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9

"Farò quel che me piacerà": Fictional women in *villotta* voice resistance[1]

Melanie L. Marshall

"Farò quel che me piacerà": "I will do what I want" or, more literally, "I will do what pleases me." These words from a sixteenth-century *villotta*, *E do', Tuogna, fate bella ch'a te vo pur mariare* (Toni, Pretty Yourself Up, for I Wish to Marry You Off), a strophic song in Veneto dialect, published as note-against-note counterpoint for four voices but in this case probably performed solo by an entertainer, might be presumed to come from a male character, so well known (or supposed) are the limits on the agency and behavior of contemporaneous Italian women.[2] The assertion, however, is made by a female character who is addressing her father about his plans for her marital future. The young woman makes a direct challenge to patriarchal authority, and thus confounds much of the scholarly consensus around early modern female autonomy. In this sense, her challenge is one that adherents to the Burckhardtian model might consider unnecessary because Burckhardt, in contrast to more recent work, considered Renaissance women to hold equality with men.[3] It is a challenge that might delight those familiar with the words of Nannina de' Medici to her brother Lorenzo following a dispute with her new father-in-law: "don't be born a woman if you want your own way."[4] It might also delight those familiar with madrigals, *balli*, and early opera written for Italian courtly weddings which tend to showcase the happy results of obedience by daughters and wives or the dire fate awaiting disobedient women. In contrast, as will be evident later, the outcome of this altercation is not clear; there is the possibility of a happy ending for this assertive young woman.

In practice, gender relations were more complicated than is allowed for by a simple oppressed/equal binary because they intersected with other forms of difference. A woman's ability to do what she wanted was closely related to her social status, her financial position and her location. Italian noblewomen might hold positions of ruling authority: duchesses and queens may have

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been expected to behave in very particular ways but they were educated and possessed considerable autonomy. They could make decisions that had profound implications for their family, their house, and their subjects, but in many cases they did so only when no appropriate male was available: they acted as exponents of their families.[5] Nonetheless, some had opportunities to manage their own economic interests. Isabella d'Este, Marchesa of Mantua, and Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara, for example, increased their income: Isabella in the apparently typical way of managing a farm estate, and Lucrezia through atypical and highly successful entrepreneurship.[6] Upper-class women who did not rule might find themselves subject to greater restrictions, as Nannina de' Medici found. The ideal for upper-class Florentine women, for example, was that their world revolved around their domestic and reproductive duties and that they left their *palazzi* only to attend church, but in their husband's absence they might also manage their family's business affairs with the help of male family members acting as go-betweens.[7] Lower-class women also had considerable autonomy arising from their income-generating activities. Moreover, many lower-class women had more autonomy than most upper-class and noble women when it came to intimate relationships, for women of the lower class could generally choose their own husbands.[8] The social status of the woman in this song is by no means clear, for reasons I discuss later, but it has profound implications for her future.

The woman's words are also remarkable when considered in the context of the song's genre. The words were written by a man: the song is from a little-known publication by Alvise Castellino, known as *il varoter venetiano* (the Venetian furrier), a professional entertainer who wrote the words and the tunes to some 29 *villotte*. Strophic songs in female voice are exceedingly rare, yet *il primo libro de villotte di Alvise Castellino chiamato il Varoter Venetiano* (Venice, 1541), dedicated to Duke Ercole II d'Este of Ferrara (the son of Lucrezia Borgia), contains several songs featuring women characters who, rather than being passive objects of desire, dare to give voice to their own needs within the limited comic framework available.[9] Although it contains only four songs of this type, the collection to my knowledge represents the single largest sixteenth-century printed source of strophic dialect songs in female voice.[10] The archetypal strophic song (whether a *villotta* or *villanesca*) is invariably related to love, sex, or marriage and is most often sung by a man about his unrequited love.[11] Many sixteenth-century strophic song collections are packed with the very characters most often documented as singing in comedies, all of whom are male—braggarts, soldiers, innumerable wistful lovers, and clients of prostitutes or courtesans. Indeed the strophic genres of the *villotta* and *villanesca* with their rustic settings and low-class character types have long been considered related to comic theater traditions. Many strophic songs employ "speech acts to establish relationships between characters and to provide a context that preserves the unities of time and place, then being

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promoted by Aristotelian critics as essential to comedy."[12] Containing several singing women characters, Castellino's publication is rather unusual for a collection of theatrical songs. It is highly possible that the songs are closely related to an unscripted theatrical practice predating *commedia dell'arte* that has left several brief accounts but little substantial documentation: that of single-actor performances of comic mini-plays with multiple characters.[13]

How did these songs come about? The answer is, predictably, complex and multi-faceted, and encompasses consideration of the role of lower-status women characters in dialect theater, especially that of Angelo Beolco, as well as the practices of theatrical cross-dressing and single-actor performance of multi-character playlets. One particularly significant factor might be the Ferrarese courtly context in which the songs were probably performed.

Ducal authority and the duchess's voice in Ferrara

In addition to their theatrical elements, Castellino's *villotte* humorously explore current affairs and personal foibles.[14] They share the device with improvised banquet songs, a genre popular at the Este court.[15] The composition date of Castellino's songs is unclear—most could have been composed from the late 1520s through to the late 1530s—but they largely focus on masculine power and authority. This was a particular concern for Duke Ercole II, the dedicatee, who continued his father Alfonso I d'Este's endeavors to balance Ferrara's interests with the competing priorities of the emperor, the pope, and the French crown.[16] Ercole was to have married the natural daughter of Charles V, Margaret, but Alfonso quickly changed plans in October 1527 when his territory was threatened by the French-aligned League of Cognac, empowered by the reaction against Charles caused by the imperial troops' sacking of Rome. Ercole's marriage to Renée de France (daughter of the late King Louis XII) was one of the clauses in the treaty agreed upon in early November.[17] Alfonso declared his loyalty to the emperor, but nonetheless was compelled to switch allegiance from empire to France. By the time Ercole and Renée arrived in Ferrara in late 1528, the emperor was ascendant again and their match had all but ceased to have political relevance.

Music prints demonstrate the opposing loyalties of the duke's and duchess's courts: the *villotta* had long been associated with imperial affiliation, and two years after Castellino's *villotte* were published, the duchess was the dedicatee of a volume of six-voice *canzone francese* by Jacques Buus.[18]

The duke's relations with his duchess, Renée de France, being insecure at times, both Renée and Ercole used her household as a convenient arena for displays of power aimed beyond Ferrara's borders. The duke struggled to control the voices of the duchess and her favorite companion, Madame de Soubise, lest they jeopardize his attempts to secure the investiture of Ferrara

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from the pope, whose relations with the two major outside powers, France and the empire, could be at variance with the Duke's. Accusing Madame de Soubise of turning Renée against him and evidently concerned about the spread of allegations against him, in 1533 Ercole started to intercept the women's correspondence, and his letters to the French king repeatedly complain of malicious gossip. Rumors of Renée's plight and Ercole's bad behavior circulated in the French court, reaching the ears of various European ambassadors. The most likely source of such information, beyond Madame de Soubise and Renée, was the Bishop of Limoges, who arrived as the French ambassador to Ferrara in 1535.[19]

