The Apology of the Author  
[Published with the second edition of the Orlandino in 1526]

1. My most splendid readers, among the other humorous deeds of the very charming Gonnella, one reads that wishing to prove his point to the most illustrious lord Duke of Ferrara, that the number of medical doctors was considerably larger than the number of professors in all other existing fields, one day he tied his right arm in a sling, as though maimed, and went all around the piazza acting as if he were suffering such painful spasms that he couldn’t settle down anywhere.¹

2. So, it happened that whoever saw him suffering so dreadfully, with great compassion for him, asked what had been the cause of his mishap; and he, continuing to pretend he was in pain, made up first one ailment then another, so that he got some kind of remedy from each of them: and thus the proverb he himself thought up deserved to be listed with others gleaned from experience.

3. But actually now, since this little fable of mine, the Orlandino, written by me

| 1. Leggesi, candidissimi lettori miei, fra gli altri faceti gesti del lepidissimo Gonella che, volendo egli la opinione sua sostentare al signor illustissimo Duca di Ferrara, ch’assai magiore fusse de’ medici il numero che d’altri professori di qualunque arte si sia, legatosi un giorno il braccio destro in guisa di stroppiato al collo, andava quinci e quindi girando per la piazza come se per doglia di spasmo non ritrovasse loco dove fermarsi potesse.

2. Or avenne che, quanti mai così angosciosamente quello penare vedeano, con molta lui compassione addimandavanogli qual fusse del suo male la cagione; et egli, tuttavia simulandosi addolorato, ritrovava qualor questa qualor quell’altra infirmitade, tal che da tutti loro qualche remedio ripportava: laonde lo proverbio da lui stesso pensato finalmente con gli altri meritò d’essere per esperienzia collocato.

3. Ma veramente, poscia che questa favoletta mia de l’Orlandino, |
quite sincerely, has left my hands in order to please him who alone can command me, I will boldly say that there are no fewer commentators and interpreters than there are audacious medical doctors, and if among these the true experts on existing diseases are extremely rare (given their abundant numbers), I myself have found thus far not even one of the commentators of my Orlandino to be accurate.²

4. If only God would allow their interpretations, just as they result in my harm and shame, to lead on the contrary to my advantage together with a bit of honor, as we have seen the profound wisdom of Gi[ov]anni Pico to have done for the beautiful poems of Benivieni.³

5. Certainly I do not wish to, nor would I be able to excuse in any way the obvious errors to learned people, I mean as far as Tuscan elegance goes, having been totally relegated to Lombardy by nature (not through the study of this [dialect]); but rather for the subject and content of this little work I have unjustifiably been not a little dishonored with infamy through the fault of a few suspicious hypocrites; because although some things placed in sincerissimamente da me composta, uscita mi è da le mani per complacenzia di chi solo commandar mi puote, dirò con baldanza non manco essere lo numero de’ commentatori e interpreti che de’ medici temerari, de li quali, se rarissimi sono (risguardato il numero loro copiosissimo) li periti conoscitori de li occurrenti morbi, niuno al tutto commentatore de l’Orlandino mio essere verace sin qua ho isperimentato.

4. Ma Dio volesse almeno che lor interpretazioni, così come resultano in mio danno e vergogna, mi fusseno per contrario ad utilitade insieme con qualche onore, come sopra la bella canzone del Benevienni lo profundissimo ingegno di Gianni Pico aver fatto vedemo.

5. Certamente nè voglio nè per niuna guisa possiomi delli evidenti errori alle dotte persone iscusare, dico quanto a l’eleganzia toscana, totalmente di Lombardia (non medientevi lo studio di essa) da natura rimossa; ma del soggetto e materia di essa operetta immitteramente per colpa d’aluni sospettosi ipocriti son io d’infamia non poca svergognato; perché quantunque alcune cose vi siano poste le quali in gravezza de la fede nostra o sia de la
the work might appear as injurious to our faith, or to Holy Scripture, or to the clergy, nonetheless the pure intention of the author is not rightfully understood by some of these people— which is rather more inclined to scold the attackers of our most pure faith than to universally attack it.

6. And as a clear signal of my sincerity those few little curse words I always put in the mouth of someone from the other side of the Alps where most often such errors are apt to accumulate.

7. The truth is, I myself confirm that the clergy of our day (I don’t mean all of them) provide a very strong reason for this, which I don’t want to describe right here and now, where I am intent only upon my excuse and defense.

