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GALILÆANA
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WOMEN'S VOICES IN RENAISSANCE AND EARLY MODERN SCIENTIFIC CULTURE

edited by Meredith K. Ray and Natacha Fabbri

Introduction
Women's voices in Renaissance and early modern scientific culture

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Abstract
This focus section reassesses the overlooked yet meaningful role of women in shaping early modern scientific culture during the late Renaissance and the seventeenth century. By foregrounding marginal spaces and manuscript sources, these six essays offer fresh insights into the gendered dynamics of scientific authorship and the epistemic boundaries of early modern science.

Keywords
women in science, female authorship, recipes, natural philosophy, manuscripts

How to cite this article
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This focus aims to contribute to a broader reappraisal of the meaningful, though long neglected, role played by women in the shaping of scientific inquiry during the late Renaissance and the seventeenth century. As a wave of pioneering scholarship has begun to demonstrate, women, though traditionally relegated to the periphery of historiographical narratives, were in fact active agents in the dissemination and transformation of early modern scientific culture.

At the intersection of natural philosophy, empirical knowledge, and moral philosophy, the engagement of women must be regarded as a sociological phenomenon and a philosophical challenge to prevalent epistemologies of the period. In a context marked by the flourishing of the *querelle des femmes*, debates over the intellectual and moral capacities of women came to be entangled with emerging notions of experimental method, empirical observation and practice, and the ongoing reconfiguration of knowledge hierarchies.

Women increasingly participated in scientific activities – whether through naturalistic observations; alchemical experiments; domestic medicine; correspondence, including with learned men connected to scientific circles; or, less frequently, publication – yet their intellectual labor was often silenced or absorbed into male-authored works. The question is therefore not only one of visibility, but of epistemic legitimacy as well: under what conditions could female knowledge be recognized as such?

Early modern catalogues of illustrious women – ranging from literary compilations to encyclopedic treatises – sought to document female excellence in a variety of fields, including medicine, alchemy, and natural philosophy. These texts, often structured according to humanist ideals of virtue and erudition, simultaneously reinforced and contested the gendered structures of intellectual authority, further fueling the vexed notion of female "exceptionality".

Drawing on the groundbreaking historiographical scholarship of the past two decades – which has deepened our understanding of the intellectual, social, and material dimensions of women's scientific contributions – this issue seeks to widen the analytical lens, continuing to examine marginal, hybrid, and often overlooked spaces of knowledge.

Particular attention is given to sources that have traditionally been undervalued: handwritten recipe books, paratextual writings, household records, poetic compositions, letters, and testimonies from oral exchanges. These documents provide access to alternative epistemologies and offer a valuable contribution not only to our understanding of women's presence in specific fields of inquiry, but also to a fuller reconstruction of those very fields themselves.

The six contributions gathered in this focus section interrogate the complex entanglements between gender, knowledge, and authority in early modern scientific culture. Taken together, they offer a multi-faceted exploration of the ways in which women inhabited and shaped the intellectual and empirical practices of their time, situating themselves at the intersection of science, literature, and philosophy. Far from operating within sanctioned in-

stitutional frameworks, these women – whether authors, patrons, experimenters, or silent compilers – often acted within liminal, even imaginary, space. This collection of essays indeed investigates not only what counted as scientific discourse in Renaissance and seventeenth-century Europe, but also who was permitted to contribute to it, and on what terms.

One of the central questions that animate many of the contributions is how women were involved in empirical practices and with what degree of agency, intentionality, and awareness. Women were not merely passive recipients of male-authored discourse; rather, they actively contributed to shaping experimental culture. This line of inquiry also extends to intellectual forms of participation as well: women's contributions are traced not only in their writings but also in the epistemic function of inner dialogue, translation, and editorial curation.

The articles cover approximately a century of scientific and philosophical production, and span a wide variety of case studies, genres, and geographies, unveiling a rich array of female engagements with discourse around natural philosophy. Mary Purcell examines Margaret Cavendish's use of inner discourse in her philosophical dialogues, arguing that she employed it both as a strategy of resistance to her exclusion from the Royal Society and as a means of rebutting her contemporaries' excessive reliance on experimental methods and sensory knowledge. Noemi Di Tommaso delves into the poetic and epistolary works of Maria Selvaggia Borghini, situated within the post-Galilean intellectual climate of Medicean Tuscany, marked by dialogues with Redi, Magliabechi, and the court of Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere. Annastasia Conner shifts the focus to the medical and cosmetic recipes attributed to Lady Venetia Digby, revealing her role not as a passive observer of her husband's experiments but as an autonomous producer of scientific knowledge. Jelena Bakić, in turn, examines dedicatory epistles and other form of paratextual writings authored by Renaissance women, in which the boundaries between rhetorical self-fashioning and scientific contributions become fluid. In so doing, these articles question traditional notions of authorship, authority, and intellectual legitimacy. The final two essays expand a plurality of voices, media, and sites involved in the making of early modern science. Cheng He, through a meticulous examination of numerous manuscripts, traces the circulation of some Asian botanical plants within British domestic medicine and recipe collections authored by women. Maria Chiara Milighetti explores the gendered implications of scientific reflection in the writings of the physician Emilio Vezzosi, whose largely unpublished works offer a significant male perspective focused on women's bodies, education, and philosophical capacities.

The essays presented here are authored by a generation of emerging scholars whose work marks a vital expansion of both gender studies and the history of scientific thought in the Renaissance and early modern periods. Accordingly, this special issue not only contributes to ongoing efforts to revisit and illuminate the richness and polyphony of voices – at times even discordant – that characterized scientific modernity, but also attests to the enduring potential of interdisciplinary dialogue within the historical-philosophical study of knowledge.

Voices from the margin. Italian Renaissance paratexts and women's knowledge production

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Abstract
This article investigates the role of Renaissance paratextual sources – particularly dedicatory epistles authored by women – as a key space for understanding female contributions to knowledge production in the early modern period. Focusing on Italian works from the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, it analyses how female authors, within contexts such as the *querelle des femmes*, epistolary practices, scientific dialogues, and poetry, used these marginal spaces to negotiate gender roles, claim authority, and position themselves within the circulation of knowledge. Approaching these texts through the lens of privacy studies and the history of emotions, and applying a slow close-reading methodology, the article reveals how dedicatory epistles served both as self-defense and as a declaration of intellectual agency in the Italian Renaissance.

Keywords
natural philosophy, querelle des femmes, paratexts, Renaissance Italy, women authors

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I respond to these words that since man was made from four elements he could not live eternally, speaking in terms of natural philosophy.
Camilla Herculiana[1]

Introduction

The aim of this article is to highlight the importance of Italian Renaissance paratextual sources and especially dedicatory epistles authored by women in revealing women's contribution to the production of knowledge and their efforts to participate in philosophical discourse, namely natural philosophy. As Eckerle points out, for women, who already wrote from the social margins, the marginal space of the book represented one of the strategic ways to express ideas which could not be formulated either in the main text of the book, or in some other form.[2] It therefore provided authors "more possibilities for innovation and even personal commentary than such writers would be allowed in a primary text".[3]

More recently, scholars have begun to recognize early modern women's intellectual contributions, highlighting "the significance of epistolary exchanges, paratexts, and private writings as venues for philosophical discourse and as tools to challenge traditional gender norms".[4] Whether in the context of the *querelle des femmes* (a debate about the nature and worth of women), religious writings, epistolary practice, scientific dialogues or poetry, women authors often needed to defend their daring to appear in public and to publish a book. It is precisely in paratexts that women authors announced their forthcoming books and occasionally, as it will be shown, engaged in scientific debate. However, the strategic function of the early modern paratext – particularly the dedicatory epistle and the address to the reader – as a mean to negotiate and legitimize authorship and to articulate ideas of defence (which, in some cases, move beyond mere rhetorical convention) is

1 Camilla Erculiani, *Letters on Natural Philosophy: The Scientific Correspondence of a Sixteenth-Century Pharmacist, with Related Texts*, ed. by Eleonora Carinci, trans. Hannah Marcus, foreword Paula Findlen (New York, Toronto: Iter Press, 2021), 155-168, here 162. See Jacopo Menochio, "Consilium DCCLXVI, 766", in *Consiliorum sive responsorum* (Frankfurt: Andreas Wécheli and Johann Gymnich, 1604-1616), 180-183.

2 Julie A. Eckerle, "Prefacing Texts, Authorizing Authors, and Constructing Selves: The Preface as Autobiographical Space", in *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Michelle M. Dowd and Julie A. Eckerle (London: Routledge, 2007), 97-113.

3 *Ibid*., 100.

4 Emilio M. De Tommaso and Delfina Giovannozzi, "Not Simply 'Impertinencies of a Woman's Pen'", in *Lo Sguardo – Rivista di Filosofia* 38, 1 (2024): 7-15.

also typical of male-authored paratexts. In contrast, female-authored books exhibit a significant, and often overlooked, difference. Women writers used these paratextual spaces as rare opportunities to express ideas related to their private lives and gendered experiences, and not infrequently, to reveal the private practices behind their knowledge production. These moments also allowed them to contribute to broader intellectual debates, such as the *querelle des femmes* and emerging discourses in science – topics that male authors, by contrast, could address more openly in full-length works. In some cases, they engage with the same topic explored in the main text, while, in the others, importantly, use this space as a unique opportunity to refer to their knowledge, regardless the topic of the book, as it will be shown further.

The term 'paratext', introduced in literary studies by French theorist Gérard Genette in 1987,[5] refers to the liminal devices that frame and mediate the main text. Gérard Genette defines paratexts with the influential formula "paratexts = peritext + epitext".[6] 'Peritexts' include features within the book such as titles, dedicatory epistles, addresses to reader, and notes, and 'epitexts' materials located outside the book but still connected to it, such as letters and diaries. As thresholds between the texts and its readers, paratexts function as a site that draws attention to certain themes or aspects of a work. At the same time, it allows space for innovation, offering Renaissance authors, especially marginalized ones, an opportunity to assert their voices, introduce new ideas, and, in some cases, engage with scholarly discourse in ways that might not have been accepted if they had done so in the main text.[7] An important aspect of paratexts is that they reveal not only patronage relationship, but also cultural networks, which in case of women's writing become very important. It was exactly thanks to these cultural networks that women were allowed to print.[8]

5 Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [1987]). See also Kevin Dunn, *Pretexts of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Furio Brugnolo and Roberto Benedetti, "La dedica tra medioevo e primo Rinascimento: testo e immagine", in *I margini del libro. Indagine teorica e storica sui testi di dedica*, ed. by Maria Antonietta Terzoli (Roma, Padova: Editrice Antenore, 2004), 13-54. Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, eds., *Renaissance Paratext* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Two academic journals are dedicated exclusively to paratextual studies: *Paratesto: rivista internazionale* (Pisa, Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore) and *Margini. Giornale della dedica e altro* (Basel: Universität Basel. Institut für Italianistik) [www.margini.unibas.ch].

6 Genette, *Paratexts*, 5.

7 See Eckerle, "Prefacing Texts, Authorizing Authors, and Constructing Selves", 97-113.

8 Apart from highly important work by Virginia Cox, Brian Richardson's study provides an important overview of female engagement in material textual culture during the early modern period. Richardson analyses women's contribution to culture as patrons and dedicatees of books, female engagement with the text in its production and consumption. See Brian Richardson, *Women and Circulation of Text in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

By focusing on the paratextual elements of books by female authors who wrote in Italian during the second half of the 16th century,[9] this article aims to provide an overview of women's contribution to knowledge – primarily in the domain of natural philosophy – within the context of the *querelle des femmes,* as reflected in paratexts. Women authors did contribute to natural philosophy and at the same time they invited other women to gain and produce knowledge. Therefore, this article explores how women referred to their own authorship and authority, articulated their intentions regarding book production, expressed ideas that are connected with natural philosophy, and consequently positioned themselves within the system of knowledge circulation and production.

Paratexts are examined here as spaces of social, authorial, and cultural negotiation, through an interdisciplinary lens that draws on rhetorical and literary studies, privacy studies, and the history of emotions.[10] However, it is important to clarify from the outset that this article does not provide a detailed analysis of scientific ideas expressed by women authors, apart from the case of Maria Gondola, which is represented in greater detail than the cases of the other authors.[11] This article emphasizes the importance of close paratextual analysis in understanding women's contribution to science and to culture in general.

Recent significant developments in historiographical studies – primarily in English,[12] and more recently also in Italian[13] – have opened important avenues for scholars to ex-

[9] I would also like to mention the online catalogue of the Italian Renaissance women's paratexts, which I have developed with the support of Elisabeth Tauber (University of Bolzano), entitled "Parity in Renaissance", designed by Alena Dziedzitz. A work in progress, it is now available for researchers to consult at www.parityinrenaissance.net [last accessed 14 May 2025].

[10] See Jelena Bakić, "Paratext and Privacy in the Early Modern Period: Toward an Interdisciplinary Theoretical and Methodological Approach", in *Privacy in Early Modern Paratexts*, ed. by Jelena Bakić and Liam Benison, *Studies in the History of Privacy* series (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2025).

[11] See Jelena Bakić, *Defence from the Margin* (PhD diss, University of Prague and University of Porto, 2017), 98-144, and appendixes, 263-279. Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10216/105856 [last accessed 14 May 2025].

[12] Here, I primarily refer to works from the series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*. See: Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr., series editors, *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe – The Toronto Series*, as well as important contributions by Virginia Cox and Meredith K. Ray (see further references below). See also the groundbreaking studies by Londa Schiebinger, particularly her seminal work *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). In addition, the extensive scholarship of Paula Findlen on early modern women in science, especially: "Translating the New Science: Women and the Circulation of Knowledge in Enlightenment Italy", *Configurations* 3, no. 2 (1995): 167-206; "Becoming a Scientist: Gender and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century Italy", *Science in Context* 16 (2003): 59-87; "Women on the Verge of Science: Aristocratic Women and Knowledge in Early Eighteenth-Century Italy", in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 265-287.

[13] I mainly refer to the recent works by Sandra Plastina and Eleonora Carinci (see further refer-

plore women's contribution to knowledge production in scientific fields, from which they had long been excluded. Virginia Cox has demonstrated that women participated in intellectual culture not only as consumers, but also as producers. Cox convincingly argues that it was during the Italian Renaissance that the model of the modern creative woman – a "cultural protagonist" – emerged, along with new ways of thinking about gender.[14] In her foundational work on the recognition of women's contribution to science in Renaissance Italy, Meredith K. Ray underscores the fact that "women contributed in crucial ways to the production of knowledge on the cusp of what has traditionally been known as the Scientific Revolution".[15] Likewise, Sandra Plastina has extensively contributed to the reconstruction of the history of philosophy by examining women's roles in Renaissance and early modern philosophical discourse.[16] These studies suggest that early modern women authors – mainly those from privileged and elite backgrounds (but not exclusively) – found strategic ways to enter scientific discourse. In the Italian context during the sixteenth century, several women authors demonstrated knowledge in natural philosophy, including Fiammetta Frescobaldi (1523-1586), Camilla Gregetta Herculiana (Erculiani) (c. 1540-c.1590), Maria Gondola (Marija Gundulić, c. 1584), Moderata Fonte (1555-1592), Lucrezia Marinella (1571-1653), Margherita Sarrocchi (c.1560-1618), Isabella Cortese (pseudonym, c. 1561), Tullia d'Aragona (1510-1556), and Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617).

In the first part of this article, I focus on the importance of early modern paratexts for understanding women's contribution to the *querelle des femmes* debate. Particular attention is given to ideas that come from natural philosophy expressed within this discourse,

ences below). See also, for an overview that covers the later centuries as well, Paola Govoni, "The Power of Weak Competitors: Women Scholars, "Popular Science" and the Building of a Scientific Community in Italy, 1860s-1930s", *Science in Context* 26, no. 3 (2013): 405-436; Ead., "Liminali in sé: studi di donne, natura e scienza", *Storia della donne*, 18-19 (2022-2023): 185-204; Federica Favino, *Donne e scienza nella Roma dell'Ottocento* (Roma: Viella, 2020); Natacha Fabbri, *Profili di donne sulla Luna. Riflessi di scienza, filosofia e letteratura* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2022).

14 See the works by Virginia Cox, especially: Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008) and Ead., *Prodigious Muse, Women's Writing in Counter-Reformation Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

15 Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 1.

16 Sandra Plastina, "Italian Women Philosophers in the Sixteenth Century. From a Critique of the Aristotelian Gender Paradigm to an Affirmation of the Excellence of Women", in *The Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern European Philosophy*, ed. by Karen Detlefsen and Lisa Shapiro (New York and London: Routledge, 2023), 381-395; Sandra Plastina and Eleonora Carinci, eds., *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Lugano: Agorà & Co., 2016). Sandra Plastina, "Considerar la mutatione dei tempi e delli stati e degli uomini: *Le Lettere di philosophia naturale* di Camilla Erculiani", *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 20, no. 1 (2014): 145-158.

in order to uncover the strategies employed by women authors to engage with scientific knowledge – a theme developed further in the second part of this contribution. Rather than offering a conventional conclusion, this article closes by highlighting the significance of a close, contextually grounded, reading of early modern paratextual sources for understanding women's contribution to culture, science, and knowledge in general.

Why paratexts?

The historical and theoretical significance of the paratext in representing women's contributions to knowledge deserves greater emphasis, as its strategic function proves to be underestimated. As scholars have noted, the paratext is "not only the text, but also the space",[17] suggesting that it offers more than mere textual framing; it creates a site for cultural and authorial negotiation, and innovation. Paratextual elements such as titles, dedicatory epistles, addresses to the reader, and *errata corrige* were composed according to strict rhetorical conventions rooted in manuscript culture and the classical tradition of letter writing. Paradoxically, these strict rhetorical rules make it possible to uncover private messages and authorial intentions that could not have been expressed or published elsewhere due to the cultural and literary conventions of the early modern period. The rhetorical rules of early modern dedicatory epistles, in particular, created space for implicit confession, authorial claim, and the use of subtle self-authorizing strategies that are rarely found in other literary forms.

In the context of female knowledge production in the Renaissance and especially in the sixteenth century, special attention should be given to addresses to readers (*a lettori*) and dedicatory epistles, particularly in light of their epistolary character. Recent scholarship emphasizes the importance of epistolary exchange to the circulation of scientific knowledge and the formation of intellectual networks. In the sixteenth century – a transitional period from manuscript to print – the epistolary form of book dedications emerged as a defining feature, making early modern dedicatory epistles a unique source for understanding authorial and cultural negotiation.

Women authors "had to explain themselves in order to create an audience receptive to their (that is, women's) work",[18] and the prefatory genre – which was shaped by the rhetorical conventions of apology and self-presentation – offered a strategic rhetorical framework for doing so. Emotions conveyed in these texts, shaped by cultural, religious, political, or ideological norms, often reflect broader gender expectations of the period, which

[17] Philiep Bossier and Rolien Scheffer, "Introduction", in *Soglie testuali: Funzioni del paratesto nel secondo Cinquecento e oltre* [*Textual Thresholds: Functions of Paratexts in the Late Sixteenth Century and Beyond*], ed. by Philiep Bossier and Rolien Scheffer (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2010), 16.

[18] Eckerle, "Prefacing Texts, Authorizing Authors, and Constructing Selves", 99-100.

Natalie Zemon Davis refers to as the 'gender system', allowing readers to discern prevailing moral and social codes. Authors referred to their gender and to prescribed female roles, using different strategies that exemplify a community's values regarding femininity and womanhood within the gender system. Natalie Zemon Davis defines the 'gender system' as "the patterns of social and political relations in which men and women were involved with each other, as expected by their gender… [and] symbolic systems of defining the 'masculine', and the 'feminine' at a given period"[19] At the same time, the commercial function of paratexts should not be overlooked: rhetorical and emotional language often operated as a persuasive device, serving not only the author's self-positioning but also the publisher's aim to support the book's success in a competitive print market.

Paratexts and the querelle des femmes

Renaissance dedicatory epistles were often written separately and added to the book later. They usually blend private messages with genre conventions, and not rarely, Renaissance dedicatory epistles and addresses to the reader offered women authors an ideal platform for defending their ideas, engaging in reflection and observation, and at times, expressing positions related to scientific discourse –sometimes within the boundaries of rhetorical convention, and at others, extending beyond them. Indeed, it may be convincingly argued that paratexts provided early modern women with a strategic space to assert intellectual authority, because "most early modern women writers recognized the value of the preface and exploited it for their own benefit, often to make arguments in defence of women that have no place in the primary texts but that, paradoxically, create the space in which those texts can be written".[20]

Between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the cultural debate about nature, status and worth of women, later named as the *querelle des femmes*, challenged the entrenched view of women. The *querelle des femmes* circulated not only across the Italian peninsula, but throughout other parts of Europe as well.[21] One of the first examples of

[19] Natalie Zemon Davis, *A Passion for History: Conversations with Denis Crouzet*, ed. Michael Wolfe, trans. Natalie Zemon Davis and Michael Wolfe, *Early Modern Studies* 4 (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2010), 115.

[20] Eckerle, "Prefacing Texts, Authorizing Authors, and Constructing Selves", 99.

[21] Although a comprehensive monograph on the *querelle des femmes* in early modern Italy has yet to be written, for selected studies see: Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400-1789", *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8, no. 1 (1982): 4-28; Margarete Zimmermann, "The Querelle des Femmes as Cultural Studies Paradigm", in *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anne Jacobson Schutte, *et al.* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2001), 17-29.

this literature was the *Book of the City of Ladies*,[22] 1405 by Christine de Pizan, which raised questions about gender equality that remain topical in the present. Both female and male authors engaged with emerging questions about gender roles, the intellectual and moral equality of the sexes, and women's position within society, often presenting arguments in defense of female equality – or even superiority – in relation to men.

At least three discernible tendencies can be identified in this debate on the role of women in society. First, some texts offer a direct response to specific attacks, in which the author (male or female) defends women by reacting to a particular case or insult. Second, some authors offer a broader defence of women in entire books – or in substantial dedicated sections of them – arguing for women's intellectual, moral, or social equality with men. Third, some works – in a variety of literary genres – include isolated examples intended to demonstrate either the equality or superiority of women. While treatises and dialogues were common formats for expressing arguments associated with the *querelle des femmes*, similar ideas also emerged in orations, declamations, poetry, pastoral plays, and letters – including, as this article emphasizes, in early modern dedicatory epistles and addresses to the reader of books not necessarily focused on the topic of women's intellectual, moral, or social equality with men.[23]

The *querelle des femmes* reached its peak in the Italian context during the sixteenth century, especially around mid-sixteenth century, within the literary academies of the Veneto region. Although the debate continued into the eighteenth century, "after 1630, it seems that the *querelle* in its original form had passed its climax".[24] Some female authors contributed to the debate by translating philosophical texts[25] (it should be noted that translation can also be understood as a form of paratexts),[26] other collected books and manuscripts, and notably, women began publicly to question accepted 'truths', authorities, and scien-

[22] Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea Books, 1982).

[23] See repertoire included in: Marina Zancan, *Nel cerchio della luna. Figure di donna in alcuni testi del XVI secolo* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1983), 236-264; for online repositories dedicated to the *querelle des femmes*, see, for example: a website devoted to the works of authors who contributed to the pro-woman side of the *querelle des femmes* debate in Italy and France, https://querelle.ca/ [accessed on 14 May 2025]; some male authors participating in the Italian *querelle des femmes* are represented in https://menforwomen.es/it/autori [accessed on 14 May 2025].

[24] Zimmermann, "The Querelle des Femmes as Cultural Studies Paradigm", 23.

[25] See Luisa Simonutti, "Invisibili traduttrici. Donne e scienza nella prima età moderna", in *Donne, filosofia della natura e scienza*, ed. by Delfina Giovannozzi and Emilio Maria De Tommaso (Roma: Iliesi Digitale, 2024), 132-154.

[26] See Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda M. Hosington, eds., *Thresholds of Translation. Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain (1473-1660)*, *Early Modern Literature in History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

tific paradigms."[27] Cassandra Fedele (1465-1558),[28] for example, advocated for women's rights to education, declaring that "even if the study of literature offers women no rewards or honors, I believe women must nonetheless pursue and embrace such studies alone for the pleasure and enjoyment they contain".[29]

Some scholars argue that the *querelle des femmes* should be seen as a literary genre devoid of thematic substance, little more than an exercise in logic, parody, and paradox.[30] It is true that some authors expressed pro-women ideas in one work, while voicing misogynist views in another; Lucrezia Marinella is a notable example, although her case should not be understood as straight forward reversal of pro-women ideas.[31] Nevertheless, the rhetorical character of the *querelle des femmes* remains evident. What should be emphasized is that, even if these texts were rhetorical exercises, their rhetoric was deeply rooted in the social, cultural, political, geographical, and moral norms of the time. Moreover, it is particularly important to note that the use of rhetoric by female authors within the *querelle des femmes* differs significantly from that of their male counterparts. Women authors often use inclusive language, referencing their personal position and socially prescribed gender roles. They employ a variety of rhetorical strategies that reflect the values and norms of their communities – *the gender system*. Finally, they reinterpret historical, medical, philosophical, and literary sources and authorities, in a substantially different way from male authors – they refer to their proper gender. As Sandra Plastina notes, women bring their own lived experience into history. Thus, their contribution to knowledge is inextricably

[27] On the Renaissance *querelle des femmes* and its intersections with scientific discourse, see: Gianna Pomata, "Was There a Querelle des Femmes in Early Modern Medicine?", *Arenal* 20, no. 2 (2013): 334-335 and Meredith K. Ray, "Prescriptions for Women: Alchemy, Medicine and the Renaissance Querelle des Femmes", in *Women Writing Back/Writing Women Back*, ed. by Anke Gilleir, Alicia Montjoy, and Susan van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 135-162.

[28] From the fifteenth century, among the women who contributed to humanist knowledge and advocated for women's rights, apart from Fedele, there are: Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466) and Laura Cereta (1449-1499), to mention a few.

[29] Cassandra Fedele, *Letters and Orations*, ed. and trans. by Diana M. Robin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 162.

[30] See Francine Daenens, "Superiore perché inferiore: Il paradosso della superiorità della donna in alcuni trattati italiani del Cinquecento", in *Trasgressione tragica e norma domestica. Esemplari di tipologie femminili dalla letteratura europea*, ed. by Vanna Gentili (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1983).

[31] On this topic see: Stephen Kolsky, "Moderata Fonte, Lucrezia Marinella, Giuseppe Passi: An Early Seventeenth-Century Feminist controversy", *The Modern Language Review* 96, no. 4 (2001): 973-989; Amy Sinclair, "Latin in Lucrezia Marinella's *Essortationi alle donne* (1645): Subverting the Voice of Authority", in *City, Court, Academy: Language Choice in Early Modern Italy*, ed. by Eva del Soldato and Andrea Rizzi (London: Routledge, 2017), 117-134. Compare also: Lucrezia Marinella, *Exhortations to Women and Others if They Please*, ed. and trans. by Laura Benedetti (Toronto: Iter Inc. and Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012).

linked to their embodied, gendered existence, and the experience that they bring to it.[32]

The writings produced within the context of the *querelle des femmes* drew upon at least five key sources that were considered authoritative – and largely uncontested – for centuries, in some cases even into the present day.[33] Paradoxically, the same sources, and often the same arguments, were invoked to support both the superiority and the inferiority of women.[34] Authors such as Aristotle, with his essentialist views on gender[35]; Galen of Pergamon, Hippocrates, and Aristotle for medicine and humoral theory; Plato, particularly in dialogues such as *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo*, and *Symposium*, where the beauty of the body is linked to the beauty of the soul; Neoplatonic ideas advanced by Marsilio Ficino; Christian thought and the principle of *sola scriptura*; and Roman law, were often reinforced by historical examples, etymology, and a rhetorical appeal to so-called "common sense". Science, within the *querelle des femmes* debate, is particularly visible in the reliance on Galenic medicine and humoral theory. Although some participants in the debate were scholars with formal or informal education in medicine and philosophy, the majority referenced widely recognized authorities and influential texts of the time; therefore, their status as original scientific inquiry should be questioned.

The sixteenth century holds particular significance for this analysis. It was often referred to as the 'feminine century', as Tommaso Campanella called it.[36] Virginia Cox argues out that the common notion that the Counter-Reformation was "programmatically misogynistic and [involved the] silencing of women" should be reconsidered. She states: "Strikingly, it is during this period of Italian cultural history, that we first find treatises on women's 'nobility and excellence' being published by clerics rather than laymen."[37] The 'feminine century' was, therefore, a period marked by the Counter-Reformation, the expansion of print culture, and, crucially, the vernacular translation of key philosophical texts by Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch.[38] The end of the sixteenth century, especially, brought

[32] See Plastina, "Italian Women Philosophers in the Sixteenth Century", 381-396.

[33] For a short, but very useful overview, see the introduction to the series by King and Rabil, Jr., "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Introduction to the Series", in *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*, vii- xxvi.

[34] See: Sandra Plastina, *Mollezza della carne e sottigliezza dell'ingegno: la natura della donna nel Rinascimento europeo* (Roma: Carocci, 2017). Among other studies, I would also like to mention my article dedicated to this topic, see: Jelena Bakić, "Girolamo Camerata and the *Querelle Des Femmes* between Discourse and Paradox", *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 46, no. 3/4 (2023): 191-216.

[35] See: Allen Prudence, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 BC–AD 1250* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1985).

[36] Mentioned in Plastina, "Italian Women Philosophers in the Sixteenth Century", 72.

[37] Virginia Cox, *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 9.

[38] See a searchable catalogue of Aristotelian works written or published in Italian between 1400

major changes when gender and scientific communities are taken into consideration. The engagement of nuns with natural philosophy reveals their often-overlooked participation in scientific and intellectual culture.[39] As Sandra Plastina points out, thanks to the new discoveries in science, Aristotelian natural philosophy showed its limitations, and women writers such as Moderata Fonte, Maddalena Campiglia, Camilla Eruculiani, Margherita Sarocchi, and Lucrezia Marinella incorporated arguments from natural philosophy into their works. Plastina writes:

> These women philosophers, through their works, placed themselves on an equal footing with their male contemporaries, opposing their theories with vigor and conviction and denouncing their clear contradictions. The writings of these women philosophers show they were conscious of the difficulty they faced in making their voices heard, as well as the conviction they had in their ideas and their determination in introducing these ideas in contemporary scientific discourse.[40]

Natural philosophy, in its broadest sense, was shaped by Aristotelian thought, and influenced by Hippocrates' humoral theory and Galen's reinterpretation of it. It was also informed by Platonic philosophy and by various occult sciences, including the cabala, magic, astrology, and alchemy. A key figure in the development of Aristotelian logic was Giacomo Zabarella (1533-1589), whose *Opera Logicae* (1578) and *Tabula Logicae* (1580) emphasize the necessity of Aristotelian method for understanding the natural world, advocating for "a productive relationship between observed experience and procedures of knowing".[41]

Apart from Camilla Greghetta Herculiana who engaged in philosophical and medical debates through her published letters, notably in *Lettere di filosofia naturale* (1584), two names are particularly important where natural philosophy penned by women authors is concerned: Moderata Fonte (1555-1592) and Lucrezia Marinella (1571-1653). Moderata Fonte advices in the second day of *Il merito delle donne* (*The Worth of Women*) that "it is best to ignore the foolish suggestions of many people who are not doctors by profession

and 1650: https://vari.warwick.ac.uk [last accessed 12 May 2025]. The importance of vernacular in approaching natural philosophy is analysed in Letizia Panizza, "Alessandro Piccolomini's Mission: Philosophy for Men and Women in their Mother's Tongue", in *Interpreting Aristotle from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Luca Bianchi, Stephen Gilson, and Jill Kraye (London: The Warburg Institute, 2016).

39 Sharon T. Strocchia, "The nun apothecaries of Renaissance Florence: marketing medicines in the convent", *Renaissance Studies* 25, no. 5 (2011): 627-647.

40 Plastina, "Italian Women Philosophers in the Sixteenth Century", 382.

41 Mentioned in Erculiani, *Letters on Natural Philosophy*, 20. See foreword by Paula Findlen, 1-49.

and are completely ignorant of natural philosophy".[42] Her ideas expressed in the second part of her work represent, in the words of Virginia Cox, "a symbolic first step toward the task of empowering women by equipping them with the kind of practical and theoretical knowledge of the world from which they had been traditionally excluded by their inadequate education".[43] Lucrezia Marinella, a "supreme expert in moral and natural philosophy",[44] in her treatise *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne* (*The Nobility and Excellence of Women*), 1600,[45] argues for the moral and intellectual superiority of women, using knowledge that comes from natural philosophy. Although, as concluded by Cox, Fonte's *Merito* and Marinella's works are quite different in structure, they are connected with the main idea that "knowledge is empowering and that women's exclusion from 'science' lies at the root of their subjection to men".[46] Apart from these, contributions to the field include the letters by Margherita Sarocchi (1540-1591),[47] Caterina Sforza's (1463-1509) *Gli Experimenti*, Isabella Cortese's *I segreti della signora Isabella Cortese* (1561), dedicated to the nobleman from Dubrovnik Mario Caboga.[48] These texts demonstrate the various ways in which women participated in and shaped scientific culture in the early modern period.

Among these, the paratextual material of Marinella's works is interesting because it is "abstract and intellectual in tone,"[49] and for her explicit and firm intent to contradict authorities, not only Aristotle, but also Tasso, Speroni, and Boccaccio. Lucrezia Marinella dedicates her *La nobilità et l'eccellenza* (1601) to physician and philosopher Luciano Scarano (1540-1610), and positions herself alongside established scholars within the intellectual discourse of her time to reinforce her intellectual authority.[50] In this work she reacts strongly against Aristotelian philosophy and gender prejudice. In the address to the reader of her epic poem *Enrico, or Byzantium Conquered* (1635), Marinella explains the process behind the composition of her work by referencing Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Metaphysics*. She writes: "I aimed to fashion my poem according to Aristotle's directions in his

[42] Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men*, ed. and trans. Virginia Cox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 184.

[43] Cox, "Introduction", in *ibid.*, 10.

[44] Cristofano Bronzini, *Della dignità, et nobiltà delle donne. Dialogo di Cristofano Bronzini d'Ancona, Diviso in quattro settimane; e ciascheduna di esse in sei giornate* (Firenze: Zanobi Pignoni, 1625), 82.

[45] Lucrezia Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men*, ed. and trans. by Anne Dunhill, introduction by Letizia Panizza (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[46] Cox, *Prodigious Muse, Women's Writing in Counter-Reformation Italy*, 238.

[47] See: Meredith K. Ray, *Margherita Sarrocchi's letters to Galileo. Astronomy, astrology and poetics in seventeenth century Italy* (London-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[48] See: Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*, 14-46.

[49] Plastina, "Italian Women Philosophers in the Sixteenth Century.", 389.

[50] See Laura Nocito, "Ai margini della letteratura femminile: per un primo approccio alle dediche di poetesse nel Cinquecento", in *Margini. Giornale della dedica e altro*, 3 (2009).

Poetics, without straying far from Homer, whom Aristotle called the living and true ideal of heroic poetry".[51] In *The Life of the Virgin Mary, Empress of the Universe* (1602),[52] Marinella continues her critical approach to Aristotle expressed in *La Nobilità e l'Eccellenza delle Donne,* and writes in her address to readers a clear explanation of her knowledge production. What is obvious in this four-page dedicatory epistle is the absence of the topos of modesty, and clear references to authors such as Ficino and Plato.

During the seventeenth century, the Jewish woman intellectual Sarra Copia Sullam (1592-1641) used the dedicatory epistle as a means of asserting her philosophical and theological stance. In her 1621 *Manifesto di Sarra Copia Sulam,*[53] she refutes accusations of denying the immortality of the soul – allegations she attributes to Baldassarre Bonifacio.[54] Dedicated to her deceased father, the *Manifesto* serves not only as a defense of her beliefs but also as a compelling example of how personal experience can function as a rhetorical strategy. In Venice, Arcangela Tarabotti (1604-1652) offered a powerful critique of patriarchal control in her invective against the forced enclosure of daughters in convents. Her dedicatory letter in *Paternal Tiranny*, 1654, addressed to God and framed explicitly as "a matter of moral duty"[55] provides a unique window into the paratextual strategies early modern women employed to claim intellectual and moral authority. It provides unique

[51] Lucrezia Marinella, *Enrico; or Bysantium Conquered. A Heroic Poem*, ed. and trans. Maria Galli Stampino (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 77.

[52] On this dedicatory letter and Aristotle see: Bryan Brazeau, "'Defying Gravity': Prose Epic and Heroic Style in Lucrezia Marinella's 1602 *Vita di Maria Vergine*", *Classical Receptions Journal* 13, no. 1 (2021): 107-125; and also (but not specifically on Aristotle) Eleonora Carinci, "Una riscrittura di Pietro Aretino: La vita di Maria Vergine di Lucrezia Marinella e le sue fonti", *The Italianist* 33 (2013): 361-389. On Marinella and Aristotle see also Eleonora Carinci's chapter, "Lucrezia Marinella e Aristotele: *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne* (1601) e *Le Essortazioni alle donne et agli altri* (1645)", in *Rinascimento Veneto, Rinascimento europeo*, ed. by Romana Bassi (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2020), 145-161. Although the dedicatory epistle is not translated, see: Lucrezia Marinella's *Life of the Virgin Mary, Empress of the Universe*, in *Who is Mary? Three Early Modern Women on the Idea of the Virgin Mary.* By Vittoria Colonna, Chiara Matraini, and Lucrezia Marinella., ed. and trans. by Susan Haskins (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 119-247.

[53] Sarra Copia Sulam, *Jewish poet and intellectual in seventeenth-century Venice: the works of Sarra Copia Sulam in verse and prose, along with writings of her contemporaries in her praise, condemnation, or defense*, ed. and trans. Don Harrán (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 2009). On Sara Copio Sullam see: Lynn Lara Westwater, *Sarra Copia Sulam: A Jewish Salonniére and the Press in Counter-Reformation Venice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).

[54] For an audio-visual representation of the addressee the reader, I would refer to the online exhibition I made in collaboration with Daniela Zambaldi and Alena Dziedzitz: https://parityinrenaissance.net/exhibition/ [last accessed 14 May 2025].

[55] "per obbligo di buona conscienza", see: Arcangela Tarabotti, *Paternal Tyranny*, ed. and trans. Letizia Panizza (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 39.

material for understanding the importance of paratexts in approaching women's contributions to knowledge in the early modern period.

However, as the main aim of this article is to discuss late-sixteenth-century female contributions to the natural philosophy within the *querelle des femmes*, we should start with one of the most interesting examples that enter scientific debates through the dedicatory epistle. The name of Maria Gondola (Marija Gundulić, c. 1557-after 1585) is found twice in texts belonging to the corpus of sixteenth-century Ragusan (Dubrovnik) literature written in Italian.[56] She first appears as one of two female interlocutors in a book of Neoplatonist dialogues, *Dialoghi* (1581),[57] written by her husband Nicolò Vito di Gozze (Nikola Vitov Gučetić). A year later, in 1582, Maria Gondola's name appeared in print at the end of her dedicatory epistle, as the author-dedicator to another book by her husband, *Discorsi sopra le Metheore d'Aristotele* (1584).[58] The book of dialogues, *Discorsi*, written by Di Gozze, is divided into four parts (four days) and represents a discussion about topics from Aristotle's *Meteorology*, such as the characteristics of the elements, stars, comets, and atmospheric states in general. The interlocutors in the dialogue are the author and Michele Monaldi.[59] This book had two editions, the second one appearing a year later in 1585, with a revised dedicatory text, one and a half pages shorter. The dedicatory epistle is signed by Maria Gondola, and dated 15th July 1582. Both books were written by Nicolò Vito di Gozze, a philosopher, statesman, and writer. In this dedicatory epistle, 1582, Gondola not only defends and praises Fiore Zuzzori (Cvijeta Zuzorić), a woman living at the time of publication without political or economic power, but also introduces "present dis-

[56] For a detailed analysis – including a full transcription of the text, selection and an in-depth commentary on the rewritten sections, an English translation of this dedicatory epistle – please refer to my doctoral dissertation: Bakić, *Defence from the Margin*. Eleonora Carinci, in Plastina and Carinci, eds., *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento*, presents a transcription and analysis of the same dedicatory epistle. While there is a significant overlap between her findings and the results of my PhD research, such similarities are perhaps to be expected when working on the same sources. Please note that throughout this article all references and interpretations are based exclusively on material and findings of my PhD dissertation: Bakić, *Defense from the Margin*. For an important recent discussion on Gondola's dedicatory epistle in Croatian, see: Maria Gabrielli, "Dinamike intertekstualnosti u posvetnoj poslanici Marije Gundulić: Camerata, Guevarra i Sannazaro", *Književna smotra* 56, no. 213(3) (2024): 71-106, available at: https://hrcak.srce.hr/322260 (last accessed 27 August 2025).

[57] Nicolò Vito di Gozze, *Dialogo Della Bellezza Detto Antos, Secondo la mente di Platone* (Venezia: Francesco Ziletti, 1581).

[58] Nicolò Vito di Gozze, *Discorsi di M. Nicolò Vito di Gozze, gentil'huomo ragugeo, Dell'Academia de gli occulti, sopra le Metheore d'Aristotele, Ridotti in dialogo & divisi in quattro giornate* (Venezia: Francesco Ziletti, 1585).

[59] On Monaldi see: Borna Treska, "The *Rime* of Miho Monaldi, or the Fate of a Book", *Colloquia Maruliana* 32 (2023), 243-245; Ljerka Schiffler, *Miho Monaldi: Ličnost i djelo* (Zagreb: Odjel za Povijest Filozofije, Centar za Povijesne Znanosti u Zagrebu [Sveučilišna Naklada Liber], 1984).

courses on the protection, or defence of the female sex".[60]

This dedicatory epistle is important because of at least three important facts: it rather introduces the other book, published one year before, namely Di Gozze's Neoplatonist dialogues, *Dialoghi* (1581), it is the only contribution to the debate of *querelle des femmes* in Italian from the eastern shore of the Adriatic; and it is a kind of literary mosaic, as Gondola rewrote the words of the other authors, namely by the Sicilian physician Girolamo Camerata (c.1567) and by Spanish bishop and author Antonio de Guevara (c. 1481-1545). Additionally, this dedicatory epistle attracted significant attention in the first half of the 20th century, because one part of the dedicatory epistle was cut from the text in the second book's edition.[61] The second, revised version of the dedicatory text is dated March 27th, 1585, when the second edition of the book was published. The first version of the dedicatory epistle (signed in 1582, and published in 1584) is thirteen pages long, and the next edition from 1585 is shortened by 1.5 pages – precisely 430 words. These 430 words were simply cut from the body of the text, and then at the end a different date is provided. The place and the dedicator in both editions are the same: Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and Maria Gondola.

At the outset, Gondola grounds her argument in personal relationships and intellectual influences, citing Aristotle, and two interlocutors in the dialogue: her husband, and the Dubrovnik-born poet and philosopher Michele Monaldi (c. 1540-1592). She writes: "Being introduced by my husband to the discourses on Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, which he conducted in these days with the very gentle Michele Monaldi. He is never praised enough for the wisdom of his soul, nor for his very gentle customs […]".[62]

Although her words are rewritten from the works by Girolamo Camerata, Antonio De Guevarra and as shown by Gabrielli, characterized by multiple echoes of Sannazaro's pastoral novel *Arcadia* (1504), they are authored by Maria Gondola. She assumes responsibility for the text of the dedication to this book about natural philosophy, written by her husband. To have somebody else sign the dedication of the book was a common practice, but usually it was somebody from the press, or a relative, in the case of the death of the writer. Here we have a rather atypical case, the wife of a living author, who in fact did rewrite the words of the other authors. However, rewriting practice, in Renaissance context is mainly understood as producing knowledge, and this fact does not diminish her authorship.[63]

Gondola delves into Aristotle's *Historia animalium* (which regards women as imper-

60 Maria Gondola, "To a woman no less beautiful than she is virtuous and gentle, Fiore Zuzori, in Ragusa", in Di Gozze, *Discorsi di M. Nicolò Vito di Gozze*, f. 1v.

61 See Bakić, *Defence from the Margin*; Carinci, *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento*.

62 All translations of this dedicatory epistle are my own. See Gondola, "To a woman no less beautiful", in Di Gozze, *Discorsi*, f. 1v.

63 On rewriting practices and authorship in Italian Renaissance see: Paolo Cherchi, *Polimatia di riuso: Mezzo secolo di plagio (1539-1589)* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1998); Paolo Cherchi, ed., *Sondaggi sulla riscrittura del Cinquecento* (Ravenna: Longo Editore Ravenna, 1998).

fect men) and his *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* (in which nature is held to determine female submission to men). Gondola argues that it is impossible to say that one sex, either male or female, is superior. Her resolution to defend women's aptitude for science is made explicit in the following passage, with direct reference to Aristotle's idea of female passiveness, exemplified by his statement that "nature does not assign defensive weapons to any female creature". Gondola writes:

> and many will wonder what the reason was which made me extract these present discourses on the protection, or defense of the female sex, considering maybe that, as *we are not capable of wielding weapons because of our nature, in the same manner we also lack knowledge of the sciences, and awareness about things in general*, and that we are far away from the customs of moral virtues, a thought which did not reach men from anywhere else other than from their affections…[64]

To prove her statement, in line with the main rhetoric of the *querelle des femmes*, Gondola refers to Plato's *Phaedrus*, claiming that "the beauty of the soul is the beauty of the body; Plato in his Phaedrus shows this very clearly: which is easily persuaded through reason, because in well-formed matter, the form performs better its operations".[65] Reasoning, as an approach to getting to know the truth is pointed out throughout the dedicatory epistle. In the following examples, Gondola reuses Camerata's original text, employing inclusive language and situating it within a different context. These adaptations offer a meaningful contribution to knowledge:

> [Regarding] the beauty of the body (which is the real matter of our soul) being an effect of the proportion of the bodily humours, and of their regulation in forming virtue, it is surely possible to say that the soul in a well-formed body is more virtuous in its operations; where it is clearly known, that the beauty of the body is a sign of the beauty of the soul; and with no doubt, the body of our sex is more beautiful than that of the male sex;[66]

It is important to observe that, although Gondola refers to unquestioned authorities, she introduces her experiential knowledge, as she refers to the knowledge gained through direct learning, rewriting again Camerata's original text:

> and if men would like to deny that our beauty surpasses that of their bodies, a single eye affirms and shows the opposite, because we are the ones lacking in hair, which makes them

64 Gondola, "To a woman no less beautiful", f. 3v. All italics in quoted material are mine.
65 *Ibid.*
66 *Ibid.*, f. 4r.

> appear wild, and painted by nature in white and red colours. [67]

Accepting Aristotle's version of humoral theory, that moist and cold humours correspond to women, and dry and hot ones to men, Gondola manages to invert the meaning, and come to the conclusion that women are not only equal with men, but better than them.[68] She continues, drawing knowledge from humoral theory, and Aristotle, writing:

> where *Aristotle s*aid that those who are made of *tender flesh are more inclined to mental work,* because the soul operates upon the corporeal instrument, the *constitution when tender, that is to say, humid and hot, or humid and cold, is more apt to receive that which is not possible when the constitution is dry and hot, as it is in the male sex:* by this mechanism, therefore, it is concluded that women are more perfect than men.[69]

Gondola continues: "Moreover it is clear, that our sex is more mentally capable of grasping the forms of intelligence, which the male cannot do, because the female constitution is more tender, *which is also proved by the senses*, as they have a humid temper… and the truthfulness of this consideration is confirmed by many ancient women, who were wise, both in Rome and in Greece".[70]

Gondola does not question that men are closer to dryness and hotness, and women to coldness and moistness. However, according to Gondola, a more temperate complexion and weakness made women more stable and more apt to understand, and since knowledge comes through the senses, women are in a better position to understand intellectual things, and logically they are more intelligent, therefore superior. The same argument rewritten by Gondola, is used by Girolamo Camerata in his tenth argument proving women's superiority.[71] According to Plastina, this kind of argument should be understood as turning the Aristotelian paradigm upside-down.[72]

> Now, don't you see, that the nature of our sex does not lack the capacity to make us not only ready, and also suitable to weapons, as it did to letters, and that the strength of the soul appears in us, no less than in men; and we are more disposed to these effects, to which men are not, if we want to believe to our reason; because it is clear, if this disposition proceeded from the essence of soul not being the same kind as the male one, we would be ready for all these

67 *Ibid*.
68 This is, however, common argument in a pro-women literature. On this topic see Plastina, *Mollezza della carne e sottigliezza dell'ingegno*.
69 Gondola, "To a woman no less beautiful", f. 4v.
70 *Ibid*.
71 See Bakić, "Girolamo Camerata and the *Querelle Des Femmes*", 191-216.
72 Plastina, "Considerar la mutatione dei tempi", 14.

> effects, not less, which are active in men; but as the diversity in this disposition to weapons, and to letters, proceeds from the diversity of constitutions: we have the temperate constitution, and when compared with ours we can say that the male's constitution is intemperate, ours has greater convenience in everything, which the intemperate does not have, as the means are closer to the two extremes, and not to one or the other; where it appears that we have a better disposition for what men are disposed to, which are weapons; what men have not is the thing to which we are disposed, that is, letters; and if we want to cede partially to men, that they are braver, and pluckier, from this it does not follow that they are more perfect; because we are inclined to more perfect things, which are the excellent disciplines of the intellect, more so than men, as we have a more perfect and more temperate sensibility.[73]

To prove female excellence in learning and science, Gondola provides a list of women who were known to have contributed to science, using examples of knowledgeable women found in other works written in the context of the *querelle des femmes*. Over six pages of Gondola's dedicatory text, she provides fifteen examples of illustrious women from the history of ancient Rome and Greece,[74] which she presents as proofs of female genius and equality or superiority. She explains why this list is important, stating: "I believe there should be some encomia to women in order to shut the mouths of those who are their detractors, and open their eyes to reason".[75]

> Still I leave Cornelia, the mother of Gracchi, who in Rome was very well known, but was more honoured for the sciences she read in Rome, than for the successes of her sons in Africa, who once was asked by a certain Roman, what was her greater honour, to see herself as a master of so many disciples, or to be mother of many children; Cornelia answered, I pride myself more for the science I learned, that for the children I bore; because children maintain honour only during life, whereas disciples affirm fame perpetually after death.[76]

[73] Gondola, "To a woman no less beautiful", f. 6v.

[74] The exemplary women from the past are all rewritten from the influential book by Antonio De Guevara, *Libro di Marco Aurelio con l'horologio de principi* (Venezia: Francesco Portonaris, 1568). They are: Arete of Cyrene (fourth century B.C.), a philosopher; Themistoclea or Theoclea, who lived in the sixth century B.C., a priestess at Delphi; Carmenta, a goddess of childbirth and prophecy; Lastheneia of Mantinea, one of Plato's female students; Myrtis of Anthedon, an ancient Greek poet; Cornificia (c. 85-40 B.C.) a Roman poetess; Laelia the daughter of Gaius Laelius Sapiens (185-115 B.C); Cornelia Africana (c. 189-110 B.C.), Roman princess; Cloelia (around 506 B.C); Porcia Catonis (c. 70 B.C); Aretaphila of Cyrene (c. 50 B.C.); Camma, a Galatian princess and priestess of Artemis; Cornelia Africana (*c.*189–110 B.C.), Roman princess, mother of Gracchi brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. For a detailed analysis of this part I would refer to my doctoral thesis:-Bakic, 2017.

[75] Gondola, "To a woman no less beautiful", f. 3v.

[76] *Ibid*., f. 5r.

On 25 February 1584, late in the "feminine century", another female author, Camilla Herculiana (Erculiani) writes in her dedication to Queen Anna of Poland: "I wanted, through my studies, to let the world know that we, like men, are capable in all areas of knowledge".[77] Her writing belongs to the *querelle des femmes* but is less rhetorical than Gondola's.[78] In her addressee to readers, Herculiana writes that everyone "with good judgment and without prejudice" should understand that times changed, and that "women do not lack the foresight and virtues that men have". [79] Expressing her own opinion, she writes: "I won't hide the fact that I have read several authors and reflected on their definitions, and our own opinion can be expressed, once I too, duly impressed by their ingenuity and their various opinions, undertook to write down my own thinking".[80]

Herculiana announces her work on the virtue of the soul, a topic which would need a privileged reader, "it will seem without doubt difficult to prove this to anyone, though to intelligent people it will not seem a thing beyond truth".[81] The matter of the soul was very topical in the Renaissance. It was discussed in *Phaedo,* and commented by Sebastiano Erizzo in his *Commento nel Fedone*, published together with Plato's *Dialogues*. In Plato's *Dialogues*, the immortality of the soul is contrasted with the mortality of the body. The condition of the soul, he suggests, is shaped by the way one lives, and intellectual growth is closely tied to the soul's purity. In this view, the cultivation of the intellect is intrinsically linked to the cultivation of the soul.

In the address to the reader of her only published book, *Letters*, Herculiana writes:

> And I would also like to explain what is the nature of the soul, if it pleases God, and in other letters to expound what, and where, and when, and with which characteristics our soul is generated. It will seem without a doubt difficult to prove this to anyone, though to intelligent people, it will not seem a thing beyond truth. And this other work will be published a short time after the present letters, if it happens that these few lines are acceptable to you and received with the same goodwill that I bring to their publication.[82]

77 Eleonora Carinci, "Una 'speziala' padovana: *Lettere di philosophia naturale di Camilla Erculiani* (1584)", *Italian studies* 68, no. 2 (2013): 202-229. Camilla Herculiana, *Lettere di philosophia naturale, di Camilla Herculiana, speciala alle tre stelle in Padoua, indirizzate alla serenissima Regina di Polonia: nella quale si tratta la natural causa delli diluuij, et il natural temperamento dell'huomo, et la natural formatio* (Krakow: stamperia di Lazaro, 1584). Erculiani, *Letters on Natural Philosophy*, 110. Discussed also in Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*, 141-131.

78 See Jelena Bakić, "Camilla Herculiana (Erculiani): Private Practices of Knowledge Production", in *Women's Private Practices of Knowledge Production in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Natacha Klein Kafer, Natália da Silva Perez (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 43-72.

79 Camilla Herculiana, "To Readers", in Erculiani, *Letters on Natural Philosophy*, 111.

80 *Ibid*., 112.

81 *Ibid*.

82 *Ibid*., 111-112. For an audio-visual representation of this part see the online catalogue of the

Unfortunately, her other work has never been identified. Between 1585 and 1588[83] Herculiana was questioned by the Inquisition because of the ideas in her only published book. A defence based on the proceedings of the trial is documented over four pages in "Consilium DCCLXVI", in a book by Jacopo Menochio, *Consiliorum sive responsarum* (1604).[84] Since Camilla refers clearly to her work in her defense, the text of a defence based on the proceedings of the Inquisitorial trial should be understood as an epitext, and included in paratextual analysis. What is valuable about Menochio's written testimony is the fact that some of Herculiana's answers are written in Italian in the form of direct speech, the common praxis in the proceedings of inquisitorial trials. She defended herself by insisting on the fact that she wrote philosophically. According to Menochio, Herculiana stated: "I respond to these words that, since man was made from four elements, he could not live eternally, speaking in terms of natural philosophy",[85] insisting that it was possible to discuss all those things in a philosophical way. Another of her answers is also reported in direct speech:

> These are things that are disputable in philosophy [...] speaking philosophically, I tell you, that one can never determine a thing to be true [...] In theology, I turn always to Sacred Scripture, and I affirm that the Flood and death came about because of sin ... As I have already said, speaking theologically, I affirm that sin was the cause of the death of man ... I spoke philosophically."[86]

When she was asked about the fact that her book of letters was written against the opinion of the theologians and the council, Herculiana responded: "I say that these ideas are disputes that are habitually made in philosophy, and this is how I intend to speak".[87] Menochio mentions that there was a second interrogation wherein she provided the following answer: "I explained, speaking in terms of natural philosophy, that a flood can both be universal and natural, and at the same time miraculous."[88] This strategy of defense, a double-truth, that the expressed ideas should be connected only with philosophy and not with real belief, is also found in the documentation saved from Giordano Bruno's trial,[89] as

PARITY catalogue: https://parityinrenaissance.net/exhibition/

83 The *consilium* was first mentioned and analised in Carinci, "Una 'speziala' padovana" and further discussed and translated in English in Erculiani, *Letters on Natural Philosophy*.

84 *Ibid*., 162.

85 *Ibid*.

86 *Ibid*.

87 *Ibid*.

88 *Ibid*., 164.

89 On Giordano Bruno's trial see: Luigi Firpo, *Il processo di Giordano Bruno*, ed. by Diego Guaglioni (Roma: Salerno editrice, 1993).

well as in many others who were sentenced to death.[90]

Within the context of the *querelle des femmes*, paratextual strategies, and contributions to early modern science, the name of Giulia Bigolina (c.1518-c.1569) emerges as significant. Her work – never printed and surviving only in manuscript[91] – is entitled *Urania*, and is dedicated "to the magnificent and excellent doctor of law in Padua, Signor Bartolomeo Salvatico".[92] The name Urania was common in pastoral literature; for example, in Maddalena Campiglia's *Flori*,[93] Urania is a nymph. Yet Urania also evokes the muse of astronomy, traditionally depicted in a light blue dress adorned with stars and holding a globe; a characterization that allowed the Neoplatonists to play with the distinction between a divine, contemplative Aphrodite Urania, the inspirer of divine love, and an Aphrodite Pandemos, her terrestrial counterpart.[94]

Bigolina's dedicatory epistle – and indeed the entire text – reveals her engagement with Neoplatonic philosophy. Like Gondola, Bigolina was one of the female interlocutors within the Neoplatonic dialogue tradition.[95] In this paratext, she refers explicitly to the relationship between goodness and beauty:

> Since the image can then represent only material things to the intellect, through the sight, and since we have two eyes, there are then two things extracted from the image and represented to the intellect, namely, the good and the beautiful. The good, being more appropriate to the nature of the intellect than the beautiful, passes directly through it, whereas the beautiful, more disjoined from its nature, is appropriated for the most part from the imaginative side, which partakes of all the senses more than any other power of the soul. The beautiful stops there only long enough to become able to ascend to the intellect. After having considered the beautiful in itself, the intellect makes of it the concept it most prefers, whether it likes it or not. If it likes the thing known and desired, the intellect sends it to the

90 On "double truth" see Craig Martin, *Subverting Aristotle: Religion, History and Philosophy in Early Modern Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

91 The manuscript is saved in Biblioteca Trivulziana, in Milano: Cod. Triv. 88, available at: https://graficheincomune.comune.milano.it/graficheincomune/immagine/Cod.+Triv.+88,+piatto+anteriore [last accessed 14 May 2025].

92 Giulia Bigolina, *Urania. A Romance*, ed. and trans. Valeria Finucci, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2005). See also: Sandra Plastina, "Ritrovandomi in termine di dover da me stessa la propria ragion difendere e sostenere: *Urania* di Giulia Bigolina", *Bruniana & Campanelliana: Ricerche filosofiche e materiali storicotestuali* 27, no. 1/2 (2021): 433-446.

93 See: Maddalena Campiglia, *Flori. A Pastoral Drama: a Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans.Virginia Cox and Lisa Sampson, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

94 Bigolina, *Urania. A Romance*, 16.

95 Mario Melechini, "A ragionar d'Amore", mentioned in *ibid.*, 16, 8.

> memory to be kept; if it does not, it banishes it and rejects it.[96]

The main ideas of Neoplatonism, rooted in Plato's *Phaedrus, Phaedo* (*On the Soul*), and *Symposium*, came to early modern writers through the revival of translation from Greek, and mostly, as already mentioned, through the work done by Marsilio Ficino and his commentary on the *Symposium* (between 1480 and 1489).[97] In the doctrine of Neoplatonism, love is understood as the desire for beauty, which can be found in three aspects: the beauty of the body, perceived by the eye; the beauty of the voice, perceived by the ear; and the beauty of the soul, which can be perceived only by the mind.[98] The beauty of the body should never be put before the beauty of the mind, according to Neoplatonists. Love is strictly connected with goodness,[99] which represents the splendour of divine beauty. Perfection in a human being could be internal (which is the goodness of the soul) or external (the beauty of the body). Anyone who has both characteristics is called a blessed person.[100] Two people who love each other want to enjoy beauty (*pulcritudine*), and there are four ways to do so, which includes owning four characteristics: "prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance".[101]

> Now if the image represents only the beautiful or the good to the intellect, I do not know what beautiful or good thing is in you that you want your image to represent to that young man, since you never have done anything worthy enough to move a noble soul. I do not want to talk of the beautiful any further with you, since I judge that one should leave an image only for the good and never for the beautiful because truly the beautiful is too vain and lewd in itself.[102]

These two passages by Bigolina can be read as offering an account of aesthetic judgment informed by Neoplatonic thought and natural philosophy. Physical beauty is por-

[96] *Ibid*., 16, 80.

[97] Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). Apart from his comments on Plato's *Symposium*, *De amore*, his most important and widely read and translated books during the early modern period are: *De vita*, *De voluptate*, *De Christiana Religione*, and *Theologia Platonica*. See: Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life* (*De vita libri tres*), ed. and trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1989). See also: Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium* (*Commentarium… in convivium Platonis de amore*), ed. and trans. Sears Reynolds Jayne (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1944).

[98] Marsilio Ficino, *El libro dell'amore*, ed. by Sandra Niccoli (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1987), 14-16.

[99] *Ibid*., 19.

[100] *Ibid*., 76.

[101] *Ibid*., 68.

[102] Bigolina, *Urania. A Romance*, 80.

trayed as inferior to the beauty of the soul and intellect. Only the good is deemed worthy of the intellect's attention, as it alone contributes to the elevation of the soul and gaining the true knowledge.

Conclusion: toward further research questions

Rather than offering a definitive closure, this discussion invites further reflection on the cultural roles of paratexts and the recovery of women's early modern voices. In the early modern period, paratexts served as a distinctive and strategic public space for authorial self-assertion – particularly for women. Early women writers adeptly exploited the preface's "marginality" and epistolary form, turning these liminal spaces into powerful platforms for self-representation. This space functioned not simply as an introduction, but as a venue into the world of print – a world from which most women remained excluded. Through the use of dedicatory epistles and addresses to the reader, women writers engaged in acts of self-promotion, demonstrating rhetorical skills, classical learning, or practical experience. While the rhetorical nature of the *querelle des femmes* is undeniable, it is crucial to recognize that these texts signed by women were not merely rhetorical exercises but rather deeply embedded in the gender system of the time. These paratexts allowed women to initiate intellectual exchange with friends, patrons, and influential figures, thus negotiating both cultural authority and visibility within a predominantly male literary and philosophical tradition. Through a range of rhetorical strategies, female authors both reflected and subtly challenged the gender norms of their communities, the important fact that distinguishes paratexts connected with female authorship from those by male authors.

Women authors presented in this article used paratexts as a space to show that they, too, could contribute to scientific debate. They demonstrated this by rewriting texts from other authorial sources (e.g., Gondola), quoting undeniable authorities (e.g., Marinella), or – following the main rhetorical strategies of the *querelle des femmes* – claiming their authority and inviting other women to contribute to science and knowledge. The case of Camilla Herculiana is particularly noteworthy. Natural philosophy is the main focus of her book, but both the peritext in her book and the epitext – namely, the proceedings from the inquisitional trial – offer important testimony to her lack of modesty in referencing her own work and asserting her position in knowledge production. As for the case of Maria Gondola, although her words are largely rewritings of Camerata's and De Guevara's, the text nonetheless clearly demonstrates Gondola's knowledge of Neoplatonism. Such statements – whether aligning with the genre's typical rhetoric or the *querelle des femmes* – contribute to knowledge and science by adding a gender perspective and showing that philosophical knowledge and participation in philosophical discussion were also part of women's intellectual aspirations.

Renaissance women authors also used the paratextual space to explain their ideas on scientific themes beyond the *querelle des femmes*, in works not dedicated to scientific themes. Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617),[103] a Modenese poet, translator, natural philosopher, and musician, was also a interlocutor in Neoplatonic dialogues, much like Gondola and Bigolina.[104] In the 1577 dialogue *L'amorosa filosofia* (Philosophy of love) by Francesco Patrizi,[105] Molza is depicted as the Renaissance ideal of the perfect woman, inspired by knowledge in both psychological and naturalistic fields. Known by the academic name 'Unique' when she was elected to the Accademia degli Innominati (Academy of the Unnamed), Molza was an influential figure in the intellectual circles of her time.[106]

In terms of her paratextual contributions, Molza's translations of important philosophical works from Greek to Italian including *Il Carmide*,[107] *Il Critone Dialogo di Platone*,[108] provide insights into her intellectual engagement with classical thought.[109] These translations offer valuable material for considering her role in the dissemination of philosophical knowledge. Furthermore, an important "opinion" by Molza is preserved in the paratext of *Unpublished Works* by Tarquinia Molza, in which she references Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – an important moment in understanding her philosophical perspective and her contribution to the intellectual debates of the time. "The Opinion of Lady Tarquinia Molza":

> Philosophy is the science of all things, that is, of human, natural, mathematical, and divine matters. Some claim that it is not the science of any of these except for the mathematical ones, because these have a certain and necessary subject, while the human ones do not, nor do the natural ones. As for the divine, they argue that, because they are the first causes, having no cause preceding them, it cannot be said that there is a science of them, since science is knowledge of the cause through its causes. To this, it is responded that they are not absolutely first causes, since before them is the first mover, the cause of them. As for natural things, it is acknowledged that the elementary ones do not have a certain cause, but the

[103] On Tarquinia Molza, see: Meredith K. Ray, "Tarquinia Molza and 'Le cose del Cielo': Gender, Natural Philosophy and Celebrity in Early Modern Italy", in *Redreaming the Renaissance*: *Essays on History and Literature in Honor of Guido Ruggiero*, ed. by Deanna Shemek and Mary Lindemann (New Brunswick: University of Delaware Press, 2024), 192-214.

[104] On the role of women as interlocutors in Renaissance dialogues, see: Virginia Cox, "The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue", *Modern Language Notes* 128, no. 1 (2013): 53-78.

[105] Francesco Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia*, ed. by John Charles Nelson (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1963).

[106] See Helena Sanson, "'Io che donna indotta e minima sono': Women, Translation and Classical Languages in Early Modern Italy", *Women Language Literature in Italy*, 3 (2021): 29-51.

[107] *Il Carmide. Dialogo di Platone tradotto dal greco dalla signora Tarquinia Molza*, in *Opuscoli inediti di Tarquinia Molza modenese. Con alcune poesie dell'istessa quasi tutte per l'addietro stampate, ma ora la prima volta raccolte, e poste insieme* (Bergamo, Pietro Lancellotti, 1701), 39-69.

[108] *Il Critone. Dialogo di Platone, tradotto dalla medesima*, in *ibid.*, 70-80.

[109] On this theme see Helena Sanson, "Io che donna indotta e minima sono".

> celestial ones do. Regarding human matters, the subject is not necessary, but nonetheless, there is some science about them, though not perfect, because these things can be known through their causes, according to the definition of science.[110]

Molza's thought reflects a synthesis of classical influences, ranging from Aristotle's concept of causes and classification of the sciences, through Neoplatonism, to the early modern emphasis on mathematics as the most certain form of knowledge, alongside elements of Scholasticism.

This "opininion", like the other liminal texts presented in this article, allowed women authors to assert their intellectual authority, demonstrate their knowledge or practical experience, and negotiate their position within gender system of their time.

[110] My translation. Tarquinia Molza, "Che la filosofia è veramente scienza, ancor fuori delle Matematiche facoltà", in *Delle poesie volgari e latine di Francesco Maria Molza. Corrette, illustrate ed accresciute, volume secondo: contenente le cose inedite, e gli opuscoli di Tarquinia Molza nipote dell'autore*, a Pierantonio Serassi (Bergamo: Pietro Lancellotti, 1750), 94. The dedication of this book is signed from Modena, 15 April, 1614, by Camillo Molza.

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Inner discourse as philosophical debate in Margaret Cavendish

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Abstract
Despite being the first woman to attend a meeting of the Royal Society, Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673) was denied membership. Her exclusion from these inner circles prevented her from participating in rigorous debates about her work and the work of her contemporaries. Although she was not invited into these conversations, she nevertheless entered them by imagining the kinds of objections her opponents would raise and publishing her responses in the form of an inner discourse. Inner discourse, here, describes a written dialogue where an author argues with themselves. This paper explores Cavendish's use of inner discourse across three genres: philosophical prose, letter writing, and science-fiction. Ultimately, I argue that inner discourse as a literary device, for Cavendish, serves not only as a way to overcome social barriers, but also as an argument, by demonstration, against members of the Royal Society who believed that natural philosophy should be done primarily through experiments.

Keywords
Margaret Cavendish, Royal Society, discourse, anti-experimentalism

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Introduction

Throughout the 17th century, funded societies for scientific study, like the Royal Society, began to form across Europe. Despite being the first woman to attend a meeting, Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673) was denied membership.[1] Cavendish often sent members of the Royal Society her philosophical works, hopeful for potential interlocuters, but she was ridiculed and for the most part, went unanswered.[2] After receiving copies of her work, Henry More, for example, wrote to Anne Conway that Cavendish "may be secure from anyone giving her the trouble of a reply".[3] This kind of exclusion largely prevented Cavendish from engaging in a practice at the center of scientific culture: debate. Behind closed doors, members of the Royal Society regularly exchanged and responded to criticism about their ideas. These debates allowed them to refine their views and defend their work. Without entry into this discourse, Cavendish was left to engage with herself. And so, she did.

To combat this exclusion, Cavendish employs a literary device I will refer to as 'inner discourse'.[4] By inner discourse, I mean to describe a form of written dialogue where an author argues with themselves. In particular, I am interested in Cavendish's use of inner discourse in her philosophical works. Cavendish uses this technique in order to address other philosophers, refine her own views, and to respond to what she imagines critics will have to say about her philosophy. In "An Argumental Discourse", for example, Cavendish slices her inner discourse into "Former" and "Latter" thoughts to answer possible objections to her anti-mechanistic picture of nature. Likewise, in the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish directly addresses the work of Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Jean Baptiste van Helmont, and Henry More through a correspondence between herself and an imagined female interlocuter. Finally, *The Blazing World* features a debate about the use of artificial tools like microscopes in the study of natural philosophy between the Empress, who represents Cavendish, and the Bear-men citizens, who represent the Royal Society. This

1 Women were denied membership from the Royal Society until 1945. "Groundbreaking women of science celebrated", *The Royal Society*, 8 March 2017, https://royalsociety.org/news/2017/03/28-groundbreaking-women-of-science-celebrated/.

2 Cavendish did receive letters from Kenelm Digby, Walter Charleton, and Henry More. However, none of these authors engaged with her philosophy in their letters. "Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673). Letters from Scholarly Contacts", *Project Vox*, https://projectvox.org.

3 Sarah Hutton and Marjorie Hope Nicolson, eds., *Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends 1642-1684* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 262.

4 Expanding West's interpretation, this contribution provides an account of Cavendish's view of philosophical discourse which operates as a rebuttal to experimental philosophers such as Robert Hooke. See Peter West, "Margaret Cavendish and the Power of Debating with Yourself", *Aeon/Psyche*, March 2022, https://psyche.co/ideas/margaret-cavendish-and-the-power-of-debating-with-yourself.

paper examines each case of inner discourse. I begin by outlining what Cavendish takes to be the essential features and aims of proper philosophical discourse. In the following three sections, I look at how Cavendish employs inner discourse in each text named above. Each iteration, I argue, satisfies Cavendish's own conditions for proper discourse. In the final section of the paper, I argue that inner discourse, for Cavendish, serves not only as a way to overcome social barriers and participate in rigorous philosophical debate, but also as an argument, by demonstration, against members of the Royal Society who believed that natural philosophy should be done primarily through experimentation.

Proper discourse

In *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, Cavendish defines discourse as "a rational enquiry into the cases of natural effects".[5] The aim of philosophical discourse, according to Cavendish, is to discover truths about the natural world by examining the effects we observe in nature. Cavendish is explicit that this investigation can be done with oneself. She explains, "for discourse is as much as reasoning with ourselves; which may very well be done without speech or language, as being only an effect or action of reason".[6] *Inner discourse* is a written presentation of an author's reasoning with themselves in this way. Inner discourse does not require the presence of another opponent or the use of speech. Discourse can be done 'without speech or language' in the sense that it can be done entirely in one's mind. This picture of discourse echoes Plato's definition of thinking in the *Theaetetus*: thinking is "a talk which the soul has with itself about the objects under its consideration […] It seems to be that the soul when it thinks is simply carrying on a discussion in which it asks itself questions and answers them itself, affirms and denies".[7] Similarly, Cavendish describes discourse as "an arguing of the mind".[8] Interestingly, as Gareth Matthews notes, despite writing many dialogues, Plato did not write an inner dialogue between the soul and itself.[9] Cavendish, on the other hand, regularly employed the form of inner discourse in her philosophical writings.

The marker of any proper discourse, for Cavendish, is the extent to which the activity leads its participants closer to the truth. Cavendish explains that while our knowledge is limited and "we are all but guessers," the person "that brings the most probable and

5 Margaret Cavendish, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, ed. by Eileen O'Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. M.J. Levett (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992), 189e-190a.

8 Cavendish, *Observations*, 14.

9 See Gareth B. Matthews, "Inner Dialogue in Augustine and Anselm", *Poetics Today* 28, no. 2 (2007): 283-302. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2006-023.

rational arguments, does come nearer to truth".[10] Cavendish is skeptical about our ability to come to any certain knowledge about the natural world.[11] At best, she says, we can have probable knowledge where something is very likely to be true although it is not certainly true. Cavendish's commitment to probabilism corresponds closely with her emphasis on the importance of proper discourse. As Emma Wilkins explains, "One of the most appealing aspects of probabilism was that it allowed freedom of discussion among natural philosophers. Opinions were not 'right' or 'wrong' they were merely more or less probable".[12] For Cavendish, freedom of discourse among philosophers is crucial for progress in the study of natural philosophy as it is through rational arguments, with oneself and others, that we get closer and closer to the truth.

Throughout her work, Cavendish outlines the requirements of a proper discourse. In *World's Olio*, Cavendish explains,

> To speak rationally, is to ask proper questions, or to answer directly to what he is questioned in, for reason is to clear the understanding and to untie the knots that clear the truth; but to speak non-sense is to speak that which hath no coherence to any thing, when there is no words but may be compared to something.[13]

Rational discourse, on this picture, involves asking relevant questions and answering questions directly. The opposite of rational discourse, 'non-sense,' involves being incoherent in such a way that the words you employ have no clear meaning. The minimum requirement for any discourse, according to Cavendish, is that the participants know the meaning of the words they use. For this reason, "Parrots, or the like can onely repeat the words they are taught, but cannot discourse, because they know not what it signisieth".[14] In a proper discourse, then, participants must use terms they understand and importantly, clarify their terms if their meaning is not immediately clear. This often involves spelling

[10] Cavendish, *Observations*, 269.

[11] On Cavendish's probabilistic approach, see S. Clucas, "Variation, Irregularity and Probabilism: Margaret Cavendish and Natural Philosophy as Rhetoric", *Early Science and Medicine* 8, no. 3 (2003): 227-257; E. Wilkins, "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society", *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* 68, no. 3 (2014): 245-260; and D. Boyle, "Margaret Cavendish on Perception, Self-Knowledge, and Probable Opinion", *Philosophy Compass* 10, no. 7 (2015): 438-450. These authors show that several members of the Royal Society shared this view including Walter Charleton, Joseph Glanvill, and Robert Boyle.

[12] Emma Wilkins, "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society", *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* 68, no. 3 (2014): 255.

[13] Cavendish, Margaret. *The Worlds Olio Written by the Right Honorable, the Lady Margaret Newcastle*. (London, 1655), in *Early English Books Online*. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A53065.0001.001, 17. Original spelling is preserved.

[14] *Ibid.*, 14. "Signisieth" here means "signifies".

out philosophical jargon in plain language. Once a discourse begins, participants ask and answer direct questions in an effort to 'to untie the knots that clear the truth'.

