

contexts. Remarkably invisible, however, remains the question of to what extent the historical characteristics and patterns uncovered in the selected poems could be considered “typically Dutch.” While Britt Grootes connects Hooft’s sonnet to the English lyrical tradition, most authors read their poems in a uniquely Dutch sociopolitical context, and sometimes enter into debate solely with colleagues in Dutch literary scholarship. A next research project on the nature of lyric address deserves a more developed comparative approach.

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Margherita Costa: “The Buffoons, A Ridiculous Comedy”: A Bilingual Edition.
Sara E. Díaz and Jessica Goethals, eds. and trans.

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Sara E. Díaz and Jessica Goethals’s critical edition and facing-page translation of Margherita Costa’s comedy *Li buffoni* (1641) brings a unique, female-authored burlesque comedy to a wide audience. This edition is a significant contribution to our understanding of Margherita Costa, whose other published works, fourteen in all, include a court *relazione*, lyric and narrative poetry, fictional love letters, opera libretti, and a horse ballet, published between 1630 and 1654. She was also a virtuosa singer, performing opera and chamber music across Europe.

Li buffoni was the first comedy by a woman to be published in the Italian Peninsula. It was written, and possibly performed, during Costa’s time at the Tuscan court of Ferdinando II de’ Medici. The scenario alludes to the unhappy marriage of Ferdinando II de’ Medici and Vittoria della Rovere, and satirizes the Florentine court, casting characters such as dwarves, hunchbacks, and clowns (*buffoni*) as courtiers. The comedy relates a moment of crisis in the marriage of Princess Marmotta, formally of the kingdom of Fessa (Fez, or slit), and Prince Meo. The princess complains of Prince Meo’s failure to perform in bed as the men of Fez would. The action follows the prince in his chosen pastimes of hunting, feasting, and carousing with buffoons, and seducing the prostitute Ancroia. The play is modeled on the three-act Roman *comedia ridicolosa* form, a scripted subgenre of the *commedia dell’arte*, most frequently written by amateur authors and performed by nonprofessional actors.

Costa’s comedy demonstrates her use of risqué and grotesque themes—qualities that make her unique for a female author of this period. *Li buffoni* is peppered with burlesque wit, using slapstick, an exhaustive range of sexual euphemisms, and grotesque

characters based on individuals supported by the Medici as entertainers. Comedy is also derived from the macaronic Italian of several characters. Stage direction for the play is indicated in the dialogue, rather than rubrics, as are the styles of dance performed during the play. Texts for the musical intermedii to be sung after each act are appended to the play.

In their introduction to the text, Díaz and Goethals offer the most extensive bibliographic survey of Costa's life and work to date, bringing together for the first time details of Costa's movements from the late 1640s. Díaz and Goethals draw on recent archival research and synthesize secondary literature across theater studies, musicology, cultural and literary studies, and art history to provide a compelling framework for Costa's writing. The second half of the introduction sets out the cultural context for Costa's comedy within the Baroque aesthetic of wonder and spectacle, and the traditions of performance at the Medici court. Elaborations on the main themes of the comedy (court life and sexual euphemisms) prepare the reader for the rich metaphorical resources Costa draws on to satirize members of the Medici court.

Díaz and Goethals bring together two published versions of the play, with the text omitted in the slightly excised, second version marked in italics. The original layout of the text has been retained, and the alignment between Italian and English translation makes comparison between the two texts seamless. Although the original play is not in verse, where Costa uses rhyme to musical or comic effect the translators use internal or concluding rhymes. The translators' strategies for representing the speech of bilingual characters are effective, enabling the anglophone reader to enjoy an approximation of Costa's linguistic caricatures without jarring foreignizing effects. Díaz and Goethals's introduction and translation are invaluable resources for researchers working on mid-Seicento literature, a period still underresearched and undertheorized. This edition will bring the ribald humor of Costa's court satire into the undergraduate classroom. The edition will enlarge understanding of Baroque Italian culture by making Costa's perspective on early modern gender relations and sexuality accessible to historians and literary critics.

This excellent edition of *Li buffoni* provides scholars and students of early modern women's studies insight into how Costa disrupted male-centered genres and gender conventions. More studies on Costa's poetry will certainly shed more light on Costa's role in the Marinist culture of mid-Seicento Italy.

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