

Aretino (M. Florio's friend) and the *Hamlet's Italian historical source*

Aretino received (by letter on April 17th 1540) the *Hamlet's Italian historical source*, a rare copy of the accusatory procedure, “written in very choice Italian”, concerning the Duke of Urbino's poisoning through his ears!

Abstract: M.O. Nobili engages in a study on the identification of the document containing the Italian historical source of *Hamlet*, a work that has an incalculable influence on world culture (for Harold Bloom, “After Jesus, Hamlet is the most cited figure in the Western conscience”¹). Well-established studies have unequivocally clarified that the Italian historical source of the *Hamlet* (and, in particular, of the recital at court) is the alleged poisoning, through the ears, of the Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria I della Rovere, who died on 21 October 1538 (Prof. Geoffrey Bullough [1935, 1978] and Prof. Giorgio Melchiori [1994], also on the basis of a previous study by Elisa Viani [1902]); *King Hamlet is equally killed!* The Author identifies the written document relating to this Italian story; in fact, the Dramatist states that “The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian” (*Hamlet* III, ii, 256-257). This document, in the opinion of the Author, is the fine and polished judicial accusatory document (based on the confession of the Duke's barber), that is the “accusatory procedure prepared by the ministers of Urbino”, by order of Guidobaldo (the murdered Duke's son); “copy” of this document was sent by one of the two alleged principals, Luigi Gonzaga (letter on April 17th, 1540), together with the promise of some money, to the “divine” Aretino, who was charged with studying such documentation, in his quality of a Luigi Gonzaga's remunerated defender, in that complex dispute, with considerable media interest. Even John Florio knew this story, which - besides having been, probably, told (or handed down through writings) by his father Michelangelo - is, however, described in the Letters sent by Aretino and in the Letters that Aretino received (which John himself certifies to have read in order to prepare his dictionary of 1598 - See the Appendix I, at the bottom of the study, bibliographic references No. 65 and No. 18).

Extensive summary:

i) Introduction, purpose and brief anticipations on the present study: i.1) Introduction; i.2) Purpose of this study; i.3) Brief anticipations on the present study.

Chapter I

Brief notes on the “extant and written in very choice Italian” (*Hamlet*, III, ii, 256-257) of the auricular poisoning of the Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria I della Rovere.

§ I.1 Brief notes on the *Hamlet's Italian historical source* (Prof. Bullough and Prof. Melchiori): the poisoning, through the ears (according to the documents of the time), of the Duke of Urbino Francesco Maria I della Rovere (died in October 21st, 1538), husband of Eleonora Gonzaga and called the “Duke

¹ Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare, L'invenzione dell'uomo*, BUR, Rizzoli, Milano, sixth edition, 2017, p.15 (original title of the work: *Shakespeare: the invention of the human*, 1998), translation into Italian by Roberta Zuppett; “Dopo Gesù, Amleto è la figura più citata nella coscienza occidentale”.

Gonzago”, in the play at court, in the *Hamlet*; the same way of poisoning (“a unique case in the entire history of theater and literature” - Prof. Giovanni Ricci²) is adopted by the Dramatist for King Hamlet’s death. The fundamental monographic study (with all relevant archival documents published in *Appendix*) by Prof. Elisa Viani, *L’avvelenamento di Francesco Maria I della Rovere, duca d’Urbino*, Mantova, 1902.

I.1.1 I am certainly not the first to correlate the poisoning, through the ears, of the Duke of Urbino Francesco Maria I della Rovere with such method of poisoning, described in *Hamlet*, in the recital at Court and for King Hamlet’s death; a *unique methodology in the entire history of theater and literature* (Prof. Giovanni Ricci, 2005). It is the *main factual, historical, Italian source of Hamlet* (Prof. Giovanni Ricci, 2005). The first to detect this correlation was C. Elliot Browne (*Note’s on Shakespeare’s Names*, 1876³), who relied on the *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* by James Dennistoun (1851⁴). Even Edward Dowden (*The Tragedy of Hamlet*, 1899⁵ and later writings) reported the same words as Browne.

I.1.2 The studies (on the *correlation between the poisoning, through the ears, of the Duke of Urbino Francesco Maria I della Rovere and the method of poisoning*, described in the *Hamlet*, in the *recital at Court* and for King Hamlet’s death), by C. Elliot Browne in 1876 (based on the *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*, by James Dennistoun, 1851) and reported by Edward Dowden in 1899, were continued, *with very different depth*, by Prof. Geoffrey Bullough, *in a large study in 1935 (The Murder of Gonzago, A Probable Source for Hamlet*⁶). Prof. Geoffrey Bullough could then also take benefit from the *excellent study* by Prof. Elisa Viani (*L’avvelenamento di Francesco Maria I della Rovere, duca d’Urbino*, 1902), *completely based on documentary evidence, which she had found in the archives of Mantua, Florence and Modena*. Prof. Bullough summarized in English the content of Viani’s study, the *unique existing study that clarified, in Italian, the story of the poisoning of the Duke!* Incidentally, it is unpleasant to note, instead, that *authoritative comments on the books of the Letters by Aretino do not show to know such monograph by Viani, essential to understand the important letter that was sent by Aretino to Luigi Gonzaga on March 31st, 1540* (on which you can see below under Chapter IV, § IV.2). Coming back to Prof.

² Giovanni Ricci, *L’Amleto Shakespeariano e la morte di Francesco Maria I Della Rovere*, Firenze, 2005, p. 9.

³ C. Elliot Browne, (*Notes on Shakespeare’s Names* (1876) in *The Athenaeum: A Journal of Literature, Science, the Fine Arts, Music, and the Drama* 1876 pp. 147-148, in particular, p. 148, readable in <https://books.google.it/books?id=0aM5AQAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=it#v=onepage&q&f=false>): “the story of the play [*Hamlet*] is certainly taken from the murder of the Duke of Urbano [*Urbino*] by Luigi Gonzaga, in 1538, who was poisoned by means of a lotion poured into his ear. This new way of poisoning caused great horror throughout Europe, and we often meet with allusions to it”.

⁴ James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of The Dukes of Urbino*, Volume III, 1851 (reprinted in 1909), Volume III, Book VI, Chapter XLI, pp.71-72 :“All authorities agree in attributing his death to poison ... Sardi [*Baldi*] and Tondini charge it upon Luigi Gonzaga ... Whoever may have been author of the foul deed, it is agreed that the perpetrator was the Duke’s Mantuan barber, who is generally said to have dropped a poisoned lotion into his ear. Baldi only mentions that he did it “in a new way” (readable in http://www.gutenberg.org/files/50577/50577-h/50577-h.htm#Page_60).

⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, edited by Edward Dowden, London, Methuen (‘*the Arden Shakespeare*’), 1899, footnote at p. 122.

⁶ Geoffrey Bullough, *The Murder of Gonzago, A Probable Source for Hamlet*, in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (Oct., 1935), pp. 433 ss., also readable on-line in the link http://www.jstor.org/stable/3716252?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Bullough, he, in the context of his *grandiose work in eight volumes on Shakespeare's sources (Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare)*, in vol. VII (1978)⁷ reworked his previous study of 1935, *confirming the aforementioned correlation and even identifying as many as seven "similarities" ("parallels") between the story of the poisoning of the Duke of Urbino and the Hamlet*. Also Prof. Giorgio Melchiori (1994), *based on the studies of Prof. Bullough*, fully confirmed the aforementioned thesis (in his "basic" book, *Shakespeare: genesi e struttura delle opere*, which was republished in seven editions and on which thousands of students of English literature were trained⁸); subsequently John Hamill (2003⁹), Prof. Paolo Bertinetti (2005¹⁰), Prof. Giovanni Ricci (2005¹¹) and Prof. Noemi Magri (2009¹²) confirmed the same thesis.

Prof. Bullough pointed out the *importance of Pietro Aretino's role in the story: "Pietro Aretino, the 'Scourge of Princes', who owed gratitude to Francesco Maria, at first took Guidobaldo's side in a violent attack of the accused men [Luigi Gonzaga e Cesare Fregoso] ... But he soon climbed down, and apologized for having connected two such honourable gentlemen with the crime of a vile barber. I give his letter [on March 31st 1540] ... in Text IX*"¹³. *"In 1543 Guidobaldo dropped his case, perhaps at his mother's suggestion"*¹⁴.

Prof. Bullough points out seven "parallels" (beyond the way of poisoning) between the story of Urbino and *The Murder of Gonzago in Hamlet* (Act II, Scene ii, 532 and Act III, Scene ii, 134-264).

*"There are parallels between the Urbino story and the Murder of Gonzago besides the manner of the murder"*¹⁵:

- 1) *"In both the alleged murderer is related to the victim"*¹⁶; Luigi Gonzaga is a cousin of Eleonora Gonzaga, the wife of the victim; Claudio is the brother of his victim, King Hamlet.
- 2) *"The Player Duke's wife's name, Baptista, was also that of Federico da Montefeltro's Duchess"*¹⁷ (Act III, Scene ii, 234).

⁷ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Volume VII, (*Major Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*), London and Haley: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Presse, 1978.

⁸ Melchiori, *Shakespeare. Genesi e struttura delle opere*, Roma-Bari, Biblioteca Storica Laterza, 2008, p. 416.

⁹ John Hamill (former President of *Oxford Shakespeare Society*), *The Ten Restless Ghosts of Mantua: Part 2 Shakespeare's Specter Lingers over the Italian City (Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 3, Autumn, 2003)*; the study has been republished in Paul Hemenway Altrocchi, MD, *The Soul of the Age, Edward de Vere as Shakespeare Stimulates a Golden Era of English Literature*, iUniverse, 2014, pp. 153-156.

¹⁰ Paolo Bertinetti, *William Shakespeare, Amleto*, introduction and translation by Bertinetti (foot-notes by Mariangela Mosca Bonsignore), Einaudi, Turin, 2005, introduction, pp. VIII e IX.

¹¹ Giovanni Ricci, *L'Amleto Shakespeareano e la morte di Francesco Maria I Della Rovere*, Firenze, 2005.

¹² Noemi Magri, *Hamlet's The Murder of Gonzago in Contemporary Italian Documents*, in *Such Fruits Out of Italy. The Italian Renaissance in Shakespeare's Plays and Poems*, Special issue no.3 of *Neues Shakespeare Journal*, Laugwitz Verlag, Bucholz, Germany, 2014, pp.275-297. The study had already been published in June 2009 in *Devere Society Newsletter*, pp. 8 and following, readable, in <https://deveresociety.co.uk/articles/NL-2009june-magri-gonzago.pdf> .

¹³ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., pp. 32-33.

¹⁴ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33.

