Federica Signoriello

Satire of Philosophy and Philosophers in Fifteenth Century Florence

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD

2013

Department of Italian

School of European Languages, Culture and Society

University College London

University of London

I, Federica Signoriello, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

After centuries when those who were engaged with the preservation and the transmission of knowledge were only partially devoted to intellectual activities, fifteenth-century Italy saw the rebirth of the philosopher. This thesis traces the changes that shaped the role of the philosopher during the fifteenth-century in Florence, a city whose arts, literature and philosophical heritage have been the focus of scholarly attention for many years. A feature of Quattrocento Florence that has been neglected, however, is comic literature. This thesis discusses a distinctive aspect of this literature: fifteenth century satirical comic literature progressively assumed the form of a tradition the aim of which was to mock intellectual aspirations. Through the evolution of this tradition we can follow the development of the intellectual Florentine milieu.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first deals with the development of the satire of philosophy and is made up of five Chapters, each dedicated to one or more poets who represent a different stage. In his poem *Lo Studio d'Atene* Stefano Finiguerri mocked the scholars of the Florentine University. Finiguerri was followed by Burchiello and his imitators, who developed a more refined style of comic poetry. Matteo Franco and Alessandro Braccesi addressed philosophers more directly, while Lorenzo de' Medici parodied the philosophy of Marsilio Ficino. The second part of the thesis deals with the representation of the intellectual understood as the fully formed figure of the philosopher. The two most significant authors here are Marsilio Ficino and his antagonist, the poet Luigi Pulci.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like thank my supervisor Dilwyn Knox for his thoughtful guidance and endless patience during the last few years. My gratitude is also for my second supervisor Catherine Keen and her helpfulness, care and invaluable advice.

Many people supported my journey through the ups and downs of my Ph.D. life in London and I should thank them all for their understanding and their help: my colleagues at the Italian department, especially Nicola, Enza, Andrew, Tim, Laura, Eleanor, Cristina and Lucia; my colleagues at London Business School library, especially John, Ann, Tracey and Barbara; the Daly and the Samek-Lodovici families; all my colleagues at the Warburg Institute library. I have had good friends in London who unfortunately heard all about my research: thanks Bekah, Mark, Francesco, Stefano, Oscar, Désirée, Raphaëlle, Steff.

Thanks to the people who inspired my decisions: 'la prof.' Anna Maria Rizzi and Professor Anna Maria Cabrini.

Thanks to those friends who have been there for me albeit in Italy: Chiara, Elisa, Stefania, Anna, Silvia, Marco, Claudio, Gemma, Alessia.

Thanks Milly, I am so glad that our paths crossed.

Thanks to my family and to Paul, Jean and Rachel.

This thesis is dedicated to Mark: it would have never been written without his love and his dedication.

REFERENCES

I cite classical texts, Italian vernacular texts and the Vulgate according to the standard numeration of book, section, etc.

I cite all the other works according to editions in the Bibliography.

In the text and notes I have expanded abbreviations, separated words and modified punctuation according to modern usage. Otherwise I have retained the spelling and orthography of the original.

Unless I state otherwise, translations are my own.

Crusca   *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, all the editions available on the *Accademia della Crusca,* (*Cruscle 1.0*) website.

DBI   *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, available on the *Treccani* website.

GDLI   Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario.*

SdB   Burchiello, *I sonetti* (2004).

SE   Luigi Pulci, *Sonetti extravaganti.*

TLIO   *Tesoro della lingua italiana antica*, available on the *Opera del vocabolario italiano* website.

INTRODUCTION

Fifteenth-century Italy saw the rebirth of the philosopher after centuries of near-oblivion. During the Middle Ages those who were engaged with preservation and transmission of knowledge, mainly clerks and monks, were only partially devoted to intellectual activities. It was not until the tenth and eleventh centuries that the growth of towns and universities encouraged 'intellectual' occupations, ones that we might now label 'professors' or 'scholars'.[1] By the twelfth century, this development was such that intellectual activity became seen as meriting financial remuneration and universities gained social prestige.

These scholars, however, were not called 'philosophers'; this was a title used only to refer to the thinkers of Greek or Roman antiquity. Most obviously, this was the case for Aristotle and he became known as simply 'the Philosopher'. The exceptions to this rule are few, for example Abelard (1079-1142) or Sigier of Brabant (1240-1280).[2]

This thesis traces the changes that shaped the role of the philosopher during this fifteenth-century rebirth in a city whose arts, literature and philosophical heritage are widely studied, Florence. Thanks to this attention we now know much of Florentine cultural life, yet one particular aspect has thus far been relatively overlooked, comic literature. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that across the fifteenth century satirical comic literature progressively assumed the form of a tradition and that through its evolution we can follow the development of the intellectual Florentine milieu. This is possible because comic literature initially targeted intellectuals and their 'intellectual pursuits' and, in doing so, it developed themes and styles that were used to mock the figure of the philosopher in the latter part of the century.

Satire of philosophers was not a novelty of the fifteenth century. A history of satire and parody of philosophers and philosophy can be traced back to ancient Greece, as far back as the satire on Socrates in Aristophanes's *Clouds*. Aristophanes (ca. 446 BC – ca. 386 BC) was little known during the fifteenth century as his only work translated into Latin at the time was the *Plutus*; the *editio princeps* of his plays was published in 1498 in

---

[1] Jacques Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages,* transl. Teresa Lavender Fagan, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, pp. 5-6.

[2] Mariateresa Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri, *L'intellettuale tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Rome, Laterza, 1994, p. 182.

Venice by Aldo Manuzio.[3] Greek Middle Comedy did not spare philosophers either, especially Plato, who is depicted in the fragments by Alexis (ca. 375 BC – ca. 275 BC) and Epicrates (fourth century BC). Later examples of satire and parody are provided by Lychopron (ca. 320-310 BC), who in his play *Menedemus* (ca. 280 BC) dealt with the Eritrean philosopher Menedemus, and Sositheus (third century BC), who mocked Cleanthes, the head of the Stoic school. Lychopron and Sositheus were not completely unknown figures during the Renaissance; they were both quoted in Diogenes Laërtius's (3rd century AD) *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, a work that was translated into Latin by Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439) in 1433. Additionally, we can find isolated examples of satire related to philosophy also in Latin literature, for example in fragments by Lucilius (ca. 160 – ca. 102 BC), and in Horace (65 BC – 8 BC). Horace's satire is particularly cutting. He ridiculed a clumsy disciple who describes food in Epicurean terms, the object of satire being firmly those who did not understand Epicurus's philosophy and mindlessly repeated their master's precepts.[4] Later, Juvenal (1st-2nd century AD) parodied the genre of the *consolatio* and its philosophical background and especially Seneca's works and letters.[5] Lucian (125-180 AD), however, is by far the most important example in antiquity, since satire of philosophy and philosophers is recurrent in his oeuvre. His numerous works, either imitations of Platonic dialogues or Menippean satires, are witty critiques of the intellectual life of his day and philosophers often are not portrayed in a complimentary way.[6] During the Quattrocento many humanists translated Lucian's works from ancient Greek.[7]

During late antiquity and the Middle Ages this kind of satire seems to vanish from European literature, reappearing occasionally in the guise of tales, whose targets were

---

[3] Dean P. Lockwood, 'Aristophanes in the XVth Century', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 40, 1909, p. LVI.

[4] *Satires* II.4; see Joachim C. Classen, 'Horace a cook?', *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, 28, 1978, pp. 333-348: 343-345.

[5] *Satires* 13; see Mark Morford, 'Juvenal's Thirteenth Satire', *The American Journal of Philology*, 94, 1973, pp. 26-36.

[6] Especially in the *Nigrinus*, *Demonax*, *Symposium*, *Icaromenippus*, *Philosophies for Sale*, *The Dead Come to Life*, *Menippus*, *The Eunuch*, *The Passing of Peregrinus*, *Hermotimus*, *The Ship*, *Cynicus*.

[7] Several works by Lucian were translated by Guarino Veronese, Giovanni Aurispa, Rinuccio Aretino, Lapo da Castiglionchio il giovane, Poggio Bracciolini, Cristoforo Persona. Emilio Mattioli, 'I traduttori umanistici di Luciano', in *Studi in onore di Raffaele Spongano*, Bologna, Boni, 1980, pp. 205-214.

the ancient philosophers.[8] Parodies of philosophical works were still written, although the texts to which they referred were taken from a detached ancient past, as for example the parody of Boethius's dialogue with Philosophy in a letter by Godfrey of Rheims (11th century).[9] The absence of a genre of satire that lampooned contemporary philosophers, however, is hardly surprising. In the early Middle Ages, thinkers considered philosophy as a part of their activities along with grammar, logic and theology. From the twelfth century on the status of intellectuals was socially recognised because of their formal university training, where they would mainly write glosses or commentaries of ancient philosophical works. Importantly, the teaching of philosophy was closely related to theology. A student at the faculty of arts who attained the title of 'Master' would teach at university for two years as a sort of regency and then had the choice to continue teaching, to seek a position outside university or to enter the faculty of theology. Very few remained Masters of Arts and most of those who wished to work in universities entered the faculty of theology. Once a Master of theology, a scholar would only stay in his chair for a limited period of time, especially if member of a religious order.[10]

Given this context, in modern terms 'medieval philosophers' were in fact theologians; most of their writings were theological. These authors recognised philosophy and theology as distinct, although 'philosophy' was to them a discipline that included every branch of knowledge based on self-evident premises, experiment and reasoning and therefore embraced those subjects we would now call 'science'.[11] This is why there were not 'philosophers' but, as Jacques Le Goff has defined them, 'intellectuals', 'whose profession was to think and to share their thoughts'. According to Le Goff, the word philosopher 'was borrowed from antiquity' and had a 'different connotation',

---

[8] For example the anecdote of Aristotle and Phyllis, written in several versions from the thirteenth century onwards, although its origin has been traced back to Indian and Arabic literature. Aristotle proves himself weak despite his great knowledge when a beautiful young woman, Phyllis, succeeds in riding upon him, while he walks on all fours with a saddle on his back and a bit in his mouth; see George Sarton, 'Aristotle and Phyllis', *Isis*, 14, 1930, pp. 8-19 and Raffaele De Cesare, 'Di nuovo sulla leggenda di Aristotele cavalcato', *Miscellanea del Centro di studi medievali*, 1, 1956, pp. 181-247.

[9] Helena De Carlos, 'Poetry and Parody: Boethius, Dreams, and Gestures in the Letters of Godfrey of Rheims', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18, 2001, pp. 18-30: 18-20.

[10] John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150-1350): an Introduction*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, pp. 20-24.

[11] Ibid., p. 88.

while the words effectively used through those years were many, ranging from 'savant' and 'scholar' to 'clerk' and 'thinker' amongst others.[12]

This does not imply that satire was absent from the academic milieu but that it was directed at different targets. Satirical verses, for instance, were written as a school exercise, usually imitating the satires of Juvenal. During the twelfth century satire flourished, especially that which criticised the decline of learning, for example with Walter of Châtillon (ca. 1135-1203) and with other anonymous poets such as the author of the *Metamorphosis Goliae*, in which an assembly of gods expels monks from a school of philosophers. The *Apocalypsis Goliae* (twelfth century) was a kindred allegorical satire in which classical poets and philosophers inhabit a Utopian land, similar to the land of Thule found in the allegorical poem by John of Hauteville (late twelfth century). Here we do not find a critique of philosophy but attacks targeting clerical ignorance and the theme of the scholar's undeserved poverty. Perhaps the most interesting satire is that of Vital of Blois, who in around 1150 wrote the poem *Geta*, which tells the story, modelled on Plautus's *Amphitruo*, of a scholar and his pretentious servant. The couple go to Athens – the allegory of contemporary Paris – to learn logic and to return home lacking in common sense. *Geta* was very popular was transposed many times in the centuries that followed. The object of these medieval satires was to defend knowledge against moral and intellectual corruption. It was not, significantly, to mock knowledge or philosophy in itself.[13]

The fourteenth and fifteenth century was an important moment in the development of the Western intellectual world. This development came hand-in-hand with economic and social changes that gave rise to new forms of government and new public institutions. With time the training provided by universities became inadequate for new needs such as secretarial work or the preparation of students for other positions.[14] In the eyes of scholars, this inadequacy, which did not affect only universities but the whole intellectual world, could be solved by resuscitating interest in ancient Greek and Latin literature and philosophy. Intellectuals inside and outside university engaged in what became the so-called *studia humanitatis*, which, by the middle of the fifteenth century,

---

[12] Le Goff, *Intellectuals*, p. 1.

[13] For an overview of twelve century satirists, see Stephen Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: the Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1100-121*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1985, pp. 95-128.

[14] Cesare Vasoli, 'The Renaissance concept of Philosophy' in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 57-74: 58.

had become a defined cycle of studies of *grammatica*, *rhetorica*, *poetica*, *historia*, and *philosophia moralis*.

From the end of the fourteenth century the *studia humanitatis* were no longer the prerogative of professional intellectuals. Well-to-do and even not-so-well-to-do Florentine citizens became highly educated and the interest in classical literature, including that of ancient Greece, flourished. The study of ancient Greek was spurred largely by the rise to prominence of Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras, who taught in Florence from 1397. This new class of 'intellectuals' were not members of the clergy or part of the university lecturers; they worked as private masters, secretaries, dignitaries and chancellors. Their status within Florence grew as their works became part and parcel of the rhetoric on which the city itself founded its cultural identity.[15]

From the point of view of institutions, Florence was well provided. It boasted a *Studium generale*, which opened in 1348 and was subsequently transferred to Pisa in 1474, where its students were educated. The history of the Florentine *Studium* is as turbulent as that of Florence itself – too often the Republic could not afford to spend precious economic resources on education when the very survival of the city was at risk. Wars that afflicted Florentines between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, for example, were financially crippling and led to a long closure of the *Studium* in 1407.

When the struggle to keep the independence of Florence shifted into a permanent effort to expand its dominions and its strategic alliances, the power of the oligarchy gradually became more concentrated until it resided in just one family, the Medici. Humanism endured nevertheless and the study of Plato, which had begun in earnest earlier in the century with Leonardo Bruni, Ambrogio Traversari, Basilios Bessarion and Gemistus Pletho, became prominent. It was at this point in the evolution of the Florentine intellectual world the Medici engaged Marsilio Ficino to translate three bodies of work, Hermes Trismegistus's *Corpus Hermeticum,* Plotinus's *Enneads* and Plato's whole oeuvre from Greek into Latin.

With this outline of the Florentine intellectual history in mind, the present research on Florentine satire is divided into two parts. The first deals with the development of satire

---

[15] Lauro Martines, *The Social World of Florentine Humanists, 1390-1460*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, pp. 238-239.

of philosophy and is made of five chapters, each dedicated to one or more poets who represent a different stage. These are Stefano Finiguerri, Burchiello and his imitators, Matteo Franco, Alessandro Braccesi and Lorenzo de' Medici. The second part of the thesis deals with the representation of the intellectual as the fully formed figure of the philosopher. The two most significant authors here are Marsilio Ficino and his antagonist, the poet Luigi Pulci.

Scholarly literature to date concerning the subject of this thesis

Important for an understanding of what happened to philosophers after Late Antiquity is Jacques Le Goff's *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, an extensive study of the role of intellectuals in Europe.[16] Le Goff considers institutions such as schools and universities and discusses a series of scholars that best represent a stage of development. The period considered by Le Goff in this book reaches the age that I aim to discuss in this thesis. In this respect Le Goff's book sets the parameters for my research.

For my argument the most important background study of the comic literature is Antonio Lanza's *Polemiche e berte letterarie nella Firenze del primo Rinascimento*.[17] Lanza published two different versions of this monograph, both of which describe how Aristotelianism and Terminism, two aspects of a culture that is now commonly perceived as medieval, were criticized in Florence at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. Unless otherwise stated I cite from the later edition of the book.[18] In the first part of *Polemiche e berte* Lanza considers, one by one, several written documents that in his view represent crucial moments of the intellectual debate, dividing clearly its participants into two antithetical categories, traditionalists/anti-humanists and humanists. The second part of the book contextualises the emergence of comic poetry of this period in the opposition between humanists and traditionalists. In this way Lanza establishes a historical background for comic poetry, most importantly the celebrations after the victory against Pisa in 1406, and places it in the context of the debate studied in the first part of the book. For this reason Lanza also defines this poetic genre as *berta della loica*, as *loica* is 'logic', the synecdoche of Terminism and more

---

[16] Le Goff, *Intellectuals*.

[17] Antonio Lanza, *Polemiche e berte letterarie nella Firenze del primo Quattrocento*, Rome, Bulzoni, 1971; id., *Polemiche e berte letterarie nella Firenze del primo Rinascimento*, 2nd edn, Rome, Bulzoni, 1989.

[18] I sometimes quote, however, the first edition. The first edition includes rare transcriptions of poems otherwise found only in manuscripts.

generally of Aristotelianism. From Lanza's point of view the comic poets in the late fourteenth century and early Quattrocento targeted the 'old' medieval culture by depicting its advocates as sodomites and as needlessly lavish.[19]

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the ups and downs of Florence's *Studium generalis* had an impact on society. Scholars earned and lost fame when hired and dismissed by the city government. Chapter 1 of this thesis starts from the reopening of the *Studium* in 1412 and considers its mockery by Stefano Finiguerri, an obscure poet who was the first to develop a satire of scholars *per se*. The goal of the Florentine elite was to restore the city's intellectual prestige and Finiguerri harshly undermined it with his depiction of education as a vain fashion. The poem that is here taken into account is *Lo Studio d'Atene*, which represents a coterie of incongruous intellectuals. The poem does not refrain from criticizing the rhetorical praises of Florence, alluding as it does to Leonardo Bruni's *Panegyric of the City of Florence*.

Finiguerri is one of the poets studied by Lanza. His discussion focuses on the *Studio d'Atene* almost exclusively, identifies its characters and explores the prominent theme of sodomy.[20] The sharp distinction between traditional and anti-traditional positions that is the premise to Lanza's work, however, does not allow a wider context for interpretation. Consequently Finiguerri's satire is pigeonholed as a sequence of personal attacks that develop around mainly the theme of sodomy.