Little trace of Renée's voice survived the destruction of her papers in 1554, but it seems she often pursued action that conflicted with Ercole's views, quite literally embodying French interests at a time when he pursued alliance with the emperor and his affiliates. Her French household, her alleged lack of facility in Italian, and her decision to resume wearing French fashions a few years into their marriage seem to have strengthened Ercole's perception that she allied with pro-French interests to sabotage his goals.[20] Furthermore, Renée encouraged reformist ideas of the type that had been in vogue in France at the time of her marriage at the very moment that Ercole sought the investiture of Ferrara from the pope. In 1535, while Ercole was in Rome negotiating the continuation of his feudal rights and allying with the emperor and pope against France, Renée, as regent, requested permission for Ercole's brother, Ippolito, to travel to France. The ducal secretary had the unenviable task of conveying Ercole's displeasure:

> The Duke was so angry about what Your Excellency has written concerning the going of Monsieur the Archbishop to France that I was not able to explain even with many words and he has said formally that he does not believe his brother and wife could have displeased him more. … I did not fail to say to his Excellency that Your Serenity with no thought of displeasing him had engaged in that business with the King of which you wrote, thinking that my failure to do so would offend His Majesty. But His Excellency replied, "she ought to think whether what she does benefits me and is of service to my state, and she ought not to have greater respect for others than for me." His Excellency said this with great anger, adding this and other similar things as examples, but I did not heed the others.[21]

In this fascinating letter, the ducal secretary (formerly in Renée's service) apparently attempted to mediate between the conflicting parties. On the one hand he presented himself as augmenting, clarifying, and defending Renée's request while, on the other, he muffled the duke by choosing not to convey the latter's full outburst. The secretary's effort notwithstanding, Ercole questioned Renée's loyalty, obedience, and agency.

Similar issues seem to have been at stake in a number of disagreements, and Renée twice absented herself from court. The first occasion occurred in 1536, when Ercole, in a demonstration of his sovereign authority, ordered Madame

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de Soubise to return to the French court. In response, Renée withdrew to her rooms, removing her voice as well.[22] At the French court, Madame de Soubise continued to use her voice to reveal Ercole's mistreatment of Renée. The duchess herself was not altogether silent. In April 1536, following an inquiry into heresy which resulted in the imprisonment of a number of Frenchmen resident in Ferrara including one of Ercole's singers, Renée reached out to a number of sources for help.[23] Her efforts were successful: France began to agitate for release of the prisoners, and eventually they were taken out of the jurisdiction of the Ferrarese Inquisition (and therefore removed from Ercole's sphere of influence) and sent to Bologna.[24] The Bishop of Limoges concluded his ambassadorial mission in 1536.

Women characters and theatrical context of Castellino's *villotte*

Without the specific courtly context of the difficult relationship between Ercole and Renée, Castellino's *villotte* in the female voice are perhaps harder to explain, for there are no easy connections to be made to other song collections and, if the evidence from written versions of contemporaneous plays is any indication, there were few parallels in theater.[25] Substantial women characters are notable by their absence from the classical eclogues that were the sources and inspiration of the writers of early vernacular *commedia regolare*.[26] The characters developed later in the century (especially from the 1560s on) by *commedia dell'arte* actresses were known for voicing their complex inner worlds in sung laments.[27] In contrast, Castellino's women characters conform to a stereotype of lower-class women who were sexually voracious by comparison with women of the upper classes and certainly not passive: they resist unwanted attention, they desire, they act. That they also speak (or sing) is congruent with contemporaneous medical discourse linking vocality to a perceived lack of courtly-standard chastity.[28]

This type of woman character can be found in comic theater and dialect poetry, particularly in the work of Angelo Beolco. Although Beolco's women characters speak, only once in his theatrical works does one sing. The first scene of Beolco's earliest known work, *La pastoral* (ca. 1517), opens with a *ballata* honoring Cupid sung by Siringa, no ordinary woman, but a nymph.[29] The pragmatic women who populate Ruzante's works have other things on their minds (food, shelter, earning a living) and lack the time to be singing of love.[30] Ruzante also employs female voice in two of his *canzoni*. The female character in *Quando de ruos' e d'oro* is, once again, not human: the goddess descends from heaven into her would-be lover's dreams to offer him consolation.[31] Their lengthy dialogue ends with their separation: she returns to heaven, he remains on earth. The first verse of this text establishes the scene and was set to music by Adrian Willaert, the *maestro di cappella* of San Marco.[32] *Alla riva del*

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mar pianzea fantina is set in quite a different world and has a different tone. A girl sits next to the seashore, weeping about her deceitful lover. Her words are carried in the wind to the male narrator, who, later in the text, uses the girl's words to express his own pain, demonstrating the Orphic, feminizing effect of a broken heart.[33] In both texts, although women speak, the lover is the narrator and controls the story. This is true even of *Quando de ruos' e d'oro*: although the goddess apparently commands the situation, arriving unbidden into the lover's dream and starting the dialogue, the lover sets the scene, and closes it (albeit with his tears). Beolco's work does not set a precedent in terms of singing women characters; rather, Beolco's and Castellino's women characters share a substantial degree of autonomy that is in part due to their social status.

Castellino's collection frequently depicts women characters as being in control, even in songs in which they are talked about rather than talking.[34] The women attempt to exert control over sexual encounters (not always successfully) and they articulate desire that concords with sixteenth-century normative expectations of young women (for example, to uphold their chastity, to marry). Their songs almost narrate a woman's life cycle, in that they feature unmarried women, a mother, and a widow—life stages common to women of all classes. Similar situations are addressed in courtly conduct literature (Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* and a lesser-known text by a Ferrarese writer, Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio's *L'uomo di corte*) but since courtly decorum does not apply in the rustic world the characters inhabit, their reactions to these situations differ from those of courtly characters. Indeed, in verbalizing their wish for sexual pleasure, these low-status ventriloquized women express feelings that women from other social classes could not voice publicly.[35]

This dimension of the songs—fictitious women articulating desire—could have found particular favor with Ercole, a well-known playboy irked by Renée's chasteness. On the other hand, if they were performed during the Ferrarese banquet celebrating Renée and Ercole's marriage, the songs could have been intended to enhance Renée's response to Ercole and their dynastic duties in a more positive way than the moralizing of some formal wedding entertainments.[36] By the time of their publication, when Renée and Ercole's relationship had already suffered several setbacks, the songs could have had multiple additional functions—perhaps, rather than a fresh attempt to woo Renée, they were an attempt to annoy her.

Whether performed in 1529 as a humorous reflection on Renée and Ercole's recent wedding or heard for the first time in the late 1530s or early 1540s, Castellino's songs resonated with courtly concerns explored through the socially-distant morés of non-elite life. And in the difficult 12 years between Renée's arrival in Ferrara and the publication of these songs, Renée and Ercole had moved from newlyweds to parents of five children and must have been turning their attention to the marriage of their eldest daughter, Anna.

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Girls of marriageable age

Unmarried adolescent girls were in a liminal stage of life; poised between sexually-innocent childhood and a future as a sexually-active wife, they posed a problem for society in early modern Italy. In moral and conduct literature, and in legal systems, girls were supposed to be innocent of sexual desire, but the light sentences for abuse of an unmarried pubescent girl, the specific sumptuary legislation that sometimes applied to them, and the long history of popular and folk songs exploring girls' desire to marry attest to a rather more complicated understanding.[37] Anxiety over the cusp of their sexual maturity is evident in the push to marry off daughters in their teens. Such marriages also offered the advantage of creating political and economic alliances.

