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**Marinism and macrotextuality  
in Margherita Costa's early printed books**

*Abstract*

Margherita Costa's first lyric works represent an enormous production of over 1046 quarto pages of poetry, and 325 pages of love letters, published in four books between 1638 and 1639: *La chitarra*, *Il violino*, *Lo stipo* and *Lettere amorose*. In this paper I propose macro- para- and intertextual analyses that work together to define these four works as a corpus, firmly situated in literary *milieu* of mid-Seicento Marinism.

## Introduction

In this paper I present my most speculative findings, the results of many years' research, that entail a macro-textual reading of the first four books of lyric poetry and love letters of Margherita Costa: *La chitarra*, *Il violino*, (COSTA 1638a, 1638b), and *Lo stipo*, *Lettere amorose* (COSTA 1639a, 1639b). I present my argument for considering these books as a corpus, and the problems and the opportunities offered by such an approach. I support this argument with textual analysis and examples, set alongside suggestive propositions from Marie-France Tristan and Luana Salvarani's studies of Marino and marinist poetics. I contend that such an approach allows these works to speak to the investments and risks of mid-century Marinism and locates Costa's poetic practice within this counter-cultural literary movement. Considered within this context the corpus stages a subversive marinist and libertine performance: it uses gendered authorship — Costa as a woman author and her ethos as a courtesan-*virtuosa* — to produce a formal imitation of Marino's lyric production.<sup>1</sup> Due to the sheer scale of Costa's output, I limited my research to these four works, however it has been extremely exciting to learn from scholars who are identifying strong resonances with Marino's writing at both structural and intertextual levels in some of Costa's other works.<sup>2</sup>

Recent, innovative analyses of Marino's *Lira*, *Dicerie sacre*, and *Adone* by Salvarani, Tristan, and Giuseppe Alonzo, offer macro-textual readings of these works. Salvarani's characterisation of Marino's *Lira* (1614) as «una *macchina versatile*», a multipurpose apparatus capable of generating a multitude of meanings, offers a compelling metaphor of marinist poetics (SALVARANI 2012, VII). In her study of Marino, Marie-France Tristan dissociates the surface from the content of Marino's writing, deriving symbolic, allegorical, and anagogical meanings (the «said» and «unsaid» of poetic discourse) through an anamorphic reading (distorted, like Holbein's skull) of the literal text. Tristan applies Kristeva's *semanalysis* to do this work (KRISTEVA 1969, 218):

La distinzione tra “genotesto” e “fenotesto”, in particolare, è un modo comodo per dissociare il testo concreto, la letteralità, dai suoi contenuti simbolici, allegorici e anagogici, in una concezione anche qui anamorfica in cui il volume del testo è determinato da un intreccio di rappresentazioni tanto più sfalsate

quanto più lontane dal nucleo anagogico generatore di senso (TRISTAN 2008, 64-65).

I make a case here for similarly complex and multilayered readings of Costa's writing and her books that draw together analysis of Costa's writing, authorship, and the material and social conditions of production of her books. In line with semiotic and post-structural approaches to intertextuality of Kristeva and Barthes I hold there to be no hierarchy of locus of signification in these books (BARTHES 1975, 14). All parts and levels of the books can be interrogated for meaning, and for connections to every other part of the text, the authorial corpus, and wider corpus of surrounding works. While citation and literary allusion within Costa's poetry connect her works to a broader marinist corpus, and beyond, other techniques of reading can trace connections between paratextual elements, formal structures, poetic forms, printing conventions such as publication details and *mise-en-page*, and authorial conventions including dedications, poetic personae, and poetic voices.<sup>3</sup>

Along these terms, this paper proposes a marinist genotext for Costa's 1638-1639 books that includes but is not limited to Marino's *Lira*, *Sampogna*, *Galleria*, and posthumous *Lettere*, of which Costa's corpus would be the fenotext in the sense described by Tristan:

Questo "genotesto" [...] può essere definito come un germe concettuale, un fermento di "significanza" incluso nello spazio infinitamente differenziato della scrittura, e si presta così alla "disseminazione" del senso all'interno di questo spazio. Nel testo barocco, questa disseminazione prende l'aspetto di un'implosione formale e semantica (l'eterogeneità, così spesso condannata, del testo mariniano) (TRISTAN 2008, 66).