The second chapter is dedicated to a poet who played a leading role in later comic literature, Domenico di Giovanni also known as 'Burchiello' (1404-1449). This Florentine barber lived between Florence, Siena and Rome and came into contact with pre-eminent humanists such as Francesco Filelfo and Leon Battista Alberti, who then became the target of his satire. Importantly, Burchiello's style was so innovative that his name lent itself to a new form of writing, *alla burchia*. The *corpus* of his poems defined some essential stylistic, lexical and thematic features of the comic poetry that followed.

A study that engages with the comic literature of this period in broad terms is Giuseppe Crimi's study of Burchiello's role in Quattrocento poetry.[21] The book begins with the Romance and vernacular roots of Burchiello's poems (Chapters 1 and 2), and deals with

---

[19] Id., *Polemiche e berte* (2nd edn), Chapter 1, p. 226.

[20] Ibid., pp. 299-311.

[21] Giuseppe Crimi, *L'oscura lingua e il parlar sottile. Tradizione e fortuna del Burchiello*, Rome, Vecchiarelli, 2005.

Franco Sacchetti's work (Chapter 3), Finiguerri's (Chapter 4), Pulci's (Chapter 5), Lorenzo de'Medici's (Chapter 6) and Berni's (Chapter 7). The whole book is dedicated to Burchiello's stylistic features and does not dwell upon specific themes. Burchiello's satire of intellectuals, nonetheless, is especially relevant in the conclusion to the chapter dedicated to Finiguerri. Crimi acknowledges a special bond between the two poets that concerns this specific topic, albeit without subsequent analysis.[22] Similarly, Crimi does not take this theme into account in Chapters 5 and 6.

Finiguerri's and Burchiello's language − because of their intricate textual tradition and their topical allusions − often pose a problem of interpretation. Antonio Lanza, who edited both Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene* and Burchiello's collection of sonnets, relies mostly on a Ph.D. thesis by Jean Toscan, *Le carnaval du langage*.[23] The aim of Toscan's research on the language of the Italian comic poets (fifteenth to seventeenth century) is to explain the roots of Bernesque poetry (Chapter 1). Toscan, however, while noting that Berni's language derives from Florentine comic poetry of the fourteenth century, assumes that comic poets developed a system of sexual metaphors that we find a century later in Bernesque poems. Toscan examines in detail many metaphors, ones that depend on a wide variety of subject matter, from natural phenomena and objects to human artefacts and professions, from animals to abstract ideas, and provides an extensive glossary in an appendix.[24] Even though the correspondences found are undoubtedly useful for interpreting some types of poetry, carnival songs for example, I doubt that Toscan's glossary provides a solid interpretative guide to the comic poetry of the Quattrocento. It is true that some sexual metaphors were settled by use, for example those taken from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, but a well-defined system of metaphors that unequivocally conveyed sexual meanings was not established before the emergence of Carnival poetry at the end of the fifteenth century.

I have employed Lanza's commentaries on Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene* and Burchiello's poems sparingly, preferring to provide an alternative commentary in the footnotes, incorporating Lanza's comments when appropriate. My interpretation of the

---

[22] Ibid., pp. 261-316.

[23] Burchiello, *Le poesie autentiche*, ed. Antonio Lanza, Rome, Aracne, 2010; Jean Toscan, *Le carnaval du langage: le léxique érotique des poètes de l'équivoque de Burchiello à Marino (XVe-XVIIe siècles)*, 4 vols, Lille, Atelier, 1981.

[24] Ibid., vol. 4.

text aims at going beyond the alleged sodomy of the characters and reveals new themes that were popular among the Florentine intellectual milieu. The same can be said for Burchiello's collection of poetry, which I have used in Michelangelo Zaccarello's edition.[25] Zaccarello's text has two main strengths: first, it does not claim completeness, which in Burchiello's case would be an unachievable task. Zaccarello's critical edition includes a selection of poems based on the *vulgata* edition of Burchiello's *Rime*; Lanza, on the contrary, chose the poems of his edition without declaring the guidelines used for the attribution of authorship. This is an intricate matter in Burchiello's case. Secondly, Zaccarello does not use Toscan's glossary and provides a detailed account of Quattrocento-language of his own. The advantage of this is that the literary content is not flattened out into an uninterrupted sequence of sexual metaphors.

Lanza also discusses Burchiello's poetry in the second part of the volume mentioned above, *Polemiche e berte*. Even though Lanza states in Chapter 1 that Burchiello's satire, unlike Finiguerri's, is a satire of all academic culture, the section dedicated to Burchiello does not thoroughly identify themes and rhetorical devices but lists instead some relevant passages or whole poems, sometimes incorrectly attributing poems to Burchiello.[26] Lanza, however, identifies a useful distinction, which I have employed at Chapter 2, of Burchiello's poems based on both form and contents.[27]

Chapter 3 of this thesis is concerned with the very first followers of Burchiello and their use of satire. Chapter 4 continues with another two poets who are closely connected with Burchiello and whose texts are not printed in any critical or modern edition. For this reason the Chapter includes an edition of a selection of their most significant texts. First is Matteo Franco (1448-1494) a private chaplain to the Medici and author of fiercely aggressive poems addressed also to intellectuals and philosophers. The second poet is Alessandro Braccesi (1445-1503), a man of fine education, a notary and an envoy of the Florentine government. Braccesi was the author of both elegant Latin verses and vernacular poetry. Among these there are many comic rhymes, here considered in relation to philosophy.

---

[25] *SdB*.

[26] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte* (2nd edn), Chapter 5, pp. 337-400. Lanza quotes, among others, the poem 'Avendo già studiato Cicerone' that was written about a century after Burchiello; Enrico Garavelli, 'Presenze burchiellesche (e altro) nel *Commento di Ser Agresto* di Annibal Caro' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 195-239: 223-224.

[27] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, p. 350.

Little has been written on these two followers of Burchiello. Among the few studies, there is an edition of Franco's letters edited by Frosini, the main source for his biography.[28] Two recent articles by Decaria and Zaccarello mark the first attempts to focus on Franco as a poet in his own right rather than as a member of the Medici household. These articles provide new information on the tradition of the manuscripts that include Franco's work. This is a crucial issue as there is to date no reliable edition of Franco's poems.[29]

On Braccesi's life Alessandro Perosa supplies the essential information in his entry in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*. There is additional information in his preliminary article to the edition of Braccesi's Latin *Carmina*.[30] There is still much of Braccesi's vernacular production that is yet to be studied. Franca Magnani discusses a part of his vernacular work in her edition of Braccesi's *canzoniere* of love poems.[31] More than two hundred comic poems in the form of sonnets remain unpublished, although Zaccarello has studied one of the two witnesses available in an article that compares Braccesi's poetry (though authorship is not discussed) with Burchiello's.[32]

Chapter 5 analyses two works by Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1492). The first part deals with the short poem *Simposio*, a parody of Marsilio Ficino's *De amore* that was in turn a commentary on Plato's *Symposium*. The second part is concerned with Lorenzo's *ballata* 'Ragionavasi di sodo', which once again alludes to Ficino's theories on the soul. The two works by Lorenzo de' Medici have not attracted as much scholarly attention as other poems in his oeuvre. Among the scholars who have attempted to date the *Simposio* are Bigi, Rochon, Martelli and Zanato.[33] Each provides useful commentaries

[28] Matteo Franco, *Lettere*, ed. Giovanna Frosini, Florence, Accademia della Crusca, 1990.

[29] Alessio Decaria and Michelangelo Zaccarello, 'Il ritrovato Codice Dolci e la costituzione della vulgata dei Sonetti di Matteo Franco e di Luigi Pulci', *Filologia Italiana*, 3, 2006, pp. 122-154; Alessio Decaria, 'Il Pulci ritrovato e nuove ipotesi sul *Libro dei Sonetti*', *Bollettino storico della Svizzera Italiana*, 111, 2008, pp. 247-280.

[30] See *DBI* s.v. 'Braccesi, Alessandro' and Alessandro Braccesi, *Carmina*, ed. Alessandro Perosa, Florence, Bibliopolis, 1943.

[31] Id*., Soneti e canzone*, ed. Franca Magnani, Parma, Studium Parmense, 1983.

[32] Michelangelo Zaccarello, 'An Unknown Episode of Burchiello's Reception in the Early Cinquecento: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms 2725, fols 80ʳ-131ᵛ', *The Modern Language Review*, 100, 2005, pp. 78-96.

[33] Lorenzo de'Medici, *Scritti scelti di Lorenzo de' Medici*, ed. Emilio Bigi, 2nd edn, Turin, UTET, 1965, pp. 173-174; André Rochon, *La jeunesse de Laurent de Médicis (1449-1478)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres,

on the text, albeit in different ways. Rochon, for example, dedicates a chapter to the *Simposio* in his monograph on Lorenzo de' Medici and focusses especially on the passages that are a parody of Dante's *Commedia* and Petrarch's *Trionfi*, only briefly touching on other possible sources such as Finiguerri and Burchiello. Bigi published the first modern edition of the poem with a commentary, while Martelli provides a critical edition with a thorough study of the manuscripts and of the tradition of the text. Martelli's work is complemented by Zanato, who found a further witness to the tradition of the poem. A fundamental contribution is that of Fubini, who, in his article 'Ficino e i Medici', suggests that Lorenzo parodied Ficino's *De amore*.[34] Fubini only outlines the main themes that the parody employs; Bottoni and Barberi Squarotti followed his lead.[35] These studies do not refer to passages from Ficino's *De amore* and parallels are only drawn in broad terms.

Concerning Lorenzo's *ballata* 'Ragionavasi di sodo', Martelli in his essay 'Un caso di *amphibolatio*' gives a detailed study of the context and metaphorical meanings of the text.[36] Orvieto's commentary to his edition of Lorenzo's work highlights the sexual double-entendre within the *ballata*. [37] Only by combining these two opposed perspectives, is it possible to accurately place the poem in the tradition of satire of philosophy.

The focus of the second part of the thesis is the work of the poet Luigi Pulci (1432-1484). Pulci's work without doubt represents the apogee of the comic realist tradition in the fifteenth century. His poem *Morgante* was written over more than twenty years and deals with Ficino's theories on a variety of topics, as well as with Ficino himself, who is allegorically concealed within one of the characters. Pulci's relationship with Ficino

---

1963, pp. 545-550; Lorenzo de' Medici, *Simposio*, ed. Mario Martelli, Florence, Olschki, 1966, pp. 3-96; id., *Opere*, pp. 177-178.

[34] Riccardo Fubini, 'Ficino e i Medici all'avvento di Lorenzo il Magnifico', *Rinascimento*, 24, 1984, pp. 3-52: 15-23.

[35] On Neoplatonic themes of the literature of the Quattrocento and on the theme of wine in Medicean literature respectively; see Luciano Bottoni, *La messinscena del Rinascimento: 1, Calandra: una commedia per il papato*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2005, pp. 25-29 and Giovanni Barberi Squarotti, 'Da Bacco a Orfeo: vino, uva ed ebbrezza nella letteratura dell'età laurenziana' in *Favole antiche: modelli, imitazione, riscrittura*, ed. Giovanni Barberi Squarotti, Alessandria, Dell'Orso, 2000, pp. 9-52.

[36] Mario Martelli, 'Un caso di *amphibolatio*: la canzone a ballo *Ragionavasi di sodo*', in *Lorenzo de' Medici. Studi*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini, Olschki, Florence, 1992, pp. 309-337.

[37] Medici, *Tutte le opere*.

stretched over twenty years and went through various phases, which are mirrored in the *Morgante*, in some satirical poems and in the letters and works by Ficino. The first chapter (Chapter 6) of this second part untangles the different threads that are woven in this enigma; the aim is to understand better the reasons and the circumstances around Pulci's satire. The second chapter (Chapter 7) deals with the section of the *Morgante* which contains philosophical digressions, in order to consider whether and to what extent they really are satirical. The third chapter (Chapter 8) of the second section analyses the allegory of Ficino in the *Morgante* and investigates the poems written with the purpose of attacking the philosopher and his philosophy. This chapter provides a new edition and full commentary on these poems.

Pulci's *Morgante* has been much studied in the last century, whereas his minor works, after the edition by Paolo Orvieto, have only recently been studied in scholarly detail.[38] The relationship between Pulci and Ficino is the focus of two chapters in the seminal study *Pulci medievale* by Orvieto. The study is the first analysis to provide evidence to support the hypothesis that the character of King Marsilione in the *Morgante* is an allegory of Ficino.[39] Orvieto also takes into account other documents such as Ficino's letters and Pulci's poems, suggesting that Pulci, thanks to his unorthodox behaviour in the Medici household, forced himself into a cultural as well as physical exile that coincided with Lorenzo's increasing interest in Neoplatonic philosophy. The matter was reconsidered more than thirty years later on the discovery of a manuscript by Alessio Decaria.[40] In his book *Luigi Pulci e Francesco di Matteo Castellani*, Decaria investigates a miscellaneous volume of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence (Magl. VII 1025) with texts collected by the Florentine aristocrat Matteo Castellani, Pulci's first patron. Even though the volume does not contain clues that point directly at Ficino, Decaria makes a contribution to the issue by suggesting other Ficinian texts that might have featured in the dispute between Ficino and Pulci. In another essay, however, Decaria has persuasively identified one of Pulci's motives for creating a satirical portrait

---

[38] Pulci, *Opere minori*, ed. Paolo Orvieto, Milan, Mursia, 1986.

[39] Orvieto, Paolo. *Pulci medievale: studio sulla poesia volgare fiorentina del Quattrocento*, Rome, Salerno, 1978.

[40] Alessio Decaria, *Luigi Pulci e Francesco di Matteo Castellani: novità e testi inediti da uno zibaldone magliabechiano*, Florence, Società editrice fiorentina, 2009.

of Ficino in the *Morgante*: Ficino's support of the Pazzi conspiracy that resulted in the murder of Giuliano de' Medici in 1478.[41]

The satire of Ficino as a philosopher and the presence of philosophy in the *Morgante*, nonetheless, remain almost untouched. There are a few exceptions, such as Lebano's article 'I miracoli di Roncisvalle e la presunta ortodossia del diavolo-teologo Astarotte nel *Morgante* di Luigi Pulci'.[42] Lebano examines the monologues by Astarotte, one of the most relevant characters.

An interesting and novel perspective on the subject is provided by Alessandro Polcri in his recent book *Luigi Pulci e la chimera*.[43] In the introductory chapter of his study on the *Morgante*, Polcri reinstates, so to speak, Pulci's position in the Medici household and argues that the poet did not suffer from isolation during the last decade of his life. In the light of letters and archival documents, Polcri illustrates a rather different portrait of Pulci, who was indeed a controversial comic poet, but also the representative in charge of the delicate relationships between Lorenzo de' Medici and the mercenary *condottiero* Roberto Sanseverino.[44]

My approach in this thesis owes much to the idea that a cultural approach to literature can reveal a wider system of values, and that for this reason literary works can be interpreted as witnesses of a social, cultural and historical phenomenon.[45] From this perspective, the significance of the comic tradition in relation to philosophy is that it passes judgement on the pursuit of philosophy from non-philosophical viewpoints, a different pattern from the usual criticism of one philosophy or philosophical view criticising another from an assumed common standard of truth. This approach, however, does not endorse the notion of comic literature as 'non-official literature' found for example in Michail Bakthin's *Rabelais and his World*. Bakhtin often referred to the idea of 'folk humour' as a fundamental manifestation of culture as opposed to the official

---

[41] Alessio Decaria, 'Tra Marsilio e Pallante: una nuova ipotesi sugli ultimi cantari del *Morgante*' in *L'entusiasmo delle opere: studi in memoria di Domenico De Robertis*, eds Isabella Becherucci, Simone Giusti, Natascia Tonelli, Lecce, Pensa Multimedia, 2012, pp. 299-340.

[42] Edoardo Lebano, 'I miracoli di Roncisvalle e la presunta ortodossia del diavolo-teologo Astarotte nel *Morgante* di Luigi Pulci', *Italica*, 46, 1969, pp. 121-134.

[43] Alessandro Polcri, *Luigi Pulci e la chimera: studi sull'allegoria nel Morgante*, Florence, Società editrice fiorentina, 2010.

[44] Ibid., pp. 5-34.

[45] See for example Nicola Gardini, *Rinascimento*, Turin, Einaudi, 2010, p. XII.

and serious tone of ecclesiastical and feudal culture.[46] One of the outcomes of 'folk humour', according to Bakthin, is 'comic verbal compositions: parodies both oral and written'[47] as opposed to 'the sphere of *belles lettres*', which, in its various stages of development, 'presented many forms of deep and pure but open seriousness'.[48] This research, though it is concerned mainly with comic literature, aims at going beyond the distinction of culture and subculture, or, in Bakhtin's words, of 'folk humour' and '*belles lettres*'. Bakhtin himself recognised that in some literary works seriousness and laughter coexist although he did not comment on the fact that the distinction of these two worlds becomes less significant during the Renaissance. On the assumption that in fifteenth-century Florence there was not necessarily a coercive cultural hegemony which rejected dissident literature, present only at, say, carnival, my research is carried out considering the permanent instability of social and cultural hierarchies that involved a continuous interplay of culture and counter-culture.[49]

The words 'satire' and 'parody' feature prominently in this thesis and it may be helpful to define them at the outset. Satire is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a poem, or in modern use sometimes a prose composition, in which prevailing vices or follies are held up to ridicule.'[50] According to this definition, all the texts here quoted are satires and satire is intended with this broad meaning. Parody is 'a literary composition modelled on and imitating another work, especially a composition in which the characteristic style and themes of a particular author or genre are satirized by being applied to inappropriate or unlikely subjects, or are otherwise exaggerated for comic effect.'[51] There has been much debate around parody, since the uncertain etymology of the word might suggest a more neutral form of 'conscious imitation'.[52] I will use hereafter the term 'parody' to refer to 'comic parody', thus parody that conveys comic

---

[46] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, transl. by Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1968, p. 4.