In courtly families, it was the head of the household (normally the father) who determined the destiny of children in the family. The interlocutors of *Il cortegiano* find the ideal match to be between a young man and a young, unmarried and chaste woman; this principle is shared by Giraldi Cinzio but, at least in elite families, it was not common for a couple to be very closely matched in age. Women lower down the social ladder had more autonomy than elite women when it came to choosing a husband; they might also have contributed their earnings to the dowry.[38] Behaviors ranged widely in accordance with circumstance, but non-elite marriage rituals can be broadly divided into two types: paternal rituals (including ceremonies with a male father-substitute such as an employer, patron, or kinsman) in which the father or substitute's consent is important, and nonpaternal rituals that center on the couple's exchange of consent before witnesses. Paternal rituals signified the continuing interest of the bride's family in the bride and thus the ability of the bride to count on a degree of protection if the marriage soured. A bride in a nonpaternal ceremony might substitute friends for an authority figure—to represent her alliance with a network that would promote her interests—and/or emphasize the importance of *buona compagnia* (good companionship) in marriage.[39]

The daughters in *La rizzola la se lamenta* (The Curly-Haired Girl's Complaint) and *E do', Tuogna, fate bella ch'a te vo pur mariare* (Come on, Toni, Get Prettied Up Because I Want to Get You Married) are in conflict with their fathers about their marriages; while Tuogna's father has found her a good match, the curly-haired girl's father is neglecting his agreement with his daughter and wife. Despite the possible relationship of these songs to the comic genres of the *contrasto* and the *mariazo*, these dialogues seem to be situated in comparatively well-to-do households.[40] The very fact that marriage is under consideration at all suggests the families were not among the lowest social orders.

La rizzola la se lamenta is a dialogue between an unhappy daughter, frustrated that her father still has not found her a husband, and her sympathetic mother. Her mother's reference to an imaginary young man who will one day take her

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daughter "for love" suggests financial constraints or paternal tight-fistedness. In fifteenth-century Venice, marriage for love was associated with lower classes who struggled to put together a dowry.[41]

La rizzola la se lamenta	The curly-haired girl, she laments
da tutt'hore con la madre	at all hours with her mother
perché lo suo vecchio padre	for her old father
non li dona ancor marito.	still does not give her a husband.
La sua madre la ge responde,	Her mother answers her,
"Fiola mia, dura, dura.	*"My daughter, be strong.*
Vegnerà qualche ventura,	*There will come some good fortune,*
qualche bona creatura,	*some good creature,*
che d'amor, sì, te torà.	*who will take you, yes, for love.*
O tient'al'ora,[42]	*O hold on until then,*
o che piacer."	*o what pleasure."*
La rizzola la ge responde,	The curly-haired girl answers,
"Madre mia, durar non posso	"Mother, I cannot endure
che mi sento e dir non osso,	what I feel and dare not say,
de marito haver bisogno!"	that I need a husband!"
La sua madre la ge responde,	Her mother answers
"Fiola mia" …	*"My daughter" …*
La rizzola la ge responde,	The curly-haired girl answers,
"Madre mia, molto ho durato.	"Mother, I've waited for a long time.
Questo sì non è il nostro patto	This is not the agreement
ch'è tra noi an chon mio padre."	between us and my father."
La sua madre pur torna a dire,	Her mother repeats to her
"Fiola mia" …	*"My daughter" …*

12. CATB ressponde 15. CA haur 16. CA maqre, ressponde 18. CATB rissponde

The curly-haired girl might be a forerunner of a *commedia dell'arte* character. Curly hair was often an attribute of the courtesan, while the actress Angela Lucchesi, active in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, took the stage name *La Rizzolina* or *Ricolina* for her maid servant character.[43]

Marriage was the point at which a girl became a woman, so in this song the curly-haired girl's need for a husband could be simply a desire to leave childhood.[44] Alternatively, the need for a husband could be a euphemism for the desire for sexual activity or pregnancy. Contemporaneous medical theories and popular understanding held that women's desire was first awoken by sexual experience. If the curly-haired girl is expressing sexual desire, this would be a serious violation of chastity if judged by courtly morés or canon law, but among lower social orders marriage was a performative process; it consisted of a series of stages from agreement (before witnesses for maximum security), through consummation, to cohabitation, but ultimately what made a relationship a marriage was its continuation and its increasing public visibility. Among lower social groups, marriages could have a clandestine

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phase during which the couple had sexual relations; the relationship would gradually achieve public recognition. Marriages that were not yet fully publicly recognized could cease to exist with minimum shame during this phase if the couple simply agreed to end their relationship.[45]

Read against the context of the ducal court, this song seems almost prescient: six years of negotiations with three different houses passed before Anna married the Duke of Guise in 1548 at age 17 and became a woman.[46] Although Ercole seemed indecisive, in elite families it was common for negotiations to be protracted and for many options to be considered. Anna's mother Renée provides a useful comparison. A princess of France, she was an important commodity and, aged two, was first promised in marriage in 1512. Following the death of that suitor, her family considered another nine candidates over a period of 15 years prior to the match with Ercole.[47]

Strategic significance seems to be a consideration for Tuogna's old father, who has fulfilled his obligations and offers his daughter a noble knight's son as husband—a good catch (*E do', Tuogna, fate bella ch'a te vo pur mariare*). However, Tuogna is unable to decide whether to marry or become a nun. The dialogue escalates humorously into an argument between father and daughter: if she cannot marry her beloved (who is not necessarily the knight's son) she would rather not marry at all.

"E do', Tuogna, fate bella, ch'a te vo pur mariare, motare tu da lamentare de mi, puover vechiarelo." *E do', ch'a l'è pur hora* *da esser marià.*	[Father:] "Toni, pretty yourself up, for I wish to marry you off, to change you from lamenting about me, poor old man." *And now it is time* *to be married.*
"Dar te voglio d'un bel fantino, fiol d'un nobel cavalliero." "Dio lo voglia che 'l sia el vero, ch'a farò quel che 'l vorà." *E do', ch'a l'è pur hora …*	"I wish to give you a handsome groom, son of a noble cavalier." [Toni:] "May God will that it be the truth, for I shall do what He wishes." *And now it is time …*
"Po' ch'a son sta' fina ai vinti anni munegela ch'a me vuò fare. Non me vuogio più mariare. Farò quel che me piacerà." *E do', ch'a l'è pur hora …*	"Now that I have reached 20 years I want to become a nun. I no longer want to marry. I shall do what I please." *And now it is time …*
"Mo che vo tu che a te ne faza? No te trovava bon partì?" "A te zuro pur gieri in dì, de tal cosa a no*n* parlà." *E do', ch'a l'è pur hora …*	[F:] "Now what do you want me to do with you? Did I not find you a good match?" [T:] "I swear to you, from this day forth I refuse to speak of such a thing." *And now it is time …*
"Va' far quelo do che tu vuoxi! Che mai più gene vuò parlare."	[F:] "Go and do what you want! I never wish to speak about it again."

