

Addressing the Reader: Lodovico Dolce's *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele* and the Audience for Vernacular Philosophy in Sixteenth-Century Italy

Lodovico Dolce's popularization of Aristotelian philosophy, the *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele*, was published in Venice around 1565. It is a rather loosely organised compendium of philosophical material, comprising books on logic, practical philosophy (ethics, economics, and politics) and natural philosophy. It has not been much studied,¹ and yet offers valuable insights into both the vernacularization of Aristotelian philosophy and the increasingly sophisticated ways, often through the use of paratext, that sixteenth-century authors (working together with editors and publishers) sought to appeal to and communicate with their audience. This article will examine the differing readerships foreseen for the *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele* and how the work seeks to persuade, mollify or rebuff these readers. The *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele* serves as an example of the ways Renaissance authors and publishers sought to shape readings of a work of popularized philosophy, and Dolce, as a *poligrafo* accustomed to writing for a commercial audience, shows a particularly keen awareness of the "diverse quality" (*Somma* 3: 97v) of readers which might encounter the text; this diversity is addressed with overtures intended for his cultured but non-scholarly readers, his learned critics, and those who might take issue with his work on religious grounds.

In his magisterial *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, Charles Schmitt demonstrated not only the persistence of Aristotelianism as a philosophical force in the Renaissance but also the tradition's variety, subtlety and ability to adapt to changed intellectual and cultural circumstances. He argued that we should speak of Renaissance "Aristotelianisms" rather than a unified Aristotelianism. The vernacularization of Aristotle's philosophy in the Italian Renaissance, the subject of two recent projects,² is one example of the variety present in the Aristotelian tradition, and yet within vernacular Aristotelianism, too, there are differing strands.³ In Padua, scholars such as Alessandro Piccolomini and Benedetto Varchi dedicated themselves to the elevation of the Italian vernacular into a language suitable for high philosophical discourse; they attempted to do this by transferring knowledge, and Aristotle's philosophy in particular, into Italian. Piccolomini composed, in addition to translations, a dense and learned paraphrase of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and annotations on the *Poetics*, while Varchi lectured in Italian

on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Samuels 616). Dolce's *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele*, however, is an example of a different sort of vernacular Aristotelianism; it is a popularization which lowers the lofty tone of Varchi and Piccolomini's vernacularizing efforts, expecting a different, less scholarly audience, and which is intended for commercial success in the Venetian book trade.

By 1565, when the *Somma* was published, Venice was the capital of Italian printing, producing cheap pamphlets, prized editions, and everything in between (Salzberg 5). The growth of the printing industry in sixteenth-century Venice offered many opportunities, not least the possibility to earn a living through the composition of works designed for commercial success. Dolce was a *poligrafo*—an “adventurer of the pen,” in Paul Grendler's words (3), who forged a career in the booming business of printed books in Venice; authoring, editing, translating, commentating and summarizing works for the press (Burke 398). However, competition between printers was fierce, with many failing to maintain steady business, while Venice itself was not the liberal city it had been in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Protestantism had become firmly established north of the Alps and the Council of Trent had laid down new standards for the Catholic Church. Works on religious matters became ever more dominant in publishing lists, and an impulse to display piety can also be found in works of vernacular Aristotelianism: the influence of the Catholic Reformation forced authors to be increasingly careful of the orthodoxy of their compositions.

In this volatile environment Dolce occupied an unusually stable position. Unlike many of his fellow *poligrafi*, he was Venetian by birth and of good family (Di Filippo Bareggi 39). Thanks to this, he enjoyed a secure position in Venice's social hierarchy. In addition, his talent for rapid and varied authorship made him the city's most prolific *poligrafo*. He edited the most popular vernacular works of his day, including Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Dante's *Commedia*, Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*; he translated the writings of classical authors such as Cicero and Galen; and he wrote books under his own name, borrowing, paraphrasing, and inventing to compose literary criticism, history, comedy, and tragedy (Terpening 5; Romei 400). For most of his career he was linked to the printing house of Gabriele Giolito, Venice's most successful vernacular press, for which he produced a large number of texts (Terpening 13). Other *poligrafi* complained that his working arrangement with the Giolito Press left them without opportunities for work (Nuovo and Coppens 101). Even so, Dolce also found time to prepare texts for other presses, including the *Somma della*

ADDRESSING THE READER

filosofia d'Aristotele, which was published in Venice in 1565 by Giovanni Battista and Marchiò Sessa and their brothers.

The work is made up of three books—the first, titled the “Somma della Dialettica di Aristotele,” concerns logic, the second, the “Abbreviatione della moral filosofia di Aristotele,” practical philosophy (ethics, economics, and politics) and the third, the “Somma di tutta la natural filosofia di Aristotele,” natural philosophy.⁴ It does not, however, remain close to the works of the Aristotelian corpus, as suggested by the title-page, but instead supplements and in many cases replaces Aristotle with other material, either taken from other authors or supplied by Dolce himself. The work is an excellent example of the phenomenon described by Charles Schmitt as “eclectic Aristotelianism”: the extent to which the Aristotelian tradition “was capable of appropriating other philosophical and scientific doctrines for its own purposes” (Schmitt 89). This is not a work of deep philosophical consideration, but a commercial enterprise.

