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Introduction

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In March 2020 the exhibition, 'Pietro Aretino and the Art of the Renaissance', was forced to shut down as the Uffizi gallery closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[1] That such an exhibition could be staged in the first place, in one of the most important galleries in the world, speaks to Aretino's position in Italian cultural history. Aretino's position and legacy in Anglophone cultural and critical spheres is not nearly so established. However, it was once. In the sixteenth century (and beyond) Aretino was as recognisable – both esteemed and notorious – a name as Machiavelli. Copies of both their works were published in the 1580s by the London printer John Wolfe, with prefaces arguing that both authors had been wrongfully maligned by the Catholic Church and that these English re-prints were intended to reinstate them for discerning readers.[2] While these prefaces argued that Machiavelli's political message was misunderstood by his English readers, Aretino was presented as a defender of free speech, and an exposer of hypocrites: 'a great friend of free men, mortal enemy of crooked necks, great lover of knowledge, cruel adversary of ignorance, follower of virtue, and bitter castigator of vices'.[3] English authors such as Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe, both of whom invoked Aretino as a prototypical print author during their public quarrel, would utter their names in the same breath, vacillating between praising their humanist learning and

[1] *Pietro Aretino e l'arte del Rinascimento*, ed. A. Bisceglia, M. Ceriana, P. Procaccioli (Florence: Giunti, 2019).

[2] *Quattro Comedie del Divino Pietro Aretino* ([London: John Wolfe], 1588); *La prima parte de Ragionamenti di M. Pietro Aretino, cognominato il Flagello de prencipi, il Veritiero, e'l Divino* (Bengodi [London: John Wolfe], 1584); *La terza, et ultima parte de Ragionamenti del divino Pietro Aretino* ([London: John Wolfe], 1589); *I Discorsi di Nicolo Machiavelli, sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (Palermo: Antonielli [London: John Wolfe], 1584); *Historie di Nicolo Macchiauelli, cittadino, et secretario fiorentino* (Piacenza: Giolito [London: John Wolfe], 1587); *Il prencipe di Nicolo Machiauelli, al Magnifico Lorenzo di Piero de Medici* (Palermo: Antonielli [London: John Wolfe], 1584), to name a selection. See A. Berber, 'All of the Five Fictitious Italian Editions of Writings of Machiavelli and Three of those of Pietro Aretino Printed by John Wolfe of London (1584–1589)', *Modern Language Notes*, 22/7 (1907), 201–6; Harry R. Hoppe, 'John Wolfe, printer and publisher, 1579–1601', *The Library*, 14/3 (1933), 241–89; Bianca Finzi-Contini Calabresi, '"Bawdy Doubles": Pietro Aretino's *Comedie* (1588) and the Appearance of English Drama', *Renaissance Drama*, NS, 36/37 (2010), 27–45; Kate De Rycker, 'The Italian Job: John Wolfe, Giacomo Castelvetro and Printing Pietro Aretino', in Richard Kirwan and Sophie Mullins, eds, *Specialist Markets in the Early Modern Book World* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 247–57.

[3] [John Wolfe] *La prima parte*, sig. A2^{v}. In the original Italian: 'amicissimo de gli huomini liberi, nimico mortale de colli storti, amator grandissimo del sapere, crudele aversario de l'ignoranza, seguace de la virtu, e agro rimorditore de vizi'.

decrying Aretino and Machiavelli for their perceived immorality; as we find, for example, written on the title-page of Gabriel Harvey's copy of Lodovico Guicciardini's *Detti et fatti* (Venice, 1571):

> Machiavelli [is] more respectful, and civil:
> Aretino [is] more impetuous, and fantastic[.][4]

In contrast to Harvey's comparison between the 'respectful' Machiavelli and the 'impetuous' Aretino, it was exactly Aretino's vividly imaginative or 'fantastic' style which Nashe preferred. In *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) Aretino is described as 'one of the wittiest knaues that euer God made', and as with the Wolfe prefaces, he is praised for being a scourge of princes: 'His sight pearst like lightning into the entrailes of all abuses […] Princes hee spard not, that in the least point transgrest. His lyfe he contemned in comparison of the libertie of speech'. Aretino's ability to 'pierce' to the very core of power's abuse, Nashe suggests, is due to his evocative writing style: 'no leafe he wrote on but was lyke a burning glasse to set on fire all his readers'.[5] In *Lenten Stuff* (1599) Nashe explains why he takes Aretino as his literary model:

> [O]f all stiles I most affect & striue to imitate *Aretines*, not caring for this demure soft *mediocre genus* that is like water and wine mixt together; but giue me pure wine of it self, & that begets good bloud, and heates the brain thorowly: I had as lieue haue no sunne, as haue it shine faintly, no fire, as a smothering fire of small coals, no cloathes, rather than weare linsey wolsey.[6]

As Marlene Eberhart demonstrates in her contribution to this special issue, Aretino was known for his copious language, which builds upon quotidian details to conjure up the sensory experiences of city life.[7] Nashe similarly uses *copia* to pile up sensory images to describe the Aretine mode of writing: it should be like drinking a full-bodied wine, like the warmth of the sun or a coal fire, and nothing like the feeling of a scratchy material on your skin. In contrast, Nashe barely mentions Machiavelli as an individual, instead referring to others as being 'false hearted Machiuillions' or of

[4] 'Macchiauelli, piu respettiuo, e ciuile: Aretino piu impetuoso, e fantastico': Lodovico Guicciardini, *Detti, et fatti piacevoli, et gravi; di diversi principi, et filosofi, et cortigiani. Raccolti dal Guicciardini; et ridotti a moralita* (Venice: Cristoforo de' Zannetti, 1571), flyleaf. It is bound with Harvey's copy of Lodovico Domenichi's *Facetie* (1548; Venice: Andrea Muschio, 1571), in Folger Shakespeare Library, H.a.2. See *The Archaeology of Reading*: https://archaeologyofreading.org/viewer/#aor/FolgersHa2/072v/image.

[5] Thomas Nashe, 'The Unfortunate Traveller' in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, 5 vols (London: Sidwick and Jackson, 1910), II, 264–5.

[6] Thomas Nashe, 'Lenten Stuff' in *Works*, III, 152.

[7] See also Marlene Eberhart, 'Performance, Print, and the Senses: Aretino and the Space of the City', *Early Theatre*, 15/2 (2012): 179–92; and 'Sensing Space and Making Publics', in Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward, eds, *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Geography, Performance, Privacy* (London: Routledge, 2013), 173–89.

'Machiauilisme' as a form of 'hypocrisie […] all vnder-hand cloaking of bad actions with Common-wealth pretences'.[8] Indeed, while English dramatists helped forge the 'stage Machiavel' caricature of a ruthless political schemer, poets and playwrights such as Thomas Wyatt, John Donne, Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare, referenced, translated, adapted and rewrote Aretino's diverse works for English readerships and audiences with greater ambivalence.

Much like Machiavelli, Aretino's name ultimately became synonymous with anti-Italian prejudice and xenophobia.[9] Demonstrating this turn in fortunes, is the example of the London publisher John Wolfe. Despite his publication of numerous works by Machiavelli and Aretino in the 1580s, by 1593 Wolfe's press issued John Eliot's *Ortho-Epia Gallica*, in which one interlocutor claims that foreign-born language teachers 'have empoysoned by the venime of their skill, our English nation, with the bookes of Nicholas Machiavell, and Peter Aretine, replenished with all filthinesse and vilanie, who deserve for their pains a few swings of the strapado […] Men should banish such plagues out of a Christian common-wealth'.[10] Indeed, like Machiavelli, Aretino's influence spread across Europe.[11] Unlike his counterpart, however, Aretino's significance gradually deteriorated over time, until he was primarily remembered as a blackmailer and pornographer – a remembrance that does him a great disservice, and which has maintained to the present day, outside of specialist circles. By 1711, Joseph Addison, writing on the subject of satire, could assert that '*Aretine* is too trite an instance. Everyone knows that all the Kings of Europe were his tributaries. Nay, there is a Letter of his extant, in which he makes his Boasts that he had laid the Sophi of Persia under Contribution'.[12] Much pivots on the word *trite*: Addison both acknowledges Aretino's enormous influence and powerful connections, but also how he has become commonplace, hackneyed. By the nineteenth century, Aretino's life had become picaresque, even romantic, as Philarète Chasles' 1834 biography, *L'Arétin*, mingled the facts and fictions that had been so carefully distinguished by Aretino's great eighteenth-century biographer, Count Giammaria Mazzuchelli.[13] Chasles' work influenced the apocryphal paintings of Aretino by the nineteenth-century neoclassicists Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1848), who painted Tintoretto threatening Aretino with a pistol (Fig. 1), and Anselm Feuerbach,

[8] Thomas Nashe, 'Pierce Penilesse' in *Works*, I, 176, 220.

[9] See, for example, Henry Heller, *Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth-Century France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 127.

