

Issues in Review

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Italian Perspectives on Late Tudor and Early Stuart Theatre

The general focus of art exhibitions in Italy has changed significantly in recent years; the objective of this essay is to outline how such a change holds considerable value for the historian of early modern theatre and demonstrates innovative potential for the dissemination of theatre scholarship. Nowadays galleries offer fewer blockbuster retrospectives of the collected works of the painters who constitute the canon; such retrospectives were designed to be seen in a calculated isolation so that viewers might contemplate aesthetic issues concerning 'development'. This style of exhibition now tends to travel to London, Washington, Boston, Tokyo, so that masterpieces now in the collections of major international galleries may be seen in relation to less familiar work from the 'source' country (chiefly, one suspects, to have that status of masterpiece substantiated and celebrated). An older style of exhibition in Italy, which centred less on the individual painter and more on genres, has returned but in a markedly new guise. Most art forms in the early modern period were dependent on patronage, initially the Church, subsequently as an expression of princely magnificence. Some Italian artists were associated with a particular dynasty and its palaces; others were sought after, seduced to travel and carry innovation with them into new settings. The new style of exhibition celebrates dynastic heritage: the Gonzaga at Mantua (2002); Lucrezia Borgia's circle at Ferrara (2002); le delle Rovere at Urbino, Pesaro, Senigallia, Urbania (2004). As is indicated by this last exhibition, the sites have shifted from traditional galleries into the places where each dynasty flourished, often as in the case of the delle Rovere being held in a variety of palatial homes favoured by the family

as their seats of power and of leisure. One consequence is that the masterpieces are now for a brief period invited back home and are once again seen as closely as is feasible in the sites where they were originally placed, alongside other masterpieces of their era.

The wording here may suggest (erroneously) that the interest of these exhibitions is solely in painting, whereas clearly those dynastic patrons offered a wide-ranging support that embraced all the arts and applied arts too; that range was their particular excellence and strength. But it has been that very aspect of their *magnificence* which has been most difficult to gauge (except by prodigious feats of imagination) once those great private collections were broken up and dispersed firstly throughout Europe and then subsequently around the world. The new style of exhibition fills that lacuna in our knowledge and scholarship: the tone, tenor and achievements of particular modes of patronage become clearer, once those often carefully organised juxtapositions are back in place. How illuminating it was, for example, at Urbino to see Raphael's great portrait of Baldassare Castiglione (normally in the Louvre) in the great hall they both frequented and surrounded by examples of the furnishings, statuary (classical and contemporary), musical instruments, armour and weaponry, riding and hunting gear, religious artefacts, majolica, printed books with their luxurious bindings, jewelry, medals and coins that were the manifestations of the courtly ideal that Castiglione promoted and that Raphael caught with such seeming simplicity in his representation of him.¹ *Grazia* and *sprezzatura* were evident as *lived* qualities of sensibility, not the cerebral theorising about behaviour and integrity they can so readily seem when isolated from contexts of precise experience. Individual objects in galleries far from Italy risk reducing magnificence and patronage to the merely material; only when they are seen once more together in this fashion can the philosophical, cultural and spiritual dimensions that underpinned and permeated their initial expression begin to register as powerfully as they once did. One could appreciate immediately what Ben Jonson, that avid reader of Castiglione, hoped for but rarely found amongst the English aristocrats whose patronage he sought: a cultural and cultured life where scholarship, thinking, and writing had their respected place.

Unlike Raphael's idealised religious and classical treatments, his portrait of Castiglione records pronounced asymmetries in the features the better to offset what seems an inner illumination of being and the frankest of gazes focused directly at the viewer; the face is framed by clothes suggesting a certain modesty and reserve through their muted palette of warm greys and black, while the whole movement of the design draws one's attention to those

penetrating but compassionate eyes. Much of Jonson's drama interrogates pretensions to gentility; that portrait momentarily returned to its proper setting defined the yardstick against which the likes of the would-be gentlemen in *Every Man In His Humour* or *Epicoene* should be measured and found wanting. The milieu in the sheer richness of its variety defined the man in Castiglione's case; it is their attempt to realise a wholeness of being by grasping at isolated manifestations of what constitutes a gentleman that renders Stephen's hawking, Matthew's filched poeticising, and Bobadil's questionable swordsmanship asinine. To view the breadth of pursuits followed in any one generation by members of the delle Rovere family and their circle gives a sharpened edge to Jonson's satire: beside the wealth that underlies the delle Revere acquisitions, Stephen's proud claims about both his actual and his likely inheritance decidedly merit the scorn his uncle voices: 'You are a prodigal absurd coxcomb' (1.1.51).² Stephen's expectations depend on the death of that uncle's only son and heir if they are to be realised and the money involved amounts to a mere 'thousand a year, Middlesex land' (90). He is, as his uncle's rebuke asserts, grasping at straws. And the very fact of his boasting proves he lacks that very quality of nonchalance (*sprezzatura*) that Castiglione considered the final proof of a true courtly status. Stephen, Matthew and Bobadil reach for the merely material in quest of status and miss the particular mind-set, which alone renders the material of value. Behind the aspirations of all three lies a profound anxiety that they are not the real thing; and the presence of that anxiety is their undoing. In capturing the varieties of anxiety experienced by the upwardly mobile in the later years of Elizabeth's reign, Jonson's satire finds its sharpest edge as social critique. Jonson was lucky: Penshurst was perhaps no match for Urbino in the scope of its magnificence, but the house, its owners and its traditions would directly have coloured and illuminated for him what he was reading in Castiglione's master work. Confronting the *setting* of Raphael's portrait of Castiglione and reading the portrait within the recreated context of the great hall of the Montefeltro-delle Rovere palace at Urbino made the *bite* of Jonson's satire the clearer in a way that viewing it in isolation in the Louvre cannot begin to equal. For many of Jonson's age an engagement with the values examined and extolled in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* through Florio's translation inevitably remained at a cerebral not experiential level; and a like fate until the advent of this exhibition obtained with most scholars of renaissance culture too.