### *Imitation on a Macrotextual level*

To state the broadest, macrotextual, level first – Costa's 1638-1639 corpus is an imitation of Marino's corpus through allusions in the titles, the length of the books, and in the poetic forms and registers they contain. The titles of Costa's four works, *La chitarra*, *Il violino*, *Lo stipo* and *Lettere amoroze* allude, in

diminutive or subordinate forms, to the titles of Marino's lyric corpus and published letters. They correspond as two musical instruments: *La chitarra = Lira*; *Il violino = Sampogna*; one form of collection/display *Lo stipo = Galleria*; and the *Lettere amoroze = Lettere gravi, acute, facete e piacevoli*. Like the three-part *Lira*, Costa's *La chitarra* is the longest of her works, and at 584 pages is very long by any measure for a *canzoniere*. Like in the *Sampogna*, which is much shorter than the *Lira*, the main poetic form in the much shorter *Il violino* is the idyll. And like Marino's *Lettere*, Costa's *Lettere amoroze* contain letters in realist and comic registers. The encomia in *Lo stipo* display verse portraits of many members of the Medici court, *famiglia*, and Florentine academies, as the jewels of the various *cassettini* of the work, while Marino's focus in the much of the *Galleria* is on artworks. Like Marino's *Galleria*, however, *Lo stipo* contains burlesque and grotesque caricatures such as «l'Astrologo afflitto dalla malattia francese» (COSTA 1639a, 218).

*La lira* (1602, 1614) ↔ *La chitarra* (1638)

*La sampogna* (1620) ↔ *Il violino* (1638)

*La galleria* (1620) ↔ *Lo stipo* (1639)

*Lettere gravi, acute, facete e piacevoli* (1627) ↔ *Lettere amoroze* (1639)

Given the sheer length of this four-book corpus, my exploration of the more detailed layers of textual relationships is focussed on features of Costa's writing and books that appear anomalous or unique in relation to contemporary male, and especially female, authors. These paratextual, inter- and intra-textual, and structural features open problems and opportunities through which the books of 1638 and 1639 can be defined as a corpus. It is the connections between this constellation of characteristics that supports the broader macro-textual analysis of the corpus.

Two problems I found are:

i) The whole corpus is marked by an extraordinary heterogeneity of forms, literary registers, male and female poetic voices, and borrows from a vast range

of images of traditions: lyric, classical, romance, and comic, grotesque and equivocal (by which I mean sexually suggestive) literature.

ii) The poetic persona, the *bella donna*, that Costa creates within the poetry of the *Chitarra* and in the *Lettere amoroze* is a significant innovation with relation to the lyric and epistolary traditions in which she is writing. This poetic personal is distinct from the authorial personae created by Costa in her prefacing letters to dedicatees and readers in the volumes. The *bella donna* figure is described through the narrative arc of the lyric sequence in the *Chitarra* (1638a, 80-544), and elements of this narrative reappear in several letters within the *Lettere amoroze*. Below, I define the *bella donna* as an imitation the Ovidian-libertine poetic voice Marino shapes in his *Lira*, and a prosopopoeia of the marinist *bella donna* figure.

I identify three main opportunities offered by this corpus:

i) The foremost feature that unites these works (other than the very close dates of publication) is that they are Costa's only books with false publishing details. Both the false imprint itself, and evidence that points to a probable true place of publication and printer, might hold clues to a contemporary clandestine print culture with which the production of this corpus can be associated.

ii) The 1638 and 1639 books are Costa's only works to be prefaced by allographic encomia. These poems are a resource for interpreting the corpus: they point towards an implicit audience, a community of production, and of interpretation. The named authors who write in support of Costa can imply a broader intertextual corpus, cited, or present through literary allusion, in Costa's books.

iii) Costa's poetics can be described as an intertextuality of feminist resistance, heavily laden with marinist imagery, containing allusions to poems of Alessandro Adimari, and images from poems of Marino that had been censored. Costa also critiques the very genre conventions within which she was writing by presenting a variety of authorial personae, and many poetic personae — male and female: by multiplying the authorial and poetic voices in these books, Costa explicitly plays on distance and proximity to the historical author and the material conditions of the poetry production on which the authority of authorship rests.