Cavendish's emphasis on clarity goes hand in hand with her desire to remove barriers to reading philosophy. Cavendish often admits her own struggle in reading philosophical works that were not written in plain English. In an effort to remove this barrier for her own readers, Cavendish says she will try to write as plainly as possible. In *Observations*, Cavendish writes "To the Reader":

> Those that fill their writings with hard words, put the horses behind the coach, and instead of making hard things easy, make easy things hard, which especially in our English writers is a great fault; neither do I see any reason for it, but that they think to make themselves more famous by those that admire all what they do not understand, though it be non- sense; but I am not of their mind, and therefore although I do understand some of their hard expressions now, yet I shun them as much in my writings as is possible for me to do, and all this, that they may be the better understood by all, learned as well as unlearned; by those that are professed philosophers as well as by those that are none.[15]

Cavendish criticizes writers who use philosophical jargon in what she believes is an effort to acquire fame by being difficult to understand. Instead, Cavendish says, they should be aiming to make 'hard things easy'. Emma Wilkins carefully shows that Cavendish shared this view with various members of the Royal Society including William Petty and Robert Boyle who called for natural philosophy to be written in plain English.[16] Denise Tillery, however, argues that despite this shared belief, Cavendish's rationale behind her commitment to writing in a plain style differs from that of the Royal Society members. Tillery claims,

> While she wants to allow her readers to enter the community of experimental science, she does not concern herself with whether they are following the rules [...] or whether they are interpreting her text correctly. She is primarily concerned with creating a connection between herself and her reader in order to win fame and to be as clear as possible so that readers will not give up in frustration.[17]

Tillery sees Cavendish's commitment to plain style as part of "her obsession with fame".[18] While it is clear that Cavendish wanted her work to be read by as many readers as possi-

[15] Cavendish, *Observations*, 12.
[16] Emma Wilkins, "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society".
[17] Denise Tillery, "'English Them in the Easiest Manner You Can': Margaret Cavendish on the Discourse and Practice of Natural Philosophy", *Rhetoric Review* 26, no. 3 (2007): 276.
[18] *Ibid.*, 275.

ble, her commitment to writing plainly goes beyond her desire to be accessible to a wide audience or her focus on "her own glorification".[19] As seen above, Cavendish believes that rational discourse can lead philosophers closer to truths about nature. Without clarity, philosophers risk hindering the progress of their discourse towards truth. As we will see below, Cavendish often includes a request for clarity on the meaning of a term within the dialogue of an inner discourse. When this occurs, it is first to ensure that readers can interpret her text correctly and second, to demonstrate how participants of a proper discourse can progress towards a more probable opinion about the subject at hand. Although inner discourse would not be considered an instance of plain style, Cavendish adopts it as a rhetorical tool to demonstrate a philosophical discourse that promotes and conveys readability and clarity.

The effort, to 'clear the truth', must be, Cavendish believes, a shared project between participants. The shared aim of truth distinguishes proper discourse from the kind of discourse described by Cavendish in *The Blazing World* as the "Art of Logic". In *The Blazing World*, the Empress listens to logicians engaging in the "Art of Logic". Logic here primarily involves the use of syllogisms. The logicians begin their demonstration to the Empress with the following syllogism:

> Every Politician is wise:
> Every Knave is a Politician,
> Therefore every Knave is wise.[20]

Upon hearing this, a fellow logician "contradicted him" and said,

> No Politician is wise:
> Every Knave is a Politician
> Therefore no Knave is wise.[21]

The demonstration continued until the Empress asked the logicians to stop. The "Art of Logic" that these men demonstrate, the Empress says, is

> for the most part irregular, and disorders Men's understanding more then it rectifies them, and leads them into a Labyrinth whence they'l never get out, and makes them dull and unfit

[19] *Ibid.*, 276.

[20] Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World, Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princesse, the Duchess of Newcastle*, in *Early English Books Online Collections*, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A53044.0001.001, 58.

[21] *Ibid.*

> for useful employments; especially your Art of Logick, which consists onely in contradicting each other, in making Sophismes, and obscuring Truth, instead of clearing it.[22]

Unlike proper discourse, the "Art of Logic" makes it difficult to achieve any clarity about a given subject. Those who employ syllogisms do not aim, Cavendish thinks, at truth. Instead, their aim is primarily to 'contradict' their opponent and in doing so, win the argument. Unlike the "Art of Logic", proper discourse requires that participants prioritize discovering the truth over merely winning an argument or confusing their opponent. Cavendish is very concerned with the emotions of her readers in this respect. Cavendish asks her readers to abide by their "regular sense and reason" so that they are not 'corrupted' by "self-love or envy".[23] A participant who is engaging sincerely in a proper discourse is not envious of their opponent or misled by their egotism. They do not prioritize 'winning' the argument. Instead, they aim only to discover the truth in collaboration with their partner. Importantly, for Cavendish, this kind of discourse can be done with oneself. The requirement to regulate one's emotions in these ways, then, applies even when one is engaging in rational discourse alone.[24]

Cavendish was not the first philosopher to write in the form of a dialogue with themselves. As Matthews argues, the first case of a philosophical work written as an inner dialogue is Augustine's *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul*.[25] One might also think of the meditative genre, a popular style of writing in the medieval and early modern periods where an author engages in spiritual exercises with themselves to "rethink their beliefs in order to begin the arduous journey towards truth and enlightenment".[26] Cavendish's use of inner discourse, however, differs from these kinds of work in, at least, three ways. First, Cavendish's use of inner discourse appears in multiple genres including poetry, letter writing, and fiction. Second, as we will see below, Cavendish primarily uses the form of inner discourse to personify her philosophical opponents. This is a significant choice in the context of her exclusion from discourse with these figures in her own life. Third, the aim of Cavendish's inner discourse is to discover *probable* truths regarding subjects in natural philosophy. In contrast, the aim of Augustine's *Soliloquies* is self-knowledge, knowledge of

[22] *Ibid.*, 58-59.

[23] Cavendish, *Observations*, 42.

[24] Contra D. Tillery, "'English Them in the Easiest Manner You Can': Margaret Cavendish on the Discourse and Practice of Natural Philosophy", this interpretation of Cavendish places her views on the role of emotions in relation to the acquisition of knowledge much closer to the views of the Royal Society.

[25] Matthews, "Inner Dialogue in Augustine and Anselm", 285.

[26] Christia Mercer, "Descartes' debt to Teresa of Ávila, or why we should work on women in the history of philosophy", *Philosophical Studies* 174, 10 (2017): 25-43.

God and the soul, and ultimately, salvation.[27] Likewise, Augustine's *Confessions* and many texts of the meditative genre, including Teresa of Ávila's *Interior Castle* and Descartes' *Meditations*, aim to "find ultimate truth and attain enlightenment" in a pursuit that centers on the acquisition of self-knowledge.[28] As noted above, Cavendish does not believe we can come to any certain or ultimate truths. Additionally, Cavendish's aim in using inner discourse is not to pursue self-knowledge. Instead, she is concerned with acquiring probable truths regarding subjects in natural philosophy. Although Cavendish is not the first to explore philosophical questions within the form of an inner dialogue, her use of inner discourse in her philosophical works is distinct. The remainder of the paper will explore how Cavendish employs inner discourse in her written work to simulate debates between herself and her opponents.

Former Thoughts vs. Latter Thoughts

Before the main text of the *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, Cavendish includes a section entitled "An Argumental Discourse". In "An Argumental Discourse," Cavendish's 'Former Thoughts' and 'Latter Thoughts' engage in proper inner discourse where they debate the views that Cavendish argues for later in the main text. While Cavendish's 'Former Thoughts' put forth and defend her own position, Cavendish's 'Latter Thoughts' are skeptical and oppose her views.[29] Cavendish describes how this discourse occurred:

> When I was setting forth this book of *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, a dispute chanced to arise between the rational parts of my mind concerning some of the chief points and principles in natural philosophy; for, some new thoughts endeavouring to oppose and call in question the truth of my former conceptions, caused a war in my mind.[30]

[27] Augustine, in *Soliloquies*, tells Reason he wants "to know God and the soul" and "nothing more". Augustine, *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul*, trans. Gerard Watson (Warminster, U.K.: Aris and Phillips, 1990), 1.2.7.

[28] Christia Mercer, "The methodology of the Meditations: tradition and innovation", in David Cunning, *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*. (New York: Cambridge University Press., 2014): 28. Mercer explains, "beginning with Augustine's *Confession* and persisting through the early seventeenth century, the main goal of spiritual meditation is a reorientation of the self so that the exercitant is prepared for illumination" (33).

[29] Notably, the "Argumental Discourse" is not the only dialogue written by Cavendish where different parts of her mind argue. See, for example, M. Cavendish, *Grounds of Natural Philosophy: Divided into Thirteen Parts: With an Appendix Containing Five Parts* (London, 1668) In *Early English Books Online Collections*. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A53045.0001.001, 291-311.

[30] Cavendish, *Observations*, 23.

Cavendish's Former Thoughts and Latter Thoughts, in their warring, perform a proper discourse as described above.[31] They discuss a variety of topics that are eventually spelled out in *Observations* including Cavendish's theory of matter, self-motion, knowledge, and infinity.

In this dialogue, the Former and Latter Thoughts satisfy the standards of proper discourse. First, the dialogue itself is a process of asking and answering questions. For example, Cavendish writes,

> My Latter Thoughts desired to know, whether motion could be annihilated?
> The former said, No: because nature was infinite, and admitted of no addition nor diminution; and consequently, of no new creation nor annihilation of any part of hers.
> But, said the latter, If motion be an accident, it may be annihilated.
> The former answered, They did not know what they meant by the word "accident."
> The later said, that an accident was something in a body, but nothing without a body.
> If an accident be something, answered the former, then certainly it must be body; for there is nothing but what is corporeal in nature.[32]

The dialogue begins with a direct question from the opposition. That question is then given a direct answer and a justification. This structure is repeated throughout the discourse. Importantly, when the meaning of a term is unclear to a participant, like "accident" is here, the participant does not continue the discourse until they gain clarity on what was meant by the term. Additionally, while sometimes the two thoughts come to an agreement, other times, their disagreement remains. In fact, the discourse between the Former and Latter Thoughts ends in disagreement. The aim of the discourse, as for every proper discourse, is not to show how every objection is resolved by the Former Thoughts and so Cavendish herself. Rather, the goal is to get closer to certainty. It is important that participants in a proper discourse admit when they are not convinced by their opponent's view or when they cannot answer a criticism about their own view. If the priority for the participant is simply to end or win the argument, they may compromise the kind of sincerity that is required in a proper discourse. As seen in the "Art of Logic", such an approach will only further obscure the truth.

Cavendish's use of inner discourse in "An Argumental Discourse" allows her to simulate debates with thinkers who would not, or could not, engage with her during her lifetime.

[31] Importantly, the division of the mind in this way is not a metaphor for Cavendish. Cavendish argues that like any other body, the mind, being material, is made of parts. For an analysis of how Cavendish argues for this view of the mind, see Colin Chamberlain, "The Duchess of Disunity: Margaret Cavendish on the Materiality of Mind", *Philosophers' Imprint* 24: 7 (2024): 1-18. doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/phimp.2503.

[32] Cavendish, *Observations*, 36.

The Latter Thoughts take on the persona of many prominent male philosophers including Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Hobbes, More, and Boyle. In the example above, the Latter Thoughts serve, in part, to represent Plato. Cavendish was a materialist who endorsed the plenum and believed that Nature was composed of infinite, self-moving, rational matter. The Former Thoughts, in this part of the discourse, serve to defend this view. If an accident is to be anything at all in nature, the Former Thoughts say, it must be corporeal because everything in nature is material. Cavendish takes thinkers like Plato to be defending the opposing view which says qualities found in nature, like colors, for example, "are incorporeal, because they are accidents".[33] The Latter Thoughts voice this view when they define an accident as "something in a body, but nothing without a body".[34] In a chapter of the *Observations* dedicated to addressing Plato's views, Cavendish responds to this same argument saying, "I answer: If qualities be incorporeal, they do not belong to nature: for, since the principle of nature is matter, all that is natural, must also be material or corporeal; and therefore all natural qualities or accidents must of necessity be corporeal".[35] This response mimics the argument made by the Former Thoughts in "An Argumental Discourse" when they say "If an accident be something, answered the former, then certainly it must be body; for there is nothing but what is corporeal in nature".[36] Throughout "An Argumental Discourse", Cavendish teases the views she later defends in the *Observations*. She uses the Latter Thoughts to voice the opinions of her opponents, like Plato, while the Former Thoughts allow her to give a brief defense of her position. A reader can discover who the Latter Thoughts are meant to represent by looking for the same argument in the *Observations* where Cavendish often names her opponents.

Cavendish uses the Latter Thoughts to represent more than one figure at a time. In the same bit of dialogue above, Cavendish is using the Latter Thoughts to represent Plato and mechanists like Descartes who believed motion was transferable between bodies. Cavendish's criticism of this view relies, in part, on her belief that everything in nature is material. If motion is material, then a transfer of motion from one body to another would be a transfer of the matter of one body to another.[37] Cavendish found this implication absurd. Bodies did not, on her view, transfer motion. Instead, bodies moved by way of their own self-motion in response to the actions of the bodies around them.[38] Both this anti-mechanist view of nature and her criticism of Plato's use of 'accidents' rely on Cavendish's materialism which says that everything in nature, including qualities and motions, is corporeal.

[33] *Ibid.*, 253.
[34] *Ibid.*, 36.
[35] *Ibid.*, 253.
[36] *Ibid.*, 36.
[37] *Ibid.*, 235.
[38] For a more detailed account of Cavendish's view of motion, see Alison Peterman, "Margaret Cavendish on Motion and Mereology", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 57, no. 3 (2019).

When the Former Thoughts say, 'there is nothing but what is corporeal in nature', they are articulating Cavendish's commitment to materialism. This commitment distinguishes her view from multiple figures including Plato and Descartes. As such, the Latter Thoughts represent more than one voice in this debate. Her use of inner discourse in the brief bit of dialogue seen above not only allows Cavendish to emphasize a central tenant of her view, but also allows her to identify and argue against multiple of her main opponents at once.

Cavendish's desire for discourse about her philosophical views is particularly explicit in "An Argumental Discourse". At the end of the dialogue, the Latter and Former Thoughts agree to refer "to the arbitration of the judicious and impartial reader".[39] Cavendish explains to the reader that the disputing parts of her mind desire "the assistance of [the reader's] judgement to reconcile their controversies, and, if possible, to reduce them to a settled peace and agreement".[40] Cavendish uses "An Argumental Discourse" to demonstrate how reasoning in one's own mind can look and to ask her readers, "Will you discourse with me?" She concludes "An Argumental Discourse" writing,

> And now, since it is your part, Ingenious Reader, to give a final decision of the case, consider well the subject of their quarrel, and be impartial in your judgement; let not self-love or envy corrupt you, but let regular sense and reason be your only rule.[41]

Cavendish asks her readers to engage with her work in the way a good participant of a proper discourse engages by avoiding egotism and using regular sense and reason. Her hope is that a reader of this text will become a third participant in the discourse. Cavendish's use of inner discourse in "An Argumental Discourse" allows her to present her own views, to participate in debates with many major philosophers, and to invite others to engage in her work.

Philosophical Letters

Cavendish's use of inner discourse as a literary form appears in, at least, three different genres of her writing: philosophical prose, letters, and fiction. This section considers its use in the second.[42] By the 17th century, the epistolary form had become an established genre

[39] *Ibid.*, 42.

[40] *Ibid.*, 23.

[41] *Ibid.*, 42.

[42] The *Philosophical Letters* is not the only fictional correspondence published by Cavendish. In the same year as the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish published the *Sociable Letters*. These letters also address a fictional Madam. Interestingly, in a poem preceding the letters, entitled, 'Upon Her Excellency the Authoress,' Cavendish writes "This Lady only to her self she Writes/ And all her Letters to her self Indites". Here, Cavendish seems to acknowledge that she is writing in

of philosophical writing.[43] Think, for example, of the importance of Princess Elizabeth's letters with Descartes.[44] As O'Neill points out, Cavendish's own collection of correspondence, published posthumously by her husband, reveals that she "had not attained general recognition by the scholarly community" in this way.[45] It is no surprise, then, that Cavendish chose to use this genre as a vehicle for her philosophy. In the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish addresses a woman interlocuter named "Madam" who has sent her the works of René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, Henry More, and Jean Baptiste van Helmont.[46] The Madam, according to Cavendish's first letter, has asked Cavendish to review their work and to explain where Cavendish's views differ from these thinkers and why. In addressing these four men, Cavendish inserts herself into the conversation without an invitation. To be clear, Cavendish did receive letters from Thomas Hobbes and Henry More.[47] However, these letters simply express their gratitude for receiving copies of Cavendish's work. They

the form of an 'inner discourse'. See M. Cavendish, "CCXI sociable letters written by the thrice noble, illustrious, and excellent princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle", in *Early English Books Online*, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A53064.0001.001. For more on Cavendish's *Sociable Letters*, see James Fitzmaurice, "Autobiography, Parody, and the *Sociable Letters* of Margaret Cavendish", in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. by Stephen Clucas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003) 69-86.

43 Boyle notes that the publication of letters to fictional interlocuters was also not uncommon in the 17th century. See Deborah Boyle, ed., *Philosophical Letters, Abridged* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2021).

44 Importantly, Princess Elizabeth's side of the letters was not published until 1879. See Lisa Shapiro, "Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2021).

45 Eileen O'Neill, "Introduction", *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xvii.

46 Cavendish also addresses, although not to the same extent, the work of other philosophers including Aristotle, Galileo, Joseph Glanvill, Walter Charelton, and Robert Boyle.

47 Although Thomas Hobbes worked as a tutor and secretary for the Cavendish family, Cavendish denies any close relationship between them. In an epilogue to *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1655), for example, Cavendish says she did not speak even twenty words to Hobbes and did not discuss philosophy with him. The only question she ever asked him, Cavendish says, is whether he would join her for dinner while she was on a visit to London. See M. Cavendish, *Philosophical and Physical Opinions Written by her Excellency, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle*, printed by J. Martin and J. Allestry, 1655, ed. by Lisa Walters, The Digital Cavendish Project, http://digitalcavendish.org/complete-works/philosophical-and-physical-opinions-1655/. Sarah Hutton provides a detailed account of Cavendish and Hobbes' intellectual relationship. Hutton shows that although Cavendish denied having any kind of relationship with Hobbes, she was well acquainted with his philosophical opinions. See Sarah Hutton, "In Dialogue with Thomas Hobbes: Margaret Cavendish's Natural Philosophy", *Women's Writing* 4, no. 3 (1997): 421-432.

do not, importantly, engage with the content of the work.[48] Cavendish's *Philosophical Letters* are what she imagines a philosophical correspondence with these figures might look like had they taken her more seriously.

Cavendish employs the form of inner discourse in the *Philosophical Letters* in two main ways: first, she performs an inner discourse with her interlocuter as she raises objections to herself through the character of the fictional Madam. This use of inner discourse differs from that in "An Argumental Discourse" not only in genre but also in presentation. While the arguments of both the Former and Latter Thoughts are present in the written text, the Madam's letters are not included in the collection. Instead, the collection consists of letters from Cavendish to the Madam. We come to know the Madam's objections to Cavendish by Cavendish's characterization of the Madam's concerns. For example, while we never see a letter written by the Madam questioning Cavendish's claim that nature is eternal, Cavendish begins one of her letters writing "Madam, It seems you are offended at my Opinion, that nature is Eternal without beginning".[49] The letters take the form of a proper discourse as Cavendish restates the question or criticism posed by the Madam and answers directly. As in "An Argumental Discourse", Cavendish also clarifies her terms when she believes the Madam, or a reader of the correspondence, may misunderstand her meaning. Cavendish is explicit about the standards of this imagined discourse. Cavendish writes, to her interlocuter,

> I humbly desire the help and assistance of your Favour, that according to that real and intire Affection you bear to me, you would be pleased to tell me unfeignedly, if I should chance to err or contradict but the probability of truth in any thing; for I honor Truth so much, as I bow down to its shadow with the greatest respect and reverence.[50]

The responsibility of the Madam is that of any participant in a proper discourse: to aim at the truth and to tell their opponent when they have strayed from reason.[51]

[48] Constantijn Huygens did correspond with Cavendish briefly and Joseph Glanvill appears to have taken her work seriously. For a more extensive discussion of the reception of Cavendish in her own time, see E. O'Neill, "Introduction", *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, ed. by Eileen O'Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), x-xxxvii.

[49] Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters, or, Modest Reflections upon Some Opinions in Natural Philosophy Maintained by Several Famous and Learned Authors of This Age, Expressed by Way of Letters* (London, 1664), in *Early English Books Online,* University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A53058.0001.001, 13.

[50] *Ibid.*, 4.

[51] As Broad notes, the exchange between Cavendish and the Madam "seem to represent Cavendish's ideal of an intellectual exchange: they offer a free and liberal discussion of ideas governed by a spirit of open inquiry, kind criticism, and sympathetic friendship". In other words, the letters exemplify a proper discourse. Jacqueline Broad, "Cavendish, van Helmont, and the Mad Raging Womb", *The New Science and Women's Literary Discourse*, 69-87 (2011): 54.

The second form of inner discourse in *Philosophical Letters* occurs as Cavendish engages with the texts of the authors she is examining. As she addresses their work, Cavendish presents criticisms of their views and imagines the kinds of objections they might have to her arguments. The purpose of the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish says, is to better clarify her own views by comparing them to the opposing views of her contemporaries. As with any proper discourse, in the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish aims to get closer to the truth by examining her own reasoning. Like "An Argumental Discourse", the *Philosophical Letters* compliment another philosophical text, *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*, which was published a year earlier. Cavendish explains,

> I considered with my self, that it would be a great advantage for my Book called *Philosophical Opinions*, as to make it more perspicuous and intelligible by the opposition of other Opinions, since two opposite things placed near each other, are the better discerned.[52]

In explaining her motivation for writing the letters, Cavendish emphasizes the importance of facing opposition to gain clarity on one's own views. This is the kind of opposition the men of exclusive scientific circles like the Royal Society regularly enjoyed as they presented their work and received feedback during meetings. Cavendish did not have access to this kind of opposition and as a result, could not improve her own work in this way. Instead, she had to imagine the discourse to benefit from an examination of her views against the views of others.

Throughout the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish works her way through the major works of Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Jean Baptiste van Helmont, and Henry More. For each of these figures, Cavendish begins many of her letter by quoting the part of their text she takes issue with and then explaining her disagreement. For example, she begins with Hobbes' *Leviathan*:

> MADAM,
>
> Your Authours opinion is, that *when a thing lies still, unless somewhat else stir it, it will lie still for ever; but when a thing is in motion, it will eternally be in motion, unless somewhat else stay it; the reason is,* saith he, *because nothing can change it self;* To tell you truly, *Madam,* I am not of his opinion, for if Matter moveth it self, as certainly it doth, then the least part of Matter, were it so small as to seem Individable, will move it self… that Motion should proceed from another exterior Body, joyning with, or touching that body which it moves, is in my opinion not probable.[53]

[52] Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters*, 2.
[53] *Ibid.*, 21.

Here, Cavendish defends the view that nature consists entirely of self-moving matter. As we saw in the "Argumental Discourse", Cavendish argues against the mechanistic view that bodies move by a transfer of motion from another body. Instead, all bodies have self-motion and ultimately, move themselves. As a participant in a proper discourse, Cavendish does not try to address the entirety of Hobbes' philosophy. Instead, Cavendish directly responds to a single idea made by the author. This allows for Cavendish to be precise in exactly where their views differ. Cavendish's approach here reflects the requirement that participants in a proper discourse ask particular and direct questions. Unlike "An Argumental Discourse", here, Cavendish appeals to the written text of the figures she addresses. As a result, the discourse in the *Philosophical Letters* between Cavendish and the authors is somewhat less imaginative than the discourse of "An Argumental Discourse" in that Cavendish is sometimes able to use the author's own words. Still, Cavendish is left to imagine how they might respond to her criticism. Once Cavendish goes beyond direct quotes from the author's work, the discourse is entirely imagined. The use of inner discourse, in this text, serves explicitly as a way for Cavendish to benefit from debating with opponents who were not willing to engage in a philosophical discourse with her in real life. The imagined discourse allows Cavendish to refine own her philosophical positions as she clarifies her differences with the views of her opponents.

In the final section of the *Philosophical Letters*, Cavendish encourages her interlocuter to continue to study natural philosophy as it is the most honorable way to spend one's time. Cavendish writes,

> MADAM,
>
> I Perceive, you take great delight in the study of Natural Philosophy, since you have not onely sent me some Authors to peruse, and give my judgment of their opinions, but are very studious your self in the reading of Philosophical Works: and truly, I think you cannot spend your time more honourably, profitably, and delightfully, then in the study of nature… I must beg leave to tell you, first, that some (though foolishly) believe, it is not fit for Women to argue upon so subtil a Mystery: Next, there have been so many learned and experienced Philosophers, Physicians, and Anatomists, which have treated of this subject, that it might be thought a great presumption for me, to argue with them, having neither the learning nor experience by practice which they had.[54]

It is significant that Cavendish chose to simulate correspondence about natural philosophy with a fictional woman despite, as she says, the fact that some believed women were not fit to do this kind of work. Cavendish could have easily written to a fictional male inter-

[54] *Ibid.*, 414-415.

locuter. Instead, she chose to demonstrate the kinds of philosophical arguments women were capable of by writing in the form of an inner discourse.

The Blazing World

Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World* is a science-fiction text that tells the story of a young woman who escapes a kidnapping, enters a new world, and becomes a powerful Empress. Importantly, *The Blazing World* was published alongside the *Observations* in 1666 and 1668. As Eve Keller notes, "The fundamental difference between the *Observations* and *The Blazing World* is less one of argument than of readerly experience […] The *Blazing World* dramatically plays out the logic of the *Observations*".[55] In the first part of the story, the Empress spends a long time speaking with the citizens of the new world about their respective work. Each citizen is a mix of some animal and man and has a designated kind of work depending on what type of creature they are. Cavendish writes,

> These several sorts of men, each followed such a profession as was most proper for the nature of their Species, which the Empress encouraged them in… The Bear-men were to be her Experimental Philosophers, the Bird-men her Astronomers, the Fly- Worm- and Fish-men her Natural Philosophers, the Ape-men her Chymists, the Satyrs her Galenick Physicians, the Fox-men her Politicians, the Spider-and Lice-men her Mathematicians, the Jackdaw- Magpie- and Parrot-men her Orators and Logicians, the Gyants her Architects... [56]

Each kind of species of citizen in the new world represents a different field of study. The Empress questions each species about their methods and beliefs until she is satisfied. These dialogues are, of course, a proper discourse. The Empress asks the citizens direct questions and raises criticisms. The animal-men, in return, provide clear reasons for their methods and findings. In this iteration of an inner discourse, Cavendish uses fictional characters to represent her opponents.

Members of the Royal Society, who Cavendish considered to be experimental philosophers, are represented by the Bear-men in *The Blazing World*.[57] In a humorous contrast,

[55] Eve Keller, "Producing Petty Gods: Margaret Cavendish's Critique of Experimental Science", *ELH* 64, no. 2 (1997): 463.

[56] Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, 15-16.

[57] Sarasohn explains the significance of Cavendish's decision to represent experimental philosophers as Bear-men: "Bears had long been an object of the public gaze in early modern Europe: they were displayed and mocked in the bear gardens of Elizabethan and early Stuart England, where they were ripped apart by dogs. Cavendish here implies that both experimenting men and performing bears operate as public entertainment, thus collapsing the cultural pretensions

Cavendish represents herself through the character of the Empress.[58] In doing so, Cavendish voices concerns regarding the methods of the experiments performed by the Royal Society. Throughout her work, Cavendish criticized the use of artificial tools like microscopes in the study of natural philosophy.[59] In *Observations,* for example, Cavendish argues that, at best, these tools can give us information about the exterior of a body. It cannot, as some experimental philosophers claim, provide insight into the true nature of a body. She says, "For, put the case of the microscope to be true, concerning the magnifying of an exterior object but yet the magnitude of the object, cannot give a true information of its interior parts, and their motions".[60] Although artificial instruments cannot reveal the truth of the inner workings of a creature, reason, Cavendish argues, "may pierce deeper, and consider their inherent natures and interior actions".[61] As the Empress, Cavendish repeats this claim when she tells the Bear-men that their microscopes and telescopes can "never lead you to the knowledge of Truth".[62] Cavendish believed that natural philosophy should be done primarily by the use of regular sense and reason. What we see with the naked eye, she argued, was closer to the truth than what we could see through artificial glass.

In her discourse with the Bear-men, Cavendish, as the Empress, warns them that artificial instruments can lead one to have false beliefs about the body being examined because

of the experimental philosophers". Lisa T. Sarasohn, *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish: Reason and Fancy During the Scientific Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010): 165.

58 This is not obvious. Later in the story, Cavendish writes herself into the text explicitly as the 'Duchess of Newcastle' character. The Empress, however, is also representative of Cavendish insofar as she rehearses arguments made by Cavendish in the *Observations*. For further discussion regarding Cavendish's multiple self-representations in *The Blazing World* see, for example, N. Pohl, "'Of Mixt Natures': Questions of Genre in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*", *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. by Stephen Clucas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 51-68; J. Caballero, "'Yet Is She a Plain and Rational Writer': Margaret Cavendish's Self-Fashioning in *The Blazing World*, Politics, Science, and Literature", *British and American Studies* 24 (2018): 19-35; C. Borbély, "The Extravagance of Form in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*", *Caietele Echinox* 46 (2024): 139-150; and E. Keller, "Producing Petty Gods: Margaret Cavendish's Critique of Experimental Science", *ELH* 64, no. 2 (1997): 463.

59 E. Wilkins, in "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society", carefully shows that Cavendish's views on the use of artificial tools in experimental philosophy were shared by John Locke, Thomas Sydenham, and Thomas Hobbes. See also S. Clucas, "Margaret Cavendish and the Rhetoric and Aesthetics of the Microscopic Image in Seventeenth-Century England", in *Margaret Cavendish: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. by L. Walters, B.R. Siegfried (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 51-68.

60 Cavendish, *Observations*, 100.

61 *Ibid.*

62 Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, 28.

the magnifying distorts the appearance of the body. Again, in the *Observations*, Cavendish repeats this worry. She points to experimental philosophers who claim to have discovered the number of eyes on a fly by putting the fly under a microscope.[63] While the microscope shows "about 14,000 eyes", Cavendish says, it is ultimately a mistake to believe the fly has 14,000 eyes.[64] If a fly did have 14,000 eyes, Cavendish argues, it would have great sight: "if flies should have so many numerous eyes, why can they not see the approach of a spider until it be just at them?"[65] Surely, Cavendish concludes, the flies do not have so many eyes because they cannot see better than creatures with only two eyes. Tools that distort the appearance of a body, like microscopes, can be misleading in this way. Cavendish makes this same argument against artificial tools as the Empress in *The Blazing World*. After being shown a telescope, the Empress says, "glasses are false informers, and instead of discovering the Truth delude your senses".[66] She orders the Bear-men to break their tools, but they kneel before her and ask to keep them because they "take more delight in Artificial delusions, then in Natural truths".[67]

Despite her exclusion as a member of the Royal Society in real life, in the *Blazing World*, Cavendish, as the Empress, has the opportunity to openly criticize their methods. Ultimately, the Bear-men are instructed to keep their "disputes and quarrels … within their Schools" so that they do not cause "factions or disturbances in State, or Government".[68] In other words, keep your 'artificial delusions' to yourself! Once again, Cavendish uses an imaginative discourse to address her opponents and to enter into conversation with them. If she could not be a member of the Royal Society, she could imagine a world where she not only held proper discourse with them but also ruled over their activities.

Later in the story, Cavendish writes herself into the text again as the Duchess of Newcastle.[69] The introduction of the Duchess comes as the Empress desires to write a Cabbala

63 Cavendish is referencing experiments on flies referenced in Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* and Henry Power's *Experimental Philosophy*. See R. Hooke, *Micrographia, or, Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses with Observations and Inquiries Thereupon* (England: Printed for James Allestry, 1667) and H. Power, *Experimental Philosophy, in Three Books Containing New Experiments Microscopical, Mercurial, Magnetical: With Some Deductions, and Probable Hypotheses, Raised from Them, in Avouchment and Illustration of the Now Famous Atomical Hypothesis* (London: Printed by T Rovcroft for John Martin and James Allestry, 1664).

64 Cavendish, *Observations*, 59.

65 *Ibid.*, 60.

66 Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, 27.

67 *Ibid.*, 28.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *The Blazing World* ultimately features Cavendish's voice in three iterations as the Empress, the Duchess, and as the author of the story. Occasionally, Cavendish breaks her telling of the story and inserts commentary in the first person. See, for example, pages 107-108.

and requires a scribe. She discusses who she should call on to be her scribe with Spirits:

> Then, said she, I'le have the Soul of one of the most famous modern Writers, as either of *Galileo, Gassendus, Des Cartes, Helmont, Hobbes, H. More, &c.* The Spirits answered, That they were fine ingenious Writers, but yet so self-conceited, that they would scorn to be Scribes to a Woman. But, said they, there's a Lady, the *Duchess of Newcastle;* which although she is not one of the most learned, eloquent, witty and ingenious, yet she is a plain and rational Writer; for the principle of her Writings, is Sense and Reason, and she will without question, be ready to do you all the service she can. That Lady then, said the Empress, will I chuse for my Scribe… [70]

Notice that the Empress' reason for choosing to work with the Duchess of Newcastle is that other philosophers, including Descartes, van Helmont, Hobbes, and More, would refuse to work for a woman. Cavendish as the Empress, as in her own life, is left to work with herself. The discourse that occurs between the Empress and the Duchess of Newcastle is distinct from the form of philosophical inner discourse described in this paper. First, both characters are representative of Cavendish. Cavendish does not use either character to represent a philosophical opponent. Second, the nature of their discourse more closely resembles a dialogue between friends rather than a focused investigation into a particular question in natural philosophy.[71] In fact, most of their dialogue occurs in what Cavendish calls the 'Fantastical' part of the text. Before the main text of the story, Cavendish says the work will be divided into three parts: "The First Part is *Romancical;* the Second, *Philosophical;* and the Third is meerly Fancy; or, (as I may call it) *Fantastical*".[72] Rapatz explains,

> The romance then transitions into the philosophical as the new Empress explores the utopian world and interrogates the animal-men about their government, religious beliefs and practices, as well as the natural sciences and philosophies… The end of the first part of Blazing World then drifts into the fantastical as the women return together to the Duchess's beleaguered seventeenth-century England.[73]

The bulk of the 'philosophical part' of the text occurs during the Empress' investigation into the work of the animal-men. As discussed above, Cavendish employs inner discourse

[70] *Ibid.*, 89.

[71] This is not to say that the Empress and Duchess do not discuss important topics. Among other subjects, they discuss art, civil war, and government.

[72] "To All Noble and Worthy Ladies" of *The Blazing World*.

[73] Vanessa L. Rapatz, "'A World of her own Invention': Teaching Margaret Cavendish's Blazing World in the Early British Literature Survey and Beyond", *ABO: Interactive Jounral for Woman in the Arts, 1640-1830* (2024): 2.

in the philosophical section of the text in order to simulate debates between herself and the experimental philosophers or Bear-men. Thus, although Cavendish writes a dialogue between two versions of herself, as the Empress and Duchess, she does not write in the style of *philosophical* inner discourse as described in this paper.

Inner discourse as an anti-experimentalism argument

In the background of her employment of inner discourse is Cavendish's rejection of the view that philosophical debate should be replaced with experiments. During the early years, members of the Royal Society regularly performed experiments. Some believed experiments provided better insight into truths of natural philosophy in comparison to traditional rational discourse. One of Cavendish's main opponents on this point was Robert Hooke. In the Preface of *Micrographia*, Hooke argues that the remedy for the limitations of human reason will "*proceed from the* real*, the* mechanical*, the* experimental *Philosophy, which has this advantage over the Philosophy of* discourse *and* disputation".[74] As seen in the discourse between the Empress and the Bear-men of *The Blazing World*, Cavendish vehemently rejects this view. In response, she writes, "discourse shall sooner trace nature's corporeal figurative motions, then deluding arts can inform the senses; For how can a fool order his understanding by art, if nature has made it defective?"[75] If, as Hooke says, the understanding is already flawed, how can artificial experiments improve one's reasoning? Regular discourse, Cavendish argues, can better lead to insights about the workings of nature.

Cavendish also argues that Hooke has the order of operations backwards. It is not the case that experiments affect the reason, but that reason motivates the experiments. In this way, "the artist or mechanic" of the experiment "is but a servant to the student" of reason.[76] Cavendish does not want to reject experimental philosophy altogether. Instead, her aim is to argue in favor of pairing experiments with rational discourse. Cavendish explains, "Experimental and speculative philosophy do give the surest informations, when they are joined or united together".[77] Speculative philosophy or philosophy that relies on reason and discourse, she believes, should direct experiments. Cavendish writes, "Although experimental philosophy is not to be rejected, yet the speculative is much better, by reason it guides, directs and governs the experimental".[78] It is a huge mistake, Cavendish believes, to reject discourse all together. She, concludes,

[74] Hooke, *Micrographia, or, Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses with Observations and Inquiries Thereupon* (London: Printed for James Allestry, 1667), Preface.

[75] Cavendish, *Observations*, 49.

[76] *Ibid*.

[77] *Ibid*., 242.

[78] *Ibid*.

> Our age being more for deluding experiments than rational arguments, which some call "tedious babble," doth prefer sense before reason; and trusts more to the deceiving sight of their eyes, and deluding glasses, than to the perception of clear and regular reason…. Thus reason must stoop to sense, and the conceptor to the artist, which will be the way to bring in ignorance, instead of advancing knowledge, for when the light of reason begins to be eclipsed, darkness of understanding must needs follow.[79]

Once again, Cavendish warns against the use of 'deluding glasses' like microscopes in the pursuit of information about a body of nature. Cottegnies notes that "Hooke's practice of microscopic observations relied on the belief that both an objective and clear perception and an objective observation were possible".[80] Against Hooke, Cavendish argued that microscopes were unreliable. A change in light, for example, could easily affect how the object under the microscope appeared to its user. Lascano explains the seriousness of this concern,

> The experimenter relied on ever-changing ambient light to illuminate his subject…If an object looks different in different lighting conditions or in various positions, how does one determine what the "true form" is given that there is no independent verification for something that cannot be seen with the naked eye?"[81]

In *The Blazing World*, the experimental philosophers admit to this limitation. The Bearmen confess, "our Glasses do onely represent exterior objects, according to the various reflections and positions of light".[82] Not only do microscopes fail to acquire knowledge of the interior nature of the object, but they are also prone to err. A sole reliance on experiments, for these reasons, Cavendish argues, will lead philosophers away from true knowledge. Rational arguments, then, remain essential to progress in natural philosophy. Cavendish's use of the inner discourse throughout the texts above is not only a technique allowing her to refine her philosophical views and enter into debates with her opponents, but it is also an argument, by way of demonstration, against experimental philosophers who wanted to do away with rational discourse. In creating a discourse between herself and her opponents throughout her written work, Cavendish showcases the benefits of using rational discourse to do natural philosophy.

[79] *Ibid.*, 196.

[80] Line Cottegnies, "Margaret Cavendish's Critique of Robert Hooke in *The Blazing World*", *Revue d'histoire des sciences* 77, no. 2 (2024): 243.

[81] Marcy P. Lascano, "Margaret Cavendish and the New Science: "Boys that play with watery bubbles or fling dust into each other's eyes or make a hobbyhorse of snow", *The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Philosophy of* Science (2020): 70-71.

[82] Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, 41.

Conclusion

In discussing Cavendish's use of different genres, Sarasohn suggests, "It may be that she used different rhetorical tactics to insinuate her ideas into a public forum increasingly closed to women in the late seventeenth century".[83] The aim of this paper is to identify inner discourse as one of Cavendish's savvy rhetorical tactics. Throughout her life, Cavendish aimed to acquire knowledge about the natural world. Discourse, she believed, could help her get closer to the truth of these matters. Although she was, for the most part, ignored and isolated, Cavendish did not retreat and give up on this project. Instead, she found imaginative ways around the silence of her contemporaries. If they would not write to her, she would write to them by devising a fictional correspondence in *Philosophical Letters*. If members of the Royal Society did not debate with her about their reliance on experiments, Cavendish would enjoy a dialogue with them on this topic anyway in *The Blazing New World* where she, as an Empress, rules over the experimental philosophers. Likewise, in the discourse between Cavendish's Latter and Former Thoughts in "An Argumental Discourse", Cavendish demonstrates what the debates between herself and her opponents might have looked like were they to engage seriously with her work. Not only does Cavendish use the form of inner discourse to enter exclusive conversations, she also, in doing so, demonstrates that women are capable of studying natural philosophy. Likewise, her use of inner discourse serves as evidence for the importance of using rational discourse *alongside* experiment to acquire truths about the natural world. Ultimately, throughout her work, Cavendish succeeds in employing inner discourse to overcome her exclusion from the prominent philosophical debates at the center of 17th century scientific culture.[84]

[83] Sarasohn, *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish*, 2.

[84] I am very grateful to three anonymous reviewers for their comments. This paper has been significantly improved as a result of their feedback.

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"The highest and deepest speculations of the mind": Venetia Digby and domestic experimentation in early modern England

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Abstract
This project examines the life and experimental/ domestic writing of Lady Venetia Digby (née Stanley; 1600-1633), including the context of her marriage to Sir Kenelm Digby, an original member of the Royal Society. Lady Digby has largely been lost to history beyond her social and familial roles. She is remembered for her beauty and possible adultery, but rarely as a medical practitioner, or as a participant in the developing scientific world of seventeenth-century London. This article will seek to reattribute Wellcome MS. 7391 to Lady Digby, and use that manuscript (in the context of a larger primary archive and social network mapping) to reconstruct her role as an experimenter and medical practitioner. By undertaking this analysis, the study aims to demonstrate that women like Lady Digby were not only present but actively engaged in the scientific, cultural, and institutional networks of seventeenth-century England.

Keywords
experimentation, recipes, women, knowledge, Venetia Digby

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Introduction

This essay aims to examine and recover the life of Lady Venetia Anastasia Digby (neé Stanley, 1600-1633) from obscurity, or when recognized at all, opprobrium. While she has traditionally been either ignored or portrayed as ignorant, immoral, and vain, I will argue that Lady Digby was experimenting within her home, practicing medical care within her family and community, and contributing to a broad social and intellectual network that included some of the brightest and most well-known scientific thinkers of her time. I will work to reattribute to her an as-yet anonymous manuscript held by the Wellcome Collection, and examine this text for the insight it can grant us into her practices and interests as a medical practitioner and intellectual of the era. Taking Lady Digby as a microhistorical case study, we can consider how women like Lady Digby, by experimenting within their households, were contributing to the broader intellectual discourse of the period through the transmission and exchange of both culinary and medical recipes.[1]

This study will investigate several key texts in pursuit of these goals: Wellcome Collection MS. 7391, which I will argue was primarily owned and compiled by Lady Digby; the posthumously published cookbook of her husband, Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665); Sir Kenelm's rather fantastical and fictionalized *Private Memoirs*; and finally, a selection of his personal correspondence. These will be accompanied by a constellation of ancillary materials, including other female-authored recipe books, many of which were authored by members of the Digbys' social and intellectual circles, and various elegies and poems written about Lady Digby after her death (including by contemporary writers like Ben Jonson). First, I will provide a brief overview of the developing scientific community in early seventeenth-century London, and the position of women therein. I will then consider the Digbys, their marriage and partnership, the texts they produced, and the networks in which they participated and contributed the various types of knowledge that they were creating and testing, whether individually or together. Finally, I will show that Lady Digby was a lay practitioner in her own right, actively engaged in testing and experimenting with recipes within the domestic sphere. Moreover, by tracing the ways in which she participated in the circulation and dissemination of knowledge within her social and intellectual networks, this research seeks to reassess her place in the history of seventeenth-century science and intellectual culture.

[1] For this discourse, see for example: *Women, Science, and Medicine, 1500-1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society*, eds. Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton, 1997); Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550-1650* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); and Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Seventeenth-century medical and scientific environments

Seventeenth-century England, and particularly London, was a hotbed of complex and interconnected systems of belief and discourses about medicine, science, and the nature of truth. Contemporaries had access to a varied and pluralistic medical marketplace containing many different kinds of practitioners, from experiential female midwives to male, university-educated members of the College of Physicians of London. At the top end, the College had extremely limited membership, and set the standard in London and its environs for elite and learned medicine; on the other end of the spectrum, the marketplace was flooded with an array of what have been termed 'irregular practitioners'.[2] Though humoral theory continued to form the basis of much medical thought and treatment, the seventeenth century also saw the rise of Paracelsian, Helmontian, and chemical medicine. Women were both patients and irregular practitioners in their own right, playing a significant part in the medical system in both roles.

Women were often the first line of defense when it came to treating illness or injury within their household or community.[3] Domestic medical manuals and recipe books were widespread and filled with recipes for everything from gendered conditions like things relating to childbirth, to more general treatments such as those for a sudden loss of hearing or "to take away Venome" from a wound.[4] These books displayed a functional level of understanding of dietetics and other practical medical treatment methods. They also provide a picture of the largely female networks of communal healing and nursing in which women were both patient and practitioner to one another within domestic environments. The books themselves were often a communal effort, including recipes compiled from various sources, and even sometimes resulting from the collaborative work of married couples taking responsibility for the health of their household.[5]

Beyond the official institutions were various less-formal circles and intellectual communities, including the Hartlib Circle, the Invisible College, and others. Many of these shared members and contributors between them, and thus represented a kind of collaborative discourse community in which women played a key and central role.[6] Sir Kenelm

2 Margaret Pelling (with Frances White), *Medical Conflicts in Early Modern London: Patronage, Physicians, and Irregular Practitioners, 1550-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 70.

3 Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*.

4 *English Recipe Book, 17th Century*, Wellcome Collection MS. 7391, f. 3.

5 Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*, 24; Sara Pennell, "Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes and Knowledge in Early Modern England", in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, eds. Victoria E. Burke and Jonathan Gibson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 237-258; Elaine Leong, "Collecting Knowledge for the Family: Recipes, Gender and Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern English Household", *Centaurus* 55 (2013): 81-103.

6 For more on women's involvement in these intellectual communities, see Pal, *Republic of Wom-*

Digby was actively engaged with a circle of natural philosophers and experimental figures such as Robert Boyle and Henry Oldenburg, as shown by their documented correspondence.[7] The Digbys' position within this intellectual milieu and her own experimental pursuit of medical and recipe knowledge suggests that Lady Digby might be regarded alongside women like Lady Ranelagh (1615-1691) as a significant female knowledge-producer in this period. Women like the ladies Ranelagh and Digby were, like many of their male family members and peers, testing, authoring, and disseminating recipe knowledge across this network of intellectuals, and according to Michelle DiMeo, "effective recipe trials often relied on a network of female experts. The judgment and domain expertise employed by these women helped create systematic and reproducible knowledge […] that would later be used to lay the foundations for new methods of experimentation".[8] There seems to have been a masculinizing language used to describe the women in these knowledge-producing circles or environs. They are described as being in some way exceptional, their feminine bodies possessed by a masculine mind or soul. Lady Digby was described as possessing "a masculine and heroic soul […] informing the body of a beautiful and fair woman".[9]

Some authors have categorized manuscript recipe books as "one of the 'informal' channels by which patients gathered and evaluated medical information and expertise", but more recent work has argued that this "trivializes their significance in the seemingly ceaseless project of therapeutic and pharmacological 'data retrieval' […] which sustained medical care".[10] Recipe books were works of a deeply experimental nature. Though a recipe collector might include recipes shared by another member of their social network, this did not mean that they were accepted at face value. Annotations and marginalia in many of these books serve as evidence that the users of these books tested recipes extensively, noted whether they found them to be effective or not, and made changes based on the results of their experiments. In the receipt book attributed to Mary Granville and Anne Granville D'Ewes, for instance, one of the contributors used a '+' sign in the margins next to recipes to indicate that they were tried and tested, as well as adding the latin "*probatum*

en; Evan Bourke, "Female Involvement, Membership, and Centrality: A Social Network Analysis of the Hartlib Circle", *Literature Compass* 14 (2017).

7 *Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, eds. Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio, and Lawrence M. Principe, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001).

8 Michelle DiMeo, *Lady Ranelagh: The Incomparable Life of Robert Boyle's Sister* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 78.

9 Digby, *Private Memoirs*, 9.

10 Steven Shapin, "Trusting George Cheyne: Scientific Expertise, Common Sense and Moral Authority in Early Eighteenth-Century Dietetic Medicine", *BHM* 77 (2003), 296; Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell, "Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern 'Medical Marketplace'", in *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c. 1450-c. 1850*, eds. Mark S. R. Jenner and Patrick Wallis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 137.

est" at the end of the passage in question.[11] Many manuscripts show written evidence of such testing, and the processes of 'testing' drugs and 'trying' cures have been shown to be overlapping and intertwined in the practices of both physicians and 'outsiders' such as women and other irregular practitioners.[12]

Because of the manner in which compilers controlled the knowledge within their recipe books, both through the choice to include a recipe and through their experimental testing, scholars have viewed these manuscripts as indicative of a kind of 'smart consumer' within the medical marketplace.[13] Scholars such as Wendy Wall have argued that women's roles in the compilation and dissemination of manuscript texts was a 'bid for gentility', and that these private circulations were a method to combat the more common audience associated with the broader reach of print texts.[14] The experience of creating and testing recipes required a great deal of practical skill that was highly similar to the skills possessed by an alchemist or early chemist: grinding, weighing, distilling, heating, and purifying. Many of the same tools were used in the early modern kitchen as in the laboratory, and some recipe books show a clear knowledge of engagement with chemical medicine, such as the use of ingredients like sulphur and mercury.[15]

Sir Kenelm Digby published several philosophical treatises, as well as a cookbook, *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Kt. Opened*, which was printed posthumously with his son's consent.[16] His recipe and culinary works have been described as "foolish piracies", by scholars who looked down on this genre of early modern knowledge-making.[17] E.W. Bligh wrote that "Digby has been too closely surrounded in the popular imagination with these stew-pans and syllabubs", disdainfully suggesting a need to

[11] Mary Granville and Anne Granville D'Ewes, *Receipt Book,* Folger Shakespeare Library MS V.a.430. Reproduced in *Preserving on Paper: Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen's Receipt Books*, ed. Kristine Kowalchuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 78. See also Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[12] Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, "Testing Drugs and Trying Cures: Experiment and Medicine in Medieval and Early Modern Europe", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 91 (2017): 157-182.

[13] Leong and Pennell, "Recipe Collections", 143.

[14] Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Pennell, "Perfecting Practice?", 239-240.

[15] Lynette Hunter, "Women and Domestic Medicine: Lady Experimenters, 1570-1620", in *Women, Science, and Medicine, 1500-1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society*, eds. Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton, 1997), 98.

[16] Sir Kenelm Digby, *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Kt. Opened: Whereby is Discovered Several Ways for making of Metheglin, Sider, Cherry-Wine, &c. Together with Excellent Directions for Cookery: As also for Preserving, Conserving, Candying, &c.* (London: E.C. for H. Brome, 1669). Reproduced with an Introduction by Anne MacDonell (London: Philip Lee Warner, 38 Albemarle Street, W. 1910).

[17] E.W. Bligh, *Sir Kenelm Digby and His Venetia* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1932), 16.

reexamine Sir Kenelm's "great life" in order to elevate him from the kitchen to a more appropriately elite status.[18] This disdain is reflective of a long tradition of distinguishing domestic medical and recipe knowledge from that of other, more learned traditions in early modern science and medicine – a division that has mainly served to obscure the rich connections and interwoven nature of both the sources, and the intellectual communities involved in the production of these types of knowledge.

Sir Kenelm has been described by one biographer as "a man who did everything and achieved nothing", yet also as "an epitome of the troubled and poetical seventeenth century".[19] His name recurs constantly in the extant primary material of the century, across genres and in connection with diverse historical figures and intellectual circles. He was a courtier, a diplomat, a staunch Royalist, a natural philosopher and alchemist, and one of the first Fellows of the Royal Society. He has been attributed with discovering that there was "something in the air which is necessary to the life of plants".[20] He was, in multiple senses of the phrase, a Renaissance man. As much of the scholarship written to date about the Digbys has focused on Sir Kenelm and his interests or accomplishments, this essay will seek rather to decenter him from their story and to use his writings (both published and manuscript) to learn more about Lady Digby and her intellectual contributions.

"The highest and deepest speculations of the mind"[21]*: Reviving Lady Digby*

Subject to a whirlwind of rumors of unchaste or immoral behavior (including whispers of illicit affairs with one or more earls), Lady Venetia Digby has been described as wanting formal education, exposed to "attacks of envy and ill-nature", but also as the main character in a life that was "altogether a love-tale".[22] She was indeed worshipped by her husband, who wrote extensively about his love for her, especially in his *Private Memoirs*, a fictionalized account of both his travels and their courtship, in which he referred to her as 'Stelliana' and himself as 'Theagenes'. After her death, she was immortalized in poems and elegies by authors like Ben Jonson and Thomas Randolph, and portraits by Anthony van Dyke.[23] One such elegy compared Lady Digby to Helen of Troy, while Jonson dedicated

[18] *Ibid.*, 16.
[19] *Ibid.*, 13.
[20] *Ibid.*, 14.
[21] Sir Kenelm Digby, *Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to King Charles the First. Written by Himself*, ed. by Sir Harris Nicolas (London: Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street, 1827), 8.
[22] Louisa Stuart Costello, *Memoirs of Eminent Englishwomen*, Vol. III (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1844), 1.
[23] British Library, ADD MS. 89136. Additional epitaphs and elegies can be found in the Bodleian Library, Ashmole MSS. 38 (f. 192) and 47 (f. 59v).

Fig. 1 – *Venetia, Lady Digby*, by Sir Anthony van Dyck. Oil on canvas, circa 1633-1634. NPG 5727, National Portrait Gallery, London.

two separate poetic pieces to the adulation of both her mind and body.[24] In the (much longer) piece on the lady's mind, Jonson wrote "But that a minde, so rapt so high / So swift , so pure, should yet apply / It selfe to us, and come so nigh / Earth's grossnesse, there's the how and why", complicating the common representation of her as uneducated.[25]

Modern portrayals have hardly improved on the traditional depiction of Lady Digby as beautiful, poorly educated, and morally corrupt, nor have they attempted a more complex consideration of her person. A novel about the Digbys appeared in 2014, which presented her as a vapid and narcissistic figure, pitiable and "no great reader or writer".[26] The manner

[24] BL, ADD MS. 89136, ff. 16-20.

[25] *Ibid.*, f. 18v.

[26] Hermione Eyre, *Viper Wine* (London: Hogarth, 2014), 22. Though this novel is intentionally anachronistic, it nevertheless does Lady Digby a great disservice. The author makes Lady Digby's alleged near-illiteracy a recurring theme of the novel, suggesting that multiple tracts were published under the lady's name which were actually ghost-written by a Catholic priest in the family's employ. Though the author uses several extant primary sources written by Sir Kenelm Digby, Ben Jonson, and other seventeenth-century men, she appears to be uninterested in Lady Digby herself.

in which Sir Kenelm wrote about his wife and partner, on the other hand, especially following her death, can only be described as reverent. His letters to his sons and brother in the months, and even years, after her passing painted her as brilliant, angelic, and morally superior. He waxed poetic about her beauty, certainly, but he spent just as much time and ink expounding upon her intelligence and the capabilities of her mind:

> in like manner, in true magnanimity, courage, sweetness of disposition, candor and ingenuity, integrity, constancy, stayedness, discretion, solid judgement and all other virtues of a heroic mind, […] I dare say I knew her thoroughly; in almost ten years of near conversation I could observe and judge of the motions of her heart; which she could never disguise; especially to him she loved, as she did me. That was a main part of our happiness, that we knew each others thoughts as soon as we conceived them; we knew not how to reserve any thing from the others knowledge.[27]

Lady Venetia and Sir Kenelm became acquainted as children and "the flame sprung up in infancy which was to increase with years".[28] They were wed only after his return from the series of travels that would be recounted and embellished in his *Private Memoirs*. It was during this absence that her morality and reputation came into question. Anne MacDonell wrote in her introduction to Sir Kenelm's *Closet Opened* that, "making all allowance for gossip, the truth seems to be that in Sir Kenelm's absence she had been at least the mistress of Sir Edward Sackville, afterwards the fourth Earl of Dorset".[29] John Aubrey, on the other hand, suggests in his Brief Lives that she was "a Miss to Sir Edmund Wyld, who had her picture", as well as to Richard Sackville (1589-1624), the third Earl of Dorset.[30] Aubrey wrote that the third Earl of Dorset was "her greatest gallant, who was extremely enamoured of her. and had one if not more children by her. He setled on her an Annuity of 500li per annum".[31] The narrative continues, however, that after the Digby's marriage, "once a year the Earle of Dorset invited her and Sir Kenelme to dinner, where the Earle would behold her with much passion, and only kisse her hand".[32] Yet, Richard Sackville, Aubrey's preferred Earl of Dorset, died in 1624, prior to

[27] Letter from Kenelm Digby to John Digby, 24 June 1633, in Gabrieli, Vittorio. "A New Digby Letter Book: 'In Praise of Venetia'". *The National Library of Wales Journal* 9, no. 2 (1955): 144. *Note that for the purposes of this piece I have standardized the spelling of sources to modern conventions where it makes it easier for the reader and does not impact meaning.

[28] Costello, *Memoirs*, 3.

[29] Digby, *Closet Opened*, xviii.

[30] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, with An Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers*, Vol. 1: Text, ed. Kate Bennett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 332.

[31] *Ibid.*, 331.

[32] *Ibid.*, 332; also noted in Kenelm's entry on 327.

the Digbys' wedding. There is clearly some confusion among scholars, and even in the historical record, but for the purposes of this essay, the truth behind the rumors and scandal are of little importance. Sir Kenelm himself seemed to give the rumors little credence, and even described multiple attempts he himself made upon Lady Venetia's chastity before their marriage, which he insists were rebuffed by "the chastest woman and the most scrupulous".[33]

Upon his return to England, the Digbys were married and according to the narrative of his memoirs and correspondence, it seems to have been a marriage of great love and passion, which resulted in the birth of six sons (including stillborn twins and an infant son who died soon after birth) and a daughter before Lady Digby's untimely demise at age 33.[34] Though all of their sons appear at least passingly in the archival record, the Digbys' daughter Margery is a specter, almost impossible to trace. Though multiple secondary sources refer to her briefly, Sir Kenelm never mentions her in his letters, nor does she appear in MS. 7391 by name (though this is not to say she played no role in its ownership or compilation).[35] The introduction to Sir Kenelm's *Private Memoirs* lists Margery among their children, and notes that she "married Edward Dudley of Clopton in Northamptonshire, Esq".[36] This Edward Dudley is also poorly documented, but appears to have died in 1641, according to records relating to his younger brother William, who was created Baronet in 1660.[37] Given the date of Edward Dudley's death in 1641, and the likely date of the Digbys' marriage in January 1625, Margery Digby would either have to have been married at an extremely young age, or to have been born before her parents' marriage is commonly thought to have taken place. It is possible that Margery is the child that Lady Digby was rumored to have borne to Richard Sackville, for which he allegedly settled an annuity upon her. Aubrey's *Brief Lives* reports that Sir Kenelm sued the Earl for this annuity after their marriage, which, if true, might have been in exchange for the taking on the official parentage and care of Sackville's illegitimate daughter.[38] This is just one possibility, however. Sir Kenelm and Lady Venetia were married in secret, to avoid the ire of his disapproving mother, and appear to have kept their union private until after the birth of their second son

[33] Letter from Kenelm Digby to Kenelme, John, and George Digby, 18 May 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 124.

[34] Letter from Kenelm Digby to John Digby, 24 May 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 121.

[35] Dictionary of National Biography; https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1885-1900/Digby,_Kenelm_(1603-1665). Accessed February 28, 2025.

[36] Digby, *Private Memoirs*, LXXXIV.

[37] George E. Cokayne, *Complete Baronetage, Vol. III: English, Irish and Scottish, 1649-1664* (Exeter: W. Pollard & Co., Ltd., 1900), 100.

[38] Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 326. Aubrey wrote of the annuity, "which after Sir Kenelm Digby maried was unpaid by the Earle", and crossed out underneath, "and for which Annuity Sir Kenelme sued the Earle after mariage, and recovered it".

in 1627 (their first having been born in 1625, ten months after the earliest estimate date of the marriage in January 1625).

Regardless of what came before, after their marriage Lady Digby appeared to all as a paragon of wifely and religious virtue. Even Aubrey allowed that, according to the reports of other women, "after her mariage, she redeemed her Honour by her strick't living".[39] The Digbys were Catholic during a period of religious strife in England, and though Sir Kenelm converted to Protestantism in late 1630 (motivated by political ambitions), Lady Digby remained firm in her faith. Sir Kenelm also returned to the old faith following his wife's death and kept it until the end of his life.[40] He wrote treatises on religion, including *A Conference with a Lady about choice of a Religion* (1638), in which he argued that the Catholic Church was the one true church.[41] In 1660, five years prior to his death, Sir Kenelm drafted a petition to the newly restored Charles II on behalf of Roman Catholics.[42] During the journey he took after their marriage, from late 1627 to early 1629, Lady Digby withdrew from the world, isolated herself and her children at home, and established a routine revolving around prayer, meditation, and the reading of spiritual books. "She often mortified her selfe with disciplining and wearing a shirt of haire; […] so farre she was from vanity and ostentation".[43] She was devout, pious, and "exceeding carefull and vigilant over the domestike affaires of her family, and ordered them very wisely".[44] She was known to gamble with other ladies of London society, then to take her winnings and donate them to religious causes both domestically and overseas (once up to £100 in a single donation), and thus gained authority and clout through her piety and modesty.[45]

Lady Digby's death on May 1, 1633 was sudden, dramatic, and prompted a new set of rumors about the woman who had for years been inspiring poets and painters. Though she had previously been known for her "perfect healthy constitution", with a complexion "neither too hott nor too pale", she died so suddenly in her bed that many suspected poison.[46] This suspicion was intense enough to justify the rare performance of an autopsy, and "when her head was opened there was found but little brain, which her husband imputed to her drinking of viper-wine; but spitefull woemen would say 'twas a viper-husband who

[39] *Ibid.*, 332.

[40] Joe Moshenka, *A Stain in the Blood: The Remarkable Voyage of Sir Kenelm Digby* (London: Windmill Books, 2016), 351.

[41] Kenelm Digby, *A Conference with a Lady about choice of a Religion* (Printed at Paris: Widow of J. Blagaert, 1638).

[42] BL, ADD MS. 41846, ff. 76r-79v.

[43] Letter from Kenelm Digby to Kenelme, John, and George Digby, 18 May 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 132.

[44] *Ibid.*, 131.

[45] *Ibid.*, 128.

[46] Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 331-332.

was jealous of her".[47] This report of an anatomically small or decayed brain after her death stands in contrast to the portrait of her intellect offered enthusiastically by Sir Kenelm in both his *Private Memoirs* and his private correspondence, where he wrote that "truly she had one of the best composed brains for the faculties of understanding and discretion that I ever knew in a womans head".[48] He addressed the issue of "the brain much putrefied and corrupted", saying that, though the doctors believed this decay to be the work of some years, "all the faculties of her brain she exercised, even to the last night wherein she died, as vigorously as ever she had done".[49]

Following her death, Sir Kenelm spoke at length about the qualities of true friendship between men as being based in equal understanding and wit, not found in women except in the rarest circumstances: "I thinke there never was a perfecter and stronger friendshippe between any two than between my wife and me. Almost infinite circumstances must concurre to make such a one".[50] He considered them to be intellectual equals, and true partners and friends in all things, "thy Friend, Companion, and Copartner too".[51] He wrote in a letter to his sons following her death:

> I must confesse that her excellent temper in judging and great discretion in directing all affaires that was fitt for me to consult with her (and I kept non from her that concerned my selfe) was the greatest guide and stay that I had in all my businesses. When upon any particular occasion I have thought some course best, upon consulting it with her she hath often turned my resolutions an other way, and hath mastered me with reason [52]

She managed the domestic matters of her household with a steady hand, consulted on her husband's business affairs, and, as I will show below, produced recipe knowledge and provided medical care within her community and social network.

47 *Ibid.*, 332. Many recipes at the time used some form of distilled venom, or other elements that we would likely consider poisonous today. It is probably not useful to speculate on whether viper wine in fact shrunk Venetia Digby's brain.

48 Letter from Kenelm Digby to Kenelme, John, and George Digby, 18 May 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 123.

49 *Ibid.*, 134-135.

50 Letter from Kenelm Digby to John Digby, 24 June 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 144.

51 BL, ADD MS. 89136, f. 9v.

52 Letter from Kenelm Digby to Kenelme, John, and George Digby, 18 May 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 123-124.

Attribution of Wellcome MS. 7391

Wellcome MS. 7391 has, until now, been anonymous and unnattributed. I believe that we can make a strong argument that this recipe book was not only owned by Lady Venetia Digby (the Wellcome Collection has loosely associated the book with her, due to a recipe attribution early in the text), but that it also reflects her personal practice, as well as her engagement with a wider social and scientific network. MS. 7391 is a vellum-covered folio volume comprised of three sections written in three distinct hands. The first section is brief, spanning only the first fourteen pages, in a cramped hand. This section contains a recipe attributed to 'Venetia Stanley'; given the use of her maiden name, the recipe seems to predate her marriage to Sir Kenelm, originating therefore sometime before 1625.[53] The third section is the only one to include dates, which clearly set it in the late nineteenth century.

The second section makes up the vast majority of the volume, and is written mainly in a single, calligraphic hand, described by one scholar as "evidently that of a professional scribe".[54] This section does not, in my opinion, appear to have been written all at the same time, as it would if it were made as a clean copy of a previously written manuscript recipe book. For one thing, there are several additions made in a larger, more looping hand, which may represent the interventions of the compiler/ user rather than the scribe or clerk used to write out the main body of the text. Additionally, there are several places where notes are added immediately after or below the recipe title (or in the margin) in a more cramped script with a different weight, as though using a different ink at another time than the main entries, with less consistency to the writing than one might expect were a scribe copying out a manuscript in full.

The volume contains no distinguishable organizational method, nor does it contain a table of contents or index. It is, however, comprised exclusively of medical and cosmetic recipes. As was common in family recipe books of the period, there are a few sections throughout where a specific type of condition or treatment is prioritized, and several recipes in a row are listed to address the same ailment, as in the case of recipes for the stone, and eye cures (which seem to have been for the use of the compiler herself). These groupings may represent periods of illness for the user or members of her family, during which multiple recipes were tried in her efforts to treat the condition. I agree with previous scholarship by Richard Aspin, who claims that the user of MS. 7391 was almost certainly female, and a lay medical practitioner who was practicing and testing her recipes, as well as putting them to use both within her household, and her larger community.[55]

[53] WC, MS. 7391, f. 4.

[54] Richard Aspin, "Illustrations from the Wellcome Library: Who was Elizabeth Okeover?", *Medical History* 44 (2000), 534.

[55] *Ibid.*, 535.

Michelle DiMeo's seminal work on the attribution of authorship for manuscript recipe books urges caution in the mapping of social networks based on these manuscript texts, and advocates for the careful contextualizing of such manuscripts within larger archival bodies, in order to glean a more comprehensive understanding of the medical and social interactions depicted therein.[56] These methods are absolutely correct and advisable, but I would like to suggest that it is also possible to use the tracking of social networks as a methodological tool through which to more precisely determine, if not authorship, then at least ownership of recipe books like Wellcome MS. 7391. Sara Pennell has argued that the compilation of a manuscript recipe text was a sociological process, with the text as an artifact.[57] Aspin has made some use of this approach in his aforementioned article, and it is my intention here to both place MS. 7391 in conversation with other archival materials to contextualize the medical and empirical practice of Lady Digby, but also to use the social network mapping to establish a more precise temporal and geographic framework for this manuscript.

In his fascinating examination of a manuscript belonging to an Elizabeth Okeover, Aspin showed that much of that book was copied over directly from the manuscript that I examine here.[58] Aspin's tracing of the Okeover family begins with an Elizabeth Okeover, aunt to Elizabeth Adderley (neé Okeover), the elder of which was born in 1629. There was, however, another Elizabeth Okeover in the generation preceding, sister to one Humphrey Okeover (patriarch of Aspin's Okeover family tree), who married an Edward Phillips in 1583.[59] Though I cannot trace either of their death dates, it is notable that while Elizabeth Okeover is indeed cited in MS. 7391, a "Master Phillips" is also referenced in Sir Kenelm's *Closet Opened*.[60] It is therefore possible that it is this older generation interacting with the Digbys in this recipe exchange, though it is also possible that MS. 7391 passed to the Digbys' daughter or a son after Lady Digby's death and that the references to Okeover were added later (they appear close at the end of the seventeenth-century entries). Aspin argues that "MS. 7391 […] was certainly compiled therefore no later than the 1680s, and probably considerably earlier".[61] I believe we can trace the central section of the manuscript to the early decades of the seventeenth century.

We can trace some of the attributions within the main distinct section of the recipe book to people that we know were members of the Digbys' social and intellectual circles, including

[56] Michelle DiMeo, "Authorship and medical networks: reading attributions in early modern manuscript recipe books", in *Reading and writing recipe books, 1550-1800*, eds. Michelle DiMeo and Sara Pennell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013): 25-46.

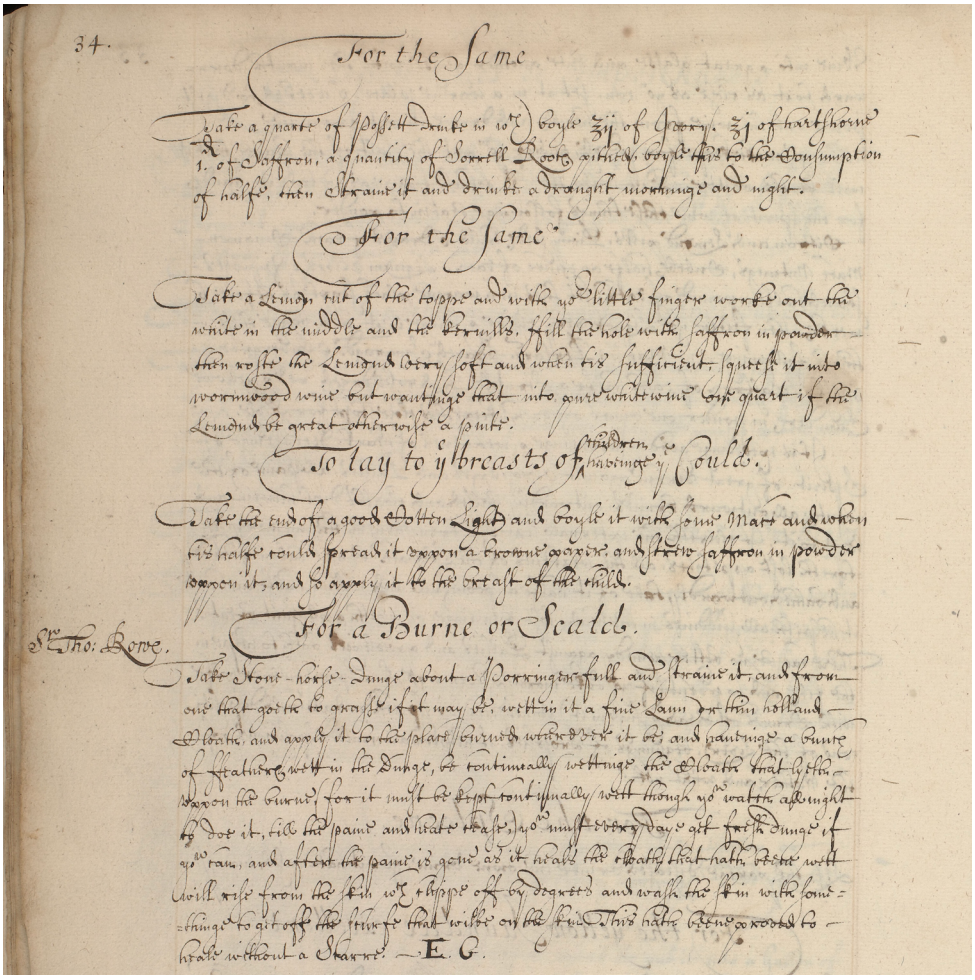
[57] Pennell, "Perfecting Practice?", 250.

[58] Aspin, "Illustrations", 533.

[59] Robert Glover and Richard Flower, *Visitacion of Staffordschire, 1583*, ed. H. Sydney Grazebrook, Esq. (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1883), 122.

[60] Digby, *Closet Opened*, 224.

[61] Aspin, "Illustrations", 534.


34.

For the Same

Take a quart of posset drink in wch boyle ℥ij of Honey. ℥j of hartshorne ℔. 1. of Saffron, a quantity of Sorrell Roote, wthin boyle this to the Consumption of halfe, then Straine it and drinke a draught morninge and night.

For the Same

Take a Lemon, cut of the toppe and with yo little finger worke out the white in the middle and the Kernills, fill the hole with Saffron in powder then rosste the Lemon a little soft and when it is sufficient, squeese it into wormwood wine but wantinge that into some white wine one quart if the Lemon be great otherwise a pinte.

To lay to ye breasts of a Childern, having ye Gould.

Take the end of a good Cotten Light and boyle it with some Mutt and when it is halfe tonld spread it upon a browne paper and strew Saffron in powder upon it, and so apply it to the brest of the child.

For a Burne or Scald.

Sr Tho: Rowe.

Take Stone-horse Dunge about a Porringer full and straine it, and from one that gotte to grasse if it may be, wett in it a fine Lawn or thin holland Cloathe, and apply it to the place scorned wtherwith it be, and dauntinge a Peece of ffeathers wett in the Dunge, be continually wettinge the Cloathe that lyeth upon the burne, for it must be kept continually wett though yo watte all night to doe it, till the paine and heate waste, yo must every day gitt fresh Dunge if yo can, and after the paine is gone, as it neare the Cloathe that hath been wett will rise from the skin wch shippe off by degrees and wash the skin with some thinge to gitt off the skin of that wthin on the sore. This hathe been approved to heale without a Skarre. — E. G.

Fig. 2 – Wellcome Collection MS. 7391, *English Recipe Book*, 17th Century, f. 34.

both Lord and Lady Arundel; the Earl of Huntington; and 'Sir Gerard of Dorney' (likely Sir John Garrard of Dorney, 1546-1625), who lived in Buckinghamshire, in the immediate vicinity of the Digbys' estate at Gayhurst, and served as Mayor of London.[62] The Digbys may have known and socialized with Gerard in both Buckinghamshire and London. Four recipes are marked with the initials 'E.G', in two distinct hands, both different from that of the main scribe. The use of initials may indicate a close relationship of the donor to the owner of the manuscript. The recipe on folio 34 that is attributed to Sr. Thomas Rowe has the initials '-E.G' added at the end, indicating that E.G. donated the recipe to the compiler of the book, but that the original 'authorship' or credit for the recipe was maintained with a reference in the margins. This is reflective of the processes described by Elaine Leong and others, in which men participated in the creation and recording of household and domestic knowledge, including with the intent of passing information down to their daughters.[63] I therefore believe this is one of two Elizabeth Garrards: 1) Elizabeth (Rowe) Garrard (d. 1624 in Buckinghamshire), who was married to one William Garrard and daughter of Sir Thomas Rowe; or her daughter-in-law Elizabeth (Swallow) Garrard (1598-before 1645), who married George Garrard (1579-1655) in London in 1625.[64] These two women were both temporally and geographically positioned for having potentially known and interacted with Lady Digby during her lifetime, and certainly help us to date MS. 7391 more definitively in the early part of the seventeenth century. In this case, an Elizabeth Garrard appears to have passed her father or grandfather's recipe to the compiler of the manuscript, while keeping his name attached to the knowledge.

It is important to note that the network depicted here expands beyond a singular neighborhood or county, as it would have done for a couple like the Digbys, who lived for periods of time in London, as well as at their estate in Buckinghamshire. Their connections would have been geographically varied, and if recipe knowledge was being exchanged among the other couples in the London court sphere, this may have resulted in the acquisition of recipe knowledge with attributions to laypeople and practitioners with an even broader geographic spread (if a lady at court shared a recipe from her own recipe book, it might continue to carry the attribution of the previous donor, across diverse geographic areas).[65]

[62] WC, MS. 7391, f. 41; Likely Henry Hastings, the 5th Earl of Huntington (1586-1643), who was married to Elizabeth Stanley, a cousin of Venetia's paternal side of the family.

