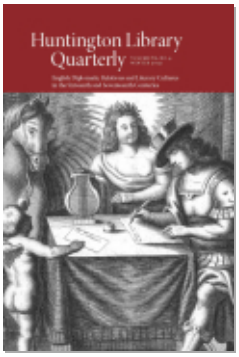
"Lingua Eius Loquetur Mendacium": Pietro Aretino and the Margins of Reformation Diplomacy



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"Lingua Eius Loquetur Mendacium": Pietro Aretino and the Margins of Reformation Diplomacy

William T. Rossiter

ABSTRACT This essay examines how Pietro Aretino used the rhetorical practices of ambassadorial exchange to bring the diplomatic periphery into the center. Drawing together a series of episodes in which Aretino had correspondence with, influence on, or direct dealings with the Tudor court and its representatives, William T. Rossiter shows them to be part of a sustained dialogue instigated by Aretino and maintained by his English respondents. Aretino's use of the printing press was a paradiplomatic force that bypassed traditional channels of influence. It gave agency to an individual who would normally be excluded from international negotiations. This demonstrates how the soft powers of paradiplomacy, exercised through the burgeoning print culture of pre-Tridentine Venice with its transnational reach, could serve as effectively as the hard powers of formal negotiations. **KEYWORDS:** sixteenth-century Italian diplomacy; Henry VIII; English Reformation; Thomas Cromwell; *Cortigiana; Pronostico*; parody

IN PIETRO ARETINO'S 1525 COMEDY (*La*) *Cortigiana*, the stock crafty-servant figure, Rosso, explains that he has a higher calling:

> It's a shame they don't send me as an ambassador to some Sophy. I'd bring honor on myself. I'd say to him, "Your Magnificence, Your Reverence, Your Sacred Majesty, Holy Father, Most Christian, Most Illustrious, Most Reverend *in Cristo Patri*, Your Fatherhood, Your Almightiness, *Viro Domino*," and so on. And I'd make a bow, like this, and another one like this . . . I'd bow my head and everything.[1]

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1. Pietro Aretino, *Cortigiana*, trans. J. Douglas Campbell and Leonard G. Sbrocchi (Ottawa, Canada, 2003), 67–68, ellipsis in original. Campbell and Sbrocchi use the 1525

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Aretino repeatedly employs this same form of superlative, faux-diplomatic hyperbole in his letters to diverse European rulers and magnates. For example, Aretino dedicated his second volume of letters (1542) to the "Most Holy King of England . . . Magnanimous Henry VIII," and we cannot help but hear Rosso's honorifics ringing throughout Aretino's letter to Henry of September 1546: "Magnanimous King, Illustrious King, Undefeated King, *salvete*; I say *salvete* because you alone upon the earth are the love, the wonder, and the terror whereby the world trembles, admires, and is consoled."[2]

This essay examines how Aretino used the rhetorical practices of ambassadorial exchange to become a player in Henry's European drama and its afterlife. It discusses how pre-Tridentine Venice's burgeoning print culture and its pan-European reach could serve as an effective form of public diplomacy. It does so by drawing together a series of episodes in which Aretino had correspondence with, influence on, or direct dealings with the Tudor court and its representatives, and shows those episodes to be interrelated, as part of a sustained dialogue instigated by Aretino and maintained by his English respondents. These episodes trace the attempts of different members of the Privy Council to control, contain, and appease Aretino. The council hoped that the Venetian publicity machine of the self-styled "secretary of the world" would continue to defend Henry's "Great Matter" and the break with Rome—on the Italian peninsula and beyond, during Henry's lifetime and afterward.[3] These attempts confirm Aretino's use of the printing press as a transnational force that impinged on or bypassed the traditional channels of influence, and attest to the power that the press could confer on an individual who would normally be excluded from international negotiations: a cobbler's son who was chosen by the Duke of Urbino to welcome Charles V on behalf of the Venetian Republic.

This discussion of Aretino as engaged in paradiplomatic activities is informed by recent critical and theoretical discussions of what constituted diplomacy and statecraft in early modern Europe, what the means of each were, how they involved nonstate participants in international affairs, and what strategies and technologies effected that participation. The "new diplomatic history" has deepened our understanding of diplomatic process by including the actors often involved on the ground—interpreters, secretaries, merchants, minor officials, and others, as well as the strategies adopted by nonprincely polities to gain recognition.[4] This work has emphasized the role played

"Roman" version, but Aretino revised it in 1534 to give it Venetian currency. The translation of the title (*La) Cortigiana* as *The Courtesan* is rather problematic, as Raymond Waddington notes in his introduction to Campbell and Sbrocchi's edition, 12–15. For the original Italian, see *Cortigiana (1525 e 1534)*, ed. Paolo Trovato and Federico Della Corte (Rome, 2010).

2. Unless otherwise stated, I have used Paolo Procaccioli's superb six-volume edition of Aretino's *Lettere*, Edizione nazionale delle opere di Pietro Aretino 4 (Rome, 1997–2002)—hereafter *Lettere*, cited by volume and page number, as here: 2:15 and 4:84–85. All translations in the essay are my own unless otherwise indicated.

3. *Secretario del mondo* is the title Aretino conferred on himself (*Lettere*, 2:356).

4. See Jeremy Black, *A History of Diplomacy* (London, 2010), 47; *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen: Netwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel*, ed. Hillard von Thiessen

by previously invisible, little-studied, even accidental diplomatic intermediaries who employed unexpected strategies within improvised interactions in shaping cross-confessional diplomacy both within and outside Europe.[5] Further, this work has found that the ability to manipulate shared diplomatic idioms, symbolic languages, and textual genres enabled these intermediaries—even those whose religious or social status might have been thought to disqualify them—to participate in diplomatic processes,[6] including those of Venice.[7] Tracey A. Sowerby has demonstrated that Henry VIII's government, at the same time, deliberately promoted the publication of polemic on the Continent as part of its diplomatic strategy. This public-diplomatic campaign increased in both extent and sophistication during the divorce and royal supremacy, explaining the English court's eagerness to engage with Aretino in the 1530s and 1540s.[8] The broader diplomatic and print contexts were ripe for Aretino to exploit.