In what follows, I will present the textual evidence to support my hypotheses, considered alongside the recent contributions to studies of marinist poetics of Tristan and Salvarani. I will address in more detail the interpretative possibilities and challenges offered by the three opportunities and the two problems, listed above.

### *Heterogeneity*

The heterogeneity of poetic forms and literary registers Costa's corpus is in stark contrast to the production of other women authors of this period. While heterogeneity as a key stylistic feature of Costa's books at first appears at odds with the concept of an over-arching macro-structure, heterogeneity has been identified as an antiphrastic technique, and a feature of marinist poetics. Here I can only briefly offer one of several aspects of my interpretation of this heterogeneity, that is with relation to the connotations of the term *rozezza*, frequently used by Costa to describe her own writing. I would like to propose that beyond adherence to rhetorical conventions of modesty in her authorial prefaces, Costa's choice of the word *rozezza* connotes a Dionysian decorum associated with love poetry, comic poetry and satire, all forms whose publication and circulation was prohibited under the regime of censorship of the Congregation of the Index. Tristan brings the «rozzo poetico» of Marino and heterogeneity together in a discussion of Marino's discursive strategies.

Per soddisfare a questo principio [che il poeta assomiglia al Logos e l'opera diviene un «mondo in miniatura»] bisognava che l'opera poetica stessa presentasse una notevole dissomiglianza tra l'essere e il parere testuali, partecipando in tal modo del simbolismo dei «sileni», che costituisce, d'altronde, il fondamento dell'etica dionisiaca dell'autore: il rozzo poetico (l'eterogeneità discorsiva e frammentarietà, o peggio ancora le incoerenze narrative e le interpretazioni deliberatamente sfasate), non meno del liscio (la perfezione formale spesso destinata a metterci su una falsa pista) (TRISTAN 2008, 33).

*Rozezza* appears in the paratexts of all four of the books in this corpus in the letters of dedication or to the reader — as it does in almost all the prefaces of Costa's printed books. The most striking set of examples is found in *Lo stipo*,

where the silenic contradiction between superficial appearance of the work and author, and their true value, is made explicit. In the letter of dedication Costa writes «Io, all'opposito...dalla rozezza dei miei pensieri scielto la roza scorza del mio basso talento, di quello rozamente ho formato del mio stipo la spoglia» (COSTA 1639a, 5); in the letter to the reader, «Lettore, habbi riguardo, che ancor sotto vil manto nobil'alma s'asconde, e considerato, che anco ne' rozi stipi sogliono rinchiudersi le cose più preggiate, e care, non per la rozezza del Fabbro contaminar l'opera, ma in risguardo dell'altrui merito i riposi del mio stipo riguarda» (*ibid.*, 7); and Dionysian *furor poetico* is invoked in the *protesta* «Dio, Fato, Fortuna, Cielo, Stelle, Dei, Deità Paradiso, Nume, Angelo, Divino, Idolatra, Idolatrare, tutte sono state voci suscitatemi da furor poetico, e non da, (benché picciolo) pensiero di non sanamente parlare» (*ivi*).

Techniques for producing multiple interpretations of a text were practiced by libertine authors, (FASOLI 2012, 98) and there are strong indications in Costa's paratexts, and in the wider corpus from which she cites and to which she alludes, that this was the context of production and reception for her books.