[63] Leong and Pennell, "Recipe Collections"; Helen Cox, "'A Most Precious and Excellent Balm': The Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Papers of Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620", *Midland History* 43, no. 1 (2018), 24.

[64] London Metropolitan Archives, P69/MTN2/A/001/MS04784, *London, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812*.

[65] Sara Pennell has suggested that "the wide variety of donor names might reflect the geographical position and diverse social networks of the compiler, reinforcing that domestic knowledge of various subjects travelled freely across socio-economic and gender barriers". DiMeo, "Authorship", 26; Pennell, "Perfecting Practice?", 243-245.

It is perhaps generative to note that Sir Kenelm's attributions of recipes to female sources are almost always to a 'Lady', whereas in other recipe and cookbooks, one might see attributions to a 'Goody', or 'Mistress', indicating contributions from across a broader social scale. Indeed, MS. 7391 is more socially inclusive in this way, the vast majority of its references being to either a 'Mr' or 'Mistress', rather than a Lord or Lady. These may have been people in the compiler's immediate neighborhood or community, as well as her broader social and intellectual circles. Several attributions very early in the main section of in MS. 7391 are to a Mrs. Kettlebey, while several others refer to a Mr. Cresset. Both of these are family names relating to Shropshire, the county where Lady Digby was born and raised. These references may indicate connections from the earlier period of her life, and knowledge gained before she became more centrally located in Buckinghamshire and London.

In establishing the origin of the main part of this manuscript to the earlier part of the seventeenth century, we can also reopen some of the ways that knowledge may have transitioned between various recipe books, whether manuscript or print, over the course of the century.[66] Aspin argues that "Lady Dacre's medicine for stone in MS. 7391 is the same as that attributed to her in The Queens closet opened, an anonymous work purportedly based on the recipe collection of Queen Henrietta Maria, from which the compiler may have gleaned it".[67] That text attributed to the Queen, however, was not published until 1655, raising questions as to whether the recipe originated there, or perhaps ended up there after circulating through various manuscript texts first. After all, the Lady Dacre here mentioned most likely refers to the Lady Anne (1554-1630), Countess of Arundel prior to Alethea Howard, née Talbot (who also appears as a donor in MS. 7391). These women were all connected either individually or through family ties to the developing scientific community in early modern London, as well as played a role at court in the inner circle of Queen Henrietta Maria, for whom Sir Kenelm served as chancellor.[68]

Both Sir Kenelm and Lady Venetia listed recipes that they attributed to various 'Doctors', but the former had only four of these, two of whom were a "Doctor Harvey" and a "Doctor Bacon".[69] Lady Digby referred to over a dozen doctors, and for some recipes listed multiple doctors' names in the margins. She cited a "Dr. Atkins" multiple times, most likely Henry Atkins (1558-1635). Atkins was a fellow of the Royal Society of Physicians and one of the principal physicians of James I. He lived in London, and his wife was reportedly from Buckinghamshire.[70] Lady Digby also referenced a Dr. Turner, likely the author of a widely

66 The first section of MS. 7391 cites Venetia Stanley under her maiden name, therefore placing that section before 1625 but likely not more than 10 years before, due to her youth.

67 Aspin, "Illustrations", 538.

68 Erin Griffey, "'The Rose and Lily Queen': Henrietta Maria's fair face and the power of beauty at the Stuart court", *Renaissance Studies* 35, no. 5 (2021), 826-827.

69 Digby, *Closet Opened*, 103, 257-261.

70 *Munk's Roll*, "Henry Atkins 1558-1635", https://history.rcp.ac.uk/inspiring-physicians/henry-atkins.

available printed herbal text that most gentlewomen would have had relatively easy access to.[71] She attributed several recipes, as well, to a "Mr. Atwood the Oculist", who, though not given the authority of the title 'Dr' seems to have provided several eye recipes in a row. This was almost certainly Mr. Atwood of Worcestershire (b. 1575), who was known to travel to treat patients, as he reportedly treated a Mr. Alsop of Derbyshire in 1655.[72] In some cases, these may have been recipes received after consulting with a doctor about their own ill health, or that of a family member or neighbor, but these may also have been collected from these practitioners, or from their communities secondhand, to add to their collections for possible later use. Lady Digby would have been likely to collect recipes to try out during her husband's next recurring case of the stone, for instance, from which he long suffered.[73]

Eye cures recur throughout the text, and indeed seem to be the area in which the user is most interested for the sake of their own health. A recipe for "A proved water for all evills in the Eyes" is marked with the name "Sir Gascoin", which can only be William Gascoigne (1612-1644), an astronomer and staunch Royalist who corresponded with several members of the developing scientific community of the moment, including Sir Kenelm.[74] Near the end of the manuscript, several recipes occur in row, with attributions to multiple donors, that together describe a period of ill-health and personal experience. She listed in quick succession: "The pills that I tooke for my Eyes when very sore" (Mr. Bracegirle); "The Electuary that I tooke of him to strengthen my Sight"; "A diet drinke prescribed mee for my Eyes" (Mr. Atwood the Oculist); "The water prescribed by him to wash my Eyes with"; "The Pills" (Mr. Atwood); "The ointment for the Eyes" (Mr. Atwood).[75] These are not the first recipes for eye treatments in the manuscript, suggesting that the user had been experiencing ongoing stress or ill-health in this area over a long period of time. This eye trouble could have been one reason to engage scribal assistance in the physical writing of the manuscript.

We can also trace within the manuscript references to family members that might provide us some insight into the relationships and priorities of its owner. MS. 7391 includes a recipe for "The drink prescribed to my sister in her violent flux after her miscarriage", while Sir Kenelm's *Closet Opened* contains a recipe attributed to a Sir John Fortescue, who married Lady

71 Jennifer Wynne Hellwarth, "'Be unto me as a precious ointment': Lady Grace Mildmay, Sixteenth-Century Female Practitioner", *DYNAMIS* 19 (1999), 107.

72 Christopher T. Leffler and Stephen G. Schwartz, "A Family of Early English Oculists (1600-1751), With a Reappraisal of John Thomas Woolhouse (1664-1733/1734)", *Ophthalmology and Eye Diseases* 9 (2017), 1.

73 WC, MS. 7391, throughout but examples on ff. 88, 94, 100, 135-136.

74 WC, MS. 7391, f. 121; David Sellers, "A Letter from William Gascoigne to Sir Kenelm Digby", *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 37, no. 4 (2006): 405-416.

75 WC, MS. 7391, ff. 140-141. Treatments for the eyes were fairly common in recipe books for the period, often involving ingredients like belladonna for their aesthetic effects on the pupils. This manuscript does not prescribe belladonna, but rather prioritizes ingredients like bettony, eyebright, sage, and "the water that comes from rotten apples".

Digby's sister Frances Fortescue (neé Stanley). In the context of familial sharing or production of recipe knowledge, it is striking that MacDonell, in her introduction to Sir Kenelm's cookbook, states that "though the elder Lady Digby contributed something to *The Closet Opened,* there is no suggestion that it owes a single receipt to the younger".[76] Indeed, this reference to Sir Kenelm's mother is a fascinating and revealing one, as it refers not to a specific recipe, but rather a method of "the boiling the same things in a close flagon *in bulliente Balneo*, as my Lady Kent, and My Mother used".[77] The method reportedly preferred by these two women differed from that recorded as part of the recipe preceding the reference, and indicates that they tested multiple approaches and determined that the 'boiling bath' was superior.

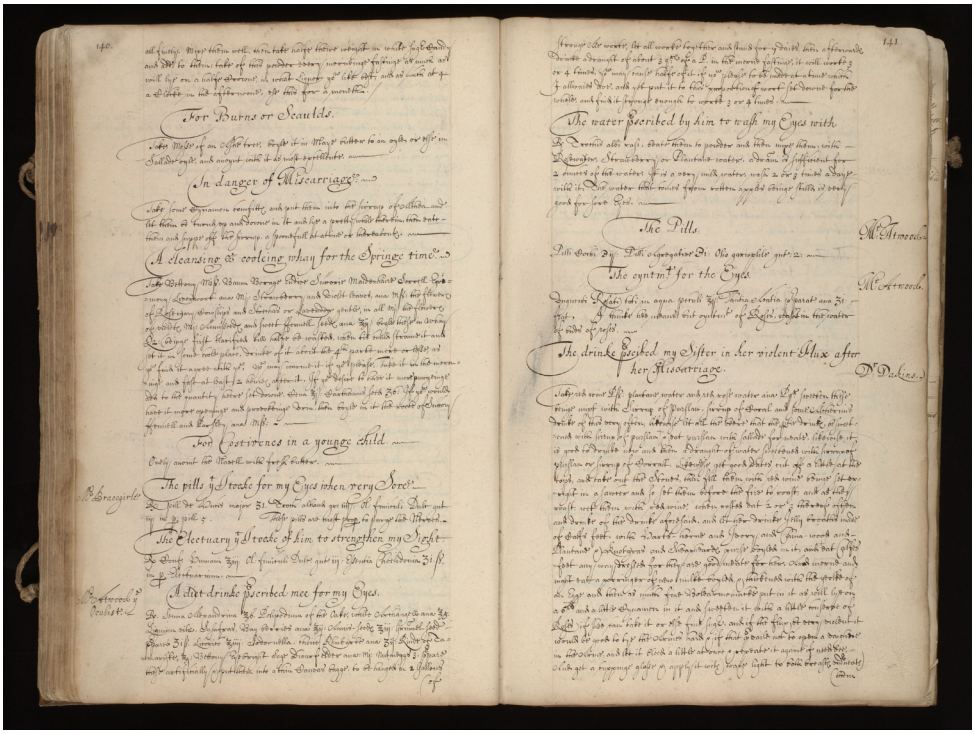


Figure 3 – Wellcome Collection MS. 7391, *English Recipe Book*, 17th Century, ff. 140-141.

[76] Digby, *Closet Opened*, xiv.

[77] *Ibid.*, 141. Lady Kent was also the attributed author of a published recipe book, albeit printed after her death: Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, *A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgery collected and practised by the Right Honorable, the Countesse of Kent, late deceased ; as also most exquisite ways of preserving, conserving, candying, &c.; published by W.I., Gent.* (London: Printed by *G. D.* and are to be sold by *William Shears,* at the Sign of the Bible in S[t]. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1653).

Both MS. 7391 and Sir Kenelm's published cookbook show a pattern of collecting recipes and contributions from other married couples: Sir Kenelm cited both Sir Thomas Gower and Lady Gower, and the Lord and Lady of Portland, while Lady Digby referenced (in individual entries) a Mr. and Mistress Talbot(t), a Mr. and Mistress Wheat(e), a Dr. and Mistress Turner, and a Mr. and Mistress Williams. She also made reference to a "Mis. Sackvill", which may be Mary Curzon, wife of Edward Sackville, 4th Earl of Dorset, with whom we know Lady Digby was rumored to have a history, and with whom she and Kenelm were reported to have had an ongoing social relationship after their marriage.[78] Sir Kenelm also cited the Countess of Dorset in his book.[79] Mary Sackville (neé Curzon) died in 1632, the year prior to Lady Venetia's own demise, which could help us to definitively date the recipe book to the latter's lifetime. I argue that the social networks shown here, in addition to the insights into practice and specific foci of the recipes that I will show below, indicate that the primary owner and user of Wellcome MS. 7391 was Lady Venetia Digby, and that she was testing recipes and practicing medicine within her household and community.

The practice and priorities of Lady Digby

Beyond the social networks that we can trace through both of these texts, we can examine how the owner used the recipes, and what types of practice she tended to prioritize. Several specific health conditions receive an excess of attention, as well as quite a few beauty cures or cosmetic recipes. It is worth noting the sheer number of recipes in Lady Digby's book for both gout and stone, with which Sir Kenelm Digby was known to struggle throughout his life.[80] Additionally, the recipe attributed to Venetia Stanley early in the manuscript is "A water to cleare hands & face", which is then followed in the rest of the book by a variety of other beauty and skincare-related entries without additional credit added in the margins.[81] Given that Lady Digby had this interest in beauty treatments prior to her marriage, this may represent an early indication as to what she found interesting and important to pursue in her later scientific and medical practices.

The principal part of this manuscript includes a variety of what we might consider cosmetic treatments, whether for preventative care of the skin or hair, or to treat the after-effects of an illness like smallpox. The compiler listed several recipes for "an approved scarecloath", or "a Scarecloath to take away the Red spots that come by the Small Pox", and these tended to share at least a couple of key ingredients, such as 'the whitest virgin's

78 WC, MS. 7391, f. 64.

79 Digby, *Closet Opened*, 62.

80 WC, MS. 7391, for example f. 67 for gout, "tis dayly proved" and f. 94 for the stone, marked both "proved" and "pro.est".

81 *Ibid.*, f. 4.

wax' and oil of roses or rose water.[82] These scarcloths involved the making of an ointment or other topical, which was then applied to a very fine cloth and laid over the skin. The process for using these might be more or less intensive, and indeed one required the patient to wear a mask of the scarcloth day and night for six weeks.[83] Several recipes are purely cosmetic, as in the cases of pomatums for hair health and growth, brightening the eyes, and washing the face. The skin treatments, as noted above, almost always include roses as central ingredients, but other flowers make appearances, as well. Lily blossoms and roots appear in recipes for face washes and pomatum.[84] Erin Griffey has shown that roses and lilies were extremely popular ingredients in beauty treatments, as can be seen in the practice of Queen Henrietta Maria, whose fair face and complexion were indicators of not only her inner health, but also of class, status, and fertility.[85] One beauty practice not seen in MS. 7391 is face painting; the compiler focuses on what Edith Snook has called "beautifying physic", rather than on temporary or purely aesthetic applications of cosmetics.[86] Snook describes the circle of mostly women around Henrietta Maria as being interested in the collection, compilation, and sometimes publication of medical recipe knowledge, thus indicating the queen's interest in natural philosophy and patronage of scientific pursuits.

Lady Digby was known for her piety and devout Catholicism, and MS. 7391 contains a recipe for "Vatican Pills", made by an Apothecary Smith, who acquired the recipe from the Vatican Library.[87] This entry includes the recipe given in Latin, followed by the English translation, indicating a familiarity with Latin and a comfort with connection to the papacy that would not have been ubiquitous in early seventeenth-century England. Digby's participation in the court circle of Queen Henrietta Maria, as noted above, placed her within a coterie of recusancy within the heart of the English court that rippled outward through both the intellectual work and political exploits of its members. Henrietta Maria was known for her "active, visible Catholicism", and for the many conversions she enacted within court circles.[88] While the Digbys came to court already Catholic, Sir Kenelm's faith did shift to Protestantism and back in the course of his political machinations. As a result of his renewed dedication to Catholicism, he spent a significant part of his later life

82 *Ibid.*, f. 85.
83 *Ibid.*, f. 43.
84 *Ibid.*, f. 4, f. 143.
85 Griffey, "'The Rose and Lily Queen'", 812-814.
86 Edith Snook, "'The Beautifying Part of Physic': Women's Cosmetic Practices in Early Modern England", *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 3 (2008): 10-33.
87 WC, MS. 7391, ff. 40-41.
88 Erin Griffey, "Picturing Confessional Politics at the Stuart Court: Henrietta Maria and Catherine of Braganza", *Journal of Religious History* 44, no. 4 (2020), 483.

in exile in Paris, where his alchemical experimentation reached new heights.[89] For many gentlewomen in this period, Protestants and Catholics alike, their piety and medical practice were entwined with one another. Though Lady Digby did not leave behind a vast record of devotional materials against which to read her manuscript recipe text, we can see in her reported piety and devout behavior following her marriage a reflection of the kind of religious and intellectual practice that scholars have examined in the case of some gentlewomen, who practiced "medical activities which extended beyond their families to the poor of the estate and neighborhood".[90]

The user of the manuscript refers to the acquisition of ingredients from an apothecary in a cosmetic recipe to remove freckles, in which same recipe 'mercurie sublimatum' is listed as a main ingredient.[91] The Latin recipe mentioned above, for 'Vatican Pills', also describes the transmission of knowledge or ingredients from an Apothecary (Smith). The practitioner was in contact with other participants in the broader medical marketplace, outside of her immediate neighborhood or household community. Although processes such as distillation would have been commonly used by practicing laywomen, the use of alchemical ingredients like mercury may indicate that the user's knowledge expanded beyond the basic herbal or humoral standard that one might expect to see from a domestic practitioner.[92] Indeed, one receipt is explicitly named "Paracelsus his Plaister", and attributed to one Lady Darcie, while another is composed of a mixture of brimstone and fresh butter, with instructions for the patient to use it every night to "cure a red & Carbunckled Face".[93] These entries show the practice of a lay medical practitioner familiar with alchemical and Paracelsian approaches to treatment, as well as humoral theory and the dietetic and herbal cures associated with that system. It is unlikely that a female practitioner, even a noble one, would have been explicitly educated in these areas of medical practice, even had she been brought up with a Humanist attention to education that some noble parents provided their daughters in this period.[94] A woman might have learned a great deal, however, from her social circle, her intellectual community, and her husband's friends.

The user also lists rare and expensive ingredients that would not have been widely accessible to all domestic practitioners and which show a level of status and wealth suggesting gentility. As Jennifer Hellwarth has shown, landed ladies had greater access to herbs

89 Lawrence M. Principe, "Sir Kenelm Digby and His Alchemical Circle in 1650s Paris: Newly Discovered Manuscripts", *Ambix* 60, no. 1 (2013), 5.

90 Cox, "'A Most Precious and Excellent Balm'", 27.

91 WC, MS. 7391, f. 93.

92 *Ibid.*, Distillation is referenced on f. 6 and f. 20, for instance, in the receipts "To make Haire grow" and "For the Stone" (Dr. Sheldon).

93 *Ibid.*, f. 71, f. 59.

94 Hellwarth, "'Be unto me as a precious ointment'", 102.

and chemicals, and therefore would have produced remedies and treatments surpassing those without such access.[95] These ingredients might include things like unicorn horn or, in the case of MS. 7391, dragon's blood in the concocting of "a most excellent balsome".[96] Unicorn horn and dragon's blood, like some of the chemical ingredients discussed above (mercury, sulphur, and others), would have required the user to acquire them from limited and far-flung sources (namely London apothecaries). Many basic herbal ingredients could be grown in the kitchen garden, but women did not always choose to do so, engaging instead with the medical market. "This engagement went beyond the purchasing of 'exotic' imported ingredients: it extended to common herbs, and to simple distilled waters to be used both on their own and as ingredients for the further compounding of drugs".[97] Scholars have argued that the pursuit of 'beautifying physic', like pomatums and face treatments, indicated a sense of class identity tied to both monetary wealth and place in a hierarchical social order; the female knowledge-producer "could also enhance and highlight her class position by transforming her body in culturally significant ways".[98]

Almost every page of MS. 7391 contains some indication of recipes being tested, applied, amended, and "proved". In addition to variations on the Latin *prob, probat, prob. est.*, the reader can find comments like "this was prob: lately", or "this hath beene often proved and found very good".[99] Some of the recipes include the word 'approved' in their title, perhaps indicating that this approval came with the donation, having been previously tested before being added to this manuscript. Others have comments like those noted above added at the end of the recipe, and some also bear checks or tick-marks in the margin, suggesting that the user had marked them after testing them herself. Occasional comments and amendments were added in a cramped hand in the margins, showing the user adjusting her practice based on prior results. Next to a recipe for a 'Purgeing Ale', the user wrote in a cramped hand "Halfe the quantity of these ingredients is sufficient for this quantity of Ale – unles it have a strong body to worke on".[100] She thus indicated an understanding of the need to try cures upon different bodies and to adjust them on a case-by-case basis.

Lady Digby's involvement both as a domestic and community medical practitioner, and as a participant in her husband's personal and business affairs, is confirmed in other sources, beyond his personal writings. Sir Kenelm had long had a relationship with Richard Napier (1559-1634), an astrologer-physician and Cambridge-educated theologian who lived and practiced in Buckinghamshire, not far from the Digbys' own estate in that

[95] *Ibid.*, 101.
[96] WC, MS. 7391, f. 115.
[97] Elaine Leong, "Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82 (2008), 161.
[98] Snook, "'The Beautifying Part of Physic'", 24.
[99] WC, MS. 7391, f. 27, f. 97.
[100] *Ibid.*, f. 62.

same county. Napier was a mentor to Sir Kenelm from a young age, as their lengthy correspondence indicates.[101] Napier's medical practice drew patients from great distances, particularly women who had in many cases already made attempts at their own treatment, or consulted various other irregular practitioners.[102] Recommendations from other female patients could confer some degree of trust in a practitioner, to the extent that women would travel sometimes great distances to consult with them, as in the case of Mrs. Hanger, a patient of Richard Napier's who saw another physician in Cambridge, then decided to travel to consult him.[103] Astrological medicine was quite popular in early modern England, and typically involved a process of patient inquiries and practitioner response. The interaction would begin with a brief personal narrative and a specific question posed to the physician. An astrological figure would be cast using the patient's name, age, question, and the time that the question was asked, and the practitioner would interpret the results.[104]

The Digbys appear in Napier's casebooks as both patients and querents. In two cases, Sir Kenelm approached Napier to inquire about Lady Digby, on her behalf; in the first case, Sir Kenelm inquired about her health in the case of a severe illness, and in the second, he asked after her cause of death.[105] The latter took place approximately one month following her death and reported autopsy. It seems that the sudden loss of his wife remained unfathomable, and it is possible that the rumors that Sir Kenelm himself was responsible for her death continued to follow and haunt him. More intriguing are the cases in which Lady Digby was the querent, of which there were four. Three of these were interrelated questions regarding Sir Kenelm's personal affairs and business in 1628 (while he was traveling abroad), including his general fortune, his social standing, a nativity seeking general predictions, and more specific ones regarding his journey and sea conditions (perhaps

[101] Some of this correspondence can be found in the Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 1730, Correspondence of Richard Napier; there is also a nativity for Kenelm Digby done by Richard Napier, accompanied by a list of accidents he experienced prior to his knighthood, in Bod. MS. Ashmole 174, ff. 75-79.

[102] For more on these practitioners, see Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman, Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); also Ofer Hadass, *Medicine, Religion, and Magic in Early Stuart England: Richard Napier's Medical Practice* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

[103] Casebooks, MS. Ashmole 222, f. 153r-v, Case 55480. For the full digital Casebooks Project: Lauren Kassell, Michael Hawkins, Robert Ralley, John Young, Joanne Edge, Janet Yvonne Martin-Portugues, and Natalie Kaoukji, eds., *The casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596–1634: a digital edition*, https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk.

[104] Lauren Kassell, "Casebooks in Early Modern England: Medicine, Astrology, and Written Records", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 88 (2014), 598. This kind of proxy was quite common, especially with one family member representing another who was too ill to travel.

[105] Casebooks, MS. Ashmole 410, f. 49r, case 65128; Casebooks, MS. Ashmole 211, p. 200, case 77489.

indicating anxiety about her husband's wellbeing in his absence).[106] The fourth shows the Lady Digby asking a question on behalf of another woman, a Lady Farmer, who was in poor health and needed "to take physick".[107] This indicates Lady Digby's participation in a wider female care network, and that women in that network trusted her to speak and seek treatment on their behalf, to negotiate with male practitioners. More intimately, it may suggest that this Lady Farmer was one for whom she had already provided direct care through one of the tried and tested recipes in her own book, and whose health and treatment she remained committed to even if her own approach had failed. Failure itself, followed by adjustments and repetition, is a fundamental part of the experimental process.

In some instances, we can observe the couple collaboratively practicing medical care, as when Elaine Leong refers to "Sir Kenelm Digby's recipe to hasten labor", which was sent by letter to a friend, who noted "if I mistake not the Lady Digby sent my wife some of this in some extreamity and she had present speed".[108] Lady Digby appears to have prepared the recipe for the recipient, and sent it along separately from her husband's correspondence, yet Sir Kenelm is a collaborative party in at least the social aspect or communication process for this childbirth recipe. From his writings, we do know that Sir Kenelm (unlike most seventeenth-century men) was present at the births of his children because "she would never permitt me to be absent att those times".[109] The couple approached their labors, both physical and experimental, as shared tasks that required both of their strength and council.

Both Digbys actively engaged in the practice of testing out recipes, and are known to have sent some of these to friends and intellectual peers.[110] Lady Ranelagh's recipe book contains several recipes that she attributed to Sir Kenelm, including "For Deaffnesse", "For a Consumption", and "For a Cough", all of which are labelled "Sir K. Dighby" between the title and the recipe instructions.[111] The collaborative nature of the recipe networks that we can see carried out in both Digby recipe books was ongoing after Lady Digby's death in 1633, and Sir Kenelm maintained scientific relationships with other women in their community until the end of his life. Certain aspects of experimentation, such as repetition and witnessing, were important to official circles like the Royal Society, and to the informal intellectual networks where women worked. Recipes, like Royal Society experiments, had to be tried and tested, and the transmission of manuscript recipes was itself a kind of wit-

[106] Casebooks, MS. Ashmole 405, f. 21r, cases 66027, 66028, 66029.
[107] Casebooks, MS. Ashmole 410, f. 189v, case 65904.
[108] Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*, 86; BL, MS. Stowe 1077, fol. 53r.
[109] Letter from Kenelm Digby to Kenelme, John, and George Digby, 18 May 1633, "New Digby Letter Book", 126.
[110] BL, Stowe MS. 1077.
[111] BL, Sloane MS. 1367, ff. 19v-20r.

nessing.[112] Pennell thus refers to the attribution of names to recipes as "a register of witness and circulation", representing a kind of conditional testimony.[113]

Sir Kenelm's *Closet Opened* was had a significant focus on culinary recipes. It can be extremely difficult to distinguish between types of recipes in the early modern period, thanks to the prevalence of dietetics and humoral theory. A useful example, perhaps, are the copious recipes for mead (or 'metheglin') in Sir Kenelm's cookbook, which may to a lay reader look like a delightful alcoholic hobby on the part of the author, while in reality these were used as medicinal beverages (both preventative and curative) to treat a range of ailments from a cold to a 'consumption'.[114] Many of his named sources were women, as in the case of "My Lady of Portland's Minced Pyes", or "My Lady Lusson makes thus her plain tosts of kidney of Veal".[115] He even briefly refers to "My Lady Fanshaw", the rather famous memoirist and cookery author who is thought to have created the earliest recipe for ice cream in Europe.[116] While this lady is given credit for only one recipe in Digby's *Closet Opened*, Fanshawe's manuscript recipe book contains seven recipes attributed to him, suggesting an relationship of exchange between them over some time.[117]

Though he made reference to his mother, Sir Kenelm did not explicitly mention Lady Digby within his text. I would argue that while there are no recipes explicitly attributed to her, if one reads *The Closet Opened* alongside MS. 7391, one will find suggestive parallels that may reflect a true partnership. In a broad view, where Sir Kenelm's text has many recipes for what he called "metheglin", Lady Digby's correspondingly has many recipes for what she called "A Consumption Drink", or "A Cordiall for a Consumption", or "To Prevent Consumptions & strengthen the stomach".[118] Given Sir Kenelm's assertion that the metheglins were effective against everything from colds to consumption, these appear to be parallel types of remedies. They also follow similar preparation processes, with a boiling and distilling of different combinations of herbs, liquors, and water (and very often different kinds of honey). Both Digbys referenced distillation frequently in their texts, and by 1648 Sir Kenelm was in possession of relevant equipment in his laboratory at

[112] Lynette Hunter, "Sisters of the Royal Society: The Circle of Katherine Jones, Lady Ranelagh", in *Women, Science, and Medicine, 1500-1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society*, eds. Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton, 1997), 189.

[113] Pennell, "Perfecting Practice?", 250.

[114] Digby, *Closet Opened*. Note that the word 'consumption' had a very broad meaning in early modern England, often involving fever and cough; it does not here carry the associations with tuberculosis that it would acquire. Venetia's book also had many recipes for coughs or consumption, for example in WC, MS. 7391, ff. 108-109.

[115] Digby, *Closet Opened*, 155 and 193.

[116] *Ibid.*, 229.

[117] Lucy Moore, *Lady Fanshawe's Receipt Book: An Englishwoman's Life During the Civil War* (London: Atlantic Books, 2018).

[118] WC, MS. 7391, references throughout.

Gresham College, almost all of which would have been standard for a wealthy household (providing some context for the tools that would have been available to his wife during her lifetime).[119]

The two books are certainly by no means the same; indeed, Lady Digby's text appears to be more medical than her husband's, which is more culinary in focus. They often have recipes treating the same conditions, as in the case of kidney stones, that are utterly different from one another. Lady Digby has several, but the most intensive begins with a gallon of white wine and progresses forward with a mixture of herbs, while Sir Kenelm's is a beer based on water, hops, and malt.[120] She annotates and corrects some of these recipes, as in the case of "For the Stone" (Dr. Sheldon), which includes a marginal notation amending the recipes by adding additional ingredients and stating that "this cured one that had beene exceedingly troubled with the Stone 30 yeares".[121]

There are several instances, however, where there seems to be a distinct parallel between the two texts. Lady Digby's recipe "For the Stone & Strangolion" contains the same ingredients and follows roughly the same procedure as Kenelm's recipe for "Conserve of Red Roses", which he described as "besides being good for Colds and Coughs, and for the Lunges, is exceeding good for sharpness and heat of Urine, and soreness of the bladder".[122] The main ingredients for both were distilled water of "Mallows", "Plantaines", red rose petals (called 'leaves' in his, and 'flowers' in hers, but by both descriptions it is clear that they both picked the petals separate from the rest of the rose), and new milk. Each has a note suggesting that they consulted with a medical practitioner about the recipe. Sir Kenelm referred to a "Doctor Glisson", and Lady Digby provided the names of two doctors in the margins near the recipe: Dr. Turner & Dr. Atkins.[123] This may suggest that in the process of perfecting this recipe, they both sought input from medical sources (whether elite or irregular), and then combined this knowledge and kept what they found to be useful. The final product of this experimental practice found its way into both of their textual collections.

Conclusions

This study has pursued a necessary revision of the life and work of Lady Venetia Digby, and argued for a reattribution of Wellcome MS. 7391 to indicate that this lady was the primary owner and compiler. Lady Digby was a gentlewoman practitioner in early seven-

[119] Hunter, "Sisters of the Royal Society", 184-185.
[120] WC, MS. 7391, f. 23; Digby, *Closet Opened*, 105.
[121] WC, MS. 7391, f. 20.
[122] WC, MS. 7391, ff. 93-94; Digby, *Closet Opened*, 257-259.
[123] Dr. Glisson is likely Francis Glisson, later an original member of the Royal Society alongside Sir Kenelm.

teenth-century England who practiced both herbal and chemical medicines and focused largely on testing and treating conditions that were relevant to her own health and wellness, and that of her family. Her manuscript recipe book prioritized recipes for the stone, gout, eye conditions, and gynecological and women's recipes. Lady Digby was married to an active member of the scientific community of the time, and both were involved in intellectual and scientific circles, particularly where these overlapped with their religious affiliations (that is, recusant Catholicism in the court of Queen Henrietta Maria).

Lady Digby was in several ways less than ideal as a medical authority or knowledge-producer. She suffered from a widely-known poor reputation prior to her marriage, which created conflicts between her gender and class positions; she was openly Catholic in a time and place where this would have complicated her engagement with both her own social circles and a wider intellectual public sphere; and though her shifting geographic position (between court and country) may have allowed her more diverse access to recipe knowledge and its transmission, it may have also kept her from being fully invested or settled in any one community. Lady Digby did not have the respect offered to other, more Protestant gentlewomen based purely on the expression of their faith, though after her marriage she was increasingly seen as pious, chaste, and charitable. Famous for her beauty, she seems to have taken a great interest in beauty cures and treatments, though focusing on the medical side of this, rather than the purely cosmetic. She used chemical techniques and ingredients, including sulphur and mercury, and served as a practitioner to other women within her community. Although often neglected, Lady Digby's contributions point to her involvement in the wider network of early modern women who played a role in producing and circulating scientific knowledge.

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BL = British Library
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WC = Wellcome Collection
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Framing the "Tenth Muse": Gendered strategies of intellectual legitimacy in the case of Maria Selvaggia Borghini (1654-1731)

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Abstract
Recent scholarship in the history of science and gender studies has increasingly interrogated the structural exclusion of women from early modern institutions of knowledge, while also illuminating the multifaceted strategies through which they negotiated intellectual authority. This article contributes to this historiographical field by examining the case of Maria Selvaggia Borghini (1654-1731), a Pisan poetess who actively participated in the literary, philosophical, and scientific culture of seventeenth-century Tuscany.
Drawing on a corpus of letters exchanged with figures such as Francesco Redi, Alessandro Marchetti, and Antonio Magliabechi, alongside Borghini's decision to translate part of the Tertullian's work, this study traces the rhetorical, epistemic, and social strategies through which she crafted and asserted her intellectual persona. Borghini's case invites a rethinking of early modern knowledge production not merely as a space of female marginalization, but as one actively negotiated through poetic and philosophical agency, rhetorical humility, and epistolary sociability.

Keywords
Maria Selvaggia Borghini, seventeenth century, Tuscany, women, poetry, natural philosophy

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Introduction

> The Accademia del Cimento flourished, daring to question Nature through repeated experiments and forcing her to reveal her hidden secrets, while the Accademia della Crusca, gathering the finest flower of the Tuscan language, fashioned from it a precious treasure in the great Vocabolario. At that time, to mention but a few, arose the Magalottis, the Averanis, the Salvinis, the Menzinis, the Magliabechis, the Fagiuolis, the Filicaias, the Redis, and the Bellinis […] And certainly, it must have been an easy task for the keen intellect of Borghini to enrich her mind with new and most useful knowledge in such a flourishing intellectual exchange, perhaps no less so through the literary correspondence, which took pride in being maintained with her by the greater part of those most learned men.[1]

Amid the stark contrasts between significant scientific advancements and the cultural repression imposed by post-Tridentine pressures, Maria Selvaggia Borghini exemplified the status to which learned women were relegated in the modern period.[2] A poetess and an advocate of the experimental approach to science that defined her century, she combined a refined mastery of language and knowledge of science with a keen ability to navigate the social fabric of late seventeenth century Medicean Tuscany and beyond. Indeed, Borghini had devoted a substantial portion of her sonnets not only to prominent figures of the cultural milieu of her time, but also to various rulers, as in the case of Louis XIV, Philip V King of Spain,[3] Leopoldo de' Medici, Vittoria della Rovere, wife of Grand Duke

1 Giovanni Simonelli, "Maria Selvaggia Borghini", in *Memorie storiche di più uomini illustri pisani*, 4 vols., ed. by Angelo Fabroni *et al.* (Pisa: Raniero Prosperi, 1790-1792), III, 376: "Fioriva l'Accademia del Cimento, che osando interrogar la Natura con replicate esperienze, a svelar la forzava i suoi reconditi arcani, mentre l'Accademia della Crusca cogliendo il più bel fiore della Toscana favella, ne formava prezioso tesoro nel gran Vocabolario. Sorsero allora, per tacere di molti, i Magalotti, gli Averani, i Salvini, i Menzini, i Magliabechi, i Fagiuoli, i Filicaja, i Redi, i Bellini […] E certamente agevol cosa riuscir dovea al perspicacissimo ingegno della Borghini l'arricchir la sua mente di nuove utilissime cognizioni in un commercio così dovizioso, e forse non meno nel Letterario carteggio, che si gloriava di mantenere con lei la più gran parte di quei dottissimi Uomini". [All translations, both from Italian and Latin into English, are mine unless otherwise specified].

2 Maria Pia Paoli, "Come se mi fosse sorella: Maria Selvaggia Borghini nella repubblica delle lettere", in *Per lettera: la scrittura epistolare femminile tra archivio e tipografia: secoli XV-XVII* (Roma: Viella, 1999).

3 It should be noted that the sonnet in honor of Philip V of Spain was not published in any collection during the poetess' lifetime or posthumously. The original manuscript of the sonnet, preserved in the ASF, ms. Magalotti 178, appears to have remained unknown as well as unpublished until now. Nonetheless, it is of some significance, as it demonstrates Borghini's substantial engagement in composing encomiastic sonnets addressed to political authorities. Moreover, together with this sonnet, eight previously unknown and unpublished letters sent by

Ferdinando II, and Gian Gastone de' Medici.

Most likely introduced to the Medici court by one of her mentors from the Pisan intellectual milieu, Borghini established a personal relationship with Vittoria della Rovere (1622-1694). In fact, in two different letters addressed to the Arcadian Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni (1663-1728), Borghini referred to the Grand Duchess as "my most gracious patroness".[4] As Modesti has shown, Vittoria della Rovere devoted a significant portion of her resources to cultural patronage, with particular attention to supporting women. In fact, in 1654, the Grand Duchess founded a female academy under her patronage: the Accademia delle Assicurate, the first women's academy in Italy.[5] The Grand Duchess also seemed to embrace a somewhat interdisciplinary approach to knowledge and, apparently, sought to involve her protégées in one another's – albeit diverse – activities. Writing to Redi, in fact, Borghini reported having gone "by order of Her Serene Highness the Grand Duchess to the Commedia."[6] Furthermore, to Maria Selvaggia, Vittoria della Rovere had requested the creation of several poetic works and more. As can be easily inferred from a letter Borghini addressed to the Florentine poet Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli (1660-1742) in February 1691, she had urged the Pisan poetess to compose both a "composizioni de' vaiuoli" and an "Oratorio".[7]

Borghini dedicated nearly thirty sonnets to Vittoria della Rovere – over ten of which were composed in commemoration of the Grand Duchess's death in 1694. Moreover, on June 21, 1681, Borghini addressed to her the only extant letter she is known to have written to a woman.[8] As will be seen, Borghini's correspondence, characterized by refined erudition and the formulaic expressions typical of academic discourse, was directed predominantly to men, the majority of whom were scientists and poets.[9] However, when ad-

Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Lorenzo Magalotti between 1695 and 1710 are also preserved.

4 *Saggio di poesie di Maria Selvaggia Borghini nobile pisana e testimonianze del di lei valore*, ed. by Domenico Moreni (Firenze: Magheri, 1827), 255 and 260.

5 Cf. Adelina Modesti, *Women's Patronage and Gendered Cultural Networks in Early Modern Europe. Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany* (New York: Routledge 2020); Assunta Vitale, *"Levare il governo del regno d'Amore dalle mani de' cavalieri e porlo nelle dame". L'Accademia delle Assicurate di Siena (1654-1714 ca.)*, in *Le accademie toscane del Seicento fra arti, lettere e reti epistolari*, ed. by Claudia Tarallo (Siena: Edizioni UniStra, 2020), 97-116.

6 Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 222-223 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Francesco Redi, January 31, 1688): "andai per ordine della Serenissima Granduchessa alla Commedia".

7 *Ibid.*, 265-266 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli, February 26, 1691).

8 The sonnets, unlike the letters, were also addressed to other women, such as Marchesa Laura Salviati, Signora Lisabetta Ambra, and Marchesa Teresa Strozzi. Cf. Maria Selvaggia Borghini, *Saggio di Poesie di Selvaggia Borghini nobile pisana e testimonianze del di lei valore*, ed. by Domenico Moreni (Firenze: Magheri, 1827), 96-103 and 120.

9 James Daybell, Andrew Gordon, *Women and Epistolary Agency in Early Modern Culture (1450-1690)* (London: Routledge, 2016).

dressing the Grand Duchess, the slightly over twenty-year-old Borghini used the following bold yet reverent words that already anticipate the strategic combination of humility and assertiveness that Borghini would always deploy:

> Having, in previous months, received the favor of Your Serene Highness through those few verses in which I ventured to exercise my modest abilities in reflecting upon the exalted and distinguished qualities of the Most Serene Lady Princess, and having, moreover, been granted the singular honor of being allowed to kiss Your royal robe through Your exceptional generosity, these extraordinary favors have been deeply engraved in my thoughts.[10]

This contribution aims to reconstruct the trajectory through which Maria Selvaggia Borghini rose to prominence – both within Grand Ducal Tuscany and on a broader European scale – while shedding light on the strategies, often developed in concert with her correspondents, that underpinned the construction of her intellectual authority.

The study begins with a survey of recent scholarship on women's participation in the cultural and scientific domains of the early modern period.[11] It then outlines Borghini's education and her involvement in various learned academies. Thereafter, particular attention is given to her correspondence with Francesco Redi (1626-1697), which sheds light on the construction of her literary authority – most notably her symbolic elevation to the role of "tenth Muse" – within the Medicean court. This is followed by an analysis of her

[10] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 217-218 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Vittoria della Rovere, June 21, 1681): "Avendo l'Altezza Vostra Serenissima a mesi passati gradito quelle mie poche rime con le quali io aveva ardito di esercitar la mia mente debilmente nella considerazione dell'eccelse e preclare doti della Serenissima Signora Principessa ed essendoci oltre a ciò motivo di sua singolare generosità degnata d'ammettermi a baciare la sua real veste, si sono così vivamente impressi nel mio pensiero questi altissimi favori".

[11] This essay builds upon a substantial body of scholarship that has explored the intersection of gender and scientific culture in early modern Europe. These works, taken together, provide an essential framework for reassessing women's scientific agency not merely as marginal or derivative, but as constitutive of early modern knowledge-making. See: Stephen Kolsky, *The Ghost of Boccaccio. Writings on Famous Women in Renaissance Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Florike Egmond, "Female Experts: Elegance and Rivalry", in *The World of Carolus Clusius: Natural History in the Making*, 1550-1610 (Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 59-72; Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge. Medicine, Science and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018); Anna Marie Eleanor Roos, *Martin Lister and His Remarkable Daughters: The Art of Science in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2019); Sharon T. Strocchia, *Forgotten Healers. Women and the Pursuit of Health in Late Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press, 2019); Nataša Raschi and Cristina Trinchero, *Femmes de science. Quatre siècle de conquêtes, entre langue et littérature* (Roma: Carrocci, 2021); Francesca Antonelli and Paolo Savoia, "Introduction Gender, History, and Science in Early Modern Europe", in *Gendered Touch* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

epistolary exchanges with Alessandro Marchetti (1633-1714) and Antonio Magliabechi, highlighting the tactics through which Borghini shaped her public persona, oversaw the publication of her works, and engaged poetically with the scientific discourse of her time.

Indeed, a particular emphasis will be placed on what is here defined as the "strategy of modesty", a binary strategy, generally understood to have consisted of a *pars destruens* and a *pars construens*. The *pars destruens* relied on the use of modesty as a rhetorical device, involving the reduction or effacement of the authorial self – a tactic widely adopted by early modern women writers to pre-empt criticism and gain legitimacy in male-dominated intellectual spaces. The *pars construens*, by contrast, entailed a practice of self-affirmation and self-consciousness, enacted through the cultivation of epistolary *sociabilité* and through the very material act of writing – whether poetic, philosophical, or translational.[12]

Finally, the article addresses her decision to dedicate herself to the vernacular translation of Tertullian, that emerges as a particularly revealing gesture, offering a privileged lens onto the gendered and intellectual tensions of her historical moment.

Women in early modern scientific and literary culture: a historiographical framework

As early as the late 1680s, Borghini's fame had crossed Italian borders and reached France. In 1688, the famous physician from Arezzo Francesco Redi wrote to her: "Your Most Illustrious Ladyship may be assured that I feel a certain shame in showing you that you are justly one of the foremost glories of our Italy, indeed of Europe".[13] Indeed, her reputation reached the critical attention of the French poet Gilles Ménage (1613-1692):

> Your glories are known not only throughout Italy but also in France, and particularly in Paris [...]. To ensure that your virginal modesty may not have any hesitation in believing this truth, I wish to transcribe here what Monsieur Menagio has written about Your Ladyship. [...] '*Signora Maria Selvaggia Borghini, highly versed in philosophy, mathematics, and who composes well in Latin verses and excellently in Tuscan*'. What more could one ask for?[14]

[12] See Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?", in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. by Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 137-164; Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Ead. *The prodigious Muse. Women's writing in Counter-Reformation Italy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011).

[13] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 181 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, January 25, 1693): "si accerti Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che ho rossore nel fargli vedere che giustamente si è una delle prime glorie della nostra Italia, anzi dell'Europa".

[14] *Ibid.*, 172 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, June 23, 1691): "le quali son note [i.e. le sue glorie] non solamente per tutta Italia, ma ancora in Francia e particolarmente Parigi [...].

In the *Historia mulierum Philosopharum* published by Gilles Ménage in 1690, Maria Selvaggia was mentioned alongside other women: "In addition to our Madonna Giustina, Italians have Vittoria Colonna, wife of the great Marquis of Pescara, Laura Battiferri from Ferrara, wife of Master Bartolomeo, a Florentine sculptor, Isabella Andreini, known as *Comica Gelosa*, who died in France in the city of Lyon, Veronica da Gambaro, so dear to Phoebus and the holy Aonio Choro. Also, Arcangela Tarabotti, who wrote *La Semplicità Ingannata*, published under the name of Galerana Baratotti. And finally, Elena Cornara Piscopia, that great Venetian luminary, who is the ornament and glory of all Italy, not just her homeland, in our times. And Maria Selvaggia Borghini of Siena, highly versed in philosophy, mathematics, and who composes well in Latin verses and excellently in Tuscan".[15] Regarding the mistake about Borghini's origin, Anton Maria Salvini (1653-1729) addressed the issue in his *Discorsi accademici*, stating: "Ménage, a man of rare and pleasing learning, made a Latin book about female philosophers in which, by mistake, he listed Signora Selvaggia Borghini as Sienese, whereas she is from Pisa".[16] In any case, there is no doubt that Ménage perceptively grasped the core of the matter: Borghini was a figure of considerable intellectual stature, whose work aligned with the "invisible" but well-established tradition of Italian learned women.

Before undertaking a detailed analysis of Borghini's case, it is essential to situate her within a broader constellation of early modern women intellectuals, as her trajectory was by no means isolated.[17] Ménage himself mentioned several female names, a clear sign that

> Ed acciocché la sua virginal modestia non abbia ad aver renitenza veruna a credermi questa verità voglio trascriverle qui ciò che di Vostra Signoria ha scritto Monsu Menagio. […] *La Signora Maria Selvaggia Borghini versatissima nella filosofia, nelle matematiche e che compone bene in versi latini e benissimo in toscani*. Or che vuol ella di più?"

15 Gilles Ménage, *Historia mulierum philosopharum* (Lyon: Anisson & Posuel, 1690), 60: "Anno [*sic*] gli Italiani, oltre la nostra Madonna Giustina, la Signora Vittoria Colonna, moglie di quel gran Marchese di Pescara, Laura Battiferri da Ferrara, moglie di Maestro Bartolomeo, Statuario Fiorentino: Isabella Andreini, cognominata Comica Gelosa; che morì in Francia nella Città di Lione. Veronica da Gambaro è con loro, sì grata a Febo, e al Santo Aonio Choro. E Arcangela Tarabotti la quale scrisse la *Semplicità Ingannata*, che va sotto nome di Galerana Baratotti. E finalmente, la Signora Elena Cornara Piscopia quel gran lume Veneziano che di tutta l'Italia, non che della sua patria, è nei tempi nostri l'ornamento e la gloria. E la Signora Maria Selvaggia Borghini Senese versatissima nella Filosofia, nelle Mathematiche, e che compone bene in versi latini e benissimo in Toscani".

16 Anton Maria Salvini, *Discorsi accademici del Sig. Abate Anton Maria Salvini* (Firenze: nella Stamperia di S.A.R. per Vincenzo Vangelisti, 1712), 62-67: "Delle donne filosofe ne fece un libro latino il Menagio uomo di rara ed amena dottrina nel quale per errore mise per senese la Signora Selvaggia Borghini pisana".

17 See Marta Cavazza, "Les femmes à l'académie: le cas de Bologne", in *Académies et societés savantes en Europe (1650–1800)*, ed. by Daniel-Odon Hurel and Gérard Laudin (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000); Sienna Star Hopkins, "Female Biographies in Renaissance and Post-Triden-

this female output did not always remain disconnected from the male one, neither in Italy nor in the rest of Europe. Recent studies have shown that women participated in the production and circulation of knowledge in a variety of roles – as correspondents, translators, patrons, and practitioners – although they were still widely excluded from universities and scientific academies.[18]

Early modern women who gained intellectual recognition were often described as "wonders of their sex" – a rhetorical dissociation of intellect from gender.[19] Yet many actively challenged this trope, especially through direct participation in the *querelle des femmes*, a centuries-long debate over women's intellectual and moral status. The *querelle* intensified across Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with Italy playing a central role in its literary and philosophical elaboration. While often associated with contests in moral philosophy and theology, the *querelle* also intersected with the emerging authority of natural philosophy, which was mobilized to challenge notions of female inferiority. Within this framework, natural philosophy did not simply serve as a backdrop to the *querelle* but became a strategic terrain where claims about gender equality could be substantiated.

Probably the most closely related example to Borghini's case was the figure of the poetess Margherita Sarrocchi (ca. 1560-1617) from Campania.[20] Sarrocchi – author of the first epic poem written by a woman – entertained relations with members of scientific academies such as the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome. Moreover, in 1602, Sarrocchi was affiliated with the Accademia degli Umoristi in Rome,[21] and in 1611 with the Accademia degli Oziosi in Naples. Not only that, but together with Giulio Strozzi (1583-1652), in 1608, Sarrocchi co-founded the Accademia degli Ordinati in Rome. She also corresponded with Galilei about scientific matters, focusing mainly on his discovery of

tine Italy" (PhD diss., University of California, 2016), 155-230.

18 Cf. Elisabetta Graziosi, "Revisiting Arcadia: Women and Academies in Eighteenth-Century Italy", in *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, ed. by Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyng Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2009); Virginia Cox, "Members, Muses, Mascots: Women and Italian Academies", in *The Italian Academies 1525-1700*, ed. by Jane E. Everson, Denis Reidy and Lisa Sampson (London: Routledge, 2016): 130-167.

19 As Graziosi has noted, Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, for example, was described as alien to her own sex "*in ea praeter sexum nihil muliebre*" ("in her, apart from her sex, there was nothing feminine"). Cf. Graziosi, "Revisiting Arcadia", 135.

20 Cf. Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 131-155; Ead., "Statecraft and the Politics of Knowledge in Margherita Sarrocchi's Scanderbeide", *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 25/2 (2019): 475-491.

21 It should be emphasized that the founding of this Academy was promoted not only by the Roman nobleman Paolo Mancini (1580-1635) but also by his wife, Vittoria Capocci (c. 1592).

Jupiter's satellites and his literary work.[22] Sarrocchi's work demonstrates the existence of an already established significant dialogue with the male scientific réseau.

Moreover, in her *Daughters of Alchemy*, Ray highlights the pivotal role played by certain sixteenth century women in shaping our understanding of the growing female engagement in the development of the natural sciences. Among these figures is Camilla Erculiani, who published *Lettere di philosophia naturale,*[23] the first printed collection of letters on natural philosophy authored by a woman.[24] Another similar case was that of Isabella Cortese (fl. 1561), author of *I Secreti de la Signora Isabella Cortese* (1561), which demonstrated how women could participate in the production and circulation of scientific knowledge through everyday practices and vernacular writing.[25] Finally, the figure of Francesca Fontana, second wife of the Bolognese naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), serves as a valuable example of how key female figures had helped to shape scientific culture of the early modern period.[26] Nevertheless, in all these cases, these were women who contributed to scientific reflection not only through theoretical insights but also through practices tied to the material culture of science.[27]

Finally, two well-known explicit contributions to the *querelle des femmes* were those of Lucrezia Marinella (1571-1653) and Moderata Fonte (1555-1592). Marinella authored a book with an evocative title: *La nobilità et eccellenza delle donne, co' difetti et*

[22] Cf. Margherita Sarrocchi, "Lettere a Galilei (1611-1612)", in *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinque e Seicento,* ed. by Sandra Plastina (Lugano: Agorà, 2016). Meredith K. Ray, *Margherita Sarrocchi's Letters to Galileo: Astronomy, Astrology, and Poetics in Seventeenth-century Italy* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

[23] See Eleonora Carinci, "Una 'speziala' padovana: Lettere di philosophia naturale di Camilla Erculiani (1584)", *Italian Studies* 68/2 (2013): 202-209; Sandra Plastina, "'Considerar la mutatione dei tempi e delli stati e degli uomini': 'Le lettere di Philosophia Naturale' di Camilla Erculiani", *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 20/1 (2014): 145-156; Camilla Erculiani, *Letters on Natural Philosophy: The Scientific Correspondence of a Sixteenth-Century Pharmacist, with Related Texts*, ed. by Eleonora Carinci, trans. by Hannah Marcus, with a foreword by Paula Findlen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

[24] See Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy*, 162-170; Ead., *The Prodigious Muse*, 211-212; Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*, 111-155.

[25] See Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*, 73-110.

[26] Cf. Paula Findlen, "Masculine Prerogatives: Gender, Space, and Knowledge in the Early Modern Museum", in *The Architecture of Science*, ed. by Peter Galison and Emily Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 29-57; Noemi Di Tommaso, "Sailing the ocean of nature: Francesca Fontana Aldrovandi in early modern Bologna", *Annals of Science* 82/1 (2025): 44-73.

[27] For an in-depth look at the presence of women in the cultural context of the previous century cf. Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the 'Querelle des Femmes,' 1400–1789", *Signs* 8/1 (1982): 4-28; Martin Craig, "Meteorology for Courtiers and Ladies: Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy", *Philosophical Reading* 4/2 (2012): 3-14.

mancamenti de gli huomini (1600),[28] while Fonte entitled her contribution to the *querelle, Il merito delle donne. Ove chiaramente si scopre quanto elle sono degne e più perfette degli huomini* (1600).[29] Unlike Erculiani, Cortese, Marinella, and Fonte, Borghini never explicitly took part in the *querelle des femmes* by writing texts that affirmed the intellectual equality of women and men. Nonetheless, the Pisan poetess consistently acted in ways that implicitly conveyed this conviction of gender parity. Her knowledge of science and philosophy, her boldness in making personal life choices, her determination in navigating the intellectual networks of her time, and her commitment to her niece's education all reveal a woman who lived independently and refused to let her status as a woman constrain her in any way.

Forging authority as a woman: education, reputation, and academic affiliation

Maria Selvaggia Borghini was born in Pisa on February 7, 1654. She was the daughter of Piero Antonio Borghini and Caterina Cosci, the daughter of the Florentine jurist Santi Cosci. A precocious talent, Borghini, who studied alongside her brother Cosimo, was immediately surrounded by the finest tutors of the time.[30] Initially, her Latin studies were guided by Giovanni Farinati Uberti of Cutigliano, who was, at the time, the governor of the Collegio Ricci in Pisa. Later, she pursued the humanistic and literary studies under the guidance of the Flemish professor of eloquence, Peter Adrian Van der Broeck, at the University of Pisa.[31] Van der Broeck addressed an important Latin letter to her, titled *Suavissimae, cultissimae Virgini Mariae Sylvagiae de Borghinis*:

> You are the pride of Italian women! Surely, you are the delight and admiration of Etruria, who, having scarcely turned eleven, address me in Latin with such refined and graceful eloquence. […] Indeed, we, who have spent our lives in these humanistic disciplines, are far surpassed by you, and you raise the glory of your sex above the honor of men.[32]

[28] Cf. Prudence Allen and Filippo Salvatore, "Lucrezia Marinelli and Woman's Identity in Late Italian Renaissance", *Renaissance and Reformation* 16/4 (1992): 5; Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*, 73-110.

[29] See Virginia Cox, "The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice", *Renaissance Quarterly* 48/3 (1995): 513.

[30] *Maria Selvaggia Borghini*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XII (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1970), 676-677.

[31] Cesare Tribolati, *Maria Selvaggia Borghini: studio biografico con poesie inedite* (Pisa: Tipografia Nistri, 1882), 11-12.

[32] *Petri Adriani Vandenbroecke belgae a Tenaramonda Epistolarum libri tres* (Lucca: apud Hyacinthum Pacium, 1684), 344-346 (Peter Van der Broek to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, June 14, 1669): *Quae tu es Virgo, Italidum puellarum decus! Amor certe, atque amabilis Hetruriae stupor, quae vix annum egressa undecimum, tam culto, tam ingenuo obsequio Litterarum, me prior latine*

From an early age, Borghini demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for Latin prose, foreshadowing the glory she would ultimately achieve thanks to her translation of Tertullian's work. However, Borghini did not restrict herself to the study of literature and poetic composition, in which she undoubtedly excelled, but also pursued scientific disciplines. Under the guidance of Giovanni Francesco Maria Poggi (1647-1715), she studied logic and theology. Additionally, under the renowned mathematician Alessandro Marchetti, with whom she had studied for six years, Borghini was introduced to the study of mathematics. Finally, although the specific mentor remains unclear, she also studied Greek, as attested by a verse from Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli.[33] This piece of information is also corroborated by another unpublished document that briefly summarizes Borghini's life, and notes that she devoted herself to the study of the Greek language in 1694.[34] However, even in this case, it remains unclear under whose guidance.

After her studies, Borghini soon became well-known within the intellectual circles of her time, receiving numerous accolades from some of the most celebrated scholars and men of letters and science of the period. It is therefore unsurprising that the praises directed toward her came from notable figures such as Anton Maria Salvini, Benedetto Menzini (1646-1704), Francesco Redi, Vincenzo da Filicaia (1642-1707), Lorenzo Magalotti (1637-1712), Lorenzo Bellini (1643-1703), Antonio Magliabechi, Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli, and many others. Borghini thus enjoyed the considerable support of the leading intellectuals associated with the Medici court. This support granted her a degree of social and cultural freedom that, while unique for her time, only partially anticipated the freedoms extended to notable women in the eighteenth century, such as Laura Bassi (1711-1778) and Anna Morandi Manzolini (1714-1774) in the context of Bologna.

It nevertheless seems essential to consider which academies and institutions were the first to open their doors to women. The first women to become a member of an academy was likely the Brescia-born poetess Veronica Gambara (1485-1550), who became affiliated with the Sonnachiosi of Bologna in the 1540s. According to her biographer, Rinaldo Corso (1525-1582), Gambara's household effectively functioned as an Academy.[35] Later, in 1550, the Neapolitan poetess Laura Terracina (1519-1577)

appellas? […] Immo nos ipsos, qui totum aevum in his humanioribus disciplinis pene exegimus, longe exuperas, tuique sexus gloriam supra virile decus attollis.

33 There is a testimony by Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli regarding Maria Selvaggia's progress in the Greek language: "Voi, ch'oltre a questo, familiare avete ed il Latino, e l'Attico parlare, Di quanto propos'io la prova siete". Tr. eng.: "You, who are equally familiar with both Latin and Attic speech, are the proof of all that I have proposed". (Cf. *Fagiuolaja*, IV, Chapter 145).

34 ASF, ms. Miscellanea Medicea 7/4, n.n.

35 For a general overview of the presence of women in Academies during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Cox, "Members, Muses, Mascots", 130-167.

became a member of the Accademia degli Incogniti in Naples.[36] Then the poetess Laura Battiferri Ammanati (1523-1589) was welcomed into two prestigious institutions: the Intronati of Siena and the Assorditi of Urbino.[37] Notably, another Sienese poetess, Laudomia Forteguerri (1515-1555), quickly gained recognition as one of the most prominent poets of the city, sharing this reputation with Aurelia Petrucci (1511-1542), both academicians of the Intronati.[38] Other prominent female writers of the sixteenth century claimed membership in literary academies.[39] Among them was the renowned comedic actress Isabella Andreini (1562-1604),[40] who, in 1601, joined the Accademia degli Intenti of Pavia under the pseudonym *l'Accesa*. The Ricovrati of Padua accepted Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646-1684) in 1669.[41] Lastly, the already mentioned Accademia delle Assicurate, established in 1654 under the protection of Vittoria della Rovere,[42] was explicitly dedicated to women.

Maria Selvaggia Borghini was an Academician in every respect, particularly because her affiliation with various academies fulfilled all four criteria for effective Academic membership outlined by Virginia Cox:[43] (1) she was mentioned in the official records of the academies;[44] (2) she identified herself as an academician in her publications; (3) she was involved in multi-author academic publications;[45] and (4) references to her memberships

36 *Ibid.*, 132. See also Diana Robin, "Women on the Move: Trends in Anglophone Studies of Women in the Italian Renaissance", *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 16.1/2 (2013): 13-25; Amelia Papworth, "Pressure to Publish: Laura Terracina and Her Editors", *Early Modern Women* 12/1 (2017): 3-24.

37 See Victoria Kirkham, "Sappho on the Arno: The Brief Fame of Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati", in *Strong Voices, Weak History: Early Modern Women Writers and Canons in England, France, and Italy*, ed. by Pamela J. Benson and Victoria Kirkham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 174-196.

38 Cf. Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2005; online ed. Oxford Academic, 2007), 279-323.

39 For a comprehensive list of the women who took part in the life of the academies in the early modern period see Cox, "Members, Muses, Mascots", 131-133.

40 See Richard Andrews, "Isabella Andreini and Others: Women on Stage in the Late Cinquecento", in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 316-333. Cf. Cox, "Members, Muses, Mascots", 136.

41 Graziosi, "Revisiting Arcadia", 104-105.

42 Cf. Modesti, *Women's Patronage and Gendered Cultural Networks*, 156.

43 Cox, "Members, Muses, Mascots", 131-133.

44 Cf. BRF, Riccardiano 3445, ff. 126r-v.

45 Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, *L'istoria della volgar poesia* (Roma: Chracas, 1698), 536; Id., "*Sonetto di Filotima*", in *L'Arcadia del canonico Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, custode della medesima Arcadia* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1711), 228; Id., "*Rime di Filotima Innia P. A.*", in *Rime degli Arcadi*, voll. 4 (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1717), 108-123.

appear in her informal literary production, such as her correspondence.[46] Throughout her career, in fact, Borghini was involved in the activities of several academies, including the Arcadia of Rome, where she became the second female member, joining in 1691 under the name *Filotima Innia*. Her admission to the Arcadia,[47] which coincided with that of Lorenzo Bellini, was also marked by a letter from the Arcadian Benedetto Menzini, under the Arcadian name *Euganio Libade*:

> These Academicians (of the Arcadia of Rome) have deemed it a great honor to enroll you in their assembly under the esteemed name of Your Illustrious Ladyship and have asked me to convey this news to you, as well as to the most learned Lorenzo Bellini.[48]

Moreover, *Filotima Innia* was requested to establish a branch of the Arcadia in Pisa, named "Alfea". It was an extraordinary mark of esteem. Appointing a woman to lead a branch of an Academy went far beyond a mere acknowledgment of Borghini's poetic talent. Through this gesture, she was granted decision-making autonomy in both administrative and managerial matters. Borghini, shielding herself behind her modesty, courteously declined this opportunity, and thus she wrote to Crescimbeni, *Alfesibeo Cairo* in the Arcadia:

> In responding to the request to establish an Arcadian colony here to hold the same singing congresses as you do there, I reply that, due to my solitary life in my humble cabin, I would be of little use in this matter.[49]

Nevertheless, her relationships with the Arcadians Crescimbeni and Menzini were flourishing and documented through a lively and affectionate correspondence. As would also

[46] Cf. Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 251 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, Pisa, July 16, 1693): "Al Gentilissimo, e valorosissimo Pastore Arcade Alfesibeo Cario (Giovan Mario Crescimbeni) Filotima Innia (Maria Selvaggia Borghini) rimanda salute".

[47] Cf. Maria Conforti, Maria Pia Donato, "Vite degli Arcadi di scienza: una lettura ideologica e antropologica", in *Scienza e poesia in Arcadia (1690-1870)*, ed. by Elisabetta Appetecchi, Maurizio Campanelli, Alessandro Ottaviani and Pietro Petteruti Pellegrino (Roma: Accademia dell'Arcadia, 2022), 151-152.

[48] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 188-189 (Benedetto Menzini to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, undated): "Questi Accademici (dell'Arcadia di Roma) hanno stimato lor pregio lo insignire la loro Adunanza col reverito nome di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e mi han pregato a volergliene trasmettere la notizia, come anche al dottissimo Signor Lorenzo Bellini".

[49] *Ibid*., 251-252 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, July 16, 1693): "In ordinarmi di cercare di stabilire qua una colonia di Arcadi ad effetto di potere fare in queste campagne gli stessi congressi di canto, come son fatti da voi costà, io vi replico che per istare io nella mia capanna con molta solitudine, poco sarei valevole a poter operare in quest'affare".

be the case with Marchetti and Magliabechi, Crescimbeni too personally advocated for the publication of some of the poetess's sonnets. Indeed, as we shall see, some of her poems were included in collections curated and published by Crescimbeni himself:

> Although I have never wished, for various reasons, for my works to be published, since this has been requested by you, whom I can obey with complete freedom, I would consider it an undue use of your generous and obliging kindness if I did not immediately comply with your most gracious request.[50]

Borghini once again displayed her refined humility, underlining that she would never have published her compositions without the encouragement of a respected colleague like Crescimbeni. Furthermore, this letter displays both components of the rhetorical strategy of modesty. In its *pars destruens*, modesty functions as a *conditio sine qua non* for gaining acceptance into a predominantly male arena. Yet only a few lines later, she shifts to the *pars construens* of the strategy, presenting herself as not only assertive but also determined to retain full control over the publication of her work: "Therefore, your foreign friend [i.e.: the publisher] may print at his discretion those compositions that have come into his hands. However, if I may be so bold, I would like to know which ones, as it is possible that among them there may be something I do not currently approve of".[51] This need for strict control over the publication of her sonnets also stemmed from the poetess' dismay at the inclusion of five of her sonnets in the anthology of women poetesses published by Antonio Bulifon (1649-1707) in 1693. In fact, she lamented that these five sonnets had been published riddled with errors.

Borghini also became a member of the Accademia degli Apatisti of Florence, the Accademia dei Ricovrati of Padua,[52] the Accademia degli Spensierati of Rossano, the Accademia de' Pigri of Bari, and the Accademia degli Stravaganti of Pisa. Finally, her membership in the Accademia degli Innominati of Bra, where she was known as *Adattabile*, is documented in a circular letter from the academy (fig. 1). Written by Giuseppe Antonio

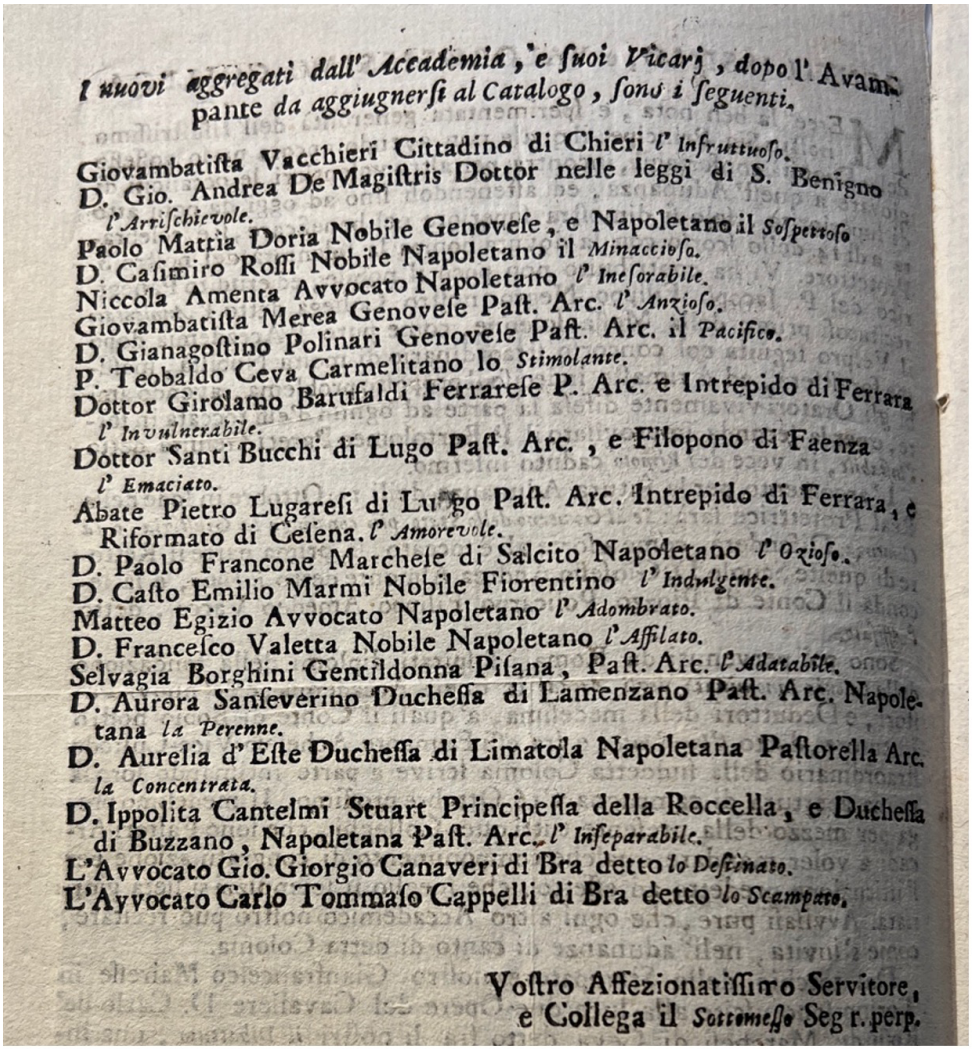
[50] *Ibid.*, 254-255 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, June 7, 1694): "Benché io non abbia mai per vari miei fini desiderato che l'opere mie sieno date alla luce, nondimeno essendomi ciò richiesto da voi, che mi potete comandare con ogni libertà, mi parrebbe d'abusar troppo della vostra obbligante e generosa cortesia se non condescendessi subito alle vostre gentilissime domande".

[51] *Ibid.*: "Può dunque quel vostro amico forestiere stampare a suo piacimento quelle composizioni che di mio gli sono pervenute; ma se non fussi troppo ardita avrei il desiderio di sapere quali sono veramente potendo essere che tra esse si ritrovi qualche cosa che io al presente non approvi".

[52] Borghini dedicated a sonnet to the esteemed members of the Accademia dei Ricovrati of Padua, which is preserved among the manuscript papers of Redi in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (BML) and was published in Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 131.

Zorgnotto, the *Sottomesso*, on August 4, 1718, and addressed to Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli, this printed letter introduced the topic for the upcoming meeting and communicated the names of the new members.

At that time, there were four new female members in the Accademia degli Innominati: Maria Selvaggia Borghini, Aurora Sanseverino (1669-1726), Duchess of Lamenzano, who was named *la Perenne*, Aurelia d'Este (1682-1719), Duchess of Limatola, known as *Concentrata*, and Ippolita Cantelmo Stuart (1677-1754), Princess of Roccella and Duchess



I nuovi aggregati dall' Accademia, e suoi Vicarj, dopo l' Avantpante da aggiugnerſi al Catalogo, ſono i ſeguenti.

Giovambatiſta Vacchieri Cittadino di Chieri *l' Infruttuoſo.*
D. Gio. Andrea De Magiſtris Dottor nelle leggi di S. Benigno *l' Arriſchievole.*
Paolo Mattia Doria Nobile Genoveſe, e Napoletano il *Soſpettoſo*
D. Caſimiro Roſſi Nobile Napoletano il *Minacciuoſo.*
Niccola Amenta Avvocato Napoletano *l' Ineſorabile.*
Giovambatiſta Merea Genovese Paſt. Arc. *l' Anzioſo.*
D. Gianagoſtino Polinari Genovese Paſt. Arc. il *Pacifico.*
P. Teobaldo Ceva Carmelitano lo *Stimolante.*
Dottor Girolamo Barufaldi Ferrareſe P. Arc. e Intrepido di Ferrara *l' Invulnerabile.*
Dottor Santi Bucchi di Lugo Paſt. Arc., e Filopono di Faenza *l' Emaciato.*
Abate Pietro Lugareſi di Lugo Paſt. Arc. Intrepido di Ferrara, e Riformato di Ceſena. *l' Amorevole.*
D. Paolo Francone Marchese di Salcito Napoletano *l' Ozioſo.*
D. Caſto Emilio Marmi Nobile Fiorentino *l' Indulgente.*
Matteo Egizio Avvocato Napoletano *l' Adombrato.*
D. Franceſco Valetta Nobile Napoletano *l' Affilato.*
Selvagia Borghini Gentildonna Piſana, Paſt. Arc. *l' Adatabile.*
D. Aurora Sanſeverino Ducheſſa di Lamenzano Paſt. Arc. Napoletana *la Perenne.*
D. Aurelia d' Eſte Ducheſſa di Limatola Napoletana Paſtorella Arc. *la Concentrata.*
D. Ippolita Cantelmi Stuart Principeſſa della Roccella, e Ducheſſa di Buzzano, Napoletana Paſt. Arc. *l' Inſeparabile.*
L'Avvocato Gio. Giorgio Canaveri di Bra detto *lo Deſtinato.*
L'Avvocato Carlo Tommaſo Cappelli di Bra detto *lo Scampato.*

Voſtro Affezionatiſſimo Servitore,
e Collega il *Sottomeſſo* Segr. perp.

Fig. 1 – BRF, Fondo Riccardiano, ms. 3445/2, ff. 126r-v.

of Buzzano, who was referred to as l'*Inseparabile*. The Accademia degli Innominati of Bra thus appeared to be one of the most open to female participation.

Nevertheless, Borghini was never able to join the most renowned literary academy of the time: the Accademia della Crusca. It is worth noting that even Anton Maria Salvini, for instance, expressed his discontent with the excessive celibacy of the Accademia della Crusca both in a letter addressed to Crescimbeni and in his *Prose toscane*. Indeed, in the *Cicalata prima dell'anno MDCXCVIII* Salvini states: "but our academy is a kind of semi-cloister, and from what one can tell, it does not welcome women".[53]

The making of a muse: Francesco Redi and the shaping of Borghini's literary authority

Oh, tu Selvaggia, che si dolce spandi
Il divin suono delli carmi tuoi,
Che dell'oblio oltra i confin li mandi,
Tu, ch'hai lo stil per favellar d'Eroi,
Favella pur del Redi, ah tu racconta
L'opre sue degne, e falle eterne a noi.
(Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli, *Fagiuolaja*, II, 68)

Maria Selvaggia Borghini's fame was the outcome of a collective enterprise to build her authority. Both the talent and ambition of the Pisan poetess were matched by what we might call a fully-fledged system for disseminating her work, devised and directed by the leading figures of seventeenth century Tuscany. The principal promoter of her work was undoubtedly the physician and poet Francesco Redi, court physician to Grand Dukes Ferdinando II and Cosimo III. Traces of the relationship between Borghini and Redi begin to emerge in the second half of the 1680s, when he was nearly sixty and she was just over thirty. In their extensive correspondence, Redi's deep admiration for his pupil is clear. Borghini, for her part, was fully aware that her fame was largely due to Redi's benevolence in promoting her work. Indeed, in one of her sonnets dedicated to Redi, Borghini expressed profound gratitude towards the Aretine physician: "Now what name can I give you, / To express your value, / If not calling you Father and Creator?"[54] Redi, in this highly refined poetic imagery, was both "creator" and "father", acting as the benevolent architect of her glory.

[53] *Prose toscane di Anton Maria Salvini lettore di lettere Greche nello Studio Fiorentino e Accademico della Crusca* (Firenze: 1715), 102: "ma la nostra accademia è una mezza clausura e per quel che s'è potuto vedere, non ci vuol donne".

[54] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 13: Or qual nome degg'io / Dare a te mai, ch'esprima il tuo valore, / Se te Padre non chiamo, e Creatore?

