

CHAPTER I

Publishing Texts

This chapter examines the parts that women in Renaissance Italy played, directly or indirectly, in promoting scribal or print publication without their necessarily having a commercial interest in the process. The first section deals with the role in which they were most active, that of self-publisher, investigating the steps that they took to diffuse their own texts, in manuscript or in print. The second section considers two ways in which women contributed to the publication of texts composed by others. In the first of these types of involvement, which was similarly an active one, women occasionally promoted works written by men because they had a personal interest in the writings, out of religious or cultural solidarity. In the second and much more widespread type, individual women were invoked as dedicatees of a work because it was considered, for a variety of reasons, that the publication of the work would benefit from their being connected with it. In most cases a dedicatee's willingness to give consent to a dedication would have been ascertained in advance.¹ Even if a woman's involvement in the publication of a work went no further than according such permission, and her role as patron was thus not necessarily a very active one, the dedicatory's decision to select a woman as dedicatee was socially significant for her, and above all it could have a strong influence on the reader's perception of the work.

¹ For two examples of preliminary enquiries about a dedication, and an example of an apology for not having made a request for permission, see Richardson, *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 219–20. Paolo Manuzio felt unable to print Silvan Cattaneo's *Dodici giornate* in 1551 because the Venetian patrician Marco Antonio da Mula had not provided a formal 'commissione' (instruction) to state that he would act as dedicatee: Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'Fortunato Martinengo and His Musical Tour around Lake Garda: The Place of Music and Poetry in Silvan Cattaneo's *Dodici giornate*', in *Fortunato Martinengo: un gentiluomo del Rinascimento fra arti, lettere e musica*, ed. by Marco Bizzarini and Elisabetta Selmi (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2018), pp. 179–209 (pp. 197–98).

Self-Publication*Self-Publication in Manuscript*

Laywomen who composed works intended for a public readership in the fifteenth century could involve themselves in their circulation in manuscript. Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466), the remarkable humanist from Verona, evidently kept copies of the Latin letters she wrote to public figures,² and one of her correspondents, Lauro Quirini, mentions her letters ‘iam in volumen redactas’ (now collected in a volume).³ Another, Lodovico Foscarini, talks of ‘[s]cripta [...] tua edita et data mihi’ (your writings, published and given to me) when he was leaving Verona in 1452.⁴ Ceccarella Minutolo of Naples made a collection of her letters on love and other topics, written around 1470 in a high-flown vernacular, and addressed it to Francesco Arcella. Dedicating the work, she makes the conventional claim that others wished to ‘publicare mei licterule’ (publish my little letters) and asks that Arcella, who has encouraged her ‘ad tal audace facto’ (to such a daring deed) will defend her against criticism.⁵

In the 1530s, Ippolita Clara, a member of the social elite of Alessandria in Piedmont, whose husband had a distinguished political career, published her poetry in copies written in her own hand. Through her verses, she cultivated relationships with other members of the ruling class, female and male, across northern Italy, and in several poems she commented on political and social events of her time, which she managed to follow closely in spite of having (apparently) twenty-four pregnancies. When sending out her correspondence poems to readers, she used a regular but not calligraphic variety of the cultured script known as humanistic cursive or, outside the peninsula, italic.⁶ An example is a leaf containing two sonnets addressed to the Duke of Milan, Francesco II Sforza, and signed by Ippolita as his ‘Humil serva et fidel suddita’ (Humble servant and faithful subject; Figure 1.1). In the second poem, Clara exhorts the duke to return from Vigevano to Milan, where she is writing out her verse: ‘et io le carte lieta vergo | vicina a te, de’ miei concetti

² Isotta Nogarola, *Complete Writings: Letterbook, Dialogue on Adam and Eve, Orations*, ed. and trans. by Margaret L. King and Diana Robin (University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 93–94.

³ Isotta Nogarola, *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. by Jenő Ábel, 2 vols (Vienna: Gerold, 1886), II, 10; Nogarola, *Complete Writings*, p. 107.

⁴ Nogarola, *Opera*, II, 118.

⁵ Ceccarella Minutolo, *Lettere*, ed. by Raffaele Morabito (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), p. 34.