The Raphael portrait is merely one small instance but it is representative of the impressiveness of this exhibition and its like: re-assembling the products of patronage within the dynastic space allowed one to recognise and assess

more securely than previously the complex ideologies permeating princely magnificence as both outward display of power and correlative of inner states of being. Gallery, *studiolo*, cabinet of curiosities and grotto were correlatives of the princely or patrician mind and sensibility more than they were emblems of the owner's power: expressions of a quest for knowledge but also for sensuous and sensual delight. Eroticism too had its place, as witness the Cupid and Psyche sequence by Julio Romano in Mantua's Palazzo Te or Correggio's *Allegory of Vice* (now in the Louvre but commissioned by Isabella d'Este at Mantua for her private *studiolo* in the Ducal Palace), where the direction of the viewer's eye-line is drawn inexorably to the flimsily hidden erection of the centrally placed satyr-like figure. Where earlier patrons had commissioned alterpieces, by the end of the fifteen-century Italian patricians were concerned more with commissioning work that helped create their own intimate spaces as rooms defining the breadth of the patron's interests. Isabella had her own suite of such rooms but so too did her husband, Francesco Gonzaga; each displayed a decidedly different 'character' through the particular scope and arrangement of its interests.³ An intricate play of ideologies, public and private, is what makes such sites so much more than examples of trends in interior design. They can be seen as extensions of that favourite renaissance pastime: the inventing of *impresae* as pictorial declarations of personal values and allegiances. The gallery was the self displayed but, as such spaces were largely private and others came there only by express invitation, they were self-reflexive, mirrors of the owner's breadth of secular achievement, sites for inner contemplation of the self's relation to beauty and to antiquity. The study was the place for extending that breadth of expertise, the grotto for reverie.

The gallery as promoting a decided relationship between power, wealth, aesthetic awe, and eroticism is interrogated perhaps only once in early modern English drama in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, when Emilia stages a tour of her 'rooms and pictures' for Bianca (2.2). The audience watch Bianca enter this private domain in the company of a guide after an exchange of civilities with her hostess and Guardiano, who is to accompany her, with emphasis on those potent terms, 'grace' and 'courtesy' (see 2.2.280–8).⁴ Later we observe an awe-struck Bianca ('Mine eye nev'r met with fairer ornaments') agreeing with Guardiano's estimate of Livia's treasures as superior to any such works as Florence or Venice could afford. With her aesthetic appetite and sense of wonder refined to a pitch of expectation, she is next told of a yet more wondrous 'piece' whereupon the highly potent Duke is revealed to her (perhaps 'exposed' would be the more precise term), and he proceeds to seduce

the already wedded Bianca with promises of wealth, security (financial and social) and honour (ll.311–88). Middleton's view would appear to be that the gallery is a site of commodification and he resists the ideologies implicit within the analogy recently drawn above with *impres*; therefore it is wholly appropriate within his moral scheme that Bianca herself become commodified within that setting. Had she not after all been first gazed upon by the Duke while she was framed within a window like a statue or portrait?⁵ She is yet another *objet d'art* to be relished and possessed, added to the collection, even if the process of her achieving will require that the Duke render himself a similar object for her gaze. In Middleton's conception the Duke aestheticises his potency; and progress through Livia's gallery is a steady arousing of her libido the better to appreciate his self-display. This critique of the ideology of the gallery as site of patrician value is simplifying and to some degree reductive, but it is an interpretation that has a secure basis in cultural fact.

A curious paradox of late Elizabethan and Stuart theatrical culture is that while some dramatists were popularising reductive myths about Italy and the artefacts of its cultural production, the more learned were absorbing the strictures on behaviour propounded by Castiglione or ransacking the tradition of *novelle* for challenging or entertaining plot-lines. By stressing the range and depth of cultural expression within a number of the great Italian households, these recent exhibitions have gone some way to eradicate the myths or redefine the circumstances on which they came into being; and this factor has interesting repercussions for the study of renaissance English drama. The completing of the lengthy restoration of the Palazzi in Ferrara was celebrated, not as one might have expected by an equivalent of the Gonzaga exhibition here devoted to the Este family, but by one focusing on Lucrezia Borgia and her circle.⁶ The intention was very much to reclaim Lucrezia from the Borgia myth: a clear influence was the biographical and historical research of Maria Bellonci whose works graced a privileged section of the exhibits (though a counterbalancing movement was allowed through the inclusion of materials relating to the many melodramas and operas about Lucrezia and her family that have flourished on the myth). Bellonci since 1939 has consistently made a case for viewing Lucrezia as more sinned against than sinning, the victim of her father and brother Cesare's dynastic or political ambitions, a woman whose very beauty made her a valuable tool in patriarchal scheming and not herself in any way an instigator of the vicious lifestyles for which the family became infamous. For a brief period from her marriage till her death in 1502–19, Lucrezia as wife to Alfonso d'Este, heir to the dukedom to which he was not to succeed till the death of his father Ercole I in 1505, gathered

about her a remarkable circle in the humanist tradition. Indeed much of the exhibition was taken up with books and letters written about her or by her: copies of Ariosto and Calcagnini's epithalamia for the couple's nuptials, and manuscripts of the correspondence between Lucrezia and Pietro Bembo, poet (later Cardinal), who dedicated his *Gli Asolani* (published in Venice in 1505) to her as his 'muse and fount of inspiration'.

What emerged from the exhibition was the sense of Ferrara at that time as a flourishing centre for writers and moral philosophers under Lucrezia's (rather than her husband's) patronage. Sceptics might interpret this redefining of herself as champion of the literary and musical muses as subscribing to the trope of the penitent Magdalen (except, as Bellonci recounts in detail, Lucrezia was conducting an affair throughout much of the period of her marriage with Francesco II Gonzaga, husband of her sister-in-law and rival in artistic patronage, Isabella d'Este). But what the evidence of the exhibition proved rather was how impossible it is to define Lucrezia Borgia in terms of any single trope, generous or critical. The complexities of her lifestyle resist easy categorising, especially of a moral tenor. On the evidence that the exhibition offered, Lucrezia was (from a feminist perspective) a woman securely in control of the structuring of her own lifestyle and the culture through which it found expression. The exhibition also implicitly showed that promoters of myths about Lucrezia are more interesting in themselves (in terms of their own motivation for shaping a reduction of this complexity) than the myths they extrapolated from her lifestyle. It is in this area of *motivation* that exhibitions like the one at Ferrara have an impact on the study of renaissance English dramaturgy.

Webster is perhaps the most illuminating figure to approach from this perspective.⁷ Recent research into the historical background to the circumstances surrounding the life and death of the actual Duchess of Malfi highlight the extent to which Webster brought Bosola right from the margins to the centre of his tragedy. In contemporary accounts of the death of Antonio in Milan, Bosola is merely one of a group of hired assassins, characterised only by his function as murderer. There is no factual evidence of any direct involvement between Daniele da Bozzolo (the historical source for Webster's Bosola) and the Aragonian brothers, the Cardinal and Duke Ferdinand, nor previous criminal history involving the galleys.⁸ The role, the most substantial in the play, is entirely of Webster's invention, except for the one fact of the murder (and even that act in the play is a pitiful miscalculation, not a set intention). All the events of the play impact on Bosola's moral awareness: one might argue that the play enacts the growth of his conscience and the birth

in him of a sense of value. He has been culled from nonentity; as a one-time criminal, he is situated at the base of the hierarchies who are represented within the play, giving voice to a sense of anger at his marginalized status as a tool in the scheming of the patrician class and at his continually being the object of their determining powers. That he senses through his torturing of the Duchess a profound urge to change a nature that he has spent much of the play seeing as controlled by others makes him the yardstick (in that desire for change, that need to shape his own lifestyle) against which we measure the other characters in the drama.