[10] John Eliot, *Ortho-epia Gallica: Eliots fruits for the French* (London: John Wolfe, 1593), sig. D2^{v}.

[11] See Adrián Sáez, ed., *Aretino y España: un mundo de relaciones culturales e intertextuales* (Madrid: Sial, 2021).

[12] *Spectator* no. 73, Tuesday March 27, 1711: http://www2.scc.rutgers.edu/spectator/text/march1711/no23.html.

[13] Philarète Chasles, 'L'Arétin, sa vie et ses œuvres', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, période initiale, tome 4 (1834), 197–228, 292–312, 731–68; G. M. Mazzuchelli, *La vita di Pietro Aretino* (Padua: Giuseppe Comino, 1741; rev. ed. Brescia: Pietro Pianta, 1763).

Fig. 1 Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), 'Aretino in the Studio of Tintoretto' (1848), oil on canvas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman collection (Wikimedia Commons)

who depicted the famous myth of Aretino dying of laughter (1854).[14] It was not until the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, largely thanks to the impeccable archival work of Alessandro Luzio, that Aretino's long road to historical recovery could begin – only to be interrupted again by the tumult of two world wars.[15]

This special issue seeks to underline Aretino's extensive cultural importance in the early modern period, and re-examine the intersecting networks of influence in which he was situated: political, artistic, religious, literary, and traversing and connecting all of these. It aims to recover the

[14] Ingres also took the Tintoretto story from Carlo Ridolfi's biography of the artist (Venice: Oddoni, 1642). On the mythology of Aretino's death see Harald Hendrix, 'La funzione della morte leggendaria nella mitografia di Pietro Aretino', in *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita: atti del convegno di Roma-Viterbo-Arezzo (28 settembre-1 ottobre 1992), Toronto (23–24 ottobre 1992), Los Angeles (27–29 ottobre 1992)* (Rome: Salerno, 1995), 453–69. For further discussion of these paintings see Piers Baker-Bates' contribution to the present issue.

[15] See for example, A. Luzio, *Pietro Aretino nei primi suoi anni a Venezia e la corte dei Gonzaga* (Turin: Loescher, 1888).

historical Aretino, and his posthumous histories within our period, for an Anglophone readership for whom he is so often little more than a name or a footnote. As part of this process, this issue seeks to highlight the substantial work being carried out by Italian scholars, such as the major editorial project of the *Edizione Nazionale* (1992-) of Aretino's complete works, organized under the auspices of Paolo Procaccioli, which includes scholars such as Marco Faini, Élise Boillet, Danilo Romei and Paolo Trovato. The issue also, crucially, aims to showcase the latest Anglophone work that is being done on Aretino, a great deal of which has been produced by the contributors to this volume.

Our issue is by no means alone in its ambitions, however, and is indebted to scholarship from across the disciplines of early modern studies. In recent years the rehabilitation of Aretino's reputation through the recognition of his centrality to diverse fields of cultural production has gathered pace. In the Anglo-American critical tradition the process began in the 1990s in the discipline of art history, thanks to the work of Luba Freedman (1995), Bette Talvacchia (1999) and Raymond Waddington (2004, 2013, 2018), whose work on Aretino remains indispensable.[16] This process could begin thanks to the aforementioned scholars of the *Edizione Nazionale*, who provided long overdue standard editions of Aretino's *opera omnia* – the same *opera omnia*, which had been prohibited by the Catholic Church in the year following his death, and which marked the first step in the decline of Aretino's reputation. Theatre history has also supported Aretino's recuperation, as scholars such as Michele Marrapodi (2007), Celia R. Daileader (2007), Bianca Finzi-Contini Calabresi (2010), and Andrew S. Keener (2014) have examined the extent of Aretino's influence upon early modern English dramatists and staging.[17] Book history has overlapped with dramatic influence, as the work of Kate De Rycker (2015) has shown, which has examined the role of the printer John Wolfe in circulating Aretino's works in England (and beyond), and the different ends to which Aretino was put – both as libertine exemplar (2019) and sexual moralist (2015b).[18] It was Wolfe's editions of the banned Aretino – the *Quattro Comedie* in 1588, and the *Ragionamenti* in 1584/1589 – that put his works in the hands of Jonson,

[16] Luba Freedman, *Titian's Portraits Through Aretino's Lens* (Penn State: University Park, 1995); Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Raymond Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr: Sexuality, Satire, and Self-Projection in Sixteenth-Century Literature and Art* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004); *Pietro Aretino: Subverting the System in Renaissance Italy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); *Titian's Aretino: A Contextual Study of All the Portraits* (Florence: Olschki, 2018).