[47] Ibid., p. 5.

[48] Ibid., p. 122.

[49] See Patricia Eichel-Lojkine, *Excentricité et humanisme: parodie, dérision et détournement des codes à la Renaissance*, Genève, Droz, 2002, p. 20.

[50] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v., online.

[51] Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-modern*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 30.

[52] Ibid., p. 30.

incongruity, dissimilarity and inappropriate similarity between texts.[53] The difference between satire and parody is that, despite their similarity in making the target the object of laughter, parody performs a deformation of the primary material offered by the target that becomes constituent of the parody's structure. Satire, on the other hand, does not imitate, distort, or quote other texts, and, if it does, it is not dependent upon the target.[54]

---

[53] Ibid., p. 32.
[54] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

CHAPTER 1

STEFANO FINIGUERRI

Not much is known of Stefano Finiguerri, also known as 'lo Za'. The only certain information is that he spent six months at the *Stinche*, the Florentine prison, for unpaid debts during 1422. The archive of the Stinche registers the payment of several sums in the name of 'Stefanus Tomaxii alias Za'. The same name, 'Za', along with the surname 'Finiguerri' is found in the *codex* 1591 (Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence) which contains three short poems: *La buca di Montemorello, Lo Studio d'Atene* and *Il Gagno*.[1] They had, as the following chapters demonstrate, a certain amount of success in Florence during the fifteenth century. Lodovico Frati, the first scholar to edit a modern edition of these works, later supported by Antonio Lanza, who edited the most recent edition, supposed that Stefano was the son of Tommaso Finiguerri and the brother of the goldsmith Antonio, who was in turn the father of the celebrated Maso Finiguerri.[2]

Finiguerri's poems are similar to one another in both content and form. Firstly, they share the *terza rima*, or interlocking three-line rhyme scheme. They have a common structure, a first-person narration of a journey led by a guide, inspired by Dante's *Commedia*. These journeys have their purpose in describing a procession of people walking towards the same object. Both *La buca* and *Il Gagno* depict a crowd of impoverished men hoping to find a source of money, while in the *Studio* the destination is the city of Athens. These three poems have as their primary object moral satire of the characters described, supposedly all Florentine contemporaries of Finiguerri and, in *Il Gagno*, Pisan contemporaries.[3] This is evident in *La Buca*, for example, where Za condemned those who squandered fortunes on gambling and drinking and depicted most of them as sodomites. *Il Gagno* is similar in this sense, shows a similar purpose, while *Lo Studio* follows a different narrative, as we will go on to explain.

---

[1] See Frati's introduction to his edition of Za's poems in Stefano Finiguerri, *La buca di Monteferrato, Lo Studio d'Atene e Il Gagno: poemetti satirici del XV secolo*, ed. Ludovico Frati, Bologna, Romagnoli, 1884, p. XXXVI.

[2] Ibid., p. XL; Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn, p. 271; *DBI* s.v. 'Finiguerri, Stefano'.

[3] Claudia Peirone, 'Finiguerri e altri; la parodia nel Quattrocento ("La turba in cammino": modello e antimodello da Dante a Lorenzo)' in *Lo specchio che deforma: le immagini della parodia*, ed. Giovanni Barberi Squarotti, Turin, Tirrenia, 1988, pp. 61-81: 69.

The poems also share common formal traits other than the rhyme scheme, the first one being the realistic and allusive language that often alludes to themes such as sex, including sodomy, and bodily functions. [4] Parody is another essential feature of Finiguerri's texts and it is embedded in the text on two different levels.

The first and most obvious kind is the parody of Dante's *Commedia*. Formal features of the text involve not only the rhyme scheme but also the fictional tool of the allegorical vision, the first-person narration, the presence of a guide and the use of similes. Parody comes in the form of an explicit reference to Dante in order to describe the wicked and petty. [5]

The second level of parody employs Dante's text more subtly. The *Commedia* inspired a large number of didactic poems in the fourteenth century, written in *terza rima*, and these remained popular during the fifteenth century. These poems display curiosity about natural philosophy along with encyclopaedic aims and the tendency, from the second half of the fourteenth century, to conform to the *Commedia*'s formal features. [6] Although they rarely showed a coherent structure, they had great fortune and were widely-read during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These poems and their didactic nature were Za's second target. Their authors are sometimes included among his characters and Za even went so far as to parody their Dantesque style. [7] The scholar Domenico Guerri has recognized these layers of parody and, referring to the pervasive reverence of Dante's *Commedia*, described Za's wit as a 'sharp taste for profanation.' [8]

---

[4] The formal features shared by the poems are listed in Mauro Cursietti, 'Alle radici della poesia burchiellesca', *La parola del testo*, 6, 2002, pp. 109-131: 116.

[5] Ibid., pp. 125-31; Peirone, 'Finiguerri e altri', p. 64.

[6] Claudio Ciociola, 'Poesia gnomica, d'arte, di corte, allegorica e didattica' in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, eds Enrico Malato et al., 14 vols. Rome, Salerno, 1995-2005, vol. 2, pp. 327-454: 413.

[7] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn, p. 280.

[8] Domenico Guerri, *La corrente popolare nel Rinascimento: berte burle e baie nella Firenze del Brunellesco e del Burchiello,* Florence, Sansoni, 1931, p. 41: 'un acre gusto per la profanazione.'

1.1 *Lo Studio d'Atene* and the Studio Fiorentino

The most interesting text for the purpose of this discussion is *Lo Studio d'Atene* because, as the title reveals, it is a satire of the *Studium* (in vernacular called *Studio*) the name by which the University of Florence was known. The history of the Studio is somewhat turbulent, as it was closed and reopened several times by the municipality, unlike other contemporary universities in Italy. This turbulence is perhaps at the root of a form of satire directed against those who were part of it.

The Studio was founded in 1348 and in 1349 Pope Clement VI authorised the teaching of theology, canon and civil law, medicine and arts. During the following years it alternated periods of expansion with periods of contraction until its closure in 1407 because of Florence's involvement in various conflicts – the most important being first with Milan and then with Pisa – which significantly drained public money from the commune. The financial situation of the Republic, in fact, always had a significant impact on the Studio's destiny from its very beginning. For instance, in 1348 the Black Death had killed half of the Florentine population and the establishment of a *Studium* was an effort to revivify the city.[9] The attitude of the Republic's administration towards the University, however, depended on many factors and was not always consistent, as a brief history of its employment shows. From 1357 to 1367 the number of teachers went from 11 to 21, although for five years, 1371 to 1376, only one was officially paid. The Studio closed from 1376 to 1385, but in 1388 witnessed the promulgation of its first Statutes. From 1396 to 1402 it incurred a substantial reduction in funds and it was closed again in 1407. From its second reopening in 1413, up to 1423, the average number of teachers employed was 19, but this number went down to 8 by 1428. It was closed yet again in 1449 and reopened two years later, although very little is known of its history from here until 1473, when it was transferred to Pisa by Lorenzo de' Medici.[10] Despite the numerous openings and closings, the Studio's reputation was largely unaffected. During the years between 1348 and 1420 the administrative board, or *ufficiali dello Studio*, included many prominent families such as the Gianfigliazzi, Valori, Guicciardini, Medici, Strozzi, Castellani and Ridolfi, a clear sign of the prestige that the Studio enjoyed.[11] Most importantly, the Studio reflected the cultural changes

---

[9] Jonathan Davies, *Florence and Its University during the Early Renaissance*, Leiden, Brill, 1998, p. 66.

[10] Ibid., p. 2.

[11] Ibid., p. 79.

and interests of Florence during the fifteenth century, especially when the *studia humanitatis* began to influence teachers from the 1420s.[12] For this reason it also became the setting of rivalries and sometimes even confrontations between scholars. For example, Guarino Guarini was excluded from teaching at the Studio and gave only private lessons because of Niccolò Niccoli's opposition; Francesco Filelfo's behaviour, during the late 1420s aggravated the internal division of the *ufficiali dello Studio*.[13]

The closure of the Studio in 1407, however, exemplifies the Republic's unpredictability in its role as a patron. The suspension was not official, yet nevertheless its doors were closed and its scholars were dispersed. The absence of a Studio was, according to the Statutes, to the detriment of the city and therefore in 1413 its reopening was urged by Florence's administration. The Statutes prove the intention of revitalizing an education establishment that would give the intellectual prestige that the city felt it deserved.[14] This is also confirmed by the fact that the Republic tried to hire teachers from all over Italy by sending envoys and letters of invitation.[15]

The date of the reopening has been used by Frati, Guerri and Lanza to date *Lo Studio d'Atene*, as they each suggested that the poem is strictly linked to the Studio's vicissitudes. Lanza's dating of the poem, the most recent, is divided into two parts. Firstly, he states that *Lo Studio* was written between the end of 1411 and 1412, when the University of Florence was reopened.[16] In order to support this, Lanza quoted the 1884 edition of Finiguerri's poems, edited by Frati. In Frati's introduction, he linked some of the characters to the university lecturers of the Studio and therefore, Lanza reasoned, since the University was reopened during the period in which Finiguerri was writing, the poem was written after 13 May 1412, when the reopening was made official.[17]

Both Lanza and Frati quoted Alessandro Gherardi's edition of the Studio's registers to find the exact date of the reopening.[18] The decision taken by the Comune to re-establish the university, however, was not taken during 1412 and lectures did not begin until

---

[12] Ibid., p. 53.

[13] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[14] Gene A. Brucker, 'Florence and Its University' in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe*, eds Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Seigel, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 220-236: 224.

[15] Davies, *Florence and Its University*, p. 12.

[16] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn, p. 271.

[17] Finiguerri, *La buca*, pp. XI-XIII.

[18] *Statuti dell'Università e studio fiorentino dell'anno MCCCLXXXVII*, ed. Alessandro Gherardi, Bologna, Forni, 1973, pp. 185-186.

September 1413. Gene Brucker, with the help of the same documents, demonstrated that from 1407 to 1413 there was no official announcement of the Studio's suspension, no governors were appointed and no funds were appropriated.[19] The provision re-establishing the Studio, which comes after the last provision, dated 2 December 1404, is dated 13 March 1412 and this date must be changed to 13 March 1413 as the Florentine New Year began on March 25. The reopening was ordered as follows:

> Since the Studio ceased to exist and to flourish in the city of Florence, for the honour and the advantage of the Republic and of the citizens and of the subordinates; and it is proved that the Republic and also the single citizens can recover in many ways the increasing costs from the Studio itself, and sometimes also from teaching expertise; (for these reasons) the magnificent and powerful masters, the masters Priors of the Arts and Standard-bearer of Justice etc., keen to take care of the public good and urged by many good and preeminent citizens, and aware that the causes mentioned above are true and that the reproachable and detrimental absence of the mentioned Studio did exist for many years; they deliberated the following on March 13th 1412 AD, during the sixth provision, that the Studio in the city of Florence shall exist and flourish and be continuously preserved, in Civil and Canon Law and in any other science with all convenient subjects.[20]

The following provision is dated 30 March 1413, two weeks afterwards. This, after the approval of the previous one, ruled on specific details:

> The magnificent and powerful masters, the masters Priors of the Arts and Standard-bearer of Justice of the people and the Comune of Florence […], considering the reformation recently made on the ordination of the new Studio to be created in the city of Florence […] since it is necessary to provide funds for the mentioned Studio in order to pay for the teachers […] deliberated [...] that the first year may begin on the first day of next September.[21]

---

[19] Brucker, 'Florence and Its University', p. 224.

[20] *Statuti*, p. 185: 'Quia habere et vigere Studium generale in civitate Florentie cedit ad honorem et utilitatem Reipublice et civium ipsius civitatis et etiam subditorum; ed diversimode Respublica et etiam singulares exinde recipiunt incrementa, et alias etiam experientia docente, probatum est; magnifici et potentes domini domini Priores Artium et Vexillifer iustitie *etc.*, per multos cives bonos et graves sollicitati, et etiam per se ipsos cognoscentes predicta vera esse; et quod vacatio dicti Studii per multos annos facta extitit reprehensibilis et nociva; volentes pro bono publico providere, habita *etc.*, deliberaverunt, die tertiodecimo mensis martii anno Domini millesimo quadrigentesimo duodecimo, indictione sexta: Quod in futurum sit et vigere debeat et continue manuteneri in civitate Florentie Studium generale, in Iure canonico et civili, et in aliis scientiis quibuscumque, cum omnibus partibus opportunis.'

[21] Ibid., p. 186: 'Magnifici et potentes domini domini Priores Artium et Vexillifer iustitie Populi et Comunis Florentie, […] considerantes reformationem nuper factam super ordinatione novi Studii faciendi in civitate Florentie, et auctoritatem ipsis concessam et attributam super hac materia; et quod necesse est

The first academic year after the reopening was to start in September 1413. The appointment of a five-year lectureship in rhetoric of Giovanni Malpaghini by the Comune on June 1412 should not mislead us, as it is not formally connected to the Studio.[22] Since Finiguerri was possibly inspired by this change, while several well-known Florentines were appointed as university lecturers, the most realistic dating of the poem is 1413, from the end of March, when the news of the reopening spread in the city and the Comune was seeking to hire teachers.

Lanza's second point in his dating of the poem, however, concerns its complicated philological tradition and poses other problems.[23] *Lo Studio* is found in eleven manuscripts but only two have the complete text, one of which is in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Nuovi Acquisti 1013, (or using Lanza's *siglum*, NA).[24] In this manuscript a tercet at the end of Canto V is identical to one found in another manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ginori Venturi 3, (Lanza's *siglum* GV), which also has *Lo Studio*. In GV this tercet is the beginning of another text, which has no connection with *Lo Studio*. In both NA and GV the lines following this tercet develop the satire of intellectuals and of the 'Valdimagra's magpies' ('gazze di Valdimagra'). Lanza admitted that this part could be apocryphal and ascribable to Antonio Barbiere da Granaiuolo di Valdelsa, the presumed author of this part in GV. Lanza's hypothesis is that Finiguerri is the real author of this final part and that he revised the poem during the 1430s, adding a satire of the *Compagnia della Gazza*. Very little is known about this and only Salomone Morpurgo, who published his findings in 1884, has studied it.[25] Since the Compagnia's statutes, which appear only in GV, are dated 1467, Lanza supposed that Finiguerri referred to them thirty years earlier and therefore also published this controversial part along with the rest of the poem in Cantos VI and VII. Both Morpurgo and Lanza, nevertheless, neglect to note that the statutes of

---

pro dicto Studio de pecunia providere, de qua possit solvi doctoribus, […] deliberaverunt: [...] quod primo annus incipiat die primo mensis semptebris proxime futuri.'

[22] Ibid., p. 388; Brucker, 'Florence and Its University', p. 224.

[23] Stefano Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, ed. Antonio Lanza, Rome, Zauli, 1994, pp. 158-159.

[24] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ginori Venturi 3; Laur. XL.47; Laur. XLII.27; Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale II.II.40; II.VII.40, Nuovi Acquisti 1013; Biblioteca Riccardiana 1591; 3048. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Chig. M.IV.80; Ott. Lat. 2151; Vat. Lat. 5225.

[25] Salomone Morpurgo, 'La Compagnia della Gazza: i suoi capitoli e le sue tramutazioni', *Miscellanea fiorentina di erudizione e storia*, 2, 1897, pp. 92-109.

the *Compagnia della Gazza* are facetious and unreliable and not necessarily linked to a real *compagnia*.[26] It is therefore plausible that inspiration might have worked the other way round, and the author of the *Compagnia* statutes could have been prompted by *Lo Studio*. After all, there is no other evidence of the existence of the *Compagnia* and the magpie was a very popular bird in the comic literature of those times.[27]

These philological problems are complicated by the facts used by Frati and Lanza to date Finiguerri's works, i.e. when the characters listed lived and when they worked at the Studio. An article by Katharine Park on the Studio's communal fiscal records clarifies when individuals worked at the University.[28] The following list counts the persons identified by Lanza, showing in Roman numerals the Canto in which they appear and, if known, their role in the Studio. Names are repeated when the same person worked over several decades:

<u>1360s</u>

Fra' Benedetto di Jacopo Cavalcanti   Canto II   Reader in Theology[29]

<u>1370s</u>

Nicolò Galgani   Canto I   Notary[30]

<u>1380s</u>

Nicolò Galgani   Canto I   Notary

Torello di Nicolò Torelli   Canto IV   Reformer of the Studio's Statutes and Lecturer in

---

[26] The Statutes report that the rules were approved by a fictional 'monsigniore cardinale meser Nieghaverssi de' Nullatensis questo dì 00 ottembre nel mille millanta'; see ibid., p. 106.

[27] GV is a miscellany containing only literary texts, sonnets and poems, copied by Filippo Scarlatti in 1470. The literary inspiration of the statutes can be proved also by the quotation of a 'Monte Morello', like the title of Za's *La Buca di Montemorello*. The Compagnia della Gazza is not quoted in any other document and the simple mention of some magpies in a letter does not allow us to establish, unlike Morpurgo, that Pulci was a member of the compagnia; see ibid., pp. 100, 107; Emilio Pasquini, 'Il codice di Filippo Scarlatti (Firenze), Biblioteca Venturi Ginori Lisci, 3', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 22, 1964, pp. 363-580.

[28] Katherine Park, 'The Readers at the Florentine Studio according to Comunal Fiscal Records (1357-1380, 1413-1446)', *Rinascimento*, 20, 1980, pp. 249-310.

[29] See ibid., pp. 262-263.

[30] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 133.