In their discussion of how modern nonstate diplomacies "draw on, mimic and intervene in the realm of formal political action," Fiona McConnell, Terri Moreau, and Jason Dittmer claim that "unofficial" diplomacy both reinforces and subverts the hegemony of "legitimate" (recognized) diplomacy through a mimicry that at once promotes it as an aspirational ideal and undermines its distinctiveness.[9] They emphasize the importance of public diplomacy—described by Eytan Gilboa as "a complex relationship between . . . the government, the media, and public opinion"[10]—in allowing nonsovereign actors to enter diplomatic spheres through "the tactical use of diplomatic discourse . . . to subvert the international system and contest its

and Christian Windler (Cologne, Germany, 2010); Christian Windler, *La diplomatie comme expérience de l'Autre: Consuls français au Maghreb (1700–1840)* (Geneva, 2002); *Protegierte und Protektoren: Asymmetrische politische Beziehungen zwischen Partnerschaft und Dominanz (16. bis frühes 20. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Tilman Haug, Nadir Weber, and Christian Windler (Cologne, Germany, 2016); and André Krischer, *Reichsstädte in der Fürstengesellschaft: Politischer Zeichengebrauch in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt, Germany, 2006). For a comprehensive survey of recent studies, see Tracey A. Sowerby, "Early Modern Diplomatic History," *History Compass* 14 (2016): 441–56.

5. Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, "Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean," ed. van Gelder and Krstić, special issue, *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 93–105 at 94.

6. Van Gelder and Krstić, "Introduction," 103; Daniel Riches, *Protestant Cosmopolitanism and Diplomatic Culture: Brandenburg-Swedish Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2013), 7.

7. E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2011).

8. Tracey A. Sowerby, "'All o*ur* books do be sent into other countreys and tra*n*slated': Henrician Polemic in Its International Context," *English Historical Review* 121 (2006): 1271–99.

9. Fiona McConnell, Terri Moreau, and Jason Dittmer, "Mimicking State Diplomacy: The Legitimizing Strategies of Unofficial Diplomacies," *Geoforum* 43 (2012): 804–5.

10. Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 2008): 55–77 at 62; quoted in McConnell, Moreau, and Dittmer, "Mimicking State Diplomacy," 805.

exclusions."[11] In this essay, I argue that Aretino is a key figure in the history of public diplomacy thus defined. His shaping of public opinion to align with Venetian foreign policy made him useful to the republic just as his pro-Henrician polemic made him useful to the Tudor court. Like his character Rosso, he mimicked the actions, idioms, and texts of the official diplomats with whom he was in frequent contact, and in doing so he both reinforced the hegemony and undermined the stability of those languages and genres, underlining diplomacy as a form of representation.

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First we must ask: how did Aretino situate himself within the Venetian sociopolitical order so as to perform this public paradiplomacy? To answer this, we must look to "the myth of Venice," which Filippo de Vivo has reformulated as the myth of complete political concord, founded on strategic secrecy and a system that silenced dissent if it could not disable it.[12] De Vivo refers to "professionals of information" who operated within Venice: "diplomats and their agents, authors and newswriters, groups living at the margins of early modern politics" whose "common traits consisted not in wealth or status, but in education and connections, the ability to access, elaborate, and redistribute, reserved information."[13] As Paolo Procaccioli has noted, the authority and prestige accorded to Aretino cannot be explained solely on the basis of fear of his satirical alter ego, Pasquino, but must also have proceeded from his "effective work of information-propaganda"; even if Aretino were "not appropriate for real political or diplomatic duties," he nevertheless found himself in favor with the rulers of Europe.[14] The culture of secrecy and control that enabled the Venetian government to function successfully necessitated information-propagandists like Aretino. Foreign diplomats could only access the Council of Ten via audiences with the Collegio, which De Vivo terms "the Republic's mouthpiece" that reiterated its "public image of unity."[15] Discussion of politics was prohibited outside of government, so foreign diplomats were forced to seek out alternative conduits of information,[16] and Aretino, with connections that went far beyond Venice, was a valuable resource. As Aretino's First Histrion threatens

11. McConnell, Moreau, and Dittmer, "Mimicking State Diplomacy," 805.

12. See Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007), 18–45, esp. 40–45.

13. De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 4, 46–47. See also Ioanna Iordanou, *Venice's Secret Service: Organizing Intelligence in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2019), 158–89.

14. See Procaccioli's introduction to *Lettere*, 1:10.

15. De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 37, 44.

16. See Elizabeth Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge, 2008), 126–64; and Francesca Medioli, "Rivalries and Networking in Venice: Suor Arcangela Tarabotti, the French Ambassador Gremonville and Their Circle of Friends, 1645–1655," *Archivio Veneto* 146 (2015): 113–38.

in the introduction to *Cortigiana*, "I'm warning you—I wouldn't hesitate to expose every last one of you. . . . I'd make all your sins a matter of public record. I know all about them."[17] Not that Aretino was anything but grateful to the republic for taking him in following his flight from Rome in 1525; indeed, as Paul Larivaille records, Aretino's Venetian publicity practically never deviates from the political line of the republic, and he shadows its foreign policy as practiced by its ambassadors. This has led many commentators to wonder whether Aretino was a subsidized, official—or unofficial—agent of the Venetian state. After all, he "strutted and intrigued with unusual immunity," even managing to be whitewashed from a political crisis over leaked diplomatic information despite being the only person connected to all the parties involved.[18]

Christopher Cairns notes that Aretino's relationships with patrician ambassadors abroad "would have been the channels of the flow of diplomatic information—possibly in both directions—that represented Aretino's security and, in a sense, political livelihood."[19] As Aretino mock-complains in a letter to Francesco Alunno, the high and mighty "give me an unending headache with their visits. My stairway is worn . . . smooth by their continual footsteps."[20] Indeed, the Casa Aretino, which he rented from the Venetian ambassador to England, Domenico Bollani, welcomed foreign diplomats such as Edmund Harvel, Don Lopes Soria, and Don Diego de Mendoza—as Aretino says, "I don't believe that Rome itself ever saw such a conglomeration of people of different nationalities as burst into my house."[21] Aside from connections with doges and patricians (such as Andrea Gritti, Francesco Donati, and members of the Venieri family), as well as diplomats and suppliants, Aretino was surrounded by a circle of artists and litterateurs. His correspondent Alunno was a grammarian and commentator on Petrarch and Boccaccio, as was the humanist Lodovico Dolce, who was instrumental in the editing of Aretino's first volume of letters. Aretino's closest friend, Titian, would visit often, as would the sculptor Jacopo Sansovino. The circle also included such would-be literati as the wayward Nicolò Franco and

17. *Cortigiana*, ed. Campbell and Sbrocchi, 52.