[17] See the essays by Marrapodi and Daileader in Michele Marrapodi, ed., *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Rewriting, Remaking, Refashioning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Bianca Finzi-Contini Calabresi, 'Bawdy Doubles'; Andrew S. Keener, 'Jonson's "Italian riddle": *Epicene* and the Translation of Aretino's Female Speech', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 65/2 (2014), 120–39.

[18] Kate De Rycker, 'The Italian Job'; 'Translating the *Ragionamento*: Reframing Pietro Aretino as the Castigator of Courtesans', *Literature Compass*, 12 (2015), 299–309; 'Commodifying the Author: The Mediation of Aretino's Fame in the Harvey-Nashe Pamphlet War', *English Literary Renaissance*, 49/2 (2019), 145–71.

Donne, Shakespeare, Harvey and Nashe, amongst others. The material and archival turns have produced a wealth of important Aretino material, especially as such turns subtend other subject disciplines. James Grantham Turner's work on Aretino and the *I modi* scandal – when Aretino famously produced sixteen explicit sonnets to accompany Marcantonio Raimondi's engravings after Giulio Romano's original sketches – have shown how a careful use of archival materials can put long-standing critical myths to bed.[19] This work culminated in Turner's magisterial study, *Eros Visible* (2017) which set Aretino's writings within a wider milieu of sex-positive philosophy at both court and studio.[20] Indeed, Aretino's role in the history of sexualities is significant – he is central, for example, to Ian Frederick Moulton's *Before Pornography* (2000), and plays a key role in Rictor Norton's *Myth of the Modern Homosexual* (1997; 2016).[21] Fluid in his sexuality, and promoting such fluidity in his works – most notably in the *Ragionamenti* – the various condemnations of Aretino as a sodomite during his lifetime, and the fear that he could feminize entire national cultures (in England and France, for example) have seen him feted in recent criticism as a champion of diverse sexualities.[22]

Before the archival was a turn, however, and following the tradition established by Luzio, a great deal of archival work had been carried out on Aretino, which emphasized his roles in political and social history. Perhaps the most significant in the Anglophone critical tradition was Christopher Cairns' *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice* (1985), which drew out just how embedded Aretino was in political and civic structures of power.[23] It is this same level of archival detail that informed Paul Larivaille's superlative 1997 Italian biography of Aretino.[24] The political, of course, went hand in hand with the religious for Aretino, and his role in religious history – not just due to his close and fraught relationship with Pope Clement VII, but due to his religious writings and ambitions – has been examined by

[19] See for example, James Grantham Turner, 'Marcantonio's Lost *Modi* and Their Copies', *Print Quarterly*, 21/4 (2004), 363–84; 'Woodcut Copies of the *Modi*', *Print Quarterly*, 26/2 (2009), 115–23; 'I Modi and Aretino', *Book Collector*, 61/1 (2012), 39–54.

[20] *Eros Visible: Art, Sexuality and Antiquity in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

[21] Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2000); Rictor Norton, *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual: Queer History and the Search for Cultural Unity* (London: Cassell, 1997; repr. London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

[22] In addition to Moulton and Norton see also by Turner, *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England, 1534–1685* (Oxford: OUP, 2003).

[23] Christopher Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches on Aretino and His Circle in Venice, 1527–1556* (Florence: Olschki, 1985).

[24] *Pietro Aretino* (Rome: Salerno, 1997). There is as yet no reliable modern biography of Aretino in English. The most useful remains Edward Hutton's *Pietro Aretino: Scourge of Princes* (London: Constable, 1922), which is deeply indebted to Luzio and Mazzuchelli. Francesco Sberlati's more recent biography is framed as a cultural history more so than Larivaille's; the latter incorporates the historical moment as it is brought into direct relation with Aretino, whereas for Sberlati Aretino is a lens through which history is refracted via micro-studies. See *L'infame: Storia di Pietro Aretino* (Venice: Marsilio, 2018).