		Civil Law[31]
Betto di Giovanni di ser Betto Saracini	Canto IV	Notary[32]

1390s

Nicolò Galgani	Canto I	Notary
Torello di Nicolò Torelli	Canto IV	Reformer of the Studio's Statutes and Lecturer in Civil Law
Betto di Giovanni di ser Betto Saracini	Canto IV	Notary

1400s

Nicolò Galgani	Canto I	Notary
Betto di Giovanni di ser Betto Saracini	Canto IV	Notary
Domenico d'Arrigo di Ser Piero Mucini	Canto I	Notary[33]
Checco Machiavelli	Canto I	Reader in Canon Law and Civil Law[34]

1410s

Nicolò Galgani	Canto I	Notary
Checco Machiavelli	Canto I	Reader in Canon Law and Civil Law
Torello di Nicolò Torelli	Canto IV	Reformer of the Studio's Statutes and Lecturer in Civil law
Betto di Giovanni di ser Betto Saracini	Canto IV	Notary
Antonio di Matteo di Meglio	Canto VI	Herald of the Florentine Signoria and Poet;[35]

---

[31] *Statuti*, pp. 4, 11; Park, 'The Readers', p. 274; Enrico Spagnesi, *Utiliter edoceri. Atti inediti degli ufficiali dello Studio Fiorentino (1391-96)*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1979, pp. 110-112.

[32] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 138.

[33] *Statuti*, p. 182.

[34] Ibid., pp. 376, 389; Park, 'The Readers', p. 272.

[35] Suzanne Branciforte, 'Antonio di Meglio, Dante, and Cosimo de' Medici', *Italian Studies*, 50, 1995, pp. 9-23: 9.

Bonaccorso del messer Giovanni da Montemagno	Canto IV	Reader in Civil Law[36]

1420s

Francesco di Ser Benedetto de' Marchi	Canto V	
Bonaccorso del messer Giovanni da Montemagno	Canto IV	Reader in Civil Law
Biagio Nicolini	Canto VII	Reader in Canon Law and Civil Law[37]
Pier d'Arezzo	Canto I	Reader in Astrology[38]

1430s

Biagio Nicolini	Canto VII	Reader in Canon Law and Civil Law
Francesco di Ser Benedetto de' Marchi	Canto V	

All these individuals worked in the Studio between the 1390s and the 1420s. The only exception is Fra' Benedetto di Jacopo Cavalcanti, who taught at the Studio during the 1360s. We can explain his presence in the poem by assuming that his fame persevered amongst those Florentines who attended the Studio in later years. None of the lecturers active during the 1420s and 1430s are, as Lanza supposed, part of the possibly spurious Cantos VI and VII, with only one exception, Biagio Nicolini. Teachers and notaries from all decades are found in the different Cantos.

From the data summarized above, it seems likely that Finiguerri wrote the whole poem during the 1420s, rather than on two separate occasions, first in the 1410s and then the 1430s.

Another relevant fact emerging from the list is that most of the persons listed above taught civil or canon law, or both, and they were notaries involved in the city's administration. This seems to contradict partially the claim made by Lanza that *Lo Studio* is a satire of the Florentine Aristotelian culture.[39] There is a fact, however, stressed by Davies, which could explain such a hostility against the study and the

---

[36] Park, 'The Readers', pp. 274-279, 282-283.

[37] *Statuti*, pp. 406, 414; Park, 'The Readers', pp. 282, 288-289.

[38] *Statuti*, pp. 414, 424; Park, 'The Readers', pp. 285-286.

[39] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn, p. 163.

practice of jurisprudence.[40] Although there were fewer teachers of law than of arts and medicine between 1385 and 1445, in terms of remuneration they surpassed all the remaining lecturers of the Studio, reflecting the importance given to canon and civil law.[41]

1.2 *Lo Studio d'Atene*: a trip to Athens

Lo Studio d'Atene is now recognised as an important example of the satire of Florentine traditionalist culture rather than a mere list of obscure and forgotten characters. This becomes very clear from the outset, as the opening passage finds the narrator parodying another text:[42]

<div style="margin-left:2em;">

1 Di tutto il cerchio che l'Europa cigne
   Italia n'è reina incoronata
   secondo che pe' savi si distigne.[43]

   Il frutto che la ciba e tiene ornata
5 si è la purpurea vesta di Toscana,
   di fioralisi e gigli seminata.[44]

   Lo specchio in che costei si mira e vana,[45]
   si è la franca terra sopra Marte[46]
   che stringe ogni tiranno e sì lontana.[47]

</div>

---

[40] Davies, *Florence and Its University*, pp. 33-34.

[41] Among them is Torello di Nicolò Torelli, mentioned in the list above and Rosello Roselli, who is one of Burchiello's targets; see Chapter 2, p. 24.

[42] The text hereafter used to quote from *Lo Studio d'Atene* is Lanza's critical edition in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, pp. 53-90.

[43] 'secondo che'; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'secondoché','avverb. vale lo stesso, che conforme a che'. Here meaning 'according to its excellence'.

[44] 'fioralisi e gigli': the fleur-de-lis was a symbol of the French monarchy, while the lily was and still is the symbol of the city of Florence.

[45] 'vanare': 'to rave' or 'to twaddle'; see Benedetto Varchi, *L'Ercolano: dialogo di Benedetto Varchi nel quale si ragiona delle lingue, ed in particolare della Toscana e della Fiorentina*, 2 vols, Milan, Società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1804, vol. 1, p. 104: 'Quelli, che dicono cose vane, o da fanciulli, hanno i lor verbi proprj: vaneggiare, o, come disse Dante, vanare, e pargoleggiare'.

[46] The legend says that Mars was the first patron of Florence in Roman times; see for example Dante, *Inferno*, XIII.143-144. 'Franca': 'free' as opposed to 'ruled by a tyrant'; see Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, eds Emilio Pasquini and Antonio Quaglio, 3 vols, Milan, Garzanti, 1982: *Inferno*, XXVII.54, p. 332: 'Tra tirannia si vive, e stato franco.' The polysemy of the words serves Finiguerri's purposes well; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'franco': 'ardito, coraggioso, intrepido, spedito, pratico.'

<div style="text-align: center">

10   Perché l'è capo e fior di molte parte,[48]
sì manda per rifar lo Studio 'Atene
e suoi ambasciador' con libri e carte.

Oh, quanta nobil gente si contiene
in questa vaga e bella ambasceria,
15   di poco senno le lor mente piene!

S'e' ti piacesse, lettor, pregherria
che tu gustassi d'esta gente el nome,
se vuogli avere alquanto giulleria.

</div>

<div style="text-align: right">(I.1-18)</div>

The first lines are peculiar; Finiguerri does not praise any divinity or muse but makes the city of Florence the centre of his focus, though it is not named. The initial periphrasis describes first Europe, then Italy, which is a 'crowned queen' because of her learned citizens. Italy's 'nourishment' and 'ornament' is Tuscany – which is objectified in a purple dress. Tuscany gazes at herself in a mirror that morphs into Florence which is, in turn, the free land of Mars, the ancient patron of the city. It is also a land that forces tyrants to flee.

After this portrait of Florence Finiguerri discloses his satirical intent (lines 15-18) and the description at lines 1-9 becomes suddenly – and quite obviously – ironic. A closer reading of these first nine lines, however, reveals a more subtle satire. Finiguerri praises Florence and effectively establishes a parallel between the Tuscan city and Athens, suggesting that both were culturally equally important. He also hints at an intellectual exchange between the two cities. Florence's resulting eminence produces the establishment of a Studio, which needs to be formally recognized through an official delegation sent to Athens. Whether these envoys were to return with knowledge learnt in Athens or whether their trip would confirm that Florence had usurped Athens as the cultural centre is not clear. This ambiguity, as discussed below, is part of the satire.

The analogy between Florence and Athens is also the premise of Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio Florentinae urbis*, a panegyric written in 1403 based on Aristides's *Panathenaicus*, a eulogy of Athens. In this work, Bruni did not hint at Aristides's eulogy, but listed Florence's greatest qualities by comparing it to Rome and Athens.

---

[47] 'Lo specchio…sì': note the identical structure of lines 4-5, describing Italy's nourishment, and 7-8, with Italy's mirror and glory. 'Stringe ogni tiranno'; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'stringere': 'per serrare, assediare'. 'Lontanare' is an alternative form of 'allontanare': Florence wards tyrants off.

[48] The subject of 'l'è capo' is Florence.

<div style="text-align: center">34</div>

This is particularly significant, because Rome was a standard measure of comparison and Romans were, according to Bruni, the founders of Florence. The comparison with Athens, on the other hand, is unusual. Athens and Rome are examples of how one cannot judge a city by the evil deeds of few citizens: 'this would be just as fallacious as reproving the law-abiding quality of the Romans because of the corruption of Verres or the bravery of the Athenians on account of the cowardice of Thersites.'[49] Furthermore, those Florentines who did not wish to be ruled over by those who betrayed Florence in the battle of Montaperti 'followed the example of the Athenians, who abandoned their own city during the Second Persian War in order to be able to live there someday in peace and freedom.'[50]

Another example includes Rome, Athens and Sparta by comparing the Parte Guelfa to the censors, the Areopagites and the Ephors respectively.[51] Bruni also gave a physical description of the city, lauding the advantages of its position between the sea and mountains. Bruni often implied that Florence resembles a woman, the most excellent and indeed 'the queen of Italy', a personification similar to Finiguerri's Italy who closely resembles a crowned queen.[52] Among the pivotal qualities of Florence often stressed in the *Panegyric* there is its fierce struggle against tyrants. As much as Finiguerri's Florence 'besieges every tyrant and so it drives them off' (I.9), Florence according to Bruni is made of citizens that 'especially enjoy perfect freedom and are greatest enemies of tyrants'.[53] Moreover, according to Bruni, Florence not only 'has

---

[49] Leonardo Bruni, 'Panegyric to the City of Florence' transl. Benjamin E. Kohl, in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. Benjamin G. Kohl, Elizabeth B. Welles, Ronald G. Witt. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978, pp. 135-175:158. Id., 'Laudatio florentinae urbis', in *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni*, ed. Hans Baron. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 217-263: 250: 'non magis quam aut Romanorum continentiae Verrina furta, aut Atheniensium fortitudini Chersili ignaviam.'

[50] Bruni, 'Panegyric', transl. Kohl, pp. 171-172; id., 'Laudatio', p. 261: 'imitati Atheniensium illud preclarum et laudatissimum factum, qui secundo Persico bello urbem ipsam relinquere ut aliquando in ea libera habitare possent.'

[51] Bruni, 'Panegyric', transl. Kohl, p. 173; id., 'Laudatio', p. 262.

[52] Bruni, 'Panegyric', transl. Kohl, p. 148; id., 'Laudatio', p. 243.

[53] Bruni, 'Panegyric', transl. Kohl, p. 151; id., 'Laudatio', p. 245. 'ut Florentini homines maxime omnium libertate gaudeant et tyrannorum valde sint inimici.'

[…] vanquished powerful enemies and tyrants' but it also sustained cities 'oppressed by the conspiracies of neighbouring states or the violence of domestic tyrants'.[54]

By hinting at Bruni's *Laudatio* in the first nine lines and then denying the excellence of Florence in the rest of the poem, Finiguerri also undermined the eulogies of the Tuscan city, typical of many chronicles of the fourteenth century.[55] Panegyrics of the city were also written in poetry, for example by Antonio Pucci, who enumerated the merits of the city in vernacular, and by Giovanni Gherardi, whose sonnet 'I' son la nobil donna di Fiorenza' represents the city as a noble woman listing her own qualities:[56]

> 1 I' son la nobil donna di Fiorenza,
> figliuola fui dell'antica romana,
> che per la grazia divina e sovrana
> è sì multipricata mia semenza
>
> 5 che per tutto il mondo è sparta mia sennenza.
> Nel fior che drento al mio giardin si grana[57]
> vi sta il tempo e la luce diana.[58]
> Costor che qui vedete a mia presenza,
>
> che ciascun fu di natura dotato
> 10 sì che non ebbon nel mondo lor pari,
> chi in arme pro e chi scienziato,[59]
>
> sì furon da ciascun tenuti cari
> che 'l mio comun ne fia sempre onorato,
> però ch'al mondo nascon molti rari.
>
> 15 Consiglio ognun ch'appari:[60]
> chi disia fama assempra da costoro
> che passan di ricchezza ogni tesoro.

---

[54] Bruni, 'Panegyric', transl. Kohl, pp. 164, 160; id., 'Laudatio', pp. 255, 252: 'sepe potentes hostes tyrannosque contrivit.' 'cum vicinorum conspiratione aut tyrannorum violentia opprimerentur, consilio, opibus, pecuniis, susentate sunt et difficillimo tempore conservate.'

[55] For example that of Giovanni Villani (*Nuova cronica*, XII.92-94). See Anna Maria Cabrini, 'Coluccio Salutati e gli elogi di Firenze fra Tre e Quattrocento' in *Le radici umanistiche dell'Europa. Coluccio Salutati cancelliere e politico. Atti del convegno internazionale del Comitato nazionale delle celebrazioni del VI Centenario della morte di Coluccio Salutati, Firenze-Prato, 9-12 Dicembre 2008*, eds Roberto Cardini and Paolo Viti, Florence, Polistampa, 2012, pp. 251-276: 251-252.

[56] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, p. 255-256.

[57] 'Si grana'*:* 'bears fruits'.

[58] 'Luce diana': 'daylight'.

[59] 'In arme pro': 'benefit of the arms'.

[60] 'Passan … tesoro'; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'passare': 'passar di bellezza, di sapere, e simili; e anche passare, assolutamente, vagliono avanzare, superare'.

Bruni's most important predecessor is, however, Coluccio Salutati's *Invectiva contra Antonium Luschum*, in which the humanist not only depicted the city as the heir of ancient Rome, but also developed the myth of Charlemagne's re-foundation of Florence and reinforced the ties between it and France. Salutati justified with this *excursus* Florence's ties with the French crown, the same to which Finiguerri controversially alludes with the word *fioralisi*.

Contrary to the idyllic visions of the perfect city, Finiguerri's Florence is populated by men with no wits (I.15). Moreover, even the lines in the *Studio* that praise the city might reveal an allegorical and satirical reading, for example, in the description of Tuscany's dress, which is purple-red, a colour that was symbolic of royal as well as papal power, and scattered with lilies, a symbol of Florence, and also fleur-de-lis, a symbol of the French crown. Despite its hostility to tyrants and its embrace of freedom, Florence was always at the mercy of greater powers.

Lines 10-12 describe a group of envoys, or *ambasciata*, which sets off for Athens. The reasons behind this embassy are not explained but we can suppose that Athens was chosen because of its status as the birthplace of philosophy and more generally as a symbol of knowledge to which all intellectuals had to pay their respects. The theme of a trip to Athens was not a novelty and it has an interesting history. The text that probably inspired Finiguerri dates back to the end of the fourteenth century. It was written Florence and it was well known during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. This is Ghigo Brunelleschi's *Geta e Birria*, a poem written in *ottava rima*, a partial translation into the vernacular of Vital de Blois's *Geta*, a twelfth-century poem based on Plautus's *Amphitryon*.[61] Besides, *Geta* was popular in Florence as one of the texts employed to teach students elementary Latin and also is mentioned in Boccaccio's *Amorosa visione* (XVIII.70-88).[62] In this poem Vital de Blois satirized the University of Paris by referring to it as Athens and by telling the story of a man and his servant undertaking a journey to Greece in order to learn philosophy. When they return home, however, they lack common sense. *Geta*'s characters and misunderstandings are borrowed from

[61] Lorenzo de' Medici refers to it in his *Uccellagione di starne* (VIII.3). It also inspired Finiguerri, Burchiello, Gambino d'Arezzo and Pulci and it was known to Machiavelli, Paolo della Pergola and Domenico di Bandino; see Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn, pp. 235, 265; Davide Puccini, 'Una fonte per Margutte', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 172, 2000, pp. 534-539. The most recent edition of the text is found in Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, pp. 271-306.

[62] Paul F. Gehl, *A Moral Art: Grammar, Society, and Culture in Trecento Florence*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 53; Lanza, *Polemiche e berte* 2nd edn, pp. 248-257.

Plautus's play, while this particular trip to Greece is inspired by a Roman tradition that appears frequently in Italian literature, for example, in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (X.8).

Brunelleschi's version is briefly the following. Amphitryon, a pretentious but dull man, decides to leave for Athens to study philosophy against the wishes of his beautiful wife Alcmena. The wife remains at home with a servant, Birria, while the husband takes away with him another servant, Geta. When Amphitryon and Geta are far away, Jupiter, in love with Alcmena, tries to deceive her. Jupiter disguises himself as Amphitryon, accompanied by the god Arcas, who has taken Geta's physical form. Jupiter succeeds in sleeping with Alcmena just at the moment the real Amphitryon and the real Geta return. Geta and his double Arcas meet and have a surreal dialogue, generating a classical comedy of errors. The real Amphitryon eventually finds out what has happened to his wife but he is convinced by Birria that it was a dream.

The trip to Athens is crucial in the development of the plot, as the city's former philosophical glories are its driving force and they are mentioned in the very first lines of the poem:[63]

> Avea la fama ogni parte ripiena
> del grande studio e dell'alta scienza[64]
> ché savi greci alla città d'Atena[65]
> lungo tempo avean fatto residenza.
>
> (1.1-4)

Vital de Blois's legacy and satire of the University of Paris is found in the word *studio* (line 2), which could refer to the 'study of philosophy' or the *Studium generale*. In the second stanza Amphitryon explains to his wife that his aim is to learn philosophy, even if that means that he might not see her again:

> [...] 'O donna mia
> ad Atene vogl'ir sanza soggiorno[66]
> e infin ch'i' non so ben filosofia
> a rivederti già mai non ritorno.'
>
> (2.1-4)

The flaws of his plan, however, become clear later:

> La fama è pur per questa terra sparta
> ch'i' debba andar; quanto parrebbe strano[67]

---

[63] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, pp. 271-306. The text is given without commentary.

[64] 'Fame filled every place with the notion of the great study and superior knowledge …'

[65] 'città d'Atena': the city of Athena, Athens.

[66] 'sanza soggiorno': 'without any hesitation'.

> a tutti non fornendo la mia impresa!
> Dattene pace e non far più contesa.'

<div align="right">(18.4-8)</div>

Amphitryon cannot not go on this trip because everybody knows that he has committed himself to the study of philosophy, not because of love of philosophy in itself.

