuming the form of an ant, Jupiter seduced Eurymedusa, the daughter of King Myrmidon (after whom the Myrmidons are thought to have been named, see above); as reported by Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 2.39.6.

186. Bonifaccio's immediate source seems to have been Leon Battista Alberti, *De re aedificatoria* 7.3 ("I read in Theophrastus [d. 286 B.C.E.], the philosopher, that it was customary in the Isthmus [of Corinth] to sacrifice an ant to Neptune and to the Sun"); after *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, 195. I could not locate the respective passage in Theophrastus's writings (*Characters*, of which Ansaldo Cebà, by the way, prepared an edition: *I caratteri morali di Theofrasto*, 1620; and *Metaphysics*).

187. John 8:12, 9:5, 12:46. See also, in reference to God as light, Isa. 60:20 and Micah 7:8.

188. For the darkness that preceded Christ's death and the "horrors" that immediately followed it, cf. Matt. 27:45–54, Mark 15:33–39, Luke 23:44–46, and John 12:35–40.

189. Thus Thales of Miletus (d. 546 B.C.E.) answered when asked for his opinion of what is hardest and easiest for men to do; after Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*: Thales 1.36. Plato, in his *Protagoras* 343a–b, praised Thales and several others for their love of philosophy, which led them to formulate pithy remarks as the fruit of their wisdom (e.g., "Know yourself").

important discipline¹⁹⁰ of knowing yourself. As a moment on which eternity depends, a science of sciences, and an art of arts, it alone leads men to attain the highest happiness.

Because I said to you, though, that the intellect cannot understand itself except obliquely, look assiduously in the mirror of this discourse. But do not act like that woman who no sooner left the mirror than she forgot the image of her face.¹⁹¹ Nor should you act like that man who, according to Cicero, read the work of Plato¹⁹² and was persuaded about the immortality of the soul, but no sooner did he put down the volume and talk things over to himself than that so firm conviction started to weaken and was annulled.¹⁹³ Rather imitate Cleombrotus¹⁹⁴ and Cato,¹⁹⁵ who, after having read that book, were kindled with an enormous desire for the other life, thus voluntarily killed themselves, exchanging death, so they believed, for immortality.

I am not at all saying that you should kill all of yourself; rather should you only those parts that, without destroying the compound, can be separated.¹⁹⁶ When slit, balsam, too, distills a precious liquid.¹⁹⁷ When pruned, the vine, too, is renewed. When cut, the wound, too, heals. If the farmer or the surgeon, out of tenderness, were to spare the iron, he would make every plant sterile and cause every wound to fester.

I want you, Signora, to be cruel to yourself in order to be more fully compassionate. Have a heart, yes, *do* have a heart, but not of a female. Or even if it is of a female, may it be of such a kind as to surpass every male in

190. In the double sense of task and field of learning.

191. Namely, a woman who, looking into the mirror, sees herself, in one fleeting moment of self-revelation, as she really is. Whether Bonifaccio had a particular woman in mind cannot be said.

192. *Phaedo*.

193. After Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.11.24.

194. Cleombrotus I, king of Sparta (d. 371 B.C.E.); after Callimachus (d. c. 240 B.C.E.), who wrote the quatrain "Saying 'goodbye sunlight!' Cleombrotus of Ambrakia / Dived from a high wall into Hades, not because / He faced an evil worse than death; no, he had read / One book of Plato's, the one about the soul" (*The Poems of Callimachus*, 183, under Epigrams, no. 53), as reported, moreover, by Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.34.84, and by Augustine, *The City of God* [*De civitate Dei*] 1.22.24–30.

195. Cato of Utica (d. 46 B.C.E.), a Stoic defender of freedom against Caesar; after Seneca, *Epistles* 24.6–8, also Plutarch, *Lives: Cato the Younger* 68.1–70.10.

196. By "parts" Bonifaccio seems to be referring to Copia's non-Christian opinions.

197. Balsam, or balm, an aromatic oil used by the Church for chrism (baptism, confirmation, ordination, etc.).

cruelty. I want you to become a Procne,¹⁹⁸ a Medea,¹⁹⁹ and, if you wish some woman of your own race, a Mary, [daughter] of Eleazar.²⁰⁰ Bleed your feelings, dismember your passions, slaughter your sons who are your sins.²⁰¹ You will be happy, you will be fortunate, you will be lucky, you will be generous and magnanimous, more so than Deborah and Judith, if you strangle these sons of yours.²⁰²

Do not believe me, believe your greatest Prophet: "Blessed is he who crushes his little ones on the rock."²⁰³ The rock is Jesus,²⁰⁴ that cornerstone that makes one of two by combining the Old with the New Testament.²⁰⁵ Smash your little ones on²⁰⁶ this rock, but hurry up and do so now, because they are growing. Kill them before they are born, lest they kill you, once they are born, as vipers.²⁰⁷

198. Procne's husband Tereus raped her sister Philomela. In revenge, Procne killed and cooked their son Itys, whom Tereus ate for supper; cf. Hyginus, *Fabulae* 45, and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.426–674.

199. The archmurderess (and sorceress) Medea killed her brother and several others, including her own two children; among the sources, see Euripides' play *Medea*.

200. During the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman warrior and, later, emperor Titus, the Jews were so plagued by famine that the same Mary killed, roasted, and ate her own son. See Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish Wars* 6.3.4, and as transmitted in Italian literature, Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Purgatory* 23.28–30.

201. "Sins," in Bonifaccio's view, because the Jewish descendants were infidels.

202. Neither of these two Hebrew women "strangled" anybody. Rather Deborah summoned Barak to wage war upon the enemy forces led by Sisera, who was eventually killed by Jael (see Judg. 4–5); and Judith beheaded Holofernes, who, as Nebuchadnezzar's general, besieged the Jews in Bethulia (as reported in the apocryphal Book of Judith).

203. Ps. 137:9. By "greatest prophet" Bonifaccio is referring to David, who, living more than four hundred years before the psalm in question, was obviously not its author. Whoever he may have been, he records the plight of the Jews as exiles in Babylon (587–537 B.C.E.). Verse 9 originally read "who crushes *your* little ones," meaning that the Jews killed not sons of their own (as Bonifaccio implied by changing *your* to *his*), but those of the oppressor.

204. Matt. 16:18. Better worded as "The rock, in this case, is Jesus," and not Peter, as Jesus said it was in the same passage from Matthew ("upon this rock [Peter] I will build my church"). Yet see Matt. 7:24–25 about a wise man who "built his house" upon the words of Christ as "upon a rock." In the Old Testament, the "rock" was identified as the Lord: see Deut. 32:31 and Ps. 18:2, 31.

205. Here Bonifaccio perceives the Old Testament as typologically foreshadowing the New. He may have had Isa. 32:1–2 in mind, namely, that Israel will take shelter in "the righteous king yet to reign" (the Messiah) as in "the shadow of a heavy rock in a parched land."

206. Bonifaccio wrote *con*, "with," though in the Italian translation of Ps. 137:9, as Bonifaccio quoted it, the preposition was *a*, "on" or "upon" or even "against" ("Beato chi calterisce i suoi pargoletti *alla* pietra").

207. On a viper's tongue that slays, see Job 20:16; and on the Jews as "vipers" (Pharisees, Sadducees), Matt. 3:7, 12:34, 23:33.

Finally, after having sufficiently philosophized, we recognize that philosophy, as others say, is the daughter of poetry: Plutarch, with good examples, proved that all sects of philosophers originated with Homer;²⁰⁸ even Aristotle said that philosophers are eager for poetic inventions.²⁰⁹ [61] So let us conclude our discourse by responding to those Muses of whom Sappho²¹⁰ was once a sister and Sara [*sic*] is now a daughter:

2. SONNET

*Sara [sic], la tua beltà cotanto audace*²¹¹

Sarra, your beauty, so brazen
 As to loathe being second among the first women,²¹²
 Is much more ephemeral, however, than leaves 3
 And much more fleeting, however, than wind.
 If I might say, though with your consent,
 What your beauty hides in itself, 6
 I would say it is a tomb where the soul, impure
 From original sin, lies buried.
 This is the sin at the root of that tragedy 9
 That denies the immortal form of life
 And corrupts the image of God.
 Run, run to the laver,²¹³ from which there now springs 12
 Life: Christ is that bird so pious
 As, with its blood, to revive its dead children.²¹⁴

208. In reference perhaps to Plutarch's biography of Alexander: not only did Alexander love philosophy, taught to him by Aristotle, but he is said to have kept a copy of Homer's *Iliad*, with Aristotle's corrections, under his pillow, considering it a treasure of military knowledge. See Plutarch, *Lives: Alexander the Great* 8.2–3, 5.

209. In reference perhaps to Aristotle's description of poetry as more philosophical than history, for it was concerned with "universals" whereas history reported "particulars"; Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451b.

210. Bonifaccio's mention of the female poet Sappho (fl. c. 600 B.C.E.) may have spurred the author(s) of the "Notices from Parnassus" (3.1 below) to include her as a participant. For Sappho in Cebà's correspondence with Copia, see 1.1/L15.46, no. 13, stanza 13:8 and L23.76.

211. For this sonnet again, and Copia's response to it, see 2.4.D 1r.

212. Beauty is emblematic of Copia, thus not beauty but Copia "loathes" being ranked second among her beautiful leading peers.

213. Of baptismal water.

214. Refers to the pelican: in medieval lore, young pelicans strike their parents, who, striking back, kill them; yet on the third day the mother pelican tears its own flesh, pouring blood over



4. SARRA COPIA'S MANIFESTO IN SELF-DEFENSE (JULY 1621)

Title and Preface

[FOLIO A 1r] MANIFESTO BY SARRA COPIA SULAM THE JEWESS,
WHO THEREIN REFUTES AND REPROVES SIGNOR BALDASSARE
BONIFACCIO'S FALSE ACCUSATION THAT SHE DENIES THE
IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

[A 2r]¹ To whoever reads this:

I can imagine, benign readers, that you are apt to find it strange that my name, not at all unknown in this city or beyond, should make its first appearance in print on a subject quite different from what might perhaps be

the dead for their revival. The pelican came to symbolize Christ, who bled on the Cross for the redemption of mankind.

1. The *Manifesto* was published in Venice in 1621 by Antonio Pinelli and twice again by Giovanni Alberti. Why three printings is not clear, nor is it clear which preceded which. Umberto Fortis ventures the opinion that the work first came out in Alberti's edition, then was republished by Pinelli to provide the *raison d'être* for his printing of Bonifaccio's essay in rebuttal (2.5 below; dated, in the author's signature, 2 August 1621; see *La "bella ebrea,"* 69n. That one or more of them first appeared in late July 1621, about a month after Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, can be inferred from information supplied by Cebà in reference to what he was told in letters by Copia (see 1.1, letters 51–52). For indirect evidence, see the *Manifesto* itself: there Copia says that the *Discorso* was only "recently printed" (A 2r), that any delay in her response would not be to her "advantage" (A 2v), and that, all in all, it took her "two days" to prepare it (B 2r). The translation here and the original in the appendix are after Pinelli's edition (for title page, see fig. 9), with variants in the other two signaled (in the appendix) in footnote. The three sources will be labeled Pin, Alb1, and Alb2. Pin and Alb1 (in quarto) are identical in having fourteen folios, so arranged: title page, [A 1]r; preface to readers, A 2r–v; dedication to Simon Copia, [A 3]r–v, plus two sonnets in his honor, [A 4]r–v; *Manifesto*, B [1]r–[C 4]v, plus three sonnets, [D 1]r–[2]r (altogether nineteen unnumbered pages in Pin while the *Manifesto* proper is paginated, in Alb1, as 9–24). Alb2 (in octavo) has a reduced format, in six folios: title page, [A 1]r; preface to readers, [A 1]v; dedication, A 2r, plus two sonnets, [A 2]v; *Manifesto*, A 3r–[5]v, plus three sonnets, [A 6]r–v, with the *Manifesto* numbered as pages 5–10. Otherwise Alb2 matches Alb1 in almost all details. For (minor) variants between the two of them and Pin, see under notes to the Italian in the appendix. Copia sent Ansaldo Cebà a copy of the *Manifesto*, as she remarked in a (lost) letter dated 8 August 1621 (though, for some reason, Cebà received the letter and the copy only six months later: see 1.1/L52.128). A modern transcription of part of the *Manifesto* was published, in a collection of "letters," as early as 1832: Bartolommeo Gamba, ed., *Lettere di donne italiane del secolo decimosesto*, 253–65 (omits preface, dedication, and concluding section with poetry). Though the title reads "from the sixteenth century," the editor, in introducing the work, which he properly dates to the seventeenth century, explains that he included it "in

expected from my pen. But another person, either out of maliciousness or out of naïveté or thoughtlessness, has forced me to do what I only uneasily would have been stirred to do on any other occasion. Even so, I have mustered the effort to bring out a work that, if I am not mistaken, might have been more gladly seen and perhaps more readily accepted by people [were it another one].²

I say, then, that under compulsion I hurriedly composed and published this short writing, not with an end or any thought to achieve glory for myself, but only to defend myself against the false accusations leveled at me by Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio. In his recently printed "Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul" he categorically says that I deny that infallible truth about the human soul's being immortal. Yet the denial is as far removed from my thinking as the capacity to know the inside of hearts is removed from all his knowledge.³

You should not anticipate any novelty of ideas, nor should you any copiousness⁴ of learning, [A 2v] [for three reasons]. The first is that my well-spring is deficient in them, especially now when I find the pursuit of studies highly strenuous: I have barely recovered from a grave illness that oppressed me, for a long time, with the danger of death. If divine kindness saw fit to preserve me from it, I do not think it was for anything else but to allow me to clear my reputation of such a grave blemish as has been put on it. Nor would my death have in any way barred my adversary from his ambitious resolution to do what has consumed his efforts for almost two years.

The second reason is that it was not to my advantage to let an excess of time or an abundance of gossip intervene between the offense and my rebuttal, for there was a danger of my incurring damage as a result.

The third and last is that the deed itself⁵ did not require any other

order to crown the present collection . . . with a document of lively exposition and strict, solid reasoning" (252; see under "Reception" in volume editor's introduction).

2. Awkwardly worded as "Even less would I have mustered the effort to bring [it?] out into the light [in print], which [light, i.e., print], if I am not mistaken, everyone would more gladly see and perhaps more eagerly greet than this one." Copia could be saying one of two things: either that she would have preferred to bring out another work, say, a book of poetry, as suggested in the bracketed portion above; or that if she had more time and energy she would have prepared a better version of the present work, as suggested by the following sentence where she apologizes for its hasty preparation.

3. Copia expands on this thought below ("as if you were an investigator of human hearts," etc.; B 1v).

4. Originally *copia*, as a pun on her name.

5. Of refuting the false accusations.



Figure 9. Title page to Sarra Copia's *Manifesto*, after the edition printed by Antonio Pinelli (1621). Genoa, Biblioteca Civica Berio, Sezione di Conservazione, Fondo Canevari, C. Misc. 44(4). Courtesy of Genoa, Biblioteca Civica Berio.

learning than the firmness of my mind and of that religious feeling that I owe to God and to the law that He gave me. Any judicious intellect, moreover, would know by itself, in reading that book,⁶ how blunderingly its author defies others in a matter that nobody, whether a Jew or a Christian, is permitted to gainsay.

May you be pleased then, kindest readers, to view this necessary defense of mine out of simple curiosity and, as just and benign judges who

6. The *Discorso*.

absolve a person who is being falsely accused, to remove the false accuser from your presence and live happily.

Dedication

[A 3r] Dedication of the work to Signor Simon Copia,⁷ her most beloved parent:

The dedication of this brief but necessary labor of mine could be no more appropriately directed than to one who has passed from this mortal life. Only thus will the consequences themselves⁸ correspond to what I declare in the work as my unquestionable belief in the immortal being of souls. To you did I want to present this little gift, yes, indeed, to you, most beloved soul, who awaken being in that dear compound⁹ from which I was generated in this world; to you, I say, my most devoted parent, who, though divested of an ephemeral veil,¹⁰ reside midst living spirits and will reside there for eternity.

[A 3v] I did so first to have you, who, by divine goodness, were allowed to be a participant in things down here, increase your joy at seeing perhaps the little renown that accrues to my name. For this reason I think that having brought a woman into the world will be no less dear to you, for the conservation of your name, than having brought a man into it, as you so fervently hoped would happen in this life.¹¹

I did so next to demonstrate somewhat the continuation of that inexpressible love that you always bore me and I will forever preserve. Enjoy for now, then, this little disbursement of immense affection that fills your beloved daughter, for if I am allowed to hope for health/salvation¹² and life,

7. Simon Copia died fifteen years earlier, on 26 August 1606, at the age of forty-eight (Venice, Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, Università degli Ebrei, in the "register of the dead" for the period 1600–1627; G.F. 57–58); on relations of father and daughter, see under volume editor's introduction.

8. Namely, the consequences of passing from life to death, wherein her father will be immortalized (see continuation of sentence).

9. Of body and soul (or matter and form).

10. Copia purposely uses the word *ephemeral* to indicate that she is well aware of Bonifaccio's reminder that life on earth is fleeting (2.3, no. 2:1–4, and same poem below and Copia's response: 2.4, nos. 3–4:1–4).

11. On Copia's assuming the role of male to compensate for the sons that her father wished to have but did not, see Marina Arbib, "Rivisitando la biblica Ester: implicazioni sottese all'immagine femminile ebraica nell'Italia del Seicento," 146.

12. The substantive *salute* is probably to be understood in both senses: "health," because Copia had just recovered from a serious illness (as she said above); "salvation" (no less crucial in Christianity than in Judaism, where, in Hebrew, it is termed *yeshu'a*), because the topic of discussion is "immortality."

it will be in my intellect's creations,¹³ for which I have been granted some fertility, so that my name no less than yours will, lively expressed, live on in them.

1. SONNET

[A 4r] *Signor che dal mio petto arderti avanti*
Mai sempre scorgi in holocausto il core
E sai ch'altro desio che frale honore 3
M'instiga a porger preghi, a versar pianti,
Deh volgi in me il tuo sguardo e mira quanti
Strali m'avventa il perfido livore, 6
Sgombra da ciechi menti il fosco errore
Né d'oltraggiar il ver l'empio si vanti.
Ben so ch'indegna di tue gratie io sono, 9
Ma l'alma che formasti a tua sembianza
Fia ch'ad esserle scudo ogn'hor ti mova,
Cessi d'audace lingua il falso suono 12
E chi adombrarla vuol scorga, per prova,
Che la mia fede ha in te ferma possanza.

Lord, who forever discern my heart
 On fire before You as a burnt offering
 And know that another desire than frail honor 3
 Incites me to offer prayers and shed tears,
 Oh, turn Your look upon me, behold
 How many darts are hurled at me in treacherous
 resentment¹⁴ 6
 And clear the dark error from blind minds,¹⁵
 Lest someone wicked brag about outraging someone
 sincere.
 Well do I know that I am unworthy of Your favors, 9
 But may the soul that You formed in Your likeness¹⁶

13. Originally "births" (*parti*).

14. Bonifaccio, among others, "betrayed" Copia, repaying her courtesies with malevolence. Yet the remark may refer, as well, to persons who, within the Jewish community, spoke critically of her ideas as bordering on sacrilege.

15. The "dark error" being the misconception among the uninformed ("blind minds") that Copia denied the immortality of the soul.

16. Cf. Gen. 1:27, there in reference to man formed in His likeness; also Bonifaccio, *Discorso* ("l'anima . . . formata a tua sembianza"; 15), on the basis of which Copia states, as her open-

Stir You to be a shield for it at all times;
 May the false sound of the brazen tongue cease, 12
 And may he who wants to besmirch it¹⁷ discern, for
 proof,
 How my faith has firm strength in You.

2. SONNET

[A 4v] *Con la tua scorta, ecco, Signor, m'accingo*
A la difesa, ove m'oltraggia e sgrida
Guerrier che ardisce querelar d'infida 3
L'alma che, tua mercé, di fede i' cingo.
Entro senz'armi in non usato aringo,
Né guerra io prendo contra chi mi sfida, 6
Ma, perché tua pietà mio Dio m'affida,
Col petto ignudo i colpi suoi respingo.
Ché se di polve già l'armi formasti 9
Al grand'Abram contra i nemici Regi
Sì ch'ei di lor fé memorando scempio,
Rinova in me, bench'inequal l'esempio, 12
E l'inchiostro ch'io spargo fa c'hor basti
A dimostrar di tua possanza i pregi.

With Your escort, Lord, behold! I gird myself
 For defense, having been outraged and rebuked
 By a warrior who dares to indict as unfaithful 3
 The soul that, by Your grace, I gird with faith.
 I enter, without arms, an unaccustomed arena,
 Nor do I wage war on him who challenges me;¹⁸ 6
 Rather, in being protected by Your pity, my God,
 I repel his blows with a bare breast.

ing premise in the *Manifesto*, that "the soul of man . . . is incorruptible, immortal, and divine, created and infused by God into our body" (B 1r). Among the Hebrew commentators on the same verse, Rashi (d. 1105) noted man's capacity "to understand and learn" (*le-bavin u-le-baskil*), unlike lower creatures, while Maimonides (d. 1204) did his resemblance to higher creatures, or angels, through his spirit (*ruah*, i.e., the breath of life instilled in him by God), "which is not a body and will not die" (*she'eina guf ve-lo tamut*).

17. It being Copia's soul, on which Bonifaccio, with his "brazen tongue," cast aspersions.

18. "Unaccustomed," for she is not used to engaging in polemics for battling her adversaries, in this case the "warrior" Bonifaccio.

If You once formed out of dust the weapons 9
 Of great Abraham against hostile kings,¹⁹
 For him to make a memorable slaughter of them,
 Renew in me the example, albeit unequal, 12
 And make the ink I spread be enough now
 To demonstrate the merits of Your power.

MANIFESTO

[B 1r] Manifesto of Sarra Copia to Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio

The soul of man, Signor Baldassare, is incorruptible, immortal, and divine, created and infused by God into our body when the fetus²⁰ in the maternal womb was made fit to receive it.²¹ This truth is as certain, infallible, and indisputable for me as it is, I believe, for every Jew and Christian.

Thus the title of your book, in which you girded yourself in a doublet²² to discourse on such a topic, made me remember the saying of that gallant Roman who, being invited to go, if he would, to listen to [B 1v] a speech in praise of Hercules, said: *Ecquis Herculem vituperat?* [Who will vilify Hercules?].²³ Imitating as much, I too said: "What need is there now, especially in Venice, for such a treatise [as yours] and what is the point of printing things on similar topics among Christians?"

Reading further, however, I found that the discourse was directed at

19. On Abraham's military exploits against "hostile kings," see Gen. 14:13–15; yet his "weapons" were his "three hundred and eighteen servants" (14:14) whom "the Lord God," as with all humans, "formed 'out of the dust' of the ground" (2:7). The Lord promised Abraham to multiply his seed, sealing a covenant with him for its everlasting (immortal) preservation (17:2, 7). Whatever "hostile kings" there were had to be displaced, for the Lord also promised him that he and his descendants would inherit the land on which they were living (17:8).

20. Originally *l'organizzato* [sic], absent as a substantive from early Italian lexicons, though present as the verb *organizzare* in *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612): "to form organs," in reference to the "completed ordering of the fetus in the mother's womb" (577; said there to be after Francesco Buti, in his commentary [1380] to the "Divine Comedy"). The fetus marks a postembryonic state (from the third month after conception to the moment of birth).

21. After Talmud, Sanhedrin 91b (in answer to the question whether the soul is placed in man at the moment of conception or after the formation of the fetus).

22. Doublet (*farsetto*) in the sense, it would seem, of a quilted undergarment, reinforced with mail and worn under armor: Copia implies that Bonifaccio proceeded to a battle of wits in military gear. Lest the sentence be misconstrued, it was not in the title of the book that he girded himself in a doublet but in the book itself.

23. As Bonifaccio points out in his *Risposta*, it was not a Roman who said this but a Spartan (2.5.A 2v): Plutarch identifies him as the Spartan king Antalcidas (fl. fourth century B.C.E.) in his *Apophthegmata regum et imperatorum* (c. 130), 25 ("Antalcidas . . . Sophistae cuidam laudationem Herculis recitare volenti, Quis enim, inquit, eum vituperat?").

me, on the totally erroneous assumption that I am one who holds an opinion contrary to the lucidity of such a truth. I could not help, then, but fill at one and the same time with the greatest admiration and with disdain for the overly audacious remarks with which you so assuredly and unqualifiedly slandered me, as if you were an investigator of human hearts and knew what lies in the deepest part of my mind and is known to God alone.²⁴

Even if I raised some philosophical or theological difficulty in some discussion with you,²⁵ it was not out of any uncertainty or indecision I might have ever felt about my faith. Rather it was solely out of curiosity to hear from you some curious and uncommon teaching to provide a solution to my arguments. I reckoned that such a procedure is legitimate for any person who pursues studies, let alone a woman, in this case a Jewish woman continually drawn into these discussions by persons who do not tire of converting her, as you know, to the Christian faith.

[B 2r] Your slander, then, was, without doubt, inconsiderate, and in conformity to what it deserves I could have reacted to it by using other defenses than my pen, to have your book prosecuted for its infamous libel. But the compassion of my law²⁶ makes me feel compassion for your simplicity, which made you believe you could become immortal in fame by treating the immortality of the soul. Not having any immediate reason for doing so, you yourself concocted one.

Instead of submitting to further trials, however, I have set myself to demolishing after two days of meager efforts²⁷ as much as you machinated against me after almost two years of purposeless nightly vigils.²⁸ By means of the present writing I will publicly make it clear to everyone that the charge you brought against me in your *Discorso*, namely, that I denied the immortality of the soul, is false to the extreme, unjust, and beyond any reason. I do this only to vindicate and acquit myself in the eyes of all those who, not knowing me, might give some credence to your accusation about my being

24. In reference, no doubt, to Jer. 17:9–10: "The heart is more deceitful than anything and is dangerous; who could know it? I, the Lord, investigate the heart, I try the conscience, to give each man according to his ways and the fruits of his labors."

25. In Copia's salon.

26. As set forth in the Pentateuch.

27. Copia's work on the *Manifesto* seems to have extended over a longer period: in the "Notices from Parnassus" mention is made of relevant material brought to Numidio Paluzzi, for his comments and corrections, "every day" (3.1.31v).

28. Since the time lapse between Copia's letter (2.2 above) and Bonifaccio's *Discorso* was a year and a half, it is clear that Bonifaccio wrote his treatise, if indeed he did so over the course of two years, not because he was provoked to do so by Copia's letter (as he claimed in 2.5.A 2v and 4v), but because his earlier discussions with her gave him reason to challenge her views.

guided by the religion I profess. But I leave it to any person of average intelligence to judge whether your pen is so equipped as to be able to remove [B 2v] or spread fame.

To eliminate any uncertainty about my own opinion in this regard, it ought to be enough that I remained a Jew. Had I [not] believed, as you say, in the happiness of the other life and were I not afraid of forfeiting it,²⁹ there would have been no lack of opportunities for me to improve my state by changing my law, a thing known to persons of much authority, who have insistently striven and attempted to do so.³⁰

With these few lines I believe I have sufficiently erased that note of impiety that you perhaps thoughtlessly pretended to give my name. This being so, I would like you to do me the pleasure of our discoursing on this subject a little more freely and familiarly between ourselves. Tell me then, please, Signor Baldassare: what moved you to prepare and print that treatise and get my name mixed up in it? You say, with verses of Vergil, that God appointed you for this.³¹ Great arrogance, to be sure! You imply that, for a matter so sublime and important, the Lord God did not have a more elevated intellect and a more learned minister than you and that you alone, from the throng of all men of letters, did He choose as fit for treating so worthy a subject.³²

If immortality had to be [B 3r] inserted into minds by using no other force than human explanations, it would surely be found to have been poorly provided if the only explanations it had were yours. Though you drew them from learned authors, they have been badly understood and even more poorly reported, and a weak discussion of matters so important tends to strengthen contrary explanations.

You might say to me that often God makes use of lowly and modest means

29. Seems to refer to 2.3.17 (last sentence in translation above).

30. Reference to the unrelenting pressure that Christians bore on Jews to convert (what better evidence than Cebà's letters to Copia in 1.1 above).

31. Copia appears to be referring to the quotation on page 38 of Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, namely: "Igneus est ollis [= illis] vigor, et coelestis origo / [seminibus]" (Fiery is the strength and heavenly the origin / [of those seeds]; Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.730–31); the "seeds" here, as Copia understood the passage, were those implanted by God in Bonifaccio's mind.

32. In dedicating the *Discorso* (to a Venetian ecclesiastic, Marc'Antonio Cornaro), the publisher Antonio Pinelli celebrated the human intellect and, by insinuation, the author Bonifaccio's cognitive powers. He wrote that "the intellect uses the knowledge of the soul as a mirror, in which, by admiring itself, it realizes it is little inferior to the angels [cf. Ps. 8:6]. Falling in love with itself, it increases its native beauties with the ornaments of the virtues in order to become, afterward, not at all a stupid Narcissus but rather an immortal Amaranth [a flower, in ancient lore, thought never to fade or die], to be transplanted to the gardens of heaven" (*Discorso*, A 2[r]).

to work great things so as more fully to emphasize His omnipotence and that once He even spoke to Balaam's donkey.³³ That is true, but in such cases the effects themselves appeared divine and the modesty of the instruments did no harm to them. You, by foolishly pretending to prophesy by yourself without any other inspiration than excessive arrogance, have shown, as effects, your totally crass ignorance rather than any marvelous divine virtue. Thus, instead of verses by Vergil, you could have appropriated those by Dante:

In the middle of our life's road
I found myself in a dark forest
That obscured the straight way.³⁴

You might also say that the state, in which "you find yourself,"³⁵ of being a priest³⁶ and role model, incites you [B 3v] to grab all opportunities that come your way so as to be of help, with your teaching and your works, to your neighbor. Ah, Signor Bonifaccio, even if you were moved by religious zeal, it was not right for you to presume something beyond what any strength of yours allowed:

You, who in writing ever strive
To earn an honored name for yourself,
Should take on a subject equal to your strength.³⁷

(and what follows).³⁸

33. Num. 21:22–35, esp. 28–30.

34. Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Inferno* 1.1–3. Copia misquotes line 3, turning the original conjunctive clause (with an intransitive verb) "Ché la diritta via era smarrita" (For the straight way was lost) into an adjectival clause (with a transitive verb), "Che la diritta [sic] via havea smarrita," as translated above.

35. Quotation marks and italics are editorial (Copia puns on Dante's *Mi ritrovai*, "I found myself").

36. As already noted (2.3.A 1r, footnote), Bonifaccio took Holy Orders in 1611 (after entry on him in Alberto Maria Ghisalberto, ed., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 12 [1970]: 192–93, esp. 192).

37. Quotation from Horace, *Ars poetica* 38–39: "Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, aequam / Viribus" (You who write should choose a topic equal / To your strength), according to the rather free Italian verse translation by Lodovico Dolce (1508–68) in *La poetica d'Horatio* (1536), [A 6]r. For the Italian, which I collated with both the same edition of Dolce's translation and a later one (*I dilettevoli sermoni, altrimenti Satire, e le morali Epistole di Horatio . . . insieme con la Poetica*, 1559), see appendix. Discrepancies between Copia's and Dolce's version in this and subsequent quotations are mainly orthographical and punctuative. Substantive ones will be listed under the Italian.

38. Namely, "Et versate diu, quid ferre recusent, / Quid valeant umeri" (And ponder at length what your shoulders refuse to bear / And what they are able to); Horace, *Ars poetica* 39–40.

You discussing the soul? You discussing immortality? It is the most difficult and arduous matter to be found in Philosophy,³⁹ which, itself, would perhaps in some part have remained concealed from you if it were not for the help of Theology. In your conscience, however, you know that you are neither a Philosopher nor a Theologian. If I am not mistaken, I heard it said, from your own mouth,⁴⁰ that such sciences are not of your profession.

When it comes to so lofty a matter, how audacious of you to have wished to have a finger in the pie!⁴¹ Did you not make sure to have your arguments printed under a title so sublime?⁴² Though you indicate how much you reflected on that famous maxim "Know yourself," know, however, that Horace, in his *Poetics*, if you have ever seen the book, says, [B 4r] as translated by Dolce:

The first source and stream of writing well
Is, without doubt, knowing.⁴³

Since true glory is procured not by ostentation but by effort, note this maxim of the same author:

You can see that he who tries to reach
The goal he desires had, on the way,
To undergo many things as a boy;
He often sweat and he experienced hot and cold.⁴⁴

But what is important is that noxious observation that could apply to you too:

To me it seems ugly indeed to be left
Behind by those who are learned

39. Thus capitalized, as are, in the continuation, Theology, Philosopher, and Theologian.

40. In conversation among the literati who gathered in Copia's salon.

41. The Italian reads "to put your hand in the pasta."

42. The immortality of the soul.

43. Dolce's translation: *La poetica d'Horatio* (1536), [B 6]r; after Horace, *Ars poetica* 309, there as "Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons" (The first principle of good writing and its source is knowing). For the Italian, see appendix.

44. Dolce's translation: *La poetica d'Horatio* (1536), C [1]v; after Horace, *Ars poetica* 412–13: "Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam, / Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit" (He who in a race strives to reach the longed-for goal / Has borne and done many things as a boy; he has sweated and shivered). For the Italian, see appendix.

And to admit, in everything,
Not to know what I never learned.⁴⁵

In this at least you should have been somewhat restrained by the example of Aristotle, whose mind almost did not suffice to reach a clear understanding of such a topic.⁴⁶

I, for my part, am not speaking to you in this way to teach you by playing the instructor or the Philosopher,⁴⁷ as you scornfully say I do,⁴⁸ while at the same time you come to me, playing the Pedant.⁴⁹ I confess to being much more ignorant in this science than you, yet I will report to you what I hear from all those who have seen your book.⁵⁰

[B 4v] More is needed, my Signor, than the title of a *iuris utriusque doctor* [doctor of canon and civil law]⁵¹ to discuss the immortality of the soul. But to make you realize the little practice you have with writings of concern to the Theologian⁵² as well as with explanations of concern to the Philosopher, it is enough to remind you of the same slander that you direct to me at the beginning.⁵³ Having falsely supposed that I deny immortality, you say that I alone among the Jews, after so many thousands of years, have lapsed into such an error. I excuse you for not having seen other writings, including those of the historian Josephus Flavius who reports on the various opinions of the Hebrew nation thereabout.⁵⁴ But I do not at all excuse

45. Dolce's translation: *ibid.*; after Horace, *Ars poetica* 417–18: "mihi turpe relinqui est / Et quod non didici sane nescire fateri" (I find it shameful to be left behind / And to confess that I really do not know what I never learned). For the Italian, see appendix.

46. Aristotle considers the problematic of understanding the soul at the beginning of his treatise (*On the Soul* 1.1), to which, moreover, Bonifaccio already referred in his *Discorso* (see 2.3.56).

47. More exactly, female philosopher (*Filosofessa*, thus capitalized).

48. See the beginning of his *Discorso*: "I am honored to have found such a learned teacher as you." For "scornfully" (*per ischerno*) in Pin, both Alb1 and Alb2 have, probably mistakenly, "covertly" (*per ischerno*, i.e., hiding behind a screen or shelter).

49. Thus capitalized: on Bonifaccio's own deprecation of pedantry, see below, under 2.6.

50. Among them Modena, Paluzzi, and doubtless her husband.

51. A literal translation of the Latin would be "doctor of both kinds of law."

52. Thus capitalized, as is, in the continuation, philosopher.

53. Of your *Discorso*.

54. "Hebrew nation" as Jewish sect. Josephus Flavius (d. c. 100) wrote on Jewish history in *The Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*. His account transmits valuable information about different Judaic sects, among them the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and the Qumran community of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Copia's mention of Flavius may have spurred the author(s) of the "Notices from Parnassus" to include him as a participant (3.1.38r–v).

you for not keeping in mind the Gospel of your Faith, since you would have remembered that in [the Gospel of] Saint Matthew, chapter 22, the Sadducees, a Hebrew sect that denied immortality, went to Christ to raise some difficulties about it and he wisely satisfied them, silencing their questions.⁵⁵

You also remark that I deny faith in the infallible covenant that God wrote in His own hand.⁵⁶ In the Sacred Scriptures I do not know any other covenant written by the hand of God than the Decalogue, with which I comply, as far as I can, not only by faith, but also in works. [C 1r] If you had any other writing of God, in His own hand, on the subject of immortality,⁵⁷ I would be grateful to see it.

But let us see how well and with how much practice in Hebrew language and its writings you also availed yourself of the term *ruah*, to form an argument to your purpose. You say that in Sacred Scripture this term properly signifies the human, angelic, and divine mind.⁵⁸ Here I could ask you for a highly detailed account of such an interpretation if you had spoken your own opinion. But because I know that you have never seen the Hebrew language and that others embedded it in your trappings, I will tell you only that from this as well as all the other things you have said it is clear, as you show, that you made sure to say them without understanding them. In this particular at least, when speaking with a Jewish woman, you should have been spoon-fed by someone who better understood the peculiarities of the language, since *ruah* signifies nothing more of itself than the air, wind, and breath with which we breathe.⁵⁹

Thus one can see how fitting the consequence⁶⁰ is when you pretend to

55. Matt. 22:23–33. The Sadducees did not deny immortality; rather they did resurrection (22:23), as Bonifaccio noted in his reply below (2.5.A 3v).

56. See Bonifaccio's words near the beginning of his *Discorso* (2.3.5).

57. Though Copia implies that, in referring to this covenant, Bonifaccio had a different scriptural passage in mind, they both concur in their understanding of its centrality (see, again, the beginning of the *Discorso*).

58. Bonifaccio: "But the human mind, the angelic mind, and the divine mind are indeed called *ruah*" (*Discorso*; see there, 2.3.7).

59. Copia pleads for a literal reading of *ruah*, ignoring its anagogic connotations in the kabbalistic (and Neoplatonist) literature, with which she pretends to be unfamiliar; see the comments to *neshamah*, *nefesh*, and *ruah* in Bonifaccio's *Discorso* (2.3.7). She buttresses her clarification on Scriptures ("You say that in Sacred Scripture this term," etc.), where, she is right, *ruah* denoted "breath." On the negotiation of literal vs. allegorical interpretations of Hebrew in this and other writings, see Corinna Fonseca-Wollheim, "Faith and Fame in the Life and Works of the Venetian Jewish Poet Sara Copia Sullam (1592?–1641)," 32–34.

60. Of your argument.

prove with such a term that the soul is absolutely incorporeal and immaterial. Yet [C 1v] even if you wanted to ascertain what you conclude in this regard, you would need a logic other than Aristotle's.

How well you understand the explanations of concern to the philosopher can be seen at the same beautiful beginning. There you say that Lucretius wrongly calls Epicurus, who denied the immortality of the soul, the Sun of the Philosophers, then say of me, whom you hold to be of the same opinion,⁶¹ that I deserve to be called the Moon of the Female Philosophers. The symmetry in this explanation is something I leave for consideration to whoever reads this, though I believe you utilized that same comparison as an opportunity to make an insipid joke.⁶²

So did you elsewhere, declaring that corruption does not occur without motion,⁶³ a statement as prejudicial to the gravity of the matter being discussed as it is to the modesty that befits your condition and to your professing to be religious.⁶⁴

Nor can I restrain myself from noting still another place, in my view as worthy of laughter as you wanted it of compassion. It is toward the end⁶⁵ of page 10 of your book. There you say: "May it please God that one die more as a joke than out of common sense!"⁶⁶ Such a manner of speaking expresses your own desire, which would be *not* [C 2r] to die, even though you believe that the soul is immortal!

Heh! Signor Bonifaccio, what game are we playing? Do you or do you not firmly believe what you preach? If the soul in its separation from the body acquires a better condition of being, as you prove, and as is certain, why, then, do you reluctantly postpone the latter state to retain the former one?⁶⁷ Is that the reason why you are more attached to the present than to another life? Yet you argue on page 14 that death, for just reasons, is sometimes to be wished and preferred to life,⁶⁸ especially for demonstrating fortitude and other virtues,⁶⁹ for which you cite examples and the au-

61. In allegedly denying the immortality of the soul.

62. Perhaps about the sun (Christianity) being preferable to the moon (Judaism).

63. "Our soul cannot become corrupted, inasmuch as it is immobile," etc.: *Discorso* (2.3.55).

64. The statement, Copia is saying, is immodest because it occurs as a sweeping generalization and irreligious because it denies human corruption.

65. The original reads, less accurately, "at the end."

66. See the *Discorso* (2.3.10), for comment in footnote.

67. Latter state, separation, versus former one, conjunction.

68. See under Bonifaccio's treatise (2.3.14).

69. Bonifaccio mentioned magnanimity and generosity (*ibid.*, end of page 14).

thority of Aristotle;⁷⁰ and you caution against contradicting this as a bad sign.⁷¹

If it were not a digression for me, I would show so many of these inanities and contradictory places that not one of your statements would remain intact. But that is beyond my purpose, because I would not want to let anyone think that by opposing your explanations I might in some way oppose the truth of your conclusion.⁷² Nor will I show the defects and imperfections of your essay, for which I would need not a short folio but another volume. The only good thing about it is the cause [C 2v] it defends. For the rest, it is so replete with erroneous conceptions of terms, twisted and badly understood meanings of writings, erroneous forms of syllogisms, bad connections between matters and strange transitions from one to another of them,⁷³ inappropriate quotations of authors, and, finally, errors of language that nobody can continue reading it without conferring on the author some [abusive] title.

Till now, however, we have not discovered the reason that might have moved you to undertake such a notable enterprise. I cannot believe that it was malice, for all along you seemed to assure me of your friendship and your pleasant disposition.⁷⁴ One might say, perhaps, that it was the very state of not knowing. I remember having read in the *Galateo*⁷⁵ that of the incivilities that men commit one is wishing to make a show of themselves in areas where they are least proficient.⁷⁶ The book says that there are many who, not knowing how to sing, or having a bad voice, always burst forth in

70. Bonifaccio refers to passages in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and his *Politics* (ibid.).

71. Bonifaccio wrote specifically (in the same passage): "Every appetite contrary to nature is bad; the desire not to be preserved is contrary to nature; therefore it [the desire not to be preserved] is bad." Said otherwise, it is bad not to wish to die, for in death one perpetuates one's "being."

72. Which is, that the soul is immortal.

73. Said otherwise, one statement does not follow from another (non sequitur).

74. Copia is referring to both his letters to her and, perhaps, a few speciously friendly remarks in the *Discorso* itself (for example, "I am honored to have found such a learned teacher as you" [2.3.5, above]; "While I argue, no desire to threaten you, no ambitious arrogance, and no proud temerity should be perceived in me" [6]; "I would not at all want you, Signora, to say to me that I am coercing you into doing something most difficult" [59]).

75. A book on etiquette by Giovanni della Casa, from the early 1550s (for the author, see also 3.1.78v).

76. The reference to the source is rather freely worded. Copia appears to have in mind here a comment, within chapter 17, about persons "who are superabundant in words and in courteous gestures in order to compensate for the defects of their idleness and their boorish, limited nature."

some song while they are in conversation;⁷⁷ and that persons who do not know how to dance always want to look light and nimble in their movements.⁷⁸ They do this, it may be thought, in order to be considered learned in that of which they know they are most ignorant, without [C 3r] realizing that they not only increase the perception of their ignorance but make conversation distasteful.

In this connection one might also refer to the example of those who, having some defective part, always try to adorn it with lovely clothes, as when someone with crooked legs always arranges to wear stockings of lovely colors, as if to make external beauty compensate for an internal defect.⁷⁹ Such a one fails to notice that, in so doing, he makes the defect far more conspicuous, attracting the eyes of viewers for its consideration.

If your work, Signor Baldassare, had its origin in such a motivation, I will let you yourself be a judge as to whether it ought to submit to the discipline of the *Galateo*.

Let us move on. My thinking does not need to be further wearied by investigating other explanations. Rather it gives me the courage to divine the true one for this maneuver of yours. You, I know, will freely acknowledge it as follows: nothing induced you to make such long and vain efforts except that vain little ambition that makes you willingly run to the press in the belief that fame consists in having many books published. But you do not consider how they are regarded by the public, which, I think you know from experience, is poorly satisfied [C 3v] with things of mediocre quality, not to speak of those that are commonplace or foolishly composed.⁸⁰ The same *Poetics* of Horace warned us not to run so easily to the printer:

Any poem should be considered
Worthy of reproof if the author
Has not expended much time on it;
Altering this and that part several times,
He eventually leads it,
Corrected and chastened, to its perfect end.⁸¹

77. *Il Galateo*, in reference to a comment, within chapter 3, about not singing if one has an unpleasant voice.

78. *Ibid.*, in reference to a comment, within chapter 23, about refraining from dancing when one is walking outside ("dancing . . . is right for weddings and not for the streets").

79. *Ibid.*, in reference to a comment thereabout in chapter 28.

80. Copia appears to be referring, as a blow to Bonifaccio's pride, to his own difficulties with his readership.

81. Dolce's translation, *La poetica d'Horatio* (1536), [B 5]v; after Horace, *Ars poetica* 291–94: "Vos, o / Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite quod non / multa dies et multa litura coercuit

Nevertheless, for this same reason, I feel sorry for your mind, which, eager for glory, goes as it were begging for it on different streets, satisfying itself with smoke where it cannot have light. The vain, immoderate thirst for glory induced even Empedocles to throw himself into the chasm of Etna:

Empedocles, desirous
Of leaving people the false belief
Of his having been snatched live into heaven
And gathered into the company of the gods,
Threw himself into the burning flames of Etna.⁸²

But for such a beautiful thought what point is there in challenging a woman, indeed a woman who, though devoted to studies, does not practice such sciences⁸³ for her profession?

[C 4r] To be seen as intrepid and courageous, you should have challenged those of the caliber of Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Epicurus, Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Averroës. But since they were not allowed to come to where you are encamped, you should have gone and found them in their own stockyards,⁸⁴ though they would perhaps have curbed your pride with as much ease as you, with little modesty, slander some of them with the title even of pigs.⁸⁵ But as far as I can see, you wanted to act, as the saying goes, like "one who brags to an empty audience."⁸⁶ You appeared in a stockyard where not only was there nobody to contradict your charges but

atque / praeseptum deciens non castigavit ad unguem" (You, O / Descendants of Pompilius [an epigrammatist, c. 100 B.C.E.], should reprehend a poem that / Many a day and many an erasure did not prune / And did not trim ten times over until becoming a close-cut nail). For the Italian, see appendix.

82. Dolce's translation, *ibid.*, C 3r; after Horace, *Ars poetica* 464–66: "deus immortalis haberi / dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aetnam / insiluit" (to be considered an immortal god / Was Empedocles so eager that into burning Etna did he coolly / Leap). For the Italian, see appendix.

83. Philosophy, theology.

84. The word "stockyards" (*steccati*) is purposely chosen in reference to the forthcoming "pigs." Copia seems to be saying that Bonifaccio garrisons in a fortified camp whereas the authors whom he slaughters are kept in pigsties.

85. Bonifaccio wrote that Platonists and Aristotelians concurred in defending the immortality of the soul, but not always their predecessors, of whom he mentions "[Alexander of] Aphrodisias along with some other pigs in the herd of Epicurus" (*Discorso*, 12). Thus his attack was not on Aristotle or Averroës, as Copia implies, but on certain skeptics, who, however, were "not that many as could not be easily counted on one's fingers" (*ibid.*).

86. An approximate rendering of *bravo a credenza*, or a person who cannot sustain what he boasts, though it would make no difference if he did, for, as Copia points out (in the continuation), there is no one to contradict him.

where, even if you did have such a contradicter, which I do not believe, he would not have had an open field.⁸⁷

The result is, O courageous challenger of women, that the field is all yours. Proudly indeed do you walk through it, striking blows in the air, O courageous champion, O generous warrior! The only noise that can be heard is your strident trumpet. You shout to yourself: victory, victory!

You may think, perhaps, from the sound of these few words of mine, that you have found some circumstance for undertaking a new joust. Yet I reply to you, as I explained to you above, that this is not a written acceptance of your challenge, but a simple manifesto [C 4v] to apologize for my not appearing.

There is no reason for combat when neither in words nor in deeds is there any difference of opinion. On my account, then, you can completely depose your arms. Though you provoked me again with a thousand offenses, I am no longer about to oppose you by any reply lest I consume my time uselessly. I, especially, am as hostile to exposing myself to the eyes of the world in print as you are noticeably desirous of so doing. Live happily and hope that the same immortality you preach will be advantageous to you if you live as much to observe your Christian law as I profess to adhere to my Jewish one.

CONCLUDING POEMS

You terminate your discourse, for charm and delight, by appending the tune of a sonnet⁸⁸ in order to portray yourself, with a lyre in hand, as in effect the very Orpheus who, in the work itself, you pretend to be: one capable of drawing a new Eurydice out of Inferno.⁸⁹ To appear on the stage in this same part that you give me,⁹⁰ I, therefore, will provide a counterpoint to

87. Copia may be saying that the subject of the soul's immortality is so uncontroversial that, except for details, little room would be left for argument about it; see below where, for the same reason, she begs off any further debate with her detractor. On the other hand, she could also be saying that Bonifaccio so dominates the field that he blocks the way to criticism; or that since his objector is a woman, it is unlikely that her voice would be heard or her opinions approved.

88. Namely, "Sarra, la tua beltà cotanto audace," at the end of the *Discorso* (and, repeated, below). By its "tune" Copia means its "sounds." The musical vocabulary (tune, lyre), we learn from the next sentence, was employed to sustain the metaphor of Bonifaccio's sonnet as a "song" to which Copia will "provide a counterpoint."

89. See the *Discorso* (2.3.6). The punctuation in Alb1 and Alb2, with a comma after "to be" (*essere*), though absent in Pin, elucidates the meaning, as translated above (with the comma now a colon).

90. The part of Eurydice.

your song.⁹¹ But I will not put you to the trouble of going to the Kingdom of Shadows, since you find me in that of Light.⁹²

3. SONNET

[D 1r] SONNET OF SIGNOR BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO TO SARRA COPIA SULAM⁹³

Sarra, la tua beltà cotanto audace,
 Che sdegnà tra le prime esser seconda,
 È però più caduca assai che fronda, 3
 È però più che vento assai fugace.
 E se potessi dir, ma con tua pace,
 Ciò che la tua bellezza in se nasconda, 6
 Io direi ch'ella è tomba, ov'alma, immonda
 Di colpa original, sepolta giace.
 Questa è la colpa, onde quel colpo uscìo 9
 Che la forma immortal di vita priva
 E corrompe l'immagine di Dio.
 Corri, corri al lavacro, ond'hor deriva 12
 La vita: Christo è quell'Angel sì pio
 Che col suo sangue i morti figli avviva.

Sarra,⁹⁴ your beauty, so brazen
 As to loathe being second among the first women,
 Is much more ephemeral, however, than leaves 3
 And much more fleeting, however, than wind.
 If I might say, though with your consent,
 What your beauty hides in itself, 6
 I would say it is a tomb where the soul, impure
 From original sin, lies buried.

91. Copia, then, will supply her own sonnet ("Ben so che la beltà ch'al mondo piace") "in counterpoint" to Bonifaccio's, which explains why she repeats the latter, even though it appeared at the end of the *Discorso*, before "countering" with her *risposta*.

92. Copia saves her punch line for the end: Judaism is her "light."

93. The sonnet, as it appeared at the end of Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, differs from the present reading in only typographical variants (capitals for the full words *Sarra* [there *Sara*] and *Christo*, small *a* for *augello*, "bird"). There it was quoted (in this edition) in translation while here it appears in the Italian as well.

94. For annotations to this translation, see the end of 2.3, above.

This is the sin at the root of that tragedy 9
 That denies the immortal form of life
 And corrupts the image of God.
 Run, run to the laver, from which there now springs 12
 Life: Christ is that Bird so pious
 As, with its blood, to revive its dead children.

4. SONNET

[D 1v] RESPONSE OF SARRA COPIA SULAM

Ben so che la beltà ch'al mondo piace
È fior caduco e di superbia abonda,
Ma de la spoglia fral che mi circonda, 3
Qual si sia, stima in me l'alma non face.
Per più nobil desio mio cor si sface,
Baldassare, ond'ardita, e sitibonda 6
Quel fonte cerco, onde stillar suol l'onda
Che rende a i nomi altrui fama verace.
Né cercar dee altro Fonte od'altro Rio 9
Chi di lasciar immortalmamente viva
La sua memoria al mondo ha pur desio,
Ché s'a far l'alma in Ciel beata arriva 12
Onda che bagni il volto o 'l petto mio,
Di lacrime versar non sarò schiva.

Well do I know that the beauty that pleases the world
 Is an ephemeral flower and abounds in pride;⁹⁵
 But the frail shell that surrounds me, 3
 However it is, hardly interests my soul.
 My heart is consumed by a more noble desire,
 Baldassare; striving and thirsting, 6
 I seek that fount⁹⁶ from which there habitually drips the
 wave⁹⁷

95. As in Bonifaccio's poem, so here beauty is personified. Anyone who has it, Copia is saying, is overconfident.

96. The fountain of life (the Lord): Ps. 36:10 ("for the spring of life is with You") and 42:2–3 ("my soul thirsted for the Lord"), also Song of Songs 4:12 ("a locked spring, a sealed fountain"); in conscious opposition to Bonifaccio's baptismal font ("laver"), in his initial sonnet (line 12).

97. Of God's beneficence to the righteous.

That confers true fame on people's names.
Nor need one seek another fount or another stream 9
When, indeed, one has the desire to leave to the world,
Immortally, a living memory of oneself;
For if, to make the soul in heaven blessed, there comes 12
A wave that bathes my face or my breast,
I will not be averse to shedding tears.⁹⁸

5

[D 2r] BY THE SAME AUTHOR, A SONNET TO THE HUMAN SOUL

*O di vita mortal forma divina,
E dell'opre di Dio meta sublime,
In cui sé stesso e 'l suo potere esprime 3
E di quanto ei credè ti fé Reina;
Mente che l'huomo informi, in cui confina
L'immortal col mortale, e tra le prime 6
Essenze hai sede nel volar da l'ime
Parti, là dove il Cielo a te s'inchina:
Stupido pur d'investigarti hor cessi 9
Pensier che versa tra caduchi oggetti,
Ché sol ti scopri allhor ch'a Dio t'appressi;
E per far paghi qui gl'Humani petti, 12
Basti saper che son gl'Angeli stessi
A custodirti et a servirti eletti.*

O divine form of mortal life,⁹⁹
And sublime end of God's works,¹⁰⁰
In which He expresses Himself and His power 3
And made you a queen of as much as He created;

98. Of joy.

99. Copia apostrophizes the soul as representing the divine element in the human compound of form and matter. In the "Notices from Parnassus" one learns that the sonnet was originally prepared in two versions, of which the second, as quoted here, was the one approved by Paluzzi, though the author(s) of the "Notices" thought the earlier one was better (3.1.50r). One also learns that the sonnet was reprinted in Paluzzi's posthumous *Rime* as a work ascribed by the editor (Berardelli) to Paluzzi himself (ibid., 73r–v; see below, 3.2.83, no. 2).

100. The infusion of life (or a soul) into humans was the summit of God's creative efforts.

Mind¹⁰¹ that informs man, in whom the immortal
 Adjoins the mortal,¹⁰² and that resides amidst the prime 6
 Essences in flying from the deepest
 Parts where heaven bends down to you:¹⁰³
 May stupid thought¹⁰⁴ that lives amidst ephemeral objects 9
 Desist now from investigating you, however,
 For you uncover yourself only when you approach God;¹⁰⁵
 And for human breasts to be made content here, 12
 May it be enough to know that "the angels themselves
 Are appointed to guard and serve you."¹⁰⁶



5. BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO'S ESSAY IN REBUTTAL (AUGUST 1621)

[FOLIO A 1r]¹ RESPONSE TO THE MANIFESTO OF SIGNORA SARA
 [SIC] COPIA BY SIGNOR BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO³

[A 2r] Unleash, oh, unleash your passion, Signora, for you are burning, nay,
 you are all fire; and fire, if it is confined, breaks out with greater fury. Let

101. Here Copia apostrophizes the human mind (or *mens humana*) as congeneric with the human soul (or *anima humana*, in the sense of *anima rationalis*, or intellectual soul). The word "mind" (*mente*) is after Pinelli's printing, to be contrasted with what appears to be the inferior reading "while" (*mentre*) in Alberti's two printings (Fortis argues for "mind" in *La "bella ebrea,"* 124–25).

102. In the sense of man created after the image of God (Gen. 1: 27).

103. Lines 6–8 ("that resides . . . down to you") may be paraphrased thus: the mind, aided by divine insights, moves from the depths of ignorance toward increasing knowledge that places it on the heights; there it "resides," for all time, "amidst the prime essences," which Copia probably identified with Plato's Forms or Ideas (see *Phaedo* 105d).

104. Copia appears to differentiate between mental profundity and aimless speculation ("stupid thought").

105. What Copia is saying is that it is not through human *ratio*, as developed to argumentative extremes in Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, that the soul can be explained, but rather through *mens divina*, or divine insight.

106. After Ps. 91:11.

1. Printed by Antonio Pinelli as a response to Copia's *Manifesto*, with an early letter of hers set at the end (see item 2 above). The response is signed Venice, 2 August 1621. Its title page has the colophon and printer's signature, preceded by the conventional formula "with the license of the superiors and a privilege." Of the six folios (in quarto), [A 1]r is the title page (with the verso blank), A 2r–[4]v the response, and [A 5]r–[6]v the letter.

2. The same title recurs at the top of A 2r, though without the byline.

us have your flame die down, then; we will not stir it, rather it will become extinguished on its own.

My coolness does not blaze from your flame. On the contrary, it does not warm at all. Thus I am not enraged if you reproach me for ignorance but rather surprised at those who cannot tolerate being called ignorant. Socrates does not know anything;³ Gorgias thinks he knows everything.⁴ Abide by the latter; I abide by the former. I say I know even less than nothing; or, together with Arcesilaus, that it could be that I know I know nothing, but that I am unaware of my knowing it.⁵

Please see if I am ignorant, for I take a pen in hand and God knows that I do not know what I ought or ought not to write on the paper. The reasons that I do not know are these: you are not able to respond to my explanations and I am not willing to counter your offenses; such a quarrel, with your being a woman, would turn to my disadvantage; I fear your threats in which you indicate other kinds of repercussions.⁶

It would be an obscenely warped spectacle to see a priest here and a Jewess there play a game of tumbles and hurdles in a stockyard.⁷ Nay, even this literary duel between us turns out to be ridiculous. Since you say that I do not know what I am saying on the subject of the soul⁸ and you confess, furthermore, that you do not understand this matter,⁹ we end up like two blind persons, taking up cudgels to the amusement of a crowd.

In short, in no way do I want to attack you now, for you are in a state of commotion. Let the swelling of your wrath subside. In the meantime, I will

3. As Socrates admitted in Plato's dialogues *Meno* 80d, *Gorgias* 506a, and *The Apology of Socrates* 21b–e, 23a.

4. Socrates emphasized Gorgias's feigned knowledge in the eponymous dialogue.

5. Arcesilaus headed the Platonic Academy in the mid-third century B.C.E., introducing a more skeptical vein into its deliberations; see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers: Arcesilaus* 4.6.28.

6. Copia's "threats" were to demolish Bonifaccio's (argumentative) fabrication and prove that his charges against her were false (*Manifesto*, B 2r). Bonifaccio was described, rather frighteningly, as begging for glory on the streets (C 3v). Perhaps the worst prospect, in her exposition, was that like Empedocles, he might leap to his death in the flames of Etna (*ibid.*). Copia considered though abandoned the idea of prosecuting Bonifaccio for libel (B 2r).

7. In reference to Copia's various remarks about philosophers confined to a stockyard (*Manifesto*, C 4r).

8. Copia spoke of his "false accusations" (*Manifesto*, A 2r), his erroneous assumptions (B 1v), his poor understanding of sources (B 4r), his "totally crass ignorance" (B 3r), his being neither philosopher nor theologian (B 3v), his "not knowing what [he] never learned" (B 4r), and his saying things "without understanding them" (C 1r).

9. Copia "confessed" to being deficient in knowledge (*ibid.*, A 2v) and, by comparison with Bonifaccio, even "more ignorant in this science [philosophy]" (B 4r).

avoid the necessity of accepting this second challenge of yours¹⁰ if [A 2v] with nothing else but a quick Spanish retreat¹¹ or a sophism by Scarabombardone.¹²

It is not right for me to be favored in this contest. I practiced skirmishing for two years,¹³ and it stands to reason that you be given as many to reinforce your dexterity and stamina.

Since I, then, am not outraged, who compels me to take action? *Amicitia* [Friendship] suffers the offense, not I. Let that inviolable divinity,¹⁴ profaned by you, look to her own defense, for I should not arrogate the right to be the champion of so powerful a goddess. The Twelve Tables did not punish wicked actions against God,¹⁵ but said: *Deus ipse vindex esto* [Let God Himself be the punisher].¹⁶ Thus I received no injury from you, and despite your calling me an adversary, you will not make me stop being a true friend to you. You would do well to be the same to me, unless I only badly understand the gentility of your nature. Even the elements go to battle as a foursome, but the result of that fight is their preservation: they stand so dearly embraced amidst contrary qualities that one transforms into another.

10. To, as it were, a duel. The unmentioned "first challenge" was presumably Copia's denial, according to Bonifaccio, of the soul's immortality; the "second" might have been her statement that, in treating the subject, he showed his ignorance (see references above).

11. The usual expression in Italian is "*furia francese e ritirata spagnola*," meaning something done with great zest yet soon abandoned. Thus Bonifaccio precipitously leaves the fighting arena.

12. Scarabombardone, one of the *commedia dell'arte* zanies; in reference here, perhaps, to Giulio Cesare Croce's *Le tremende bravure del capitano Bellerofonte Scarabombardone da Rocca di Ferro* (later edition, 1623). By "sophism of Scarabombardone" Bonifaccio means, it would seem, the witticism of a "braggart" (*bombardone*), which is how Copia described him (*bravo a credenza*). The phrase "like two blind persons, taking up cudgels to the amusement of a crowd" (A 2r) would have been such a witticism.

13. Meaning that he worked for two years on his *Discorso*, as Copia already told us in her *Manifesto* (A 2v, B 2r).

14. *Amicitia* (or in Greek, *Philotes*) was personified as a divinity in classical mythology: see Hesiod, *Theogony* 224, and Hyginus, *Fabulae*, preface.

15. In reference to the tables on which the early laws for governing Roman society were engraved (*Duodecim tabularum leges*, c. 450 B.C.E.). The same laws provide no punishment for sacrilege (nor does the concept of "God"—in the quotation that follows—appear in them). See Paul Frédéric Girard, ed., *Textes de droit romain*, 12–23; also below, under 2.6.5v.

16. The words are absent from the Twelve Tables, yet can be traced to Cicero, *De legibus* 2.8.19. Unlike the Twelve Tables, which "did not punish wicked actions against God," the Two Tables, viz., those on which God inscribed the Decalogue as a sign of His covenant with Israel, very much did (the subject of the covenant came up at the beginning of the *Discorso* and Copia responded to it in her *Manifesto*, B 4v). The quotation can be related, moreover, to an ordinance in Scriptures against worshipping foreign gods: "You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God and I visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me" (Deut. 5:8).

With the same affection will I always love the one¹⁷ who dictated to you the first letter, which was the occasion for my discourse on immortality.¹⁸ It was he who, further, suggested to you the piece you call a manifesto,¹⁹ in which my book is given the name of libel. But anyone who does not know how to distinguish which of the two is a libel would be deprived of common sense.

I, in my writings, have always honored this champion of yours and have much praised his intellect; I also promoted his interests and together with my relatives relieved him of his bad fortune.²⁰ Spending that money that alone is coined in his mints, he now rewards me with sharp invective. He, I say, and not you, for I recognize the peculiarities²¹ of his language and the same conceits he always has in his mouth, as in telling the story of Antalcidas, who, invited to deliver an encomium of Hercules, said: "Who will vilify him?"²²

Take note, Signora, that the author of this aphorism was not a Roman, as someone else put it in your mouth, but indeed a Spartan and that, to

17. Leon Modena, Copia's friend and presumed advisor on questions of Jewish law. The possibility that Bonifaccio was referring to Copia's literary mentor, Numidio Paluzzi, is excluded in the second paragraph below, where Bonifaccio specifically says "the rabbi."

18. Copia's letter, written about one and a half years before Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, was reproduced at the end of his *Risposta* (see below for short reference and, in this volume, under 2.2).

19. Bonifaccio eventually drops the idea of Modena's having "suggested" that Copia write a manifesto and leaves us to infer that it was Modena who wrote it ("I recognize the peculiarities of his language," etc.; see below).