⁶ For a summary of the development of scripts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, see Richardson, *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 59–62.

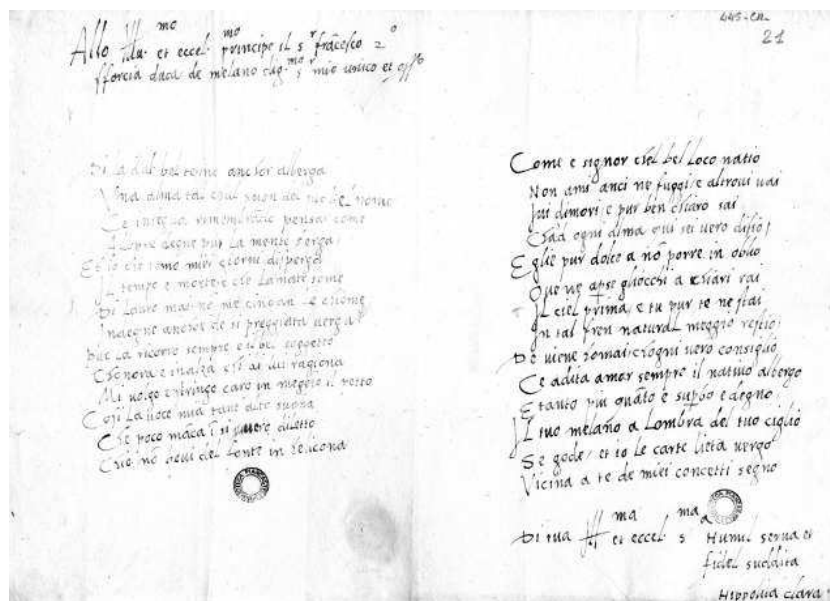


Figure 1.1 Ippolita Clara, two sonnets addressed to Francesco II Sforza. Forlì, Biblioteca Comunale, Raccolte Piancastelli, Sezione Carte Romagna, busta 445 / 21 fronte

segno' (lines 13–14; and I happily copy out my writings on paper, near you, as a sign of my thoughts). This leaf was sent as a letter, with the address on the verso, folded and sealed.⁷ In 1533 Clara wrote out and communicated to Duke Francesco, as dedicatee, her verse translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Books I–VI. In her letter of dedication, she explains that she has chosen to translate these books, leaving aside the later ones which are full of warfare, for the benefit of women, since they do not understand Latin. Book I, for instance, showed them how one should try to avoid incurring the wrath of the gods:

tal opera i' fece per essemplio alle indotte donne, cioè che non intendano la latina lingua, acciò nel primo de l'*Eneida* vedano come sempre si debbe (quanto si pò) fugir l'ira de li dei, che se ben il fugir in tutto non placa tal ira almeno tal atto di cedere la sminuisse.⁸

⁷ Forlì, Biblioteca Comunale, Raccolte Piancastelli, Sezione Carte Romagna, busta 445 / 21. See Simone Albonico, 'Ippolita Clara e le sue rime', in *Ordine e numero: studi sul libro di poesia e le raccolte poetiche nel Cinquecento* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2006), pp. 95–122 (pp. 106, 113).

⁸ Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, MS F-IV-17, fol. III^r. Albonico published the letter of dedication in 'Ippolita Clara', pp. 120–21.

(I carried out this work as an example to women who are unlearned, that is, who do not understand Latin, so that in the first book of the *Aeneid* they may see how one must always flee the gods' wrath as far as possible; for although fleeing does not placate their wrath completely, at least yielding reduces it.)

At the end of Book VI, Clara again signs her work as the duke's 'Humil serva et fedel suddita'. But in publishing her work through him, Clara was clearly hoping, if possible, to reach and to educate a wide female readership.

