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DEBORAH PARKER

Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* (1532–33) differs from earlier representations of the poet in a number of striking ways.[1] The earliest portraits, such as the one in the Capella della Maddalena in the Bargello attributed to the school of Giotto and the fresco in the former Palazzo dei giudici e notai by an unknown artist, show the poet in profile with the aquiline nose, dark hair and serious countenance noted by Boccaccio in his *Trattatello in laude di Dante*. In 1465 Domenico di Michelino introduced a number of new elements to the Dante portrait: a laurel crown now graces the poet's *cappuccio*, his cap, and he wears a red *lucco*, a long tunic-like garment. Domenico depicts Dante amidst the three realms of the afterlife: above loom the heavens of Paradise, to the left we see the Mountain of Purgatory, and in the lower left corner, a mixture of infernal elements–the Gate of Hell, the neutrals, and Satan. To the right we see Florence—more precisely, Quattrocento Florence, with Brunelleschi's dome prominently displayed. Dante holds a book of the *Commedia* open to the first lines of *Inferno* 1.

Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* adapts some elements from Domenico's work and introduces some notable new ones.[2] Dante himself has never appeared more grandly majestic. The work displays many of the hallmarks of the third age of art extolled by Vasari in the *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori*: the features of Dante's face, shown off profile, have been softened and show the fine modeling typical of the *bella maniera*. His red garment falls in soft sweeping folds and Bronzino has foreshortened the artist's right arm. With his other hand Dante holds a large folio volume of his poem. Like Domenico di Michelino, Bronzino shows Dante amidst the three realms of the *Commedia*. In the painting Dante sits majestically

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DANTE
CON LESPOSITIONE
DI CHRISTOFORO LANDINO,
ET DI ALESSANDRO VELLVTELLO,
Sopra la sua Comedia dell'Inferno, del Purgatorio, & del Paradiso.
Con tauole, argomenti, & allegorie, & riformato, riueduto,
& ridotto alla sua uera lettura,
PER FRANCESCO SANSOVINO FIORENTINO.

IN VENETIA, *Appresso Giouambattista, Marchiò Sessa, & fratelli.* 1564.

Fig.1 (left): Title page, *Dante con l'espositione di Christophoro Landino, et di Alessandro Vellutello,* 1564. Photo: Courtesy of Small Special Collections, University of Virginia.

Fig.2 (below): Artist unknown, *Allegorical Portrait of Dante*, late sixteenth century, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Photo: Courtesy of the National Gallery.

on a rocky promontory, gazing meditatively towards the Mountain of Purgatory, three of whose terraces can be discerned—the proud, the wrathful and the lustful, not to mention the Earthly Paradise atop the mountain. A sailboat with one figure standing on the stern and two seated figures is visible in the middle ground.[3] While Domenico da Michelino places Florence to Dante's left in his work, Bronzino places the city to the poet's right. His right hand hovers over Florence; below the city we see the fires of hell. Dante appears in partial darkness, his face and torso illuminated by a light that shines down from above, which also irradiates the large folio edition of the *Commedia* he holds. A light shines brightly on the upper left page, making the passage on the page he holds open with his left hand manifestly apparent: *Paradiso* 25.1–48. The portrait has a dual focus: while the figure of Dante dominates the painting, the large book he holds also commands the attention of viewers.

The earliest allusions to this work occur in Vasari's *Vite*. In the "Life of Pontormo," Vasari reports that Bronzino had begun to paint portraits of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio in the lunettes of his patron Bartolomeo Bettini's bedroom, and he planned to add portraits of other Tuscan love poets. Later, in the "Life of Bronzino," Vasari notes that the half-length portraits ("figure di mezzo in su") of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio had been completed.[4] Until Philippe Costamagna discovered the original in the 1990s, Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* was only known through some preparatory drawings, a workshop copy in Washington's National Gallery of Art entitled *Allegorical Portrait of Dante* (Fig.2), and a woodcut bust of Dante that appears in Francesco Sansovino's 1564 edition of the poem that includes the commentaries of Cristoforo Landino and Alessandro Vellutello (Fig. 1).[5] (The latter is often known as "il nasone" in Italy.) Costamagna's discovery of the *Portrait of Dante* in a private Florentine collection in the 1990s has spurred new revelations about the work. Executed on an arched canvas, this work is now believed to be the original that Bronzino painted for Bettini's bedroom.[6]