20. A check of Modena's autobiography for his financial status at the time of the *Discorso* and the *Manifesto* (and Bonifaccio's *Risposta*) reveals that from late 1617 to the end of 1621 the rabbi was in particularly difficult straits. The debts he incurred from gambling, an old habit that he tried but was unable to shake, left him almost penniless; see *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah*, 113–17. Copia appears to have solicited help from Bonifaccio, who, on his own admission, supplied the necessary funds to "relieve [Modena] of his bad fortune." How he did this is not clear: by "promoting [Modena's] interests," Bonifaccio perhaps means that he and his "relatives" offered him shares in an investment that paid off in revenues, which would explain Bonifaccio's next sentence about money that Modena "coined in his mints," i.e., made his own, or turned to his own profit. That a diehard Christian aided a Jewish rabbi adds a piquant new detail to Modena's life story. Why Copia via her husband did not do so herself may be because Modena was too proud (and embarrassed) to accept her money, especially if he had received it in the past.

21. *Idiotismi*, which also means imbecilities. Bonifaccio may purposely have played on the word for its ambiguity.

22. As Copia recounted the episode (*Manifesto*, B 1r–v), a "gallant Roman" (whose name she does not mention) was "invited . . . to listen to a speech in praise of Hercules," not give one himself. Bonifaccio corrects her, referring to Plutarch as his source (see next sentence), yet he too stands to be corrected, for the source upholds Copia's version: Antalcidas did not deliver an encomium to Hercules but rather remarked, when a Sophist was about to do so, that Hercules obviously needed no praises.

prove it, you can consult Plutarch.²³ I know well that the rabbi uses this fine motto as a pet phrase. Isocrates teaches me, nevertheless, that praising great men [A 3r] worthily is much more difficult than celebrating average ones.²⁴

Who is he who would vilify God? Surely He wanted to be celebrated via praises in all languages, by all pens, and in all centuries. Even I celebrated Him in praises, I think, in that discourse of mine that you baptize as merely vain and fallacious prophecy.²⁵ But what would you say, I ask you, if I had prophesied at the outset of my work as you did at the outset of yours? Could you deny having prophesied?²⁶

I have read that among the Gentiles there were men who very closely investigated the internal organs of animals.²⁷ But I see that among the Jews there are women who are confidently investigating the internal organs of men.²⁸ You penetrate to the recesses of my heart and foresee that if you were dead, I would in any case have published my discourse.²⁹ Nay, with greater boldness do you sink into the abyss of divine secrets, drawing from them the reason why God allowed you to survive: in order for you to lacerate a friend with pricks and stings.³⁰

I, on the contrary, always keep my distance from such wild suppositions. Till now I believed that prophecy concerns the future. If my discourse is prophetic, then, it is only right that I learn from you³¹ that prophecy is about the past.³²

23. For specific reference, see under *Manifesto* (2.3.B 1v, note).

24. The reference to Isocrates may be to his orations in general or more specifically to a passage in his *Panegyricus* (380 B.C.E.), as for example 82–83, where he differentiates between excellence and mediocrity.

25. Refers to Copia's statement about his "foolishly pretending to prophesy," etc. (*Manifesto*, B 3r).

26. Bonifaccio appears to be referring to Copia's words that even if she were dead, he would have gone ahead with publishing his *Discorso* (*Manifesto*, A 2v).

27. By Gentiles, Bonifaccio means heathens, among them such writers on zoology as Aristotle (*On the Parts of Animals*) and Pliny (*Natural History*, bks 7–11).

28. Refers to Copia's comment that Bonifaccio is incapable of knowing "the inside of hearts" (*Manifesto*, A 2r) or, again, that he pretends to be "an investigator of human hearts and [to] know what lies in the deepest part of [her] mind and is known to God alone" (*Manifesto*, B 1v).

29. *Manifesto*, A 2v. For another example of "prophesying," see there C 3r, where Copia "divine[s] the true" explanation for Bonifaccio's having written his *Discorso* (viz., to get another book published, and one on a profound topic at that).

30. Copia said as follows: "I have barely recovered from a grave illness . . . [and] if divine kindness saw fit to preserve me from it, I do not think it was for anything else but to allow me to clear my reputation of such a grave blemish as has been put on it" (preface to the *Manifesto*; A 2v).

31. The original mistakenly reads "us" (*noi*).

32. Obscure. Bonifaccio appears to understand "prophecy" here not as prediction of things to come but as insight into things meant to be: God let Copia live, so she intuited, in order to

Similarly, I also learn, in your schools, that knowing is the source of good writing.³³ Horace did not say *scire* [to know] but *sapere* [to discern], which I, in my own materiality, took in the sense more of prudence³⁴ than of knowledge. Since, in this, you do not know if I ever read Horace's *Poetics*, my poetic digressions, already published in print,³⁵ should make it clear to you that I *have* read the book, but if I also understood it, I do not know.³⁶ I would not at all like to understand it as your excellent teacher understands it in the course of this learned lucubration of his.³⁷ It may serve as a paraphrase of that "Epistle to the sons of Piso,"³⁸ from which your teacher, if he did not learn poetry, at least learned parrhesy:³⁹

. . . *Nec dicet: "Cur ego amicum
Offendam in nugis?"* . . .⁴⁰

. . . Nor will he say: "Why will I offend a friend
By signaling nonsense?" . . .

defend herself in writing (*Manifesto*, A 2v; see note above). Yet, for him, her insight alias prophecy was not about "the future"; rather it ended with the completion of the *Manifesto*, and thus belonged to "the past."

33. Refers to Copia's quotation of the verse, from Horace's *Ars poetica*, about "knowing" (Latin *sapere*) as the fundament of composition (*Manifesto*, B 4r).

34. Which, itself, has various senses: Bonifaccio appears to construe it here as "foresight."

35. By "poetic digressions," Bonifaccio seems to refer to his verse compositions as departing from the main course of his writing. Before his *Discorso* and answer to Copia's *Manifesto*, he published a collection of Italian sonnets (along with those of Giovanni Maria Vanti, on whom more under 3.3, below) entitled *Castore e Polluce* (1618) and another of Latin epigrams entitled *Stichidion libri XVIII* (1619).

36. Note how Bonifaccio capriciously plays on "know[ing]," "knowledge," "you do not know," and "I do not know."

37. The unnamed teacher would be Modena. Bonifaccio has already said that Modena spoke through Copia as an intermediary (A 2v), and now he concludes that not Copia but Modena composed the *Manifesto* (as a "learned lucubration," i.e., overlabored exercise of wits). His suspicions about her authorship might have been reinforced by her remark that in writing the *Manifesto* she reports what she heard about his discourse from "all those [specifically Modena?] who have seen" it (B 4r).

38. Horace's *Ars poetica* is thought to have been written, as a letter, to the sons of Lucius Calpurnius Piso (born 48 B.C.E.). By "paraphrase," Bonifaccio refers to the various quotations from the *Ars poetica*, themselves a "paraphrase" in Lodovico Dolce's often rhapsodic translation. Yet he also seems to conceive "paraphrase" in a pejorative sense, namely, that the whole *Manifesto* is, in form and content, a travesty of proper composition.

39. *Parrhesia*, freedom of speech.

40. For the quotation, see Horace, *Ars poetica* 453–54 (the omitted portions, here in ellipsis points, were signed by dashes in the *Risposta*; the verb *dicet*, in future tense, was misspelled as *dicit*, in the present). The passage continues with the observation that unless such "nonsense,"

See precisely to what nonsense he descends, for the major defect he ascribes to me is, according to him, not being a Doctor of Philosophy,⁴¹ even though he confesses that I am a Doctor of Laws.⁴² O God! Are [A 3v] we mountebanks or charlatans, to have to show our credentials? Let him show his.

Neither will he be any more trustworthy than he was in quoting to you the Gospel, where he led you to understand that the Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul.⁴³ Nor, moreover, would it have been prejudicial to my cause had they really denied it: if I said that you alone, after so many years, call it into question, I also knew that the sect of the Sadducees was already extinct for many, many centuries. Nor did I speak of heretics or of your schismatics but of those who, according to the plain and pure sense of Mosaic law, upheld better opinions.

Nevertheless, from what source do you conclude that the Sadducees denied immortality? From the Gospel, the teacher⁴⁴ answers. Josephus Flavius confirms it, according to you.⁴⁵ Among our people the Carthusian Rule also acknowledges it in more than one place.⁴⁶ But the Evangelist does not say it. His words are these: *Accesserunt Sadducei, qui dicunt non esse resurrectionem* [There approached Sadducees who say there is no resurrection].⁴⁷

Yes, they were denying the resurrection of the body, but not the immortality of the soul.⁴⁸ Had they denied the latter, they would have renounced faith in the covenant of the Omnipotent. Since you pretend not to

i.e., one or another faulty compositional detail, is repaired, the author is likely to become an object of ridicule.

41. In reference to the passage: "you know that you are neither a Philosopher nor a Theologian" (*Manifesto*, B 3v).

42. More exactly, of both laws: canon, civil; in reference to the passage: "More is needed . . . than the title of a *iuris utriusque doctor*" (*ibid.*, B 4v).

43. See the passage in the *Manifesto* where Copia refers, for her sources, to Josephus Flavius and the Gospel of Matthew (B 4v; on which more below).

44. Modena.

45. Copia did not say that; rather she said that Bonifaccio did not read Jewish sources, among them Flavius (*ibid.*). But, as a matter of fact, Flavius does confirm it (see below).

46. The *Consuetudines Carthusiae*, or statutes of the Carthusian Order, were first compiled around 1127 by Guigues I (1083–1137), prior of the monastery Grande Chartreuse. For their references to the salvation of the soul, see *Coutumes de Chartreuse*, 206/7 (article 20.21), 212/13 (22.1), 258/59 (50.2), 280/81 (74.1), 282/83–284/85 (77.1).

47. Matt. 22:23.

48. Bonifaccio's point is well taken. Modena repeats the claim in his *Historia de' riti bebraici* (originally 1637), 5.1.111–12, with one difference: by denying the immortality of the soul, he said, the Sadducees were also denying the resurrection of the dead. What Bonifaccio did not know,

know what the covenant is,⁴⁹ we confess to you, and thus Campiano teaches us,⁵⁰ that it is the Holy Scripture.

There it is also proven that the word *ruah* refers to understanding, not to air-blowing,⁵¹ and that it means a human soul, an angelic intellect, and a divine mind.⁵² See Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verse 21, and chapter 12,⁵³ verse 7; Zechariah, chapter 12, verse 1, and chapter 13, verse 2; Isaiah, chapter 31, verse 3, and chapter 57, verse 16; Ezekiel, chapter 2, verse 2; Numbers, chapter 11, verse 25; and Genesis, chapter 1, verse 2.⁵⁴ Rereading them with a more healthy eye, you will see that the term *ruah* is understood as

however, is that Modena relied for his information on Josephus Flavius (*Antiquities of the Jews* 18.16, namely, that for the Sadducees the souls died with their bodies) The reason he did not is, as just said, his not having consulted him.

49. Refers to the passage: "I do not know any other covenant written by the hand of God than the Decalogue" (*Manifesto*, B 4v), with which Bonifaccio now disagrees, construing the covenant as the Bible.

50. Campiano is not easily identified. One may rule out the English poet and musician Thomas Campion (1567–1620), but not altogether his countryman Edmund Campion (1540–81), who in 1573 entered the Jesuit order in Rome, heading its first mission to England in 1580. Campion's writings include the pamphlet *Rationes decem* (1604), a defense of the Roman Church against Anglican critics. Another possibility is the philosopher and theologian Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639): though his name is even farther removed from Campiano, he shares an ideological connection with Bernardino Telesio (1509–88), whom Copia mentioned in the letter that Bonifaccio appends to his *Risposta* (A 5r). It was Telesio's radical doctrine that all knowledge is sensation that Campanella eventually espoused and defended. Campanella, moreover, can be drawn into the argument over the immortality of the soul, about which the inhabitants of his imaginary "city of the sun" had no doubts ("They do not fear death, for all of them believe in the immortality of the soul"); *La città del sole* (1602), 50 (lines 656–57). Or does Campiano refer to the little known Fabrizio Campani, author of the treatise (in ten books) *Della vita civile overo del senno* (1607; said, in the title, to treat of the "most curious theological and natural topics")?

51. For "air-blowing" Bonifaccio writes *arfiatare*, a seeming neologism (*aria* + *fiatare*). The passage to which he adverts is as follows: "*Ruah* signifies nothing more of itself than the air, wind, and breath with which we breathe" (*Manifesto*, C 1r).

52. As Bonifaccio originally noted in his *Discorso*, with one difference: while in the *Risposta* he speaks of a "human *anima*," an "angelic *intelletto*," and a "divine *mente*," in the *Discorso* he speaks of *mente* only ("the human mind, the angelic mind, and the divine mind are indeed called *ruah*"; 2.3.7, above).

53. As printed, the chapter reference was 21 (a typographical inversion).

54. Bonifaccio's references are exact: all the passages contain the word *ruah* in the original. But the "angelic *ruah*" is nowhere to be found in them, which leaves two kinds of soul, human (Eccles. 3:21 and Zech. 12:1, 13:2) and divine (Eccles. 12:7, Isa. 57:16, Ezek. 2:2, Num. 11:25, Gen. 1:2). Note that two of the passages mention yet another kind, the "bestial soul" (Eccles. 3:21, Isa. 31:3), which belies Bonifaccio's statement that "*ruah* [is] a word that throughout Scriptures always signifies an immaterial substance, nor was the soul of any brute animal ever called *ruah*" (*Discorso*; as above, 2.3.7).

my books *have spoon-fed me*, and these alone, Signora, and no others, *spoon-feed me*.⁵⁵

I am not as "copious"⁵⁶ as you are in having great teachers,⁵⁷ under whose instruction you arrived all at once at such perfection that you volunteer to teach me not just the most recondite sciences but our native tongue. You said, in general, that I made many mistakes of language,⁵⁸ without specifying any of them. Too much favor would I be shown if from such an eloquent [A 4r] female linguist I were to receive the good language.

But I wish you had better understood the propriety of "may it please God," which, in my discourse, did not express my desire, but yours.⁵⁹ "May it please God" means for you that in my reasoning with you I come to suppose that your opinion is true.⁶⁰ Would it not be bad if man, not being sure of his salvation, and running the great risk of damnation, were to want not to die, not because he does not believe, but because unfortunately he *does* believe that along with the soul being immortal suffering will be interminable? But that place⁶¹ cannot be understood literally, but only by someone who reads it for its irony. Such a person would not cavil, as you do, in order to beg contradictions and raise difficulties where there are none.

You, with such great solicitude and anxiety, investigate the reason that may have moved me, in the book, to word the title, with your name in it, as I

55. Italics are this editor's, corresponding to those words on which Bonifaccio puns in Copia's comment, as follows: "But because I know that *you have never seen* the Hebrew language and that others embedded it in your trappings, I will tell you only that from this as well as all the other things you have said it is clear, as you show, that you made sure to say them *without understanding them*. In this particular at least, when speaking with a Jewish woman, *you should have been spoon-fed* by someone *who better understood* the peculiarities of the language" (*Manifesto*, C 1r).

56. *Copioso*: quotation marks editorial, to indicate the usual quip on Copia's name.

57. In reference to Modena and, for language and literature, Paluzzi (see, for the latter, "Notices from Parnassus," 3.1.5r, etc.). Yet "great teachers" might otherwise be understood as a synecdoche for one teacher only: Modena, the butt, throughout, of Bonifaccio's criticism.

58. Refers to Copia's comment that the *Discorso* burgeons with "errors of language" (*Manifesto*, C 2v).

59. See Copia's comment in the *Manifesto*, as follows: "Nor can I restrain myself from noting still another place, in my view as worthy of laughter as you wanted it of compassion. It is toward the end of page 10 of your book. There you say: 'May it please God that one die more as a joke than out of common sense!' Such a manner of speaking expresses your own desire, which would be not to die, even though you believe that the soul is immortal!" (C 1v–2r). Bonifaccio, who counters in the *Risposta* by asserting that Copia's conclusion about his preferring life to death applies rather to her, does so in conformity to his basic argument that Copia denies the immortality of the soul.

60. Namely, that his desire to live raises the question of how strongly he believed in the immortality of the soul after death.

61. Better, phrase, in reference to "May it please God."

did.⁶² In this particular, the explanation is so plain that your whole curious⁶³ investigation is superfluous. Crossing the boundaries of conjecture in pursuing it, you pass on to divination⁶⁴ and admit thereby to being a prophetess, perhaps because I do not get angry at your calling me a prophet.⁶⁵

But whatever I am, I am your friend;⁶⁶ and I have honored you with my pen.⁶⁷ I have sought your salvation, for which I will not cease to offer God my continuous prayers.⁶⁸ Thus, if I study the matter of the soul another two years⁶⁹ with greater diligence, I will write you about it perhaps with greater fruit.

You should know, however, that the spirit did not speak the truth to you in suggesting that I composed that work in a doublet.⁷⁰ In faith, as a Philosopher,⁷¹ I was in a heavy fur coat.⁷²

62. The expression "moved" (*mosso*) links with Copia's request: "Tell me then, please, Signor Baldassare: what *moved* you to prepare and print that treatise and get my name mixed up in it?" (*Manifesto*, B 2v). Of Copia's three references to the title, the first expresses her surprise at encountering a treatise so headed, inasmuch as the proposition it explored (the immortality of the soul) is "as certain, infallible, and indisputable for me as it is, I believe, for every Jew and Christian" (B 1r). Why bother then? In the second reference, she says that after reading beyond the title she realized that the *Discorso* was directed at her, "on the totally erroneous assumption" that she is of a contrary opinion (B 1v). In the third, she presumed that the reason for presenting the treatise "under a title so sublime" was to win fame (B 3v).

63. "Curious" to be understood in its two senses of "inquisitive" and "peculiar."

64. Bonifaccio refers to the remark that after having "investigated" the reasons for his treatise, Copia decided to go no further in their pursuit, for she had "the courage to divine [*indovinare*] the true one" (*Manifesto*, C 3r); see above, under remarks on "prophesying."

65. Copia had said that "you, by foolishly pretending to prophesy by yourself without any other inspiration than excessive arrogance, have shown . . . your totally crass ignorance rather than any marvelous divine virtue" (*Manifesto*, B 3r).

66. In reference to Copia's comment: "for all along you seemed to assure me of your friendship" (*ibid.*, C 2v).

67. In connection with Copia's question whether Bonifaccio had a "pen . . . so equipped as to be able to remove or spread fame" (*Manifesto*, B 2r-v).

68. In reference perhaps to Copia's remark, in the poem that opens her *Manifesto*, that in barring her heart to God, "another desire than frail honor / Incites [her] to offer prayers and shed tears" (A 4r).

69. As already noted, Copia referred twice to Bonifaccio's having worked on his treatise for two years (*Manifesto*, A 2v, B 2r).

70. Refers to Copia's comment that "you girded yourself in a doublet to discourse on such a topic" (*ibid.*, B 1r).

71. Thus capitalized.

72. Unlike the soldier in armor, the philosopher sometimes appears in flowing garments; thus, for example, Plato and Aristotle in Raphael's *School of Athens* (Rome, Vatican, Palazzi Pontifici, Stanza della Segnatura, 1510). For a scholar in furs, see Petrus von Clapis, *Portrait of Scholar* (Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, c. 1528).

But how, tell me, would you have me labor for you beyond two years if, as you say, I am so precipitous that it was right for you to urge me solemnly not to run to the printer hereafter in so much haste?⁷³ "May it please God" that this haste cause no more prominent aversion than my having said "may it *please* God," which so *displeased* you!

You will find it hard to make people believe that I might have toiled over the work for two years, especially after remarking that it was so rashly prepared. But you will easily persuade everyone, with supreme effortlessness, that the architect of your beautiful *Manifesto* [A 4v] fabricated it in two days.⁷⁴ Even that good painter did his outmost to persuade others that that image was one that he drew and painted quickly. Yet Apelles said to him: "You should keep quiet, though, for the picture speaks in your stead. It shouts: 'I was made in haste.'"⁷⁵

But since you really enjoy these stories, I will tell another half dozen of them, if we are alive, in my next discourse.

In the meantime, may Your Innocence⁷⁶ read the letter here, recorded below; though not your composition,⁷⁷ it is at least your writing.⁷⁸ If you fear that the printed copy was altered in some part, you will be able to see your authentic manuscript in the offices of Signor Fabrizio Benazzano, public notary of this city.⁷⁹ It will be a better reminder of the things that passed between us,

73. Copia remarked that it was Bonifaccio's "vain little ambition that makes [him] willingly run to the press in the belief that fame consists in having many books published" (*Manifesto*, C 3r); on which see previous comments under "prophesying."

74. The architect, i.e., author, being Modena, as Bonifaccio already implied. On the composition of the *Manifesto* in two days, see Copia's comment about "demolishing after two days of meager efforts as much as [Bonifaccio] machinated against [her] after almost two years of purposeless nightly vigils" (*Manifesto*, B 2r).

75. The original story, as told by Plutarch in his *De liberis educandis* 7 and retold by Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise *De pictura* 3.61, is about an unnamed painter who bragged to Apelles that he finished a certain painting in one day. Apelles retorted that he would not in the least be surprised if, at the same time, he had finished "many others similarly painted" (Alberti, *On Painting*, 96–97).

76. Capitals are editorial, as warranted by the sarcastic tone of Bonifaccio's remark (and the suggested analogy to "Your Excellency" or other salutations).

77. Again Bonifaccio removes the authorship from Copia to ascribe the composition to Modena.

78. Meaning, as dictated to you, so you copied it.

79. May be identified as Fabrizio Beaciani (Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Notarile*, with documents of his, for the years 1594–1634, in folders [*buste*] nos. 556–739, of which nos. 622 [1594–1609], 623 [1610–28], and 634 [1629–34] were for specific clients); after Carla Boccato, "Una disputa secentesca sull'immortalità dell'anima—contributi d'archivio," 600–601 n. 24 (she was unable to trace the letter that Bonifaccio said had been deposited with him).

for you will see that I was not only invited by you (no, I would not say that), but rather pushed and forced by you to write you what I wrote with an admirable purpose and ever with the intention to earn your love and grace.

But just as at the lovely beginning of the present letter I confessed my ignorance,⁸⁰ so at the end I have to confess my simplicity, for which you reprimanded me with repeated sarcasm.⁸¹ I was simple-minded, it is true, in hoping that another's duplicity might change to that simplicity that alone is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, to which, it appears, you wish that I, a Christian, and you, a Jewess, might be equally able to aspire. But truth, which, because it is one, does not permit being divided into two sects, may lead you to consider if this division could be a more manifest heresy in the religion you profess than that of having wished to cling to the mortality of the human mind. Venice, 2 August 1621.

Baldassare Bonifaccio

SARRA COPIA'S ORIGINAL LETTER TO BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO
[A 5r–6v] (10 JANUARY 1619 IN VENETIAN STYLE OR 1620 IN
GREGORIAN CALENDAR)

See item 2 above (and, for the Italian, appendix 2).



6. PORTION OF A LETTER BY BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO
(DECEMBER 1621)

Writing to Uberto Manfredino, a teacher who, it appears, barely eked out a living, Bonifaccio lambasted another teacher, Zoilus, by whom he meant Numidio Paluzzi, and his pupil Jezebel, by whom he meant Sarra Copia. Bonifaccio turned on Paluzzi, whom he had previously respected as an author¹ and seems to have assisted upon his arrival in Venice. The

80. He said: "I am not enraged if you reproach me for ignorance, but rather surprised at those who cannot tolerate being called ignorant. . . . I say I know even less than nothing," etc. (*Risposta*, A 2r).

81. She said: "But another person, either out of maliciousness or out of naïveté or thoughtlessness, has forced me to do what I only uneasily would have been stirred to do on any other occasion" (*Manifesto*, A 2r); and later: "But the compassion of my law makes me feel compassion for your simplicity, which made you believe you could become immortal in fame by treating the immortality of the soul" (B 2r).

1. Praises of Paluzzi can be gleaned from two letters in MSS Silvestriana, 226, fasc. 3:8r–8v and 18:2r.

reason for the change was presumably that word got to him about Paluzzi's being responsible not only for editing *Copia's* stinging Manifesto but also for marking up his own *Discorso* with comments and criticisms to be used by *Copia* for her arguments.²

[Folio 5r]³ Six months have not yet passed, if my counting is not wrong, since you were a teacher of the Clerics of Udine.⁴ You would still be waving your scepter there if your pedagogical customs had not forcibly wrested it from you.⁵

Now, now, what business detains you in Venice? Are you not giving lessons to boys, all day long, for ridiculous pay? Yet you cannot say along with Fidenzio: *Cento fanciulli, d'indole prestante* [A hundred boys of excellent character],⁶ though you manage, with your new inventions, not to say your magical tricks,⁷ to keep out of others' schools.⁸

But what about Zoilus,⁹ that scum of Venetian pedantry and most despicable proofreader,¹⁰ who, after being a classroom assistant [*hipodidascolo*] for many years, gloried in finally having become a schoolmaster [*ludimagistro*]?¹¹

2. On Paluzzi's editing, see "Notices from Parnassus," 3.1.31v; on Bonifaccio's assistance to Paluzzi as a newcomer to Venice and the latter's annotations to his *Discorso*, *ibid.*, 51v.

3. Source: Rovigo, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, MSS Silvestriana, 226, fasc. 20:4v–5v. Fol. 4v, omitted here, has various remarks on the benefits of teaching.

4. Udine, the site of the seminary, was seventy-nine miles northeast of Venice and under Venetian rule from 1420 until 1797.

5. Uberto's teaching methods appear to have been so unconventional (see continuation) as to get him into trouble with the authorities, who dismissed him from his post.

6. First line of a sonnet by Camillo Scroffa (d. 1565) from *I cantici di Fidenzio*, 7. Its "songs" (*cantici*) poked fun at the pedant, as represented by the grammar school teacher Fidenzio. "With my distinctive instruction," Fidenzio declares, the students "learn fine customs and the way to speak and write elegantly" (lines 2–4). Yet he admits to taking no pleasure in educating them, no matter how much he earns for it, without his boy love Camille in attendance (lines 6–7, 12–14). Bonifaccio seems to imply that Uberto's situation as a teacher is different from Fidenzio's, first for not having a boyfriend and second for being underpaid. The reference to Fidenzio was probably in anticipation of the one (in the next paragraph) to Paluzzi, described, in the "Notices from Parnassus," as androgynous (3.1.16r).

7. No less "distinctive" (it is implied) than Fidenzio's "instruction" (see earlier note).

8. Ruining any chances, that is, of finding regular employ as a teacher there.

9. Greek grammarian (400–352 B.C.E.), particularly harsh in his opinion of Homer's works. His name became a byword for the malicious critic. Numidio Paluzzi is meant.

10. For Paluzzi's work as proofreader for the Venetian press, see relative footnotes under "Notices from Parnassus" (3.1.1v, 35r).

11. Bonifaccio mocks Paluzzi for moving up in rank from an inconsequential tutor (of who-knows-whom) to a full-fledged instructor (of *Copia*). *Ludimagistro* appears in the title to early editions of Scroffa's *Cantici* (1565, 1572, 1574, etc.), though not the first (1562). On his derision of pedantry, see Severino Ferrari, "Camillo Scroffa e la poesia pedantesca."

And Jezebel,¹² who, indoctrinated by these great theologians of hers,¹³ enters the battlefield¹⁴ with that prefatory remark:¹⁵ *L'anima dell'huomo, signor Baldassare, è¹⁶ creata et infusa da Dio nel nostro corpo in quel tempo che l'organizzato è reso habile nel ventre materno a poterla ricevere* [The soul of man, Signor Baldassare, was . . . created by God and infused by Him into our body when the fetus¹⁷ in the maternal womb was made fit to receive it]? Oh, that simple-minded woman does not realize that in her religion it amounts to a grave heresy for Jews to believe that all souls were created by God at the same time as the angels.¹⁸ . . .

But of this and a dozen¹⁹ similar heresies against the doctrines of her faith, as she inadvertently stated them in her *Manifesto*, Jezebel was convinced by Rabbi Leon Modena, among the Jews a most learned figure to be sure.²⁰ He also reproaches her for her more than crass and gross ignorance of her own language,²¹ in which her understanding of the word *ruah* [spirit, breath] was most disgracefully confused, as I demonstrated in my "Reply" [*Risposta*] already published four or so months ago.²² I am sending it to you as an attachment here so that you can see how I resolve the objection that, raised by the Sadducees, so troubled you, yet never caused me annoyance, for with [5v] a snap of the fingers it collapses.²³

12. Wife of the Israelite King Ahab (ninth century B.C.E.), Jezebel introduced idol worship and, in time, became a symbol of female depravity (see variously 1 Kings 16, 18–19, 21; 2 Kings 9). By Jezebel the writer meant Sarra Copia.

13. A jibe not only at the rabbis but also at Paluzzi, who, as editor, would have overseen the writing of Copia's *Manifesto*.

14. In her controversy with Bonifaccio over the immortality of the soul.

15. That introduces the central portion of her *Manifesto* (B 1r).

16. Here Bonifaccio intentionally omits the words *incorruttibile, immortale, e divina* (incorruptible, immortal, and divine), which sustain Copia's belief in the soul's immortality.

17. For *organizzato* as "fetus," see *Manifesto*, 2.4.B 1r, footnote.

18. It should be remembered that, for one, Copia said nothing about angels and that, for another, she wrote in the continuation: "This truth is as certain, infallible, and indisputable for me as it is, I believe, for every Jew and Christian." Bonifaccio drew the notion of "angels" from the last two verses of "O di vita mortal forma divina," the sonnet with which Copia closes her *Manifesto* (see there, D 2r), namely: "the angels themselves / Are appointed to guard and serve you" (after Ps. 91:11).

19. A dozen apparently from the Twelve Tables shortly to be mentioned.

20. By "inadvertently" Bonifaccio implies either that Copia misunderstood Modena or that Modena misled Copia, hence was not so learned after all.

21. Said sarcastically: Modena, with all his erudition, did *not* reproach her for her mistaken Hebrew.

22. For *ruah*, see Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, 7; Copia's *Manifesto*, C 1r; and Bonifaccio's *Risposta*, A 3v.

23. For the "objection," see Copia's *Manifesto*, B 4v, and Bonifaccio's *Risposta*, A 3v.

But I never gave any thought to having the writers condemned for their invective. Nor did I to having the one[s] who published the work condemned for proceeding without the consent of superiors,²⁴ as can be shown by [its absence from] the register of the Magistrates against Blasphemy.²⁵

Gravest are the penalties for this crime. Porphyry believes that authors of defamatory libels were sentenced to be whipped;²⁶ and certain lawyers, in our times, say they should be put in a pillory. In the Twelve Tables, however, I read: *Se quis occentassit, carmenve conduit, quod alteri flacitioni faxsit, kapital estod* [If someone sings or composes a song that casts dishonor on someone else, he should be capitally punished].²⁷ I see that the same penalty was confirmed by the emperors Valentinianus and Valens²⁸ in a separate law about defamatory libels.²⁹

Though canon law should, in its censure, be less severe than civil law, I see, however, in chapter 11, "On conspiracies," item 1, that because of such

24. The publishers were Antonio Pinelli and Giovanni Alberti. Bonifaccio was careful to receive permission from the authorities for the publication of his *Discorso* and, again, his *Risposta*: the title page of both includes the formula "with license of the superiors and under privilege." (For the approval of Cebà's letters to Copia, see 1.1, footnote near beginning). But, it should be noted, the publishers of Copia's *Manifesto* were no less careful in this regard: all three copies acknowledge "the license of the superiors." Bonifaccio faults them, apparently, for neglecting to have the work properly inspected for its content (see continuation). On customs of Hebrew printing in Venice, see Meir Benayahu, *Haskama u-reshut bi-defusei Venetsya: ha-sefer ha-'ivri me-'et bava'ato li-defus ve-'ad tseto la-'or* [Approbation and approval in the Hebrew press in Venice: the Hebrew book from its delivery to the press until its publication].

25. *Esecutori contro la Bestemmia*: they were on the alert, in publications, for offensive expressions relating to sacred or public affairs. See Paul Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605*, 26, 80, 160, 225 (and, for the register of imprimaturs, 152); and, in general, Renzo Derosas, "Moralità e giustizia a Venezia nel '500–'600. Gli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia," 431–528.

26. For his reference to slanderers, though with no mention of their punishment, see Porphyry (d. 309), *Against the Christians: The Literary Remains*, 37–38.

27. The Latin is strangely garbled. It should read: "*Si quis occentavisset sive carmen condidisset, quod infamiam faceret flagitiumve alteri*" (. . . that casts slander or dishonor . . .). See the *Duodecim tabularum leges* (c. 450 B.C.E.) in Girard, *Textes de droit romain*, 12–23, esp. 17 (under *Tabula VIII. 1b*). Bonifaccio had already referred to the Twelve Tables in his *Risposta* (A 2v).

28. Valentinianus I appointed his half-brother Flavius Valens as co-emperor: the former ruled over the western part of the empire (364–75), the latter over its eastern part, from Thrace to Persia (364–78).

29. "Anyone who finds a libelous writing whether in a house or public place should either destroy it . . . or report the find to nobody. Otherwise, . . . he is subject to capital punishment," etc. See Justinian, *Corpus juris civilis*, *Codex Constitutionum* 9.36 ("De famosis libellis"), ed. Paul Krüger, 2:387.

a misdeed clerics are demoted and laymen excommunicated.³⁰ Could one imagine a punishment any harder than this? May they [the slanderers] live as apostates and renegades, without God, without religion, for I do not presume to remove the sword from the hand of Divine Omnipotence. *Mea est ultio* [Revenge is mine], God said in Deuteronomy.³¹ If it is His, would it not be arrogant to appropriate it?

See now how harsh and bitter He makes this revenge. Zoilus died when life was dearest to him.³² Aristarchus³³ was consumed by catarrh³⁴ and crippled by that disease of either French or Spanish origin (which of them has still to be decided).³⁵ Yet he forcibly maintained a disdainful soul,³⁶ refusing to give life to Him³⁷ who saw to his being given death. After becoming notorious for impudence,³⁸ Jezebel, with a cadaverous face and her limbs stripped of flesh, lives on, odious to Jews themselves and subject to the ignominy she spreads among all her people.³⁹

I, however, am not so little mindful of ordinary humanity as to rejoice in the miseries of enemies. Stephen would pray for the rogues who buried him alive under a shower of rocks;⁴⁰ and the onlookers *videbant faciem eius tanquam faciem angeli* [saw his face as if the face of an angel].⁴¹ He who pardons

30. It is not clear to which canonic regulations Bonifaccio is referring. The Council of Turin (398), for example, has a chapter entitled *De clericis qui per culpam ab episcopo suo excommunicantur* (on clerics who, for their fault, are excommunicated by the bishop); see http://www.benedictus.mgh.de/quellen/chga/chga_031t.htm (for full text).

31. Deut. 32:35.

32. As if a prognostication of Paluzzi's decease four years later (1625). It is uncertain how Zoilus died: relying on different accounts, Vitruvius said he may have been crucified, stoned, or burned (*De architectura* 7.9).

33. Of Samothrace (c. 220–143 B.C.E.), like Zoilus a grammarian and Homeric scholar.

34. An inflammation of mucous membranes (in the nose or sinuses).

35. Supposedly syphilis, though Bonifaccio's allusion to it is both erroneous and anachronistic: Aristarchus is thought to have succumbed to dropsy (as reported in Suidas, *Lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler, 1: A 3892), and syphilis was introduced into Europe in the late fifteenth century. Aristarchus (again after Suidas) died, miserably, in exile (as if an omen, in Bonifaccio's letter, of Paluzzi's death after expulsion from Copia's household).

36. Like Paluzzi, Aristarchus was a nonbeliever.

37. Acknowledge Him as a "living" God.

38. In (what Bonifaccio saw as) challenging the immortality of the soul.

39. Bonifaccio implies that her face was deathlike and her body emaciated from anxiety over the consequences of her actions (for herself, her family, her people).

40. Acts 7:58–60.

41. Acts 6:15.

the enemy, then, becomes similar to the angel, nay, rather becomes similar to God, as in the words, moreover, of Jacob when pardoned by his brother: *Sic vidi faciem tuam quasi viderim vultum Dei* [Thus I saw your face as if I saw the countenance of God].⁴²

May Jesus, who prayed for his crucifiers,⁴³ grant eternal peace to the dead⁴⁴ and a spirit of repentance to those who continue to live!⁴⁵

42. Gen. 33:10.

43. Luke 23:34 ("Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing").

44. A variation on the opening words of the Introit to the Mass of Burial: "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine."

45. Among them, Copia.



III

"NOTICES FROM PARNASSUS"

A face full of mockery and impioussness does it have,
But this was a true story . . .

From the sonnet "Faccia ha di farsa" ("Notices from Parnassus")

1. "NOTICES FROM PARNASSUS" (1626 OR THEREAFTER)

The "Notices" are a partly fictional report in prose and verse from 1626 or thereafter by Giulia Solinga and possibly others on Numidio Paluzzi and Alessandro Berardelli, brought to trial around 1626 in Apollo's court on Parnassus for conniving against Cópia. Of its seventy-one poems, five are by Cópia.

DEDICATORY LETTER WRITTEN BY GIULIA SOLINGA TO MARCO TREVISAN

[Folio 1r]¹ To the most illustrious Signor, Signor Marco Trevisan,² most revered patron:

1. Source: Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, MS Cicogna 270 (*olim* 206), otherwise known as the Codex Giulia Solinga (or Soliga; see below). After the handwritten catalog of Emmanuele Cicogna's manuscript collection, now in the library of the Museo Correr: *Catalogo dei codici della Biblioteca di Emanuele Cicogna di Venezia*, 7 vols, 1:84v–85r (no. 206; now 270). Comprising a hundred folios in small quarto (with a fragment of one or more folios set between 88v and 89r), the "Notices" were copied in a single hand (conjectured by Carla Boccato and others to be Leon Modena's, yet see under volume editor's introduction). The title ("Notices from Parnassus") appears not at the opening but before the new section starting on 15r.

2. Marco Trevisan (or as spelled in codex, Trivigiano, 1588–1674), Venetian patrician, known particularly for his orations, some pronounced over the death of friends, and for his biography of Francesco Erizzo, doge (1631–46). His appearance here, at the head of the manuscript, was calculated to exemplify faithfulness and benevolence, in anticipation of the same qualities dis-

It is certain, most noble and illustrious Signor, that the earth does not have, in its bowels, a beast more cruel, a serpent more iniquitous, a poison more deadly than an ungrateful man. The latter, filling his heart with a depraved will, darkening his intellect with a dense fog of wicked forgetfulness, confounds the laws of nature. Erasing from memory the qualities of benefits, he lacerates the merits of their donor, as does a mastiff when his muzzle is cast away by a hostile hand.³ Thus the pity and liberality that another, out of gentility, exercises to the advantage of such monsters fails to produce the sweetest honey of gratitude or to bind minds in the holiest knots of insoluble friendship.⁴ Rather, it alters everything: within the heart of these prodigious serpents⁵ it changes, by a horrible metamorphosis, into the bitter gall of poisonous rage. See how these iniquitous beasts, in their every excess of inhuman [1v] impiety, became hostile to their benefactors. With an infamous mask, they disfigure those seeds that the liberal hand of Love scattered on the base terrain of their hearts.

'Twas a most horrendous vice that gave me reason to collect these writings from various originals that uncover the villainous ingratitude of one with a most contemptible mind.⁶ Abusing the pity that a lady of a truly in-

played by Sarra Copia in her dealings with others. Indeed, the story of his unswerving amity with Nicolò Barbarigo was celebrated as a wonder of its time ("one should note the singular union, the incomparable friendship, and the immutable virtue of these two most illustrious and steadfast friends as something rare, marvelous, and most exceptional"; Agostino Superbi, *Discorso dell'incomparabile, et eroica amicitia, de gl'illustrissimi signori Nicolò Barbarigo, e Marco Trivisano* [1629], [B 4]r). See, further, Gaetano Cozzi, "Una vicenda della Venezia barocca: Marco Trevisan e la sua eroica amicizia," in *Conflitti di uomini e idee nella crisi del Seicento veneziano*, 325–409. Just as Trevisan was "betrayed" by Giulio Strozzi (see continuation), so was Copia by her protégés, as we learn in the "Notices."

3. Implies that the mastiff attacks when prodded by a criminal. Thus the servant who defies his master was spurred by others, as in the story, to be told, of the wrongdoing perpetrated upon Copia by members of her household.

4. In reference to Trevisan's friendship with Barbarigo (see above).

5. "Prodigious" inasmuch as they perform wondrous acts when ensorcelled.

6. Numidio Paluzzi, of whom little is known and only one writing remains (on which more below and in 3.2). See 3.3 for a report on him by Angelico Aprosio. Despite his negative portrayal in the Codex Solinga, he was praised in verses by Pietro Michiele (*Rime* [1642], 2:242, originally printed as the last item in Paluzzi's *Rime*, 130; *Delle poesie postume* [1671], 195) and Leonardo Quirini (*Vezi d'Erato, poesie liriche* [1649], 139) and in a letter (from 1619) by Giambattista Marino (*Lettere*, 226–27). Various dedicatory poems occur in Paluzzi's *Rime* (two by Claudio Achillini, one by Baldassare Bonifaccio, etc.). Evidence for his work as a proofreader can be found at the end of an Italian edition, with engravings by Andrea Palladio, of Julius Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars (*Commentari di C. Giulio Cesare*, 1619): on the final page, after the table of contents (*tavola*), there is a reference to "Numidio Paluzzi Correttor." Paluzzi also seems to have done proofreading for the publishing house of Giovan Battista Ciotti (see note to 35r below).

genuous mind showed him in his extreme discomfort, he has left to memory a savage example of how ample a reward can be expected as compensation for a singular benefit when bestowed on an inappropriate subject, namely: someone completely disjoined from the noble customs that adorn a gentle heart and from the illustrious usages that brighten a generous mind.

After the same compositions came my way, they made me think a lot about the one to whom I should dedicate them. I had the idea of making a gift of them to Vengeance; I thought about hanging them on the temple of Fame, for them to appear there, however, among memories of ingratitude; I had the desire to dispatch them to a certain magistrate⁷ who, in better times, in Atri,⁸ that most ancient city in the Abruzzi, used to assist in remedying people's thanklessness.⁹

These and other such thoughts were [2r] troubling me when by chance I heard about the unthinkable incident that Your Most Illustrious Lordship sustained, last February, in the library of Parnaso.¹⁰ Just as it surpassed every excess of ingratitude, so it filled my mind with horror and amazement

7. Unidentified.

8. Spelled in source as Acri.

9. The sentence can be read in at least two ways: the magistrate's help might have consisted in imposing proper sentences upon the ingrates; or in providing them with funds when their benefactors cut off their support. In the first instance, "in better times" would indicate an era of improved justice; in the second, an era of economic prosperity. One wonders whether the same magistrate is identical with the "most liberal lord" said to have sustained Paluzzi, off and on, in his troubles (6v). The geographical element is a problem here: until we know more about Paluzzi's peregrinations, it seems reasonable to situate the magistrate in Venice and Florence rather than in the Abruzzi (about a possible stay of Paluzzi in Florence, see below).

10. Parnaso appears to be the name of Giulio Strozzi's house. Poet and dramatist, Strozzi (1583–1652) is remembered, in particular, for his librettos to Venetian operas (two of them by Claudio Monteverdi) and his poems set to music by his daughter, the renowned singer and composer Barbara Strozzi (d. c. 1664). It was in his house that in the years following the "Notices" he probably held meetings of one or another of the Venetian academies to which he belonged (the Incogniti, founded around 1630, and the Unisoni, founded in 1637), to judge from a manuscript in eight parts with "prose satires in dialogue against the Accademia degli Unisoni that met in Giulio Strozzi's house" (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, It. X, 115 [= 7193]). The manuscript has Parnaso in the headings to some of its parts (e.g., "Sentimenti havuti in Parnaso per l'Accademia de gl'Unisoni," 1r–13v, and "De i sentimenti gioiosi in Parnaso per l'Accademia de gl'Unisoni," 55r–62r); for its contents, see Ellen Rosand, "Barbara Strozzi, 'virtuosissima cantatrice': The Composer's Voice," 249–50. Strozzi himself is said, in another of its headings, to be "a nameless academician" ("l'accademico senza nome"; 15r), meaning perhaps that it was enough to invoke the presumed name of his house to signify its owner. On the various houses that Strozzi rented in Venice from the 1630s until 1652, see Beth L. Glixon, "New Light on the Life and Career of Barbara Strozzi," 313. Trevisan, the dedicatee of the "Notices," had favored Strozzi in his dealings with him, but became the victim of his ingratitude: poem 3 below (4r) suggests that Strozzi, in the library of his own house, turned on his benefactor, attacking him with a sword or challenging him to a duel.

and, at the same time, advised me that to none other than you should these "leaves"¹¹ be dedicated. They contain part of the iniquities that, sprouting from a similar bough,¹² have almost put to ruin a lady who, given the loyalty of her mind and the affection she always showed those professing virtue, certainly did not deserve to fall into such villainous hands. To you, then, most illustrious Signor, are these prose selections and these verses dedicated, for she, most receptive to the benefaction of a most illustrious friend¹³ and greatly beneficent to a sycophant enemy,¹⁴ has experienced the immense affection of the former and the savage intemperance of the latter. In the misfortunes that befell the Jewish woman, you might almost see a portrait of that payment you received in recognition of both the pity and the liberality discharged by Your Most Illustrious Lordship.

Because I by no means could refrain from speaking of such an extravagant event via the Muses,¹⁵ may you deign to see what is said of it in the next three sonnets. [2v] The first of them is presented in the person of the Jewess, for, as far as I can discern, it was on that same reef¹⁶ where Your Most Illustrious Lordship was shipwrecked that she too, I believe, had her boat overturned.

May your innate gentility accept the affection of my mind, for I, in the meantime, wishing you from God those honors owed to your bright virtue, kiss your hands with reverent affection.

*Your Most Illustrious Lordship's humble servant, Giulia Solinga*¹⁷

11. Properly folios, though "leaves" better suits the sustained metaphor in the continuation ("sprouting from a similar bough").

12. As that of Giulio Strozzi.

13. Ansaldo Cebà.

14. Paluzzi.

15. Who, nine in all, presided, in classical mythology, over the arts: Calliope (epic poetry), Melpomene (tragedy), Erato (lyric poetry), Euterpe (music), and so on. Here the reference to them is generic, namely, the goddess or power of poetic inspiration.

16. Of ingratitude.

17. Thus spelled in source, though in the secondary literature on Copia one encounters Soliga, also Solica, Solico. Cicogna describes the family as among the older ones of Venice (and adverts to writings of two of its members from the 1570s), though he was unable to find specific information on Giulia; see "Notizie intorno a Sara Copia Sulam coltissima ebrea veneziana del secolo XVII," esp. 245–46 n. 25. May perhaps be related to the Solingo, a pseudonym ("Unique") for Giovanni Ambrogio Spinola, whom Cebà praised in a speech to mark his appointment (in 1591) as head (*principe*) of the Accademia degli Addormentati ("Oratione per l'entrata del Solingo al Principato dell'Accademia [sic] de gli Addormentati"; *Essercitii academici*, 51–66); after Nicolò Giuliani, "Ansaldo Cebà," 9:429–30. Yet as counterevidence it might be mentioned that Donata Ortolani, who checked the statutes of the academy, found that the same Spinola was nicknamed "Svegliato." She identifies Solingo rather as Francesco Antonio

1. PRESUMABLY BY GIULIA SOLINGA

[3r] SONNET [WRITTEN] IN THE PERSON OF THE JEWESS¹⁸ TO
THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SIGNOR MARCO TREVISAN UPON THE
INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED WITH STROZZI

<i>Fiero destin, direi, se pur le stelle</i>	
<i>Quei cagionasser scelerati effetti</i>	
<i>Che aborti de arroganza, anzi concetti,</i>	3
<i>Cred'io, d'inferne furie al ciel rubelle.</i>	
<i>Donque ai tuoi danni il ferro strinser quelle</i>	
<i>Mani ch'empesti d'oro? E in fieri aspetti</i>	6
<i>Cangiar vedesti i lusinghieri affetti?</i>	
<i>Tai dunque cela un cor voglie empie e felle?</i>	
<i>Caso che ben pareggia, anzi ch'adombra,</i>	9
<i>Signor, le mie sventure e in via maggiore</i>	
<i>Pelago d'acque ingrate le sommerge,</i>	
<i>Tragici eventi hor vien ch'ammantin¹⁹ d'ombra</i>	12
<i>La mia comica scena e hostil furore</i>	
<i>L'altrui vile empietà d'oblio cosperge.</i>	

'Tis a fierce destiny, I would say, if indeed the stars
Caused those villainous effects

Spinola (for whom Cebà is said to have pronounced another speech, again upon his inauguration as *principe*, in 1593); "Cultura e politica nell'opera di Ansaldo Cebà," 127. If, in fact, Solinga, feminine for Solingo, can be related to the Spinola family, one or more authors of the "Notices" would have been Genoese (among whom Copia, according to Cebà, had "such friends . . . as might sustain [her], in [her] need, with more sweetness and greater discretion"; 1.1/L14.37). The closest I could come to Giulia among the various Spinolas with whom Cebà corresponded was Paolo Agostino's wife Ginevra (*Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano* [1623], 44, 45). There is, of course, the possibility that the name Giulia Solinga was an anagram for someone else. Solinga is mentioned five times in the codex (2v, 5r, 10r, 11v, 51r). Whoever she was, her authorship of various portions, as questionable as it is (see volume editor's introduction, under the authors of the "Notices"), might seem to be confirmed by the frequent references to "sun" (*sole*)—in her family's coat of arms, according to Cicogna (see below)—throughout its pages (14v, 18v, 28r, etc.).

18. Centered headings to poems (with their numbers and, if not given in the inscriptions to the poems themselves, the names of their authors and the identification of their forms) here, and in the continuation, are this editor's. Since the first two sections of the codex are said to be by Solinga, it is likely that this and the next two poems are hers as well. From the impersonation of Copia in the first of them one wonders whether Copia herself might have had a hand in its authorship (for which reason the verses have also been quoted in the Italian).

19. Should probably be *ch'ammantan*.

Of arrogance that you abort, nay, those notions, 3
 I believe, of infernal furies rebelling against heaven.²⁰
 Was it not to your damage that those hands clenched iron,²¹
 Though you filled them with gold? Did you see 6
 Flattering affections change into fierce looks?
 Does a heart, then, conceal such impious, evil wishes?
 The incident, Signor, well equals, nay, foreshadows, 9
 My misfortunes and submerges them
 In a much bigger sea of ungrateful waters;
 Tragic events, it now happens, wrap my comic stage 12
 In shadows, and hostile fury
 Covers another's base impiety with oblivion.²²

2. SONNET PRESUMABLY BY GIULIA SOLINGA

[3v] TO THE SAME ONE

Col magnanimo impronto, onde felice

With the magnanimous imprint of your regard, where you
 happily carry
 The sign, so stamped, of a great friend,
 Your kind, bestowing hand 3
 Tried to engrave the heart of a man already brought low.
 Rich fodder did you spread, Signor,
 Within an unhappy furrow, only for there to sprout, 6
 With unworthy excess, a wild harvest that expressly
 showed
 What evil fruit derives from good seed.
 Unequal effects, to be sure, from equal causes: 9
 How is it, now, that a great benefit
 Fills one person with love and unsettles another with
 hate?
 Two objects cause contraries whenever 12
 A single gentle bond both ties the former in dear knots
 And girds the latter with fury.

20. The furies being the enemy (Strozzi), heaven being the benefactor (Trevisan). Trevisan may have given expression to the "effects" and "notions" in a poem.

21. A sword.

22. Seems to be saying that the enemy, in his rage, forgets how much he owes his benefactor.

3. SONNET PRESUMABLY BY GIULIA SOLINGA

[4r] TO THE SAME MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SIGNOR

Cesare allhor ch'en sé vide converse

When Caesar saw that the arms of Brutus²³
Were turned against him, he was so horrified
By the unworthy failing of the disloyal friend 3
That to keep from seeing him he covered his eyes.
Hiding himself from that impious soul, he discovered
That the betrayed faith oppressed him 6
With much greater shame than the hostile fury
That forced its way, more than once, into his caring
person.
Impiety has no fiercer representative²⁴ 9
Than an inimical friend, but if the latter draws
An iron against a friend, oh, how hard it is!
It is you, Marco, who saw in what way 12
The lividness of hell colors the same one's face;
It is you who show me the truth that, in my words, is
obscure.²⁵

FOREWORD

[5r]²⁶ Giulia Solinga, to the kind readers:

The occasion for having to publish these notices arose in the never fully expressed wickedness of two most contemptible I-would-not-say men, but rather monstrous marvels of abominable ingratitude.²⁷ One of them, vil-

23. Who betrayed Caesar, as Strozzi did Trevisan. As it turns out, Paluzzi, who in the "Notices" betrayed Copia, was connected with Strozzi, for whom he wrote two poems included in his *Rime* (86, a *canzonetta* in ten stanzas plus envoi; 90, a sonnet).

24. The original had "object."

25. Marco Trevisan's example, that is, illustrates more clearly what is to be recounted in the codex itself.

26. Fol. 4v is blank.

27. Paluzzi and Alessandro Berardelli. On Paluzzi, see above. Though reviled, as was Paluzzi, in the Codex Solinga, Berardelli, of whom little is known as poet and painter, was praised by his contemporaries, among them Gabriele Zinano in a sonnet (*Rime diverse* [1627], 47–48), on which more below (20v), and Pietro Michiele in two sonnets (*Rime* [1642], 2:304) and, in another collection, a seven-stanza *stravaganza*, two sonnets, and two octaves (*Delle poesie postume* [1671], 45–46, 177–79), along with a sonnet in Paluzzi's *Rime*, A 6r. For Berardelli's own writ-

lamous beyond any belief, had already flung himself, under the name of a great philosopher, an orator, and a poet, into the reception room of a most excellent lord,²⁸ arrogating to himself the title of secretary. But he was soon chased away from there, for he turned out to be no less ignorant than arrogant. What happened to him next, however, is that protected by Fortune, which quite often shows favor toward one who is least worthy of it, he fell into the hands of a virtuous young Jewish woman,²⁹ who, charmed by the false sound of his learning, introduced him into her household.

After the lady was enticed by that patina of knowledge that he seemed to show in his lively chatter, she was pleased to make him her teacher, burdening him with³⁰ having to give her a lesson twice a week. Beyond being hampered by a tough case of French pox,³¹ [5v] so deep in his bones that he could hardly bear it, the outstanding man suffered from a want of everything else. From that indescribable torture by which he was racked, he clearly appeared more poorly than properly dressed. She therefore took it upon herself to reclothe him completely in accord with the latest fashion and his own needs that obliged him to wear loose garments.³² As a salary she apportioned him two sequins³³ per month, providing him with a furnished, prepaid apartment,³⁴ as befitted the great talent that she *thought* he was and

ings, see Carlo Ridolfi, *Le meraviglie dell'arte, ovvero Le vite degli illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato* (1648), b [1]v–2r, a poem in ten quatrains, and Giovanni Battista Manso, *Poesie nomiche* (1635), a 2r–5v, a dedication to Pietro Michiele; not to speak of the dedication and foreword to Paluzzi's *Rime* (1626; see 3.2).

28. When Paluzzi first came to Venice in 1620, he found refuge probably with Baldassare Bonifaccio, summoned to the city, in the same year, after the founding of the Accademia dei Nobili. Paluzzi served him as secretary, yet was soon expelled for incompetence (see continuation). Later, perhaps at Copia's behest, he may have glossed Bonifaccio's *Discorso* in preparation for her manifesto (as hinted on 51v). If not Bonifaccio, the "most excellent lord" could possibly have been Giulio Garimberto (author of the sonnet below, no. 6; 14v).

29. Copia appears to have heard satisfying reports about his abilities.

30. The addition "little more than" might strengthen the sarcastic insinuation.

31. Syphilis.

32. Originally a *giuppone alla disdossa*, i.e., a shirt or jacket to be worn bareback. Paluzzi avoided tight-fitting undergarments to prevent the spread of rashes over his body.

33. The sequin, or *zecchino*, is another term for the ducat, a gold coin minted in Venice and retaining its original weight (3.56 grams) and purity (24 carats) from 1284 until 1797. See Alan Stahl, *Zecca: The Mint of Venice in the Middle Ages*, 30–31.

34. Outside the ghetto and the first of two apartments in which Copia lodged him (for the second, see below, 7v). In both of them, Copia appears to have settled the costs of rental in advance. For "apartment" the original reads *casa*, according to the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612) "a place to live in" (*edificio da abitare*; 161). Yet it was probably no more than a room (as was the second apartment; see there).

his most needy person that he *really* was. Furthermore, she sent him, morning and evening, generous pocket money, for both His Excellency and the valet³⁵ who, in serving him, thereby suspended those regulations concerning anyone doggedly continuing in this rank beyond the sixth year.³⁶

True it is that at this time he kept no account of the six months or thereabouts he stayed in Friuli,³⁷ where he thought he would close a big venture. To move there, moreover, he quietly plundered the apartment³⁸ of whatever commodities the Jewess had supplied and took flight without saying goodbye, though not without first having himself disbursed the salary of three months, [6r] a trick that earned him a hundred ducats or even more.³⁹ Not having found the Friulians any less wary than the Florentines,⁴⁰ the rogue was forced to return over already traveled roads. Nor did he have the courage to go back to the Jewess. So he took shelter in the house of a most illustrious cavalier⁴¹ and made it known to her, through an intermediary, that he was in Venice again and that he wanted to pay his respects. Her answer was that she would gladly see him and that he could come at his pleasure.

The next day he presented himself in a more miserable state than ever, for beyond the sufferings to which he was naturally unaccustomed,⁴² the French enemy⁴³ had also begun fiercely to besiege him. He had wanted to come and apologize for both his trick and his flight, but the Jewess would not suffer his humiliation. Rather, consoling him, she ordered that he be

35. Berardelli must clearly have occupied the same apartment.

36. For the ordinance of dismissing slaves, alias servants, after six years of custody, see, as a possible reference, Exod. 21:2 and Deut. 15:12 (such "learning" would suggest that a Jewish author, in this passage at least, paraded under the name of Solinga). The implication is that Berardelli had already been Paluzzi's valet for six years, yet Paluzzi had no intention of discharging him. It remains to be seen how Paluzzi, indigent as he was, paid him for his services.

37. Friuli-Venezia, a region (formerly a part of Venezia Giulia) in northeast Italy.

38. Paluzzi's own residence in differentiation from Copia's; his plundering the latter comes at a later stage (see below).

39. Over the course of three months, Paluzzi, who taught Copia twice a week (5r, above), would have given Copia twenty-four lessons, earning for each of them 4.17 ducats, "or even more" (on the value of ducats and *scudi*, see below). He must have inveigled her into paying him for them in advance.

40. Paluzzi appears, then, to have spent time in Florence before turning back to Venice. For a "Florentine" sonnet in his *Rime*, see the one headed "For the weapons of the Grand Duke of Tuscany" (70). His peregrinations seem to have taken him to Ferrara as well (the *Rime* have three sonnets with a Ferrarese connection; 6, 67, 81).

41. No name is mentioned, though Giulio Garimberto (author of poem 6; 14v, below) is a possibility.

42. Paluzzi's pecuniary difficulties.

43. Syphilis.

newly clothed and she offered to make it possible for him to be able at his own convenience to take the purge,⁴⁴ about which he had already spoken to her. No sooner was the offer accepted than the lady [6v] most eagerly saw to its execution, getting involved therein from the beginning of April until the start of autumn. Thus with the help of mercury, waxes, ointments, and beverages, the enemy, yielding, withdrew. There followed the cool season during which the industrious man leaned on a most liberal lord.⁴⁵ Still, because the defectiveness of his customs always made him mendicant, it never happened that he found his pupil⁴⁶ unwanted or unneeded.

The purplish rash had already begun to break out when certain spies,⁴⁷ who kept on the borders of the joints, reported that the truce had been broken and that the hostile army was entering the field in an open war. Under the flag of bestial urine one detected the plunderers. A troop of frightful wounds had spread out on the plains of the abdomen, where the army set up camp.⁴⁸ The only way to divert the fury was to withdraw to a steam bath.⁴⁹

At the same time, mind you, [7r] that most illustrious cavalier⁵⁰ chose to cross the Alps, which left all the weight of the war on the shoulders of the Jewess. She accepted it wholeheartedly and, to resist the hostile attack, set out a provision of five hard silver *scudi*.⁵¹ They were disbursed, each month, for as long as the poet was encamped in that fort,⁵² to let him not just have

44. In the steam baths (see below).

45. The "illustrious cavalier" with whom he stayed when he returned to Venice? The magistrate mentioned earlier as helping out the destitute? Giulio Garimberto named below? Baldasare Bonifaccio?

46. Copia.

47. Here and in the next sentences the attack of Paluzzi's malady is described in military terms.

48. Paluzzi, in the act drawn up at his decease, is said to have suffered from *bolgie*, or pains, in the abdominal region (see below).

49. There appear to have been several such curative steam baths, or *stufe*, in early Venice, to judge from various alleyways that, labeled "della stufa," recall their presence (after Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia: episodi della sua vita in un manoscritto del secolo XVII," 128 n. 36). For further evidence of Paluzzi's confinement to a steam bath for cure of his syphilis, see the sonnet entitled "Purgante ravveduto. In persona del Sig. Numidio Paluzzi" [A repentant taking the purge, in the person of Signor Numidio Paluzzi] by Quirini (*Vezzi d'Erato, poesie liriche*, 139).

50. With whom Paluzzi stayed when he returned to Venice and from whom he appears to have received some support (see above).

51. Or crowns. The *scudo*, a silver coin, was about one third less in value than the ducat. For the thirty-one different coins minted in Venice under the doge Antonio Priuli (1618–23), see Raffaele Paolucci, *Le monete dei dogi di Venezia*, 86–88.

52. The steam bath.

roasts and other similar refreshments but also stock up with arms for the siege, which stubbornly continued until the middle of August. Then, at the climax of the heat, the enemy, well-nigh fatigued, appeared to slow down, and the besieged, now breathing somewhat, ventured off and on to play at crossbows.⁵³

But the war advisors⁵⁴ persuaded the young Jewess that the same post had best be abandoned not just because it was difficult to maintain it but because the poet, through faults of gluttony, gaming, and his other pastimes, had gotten badly into debt with both the steam bath establishment and his errand boys. On account of this intemperance, he needed to earn money by selling his fabrication of spotless books,⁵⁵ which, [7v] of the many sources of income that the daughter of Israel had been kind enough to secure him, was the only one he had left.⁵⁶ But what most stirred her to act was the belief that with his transfer to a place that had cleaner air and was closer for lending him assistance, it would doubtless be to her greater advantage.⁵⁷ Thus all at once it was resolved that he depart, and on the fifteenth day of August, with the renewal of his pains, he entered a boat that awaited him⁵⁸ and, rowing it, directed himself to the Promised Land⁵⁹ precisely as planned, looking like Saint John the Baptist.⁶⁰

53. That is, with less heavy armor.

54. The doctors.

55. A circumlocution for correcting proofs.

56. The implication is that Copia not only paid him for teaching but also solicited jobs for him as editor and proofreader.

57. By making it easier for her, perhaps, to attend to his needs and, further, to have him cured more speedily in order for him to attend, as stylistic advisor, to hers.

58. The decision to leave the cure might have been hastened by the realization that, with new pains flaring up, the treatment was no longer effective.

59. Refers, in this case, not to the Land of Israel that God promised to the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12:7, 13:15, etc.) but, figuratively, to Paluzzi's place of salvation in Copia's household. Paluzzi seems to have been his own oarsman (with the help of a gondolier?) in reaching his destination, which might imply that salvation depends on the efforts of the person to be saved, though we know, of course, that Paluzzi's real savior, in a material sense at least, was Copia.

60. The simile lends itself to various interpretations. One is that John the Baptist showed the road to salvation, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham (Luke 1:69: "He [the Lord] raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David"; also 72–73: "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers and remember His holy covenant, the oath He swore to our father Abraham," and 77: "To give knowledge of salvation"). Another is that John spent his early life as an anchorite in the desert and when he emerged was not "clothed in soft raiment" or "gorgeously appareled" (Luke 7:25) but rather had "his raiment of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins" (Matt. 3:4). A third is that he must have looked emaciated after having fed on "locusts and wild honey" (ibid.), or in the case of Paluzzi, after having been deprived of the

He was received with extreme compassion by the Jewess and, once again, fit out with new clothes. This time, too, she assigned him a room close to hers⁶¹ and amply filled it with everything appropriate for living comfortably in it, recommending him to the woman, moreover, under whose roof he resided.⁶² The Jewess could have great faith in her, provided a long and notable show of favors had any command over a boorish heart and considering that the woman, her husband, and her children were not so plump except from being fed, with constancy, out of the house of the Jewess, ever their substantial [8r] benefactor. As she [Copia] appeared to have been accustomed,⁶³ morning and evening she provided advantageously for his [Paluzzi's] living.⁶⁴ Often she visited him, nor did she ever leave him without setting an example of how the infirm ought to be visited. She kept him there for two consecutive years.⁶⁵

delicacies he previously enjoyed. A fourth and last is that Paluzzi may have appeared no less frayed and disheveled than did John the Baptist during his incarceration by Herod Antipas (Matt. 14:3, Mark 1:14).