Raymond Waddington (2006), Élise Boillet (2007; 2017; 2021) and William T. Rossiter (2015).[25]

Most recently, both preceding and following the Uffizi exhibition, there have been some major continental Aretino volumes, which bring together a number of the most important international scholarly voices since the essential two-volume conference proceedings from Italy, the US and Canada in 1995.[26] 2019 saw the publication of the collections *'Inchiostro per colore': Arte e artisti in Pietro Aretino*, released to coincide with the curtailed Uffizi exhibition, and *Pietro Pictore Arretino*, the proceedings of a conference held in Venice in October 2018.[27] These volumes return to the enormous and complex issue of Aretino and the art-world, from the circles in which he moved in Rome and Venice, to his close relationships and occasional disputes with Titian, Michelangelo and his fellow Aretine Vasari (to which one must add Sebastiano del Piombo, Tintoretto, and Sansovino, amongst myriad others), to his importance as an art critic. Indeed, Aretino was a byword for art criticism in his own time – Lodovico Dolce's influential 1557 treatise on art was entitled *Aretino* – and beyond: Aretino's collected and edited writings on art were published in three volumes from 1957–1960.[28] More recently, in 2021 Aretino's position as a major cultural figure was confirmed by the publication of the Brill *Companion to Pietro Aretino* (2021), which serves as a wide-ranging compendium of Aretino scholars from the past thirty years, surveying his various fields of cultural influence.

The scale of the present issue means that it cannot compete with those monumental recent volumes but nor does it seek to do so. Rather we aim to complement, acknowledge, and build on what has gone before. We draw on the range of overlapping cultural jurisdictions which the Brill volume addresses, just as we acknowledge that the current Aretine revival has been driven in large part by art history. This issue rather intends to bring together some of the most intellectually exciting Anglophone scholars to present Aretino to a wider readership of early modern scholars – to those for whom Aretino does remain a name or a footnote, as well as those who are deeply steeped in his history, influence and mythologies. We are collectively committed to

[25] Raymond Waddington, 'Pietro Aretino, Religious Writer', *Renaissance Studies*, 20/3 (2006), 277–92; Élise Boillet, *L'Arétin et la Bible* (Geneva: Droz, 2007); 'Rewriting the Bible in Aretino's *Genesi* (1538)', in Helmut Pfeiffer, Irene Fantappiè and Tobias Roth, eds, *Renaissance Rewritings* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 253–72; 'Aretino's "Simple" Religious Prose: Literary Features, Doctrinal and Moral Contents, Evolution', in Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini, eds, *A Companion to Pietro Aretino* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 303–28; William T. Rossiter, 'What Wyatt Really Did to Aretino's *Sette Salmi*', *Renaissance Studies*, 29/4 (2015), 595–614.

[26] *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita.*

[27] Anna Bisceglia, Matteo Ceriana, and Paolo Procaccioli, eds, '*Inchiostro per colore': Arte e artisti in Pietro Aretino* (Rome: Salerno, 2019); idem., eds, *Pietro Pictore Arretino: Una parola complice per l'arte del Rinascimento* (Venice: Marsilio, 2019).

[28] Mark Roskill, *Dolce's* Aretino *and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (New York: New York University Press, 1968); *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, ed. E. Camesasca with commentary by F. Pertile, 3 vols (Milan: Milione, 1957–60).

showcasing Aretino's profound importance within the field of cultural production, how that came to be, and how he can and does speak to a wide range of early modern disciplines.

The challenge remained how to do so, but the solution was clear from the start. Aretino represents a new cosmopolitan identity, his writing permeated by urban culture and economy. Aretino was drawn to and prospered in cities, and to cities that were held in a nexus of diverse international and intercultural exchanges – from the university town of Perugia, to the court of Rome, to early modern Europe's mercantile heart in Venice. Aretino befriended the rulers, the politicians, the diplomats, the artists, the scholars, and the publishers, each of whom represented a particular form of cosmopolitan exchange and transnational urbanity. It was the city that fired Aretino's imagination, that gave him the material for his letters, plays and dialogues – where the language and rhythms of the streets and *piazze* made themselves heard in Aretino's representations, howsoever impetuous and fantastic they might be. It was the city that was his canvas and which filled his senses – from the sights of the gondolas laden with food, the rituals and dresses of the carnival, the artworks in the palazzi and churches, the satires plastered to public statues, the squares filled with music of the street-singers.[29]

This Aretine conception of the city-as-sensorium accords with renewed critical interest in the early modern lived and living urban environment.[30] Fabrizio Nevola has propounded 'an approach to street life that views the city as an ecosystem' whereby 'the fertile spaces for new research in this area arise from interstitial locations or mediating figures that are the product of the vibrant life of streets'.[31] Aretino constitutes such a mediating figure, but one who occupies the interstices between streets and courts, bringing each to the other – as exemplified by his alter-ego Pasquino. Moreover, as Nevola notes, this emphasis upon the urban ecosystem is not to forgo traditional approaches to the cityscape, so much as to confirm the interdependencies 'between the physical and the social fabrics of the city'.[32] Aretino captures the spatial experience of living in the

[29] See the December 2019 special issue of *Renaissance Studies* (33/1) ed. by Luca Degl'Innocenti and Massimo Rospocher, esp. their article, 'Urban Voices: The Hybrid Figure of the Street Singer in Renaissance Italy', 17–41.