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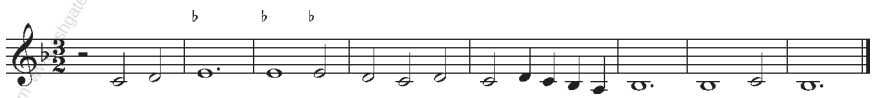
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"Ch'a venivu, do', da impazare!	[T:] "But you've just been mixing with this!
A vuò tuor lo mi inamorà!"	I want to take my beloved!"
E do', ch'a l'è pur hora …	*And now it is time …*
"A te do la maledizion!	[F:] "I give you my curse!
Va' fin là che ma te veza!	Go where I will never see you again!
A no vuò cha tu te chreza	I don't want you to believe
ch'a te sia sempre ubligà."	that I shall always feel an obligation to you."
E do', ch'a l'è pur hora …	*And now it is time …*

7. CATB volgio 20. *Parlar* would be expected here; the final *-r* may have been omitted to rhyme with the corresponding lines in strophes two through six.

In contrast to the curly-haired girl who seems to feel relatively powerless over her fate, expressing her anger about the length of time it is taking her father to find a match, Tuogna refuses her father's suggestion. Her name and her preference to marry for love suggest that she might be of comparatively low status, making the cavalier's son a particularly advantageous match for her family.[48] Yet, while the family could benefit from the relationship, the disparity in class has the potential to work against Tuogna; women with a partner of significantly higher status were vulnerable to abuse since the family might not be able to leverage sufficient power to support and protect the daughter. The outcome of the argument remains ambiguous, a situation not helped by the absence of indications in the print of changes of character. It is by no means clear whether Tuogna marries or goes to a convent where her father might never see her again. It is possible that the songs did not stand entirely alone in performance but formed part of a longer sketch.

E do', Tuogna bears some resemblance to the well-known song *La bella Franceschina.* In most versions of *La bella Franceschina*, Franceschina's father offers her the son of a nobleman as a husband, but Franceschina wants instead her beloved, who is not of an appropriate rank. Indeed, Castellino's music cites the opening of *La bella Franceschina* (Example 9.1). The stock *commedia dell'arte* character of Franceschina was usually of servant status, and throughout the sixteenth century the part was played by women and men.[49]
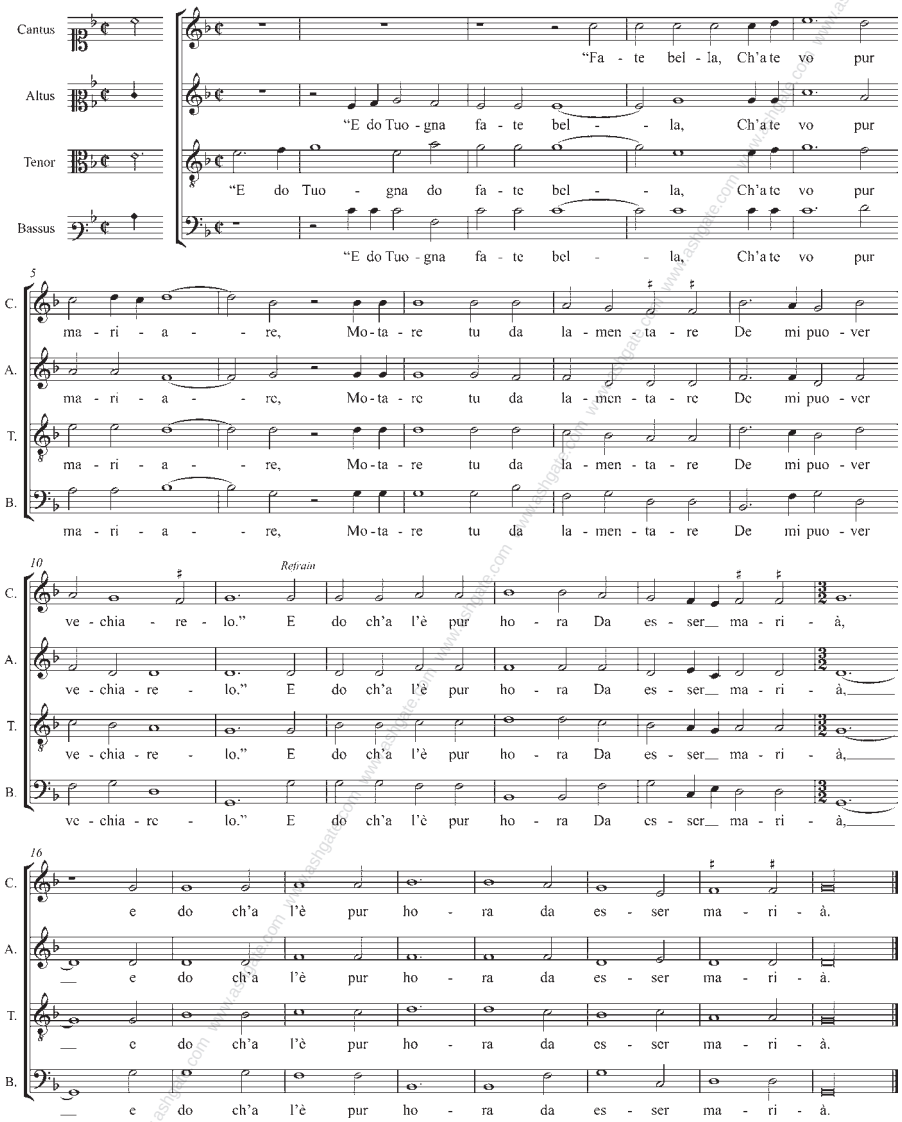


Example 9.1a *La bella Franceschina*, I–Vnm Ms. Ital. IV 1227 (=11699), after Kirkendale

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Example 9.1b Alvise Castellino, *E do', Tuogna, fate bella*, ed. Melanie L. Marshall

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As with the other dialogue texts in this book, the strophic nature of the genre provides limited opportunity for musical characterization since the same music is used for different characters. Rather, just as in the comic *contrasto* in which one actor would deliver a heated dialogue between two or more characters, the onus falls on the performer to differentiate the speakers. In *E do', Tuogna*, which has one of the higher *tessituras* of Castellino's book, the highest pitches occur in the phrases most frequently sung by the old father, thus providing further opportunity for comic vocal characterization. Playing a variety of male and female characters in one piece was not a unique trick of Castellino's: the son of Venetian *buffone* Zuan Polo performed in this way in the 1530s (though not as described by Aretino's Nanna), as did Venturino, a colleague of Orlando di Lasso's in 1574, who improvised one-man plays featuring the Magnifico, Zanni, and Franceschina each night during a trip to Italy to hire new *commedia* players.[50]

The *malmaritata*

Although the social status of the majority of Castellino's characters is markedly different from that of their courtly audience, courtly civility literature recognized the situations depicted in his songs as challenging and they were by no means alien to court life. According to Federico Fregoso in Castiglione's *Il cortegiano*, "some women are forced by their fathers to marry old men who are in poor health and filthy and disgusting, and who make their lives one long misery."[51] Giraldi Cinzio's advice to young men at court echoes the same idea: young couples are better matched in many ways. Unfortunately, not all parents heeded this advice. The plight of the unhappily married young girl of *Chorì, chorì brigata* might have been all too familiar to elite audiences. The girl's lament that her white-haired husband is able to give her clothes but cannot satisfy her in other ways is safely contained within a narrative framework. Nonetheless, she advises "all girls who are to marry / to heed neither father nor mother / but to take handsome and young husbands."