The following table offers an overview of the basic structure of Dolce’s work.⁵ While the pagination continues from the first book to the second, the third (on natural philosophy) has its own title page and new page numbers (Bianchi 380-81). As can be seen, in addition to the three main books of the *Somma*, the work contains paratextual material which supplements the text—a dedication, notes, and an address to the reader, among others.

Page	Text or Paratext	Details
*1r	Title-page	SOMMA DELLA FILOSOFIA D’ARISTOTELE, E PRIMA DELLA DIALETTICA. Raccolta da M. LODOVICO Dolce. CON PRIVILEGIO. IN VENETIA APPRESSO GIO. BATTISTA, & Marchiò Sessa, & fratelli.
*2r-*4r	Dedication to Sebastiano Erizzo	AL MAGNIFICO S. SEBASTIANO ERIZZO, FV DEL CLARISSIMO SIGNORE ANTONIO.

*4v	Outline of the contents of the first book	INDICE DI QUELLO CHE NE GLI OTTO LIBRI DELLA SOMMA DELLA DIALETTICA DI ARISTOTELE SI CONTIENE.
1r-61v	Text of Book One: Dialectic. <i>Somma della Dialettica di Aristotele</i>	DELLA SOMMA DELLA DIALETTICA DI ARISTOTELE.
62r-132v	Text of Book Two: Moral Philosophy. <i>Abbreviazione della moral filosofia di Aristotele</i>	ABBREVIATIONE DELLA MORAL FILOSOFIA DI ARISTOTELE, CIOÈ ETHICA, POLITICA, ET ECONOMICA. PER M. LODOVICO DOLCE.
1r	Book Three Title-page	SOMMA DI TVTTA LA NATVRAL FILOSOFIA DI ARISTOTELE Raccolta di M. Lodovico Dolce: <i>NELLA QVALE SI</i> CONTENGONO. Della Fisica Libri VIII. Del Cielo Libri III. Della generatione Libri II. Della Meteore Libri III. Dell'Anima Libri III. <i>CON PRIVILEGIO.</i> IN VENETIA.
2r-3v	Address to readers: "Ai Lettori"	A I LETTORI.
4r-97v	Text of Book Three: Natural Philosophy. <i>Somma di tutta la natural filosofia di Aristotele</i>	SOMMA DELLA FISICA DI ARISTOTELE: Raccolta da M. Lodovico Dolce.
97v-98v	Concluding address to readers: "Iscusatione"	Iscusatione.
99r-102r	Contents of Book One	TAVOLA DELLA DIALETTICA D'ARISTOTELE.

ADDRESSING THE READER

102v-104r	Contents of Book Two	TAVOLA DELLA MORAL FILOSOFIA D'ARISTOTELE,
*104v- *107r	Contents of Book Three	TAVOLA DELLA NATVRAL FILOSOFIA D'ARISTOTELE:
*107v	Register	REGISTRO

While interactions with readers are not limited to the paratextual material in this work, it is certainly very important for this purpose. Important studies in literary history have highlighted the rarity of a text appearing in its pure or naked form, emphasizing the importance of a surrounding of liminary material—“the fringe of the printed text which, in reality, controls the whole reading” (Lejeune 45; cited in Genette and Maclean 261). Renaissance authors, editors, and publishers were extremely sensitive to the value of paratextual material, and used them with great variety and with different ends; to make the reading easier, for instance, with explanatory material, or to persuade dedicatees or a more general audience of the value of the book in dedications or addresses to the reader. It is important to remember that Renaissance paratext cannot be understood as an “authorial commentary” only (Genette and Maclean 261) as book production in the Renaissance was the result of collaboration between authors, publishers/booksellers and editors, a relationship in which the author did not necessarily have control (Smith and Wilson 8). Therefore, where I refer to Dolce in this article, it is with the caveat that the influence of his collaborators on the content of the work is unknown.

Turning, then, to Dolce and his publishers’ expectations of the audience this work would attract, I shall first consider the primary intended readership—those who would buy the book in order to make it a commercial success. This was the new audience harnessed by the printing press, one literate in the vernacular but lacking skill in Latin, who would, for the first time, be able to apprehend the works of Aristotle through an introduction to the subject such as Dolce’s. This begins with the title-page itself of the work. With the frontispiece of the *Somma della filosofia d’Aristotele*, Dolce and the Sessa press promise the reader Aristotle’s philosophy in its entirety, condensed and presented in a small and cheap format—a lot for your money and not too taxing to read. This, of course, is too good to be true: Dolce does not cover all of Aristotle’s works, and treats the ones he does patchily. Yet this exaggeration is an

example of attempts to shape his readers' perceptions of the work, and to persuade them to part with money for it.

Dolce was, of course, not the only author of vernacular Aristotelianism hoping to win this audience, although his book title is perhaps the most grandiose. Antonio Scaino (1524-1612), a scholar who published a number of Aristotelian works in both Latin and Italian, explained in the introduction to his 1578 popularization of the *Politics* (*La Politica di Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi*) that he hoped to educate a vernacular and non-scholarly audience, as he was aware "quanto grande utile possino arrecare a gli huomini, che sono manuali operatori de governi" (*3v).