A review of productions in England since the 1930s shows that almost invariably established 'names' have been cast in the roles of Duchess, Ferdinand and Cardinal but far less frequently so in the role of Bosola.⁹ The hierarchies within the play seem to have influenced the particular casting in its various stagings. Where one could argue that Bosola is a part that a young actor who has accomplished the role of Hamlet might move to with the maturity which any attempt at that particular Shakespearean role usually brings to the performer, such a progression has not seemingly been attempted to date, except in the case of Ian McKellan. By custom, modern-day directors cut Bosola's lines extensively, so that the moral journey, which the role is required to accomplish, is fragmented with severe consequences for Webster's moral scheme. Bosola's soliloquies demand a highly developed technique and command of good actor-audience relations; they demand in fact an experienced actor, while the extent and scope of his onstage presence require a director's respect, if the structuring of the play is to be presented with integrity. What Webster's sources were and how he gained access to them is less important than his particular use of them: that he chose to 'simplify' his representations of the Aragonese family and of Antonio and to build up a complex representation for the common man, Bosola, is what should be of major importance to a director. How history is deployed in the services of dramatic representation involves moral and political choices through which one may read the ideologies underpinning Webster's dramaturgy.

Another significant instance in this context is the role of Isabella in *The White Devil*. Webster represents her as a model of wifely virtue, dutifully submitting herself to her husband, Bracciano's every whim, even seemingly at the cost of her own integrity. At his request she gives him public grounds for effecting their divorce, while privately she still worships his portrait, as if it were a shrine (it transforms ironically into his means of killing her, becoming instead a *memento mori*). The moral complexion of the historical Isabella fluctuates, depending whether one reads Orsini-inspired sources or

Medicean accounts. The marriage would appear to have been little more than a dynastic convenience, a uniting of two great families that would secure between them most of the territories on the seaward side between Rome and Florence, though marital links between the Medici and the Orsini were frequent, dating back to Lorenzo's marriage to Clarice Orsini in 1469.¹⁰ A visit to the fortress at Bracciano reveals a formidable castle indicative of a harsher lifestyle than ever obtained at Florence, Urbino or Mantua, though the events surrounding Paolo Giordano and Isabella de' Medici took place a good century later (1560–85) than the highpoint of Urbino culture under Federico and his wife Battista Sforza and several decades after the demise of Lucrezia Borgia (1519) and of Isabella d'Este (1539). The castle has an impregnable position but is extensively fortified; decoration of the rooms features chiefly displays of hunting trophies and armorial escutcheons; only the ceiling of the room richly prepared for the arrival of Isabella in 1560 survives, a magnificent arrangement of carved wood and stucco ornamentation above a remarkably unusual, because deep, cornice.

What visitors to Bracciano learn about the historical Isabella from the study of artefacts on display there is as sensational (if taken at face value) as any plotline devised by Webster. To account for her sudden death at her husband's hands (she was apparently strangled, though whether by Paolo Giordano or a henchman not surprisingly remains unknown) a myth has evolved of her as a prodigiously amoral siren, luring yeoman to the castle to gratify her will then murdering them to keep her affairs secret by hiding them in a room where a false floor gave way to drop them down a well, from the sides of which protruding swords hacked these luckless men to pieces. Medici accounts however show that she spent a great deal of time living in Florence and away from Bracciano. But Paolo Giordano had begun a relationship with one Vittoria Accoramboni, who connived with her brother Marcello to murder her husband, Francesco Peretti, nephew of Cardinal Montalto (later Pope Sixtus V) to help further the relationship with Paolo. Was the blackening of Isabella's character a masculinist myth fabricated by Paolo Giordano to justify the mysterious death of his wife and further his own affair? Or was that death a crime of passion by an irate cuckold? Was Webster's source of Isabella's story a Medici-influenced account? The member of the Orsini family who visited the court of Elizabeth I was the son of the union of Paolo Giordano and Isabella; and that heir in the next generation may understandably have promoted a different representation of the Orsini Duchess, his mother. Interestingly in the context of the final acts of Webster's tragedy, the historical Vittoria was killed by Ludovico Orsini because, so the docu-

mentation attests, she refused to return the family jewels given to her by Paolo, while her brother, Marcello, was murdered by friars with whom he sought refuge.¹¹ Virginio Orsini, Isabella's son, married Flavia Peretti to effect a reconciliation between the families and with the Pope. While it is difficult to untangle fact from fiction, there is sufficient overlap between historical accounts and Webster's plotting to suggest that, as with his treatment of *The Duchess of Malfi*, he had access to some detailed account of events at Bracciano, however inflected that account might have been by the ideological intent of the teller of the tale.

But what is the value of this history to the student of renaissance English drama? As more and more Italian documentation of this era comes on display in the public arena, the more it helps deeply to illumine the dramaturgy of playwrights like Webster. The point is not that Webster may have got his facts wrong or that he may have been overly influenced by jaundiced accounts of proceedings outside his direct experience. Rather, as with the way that he chose to centralise the figure of Bosola over the aristocratic figures in *The Duchess of Malfi*, his particular selection and shaping of events out of a panoply of confusing and conflicting sources reveals much about his moral schema within a given play and the ideologies determining the direction of his creativity. In both his major tragedies Webster was handling what to him was relatively recent history; the more that history comes under scrutiny for interpretation in the current century, the more the politics governing Webster's aesthetic choices become open to investigation. It was fashionable in the earlier half of the twentieth century to dismiss Webster in George Bernard Shaw's terms as 'our Tussaud laureate' (developing resonances from the waxwork image of the seemingly dead Antonio in *The Duchess of Malfi* to imply that the plays were little more than journeys through chambers of horror); that *The White Devil* was initially staged at the Red Bull Theatre added to the belief that the play was little more than crude melodrama. Scholarship has changed those inaccurate judgements amongst theatre historians, but not generally within the wider world amongst theatre critics and some contemporary directors to judge by the clichés that recur throughout reviews of most revivals of Webster's plays, which reflect more on the limited pre-formed expectations of the reviewers than on the drama they seek to castigate. If Webster's dramaturgy were to be understood as less gratuitous and more a matter of conscious aesthetic, moral and political choices, then perhaps a greater respect for the sophistication of his inventions might obtain, resulting in more subtle directing of actors in how they should represent the characters in his tragedies. This directorial change would in turn result in