18. See Paul Larivaille, *Pietro Aretino* (Rome, 1997), 154; Christopher Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches on Aretino and His Circle in Venice, 1527–1556* (Florence, 1984), 25; and Patricia H. Labalme, "Personality and Politics in Venice: Pietro Aretino," in *Titian: His World and His Legacy*, ed. David Rosand (New York, 1982), 119–32 at 119.

19. Cairns, *Pietro Aretino*, 29.

20. *Lettere*, 1:257; *The Letters of Pietro Aretino*, trans. Thomas Caldecot Chubb (Hamden, Conn., 1967), 101.

21. *Letters of Pietro Aretino*, trans. Chubb, 101. See Aretino's list of Venice's resident and visiting luminaries in the 1534 redaction of *Cortigiana*, ed. Travato and Della Corte, act 3, scene 7, 283–90.

other *poligrafi* who were imitating Aretino's career example.[22] Even Pietro Bembo had need of Aretino's acquaintance.[23]

Of course, Aretino did make sins a matter of public record, first in Rome under the guise of Pasquino—an example of what might be termed "glocal" satire, since his localized attacks on members of the Roman Curia spread from town to town and overseas—but then more systematically via the publication of his *Lettere*. The first vernacular letter collection ever to be printed, its popularity was in part due to what it revealed of Aretino's powerful correspondents, while his deft use of the press in partnership with the printer-publisher Francesco Marcolini cemented his position. As Jessica Wolfe argues, printing "paradoxically protects a writer's secrets by divulging them . . . either directly, by copyright or privilege, or indirectly, by virtue of their existence in the public sphere."[24] Aretino's deployment of the printing press was his greatest achievement, allowing him to insinuate himself into social positions he could not otherwise have attained. As Brian Richardson summarizes, Aretino was unique as "a writer without advantages of birth, and working outside, though still in contact with, the social framework of the court"; he used the press opportunistically for political leverage, power, and profit by "satisfy[ing] the appetites of quite different publics."[25] This essay will consider Aretino's activities in this context, as forging an identity for him from within the loose conglomeration of Venetian information professionals. I will argue that his greatest contribution was not to literature, theology, or art, but to the arts of public diplomacy and self-representation, to which all the other fields in which he worked were subsidiaries.

In his annual satirical forecast, or *Pronostico*, for 1534, Aretino defended Henry VIII's "Great Matter" by noting that, "had I not already opted to say no more of the Holy See, I would have given the example of the Holy Father himself, who repudiated his consort Madonna Giamattea and sent her to live in a nunnery in Verona."[26] The

22. On Aretino's connections with the Venetian patriciate, see Cairns, *Pietro Aretino*, chap. 1. Lino Pertile defines the *poligrafi* as "a few versatile and unscrupulous 16th-c. intellectuals who were willing and able to write on any subject (hence their name) and for (or against) anyone, so long as they were paid for their work." See *The Oxford Companion to Italian Literature*, ed. Peter Hainsworth and David Robey (Oxford, 2005), s.v. "poligrafi." On the *poligrafi*, see Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530–1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco and Ortensio Lando* (Madison, Wisc., 1969). On the Casa Aretino, see Juergen Schulz, "The Houses of Titian, Aretino, and Sansovino," in *Titian*, ed. Rosand, 73–118.

23. See Larivaille, *Pietro Aretino*, 160–67.

24. Jessica Wolfe, *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 2004), 88–124 at 113.

25. Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, 1994), 95.

26. Pietro Aretino, *Un pronostico satirico di Pietro Aretino (MDXXXIIII)*, ed. Alessandro Luzio (Bergamo, Italy, 1900), 15.

Holy Father at the mercy of Aretino's *praeteritio* is Clement VII (formerly Giulio de' Medici), who had once been Aretino's good friend and patron and had refused to annul Henry's marriage to Katherine of Aragon. Aretino had supported de' Medici's initial bid for the triple crown in 1521–22 by pasting vicious slurs about the other papal candidates to the dilapidated statue in the center of Rome that had become known as Pasquino. De' Medici's failure obliged Aretino to leave Rome for eighteen months, during the papacy of the elderly Adrian VI, to avoid a vendetta caused by his pasquinades. He returned for de' Medici's election as Clement in November 1523. However, relations with the Holy See did not remain calm and auspicious for long, and Aretino's troubled relations with the pope underlay his support for Henry.

Aretino launched a smear campaign against the papal datary, Gian Matteo Giberti, who was savagely lampooned during the April 1525 festival of Pasquino. Aretino was indignant about Giberti's imprisonment of Marcantonio Raimondi for his engravings of Giulio Romano's sexually explicit images in *I modi* (1524); this incident impelled Aretino to write the sonnets accompanying *I modi* for which he became infamous (*I sonetti lussuriosi* [1525/1527]).[27] This was an opportunity for Giberti to rid himself of the scandalmonger Aretino, who had too much of Clement's favor at a time when Giberti was trying to reform the public image and morals of the Church, to bring it in line with the Fifth Lateran Council before the 1525 Jubilee.[28] To find himself publicly ridiculed and his reforming efforts undermined during the Jubilee year, when people flocked to Rome, was too much for Giberti, and he responded by ordering Aretino's assassination in July of that year.

Aretino escaped with his life—just—and following his recovery, he left Rome in October 1525. Soon after, he arrived in Venice, his spiritual home, where he would spend the rest of his life. Rome and Venice thereafter constituted a binary opposition in Aretino's thought, as he wrote to the doge in 1530, endorsing the myth of Venice:

> Venice embraces Italy when others shun her, and upholds her when others abase her; she feeds her when others starve her; she shelters her

27. For a detailed account of the *I modi* scandal and Aretino's role in it, see Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton, N.J., 1999), 3–100; James Grantham Turner, "Marcantonio's Lost *Modi* and Their Copies," *Print Quarterly* 21 (2004): 363–84; James Grantham Turner, "Woodcut Copies of the *Modi*," *Print Quarterly* 26 (2009): 115–23; and James Grantham Turner, *Eros Visible: Art, Sexuality and Antiquity in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, Conn., 2017), chaps. 3, 7. I have given proximate dates for composition (1525) and publication (1527), although see Danilo Romei's note, "Datazione dell'*editio princeps* dei *sonetti lussuriosi* di Pietro Aretino. Una rettifica: Non 1527 ma 1537," *Banca Dati "Nuovo Rinascimento"* (2018), accessed February 27, 2020, http://www.nuovorinascimento.org/n-rinasc/saggi/pdf/romei/datazione.pdf, in which he rectifies his earlier position by pushing the publication date from 1527 to 1537. See also Romei's revised edition of the *Sonetti lussuriosi* (n.p., 2019).