Scaino's words show the dual purpose inherent in these popularizations. They might be issued as a money-making enterprise to meet demand, but their authors could claim to have their minds on higher things: a moral and generous ambition to make the works of the philosopher available to those unable to study in Latin or at a university (Bianchi 2: 483) and expressed in a similar fashion to organizations focused on the elevation of the vernacular such as the Accademia Fiorentina (Ricci 103-99; De Gaetano 110; Sherberg 26-55). Dolce chose to dedicate the work to the Venetian nobleman Sebastiano Erizzo, a scholar engaged in the vernacularization of philosophy (Vanhaelen 138; Benzoni 198-204). In doing so, Dolce emphasizes his composition's place within the movement to make philosophy widely available. Dolce explains that:

La dottrina di Aristotele . . . ho giudicato sempre cosa di grandissimo profitto, che ella si potesse vedere nella nostra volgar lingua, e ridotta in una convenevole brevità, accio che la medesima fosse agevole ad essere appresa da tutti. (*Somma* 1: *2r)⁶

Dolce later uses his "Ai Lettori," to market his work by speaking directly to these vernacular readers. Here the focus is less on a higher purpose, and more on the simplicity and good value his book provides (Bianchi 381). As an author whose living depended on the selling of his work, he had to cultivate a closer link with his readers, and persuade them of the benefit they would find in the *Somma*:

L'abbreviare e ridurre in compendio i buoni Autori, è di grandissimo profitto a gli studiosi . . . La onde non sia di picciolo profitto il vedere i gran libri di Aristotele rapportati in una convenevole brevità: e tanto maggiormente, che chi con diligenza gli legge, vedrà loro levata ogni

oscurità, anzi trattar di qualunque materia con molta chiarezza: come appare nella Dialettica, opra da se difficile e faticosa; nondimeno si puo dire con verità, che sia detta facilissimamente. Così parimente la Fisica: i libri del Cielo e del Mondo: la Meteore, dell'Anima: e la morale Filosofia. I quali tutti libri si apprendono con gran difficoltà nelle Scole: et in tal forma ridotti, possono esser facilissimi a ciascuno. (*Somma* 3: 2r-v)⁷

Dolce sought to make his “brief guide to Aristotle” as accessible to these readers as possible. The ease with which Aristotelian philosophy could be learnt from the work, and that this is his highest priority, is emphasised by Dolce in the “Iscusatione” at the end of the book on natural philosophy. He writes that:

In questi tre brevi volumetti havete, sincerissimi lettori, tutti la somma della Dialettica, e della naturale e morale Filosofia. La qual cosa stimo, che recherà a ciascun di voi non picciolo giovamento. Io confesso, che di cotal materia si poteva piu copiosamente trattare (serbando tuttavia la brevità) ma per avventura non si poteva con maggior chiarezza. (*Somma* 3: 97v)⁸

The majority of Dolce’s treatment of moral philosophy comes in the form of short discussions, each heralded by a short title, such as “Quel, che dee fare un Cittadino, che amministra la Republica” (*Somma* 2: 97r). These offer the unlearned reader a structured way to encounter information. Dolce’s “eclectic Aristotelianism” is very much in evidence: he uses material from outside the Aristotelian tradition to add detail or interest for his readers. So, when Dolce raises the subject of money, he presents the views of Aristotle (from *Politics* 1328^b10-11) and Demosthenes together,⁹ saying that money is: “Come piace a Demosthene, sono i nervi della Republica: o, come ad Aristotele, tanto necessari, che è uopo, che manchi lo stato della Republica, se la città non havrà le sue rendite e le sue entrate” (*Somma* 2: 93v).¹⁰

Elsewhere, Dolce offers a selection of maxims from Seneca, a discussion of duty to the republic with reference to Cicero and Cato the Elder and, perhaps most surprisingly, a description of tyranny in which he does not refer to Aristotle at all but draws from a canzone of Petrarch, stating that bad plants which cannot flower (that is, tyrants) must be uprooted (Petrarch 48, lines 71-76).¹¹

It is clear that Dolce presumed his vernacular readership to be acquainted with works of Italian literature—he quotes elsewhere from Jacopo Sannazaro (*Somma* 2: 102v) and Dante (*Somma* 2: 103v)—emphasizing the development of the Italian vernacular which created the possibility of being “well-read” without knowing any Latin. Appealing to this appetite for reading, Dolce offers his eager readers further material to better their understanding, writing at the conclusion of the first book, on dialectic, that although his treatment of the subject has drawn to a close, his readers can consult both Aristotle’s original text and explanatory works by other authors: “degli altri lo studioso lettore se n’ andrà a vedere Aristotele, et alcuni moderni, che di cio hanno scritto diligentemente” (*Somma* 1: 55r). While no complete vernacular translation of Aristotle’s logical works existed, treatises on the subject were certainly available, including one published in Venice by Dolce’s close collaborator Gabriele Giolito only two years previously—Tito Giovanni Scandianese’s 1563 *La dialettica divisa in tre libri*.