61. Hence, as already said, a different lodging from the first one she found him (see above, 5v). For "lodging" the original has *stanza*, or "room," as translated here (and also at the beginning of the next paragraph).

62. Paola Furlana worked as a laundress for Copia and may in fact have been her chief housekeeper. It was in Furlana's house, close by the ghetto, that Copia found an apartment for Paluzzi, settling the costs of rental with the landlady (Furlana), as she did before with the owners of the first apartment, in advance. Where the house was may perhaps be determined from his death notice (if in fact Paluzzi continued to live there after having been expelled by Copia on 9 July 1624 [see below, 48v]): "Omidio Paluo romano de ani 38 da dolgie ani 5—S. Marcuola" (Numidio Paluzzi, Roman, thirty-eight years old, [after suffering] from pains for five years—San Marcuola): Venice, Archivio di Stato, Necrologio, Provveditori alla Sanità, in the listing for 29 July 1625 (after Boccato, "Un altro documento inedito su Sara Copio Sullam," 307). Like the ghetto, the church of San Marcuola is in the Cannaregio district (the Campo San Marcuola is, today, the *vaporetto* stop for visitors to the ghetto). See fig. 2, no. 5. Similar but even more specific is a second obituary notice, in the archive of the parish church of Saints Ermagora and Fortunato, alias San Marcuola, where Paluzzi's funeral appears to have taken place. It reads: "Adi detto m(e)s(er) Numidio Palucio Romano de anni 38 da holgie [to be contrasted with *dolgie* above] nella vita già anni 5. drio el magazen a s.[an] Gier[la]mo [or Gier(oni)mo]" (On that day [there died] Numidio Paluzzi, the Roman, thirty-eight years old, [after suffering] from pains in his abdomen for some five years, behind the storehouse near [the church or the parish of] San Girolamo), which appears to have been the area of his habitation (see fig. 2, no. 3). I am grateful to Annamaria Pozzan for providing a copy of the second notice as preserved in the Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Parrocchia di Santi Ermagora e Fortunato, Registri dei morti, folder 10 (its transcription in Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 128 n. 34, is faulty).

63. From her ministrations to Paluzzi in his first apartment.

64. With food and pocket money.

65. Since Paluzzi was dismissed from Copia's service on 9 July 1624 (see, again, 48v, below), his employ as her instructor would have begun approximately in July 1622.

O unheard-of impiousness! No more than four days was this monster in that room of his than an unworthy betrayal being perpetrated on the Jewess was brought to his attention by the impious woman [Furlana] to whom he had been recommended. She entertained the hope, thereby, that he would be of service here along with a perfidious black Marrano girl [*marana*] from Granada,⁶⁶ a servant of that honest young woman [Copia]. The same unworthy Moorish lass [*Mora*] went to the extreme of pretending to be possessed by demons and to be in close touch with spirits, as she only too well knew how to pretend: she swooned from time to time and then, with strange wailings, prophesied and predicted things that had already been decided in concert with the other one [Furlana], no less villainous than she. At first the Jewess did not believe these goings-on, but when the woman [Furlana], whom she treated as a mother, confirmed and so demonstrated them as unfortunately to deceive her by their semblance, she began [8v] to give them some credence, then be curious about them. The black girl was led to this villainy in order to satisfy her loathsome licentiousness. Thus by stealing from her mistress, the swarthy culprit paid her tribute in the form of

66. Marrano is not delimited to Jews, as is generally thought. Rather it refers to Spanish or Portuguese Jews or Moors (Muslims, of mixed Arab and Berber descent), who, though forced to convert to Christianity, adhered in secret to their original faith (Muslim apostates were more properly known as *moriscos*). See, for early lexicons, Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611), 791 ("Marrano: a recent convert to Christianity"), 815 ("Moriscos: Moors who converted to the Christian faith"), and John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, or, *Dictionary of the Italian and English Tongues* (1611), 300 ("Maráno: a nick-name for Spaniards, that is, one descended of Lewes or Infidels and whose Parents were never christned, but for to save their goods will say they are Christians"); and, for modern ones, Joan Corominas in collaboration with José A. Pascual, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*, 3:858 ("Marrano . . . an insult directed, sarcastically, at converted Jews and Moors"), the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 9:830–31 ("Marrano: a Spanish Jew, or Muslim, and convert . . . to Christianity"), and *The Oxford English Dictionary* ("Marrano: in medieval and early modern Spain a Christianized Jew or Moor, esp. one who professed conversion in order to avoid persecution"). After the Christian reconquest of Spain under Ferdinand V and Isabella I in 1492, Granada, a stronghold of the Moors, was united with Castile, and its inhabitants, though initially granted religious freedom, were, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, forcibly baptized. The "scullery maid" was then, to all appearances, a nominal Christian, who probably left Granada, on her own or with her family, after the expulsion of all *moriscos* between 1609 and 1614, under Philip III (I owe this information to Yosef Kaplan [Hebrew University of Jerusalem], who kindly responded to my request for clarifications). Her name seems to have been Arnolfa (see 90v, no. 48:8, below); and her black color—she appears nine times as "la Negra" and once as "la nera"—may have been real or implied by her Moorish origins (*moro* meaning dark-skinned: see again *The Oxford English Dictionary*, under Moor, namely that "in the Middle Ages, and as late as the seventeenth century, the Moors were widely supposed to be most black or very dark-skinned"). On Moors employed as servants by the more affluent Jews in the Venetian ghetto, see Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*, 4:26–27; and on Copia's "black Marrano girl" as one of several there, see 96v, no. 62:1, below.

thefts, which were then attributed to an aerial spirit that courted the black girl, so the two of them [she and Furlana] said.

Once the valiant man [Paluzzi] discovered this hare,⁶⁷ he imagined it might be a hunt for employing his dogs, so he entered into the infamous scheme as a third partner. The other two willingly assented, for they hoped, with the evidence of his authority, to accomplish great things, as indeed they did. The betrayer fell into line with the scheme, directing the goings-on from afar.⁶⁸ In talking about them with his mistress [Copia], he showed himself totally unbelieving of any intrigue. The happenings were falsities, he asserted, for had they been true he too would have known of them. Then he left, setting an interval of a few days before returning to the Jewess, to whom he now presented himself with a certain scowl full of wonder. [9r] He had to tell her that he remained dumbfounded, nor did he know whether he should say any more or be silent. But he was not silent, so he told her that during the time he had not come to visit her he was beset every night by wild visions; that with his whole bed, as was seen moreover by Paola and everyone in her household,⁶⁹ he was transported from one side⁷⁰ to the other; and, further, that lofty speeches had been made to him without his seeing who might be speaking, even though the light was turned on. Hence, to his shame, it was only right for him to believe that some truth might be hidden in the matter; nor did he talk of anything else that day. In this way, he laid the foundations for strengthening the trust of that incautious woman [Copia]: she never would have thought that a man invested with such gravity and practicing lofty sciences would have played such an iniquitous hoax on her.

Now, since the wretched fellow was not very fit to stand on his feet, he hatched the nasty thought of having a coadjutor in these goings-on: thus a most solemn scoundrel [Berardelli] was elected. He instructed him in whatever was necessary and got him into the Jewess's household under the pretext of going to fetch him [9v] his food provisions at the customary hours.⁷¹ Furthermore, he wanted the laundress's three sons, who were particularly cunning, to be his [Berardelli's] cohorts so as to secure and implement

67. Meaning "found out the truth of the matter;" though the author also uses *hare* in its literal sense as an animal, particularly one chased by dogs, which explains the hunting imagery in the continuation.

68. His room in Furlana's house.

69. Her husband, their three sons.

70. Presumably of the room.

71. Paluzzi remained all the while in Furlana's house (see below, 36r; 92r, no. 51:2–4; 96r, no. 60:13–14).

whatever the black girl had ordered him [Berardelli] to do. With this hurdy-gurdy so fabricated as for seven voices to be tuned to one,⁷² they brought that poor lady [Copia] so low that she was nearly beside herself. No number can sum up the amount of mocking and scoffing heard from such a mean rabble in her derision.

The thefts went on endlessly, nor did they let up as long as something was left to steal. There was no strongbox that could not be unbolted, no coffer that could not be unlocked, no cupboard that could not be thrown open. To the aerial spirit every door was ajar; every latch, as if touched by the magical effect of moonstone, came out of its socket by itself; tin melted, copper went up in smoke; bracelets were not secure on the arm, nor were necklaces on the neck, belts on flanks, rings on fingers. What is more, even wine disappeared from vats and [10r] boiling pots from the hearth; and the dining table of the Jewess was already subjected, like that of Phineus, to the rapacious claws of these fetid Harpies.⁷³

Using the name of a great prince,⁷⁴ they concocted letters, directed to the [Moorish] serving maid and her mistress [Copia]. From these same letters it appeared that that great lord was burning with the desire to become acquainted with both the one and the other because of what had reached his ears, even in France, about their being famed for their skills in magical science. For expediting this business the planners had pages, postilions, and postmen appear on several occasions.

Under the cover of this fiction they engineered awesome swindles, of which I will mention but two, recorded by Signora Solinga in her chapters:⁷⁵

Swindle No. 1

It was, for the Jews, a solemn feast day,⁷⁶ and by ancient custom not only are they wont to distribute alms to their poor on that feast day but they ex-

72. The seven were the intriguants, namely: Furlana, her three sons, the dark-skinned maidservant, Paluzzi, and Berardelli.

73. In classical mythology, Phineus, a Thracian king, was tortured by the Harpies, who stole or defiled his food, nearly starving him to death.

74. Identity unknown, though he appears to have visited Copia's salon while in Venice; see the report by Aproso (below, 3.3.2:114).

75. Of either a prospective book or one already completed. Solinga might have drawn on various portions of it for the "Notices." Instead of *capitolo* as "chapter," is it to be understood as the verse type so designated (on which see 47v)? Hardly: the conjunction, below, of Solinga's *capitoli* and *avvisi* as two separate writings (11v) speaks rather for "chapters." The headings in the continuation, "Swindle no. 1," "Swindle no. 2," are this editor's.

76. Purim.

change splendid presents among themselves. On this opportune occasion these infamous souls [Paluzzi and the rest] imagined that they could pinch, at the least, some twenty ducats. The order was one that the Moorish girl pretended she had received as a command from the domestic spirit, though not before having [10v] been dragged by it through all parts of the house. Livid and wan, she said, in a broken voice, that she had been ordered to have a gift of exquisite confections sent to the prince.

No sooner did the council convene than it was decided to fill an ample basket with the rarest delicacies formed from sugar. There were artificial fruits of exquisite beauty;⁷⁷ pastries in different shapes; precious liquor candies; choice sugared almonds; and compotes in all perfection.⁷⁸ This basket was brought to the house of the Jewess and paid for by a sum of money that exceeded twenty ducats. No sooner did the Jewess turn her back than the basket was absconded by the laundress, who transferred it to her house and then placed it on the bed where the inventor of the hoax [Paluzzi] was lying. While the Jewess attended to other things, the household echoed with the murmuring of the remaining conspirators, who said to one another: "Yes, yes, you saw how the spirit lifted the basket and, rushing out, disappeared like a flash of lightning."

The traitor was caught, though, while examining the booty, by a certain friend,⁷⁹ who, [11r] after hearing the story of the swindle, revealed to the Jewess how unworthy he was for being a traitor.⁸⁰

Swindle No. 2

They then pretended that the same prince was kindled with the desire to have a portrait of this young woman [Copia]. As evidence they had a courier come with a letter that urgently requested this portrait. After the fellow delivered the message, the matter was discussed, and it was resolved

77. Seems to refer to fruits made of marzipan. On the ubiquity of marzipan delights in traditional Italian Jewish cookery for "all celebrations," see Ariel Toaff, *Mangiare alla giudia: la cucina ebraica in Italia dal Rinascimento all'età moderna*, 102–3, and, for Purim in particular, 105–6.

78. For recipes for various "classic" Purim sweets, see Edda Servi Machlin, *The Classic Dolci of the Italian Jews: A World of Jewish Desserts*, 71, 146, 153–54, 182–83.

79. Giacomo Rosa. His identity may be determined from the continuation and, moreover, from a letter of his to be read out loud, in bits and pieces (from 26r on), at Paluzzi's mock trial. Rosa corresponded with Cebà (see 1.1/L39 and 41) and was asked by him to befriend Copia. In time, he seems to have become a regular visitor to her house, where he became acquainted with her teacher Paluzzi.

80. Rosa discovered Paluzzi's doings on 8 July 1624, informing Copia of them on the following day (48v, below).

to satisfy the prince. Because the roguish scullery boy [Berardelli] dabbled somewhat in colors, he himself volunteered to make this portrait for His Excellency.

But the whole clique thought that the latter was also deserving of a worthy decorative ornament, such as a jewel box with gold embellishment, as much for the respectability of the one [Copia] who was dispatching it as for not sending such a great lord anything but an object appropriate to a person of his likes. Upon the entreaties of the philosopher [Paluzzi], who roused and stirred lofty hopes in the Jewess, the portrait was made, as was, according to the taste of the servant [Berardelli], the jeweled ornament, which, in its gold, gems, and construction, rose in value to a hundred ducats.⁸¹ [11v] For greater rapidity, the ornament, as was the custom in all the swindles that occurred, was consigned to the aerial spirit that put in no more than three hours' time to make this trip [to France].

Whoever wants a better understanding of how these traps were manipulated should read Signora Giulia Solinga's chapters and her sonnets, for there he will find more information.

God willed, however, that such unworthy deceits be discovered.⁸² Once the Jewess became certain of her losses, she complained to the authorities and protested in private and in public. Consequently, those two infamous souls [Paluzzi, Berardelli] brought out exceptionally shameful writings⁸³ that disputed her innocence, as is shown, moreover, in the aforementioned chapters and the following "notices."

It is true that we would have gladly avoided this encounter in which we are forced to uncover the villainies of a man who no longer numbers among the living.⁸⁴ But the sight of piety abused, benefits wasted, a good name sullied, innocence trampled, and this wrong remaining [12r] stamped in print through the actions of that contemptible servant⁸⁵ was the motivating cause

81. Equivalent to Paluzzi's earnings for three months of lessons to Copia (see above, 5v–6r).

82. On 8 July 1624 (as said above).

83. The *Sareide*, or "Satires on Sarra," identified by title five times in the "Notices" (see 22v, 30v, etc., all with a single *r*, except for 49r: *le Sarreide*). Its reading as "Satires on Sarra" (*Satire sareidi*) is after Boccato ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 132 n. 67, and elsewhere). The satires may have been printed and circulated in pamphlets. Whether Paluzzi and Berardelli were joint authors is uncertain: the satires are later ascribed solely to Berardelli (72r).

84. Paluzzi died on 29 July 1625 (for necrological notices, see above). The date is useful for establishing a *terminus ante quem non* for the Codex Solinga.

85. As said, Berardelli brought out a collection of Paluzzi's *rime* in 1626, adding his own abusive dedication and foreword to it (see below and, for excerpts, 3.2).

for uncovering the truth to all, for each and everyone to know the reasons that prompted that thief [Berardelli] to slander the name of the Jewess.

The incident is such as might make one wonder perhaps how a person so esteemed for her judgment could let herself get caught in these nets. But one ought to consider the clothes in which a fraud can be wrapped and how easy a deceit is for those who, under the cloak of mendacious doctrines, lying appearances, feigned customs, false demonstrations, and simulated zeal, cover the trunk, rooted within their infamous hearts, of every most abominable impiety: it is a trunk from which the fruits of betrayal forever sprout, nay, can always be found to ripen. Then perhaps will wonder cease, all the more so since of the seven who concerted this villainous conspiracy there was, as has been said, not one who, from having received notable, extended, and continuous benefits, was not indebted for his or her life to that [12v] honored woman, which only made it easier for that unworthy rabble to persevere in its deceit for two consecutive years.⁸⁶

The example is one, to be sure, of execrable ingratitude and of excogitated despoliation. But it ought to be pondered both so that others may learn, at still others' expense,⁸⁷ to flee the blows of such abominable monsters and so that, by keeping the example fixed in their memories, the inhuman perfidy of souls so foul and wicked may ever be detested.

4

[13v]⁸⁸ SONNET BY AN UNCERTAIN AUTHOR ON THE ACT OF
BETRAYAL PLAYED ON THE JEWESS⁸⁹

<i>Faccia ha di farsa e d'empietà ripiena,</i>	
<i>Vera historia fu questa a cui rubella</i>	
<i>Torma attorse le trame infami, ond'ella,</i>	3
<i>Tra inganni e frodi, il suo ordito incatena.</i>	
<i>Fu colpa a cui doveasi di una piena</i>	
<i>Piazza il teatro, eretta al merto quella</i>	6
<i>Machina aerea che forza s'appella,</i>	
<i>Di canapi ritorti intessa scena.</i>	

86. The years 1622–24.

87. The "expense" paid by Copia and her husband as the victims of treason.

88. Fol. 13r is blank.

89. The sonnet is a "proposition" (*proposta*), in the sense of a poem directed to someone who provided a "response" (*risposta*, no. 5 below).

- Sceleragine fu che istupidisce* 9
Il senso, fu empietà ch'empie d'horrore
Se pur avien che se ne parli o scriva,
- Con sfacciata perfidia ivi si unisce* 12
Ogni eccesso ch'infame rende un core,
Ogni slealtà che da viltà deriva.
- A face full of mockery and impiousness does it have,
 But this was a true story, in which a rebellious
 Crowd twisted infamous designs, whereby, 3
 Midst deceits and deceptions, it secures its plot.
- It was a wrong to be enacted on the theatrical set
 Of an entire square, where, notably, 6
 That aerial machine called a gallows was erected
 As a prop entwined with double ropes.⁹⁰
- Villainy it was, stupefying 9
 The senses, and impiousness it was, filling us with
 horror,
 Should it happen that one speak or write about it,
 With shameless perfidy it combines 12
 Every excess that makes a heart infamous
 And every disloyalty that derives from meanness.

5. SONNET BY SARRA COPIA

[14r] RESPONSE⁹¹

- Quasi a coturno diè materia in scena*
Quella, onde pur ritorci empia procella:
Quel domestico mostro, Idra novella, 3
Da' cui toschi campata spiro a pena.
- La fè ch'ebbi in huom vile empia sirena*
Fu ch'affascinò l'alma, o cielo, e quella 6
Lingua ch'estinta ravvivai, potè ella
Congiura ordir di sì empì fili piena?

90. The quatrain foreshadows the public trial that, staged as if a theatrical production, led to the (fictitious) hanging of Berardelli.

91. In this and all other *risposte* in the collection, the end-rhymes, and sometimes end words, are determined by the starting poems, or *proposte*. Thus, for example, the sonnets in poems 4–5 have, for the quatrains, *ena, ella, ella, ena*, and for the tercets, *isce, ore, iva*, while the sonnet in poem 31 reproduces eleven of the fourteen end words of no. 30 (see 82v–83r).

Ma s'in animo ingrato allhor perisce 9
Che nasce il beneficio, non migliore
Frutto da simil pianta si deriva.
Serva adonque il mio essemio a chi nodrisce 12
L'angue nel seno e ne lo snidi fuore
Pria che lo asperga di rabbia nociva.

Almost as a cothurnus⁹² was matter provided for the stage
 By that [true story]⁹³ in which you entwine⁹⁴ the
 threads of an impious calamity
 [Caused by] that domestic monster, a new Hydra,⁹⁵ 3
 From the poisons of whom I escaped, though can
 scarcely breathe.
 The faith I had in a contemptible man was an impious siren⁹⁶
 That enchanted the soul, O heavens! 6
 Could the language that, extinct, I revived⁹⁷
 Hatch a conspiracy full of such impious threads?
 But if it [faith] is lost on an ungrateful mind 9
 When benefits arise, no better
 Fruit derives from a similar plant.
 May my example, then, serve those who nourish 12
 The snake in their breast and may they drive it from
 its nest therein
 Before it sprinkles them with noxious⁹⁸ rage.

92. A buskin worn by actors in ancient drama, used figuratively here to designate tragedy.

93. For "that" (*quella*) in reference to "true story," see poem 4:2.

94. Poem 4 had, for "winding," *attorse* ("twisted"; line 3) and *ritorti* ("entwined"; line 8), which, in Copia's response, became *ritorci*, "you [the poet of the *proposta*] entwine" (as transcribed by Leonello Modona in S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti*, 48, though not by Umberto Fortis, who reads the verb as *ritorsi*, "I [Sarra] entwined," in *La "bella ebrea": Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa nel ghetto di Venezia del '600*, 130). The source has *c*, not *s*, and Copia appears to refer to "the threads" of the "true story" told in the previous poem, not to her own "rewinding" of them (in this and other poems).

95. Paluzzi is likened to the nine-headed monster slain by Hercules as one of his Twelve Labors (see below, 49v).

96. In classical mythology, the sirens were partly human, partly avian sea nymphs, who lured mariners to their destruction by their singing, or more generally, as used here, those who beguile and deceive others with their charms.

97. Obscure. Copia went out of her way to speak in a polished language that perhaps was "extinct" in belonging to ancient letters, yet that warranted "revival" for communication with Paluzzi, as befitted his status, to her mind, as a literary connoisseur. Still another reading would be *lingua* as "tongue," in reference not to herself but to Paluzzi, who, if it were not for Copia's assistance in "reviving" him from near death (or "extinction"), would have lost his "tongue" (power of speech).

98. "Noxious," in reference to the poisons above (line 4).

[14v] A SONNET BY SIGNOR GIULIO GARIMBERTO⁹⁹

Tal vil nube ch'il sol da terra al cielo

Such a despicable cloud did the sun raise
 From earth to heaven and paint there in various
 colors,¹⁰⁰
 Ungrateful as it was, it girded the air with black horrors 3
 And covered the sun on all sides with a dark veil.¹⁰¹
 Such an ivy, no less ungrateful, pushed back to earth
 The wall upon which its crooked stalk rose to heaven;¹⁰² 6
 Such an impious serpent did the man, its friend,
 Who gathered it in his breast, annihilate by exposing it
 to the murderous cold.¹⁰³
 As it now happens¹⁰⁴ that we nourish two infamous spirits, 9
 Who conspired to discharge blasphemies and poison
 Upon the very one who gave them breath and life,
 But of the two, one pushed back to earth by hardship,
 took leave,¹⁰⁵ 12
 Gnawing himself away,¹⁰⁶ so now Astrea,¹⁰⁷
 For the other, twists new twine¹⁰⁸ and chops down the
 woods.¹⁰⁹

99. Giulio Garimberto could not be identified, though he and others appear originally to have supported Paluzzi and Berardelli before learning of their deceits (see line 9).

100. Copia praised Paluzzi to the skies, in "rosy" speech.

101. "Black horrors" refers to the frightful thefts performed at night by "aerial spirit(s)" (8v, 9v); "a dark veil," to Copia's blindness to what was going on around her.

102. Said otherwise: Copia was a wall of support for Paluzzi in his climb to the heavens; but once he got there, he destroyed the wall, knocking it down to earth.

103. Berardelli eventually betrayed Paluzzi (see below).

104. The sentence is convoluted: to counterbalance "As it now happens," the poet writes "so now Astrea" in verse 13.

105. In short, Paluzzi died.

106. In his syphilis.

107. The goddess of justice.

108. For stringing up Berardelli on the gallows.

109. Either for firewood, which would suggest that Berardelli was to be burned at the stake, or for constructing the gallows.

NUMIDIO PALUZZI BEFORE THE INVESTIGATING JUDGES
VITTORIA COLONNA AND VERONICA GAMBARA

[15r]¹¹⁰ It is the office of a just prince to comfort the innocent and crush the wicked, with two ends: one is to rouse virtuous minds, by the example of honor that accrues to the good, to operate at every hour with greater virtue; another is to have the evil-minded, by the example of infamy that reveals their falseness, put a restraint on their deceptions. For this reason, our Serene Lord Apollo¹¹¹ has wished that the world be informed of the judgment reached on Parnassus¹¹² in condemnation of certain wicked persons who, with singular treachery and artful ingratitude, have offended a virtuous and honored gentlewoman: they detracted as much as they could from her fame and, what is more, as outright scoundrels they committed a theft on her to the tune of more than four hundred golden *scudi*.¹¹³ Apollo thus commands that for perpetuating the memory of this incident its outcome be made known.

It must be about a month ago that Parnassus saw the delivery of certain verses, printed after the death of their author and collected by a certain servant quite renowned for the resourcefulness of his talent.¹¹⁴ Because these verses caused a big [15v] stir on Parnassus in advance of their arrival, His Highness Apollo wanted them to be examined, for His Serenity maintained that in the end, as indeed became evident, the pregnant hills may have given

110. It is with this section that the "Notices from Parnassus," so inscribed here, properly begin.

111. Ancient god of light, music, poetry, and prophecy (with Delphi, on the southern flank of Parnassus, his chief shrine). Apollo was often identified with the sun god Helios, hence the connection, by insinuation, between Copia inspired by a Muse, subservient to Apollo, and addressed, on various occasions, as a "sun" (poem 6:1, 4; 18v; 36v; etc.), not to speak of the connection between "sun" and the *sole* of Solinga (on which above).

112. Parnassus: mountain in central Greece north of the Gulf of Corinth, with Delphi at its foot and twin summits on the top. In ancient mythology, one of the summits, as relevant to the present composition, was sacred to Apollo and the Muses and the other to Dionysus. Parnassus is to be distinguished from Olympus, the abode of the gods, and from Helicon (a continuation of the Parnassus range), where, specifically, Apollo and the Muses resided (on the Helicon, see below, 88v, no. 43:2).

113. In 1606 the golden (Florentine) *scudo* (as opposed to the silver *scudo*, see above) was valued at about 1.29 more than a (Venetian) ducat, meaning that the equivalent sum for 400 golden *scudi* was 516 ducats. See Galileo Galilei (d. 1642), *La operazione del compasso geometrico, et militare* (1606), translated, by Stillman Drake, as *Operations of the Geometric and Military Compass*, 11 (under "Rule for Monetary Exchange, operation VI").

114. Refers, again, to Paluzzi's *rime* assembled by his friend Berardelli and published posthumously in Venice (on which more below). The statement reflects the public opinion, apparently, of Berardelli in contradistinction to his negative portrayal in the "Notices."

birth to a mouse.¹¹⁵ But no sooner did those appointed for doing this see, at the front of the volume, the letter directed "to the readers" than they realized both the wickedness of the servant and the knavishness of the author: in the same letter a virtuous woman's fame was assailed with explicit lies and execrable slurs.¹¹⁶ Having heard this, Apollo gave the case for review to ladies of no lesser distinction than Signora Vittoria Colonna, marchesa of Pescara,¹¹⁷ and Signora Veronica Gambara of Correggio,¹¹⁸ with, as their assistants, the ladies Sappho¹¹⁹ and Corinna.¹²⁰ They were provided thereupon with the trial proceedings drawn from the authentic originals in the exalted Office of the Signori di Notte al Criminal¹²¹ situated in the glorious city of Venice; they compared the records with the words of the witnesses; they examined certain letters written by these villains in their first moves after their deceits were uncovered;¹²² they discussed the content of a letter written¹²³ to the author of the verses [16r] on the occasion of certain infamous libels that he

115. After the adage *Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus* (Horace, *Ars poetica* 138).

116. Paluzzi, *Rime*, the "letter" being a foreword directed to the "kind readers" (see below, 3.2.A 4r–v).

117. Vittoria Colonna (1490–1547), wife of Fernando of Avalos, marchese of Pescara. She corresponded widely with notables in literature and the Church, including reformers of Protestant persuasion, and wrote nearly four hundred poems, the larger number of which were *rime spirituali* (among them more than a hundred sonnets to Michelangelo).

118. Veronica Gambara (1485–1550), wife of the count of Correggio and friend of Colonna. She wrote some eighty poems, of which fifty were sonnets, and exchanged about 150 letters with many notables, among them Emperor Charles V, Pietro Bembo, and Pietro Aretino (on whom more below).

119. Sappho: Greek poet (c. 620–c. 565 B.C.E.) born in Lesbos (she is said to have leapt into the sea from the promontory of Leucadia in unrequited love for Phaon). Though her works were, in her time, so ample as to be collected in nine volumes, what remains of them is largely fragmentary.

120. Corinna: Greek poet (fifth century B.C.E.) from Tanagra in Boethia, of her works, written as choral verses for celebrations, only fragments remain. She may have competed for recognition with the lyric poet Pindar (d. 438 B.C.E.), whom she is said (by Pausanias and Aelian) to have defeated in one or more poetic contests.

121. *Signori di Notte*, "Lords of the Night," refers to the functionaries who, in Venice, staffed a secret police force, from around 1250 until the end of the eighteenth century, principally for maintaining public order (offices were in the Prigioni Nuove; see fig. 2, no. 13). By and large, they investigated cases of homicide, theft, verbal abuse, and witchcraft; practiced methods of torture in their interrogation; and were responsible for the execution of sentences. Of the hearings over which they presided, only partial records survive (in Venice, Archivio di Stato, Signori di Notte al Criminal, fondo 0960). Boccato checked them for traces of the proceedings instituted against Paluzzi and Berardelli, though, because of the lacunae in their preservation, to no avail ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 110 n. 15).

122. Among the letters one to Giacomo Rosa: see below, 48v.

123. By Rosa: the letter will be recited in full (from 26r on).

and that servant of his disseminated¹²⁴ in vituperation of that honored lady, they asked for certain poems indicative of these goings-on to be recited; and together they held a full discussion of their own reasoned conclusions.

The accused [Paluzzi] was summoned to appear in court. When those illustrious ladies saw him, with that soot-covered mug of his, that voice of a hermaphrodite, that leer of an evildoer, they quickly realized how abominable he was. He was interrogated by the illustrious Signora Isabella Andreini¹²⁵ regarding the principal items of contention, but the answers he gave that excellent woman were all of the same nature as those that Ser Ciappelletto gave that good priest who came to hear his confession at the end of his days.¹²⁶ Nor was he any less sanctimonious than Ser Ciappelletto, who wished to have himself regarded as an *Agnus Dei*,¹²⁷ whereupon Boccaccio, present throughout, could not contain his laughter while greatly marveling, at the same time, over such impudence.¹²⁸ But the Ladies of Pescara and Correggio, who had already governed their own subjects and possessed a good touchstone for assessing persons of his likes, gave little credence to his hypocrisy, [16v] especially after the confirmation, from their readings of Annibale Caro,¹²⁹ that the same one [Paluzzi] was so formed as to seem to be a pupil¹³⁰ of that [scoundrel] Marc'Antonio Piperno, about whom there is a report to the Bishop of Castro in one of the letters printed (by Paolo Manuzio)¹³¹ in the first volume of his [Caro's] *Famigliari*.¹³²

124. The word "disseminated" would seem to strengthen the assumption above that the *Sareide* were printed not as a volume but rather as pamphlets distributed in a limited number of copies.

125. Isabella Andreini (1562–1604), renowned actress (and singer) of the commedia dell'arte, specifically the Gelosi troupe, directed by her husband, Francesco Andreini, from 1578 (the year they met and married). She wrote letters, verses, and a pastoral play (*La Mirtilla*, 1588).

126. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, day 1, story 1. The gist of the *novella* is that Ciappelletto, an unrepentant sinner, pretended so much modesty when questioned by the priest that he was considered a saint.

127. The lamb as an emblem of Christ. *Agnus Dei* is recited as a three-part litany, in the Mass, before Communion.

128. In the story it was not Boccaccio but two brothers who "almost broke out in laughter" at Ciappelletto's feigned innocence.

129. Annibale Caro (1507–66) earned his renown as a playwright (the comedy *Gli straccioni*, 1544), poet (*Rime*, 1557), translator from Greek and Latin into Italian (Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, 1570; Vergil's *Aeneid*, 1581), and, particularly, epistolarian (*Lettere familiari*, 1574–75, after Petrarch's example).

130. In spirit, if not in fact.

131. Paolo Manuzio (1547–97), better known as the son of Aldo Manuzio (1450–1515), founder of the legendary Aldus press that specialized in the publication of Greek and Latin classics.

132. Or "Personal Letters." Boccaccio identifies Marc'Antonio Piperno as a thief and cheat jailed in Ravenna by order of Monsignor Giovanni Alessandro Giudicioni, bishop of Romagna, whom

They resolved to put him [Paluzzi] to the rack, but no sooner did he see the rope than he begged for the favor of not being hanged, promising to tell the whole truth. In answering the things that were asked, he said:

"Very well did I know the offended gentlewoman, for she took me in, in Venice, when I was excluded, for my shortcomings, from the house of my most excellent Signor and patron.¹³³ Then this lady offered me room and board and wanted me to be her teacher in belles lettres."

Shortly resuming his speech thereafter without anyone's having to resort to the use of ropes, he admitted the uncommon benefits that this virtuous woman secured him; he told of the considerable monetary profits with which she encouraged him; he referred to the opportune amenities with which she withdrew him from his afflictions; he discussed the prompt aids whereby she prevented his falling [17r] precipitously into ruin; he spoke of the unusual kindnesses with which she never left him a minute to prepare an orderly expression of gratitude, thanks to their frequent dispensation; he gave an account of the unfeigned acts of her charity, noting that their effects always appeared without a mask of self-interest and their recurrences without a disguise of ostentation.

He was not silent about her loving show of comfort, in which the words of her speech were never separated from the substance of her works. Nor did he, in the end, keep hidden the profuse acts of her generosity, whereby she could, as was known of her, sate the wants of appetite and put an end to the intemperance of desire; and how these offices of humanity were always shown to him, in every place, at every time, on every occasion, by that illustrious woman who abundantly provided for his needs.

The Lady of Correggio reacted all at once with the exclamation "oh, dear," then said: "And how did you show your gratitude for so much pity?"

Here the graceless soul fell silent and almost fainted. Regaining some courage, he then began a new story. He told of the escape he made when he went to Friuli, after having filched whatever he had obtained from [17v] the honored Jewess; he told of how courteously he was greeted by her upon his return—she did not even hold his failing against him. He told of whatever followed: the way she cheered him up in his illness and how much trouble

Caro served as secretary ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 137 n. 90). Caro is said (by Boccato) to have related the story in a letter written in Giudicioni's name to the bishop of Castro and printed in volume 1 of his *Lettere familiari*; yet I was unable to find Piperno or the story in any of the *Lettere*, neither in their modern edition (3 vols.) by Aulo Greco, nor in volume 1 as originally printed by Manuzio in 1572 (and reprinted by him, together with volume 2, in 1574–75). The whole point, in the Codex Solinga, was to set up a comparison between Piperno and Paluzzi as two tricksters.

133. Bonifaccio? Garimberto? See above.

the solicitous woman went to in doing so and how she was determined to remove him from the steam bath and how she placed him in the house of Paola Furlana, whereupon he became an accomplice in the thefts of the filthy Moorish girl and the infamous laundress [Furlana]. He recounted how he improved upon the villainous shams first invented by those two knavish females and how much authority he conferred on the fraud in his assurances to that lady that the black girl had unequivocal dealings with the spirits and that, from all of this, he hoped to discover secrets perhaps never before probed in the marvelous art of magic. He told of how, to facilitate this business, he included three sons of the laundress among the accomplices; he showed how his servant was involved in the doings and how often the group used false letters and false testimony to sully, seize, steal, and slander. He told of the insults and outrages committed in disdain and derision of the betrayed woman; he assured those ladies of the illicit [18r] relations the servant had with the Moorish girl, saying that what they did was as much out of impious behavior, in complete repudiation of the law, as it was to serve and secure whatever had been concluded. He declared every trick and trickery; he recounted the invention of the basket and the way it was exposed; nor did he forget the one of the portrait, whereby the servant made a profit of more than a hundred ducats by remitting only a minimal part to the rest of the band that, itself, had been hard at work to make sure the trick would succeed. He told of the pages, the postilions, the messages, the incantations, the flying spirits, and all sorts of traps invented by him, by the servant, and by that whole infamous college for the total ruin of that luckless gentlewoman.

Here he became silent, as if he had nothing left to say, at which point all those ladies along with whoever else was there burst forth, almost in one voice, with the words: "O revolting monsters, did this not seem enough to you without having further to defame that illustrious woman with slanderous tongues and vilify her in unworthy writings?"¹³⁴ Turning to him, the Lady of Pescara said: "How could you still have a heart, iniquitous man, [18v] to let your writings be seen and read for their unworthy lies?"

Those ladies, by then, were already so sickened by him that they were about to have him lifted to the rack. But he begged that they allow him to be heard again. License was given him to speak, whereupon he resumed his discourse as follows:

"Ignominies were seen in writing, and the charges brought against that honored woman now appear in print."¹³⁵ But they were not seen, nor do they

134. The *Sareide*.

135. In the edition of his *Rime* (see under 3.2 below) and, possibly, in pamphlets of the *Sareide*.

now appear, in order for her to be defamed by them (no! an insignificant cloud cannot blot the eternal light of the sun). Rather it was in order for me to be tormented by them in some sort of inferno, thanks to the unworthy villainies I committed against her. My actions were certainly impious, shameful, and unpardonable in all the ways they led from one abyss to another.

"But that it was my will to offend a person, who had helped me so much, by such an execrable betrayal and with invective of so wicked a nature—never was this true! Unbeknown to me, that dishonored servant [Berardelli] let those [19r] infamous writings, which were seen in manuscript, be heard. Nor did I ever receive any notice of the indignities that this most contemptible scullery boy went and publicized, out loud and on paper, about one who was both deserving of every honor for her virtue and always meritorious of every reverence for her nobility of mind.

"Some thought should be given, illustrious ladies, to how frequently and ineptly the unworthy man came to lay charges against the honored Jewess, for no less will the perfidy in which he abounds be perceived in his deceitful lies than will my innocence show clearly in his fallacious reports. The rascal is lying about my never having composed a work that that lady did not think of using to blazon her own name.¹³⁶ Infamous blasphemer! Look how he tries to detract from the fame of one so virtuous and at the same time put her in need of emending those creations she has already brought to the limits of completion.¹³⁷ To establish his case, he endeavors, with no less villainous a lie, to make this falsity credible by availing himself of those incomplete compositions of mine that [19v] the wretched fellow saw purposely to printing in so mutilated and lacerated a form¹³⁸ as indeed would require the honored actions of that illustrious woman for their improvement.

"But do you perhaps think, thievish soul,¹³⁹ that she would ratify this

136. The implication being that Copia plagiarized her teacher's works, among them poems published in her *Manifesto* (see below).

137. Can be read in two ways: works that Copia not only "created" but saw through to their "completion"; or works that she "created" but Paluzzi marked to be "emended," whereby she "completed" them on her own. For "creations," Paluzzi speaks of *parti*, "births"; indeed, the formulation "*quei parti già da lei a termine di perfetione condotti*" may be freely rendered as "those works already brought by her to the full term of pregnancy before delivery, upon completion, as 'creations.'"

138. Paluzzi's *rime* has twenty-four instances of verbal omissions (marked by ellipsis points), two incomplete canzoni (72–80), one scene only of a play (98–101), and an incomplete set of *ottave rime* (104–5).

139. Paluzzi addresses Berardelli.

agreement of yours? And that I, according to your false dogma, compose works for the Jewess and that she, after revising them, would endeavor to have my works seen in print as lacerated and torn to shreds? If your imprisonment and your having been proclaimed¹⁴⁰ an outright, infamous thief did not demonstrate the dark meanness of your mind, I would do my best to uncover it.¹⁴¹ But of those who may have had dealings with me there is nobody to whom this fraud of yours (ass that you are!) would not appear obvious, you double-dealing, big-time thief!

"With cunning design he took whatever really seemed to be good from within those fragments,¹⁴² only to hack it, I say, so as to strengthen his infamous lies. By challenging another's [Copia's] innocence, he has, with such a wound inflicted on my verses, offended my fame, for his larcenies, his villainies, are all directed at the target of my name and all hit my honor with a bull's-eye. [20r] The result is that those who once were on somewhat friendly terms with me hold themselves in shame, not to speak of their not even mentioning me anymore. Even so, the ignominious thief dares to walk through the streets of Venice and introduce himself into the print shops. Putting on an impudent face, he has the nerve to deal with men of honor and let himself be seen alive on the pavement of the earth.

"O most excellent ladies, may you sympathize, I beseech you, with my afflictions, even though I do not deserve it; and may you go on to ponder the inventions of this perfidious servant—oh, what a load they heap on my cause! May you consider how he, with an eye to supporting his lies with some semblance of truth, pretends that my verses include a sonnet that I appear to have written to him while he was in prison, though such a sonnet did I never conceive, let alone compose.¹⁴³ Please consider if someone at his last gasp in the throes of death and shriveled in his every member, distressed by discomfort, oppressed by sin, and pained by a guilty conscience could possibly, or in any degree of likelihood, [20v] have a mind to composing sonnets and do so all the more for a sordid scullery boy who was the cause of my own great destruction!

"Nor is the thief content with stating this lie, for over the same sonnet

140. From the continuation (23v) it is clear that after having been convicted, Berardelli was publicly denounced as a thief by the town crier.

141. The source has *scoprirlo*, with *lo* in reference to "mind" (*animo*), yet *lo* is probably a mistake for *la*, in reference, more sensibly, to "meanness" (*viltà*).

142. Paluzzi resumes his appeal to the judges.

143. The sonnet "Dunque cotanto l'empia invidia hor puote" (Paluzzi, *Rime*, 106), which, as Paluzzi just said, was not his own composition but Berardelli's (it has the word "prisoner" in line 12). See below for inscription (and for Traiano Boccalini's response to the sonnet, 66r).

he also set the inscription of his being in prison 'because of my interests.'¹⁴⁴ It was because of his thefts, over which I had no jurisdiction, that he was there! Let the wretch say to me: 'Who cut off the Jewess's belt? Who stole from her so many pieces of gold both minted as coins and worked in several shapes? Who removed so many pieces of furniture? Who made the villainously invented portrait? Who cleared out her coffers? Who despoiled her house? Who unhinged the strongbox?' Paluzzi frozen to death in his bed?¹⁴⁵ Paluzzi not even fit to feed himself? Paluzzi not alive except for his tongue?

"He calls 'my interests' the things that were his particular misdeeds! In an inscription to a sonnet composed by Zinano he writes, further, that 'for his friend Signor Numidio he suffered damages and dangers'¹⁴⁶ Not 'for his friend' but for the excess of his thefts did the [21r] lout suffer the villainous wrongs of his doings, which, cloaked in a new charity, he now, with feigned zeal, has seen to unload on the back of my fame.

"But no less should the administration of justice, most excellent madam judges, be determined from what I am about to tell you of him. By extracting from my words their true implication you will then know whether I can be blamed for his slander.

"All of Venice knows that after the Jewess removed me from the steam bath, she set me up in a comfortable place, where, despite its modesty, I had the greatest piece of mind. It was in praise of that place that I wrote the sonnet 'Altri spatiar tra le dilitie e gli agi' [Others roaming among delights and comforts] to be found on page 106 [of my *Rime*]. I composed it with no other end than to praise the beneficence of the one who had led me to that lodging. Why did the thief not make any mention of this?¹⁴⁷ Instead, with malice aforethought, he had it printed under the title of what he pretends I wrote to him when he was imprisoned,¹⁴⁸ and yet it is known that I com-

144. Inscription: "[A poem] presented to Signor Alessandro Berandelli [sic] because of the false criminal charge [brought against him] for [having looked out for] the interests of the author [Paluzzi]."

145. In Furlana's house (see 10v, above).

146. Paluzzi, *Rime*, A 5v ("To Signor Alessandro Berardelli . . . by Signor Gabriele Zinano"). Zinano (1557–1635): born in Reggio Emilia, studied in Ferrara, and from the 1590s traceable in Naples and Rome; poet, epistolarian, playwright, and theorist. In 1626 he published a twelve-book political treatise *Della ragione degli stati* and in 1627 six collections of verses, among them *Rime diverse* (with a sonnet to Copia and hers in response; see below, 4.2, nos. 2 and 3). It was in the *Rime diverse*, moreover, that Zinano republished the same sonnet dedicated to Berardelli, now spelled Bernard.[elli] (47–48), removing its inscription. There the portion about "suffering damages and dangers" (without "for his friend Signor Numidio") occurs (as it did in Paluzzi's *Rime*) within line 9 ("Poi che sofferti pria danni, e perigli").

147. In the inscription.

148. The inscription reads: "[Upon Berardelli's] being reduced to poor lodgings" (*Essendosi ridotto in un povero albergo*), with "poor lodgings" meant to denote his prison cell; Paluzzi, *Rime*, 106.

posed the sonnet two years before his imprisonment occurred. He did so in order [21v] to conceal the high regard that that lady had for me and not to weaken his unworthy lies by confessing as much.

"But why am I toiling over the evidence of his iniquity? Did he not also try to darken the glory of that virtuous woman by attaching another name to the title of the sonnet that I wrote in her praise, to be read on page 57 [*recte* 56]? Each of its verses was so weighed by her as to earn me, in exchange, one silver *scudo*,¹⁴⁹ and, out of envy, this panhandler did not say: 'In praise of the beautiful Jewish woman,' as I said; rather he chose to say: 'In praise of the beautiful Turkess.'¹⁵⁰ Yet everyone knows that it was composed for the Jewess and that it was dedicated to her, all of which should be said so as not to remove credit where it is due or diminish his thievish lies.

"Meanwhile the villainous soul calls me a friend and addresses me as 'Signor.' At one and the same time he flatters, he pricks, and he sows calamities, since he no less betrayed me, in undermining my fame and pilfering my compositions, than he did the Jewess, in speaking ill of her [22r] name and stealing her money. The best of my works has this thief fleeced in order to make use of them whenever it might be to his advantage. They include the prologue of the tragedy¹⁵¹ that is also my best work, which [prologue] I even finished.¹⁵² But it is also true that with these feathers the clumsy bird hunter¹⁵³ thinks of rehabilitating himself and refurbishing his image and that he places the blame of his own theft on a woman who was most innocent of it and never gave any thought to it.

"Is this the testimony of faith that I am shown by one who, at no time, heard similar blasphemies from my tongue? How is it that in considering my works he could be more concerned with others than with me?¹⁵⁴ Ah, that in-

149. Thus Copia rewarded him with fourteen silver *scudi*, equivalent to slightly more than nine ducats.

150. The inscription omits "in praise of" to read simply *Bella Turca*. For the sonnet, see below under 3.2, no. 1.

151. Of this tragedy, unidentified by title, only one scene is printed (*Rime*, 98–101; altogether 117 lines, indistinct in their content). In the caption to the scene (*ibid.*, 98) the tragedy is described as "little short of being completed" and the scene itself as "all that remains of it."

152. Paluzzi leaves one to infer that Berardelli printed fragments of works that, according to the latter, were left undone. It is not clear, from the prose, whether Paluzzi considered his "best work" to be the tragedy or only its "prologue." What is clear, however, is that he accused Berardelli of absconding with the prologue, not the tragedy, and, from the use of the masculine demonstrative pronoun *questo* (for *prologo*, whereas *questa* would have been required for *tragedia*), that he described the same prologue as complete.

153. Equates his works with birds that Berardelli, as bird hunter, trapped and plucked of their feathers.

154. Instead of acknowledging the works as Paluzzi's, that is, he accuses others of stealing them.

famous fellow, who, with one shot, thought of achieving several goals:¹⁵⁵ to appear to be anxious over a friend, to avenge the Jewess by false slander, and to cover up his defamation! With his stinking mouth open to spout insults, his infamous tongue makes such strides that it dares to say that the purest mind of that lady so debased itself as to have wished to rob me of my verses.

"Exorbitant, shameless [22v] impudence of a stinking guzzler!¹⁵⁶ Certainly from nobody but one of your likes would I hear similar dirt. No other authority than a recognized thief would belch forth such villainous imperinencies.

"As regards this lie, I refer, most excellent ladies,¹⁵⁷ to the same letter¹⁵⁸ that was written to me when this traitor had the *Sareide* heard in public and gave out infamous libels to be read in the squares.¹⁵⁹ But I will say, in addition, that after the compassionate Jewess removed me from the steam bath, I myself, several times, made her an offer of the verses that the servant [Berardelli] said she stole from me.¹⁶⁰ But what is of more consequence is that I employed the same servant, several times, to have him persuade that virtuous soul to accept them, which was always to no avail, as you must have seen from the above-mentioned letter.¹⁶¹

"Oh, how much, how much indeed would I have to say to you, most excellent madam judges, about this wretch. But noticing that my untimely talking is causing you much tedium, I abruptly put a brake on it, and so my desire to talk about him makes a retreat. Trusting in your noble ways, [23r] however, I am induced to supplicate you for permission to vent my sorrow. May I, as is fit, be given enough time to turn to this abominable brigand and say to him:

"O falsest thief, what hostility did the Jewess feel toward me? Oh, she must have been suspicious of what was in my mind regarding this particular

155. The original reads "with one shot he thought of making several strikes" (a variation on "killing two birds with one stone"), though, from the continuation, the speaker aimed rather at "achieving several goals" (as translated).

156. Paluzzi addresses Berardelli.

157. Paluzzi resumes his appeal to the judges.

158. Shortly to be recited at Aretino's command (from 26r on).

159. The implication is that in addition to the *Sareide* Berardelli composed further denunciations.

160. By "the verses" Paluzzi seems to be referring to those of his own that, at the end of the second paragraph above, Copia, according to Berardelli, thought of stealing.

161. From the letter it becomes clear that Paluzzi was so pinched for money that he made the following proposition: he would give Copia his own verses were she properly to compensate him for them, nor would he mind her publishing them under her name. But the letter also reveals that it was not Berardelli who served as intermediary but rather Giacomo Rosa and, at Rosa's bidding, a certain Bartolomeo Pasini (see below, 30v).

person who was supposed to induce her to steal my compositions, yet how suspicious was she? To what end would she seek to have, by theft, that which so many times I had sought, by entreaties, to make her want to receive as a present? Every day, as one knows, she sent me victuals to sustain me, but do you not know, infamous ingrate, how many, many times you appeased your hunger with the remnants of her liberality? Were these perhaps signs of any hatred or rancor she might bear me?

"I do not know, most excellent ladies,¹⁶² what reason he had to believe he could make the world believe that she who, in every possible matter, strove for my benefit would want then, out of wickedness, to deprive me of my efforts. Nor do I so little as know how to imagine myself as the person whom he, in his gross ignorance, thought of portraying via false charges of my ineptitude, stating that she [23v] regarded these fragments of verse as scrapings and these abortive works as half-grown ones that I never directed to any completion, as would be obvious, moreover, so he continued, to anybody who conversed with me.

"People do not see how much material this clumsy ox offers for others' laughter, as when he thinks that he makes fireflies appear as lanterns¹⁶³ and hypocritically pretends that others interpret his perfidy as zeal and his treacheries as pious affections. Is it perhaps because of a cloud that they do not perceive the ulcerous wound in the mind of this filthy glutton?¹⁶⁴ Who is it that would not see that his wish is to take revenge on the Jewess, by whom he was made public as a thief and proclaimed as one¹⁶⁵ on the steps¹⁶⁶ and, consequently, held so long in detention? Who does not see, I say, that this is the reason why the more the foolish wretch thinks he has loosened his snares, the more he becomes entangled in them?

"Let the idler tell me what burning interest he could have in my stuff¹⁶⁷ or what zeal, beyond any ordinary vehemence, so pressed him as for such furious barking to be heard from such a mastiff. Ah, if anything, [24r] he had the feeling of turning corners, on this street, to skirt that loathsome infamy

162. Paluzzi resumes his appeal to the judges.

163. Neither of the two words (*luciole, lanterne*) could be traced in Paluzzi's *Rime*.

164. For glutton the source had *disongipati*, or one who scrapes dishes of their remnants.

165. By the town crier.

166. It was customary in Venice for the names of criminals to be publicly announced on the steps alongside the balustrade of the Rialto Bridge and what is known today as the Guglie Bridge (*guglie*, or "spires," from the four obelisks erected in 1823) (after Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 143 n. 118; see fig. 2, nos. 8 and 1, respectively, for the two bridges).

167. Originally "things," i.e., writings.

that ever more surrounds him on all sides. Yes, yes, the fox is in a trap, oh, let us let him twist and turn.

"But what particularly astonishes me about people is seeing that even the wisest of them may, by their encouragement, have so fomented the falsity of a similar wretch as for him, having gained a public stamp of approval, to face me by putting on a mask of such wickedness. I honored them in another way, as can be seen moreover in my writings, which leaves me bewildered: while he pretends to be indebted to most illustrious heroes, aiding them by flattery to maintain their solicitude [over him], they, it seems to me, ought never to have let an infamous cutthroat servant lacerate the name of a virtuous and honored woman. Even if they knew nothing else (though the truth of the matter was not hidden), just seeing how he appears to feed himself in no other way than by plunging his canine tooth into the fame of this honored lady with such glaring lies would be enough to turn the stomach of any man, be he only moderately reputed for his honor.

[24v] "But let us return to the thief, who, confronted by my verses, makes such a mishmash of politics, tragedy, and polemics¹⁶⁸ as for the world not to know which works, of these kinds, I might still finish, which ones I may have left incomplete, and which ones I hardly began. The rascal does not know that the political one passed for review through the hands of various illustrious lords and preeminent lawyers and that even though the original was lost, enough of its contents remained so that one had a sampling of it in more than one place. Thus one recognizes that he is deprived no less of sense than of honor and that his confused conscience is such as to become all the more confused by getting wrapped up in lies. So it happens that even when he knows how little enduring the form of his impudent criticisms is, he proceeds to a new hunt to ruin the name of that illustrious woman with a fiercer canine bite.

"To do this, he prepares new artillery by promising these other lacerated remains to the press.¹⁶⁹ But while the ass believes he is cleansing himself

168. For "polemics" the source has *opuscoli*, i.e., pamphlets, presumably of an argumentative nature. It is not clear where the "mishmash" occurred. One possibility is in Berardelli's reports to others on Paluzzi's works, in which case Paluzzi seems to be saying that the reports were confused for failing to differentiate between writings of different kinds (prose, poetry, political tracts, plays, polemics). Another possibility is in Berardelli's publication of Paluzzi's *rime*, which, themselves, included disparate material, of political, dramatic, and disputatious content. We already know about a "tragedy" (see above, 22r) and in the next sentence are told of a "political" work (which might refer to the canzone for Carlo Emanuele I, duke of Savoy, or the one for Henri IV, king of France; *Rime*, 72–80).

169. Berardelli promises a second collection, in his foreword to Paluzzi's *Rime*, with scraps from the author's writings (3.2.A 4r).

of the infamy that smothers him, what happens to him is as to one who spits against the wind, which then blows [25r] back on him to imprint the ignominy of his despicable actions, ever more, on his face.

"Most excellent ladies, now that I entreat you to judge my cause with that discrimination needed for discerning one wrong from another, may you be advised, with respect to the unworthy perjury committed by the evil-doer in his remarks about the 'Manifesto on the Soul,'¹⁷⁰ that I refer to the trustworthy evidence of that above-mentioned letter.¹⁷¹ I have said all I have to say."

PALUZZI AND BERARDELLI AS CHARGED BY THE CHIEF PROSECUTOR PIETRO ARETINO

The most eminent persons on Parnassus formed a thick and honorable circle around those women. After the speaker became silent, they began to do a lot of murmuring, with some of them forgiving the things that were heard and others reproving them. It was at that point that Signor Pietro Aretino,¹⁷² who, until now, had listened with little patience to the falsities of the same one [Paluzzi], asked to say a few words in response to what that Lycaon had said.¹⁷³ He was given license by the illustrious women. Extending his arm toward the accused, he bowed to Their Excellencies and directed his words to them, saying:

"Most excellent ladies, in a long and tedious speech he [Paluzzi] indulged in his cavil, [25v] wanting to make us believe that of the indignities practiced by the servant [Berardelli] in writing to the detriment of that Jewess's honored fame he had no knowledge. Meanwhile, he confesses his minor, though still most impious wrongs, hoping by this strategy to escape from the major ones that are irremissible. The ingrate foresees what shame-

170. *Manifesto dell'anima*, or rather the soul's immortality, a tract that Berardelli said was written or heavily influenced by Paluzzi (see below, 31v, 51v, 72v, 73r-v).

171. To be read below (26r on).

172. Pietro Aretino (1492-1556), poet, playwright, critic. He became the bane of the literary world in his sardonic criticism, mincing few words in his *Ragionamenti* and letters, as he became of the Church in his outright disrespect for its authority. So forceful was his tongue that he could topple princes and politicians. For his acerbic dialogues, see their translation by Raymond Rosenthal (*Aretino's Dialogues*), and for his scandalous behavior, Raymond B. Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr: Sexuality, Satire, and Self-Projection in Sixteenth-Century Literature and Art*.

173. Lycaon, in ancient mythology, was the son of Pelasgus, king of Arcadia. He founded the cult of Zeus Lycaeus, but after sacrificing a child on his altar, he was turned into a wolf. In another episode he is said to have tricked Zeus into eating human flesh, thus provoking the Flood (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.222ff.).

ful punitive measures will be taken against him. Therefore by declaring himself guilty of one part and abjuring any involvement in that other one of greater weight, he endeavors to escape that punishment for which the law, if it is not to be lame, can in no way show leniency. It was his wildest misdemeanor to have despoiled the Jewess of her comforts and, with violent robbery, to have defrauded her of her jewels, stolen her gold plate, bared her coffers, thrown open her strongboxes, and looted her money. To these actions he added the opprobrium, the disdain, the impudent arrogance, the sneers, the contempt, the outrages, and the derision that all occurred in the course of performing their infamies. But he is to be blamed for a much greater iniquity in his having denied her fame [26r] with wicked falsehoods, reviled her honor with dirty lies, stained her reputation with detestable fabrications, impugned her innocence with execrable slander, crushed the truth with iniquitous calumnies, and, in the sight of mankind, exhibited villainies of such odious qualities.

"One might go back to reading the letter that was already discussed¹⁷⁴ and that he himself already brought in as evidence, to see if we can draw some truth from it. I suggest this because I do not believe that there is such nobility of mind in that person as for him to have made the point of expatiating more on robbing her property than on ravaging her fame."

The lector¹⁷⁵ was ordered to reread that letter.¹⁷⁶ He read its words out loud, while everyone listened to their content:

Giacomo Rosa's Letter to Paluzzi

"It must be about five years ago that I made the acquaintance of Signora Sarra,¹⁷⁷ and this through the mediation of that lord, of illustrious memory, Ansaldo Cebà, may he rest in heaven! As virtuous as he was Christian, he ever set his goal at leading this honored woman to the light of truth, and, to this end, he sometimes took pleasure [26v] in availing himself of my efforts,

174. See above, 15v.

175. Probably the court official appointed for reciting documents as part of judicial procedure. Why "reread" (continuation)? Presumably because the investigating judges had already read the letter (see, again, 15v).

176. Written by Giacomo Rosa, as follows. Italicized headings are this editor's.

177. Since the letter is dated 1624 (see closing, 34v), Rosa would have first met Copia around 1620, as might be corroborated by the two letters he received from Cebà (1.1/L39 and L41), the first in answer to Rosa, who reported to him on Copia in a letter from mid-November 1620. Writing to Bonifaccio in early January 1620, Copia mentions Paluzzi as present in her house (2.2.A 5r), though it was only two years later that she appears to have appointed him as her instructor (see above, note to 8r).

as one can see in his letters.¹⁷⁸ Perhaps if death had not intervened, and there had been no further wickedness of destiny, by which I mean a cessation of others' perfidy, we were not that far from seeing the realization of that honored lord's holy thought.

"In the house of Signora Sarra I knew you by reputation, which, by testimony of that lady, resonated in my ears so honorably as could no more worthily befall the reputation of any more illustrious name bearer. Yet the honored woman, from what I heard afterward, would have had little occasion to praise you for the way you behaved to her when, without saying a word, you went away, which is something of which you yourself know the circumstances.¹⁷⁹

"Nor was there any consideration, in this decision of yours to depart, of the many benefits already received from her at a time when you were wanting breath for respiration, let alone clothes for keeping covered, bread for nourishment, or a room for shelter. [27r] To confirm what I say I have many persons' testimony, beyond what I heard from you yourself, moreover, when you so excessively made an apology to that good gentlewoman on the first day you visited her in her house after your return from Friuli (the noblewoman did not let you finish the apology, for with all sorts of honorable words she comforted and consoled you). This was also the first day I met you in person and, at one and the same time, got to know you and began to assist and like you. How I stood by you afterward, exerting as much strength as I could muster, you yourself know. Similarly you know how, in appreciating your powers of persuasion, I hoped to be able to realize, by your mediation more than others', what Signor Ansaldo had in mind, for I saw how highly Signora Sarra regarded you. Therefore I never once stopped doing whatever I possibly could for your benefit, certainly never believing I would be sorry for it.

"You chose afterward to fail me in what you had been entrusted to do.¹⁸⁰ [27v] Once you consented to doing something else, you employed your skills and lent your counsel for a betrayal so inherently infamous, a theft so sordid, and a deception so scornful. Nor were you particularly satisfied with your knowledge of the doings, so you added an accomplice [Berardelli] to your iniquity, and in the secret gatherings of your rabble you all conspired

178. See, again, 1.1/L39, L41.

179. From what follows it is clear that the speaker (Rosa) was not a visitor to Copia's house before Paluzzi stole away to Friuli, yet he definitely was upon his return, meaning that he first made Copia's acquaintance during Paluzzi's absence.

180. Help Rosa in persuading Copia to convert.

the total ruin of those with whose bread you relieved both your own and your party's hunger over so long a time. In the fire of their charity you so often rekindled your spirits and in that of their benignity you ought to recognize the life whereby you breathe. Treacheries are to be abhorred in the most infamous villains, let alone those who like you make a profession of cultivating the sacred studies of illustrious sciences. None of this can you hide from me, for you well know how you dealt with me. You also know how much of the goings-on I can confirm from various sources, namely: what I have seen; your words, [28r] of which I retain an unshaken memory; the letters you wrote me; and a hundred other details that make the truth of the matter clearer than the sun.

"Regarding your malice, I swear by God that I never took any notice of it up to the very last day I was with you, for in every other person would I have believed a failing possible, but in you, certainly never. Behold! upon my making a return visit to Signora Sarra, with my mind still most intent on being of help to you, she accidentally spoke of the tricks that had been played on her, recalling as one of them the business of the basket, about which, again I swear by God, I no longer had any recollection. Then, in a flash, I recognized your fraudulent machination, for in pondering the words you had already exchanged with me—more than a year before—about the thieveries of the Moorish girl and in recalling with what wicked artfulness you protested your having to keep silent about them¹⁸¹ and in considering the hatred you displayed on that particular day, I became more than certain of your perfidious wickedness."

[28v] "Listen, Ladies," Aretino said: "'the hatred you displayed on that particular day!' Continue reading."¹⁸²

Giacomo Rosa's Letter to Paluzzi (cont'd)

"That day, I say, despite your being in low spirits, your voice became so much stronger that I needed to beg you to calm down lest your anger cause you some harm. Hatred to defend whom? A villainous accomplice [Furlana] in thefts to the detriment of a woman who, for your reputation, would have put her life on the line; to the detriment of a woman who alone was your helper in your extreme calamities; to the detriment of a woman who, good God! would yet have given her word that same day to continue to support you provided you remove yourself from the house of that wicked female

181. And presumably swearing Rosa, too, not to say a word of them.

182. The last two words are addressed to the lector.

[Furlana] by whom she claimed she was betrayed—ah, what a fate it was for her to be so betrayed!

"But God, who does not permit such villainies to remain covered over a long period, saw to my inadvertently making Signora Sarra aware of the fact that she obviously could no longer lend you her faith. I consider it a miracle, to be sure, that while I was trying, [29r] with every effort, to relieve her of these vexations caused by the discovery of the traps in her household, behold! the truth came to me on my tongue and, without my knowing what I was saying, made me uncover what I then would gladly have concealed. Losing myself in thought over all these things and perceiving the filthiness of such an indignity, I resolved no longer to come to where you were, which, instead of grieving you, showed rather that among the worse you are the worst."

"Pay attention to where you are, lector," said Aretino, only to speak to those most excellent lady judges as follows:

"The hatred that he [Paluzzi] displayed that day, while another [Rosa], with friendly offices, strove to silence the uproar, was the same one that made him raise his voice, for which reason the friend thought it right to ask him to calm down lest that troublesome shouting cause him some damage. From what source should we believe it arose? From no other, so I believe, than a poisoned vein of naturally wicked ingratitude that leads to mortal hatred [29v] mostly of those who offer greater services in return for the disservices of similar monsters.

"O God! And for whom was he so upset? For a villainous accomplice: the person to be named would necessarily be the laundrywoman, whose dirty tricks may perhaps have been censured, which gave this infamous fellow an occasion to become so upset. She must no doubt have been a worthy subject for such a warrior to protect her in battle!

"But I return to you, foulest of spirits,¹⁸³ and I ask: why this hatred so intense? Was it perhaps as a remuneration, then, for that eternal beneficence, the waters of which ever irrigated the parched tongue of your mendacity?