subtler modes of reception by audiences. Greater access to period documentation through which continuing reassessment of Webster's artistry becomes possible will perhaps filter down to influence future theatre practice. Source material for renaissance playwrights other than Shakespeare tends to be stated or simply outlined rather than interrogated; increasing access to Italian historical documentation might remedy the situation and effect a necessary balance. But the increasing availability of *non-fictional* documentation will also allow for a greater understanding and critique of the ideologies shaping such sources as Malespini's *Ducento Novelle*, for example, on which Middleton seemingly drew for his portrayal of Bianca Capello in *Women Beware Women*. Malespini offers a decidedly different view of Bianca than emerges from the study of the cultural artefacts relating to her to be found in the Pitti Palace in Florence (portraits and jewels) and at Poggio a Caiano, the Medici villa where her suite of private rooms is currently undergoing substantial restoration. Its reopening could instigate as remarkable a reclamation of the historical Bianca, as did the exhibition centred on Lucrezia Borgia in Ferrara. Theatre scholarship could not but benefit from exposing itself to new interdisciplinary research in these wider cultural contexts.

If the focus of this essay till now has been on the ways in which the study of Italian courtly cultures can enhance study of early modern drama, that is because disappointingly little material was included at Ferrara, Mantua or Urbino about theatrical performance in those great houses. Though the Gonzaga collection of musical instruments was well exemplified in *La Celeste Galeria*, there was scant reference to the uses to which they were so frequently put beyond the inclusion of several autograph letters from Monteverdi and selected illustrations of the various performances that graced the wedding ceremonies of Francesco Gonzaga and Margaret of Savoy in 1608, which included over several days opera, plays with incidental music and a naval battle with fireworks, sung masses, performances of Guarini's *La Idropica* and Rinuccini's *Ballo delle Ingrate* (both with music by Monteverdi), and tournaments. It seems that Italian theatre scholars are not yet making substantial contributions to the wider cultural contexts that have been explored in these exhibitions. Theatre too had its place within the demonstrations of princely magnificence. However, although there has been no dearth of exhibitions devoted to aspects of renaissance theatre, they have been isolated from the interdisciplinary considerations that the exhibitions under discussion have made possible. Two exhibitions devoted to aspects of theatre history deserve special mention not only for their impact on our growing understanding of court theatrical performance under the Stuarts but also for the particular

manner in which that impact was fostered. Both contained enormously informative working models and one took advantage of the potentials of computerised graphics in ways that no exhibition devoted to the work of Inigo Jones and theatre at the English court has attempted.

Throughout 2001 at the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence Elvira Garbero Zorzi and Mario Sperenzi curated *Teatro e Spettacolo nella Firenze dei Medici: Modelli dei Luoghi Teatrali*.¹² It was a remarkable multi-media event. The centre of attention was a series of large-scale models (how much more informative than the toy-theatre like proportions that generally appear at exhibitions of stage design or theatre architecture elsewhere in Europe); accompanied by recordings of music created for the spectacles being illustrated, most of the models were continually in motion, showing how particular stage effects were achieved. On the surrounding walls were mounted the original sketches for scenery and for the operation of the machines on which the models had been based. Included too in these displays were costume designs and contemporary illustrations of moments of spectacle, showing how they were received by members of the original audience; and on occasions recorded voices read from private memoirs or official letters similarly conveying ideas about reception of the marvels. One entered the world of the performance to a surprising degree, even if one were more aware of the mechanics of the event (the transformation of a given place into a performing space; the nature of the stage machinery deployed) rather than the magnificence.

A surprising number of non-theatrical spaces were theatricalised by Medicean dictat between 1439 and 1661, the parameters of the exhibition, starting with the commissioning of Filippo Brunelleschi by the Council of Florence for the staging of several sacred mysteries in the churches of the Annunziata, Santa Maria del Carmine and San Felice in Piazza. Rather than dramatising the search for the risen Christ by the Maries at the tomb, from which so much English drama (sacred and secular) is derived, the biblical subjects chosen here were those inviting spectacle: the Annunciation and Christ's Ascension. The Annunciation was originally conceived in 1439 for two playing spaces elevated above the congregation, one over the altar representing Heaven with God the Father from whom a dove passed representing the Holy Spirit to the Virgin seated on a raised stage at some distance opposite Him on the reredos. As was the case with all the models, three sides of the built space (the Annunziata) were recreated as well as the stages so a sense of precise dimensions was conveyed as well as the intricate system of pulleys that was necessary to allow the passage of the model dove across an

extremely wide space without any sagging of the wires supporting it. Compared with what was in time to follow, this staging might seem naïve; but there is clear evidence in the construction of a wish to sustain a tone appropriate to a miracle, which at that date the achieving of such a feat of engineering must have seemed. Matching of medium with message would alone achieve the appropriate decorum.

For Santa Maria del Carmine Brunelleschi designed a staging of the Ascension, which achieved an effect of the marvellous by this time exploiting the sheer height of the space. The main stage for the apostles was itself elevated, being constructed on the reredos, with (to the audience's left) a recreation of a city wall, significantly including a recognisable representation of the Palazzo della Signoria; to the rear at centre stage was a huge crucifix (it was not clear whether this was the actual rood of the church at that date or a constructed part of the setting); Christ ascended from a mountain-like structure to the audience's right on a platform supported at the four corners by pulleys that elevated the actor towards two welcoming angels. Life, death and resurrection were symbolically represented as the spectator's eye travelled from left to right of the stage. The arrangement of wheels controlling the pulleys that lifted Christ aloft appeared like a stylised representation of the planets, while God and an angelic throng waited yet higher in a raised stage disguised as a circular, sun-like mandala. Again the means were beautifully wedded to the intended conveying of a sense of the miraculous, and by a more sophisticated mechanics on this occasion. What impressed was again how the need for a suitable decorum in the *steady* elevating of the platform had been met and how the whole had been meticulously integrated into the architectural organisation of the space.

The third hypothetical realisation of one of Brunelleschi's designs was for a further staging of the Annunciation in San Felice where a false stage was constructed within the roof space and carefully fronted by a kind of circular proscenium within which appeared God and his host. From behind this structure at a given moment, Gabriel and a choir of eight angels descended towards the main stage but remained suspended above it (the choir supported on the perimeter of a half-orb or cupola-like structure, while below them within an ovoid mandala Gabriel hovered before Mary, who was seated inside a square portico-like structure as in so many paintings of the subject in the period. In this construction the mechanisms allowing for the descent of such a large combination of lifts and platforms was largely hidden from view, thus moving a stage closer to the disguised marvels of courtly spectacle. An accompanying contemporary etching, thought to be by Feo Balcari, showed

a trio of singing angels within a mandala suspended from a cupola-like cloud formation suggested a possible source for Brunelleschi's inspiration; there were also sketches by the architect of a dome or cupola as seen from below and one by Bonaccorso Ghiberti depicting a mandala-like stage and a pulley system to lower and elevate it.