### *Costa's Marinist Networks and Clandestine publication*

Clizia Carminati has described how in the late 1620s and early 1630s, members of the Roman Academy of the *Umoristi*, including Marino's close friend Antonio Bruni (1593-1635), defended Marino and his works from the Roman Congregations of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and the Index. After Marino's death, and the failure of all attempts to revise the *Adone* to obtain publishing permissions in Italy, the attention of his supporters and opponents turned to the clandestine publication of his burlesque and satirical poems that had previously only circulated in manuscript (CARMINATI 2008, 10, 242-68; 290-91). It has been suggested that other authors practiced imitation of Marino's works, completed and projected, in order to sustain his presence in literary culture. For example, Antonio Bruni's extensive production of *epistole eroiche* followed from Marino's (unrealised) claim to have produced a volume of letters modelled on Ovid *Heroides* (GERI 2014, 174). Lorenzo Geri writes of Bruni's determination, shared by other marinists, and the risks of this endeavour:

Sino a quando ci sono margini per farlo, infatti, il Nostro si sforza di tenere insieme sodali umoristi e la cerchia di poeti vicini a Urbano VIII, l'emulazione di Marino e le nuove parole d'ordine della poetica barberiniana alla quale concede un formale assenso. Al di là delle cautele e delle ritrattazioni, delle opportunità e delle ambigue dissimulazioni, *nel corso di tutta la sua carriera Bruni ambisce ad emulare l'opera mariniana nel suo complesso, tanto le opere effettivamente realizzate, quanto quelle destinate a rimanere per sempre sulla [sic], come, appunto, le Epistole eroiche*. Da questo punto di vista il poeta leccese mostra una fedeltà ostinata e costante a Marino, quasi un tratto generazionale che sembra condividere perlomeno con una parte dei sodali umoristi, come Andrea Barbazza, non a caso ricordato più volte nelle sezioni di corrispondenza dei canzonieri bruniani come amico del poeta dell'Adone (GERI 2014, 180).

Geri also emphasises that the marinists needed to exercise caution and subterfuge, «ambigue dissimulazioni» in their attempts to maintain Marino's cultural primacy. I suggest that the imitation on a macrotextual level of Marino's corpus by Costa's four works may share this goal, and be another example of a strategy of deflection or disguise employed by marinist authors. Jennifer Helm's recent study of the ways in which censorship affected poetry production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found evidence that readers for the Inquisition searched for «counter strategies employed to hide ideas in the semantic structure of a literary text» (HELM 2015, XI). At the same time, to reduce deliberate circumvention by authors, the Holy Office kept rulings and guidelines for censors secret (*ibid.*, 57). The consequences for authors of running afoul of censorship could be serious. Marie-France Tristan frankly describes the ideological commitment and risks run by free thinkers who persisted in presenting their counter-cultural ideas through subtexts and refused to reproduce orthodox and sanctioned truths.

È proprio contro un tale visione [che il senso figurato sia secondario, e in servizio alla verità] delle cose che i libertini e i liberi pensatori del Seicento, vittime o sopravvissuti del terrorismo politico, culturale e religioso instaurato dalla controriforma e dai suoi alleati, intendevano lottare per quanto sia possibile, nella loro certezza che non c'è verità assoluta, ma solo relativa e frammentaria (TRISTAN 2008, 30).



There are also explicit connections between marinist networks and texts in Costa's corpus. Citations and literary allusions in three of Costa's prefacing texts to the *Chitarra* connect the work to the *La murtoleide*, an important marinist multi-author collection which appeared in multiple editions dated between 1626 and 1649. Several figures that appear in the prefaces of Costa's works contributed to this work. *La murtoleide* contains Marino's satirical portrait of his rival Murtola, Murtola's poems to Marino, satirical sonnets addressed to Tomaso Stigliani by Andrea Barbazza, using the pseudonym Robusto Pogommega, and a miscellany of *poesia giocosa* (MARINO 1649, 3; 85; 198), (SCHILARDI 2007). The authors appearing in *Murtoleide* who composed encomia for Costa, and were also members of the *Accademia degli Umoristi*, included Barbazza and Pompeo Colonna (MARINO 1649, 268). One poem in the *Murtoleide* is addressed to Antonio Bruni (MARINO 1649, 264). While Bruni died in 1635, Costa includes a poem from his *Tre grazie* in the *Chitarra*, making it appear as if it were her own. (COSTA 1638a, 40-43) (BRUNI 1630, 202).<sup>4</sup> The poem evokes Costa's place in the musical culture of late 1620's Rome.