28. See Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago, 2011), 225–56; Cairns, *Pietro Aretino*, 69–124; and Adriano Prosperi, *Tra evangelismo e controriformo: G. M. Giberti (1495–1543)* (Rome, 1969).

> when others hunt her down, and, comforting her in her tribulations, sustains her with charity and love. . . . 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.[29]

Clement's vacillation played its part in the events that resulted in the sacking of Rome by mutinous imperial troops in May 1527. Rome ceased to be the Eternal City, since its ruin underlined its vulnerable temporality, and for Aretino, this role was taken up by Venice, which God wished to "endure for endless ages."[30]

In fact, a great deal of the blame for the catastrophe of May 1527 was deflected onto Giberti, who ignominiously departed Rome for his bishopric in Verona the following year. Upon his arrival there, as James Carley notes, Giberti embarked on a humanist program of ecclesiastical reform and enlisted the aid of the Venetian printing family of Da Sabbio, installing them at the bishop's palace.[31] The retreat to Verona dismayed Henry VIII and his chief minister, Cardinal Wolsey, who had been relying on Giberti—who had a long-standing practical *amicitia* with Wolsey—to use his influence with Clement to expedite the dissolution of the king's marriage to Katherine. That Giberti was now unwilling or unable to do any such thing was confirmed by the publication in 1532 of the *Disputatio Super Reginae Britannorum Diuortio*, by Ludovico Nogarola, Count of Verona; the treatise, published by Da Sabbio, included a dedication to Katherine's nephew Charles V and was, unsurprisingly, contra Henry. As Carley suggests, it seems likely that the tract arrived in England at around the same time that Clement declared Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn to be null and void (July 11, 1533), a pronouncement that was rapidly followed by the decision to excommunicate Henry on September 7, 1533.[32] Aretino's support for Henry's divorce in the 1534 *Pronostico* demands to be read in response to Nogarola's treatise and the fact that the *Disputatio* received its imprimatur from Giberti, the man who had previously labored to support Henry's interests, who was seen as one of the architects of the sack of Rome, and who had ordered Aretino's botched assassination.

More generally, Giberti's volte-face was further evidence—not that Aretino required any—of the profound hypocrisy at the heart of the Roman Curia, which Aretino continued to attack until the end of his life, and this again underpins his

29. Pietro Aretino, *Selected Letters*, trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth, U.K., 1976), 66. This Venice–Rome binary is added into the 1534 redaction of *Cortigiana*, notably in act 3, scene 7; see *Cortigiana*, ed. Trovato and Della Corte; and Cairns, *Pietro Aretino*, 74–75.

30. Aretino, *Selected Letters*, 66.

31. James P. Carley, "Henry VIII's Library and Humanist Donors: Gian Matteo Giberti as a Case Study," in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*, ed. Jonathan Woolfson (London, 2002), 99–128 at 100.

32. Carley, "Henry VIII's Library," 104. The July declaration included a threat of excommunication if Henry did not leave Anne by September (see SP 1/77, fol. 193); the excommunication did not actually take effect until December 17, 1538, when it was enacted by Clement's successor, Paul III.

position in the *Pronostico*. What made Aretino's teeth sharper than those of his contemporaries, however, was his previously privileged position at the Curia: his outrage at Giberti's response to Romano and Raimondi was due to his knowledge of the vice that was commonplace at the Curia. As his First Histrion threatens the gabbling audience in the prologue to *Cortigiana*—"I'll tell everyone which of you are doing it, and which of you are having it done"—he was willing to name and shame.[33] In simple terms, Aretino was at odds with Rome, Henry was at odds with Rome, and thus Aretino supported Henry.

However, Aretino very rarely dealt on simple terms, and his praise of Henry was qualified by a generous helping of irony and satire:

> That King who has conceded that Love Conquers All . . . has with apostolic benediction consummated his marriage with his new spouse. And because the hatred of his people is united with the repudiated lady he runs the risk of finding himself ridiculed by the plebeian fury, but this is not the opinion of Master Pasquino. . . . His Holiness is committing an injustice, as I have said many times, in not granting license to a King who refutes his aged wife, having done so for a Duke who renounced two young ones in Mantua.[34]

Aretino ironically claims that Henry chose to marry again "with apostolic benediction" and prays that "God, his mother, and all the saints will wish [Henry] long life, eternal happiness, and male heirs."[35] His satirical prognosis is here a means of skewering Clement's hypocrisy by pointing to papal endorsements of iniquities within Italy that Aretino perceived to be at least as sinful as Henry's grounds for divorce. The Mantuan duke in question here is Federico Gonzaga II, whose matrimonial intrigues became a cause célèbre in Italy at the same time that Henry was seeking his annulment.[36] Clement's pliability in Gonzaga's case, which demonstrated political disregard for marriage as a sacrament, compared with his rigidity in refusing to annul the marriage of Henry and Katherine, confirms the hypocrisy that Aretino ridicules. Moreover, despite Aretino's claim that he praises or vituperates not those whom he personally adores or hates but those who deserve to be adored or hated,[37] he had a personal score to settle with Federico.

Aretino's grudge dated back to 1527 and the continued reverberations of Giberti's assassination order. As soon as he had recuperated from the attack, Aretino left Rome, on October 13, 1525, with a letter of commendation from the bishop of

33. *Cortigiana*, ed. Campbell and Sbrocchi, 52.
34. Aretino, *Pronostico*, 14–15.
35. Aretino, *Pronostico*, 14–15.
36. For the details of the scandal, see Deanna Shemek, "Aretino's *Marescalco*: Marriage Woes and the Duke of Mantua," *Renaissance Studies* 16 (2002): 366–80.
37. Aretino, *Lettere*, 1:216.