[30] See for example the work of Rosa Salzberg, including her *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) and more recently, her co-edited (with Luca Zenobi and Pablo Gonzalez Martin) special issue of the *Journal of Early Modern History*, 25 (2021), 'Cities in Motion: Mobility and Urban Space in Early Modern Europe'; Marc Boone and Martha Howell (eds), *The Power of Space in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The Cities of Italy, Northern France and the Low Countries* (Turnhout, 2013); the special issue of *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 19/1 (2016), ed. by Roisin Cossar, Filippo de Vivo and Christina Neilson, 'Shared Spaces and Knowledge Transactions in the Italian Renaissance City'; Tess Knighton and Ascensión Mazuela-Anguita, *Hearing the City in Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018); as well as foundational studies such as Christopher R. Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City 1450–1750* (London: Routledge, 1995), to name a select few.

[31] Fabrizio Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 19.

[32] *Ibid.*, 11, 19.

chaotic and persistently changing environment of the urban environment, peopling his plays, dialogues, and letters with characters who both thrive and are caught out by the anonymity of city life. Importantly, those who knew how to live in cities could live in any city, without being citizens of nowhere. Aretino could write to Thomas Cromwell, or the Constable of France, or Cosimo de' Medici, or Vittoria Colonna, knowing that he could speak to them as fellow metropolitans, in his and their own social languages. It is precisely this quality that allowed Aretino to prosper in cities far beyond his physical reach or immediate sphere of influence – in London both Harvey and Nashe could hear and identify with Aretino's voice, just as his banned religious works could be heard by Catholics almost a century after his death in Douai. Each one of the essays in this issue is examining a different aspect of Aretino's civic-mindedness in order to trace and understand the enormous influence he had in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and how his name became a byword for the citizen in the know. The essays in the present volume represent the disciplinary range, detailed above, which has driven and informed the recovery of Aretino's importance. By focussing upon Aretino's Cityscapes, our issue highlights his contributions to the development of a new metropolitan cultural identity, and also schematizes the intersections between the aforementioned networks, and the disciplines that trace them, in a concrete and immediately legible way. As such, there is a careful ratio in the ways in which these essays are arranged.

The issue opens with William T. Rossiter's examination of the circles of cultural production in which Aretino moved during his early years in Perugia (ca. 1507–1517), which are nostalgically recalled in his Venetian letters, and contextualised by the artistic, poetic and print-cultural influences within the town of the universities. These influences are, in part, reiterated by Aretino's poetics of nostalgia in the letter to his *brigate Perugine*, as he terms them, in which his recursive rhetoric reminds his correspondents of Aretino as he was then – before he became the Scourge of Princes – while his letters themselves attempt to elide the distance of the years. Perugia's urban community of scholars, painters, poets and street-singers all played a crucial role in Aretino's intellectual and cultural development after departing his hometown of Arezzo, and provided him with a blueprint for establishing influence within a bustling metropolis before he departed for Rome and Venice. It was in Perugia that Aretino became a poet, most likely after he had tried his hand at painting. His first work, the *Opera nova*, was published in Venice for a Perugian publisher in 1512, and titled its author as *Pietro Pictore Arretino* [sic]: Pietro Aretino – Painter. The volume, in both its content and its honorific, confirms the influence of the established artist Giovanni Battista 'Bitte' Caporali, who served as Aretino's mentor in Perugia. It is thus no surprise that the *enargeia* which characterizes Aretino's writing is repeatedly described as painterly. Moreover, his lifelong love of art, his crucial position in the history of art criticism, and his close friendships with the leading artists of the day all owe something to Aretino's years in Perugia. As recalled in the *Letters*, it is a town bustling with

characters, ideas, sights and sounds – what Marlene Eberhart, in her chapter, would term a *sensorium*.