- 3) “*The Player King has been married for ...thirty years*” (Act III, Scene ii, 150-155). Also “*Francesco Maria had been married for thirty years in 1538*” [when hi died]. “*In the main play we also learn that old Hamlet and Gertrude have been married for over thirty years*”¹⁸, [Hamlet is thirty years old - Act V, Scene i, 138-159]”.
- 4) “*Gonzago is unwell; his ‘operant powers their functions leave to do’ before he is poisoned. This was true of the Duke of Urbino*”¹⁹[Act III, Scene ii, 169].
- 5) “[King Hamlet] *Like Francesco Maria was a famous soldier*”;
- 6) “[King Hamlet’s] *combat with King Fortinbras ... recall the Duke’s victories*”²⁰”.
- 7) “*many details about Hamlet’s father’s appearance and dress suggest that Shakespeare ... knew the portrait of Francesco Maria by Titian ... [where] one sees the strong warrior of Shakespeare’s play, in ‘complete steel’ ...here are the armour which impressed Horatio, the field-marshal’s truncheon (held at hip) and behind him the helmet with its ‘beaver up’*”.

§ I.2 As noted above, I am certainly not the first to correlate the *Letters* by Aretino with *Hamlet*: in particular, with *the poisoning, through the ears, of the Duke of Urbino*, a unique method of poisoning, which was described in the recital at the Court, in *Hamlet*, as well as for King Hamlet’s death.

Prof. Geoffrey Bullough (*Professor of English Language and Literature, King’s College, London*) had already authoritatively supported this thesis in 1978, in an unequalled *eight-volume work on Shakespeare’s Literary and Theatrical Sources* (“*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*”). In his volume VII, Bullough considers as “*Possible Historical Source*” of “*The Murder of Gonzago*” (in *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii, 532), the murder of Francesco Maria I, Duke of Urbino; and, in this regard, he indicates two specific reference documents: A) *The letter that Luigi Gonzaga sent to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga on February 9th 1539* (where the pouring of poison by the barber is described, when the criminal barber was “*cleaning*” [nel “*nettare*”, *pulire*] the Duke’s ears); B) *The letter that Aretino sent to Luigi Gonzaga on August 21st, 1538* (with evidently erroneous date, given that the Duke had died on October 21st, 1538; a larger version of the same letter, with the correct date of *March 31st, 1540*, was published in 1960 by Francesco Flora), in which Aretino retracted his verbal accusation against Luigi Gonzaga (and Cesare Fregoso), *fully and masterfully supporting Gonzaga’s defensive thesis*.

Bullough translated these two documents into English: with regard to the first document, Bullough translated into English the excerpt of the most significant piece; with regard to the second document, he

¹⁸ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33.

²⁰ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, cit., p.33. The historic rivalry between a previous Duke of Urbino, Federico da Montefeltro (husband of Battista Sforza, cited in the *Hamlet*- Act III, Scene ii, 234) and the mercenary captain Carlo Fortebracci, is described in Massimo Oro Nobili, “*A 500 anni dalla nascita di Michelangelo Florio: Aretino, i Florio, Amleto*”, published on September 23rd 2018 in www.shakespeareandflorio.net, pp. 84-87. Aretino, his *Letters* (Book II), expressly refers to the possessions “*of the Fortibraccia family*” (letter of Aretino on 3 November 1540 to Mr. Gianfranco Manfroni, condottiere, nephew of the homonymous uncle, in Paolo Procaccioli, Pietro Aretino, *Lettere*, Tomo II, Libro II, Salerno editrice, Rome, 1998, pp. 244-254). The main bibliographic reference is Angelo Ascani, *Montone: la patria di Braccio Fortebracci*, Città di Castello, 1965. See also the poster of the conference held in 2012 by Prof. Marcello Simonetta (“*Carlo Fortebracci and Federico da Montefeltro, una mortale sfida a distanza*”), readable, on the institutional website of the Municipality of Montone, <http://www.montonein.it/carlo-fortebracci-e-federico-da-montefeltro-una-mortale-sfida-a-distanza/> Prof. Marcello Simonetta also wrote a monograph on the Montefeltros, *L’enigma Montefeltro*, Milano, Rizzoli, 2008. See also Pier Luigi Falaschi - *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* - Volume 49 (1997), entry, Fortebracci, Carlo, in http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-fortebracci_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/; Carlo was Andrea Fortebracci’s son.

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translated the entire document. Therefore, *Aretino's letter to Luigi Gonzaga on March 31st, 1540* is one of the two literary documents supporting the Italian "historical source" of the *Hamlet*!

This fundamental letter, as we repeat again, was unfortunately, in some, even *authoritative, comments* on the *Letters* by Aretino, completely misrepresented (see, extensively, in the following Chapter IV, § IV.2). *Forty years passed since Bullough pointed out that the aforementioned letter from Aretino* was to be considered *one of the two literary documents supporting the Italian "historical source" of the Hamlet!* No scholar has yet deemed it necessary to deepen *the connection (highlighted by Bullough) between the Letters by Aretino (as literary source of a historical fact, the poisoning of the Duke of Urbino) and the Hamlet*. It is what, instead, with much humility, I am going to do in this study.

Prof. Geoffrey Bullough, in his monumental work *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Volume VII, (*"Major Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth"*), London and Haley: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Presse, 1978, p. 172, under "*Text IX*", reports as it follows:

"*Hamlet*

IX. Possible Historical Source

THE MURDER OF FRANCESCO MARIA I, DUKE OF URBINO

A. [Luigi Gonzaga protests his innocence of the Duke of Urbino's murder]

....It does not seem likely to me (if it be true, as I have heard, that his late [correct translation is "the said"] Excellency Francesco Maria I della Rovere] was already sick of an infirmity which was regarded as serious before the barber arrived), that the Secretary [sic! Here, the Italian old word 'segurato' (i.e. "sciagurato", "criminale") is confused with Italian word "segretario": the correct translation is: "that such criminal barber"] would not have wished to see the illness diminished before placing himself in such danger. And I cannot imagine how in a serious illness occasion have occurred to bathe [the correct translation of Italian "netare", "pulire", is "to clean"] the Duke's ears many times (that is, if the rumor be true which spread abroad [the correct translation is without "abroad"], that the barber had the opportunity to give him the poison many times through the ears), because in a grave and dangerous sickness it does not seem probable that the ears would be bathed [correct, "cleaned"] much and often. And before going to Venice this last time he had never done such a thing. Nor could be supposed that I might have known about, or instigated it. I had not seen him [the Duke] for two years. Although he was here twice during the past two years, that was during the time when I was with the Emperor's army".²¹

²¹ This is an excerpt from a letter that was sent by Luigi Gonzaga, from Castiglione, on February 9th 1539, to his relative, the Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga. The text reported by Bullough is in the "Post-scripta of the letter". Prof Bullough makes reference refers to the study by Elisa Viani, *L'avvelenamento di Francesco Maria I della Rovere, duca d'Urbino*, Mantova, Mondovì, 1902. Viani reproduced this complete letter in the documentary Appendix, in Document IV, pp. 43-46 (in particular, the passage translated here by Bullough is at page 45. It is the unique document, still preserved, in which, Luigi Gonzaga, *not having yet received the document of the formal "accusatory procedure", prepared by the learned jurisconsults of Urbino (unfortunately gone irretrievably dispersed over the years)*, tries to *sustain his innocence on the basis of the indiscretions that his ministers managed to informally obtain*. He describes the crime of the "criminal" ["sciagurato"] barber, who would have taken advantage of the opportunity of "cleaning" ["netare", pulire] the ears of the Duke, to "pour poison into his ears".

B. [Pietro Aretino apologizes to Luigi Gonzaga]

To Luigi Gonzaga,

Do not believe, Marquis, that my mind has ever inclined in the least to the belief that the villainy which has murdered not only the Duke of Urbino but the reputation of man-kind, the oracle of the soldier and the grace of speech, could have sprung from you. Of course I am not judge in such a case. It could however, well be, that on hearing of the sad fate of the great Francesco Maria, there fell from my mouth some words against so cruel an excess; for the effect of terrible things presents itself with so horrible an aspect that in that moment the heart does not know how to preserve its customary caution. On the contrary, overwhelmed by the iniquity of the deed, the mind grows dark in the same way as when thunder shakes the soul. It is very true, also, that just as we laugh at a rumour which makes us fear, so we repent of the falsity that makes us talk scandal. As to prejudicing you, however, my tongue is innocent; nor would I injure the sincerity of your nature with so malign a presumption.

But what cannot a wicked man do when he resolves to exercise his criminal will on another's head? Certainly at the point he puts aside all respect for God and fear of Justice, and set out of tune in his entire body and soul, he believes just as neither God nor Justice could injure him either in soul or body. If it happens that the severity of the one and the scourge of the other confine him in prison, then, putting on audacity in his baseness, when the rope is nearer than death, he not only confesses to the crime at the approach of torture, hoping that in the interval between admission of guilt and the penalty he may escape it, but also, believing that a sin carried out at the instigation of another may be excusable, he frequently tries to shift the burden of the crime on the shoulders of his betters...

So do not be disturbed. And if it happens that the teeth of any jesting word bit the finger-tips of your honour, do not take it for mine, seeing that I am ever unwilling to think that the magnanimous blood of the Gonzagas, so abundant always in virtue and glory, could lack my devotion [correct translation is: "could lack its decorum"].

From Venice, 21 August 1538

In the foot-note No. 1 at p. 173, Bullough states that : *"the date [of the letter] must be wrong. On 1st April 1540 Aretino sent to the Duke of Mantua (another Gonzaga) a copy of a letter he had written to Luigi Gonzaga declaring that he did not believe him to blame for the death of the Duke of Urbino"*²².

The original excerpt, in Italian, of the letter is the following: *"Non ancho mi pare verisimile, se gli è vero che quello che ho inteso, che già la p.ta [predetta] Ecc.tia [Francesco Maria I della Rovere] era inferma di infermità giudicata pericolosa, quando vi arrivò el barbiere, ch'el segurato [sciagurato] non avesse prima voluto vedere l'esito della infermità che mettersi a tanto pericolo, ne anche so immaginarmi come in infermità grave gli sii venuto occasione di netargli [pulirgli] molte volte le orecchie, essendo vera la voce che si è sparta, che più volte [el barbiere] accadesse dargli il veleno per le orecchie, perché come è ditto, in infermità grave et pericolosa non par verosimile el nettar delle orecchie massimamente molte volte, et prima della andata sua a Venezia questa ultima volta havesse mai fatto tale operazione, non se potria pensare ch'io ne fossi stato né conscio né partecipe, perché erano dui anni ch'io non lo aveva visto, stante che se ben due volte era stato qua, vi fu da tempo ch'io era nel esercito del Imperatore"*.