"Most learned madam judges, this letter was sent to him [Paluzzi] after the calumnies and infamies that the mean servant [Berardelli] went around disseminating had been seen in writing.¹⁸⁴ In order further to corroborate them, the lector ought to continue reading—note the places where the truth of the matter is uncovered. Let the lector go back to that passage 'losing myself in thought over all these things.'"

183. Aretino addresses Paluzzi.

184. Refers to the *Sareide*.

Giacomo Rosa's Letter to Paluzzi (cont'd)

"Losing myself in thought [30r] over all these things and perceiving the filthiness of such an indignity, I resolved no longer to come to where you were, which, instead of grieving you, showed rather that among the worse you are the worst. Those with impious minds are not content with the exercise of loutish injuries or of stealings both to the disadvantage of one who was never deserving of them and to their own eventual end with a rope.¹⁸⁵ Behold! they bring into play an invective [the *Sareide*] as fit for general hissing by the populace as it is for severe punishment of anyone who was its instigator. From this invective one well knows where that shoe was tight on you and how much it displeased that gentleman [Berardelli], who had taken upon himself the enterprise of having similar infamies be heard, to see his plans cut short. But these infamies are a perfect indication of those monstrosities customarily born of similar vulgar crudities.¹⁸⁶ It is only right for you to know, however, that when the fame of an honored person is lacerated by similar people, it is but a true testimony of the same person's worth and merit.

[30v] "The infamous always maintain a fiendish enmity with the honored. Just as men of honor clearly do not get involved in similar vile crudities, so the *Sareide* and a hundred other extravagancies, worthy fruit of your trunk, would make you appear as you are. Thus the dedication [to your *Rime*] that our interpreter [Berardelli] elucidates¹⁸⁷ only to confuse others would be particularly worthy of being placed at the front of your compositions to serve as a fitting decoration for them and as a meritorious trumpet for hailing your filthy actions.

"But where does this insolent arrogance have to end? Tell me yourself. How many times did you try to make Signora Sarra content with having your verses issued under her name, resolving on this in exchange for a minimal reward? Do you not remember that you entrusted me with talking to her about the matter and had me broach it to Signor Bartolomeo Pasini?¹⁸⁸ And

185. Presages Berardelli's (imaginary) hanging by rope.

186. The words of invective in the *Sareide*.

187. While under interrogation.

188. Possibly to be identified with a certain Bartholomei di Pasini, a basket weaver, who, on 6 May 1621, had a will drawn up by the notary Giovanni Crivelli (see Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 149 n. 136, after Venice, Archivio di Stato, Notarial wills, file 219 of those pertaining to Crivelli). Is there any connection between him and the *cestarioli*, or "basket makers," who seem to have worked in Copia's household (see below, 96r, no. 60:7)?

that it was pointless since that lady shrank from similar tawdriness? Do you not recollect that in answer to your offer she urged you to use these verses as [31r] an opportunity to obtain a patron from whom you might hope for some relief from your worries? And that in any case you could count on her for whatever it was in her power to guarantee? Do you not recall how, with these words of hers, you secured three *scudi* in her name? Does this now put you in a mind to incite another [Berardelli] to resort to slander in order for him to sully, with abusive lies, the reputation of such a virtuous lady by claiming that she stole your verses? Was this not to cover up for your thefts, your tricks, and your deceptions and at the same time for you to appear, in others' judgment, as a poet of great consequence? Is that not so?

"Oh, if it only pleased your roguish court to dispense you from any further need of the Jewess's bread and side dishes or whatever the Jewess herself might have gained from your compositions and your teachings! Yes, because you availed yourself of her property far more than she did of your learning. You well know that the crumbs falling from her table were always [31v] enough to appease your hunger, but your serious prerogatives and privileged studies were never of any power to satiate you.

"What kind of evidence do you induce this new chronicler of yours [Berardelli] to bear? He speaks like an echo in a cave, without knowing what is being said. The poor guy rambles on about your work on a 'Manifesto.'¹⁸⁹ Yet where am *I* in this picture? He does not mention that I came,¹⁹⁰ every day, to let you see whatever Signora Sarra had written and that I had a lot of trouble to extract a correction from your claws¹⁹¹ and that before you might condescend to look at a sonnet, I so often needed to butter you up and wheedle you. All the servants who then staffed the house of the most illustrious Signor Marchese Martinengo¹⁹² will testify to this, for they saw, when I was there, how I continually accommodated to your person. But I am

189. Paluzzi's *Rime*, foreword to readers, where the *Manifesto* is named among other works written for Copia (3.2.A 4r).

190. To the house (presumably) of the marchese Martinengo, in whose literary salon Paluzzi seems to have installed himself as an instructor (see next sentence).

191. Paluzzi was slow or derelict in performing his editorial work.

192. Identified by Boccato as perhaps Marc'Antonio (1592–1678), count of Martinengo and bishop of Torcello ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 150 n. 139). Yet Marc'Antonio was a count and the marchese to whom Rosa is referring was named by Paluzzi as Gherardo in three sonnets (*Rime*, 91–92), the first two "For the lord marchese C[h]erardo Martinengo" and the third "For the eagle, the device of the lord marchese Martinengo" (the inscription is supplied in the *errata*, A 5r). Paluzzi's connections with the family extended to another member, the count Francesco (the *Rime* contains a sonnet "upon the death of the excellent and most illustrious lord count Francesco Martinengo," 49).

not surprised at what I now hear from them, since it was always your custom to brag of your skills, as you were heard to do before all those different individuals who had assembled in the distinguished salon run by that [32r] most noble signor, the Signor Marchese, I mean. You, I would say, revised or completely reshaped the speeches that each and all of them recited in public. It was your style, moreover, to say to those whom you addressed or met that only a short time ago you had been with a certain person or that a certain signor had just departed or that you were biding your time in expectation of his arrival or that you were waiting for someone else to come, and you always name-dropped those of greater fame and those of greater learning and those of greater eminence in rank. You added that in whatever you do, you eat the bread of virtue, though these words were said at a time when you were eating the bread of impiety, treason, and perfidy. The words were meant to indicate that you were revising those learned men's works, correcting errors, eliminating inconsistencies from their writings, and, to say it all in one breath, giving lessons to the authors.

"Therefore we should not be surprised if a woman who in fact was your student should have to go through the routine of your slander, for in that work¹⁹³ there is really nothing of yours beyond [32v] having roused the good lady to adopt that biting style that made her appear with less charm than the way she would have appeared if she had not trusted you. Yet the same style was of little liking to anyone having greater respect for the terms of courtesy than you have.

"But what memorable enterprises do they [the writings in the *Sareide*] reveal, what flashes of deep learning, what authoritative ink scrawls, and what trials surpassing Herculean ones! Look! You became a new Eurystheus spurring a modern Alcides on to illustrious deeds!¹⁹⁴ Behold the gallantry of a soldier in combat with a respected woman: he goes into the field with infamous libels. Do you, under this mantle, believe you can cover the indignities of your unworthy actions? I do not want to go into details about them, for they turn my stomach. As a good-for-nothing you got mixed up with female servants and kitchen maids, you fell into the muck of their deceptions, and you lent a hand to ruining and slandering one who for the better part of five continuous years so helped and comforted you.¹⁹⁵

[33r] "You and your contemptible mind! Tell your stupendous champion

193. The *Manifesto*, which Paluzzi supposedly helped Copia draft.

194. Eurystheus was the king of Mycene who commanded Hercules (here Berardelli) to perform the Twelve Labors.

195. On the five years Paluzzi received favors from Copia, see under 26r, note.

[Berardelli], if he does not know it, the story of your misfortunes. Inform His Excellency [Berardelli], if your memory has not faded, however, of the benefits that from the time you made Signora Sarra's acquaintance you ever received from her. Tell him that only recently, when you were rejected by hospitals, detested by steam baths, disliked by all those celebrating others' calamities from their pulpits,¹⁹⁶ and, in the end, bereft of hope, she alone lifted you from the mud, she alone removed you from an ignominious death, she alone stole you away from discomfort, she alone snatched you from the hands of piercing hunger and made you abound in those conveniences with which every notable spirit would have felt honored. Tell him, though, in all truth, that from no lord or any friend would you have ever had that with which you were provided and inundated by Signora Sarra. But as evidence of my own efforts in all of this, tell him also that after I saw the wretched state to which you had been reduced (thanks to your disordered ways for the repair of which the riches of Crassus¹⁹⁷ [33v] would have been inadequate), I overcame all self-respect by plundering myself to cover your expenses. Not only that, but I went out begging on your behalf at this door and at that, only many times to meet with refusal and embarrassment as the punishment for my importunity. I did this to keep you alive and cover your flesh, since neither the five *scudi* that Signora Sarra awarded you every month¹⁹⁸ beyond her other gifts, nor that small—no, sorry!—that *enormous* part of my paltry earnings that I spent on your person, nor the provisions arranged for you by the most illustrious Signor Marchese [Martinengo], nor many other forms of aid procured for you from good friends, were ever enough to sustain the prodigality of your disordered living.

"I, then, was the one who exhorted Signora Sarra to remove you from the steam bath, so uncomfortable for its sparseness, and to deprive you of the opportunity for such disorderly spending. But I should have never so acted: the more I saw, to my infinite pleasure, that, at the time, things were being arranged by her for your benefit, the more I now regret it. [34r] It is I, I can say, who have been the reason for so much harm and injury done to that worthy lady and her household. Hence I felt obliged to write you this

196. Seems to be saying that Paluzzi appalled even those who preached the value of human suffering or sang the praises of martyrs.

197. Marcus Licinius Crassus (d. 53 B.C.E.), a Roman patrician who amassed a great fortune; his surname became synonymous with wealth.

198. Does not correspond with the figures mentioned earlier (6r), namely, a hundred ducats for three months of biweekly lessons, or slightly more than thirty-three ducats per month (eight lessons), which in *scudi* would amount to about twenty-two. But it *does* correspond with the earlier mention of an outlay of five *scudi* as pocket money while in the steam bath (7r), during which time, moreover, Paluzzi would not have been giving lessons to Copia.

letter, which I distributed in copies to many and read out to many others. It was meant to serve as live evidence of how you abused her pity and betrayed her innocence. I will ever spread this evidence in abashment of your thankless villainy and will also see to its dissemination through the mediation of one who, at my behest, went to such trouble for your interests.¹⁹⁹ Nor will I fail to do as much as I possibly can, for both the illustrious memory of the dead, whose memory you so value,²⁰⁰ and the singular merits of the living, whom you reward with infamous impiety.

"Believe me when I say that in the depths of my soul I feel I was summoned to write you in this way. So much ingratitude, so profuse a show of bestial actions, so vast a flood of discourtesies create a situation where, however moderate and composed a man may be, he could not be docile. Were the strength of my body [34v] to correspond to the aversion of my mind, by God! I would make you hear what coin is being used to repay the infamy of similar ravages. As far as your case is concerned, God rewards you not with the charity that you yourself do not have, but, rather handsomely, by keeping you immersed in disrepute. Though of no value to you, disrepute is the rule of your measure by men truly virtuous. 1624."

"This, most excellent ladies," Aretino said, "is precisely what was written in the letter to this terribly ugly ape. From its assertions one can verify if that most sordid ingrate might or might not have been aware of the infamous libels, the filthy denunciations, and the untruthful accusations that the servile scullery boy [Berardelli] then began to disseminate. The misdeeds of both thus came to light. O pestilent rabble that you are, in what a clear light your villainous malice appeared! So, cursed breed, why is it that no sooner did the Jewess become aware of your thefts and robberies than [35r] you became aware of the damage done to your reputation, charging her, in your perfidy and deceitfulness, with being responsible for it? Speak, you most contemptible beasts, speak! Why is it that no sooner were your lying complaints heard than the city of Venice with all its surrounding islands became replete with the sound of your ugly misdeeds from long before?

"O Venice, Venice, I turn to you. See how the false charges of these

199. The verb "went to such trouble" is gendered in the masculine (*si è affaticato*), which would eliminate Copia as the one who, upon Rosa's urging, looked out for Paluzzi's "interests." Of the male candidates, one might be Martinengo (whose house Rosa visited when, acting as courier, he delivered to Paluzzi the various portions of Copia's *Manifesto* for his review; see above, 31v, also 33v).

200. Those whom Paluzzi allegedly honored, in verse or spoken comments, upon their decease might have included Ansaldo Cebà (d. 16 October 1622). For Paluzzi's sonnet in praise of Cebà's portrait (printed in his *Rime*, 48), see 1.1/L20.67 (under footnote to "honored it with their verses").

infamous thieves arise from the dark accusations brought against them in the lady's testimony and how shamelessly they remain on pages signed and stamped in your publications!²⁰¹ But why is the honored Giovan Battista Ciotti²⁰² not to be seen here? And why does he escape the meeting held today before this tribunal? The venerable old man blushes at seeing the illustrious name of the Ciotti family imprinted upon such infamous perjuries and engraved at the foot of such foul perversities.

"If he [Berardelli] were only here at least, that panhandling scullery boy, that filthy ruffian, that contemptuous lawbreaker, that incestuous blockhead, that obscene stable boy, that cupbearer of the obnoxious, that Adonis of the kitchen! If he were only here, that herald of infamy, that witness to lies, [35v] that shelter of perfidy, that portrait of impudence! If he were only here, that arrogant subject for any Last Supper, should its painter in fact lack an idea for expressing a true traitor!²⁰³ If he were only here, that chiro-mancer and that pyromancer²⁰⁴ who had the power to command spirits to steal chickens, scrape off skewers, and clean out saucepans! Yes, if he were only here, that frightening wizard who, as a worthy pupil of the black scullery girl, sounded unheard incantations to make necklaces, brackets, jewels, and rings become invisible to the Jewess! Oh, if he were only here, that so expert fencer who no sooner saw her turn her head than he struck a sure blow and made off with two pairs of her sheets and one pair of her husband's underwear! Nor did it bother him that they may have been dirty!

"But please! Aretino should not be blamed if, in speaking, he descends to these vulgarities, for the thievish subject he has in hand gives him no reason for adopting another style in speech of this kind. It is he who will determine, most excellent madam judges, whether there should stand here, before you, that designer of trickeries [Berardelli], that [36r] fabricator of deceits, that inventor of cunning plots, that great architect of villainies, that repository of all vices. It is he who will determine whether that picker of locks should be here, that exorciser for removing door bolts, that horrible eviscerator of coffers, that great slicer of golden belts, that so diligent anatomist who in the Jewess's wardrobe did not leave any blood in veins, or

201. In reference to both the *Sareide* and the dedication and foreword to Paluzzi's verses.

202. Ciotti, the publisher of Paluzzi's verses (1626). Paluzzi appears to have worked for Ciotti's publishing house as proofreader. In two letters to Ciotti (the first from 1619, the second from 1620), Marino asked him to give Paluzzi his warm regards (*Lettere*, 226–27, 265).

203. Judas, betrayer of Christ, was present at the Last Supper.

204. Berardelli would have divined the future by reading palms and observing flames, as part of the mysterious goings-on in Copia's household.

nerves in joints, or marrow in bones that he did not minutely examine by using his ingenious twisted irons.

"Yes, yes, here I would like to have that bold executor of such numerous and wicked thefts [Berardelli], that domestic spirit who was the filthy black girl's precious delight, that guzzler never sufficiently stuffed with the tidbits that he continually carried off from the hearth of the Jewess and never sufficiently sated with the wine that his lovely Amaryllis [the Moorish girl] poured into his gullet. On his way downstairs²⁰⁵ he was seen, on several occasions, to give a hoist to the bottle and despoil capons of both their pulp and their rump, whereupon her poet [Paluzzi] was left so very, very often with an unfed-looking snout.

"This [Berardelli] is that Malagigi²⁰⁶ whom I would like over here, that Zoroaster,²⁰⁷ [36v], that new Proteus²⁰⁸ who changes into so many forms, who practices so many crafts, who is provided with knowledge of so many sciences, who has served so many patrons, who has bewitched so many bastards, who has emptied so many casks, who has escaped the gallows on so many occasions, who has been involved in so many shady transactions, who scrapes the chitarrone,²⁰⁹ who besmirches poetry, who corrects printed copy,²¹⁰ who harvests others' ears of corn,²¹¹ who dishonors the sword with trickery,²¹² who makes painting infamous by his thievery,²¹³ and who bun-

205. To deliver food to his master in his room in Furlana's house.

206. According to the legends of Charlemagne, his nephew Rinaldo, wandering in the forest of Arden, met the magician Malagigi, disguised as an old man. Malagigi told Rinaldo that an untamable horse, Bayard, was held at bay by a sorcerer (Malagigi himself) and that once the spell was broken the animal would be subdued by a valiant knight, who, it turned out, was Rinaldo. See Bulfinch, *Bulfinch's Mythology: The Art of Fable, The Age of Chivalry, Legends of Charlemagne*, 656–66, 769. Malagigi, part necromancer, part thief, figured in later versions of the legends, as recounted in Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* (1482), Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1495, as Malagise), and Lodovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516).

207. Founder, around 600 B.C.E., of Zoroastrianism, a religious cult of which a principal tenet was the belief in, and struggle between, the God of Light and the God of Darkness.

208. A sea god who assumed different shapes at will.

209. See below, 97r, no. 63:2.

210. It is not clear what is wrong with proofreading, unless the author intimates that Berardelli took others' writings, already printed, and revised them, only to pass them off as his own.

211. Meaning pilfers others' works.

212. Obscure: may refer to an episode known to the readers, possibly a trumped-up duel; or to Paluzzi's stealthy friend Berardelli's recourse to scissors (as a sword?) to cut off Copia's golden belt, whereby debasing the use of the sword for defending one's honor.

213. Berardelli, as a painter, throws painting into disrepute by his thievery.

gles art with his ignorance. Yes, it is he I wish were present so as to say to him the following:

"Get over here, contemptible scum at the root of every disgrace, infamy of that land that governs you, and shame of that sun that warms you. You were out, then, to appease your hunger in the Jewess's house; to get your impious traps to operate after they were prompted by that same infamous false witness [Paluzzi] and approved by that filthy gathering of those most contemptible persons who are his faithful. Thus with secret thefts, astute deceits, and open robbery you made off with so much, you snatched so much, [37r] and you stole so much. Yes, you were out to facilitate your detestable inventions; to have the domestic spirits spread the wings of your impudent lying; to clear the passage for the representatives of that Gallic prince;²¹⁴ and to make yourself wealthy, you wild beast of a vampire, from the financial exchanges you had with the French.²¹⁵ Yet all the while you carried the Jewess over your head, you honored her as a patroness, you served her as your superior, and you exalted her to the heavens as your benefactress! O most contemptible adulating thief, O unworthy traitor! Look how your infamies are uncovered, or rather how God makes you uncover them. Look how the Jewess is defamed by your slanderous tongue and perfidiously torn to shreds by your unworthy writings, which are worthy fruits of your foul origins and well-shaped works of your infamous mind!"

Here Aretino, impelled by the anger of just wrath, could not restrain himself, hence spit with a vengeance on the face of the accused [Paluzzi], saying to him: "And you, dog, are so brazen as to have us understand that you were not conscious of such filthy acts?" After turning to those ladies, he cried out in these words:

"Is there any reason for us to doubt that the failings of this ungrateful traitor [Paluzzi] are most unworthy and that his villainies are most impious? [37v] Is there anybody who perchance would wish to persuade you, in the administration of your justice, to let such an enormous excess of ingratitude and such an execrable disregard of so much merit go unpunished? Ah, may God stop the exercise of justice on Parnassus out of any vested interest or any personal consideration! That fellow's perfidy was, unfortunately, already shown in the letter that we saw to having read aloud.²¹⁶ But what makes

214. See above, 10r–11r.

215. Refers perhaps to the money gained from the basket of delicacies meant to be sent to the French prince.

216. Rosa's letter to Paluzzi.

it much more obvious is that he did not react to the letter with even the slightest response, he did not send a message, nor did he make any sign that would let one detect, in that bestial heart of his, either regret or remorse.

"Most excellent ladies, I had occasion, in Venice, to deal with a similar creature, namely, a certain Niccolò Franco,²¹⁷ whom I lifted out of that city's dregs. When my housekeeper—I tell you—saw that the same Franco had been let into my house, she cried out, saying: 'I'll be damned! Thus the master who, to this day, was a host of great notables now becomes a hospital warden of rascals?' The guy happened to fall into my hands with nothing on him, in the same way this other wretch [Paluzzi] ended up, undressed, in the hands of the Jewess. I clothed him [38r], and when he saw that I had provided him with a hat and shoes of velvet, he confessed to not being worthy of what I, in giving, did not make anything of, as one noticed. But after recovering his spirits somewhat and finding warmth in the fire of my courtesy, he spit his venom on me and publicly revealed himself as my enemy. One day my above-mentioned servant unexpectedly came upon him as he was shredding, with teeth of envy, the bright evidence of my fame, at which point she could not help but put her hand on the collar of his shirt and say to him: 'Mr. Ignoramus, first pull this off your back, then speak badly of him who dressed you!' That is the coin used by similar kinds of beasts in repayment of benefits."

With this little story of the housekeeper Aretino lifted the tired minds of those ladies somewhat, then made a short pause. Meanwhile Josephus Flavius, who wrote *De antiquitate judaica* [On the antiquities of the Jews],²¹⁸ said to Signora Sappho and Signora Corinna, who were standing nearby:

"Only too well does Aretino speak the truth. Indeed, it was ever his custom to let the same truth [38v] be heard in the impenetrable passages of princes' ears.²¹⁹ But I do not know whether he or these ladies have given

217. Niccolò Franco (1515–70) was a talented poet whom Aretino saved from poverty, employing him as secretary. After their relationship soured, Franco reviled his erstwhile benefactor (as Paluzzi and Berardelli did Copia) in verse and prose. His attacks on the Church were no less virulent. In the end, Franco was hanged as a heretic.

218. Josephus Flavius (Hebrew name: Joseph ben Mattityahu ha-Cohen), politician, soldier, and historian (c. 38–c. 100). With the Roman conquest of Judea, he went over to the winning side, adopting the emperor Vespasian's family name, Flavius. He wrote (in Greek) an autobiography, two books on Jewish history (*The Jewish War* and, as cited here, *The Antiquities of the Jews*), and, in defense of the Jews against libelous accusations circulating about them in Alexandria, *Contra Apionem* (Against Apion).

219. It was because of his outspoken criticism that Aretino was called "the scourge of princes" (Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* 46.14.3–4).

thought to what the author of the chapters²²⁰ says at almost the end of the fourth of I-do-not-know which hermaphroditical set of verses²²¹ as concerns one such sonnet that was shown to this one here [Paluzzi]. I would gladly have you let me in on this secret."

To please Flavius, Signora Corinna asked of Signora Andreini, who remembered the sonnet, that she do so. The latter said that she already knew the one who composed it when he was in the service of His Most Serene Prince;²²² that he had been proven for his faith by this lord and his subjects in their wide experience with him; and that because of this he was loved by all of them beyond any belief. Now as Signora Andreini was so speaking, Flavius, who stood with Signora Sappho close to a window, to which she had retired so as to take a breath of air, asked of his neighbor that she please return to the tribunal. His intention was to hear more clearly what was being debated. Signora Sappho satisfied Flavius [39r] and made a return to the place where the case was being argued. Her move was observed by Pindar²²³ and his partner in conversation, a great lettered Genoese patrician.²²⁴ They followed in her footsteps and reached the tribunal at almost the same time. That lord²²⁵ took in the words of Signora Andreini as she was talking about the person by whom the sonnet was constructed,²²⁶ and he registered

220. The author being Solinga. Her "chapters" (*capitoli*) may be read in at least three ways: portions of a book; poems constructed according to the burlesque verse type *capitolo* (in *terza rima*); and, possibly, sections of a *capitolato*, or summary of findings relative, in this case, to the criminal investigation into the activities of Paluzzi and Berardelli. Of the three, the first is the likeliest (see above, 10r, 11v).

221. Read the adjective "hermaphroditical" as "odd" or "strange." But it also applies to the sexually deviating Paluzzi, already described as having the "voice of a hermaphrodite" (16r). Giulia Solinga appears to have included and commented various "verses" by Paluzzi in her "chapters." When Flavius says he does not "know which" of them, he probably means that he cannot remember their *capoversi*, or first lines.

222. Given Isabella Andreini's connections with Mantua through the theatrical company directed by her husband, the same prince may be Francesco Gonzaga. Isabella herself died in 1604, meaning that if the report is not fictional, the author of the sonnet served the prince before then, sometime during the reign of Duke Vincenzo (from 1587 to 1612; after which Francesco became duke, though for one year only). On the author as possibly Rosa, see below.

223. Pindar, lyric poet (518–438 B.C.E.): his works include hymns, paeans, dithyrambs, processional songs, maiden songs, encomia, dirges, and epinicions (in praise of victory), of which only a small number survive.

224. Presumably Cebà. See above, 26r–v.

225. Cebà.

226. Presumably Rosa, as might be confirmed by the continuation, where the poet is said to have acted as an intermediary for Cebà in persuading Copia to convert to Christianity. Another possibility is Giovanni Benedetto Spinola, Cebà's "longtime friend and a gentleman having

more than one sign of the delight he felt in recalling him to memory. He was asked by Pindar if he had any knowledge of that same person. "Indeed, quite a lot," he answered. "He is the one I used as an intermediary to lead that honored Jewess, who is being discussed here, beyond the shadows of Judaism. But the wickedness of these clumsy oxes spoiled everything that I, in my wildest dreams, had planned."

Meanwhile Momus,²²⁷ who, running all about, summed up the words that had been said by these and others, was, in a flash, at Aretino's side. Gaining his ear, he informed him of everything, whereupon Aretino, turning to Signora Andreini, said: "Signora Isabella, I have done my part in making known [39v] the knavery of these villains. May you now uncover whatever else you know about the excellence of this great vavasour²²⁸ [Paluzzi] in order for the ladies to be fully advised of such a wild swan's candor."²²⁹

Andreini turned toward the female judges, asking if there was any need for her to elucidate the case of the said sonnet. "Make sure that we, too, know what you know about it," said Signora Vittoria [Colonna], to whom Andreini, having bowed, spoke thus:

"This sonnet was devised in praise of a woman most virtuous²³⁰ in both belles lettres and the practice of music. As to the latter, beyond composing songs with every exquisite excellence and performing them in a manner almost divine, she accompanies them in so charming a style of playing on some keyboard instrument that she almost removes souls from bodies and returns them to heaven midst the blest. But no less virtuous than liberal and magnanimous does she show herself to the benefit of those with humbled virtues."²³¹

the most honored virtues": Cebà asked him, in visiting her, to pay respects on his behalf (1.1/L43.116). Yet I have no evidence to establish a Mantuan connection, of any kind, for Rosa or Spinola.

227. In Greek mythology, the god of mockery and faultfinding.

228. The original *barbassoro* is a popular distortion of *valvassore*, or a feudal lord of a class next in rank to a knight banneret.

229. "Wild swan," also known as a whistling or whooping swan. The writer may have conceived it as making a rasping noise (which it does) or as being one of the unclean birds that, according to Lev. 11:13–20, are "not to be eaten, for they are an abomination" (see also Deut. 14:12–19), which, if so, would suggest Jewish authorship for the passage (see note to 5v, above). As to the "candor" or whiteness of the swan, meaning, further, its purity and sincerity, here the writer obviously intended to depict the raucous "swan" Paluzzi as black, impure, and insincere.

230. *Virtuosissima* here in the sense of "most talented," though its indication of morality or rectitude lies in the background. If "virtuous" was retained above without further specification, it was because of its calculated reiteration two sentences later.

231. Those whose powers, that is, have been curbed through hardship. On Copia as a comfort to the needy, see the epitaph on her tombstone (4.3: "A jewel for the miserable, / And of every poor soul / A friend and companion").

"As said, the author of the sonnet attempted to praise such great excellence. After devising the fourteen [40r] verses, he consulted with this one here [Paluzzi], inasmuch as he considered him his friend. The tercets did not meet the purified judgment of the latter, who changed them to something else. Indeed, he redid them in two different versions, of which the first did not please and the second therefore got accepted.²³² It is the tercets in the second version that this one here [Paluzzi] then placed under the other quatrains in the sonnet that the servant [Berardelli] later had printed on page 12.²³³

"By so doing, he [Paluzzi] thought of greatly insulting the author who, since he had never been allowed to see that sonnet [with its new tercets], actually laughed at it after discerning this rustic Amphion's mind.²³⁴ Hence it is from the sonnet as printed that one can draw a clear argument for how false the charges of the servant [Berardelli] were. Why? Because anyone who took an exact account of its two revised tercets, filled with ideas used before by so many others, would realize that only few of the original coins were kept in the sonnet's treasury.

"That infamous fellow of a servant falsely attests that this sterile she-mule [Paluzzi] gave birth to many versions, sustaining his claim, with all his scullery-boy authority, by his dishonest testimony to everyone. But there is great truth [40v] in what the aforementioned author of the chapters [Solinga] left written, thus: *Per che chi fa gran conto d'una paglia / Per aggrandir sua fama, ben si vede / Che né del gran vorà ch'altri sen vaglia* [For he who makes a big thing of a straw, / To add greatness to his fame, well recognizes / That he does not want another to make use of his greatness]."²³⁵

The sonnet as it was first written²³⁶ is the one that follows:

232. As clear from the continuation, it was Berardelli who criticized the first revised version and approved the second.

233. In reference to a sonnet entirely different, in its octave, from the one printed below ("Sirena illustre," 40v). Inscribed (by Berardelli) as written for Signora Barbara N., it begins: "Non con tal vanto, a mortal vista espone" (*Rime*, 12).

234. Mind, in the sense of "intention." Amphion, son of Jupiter, moved stones to the sweet sounds of his lyre. Not so Paluzzi, who seems to be portrayed here as his antithesis: an ineffective rhymester. For Amphion in Cebà's verses, see 1.1/L15.42, no. 11:1–2.

235. The implication is that Paluzzi, by insisting on the need for revisions, made a big fuss over nothing, to prove his "greatness" as a discriminating poet and to make sure, by voicing his criticism, that he be respected as an authority.

236. By Giacomo Rosa.

Sirena illustre che gli alteri lidi

Illustrious siren²³⁷ who gild the lofty shores
 Of foaming Adria²³⁸ and gladden the beaches
 With your lovely lights²³⁹ and, as dear and faithful 3
 Shelters of love, your blond tresses,
 You happen to nest within you a celestial soul
 That, from exalted thoughts, spreads and scatters 6
 Forever imaginative and eternally glorious works,
 Through which you escape death and defy time.²⁴⁰
 Alone can you raise, from the depths so deep and dreary
 [tetro],²⁴¹ 9
 Neglected virtue to a lofty place in the sun
 With liberal customs and a learned plectrum [pletto],²⁴²
 No less do I ask of you, when you sing to a sweet meter
 [metro], 12
 Than to bind hearts with those unique and singular
 Graces whereby you rule over souls with a double
 scepter [scettro].²⁴³

"And why did you not like the tercets?" Signora Veronica [Gambara] said after having turned to the accused [Paluzzi]. "Because of the rhyme words [41r] *tetro* and *pletto*," he answered. "And do we not have examples of these in the best poets' verses, stupid man?" "We do," he said, to which that lady added: "And how did you change them?" "This is what I said," he answered:

237. Copia. To be contrasted with an "impious siren" (see 14r, no. 5:5).

238. The Adriatic Sea, here the Gulf of Venice.

239. That is, eyes.

240. Whether the poet intended to or not, he answers Bonifaccio, who, in his *Discorso*, warned Copia that her soul would not be saved. Yes, it would, he now says, because her works assure her of immortality.

241. The rhyme words in lines 9, 11, 12, and 14 are cited in the original for comparison with those in the revised tercets below.

242. For playing the lyre.

243. "Double," presumably, because "hearts," as said here, are bound by "sing[ing]" and "graces."

Tercets of Same Sonnet, First Revision by Paluzzi

You alone today shine among us like a sun [*sole*] 9
 In which all the splendor of virtue has been collected
 [*raccolto*];
 Each Muse and goddess admires you, as does the sun
 [*sole*],
 So much so that the future world, after having turned
 [*rivolto*] 12
 To you, will say: "Anyone worthy of hearing her words
 [*parole*]
 Was as blessed as anyone worthy of beholding her face
 [*volto*]."

"Nothing did you improve," said those ladies, continuing: "And how did it happen that you prepared those that are now in print?"

"He [Berardelli] was not very satisfied with these [tercets], and he kept telling me that he would rather have me say something to the effect that if anyone searched all known lands he would not find any beauty or virtue comparable to the virtue and beauty of his praise. It was with the verse *Ovunque il sole i raggi suoi comparte / Peregrinando* [Wherever the sun distributes its rays / In its wandering]²⁴⁴ that he awakened my thoughts, at which point I silenced him to make him hear what his words had put into my mind. I composed the tercets that follow."

Tercets of Same Sonnet, Second Revision by Paluzzi

[41v] Let the famous wanderer search every remote part [*parte*], 9
 Let him search it then if he wants, and believes [*crede*]
 He is able, to see what beautiful works owe to nature
 and art [*arte*],
 For when to the fatherly shore he later returns [*riede*], 12
 His efforts will have been vainly spent [*sparte*]:
 He will have seen nothing if it is you he does not see
 [*vede*].

244. The words seem to be Berardelli's own invention.

"But ask him," Aretino said, "if he [Berardelli] put the last two tercets²⁴⁵ in the writing of his pen before he had them printed on paper.²⁴⁶ What will Parnassus say now about the skills of this new mighty Moor?²⁴⁷ Is there not proof of them perhaps in their having been put to use in assembling a collection of the author's [Paluzzi's] most famous poems?²⁴⁸ Would his skills not perhaps be fit to serve as testimony to the dried-up paltriness of his arid source, since he thought it right to go rummaging every piece of straw to fill up four sheets of paper?²⁴⁹ Would the Master of Deceits Incorporated have us understand that this contracted wretch²⁵⁰ took so little care of his scraps of paper as to let entire volumes of them, kept in bundles, be stolen and compiled as others' books?²⁵¹

[42r] "Oh, let us see, Sir Captain Scavenger of Coffers [Berardelli], what the slovenliness of such a wide-open style²⁵² tends to, since the computation of two illegitimate tercets was of such great moment for the style's glory. To fill up this clay pot of poetry,²⁵³ did the tercets not rather encumber the pot with their putrid fodder? One ought to read the sonnet on page . . .²⁵⁴ and consider it for its impudent impiety. There a reference to the Elevation of the Sacred Host containing the essence of Christ Incarnate inspires an

245. Source had "verses."

246. Aretino implies to the judges that Berardelli printed the second revised version of the tercets (and the octave to which they were added; see above) as his own work, which it apparently was.

247. Original *morone*, which, according to Boccato ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 159 n. 180), refers to Gerolamo Morone (1470–1529): he governed Milan, as its Gran Cancelliere, under two Sforza dukes (Massimiliano, Francesco II). Yet another, more likely reading might be as an overgrown male accomplice of the *Mora*, or Moorish girl servant, with whom Berardelli had "illicit relations" (see above, 17v–18r).

248. The formulation is garbled: the adjective "famous" (with a feminine plural ending, *famose*) stands alone, without a noun, which may have been *poesie*, or poems, as has been assumed above. Their being "famous" is an ironic snipe at the indifference of the public to Paluzzi's verses.

249. In reference to Paluzzi's works as collected for publication in his *Rime*, where they appear not on four (duodecimo) folios, however, but on six (see 3.2, footnote on layout of print, also 3.3.2:115).

250. "Contracted," because of his syphilis.

251. In reference to comments in the dedication and foreword to Paluzzi's *Rime* about Copia's having stolen his works for use as her own.

252. As represented by the variegated items in the *rime*.

253. Paluzzi's verses as collected for printing.

254. The number is lacking. It may be assumed to be 12, in connection with the sonnet having tercets in their revised second version ("Non con tal vanto"; see 40r).

unworthy analogy.²⁵⁵ Such a thought is not even to be mentioned, let alone printed and published.

"The waters of the Arno²⁵⁶ meant to wash away this garbage make their way downhill with a protruding belly²⁵⁷ and allow similar indignities to remain impressed on sheets. It comes as no surprise, then, that the same waters allowed the name of the Jewess to be vitiated, for they set no store by a sacrifice of such eminence.²⁵⁸

"The sonnet cannot possibly be attributed to either of you.²⁵⁹ [42v] But I ask that one consider those torsos and those segments²⁶⁰ that the servant, out of ridiculous caution²⁶¹ or, better said, nasty perfidy, saw to having printed.

"Oh, what a tasteless soup! Oh, what frigid, what uncooked, and what lean portions are these! You should have studied my academically shaped works if you wanted to understand how princes ought to be praised!²⁶² (If anyone has an upset stomach, he might read those amorous lyrics of his [Paluzzi's] and take a look at that 'Idyll' he wrote,²⁶³ because any such reading will serve him as an effective emetic and, moreover, as a means for perceiving whether that inept, overworked, and enervated Muse of the author was fit to be employed by him for writing an extended discourse.) Ignora-

255. I could not locate a reference, direct or indirect, to the Elevation of the Host in the octave or tercets of the same (or any other) sonnet. Nor could I locate its "unworthy analogy," unless the speaker meant the one (in lines 7–8) between beauty and barbarism ("things marvelously beautiful"—as exemplified by the woman to whom the sonnet is dedicated—"bear comparison with barbarous magnificence").

256. River that runs through Florence.

257. "Protruding," because the "garbage," in its bulk, swelled the waters. The reference to the downhill flow of the Arno is not to be found anywhere in the *Rime*. Nor was I able to trace the image at large: a search of such arch-Florentine writings as, for example, Dante's *Divina commedia* and Petrarch's *Canzoniere* yielded nothing.

258. "Vitiated" in the *Rime*, which, moreover, are void of references to the "sacrifice" of Christ on the Cross, as implied by the Elevation of the Host.

259. Meaning that the original version of the sonnet ("Sirena illustre": see above) was composed by neither Paluzzi nor Berardelli.

260. The rest of the works in the collection.

261. Seems to refer to Berardelli's comment that Paluzzi was so unconcerned about his verses that, after the larger part had been stolen by Copia (as Berardelli maintained), the rest would have been "relegated . . . to the flames" (from dedication to *Rime*; 3.2.A 2v, below).

262. Aretino now addresses Paluzzi. As far as is known, Aretino received no formal ("academic") education. His usual vehicle of praise (or condemnation) was his letters.

263. *Rime*, 107–17, headed "Innamoramento" (infatuation) with the subtitle "Idillio" (318 lines, largely septenaric, in free verse), beginning "Son del mio pianto dolorose stille." Earlier in the collection a canzone in nine stanzas plus envoi had also been headed "Innamoramento" (*ibid.*, 14–22).

mus! The works of Preti,²⁶⁴ or of Macedonio,²⁶⁵ or of Scipione della Cella²⁶⁶ are what you should have read, for they would have prompted you to throw those soot-covered parcels with your verses²⁶⁷ into the flames!

"For thirty years, mind you, the sad soul has been swindling us with his canzoni,²⁶⁸ as can be seen. But, most excellent ladies, if the Jewess stole his verses in two big packages, why is she to be blamed for ignorance?²⁶⁹

[43r] "Ah, you with your trophies²⁷⁰ destined for the gallows, do you want me to go back and make you both blush again?

"Most excellent madam judges, to pursue the truth further, until I recover some strength, may Your Excellencies not be displeased to hear what, in this respect, is contained in the copy of a letter written to that knavish servant [Berardelli] upon the appearance, in print, of those five roaring accusations with which the same scoundrel endeavored to obscure the fame of that honored Jewess."²⁷¹

In saying this, Aretino withdrew a paper from his breast pocket and gave it, unfolded, to the lector, who, reading it out loud, let these words be heard:

"You unworthy bearer of the name of a man!²⁷²

"The fact that one creature so infamous could nestle such great arro-

264. Girolamo Preti (1582–1626), from Bologna, a Marinist poet of considerable renown (his *Poesie*, printed in 1614, was reissued throughout the seventeenth century). He laid the theoretical foundations for his Marinism in the *Discorso intorno alla onestà della poesia* (1620).

265. Marcello Macedonio (1575–1620), Neapolitan author of several verse collections, among them *Ballate et idillii* (1614), *Le nove muse* (1614), *Scielta delle poesie* (1615), and *De' nove chori de gli angeli* (1615).

266. On the poet Scipione della Cella (b. c. 1575) and his *Rime*, see Matteo Cerutti, "Logica e retorica nella poesia barocca: alcune considerazioni in margine all'edizione delle 'Rime' di Scipione della Cella." Marino raved about his sonnets, saying that he "read them several times . . . and ever with new pleasure for being highly graceful and having certain lights that, for me, visibly represent the vivacity of his brilliant mind" (from a letter dated 1603 to Bernardo Castello, *Lettere*, 32).

267. Note the previous use of the same adjective "soot-covered" (*affumato*) to describe Paluzzi's face (16r).

268. "Swindling," in the sense that the canzoni were no more than scraps. Paluzzi's thirty years of poetic activity is a point that does not come up in Berardelli's annotations to the *Rime*.

269. See selections, below, from *Rime* (3.2.A 2v, 4r).

270. Aretino speaks to Paluzzi and Berardelli. "Trophies" here in the sense of worthless laurels.

271. See the five *motini*, or epigrams, on 67r–69r below, with specific reference to the five accusations printed in the *Rime*. Aretino does not disclose the name of the person whose letter he orders to be read out loud (see continuation).

272. In reference to Berardelli, about whom the continuation is concerned.

gance and that one thief so contemptible could be of such great impudence produces as much astonishment as it kindles indignation in those who turn their thought to precisely such an unworthy object as you. But the astonishment does not last forever, for the same ones fill with nausea [43v] at seeing you, stinking dog. Though burdened with disgrace and marked with every most filthy infamy, wherein treason and theft are the lesser outrages that weigh on your back, you have been so impudently brazen as to come out into the bright light of day, in the sight of that truth about yourself that you know cannot be veiled. Not only that, but you use a glaringly dishonest lie as arms in challenging the honor of a virtuous and honored lady. And of all places, where? In a city, Venice, where you know you are known by so many to be that most contemptible scoundrel that you are! And where, nevertheless, you presumptuously fraternized with illustrious men, believing that the authority of their name might serve as a curtain for your unworthy misdeeds, about which I would say this: if the important occupations of these men left them enough time to be able to reflect upon that dirty infamy to which you succumb, you can be certain that the insolence of your arrogance would be worthily rewarded by the whop of a stick handled by an especially supple arm.

"Most sordid thief, in the [44r] course of twenty-three consecutive months,²⁷³ during which you habitually attended the house of the honored Jewess,²⁷⁴ so many villainies of dirty impiety did you commit, so many thefts of infamous robbery did you exercise, so many abominable iniquities did you execute! In the end, after the truth was uncovered and there came to light the monstrous failure of the lie²⁷⁵ deformed by its own enormous exaggerations, you dare still to come before a man of the most eminent integrity,²⁷⁶ one upon whom justice depends for its dignity. In his breast all heroic

273. Since the fraud was brought to Copia's attention on 9 July 1624 (cf. 48v), Berardelli, if we count back twenty-three months, would have engineered his machinations, in her household, after July 1622, at which time Copia arranged lodgings for Paluzzi (and Berardelli too, as his valet; 5v). Yet Copia's concern over Paluzzi began around 1620: see below, 45v, for reference to "five years or more" of her generosity toward him.

274. "Habitually attended" the house of Copia, yet lodged in that of Furlana (7v), assuming, again, that Berardelli as Paluzzi's "servant" would not have been separated from his "master."

275. First discovered on 8 July 1624, then exposed to Copia, as said, on the following day (48v).

276. Giovanni Soranzo (1600–1665), the dedicatee of Paluzzi's *Rime*, was a Venetian patrician who fulfilled various diplomatic offices both at home and, as ambassador for the Republic, abroad (Holland, 1626–28; England, 1629–32; France, 1632–35; and Turkey, 1642–50). He is not to be confused (as he was by Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane raccolte ed illustrate*, 3:405–7)

virtues have their nest. To his wisdom so great a republic entrusts itself. Upon the shoulders of his faith, so great, a monarchy places its heaviest burdens.²⁷⁷ From the force of his innate kindness just persons hope for a reward for their merits, virtuous ones for a recompense for their honorable efforts, and afflicted ones for relief from their sufferings.

"In the protective wrappings of such a man does someone of your likes wish to swaddle himself? Someone as evil as you are and of so much presumption as to think that with the inanities of another most monstrous monster²⁷⁸ you are making headway with him? Only for you to release, in the eyes of the world, the poison [44v] of a mendacious accusation²⁷⁹ iniquitously repeated several times to the discredit of her who, full of charity, provided you and your villainous troop with board? Only for you, full of thankless impiety, continually to weave plots for her defamation and contrive deceits for her liquidation, as would have been entirely achieved if the providence of Him who rules everything had not intervened?

"Being as you are, you presume that by placing the splendor of another's distinct merits at the head of your villainous lies²⁸⁰ you can so dim others' sight as for the truth to remain suppressed. You pretend, most contemptible, unworthy wretch, that a man so notable for his ancient pedigree, so distinguished for his own virtue, so eminent in rank would act as a guardian and a custodian of your infamous name within your fetid carcass.

"On the basis of what merits do you think you have acquired such a defender? Ah, unspeakable lout, on the basis of an outlay of slander or of an exchange of infamy vomited against the fame of her whose bread has already stolen you away, for such a long time, from hunger? That is certainly a method no longer [45r] used for seeking benevolence and a new style of rhetoric taught only within asylums of brigands, amidst secret gatherings of thieves, and amongst herds of oppressors!

with another, earlier Giovanni Soranzo, Venetian lawyer, doctor of laws, poet, and writer of various works in prose (among them a dialogue on "the love of one's country, for which one should die to defend it from foreign swords and save it from uncivilized languages": *Dell'amore della patria*, 1630).

277. Soranzo appears to have had dealings with the French "monarchy" before his service as ambassador to France (see above).

278. That Paluzzi is the "monster" in question can be deduced from the previous use of the term (1r, 8r, 12v, 14r, 18r, 29v). His "inanities," or banalities, are his worthless verses.

279. That Copia stole Paluzzi's verses.

280. In this particular case, Soranzo's name placed on the title page and at the beginning of the dedication, where, moreover, Berardelli makes specific reference to his "merits" (*Rime*, see below, 3.2.A 3r).

"Effronteries that deserve no lesser punishment than the same larcenies, the same injuries, the same atrocities that you practiced against the Jewess! Of the atrocities I leave aside so many infamous overstatements that you impudently discharged against her fame from the rancid center of your bosom, both because others have talked about them and because the reason for your villainous lying is known to all. Rather it is to my avail to fix my thoughts a bit, within the dedicatory epistle, upon how, moved by charity, you begin to complain, asserting with false testimony that the Jewess stole the better and larger part of the verses and that, if this had not happened, you would have prepared another big volume."²⁸¹

"I swear to you, upon my word as a respectable man, that when, in reading, I came to this spot in the dedicatory epistle, so revolted was I by your very impudence that, as if you were present, I spit on your face, an action ever suited [45v] to the merits of such a villainous rascal. I then looked over the whole work that here and there reeks of your perfidy. But even midst so many falsities, so many lies, and so many deceptions I noted that one truth emerged from your mouth without your being aware of it. If I remember well, you say to the readers that the author had his worst portion reserved for the end when he was strangled by the noose of discomfort and the rope of privation,²⁸² which is the truth. The truth came out after the Jewess, offended by such an infamous betrayal contrived via the depraved iniquities of yours and his, closed the hand of pity that for five years or more had ever been open, not just to provide basic things, but to distribute superfluous ones for the comfort and pleasure of such a villain."²⁸³ With the stipend thus restricted, the ingrate fought for thirteen months against hunger that eventually turned him into a lump of flesh, whereupon he belched forth that contemptible soul become dirty and gross from so many infamous faults.²⁸⁴ Oh, force of truth that makes itself heard even on the tongue of [46r] the liar!

"To recommence the interrupted thread of the story, however, I turn to you, Mr. Toilet Painter,²⁸⁵ and say: Come over here, dolt, gallant soldier, and

281. This second portion about "another big volume" of Paluzzi's verses is actually from Berardelli's foreword to the readers (3.2.A 4r), not the dedicatory epistle.

282. Meaning that after Copia stopped her support of Paluzzi, he died of want.

283. If Paluzzi enjoyed Copia's favor for "five years" (until his demise in 1624), he thus originally turned up on her doorstep in 1620, though was only regularly employed by her after 1622 (as already said, 26r, note).

284. After learning of the deceit (on 9 July 1624), Copia discharged Paluzzi, "closing the hand" that assisted him. He died precisely "thirteen months" later on 29 July 1625.

285. Berardelli was, by profession, a painter, though now, as addressed, of the most despicable kind.

tell me something. When such a notable theft was perpetrated on you,²⁸⁶ you said that a cloud was shading the Jewess. Would it not have been better to say that the same cloud was dimming both your eyes and your poet's when you went to where she was, yet pretended not to see her and set about looking for her throughout the house? Most contemptible swindler, did the cloud not already veil your sight when even in the darkness of the night you did not know how to find the thefts you had waylaid during the day? But may you be so graced as to have your fate protect you from a new executioner!²⁸⁷

"Tell me, did this poet of yours keep his written tales in such good order as to prevent another from taking them as such fat booty? And tell me, how is it that she [Copia], being of a mind so perfidiously set against this baboon and having in her charge these large packages of his verses, might not have thrown them into the fire or so concealed them as never to let them come to light again?

"Ah, Signor Servant,²⁸⁸ you know, though, that the blockhead had no originals [46v] beyond those snippets of pages he kept bound in those two bundles, and in speaking otherwise you lied as befits that true thief that you are. In your thievish respectability you ought to know that these rotted ship's relics²⁸⁹ have been shuffled many, many times by several persons. Moreover, the ignoramus kept no record of what he composed. Thus when he was asked for some work of those already heard by others, his memory was so poor that it was ever necessary for him to turn those two parcels of his inside out. About this ridiculous practice a gentleman, who more than once happened upon him, had the following to say, namely, that it appeared to him that he was seeing one of these rag pickers who, in Venice, are accustomed to go to places reserved for trash in order to hunt down remnants of cloth and leather, heads of nails, and bits of nothing. A mark of your lineage—oh, how infamous I think it must be!

"I would say that you are a beast and that in [47r] Venice there are men

286. Ironically formulated: the theft was perpetrated not *on* him, but *by* him. The sentence refers to the removal of the basket filled with fruits and pastries for the French prince (10v–11r, above), a stratagem of which Berardelli pretends to have been unaware.

287. New in the sense of "inexperienced." See below for the reference to the executioner "Spadina," who, deceased, was replaced by "a man who does not know his profession" (94r, no. 55:2–4).

288. From here on, the writer, for some reason, changes the familiar *tu* form of address to *voi*. One explanation might be that after having been upgraded from mere servant to "Signor Servant," Berardelli was (ludicrously) deserving of another salutation.

289. Paluzzi's works conceived here as the scanty remains of a shipwreck.

who rank higher in honor than you do and show up the truth of what you are in your infamy. May your scullery-boy thievishness know that those same men knew this mummy and the size of his long shroud before you did;²⁹⁰ and that while you were standing shackled and entombed in prison for your thievish demerits, they had an occasion to hear this oracle,²⁹¹ nay, purposely came to him. Either he realized the reason for their visit²⁹² or he did not have the heart to arm his tongue with blasphemy. So he kept quiet and escaped a confrontation [where he could be accused] of lying, because he well knew that the den of foxes was not hidden to them.²⁹³

"But I will desist now from providing explanations, which win no esteem from one of your kind; and I will return to the evil of your doings, to say: you are what you are. But one notes that in the presumptuousness of your thievish lies you forgot to observe a significant propriety. It applies to being specific in talking about the verses that you say have been stolen from you. You do not clarify their form (as sonnets, [47v] canzoni, *stanze*, *capitoli*, *sdrucchioli*,²⁹⁴ or madrigals), the occasion for which they were composed, or the person to whom they were addressed; nor do you state their content. You do not, because it is probable that your sagacious astrologer²⁹⁵ might himself inform us of the facts very, very well. But in my opinion your inimitable trickery could perhaps provide a remedy for such a disorder, for were you to enlighten us on the details of the sheets of paper, you would close the road to having these verses come forth under another person's name.²⁹⁶

"Oh, Sir Flesh-Axe,²⁹⁷ no less infamous than a numskull! You²⁹⁸ fought

290. Appears to refer to Paluzzi's iniquities well known in Venice before those committed in alliance with Berardelli. Paluzzi qualifies as a "mummy" because, with his syphilis, his body was already half lifeless and, when wrapped in a "shroud," ready for burial. "Shroud" might also indicate the cover, in this case a particularly "long" one, that he spread over his deceptions, to hide them. Still another reading would be Paluzzi's semblance before death as a wraith and after death as a specter enveloped in a "long" sheet.

291. "Oracle," in (sarcastic) reference, perhaps, to Paluzzi's wise pronouncements. When Paluzzi was accused, his acquaintances appear to have come to him to hear his side of the story.

292. Which was to ascertain how much truth there was in the rumors that circulated about his doings.

293. They thus could see through the wiles of a trickster.

294. Verses ending with a proparoxytone, or accent on the third from last syllable.

295. Presumably Paluzzi: while he was an oracle before, now he is an astrologer who perceives or prognosticates the influence of the stars upon human behavior.

296. Said otherwise: it would be obvious that nobody except Paluzzi could have written the verses, which "closes the road" to Copia's having stolen them.

297. Berardelli kills people with the axe of his slander.

298. Here the writer reverts to the familiar *tu* form, only to resume the more impersonal *voi* form in the next paragraph ("Now stand still and listen," etc.).

tooth and nail where the case offered evidence for your felony, yet here you aimlessly thrash about as would a scabby dog in chasing away those flies that badger it. But what you gain from this is disdained as contemptible, abhorred as infamous, and hated as treacherous.

"Now stand still and listen, Sir Prison Sweeper, for a greater understanding of the reasons why you knavishly said what you did in those verses²⁹⁹ you had printed out of so much charity. It remains to be seen here [48r] how there could have occurred such notable damage to your reputation as would cause you so much distress.³⁰⁰ One knows that until 9 July 1624³⁰¹ you thrived, in concert with others in the household, on the tricks you played on the Jewess and on the provisions she mercifully supplied for the sustenance of this monster here [Paluzzi]. One knows, I say, that you and they reached a full agreement detrimental to the person of their benefactor, O wicked beasts! How could one possibly speculate, then, about anyone who, outside the house, could so extensively have damaged you?

"Some people are even very surprised you did not risk saying that the Jewess set up this whole affair by using her spells, for it was precisely for her ruin that you knew so well how to feign acts of exorcism by your magic, to the extent of stealing from her everything up to women's menstrual pads after they were put in packages meant to be sent for ironing. Others say that the infinitude of that infamy encompassing you would, of its own essence, have specified the time of the case in question [as infinite], to let one make [48v] a true calculation of how and to what degree you are a ruffian.

"But wherever your thievish attention to details was deficient,³⁰² we have, to make up for it, the trials recorded in the Office of the Signori di Notte al Criminal.³⁰³ These give an account of what happened as follows: on the eighth of July, 1624, one had an inkling of the injuries you wrought;³⁰⁴ on the ninth the Jewess was informed of them, whereby on this same day she expelled the washerwoman from the house and it was announced to the servant, i.e., to your thievish person, that you should not set foot in it;³⁰⁵ on the tenth the poet [Paluzzi] and the panhandler [Berardelli] wrote to a

299. For specific reference, see note to next sentence.

300. Berardelli writes in the dedication that he "saw, to [his] own detriment," to having them printed (see below, 3.2.A 3r).

301. The date on which the deceptions were revealed to Copia, who then expelled their fabricator.

302. In not providing a circumstantial account of his doings.

303. To which magistracy Copia complained, asking that it institute proceedings against Paluzzi and Berardelli for their villainy (see above, 15v).

304. Giacomo Rosa found them out (10v–11r, above).

305. The announcement was made to both Paluzzi and Berardelli.

certain Giacomo Rosa, blaming, begging, admonishing, and threatening; on the eleventh a copy was sent to the Jewess; and on the twelfth she had to go into the country with a certain gentlewoman, whereby the affair remained suspended for four days. Upon her return,³⁰⁶ there were discussions about how to silence the gossip. But no sooner does one raise certain topics than their stinking smell spreads through the neighborhood; and, consequently, no sooner did one discuss these most ignoble goings-on than it was discovered how disgusting they were. Hence the Jewess revealed in public the [49r] infamous thieveries of which she was a victim, and she was guaranteed that there would be punishment for them. So doing, she gave the villains a reason, in their attempt to conceal the enormity of their intemperance, for unsheathing those reproaches and those infamous charges that only they, in their thievish wickedness, knew how to improve with the skills of their invention. Thus at the end of the following month, August, the infamous libels were seen,³⁰⁷ the *Sareide* were read in the ghetto, insults were exchanged, abuses were shouted, threats of both passion and fury were hurled, all of them actions taken, understood, and viewed as a measure to turn a valiant, armipotent hero into an infamous trickster."

While the lector took a pause here, Aretino stretched out his hand, not wanting him to proceed any further. Then, fixing his eyes upon the heavens, he broke out into an exclamation, so worded:

"O sons of Parnassus³⁰⁸ and you, sacred daughters of Jupiter!³⁰⁹ See to what end the world has come in its laboring under the contagious disease of such an abject, contemptible, and villainous generation of humans. It was as impossible, in fact, for the lion of Andronicus,³¹⁰ [49v] or the eagle bred by the virgin of Sestos,³¹¹ or any panthers or snakes that others' illustrious pens

306. On the seventeenth of July.

307. It is unclear whether "seen" refers to their circulation in various copies or to their having been made public through recitation.

308. Here in reference to poets at large.

309. The Nine Muses.

310. May refer to Saint Andronicus, a Roman soldier and, later, Christian convert, who, in 304, during the Diocletian persecutions, was arrested, tortured, and thrown into an arena to be mauled by an animal (a lion?); but since the animal would not touch him, Andronicus was stabbed to death. See Paul Allard, *Histoire des persécutions*, 4/1:305–21; also the entry for "Sts. Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus" on the website for the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Or perhaps the "Notices" confused Andronicus for Androcles, who removed a thorn from the paw of a lion, and the lion became so grateful to him thereafter that when Androcles was captured and sentenced to be devoured by the animal, purposely starved to this end, it left him in peace (a tale told, among others, by Aulus Gellius, *Noctes atticae* 5.14).

311. Refers to a story told by Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 10.6.18) about an eagle lovingly raised by a maiden from Sestos, a town on the Hellespont; it was so attached to her that when she died, it flew into her funeral pyre, for consumption along with her body.

celebrated for their agreeable qualities³¹² to tame these infernal hydras,³¹³ these enraged sphinxes,³¹⁴ as for one eternal favor [of the Jewess], one ever vital display of her compassion to these impious creatures not to be requited with their detestable misdeeds and their horrible offenses—God on high be my witness!

"But if it were not for our seeing and fearing the justice, uncorrupted, that His Eminence, our Lord Apollo,³¹⁵ causes to be administered under this heaven, how could we ever believe that such abominable beasts might amend their ways? [Without it] it is certain that cities designated for the congregation of men would be none other than slaughterhouses of the innocent and infernos of the virtuous. Yet why are such scoundrels still not eliminated from the world? And why are such malign roots still not removed and extracted from the earth?

"I ask you, though, most excellent madam judges, who, thanks to your lustrous merits, are [50r] deified and immortalized on Parnassus, what are you waiting for? Why hesitate any longer? Why not flay this horrid dragon [Paluzzi], a compendium of every villainy so awful that not even death could amend his enormous impiety?³¹⁶

"Behold the iniquitous man who, not satisfied with the sum of wrongs so contemptuously done to the Jewess, seeks to taint that worthy, virtuous woman's reputation even more by attributing to himself, note well, the sonnet 'O di vita mortal forma divina' [Oh, divine form of mortal life].³¹⁷ There are those who solemnly swear to have seen the Jewess present this same sonnet in two different versions, of which the discarded one, elegant in its especially beautiful conceits, was perhaps better than the one that he

312. See again Pliny the Elder (*ibid.* 8.21.59–60) about a panther approaching a man to ask him to help rescue her babes fallen into a ditch: he pulled them out, to the panther's gratitude; or the same author (*ibid.* 8.22.61) about a snake that, brought up by Thoas, saved him, in later life, when he was set upon by thieves.

313. The Hydra being a serpent or monster slain by Hercules: it had nine heads, each of which, when cut off, was replaced by two others (for Paluzzi as a Hydra, see above, 14r, no. 5:3).

314. Sphinx: in Greek mythology, a monster having wings, a lion's body, and a woman's head and bust; specifically, the Sphinx of Thebes that proposed a riddle to passersby and destroyed them when they failed to solve it (with one notable exception: Oedipus, who became king of Thebes).

315. Originally *Signor*, but now in the sense of a deity.

316. Meaning, as said in the sonnet below, that Berardelli survived him to perpetuate his iniquity (51r, no. 8:12–14).

317. *Capoverso* of Copia's sonnet in a version approved by Paluzzi—see continuation—for publication in her *Manifesto* (2.4.D 2r, above) and, as we learn below (73r–v), included in Paluzzi's *rime* (on page 56) as a composition of his own (see 3.2, no. 2).

[Paluzzi] approved. Yet a copy of the first version remained, confidentially, in the hands of this notorious perjurer [Berardelli].³¹⁸

"Now tell me: could one ever imagine impudence of a greater insolence or knavery of a greater nastiness on the part of any traitor?

"Most excellent ladies, so vehement is the anger that, burning in my breast, I feel for this impious one [Paluzzi] that it almost impels me to tear him to pieces. Thus it is in dealing with the most contemptible garbage of a sordid mob. Let us say someone composes a work and [50v] out of confidence in his friends entrusts it to a Ferranti,³¹⁹ a Ferrari,³²⁰ and a Casoni³²¹ in order to get advice, an opinion, and even suggestions for correction. The reason for doing so is that an author does not always see details in his own things, and even fewer does he see when engaged in a precipitous act of writing, as was the case with the Jewess's *Manifesto*. For bringing out an idea with a little more liveliness, for fixing four words of speech and as many letters in spelling, for indicating some period or accent that the author might have overlooked, would these friends appropriate his work as their own? God forbid if I had been so treated by Bembo,³²² Tolomei,³²³ or my godfather Lodovico Dolce,³²⁴ to all of whom I consigned in Rome as well as in Venice many of my works, in large part punctuated by Dolce, as I acknowledge in

318. Are we talking about three different versions of the poem: one printed (with Paluzzi's consent) in Copia's *Manifesto*, another printed in Paluzzi's *Rime* (with a single, insignificant word change [see under 3.2.83], which would hardly qualify it to be more "elegant"), and a third (the so-called elegant one) retained by Berardelli?

319. Possibly Giovanni Francesco Ferranti (c. 1600–after 1653), author of the pastoral tragedy *La ninfa regina* (1630).

320. Which Ferrari (Francesco, Marc'Antonio, Ottavio, etc.)? It is still too early for the prolific Benedetto Ferrari (1603–81), poet, musician, librettist, and composer, active from the 1630s. Perhaps the reference was to the distinguished Venetian printer and editor Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari (d. 1578). Francesco Saverio Quadrio refers (in his *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia volumi quattro*, 2:296) to a Luca Antonio Ferrari, who, in 1617, published a collection of *Rime* (which I have not been able to trace).

321. Probably Guido Casoni (1561–1642), author of *La magia d'amore* (1591) and a collection of verses (*Le ode*, 1602); for the first, as it relates to music, see Don Harrán, "Guido Casoni on Love as Music, a Theme 'for All Ages and Studies.'"

322. Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), humanist scholar (and, after 1539, cardinal), poet (*Rime*, 1530, and the Latin *Carmina*, 1533), editor of Petrarch's and Dante's verses (1501–2), author of a disquisition on Platonic love (*Gli Asolani*, 1505), literary critic in praise of the vernacular (*Prose della volgar lingua*, 1525), and epistolarian.

323. Claudio Tolomei (1492–1555), an avid writer of letters (published in seven volumes, 1559) and a literary critic remembered in particular for a treatise in which he advocated the introduction of Latin metrics into the vernacular (*Versi et regole della nuova poesia toscana*, 1539).

324. Lodovico Dolce (1508–68), literary critic, editor of numerous works published in the Venetian presses for which he worked for over three decades, dramatist, translator (e.g., Hor-

the second volume of my 'Letters.'³²⁵ Few followers of Aristarchus would have envied me³²⁶ and few envious evildoers would have lambasted me.³²⁷

"But it was only right for him [Paluzzi] to reinvigorate his extenuated Muse, after the calamities that befell it, by resorting to these ways, [51r] as willed by the infamy of his genius. Thus operating with deceit and treason, and festering in leisure, he propped up his fame by nothing less than detracting from the reputation of the best and despoiling his benefactors. They were prey to his continuous acts of devastation, which he contrived after joining with the infamous big-time thief [Berardelli] and a band of filthy rabble.