In Perugia Aretino learned the Petrarchan poetics he later unlearned and rejected. It was possibly also in Perugia, but also perhaps through his early schooling in grammar by his uncle, that he encountered Virgil's *Aeneid*. As Jessica Goethals shows in her contribution, the great poet of Rome provided the ideal parodic model (or not) for Aretino's account of the 1527 Sack of Rome, which Aretino had in fact predicted, and which offered him some vindication following the assassination attempt on his life, ordered by Cardinal Giberti, that forced him to flee from the Eternal City in 1525. Aretino admits that his account in the *Ragionamenti* (1534–1536) of the immoral baron whose tale of escaping the flames of Rome led to the enflamed passions and suicide of a noble lady was an act of Virgilian *imitatio*. However, Goethals also shows how Aretino's account is less of a pseudo-humanist parody than a reworking of more immediate accounts of the Sack, including Aretino's own contemporary accounts.

Aretino's updated resetting of the account of the flight from Troy finds its equivalent in the painting of the Fire in the Borgo by Giulio Romano (ca. 1514–1517), which ostensibly depicts the ninth-century invasion of Rome, while in the foreground we see Aeneas carrying the aged Anchises on his back, accompanied by Ascanius. It was Giulio Romano's sketches that led to the *I modi* scandal (1525), we recall, and serves to remind us of Aretino's artistic circle within Rome. It is this circle, and in particular Aretino's friendship with Sebastiano del Piombo, that is the focus of Piers Baker-Bates' essay on Aretino in Clementine Rome. As Baker-Bates notes, Sebastiano was Aretino's closest friend in Rome, where they both came to fame at the same time, and where they benefitted from the same patrons – the legendary banker Agostino Chigi (1466–1520) and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who became Pope Clement VII. Yet it is a friendship that is repeatedly overlooked in comparison with, for example, his decades-long friendship with Titian, or his fraught relationship with Michelangelo.[33] In recovering the extent of that friendship, Baker-Bates provides us with a clearer understanding of Aretino's experience of Rome.

The shared patron of Aretino and Sebastiano, Agostino Chigi, provides James Grantham Turner with the focal point of his contribution: namely Chigi's extensive urban garden, the Villa Farnesina in Rome. The urban garden is a reminder that the cityscape contains a plurality of sites and ideas; more than the image of skyline, more even than the ideal of urbanity, the cityscape also offers a retreat from the city – the classical ideal of *otium* could thus be situated within the bustle of *negotium*, of the banker's city. Just as Aretino

[33] In Anna Bisceglia, Matteo Ceriana, and Paolo Procaccioli (eds), *Pietro Pictore Arretino*, for example, there is not a chapter dedicated to Sebastiano, although see Paolo Procaccioli (ed.), *In utrumque paratus. Aretino e Arezzo, Aretino a Arezzo: in margine al ritratto di Sebastiano del Piombo* (Rome: Salerno, 2008).

would repeat and recall his earlier artistic circles in his later social networks, and reiterate Rome's cycle of providential destruction in the *Ragionamenti*, so would he recreate and reimagine his residence at Chigi's Roman villa (ca. 1516–1520) in his Venetian years and works – a time of freedom and creativity, when allegedly he gained the friendship and respect of the major artists who worked there. Just as Aretino recalled his Perugian paradise in Venetian correspondence, Turner's paper reviews Aretino's literary evocations of the Chigi environment, especially its green spaces and gardens. In contrast to his famous portrait of Venice, Aretino's cityscape of remembered Rome gives us an ecology of the urban garden.

In his letter of 1530 to Doge Andrea Gritti, Aretino reveals how Rome and Venice have resolved into a binary opposition in his thought:

> Venice embraces Italy when others shun her, and upholds her when others abase her; she feeds her when others starve her; she shelters her when others hunt her down, and, comforting her in her tribulations, sustains her with charity and love. So let Italy pay homage to Venice, and give prayerful thanks to God, whose majesty, through her altars and sacrifices, wishes Venice to endure for endless ages […]. She is a reproach to Rome; for here, no one can tyrannize over others or seeks to do so, while there, freedom has been enslaved by the priests.[34]

Here the Roman ideal of the eternal city has been replaced by Venice, which is kingdom without end. Indeed, Rome and Venice are presented as metonymic of a series of antithetical dyads: tyranny/freedom, cruelty/charity, falsehood/truth, sin/piety. Yet, as Marlene Eberhart shows in her essay, the city is as physical in Aretino's writing (and experience) as it is ideational, it is lived in as much as it is conceived, through its multi-sensory experience, which Aretino repeatedly records. The city as *sensorium*, moreover, is another key means of establishing metropolitan identity. Aretino describes his own urban experience in seeking to shape the way his readers also perceive it – through his sensuous scripting of it. Those who recognize the sensory experience Aretino presents – for example in his comedies and letters – are thus identified (by the text and by themselves) as belonging to the metropole.