Many of Bronzino's portraits include books as attributes. Sitters such as Bartolomeo Panciatichi, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Young Man*, and the *Young Girl with a Book* (possibly Giulia, daughter of Alessandro de' Medici) hold small volumes, octavos or duodecimos, but the titles are not visible. Lucrezia Panciatichi holds a Book of Hours that shows her devotion. Bronzino includes three books in his *Portrait*

of Ugolino Martelli (1536–37)—a volume of Virgil (indicated by the word MARO) although no title is indicated, a work by Bembo, and a copy of Homer's *Iliad*, open to the beginning of Book IX. The books underscore Martelli's erudition. Martelli had studied philosophy at the University of Padua, was a member of the Accademia degli Infiammati and became a member of the Accademia Fiorentina after he returned to Florence. In the *Portrait of Lorenzo Lenzi* (1527–28), a young boy holds a volume by Petrarch and another by Benedetto Varchi. The book of poems evokes the affectionate relationship between Lenzi and Varchi. Bronzino's *Portait of Laura Battiferri* constitutes one of Bronzino's most intriguing literary portraits: her profile deliberately recalls Dante's and she holds a book featuring two Petrarch poems (*RVF* 64, 240), a detail which underscores Battiferri's own vocation as a Petrarchan poet.[7]

The book featured in the *Portrait of Dante* differs from these other portraits in two distinct ways: the large size of the volume and its calligraphy, which is *sui generis*. Bronzino has enhanced Dante's grandeur by giving him Michelangelesque proportions. The artist treats the book with the same aggrandizing impulse: this is not just a folio, it is an unusually large one, far exceeding the dimensions of fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts or printed editions of the *Commedia*. One reason could be practical: the painting was intended for the lunettes of Bettini's bedroom, so the volume and the words had to be visible from below.

The decision to illuminate the volume from above heightens its prominence. While the poor condition of the original does not make it possible to study the writing closely, its general characteristics are discernible from the Washington workshop copy: in both paintings the writing is unusually large. While one scholar has declared that the calligraphy in the replica corresponds closely to Bronzino's handwriting in the chief manuscript of his burlesque poetry (BNF VII 115), the handwriting is, in fact, notably different from the elegant cursive used in this autograph manuscript. It also differs from the calligraphy in Bronzino's other paintings.[8] The script in the painting is a "cancelleresca all'antica" (humanistic chancellery round hand). It is not a cursive because the letters are separate and not attached. In the workshop copy the writing is fanciful and imaginative in a number of particulars: the odd use of capital letters, which in fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts of the *Commedia* usually appear at the beginning of a tercet, are

used more frequently here (e.g., M in "miglior," "mia" and "morte"). Various letters, the "e" of "se mai continga," the curl above it, the "h" of "che," and the two "ss" of "disse" (*Par.* 25. 17) show the influence of printing. However, the artist has reversed things in "disse": the roman "s" should follow, not precede the long "s." One notes a disparity in the size of "press'" (l.18), which is notably larger than "girando" in the line below.[9] Finally, no printed manuscript or book printed would have so narrow an upper margin. Taken together, these elements suggest that the artist of the copy is not seeking to render the text realistically as it would appear in a manuscript or printed edition, but to highlight the content. Bronzino ensures that no viewer can fail to consider the injustice of Dante's exile.