An autograph manuscript that at first sight is, in contrast, humble and unprepossessing is an account of seven 'rivelationi' (visions) written in 1544, the last year of her life, by Lucia Brocadelli, born in 1476 and a member of the Dominican tertiary order. Duke Ercole I d'Este of Ferrara had resolved to have Brocadelli brought to his city, and she had been smuggled out of her native Viterbo in a basket of linen in 1499. In Ferrara, she became prioress of a community of tertiaries and held a privileged position there until Ercole's death in 1505. Thereafter she lost her position as prioress and lost respect, even within her own community; she was suspected of feigning sanctity. Brocadelli wrote *Le rivelationi* in an irregular, unskilled hand and without punctuation. However, the making of this copy seems to have helped her fellow tertiaries in Ferrara to change their minds about her. After Lucia's death her manuscript soon came to be considered as a precious object, and it took on the function of strengthening the identity of her community. At a later stage, maybe in the early eighteenth century when Lucia was beatified, it was provided with a cover embroidered with religious symbols.⁹

If an author preferred to make use of a less personalized but more aesthetically pleasing artefact, then she could use the services of a professional scribe. This was the option taken by the noblewoman Vittoria Colonna, the

⁹ Pavia, Biblioteca Civica, MS II 112. On Brocadelli, see E. Ann Matter, Armando Maggi and Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner, 'Le rivelazioni of Lucia Brocadelli da Narni', *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*, 71 (2001), 311–44; Tamar Herzig, 'The Rise and Fall of a Savonarolan Visionary: Lucia Brocadelli's Contribution to the Piagnone Movement', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 95 (2004), 34–60; Herzig, *Savonarola's Women: Visions and Reform in Renaissance Italy* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 180–83; Herzig, *Christ Transformed into a Virgin Woman: Lucia Brocadelli, Heinrich Institoris, and the Defense of the Faith* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2013). Brocadelli was beatified in 1710. On an eighteenth-century transcription of Lucia's autobiography, of which the original is now lost, see Gabriella Zarri, 'Memoria individuale e memoria collettiva: gli scritti di Lucia da Narni († 1544) e la loro conservazione', in *Memoria e comunità femminili: Spagna e Italia, secc. XV–XVII*, ed. by Gabriella Zarri and Nieves Baranda Leturio (Florence: Firenze University Press; [Madrid]: UNED, 2011), pp. 73–86, and Zarri, 'Blessed Lucia of Narni (1476–1544) between "Hagiography" and "Autobiography": Mystical Authorship and the Persistence of the Manuscript', in *The Saint between Manuscript and Print: Italy 1400–1600*, ed. by Alison K. Frazier (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2015), pp. 421–45.

pre-eminent female poet of the sixteenth century, when, in late 1539 or perhaps 1540, she offered to Michelangelo a manuscript of 103 recently composed spiritual sonnets, now BAV, MS Lat. 11539.¹⁰ Having this manuscript made and then presented was an unprecedented act for a woman of Colonna's period. This was very probably the first ever thematically organized collection of lyric verse created by a female Italian poet.¹¹ Its presentation seems extraordinarily generous and trusting when one considers that Colonna had been extremely reluctant to give out her verse to anyone even in manuscript. Her action has to be explained by the nature of gift-giving within the select group of reform-minded Catholics or Spirituali to which she and Michelangelo belonged. For them, the presentation of a work of art or literature by one member to another was free from the economies of the marketplace or of the patronage system, and indeed free from the normal expectation of a reciprocal gift.¹² The manuscript is written elegantly, but is undecorated and sober, in a spirit entirely in keeping with that of Colonna's spiritual verse. A title for the collection, 'Sonetti spirituali', was added later and casually, in another hand, probably that of someone known to both the poet and Michelangelo, since he or she adds 'Della Signora Vittoria' on the next line as an afterthought.¹³ The script of the manuscript might have seemed slightly old-fashioned in 1540: the letter shapes are similar to those of one of the typefaces used by Ludovico degli Arrighi while working as a printer in Rome during the 1520s, based on his own humanistic cursive handwriting. The hand that wrote these sonnets is not quite as neat as that of another scribe who was commissioned by the Venetian