Brunelleschi did not describe his characters as dim-witted. Instead, through the exchanges of identity, the dialogue is developed to reveal their utter lack of judgement. This vacuousness is a characteristic of Geta and Amphitryon before their departure and it worsens afterwards, because they harbour the illusion that they have gained wisdom. All they can find are shallow theoretical confirmations of their foolish thoughts. Geta, in particular, is tangled up in logic to the point that at stanza 122 he curses philosophy as the main cause of his troubles:

> 122   'Loica! Maladetto sia chi prima
> mi disse che tu eri il fior d'ogni arte;
> i' feci d'appararti grande stima
> e per lodarti ho piene molte carte;
> ora hai sì fatto con tua falsa lima,[68]
> che 'l nome e l'esser mio da me si parte.[69]
> Dov'util di saperti riputava,
> sì tu mi nuoce e quanto puoi mi grava.'

<div align="right">(122)</div>

On the other hand Birria, the servant who never left, plays the role of the real sage – he repeatedly affirms that being in the kitchen is better than learning philosophy – and relies only on his common sense rather than on any sort of complicated reasoning. His personal thought is epitomized in three stanzas that reflect the core of Brunelleschi's satire:

> 135   Birria ascoltava il Geta, e sorridendo
> dicea: 'Gli orecchi convien ch'io m'impeci.[70]
> Per nuove vie andaste voi caendo[71]
> d'apparar senno alle terre de' Greci:
> savi eravate, e or chiaro comprendo
> che siete pazzi, ond'io troppo ben feci
> a rimanermi a guardar la cucina,

---

[67] 'La fama ...andar': hyperbaton. 'The rumor (*fama*) that I am going to this land (Athens) has already spread.'

[68] 'Lima': 'file'. Here used as 'polishing', 'finishing'.

[69] 'Che… parte': Geta is confused about his own identity, and cannot recognize his name or even is being.

[70] 'Impeciare': 'to cover with pitch'. Birria is bored of Geta's complaints and he wishes he was deaf.

[71] 'Caendo'; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'caere': 'cercando; e non ha questo verbo, se non questa voce del gerundio, e per lo più s'accompagna col verbo andare'.

armando il corpo con forza divina.[72]

> 136 Costoro apparan loica, pensando
>   d'esser per senno degli altri maggiori,
>   ed ella li vien poi sì conciando[73]
>   che del loro esser proprio li trae fuori,[74]
>   a poco a poco il cervel consumando.
>   Birria, caccia da te questi dolori,
>   non volere apparar così fatt'arte,
>   ch'altrui dell'esser suo divide e parte.[75]
>
> 137 Non saper arte giova troppo altrui,[76]
>   s'in bestia si converte chi l'appara,
>   e parendo esser nulla ora a costui,
>   ha di sé fatto troppo maggiore tara.[77]
>   I' son pur savio, e così sempre fui,
>   ed ho, come ver uom, la vita cara.
>   Statti in cucina e quivi ti trastulla
>   loico sia chi vuol per esser nulla.'

(135-137)

For Birria, logic is like a disease that consumes people's brains, and as their intellect suffers, their ego becomes overblown. This emphasis on logic, as Lanza observes, could be read as a criticism of medieval Aristotelianism.[78]

Following Brunelleschi, Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene* develops the theme of the trip to Athens, albeit from a completely different perspective. Satire in *Lo Studio* is forthright and therefore more obviously aimed at the specific characters that he wanted to attack. Italy is 'distinguished for her learned men' (I.3) and Florence is the city with the Studio. Florence's re-establishment was ordered and then the envoys left for Athens 'with books and papers' (I.12). Athens here is not the place of exclusive knowledge, but only the city where one must go. If in the *Geta e Birria* the hypocrisy was Amphitryon's, concerned about the opinion of others, in *Lo Studio* the trip to Athens becomes pointless and is described as a collective delirium. Additionally, a trip to Greece could have had also

---

[72] 'Armando… divina'*:* 'providing myself with a divine strength'.

[73] 'Conciando'*:* 'ruining'.

[74] 'Che… fuori': 'that deprives them of their own being', like it has happened to Geta.

[75] 'Ch'altrui… parte': see *Geta e Birria* 122.6.

[76] 'Non… altrui': 'ignorance is bliss to other people'.

[77] 'E parendo… tara': '(Geta, even) feeling like nothing, is making a fuss out of himself'; see Varchi, *Ercolano*, vol. 1, p. 140: 'Quando ci pare, che alcuno abbia troppo largheggiato di parole, e detto più di quello, che è, solemo dire: bisogna sbatterne, o tararne, cioè farne la tara, come si fa de' conti, degli speziali.'

[78] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, pp. 261-264.

another connotation, as sodomy was called at the time the 'Greek vice'. Although sexual references, also hinting at sodomy, are frequent in the poem, we shall now focus on the most important meaning pertaining to Greece as the birthplace of philosophy.[79]

The characters travelling to Greece never mention anything that needs to be learnt once they arrive. They do carry their own knowledge and their own 'written' books:

> E' porteran con lor ben mille some[80]
> 20   di libri scritti e 'l Büezio in volgare,[81]
> che basterebbe a più di sette Rome.[82]

<div align="right">(I.19-21)</div>

The flow of books is one of the eccentricities of the envoys, as it passes from Florence and it goes towards Athens rather than vice versa as might be expected. Elsewhere these books become so essential to a judge (*giudice*, line 65) called Bonnaccorso that he seeks for the help of Betto di Giovanni di Ser Betto Saracini:

> Quale servo che gli è comandato
> da bizzarro signor fa cammin presto[83]
> per non sentir romor quando è tornato,[84]
>
> tal si fé Betton, ma non sì presto,[85]
> 65   ché s'accostò al giudice dicendo:
> 'Che domandate voi?' con modo onesto.[86]
>
> Ed egli a lui: 'I' voglio e così intendo[87]
> che tu mi porti alquanti libri 'Atene:
> miglior di te non c'è, s'io ben comprendo.'
>
> 70   'Io son contento ma leghiàngli bene,
> perch'io mi sento molto svemorato[88]

---

[79] Spagnesi, *Utiliter edoceri*, pp. 82-83.

[80] 'Soma' is a burden carried by animals, usually donkeys. Scholars are already implicitly compared to animals.

[81] ''l Büezio in volgare': 'the works of Boethius translated in vernacular'. Note that *Boezio* is mingled into *Buezio* to recall the word *bue*, 'ox'.

[82] 'Sette Rome': hyperboles that matches the previous one at line 19, 'mille some'. The number seven is probably suggested by Rome's seven hills.

[83] 'Bizzarro': 'hot tempered'. 'fa cammin presto': 'leaves immediately'.

[84] 'Romor'; see *GDLI*, vol. 17, p. 245: 'manifestazione chiassosa e per lo più minacciosa […] d'ira, di furore, di dissidio, di protesta, di biasimo.'

[85] 'Betton' has been identified with Betto di Giovanni di Betto Saracini; see Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 138.

[86] 'Con modo onesto': 'reverently'.

[87] 'Io… intendo': 'I demand, and therefore I order, that…'

[88] 'Svemorato': alternative form of *smemorato*; see *GDLI*, vol. 20, p. 606.

e non vorrei portar pe' libri pene.'[89]

<div align="right">(IV.61-72)</div>

The pointlessness of the trip to Athens is expressed unequivocally at Canto V in the words of Benedetto di Ser Pecora:

> 'La scimunita e poca providenza
> ci sforza a camminare inverso Atene,
> al nostro spaccio omai date licenza!'

<div align="right">(V.61-63)</div>

Given the futility of the embassy, we might suppose that there was another reason behind this theme. From the final decades of the fourteenth century a new intellectual phenomenon took place in Italy, especially in Florence. In 1396 Coluccio Salutati, the chancellor of Florence, invited the Byzantine émigré Manuel Chrysoloras to teach ancient Greek at the Studio, where he worked until the year 1400. From the moment that Chrysoloras began teaching at the University of Florence we can speak of a revival of the study of Greek. Even though after him only Guarino Veronese (1411-1414) and Francesco Filelfo (1427-33) taught Greek in Florence, this trend spread elsewhere, for example in the North-East of Italy, with Guarino Veronese (Ferrara, 1429-60) and Vittorino da Feltre (Mantua, 1423-46).

In the first half of the Quattrocento, however, those who wished to learn ancient Greek to a high level had to go to the Greek East.[90] Among the preeminent scholars who studied Greek and spent a significant number of years in Florence was Guarino Veronese, who went to Costantinople from 1403 to 1409, and then lived in Florence from 1410 and taught at the Studio in 1413 and 1414;[91] Rinuccio Aretino went to Crete and Constantinople between 1415 and 1423, visited Florence in 1424 and later taught Poggio Bracciolini in Rome;[92] Francesco Filelfo studied philosophy in Padua with Paul of Venice, worked in Constantinople for over five years (1422-27) and lectured in moral philosophy at the Studio in Florence from 1429 to 1434.[93] Giovanni Aurispa went to

---

[89] 'e… pene': 'I do not want these books to bring me exertion'.

[90] James Hankins, *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols, Roma, Storia e Letteratura, 2003-04, vol. 1, pp. 284-285.

[91] See *DBI* s.v. 'Guarini, Guarino', p. 359.

[92] James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols, Leiden, Brill, 1990, vol. 1, pp. 85-89.

[93] Ibid., pp. 89-95.

Greece during 1413-14 and 1420-23 and was called to teach Greek at the florentine Studio in 1425. He then spent two years in Florence.[94]

The revival of ancient Greek had a deep impact on the Florentine cultural milieu from the very beginning. For example, Bruni's *Laudatio*, written in 1406, is the first Florentine work to benefit from the newly institutionalised knowledge of Greek.[95] Going to the Greek East was no longer associated solely with ancient Romans. This development is reflected in the main theme of *Lo Studio d'Atene*.

A secondary consideration is that Athens had in those years a different type of connection with Florence through the Acciaiuoli family. Neri Acciaiuoli seized Athens in 1388 and acquired the duchy of Athens in 1394. His son Antonio regained the city in 1402 and he was, though not formally, the duke of Athens when *Lo Studio* was written. Antonio Acciaiuoli may be the delighted *duca* described in the first Canto (lines 34-36).

1.3 Main features of Finiguerri's satire

Metaphors of the intellect between food and death

The journey to Greece should confer knowledge upon the embassy, but the enterprise is doomed, since every member of it shows a lack of intelligence. Many are the metaphors that describe this feature and many recur in the poem. Judgement (*senno*), for example, is often compared to a physical object that one must carry all the time. This is the case of Ser Gabriello da Linari, whose mind is like a 'little vase', empty of *senno*:[96]

> '[…] Questo è ser Gabrïello,
> quel da Linar, dello studio nimico,[97]
> e porta poco senno in suo vasello.'
>
> (I.82-84)

Other examples reveal how literary references are woven into the fabric of *Lo Studio*. This is clear in the following (VI.120): 'È püeril di senno e vecchio d'anni' in which the

---

[94] See *DBI*, s.v. 'Aurispa, Giovanni'. Other humanists who went to the Greek East are Antonio Cassarino, Giovanni Tortelli, Gregorio Tifernate, Cristoforo Persona and Cyriac of Ancona; see Hankins, *Humanism and Platonism*, vol. 1, pp. 285.

[95] Hans Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political literature*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 151.

[96] The vase of judgement resembles the phial of Orlando's *senno* that Astolfo finds on the Moon. See Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, XXXIII.82-83.

[97] 'dello studio nimico': anastrophe ('nemico dello Studio'). Gabriello, deprived of judgment, confers no benefit to the Studio and is therefore its enemy.

reference is to the classic *topos* of the *puer senex* (the 'young-old man'). This trope was much developed in the Bible, featured prominently in literature of late Antiquity and was widely used in medieval hagiographical texts, and refers to exceptional individuals who are gifted with maturity at a young age. In this case, however, the wonder is overturned and the verse describes paradoxically the condition of every single character of *Lo Studio*, as *senno* becomes the centre of a metaphor that exposes its insignificant presence, while the non-marvellous event – an old man whose judgement is that of a boy – is described in a misplaced high register.[98]

The theme associated in most cases with scholars' dim-wittedness is food. This is because the word *sciocco* means 'stupid' and 'unwise' as well as 'tasteless'. Often the word does not even appear, but the text alludes to it with periphrasis, for example (III.35-36): 'e fa', se puoi (ti prego!), che mi conti/ el nome di costor senza sapore.' Another character, Ser Catanzano, is *sciocco* as 'sweet like salt':

> Ma s'io ti mostro un grande che non rida,
> non temer tu, ch'egli è dolce di sale:[99]
> egli è ser Catanzan, che par l'accida.[100]
>
> (I.73-75)

Za's first guide is Piero Vettori, who describes Ser Catanzano as an imposing though inoffensive man. In another example the allusion to *sciocco* is more complex and more pointed, for the sons of Ser Mino resemble 'dumplings without cheese':

> Questo mi par de' più sciocchi figliuoli
> ch'avesse il padre suo, detto ser Mino,
> benché sien senza cacio ravïuoli.
>
> (IV.40-42)

Dumplings are particularly suitable for a group description. Not all food is tasty and *senno* can sometimes be a bland dish, as in the example offered by Bonaccorso, who admits his lack of intelligence by describing his brain as 'breadcrumbs', therefore tasteless (IV.54: 'pan grattugiato porto per cervello').

Lack of judgement and ignorance are expressed from Canto V onwards with a new metaphor, thoroughly explained by Ser Gigi:

> 10 'Ferma le piante – disse el mio conforto –[101]

---

[98] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. W. R. Trask. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953, pp. 98-101.

[99] 'dolce di sale': 'sweet like salt', therefore with no flavour and *sciocco*.

[100] 'accida': *hapax*; see Lanza's interpretation in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 132: 'l'accidia in persona, cioè la passività'.

> e guarda quella gente che ci mira,
> che paioni vivi e ciascheduno è morto.'
>
> E io a lui: 'Deh, non ti vinca l'ira!
> Come esser può s'e' vanno e morti sono?[102]
> 15   Di' la ragion, ché volontà mi tira!'[103]
>
> Ed egli a me: 'Di ciò ti farò dono.
> El corpo umano senza sentimento[104]
> è come uno strumento senza suono.
>
> assai ti mosterrieno il munimento[105]
> 20   vivi, e la ragion perch'a te pare
> è sol pel dimenar che gli fa il vento. [...]'

<div align="right">(V.10-21)</div>

Men without intelligence or knowledge are dead and the only reason they seem to move is the wind. The evocative image recalls Boccaccio's *Decameron* (VI.9), when Guido Cavalcanti's character conveys a similar message.[106] Betto Brunelleschi, understanding Cavalcanti's words, offers the following explanation:

> [...] queste arche sono le case de' morti, per ciò che in esse si pongono e dimorano i morti; le quali egli dice che sono nostra casa, a dimostrarci che noi e gli altri uomini idioti e non litterati siamo, a comparazion di lui e degli altri uomini scienziati, peggio che uomini morti, e per ciò, qui essendo, noi siamo a casa nostra.[107]

Another example of this metaphor is at Canto V, where Antonio di Meglio, poet and herald of the *Signoria* until 1442, is not just dead; he was never alive:

> 'Costui non può paura aver di morte,
> perchè vivo non è né fia già mai;
> se viene innanzi, egli ha ragioni accorte.'

<div align="right">(VI.85-87)</div>

---

[101] See Dante, *Inferno*, XXII.122, pp. 225: 'fermò le piante a terra […].'

[102] The question and the explanation that follows vaguely recalls Dante's surprise to acknowledge that Frate Alberigo's soul is in Hell while his body is still alive on Earth (*Inferno*, XXXIII.121-135). Traitors to their guests, punished in the third ring of the ninth circle, are deprived of their soul as soon as they sin, and a demon inhabits their mortal bodies until their death.

[103] 'volontà mi tira': 'the desire (to know) attracts me'.

[104] 'sentimento': 'intellect', 'judgement'.

[105] 'munimento': 'grave', here referring to their corpses.

[106] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 139.

[107] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Cesare Segre, Milan, Mursia, 1966, p. 564.

Latin and vernacular

The revival of ancient Greek, as observed above, was crucial to the development of Finiguerri's satire. Latin, however, remained the essential language of intellectual exchange and it was part of humanistic debate along with its grammatical and syntactical rules. This is evident in a number of treatises that discuss the Latin language during the first half of the Quattrocento.[108] Perhaps the most important treatises on the subject are by Lorenzo Valla, who for instance in his *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (1441) endorses classical Latin as the first tool of thinking and writing for every kind of intellectual. Even though Finiguerri wrote *Lo Studio* some twenty years earlier, his mockery fully targets this problem, suggesting that he was aware of the issues concerning linguistics under debate in the early fifteenth century. *Lo Studio* displays this awareness through a satire that explicitly distinguishes levels of linguistic competence that are qualitatively different, and evaluates Latin as superior to the vernacular. Giovanni del Boccino, for example, teaches *grammatica* in Latin but also in the vernacular (II.19-30), while Jacopo di Bartolomeo Niccoli, reader of Civil Law, shows little competence in Latin:

> Però dovuto egli è che 'l Za lo briccoli[109]
> alla città, ch'ei non ha sapïenza,
> co' suo' sciocchi latin', benchè sien piccoli.[110]
>
> (I.52-54)

Za himself admitted that he could not fully understand Latin, as one of his guides must speak 'rough Latin' to allow effective communication:

> Allor ser Gigi gli parlò latino
> salvatico, per modo ch'io lo 'ntesi.[111]
>
> (IV.43-44)

Despite the conspicuousness of this theme, the passages that include this satire have been interpreted otherwise, especially in Lanza's edition of the poem. The word *latino*,

---

[108] For example by Leonardo Bruni, Flavio Biondo, Leon Battista Alberti, Guarino Veronese and Lorenzo Valla; see Mirko Tavoni, *Latino, grammatica, volgare. Storia di una questione umanistica*, Padua, Antenore, 1984, pp. IX-XVII; Lodi Nauta, 'Linguistic Relativity and the Humanist Imitation of Classical Latin', in *Language and Cultural Change: Aspects of the Study and Use of Language in the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Lodi Nauta, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, pp. 173-185: 173.

[109] 'briccola'; see *Crusca*: 'macchina militare, ad effetto di scagliare pietre, o altro negli assedj'. Za would 'catapult him into the city'.