Costa's *La chitarra* shares its title with a burlesque *capitolo* in the *Murtoleide*: 'La chitarra' by Girolamo Magagnati (1563-1619):

La chitarra  
Desiderosa di **darci caparra**  
Del **bestialaccio umor della mia Musa**  
Le hò fatto dar di piglio a la Chitarra,  
**Stromento c'hoggi più che gli altri si usa**  
Per haver molto più proportione  
De la viuola, o della Cornamusa.  
Stromento fatto con gran discretione  
Poi c'hà fisionomia sì gioviale  
Che piace a tutte quante le persone  
(MARINO 1649, 324).

Three of Costa's prefacing texts to *La chitarra* contain citations or allusive references to Magagnati's *capitolo*. In the letter of dedication to Ferdinando II de' Medici Costa borrows the idea of the guitar as a «common» instrument from Magagnati's *capitolo*: «Ho voluto anco intitulare questo mostruoso Parto del

mio rozzo ingegno, la Chitarra; poiche [...] se bene è istromento vile, **viene quasi da tutti esercitato**» (COSTA 1638a, ii). In her dedicatory comic sonnet she described her book *La chitarra* as a down-payment or deposit: «Però prendi sì picciola **caparra** / dal buon'animo mio, nè mi sia tolto / di gradirlo, ò sia Nano, ò sia Chitarra» (COSTA 1638a, 6). Finally, Costa's own 'Capitolo scherzoso Scusandosi l'Autora,' creates a truly beast-like muse — one that bays and howls, with a hairy face. This *capitolo* is the first poem of the *canzoniere* and acts as the proem:

La mia musa e svegliata, e già ripiglia  
il Plettro ruginoso, e la zampogna,  
e non la posso ritener in briglia:  
[...]  
**Grida, s'abbachia, stride, e maladice,**  
e priega, ch'io li lasci dire il vero,  
e varie cose in testa mi predice;  
Ed io, ch'uscir non voglio dal sentiero,  
tiro la briglia, e li dò bastonate,  
e stimo la sua furia quanto un zero;  
[...]  
**Nella faccia e pelosa come Belva**  
(COSTA 1639a, 1-5).

Finally, Costa's *La chitarra* and *Il violino*, show «Francfort», as the place of publication. This same city is also indicated in some of the early editions of *La Murtoleide*, being one of the false locations commonly used to protect Italian printers from ecclesiastical authorities (SCHILARDI 2007, 100-2; PARENTI 1996, 93). Clues to the real place of publication of *La chitarra*, *Il violino*, and *Lo stipo*, however, can be gathered from various editorial and typographical elements found in the paratexts and in the *mise-en-page* of these books. Decorative woodblocks marking text divisions in *Il violino* and *Lo stipo* indicate Florentine printing by Amadore Massi and Lorenzo Landi, who also printed Costa's four subsequent Florentine books. These include three different woodblocks used to signal the end of poems found in *Il violino* and *Lo stipo* that conceal the initials of AM (for Amadore Massi) hidden in the decorative friezes, or that appear in other publications of the same printer.

The first two examples are found in the decorative woodblocks that mark the sections of the text in *Il violino*, where A and M are found nestled in the topmost curved pendants, left and right (*La chitarra*, British Library, 11429.k.7).



Fig. 1. (COSTA 1638b, 8, 26, 33, 80).



Fig. 2. (COSTA 1638b, 49, 93).

*Lo stipo*, despite this work stating *Venezia* on its title page, is «signed» by Amadore Massi through the insertion of a decorative scroll. When inverted, as it is in many examples beginning with page 21, an A is evident, (and perhaps even an M) disguised in the top of a Corinthian capital (*Lo stipo*, BNCF, MAGL. 3.1.88).