Chorì, chorì brigatta!	Come running, come running, everyone!
Chi vuol sentir una bella novella?	Who wants to hear a great tale?
Chi vuol sentir da nuovo una bella novella	Who wants to hear for the first time a great tale?
È d'un vecchio chanuto	It's about a white-haired old man
c'ha preso p*er* mogier una fantina,	who took for his wife a girl,
c'ha p*re*so per mogier una bella fantina.	who took for his wife a pretty girl.
La puta se lamenta	The girl laments
da tutte l'hore con le sue co*m*pagne,	at all hours with her female friends,
e maledice chi gli'a dà vechio marito.	and curses those who gave her an aged husband.

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El vecchio ge responde,
"Mo che te ma*n*ca, cara mia figiola?

Mo vo tu ch'un guarnelo ch'a te faza?"

La puta ge responde,
"A no vuò ne guarnello ne gonella,
ma q*ue*l ch*e* vogio voi no me'l podete fare."

El vecchio ge responde,
"A fazo quel che posso, mia figiola.
Tu no*n* te alame*n*tare, la mia cara mogiere."

La puta si conseglia
a tutte quelle ch'è da mariare
che no le tenda né a pare né a mare
ma che le toglia belli e gioveni mariti.

The old man replies,
"Now what do you lack, my sweet child?
Do you want me to make you a dress?"

The girl answers,
"I don't want a dress or a gown,
but what I want you cannot do for me."

The old man replies,
"I do what I can, my child.
Do not lament, my dear wife."

The girl advises
all girls who are to marry
to heed neither father nor mother
but to take handsome and young husbands.

12. CA Me

The offer of clothing might indicate the young woman's age and the stage of the relationship. Sumptuary restrictions often governed wealthy unmarried adolescent girls and new wives who had not yet borne children—the sexual activity of these categories of women was problematic, at least until reproductive capability was proved. In mid-fifteenth-century Genoa, for example, restrictions on adolescent girls' clothing eased at marriage but were only fully lifted after a further three years, by which time the woman could be expected to have borne a child. Both the pregnancy and the new clothing were public markers of her change in status.[52] In some Italian regions at least, throughout a married woman's life clothing indicated her status: the lavishness of the bride's clothing might decline over time as her husband's family reclaimed the jewels lent to her.[53]

Wives with elderly husbands unable to meet their sexual needs (and other unhappily married women) pose a potential problem for the social structure, for, as Federico acknowledges in *Il cortegiano*, they might seek comfort outside their marriage. Although Federico recommends compassion to a wife who discovers that "in the marriage bed, which ought to be a haven of concord and love, cursed and devilish dissension plants its evil seed" and who therefore wishes to "seek some refuge from her torment and to give to others what her husband not only despises but detests," Giuliano de' Medici will not permit the gentlewoman of the *palazzo* such liberties.[54] The strictures of courtly love demand sexual fidelity even for unhappily married women. Non-elite women were likewise admonished to be faithful to their husbands. Legal records—which preserve the most fractious separations—suggest that women who were the victims of excessive physical abuse and mistreatment were the most likely

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to garner sympathy and support of their peers; however, women who pursued extramarital relationships (including concubinage) were not necessarily well received when they attempted to re-enter mainstream society.[55]

The widow

Castellino's speaking women characters have one thing in common: they are all dissatisfied. The happiest characters of all seem to be those whose voices are not heard. A case in point is this widow:

La viduella non si lamenterà	The little widow will not lament
già più co la solea	anymore as she used to do
che la dorme soleta.[56]	that she sleeps all alone.
Anzi da tutte l'hore si sta lieta	On the contrary at all hours she is happy
che 'l suo fidel amante	that her faithful lover
l'adora per sua stella.	loves her by his fate.
La viduela non se lamenterà	*The little widow will not lament*
già più co la soleva.	*anymore as she used to do.*
O viduella, rifai il tempo perduto,	O little widow, make up the lost time,
arcolgi il dolce fruto,	pluck the sweet fruit,
che gionta è la stagione,	for the season has come,
gionto il tempo e gionta è l'ora.	the time has come and the hour.
Al tuo amante decora,	To your lover, an ornament,
tra le altre bele bela.	beautiful among the other beauties
La viduela …	*The little widow …*
11 CATB gionto	12 CATB gionto

The female lament is often a transgressive act—women who through their silence can be assumed to be chaste, come to voice and rhetorical persuasion—but in this case the widow is silenced once again.[57] This song disrupts the usual equation of silence with chastity—the widow has ceased her lament because she has a new lover—and draws on another commonplace concept: the lusty widow. Since widows had experienced the joys of carnal relations, and thereby the arousal of their desire to attain perfection through sexual congress, they were renowned for their sexual appetite. The widow's lament of the fifth act of Ruzante's comedy *La Betia* (ca. 1517–18) is typical and covers similar ground to that outlined in *La viduella non si lamenterà*.[58] Early in her lament, Tamia notes that she shared a bed with her husband every night and what delighted one, delighted the other. Following an innuendo-laden description of the effect of her husband's death—the milk will not be made into cheese because the rennet is lost; the ram will no longer shove its head between her legs—Tamia realizes that she is still young:

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Te vuossi mo che perda la mia zoventú bela?	Do you want me to waste my youthful beauty?
Questa m'è una mala novella e mi no n'he pecò.[59]	This is bad news and I am not at fault.

Tamia's quick acceptance of her lover's marriage proposition prompts her husband Nale, who is not really dead, to note that, once married, women cannot live without a husband.[60] The comic archetype of the lusty widow did not deter Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinzio from noting that well-born young men may make amorous overtures to widows: it is enough that widows are free to marry.[61] Economic and patrimony concerns impacted upon widows' availability for remarriage: some husbands included in their will financial and emotional incentives against it. Widows with sufficient financial independence might be able to remain single; in Venice this included patrician women, who, at the death of the husband, assumed control of the dowry. Lower-status widows without adequate funds had fewer options.

Concluding thoughts

Castellino's women characters are akin to the women protagonists of Beolco's theater in some respects, yet it seems unlikely that his songs were intended for a surviving written comedy. The most plausible performing context is solo performance (presumably by Castellino himself) at a banquet of the type at which Beolco's group and various *buffoni alla venetiana* and *alla bergamasca* performed in 1529, and indeed Castellino's collection shares with improvised banquet song a tendency to reference current affairs and personality weaknesses of particular guests.[62] The 1529 banquets celebrated the marriage of Renée and Ercole, and in many respects some of the songs in the book would be ideal for that context—the young couple had just been through the tribulations of marriage negotiations (each had misgivings) and were now expected to reproduce and go through the trials of marrying off children themselves. But Castellino's songs would have also been relevant (or continued to be relevant) at the time of their publication in 1541 as Renée and Ercole's children approached marriageable age.