An initial and significant step in promoting the poetess was the strategic circulation of her sonnets among prominent literary figures. On February 21, 1687, Redi sent a letter to Vincenzo da Filicaia, in which he devoted almost the entire content to praising the poetic talents of the young poetess, comparing her to the renowned Greek poetess Sappho:

> Please bear with me as you read this letter. I do not wish to say anything more than this: just as God has granted our age the glory of a Pindar in the person of Your Most Illustrious Lordship, so too has He granted it the glory of Sappho in the young Maria Selvaggia Borghini, the Pisan maiden. Your Most Illustrious Lordship may laugh at the second part of my statement, but I ask that you not laugh immediately. Instead, first read these six sonnets enclosed, written by this new and marvelous poetess, in praise of the Most Serene Princess of Tuscany. Then, if you are still inclined to laugh, feel free to do so, as I grant you full permission in the manner of a formal court.[55]

This letter, first and foremost, draws attention to the perceived oddity of praising a woman's work to such an extent. Indeed, Redi immediately expressed concern that Filicaia might mock him for his "recommendation of the poetess". At the same time, Redi stressed that the only way to overcome such a social prejudice is to read the poems themselves. On March 2, 1687, approximately two weeks later, da Filicaia responded to the letter, expressing his sincere astonishment:

> I have read with amazement the sonnets of Signora Borghini, and I confess that I did not know that women could reach such heights. Typically, women's compositions tend to be weak and lacking vigor, but in these, one can observe a remarkable strength and a certain charm.[56]

This amazement had led da Filicaia himself to circulate copies of Borghini's sonnets. In

[55] Francesco Redi, *Opere di Francesco Redi* (Milano: Società Tipografica de' Classici Italiani, 1811), 280-281 (Francesco Redi to Vincenzo da Filicaia, February 21, 1687): "Abbia un poco di pazienza a leggere oggi questa mia lettera. In essa io non voglio dir altro se non che, siccome Iddio ha voluto, che il nostro secolo abbia le glorie di un Pindaro nella persona di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima così abbia parimente quelle di Saffo nella Signora Maria Selvaggia Borghini Fanciulla Pisana. Si riderà Vostra Signoria Illustrissima della seconda parte di questo mio detto: non se ne rida così subito subito, ma legga prima questi sei sonetti qui annessi, fatti da questa nuova e maravigliosa Poetessa, in lode della Serenissima Signora Principessa di Toscana e poscia, se può ridersene, se ne rida altamente, che le ne do un'ampla licenza *in forma Camerae*".

[56] Francesco Redi, *Opere di Francesco Redi* (Venezia: Gio. Gabriello Hertz, 1728-1742), IV, 183 (Vincenzo da Filicaia to Francesco Redi, March 2, 1687): "Ho letto con maraviglia i sonetti della Signora Borghina e confesso ch'io non sapeva che il sesso donnesco giungesse a tanto. Sogliono i componimenti delle donne esser per lo più esangui e snervati, ma in questi si vede una felice robustezza e una certa amenità".

fact, da Filicaia, initially skeptical, even dedicated a sonnet to Borghini, to which the poetess responded with her own composition.[57]

In April 1688, Redi wrote to Borghini to inform her that the Grand Duke himself had taken the initiative to circulate her already mentioned sonnets on behalf of the Grand Duchess, ensuring they were also sent to Cardinal Giovanni Delfino (1617-1699). The Cardinal had responded with words of praise and appropriate recognition for Borghini, prompting Redi to forward her his letter as a token of deep admiration. In fact, Cardinal Delfino likened Borghini's poetic talent to that of Francesco Petrarca, writing: "The fortunate spirit of Petrarca will rightly rejoice to live in the mind of such a virtuous young lady, so worthy of his affections, as she renders herself deserving through the glory of a most fortunate imitation".[58]

As will be discussed, the comparison to Petrarca became a recurring theme in the praise directed towards Borghini's work and poetic talent. In response to Redi's letter, which included that of Cardinal Delfino, Borghini penned remarks that clearly laid bare the mechanisms underpinning the construction of her poetic authority, that is, in this specific case, the *pars destruens* of her strategy of modesty:

> I have received, through your kind addition, the copy of the letter from the Eminent Cardinal Delfino. If I deny feeling the joy that is due, I would be saying something quite incredible and unreasonable. However, it is true that, considering the generous praises His Excellency bestows upon me through his own kindness, I can only respond with the desire to deserve at least a small part of them. Thus, I attribute the entire recognition to the benevolence of our most Serene Grand Duke and to the cordial and effective support of Francesco Redi, whose unique kindness my limited abilities will never fully repay.[59]

Redi continued his efforts to promote the circulation of Borghini's poetic works among other literary figures. In a letter to Carlo Enrico of San Martino, Redi himself compared

[57] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 67. Another sonnet directed to Vincenzo da Filicaia in response to his sonnet "Dai chiari orrori di quel puro inchiostro ec" can be found on 129.

[58] *Ibid.*, 149 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, May 1, 1688): "Goderà ben a ragione lo spirito fortunato del Petrarca di vivere nella mente di così virtuosa fanciulla tanto degna de' suoi amori, quanto ella se ne fa benemerita colla gloria di una imitazione, la più felice".

[59] *Ibid.*, 218-220 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Francesco Redi, April 16, 1688): "Ricevo dalla gentilissima sua aggiunta la copia della lettera dell'Eminentissimo Signor Cardinal Delfino. Se io negassi di non n'avere sentito quel contento, che si conviene, direi forse cosa incredibile, e fuori di ragione; è bene vero, che alle lodi delle quali Sua Eccellenza così prodigamente mi favorisce per sua sola benignità non arrivando io se non col desiderio sarò da qui in avanti in obbligo di fare ogni sforzo per meritarne una piccola parte; pertanto il tutto riconosco dalla bontà del Serenissimo Granduca nostro signore e dalla cordiale ed efficace protezione del Signor Francesco Redi la di cui singolare benignità non potrà mai il mio scarso potere compensare in alcun tempo secondo il debito".

her to Francesco Petrarca and, above all, asserted that she surpassed most men in poetic talent:

> There are few men who excel as this young woman does, having taken it upon herself to follow in the footsteps of Petrarca, and I dare say, she is not far from matching him. […] I see Your Illustrious Lordship is eager to know the name of this poetess, so I add that she is a noble young woman from Pisa named Maria Selvaggia Borghini.[60]

In the spring of 1688, the Arcadian poet Benedetto Menzini also expressed his genuine admiration for Borghini after receiving two sonnets she had written for him. In this case, Redi, commenting on the sonnets dedicated by the poetess to their mutual friend, even employed the phrase: "such well-crafted sonnets that they could have made Petrarca himself envious when he was alive, had he not been captured by a sweet and proud complacency in seeing that Your Ladyship did not disdain to walk in the very same footsteps he had first left with such honor".[61] And he went on: "I have shown two of your sonnets to many literary friends, and they all unanimously declare that Your Ladyship is one of the foremost and most graceful pens in Italy, and that, without flattery, you can truly be called the tenth Muse".[62] Finally, Redi concluded this richly detailed letter to the poetess by informing her that he had sent copies of her sonnets to the Grand Duchess Vittoria, to Paris,[63] and to Venice and Vienna.

Surpassing Petrarca in versification had elevated her to the status of the "tenth Muse".[64]

60 Redi, *Opere di Francesco Redi* (Venezia: Gio. Gabriello Hertz, 1728-1742), IV, 294-296. (Francesco Redi to Carlo Enrico, May 1, 1688): "Vi sono pochi uomini che facciano bene come questa fanciulla che si è presa a camminare dietro alle sole pedate del Petrarca, e sto per dire, che lo raggiunge. […] Veggio Vostra Signoria Illustrissima tutta curiosa per sapere il nome della Poetessa, e però le soggiungo, che ell'è una fanciulla nobile Pisana nominata Maria Selvaggia Borghini".

61 Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 149-150 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, May 1, 1688): "sonetti così ben condotti che avrebbero potuto fare invidia al Petrarca allor ch'ei viveva, se egli non fosse stato rapito da una dolce insieme e superba compiacenza nel vedere che Vostra Signoria non isdegnava di camminare per quelle stessissime orme che da lui con tanto onore furono da prima impresse".

62 *Ibid*.: "Ho fatto vedere due sonetti a molti amici litterati e tutti a una voce esclamano che Vostri Signoria è una delle prime e delle più gentili penne della nostra Italia e che senza adulazione può dirsi la decima musa".

63 In Paris, Borghini's verses were likely addressed to Gilles Ménage and Abbot François-Séraphin Régnier-Desmarais (1632-1713), both of whom were her admirers.

64 Redi reiterated Borghini's poetic superiority over Petrarch in another letter addressed to her: Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 160-162 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, January 4, 1688): "questi suoi sonetti, i quali sono belli, bellissimi ed a tal segno bellissimi che da me in ogni luogo più opportuno viene altamente esclamato che il Petrarca medesimo non gli avrebbe

It was a form of high praise, articulated in terms that bordered on the hyperbolic and positioned Borghini within one of the most emblematic figures of poetic authority. The same expression also appeared in the sonnet composed by Anton Maria Salvini for Maria Selvaggia:

> Tenth Muse, fourth Grace, and new
> Sappho, I beheld in the Pisan lands,
> Shining, and all that Tuscan Athens
> Admiring the illustrious proof of a Woman.[65]

Thus, the *topos* that aligned her with Petrarca – and even positioned her as surpassing him – led many to associate her with the emblematic figures traditionally linked to poetry: the Greek poetess Sappho of Lesbos, or the Muses, and the Graces. Redi also endorsed Federigo Nomi's (1633-1705) comparison of Borghini to the renowned poetess Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547):

> Furthermore, Your Lordship was right to place Borghini alongside the famous Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara, and, in fact, Borghini is by no means inferior to Colonna; on the contrary, I personally believe she surpasses her both in poetry and in her knowledge of all the other fine Arts and Sciences, particularly in Mathematics and the new Philosophies.[66]

Although, as mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Borghini's figure closely resembled that of Margherita Sarrocchi – particularly in terms of the nature of the subjects they addressed – the two were never associated. Conversely, she was linked to the figure traditionally recognized as the foremost female poetess of the Renaissance: Vittoria Colonna. Borghini was not only likened to such a highly esteemed poetess but was also implicitly acknowledged as superior in virtue of her knowledge of natural philosophy and, more broadly, of scientific culture.

Redi expressed not only great esteem but also a personal affection for the Pisan poetess. This affection emerged in his explicit willingness to read and evaluate her poetic

potuti fare così belli, anzi, che per avventura sono in uno stile più sostenuto e più robusto di quello del mentovato Petrarca". The original version of this letter is preserved in BMaF, ms. Redi-Cestoni 8, ff. 165r-v.

65 Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, XXIII: Decima Musa, e quarta Grazia, e nuova / Saffo vid'io nelle Pisane Arene / Splendere, e tutta quella Tosca Atene / D'una Donna ammirar l'inclita prova.

66 Redi, *Opere di Francesco Redi*, 247 (Francesco Redi to Federigo Nomi, undated): "Del resto, Vostra Signoria ha avuto gran ragione a mettere la Signora Borghina in compagnia della famosa Vittoria Colonna Marchesa di Pescara, e di fatto la Signora Borghina non è punto inferiore alla Colonna, anzi io per me credo che la superi e nella Poesia e nella cognizione di tutte le altre belle Arti e Scienze, e particolarmente nelle Matematiche, e nelle nuove Filosofie".

compositions: "with the same complete satisfaction with which I have always read the most gracious works of my most virtuous Signora Borghini".[67] The mere use of the possessive adjective "my" is sufficient to cast their relationship in an exceptionally affectionate and personal light. However, even more telling than his eagerness to read and refine Borghini's verses is the fact that Redi sent his own sonnets to her, seeking her corrections: "I enclose two of my *strambotti*, so that you may revise them. You may also show them to Signor Dottor Bellini for the same purpose of correction".[68] This clearly reflected a form of deep esteem: it was unusual for a scientist and poet of Redi's stature, already over sixty, to seek revisions from a much younger pupil (at the time, still under forty) which, moreover, was a woman.

The strong sense of protection Redi felt for his pupil was particularly evident in the reassurances he offered regarding her favor within courtly circles. In July 1688, Redi acted as a mediator for a gift from the Grand Duchess to Maria Selvaggia, writing to her in a letter:

> With her magnanimous kindness [i.e. the Grand Duchess] took pleasure in offering me a new encomium for the most beautiful sonnets of Your Ladyship and once again expressed her kind appreciation. As a token of this, she removed a ring with fifteen noble diamonds from her finger and instructed me, in the name of Her Serene Highness, to send it to Your Ladyship, wherever you may be in Pisa.[69]

Redi even explained to Borghini the most appropriate way to respond to such a gesture. He urged her, in fact, to write a letter of thanks as soon as possible and noted that, should she wish to include a few verses composed for the occasion, they would no doubt be well received.[70] Redi did not act solely as an intermediary in the relationship between Borghini and the Grand Ducal Court, but also between the poetess and certain academic circles.[71] His efforts to promote her sonnets quickly yielded results, and by November 1689, Borghini had been invited to join the Accademia degli Stravaganti of Pisa. Redi congratulated

[67] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 158-159 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, August 28, 1688): "con quella intiera soddisfazione con la quale ho letto sempre le Opere gentilissime della mia virtuosissima Signora Borghini".

[68] *Ibid.*, 164-165 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, June 6, 1690): "Le mando qui scritti due de' miei strambotti, acciocché possa emendarli. Potrà mostrargli ancora al Sig. Dottor Bellini con lo stesso fine dell'emendazione".

[69] *Ibid.*, 155-156 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, July 13, 1688): "si compiacque [i.e. la Granduchessa Vittoria] con la sua magnanima bontà di farmi un nuovo encomio de' bellissimi sonetti di Vostra Signoria e di nuovo mi espresse il suo benigno aggradimento; in testimonianza del quale, cavandosi di dito un Anello con quindici nobili Diamanti, m'impose che in nome di Sua Altezza Serenissima io lo mandassi a Vostra Signoria costi in Pisa".

[70] *Ibid.*, 156-157 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, July 20, 1688).

[71] *Ibid.*, 168-169 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, September 23, 1990).

her on this significant achievement, highlighting how "the esteemed Academicians, with your name, have brought such brilliant luster to their Academy".[72]

Redi also actively defended and consoled her when, as might have been inevitable, her poetic greatness led to direct attacks. In the spring of 1691, a satirical poem began circulating in Pisa against the Accademia degli Stravaganti, in which Borghini was ironically referred to as "Musa Selvaggia". Thus, giving rise to an offensive pun that combined her epithet as the "tenth Muse" with her given name "Selvaggia". In response to this discontent, Redi sought to comfort her with the following words: "You asked for my advice on how you should respond to the sonnet circulating in Pisa against the noble Academy of the Signori Stravaganti, in which Your Ladyship was also mentioned under the title of *Musa Selvaggia* [...] I sincerely tell you that my advice is to mock this sonnet, laugh at it, and pay it no attention – none whatsoever, absolutely none – and once again, none".[73] This approach was driven by sincere affection and a desire to protect his pupil from any discomfort that might cause her to doubt or hesitate regarding her work and her talent, which should instead be pursued and developed. Unlike the Pisan poetess, Redi allowed himself an informal communication of his affection: "I rejoice with Your Illustrious Ladyship from the bottom of my heart because I love you as if you were my sister and I honor your virtue in this world as much as is possible".[74]

On March 1, 1697, Redi passed away, leaving his pupil with a sorrowful awareness of the master's contribution to shaping who she had become. Twenty days later, the words that Borghini wrote to Fagiuoli, their mutual friend, were a clear trace to this (fig. 2):

> One of the noblest spirits must surely be awakened in the face of one of the greatest losses to mourn the common damage; thus, for the death of our never sufficiently mourned Francesco Redi.[75]

[72] *Ibid.*, 162-163 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, November 30, 1689): "essi Signori Accademici col suo nome hanno dato un così fulgido lustro alla loro Accademia".

[73] *Ibid.*, 169-173 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, June 23, 1691): "Mi domanda consiglio di come ella dovrebbe contenersi nella congiuntura del sonetto costi in Pisa fatto contro la nobilissima Accademia de' Signori Stravaganti, quel qual sonetto è stata nominata ancora Vostra Signoria sotto nome di Musa Selvaggia [...] Le dico sinceramente che il mio consiglio si è che di questo sonetto Vostra Signoria se ne burli, se ne rida, e non ne faccia conto veruno, veruno veruno, e poi di nuovo veruno".

[74] *Ibid.*, 158-159 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, August 28, 1688): "Io me ne rallegro con Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di vero cuore perché l'amo come se mi fosse sorella e riverisco quanto mai si può in questo mondo la sua virtù".

[75] *Ibid.*, 270-272 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli, March 22, 1696): "Ben si doveva in una delle maggiori perdite risvegliare uno de' più nobili spiriti per piangere degnamente il danno comune; onde per la morte del nostro non mai abbastanza sospirato Signor Francesco Redi". The original letter is preserved in BRF, ms. Riccardiano 3445/1, ff. 15r-v.

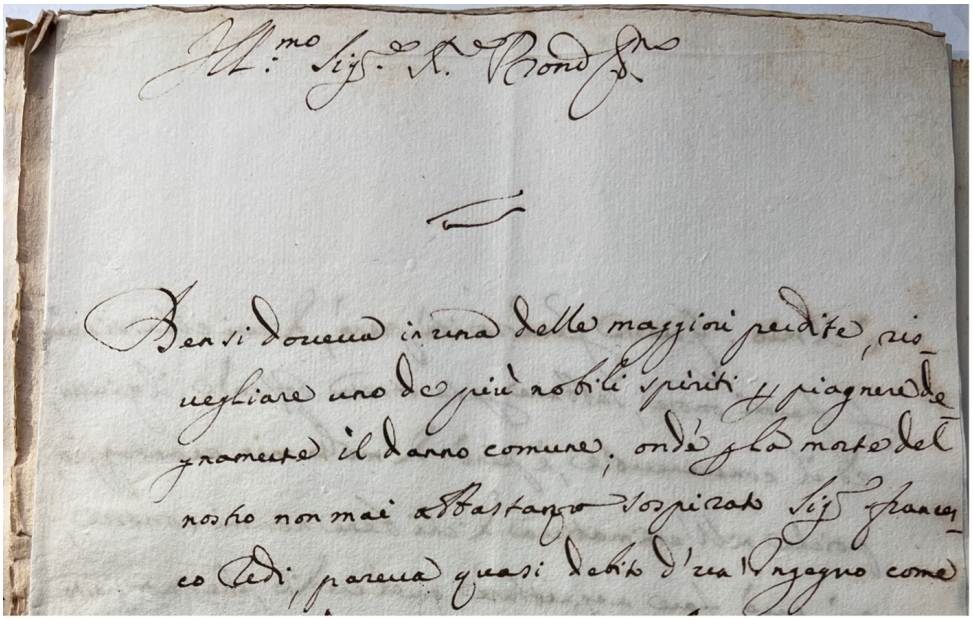


Fig. 2 – BRF, Fondo Riccardiano, ms. 3445/1, f. 15r.

Thus ended one of the most significant affective relationships in the lives of both the Aretine physician and the Pisan poetess. Redi had protected Borghini from malicious voices and envy, comforted and supported her, praised and reassured her. This, far beyond the promotion of her works, represented the true essence of their relationship. In the over 40 letters Redi sent to Borghini between 1686 and 1696, one can trace the cultural and social rise of the young poetess, to whom Redi never ceased, until his final letter, to remind her that she was "the greatest honor that all of Italy has".[76]

Voicing the intellectual self: correspondence with Alessandro Marchetti and Antonio Magliabechi, publication strategies, and scientific poetry

As previously noted, Alessandro Marchetti was one of Maria Selvaggia's mentors and, above all, the one who introduced her to the world of experimental sciences. Much like Redi, Marchetti held great esteem for his pupil and, similarly to the Aretine physician, he personally took on the task of promoting and disseminating her poetic work. In 1687, Marchetti formally introduced his pupil to Antonio Magliabechi, the librarian of Palazzo Pitti under Ferdinando II de' Medici:

[76] *Ibid.*, 187-188 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, December 19, 1695).

> I take the liberty of sending you another of her sonnets. […] I hope she will finally decide to allow some of her work to be shown publicly. Since she places great trust in me, having been her teacher in philosophy and mathematics for nearly six years, and having continuously discussed poetry with her on such occasions, it is possible that she might entrust me with her works when I come to Florence next summer, and that she would grant me permission to make a selection and have it published according to my discretion.[77]

In promoting Borghini's work to Magliabechi, Marchetti underscored not only her exceptional literary talent but also her marked reluctance to publish her poems. He presented his own intervention as the only effective means of overcoming her resistance – an approach made possible by the bond of trust that had developed over six years of a mentor-pupil relationship. This personal connection was, in his view, essential to persuading her to share her work more widely.

As Marchetti promptly informed Borghini, Magliabechi had personally acknowledged the evident talent of the poetess, and she was particularly gratified by the librarian's favorable judgment. Indeed, Marchetti wrote to Magliabechi:

> I do not cease to continue my entreaties to the said lady, urging her to resolve to send at least a sample of her works to the public light. To further encourage her in this, I took the liberty today of reading to her the part of your letter in which Your Illustrious Lordship speaks of her with such praise. She, her face flushed with modesty, replied that she is aware she does not deserve the honor that Your Illustrious Lordship graciously accords her.[78]

As a matter of fact, this exchange centered on Marchetti's effort to convince Maria Selvaggia Borghini to publish some of her sonnets, seeking to overcome her reluctance, which stemmed from the *pars destruens* of her strategy of modesty.

[77] BNCF, ms. Magliabechi VIII, 748, f. 88 (Alessandro Marchetti to Antonio Magliabechi, January 27, 1687): "Mi piglio l'ardire di inviarle un altro suo sonetto […]. Io spero ch'ella finalmente si risolverà a lasciar vedere in pubblico qualche sua cosa e confidando ella molto in me per essere stato per lo spazio di quasi sei anni suo maestro nella filosofia e nella matematica ed avere con tale occasione discorso anco seco, per così dire, continuamente di poesia, potrebbe esser ch'ella desse a me le sue opere quando io nella prossima futura state vengo a Firenze e che di più mi concedesse licenza di farne una scelta a mio modo e darla alle stampe".

[78] BNCF, ms. Magliabechi VII, 748, f. 165r (Alessandro Marchetti to Antonio Magliabechi, December 31, 1687) Published in Paoli, "Come se mi fosse sorella", 513: "Io non manco di continuare le mie instanze alla detta Signora acciò ella si risolva di mandare almeno un saggio delle sue cose alla pubblica luce e per invogliarla maggiormente a ciò fare mi son preso appunto oggi l'ardire di leggerle quella parte della sua lettera nella quale Vostra Signoria Illustrissima parla con tanta lode di lei al che ella tutta tinta di un modesto rossore ha risposto che conosce di non meritare l'onore che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima si compiace di compatirle".

In 1688, Magliabechi and Borghini finally established their own direct epistolary relationship, no longer mediated by Marchetti. In this case too, Borghini employed the rhetorical strategy of modesty. An initial expression of reluctance to publish her compositions (*pars destruens*) was soon followed by a gesture of independent self-assertion (*pars construens*), embodied in her decision to establish a direct and autonomous relationship with an influential figure like Magliabechi (which would instead prove crucial to the publication of some of her works). As is clearly apparent, Borghini wrote her first letter to Magliabechi with noticeable enthusiasm and a strong awareness:

> If it were possible to reveal the feelings I experienced when I received your first most courteous letter, accompanied by such a noble sonnet, I must confess to Your Illustrious Lordship that my ambition was no small thing, seeing myself honored in such a manner by a person of such fame as Your Illustrious Lordship.[79]

On January 1, 1688, thanks to their now direct relationship, Magliabechi had been able to inform Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli that a sonnet by Borghini had recently been published in the Netherlands (fig. 3). Even though she consistently appeared hesitant, several of her compositions, as we shall see, were published while she was still young.

Thus, the relationship with both Marchetti and Magliabechi – just like that with Crescimbeni – had been decisive for the publication of some of her poems. As she herself stated in a letter, the effort by Marchetti and Magliabechi to encourage her to publish had taken on the character of a veritable campaign orchestrated by the two: "Marchetti wrote to me some days ago that he had arranged with Your Most Illustrious Lordship to present those latest sonnets of mine to the French Envoy. I replied that I would defer to him, as he could see much farther than I could".[80] Indeed, the publication of Borghini's sonnets in honor of King Louis XIV of France was made possible through Magliabechi's support.[81] Magliabechi must have greatly appreciated these sonnets (fig. 4),[82] as evidenced in a letter

[79] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 229 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Antonio Magliabechi, October 28, 1688): "Se fosse lecito il palesare i sentimenti che provai quando ricevei la sua prima cortesissima lettera accompagnata da sì nobil sonetto doverei confessare a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che non piccola fu allora la mia ambizione, vedendomi onorata in tal forma da un soggetto di tanta fama come è Vostra Signoria Illustrissima".

[80] *Ibid*., 239-240 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Antonio Magliabechi, July 3, 1691): "Il Signor Dottore Marchetti mi scrisse ai giorni passati che aveva concertato con Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di presentare quegli ultimi miei sonetti al Signor Inviato di Francia. Io gli replicai che mi rimetteva in lui che vedeva più lontano assai di me".

[81] A manuscript version of the sonnets by Maria Selvaggia Borghini dedicated to Louis XIV, King of France, is currently preserved at the BNCF, ms. Panciatichiano 244, ff. 82r-87v, and another one, is in Biblioteca Moreniana of Florence (BMA), ms. Bigazzi 249, ff. n.n.

[82] The sonnets in honor of King Louis XIV of France are also published in Borghini, *Saggio di*

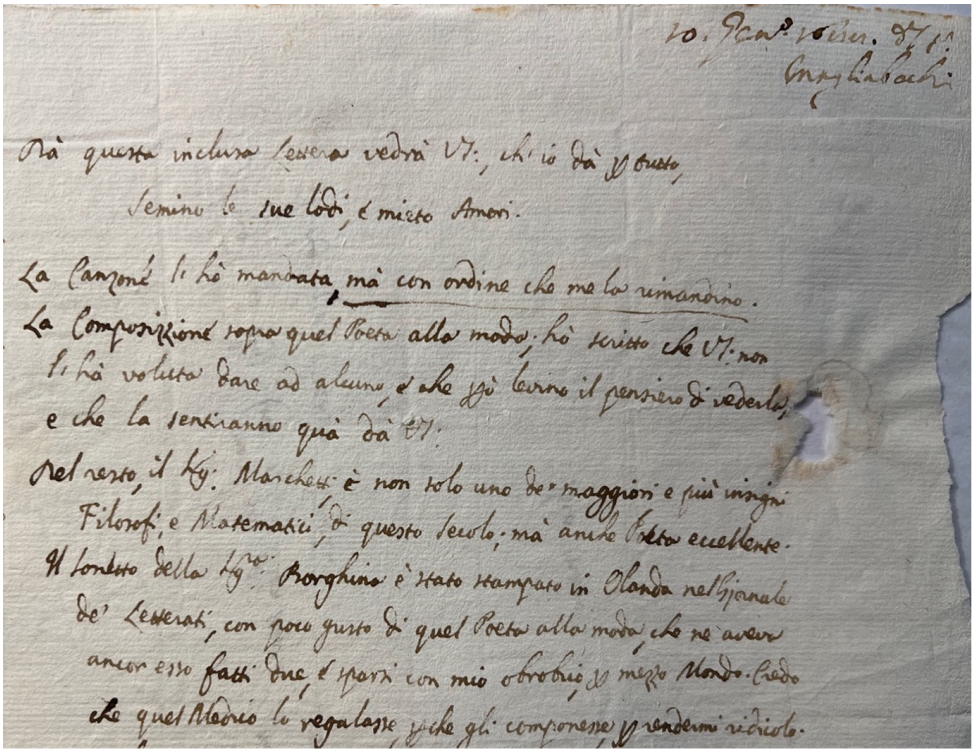


Fig. 3 – BRF, Fondo Riccardiano, ms. 3447, ff. 201r-v.

to Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli: "I am infinitely pleased that from time to time you have the opportunity to engage in learned conversation with the most erudite Signora Borghini, who is certainly one of the greatest glories of Tuscany, indeed of Italy. Your Lordship should read the sonnets she has recently composed in praise of the Christian King, which are truly admirable in every respect".[83] For this fundamental recognition, Borghini expressed her gratitude writing: "I have heard from Alessandro Marchetti that Your Most Illustrious Lordship has kindly consented to have my sonnets in praise of the King of France published, and for this, I offer Your Most Illustrious Lordship my heartfelt thanks".[84]

poesie, 72-95.

83 BRF, Riccardiano, ms. 3447, ff. 176r-177v (Antonio Magliabechi to Giovanni Battista Fagiuoli, October 21, 1691): "Mi rallegro poi infinitamente che talora si trovi in eruditissima conversazione con la dottissima Signora Borghini che è certo una delle maggiori glorie della Toscana anzi dell'Italia. Vostra Signoria si faccia leggere i sonetti che ultimamente ha composti in lode del Re Cristianissimo che certo sono ammirabili per ogni capo".

84 Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 245-247 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Antonio Magliabechi, May 5,

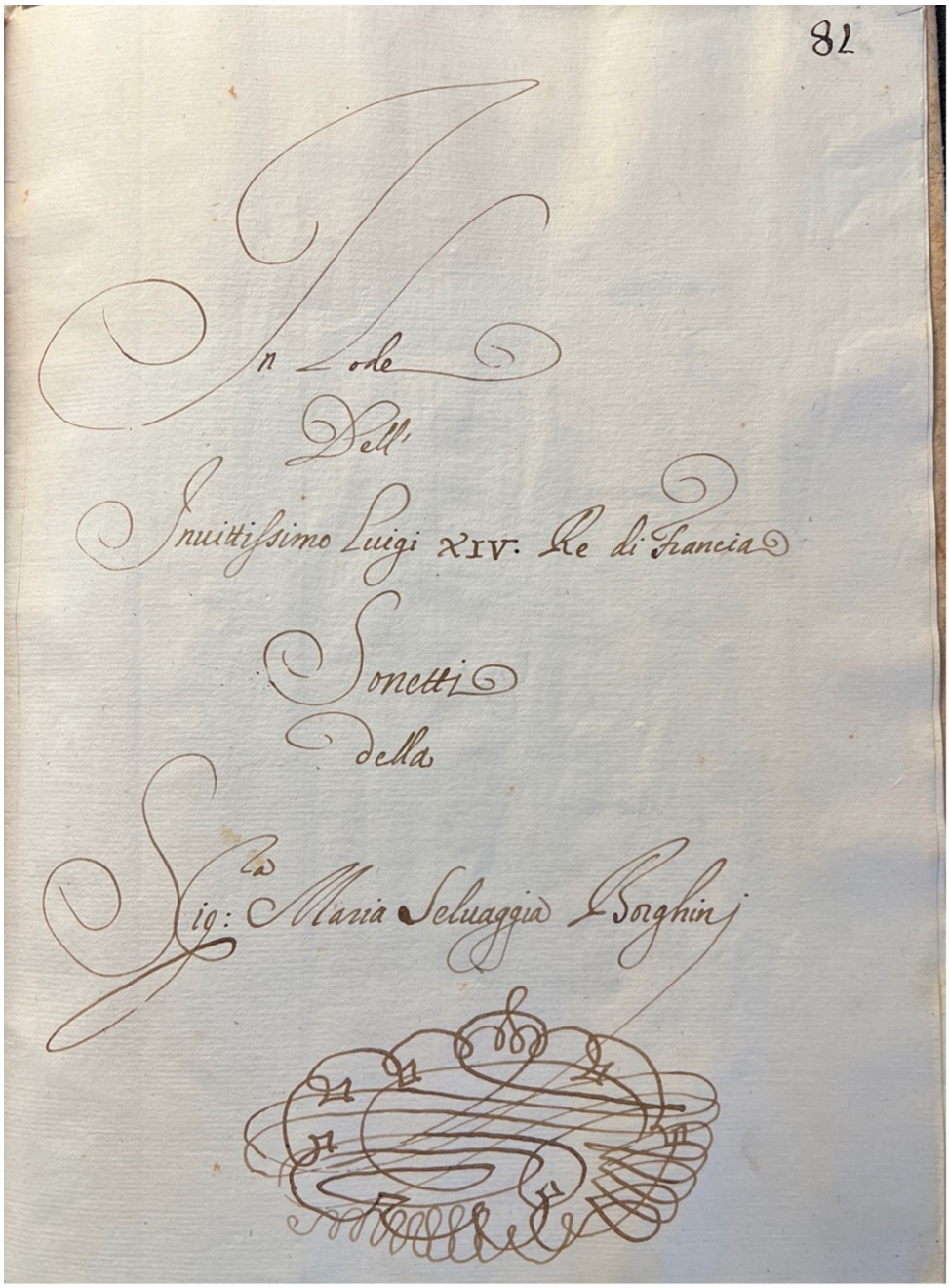


Fig. 4 – BNCF, Fondo Panciatichiano, ms. 244, f. 82r.

In this case as well, just as with the publication of her sonnets overseen by Crescimbeni, Borghini was deeply concerned with maintaining control over the accuracy of her poetic compositions: "Indeed – she wrote – not knowing whether the copies of my aforementioned composition that have reached Perugia are correct, I would like to know who exactly revised them in that city, because from this I might determine whether they are as they should be; since I would not want the same thing to happen to me as in Naples, where they printed five of my canzoni full of errors and even left in entire stanzas".[85]

During her lifetime, several printed collections featured poems by Borghini. In 1693, a selection of her verses appeared in a volume published in Naples by the Italo-French printer Antonio Bulifon: *Rime della Signora Lucrezia Marinella… con giunta di quelle fin'ora raccolte della Signora Maria Selvaggia Borghini*. Two years later, Bulifon included her sonnets again in *Rime di cinquanta illustri poetesse di nuovo date in luce*. Other appearances include a devotional sonnet in *Applausi divoti* published in 1697, and a poem in Crescimbeni's *L'istoria della volgar poesia* published in 1698. Crescimbeni also included a "Sonetto di Filotima" in *L'Arcadia* in 1711, and further verses in *Rime degli Arcadi*, vol. 4 in 1717. In 1716, two sonnets were featured in Giovanni Battista Recanati's *Poesie italiane di rimatrici viventi*. Lastly, in 1726, the poetess Luisa Bergalli (1703-1779) included seven of Borghini's sonnets in her *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici*.

Borghini's sonnets, as is often the case with things that remain in the spotlight for a long time, soon became the subject of heated disputes, with Borghini accused of plagiarism. On March 24, 1687, Marchetti himself wrote to Magliabechi: "Envy, that always fierce and bitter enemy of life, which, as Petrarca so divinely sang, 'happily opposes beautiful princes,' has spread through Pisa with sacrilegious and false tongues, claiming that the sonnets I published by Signora Borghini, my pupil, are not hers".[86] In a letter addressed by the poet Federigo Nomi to Magliabechi a trace of this accusation still lingers. Moreover, in this very letter, Nomi – likely influenced by his friends Francesco Redi and

1695): "Sento dal Signor Alessandro Marchetti le notizie che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima si contenta di porgermi in ordine alla stampa de' miei sonetti in lode del Re di Francia, onde ne rendo a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima vivissime grazie".

85 *Ibid.*, 245-247 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Antonio Magliabechi, May 5, 1695): "bene è vero che non sapendo se le copie, che sono andate a Perugia della mia sopraddetta composizione, sieno corrette, io desidererei sapere chi veramente l'ha corrette in quella città, perché da questo potrei venire in cognizione se stanno a dovere; poiché non vorrei che m'intervenisse come a Napoli dove hanno stampato cinque mie canzoni piene d'errori e v'hanno lasciato fino le strofe intere".

86 BNCF, ms. Magliabechi VIII, 748, f. 90 (Alessandro Marchetti to Antonio Magliabechi, March 24, 1687). Published in Paoli, "Come se mi fosse sorella", 507: "L'invidia sempre fiera ed acerba nemica della vita e che sempre come divinamente cantò il Petrarca A' bei principi volentier contrasta' a con lingua sacrilega e bugiarda sparso per Pisa che i sonetti ch'io ho dato fuori di questa Signora Borghini mia discepola non sono suoi".

Anton Maria Salvini – described Maria Selvaggia Borghini as "fourth Grace" and "tenth Muse":

> I have always known Borghini to be a highly learned woman, and I used to call her "the fourth grace" because of her charm. However, if now she is the subject of the common people's disdain, she must be called the Tenth Muse. It is, however, a great compliment to her that her poems are so highly esteemed that it is almost unbelievable that they could be composed by her. At least, it is the fortune of good literature that, in her displeasure, she has written a sonnet that, in my opinion, is truly beautiful.[87]

The *topos* of association with the Graces and the Muses re-emerged, as such references were among the most conventional means of legitimizing female authorship. As seen also in the comparison with Colonna, carried out by Federigo Nomi himself, Borghini's authority was framed not only in terms of poetic talent, but also through her command of philosophical and natural knowledge. It was precisely her scientific expertise that endowed her with a singular distinction. Yet in what arena had this knowledge been effectively put into practice?

On June 10, 1690, Redi wrote to Borghini expressing his admiration for the verses she composed for the translation of Lucretius by Alessandro Marchetti: "Beautiful, truly beautiful is the song that Your Most Illustrious Lady has made in honor of Alessandro Marchetti".[88] Marchetti, indeed, had worked on a new translation of *De rerum natura*, a project that was probably completed around 1668. However, the publication of this translation encountered significant obstacles. In 1673, Prince Leopoldo, brother of Ferdinando II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, decided to prevent Marchetti from publishing a text that could easily be condemned as heretical, such as the vernacular edition of Lucretius. The following Grand Duke, Cosimo III, in the same year, postponed the decision regarding the publication of Marchetti's translation until it was approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rome, which was expected to deliver a prohibitive verdict. In this climate of stagnation, the Roman Sacred College issued its veto against the full publication of the work in December 1675. Despite this, the translation's lack of formal publication did not prevent it

[87] BNCF, ms. Magliabechi VII, 525, ff. 34r-34v (Federigo Nomi to Antonio Magliabechi, June 20, 1688): "La Signora Borghini l'ho conosciuta sempre litteratissima e fui solito chiamarla per la sua leggiadria la quarta grazia, ma se ora dei concetti della plebe piglia muso, bisognerà dirla la Decima Musa, ma è sua somma lode che siano tanto stimate le di lei poesie che appena si creda possibile potersi da lei comporre; almeno è fortuna delle buone lettere che ella per lo sdegno abbia fatto un sonetto che a mio giudizio è bellissimo".

[88] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 165-167 (Francesco Redi to Maria Selvaggia Borghini, June 10, 1690): "Bella, bella, ma bella da vero è la canzone che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ha fatto in onore del Signor Alessandro Marchetti".

from circulating in manuscript form, securing a place in the libraries of the era's leading scientists and intellectuals.

The poetic composition that Borghini dedicated to Marchetti's work was situated within the broader context of an awareness of the centrality of the subject matter. For this reason, Redi acknowledged Borghini's necessary expertise to understand the significance of that work:

> But returning to the Canzone for Signor Marchetti, I once again tell you that it is beautiful and full of thoughts and striking, elevated, and noble comparisons that can only be conjured by a great poet who, at the same time, is also a great philosopher, one who has studied in the finest schools of philosophy.[89]

Borghini's scientific and philosophical competencies were, once again, explicitly foregrounded. Indeed, she demonstrated the scientific expertise necessary to fully appreciate the value of the translation of Lucretius by her former teacher. The seventh and eighth stanzas of the sonnet were the true heart of the composition dedicated to Marchetti:

> However, within these learned, exalted, and sacred
> verses, with a new and superhuman style,
> Unknown principles and hidden marvels
> Will appear clearly through you, and if before
> You, the great Roman wrote so sweetly
> About the nature of things,
> You, joyful, will go further,
> To more worthy and famous works,
> As you explain with the highest truth,
> On the secure wings of knowledge.
>
> Indeed, at that time, you were able to grant him new life,
> And adorn him with eternal brilliance,
> Turning his words into your native tongue.
> I know well that your heart,
> Generously moved by compassion, often overcame,
> As sometimes, the light of his mind

[89] *Ibid*.: "Ma tornando alla Canzone pel Signor Marchetti, le dico di nuovo che è bellissima e tutta piena di pensieri e di similitudini pellegrine, sostenute e nobilissime che non possono sovvenire se non ad un gran Poeta il quale in uno stesso tempo sia gran filosofo e filosofo nelle scuole della miglior filosofia".

> Could dim, leading him astray,
> And making him guilty in the eyes of heaven.[90]

These verses are crucial for shedding light on various aspects of Borghini's poetic output, her broader intellectual formation, and the context in which these verses were produced. Firstly, the poetess's thorough grasp of Lucretian ideas is immediately evident, as is her desire to give them a new circulation. Secondly, in the eighth stanza, the expression "I know well that your heart" highlights the personal and intellectual intimacy between the author and her mentor Alessandro Marchetti. Then, this sonnet stands as an important trace of the manuscript circulation of Marchetti's *De rerum natura* translation, which was only published posthumously in 1717. Remarkably, the sonnet that Borghini dedicated to Marchetti's translation of Lucretius was published in Antonio Bulifon's 1693 collection – nearly twenty-five years before the translation itself appeared in print. Borghini was therefore publishing, among other compositions, a poem referring to a text that had not yet been officially released to the public. Finally, the seventeenth century's trend towards epistemological reflection in verse is well-documented, with notable examples ranging from the work of Galileo Galilei to that of Alessandro Marchetti. In this sense, Borghini aligned herself with an already established tradition typical of her century, once again demonstrating how, behind a particularly refined modesty, lay a profound awareness of not being any less capable than her male contemporaries who had engaged in similar practices.

However, Borghini remained cautious when dealing with themes or books that might be placed on the *Index librorum prohibitorum*. In a letter dated April 28, 1691, addressed to Antonio Magliabechi, she expressed concerns about potential accusations and her intentions to avoid any trouble:

> I come to request that you kindly inform me whether you think that your brother [...] might take the trouble to help me obtain a broader license, as extensive as possible, for books suspended or prohibited by the Sacred Congregation [...] But when various poetic, historical, and scientific works occasionally come into my hands, not knowing whether they are permitted, I read them with little peace of mind.[91]

[90] *Ibid.*, 19: Però che dentro saggi, eccelsi, e santi / Carmi con nuovo modo, e sovrumano / Principi ignoti, e meraviglie ascose / Chiari per te vedransi, e se davanti / A te sì dolcemente il gran romano / Scrisse della Natura delle cose / Di più degne, e famose / Opre tu lieto andrai, che al vero lume / Spieghi per l'alta via sicure piume. / Anzi allora, che tu vita novella / A lui donar potesti e di splendore / Eccelso farlo adorno eternamente / Volgendo nella tua natìa favella / I detti suoi, a te ben so, che il cuore / Generosa pietà vinse sovente, / Mentre della sua mente / Il bel lume talora, error poteo / Render men chiaro, e incontro al ciel far reo.

[91] *Ibid.*, 237-238 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Antonio Magliabechi, April 28, 1691): "Vengo a supplicarla a volersi contentare di avvisarmi se pensa che il suo Signor fratello [...] si prendesse

A few years later, Borghini urged Anton Francesco Marmi (1665-1736) to remind Magliabechi to send her the license.[92] This tension between scientific ambition and religious caution marked much of Borghini's trajectory. While she actively participated in the literary academies and scientific climate of her time, she also sought to shield herself from potential accusations concerning her philosophical views. Her interest in theology and her later work on Tertullian probably reveal an effort to reconcile intellectual independence with spiritual restraint.

Clavo clavum trudam*: theology, gender, and literary strategy*

In less than two decades, Borghini had firmly established a strong and lasting reputation within the intellectual circles of late seventeenth century Italy. However, the career of an unmarried woman was far from assured at the time and, in fact, represented a notable anomaly in the biography of the Pisan poetess. Her decision not to marry contravened the social norms of post-Tridentine Italy.[93] This choice prompted a range of reactions – from admiration to irony – among her contemporaries. Giacinto Gimma (1668-1735), founder of the Accademia degli Spensierati in Rossano in 1695, of which Borghini was a member, recalled the poetess as one of the "valentuomini" who had corresponded with the Neapolitan Andrea di Milo: "He was worthy of receiving honorable letters from Marcello Malpighi, Francesco Redi, Antonio Magliabechi, Maria Selvaggia Borghini, Giovan Francesco Bonomi, and other *distinguished men*".[94] As noted at the outset of this study, women were often dissociated from their gender in order to be intellectually accepted. This dissociation was achieved either by likening them to transcendent figures such as the Muses and the Graces, or by aligning them with male intellect, or even through a marginalization as an "exception to their gender".

Lorenzo Bellini had even dedicated a poem to her on the theme of marriage, playfully teasing the provocative tones of the matter (fig. 5).[95] Although it was a burlesque poetic composition, Bellini seemed sincere in some of his verses, especially when he directly addressed the dedicatee, urging her to marry: "Become a wife, my little Selvaggia, / And you

ad istanza la briga di farmi ottenere una licenza più generale che fusse possibile de' libri sospesi e proibiti da quella Sacra Congregazione […] Ma venendomi alle volte alle mani varie opere poetiche, istoriche e di scienze né ben sapendo se sieno permesse io leggo con poca quiete".

92 *Ibid.*, 225-227 (Maria Selvaggia Borghini to Anton Francesco Marmi, April 29, 1693).

93 Cox, "The Single Self", 513-581.

94 Giacinto Gimma, *Elogi accademici della Società degli Spensierati di Rossano*, 1703, 312: "fu degno di ricevere lettere onorevoli da Marcello Malpighi, da Francesco Redi, da Antonio Magliabechi, da Maria Selvaggia Borghini, da Giovan Francesco Bonomi e da *altri valentuomini"* (my italics).

95 Francesco Berni *et al.*, *Il Terzo libro delle opere burlesche* (Usecht al Reno: Jacopo Broedelet, 1760), 292.

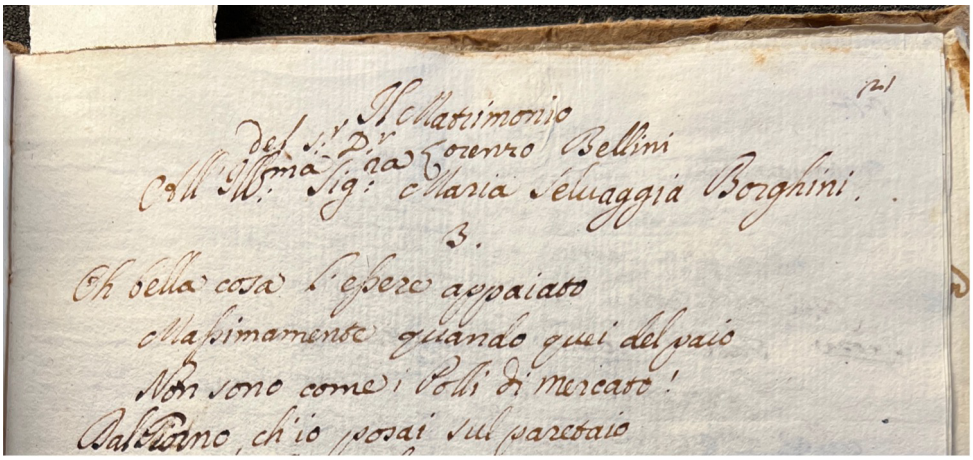


Fig. 5 – BNCF, Fondo Panciatichiano, ms. 328, f. 21r.

will find in yourself that the clear foundations / Are clear only through theology, / Crafted specifically for your mind / That is all science and all hypochondria".[96] The last two verses are especially rich. They suggest a mind that is both rigorously intellectual ("all science") and excessively introspective or anxious ("all hypochondria"). This contrast partly reflects the two poles of Borghini's strategy of modesty: hypochondria as the *pars destruens*, and science – also understood more broadly as ambition – as the *pars construens*. Finally, the refrain returned, slightly varied, a few verses later (fig. 6) describing marriage as a "medicine against the Devil".[97]

Maria Selvaggia never married though this did not exclude her from leading a "family life". In fact, she devoted significant attention to the education of her niece, Caterina Borghini, daughter of her brother Cosimo and his wife Laura. Like her aunt, Caterina became deeply engaged in the study of Latin and was later recognized as a distinguished member of the Arcadia Academy, adopting the name *Erato Dionea*. Moreover, like Maria Selvaggia, she remained unmarried. The educational framework that Maria Selvaggia provided to her niece became a model for many women in the eighteenth century, who increasingly sought to assert themselves in the intellectual domain. The Sienese scholar Aretafila Savini de' Rossi (1687-1731), in her *Apologia in favore degli studi delle donne* (1729), specifically referred to Borghini's contributions: "And who knows if some of these mothers did not take it upon themselves to instruct their children, as we have seen done

[96] *Ibid.*, 293: Fatevi Sposa, Selvaggiuccia mia / E proverete in voi che le fon chiare / Ma chiare a forza di Teologia, / E fatte a posta pel vostro cervello / Ch'è tutto scienza e tutto ipocondria. The manuscript version is preserved in BNCF, ms. Panciatichiano 328, ff. 21r-28v.

[97] *Ibid.*, 294.

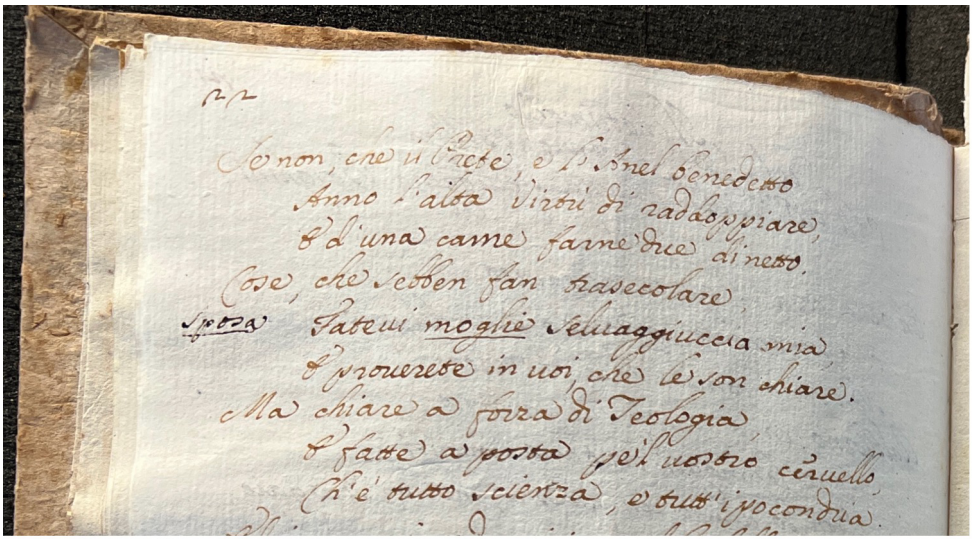


Fig. 6 – BNCF, Fondo Panciatichiano, ms. 328, f. 22v.

by an aunt to her nephews, the learned Signora Selvaggia Borghini, the esteemed lady from Pisa, who not only taught them the humanities and pleasant letters but also the most challenging and rigorous sciences?"[98] Thus, Borghini became a veritable symbol for those women who were engaged in the ongoing *querelle des femmes*.

Not only did her unmarried status elicit surprise, but so did her decision not to enter monastic life – especially given her deep engagement with theology. Borghini's passion for theological studies was well-known, and it was this passion that led her to undertake the translation of selected works by Tertullian.[99] Equipped with perseverance, she would often respond to those who advised against taking on such a difficult endeavor: "This task does not burden my spirit but lifts it: let me drive out one nail with another".[100] By so doing, Borghini aligned herself with the tradition of Tertullian commentators, such as Beatus Renanus (1485-1547), Latino Latini (1513-1593), Guido Panciroli (1523-1599), Jacobus

[98] *Discorsi accademici di vari autori viventi intorno agli studi delle donne la maggior parte recitati nell'Accademia dei Ricovrati di Padova*, 1729, 58: "E chi sa che taluna di queste madri da sé stessa non si ponesse ad istruire i propri figliuoli come abbiamo veduto farsi da una zia a' nipoti, la quale è stata la Signora Selvaggia Borghini dottissima dama pisana che gli ha addottrinati non solo nelle umane lettere e piacevoli ma ancora nelle scienze più difficili e severe?".

[99] *Opere di Tertulliano tradotte in Toscano dalla Signora Selvaggia Borghini, Nobile Pisana,* ed. by Giovanni Gaetano Bottari (Roma: Pallade, 1756).

[100] *Ibid.*, 8: "Questa fatica non opprime il mio spirito, ma lo solleva: lasciate, che io *clavo clavum trudam*".

Pamelius (1536-1587), Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), and Nicolas Rigault (1577-1654), also known as Rigaltius, among others. Borghini once again showed no fear of comparison with men; on the contrary, she made it clear that behind her rhetorical modesty lay a firm ambition grounded in a concrete awareness of her own abilities.

What about women translators in Italy? Aside from Borghini, two other women, during that period, had also engaged in the translation of significant literary and philosophical works. Luisa Bergalli Gozzi (1703-1779) had worked on a translation from Latin and, more specifically, on Terence. Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola (1702-1740),[101] known as *Mirista* among the Arcadians, had translated the work of René Descartes: *The Principles of Philosophy by René Des-Cartes. Translated from the French with comparison to the Latin in which the Author originally wrote them.*[102] As has been noted, "in Italy, among those who performed this unrewarding toil between 1650 and 1850, there were several women, such as the actresses Angiola D'Orsi (active in the second half of the seventeenth century), Brigida Bianchi (1613-1703), and Orsola Cortesi Biancolelli (c. 1632-1718), who translated and imitated Spanish".[103]

Borghini's *Tertulliano Volgarizzato* garnered significant approval and admiration from numerous scholars, especially for the accuracy of the translation and the challenge presented by the Latin in which Tertullian's work was originally written. The translation was posthumously published in 1756 by Giovanni Bottari (1689-1775), who oversaw the edition; and again in 1783, also by Bottari, in Rome, as evidenced by a manuscript copy of the work preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (fig. 7).[104]

Although it was published only posthumously, some confirmation that Borghini intended to publish this work can be found in the "letter to the reader" written by the author herself, which, however, was not included in Bottari's editions:

> I place before you, O courteous Reader, the great Tertullian. Yet, it seems to me as though I see him blushing, having, so to speak, after so many centuries, changed his attire, and not making his usual appearance. This, indeed, is the fault of my pen, which, unable to clothe

[101] See Paula Findlen, "Translating the New Science: Women and the Circulation of Knowledge in Enlightenment in Italy", *Configurations* 2 (1995): 167-206; Ead., "Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola", in Rebecca Messbarger, Paula Findlen, *The Contest for Knowledge Debates over Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago&London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 35-66.

[102] Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola, *I principi della filosofia di Renato Des-Cartes. Tradotti dal Francese col confronto del Latino in cui l'Autore li scrisse da Giuseppa-Eleonora Barbapiccola, tra gli Arcadi Mirista* (Torino, 1722).

[103] See Natalia Costa-Zalessow, "Teresa Carniani Malvezzi as a Translator from English and Latin, *Italica* 76/4 (1999): 497-511.

[104] BNCF, Fondo Nazionale, ms. II.II.275.

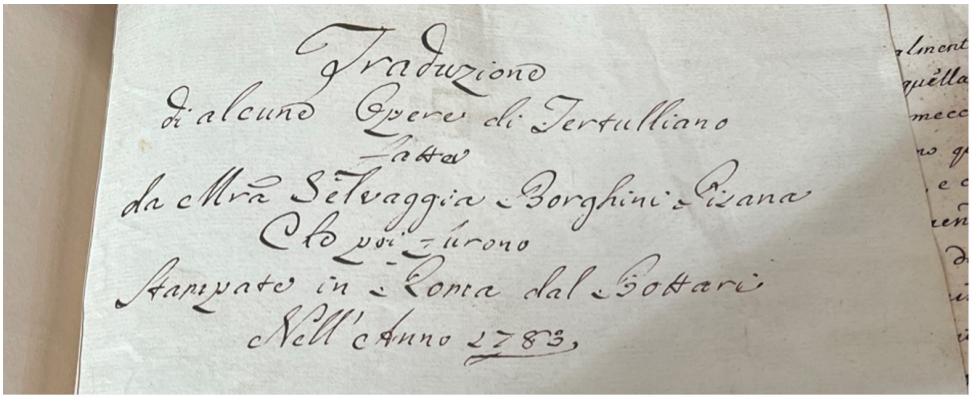


Fig. 7 – BNCF, Fondo Nazionale, ms. II.II.275.

> him in a fitting garment in our vulgar tongue, causes him to fall short of his majesty and perhaps presents a more ordinary character.[105]

In this instance too, Borghini's customary modesty was immediately apparent. As in other cases, it is worth questioning to what extent this humility responded to specific rhetorical needs. Indeed, translating Tertullian meant engaging with a long-standing tradition of male translators, most of whom were theologians. The choice to translate Tertullian was likely motivated by two main factors.

Firstly, Tertullian, one of the most prominent Christian apologists of the 2nd century CE, developed one of the most complex and rigorous theological and moral systems of his time. Embarking on the translation of such a work was, in part, an engagement with deep theological reflection, which, to some extent, ensured a favorable reception from the religious and inquisitorial context of the time. As a woman, unmarried and raised with the mathematical education of Alessandro Marchetti, Borghini found herself in a particularly delicate position within the social structure of her time. Evidence of this is found in a sonnet she composed for Marchetti's translation of Lucretius, in which, in one of the final stanzas, she writes: "Though wise; / It is no wonder if, at times, in thought, / He strayed far from the truth".[106] It is apparent that the poetess was seeking to distance herself from

[105] Borghini, *Saggio di poesie*, 261-263: "Io pongo, o Lettor cortese, sotto i tuoi occhi il gran Tertulliano: Parmi però di presente di vederlo in certo modo dipinto di rossore per avere, per così dire, dopo tanti secoli cangiato abbigliamento e non fare perciò la sua solita comparsa. Questa in vero è colpa della mia penna, che non avendo saputo nel trasportarlo nel volgar nostro, intessere al medesimo un abito condegno lo fa decadere dalla sua maestà e gli fa forse rappresentare un personaggio più comune".

[106] *Ibid.*, 18: benché saggio; / Meraviglia non è, se col pensiero / In ciò tal'ora errò lungi dal vero.

any accusations of atheism. To be a learned woman in the sciences required a delicate balance within the social framework. Whether Borghini intentionally cloaked her work in religious overtones to maintain her secular unmarried status, or whether she genuinely struggled with deep moral doubts concerning faith, remains unclear.

Secondly, Tertullian was widely regarded as an author whose works were notoriously difficult to read and interpret, which allowed Borghini to highlight her refined skills as a philosopher and translator. It is therefore plausible that her decision to translate Tertullian was part of a broader strategy to promote her intellectual and social standing. By clarifying her scholarly and social contributions, she sought to reinforce the fame and recognition she had earned, strategically managing her position within the intellectual circles, particularly in the eyes of the Medici court, which had long supported and endorsed her.

Maria Selvaggia Borghini died in Pisa on February 22, 1731, fifteen days after turning seventy-seven. Her body was laid to rest in the Church of the Carmine in Pisa. An – until now – unknown document notes in the margin: "It is said, not without some foundation, that before long a suitable cenotaph will be erected for her in the Camposanto of Pisa".[107] According to the record drafted in 1986 and updated in 2006 in the General Catalogue of Cultural Heritage, such a monument was erected in 1829 by the Pisan sculptor Enrico Van Lint (1808-1884), nearly a century after the poetess' death. The honorary sculpture, regarded as the artist's first work and originally placed to the left of the Medici monument (west corridor), was dismantled in 1935. The white Carrara marble plaque bore the following inscription: M. SELVAGGIAE BORGHINIÆ DOMO PISIS ORTU / PATRICIO POETRIÆ SUI TEMPORIS PRÆSTANTISSIMA… VIXIT A. LXXXVI OBIT VIII KAL. MART. A.D. MDCCXXXI / FABIUS ET ALEXANDER FRATRES BORGHINI NE TANTUM FAMILIÆ SUÆ DECUS MONUMENTI HONORE CARERET MARMOR CUM ELOGIO P.P.A. MDCCCXXIX. Moreover, this monument represents the only surviving iconographic record of the poetess. The marble-carved profile may have been derived from a portrait that is now lost or remains unknown. In this way, both the visual and intellectual memory of this extraordinary poetess gradually waned.[108]

Conclusion

Maria Selvaggia Borghini's case offers a valuable lens through which to examine the gendered dynamics of intellectual authority in late seventeenth century Italy. Far from being a marginal figure, Borghini actively participated in the cultural and scientific exchanges of her time, positioning herself within a dense network of correspondents, patrons, and

[107] ASF, ms. Miscellanea Medicea 7/4.

[108] C. Casini, "Selvaggia Borghini (monumento)", scheda OA 09-00149901, 1986 (rev. 2006). See also https://catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/PhotographicHeritage/0900601147#lg=1&slide=0

academies. Her poetic production – ranging from courtly celebration to scientific reflection – alongside her epistolary and translational practices, reveals the strategies through which a learned woman could inhabit, negotiate, and subtly redefine the spaces of knowledge traditionally reserved for men. In navigating the intersections of literary expression, theological orthodoxy, and scientific knowledge, Borghini constructed an intellectual persona that was both culturally legitimate and socially resonant. As had been stressed, at the heart of Borghini's intellectual project probably lied a finely calibrated strategy of modesty. By combining self-restraint with intellectual resolve, Borghini transformed modesty from a constraint into a resource.

Her trajectory underscores how early modern women could participate in the making of scientific culture not despite, but through, their engagement with genres. In refusing both matrimonial and monastic models of female selfhood, Borghini carved out a third path – one grounded in erudition, rhetorical tact, and a deliberate modulation of visibility.

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BNCF = Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze, fondo Panciatichiano, fondo Magliabechi, fondo Nazionale, Miscellanea medicea.
BRF = Biblioteca Riccardiana, Firenze, fondo Riccardiano.
BMaF = Biblioteca Marucelliana, Firenze, fondo Redi-Cestoni.

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Experimenting with new ingredients for health: Asian plants in women's recipe books in early modern Britain

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Abstract
This paper explores the role of early modern British women in incorporating the use of Asian plants into healthcare practices. As plant circulation across Eurasia increased, knowledge of medicinal ingredients evolved, especially those from Asia. While physicians and botanists copied and translated recipes into printed books, household recipe manuscripts – often compiled by women – suggest different ways of using foreign ingredients. Rather than directly transcribing printed sources, women adjusted ingredients and methods, demonstrating practical engagement with these plants. This study retraces the use of galanga, camphor, and cardamom and their roles in domestic medicine. By examining women's manuscripts alongside botanical and medical texts, this paper highlights how these plants were adapted and integrated into daily practice. It argues that early modern women actively participated in knowledge-making by experimenting with and refining medical recipes. Their contributions shaped household medicine and influenced broader understandings of Asian plants in early modern Britain.

Keywords
household recipes, healthcare, Asian plants, empirical knowledge

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Introduction

The early modern period witnessed an increasing exchange between Europe and Asia, so that Asian plants became a group of common trading products. Although textual and visual knowledge of Asian plants had been recorded and circulated since antiquity across Eurasia, it was actually since the late fifteenth century that maritime activities provided Europeans with more opportunities to reach foreign plants and study their features and medical values.[1] Comparisons with existing discussions and popularisation of herbals and medical works took place in parallel with the flourishing of the printing trade.[2] While knowledge of Asian plants in botany and medicine became increasingly available towards the end of the seventeenth century, it is uncertain to what extent they reveal the actual use of Asian ingredients in Britain. As the access to expensive plant materials – such as spices – was still limited, were the remedies more about catering to curiosity about foreign materials than about practical use?[3]

A direct way of looking for the use of Asian plants in medicine is to trace specific materials as case studies.[4] This includes how plants received English names, how their material features helped assign them medical values in the systems of knowledge and belief, how their recipes were passed down through the centuries, and so on. As women at home played a vital role in monitoring the health conditions of family members and making remedies for ailments, the recipes they compiled demonstrate not only the influence of printed materials, women's familial and social connections but also the integration of practical needs, and their

1 See Andrew Dalby and Annette Giesecke, eds., *A Cultural History of Plants in the Early Modern Era* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023); Jennifer Milam, ed., *A Cultural History of Plants in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023); Pamela Smith and Paula Findlen, eds., *Merchants and Marvel* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

2 *Ibid*. Also see Giulia Rovelli, *Popularizing Learned Medicine in Late-17th-Century England: The Art of Physick made Plain and Easie* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2024).

3 For the discussions on the validity and use of remedies in printed herbals or medical works, see Sarah Neville, *Early Modern Herbals and the Book Trade: English Stationers and the Commodification of Botany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 168-172.

4 Numerous studies have explored specific Asian plants in early modern period, although not necessarily focusing on their knowledge and use at home. See, for instance, Heasim Sul, *A Global History of Ginseng: Imperialism, Modernity and Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 2022); Erika Monahan, "Locating rhubarb: Early Modernity's Relevant Obscurity", in *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. by Paula Findlen, Second edition (London: Routledge, 2021), 297-322. In addition, there are other studies focusing on certain materials in household recipes, see Amanda E. Herbert, Jack B. Bouchard and Julia Fine, "Colonizing Condiments: Culinary Experimentation and the Politics of Disgust in Early Modern Britain", *Global Food History* 11, 1 (2024): 42-71; Hillary M. Nunn, "Local Waters and Notions of Home in Early Modern Recipe Manuscripts", *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 20, 1 (2020): 59-82.

thoughts of different recipes after experimentation.[5] These manuscripts provide a window onto empirical knowledge, that I would like to apply to the case studies of Asian plants.[6] This paper tries to follow three Asian plants from women's perspective at home and, at the same time, to pay attention to the differences between them in household recipes, popular herbals, and medical works in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The comparison can provide insight into how women selected, adapted, and shaped the knowledge of Asian ingredients.

In this paper, I would like to choose galangal, cardamom, and camphor as case examples. A primary reason is that they were less common compared with other more affordable Asian plants and spices such as cloves, nutmegs, and ginger, etc.[7] Whether and how these materials were recorded in household recipes could offer valuable clues about the use of Asian plants, and their understanding beyond a mere curiosity for foreign ingredients. Moreover, each of the plants has unique material features in its way. They also shared similarities when it came to practical uses. Their applications in daily healthcare can reveal different aspects of the understanding of Asian medicinal plants. Although less common than ginger and clove, at least in Eurasia these plants had already been circulated since the ancient or medieval period.[8] Earlier compiled knowledge of them laid the foundation for later publications that

5 There is a considerable number of studies on making knowledge at kitchen in early modern Britain, for example, see Elaine Leong, "Collecting Knowledge for the Family: Recipes, Gender and Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern English Household", *Centaurus* 55 (2013): 81-103; Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell, "Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern 'Medical Marketplace'", in *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c. 1450-c. 1850*, ed. by Mark S.R. Jenner and Patrick Wallis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 133-152; Sara Pennell, "Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes and Knowledge in Early Modern England", in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, ed. by Victoria E. Burke and Jonathan Gibson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 237-258; Wendy Wall, *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

6 For empirical knowledge, see P. H. Smith, "Epistemology, Artisanal", in *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Marco Sgarbi (Cham: Springer, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-14169-5_1182, 1117-1125; Pamela H. Smith, Amy R. W. Meyers, and Harold J. Cook, eds., *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge.*

7 A list of the prices of herbs and spices for domestic healthcare use can be found in Gideon Harvey, *The Family-Physician and the House-Apothecary…* (London: T. R., 1676). See note 11.

8 Cardamom was already known in antiquity, see Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, trans. T.A. Osbaldeston and R.P.A Wood (Johannesburg: IBIDIS, 2000), 6, 20. Galangal and camphor can be found in medieval texts on trade or medicine, see Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica Della Mercatura*, ed. by Allan Evans (Cambridge, MA.: The Mediaeval Academy of America,

were available to the public for daily use in seventeenth-century Britain.[9] For instance, these three plants received detailed discussions in the herbal *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da India* (1563), written by the Portuguese physician Garcia da Orta (1501-1568) and published in India, which was influential in early modern Europe.[10] Generally, galangal, cardamom, and camphor were categorised into 'roots', 'seeds', 'resins', and 'gums' in seventeenth-century herbals and medical works. In the 1670s, their prices were relatively high compared with other listed ingredients, although not the highest in each one's category.[11] In the next section, I will introduce each plant's material features and medical functions, then provide a general picture of each one in printed texts and household manuscripts.

Using Asian plants in a selective way

First is galangal, the aromatic rhizome of certain Asian plants of the ginger family.[12] Its stem is of a similar appearance to ginger, as is commonly found in markets today but with paler colour and rounder shape, being widely used in Southeast Asian cuisine. In English records, galangal can be traced back to the fourteenth century, which suggests a long-term exchange between Britain and Asia.[13] It was also spelled as 'galingale' or 'galanga' in the seventeenth century. Like other Asian spices, galangal was believed to be 'hot' in the Galenic system to treat coldness in the human body. It also "strengthens the brain … releeves faint hearts, takes away windiness of the womb…"[14]

1936, first publication date unknown), 65, 196; Claire Burridge, "Incense in Medicine: An Early Medieval Perspective", *Early Medieval Europe* 28 (2020): 219-255.

9 There is a large body of research on the global circulation of plants and their knowledge before the seventeenth century. For more recent works, see note 1; Federica Rotelli, "Trade and Exploration", in *A Cultural History of Plants in the Post-Classical Era*, ed. by Alain Touwaide (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 59-78; Florike Egmond, "Shapes of Knowledge: Images and the Identification of Exotic Plants by European Naturalists in the Sixteenth Century", in *Epistemic Practices and Plant Classification in Premodern European Botanical Knowledge: An Interdisciplinary Treatment*, ed. by Fabrizio Baldassarri (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025), 205-236. For common spices in seventeenth-century Britain, see Jillian Azevedo, *Tastes of the Empire: Foreign Foods in Seventeenth Century England* (Jefferson, NC.: McFarland, 2017), 101-108.

10 Garcia da Orta. *Colloquies on the Simples & Drugs of India*, translated with an Introduction and Index by Sir Clements Markham (London: Henry Sotheran and Co., 1913, first published 1563), 86-112, 208-212.

11 The prices: four shilling per pound for galangal and cardamom, eight shilling per pound for camphor, see Harvey, *The Family-Physician and the House-Apothecary*, 116, 120, 124.

12 *Oxford English Dictionary*, "galangal (*n.*)", December 2024. https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1004360963.

13 *Oxford English Dictionary*, "galangal (*n.*)"; Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 19-25.

14 Royal College of Physicians of London. *A physicall directory, or, A translation of the London dis-*

In *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* (first published in 1618), the official pharmacopoeia of the Royal College of Physicians in London and one of the most influential medical works in seventeenth-century Britain, galangal can be found in several remedies.[15] As the English versions of the book enjoyed several reprints since the mid-seventeenth century, its influence on medical knowledge provides a general background for how medicinal plants like galangal were understood.[16] Galangal most frequently appears in the sections on compound water,[17] electuary,[18] and powder.[19] Most of the recipes for compound water were developed more recently, starting from the sixteenth century. In contrast, the part on electuary and powder has a longer history: many are borrowed from the medical works by medieval physicians such as Masawaiyh (777-857 AD) and Nicholaus Myrepsus (c. 1240-1280). The latter two types of use outnumbered those of galangal in compound water, indicating the dominant role of early medical works.[20] Mixing numerous Asian plant materials in one remedy was common, and cardamom frequently appeared along with galangal probably because of their similar medical properties. Besides, there are a few recipes to transform galangal into pills or plasters for external uses.[21]

To what extent did women at home borrow from these recipes when recording and making remedies? A search for 'galangal' (or 'galanga', 'galingale') in household manuscripts compiled in the seventeenth century unveils a fascinating picture.[22] Among the twenty-two household recipes that contain galangal, only three are used to make powders, and seventeen of them are compound waters.[23] There are recipes for balm water and Dr.

pensatory made by the Colledge of Physicians in London… by Nich. Culpeper, Gent (London: Peter Cole, 1649), 11.

15 It is worth noting that *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* was not the first work to cover the medical recipes of these Asian plants. However, it served as a good example of influential institutional works in the seventeenth century, which is why this essay heavily draws on it to contrast with household recipes. Another influential English work in sixteenth-century Britain is John Gerard, *The Herball, or, Generall Historie of Plantes, Gathered by John Gerarde of London, Master in Chirurgerie* (London: By John Norton, 1597).

16 See Clare J. Fowler, *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis 1618 and Its Descendants* (London: Royal College of Physicians, 2018).

17 Compound water: a distilled water made from multiple ingredients, rather than a single plant.

18 Electuary: "medicinal preserve or paste, ingredients being mixed with honey or syrup". Cited from Juhani Norri, ed., *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary in English, 1375-1550: Body Parts, Sicknesses, Instruments, and Medicinal Preparations* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 332.

19 Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 80-81, 88-91, 114, 124, 133, 148-150, 152-154, 157-158, 170-171, 184, 313.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*

22 The search of manuscripts relies on Perdita Manuscripts database. https://www.perditamanuscripts.amdigital.co.uk/

23 Women's manuscript books that contain galangal (not exhaustive): FSL, V.a.20, f. 11*r*: "Aqua

Stephen's water.[24] *Aqua mirabilis* ("miraculous water") occurs nine times, thus becoming the most popular galangal-made water in households [Fig. 1]. The quantity of different types of remedies suggests a selective assimilation of herbal and medical knowledge from existing remedies. It would be an oversimplification to claim that recipes of rare Asian plants were driven by curiosity rather than conscious practical use based on empirical knowledge. Women in household medicine might have used galangal more often as a medicinal drink than electuary or any powder of diverse ingredients. Household recipes show a shift in focus from dried or semi-dried remedies to liquid ones.

Camphor is another good example to show the differences between medieval texts and seventeenth-century domestic healthcare practices. Today camphor refers to a white, crystalline substance with a strong, penetrating aroma. It is extracted from the wood of the camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora* (L.) J.Presl), which is native to East Asia.[25] The wood will be chopped and boiled in water, and the camphor obtained from the steam will condense and crystallise in cooler areas. Today, the substance is more often used in medicine to treat inflammation and as a moth repellent for daily use. Camphor was also found in medieval English texts, interchangeably with the word 'camphire'.[26] Different from hot plants like galangal and cardamom, camphor was thought to be 'cold', and ideal as a cooling ingredient. [27] Because of its crystalline appearance, camphor was often included in medical works among amber, mastic, and other natural resins and gums.