Fig. 3. (COSTA 1639a, 21, 26, 31, 45, 50, 58, 63, 75, 91, 94, 99, 105, 113, 116, 134, 143, 146, 221).

Caroline Callard identified the woodblock in Costa's *Lo stipo* as the same one used in Scipione Ammirato's censored *Istorie fiorentine* which also bore a false Frankfurt imprint and was dated 1639. An otherwise identical edition of the *Istorie fiorentine* was later published with permission by Massi and Landi. Callard proposes that in the case of Ammirato's work, the false imprint was used by the Florentines as a form of blackmail to secure permission to print, proving they were able to bypass the Inquisitor, as was already happening in Venice (CALLARD 2007, 102-3). Finally, thanks to the evidence presented by Maria di Maro at this conference, the *Chitarra* can also be established as a Florentine publication. The only other known example of the fictitious printer indicated for *La chitarra* and *Il violino*, Daniel Wascht (or VWascht), is found on a work dedicated to Ferdinando II by his Trumpet Major Girolomo Fantini, also bearing a false Frankfurt imprint: *Modo per imparare a sonare di tromba tanto di guerra, quanto musicalmente in organo, con tromba, sordina, col cimballo, e ogni altro istrumento* [...] In Francofort Per Daniel VVastch 1638. This shows that at least three of the four works considered here were published

in Florence. In this way, Costa's books become another case in point in a little studied history of Florentine clandestine publishing, and Florentine Marinism.

*The poetic persona of the bella donna. Marinist, Ovidian and Libertine*

Costa, in the choice of the entirely generic and impersonal name of the *Bella donna* for the central poetic persona of the *Chitarra*, both of the *canzoniere*, and of the section of encomiastic poetry that precedes it, has given voice and animated a female poetic trope that was highly diffused in seventeenth century print and manuscript poetry collections, where the trope of the *bella donna* existed solely as an object of male curiosity and desire. This generic woman was even frequently reduced to the initials B.D. Antonio Bruni's *Le tre grazie* contains more than eighteen *bella donna* poems including «BD vestita d'un drappo a color d'argento», «BD dipinta in atto di dipingere», «BD avara» (BRUNI, 1630, 49, 53, 57). A *zibaldone* of Antonia Malatesti in the National Central Library of Florence that can be dated to around 1638 contains more than eighteen poems with titles like 'Bella donna chiamata innocenza', 'Bella donna ha paura sognando', 'Bella donna muta', 'Bella donna domanda quante ore sono', 'Bella donna ha paura di un terremoto' (MALATESTI 1638, 230, 34, 53, 58). The term is found at the beginning of Marino's *Rime*, in the poem given the title 'Il tempo, e la guisa del suo innamoramento' where the first beloved is named only by the Petrarchan periphrasis «Donna oltre le belle bella» and is referred to as «sua Donna» and by the initial «D.» in several subsequent poem titles (MARINO 2012, 10, 11-21).

Of the two hundred and twenty-two poems in *La chitarra*, two hundred and nineteen indicate in the title that the voice or persona of the poem is the *bella donna*. The narrative of the *bella donna* is traced by the poems of the central *canzoniere* section (COSTA 1638a, 80-395) and describes the figure moving between several «beloveds». Twenty-three of the poems identify the main beloved in Costa's *canzoniere* with the pastoral name Tirsi, and the central love affair narrated by the poems follows the *bella donna* with Tirsi, in Rome. The *bella donna* rejects Tirsi after he is unfaithful, she seeks other lovers, and finally settles down in Florence with one man to domestic life, renouncing the world in favour of family, the spindle and needle (COSTA 1638a, 387-97, 494; 516-18).