²² This is a fundamental letter, in which Aretino retracts his verbal accusation made against Luigi Gonzaga and Cesare Fregoso, who had been indicated as the instigators of the murder, by the barber of the Duke of Urbino, who had confessed, in prison, to have been the actual perpetrator of the murder, (according to Aretino) under threat of the terrible torture of the

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§ I.3 In the present study we will essentially examine the *fundamental correspondence* (hitherto not the subject of complete and in-depth studies and indeed *object of some remarkable misunderstandings* in some even authoritative comments to this correspondence) *between Luigi Gonzaga and Pietro Aretino, concerning the poisoning of the Duke of Urbino*, as it results from: the books of the *Letters sent by Pietro Aretino* and the volumes of *the Letters written to Pietro Aretino*.

Furthermore, this study will be based on the following seven studies: 1) The little-known excellent monographic study (completely documented, based on archival evidence, and provided with a very broad documentary Appendix) by Prof. Elisa Viani, *L'avvelenamento di Francesco Maria I della Rovere, Duca d'Urbino*, Mantova, A. Mondovì, 1902; 2) the aforementioned studies by Bullough; 3) the little-known monographic study by Prof. Giovanni Ricci (University of Florence), *L'Amleto Shakespeariano e la morte di Francesco Maria I Della Rovere*, Firenze, 2005; 4) the study by Prof. Noemi Magri, *Hamlet's The Murder of Gonzago in Contemporary Italian Documents* (published in 2009 and republished in 2014); 5) the monographic study of Prof. Piero Gualtierotti, *Pietro Aretino, Luigi Gonzaga e la Corte di Castel Goffredo*, Mantova, 1976, which is of particular interest here for the analysis of the relationships and correspondence between Aretino and Luigi Gonzaga (one of the two presumed principals of poisoning); 6) the monographic study by Massimo Marocchi, *I Gonzaga di Castiglione delle Stiviere*, Verona, 1990.

Chapter II

The relations between Pietro Aretino and the protagonists of the story: the Duke of Urbino Francesco Maria I della Rovere, Luigi Gonzaga Lord of Castel Goffredo (the most important of the two alleged

“rope” (see Collins Dictionary, entry “Strappado”, in <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/strappado>). The correct date of this letter is March 31st, 1540 (the Duke died on October 21st, 1538 and the date of August 21st, 1538 is prior to the death of the Duke himself).

The passage of the letter, in Aretino's original Italian text, is the following: “*Non vi crediate, Marchese, che in niun ragionamento la oppenione de la mia coscienza abbia mai concluso il credersi che la sceleratezza che ha morto non pure il Duca d'Urbino, ma la reputazione de gli uomini, l'oracolo de la milizia, e la grazia del sermone, sia derivata da voi. Avenga ch'io non son giudice di tali cause. Potria ben essere che ne lo intendere il caso del gran Francesco Maria mi fusse caduto di bocca qualche parola contra un sì crudo eccesso, imperoché lo esito de le cose orrende [degli accadimenti tremendi, quale la morte del Duca] ci si rapresenta con sì terribile aspetto[assume, nella nostra mente, un aspetto così terribile] che il senno [discernimento] in quel mentre non sa usare il solito consiglio [la consueta ponderatezza e prudenza]. Anzi, provocato da la inequità del fatto, ci offusca la mente nel modo che il tuono ci scuote l'animo. E' ben vero che sì come ci ridiamo del rumore che ci fa paura, così ci pentiamo del falso che ci fa sparlare. Benché il pregiudizio vostro [nonostante quel che voi pensate] la mia lingua è innocente, né dionesterebbe [screditerebbe] la sincerità de la sua natura con sì malvagia presunzione. Ma che non puote un uomo pessimo [il barbiere] nel deliberare di essercitare la sua volontà nefanda sopra la testa d'altri [a scapito di altri innocenti: Luigi Gonzaga e Cesare Fregoso]? Certo che egli in quel punto [in quel momento in cui accusa falsamente] pon da canto il rispetto di Dio e il timor de la giustizia; e scordatisi [scordatosi] in tutto del corpo e de l'anima, non altrimenti adopera [non si comporta diversamente] che se Iddio e la giustizia non gli potesse nocere né a l'anima, né al corpo. Se accade poi che la severità di quella [la giustizia divina, riguardante l'anima] e il flagello di questo [la giustizia terrena, riguardante il corpo] lo releghi in prigione, mutata la nequizia in viltade per essergli più vicina la corda [era la più tremenda e diffusa tortura dei tempi] che la morte, non solo confessa il delitto al cenno [alla semplice minaccia] del tormento con isperanza che lo indugio che si pone tra la colpa e la pena lo scampi, ma ponendogli [apparendogli] che il peccato eseguito per via de l'altrui instigatione sia scusabile [che sia perdonabile il misfatto dell'esecutore materiale del delitto compiuto su istigazione di altri], scarica il più de le volte la soma [la responsabilità] de l'errore sopra le spalle de i migliori [Luigi Gonzaga e Cesare Fregoso, che il barbiere aveva indicato come i mandanti del delitto]...*

Sì che acquetatevi. E s'egli avviene [se ciò avviene] che i denti d'alcun motto vi mordano le dita dell'onore [che parole mordaci vi ledano l'onore], non gli tenete per miei [non pensate che tali parole siano pervenute da me], avenga ch'io non voglio che mi sia lecito a pensare che il magnanimo sangue di Gonzaga sempre abbondante di virtù e di gloria, manchi del suo decoro.

Di Vinezia il 21 d'Agosto. 1538

principals of the poisoning of the Duke), Cesare Fregoso (the second alleged principal) and the new Duke of Urbino Guidobaldo II della Rovere, son of Francesco Maria I.

§ II.1 By accident, at the end of November 1526, *at the bedside of dying Giovanni de' Medici delle Bande Nere, three of the main protagonists of the "story extant and written in very choice Italian"* (Act III, Scene ii, 256-257) - that is told by the Dramatist in the recitation at the court in *Hamlet* - were present: 1) *Francesco Maria I della Rovere, Duke of Urbino* (poisoned, according to the indictment documents, through his ears); 2) *Luigi Gonzaga, Lord of Castel Goffredo* (the most important of the two alleged principals of poisoning); 3) *Pietro Aretino, initial accuser of Luigi Gonzaga.*

II.1.1 *Francesco Maria I della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, the "Duke Gonzago" [Hamlet, Act III, Scene ii, 234], since he was the husband of Eleonora Gonzaga and had been poisoned at the instigation of his "relative" Luigi Gonzaga, according to the inculpatory documents of the time: an atrocious crime perpetrated within the same family, just like that of King Hamlet, murdered by his brother Claudio.*

II.1.2 *Luigi Gonzaga, Lord of Castel Goffredo, the presumed main instigator (together with Cesare Fregoso) of this murder, who should have also violated the blood ties that (through his cousin Eleonora Gonzaga, wife of the poisoned Duke) had bound him, to some extent, to the victim.*

§ II.2 When Giovanni de' Medici delle Bande Nere was dying, at his bedside (besides the Duke of Urbino and Luigi Gonzaga, Lord of Castel Goffredo, in whose house, in Mantua, Giovanni died) also *Pietro Aretino* was present, and *Aretino had been initial accuser of Luigi Gonzaga* and then *his most staunch defender* in his letter on March 31st, 1540. *First hints.*

§ II.3 Aretino, besides being bound by friendship to the Duke of Urbino and Luigi Gonzaga (both present at the agony of Giovanni de' Medici), was *also bound by friendship to the other two protagonists of the story*: 1) Cesare Fregoso (accused, along with Luigi Gonzaga, of being one of the instigators of the poisoning of the Duke); 2) the new Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo II della Rovere, son of Francesco Maria and Eleonora Gonzaga, as well as accuser of Luigi Gonzaga and Cesare Fregoso.

II.3.1 The relations between Aretino and Cesare Fregoso.

II.3.2 The relations between Aretino and Guidobaldo II, son of Francesco Maria della *Rovere and new Duke of Urbino. Aretino defined himself as a "spontaneous servant" ("servo spontaneo") of Guidobaldo* (Aretino's letter to Generale Costacciaro in October 1545).

Chapter III

The complex story of the events that followed the death of the Duke of Urbino.

§ III.1 A *brief historical summary*, conducted on the basis of archival documents (examined by Prof. Elisa Viani in her fundamental study on the poisoning of Duke Francesco Maria), *of the complex story of the events that followed the death of the Duke and the litigation which for five years inflamed the courts*

of all Europe, involving the Pope, Emperor Charles V, the King of France, the Republic of Venice, and many other minor princes. The confession of the barber, which took place in the prison of Pesaro (in the Duchy of Urbino), where the Duke had died. The barber had confessed to have been the Duke's murderer (*explaining the methods of poisoning*, documented in a letter, still preserved in Mantua and sent by Luigi Gonzaga to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga on February 9th 1539) and had indicated Luigi Gonzaga and Cesare Fregoso as principals. The accusatory "*procedure*", prepared by the ministers and the learned jurisconsults of Urbino, which was *an elegant transposition in writing of the confession of the barber* (unfortunately, the "*procedure*" was lost); *Luigi Gonzaga's repeated requests*, aimed at acquiring this important document (in order to prepare *an adequate defense; on this important vicissitude, and on the secrecy of this document, see the following § III.2*).

Only in April 1540 we have documentary certainty that Luigi Gonzaga had finally received the copy of this *documented accusatory procedure*; this is documented by the letter that Luigi Gonzaga sent to Pietro Aretino on April 17th 1540; by this letter, Luigi sent Aretino, together with the promise of some "*money*", "*the copy of the accusatory procedure, prepared by the ministers of Urbino*", asking Aretino to study these documents, *for the clear purpose of helping the Gonzaga in such litigation*. The different points of view of Guidobaldo (new Duke of Urbino and son of Francesco Maria) and Luigi Gonzaga: 1) the first claimed that the confession of the barber had been "*true and spontaneous*"; 2) the second stated that the barber had been forced, under torture, to confess all that his inquisitors wanted ('he had confessed everything by force [i.e. under torture]), asking that he be interrogated again at the Emperor or at the Republic of Venice. The *blood ties* between the alleged instigator (Luigi Gonzaga) and Francesco Maria (husband of Eleonora Gonzaga, Luigi's cousin).