"Considering this, the illustrious Solinga spoke thus in singing about this beast [Paluzzi]:³²⁸

8. SONNET

Ti sfami, infame, col pan de lo hebreo

You appease your hunger, scoundrel, with the bread of
the Jew;³²⁹

You quench your thirst on his nectarean wines;

You revive your spirits with the heat of his fire; 3

You breathe with the breath that he breathed into you.

You nestle within a nest of comfort, after he managed

ace's *Ars poetica* [1535 and later editions], from which Copia quoted in her *Manifesto*, as above), and prolific writer on a vast array of subjects (from the qualities and proprieties of colors to how to improve one's memory); see Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce: Renaissance Man of Letters*. His "godson" Aretino figures as an interlocutor in two of his treatises: *L'Aretino: dialogo della pittura* (1557), in praise of Venetian painting as against the strongly Florentine orientation of Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*, or "Lives of the Artists" (1556); and a *Dialogo piacevole*, "in which Signor Pietro Aretino speaks out in defense of unfortunate husbands" (1542) as victims of unfaithful and covetous wives.

325. Aretino's *Lettere*, in six volumes (1538 on), of which the last appeared with the previous ones in a collected posthumous edition (1609). The second volume (1547) was directed, in the title, to "the most sacred king of England" (Henry VIII); see *Il secondo libro delle lettere*, with the dedication proper ("Al magnifico Enrico Ottimo Massimo"; 1:3–5). I could not find the reference to Dolce in the dedication or elsewhere, though he does appear to have edited the volume and was the recipient of a letter in it from 1539 (*ibid.*, 2:176–81) about Niccolò Franco, on whom see above, 37v–38r.

326. Aristarchus of Samothrace (c. 217–145 B.C.E.), Greek scholar whose writings on grammar, orthography, etymology, and textual criticism earned him the name of an authority on philology.

327. Aretino implies that had his works been stolen, he would never have admirers or critics.

328. The verb "singing" in the ironic sense of "celebrating."

329. Masculine (*lo hebreo*), referring to Copia's husband as provider.

To lift you from the dung wherein you were perishing; 6
 He fitted you out with clothes for the cold months and
 provided cover
 For the summer ones: who ever did more for you
 than he?
 O infernal, cruel example of a wild beast, 9
 Do you not ravage and ensnare both the fame and
 the life
 Of such a friend, stealing from him the best that he has?
 Nor does your impiety end there, for you also leave, upon
 dying, 12
 A wanton thief as the infamous and impious
 Inheritor of your mendacious perjuries.³³⁰

[51v] "But is there actually anyone who extended some benefit to this inhuman monster [Paluzzi], yet was not rewarded for it with notable ingratitude?³³¹ Whoever wants to know about this should take care to see those annotations made by him in glossing that work that gave the Jewess reason to bring out her *Manifesto*.³³² They show, with the biting maliciousness of his language, what effect the benefit could have on him when received from one who was the first in Venice to assist him.³³³ His comments are of so wicked a nature that the Jewess, who detested them, did not even want them to be seen, let alone printed. They appear in the script of this monster, however, in that same book's margins that he had widened in order to dilate, to his liking, the gall of his malicious heart.

"From the refusal of the Jewess to accept that odious offering, one clearly sees how terribly the thievish scullery boy [Berardelli] was lying in his false declarations against her. She did not want to avail herself of anybody's works: not just those of this scoundrel over here [Paluzzi], but also the most learned writings—[52r] in prose as in verse, in Latin as in Tuscan—of the most excellent authors she had at hand. Her own writings, I say, were heard and seen at the time by diverse valorous persons in Venice. They visibly contradict the claims of these two scoundrels.

330. Refers to Paluzzi's dying, after which Berardelli, who became his heir, spread false ("mendacious") rumors to the effect that Copia plagiarized the poet's works.

331. After reciting Solinga's sonnet, Aretino continues his speech.

332. The work being Bonifaccio's *Discorso*.

333. Seems to refer to Bonifaccio as the person whom he served, as secretary, when he first came to Venice (see above, 5r). His kindness was clearly requited with spiteful words.

"But, as the author of the chapters [Solinga] well shows, could we have any better testimony to the impudent falsity of these unworthy men than the Jewess's having announced, before the eyes of the law and the whole world, the treacheries and the thefts contrived and executed against her by these revolting villains? Who is so foolish as not to see that every little mark of consideration that the Jewess might have noted within the many falsities spread about her would have been enough to make her desist from accusations and tie her tongue?³³⁴ Who does not know that just as truth produces hate and fear in scoundrels, as happens moreover with these wicked ones here, so in the virtuous it generates security and self-assurance, as can be seen in the Jewess? She, though, has not proven so stupid as to believe that anyone involved and completely immersed in such contemptible, filthy, and [52v] unworthy thieveries could be secure or that his every villainous slander, his every false calumny, and his every unworthy, ugly action might not reverberate in sounds of vicious infamy on his tongue.

"With no respect for this rabble, the honored young woman disclosed, both privately and publicly, the enormous excesses of these two and impressed on their faces the sign of shame that will make them eternally infamous. Feeling particularly injured by this sign, however, the thievish servant [Berardelli] sees to having an occasion arise, wherever he is, to apologize for it; and in showing this and that one the verses [by Paluzzi that] he had printed, he suddenly starts to defame, belittle, and slander the Jewess and, crazy beast that he is, does not realize that his same deprecating tongue is none other than clear testimony to his thefts, his deceits, and his abominable and filthy all-consuming vices. Hence with good reason the verses below³³⁵ are read aloud in execration of a man so unworthy. Nor will the lector regret having the most excellent ladies hear them."

At that point, [53r] Truth,³³⁶ standing to the right of Aretino, handed him an octavo-sized book that recorded the insults of those shameless rascals. Aretino gave it to the lector, who, reading, made himself heard as follows:³³⁷

334. Cumbersome formulation for saying, perhaps, that had the scoundrels shown her a modicum of respect she would not have denounced them to the authorities.

335. In reference not only to those that follow but also, obliquely, to the forty-seven poems at the end of the "Notices."

336. Here *Verità* (or Latin *Veritas*), personified, in Greek mythology, by Aletheia, daughter of Jupiter.

337. The sonnets numbered 9–13, in condemnation of Berardelli, were clearly written by one of Copia's supporters (the book in octavo may have been that to which earlier reference was made as having chapters and verses by Giulia Solinga; see 11v).

There you await the wandering traveler if he draws
 near;³⁴⁴ 6
 In the meantime, may the hangman weave you a
 hemp rope
 To leave you as food for the crow and the raven.
 Yes, we will see the mouth's execrable tongue, 9
 Forcibly thrust by a vengeful rope and dirty with scum,
 Scoff at the air and the winds.
 May it come to pass that the soul, so filthy from every stain, 12
 Be shattered; may it come to pass that, in the end, the
 contemptible beast,
 Detested by the heavens and the elements, be
 extinguished.

11. SONNET POSSIBLY BY GIULIA SOLINGA

Sfacciato vil ladron, ben del sagace

[54r] Impudent, contemptible thief, well do you
 Maintain the propriety and imitate the strategy of the
 wise thief;³⁴⁵
 With a theft in your hand you scoff at the rope yarn, 3
 As do all those of your kind with their mendacious
 pretensions.
 Do you rob, evildoer, and raise a noisy commotion
 About your having been robbed?³⁴⁶ And thus make a
 full circle? 6
 O heaven, do I see, stamped in print,
 The same lie no less impious than fallacious?³⁴⁷
 Do the gallows and twisted ropes 9

344. Meaning perhaps that he seizes whatever he can from the drawers or cabinets opened by Copia and her husband in their meanderings through the house.

345. In ironic reference, perhaps, to one of the two thieves hanged along with Christ: the same thief, as a token of sagacity, is said to have recognized his crimes and asked for forgiveness in the afterlife (cf. Luke 23:39–43). Berardelli feigns innocence, hoping it will earn him an acquittal.

346. In reference to the theft of Paluzzi's verses.

347. In reference to Berardelli's fivefold accusation, in the *Rime*, that Copia stole Paluzzi's works; see, in the "Notices," under 67r–69r, and for the five passages in the *Rime* themselves, the various extracts under 3.2 below.

Your thefts reverberate and in a clear meter 12
 They say: "Be still, scoundrel, for she, the thief's
 Foolish consort, not always laughs."³⁵⁶

13. SONNET POSSIBLY BY GIULIA SOLINGA

A Bacco celebrar con empio abuso

[55r] Abominable feasts were celebrated to Bacchus³⁵⁷
 By barbarous peoples excessive in their impiety;
 Nay, the feasts, bereft of every human custom, 3
 Were dark, ruinous tragedies of impious lewdness.
 Within an unclean sanctuary³⁵⁸ every ray, every light,
 Was completely dimmed, and the confused-sounding 6
 Roars of obnoxious voices
 Overwhelmed the sad voices of the ravaged.³⁵⁹
 Yes, it now happens that an infamous thief, intent 9
 On keeping hidden from the world the unjust larceny
 That fame impressed and sculpted on his person,³⁶⁰
 Wails and roars, and laden with ignominy 12
 He thinks he has buried truth in falsity,
 A true trophy of the trilinear stalk.³⁶¹

Aretino resumed his speech:

356. The last clause—"che non ride / Sempre del ladro la sciocca consorte"—can be read in two different ways: with *ride* governing *del ladro*, "laughs at the thief," or, as above, with *del ladro* defining *la sciocca consorte*, "the thief's foolish consort." According to the second, "consort" would refer to a female conspirator, here either Furlana or the dark-skinned scullery maid; thus the writer might be saying that the same "consort" was so reprimanded that she could no longer afford to laugh at her misdeeds. But according to the first, "consort" means conjugal partner, namely Jacob Sulam's wife Sarra, hardly as "foolish" as Berardelli may think (see above, 52r, where she is said not to be "stupid"): instead of laughing at the thievery, she complained to the authorities.

357. Bacchus (Dionysus), the god of wine and debauchery. The "feasts" in his honor would be termed bacchanalia.

358. Copia's abode, contaminated by the poison of the evildoers.

359. The original has "raped" (*stuprati*).

360. Add, for eternal shame.

361. Obscure (*trilimigne fusto*): "three" might refer to a noxious plant that sprouts in the acts of the *three* major criminals Paluzzi, Berardelli, and Furlana; or, more likely, to the gallows as a "trilinear triumphal arch" (see below, 93r, no. 53:6), on which Berardelli was rightly to be hanged.

"May you now see, most excellent ladies, what disciple, what pupil, what heir³⁶² has been left to us by this eminent man of letters [Paluzzi],³⁶³ this new politician³⁶⁴ whose thought was that in [55v] cities religion is fruitless and that its ministers, for their being useless, ought not to be tolerated.³⁶⁵ His most villainous mind had the audacity to oppose and impiously to contradict that which was recognized by the most barbarous, most savage, and most inhuman nations. Take a good look at the follower [Berardelli] left behind by this impertinent Epicurean who in no way believed in the immortality of the soul.³⁶⁶

"But what else did he [Paluzzi] do? He denied the existence of God Himself. Behold a rustic philosopher,³⁶⁷ behold the wild Demosthenes:³⁶⁸ with the presumptuousness of his arrogance there is not a poet he did not excoriate and not a historian left unhurt by his teeth, nor was there a man of letters able to flee the eyetooth of his bites. Behold the egotist who loathed turning his look to the works of the great Petrarch,³⁶⁹ who bragged of correcting every verse of the divine Ariosto,³⁷⁰ who made known his intention to emend every work of the most celebrated Marino.³⁷¹ So much did this well-dressed peasant arrogate to himself in his ignorance [56r] and attribute to himself in his impudence!"

362. All three in reference to Berardelli.

363. "Left" in the sense that Berardelli outlived him.

364. Refers to Paluzzi's "writings on politics" (foreword to *Rime*, A 4r; see below), though the meaning here is clearly that Berardelli has his own corrupt views on government.

365. The description may summarize Paluzzi's thoughts and, by proxy, Berardelli's in the same "political" writing among the former's *rime*: is it to be identified with the canzone written upon the death of Henri IV, king of France, and containing, in stanza 5, a vague reference to "pious ministers making their own gods . . . buried in the tomb of the sea" (*Rime*, 79:17–20)?

366. Hence Paluzzi's critical comments to Bonifaccio's *Discorso*: they appear to have been so vicious that Copia is said to have rejected them for use in her *Manifesto* (see above, 51v).

367. Meaning either that Paluzzi buried his musings in bucolic verse or that despite his being a "peasant" (see below) he played the philosopher.

368. Implies that the great ancient Greek orator Demosthenes (384?–322 B.C.E.) would have tamed his speech, whereas Paluzzi used it "wildly" for execration.

369. Francesco Petrarca (1304–74), famed for his Italian lyric verses (in his *Canzoniere*) and various writings in Latin, among them an epic poem (*Africa*), biographies of distinguished Romans (*De viris illustribus*), two collections of letters (*Familiars*, *Seniles*), and a highly personal confession of moral failings (*Secretum meum*).

370. Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), author of the epic poem *Orlando furioso* (first begun in 1505), along with seven satires and five comedies.

371. Giambattista Marino (1569–1625), author of the epic poem *Adone* (on the love of Venus and Adonis) and numerous lyric verses in a new mode that, because of its clever, often strained conceits, became known as Marinism.

Now as Aretino was thus overstating the same one's [Paluzzi's] insolence, it was precisely those two exceptional spirits who passed by the tribunal. They were seen by Signora Andreini, who made them a sign to approach. She said to Ariosto: "Listen, Signor Lodovico, how excited Aretino becomes over protecting your interests and those of the Signor Cavalier [Marino]."

"Aretino ought not to go to any trouble over my person to the disadvantage of this one here [Paluzzi]," Ariosto answered, "because he well knows that those of my kind have little regard for the roars of a similar ox."

"And what do you think?" Signora Andreini said, turning to Marino, who replied:

"I already heard that such a pedant³⁷² was destroying my fame, but not having seen any of this in public, I took little notice of it. Well would I have known with what soap I ought to rinse [the mouth of] this ass even if it does not pay for a virtuous spirit to show resentment toward such unworthy rabble.³⁷³ The shrewd Jewess does wisely in not responding to either the wailings of this scoundrel [Paluzzi] or the barks of that [56v] same thief [Berardelli], who, by barking, revealed that he was in fact a thief. Nor is there need for any other response to those of their kind³⁷⁴ than using a strap on them and hissing them."

The criminal [Paluzzi] was more dead than alive in hearing those lords speak in such a way. It was then that a furious riot broke out without anyone's knowing who might have instigated it. Midst the confusion of hisses and shrieks one heard shouts of "give it to him but good," "hang him," "butcher him," "burn him." The guards moved forward and barely managed to silence the noise that pervaded the whole court. In the meantime, those most excellent ladies retired to a secret chamber and discussed among themselves the ways the same one [Paluzzi] had abused the piety and faith of his benefactors. They reflected upon the words said by the noble Genoan³⁷⁵ and verified that the villain was no less impious in his beliefs than unscrupulous in his deceits. Filled with nausea from his wickedness, they thus took to considering what kind of punishment should be used for chastising such great perfidy.

372. For Paluzzi as pedant, see above, 2.6.5r.

373. For Marino's earlier praises of Paluzzi (in a letter from 1619), see above, under notes to 1v.

374. The original has "his [Berardelli's] kind" (*suoi pari*), probably a slip of the pen.

375. Presumably Cebà. See above, 2r, 26r, 39r. What the same gentleman said is not clarified. The Genoan might also have been Rosa (presuming he *was* Genoan), whose letter was central to the proceedings.

Some proposed ruining his reputation; some suggested removing his name from all remaining records [57r]; some moved for placing him inside a perpetually revolving wheel whereby his torments would ever be renewed; and some were of the opinion that he should be consumed by fire. Although they did not speak of his abominable vice³⁷⁶ in order not to contaminate the chaste ears of those ladies, there was nobody who did not know the net result of his filthy habits. They could not make up their minds on the way such an abominable beast should be punished, at which point a great person in arms and letters took big steps to defend him.³⁷⁷ He induced the most excellent Signor Don Giovanni de' Medici,³⁷⁸ though adversely inclined toward the criminal, to join forces with him. They hastened to the rooms of Lorenzo³⁷⁹ and Cosimo the Great,³⁸⁰ who, as princes together with all their supporters, conveyed themselves, in flight, to the kingdom of Apollo.

The most learned Poliziano³⁸¹ presented the petition for grace to be granted by His Majesty [Apollo], who immediately sent the house steward to those ladies with an order that they postpone a decision until further notice. But that great personage³⁸² who favored the criminal feared that, with any delay, the tongue of Aretino might cause him [Paluzzi] [57v] some notable damage and that some other important misdeed might come to light. In little time he saw to it that the Majesty of Apollo give an order to speed things up and recommended the case, in the interim, to all those from whose favor he was hoping for some relief in these so turbulent circumstances. He

376. Sodomy.

377. The name of this "great" warrior and writer is left unsaid.

378. Giovanni (or as shortened in source, Giovan) de' Medici (1498–1526), who dedicated himself to the military profession, becoming one of the outstanding soldiers of his time; he fought for Pope Leo X, then for the French, and eventually fell in combat. His son was the future duke Cosimo I, mentioned in the continuation.

379. Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent (1449–92), after 1465 ruler of the Florentine republic and patron of artists (among them Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, and Michelangelo), philosophers (Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola), and poets, including Poliziano (see below). He himself wrote poetry (sonnets, canzoni, *ballate*, carnival songs, sacred *laude*).

380. Cosimo de' Medici the Great (1519–74) was the son of Giovanni de' Medici (see above) and, after 1537, duke of Florence (in 1569 Pius V conferred on him the title Grand Duke of Tuscany).

381. Angelo Poliziano (1454–94), illustrious poet and classical scholar at the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent (see above). He edited, translated, and commented works of ancient Greek and Latin authors, writing verses in their languages as well as in the vernacular (e.g., the *Stanze cominciate per la giostra*). His play *Favola d'Orfeo* (1480), on the theme of Orpheus and Eurydice, adumbrated the first operas, most notably Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607).

382. "In arms and letters": see above.

also obtained from His Serenity Apollo that Mr. Cino da Pistoia³⁸³ be allowed to speak in the criminal's defense.

A BRAWL BETWEEN AN ITALIAN AND A SPANIARD OVER THE QUESTION OF JUSTICE

Mr. Cino immediately received an official appointment as attorney and was already on his way to the rooms of Signora Vittoria when made to stop by a fierce brawl that ignited no more quickly than straw set to fire.³⁸⁴ What caused it was that outside the walls of Parnassus Signor Traiano Boccalini³⁸⁵ had challenged Signor Don Garcilaso de la Vega³⁸⁶ to a duel for slanderous speech in saying about the servant [Berardelli] that after he had worked the oars on a galley and spent a short time in prison, he came out unscathed;

383. Cino da Pistoia (1270–c. 1337) was renowned as a jurist and lyric poet. The "Notices" emphasize his legal skills; indeed he composed a massive commentary on the Justinian Code (*Lectura super codice*, 1312–14). But he is chiefly remembered for his verses (Dante praised them for their sweetness and subtlety; *De vulgari eloquentia* 1.10.4).

384. As background for this section it might be mentioned that tensions ran high in Venice ever since the Venetians suspected the Spanish of having connived in 1618 to bring the republic under Spanish dominion. See Richard Mackenney, "'A Plot Discover'd': Myth, Legend, and the 'Spanish' Conspiracy against Venice in 1618."

385. Traiano Boccalini (1556–1613), author of the *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, begun around 1605 and printed in installments in 1612–13, then as a whole another twelve times between 1614 and 1680 (ed. Giuseppe Rua, 2 vols., with volume 2 newly edited by Luigi Firpo). The *Ragguagli* are important for perpetuating the Parnassus mode inaugurated by Cesare Caporali around 1580 (see below) and for providing an example for the present "Notices." More particularly they included 201 "reports" (*ragguagli*) in which wise men over the ages discoursed on literature and politics. Boccalini followed them up with the *Pietra del paragone politico* (published posthumously in 1615), a vehement attack on Spanish rule in Italy. His early studies in law at the University of Perugia (1578–80) seem to have qualified him, in the "Notices," for being grouped below with the Perugians (64r). For bio-bibliographical data on Boccalini, see (Firpo's entry in) Alberto Maria Ghisalberto, ed., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 11:10–19; and for the Parnassus genre, Federica Cappelli, "Parnaso bipartito nella satira italiana del '600 (e due imitazioni spagnole)," and, in this volume, under "Notices from Parnassus" in the volume editor's introduction.

386. Or as spelled in source, Don Garcilasso della Vega (1503–36): Spanish poet and soldier, to be distinguished from the same-named historian (1539–1616) born in Peru but living in Spain after 1560 (his *Comentarios reales*, 1609, recount the history and customs of the Incas). The earlier Garcilaso joined the forces of Charles V and fought in Italy in the 1520s–30s. Though few in number, his verses (sonnets, odes, eclogues), which betray Italian influence, earned him a place as a leading figure in Spanish literature. On one particular sonnet that commemorates the fortress Goleta captured by Charles V near the site of ancient Carthage and its relevance to reforms in Renaissance poetry, see Richard Helgerson, *A Sonnet from Carthage: Garcilaso de la Vega and the New Poetry of Sixteenth-Century Europe*.

that if he had had to deal with the Count of Fuentes,³⁸⁷ he would have been strung up on a gallows; and that not only did one fail to punish him, but he was allowed to dedicate those [58r] publicly stated falsities to a most illustrious senator,³⁸⁸ to defame that honored Jewess in print, and to assert that he had wrongly been put in prison.³⁸⁹ The last statement was a lie, about which a *creado* [servant]³⁹⁰ of his [de la Vega's], and one who took pleasure in conversing with Italian Muses,³⁹¹ composed this sonnet:

14

Ferma, viatore, ascolta un caso strano

Stop, traveler, and listen to the strange case	
Of Signor Berardelli as presented	
On a site to which passage is closed to your likes: ³⁹²	3
Oh, what misfortune accompanied the sovereign man!	
After he made the fortune and condition of the Jew	
Change with a rapacious and busy hand	6
And removed whatever had filled his empty spaces,	
Whence Israel still complains, ³⁹³ but in vain,	
He dares to say, as a heading to a sonnet	9
That his contemptible colleague addressed to him in	
prison,	
That he was being held on a false charge; ³⁹⁴	

387. Don Pedro Enríquez de Acevedo (1535–1610), count of Fuentes, Spanish general and diplomat; under Philip II, he was governor of the Netherlands (1595–96) and, under Philip III, governor of Milan (1600–1610).

388. The "falsities" about Copia to be found in Paluzzi's *Rime*, dedicated to Soranzo.

389. De la Vega's complaints were, then, that Italian law was too lenient; that the country lacked harsh disciplinarians; that Berardelli came off with too light a punishment; that he was allowed to sully Copia's reputation; that he dedicated Paluzzi's verses to Soranzo; and that he declared his having been unjustly incarcerated.

390. Properly *criado*, Spanish.

391. Writing, that is, in Italian (and not in his native Spanish).

392. The same "site" to which there is no access would seem to be that of his incarceration, though Parnassus is another possibility.

393. A reference to the story of the Jews in exile as one of ravage. Israel denotes the name that Jacob was ordered to assume after wrestling with and prevailing over an angel (Gen. 32:24–30). Jacob alias Israel is, of course, Copia's husband.

394. Paluzzi, *Rime*, 106.

After having burgled the place of assembly,³⁹⁵ 12
 Like an eager rustic who mows the field,
 He makes us hear an impudent lie.

To which Boccalini responded with four comments:

The first was that Italy had no lack of parallels [58v] for comparison with Fuentes, for if the thief had had to deal with a Sixtus V,³⁹⁶ a Vespasiano Gonzaga,³⁹⁷ and a Ranuccio Farnese,³⁹⁸ none of them would have furnished him with supplies [for his well-being].

The second was that in Venice there always were and still are such senators as could compare in integrity of mind, in evenhanded dispensation of justice, and in prudent governance, not just to those named above, but also to as many of the most famous who, in their importance, illuminated Greece or immortalized the great Roman Republic.³⁹⁹

The third was that clear evidence of this may be had in the best modes of administration with which they governed and continue to govern the cities entrusted to them. As exceptionally clement as these senators were, they did not refrain, however, from disinfecting their countries from a wicked generation of men resembling that thief in their cut. Similar traitors can often be seen raked up in a multitude alongside city walls, where they

395. The place of assembly (originally the one word *convento*), for Berardelli and the conspirators, being Sulam's house.

396. Sixtus V (1520–90; born Felice Peretti): joined the Franciscan order in 1533 and, in 1557, became head of the Inquisition in Venice, only to follow Gregory XIII, in 1585, as pope. He was known to have exercised his duties with particular severity.

397. Vespasiano Gonzaga (1531–91), son of Luigi Gonzaga and founder, in 1553, of Sabioneta (some thirty-two miles southwest of Mantua), governing it as duke. Rumor has it that he killed his two wives and that in a fit of rage he mortally wounded his son, aged fifteen, by kicking him in the groin.

398. Ranuccio Farnese (1569–1622), duke of Parma and Piacenza. Intolerant of criticism or delays, he ruled his court with an iron hand. His cruelty led him, on one occasion, to execute more than a hundred persons from Parma because he suspected them of plotting his overthrow.

399. This and the next paragraph connect with Venice as the ideal republic, a myth once fervently upheld and now more often debunked in the scholarly literature: for a recent, balanced review, see John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797*, especially the editors' introductory chapter "Reconsidering Venice" (1–35). The development of a republican consciousness in Venice is sketched out by William J. Bouwsma in his by now classic study *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation*. On the visual representation of the myth of Venice (with its various components of wisdom, justice, and peace), see David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*.

are placed, as a frightening spectacle, to satisfy the hunger pangs of crows and fill [59r] the gullets of wolves.

The fourth was that Signor Don Garcilaso could be safe in believing that that most illustrious senator to whom that book was dedicated⁴⁰⁰ never knew, in any way, the perfidy of its author or the detestable iniquity of his servant. Surely that most illustrious man and his peers have other things to attend to than giving ear to similar rabble.

As concerns the same servant, he [Boccalini] referred him [de la Vega] to a sonnet composed by a virtuous lord, who responds to a silent charge in this regard. It is a sonnet so worded as to read thus:

15

Carco di furti e obbrobij, il dipintore

Laden with thefts and disgraces, the painter	
Turned his thoughts to dedications,	
Placing the name of a signal man	3
Before his thievish reports, ⁴⁰¹ O charlatan!	
To lacerate another's honor, that dog	
Entered the book through this door, ⁴⁰² and with stories	6
Woven of lies he displayed	
The victories of his infamies as a traitor.	
Impudent thief, truly unworthy	9
Of having the earth support you or being let to breathe	
Pure air or not being hung over flames!	
But, blind peoples, why not have a stiff arm	12
Strike every part of him with a stick of wood	
Until the stick becomes soft and he becomes hard? ⁴⁰³	

[59v] The same sonnet was heard by a man who well knows the lord to whom this arrogant blusterer dedicated the *Rime*. He, too, wrote a sonnet, in which he said what really is true, in these words:

400. Paluzzi's *Rime* was dedicated to Soranzo.

401. Berardelli, "painter," man of letters, appears to have used Soranzo's name as a ploy to validate the falsities he reported in the dedication and elsewhere in Paluzzi's *Rime* (see above, 15v, and the various extracts from the *Rime* proper under 3.2).

402. Namely, the dedication to Soranzo.

403. I.e., until he is dead.

39
 La non più due lupi e che el s' d'garisano l'onea
 creder peggio che quello d' ^{me} l'ovore a cui fu dedicata
 quel l'oro non regge mai ne la certezza dell' ovore
 ne la ~~memoria~~ ^{iniquità} iniquità del famiglia che i cari di
 quell' ~~l'oro~~ ^{me} d'altro hanno la balda che il
 dar aiuto a simil Canaglie e che mirano a questo
 lo rimettono ad un volere fatto da virtuoso signore
 onde si ridonda ad una sacra querela in tale
 proposito ~~la penna in sp~~ ^{la penna in sp} senza con d'licenza
 caso di furti e robbe d' d' piovore
 volte il pensiero a le dell'ingria
 e di ingria ingria il nome a e memoria
 tale padre: forte ingria se d' commettere:
 Ca facemmo il cane l'altra honore
 enno per quon d'ora e con l'ovore
 di mazzette ingria le ingria
 ingria delle sue ingria il padre re
 S'facemmo l'adri, uon meno ingria
 che si regge la terra, el aere. S'non
 ingria si ingria e non si ingria caldo:
 ma cieche ingria e per che uon meno ingria
 non gli fulmina intorno con un legno?
 sia el s' d' l'adri sia molle e gli ingria duro?

Figure 10. Fol. 59r from the "Notices from Parnassus" (1626 or thereafter). Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, MS Cicogna 270. Courtesy of Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr.

Cred'il falso chi crede ch'un huom degno

He believes a falsehood who believes that a worthy man,⁴⁰⁴
 Ever illustrious and wise and just in his behavior,
 Would ever know what contrivances the unjust 3
 Thief might employ to strike at the Jewess,
 For he would not have placidly suffered
 Having such a scoundrel, packed with every vice, 6
 Stand under the aegis of his bright, ever august name
 And blemish someone with a show of villainous wits.
 He believes a falsehood who believes that he could know 9
 What excessive wickedness was used by that
 contemptible one
 Whose *Rime* darken his name,
 For the great Soranzo would not have allowed 12
 A signal woman, of a gentle mind,
 To be oppressed by such unworthy burdens.

Boccalini added that one might believe as much of all those illustrious lords [60r] named within that work [Paluzzi's *Rime*], whether they were fictional or true: had they known the infamous actions of that thief [Berardelli] and the impiousness of that villain [Paluzzi], they would not have allowed their names to be seen printed on those pages. Resuming his speech, Signor Traiano then said:

"Don Garcilaso should definitely believe that that servant [Berardelli] was judged by the most impartial lords, who showed him no more respect than would the Count of Fuentes. But in Venice, as in every place where justice is administered with that dexterity and equity that the holiest laws teach and not with capricious cruelty, an advantageous explanation was not enough. One had to go beyond such an explanation by knowing how to present it to the judges and, for their benefit, to remove it continually from under those curtains with which the culprits, to escape punishment, attempt all along to veil it.

"The Jewess did not know how to do this. She thought she needed only to furnish an explanation, for she had no experience [60v] in judiciary matters handled in the Palace⁴⁰⁵ and solicited little legal advice in this af-

404. Soranzo.

405. The larger part of the judicial machinery was located in the Palazzo Ducale (see fig. 2, no. 11).

fair. The little she did solicit, however, was always with great impatience, for in a short period of time she switched to several lawyers, each of whom was already less informed of the case than his predecessor. With his little knowledge of it, then, the lawyer could convey that much less to the judges. Because of these disadvantages he left the criminal [Berardelli] a lot of room for maneuver, and the latter, to escape his rightful punishment, was not lacking in every kind of legal aid. With the shrewdness of a good consultant, the same criminal was able to shadow and obfuscate the truth and almost turned this whole business into a comedy.

"It comes as no great surprise, then, that the criminal escaped the gallows, since in Venice lawsuits are managed by smart men who have utilized their studies to persuade one of anything that suits them. What inevitably happens is that there sometimes is a bit of disorder, for which, as has been shown, a great opportunity arose in the carelessness of a person who, less shrewd than the rest, did not properly attend to the case. Nay, it was he who notably caused the disorder. [61r] The Jewess did not know how to provide herself, in this hunt, with a fine, sharp-nosed hound to dislodge this fox and, as a consequence, eventually lost track of the beast.

"But Signor Don Garcilaso could well discern that, in this way, the thievish servant escaped the gibbet he deserved, while someone else, most innocent, was hanged in his stead.⁴⁰⁶ Such things are apt to happen not just in Venice but from time to time in every age and place. They fill ancient records and one can find modern examples of them within the recent past. All arise from nothing else but the malicious ideas for hanging that wicked men shape in the minds of judges through false appearances, feigned accounts, and villainous testimony.

"Something of this sort occurred in Venice, moreover, a short time ago, when one of these enemies of God saw to the ignominious execution of his ill-fated gray-haired patron⁴⁰⁷ by inventing a similar detestable falsehood against the illustrious innocence of persons most eminent. Thus it is that just as the impiousness of that villainous slanderer could prevail in a case of the gravest consequence, [61v] so in matters of lesser importance to legal accuracy and diligence, when one encounters carelessness and negligence, it becomes easy for the slanderer to mask the truth with whatever disguise best suits him. As everyone knows, the duty of the judge is to be just in his judgment. But it should be the concern of anyone who wants justice from

406. Appears to refer to Copia's being "hanged" (figuratively) as a result of the false accusations brought against her by Berardelli.

407. Originally worded as "his sorry gray hairs" (*la sua mal condotta canitie*). The translation as "patron" was by analogy to the circumstances of Trevisan, Strozzi's benefactor (see above, 2r, 3r), and to those of Copia, Paluzzi's.

him to elucidate the truth and, in presenting his arguments to him, leave no room for fraud so as to clear the ranks of its deceptions."

In handling this matter, as he [Boccalini] demonstrated, the Jewess had conducted herself with the utmost carelessness and impatience. It follows that the reason for this disorder was to be attributed to no one else but herself.

Don Garcilaso was not appeased by these vivid explanations. Rather he said, with a bitter taste in his mouth, that Boccalini let himself be veiled by a cloud of feelings that prevented him from perceiving the truth. He referred him to what [62r] Boccaccio wrote about Venice in the second story of the Fourth Day, in which story he called it "the harbor of every wickedness."⁴⁰⁸ Boccalini responded to this, saying that, at the time, Boccaccio spoke not as moved by his will but rather as impelled by a certain spirit of prophecy. It made him "divine" the coming of those two scoundrels [Paluzzi, Berardelli] to that city as persons in whom, we already know from experience, every revolting indecency had its nest. The Spaniard laughed at these words and said that Boccalini had stolen this idea from a certain Giustinopolitano.⁴⁰⁹ "I do not deny," Signor Traiano said, "that the Istrian⁴¹⁰ said the same thing much earlier. But if he, either out of spite or some conflict or other with a man who bedecked himself with the title of 'truthful' and the nickname of 'divine,'⁴¹¹ could turn the words of Boccaccio to his own purposes, why should I not be able to take advantage of them? Would I not have better reason to do so against two wicked men branded, for their culpability, with that mark that in every variety of thoroughly contemptible iniquity [62v] makes someone impious worthy of torture?"

"Should Signor Don Garcilaso wish to interpret Boccaccio according to the letter, he might by contrast consider the esteem that Petrarch had for that republic and his ideas about that most eminent city where he lived for a long time⁴¹² and was honored, as befitted so great a philosopher and so singular a poet. Speaking of it [Venice], he termed it most august and called it a house of liberty, peace, and justice; a refuge for the good; and an only haven for anyone who, oppressed by wars and despotic regimes, wishes to live well.

408. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, day 4, story 2 ("Vinegia, d'ogni bruttura ricevitrice").

409. Gerolamo Muzio (1496–1576), called *Il Giustinopolitano* from the native city of his father, Capodistria (today Koper), also formerly Giustinopoli (Capodistria, to the south of Trieste, was the capital of Istria, to which the next sentence refers, under Venetian rule from 1267 to 1797). In addition to several collections of verses, he composed various treatises, among them one on poetry (*Arte poetica*) and another in defense of Italian (*Battaglie per la difesa dell'italica lingua*).

410. Muzio again.

411. It is not clear who flaunted the epithets "truthful" and "divine" and awakened Muzio's envy or anger.

412. Petrarch lived in Venice six years in all (1363–68).

He said that it was rich in gold, but richer in a good reputation; he said that it was powerful in its capabilities, but even more powerful in its virtues; he said that it was founded on solid marble blocks⁴¹³ but even more solidly established on the solid foundation of civil concord; he said that it was girded by salty waves but defended by even saltier councils; and he said that, in corroboration [63r] of as much as he wrote about it, he wanted that lofty republic to be the heir of those books with which he adorned the walls of his study, as can be seen in the deed of legacy drawn up in his own hand."⁴¹⁴

Signor Traiano then added that if Don Garcilaso was still not appeased by this explanation, he should do his best to see what Gabriello Selvago, that noble Genoan, wrote about the city,⁴¹⁵ for perhaps from what he said His Eminence⁴¹⁶ might become disabused [of his false opinions]. Should this, too, not be enough, so he continued, he might reflect on how many illustrious men, in arms as in every science and art, left their native nest not only in all the cities of Italy, but also in all parts of the world, to gather and dwell in Venice with their families. They blissfully thought that after their decease their bones would have eternal peace on that sacred terrain under that benign heaven. All these things appeared to inscribe a robust lie on the face of Boccaccio should he have pretended to speak maliciously [63v] and not according to the interpretation he intended.⁴¹⁷

"*Resto amirado* [I am amazed]," the Spaniard said, "that Your Eminence⁴¹⁸ did not declare that that republic is a guardian of popes, a financial backer of overthrown kings, and a breakwater of faith!"⁴¹⁹ With a sinister look full of disdain, he turned his back to Bocalini, who, with his pride offended, followed up by saying:

"What I said was what I had to, nor can one say as much without leaving much more unsaid. But I certainly do not want to leave out that it [Venice] is a bridle against the covetousness of others' unjust tyranny; that it is a

413. Its buildings erected on waterproof marble foundations that themselves rest on pilings.

414. He willed his library to the republic of Venice.

415. Refers to a letter written by Selvago, in 1565, to the Bolognese senator Camillo Paleotto (not to be confused with the homonymous character in book 2 of Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano*) and published, with an introductory note by Cicogna, under the title: *Della città di Venezia: lettera inedita di Gabriele Selvago genovese a messere Camillo Paleotto*. Paleotto was also the recipient of an anonymous letter, from the same date, on a related topic (*Ritratto della vita civile dei veneziani nel 1565: lettera d'incerto autore a Messer Camillo Paleotto*).

416. Originally *sua ste*, which makes no sense unless *ste* was an abbreviation: perhaps the final *e* should be read as *à*, thus *s.à* for *serenità* (or, as translated above, "Eminence"), here used sarcastically.

417. I.e., the prophetic interpretation.

418. Again originally *sua ste* (see above).

419. In the sense that it weakens the force of religion.

whip upon others' villainous hypocrisy; that it is a touchstone for detecting the false metal of others' feigned charity; that it is an immortal Argus,⁴²⁰ ever vigilant to overturn others' unjust spoils and counter others' cruel robberies; that it is a mirror in which Italian princes, by beholding themselves, would perceive that, thanks to the counsel and prudence of those admirable city fathers, they enjoy being lords [64r] and not servants—they would know, in short, that it [Venice] is a sponge of a kind ever prepared to wipe out those plans that tend to the distortion of that unique perspective⁴²¹ that to this day makes the illustrious architecture of the Italian scene remarkable."

Already overheated from speaking, the Roman [Boccalini] continued, however, noting that just as the praises of those illustrious persons⁴²² were ever worthy of being sung by Fame, so de la Vega showed himself as *mal creado* [poorly bred]⁴²³ by using terms of disdain and speaking ill of him whom he was not worthy of naming.⁴²⁴

"*Io soi ombre honorado!* [I am an honored man]," said the Spaniard,⁴²⁵ setting a hand to his sword. All at once two hundred swords belonging to members of the Spanish faction could be seen flashing against Boccalini, who perhaps would have fared ill if Caporali,⁴²⁶ Cardonetti,⁴²⁷ and Signor Sforza Odi,⁴²⁸

420. For Argus, see above, 53r (no. 9:6).

421. Perspective, in both an architectural sense and the "unique" moral one of justice, freedom, and tolerance.

422. See above, 63r, for those who flocked to Venice.

423. Spanish, also spelled *malcriado*. Refers back to *creado* (58r), there as "servant."

424. Boccaccio.

425. From the spelling of the Spanish, it is clear that the author of this passage was an Italian (*io soi ombre* should be *yo soy hombre*).

426. Cesare Caporali (or as spelled in source, Caporalli; 1531–1601), from Perugia, a poet who, in his burlesque, mocking *Rime piacevoli* (1586 and later editions), followed the example of Francesco Berni (d. 1535; see 91r, below, note to "caudated sonnet"). He also composed a *Viaggio di Parnaso* (1582), about an imaginary voyage to Mount Parnassus, and, as the Codex Solinga was to be entitled, a set of *Avvisi di Parnaso* (around 1580), about a war undertaken by Apollo against ignorant poets; both works inaugurated the Parnassus mode and influenced Boccalini and, indirectly, the author or authors of the Codex (see above under volume editor's introduction). Caporali was a member, in Perugia, of the Accademia degli Insensati (as he himself asserted in his *Vita di mecenate*, 1604); on the academy and its outstanding members, see Michele Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*, 3:306–11 (with specific mention of Caporali).

427. Cardonetti: may be identified as Orazio Cardanetti, author of at least two orations printed in Perugia in the later 1580s (see Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli, *Biblioteca volante*, 3:71) and, presumably, another member of the Accademia degli Insensati (though his name is absent from Maylender's summary report).

428. Recte Sforza degli Oddi (1540–1611), from Perugia. Beyond Latin works on jurisprudence, he composed various comedies, among them *L'Erofilomachia ovvero il duello d'Amore e d'Amicitia* (1572), *I morti vivi* (1576, a play in which he identifies himself as a member of the Accademia degli Insensati; see Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*, esp. 3:309), and *La prigionie d'amore* (1576).

together with all those others of the Perugian academy,⁴²⁹ had not drawn their swords and put iron shields on their arms to oppose them. In any case, a savage massacre was about to ensue because the Spaniards, who had withdrawn to the slope [64v] of a hill where they stood behind a temple once dedicated to the God of Advantage,⁴³⁰ increased their strength. They threw stones from the slope, not leaving the Perugians, among them Boccalini,⁴³¹ much room to maneuver. Shouting loudly, he invited Garcilaso to step outside the city walls for a one-to-one confrontation.

Arnaut Daniel,⁴³² Folquet de Marselha,⁴³³ and Raimbaut d'Auregna⁴³⁴ came, as new arrivals, to shore up the Perugians, and they were followed by a substantial squadron of others from Provence. Lined up like a tortoise, in their various rings,⁴³⁵ they disregarded the stones hailing down on them from above and tried to ascend the hill. At that point the count Baldassare Castiglione,⁴³⁶ whose turn it was that day to guard the square, appeared on the spot, to which he was drawn by the noise. He headed a well-ordered phalanx and was accompanied by Count Matteo Maria Boiardo,⁴³⁷ Signor Ortensio Lando from Piacenza,⁴³⁸ and the most excellent Count Pomponio

429. Refers not to the Accademia Perugina founded in 1573, today the Academy of Fine Arts ("Belle Arti"), but to the same Accademia degli Insensati to which the previous literary figures belonged.

430. Mercury (or Hermes), god of "advantage" in the sense of trade and good fortune.

431. Described in the "Notices" as Roman (64r, above), though born in Loreto and only sporadically in Rome during the years 1584–1612. His "Perugian period," as said above (note to 57v), was limited to his early studies at the university (1578–80). One wonders whether "among them [the Perugians]," however, should be read as "who happened to be together with the Perugians at the time."

432. Arnaut Daniel (or in source: Arnaldo Daniello; fl. 1180–1200), troubadour, of whom eighteen poems survive (though without their melodies), and alleged inventor of the sestina. Dante honored him in the *Divine Comedy* by quoting an octave of his in Provençal (Purgatory 26.140–47).

433. Folquet de Marselha (or in source: Folchetto da Marsilia; c. 1180–1231), Provençal poet in Marseilles. His verses won Dante's praise in his *De vulgari eloquentia* 2.6.58–59, as they did in the *Divine Comedy* (Paradise 9.67–108).

434. Raimbaut d'Auregna (or in source: Raimbaldo d'Arvenga); Provençal poet, fl. c. 1170.

435. The tortoise was possibly an emblem of the Accademia degli Insensati (after Boccato, "Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 181 n. 293).

436. Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), count of Novellata, active as diplomat at the courts of Mantua and Urbino and for the Holy See in Rome. His writings include poems in Latin and the vernacular, letters, an eclogue, and the famed manual on courtly etiquette, *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528).

437. Matteo Maria Boiardo (c. 1434–94), count of Scandiano, author of lyric verses in the vernacular, Latin eclogues, a comedy, and, most notably, *Orlando innamorato* (1495), a chivalrous poem in sixty-eight cantos.

438. Ortensio Lando (or in source: Orentio Lando; c. 1512–after 1555), prolific writer of dialogues and treatises on a wide range of topics, from Ciceronianism to a European travelogue

Torelli from Parma.⁴³⁹ Upon [65r] his arrival with them he saw to circulating the proclamation that whoever did not depose his arms would have, as punishment, His Majesty Apollo's disfavor. First he wanted to hear, from Boccalini, the cause of this disorder. Then he issued a summons for the Spaniard, who refused to come unless he was given a hostage. The count rejected the demand, giving him his word, as a cavalier, that he would receive no harm and that in coming forward he could trust him to hold to it.

Don Garcilaso descended from the hill and entered into discussion with those lords [Castiglione and his escorts]. Messrs. Parrasio,⁴⁴⁰ Alciati,⁴⁴¹ and Muzio⁴⁴² were then called in for consultation, for they were all familiar with the subtleties of dueling. They tested both the Roman and the Spaniard by noting that this disagreement of theirs was too frivolous a business to make them think of terminating it, in any way, by sword. Since each of them proved ready to preserve his honor without committing any further offense, the consultants asked them to make peace and embrace each other, out of consideration for those lords [Castiglione and his escorts]. Don Garcilaso did not show any reluctance to do so, which led the Roman to come around, himself, to complying most willingly with the request. They thus made peace and dearly embraced one another.

[65v] As a present to de la Vega, Signor Traiano gave him two sonnets. The first was in response to the one that appears to have been written [by Paluzzi] to the servant [Berardelli] while the latter was in prison.⁴⁴³ The second served as a response to one by an unidentified author, the next-to-last item in the *Rime* that that trickster had printed.⁴⁴⁴

(his *Commentario delle più notabili e mostruose cose d'Italia et altri luoghi*, 1548), *Paradossi* ("or judgments that depart from common opinion," on ignorance, poverty, war, and death, 1543), and "Funeral sermons of various authors upon the death of different animals" (1548).

439. Pomponio Torelli (or in source: Torello), active, during the years 1576–1605, in Parma, where, as a member of the Accademia degli Innominati, he composed Italian and Latin verses, several tragedies, and a treatise on the duties of the cavalier (1596).

440. Aulo Giano Parrasio or Giovan Paolo Parrasio (source has m.[esser] Paris.[io]; 1470–1522): founder of the Accademia Cosentina (now Parrasiana) in his native town Cosenza (in Calabria), commentator on classical works (by Claudianus, Horace, and Ovid), compiler of "rhetorical excerpts from the best [ancient] authors," and editor of grammatical manuals (by Valerius Probus, Marcus Cornelius Fronto, and Phocas).

441. Andrea Alciati (or in source, Alceato; 1492–1550), who, beyond his extensive works on jurisprudence (published in six volumes, 1571), is best known for his *Emblemata*, a collection of enigmatic images with their mottos and epigrammatic verses (1531).

442. Gerolamo Muzio (see above, 62r).

443. See above, 20r. The sonnet is printed, in Paluzzi's *rime*, on page 106 (as said below, 66r, in the heading to Boccalini's response, no. 17).

444. "Formar d'inchiostrì candida figura," labeled as "by an uncertain author" (*D'Incerto*): *Rime*, 130 (see below).

Reaches whoever stirs and shakes a kindled torch.⁴⁴⁹
 The heart of the impious and their like is revealed 9
 In the dark light of their infamous torch,⁴⁵⁰ whence
 he laughs
 Who hears a thief treat a thief with honor;
 But anyone who previously saw the Jewess's compassion 12
 Should rightly exclaim with no little sorrow:
 "What Alcides will return⁴⁵¹ to obliterate such
 monsters?"⁴⁵²

18

[66v] SONNET [BY BOCCALINI] IN RESPONSE TO THAT ONE BY AN UNIDENTIFIED AUTHOR TO BE READ ON PAGE 130 [OF PALUZZI'S RIME]. IT HAS THE SAME VERSE ENDINGS.⁴⁵³

De ingrate sempre horribile figura

Always drawing a horrible face of ungrateful women⁴⁵⁴
 And ever, under a feigned countenance,
 Keeping fierce deceit caught in the breast, 3
 Betraying the faith of pure innocence,

449. *Luce aggonie / Chiunque accesa face agita e scuote*, i.e., anyone who searches for the truth with an open mind will find it. The source of "the saying" (*il dir*), if it was one, could not be traced.

450. While bright light, that is, shows the truth, dark light shows evil.

451. On Berardelli as a would-be Alcides (Hercules), see above, 32v (and also 54v).

452. On "monsters" who receive favors from benefactors, yet, out of ingratitude, despoil and slander them, as a recurrent theme in the "Notices," see above, 1r, 8r, etc. The "monsters" in this case are Paluzzi and Berardelli.

453. As in the previous sonnet (no. 17), the end words are identical (*figura*, *volto*, *accolto*, *pura*, etc.). Not only that, but the *risposta* refers to, and comments on, statements made in the original sonnet ("Formar d'inchiestri candida figura"), which reads as follows (Paluzzi, *Rime*, 130; no inscription except for the designation "by an unknown author"): "To draw a bright figure [by writing about it] in ink, / To adorn a face with privets and roses, / To make the Sun gathered in two beautiful eyes shine / And tresses discharge their treasures to pure air, / To lift on wings another's obscure fame, / To praise to heaven someone released from heaven, / To return to the world something removed from the world, / To conquer time and outdo nature / Are [things achieved in] your works, Numidio, and any ordinance / Not to envy heaven (though I do not know how) / Would deflect one from the straight path [to it] through you: / Indeed, the laurels of Pindus [the mountain of the Muses] are lowly ornaments / For your locks, hence in heaven it is written: / 'Your name is garlanded in stars.'"

454. Said otherwise: villains turn on their erstwhile benefactors (here Copia), painting a "horrible" picture of them as "ungrateful."

Making someone who should have risen to heaven with
 obscure
 Impiety now be released from heaven 6
 To arrogate to himself that which was removed from
 others,⁴⁵⁵
 Breaking the laws of love and nature⁴⁵⁶
 Were the arts of Numidio, a man already ordained 9
 To contrive lies and deceptions—see how
 He now deflects another,⁴⁵⁷ who knows him, from a
 straight path—
 And worthy of having his locks topped by an infamous
 miter⁴⁵⁸ 12
 And his name perpetuated,
 In clear writing, by unworthy fame.

19. SONNET

[67r] THE FIRST EPIGRAM⁴⁵⁹ OF DON GARCILASO DE LA VEGA AS
 A REPORTEE TO THE FIRST FALSE ACCUSATION,⁴⁶⁰ WHICH CAN
 BE READ IN THE DEDICATORY EPISTLE TO THE COLLECTION
 OF [PALUZZI'S] *RIME* THAT THE SERVANT [BERARDELLI] HAD
 PRINTED⁴⁶¹

Chi non crede ch'a un vile, ch'a un infame

He who does not believe that zeal could kindle
 The firebrand of a knave, a scoundrel,

455. Appears to refer to the perpetuation of Paluzzi's evil nature in his successor Berardelli, who claims that Copia pilfered Paluzzi's writings, though according to Paluzzi it was Berardelli who did so (see above, 21v–22r).

456. Of love, by betrayal; of nature, by sexual perversion.

457. Berardelli.

458. The official headdress of a bishop in the Western church and originally of the high priest in the ancient Temple. Paluzzi's is "infamous" because of his impiety (see above, 55r–v). For a miter on the head of Berardelli, see 77v, below.

459. Rough translation, in this and the next four poems, for *motino*.

460. The accusation was that Copia stole works that the dying Paluzzi kept in two folders, or satchels, in his own room. It was stated five times with slight variations; thus the five "false" accusations to which Garcilaso de la Vega responded in the following sonnets are but one. The accusation can be found, moreover, in Paluzzi's *vita* composed by Aprosio (see below, 3.3.2:114–15).

461. For the "first false accusation," namely, that Copia stole from Paluzzi "the larger and better part of [his verses] together with many other compositions in two large packages," see the dedication as printed among the extracts from Paluzzi's *Rime* under 3.2 below (A 2v).

A villain, a thief, and a rascal 3
 Should set his sight on this sack of manure.⁴⁶²
 Let him observe how the troublemaker weaves
 The fine threads of his speech and how, by sighing
 over the losses 6
 Incurred by his stinking patron,⁴⁶³
 He fills the web of his unworthy schemes with his
 [sighing] breaths.
 "From within two bulky packages did the Jewess steal 9
 The larger part of the writings;
 Thus," he says, "did the impious lady repay her
 teacher."⁴⁶⁴
 Lying thief, praise the one who removed you 12
 From the galley⁴⁶⁵ and renewed the flower
 Of your thefts so as to be ever green before Astrea.⁴⁶⁶

20. SONNET

[67v] THE SECOND EPIGRAM OF DON GARCILASO AS A REPARTEE
 TO THE SECOND ACCUSATION, WHICH CAN BE READ IN THE
 LETTER DIRECTED TO THE READERS⁴⁶⁷

Non vi diss'io quant'ei fosse zelante

I did not tell you how zealous he could be:
 Listen to the way he complains to the readers

462. The dedicatory epistle.

463. The adjective "stinking" may perhaps be taken literally as an indication of Paluzzi's offensive body odor.

464. Close though not exact quotation of Berardelli's words in the dedication (3.2.A 2v, below).

465. For "galley," see above, 57v. Was it his lawyer who removed him from it?

466. Astrea, goddess of justice (see above, 14v). The last couplet could mean one of two things: either Copia unknowingly provides Berardelli with material—household articles, personal property, writings (her verses, Paluzzi's)—for his pilfering or she denounces him to the authorities for doing so (see next note).

467. The "second accusation" was that Copia "took from [Paluzzi], in two large packages, the larger and better part of his verses, his writings on politics, a tragedy, and works of which the fragments collected by [Berardelli] will soon be published." Yet Garcilaso clarifies that it was not Copia who stole poems that she paraded as her own, but rather Berardelli (lines 8–11). For the "letter" to the readers, see among the extracts from Paluzzi's *Rime* under 3.2 below (A 4r).

And how the crocodile weeps⁴⁶⁸ over mistakes 3
 That his pedant [friend Paluzzi] imprudently made
 By composing, for a mere woman,
 So many works about warfare, women, and love, 6
 Yet gaining for them, more often than not, berries and
 custard apples as laurels.
 Ah, if only the thefts were no longer yours, rascal!⁴⁶⁹
 Nor does the gentleman stop at that: he returns 9
 To mentioning the bulky packages, suspecting he may
 have been misunderstood
 As to who was their thief; so he accuses someone
 innocent.
 Mendacious thief, the earth cannot sustain 12
 The weight of your dirty tricks now,
 So you will have to make your apologies in the air.⁴⁷⁰

21. SONNET

[68r] THE THIRD EPIGRAM OF DON GARCILASO AS A REPARTÉE
 TO THE THIRD ACCUSATION, WHICH CAN BE READ IN THE
 HEADING TO THAT BEGINNING OF A CANZONE FOR THE DUKE
 OF SAVOY⁴⁷¹

Né però il zelo ponto intepidisce

Nor does his zeal cool down in any way,
 Though he takes care to empty the urinals;⁴⁷²

468. Reference to crocodile tears.

469. These two lines imply that not only did Copia reward Paluzzi for the verses he provided by sending him fruit in return, but she appropriated the verses as her own, though it was the thief Berardelli who did so (as emerges from lines 9–11).

470. Hanging on the gallows.

471. The "third accusation" was that of two canzoni—one "written in praise of the lord duke of Savoy and the [other] written upon the death of Henri IV, king of France—hardly any fragments could be found [beyond the ones printed below], for the aforementioned Jewess stole the complete originals." For the inscription to the duke of Savoy, namely, Carlo Emanuele I (who ruled from 1580 until his death in 1630), see among the extracts from Paluzzi's *Rime* under 3.2 below (72); and for a second reference, within the "Notices," to "the mendacious allegation in the heading to the canzone begun, but not finished, for the duke of Savoy," see below, 74r.

472. Meaning, perhaps, that he spills the contents of his filthy mouth.

Rather he unfolds the wings of the third accusation, 3
 Without in any way lessening his [demands for]
 propriety.⁴⁷³
 Hear how, out of zeal, he languishes
 In recounting how the Jewess 6
 Stole the originals in their entirety; would I not hurl
 My flashing arrows to reduce this unworthy man to
 ashes?
 It was an undertaking of Marino to praise kings,⁴⁷⁴ 9
 Piggish fool, not of a dry talent
 That begged and groped for ideas.⁴⁷⁵
 With the prince of Condé⁴⁷⁶ did he show his remarkable
 skills 12
 As an aide;⁴⁷⁷ O contemptible thief,
 Do you dare to poke your nose into others' fame?⁴⁷⁸

473. He pretends to adhere to an ethical code that forbids any intrusion upon authors' rights.

474. Marino (above, 55v) went to France in 1615 at the invitation of Maria de' Medici, widow of Henri IV and regent for Louis XIII (see note below).

475. Refers to Paluzzi as a second-rate talent.

476. The same prince may be identified as Henri II de Bourbon, third prince de Condé (1588–1646) and cousin to the French king Henri IV, who recognized him as heir presumptive until the birth of his own son and successor Louis XIII. There was a falling-out between the two upon Henri II's marriage in 1609 to Charlotte de Montmorency, with whom the king himself was infatuated. Yet Henri II returned to favor after 1619, and it was then that Marino could have served him in one capacity or another. Henri II should be distinguished from the French prince in whose name Berardelli (and Paluzzi) had letters composed with a mind to extorting money and valuables from Copia (see 10r, 11r, 37r, 77r, 86v, 97v, 100v). On Marino in France (1615–23), see the thumbnail account by Francesco Ferrari (*Vita del Cavalier Gio. Battista Marino*, 1633), printed as an appendix to Guglielminetti's edition of Marino's *Lettere*, 621–38, esp. 631–33 ("Il soggiorno a Parigi," from which Henri II's name is absent, as it is moreover from the *Lettere* themselves, first printed in 1628). James Mirollo, author of *The Poet of the Marvelous: Giambattista Marino* (1963), kindly communicated to me that, to his knowledge, there are no records of Marino's having had dealings (during his stay in Paris) with Henri II. Don Garcilaso either fantasized or was aware of a biographical detail unknown to historians.

477. Originally *secretario*, in its older sense as a confidant or trusted counselor of a prince or sovereign.

478. Garcilaso is saying that any comparison between famous Marino and infamous Paluzzi is asymmetrical.

22. SONNET

[68v] THE FOURTH EPIGRAM OF DON GARCILASO AS A REPARTEE
TO THE FOURTH ACCUSATION, WHICH CAN BE READ IN THE
HEADING TO THE FRAGMENT OF A TRAGEDY⁴⁷⁹

Non può sopir il zelo che lo accende

He cannot lull the zeal that kindles him
While turning his eyes to his unworthy excesses,
For he well sees how grimly he is beheld by her 3
Whom, in vain, he covers with veils or blinds.⁴⁸⁰
He creeps even further, wallowing and whirling,
Like an exhausted snake, in strange squirms; 6
Then the thievish lyre is heard to roar⁴⁸¹
As he stoops, in the field [of battle], to the fourth
accusation.
Among other losses he complains 9
Of a tragic work as almost a casualty that hardly
earned
Its despoiled author any credit for its scene.⁴⁸²
I do not know why, here, he would not reveal 12
The name of the Jewess;⁴⁸³ his heart perhaps failed his
tongue,
So full of ignominy from its lies.

479. The "fourth accusation" was that "among the other writings removed from the author [by the Jewess] was a tragedy, little short of being completed: this scene is all that remains of it." For the inscription, see among the extracts from Paluzzi's *Rime* under 3.2 below (98); and for earlier mention of the "tragedy," see above, 22r, 24v.

480. Try as he may, that is, he could never succeed in hiding his trickeries from Copia.

481. On his "five roaring accusations," see above, 43r.

482. The single scene that, printed in Paluzzi's *Rime* (98–101) as a remnant of a larger work, hardly earned the author any "credit."

483. In making his accusation.

23. SONNET

[69r] THE FIFTH EPIGRAM OF DON GARCILASO DE LA VEGA AS A
 REPARTEE TO THE FIFTH ACCUSATION,⁴⁸⁴ WHICH CAN BE READ
 ON PAGE [120]⁴⁸⁵

O qui sì che ci vuol del re di Ponto

Oh, yes, here we need the powerful antidote that the king
 of Pontus⁴⁸⁶
 Provided to offset the poison
 That he belches forth, from an impure heart, 3
 In the charge that I now count as the fifth.
 The stinking, greasy thief says
 That, in a flash, the perfidious woman stole 6
Proposte and *risposte*⁴⁸⁷ that his Silenus⁴⁸⁸
 Had arranged in a big bundle.
 Readers, don't your jaws drop 9
 At seeing how that beast presumes
 His own thefts are under cover?
 I was almost impelled to discharge my bowels 12
 At perceiving the ways of the insolent thief,
 That loutish, impious, and perjuring stupid numskull.

484. Which repeats the accusation that Copia stole verses in the form of *proposte* and *risposte*.

485. Though omitted, the page number can be supplied from the reference to the same below (74r). The "fifth accusation" was that "of the considerable number of sonnets by diverse persons who wrote them to the author, only these few [seventeen in all on the final pages, viz., 120–30, of Paluzzi's *Rime*, disregarding four sonnets by Paluzzi himself] could be found. . . . [The others] were removed from him . . . by that perfidious Jewess." For the inscription, see among the extracts from Paluzzi's *Rime* under 3.2 below (120).

486. Mithridates VI, also known as Eupator Dionysus the Great (120–63 B.C.E.), who found that a diet of prophylactics made him immune to poison.

487. I.e., poems and their repartees (as already explained).

488. In classic myth, Silenus, son of Pan, was the oldest of the satyrs and the foster father, teacher, and companion of Bacchus: here he stands for Paluzzi while Bacchus does for Berardelli.

CINO DA PISTOIA PLEADS FOR MERCY IN SENTENCING PALUZZI,
MUCH TO ARETINO'S DISPLEASURE

But while these things were happening, Mr. Cino had already taken to the street that runs along the Temple of Minerva,⁴⁸⁹ and by descending the slope that leads to the Tower of Knowledge through Royal Avenue he eventually came to [69v] where the female judges resided. After setting forth to them the will of their most serene lord [Apollo] and pulling out the deed of his appointment as attorney, he succeeded in getting those ladies to return to the tribunal.⁴⁹⁰ The words with which he tried to calm their disturbed minds were of this nature:

"If all men had that grace of wisdom with which the truly wise can command the stars and regulate the precipitous course of destiny, you can be sure, most excellent ladies, that nobody would be noticed as being deficient. Rather, with everyone poised between the extremes of duty and honesty, we would continuously enjoy that Golden Age that, if it ever existed, only God knows. Ingratitude would neither drown good offices in Lethe,⁴⁹¹ nor would cunning ensnare simplicity or slander contrive against others' honor. Thievery would not snatch others' property and lying would not suppress the truth. We would not know the detestable effects of tyranny, nor would we see [70r] irate Vengeance stained with innocent blood or perceive the world as wrapped in thousands and thousands of villainies and encumbered with sordid and sacrilegious depravities.

"I mean to say that if, [to compensate] for the fragility [of the matter] from which we are composed, or for the imperfection of this nature of ours ever prone to evil, or for the violence with which superior causes turn their whip on us,⁴⁹² man were not fortified by the knowledge that derives its origin from the fear of God, he would otherwise believe [three things]: to no avail will he put up resistance to the fierce enticements of misleading senses; to no avail will he arm himself against the hidden snares of a tempting appetite; and to no avail will he oppose those secret enemies that continually set up camp in the innards of his heart. Human knowledge is nothing but fierce and foolish stupidity if the law of God is not its mistress.

489. Minerva or, as known by her Greek name, Athena, goddess of crafts and wisdom.

490. On Sappho's earlier return to the tribunal, see above, 38v.

491. Lethe: in ancient mythology, a river in Hades, causing forgetfulness in whoever drank of its waters; in reference here to the short memory of those who requite their benefactors with ingratitude.

492. Appears to refer to human misfortunes as willed by higher powers.

"We now have evidence for what I am saying in this miserable man [Paluzzi] whose being and nonbeing depend completely on the mercy displayed by your acts of clemency; on that mercy, I say, which, with the softness of your verdict, will be able to temper the severity with which irate Astrea⁴⁹³ threatens [70v] to inflict her blows. Thus will you show the world that you do not have hearts of stone in your breasts and that you are not eager, by shedding others' blood, to acquire a reputation for being unrelenting or a name for being cruel.

"Most excellent madam judges, confessing one's sin, declaring oneself unworthy of pardon, hoping only in that clemency from which justice should clearly not be disjoined, and not crediting oneself with positive qualities, if in fact, midst the clouds of so great a dishonor done to this unlucky person, any such qualities could appear: ah, would these not partly lighten the punishment? And the embarrassment and mortification of a man who was once held in some esteem: should this not be taken into account before pronouncing the gravest punishment? He has made public, to his greatest embarrassment, the excess of his faults,⁴⁹⁴ nor do I believe that beyond what he confessed he proceeded any further. If, in truth, Aretino does not show me the evidence that led him to strengthen his arguments, I could scarcely approve them as sufficient [71r] for making me believe what he wants me to believe. Nor can I but little believe that Your Lady Excellencies are about to approve his opinion when your breasts become clear of that cloud apt to obscure the sun of upright judgment.