¹⁰ Enrico Carusi, 'Un codice sconosciuto delle "Rime spirituali" di Vittoria Colonna, appartenuto forse a Michelangelo Buonarroti', in *Atti del IV Congresso nazionale di studi romani*, ed. by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, 5 vols (Rome: Istituto di studi romani, 1938), IV, 231–41; Carlo Vecce, 'Petrarca, Vittoria, Michelangelo', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 44 (April 1992), 101–25; Monica Bianco and Vittoria Romani, 'Vittoria Colonna e Michelangelo', in *Vittoria Colonna e Michelangelo*, ed. by Pina Ragionieri (Florence: Mandragora, 2005), pp. 145–64; Claudio Scarpati, 'Le rime spirituali di Vittoria Colonna nel codice vaticano donato a Michelangelo', in *Invenzione e scrittura: saggi di letteratura italiana* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2005), pp. 129–62; Vittoria Colonna, *Sonnets for Michelangelo*, ed. and trans. by Abigail Brundin (University of Chicago Press, 2005); Abigail Brundin, *Vittoria Colonna and the Spiritual Poetics of the Italian Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 67–100; Tobia R. Toscano, 'Per la datazione del manoscritto dei sonetti di Vittoria Colonna per Michelangelo Buonarroti', *Critica letteraria*, 45 (2017), 211–37. On this and other manuscripts of Colonna's verse, see Abigail Brundin, 'Vittoria Colonna in Manuscript', in *A Companion to Vittoria Colonna*, ed. by Abigail Brundin, Tatiana Crivelli and Maria Serena Sapegno (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 39–68. For an overview of women's religious writing, see Rita Librandi, *La letteratura religiosa* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012), pp. 47–69.

¹¹ A collection made by Ippolita Clara, completed by November 1536, simply follows the order of composition of the poems (written between 1530 and about 1535) and was not intended for presentation: Albonico, 'Ippolita Clara', pp. 98–105.

¹² On the gift of art, see Alexander Nagel, 'Gifts of Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna', *Art Bulletin*, 79 (1997), 647–68.

¹³ Vecce, 'Petrarca, Vittoria, Michelangelo', p. 104.

patrician Pietro Bembo to prepare a gift collection of his verse around this period.¹⁴ However, Colonna was using the same method of publishing a lyric collection or *canzoniere* that was conventionally followed by male authors, that of presenting it in the first place to a contemporary. She would have hoped that, through Michelangelo, it would then have reached those to whom she refers in line 8 of her opening sonnet, ‘sì ch’io scriva ad altrui quel ch’Ei sostenne’ (so that I may write to others what He endured): the close members of her spiritual community to whom she wishes to express the meaning of Christ’s suffering on the cross.

We know that another manuscript collection of Colonna’s verse was copied and sent in 1540 to the devout Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549), sister of the French king François I. It is uncertain, however, whether the poet was involved in making this gift. It has been suggested that the manuscript in question is BLF, MS Ashb. 1153, dated 1540 on the title page.¹⁵ However, it seems unlikely that the collection contained in this Florentine manuscript was put together under the control of Colonna, not only because 8 of the 102 sonnets contained in it are not by her and are not concerned with religious subject matter, but also because of the material presentation of the texts. In strong contrast with the manuscript for Michelangelo, this one is decorated: it has the arms of Marguerite de Navarre facing the title page and coloured initials at the start of each quatrain and tercet of the sonnets. Moreover, the wording of the title page, written all in capital letters, would surely not have been approved by Colonna: ‘Sonetti de più et diverse materie della divina signora Vittoria Colonna Marchesa di Pescara con somma diligenza revisti et corretti nel anno MDXL’ (Sonnets on several different subjects by the divine lady

¹⁴ London, National Art Library, MS L/1347/1957, illustrated in Joyce Irene Whalley, *The Art of Calligraphy: Western Europe & America* (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1980), p. 120. On the manuscript and its contents, see Alessandro Gnocchi, ‘Un manoscritto delle rime di Pietro Bembo’, *Studi di filologia italiana*, 60 (2002), 217–36; Daniele Ghirlanda, ‘La raccolta Farnese: un piccolo canzoniere di Pietro Bembo’, in *Il Petrarchismo: un modello di poesia per l’Europa*, 2 vols (Rome: Bulzoni, 2006), II, ed. by Floriana Calitti and Roberto Gigliucci, 117–31; Pietro Bembo, *Le rime*, ed. by Andrea Donnini, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2008), II, 548–49, 798, 851–59.

