Until now the Italian humanist Antonio Brucioli has received little attention by scholars familiar with Erasmus’s influence and legacy. This is not surprising, given that the name of this Florentine polygraph (1487–1566), who spent the majority of his life exiled in Venice, is not mentioned by Erasmus (and thus does not figure in Bietenholz’s and Deutscher’s *Contemporaries of Erasmus*).¹ Neither does Brucioli particularly stand out among the myriad of characters that people the long narrative of *erasmismo* in Italy as it was established by renowned scholars such as Delio Cantimori, Pierre de Nolhac, Augustin Renaudet, and Silvana Seidel Menchi.² Meticulously mapping the historical reception and ideological reworking in Italy of the major Erasmian themes of religious renewal, humanist reform, education, and ancient and biblical philology, these scholars considered Brucioli’s works of rather limited importance for their purpose. As we will see, this is in part for valid reasons: Brucioli did not play a significant role in the vicissitudes of Erasmus’s legacy in historical events such as the Italian Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and the Roman Inquisition’s religious censorship.

One intellectual historian paying more extensive attention to our Venetian exile, however, is Silvana Seidel Menchi, whose monumental *Erasmo in Italia 1520–1580* treats Brucioli’s reworkings of Erasmian material on Christian marriage in some of his *Dialogi della morale filosofia* (1526 and 1537) and points to the undoubtedly Erasmian echoes of *philosophia*.

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Christi in Brucioli’s dedications of his Italian Bible translations. Her interest lies primarily in tracing the influence of Erasmus’s figure and works on the ideologies of the Italian reform and counter-reform movements. Yet Seidel Menchi’s comparative analysis of writings by Erasmus and those by his Italian followers, opponents, and defenders reveals, without further exploring the issue, that in many cases, and most notably in that of Brucioli, the texts by Italian Erasmians can also contribute to an understanding of the influence of Erasmus’s rhetorical and literary strategies on contemporary developments in literary form and genre in the Italian vernacular.

The case I would like to make in this study therefore concerns less intellectual or religious history but rather the literary and rhetorical aspects of textual transmission between the genres of declamation and dialogue. The following is a case-study of one specific literary adaptation of a particular *declamatio* by Erasmus, his well-known *Praise of Folly* (*Moriae encomium id est Stultitiae laus*), as it was reworked by Antonio Brucioli in a dialogical version entitled *Dialogo della sapientia et della stultitia* (1526, second edition 1538). Brucioli’s ‘dialogized Folly’ should be seen in the context of a decade, the 1520s, that was particularly important for the development of the dialogue genre in Italy, which also coincides with the onset of the influence of Erasmus’s major works in the Italian peninsula. To be sure, claiming that Brucioli’s large corpus of dialogues is as innovative as the canonical humanist dialogues by best-seller authors such as Leon Battista Alberti, Pietro Bembo, Baldassar Castiglione, and Sperone Speroni would be an altogether incorrect assessment. Nevertheless Brucioli was an avid early cinquecento experimenter of the dialogue form and sensitive to its emerging Renaissance poetics that sought to combine the imitation of classical models of argumentation with a lifelike immanence of the spoken word. His dialogues generally seek to recreate a vivid, mimetic, and open-ended *disputatio* modeled after classical predecessors, staging a *praxis* of collective speaking by virtuous interlocutors on ancient and Christian moral wisdom, and exploiting dialogue as a practical tool for the application thereof in the reader’s sphere of action. In that respect, his *Della sapientia et della stultitia*, as well as some of his other dialogues, clearly echo Erasmian dialogical and declamatory strategies that exploit the mimetic value of the spoken exchange (such as in the *Colloquies*).

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