The next group of designs, dating from 1533, were concerned with the transformation of the second, inner courtyard of the Medici-Riccardi palace, first into a garden of earthly delights to greet the arrival in Florence of Margaret of Austria; and next in 1539 to an open-air theatre with canopies protecting the audience from the sun for a performance of Antonio Landi's *Il Commodo* interspersed with allegorical interludes devised by Giovanbattista Strozzi. The architecture of this second theatre was the work of Bastiano da Sangallo with the assistance of Vasari; it was created for the wedding of Cosimo with Eleanor of Toledo. The interest here was the designer Beccafumi's construction of a permanent setting (including such recognisable monuments from Pisa as the leaning tower) very much as in the theatres at Vicenza and Sabbionetta (though appropriately it was most akin to Serlio's design for a scene for comedy); an elevated sun, to a device by Ferdinando Ghelli, moved across the proscenium arch to define the passage of the day and the dramatist's close observance of the unities. Because this structure largely filled the proscenium area, steps led down from this raised area to a performing space (very much in the manner in which Stuart masques were staged) surrounded on three sides by the spectators. Both Beccafumi's design and Ghelli's scheme (with illustrations of how the sun was to be 'lit' and how move) survive and were the source of the recreation. If one adds to this list of artists involved in the endeavour the additional names of Niccolò Tribolo as costume designer and Francesco Corteccia as composer of the music for the interludes, one begins to grasp the extent of the collaboration that was essential for the creation and smooth-running of one of these extravaganzas. As many artistic talents were required for the staging of one of these events as previously were commissioned to shape the lifestyles that were the subject of the exhibitions discussed earlier. What was not clear in this instance (where the focus was chiefly on the architecture of the playing space and the setting) was who, if anyone, had over-riding control of the whole aesthetic scheme.

By 1565 Vasari, who assisted on Sangallo's project at the Medici-Riccardi, had taken over as chief architect, creating playing spaces in the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio. He designed what is virtually a traverse stage with banks of seating to either side of a performing space with at one end a shallow but elevated proscenium stage, fronted by an elegant open arch

and stairs down to an extensive forestage which included a raised podium at the opposite end. Four years later, he was to create for the Salone a definite proscenium theatre with a capacity for moving scenery for which two designs by Baldassarre Lanci are extant, one being reproduced within the model. Both are of imaginary street scenes in Florence, appropriate for a comedy, but embracing well-known landmarks such as the great dome of the cathedral and the tower façade of the Palazzo Vecchio, in which the audience was actually situated.

All these were converted spaces; most were used ordinarily for more serious purposes than entertainment. In 1589 Bernardo Buontalenti created a purpose-built theatre within the new Uffizi Palace, a structure that must certainly have in time influenced Inigo Jones's designs for the banqueting house and masque theatre at Whitehall, more so than the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. Notably, this design grows out of the traverse-like theatre created earlier by Vasari: though the raised proscenium stage here is deeper to allow for more extensive changes of scene, it is also considerably higher to ease sightlines for spectators situated on the six tiers of banked seating down the long side walls at ninety degrees to the stage. Some four wide curving steps were hollowed out of the centre stage, descending to a small mid-stage with balustrade, which projected into the auditorium, before a further ten steps curving outwards descended to a sizeable forestage or dancing area, which was separated by a second balustrade from an audience space for the Medici family and their important guests. The models first were of the whole theatre, and then came a more detailed recreation of the proscenium space. These were accompanied by numerous sketches and realised designs by Buontalenti for perspective scenery and for machinery such as an arrangement of lifts of decreasing size placed inside each other that could extend upwards to create the effect of a mountain growing or of cloud formations with ranks of performers on the various levels. Working plans to scale like these (were they intended for the stage carpenters?) give a remarkably potent sense of how certain effects were realised and too how one invention such as that described could be adapted subtly to achieve a variety of surprises, transformations or *coups de théâtre*.

The whole spread of extant designs by Buontalenti for the opening production of *La Pellegrina* and its interludes (1589) was included as representative of his achievements in this space with their evocations of celestial and infernal vistas (the latter dominated by a giant, mechanical, winged Lucifer) and his numerous costume designs, which, as Orgel and Strong have demonstrated, made such a marked impression on Inigo Jones when he visited Italy in the entourage of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, in 1613.¹³ The

format of their study requires inevitably that pride of place within the design of every page within their catalogue should go to Jones's work, so that reproductions of images that had most likely influenced his designs are on the whole much reduced in size and relegated to the marginal spaces. A consequence of this diminishment is that the impact of the Italian designs on the reader of the catalogue is not as forceful as it clearly was on Jones. What impressed when one saw the originals full-size in the exhibition was the extent of the detail Jones remembered, often some several years later, a response which left one wondering whether he possessed to a highly sensitive degree what today we know as a photographic memory or whether he had the time to make extensive copies with annotations.¹⁴ Most informative (and this detail is finely reproduced in the catalogue) was the colouring of the costume designs. When so few of the extant designs by Jones are coloured so that a scholar nowadays has to fall back on Jonson's descriptions of his characters' appearance to gauge what those designs looked like when realised (admittedly Jonson goes into generous detail about colour-schemes, types of materials used and so on), it is refreshing and highly informative to study the colouring of Buontalenti's work. This aspect of his artistry is almost more rewarding of close observation than investigation of the styles of attire he devised. There is something slightly caricatured about Buontalenti's figures (to be fair, many were created for comic characters in the interludes and Jones imitates this manner when devising costumes for the characters in his anti-masques) but Jones's costumes for the main masques were from the first figure-revealing for both male and female performers, hugging the physique in a manner that must admirably have displayed the body-lines of his masquers, whether dancing or in repose (as they are often required to be by Jonson, while their emblematic significance is being described). Jones clearly felt the need for a decorum that honoured the body as a means of sophisticated and courtly expression; and in his designs he was echoing Jonson's concern to encourage spectators to view the body as the outward manifestation of an inward grace (as most fully argued in the choric songs encouraging the masquers to continue their efforts in *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*). If Jones borrowed extensively from Florentine example, he was spurred on (arguably by Jonson) to build on that basis and make a distinctly personal contribution to the conventions of the genre of courtly spectacle.