While Dolce could have presumed that the majority of his readers were not particularly familiar with the Aristotelianism he covered in the *Somma*, he was nonetheless prepared that the work might attract a readership which would have the ability to make a critical assessment of his presentation of Aristotelian material. This assumption was certainly not limited to Dolce. The scholar Niccolò Vito di Gozze (1549-1610), a resident of Ragusa (today Dubrovnik), added a note in the “Ai Lettori” at the end of his 1591 *Dello stato delle repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotele con essempli moderni giornate otto* which pre-empted censure of his composition and betrays a certain feeling of inferiority from an author working outside the Italian centers of learning:

Benignissimi Lettori, se in questi Ragionamenti dello stato delle Rep[ubliche] non arriverà l’autore per avventura ove desiderano gli elevati ingegni vostri, l’iscusarete, havendo questa considerazione; che egli non mai vide le mura di Padova, ne di Bologna, ne d’alcun’altro studio famoso fuori della sua patria, fondata sopra un’altro lido del mare, et sotto l’aspro Monte di Vargato; perche più di meraviglia, che di riprensione degno doverà sempre essere stimato, havendo egli acquistato questa cognitione più in casa, con la propria industria, senza precettore, che fuori con l’aiuto altrui: la qual anco maravigliosamente hà dimostrato fin’hora in più sue opere, che hà dato in luce (Vito di Gozze 447)¹²

Dolce's overtures to his learned readers are frequent and nuanced. He addresses varying facets of this learned audience: those with enough knowledge to notice his mistakes, those who doubted the value of transferring classical philosophy into the vernacular, and finally his professional rivals who might attack his work for their own gain; the other *poligrafi* who were undoubtedly jealous of his success. He is careful to meet these possibilities directly, in order to reassure his primary intended public, those wishing to learn about Aristotelian philosophy, and to caution his critics.

To those who might look down upon the vernacularization of philosophy (and therefore were learned but not *poligrafi*, since vernacularization was a staple of their trade) he is defiant, writing in the "Ai lettori" at the beginning of the book on natural philosophy that while some scholars might resent Aristotle being made available to the common people, they cannot deny the advantages of such learning:

molti letterati mostreranno di prender dispiacere, che un Filosofo di tanta stima si faccia famigliare al volgo et a coloro, che lettere non sanno. Ma questi tali non dovrebbero invidiare il beneficio, che ne possono conseguire i belli intelletti. (*Somma* 3: 2v-3r)¹³

Later, in the "Iscusatione" at the end of the work, he defends the effectiveness of his endeavour, writing that "ad alcuni parrà forse impossibile, che da quelli, che lettere non sanno, si possa nel primo libro apparar la Dialettica: ma io stimo, che a belli ingegni cio impossibile non sia" (*Somma* 3: 98v).¹⁴

This act, of the author censuring an imagined foe who disapproves of their noble intention to spread knowledge is not unusual in Renaissance book culture. It is also found in the "Ai Lettori" included in another work written by Dolce for the Sessa press, the *Dialogo . . . nel qual si ragiona delle qualità, diversità, et proprietà de i colori* (1565). Here, it seems that the "Ai Lettori" has been written by the publisher, not Dolce (Sanson 18). It discusses not only the work it is published with, but also the *Somma della filosofia dell'Aristotile*, stating that:

Ne debbono alcuni troppi severi riprendere il transportar nella nostra lingua cosi fatte opere: percioche non possono essi dire, che non apportino frutto a belli spiriti, che non sanno lettere Latine, e meno Greche. E'l cosi riprendere è un dimostrare di portare invidia al beneficio di altrui. (5r)¹⁵

In the *Somma della filosofia dell'Aristotile*, however, Dolce goes further, confronting criticism from other directions. It seems he expected some to come from his fellow *poligrafi*, whom he warns off with the veiled threat that those who review too harshly should expect unkind reviews in return:

E, perche è da credere, che da diverse qualità di persone saranno questi libri letti: io prego coloro, che sanno, che non vogliono condannar tutta la opera, per vederci alcuna cosa per avventura non ben detta: percioche tutti gli huomini in qualche parte errano. Ne si conviene nelle fatiche altrui esser troppo severo censore: e chi questo fa, da similmente cagione, che altrui poi siano severissimi nelle cose loro. (*Somma* 3: 97v)¹⁶

The bulk of Dolce's ire, however, is directed to those readers who scorn the works of others without producing anything useful themselves. He writes at the end of the second book, on moral philosophy, that:

Se gioverà in qualche parte a i lettori di haver cio letto, stimerò di haver ricevuto assai largo frutto della mia fatica: se averrà altrimenti, non è da biasmare la mia volontà, laquale è sempre indirizzata all'utile comune di coloro, che non sanno. Ne è da fare istima di alcuni, che non iscrivendo mai cosa alcuna, mordono sempre le fatiche et i sudori di altrui. In questo accorti, che non iscrivendo nulla, perché scrivendo, darebbono essi ancora materia ad altri di censurare i loro scritti. Ma io poco curandomi di cosi fatti huomini, penso ancora di darvi a leggere la *Dialettica* di Aristotele,¹⁷ chiarissimamente in un breve sommario ridotta. (*Somma* 2: 132r-v)¹⁸