¹⁵ Contributions to the discussion include Domenico Tordi, *Il codice delle Rime di Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara, appartenuto a Margherita d’Angoulême, Regina di Navarra* (Pistoia: Flori, 1900); Angela Dillon Bussi in *Vittoria Colonna: Dichterin und Muse Michelangelos*, ed. by Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (Vienna: Skira, 1997), cat. no. II. 36, pp. 202–04; Brundin, *Vittoria Colonna and the Spiritual Poetics of the Italian Reformation*, pp. 101–31; Antonio Corsaro’s entry on MS Ashb. 1153 in *Vittoria Colonna e Michelangelo*, ed. by Ragionieri, pp. 129–30, and his ‘Manuscript Collections of Spiritual Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Italy’, in *Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, ed. by Abigail Brundin and Matthew Treherne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 33–56 (pp. 34–39); Toscano, ‘Per la datazione del manoscritto’.

Self-Publication

7

Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara, revised and corrected with the utmost diligence in 1540). The adjective ‘divina’ is typical of the title pages of the printed editions of her works, none of them authorized by her, starting with the first edition of 1538. The phrase about diligent revision also belongs to the terminology of print publication, and the poet herself would not have employed it.¹⁶

A combination of autography and transcription on behalf of the author was used in the case of the verse play *Amor di virtù* by suor Beatrice Del Sera, a Dominican nun of San Niccolò in the Tuscan city of Prato, and a cousin of Michelangelo’s. This example of convent theatre, a genre designed for both spiritual edification and entertainment, was composed in 1548 or 1549 and was then transcribed in 1555 in a calligraphic hand for suor Beatrice, who added some corrections and other texts. The occasion for the creation of the copy found in BRF, MS 2932 may have been a performance in the Medici court during the carnival of that year. However, it was probably suor Beatrice who added some stage directions and paratexts, including a sonnet addressed ‘Al discreto lettore’ (To the discerning reader).¹⁷

Self-Publication in Print

When it came to circulation in print, women authors needed to proceed with great caution, for reasons of social propriety and because it was much harder for them to take a direct part in the commercial negotiations that were normally necessary in order to have an edition produced. Nerida Newbigin has suggested that Antonia Tanini Pulci (c. 1452–1501) may have been ‘the first woman in Western Europe to see her own writings through the printing press’ if she played a part in commissioning the first Florentine editions of her sacred plays, attributable to the press of Antonio Miscomini and datable to 1483. Plays by Antonia’s husband Bernardo were printed probably by Miscomini around the same time, and she may have acted in conjunction with Bernardo in having her own plays printed: it seems significant that she is identified as ‘donna di Bernardo Pulci’ (wife of

¹⁶ The same phrase is found in contemporary printed Venetian editions such as the *Fior de virtù* (Francesco Bindoni and Maffeo Pasini, 1543); *Libro della regina Ancroia* (Giovanni Andrea Vavassore detto Guadagnino, 1546); Castiglione’s *Libro del cortegiano* (Gabriele Giolito De Ferrari and brothers, 1552).

¹⁷ Beatrice Del Sera, *Amor di virtù: commedia in cinque atti, 1548*, ed. by Elissa Weaver (Ravenna: Longo, 1990), pp. 75–82 (the main scribe may have been a certain Bonino: see p. 79); Elissa Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 151–69.

Bernardo Pulci) on the first page of the play of *Santa Domitilla*.¹⁸ Laura Cereta, daughter of a lawyer of Brescia, apparently had plans to have her collected Latin correspondence printed around 1488, when she was only about nineteen years old and already a widow. She writes in a letter to Sigismondo Bucci of ‘*Epistolarum grande volumen, quod libraria nunc elementatim format impressio*’ (the great volume of letters that printing is now forming bit by bit).¹⁹ There is no trace of such an edition today, but Cereta was nevertheless confident that her collection would be widely read. She addresses her dedicatee, Cardinal Ascanio Maria Sforza, in an extensive prologue and in an epilogue, and predicts in the latter that, enhanced by his wit and reputation, ‘*gratus ibit iste liber in populos*’ (this book will be welcomed by the peoples).²⁰