Vaison to Gonzaga, who at that time was still Marquis of Mantua.[38] On this occasion Aretino did not stay long at the Mantuan court, for he soon found himself on campaign with Giovanni delle Bande Nere (Lodovico de' Medici) against the imperial army.[39] Following this episode, Aretino turned again to Mantua and Federico Gonzaga. Despite the uncertainty of his future at the close of 1526, Aretino did not fail to issue his satirical annual review, a fragment of which remains.[40] Aretino dedicated his 1526 *Pronostico* to Federico. The review initially delighted the marquis, but his ambassador to Rome, Francesco Gonzaga, soon returned with news that the papal Curia was outraged by it, which terrified Federico.[41] His response to Clement was that he would have Aretino assassinated and that this time the satirist would not escape with his life.[42] Not only had Gonzaga betrayed Aretino, but his military inaction represented a betrayal of Italy. Federico, like Giberti, came to be viewed as one of those responsible for the sack of Rome: although he had joined the League of Cognac in 1526, a clause had excused him from warring against the emperor, a traditional ally of Mantua, so Federico had allowed the imperial forces to travel through his lands unassailed on their way to Rome in 1527. Thus Aretino in the 1534 *Pronostico* had reason enough to skewer not only Clement and the Curia but also Federico, by then the Duke of Mantua.[43]

In redressing his personal injuries through public attack in the 1534 *Pronostico*, the hugely influential maestro of Venetian print culture ever so slightly polished Henry's tarnished reputation on the peninsula, despite the ironies tinging his praise for the English king. His mock praise, moreover, attacked Henry's enemy Clement and—crucially—caught the eye of Thomas Cromwell, drawing Aretino almost accidentally into opportunistic public diplomacy. By way of thanks for this endorsement, Cromwell pledged 300 scudi to Aretino in a letter of July 20, 1534:

38. Giulio Romano had left Rome for employment at the Mantuan court on October 6, 1524. It made sense for Aretino to flee to Mantua and join Romano in the aftermath of the *I modi* scandal.

39. Aretino famously recorded the great condottiere's last hours in a letter that he sent to Francesco degli Albizi from Mantua on December 10, 1526.

40. Codex Marciano, It. XI, 66 (=6730), fol. 255, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice. See Alessandro Luzio, *Pietro Aretino nei primi suoi anni a Venezia e la corte dei Gonzaga* (Turin, Italy, 1888), 8–9, for a transcription.

41. See Luzio, *Pietro Aretino*, 62–63, for the letters exchanged between Francesco and Federico.

42. Edward Hutton, *Pietro Aretino: The Scourge of Princes* (London, 1922), 103.

43. Federico gained the ducal title in 1530. Giberti, as the diplomatic architect of the League of Cognac, was a key player in the events that led to the sack.

> Most Divine Signor Aretino: His Majesty Henry, King of England, has commanded me to give you, as a sign of courtesy, 300 scudi. Of this amount, 100 will be given to your servant and the rest will reach you by way of your friend, the Florentine [*sic*] merchant Carsidoni. Have hope in the bounty of His Majesty's magnanimity, which you can do, and must, by awaiting the opportunity to serve him.[44]

Cromwell addresses his letter to the "miraculous" Pietro Aretino and opens by describing him in the superlative form of the familiar honorific—"Divinissimo Pietro Aretino"—once more in parodic mimesis of diplomatic high style. He here appears willing to participate in Aretino's diplomatic parody by acknowledging his status as the prince of the Venetian press, adopting Aretino's facetious and irreverent tone in his 1534 *Pronostico*. However, Cromwell's shrewd response also disarms the mocking ambiguity of Aretino's text, claiming it instead as a distinctly unambiguous defense of Henry VIII. Cromwell guarantees this semantic consolidation by attaching money to it. Yet even though he returns the potentially ironic compliments seriously, his letter, too, reads as if it is doused in irony. This is a simple but effective trick: he normalizes irony as a diplomatic register and in the process removes its fangs.

The servant who collected the initial payment of 100 scudi from Cromwell, according to a later letter from Carsidoni, was Aretino's secretary, Ambrogio degli Eusebi.[45] A few years later, Eusebi arrived at the English court and sought to collect the remaining 200 scudi by obtaining an audience with Cromwell. As Eusebi writes,

> I travelled to England with letters made out in your name to the King and to Lord Thomas Cromwell, My Lord of the Privy Seal, where I treated of the matter in which you were to receive the two hundred ducats, which the aforementioned Lord had pledged by way of Carsidoni, and prayed him to give the money to me as an act of goodwill along with 80 ducats for my expenses.[46]

It is not clear when Eusebi arrived, as his letter begins by apologizing for the long intermission since his previous correspondence (of April 12, 1538) and is dated September 10, 1541, by which time Cromwell had been dead for over a year.

Aretino appears to have learned of Cromwell's execution through Carsidoni, because he responded to the merchant on this subject in a characteristic letter that makes his own mercenary position all too clear:

44. *Lettere scritte a Pietro Aretino*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli, 2 vols. (Rome, 2003–4), 1:207 (my translation).

45. Carsidoni to Aretino, April 23, 1540, in *Lettere scritte a Pietro Aretino*, ed. Procaccioli, 2:85.

46. *Lettere scritte a Pietro Aretino*, ed. Procaccioli, 2:30–31.

> I am grieved by what happened, since through Cromwell I received some benefit. But it would be better for his reputation if the courtesy shown me at the command of the illustrious Henry had been mixed with some generosity of his own. However that may be, I shall never forget that I was once in his favour.
>
> Since all honours, nonetheless, are due to the supreme Creator, I now shall devote my efforts to working for his majesty, whom God made in His own likeness.[47]

In this letter Aretino attributes the English Reformation to Cromwell,[48] saying that Cromwell was executed "by Divine Judgement and not by any human resolve" for trying to "damage the religion of Christ; indeed anyone who has no regard for the laws of religion is disregarded by Heaven."[49] In this way Aretino conveniently absolves Henry of Cromwell's death, which means he can in good conscience continue to receive payment from the king, and sidesteps the role Cromwell's religious position played in his original patronage of Aretino. However, the king's personal investment in and instigation of the English Reformation is the submerged theme of Aretino's dedication of his 1542 volume of letters to Henry (as this essay later discusses). The complaint that "it would be better for [Cromwell's] reputation if the courtesy shown me at the command of the illustrious Henry had been mixed with some generosity of his own" confirms that Cromwell's real crime is against "il divin Pietro Aretino"—the epithet conferred on Aretino by Ariosto and universally adopted by Aretino's correspondents—not against the divine God.[50] Aretino had in fact written to Cromwell a few months prior to his execution with a similar complaint: "It is not a gift if one must continually wait for it, and he who does not give quickly acquires more hatred than thanks." He added an implicit threat: "The tongues which confirm wickedness are more numerous than those which confirm goodness, and so the testimony of my pen matters greatly."[51]

The letter presented to Cromwell by Eusebi might have been along similar lines but is more likely to have been the renegade secretary's own invention as a means of obtaining money. Eusebi's audience with Cromwell is likely to have taken place in 1539, when it became prudent for Eusebi to leave Venice after he had stabbed Aretino's previous secretary, Nicolò Franco, in the face for slandering Aretino. In meeting

47. Aretino, *Selected Letters*, 197.

48. As did many contemporaries and later historians; see Tracey A. Sowerby, "Richard Pate, the Royal Supremacy, and Reformation Diplomacy," *Historical Journal* 54 (2011): 265–85.

