

Notes

SPINELLA'S NAME IN JOHN FORD'S *THE LADY'S TRIAL*

Set in Genoa, John Ford's *The Lady's Trial* (1637–38, publ. 1639) features a character named Spinella, the wife of the main character Auria, Ford's version of the glorious Genoese surname Doria—probably influenced by the spellings 'Auria' and 'D'Auria' used in Richard Knolles's *The general historie of the Turkes* (1603) and in Fynes Moryson's *Itinerary* (1617) respectively. Lisa Hopkins, the latest editor of the play, rightly argues that Spinella's name 'Probably derives from spinel, a precious stone which is red in colour and resembles a ruby. Ford was interested in jewels'.¹

Yet, I would suggest that Spinella's name may have also been reminiscent of another prestigious Genoese surname, that is Spinola. This surname was well known in early modern London especially through the activities of Benedetto (Englished as Benedict) Spinola. Born to one of Genoa's most influential and affluent families, he lived the best part of his life in London, where he 'was in the very top

rank of merchants' as an exporter of woollen cloths and importer of wines, 'was granted full denization in 1552' and even served the English government as an agent and financier.² R. B.'s epitaph on Spinola's death extols him as a virtuous man who 'lived here / A noble Merchaunt euery way, / no straunger was his peere', and whose 'purse was shut from none'.³ Moreover, the surname Spinola was often associated in early modern Genoa with the surname Doria by way of marriage, as it was commonplace for families of means to consolidate their wealth through intermarriage.

Spinella's name would have therefore been susceptible to functioning on two different levels, one associating Spinella to a precious gem by virtue of her moral integrity, the other more obliquely rooting Auria's wife in the play's Genoese setting by dint of the similarity between the name 'Spinella' and the surname 'Spinola'.

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¹ John Ford, *The Lady's Trial*, ed. Lisa Hopkins (Manchester, 2011), 42n13.

² John Bennell, 'Spinola, Benedict (1519/20–1580)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004; online edn, January 2008): <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52156>>, last accessed November 2016.

³ R. B., *An epitaph vpon the death of the worshipfull Maister Benedict Spinola merchaunt of Genoa, and free denizon of England, who dyed on Tuesday the. 12. of Iulie. 1580* (London, [1580]) ll. 30–2, 36.