Dolce's pre-emptive attacks on his learned critics paint a picture of not only a fiercely competitive Venetian publishing industry, but of an intellectual society which held its members to rigorous (and, according to Dolce, unfair) account. Although it is not possible to say whom Dolce may have had particularly in mind when he wrote these barbed volleys, he certainly had his fair share of scholarly quarrels. In the 1530s the animosity between himself and Nicolò Franco, who had accused Dolce of poor knowledge of Latin (Terpening 17), and between Franco and Pietro Aretino, forced the young Franco, lacking the connections and status of his rivals, to leave Venice for good (Di Filippo Bareggi 242). Another dispute occurred in the 1550s, when Girolamo Ruscelli penned his *Tre Discorsi* criticizing three of Dolce's works, although this

animosity seems to have dissolved by the time the *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele* was published in 1565 (Terpening 18). Dolce's addresses to his critics reveal that despite his advertised popularising intent, he confidently expected a more learned readership, including his fellow authors, to feature in the readership of his work.

Finally, we turn to Dolce's concern that a certain part of his work's public might examine it, whether officially or informally in the course of their reading, for Catholic piety and orthodoxy.¹⁹ The liberal atmosphere in Venice in the early decades of the sixteenth century had evaporated by the time Dolce wrote the *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele*; it was imperative to remain beyond question of unorthodoxy. Dolce often took liberties with the letter of the Aristotelian texts he purported to be summarizing, and this was certainly true when he wished to avoid difficult theological points. For instance, in outlining to his readers one of the pillars of Aristotelian politics, man's nature as a social animal, he rejects the second part of Aristotle's dictum that an individual who has withdrawn from human society is either a beast or a god (*Politics* 1253^a3-4). He concludes that a man who turns from God's gift of human partnership can only be beast-like:

Non è buono, che l'huomo sia solo: percioche l'huomo di ordine di DIO per natural compagnia è animal civile e politico. Ilche si vede manifestamente per rispetto del parlare, che come legame della compagna humana, è stato dato da esso DIO al solo huomo, affine, che l'un con l'altro si possa scambievolmente intendere, per servire e giovare l'uno parimente a bisogni dell'altro: laqual favella a gli altri animali non è conceduta. Il perche è da dire, che l'huomo soletario sia o bestia, o DIO. DIO non puo essere oltre ogni altra ragione, per cagione che solo DIO non ha bisogno di cosa alcuna; come quello ch'è datore di tutte le cose: ma si ben l'huomo ha bisogno dell'altro huomo. Onde è da conchiudere, che 'l soletario sia bestia. (*Somma* 2: 89r)²⁰

While other commentators, most notably Thomas Aquinas, had offered the example of hermit-saints such as John the Baptist or St. Anthony as a way around the difficult concept of a man whose solitude renders him god-like (Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In Octos Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio* I.i.5),²¹ Dolce denies it completely. His insistence on man's sociability as God-given and his emphasis on the word "Dio" reflects the sensitivity to religious unorthodoxy at the time. Certainly, Dolce is very clear on the necessity of religion to the state,

something largely missing from Aristotle's discussions, insisting that religion is the only foundation on which to build the republic: "La religione è solo fondamento a ordinar la Republica" (*Somma* 2: 90r).

The subject that demanded the most skilful dancing around potential heresies was tackled by Dolce towards the end of the work, when outlining Aristotle's natural philosophy. Aristotle's contention that the soul was mortal simply could not be explained away, although Dolce tried his best, suggesting in his "Ai Lettori" that Aristotle's stance was only that of devil's advocate to his teacher Plato:

Solo in una cosa peccò: e questo in tener l'anima mortale. Ma sono alcuni, che stimano, che non tanto si movesse a cio, perche tale fosse la sua openione, quanto per contradire al suo Maestro Platone; il quale mosso da spirito Divino s'affaticò a provare la immortalità. (*Somma* 3: 3r-v)²²

This suggestion does not seem to be enough, however, and Dolce devotes later pages to the writings of the later Platonists and their confutations of Aristotle's theories on the soul (Bianchi 382): "con quali verissimi Argomenti i seguaci di Platone confutino le conchiusione di Aristotele" (*Somma* 3: 88r).