[110] 'sciocchi latin'': 'dull chatter'.

[111] 'salvatico', see *Crusca*: 'di selva, non domestico […]. Aggiunto a huomo, vale zotico, rozzo, contrario d'affabile, e di gentile.'

for example, is interpreted as meaning 'sexual partner', but there is only one occurrence in the poem, the meaning of which could be ambiguous.[112] This is in the first Canto, in which Francesco dello Allicciatore seems to be described as a paedophile because 'every young boy understands his Latin' (I.111: ''ntende ogni fanciullo il suo latino'). The reference to young boys gives a possible hint to the real meaning of Finiguerri's words which, otherwise, could easily be interpreted differently. First of all *Lo Studio* is a satire of the city's scholarly environment, and Francesco dello Allicciatore's Latin could be so elementary that even school boys would understand it. In many other passages the use of *latino* as well as *volgare* is satirical and points at the misuse of these languages. Besides, the vernacular word *latino* meant 'Latin', but also 'language' or 'speech', but in the poem *latino* is quite clearly opposed to the word 'vernacular', *volgare*, in a way that suggests the reference is to the Latin language. In other words, Finiguerri pilloried lecturers because their Latin did not meet the expected standards.

The most noteworthy passage that proves this point is found at Canto I.19-21:

> E' porteran con lor ben mille some
> di libri scritti e 'l Büezio in volgare.

The books carried to Athens include a work by Boethius, no doubt the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, translated into the vernacular. Boethius's work enjoyed an extraordinary popularity through the Middle Ages, especially after Alcuin of York's Christian interpretation of it. In addition to its philosophical influence on European culture, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was also extremely important as a schoolbook. During the Middle Ages, the student of Latin started from Aelius Donatus's grammar handbook *Ars Minor* and then passed on to Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* and Alexander of Villedieu's *Doctrinale Puerorum*. At this second phase, a boy could translate classical authors or *auctores minores* such as Cato, Prudentius, Prosper of Aquitaine. But before reading major classical authors, the intermediate text was *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, which was particularly appropriate because of its combination of prose and poetry. Both interlinear and marginal glosses found in medieval Florentine manuscripts are mostly in the vernacular, and in the form of rudimentary comment concerning the meaning of single words or paraphrases of sentences, information on geography, mythology, rhetoric, history and philosophy and often they explain the

---

[112] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 132.

grammatical function of the single words. [113] *De Consolatione Philosophiae* as a schoolbook was mostly used from the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fifteenth century, when both private teaching and communal subsidized education flourished in Florence. [114] Another important feature of the use of Boethius in Florentine schools is that *De Consolatione* schoolbooks almost always circulated as single-text codices. [115] Works such as *De Consolatione Philosophiae* were part of a curriculum in Latin schools, where one would learn the rudiments of Latin before enrolling at university. Boethius's work was also translated for other purposes in several European vernaculars. Translations in different Italian vernaculars are numerous, especially during the fourteenth century, when we can count at least twelve different renditions. The most notable is that of Alberto della Piagentina, whose version is found in forty-four manuscripts. [116] The depiction of scholars carrying a vernacular version of Boethius's work suggests that these people could not read Latin, not even a text that one was supposed to learn, as a school boy, before starting university.

Naturale and *accidentale*

Two adjectives are mentioned and opposed as contraries several times in the text of *Lo Studio d'Atene*, *naturale* and *accidentale.* These are two words derived from Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy that concern substance. In ontological terms, substance is the first category or mode of being, while the other categories are the accidents. An accident is inherent in and accrues to substance without changing its essence and it does not exist by itself but only as part of substance. *Accidentale* is also a word used in logic, and it is one of the four categories of the predication in relation to the subject of a proposition. *Accidentale* is transferred into epistemology, so to speak, in Finiguerri, and refers to education and possibly erudition as opposed to *naturale* knowledge, an inborn intelligence of the human being. Although *naturale* is not the antonym of *accidentale* in metaphysics or logic, their opposition became normal in

---

[113] Robert Black and Gabriella Pomaro, *La Consolazione della filosofia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento italiano: libri di scuola e glosse nei manoscritti fiorentini*, Florence, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000, pp. 4-11.

[114] Robert Black, *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany. Vol. 1, Teachers, pupils and schools, c. 1250-1500.* Leiden, Brill, 2007, pp. 295, 327; Gehl, *A Moral Art*, p. 53.

[115] Black and Pomaro, *La Consolazione*, p. 4.

[116] Silvia Albesano, *Consolatio philosophiae volgare: volgarizzamenti e tradizioni discorsive nel Trecento italiano*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006, pp. 45-53.

vernacular literature, as for example in Dante's *Convivio* (I.10, IV.13).[117] Sacchetti was perhaps one of the first to use the word *naturale* to refer to epistemology and to define inborn knowledge opposed to *sillogismi*, 'syllogisms', in his *Trecentonovelle* (CLI).[118]

Another premise to the analysis of the theme *naturale-accidentale* is that the word *naturale* in the comic tradition had a sexual connotation, and this is the reason why the satire of those who lack the 'natural' judgement often alludes to impotence (lack of 'natural power') or homosexual passivity.[119] As Zaccarello points out, lack of judgment in these texts overlaps the lack of virility and the two satires are indivisible.[120]

Finiguerri's position in the tradition of this theme is clear. None of his characters possess either *naturale* or *accidentale* knowledge and they are conscious of their utter lack of judgement. The characters interrogated at Canto V imply that this condition, which depends on their faulty judgement, is the cause that gathers so many lunatics together:

> 'Prima che voi passiate così ratti,
> ditemi il nome vostro e che cagione
> 60   vi fa travalicar con questi matti.'
>
> E l'un de' due a noi: 'Perchè ragione
> natural non ci dà, né isciënza:[121]
> lo star matto co' savi è diligione [...].'[122]

(V.58-63)

This theme is also joined to the theme of food at Canto VI, where some scholars' stomachs are empty from both *naturale* and *accidentale* knowledge

[...]: 'Volentier dirò d'alcuno,

---

[117] Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno, Florence, Le Lettere, 1995, 408-409, pp. 44: 'Onde chi vuole bene giudicare d'una donna, guardi quella quando solo sua naturale bellezza si sta con lei, da tutto accidentale adornamento discompagnata.'; 'E alcuna morte è violenta, o vero per accidentale infertade affrettata; ma solamente quella che naturale è chiamata dal vulgo, e che è, è quel termine del quale si dice per lo Salmista: "Ponesti termine, lo quale passare non si può."'

[118] Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. Davide Puccini, Turin, UTET, 2004, p. 412: 'Io non so che sillogismi: io ti dico le cose naturali e vere, ma tu vai drieto al vento di Mongibello.'

[119] 'Naturale', see *Crusca*: 'sust. per lo membro virile dell'huomo'.

[120] Michelangelo Zaccarello, 'Indovinelli, paradossi e satira del saccente: "naturale" ed "accidentale" nei sonetti del Burchiello', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, 15, 2000, pp. 111-127, pp. 123-124.

[121] 'ragione' is the subject of this sentence: 'because our intellect does not provide us with *naturale* nor *accidentale* (*isciënza*)'.

[122] 'diligione': 'joke'.

> di que' ch'i' so lor nome chiaro e sperto.[123]
> 100   Quel primo che mi mostra esser digiuno
>
> d'ogni buon naturale e di scïenza [...].'

<div align="right">(VI.98-101)</div>

Someone that lacks *accidentale* knowledge but not the *naturale* and its sexual implications is Biagio Nicolini, the reader of canon and civil law at Canto VII:

> Guarda quell'altro senza accidentale,
> il quale è messer Biagio Nicolini,
> che barattò i suoi libri alle parete
>
> e chiamava in gran muffa gli uccellini.[124]

<div align="right">(123-125)</div>

Zaccarello pointed out how Biagio Nicolini is guilty of sodomy, suggested by the image of the birds that he tries to capture. Nicolini purchased the net he uses to catch the birds (*parete*) by selling his books and therefore remains without the tools necessary to gain *accidentale* knowledge.[125] *Accidentale* knowledge is as important as *naturale* and lacking it is a disreputable fault of those who are supposed to be scholars.

Finiguerri's very peculiar epistemology also introduces a third kind of knowledge, called *munto*, a past participle that means 'milked'. Zaccarello supposes that it could be 'gained from family and primary education, different from *accidentale* knowledge [...], a sort of knowledge acquired subsequently', as if it was drunk from the breasts of one's mother.[126] Despite the special intermediate status of *munto* knowledge, the Studio's scholars do not have this either:

> '[...] quest'è 'l loco oramai dove se' giunto
> che tu vedrai la gente senza sale
> c'hanno perduto el natural e 'l munto.'[127]
>
> 10   'Dimmi s'han punto dello accidentale
> – comincia'io a dir con riverenza –,[128]

---

[123] See Lanza's interpretation of 'sperto' in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 141: 'per esperienza diretta'.

[124] See Lanza's intepretation of 'barattò… uccellini', ibid., p. 144: 'con le reti costituenti il paretaio […]; cioè, si impegnò i libri per finanziare il suo vizio sodomitico.'

[125] Zaccarello, 'Indovinelli', pp. 124-125.

[126] Ibid., p. 124. An important occurrence that suggests that one can be *munto* as 'deprived' of *senno* is in a *frottola* by Sacchetti, CCXLVIII.33-36, *Il libro delle rime*, pp. 390-391: 'Di senno munti/ e giovenetti sono;/ vanno al perdono,/ o voglion far passaggio?'.

[127] Here the parody of Dante's *Inferno* is patent, especially Virgil's words before the gates of Hell III.16-18, p. 22: 'Noi siam venuti al loco ov'i' t'ho detto/ che tu vedrai le genti dolorose/ c'hanno perduto il ben de l'intelletto.'

<div align="center">
o se l'un più che l'altro vale'.

Ed egli a me: 'La lor tutta scïenza
non potrè fare un prete di contado';[129]
15   e sopra ciò non diede altra sentenza.[130]
</div>

<div align="right">(III.7-15)</div>

Satirical literature after Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene* develops further the theme of categories of knowledge. It is important to stress that in this first stage of satire of philosophy there is no difference between *naturale* and *accidentale* knowledge (with the *hapax* of *munto*), as all of them seem intellectually essential. Finiguerri did not evaluate any of them as superior, although the implicit assumption is that, besides sexual double meanings, *naturale* knowledge is what everybody should have from birth, *munto* is that gained by living in family and society, and *accidentale* is what one learns from books and what university lecturers should have in order to teach at university.

Nomi parlanti

There are a number of anthroponyms and toponyms in the Italian vernacular comic tradition which are often termed *nomi parlanti*. They not only refer to a person or a place but have also other meanings as they provide extra information and are often hyperbolic or grotesque. A classification is given by Zaccarello in his article 'Primi appunti tipologici sui nomi parlanti', which distinguishes these names firstly by their relationship with the existing onomastics and then by grammatical category. [131] Finiguerri frequently employs names of this kind in his work. Many of the allusions in his poems refer to sodomy and sex, but we still can find *nomi parlanti* used to satirise university lecturers.

The first criterion of Zaccarello's classification is the distinction of those names that are shaped on existing ones. [132] One of these consists in changing the phonetics of an existing name, for example *Buezio* (I.20), that simultaneously refers to the philosopher

---

[128] 'con riverenza', see *Crusca* s.v. 'riverenza': 'maniera, colla quale si prende licenzia di dire ciò, che non sarebbe dicevole per onestà, per rispetto, o simile'.

[129] The judgment of all these people together could not even reach the judgment of a single simpleton, a country priest. Note the anastrophe at line 13 for 'tutta la loro scienza'.

[130] 'e… sentenza', see *Purgatorio* III.43-44, p. 39: '[…] io dico d'Aristotile e di Plato/ e di molt'altri'; e qui chinò la fronte,/ e più non disse, e rimase turbato.'

[131] Zaccarello, 'Primi appunti tipologici sui nomi parlanti', *Lingua e stile*, 23, 2003, pp. 59-84.

[132] Ibid., pp. 69-72.

Boethius (*Boezio*) and to the ox (*bue*) with the single change of one vowel. This form of Boethius's name is largely used from Finiguerri onwards. The reference to the ox twists the authority of his name into a grotesque allusion and it possibly hints at the theme of sodomy.[133] In the second Canto Boethius's name is again spelt with this variant but this time the target is, along with the quality of Ser Chel Silvestri's education, the method of study, which is 'by heart':

> [...] leggerà filosofia,
> però che tutto sa il Büezio a mente,
> che ne imparò in gran parte in Balordia.
>
> (II.40-42).

This last scholar is said to have learnt philosophy in a place called *Balordia*, another kind of *nome parlante* which stands for a toponym. *Balordia* is an invented name formed by the adjective 'foolish', *balordo*, and the common toponymic suffix –ìa. The two *nomi parlanti* are joined synergically to emphasise the uselessness of Silvestri's knowledge. Another toponym is found at Canto III, *Grosseto*, and is part of that category of existing names that undergo a mock-etymological analysis:

> Questo mi parve ser Matteo del Testa,
> che imparò gramatica a Grosseto,
> e certo sua loquela il manifesta.
>
> (III.103-105)

In this case *Grosseto* is the real name of a Tuscan city but at the same time the adjective *grosso* means not only 'big' or 'great' but also 'stupid'. *Grosseto*, following the same procedure used for *Balordia*, is made of 'grosso' and the common toponymic suffix – eto. The statement in the last line becomes then ironic, meaning that Matteo del Testa's speech is affected by his substandard knowledge.

Finiguerri satirises the university lecturers through another category of *nomi parlanti*. In the second of Zaccarello's group there is the sub-category of the compound anthroponyms. We can find in *Lo Studio* two different ones, based on a verb or on an adjective, both in Canto VI. The first one is related once again to the dumbness of a character that is named only as 'ser Nonintendi' (52). Andrea di Matteo di Giovanni's name is found at line 116 but Finiguerri assigns an invented surname to him and his family: 'El nome di suo seme è Malepiante' (115). This *nome parlante* is formed of an adjective and of a noun. The latter is chosen to match the metaphor of the seed, which stands for the origin of the family.

---

[133] Ibid., p. 76.

Cultural references

Even though Finiguerri is not considered a learned poet, he was aware of a tradition of literature in vernacular. His reference to this tradition not only comprises Dante and Boccaccio – as mentioned above – but also expatiates upon his civic heritage.

An example of this civic learning in *Lo Studio* is Ser Giovanni's *Pecorone*. Il *Pecorone* is an anthology of short stories in a narrative frame – the model is Boccaccio's *Decameron* – written between 1378 and 1385 by an otherwise unknown Ser Giovanni from Florence. The first to use the title of this work in poetry, taking advantage of its original etymology ('great sheep') is Ser Giovanni himself in the *Pecorone*'s poems in the epilogue. In the lines that follow the word *pecorone* is mentioned twice, first as a title and then as an animal (5-11):

> 5   E 'n battezzarlo non durai affanni
>   perch'un mio car signor l'ha intitolato
>   ed è per nome il *Pecoron* chiamato
>   perché ci ha dentro nuovi barbagianni.
>
>   E io son capo di cotal brigata,
> 10   che vo belando come pecorone
>   faccendo libri, e non ne so boccata.[134]

Ser Giovanni draws upon the ambiguity of his title to depict a distorted and comical portrait of himself. Subsequently the title became somehow a trope among Florentine writers in need of a reference to a work related to a not-so-intelligent figure. The example found in *Lo Studio* provides a *nome parlante* that clarifies the meaning of the word 'pecorone' (IV, 58-60). Ser Gigi calls Betto Saracini a 'ram', *montone*, and enhances the ambiguity of the word *pecorone*, which simultaneously alludes to the literary work and insults the interlocutor.

Ghigo Brunelleschi's *Geta e Birria* provides another reference to contemporary Florentine literature in *Lo Studio*. While the link to the trip to Athens is implicit, a passage at Canto IV mentions one of the characters explicitly (46-48). *Geta e Birria* must have enjoyed great popularity at the time when Finiguerri was writing, if naming of Geta alone rendered this hyperbolic comparison intelligible.

---

[134] Ser Giovanni, *Il Pecorone*, ed. Enzo Esposito, Ravenna, Longo, 1974, p. 568.

In addition, Finiguerri not only refers to contemporary literature but also enhances the satiric intent of his text by using the names of those authors who were considered the traditional sources for education in the Middle Ages. This is not, however, a satire of the scholastic curriculum, but a way of emphasizing the poor knowledge of Latin of the characters. This is evident in the quotation of the first grammarian, Priscian, who is the goal of a scholar that is said to be running –metaphorically – towards him, even though he is overloaded with stones. Priscian, and more specifically the schoolbooks that he represents, would be a positive goal, if only Messer Francesco were able to reach him (III, 46-48). The same observations can be made about Aelius Donatus. The schoolbooks of the celebrated grammarian were considered the basics of Latin, which, in a passage at Canto VII, is represented by the genitive pronoun *cuius* (lines 136-138).

In *Lo Studio* even higher *auctoritates* are mentioned in a section that displays a close parody of Dante's *Inferno*. In Canto III Za's guide states that they have come to the place where they shall see the people who have no judgement, in the manner that Virgil in Canto III of the *Inferno* introduces the gates of Hell (16-18):

> Così passammo di quel fiume il guado
> e gimo in parte dov'è gente assai:
> per non saper parlavan molto di rado.
>
> Vidivi alquanti vestiti di vai;[135]
> 20   non Aristotil, Plato, né Lucano:
> più tosto mi parean veri fornai.

<div align="right">(III.16-21)</div>

Then Za and his guide wade across a river (16) to reach the scholars, just as Dante and Virgilio are carried across the Acheron to Limbo. There Dante joins Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan and Virgil (IV.97-105) in a discussion and then he is able to see Aristotle (130-132), Socrates and Plato (134). Za's characters, on the contrary, are not Aristotle, Plato, or Lucan, but bakers (III.19-20). Unlike Dante's preeminent company, they do not talk often since they do not possess any knowledge.