Earlier readings of this painting tend to be allegorical. One critic posits that Bettini's choice of portraits "surely reflects the 'questione della lingua.'"[10] By way of explanation he notes rather briefly: "Florentine poet portraits demonstrate that local writers were seen as representatives of the city." There are no references to the linguistic debates which lie beneath the "questione della lingua."[11] Another interpretation is somewhat undeveloped: Maurice Brock contends that the placement of Florence above the fires of Hell show that the *commune* "can aspire to Heaven thanks to the intervention of Dante."[12] I believe it would be more productive to examine this work in light of the cultural issues that surrounded the figure of Dante at this time, the political alignments of Bartolomeo Bettini, and Bronzino's use of allegory in his other works.

We might begin by considering the first three tercets from *Paradiso* 25:

Se mai continga che 'l poema sacro
al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,
sì che m'ha fatto per molti anni macro,
vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra
del bello ovile ov'io dormì agnello,
nimico ai lupi che li danno guerra;
con altra voce ormai, con altro vello
ritornerò poeta, e in sul fronte
del mio battesmo prenderò 'l cappello;
(If it should happen . . . If this sacred poem—
this work so shared by heaven and by earth
that it has made me lean through these long years—

can ever overcome the cruelty
that bars me from the fair fold where I slept,
a lamb opposed to wolves that war on it;
by then with other voice, with other fleece,
I shall return as poet and put on
at my baptismal font, the laurel crown.)[13]

The topic of exile looms large in these lines. Florence's most famous exile condemns the cruelty of those who banished him from his beloved native city—the "bello ovile ov'io dormì agnello." In the painting, Dante's great aspiration has been realized: Bronzino shows the poet wearing the coveted laurel crown over his red cap. Dante is not shown in Florence, however, but in an unspecified mythical landscape, and looks away from the city. This passage from *Paradiso* 25 would have resonated strongly with Bronzino's patron, Bartolomeo Bettini, a Republican who left Florence for Rome in 1536 shortly after the tyrannical Alessandro de' Medici became the first duke of Florence in 1529. Girolamo Francesco Bettini, one of Bartolomeo Bettini's relatives, was exiled on 29 November 1530, a sentence that was confirmed on 17 November 1533.[14] Hence Bettini, not unlike his friend and fellow Republican Michelangelo, would have been especially receptive to a portrait that highlighted the subject of exile and its attendant sufferings.

The injustice of Dante's exile had occupied Florentines since the last two decades of the fifteenth century. Landino's 1481 commentary included a Latin epistle written by Marsilio Ficino that describes a triumphant return of Dante to his native city. While the letter has no heading in printed editions of the commentary, in some manuscripts and printed editions, the following title appears: "Marsilius Ficinus Florentinus fingit Florentiam congratuli Dante pia Christophoro Landini opera iam redivivo et in patrium restituito et coronato" (Marsilio Ficino, a Florentine, feigns that Florence congratulates Dante, now restored to his native land and crowned through the work of the pious Cristoforo Landino). In the letter Ficino essentially ventriloquizes Florence: the city responds to the poet's deepest aspirations in words that conspicuously echo the opening of *Paradiso* 25.

Firenze lungo tempo dolente, ma finalmente lieta, sommamente si congratuli col suo poeta Danthe nel fine di due secoli risuscitato, et restituito nella patria sua, et gloriosamente già coronato. O Dante mio, nel tempo ch'era posto nell iniquo

exilio predicesti nel tuo poema sacro, quando la pietà vincessi la crudeltà, la quale ti serrava fuori del tuo ovile, allhora torneresti in patria molto più ornato che prima, et nello escelso tempio del Baptista prenderesti degnamente la corona poetica.[15]