The final section of the exhibition was devoted to a playing space for which the Stuart court afforded no true parallel: the open-air theatres in the cortile and, extended beyond it, in the amphitheatre at the Palazzo Pitti. In the latter the fascination of the masque form with its spectacular entrances came into

its own, the great expanses of the space allowing for huge triumphal chariots and mechanically moving devices. Many of the performances here were equestrian, the raised seating allowing for particularly good sightlines onto the formations shaped by charging or dancing groups of horses. Many of the etchings copying designs by Alfonso Parigi, Felice Gamberai, Ferdinando Tacca and Tommaso Guidoni, dating from the period between 1637 for *Festa a cavallo* through 1652 for *Carosello* to 1661 for *Il Mondo festeggiante* surround images of the entertainment in performance with miniature indications of the sets of patterns into which the horses formed. The equestrian ballet was never a late-renaissance form of spectacle in England, as it was not only in Italy but also in Germany. However, close study of these patterns reveals remarkable similarities with the changing choreographic formations that masquers at the Stuart court are known to have adopted in their dancing. Few pictorial indications exist of what these choreographic and dancerly skills comprised (as distinct from verbal accounts, such as Jonson's brief comments on the dances in the stage directions to his masques). That they were expected to be intricate is to be inferred from the several accounts of King James's loud complaining when he deemed the dancers' efforts fell short of his wishes. Just how intricate they might be could more readily be appreciated from these Italian images. A great deal of imagination is required to envisage from extant records the *look* of a Stuart masque in performance, since the prime appeal was through spectacle to the faculty of sight (and through sight to understanding of its larger significances). This exhibition achieved much through its three-dimensionality. Even flat designs took on depth as one viewed them here, surrounded as they were with detailed recreations of the many theatre spaces for which they were created. Increasingly the scale of the models revealed how finely judged the issue of their size had been: smaller, they would not have conveyed the sense of powerful ingenuity with which they functioned mechanically nor would they have informed the viewer to anything like the same extent how the seeming miraculous was managed by deft engineering. If they had been miniature in scale, one would more likely have marvelled at the skills of the model-makers rather than at the remarkable innovations of the original theatre practitioners and architects, the chief motivation for curating the exhibition. Because the curators had conceived the need to render the spectacle of Medicean theatre *experientially* and had found precisely the way to do this succinctly, one was rapidly taught how to 'read' and interpret three-dimensionally the accompanying visual materials and through that process how to read the surviving remnants of Stuart theatre design with fresh appreciation. It is not an easy accomplishment to enter

Jones's Banqueting House as an empty architectural space and see it theatricalised in the mind's eye. Only Rubens' paintings on the ceiling depicting the apotheosis of King James offer some visual keys to what spectacle there had been like and what its emblems of power signified; but they would be more meaningful if contextualised in the manner of this Florentine exhibition. One left the Medici-Riccardi wondering why no one has attempted to design such a *large-scale* model of the Banqueting House at Whitehall, showing how it would appear after transformation into a theatricalised space and with the mechanisms to demonstrate how its changing scenery operated. Small models like those constructed in the past in England by Richard Leacock or Richard Southern do not communicate a proper sense of the grandeur involved nor, in consequence, do they intimate anything about the ideology of absolute power, which was the *raison d'être* of performances in the space. This exhibition offered an invaluable lesson on modes of representing past history for students of theatre practice.

The following year (2002) the museum in the Palazzo del Comune in Arezzo mounted a modest, but in the event a highly informative exhibition, entitled *Leonardo da Vinci: The Theatre Sheet*. It was again a model of what a good theatre exhibition might encompass. The sheet in question (known as Atlanticus Codex. f. 50) was detached from the main body of work with which it was originally grouped. Though its discovery (through a purchase for a private collection in Switzerland) was known to a select number of da Vinci scholars since the 1950s, it has but recently been made available for general viewing. Its appearance has brought a range of da Vinci's sketches into a new, hitherto largely unsuspected relation: a whole constellation of designs to scale and impressions of their working appearance, which were made for an intended staging by Leonardo of Politiano's *Orfeo* in 1506 for Charles D'Amboise, the French governor of Milan. What the theatre sheet contains is a detailed design for the central machine necessary to effect a complex moment of spectacle together with two sketches of its appearance in operation, one a close up of the surprising coup de theatre, the other that moment seen from a sufficiently detached distance as to situate it within the large permanent stage setting designed by Leonardo for the performance. Two further sketches on the sheet were cut away from the complete manuscript (one a general view of the permanent set, which out of context looks like a rough landscape study; the other a group of racing figures, which might, again out of context, have been passed off as a preliminary drawing for a larger painting) so that the sheet as exhibited has two oddly shaped holes to either side of the two images of the setting in use. Fortunately these two tiny sketches

have been known for many years and been extensively photographed (chiefly to accompany essays attempting to define what they might depict) and scaled down photographs were included in the exhibition to show how the whole sheet might once have appeared. It is indeed fortunate that they were so extensively recorded, since both small images have recently been virtually lost through attempts to 'restore' them by cleaning to clarify their content (or so it was hoped); the methods deployed for the restoration did not take properly into account the constituents of Leonardo's ink and so his work was virtually dissolved. Excitingly the discovery of the theatre sheet has explained the significance of a wealth of other materials by Leonardo (in the Madrid and Arundel Codices together with a number of isolated fragmentary images in the Royal Collection at Windsor). All these were drawn together in the exhibition not only to give a context for the theatre sheet but also to give for the first time a full assembly of images and artefacts to show Leonardo's work as stage designer and director.

Politiano's *Orfeo* had originally been written in Italian not Latin and performed in the Gonzaga household in Mantua in 1480 to a commission by Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga. Whether the work was actually performed in Milan is uncertain, despite the extensive preparations, which are evident from the range and detail of Leonardo's work, since no references to performances appear in any annals or state papers of the time. This lacuna is in itself unusual, since most of Leonardo's theatrical enterprises were described by spectators or contributors in some detail (from the staging of Bellincioni's *Paradise* for the wedding of Galeazzo Maria Sforza with Isabella d'Aragon in 1490 and the production of Taccone's *Danae* in Milan in 1496 to the machines, costumes and triumphal arches designed to entertain the court of Francois I in his last years). Leonardo's ability to provoke surprise and delight was much commented upon. However, where more verbal records survive of these other entertainments (with some notable exceptions, such as the elegant costume designs for court festivities and tournaments in the collection at Windsor), this grouping together of materials at Arezzo provided substantial visual evidence of the theatrical dimension of his genius, which was welcome.