The last literary and cultural reference is an exception among Finiguerri's contemporaries. The allusion is to the humanist Coluccio Salutati, who died in 1406 and is the only intellectual of the time who is presented as a positive model in the whole poem. Salutati is a yardstick by which the others' greatness is measured. Moreover, the intellectuals criticised by Finiguerri are compared to Salutati because they are his sons,

---

[135] 'vai': see *Lo Studio d'Atene*, I.43.

whose guilt is twice as serious compared to the other characters, since they did not follow their own father's footsteps:

130 Non altrimenti gli orbi con la mano
 s'attaccan dietro al lembo del compagno
 e seguon quel dinanzi ch'è più sano,

 così venien que' quattro in un vivagno[136]
 l'un dietro all'altro seguendo lor guida;
135 e giunti presso a noi fecion ristagno.[137]

 El primo cominciò con molte grida:
 'Date licenza a noi, che siàn per uno,
 e non ci siate alla domanda Mida![138]

 Ciascun di noi è vie più che digiuno
140 d'ogni scïenzia e sì del naturale,
 e del dappoco abbiàn più che veruno.'[139]

 'Deh, non v'incresca un miccin l'aspettare[140]
 – disse il maestro mio – che sanza cruccio
 intendo alquanto con voi ragionare!

145 Il vostro padre, buon messer Coluccio,[141]
 se ne portò assai quel che vi manca
 e che sonar vi fa sotto 'l cappuccio.'[142]

---

[136] See Lanza's interpretation of 'que' quattro' in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 137: 'i quattro figli di Coluccio Salutati: Ser Antonio, che fa da guida ai fratelli, e ser Bonifazio, notai; messer Leonardo, pievano di Montecatini; e messer Salutato, canonico fiorentino e pievano di Santa Maria di Figline nella diocesi di Fiesole.' See also Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn., p. 307: 'Le chiacchiere su di loro non mancavano se nel 1413 Salutato intentò una causa per diffamazione contro due individui, avendone la peggio.' 'vivagno': alternative form of *vivaio*, 'fish farm'; see *GDLI*, vol. 21, p. 946. In Dante, *Inferno*, XXIII.49 it means 'shore'.

[137] 'fecion ristagno': they stopped. 'Ristagno': 'stagnation'. Finiguerri continues the fish and aquatic metaphor of line 133.

[138] 'non… Mida': 'do not be grudging in your question.' Mida is here taken as an example of avarice.

[139] *GDLI*, vol. 4, p. 21, s.v. 'dappoco': 'persona buona a nulla, priva di ingegno, incapace'. 'Veruno': synonym of *nessuno*.

[140] 'Un miccin': 'a little,' see *Crusca*.

[141] 'buon messer Coluccio': see Domenico da Poggibonsi in Lanza, *Lirici toscani*, vol. 1, p. 446, 'Canzone fatta per la morte di messer Coluccio Salutati, cancelliere e poeta (lines 19-20): 'O buon messer Coluccio, i' chiamo te;/ o figliuol mio, ove se'?'

[142] 'sonar… cappuccio': their heads, under the hood, sound hollow, as they are empty of judgment. The details on *cappuccio*, together with *vivagno* at line 133, recall Canto XXIII of Dante's *Inferno*, in which the hypocrites wear gilded lead cloaks (lines 61-66, p. 265): 'Elli avean cappe con cappucci bassi/ dinanzi

A solemn simile describes them as blind (III.130-32). Besides, one of them explicitly admits their ignorance of both *naturale* and *accidentale* knowledge, where *accidentale* is called *scienza* (139-141). Their metaphorical blindness is not the only effect that lack of judgement has on them, as their hoods produce a hollow sound, probably because their heads are empty.

Fame

An important perspective for understanding the scholars in *Lo Studio* is the reputation that they enjoyed in Florence. Some of them were hired by the *ufficiali dello Studio* on the basis of the prestige that they could bring to the university, and Finiguerri obviously aimed at parodying this fame.

The first Canto is particularly focussed on the parody of the classical theme of the poets' fame, which is subverted to emphasize the complete irrelevance of their studies. Athens, for example, is filled with this 'non-fame' that becomes somehow an entity for itself

> La fama di costor è tanto oscura[143]
> che, volendo parlar di tutti appieno,
> e' s'empirebbe d'Athene le mura.[144]

(I.61-63)

The conditional sentence in these lines predicts figuratively what happens in the poem, because *Lo Studio d'Atene* is filled with 'obscure' characters whom nobody, according to Finiguerri, would remember.

Lack of fame is objectified again in the same Canto through the image of the ink in an inkwell. Another hyperbolic and evocative metaphor compares written work to ink that rains down, but the judge Filippo di Ser Piero Mucini could not even fill an inkwell with his:

> E se tutta un'età piovessi vaio[145]

---

a li occhi, fatte de la taglia/ che in Clugnì per li monaci fassi./ Di fuor dorate son, sì ch'elli abbaglia;/ ma dentro tutte piombo, e gravi tanto,/ che Federigo le mettea di paglia.'

[143] 'La fama': see *Geta e Birria* 1.1-4.

[144] 'E'… mura'*:* this is an ironic statement, since the scholars' fame is 'obscure' (line 61).

[145] 'Vaio' was a kind of expensive fur that distinguished people of high social status. This is the meaning that Lanza endorses in his commentary in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 132. The colour of *vaio*, however, was very dark, almost black, and the use of this word to refer to the colour black is proven, also as a noun; see

<div align="center">
la parte di costui sarè si poca
che non se n'orlerebbe un calamaio.
</div>

<div align="right">
(I.43-45)
</div>

Similarly, Niccolò del Guarinaio does not work enough to be afforded posterity and this emptiness is represented by the inkwell, in this case covered in mould despite thirty years of writing:[146]

<div align="center">
'[...] El quale è stato trenta anni notaio
e non ne può mostrare il protocollo[147]
e ha sempre muffato il calamaio.'
</div>

<div align="right">
(VI.22-24).
</div>

Following this image, in the same Canto, the inconsistency of another character, Anton Maffìo, is like something that only seems to exist but does not have any consistency, like fog:

<div align="center">
Oh, quanto gli par esser ben saccente,
perché da ignoranza è preso forte,[148]
come nebbia che pare ed è nïente!
</div>

<div align="right">
(VI.82-84).
</div>

One of the main messages conveyed by the poem is the inadequacy of these lecturers and students despite their role in the Studio. The portrait of Din da Pistoia is significant in this respect as it is based on the concept of *vaio*, a kind of valuable fur used to tailor luxurious clothes, worn as a distinctive ornament by knights and other important characters:[149]

<div align="center">
Gli aveva un ciambellotto pien di loia[150]
ed era foderato di Rovaio,[151]
30   e altri panni non gli davan noia.[152]
</div>

GDLI, vol. 21, p. 628. In this sentence it refers to ink and it is used because of the rhyme with 'inkwell', *calamaio*. The image of ink that rains into the inkwell, moreover, better suits the metaphor.

[146] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 140.

[147] See *Crusca* s.v. 'protocollo': 'libro, ove i notaj scrivono i testamenti, e i contratti, che essi rogano'. Finiguerri, by saying that this notary cannot show his register, hints that his work was none, or useless.

[148] 'perché… forte': 'he is so wrapped up in his own ignorance.'

[149] See *GDLI*, vol. 21, p. 628. Din da Pistoia was identified with a jurist and envoy in Lucca where he had been the prisoner of Paolo Guinigi (1372-1432) in 1408; see Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 142.

[150] 'Ciambellotto': 'cloak'; 'loia': 'dirt'.

[151] See *Crusca*, s.v. 'Rovaio': 'Borea, Tramontana, vento settentrionale'. Hence I have capitalized the first letter of 'Rovaio' above.

[152] 'e… noia': his other clothes do not bother him because he does not wear anything else, as stated at line 32 ('brullo di panni').

Disse 'l maestro a me: 'O figliuol gaio,
perché tu 'l vegga sì brullo di panni,
egli ha tanta scïenza quanto vaio.'[153]

Io gli dissi: 'Maestro, tu mi inganni:
35   io non gli veggo vaio o rotto o intero,
né vidi già, è una frotta d'anni'.

Ed ei rispose: 'Sciocco, tu dì vero:
se non se' folle, tu puoi ben comprendere
ch'egli è di senno assai più che leggiero.'

(VII.28-39)

Din's mantle is called *vaio*, but is made of a fabric 'filled with mud' and lined with *Rovaio*, the name of a wind, to signify that is tattered. Ser Gigi, Za's second guide, compares the quality of Din's mantle with Din's knowledge. In this case lack of judgment is intertwined with ill fame, and *vaio* is an effective symbol of it.

Comic realism

Finiguerri's poetic style comprises a wide use of realistic metaphors used for comic purposes. The themes developed include a great variety, like food, bodily functions and allusions to sex, in particular homosexual. The realism in the satire of the intellectual is elaborated mostly through animals, to which the characters are often compared. With the single exception of a lion (I.77-78), the range of beasts populating *Lo Studio* consists of animals that are proverbially lacking in intelligence or beauty, for example fish ('goby', *ghiozzo* IV.31-33; 'pike', *luccio* IV.138) or cattle ('ox', *bue* VI.106-108). The most common tool for descriptions are the images of birds. The characters in *Lo Studio* are like geese (I.48), chickens (III.70-75), thrushes (IV.100-102), magpies (IV.76-93), and night birds.

The owl was the traditional symbol of the Greek goddess Athena, and therefore also a symbol of wisdom, knowledge and erudition. These nocturnal birds, however, appear clumsy in daylight and are used by Finiguerri to objectify the scholars who look awkward and uncomfortable, starting a trend that flourishes in the work of later Florentine comic writers. Several names for night birds can be used as *nomi parlanti*, for example 'tawny owl', *ser allocco* (II.118); as an appellative, for example 'owl', *gufo* (VI.147); in extensive similes:

---

[153] 'vaio': see *Lo Studio d'Atene*, I.43.

<div align="center">
Non altrimenti gufo o coccoveggia[154]
da molti uccegli intornïato e chiuso[155]
90   ch'ognun di lor lo schernisce e dileggia,

così vid'io in quella torma chiuso
un degli altri scolari in questo modo,
gridando ognuno a lui: 'Omo confuso!'
</div>

<div align="right">(IV.88-93)</div>

The latter is a clear example of a solemn Dantean simile transformed into a comical image. Even though Dante used grotesque and realist similes, especially in the *Inferno*, none of them embraces nonsense as the one above. Finiguerri inverts the two elements of this simile, as the birds are humanised, playing with the expectations of his readers and generating a humanised and almost Aesopian picture.

1.4 Satire of the philosopher: Finiguerri and Arlotto Mainardi

Chapter 2 will illustrate how Finiguerri's tools were extensively used by Burchiello. Their legacy is evident and it has been partially recognised. Another work, however, is strictly linked to Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene*, namely *Motti e Facezie del Piovano Arlotto*, an anonymous collection of jokes and humorous anecdotes on the life of the Florentine parish priest Arlotto Mainardi.[156] The latter lived and worked in the parish of San Cresci a Maciuoli (1396-1484) and his adventures are described by one or more anonymous authors in this collection.

In one of these short stories (XXX) Arlotto meets Leonardo Bruni, who becomes the object of a fierce criticism. First, unlike any other character of the *Motti e Facezie*, Bruni had recently died and wanders the earth awaiting judgement. A second essential element is the dialogue engaged in between Arlotto and Bruni, because, when the humanist asks for a glass of wine and clarifies his status, the priest dwells on a question that deals with the essence of being a philosopher:

---

[154] 'coccoveggia': 'owlet'. The *civetta* or 'owlet', whose name is 'Athene noctua' (or 'little owl') is a traditional symbol of wisdom from ancient Greece. In order to avoid confusion with typical owls ('Strigidae'), I use the name 'owlet' hereafter.

[155] 'intorniato e chiuso': Lanza suggests that the owl in the simile is a decoy in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 138.

[156] Arlotto Mainardi, *Motti e facezie del Piovano Arlotto*, ed. Gianfranco Folena, Milan, Ricciardi, 1995, pp. 55-57.

> Dove è la sapienzia, la scienzia, la dottrina, le eloquenza delle lettere greche e latine? Dove è il modo del dir ciceroniano il quale illustrava tutto il mondo? Può egli essere che la Fama e queste tante Muse vi abbandonino, le quali tutte vi obbedivano, e che voi ora ve ne andiate in tanta calamità?[157]

Despite the dramatic tones of the dialogue, rhetorically enriched by the hint at the biblical *ubi sunt*, Arlotto's lengthy question is an effective satire of Bruni. In the space of twenty years, Bruni was twice the target of satire, firstly by Finiguerri, who used the text of the *Laudatio* to depict a Florence populated by miserable scholars, and in the second instance by the anonymous author of the *Motti e Facezie*. The difference between the two satires is considerable, given that the scholars of the Studio were lampooned because they did not have enough knowledge, while Bruni was attacked by Arlotto because he was a learned man, although all his knowledge had no value in the afterlife. The kind of knowledge that Arlotto refers to, although not explicitly, is *accidentale*, and by reproaching Bruni he undermines the value of education and erudition, both useless when most needed.

Pointing out the evolution of satire from *Lo Studio* to the *Motti e Facezie* provides a valuable clue for establishing how satire functions in the poem. In *Lo Studio d'Atene* the target is not a specific kind of culture, or a restricted group of scholars, but the whole intellectual community of Florence and the praises of a city that was not, in Finiguerri's eyes, the 'free land' that Bruni described. Lanza has been the only scholar who extensively linked *Lo Studio d'Atene*, and indeed the other two poems by Finiguerri, *La Buca di Montemorello* and *Il Gagno*, to the cultural changes happening during the first half of the fifteenth century. He maintained that in Florence there was a wider literary trend that criticized scholastic culture and ascribed Finiguerri to this category:

> *Lo Studio d'Atene* represents the programmatic satire of the traditionalist culture, mercilessly attacked in its more or less representative exponents. They are invariably indicated with their names and surnames by Za, according to his custom [...]. The opportunity for this sarcastic complaint about the pettiness of a great number of Florentine professionals and intellectuals is certainly found, as Frati thought, in the reopening of the Studio in 1412. The deepest reason of this, however, is extensive and involves the radical critique of the old cultural movement that had already been mocked by Ghigo Brunelleschi [...][158]

---

[157] Ibid., p. 55.

[158] Lanza, *Polemiche e berte*, 2nd edn, p. 304: '*Lo Studio d'Atene* rappresenta la satira programmatica della cultura tradizionalista, impietosamente attaccata nei suoi esponenti più noti e meno noti, puntualmente indicati con tanto di nome e cognome dallo Za, come è sua abitudine. [...] L'occasione per questa sarcastica denuncia della pochezza di troppi professionisti ed intellettuali fiorentini fu senz'altro

Finiguerri, however, in *La buca di Montemorello* had already attacked those poets whose works were permeated by scholastic philosophy, for example Giovanni Gherardi da Prato, Anton de' Marchi, Jacopo del Pecora da Montepulciano, Goro di Stagio Dati, among others citizens of Florence.[159] On the other hand, the aim of *Lo Studio d'Atene* was to satirize the whole of the intellectual world that was represented by the Studio's teachers and students.

This Chapter has illustrated that traditional sources of knowledge are not questioned in *Lo Studio d'Atene*. Instead Finiguerri's focus lies elsewhere. Poor knowledge of Latin is denounced and trips to the Greek East are deemed useless, even though at that time they were undertaken by a new generation of intellectuals that was challenging traditional cultural systems. Bruni's idealistic depiction of Florence is also challenged, even though he was an important part of the new cultural trend. This becomes clear in his fictional counterpart in the *Motti e facezie*, mocked by a simple priest whose practical perspective on life is implicitly valued more than philosophy.

The targets of *Lo Studio d'Atene* are therefore all scholars and intellectuals, regardless of their cultural background. This satire was the first step, paradoxically, in the recognition of a special position of the intellectuals in Florence, one that led to Burchiello's satire of philosophers.

---

offerta, come pensò il Frati, dalla riapertura dello Studio, avvenuta nel 1412. Tuttavia il movente di fondo è di più ben vasta portata e consiste nella critica radicale della vecchia corrente culturale, già strapazzata da Ghigo Brunelleschi.'

[159] Id., *Polemiche e berte*, pp. 291-295.

CHAPTER 2

BURCHIELLO

The word *burchiello* means 'barge', a boat used for the transport of goods on waterways. This is the nickname given to the Florentine poet Domenico di Giovanni because of his peculiar style; many of his poems resemble a random list of objects, comparable to goods hoarded on a boat.[1] Burchiello was part of the generation that followed Finiguerri. He was born in Florence in 1404 and died in Rome in 1449. He left his job as a barber in Florence in the 1430s for unknown reasons and relocated to Siena, where he stayed from 1438 to 1443, spending a period in prison during 1439.[2] He finally joined the Florentine community in Rome in 1443, where he died. The popularity of Burchiello's poetry endured throughout the centuries and many editions of his collected works survive from the late 1470s to the late eighteenth century. Burchiello's distinctive style, which gave rise to the so called *poesia alla burchia*, found immediate success and was imitated by a large number of comic poets, a fact that sometimes makes establishing authorship difficult. A critical edition of his works was published by Zaccarello in 2000, followed by another with a commentary in 2004.[3] Zaccarello's attempt was not to identify all the poems by Burchiello, but to edit the collection published in Florence in 1481, which became the *vulgata* for the anthologies that followed.[4] Antonio Lanza's very recent edition (2010), however, aims at including all of Burchiello's poems and provides a new commentary that differs from that of Zaccarello.[5]

Burchiello's eventful life and his original personality lead him to meet and engage with many intellectuals of his time. We know nothing of his education, although we know that his family was poor and we can suppose that he did not have a Latin school or

---

[1] *SdB*, p. XIV.

[2] Although he could have been among those exiled by Cosimo de' Medici between 1433 and 1434, there is no evidence to support this interpretation; see Luca Boschetto, 'Burchiello e il suo ambiente sociale: esplorazioni d'archivio sugli anni fiorentini' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 35-57: 47-48.