Compared with galangal, the ways of using camphor were more diverse. In *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*, in addition to the three types of remedies discussed above, camphor

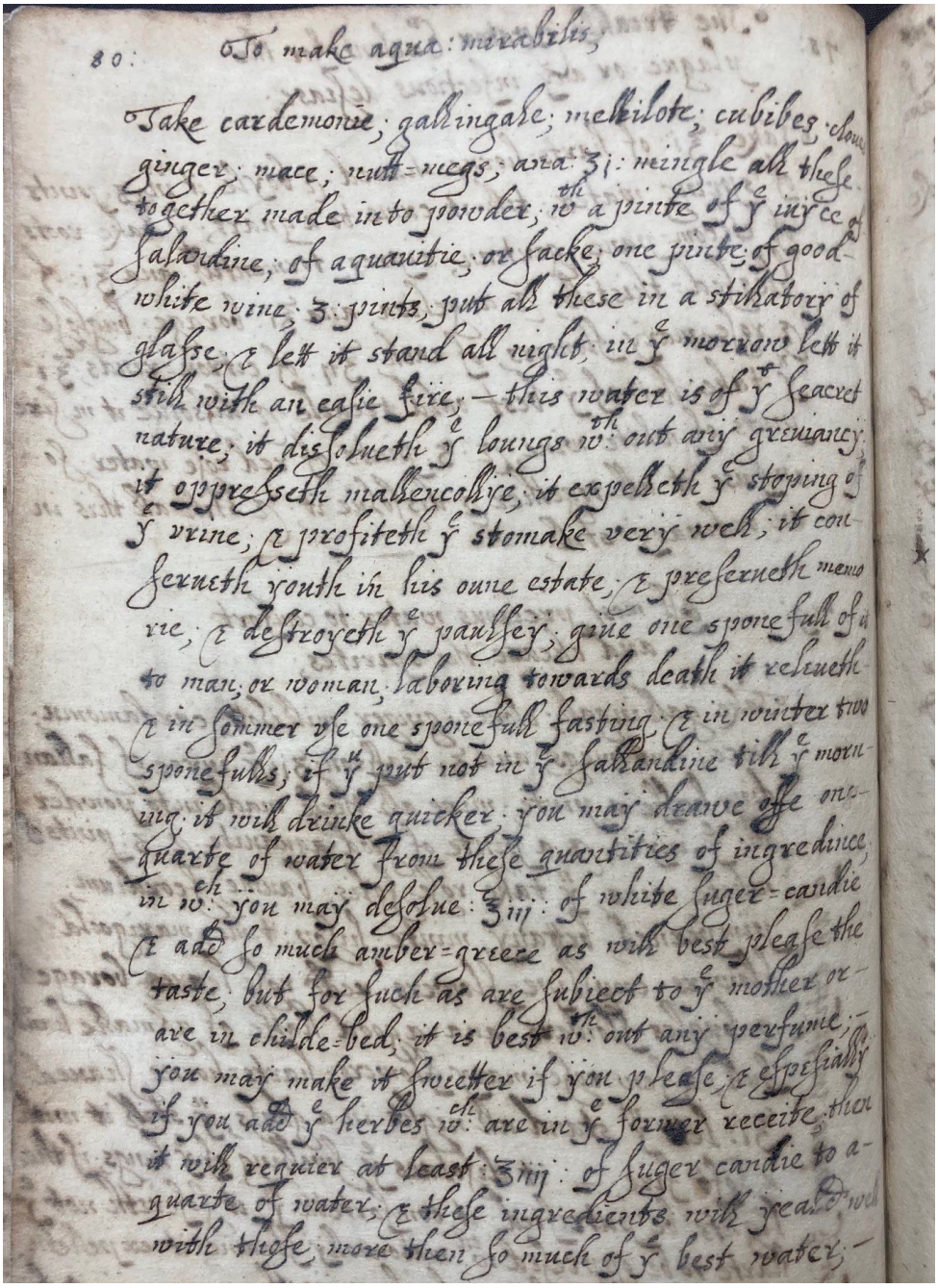
Mirabilis"; FSL, V.a.215, p. 97: "Rosa Solis"; FSL, V.a.669, p. 10: "To make Aqua Mirabilis a Slighter way"; FSL, V.b.14, p. 26: "Aqua=mirabilis"; FSL, V.b.363, p. 20: "Powder against Wind in the Stomach"; FSL, V.b.366: see next section on Winche's recipes; FSL, V.b.380, p. 84: "Balme Water"; BL, Add. MS. 27466, see note 70; BL, Add. MS. 45196, f. 81*r*: "How to make Aqua mirabilis w[hi]ch is good against any Surfeit, distemper or fainting"; BL, Add. MS. 57944, f. 15*r*: "Aqua Mirabilis. Parry"; BL, MS. Egerton 2197, f. 15*v*: "A specill powder to be drunke in wine, to helpe digestion"; BL, MS. Sloane 2485, f. 41*r*: "To make aqua mirabilis"; BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 22*v*: "To make aqua mirabilis"; BL, MS. Sloane 3842, ff. 24*r*-24*v*: "To make Aqua Mirabilis", "Aqua Mirabilis and the vertues of it".

[24] Balm water is a distilled water made with lemon balm, sack wine, and a few other herbs and spices. Dr. Stephen's water, also known as "Aqua Stephani", is another distilled water made using various spices, herbs, flowers, and Gascoigne wine.

[25] Hamidpour, Rafie, Soheila Hamidpour, Mohsen Hamidpour, *et al.*, "Camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), A Traditional Remedy with the History of Treating Several Diseases", *International Journal of Case Reports and Images* 4, 2 (2013): 86-89. doi:10.5348/ijcri-2013-02-267-RA-1.

[26] The word "camphire" could refer to henna, another type of plant which was often used as a dye. According to Miczak, camphire in early modern Britain referred to camphor rather than henna. See Marie Anakee Miczak, *Henna's Secret History: The History, Mystery & Folklore of Henna* (San Jose: Writers Club Press, 2001), 247-250.

[27] Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 67.


80: To make aqua: mirabilis,

Take cardemome, gallingale, melilote, cubibes, cloues
ginger, mace, nutt-megs, ana 3j: meingle all these
togeather made into powder, wch a pinte of ye iuice of
Saladine, of aquauitie, or Sacke, one pinte; of good
white wine, 3: pints, put all these in a stilatory of
glasse, & lett it stand all night, in ye morrow lett it
still with an easie fire, — this water is of ye Secret
nature, it dissolueth ye lounge wch out any greuiancy;
it oppresseth melancollye, it expelleth ye stoping of
ye vrine, & profiteth ye stomake very much, it con-
serueth youth in his owne estate, & preserueth memo
rie, & destroyeth ye paulsey, giue one spoone full of it
to man, or woman, laboring towards death it releueth
& in Sommer vse one spoone full fasting, & in winter two
spoone fulls, if yu put not in ye Saladine till ye morn-
ing: it will drincke quicker: you may drawe offe one-
quarte of water from these quantities of ingredience,
in wch you may dissolue 3iij: of white Suger-candie
& add so much amber-greece as with best please the
taste, but for such as are subiect to ye mother or
are in childe-bed, it is best wth out any perfume; —
you may make it sweetter if you please, & especially
if you add ye herbes wch are in ye former receite, then
it will require at least 3iij: of Suger candie to a-
quarte of water, & these ingredients with yeast well
with these more then so much of ye best water; —

Fig. 1 – An *aqua mirabilis* recipe in Margaret Baker's recipe book, with detailed procedure and medicinal effects, 1650. From the British Library Collection: MS Sloane 2486, f. 22*v*. Photo by the author.

also appears in recipes for troches, ointment, cerecloth, and plaster. However, a similar feature is that most recipes provided with Latin names are transmitted from Masawaiyh, Rhasis (865-925), and Myrepsus.[28] For instance, there are *Diarhodon Abbatis*, *Philonium Persicum*, and *Laetificans,* all of which are electuaries or powders that contain camphor for a cooling function.[29] While medieval tradition occupies ample space in the official medical works, household recipes provide a contrast: camphor was not a rare ingredient in women's recipe books but was much more common in external remedies like ointment and plaster.[30] Troches or electuaries of camphor are hard to find, which suggests its limited use in daily life. Like galangal, camphor was used in daily healthcare, but in a selective way.

Cardamom had a similar situation that combines certain features of the knowledge and uses of galangal and camphor. It refers to the aromatic seeds of several plants belonging to the ginger family. The seedpod can be green or black in different species. Cardamom is native to the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and Africa, and is used in cuisine, medicine, and perfumery.[31] Similar to galangal and camphor, its earliest appearance in English records was in the fifteenth century. It was sometimes spelled as 'cardamum' throughout the early modern period. Apart from being a 'hot' plant for treating coldness, it was believed to clean the human body and provoke urine.[32]

Cardamom enjoys the most diverse type of medical uses among the three plants in

[28] Keeping Latinate terms might be due to its popularity at the time, avoiding misunderstanding, helping the readers get familiar with specialised terms, or translators' lack of knowledge, see Rovelli, *Popularizing Learned Medicine in Late-17th-Century England*, 84-86.

[29] Norri, 297: "*Diarhodon Abbatis*: Electuary containing roses and syrup of roses, attributed to Abbas Curiae…" *Philonium Persicum*: Persian philonium, an electuary containing pepper, opium and camphor; *Laetificans*: a powder made of spices, aromatics, and silver and gold leaf. Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 159, 161, 180.

[30] Women's manuscript books that contain camphor (not exhaustive): FSL, X.d.457 (1-19), f. 5*r*: "Lotion for the Teeth"; FSL, V.a.215, p. 270: "Mr Beekitts infalibell healing oyntmentt for a sore brestt…"; FSL, V.a.430, pp. 46-47: "An excellent approoued plaister for the spleene which hath cured divers giuen ouer by the Phisitians", "A Receipt to take away the red spotts out of the Face after the small pox are gone"; FSL, V.a.456, f. 24*v*: "To heale a Tetter. M.r Corsley"; FSL, V.a.388, p. 257-258: "A receipt of a white playster against the bytings of venamus beasts"; FSL, V.b.301, f. 59*r*: "to Stew a leg of Beefe"; BL, Add. MS. 27466, f. 6*v*: "A water to take Sunburne off the Face & hands", see Fig. 5; BL, MS. Egerton 2197, f. 21*r*: "A medicine good for all matter of aches & sores"; BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 16*v*: "For an extrame heat in a womans brest".

[31] For introduction, see Kaliyaperumal Ashokkumar, Muthusamy Murugan, M.K. Dhanya, *et al*., "Botany, Traditional Uses, Phytochemistry and Biological Activities of Cardamom [Elettaria cardamomum (L.) Maton] – A Critical Review", *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 246, 112244 (2020): 1-10.

[32] Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 63; John Pechey, *The Compleat Herbal of Physical Plants Containing All Such English and Foreign Herbs, Shrubs and Trees as are Used in Physick and Surgery…* (London: Red Lyon, 1694), 226.

Pharmacopœia Londinensis. Apart from those mentioned above, it can also be used in syrup and compound oil. Again, most recipes are powder, electuary, and troches copied from Masawaiyh and Myrepsus, with a few from Galen, Avicenna, and Jean François Fernel (1497-1558).[33] In household recipes, however, cardamom often appears in compound water, most of which are *aqua mirabilis*. Another common use is in *rosa solis*, a type of cordial drink made primarily with the flowers of *rosa solis* (sundew) and *aqua vitae*.[34]

Such shift of use also shared similarities with publications written or complied by apothecaries who aimed to popularise medical knowledge for a wider public. These include Nicholas Culpeper (1616-54), who first translated *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* into English in 1649. In a medical instruction written by Culpeper himself and published in 1659, galangal appears in only one recipe for electuary with simplified ingredients for digestion issues.[35] There are still four compound water recipes using galangal, including *elixir vitae*, *aqua mirabilis*, *aqua vitae composita*,[36] and celestial precious water.[37] The last type can also be externally used as eye drops after being mixed with herbal water, thus suggesting its versatile function.[38] However, the use of cardamom and camphor are even less frequent in the book. The latter was recommended in two types of compound water and an ointment added with hogs-grease only.[39] As Culpeper preferred simple, affordable, and accessible ingredients, the restrained use of foreign ingredients, especially costly ones, is perceivable here.[40] Nevertheless, his work corresponds to the daily use of galangal and cardamom in compound water drawn from household recipes: not as widely used as other common ingredients, but still employed in making remedies primarily of compound water.

The similarities between household recipes and popular medical books can also be found in works by William Salmon (1644-1713), a successor to Culpeper in the second half of the seventeenth century. Working as an apothecary opposing the monopoly of

[33] Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 80-81, 85, 87-90, 127, 135, 136, 149, 152-155, 157-159, 161-164, 240, 244, 246, 249, 265, 269, 309.

[34] A brief introduction to the use of *rosa solis* in early modern recipes can be found in Jennifer Sherman Roberts, "Revisiting Jennifer Sherman Roberts' Little Shop of Horrors, Early Modern Style", *The Recipes Project*, July 30, 2020, https://doi.org/10.58079/td9t.

[35] Nicholas Culpeper, *Culpeper's school of physick, or, The experimental practice of the whole art wherein are contained all inward diseases from the head to the foot, with their proper and effectuall cures, such diet set down as ought to be observed in sickness or in health…* (London: N. Brook, 1659), 99-100.

[36] *Aqua vitae composita*: *aqua vitae* mixed with herbs, spices, or other medicinal ingredients.

[37] Culpeper, *Culpeper's school of physick*, 407-409, 442-445, 457-461.

[38] *Ibid*., 460.

[39] *Ibid*., 152, 450-451, 457-461.

[40] For his life and works, see Michael JG. Farthing, "Nicholas Culpeper (1616–1654): London's first general practitioner?", *Journal of Medical Biography* 23, 3 (2015): 152-158. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967772013506687.

medical practices by the Royal College of Physicians, Salmon earned success in popularising knowledge of medicine, alchemy, art, and botany.[41] In *The family dictionary, or, Household companion* (1696), one of his guidebooks for medicine and cooking, galangal and cardamom are included in the same six recipes, with five on compound water and one on powder.[42] In terms of camphor, the diversity of uses was preserved but focuses more on plaster, ointment, and compound water compared with *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*.[43] Like galangal and cardamom, the types of use were limited – a feature in the domestic practice of using Asian plants.

However, do the similarities between medical publications and household recipes suggest that women were users or transmitters – even if competent or informed ones – rather than producers of knowledge? It is worth briefly considering these women's background and how much they knew about the plants. The women authors cited in this essay (whose names are known)[44] came from the gentry class or the nobility, some of whom have been discussed by scholars on empirical knowledge making. Access to ingredients and textual knowledge (from other women in the social circles and publications) was available, which granted space for experimentation with recipes. Although women tended to prefer instructions over descriptions of individual plant in their manuscripts, evidence of the latter is still traceable, such as in Elizabeth Freke's (1642-1714) recipe book, in which she recorded each plant as a separate entry, briefly listing its medicinal effects and uses.[45] However, to what extent women were aware of and appreciated the foreign origins of these plants remains difficult to establish, given the current state of research.

As already touched upon above, a general look at what had (not) been borrowed from printed books to manuscripts already reveals a different answer: the influence of the physicians' authority was selectively assimilated into daily practices using Asian plants. This once again highlights women's identity as chemical medicine practitioners.[46]

41 Craig Ashley Hanson, *The English Virtuoso: Art, Medicine, and Antiquarianism in the Age of Empiricism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 111-113.

42 William Salmon, *The family dictionary, or, Houshold [sic] companion wherein are alphabetically laid down exact rules and choice physical receipts for the preservation of health…* (London: 1695), page unnumbered.

43 *Ibid*., page unnumbered.

44 For their names, see Bibliography – Manuscripts at the end of the essay. For their individual background, see Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith, eds., *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); The Recipes Project also covers a considerable number of blog entries on them, see https://recipes.hypotheses.org/.

45 BL, Add. MS. 45718, f. 254*r*: "Camphire. Takes pains of the Head coming of Cold, takes away inflammations. Cooling any place itt is applied to. Itt resists putrefactions & poysons…"

46 For women's involvement in distilling and chymistry, see Jayne Elisabeth Archer, "Women and Chymistry in Early Modern England: The Manuscript Receipt Book (c. 1616) of Sarah Wigges", in *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Kathleen P. Long, Second

As for recipes in popular medical books, they were not entirely or exactly copied in household manuscripts. Although the Galenic system of classifying temperaments of plants was widely accepted in daily practice, women's selection and transmission of knowledge placed highly value on practicality. The goal was to make the recipes feasible and accessible, which means that empirical experience not only ran through the process but was also the ultimate aim. Therefore, it is common to see paraphrasing of instructions, supplementation of details to the procedure, and adjustment of ingredients and distilling methods according to need, as will be unfolded in the following sections. More importantly, when formulating new ideas, women drew inferences from existing knowledge of plants and integrated their sensory experiences of the materials. We will see that women created new recipes utilising material features of these Asian plants, even not necessarily for medical function, but for more pleasant sensory effects in daily life. Compared with printed books, these recipes reveal realistic aspects of using and making knowledge.

Practicality, adjustment, and elaboration

Apart from selectively using recipes from publications, women at home made adjustments based on the formulas. This can serve as another clue for the actual uses of Asian plants. Among all household recipes that contain one or more of the three Asian plants, *aqua mirabilis* is the most common type. Therefore, I would like to take it as the first example of domestic use.

Aqua mirabilis is a type of cordial water made with spices and strong alcohol. It was one of the two popular drinks that employed various spices in the seventeenth century.[47] Early recipes of *aqua mirabilis* in printed materials can be found in *A right profitable booke for all diseases called…* (first published in 1582), a medical work written by the physician and surgeon Peter Levens (active 1552-1587), which was reprinted several times until 1664. The recipe contains several Asian plants, including galangal and cardamom:

> ¶ Take of Galingall, Cloues, Maces, Cucubes, Ginger, Cardomomum, Nutmegs, Millilot, Saffron, Egrimony water foure vnces, and beat all these into powder the quantity of a dram and somwhat more: then take of the iuice of Selondine, and a pint of M. *George Kebels* water of the best and the first: put of the same water beeing well mingled in a stillatory of glasse, and let it be stopped well and close, and so let it stand for the space of foure and twenty houres, and then distill them with a soft fire for the space of a naturall day.[48]

edition (Abingdon – New York: Routledge, 2016), 191-216.

47 Azevedo, *Tastes of the Empire*, 101-102. Another popular drink is Dr. Stephen's water.

48 Peter Levens, *A right profitable booke for all diseases called, The pathway to health. Wherein are to be founde most excellent & approued medicines of great vertue… First gathered by Peter Leuens…* (London: Edward VVhite, 1596), 112-113.

Apart from galangal and cardamoms, other soaked plants are also from Asia, and all botanical ingredients, including the juice, are of hot quality. The method involves soaking spices in juice and alcohol, then distilling the liquid through heat.[49] Another popular medical work that contains the recipe of *aqua mirabilis* is *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*. The recipe in the first English edition shows less variety of ingredients: "Take of Cloves, Galanga, Cubebs, Mace, Gardamoms, Nutmegs, Ginger, of each one drachm, juyce of Chelondine,[50] half a pound, Aqua-vitae, a * pound, White Wine three pints (or three pound which you please) Infuse them twenty four hours, and then draw a quart of water from them, by an Alembick".[51]

Here, the proportion of alcohol is higher than in the first recipe, removing a few ingredients, including agrimony, saffron, melilot, and celandine. The drink can heat cold stomachs, purify lungs, prevent apoplexies, and restore speech loss.[52] In a later edition of *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* translated by Culpeper in 1653, *aqua vitae* was replaced by spirits of wine, which is more refined and stronger.[53] The two widely circulated recipes from *A right profitable booke* and *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* served as representative versions of *aqua mirabilis* recipes, with revised versions published in other medical works in the seventeenth century.

In household recipes, different versions of this recipe demonstrate a higher level of detail on the procedure and the pursuit of more practical instruction, such as adjusting ingredients for different levels of medicinal strength. This is mostly obvious in the recipe book compiled by Rebeckah Winche (d. 1713) [Fig. 2], who was from a medical family and married Sir Humphrey Winche, a politician and member of the Parliament between the 1660s and 1680s.[54] Winche's recipe book was compiled in 1666, in which a recipe from the 1653 English edition of *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* was included, titled as "Aqua Mirabilis the strongest sort".[55] Winche added that: "…you may if you please put aqua vite instead of the spirit of wine & destill itt in a cold still & itt will be hot enough".[56] This means Winche was aware of both versions of ingredients, and she had probably tried both to added a comment. In addition, she was familiar with distilling methods. While the recipe in *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* suggests hot distillation, Winche noted that the cold still – a

[49] "M. George Kebels water" probably refers to an alcoholic drink, but it is unknown what ingredients it consists of.

[50] Chelondine: calendine

[51] Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 90.

[52] *Ibid*.; Levens, *A right profitable booke…*, 112-113.

[53] Royal College of Physicians of London, *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*. 67.

[54] For Winche's life, see anonymous, "The Winche Project", *emroc: early modern recipes online collective,* https://emroc.hypotheses.org/ongoing-projects/the-winche-project.

[55] FSL, V.b.366, p. 11.

[56] *Ibid*.

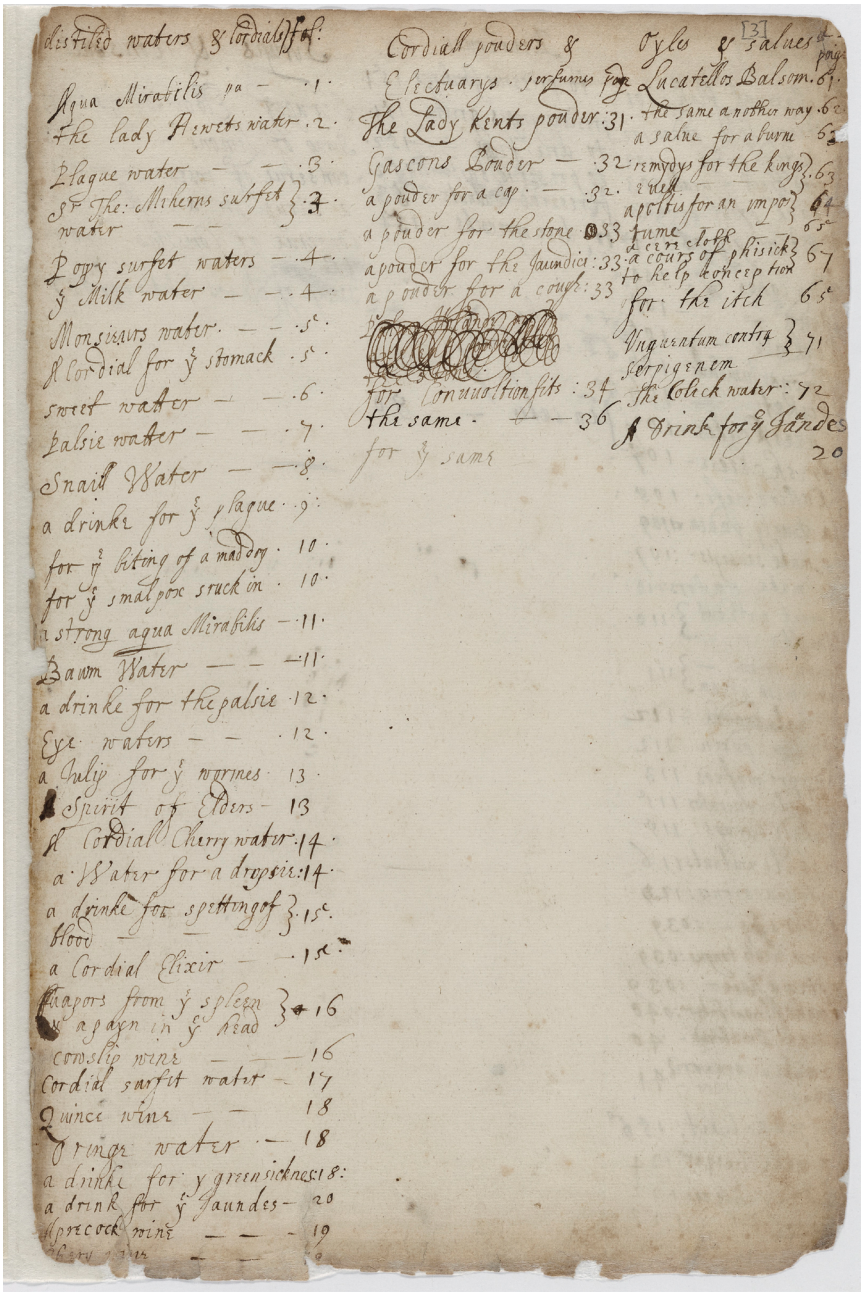


Fig. 2 – Table of contents in Rebeckah Winche's recipe book, ca. 1666. It contains three entries of *aqua mirabilis*: two on the same folio, and "a strong aqua Mirabilis" on the other folio. From Folger Shakespeare Library Collection: V.b.366, p. [3].

method without heating but relies on slow evaporation and condensation of ingredients – would be enough for achieving a desired 'hot' drink. Here, hot refers to the Galenic quality, which is one of the reasons for employing Asian plants. Combining the theory and practical experience, Winche added comments to the recipes that she found helpful.

While the recipe from the institution seems too strong, Winche recorded two more versions of *aqua mirabilis* and placed them before the most potent recipe, which suggests their lighter medicinal effects [Fig. 3]. The first is titled "aqua mirabilis" with a sidenote, "Mrs. Hobby", suggesting the source of information.[57] The recipe includes more floral and herbal materials than *A right profitable booke* and *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*. Based on existing spices and alcohol, there are sack wine, melilot flowers, rosemary flowers, cowslip, borage, bugloss, marigold, a pint of the juice of lemon balm, half a pint of the juice of spearmint.[58] To make the drink, Winche recommended to: "…bruse the spices & seeds & steppe all these together all night: the next say distill itt in an ordinary still. laying hartstongue leaves in the botom of the still & let itt drope on suger candy or double refine suger:/ iff you put in more minte itt will taste too much of it".[59]

Compared with the previous versions, this recipe contains more local plants, which are more accessible than Asian ones. With sugar and added ingredients, the distilled water will be diluted and taste lighter than the original version. It suits the need for a gentler drink with a more pleasant taste. More importantly, this also helps lower the cost. An earlier printed version can be found in *The Queen's closet opened…* , a book of physick and food preservation recipes, which were claimed to be "presented to the Queen" Henrietta Maria.[60] It is highly possible that Mrs. Hobby referred to this version of *aqua mirabilis*, which is said to be "Sir Kenelm Digby's way" in the printed book.[61] While the ingredients are almost the same, the recipe in *The Queen's closet* includes angelica water and red-rose water, but only mentions "sugar one pound" following the juices.[62] The version by Mrs. Hobby is more detailed about using sugar and notes the overuse of mint affecting the taste, which indicates the sign of experimenting the recipe from the publications.

The third version of *aqua mirabilis* in Winche's recipe book follows the same way of adjusting: adding more local ingredients and liquid from Britain or continental Europe. In

[57] FSL, V.b.366, p. 1.

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] *Ibid*.

[60] Elizabeth Spiller, "Introductory Note", in *Seventeenth-century English Recipe Books: Cooking, Physic and Chirurgery in the Works of Elizabeth Talbot Grey and Aletheia Talbot Howard*, ed. by E. Spiller (London: Routledge, 2016), xxxviii-xxxix.

[61] W. M., *The Queen's Closet opened: incomparable secrets in Physick, Chirurgery, Preserving, Candying and Cookery, as they were presented to the Queen… Transcribed from the true copies of her Majesties own receipt books…* (London: Christ. Eccleston, 1662), 290-291.

[62] *Ibid*.

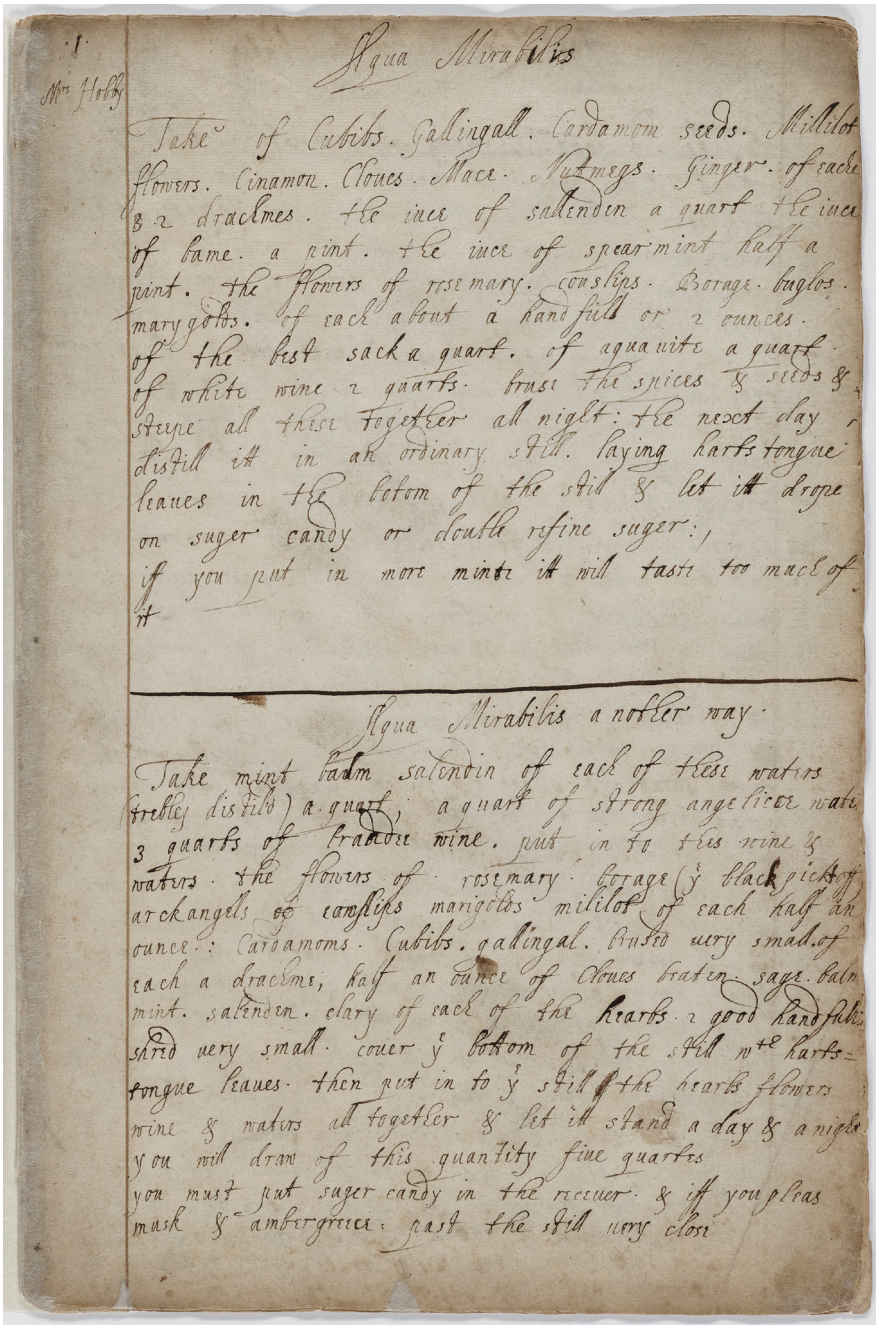


Fig. 3 – Two *aqua mirabilis* recipes of lighter effect. From Folger Shakespeare Library Collection: V.b.366, p. 1.

addition to the ingredients mentioned in Mrs. Hobby's version, a quarter of strong angelica water is added. Three quarts of brandy replaced white wine and aqua vitae in previous recipes.[63] The change of alcohol is likely to be a creation by women at home since recipes published before 1670 did not mention the use of brandy for *aqua mirabilis*. In terms of spices, nutmeg and mace are removed, however, the quantity of cloves increases from one drachm to half an ounce.[64] The adjustment made on the ingredients means Winche probably encountered the version by Digby but did not entirely copy it – a sign of experimenting and improving the recipe.

Among the three recipes, the third one has the most detailed procedure. This is demonstrated in the selection and processing of materials. The required parts of the plants and flowers are noted: "…the flowers of rosemary. Borage (the black pickt off), arckangels of cowslips…"[65] These materials should be "shred very small" before being put into the bottle.[66] Sugar is noted as compulsory, and aromatic ingredients like musk and ambergris can be added according to one's need.[67] The diversity of materials with a higher proportion of local plants, details of processing ingredients, and optional choices of adding aromatics well demonstrate the pursuit of the practicality of making and using medicinal drinks with Asian plants at home. Women's versions in household manuscripts further prove the actual use and experiment with different ingredients.

The adjustment of the recipes in Winche's recipe book is not the only case, as adjustment of *aqua mirabilis* from printed materials can be found in other seventeenth-century household recipes compiled by women.[68] In fact, it is more difficult to find the exact identical versions of recipes circulated in publications [Fig. 1]. Women at home often had certain ingredients removed, replaced, added, or adjusted the proportion. This could be a result of pursuing a better taste, desired effects, or subjected to the availability of ingredients, which formed a part of experimental science at home.

In another anonymous manuscript recipe book, "Cordial waters simple waters and

63 FSL, V.b.366, p. 1.

64 *Ibid*.

65 *Ibid*.

66 *Ibid*.

67 *Ibid*.

68 Other examples: FSL, V.b.380, p. 86: apart from the ingredients commonly seen in printed recipes, the author (an anonymous lady) noted to add "what cordial flowers you please… in a cold still…"; FSL, V.b.342, pp. 1-2: the recipe resembles Mrs. Hobby's version in Winche's recipe book. It has "Juice of mint, & balme of each a pint, Buglas, Burag, & cowslips…", and requires cold still; BL, Add. MS. 27466, f. 10*r*: this recipe is similar to the third version in Winche's recipe book, using spices and various local plants. However, it does not include *aqua vitae* but only white wine and "strong angelica water" with flat still. Another trace of experiment is that Mary Doggett (the author) commented on the effect and usage: "this is most excellent water for many diseases inwardly, In the Summer use one Spoonfull a week in the winter 2".

syrrups" compiled around 1680, there is one recipe for making "Aqua Mirabilis a Slighter way".[69] It is noted to be from "Lord Paulet's daughter: Mrs. Warton".[70] The ingredients largely follow the version in *A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgery,* a printed collection of recipes compiled by the Countess of Kent, Elizabeth Grey (1582-1651): "Take three pints of White wine, one pint of Aqua vitae, one pint of juice of Salandine, one drachm of Cardamer, a drachm of Mellilot flours, a drachm of Cubebs, a drachm of Galingal, Nutmegs, Mace, Ginger and Cloves, of each a drachm, mingle all these together over night, the next morning set them a stilling in a glass Limbeck".[71] Grey made adjustments to the version in *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* by increasing the proportion of juice of celandine and adding melilot flowers.[72] Compared with the recipe in *A choice manual*, the quantity of each type of ingredient was doubled in Mrs. Warton's version, probably to suit a higher need in her family. To make the drink lighter, Mrs. Warton did not add any juice of other plants, flowers, or other new ingredients but simply replaced the hot still method (heating the liquid) with the cold still.[73] Using or noting the optional gentler way was still a common method of adjusting recipes in this case.

This also appears in other household recipes of *aqua mirabilis*.[74] Sometimes it is cold still, or something between the cold still and alembic still, as shown in an *aqua mirabilis* recipe in Mary Doggett's (date of birth and death unknown) recipe book compiled in 1682. Her recipe is based on the one from *The Queen's closet opened*, which recommends using "an ordinary or glass still", namely a hot still.[75] This was also copied in the recipes in Winche's book as discussed above.[76] However, Doggett chose 'flat still', a type of still with a broader base than alembic still and suitable for a moderate heat: it is stronger than cold still but gentler than alembic still.[77] The adjustment shows that women at home had different considerations and ways of altering the strength of the drink, and this was undoubtedly based on the knowledge of distillation.

Mrs. Warton's and Mary Doggett's versions of *aqua mirabilis*, together with the ones mentioned above, show the flexibility of assimilating foreign ingredients into remedies.

69 FSL, V.a.669, p. 10. See note 23 for the complete recipe.

70 *Ibid*.

71 Elizabeth Grey, *A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgery collected and practised by the Right Honorable, the Countesse of Kent, late deceased…* (London: W.I., 1653), 4-5.

72 *Ibid*.

73 FSL, V.a.669, p. 10.

74 For example, FSL, V.b.342, pp. 1-2: "Aquamarabilliss my Lady Lockhartt"; BL, Add. MS. 27466, f. 10*r*: "A very good aqua Mirabilis wat[e]r". The recipes in these manuscript books chose cold still or flat still.

75 M., *The Queen's Closet opened…*, 291.

76 FSL, V.b.366, p. 1.

77 BL, Add. MS. 27466, f. 10*r*.

Besides ingredients and distilling methods, the way of describing the instruction also differs between authors/compilers, which means the recipes are not the products of simply copying and pasting from books or other household recipes but went through thinking and practice, and eventually displayed with personal preference and considerations of practicality.

From recipes of *aqua mirabilis* in women's manuscripts, we can be certain that galangal and cardamom were used to make this drink. The recipes in early publications like *Pharmacopœia Londinensis* were too strong for daily use. However, not being directly put into daily use does not mean Asian plants existed more as curiosities in texts. To achieve the desired effects, women revised the recipes to make the medicinal drink milder by adding other herbal and floral ingredients, increasing the proportion of gentle ones, reducing the usage of strong alcohol, or applying a softer distilling method. This was a combination of information exchanges between women at home and the borrowing and revising of existing recipes from publications, which were also updated during the process.

Creating new ways of using Asian plants

In recipes of *aqua mirabilis*, galangal and cardamom existed in the first place. We can infer the actual use of two plants from changes made in household recipes. The encounter between new ingredients and the domestic space also took place conversely – Asian plants were added to existing recipes to update ingredients or even create new recipes. This section will take all three plants as examples, showing how they were utilised thanks to women's creativity and their knowledge of plants, medicine, and cookery.

Another cordial drink, which was less popular than *aqua mirabilis* but gradually integrated Asian plants, is *rosa solis*, which in English means the dew of the sun. It also refers to the plant *rosa solis* (sundew) itself. The plant received the name because the shiny and sticky droplets on the leaves resemble morning dew.[78] Blossoming only in summer months, it was a valuable plant for making drinks, commonly with *aqua vitae*.[79] *Rosa solis* was believed to cure the consumption, diseases of the lungs, shortness of breaths, comfort the heart and weak spirits.[80]

In the late sixteenth century, there were already different ways of using *rosa solis* as a medicinal drink. As early as 1588, cookery and medical books published recipes for put-

[78] Marcus Harrison, *Plants and the Plague: The Herbal Frontline* (Lostwithiel: Marcus Harrison, 2015), 212.

[79] See Roberts, "Revisiting Jennifer Sherman Roberts' Little Shop of Horrors…"

[80] William Turner, *The first and seconde partes of the herbal of William Turner Doctor in Phisick, lately ouersene, corrected and enlarged with the thirde parte, lately gathered…* (Collen: Arnold Birckman, 1568), 79; John Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicvm: The Theater of Plants. Or, An Herball of Large Extent…Vol. II.* (London: Tho. Cotes, 1640), 1053.

ting sundew flowers into *aqua vitae*. A simple version is to put flowers of *rosa solis*, gold leaf, rosemary flowers, and sugar into a pint of *aqua vitae*, which should be distilled and stored.[81] A more complicated version is to have dates and spices, including ginger, nutmeg, aniseeds, and liquorice beaten into powder, which will be added into *aqua vitae* for a cold still.[82] As putting gold leaf into drinks is costly, the luxurious quality of *rosa solis* drink was more distinct than *aqua mirabilis*.

In the same period, *rosa solis* was sometimes used to make rare and curious drinks, as instructed in books for housewives. The recipe is called 'water of life' and contains several local plants like lemon balm, burnet, rosemary, tormentil, red roses, carnations, and hyssop. There are also common spices including cinnamon, ginger, nutmegs, cloves, and saffron.[83] Along with various ingredients including mutton, pigeon meat, egg yolk, sugar, etc., three gallons of wine will be added to the alembic for a hot still.[84] The recipe is claimed to be a panacea for numerous diseases whether hot or cold ones, which could serve to cater to the curiosity for spices and herbal medicine. However, besides the diverse ways of making *rosa solis* drink, precious spices like galangal and cardamom were not found among them.

The diversity of making *rosa solis* was well extended throughout the seventeenth century, and in *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*, galangal and cardamom were added as new ingredients: "Take of Nutmegs, Annis seeds, Coriander seeds, of each an ounce, Galanga, Ginger, Cloves, of each half an ounce, Red-rose leaves a handful, Ros-solis six handfuls, Liquoris two ounces, Cardamoms, Zedoary, Grains of Paradice, Calamus, Aromaticus, of each a drachm, Yellow Sanders two drachms, Red Sanders, Cinnamon, of each an ounce and an half, Of the best Aqua-vitae, twelve pints, make an infusion of them for eight daies, then strain it and ad to the liquor, a pound and an half of Sugar".[85]

Apart from galangal and cardamom, a variety of spices are added. As *rosa solis* was considered a hot plant, new ingredients of the cold property were added, such as yellow and red sanders. Culpeper noted that it is the drying and binding quality of *rosa solis* being valued here, and the ingredients were more targeted at the lung disease rather than hot and

81 John Partridge, *The widowes treasure plentifully furnished with sundry precious and approoued secretes in phisicke and chirurgery for the health and pleasure of mankinde…* (London: Edward White, 1588), page unnumbered.

82 *Ibid*.

83 Thomas Dawson, *The good husvvifes ievvell VVherein is to be found most excellent and rare deuises for conceits in cookerie, found out by the practise of Thomas Dawson… and the way to distill many precious waters, with diuers approued medicines for many diseases…* (London: Edward White, 1587), 47-48.

84 *Ibid*.

85 Royal College of Physicians of London, *A physicall directory*, 90.

cold qualities.[86] The balance of hot and cold ingredients, together with the cold still method for a mild distillation, suggests a gentle approach. Another similar recipe appears in *Pharmacopœia Bateana* (1694), a medical work purportedly translated by William Salmon from the Latin texts by George Bate (1608-1669).[87] The use of multiple spices in *rosa solis* drink became common in the seventeenth century. The changes made in the publications were also embodied in household recipes. When it came to the mid-seventeenth century, *rosa solis* in household recipes began to include galangal, cardamom, and other uncommon spices, too [Fig. 4].

However, the relationship between printed texts and household recipes was not a straightforward copy from publications to manuscripts. New ingredients were often added, at times even replacing those found in printed texts authored by physicians and apothecaries. Sometimes, the revision overlaps with the update in publications, thus complicating the picture. Household recipes of *rosa solis* compiled around 1600 selectively combine the published ones in the late sixteenth century.[88] In a recipe from the manuscript book originally owned by Margaret Baker (date of birth and death unknown)[89] with a signed date of 1650, there is a recipe of *rosa solis* which shares more common ground to those in the late sixteenth century. However, it contains cardamom, which is hardly seen in recipes before mid-seventeenth-century English sources except for *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*.[90]

Although Baker's recipe book was compiled about one year after the publication of *Pharmacopœia Londinensis*, it is hard to determine that the latter influenced Baker's inclusion of cardamom. The two recipes are different in terms of ingredients: Baker's recipe lacks some spices, including zedoary, grains of Paradise, aromatic calamus, and red and yellow sanders, and it contains white pepper and raisins – ingredients which are not to be found in other recipes of *rosa solis* drink but only in those of the syrup of *rosa solis*.[91] Moreover, Baker's recipe contains a unique ingredient which no other recipes have: *manus Christi* (hand of Christ), a type of medicinal confection made of sugar, rose water, gold leaf, and aromatic ingredients.[92] The high-level adaptation and inventive combination of ingredients lead to different possible explanations: Baker might have accessed to the *Pharmacopœia Londinen-*

86 *Ibid*.

87 George Bate, *Pharmacopœia Bateana, or, Bate's dispensatory translated from the second edition of the Latin copy, published by Mr. James Shipton: containing his choice and select recipe's, their names, compositions, preparations, vertues, uses, and doses, as they are applicable to the whole practice of physick and chyrurgery by William Salmon …* (London: S. Smith and B. Walford, 1694), 734.

88 FSL, V.a.388, p. 157.

89 See Anonymous, "The Baker Project", *emroc: early modern recipes online collective,* https://emroc.hypotheses.org/ongoing-projects/the-baker-project.

90 BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 24*v*.

91 Partridge, *The widowes treasure*, page unnumbered.

92 Peter Brears, *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Prospect Books, 2015), 563.

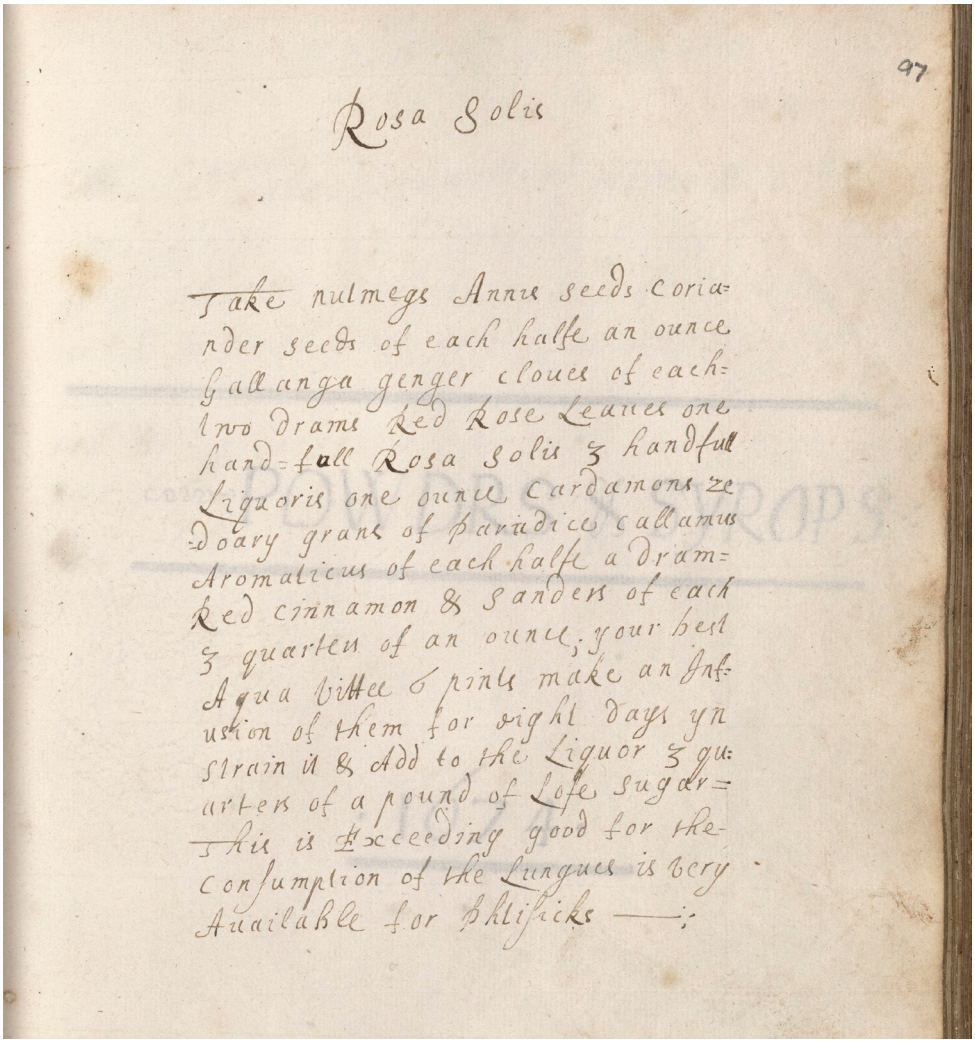


Fig. 4 – *Rosa solis* recipe in Susanna Packe's cookbook, 1674. From Folger Shakespeare Library Collection: V.a.215, p. 95.

sis and borrowed cardamom, which she found to be valid; or, Baker added cardamom based on her consideration and knowledge of plants and spices. In the discussions below, I will go back to her recipe book, which further reveals her creativity in using Asian plants.

While *rosa solis* shows a somewhat blurry and complex image of new ways of using Asian plants, other recipes are more distinct in showing the creativity of medicine making and cookery by women at home. Camphor serves as a good example because of its mate-

rial features and versatile uses. In the Introduction, we have seen that camphor was often recommended in recipes for inflammation because of its cooling property. External uses like unguent and plaster for sores and aches were common. One group of the remedies is to use camphor for toothache and gum issues.

The inclusion of camphor in treating teeth can be found in several seventeenth-century medical publications. In a relatively early example, published in *A rich storehouse, or treasure for the diseased* in 1631, the authors, who were medicine practitioners, recommended boiling camphor, vinegar, honey, a few other herbs, and spices in *aqua vitae* until the liquid becomes hard substance, which the patient could then put between the teeth to ease the pain.[93] The tooth-pain relieving feature was well utilised at home, as women also used camphor to make lotion for the teeth. Here, 'lotion' means medicinal washes in the seventeenth century. In Jane Staveley's (fl. seventeenth century) recipe book dated between 1693 and 1694, she dissolved two drachms of camphor in four ounces spirit of wine, then added one ounce of tincture of myrrh and tincture of bark each, which is diluted by twelve ounces of distilled water.[94] The liquid ingredients used here are antiseptic or astringent, which are ideal for easing inflammation and preventing infections. Although camphor occasionally appeared in published recipes for mouthwash for toothache,[95] the combination of the tinctures and spirit of wine was rarely seen in printed materials written by physicians.

The material feature of cooling and alleviating inflammation was also utilised for other human body parts. Another way of using camphor, which is less common in medical works, is for facial treatment, which assigns camphor both medicinal and cosmetic value. The use is easier to trace in popular recipe books such as Girolamo Ruscelli's widely circulated work *De Secreti del reverend donno Alessio Piemontese* (1555) (*The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont* in English version). Ruscelli recommended using camphor, brimstone, cuttlebone, and rose water to make an ointment for burnings or scurf on the face.[96] Camphire also appeared in a recipe to "remedie spots and markes" on the

[93] George Wateson and A. T. *A rich storehouse, or treasure for the diseased … First set forth … by G. W. And now seuenthly augmented and inlarged by A. T. practitioner in physicke and chirurgerie* (London: Philemon Stephens and Christopher Meredith, 1631), 310.

[94] FSL, X.d.457 (1-19), p. 5. There are several pages marked as f. 1v. in the online catalogue, including the cited folio here.

[95] For example, William Salmon, *Synopsis medicinæ a compendium of physick, chirurgery, and anatomy: in IV books: shewing the signs, causes, judgments, and various ways of curing all diseases…* (London: Th. Dawks, 1681), 634-635; Anonymous, *The Country-mans Physician. Where is Shew'd by a Most Plain and Easie Manner, how Those that Live Far from Cities, Or Market Towns, and Cannot Have the Advice of Physicians, May be Able of Themselves, by the Help of this Book, to Cure Most Diseases Happening to the Body of Man…* (London: Richard Chiswel, 1680), 24-25.

[96] Girolamo Ruscelli, *A verye excellent and profitable booke conteining sixe hundred foure score and odde experienced medicines apperteyning unto phisick and surgerie, long tyme practysed of the expert and Reuerend Mayster Alexis, which he termeth the fourth and finall booke of his secretes… Trans-*

human body, with several skincare ingredients including ceruse, roots of several plants, oil, pigeon's dung, egg white, and orange juice.[97]

While it is hard to know if these recipes were actually used in practice, household recipes provide evidence of experimentation and creativity in harnessing the material properties of camphor. In a manuscript book owned and passed down by women in the Granville family, many recipes were written down between the 1660s and 1680s. Among them, there is one using camphor for removing the red spots on the face after the recovery from small pox. Fumitory water, tansy water, sulphur vivum, and powder of camphire should be boiled together. When the liquid gets cold, strained lemon juice can be added, followed by a pint of white wine. The liquid should be left under the sun for five or six days before use.[98]

The materials used here significantly differ from those in the publications, which could be due to the availability of materials and personal preference. Based on the ingredients, this is likely to be used on the face since sulphur and lemon were usually for external use, and the latter was often applied to alleviate blemishes. Adding camphor would help cool down and remove the spots left by small poxes, which was a detailed and practical application of the material. Following this recipe is a simplified and gentler version of the remedy for the same purpose: a pint of milk replaces fumitory water, tansy water, and sulphur. Together with white wine, the liquid will be boiled with camphor.[99] To develop the recipe, the women of the Granville family drew on their knowledge of the medicinal properties of camphor and common treatments for skin conditions. And they were not the only ones who tried making use of the cooling quality, as Mary Doggett, in her recipe book, also noted a recipe that employs camphor for the sunburn on the face and hands [Fig. 5].[100] This new use shares similarities with camphor-based teeth lotion: while the purpose remained the same, the remedy's format or function was adapted to meet a specific need. This well reveals the use of camphor in practice – women experimenters not only followed the existing recipes but also invented other uses based on the material features and practicality.

In addition to external use, camphor was also applied for internal use by women, which is rarely seen in printed works or remedies developed by physicians. There are household recipes for drinks containing camphor, and a rarer type of using camphor is cookery.[101]

lated out of Italian into Englishe by Richard Androse (London: 1569), 25.

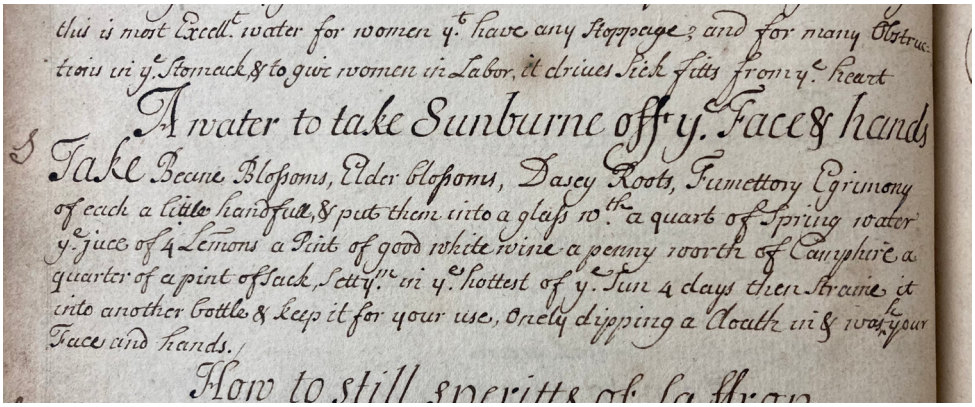
97 *Ibid*., 32-33.

98 FSL, V.a.430, p. 47.

99 *Ibid*.

100 BL, Add. MS. 27466, f. 6*v*. Another example from Mary Hookes' recipe book, FSL, V.b.342, pp. 19-20: "To make the Faice look young", a water made with calves' feet, milk, rice, bread, butter, egg, camphire, and alum.

101 It also appears in publications, such as in Levens, *A right profitable booke…*, f. 50v. There is a recipe for a decoction to drink with wine, treating hematuria due to the rupture of a vein inside the body, particularly the liver, kidney, and bladder.


this is most Excell.t water for women y.t have any Stoppage & and for many Obstruc-
tions in y.e Stomack & to giue women in Labor, it driues Sick fitts from y.e heart

A water to take Sunburne off y.e Face & hands

Take Beane Blossoms, Elder Blossoms, Dasey Roots, Fumettory Egrimony
of each a little handfull, & put them into a glass to.th a quart of Spring water
y.e juice of 4 Lemons a Pint of good white wine a penny worth of Camphire a
quarter of a pint of Sack, Sett y.m in y.e hottest of y.e Sun 4 days then Straine it
into another Bottle & keep it for your use, Onely dipping a Cloath in & wash your
Face and hands.

How to still spiritts of [illegible]

Fig. 5 – Recipe "A water to take Sunburne off the Face & hands", in Mary Doggett's recipe book, 1683. From the British Library Collection: Add. MS 27466, f. 6*v*. Photo by the author.

As an aromatic material, camphor was sometimes used with other aromatic spices to add flavour and pleasant scents. The cookbook of Grace Blome (1674-1750), dated 1697, contains recipes ranging from preserving food, clearing wine, and making desserts to main courses of meat and vegetables.[102] There is more than one recipe for stewing beef leg. One instructs to make stuffing with suet, eggs, breadcrumbs, with herbs and spices like parsley, nutmeg, and pepper, which are to be put into the beef leg and slow-stew in wine or cider.[103] Another recipe differs in method and ingredients: it does not contain stuffing but directly stew the leg with a broth of mutton or fresh beef, followed with adding red wine.[104] The pursuit for adding depth to the flavour is shown in adding anchovy, with more spices and different herb and vegetables [Fig. 6]. Besides pepper and nutmeg, there are cloves, mace, "a spoonfull of Capers and as much Camphire a few mushroomes and halfe a pound of butter".[105] While using camphor in cookery might not be a common practice today, its usage for cooking beef for its olfactory feature reveals a different dimension of camphor's values: it was not merely medicinal, precious, exotic, but also integrated into local cuisine as an aromatic element.

Camphor is a unique example of the assimilation of Asian ingredients because it refers to both the trees and the resinous product processed from them in the context of herbal and cookery. The way of processing camphor is thus another aspect that could

[102] According to Wall, Blome was likely to be Mary Castillion Randolph. Wall, Recipes for Thought, 204.
[103] FSL, V.b.301, f. 27*v*.
[104] FSL, V.b.301, f. 59*v*.
[105] *Ibid.*

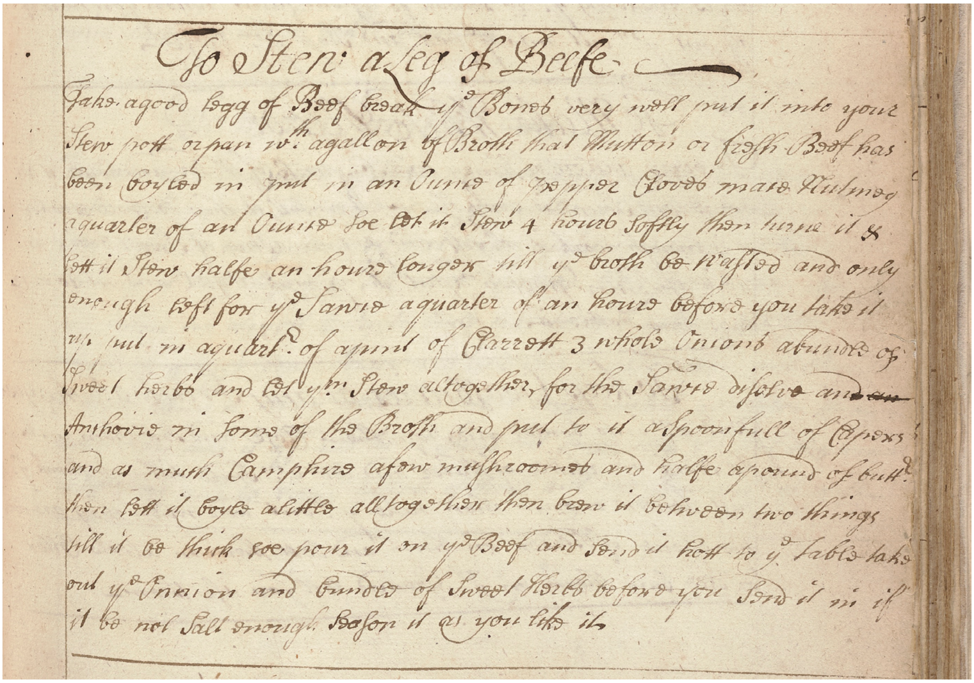

To Stew a Leg of Beefe
Take a good Legg of Beef break ye Bones very well put it into your Stew pott or pan wth a gallon of Broth that Mutton or fresh Beef has been boyled in put in an Ounce of Pepper Cloves mace Nutmeg a quarter of an Ounce soe let it Stew 4 hours softly then turne it & lett it Stew halfe an houre longer till ye broth be wasted and only enough left for ye Sauce a quarter of an houre before you take it up put in a quart of a pint of Clarrett 3 whole Onions a bundle of Sweet herbs and let ym Stew altogether, for the Sauce disolve an Anchovie in some of the Broth and put to it a Spoonfull of Capers and as much Camphire a few mushroomes and halfe a pound of butt. then lett it boyle a little altogether then beat it between two things till it be thick soe pour it on ye Beef and send it hott to ye table take out ye Onnion and bundle of Sweet Herbs before you send it in if it be not Salt enough Season it as you like it

Fig. 6 – Recipe "To Stew a leg of Beefe", in Grace Blome's cookbook, 1697. From Folger Shakespeare Library Collection: V.b.301, f. 59*r*.

help reveal its actual use in households. Mary Doggett's recipe book, apart from providing several recipes for making salve and ointment with camphor, contains a brief guide for making "camphire ball": "Take half a pound of bitter almonds half an Ounce of camphire 4 musk balls, and half an Ounce of white Lead beat them altogether in a morter while they are well mixed and then make them up in balls & dry them".[106] The format differs from those listed in publications by the institutions or apothecaries. In fact, it is seldom seen in English printed materials, in which we can only know camphire ball is for washing one's body.[107] This matches the ingredients used in camphire ball: bitter almonds were often included for skin-cleansing properties; white lead was well-known for whitening; and musk was often added to skin products for a pleasant scent. It is unknown if Doggett came up with the ingredients or borrowed the recipe from others. However, the existence of the recipe here demonstrates the practical knowledge as a way of confirm-

[106] BL, Add. MS. 27466, f. 38*v*.

[107] In Early English Books Online database, there are only six printed materials that mention "camphire ball", for instance, Thomas Deloney, *The gentle craft A discourse containing many matters of delight, very pleasant to be read…* (London: Robert Bird, 1637), page unnumbered.

ing the integration of foreign materials through daily use, which is more difficult to spot among the institutional knowledge on medicine and healthcare. Moreover, camphor is a good example of Asian plants playing roles between medicine and food, as many other plants did. It was not necessarily used to cure diseases, but as a healthcare product or sensory enrichment in food culture. All of these fell into the health domain and were closely associated with daily life activities.

In addition to different formats of use of Asian plants and spices, there are also recipes named after women, which directly give credit to those who created the recipes. One example is "Lady Hewet's water", which can be found in a few recipe books compiled in the second half of the seventeenth century. One is from Rebeckah Winche's manuscript book: it contains over sixty ingredients ranging from plants (red sage, spearmint, pennyroyal, lavender, rosemary, etc.), resin (amber), animal materials (bezoar, red coral, musk, ambergris, pearl), to precious metal (gold).[108] In addition, there is a medicinal powder *aromaticum rosatum*, which appeared as early as 1543 in English medical works and frequently seen in medical publications in the seventeenth century.[109] It is made with roses and other spices for comforting the stomach and the heart. For making the water, herbs should be washed and placed with the spices, including galangal and cardamom, which need to be soaked in sherry sack wine and distilled in an alembic, then added with animal materials and gold leaf.[110] Winche noted that, in order to preserve the cordial properly, the bottle needs to be shaken every day for the first two weeks.[111]

Lady Hewet's water also appears in another manuscript recipe book by Penelope Jephson (1646-1725) in the 1670s. To make the recipe more straightforward for reading and use, she made a categorised list of the ingredients according to the dosage and the ingredient type.[112] Compared with Winche's version, Jephson also mentioned taking this drink once a day, and the dosage of some ingredients differ those in Winche's. Similar to the ways of making *aqua mirabilis*, it is from adjustments of the ingredients that we can find hints of experimenting with ingredients. The traces of sorting information and adapting to Jephson's use can be noticed in this recipe.

Although neither Winche nor Jephson recorded the medicinal effect of Lady Hewet's water, it was undoubtedly a luxurious drink considering the cost of ingredients and their believed medical values. Many ingredients (red sage, spearmint, rosemary, ginger, cardamom, etc.) are useful for digestive issues. Moreover, the use of galangal and cardamom

[108] FSL, V.b.366, p. 21.

[109] Giovanni da Vigo, *The most excellent workes of chirurgerye, made and set forth by maister John Vigon, heed chirurgie[n] of our tyme in Italie, translated into english…* (London: 1543), page unnumbered.

[110] FSL, V.b.366, p. 21.

[111] *Ibid*.

[112] FSL, V.a.396, ff. 39*r*-41*r*.

was not specifically for their hot property, as the ingredients in this recipe are partly hot and partly cold. The mixture results in a more balanced effect, which could be for a restorative function as a general healthcare drink rather than targeting certain illnesses. Although costly to make, the recipe of "Lady Hewet's water" was circulated well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and included in publications for housewives, which suggests its long-lasting popularity.[113]

To create a recipe like this, one requires knowledge of each ingredient's medicinal properties, processing various ingredients, other common remedies in use, distillation and storage methods, and also new ingredients coming into use. Moreover, there are other foreign materials besides galangal and cardamom: China root and sassafras, which were introduced from China and North America respectively in the sixteenth century.[114] The inclusion of new plant materials in household recipes suggests women's familiarity with the market, with which they tried new and precious herbal ingredients in the homemade drinks. Galangal and cardamom were certainly not the only two examples here.

Camphor was also included in drink recipes named after the woman inventor. Margaret Baker recorded one titled "My Lady Paget's water… to heal a sore without any salve".[115] The main ingredients include bole ammoniac, white copperas, and camphor, which need to be beaten thin and boiled together, strained in running water and then dried to be powder.[116] This will be added in water and stored in a glass bottle. When in use, one can warm the clearest part of the water and wash the sore with it or wet a piece of linen cloth with this water and bind it around the sore.[117] Bole ammoniac is astringent and white copperas is antiseptic like camphor. The combination helps dry out the wound and protect the sore from inflammation. This shares similarities with the mouthwash made with camphor, but here created and used on the external skin – another example of the versatile utilisation of camphor's cooling and antiseptic properties.

[113] For instance, Eliza Smith, *The Compleat Housewife: Or, Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion: Being a Collection of Upwards of Six Hundred of the Most Approved Receipts in Cookery, Pastry, Confectionary, Preserving, Pickles, Cakes, Creams, Jellies, Made Wines, Cordials…* (London: J. and J. Pemberton, 1739), 233-234; Hannah Glasse and Maria Wilson. *The Complete Confectioner, Or, Housekeeper's Guide to a Simple and Speedy Method of Understanding the Whole Art of Confectionary…* (London: J. D. Dewick, 1800), 247-248.

[114] Anna E. Winterbottom, "Of the China Root: A Case Study of the Early Modern Circulation of Materia Medica Get access Arrow", *Social History of Medicine* 28, 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hku068, 22-44; Clare Griffin, "Disentangling Commodity Histories: Pauame and Sassafras in the Early Modern Global World", *Journal of Global History* 15, 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022819000305, 1-18.

[115] BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 40*v*.

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] *Ibid.*

However, more often, women's creative uses of foreign ingredients were not named after their creators. Baker's recipe book serves as a good example, as all recipe titles focus on the ailments to be treated or the intended effects of the remedies. For less common recipes like "Lady Paget's water" above, Baker added medicinal function in the title for clarification. In other cases, the specific function and format are the only key terms for a recipe title. For instance, there is a recipe "For an extreme heat in a womans breast", which instructs to wash the best birdlime in white wine, then temper it with camphor and apply it to the breast.[118] Highly specific and practical for women members at home, the recipe was likely to be used rather than just catering to curiosity for public readers as some publications did.

The same happened to galangal and cardamom. Baker included a recipe of a water, which is not *aqua mirabilis* or *rosa solis* but contains ingredients from both waters. Rather than giving or recording the water's name, Baker simply noted the desired effect: "A most precious water to comfort and cheer the spirits":

> Take galingale; cloves; ginger; millilot; cardamomu; mace; nut=megs; ana ʒ i: saffron; ʒ i: the juice of sallendin; halfe a pinte; mixe all these made into powder w[it]h: the juice; and a pinte of good aquavite; and 3 pints of white wine; t[he]n take rose=solis; baume; scordium; pimpernell; bettany; minte; hisop; time; marigold flowers; cowslipe=flowers; redd rose leaves;borage and buglos=flowers; ana a good halfe of a smalle handfull; a few rose=mary flowers; harts=horne shaved ʒ i: lett t[he]m stand all night in a glass; t[he]n stirr it with a soft fire… [119]

Since there are recipes of *aqua mirabilis* and *rosa solis* in her recipe book, Baker was certainly aware of the similarity of this unnamed recipe to the other two: it is more like a selective combination of the two recipes. This resembles what she did in *rosa solis*'s recipe: selectively combined the ingredients and methods in existing recipes and added her elements to them. There is an exaggeration of the effects of the water, as she noted several effects: it is good for lungs, the heart, melancholy phlegm, expel urine, help preserve a good colour, youth, and memory; "distroyeth the paulsy", and "a spoonful be given at the point of death; it reviveth the spirits…"[120] But interestingly, she also commented at the end: "… strangly of all artificial waters, t[hi]s is the best".[121] Although it is hard to know in which way the water is "strangely the best", the comment suggests her rich experience in making and testing different medicinal waters.

[118] BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 16*r*.
[119] BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 22*r*.
[120] *Ibid*.
[121] *Ibid*.

Apart from the above examples, the novelty of using Asian plants was not always embodied in including them for making a remedy or cuisine. On other occasions, they were used as a supplement, which indicates another level of integration of Asian plants into daily healthcare. In a recipe titled "Pills to be taken an honer before supper to helpe degestian", Baker recorded aloe, rose, and myrrh, which were all digestive ingredients.[122] Galangal was included not for making the pills but in the instruction of use: Baker recommended drinking wine mixed with galangal powder before taking the pills.[123] This is a simple way of using galangal but relies on one's familiarity with the medical properties and common ways of use of the ingredients. Galangal was no longer a curious or strange material that could be known only through books passed down from the medieval period, or texts provided by institutions or professionals, but was within reach and adapted to a comprehensible instruction for a common health issue. The wide applicability of Baker's recipe book also highlights its practical use rather than the commercial value often emphasised in printed recipe books. It thus provides a window onto the understanding and actual everyday use of Asian plants in domestic healthcare.

Conclusion

Household recipes involving rare Asian plants were not simply for curiosity about the East, as shown in women's recipe books. Retracing the materials in recipes in published books and manuscripts, this paper shows that galangal, camphor, and cardamom were used at home as healthcare materials, ranging from medicine, restoratives, cosmetic products, to food. The wide range of uses suggests a broad concept of health, in which rare Asian plants did play a role. Although well-circulated knowledge of medicine already provided recipes using these plants, women's application of remedies was selective, pursuing feasibility and practicality. This was first embodied in the format of remedies: compound water was a principal type of application for galangal and cardamom, whereas camphor mostly appeared in external remedies. This differed from their records in medieval texts and institutional publications, and was more aligned with vernacular medical works. The adaptation was also shown in ingredients, ways of description, and methods of making: women chose to replace, add, or alter the amount of ingredients, provided more detailed and accessible instructions, and adjusted the distilling method according to the desired strength of the remedies. Traces of experiments suggest women's testing the medical value and ideal ways of using Asian ingredients.

Most importantly, women created new recipes for these Asian plants with different formats based on their material features and medicinal effects. The adjustment and inven-

[122] BL, MS. Sloane 2486, f. 57*v*.
[123] *Ibid*.

tion well demonstrate how these precious ingredients came into use in daily life, which required not only updated information about plants, medicine and the market, but also the experience of balancing knowledge and practicality. Although the three plants cannot exhaustively represent the past of Asian plants in daily use in early modern Britain, their presence in household manuscripts offers insight into the understanding and uses of Asian ingredients in medicine and healthcare practice.

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Virgo, Mater, Nutrix. Women in the writings of a doctor from Arezzo in the 17th century: Emilio Vezzosi (1563-1637)

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Abstract
This article aims to highlight philosophical and scientific thought in both published and unpublished writings by Emilio Vezzosi, a physician from Arezzo. The article concerns the role of women in society and their education in the early modern age.
Women as objects of investigation occupy a large space in his scientific and literary production. Physician and poet, he obtained his degree in Pisa in 1589; 'Prince' of Discordi's Academy and polygrapher, he was born in Arezzo in 1563, and died in 1637. He focused his scientific interests on women, their education (*De instituenda Virgine, MS. 31*, Library "Città di Arezzo"), their health as mothers (*Gynaecyeseos, sive De mulierum conceptu, gestatione, ac partu*, 1598, Library of the Academy "Francesco Petrarca", Arezzo), with field medical consultations and investigations (*De partu mirabili Alexandriae Spathariae iudicium Aemilii Vezosi medici aretini, MS. 38*, Library "Città di Arezzo"), as well as on to their role as nurses (*Nutrix sive De alenda sobole, MS. 41*, Library "Città di Arezzo"). His correspondence was also extensive; it remained unpublished and was addressed, above all, to his students.
This article intends, therefore, to fill a historiographical gap as regards the consideration of the female body and its dignity in early modern times, but also as regards the conception of women's role in society, in relation to men and religion (*De Nuptiarum dignitate, MS. 39*, Library "Città di Arezzo"), and with science.

Keywords
women's history, breastfeeding, female education, Arretine medical class

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Women in Arezzo: the context

The aim of this essay is to highlight philosophical and scientific thought in both published and unpublished writings by a physician from Arezzo, Emilio Vezzosi (1563-1637). Studies on Vezzosi are rare, and especially those on the scientific aspects of his medical production. His works mostly concern the role of women in society and their education in the early modern age.

Women as objects of investigation occupy a large space in his scientific and literary production. It is significant that Vezzosi dedicated some of his works to women and, in particular, to the women from Arezzo. This article can therefore fill a historiographical gap as regards the consideration of the female body and its dignity in early modern times, but also as regards the conception of women's role in society, in relation to men, religion and science.[1]

During the Renaissance, we can identify different reactions to the statement of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) about the imperfection of women. For example, in a commentary on *Genesis* Martin Luther (1483-1546) states that a woman is in no way a 'botched' man, but it is rather those who accuse her of being such that 'are themselves monsters and the sons of monsters.' This hostility toward Aristotle and Aquinas contrasts with his avowed belief in women's inferiority to men. Furthermore, in the Reinassance, there was

[1] At the end of the Renaissance, there was a greater discrepancy between social realities and the current notion of woman than at the beginning. Ian MacLean noted that these presuppositions had emerged from his investigations into feminist writings in France in the first half of the seventeenth century. There are three broad areas of inquiry to be pursued: the notion of woman itself; the idea of sex difference; and the relationship between sex differences and other differences (cf. Ian MacLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman. A study in the fortune of scholasticism and medical science in european intellectual life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1-16). In the Renaissance, the set of Pythagorean opposites (male-female; limited-unlimited; odd-even; one-plurality; right-left; square-oblong; at rest-moving; straight-curved; light-darkness; good-evil) was known not only through Aristotle's account of it, but also through the Hippocratic *corpus*, in which it was implicit (cf. MacLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman. A study in the fortune of scholasticism and medical science in european intellectual life*, 3). For example, Pierre de la Ramée's (1515-1572) dichotomies are found in many texts of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, too; in particular, his theory of division was inherited by Plato. It would be wrong to suggest, however, that humanist activity and scientific inquiry are alone the cause of change in the notion of woman. André Tiraqueau (1488-1588) establishes women's inferiority to men, and Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529) in *Il cortegiano* (1528) reproduced the case for and against female inferiority. In the distinction between masculine and feminine, we could discern Aristotle's general tendency to produce dualities in which one element is superior and the other inferior. In Aristotle, Nature would always wish to create the most perfect thing, which is the most completely formed, the best endowed, with the power of procreation. Such a creature is the male, who implants his semen in the female for the purpose of procreating males (cf. Maurizio Mamiani, *Storia della Scienza moderna* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1998), 61).

one notable debate on this subject: women would not be human beings. This debate was connected with the Anabaptist cause and forcefully rejected in Italy by women writers such as Arcangela Tarabotti.[2]

Another debate is also about the great contrast between *mala mulier* and *bona mulier.* A 'good' woman was a pure, well-mannered woman, faithful to her husband and devoted to God, submissive to social customs and family rules.[3] Tertullian (c. 155-c. 222) in *De Cultu Feminarum* I, 1 spoke of women in terms of *diaboli ianua*, descending from Eve and therefore to be considered as the greatest obstacle to salvation.

Since her birth, every girl was considered in a relation to a man: first her father, then her husband or her religious confessor.[4] Illegitimate daughters were soon separated from their mothers and forcibly 'interned' in convents or poorhouses by men.

In 1523, Jean Louis Vives (1493-1540) published *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, a work in which there are reiterated mentions to the separation of the sexes, to the priority of housework over reading and writing, and to the caution about women being initiated into Latin. The Counter-Reformation accentuates the educational action of the Church on women. The goal of such education is to train good mothers.

The purpose of marriage was mainly the continuation of the species, although infant mortality was high. The main maternal role was to feed her children, and educate them. However, some women were strongly criticized for their prolonged breastfeeding. At the end of the seventeenth century, for example, a debate whether entrust or not their children to a wet nurse emerged in philosophical and medical treatises.[5] Three types of women usually sent their children to a nurse: aristocrats, middle-class women, and workers. There were also different categories of nurses: healthy and well-nourished women, poor women, and women who served foundling hospitals.

However, for many centuries, there had been a real suspicion towards the body, and, because for a long time women had been identified with their bodies, there was suspicion towards them, too. Furthermore, during the Modern Age, there was a widespread prejudice about the dangerousness of baths, ointments, powders, and perfumes. Additionally, there was a rebirth of modesty, an attitude based on the idea that the roundness of the body is a

2 Arcangiola Tarabotti, *Che le donne siano della spetie degli Huomini, un trattato proto-femminista del XVII secolo*, ed. Susanna Montioni (Capua: Artetetra Edizioni, 2015).

3 Cf. Francesco Santi, *Marbodo di Rennes e lo sguardo sulle donne nel «Liber decem capitulorum»*, in *Natura, scienze e società medievali*, ed. by Claudio Leonardi, Firenze, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2008, 245-270; cf. Marbod of Rennes, *Marbodi liber decem capitulorum,* ed. Rosario Leotta (Roma: Herder, 1984).

4 Cf. *Dal Rinascimento all'età moderna*, ed. by Natalie Zemon Davis, Arlette Farge, in *Storia delle donne in Occidente*, ed. by Georges Duby, Michelle Perrot (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1991).