Ficino artfully incorporates Dante's own words to highlight Florence's recognition of its villainy toward the poet. In the wake of Landino's and Ficino's efforts to repatriate Dante symbolically with the 1481 commentary, more proactive forces worked to restore Dante's remains to Florence. While there had been earlier attempts to do this, most recently by Lorenzo de' Medici, there was a renewed effort in the early sixteenth century to retrieve Dante's bones from Ravenna. After the victory of the League of Cambrai, Venice became part of the papal state in 1509, and Giovanni de' Medici, the second son of Lorenzo, became Pope Leo X in 1513. The Sacred Academy of the Medici (1515–c.1519), a literary club whose members consisted of prominent Florentines, wrote five or more letters between 1515 and 1519 aimed at eliciting Pope Leo X's assistance in the recovery of Dante's remains. The pope finally took action after receiving a formal petition (October 20, 1519), signed by a number of eminent Florentines, including Michelangelo, who offered his artistic services in this effort: "I, Michelangelo, sculptor, supplicate your Holiness in the same terms, offering to make a worthy tomb for the divine poet in an honorable place in this city."[16] Notwithstanding this solemn appeal and Michelangelo's offer, Dante's remains never left Ravenna.

Although Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* was executed thirteen years after these efforts, the artist would have been aware of earlier attempts to repatriate Dante's remains and, given his well-known familiarity with Dante's works, he would likely have been aware of Ficino's letter in the Landino commentary, the most famous exposition of the poem in the Renaissance. Bronzino and his friends—among them Pontormo, Benedetto Varchi, Laura Battiferri, Vincenzo Borghini, Ugolino Martelli, Annibale Caro, and Luca Martini—were in the habit of discussing literary and cultural subjects. In a 1539 letter to Bronzino and the sculptor Tribolo, which includes a translation of Ajax's orations in Book 13 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* Benedetto Varchi declared that Bronzino had memorized all of Dante and a great deal of Petrarch.[17] Similarly, Pontormo reports in his diary that the two artists once held a bet about the source of some lines of Petrarch's poetry.[18] Bronzino's poetry, which

contains many playful reworkings of Dantesque lines, also attests to his familiarity with the *Commedia*.[19]

Let us return to the painting. Dante's right hand hovers over Florence, below which burn the fires of hell. The relationship of this detail to the rest of the painting is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand the gesture could be seen as protective; on the other, it recalls the many passages in the poem in which Dante decries the sinfulness of Florentines. As he declares at the beginning of *Inferno* 26 "per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande." Even if we see Dante's hand as a protective gesture, the fires of hell threaten the city from below. Moreover, Dante looks away from Florence into the distance, towards the Mountain of Purgatory. The prominence of the book encourages viewers to explore the painting's significance in terms of the lines depicted. The first three tercets highlight the poet's exile, his desire to be crowned poet laureate in Florence's Baptistry, and the lupine savagery of the Florentines who banished him. The balance of the passage depicted, however, addresses the arrival of St. James, who will examine Dante on the second of the three theological virtues, hope, later in the canto. As lines 38–39 make clear, Dante lifts his eyes "a' monti / che li 'ncurvaron pria col troppo pondo." He looks in the direction from which he will be prepared for the sight of greater splendors. The painting too captures this moment: in gazing towards the Mountain of Purgatory, Dante looks beyond temporal desires.

As these particulars make clear, the book in Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* delineates a complex psychology—the inevitable contradictions an exile would experience in thinking of the "bell'ovile" from which he has been banished. The feelings are no less complicated for Bartolomeo Bettini, who left Florence of his own accord, never to return, after the banishment of his relation, Girolamo Francesco Bettini. At the same time, Dante seems to be contemplating the transcendence of earthly aspirations as he looks toward the mountain where sin is purged.

Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* offers a suggestive combination of elements but the significance of some of them is less clear—notably the poet's hand hovering over Florence, which is positioned above the fires of Hell, as well as the meaning of the boat with the three passengers. This kind of ambiguity underlies the artist's painting and poetry. A consideration of some of Bronzino's other paintings shows the extent to which equivocation pervades his art. While the significance of some

allegorical paintings, notably the *Portrait of Andrea Doria as Neptune* (a great naval commander as god of the seas), are easily comprehended, the meaning of other works, such as *Cosimo I as Orpheus*, the famous *Allegory of Venus*, and the tapestry *Justice Liberating Innocence*, remains elusive. As decades of scholarship on the *Allegory of Venus* attest, the precise nature of the allegory depicted in this work and the relationships between the figures is ambivalent at best. In his allegorical paintings, Bronzino often activates an allegory but does not delineate clear correspondences between all the elements. A combination of precision and inexactness pervades his works.

Few admirers of Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* are aware of the fact that he employs, or more precisely, adapts the opening lines of *Paradiso* 25 in one of his poems, the three-part burlesque capitolo, "La Cipolla del Bronzino pittore." The poem may have been written many years after the painting was executed.[20] Assigning a date of composition has proven problematic given the paucity of historical and cultural references. Franca Petrucci Nardelli dates the most important manuscript of the capitolo (BNCF Magl. VII 115) to 1538–58. In turning now to Bronzino's poetry, we move from the sacred to the profane. Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante* shows the significance that the opening of *Paradiso* 25 has for his patron and his illustrious subject. It is an irreverent tribute to Florence's most eminent poet. In the final lines of the third part of "La Cipolla," Bronzino figures himself as the speaker. Like Dante, this archest of Renaissance painter-poets desires recognition for his poetic accomplishments:

se mai continga ch'e' si giunga al vero
fin di lodarle qualche 'ngegno acuto,
che possa al nove mio giugner un zero,
sarà ben degnio ch'e' ne sia tenuto
conto e ch'e' se gli cavi la berretta
e ch'e' sia dalla fama intrattenuto
e, come a simil poeti s'aspetta,
carezzato e menato sopra il colle
Parnaso fra le Muse e lassù in vetta
coronato di foglie di cipolle.
("La cipolla," III, 268–277)[21]

These lines constitute an insouciant dismissal of one of the most poignant moments in the *Commedia*, as Dante hopes that his monumental achievement will enable him to return to Florence to be crowned poet laureate. This ludic adaptation shows no interest in the topic of exile: "La cipolla" contains no allusions to hardships endured; a crown of onions playfully substitutes the laurel crown of poets.[22] The satiric tone of the capitolo could not be more different than the somber mood of the painting.

Bronzino also introduces elements foreign to Dante's conception, notably the declaration that the poet who surpasses the painter in praising onions "possa al nove mio giugner un zero." Ostensibly, the line proclaims that this poet would be ten times better a writer than Bronzino—adding a zero to nine makes ninety. But read in terms of the erotic significance accorded numbers in burlesque poetry, the line acquires quite a different meaning: zero, because of its circular form, often represents the anus in burlesque poetry; nine is considered a phallic symbol due to its shape.[23] The artist, then, suggests that the reward for poetic achievement will be that he will sodomize his successor or be sodomized by his predecessor. Bronzino's adaptation goes beyond a comic reworking of Dante's lines: the eroticizing of Dante's images and words makes this a particularly impudent parody.[24] As in his other burlesque poems, Bronzino suffuses the passage with indecent associations. A quick perusal of Jean Toscan's glossary in *Le Carnival du Langage* shows that the passage is teeming with equivocal terms, among them "berretta" (anus), "fama" (sodomy), "ingenio" (penis), "poeti" (sodomites), "il colle Parnaso" (buttocks), and "coronato" (orifice). Given that many of the words have more than one erotic meaning, decoding the passage is a fraught enterprise.

While there is no direct connection between the *Portrait of Dante* and "La Cipolla," both works constitute homages to Dante—one respectful, the other transgressive. Yet the capitolo too acknowledges Dante's renown and the power of his verse. Bronzino's contemporaries would have delighted in the parody all the more because they would have recognized that it was inspired by Dante's famous lines. Bronzino's saucy reworking of Dante reminds us of his slyness as an artist-poet. While his paintings, especially the portraits, are famously resistant to interpretation because of the frozen impenetrable countenances of his sitters, the burlesque poems reveal a more open and raucous sensibility.