§ III.2 The troubled affair of the "*copy*" of the *accusatory document* (against Luigi Gonzaga and Cesare Fregoso): the "*accusatory procedure prepared by the Ministers of Urbino*", by the will of the new Duke Guidobaldo II, *based on the confession of the perpetrator of the murder* (the poisoned Duke's barber). The content of this document (*which has unfortunately been lost*) is clarified by a letter from Guidobaldo (in the State Archives in Florence): the document contained the "*authentic procedural transcription of the true and voluntary [not therefore forced, according to Guidobaldo!] confession*" of the "*Barber, the material perpetrator of so grave crime*"; in the document, moreover, "*[the names] of all People involved in the murder [not only in the role of material perpetrator, but also of principals] are certified*" and, according to Guidobaldo, everyone might understand that "*the evidence of their guilt was absolutely indisputable*". Guidobaldo had had the "*accusatory procedure*" prepared *by his own ministers (learned jurists)*, "*in complete secrecy*". When Guidobaldo commissioned his secretary (Abati, Giambattista known as Abbadino) to hand over a *copy of the procedure to the Duke of Mantua (Federico Gonzaga)* and to the Duke of Ferrara (Ercole II d'Este), *Luigi Gonzaga asked for a copy of this procedure* (in order to adequately defend himself) to Federico Gonzaga (12 April 1539) and to his brother, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga; but, from a letter of the same Luigi Gonzaga on April 12th 1539, we learn that *this copy of the procedure could not be delivered to him because Guidobaldo had denied his "consent"* to that it reached the defendants. We are certain that Luigi Gonzaga finally had a copy of this secret procedure before April

17th, 1540 (see the subsequent Chapter IV, § IV.4), when he had a specific copy prepared for Aretino and sent it to him together with a letter of his in the aforementioned date.

Chapter IV

Analysis of the correspondence (resulting from the *Letters written by Aretino and those he received*) between Aretino and Luigi Gonzaga of Castel Goffredo about the poisoning of the Duke of Urbino, through his ears.

§ IV.1 Luigi Gonzaga's letter to Aretino on March 18th 1540: Luigi had, at first, become aware (through a letter from friends) that Aretino had *verbally considered Luigi guilty of the Duke's murder*; but he has recently become aware that Aretino has *changed his mind*; therefore he "*requested Aretino to firmly maintain this new opinion*".

§ IV.2 Aretino's reply to Luigi Gonzaga, in his letter of March 31st, 1540 (published by Francesco Flora, in 1960). Here I publish my analysis and my comment (*for the first time finally complete and correct, as far as I know!*) of such Aretino's important letter. Aretino *retracted his accusations against Gonzaga and Fregoso*, as instigators of the poisoning (through his ears) of Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino; *he supported, in the letter, the defense of the two gentlemen, unjustly accused by the Duke's barber* (who had confessed to be the perpetrator of the poisoning). *Each paragraph contains the comment of a single passage of the long and important letter in reference.*

IV.2.1 First of all, in the *incipit*, in the first passage of the letter (to Luigi Gonzaga) on March 31st, 1540, Aretino *refers to a then recent historical fact*, making a subtle comparison between the story of the Duke of Urbino's barber (self-confessed murderer, who *had accused Luigi Gonzaga and Cesare Fregoso of being the instigators of the crime*) and *the story of Sebastiano Montecuccoli*; the latter was *the cupbearer of Francis of Valois*, Dauphin of France, who had confessed, *under torture*, that he had poisoned, by *poison poured into a glass of water*, the Dauphin (died on August 10th 1536); he had, likewise, *accused some innocent people and even the Emperor to be the instigators of the crime.*

IV.2.2 In the second passage of the letter (to Luigi Gonzaga) of 31 March 1540, Aretino introduces the figure of the "*very bad man*", who is *the Duke's barber, actual perpetrator of the poisoning*, by auricular way, of the same Duke Francesco Maria; he is a person who is not fearful of either God or earthly justice.

IV.2.3 In the third passage of the letter (to Luigi Gonzaga) of 31 March 1540, Aretino explicitly clarifies that the "*very bad man*" is the barber, the material perpetrator of the poisoning, by auricular way, of Duke Francesco Maria. The barber, after the Duke's death, who appeared to have been poisoned (based on the performed autopsy), was immediately relegated to the prison in Pesaro, by order of Guidobaldo, *as the prime suspect, for questioning* and (according to Aretino's reconstruction of the facts, favorable to Luigi Gonzaga's defense argument) also *to be subjected to torture*. Aretino, in his reconstruction of the facts, points out that the barber, *at the mere threat of being subjected to the terrible torture of the rope* (which injured and disrupted the upper limbs),

decided to confess to having been the perpetrator of the crime: not only, but, according to Aretino's reconstruction of the facts, he would have tried to place all the responsibility on the shoulders of some innocent people, his "instigators", considering, instead, his role (of actual perpetrator) as worthy of forgiveness ("excusable"); thus, metaphorically poisoning also the reputation of some innocent people, just as he had actually poisoned the Duke. It is a real, well-argued and masterful defensive memory (Gonzaga could not be more than satisfied)! Aretino assumes the role of Luigi Gonzaga's defense attorney and concludes this passage of the letter, noting that, in his opinion, Luigi Gonzaga's defense is firm, since impartiality and discernment (cornerstones of every judgment) can only induce everyone to point out the difference among a simple "barber" and two brave "captains", among "a plebeian" and "two gentlemen", "among a person who ever did good works and two people who never performed wickedness".

IV.2.4 In the closing passage of the letter (to Luigi Gonzaga) of March 31, 1540, Aretino still continues his splendid defensive memory in favor of Gonzaga. Even if there were no impartiality and discernment, or, in any case, a final judgment was not reached, the judicial affair remaining in a position of "stalemate", it will be "natural" to reprobate the servant, the barber (certainly not the two gentlemen); and, considering such a natural reprobation, it will not at all surprising that the "criminal" barber, "servant of His Excellency"[i.e. of the Duke of Urbino], and "bandit" [i.e. alleged "hired assassin"] of Your Lordship" [i.e. of Luigi Gonzaga, addressee of the letter], had tried to "kill your name" [to disgrace Luigi's reputation and the Gonzaga Family name], with the same "cruelty with which he had also killed ... the Duke of Urbino". Aretino insists that the barber had committed two crimes, two poisonings: at the same time he had "killed" the Duke and he had also "killed the name" of Luigi and of the Gonzaga Family. Aretino admits that, as Luigi Gonzaga had told him in his letter of March 18th, 1540, in some discussions (in the presence of some people), he had uttered some words of accusation against Luigi Gonzaga ("a few words had fallen from my mouth"). This was, however, exclusively due to the fact that Aretino had been badly shaken up by the news of "the great" Francesco Maria's death; due to such emotion, he had momentarily lost his usual discernment and prudence. The atrocity of that fact had "clouded [Aretino's] mind in the same way that the thunder shakes our souls: it is certainly true that, as we laugh at the thunder that has frightened us, so we repent of the falsehood that we have told". In short, Aretino tells Luigi Gonzaga that he is repented of the falsehoods he told against him and that he "talked nonsense". Substantially Aretino states to have spoken without thinking, under a great emotion, when "his mind was clouded", and he was "out of his mind"! Aretino completely calms Luigi Gonzaga, so that Luigi cannot think, for the future, "that any accusations against his reputation could in any way come from Aretino". The conclusion of this long letter is nothing but the emphatic celebration of the great glory of the Gonzaga. Aretino states: "I am not allowed to believe" that "the magnificent blood of the Gonzaga", which "always enriched Italy with virtue and glory", may degenerate. A true masterly letter, in which Aretino is the absolute "protagonist".

IV.2.5 Unfortunately, some authoritative comments on the Lettere by Aretino, seriously misunderstand the content of Aretino's letter to Luigi Gonzaga on August 21st, 1538 (although these comments show knowledge of the larger version of the same letter, correctly dated March

31st, 1540). And, perhaps even more serious issue is that, as far as my very modest knowledge is concerned, no scholar of the *Lettere* had taken care to “rectify” these inaccurate comments, dating back twenty years ago and concerning, moreover, the death by poisoning of the dedicatee of the Book I of the *Lettere* (the Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere); whose death had been investigated in 1902, in an excellent way, in Prof. Elisa Viani’s specific monograph (also referred to in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Treccani, 1998²³); unfortunately, this monograph was not considered by the aforementioned scholars of the *Lettere*, while, instead, it was even summarized, as already noted, in English by Prof. Geoffrey Bullough in 1925! it is a very important letter (even translated into English, as already pointed out, by Prof. Geoffrey Bullough in 1978, who fully understood its meaning, considering it one of the “possible historical sources” of the recital at court in *Hamlet*); a fundamental letter on which Aretino spent much of his time and energy, writing three versions of it, fully aware of the media important attention of the letter itself in the complex European context of the story in which the letter itself was inserted! The infinite variety of characters and events, of which Aretino was a witness in his *Lettere*, is certainly to be considered as an extenuating circumstance, with regard to the serious misunderstanding of these scholars of the *Lettere*; my personal modest encouragement, addressed to the scholars of the *Lettere*, is to quickly remedy such misunderstanding, through in-depth essays, on qualified literary journals, dedicated to the correspondence between Aretino and Luigi Gonzaga, in relation to the alleged poisoning of the Duke of Urbino, through his ears.

§ IV.3 Pietro Aretino’s letter to Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua on April 1st 1540, to which he attached a “reworked” copy of the letter he had sent to Luigi Gonzaga on March 31st 1540. In his letter on April 1st 1540, Aretino celebrated *the fame of the Gonzaga Family*, one of whose members (Luigi) had been unjustly blamed.

§ IV.4 The further letter from Luigi Gonzaga to Aretino dated April 17th 1540. The transmission to Aretino of “a copy of the accusatory procedure prepared by the Ministers of Urbino”, against Gonzaga; Gonzaga’s invitation, addressed to Aretino, to “make a little effort to study the copy of the accusatory procedure prepared by the Ministers of Urbino”; it was a task paid with some money to Aretino (a “small gift”). Luigi Gonzaga asked Aretino to do something that went “beyond” what Aretino had already claimed (in defense of Gonzaga) in *his previous letter of March 31st, 1540*.

At least in the most recent world history, *there is no other so formal and authoritative document* (like that polished and *accusatory procedure prepared by the learned jurisconsults of Urbino, on behalf of Guidobaldo, “copy” of which Aretino received by Luigi Gonzaga’s letter on April 17th, 1540*), which contained the description of the modalities of a poisoning through the ears (a modality of poisoning which, for mere curiosity, the English doctor Robert Ritchie Simpson - in his important monograph *Shakespeare and Medicine*, 1959²⁴ - considered possible, on the basis of studies of other doctors, even in

²³ See the entry *Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, duca di Urbino*, by Gino Benzoni - *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* - Volume 50 (1998), in the link http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-maria-i-della-rovere-duca-di-urbino_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/, where the precious study, “E. Viani, *L’avvelenamento di Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, duca d’Urbino*, Mantova 1902”, is expressly mentioned, among the bibliographic sources.

²⁴ Robert Ritchie Simpson, *Shakespeare and medicine*, Edinburgh, London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1959, p. 138; Simpson makes reference to an important scientific study by Prof. Match: “Match has shown that a number of poisons can be and are absorbed through the intact ear”.

the presence of an intact eardrum); it was a completely unusual story, especially for being the object of an authoritative formal written document, and which had a very strong theatrical attraction! About such poisoning, one can record, in recent history, just “rumors” (but never authoritative, written, formal documents!); for example, the “rumors” that were spread, after the death of the Duke of Urbino (1538), when the young king Francis II, at the age of sixteen, died, in France (1560), because of an otitis (as precisely described in an important specific study in 1989 by three authoritative French otolaryngologist doctors, on the causes of the young king’s death²⁵); “rumors”, which evidently still spread in the memory of the long contentious procedure after the “auricular” poisoning of the Duke of Urbino (a dispute that had also involved King Francis I, grandfather of Francis II). *The murder of a theatrical character through poison poured into his ears “is a unique case in the entire history of theater and literature”* (Prof. Ricci-2005).