In voicing consequence-free challenges to authority, Castellino's songs stand in contrast to court wedding entertainments concerning a girl's transition to womanhood through marriage, which stage women's painful subjection to patriarchal authority or promise terrible consequences for the *ingrate* who reject it. The women in Castellino's songs experience desire, sexual frustration, sexual fulfillment, grumble about their parents and their husband, and argue with their fathers. The songs give voice to feelings that elite women abiding by courtly decorum cannot express in public. This expression is perhaps only

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possible because of the comic performing context and the ventriloquizing of the male performer. Their independence assumes particular importance in light of the primary association of Castellino's songs with their dedicatee, Ercole II d'Este. The songs—particularly the opening song, "Viva il nobil Duca di Ferrara, Ercole degno" ostensibly lauding the Duke but in fact employing blame-by-praise irony to criticize him—are among a number of public satirical pokes at Ercole's masculinity and leadership which call into question his ability to control court culture.[63] Thus the comic staging of the morés of a more equal lower-class culture potentially performed important cultural work for the women of the court too.

The comic treatment of songs in women's voice resonates with the fraught relationship between the duke and duchess, in particular Ercole's struggle to control Renée and thereby control his relationship with France. Throughout the 1530s, Renée and Ercole oscillated between fallings out and attempts at reconciliation, and they produced five children who survived into adulthood. An additional function of the songs, given the political connotations of the *villotta*, might have been a role in the ongoing taunts between the duke and duchess.

Unfortunately it is not clear whether Renée would have heard or even understood Castellino's songs.[64] Messisbugo documents her presence at banquets in 1529 and the early 1530s but, although the banquets that Messisbugo selected for description occurred as late as February 14, 1548, Renée is rarely listed among the dignitaries; in any case, Messisbugo does not provide details of entertainment for all the events. In 1540, the year in which Castellino applied for a Venetian printing privilege for his songs, Renée effectively removed herself from court and spent significant amounts of time in her villa at Consandolo, where she continued to correspond with reformers and reform sympathizers. By 1554, Ercole had had enough. In March, he informed Renée's nephew, Henri II of France, that she had fallen in with "certain ribald Lutherans" and requested his help in saving Renée from heresy.[65] Aid came in the shape of Matthieu Ory, the Inquisitor General of France, who was tasked with bringing the duchess back to orthodox Catholicism while avoiding scandal.[66] Ory arrived in July and joined Girolamo Papino, the local inquisitor, and a number of other figures, in attempting to convert the duchess. In accordance with the need to prevent scandal, they did not constitute a formal tribunal. Following unsuccessful private meetings with Renée, in September Ory threatened to reveal her heresy to her family and confiscate her French lands. Renée responded to this strong financial inducement by hearing Mass the following morning, but in the following days further heresies came to light. On September 6, on Ercole's orders, "Questa notte passata Madama è stata messa prigione però nel palazzo del Duca, alla quale non parla nessuno havendo solo due donne in sua Compagnia" (in the night the duchess was put in prison in the Duke's palace, where she can speak

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to no one, having only two women in her company).[67] Renée allegedly told Ercole, "Signore viri seti signore del corpo mio ma non dell'anima" (Sire, you may control my body but not my spirit or conscience).[68] Ercole put Renée under tremendous pressure to return to Catholicism: in addition to isolating and confining her, Ercole removed their children from Renée's care, placing Anna's younger sisters Lucrezia and Leonora in the convent of Corpus Domini where their paternal aunt was abbess. Renée could not gain support for her position from France, and her only hope of being reunited with her daughters was to outwardly comply with Catholic practice. Yet despite apparently succumbing to inquisitorial pressure, Renée in fact continued to support reformers. The duke's death in 1559 brought an end to a marriage that had fluctuated between tolerance and hostility, and in 1560 Renée moved to France as a widow with control over her own affairs.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Linda Carroll, Katherine McIver, Bonnie Blackburn, Laurie Stras, and Emily Wilbourne for commenting on early drafts of this work. I am grateful to Leofranc Holford-Strevens and Linda Carroll for their expert assistance with translating the texts. In the song texts, I have modernized use of *u*, and added accents, apostrophes, punctuation, and speech marks without comment. Unusual orthography is noted below the relevant texts, with C, A, T, or B indicating the relevant partbook in which the variant is found. Italics indicate expanded abbreviations.

2. The song is discussed in greater detail at 193–6.

3. Burckhardt, 1981, 240.

4. Francis W. Kent, 1997, 6, cited in Dale Kent, 26.

5. I am very grateful to Linda Carroll for suggesting this phrase.

6. William Prizer, 1985, reports that, in 1502, Ercole I d'Este, Isabella d'Este's father and Lucrezia Borgia's father-in-law, asked Isabella for details of her budget for comparison with Lucrezia's requested budget, which had clearly shocked him. Isabella replied that she had a budget of (in Prizer's translation) "six thousand ducats … from the taxes on the millstone, one thousand from excise duties, and the other one thousand from the income derived from the village of Palidano, the total coming to eight thousand ducats. It is true that, through my own industry, my income from the said *corte* [Palidano] has increased by one thousand ducats and from this income I have acquired the *corte* of Castiglione Mantovano and Bondenazo, so that at present I have an income of about ten thousand, five hundred ducats." See Prizer, 1985, 13–14 and 32. Ghirardo demonstrates that Lucrezia Borgia doubled her income through entrepreneurial activities.

7. Dale Kent, 26 and 36. Studies of women's economic activities, such as Ghirardo and Carroll, this volume, challenge the relevance of this ideal to women's actual behavior.

8. Eisenach; Ruggiero, 1989. See also the discussion below.

9. Cardamone and Corsi classified 208 strophic songs published between 1537 and 1557 and found only three in female voice (typology: *lamento delle donne*). Of those, one is associated with Naples (in RISM 1537/5) and two originate in Rome (in RISM 1555/30 and 1557/19).

10. Castellino's volume seems to be the first music print of the sixteenth century proclaiming to be devoted entirely to *villotte*. It is also one of the first music prints bearing a dedication to a duke; Piperno, 52, suggests that, in dedicating his first book of madrigals to the Duke of Urbino in 1542, Domenico Ferabosco followed Castellino's lead. Proto-*villotte* were included in Petrucci's frottola prints. *Villotte* proper are found in Venetian manuscripts in the early sixteenth century, and begin to appear in print from the 1520s in Rome: *Fior de motteti e canzoni novi* (1523), the *Libro primo* and the *Libro secondo de la Croce* (both predate 1526; the earliest surviving copies are corrected reprints bearing the dates 1526 and 1531 respectively), and the *Libro primo de la fortuna* (?1526). The Sack of Rome in 1527 halted music printing there for a few years. After Castellino's collection (1541), *villotte* were printed in 1549, 1550, 1552, 1557, 1559, 1569, and 1583. On the *villotta* see Brusa; Prizer, 1991; Marshall, 2004; and Gallico.

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11. One of the theatrical archetypes under-represented in song is the male pedant, who presumably has little need of music since he is rarely if ever in love. Pietro Aretino's *Il marescalco* (Act III, sc. 10; Aretino, 1971, 53; Aretino, 2003, 166) includes a pedant who sings—but of declensions rather than love. For a typology of ten *villanesca* collections associated with Naples and Rome from 1537 to 1557, see Cardamone and Corsi, 104.