49. Aretino, *Selected Letters*, 197.

50. "il flagello / de' principi, il divin Pietro Aretino." Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, ed. Cesare Segre (Milan, 1976), 46.14.

51. Aretino, *Lettere*, 1:197. The diplomatic tone is (temporarily) abandoned as soon as it lacks utility as a rhetorical strategy, as we see in the letter to the French grand master, Montmôrency, discussed below, wherein Aretino repeats a very similar threat.

Cromwell, Eusebi effectively served as Aretino's representative, presenting his credentials and seeking an audience in a self-serving parody of an envoy, thus conferring on Aretino something like the shadow of princely status. During this period, when Aretino was at the height of his powers, he was certainly living like a prince, in the palazzo of Domenico Bollani in Venice, and Aretino's importance in the sphere of public diplomacy was noted by contemporaries. As Michelangelo wrote to Aretino in November 1537, "Kings and Princes esteem it a very great favor if your pen deigns to notice them."[52]

Cromwell's deliberate arrest of Aretino's characteristic "concealed irony" is significant:[53] in the exchanges between Cromwell and Aretino, the absorption of satire, mockery, irony, and parody into public diplomacy has a serious function. As Rosso in *Cortigiana* confirms, albeit in a burlesque manner, Aretino knew the formalities, epithets, and honorifics of diplomatic exchange. The parodic exploitation of these inherently hyperbolic conventions allowed an atypical actor—one "not appropriate for real . . . diplomatic duties"—to insert himself into the diplomatic world; in turn, it permitted a major diplomatic player to make improvisational use of public satire for diplomatic purposes. Nevertheless, in his initial exchange with Cromwell, if not elsewhere, Aretino concealed his ambition and observed the protocols—just as Cromwell wrote back respectfully, albeit with a knowing and open facetiousness.

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His support for Henry in 1534 having literally paid off, Aretino sought to repeat the gamble in the 1542 dedication of his second volume of letters, mentioned in the opening of this essay. As we have seen, the dedication returns Cromwell's ironic hyperbole, except this time there was no Cromwell keeping a close eye on English public diplomacy. Both the dedication and the collection's proemial letter are also laced with an ironic ambiguity that draws on Henry's earlier title of Fidei Defensor, bestowed on the king by Leo X after Henry had penned (or at least put his name to) the treatise *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* (London, 1521).[54] Aretino's claim in these prefatory materials that Henry "removed the obstacles of misery and want" and "extirpated depraved wills" likely refers to the expurgation of clerical and monastic abuses that climaxed in the dissolution of the monasteries, given Aretino's antifraternal satire when commenting on Henry's "Great Matter" in the 1534 *Pronostico*. His statement that "the title of Godhead and the name of religion both befit you" appears to be a similarly amorphous reference to the Act of Supremacy passed

52. *Lettere scritte a Pietro Aretino*, ed. Procaccioli, 1:369.

53. See Larivaille, *Pietro Aretino*, for the reference to his "model of concealed irony," 132.

54. The *Assertio* was presented to Leo X in Rome in 1521, and he conferred the title Fidei Defensor upon Henry on October 11 of that year. Aretino was a marginal, satirical presence in the Roman Curia at that time; see Nello Vian, "Le presentazione e gli esemplari vaticani della *Assertio septem sacramentorum* di Enrico VIII," *Studi e testi* 220 (1962): 355–75.

that same year. However, the claim that when Henry takes up his pen, he "disperses the rabble of heretics and in the generosity of faith reassures the minds of the doubters" is surely a reference to the honorific Defender of the Faith. Paul III had revoked the title only for it to be reconferred by the embryonic English Church two years after Aretino's dedication, and Aretino's use of it is deeply ambiguous.

Aretino had claimed in the letter to Carsidoni that Cromwell died for crimes against the laws of religion, and he undoubtedly knew how the papacy had used the honorific Fidei Defensor against Henry after 1534, so Aretino would not have referred to it idly. What then is he doing? It is possible that he does have the title and the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* treatise in mind but is claiming that Henry did not merit the title until after his reforms. Only by breaking with Rome did Henry truly become Defender of the Faith, while the impious Roman Curia and any hypocritical religious, not the Lutherans, became the real heretics. This was certainly the line taken by Henry's own polemicists in the 1530s.[55] Cromwell's crime, in the context of this interpretation, was not religious reform per se, but the extremes to which he went. This argument, however, attributes to Aretino a fixed doctrinal position that he did not possess: although he never fundamentally strayed from an Erasmian middle ground, he did maneuver within that moderate reformist ambit, depending on his addressee, his paymaster, and his present ambition.

Despite his distaste for Luther, Aretino numbered among his friends the reformers Antonio Brucioli, Pier Paolo Vergerio, and Bernardino Ochino.[56] Baldassare Altieri, a confirmed Lutheran, was described by Aretino as being his brother of twenty years' standing. Not only did Aretino congratulate Altieri on becoming secretary to the English ambassador to Venice—Edmund Harvel, with whom Aretino would have much ado—he also campaigned on his behalf to the sometime English ambassador to the imperial court Philip Hoby, when Altieri had been dismissed from Harvel's service and was being persecuted for his reformist beliefs.[57] Aretino's anticurial agenda, his movement within reformist circles, and his professed favor for Henry's position and the English rite all undermine the interpretation of his term *luterani* as signifying those who followed Luther's doctrine to the letter;[58] in fact, he used it to signify heretics more generally. Aretino, like his translator Wyatt, occupied a moderate reformist ground, and he did so flexibly. He had served Cromwell's ends in that regard, just as Cromwell had served his.

Thus Aretino could support Henry's agenda at Cromwell's behest; he could support Henry's agenda by condemning Cromwell's (not Henry's) crimes against

55. Tracey A. Sowerby, *Renaissance and Reform in Tudor England: The Careers of Sir Richard Morison, c. 1513–1556* (Oxford, 2010), 69, 80.

