

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> xi
Introduction: Italy in the sixteenth century	i
1 Precedents	9
Some definitions	9
Uses of comedy	10
Patterns of performance	21
The classical models	24
2 The first 'regular' comedies	31
Revivals of Roman comedy	31
First steps in the vernacular: Ferrara	34
Ariosto's dramaturgy	40
Rome and Florence	47
The comic text: Bibbiena and Machiavelli	56
3 The second quarter-century, outside Venice	64
Demarcations	64
Aretino in Rome and Mantua	66
Ariosto's verse comedies	77
The Congress of Bologna: Tuscany	87
Siena and its Academy	89
Florentine comedies	108
4 The second quarter-century, Venice and Padua	121
Spectacle and politics in Venice	121
Ruzante	125
Multilingual comedy	144
Aretino in Venice	154
Dolce and Parabosco	161
5 Improvised comedy	169
Definitions and evidence	169

Improvisation and modular structure	175
Larger units of improvisation	185
Scenarios	195
The comedy of <i>commedia dell'arte</i>	199
6 Obstacles to comedy	204
The rise of theory	204
Theory of laughter	208
Theory of decorum	216
Suppression and censorship	220
<i>La pellegrina</i>	225
7 Scripts and scenarios	227
<i>La pellegrina</i> as 'serious' comedy	227
The Florentine festivities of 1589	233
Plays and authors after 1550	237
Conclusions	244
<i>Notes</i>	249
<i>Chronological bibliography of comedies, 1500-1560</i>	271
<i>General bibliography</i>	280