12. Cardamone and Corsi, 75–6.

13. Schleuse, this volume, discusses Aretino/Nanna's account of a multi-character performance by Cimador, son of the Venetian *buffone* Zuan Polo. Aretino was inclined both to debunk and to embroider events, as was Nanna, so this description does not call into question the existence of multi-character performances. There are other references to solo performance of multi-character plays; see below.

14. The Duke is the main target. See Marshall, 2004, 1.62–109.

15. Messisbugo lists musical entertainment at banquets, including solo song accompanied by the "lyra"; ensemble singing, with at least one turn by an ensemble put together by Ruzante; mixed vocal and instrumental ensembles; and wholly instrumental ensembles. Howard Mayer Brown discusses Messisbugo's accounts, but was apparently not aware of Castellino's volume. Among the singers at Ferrarese banquets was Madonna Dalida de' Putti, who entered Lucrezia Borgia's service as a singer in September 1507, with a salary of 96 lire per year (equal to that of some of her fellow male musicians on Lucrezia's salary rolls) and moving to Cardinal Ippolito I d'Este's service in 1512 until at least 1516–17. She became his mistress (Prizer, 1985, 8–11; Lockwood, 111). On one occasion, she sang with a group of male musicians, all dressed as shepherds. Brandolini discusses the art of the solo banquet song, including the practice of interjecting subtle criticism, such as praising a weakness as if it were a strength.

16. For a comprehensive summary and discussion, see Carroll, 2003b.

17. In expectation of Ercole's marriage to Margaret, Alfonso d'Este took possession of Carpi on March 18, 1527, as a dowry (Pascual de Gayangos (editor), "Spain: March 1527, 16–31"). On October 27, the Imperial ambassador to Venice, Alonso Sanchez, reported to the Emperor that "Lautrech has made great offers to the Duke (Alfonso d'Este) if he will declare for the League, threatening, if he does not, to deprive him of his estate. Seeing the French already on this side of the Pò, and the Imperial army still at Rome, the Duke had sent to Lautrech one of his gentlemen named Taxon (Tassone) with the following message: 'He considered himself a good friend and servant of the King of France, as likewise of this Signory; he was besides a near relative of the Duke Francesco. He knew not what other declaration was demanded of him, but this he would say, that on no account could he forget what he owed to the Emperor.' Notwithstanding this message, it is publicly announced here (at Venice) that the Duke has already joined the League" (Pascual de Gayangos (ed.), "Spain: October 1527, 26–31"). On November 16, a proclamation was publicly read [at Ferrara], stating that "the Duke bad [*recte*: had] joined the League at the request of Cardinal Cibo, and signed it. The treaty, it is asserted, contains 17 articles" including that Renée de France would marry Ercole d'Este, and that France would back Ercole's retention of Carpi in a future treaty with the emperor (Andrea del Borgo to the Emperor, November 28, 1527: Pascual de Gayangos (ed.), "Spain: November 1527, 21–30"). The French king approved the marriage in late 1527 (Letter from Alonso Sanchez, Imperial Ambassador in Venice, to the Emperor, dated December 23, 1527, translated in: Pascual de Gayangos (ed.), "Spain: December 1527, 21–31").

18. Buus. This is an argument I intend to develop further in future. On music associated with Renée de France, see Bernstein, especially 19–22 and 48–53, Vendramini, and Meine. Carroll, 1993b and 1997, used sources from the Veneto to demonstrate that the *villotta* indicates imperial affiliations. To Carroll's evidence, I add the observation that Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, a well-known imperial adherent who led an army against Pope Clement VII just before the Sack of Rome, was the dedicatee of a music print from 1523 that included several *villotte* (*Fior de motetti e canzoni*, briefly described in Fenlon and Haar, 207–9). Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga may have composed or commissioned the *Villotte mantovane* of 1583 (Gallico), and Camillo Zanotti, a musician in the chapel of Rudolph II, also published several *villotte* (Zanotti). Brusa gives a full list of sources of *villotte*; Marshall, 2004, discusses the cultural significance of several *villotta* publications of the mid-sixteenth century. The political significance of the early *villotta* forms part of my current research toward a monograph on music and sexuality in early modern Rome.

19. Webb, 72.

20. Webb, 22–85, documents this unhappy marriage.

21. Translation after Webb, 77, quoting a letter from Guarino to Renée dated November 10, 1535, Archivio di Stato, Mantua, *Carteggi tra principi estensi*, *Minute provenienti da Roma*, Busta 291.

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22. See Webb, 58–60, 72, and 84–5 on Madame de Soubise's influence and correspondence; for Ercole's complaints, see the letter quoted and translated on 63–6. The recall of Madame de Soubise is covered at 68–74.

23. Renée's "account books for April show that she had messengers constantly on the road between Ferrara and Venice" (Webb, 99). For discussion of music associated with attempts to discourage Protestant heresy, see Nugent.

24. A full account of the complicated political intrigue is given in Webb, 99–115.

25. Ferrara was an important center for the development of comic theater. Andrews, 34–47. Castellino's songs draw on popular archetypes, but the title claims he wrote the words and the tunes (Castellino). There are few concordances with manuscript and print sources of *villotte*. There may be more *villotte* than *canzone villanesche alla napolitana* in female voice.

26. Gerbino, 198.

27. Gerbino; MacNeil.

28. This is well documented. See Fuhrman; Gordon, 2004, especially the discussion of perceived relationships between the vocal tract and the vagina (31–5). Brooks draws on Italian conduct manuals.

29. Beolco, 1967, 21. The stage directions mention only that "nympha sola laudando / amor parla" ("the nymph, alone [on the stage], praising love, speaks "; ibid., 1287, n. 28) but, as Zorzi notes, it is clear from the "Proemio a la villana" that the ballata should be sung: "una bela tosa / che vegnía da l'ascosa, / e sí vegnía cantando / e saltolando" (a pretty girl / who appears from the shadow / and comes singing / and skipping; 8–11, li. 47–53). On the dating of *La pastoral*, see Baratto. In Beolco's *Anconitana* (ca. 1534–35) the dialogue sets up the possibility that Bessa might sing. Following Bessa's observation that Ruzante has a fine voice, he suggests that they make counterpoint together—she would take the upper part and he the lower—but this deliberately suggestive proposition is not realized.

30. See Carroll, this volume. The lack of singing by Ruzante's women characters is certainly not connected to a lack of women singers. Ruzante performed with an ensemble including two women at a Ferrarese banquet in 1529 (Messisbugo, 7^{r}). In any case, a performer's gender did not have to align with the character being played.

31. Beolco, 1967, 1260–62.

32. Edited and translated in Cardamone, 1978, xxxi and 31–2. Willaert set two more *canzoni* by Beolco, *Zoia zentil* (Cardamone, 1978, xxxiii–iv and 51–5), and *Occhio non fu zà mai* (Cardamone, 1978, xxx and 29–31); the latter was also set by Filippo Azzaiolo (Marshall, 2004, 2.67 and 2.431–5). Cardamone suggests that Willaert may have set the songs at the request of Beolco's patron, Alvise Cornaro, perhaps for the four Greek women singers he hired (Cardamone, 1978, xiv–xv).

33. Beolco, 1967, 1259.

34. See, for example, *La mi fa balare*, discussed in Marshall, 2004, 1.89–92 and Marshall, forthcoming.

35. Marriage and partnership practices were diverse and women from non-elite families could exert a considerable degree of agency and autonomy. See Eisenach, and Carroll, this volume.