5 Cf. Ambroise Paré, *Oeuvres* (A Paris: chez Gabriel Buon, 1575).

symbol of beauty. This also determined the evolution of eating habits in elite groups.[6]

Through women, in seventeenth-century Italy, we witness the spread of the 'culture of persuasion' in civil society, a culture that penetrated families through gifts and privileged relationships with clergy. The role of women is therefore limited to being educators and mediators. Traditional misogyny responds, in this sense, to a need for order, according to a precise system of rules and hierarchical relationships. Renata Ago,[7] speaking about seventeenth-century Rome, defined these relationships as a 'team play': women are partners and, at the same time, strangers to the power group constituted by men. A good aristocratic wife is expected to weave family and social relationships and to wisely manage economic resources. In particular, there is a privileged bond between the lady of the house and her ecclesiastical brother-in-law, who provides and facilitates advantageous careers for the male children of the family. The perfect wife, for the Jesuitic spirituality, is opposed to the perfect nun. The first one is devoted to her spouse, the second one to God, although any miraculous aspect or any excess of religion or mystical ecstasy must be avoided.[8]

If it is true that there is adequate documentation regarding male citizen's wealth conditions as well as their professional, cultural and institutional roles, the same cannot be said for women. The case of Arezzo is certainly not exempt from the shortage of documentary sources that impacted the Italian and European archives during that period. However, especially since the sixteenth century onwards, a copious ordinary production was generated within families, much of which remained unknown, although it shows that women's accounts of their life experiences and writing had become more frequent. Women's writings are an invaluable resource for gaining insights into daily activities, family events, parental relationships, political careers, alliances, health, and devotion. In cultural salons, the controversy over women's culture is the fashionable topic of conversation. Private places of education are homes, convents, and primary schools.

However, the case of Arezzo is not different from the European context. Limiting the research to our case means considering three determining and characterizing factors. The first factor is the local socio-cultural environment, which was dominated by civil institutions, religious orders, and lay 'companies' with a long historical tradition of preserving the testimonies, including those of female members. The second consideration is that gender conditions require alternative sources to institutional ones, such as letters, books of mem-

6 Cf. Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Bruswswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

7 Cf. Renata Ago, "Giochi di squadra: uomini e donne nelle famiglie nobili del XVII secolo", in *Signori, patrizi, cavalieri in Italia centro-meridionale nell'età moderna* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1992), 256-264. Cf. Renata Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma Barocca* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1990).

8 Cf. *Barocco al femminile*, ed. by Giulia Calvi (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993); cf. *Per Lettera. La scrittura epistolare femminile tra archivio e tipografia, secoli XV-XVII*, ed. by Gabriella Zarri (Roma: Viella, 1988).

ories, and poetic compositions. Third, the demographic and anthropological conditions of Arezzo during this period can be investigated through the archive of the "Fraternita dei Laici". The archive of this institution preserves the names of those born and died *intra moenia* in its precious *Vacchette dei battezzati e dei morti in Pieve e Vescovado*. These documents consistently indicate the name of the father of the woman, whether born or deceased, or, in certain instances, their profession or the certificate of nobility of their family.[9]

According to this documentation, the Arretines have four categories of social origin: nobles, in the baptismal records in which the name of the godmother or an influential godfather is often also reported (especially if she was a firstborn); common people, daughters of apothecaries, wool workers, tanners, or farmers, and servants; illegitimate daughters who were acknowledged by their noble or commoner fathers; and finally the 'gettatelle', no one's daughters, who were 'thrown' at the mercy of the begging's hospital or left to the 'wheel' of the convents. However, as with male births, there is a fundamental distinction between *intra-moenia* and *extra-moenia* births.

The city was surrounded by a belt of poverty beyond the boundaries of the 'Cortine' and the 'Camperie'. This distinction also gave rise to administrative and fiscal differences. Business, trade, intrigue, and relationships were inside the city; the rest 'in villa' for the lords and the hard work on the fields for the farmers were outside. The rhythms and the timetables were also different: the frenzy of holidays and the walks of ladies and gentlemen on the one hand and the peasants' hard life on the other. The city and its charm were still an unattainable destination, a mirage, for the peasant woman who went to the fair on the occasion of Saint Donate's[10] celebrations from the Chiana Valley or the Tiber Valley. She was an 'extraneous' (from *extra-moenia*); she was considered differently by the citizens. Nevertheless, the *cursus honorum* that the Arretine noble male is required to achieve appears to be equally demanding. He was able to acquire the third degree of aristocracy thanks to his merits. Subsequently, he could acquire the second and first ones from his personal resources. This was true for Redi's family, too.

The providential institution of Fraternita fits into this rigid social and fiscal structure. The Community Magistrate managed hospitals, schools, the dowries for the poor spinsters, and the student places at the Collegio Ferdinando in Pisa. He was responsible for safeguarding "gettatelli" and orphans, providing assistance to the impoverished people and debtors.[11]

[9] Cf. *Il patrimonio della Fraternita dei Laici. Libri, manoscritti e documenti tra biblioteca e archivio*, ed. by Antonella Moriani (Firenze: EDIFIR, 2014).

[10] Saint Donate is celebrated on August, 7 of every year.

[11] Cf. Antonella Moriani, "Fonti per la storia dell'assistenza e della sanità in territorio aretino: L'archivio dell'Ospedale di S. Maria Sopra i Ponti di Arezzo", *Annali Aretini* V (1997): 81- 98; cf. Antonella Moriani, "La famiglia predicata e contraddetta: i gettatelli", in *Storie di violenza. abusi, prepotenze e ingiustizie nell'Arezzo del passato.* Sussidio didattico dell'Archivio di Stato di Arezzo (Provincia di Arezzo: Progetto Archivi, 1989), 63-74.

In addition to the nobility, a significant proportion of the populace is composed of clergy, consisting of both religious men and women. Despite the predominantly masculine-centred historical narration, these religious women's names fill the dusty records of the chronicles in the Bishop's Archive in Arezzo. They were Sister Agata Smeralda, Sister Diomira Osmida, and Sister Chiara Maddalena, among others.

However, among the Arezzo brides, there were also those who did not shy away from the competition with men and affirmed their own worth among the academics of the city. This is the case of the poetess Faustina Azzi Forti (1650-1724).[12] They were courageous women who are regrettably recalled rarely traces in men's documents, correspondence, diaries and letters. Writing is a true instrument of redemption for them - a slow but constant, unstoppable redemption.

During the Renaissance and early modern age, women provided a fundamental contribution to the production of knowledge.[13] For example, in the female writers' works of this period are now more than ever conspicuously focused on natural sciences. As historians increasingly emphasize, literary practice and representation are closely connected. Furthermore, science was not studied and practiced only in universities, laboratories, anatomical theaters, and other public places. Indeed, natural science research was conducted in alternative contexts, which were more favorable to female participation, such as convents, private residences, and pharmacies.[14] For example, one of the most significant gynaecological treatises of the Middle Ages (the so-called *Trotula* or *De sinthomatibus mulierum*, *De curis mulierum*, *De ornatu mulierum*) was attributed to a doctor from Salerno (named Trota) and it provided remedies for typical women's ailments as well as recipes for cosmetics.[15] It was published in 1544.[16] Furthermore, transmutation (i.e., the highest goal

[12] Cf. Giovanni Bianchini, "Faustina degli Azzi nei Forti (1650-1724): tra polemica e impegno accademico", in *Arezzo e la Toscana tra i Medici e i Lorena (1650-1765)*, ed. by Franco Cristelli (Perugia: Edimond, 2003), 179-197; cf. Neda Mechini, "Lettere di donne nel Carteggio Albergotti del Seicento", in *Gli Albergotti. Famiglia, memoria, storia* (Firenze: Edifir, 2006), 165-200; cf. Maria Chiara Milighetti, "Anna, Cecilia e le altre... scritture femminili nei carteggi di matematici e scienziati aretini tra Seicento e Settecento", *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia 'F. Petrarca' di Arti, Scienze e Lettere di Arezzo* LXXI (2009): 327-352.

[13] Cf. Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 1.

[14] Cf. *La grande storia dell'artigianato*, ed. by Franco Franceschi, Gloria Fossi (Firenze: Giunti, 1999).

[15] Monica H. Green, "In search of on Authentic Women's Medicine: the Stranges Fates of Trota of Salerno and Hildegard of Bingen", *Dynamis*, XIX (1999): 25-54.

[16] Trota's works have circulated widely and have been translated into several languages. Cf. Monica H. Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); cf. Monica H. Green, "Reconstructing the Oeuvre of Trota of Salerno", in *La Scuola medica Salernitana: Gli autori e i testi*, ed. Danielle Jacquart and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Edizione Nazionale 'La Scuola medica Salernitana',

pursued by alchemy) is often described as a phenomenon that occurs within the female womb. Women practiced science at home, using techniques drawn from alchemy and medicine to take care of their family members and manage the household.[17]

Practice and literature are also interconnected, and there is a link between scientific knowledge and various literary forms (treatises, epistles, and dialogues). For example, there is a vast tradition of women's recipe books, which were later printed as 'books of secrets'.[18]

A fundamental work, *De Mulieribus Claris* by Giovanni Boccaccio,[19] was important for the so-called *querelles des femmes*. In fact, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, women had begun to participate in scientific discussion in more explicit and structured forms. They published scientific treatises on natural philosophy, joined scientific academies, and maintained epistolary correspondence with some of the greatest scientists of the time.[20]

In Arezzo, there were various institutions and individuals, both public and private, whose efforts were dedicated to men's education and development. There were various types of schools, including academies, municipal schools, episcopal seminaries, and private schools. Positions for private and shop masters were available in Arezzo. It was contingent upon their level of nobility, their origin and profession. Nonetheless, women's education was frequently restricted to lessons imparted by a private tutor or religious educator. Tutors were primarily employed by the most affluent families, and young women were inevitably destined for marriage or a secluded existence. Nonetheless, there were frequently pockets of widespread and rampant illiteracy that lacked the prospect of social and cultural redemption, even among he upper-class male children.

Few are the studies conducted on male education and instruction in Arezzo in the modern age;[21] we know very little about female education. This is due to the limitations of institutional documentary sources and the fragmentation of informal ones. However,

1 (Florence: SISMEL/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007), 183-233.

17 Cf. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*; Anders Jette, 33 *Alchemistennen, Die verborgene Seite einer alten Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Vergangenheitsverlag, 2016); Tara Nummendal, *Anna Zieglerin and the Lion's Blood:Alchemy and End Times in Reformation Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

18 Cf. Katharine Park, *Secret of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origin of Human Dissection* (New York: Zone Books, 2006).

19 Cf. Giovanni Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris*, ed. by Vittorio Zaccaria (Milano: Mondadori, 1967); cf. Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della institucion delle donne* (Venezia: Gabriel Giolito de' Funari, 1545).

20 Cf. Virginia Cox, *The Prodigious Muse: Women's writing in Counter-Reformation Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); cf. Kathleen P. Long, *Gender and Scientific Discours in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016).

21 Cf. Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy. Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore-London: J. Hopkins University Press, 1989).

some information can be obtained from the State Archives of Arezzo.[22]

In Arezzo, an institution of established fame in the field of female education and instruction was actually the 'educatorio' of "S. Caterina d'Alessandria". Arretine girls were originally gathered here in order to make them learn the sacred writings and catechesis for the sacraments. Later, the monastery became a real educational institution, especially during the period of greatest splendor, which can be dated around the middle of the 16th century. Due to the presence of Abbess Maria Maddalena Dal Monte, the granddaughter of Julius III, the convent received significant benefits and privileges. Another educational institution was 'Le Derelitte', also known as 'Le Suorine', which was founded by the municipality of Arezzo in 1596. It was almost a mendicants' hospice for lower-class girls. However, the level of female education in Arezzo, and more generally for 17th-century girls, was lower than that of the male peers of the same class and economic conditions.

The ritual of the doctoral celebration was intended to initiate a well-off young scion into a professional or ecclesiastical career. In the case of young women, this ritual was replaced by the worldly or religious wedding ceremony. This was an obligatory passage towards adulthood and maturity, towards physical and spiritual motherhood. Young women prepared to become mothers, mistresses or, in some cases, abbesses or prioresses. And the few, very rare, women who remained spinsters were destined to a future of rejection, social marginality and slow psychological and relational isolation. For a man, being a bachelor was considered an elitist and frequently sought-after decision. Indeed, misogyny was a part of the taste of the century, sometimes more motivated by the general trend of the time than by personal psychological convictions. Unmarried women had no social or family function. She was supposed to help the rest of family and take care of grandchildren and brothers.[23]

However, the cultural context of Arezzo was also affected by the presence of some important medical figures as well as by the emergence of new philosophical and scientific tendencies. Representatives of these new trends included Andrea Cesalpino (1524-1603), Girolamo Borri (1512-1592), Vezzosi's master in Pisa, Tommaso and Marco Cornacchini, and Gregorio Redi.

Cesalpino, who also was from Arezzo, pursued his studies in Pisa under the guidance of Realdo Colombo (1516-1559) and Luca Ghini (1490-1556), whom he succeeded as director of the 'Orto dei Semplici'. Cesalpino's botanical work, *De Plantis libri XVI*, was published in 1583, after he had already left his duties at the garden. It is an Aristotelian work that contributed to a meticulous classification of plants. In 1571, he published the

[22] Cf. ASA, Serie IV, Stanza A, Armadio D; cf. Ottavio Andreocci, *Delle scuole femminili Popolane e Cittadine e degli instituti ospitalieri* (Firenze: Tipografia Bencini, 1865); cf. *Il conservatorio di S. Caterina in Arezzo, Le sue origini - La sua storia, 1333-1963* (Roma: INADEL, 1963).

[23] Milighetti, "Anna, Cecilia e le altre…": 327-352.

philosophical text *Quaestiones Peripateticae libri V*, which was reprinted in 1593 together with *Quaestionum Medicarum libri II*. His medical research on the small circulation and absence of intraventricular pores prompted William Harvey (1578-1657) to present the theory of blood circulation in 1628. Because of several personal disagreements at the University of Pisa, Cesalpino moved to Rome where he became a papal doctor and taught medicine at the Roman University.

Girolamo Borri (1512-1592) was repeatedly incarcerated by the tribunal of the Inquisition on suspicion of heresy, and in 1561, he published a work devoted to Giovanna of Austria, the duchess of Tuscany, titled *On the flux and reflux of the sea* (Lucca, Busdrago, which is paired with *Ragionamento di Telifilo Filogenio della perfettione delle donne*, translated by Girolamo Ghirlanda). This work is structured as a dialogue.

In a clearly concordant approach, at the beginning of his work Borri shows his admiration for the Latin tradition of Aristotle and Plato (425 ca. BC-348 BC). Then he proceeds to expose his cosmological system, according to the usual Aristotelian structure. However, in this system, Arab and Neoplatonic traditional themes and doctrines also find their location in a naturalistic key.

Telifilus Filogenius' reasoning for women's perfection was included in the previous work. It is part of the long list of books that were published in the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy in favor of women, after the publication by Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) of *The Nobility of Women*.[24] The orator, who has a clearly allusive name, accepts the invitation to discuss the perfection of women while he is a guest at the Medici villa in Agnano, near Pisa. He is accompanied by six ladies at the residence of Elisabetta Cibo Della Rovere. To date, the text has been little known and practically unstudied.[25]

The arguments pertaining to female superiority are partially influenced by the traditions of 'Dolce stilnovo', and Neoplatonism, which consider women as an 'emanation' of the Divine and a sign of transcendental happiness. Additionally, the writings of Agrippa (and the work of Borri) hold that Eve is superior to Adam because God created her directly out of the human body, whereas Adam was shaped by the vile earth. According to Agrippa (and Borri), the Holy Scriptures would also affirm the superiority of women over men:

> Nondimeno esso Iddio, dico Giesù, non volse esser figliuolo dell'huomo, ma della donna la quale honorò tanto che pigliò carne da lei sola. Certamente Christo fu chiamato figliolo dell'huomo non per cagione del maschio ma per rispetto della femina. Et questo è quel gran

[24] Cf. Alessandro Piccolomini, *Della nobiltà et eccellenza delle donne, dalla lingua francese nella italiana tradotto, con una oratione di M. Alessandro Piccolomini in lode delle medesime* (In Vinegia: appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1549).

[25] Cf. Angelo Rella, "'Tutto quello che allo improvviso si disse della virtù e grandezza delle donne sotto il cielo senza pari'. Prime riflessioni sul Ragionamento di Telefilo Filogenio della Perfettione delle Donne di Girolamo Borri", *Cartaphilus* I, vol. 19 (2021): 316-333.

> miracolo del quale oltramodo si stupisce il Propheta, che la femina circonda il maschio; ilche è mentre il sesso è divorato dalla Vergine, et quando porta Christo nel corpo. Similmente risurgendo Giesù da morte prima apparve alle donne, che a gli huomini.[26]

The Virgin Mary would be the culmination of creation, and the incarnation would represent God's victory over Satan. In the case of incarnation, transmutation is a phenomenon that takes place inside the Virgin's womb. Just as the pregnant Earth generates the *puer philosophicus*, so the Virgin Mary gives birth to Christ.[27] The Earth and the Virgin are therefore mothers and nurses. The influence of the tradition of the Fathers of the Church is strong in both Catholic and Reformed writings. The Scholastic practice of outlining comparisons with Roman law, Aristotelian medicine and ethics continued during the Renaissance. Several questions arise. Is a woman a human being? Was she made in the image of God? How does a woman relate to a man in matters of sin and malediction? In which ways is she equal to man? Is she superior to men?

Alchemical themes return, instead, in Cornacchini's studies. Tommaso Cornacchini was a teacher of medicine in Pisa (1551-1554 and 1577-1584), of philosophy (1554-1557), and practical medicine for about thirty years; he was the author of a work dedicated to rational and empirical practical medicine, and wrote some *Tabulas Medicas*[28] that were disclosed by his son Marco.

Marco Cornacchini,[29] another doctor from Arezzo, was a follower of Andrea Cesalpino and tried to outline a medical science that might be open to a new rationality. His expertise was based on extensive experience, keen observation, and intuition. He inherited from his father and Girolamo Mercuriale a proclivity to reassess Greek medicine, specifically Hippocratic medicine. In the final years of his life, his name was connected with the popularization of an antimonial medication, referred to as "Cornacchini's powder", which he attempted to scientifically validate within the framework of Galenic medicine.

Another notable doctor in Arezzo and the Florentine milieu is Gregorio Redi, a prominent grand ducal proto-doctor, the father of Francesco, who succeeded to the same position at the court of Florence in 1670. Gregorio, who was 'Discordi's academician' and an

[26] Piccolomini, *Della nobiltà*, f. 15 r.

[27] Cf. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*: XVII.

[28] Tommaso, Cornacchini, *Tabulae medicae. In quibus ea fere omnia, quae a principibus medicis Graecis, Arabibus, & Latinis de curationis apparatu, capitis ac thoracis morbis, febribus, pulsibus, urinis scripta sparsim reperiuntur, methodo adeo absoluta collecta sunt, ut & illa, & loci, unde sunt hausta, sub unum cadant oculorum obtutum. Opus ab ipso, dum practicam medicinam publice Pisis doceret, elaboratum, recens vero in lucem editum a Marco, & Horatio* (Patauij: ex officina Petri Pauli Tozzij, 1605).

[29] Cf. ASA, *Registri dell'età dei cittadini*, 1, f. 30 v; *Filze di provanza di nobiltà dell'anno 1750*, 1, ff. 442 v-443 r.

authentic celebrity in Arezzo, was considered as a 'forerunner' for numerous Arretines at the Grand Ducal Court.

Women in Vezzosi's works

This is the cultural context within which Vezzosi carried out his profession as a physician. His production was influenced by the humanistic tradition. However, it is significant that treatises that he composed in a strictly scientific context are about women, and in particular, about women from Arezzo. His science is therefore somehow addressed to women, as it is practical and capable of altering the conditions of his patients, specifically female patients. It is a science with an educational purpose. It tends to educate rather than to provide a cure, to prevent rather to heal. Nonetheless, this science is not distinct from women's moral, physical, and cultural education.

For example, *MS. 31* of the Library "Città di Arezzo" hosts the work *De instituenda virgine*, a treatise in poetic form consisting of two books.[30] It was transcribed from the original by the scholar and librarian Lorenzo Loreti (1734-1789) at the end of the 18th century, and it outlines what a young woman's education should look like. The book, in particular, opens with a quote from Plutarch:[31]

> Puellarum mores principio apte concinnegere fingere conveniet.
> Illa namque novella aetas ad fingendum facilis, et tenera
> est, et ipsarum animis, dum molles ad huc extant, disciplinae
> melius instillantur. Difficilius autem quae dura sunt molliuntur.
> Ita et docrinae, dum puerilis ad huc animus est,
> inscrelpuntur.

The author starts by asserting that the process of shaping minds and habits would be less challenging for young women than for the more mature ones. Vezzosi emphasized the importance of moral, religious, intellectual and physical education for women. Here the references are Pseudo-Plutarch (*De liberis educandis*),[32] Saint Jerome (*Epistles on the education of women*), and Juan Luis Vives (*De institutione foeminae christianae* (1523)). The chaste, modest, silent, submissive, pious wife emerges as the model of this author's moralistic work.[33] Vezzosi emphasized the centrality of prayer in women's but also young men's education. The virgins must be modest, and their purity must shine, especially on their

30 BCA, *MS. 31*, *De instituenda virgine*, *Liber* I and II, ff. 21r-29 r and ff. 30 r-37 r.

31 Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Liberis educandis*; cf. Plutarco, *Come educare i figli*, ed. by Giuliano Pisani, in *Tutti i Moralia*, ed. by Emanuele Lelli, Giuliano Pisani (Milano: Bompiani, 2017), 2-25.

32 Cf. Pseudo-Plutarch, *De liberis educandis.*

33 Cf. MacLean, *The Renaissance notion of Woman*, 59.

wedding day. The traditional approach to women's life conditions (virgin, bride, widow) is closely linked to their social role as well as their sensibility, sexuality and religiosity. It is far from aiding in diminishing the complexity of Vezzosi's interpretation of the female figure. In fact, another source of inspiration for Vezzosi's work is almost certainly Plutarch's *Mulierum virtutes*.[34] Courage, wisdom, cunning, but also modesty, loyalty, pride and perseverance are some of the main qualities that characterize the women described by Plutarch in *Mulierum virtutes*: young or old, mothers or daughters, sisters, wives, or companions. He argued that male and female virtues are identical by recalling famous historical examples of heroic deeds performed by women.[35]

In his work *Gynaecyeseos sive De mulierum conceptu, gestatione ac partu*, Vezzosi demonstrated the mechanisms that lead to the conception, gestation, and birth of the unborn child. The choice of the form of *Gynaecyeseos* is not causal; *Gynaecyeseos* was written at the end of the sixteenth century and was published in Venice in 1598 in three books. Each book is introduced by a very short preface by Antonio Biondo, in the form of questions. Vezzosi answered these questions within every single book. This work portrays a woman as the protagonist and architect of her unborn child's life and well-being. The selection of language, specifically Latin, is significantly important for a proficient reader, or an 'insider'. However, if the subject is considered important, the form must also be elegant, incisive and persuasive. In the treatises of the sixteenth-century and late Renaissance, there are numerous pedagogical, didactic, and moralizing themes that are also present in Vezzosi's scientific production. It is significant to note that in 1596, Scipione Mercurio published what can be considered the first Italian treatise on obstetrics: *La commare o riccoglitrice*,[36] and in 1566 (with a third edition in 1586) *Gynaeciorum libri* was published too.[37] However, the progress in obstetric studies was not accompanied by a progress in childbirth assistance; for reasons of modesty, obstetric care remained an exclusive privilege for women.

Vezzosi's work is dedicated to Clarice Palombara, the wife of the Roman noble Lucio Savelli:

> Cum sponsa Clarice tua,
> clarissima Mundi lumina adeste mihi;
> Iani dum nitor ad Aram
> Foemineum vobis properatum dicere carmen;

[34] Cf. Plutarco, *La virtù delle donne. (Mulierum virtutes)*, ed. by Fabio Tanga (Berlin: Brill, 2019).
[35] Cf. MacLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, 54.
[36] Scipione Mercurio, *La commare o la riccoglitrice, divisa in tre libri* (In Venezia: appresso Giovan Battista Ciotti, 1596).
[37] Cf. Helen King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology. The Uses of a Sixteenth-Century Compendium* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007).

carmen deductum sterili Soractis ab antro.[38]

Nonetheless, the treatise assigns women a position of subordination to their spouse, so that her primary responsibility is to produce healthy offspring, according to the traditional role they are given as wives and mothers:

Ut sobolem reddat coniux foecunda Marito,
Aptum connubio tempus, natisque parandis,
aetatem, studiumque canit nuptaeque virique:
naturae sterilis caussis mox prorfusabactis,
signa, quibus soboles cognoscitur abdita pandit.[39]

Until the child is born, the bride diligently takes care of her weight and sustenance. She preserves the 'seeds' sown in her body. Aristotle considered the reproduction of living things as an extension of the species' development. Early modern medicine is characterized by Aristotelianism-Galenism dualism. For Aristotle, the female body is characterized by incompleteness; for Galen, by the specificity of the uterus. Aristotle considered the woman as the receptacle of the embryo; for Hippocrates, she is its seed and nourishment. Mercurio, for example, tackles the similarity between the uterus and cervix and the male urogenital system. The theory of humors and the great principles of Galenic physiology explain sexual dimorphism. On the contrary, Juan Huarte (1529-1588) in his *Examen de ingenios para las sciencias* (1575), maintained that women, being immersed in their cold humidity, cannot be endowed with the same intellect as men. In his treatise,[40] Juan de Valverde (1525-1587) represented women with a body closed on itself in a modest posture. Jacob Rueff (1500-1558) was the author of one of the most widespread treatises on obstetrics of the Renaissance: *De conceptu et generatione hominis* (1554).[41] In fact, the work

38 Cf. Emilio Vezzosi, *Gynaecyeseos, sive De mulierum conceptu, gestatione, ac partu libri tres, cum argumentis in singulos libros Antonii Blondii Arretini* (Venetiis: apud Gio. Ant. Rampazettum, 1598), f. 3 v.

39 *Ibid.*, f. 3 r.

40 Cf. Juan de Valverde, *Historia de la composicìon del cuerpo humano di Juan de Valverde* (Roma: Antoine La Frery e Antonio Salamanca, 1556); Juan de Valverde, *L'anatomia del corpo umano composta da M. Giovanni Valverde* (Venezia: Stamperia de' Giunti, 1586). In the ancient collection of the Library "Città di Arezzo" (Placement Q 79) there is an example of an edition of Valverde's treatise. It is dated 1560.

41 Jacob Rueff, *De conceptu, et generatione hominis. De matrice et eius partibus, nec non de conditione infantis in vtero, & grauidarum cura & officio. De partu & parturientium, infantiumque cura omnifaria. De differentijs non naturalis partus & earundem curis. [...] libri sex, opera clarissimi viri Iacobi Rueffi, chirurgi Tigurini quondam congesti. Nunc denuo recogniti & in plerisque locis castigati* (Francofurti ad Moenum: apud Petrum Fabricium, impensis Sigismundi Feyrabendij, 1587);

is not addressed to midwives and pregnant women, but also to doctors and general practitioners. Andreas van Wesel (1514-1564), named Vesalius, worked in Pisa in 1544, and his *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543)[42] may have been printed mainly for the use of students. It is not excluded that Vezzosi read it when he was a student in Pisa. The treatise contains many anatomical tables (some made by Jan Stephan Calcar, a pupil of Titian), which attest to Vesalius' great precision. *Fabrica* opens with two engravings: the frontispiece and a portrait of Vesalius. From the first illustration, we understand the profound novelty of Vesalius' work. In this image, we witness a lesson on dissection, in which the teacher is not in the classroom with a treatise on anatomy, as was common at the time. He dissects the corpse himself, showing the various anatomical parts to the spectators. In the center of the image, the body of a woman is lying down in perspective while a compact crowd is scattered around; on one side, the image represents anatomists of that time who opposed Galen's theories. On the other side, there are his supporters, all gathered around Vesalius in a sort of ideal reconciliation. However, the gap between theory and observation in the *Fabrica* is documented in Vesalius's conclusion on the anatomy of the heart. Having been unable to observe any pores in the cardiac septum, Vesalius praised the wisdom of the Creator, who would have managed to make the blood pass through tiny pores. In all these medical treatises, the relationship between science and art is evident. Thus, Vezzosi's work maintains a close relationship between medical art and poetry, which is significant.

Vezzosi, unlike Hippocrates, was a follower of Aristotle. He believed that, in differentiated sexual reproduction, the male would provide the soul-bearing form, and the female would provide only the matter of the embryo. These themes were discussed throughout the Middle Ages, and their dissemination continued into the sixteenth century. Vezzosi's treatise bears witness to this:

> Quo studio Coniux gignat dilecta marito
> progeniem; quae cura oneris; quae victus habenda
> Sit ratio quanta immineant discrimina iactis
> Seminibus, casusque, tener dum prodeat infans;[43]

However, conception must not occur too late or at an advanced age. In fact, old age can lead to infertility, and a couple will be unhappy without children:

> Ne pigeat facti sero, neu denique natos

an edition since 1587 is preserved in the ancient collection of the Library "Città di Arezzo" (Placement II 97).

42 Andreae Vesalii, *De humani corporis fabrica* (Basileae: ex officina Ioannis Oporini, 1543); cf. Mamiani, *Storia della scienza moderna*, 67.

43 Vezzosi, *Gynaecyeseos*, f. 3 r.

tum frustra expectes, portum, requiemque senectae,
nam cunctas haud foecundas natura puellas
edidit: heu multis, dulci sine munere prolis,
(coniugium infelix) teritur diuturna iuventus.[44]

The author then discusses the changes that occur in a woman's body after puberty. Her breasts undergo swelling, protrusion, and tension, and menarche comes along. She must not be thin, fat, nor affected by any disease that might compromize conception and the child's health:

Foemina, quae nubit, quamvis sit idonea proli
septem etiam ante annos; tunc mammae pectore turgent
extantes, arctumque; sinus disrumptis amictum;
tunc et purpurium coepto iam mense cruorem
Luna movere solet:gracilis, nec obesa deinde,
nec placet imbellis, nec quae plerunque dolore
iactatur stomachi, nulla curabilis arte.[45]

It was imperative that virgin women were safeguarded and preserved. It is significant that Vezzosi placed physical virginity in the mind along with the chastity of customs. He then moved on to investigate the causes of the couple's sterility.

Furthermore, in addition to the classical treatises on women's diseases, such as *De natura muliebri*, *De mulierum affectibus* (I-III) and *De virginum morbis* by Hippocrates or *De uteri dissectione* by Galen, there are also some interesting gynaecological treatises. They are written in the vernacular by doctors and expressly addressed to a female audience: *Der Rosengarten* for pregnant women and midwives by the German doctor Eucharius Rösslin (published in Strasbourg in 1513 and then translated into various European languages) or *Le medicine partenenti alle infermità delle donne* by Giovanni Marinello (Venice, De' Franceschi, 1563).[46] It is important to underline that Marinelli was the father of Lucrezia Marinelli, author of *La nobiltà, et eccellenza delle donne* (Venice, 1600) who took a stand in favor of women's knowledge. Observing the work of the city's midwives, Rösslin noticed how certain aspects of carelessness and imprecision in their habits led to a higher infant mortality rate. We do not know if Vezzosi had read these important treatises.

[44] *Ibid.*, f. 5 r.
[45] *Ibid.*, f. 5 v.
[46] The work had three editions, as documented in *Medicina per le donne nel Cinquecento*. Texts by Giovanni Marinello and Girolamo Mercurio, ed. by Maria Luisa Altieri Biagi, Clemente Mazzotta and Paola Altieri (Torino: Utet, 1992), 13-14; cf. Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*.

When these hidden causes of sterility were discovered and remedied by the doctor, the woman would become pregnant:

> Quin medico interea licuit novisse latentes
> coniugij sterilis caussa; morbosque repente
> discusso intumuit crescenti pondere venter:
> tantum Poeonia omnipotens Deus addidit arti.[47]

The doctor provided the appropriate remedies with his skill. He gave the woman appropriate attention. The theory of 'humors' was borrowed here by Vezzosi. The four Hippocratic humors (blood, phlegm, black bile, and red bile) correspond to the four elements (air, water, earth, and fire) and four qualities (hot, dry, cold, and moist):[48]

> Arte sua Medicus contra: nam frigida praebet
> pocula contendens calidis; domat humida siccis:
> neu frigus noceat dirum, flammam evocat intro
> vitalem; hinc venis late sitientibus undam
> elicit ingentem, dum temperet arida membra.[49]

The text contains a recipe to aid conception, too.[50] The foetus is similar to an egg, and it is clotted in blood.

> Haec infans dat signa tener, dum matris in alvo,
> Non perfectus adhuc, concreti sanguinis instar,
> Atque ovo similis, tunicis conduditur artis.[51]

In the second book, the author addressed the topic of gestation, including its management, encouragement, and enhancement, both on a psychological and physical level:

> Hactenus uxores; utero canit inde gerentes:
> quid faciant primum? Statio quae cuique paranda?
> Quae domus? Ut casus valeat arcere propinquos:
> quae ratio victus? Studio quo denique corpus

47 Vezzosi, *Gynecyeseos*, f. 9 r.
48 Cf. Mamiani, *Storia della scienza moderna*, 63.
49 *Ibid.*, f. 9 r.
50 *Ibid.*, ff. 9 v-10 r.
51 *Ibid.*, f. 14 v.

detineant, animumque: nimis ne torpeat aeger.[52]

The moon used to alter and damage the human body quite much, because its in movement and light are very close to us. The influence of the moon on the formation of the foetus is fundamental in the text:

Multum Luna solet mutare, et laedere corpus
Humanum: quia vel motu, vel lumine nobis
Est vicina nimis: gelidae conformia Lunae
Praeterea sunt nostra magis terrestria membra,
Quam pecudum, et volucrum sudum per inane meantu:
Nos ideo violenta premit, citius lacessit.[53]

Nature created humans of both sexes so that they could live without any discrimination. This statement is really significant:

Utriusque hominem sexus Natura creavit,
scilicet ut nullo discrimine vivat uterque.[54]

Ultimately, the topic of childbirth (including the proper arrangement of the bed, the appropriate food intake before and after it, and the optimal chair to enhance comfort) is in the third book. Vezzosi discussed breastfeeding and who should come to assist the giving-birth women:

Protinus inclusum signis distinguere sexum
aggreditur; quoque arte sibi paritura cublicum.
Instituat, lectosque cibos, aptum sedile:
quae facilem reddant partu: quae minima porro
edocet, auxilio veniant parientibus aegre.[55]

About the time of delivery, Vezzosi said:

At gravidae contra diversa ad tempora Partus
Convertant sese Matres, ne quando labores

[52] *Ibid.*, f. 18 r.
[53] *Ibid.*, f. 22 v.
[54] *Ibid.*, f. 31 v.
[55] *Ibid.*, f. 34 v.

Sollicitant, urgentque magis sint cuncta paranda
Namque licet nono deponat mense peracto
Plurima ventris onus: multas tamen ante videmus
Nunc parare infantem dextro, nunc omine laevo.[56]

However, touching the foetus and "picking the ripe apple" is job of the midwife, not of the doctor:

Obstetrix autem, foetum cui tangere cura,
vestigare caput, taciteque; inferre lacertos,
Munere fungatur; vinclis, cultroque; parato,
Una manu properet, maturum carpere pomum:
Una cibi, potusque; vias infantis in alvo
Obstruat; atque liget, ventrisque accomodet omnem
Rite locum: sic ursa solet connix fovere
Informem sobolem, doctaque; effingere lingua.[57]

In close connection with the topic of raising children, Vezzosi addressed the subject of breastfeeding in *MS. 31* of the Library "Città di Arezzo", which Loreti meticulously transcribed from the original work by Vezzosi, *Nutrix sive de alenda sobole*. He discussed breastfeeding and the importance of mothers in the education and nutrition of their infants.

According to Greek-Roman custom, a woman is considered a mother solely upon providing breastfeeding to her child. Therefore, Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD) stated that the woman should be half mother and half nurse. Vezzosi seems to have also conceived Marcus Aurelius' idea of a *mater-nutrix* woman. We do not know if Vezzosi knew *Aureo libro* by Marcus Aurelius, written by Antonio de Guevara and translated by Alfonso Ulloa, in 1562.[58] The book had a wide circulation and represents one of the references in the work of female authors, who confronted themselves with the medical-scientific knowledge of the time.

In Vezzosi, the role of woman is exclusively identifiable with that of a *virgo-sponsa*, i.e., she lends her body and nourishment to another body: that of her child. The symbolic

[56] *Ibid*., f. 38 v.

[57] *Ibid*., ff. 44 r-v.

[58] Cf. Antonio Guevara, *Aureo libro di Marco Aurelio famosissimo imperatore, con l'horologio de' prencipi, in tre volumi. Composto per il molto reurendo […] Antonio di Gueuara. Nouuamente tradotto di lingua spagnuola in italiana dalla copia originale di esso auttore. Et perchè à questo ueramente aureo libro niente manchi, l'abbiamo adornato di postille, che per auanti erano grandemente desiderate* (In Venetia: appresso Francesco Lorenzini, da Turino, 1562).

representation of the Virgin Mary has been as a significant reference for women since the Middle Ages and Renaissance.[59]

For the first time, the nutrition of the newborn is mentioned in *Corpus Hippocraticum*, and the mystery of the formation of breast milk is investigated because the Greek doctor hypothesizes a direct relationship between the uterus and the breasts.

Nevertheless, Soranus of Ephesus (second century AD) articulated the initial principles of child care in his literary work, *Gynaecia*,[60] which bears resemblance to Vezzosi's *Gynecyeseos*. Soranus advised the readers of his treatise to maintain moderation in the frequency of feedings, cautioning against breastfeeding at any time of the day or night or every time the child cries.

Soranus also advised the reader not to attach the baby to the mother's breast earlier than twenty days after the birth. On the contrary Damaste invited the mother to feed the baby immediately. This would allow for a more rapid and abundant milk formation. The transition to 'mercenary' breastfeeding, which involved the use of professional nurses, was not opposed by Soranus, because breastfeeding causes premature aging in women. Soranus' work deals with the choice of the nurse, her dietary rules, and her physical exercises.

Instead, in Rome, breastfeeding was defended by philosophers, doctors, scholars, and jurists. Plutarch (first century AD) asserted that nature had placed breasts high in women's body in order that a woman could hug her child and develop attachment while breastfeeding them. Hence, Vezzosi cautioned Arretine women against abruptly abandoning their children to the hands of "mercenary nurses". This detachment can, indeed, cause severe trauma to both the child and the mother. Vezzosi considered this abandonment to be an act against nature, following the Roman literary tradition.

Unlike the early days of the Roman Republic, when breastfeeding was a fundamental task for mothers, during the imperial age, the custom of mercenary breastfeeding was spreading. Antoninus Pius (86-161 AD) established rewards for women who would breastfeed their own children. Aulus Gellius praised maternal breastfeeding in his *Attic Nights.* Indeed, he defined mercenary breastfeeding as an act against nature because it would cause immediate distancing from the person to whom it is addressed.

According to the Hippocratic scheme of 'constitutions', Galen exalted the perfection of milk, a moist and warm food. Galen focused his attention on the importance of first impressions, which would be fixed through milk on to the soul of the baby. His great intuition is that there would be a kind of transmission between a mother and her child, a transmission of something more than the mere liquid. This evokes a profound fascination with the maternal act of breastfeeding.

[59] Cf. *La medicina nel basso Medioevo. Tradizioni e conflitti: Atti del LV Convegno Storico Internazionale*: Todi, 14-16 October 2018 (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2019).

[60] Cf. Temkin Owsei, *Soranus' Gynnecology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956).

Milk, similar to sperm, is derived from a 'coction' process, wherein it undergoes cooking and whitening through the circulation of blood vessels. The explanation (the real novelty lies here) is fundamentally centered not so much on the metaphysical principle of vital heat as on the accurate observation of the blood paths in the body, which occurs through the dissection of the veins and arteries; hence the so - called theory of *haemogenesis.* This was very popular until 1700 in treatises on anatomy and physiology. However, sexual relations can interfere with the distribution of blood in the female body. These beliefs had a profound influence on women's social behavior and sexual habits until the Renaissance.

Even in *Nutrix, sive de alenda sobole*, the idea of milk as a complete food is present in the treatise. Vezzosi's youthful poem, composed when he was still a student in Pisa, is divided into two books.[61]

Plutarch is cited in the introduction by Vezzosi. Mothers are expected to feed their children personally. They have to offer them their breasts, so that they are raised with greater affection and care. Mothers have to love their babies with their whole being, "with their nails". Indeed, the affection of wet nurses is insincere and fictitious because it is 'mercenary love'. Nature also clearly indicates that mothers have to breastfeed and raise their own children. For this reason, every being that gives birth receives the nourishment of milk. With foresight, nature provides two breasts to ensure adequate nourishment:

> Oportet, ut mihi profecto videtur, ut Matres Filios
> educent, eisque hubera porrigant: quoniam maiori cum
> caritate, et impensa magis diligentia nutrient, ut quae
> natos ex intimo, ut dici solet, ex unguibus ament.
> Nutrices vero, et alumnae suppositam quondam, et
> adscriptitiam benevolentiam habent, ut pote
> mercedis gratia diligentes.[62]

It is significant that Vezzosi's poem is dedicated to the women of Arezzo. In fact, this work represents a real warning to those women who entrust their children to mercenary nurses, who act without method and (we would add) without love. They do not take care of their children in body and spirit, creating the conditions for their impending death or illness.

[61] BCA, *MS. 31, Nutrix, sive de alenda sobole*, Liber I and II, ff. 1 r-10 v and ff. 11 r-20 v.
[62] Pseudo-Plutarch, *De liberis educandis.*

Appendix. Emilio Vezzosi, a biographical profile.

Emilio Vezzosi was born in Arezzo on July 7, 1563, to Gaspero of Antonio and Lucrezia of Cristoforo Aleotti. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, members of the Vezzosi family had been appointed as judiciaries and to other positions within the 'Fraternita dei Laici', a welfare institution of the city of Arezzo. Vezzosi family was noble.

His first tutor was Guido Zoppici, from Cortona, and since his young age he composed eclogues and Latin poems, which were later collected in a volume entitled *Theatrum Aretinum*.[63] All biographers unanimously have recognized him as a great Latin scholar.[64] In fact, his poetry and scientific production are characterized by elegant Virgilian style.

He studied philosophy and medicine in Pisa with Andrea Cesalpino and Girolamo Borri. Not yet graduated, he composed a treatise in poetic form entitled *Nutrix sive de alenda sobole*, and divided into two books, which was dedicated to the women of Arezzo. The language of the poem is clearly inspired by Virgilian style and is very elegant as for the Latin form.[65] He then wrote a draft of another poem, *De cura nutricis liber unicus*. In the first case, the text is preserved in *MS. 41*, an autograph manuscript from the Library "Città di Arezzo" in poetic form composed in the last decade of the 16th century. A later transcription of this text is also contained in *MS. 31* of the Library "Città di Arezzo". The copyist is Lorenzo Loreti, a scholar and librarian from Arezzo. He copied the text from the "devilish and abstruse original" in June-July 1786, together with another text that he probably tran-

[63] Cf. Giulio Anastasio Angelucci, *Stanze dell'Abate G. Anastasio Angelucci con documenti e note ad illustrazione della città e degli uomini celebri di Arezzo* (Pisa: co' caratteri di Didot, 1816), 165-168; Ugo Viviani, *Medici, fisici, cerusici della Provincia aretina vissuti dal V al XVII secolo d. c.* (Arezzo: Stabilimento Tipografico Beucci, 1923); cf. Marta Paliotti, "Le Accademie aretine del secolo XVII ed Emilio Vezzosi. Parte prima: sguardo generale alla vita e alla cultura aretina nella prima metà del Seicento", *Atti e Memorie Accademia Petrarca* VIII (1° semestre 1930): 111-116; Marta Paliotti, "Le Accademie aretine del secolo XVII ed Emilio Vezzosi. Parte seconda. Emilio Vezzosi (la vita)", *Atti e Memorie Accademia Petrarca* IX (2° semestre 1930): 274-290; Marta Paliotti, "Emilio Vezzosi (gli scritti)", *Atti e Memorie Accademia Petrarca* X (1° semestre 1931): 87-94; cf. Giovanni Bianchini, "Emilio Vezzosi (1563-1637), filosofo, medico, insegnante, accademico, 'devotissimo' alla famiglia Medici", *Studi secenteschi* LIX (2018): 97-114. Cf. *MS. 56*, Mario Flori, *Vita de' letterati aretini*, ff. 595 r- 606 r e ff. 609 r-634 v.

[64] *Ibid*.: "La Famiglia Vezzosi in oggi estinta godette in Arezzo il grado secondo per molti anni: vedasi libro *VV Deliberazioni* a 80. Nel 1561 si trova estratto dalla borsa ottava dei Priori Gaspar Antonii de La Vezzosa; Lib. *XXJ delle Estrazioni* a 62, ed Emilio di lui figlio fu diverse volte dei Rettori della Fraternita".

[65] Cf. Flori, *Vita...*, f. 597 r.: "Questo poemetto è senza dubbio sommamente apprezzabile, mentre oltre il pregio di una virgiliana eleganza, racchiude tutti quei precetti, i quali posti in opera contribuir saprebbero alla salvezza di tanti, e tanti fanciulli [...]". Flori, *ibid*., says that this little poem is undoubtedly highly appreciable because, beyond the merit of a Virgilian elegance, it contains all those precepts that, if implemented, would contribute to the salvation of many, many children.

scribed in August of the same year, *De instituenda Virgine libri duo*, *Ad Matronas Arretinas.* This poem ends with a description of the modesty and shyness that arise in every girl on her wedding day. Then, the theme of women's education and medical science becomes significant for this obscure and interesting Tuscan physician. Indeed, the significance of his initial two works addressed to the women of Arezzo cannot be underestimated. He graduated from Pisa in 1589.[66]

After receiving the degree, Vezzosi moved to Sant'Oreste and then to Rome to work as a physician in the house of the noble Savelli family. Here he composed a treatise in poetic form entitled *Gynaecyeseos, sive De mulierum conceptu, gestatione, ac partu*, dedicating it to Lucio Savelli's wife, Clarice Palombara (+1648).[67] The treatise was printed in Venice

[66] Cf. Rodolfo Del Gratta, Giuliana Volpi and Leonardo Ruta, *Acta Graduum Academiae Pisanae (1543-1599)* vol. I (Pisa: CNR, 1980), 387. The 'promoters' of his doctorate were Andrea Cesalpino, Baldello Baldelli, a nobleman from Cortona, Leone Maurizi, Bartolo Francucci, Ippolito Accolti and Fabio Sinigardi, other noblemen from Arezzo. Among the "witnesses", we find Francesco Verino (1524-1591) (whose treatise on meteors Vezzosi kept in his library (Francesco, de' Vieri, *Trattato di M. Francesco de' Vieri, cognominato il Verino secondo cittadino Fiorentino, nel quale si contengono i tre primi libri delle metheore. Nuovamente ristampati et da lui ricorretti con l'aggiunta del quarto libro* (In Fiorenza: appresso Giorgio Marescotti, 1582); handwritten ownership note on the front of the second flyleaf: "Emilio Vezzosi"; location: APA, VI-d, 77)), Francesco Buonamici (1533-1603), Damiano Dias, and Jacopo Mazzoni (1548-1598). Francesco Buonamici studied at the 'Studio' of Florence, where he followed Greek courses with the humanist Pier Vettori (1499-1585). Doctor, professor of natural philosophy, and Greek and Latin scholar, he was greatly inspired by the ancient texts. He consulted Aristotle (384-322 BC), Averroes (1126-1198), Nicomachus (60-120 BC), and others. Furthermore, he was one of Galileo Galilei's (1564-1642) teachers at the University of Pisa. Mazzoni taught in Pisa, too. He held the chair of philosophy since November 1588 to 1597. In Pisa, he met Galileo Galilei, at this time a young mathematics teacher, with whom he established an excellent relationships. The Pisan environment was influenced by the significant figure of Matteo Realdo Colombo (1510 ca.-1559). Since 1546 to 1548, he taught at the University of Pisa, where he was called by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-1574). In the same years, Andrea Cesalpino (1519-1603) was carrying out his studies in Pisa: it is reasonable to suppose that he owed Colombo's studies on small circulation the development of his research on large circulation. Furthermore, in 1544, Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) held lessons in Pisa, where the anatomical theater in "Via della Sapienza" had been inaugurated by Cosimo I. In 1544, Juan de Valverde (1525-1587) was also in Pisa. There he anatomized also the body of a woman. The Pisan environment, far from being a stronghold of Aristotelian thought, was instead a fertile ground for scientific innovations.

[67] Cf. Maria Fiammetta Iovine, *Massimiliano Palombara filosofo incognito. Appunti per una biografia di un alchimista rosacrociano del XVII secolo* (Roma: La lepre Edizioni, 2016); Cf. Oddo Savelli Palombara, Principe dell'Accademia degli Umoristi, *Rime diverse*, ed. by Jean Luc Nardone, Maria Fiammetta Iovine (Roma: Edizionidipagina, 2019). Daughter of Camillo Palombara and the noble Ippolita Orsini, Clarice was Oddo V Palombara's, Marquis of Pietraforte, half-sister, and therefore she was Massimiliano Savelli Palombara's (1614-1685) aunt. Massimiliano had

in 1598.[68] Vezzosi also encountered Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) in the affluent and academic Roman milieu and in the court of the cardinals. The meeting with Tasso arouses great admiration in Vezzosi. However, the court environment, with its intrigues and jealousies, did not suit Vezzosi, who preferred the quiet Tuscan countryside. In fact, at the end of the sixteenth century, Lucio Savelli, probably fallen out of favor, moved with his wife Clarice and his three children (Onorio, Luca, and Camilla) to a rented house in "Rione Pigna" in Rome.

In 1594, Vezzosi returned to Arezzo to practice his profession at the Hospital of "Santa Maria sopra i Ponti". In the 16th century, several hospitals were established in Arezzo, including that of Santissima Annunciate (created for women who were ill, unmarried, or giving birth).[69] His activity as a medical doctor is accompanied by the drafting of medical consultations. An example of this is *De partu mirabili Alexandriae Spathariae iudicium Aemilii Vezosi medici aretini* (*MS. 38*, Library "Città di Arezzo"),[70] a medical certification that was later used for the beatification of Pope Gregory. Indeed, Alessandra Spadari, a young woman from Arezzo, survived the birth of a dead foetus through the intercession of this saint. Emilio Vezzosi was called to certify, as a medical doctor, the miracle.

Many years later, in addition to his professional role as a physician, he worked as a teacher of rhetoric, grammar, and poetry at the School of Humanities of the city, a cultural institution of moderate prestige.[71] During this period, there exist numerous letters that he addressed to his pupils, which appear to have been systematically documented in 1626 in *MS. 37* of the Library "Città di Arezzo" (*Thematum epistolarum quas Aemilius Vezosius discipulis suis dictabat*). This production is noteworthy and will be accompanied by the various *Orations* on the cultural and religious life of the city as well as on some noble families of Arezzo. They are contained in *MS. 38*, an autograph manuscript of the Library

built in Rome the so-called 'Magic Door', the only example of alchemical-magical architecture in the Western world. He was close to the cultural and scientific circle of Christina of Sweden. In Palazzo Palombara, now destroyed, he had built an underground alchemical laboratory. He practiced experiments in the fields of metallurgy, medicinal plants, and the magical virtues of stones and minerals. His father, Oddo Savelli Palombara, was instead elected Prince of the Academy of Humorists in 1633, and was close to the Barberini's family.

68 Vezzosi, *Gynaecyeseos.* The autograph text is also preserved in APA, *MS. M IV.1* and in BCA, *MS. 41*.

69 Cf. Silvano Pieri, *La Compagnia della SS. Annunziata dal XIV al XVIII secolo*, in *La Chiesa della SS. Annunziata di Arezzo nel Cinquecentesimo della sua costruzione*: Atti del Convegno di Studi: Arezzo, 14 September 1990, (Arezzo, Accademia Petrarca di Lettere Arti e Scienze, 1993) 21-58; cf. Silvano Pieri, "Notizie sugli 'hospitalia' nella diocesi di Arezzo", *Annali Aretini* V (1997): 5-80.

70 A copy is preserved in *MS. 56*, ff. 589 r-592 r.

71 His position is regularly recorded in ASA, *Deliberazioni e Partiti dei Priori e Consiglio Generale*, 31, f. 228 v.

"Città di Arezzo". We know with certainty that some of his students became talented Latin scholars. This is the case of Lorenzo Nardi, who became very skilled in Latin poetry.[72] Vezzosi's pedagogical style is 'epistolary': in fact, he addressed letters to his students to be translated into Latin.

Upon his return to Arezzo, he married the young Angela Fossombroni, with whom he had three children: Francesco, who died at an early age; Teresa, who took her vows; and Carlo, who was born on April 9, 1617.[73] The oration *De nuptiarum dignitatem* in *MS. 39* (an autograph from the Library "Città di Arezzo") is certainly related to his marriage to Fossombroni. Angela belonged to one of the most noble families in the city. This marriage was happy. However, an unknown woman often appears in Vezzosi's poems. The author identifies her with 'a pretty woman'. We do not know who she was. Perhaps she is just literary fiction.

He left his teaching position in 1626. However, the educational and training theme of the *Epistolae*, accompanied by the scientific and medical themes of the *Orations* (about sixty), is the backdrop for all the productions by this author that were conceived in an academic environment. Indeed, Discordi's Academy is present in Arezzo, having been established in 1623, and Vezzosi's contribution to the academic life of the city is regarded as "one of the most significant".[74] The first 'Prince' of Discordi was Scipione Francucci. After Francucci's death, the debate was animated by Vezzosi, thanks to his Latin verses and his epigrams. In the first season, the academic programs mainly focused on studies in the humanities, dealing with plague, idleness, and music. Later, they developed scientific interests, discussing shows that were performed in the theater of the city, and meeting to recite lyric poems and verses on the occasion of famous takings of monastic vows, weddings, or religious celebrations. It is no by chance that the academy is composed of members of the local clergy and small nobility; some of them had received orders. For example, Francucci is an abbot of the Dominican Order.[75]

Vezzosi died in Arezzo on August 9, 1637.

[72] Flori, *Vita...*, f. 413 r.

[73] Cf. Bianchini, "Emilio Vezzosi (1563-1637), filosofo, medico, insegnante, accademico, 'devotissimo' alla famiglia Medici", 102.

[74] Cf. *ibid.*, 105.

[75] Other figures from the world of the city of Arezzo are part of this academy: doctor Gregorio Redi, father of the more famous Francesco (1626-1697); Girolamo Forti; Bernardino Tondinelli; Antonio Graccioni; Pietro Lippi; Jacopo Burali; Giuseppe from Casoli; Paolo Burali; Pietro Guadagni; Bernardino Azzi; Pietro Accolti, jurist, theologian, and philosopher; Angiolo Tenti, priest of the cathedral; Girolamo Ruscelli; Francesco Albergotti; Antonio Nardi, disciple of Galileo Galilei. Cf. Maria Chiara Milighetti, "Da Antonio Nardi (1598-1649 ca.) a Francesco Redi (1626-1697): l'eredità culturale di un galileiano", *Annali Aretini* XII (2004): 221-238.

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loci, unde sunt hausta, sub unum cadant oculorum obtutum. Opus ab ipso, dum practicam medicinam publice Pisis doceret, elaboratum, recens vero in lucem editum a Marco, & Horatio. Patauij: ex officina Petri Pauli Tozzij, 1605.

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– TEXTS AND DOCUMENTS –

Anachronistic marginalia: An annotated copy of Ludovico Delle Colombe's *Risposte piacevoli e curiose* (1608)

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Abstract
The National Library of Turin holds a copy of Ludovico delle Colombe's *Risposte piacevoli e curiose* (1608), notable for its Italian handwritten marginal annotations, which may date to the 1660s (Coll. CIACC 256). This paper summarizes the key arguments of the *Risposte*, analyzes the annotations in five thematic areas, and explores the history of the annotated copy. A table at the end provides transcriptions of the notes.

Keywords
Ludovico delle Colombe, 1604 nova, Alimberto Mauri, Giuseppe Vincenzo Ciaccio

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Although this contribution is the result of a collaborative effort and reflects the shared responsibility of both authors, Sections 3 and 4 were written by Francesco Barreca, while the introduction, Sections 1 and 2, and the transcription were written by Ivan Malara.

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The National Library of Turin holds a copy of the *Risposte piacevoli e curiose di Lodovico delle Colombe alle Considerazioni di certa Maschera saccente nominata Alimberto Mauri, fatte sopra alcuni luoghi del discorso del medesimo Lodovico dintorno alla stella apparita l'anno 1604* (hereafter *Risposte*). This copy (shelfmark: CIACC 256) is noteworthy for its Italian handwritten marginal notes.[1]

Although Delle Colombe's text was printed in 1608, internal evidence suggests the annotations were written much later, around the 1660s. This circumstance is interesting, as it shows that Delle Colombe's outdated claims still had some currency, at least as a rhetorical target, well into the second half of the seventeenth century. The notes clearly exhibit a Galilean tone, even when Galileo is not mentioned directly. Additionally, references to key thinkers like Kepler, Descartes, Gassendi, and Boulliau suggest the notes may offer insight into the Italian reception of Galileo's work and its place in broader 17th-century European scientific culture.

In the following, we will first provide an overview of the key arguments in the *Risposte*. Second, we will analyze the notes, categorizing them into five thematic areas. Third, we will consider the history of the annotated copy, whose final owner was Giuseppe Vincenzo Ciaccio. Finally, we will address the dating and attribution of the notes.

A table at the end of the paper contains all the marginal notes, which have been fully transcribed and collated with relevant passages from the *Risposte*. Each note is numbered for reference (e.g., N1, N2, etc.). All references to Delle Colombe's *Risposte* are based on the annotated copy and are indicated with the abbreviation "*Risp.*" followed by the folio number (e.g., *Risp.*, 13r).

1. An overview of Ludovico Delle Colombe's Risposte piacevoli e curiose *(1608)*

Among the earliest works published in Italy on the 1604 *nova* was the *Discorso* by Ludovico Delle Colombe. Although it was printed in Florence in 1606, the dedication to Monsignor Alessandro Marzi Medici, Archbishop of Florence, is dated December 28, 1605. That same year, the *Discorso intorno alla nuova Stella* by Antonio Lorenzini of Montepulciano was printed in Padua. While these works proposed two different theories to explain the appearance of the new star, neither challenged the Aristotelian notion of the incorruptibility of the heavens. On the contrary, both Lorenzini and Delle Colombe explicitly stressed the importance of adhering to Aristotle's natural philosophy, which held that no generation or change could occur in the celestial realm above the lunar sphere.[2]

[1] The annotated copy is readily available online at https://www.google.it/books/edition/Risposte_piaceuoli_e_curiose_di_Lodouico/iMAy9FeuFvcC?hl=en&gbpv=0.

[2] The literature on the 1604 *nova* is vast. Restricting our focus to studies on Galileo and the Italian context, see: Antonio Favaro, *Galileo Galilei e lo Studio di Padova*, 2 vols. (Padova: Antenore, 1966), vol. I, 213-236; Raffaello Caverni, *Storia del metodo sperimentale in Italia*, 6 vols. (Firen-

Galileo Galilei and Girolamo Spinelli mocked this overly deferential stance toward Aristotelian doctrine with sharp irony in a satirical work written in Paduan dialect and published in 1605 under the pseudonym Cecco di Ronchitti da Bruzene. It is also highly likely that Galileo contributed to sections of another pseudonymous work published in Florence in 1606 by the printer Giovanni Antonio Caneo, titled *Considerazioni d'Alimberto Mauri sopra alcuni luoghi del Discorso di Lovodico delle Colombe intorno alla stella apparita 1604* (hereafter *Considerazioni*). Delle Colombe's response followed two years later, in 1608, from the same Florentine printer. His *Risposte* offered a detailed rebuttal to Mauri's criticisms.[3]

While the *Risposte* are not regarded as a major scientific contribution, they offer valuable insight into the early Italian debate on the 1604 *nova*.[4] The work addresses not only the scientific question of the star's origin but also broader cosmological and philosophical concerns, including the implications of the Copernican theory. Delle Colombe frequently accuses Mauri of supporting Copernicus, while also criticizing him for not fully committing to the Copernican theory (*Risp*., 16v, 25v, 26v).[5] In his polemics, Delle Co-

ze: G. Civelli, 1891-1900), vol. 2, 493-501; Maria Laura Soppelsa, *Genesi del metodo galileiano* (Padova: Antenore, 1974), 21-45; Guglielmo Righini, *Contributo all'interpretazione scientifica dell'opera astronomica di Galileo* (Firenze: Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza), 12-24; Stillman Drake, *Galileo Against the Philosophers* (Los Angeles: Zeitlin & Ver Brugge, 1976), 1-32, 55-71, 131-144; Saverio Ricci, «Una filosofica milizia». Tre studi sull'Accademia dei Lincei (Udine: Campanotto, 1994), 7-31; Massimo Bucciantini, *Galileo e Keplero. Filosofia, cosmologia e teologia nell'età della Controriforma* (Torino: Einaudi, 2003), 117-143; Michele Camerota, *Galileo Galilei e la cultura scientifica nell'età della Controriforma* (Roma: Salerno, 2004), 116-124; William R. Shea, "Galileo and the Supernova of 1604", in *1604-2004: Supernovae as Cosmological Lighthouses*, ed. by Massimo Turatto *et al.* (San Francisco: Astronomical Society of the Pacific, 2005), 13-20; Michele Camerota and Patrizia Ruffo, "Le lezioni di Galileo sulla nuova stella del 1604 nel resoconto di Antonio Alberti (17 dicembre 1604)", *Galilaeana* 12 (2015): 193-201; Alessandro Regosa, "«Con chioma di fuoco or vi fiammeggi»: una ricognizione intorno alla stella nova del 1604", in *Letteratura e Scienze. Atti delle sessioni parallele del XXIII Congresso dell'ADI (Associazione degli Italianisti)*, ed. by Alberto Casadei *et al.* (Roma: Adi editore, 2021), https://www.italianisti.it/pubblicazioni/atti-di-congresso/letteratura-e-scienze.

3 Cecco's *Dialogue* is included in OG, II, 307-334 (English translation in Drake, *Galileo Against the Philosophers*, 33-53). Mauri's *Considerazioni* are not included in the National Edition of Galileo's work. See Alimberto Mauri, *Considerazioni d'Alimberto Mauri sopra alcuni luoghi del Discorso di Lodovico delle Colombe intorno alla stella apparita 1604* (Firenze: appresso Gio. Antonio Caneo, 1606); English translation in Drake, *Galileo Against the Philosophers*, 73-130.

4 Drake dismissed Delle Colombe's *Risposte* as not deserving careful examination: "Colombe's 'Plesant Replies' hardly deserve further discussion here" (Drake, *Galileo Against the Philosophers*,135). However, the *Risposte* contains numerous interesting aspects, which will be briefly outlined here and explored in detail in a separate study.

5 On the significant role of Copernicanism in the 1604 *nova* debates, see Bucciantini, *Galileo e Keplero*, 117-143, and Luigi Guerrini, *Galileo e la polemica anticopernicana a Firenze* (Firenze: Polistampa, 2009), 19-20.

lombe defends Aristotle and Aristotelian scholars, including Cesare Cremonini, whom he believes to be the true author behind Lorenzini's work (*Risp*., 11r). Concerning literary style, Delle Colombe claims to be inspired by Plato (*Risp*., 9v) and critiques Mauri's use of the Tuscan vernacular, pointing out errors in spelling and grammar (*Risp*., 25r, 38r, 82r, 85r, 102r).

As for the *nova*, Delle Colombe argues that the *primum mobile* (tenth sphere) is populated by fixed stars, which become visible only when the denser parts of the Crystalline (i.e., the ninth sphere) interpose themselves. Mauri mocks this idea, referring to the denser parts of the Crystalline as "glasses", a point Delle Colombe eventually finds tiresome (*Risp*., 104r: "*Oh, Oh, Questa occhialata comincia a saper di stucco*")[6] Additionally, and more interestingly, Delle Colombe defends his explanation of the *nova* against theological objections (*Risp*., 92r-v), asserting that human intellect can explain natural phenomena without relying on miracles (*Risp*., 79r; included in the *Discorso*). The *Risposte* also contain a critique of judicial astrology, an issue Delle Colombe had addressed in his earlier *Discorso* (*Risp.*, 126v-131v). Finally, he discusses the theories of emission and intromission of rays, favoring the latter (*Risp*., 57r-60v).

2. The marginal notes

The notes are all by the same hand, and ink fading suggests that they were written within a short span of time. The annotator shows no interest in debates over Copernicanism, Biblical accommodation, linguistic practice, or optical theories. Judicial astrology is also completely ignored. The first marginal note is about the expression *Natura locuta est ex ore Aristotelis* ("Nature has spoken through Aristotle's mouth"), used by Delle Colombe to assert that doubting Aristotle was indeed a heresy ("*gran resia*", in Mauri's sarcastic words). The annotator's reaction is dramatic: "Oh, what a great absurdity!" (N1), where he underlines the word "absurdity [*sproposito*]".

Another marginal note of this type, where the annotator focuses on undermining Aristotle's authority, is the one in which the *topos* "if Aristotle were alive" is used:[7]

> If Aristotle were alive today, he would need to say the opposite [*ridirsi*][8] about many things

[6] Delle Colombe referred to the "*occhiali*" only once in his *Discorso* (see *Risp*., 61r).

[7] On this *topos* and Galileo's use of it, see Eva Del Soldato, *Early Modern Aristotle: The Making and Unmaking of Authority* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 109-149. See also Luca Bianchi, *"Aristoteles Redivivus* and His Alter-Egos," *Mediterranea. International journal on the transfer of knowledge* 6 (2021): 209-234, pp. 226-234. Bianchi notably observes that the *topos* was employed by Galileo's disciples – and possibly by Galileo himself – well before the advent of telescopic observations, in connection with the 1604 *nova*.

[8] According to the first edition (1612) of *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca*, "ridirsi" means

> and explain many others more clearly. He would see his natural philosophy as poor and bare [*povera e nuda*][9] of true conclusions, because today philosophy is conducted through experiments and geometric demonstrations, not through chatter and the interpretation of texts and pots [*testi, e pentole*]. (N5)

This critique of Aristotle's authority, coupled with the emphasis on experiments and geometric demonstrations, typifies the polemical tone of many marginal notes (see N3-4, N6, N8, N11, N15, N17-19, N20-21). Remarkably, one note suggests that understanding the causes of natural phenomena requires prior study of Descartes and Galileo:

> Read the philosophy of René Descartes and the works of Galileo, and then you will know how to demonstrate the causes of natural effects. (N18)

The annotator seems convinced that neither Descartes' philosophy nor Galileo's scientific work alone is sufficient to explain "the causes of natural effects". This suggests that he may have supported an integration of Cartesian mechanistic principles with Galilean science. Thus, he was at least aware that Galileo's science did not extend as far as Descartes' philosophy, at times explicitly disregarding the underlying causes of natural phenomena.[10]

The annotator sometimes addresses technical aspects of the 1604 *nova* debate, such as the theory that the *nova* moves in a circular orbit on an epicycle, becoming visible near the Earth and invisible otherwise. Kepler discusses and refutes this theory in *De stella nova* (1606), and Dario Tessicini cautiously suggested it may have been a hypothetical model derived from Aristotelian dynamics, possibly created by Kepler himself for the sake of argument.[11]

"to say the contrary of what was already said" (*In signific. neut. pass. vale disdirsi, cioè dire il contrario di quello, che già s'è detto*). This definition is retained in subsequent editions (up to the fourth), with additional examples provided. We are thankful to the anonymous reviewer who suggested that we revise our previous translation and directed us to the Crusca.

9 The phrasing "filosofia natural povera e nuda di…" employed by the annotator was likely influenced – whether consciously or unconsciously – by Petrarch's well-known line from Sonnet VII, "Povera, e nuda vai, Filosofia…," albeit with a different intended meaning. We are grateful to Luca Bianchi for drawing attention to this connection.

10 See, for example, OG, VIII, 202.

11 See Dario Tessicini, "Straight Paths and Evanescent Bodies: The Physics and Dynamics of Celestial Novelties in Kepler's *De stella nova*", in *Kepler's New Star (1604): Context and Controversy*, ed. by Patrick J. Boner (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 17-40, p. 25. The hypothesis is presented (and rejected) by Bartolomeus Amicus in the 1620s as one of the possible approaches to subvert claims for celestial corruptibility. Amicus himself favoured a solution that, while involving epicycles in the eighth sphere, assumed that they were made of denser parts of the celestial aether. A "new star" appears, according to Amicus, when three or more of these epicycles are aligned in such a

Notably, Delle Colombe's *Discorso* (1606, likely finished in 1605) sarcastically attributes the theory to a "brilliant mind [*bell'ingegno*]" (*Risp*., 119v) and refutes it. Mauri also dismisses it, arguing that if the *nova* moved in such a way, its parallax would vary as it approached the Earth. Since no parallax is observed, Mauri concludes the theory is untenable.

In this case, the annotator offers a polite critique of Mauri's *Considerazioni*. He points out that

> the *nova*, even when at perigee, might not be any closer to the Earth than any fixed star, and thus it would not exhibit any noticeable parallax, just as fixed stars do not, despite being at varying distances from the Earth's center. (N26)

Later, when the annotator reads that Delle Colombe makes the same point to Mauri, he writes: "here you speak well" (N27). This is the only note in which the annotator agrees with Delle Colombe, suggesting his strong attachment to the epicycle-*nova* theory. In fact, he also criticizes Delle Colombe's sarcasm in this regard, noting: "Do not mock this opinion too much, for it is not as ridiculous as yours" (N25). Additionally, he defends the theory against some of Delle Colombe's critiques by referring to much later events, such as "the transit of Mercury across the solar disk" (N28), which was first observed by Pierre Gassendi on November 7, 1631.[12]

The annotator briefly refutes Delle Colombe's view on the 1604 *nova*. The critique, though simple, reflects his dialectical approach to identifying fallacies. The annotator notes that if the *nova* were in the *primum mobile*, as Delle Colombe believed, it would move east to west in 24 hours. However, in the geocentric model, fixed stars also move slowly west to east. In essence, the annotator highlights that the fixed stars placed in the *primum mobile* by Delle Colombe would not exhibit any motion of precession (cf. N16).

A series of notes strongly reiterates that only the Sun "and the fixed stars have their own light, being like so many suns" (N9). The Moon and all other celestial bodies do not generate light but merely reflect it (cf. N9, N13-14, N23, N30-31). Two of these notes (N13 and N30) are nearly identical, but one calmly responds to an observation by Mauri (N13), while the other is highly polemical against Delle Colombe (N30). In two other notes (N14 and N23), "Galileo's spyglass / great spyglass" is mentioned. His name also appears in a note that approves Mauri's thesis on the similarity between the Earth and the Moon: "this – writes the annotator – is demonstrated by our great Galileo" (N10).

Finally, there are reference marks resembling an asterisk, which seem to reflect the annotator's interest in the Pythagorean theory of celestial harmony (N2), the history and

way that the denser parts are clustered together. Cf. Edward Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs. The Medieval Cosmos 1200-1687* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 213-214.

[12] See *infra*, section 4.

use of "glasses" (N22), and the possibility of using mirrors to see distant objects (N24).

The notes can thus be grouped into five main thematic areas (N29 is excluded, as it is a deletion with no content):

1. Praise for the new philosophy based on experience and geometric demonstrations, and a rejection of the principle of authority (N1, N3-6, N8, N11, N15, N17-19, N20-21);
2. Defense or critique of astronomical theories, especially those concerning the *nova* (N7, N16, N25-28);
3. Emphasis on the Sun and stars as the only sources of light, and on the Moon as dark and similar to Earth (N9-10, N12-14, N23, N30-31);
4. Interest in optical instruments for long-distance vision (N22, N24);
5. Interest in the theory of celestial harmony (N2).

3. Provenance of the annotated copy

The annotated copy of Delle Colombe's *Risposte* – an in-quarto volume bound in what appears to be 19th-century half parchment – is currently held at the National Library of Turin, Italy. On the front flyleaf a stamp added by the library reads "Dono Ciaccio 256." The selling price (2 Lire) is written in black ink on the frontispiece. On the back flyleaf, there are two scripts by different hands: "Gamba 1603" and "B.4." The book was gifted to the National Library of Turin by Giuseppina and Lisetta Ciaccio in 1907, together with the personal library of their father, physician Giuseppe Vincenzo Ciaccio.

Born in Catanzaro in 1824, Ciaccio studied in Napoli, Torino, Paris, London, and Berlin before settling in Bologna as a professor of Comparative Anatomy.[13] A passionate bibliophile and literary enthusiast, during his lifetime he assembled a library of about 1200 17th- and 18th-century editions, facsimiles, and other books mostly related to the history of the Italian language and the history of medicine and science.[14] As philosopher and Ciaccio's childhood friend, Francesco Acri remembered him on the occasion of his death in 1902, "next to the microscope he had the *Crusca*."[15]

The inscription "Gamba 1603" on the back flyleaf, probably added by the bookseller, refers to an entry in the 1828 edition of Bartolomeo Gamba's *Serie dei testi di lingua italiana e di altri esemplari del bene scrivere*. This reference work was commonly used as a catalogue

[13] On Ciaccio, see Renato G. Mazzolini, "Ciaccio, Giuseppe Vincenzo", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 25 (1981), 86-89.

[14] On Ciaccio's library, see Andrea De Pasquale, "Biblioteche private del XIX secolo nei fondi della Biblioteca Nazionale di Torino", *Percorsi* 6 (2004): 46-68, pp. 61-62. A manuscript catalogue, probably written on Ciaccio's initiative, is held at the National Library of Turin.

[15] Francesco Acri, "Discorso sul prof. Giuseppe Ciaccio", in *Annuario della R. Università di Bologna, anno scolastico 1901-1902* (Bologna, 1902), 189-192.

by libraries and booksellers.[16] In the entry, which is actually about Delle Colombe's *Discorso apologetico*, Gamba explains that Gaetano Poggiali mentions the *Risposte* in his *Serie di testi di lingua stampati, che si citano nel vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*.[17] Finally, the inscription "B.4." very likely indicates the physical location of the book.[18]

Even though the book was by no means a valuable piece of typography, it retained some value for collectors. During the 19th century, it had been on sale in Padua (1805),[19] Florence (1806, 1814, and 1855),[20], and Bologna (1852).[21] Guglielmo Libri owned a copy that went on auction in London in 1861. The brief description provided in the auction catalogue states that "in this almost unknown work we find the *Occhiale* frequently mentioned as applied to astronomical observations, and as the telescope was not yet invented at that time, it shows that *Occhiale* (spectacles) were used for astronomical observations."[22] The book is listed under the category "Galileo's history". In 1978, a copy once belonged to Willem van Thienen and now held by the ETH-Bibliothek of Zurich, Switzerland, went on auction at the opening bid of 70£. The name "Galileo Galilei" is scribbled on the frontispiece of this copy, perhaps to point out the general subject of the book.[23] Indeed, the association with Galileo, first suggested by Libri and then reappraised by Galilean scholarship,[24] was one of

16 On Gamba, see Giampietro Berti, Giuliana Ericani, and Mario Infelise, eds., *Una vita tra i libri. Bartolomeo Gamba* (Roma: FrancoAngeli, 2008).

17 Bartolomeo Gamba, *Serie dei testi di lingua italiana e di altri esemplari del bene scrivere* (Venezia: dalla tipografia di Alvisopoli, 1828).

18 In the Ciaccio's manuscript catalogue mentioned in note 2, the physical location is A.5.d. So, either the book was moved or the inscription "B.4" refers to another library.

19 *Catalogo dei libri italiani che si trovano vendibili appresso Carlo Scapin* (Padova: nel Seminario, 1805), 102.