Indeed it was the comedies, the *Ragionamenti* and the Letters that largely carried Aretino's fame across the major cities of Europe. In 1588 John Wolfe published Aretino's *Quattro Comedie* in London, and in Paris in 1609 the six-volume collection of the *Lettere* became the standard edition for almost four hundred years, until the *Edizione Nazionale*. And yet, as Kate De Rycker notes in her essay,

[34] *Lettere*, I.2: 'ella [Venezia] t'abraccia s'altri ti schifa, ella ti regge s'altri t'abatte. Ella ti pasce s'altri ti affama. Ella ti riceve s'altri ti caccia, e nel rallegrarti ne le tribulazioni, ti conserva in carità e in amore. Sí che inchiniti a lei, e per lei porgi preghi a Dio, la cui maestà per mezzo de suoi altari e de i suoi sacrifici, vole che Venezia concorra d'eternità […]. Taccia Roma, perché qui non son menti che possino né che voglino tiranneggiare la libertà fatta serva da gli animi suoi'; *Selected Letters*, trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1976), 66.

Aretino's reception in early modern England is usually interpreted via his reputation as a banned pornographer, thanks to a misunderstanding of his role in the *I modi* scandal, which collapsed his authorship of the *Sonetti Lussuriosi* (ca. 1524) – a sonnet sequence which gave voice to the characters depicted in the sixteen sexual positions – with that of the images themselves. This misunderstanding was largely due to the ephemeral nature of these images, which – variously banned or destroyed by their buyers – were known more by reputation than by sight, until ultimately any set of illustrated sexual positions could become known as 'Aretine's Postures'. Taking a spatial approach to this misattribution, De Rycker argues that the unseen nature of these images lent itself to the seventeenth-century English writers who wishes to conjure up the imaginary interiors of London's suburban brothels and aristocratic boudoirs. This technique of enticing a reader or audience member to see inside the private spaces of the city was also used by Aretino in his first comedy, *Cortigiana* (1525; rev. 1534). As De Rycker demonstrates, Aretino portrays Rome as a socially stratified space, in which the Papal Court as well as the homes of courtesans and elite women, are both imaginary and socially desired spaces for the play's main characters, outsiders who must view this world from the street. As De Rycker shows, the critical narrative of Aretino's early modern reputation as a banned pornographer is insufficient.

Underlining this insufficiency, Andrew S. Keener examines John Hawkins' 1635 translation of Aretino's *Paraphrase upon the Seven Psalms of David* (1534) within its religious ambit in early modern Douai, situating the translation within its Catholic and translingual context. Moreover, Hawkins translation is not an anomaly within the history of Aretino's reception – the first ever translation of Aretino's work into English was Thomas Wyatt's versified treatment of the *Sette Salmi*, almost a century earlier, in support of the inchoate doctrine of what would become the English Church. Conversely, Hawkins' prose version, as Keener shows, appeared in Douai, a city known for its English Catholic university. Douai, analogously to Rosa Salzberg's account of Renaissance Venice, was an international hub, where 'the interaction between different people, between interiors and exteriors, public and private spaces' created a 'complex and variegated urban environment' that 'intimately shaped the kinds of texts produced and how they circulated'.[35] Keener analyses the translation's discursive and bibliographical elements in relation to the intermetropolitan book trade supplying England's Catholics with religious texts, and with particular emphasis on the ways Hawkins's rendering dresses the *Sette Salmi* in the rhetoric of imaginative contemplation for devotional purposes.

This is the first Anglophone journal issue ever devoted to Aretino, drawing together the diverse disciplines through which Aretino can be traced: political and diplomatic histories of Europe, art history, literary studies, book history and print culture, to name a selection. He is a figure long overdue a return to wider

[35] Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 48–9.

academic recognition; not the blackmailer and pornographer of popular tradition, but a figure who was courted by kings, emperors and popes, who was both friend and enemy to some of the most important artists of the cinquecento, whose name and fame spread across Europe as a byword for Italy and vice, and whose influence upon English literary culture has still not been fully acknowledged.[36] As the Uffizi exhibition showed, Aretino has been rehabilitated and re-established in his home country; it is time for the Anglophone world to do the same. To return to Harvey's comparison: Aretino might be less civil than Machiavelli, but he is no less civic. It is in the cityscape that he found his voice and came to fame, and invited others to share in his metropolitan identity. This identity was confirmed by the title he gave himself: the Secretary of the World.

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[36] *Cf.* Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini's Introduction to the Brill *Companion*, 11.