The permanent set that Leonardo designed evoked a wild, rocky landscape where a central mountain separated two valleys surrounded by a curving ridge of steep crags. (The appearance of the mountain range is reminiscent of his geological sketches made in the Valdarno region, which were also deployed as sources for the backgrounds to his two versions of the painting of 'Virgin and Child with Saint Anna'.) Most of the action of the drama was to be played on a forestage before the central mountain. After Eurydice's death and at the

start of Orfeo's descent to Hades to beg Pluto and Persephone to spare his wife and return her to earth, the central structure began to turn to reveal the inside of the mountain as the palace of Hades. But the truly remarkable engineering feat was that, as the mountain structure rotated, the actor playing Pluto simultaneously rose on a lift from beneath the stage standing astride a giant orb to tower over the mortal characters. Ever thoughtful of contingencies that might disturb the awesome effect of this spectacle, Leonardo included in the design of the lift two vertical supports to allow the actor to steady himself throughout the ascent so that he appeared to be framed within the gate of Hell. Most of the theatre sheet is occupied with the design of the lift to scale, defining the grouping of the pulleys that will ensure a smooth ascent (there is an enlarged sketch of one such pulley); the features of the design are severally given letters and calculations as to their dimensions are made alongside.

Of the two smaller images, which are situated beneath the mechanical designs, one shows the effect of the spectacle inside Hades at its climax; the other, by taking a larger view of the stage, shows how the effect was to be confined to just the central section of mountain. Was the inclusion of this sketch intended to show how the performance was to observe the unity of place? It is as if Hades is being conceived as the dark side of Orfeo's psyche. This second sketch makes clear the dimensions of the forestage, which are not so apparent in the other drawings of the set, such as the two, which appear in the Arundel Codex (ff. 231v and 224r) in the British Library. The first of these shows the full mountainous setting with its valleys and crags but in this instance with a flight of stone steps leading from the forestage to a doorway in the central bulk of mountain, which was presumably intended for Orfeo's approach to the entrance to Hell. The second drawing intimates that that central grouping of rocks has somehow reversed to leave an arched inner stage but with arched entrances to either side of it (presumably to allow access to the forestage for the chorus of furies or to suggest Orfeo's descending journey before he finally encounters Pluto). Clearly these were interim designs as Leonardo's concept took shape, before the annotated drawing of the lift-device was attempted.

Of the two sketches that were removed from the theatre sheet, the originals of which have virtually been destroyed, one (that would have been situated to the right of the two images depicting Pluto's arrival) showed a yet more detailed design of the central grouping of crags but on this occasion with a more clearly defined doorway and mounting steps leading up to it; the other is one of only three images that, taken together, indicate how the most intense

moments from the play in performance might have been staged. It depicted the final sequence from the action, where Orfeo is destroyed by the Bacchantes: the singer has been thrown to the ground and is surrounded by raging figures with their arms raised as if about to attack him violently. Designs for the scenes of Pluto's judgement and Orfeo's death are grouped in a sequence on the sheet. What is not clear is if a relation exists between these sketches and the one described as 'Aristeus following Euydice' which is in the Royal Collection at Windsor (RL 12708r), where the chase, which is to lead to Eurydice's death, appears to be taking place on a raised stage above a group of gesticulating figures and a curled shape which may be a hasty representation of the snake that is deal Eurydice her death. This sketch is another fragment cut from a larger sheet, but so far its proper context remains unidentified. Whether *Orfeo* was actually performed or not in Milan in 1506 is of less importance than the remarkably full sense of how Leonardo envisaged staging Politiano's drama, which emerges from juxtaposing this array of materials from numerous collections to guide one's 'reading' of the theatre sheet.

Verbal accounts of the celebrations that Leonardo designed elsewhere suggest that he frequently took on the role of arranger of the whole event, much in the manner of what today we would term a director; these small sketches indicate how powerfully developed a sense of drama Leonardo possessed, particularly in respect of how to situate actors within the stage picture to heighten that sense of drama. Here the stage designs for all their technical complexity are devised as settings for performers, in ways that anticipate theatre practice from a far later date than the pictorial, scenic theatre of the Stuart court, which directly drew on the traditions to which Leonardo made these contributions. There appears to be less pressure to make this event an occasion for rhetorical affirmation of the politics and power of the princely spectators for whom it was intended (the emphasis would appear to have been more on the myth being represented as an allegory of the artist's choice between the demands of his life and of his work). Such was evidently not the case with many of Leonardo's other theatrical ventures (especially where the relations of Florence and France were concerned, when his ability to create emblematical pageantry and theatre was ingeniously exploited). Perhaps this want of a conscious political dimension to the spectacle was the reason why *Orfeo* was not staged or, if mounted, not commented on in court annals.

The look and the use of the realised setting was not the only strength in this rich exhibition. The discovery of the detailed design of the lift-mechanism opened up connections with other similar materials: a series of sketches from the Arundel Codex (f. 231v) in the British Library showing how the turning

of the rocky structure to reveal an inner stage were shown to have a direct relation to a set of drawings from the Madrid Codex (1.f. 101v and 1.f.20) depicting innovative groupings of ball bearings designed to effect the smoothest of movements when rotating heavy masses. These drawings had been recreated as three-dimensional models so that the principles on which the mechanics of the setting were achieved were fully realised. These preceded a large-scale model of the setting raised above what to a comparable scale was the required under-stage area necessary to house the machinery that would effect the revolving of the central block of crags to reveal the inner stage while simultaneously allowing for the ascent of Pluto. The component elements were viewed in isolation and then combined so that one might read each component's contribution to the success of the overall effect. This format was further supplemented with the aid of computer graphics on a screen where, to the accompaniment of recorded actors and music, the spectacle was realised as it might have been seen in performance. The two continually moving recreations set alongside each other allowed one at once to enjoy the awesome moment of spectacle and appreciate the intricate workmanship that achieved the effect so effortlessly. Again, as with the exhibition of models in Florence, it was the *potential* of such a way of displaying the artefacts that chart significant developments in theatre history that impressed: the immediacy with which complex ways of reading performance from limited extant documentary evidence was achieved. Taken together the two exhibitions charted the evolution of courtly theatrical spectacle in Italy from Brunelleschi's endeavours in 1439 to the extravaganzas in the Boboli amphitheatre in the 1660s. Understandably, given the prominence of Buontalenti and his peers as known and readily identifiable influences on Inigo Jones, English historians and scholars tend to think of the genre as exclusive to Florence. The exhibition of a connection between Florence, Milan and the French court as early as the turn of the fifteenth into the sixteenth century through the figure of Leonardo da Vinci did much to broaden the scope of one's understanding not only of how the Italian tradition developed but also of how that tradition began its extensive influence throughout Europe.