In the *Portrait of Dante* and "La Cipolla" Bronzino shows his adeptness in adopting different approaches to a canonical work: he can create refined tributes and just as nimbly dismantle them. Once the *Commedia* had been ensconced as a classic, its author deemed one of the "three crowns of Florence" by Leonardo Bruni, homages took two forms. On the one hand humanists like Cristoforo Landino glorified it in his sumptuous 1481 commentary replete with engravings modeled on drawings by Botticelli; on the other parodic spoofs, such as Lorenzo de' Medici's "I beoni," an ebullient journey among Florence's most infamous drunkards, also abounded.[25] In the *Portrait of Dante* and "La Cipolla" Bronzino assumes his place among creators who pursued reverent and irreverent tributes to Dante. What differentiates Bronzino from other adaptors is his pursuit of *both* a reverent and an irreverent tribute. Moreover, he effects this in the two mediums, painting and poetry, widely referred to as the "sister arts" during the early modern period. Ultimately, the *Portrait of Dante* and the lines from "La Cipolla" affirm Dante's eminence. One would expect nothing less from this most elusive and allusive of artist-poets.

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NOTES

1. This work can be viewed here: http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_1778056989.html). This article reproduces a later workshop copy of Bronzino's work as the painting is privately owned and reproductions are not easily procured.

2. There are a number of studies of portraits of Dante. For a recent overview of the types, see Debra Pincus, "The Humanist and the Poet: Bernardo Bembo's Portrait of Dante," *Patronage and Italian Sculpture*, ed. Kathleen Wren Christian and David J. Drogin (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 61–94.

3. The detail of the boat is too small to identify the two figures but they may be the celestial helmsman who ferries saved souls to the shores of Purgatory and Dante and Virgil. There is a precedent for this hypothesis in manuscript illustrations. An historiated initial opens the first page of *Purgatorio* in Yates Thompson 36. Inside the capital P one sees Dante and Virgil in a boat. See http://www.worldofdante.org/gallery_yates_thompson.html.

4. For Vasari's allusions to Bettini's commission, see the biographies respectively of Pontormo and Bronzino (Degli Accademici del Disesgno), Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori* (Novara: Istituto Geograficao de Agostini, 1967), VI:174–75; VIII:16. It's worth noting that Vasari himself adapted Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante*. See Parker, "Vasari's *Portrait of Six Tuscan Poets*: A Visible Literary History," *Modern Language Notes* 127 (2012): 204–215.

5. Philippe Costamagna, "Portrait of Dante," *Venus and Love: Michelangelo and the New Ideal of Beauty*, ed. Franca Falletti and Jonathan Katz Nelson (Florence: Giunti, 2002), 185. Francesco

Sansovino, editor of the 1564 edition of the *Commedia* with Landino's Vellutello commentaries, likely knew Bronzino. Both were members of the Accademia degi Umidi. In his additional notes to Landino's praise of Florentine artists, Sansovino adds Leonardo, Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, Michelangelo, Francesco Salviati, and Bronzino. Of Bronzino he writes: "Il Bronzino è degno di memoria, perchioché fu molto celecre nella sua patria e dipinse assai cose e con molta vivacità." The woodcut profile of Dante, widely known as "il nasone" because of the prominence of the poet's nose, was based on Bronzino's *Portrait of Dante.*

6. Art historians have noted the inferior aspects of the National Gallery copy: the drapery is generally harsher, a clumsy clump of cloth sits in front of the book, the foreshortening of Dante's right arm is awkward, and the coloring, especially of Dante's garment, is less nuanced. On these details, see Jonathan Nelson, "Dante Portraits in Sixteenth Century Florence," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (September 1992), 68.