§ IV.5 In a subsequent letter from Aretino to Luigi Gonzaga, on May 18th 1540²⁶, the literary man referred to have received the promised money, thanks to Mr. Costanzo Scipione (“Mr. Costanzo Scipione [had] paid me the money that you had asked him to give me”).

Aretino, through the acceptance of the money, basically showed that he had also accepted Gonzaga’s request: that was, to continue to favor the promotion, in public opinion (as the maximum “opinion maker” of the time), of the defensive, favorable thesis to the same Gonzaga, also using all the details of the confession of the barber and of the accusation against the alleged principals, that now Aretino had perfectly known, thanks to the copy of the “accusatory procedure prepared by the ministers of Urbino” (normally reserved to the jurists and not to a man of letters, like Aretino).

Chapter V

A kind of “judicial simulation”: a simulated conversation between Michelangelo Florio and Pietro Aretino, concerning the copy of the “accusatory procedure by ministers of Urbino”, received by Aretino with a letter from Luigi Gonzaga dated 17 April 1540. The encouraging results of this simulation!

Chapter VI

Aretino knew that, just like the spouses of the recitation at the court in the Hamlet, Eleonora Gonzaga and Francesco Maria della Rovere had also been married for 30 years when the Duke died. Aretino had also seen the Titian’s Duke’s portrait and had written a sonnet on the subject; it is a portrait that,

²⁵ J. F. Gouteyron, E. Salf and J. M. Faugère, *La mort de François II. Conséquence de l’évolution d’une otite moyenne chronique*, Communication présentée à la séance du 16 décembre 1989 de la Société Française d’Histoire de la Médecine, in <http://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/sfhm/hsm/HSMx1990x024x001/HSMx1990x024x001x0049.pdf> The death of Francis II was due to the evolution of a chronic otitis: “*Ces étranges symptômes, vraisemblablement ces otalgies violentes et ces céphalées très intenses, font naître l’idée que le roi est victime d’un poison violent que le barbier lui avait fait couler subrepticement dans l’oreille en faisant le poil. Ce bruit colporté par des médecins fut heureusement balayé par la réputation et le dévouement sans faille d’Ambroise Paré*”. Robert Ritchie Simpson, *Shakespeare and medicine*, Edinburgh, London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1959, p. 135 points out, with regard to the poisoning, through ears, of King Hamlet: “*I am not aware of any similar case of poisoning by this method in the literature, but another case of alleged poisoning via the ears is of interest. Ambroise Paré was wrongfully accused of murdering Francis II of France by blowing a poisonous powder into his ear.*”

²⁶ This letter may be read in Paolo Procaccioli, *Pietro Aretino, Lettere*, volume II, book II, Rome, Salerno Ed., 1998, n. 187, pp.209-210; as well as, in Book II of the same *Lettere*, edited in Paris, 1609, p. 148v, in the link https://books.google.it/books?id=ak7Lc_RWeJ8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=it#v=onepage&q&f=false

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according to the very authoritative opinion of Prof. Bullough, the *Dramatist must have seen, since the description of King Hamlet corresponds to this portrait by Titian.*

§ VI.1 Aretino knew, with certainty, a *very specific detail*, which appears in the *Hamlet*: the circumstance that *Eleonora Gonzaga and Francesco Maria della Rovere had been married for 30 years when the Duke died*. In fact, Titian had been asked to paint two “*pendant*” portraits of the dukes for their 30th wedding anniversary; and Aretino had also written two sonnets on these portraits!

§ VI.2 Authoritative scholars (first and foremost, Prof. Bullough) believe that *the description, in the play, of King Hamlet (poisoned through his ears, like the Duke of Urbino) was suggested to the Dramatist from the Titian’s portrait of the Duke of Urbino, as, in turn, described by Aretino in his masterful sonnet composed for this portrait and in the letter, accompanying this sonnet, written by Aretino to Veronica Gambara on 7 November 1537 (also the Dramatist, like Aretino, describes the Titian’s portrait of the Duke, when he represents King Hamlet!)*.

Chapter VII

Even the supporters of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (as the author of the works of Shakespeare) have thoroughly studied the issue of the documented and written Italian historical source of *Hamlet* (the “auricular” poisoning of the Duke of Urbino); but the studies prepared (Prof. Noemi Magri), in favor of this thesis, concerning three specific aspects, are inconsistent from a probative point of view. Comparison between the inconsistent probative basis of Edward de Vere’s supporters and the solid evidentiary basis of the supporters of the “Floriana thesis”.

§ VII.1 According to Prof. Noemi Magri, *the method of poisoning the Duke of Urbino, through his ears, was certainly described in the accusatory procedure prepared against Luigi Gonzaga by the Court of Urbino; but these documents were kept as secret documents and therefore inaccessible to the Earl of Oxford. Perhaps* (the scholar concludes), on his trip to Italy, *the Earl may have heard the story from an oral source.*

According to the “*Floriana thesis*”, instead, *the document of the accusatory procedure against Luigi Gonzaga was transmitted by the latter, with a letter of 17 April 1540, to Aretino, Michelangelo Florio’s friend. This is, in our view, the document on the “Story [that] is extant, and written in very choice Italian”, to which the Dramatist makes reference!*

John also had knowledge of this finely prepared document by the jurisconsults of Urbino in the volume of the *Letters* received by Aretino, which is one of the books that he certifies to have read for the dictionary of 1598 (see Appendix I, at the bottom of the present study, bibliographical reference n.18).

§ VII.2 According to Prof. Noemi Magri, *the Dramatist shows to know the fact that, when Francesco Maria died, he had been married to Eleonora for 30 years. Perhaps* (the scholar concludes, also in this case), on his trip to Italy, the Earl may have heard the story from *an oral source*. With regard to the “*Floriana thesis*”, please refer to what we have already expressed in the previous Chapter VI, § VI.1.

§ VII.3 With regard to the portrait of the Duke of Urbino Francesco Maria della Rovere (work by Titian), Prof. Magri states that “*It is very likely that the description of King Hamlet all in armor was suggested to Shakespeare by that Titian painting*”. The scholar concludes that *perhaps* the Earl may have seen a copy of this portrait in Titian’s house (it was the practice to keep a copy of the portraits of any important person, for possible replicas); being the original already in Urbino. With regard to the “*Floriana thesis*”, reference is to be made to what we have expressed in the previous Chapter VI, § VI.2.

Chapter VIII

Conclusions: *Hamlet*, a story of the Italian Renaissance.

§ VIII.1 The present study has been aimed at *identifying the document* containing the Italian historical source of *Hamlet*, a work that has an incalculable influence on world culture (for Harold Bloom, “*After Jesus, Hamlet is the most cited figure in the Western conscience*”²⁷). The document on the “*Story [that] is extant, and written in very choice Italian*” (*Hamlet* III, ii, 256-257) is, in our opinion, the refined, polished and confidential judicial accusatory document (based on the confession of the Duke’s barber), which Guidobaldo had commissioned: it is the “*accusatory procedure prepared by the ministers of Urbino*”, “*copy*” of which had been sent by Luigi Gonzaga (letter of 17 April 1540), together with the promise of some money, to the “*divine*” Aretino, who had been requested to study the documentation, in his capacity as a *true and paid defender of Luigi Gonzaga, in such a procedure*.

§ VIII.2 The *documented Italian story (concerning the recital at court in Hamlet)*, as such *unchangeable, influences the plot of the entire drama*. The representation at Court of the Italian historical event “*is the hinge of the entire structure ... of the work*” (Prof. Giorgio Melchiori²⁸); the understanding of the work requires, first of all, *the perfect knowledge of this historical source*, to be considered as a *fundamental starting point for a correct analysis of the whole drama*; in fact, between the recital at Court and the *Hamlet’s plot there is a substantially unidirectional connection, in the sense that the recital at Court (based on a documented Italian story) influences the plot of the drama*²⁹. As a mere example, *the theme of*

²⁷ Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare, L’invenzione dell’uomo*, BUR, Rizzoli, Milano, sixth edition, 2017, p.15 (original title of the work: *Shakespeare: the invention of the human*, 1998), translation into Italian by Roberta Zuppet;: “*Dopo Gesù, Amleto è la figura più citata nella coscienza occidentale*”.

²⁸ Prof. Giorgio Melchiori, *Shakespeare. Genesi e struttura delle opere*, Roma-Bari, Biblioteca Storica Laterza, 2008, p. 416.

²⁹ See Geoffrey Bullough, *The Murder of Gonzago, A Probable Source for Hamlet*, in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (Oct., 1935), p. 440, readable on-line in the link http://www.jstor.org/stable/3716252?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents :“*We may suggest with confidence therefore that, in adapting the saga to the Elizabethan stage, the original writer of the Hamlet tragedy used the important element of the 1538 murder. In one respect at least King Hamlet was identified with Francesco Maria della Rovere. But the play contains many other features not represented in in the Danish [Saxo Gramaticus, *Historiae Danicae Libri*, 1514] or French source [Francois de Belleforest, *Histoires tragiques*, volume V, 1570, translated into English in 1608]. We may will ask whether any of these have any resemblance to the story of the Duke of Urbino, since it would not be unnatural for the planner of Hamlet, using some elements of the Italian ‘story’ for his inset play, to use other elements of it in the play proper where he had to fill out or modify his main source*”.

“Aretino (M. Florio’s friend) and the *Hamlet’s* Italian historical source”, by Massimo Oro Nobili, Copyright © June 2019 . All rights Reserved

the ears, and, in particular, of the “*infected*” ears (Act IV, Scene v, 90) or of the ears, which are *pierced* by “*daggers*” (Act III, Scene iv, 95) characterizes *the whole plot of the drama*³⁰.

The murder of a theatrical character by pouring poison into his ears “*constitutes a unique case in the entire history of theater and literature*” (Prof. Ricci). This very peculiar way of poisoning, through the ears (documented in the authoritative accusatory procedure, prepared by the ministers of Urbino, by order of of Guidobaldo) had “*a very strong theatrical attractiveness*”!

§ VIII.3 The Dramatist emphasizes that *the Duke of Urbino*, in his position as the husband of Eleonora Gonzaga, was, *in a broad sense, also member of the great Gonzaga family*. Precisely for this reason, the Dramatist calls the Duke with the name of “*Gonzago*”: the Duke “*Gonzago*” is a *member of the “Gonzaga” Family, who had been murdered by order of another member of the Gonzaga Family* (Luigi Gonzaga, Eleonora’s cousin). Also *in the Italian story, just like in the Hamlet, a horrible crime had been perpetrated within the same family, by violating the sacred bonds of blood*.