20 *Catalogo di una scelta e copiosa collezione di libri greci, latini, italiani, francesi, inglesi, spagnoli, tedeschi &c. alcuni dei quali di un merito assai distinto che si vendono da Giovacchino Pagani negoziante di libri e stampatore in Firenze* (Firenze: presso Giovacchino Pagani, 1806), 100; *Catalogo dei libri greci, latini, italiani, francesi, inglesi, spagnoli, tedeschi &c. alcuni dei quali di un merito assai distinto che si vendono da Giovacchino Pagani negoziante di libri e stampatore in Firenze* (Firenze: presso Giovacchino Pagani, 1814), 26; *Catalogo dei libri duplicati della pubblica I. e R. Biblioteca Magliabechiana di Firenze che si offrono in vendita o in baratto* (Firenze: Tipografia Galileiana, 1855), 69.

21 *Catalogo della libreria di Carlo Ramazzotti librajo in Bologna* (Bologna: Tip. Guidi all'insegna dell'Ancora, 1852), 31.

22 *Catalogue of the Mathematical, Historical, Bibliographical & Miscellaneous Portion of the Celebrated Library of M. Guglielmo Libri. Part I. A-L* (London: printed by J. Days and sons, 1861), 336.

23 *Book Auction Records: A Priced and Annotated Annual Record of London, New York, and Edinburgh Book-Auctions* (London: Karslake and Co., 1978), 124.

24 See, for example, Antonio Favaro, *Galileo Galilei ed il «Dialogo de Cecco di Ronchitti da Bruzene in perpuosito de la stella nuova»* (Padova: Tipogr. G. Antonelli, 1881), 36-38; Drake, *Galileo Against the Philosophers*; and, more recently, Matteo Cosci, "Galileo alias Alimberto Mauri e la disputa fiorentina sulla Stella Nuova", *Atti e memoria dell'Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Parte III. Memorie della classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti* 135 (2024), 111-148.

the main motives behind the collectors' interest in the book. It was probably this kind of interest that led Ciaccio to purchase a copy of the *Risposte*, as he had in his library also several 18th- and 19th-century editions of Galileo's works and a first edition of Mario Guiducci's *Discorso delle comete* (Florence, 1619). Unfortunately, we have been unable to find, in booksellers' catalogues, any indication about the presence of annotations on the copies on sale, so we cannot, at the moment, provide a possible identification of the previous owner.

4. Datation and autorship of the marginal notes

The notes bear no indication of date; nevertheless, there are pieces of evidence that allow us to cautiously argue that they were likely produced in the second half of the 17th-century and possibly during the 1660s. The most explicit reference is a mention of Pierre Gassendi's observation of Mercury's transit in 1631 (N28). However, a note about elliptical orbits mentioning Johannes Kepler and Ismaël Boulliau leads us to believe that the annotations were written much later – that is, after Boulliau's *Astronomia Philolaica* was first published in 1645 (N7). The same note about Gassendi's observations also states that the transit of Mercury had been observed other times by several astronomers, strongly indicating that this note was written either after 1651 or, more likely, 1661, when Johannes Hevelius observed the transit in Danzig. Indeed, another note mentions "the philosophy of René Descartes and the works of Galileo" (N18), so it would be a fair bet to assume that the annotator was already familiar with the Bolognese edition of Galileo's works (1655-1656). Moreover, a reference to "Kepler, Boulliau, *and others*" [italic is ours] in the note about elliptical orbits (N7) suggests the possibility that the notes were perhaps written in the wake of Giovanni Antonio Borelli's *Theoricae mediceorum planetarum* (1666). Finally, a note in which fixed stars are matter-of-factly presented as self-luminous bodies similar to the Sun seems to indicate that, at the time of the writing, this belief was no longer a controversial issue, reinforcing our claim that the notes were written no earlier than about the end of the 1650s (N9).[25]

As for the *terminus ad quem*, since there is no firm ground for us to assess a specific date, we can only speculate and make cautious guesses. The consistent use of '*alquni*' in place of '*alcuni*' and the old-fashioned spelling of verbs like '*ha*', '*ho*', and '*hanno*', which are rendered as '*a*', '*o*' and '*anno*', for example, may indicate that the notes were written in

[25] As Geminiano Montanari states in his *Sopra la sparizione d'alcune stelle et altre nouità celesti* (1671), "giacche le stelle fisse a guisa di tanti Soli di propria luce sono dotate, come hoggi mai consentono tutti gli Astronomi da irrefragabili argomenti persuasi…" (Geminiano Montanari, "Sopra la sparizione d'alcune stelle et altre novità celesti discorso astronomico", in *Prose de' Signori Accademici Gelati* (Bologna: per li Manolessi, 1671), 369-392, p. 389). Also quoted in Caverni, *Storia del metodo sperimentale in Italia*, vol. 2, 501. Cf. also Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs*, 415-419.

the 1650s-1660s. Indeed, in the second half of the 17th century, the latter was a subject of debate, with the initial 'h' to discriminate between verbs on the one side and prepositions and names on the other increasingly becoming the standard usage.[26] Another hint at the notes being written in the 1660s is the circumstance that, despite showing a great interest in matters related to light and observational astronomy, the annotator does not seem to be up to date with the advancements of technology in telescope design and construction. The telescope is always referred to as *l'occhiale di Galileo* (Galileo's spyglass),[27] and the argumentation in favour of planets not having their own light merely reproduces the one already provided by Galileo in the letter included in Kepler's *Dioptrice* (1611).[28]

Apart from Boulliau, there is no reference to contemporaries who were engaged in observational astronomy and telescope construction such as Giuseppe Campani, Eustachio Divini, Adrien Auzout, Christiaan Huygens, Gian Domenico Cassini, or Geminiano Montanari. This may suggest that the author was not a professional astronomer and thus had limited or no access at all to state-of-the-art instruments and updated news, and perhaps was uninterested in the finer technicalities of astronomy.[29] If that is the case, then the problem with datation becomes trickier as we have no clue to decide whether omissions result from disinterest or ignorance. Thus we are forced to conclude that the notes might as well be from a much later period.

The matter is further complicated by the somewhat anachronistic tone in which the argumentations are delivered. The author writes as if both the fictitious Alimberto Mauri and Ludovico Delle Colombe are still alive, addressing them directly; at the same time, contemporaries of Delle Colombe like Baldassare Capra and Antonio Lorenzini are referred to in the past tense (see N21). In general, the whole issue of the *nova* of 1604 is treated as an ongoing current debate and not as something that happened at least thirty years before. To add more weirdness to this, the already dead Delle Colombe is encouraged to read Kepler, Boulliau, Descartes. It is possible that this is a rhetorical approach of some sort, or that Delle Colombe's *Risposte* were still considered a valuable authority in the annotator's cultural circle; in any case, there is no ground to argue in favor of a *terminus ad quem*. To sum up, then,

[26] According to Lorenzo Magalotti, he had discussed the matter at length with Alessandro Segni and Francesco Ridolfi during the composition of the *Saggi di Naturali Esperienze*, and in the end it was decided to drop the initial h. Cf. Magalotti to Ottavio Falconieri, August 5, 1664, in Lorenzo Magalotti, *Delle lettere familiari del Conte Lorenzo Magalotti e di altri insigni uomini a lui scritte*, vol. I (Firenze: nella Stamperia di S.A.R. per Gaet. Cambiagi, 1769), 88-90.

[27] Even an amateur astronomer like Barzini, in his *Osservationi* no longer called the telescope "occhiale di Galileo", but merely informed the reader that he had been using a *cannocchial di braccia quattro*; see Francesco Barzini, *Osservationi, e giudizi circa alla nuova stella; o Cometa apparsa sopra del nostro orizzonte nel principio di Dicembre 1664* (Firenze: all'insegna della Stella, 1665), 3.

[28] Johannes Kepler, *Dioptrice seu demonstratio eorum quae visui & visibilibus propter Conspicilla ita pridem inventa accidunt* (Augustae Vindelicorum: typis Davidis Franci, 1611), 24-25.

[29] It is not clear, from the notes, if the annotator knew about Boulliau's *De natura lucis* (1638).

what we know is that the notes were *very likely* produced after 1655, and *maybe* after 1666.

To positively identify the author of the annotations, further paleographical and philological research is required. At first, we hypothesized that the annotator might have been involved in or gravitating around the Accademia del Cimento or, more generally, be someone interested in the experimental research that was being carried out in Tuscany under the protection of Grand Duke Ferdinand II and Prince Leopold during the second half of the XVII century, but we have not been able to find conclusive paleographic evidence for identification. At the moment, we can try to delineate a general profile of the author based on a preliminary assessment of the marginal notes' style and content. Many sentences present a distinctly Tuscan flavor, and phrasal constructs like "*Tu ai di buoni amici, e letterati, oh che uomini furono il Capra, e 'l Lorenzini?*" and "*Bue mio tu dei sapere*" induce us to believe that the author was, if not Tuscan, at least well acquainted with the Tuscan vernacular and its cultural background. A reference to the *priorista* (N15) – the office-holding record book that many Florentine eminent families held – adds weight to this assumption.

The annotator shows great admiration for Galileo, enthusiastic endorsement of the elliptical hypothesis, and the firm belief that the fixed stars are self-luminous bodies similar to the Sun. These 'modern' views, however, are strangely mixed with what appears to be the conviction that new stars move around in an epicycle. While this conviction is never stated explicitly, the annotator reproaches Delle Colombe for making fun of it, argues against Mauri's point that the new star of 1604 was at its maximum size when it first appeared, and questions Delle Colombe's claim that even if the star moved in an epicycle it would have always been visible.[30] That the new star of 1604 was not actually new, but moved around in an epicycle had been maintained by Antonio Rocco in his *Esercitazioni filosofiche* (1633);[31] and according to Geminiano Montanari the belief that the new stars' appearing and disappearing was due to their getting closer to and farther from the Earth – be it by moving in a circle or a straight line – still enjoyed some popularity in the second half of the 17th century, especially among non-astronomers (*molti mal prattici d'astronomia*).[32] So here we have another sign that the annotator was not a professional astronomer, which seems all the more confirmed by a marginal note in which it is claimed that all the planets exhibit phases as the Moon does (N31). Again, as noted above, this leaves us with the issue of datation, as we have no way to tell if the notes were written before Bouillau's *Ad astronomos monita duo* (1667) or the annotator did not know about it. Arguing in favor of the new star of 1604 moving in an epicycle might as well have been the annotator's main concern, so that it was deliberately done *against* the opinion of astronomers who thought otherwise such as Boulliau and Riccioli.

30 See *supra*, section 2.
31 OG, VII, 627.
32 Montanari, *Sopra la sparizione d'alcune stelle*, 384.

All in all, what we have is a set of marginal notes likely written in the period 1650-1670 by someone who conjures up a curious mixing of old and new ideas which is worth examining in greater detail, as it can shed light on the tortuous path taken by Galilean science towards affirmation in 17th-century Italy.

Document

For details about the annotated copy of the *Risposte*, housed at the National Library of Turin, see section 3. Since the *Risposte* also include extensive excerpts from Delle Colombe's *Discorso* on the new star and Alimberto Mauri's *Considerazioni* (see section 1), in the "Risposte's text" column, the passages belonging to these three works are indicated in square brackets with the letters R (*Risposte*), D (*Discorso*), and C (*Considerazioni*).

Reference Number	Folio	*Risposte*'s Text	Marginal Notes	Reference Marks
N1	56v	[R] Natura locuta est ex ore Aristotelis	*Oh che grande sproposito!*	
N2	65r	[R] E io vi rispondo, che par, che facciate habito di lasciar sempre ciò che di buono dicon gli autori, e pigliate il cattivo, poiche biasimate in ciò Macrobio, e lo seguite nell'haver egli attribuito il suono, e l'armonia al Cielo: havendo fatto, come Francesco della Luna architettore, ilquale in assenza del Brunellesco, seguitando di far la loggia degli Incenti, perche fece il ricingimento d'un'architrave, che corre à basso, di sopra, fu sgridato da Filippo al suo ritorno.		* *
N3	66v	[R] Sig. Mauri, come quegli, che non attende, se non per diporto [vedi anche 132r ai "signori lettori"] a queste cose, ha voluto anche per diporto farnela dimostrazion, con la figura: però si lascia, come vana fatica, non havendo noi tempo da gittar ne' diporti.	*Voi fate bene a saltare il fosso quando si parla di dimostrazzioni.*	

N4	67r	[R] Anzi che della demostrazion, che per farmi piacer fatta avete; io ven'hò quel grado, che ha il Proconsolo a chi pesca per lui; perche nulla più mi giova, che, se fatta non l'haveste.	*Le cose non intese non si apprezzano.*	
N5	67v	[D] E io non dubito punto, che meglio filosofandosi ragione assai più verisimile ritrovar si potrebbe per questa, e per l'altre apparizioni, e potrebbonsi forse tor via l'imaginazion favolose di tanti Epicicli; ma per hora intorno a ciò altro non fa mestier ch'io dica. O Aristotele, sè tù in questi tempi vivessi, quanto riderestù [*sic*] di quegli astrologi, che rovinan tutto il Cielo per non rovinar se medesimi sotto un'argomento?	*Se Aristotile oggi vivesse uopo gli sarebbe ridirsi in molte cose, ed in molte dichiararsi meglio; e vedrebbe la sua natural filosofia povera, e nuda di vere conclusioni, perche in oggi si filosofa in virtù delle esperienze, e delle geometriche dimostrazzioni, e non delle chiacchiere, e interpetrazioni* [*sic*] *di testi, e pentole.*	
N6	68v	[R] Io ho veduto un discorso curioso, e dotto, e degno veramente, che i letterati lo leggano; dove, oltre che si piglia a dimostrar, che in tutte le scienze, e arti i cattolici sono stati più eccellenti degli eretici, egli non solamente, quando novera i filosofi non fa memoria veruna di quegli, che per loro impresa si misero a contraddire ad Aristotele, si che voi Mauri non vi accontenterete in quel bel numero, eziando, che voi foste eccellente; ma parlando de' ritrovatori degli strumenti, che voi negate a' filosofi, mostra, che tutti Filosofi, e Teologi sono stati coloro,	*Bue mio tu dei sapere, che Ignazio Danti, il Piccolomini, e Gemma Frisio furono intendenti della Astronomia, e di altre parti della matematica, e così gli altri, che quì tu nomini, e da coloro, che non sanno le matematiche tu potresti agevolm<ent>e accorgerti, che niuna buona cosa è uscita in luce pertinente alla natural filosofia, dico della vera filosofia, e non chiacchiere scolastiche.*	

		che i maravigliosi strumenti hanno fatti conoscere; come Ignazio Danti, eccellente Filosofo, e Teologo, il Radio latino, il cui uso è mirabile: Alessandro Piccolomini, che un uovo strumento anch'egli ne 'nsegna: il Cosmolabio, che da Iacopo Bossani è mentovato [...].		
N7	69r	[R] I moti circolari son reali, e veri, ma l'apparenze diverse, che in essi pianeti si veggono, come i movimenti ovati, e simli [*sic*] altri, reali non sono: e perciò non vi attaccate alla mala intelligenza vostra delle mie parole, per le quali vorreste, che io chiamassi favoloso ogni circolo, e ogni movimento celeste, havendo io detto, che imaginarie sian tutte queste apparizion planetali, attesoche, dicendo apparizioni, chi non vede, che io distinguo da i movimenti reali gli imaginari?	*Tu non potrai mai salvar l'apparenze celesti nell'ipotesi del moto de' pianeti per le circonferenze circolari, ma si bene ellittiche, leggi il Keplero, il Bullialdo, e altri, e poi riparlami de' tuoi movimenti circolari.*	
N8	69r	[R] Quei filosofi in somma, che niuna cognizione hanno di cotali strumenti astronomici, e moti, e apparenze celesti, che bene intendono, filosofando la ragion delle cose, chi dubita che facilissimamente non l'apparino, leggendo cotali autori, e senz'altro maestro? Il che non posson cosi agiatamente far quegli, che, mediante le filosofiche speculazioni, non si son resi agili d'intelletto, e di facile apprensiva, nelle squisite discipline, esercitandosi.	*La lettura de libri pieni di false dottrine porta grandissimi pregiudicij a gli uomini, così è adivenuto a te.*	

N9	71r	[R] E che la Luna non è assolutamente tenebrosa, essendo il corpo celeste sempre luminoso in atto. Ma quando vi si permettesse il dir, che oscura fosse assolutamente la Luna, che ne seguirebbe? Anzi che, per esser molto differente, e più imperfetta del suo Cielo, secondo il creder vostro, dovrebbe aver fatto in tanto tempo qualche mutazione; e nulladimeno il contrario ci dimostra.	*La luna è oscurissima da per se stessa e riceve il lume dal sole, e secondo l'aspetto, in che si trova con esso, à maggiore, o minor parte del suo disco, che stà volto verso la terra, illuminata; e quel candore della luna, che ella à cinque, o sei giorni avanti, e dopo la sinodo col sole, non è altro, che un lume secondario del sole riflesso dall'emisferio terrestre volto verso la luna in verso la medesima e gli altri pianeti cioè <Luna>, <Mercurio>, <Venere>, <Terra>, <Marte>, <Giove>, <Saturno>, non anno luce propria, ma la ricevono direttamente dal sole, e le stelle fisse anno propria luce, essendo come tanti soli.*	
N10	73r	[C] Ma, perche ciascheduna cosa hà la sua propria cagione, andrei per quella investigare altrimenti discorrendo, e dire, che, per esser la Luna, secondo Possidonio, e altri antichi Filosofi, come referisce Macrobio, cotanto simile alla terra, che un'altra terra è da lor nominata, non è sconvenevole il pensare, ch'ella non sia per tutto egual nello stesso modo, ma, sì come nella terra, ancora in lei si ritrovino monti di smisurata grandeza, anzi tanto maggiori, quanto à noi son sensibili.	*questo dimostra il gran Galileo nostro.*	

N11	73r	[R] La Luna, che è tanto minor della terra havrà i monti quasi maggiori della stessa Luna, à voler che siano sensibili: e cosi farete, come quel rosignolo, che per farsi correr dietro a un certo gocciolone, gli diede a' creder d'haver in corpo un diamante grosso quant'è un'uovo d'oca, non s'accorgendo egli, che non era si grosso il rosignuolo stesso.	*se la geometria vi fusse familiare, voi non diresti questi spropositi*	
N12	73v	[C] E per prova di questo addurrei un'agevole, e bella osservazione, che si può di continuo fare, quando ella è in quadrato rispetto al Sole. Perciocche allora ella non fa il mezzo cerchio pulito, e netto, ma sempre con qualche bernoccolo nel mezo.	*ragione evidentissima*	
N13	78r	[C] Imperoche, quantunque da per lor sien luminose, con tuttociò il compimento, e perfezione dello splendore è dato loro dal Sole, ilche si vede manifestamente avvenir nella Luna, laqual, come dice Rainoldo, se ella non avesse un certo lume proprio, e particulare, manifesto è, che ne' totali eclissi, quando ella del tutto perde di vista il Sole, non si scorgerebbe il suo cerchio di quel colore così tetro, e alcuna volta spaventevole.	*la luna non à lume alquno proprio, ma quello avviene nell'eclisse per la refrazzione nell'atmosfera de' raggi del <Sole>.*	

N14	80v	[R] E senza, che n'adduciamo altre provanze, basterà dire, che è comun consenso di tutti gli Astrologi, per non mentovare i Filosofi, Teologi, e la Sacra scrittura, eziando; che vogliono il Sole esser locato nel mezo del Cielo, accioche illumini il Mondo; ma non l'altre stelle.	*ma niuna stella, fuor che i pianeti primarij, e secondarij, riceve il lume dal sole, ma di propria luce risplende, e ne è segno la gran differenza, che è fra il vivo raggio, e scintillante delle stelle fisse, e 'l lume smorto, e abbacinato de' pianeti, riguardando gli uni, e gli altri con l'occhiale grande del Galileo.*	
N15	83v	[R] Signor no, che l'ordine de Cieli non si dee chiama [*sic*] alterato; conciosiache, non solo la virtù che è ristretta in quel globo solare, se fosse sparsa per tutto il suo Cielo, verrebbe tanto innacquata, che meno efficacemente, opererebbe, che non fà la virtù di Marte con tutto il suo Cielo; ma, che più importa è, che per esser differenti di spezie, non può mai il Cielo inferiore, quando fosse tutto stella esser più nobile del superiore; si come altresi delle stelle fra di loro comparate, accade il medesimo: sendo che altro non siano le stelle, che parte più densa del suo Cielo; e, come i filosofanti vogliono, tale è la forma delle cose, quale è la disposizion della materia, che la riceve. Tolommeo ancora nel suo quadripartito, non dic'egli, che le stelle quanto più alte situate sono, più nobile, e più efficace è la virtù loro?	*bisogna, che tu produca il priorista delle stelle, e ci faccia vedere la lor nobiltà, oh tu sei pur ridicolo in questa tua maniera di filosofare!*	

N16	87v	[R][...] il Primomobile esser tutto sparto di stelle.	*questo tuo primo mobile non si muove per sè, che di un solo movimento, or se le stelle fisse sono nel primo mobile, queste non si moveranno, se non del solo moto diurno, che è quello del primo mobile, ma questo è falso, perche le stelle fisse oltre il moto diurno anno anche il moto proprio da ponente in oriente, adunque le stelle fisse non sono nel primo mobile.*	
N17	87v	[R] Ma, se l'aver dalla mia Aristotele, e per autorita, e per ragion, non vi quieta in maniera, che ad ogni modo non vogliate imputarmi di troppo ardito, crederei che, dove gli scrittori son dubbi, o vari, o non contraddicenti, e mutoli, non potendo dirsi, che altri vada contro la comune, perche altramente non avrei cotal cosa affermato; ciò dovesse almen bastarvi, per conceder, che io potessi far prova dell'ingegno, senza sostener menda di arrogante.	*Assicurati, che per conoscere i fenomeni del cielo fa' di mestieri osservarlo, e contemplarlo, e non stare in camera a voltar leggende, e sognare spropositi.*	
N18	93r	[R] Il pelago della filosofia è stato da capricciosi filosofastri tutto infettato, per la mala intelligenza: e però chi non beve di quella parte, dove l'unicorco Aristotele, per esser unico, ha bevuto prima, si avvelena di corrotta filosofia, come havete fatto voi.	*e tu ai fatto la parte tua meglio d'ogn'altro.* *Leggi la filosofia di Renato Cartesio e l'opere del Galileo e poi saprai come si fa' a dimostrar le cagioni de gli effetti naturali.*	

N19	93v	[R] Saggio voi, che per non haver di questi ribrezi, ancora havete a pensar di risolver, qual volete, d'intorno a ciò, elegger per vostro parere; e finalmente, dopo molto cercare senza ritrovar nulla, havete deliberato, lasciarvi pensare ad altri, per non ci intisichir dentro affatto.	*è assai meglio confessar di non intendere una cosa, che dir spropositi cosi solenni, come perpetuamente tu fai.*	
N20	101v	[R] E per sempre con vostra pace, come havete veduto per le nostre dimostrazioni.	*se tutte le dimostrazzion fossero come son le tue, Iddio ne guardi il mondo.*	* [This reference mark also appears at the end of Delle Colombe's sentence.]
N21	102v	[R] Onde più si dee credere a Baldassar Capra, il quale afferma averla minutissimamente osservata in Padova, e più volte, e d'essere stato il primo, come altri matematici di Padova concedono […].	*tu ai di buoni amici, e letterati, oh che grandi uomini sono stati il Capra, e 'l Lorenzini?*	
N22	116r	[C] Consciosiache quantunque gli occhiali si ritrovassero la prima volta nel 1208 nulladimeno l'uso loro, essendosi in questa lungheza di tempo anneghittito solo in oggetti vili, non è stato mai, se non ora da voi, adoperato, e adattato in favor dell'Astrologia à cose sovrane, e celesti.		*

N23	116v	[D] [...] quel piazzamento di biancheggianti particelle [...].	*il candor della Via lattea non vien da altro, che pe' l lume, che ne mandano innumerabili piccole stelle, delle quali ella è composta, come chiaro si vede con l'occhiale del Galileo.*	
N24	119r	[R] Lo scelerato Agrippa faceva specchi, in cui le cose di quattro, ò cinque miglia lontano si vedeano, se dentro vi dava il Sole illuminandole. Pittagora sapeva farli cotanto lucidi, che diede occasion, per gli effetti che di lontano adoperavano, che si favoleggiasse, che egli, in essi scrivendo, faceva per via di reflesso veder le stesse lettere nella faccia della Luna, di varie parti del Mondo. [...]		*
N25	119v	[D] Sovviemmi un concetto d'un bell'ingegno, che tutte le raccontate opinioni, e, se altre cen'ha ancora, stima non esser da accettar per vere, dicendo, che è molto più verisimile, questa nuova stella non esser fissa, ben che nel firmamento, ma che, volgendosi per lo suo Epiciclo, non prima, che hora sia discesa nell'opposito dell'auge di quello; e perciò fattasi veder nella parte infima, ciò è nella concava superficie del suo cielo.	*non ti far tanto beffe di questa oppinione, che ella non è ridicola come la tua.*	

N26	120r	[C] Risponderebbe un'Astronomo, che non è verisimile, che questa nuova stella, per voltarsi in un suo Epiciclo, dal girar dell'Apogeo al Perigeo, diventasse visibile: imperocche, per conseguenza, ella prima sarebbe apparita piccola, e poi di mano in mano, secondo l'avvicinarsi al Perigeo, maggiore: ilche, come si è detto di sopra nella Considerazione 42 è falso. In oltre ella dal suo apparire, al suo sparire avrebbe di continuo fatta gran diversità d'aspetto: le quali cose quanto lontane sien dalla verità, ciascheduno sensibilmente l'hà conosciuto. Ma vadasi pure à riporre l'Astronomia con tutti quanti i seguaci suoi, che le vere risposte son quelle del nostro Colombo, che è Filosofo naturale. Attendete, che elle s'andranno sempre esplicando.	*considera, che e' può essere, che la nuova stella anche trovandosi nel perigeo, non fusse piu vicina alla terra di quello che sia qualunque stella fissa, e cosi ella non patirebbe parallasse sensibile, come le stelle fisse non la patiscono quantunque esse sieno in diversa distanza poste dal centro della terra; e tanto grande è la distanza d'una stella fissa (anche della meno remota) dalla terra, che l'avvicinarsele la terra per tutto il diametro dell'orbe magno (secondo il Copernico) non apporta variazione d'aspetto sensibile.*	
N27	120v	[R] E perche dalla mutazion dell'aspetto, se in quella altezza non può haver luogo la paralasse?	*quà tu di' bene.*	
N28	121v	[D] Imperoche non è egli vero, che quel cerchietto, dentro a cui si volge la stella, non la toglie mai di vista a' riguardanti, portandola nella porzion superiore, come nella parte opposta, che la concava superficie del suo ciel riguarda? Saturno, per esempio, ritrovisi nell'Auge, ò nell'opposto dell'Auge del suo Epiciclo, altra	*e perche non può essere, che la stella sia stata nel perigeo altre volte, ma non osservata da gli astronomi antichi? mercurio, e venere, che non saranno stati sotto il disco del sole anche ne tempi antichi? e pure non sono stati osservati prima, che da Pietro Gassendo, cioe mercurio sotto il disco solare, e poi altre volte da altri astronomi.*	

		differenza non fà, che maggiore, ò minore apparire, ma non mai si perde la veduta di quello, per ritrovarsi nell'Apogeo di esso circolo, in cui si gira quel pianeta. Hora, sè la stella nuovamente apparita, non mai più s'è veduta, se non in questi tempi, chiara cosa è, che per altra strada, che per mezo dell'Epiciclo a gli occhi de' riguardanti s'è dimostrata. Oltreacciò, non tutte le stelle di quel cielo debbono havere Epiciclo. Onde di quelle, che non si portano da gli Epicicli verso l'Apogeo, ma fisse nella concava superficie del Cristallino cielo si ritrovano, supposto, che ve ne fosse, perche non si veggono almeno le maggiori? Che forse non v'è altra che quella? E poi, farebbe di mestier, che il suo Epiciclo fosse maggior di tutto il ciel, nelquale egli si ritrovasse, à voler che una stella, che grande rassembra esser, come Giove la sua veduta ne togliesse, girandosi verso l'Auge di quel circolo. Cosa, che veramente difficile sarebbe a persuadersi da Bruno pittore a quel melenso di Calandrino.		
N29	123r	[C] […] ricevono la chiarezza, e splendor del Sole, come lor signore e padrone […].	*questo* [crossed out]	

N30	123r	[R] Quale stella vedete voi sopra la Luna, che non habbia lume più vivo di essa? Un ciel tanto più nobile di quel della Luna, che voi stimate simile alla terra, havrà le sue stelle oscure come è il corpo lunare? […] E che 'l corpo lunare si vegga senza che illuminato sia dal Sole, ciò appar manifesto nella sua eclisse.	*questo è un solenne sproposito il dir che si vedrebbe la luna se il sole non l'illuminasse nell'eclisse ciò avviene per la refrazzione de raggi solari nell'atmosfera, e non per proprio lume della luna, la qual talvolta è stato osservato* [wrote *'stata osservata'* and corrected it] *nel mezzo dell'eclisse che non si sia punto, ne poco veduta.*	
N31	123v	[R] Anzi che come di sopra si disse; Macrobio, a cui voi credete, fino il suon celeste, afferma con Avicenna, e altri, che le stelle, fuor solamente la Luna, non ricevon lume dal Sole: e io dissi, che gli Astrologi intendevan solamente, le stelle conosciute, fino all'ottavo cielo, mendicare il lume del Sole, se bene il vivace lume di quelle ne persuade incontrario, come ancora afferma il Pererio, dicendo, che è più conforme alla Sacra Scrittura: portando in mezo le parole del Dottor delle genti, che vuole ciascuna stella haver proprio splendore, e differente fra di loro ancora, così dicendo […].	*è vero, che le stelle anno proprio lume, ed i pianeti l'anno solamente dal sole, i quali secondo l'aspetto, nel quale sono col sole, variano figura come fà la luna.*	

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Le “Robbe del Museo” di Federico Cesi

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English title
Federico Cesi’s Museum

Abstract
Federico Cesi’s Museum, whose inventory is transcribed here in its entirety for the first time, is in constant dialogue with the Library. Through the study of the Lincean sources, which attribute so much importance to the ars pingendi, the writing contextualizes the various inventory items, by analizying the events that influence the history of the Academia and by proposing some new documents on the legacy of the Cesi family.

Keywords
Federico Cesi, Lincei, museum, library, collections

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Biblioteca e Museo nelle fonti lincee

Tra la fine del XVI e l'inizio del XVII secolo, in seguito al crescente interesse per le scienze, i *naturalia* e gli *exotica*, il gusto collezionistico congiunge una nuova finalità di carattere didattico a quella meramente estetica, già fortemente consolidatasi nei decenni precedenti.[1] Sull'esempio della raccolta aldrovandiana,[2] caposaldo del collezionismo eclettico tardocinquecentesco, l'Accademia dei Lincei persegue sin dalle sue origini (1603) l'obiettivo di riunire opere d'arte che riproducono *naturalia* botanici e zoologici, ma anche beni di varia natura e *curiosa*.[3] Ne conseguono la necessità della raffigurazione dal vero e la presenza sia

1 Per il collezionismo nella Roma del Seicento cf. Cristina De Benedictis, *Per la storia del collezionismo italiano. Fonti e documenti* (Milano: Ponte alle Grazie, 1998), 116-125; Luigi Spezzaferro, "Problemi del collezionismo a Roma nel XVII secolo", in *Geografia del collezionismo: Italia e Francia tra il XVI e il XVIII secolo: atti delle giornate di studio dedicate a Giuliano Briganti (Roma, 19-21 settembre 1996)*, a cura di Olivier Bonfait, Michel Hochmann, Luigi Spezzaferro, Bruno Toscano (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2001), 1-23. Per limitarci a un solo, illustre, esempio, nella collezione di Cassiano dal Pozzo la pittura ha un fine più didattico che estetico (*ivi*, 20) e l'intento collezionistico cede il posto alla catalogazione e alla classificazione. Per quest'ultimo aspetto, cf. Donatella Livia Sparti, *Le collezioni dal Pozzo: storia di una famiglia e del suo museo nella Roma seicentesca* (Modena: Panini, 1992), 67-68. Per gli studi sulla raccolta puteana si vedano: Ead., "Criteri museografici nella collezione dal Pozzo alla luce di documentazione inedita", in *Cassiano dal Pozzo: atti del seminario internazionale di studi*, a cura di Francesco Solinas (Roma: De Luca, 1989), 221-235; Ead., "The dal Pozzo collection again: the inventories of 1689 and 1695 and the family archive", *The Burlington Magazine* 132, 1049 (1990): 551-570; Ead., *Le collezioni dal Pozzo*; Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (München: Hirmer, 1999); Francesco Solinas, "Cassiano dal Pozzo Linceo e alcuni fogli del *Museo Cartaceo* recentemente acquisiti per le collezioni accademiche", in *Sul* Tesoro Messicano *e su alcuni disegni del Museo Cartaceo di Cassiano dal Pozzo*, a cura di Sabina Brevaglieri, Luigi Guerrini, Francesco Solinas (Roma: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 2007), 93-136.

2 Per il rapporto fra natura, scienza e raffigurazione in Ulisse Aldrovandi, si vedano: Giuseppe Olmi, "Osservazione della natura e raffigurazione in Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605)", *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 3 (1977), 105-181; Id., *Ulisse Aldrovandi: scienza e natura nel secondo Cinquecento* (Trento: Libera Università degli studi di Trento, Gruppo di teoria e storia sociale, 1978); Id., *L'inventario del mondo. Catalogazione della natura e luoghi del sapere nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1992), 9-117.

3 Sulla prima Accademia cf.: Baldassarre Odescalchi, *Memorie istorico critiche dell'Accademia de' Lincei e del Principe Federico Cesi* (Roma: Luigi Perego Salvioni, 1806), anche nella nuova edizione a cura di Giuseppe Finocchiaro e Marco Guardo (Roma: Bardi, 2024); Domenico Carutti, *Breve storia della Accademia dei Lincei* (Roma: Salviucci, 1883); Giuseppe Gabrieli, *Contributi alla storia della Accademia dei Lincei* (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1989), voll. I-II; Giuseppe Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo* (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1996); Irene Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince. I primi lincei tra arte, scienza e collezionismo (1603-1630)* (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2002); David Freedberg, *L'occhio della*

di un "pictor ad naturalia observata effingenda" sia di uno "sculptor" per i rami, teorizzate dal dettato statutario del sodalizio,[4] il *Lynceographum*.

Inoltre il "Rerum cognitionem et sapientiam […] acquirere"[5] è sovente connesso con la "peregrinatio studiosa" e sottende in modo costante la comunicazione epistolare tra i sodali. "Plurimum docendo discitur" riportano poi le norme dello statuto,[6] preannunciando in tal modo il rilievo che più tardi Federico Cesi, nel suo discorso *Del natural desiderio di sapere*, ascriverà da un lato all'"ammaestramento che porgono le voci vive de' dotti", dall'altro alle "compite librarie".[7]

Molteplici sono i riferimenti al Museo e alla Biblioteca negli statuti e nel carteggio lincei. Le "particulae" del *Lynceographum* prescrivono in primo luogo "Communis aula Bibliothecae sit […] et Musaeum sit",[8] esortando a visitare altre raccolte museali e librarie.[9] Ne sortisce che sin dai primi anni del sodalizio emerge con ogni evidenza la giustapposizione della Biblioteca e del Museo,[10] la prima luogo atto ad apprendere, il secondo

lince: Galileo, i suoi amici e gli inizi della moderna storia naturale, trad. a cura di Luigi Guerrini (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2007); Paolo Galluzzi, *Libertà di filosofare* in naturalibus. *I mondi paralleli di Cesi e Galileo* (Roma: Scienze e Lettere, 2014); Michele Camerota, Alessandro Ottaviani, Oreste Trabucco, a cura di, Lynceorum historia: *le 'schede lincee' di Martin Fogel* (Roma: Bardi, 2021). Per i testi statutari cf. Anna Nicolò, a cura di, *Lynceographum quo norma studiosae vitae Lynceorum philosophorum exponitur* (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2001) e Marco Guardo, Raniero Orioli, a cura di, *Cronache e statuti della prima Accademia dei Lincei*: Gesta Lynceorum, «*Ristretto delle Costituzioni*», Praescriptiones Lynceae Academiae (Roma: Scienze e Lettere, 2014).

4 Cf. Nicolò, a cura di, *Lynceographum*, 91. Sul legame fra i Lincei e l'*ars pingendi*, cf. Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 7-14; Marco Guardo, "Nell'officina del *Tesoro Messicano*. Il ruolo misconosciuto di Marco Antonio Petilio nel sodalizio linceo", in *Il* Tesoro Messicano. *Libri e saperi tra Europa e nuovo mondo*, a cura di Maria Eugenia Cadeddu e Marco Guardo (Firenze: Olschki, 2013), 68. In relazione al rapporto fra Cesi e alcuni incisori, quali Matthäus e Iohann Friedrich Greuter, cf. Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi, "Il mecenatismo artistico di Federico Cesi il linceo", *Studi di Storia dell'Arte*, 21 (2010): 107-118.

5 Nicolò, a cura di, *Lynceograpghum*, 1.

6 *Ivi*, 71.

7 Federico Cesi, "Del natural desiderio di sapere et institutione de' Lincei per adempimento di esso", in *Galileo e gli scienziati del Seicento*, II, *Scienziati del Seicento*, a cura di Maria Luisa Altieri Biagi e Bruno Basile (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1980), 39-70, in particolare 55.

8 Nicolò, a cura di, *Lynceographum*, 88.

9 *Ivi*, 172: "Res ipsae visitandae sunt, Domus, Lyceum, suppellectilia, mobiliaque omnia, Bibliotheca, Musaeum […]". I Lincei che dispongono la donazione delle proprie raccolte librarie e museali sono insigniti con il titolo di "Benefactores": *ivi*, 53 e 181.

10 Per la Biblioteca lincea cf. Anna Capecchi, "Per la ricostruzione di una biblioteca seicentesca: i libri di storia naturale di Federico Cesi Lynceorum Princeps", *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, XLI, fasc. 5-6 (1986), 145-164; Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. I, 79-96; Enrica Schettini Piazza, "Più 'studio' che 'passatempo':

idoneo all'osservazione. Non meraviglia, allora, che durante le sue frequenti peregrinazioni il linceo olandese Joannes van Heeck (Ioannes Heckius) raccolga numerosi oggetti e piante da destinare al Museo,[11] ma nel contempo anche libri "quos Lyncaeis placituros sciret".[12]

Non diversamente, il carteggio linceo concorre a individuare ulteriori riferimenti alle raccolte accademiche: Cesi, scrivendo a Francesco Stelluti e ad Anastasio de Filiis, menziona "cose naturali per i Lyncaei necessarissime" e "libri rarissimi" per la "nostra Biblioteca", oltre a uno "scultore di figure in rame";[13] inoltre egli afferma di essere disposto a provvedere "la Biblioteca Lyncea de libri et altre cose".[14] Parimenti Heckius, mosso da analogo intento, riferendosi ad alcune farfalle ("papiliones") e locuste ("locustae") raccolte nel corso delle sue peregrinazioni, raccomanda ai Lincei di custodirle nel "Musaeo", mentre sarà egli stesso a recare con sé gli "annulosa".[15] Ancora: Cesi cita a Joahannes Faber

la *libraria* di Federico Cesi e le sue peregrinazioni", in *Federico Cesi e i primi lincei in Umbria: atti del convegno di studi nel IV centenario della fondazione dell'Accademia dei Lincei (Terni, 24-25 ottobre 2003)*, a cura di Vincenzo Pirro (Terni: Thyrus, 2005), 129-154; Maria Teresa Biagetti, *La biblioteca di Federico Cesi* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2008), per la trascrizione e il commento degli inventari; Ead., "Le Scienze della natura nella biblioteca di Federico Cesi e la rappresentazione del mondo animale nelle pubblicazioni lincee", in *Gli animali e la caccia nell'immaginario di Francesco Maria II della Rovere*, a cura di Massimo Moretti (Roma: De Luca, 2023), 315-322; Guardo, Orioli, a cura di, *Cronache e statuti*, 135-136. Marco Guardo, *Sulle tracce della lince* (Roma: Bardi, 2016), 17-19, per il ruolo del Bibliotecario accademico, coinvolto anche nelle vicende editoriali. Cf. Tullio Gregory, *La biblioteca dei Lincei: percorsi e vicende* (Roma: Bardi, 2019), per l'ideologia sottesa alla Biblioteca cesiana.

11 "Cures etiam rogo, si quos libros apud nos non reperibiles inveneris ut habeas, similiter de rarioribus plantarum seminibus, aliqua digna Lyceo" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 44-45, lettera del 12 agosto 1604).

12 Guardo, Orioli, a cura di, *Cronache e statuti*, 111. Fra le raccolte che Heckius ha modo di osservare vi è quella del Duca Ferdinando I (*ivi*, 107). Per il profilo biografico del linceo olandese, cf. Howard Rienstra, "Giovanni Ecchio Linceo: appunti cronologici e bibliografici", *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche, filologiche*, s. 8, vol. XXIII, fasc. 7-12 (1968), 255-266, e Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. I, 1093-1115.

13 Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 59-70, lettera del 10 aprile 1605, in particolare 61 e 67.

14 "e li manderemo denari acciò li proveda la Biblioteca Lyncea de libri et altre cose" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 76, lettera del 30 aprile 1605). Nel medesimo anno Cesi ribadisce le sue intenzioni (*ivi*, 83, lettera del 25 giugno) e manda alcuni scudi per acquistare i libri da destinare alla raccolta lincea (*ivi*, 86, lettera del 2 luglio).

15 "[…] ea et vobis non mittam, sed ipse feram. […] Valete interim, atque donec venero inter mea abdita reliqua ista in Musaeo custodite" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 88, lettera del 1° agosto 1605). Per "annulosa" si intendono gli animali con struttura ad anello, quali vermi, lombrichi, serpenti e non soltanto: cf. Ulisse Aldrovandi, *De animalibus insectis* (Francofurti: Typis Pauli Jacobi, 1618), 2.

il "Lyncis Musaeum",[16] e il *poeta-doctus* linceo Iosse de Rycke (Iustus Riquius) attesta di scrivere al sodale di Bamberga "E Musaeo Caesiano nostro" (in entrambe le occorrenze la menzione del Museo rinvia al Palazzo romano di Via della Maschera d'Oro).[17]

Il Museo nelle intenzioni di Cesi non è destinato a un uso privato ma all'intera comunità lincea, rappresentando in tal modo, unitamente alla Biblioteca, il manifesto della *methodus studendi* dell'Accademia.[18] A conferma di questo costante rapporto fra raccolta museale e "libraria", non casualmente il linceo Fabio Colonna, durante la ricerca di una sede adatta per il liceo napoletano, individua una struttura caratterizzata da vasti ambienti e con spazi tali da poter ospitare diverse "librarie" e una "lunga galleria".[19]

Infine, in relazione alla Biblioteca, il carteggio linceo attesta più volte la volontà di acquisire quella degli accademici defunti: a tal fine il *Lynceorum Princeps* istruisce meticolosamente Stelluti onde, forte di ogni arma retorica, convinca il sodale Giovambattista Della Porta a lasciare la propria "libraria" ai Lincei, ché altrimenti rischierebbe di andar dispersa; mentre in seguito Faber, informando Cesi della morte di Virginio Cesarini,[20] non nasconde la sua preoccupazione per il destino della biblioteca di quest'ultimo, sperando

16 Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 622-623, lettera del 1° gennaio 1618.

17 *Ivi*, 1076, lettera del 10 dicembre 1625. Su Riquius e la sua produzione cf. Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. II, 1165-1175; Marco Guardo, "L'ape e le api: il paratesto linceo e l'omaggio ai Barberini", *Paratesto*, 1 (2004), 121-136; Angela Gallottini, Marco Guardo, "Le *Apes Dianiae* di Iustus Riquius: poesia e antiquaria nella prima Accademia dei Lincei", *L'Ellisse* III (2008), 51-83; Marco Guardo, "Iustus Riquius e la *Vita Virginii Caesarini*. Fonti, tematiche e stile", in *Dal 'mondo scritto' al 'mondo non scritto'. Studi di letteratura italiana per Eraldo Bellini*, a cura di Marco Corradini, Roberta Ferro, Maria Teresa Girardi (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2021), 41-53.

18 Cf. Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 37-44. Per le residenze romane della famiglia Cesi, cf. Michela Peretti, "Le residenze romane della famiglia Cesi", in *I Cesi di Acquasparta, la dimora di Federico Cesi il Linceo e le accademie in Umbria nell'età moderna: atti e nuovi contributi degli incontri di studio ad Acquasparta (TR), Palazzo Cesi, 26 settembre-24 ottobre 2015*, a cura di Giorgio De Petra, Paola Monacchia (Perugia: Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria, 2017), 629-664, mentre per la loro decorazione cf. Guerrieri Borsoi, "Il mecenatismo artistico di Federico Cesi", in particolare 100-106 per il palazzo in via della Maschera d'Oro. Fabrizio Federici, "Alla ricerca dell'esattezza: Peiresc, Francesco Gualdi e l'antico", in *Rome-Paris, 1640. Transferts culturels et reinassance d'un centre artistique*, sous la direction de Marc Bayard (Paris: Somogy; Rome: Academie de France à Rome, 2010), 229-273, pone in risalto l'impegno di un altro collezionista, il riminese Francesco Gualdi, che notevole energia profonde nella promozione e nella circolazione del proprio Museo romano.

19 Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 236-238, lettera del 9 giugno 1612. Sulle vicende del liceo napoletano, cf. Giuseppe Olmi, "La colonia lincea di Napoli", in *Galileo e Napoli*, a cura di Fabrizio Lomonaco, Maurizio Torrini (Napoli: Guida, 1987), 23-48, e in particolar modo Camerota, Ottaviani, Trabucco, a cura di, *Lynceorum historia*, 135-138 e 227ss.

20 Cf. Eraldo Bellini, "La vita di Virginio Cesarini Linceo", in *I primi Lincei. Le biografie manoscritte*, a cura di Marco Guardo (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2016), 15-39, e Guardo, "Iustus Riquius", 41-53.

che possa confluire nelle raccolte librarie dell'Accademia.[21] La medesima preoccupazione si rileva quando, successivamente alla scomparsa del *Lynceorum Princeps* nel 1630, Stelluti scrive a Cassiano Dal Pozzo, preoccupato per le sorti delle raccolte museali e librarie del *Princeps*, non avendo quest'ultimo disposto alcun testamento.[22] Il sodale fabrianese provvede affinché parte della Biblioteca e del patrimonio iconografico possa essere acquistata da Cassiano,[23] mentre per il Museo viene steso un inventario, contenuto nel manoscritto Archivio Linceo 32.[24]

A riguardo di tale documento, alcuni studiosi non hanno nascosto le loro perplessità dovute al fatto che esso sarebbe testimone solo parziale delle raccolte di Cesi.[25] Redatto dopo la sua morte, esso sottende alcune lacune che, se pur non irrilevanti, tuttavia non ne inficiano il valore di fonte: innanzitutto attesta un numero esiguo di minerali, ove si consideri che il fondatore dell'Accademia li raccolse in gran copia, così come con i fossili;[26] alcuni beni, inoltre, hanno la *facies* di una qualsiasi *Wunderkammer* del secolo precedente,[27] non certo di un *musaeum* come quello citato di frequente nel carteggio; meraviglia, infine, la quasi totale assenza di reperti archeologici, ove si consideri da un lato che Stelluti nel *Persio* (1630) descrive una statua di Iside vista nelle collezioni di Cesi (ma non documentata nelle carte in questione);[28] dall'altro che il cardinale Pier

[21] Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 342-352, in particolare 347, lettera di metà aprile del 1613 e 863-865, 875-876, lettere del 13 aprile e dell'11 maggio 1624.

[22] "Le quali [le cose dell'Accademia] vedo andare in rovina, se non abbracciate da signore potente; [...] giachè il povero Signore non ha disposto di quelle come sempre ha detto, et era di lasciar il suo Museo, libraria [...] alla detta Accademia [...]. Ma non avendo fatto testamento [...]" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1220-1221, lettera del 17 agosto 1630).

[23] Per la documentazione archivistica sulla Biblioteca di Federico Cesi, cf. Schettini Piazza, "La *libraria* di Federico Cesi", (in particolare 130-131 per il riferimento a Cassiano) e Biagetti, *La biblioteca di Federico Cesi*. Una lettera di Cassiano a Isabella Salviati, vedova di Cesi, testimonia la vendita della Biblioteca avvenuta nel 1633: "per la presente scritta di propria mano confesso io Caval.r Cassiano Dal Pozzo haver compro la libraria [...] dall'Ecc.ma Sig.ra D. Isabella Salviati [...]; dalla quale mi è stata consegnata per prezzo di scudi settecento cinquantotto m[one]ta e giuli dieci per scudo [...]" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1239, lettera del 21 gennaio 1633).

[24] Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Ms. Archivio Linceo 32 (d'ora in avanti Arch. Linc. 32), ff. 84*v*-102*v*.

[25] Anna Nicolò, Francesco Solinas, "Per una analisi del collezionismo linceo: l'Archivio Linceo 32 e il Museo di Federico Cesi", *Atti dei convegni lincei 78* (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1986), 194-212.

[26] Per lo studio dei fossili in ambito linceo cf. Annibale Mottana, Il *Trattato del legno fossile minerale* di Francesco Stelluti (Roma: Bardi, 2024).

[27] Vedi *infra*.

[28] Francesco Stelluti, *Persio tradotto in verso sciolto e dichiarato* (Roma: Appresso Giacomo Mascardi, 1630), 186: "[...] è detta statuetta del nostro Signor Principe Cesi; quale ha nella Rocca

Donato Cesi Senior (1521-1586) dispone che tutti i suoi beni, dunque anche la collezione di *antiquitates*, passino al nipote *ex fratre* Federico (I Duca d'Acquasparta e padre del Nostro) e al suo primogenito maschio.[29] Ebbene, di tali beni non vi è alcuna traccia nel documento in questione.

Secondo uno studio recente, che ha posto in luce l'esistenza di una piccola collezione archeologica presso il palazzo cesiano di S. Angelo Romano, l'assenza di molti reperti nell'inventario dell'Archivio Linceo 32 non induce a congetturare che parte della collezione non fosse stata oggetto di inventario. Infatti le fonti, compreso Stelluti, poco si soffermano sulla collezione di Cesi, per poi passare in rassegna quella ben più prestigiosa degli zii paterni, i cardinali Paolo Emilio (1487-1537) e Federico (1500-1565), beni di proprietà di Federico Cesi I Duca d'Acquasparta, il quale nel 1622 ne vendette una cospicua parte a Ludovico Ludovisi, cardinal nepote di Gregorio XV:[30] ne consegue di necessità l'assenza delle *antiquitates* nelle carte inventariali cesiane, non essendo quelle di proprietà del Nostro. Inoltre avremmo ragione di supporre che il suddetto inventario, redatto nell'Urbe, si limitasse a elencare i beni custoditi nel palazzo in Via della Maschera d'Oro: tale congettura giustificherebbe anche l'assenza della piccola statua di Iside e di "altre fatte da eccellenti Scultori", menzionate da Stelluti nelle collezioni di S. Angelo Romano.[31]

Alla luce di tali osservazioni, si pubblica in questa sede, per la prima volta, l'edizione interpretativa dell'inventario cesiano nella sua interezza,[32] e successivamente se ne indaga un *corpus* cospicuo di voci, ponendo a confronto le raccolte del *Princeps Lynceorum* e quelle di altri collezionisti del suo secolo, quali Francesco Barberini, Cassiano dal Pozzo, Johannes Faber, Ferrante Imperato, Francesco Calzolari, Francesco Gualdo, Enrico Corvino, Francesco Angeloni, Francesco Maria II della Rovere Duca di Urbino, infine dell'Orto botanico di Pisa.

c'ha fatto fabricare nella sua Terra di S. Angelo".

29 Enrica Schettini Piazza, "Spigolando nell'archivio Cesi", in *All'origine della scienza moderna: Federico Cesi e l'Accademia dei Lincei*, a cura di Andrea Battistini, Gilberto De Angelis, Giuseppe Olmi (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007), 472.

30 Marco Guardo, Fabio Guidetti, "I primi Lincei tra collezionismo e scienza antiquaria", *L'Ellisse* IX, 1 (2014), 67-72. Per uno studio sull'inizio del collezionismo cesiano ad opera del cardinale Paolo Emilio al principio del Cinquecento, cf. Fiorenza Rausa, "La collezione del cardinale Paolo Emilio Cesi", in *Collezionismo di antichità a Roma tra '400 e '500*, a cura di Anna Cavallaro (Roma: De Luca, 2007), 205-217.

31 Stelluti, *Persio tradotto*, 186.

32 I ff. 90*r*-99*r*, riguardanti le "Gioie" e gli "Argenti", si editano per la prima volta in questa sede, mentre il testo dei ff. 84*v*-89*v* e 99*v*-102*v* fu trascritto prima da Nicolò, Solinas, "Il museo di Federico Cesi", 206-212, successivamente da Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 269-277.

L'edizione dell'inventario cesiano del 1630[33]

[f. 84*v*]

Robbe del Museo[34]

Due pietre de Volterra che rappresentano città rovinate
Una pietra con arbori naturali con cornice di noce
Una pietra con cornici grandi un palmo e mezzo in circa
Uno specchio grande di metallo concavo et convesso con cornice et piede di noce
Uno specchio di metallo concavo di un palmo di diametro in circa con cornice di noce et coperchio di noce
Un altro simile senza cornice concavo
Un altro simile con cornice di noce
Un altro specchietto di vetro piccolo concavo con cornice di noce
Una fascia o circolo di bronzo di due palmi in circa di diametro polito dalla parte di dentro come specchi[o]
Una tazza di bronzo ovata polita di dentro
Due noce dindie grosse con la scorza con alcuni altri frutti dindij
Due noce dindie fatte a fiaschetti et una mez[za] noce che serve per polverino
Pietre e vetri diversi intagliati parte et parte no che servono per anelli con alcuni camei

[f. 85*r*]

Seguitano le Robbe del Museo[35]

Pezzi quattro di Calamita
Instrumenti Matematici varij di Cartone et di legno cioè Astrolabij quadranti oriolij et simili con due quadranti di ferro lavorati alla Geminina
Schelde di diversi Animali quadrupedi, et ucelli che erano del Signor Falzi.

[33] Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 84*v*-102*v*. Il f. 99*r* è bianco (vd. *infra*) e parimenti bianchi sono tre fogli che seguono il f.102*v* (ff. 103*r*-104*r*). Per quanto attiene ai criteri editoriali l'edizione è per lo più fedele all'ortografia e all'interpunzione riportate dalle carte manoscritte, che rinviano a una scrittura ascrivibile a due differenti mani (vd. *infra*). Le abbreviazioni sono state sciolte. A causa della legatura stretta talora alcune lettere non sono leggibili e pertanto sono state integrate entro parentesi quadra.

[34] *Sul margine superiore del foglio, in area mediana. L'inferiore destro attesta la nota di richiamo* Seguitano.

[35] *Sul margine superiore del foglio, in area mediana, con il testo disposto su due righe.*

Coccodrillo grande con altri due piccoli, e due Animali d'Egitto con coda lunga, pesci diversi, ossi di Balene, e pelle di Lince, et una Testa di cocodrillo grande.
Corni di Cervi diversi, e di Capre salvatiche.
Lumache grandi, e conchiglie diverse.
Lumache di madriperle, et ossi di madriperle.
Una scattola con coralli rossi in rame, et un'altra con coralli bigi, e neri.
Coralline rosse, e bianche diverse.
Alcune pietre marine dove nascono li coralli
Una scattola lunga con rete marina.
Una scattola con Alcionij marini, et uva marina.
quattro vasetti d' alabastro con altri rotti.

[f. 85*v*]

Una Tazza d'alabastro.
Una Tazza di scorza di tartaruca marina.
Una palla d'ottone che suona dentro.
Due palle di vetro di varij colori
Un'essagono di busso lavorato con altri dentro.
Due scattolini di Ginebro, e busso, et uno d'osso rosso.
Due Tazze all'Indiana, et una zucca dipinta all'Indiana.
Un prisma turchino di cristallo.
Otto vasi di terra dipinti gialli, e verdi.
Una scattola d'osso di balena.
Una scattola all'antica d'avolio.
Una scattola con molti fori senza Coperchio.
Un'altra scattola di busso con alcuni bicchieri dentro di busso.
Un Cocco grande d'India
Un pezzo d'ambra gialla
Alcuni pezzi di Corno d'Ammone, o Corno petrificato.[36]
Un pezzo di minera di ferro copillare.
Una Canestrina di Giunchi all'Indiana col suo coperchio depinto.

[f. 86*r*]

Un scattolino tondo con minere di brilli, e di christalli.
Un pezzo di minera di marchesetta.

[36] *Segue* per *cancellato*.

Un pezzo di minera d'amatisto.
Un pezzo di dente, o pietra fatta a guisa di dente.
Un pezzo di christallo citrino.
Un pezzo di minera di Marchesetta nera con altri pezzetti piccoli.
Dieci pezzi di christallo in varie forme.
Un Dente di Caval marino.
Un Corno di Rinoceronte.
Un'altro dente di Cavalmarino piccolo.
Una Tartaruca grande marina con altre tre mezzane, e due piccole.
Una scattola con uno scinco marino, et un camaleonte.
Una fibbia, et una Madonnina d'avolio.
Agate polite in pezzetti in varie forme, e di diversi colori
Una pietra segata in quattro parti bianca, e nera.

[f. 86*v*]

Due pietre ovate con mostra d'arboretti.
Una pietra bianca, e nera.
Due pezzi di smalto verde, e turchino.
Una pietra in ottagono rossa e bianca.
Diece palle di marmo.
Una pietra di Castracane
Due pietre di pidocchioso
Una pietra d'alabastro
Pezzetti varij di pietre di marmo politi, e non politi, e parte lavorati.
Una scattola con alcune pietre d'aquiline, e stellarie.
Due Archi turcheschi con alcune frezze.
Un paro di Scarpe turchesche.
Ritratti d'huomini Illustri, e d'alcuni Cardinali usati assai numero 35.
Quattro quadretti con vasi da fiori.
Quattr'altri quadretti simili più piccoli
Due con canestrine con uva
Un quadro con ucelli.
Una Madonna depinta in tavola antica, e rotta.

[f. 87*r*]

Un quadro con la figura degl'Api depinti con cornici d' ebano rotte
quadretti piccoli diversi parte in carta depinti, parte stampati in rame, parte fatti col lapis, et

alcuni tondini con paesi numero 29.
Una Madonnina di chiaroscuro, e San Giovanni Battista, e Nostro Signore in carta.
Un forziero rotto di corame nero senza serratura.
Una Roma antica stampata in rame, e colorita, e la fabrica di San Pietro pure in carta stampata in rame.
Due calamari di legno fossile
Un tavolino di legno fossile rotto senza piedi, e semplice senza profili.
Due Cornici una grande, et una piccola di legno da tener figure dentro.
Un'altra cornice di legno rosso, ò di verzino
Due Cornici nere di specchi.
Nove città in tela miniate in prospettiva, e la Villa di Frascati del Greuter.
Un Credenzone d'albuccio vecchio e rotto.
Quattro cusini di corame vecchi

[f. 87*v*]

Uno studiolo coperto di corame vecchio, e rotto con la parte dinanzi di Cassettini con lastre d'argento sottili con figurine diverse.
Sette gugliette di marmo tra' rotte e sane.
Due statuette di Donne d'alabastro nude.
Una Madonna di alabastro col figlio in braccio
Dui statuette simili che siedono.
Un'altra Madonnina piccolina col figlio in braccio.
Due teste di marmo bianco di basso rilievo in pietra nera incastrate.
Due teste di putti di marmo piccole.
Cinque testine piccoline di marmo rotte.
Tre quadretti di terra cotta con una Madonna, un putto, et un Pastore di cera, o di stucco indorato, et un'altro di piombo.
Un Puttino di basso rilievo di marmo piccolino.
Tre statuette di legno in piede[37] piccoline
Sei statuette di terra cotta in piede tinte verdi.
Una testa d'alabastro tinta.
Due testine con busto di terra cotta tinte verdi.

[f. 88*r*]

Un Vaso di legno lavorato col suo Coperchio.

37 *Segue* di marmo *cancellato a penna con otto brevi linee oblique*.

Teste due una di legno, e l'altra di gesso del prete Savonarola ritratti.
Una tazzetta di legno depinta all'Indiana.
Due legni impetriti, et una pietra vermicolare.
Conchiglie impetrite, fonghi, pesci, et altro impetrito
Un quadretto di bronzo con una Pietà di basso rilievo.
Un altro quadretto di figure di bronzo di basso rilievo con un Christo deposto dalla Croce.
Una Madonnina di bronzo piccolina di basso rilievo.
Un Calamaro di bronzo con un huomo a Cavallo.
Una Satira, et un Satiro di bronzo a sedere da tener lume.
Una statuetta di bronzo piccolina con piede d'alabastro.
Una testina di bronzo indorata.
Una Lucerna trasforata d'ottone con il suo coperchio.
Una Lucerna di bronzo antica fatta à testa.
Un Cavallino di bronzo piccolino.
Un Mercurio di bronzo piccolino.
Un fondo di macinello di pietra bigia.

[f. 88*v*]

Pezzi 45 d'Idoletti piccolini antichi.
Alcuni ossi di Gigante.
Un Calamaro di ferro lavorato con intarsiature minute d'oro, e d'argento rotto, e ruginoso stimato scudi dodeci.
Un Cassettino di ferro con simili lavori con chiave e dentro foderato di felpa stimato diece piastre.
Bicchiero di Rinoceronte col piede d'argento, e il piede di corno di detto animale.
Medaglie d'oro due piccoline, et una grande scudi tre.
Medaglie diverse d'argento scudi quattordeci once 14 3/8.
Medaglie di bronzo antiche, e moderne scudi otto.

[f. 89*r*]

Instrumenti d'ottone matematici stimati da Pietro Biondi Franzese Matematico.[38]

Altri due globbi simili uno depinto et l'altro stampato in rame inventariati pur con cerchi di ottone stimato scudi cinque.
Uno stuccio con diversi compassi, et altri Instrumenti matematici stimati scudi vinticinque

[38] *Sul margine superiore del foglio, in area mediana, con il testo disposto su quattro righe.*

Un' Instrumento[39] detto la riga Geometrica con la sua Cassa di corame turchino fatto da Messer Daniele Cassignetti scudi dieci
Compasso Geometrico, e militare scudi quattro
Pugnale d'ottone detto Proteo militare scudi otto
Compasso optico grande scudi tre
Compasso doppio di proportione col centro mobile scudi uno baiocchi 50[40]
Compasso da tre punte scudi uno
Compasso con aggiunta di 3 pezzi scudi uno baiocchi 50.
Compasso da far l'ovato 8.50.
Instrumento delle linee parallele 8.60.
Instrumento da cinque punte per transportare le figure matematiche scudi tre
Instrumento da aggiustare l'artiglieria scudi tre
Riga lunga da pigliar il diametro del Cavo dell'artiglieria baiocchi 60.
Un instrumento alto con la sua cassa di corame lionato scudi sei[41]

[f. 89*v*]

Compasso d'acciaro con la mostra de' gradi scudi 1 baiocchi 8,50
Compasso d'ottone che slarga nelle congionture con un circolo baiocchi 60.
Penna d'ottone. baiocchi 30
Squadra per haver l'angolo retto baiocchi 60.
Una sfera con molti pezzi rotta
Astrolabio di più pezzi nella cassa leonata scudi 6.
Astrolabio il più grande senza cassa scudi cinque[42].
Astrolabio Arabico scudi uno baiocchi 50[43]
Astrolabio di simil grandezza scudi due[44]
Astrolabio piccolino scudi uno baiocchi 50.[45]
Astrolabio nella cassa nera scudi tre[46]
Astrolabio sottile baiocchi 60.
Instrumento longo ovato sottile baiocchi 60.

39 *Segue* alto *cancellato con tratto di penna orizzontale. Tra* Instrumento *e* alto *un segno di richiamo rinvia alle parole* detto la riga geometrica, *vergate da altra mano sul margine sinistro del foglio.*
40 *L'attestazione della stima* scudi uno 8.50 *è vergata da altra mano.*
41 *La riga è vergata da altra mano*.
42 *L'attestazione della stima* scudi cinque *è vergata da altra mano*.
43 *L'attestazione della stima* scudi uno baiocchi 50 *è vergata da altra mano*.
44 *L'attestazione della stima* scudi due *è vergata da altra mano.*
45 *L'attestazione della stima* scudi uno. Baiocchi 50 *è vergata da altra mano.*
46 *L'attestazione della stima* scudi tre *è vergata da altra mano.*

Instrumento per le stelle piccolino. baiocchi 30.
Altro instrumento simile piccolo baiocchi 30.
Riga doppia quadrata baiocchi 50.
Bussola grande dentro la Cassa scudi otto
Bussola grande fuor dalla cassa scudi due
Bussola piccolina con la cassa baiocchi 60.
Sfera d'ottone rotta in più luoghi scudi tre
Due Globbi uno del cielo e l'altro della terra, stampati in Rame inventariati con i suoi cerchi di ottone e piede di noce grandi d'un palmo di diametro in circa stimati scudi cinque.
Un Globo Celeste grande di doi palmi di diametro in circa tutto scolorito per l'antichità col meridiano et orizonte di ottone graduati e piede di noce stimati scudi dieci[47]

[f. 90*r*]

Gioie[48]

Uno studiolo d'ebano in forma di tabernacolo guarnito di piastre d'argento intagliate, e dentro di pietre d'argento figurate a vasi, fiori et ucelletti, e fogliami con smalti di diversi colori, con un'horiuolo in cima ornato d'argento, e con uno specchio sotto detto horiuolo con perline, e granate nelli tiratori, e da basso nel tiratoio un Calamaro d'ebano con polverino tutto scollato stimata scudi trenta.
Un Gioiello di Diamanti fatti à rosa poco smaltato col suo anello grosso da capo, e fondo tutto d'oro, e sotto una perla à pero grande con due piccole, e tutte tre pendon[o]. Li Diamanti sono cinquantuno di diverse figure, e grandezze, e stà in una scattola di velluto turchino trinata d'

[f. 90*v*]

oro con l'arme de Signori Prencipe, e Prencipessa, et arbori, e monti sparsi stimato scudi trecentosessanta.
Una cerva colca che pende da tre catenelle d'oro con li suoi attaccagli, nella quale sono tre rubinetti di sotto ad una perla che pende. La schiena della cerva è tutta d'una perla grossa con rubini intorno, e nel capo, e nel collo in tutto numero tredici, e in una scattola di Velluto turchino con l'arme come sopra stimata scudi venticinque.
Una Collana di profumi di trenta Paternostri grossi, e cento cinquanta piccoli incatenata a cinque catenelle d'oro con sue rosette d'oro smaltate stimata scudi ottanta.

[47] *La descrizione dei beni inventariali del testo* Due globbi ~ scudi dieci *è ascrivibile ad altra mano*.
[48] *Sul margine superiore del foglio, in area mediana*.

Una Corona di plasma verde con i suoi Paternostri d'oro, due de' quali rotti stimata scudi sei.
Quarantuna rosette d'oro con tre perle per ciascuna grossette stimate scudi centoventotto e baiocchi 50.
Una Gargantiglia di sei pezzi grandi, e sei

[f. 91*r*]

piccoli che tramezzano d'oro, li quali sono d'un diamante l'uno, e perla attaccata che pende sotto. Li grandi sono di nove diamanti l'uno, cioè uno grande in mezzo, et otto minori che lo circondano, e tre perle che pendono di sotto per pezzo. Li diamanti tutti grandi, e piani in una scattola turchina di velluto con l'arme come sopra stimata scudi ottocento sei.
Un Granchio d'oro, la cui schiena tutta è d'uno smeraldo piano con sei lati, et un rubino grande con un girasole tra le branche et un altro girasole nella coda, et altri tredici rubinetti in una scattola di velluto turchino con l'arme come sopra stimato scudi settanta.
Uno studiolo d'ebano piccolo un palmo in circa et altrettanto largo con li suoi tirarelli foderati di raso incarnatino stimato scudi cinque.
Un fiore d'oro con uno scardafone, et una mosca sopra tutto smaltato con una perla in

[f. 91*v*]

punta con due rubini maggiori otto piccoli stimato scudi dodeci.
Una spadina d'oro con otto diamantini da portare in testa stimata scudi dieci.
Una scimitarrina con la sua rotella attaccata e fondo d'oro con tré perle pendenti, e cinque perle nel manico, e sei rubinetti nel fondo che pendono da tre catenine d'oro con perle al suo attaccaglio con una perla pendente stimata scudi sette.
Uno spillone d'oro con la sua testa d'un topazio grosso in ottangolo cinto da quattro rubini e quattro perle grossette stimato scudi venti.
Un paro di pendenti di due pappagalletti smaltati col petto di perla e tre perline sotto pendenti stimati scudi cinque.
Un paro d'horologgetti d'oro in forma di quelli da polvere con due perline pendenti stimati scudi quattro.
Un paro di guantini pendenti da due Catenine d'oro baiocchi 60.
Una Collana d'oro per attaccare il ventaglio

[f. 92*r*]

tramezzata con perline numero centodieci, pesa oncia una stimata scudi quattordeci e baiocchi 50.

Un diamante à punta a cuore ligato in anello stimato scudi quattro.
Tre lucchetti per attaccare anelli, due di pietra ligati in oro, et una et uno smaltato stimato scudi tre, baiocchi 60.
Una ghirlanda fatta a fogliami smaltata di più colori con una rosetta di Diamanti in mezzo numero nove, e sopra essa un Diamantino con quattro rubini, e tre punte con dieci rubini, et altri sedici diamanti ne' fogliami, e dodeci rubini, e sei smeraldi ne' fogliami, e quattordeci gioie di Diamanti che pendono, e quindeci perle di sopra grosse, e cinquanta perle piccolette poste in modo di rampazzi appresso alli fogliami con la sua scattola di velluto turchino in modo di ciuffo con l'arme, come sopra, stimata scudi duecento diciotto.
Una cinta d'oro di pezzi numero trentasei smaltata

[f. 92*v*]

di più colori con otto diamantini in tavola, rubini cinque simili, smeraldi quattro simili, perle tonde grossette numero novanta, et una treccia di smeraldo a monte con un rubinetto in punta, pesa oncie 14 ½. stimata scudi settecento cinquantuno. baiocchi 40.
Una Cinta, o vero Collaro di nove Angeli d'oro tramezzati con nove altri festoni di frutti e fiori, e due festoni che pendono da un'Angelo con profume dentro. pesa once quindeci stimata scudi centoventidue baiocchi 30.
Un'anello con un diamante quadro ligato in aria stimato scudi quattrocento.
Un'anello antico grosso con una granata intagliata stimato scudi quattro.
Una Collana antica d'oro di ducato di peso di ducati ventinove stimata giulij quattordeci per ducato, se ne levano baiocchi 60. per il colorista in tutto scudi quaranta.
Due Anelli con un Diaspro d'Alemagna e l'altro orientale stimati scudi tre, e baiocchi 60.

[f. 93*r*]

Un'anello con otto rubinetti, et un Diamante in mezzo stimato scudi sei.
Un'anello con un diamante in Tavola con fondo scudi quaranta.
Una Lince d'oro con una Catenina stimata scudi tre baiocchi 60.
Un reliquiario d'oro con figurine smaltate da una banda con un Crocefisso, la Madonna e San Giovanni, dall'altra san Francesco, e Santa Chiara con li suoi scompartimenti di christallo pieno di reliquie con un diamante, un rubino, et uno smeraldo, et una perla pendente scaramazza, pesa scudi quarantotto e mezzo d'oro à giulij 13. per scudo stimata scudi ottantatre baiocchi 80.
Un Centiglio da cappello di pezzi tredici d'oro a rosette con puntale, e fibbia smaltati assai, pesa scudi venti d'oro, stimato scudi ventiquattro compresoci il calo, e smalto.
Un Centurino con ricami, et alcune Perline piccole stimato scudi quattro.

[f. 93*v*]

Un Centiglio di Diamanti di pezzi numero cinquanta sette, cioè quaranta grandi, e dicissette piccoli stimato scudi cento ottanta baiocchi 40.
Una Collana d'oro à mattoncini pesa scudi venticinque d'oro, stimata scudi trenta.
Due para di maniglie, uno d'occhio di gatto, e l'altro con l'unghia della gran bestia con la fibbia d'oro stimate scudi quindeci.
Un vezzo di Granate di Bohemia numero trenta ligate in oro stimate scudi quattro baiocchi 60.
Una Coroncina di Coralli piccoli con diece rosette d'oro smaltate di bianco stimata scudi dodeci.
Una Corona di Coralli stimata scudi tré.
Una Corona di dente di cavalmarino stimata scudi due.
Una Corona d'acqua di mare di vetro con bottoni d'oro numero sette, e bottoncini d'oro falso numero[49] stimata scudi tre.
Una Corona d'ambra stimata scudi uno baiocchi 50.
Cucchiari, e forchette in tutto numero dodeci con manichi di rami di coralli e le Cucchiare d'

[f. 94*r*]

argento stimate scudi trenta.
Anelli sei con smeraldi intagliati con la lince Impresa dell'Accademia de' Lincei stimati scudi quarantasei.
Un'anello con uno smeraldo grande stimato fra l'oro, e la pietra scudi sette.
Un'anello con una turchina crepata in mezzo usato assai stimato scudi uno baiocchi 20.
Un'anello con una figura miniata stimata frà l'oro, e la pietra scudi tre baiocchi 50.
Un'anello con un Topazio intagliato con l'arme di Casa Cesi, e Colonna stimato scudi due.
Un'anello con un Niccolo intagliato stimato baiocchi 80.
Un anello con un'Agnus Dei che gira stimato scudi due baiocchi 50.
Un'Anello antico con una Corgnola intagliato stimato frà l'oro, e la pietra scudo uno, baiocchi 40.
Un'Anello con un opalo grande stimato scudi sei.
Un'anello simile con un opalo piccolo stimato

[f. 94*v*]

scudi uno baiocchi 50.
Un'anello d'oro con una plasma intagliato stimato scudi due.