"One should consider, most excellent ladies, that whatever Signor Pietro [Aretino] said against this one here [Paluzzi] both can and cannot be true. I leave aside, for now, that accusation of his hardly being a believer and of his holding fast to an Epicurean view,⁴⁹⁵ for just as this is not a matter to be decided in this forum, so, with Epicurus present in Parnassus, where freedom of living is permitted, he would not want me to fret over this. Epicurus with his sect has no less worthy a place here than do Socrates and Plato⁴⁹⁶ with theirs.

"But to respond to that claim on which Signor Pietro appears to base his accusations,⁴⁹⁷ I say that I can well believe that he [Paluzzi] made a re-

493. Goddess of justice (see above, 14v, 67r).

494. For Paluzzi's confession of his sins, see above, 17r–18r.

495. Pleasure, according to Epicurus (341–270 B.C.E.), was to be regarded as the highest good.

496. Socrates (470–399 B.C.E.), teacher of Plato (427–347 B.C.E.), both of whom are conceived here as providing a dialectical alternative to Epicurus: humans should strive not for pleasure but for knowledge and understanding.

497. Namely, that Paluzzi ignored Rosa's letter.

sponse to that letter and that he sent it through the servant [Berardelli] or one of his cohorts residing in the household,⁴⁹⁸ since he could not or would not [71v] send it through others. I say, too, that out of their wickedness, the response was not delivered, inasmuch as they wanted to know its contents. When they discovered that they were inappropriate, in no way did they hand it over.

"But even if he did not respond, why should I believe that it was more out of disdain than out of that shame aroused in him at seeing himself so addressed by one who, before, was such a great friend of his? And why, most excellent ladies, should it be believed that all the other failings attributed to him by Aretino were not invented by the servant [Berardelli]? It was the latter who, most villainous, kept a hold on his [Paluzzi's] writings and had them printed and who spoke as it best suited him for both being revenged and protecting himself. Nor is it probable that, except for the faults already confessed, this unfortunate one [Paluzzi] committed any other wrong. I would swear, then, that he had no thought of having those refurbished tercets⁴⁹⁹ [72r] printed, and even if he used them, it was more to try out an alternative construction of verses than to allow anyone to revise the sonnet. Just as I believe this to have been the case here, so I hold the following to be absolutely certain: when that thief [Berardelli] let his infamous *Sareide* be heard and gave out those slanderous writings (in his stinking sewerlike style) to be read, it was done without any knowledge of it by this luckless soul [Paluzzi].

"True, he [Paluzzi] lapsed into those first errors⁵⁰⁰ not denied by him. Yet I pondered his character, his ever esteemed actions, his profound studies, the services he proffered the greats, the country in which he was born⁵⁰¹ (a place fit, in itself, to make a man, however abject, well-mannered and circumspect), and his deep-felt obligations toward that honored Jewess. All of these are particulars, I say, that in no way would lead me to believe that any such villainous meanness could come over him. I might just as well believe that all of this was merchandise removed from the infamous warehouse of that iniquitous scullery boy [Berardelli]. Nay, I believe [72v] that when this unlucky fellow [Paluzzi] saw his errors uncovered, which made him lose his balance without even noticing it perhaps, he might have become speechless; confused, remorseful, and abhorring himself, he would have taken his

498. Specifically, Furlana, her husband, and their three sons.

499. See above, 40r–41v.

500. Referred to, above, as "his faults" (70v).

501. Country meaning city, here Rome.

own life with either a noose or a weapon had he had so much strength as to commit suicide; and in so doing he would have prevented any greater misdemeanor from being part of such impious meanness. Who would want to believe there is such impudence in this one [Paluzzi] as would induce him to appropriate, as his own, the valorous efforts of a female student under his wing? Who ever heard⁵⁰² him give testimony of such a filthy lie? Except for that thief [Berardelli], who is the one to claim that he [Paluzzi] ever bragged of having authored the *Manifesto*,⁵⁰³ a writing devised without any laborious study, for it was composed by the Jewess only to inform the world of that stigma with which she had been wrongly branded?

"Who could ever believe there is such great rashness in this man [Paluzzi]—aware as he was that many Venetians were familiar [73r] with this affair and ready to lend their counsel, moreover, to that virtuous woman who consulted them for their opinion thereabout—as to go on and brag, in the face of so many witnesses, by pronouncing a lie so outrageous? Behavior of this kind is all the more unlikely since he had, in his hands, writings of so many honored and skilled authors who bestirred themselves, at the time, to write in behalf of that worthy lady.⁵⁰⁴ These writings included a most learned discourse of that most illustrious gentleman who loved that young woman as a daughter,⁵⁰⁵ by whom he was loved in return as a beloved father and revered as a loving lord.⁵⁰⁶ His learning and style were well known to this poor fellow [Paluzzi], whom fortune treats badly now by his not being held in greater regard.

"All these are things that ought to be contemplated for getting to know the malign knavery of that scullery-boy servant [Berardelli].

"But, most excellent ladies, if you want to have another real sample of how perfidious that one [Berardelli] is, you might contemplate the way

502. Originally *intesse* (from *intessere*), present tense for "hatch" or "contrive," though the preterite *intese* ("heard," from *intendere*) was meant.

503. For assertions or insinuations that Paluzzi was its author, see above, 25r, 31v, 50v, 51v.

504. One can only wonder whether these writings formed the core of the "Notices from Parnassus."

505. The "most illustrious gentleman" appears to be Cebà, who refers to Copia as his daughter in various letters (1.1/L35, L37, L38, L40, L45). It is unlikely that he composed a separate "learned discourse" in which he so addressed her. Yet the speaker may have been bending the facts by intimating that Bonifaccio, who did in fact write a "discourse," and a vitriolic one at that, "loved" Copia as would a "father" and that she reciprocated by seemingly "daughterly" affection.

506. Copia does not seem to have referred to Cebà as "father." Rather she sought out his advice, and Cebà took this as an excuse to address her as "daughter" in the letters just mentioned. That she revered him "as a loving lord" can be sensed throughout his correspondence (a notable example being letter 22).

he removed the sonnet 'O di vita mortal forma divina' [O divine form of mortal life]⁵⁰⁷ from the *Manifesto* composed by the Jewess [73v] and placed it in the *Rime* that he had printed, attributing it to this unfortunate person [Paluzzi].⁵⁰⁸ Turning to him [Berardelli], I thus say: 'O wicked beast, if you maintain that this one [Paluzzi] composed the *Manifesto*, what is the purpose of separating, then reprinting a sonnet that proves, upon the oath of that most honored person,⁵⁰⁹ to be by the Jewess?'

"But the thief [Berardelli] did not have this notice,⁵¹⁰ for a liar is lacking in caution and memory and the present one is as foolish and insane as he is evil and infamous. He therefore pays no attention to how or when he belies the candid sincerity of that illustrious young woman. Spurred only by the misdeeds he committed, he does not care about having made the calamitous state of this one [Paluzzi] far more infamous and disheartening.

"But if you want even more positive proof of his [Berardelli's] iniquity, you might consider his rage so bestial as not to let him be content with making false accusations of the Jewess in the dedicatory epistle. All at once, with no reason, he renews the same accusation in the letter to the readers,⁵¹¹ [74r] and impelled by the same insanity, which leads him to think he can bury his insults,⁵¹² he then repeats the mendacious allegation in the heading to the canzone begun, but not finished, for the duke of Savoy.⁵¹³ Afterward, he noticed that he might appear to be a numskull in the heading to that fragment of a tragedy barely begun.⁵¹⁴ Hesitating, though, to name the Jewess again, he says instead that 'among the other writings taken from the author [Paluzzi], this scene was what could barely be found of this tragedy little short of being completed.'⁵¹⁵

"Villainous servant! To cloak his sordid perversities in a thousand falsi-

507. See above, 50r, where Aretino says that it is Paluzzi who appropriated the sonnet. For the sonnet itself, see the *Manifesto* 2.4.D 2r.

508. *Rime*, 83. Berardelli did not attribute it specifically to Paluzzi. Rather its inclusion in his *Rime* would lead one to assume his authorship.

509. Presumably Cebà.

510. Cebà's sworn testimony.

511. *Rime*, A 4r.

512. By slipping them into headings of poems (see continuation).

513. See Don Garcilaso's third *motino* above, 68r.

514. See Don Garcilaso's fourth *motino* above, 68v, and for other references to tragedies among Paluzzi's works in the *rime*, 22r (a prologue to a tragedy) and 24v (three genres: political, tragic, polemic), and within the *Rime* themselves, A 4r ("a tragedy") and 98 (heading to a single scene from a tragedy, 98–101; see next note).

515. Slightly free rendering of the heading as it appears in Paluzzi's *Rime*, 98 (see under 3.2 below). Though Copia was omitted from it, she was no less strongly implied as the one who fleeced Paluzzi's works.

ties, he so abused this unfortunate soul [Paluzzi] that midst the circles of experts and in the salons of men of letters he [Paluzzi] is regarded as infamous and declared to be a traitor. Iniquitous servant! Note, if you would, how his guilty conscience cannot be appeased. Behold the liar almost penitent for not having mentioned the name of the Jewess in the fourth accusation.⁵¹⁶ Here he is again on page 120, belching forth his poison: he says that the perfidious Jewess [74v] stole the *risposte* and the *proposte* of the sonnets that the author [Paluzzi] had collected.⁵¹⁷

"Good God, who would not see how perfidious a liar the infamous servant is? To what end would the Jewess want to steal from him [Paluzzi] those *Rime*? To make use of them for what? From what enmity would she do so, from what hatred, if she continually assisted him as if he were her father and continually respected him as her teacher?

"False findings are these, invented by that thief. His fallaciousness makes the faults of this poor soul [Paluzzi] so much heavier that no one now considers him worthy of living any more. But, for heaven's sake, why should another one's [Berardelli's] sin increase the punishment for his [Paluzzi's] errors?

"In hoping for your clemency one should weigh, on a just scale, the discreditable action that he [Paluzzi] denies against what he has freely confessed of his faults. Meanwhile, one might think, most excellent ladies, that his silence corroborates those charges made against him after he finished speaking. But his silence results [75r] from the embarrassment that hinders him, from the vigorous opponent [Berardelli] who tramples on him, and from the place where he happens to be as he stands here in your presence with all of Parnassus as witness. In being marked with such a contemptible blemish, who would not be terrified?

"It is this embarrassment that has removed his tongue, this mortification that causes his heart to be burdened. See! it almost makes him break out in a sob from within his breast. This is what generates his taciturnity; this is what keeps his eyes nailed to the ground; and this is what almost makes him an insensible marble.

"But pity could well soften this stupefied corpse; clemency could revive his spirits; and mercy could withdraw from the jaws of Cerberus⁵¹⁸ that soul which now, at the farthest limits of life, blinks precisely as would a weakened light. Yes, yes, commiseration for human weaknesses, most excellent ladies, only makes us appear human; and you will appear human by display-

516. See, again, Garcilaso's fourth *motino*, 68v.

517. The reference is to Don Garcilaso's fifth *motino*; see above, 69r.

518. Cerberus: in Greek mythology, a three-headed dog that guarded the entrance to Hades.

ing yourselves today as your illustrious origin and your eminent virtue have always shown you to the world.

[75v] "The shipwreck of this unfortunate soul [Paluzzi] offers you ample material for practicing mercy and thereby making yourselves similar to God, mercy's true source: 'tis a truth that advised me against bothering you with any further prattle. Indeed, I see your eyes glimmer with a fire of pity for warming that hapless fellow in the mortal coldness now oppressing him. Drawn by an unseen and almost inevitable force, he now makes of himself an ignominious spectacle to peoples. If that genteel Jewess were to perceive him in such a sorry plight, she, I definitely believe, would be far more effective in performing this office of pleading before Your Excellencies than I am now in performing it. Nor would she refrain from loosening those knots with which he is bound. As I fix my eyes on them and think of what horrible accidents our miserable state of being has to endure, I feel my tongue becoming tied, then my heart becoming faint. I thus keep silent."

Aretino could not hold back [76r], at the end of these words, from responding. Turning to the gentleman from Pistoia [Cino] who was wiping his eyes, he said: "Why does he [Paluzzi] not ask for the Jewess to come and loosen those knots by sending her the messenger who went and returned from Venice to France and from France to Venice in a span of three hours?"⁵¹⁹

Mr. Cino became angry at hearing these words and said: "Mr. Pietro, you have spoken more than you should have."

"I have spoken the truth," Aretino responded.

Mr. Cino replied: "You do not have a legal commission, nor do you have a deed of appointment as attorney," to which Signor Pietro answered:

"My mouth always has power of attorney and a commission wherever one has to discuss the truth. By using it, I got the truth to reach the ears of Pluto⁵²⁰ in the house of the devil, not to mention those of the pope within the gates of Rome.⁵²¹ Before my mouth uttered a word, I was given license to open it by these most excellent ladies. But I do not know what makes you so brazen as to defend someone evil. You have come before this tribunal in the person more of an astrologer than of a jurist; hence you have alleged the force of the [76v] stars and the necessity of fate. Yet it particularly jolts us to hear you say that inasmuch as this one [Paluzzi] is destined to be a knave, he deserves to have compassion."

Mr. Cino flew into a rage, more than could ever be imagined, at Are-

519. See above, 11v.

520. Pluto, the god ruling the underworld.

521. Probably in reference to Clement VII (pope, 1523–34).

tino, accusing him of lying. He was about to use that [familiar, hence presumptuous] form of speech *tu*, but Signora Vittoria noticed it and prevented him from doing so. She extended her hand to impose silence on the parties. Meanwhile, Aretino's bosom friend Marcolino, a printer on behalf of the Ducal Palace,⁵²² pulled Aretino by the hem of his coat, admonishing him not to cause displeasure to a person of merit, which would incite him even more. Mr. Cino withdrew, grumbling, as if to say that if he met him outside the court, he would call him to account for his remarks.⁵²³

THE JUDGES RENDER THEIR VERDICT

To get out of the present awkward situation and eliminate any possibility for new maneuvers, the lady judges banded together to pronounce sentence. What they decided for the person of the criminal [Paluzzi] was to be of this sort [77r]:⁵²⁴

1. For the following morning he was condemned to stand for one hour on the pillory, yet without any of his members getting amputated.
2. They only wanted his forehead to be branded, publicly, with a red-hot iron, and this for having falsified the seal of that French prince, who, in this affair, had sent his letters to Parnassus.⁵²⁵
3. They wanted him to carry under his knee, forevermore, a carillon formed of three rows of bells with their mouths open,⁵²⁶ as are customarily suspended from the necks of hooligans.
4. They wanted him to be present, every Sabbath, in the Temple of the Graces⁵²⁷ and to stand by its door, with a lighted red candlestick in his hands, from the opening of the temple to the conclusion of its morning ceremonies.

522. Refers to Francesco Marcolini da Forlì, who, in the 1530s, was the chief printer of Aretino's works in Venice.

523. The original reads *volea farlo render di settimana*, an unusual formulation that the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 18:823–24, explains as “force someone to account for something.”

524. The separation of the following clauses and their numeration are this editor's.

525. Obscure: in reference to the letters that Paluzzi (and Berardelli) fabricated as written by the French prince to Copia and the black servant girl (see above, 10r). The investigating judges may have dispatched a request to the prince that he clarify his involvement, which he did in letters sent to them on Parnassus.

526. So that they would tinkle.

527. On the Temple of the Graces, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.5.7, and, in the Peloponnesian town of Elis, Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 6.24.6. In classical mythology the Graces, daughters of Jupiter and Eurynome, and revered for their beauty and charms, usually number three: Aglaia (Brilliance), Euphrosyne (Joy), and Thalia (Bloom).

The expenses⁵²⁸ were to be drawn from the proceeds of the temple.

In the space of time that intervened between the disclosure of the sentence and its execution, a pupil of Daedalus the sculptor⁵²⁹ made a statue that closely resembled the servant and former accomplice [Berardelli], in charge of the thefts and trickeries. [77v] Its hands were bound behind it and its head was crowned with a miter, on which were painted cartoons with grotesque figures: civets,⁵³⁰ night owls, screech owls, bats, frogs, crows, cicadas, and roaches—animals that employ their skills in nothing else but discharging pellets of excrement. The beasts were all entwined with a continuous festoon of axes, fetters, cords, gallows, knives, ropes, pincers, whips, stocks, and ladders, all of them implements used by the executioner.

The statue was bound by its feet to the tail of a mule while the town crier shouted out the felonies of that scoundrel [Berardelli], as he is wont in these and similar circumstances. It was dragged, three times, through all districts of Parnassus, with the executioner riding on the mule. The statues of the female Moor and of the laundress and her sons were also driven forward. Bound to the top of other mules, they closely resembled the originals. After the third run, the Master Hangman dismounted from the mule, then ascended to the platform. Taking the seal used in Parnassus for culprits, he impressed on [78r] the criminal's [Paluzzi's] forehead the eternal imprint of his dishonor and buckled on him the string of bells with a knot much tighter than the Gordian one. Then, with the pomp already described, he rose to the summit of the mount [Mount Parnassus]. On the gallows erected there for this one [Berardelli] he hanged the statue of the servant by one foot, adding a profuse explanation, in writing, of who he was and why he was hanged. This being done, he gave the remnants of those five statues as spoils to the people, who so tore them to pieces that not one part of them remained in any shape or form.

The incident has variously been celebrated in reports of different authors. Copies of whatever was written in both prose and verse have remained in the public chancellery.⁵³¹

528. For realizing the various stipulations.

529. Daedalus: in Greek mythology, an Athenian artist, craftsman, sculptor, and inventor; he built the labyrinth for the Minotaur (in Crete) and, when imprisoned with his son Icarus, made wings for both of them to escape.

530. The civet is a long-bodied, short-legged, catlike animal (native to Africa).

531. Located in the Ducal Palace, the *cancellaria* preserved all documentation relating to the administration, legislation, and jurisdiction of the Venetian republic. See fig. 2, no. 11.

FINAL BANQUET

The next day, those most excellent ladies⁵³² sought to quiet the same verbal exchanges that, it appeared, might cause a mishap of sorts between Aretino and Mr. Cino. They did this by having a most sumptuous dinner prepared for the evening, with the participation of Cynthia,⁵³³ Minerva,⁵³⁴ the Graces,⁵³⁵ the Muses,⁵³⁶ and the Sirens.⁵³⁷

There were upward of [78v] five hundred persons at the table, counting ladies and noblemen. It was the express wish of those in charge that Signora Serena, formerly celebrated by Aretino,⁵³⁸ be present. They arranged the seating so that each man adjoined a woman, taking care to have the same lady seated next to Aretino and Mr. Cino placed on her other side. That most beautiful woman thus had the opportunity to restore peace between those two rare spirits by passing on to them their separate remarks and by introducing persons to the one or the other or conversely by having the one or the other introduce her.

There was served a banquet equal to the splendor of those who gave it, with exquisite pieces of music divinely sung and played. Over five hours were spent at the table, with time divided more on making the most noble speeches than on doing anything else. After the tables were removed, the musicians took their instruments and started playing dances in *gagliarda* style. Many of the illustrious figures present invited the ladies to dance with them. They included Signor Francesco Petrarca,⁵³⁹ Monsignor Pietro Bembo,⁵⁴⁰ Giovanni della Casa,⁵⁴¹ and Giovanni Guidiccioni,⁵⁴² all of them masked.

532. To repeat: Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Sappho, and Corinna.

533. Cynthia, or Artemis, so called from her birth on Mount Cynthus, on the island of Delos: ancient Greek (or as Diana, Roman) goddess, described as a virgin huntress and associated with the moon.

534. On the Temple of Minerva, see above, 69r.

535. On the Graces, see note above to 77r.

536. On the Muses, see above, 2r.

537. On the Sirens, see above, 14r, 40v.

538. In his *Stanze in lode di Madonna Angela Serena*, 1:221–47 (sixty *stanze* followed by two sonnets: one by Veronica Gambara, the other by Aretino).

539. Elsewhere anglicized, in this translation, as Petrarch (55v, 62v, etc.).

540. On Bembo, see above, 50v; “Monsignor,” because (in 1539) he was made a cardinal.

541. Giovanni della Casa (1503–56): poet and prose writer, particularly remembered for his *Galateo, ovvero dei costumi* (completed in 1554), a manual on courtly manners and proper social conduct (see 2.4.C 2v and 3r).

542. Giovanni Guidiccioni (1480–1541): bishop, statesman, writer of letters and lyric verses, of which at least seven appeared as madrigals in collections of various composers (among them

Petrarch danced with Signora Veronica Gambara, [79r] and the great poet appeared more graceful than ever before. After a long duration of time, Bembo, with his mask now removed, had his manservant bring him a lute. To please Signora Vittoria Colonna, he sang that sonnet of the Florentine poet [Petrarch] "Mentre che 'l cor da gli amorosi vermi" [While the heart (was consumed) by amorous worms].⁵⁴³ No less did he perform it with greatest feeling than he was heard with singular attention. For the final seasoning of such a noble recreation Signora Isabella Andreini, with that angelic voice of hers, sang that same poet's sonnet "Quando veggio dal ciel scender l'aurora" [When I see dawn descending from the heavens],⁵⁴⁴ whereby all the Muses, Graces, and Sirens were left stunned.

Dawn had already begun to show its white light, and when those noble spirits realized that night was now surrendering to day, they each returned to their rooms.

A MEDLEY OF VERSES IN CONCLUSION

24

[79v] SONNET OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS SIGNOR NICOLA SAVIGNONE⁵⁴⁵ TO THE AUTHOR OF THE "NOTICES" [SOLINGA]

Di strane bende fascia il plectro e i carmi

In strange veils a genteel enchantress⁵⁴⁶ envelops
Her plectrum and poems,⁵⁴⁷ and midst laurels and
myrtles
She invokes the renowned spirits of Parnassus,

3

Jacques Arcadelt, Philippe de Monte, Orlando di Lasso, Cipriano de Rore, Orazio Vecchi, and Giaches de Wert) between 1539 and 1605.

543. *Canzoniere*, 304 (sonnet 260), especially popular in the madrigal literature—it appears in the collections of at least sixteen composers (among them Sigismondo d'India, Lasso, Giuseppe Guami, and Adriano Willaert) between 1559 and 1621.

544. Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, 291 (sonnet 247), set to music by at least fifteen composers (among them Costanzo Porta, Pietro Paolo Quagliati, and Wert) between 1559 and 1592.

545. Nicola Savignone: could not be identified.

546. Solinga.

547. Read "plectrum" as the device used to pluck the strings and release the content of her "poems," which she covers with the "strange," i.e., mysterious "veils" of metaphor.

Opening tombs to them after removing their marble
 slabs.⁵⁴⁸
 So it happens that she disarms the lying tooth⁵⁴⁹
 And scorns the impious Gulfs of Syrtis⁵⁵⁰ on the seaway
 of treachery 6
 And cuts off the monster's viperous and bristling tresses⁵⁵¹
 And plies unknown weapons for its annihilation.
 Then the slandering tongue, which, like a slashed serpent, 9
 Creeps through the sand to no avail,
 Provokes the laughter and mockery of whoever
 beholds it.
 Though the impious thorn bush—look!—is uprooted 12
 When facing the sun [*Solinga*],⁵⁵² it still discharges
 poison and rage
 And secretes a venomous liquid from its stock.

25

[80r] SONNET OF SIGNOR LELIO SACRATI⁵⁵³

Mentre del bel Castalio a le chiare onde

While a lovely, gentle Muse looks at her reflection
 In the clear waves of the beautiful Castalian Spring,⁵⁵⁴
 then dries off the water

548. Savignone seems to be saying that Giulia Solinga revealed the hidden content of tombs, here verses, by having the reader pry away the marble slabs, here verbal obstacles, at their entrance. Specifically, she told the story of how Copia was betrayed by Paluzzi and Berardelli.

549. A metonym for mouth, namely, Paluzzi's.

550. The name of two gulfs, the Great Syrtis (otherwise known as the Gulf of Sidra), on the coastline of present-day Libya, and the Little Syrtis (otherwise known as the Gulf of Gabes), on that of present-day Tunisia. Both had a reputation, among navigators, for being dangerous. By using the plural form (*le Sirti*) the poet appears to refer to the twosome Paluzzi and Berardelli.

551. Refers to the weakening of Samson by the removal of his tresses (Judg. 16:19). The monster seems to be Paluzzi (see above, 8r).

552. Her—Solinga's—verses, being those of the "sun" (*sole*), destroy it.

553. Lelio Sacрати: could not be identified.

554. In ancient mythology, Castalia was a nymph whom Apollo turned into a fountain at Delphi, consecrating it to the Muses. Whoever imbibed its waters or listened to its sprinkling sounds was endowed with poetic inspiration. Here the Muse is Copia.

And, with a celestial plectrum,⁵⁵⁵ sprinkles souls 3
 With a pleasure perhaps no longer known elsewhere,
 Look! an obscene boor,⁵⁵⁶ who emerged
 From filthy latrines, spreads mud on the sacred stream, 6
 Immersing himself in its pure waters
 To prevent them from ever being clear or clean.
 But the slanderous poems of the despicable man⁵⁵⁷ 9
 Are of no avail in aiming to obscure
 The virtue that displays itself all the more brightly.
 What a fool: his despicable actions could be sculpted 12
 In bronzes and marbles, yet a halo of impure fame
 Burns and glistens within the cloud of his disgraces!

26

[80v] SONNET TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PRINTED *RIME* AND HIS
 SERVANT, BY AN UNIDENTIFIED WRITER

Magnanima, gentil, d'illustre merto

Magnanimous, genteel, illustrious in merit
 Did you call the Jewess, you filthy infamous souls,
 While you cleared the road for removing loads 3
 Of unworthy thefts with your rapacious fishhooks.
 But when the truth was exposed to the light
 And the veils covering the impious villainy 6
 Were torn asunder, oh, with what false threads
 Was a new betrayal woven onto the first one!⁵⁵⁸
 Despicable, ignoble, inscrutable is she now called: oh,
 how you 9
 Changed, illustrious woman, from your first appearance!
 Oh, thievish pens that mark her as even having
 committed larceny!⁵⁵⁹

555. That caused divine afflatus.

556. Berardelli.

557. The *Sareide* by Berardelli.

558. The "first" betrayal was despoiling Copia of her belongings; the "new" one was defaming her in the *Sareide*.

559. By stealing Paluzzi's verses (and the *Manifesto*, rightly Copia's).

Oh, uncommon perfidy of fate, 12
 But not unexpected of its infamous authors!
 Oh, abominable monsters, from out despicable dregs!

27. SONNET

[81r] BY SIGNOR MATEO BALDANZA⁵⁶⁰ TO THE
 SERVANT [BERARDELLI]

Alzar il fiasco a costo de l'hebreo

To raise the flask at the expense of the Jew,
 To wear his perfumed shirts,
 To steal his unwashed sheets,⁵⁶¹ 3
 His silk boots, with the skills of Asmodeus:⁵⁶²
 Such pinnacles were not reached by the one who choked
 Anteus!⁵⁶³
 But to remove diverse minted coins 6
 From within their iron-fitted coffers
 Was something that not even Alexander the Great did
 in Persia!⁵⁶⁴
 What about stripping an ornament from the arm 9
 Of an incautious woman and shortening her belt⁵⁶⁵

560. Mateo (or Matteo) Baldanza: could not be identified.

561. With the help of the laundrywoman Furlana.

562. Asmodeus: "king of the demons" in the Book of Tobias (3:8). He coveted Tobias's wife Sarah, but was defeated by her chastity. Though the poet of the sonnet mentions neither Tobias nor Sarah, he seems to have covertly intended Jacob and Sarra Copia Sulam. In Hebrew, Asmodeus is Ashmedai, from *le-bashmid*, "to destroy": he figures in the Talmud (Pesahim [Feast of Passover] 110a, Gittin [Bills of divorce] 68a–b) and later rabbinical writings as a demon and especially trickster. The verse begins *Calzar di seta*, in which *calzar* means "to wear shoes" and *di seta*, "of silk," but, to complicate matters, *seta* is a variant of *sete*, "thirst," i.e., "longing" or "greed," in accord with Asmodeus's concupiscence.

563. In reference to Hercules, who strangled the giant Anteus, son of Neptune and Earth. The poet seems to be saying that even Hercules, for all his brutality, did not descend to such depths of wickedness.

564. Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.), who, at the age of twenty-one, invaded and conquered the Persian empire under Darius III.

565. Implies that not the whole belt but only a part of it—probably its golden clasp—was stolen.

By theft and removing rings from her fingers?
Works worthy, indeed, of a really filthy noose 12
Tightened with brute strength and bound to the neck:
May the gallows serve as an umbrella!

28. SONNET

[81v] BY AN UNIDENTIFIED AUTHOR TO THE
SERVANT [BERARDELLI]

Tagliente spada il Macedone altero

A cutting sword did the proud Macedonian use
To undo the difficult knot;⁵⁶⁶
Applying firm pincers to a belt of solid gold, 3
A savage thief dismembered it.
Alexander conquered the empire of Darius;⁵⁶⁷
A new Alexander, with a twisted nail, 6
Gutted a safe and saw to releasing its "soup"
Curdled in golden coins, as genuine as could be.⁵⁶⁸
The former, as a young man, overran and conquered the
world; 9
The latter, not old, with a robust hand
Managed to score a medley of thefts.
Ah, what have I done? I thus equated 12
A sovereign hero with a thief, and no shame
Tinged my face, oh, what a crazy, strange circumstance!

566. Refers to the Gordian knot that Alexander loosened by the blow of his sword (see Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, 2.3.9, above).

567. Darius I the Great, king of Persia from 521 to 486 B.C.E. His reign marked the apogee of the Persian empire, which Alexander wrested from his descendant Darius III in 331.

568. The "golden coins" as the "soup," or contents, of the safe.

29. SONNET

[82r] BY THE SAME WRITER TO THE SAME SERVANT

Quei ch'il biforme toro in Creta estinse

That one⁵⁶⁹ who slaughtered the biform bull⁵⁷⁰ in Crete
 And found his way out of the Labyrinth⁵⁷¹
 Was honored with an ornament bound to his neck; 3
 He received it from her who, in her love, embraced
 him.⁵⁷²
 Such a desire for an ornament, perhaps, impelled the
 despicable thief
 To steal the golden bangles that had girded 6
 The beautiful Israelite's arm, and conquered
 By such an urge, he fiercely proceeded to their theft.
 But if I enrage you by comparing a thief to demigods 9
 And an assassin to divine heroes,⁵⁷³
 Do excuse me, Muses.
 Say that I represent the most illustrious pens: 12
 O abhorrent lie,⁵⁷⁴ are you so potent
 As for me to abuse the gift that Apollo breathed into
 them?⁵⁷⁵

569. Theseus, an Attic hero known for his feats of bravery, among them the slaying of the Minotaur (see next note).

570. Namely, the Minotaur, part man (in its head), part bull (in its body).

571. That had been constructed by Daedalus to hide the Minotaur.

572. The original is garbled in its syntax ("Was honored by a necklace, the neck bound, / To hold from her") and, moreover, deviates from the two versions of the myth in the way it accounts for the "necklace" (*monile*). In one version, the necklace is a "golden crown" that belonged to Ariadne and, because it glowed, led Theseus out of the dark Labyrinth. In another, Theseus gave the crown to Ariadne after removing it from the depths of the sea.

573. "Demigods" and "divine heroes" as represented by Theseus, said to be the son of Aegeus or, elsewhere, of Poseidon, god of the sea (the connection between Aegeus and Poseidon resides in the provenance of Poseidon from Aegae, the early capital of Macedon).

574. That Berardelli bears comparison to Theseus.

575. "Them" being the "pens," which is to say that the writers are offended by such a thoughtless comparison.

[82v] SONNET BY SIGNOR ALBERTO DEI MAGNI⁵⁷⁶ TO SIGNORA SARA [SIC] COPIA

*Del tuo sol tenta in vano, alma gentile,
 Infame lingua di adombrar la luce,
 Infame lingua per cui fuor traluce 3
 Quel raggio per cristallo, il cor d'huom vile.*
*La pietra di menzogna empio focile
 Di perfidia colpisce, ma riluce 6
 Entro a l'esche dei furti e d'empio duce
 La frode e di seguace empio lo stile.*
*Eccoti, Donna, intanto entro a la schiera 9
 Di quei ch'altrui giovando ebbero in vece
 Di ricompensa strazi, oltraggi e morte.*
*Ma vanne pur d'una tal sorte altera 12
 Coi Melciadi e i Focioni: già non lece
 Ch'ingrato mostro altra mercé t'apporte.*

Of your sun does an infamous tongue try in vain,
 Genteel soul, to darken the light;
 Being an infamous tongue, it radiates a beam of light 3
 As sharp as crystal, revealing the heart of a despicable
 man.
 The impious flint of perfidy
 Strikes the stone of a lie, 6
 But the tinder of the thefts reflects
 Both the wiles of the impious leader and the ways of
 the impious follower.⁵⁷⁷
 Here you are, Madam, in the company, all the while, 9
 Of those who, helping others,⁵⁷⁸ had, as recompense,
 Torments, outrages, and death.

576. Alberto dei (or de') Magni: could not be identified. Leonello Modona would have him from Parma (S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti*, 46), though does not say why.

577. Paluzzi being the leader and Berardelli the follower.

578. Persons who, throughout history, offered assistance, yet were punished (as exemplified by Melchiades and Photius in line 13).

But endure the rigors of such a lofty fate 12
 Along with persons like Melchiades and Photius:⁵⁷⁹ it
 is clearly impermissible
 For an ungrateful monster⁵⁸⁰ to show you any other
 thanks.

31. SONNET

[83r] RESPONSE [OF COPIA]⁵⁸¹

Quel desio di saper ch'in cor gentile
Sovente alberga ad ingannevol luce
Mi trasse; indi, seguendo infido duce, 3
Tardi di cor vilan scorgei lo stile.
Fummi il costui disagio qual focile
Ch'ognhor colpiami il cor; ma chi m'induce 6
A dir quali esche ardesse se riluce
Pur anco illustre l'oprar mio virile?
Mi tacio dunque e m'ascrivo a la schiera 9
De' Melciadi Focioni se non lece
Ch'un empio ingrato altro premio m'apporte,
Di cui non so qual inferna megera 12
L'alma ingombrassi che d'honore in vece
Danno mi procurasse, oltraggio e morte.

That desire to know things, which often lodges
 In a genteel heart,⁵⁸² drew me

579. Melchiades, Roman pope (311–14), and Photius, bishop of Constantinople (d. c. 891), were two figures who suffered persecution, yet outlived it to be recognized for their achievements. The poet may be implying that Copia's fate is similar: she pains from the villainy of Paluzzi and Berardelli but in time will see them properly punished and her good name vindicated.

580. Such as Paluzzi or Berardelli.

581. Reproduces eleven of the previous end words, in partly irregular order (1, 2 = 1, 2; 5, 6, 7, 8 = 5, 7, 3, 4; 9, 10, 11 = 9, 13, 14; 13, 14 = 10, 11).

582. Copia's "genteel heart" is contrasted with Paluzzi's "boorish heart" (line 4). The adjective *gentile* may have been used in the double sense of "gentle/genteel" and "Gentile" (see under "A Note on This Edition and Translation" in volume editor's introduction), as if to say that the urge to gain knowledge is common to Jews and Gentiles. Thus Copia's intellectual concerns are legitimate and nobody would think of questioning them.

To the deceptive light:⁵⁸³ there, following a faithless
 leader,⁵⁸⁴ 3
 I later perceived the ways of a boorish heart.
 His discomfort⁵⁸⁵ was, for me, like a flint
 That struck my heart every hour; but who induces me 6
 To say what kinds of tinder ignited it
 If my courageous actions shine as ever illustrious?⁵⁸⁶
 I keep quiet, then, and I enroll in the company 9
 Of those like Melchiades and Photius if it is
 impermissible
 For an impious ingrate to show me another reward;
 I do not know what infernal Megaera⁵⁸⁷ 12
 Would so encumber his soul as to cause me not honor,
 But harm, offense, and death.

32

[83v] SONNET OF SIGNOR FELICIANO BUON SPINO⁵⁸⁸ TO
 SIGNORA SARA [SIC] COPIA

*Face è l'altrui calunnia dove appare,
 Donna, del tuo valor la gloria vera,
 E per entro a vil nube via più altera 3
 Splende la luce de l'opre tue rare.*
*D'infami sempre huom vil tenta d'armare
 In van la lingua immonda che, senciera 6
 Già fatta dei suoi furti messaggera,
 Qual lampa le sue infamie scuopre chiare.*

583. As reflected by Paluzzi.

584. "Faithless," in two senses relevant to Paluzzi: irreverent, treacherous. See Copia's first poem ("Quasi a coturno," 14r), in which her "faith . . . in a contemptible man" was wasted "on an ungrateful mind" (lines 5, 9).

585. Both his suffering (from syphilis) and his penury.

586. Copia seems to be asking: why should I bother to talk about "his discomfort" that "ignited" my sympathy when what counts are my "courageous actions" to clear my name of slander?

587. In Greek mythology, one of the three Furies, by name Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone. Megaera refers, more generally, to a fierce, violent person, especially a witch or shrew, though here perhaps to Furlana, who poisoned Paluzzi's mind against Copia.

588. Feliciano Buon Spino (or Buonspino): could not be identified.

Non degna huom saggio del canino dente 9
Al fremer pur fermarsi, ma in non cale
Pone i latrati e l'arufato pelo;
E s'altri vi si volge, "ecco pecente," 12
Dice, "cb'entro ogni infamia inveschie ha l'ale:
Come ardisce di por la bocca in cielo?"

That other one's⁵⁸⁹ slander is a torch that reveals
 The true glory, Madam, of your valor;
 From within a despicable cloud⁵⁹⁰ the light 3
 Of your singular works is even more proudly
 resplendent.
 With infamous remarks does a despicable man ever try
 to arm,
 Though in vain, the foul tongue that, already become 6
 A sincere messenger of his thefts,
 Exposes his infamies as brightly as a lamp.
 Yet a wise man does not deign to halt at the howling 9
 Of a raging dog; rather he is indifferent
 To its barks and bristling hair;
 And if the other one [Berardelli] turns around, he [the wise
 man] says: 12
 "Here's the panhandler, whose wings are ensnared in
 his every infamy:
 How dare he place his mouth in heaven?"⁵⁹¹

33. SONNET

[84r] RESPONSE [OF COPIA]⁵⁹²

A vile e indegno oggetto di mirare
Talhor fui astretta, ma la mente altera
Tosto a dietro si volse, ché non spera 3
Da vil tenzon fama illustre destare.

589. Berardelli, not Paluzzi, as clear from the mention of the former's "thefts" (line 7).

590. Of slander.

591. With his "wings" tied, he could not possibly direct his speech to "heaven," Copia's domain (as clear from the sonnet below: no. 34:1). Yet, in his impudence, he does do so.

592. The sonnet can be read to refer to either Paluzzi or Bonifaccio: the first as one whom Copia denounces, the second as one whom she thought of challenging in a debate (though she decided against it; see continuation).

- Se con armi in aringo si de' entrare*
Conformi al vil nimico, ah, che dispera 6
Ch'in alto aspira e sdegna uscir di schiera
Per ignobil trofeo scuro e volgare.
- Quindi è, Signor, ch'uscir s'ode repente* 9
Talhor la Musa, se furor l'assale,
Cinta di larve entro incognito velo.
- Ma per il più, qui vaglia il ver, si pente* 12
D'aver mai da faretra schiuso strale,
Né affisso a infame segno illustre telo.
- To behold a despicable and unworthy object
 Was I sometimes compelled, but the proud mind
 Soon turned back,⁵⁹³ for it does not hope 3
 To awaken illustrious fame from a despicable contest.⁵⁹⁴
- If one must enter the arena with arms⁵⁹⁵
 Conforming to those of the despicable enemy, ah! it is
 hopeless 6
 To aspire to the heights, yet refuse to leave the crowd⁵⁹⁶
 For the sake of winning an ignoble trophy, dark and
 common.⁵⁹⁷
- Thus it is, Signor, that the Muse,⁵⁹⁸ if assailed by fury, 9
 Can sometimes be heard to leave⁵⁹⁹ suddenly,
 Protected by disguises within an impenetrable veil.⁶⁰⁰
- But here it must be admitted that one regrets, for the most
 part, 12
 Ever having released the arrow from the quiver
 Or aimed an illustrious dart at an infamous target.

593. From any intention Copia may have had, in her "proud mind," to challenge the "object" (Paluzzi or Berardelli) in an open debate.

594. In the sense of "dispute" or "argument." Copia refrained, then, from getting involved in verbal controversy, lest she descend to exchanging villainous sallies with her adversary.

595. See, for similar vocabulary, Copia's poem "Con la tua scorta," line 5 ("Entro senz'armi in non usato aringo"; *Manifesto*, A 4v).

596. Of persons who argue.

597. Said otherwise: if a person sets his goals on high, yet blasphemously challenges his opponent in an arena from which he himself refuses to exit, he cannot hope for anything but a worthless trophy.

598. Of poetry.

599. The arena.

600. Rather than speak out directly against the adversary, Copia, inspired by "the Muse," expressed herself in ambiguities so as to conceal her thoughts.

34. SONNET

[84v] BY SIGNOR ANNIBALE GRIMALDO⁶⁰¹ TO SIGNORA SARA
[SIC] COPIA

Veggio, Donna gentil, contro al tuo cielo
Nuovi Briarei sovra por monti a monti
E di aperta vorago i toschi pronti 3
Per fascinarne il vago aureo tuo stelo.
Ma ben veggio anco in ciel d'ardente telo
Le nubi aprirsi e ne l'indegne fronti 6
L'infamie impresse e a lor gli orgogli e monti
D'ampia menzogna in vano ombrarli il velo.
Ecco che d'ignominia il grave pondo 9
Gli carica, ecco pur vomon fiamme e fumi,
Mostruosi aborti di vil core immondo.
Ma tu qual saggia, gli empì lor costumi 12
Sprezzando, insegna che da uno infecondo
Terren sol trabesi⁶⁰² spine, sterpi e dumi.

I see, genteel lady, new Briareuses⁶⁰³
 Place mountains upon mountains to storm your heaven

601. One is tempted to identify him with Annibale Grimaldi, from the branch of the Grimaldi family in Boglio, originally a fiefdom wedged between Provence, Savoy, and Piedmont: Grimaldi negotiated with the French to secure the independence of his land from the dukes of Savoy, who, in early January 1621, judged and executed him for political maneuvering (see entry on him, by Blythe Alice Raviola, in Ghisalberto, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 59:472–74). Yet he is not known to have been a poet, and even if he were, he could not have written the sonnet above: the events to which it refers occurred after his death. Modona says of the present poet that he “must certainly have been Genoan and a relative of Cebà” (S. C. Sullam, *sonetti editi e inediti*, 31, 46): on Cebà alias Grimaldo, cf. Nicolò Giuliani, “Ansaldo Cebà,” 387–88. For a letter to Gaspare Grimaldo and another to Carlo Grimaldo, see Cebà, *Lettere ad Agostino Pallavicino di Stefano*, 1, 313; and for sonnets dedicated to Francesco Grimaldo and Gian Giacomo Grimaldo, Cebà, *Rime* (1611), 50, 518, 557.

602. Though the unwonted *b* creates an extra syllable, it is dropped in recitation to keep the number of syllables at eleven.

603. In mythology, Briareus was one of the Hecatonchires, with a hundred arms and fifty heads. He assisted Jupiter in the struggle against the Titans who stormed Olympus. Once defeated, the Titans were thrown into Tartarus, a sunless abyss said to be as far below Hades as heaven is above earth (*Iliad* 8.1). In the sonnet, the “new Briareuses” refer to Paluzzi and his accomplices.

And see an open chasm's poisons⁶⁰⁴ ready 3
 To turn your lovely golden stalk to bramble.⁶⁰⁵
 But I also well see, in your heaven, the clouds
 Of a burning canvas open up,⁶⁰⁶ and on the unworthy
 foreheads 6
 I see the infamies impressed while boasts and mountains
 Are uselessly concealed by the veil of an abundant lie.⁶⁰⁷
 Behold the heavy weight of ignominy 9
 Loaded on them; indeed, behold the spewing of flames
 and fumes,⁶⁰⁸
 Monstrous depravities of a despicable, foul heart.
 But you, as a wise woman disdaining their impious
 customs,⁶⁰⁹ 12
 Teach that from an unfertile terrain
 Only thorns, thickets, and thistles can be gathered.

35. SONNET

[85r] RESPONSE [OF COPIA]⁶¹⁰

Se può vil nube anco adombrar del cielo
A le più chiare stelle i suoi orizzonti,
Per ch'a vil bue vietar, sorga o tramonti 3
Il sol, ch'ei non rimugg[h]i e al caldo e al gelo?
Non fia che adduggi al verde del mio stelo

604. The chasm is Tartarus or more specifically the blasphemers' cavernous mouth, spouting venom.

605. Meaning that the more poison the enemy spreads by lies and slander, the more Copia's "stalk," i.e., her intrinsic honesty or benevolence, is contaminated. Between the mountains of the enemy and the heavens of Copia lies an "open chasm," into which she is in constant danger of falling should the enemy invade the heavens and eject their occupant. The verses build on celestial heights and infernal depths as a conceptual antithesis.

606. While *telo*, in the *proposta*, was a dart, now it signifies a "canvas." Why "burning," though? One explanation is that heaven, lighted by the sun (Copia), shines in its brightness, revealing the criminals. Another is that Copia appears, on high, in all her radiance.

607. The many lies of the assailants, that is, cannot conceal their trickery.

608. Rising from the chasm (line 3).

609. On Copia's avoidance of verbal argument with her slanderers, see above, 84r.

610. Reproduces eight of the previous end words, in irregular order: 1, 2 = 1, 6; 4 = 5; 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 = 8, 9, 12, 11, 10.

Livor d'infame mostro, monti a monti 6
Inalzi, ch'ivi al mondo pur son conti
Suoi indegni vanti e non gli adombra velo.
Ma che? Vil core d'ignominia al pondo 9
Forsi pon cura se in sozzi costumi
Gode qual entro al lezzo porco immondo?
Quindi è, Signor, ch'ai fiati odiosi, ai fumi 12
D'empie fauci non bado: a più secondo
Spirar d'aura hor m'avvien che i vanni impiumi.

If a despicable cloud can in fact shadow
 The brightest stars in the full span of heaven,⁶¹¹
 Why prevent a despicable ox,⁶¹² upon the rising or
 setting 3
 Of the sun, from roaring in both heat and cold?⁶¹³
 May the shady ways of an infamous monster not darken
 The green of my stalk⁶¹⁴ or raise mountains upon
 mountains!⁶¹⁵ 6
 Its unworthy boastings are known to everyone there⁶¹⁶
 And no veil conceals them.
 Why be concerned? Would a despicable heart ever be
 troubled 9
 By the weight of ignominy if it rejoices in loathsome
 customs,
 As does a filthy pig in stench?
 Thus it is, Signor, that to the odious breaths and the fumes 12

611. The first couplet reads literally: "If a despicable cloud can in fact conceal its full span from the brightest stars of heaven." It appears to be garbled, for lines 5–6 clarify that the "good" (i.e., heaven's brightest stars, 1–2, and the green stalk, 5) is darkened by the "bad" (i.e., a despicable cloud and the shady ways of a monster). So the cloud does not hide "its full span" from heavens' stars, rather it obscures the stars in the extensive heavens. One such star is Copia, whom Paluzzi and Berardelli sought to dim with their trickery.

612. Paluzzi, or Berardelli, now as a dunce or blockhead.

613. What Copia seems to be saying, in this (difficult) quatrain, is if a cloud can dim the stars, why be bothered by an ox, i.e., a numskull, who casts his aspersions, morning and evening, on the sun (Copia herself).

614. Denigrate my person by slander.

615. To storm my abode and attack me.

616. "There" appears to refer to Grimaldo's surroundings (Genoa?), thus should be read as "where you yourself are."

Of impious jaws⁶¹⁷ I pay no attention: as it now
 happens,
 A more favorable breeze is blowing⁶¹⁸ and I spread my
 wings.⁶¹⁹

36. SONNET

[85v] BY SIGNOR LIVIO SANSONI, CALLED SPINELLI,⁶²⁰ TO
 SIGNORA SARA [SIC] COPIA

*Sarra gentile, la canora cetra,
 Ond'adolcisti a l'aere l'aure intorno,
 Veggio hor, d'infame mostro ad onta e scorno, 3
 Penderti al fianco, cangiata in faretra.
 Forma have il plettro d'arco a cui s'aretra
 Vil menzogna, empio inganno, e in vil soggiorno 6
 Là 've s'occulta il tradimento al giorno,
 Rintanans'ivi in buca scura e tetra.
 È strale ogni tuo verso, onde trafigi 9
 Di malvagia perfidia il fianco e il dorso
 Ch'in van da sé s'invola e si rinselva.
 Segui, segui de gli empi i rei vestigi, 12
 Franga vindice metro al mostro il morso
 E fia tuo pregio spoglia d'empia belva.*

Genteel Sarra, the melodious lyre,
 With which you sweetened the breezes circulating in
 the air,
 I now see, to the shame and disgrace of an infamous
 monster,⁶²¹ 3
 Transformed into a quiver hanging by your side.⁶²²

617. "The fumes . . . jaws" refers to the poisonous remarks in their mouths.

618. Now that the culprits have been found out for what they were.

619. To rise in poetic flight.

620. Livio Sansoni, called Spinelli: could not be identified.

621. Probably to be read in the plural as referring to both Paluzzi and Berardelli (see above, 13r, for "abominable monsters"); in line 12 they are called "scoundrels."

622. Instead of talking about pleasant things in verse, Copia now has to fulminate against criminals, turning her poetic lyre into a weapon of forensic combat.

The plectrum has the form of a bow, from which a
 despicable lie
 And an impious deceit retreat,⁶²³ only to stay in a
 despicable place, 6
 Where, to hide treason from the light of day,
 They shut themselves off in a dark and gloomy pit.
 Every verse of yours is an arrow, with which you pierce 9
 The side and the back of wicked perfidy
 That, to no avail, steals away on its own and reverts
 to the woodland.⁶²⁴
 Follow, follow the evil tracks of the scoundrels; 12
 May the vengeful meter break the monster's bite
 And your reward be the remains of an impious wild
 beast.

37. SONNET

[86r] RESPONSE [OF COPIA]⁶²⁵

Tace, è gran tempo, qual pose la cetra,
Onde sen gio talhor mia fama intorno;
Noiose cure al bel desio troncornò 3
L'ali, onde s'alza il canto e vita impetra.
Poscia d'odiosa lingua indegna e tetra
Calunnia al furto infame unì lo scorno; 6
Stimai quei detti qual suolsi il ritorno
D'assinea voce a noi da cava pietra.
Fu poi, non so se da gli elisij o stigi 9
Campi, Musa ch'al canto spronò il corso
E de l'infamie altrui crollò la selva.
Signor, fu alhora ch'[e], ai costei vestigi 12
Rivolta, scorsi, lacerato il dorso,
Di mille ponte offesa l'empia belva.

623. The lie and deceit might be personified as Paluzzi and Berardelli, who, in line 8, hide out.

624. "Reverts," that is, to its basic nature of being wild and savage.

625. Reproduces seven of the previous end words, though in partly irregular order: 1, 2, 3 = 1, 2, 6; 8 = 5; 10 = 13; 12 = 12; 14 = 14.

Silent, for a long time, is the one⁶²⁶ who set down the lyre,
 From which my fame sometimes spread about;
 Bothersome cares have cropped my beautiful desire's
 wings, 3
 On which song rises and life is renewed.
 Afterward, the base, repugnant slander of an odious tongue
 Added scorn to the infamous theft;⁶²⁷ 6
 I regarded those words⁶²⁸ as the usual echo we hear
 When a donkey brays inside a stone cave.
 It was then that from out the Elysian or Stygian fields, I am
 not sure which, 9
 There appeared a Muse who stirred song on its path⁶²⁹
 And shook the woods of the others' infamies.⁶³⁰
 What happened next, Signor, is that having turned about to
 follow her tracks, 12
 I noticed a backside torn to shreds:
 The impious wild beast had been wounded by a
 thousand stabs.⁶³¹

626. Copia, in reference to herself.

627. Meaning, as one possibility, that after the culprits stole from Copia, they added insult to injury by publishing the *Sareide*; or, as another, that after Berardelli accused Copia of having pilfered Paluzzi's writings, he went even further, saying that she plagiarized them (see above, 22r).

628. Of calumny, in the *Sareide* or defamation at large.

629. Solinga came to Copia's defense in "song" (verse, prose), but from where? Copia is uncertain about her provenance: either Solinga inhabited Parnassus (the "Elysian fields"), as did Apollo and the Muses in the "Notices"; or, like Eurydice, she was released from Hades (the "Stygian fields") by Orpheus—Bonifaccio had written that "as if a new Orpheus, I am stirred to enter this profound abyss only to remove you, beautiful Eurydice, from the chasm of Inferno" (*Discorso*, 2.3.6, above); or, again, she entered Hades, the abode of Copia's adversaries, only to emerge from it, triumphant over them. Whatever the case, Solinga was stirred by the Muses to write on Copia's behalf.

630. Within "the woods" (the "Stygian fields" of line 9?) she revealed the infamies hidden "in a dark and gloomy pit" (no. 36:8).

631. Solinga demolished Paluzzi (and Berardelli) in the "Notices."

[86v] SONNET DIRECTED BY SIGNOR MARCO BRESCIANO⁶³² TO
ILLUSTRIOUS PAINTERS AND INTENDED FOR THE SAME SERVANT
[BERARDELLI]

Emuli di natura, illustri ingegni

Emulators of nature, illustrious talents,
Endowed by heaven with the power to feign, with
colors,
The rages of Mars and the games and tantrums 3
Of lascivious and flattering lovers:
You can feign the salty realms of Neptune
In their turbulence and fill heaven with horrors 6
And make the senses believe
That crashes of thunder are heard in colored specks.
Oh, may the glories of your merits⁶³³ not be tarnished 9
By the thievish fiction of that villainous deceit⁶³⁴
Whereby an impious spirit⁶³⁵ betrayed an innocent soul;
May the despicable creature be excluded from your
remarkable studios⁶³⁶ 12
And praise of illustrious art never be given
To the skills of one who at no time regrets having acted
as a scoundrel.

[87r] There was someone who had an urge, if time permitted, to recount via end rhymes used by Petrarch and Tasso all the tricks and thieveries that the thievish gathering performed to the detriment of the Jewess. He wanted to try it out in verses formed after the first three sonnets of Petrarch⁶³⁷ and the first three *stanze* [octaves] of Tasso from his *Gerusalemme liberata*, as follows:

632. Marco Bresciano (or Bresciani): could not be identified.

633. As painters.

634. Namely, the pretended request of the French prince to have a portrait of Copia.

635. Berardelli, who executed the portrait.

636. I.e., artists' workshops.

637. From his *Canzoniere*.

39. SONNET

*Voi ch'ascoltate de l'infamie il suono*⁶³⁸

You who hear the sound⁶³⁹ of infamies
 That the thief, a painter, contrived against her
 To remove his treacherous self from the hardship 3
 And hunger to which he was prey,
 If I talk to you about disgraces and ignominies,
 About tricks and thefts, about stink and stench, 6
 Place the blame on the writer Berardelli,⁶⁴⁰
 Unworthy of pardon even though hanged.
 The common herd of assassins does not have 9
 Any man more iniquitous, any cistern⁶⁴¹ more fetid;
 Their very remembrance⁶⁴² makes me ashamed.
 The infamous man abused the fruits of pity 12
 And openly showed us in his actions
 How much he needed a scaffold and a rope.

40. SONNET

*Per far di stagni e rami e vuota e netta*⁶⁴³

[87v] To make the Jew's kitchen both empty and free
 Of tins and copperware, the thief was kindled
 With ardor and, in his burning desire, he came to an
 understanding 3
 With his beloved black scullery girl.

638. The end-rhymes are identical with those of "Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono" (Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, 1). No. 39 and its model also share various words (P = Petrarch; S = Codex Solinga): P and S, *Voi ch'ascolate / il suono / perdono / pietà / frutto*; P, *di me medesimo meco mi vergogno* as compared with S, *io mi vergogno*.

639. Alludes to the echo heard in no. 37:7–8.

640. Note that Berardelli is now addressed in his second capacity as a poet.

641. Containing poisons.

642. In reference to the "tricks and thefts," etc.

643. The end-rhymes are identical with those of "Per fare una leggiadra sua vendetta" (Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, 2), with one exception (P = Petrarch; S = Codex Solinga): *-ese* in P and *-esse* in S, lines 2–3 and 7–8 (though *-esse* is meant to be read as *ese*). No. 40 and its model also share various words: P and S, *Per far / non hebbe spatio / ristretto* (S, *ristretta*).

Laden with these utensils bundled into one,
 He twice⁶⁴⁴ hastily descended the stairs 6
 And took to the street, toward his cohorts,
 Even more swiftly than an arrow flies.
 The Jew was astonished because the leap appeared to him 9
 To be fatal,⁶⁴⁵ and, in his stupefaction, he did not have
 time
 To take up arms against the shrewd wretch.
 Those living upstairs and downstairs 12
 All ran to the spot, and he blamed
 The havoc on infernal schemes.⁶⁴⁶

41. SONNET

*Chi può dir come al viso scoloraro*⁶⁴⁷

[88r] Who can say how they removed color from the beautiful
 features
 Of the face⁶⁴⁸ and how a beautiful woman must have
 turned
 Her rays⁶⁴⁹ to heaven when she noticed 3
 The mockeries⁶⁵⁰ that, earlier, had not been disclosed
 to her?
 It was as Niobe who had become a rock⁶⁵¹ and was oppressed
 by such varying
 Modes of treason that I beheld her. 6
 "Alas! what furies in that abyss,"⁶⁵² she said,
 "Ever roused such impious thoughts in the heart?"

644. Refers to two separate robberies.

645. Berardelli appears to have jumped to the street from a window on an upper story.

646. I.e., Berardelli blamed the spirits: on the scullery maid possessed by demons, see above, 8r.

647. The end-rhymes are identical with those of "Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro" (Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, 3). No. 41 and its model also share various words: *scoloraro* / *i rai* / *l'arco* / *pietà* / *il varco*.

648. Their thieveries, that is, made Copia pale.

649. I.e., her eyes.

650. In the *Sareide*.

651. Out of pity for her grief (over the killing of her fourteen children) the gods transformed Niobe, daughter of Tantalus and wife of Amphion, into a rock, yet even then she continued to weep.

652. Abyss, meaning the traitors' den of iniquity; see above for the chasm (Tartarus) and its poisons (84v, no. 34:3).

O ungrateful heart of infamous Paluzzi, 9
 O treacherous example of a servant:
 The latter shot the arrow, the former held the bow!
 O vehement ardor of my pity, 12
 O unfortunate affection of my virtue:
 You, you, opened the passage for my being dealt such
 grave injuries!"

42. STANZA

*Canto gli infami eccessi e 'l capitano*⁶⁵³

[88v] I sing of the infamous misdemeanors and of the captain:⁶⁵⁴
 He prompted a villain and thief in the ugly acquisition,⁶⁵⁵
 Betraying those who, with a merciful hand, 3
 Removed one scoundrel and one wretch from hardship;
 I sing of an infamous counselor and an inhuman,
 Horrible executor,⁶⁵⁶ as I do of miscellaneous 6
 Disgraces and abuses as many in number
 As the nocturnal glories of heaven's star-lit beams.

43. STANZA

*Non chirlanda di mirti, non d'allori*⁶⁵⁷

Not a garland of myrtles or of laurels
 Did the same ones⁶⁵⁸ look for on the Pindus⁶⁵⁹ or on the
 Helicon,⁶⁶⁰

653. The end-rhymes are identical with those of "Canto l'arme pietose e 'l capitano" (Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, bk 1, stanza 1). No. 42 and its model also share various words: *Canto / e 'l capitano / mano*.

654. Paluzzi was in charge of the robberies.

655. Of property.

656. Again Paluzzi and Berardelli.

657. The end-rhymes are identical with those of "O Musa, tu che di caduchi allori" (Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, bk 1, stanza 2). No. 43 and its model also share various words: *allori / 'n Eli-cona / corona / ardori*.

658. Paluzzi, Berardelli.

659. The northwestern Greek provinces of Thessaly and Epirus are separated from each other by the lofty Mount Pindus. Yet Pindus should probably be taken to designate the range of mountains that included Parnassus (as a complement, in the continuation of the verse, to the Helicon).

660. Helicon, the highest mountain in Boeotia; there, in Greek mythology, Apollo and the Muses resided. On the conjunction of Pindus and Helicon in ancient verse, see, for example, Horace, *Odes* 1.12.5–6.

But rather the Jew's silver, copperware, and gold pieces, 3
 To steal them and adorn themselves with them as an
 unfit crown;
 So fervid was their passion for doing this
 That at the ringing of bells for vespers, terce, and nones, 6
 When men were otherwise distracted, they succeeded in
 demonstrating
 Novel craftiness and ever new inventiveness.

44. STANZA

*Non sì la brezza vien che larga versi*⁶⁶¹

There is no breeze so big for sweeping
 The sea's sweet waters into a larger basin
 As could compete with the waves of the ample and varied
 thefts⁶⁶² 3
 That fortune or circumstances allowed;
 The waves pressed forward while laden with solid items
 and besprinkled with soft ones,
 They cleared out cabinets, they emptied every closet, 6
 They released whatever was closed by locks and bars
 And carried off light and heavy objects all in one.⁶⁶³

45. SONNET WITH THREE-LINE ENVOI

Si fé gran festa in Ghetto il luni grasso

[89r] A great feast was celebrated in the ghetto, on Shrove
 Monday,⁶⁶⁴

661. The end-rhymes are identical with those of "Sai che là corre il mondo ove più versi" (Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, bk 1, stanza 3). No. 44 and its model also share various words: *versi* / *molle* (in Tasso's poem: *mollì*) / *aspersi*.

662. The billows, that is, swept the thefts into the receptacle designated to hold the booty.

663. Followed by a torn folio, with no more remaining of its poems than the initial characters of five verses on the recto side (*S, a, Deb, Par, Deb*) and the final characters of four verses on the verso side (*no, fassi, [?] poe, ingegn*).

664. The second of three days preparatory to Lent (starting with Ash Wednesday), namely, Shrove Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, a time of confession yet also of merrymaking, which raises the question whether the celebration in the ghetto, on Shrove Monday, coincided with the festive Jewish holiday of Purim (14 Adar). Yet the dates do not match (SM = Shrove Mon-

And Berardelli served as a bull;⁶⁶⁵
 They dragged it through all the gates,⁶⁶⁶ 3
 From the side buildings to the central square⁶⁶⁷ and
 from one end to the other.⁶⁶⁸
 For greater fun they attached to its buttocks
 Two large broken cauldrons, and beating it 6
 With whips, they made it quicken its pace
 While, in all the clatter, boys and old men ran
 alongside.
 Afterward, they led it to the spot 9
 Where Signora Sarra lives, pretending
 To cut off its head with a butcher's knife;
 The crowd around them whistled approval 12
 As they poured a cauldron of icy water
 On its neck and mane.
 Naturally, they drove the bull out of the ghetto, 15
 When the feast was over,
 To the place where Spadina⁶⁶⁹ has his quarters.

46. SONNET

Vari intartenimenti ha il Berardelli

[89v] Berardelli has various amusements:
 He plays the *rebab*;⁶⁷⁰ in his singing skills

day, P = Purim): 1624, SM, 19 February / P, Tuesday, 5 March; 1625, SM, 10 February / P, Friday, 21 February; 1626, SM, 23 February / P, Thursday, 12 March; 1627, SM, 15 February / P, Tuesday, 2 March.

665. There was a lingering tradition of animal baiting, from medieval times, in outdoor games played on Shrove Monday, as follows: a bear or bull would be roped to a pole in the center of a large pit only to have a pack of hunting dogs turned on it; they would battle until either the tied animal was killed by the dogs or vice versa.

666. At the entrance to the ghetto.

667. Source has "to the middle."

668. For the second part of this verse the original read "from top to bottom" (*da la cima al basso*). Thus the bull would have been dragged over the full length of the Ghetto Nuovo and the contiguous Ghetto Vecchio.

669. The executioner so named.

670. Designates various Arabic string instruments or their European derivative, the *rebec* (known under separate names and shapes from the tenth century on). By *rebab* alias *rebec* the poet probably had in mind a primitive violin.