This is one essential difference between the marinist trope of the *bella donna* and Costa's *bella donna*. The narrative of the *bella donna* that Costa presents by way of the *Chitarra* and some of the *Lettere amorose* is that of a woman who moves between places and relationships and defends her freedom to choose her lovers. An explicit declaration of this is found in the *Lettere amorose* where the *donna spergiura* writes:

senza altra dichiarazione dicovi, ch'io libera nacqui, vissi, e in mia libertade viverommi fino, ch'averò vita, né per altro è da me esercitato l'abito di non congiunta Amante, che per potere a mia voglia appigliarmi a quello, che più mi piace, né dovete voi terminare i miei pensieri (COSTA 1638b, 197-98).

The story and the sexual politics of Costa's *Bella donna* more closely resembles the poetic voice of the «Protheo d'Amor novello | novel camaleonte», in which Marino rewrites Ovid's catalogue of women, or the male libertine characters described in the novelle of the of authors associated with the Venetian *Accademia degli Incogniti* (MARINO 2012, 495-97).<sup>5</sup> Marino's libertine persona is given flesh and a history in the poem dedicated to Marcello Sacchetti, but is activated more broadly across the *Lira* by Marino's poems for many types of women. Gavin Alexander shows that implicit in the definition of prosopopoeia is the analogy of an earlier voice haunting its later evocation. It is a figure that can «resurrect or summon up lost or absent voice» (ALEXANDER 2014, 214-5).<sup>6</sup> The *bella donna* is an active, female libertine subject, modelled on the male libertine poetic subject. The libertine narrative of the *bella donna* persona strengthens the connection between Costa's *La chitarra*, and Marino's poetic persona in the *Lira*, the Ovidian lover.

### *Parodic and feminist rewriting of Marino's poetry*

I move now from the level of authorial conventions to consider Costa's citation and rewriting of Marino's poetry, specifically two poems that had been subject to censorship. A similarly assertive repositioning of marinist female tropes is found in Costa's long idyll, the *Violamento di Lilla* in *Il violino*, an imitation of Marino's *Trastulli estivi*, as several scholars have noted (COSTA, 1638b, 17-27).<sup>7</sup>

My analysis of this poem has located a second marinist intertext: *Durante il bagno*. The *Trastulli estivi*, had been ordered to be excised from the *Lira* in 1615, while *Durante il bagno* appeared only in a small print run of a *princeps* edition of the *Lira*, for which the Venetian publisher, Ciotti, was fined and imprisoned (CARMINATI 2008, 135-40; 37-38 n.27). Costa reprises only a few words of *Durante il bagno*, one slightly altered, however the position of these few words at the centre point, and narrative climax, of Costa's idyll, combined with the repeated emphasis on *looking* and *seeing* make these words unmissable.

Sovra basi d'argento in conca d'oro  
io vidi due colonne alabastrine  
dentro linfe odorate e cristalline  
franger di perle un candido tesoro.  
[...]  
(MARINO 1913, 77).

Avidi gli occhi miei  
di mirar più nascoso,  
al fonte degli amanti  
affissaron gli sguardi  
alla fonte bramata,  
ove ciba ogni core  
il lusinghiero e dispietato Amore.  
Quivi, quivi mirar più intento ammiro,  
fra due basi d'argento,  
conchiglia di tesoro, colma di gioie,  
a cui di fila aurate  
per man d'Amor tessute  
facean, quasi per scherzo,  
lascivetto riparo.  
O tesoro d'Amor, pregiato e caro!  
(COSTA 1638b, 19-20).

The iterations to «look here» simultaneously narrate the male protagonist's discovery of the naked body of the sleeping nymph and draw the reader's attention to the locus of the crucial marinist intertext, central to this passage and the poem. The shift in preposition (*fra due basi d'argento*) compresses the terms of Marino's erotic scene of bathing into an explicit description of the nymph's pudenda. In a more extensive analysis elsewhere, I propose that

Costa's rewriting of Marino's poems is a formal parody of the master's work. As others have noted, at the end of the poem Costa's Lilla triumphs over her assailant, abandoning him for other adventures, pointing a tradition of woman-authored pastoral, including that of Isabella Andreini, which modified pastoral satyr scenes with a victorious nymph (FINUCCI 2008, 37-40; COLLIER 2017).