36. This would be in stark contrast to the 1608 Mantuan wedding, on which see Cusick, 1994; Gordon, 1999. Publication over ten years after a dynastic event is not unheard of, especially at this time, when such commemoration was still relatively new.

37. The light penalties for rape of unmarried women in fifteenth-century Venice are indicative of the idea that after puberty women were no longer wholly innocent and could be considered partly responsible for their attack. Ruggiero, 1989, 152. On sumptuary legislation, see Hughes.

38. For general information on marriage, see Cohen and Cohen. Eisenach's study of marriage and concubinage shows considerable diversity in practice even within a short period of time in a provincial area.

39. Eisenach, 44–5.

40. The *contrasto* was an argument, often between low-class figures, while the *mariazo* was a betrothal play containing "extended double entendres about the alleged freedom and brutishness of [the betrothed peasant couple's] sexual experience" (Andrews, 124). Padoan, 1982, 44 n. 9 and 64–5 gives brief examples of the *contrasto*; some of the texts he mentions are available in Lovarini, 1894, 89–207.

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41. Ruggiero, 1989, 36.

42. *O tient' al' ora* was a well-known song. Andrea Calmo includes it in a list of song titles in letter 34, book three. See also Rossi, 414–15.

43. Katritzky, 201, 207, 245, and plates 3 and 293.

44. On marriage and adolescence, see Chojnacki, 185–205.

45. Unfortunately, as the Church recognized, a clandestine phase could facilitate an indecisive, overenthusiastic, or simply deceitful and lusty husband committing himself to several wives at the same time. Eisenach, 95–6.

46. Coester, 75.

47. See Webb, 37–8.

48. The very intention to marry implies that the family has some disposable resources, for many of the poorest couples did not marry at all. Research on sixteenth-century Veronese elite concubinage arrangements shows that a level of inequality seems to have been common, while non-elite concubinage usually involved partners of equal status and was more akin to marriage (Eisenach, 134–77, especially 136, 138–40).

49. Male performers of Franceschina include Battista Amorevoli of Treviso (Katritzky, 91 and 251) and Gasparino Venturino (Katritzky, 63). In 1581, Battista Amorevoli wrote to Anna d'Este, the daughter of Renée de France and Ercole II d'Este who by that time was Duchess of Nemours, asking her to remember him and to remember Franceschina (Pigot, 1898). For a list of musical sources (dating from ca. 1520) of *La bella Franceschina* see Kirkendale, 1972, 189. Franceschina is also mentioned in a concatenation *villotta* (one that quotes several songs) by Mathias Herman Werrecorre, in the second part of *Horsù, horsù, compagni, statt' attenti* (Werrecorre, 1549).

50. Katritzky, 63.

51. Castiglione, 1976, 260.

52. Hughes, 145–6.

53. I am grateful to Linda Carroll for this observation, and for directing me to the catalogue of the National Gallery of Art (Washington) exhibit *Virtue and Beauty*. Dale Kent, 30, points out that in Florence any jewelry and clothing the bride received from the groom usually remained her husband's property and could be sold to raise capital or left to her after his death.

54. Castiglione, 1976, 260–61.

55. Eisenach, 134–5.

56. Compare Giannicco's song in Act II sc. 8 of Pietro Aretino's *Marescalco*: "La vedovella quando dorme sola, / Lamentarsi di me non ha ragione, / Non ha ragione, / Non ha ragione" (Aretino, 1971, 39). In Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero's translation: "The young widow, when she sleeps alone, / Has no reason to complain of me. / She has no reason, / She has no reason" (Aretino, 2003, 152).

57. There is extensive scholarship on women's laments in early modern Italy: McClary; Cusick, 1994; Gordon, 1999.

58. On *Betia* see Carroll, this volume.

59. Beolco, 1967, 455, vv. 659–62.

60. Beolco, 1967, 487, vv. 1142–4: "Com una femena è stò una fià, / a' dighe, marià, / la no pò far pí senza marío."

61. Giraldi Cinzio, 78.

62. Raffaele Brandolini, describing his extempore singing at banquets in his *De musica et poetica* (1513), says he might sing of the "intimate and amusing … amusing when I upbraided in jest a quiet person for his silence or a talker for his chatter or a drowsy person for his nodding" (Brandolini, 89). He goes on to explain that he may praise as well as blame, with "such moderation in both regards so that I can at times expose an unknown blemish in a person I praise, and sometimes praise a recognized quality in a person whom I censure" (Brandolini, 105). For further discussion, see Marshall, 2004, 1.75–6.

63. Dosso Dossi's *Allegory of Hercules*, also known as *La stregoneria*, which was completed by 1540 and is therefore contemporaneous with Castellino's collection, depicts the young Ercole as an aged and impotent Hercules. Mauro Lucco argues that the painting is too insulting to have been

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commissioned by anyone other than Ercole and that it must therefore demonstrate his sense of humor (Humfrey and Lucco, 221–2). Salvatore Di Maria (1985), discussing blame-by-praise irony in Giraldi Cinzio's *Ecatommiti*, concludes that Ercole could not publicly defend himself from such subtly made criticisms without acknowledging their truth. The blame-by-praise irony in Castellino's opening song includes a description of Ercole as a commander of every Christian, which nods both to the famed religious tolerance of Ferrara and to Ercole's avoidance of military leadership. Throughout the song, Castellino uses a word setting that consistently puts stress on the wrong syllable of Ercole's name: rather than *Her*cule, the performer is forced to sing Her*cu*le, leading to an unfortunate yet, I argue, purposeful confusion with the obscene word for anus, *cul'*. The praise is further undercut by the fact that not all of the cadences proceed according to standard practice, perhaps casting doubt on the competence and judgment of the person delivering the praise (Marshall, 2004, 1.66–74, and Marshall, forthcoming). As a *buffone* or comic actor, Castellino would have had a certain degree of license to criticize his host, but the number of criticisms in visual art, literature, and song perhaps lend weight to Salvatore Di Maria's thesis over Lucco's. There seems to have been a tradition of this kind of criticism at the Ferrarese court, for there are satirical passages in Ariosto's plays too, although Ariosto is careful to "[absolve] the Prince from collusion with his [corrupt] employees" (Andrews, 85; see also 39).

64. Webb suggests Renée was not fluent in Italian. However, Lancillotti quotes her in Italian (see n. 66 below).

65. Webb, 251. The following account is drawn from the detailed chronology and discussion in Webb, 232–87.

66. Webb, 255.

67. Webb, 261, translating a letter from Francesco Babbi to Cosimo de' Medici, September 7, 1554, Archivio di Stato, Florence, *Archivio Medici*, filza 2886; the letter continues, "e quei che l'andoreno a levare di casa sua, che fu a mezza notte, dicano che era allegrissima" (and those who went to fetch her from her house, which happened at midnight, say that she was very cheerful). Babbi judges the two women as tantamount to no one, thus indicating the importance of status and gender to speech.

68. Webb, 262, quoting Tommasino Lancillotti, *Cronaca* XII, 198. Lancillotti reports further that Ercole had ordered her household to leave Ferrara on pain of death.

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