8. If I include the story of Monsignor Griffarosto, my intention was not formed by any particulars, rather I want all those who are like him to stand under the shadow of this one [personage], excepting always the reverence of those prelates with the most integrity; not having the slightest regard in this for the threats of some, who, with their irrational malevolence towards me, are disseminators of calumny against me.

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<th>Sacra Scrittura o de li relligiosi appaiono essere nulladimanco la mera intenzione de l’autore non vien in alquantì accommodamente intesa, la qual è viapiù presto inclinata in biasmar li mordaci di essa che morder universalmente la candidissima fede nostra.</th>
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<td>7. Vero è che da me stesso confermo poi li relligiosi d’oggi (non dico tutti) esserne potentissima cagione, la quale non mi curo teste quivi descrivere, ove solamente a la escusazione e defensione mia io sono intento.</td>
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<td>8. S’io pongo la istoria di monsignore Griffarosto, la intenzione mia non fu però d’alcuna particularitate conceputo; anzi voglio che sotto l’ombra di esso, eccettuata la reverenzia sempre de l’integerrimi prelati, stiano tutti quanti li simili soi, non avendovi un minimo riguardo a le minaccie d’alcuni, li quali, per sua verso me contra ragione malevolenza, di mie calumnie sono seminatori.</td>
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9. But the silly wisdom of some others could appear to me of much greater importance, those who, while continually perfuming themselves with amber and musk, take my pleasant and humorous jousting as so disgusting and annoying, where mention is made (as it is in other passages of this little work as well) of crap and bad odors, while they do not consider the filthy, decrepit and nauseating character of a scoundrel whom I do not disdain to portray for you, with the intention that through being able to say everything boldly, one arrives eventually at the truth; because if I were talking about other matters less base, I would put my own name on it, instead of none.

10. And yet their haughtiness of mind offends me little, since I did not compose such a work for similar know-it-alls; but let any of them write what they know to my shame and notoriety, and maybe they will hear the columns prophesize together with the walls about their own lives, for misery loves company.

11. I say the same thing about words having at times left the pen published less than honestly, so that it seemed to me not really inappropriate in such
subject matter, to pretend to be a beggar, in whose character being obliged to act out a comedy, dissolute and impulsive ideas would occur.

12. Indeed, my very special friends, I will want to be hateful to you and reproached, if my life and habits correspond to the aforementioned filthiness.

13. However, if I should seem to you to call to task any person individually, it is not the case that any man could even imagine this let alone know it, because I honestly do not believe that I have an enemy in the world hated by me as much as my own soul is regarded by me: it is quite enough for me that we both know about whom we are talking.

14. Therefore, let the pure truth be more satisfying to you than the present apology, my most splendid readers, that never leaves its extremely dependable place.

15. One could still say a great deal; but I know well that what has already been said appears too long and wearisome to kind and loyal souls; however, the nobility of every high-minded spirit will not disdain, I hope, to read this satisfaction of mine impetuously composed in a single night, while I was

soggetto fingermi “pitocco,” ne la qual persona dovendosi recitare una commedia, ragionamenti soluti e strabocchevoli accascarebbono.

12. Ben vorovvi, singularissimi amici miei, esservi aora odioso e probo, quando la vita e’ costumi a le predette immondizie corrisponderanno.

13. Ma, s’io vi paro singularmente tassar alcuna persona, non è pero ch’uomo qual che si sia poscia quella imaginare non che sapere, perché non mi reputo lealmente aver nemico al mondo tanto da me odiato quanto l’anima mia da me risguardata: bastami solamente che ambi noi sapiamo di cui si parla.

14. Or dunque la mera veritade via più satisfacevole vi sia che la presente apologia, candidissimi lettori mei, la quale dal seggio suo constantissimo giama non si parte.

15. Molto ancora vi si potrebbe dire; ma lo già detto agli animi generosi e leali so bene che troppo lungo e fastidioso appare; però la nobilitade d’ogni alto spirito non si dignara, spero, leggere cotal mia satisfazione in una notte impetuosamente composta, essendomi da non so cui potente tiranno minacciato; e io con ogni veritate, la
being threatened by I don’t know which powerful tyrant, and I, with every truth, which gives birth to hate, have made an effort to try to satisfy him and others of a similar opinion.

quale parturisce odio, mi son posto a tentar di sodisfar a lui con gli altri di simile sentenza.

1 Pietro Gonella was a famous jester at the court of Obizzo III d’Este in Ferrara (1294-1352).

2 It is not clear who the person is, “who alone can command” the author: choices could be Federico Gonzaga, or Camillo or Paolo Orsini.

3 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), famous humanist, wrote a commentary for the work, *De la donna celeste*, by Girolamo Benivieni (1453-1542).