In his caution over the unorthodox implications of his work, Dolce is completely in line with other vernacularisers of Aristotle. When paraphrasing Aristotle's simple declaration of the natural desire for procreation, common to all living things, Antonio Scaino adds a digression on the benefits of marriage and how this is peculiar to mankind (Scaino 1v-2r). Felice Figliucci (1518-95), a scholar, priest and populariser of both Plato and Aristotle, also takes care over Aristotle's position as a pagan authority in a Christian society. For instance, when comparing ancient Greek religion with Christianity, he encourages his audience to see the parallels between the religion of Homer and of the Catholic Church:

Il gran poeta Homero disse, che Giove era padre, et Re de gl'huomini, et de gli Iddii, per la somiglianza, che hà il governo del padre a quello del Re . . . Homero allhora parlò secondo l'opinione del vulgo, che crede Iddio havere la medesima figura de gl'huomini, et esser d'una medesima sorte. Oltra di questo si può dire, parlando come Christiano, che Iddio per sommo, et infinito amore, che a gl'huomini porta, s'è fatto a loro per amor simile, et cosi si può dire lor Re, et lor padre (*De la politica* 32r)²³

Figliucci aligns it with Christianity; Homer's God is father and king, and the same can be said of the Christian God. He writes forgivingly of the "opinion of the common people"—the tendency to anthropomorphise God being equally tempting to his own contemporaries.

It is obvious that writers working on classical philosophy felt the need to be extremely cautious concerning the suspicion of unorthodoxy. At the end of the *Somma*, in the "Iscusatione," Dolce entreats his readers for understanding:

E, quanto alle cose, che appartengono alla religione, è da sapere, che qui si favella, come Filosofo, indagando le cose per via o di vere, o di probabile, et apparenti ragioni. Quanto a quello, che si scrive dell'anima, ancora che pure se ne favelli filosoficamente; ci rimettiamo in tutto e per tutto alla vera Theologia, et a censori delle cose sacre, come quelli, che non intendiamo in niuna guisa di discostarci punto dalla catholica dottrina della Santissima Romana Chiesa. Onde ogni errore, che ci sia dimostro, siamo prontamente per correggere. (*Somma* 3: 97v-98r)²⁴

While Dolce had sneered at the critical readings of his rivals and the errors in style or Aristotelian doctrine they might find, he is at his most conciliatory here, promising to right any mistakes and explaining that the problematic passages are spoken of "as a philosopher," distancing himself from what was conveyed. Failure to express suitably Catholic opinions could be a matter of life and death; indeed Dolce's former rival, Nicolò Franco, was executed for heretical writing in Rome in 1571 (Grendler 48).

In conclusion, reading the *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele* shows the high awareness the authors and publishers of vernacular Aristotelianism had of their audience, and the means—often through the use of paratextual materials—with which they attempted to shape readings. Within this subset of vernacular Aristotelianism, that intended as a popularization, the ideal intended reader (and buyer) was Italian-literate but philosophically uneducated, who wished to improve their learning and who would choose his concise summary over longer, more difficult translations or treatises. However, Dolce also expected other inevitable audiences from elsewhere in Italian sixteenth-century society. This included fellow writers or intellectuals who would criticize his work (and here he seems to be unusual in his direct confrontation of this readership) for its stylistic or philosophical content and other readers

who would scrutinize it for religious ambiguities. His attention to the shaping of his readers' opinions is precise, and indicates an author deeply immersed in the book trade of the sixteenth century and one sensitive to his opportunities to manipulate his readers and elevate himself in relation to his contemporaries.

Grace Allen THE JOHN RYLANDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

NOTES

¹ An important discussion of the work is found in Luca Bianchi's article "Per una storia dell'aristotelismo 'volgare' nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca," which also draws attention to its haphazard nature and its divergence from strictly Aristotelian philosophy. Bianchi writes: "durante il Rinascimento la filosofia di Aristotele non solo si confrontò, interagì, si contaminò, talvolta si fuse con altre tradizioni filosofiche, ma divenne anche il veicolo attraverso il quale furono trasmessi teorie, concetti, e persino materiali testuali eterogenei; materiali che—come dimostra il caso, tutt'altro che isolato, di Dolce—potevano avere poco o nulla a che vedere con l'interpretazione del pensiero dello Stagirita" (384).

² The AHRC-funded project *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy, c. 1400-c. 1650*, ran from 2010-2013 at the University of Warwick and the Warburg Institute. Another project—*Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular: Rethinking Renaissance and Early Modern Intellectual History (c. 1400-1650)*—is in progress at Ca' Foscari, Venice, and the University of Warwick.

³ On vernacular Aristotelianism, see, for example, Lines, David, and Refini, Eugenio (eds). *"Aristotele fatto volgare": Tradizione aristotelica e cultura volgare nel Rinascimento*, Edizioni ETS, 2014; Lines, David. 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism: Bernardo Segni's *Ethica*, the Florentine Academy, and the Vernacular in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 66 (2013), pp. 824-65; Bianchi, Luca, "Volgarizzare Aristotele: per chi?" *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, vol. 59, 2012, pp. 480-95.

⁴ I have cited the three books as *Somma* 1, 2 and 3, with the paratextual material preceding the first book included with *Somma* 1 and that preceding and following the third book with *Somma* 3. An asterisk indicates where I have assigned foliation.

⁵ For clarity, I have not included divisions within the main books themselves, chapter headings or diagrams, which can themselves be considered paratextual.

⁶ I have always judged it to be a thing of great profit that the teaching of Aristotle . . . can be seen in our vernacular language and reduced to a convenient brevity, in such a way that it can be easily apprehended by everyone.