§ VIII.4 *King Hamlet is poisoned, through his ears, because in such strange way the Duke of Urbino had been poisoned*, according to the “*accusatory procedure, prepared by the ministers of Urbino*”, which had been written in elegant Italian, by order of Guidobaldo. *The Dramatist compares* (in the recital at court) *the poisoning of a Danish King (King Hamlet), to the poisoning of an Italian Duke (the Duke of Urbino)*; the Dramatist shows to be aware of the fact that, at the time, *many small independent states were in Italy and the Duke of Urbino, in the territory of his Dukedom, was an independent sovereign just like King Hamlet was in the territory of his Kingdom of Denmark!*

§ VIII. 5 For Guidobaldo a great deal of *embarrassment* was caused by *judging and condemning his relative* (on his mother’s side) Luigi Gonzaga, who was *bound to him by blood ties* (Guidobaldo refused that the trial against Luigi Gonzaga may take place in his own Dukedom of Urbino); *a similar situation of great unease will also characterize Hamlet* (son of King Hamlet, who was also poisoned through his ears), who was also facing his suffering for his *father’s murder, perpetrated by one of his relatives, who was bound to him by blood ties (his uncle Claudius)*.

§ VIII.6 *The fundamental theme of the widowed deep grief*. The central contrast between *Hecuba’s widowed grief* (her “*bisson*³¹ *rheum*³²” [i.e., “*blinding tears*”] - Act II, Scene ii, 502), the same as Eleonora Gonzaga’s grief, celebrated by Aretino (“*two bitter rivers irrigate her face*”³³), and Gertrude’s behavior (her “*unrighteous tears*” - Act I, Scene ii, 154). Hecuba’s “*grief for the murder of her husband*

³⁰ Giorgio Barberi Squarotti, *Campioni di parole, letteratura e sport: teoria e storia dei generi letterari*, Rubettino Ed., 2005, p.35 and foot-note 24.

The study is readable in <https://books.google.it/books?id=IGfqY08c9B0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=it#v=onepage&q&f=false>

³¹ See Merriam-Webster Dictionary, entry “bisson”, an “obsolete” adjective for “blinding”, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bisson>

³² See Merriam-Webster Dictionary, entry “rehum”, an “archaic” noun for “tears”, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rheum>

³³ Aretino had described (in his poetic composition “*A lo Imperadore [Carlo V] ne la morte del Duca d’Urbino*”, which Aretino sent by letter to don Lope de Soria - Emperor’s ambassador in Italy - on January, 15th 1539,) Eleonora’s widowed grief, as it follows: “*duo fiumi amari le irrigano il volto*”; such letter was published in the II Book of Aretino’s *Lettere* and may be read in https://books.google.it/books?id=ak7Lc_RWeJ8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=it#v=onepage&q&f=false, Parigi, 1609, pp. 58 v-62 r; the specific sentence may be read in the middle of p. 61 r.

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... is not found ... in the story of Aeneas in Virgil...[Such grief] is here the clear antithesis of Hamlet's mother's behavior"³⁴. However, also Eleonora Gonzaga (as it is documented), similarly to Gertrude, ends up not wanting to accuse the alleged instigator and responsible for the poisoning of her husband (Luigi Gonzaga); this, in the present case, to preserve the glorious name of her Gonzaga Family.

§ VIII.7 The portrait of the Duke of Urbino ,Francesco Maria (a celebrated work of art by Titian), and the description of the same, by Aretino in a very famous letter to Signora Gambarà, dated November 7th, 1537 and in a sonnet therein attachment: certain sources for the representation, by the Dramatist, of King Hamlet³⁵, poisoned, through his ears like the Duke (the Dramatist, like Aretino, describes the Titian portrait of the Duke, when he represents King Hamlet!). This portrait had been commissioned (together with the portrait of the Duchess Eleonora Gonzaga) to Titian on the occasion of *the 30 years of marriage of the Dukes of Urbino*: a very specific detail, which the Dramatist shows to know in the recital at court in the *Hamlet*.

§ VIII.8 Aretino played the role of one of the important "protagonists" in the very complex story of the poisoning of the Duke of Urbino (who died on October 21st, 1538 and had been the *dedictee of the Book I of the Letters* by Aretino, published, a few months earlier, in Venice in January of the same year 1538). Aretino perfectly knew both the Duke *Francesco Maria*, presumably poisoned, and the alleged instigator of the crime, *Luigi Gonzaga*, as well as he was also "spontaneous servant" of the son of Francesco Maria, *Guidobaldo*, the prosecutor of the Gonzaga. Aretino initially accused *Luigi Gonzaga*, during talks in the presence of an audience of people. Then, Aretino recanted his own accusation (justifying such accusation, by pointing out that such accusation had been due to a moment in which his mind was not unperturbed, because of the emotion due to the Duke's death) and, indeed, he became a staunch defender of the defensive theses of *Luigi Gonzaga* (considered as a brave captain, unjustly accused by a vile plebeian, the very bad barber of the poisoned Duke - letter from Aretino to Luigi Gonzaga on March 31st, 1540).

Luigi Gonzaga, evidently very satisfied with that admirable Aretino's masterpiece of defense, decided to do something completely unusual (by his letter on April 17th, 1540): he sent to the Literary man no less than an "ad hoc" document, a "copy of the accusatory procedure prepared by the ministers of Urbino" (documentation normally restricted to the accused persons, their lawyers and judges!), and promised him some money.

In this way, *Luigi Gonzaga* assigned a real, remunerated professional appointment on Aretino, by inviting him to "spend a little effort" in studying *Guidobaldo's* accusatory documentation, in order to continue (go "beyond" what Aretino had already written in his letter on March 31st, 1540) in *Gonzaga's* defensive action; thus, in the light and with full knowledge of *Guidobaldo's* formal accusations.

³⁴ Mariangela Mosca Bonsignore, *William Shakespeare, Amleto*, cured by Paolo Bertinetti, foot-notes by Mariangela Mosca Bonsignore, Einaudi, Torino, 2005, p.159, foot-note 496, points out that Hecuba's grief "per la morte del marito ... non si trova ... nel racconto di Enea in Virgilio...[Tale disperazione] è qui in evidente antitesi con il comportamento della madre di Amleto". It seems that the Dramatist is not so much interested (in the recital by the actors, in *Hamlet*, of a passage of Aeneid) in the regicide (of king Priam of Troy), as in the description of the grief and tears of Hecuba (a scene, it is repeated, totally invented by the Dramatist and non-existent in the Aeneid by Virgil, which the actors of Hamlet claim to recite!).

³⁵ Geoffrey Bullough, *The Murder of Gonzago, A Probable Source for Hamlet*, in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (Oct., 1935), pp. 433-444, in particular, p. 441, also readable on-line in the link http://www.jstor.org/stable/3716252?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents points out that: "When one considers this portrait side by side with the descriptions of old Hamlet given in I, i, I, ii, and III, iv, one is struck by the resemblance. Here is the martial hero ... here is the armour which so impressed Horatio; here even tis the field-marshal's 'truncheon'".

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Aretino became, therefore, as the maximum “*opinion maker*” of the time, also a *true defender of Luigi Gonzaga and, in general, of the honor of the Gonzaga Family*, in that complex dispute, with *considerable media interest*. Aretino, on his own initiative, sent a copy of his letter on March 31st, 1540 (however slightly redrafted) to his first patron, Federico II Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (letter on April 1st, 1540), in which he also *celebrated the honor of the Gonzaga Family*; it should also be emphasized that Aretino, already as far back as 1527, had promised the Duke of Mantua he *would have celebrated the praises and glories of the Gonzaga Family* in one of his works (*Marfisa*), but this celebration project had never been completed³⁶.

§ VIII.9 We have repeatedly pointed out *the close friendship between Aretino and the Friar Paolo Antonio Fiorentino (Michelangelo Florio’s name, as a religious*³⁷), which is *documented by a correspondence*, that we have published and commented in a previous study³⁸.

No doubt that Aretino (as already analyzed in this study) told Michelangelo Florio, during their meetings in Venice, the complex story concerning the Duke’s poisoning, Guidobaldo’s accusations (against Luigi Gonzaga) and, above all, the fact, completely unusual, of having received (by Luigi Gonzaga) a confidential copy of the “accusatory procedure prepared by the ministers of Urbino”.

Finally, John Florio (who, according to the “*Floriana thesis*” by Santi Paladino, was the true author - with his father Michelangelo’s fundamental *background* - of the dramas, necessarily to be attributed to a *mere-English* man, as William Shakespeare was), besides having, in turn, got to know this story through his father (either by his voice or by his written materials), certified, in the introductory part of his dictionary of 1598, to *have read the Letters written by Aretino (and those he received), including those mentioned above on March 31st, 1540*³⁹ and on April 17th, 1540 (to which was attached a *copy of the “accusatory procedure prepared by the ministers of Urbino”*)⁴⁰, *where the story is explicitly told by the protagonists themselves, Aretino and Luigi Gonzaga. The circle is perfectly closed!* At least as far as the undisputed main masterpiece by the Dramatist (*Hamlet*) is concerned, the “*Floriana thesis*” by Santi Paladino perfectly works, *through the fundamental Pietro Aretino’s link!*

§ VIII.10 At the conclusion of this brief study, we like to point out that our recent studies (including the present one), *on Aretino’s influence on Shakespeare’s works*, are precisely aimed at fulfilling the wish, which was strongly formulated by Prof. Lamberto Tassinari, in his French study on John Florio in 2016⁴¹:

³⁶ See, Giuliano Innamorati - Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani - Volume 4 (1962), entry *Aretino, Pietro*, in [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-aretino_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-aretino_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

³⁷ Michelangelo Florio Fiorentino and the friar Paolo Antonio Fiorentino (or from Figline) are the same person, as evidenced by documents that certify this identity “*per tabulas*”, as already, however, noted by authoritative scholars; on the issue, see, extensively, Massimo Oro Nobili, “*A 500 anni dalla nascita di Michelangelo Florio: Aretino, i Florio, Amleto*”, published on September 23rd, 2018 in www.shakespeareandflorio.net, pp.14-24.

³⁸ See such a correspondence (with our respective comment) in Massimo Oro Nobili, “*A 500 anni dalla nascita di Michelangelo Florio: Aretino, i Florio, Amleto*”, published on September 23rd, 2018 in www.shakespeareandflorio.net, pp. 51-66.

³⁹ This letter (from Aretino to Luigi Gonzaga) was published in the *Second Volume* of the *Lettere, written by* Pietro Aretino; see, Appendix I (at the bottom of this study), bibliographic reference No. 65 (“*Secondo volume delle lettere del’Aretino*”).