A curious example of apparent collaborative authorship and self-publication by women with a man is the *Opera nuova da insegnar parlar hebraico et una disputa contra hebrei, approvando esser venuto il vero Christo*, composed – or purporting to be composed – by three ‘hebrei fatti christiani’ (Jews converted to Christianity), Giovan Battista, his mother Orsola and his daughter Isabeta, and printed in Florence at their instance in 1552. This small volume, a single gathering in octavo, contains a dialogue about articles of faith between a Jew and his sister, who does most of the teaching, followed by a list of Hebrew words and a Hebrew prayer with translations in ‘lingua Christiana’, that is, Italian. The publication was perhaps part of a conversion campaign, but it is significant that important roles are attributed to women, even if they are fictitious.²¹

It was not until the middle of the sixteenth century that a few women authors began to venture more consistently into the public sphere of the press. We can identify several stages in this process. The potential for commercially successful publication of works composed by a living woman was first demonstrated through a series of unauthorized editions of poems by Vittoria Colonna, starting with one printed in Parma by Antonio Viotti in 1538. Filippo Pirogalli nonchalantly acknowledged in his dedication of this edition to Alessandro Vercelli that he had had this

¹⁸ Nerida Newbiggin, ‘Antonia Pulci and the First Anthology of *Sacre Rappresentazioni* (1483?)’, *LB*, 118 (2016), 337–61 (quotation from p. 337).

¹⁹ Laura Cereta, *Epistolae*, ed. by Jacopo Filippo Tomasini (Padua: Sardi, 1640), fol. A8^r. ‘*Libraria impressio*’ was the phrase used by Marcantonio Sabellico when describing the invention of printing in the *Secunda pars enneadum* (Venice: Bernardino Viani, 1504), X, 6, fol. u2^r.

²⁰ Cereta, *Epistolae*, fols A1^r–A5^v, P2^r–P3^r (fol. P3^r); Laura Cereta, *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, ed. and trans. by Diana Robin (University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 36–45.

²¹ On the context, see Brian Pullan, ‘The Conversion of the Jews: The Style of Italy’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 70 (1988), 53–70.

collection of sonnets printed without the poet's permission: 'ho preso ardire di mettergli in istampa, anchora che contradicessi al voler d'una sì gran Signora; stimando meno errore dispiacere a una sola Donna (benché rara, e grande) che a tanti huomini desiderosi di ciò' (I have been so bold as to put them into print, even though this goes against the wish of such a great lady, considering it less wrong to displease a single lady, however special and great, than to displease so many men who desire this).²² Colonna's death in February 1547 seems to have encouraged initiatives to try to raise the verse of other contemporary women to a similar status in print, initiatives taken first by male supporters of female poets and then by the poets themselves. The Venetian printing firm of Gabriele Giolito had already published in 1544–45 two treatises on the status and comportment of women and an anthology of lyric verse that included poems by three women alongside, and on a par with, poems by men.²³ In 1547 the same company brought out two works by the courtesan Tullia d'Aragona (c. 1508–1558), then residing in Florence. One was a collection of lyric verse (*Rime della signora Tullia di Aragona; et di diversi a lei*) that gave prominence to broadly social rather than introspective themes: to Tullia's cultural links with Florentine men of letters and especially to her gratitude to the Duke and Duchess of Florence, Cosimo I de' Medici and Eleonora de Toledo, who had recently spared her from the humiliating obligation of wearing a yellow veil in public as common prostitutes had to do. Tullia must at least have consented to, and collaborated in, the printing of these *Rime*, which have a dedicatory letter from her to the duchess. Sonnets addressed to her by male poets outnumber those composed by her. The other work was her *Dialogo della infinità di amore*. This is dedicated by her to Duke Cosimo in terms that recall the dedication of the *Rime*: both use

²² See Antonio Corsaro's entry on the 1538 edition in *Vittoria Colonna e Michelangelo*, ed. by Ragionieri, pp. 130–31. For an overview, see Tatiana Crivelli, 'The Print Tradition of Vittoria Colonna's *Rime*', in *A Companion to Vittoria Colonna*, ed. by Abigail Brundin, Tatiana Crivelli and Maria Serena Sapegno (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 69–139.