7. Victoria Kirkham, "Dante's Phantom, Petrarch's Specter: Bronzino's Portrait of the Poet Laura Battiferra," *Lectura Dantis* 22–23 (1998), 91.

8. Alessandro Cecchi, "Il Bronzino, Benedetto Varchi e L'Accademia Fiorentina: Ritratti di Poeti, Letterati e Personaggi Illustri della Corte Medicea," *Antichità Viva* 30 (1991): 18. The Petrarchan works in the *Portrait of Lorenzo Lenzi* are written in a cursive hand; the handwriting in the Laura Battiferri portrait is more regular.

9. I am indebted to Gabriella Pomaro, an eminent authority on medieval and Renaissance paleography and former librarian for the Società Dantesca Italiana in Florence, for the observations on the writing in this painting.

10. Nelson, "Dante Portraits," 69.

11. Ibid., 69.

12. Maurice Brock, *Bronzino* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002), 165. For another recent catalogue entry on the National Gallery's "Allegorical Portrait of Dante," see *Bronzino: Artist and Poet at the Court of the Medici*, ed. Antonio Natali and Carlo Falciani (Florence: Mandragora, 2012), 208.

13. Dante, *Paradiso*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Books, 1984), 218–20.

14. Costamagna, 196.

15. Marsilii Ficini Florentini in Cristoforo Landino, *Comento Sopra la Comedia*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli (Rome: Salerno, 2001), I:268–69.

16. I am indebted to Guy Raffa, who is working on a book on Dante's bones, for this notice.

17. For a discussion of this letter, see Parker, *Bronzino: Renaissance Painter as Poet* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

18. Pontormo, *Il libro mio*, ed. Salvatore Nigro (Genoa: Costa & Nolan), 54.

19. See *Bronzino: Renaissance Painter as Poet*, 32–35, for an analysis of Bronzino's burlesque reworkings of Dante.

20. Robert Gaston has proposed 1540–1545 as possible dates for the composition of "La Cipolla." See Robert Gaston, "Peeling the Onion: Experiencing the Senses in Bronzino's Burlesque poem, 'La Cipolla,'" *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice*, ed. Alice E. Sanger and Siv Tove Kulbrandstad (Ashgate, 2012), 93–108 (see especially note 7). In a private communication Gaston offered some reasons for his choice dates: the reference to "il Sanese" is likely a reference to M. Celio Sanese whose *Gli Spiriti folletti* was published in 1546 by Anton Francesco Doni. Gaston also noted the insouciant treatment of Cupid in *The Allegory of Venus* (1546) and the second capitolo of "La Cipolla." Massimiliano Rossi, *Bronzino Artist and Poet at the Court of the Medici,* exhibition catalogue (Florence, 2011), 178, prefers a dating of c.1566.

21. See Agnolo Bronzino, *Rime in burla*, ed. Franca Petrucci Nardelli (Rome: Treccani, 1988), 128.

22. For other examples of burlesque poems that parody the laurel crown of poets, see Silvia Longhi, *Lusus: Il capitolo burlesco nel Cinquecento* (Padua: Antenore, 1983), 60.

23. For a discussion of the equivocal meaning of numbers in burlesque poetry, see Jean Toscan, *Le carnaval du langage. Le lexique érotique des poètes de l'équivoque de Burchiello à Marino,* 4 vols. (Lille: Reproduction des thèses Université de Lille, 1981), II:907–978. For a study of Bronzino's poetry, see Parker, *Bronzino: Renaissance Painter as Poet* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

24. See Toscan, *Le carnaval*, IV, s.v. for the equivocal meanings of these terms. Many of the words listed have more than one such meaning.

25. For an examination of early modern parodies of the *Commedia,* see Parker, "Dante *giocoso*: Bronzino's Burlesque of the *Commedia*," *Quaderni d'italianistica* 22 (2002): 77–101.