⁴⁰ This letter (from Luigi Gonzaga to Aretino) was published in *Two volumes of Epistles, which had been written to Aretino by great Lords and Princes*; see, Appendix I (at the bottom of this study), bibliographic reference No.18 (“*Duo volumi di Epistole di diuersi gran Signori e Prencipi scritte al’Aretino*”).

⁴¹ Lamberto Tassinari, *John Florio alias Shakespeare, “L’identità de Shakespeare enfin révélée”* (Préface de Daniel Bournoux, traduction de Michel Vaïs), éditions Le Bord de l’eau, Lormont, 2016, pp. 258, 260 e 261: “*L’influence des pièces de l’Arétin sur Shakespeare [est] profonde et indéniable... J’invite le lecteur à parcourir les résultats détaillés de la recherche*

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“The influence of Aretino’s works on Shakespeare is profound and undeniable ... I invite the reader to examine the detailed results of Lothian’s research [1930⁴²:] ... At the moment, the importance of Aretino in Shakespearean studies remains an ongoing investigation, a prospect still open, that someone, one day, armed with the Floriana truth, will certainly bring to a close”. We are, actually, only at the first “debuts” of these studies, considering that the documented friendship between Michelangelo Florio and Pietro Aretino (as well as the documented reading by John Florio of almost the entire Aretino’s work), according to the “Floriana thesis”, open up inscrutable new prospects for renewed studies and in-depth analyses on Aretino’s influence on Shakespeare’s works, in addition to the already existing ones.

Massimo Oro Nobili

Independent scholar and Florios’ enthusiastic “fan”

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THE ENTIRE TEXT IS AVAILABLE IN ITALIAN

“Aretino (amico di M. Florio) e la fonte storica italiana dell’Amleto”

in

www.shakespeareandflorio.net

de Lothian...Our le moment, l’importance de l’Arétin dans les études shakespeariennes demeure ‘une enquête en cours’, une ‘perspective encore grande ouverte’...,que quelqu’un, un jour, armé de la vérité florienne, amènera certainement à terme”. It is interesting a recent debate between Prof. Lamberto Tassinari and the theater critic Michel Vaïs: this debate (2018) is in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQXWDzPxEYA> Michel Vaïs’ opinion is also reported in “Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship”: “John Florio, alias Shake-speare? By Michel Vaïs. The Secretary-General of the International Association of Theatre Critics explains why he has come to believe that the real author of the plays of Shakespeare was not the man from Stratford but rather scholar John Florio”; see such news (24 July 24th 2018) in <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/theatre-webjournal-will-focus-on-shakespeare-authorship/>

⁴² J.M. Lothian, *Shakespeare’s Knowledge of Aretino’s Plays*, in *Modern Language Review*, 25, 1930, pp. 415-424, who believes that the true Dramatist had to read Aretino’s plays in Italian. Rita Severi, *What’s in a name. La fortuna di Giulio Romano nel periodo shakespeariano*, in *Rinascimenti. Shakespeare e Anglo/Italian relations*, Patron, 2009, foot-note 12 at p. 111, points out “about thirty ‘loans’ from Aretino in Shakespeare”, in Lothian’s study. See also Maria Palermo Concolato, *Aretino nella letteratura inglese del Cinquecento*, in *Pietro Aretino, Atti del Convegno di Roma-Viterbo-Arezzo 28 September – 1° october 1992; Toronto 23-24 october 1992; Los Angeles 27-29 october 1992*, Salerno Ed., 1995, Vol. I, p.471 and footnote 1; Claudia Corradini Ruggiero, *La fama dell’Aretino in Inghilterra e alcuni suoi influssi su Shakespeare*, in *Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate*, vol. 29, 1976, fasc. III, pp. 182-203. P. Reborà, *Interpretazioni anglo-italiane. Saggi e ricerche*, Bari 1961, pp. 128-129.

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APPENDIX I

“The names of the Bookes and Auctors , that have bin read of purpose for the accomplishing of this Dictionarie, and out of which it is collected”, A Worlde of Wordes of 1598⁴³.

1. Apologia d'Annibal Caro, contra Lodovico Castelvetri.
2. Arcadia del Sannazzaro.
3. Capitoli della venerabile compagnia della lesina.
4. Cento nouelle antiche, e di bel parlar gentile.
5. Decamerone o Cento nouelle del Boccaccio.
6. Del' Arte della Cucina di Christofano Messisbugo.
7. Descrittione del Regno e Stato di Napoli.
8. Dialogo delle lingue di Benedetto varchi, detto Hercolano.
9. Dialoghi della corte del' Aretino.
10. Dialoghi delle carte del' Aretino.
11. Dialoghi, o sei giornate del' Aretino.
12. Dialoghi piaceuoli di Stefano Guazzo.
13. Dialoghi di Nicola Franco.
14. Dialoghi di Speron Speroni.
15. Dittionario volgare & Latino del Venuti.
16. Dittionario Italiano e Francese.
17. Dittionario Inghilese & Italiano.
18. Duo volumi di Epistole di diuersi gran Signori e Prencipi scritte al' Aretino.
19. Epistole o lettere facete del Rao.
20. Fabrica del Mondo di Francesco Alunno.
21. Galateo di Monsignore della Casa.
22. Gierusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso.
23. Georgio Federichi del Falcone & Uccellare.
24. Gloria di Guerrieri ed Amanti del Dottor Cataldo-Antonio Mannarino.
25. Herbario Inghilese di Giovanni Gerardo.
26. Herbario Spagnuolo del Dottor Laguna.
27. Historia delle cose Settentrionali di Ollao Magno.
28. Hospedale degli Ignoranti di Thomaso Garzoni.
29. Humanità di Christo del' Aretino.
30. Il Cortegiano del Conte Baldessar Castiglione.
31. Il genesi del' Aretino.
32. I Marmi del Doni.
33. I Mondi del Doni.
34. I sette salmi del' Aretino.
35. La pelegrina, comedia di Girolamo Bargagli.
36. La nobilissima compagnia della bastina.
37. La diuina settimana di Bartas, tradotta da Ferrante Guisone.
38. La ruffiana, comedia.
39. La minera del mondo di Giouan-Maria Bonardo.
40. La vita della vergine Maria del' Aretino.
41. La vita di San Thomaso del' Aretino.
42. La vita di Santa Catarina del' Aretino.
43. La P. Errante del' Aretino.
44. La vita del Gran Capitano del Giovio.
45. La Tipocosmia d'Allessandro Cittolini.

⁴³ See such list in the photo-reproduction of the Dictionary in <http://www.pbm.com/~lindah/lorio1598/023small.html>
The books concerning Aretino are highlighted in yellow.

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46. La Zucca del Doni.
47. Le lodi del Porco.
48. Lettere Familiari d' Annibale Caro.
49. Lettere Familiari di Claudio Tolomei.
50. Lettere facete et piacevoli di diversi grand'huomini, raccolte da Francesco Turchi.
51. Le opere del Petrarca.
- 52. Le quattro comedie del' Aretino.**
53. Le opere burlesche del Berni, e d'altri, Duo volumi.
54. Mathiolo sopra Dioscoride.
55. Opere di Senofonte, tradotte da Marcantonio Gandini.
56. Ordini di cavalcare del S. Federico Grisone.
57. Osservationi sopra il Petrarca di Francesco Alunno.
58. Piazza Universale di Thomaso Garzoni.
59. Pistolotti amorosi degl' Academici Peregrini.
- 60. Primo volume del' Epistole o lettere del' Aretino.**
61. Ragioni di stato del Botero.
62. Relationi uniuersali del Botero.
63. Ricchezze della lingua Toscana di Francesco Alunno.
64. Rime piaceuoli di Cesare Caporali, del Mauro et d'altri.
- 65. Secondo volume delle lettere del' Aretino.**
66. Sinagoga de'pazzi di Thomaso Garzoni.
67. Specchio di vera penitentia di Maestro Iacopo Passauanti.
68. Theatro di varij cervelli di Thomaso Garzoni.
- 69. Terzo volume delle lettere del' Aretino.**
70. Tito Livio, tradotto dal Narni.
71. Tre volumi di Conrado Gesnero degli animali, pesci, et uccelli.
72. Vocabolario de las dos lenguas, Italiano e Spagnuolo.

APPENDIX II

“The names of the Authors and Books that have been read of purpose for the collecting of this Dictionarie”, *Queen Anna’s New World of Wordes* del 1611⁴⁴.

1. Alfabeto Christiano.
2. Aminta di Torquato Tasso.
3. Amor Costante, Comedia.
4. Antithesi della dottrina nuova et vecchia.
5. Antonio Brucioli nell’Ecclesiaste, et sopra i fatti degli apostoli.
6. Apologia d’Annibale Caro contra Lodovico Castelvetri.
7. Apologia di tre saggi illustri di Napoli.
8. Arcadia del Sannazzaro.
9. Arte Aulica di Lorenzo Ducci.
10. Asolani di Pietro Bembo.
11. Avvertimenti ed essamini ad un perfetto bombardiere di Girolamo Cataneo.
12. Balia. Comedia.
13. Bernardino Rocca dell’Imprese militari.
14. Bibbia Sacra tradotta da Giovanni Diodati.
15. Boccaccio de’ casi degl’huomini Illustri.
16. Botero delle Isole.
17. Bravure del Capitano Spaventa.
18. Calisto. Comedia.
19. Canzon di ballo di Lorenzo Medici.
20. Capitoli della venerabile compagnia della lesina.
21. Capo finto. Comedia.
22. Catalogo di Messer Anonymo.
23. Celestina. Comedia.
24. Cena delle ceneri del Nolano.
25. Cento novelle antiche et di bel parlar gentile.
26. Clitia. Comedia.
27. Commentario delle più nobili e mostruose cose d’Italia.
28. Contenti. Comedia.
29. Considerationi di valdesso.
30. Contra-lesina.
31. Corbaccio del Boccaccio.
32. Cornelio Tacito, tradotto da Bernardo Davanzati.
33. Corona et palma militare di Arteglia, di Aless. Capobianco.
34. Corrado Gesnero degl’animali, pesci, ed uccelli, tre volumi.
35. Dante, Comentato da Alessandro Velutelli.
36. Dante, comentato da Bernardo Daniello.
37. Dante, comentato da Giovanni Boccaccio.
38. Dante, comentato dal Landini.
39. Decamerone, overo Cento novelle dell Boccaccio.
40. Decamerone spirituale di Francesco Dionigi.
41. Della causa principio ed uno del Nolano.
42. Della perfezione della vita politica di Mr. Paulo Paruta.
43. Dell’Arte della Cucina di Christofaro Messibugo.
44. Dell’infinito, universo et mondi del Nolano.
45. Descrizione delle feste fatte a Firenze, del 1608.