The achievement of the exhibition in Arezzo was the more remarkable, given the fact that it was all designed as a setting for a single sheet of sketches. The brilliance of the curating lay in the broad interpretation of what was deemed to be relevant to that term 'setting' (what elsewhere in this essay has been defined as 'contextualising'). To enable a spectator to understand what exactly was depicted on that single sheet a range of other materials had been summoned to its explication. Not only were there the related works by

Leonardo, but on the surrounding walls were hung carefully captioned images that gave insights into the ducal courts he was employed by; the many other spectacles he created in Italy and France; the life and society of Politiano amongst the Medici and elsewhere; contemporaneous treatments of the tale of Orpheus and its subsequent importance to theatre history through the medium of Italian opera. These different sections of the exhibition were created by scholars from different disciplines, who were then invited to write for the catalogue more extensive discussions of the relevance of Leonardo's project on *Orfeo* to their respective fields.¹⁵ Theatre in performance is a collaborative art form; on the showing of these two exhibitions, theatre history is most informatively served when it too is the product of interdisciplinary collaborations. All the exhibitions referred to in this essay were continually mindful of *context* in a manner that was controlled by meticulous scholarly scruple. Their value to the historian of early theatre was extensive for their particular topics obviously, but as much too for demonstrating complex ways in which a theatre event needs to be presented, if its positioning as a cultural event is fully to be registered and appreciated. Whether one is discussing the performance of a particular play or style of drama or editing texts designed for performance, one can learn much from such mindfulness of context and the interdisciplinarity it encourages.¹⁶ The strength of these exhibitions lay in the immediacy of their engagement with theatre as a focus of cultural interactions influenced by the processes of history. That approach was exemplary; it could readily become seminal amongst theatre scholars.

Notes

- 1 The actual portrait was not on loan to the exhibition; instead it was represented by the brilliant, though anonymous, copy that is now in the private collections of the Palazzo d'Arco in Mantua. There is a further fine portrait of Castiglione by Giulio Romano, now in the collections of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome. Both Raphael's canvas and Romano's deploy a muted colour range where the subject's distinctive features seem to emerge from the darkened surroundings by virtue of some inner radiance. In Romano's portrait, the face shines and the eyes (again the focus of the viewer's gaze) seem to dance with wit and insight.
- 2 Ben Jonson, *Every Man In His Humour*, ed Martin Seymour-Smith, *The New Mermaids* (London, 1988). See 1.1.38–94 for the whole sequence. Interestingly, in the scene Jonson links Stephen's aspirations with precise details of his

income from his patrimony. Jonson was not blind to the fact that culture requires means. Similarly in *Epicœne* Dauphine's ambitions to live the leisured existence of a civilised gentleman require his securing his uncle, Morose's estate. Again Jonson is quite specific about the finances involved: Dauphine's income would amount to some fifteen hundred pound a year. The ruthlessness with which he pursues that objective leaves one questioning, however, precisely how *gentlemanly* Dauphine is: his heartlessness has opened up an unbridgeable gap between wealth and worth.

- 3 It was, however, Isabella and her instinct for collecting that most influenced their son, Federico II Gonzago, whose collection of paintings was subsequently coveted and in large measure acquired by Charles I of England. See Raffaella Morselli et al, *Gonzaga: la Celeste Galeria* (Milan, 2002). A first investigation of the importance of the Gonzaga court and its collections was mounted under Roy Strong's direction at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1981–82. See David Chambers and Jane Martineau (eds) *Splendours of the Gonzaga* (Milan, 1981).
- 4 Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women*, ed Roma Gill, The New Mermaids (London, 1968).
- 5 No stage direction indicates that Bianca and the Widow are situated *above* throughout the procession of the States of Florence (1.3); but subsequently, when Guardiano is sent by the Duke to request Livia's aid in furthering his intended seduction, the dialogue describes Bianca as 'spied from the widow's window' (2.2.1–2).
- 6 See Laura Laureati (ed), *Lucrezia Borgia* (Ferrara, 2002). The most recent revisioning of Lucrezia's life, which draws extensively on archival research, is to be found in Sarah Bradford, *Lucrezia Borgia: Life, Love and Death in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2004).
- 7 This is true of all early modern English dramatists dealing with Italian themes and history; Webster has been selected for particular appraisal here since by coincidence a number of relevant materials reflecting on the composition of his plays have become more readily accessible in recent years.
- 8 For the most recent scholarly exploration of the historical sources of the play, see Barbara Banks Amendola, *The Mystery of the Duchess of Malfi* (Stroud, 2002). The only mention of Bozzolo/Bosola occurs on 175–6, where reference is made to Bandello's almost first-hand account of the murder of Antonio Bologna in Milan and to Bozzolo's part in it.
- 9 Exceptions would be Ian McKellen and Bob Hoskins.

- 10 Isabella appears to have taken some time after her betrothal to arrive at Bracciano, which reflects the long delay that occurred between the marriage of Lorenzo and Clarice by proxy and the actual nuptials in June 1569. Lorenzo was reluctant to travel to Rome to secure his bride and eventually Clarice made the journey to Florence.
- 11 Ludovico makes little other impression in the story; Flamineo is wholly an invention by Webster seemingly (much in the manner of his privileging of Bosola over the aristocratic characters in *The Duchess of Malfi*) while Marcello becomes the wicked accomplice and assassin; the mode of his death at the hands of friars echoes Bracciano's strangling by the disguised Medici clan in the play.
- 12 A catalogue under that same title, edited by Zorzi and Sperenzi, was published by Leo S. Olschki (Firenze) in 2001. It includes some 68 illustrations in black and white and 49 in colour.
- 13 See S. Orgel and R. Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (London, Berkeley, and Los Angeles, 1973).
- 14 The visit of 1613 would have allowed him to see copies of later sets of designs (included in the exhibition) by Giulio Parrigi for *I Giudizio di Paride* (1608). These number a remarkable series of inventions, which have their parallels in Jones's inspiration right up until *Salmacida Spolia*, the last of the major masques in Charles I's reign.
- 15 The catalogue, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Theatre Sheet*, was edited by the curator of the exhibition, Carlo Starnazzi, with contributions from Carlo Pedretti and Rocco Sinisgalli (Arezzo, 2002). *The Theatre Sheet* was designed as part of an ongoing series of such exhibitions in Arezzo under the general title: *Leonardo & Surroundings: The Master, The Workshops, The Territory*. Copies offer the text in both Italian and English; black and white illustrations are reproduced in both versions, while the illustrations in colour are reproduced in a central section.
- 16 The catalogues listed in the notes above are accessible, relatively inexpensive, thoroughly and unstintingly illustrated, and generally organised in a manner that gives a reader a good sense of participating in the actual exhibition concerned, by recreating the powerful impact of the juxtapositions that were effected by the special placing of particular exhibits in relation to each other. Nothing can quite replace the impact of the mechanical models, but they are generally photographed from angles that reveal the mechanisms extensively and these images are then reproduced of a size to make possible a detailed enough reading.