⁷ The abbreviation and reduction of good authors into compendiums is of the greatest profit to students So, it is of no small profit to see the great books of Aristotle relayed in convenient brevity; and even more so, he who reads it with diligence will see that every obscurity is removed, and that instead every matter is treated with great clarity.

This is seen in the *Dialectic*, by itself a difficult and tiring work, but nevertheless one can truly say that it can be understood very easily. It is the same with the *Physics*, the books on *Heaven and Earth*, the *Meteorology*, the *On the Soul*, and *Moral Philosophy*. All these books are studied with great difficulty in the schools; and in this reduced form, they can be very easy for everyone.

⁸ In these three brief little volumes you have, most honest readers, all the summary of the *Dialectic*, and of the natural and moral philosophy. Something I envisage will bring to all of you no little pleasure. I confess that one could treat of all this material more fully (retaining above all the brevity) but perhaps one could not do so with greater clarity.

⁹ These words are ascribed to Demosthenes by Aeschines (section 166, 438-39).

¹⁰ Either the sinews of the republic, as pleases Demosthenes, or, according to Aristotle, so necessary and vital that the state of the republic is deficient if the city does not have its income and tax revenue.

¹¹ Orsi, lupi, leoni, aquile e serpi
ad una gran marmorea colonna
fanno noia sovente, et a sé danno.
Di costor piange quella gentil donna,
che t'ha chiamato, a ciò che di lei stirpi
le male piante, che fiorir non sanno.

¹² Excellent readers, if in these thoughts on the state of republics the author does not by chance reach the heights your lofty intellects desire, excuse him, bearing this in mind: that, located on another seashore and under rugged Monte di Vargato, he never saw the walls of Padua or of Bologna, nor of any other university famous beyond his country; so that, more worthy of wonder than of reproof, he will always deserve praise, having acquired this understanding more at home, by his own industry, without a teacher, than from outside with the help of others, which he has also marvellously demonstrated up to now in the many works which he has published.

¹³ Many scholars show their displeasure that a philosopher of such esteem is made familiar to the common people and to those who are unlearned. But these such must not resent the benefit that those of good intellect can obtain from it.

¹⁴ To some, it might seem impossible that in the first book *Dialectic* could be made clear to those who are unlearned: but I expect that to good minds this is not impossible.

¹⁵ Nor should some very severe people reproach the translation of such works into our language, because they cannot say that they [the works] do not bring fruit to beautiful spirits who know no Latin and less Greek. To reproach thus is a demonstration that they resent the others' benefit.

¹⁶ And, because it is expected that a diverse quality of people will read these books, I pray that those who are learned will not wish to condemn all of the work, from seeing something there perhaps not well said: because all men err in some things. Nor is it advisable to be too severe a critic of the works of others: and whoever does this, for a similar reason, others then are very severe in judging their things.

¹⁷ This suggests that Dolce's summary of *dialectic* was written after that of moral philosophy (Bianchi 380).

¹⁸ If it is of any use to the readers to have read this, I will consider to have received a very large reward from my work: if it should be otherwise, my intention is not to blame, it being always directed to the common utility of those who are unlearned. It is not to gain respect from those who, never writing anything, always castigate the works and the

labours of others. In this they are careful not to write anything, because by writing they might then give material to others to censure their writings. But concerning myself little with such men, I think still to give you to read the Dialectic of Aristotle, reduced most clearly in a brief summary.

¹⁹ Discussion of Dolce's attention to religious orthodoxy may also be found in Bianchi's "Per una storia dell'aristotelismo 'volgare' nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca."

²⁰ It is not good for man to be alone; because man, ordained by God for natural partnership, is a civil and political animal. One sees this clearly with respect to speech, which, as a bond of human partnership, was given by God to man alone, so that one person may understand another, in order that one may serve and assist, in like manner, the needs of another; this power of speech was not given to the other animals. The reason is that the solitary man is either a beast or God. He cannot be God, apart from any other reason, because only God has no need of anything else, since he is the giver of all things; but man needs other men. Therefore, it is to be concluded that the solitary man is a beast.

²¹ Sed si aliquis homo habeat quod non sit civilis, propter naturam, aut nequam est, utpote cum hoc contingit ex corruptione naturae humanae; aut est melior quam homo, in quantum scilicet habet naturam perfectiorem aliis hominibus communiter, ita quod per se sibi possit sufficere absque hominum societate; sicut fuit in Ioanne Baptista, et beato Antonio heremita.

²² He sinned in only one thing: and this is in holding the soul to be mortal. But some others consider that he was moved to this not so much because it was his opinion, as to contradict his master Plato; who, moved by the Holy Spirit, had laboured to prove the immortality [of the soul].

²³ The great poet Homer said that Jove was father and king of men and of the gods, from the similarity which the governance of a father has to that of a king . . . Homer, however, spoke according to the opinion of the common people, who believe God to have the same appearance as men and to be the same sort of being. Other than this, one can say, speaking as a Christian that God, through the great and infinite love which he bears for human beings, is made similar to them by love and so one can say he is their king and their father.