[49] *Segue uno spazio bianco senza l'indicazione della consistenza numerica.*

Un'altro anello simile con una plasma che gira intorno stimato scudi due baiocchi 50.
Un'anello con uno smeraldo orientale piccolo stimato scudi quattro.
Un'anello con un'occhio di gatto stimato scudi due.
Un'anello con una turchina stimato scudi due.
Un'altro anello simile con una turchina più piccola stimato scudi uno baiocchi 30.
Un cerchietto d'oro con l'unghia della gran Bestia scudi uno baiocchi 50.
Un'anelletto d'oro con un zaffiro piccolo stimato baiocchi 60.
Un'anello con un'elce intagliato stimato frà l'oro, e la pietra scudi due e mezzo.
Un anello d'oro con un zaffiro grande, cioè acqua marina à otto facce stimato scudi cinque.
Un vezzo di perle piccolette di sette filze di numero 171 a giulij tré l'una sono scudi quarantadue baiocchi 30.[50]

[f. 95*r*]

Una Collana d'oro liscia smaltata di maglia tonda tramezzata con bottoni ovati numero sette pesa scudi 68 d'oro stimata scudi settantaquattro baiocchi 80 a ragione di giulij undici per scudo tutta resaldata con le maglie vote.
Un Cavaliere di Cristallo fatto a vasi guarnito d'oro con un anello di Cristallo da capo stimato scudi otto.
Una Collana di pasta di profume fatta a rampazzetti con 31 paternostri liscia con margaritine nere pesa once 3. meno denari sette e mezzo stimata scudi cinque.
Tre mazzi di perline a once di peso una libra e denari dodici parte piccoline e parte più grandette stimate scudi settantacinque.
Per un pezzo d'oro di ducato rotto fatto a punta con un nome di Giesù dentro pesa tre ottave e due terzi a giulij quattordici per scudo Importa scudi cinque di metallo et baiocchi 30.
Tutte le sopradette Gioie sono state stimate da Ostilio Ostilij orefice et mi portano la somma di scudi tremila ottocento quarantotto et baiocchi 60.[51]

[f. 95*v*]

E più un filo di perle grosse di numero centocin[quant]otto tramezzate con perline piccole infilate in cordoncino di seta bianca et sono le medesime cioè numero ottantadue già inventariate in Acquasparta ed altre 46 che Sua Eccellenza portava in un altro vezzo da collo così divise e questo si diceva non doversi inventariare cioè dette perle numero 46 perché spettasse et fossero guadagnate per morte del signor Duca per ritrovarsile esso al collo pe-

[50] *Il margine inferiore destro del foglio riporta il segno di richiamo* Una, *il primo termine del foglio 94v. Il suddetto foglio e quello successivo sono vergati da altra mano.*
[51] *Segue uno svolazzo*.

sano dette perle caratte di Venetia 335. le quali sono state stimate a raggera di 20 scudi l'una che importano in tutto una per l'altra scudi doimila et cinquecentosessanta così stimata da Pietro Paolo Discacciati et Ostilio Ostiliij orefici
Un paro di manigli di occhio di gatto ligato in oro di valuta d'oro scudi 5 d'oro in oro in tutto stimata scudi sei
Un paro di manigli d'unghia della gran bestia con serrate d'oro smaltate di nero pesano scudi 6 d'oro in oro
Una medaglia d'oro di venetia con berretta da una parte di Leonardo Loredano Doge di Venetia et dal altra parte con un santo e il Doge pesa scudi 21 d'oro in oro
Trentuna granatine legate in oro pesano 7.3 d'oro in o[ro].
Una Corona di Calambuco infilata in cordoncino di seta pavonazza con li segnacoli alli Paternostri d'oro di filo con la Croce del medio et da una parte rotta stimata scudi dodici

[f. 96*r*]

Argenti[52]

Una Panettiera intagliata con li suoi salierini già stata indorata un poco rotta con l'arme di casa Cesi e Salviati, pesa libre cinque, e once nove.
Un'altra Panattiera semplice con l'arme, e salierini come sopra con le sue cornici attorno stata indorata, pesa libre quattro, et oncie cinque.
Una Guantiera intagliata, e traforata vecchia indorata, pesa libre una, once sette e denari sei.
Una sottocoppa indorata, rotto l'orlo intorno con l'arme di Casa Cesi e Salviati vecchia, pesa libre tre, once due, e denari diciotto.
Un'altra sottocoppa simile di peso simile.
Uno scaldavivande grande con lavoro di basso rilievo con le sue campanelle dalle

[f. 96*v*]

bande, pesa libre sei, e once due.
Un secchietto da bever'acqua indorato, ma tutto sbianchito con lavoro nel corpo fatto a sonaglie, pesa libre due, once nove.
Una saliera fatta a sepoltura con l'arme come sopra stata indorata, e tutta sbianchita pesa libre una, once cinque, e denari dodeci.
Uno scaldaletto col suo manico d'argento, e Coperchio tutto traforato, e la panza, o fianchi fatti a fette di melone, pesa libre sette once cinque.
Una ghiara indorata sbianchita con due legni dalle bande che servono per maniche risaldata

52 *Sul margine superiore del foglio, in area mediana.*

da due parti, pesa libre due once sei.
Una profumiera d'argento con la sua cuppolet[ta] intagliata con tré palline da piede con l'arme di Casa Cesi e Salviati, pesa libre tre, once undici.
Un Campanello semplice con l'arme come sopra col suo battocchio, pesa libra una.
Un bacile liscio, a bocale stato indorato hora tutto sbianchito con l'arme come sopra, pesa libre nove, once nove, e denari dodeci.

[f. 97*r*]

Un bacile, e boccali lavorati di basso rilievo un poco rotto indorato, e poco sbianchito con l'arme di rilievo di Casa Cesi e Salviati, pesano libre dieci e once dieci.
Due piatti a Navicella ovati lisci, uno rotto a canto a l'orlo con l'arme sopradetta, pesano libre sei.
Due bacili grandi fatti a figure tutti dorati vecchi assai, e tutti rappezzati con l'arme di[53] pesano libre diciannove, e once sei.
Una Bacinella col suo boccaletto semplice coperto pesa libre quattro, e once sette.
Una mazza d'argento da Generalato indorata da capo, et alli nodi con l'arme di Casa Orsina, et Anguillara smaltata, e due teste di Leoni indorate, pesa libre tre, once nove, e denari dodeci.
Otto piatti piccoli con l'arme di Casa Cesi e Salviati, pesano libre nove, e once diece.
Due piatti da Capponi, e sei altri più piccoli con l'arme come sopra, pesano libre sedici, once sette, denari sei.

[f. 97*v*]

Un paro di Candelieri lisci un poco acciaccati pesano libre cinque con l'arme di Casa Cesi, e Salviati.
Un'altro paio più piccoli lisci con l'arme sopradetta, pesano libre tre, once otto.
Un'altro paio più grandi lisci con l'arme come sopra tutti sbuccati, pisano libre 3 e mezza.
Un'altro paio più grandi lavorati senz'arme pesano libre tre, e mezz'oncia.
Due Candelieri uno liscio, e l'altro lavorato acciaccati con l'arme, come sopra, pesano insieme con un Cucchiaretto libre tre, e once otto.
Un boccaletto alla Napoletana pesa once otto e denari dodeci.
Un fiaschettino per l'acqua d'odore con l'arme di Casa Anguillara, e Cesi, pesa once quattro.
Un calamaro col suo Polverino senz'arme, pesa once sette e mezza.
Un Parafume con le sue smoccatore, e Catena pesa libre una, once tre, rotto appresso al manico.

[53] *Segue uno spazio bianco*.

Una sottocoppa bianca con l'arme di Casa Cesi e Salviati pesa libre tre.

[f. 98*r*]

Una salierina rotta con tré rampolle, pesa once cinque, e denari sei.
Una zuccariera un poco acciaccata pesa once quattro.
Un piedi di bicchiere d'argento in un bicchiero di corno di Rinoceronte, pesa once tre, e denari dicidotto.
Uno Smoccatoio solo pesa once undeci, e denari uno.
Una bugia senza Catena con le sue mollette con l'arme come sopra, pesano once sei, e denari ventuno.
Due scattolini a foggia de vasetti tondi semplici pesano in tutto once quattro.
Due Cucchiari e due forchette di getto state indorate, e due manichi di Coltello bianchi, pesano libre una e once mezza.
Uno scattolino longo con l'arme come sopra pesa once cinque, staccato la metà dal fondo.
Un Calice con la sua Patera da una banda indorato, et il calice tutto bianco usato, pesa libra una, once nove, e denari dicidotto.
Un bicchierino d'argento dentro dorato, pesa once due, e sei denari.

[f. 98*v*]

Due ovaioli pesano once sei rotti tutti due.
Dieci cucchiari, e otto forchette, e quattro manichi di Cortello, pesano libre due, et once una.
Una Secchietta d'acqua santa da metter in un quadro, pesa once quattro.
Una Secchietta per l'acqua santa con un Crocifissino mezzi dorato, con l'arme come sopra pesa libre una, once due e denari 15.
Un quadro alto due palmi in circa con le Cornici d'ebano intorno da una banda un poco rotte col Crocefisso, e la Madonna, e San Giovanni di mezzo rilievo, sopra le Cornici sei angiolini di sfoglio con li misteriij della Passione e dieci teste di Cherubini d'argento dorato e li quattro evangelisti nelli Cantoni pure di sfoglio, e de' cherubini ce ne mancano due con l'attacaglia d'ottone stimato scudi cinquanta.
Una Tazza di Porcellana con due figurine nude d'argento indorato stimato scudi diece.
Una Madonna d'argento lavorato col figlio in braccio in uno scattolino tondo con Cornice d'argento, e vetro sopra, stimata scudi dieci.

[f. 99*r* bianca]

[f. 99*v*]

Quadri diversi stimati da Messer Paris Parigi pittore.[54]

Quattro Tondini di Paesi con cornici indorate dico sei tondini scudi uno baiocchi 80.
Nove Tondini pur di Paesi piccoli vecchi baiocchi 90.
Un quadro con una Tavola con diversi vasi de frutti e fiori scudi dodeci.
Due quadri di fiori senza Cornicie scudi uno.
Una testa di San Carlo baiocchi 60.
Un quadro di San Francesco grande con Cornici scudi due.
Una Madonna depinta in rame con Cornice scudi due.
Una testa d'un Christo, ed una Madonna baiocchi 40.
Un San Francesco di Paula con cornice indorata baiocchi 30.
Undeci tondini di Paesi con un filetto d'oro scudi due baiocchi 20.
Una Santa Anna con la Madonna e Nostro Signore depinta in rame con la Cornice d'ebano, e taffetà verde da cuoprirla scudi sei.

[f. 100*r*]

Un arbore di famiglia de' quarti di Germania con Cornice indorata baiocchi 80.
Una Roma del Greuter in rame, e tela depinta.
Una Siracusa in rame, et in tela.
Un'Italia del Magino in rame e tela.
Una Fiorenza in rame e tela depinta.
Un Mappamondo in rame e tela depinto.
Un quadro grande con l'historia di Moisé quando fu trovato nel mare scudi trenta.
Un quadro grande di Santa Cecilia stimato scudi diece.
Un quadro con Venere et Amore, e Cerere e Bacco stimato scudi venti.
Un quadro con Democrito et Heraclito filosofi scudi dieci.
Un quadro col ritratto di Campo Vaccino scudi dieci.
Un quadro grande con fiori e frutti in un tappeto sopra una tavola scudi dodeci.
Un quadro poco più piccolo del sopradetto con ucelli, et altri animali e frutti scudi dieci.
Un quadro col ritratto di monsignor Paolo Cesi vescovo di Narni scudi otto.
Un altro quadro con il ritratto di Reinaldo Cesi scudi otto.

[54] *Sul margine superiore del foglio, in area mediana, con il testo disposto su due righe.*

[f. 100*v*]

Un quadro del Beato Pietro Cesi Aquitano con cornici neri
Un quadro col Ritratto del Generale de' Carmelitani di casa Cesi scudi quattro.
Un quadro con fiori e frutti senza Cornicie essendo li frutti in mezzo alli fiori depinti in un tazzone di maiolica scudi uno baiocchi 20.
Due quadretti piccoli con due Ceste d'uva senza cornici baiocchi 80.
Un quadro cominciato con un vaso da fiori senza cornici baiocchi 50.
Un quadro col ritratto del Selvaggio scudi uno.
Due quadri con Cornici indorate col ritratto di Papa Urbano, e signor Cardinale Francesco Barberino scudi quattro.
Quattro quadri con cornici con li ritratti di quattro Cardinali di Casa Cesi scudi quattro.
Tré quadri con Cornici con filetti d'oro con li Ritratti di Vescovo di Bamberga, signor Cardinale di Zolleren, e signor Gasparo Scioppio scudi due baiocchi 40.
Un Ritratto di Bartolomeo Liviano con cornici indorate scudi uno.
Due Ritratti di Papa Paulo quinto, et Papa Urbano 8° con Cornici scudi due.
Un Ritratto d'una Signora di Casa Cesi baiocchi 50.
Una Madonna con nostro Signora in braccio, e San Giovanni

[f. 101*r*]

Battista, et un'altro quadro della Madalena con Cornici scudi due.
Ritratti, cioè teste di Cardinali diversi numero 7, et un ritratto di Papa Paulo quinto senza cornicie scudi quattro.
Nove ritratti d'huomini Illustri senza Cornici vecchi assai scudi due baiocchi 70.
Un ritratto con la Cornice del signor Duca secondo bonae memoriae d'Acquasparta grande scudi tré.
Un quadro di Sant'Alessio con le Cornici indorate scudi due.
Un quadro con una Madonna in tavola indorata baiocchi 30.
Un quadro col ritratto di Falpetto cane baiocchi 20.
Un quadro con una Madonna col figlio in braccio senza Cornici baiocchi 50.
Un quadro d'una Madonna col figlio in braccio con le Cornici, e[55] drappo verde da cuoprirla scudi due baiocchi 50.
Un ritratto d'una testa d'un Salvatore fatto di ricamo tutto, dico di punti con seta, et oro stimato da Messer Luigi Ricamatore scudi sei.
Un Christo resurgente di ricamo con punti di seta piccolino vecchio scudi uno.

[55] *Seguono le lettere* dro, *non cancellate, più che verosimile abbreviazione del termine* drappo *che segue dopo.*

[f. 101*v*]

Due Teste d'huomo, et una di donna semplici senza busto baiocchi 90.
Una Madonna in Tavola antica rotta baiocchi 20.
Dieci quadretti di disegni piccoli in carta parte di lapis, e parte stampati in rame e coloriti scudi due.
Quattro quadretti piccoli con fiori e frutti scudi due baiocchi 90.
Altri due quadretti piccoli simili con vasi di fiori scudi uno.
Due figure dipinte degl'api incollate in tela baiocchi 60.
Un altro quadro di dette Api depinte con Cornici d'ebano rotte scudi uno.
Due Capi di Culla con figurine depinti in legno scudi uno.
Un quadretto piccolo della Madalena communicata dall'Angelo baiocchi 20.
Un quadro con ucelli scudi uno baiocchi 20.
Una Natività di Nostro Signore non finita baiocchi 40.
Un quadretto della Madalena baiocchi 30.
Due teste del Padre fra' Bernardino da Colpetrazzo Cappuccino baiocchi 30.
Un ritratto del Volto Santo baiocchi 30.
Quattro staggioni in carta depinte vecchie con Cornici baiocchi 40.

[f. 102*r*]

Quattro parti del Mondo in carta[56] depinte vecchie con cornici baiocchi 40.
Due quadri con vasi di fiori, et uno con un fiasco e frutti e salami tutti tre scudi due baiocchi 40.
Una Madonna col figlio in braccio di mano antica depinta in tela con cornici, indorato un filetto scudi tré.
Una Testa da Donna in profili in tela Cornice simile scudi due baiocchi 50.
Una Testa di Donna depinta in carta, et incollata in tavola scudi uno.
Una testa e busto depinta in rame con Cornice nera, Ritratto di Scoto scudi uno baiocchi 20.
Una depositione di Croce di Nostro Signore antica depinta in tavoletta indorata scolorita, e rotta baiocchi 60.
Un San Girolamo antico depinto in tavola con Cornice indorata scudi uno baiocchi 20.
Un Crocefisso con la Madonna e San Giovanni depinti in Cartapecora col vetro sopra, e Cornice nera baiocchi 80.
Una morte della Madonna con gl'Apostoli depinta in rame con adornamento di noce scudi tré.

[56] *Segue* del *parzialmente cancellato*.

[f. 102*v*]

Un'Assunta della Madonna depinta in legno Pittura antica, et stimata tutta scudi uno baiocchi 20.
Una Pietà, cioè un mezzo Christo nel sepolcro piccolo con adornamento intorno d'avolio intagliato antico baiocchi 60.
Quattro quadri di prospettiva di mare con verdure, e stagni con figurine con habiti venetiani alti palmi 4 in circa lunghi 5.

[ff. 103*r*-104*r* bianchi]

Materia e funzione nel Museo cesiano

Le diverse voci inventariali, in questa sede riunite e indagate per aree tematiche, rinviano in primo luogo ai minerali, attestati anche nelle raccolte di Faber, Cassiano, del veronese Francesco Calzolari e presso il Museo dell'Orto botanico di Pisa, per citare alcune collezioni.[57] I primi oggetti dell'inventario sono due pietre "che rappresentano città rovinate":[58] la pittura su pietra, tra la fine del '500 e l'inizio del '600, si diffonde in molteplici collezioni romane,[59] e celebre per questa tecnica è Antonio Tempesta, vicino alla cerchia di Cassiano dal Pozzo e maestro di Vincenzo Leonardi, con il quale illustra l'*Uccelliera,* opera successivamente donata a Cesi.[60] Altresì attestata è l'ambra, resina che origina un grande interesse

[57] Faber colleziona alcuni minerali (Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 279), come anche Cassiano dal Pozzo (Sparti, "The dal Pozzo collection", 568); per quelli dell'Orto pisano, cf. Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Il giardino dei semplici dello studio pisano: collezionismo, scienza e immagine tra Cinquecento e Seicento", in *Livorno e Pisa: due città e un territorio nella politica dei Medici* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi e Pacini, 1980), 516. Il Museo veronese di Calzolari, invece, contiene una sezione molto estesa, dedicata unicamente alle gemme e alle pietre, che comprende altresì alcuni antichi bassorilievi ed epigrafi provenienti dall'Egitto: cf. Benedetto Ceruti, Andrea Chiocco, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari Iun. Veronensis* (Verona: Apud Angelum Tamum, 1622), 186-431. Nonostante si tratti di una raccolta lontana dall'Urbe, è lecito congetturare un legame con quella cesiana, dal momento che la descrizione del Museo veronese è attestata nella Biblioteca del Nostro (Biagetti, *La biblioteca di Federico Cesi*, 319) e citata in una lettera che il sodale Iohannes Schreck (Terrentius) scrive a Faber nel 1617, riportata in Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 605-606.

[58] Arch. Linc. 32, f. 84*v*.

[59] Cf. Francesca Cappelletti, Patrizia Cavazzini, a cura di, *Meraviglia senza tempo: pittura su pietra a Roma tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Roma: Officina Libraria, 2022).

[60] Su Tempesta cf. Andrea de Marchi, "Tempesta: pitture a due facce su lapislazzuli e diaspri bluastri, per i Borghese e per altri", in *Meraviglia senza tempo*, 115-123. Come testimonia una lettera mandata da Cassiano a Cesi, il collezionista dona l'esemplare a quest'ultimo: "In segno della medesima, poiché con altro per ora non posso, le invio, come tributo del mio ossequio, un libro

nel principe naturalista,[61] non diversamente dal legno fossile, impiegato per alcuni arredi preziosi.[62] Al cui riguardo notiamo che l'inventario del cardinale Francesco Barberini riporta un "ciocco di legno fossile, che si cava nel Ducato d'Acquasparta",[63] forse omaggio del Nostro. Molti, infine, sono gli oggetti di corallo, come anche nel Museo di Calzolari.[64]

Seguono alcuni specchi con cornice o concavi.[65] Gli studi ottici sono oggetto di rilevante interesse per Cesi, al quale Giovambattista della Porta scrive nel 1609, facendo riferimento al suo *De refractione optices* del 1593:[66] a tal proposito sarebbe lecita la congettura

d'Uccelli stampato da un giovane di casa più per prova dei rami che io vo mettendo insieme [...]" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 769-770, lettera del 15 agosto 1622). Per un'analisi approfondita de *L'Uccelliera* di Giovanni Pietro Olina e delle illustrazioni di Leonardi, cf. Francesco Solinas, *L'uccelliera. Un libro di arte e scienza nella Roma dei primi Lincei* (Firenze: Olschki, 2000), in particolare 13-14, 15-39. La collezione puteana conservava alcune opere di Tempesta (Sparti, "The dal Pozzo collection", 558, 563, 565).

61 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 85*v*, 93*v*. L'ambra suscita notevole interesse ed è anche oggetto di donativo: infatti Cesi, come riporta Iohannes Faber, *Animalia Mexicana descriptionibus, scholijsque exposita* (Romae: Apud Iacobum Mascardum, 1628), 573-574, "specimen et species diversas anno praeterito ad Illustrissimum Principem Franciscum Cardinalem Barberinum, Acquasparta Romam transmisit". Tuttavia nell'inventario del Cardinale Francesco Barberini non rimane traccia del minerale, se non un "horologgio a polverino, con hornamento di ambra". Per la voce inventariale cf. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *Seventeenth-Century Barberini Documents and Inventories* (New York: New York Univerity Press, 1975), 81. Anche Faber si interessa al minerale, come testimonia una lettera pubblicata da Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1070 [ottobre ? 1625] e indirizzata a Cesi: "ecce mitto tria alia folia, donec de Ambra [...] pensum totum absolvam". A riguardo dell'ambra cf. *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus* (Romae: ex Typographeio Vitalis Mascardi, 1651), 564-576.

62 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 87*r*. Il "tavolino [...] semplice e senza profili" dell'inventario potrebbe rinviare alla tavola in legno fossile "non lavorata" che Stelluti si preoccupa di mettere da parte per Cassiano subito dopo la morte del Nostro (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1240, lettera del 1° marzo 1633). Faber ricorda altresì gli arredi in legno fossile "Therebintinum" della collezione cesiana (Faber, *Animalia Mexicana*, 502-503) e Francesco Stelluti, *Trattato del Legno Fossile Minerale* (Roma: Appresso Vitale Mascardi, 1637), 11-12, celebra la conoscenza di Cesi che "non solo scriveva della generazione di dette pietre e legno e delle pietre aquiline [...], ma di tutte l'altre pietre note sin qui, di altre ancora non più osservate, né descritte da altri autori". L'interesse di Cesi per il legno fossile è attestato, infine, in alcune lettere trasmesse a Faber e a Galilei (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 762-764, lettere del 26 febbraio, 16 e 21 marzo 1626). A riguardo cf. anche Mottana, Il *Trattato del legno fossile minerale* di Francesco Stelluti.

63 Aronberg Lavin, *Barberini Documents*, 76, per la citazione tratta dall'inventario redatto fra il 1626 e il 1631, dunque durante l'ultima parte di vita del Nostro.

64 Ceruti, Chiocco, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari*, 3-98.

65 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 84*v*.

66 Cf. Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 114-115, lettera del 28 agosto. Cf. Giovan Battista della Porta, *Magia naturalis* (Neapoli: Apud Horatium Salvianum, 1589), XVII, 4 ss. (*Delle varie operationi del specchio concavo*).

che proprio questi specchi siano alcuni dei primi beni che Cesi inizia a collezionare.

Inoltre, non sono pochi gli astrolabi nella collezione del *Lynceorum Princeps*.[67] Tale strumento, infatti, desta l'attenzione del sodalizio sin dal 1603, come attesta il manoscritto dei *Gesta Lynceorum* a riguardo della costruzione di un "astrolabium maximum".[68] Non solo: i *Miscellanea Literaria*, di mano di Heckius,[69] trattano, fra gli altri aspetti, la costruzione di alcuni strumenti come meridiane e, appunto, astrolabi.[70] Non diversamente, le carte cesiane riportano anche strumenti scientifici e matematici, in ottone e altro materiale, acquistati poi da Cassiano grazie all'intermediazione di Stelluti.[71]

Altra voce inventariale di rilievo è quella che riguarda i disegni di alcuni animali "che erano del s. Falzi":[72] un'area tematica nella quale Faber certamente emerge rispetto agli altri Lincei,[73] sicché non stupisce che fra i vari quadri trovi posto anche il ritratto di un cane, animale studiato approfonditamente dal medico di Bamberga.[74] D'altra parte, pur non attestati fra i beni, il *Lynceorum Princeps* ha in gran conto i disegni di piante (oggetto di indagine autoptica),[75] inviati talvolta a illustri personaggi, come il cardinale Scipione

67 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 85*r*, 89*v*.

68 Guardo, Orioli, a cura di, *Cronache e statuti*, 61, e Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. II, 1431-1433.

69 Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Ms. Archivio Linceo 11.

70 Irene Baldriga, "Johannes van Heeck, *Miscellanea literaria*", in *Il trionfo sul tempo. Manoscritti illustrati dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei,* a cura di Antonio Cadei (Modena: Panini, 2002), 73.

71 Gli strumenti in questione sono quelli descritti in Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 89*r*-89*v*. L'inventario puteano riporta "Un'Stuccio pieno di diversi ferri da matematica […], Un' Compasso grande" (Sparti, "The dal Pozzo collection", 564), acquistati da Stelluti per conto di Cassiano al prezzo di 25 scudi, (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1241, lettera del 6 aprile 1633), valore corrispondente a quello della stima nell'inventario di Cesi, al f. 89*r*. Per citare un solo esempio, anche la collezione di Francesco Maria II della Rovere Duca di Urbino conservava molti strumenti matematici come squadre e compassi. Per uno studio sul collezionismo del Duca, cf. Tiziana Biganti, *L'eredità dei Della Rovere. Inventari dei beni in Casteldurante (1631)* (Urbino: Accademia Raffaello, 2005), in particolare 355-359 per gli strumenti matematici; cf. anche Giulia Semenza, "Gli animali e la caccia nella collezione e nella nota di spese di Francesco Maria II", in *Gli animali e la caccia nell'immaginario di Francesco Maria II della Rovere*, a cura di Massimo Moretti (Roma: De Luca, 2023), 99-110.

72 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 85*r*. Le fonti ad oggi disponibili tacciono su questo personaggio.

73 Per lo studio sugli animali, cf. Faber, *Animalia Mexicana*. Il medico di Bamberga, inoltre, possiede la celebre raccolta di "nothomie", serie di incisioni del pittore Filippo Napoletano. Per questo aspetto, si veda Luigi Salerno, "Il dissenso nella pittura. Intorno a Filippo Napoletano, Caroselli, Salvator Rosa e Altri", *Storia dell'arte*, 5 (1970): 34-65; Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 52-61; Sabina Brevaglieri, Natural desiderio di sapere. *Roma barocca fra vecchi e nuovi mondi* (Roma: Viella, 2019), 294-295.

74 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 101*r*. Faber descrive l'animale in una lettera inviata a Cesi (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1053, lettera del 27 luglio 1625), che rimanda al *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus*, 466-478.

75 Le *Tabulae Phytosophicae*, pubblicate in appendice al *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae The-*

Cobelluzzi.[76] Per citare alcuni esempi, l'olandese Enrico Corvino, noto speziale e fedele compagno del Nostro durante le sue escursioni naturalistiche, conserva nel proprio Museo numerosi disegni e miniature di piante, opere di Giovanna Garzoni e Maddalena Corvino, sua figlia;[77] e in merito ai volumi illustrati, la collezione dell'Orto botanico di Pisa custodisce miniature, tra gli altri, di Daniel Fröschel e Filippo Paladini.[78]

Il Museo di Cesi, oltre ad alcuni *curiosa*, come un "cocco d'india",[79] conserva anche una lince e un osso di balena, insieme con una scatola del medesimo materiale.[80] Il cetaceo muove l'attenzione di moltissimi studiosi in quel periodo, a tal punto che Faber decide di esporre al pubblico le pinne di un esemplare.[81] Fra gli animali del Museo trovano posto

saurus, 901-952, suggellano l'interesse di Cesi per la botanica. Cf. Ada Alessandrini, *Cimeli Lincei a Montpellier* (Roma: Bardi, 1978), 157-159. Egli lavora anche alla *Syntaxis plantaria*, che avrebbe dovuto far parte del *Teathrum totius naturae*, per il quale Cesi commissiona alcune illustrazioni, successivamente divise in più codici dedicati ai funghi (*Fungorum genera et species*) e ai fiori (*Plantae et flores*), oggi conservati a Parigi, presso la Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France. Per le vicissitudini dei fogli cesiani, acquistati da Cassiano subito dopo la morte del Nostro, cf. Antonio Graniti, "*Fungorum genera et species, Plantae et flores*", in *Il trionfo sul tempo*, 80-84.

76 Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 797, lettera del 5 maggio 1623. Per un primo profilo biografico del Cobelluzzi, cf. Franca Petrucci, *Cobelluzzi, Scipione*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1982), vol. 26, 433-435. L'alto prelato è anche promotore di un'accademia che vede la frequentazione di Faber (Brevaglieri, *Natural desiderio di sapere*, 224).

77 Per Corvino, le sue raccolte e le sue frequentazioni, cf. Giovan Pietro Bellori, *La nota delli musei* (Roma: Nella Stamperia del Falco, 1664), 21; Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 227-233; Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi, *Gli Strozzi a Roma: mecenati e collezionisti nel Sei e Settecento* (Roma: Fondazione Marco Besso, 2004), 121-131; Noel Golvers, "A Dutch Pharmacist in Early Modern Rome", *Nuncius*, 38 (2023): 32-71; Id., "Hendrik de Raeff, Enrico Corvino", *Scientia* II, 1 (giugno 2024): 197-201. Per Giovanna Garzoni, cf. Gerardo Casale, *Giovanna Garzoni "insigne miniatrice 1600-1670* (Milano-Roma: Jandi Sapi, 1991), Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi,"'La femminil pazienza': Women Painters and Natural History in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries", in *The Art of Natural History: Illustrated Treaties and Botanical Paintings 1400-1850*, a cura di Arny Meyers, Theres O'Malley (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2008), 166-167 e Sheila Barker, a cura di, *La grandezza dell'universo nell'arte di Giovanna Garzoni* (Livorno: Sillabe, 2020). Per Maddalena Corvino, cf. Olivier Michel, "Maddalena Corvina e i suoi", *Strenna dei romanisti*, 56 (1995): 399-408.

78 Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Il giardino dei semplici".

79 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 85*v*. Il medesimo oggetto è testimoniato anche nella collezione di Enrico Corvino alle pendici del Gianicolo (Golvers, "A Dutch Pharmacist", 69), mentre un "cocco de Maldiva" è attestato nel Museo di Francesco Calzolari (Ceruti, Chiocco, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari*, 620-621) e raffigurato in una xilografia del *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus*, 458.

80 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 85*r*-85*v*.

81 Negli anni durante i quali Faber presta servizio come medico presso il S. Spirito le pinne del cetaceo sono esposte nel portico della struttura: cf. Brevaglieri, *Natural desiderio di sapere*, 171. Inoltre Bernardino Radi, sovrintendente del porto di Ostia, manda dettagliate informazioni sul

anche un "Coccodrillo grande con altri due piccoli",[82] ben noto nella cerchia lincea,[83] una tartaruga, alcuni denti di "Cavalmarino" e un corno di rinoceronte,[84] spesso impiegati per impreziosire gli arredi e gli oggetti. A un fine analogo risponde anche "l'unghia della gran bestia", che subisce tre occorrenze nell'inventario del Nostro, spia del grande interesse per l'animale, la cui zampa è attestata anche nel già citato Museo pisano;[85] d'altra parte una

cetaceo rinvenuto presso il litorale laziale a Faber (*ivi*, 271). Quest'ultimo afferma che Cesi possiede più denti di balena (non attestati nell'inventario), distribuiti ad alcuni conoscenti e conservati presso il proprio Museo. Ad essi Faber dedica una descrizione, specificando che anche Cassiano dal Pozzo li possiede (Faber, *Animalia Mexicana*, 568-571). Una "costa", quindi un osso di balena, viene donata a Cesi dal nobile romano Girolamo Mattei (*ivi*, 571), amico del Nostro, di Galileo Galilei e dello stesso Faber, il quale ultimo propone di accoglierlo nel consesso linceo. Cf. Francesca Cappelletti, Laura Testa, *Il trattenimento dei virtuosi: le collezioni secentesche di quadri nei Palazzi Mattei di Roma* (Roma: Argos, 1994), 81. Si vedano anche Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 828 e 883, 889, 1025, 1029, 1051, lettere del 9 dicembre 1623, del 25 maggio 1624, dell'8 giugno 1624, 18 febbraio 1625, 7 marzo 1625, 18 giugno 1625. Infine, anche il Museo pisano testimonia la presenza di ossa di balena (Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Il giardino dei semplici", 516). Sulla storia, l'iconografia e il collezionismo inerenti al cetaceo, cf. Florik Egmond, Peter Mason, Kees Lancester, a cura di, *The whale book: whales and other marine animals as described by Adriaen Coenen in 1585* (London: Reaktion, 2003), e Alessandro Tosi, a cura di, *Balene* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2017).

82 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 85*r*. Anche di questo animale è possibile osservare alcune parti nel Museo di Pisa, come riporta Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Il giardino dei semplici", 516, e in quello di Calzolari (Ceruti, Chiocco, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari*, 655).

83 Faber, *Animalia Mexicana*, 740, 819, il quale non casualmente custodisce nel proprio Museo la "nothomia" di un esemplare (Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 284); cf. *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus*, 315-316.

84 Le voci inventariali sono citate in Arch. Linc. 32, f. 86*r*. Un corno di rinoceronte è nel Museo di Pisa (Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Il giardino dei semplici", appendice documentaria, 547). Si tratta di animali non presenti nelle collezioni di Cassiano dal Pozzo e Francesco Barberini, a eccezione della tartaruga e del cavalluccio marino, le cui parti vengono impiegate per la decorazione di oggetti: probabilmente il guscio della prima (Sparti, "The dal Pozzo collection", 567) e le ossa del secondo (*ibidem*). Le "nothomie" di tartarughe marine e terrestri sono conservate nel Museo di Faber, insieme con la spalla di un rinoceronte (Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 281-283).

85 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 93*v*, 94*v*, 95*v*. La descrizione dell'animale corrispondente all'alce è in Apollonio Menabeni, *Trattato del grand'animale, o' gran bestia* (Rimini: Per Giovanni Simberni, 1584) e, successivamente, in Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Quadrupedum omnium bisulcorum Historia* (Bononiae: Apud Sebastianum Bonhommium, 1621), 866-877. Una lettera di Faber a Cassiano cita il trattato sull'unghia della gran bestia, di autore anonimo, forse il *pharmacopaeus* polacco Joannes Davidoviz (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1081-1082, lettera di fine dicembre 1625; *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus*, 786). Per la voce inventariale che riguarda il Museo dell'orto botanico di Pisa, cf. Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Il giardino dei semplici", 517. Per ulteriori riscontri, cf. Antonella Attanasio, "Costanzo Felici, Francesco Maria II e l'Unghia della Gran Bestia", in *Gli animali e la caccia nell'immaginario di Francesco Maria II della Rovere*, a cura di Massimo Moretti (Roma: De Luca, 2023), 141-144.

"scatola [...] con un'onghia d'Animale", denti d'avorio e altri *curiosa*, alcuni provenienti dalle Nuove Indie, arricchiscono la collezione di Francesco Maria II della Rovere.[86]

Alla luce di tali osservazioni, cominciano a stagliarsi i contorni di un Museo ricco di *naturalia*, *exotica*, *curiosa*, che in quegli anni segnano numerose raccolte, a cominciare da quella nota a Cesi e riprodotta dall'incisione contenuta nell'*Historia Naturale* di Ferrante Imperato (1599) o in quella all'interno del *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari* del veronese Girolamo Viscardi (1622).[87] Sorge spontaneo il rimando al celebre giudizio di Galilei, attestato nelle *Considerazioni al Tasso* (1589-1592) a riguardo delle *Wunderkammern*.[88]

Venendo adesso alla geografia, rileviamo che tale disciplina è coltivata dal sodalizio sin dal 1603, come attesta la "planisferii structura, omnium manuali et mentali labore fabrefacta".[89] Si è già accennato agli *itinera* di Heckius, al quale va aggiunto adesso Johannes Schreck (Terrentius), linceo dal 1611, lo stesso anno nel quale Galileo è ascritto all'Accademia.[90] Accolto nella Compagnia del Gesù, egli intraprende nel 1615 il suo viaggio con scopi missionari, ma anche scientifici, durante il quale non manca di documentare le sue osservazioni e lo studio della lingua cinese.[91] Non diversamente, altro esempio dell'alleanza tra scienziati e viaggiatori è Pietro della Valle, celebre per la conoscenza delle lingue orientali, il quale parte per la Persia, spingendosi fino all'estremo Oriente.[92]

[86] Sui *curiosa* cf. Semenza, "Gli animali e la caccia", 102-105.

[87] Ferrante Imperato, *Dell'Historia Naturale* (Napoli: Stamperia a Porta Reale, 1599); Ceruti, Chiocco, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari*. Cesi con ogni verosimiglianza visita il Museo di Imperato durante il suo soggiorno napoletano, del quale stende un resoconto in una lettera a Stelluti datata 17 luglio 1604 e riportata in Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 36-41, in particolare 40-41. La raccolta è citata ancora in una lettera dell'erede Francesco Imperato a Federico Cesi (*ivi*, 1193, lettera del 1628, priva dell'indicazione del mese e del giorno) e anche nel *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus*, 634 (il passo è inerente alla visita che Faber fa alla collezione partenopea).

[88] Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 37, nota 2, con bibliografia. Nelle *Considerazioni al Tasso* Galileo ascrive ad Ariosto uno stile che sottende un'armonia di stampo classico, al Tasso invece un poetare di "maniera", "pedantesco e ampulloso" (cf. OG, IX, 69). Per un'analisi dell'opera e del passo, cf. Lina Bolzoni, "Giochi di prospettiva sui testi: Galileo lettore di poesia", *Galilaeana* IV (2007), 157-175.

[89] Guardo, Orioli, a cura di, *Cronache e Statuti*, 57.

[90] Odescalchi, *Memorie istorico critiche*, 100.

[91] Brevaglieri, *Natural desiderio di sapere*, 222. Cf. anche Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. II, 1011-1051.

[92] Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. I, 342-343. Sul sodale e l'Oriente cf. anche Ronald Lightbown, "Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy", *Journal of the Warburg and Cortauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 228-279, Gianni Venditti, a cura di, Valeria della Valle, con una premessa di, *Diario di Pietro Della Valle di alcune cose memorabili* (Roma: Bardi, 2019), Massimo Carlo Giannini, "Roma nell'età della prima mondializzazione fra religione, politica e culture", in *Barocco Globale*, a cura di Francesca Cappelletti, Francesco Freddolini (Milano: Electa, 2025), 39-49, e Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, "Immagini di un'altra' natura", *ivi*, 51-59.

Fatte queste premesse, non stupisce la presenza di globi e di carte geografiche in più collezioni (il Museo di Faber, quello di Cassiano o quello barberiniano, per poi giungere alle raccolte cesiane),[93] e di numerose piante di città. Il Museo cesiano, infatti, conserva una pianta di Firenze, una di Roma di Matthäus Greuter, una dell'Italia di Giovanni Antonio Magini.[94] Parimenti Faber e Francesco Barberini possiedono alcune piante: il primo "quadretti piccoli di geographia", oltre a una Roma di Antonio Tempesta e una di Greuter, mentre il secondo molteplici piante di città, non solo italiane.[95]

All'interesse per le città moderne e la loro rappresentazione si accosta quello per la città antica con i suoi *monumenta*. In una lettera all'incisore Giacomo Lauro il *Lynceorum Princeps* attesta di aver ricevuto la "prova" della sua "Roma antiqua", che tuttavia, stando alle carte dell'inventario, non è attestata nella collezione:[96] sicché la fonte potrebbe forse rinviare a un semplice parere richiesto dall'artista al Nostro. D'altra parte "quattro quadri in tela con sopra incollatevi l'antichità di Roma, di M^{s} Jacomo Lauro" sono attestati sempre in ambito linceo, ma nella raccolta di Faber.[97]

Nel Museo cesiano trova posto anche "Una Siracusa in rame, et in tela" anonima:[98] la descrizione inventariale rimanda con ogni verosimiglianza alle *Dichiarazioni della pianta dell'antiche Syracuse*, stampate a Napoli nel 1613, di Vincenzo Mirabella, linceo dal 22 aprile del 1614.[99] Dal momento che il volume è attestato nella Biblioteca del *Princeps*, la

[93] Carte geografiche sono attestate nel Museo puteano (Sparti, "The dal Pozzo collection", 562, 565, 568-569), in quello di Francesco Barberini, insieme con una "descrittione di tutto il mondo" (Aronberg Lavin, *Barberini Documents*, 69-70, 120, 122-123, 223, 225), mappamondi nella raccolta di Faber (Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 278), globi celesti nel Museo di Federico Cesi (Arch. Linc. 32, f. 89*v*).

[94] Arch. Linc. 32, f. 100*r*; per il rapporto fra Cesi e i Greuter, cf. Guerrieri Borsoi, "Il mecenatismo artistico di Federico Cesi"; il geografo Luca Olstenio, nella propria raccolta, mette a confronto la *Roma antiqua* di Pirro Ligorio e la *Roma nova* di Greuter: cf. Mario Bevilacqua, *L'immagine di Roma moderna da Bufalini a Nolli: un modello europeo* (Roma: Artemide, 2008), 35-39. Il Magini è sin da subito noto ai Lincei e viene citato in una lettera che Cesi manda a Stelluti: "Mi lasciò l'Illuminato [Hekius] le tavole del Magino [...]" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 38 , lettera del 17 luglio 1604).

[95] Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 282, 290; Aronberg Lavin, *Barberini Documents*, 120-122.

[96] Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 683-684, lettera del 18 marzo 1619: "Ho ricevuta la sua graditissima con la prova della sua Roma antiqua, e se bene per la moltitudine de negotij non ho potuto considerare il tutto a pieno, tuttavia per quanto ho potuto scorgere un'occhiata, credo riuscirà bene, e le farà onore, venendo molto bene unite e rappresentate insieme le grandezze della Città stessa [...]".

[97] Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 282.

[98] Arch. Linc. 32, f. 100*r*.

[99] Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. I, 820-822; Id., a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo,* 386-387, attesta che Mirabella "viene proposto dal sig. Porta insieme col quale hora si trattiene", evidentemente a Napoli (lettera del 6 settembre 1613). Il siracusano ringrazia Cesi per l'opportunità e poco dopo riceve

"Siracusa in rame" menzionata dall'inventario potrebbe appartenere al *corpus* delle tavole di Francesco Lomia, raffinato apparato iconografico delle *Dichiarazioni* di Mirabella.[100]

A riguardo della passione antiquaria, non si dimentichi, inoltre, che il *Princeps* effettua alcuni scavi archeologici in una zona non lontana da Monticelli, nel tentativo di rinvenire la villa di Zenobia, scoprendo alcuni gioielli ritenuti di proprietà della regina.[101] Si devono inoltre a Cesi l'esplorazione del santuario della Fortuna Primigenia a Palestrina e la più antica descrizione del sito nella sua interezza, compreso il celebre mosaico.[102] Infine, la presenza di monete antiche si ricollega all'interesse per la numismatica molto diffuso all'epoca, come testimoniano i trattati di Francesco Angeloni e Giovan Pietro Bellori, il quale ultimo ripubblica l'*Historia Augusta* del primo con l'aggiunta delle monete provenienti dalla collezione di Cristina di Svezia, o il Museo di Francesco Gualdi, ricco di medaglie e cammei, o ancora la ricchissima collezione numismatica di Virgilio Spada.[103]

Emerge, allora, il profilo di un *vir doctus* tanto nello studio dei *naturalia* quanto in quello della *res antiquaria*, delineando l'immagine del linceo ideale.[104] Pertanto meraviglia che le voci inventariali si limitino ad attestare "teste di marmo", "teste di putti", "pezzi 45 d'I-

l'anello accademico, distintivo del consesso (*ivi*, 429-430, 442-443, lettere del 21 maggio e del 7 luglio 1614). Archeologo noto per la sua erudizione nel campo della numismatica, nel 1615 egli invia al Nostro alcune monete siciliane antiche (cf. Camerota, Ottaviani, Trabucco, a cura di, *Lynceorum Historia*, 284, n. 5), citate in una lettera di Mirabella a Cesi (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 811-812, lettera del 1^{0} settembre 1623). Di esse, tuttavia, l'inventario non reca traccia alcuna, a meno che non si tratti delle non meglio precisate "medaglie di bronzo antiche e moderne", attestate in Arch. Linc. 32, f. 88*v*.

100 Biagetti, *La biblioteca di Federico Cesi*, 124, per la voce dell'inventario librario. L'esemplare consultato presso la Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma (6.3.M.7) reca al suo interno molteplici piante, alcune delle quali piegate a causa del grande formato. La terza tavola, piegata fra le pagine 62 e 63, riporta "Franciscus Lomia incid. Syracusis 1612". Pertanto è probabile che Cesi abbia fatto incorniciare una di esse.

101 Odescalchi, *Memorie istorico critiche*, 79-80; Guardo, Guidetti, "I primi Lincei", 72-77.

102 *Ivi*, 77-100.

103 Giovan Pietro Bellori, *L'historia augusta da Giulio Cesare a Costantino il Magno, illustrata con la verità dell'antiche medaglie da Francesco Angeloni* (Roma: Felice Cesaretti, 1685). Per il Museo di Francesco Gualdi, ricco di oggetti metallici antichi, quali il sistro egizio, cf. in primo luogo Stelluti, *Persio tradotto*, 187-188, successivamente Federici, "Alla ricerca dell'esattezza". Per le raccolte di Virgilio Spada, simili a quella cesiana per quanto concerne i *curiosa* e i *naturalia*, cf. Giuseppe Finocchiaro, *Il Museo di curiosità di Virgilio Spada. Una raccolta romana del Seicento* (Roma: Palombi, 1999), in particolare 194-222.

104 In una lettera di Cesi a Galileo Galilei il fondatore dell'Accademia sostiene la necessità di un "filologo, non però puro" da porre al servizio del consesso (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 353, lettera dell'11 maggio 1613). Celebre è lo scritto di Cesi ad Albino De l'Atti, nel quale il Nostro spiega perché l'imperatore Traiano sarebbe originario di Todi, avvalendosi di molteplici fonti letterarie e archeologiche (*ivi*, 895-916, lettera del 28 giugno 1624).

doletti piccolini antichi", "medaglie di bronzo antiche, e moderne":[105] un numero davvero esiguo di *reperta*, ragione che ha indotto a dubitare della completezza dell'inventario cesiano. Tuttavia, come accennato, un recente studio ha mirato a indagare le cause di tale assenza, muovendo dalla considerazione che molti dei cimeli antichi vengono venduti nel 1622 dal padre del Nostro a Ludovico Ludovisi.[106] D'altronde le *antiquitates* non oggetto di quella vendita sono attestate in alcuni documenti inediti. A ospitare la collezione archeologica di famiglia era il palazzo romano presso Porta Cavalleggeri, dove era possibile ammirare alcuni dei più celebri esemplari, come la *Dea Roma* con ai lati i *Barbari prigionieri*, un *Cupido addormentato*, una *Giunone*.[107] Il palazzo, per qualche tempo sede provvisoria della prima Accademia dei Lincei, rimane di proprietà dei Duchi d'Acquasparta fino al 1762.[108] Nel rione romano di Borgo la famiglia possiede un altro palazzo, oggi su Via della Conciliazione,[109] che tra gli anni '70 e '80 del Seicento viene alienato a causa di una grave

[105] Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 87*v*, 88*v*.

[106] Guardo, Guidetti, "I primi Lincei".

[107] Per il palazzo in questione, cf. Peretti, "Le residenze romane della famiglia Cesi", mentre per la collezione archeologica, descritta da Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Le antichità della città di Roma* (In Venetia: Appresso Giordano Ziletti, 1556), 122-141, cf. Beatrice Palma Venetucci, "Alcune osservazioni sugli 'uomini illustri' dello studiolo Cesi", *Bollettino d'Arte* 79 (1993): 49-64, Sabine Eiche, "On the layout of the Cesi palace and gardens in the Vatican Borgo", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorichen Institutes in Florenz* XXXIX (1995): 258-281, Katherine Bentz, "The Afterlife of the Cesi Garden: Family Identity, Politics, and Memory in Early Modern Rome", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historian* 72, 2 (June 2013): 134-165.

[108] Odescalchi, *Memorie istorico critiche*, 124, e Laura Gigli, *Guide rionali di Roma. Rione IV – Borgo* (Roma: Palombi, 1994), vol. II, 114, attestano che si tratta della residenza del cardinale Bartolomeo Cesi, fratello di Federico Cesi I Duca d'Acquasparta e zio del Linceo, al quale l'alto prelato permette di promuovere alcuni incontri dell'Accademia all'interno del proprio palazzo. Edoardo Martinori, *Genealogia e cronistoria di una grande famiglia umbro-romana: i Cesi* (Roma: Tipografia Compagnia Nazionale Pubblica, 1931), 83-84, riporta che Federico Pierdonato Cesi aliena la residenza nel 1762, come riferisce Gigli, *Guide rionali di Roma*, vol. IV, 45; d'altro avviso Eloisa Dodero, "Dal palazzo alle Quattro Fontane al museo Capitolino: la nuova vita della collezione del cardinale Alessandro Albani", in *Cardinal Albani. Collezionismo, diplomazia e mercato nell'Europa del Grand Tour*, a cura di Claire Hornsby, Mario Bevilacqua (Roma: Quasar, 2021), 179, nota 90, secondo la quale a vendere la proprietà è in realtà il di lui figlio, il quale si riserva inoltre il diritto di trattenere alcuni "sassi, rilievi e statue".

[109] Dunque i palazzi in Borgo sono due, entrambi denominati in modo eguale dalle fonti. In Archivio di Stato di Roma, fondo Massimo d'Aracoeli, busta 152, Eredità Cesi, fasc. 50, ff. non numerati, le indicazioni sono però precise e non lasciano spazio a dubbi: "situato nella mano manca della strada di Borgo Vecchio per andare a S. Pietro in faccia a tramontana, e dalla parte di ponente vi sono le cocine, e la stanza del Carbone, che confinano al muro delle scale, e stanze circolari del piano nobile con li R.R. P.P. delle scuole Pie della Chiesa, e Convento di S. Lorenzo in Pesce". La documentazione di nostro interesse, dunque, riguarda il palazzo su Via della Conciliazione. Per la cronologia della vendita e del documento vedi *infra*.

crisi finanziaria.[110] L'atto di vendita riporta una sezione intitolata "Valore del Capitale di esso Palazzo", riguardante anche "Le statue poste in detto Palazzo dal medesimo Signore Cardinale Pier Donato Cesi Seniore, et altre spettanti al Fideicommisso del Signor Cardinale Federico Cesi *bonae memoriae* stimate dal già Ercole Ferrati in tutto scudi 4.500": un valore decisamente rilevante.[111] Si tratta dunque di una ulteriore testimonianza della sopravvivenza di una piccola parte della collezione statuaria, non menzionata tra le "Robbe del Museo" cesiano.

Segue l'elenco dei quadri stimati dal pittore Paride Parigi, del quale non si conosce l'esatta identità ma che potrebbe rinviare alla città toscana, dove i Parigi sono molto attivi, in contatto con il Granduca Cosimo II e con la cerchia galileiana.[112] Filippo Baldinucci, nella raccolta di biografie da lui progettata e pubblicata *post mortem*, attesta il nome di Alfonso Parigi, architetto militare e di macchine sceniche al servizio degli arciduchi, uno dei figli di Giulio Parigi, presso il quale si formano artisti come Giovanni da San Giovanni e Jacques Callot.[113] Giulio, inoltre, frequenta un circolo di paesaggisti, il "Cenacolo dei Pastori Antellesi", dedito all'arte *en plein air*, insieme con Galileo Galilei e Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane, oltre a operare negli stessi cantieri fiorentini di Ludovico Cardi detto il Cigoli e a essere in contatto con l'ambiente romano, poiché dall'Urbe fa arrivare alcune opere per conto di Cosimo II.[114] Ancora, Stefano della Bella, incisore toscano a servizio dei Lincei e

[110] Per la crisi finanziaria cf. *Il Palazzo Cesi in Via della Maschera d'Oro* (Roma: stabilimento grafico militare di Gaeta, 1998), 27-28. Il palazzo è alienato da Federico Angelo Pierdonato Cesi (†1705), V Duca d'Acquasparta (cf. Martinori, *Genealogia*, 81-85).

[111] Archivio di Stato di Roma, fondo Massimo d'Aracoeli, busta 152, Eredità Cesi, fasc. 50, ff. non numerati. La vendita è autorizzata tramite un chirografo "della santa memoria di Innocenzo XI" (1676-1689) e le statue sono valutate da Ercole Ferrata, nominato dall'Accademia di S. Luca "stimatore di scultura" nel 1667 e morto nel 1686. A tal riguardo cf. Maria Giulia Barberini, "Melchiorre Cafà nella storia della critica", in *Melchiorre Cafà. Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, a cura di Keith Sciberras (Valletta: Midsea Books, 2006), 37. Ne consegue che l'alienazione risale agli anni '70-'80, quando sia il papa sia lo scultore sono vivi. Poiché essi sono citati come defunti, il documento in questione rinvia con ogni verosimiglianza agli anni '90 del secolo, prima della morte di Federico Angelo Pier Donato Cesi (1705). Raffaella Marinetti, "Note su Ercole Ferrata e le antichità medicee di Roma e Firenze", *Ricerche di Storia dell'Arte* 88 (2006), 93, riporta che Ercole Ferrata era già attivo a Firenze nel mercato delle sculture antiche e del loro restauro per conto della famiglia Medici.

[112] Il pittore è citato in Arch. Linc. 32, f. 99*v*. Sul rapporto fra scienza e pittura nella Toscana di Galilei, cf. Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, Alessandro Tosi, a cura di, *Il cannocchiale e il pennello: nuova scienza e nuova arte nell'età di Galileo* (Firenze: Giunti, 2009).

[113] Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua* (Firenze: per il Tartini e Franchi, 1728), 6, 332-334.

[114] Per il "Cenacolo", Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, "La conquista del visibile. Rimeditando Panofsky, rileggendo Galilei", *Galilaeana* IV (2007), 28; per inquadrare i Parigi nella Firenze dell'epoca, cf. Annamaria Negro Spina, *Giulio Parigi e gli incisori della sua cerchia* (Napoli: Società editrice

formatosi presso i Parigi, dedica un'incisione al Duca di Bracciano Paolo Orsini, frequentatore del Museo angeloniano e al quale Giulio dona un suo volume.[115] Il Duca Orsini, inoltre, viene menzionato come "mantenitore" in occasione delle nozze tra Federico Cesi e Isabella Salviati in una lettera di Faber a Federico Borromeo.[116]

Molti sono i quadri, tutti anonimi, che ritraggono vedute, paesaggi, nature morte e soggetti sacri, rendendo spesso difficile avanzare un'ipotesi di attribuzione.[117] Sarebbe vano elencare tutti i ritratti di santi, beati e laici nella raccolta di Cesi, tuttavia è possibile rintracciare un filo conduttore che lega alcuni personaggi ritratti alle vicende della famiglia: a S. Francesco è devota la madre del Nostro, Olimpia Orsini, che sceglie di commissionare un *S. Francesco che riceve le stimmate* per la propria cappella nella Chiesa del Gesù;[118] i

napoletana, 1983); da Gino Corti, "Il 'Registro de' mandati' dell'ambasciatore granducale Piero Guicciardini e la committenza artistica fiorentina a Roma nel secondo decennio del Seicento", *Paragone* XL, 16 (luglio 1989), 114-117, 121 (nota 67), 122 (nota 76), 123 (note 83, 91), si apprende che Giulio Parigi per il Granduca di Toscana acquista alcune *antiquitates*, commissiona a Paul Brill due quadri e riceve informazioni in merito ad alcuni disegni di Antonio Tempesta. Cigoli è stretto amico di Galileo Galilei e dipinge la *Immacolata Concezione* della Cappella Borghese in S. Maria Maggiore, seguendo la descrizione lunare che lo scienziato pisano espone nel *Sidereus Nuncius*. Su quest'ultimo argomento cf. Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 300-301 (lettera di Cesi a Galileo del 23 dicembre 1612), Tongiorgi Tomasi, "La conquista del visibile", Erwin Panofsky, *Galileo critico delle arti*, a cura di Maria Cecilia Mazzi (Milano: Abscondita, 2008).

115 L'incisore Della Bella, cresciuto nella scuola dei Parigi (Negro Spina, *Giulio Parigi*, 129), è autore di un'illustrazione del *Dialogo* […] galileiano del 1632. Tongiorgi Tomasi, "La conquista del visibile", 46, riferisce che all'artista vanno ascritti anche due disegni per il frontespizio di una nuova edizione delle opere galileiane, che i discepoli intendono pubblicare dopo la morte del maestro (Firenze, Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, 7991F e 8042F): cf. *Opere del Galileo* (Bononiae: Ex Typographia HH. De Ducijs, 1655-1656). Per l'incisione che Della Bella dedica al Duca Orsini cf. Maria Elena Boscarelli, "*Il viaggio di Giacobbe in Egitto*", in *Storia dell'incisione italiana. Il Seicento*, a cura di Paolo Bellini (Piacenza: Tip.Le.Co., 1992), 147, mentre per l'opera che Giulio Parigi dona allo stesso cf. Negro Spina, *Giulio Parigi*, 42.

116 "Dimane il Sig. Principe Cesi mena in casa la sua Sposa de Casa Salviati e il Conte Marescotti fa fare una giostra dove sarà mantenitore Don Paulo Giordano Ursino" (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 589, lettera del 28 gennaio 1617).

117 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 92*v*-102*v*. Per quanto concerne la pittura di paesaggio e la natura morta, si rimanda a Silvia Danesi Squarzina, "Natura morta e collezionismo a Roma nella prima metà del Seicento", in *Natura morta, pittura di paesaggio e il collezionismo a Roma nella prima metà del Seicento*, a cura di Ead. (Roma: Lithos, 1995-96), 9-76, e a Francesca Cappelletti, "Roma 1580-1610. Una traccia per il contributo fiammingo alle origini del paesaggio", in *Natura morta,* 177-200.

118 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 99*v*. Federica Favino, "Scienza e spiritualità nell'impresa lincea di Federico Cesi. Un panorama", in *I Cesi di Acquasparta,* 396, riporta che Olimpia Orsini commissiona al pittore Cherubino Alberti l'opera in questione. Per il rapporto tra il casato Cesi e l'Oratorio, cf. Maria Teresa Bonadonna Russo, "I Cesi e la Congregazione dell'Oratorio", *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 90 (1967), 101-163. La nobildonna è in stretto rapporto anche con gli Oratoriani, dal momento che a lei sono dedicate più opere di carattere spirituale, citate in Brevaglieri, *Natural*

quadri che celebrano gli antichi fasti cesiani, quindi i ritratti di "mons. Paolo Cesi vescovo di Terni", di Reinaldo Cesi e del Beato Pietro;[119] il ritratto del "Generale dei Carmelitani di casa Cesi", a noi ignoto ma probabilmente fautore dei rapporti fra l'ordine e la famiglia Cesi, ancora vivi al tempo del Nostro;[120] un ritratto di Bartolomeo Liviano, per la cui famiglia Federico chiede a Johann Friedrich Greuter di incidere un albero genealogico;[121] "Due teste del Padre fra' Bernardino da Colpetrazzo Cappuccino", testimoni del legame fra l'Ordine e il padre del linceo.[122]

L'inventario prosegue attestando molteplici ritratti di uomini illustri, cardinali, alti prelati e papi contemporanei al Nostro:[123] a riguardo ci limitiamo a segnalare il ritratto del

desiderio di sapere, 73. Per la presenza nella biblioteca di Cesi della biografia di San Filippo Neri, pubblicata nel 1600 da Antonio Gallonio, cf. Biagetti, *La biblioteca di Federico Cesi*, 173.

[119] Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 100*r*-100*v*. Una lettera di Cesi ad Albino degli Atti fa riferimento a un'"Ara Massima", luogo sacro per la frequentazione di S. Francesco e del Beato Pietro Cesi (Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. I, 154-157). Nel Palazzo Cesi di Acquasparta, nella *Sala della Genealogia*, il *Princeps Lynceorum* fa rappresentare, tra i molti antenati, anche quelli di epoca medievale, tra i quali il Beato Pietro che, appunto, avrebbe conosciuto S. Francesco: cf. Giorgio De Petra, *Gli affreschi del Palazzo Cesi di Acquasparta* (Perugia: Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria, 2017), 115-116. D'altra parte Guerrieri Borsoi, "Il mecenatismo artistico di Federico Cesi", 105, riferisce che l'"Ara Massima" corrisponde a una struttura sacra eretta nella località di Poggio Azzuano e immortalata dal pittore Riccardo Ripanelli nella sala principale del Palazzo Cesi in Roma, Via della Maschera d'Oro. Rileviamo, infine, che il Beato Pietro è menzionato nel *Compendium historiae antiquorum Caesiorum ac eorum posteritatis*, testo manoscritto di Della Porta datato 1607. La fonte dellaportiana, della quale dai primi del XIX secolo (cf. Odescalchi, *Memorie istorico critiche*, 5) si erano perdute le tracce, è stata di recente rinvenuta ed edita da Marco Guardo, "Il *Compendium historiae antiquorum Caesiorum ac eorum posteritatis* di Giovambattista Della Porta. La genealogia cesiana tra realtà e finzione", in *Genealogia, emblematica e araldica lincea*, a cura di Andreas Rehberg (Roma: Bardi, 2025), 117-157.

[120] Arch. Linceo 32, f. 100*v*. Pompilio Totti, *Ritratto di Roma moderna* (Roma: per il Mascardi, 1638), 515, fa menzione del legame fra il monastero carmelitano di S. Teresa (nell'Urbe, nell'area di Montecavallo, non lontano dalla chiesa di S. Susanna) e la sorella di Federico, Caterina Cesi, fondatrice dello stesso.

[121] Arch. Linc. 32, f. 100*v*; Guerrieri Borsoi, "Il mecenatismo artistico di Federico Cesi", 109.

[122] Arch. Linc. 32, f. 101*v*. A riguardo del frate ci limitiamo a citare Michele Lodone, *I segni della fine. Storia di un predicatore nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Roma: Viella, 2021), 162-163.

[123] I ritratti sono più di cinquanta: cf. Caterina Volpi, "I ritratti di illustri contemporanei della collezione di Cassiano dal Pozzo", in *I segreti di un collezionista. Le straordinarie raccolte di Cassiano dal Pozzo 1588-1657*, a cura di Francesco Solinas (Roma: De Luca, 2002), 68-78. Quando Cesi muore, Stelluti si preoccupa di metter da parte alcuni ritratti, così che Cassiano possa acquistarli (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 1240, lettera del 1^{0} marzo 1633). Nella raccolta di Cassiano, infatti, sono attestati i ritratti di alcuni Lincei, forse provenienti proprio dalla raccolta di Cesi. L'ipotesi poggia sulla descrizione che Gabriel Naudé, *Epigrammata in virorum immagines, quas illustrissimus eques Cassianus a Puteo sua in bibliotheca dedicavit* (Romae: excudebat Ludovicus Grignanus, 1641), [4], [7], [5] dedica alla raccolta puteana, citando rispettivamente

"Vescovo di Bamberga",[124] nel 1613 destinatario delle *Mexicanarum plantarum imagines*, rarissimo libello che costituisce, per così dire, il primo *specimen* del futuro *Tesoro messicano*;[125] trovano inoltre luogo un quadro "con la figura degl'api dipinti",[126] che rinvia alla prima opera che Cesi, ormai quarantenne, affida ai torchi, ossia l'*Apiarium* (1625),[127] e soggetti della tradizione antica e medievale, come Democrito, Eraclito, e Scoto;[128] inoltre Venere, Amore, Bacco e il "Selvaggio", il quale ultimo tanto interesse suscita negli studiosi del tempo.[129]

i ritratti di Galileo, di Della Porta e di Schoppe. Quest'ultimo potrebbe essere quello attestato nell'Arch. Linc. 32, f. 100*v*. A riguardo della questione dei ritratti lincei mette conto di segnalare le fonti archivistiche di recente emerse grazie all'edizione delle 'schede lincee' di Martin Fogel. L'inventario dell'eredità Cesi testimonia infatti la presenza di "Cinque ritratti con le loro cornice negre et fogliame d'oro; uno di Marco Venziar [*sic*], un altro di Fabio Colonna, Gio. Battista Porta, Galileo Galilei et Filippo Salviati" (Archivio di Stato di Roma, Archivio Massimo, busta 237, fasc. 10, f. 33*r*). Inoltre una lettera di Carlo Antonio Dal Pozzo a Carlo Dati, datata 6 dicembre 1644, rinvia a una richiesta di Fogel inerente ad alcuni ritratti di sodali lincei: "È riuscito il S^{r}. Foghelio molto puntuale e merita la sua modesta virtù d'esser servita. Harebbe goduto che gl'havessi fatto intagliare alcuni de ritratti degl'Accademici Lincei, ma stando costoro sulla bestalità de prezzi, stimo vantaggio di questo Signore il fargliene fare i disegni e mandarglieli acciò da quelli in Alemagna, a miglior prezzo, ne possa restar servito" (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Ms. Baldovinetti 258, cassetta V, n. 7, f. 68*r*): per le suddette fonti cf. Camerota, Ottaviani, Trabucco, a cura di, *Lynceorum historia*, 360.

124 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 100*v*.

125 Baldriga, *L'occhio della lince*, 248, 253, 258, 259, 266 e Ebe Antetomaso, "Gli esordi dell'editoria botanica lincea e la pubblicazione del *Libro delle piante indiane*", in *Rara Herbaria. Libri e natura dal XV al XVII secolo: dagli incunaboli della collezione Peter Goop ai cimeli botanici della prima Accademia dei Lincei*, a cura di Michael Jakob, Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2023), 334-339.

126 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 87*r*.

127 Cf. Federico Cesi, *Apiarium*, ed. a cura di Luigi Guerrini, trad. di Marco Guardo (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2005). Per l'interesse linceo rispetto alle api nell'anno giubilare del 1625, cf. Guardo, "L'ape e le api". Nel medesimo anno Riquius pubblica le *Apes Dianiae* (Gallottini, Guardo, "Le *Apes Dianiae*") e viene stampata la *Melissographia*, tributo iconografico all'insetto e al papato Barberini, cf. Giuseppe Finocchiaro, "Dall'*Apiarium* alla ΜΕΛΙΣΣΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ: una vicenda editoriale tra propaganda scientifica e strategia culturale", *Atti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti*, s. 9, 15 (2004), 767-779.

128 L'identificazione del ritratto permette solamente mere congetture: potrebbe trattarsi del filosofo greco, citato in una lettera di Cesi a Faber [1615?], cf. Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 513, o forse di Andrè Schott, amico del linceo Welser.

129 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 100*r*-100*v*. Circa il "Selvaggio" Pedro Gonzalez cf. Roberto Zapperi, *Il selvaggio gentiluomo: l'incredibile storia di Pedro Gonzalez e dei suoi figli* (Roma: Donzelli, 2005); il celebre ritratto di mano di Agostino Carracci, con lo stesso soggetto, era già da tempo attestato nella collezione Farnese, cf. Pierluigi Leone De Castris, "Arrigo Peloso, Pietro Matto e Amon nano", in *I Farnese. Arte e Collezionismo*, a cura di Luigi Fornari Schianchi (Milano: Electa,

Rileviamo adesso che nella nostra fonte i beni ai quali è attribuito maggior valore sono gli argenti e i gioielli,[130] talora descritti non con lo stile sintetico proprio degli inventari, ma con una prosa dal sapore narrativo.[131] Si tratta di prodotti *ad hoc* recanti lo stemma del casato Cesi e dei Salviati, oppure, come nella collezione di Francesco Gualdi, anelli antichi e moderni, oggetti da collezione e talvolta di studio.[132] Anche in questa sezione dell'inventario cesiano è possibile cogliere non lievi tracce della storia accademica: gli "Anelli sei con smeraldi intagliati con la lince impresa dell'Accademia dei Lincei"[133] sono con evidenza gli stessi prescritti dal dettato statutario e che i sodali ricevono con animo lieto al momento dell'ascrizione.[134] In relazione alla consistenza numerica degli anelli indicata dall'inventario si potrebbe congetturare che tre di essi fossero quelli destinati agli ultimi sodali ascritti all'Accademia, ai quali Cesi non fece in tempo a consegnare l'anello,[135] testimoniato nel celebre ritratto di Cesi, custodito presso la sede dell'Accademia dei Lincei:[136] l'anello di-

1995), 289-290; anche Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia* (Bononiae: Typis Nicolai Tebaldini, 1642), 16-18, traccia un quadro di questa "curiosità" della natura.

130 Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 90*r*-98*v*. Il "Registro de' mandati" dell'ambasciatore granducale presso la città papale Piero Guiccardini (in carica dal 1611 al 1621), testimone degli acquisti fatti in Roma per conto di alcune famiglie toscane e del Granduca Cosimo II, reca il nome degli orefici Ostilio de Ostili (Corti, "Il 'Registro de' mandati' dell'ambasciatore granducale Piero Guicciardini", 117, 145 n. 55) e Pietro Paolo Discacciati (*ivi*, 124, nota 92): il primo per una catena d'oro, il secondo per un "quadro aovato, guarnito d'argento et con rame indorato, entrovi una Madonna". L'Arch. Linc. 32, ff. 95*r*-95*v*, attesta il nome di entrambi gli artigiani come stimatori: Ostili per tutti i gioielli, mentre Discacciati per una preziosa collana, stimata insieme al collega.

131 Citiamo, a titolo di esempio, il riferimento alle "perle caratte" (Arch. Linc. 32, f. 95*v*), per il quale si rinvia a Agostino Poletti, *Santuario* (Milano: Appresso Lodovico Monza, 1659), 15.

132 Per la collezione di Gualdi cf. Federici, "Alla ricerca dell'esattezza".

133 Arch. Linc. 32, f. 94*r*.

134 Nicolò, a cura di, *Lynceographum*, 192-193. Per la consegna dell'anello a Francesco Barberini cf. Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 812-814, lettera del 30 settembre 1623: "Questa sera poi si è dato finalmente l'anello a Mons.r Ill.mo Barberino, quale è stato assai da S. S. Ill. ma gradito". Con sentimenti non diversi Filippo Pandolfini, rivolgendosi a Cesi, afferma che terrà "sempre la lince vivacemente scolpita nel quore, non meno che saldamente intagliata nello smeraldo" (*ivi*, 484, lettera del 7 febbraio 1615). D'altra parte Terrentius, indossato l'abito gesuitico, abbandona l'Accademia e con essa anche l'anello (Gabrieli, *Contributi*, vol. I, 302).

135 Stelluti scrive a Cassiano che "già vi sono tre anelli fatti per il Sig.r Marchese Pallavicino, per il Sig.r Pietro Della Valle e per il Sig. r Luca Olstenio", precisando che il *Princeps Lynceorum* avrebbe voluto consegnarli ai nuovi sodali in presenza del cardinale Francesco Barberini (Gabrieli, a cura di, Il carteggio linceo, 1222, lettera del 17 agosto 1630).

136 Per il ritratto in questione cf. Piera Giovanna Tordella, "Alessandro Peretti Montalto, Ludovico Ludovisi, Maurizio di Savoia: disegni inediti di Ottavio Leoni e novità documentarie sui rapporti con Vincenzo I Gonzaga e la curia romana", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorichen Institutes in Florenz* XLV, 1/2 (2001): 319-337, 321-322; Ead., "Ottavio Leoni disegnatore e pittore. I Cesi e il cardinal Montalto", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* XLVII, 2/3 (2003):

pinto nel quadro ha la stessa forma dell'impronta visibile accanto alle sottoscrizioni dei primi Lincei.[137]

Alla luce delle osservazioni sopra esposte, emerge che la raccolta del *Princeps* riflette le idee del sodalizio linceo, che fa della comunicazione scientifica la prima missione.[138] Come si è visto, il Museo cesiano non è un *unicum* nella Roma del secolo XVII, quando nelle raccolte la natura diventa *sponsa* dell'arte, e testimonia l'evoluzione del collezionismo che approda anche nel secolo successivo, come attesta il Museo dell'arcade Leone Strozzi (1657-1722).[139] Nel terzo libro dell'*Arcadia* Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni descrive Strozzi, nelle vesti del pastore Nitilo Geresteo, intento a mostrare alle ninfe la propria raccolta.[140] Le corrispondenze e i parallelismi tra le due raccolte museali non sono pochi, sottendendo entrambe l'osservazione autoptica, la presenza di *numismata*, di gemme in-

345-374, Ead., *Ottavio Leoni e la ritrattistica a disegno protobarocca* (Firenze: Olschki, 2011): 33-35, Ead., "I volumi di ritratti di Ottavio Leoni. Aspetti storico-collezionistici, tecnico-conservativi. Pasquale Nerino Ferri e altri", in *Libri e Album di Disegni 1500-1800. Nuove prospettive metodologiche e di esegesi storico-critica. Atti del convegno internazionale, Roma, Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome – Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma, 30 maggio -1 giugno 2018*, a cura di Vita Segreto (Roma: De Luca, 2018): 11-118, Ead., "La scelta dell'attimo. Ottavio Leoni disegnatore, incisore, miniatore. Il *corpus* dell'Accademia Colombaria, il volume H della Biblioteca Marucelliana e altre presenze fiorentine", in *Volti e storie. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630) ritrattista nell'Accademia Colombaria e nelle raccolte fiorentine*, a cura di Ead. (Firenze: Polistampa, 2019), 13-31, Ead., "Ottavio Leoni. Logiche di incontro e confronto", *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere La Colombaria*, LXXXV, n.s. LXXI (2020), 25-28, Ead., "*Ritratto di Cristoph Scheiner*", in *La Città del Sole. Arte barocca e pensiero scientifico nella Roma di Urbano VIII*, a cura di Filippo Camerota, Marcello Fagiolo (Firenze-Livorno: Museo Galileo-Sillabe, 2023), 321, Ead., "Nell'età di Federico il Linceo. Ancora su Ottavio Leoni e la ritrattistica cesiana", in *Genealogia, emblematica e araldica lincea*, a cura di Andreas Rehberg (Roma: Bardi, 2025), 197-228, 197-200.

137 Cf. Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 96.

138 "Invidus vero et impius qui Scientiae bona communicare non vult, longeque et omnibus utilior magisque perpetua illa Scientia quae chartis conscripta in lucem divulgatur": cf. Nicolò, a cura di, *Lynceographum*, 71.

139 Per le vicende biografiche e collezionistiche di Leone Strozzi, cf. Guerrieri Borsoi, *Gli Strozzi a Roma*.

140 Cf. Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, *L'Arcadia* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1711[2]), 91-128. A riguardo cf. Marco Guardo, "Memoria e reinvenzione dell'antico negli *Arcadum Carmina*: arte e natura in Leone Strozzi", in *Canoni d'Arcadia. Il custodiato di Crescimbeni*, a cura di Maurizio Campanelli, Pietro Petteruti Pellegrino, Paolo Procaccioli, Emilio Russo, Corrado Viola (Roma: Edizioni Storia e Letteratura, 2019), 331-347, e Marco Guardo, Enrico Gullo, "Il Museo di Leone Strozzi: le fonti letterarie e archivistiche", in *Scienza e Poesia scientifica in Arcadia (1690-1870)*, a cura di Elisabetta Appetecchi, Maurizio Campanelli, Alessandro Ottaviani, Pietro Petteruti Pellegrino (Roma: Accademia dell'Arcadia, 2022), 3-41.

tagliate, di conchiglie, di pietre e marmi, ma anche di farfalle.[141] Nella raccolta di Strozzi *res antiquaria*, *naturalia* ed *exotica* occupano il posto più rilevante: lucerne, probabilmente acquistate dalla collezione di Enrico Corvino nel 1682 e altresì attestate anche nella raccolta di Cesi;[142] "cinque libri grandi di semplici", sempre provenienti dalla raccolta dell'olandese, oggetti lavorati "all'indiana", corna di rinoceronte e della già citata "gran bestia detta *alcis*", frutti indiani, diversi semi e cocchi d'India.[143] L'inventario del 1725 attesta inoltre la presenza di alcuni studioli e di numerosi quadri con piante e animali, per lo più anonimi,[144] mentre quello del 1748, inerente all'eredità di Maria Teresa Strozzi, cita un codice miniato con piante di Giovanna Garzoni, numerosi oggetti realizzati con fico d'India e anche il cannocchiale di lincea memoria.[145]

A un secolo di distanza, dunque, alcuni *specimina* di collezionismo scientifico mantengono inalterata la propria impostazione e la raccolta di Strozzi è testimone di tale eredità, rivelandosi al visitatore non già come "un piccolo Studio", in ossequio al *topos modestiae*, ma come "un ben vasto teatro di meraviglie".[146]

[141] *Ivi*, 5-14. Heckius manda al Museo linceo alcune farfalle (Gabrieli, a cura di, *Il carteggio linceo*, 88, lettera del 1° agosto 1605), ma di esse non c'è traccia nell'inventario cesiano.

[142] Guardo, "Memoria e reinvenzione dell'antico negli *Arcadum Carmina*" 335; Guerrieri Borsoi, *Gli Strozzi a Roma*, 184. Per l'elenco degli oggetti acquistati dallo speziale olandese, cf. *Ivi*, 234-236. Le lucerne suscitano l'interesse di molti studiosi e tra questi Giovan Pietro Bellori, Pietro Sante Bartoli, *Le antiche lucerne sepolcrali figurate* (Roma: nella Stamperia di Giovanni Francesco Buagni, 1691).

[143] Guerrieri Borsoi, *Gli Strozzi a Roma*, 234-236.

[144] *Ivi*, 238-241.

[145] *Ivi*, 241-247. Nell'opera di Crescimbeni sono molti i rimandi alla tradizione dell'osservazione, anche entomologica, richiamando le vicende legate alla *Melissographia* (Guardo, "Arte e natura in Leone Strozzi", 339).

[146] Crescimbeni, *L'Arcadia*, 96.

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