²³ The treatises are Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Della nobiltà et eccellenza delle donne, nuovamente dalla lingua francese nella italiana tradotto* (1544), and Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della institutione delle donne secondo li tre stati che cadono nella vita humana* (1545). The anthology is the *Rime diverse di molti eccellentiss[imi] autori nuovamente raccolte, libro primo*, ed. by Lodovico Domenichi (1545, reprinted in 1546 'con nuova additione'), which included three poems by Vittoria Colonna, eleven by Veronica Gambara and two by Francesca Baffa. See Salvatore Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari da Trino di Monferrato stampatore in Venezia*, 2 vols (Rome: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1890–97), I, 77–78, 88–89, 100–02. Giolito dedicated Francesco Coccio's translation of Agrippa's work to Bona Maria Soarda da San Giorgio in September 1544 and, in a letter addressed to Giolito on 11 November 1544, she described him as 'devoto del sesso donnesco' (a devotee of the female sex): cited in Angela Nuovo and Christian Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell'Italia del XVI secolo* (Geneva: Droz, 2005), p. 121.

the modesty topos of ‘la bassezza della condition mia’ (the baseness of my condition) contrasted with the ‘altezza’ (loftiness) of the status of the dedicatee. However, this edition opens with a letter to Tullia from the author Girolamo Muzio, who must have taken the manuscript of the work from Florence to Venice, and who says he has had it printed without her knowledge. Even if this is a fiction intended to protect Tullia from criticism, it seems that the print publication of her texts was organized chiefly not by her but by two of her gentlemen admirers, Muzio and Benedetto Varchi, the second of whom also helped to revise her verse.²⁴

The first woman poet who came to take an active and successful part in the print publication of her works was Laura Terracina (1519–1577?), born into a noble family of the Kingdom of Naples but not a leading family of Naples itself.²⁵ Eight books of verse by her were printed during her lifetime, and her involvement in their production became gradually stronger and more explicit. The first book, which appeared from the Giolito press in 1548 and 1549 and gave prominence to verses addressed to individual members of the community of her acquaintances, was edited by Lodovico Domenichi, a writer from Piacenza. Terracina had probably come to Domenichi’s attention around 1546: he had included in his edition of *Rime diverse di molti eccellentissimi autori nuovamente raccolte* of that year, printed by Giolito, a capitolo in ottava rima in which Terracina writes that she knew him only through his writings and expressed her literary aspirations (fols R4^r–R5^r). Domenichi claims in his dedication of Terracina’s first *Rime* that the decision to print the verse and the choice of dedicatee, Giovanni Vincenzo Belprato, count of Anversa in

²⁴ Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito*, I, 150–98 (especially pp. 187–88), 198–99; Francesco Bausi, ‘Le rime di e per Tullia d’Aragona’, in *Les Femmes écrivains en Italie au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: actes du colloque international, Aix-en-Provence, 12, 13, 14 novembre 1992* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1994), pp. 275–92. The publication of these editions has been linked with Colonna’s death by Bausi (ibid., p. 282) and Virginia Cox (*Women’s Writing in Italy*, pp. 80–81). On Varchi’s role as linguistic advisor, see also Marco Biffi and Raffaella Setti, ‘Varchi consulente linguistico’, in *Benedetto Varchi, 1503–1565: atti del convegno, Firenze, 16–17 dicembre 2003*, ed. by Vanni Bramanti (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), pp. 25–67.

²⁵ For an overview of her life and works, see Claudio Mutini, ‘Bacio Terracina, Laura’, *DBI*, 5 (1963), 61–63. Works by Terracina are discussed in Deanna Shemek, *Ladies Errant: Wayward Women and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 126–57. On Terracina’s editions, see also Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito*, I, 227–31, 269–70; Tobia R. Toscano, *Letterati corti accademie: la letteratura a Napoli nella prima metà del Cinquecento* (Naples: Loffredo, 2000), pp. 202–03, 208–09, 232–34, 241; Cox, *Women’s Writing in Italy*, pp. 80–91, 108–13, 115–18. On her relationships with her editors and publishers, see Amelia Papworth, ‘Pressure to Publish: Laura Terracina and Her Editors’, *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 12.1 (Fall 2017), 3–24.