⁴⁴ See such list in the photo-reproduction of the Dictionary in <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/florio/012small.html>. The books concerning Aretino are highlighted in yellow.

46. Descrizione del Regno o stato di Napoli.
47. Dialoghi della corte, dell'Aretino.
48. Dialoghi delle carte, dell'Aretino.
49. Dialoghi, o sei giornate dell'Aretino.
50. Dialoghi di Nicolò Franco.
51. Dialoghi di Speron Speroni.
52. Dialoghi piacevoli di Stefano Guazzo.
53. Dialogo delle lingue di Benedetto Varchi, detto Hercolano.
54. Dialogo di Giacomo Riccamati.
55. Dilologo di Giovanni Stamlerno.
56. Discorsi Academici de mondi di Thomaso Buoni.
57. Discorsi peripathetici e Platonici di D. Stefano Conventi.
58. Discorsi politici di Paolo Paruta.
59. Discorso di Domenico Scevolini sopra l'Astrologia giudiciaria.
60. Dittionario Italiano ed Inglese.
61. Dittionario Italiano e Francese.
62. Dittionario volgare et Latino del venuti.
63. Don Silvano.
64. Dottrina nuova et vecchia.
65. Duello di messer Dario Attendolo.
66. Emilia. Comedia.
67. Epistole di Cicerone in volgare.
68. Epistole di Phalaride.
69. Epistole di diversi Signori et Prencipi all'Aretino, duo volumi.
70. Epistole ovvero lettere del Rao.
71. Essamerone del Reverendissimo Mr. Francesco Cattani da Diaceto.
72. Eunia. Pastorale ragionamento.
73. Fabrica del mondo di Francesco Alunno.
74. Facetie del Gonella.
75. Fatti d'arme famosi di Carolo Saraceni, duo gran volumi.
76. Favole morali di Mr. Giovanmaria Verdizotti.
77. Feste di Milano del 1605.
78. Fuggi l'otio di Thomaso Costo.
79. Galateo di Monsignore della Casa.
80. Gelosia. Comedia.
81. Genealogia degli Dei, del Boccaccio.
82. Georgio Federichi del falcone ed uccellare.
83. Geronimo d'Urea dell'honor militare.
84. Gesualdo sopra il Petrarca.
85. Gierusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso.
86. Gio: Marinelli dell'infermità delle donne.
87. Gio: Fero della Passione di Giesù Christo.
88. Giovanni Antonio Menavino, de' costumi et vita de' Turchi.
89. Girolamo Frachetta, del governo di Stato.
90. Girolamo Frachetta, del governo di guerra.
91. Gloria di Guerrieri ed amanti di Cataldo Antonio Mannarino.
92. Hecatommiti di Mr Gio. battista Giraldi Cinthio.
93. Hecatompnila di Mr Leon-Battista.
94. Herbario Inghilese di Giovanni Gerardi.
95. Herbario Spagnuolo del Dottor Laguna.
96. Heroici furori del Nolano.
97. Historia della China.
98. Historia delle cose Settentrionali di Ollao Magno.

99. Historia del villani.
100. Historia di Gio. Battista Adriani.
101. Historia di Francesco Guicciardini.
102. Historia di Natali Conti duo volumi.
103. Historia di Paolo Giovio, duo volumi.
104. Historia di Persia, del Minadoi.
105. Historia d'Hungheria, di Pietro Bizarri.
106. Historia milanese.
107. Historia naturale di C. Plinio secondo.
108. Historia Venetiana di Pietro Bembo.
109. Historia universale del Tarcagnotta, cinque volumi.
110. Hospedale degli Ignoranti di Thomaso Garzoni.
- 111. Humanità di Christo dell'Aretino.**
112. Iacomo Ricamati, della dottrina Christiana.
113. Il Castigliano, overo dell'arme di Nobiltà.
114. Il Consolato.
115. Idea del Secretario.
116. Il Cortegiano del Conte Baldazar Castiglioni.
117. Il Furto. Comedia.
- 118. Il Genesi dell'Aretino.**
119. Il gentilhuomo di Mr. Pompeo Rocchi.
120. Il Marinaio. Comedia.
121. Il Peregrino di Mr. Girolamo Parabosco.
122. Il Terentio, comentato in lingua Toscana de da Gio. Fabrini.
123. Il Secretario, di Battista Guarini.
124. Il viluppo. Comedia.
125. I Marmi del Doni.
126. I Mondi del Doni.
127. Imprese del Ruscelli.
128. Inganni. Comedia.
129. Istruzioni di Artiglieria, di Eugenio Gentilini.
130. I Prencipi di Gio. Botero, Benese.
131. Isole famose di Thomaso Porcacchi.
- 132. I sette salmi penitentiali dell'Aretino.**
133. La Civile Conversatione, di Stefano Guazzo.
134. La Croce racquistata di Francesco Bracciolini.
135. La divina settimana di Bartas, tradotta da Ferrante Guisone.
136. La Famosissima compagnia della lesina.
137. La Fiammetta del Boccaccio.
138. Lacrime di San Pietro del Tansillo.
139. La minera del mondo, di Gio. Maria Bonardo.
140. L'amoroso sdegno. Comedia.
141. La nobilissima compagnia della Bastina.
142. La Pelegrina. Comedia di Girolamo Bargagli.
143. La Dalida, Tragedia.
144. La Adriana, Tragedia.
- 145. La P. errante dell'Aretino.**
146. La Regia. Pastorale.
147. La Ruffiana. Comedia.
148. La Tipocosmia d'Alessandro Cittolini.
149. Le aggiunte alla Ragion di Stato.
150. Le due Cortegiane. Comedia.
151. Le hore di recreatione di Lod. Guicciardini.

152. Le lodi del porco.
153. Le opere del Petrarca.
154. Le origini della volgare toscana favella.
155. Lettere di Angelo Grillo.
156. Lettere del Cavagliere Guarini.
157. Lettere del Cieco d'Adria.
158. Lettere di Prencipi a Prencipi, tre volumi.
159. Lettere di Stefano Guazzo.
160. Lettere d'Ovidio, fatte in volgare.
161. Lettere famigliari di Annibale Caro.
162. Lettere famigliari di Claudio Tolomei.
163. Lettere facete di diversi grand'huomini.
164. Lettioni varie di Benedetto varchi.
165. Lettioni del Panigarola.
166. Libro nuovo d'ordinar banchetti, et conciar vivande.
167. Luca Pinelli Giesuita, nelle sue meditationi.
168. Madrigali d'Allessandro Gatti.
169. Marsilio Ficino.
170. Mathiolo sopra Dioscoride.
171. Metamorphosi d'Ovidio, tradotte dall'Anguillara.
172. Morgante Maggiore di Luigi Pulci.
173. Notte. Comedia.
174. Novelle del Bandello, volumi tre.
175. Nuovo theatro di machine ed edificij di vittorio Zonca.
176. Opere burlesche del Berni ed'altri, duo volumi.
177. Opere burlesche di varij et diversi Academici.
178. Opere di Senofonte, tradotte da Marcantonio Gandini.
179. Oratione di Lodovico Federici, a Leonardo Donato, Doge di venetia.
180. Oratione di Pietro Miario all'istesso.
181. Orationi di Luigi Grotto, detto il Cieco d'Hadria.
182. Ordini di Cavalcare di Federico Grisone.
183. Orlando Furioso dell'Ariosto.
184. Orlando Innamorato dell'Boiardi.
185. Osservationi sopra il Petrarca di Francesco Alunno.
186. Parentadi. Comedia.
187. Pastor fido, del Cav. Guarini.
188. Petrarca, del Doni.
189. Panigarola contra Calvino.
190. Philocopo del Boccaccio.
191. Piazza universale di Thomaso Garzoni.
192. Pinzocchera, Comedia.
193. Piovano Arlotto.
194. Pistolotti amorosi degli Academici Peregrini.
195. Pratica manuale dell'arteglieria, di Luigi Calliado.
196. Precetti della militia moderna tanto per mare quanto per terra.
197. Prediche del Panigarola.
198. Prediche di Bartolomeo Lantana.
199. Prigion d'Amore, Comedia.
200. Prose di Mr. Agnolo Firenzuola.
201. Prediche di Randolfo Ardente.
202. Quattro Comedie dell'Aretino.
203. Ragon di stato del Botero.
204. Relationi universali del Botero.

205. Retrattatione del vergerio.
206. Relatione di quanto successe in vagliadolid del 1605.
207. Ricchezze della lingua toscana di Francesco Alunno.
208. Rime di luigi Grotto, Cieco d'Hadria.
209. Rime del Sr. Fil. Alberti Perugini.
210. Rime piacevoli del Caporali, Mauro ed altri.
211. Ringhieri de' giuochi.
212. Risposta a Girolamo Mutio del Betti.
213. Rosmunda, Tragedia.
214. Sacrificio, Comedia.
215. Seconda parte de' Prencipi Christiani del Botero.
216. Scelti documenti a' scolari bombardieri di Giacomo Marzari.
217. Sei volumi di lettere dell'Aretino.
218. Sibilla, Comedia.
219. Simon Biralidi, delle Imprese scelte.
220. Sinagoga de' Pazzi, di Thomaso Garzoni.
221. Somma della dottrina christiana.
222. Sonetti mattaccini.
223. Spatio della bestia triumphante del Nolano.
224. Specchio di Scienza universale di Leonardo Fioravanti.
225. Specchio di vera penitenza di Jacopo Passavanti.
226. Spiritata. Comedia.
227. Sporta. Comedia.
228. Strega. Comedia.
229. Tesoro politico, tre volumi.
230. Tesoro. Comedia.
231. Teatro di varij cervelli, di Thomaso Garzoni.
232. Tito Livio tradotto dal Narni.
233. Torrismondo, tragedia di Torquato Tasso.
234. Trattato del beneficio di Giesù Christo crocifisso.
235. Tutte le opere di Nicolò Macchiavelli.
236. Vanità del mondo, del stella.
237. Vendemmiatore del Tansillo.
238. Ugoni Bresciano degli stati dell'humana vita: dell'impositione de' nomi: della vigila & sonno; e dell'eccellenza di venetia.
239. Viaggio delle Indie orientali di Gasparo Balbi.
240. Vincenzo cartari degli Dei degli antichi.
241. Vita del Picaro Gusmano d'Alsarace.
242. Unione di Portogallo & Castiglia del Conestaggio.
243. Vocabolario delas dos lenguas, Italiano & Spagnuolo.
244. Vita del Gran Capitano. Scritta dal Giovio.
245. Vita del Petrarca, scritta dal Gesualdo.
246. Vita della vergine Maria, scritta dall'Aretino.
247. Vita di Bartolomeo Coglioni.
248. Vita di Pio Quinto.
249. Vita di Santa Catarina. Scritta dall'Aretino.
250. Vita di San Tomaso, scritta dall'Aretino.
251. Vite di Plutarco.
252. Zucca del Doni.