### *Conclusion*

Some of the strategies that established Costa as a marinist poet and located her production in a marinist and libertine intellectual context were as transparent as the presence of marinist authors in the paratexts of her books, the prosopopoeia of the *bella donna*, or citing marinist poetry. Less obviously, I argue that on a macro-level Costa's lyric corpus can be mapped onto the main books of Marino's lyric corpus, and I interpret this as an example of the organisation of the formal structure of a text around a concept or theme. Signification through overarching structures is identified as a technique of marinist poetics in recent studies of Marino's *Lira*, and the *Adone* (SALVARANI 1996, VII).<sup>8</sup> Marie-France Tristan, in her critical analysis of the *Adone* in the light of Marino's entire corpus, found that marinist poetics can be best considered as cybernetics – the science of the organisation of, and communication between, interdependent systems – organic and inorganic. In justifying this term she writes:

La poetica mariana, considerata dal punto di vista della “retorica della dispositio”, esige in effetti che si scelga un termine tenendo conto, a monte e in modo sintetico, dell'insieme degli schemi di organizzazione e di regolazione, indipendentemente dalle applicazioni particolari che possano esserne fatte, siano strumentali, anatomiche, fisiologiche, psichiche e psicosemiali, sociali o politiche, cosmogoniche, o ancora poetiche o artistiche. La cibernetica così concepita implica sempre che un funzionamento dinamico sia innestato dall'esterno su (o sorga dall'interno in) una struttura statica preesistente: a questo le stesse opere d'arte, che vivono di una loro vita propria, si ritiene non facciano eccezione (TRISTAN 2008, 424).

My interpretation of Costa's four books of lyric poetry and love letters as a marinist corpus offers a new understanding of centrality of gender to baroque



poetics. For marinists who no longer saw the possibility of publishing Marino's poetry with official sanction, bringing a female voice to marinism was a novel and indirect way to keep Marino present in literary culture, without risking prosecution, imprisonment or worse (CARMINATI 2008, 291). The creation of a female marinist author makes a strong statement about one of the most radical and disruptive cultural interventions of libertine culture — the centrality of female performance, and the female voice, in the presentation of political and aesthetic knowledge.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> By the term “courtesan *virtuosa*” I am not referring to Costa practising prostitution, for which I am unaware of any historical evidence. My use of this term for Costa’s social and cultural position follows Amy Brosius’ findings that female *virtuose* were placed in two categories by contemporaries: singers perceived to possess the key female virtue of onestà «were expected to follow the social rules for noblewomen», and «those women who were publicly known as unchaste [...] followed the social rules for courtesans» (BROSIUS 2009, 3).

<sup>2</sup> COSTA 1640 and COSTA 1644 in the contributions of Mónica García Aguilar and Clara Stella to this conference.

<sup>3</sup> On the relationship between Intertextuality and earlier and enduring approaches see Orr, who notes the term “Intertextualité” was coined by Julie Kristeva in the late 1960’s. She argues that for «critics interested precisely in the contexts of cultural production and the making of meaning [...] theories of influence, imitation and quotation offer more sophisticated tools and methodologies, as well as more precise vocabularies» than theories of Intertextuality (ORR 2003, 1, 3, 14-15, 17, 174).

<sup>4</sup> *BD al S. Angelo Contarini Inbasciadore di Venezia in Roma* appeared in Bruni’s collection as *Effetti di gelosia d’una Signora, detta Margherita; dopo che il Cavaliere amato si diportava con altra Dama del medesimo nome, in un Giardino*.

<sup>5</sup> Marino’s text is considered alongside (OVID 2014, 1759-62) in TORCHIO 2000; Cf. LOREDANO 1982, 145-54, CONRIERI 1982, XXIV.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ALEXANDER 2007, 112.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. COX 2008, 214-15; COSTA-ZALESSOW 2008, 116).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. CHERCHI 1996 and ALONZO 2010.

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