56. See William T. Rossiter, "What Wyatt Really Did to Aretino's *Sette Salmi*," *Renaissance Studies* 29 (2015): 595–614; and Rossiter, *Wyatt Abroad: Tudor Diplomacy and the Translation of Power* (Cambridge, 2014), 152–97.

57. Aretino, *Lettere*, 5:139–40.

58. Aretino, *Lettere*, 5:140.

religion; and he could ambiguate his support through careful equivocation if he thought that pushing too far in one direction or the other—at the wrong moment, in the unstable confessional environment of the 1530s and 1540s—might jeopardize his (real) ambition for a red biretta.[59] He could likewise adopt the dual action of the diplomat in simultaneously supporting Henry's break with Rome and seeking to be made cardinal.[60]

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Following the death of Henry, Aretino sought to create continuity in terms of his relationship with the English Privy Council; however, Aretino's Edwardian period was beset by discord from the outset. He characteristically overturned his verdict on Cromwell in the letter to Carsidoni of July 1540 and in his later series of letters to Anthony Denny, William Paget, and Philip Hoby, which he sent during the closing year of Henry's reign and the first of Edward's. In May 1547, Aretino reminds Denny that his service to Henry began under Cromwell, "whose innocent soul now reigns in Paradise with God," a characterization that starkly contrasts with his previous judgment, upon Cromwell's execution. That Aretino saw himself as fulfilling an ambassadorial role for the English court is clear from the parallels he draws in this letter to Denny. He explains that Augustine de Augustinis, formerly physician to Wolsey and Henry before becoming the Duke of Norfolk's ambassador, has recently taken up residence in the house in Venice where Aretino has lived for twenty years. Moreover, he writes, "the proper owner of this house in which both he and I reside has become the ambassador of this Most Serene Republic to the illustrious King Edward. Whereby it is almost a miracle to have pent up together in such a stupendous city three such great ones."[61] Aretino here explicitly claims the same great status as the official ambassadors between England and Venice. Furthermore, in a letter to Hoby of September 1546, Aretino depicts himself as ambassador for the entirety of a unified Italy, which was at that point still a humanist fantasy.[62] In part, Cromwell had originally envisaged Aretino as serving just such a function, communicating the views of

59. See Cairns, *Pietro Aretino*, 97–124.

60. On "duality" as one erroneous Renaissance etymology of the term *ambaxiator*, see Wolfe, *Humanism*, 90–91.

61. Aretino, *Lettere*, 4:122. Aretino's landlord is Domenico Bollani, Venetian ambassador to England from June 1547 to October 1549. See Christopher Cairns, "Domenico Bollani, a Distinguished Correspondent of Pietro Aretino—Some Identifications," *Renaissance News* 19 (1966): 193–205. The Agostino that Aretino refers to must be de Augustinis, since E. A. Hammond notes that he returned from England to Venice at the end of 1546. See E. A. Hammond, "Doctor Augustine, Physician to Cardinal Wolsey and King Henry VIII," *Medical History* 19 (1975): 215–49. Presumably he is the same Agostino who witnessed Harvel's payment of the 300 scudi—as mentioned by Aretino in a letter to Denny on March 10, 1547 ("in presenza del magnifico M. Agostino" [*Lettere*, 4:113]).

62. Aretino, *Lettere*, 4:86.

the English crown to an idealized Italy from Venice, the print Republic of Letters. In his letter to Denny of May 1547, Aretino also reminds him of "the 300 scudi sent here as a gift" from Henry "out of his magnanimous grace" upon receipt of the 1542 dedication, money promised but not yet all received by Aretino.[63]

The delayed final payment of this gift to Aretino was at the heart of a diplomatic scandal involving the English ambassador to Venice, Edmund Harvel, under whose aegis the dedication had been presented to the English king.[64] Five years had passed, Henry had died, and Aretino still had not received the remaining 200 scudi. We know from his letters to and about Cromwell that he did not like to wait. Aretino reached the conclusion that Harvel had kept the money for himself, and wrote one of his vituperative character assassinations in a letter of November 1547, which he sent to the Mantuan envoy.[65] Harvel was outraged and, allegedly by chance, bumped into Aretino in a street in Venice. Harvel had with him six of his ambassadorial *famiglia*, who proceeded to beat Aretino with cudgels. Harvel immediately regretted the incident—or was made to regret it—for it caused a minor diplomatic storm. According to a letter that Aretino wrote to Vecellio Apelle (a.k.a. Titian), the emperor was outraged by the English ambassador's assault on the aging scourge, although it was the emperor's own ambassador, Don Diego de Mendoza, who finally dissuaded Aretino from taking revenge on Harvel.[66]

The English Privy Council was clearly alarmed by Harvel's attack and the European response to it. Hoby wrote a series of letters promising to make amends for the attack, and, finally, Denny sent a letter that appears to have been delivered by Harvel himself, along with the sum owed for the dedication.[67] Harvel thus paid the money, even though in all likelihood he had not appropriated it, since the same amount is listed in the English state records of payments to be made in both 1542 and 1547—suggesting it simply had not been dispatched the first time round—and even Aretino himself later suggested that Carlo de la Foresta had taken the money.[68] Harvel also made groveling apologies to Aretino, to protect either his or Henry's (posthumous) reputation. Surprisingly, Aretino did not retaliate in print: the Scourge of Princes held his lashing tongue; the *secretario del mondo* did *not* let the world know (or at least not immediately, since he eventually published his letters to Hoby and

63. Aretino, *Lettere*, 4:122.

64. R. O. Edmond [Edmund] Harvel to Henry VIII, September 24, 1542, SP 1/173, fol. 56, The National Archives, Kew.

65. Aretino, *Lettere*, 4:169. For full details of the scandal and its responses, see Larivaille, *Pietro Aretino*, 329, 442–43.

66. Aretino, *Lettere*, 4:293. While serving Charles in Italy, Mendoza was sent to England in 1537 to arrange marriage between Henry VIII and Christina of Denmark, before becoming imperial ambassador to Venice in 1539.

67. *Lettere scritte a Pietro Aretino*, ed. Procaccioli, 2:251–52. Denny, like Cromwell before him, seeks to enlist Aretino on Edward's behalf on the quid pro quo basis of "the more you say (in support), the more we pay."