²⁴ And as for things pertaining to religion, it must be known that here they are spoken of as by a philosopher, investigating things through true, or probable and apparent reasons. As to what is written on the soul, even if it is spoken of philosophically, we return in every way to the true Theology, and to the censors of sacred things, as those that do not intend in any way to distance ourselves at all from the catholic doctrine of the most holy Roman Church. So we will quickly correct every error that is revealed here.

WORKS CITED

Aeschines. *The Speeches of Aeschines, with an English Translation.*

Edited and translated by Charles D. Adams, W. Heinemann and G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1919.

Aquinas, Thomas, and Peter of Auvergne. *In Octos Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio.* Edited by Raimondo M. Spiazzi, Marietti, 1966.

- Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular: Rethinking Renaissance and Early Modern Intellectual History (c. 1400-c. 1650)*. Directed by Marco Sgarbi, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, University of Warwick, 2013. 8 Nov. 2016, <https://aristotleinthevernacular.org/>.
- Aristotle. *The Complete Works*. 2 Vols. Edited by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Benzoni, Gino. "Erizzo, Sebastiano." *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 43, 1960-2013, pp. 198-204.
- Bianchi, Luca. "Per una storia dell'aristotelismo 'volgare' nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca." *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, vol. 15, 2009, pp. 367-85.
- . "Volgarizzare Aristotele: per chi?" *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, vol. 59, 2012, pp. 480-95.
- Burke, Peter. "Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication." *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, edited by John Martin and Dennis Romano, Johns Hopkins UP, 2000, 389-419.
- De Gaetano, Armand L. *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy: The Rebellion Against Latin*, L. S. Olschki, 1976.
- Di Filippo Bareggi, Claudia. *Il mestiere di scrivere: lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento*, Bulzoni, 1988.
- Dolce, Ludovico. *Dialogo di M. Ludovico Dolce nel qual si ragiona delle qualità, diversità, et proprietà de i colori*, Giovanni Battista Marchio Sessa et fratelli, 1565.
- . *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele*. Giovanni Battista Marchio Sessa et fratelli, 1565.
- Figliucci, Felice. *De la politica, ouero scienza ciuile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile*, Giovanni Battista Somascho, 1583.
- Genette, Gerard, and Maclean, Marie. "Introduction to the Paratext." *New Literary History*, vol. 2, 1991, pp. 261-79.
- Grendler, Paul F. *Critics of the Italian World 1530-1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco and Ortensio Lando*, U of Winconsin P, 1969.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *Le pacte autobiographique*, Seuil, 1975.
- Lines, David. "Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism: Bernardo Segni's *Ethica*, the Florentine Academy, and the Vernacular in Sixteenth-Century Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 66, 2013, pp. 824-65.

- Lines, David, and Eugenio Refini, editors. *"Aristotele fatto volgare": Tradizione aristotelica e cultura volgare nel Rinascimento*, Edizioni ETS, 2014.
- Nuovo, Angela, and Coppens, Christian. *I Giolito e la stampa nell'Italia del XVI secolo*, Droz, 2005.
- Petrarch, Francesco. "Canzone 53." *Le Rime Sparse e i Trionfi*. Edited by E. Chiorboli, G. Laterza, 1930, pp. 46-49.
- Ricci, Antonio. "Lorenzo Torrentino and the Cultural Programme of Cosimo I de' Medici." *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*. Edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, Ashgate, 2001, pp. 103-19.
- Romei, Giovanna. "Lodovico Dolce." *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 40, Rome, 1960-2013, pp. 399-405.
- Salzberg, Rosa. *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice*, Manchester UP, 2014.
- Samuels, Richard S. "Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement." *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 29, 1976, pp. 599-634.
- Sanson, Helena. "Introduction." *Dialogo della institutione delle donne, secondo li tre stati che cadono nella vita umana*. By M. Ludovico Dolce, Edited by Helena Sanson, The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2015, pp. 1-68.
- Scaino, Antonio. *La Politica di Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi*, Rome, 1578.
- Scandianese, Tito Giovanni. *La dialettica divisa in tre libri*, Gabriele Giolito, 1563.
- Schmitt, Charles. *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, Harvard UP, 1983.
- Sgarbi, Marco. *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540-1551)*, Brill, 2014.
- Sherberg, Michael. "The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language: The Politics of Theory in Ducal Florence." *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 56, 2003, pp. 26-55.
- Smith, Helen, and Wilson, Louise. "Introduction." *The Renaissance Paratext*. Edited by Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, Cambridge UP, 2011, pp. 1-14.
- Terpening, Ronnie H. *Lodovico Dolce: Renaissance Man of Letters*. U of Toronto P, 1997.
- Vanhaelen, Maude. "Platonism in Sixteenth-Century Padua: Two Unpublished Letters from Sebastiano Erizzo to Camilla Erculiani." *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2016, pp. 137-47.
- Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy, c. 1400-c. 1650*. Directed by David Lines, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance,

ADDRESSING THE READER

University of Warwick, 2010-14. 8 Nov. 2016,
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/projects/vernaculararistotelianism/>.

Vito di Gozze, Niccolò. *Dello stato delle republiche secondo la mente di Aristotele con essempli moderni giornate otto*, Aldo Guidi, 1591.