He remains a timid swan;⁶⁷¹ he knows how to cover up 3
 His every thievish trick with paintbrushes;⁶⁷²
 He mainly cares about the business of his infamous libels;⁶⁷³
 Midst swindlers and ruffians he counts for someone; 6
 In his acts of despicable treason he is worth as much
 as he accomplishes;⁶⁷⁴
 He only believes in the cook and the dining room.⁶⁷⁵
 But little did fortune ever favor 9
 The infamous customs of the rascal,
 For hunger continually and increasingly destroyed him;
 Perhaps the decree pronounced on account of the fatal
 volumes⁶⁷⁶ 12
 Authorized the despicable man, midst infamies and
 stench,
 To appease his hunger on crumbs, bones, and drippings.

[90r] No less heavy with irons than laden with infamy was the rogue in his attempts and threats to prevent the Jewess from proclaiming him a thief, which offered an occasion for the following sonnet:

47. SONNET POSSIBLY BY LEON MODENA

Fascia di maglia l'anche, il ventre e il dorso

He binds his hips, stomach, and back in a coat of mail;
 He handles the iron glove and the spear with his claws;
 He adjusts the sword and the dagger to his flank: 3
 I am hesitant in speaking of his military prowess.
 Oh, who would be the one to lead this bear to Modena?⁶⁷⁷

671. Original word (*uncignuto*) seems garbled. It is probably to be read as *un cignuzzo* or *un cignuccio* (with the suffix *uzzo* or *uccio* an endearing diminutive), meaning perhaps that Berardelli's singing will improve before his death, as does a dying swan's.

672. Implies that the painter Berardelli can use his colors to "paint over" as it were, hence disguise, whatever he drew or contrived.

673. Published in the *Sareide*.

674. What he does, that is, makes him what he is: a "despicable 'traitor.'"

675. He has an all-consuming interest in what will be served for dinner.

676. The "infamous libels" mentioned above (the *Sareide*).

677. Or in the original, *Modona*, which Boccato read as the Greek city *Methona* ("Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia," 206n.), though clearly the reference is to Leon

It befouls Hippocrene⁶⁷⁸ and besmirches the Pindus;⁶⁷⁹ 6
 I see Jerusalem destroyed by it⁶⁸⁰
 If I do not curb its bite with a tripe.⁶⁸¹
 I am speaking of Berardelli who, with irons⁶⁸² and by fire, 9
 Would have the ghetto destroyed to clear himself;⁶⁸³
 More water, Jewish brothers, the well you draw from
 is not enough!
 Oh, may the pitchfork lift him to the beam;⁶⁸⁴ may
 Sforzina⁶⁸⁵ 12
 Bind him tight; may the aerial hook⁶⁸⁶ be set in place
 And become a yoke⁶⁸⁷ to keep him hanging in his
 doublet.

Modena, who figures heavily in all other parts of this volume. Here Modena seems to point to himself, asking: who brought me Berardelli, that animal no less ferocious than a "bear"? He then pledges to "curb its bite" and rallies his "Jewish brothers" in the ghetto to see to its proper punishment by the executioner Sforzina (lines 8, 12–14). I am grateful to Robert Bonfil (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) for confirming the plausibility of Modena as the referent.

678. Hippocrene, in mythology a spring on Mount Helicon. It was sacred to the Muses, who drew poetic inspiration from its waters.

679. On which see above.

680. Jerusalem, as a metonym for the ghetto and its residents, particularly Copia and her husband.

681. Meaning, broadly, that Berardelli would kill all Jews if his hunger were not appeased. Thus Modena, the presumed speaker of the verses, tries to pacify him, i.e., divert him from his evil designs, by filling his stomach.

682. I.e., weapons.

683. Berardelli seems to have practiced his thefts on various families in the ghetto; hence the poet's call to its residents (his "Jewish brothers"). By denouncing the Jews, Berardelli hoped "to clear himself" before the authorities.

684. Of the gallows.

685. Sforzina (or as abbreviated in source, Sforzin), the new executioner. He replaced Spadina (about whom see 89r, 91r, and 94r) and, with little experience, was clumsy in performing his job.

686. For holding the noose.

687. Lines 13–14 are an approximate translation of what appeared in the original as *e venga l'aereo masto e il gioco / Gli faccia*, etc. (*masto* a corruption of *mastio*, roughly "hook").

[90v] A MADRIGAL IN DERISION OF THE *SAREIDE* AND THE
INFAMOUS LIBELS THAT THE THIEF [BERARDELLI] PUBLISHED
ABOUT THE JEWESS WHEN HE WAS DECLARED A THIEF

*O che sozzo bricone*⁶⁸⁸

Oh, what a loathsome knave;	
Oh, what an unworthy stable boy;	
Oh, what an infamous thief!	3
Run, people, yes, run to the nitwit	
Now emerging from the pit; ⁶⁸⁹	
Make a circle around him,	6
Listen to his noble sol-fa	
To words dictated to him by his scullery-girlfriend	
Arnolfa ⁶⁹⁰	
While he covered for her. ⁶⁹¹	9
Oh, pay attention to the tin bugle of the impostor; ⁶⁹²	
Listen to the thievish meter ⁶⁹³	
That [with him] a half step or more away from the	
lyre	12

688. Fourteen lines, with the following rhyme scheme: *aaa/Bb,cdDc/aeEFF* (majuscles for eleven-syllable verses, minuscules for seven-syllable ones; virgules for larger syntactic divisions and the one comma for a smaller one). So shaped, the madrigal has the structure, somewhat modified, of a (monostrophic) canzone.

689. On the "infamous monster" (in reference to both Paluzzi and Berardelli) that "shuts itself off in a dark and gloomy pit," see 85v, no. 36:3, 8. Now it is Berardelli who emerges from it as his place of hiding.

690. Read "his noble sol-fa to words" as "the noble melody" that Berardelli sings "to words" by the young Moorish female servant, identified for the first time by name: Arnolfa.

691. The implication is that some of the accusations in the *Sareide* were inspired by the scullery girl whose identity Berardelli purposely concealed.

692. As an impostor, he clearly plays a fake instrument, hence a mere "tin bugle" and, in line 13, a "common lyre," itself comparable to the *rebab*, or the rudimentary string instrument he scraped (89v, no. 46:2).

693. Of the song.

He used to unfold over the flowery slopes:⁶⁹⁴

He drags axes, ropes, and the gallows unto himself.⁶⁹⁵

[91r] Having committed thefts and misdemeanors, the rogue proved himself worthy of being handled by the executioner. It then entered the mind of the Muses that [while being hanged] he might be treated with a certain display of honors, which was abhorrent to Signor Manoli Stamati, or Stamatelli,⁶⁹⁶ who composed the following sonnet:

49. CAUDATED SONNET IN VENETIAN⁶⁹⁷

Cossa voleu che para un lauraner

Is that how you want a thief to appear

On the gallows midst two ladders, dear Muses?

Would it not be regarded as empty fantasy

3

To have a triumphant carriage on the stage?

694. The Italian for lines 12–13 (*che longi un mezo passo e meglio al cetro / usò volgar per le fiorite piagge*) is problematic. Usually *longi*, "far," is followed by *da* for "from," only exceptionally by *a* (Dante, *Divine Comedy*, Paradise 12.49: "Non molto lungi *al* percuoter de l'onde" [not far *from* the smiting of the waves]), as in line 12 here with "*al cetro*." But why "away from the lyre"? Is "lyre" to be read as the instrument for comforting Berardelli when he proceeds to his hanging (see no. 49:8, below)? Or is it his own instrument, as in "the thievish lyre" he was heard to play in accusing Copia (see no. 22:7, above)? Or, then again, is "*from* the (or his) lyre" to be changed to "*on* the (or his) lyre," in completion of "he used to spread"? In that case, "a half step or more away" might refer to the distance between Berardelli and the place of execution (see line 14) or between him and the scullery maid (line 8). Another reading is with *volgar(e)*, a variant of the verb *divulgar(e)*, "to spread" (or in the translation above, "unfold") treated as an adjective in apposition to "lyre," hence "he used to spread on his *common* lyre," to complement his "tin bugle." "Over the flowery slopes" might indicate Berardelli's "ornamented" (or "flowery," in the original *fiorite*) shapings of the melody sung to the scullery maid's words or perhaps his poetically inspired musical "ascents" (slopes?).

695. I.e., he precipitates his own hanging.

696. Manoli Stamati, or Stamatelli: could not be identified, though the name betrays his Greek origin or ancestry.

697. A *sonetto caudato* is a full sonnet with a *coda* of one or more tercets, each formed from a seven-syllable verse (rhyming with the previous line) and two newly rhymed hendecasyllables (in the present case, six tercets in all, as follows: *dEE, eFF, fGG*, etc.). Introduced in the fourteenth century, the *sonetto caudato* was particularly frequent in the burlesque literature, as, for example, in the flippant works by Francesco Berni (d. 1536; his *Rime*, ed. Danilo Romei, have twenty-seven such sonnets, with anywhere from one to fifteen added tercets). I am grateful to Marina Vianello (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice) for her help in reading this and other Venetian texts in the codex.

What does Spadina⁶⁹⁸ have to do
 With the master of ceremonies on Parnassus?⁶⁹⁹ oh,
 empty heads,⁷⁰⁰ 6
 San Fantin⁷⁰¹ allows no bagpipes to be sounded;
 Rather it is the lyre player⁷⁰² who comforts.
 When a poet is led to be hanged, 9
 He is shaven, disgraced, and well washed
 With salt and pungent vinegar;
 Every ruffian honors him with his spit 12
 And makes him drag a plank
 And does not think twice about anointing him with
 vinegar.⁷⁰³

Coda (five tercets)

If he is an imitator of Orpheus,⁷⁰⁴ 15
 You may want him to be hanged in triumph,
 But I think it is only right for him to be mutilated;
 I do not adulate you or inflate your worth, 18
 But if you want him to have decorated carriages,⁷⁰⁵
 Prevent them from being loaded with jugs;⁷⁰⁶

698. The hangman.

699. Apollo.

700. Here the author impertinently addresses the Muses (of line 2).

701. Venetian for Fantino. In reference to the church that bears the saint's name (to the west of the Piazza San Marco, in the Campo San Fantin and, ever since 1792, adjacent to the theater La Fenice). It was the main site of the religious order known as the Confraternity of the Hanged (Confraternita dei Picai; in Tuscan, Impiccati) or, otherwise, the Confraternity of Justice (della Giustizia) or of Good Death (della Buona Morte). Its members were wont to accompany criminals from the prisons (either in the Ducal Palace, for the older prisons, or, from the later sixteenth century, in the Prigioni Nuove) to their place of hanging (in the Piazzetta San Marco [adjacent to the same named Piazza], between the two columns) and comfort them (see below, 96v, no. 6:6, note to "Paglia Bridge," and fig. 2, nos. 6 [San Fantin], 10 [Piazzetta San Marco], 11 [Ducal Palace], 13 [Prigioni Nuove]). On prisons in Venice, see Umberto Franzoi, *Le prigioni della Repubblica di Venezia*.

702. Apollo.

703. It was Jesus who dragged the cross to the place of crucifixion (John 19:17, though in the other Gospels it was Simon) and, hanging on it, was given vinegar to drink (29–30).

704. Read, if he is a poet.

705. As in a carnival procession.

706. Of wine for celebration.

On the four corners ⁷⁰⁷	21
Each one should draw—one, two, three, four!—as much as he can, ⁷⁰⁸	
Having a mind to his hanging;	
Let each one encourage	24
[91v] His partner, crying "Right now!" and "Over there!"	
Until all four parts ⁷⁰⁹ are attached to the carriage;	
What remains is for the pieces	27
To be dragged in this and that direction, with the dogs following behind,	
Through squalid, filthy, and swampy ⁷¹⁰ places;	
That is how loutish idiots	30
Should be handled in order for the ghetto	
To be free of fears and dangers. ⁷¹¹	

50. SONNET

Risi sempre di cor quando aggirarsi

I laughed ever heartily when I saw this infamous fellow	
Make the rounds of the printing shops, ⁷¹²	
For he thought that being afflicted by hunger and hardships	3
He could thus relieve the burden of his infamy.	
I laughed when over there I saw	
This sack of manure approach the bookstores,	6

707. Of, it would seem, the carriage (lines 4, 26), on which Berardelli may have been brought to the place of execution and from which he was hoisted to the gallows. After execution, the corpse, once the populace had a chance to gaze and jeer at it, would have been lowered back onto the vehicle (27), which noisily drove away through the streets of Venice (28–29).

708. "Each one should draw" on the ropes so as to lift the criminal (it would seem) to the top of the gallows.

709. Of the body after its removal from the gallows (like the "four parts" of a butchered quadruped).

710. "Swampy," as when the streets of Venice are flooded by the lagoons.

711. Implies, again, that Berardelli practiced his thefts on various houses in the ghetto (see 90r, no. 47:9–10).

712. Berardelli did this in order to sell the manuscripts he had stolen with an end to obtaining revenues from their printing.

For he carried the despicable schemes of his larceny
 On his brow, nor could they be concealed.
 Then I said: "Despicable, unworthy man, 9
 You should not have stolen the lights from the Jew,⁷¹³
 Nor should you have undertaken, on his premises, the
 thefts that you gathered into bundles;
 May the latter become clearer once they are printed,⁷¹⁴ 12
 Hence you expend your art and cunning to no avail!"
 Which Echo repeated from within the hollow rocks.⁷¹⁵

51. SONNET

Quest'è quell' Alessandro Berardello [sic]

[92r] This is that Alessandro Berardelli
 Who, halfway down the stairs,⁷¹⁶ predicted, like a wise
 seer,
 The fate of the cooked capons⁷¹⁷ 3
 And decimated the food meant for Paluzzi.
 This is that cheater Berardelli, the one
 Who gulped down two thirds of the wine 6
 That the Jewess used to provide the evildoer
 Whom she nurtured for her own ruin.
 This is that Alessandro, archimandrite⁷¹⁸ 9
 Of traitors: with impious deceit
 He abused the pity of the Israelite woman.
 It is only right for him to win first prize 12
 Midst thieves and, as a thief, for his infamy

713. Read perhaps, you should not have detracted from his distinctions.

714. The true authorship of the writings, that is, will be revealed as soon as they are printed and examined.

715. See above, 86r, no. 37:7–8, for a similar image, namely, the braying of donkeys heard from within stone caves, in mockery as it were of thievish schemes.

716. After collecting the food for Paluzzi. The original reads "halfway on the stairs" (*a meza scala*), yet it is clear from 36r that to deliver the food to Paluzzi in Furlana's house Berardelli "descended" the stairs, hence the translation "halfway *down*" them (see also 87v, no. 40:6).

717. "The fate" was their being devoured by Berardelli before reaching Paluzzi (see next line).

718. Usually designates an abbot at the head of one or more monasteries. As an "archimandrite" of villains alias "traitors" (next line), Berardelli was, by analogy, their leader.

Ever to give rise to his works, faces, words, and
intentions.

52. SONNET IN VENETIAN

Abbaia cani, l'ocbe a far schiamazzo

- [92v] Dogs can be heard to bark and geese to cackle
Upon the arrival, in the ghetto, of the thief,
Which shows in effect that his natural disposition 3
Is toward being an impostor worthy of a noose.
All, then, have their hands on the chain;⁷¹⁹
All fill with fear in observing his goings; 6
This one says to that one: "The architect
Of deceptions is over there, yes, he is over there, the big
cheat!"
There are some who hold a heavy stick 9
And observe his movements and his haunts
In order to assault him with a severe forewarning;
But he makes off at top speed, for he does not dare look 12
At someone who purposely fixes his eyes on him
To make him turn livid and wan.

53. SONNET

Ha pensieri elevati il dipintore

- [93r] The painter has elevated thoughts
To which larceny imparts its wings
For rising to where nobody rises by himself 3
Unless he is an artful traitor.
With these thoughts he aspires to that ultimate honor
Of the trilinear triumphal arch,⁷²⁰ 6

719. Seemingly to lock their doors or secure whatever they own. The implication is that of the houses in the ghetto, Copia's was not the only one looted by Berardelli. It is no wonder that the residents were up in arms when he appeared in the precincts.

720. Refers to the gallows with poles on both sides and a transverse beam on top. A triumphal arch is often trilateral, as, for example, in Rome, the Arch of Augustus (29 B.C.E.) or that of Constantine (c. 315 C.E.). See above, 55r, no. 13:14.

Where he makes his way via lofty ladders
 To the place where the rope shortens his living hours.
 In the ghetto the thief put his thoughts into practice,⁷²¹ 9
 Unstitching, from a dress of the purest gold thread,
 A superb ornament, counter to the pragmatic
 sanctions;⁷²²
 With these thoughts the out-and-out despicable rogue
 emptied 12
 A mattress of its wool and, downright trickster that
 he was,
 Filled it with Adriatic seaweed.

54. SONNET IN VENETIAN

Sul ponte, l'altro dì, dei Baretteri

[93v] The other day, on the Baretteri Bridge,⁷²³
 I heard, in passing by, the noisy
 Sound of pincers and a chisel 3
 Plied by two fellows who, I think, were masons.
 I asked them whose tools these were;
 They answered me: "They belong to Mr. Berardelli 6
 Who, on Friday, in the ghetto, stole the paschal
 Lamb, the candles, and the candlesticks."⁷²⁴

721. By stealing from others and, in the next line (and next sonnet too), from Copia in particular.

722. Refers to the *pragmatiche*, or sumptuary laws that regulated proper dress. Berardelli would have justified his theft of the "superb ornament" (a piece of jewelry) on the grounds that the *pragmatiche* forbade any show of extravagance. See, for general studies, Diane Owen Hughes, "Sumptuary Laws and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy," and for the period up to 1500, Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy: 1200–1500*; and in relation to the Jews, Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, 104–11.

723. *Baretteri*, or hat makers (in Tuscan, *berrettai*), in reference to their various shops: the Baretteri Bridge is adjacent to the church of San Salvatore, about a three-minute walk from the Piazza San Marco (see fig. 2, no. 7).

724. If this is an authentic report, the incident would have occurred in 1625, on Friday, which, in the Hebrew calendar, is the sixteenth day of Nissan, or the second night of Passover (when the ritual of the seder, or Passover dinner, was, as on the first night, duly performed). By contrast, in 1624, the first two days of Passover fell on Saturday and Sunday and, in 1626, on Tuesday and Wednesday, which rules out the earlier and later dates. "The paschal lamb" was traditionally associated with the seder ever since its sacrifice, on Passover, in the ancient Temple, as a remnant of which, in later times, it is symbolically represented by a shank placed on the

On the jaws of the pincers was the inscription: 9
 "This is the set that, in the ghetto, pried open
 The golden belt with such great trouble;
 The trickster who fears being hanged by the executioner 12
 Sold it now to pay the rent
 For where he hides out, naked, hungry, and shoeless."⁷²⁵

55. SONNET

Si pente 'l Berardel che l'occasione

[94r] Berardelli is sorry he missed
 The opportunity while Spadina was still alive,
 Now that his thievish fate destines him 3
 To be at the mercy of a man who does not know his
 profession.⁷²⁶
 "Watch out!" so the rogue was forewarned;
 "Let yourself be hanged while he who exercises control 6
 Is alive, do not await the slaughter
 Of one who handles the ropes with uncertainty.
 The latter is not at all secure in his art: 9
 He will make the person being hanged dawdle away a
 whole hour
 And shuffle with his feet that play a game of cards.
 Ask him, at least, to attach a weight to them 12
 So that, pulling you down, it will quickly break the
 bones
 Of your neck and stay on you while you are suspended."

ceremonial "seder plate"; see Toaff, *Mangiare alla giudia*, 150. Lamb also appears to have been eaten, in various Italian Jewish households, during the Passover repast: for various lamb recipes, see Edda Servi Machlin, *The Classic Cuisine of the Italian Jews: Traditional Recipes and Menus and a Memoir of a Vanished Way of Life*, 1:157–60. Before the festivities began, the woman of the house customarily lighted the Passover "candles," set in their decorative "candlesticks." For lamb on the spit, see below, 96r, no. 59:4 (and footnote).

725. On Paluzzi and Berardelli hiding in a pit, see above, 85v, no. 36:8; and on Berardelli emerging from one, 90v, no. 48:5.

726. Spadina appears to have been replaced by a new executioner, Sforzina, less experienced (see above, 90r, no. 47:12).

56. SONNET

Il comico ladron ch'apparve in scena

- [94v] The comic thief who appeared on the stage⁷²⁷
 And is a magician, a cheat, a scullery boy, a painter,
 An inventor of libels and infamous verses, 3
 A lover, a pimp, and a thick-headed fatso all in one,
 And who barely escaped a fatal rope,
 Has become a new teacher of history,⁷²⁸ 6
 Recounting the fury of a certain bystander
 Who wanted to remove the marrow from his spine.⁷²⁹
 The same bystander was in the ghetto, a few steps below,⁷³⁰ 9
 Toward which the thief, loaded with what he had
 stolen,
 Was seen several times to be rushing.⁷³¹
 Just as the scullery boy puts on wings for his infamies, 12
 And does not spare the remains of broth,⁷³²
 So may he now surrender to the swine⁷³³ and thus
 wallow.

727. Of this drama. For "stage" theatrically construed, see above, 14r, no. 5:1, and 53r, no. 9:5.

728. He invents his own version of the happenings, to his advantage.

729. Put simply: kill him. For "bystander" the original had *pallo*, correctly *palo*, for someone who stands on guard; in loose reference here to Jacob Sulam. For "marrow" it had *model*, a garbled version of *midollo*: that the "bystander" Sulam would have "removed the marrow from his spine" is another way of saying that, were it not for Berardelli's swiftness, he would have beaten the life out of him. Seeing "the fury" in the "bystander's" eyes, Berardelli might have accused Sulam of attempted assault.

730. "Below" the place from which Berardelli made his escape.

731. See above (87v) for mention of Berardelli's running down the stairs with stolen goods (no. 40:5–7).

732. He steals everything, even soup.

733. Better, "surrender to *eating* the swine," which, because of its prohibition by Jewish dietary law (Deut. 14:8), Berardelli would certainly not have found in Copia's kitchen. So he had best do, the author is saying, with the scraps (if he can rake them up) of a non-Jewish cuisine.

57. SONNET

Ecco il poeta di carta da strazzo

- [95r] Behold the poet⁷³⁴ of scrap paper:
 He gets his ideas from picking locks;
 He bases his thievish deceits on examples 3
 No longer familiar to law courts in the Palazzo.⁷³⁵
 This particular thief has no equal among those of his kind
 In handling files, pincers, and chisels 6
 And in unlocking hinges and iron bolts;
 Brunello,⁷³⁶ by comparison, would look like a fool.
 It is he who tuned the pipes 9
 Of seven voices⁷³⁷ and ruined the Jewess,
 Not even leaving hot ashes;⁷³⁸
 It is he who worked out the time schedule for the thefts 12
 With the stinking black girl, that slut
 Upon whom he relieved his incestuous heat.

58. SONNET IN VENETIAN

Come de laro s'è fatto poeta

- [95v] How did he become a poet from being a thief,
 This painter of safe-deposit boxes?⁷³⁹
 How did he cross over, more swiftly than a courier, 3
 From cheating to poetizing?
 After this Jason⁷⁴⁰ heard that complaint

734. Berardelli.

735. "No longer familiar" because the examples are so far-fetched. Palazzo refers to the Ducal Palace, site of the Venetian tribunals (see fig. 2, no. 11).

736. Brunello was a dwarf and thief known from the legends of Charlemagne (see Bulfinch, *Bulfinch's Mythology: The Art of Fable*, 694, 718) and later Italian literature (e.g., Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* 32.33.6).

737. The seven being Berardelli, Paluzzi, the Moorish serving maid, Furlana, and her three sons (as on 9v, above).

738. Of candles; thus he grabbed the candles while they were still burning.

739. Not that Berardelli painted the safe-deposit boxes; rather he broke into them.

740. Who stole the Golden Fleece, a story that resembles the one being told in the "Notices," thus: Jason led the Argonauts, as did Berardelli the robbers; he was induced to retrieve the

In which he was denounced as a thief, 6
 He took to writing books and blurting out lies,⁷⁴¹
 Thinking he could stay hidden under their fold.
 O thief, O impostor, go away, you fool! 9
 Get your wheelbarrow of manure out of here;
 Go back to emptying ashcans, great knave,
 If, indeed, you want to relieve your hunger 12
 Before the executioner gives you a violent jerk,⁷⁴²
 Monstrous, filthy, infamous thief and ruffian.

59. SONNET

Il temerario ladro, l'arrogante

[96r] The reckless thief, the arrogant,
 Shameless cheat returns: Berardelli,
 I say, who stole, from the good Jew, the lamb 3
 Still dripping and smoking on the spit;⁷⁴³
 That grand court baron who adapted
 His gait to carrying away a cask of muscatel wine; 6
 That magician at whose whisper the iron bolts
 On all hinges opened at once;
 That one who "circumcised"⁷⁴⁴ Signora Sarra's 9
 Golden belt with a rapacious hand
 Armed, by the brave man,⁷⁴⁵ with pincers.
 But let me say to you, gallows, with your permission, 12
 That the neck of the thief ought not to get entangled,⁷⁴⁶
 For that would put an eternal blight on your propriety.

Golden Fleece by Pelias, as was Berardelli to carry out his thefts of gold (or silver, shiny coins, and more specifically Copia's golden belt) by Paluzzi; Jason was aided by Medea, as was Berardelli by the Moorish scullery maid.

741. After the Jewess "denounced" him to the authorities, he wrote the *Sareide*.

742. By pulling on the noose.

743. For the theft of the paschal lamb, see above, 93v (no. 54:7–8), and footnote thereto. A traditional recipe shared by Jews and Christians in Venice for "paschal lamb or kid . . . cooked on the skewer" can be found in Giuseppe Maffioli, *La cucina veneziana*, 375–76, except that the Jews, in preparing the stuffing, "substituted goose fat or veal (or beef) kidneys for bacon."

744. Jocosely said for "cut off."

745. Paluzzi, who devised the theft.

746. In the rope—a warning directed to the new, less accomplished executioner Sforzina.

60. SONNET IN VENETIAN

Donne che sté sugando la lessia

Ladies drying the wash, ⁷⁴⁷	
Keep a good watch over tablecloths and napkins,	
Because the one who stole the Jew's handkerchiefs	3
And saucepans has returned from Gaul; ⁷⁴⁸	
That painter who, with that woman	
From Forlì and a sect of tricksters, ⁷⁴⁹	6
Scullery maids, girls doing weaving, and basket makers, ⁷⁵⁰	
Enjoyed the spoils in company;	
That Berardelli, a servant of Numidio:	9
In the ghetto he stole Egyptian rugs	
And two bundles of silk stockings; ⁷⁵¹	
That competitor of Horace and Ovid: ⁷⁵²	12
On the stairs he ate the pullets	
That the Jewess sent his master. ⁷⁵³	

747. The implication is that Furlana was not the only laundress in the house, as suggested until now (see 9v, 10v, 17v, and, further, note to line 7 here and, below, to no. 62:1).

748. France. For imaginary "aerial" trips to the French prince, see above, 11v, 76r.

749. The woman from Forlì being Furlana and the "sect of tricksters" probably her accomplices in the thefts.

750. Which markedly expands the household staff beyond the two persons mentioned so far, viz., Furlana and the Moorish scullery maid. "Basketmakers" is in the masculine (*cestarioli*), referring perhaps to Furlana's sons, who may have woven baskets as a trade, or to those who made the basket that, filled with goodies, was absconded from Copia's house for (supposed) expedition to the French prince (10r–v, above).

751. In allusion, beyond real stockings of the Sulams, to the two bundles of Paluzzi's writings.

752. Horace, Roman poet and satirist (65–8 C.E.); Ovid, Roman poet, particularly known for his amorous verses (43 B.C.E.–17 C.E.).

753. The master being Paluzzi, to whom Berardelli was supposed to deliver them (see above, 92r, no. 51:1–4).

61. SONNET

Sen ridono le forche e le berline

- [96v] The gallows laugh, the pillories
 Exult, and a pile of torsos
 Mounts in the square;⁷⁵⁴ the ghetto 3
 Lifts the bridge to escape thefts and robberies.⁷⁵⁵
 Look! Berardelli returns
 From foreign seas;⁷⁵⁶ O you who stand at the Paglia
 Bridge,⁷⁵⁷ 6
 Have the cords ready,⁷⁵⁸
 Go meet him and cover his head.
 Of the thefts that he managed in the Levant 9
 See if you can get some sketch⁷⁵⁹
 To be filed with his illustrious deeds;
 Have him give you a drawing 12
 Of his fraudulent transactions in Zara,⁷⁶⁰ Corfu, and
 Zante⁷⁶¹ before the rope
 Squeezes his throat and puts an end to his glories.

754. After the torsos were removed from the gallows. The same "square" may be identified, from the continuation, as the Piazza San Marco (see fig. 2, where it is adjacent to no. 10, the Piazzetta San Marco).

755. "Lifts the bridge" to prevent entrance to the ghetto, lest Berardelli and his cohorts come to exercise their "thefts and robberies" upon its residents.

756. After wandering in the Levant (see line 9).

757. Ponte della Paglia (Straw Bridge), for it was at this location, alongside the wharf of Piazza San Marco (Riva degli Schiavoni), that boats delivered "straw" to the city (see fig. 2, no. 12).

758. To bind him.

759. The words "sketch" and, in line 12, "drawing" in conformity to Berardelli's *métier* as a painter.

760. Zara, i.e., Jadera, in Dalmatia.

761. Zante, one of the islands, off Greece, in the Ionian Sea.

62. SONNET

Correte, tutte bisonte fantesche

Run, all you swarthy serving girls,⁷⁶²
 Look! Berardelli is returning with a fleet;⁷⁶³
 Prepare rolls and ring cakes⁷⁶⁴ 3
 For him to feed on and take some refreshment.
 The Jew should be cautioned against a renewal of his
 intrigues,
 Once over the threshold of his house, as a picklock; 6
 He should search him to see if he has files or chisels
 Or similar destructive implements.
 If he enters the ghetto, there should always be two persons 9
 To observe the thief's steps and claws,⁷⁶⁵
 Lest he give anyone reason to weep.⁷⁶⁶
 Israel⁷⁶⁷ well knows how the thief shows his claws 12
 And with what treachery he harmed others
 And the kind and extent of damage his thefts caused.

762. On Copia's "expanded" household staff, see 96r, no. 60:7, footnote. It is not clear whether all these "swarthy serving girls" worked for Copia or, more likely, for still other families in the ghetto. The expression might even have been a synecdoche for the single Moorish lass in her employ. "Swarthy," of course, is a variant of black, about which see above, 8r, footnote appended to Granada.

763. Of ships from the Levant, as many as needed to hold his goods.

764. Specifically, *fogaccie* (i.e., *focaccine*) and *bracciatelli*. On their place in Italian Jewish cookery, see Toaff, *Mangiare alla giudia*, 93–96 (*focaccine*), 13 (*bracciatelli*, especially "bracciadelli di marzapane," with references to further literature). The verb "prepare" could be construed as either "make" or "serve" or perhaps both; thus the two or more girls worked in the kitchen to "make" food, which they then "served."

765. I.e., hands holding instruments for picking locks (see above, 90r, no. 47:1–3).

766. Here, and in line 13 as well, the implication is, again, that Berardelli's plundering in the ghetto was not limited to Copia's domicile.

767. In the sense of all the Jews in the ghetto or, more specifically, Jacob Sulam (on Jacob as Israel, see above, 58r, no. 14:8, note).

63. SONNET

Quel gran soldato, cavallar soprano

- [97r] If that great soldier, that sovereign knight,
 And that great chitarrone player,⁷⁶⁸ if that archer
 Who damaged the Jew's property 3
 With his forked, hooked, and clawed hand
 Should come back from that distant place to which he went
 In order to escape from the crowd⁷⁶⁹ that, closing ranks, 6
 Hurlled itself at him, intent on avenging
 His despicable and inhuman thievery,
 The whole people, as soon as he is sighted, 9
 Will raise a shriek and gnash their teeth,
 Saying: "Give it to him but good, that thief and nest
 of infamy!"
 "Give it to him but good!" the rivers and streams will
 resound; 12
 "Give it to him but good!" every shore of the Adriatic
 will answer;
 "Give it to him but good!" both the air and the winds
 will reiterate.

64. SONNET

Quel Berardel che già per la piantoza

- That Berardelli who used to go to the house of the Jewess,
 Morning and evening, to collect meals,
 Returns to us from the Sea of Galilee⁷⁷⁰ 3
 To which he went to change lodgings.⁷⁷¹
 There he was drawn by hunger and the hope

768. On Berardelli as one "who scrapes the chitarrone," see above, 36v.

769. Berardelli had previously been attacked by the ghetto's inhabitants and, to dodge their fury, traveled to the Levant until the storm subsided and it was safe for him, or so he thought, to return (a reading corroborated by the next sonnet, line 3).

770. To be understood not as a specific reference to a stay near the Sea of Galilee in what is now northern Israel but probably as a general term for Berardelli's wanderings in the Levant.

771. So as to flee the angry populace in the ghetto (see above, note to no. 63:6).

Of disguising that infamy 6
 So resplendent in that thievish gathering of
 conspirators who,
 With their evil and despicable tricks, promoted every
 infamous excess.
 But the cowbell of this wicked man 9
 Rings ever more clearly,⁷⁷² and if he appears
 Midst the living, you will hear whistling and cackling⁷⁷³
 Until that day which, when it comes, will wipe out the
 speech of his teeth 12
 By force of a tight noose
 And will make him, by hanging in the air, a recreation
 for the winds.

65. SONNET

Ritorna il Berardel, la primavera

[97v] Berardelli returns; behold! Spring
 Flourishes with thefts and larcenies,⁷⁷⁴
 With thievish magic tricks, with deceits, prophecies,⁷⁷⁵ 3
 And spirits that obscure the sun's orb,⁷⁷⁶
 Behold! he is on the lookout for the black girl
 Who used to sustain him on cheeses and dairy food 6
 In the morning when, at the crow of the cock,
 The colors of dawn were displayed.⁷⁷⁷

772. Wherever he goes, that is, he sounds his own alarm.

773. See above, 92v, no. 52:1, where dogs were heard to bark and geese to cackle upon his arrival in the ghetto. Now the "cackling" (and "whistling") is of the residents who boo him.

774. He "returns" to his stealing in the spring, after having desisted from it for a certain period: here "spring" reads as either the specific season or the renewal of nature, comparable to Berardelli's renewal of his own "natural" disposition to "thefts and larcenies."

775. See above, 92r, no. 51:2, for Berardelli's divination.

776. On the "spirits" with whom the black girl communicated, see above, 8r, 17v. The thieves "obscure the sun," with "sun" to be read as either the truth that they hide or Copia whom they denigrate.

777. Thus Berardelli would make his way to Copia's house in the early morning hours and after having been fed by the servant girl, presumably went on a looting spree. (The gates of the ghetto were opened at the sounding of the Marangona bell—in the great campanile in Piazza San Marco—to mark the beginning of the workday.) Berardelli's appearance in the early morning hours raises the question about when the thefts took place. From the description of "black

Look at him there, as confident as Spadina and vainly
 holding his paintbrushes,⁷⁷⁸ 9
 See how shameless and arrogant he is,
 Yet how fearfully he submits to the executioner.
 Search him for his talons; with the charcoal 12
 He keeps in his purse,⁷⁷⁹ he sketches out, like a villain,
 His schemes for the French prince.⁷⁸⁰

66. SONNET POSSIBLY BY LEON MODENA

*Il Berardel, fratell'hebrei, quel grande*⁷⁸¹

[98r] Berardelli returns, Jewish brothers;
 That is the great fellow who gutted the righteous Jew's
 strongbox
 And, with a placid brow and sneering smile, 3
 Stole from him even his underwear.
 To greet him, you should keep on hand
 A great supply of hard stones 6
 And have someone wield the knotty branch
 Of a tree stripped of its ancient acorns.⁷⁸²
 Oh, look, here he is, so arm yourselves with rocks; 9
 You there, aim them at the temples, up above, of his
 forehead;

horrors" (14v, no. 6:3) one might conclude that it was at night; yet from that passage in which Berardelli is said to have been unable "in the darkness of the night" to identify the objects he had stolen "during the day" (46r) one might conclude that they continued from the day into the night. If so, he would have sometimes spent the night in Copia's house, hiding out probably in the room of the servant girl with whom he had "illicit relations" (17v–18r).

778. The original consists of the neologisms *spadaciuto* and *pennelloso*, meaning roughly "as spadinized" and "as paintbrushed," hence the periphrastic translation above.

779. In the sense that he used it for drawing things that would add coins to his purse (see next note).

780. This last tercet is difficult: the poet seems to expand on the neologisms *spadaciuto* and *pennelloso* to say that Berardelli has neither the skills of Spadina (for his "talons" have been cropped) nor those of a true painter (for what he does "with the charcoal he keeps in his purse" is design "schemes" to make money; on the portrait he drew for the French prince, see above, 11r).

781. That the poet may have been Modena follows from his appeal (in the *capoverso*) to "Jewish brothers," as in line 11 of the sonnet "Fascia di maglia" (90r), which, too, has been tentatively ascribed to him. On Modena as possibly the author of certain "Notices," see under volume editor's introduction.

782. I.e., its ancient flowers (or erstwhile glory).

And you, stop his steps with that heavy bar;
 And you, hit him to have him tumble from the bridge,⁷⁸³ 12
 Then repeat the blow while he proceeds from salty
 waters⁷⁸⁴
 To the sulfurous waters of the black Acheron.⁷⁸⁵

67. SONNET IN VENETIAN

Sento che sona campane a martello

[98v] I hear the bell ringing the alarm;
 A fire must have broken out in some house;
 Run, porters, before it gets out of control; 3
 Let the priest give everyone a bucket of water.
 Ah, what did you say? That Berardelli arrived?⁷⁸⁶
 Oh, poor me! I cannot stay here; 6
 I hear you, son;⁷⁸⁷ I did not know the reason
 Why this and that one were running to the house.
 Look at those Jews racing in their boots⁷⁸⁸ 9
 To spread the news so that others, if they recognize him,
 Might be especially on their alert.
 He is the one who cut into the mattress 12
 And emptied it of its wool, he is the culprit;
 And to complete the trick, he filled it with seaweed.⁷⁸⁹

68. SONNET

Quel Berardel che fé i libelli infami

[99r] That Berardelli, who spread infamous libels
 After he was exposed as an infamous thief,

783. Supposedly the bridge that leads across to the ghetto.

784. Of the Adriatic.

785. A river of woe in Hades.

786. The "fire" of the first quatrain thus turns out to be a metonym for the destructive Berardelli.

787. In the previous line, "poor me" and "stay" are gendered in the feminine (*grama mi* and *romasa*): a son thus reports the "fire" to his mother.

788. By referring to "those Jews," the author defines himself as a Christian.

789. For this trick, see above, 93r, no. 53:12–14.

Returns, laden with both charming and polished verses 3
 That he drew from various fragments.⁷⁹⁰
 Similar threads of authentic fine combed wool
 Did Euterpe⁷⁹¹ never discover, I believe, 6
 Among the Greeks or in Cathay;⁷⁹² nor did Thessaly,
 To speak of Xerxes,⁷⁹³ ever have such leafy branches.
 It is only right, then, to let him stay alive 9
 Until the new executioner⁷⁹⁴ learns the art
 Of putting the devastating cable on his neck;
 In the meantime, he will be able to show, with singular
 verses, 12
 How someone who awaits the festive day of the noose
 Begets his own harsh and bitter days.

69. SONNET

Preparatevi forche a l'inventore

[99v] Prepare yourselves, gallows, for the inventor⁷⁹⁵
 Who is the epitome and measure of every filthy
 villainy;
 Prepare ropes to fix his neck 3
 Upon his frame⁷⁹⁶ so that his soul may exit from his
 bottom.⁷⁹⁷
 As a reward suited to his valor he should receive
 A greasy halter, nor should he try to stop making
 footprints 6
 In the air,⁷⁹⁸ for it will not help him; afterward crows,
 hawks, and vultures

790. Of works by others, among them Paluzzi and, presumably, Copia.

791. The Muse of lyric poetry.

792. Medieval name for China.

793. Xerxes I, king of Persia (485–465 B.C.E.), invaded Thessaly, a fertile region in northeastern Greece, where he waged the battle of Thermopylae (480; as recounted by Herodotus in his *Histories* 7.213ff.).

794. Sforzina.

795. Berardelli as an "inventor" of ruses and intrigues.

796. I.e., his bodily frame.

797. Not from his mouth (as with a dying swan; see above, no. 70:5), because the top of his body has been incapacitated, which leaves but one other orifice, in "his bottom."

798. That is, dangling his feet back and forth "in the air" (see above, 94r, no. 55:10–11).

Should appease their hunger on his hanging frame.
On the foot of the thief were hung the pincers, 9
With which he cut off the belt, and the inflated
goatskins,
Into which he emptied the barrel of muscatel.
At the foot of the scaffold the executioner engraves: 12
"These were the trophies, these the triumphs,
For honoring Berardelli at his end."

70. SONNET

Nel fin che l'altrui vite suol lo stame

[100r] At the end of others' lives Fate is wont
To cut the thread: the executioner tightened this
fellow's knot
And sent him to Pluto⁷⁹⁹ at top speed, 3
On the wings of his thievish schemes.
The swan sings while dying; the thievish poet
Yearned to do the same, but the obstacle 6
Of an inconsiderate halter so tied his throat
That his soul exited through the hole.⁸⁰⁰
The phoenix⁸⁰¹ gathers wood and spices 9
To make itself a pyre, then ignites it by facing the sun,
Only to take on new life in the flames;⁸⁰²
This unlucky one gathered wood and ropes 12
To make himself a gallows, and under a brace of
timber⁸⁰³
He finished the Ides and strangled the Kalends.⁸⁰⁴

799. On Pluto, see above, 76r.

800. In his bottom (see above, 99v, no. 69:4).

801. A mythical bird that periodically burned to death and was reborn from its ashes.

802. After the description of the phoenix in Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 10.2, or in Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 12.7.22.

803. The frame of the gallows.

804. In the Roman calendar, Ides marked the middle and Kalends the beginning of the (lunar) month. Here the poet seems to be saying that unlike the phoenix that came back to life, Berardelli, by dying, destroys the calendar by which life is measured.

71. SONNET WITH THREE-LINE ENVOI, IN VENETIAN AND
POSSIBLY BY LEON MODENA⁸⁰⁵

Corré, vui tutte che savé in che guisa

- [100v] Run, all you women⁸⁰⁶ who know how
 The ghetto was plagued by the painter⁸⁰⁷
 Whose neck the executioner has placed in a noose
 While arranging his shirt collar.
 Look at him there, wearing the emblem
 Of San Fantin,⁸⁰⁸ the priest Salvador⁸⁰⁹ heard
 That he wants to confess his guilt for the error
 Of being the portrait painter of Monsieur de Ghise,⁸¹⁰
 Of cutting off the belt, and of filching the necklace,
 Bracelets, pendants, jewels, rings,
 Silk, linen, cottons, flannels, coins, and sheets;
 He heard him say that Paula Furlana
 Lent him a hand in stealing the laundry,
 The silver censers, and the prayer candles.
 Look at him, look at him, brothers,
 See him, that puffed-up good-for-nothing over there,
 Discomfited, discredited, and displeased.

805. For the tentative ascription to Modena, because of the appeal to (Jewish) brothers (line 15), see above, 90r, no. 47:11, and 98r, no. 66:1. The author here, if not Modena, was at any rate a Jew.

806. *Tutte*, adjective in feminine, in reference (it appears) to the two earlier sonnets in Venetian "Donne che sté sugando la lessia" and "Correte, tutte bisonte fantesche" (96r-v).

807. The residents of the ghetto are being summoned to Berardelli's execution.

808. See above, 91r, no. 49:7. The emblem is probably a medal with the saint's image.

809. Venetian for Salvatore: could not be identified.

810. Italian, *monsù de Ghisa*, to be read probably as the French family name Guise. The author seems to be referring to Berardelli's "being the portrait painter [of Copia upon the request] of Monsieur de Ghise [alias Guise]." Assuming the first bracketed insertion to be correct, one may draw some sort of connection between the Frenchman to whom Berardelli (supposedly) sent Copia's portrait and the so-called Monsieur de Ghise (alias Guise), of uncertain identity. Till now, the person who requested and received the portrait was said to be a prince (see 10r–v, 11r, 37r, 77r, 97v), meaning one of two things: either this same Monsieur should rightly be called Monsieur le prince de Ghise (alias Guise); or Monsieur de Ghise (alias Guise), acting for the prince, was a (French) courier (or "aerial spirit," 11v) to whom Berardelli consigned the portrait for delivery.



2. EXCERPTS FROM NUMIDIO PALUZZI'S *RIME*, AS EDITED BY
ALESSANDRO BERARDELLI (1626)

*Thought to have disappeared, Paluzzi's Rime has recently resurfaced in two copies.*¹ Berardelli says of Copia (in the *Rime*) that her writings were all the work of Paluzzi and that when the poet took ill she stole "the larger and better part of them"—he had retained the originals—along with others of his, kept in two big packages. Though Berardelli pretends to be protecting Paluzzi's interests, one suspects that his main reason for publishing the *Rime* was to get back at Copia via malicious comments about her, from the dedication on, for having denounced him to the authorities, which led to his imprisonment and sullied his public image (he had already vented his wrath on her in the *Sareide*). He himself may have been the thief.² One point is of particular interest: Berardelli mentions that Copia (or as he would have it, Paluzzi) composed two books of *Paradossi in lode delle Donne contro gli huomini* (*Paradoxes in praise of women against men*). Till now unknown, these books are of significance for setting Copia, the presumed author, squarely in the male-female controversies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy.³

1. One in Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, shelfmark 8° 46568 (located by Carla Boccato: see "Le *Rime* postume di Numidio Paluzzi: un contributo alla barocca a Venezia nel primo Seicento," 123 n., and for its earlier history, 123–24); and another in the Beinecke Library at Yale University, shelfmark 1999 302, from which copy I myself worked (it only recently appeared in World Cat OCLC listings; Yale University acquired it in 1930 as part of a collection of books owned by the Lyonais author and bibliophile Hugues Vaganay [d. 1936]). It consists of six duodecimo folios (labeled A to F), arranged as follows: A 1r–6v (title page, dedication, foreword, errata, 4 dedicatory poems: 2 to Berardelli, 2 to Paluzzi) plus pages 1–12, with poems 1–23 (unnumbered, as are those below); B, pages 13–36, with poems 24–45; C, pages 37–60, with poems 45 (cont'n)—80; D, pages 61–84, with poems 81–111; E, pages 85–108, with poems 112–30; and F, pages 109–30 (131–32 are blank), with poems 130 (cont'n)—154 (including various poems dedicated to Paluzzi on pages 120–30). Thus the collection totals seventy-two folios, i.e., 144 pages, and 154 poems. Of the latter, the lion's share are sonnets (132) while the rest are madrigals (12), canzoni (4, in multiple stanzas), *canzonette* (2, in multiple stanzas), *ottave rime* (2, in multiple stanzas), free verse (a single example), and a scene from a tragedy. Two of the canzoni and one of the *ottave rime* are incomplete, and in the collection as a whole twenty-four lines are defective (the missing portions being marked with ellipsis points).

2. "Notices from Parnassus," 21v–22r.

3. The literature is extensive: see, for example, the synoptic work on treatises for and against women by Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, and for the argument in Hebrew writings, Dan Pagis, "Ha-pulmus ha-shiri 'al tiv ha-nashim: bav'u a li-temura ba-shira ha-ivrit be-'Italya" [The poetic controversy over the value of women: a reflection of change in Hebrew poetry in Italy].

DEDICATION BY BERARDELLI TO GIOVANNI SORANZO

[FOLIO A 2r] TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND EXCELLENT
SIGNOR GIOVANNI SORANZO, AMBASSADOR FOR THE MOST
SERENE VENETIAN REPUBLIC TO THE STATES OF HOLLAND

I present to Your Most Illustrious Excellency this little volume of *Rime* by Signor Numidio Paluzzi. Though few, they are valuable for the plaudits they won him from the principal academies of Italy and the courts of many great princes. In their sweetness and eloquence and in the [A 2v] novelty of their witty conceits displayed with ease and grace, they hardly rank second to whatever is considered first in lyric poetry. The reason they are few is that the author, with his mind set on pursuing more serious studies, always held them in little regard. Nor did he, while alive, ever consent to their being printed even though many friends urged him and many persons commanded him to see to it that they would. It so happened that his taking ill gave occasion to a Jewess to steal from him the larger and better part of them together with many other compositions in two large packages. Thus she reimbursed Paluzzi for so many works he prepared for her. His lack of concern about them would have relegated the remainder to the flames if they had not been removed from his hands.⁴

In the esteem I have always shown for the works of this marvelous [A 3r] talent, I saw, to my own detriment, however,⁵ to removing them from the jaws of oblivion in order both to brighten the name of the author and to enrich lyric poetry with this new jewel. For its greater luster I have been so bold as to place the revered name of Your Illustrious Excellency at the front. But I do not want to enter the depths of praises to you or to Your Most Illustrious House⁶ (as many are accustomed to do in their dedications [to persons]), for to say little about them⁷ does not seem right. The merits alone of Your Most Illustrious Excellency are such that outshining any hereditary achievements, you already strode, as a youth, toward the eminence of the

4. Berardelli seems to be saying that the only way to save the works remaining after Copia's pickings was for him to take over and remove them from the jurisdiction of their uncaring author before and after his death (as confirmed by the next sentence).

5. Berardelli must have been criticized for his support of Paluzzi, whose name and character were maligned in Venetian circles after his expulsion from Copia's household and even before. In the dedicatory poem to Berardelli by Gabriele Zinano, one reads, in the inscription, that he "suffered damages and dangers for his friend Signor Numidio Paluzzi while alive" (*Rime*, A 5v).

6. In the sense not of Soranzo's publishing house but of his family.

7. As happens within the limited confines of a dedication.

highest honors conferred by the Most Serene Republic.⁸ Yet your nature is so modest that you prefer having others admire their actions to hearing them sound your own praises.

This little work, I think, will not be disagreeable to you, considering that [A 3v] Your Most Illustrious Excellence has, for recreation after weightier studies and relief from graver affairs, a particular taste for fine literature as no less an adornment than your interest in philosophical and political writings. I will not entreat you to undertake its defense against slanderers—let everyone say about it what he chooses provided it be rated good by the good. Rather I entreat you to accept, in this little demonstration [of respect], the great affection of my servitude and thereby give me access to your favor, so fervently desired. I bow to you reverently. Venice, 4 August 1626.

*Your Most Illustrious Excellency's most devoted and affectionate servant,
Alessandro Berardelli*

FOREWORD BY BERARDELLI⁹

[A 4r] Kind readers:

It appears that the *Rime* and other works of Signor Numidio Paluzzi were born under the same unlucky star as the one under which he, too, was born: they suffered part of the same misfortunes that he suffered toward the end of his life. He himself was to blame for them, in always undervaluing those works he wrote for himself and in composing many verses, two books of "Paradoxes in praise of women against men," a large number of letters, and a "Manifesto on the immortality of the soul" for some female. It was she who took from him, out of two large packages, the larger and better part of his verses, his writings on politics, a tragedy, and works of which the fragments collected by me will soon be published.¹⁰ In these works one will perceive the strength [of his knowledge] in all sciences. Among the verses in the present volume you will find many that, despite his having rejected them, have been included for being his.

8. By "highest honors" Berardelli is referring to Soranzo's services for the Venetian republic, most recently, and in the same year Paluzzi's *Rime* was published, his appointment as Venetian ambassador to Holland in 1626 at the "youthful" age of twenty-six.

9. Angelico Aprosio quotes most of it (until the portion "in all sciences") in two notebooks containing the unpublished portions of what was to be part 2 of his *La biblioteca aprosiana*; specifically, Genoa, Biblioteca Durazzo, MSS A.III.4, 229 and A.III.5, 306.

10. Berardelli thus promises a second collection with various scraps from Paluzzi's writings (the passage was already signaled in the "Notices from Parnassus," 24v, above).

The words paradise, goddess, angel, divine, fate, destiny [A 4v] are capitalized and thus emphasized lest devout readers be scandalized,¹¹ even though these words are employed only for the charms of the poetry and in line with its procedures. He who is a faithful Christian, however, does not allow himself to get upset by similar frivolities.

Many errors occurred, for some of which corrections have been provided here,¹² leaving the rest to the judgment of the discerning reader.

POEM THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MEANT FOR COPIA

*Paluzzi says, in the "Notices," that he originally wrote the poem "in praise of a beautiful Jewish woman" and that, in the print, Berardelli changed the inscription to read "Beautiful Turkess."*¹³

11. Word seems to have gotten out that Paluzzi was an atheist (see "Notices," 56v, above), hence the sensitivity of "devout readers" perhaps to his seemingly presumptuous use of religious-shaded vocabulary.

12. In the following list of errata (A 5r).

13. "In lode di bella Donna hebrea" replaced by "Bella Turca" ("Notices," 21v, above).

1. SONNET

[PAGE 56] BEAUTIFUL TURKISS¹⁴

Un bel Idolo adoro, ov'è rinchiusa

I adore a beautiful idol¹⁵ enclosing
 A soul that shows false faith¹⁶ toward heaven;
 I love a beauty in which heaven can be seen 3
 To incorporate every other light except faith.¹⁷
 But if my heart errs,¹⁸ it has its own ready excuse,¹⁹
 For that face [is] a . . . it believes,²⁰ 6

14. Elsewhere in the collection (*Rime*, 11–12) Paluzzi dedicated two sonnets to the marchesa Livia Obizi Turca and a third to a certain Barbara. Here *turca* appears to be a sobriquet or maiden name and Barbara to be both a first name and, because of its meaning as an adjective, "barbarous," an analogue for "Turkish" (one wonders: are Livia and Barbara the same woman?). The two to the marchesa are headed, respectively, "To the Illustrious Signora, the Marchesa Livia Obizi Turca, compared by others to Pallas" and "On a thunderbolt that fell on the Pal[ace] of the Most Illustrious Signora, the Marchesa Turca" (or jocosely "the 'Turkish' marchesa"?); the one to Barbara, "To the noble Signora Barbara" (or jocosely "'barbarous' Signora"?). Giambattista Marino, who wrote a sonnet for the marchesa and a madrigal for Barbara (addressed as "Turca barbara"), asked in the madrigal: "Why and how is it that you / Who adorn the reign of Love, not that of Turkey, / Are called by us *turca* ('the Turkess')?" Marino, *La galeria* (1620; 4.1.19–20), ed. Marzio Pieri, 1:228. For inscriptions, the sonnet has "The Marchesa Livia Turca Pia [or jocosely a "pious 'Turkess'"] in a garment of Pallas" while the madrigal has "Turca, barbarous and pious" (or jocosely a "'barbarous' and pious 'Turkess'"). Pieri identifies the marchesa as a Ferrarese noblewoman (1:156) and Barbara as Barbara Turchi of Ferrara, the second wife of Enea Pio, governor of Reggio from 1591 until its incorporation into the states of the Church in 1598. Yet, as suggested above, they may have been the same person. The names Obizi, Livia, and Barbara are absent from Marino's letters. If anything, Paluzzi's and Marino's poems for the two strengthen Paluzzi's allegation about having written "Un bel idolo adoro" for a Jewess: nothing is said in them about "false faith" (as is the case in line 2 below); rather the marchesa and Barbara are praised for their distinctions, more specifically, the marchesa for her beauty, courage, and honor, and Barbara for her beauty, renown, and merits.

15. Both an image revered in worship and a false god, which, in the present case, would apply indifferently to a Turkish or Jewish infidel.

16. As an infidel.

17. Read as "true faith," viz., Christianity. Fonseca-Wollheim rightly noted the resemblance of this passage to one in the poem that Cebà wrote in "reaction to the embroidery Copia had sent him, in that faith is the only virtue lacking among her accomplishments" ("Faith and Fame in the Life and Works of the Venetian Jewish Poet Sara Copio Sullam," 147); see 1.1/L8.23, no. 7, stanza 9:49–54.

18. In loving an infidel.

19. Namely (it would seem), that it is enough to enjoy love on earth (*carpe diem*).

20. Four syllables are missing to complete the line (*Poi che quel volto un . . . ci crede*). "It" (*ei* = *egli*) is in reference to "my heart," as is the "it" in the next line. The poet may have written something to the effect that a beautiful face can shake the religious foundations on which a heart rests.

And it well knows that in the empyreal residence
 Only Love reigns and faith is excluded from it.²¹
 How can that angelic appearance, it²² says, 9
 Be divided from God? oh, well do I discern
 That faith opens it, one day, to the . . . ,²³
 For heaven did not establish it²⁴ for eternal weeping: 12
 If such a beautiful face could be there,
 A residence of joy penetrates Inferno as well.

SONNET "TO THE HUMAN SOUL" PRINTED AS COPIA'S IN HER
 MANIFESTO AND AS PALUZZI'S IN HIS RIME

2

[83] *To the human soul*²⁵

*O di vita mortal forma divina,
 E dell'opre di Dio meta sublime,
 In cui sé stesso e 'l suo potere imprime 3
 E di quant'ei credè ti fé Reina,
 Mente che l'huomo informi, in cui confina
 L'immortal col mortale, e tra le prime 6
 Essenze hai sede nel volar da l'ime
 Parti, là dove il Cielo a te s'inchina:
 Stupido pur d'investigarti hor cessi 9
 Pensier che versa tra caduchi oggetti,
 Chè sol ti scopri all'hor ch'a Dio t'appressi;
 E per far paghi qui gli humani petti, 12*

21. An unwonted conceit: namely, in heaven religion plays no role, for what counts there is love.

22. Again in reference to "my heart."

23. Four syllables are missing to complete the line (*Che la fé gl'apre un giorno il . . .*).

24. *Nol prescisse*, with the *lo* of *nol* (= *non lo*) in reference, again, to "my heart."

25. This version differs only in a single word from the one in the *Manifesto* 2.4.D 2r: *imprime*, "impresses," in the *Rime* as against *esprime*, "expresses," in the *Manifesto* (line 3). Aretino spoke, in the "Notices" (3.1.50r), of Copia's having prepared two versions, "of which the discarded one, elegant in its especially beautiful conceits, was perhaps better than the one that [Paluzzi] approved" for printing in the *Manifesto*. Berardelli, according to him, retained a copy of the "better" one, which, if it did exist in all its "beautiful" variants, was obviously not the one printed in the *Rime*. For editorial notes, see under *Manifesto* 2.4.D 2r.

*Basti saper che son gli Angeli stessi
A custodirti et a servirti eletti.*

O divine form of mortal life,
And sublime end of God's works,
In which He impresses Himself and His power 3
And made you a queen of as much as He created;
Mind that informs man, in whom the immortal
Adjoins the mortal, and that resides amidst the prime 6
Essences in flying from the deepest
Parts where heaven bends down to you:
May stupid thought that lives amidst ephemeral objects 9
Desist now from investigating you, however,
For you only uncover yourself only when you
approach God;
And for human breasts to be made content here, 12
May it be enough to know that "the angels themselves
Are appointed to guard and serve you."

INSCRIPTIONS TO VARIOUS WORKS

Two Canzoni

[72] Of this canzone written in praise of the lord duke of Savoy and the following one written upon the death of Henri IV, king of France, hardly any fragments could be found beyond these, for the aforementioned Jewess stole the complete originals.²⁶

A Scene from a Tragedy

[98] Among the other writings removed from the author [by the Jewess] was a tragedy, little short of being completed. This scene is all that remains of it.²⁷

26. Of the first canzone (72–74), only stanzas 1–3 are preserved, each of them twenty lines long (with "manca il resto," or the rest is missing, marked at the end), and of the second (75–80), only stanzas 1–6, each of them nineteen lines long, though the sixth lacks eight (here, too, "manca il resto" is marked at the end).

27. The scene (beginning "Sorgi, deh sorgi homai tu, che nemica") comprises 117 lines (largely hendecasyllabic) in free verse; *Rime*, 98–101.

*End of Collection: Twenty Sonnets and One Madrigal, Most of Them*²⁸
Dedicated to Paluzzi

[120] Of the considerable number of sonnets by diverse persons who wrote them to the author,²⁹ only these few could be found. The larger part of them remain unidentified,³⁰ for in his having placed them together with his responses they were removed from him, along with other responses, by that perfidious Jewess.



3. LETTER BY ANGELICO APROSIO (UNDATED, THOUGH BASED
ON A REPORT FROM 1637)

The letter was sent to Prospero Mandosio (d. 1709), who asked Aprosio for information about Numidio Paluzzi for his forthcoming bibliography of Roman literature (*Bibliotheca romana seu romanorum scriptorum centuriae*). Mandosio copied out the relevant part for inclusion in volume 2 (item no. 50). The informant based his account, as noted toward the end of the letter, on what he had heard from Giovanni Maria Vanti (1584–1641) during a meeting in Treviso on 20 July 1637. Undated, the letter was obviously drafted sometime before Aprosio's death in 1681. Except for minor details, it corroborates what we already know from the "Notices from Parnassus." Yet the author, after Vanti, takes a negative view of Copia ("she was not that smart" as to be able to do her own writing). Nor are we surprised that he does, for Vanti was a bosom friend of Copia's adversary, Baldassare Bonifaccio.¹ The author, again after Vanti, puts a new slant on the story of the French noble who visited Copia, saying that she became infatuated with him.²

Title of the Notice on Paluzzi (originally in Latin)

[2:112]³ Numidio Paluzzi, a master of poetry in particular and also versed in all kinds of writings. The notice on Numidio that I am about to present

28. Seventeen in all among the twenty-one at the end of the collection (*Rime*, 120–30).

29. Either in his praises or in response to his poems.

30. Not exact: only five. Twelve of the twenty-one poems are identified for their authors: one each by Claudio Achillini, Gio. Battista Bellaver, Pietro Petracchi, Giacomo Litegati, Sebastiano Adrantonelli, Gaspare Bonifacio, and Pietro Michiele; two by Francesco Paoli, and three by Romolo Paradiso. Paluzzi appears to have composed the remaining nine. Six of the twenty-one are *risposte*.

1. See Giovanni Maria Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia, cioè Notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani*, 2:1637 ("strettissimi amici"). They published sonnets, moreover, in a joint collection (*Castore e Polluce*, 1618; 200 by Vanti, 176 by Bonifaccio).

2. See, for comparison, 3.1.10r–11v.

3. Source: Prospero Mandosio, *Bibliotheca romana seu romanorum scriptorum centuriae*, 2 vols. (1682–92), 2:112–15.

to you, my reader, is one that I think you will find agreeable. I received it from Angelico Apro시오, originally from Ventimiglia⁴ and a member of the Augustinian order. He is well known for his publications. In order for me to present the notice to you clearly, I shall write out here part of the same Angelico's autograph letter.

The Notice Itself (originally in Italian)

. . . Paluzzi . . . was more richly endowed with the gifts of nature than with the goods of fortune, in confirmation of that aphorism *Ubi plurimum de ingenio, ibi minimum de fortuna* [Where there is the most of talent, there is the least of fortune].⁵ He abandoned his birthplace with the thought of changing cities, believing that outside of Rome he might find more benign skies. Yet as a learned person he ought to have remembered what the one from Venusia⁶ wrote: *Caelum non animum mutant, qui &c. [trans mare currunt]* [The skies, not their heart, do those change who (run across the sea)].⁷ Accompanied by the painter Alessandro Berardelli, likewise Roman, he surveyed the most celebrated cities of Tuscany and Emilia, [2:113] settling down in Venice where fortune did not begrudge him its favors. Had he known how to use them, they would not have lessened.

In the ghetto of that city there lived Simon⁸ Copia, rich beyond other Jews. His wife Ricca⁹ bore him offspring of the female sex, that is, two girls, Sarra and Stella, both of them intelligent. Sarra was particularly so, for she delighted in reading books of poetry and [on] various odd subjects.

To please her, her father allowed an academy to be opened in his house.¹⁰ There men of letters convened with the end of hearing her speak, coming not only from nearby but also from Treviso, Padua, Vicenza, and even farther places.

Paluzzi made friends with her. Realizing she could not live up to the widespread rumors of her reputation for being gifted, she recognized her need for help. Paluzzi, to her mind, was cut out for giving it, for she knew that he was in hard circumstances and that with persons of his kind not

4. On the western tip of the region of Liguria.

5. I have not been able to trace it.

6. On the border of Apulia: Horace, to whom Apro시오 is referring, was born there in 65 B.C.E.

7. *Epistles* 1.11.27.

8. Source has Simone.

9. Apro시오 jocosely sets Ricca, the wife, in apposition to the "rich" (*ricco*) husband Simon.

10. It is doubtful that the academy was opened in her father's house; rather it was probably in her husband's (see under volume editor's introduction).

much effort is required—he who is in danger of drowning would cling to a sword without fear of cutting his hands.¹¹ He offered her his services, and since she lacked for nothing, she not only paid him the rent for his lodgings but also supplied him with money for securing food and clothing, and in such *copiousness*¹² that coins remained for him to spend on other things.

In 1615 Ansaldo Cebà, a Genoese noble, published his poem about Esther. Not many years passed before it fell into the hands of Sarra. This poem made her wish to become friends with him and she achieved her purpose, as can be seen in a volume of his letters printed in Genoa, 1623. There one learns of the presents they exchanged and also of their portraits. Sonnets and other poetic works were yet to follow. It fell to Paluzzi to play the part of the Jewess, nor could he allow himself to remain idle. I, who knew her,¹³ know that she was not that smart after all.