68. See *Lettere*, 4:187.

Denny). The truth is that Aretino, the self-appointed orator who had been promised more money by Denny for further print support, handled the matter diplomatically—where the real diplomat had failed to do so—protecting an English source of patronage for his public diplomacy.

Yet we might have expected the scandalous truth of Aretino's treatment at the hands of the English ambassador to be ringing in Europe's ears. Aretino had, after all, responded angrily when Francis I, king of France, implied that Aretino was as mendacious as an ambassador fifteen years earlier. Aware of Aretino's public diplomatic influence, in November 1533 Francis had sent him an orator's chain bearing the inscription "Lingua Eius Loquetur Mendacium" (His Tongue Tells a Lie).[69] This royal gift was a comment on the role of the diplomatic orator as much as it was on Aretino, its inscription preempting Henry Wotton's famous witticism that an ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for his country.[70] The French king's gift implicitly characterized Aretino's manipulations of ambiguity, irony, satire, and parody as mimicking—or rather caricaturing—an ambassador. Aretino, the consummate satirist, did not find Francis's joke very funny. On receiving the chain, he described it thus:

> It has arrived at last, with its tongues enameled in vermillion and its royal message in white lettering. . . . By God, a lie is as much at home on my tongue as the truth is on the tongue of a priest! If I say that you are to your people what God is to the world, and what a father is to his children, am I telling a falsehood? If I say that you possess all the rare virtues, fortitude, justice, clemency, gravity, magnanimity and knowledge, am I a liar? . . . It is certainly true that if I were to boast about this chain being a present from you I should lie. There's nothing of the present about a gift when one has been living on the hope of having it and on the strength of promises for so long. If you were not utterly good and perfect, and if I had not concluded that you must believe I had in fact received it, I would strip off all the tongues that are attached to the chain and I would make them sound forth in such a way that your treasury officials would have them ceaselessly ringing in their ears, and

69. Aretino, *Selected Letters*, 71. The engraving is a reference to Jeremiah 9:5: "And they will not speak the truth: for they have taught their tongue to speak lies."

70. "Legatus est vir bonus preregre missus ad mentiendum reipublicae causa." The anecdote is recorded in the *Reliquiae Wottonianae* (London, 1651), sig. c verso. Quoted in Diego Pirillo, "Tasso at the French Embassy: Epic, Diplomacy, and the Law of Nations," in *Authority and Diplomacy from Dante to Shakespeare*, ed. Jason Powell and William T. Rossiter (Farnham, U.K., 2013), 135–54. On "orator" as a term for diplomat, see Jason Powell, "Astrophil the Orator: Diplomacy and Diplomats in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*," in *Authority and Diplomacy*, ed. Powell and Rossiter, 183.

> so learn to send presents from the king as promptly and as speedily as he bestows them.[71]

One wonders how many other people would have sent such a letter to the king of France, a letter that reflects the influence Aretino had gained from his parodic self-insertion into the public diplomatic world. His mocking response makes much of the ambivalence of diplomatic truths. Aretino's entire career had been spent denouncing the lies and hypocrisies of popes, cardinals, prelates, and clerics; by extension, a lie was not at home on his tongue. But a priest was supposed to be devoted to the truth and should speak it, and so Aretino was at the same time a liar. As such, he is both telling the truth and lying about Francis being a spiritual father to his people and a paragon of virtue. Aretino's ironic respect is laced with bitter satire and implicit threats about his power to destroy reputations publicly through the press. We have seen this kind of thing before in the 1534 *Pronostico*'s praise of Henry: this is praise that undoes itself; these are lies that tell the truth; they are ambages, the dual language of the ambassador.[72]

The king's joke was still rankling four years later when on June 8, 1537, Aretino wrote to the French grand master, the Duc de Montmôrency, initially apologizing for his previous letter but increasingly employing ironic criticism and implicit threat as the letter progresses. Aretino builds up to an explanation of his realm as prince of the press, an apologia for his satirical attacks as a valuable form of public diplomacy, and a demand for a stipend from the French crown:

> According to the motto on the chain I should keep silent all the time, because, it says, in praising his Majesty I would be telling lies. But I have ignored this instruction and I have embellished all my writings with his name. And when the four hundred crowns a year are consigned to me for the rest of my life, I shall speak the truth as I know it to spread the fame of your King: for I too am a captain, but my soldiering does not steal its soldiers' pay, nor does it incite to mutiny or surrender fortresses. On the contrary, with its squads of inkpots, and with Truth painted on every banner, it acquires more glory for the prince it serves than all the new lands that his armed men could conquer. And my pen pays in the ready money of honor and shame. . . . For this reason, you [Francis] should fulfill the promises which you made in the presence of many people, and which are known throughout all Italy; and then I will be all you wish me to be.[73]

71. Aretino, *Selected Letters*, 71–72.
72. See Wolfe, *Humanism*, 92, 117–18, and note 60 above.
73. Aretino, *Selected Letters*, 93–94.

Aretino claims his publicity can acquire "more glory for the prince it serves" than the conquest of new lands, and he has mustered his army of inkpots either to support or attack the French king, depending on his receipt of a stipend. His mercenary public diplomacy is war by other means.

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Through such powerful parodic manipulations of public diplomacy, Aretino moved from the periphery to the center, from mock orator to orator proper, whose tongue told truths that those in power had to hear as lies if they were to maintain their reputations. Master of reframing public images, he became his own representation, the secretario del mondo he claimed to be. Edmund Harvel and even Francis I briefly underestimated the dominion of this prince of the press, but Cromwell and Hoby knew that such men were dangerous and must be handled with care, with a certain diplomacy. In 1543 the Duke of Urbino requested that Aretino join the ambassadorial party sent on behalf of the republic to receive Charles V as he passed through Venetian territory, and "Charles no sooner saw Aretino than he spurred his horse toward him, saluted him affectionately and they rode along together, Aretino on his right hand," as Edward Hutton notes.[74] Starting as a mimic in the manner of his character Rosso, whose ambassadorial burlesque opened this discussion, Aretino came to inhabit the "real" diplomatic roles for which Procaccioli deemed him both unsuitable and unreliable. Aretino's public diplomacy had blurred the line between the "real" diplomat and the nonstate actor able to improvise diplomatic encounters through parody.

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74. Hutton, *Pietro Aretino*, 198. See also Cairns, *Pietro Aretino*, 28–29, on the political machinations that led to Aretino's part in the ambassadorial party.