The academy offered an opportunity to discuss the immortality of the soul. It appeared to Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio, who, at the time of the Holy Pope Innocent X, was elevated from archdeacon of Treviso to bishop of Giustinopoli,¹⁴ that Sarra tended to believe in the mortality of the soul. Hence he published, in 1621, the book entitled “A Discourse, by Baldassare Bonifaccio, on the Immortality of the Soul.” [2:114] He directed it to the Copia woman, who, offended by it, published, to counter it, a “Manifesto by Sarra Copia Sulam the Jewess, who therein refutes and reproves Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio’s false accusation that she denies the immortality of the soul” (printed in Venice, in the same year). The “Discourse” comprises eight folios, the “Manifesto” three,¹⁵ which so noticeably offended Bonifaccio as for him to wish he had abstained from reading it. It was not the work of Sarra, however, but that of Paluzzi who masqueraded as a Jewess.

Yet Numidio was not content with what fortune brought his way. Abusing the kindness of the Jewess, he took to behaving discourteously toward

11. Possibly a quotation, though I have not been able to trace it.

12. In *tal copia*, the usual pun on Sarra’s name.

13. It is not clear whether Aprosio “knew her” from a visit to her “academy,” sometime in the early 1620s, when he would have been in his teens (though he does not seem to have been in Venice until 1637: see Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d’Italia*, 2:888) or from hearsay, namely, what he was told by Vanti (see end of letter), which seems more likely. Hence the translation above might be reworded: “I, who knew of her,” etc.

14. Innocent X was pope from 1644 to 1655, and Bonifaccio became bishop of Giustinopoli, now Capodistria (near Trieste), in 1653.

15. Folio here refers to a large sheet folded twice (in quarto); thus, according to Aprosio, the eight folios (of the *Discorso*) are sixty-four pages, and the three (of the *Manifesto*) are twenty-four pages (Aprosio’s estimate bears out, with some minor discrepancies, after checking the books themselves).

her. In the meantime, a person of rank, a Frenchman, turned up in Venice, and drawn by her name, he, too, made his way to her house. He was handsome in appearance; hence she could say, despite her being married to Jacob Sulam, *Ut vidi, ut perij* [When I saw you, I perished].¹⁶ The Frenchman did not stay long in Venice and perhaps did not give any thought to her. Rather, in a hurry, he returned to France. When Paluzzi noticed the love of hers, he thought he had found the way to poke fun at her. So it was that after having another Frenchman write a letter to Sarra in the real one's name, he kept reminding her of the latter's feelings of love said to have been kept secret;¹⁷ of his request for a kind response; [of his suggestion] that in order for him to receive it she ought to place it in the hands of the one who brought her his own; and [of his assurance] that in fewer than twenty-four hours it would reach Paris¹⁸—the deliverer had powers of which the Frenchman had already availed himself.¹⁹ It was not difficult to make her believe all that, for the Jews did not desist from giving ear and credit to the powers of magic. That is the way letters and their responses were dispatched in Venice.

Since many, though, were involved in the affair, it was only a few months before Sarra became informed of it, and since she barely needed the work of Paluzzi now that Cebà, with whom she had wanted to remain in good standing, had passed on to a better life, she expelled him from her household, depriving him of all assistance.

Without any thought to the future, Paluzzi recklessly continued to squander everything the Jewess had given him. In the end he reduced himself to such extreme misery that after falling ill, and paying his debt to nature,²⁰ there was nothing left to guarantee the parish priest of a reward for giving him burial.²¹

When the Jewess learned what state Numidio was in and how close he was to the end of his [2:115] life, she thought that if she did not contrive to get his writings, her little knowledge was about to be revealed. She found a way to remove them from the hands of the landlady²² by slipping her a

16. Vergil, *Eclogues* 8.42.

17. "Said" in the letter "to have been kept secret" during his visit to her.

18. In the "Notices from Parnassus" the transmission is said to have taken three hours (above, 3.1.11v).

19. For sending his original letter.

20. By dying.

21. After the rites were performed in the church of San Marcuola (see obituary notice under 3.1.7v, note).

22. The question is whether Paluzzi, after having been expelled by Copia, continued to live in Furlana's house or had lodgings elsewhere (still another question is how he would have been

few coins, and she went to take them herself, doing so when Berardelli, who would have prevented her, was out of the house. But she was not so completely successful as not to leave behind some few compositions, which, assembled by Berardelli as a little volume of six folios,²³ were published under the following title: "The *Rime* [poems] of Signor Numidio Paluzzi, [dedicated] to the Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Signor Giovanni Soranzo" (Venice: Ciotti, 1626).

Berardelli underwent losses and endured risks on his [Paluzzi's] behalf, as can be seen in a sonnet with the inscription: "To Signor Alessandro Berardelli, who, beyond suffering damages and dangers for his friend Signor Numidio Paluzzi," etc.²⁴

I got these notices in Treviso, on the twentieth of July, 1637, . . . from Signor Don Giovanni Maria Vanti, a parish priest in Dossone, a village not far removed from these parts . . .

able to pay for them). Is the statement "she kept him there [in Furlana's house] for two consecutive years" ("Notices," 3.1.8r, above) to be interpreted as "paid the rent" for two years, after which she did not? See, for more detail, "Notices," 7v, in the same note mentioned above.

23. In duodecimo, that is, with each of the six folded over to constitute a set of twelve, hence seventy-two folios (or 144 pages). For details on the setup of the volume and its contents, see 3.2 (under footnote to introductory blurb).

24. Paluzzi, *Rime*, A 5v (sonnet by Gabriele Zinano). See also "Notices," 3.2.20v–21r, above.



IV MISCELLANEA

If you aspire to escape the hand of death
With the favor of the Muses, I do too.

Sarra Copia, poem to Gabriele Zinano

1. DEDICATION TO SARRA COPIA FROM LEON MODENA'S PLAY *ESTER* (1619)

[Page 3]¹ To the very illustrious Signora, and my most respected patroness, Signora Sarra Copio Sullam [*sic*],² the Jewess:

Your Ladyship deemed me worthy of her honorable and genteel conversation, which, because of her singular qualities and many virtues³ and because of her considerable knowledge in advance of both her years and her sex, delights and attracts any notably intelligent person, especially since she is regarded as one who relishes, understands, and practices Italian poetry.

On several occasions did we fall into a discussion of that most unusual poem [4] *Regina* [*sic*] *Ester* [Queen Esther] by the illustrious Genoese Signor Ansaldo Cebà.⁴ I have noticed that Your Ladyship is exceedingly attached to it and that she never appears to tire of commending and praising it for reasons that I, moreover, second and confirm, even though her judgments

1. Source: *L'Ester, tragedia tratta dalla Sacra Scrittura* [Esther, a tragedy drawn from Sacred Scriptures], after a play by Salomon Usque (see below); printed in Venice by Giacomo Sarzina in 1619 (for the author's portrait, see fig. 11).

2. *Copio Sullam*, thus spelled; yet Modena writes *Copia* (in Hebrew) in the epitaph as engraved on her tombstone (4.3 below). For the Hebrew spelling of *Sullam* versus *Sulam*, see the note to the name Jacob Sullam in the inscription to the same epitaph.

3. In the sense of "distinctions."

4. There spelled *Reina Esther*.

of it have no need of approval, nor can I, being deaf,⁵ give an account of its harmonic consonances. Truth to tell, it reveals a heroic style,⁶ delightful inventions, *copious* clever thoughts,⁷ plausible occurrences, justifiable digressions, an orderly sequence, a smooth presentation, numerous verse types, proper comparisons, figured speech, metaphors, in short, all those particulars one would expect to make a poem outstanding [5] and impressive, as it is indeed.

I was about to publish that same story, but now in the mode of a tragedy, arranged, revised, and almost totally refurbished by me (allowing for certain exceptions that I both explain and regretfully acknowledge in the following letter to the readers).⁸ It therefore seemed right to dedicate it to

5. Modena was not deaf; rather he feigns insensitivity.

6. As customary in epic.

7. Originally *i concetti in copia* (with *copia* the usual pun on Sarra's maiden name).

8. "The author to his benign readers" (on pages 8–11). His *Ester* is based on an earlier play by Salomon Usque, who prepared it in assistance with Modena's mother's uncle, Lazaro di Gratian Levi. The "original" was first performed in 1559, then again in 1592. When Modena learned that an acting company was planning a third performance for 1613, he advised against it because, to his mind, the play was outmoded in its expression. The relevant portion is as follows (9–10): "I told them [the members of the acting company] that in the years that followed [its revival in 1592] the style of Italian poetry, in whatever genre you consider, had noticeably advanced, so that this one [in Usque's play] was at present very low and without that gravity, smoothness, and pithiness required for tragedies and for heroic and especially sacred topics. Their response was that I . . . could remedy this by fixing some of its insipid verses and improving it. I could not refuse them and did my best to fulfill the request: . . . I revised and completely renewed it. . . . It seemed right, though, to leave you something of its original form in order for it to be recognized in a certain way as such, and faced with the light weight of those older verses, I sensed, indeed I know, that my expression, though low, turned out to be even lower. Moreover, I attempted, in rewriting the story, to employ the phrasing and vocabulary of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, the style did not rise as much as it perhaps should, which may have been caused, further, by my having interpolated some rabbinical glosses (called *midrashim* by the Jews) for the greater enjoyment of the learned," etc. The play as revised did not seem to spur the actors to a third performance, so Modena decided that instead of leaving it in a drawer he would have it printed "for the delight of whoever might want to read it and the pleasure of whoever might want to recite it, in being something suited to everyone as a pleasant work and a sacred story" (10). On Usque's play and Modena's reworking of it, see Gabriella Zavan, *Gli ebrei, i marrani e la figura di Salomon Usque*, 120–23. For Angelo Alatrini's pastoral fable *I trionfi* (1575) that Modena adapted for publication in 1611, see Robert C. Melzi, "Una commedia rinascimentale di Angelo Alatrini: *I trionfi*." Its preface (iii–iv, quoted by Melzi, *ibid.*, 353–54), compared with *Ester's*, is no less revealing of Modena's ideas on old and new, though here Modena was not fazed by Alatrini's "outmoded" language. "I took care," Modena explained (to the "benign readers"), "to recopy [the play] and put it in as good a shape as I knew how and see to its printing. . . . Should it perhaps fall short of other similar ones that people read and perform today with much more gusto, one should remember that it was composed by [Alatrini] more than thirty-six years ago when our playwrights could have learned something from him, nor did he have them to imitate. . . . If some verse or expression in the poetry . . . appears inap-



Figure 11. Leon Modena as portrayed on the lower part of the title page to his *Historia de' riti hebraici* (1638).

Your Ladyship and make her a present of it in order to show her some sign of how much I respect and revere her. Just as I recognize her worth and her virtue, so I would like them to be recognized by the world at large. I reassure myself that she will not be displeased by something that, in the similarity of its name and story, does not differ from the above-mentioned poem that, I know, she so likes and enjoys.

[6] Our ancient mothers Sarah [*spelled* Sarra] and Esther resemble each other:⁹ the former generated our race¹⁰ and the latter regenerated it by saving it from death;¹¹ the name Sarah [*spelled* Sarra] means princess,¹² and Esther was herself a queen; the former was holy and virtuous, the latter righteous and honest. This being so, there is no doubt that Your Ladyship seeks to imitate the two women in kindness, virtue, and magnanimity. May it please the Lord to grant her unending prosperity and well-being in order for her to

propriate to you, do not blame him, blame me, for I was the one who transcribed it and may by chance have altered some small verse or word" (for details of Modena's adaptation, see Melzi, *ibid.*, 347–48, 351–52). Mauro Sarnelli quotes a portion of the preface within the broader context of his "Presenze della cultura ebraica nella Venezia del primo Seicento," 167 n. 5.

9. For the adjacency of biblical Sarah and Esther, see Cebà's sonnet "Mosse l'antica Esther" (1.1/L1.3–4, above).

10. Sarah, wife of Abraham, first of the patriarchs and father of the Hebrew people (on "generation," see Gen. 12:2–3, 28:3–4, etc.).

11. See Esther 3:6, 13 (Haman resolved to put all Jews to death); 7:3–4 (Esther pleads with her husband, King Ahasuerus, to save them from destruction); and 8:8ff., 9:22 (the Jews were spared).

12. In Hebrew, *sara*, from the verb *la-sor* or *li-seror*, "to rule" (see above, 2.3.58 and, below, 4.3, no. 1:3, note).



2. TWO POEMS BY GABRIELE ZINANO AND A POEM BY SARRA COPIA IN RESPONSE (PROBABLY 1622–23)

The trio of poems was printed in *Gabriele Zinano, Rime diverse* [Various poems] (Venice: Evangelista Deuchino, 1627).¹ Of the two by Zinano, the first is about *Copia* and was directed to a visitor to her salon. His second poem is about the immortality of fame, as exemplified by Ansaldo Cebà. It seems to have been written shortly after Cebà's death in 1622, at which time the author is likely to have asked *Copia* to compose a properly eulogistic poem in response. The arrangement of the three in his *Rime diverse* was, as acknowledged in the title, according to the different periods in which the contents of the collection originated.²

1. SONNET

[24] TO SIGNOR GERONIMO BEMBO, A VENETIAN GENTLEMAN,
WHO HAPPENED TO VISIT A YOUNG JEWESS CALLED SIGNORA
SARRA COPIA WHEN THE AUTHOR [ZINANO] WAS ALSO THERE³

La bella di Giesù nemica, e nostra

The beautiful enemy of Jesus and ours
Both hurls the fierce voices and shoots the arrows

yet he hopes that *Copia* will not refuse it, if only for having a common name. In medieval art the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, after Isa. 11:2 ("The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and God-fearingness"), are often represented by seven doves, as in the Jesse window in the west facade of the cathedral of Chartres.

1. Sixty-six poems in all (on pages 9–52). The collection links with the Codex Giulia Solinga ("Notices from Parnassus") through the figures of Alessandro Berardelli, Numidio Paluzzi, Giulio Strozzi, and Marco Trevisan. In the sonnet "Corse l'Asia Alessandro" (47–48), Berardelli, having "suffered injuries and perils and other troubles, with which life is laden" (lines 9–10), presumably humiliation (after *Copia* denounced him and Paluzzi to the authorities) and bereavement (after Paluzzi died), is enjoined to "remove" his friend "from the hand of Death" by immortalizing him ("placing his name in the Ark of Eternity"); the sonnet was published earlier in Paluzzi's *Rime*, A 5v (see, for reference, under 3.1.20v, above). While Strozzi betrayed Trevisan in the Codex Solinga, he is now described, in the sonnet "Tra forme che intagliar" (33), as "collecting verses in honor of [the singer] Signora Adriana Basile." Trevisan is the recipient of six poems (49–52) and elsewhere, in the sonnet "Circa ove nasce il Sole" (34), is lauded for "his remarkable and heroic friendship" with Nicolò Barbarigo (so different, as was remarked in the note to Trevisan's name in the title of the dedication to the codex [3.1.1r, above], from Strozzi's conception of camaraderie). On Zinano, see the note to 3.1.20v, above.

2. "Collocate secondo l'ordine de' tempi, ne' quali si sono composte," etc.

3. I have not been able to identify Geronimo Bembo.

Of her graces within a proud citadel,⁴ 3
 Wounding those whom she less intends to wound even
 more;
 Often she shows her cheeks of flames⁵
 And with lighted corals⁶ arms her mouth, 6
 Whence everyone overflows with sweet desire:
 Lovers, what more hope could you have?
 But is there any? No strength at all could withstand that
 heart 9
 Which, under the shadow of the unconquered cross,
 Should hope for help from the wounds of God;
 [25] Oh, if she were to turn her eyes and steps toward them 12
 [the wounds],
 She would not say then, with a humble voice:
 "Enemies, I am conquered, yours is the trophy."⁷

2. SONNET

[46] TO A JEWESS CALLED SIGNORA SARRA COPIA WHO LOVED
 THE VIRTUES OF SIGNOR ANSELMO [SIC]⁸ CEBÀ THOUGH HE IS
 DEAD

*Sarra, mort'è il tuo bene e morto il mio,
 Abi non son morti—vivi andaro al Cielo,
 Par ver morir, ma fu squarciar il velo 3
 Che gli impedia la via di gire a Dio.*
*E spero ivi salir, come ho desio
 Vittoria mia a goder con dolce zelo, 6
 S'offeso ho Dio con troppo ardore, o Zelo,
 Ei può perdonar più che peccar'io.*
*La Bontà che per noi lo spinse a morte 9
 Sempre aperse le porte a viva fede
 Del Ciel: qual maggior vo desio e speranza?*

4. Her protective salon.

5. On "the beautiful colors of her cheek" as recalling those of biblical Sarah, see under Cebà's sonnet "Mosse l'antica Esther," lines 6–8 (1.1/L1.4, above).

6. Her rosy lips. See, for their "red tints," Cebà's canzone "O se, come al vivo espressi," line 24 (1.1/L8.22, above).

7. The implication is: rather she would say, with a triumphant voice, "Friends," etc.

8. Why the author, here and in the following poem, garbled Ansaldo to Anselmo is not clear.

- Ma se questa Bontà chiude le porte* 12
A quel superbo cor ch'a lei non crede,
Dove senza il tuo Anselmo havrai tu stanza?
- Sarra, dead is your joy and dead is mine;
 Oh, they are *not* dead—alive they went to heaven,
 Seeming truly to die, but it was for rending the veil 3
 That blocked the way for them to go to God.
- I hope to ascend to that place, for I have a desire
 To enjoy my victory⁹ with sweet zeal; 6
 If I offended God with too much ardor or Zeal,¹⁰
 He can pardon more than I can sin.
- The goodness that, for our sake, drove him to death 9
 Always opened the doors to the live faith
 Of heaven: what better desire and hope could I want?
- But if this goodness closes the doors 12
 To that proud heart that does not believe in it [the
 live faith],
 Where will you take up residence without your
 Anselmo [sic]?

3. SONNET

[47] THE ABOVE WOMAN'S RESPONSE¹¹

Amai, Zinan, qui il ben d'ogni ben mio,
Ma l'amo or più, ch'è sta beato in Cielo,

9. Over death by being immortalized in heaven.

10. The use of *zelo* as the end word of lines 6 and 7 is suspect. Copia, who, with but three exceptions, reproduces the end words of Zinano's *proposta* in her response, writes *gelo* ("ice" or "cold") instead (for the other exceptions see below). Could *gelo* be intended here ("If I have offended God with too much ardor or ice")?

11. Employs not only the end-rhymes of Zinano's sonnet but also their end words (with three exceptions: *zelo*, line 7, becomes *gelo*; *fede*, line 10, becomes *piede*; *crede*, line 13, becomes *erede*). Copia is not the only Jew to appear in the collection. Zinano dedicates a sonnet to a certain "Signor Giacob Uriel [*recte* Uziel], who used to sing [praises of] the Most Serene David" (Uziel may have composed the Spanish sonnet "Señor Ansaldo, iuro al Soberano" in Cebà's letter 1 [1.1.4, no. 3]; see there, note to inscription, for biographical details and his epic poem on King David). The sonnet ("Canti l'Eroe, ch'or co'l valor de l'armi") translates as follows: "You sing of the hero [David] who, on the one hand, with strength of arms, / Taming the fierce, went on to destroy the wicked, / And, on the other, with his lyre and pious poems, / Made temples sound the glories of God. / Great and beyond all temerity this one [hero] of yours appears to me, / But

Perché spogliato del terren suo velo 3
Fatt'è più bel ne la beltà di Dio.
E crescendo l'amor, cresce il desio
Di gire a lui con più devoto zelo, 6
Ché dove non può entrar caldo né gelo,
Se sperì tu d'andar, no'l despero io.
E se tu aspiri a uscir di man di morte 9
Co'l favor de le Muse, io porre il piede
Con maggior forza ne l'eterna stanza,
Ché s'apre la virtù del Ciel le porte, 12
De le virtù d'Anselmo io fatta erede,
D'andarlo ivi a goder prendo speranza.

Here,¹² Zinano,¹³ I loved the joy of my every joy,¹⁴
 But now I love him more, for blessed in heaven,
 And divested of his earthly veil, 3
 He has become more beautiful in the beauty of God.¹⁵
 As my love increases, so does the desire
 To go to him with more devoted fervor, 6
 For if you have hope of going to where¹⁶
 Neither heat nor cold can enter,¹⁷ I will not lose mine.
 If you aspire to escape the hand of death 9
 With the favor of the Muses,¹⁸ I do too, putting my foot
 In the eternal room with greater force,

continue [to write your epic poem about him], for if you complete the project, / You will show how [David by his actions in] the world, whether in songs or in arms, / Can reach heaven and conquer times. / Do not only sing about the way it [the world in its temptations] might conquer heroes, / Strong and gigantic, yet do not let your pen refuse / To count him [David] among other lovers; / He sinned, but it happens that in sinning you show us / This great king, with his devout laments, / As worthy of heaven midst unworthy errors."

12. On earth, as opposed to "in heaven" (line 2).

13. As said in the introductory note, Zinano appears to have asked Copia to respond to his sonnet, which she did, addressing him three times, first by name (abbreviated to Zinan to keep within the hendecasyllable), then by "you" (lines 8 [in translation 7], 9).

14. Cebà, by metaphor "the joy" of Copia's life.

15. Cebà's death rid him of his earthly form, to replace it with his works, which not only assure his fame in times to come but appear "more beautiful," for they are judged by a divine standard.

16. Namely, "the eternal room" (line 11), or heaven (lines 2, 12), as the Hall of Fame.

17. Fame resists seasonal changes: its duration is eternal.

18. When inspired by the Muses, the poet wins immortality.

For if *virtù*¹⁹ opens the doors of heaven, 12
 I, having inherited the *virtù* of Anselmo [sic],²⁰
 Take hope in going there to rejoice.²¹



3. LEON MODENA'S EPITAPH FOR SARRA COPIA'S TOMBSTONE

The tombstone (see fig. 12) is in the Jewish cemetery on the Lido, Venice.¹ Copia's Hebrew date of decease (5 Adar 5401), at the end of the epitaph, matches the civil date 15 February 1641 recorded in two necrologies for 1641.² The epitaph, in Hebrew, has four quatrains³ framed by an inscription and a close.

19. In the double sense of "goodness" (or *bontà* in the initial sonnet by Zinano, lines 9, 12) and "skills" (in composing poetry: see line 10 here, in reference to the Muses).

20. She sees herself as a disciple of Cebà, in both his "goodness" and his poetic "skills."

21. Over my own victory: see Zinano's sonnet, line 6.

1. Modern source for the epitaph: Abraham Berliner, comp., *Luhot avanim* [Tombstone inscriptions]: *Hebräische Grabschriften in Italien, I: 200 Inschriften aus Venedig, 16. u. 17. Jahrhundert*, 80–81 (no. 159), after a manuscript inventory by Moisè Soave (New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, MS 3551 [*Luhot avanim*], 95v, item no. 353); see also Aldo Luzzatto, ed., *La Comunità Ebraica di Venezia e il suo antico cimitero*, 1:246–50. The tombstone displays the arms of the two families: a ladder (in Hebrew, *sulam*), on the right side, for Sulam; a scorpion, on the left, for Copia (as playfully suggested by removing *s* and *r* from *scorpio*, or Copio). See the detail—to all minds, an extraordinary piece of biographical evidence—in figure 1; and for the ladder as a device for the Sulam family, Cecil Roth, "Stemmi di famiglie ebraiche italiane," 183. The scorpion appears not only on Sarra's headstone but also on her mother Ricca's; *La Comunità Ebraica di Venezia*, 1:418. An attractive, illustrated overview of the Jewish cemetery on the Lido may be found in Roberta Curiel and Bernard Dov Cooperman, *The Ghetto of Venice*, 148–55.

2. Venice, Archivio di Stato, Provveditori alla Sanità, Necrologie ebrei, register 996, for the year 1641 ("Adi 15. febr.[aio] 1641 è morta Sara moglie Giacob Sula(m) d'anni 40. in c[irc]a da febre continua mesi 3. G.[hetto] V.[ecchio]"); and Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, Università degli Ebrei di Venezia, register for 1627–53 (G.[rande] F.[ormato] 59), folder (*busta*) 11, under 1641 ("Sara Copia Sullam *isha maseket* [in Hebrew characters; "a learned woman"—first five words added by a later hand] 15 d.[ett]o è morta sara moglie de giacob sulam de ani 40 in c.[ir]ca amalata de febre continua mesi tre in c.[irc]a in getto vechio"; I am grateful to Umberto Fortis for confirming the accuracy of my transcription). For translation and further detail, see under volume editor's introduction and next to last note below.

3. Each verse of them has four syllables (in iambic meter), with the quatrains rhymed as *aabc/ddcc/ffgc/hbic* (hence initial pairs and the common rhyme *c*). For another similarly constructed epitaph by Modena, see "Ki tir'e shir" (in his *Divan*, 145).



Figure 12. Sarra Copia's tombstone with epitaph by Leon Modena and separate devices of the Copia and Sulam families (1641). Venice, Jewish cemetery on the Lido.

1. EPITAPH

Mal'akh loḥets [*The oppressive angel*]

The tombstone of the virtuous Signora Sarra Copia,⁴
 wife of the honorable Signor⁵ Jacob Sullam [*sic*]⁶
 (may his Rock protect and preserve him!)

The oppressive angel
 Shot his arrow
 And a foremost lady of fine discernment [*sarat ta'am*]⁷ 3
 Was destroyed and killed.

Wise was she among women,⁸
 A jewel for the miserable,⁹ 6
 And of every poor soul
 A friend and companion.

4. In Hebrew there is no way one can write a single or double *r*, yet it has been assumed that Modena intended the latter, for that is how he spelled the name in item 1 above. Copia was specifically indicated as such on the tombstone even though Modena spelled the names of two members of the family (Abraham, Diana) with a final *o* in his autobiography (*Sefer ḥayyei Yebuda* [Book of Judah's life], 58, 78). For "virtuous," the Hebrew had *tenu'a*, "humble," or "modest."

5. The Hebrew is more formal: *kevod ma'alato*, "His Honored Eminence."

6. The double *l* is indicated in the Hebrew by the closed spelling *s-l-m* (requiring a hard accent point, or *dagesh hazak*, on *l*) as against its open spelling *s-u-l-m*, in which *l* remains single.

7. *Sara* from the verb *la-sor*, "to rule" (hence *sar*, or the feminine *sara*, as "ruler"; see above 4.1.6, note). Yet the locution *sarat ta'am* (roughly "a discerning female ruler," or, as translated above, "a foremost lady of fine discernment") was intended as a pun on Prov. 11:22, which, because of a different letter in the Hebrew alphabet for the *s* of *sarat ta'am* (not *sin* but *samekh*), makes the locution mean the exact opposite, not "discerning," but "undiscerning" ("As a gold ring in the nose of a pig, so a woman who is beautiful, but 'undiscerning'; *sara* now from the verb *la-sur*, "to remove"). Under the (lugubrious) circumstances, the pun resounds as rather "undiscerning," though Copia would probably have been the first to relish it. For *sarat ta'am* (as, again, a discriminating woman) in a sonnet by Modena ("Hoga ve-yom 'evra"), see Dvora Bregman, ed., *Tseror zebuvim: sonettim ivriyim mi-tekuḥat ha-Renesans ve-ha-Barok* [A bundle of gold: Hebrew sonnets from the Renaissance and the Baroque], 186.

8. *Ḥokhmat nashim*: after Prov. 31:10–31 about the virtuous wife (*esbet ḥayil*), especially verse 26 ("She opened her mouth with [words of] wisdom [*ve-ḥokhma*] and the law of charity [*hesed*] is on her tongue"); also 14:1 ("All wise women [*ḥakmot nashim*] build their house").

9. The Hebrew reads *nezer rashim*, literally "a nose ring for the miserable," in playful reference to Prov. 11:22, the same verse on which Modena made his earlier pun ("As a gold ring in the nose of a pig," etc.).

If she, today, 9
 Has been irreparably deposited
 As solace for worms,¹⁰
 Moths, and spiders, 12

On the day the Redeemer¹¹ comes
 God will say:
 "Return, return, 15
 O Sulamite" [*ba-Sulamit*].¹²

She deceased on the eve of the sixth day, 5 Adar 5401.¹³
 May her soul dwell at ease!¹⁴

10. After Mishna, Avot 4:4 ("the hope of men is but a worm [*tikvat enosh rima*"]), itself after Ps. 22:7 ("I am a worm, not a human").

11. That is, the Messiah.

12. A quotation from Song of Songs 7:1, though *Sulamit*, with its indication of the Sulam family, is a pun on the Shulamite (in Hebrew, *Shulamit*).

13. In Jewish law, days are reckoned from evening to evening, thus "the eve of the sixth day" is not Thursday night but the beginning of Friday. As said above, 5 Adar 5401 in the Hebrew calendar corresponds to Friday, 15 February 1641 in the Gregorian one.

14. Ps. 25:13 (*Nafsbo be-tuv talin*). The expression is typical of epitaphs, as is, moreover, the reference to the coming of the Redeemer alias Messiah; see examples of both in David Malkiel, "Shirei matsevoṭ mi-tsefon Italya ba-me'ot ha-16 ve-ha-17" [Tombstone poems from northern Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries], 137–40, 146. In an oblique way, Modena wished Copia's soul "immortality" (over which, as we know from part 2, Copia and her adversary Bonifaccio were locked in a dispute).



APPENDIX
SARRA COPIA'S PROSE WRITINGS IN
THE ORIGINAL

1. LETTER TO ISABELLA DELLA TOLFA (1.2)

Ill(ustri)s(si)ma Sig(no)ra e P(ad)rona Col(endissi)ma
All'hora i mortali ricorrono con ogni lor affetto alla divina bontà, quando bramano
alcuna gratia di molto rilievo a i loro bisogni, così fo io con V.[ostra] S.[ignoria]
Ill(ustrissi)ma alla quale ricorro con molto affetto perché mi move interesse che
molto mi preme, né di questa comparatione credo ella sia per isdegnarsi, perché è
pregio alla n(ost)ra humanità l'imitar le divine operationi. Supplicai alli giorni passati
Ill(ustrissi)mo sig(no)r¹ suo consorte che mi volesse far gratia nello stamparsi delle
l(ette)re del mio sig(no)r Ansaldo, farne lasciar fuori una a me scritta alli p(ri)mo
[sic] di Novem(b)re 1619 e perché non vedo risposta di s.[ua] s.[ignoria] Ill(ustrissi)-
ma vado dubitando che la mia possa esser andata in sinistro, onde con l'istessa con-
fidenza vengo a pregar del med(em)o favore V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] Ill(ustrissi)ma, e
se si havesse dubio di far cosa contra la fama et volontà del sig(no)r Ansaldo, può
beniss(im)o la prudenza del sig(no)r Mar[c]'Antonio assicurarsi che quella bene-
detta anima diede ord(in)e di tale impressione più per honorar me sua serva che
per propria ambitione e se riceverò questa gratia si acrescerà nova obl(igatio)ne, se
pur l'infinito può ricever accrescim(en)to ad [a]mbe due le S.S. [= Signorie] V.V. [=
Vostre] Ill(ustrissimi)me alle quali faccio humilmente riverenza.

Venetia li 8 Gen(nai)o 1622

D.[i] V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] Ill(ustrissi)ma

Devotiss(i)ma et umiliss(i)ma serva

Sarra Copia Sulam

1. The inconsistencies in the use of majuscules or minuscules in the titles here (uppercase *I* for *Illustrissimo* but lowercase *s* for *Signor*) and below (lowercase *s* for *signor* but uppercase *A* for *Ansaldo*, etc.) are in the original (see fig. 5 above).

2. LETTER TO BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO (2.2)

[Folio A 5r] AL MOLTO ILLUSTRE SIGNOR Baldassare Bonifaccio.

Dal gentilissimo animo di V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] non potevo aspettare se non cortesissimi effetti, tale è stato l'annuntio di felicità recatomi dalla sua lettera nell'ingresso del nuovo anno: ma da triplicato favore accompagnato, per li tre Sonetti de quali li è compiaciuto honorare a mia intercessione il meritevole ritratto del mio Signor Ansaldo, e benché a me non siano giunti in tutto novi ho però con nova ammiratione contemplata la loro bellezza che a pena lampeggiò alla mia debole cognitione, quando alla sfugita mi furono da lei recitati, e poi sa che al repentino apparire de gl'oggetti che recano maraviglia, resta l'intelletto nostro abbagliato, in quella guisa apunto che sogliono restar adombrati gl'occhi nell'uscir dalle tenebre ad una improvvisa luce, rendo dunque hora a V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] quelle gratie che all'hora passai sotto devoto & osservante silentio, e la supplico ad accompagnare a gli altri honori che mi fa anco quelli de suoi comandamenti, ché non mancherò di riverire in ogni occasione i suoi meriti. Non resterò però di soggiungerle che l'altezza della dottrina della sua lettera è stata talmente osservata e commendata dal Signor Paluzzi, il quale capitò qui da me per udirla in compagnia del Signor Corniani che mi ha dato occasione di farne seco più che un discorso, e non so immaginarmi come V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] mostri una certa invidia all'anno mentre dice, che esso ringiovanisce, e noi invecchiamo poiché se ella stima rinovatione lo sparir di uno col succeder di un'altro anno questa medema felicità la gode tanto più compitamente l'huomo, quanto la sua duratione non è terminata da un solo giro della sfera solare come l'anno, che hora mediante ii numero conosciamo non esser più quello: e che prendendosi l'esser del numero si perde anco l'essere dell'individuo, che nella numerica distintione apparisce, è [A 5v] tanto chiaro che sarebbe superfluo il dimostrarlo, onde se V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] ha per vanto, che l'anno si conservi nella specia, e sparisca ne' numeri, non si lagni, che l'huomo anch'egli invecchiando faccia il simile, né mi replichi che l'essenza sia solamente nelle specie e che gl'individui non differiscano in altro che gl'accidenti perché se ben questa potrebbe esser vera opinione in qualche Filosofia io dirò che se l'essenza di un'huomo non si distinguesse essenzialmente dall'altra, ne seguirebbe che mancando l'essenza di Socrate, mancasse anco quella di Platone, e così de gl'altri; in modo che nella morte di un individuo morirebbono tutti; che poi cagione di questa corruttibilità sia la materia, è comunissima dottrina, & approvata sentenza delle scole Peripatetiche, ma, com'io credo, più difficile a dire, che approvare, posciaché se la materia è parte intrinseca e sostantiale del composto & essa è eterna come è possibile che una cosa prenda l'essere corruttibile da quella parte che là in sé eterna & incorruttibile? e che tale sia la materia vedesi espressamente, poiché dissolvasi, e corrompasi qual si voglia composto, sempre di esso rimane la materia se non in altro modo almeno ne suoi primi fonti che sono gl'elementi, dunque se di due parti componenti che vediamo nelle cose naturali, dico materia e forma, una dura eternamente e l'altra svanisce, a qual di loro sarà ragionevole di attribuire la corruttibilità[:] la materia apunto del cielo, senza ricorrere alla sofistica dottrina di Telesio può benissimo darci a divedere questa verità, con pace però di Aristotile ateso che se il non poter corrompersi nel cielo deriva, dal non poter ricevere altra forma è di conseguenza che ne habbia una che non riceva corruttibilità dunque se quella forma che ha non fusse eterna sarebbe necessario che per sodisfare all'eternità della mate-

ria, un'altra ne subentrasse e se quella si corrompesse anco un'altra sino all'infinito, ché per ciò la stessa potenza e desiderio infinito all'esser informata connota la poca durabilità di esse forme a sodisfare a tale appetito, ilche non succede nel cielo; dove una sola forma con la sua duratione adempisce ogni desi- [A 6r] derio della materia, la quale se da quella fusse abbandonata e per ciò necessitata a rimaritarsi segno sarebbe, che per la sua parte non può ammettere il non essere se la colpa dunque dicio è nella forma perché ascriverla alla materia? può ben ammettersi che ne lombi del primo huomo havesse principio la corruttione dell'humano linguaggio [*recte* lignaggio], se pur vogliamo far pregiudicio alla dottrina Aristotelica di conceder principio alla generatione, ma per qual cagione il Creatore non fece l'huomo per natura immortale, se hebbe intentione che tale si preservasse? o se tale non havea stabilito che fusse perché costituirlo miracolosamente in essere, nel quale non havea da durare? dico miracolosamente perché V.[ostra] S.[ignorìa] attribuisce a virtù di gratia soprannaturale la potenza all'immortalità che godea l'huomo nel primo stato e se egli si fusse in esso preservato in modo che ne havesse conseguito attualmente l'essere incorruttibile vorrei sapere se la generatione dovea continuare come ha fatto? & in tal caso come si sarebbe dato luogo all'infinito, in un mondo di quantità terminato, o se pur non dovea continuare la generatione a me pare che sarebbe cessata la comunicabilità dell'esser suo come sommo bene, & in qual si voglia modo il costituire una cosa in un esser nel quale è impossibile che essa subsista pare intollerabile ne gli huomini non che in Dio concedasi dunque come si cava dalla [*sic*] propositioni stesse di V.[ostra] S.[ignorìa] che l'huomo fu sempre di natura mortale e che per ciò non habbia fatto passaggio di una in altra specie nel cader dal primo stato, e concedasi di conseguenza che quasi acque dilabimur luogo in vero notabilissimo nella Sacra Scrittura, poiché sì come un corrente fiume ci rappresenta avanti a gli occhi acque che corrono, e passano in un istante e pur sempre è quel fiume e non sempre quell'acque stessi [*sic*], così l'humane specie ci mostra ad ogn'hora individui transitorij, li quali non sono sempre li medemi ben che sempre sia la specie medema. E dalle ragioni accennate chiaramente riporteremo che né dell'anno né di alcun'altra essenza corruttibile può darsi rinovatione né redificatione di che fa testimonianza l'esempio medemo, che [A 6v] ella adduce del muratore il quale se di una casa disfatta formerà una nuova fabrica non potrà mai dirsi esser la medema casa, ma solo, fatta della medema materia; sì che Signor mio altro non ne resta da desiderare nell'essere di questi nostri individui che la duratione, la quale è sì breve che possiamo infallibilmente dire non esser il tempo misura del moto, come pare a i Filosofi, ma il moto misura del tempo, poi che col moto de gl'horologi si misurano l'hore; col moto del Sole violento si contano i giorni; col moto della Luna si distinguono i mesi; e col moto del Sole naturale si numerano gl'anni de quali piaccia al cielo con influssi di prosperità farne goder tanti a V.[ostra] S.[ignorìa] quanti ne vide Nestore, e compiaciasi ella scusar il mio ardimento nell'haver promosse queste deboli dubitatione [*sic*] per desiderio di sentire a suo tempo la dichiarazione da V.[ostra] S.[ignorìa] e da quel Signor che è sempre Nume; Venetia li 10. Genaio 1619.

Di V.[ostra] S.[ignorìa] molto Illustre Affettionatiss.[ima] & obligatiss.

[ima] Sarra Copia Sula.[m]

3. MANIFESTO (2.4)

TITLE AND PREFACE

[FOLIO A 1r] MANIFESTO DI SARRA COPIA SULAM HEBREA.² NEL
QUALE È DA LEI RIPROVATA, E DETESTATA L'OPINIONE NEGANTE
L'IMMORTALITÀ DELL'ANIMA, FALSAMENTE ATTRIBUITALE DAL
SIG.[NOR] BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO.

[A 2r] A chi legge.

Posso creder, benigni Lettori, che sia per parervi cosa strana, che il mio Nome non affatto ignoto in questa Città, né fuori, comparisca la prima volta alle stampe in materia assai diversa da quella, che poteva forse esser aspettata dalla mia penna; ma l'altrui, o sia stata malignità, o semplicità, o trascuratezza, mi ha necessitata a quello, a che non ero per movermi facilmente per qual si voglia occasione, ancorché io mi ritrovi qualche fatica da poter mandar alla luce, la quale, se io non fallo, potrebbe dal mondo esser più volentieri veduta, e forse più gradita di questa; Dico che sono stata astretta a comporre, e dar fuori frettolosamente questa breve scrittura, non con fine, o pensiero alcuno di procacciarmi gloria, ma solo per difendermi da una falsa calunnia datami dal Sig.[nor] Baldassarre [sic] Bonifaccio, il quale, in un suo discorso stampato ultimamente dell'Immortalità dell'Anima, dice affermativamente che io nego quest'infallibile verità, che l'Anima humana sia immortale: cosa tanto lontana dalla mia opinione, quanto è lontano da ogni sua scienza il poter sapere l'interno de cuori; onde non dovete promettervi novità di pensieri, né copia de dottrina; [A 2v] prima perché il mio fonte ne è scarso, massime hora che mi è molestissima la fatica de gli studij, per esser a pena risorta da una grave infermità, che lungamente mi ha tenuta oppressa con pericolo di morte, dalla quale non per altro credo che la Divina bontà sia compiaciuta preservarmi, che perché io potessi liberar la mia fama da una sì grave macchia, che mi si era preparata; poiché la mia morte non haverebbe punto ritenuto l'Aversario dall'ambitiosa resolutione, per laquale quasi due anni si è affaticato: Poi perché non conveniva che io interponessi dilatione di tempo, né lunghe dicerie a ributtar l'offesa, per lo pericolo del danno che poteva risultarmene. E finalmente, perché il fatto stesso non richiedeva altra dottrina, che la sinceratione dell'animo mio, e di quel religioso affetto, che io devo a Dio, & alla legge, che egli mi ha data, potendo nel resto ogni giudicioso intelletto per sé stesso conoscere, in leggendo quel libro, quanto spropositamente l'Autore vada disfidando altri in cosa, alla quale a nessuno o Hebreo, o Christiano è lecito di contradire; Piaciavi dunque

2. Transcription according to Pin, by comparison with which Alb1 and Alb2 display minor variants, as follows: they resolve abbreviations (*Sig.* in Pin becomes *Signore*; *cimēti* becomes *cimenti*) or introduce them (*franco* becomes *frāco*); add gratuitous grave accents to the preposition *a* or the conjunction *o*; make typographical corrections (*sia sia compiaciuta* becomes *si sia compiaciuta*; *comrire* becomes *comparire*); change caps to lower case letters (*la Divina bontà* becomes *la divina bontà*; *una Donna* becomes *una donna*; *DIO* becomes *Dio*); alter punctuation marks or spelling (*istantemente* becomes *istantemente*); and apocopate words (*credere* becomes *credor*) or garble them (*proprietà* becomes *proptietà*). More significant variants are *ischerno* in Pin versus *ischerno* in Alb1 and Alb2 (see under notes below) and, in the concluding sonnet, *mente* in Pin versus *mentre* in Alb1 and Alb2 ("O di vita mortal," line 3: see note under translation).

cortesissimi Lettori, di veder per semplice curiosità, questa mia necessaria difesa, e come giusti, e benigni giudici, assolvendo chi falsamente viene accusato, rimovete dalla vostra presenza il falso accusatore, e vivete lieti.

DEDICATION

[A 3r] DEDICATIONE DELL'OPERA AL SIGNOR SIMON COPIA SUO DILETTISSIMO GENITORE.

La Dedicazione di questa mia breve, ma necessaria fatica, non poteva convenevolmente esser diretta, se non a chi ha fatto passaggio da questa mortal vita, accioché gl'effetti stessi corrispondessero a quel che nell'opera affermo di credere indubitamente l'essere immortale dell'Anime; Onde a te, Anima dilette, che desti l'essere a quel caro composto, da cui fui generata in questo mondo: a te dico mio visceratissimo Genitore, che benché spogliato del caduco velo tra spirti viventi dimori, e dimorerai in eterno, ho voluto io far questo picciolo dono; [A 3v] Primieramente perché concedendoti la Divina bontà di esser partecipe delle cose di qua, possi accrescer le tue gioie, con quel poco acquisto di fama, che nel mio nome forsi vedrai, per la qual cagione penso non ti sarà men caro haver prodotta una Donna, per conservatione del tuo nome, al mondo, di quel che ti sarebbe stato l'haver prodotto un'huomo, come in questa vita mostravi estremo desiderio; E poi anco per darti qualche segno della continuatione, che in me perpetuamente si conserva di quell'inespressibile amore, che sempre mi portasti. Godi dunque per hora questa picciola caparra dell'affetto immenso di una tua diletta figliola, che se mi sarà concesso poter sperar salute, e vita, come mi è conceduta alcuna fecondità de' parti dell'ingegno, vivrà in essi vivamente espresso, non meno il tuo, che il mio nome.

[A 4r] *Signor che dal mio petto arderti avanti* [sonnet 1; see 2.4, no. 1]

[A 4v] *Con la tua scorta, ecco, Signor, m'accingo* [sonnet 2; see 2.4, no. 2]

MANIFESTO

[B 1r] MANIFESTO DI SARRA COPIA AL SIGNOR BALDASSARE BONIFACCIO.

L'Anima dell'huomo, Signor Baldassare, è incorruttibile, immortale, e divina, creata & infusa da Dio nel nostro corpo, in quel tempo, che l'organizzato è reso habile nel ventre materno a poterla ricevere: e questa verità è così certa, infallibile, & indubitata appresso di me, come credo sia appresso ogn'Hebreo, e Christiano, che il titolo del vostro Libro, dove vi siete accanto in farsetto a discorrer di tal materia, mi ha fatto sovenire il detto di quel galante Romano, ilquale essendo invitato a voler andar ad ascolta- [B 1v] re una oratione in lode di Hercole, disse, *ecquis Herculem vituperat?* & a tale imitatione, dissi anch'io, che bisogno vi è hora, e massime in Vinegia di tal trattato, & a che proposito stamparsi tra Christiani simili materie? Ma quando poi leggendo più a basso trovai, che il discorso era a me diretto, co(n) falsissima suppositione, che io sia quella che habbia contraria opinione alla chiarezza di tal verità non potei non prendere grandissima ammiratione, e sdegno insieme della troppo audace calunnia che affirmativamente, e senza alcuna eccectione mi date; quasi che

voi siate perscrutatore de cuori humani, e sappiate l'intimo del mio animo, solo a Dio noto; che se pure in alcun discorso io vi ho promossa alcuna difficoltà Filosofica, o Teologica, ciò non è stato per dubio, o vacillamento, che io habbia mai havuto nella mia fede; ma solo per curiosità d'intender da voi, con la soluzione de miei argomenti, qualche curiosa, e peregrina dottrina; stimando ciò esser concesso ad ogni persona che professi studij, non che ad una Donna, e donna Hebrea, laquale continuamente vien posta in questi discorsi da persone, che si affaticano di ridurla, come voi sapete, alla Christiana fede.

[B 2r] Inconsiderata du(n)que è stata senza dubio la vostra calunnia, & io haverei potuto, conforme al merito di essa, con altre difese, che con quella della penna farne resentimento, potendo il vostro Libro ricever anco querela di libello famoso; ma la pietà della mia legge mi fa pietosa della vostra semplicità, laquale vi ha fatto credere di farvi immortale di fama, con trattar dell'immortalità dell'anima, e non havendone alcuna pronta occasione ve l'havete finta da voi stesso: E però in vece di venire ad altri cime(n)ti, mi sono disposta, con la breve fatica di due giorni atterrar quanto da voi mi è stato machinato contra, con l'inutili vigilie, quasi di due anni, facendo costare pubblicamente al Mondo, per mezzo della presente Scrittura, che falsissima, ingiusta, e fuori di ogni ragione è l'imputatione da voi datami nel vostro discorso, che da me sia negata l'immortalità dell'anima; ilche sarà solo per giustificarmi, e sincerarmi appresso tutti coloro, liquali non conoscendomi potessero dar qualche credenza alla vostra accusa, in quanto appartiene alla Religione che io professo; ché nel resto lascio al giudizio di qual si voglia persona di mediocre intelligenza quanto sia atta a poter torre, [B 2v] né dar fama la vostra penna; benché a rimuovere ogni dubio della mia opinione in questo, dovrebbe bastare il mio preservarmi Hebrea, perché quando io credessi, come voi dite, e non temessi di perder la felicità dell'altra vita, non mi sarebbero mancate occasioni, col cangiar legge, di migliorar il mio stato: cosa nota a persone di molta autorità, che l'hanno istantemente procurato e tentato.

Ma hora che con queste poche linee, credo haver cancellata a bastanza quella nota d'impietà che forse inconsideratamente havete preteso dare al mio nome, desidero mi facciate piacere, che discorriamo tra noi in questo proposito un poco più alla libera, e familiarmente. Ditemi dunque di gratia Signor Baldassare, che cosa vi ha mosso a far quel Trattato, a stamparlo, & ad imbrogliarvi il mio nome. Voi dite con i versi di Virgilio, che Dio vi ha eletto a questo. Grand'arroganza veramente, dunque non aveva il Signor Iddio per materia sì sublime, e sì importante un'ingegno più elevato & un ministro più dotto di voi, voi solo ha scielto fra la schiera di tutti i litterati per atto a trattar sì degno soggetto: se l'immortalità dovesse esser [B 3r] inserita ne gl'animi, non co(n) altra forza, che d'humane ragioni, mal fornita al sicuro si troverebbe se non avesse altre ragioni, che le vostre, le quali, benché da voi siano state cavate da dotti Autori, sono però state male intese, e peggio riportate, & il trattar debolmente materie tanto importanti è un'invigorire le ragioni averse. Potreste dirmi, che spesso Dio si serve di mezz bassi, e vili ad oprar cose grandi, per maggiormente far costare la sua onnipotenza, e che fino all'Asino di Balaam una volta parlò: è vero, ma in tali casi, gl'effetti stessi sono apparsi divini, e la viltà de gl'istrumenti non ha loro punto pregiudicato: voi che scioccamente havete preteso di profetar da voi stesso senza altra inspiratione, che di una troppa arroganza, havete mostrato ne gl'effetti la vostra crassissima ignoranza più tosto, che alcuna maravigliosa virtù divina: onde potevate in vede de' versi di Virgilio appropriarvi quei di Dante:

Nel mezo del camin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la deritta via havea smarrita.

Potresti anco dire che lo stato, in che vi ritrovate di Sacerdote, e di persona esemplare vi spin- [B 3v] ge a prender tutte l'occasioni, che vi si presentano di giovare, con la dottrina, e con le opere al prossimo: Ah, Signor Bonifaccio, quando anco zelo religioso vi havesse mosso, non conveniva però, che presumeste più oltre di quello, che le vostre forze comportavano.

Voi, che scrivendo ogn'hor v'affaticate
Di guadagnarvi un'honorato nome,
Prendete a vostra forza ugual soggetto.³

E quel che segue.

Voi trattar dell'anima? voi dell'immortalità? materia la più difficile, & ardua, che habbia la Filosofia, la quale vi resterebbe forse in qualche parte avviluppata, se non fusse il soccorso della Teologia; sapete pure in coscienza vostra che non siete né Filosofo, né Teologo, e se non erro, di vostra bocca ho udito dire, che tali scienze non sono di vostra professione, e pur così audacemente havete voluto metter mano in pasta, circa materia sì alta! e vi siete assicurato a stampar vostri discorsi con titilo sì sublime? con tutto che voi mostriate di far tanta riflessione sopra quella famosa sentenza, *Conosci te stesso*, sapete pure, che Horatio dice nella Poetica, se pur l'havete veduta:

[B 4r] Il primo fonte, e 'l rio del scriver bene
Senza dubbio è 'l saper:
tradotto dal Dolce,⁴

Poiché la vera gloria non si procaccia con l'ostentatione, ma con la fatica, sentenza del medemo Autore:

Vedesi, che colui, che giunger tenta
A la meta, ch'ei brama nel suo corso
Molte cose patì sendo fanciullo,
Sudò sovente, e provò caldo, e gelo.⁵

Ma l'importanza è, che anco in voi può quella pestifera opinione.

A me par brutto in vero esser lasciato
Indietro da color, che dotti sono,
E convenirmi confessar in tutto
Non saper quel, che mai non imparai.⁶

3. Dolce (1536, [A 6]r; 1559, 282): *vostre forze*.

4. Dolce (1536, [B 6]r; 1559, 299).

5. Dolce (1536, C [1]v; 1559, 306).

6. Dolce (1536, *ibid.*; 1559, 307): line 2 ("Indietro . . . sono") reads *Giù ne l'ultimo grado de' Poeti* (Below, in the last rank of poets).

Dovea in questo almeno farvi alquanto ritenuto l'esempio di Aristotele, al quale non è quasi bastato l'animo di lasciarsi intender chiaramente in tal materia; Io per me non vi parlo in questa guisa per far la maestra, o la Filosofessa in insegnarvi, come voi per ischerno⁷ mi dite nel medemo tempo, che venite a farmi il Pedante; poiché confesso di esser assai più ignorante di voi in queste⁸ scienza: ma per riferirvi quello, che odo da tutti coloro, che vedono il vostro libro.

[B 4v] Altro ci vuole,⁹ Signor mio, che il titolo di *luris utriusque Doctor*, per trattare dell'immortalità dell'anima: ma per farvi accorgere della poca pratica, che havete, sì delle scritture spettanti al Teologo, come delle ragioni spettanti al Filosofo, basti rammentarvi l'istessa calunnia, che a me date nel principio; nella quale supposto falsamente, che io neghi l'immortalità, dite, che io sola tra gl'Hebrei dopo tanti migliaia d'anni sono trascorsa in tal errore; nel che se pur non havete vedute le altre scritture, e Gioseffo Flavio Historico, che le varie opinioni dell'Hebraica Natione riferisce, vi scuso; ma non vi scuso già, che non habbiate a mente l'Evangelio della vostra Fede, poiché vi sareste ricordato, che in San Mattheo al cap. 22. li Saducei, una setta di Hebrei, che negava l'immortalità, andorono [*sic*] a promoverne anco difficoltà a Christo, dal quale fu saviamente sodisfatto, e posto silentio alle loro interrogazioni. Soggiungete anco, che io nego fede all'infalibil chirografo, che scrisse Dio di sua mano: Io non so, che altro chirografo si trovi nella Sacra Scrittura dalla mano di Dio scritto, che il Decalogo, al quale io non solo aderisco con la fede, ma anco con le opere, per quanto [C 1r] posso, se voi havesti alcun'altra scrittura fatta dalla mano di Dio in proposito dell'immortalità, haverei caro di vederla; Ma veggiamo quanto bene, e con quanta pratica della lingua, e della scrittura Hebraica vi siate anco valuto della voce *Ruach*, per formarne argomento a vostro proposito. Dite che nella sacra Scrittura significa propriamente questa voce, la mente Humana, l'Angelica, e la Divina, io qui potrei richiedervi strettissimo conto, di sì fatta interpretatione, se haveste parlato di vostro sentimento: ma perché so che voi non havete mai veduta lingua Hebraica, e che da altri è stato soffiato nella vostra ciarabottana, dirovvi solo, che da questo fate conoscere chiaramente, che anco le altre cose tutte, che havete dette, vi siete assicurato a dirle, senza intenderle; almeno in questo particolare, parlando voi con una Hebrea dovevate farvi imboccare da chi meglio intendesse la proprietà della lingua, poiché *Ruach*, altro di sua proprietà non significa che l'aria, il vento, & il fiato, col quale noi respiriamo; onde si può vedere quanto bene calzi la vostra conseguenza, mentre pretendete per tal voce provare, che l'anima sia assolutamente incorporea, & immateriale; ben- [C 1v] ché a voler anco trovare quello che in tal luogo concludiate, vi vuole altra logica, che quella di Aristotele.

Delle ragioni poi spettanti al Filosofo quanto siate intelligente, veggasi nell'istesso bel principio; dove dite che Lucretio chiama a torto Sole de Filosofi Epicuro, il qual negava l'immortalità dell'anima, & a me che voi stimate dell'istessa opinione, dite conviene a ragione il nome di Luna delle Filosofesse, e qual sia la proportion di questa ragione, lascio considerarlo a chi legge; ben che io credo, che quella comporatione sia stata da voi posta per occasione di scherzare insipidamente, come in altro

7. Alb1 and Alb2 have *per ischerno* (seeming misprint, yet see above under translation).

8. Properly *questa*; the misspelling occurs in all three sources.

9. Alb1 and Alb 2: *vole*.

luogo, quando affermate, che la corruttione non si fa senza moto: cosa altrettanto pregiudicante alla gravità della materia, che si tratta, qua(n)to alla modestia conveniente alla vostra conditione, & alla professione che fate di Religioso; Né posso contenermi di notare anco un'altro luogo, appresso me tanto degno di riso, quanto voi lo fate di compassione, & è a carte dieci del vostro Libro nel fine, dove dite, *Piacesse a DIO che più tosto da burla che da buon senno si morisse*: modo di parlare che esprime il vostro desiderio, ilquale sarebbe di non [C 2r] morire, ancorché crediate l'anima immortale! Eh, Signor Bonifaccio, a che giuoco giochiamo? credete fermamente quel che predicate o no? se l'anima con la separatione del corpo acquista miglior conditione di essere, come voi provate, e come è certo, perché dunque posponete mal volentieri questo stato a quello; donde deriva il vostro affetto più alla presente, che all'altra vita? è pur vostro argomento a carte num. 14 che la morte, secondo la retta ragione, è alcuna volta da desiderarsi, e preporsi alla vita, massime per le operationi di forza, e di altre virtù, come voi ne apportate gl'esempi, e l'autorità di Aristotile; avvertite che questo contraddirsi è cattivo segno.

Se non fusse per me digressione, mostrerei tante di queste sciocchezze, e luoghi contraddittorij, che non resterebbe alcuna vostra propositione intatta: ma ciò è fuori del mio proponimento, perché non vorrei che alcuno potesse credere, che con oppugnar le vostre ragioni, io mi opponga in maniera alcuna alla verità della vostra conclusione: oltre che a mostrare i difetti, & imperfettioni della vostra scrittura, altro volume vi bisognerebbe, che di un breve foglio, non havendo ella altro di buono, che la causa [C 2v] che difende: nel resto è così piena di false intelligenze di termini; di storti, e mal intesi sentimenti di scritture; di false forme di sillogismi; di cattive connessioni, e strani passaggi da una in altra materia; di sproposite citationi di Autori; e finalmente di errori di lingua, che nessuno può continuare a leggerla, senza dar qualche titolo al compositore.

Fin hora però non habbiamo scoperta la cagione, che vi ha potuto muovere ad intraprendere sì notabile impresa; non posso credere esser stata malignità, poiché di questa pare che mi assicuri la vostra amicitia, e la piacevolezza della vostra natura; Potrebbe forse dirsi esser stato l'istesso non sapere, atteso che mi ricordo haver letto nel Galateo, che tra l'inciviltà, che commettono gli huomini, una è il voler far ostentatione di sé stessi in quello, in che manco vagliono, e però, dice egli, si trovano molti, li quali non sapendo cantare, o havendo cattiva voce prorompono sempre in qualche cantilena, mentre sono nelle conversationi; e chi non sa ballare vuol sempre far lo snello, & il leggiadro ne movimenti, il che si può creder che facciano per esser tenuti scientifici in quello, in che sanno di esser più ignoranti, e non [C 3r] si accorgono, che non solo accrescono il concetto della lor ignoranza, ma disgustano la conversatione, al qual proposito può applicarsi anco l'esempio di coloro, li quali havendo qualche parte difettosa cercano sempre adornarla di vestimenti vaghi, come alcuno che havendo le gambe storte procura portarvi sempre calze de vaghi colori, quasi per fare che la bellezza esterna compensi il difetto interno, e non si avvede che in tal guisa fa maggiormente riguardevole esso difetto, & alletta gl'occhi de' riguardanti a considerarlo; se da tal movimento havesse havuto origine la vostra opra, Signor Baldassare, faccio giudice voi stesso se sarebbe da sottoporre alla disciplina del Galateo.

Horsù senza più andar affaticando il pensiero per investigare altre ragioni, a me dà l'animo d'indovinar la vera a questa volta, e so che voi il confesserete alla libera:

Altro non vi ha indotto a far sì longa, e vana fatica, se non quella vana ambitioncella, che vi fa correr volentieri alle stampe credendo che la fama consista in haver di molti volumi fuori, senza haver consideratione alla stima, che ne fa il Mondo, il quale credo sappiate per esperienza quanto mal si sodisfaccia [C 3v] di cose mediocrementemente buone, non che de le dozinali, e scioccamente composte, e però a non correr così facilmente alla stampa, ci fa avvertiti la medema Poetica di Horatio.

Stimasi degno di riprensione
Qual, che si sia Poema: ove l'Autore
Consumato non v'habbia lungo tempo:
E più volte mutata questa, e quella
Parte, fin che corretto, e castigato
Al suo perfetto fin condotto il veggia:¹⁰

Co(n) tutto questo per sì fatta cagione compatisco al vostro animo, il quale cupido di gloria va, per così dire, mendicandola per diverse strade, appagandosi del fumo, ove non può haver la luce,¹¹ Poiché la vana immoderata sete di gloria indusse anco Empedocle a gittarsi nella voragine di Etna.

Empedocle bramoso
Di lasciar falsa opinione al Mondo,
Ch'egli fosse rapito vivo in Cielo,
E raccolto nel numer de gli Dei
Gettossi d'Etna nell'ardenti fiamme.¹²

Ma per sì bel pensiero a che effetto sfidar una Donna? & una Donna, che se bene è vaga di studij, non ha però tali scienze per sua professione: [C 4r] Bisognava per mostrarsi intrepido, e valoroso sfidar gl'Empedocli, gl'Anassagori, gl'Epicuri, gl'Aristoteli, gl'Alessandri Anfrodisei, gl'Averroi, e poiché a loro non è conceduto venire dove campeggiate voi, andarli a trovare ne' loro steccati medemi, che con altrettanta facilità haverebbono forse rintuzzato il vostro orgoglio, con quanta poca modestia voi sparlate di alcuni di loro col titolo anco di Porci. Ma per quel che vedo voi havete voluto fare, come si suol dire il bravo in credenza; poiché non solo siete comparso in isteccato, dove non è chi contradica alla vostra querela, ma dove, quando anco haveste contraddittore, che non credo, non è conceduto il campo franco: Di modo che, o valoroso fidatore delle Donne, il campo è tutto vostro, passeggiate in esso pur altiero, vibrando i colpi all'aria, o valoroso campione, o generoso guerriero, e senza che si oda altro strepito, che della vostra rauca Tromba, gridate pur da voi stesso, vittoria, vittoria, e benché al suono di queste mie brevi parole vi parrà forse di haver trovato qualche incontro da poter intraprender nuova giostra, vi replico, come di sopra vi ho dichiarato, che questo non è cartello di risposta alla vostra

10. Dolce (1536, [B 5]v; 1559, 298): line 1, *Stimate*; line 3, in 1536 only, *Interposto non habbia*, etc.

11. For the semicolon (Pin), Alb1 and Alb2 have (strangely) a question mark.

12. Dolce (1536, C 3r; 1559, 310): line 4, *Dij* (for *Dei*); line 5, *in quelle* (for *nell'*).

disfida, ma un sem- [C 4v] plice manifesto per iscusarmi del mio non com[pa]rire:¹³ non essendo cagion di combattimento, dove non è contrarietà di pareri, né in detti, né in fatti: sì che per me potete deporre affatto l'armi, ché ancorché mi provocaste di nuovo con mille ingiurie, non sono più per contraporvi alcuna replica, per non consumare inutilmente il tempo, massime essendo io così nemica di sottopormi a gl'occhi del mondo nelle stampe, come voi ve ne mostrate vago, vivete lieto, e sperate per voi giovevole quell'immortalità, che predicate, se viverete così osservatore della vostra Christiana legge, come io professo di essere della mia Hebrea.

CONCLUDING POEMS

Hora poiché voi per terminar con piacevolezza, e diletto il vostro discorso vi aggiungete la cantilena di un Sonetto per mostrarvi in effetto con la cetra in mano, quell'Orfeo, che nell'opera stessa presumete di essere¹⁴ sufficiente a cavare una novella Euridice dall'Inferno, io per comparire in Scena con questa parte, che voi mi date terrò contrapunto al vostro canto, senza però darvi briga di andare al Regno dell'Ombre, poiché mi trovate in quello della luce.

[D 1r] Sonetto del Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio. A Sarra Copia Sulam.¹⁵

Sarra, la tua beltà cotanto audace [sonnet 3; see 2.4, no. 3]

[D 1v] Risposta di Sarra Copia Sulam.

Ben so che la beltà ch'al mondo piace [sonnet 4; see 2.4, no. 4]

[D 2r] Della medesima. Sonetto all'Anima humana.

O di vita mortal forma divina [sonnet 5; see 2.4, no. 5]

13. Correct spelling (*comparire*) in Alb1 and Alb2.

14. Alb1 and Alb2 have a comma after *essere*, which clarifies the sentence structure.

15. The sonnet already occurred at the end of Bonifaccio's *Discorso* (see part 2, item 3 above), with only typographical variants (uppercase for Sara and Christo; lowercase *a* for *augello*, "bird"). There it was quoted (in this edition) in translation while in the *Manifesto*, as translated above, it appears in the Italian as well.



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