[3] See Burchiello, *I sonetti del Burchiello. Edizione critica dalla vulgata quattrocentesca*, ed. Michelangelo Zaccarello, Turin, Einaudi, 2000 and *SdB*.

[4] Burchiello, *I sonetti* (2000), pp. VII-X.

[5] Id., *Le poesie autentiche*.

university education. Despite this background, his poems are enlivened by many references to classical culture, including philosophy, and his verses often include other languages such as Latin and Hebrew.

In order to understand how Burchiello performed his satire, the most important characteristics of his style are summarized below. The main features of poems *alla burchia*, according to Zaccarello, are the following:

(1) Metrical fluidity and regularity [...];
(2) Correspondence between metrical and syntactic units [...];
(3) Dominance of paratactic structure [...];
(4) Late appearance of the main-clause verb [...];
(5) [...] syntactic links [...] often applied to blatantly unrelated elements to create an amusing effect of bewilderment in the reader [...];
(6) Use of hyperbolic quantifiers and exaggerated numerals [...];
(7) Use of aequivocatio as a main factor in the juxtaposition of unrelated elements [...];
(8) Parodic, often paradoxical and/or contradictory quotation of protagonists from high culture [...];
(9) Remarkable inclination towards linguistic pastiche [...];
(10) Frequent use of cryptic jargon, mainly by paraphrastic means [...].[6]

This style was inspired by Franco Sacchetti, Filippo Brunelleschi and Mariotto di Nardo di Cione, all popular poets of the fourteenth century. Common to their style was a combining of naturalistic and domestic images with biblical and mythological references, consistently alluding to contemporary issues and events.[7]

Although Burchiello's hallmark was the technique described above his poems are not only written *alla burchia*. They employ several other forms and themes of the comic tradition. Most of the texts, however, share a common characteristic: their real meaning, if there is one, is elusive. Only in recent years have critics unveiled some of the more obscure references in Burchiello's texts, demonstrating that single narrative units – corresponding for example to *quartine* or *terzine* – are independent from one another, and that the logical connections between the single units are more random in nature.[8] This haphazardness complicates any systematic analysis of themes and requires a detailed knowledge of the anthology. Recent scholarly contributions have systematically investigated the parody of medical prescriptions,[9] poems of

---

[6] Zaccarello, 'An Unknown Episode', pp. 79-80.

[7] *SdB*, p. XIII.

[8] Zaccarello, 'Schede esegetiche per l'enigma di Burchiello' in id., (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 1-34: 1.

[9] Id., 'Una forma istituzionale della poesia burchiellesca: la ricetta medica, cosmetica e culinaria tra parodia e nonsense', in *Nominativi fritti e mappamondi. Il nonsense nella letteratura italiana. Atti del*

correspondence[10] and misogynous poems. The satire of intellectuals and philosophers is, however, still unexplored.[11] The satire of philosophers present in Burchiello's poetry is so prominent that often results in the parody of philosophy itself.

2.1 Burchiello and the satire of scholars: heyday and conclusion of the trip to Athens

An important document that suggests the continuity of the theme of the trip to Athens is a manuscript dated 1462, kept in Florence: Biblioteca Riccardiana, 1591, and studied by Dario del Puppo.[12] It is a miscellaneous collection of vernacular prose and poetry, an object that represents both the material culture of the Florentine merchant class and its pragmatic ideals. The section of this manuscript that concerns poetry comprises first *Geta e Birria*, then *Lo Studio d'Atene* and finally Burchiello's poem *Questi ch'andoron già a studiare Âthene*, a striking sequence of comic literature, given that all three share a common theme of the trip to Athens.

Chapter 1 above has illustrated how, from Brunelleschi to Finiguerri, the fictional trip to Athens was used to satirize contemporary intellectual pretentions. Finiguerri linked the fictional event provided by Brunelleschi to the actual journey made by humanists to the Greek East and he probably alluded to the role that Athens played in Bruni's *Laudatio*. Burchiello's poem, finally, re-contextualized these well-known references in his contemporary Florence:[13]

> 1   Questi ch'andoron già a studiare Âthene
>   debbon essere stati licentiati,[14]

Convegno di Cassino (9-10 ottobre 2007), eds Giuseppe Antonelli and Carla Chiummo, Rome, Salerno Editrice, 2009, pp. 47-64.

[10] Giunta, 'Premesse per un commento alle tenzoni di Burchiello' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 75-100.

[11] Diego Zancani, 'Burchiello e la tradizione misogina' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 115-125.

[12] Dario Del Puppo, 'In margine ai codici delle rime del Burchiello: individuo e società nelle antologie e nelle miscellanee letterarie del '400' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 101-125: 105-113.

[13] *SdB*, pp. 114-116.

[14] 'Licentiato' means that these *studianti* received the intermediate degree between bachelor's degree and doctorate that was in use in medieval universities. Za's scholars were also *licentiati* (VI.63); see Burchiello, *Le poesie autentiche*, p. 283.

> e ch'e' sie ver, più parte son tornati
> e van col capo chino e colle rene.
>
> 5   Questo si è, ch'egli han patito pene
> a star tanto in su' libri spenzolati,[15]
> sì che meritano d'esser dottorati
> e ser Pecora faccia questo bene.
>
>   E questi altri studianti più moderni
> 10 si vorrebbon mandar dove che sia
> ché a Firenze n'è fatti troppi scherni:
>
>   vorrebbonsi mandare in Balordia,
> ch'è v'è buona derrata di quaderni,
> se già non rincrescesse lor la via.
>
> 15 Ora, quel ch'e' si sia,
> per mio consiglio vadino a Barbialla,[16]
> tututti col Buetio in su la spalla.

(LXXXI)

Two generations of scholars are clearly distinguished in the text. The first generation (lines 1-8) went to Athens, while the second (lines 9-17) were still in Florence, although Burchiello clearly expresses a desire for them to leave. This text marks the full development of satire directed against Florentine scholars who went to study in the Greek East, since the memory of those who had embarked on this journey was fresh enough. Moreover, leaving behind Finiguerri's ambiguities, Burchiello explicitly affirms that these scholars went to Athens with the purpose of studying (line 1; as Brunelleschi's Amphytrion and Geta do in the tradition, see Chapter 1, p. 38). The narration resumes where Finiguerri had left off, describing their return and depicting them with traditional images, for example, the endorsement of their doctorate by Ser Pecora (*Lo Studio d'Atene*, IV.58-60). Since they studied so much and spent such a long time crouched over various books, their heads and their backs are permanently *chine*. This physical detail is Burchiello's addition and a significant turn towards a more explicit satire of sodomy, euphemistically and pointedly termed the 'Greek vice'.

The second generation of intellectuals, the *studianti* (lines 9-17), are too lazy to go to anywhere (line 14), but need to go somewhere because they have been 'excessively

---

[15] See also *Lo Studio d'Atene*, VI.68.

[16] While Zaccarello cannot find any specific reference (*SdB*, p. 115), it seems that Burchiello could have hinted one particular idiom; see *Crusca* s.v. 'barba': 'alla barba mia, alla barba tua, e in barba ec. vale in ischerno, in danno, in dispetto, a onta'. For its use in the Quattrocento see Luigi Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, ed. Domenico de Robertis, Florence, Sansoni, 1962, XXII.18, line 3, p. 585.

mocked' in Florence (line 11). These explicit references to Finiguerri's poem are essential meta-textual clues to trace the popularity of this kind of satire. The *nomi parlanti* mentioned in these lines, as with the endorsement of Ser Pecora above, confirm that in the second quarter of the Quattrocento readers of Florentine comic poetry already had a reference system of names, themes and metaphors.[17] *Balordia*, for example, is a *nome parlante* in *Lo Studio d'Atene* (II.42) and the first chosen destination for these *studianti*, while *Barbialla* is a similar play on words that could have been easily interpreted as the better known *nomi parlanti*. The poem concludes with an image of the *studianti* carrying the book of Boethius (whose name remains *Buezio*), and then another quotation of *Lo Studio d'Atene* ('E' porteran con lor ben mille some/ di libri scritti e 'l Büezio in volgare […].' I.19-20). By recalling a second time this image − one also developed in the first quatrain − this reference gives a thematic circularity to the text. The trip to Athens is mentioned in another poem that refers to a number of Burchiello's contemporaries: Anselmo Calderoni, Giovanni da Prato and Vannino:[18]

<div style="margin-left:2em">

1   Questi che hanno studiato il Pecorone
       coronià·gli di foglie di radice
       poichè son giunti al tempo lor felice
       e facciasi per man di Guasparrone.

5   Il primo sia Anselmo Calderone,
       che non iscrive mai sanza vernice:
       costui esser ben dotto in ciò mi dice
       e che fece di Lucca le canzone;

       l'altro sarà Giovanni mie da Prato,
10   che l'apparò insieme col Vannino

</div>

---

[17] Lanza, however, argues against any continuity between *Lo Studio d'Atene* and Burchiello's poem by maintaining that Ser Pecora is Ser Benedetto di Lorenzo Pecora, a prominent dignitary of the Republic between 1429 and 1433; see Burchiello, *Le poesie autentiche*, p. 285.

[18] *SdB*, pp. 131-132. Giovanni da Prato is identified by Zaccarello (*SdB*, p. 132) with Giovanni di Gherardo Gherardi (1360/62-1446?). Gherardi could easily have been a target for this poem. He was a very active Florentine intellectual as, besides writing poetry, he graduated in law in Padua and was sent by the Florentine municipality to the universities of Bologna, Ferrara, Padua and Venice in order to recruit new teachers for the Studio (1392). He was hired for some public readings of the *Divina Commedia* at Florence University between 1417 and 1425 and was involved in the design of the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore. His most important work, *Il Paradiso degli Alberti*, is a collection of novellas with a frame story whose model is Boccaccio's *Decameron* that combines several themes from philosophy to history, politics and science, expanding the narrative frame and adopting a convoluted vernacular prose. Francesco Bausi, however, has convincingly argued that the person named Giovanni da Prato mocked here and in other texts cannot be Giovanni Gherardi. See *DBI* s.v. 'Gherardi, Giovanni'.

<center>Âthene dove a Studio fu mandato [...].</center>

<div align="right">(XCII.1-11)</div>

Anselmo Calderoni (1393-1446) was one of the several poets that engaged in a *tenzone* with Burchiello. Giovanni da Prato was also mocked by Finiguerri *La Buca di Montemorello* (I.69), and by Domenico da Prato in another short poem (*Acquettino*). In both he was mocked for being a sodomite.[19] It is not clear whether the name *Vannino* refers to a mock-textbook (as for example in another poem by Burchiello, 'Democrito, Geremia e Cicerone' and in *Lo Studio d'Atene*, VII.163)[20] or to another intellectual identified by Lanza as Ser Giovanni d'Arezzo (*Lo Studio d'Atene*, IV.98-99: 'sappi ch'è Ser Giovanni d'Arezzo folle,/ nimico capital del buon Orazio').[21] Calderoni, Giovanni da Prato and Vannino do not deserve a laurel wreath but a garland made with 'leaves of root', a periphrasis which, as often happens in Burchiello's poetry, means 'nothing' (line 2). References to the *Pecorone* (line 1) and to the trip to Athens (line 11) undoubtedly undermine their competence as poets, even though they result in a loss of efficacy, because they no longer coincided with the satire of scholars, being employed more loosely. This eventually led to a neglect of the theme of the trip to Athens, which seems to disappear from later poetry to be replaced by other *alla burchia* innovations.

The poem *Questi che hanno studiato il Pecorone* was probably written shortly before 1443, when Calderoni replied and Burchiello, writing in Siena, needed a strong thematic link to Florence to provoke these Florentine poets.[22] What previously was a satire of the scholars of the Studio, becomes in Burchiello a sort of Florentine penchant to satirize a different sort of pedant.

If the theme of the trip to Athens is easy to identify, other *topoi* of satire that can be found in *Lo Studio d'Atene* are used more subtly. This subtlety is due in large part to the heterogeneous style of Burchiello that does not lend itself well to analysis that points uniquely at scholars, philosophers or philosophy. What follows is a review of Finiguerri's themes in Burchiello's poetry and their evolution. Very often, however, these poems lack a precise target, and the various themes permeate the texts without taking particular prominence in any poem. Following this analysis, the same tools are

---

[19] See ibid., s.v. 'Calderoni, Anselmo'.

[20] *SdB*, XLVIII.16, p. 67.

[21] See Lanza's commentary in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 138: 'Il Vannino dei sonetti burchielleschi; poeta mediocre, fu in corrispondenza con Comedio Venuti.' See also Cursietti, 'Le radici della poesia burchiellesca', pp. 123-124.

[22] *SdB*, p. 220.

illustrated 'in action' in some poems addressed to two eminent humanists, Francesco Filelfo and Leon Battista Alberti.

2.2 Main features of Burchiello's satire

Latin, vernacular and Hebrew

Unlike Finiguerri, Burchiello does not target poor knowledge of Latin and the use of vernacular as grounds for parody. Examples of the juxtaposition of Latin and vernacular, nonetheless, can be found in Burchiello's work even though they are not aimed specifically at satirizing ignorance. A poem addressed to Piero di Cosimo de' Medici can exemplify how the reference to Latin radically changes: [23]

> 1   Son medico in volgare, non in grammatica,
>   signor mie caro, e con poca attitudine,
>   ché l'ho mal studiata in gioventudine,
>   sì ch'io non ti guarrei d'una volatica.
>
> (CXXXI.1-5)

This is the beginning of a mock-recipe that the addressee should follow, a format that is frequent in this *corpus*. Burchiello introduces himself as a *medico in volgare*, 'physician in vernacular', a definition that is opposite to *medico in grammatica*, 'physician in grammar' (line 1). From lines 2-4 Burchiello makes clear that vernacular is less prestigious than *grammatica*, i.e. Latin, and therefore outlines a self-*deminutio* and ironically hints at the topos of humility in classical poetry. As a *medico in volgare*, Burchiello states that he is not able to heal a simple skin disease (*volatica*, line 4). Unlike Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene*, where scholars did not have a sufficient knowledge of Latin (see Chapter I, pp. 46-48), in Burchiello's poems the opposition between Latin and vernacular is employed in other ways.

In the poem 'El marrobbio che vien di Barberia', we find a typical example of *alla burchia* style. Inanimate objects are personified in a surreal narrative, creating images that apparently are not linked to one another. Every single description, nevertheless, seems to hint at an intellectual world in which languages play an important role: [24]

> 1   El marrobbio che vien di Barberia
>   e le mugghia del mar del Laterina
>   hanno fatto venir la palatina
>   al camarlingo dell'ortografia;

---

[23] Ibid., pp. 184-185.

[24] *SdB*, pp. 12-13.

<pre>
    5   e, s'io comprendo ben, la poesia
         è dimagrata in questa quarantina:[25]
         però nessun ci mangi gelatina,
         se non che gli verrà la parlasia.[26]

         E chi volessi dir 'tu tibi tolli',
   10   le mosche son fuggite in Ormignacca,
         veggendo i pesci d'Arno tutti molli.

         Egli è un gran philosopho in Baldracca
         che insegna molto ben beccare a' polli
         e dà lor bere con una salimbacca;

   15   e 'l presto della vacca
         è fatto soprastante della pratica
         e le civette studiano in gramatica.
</pre>

<div align="right">(VIII)</div>

Marrubii was the Latin name of the ancient city of Marsi, now San Benedetto dei Marsi, whose inhabitants Virgil mentions as 'Marruvia gens'.[27] If Burchiello referred to this name, both the subjects (*marrobbio* and *mugghia*) would be periphrases of things that do not exist: a *marrobbio* that comes from North Africa (*Barberia*) and the roar (*mugghia*) of a small lake (*Laterina*).[28] These two made the *camarlingo dell'ortografia*, 'treasurer of orthography', fall ill and as a result of this, Poetry, an abstract idea that is also personified, loses weight (lines 5-6). For this reason nobody is allowed to eat 'jelly' (or 'ice', *gelatina*) lest they fall ill with *parlasia*, 'paralysis'. Although this narrative may not make immediate sense, there is a common thread between the 'treasurer of orthography' and Poetry, which are followed by a quotation in Latin (line 9), and is the language defined by the word *gramatica* (line 17). Whoever wants to speak Latin is related to flies who fled to France when they saw limp fish in the Arno river (lines 9-11)

---

[25] 'Poetry has lost weight after the quarantine', or 'poetry has diminished', but *dimagrire* is also a euphemism for 'to have an abortion' in Florentine comic poetry; see for example Rustico Filippi's 'Su, donna Gemma, co·la farinata' and 'Se no l'atate, fate villania' in *Rimatori comico-realistici del due e trecento*, ed. Maurizio Vitale, 2 vols, Turin, UTET, 1956, vol. 1, pp. 124-126.

[26] The word *latina* is echoed throughout these first lines (*laterina*, *palatina*, *gelatina*). It is also striking that among the numerous diseases that Burchiello knew, he chose for those who eat *gelatina* a disease that sounds very similar to the word *parlare*. *Parlasia*, 'paralysis', could also be a mock-etymological name for an imaginary disease whose symptom is incessant talking.

[27] Aen. VII.750.

[28] *Marrobbio* is also a herb and Laterina is a Tuscan town by a small lake. *Barberia* is an alternative form of *Barbierìa*, and could therefore mean both 'North Africa' and 'barber shop'; see *GDLI* s.v. 'barberia', vol. 2, p. 63.

– here the relative clause *chi volesse* should ordinarily be followed by a verb with the same subject but Burchiello often does not follow rules of syntax.[29]

Finally a new scene (lines 12-14) depicts an eminent philosopher in *Baldracca*, (both the name of a popular Florentine tavern and of a district famous for its prostitutes), who teaches trivialities (lines 12-14), probably the treasurer of orthography himself, while Latin is learnt by 'owlets' (*civette*), night birds that are mentioned in *Lo Studio d'Atene* (with the synonym *coccoveggia* IV.88).[30] These nocturnal birds recall consequently the intellectual world. The presence of the chickens is also relevant, as chicken is another bird used in *Lo Studio* (III.70-75), and of the *camarlingo-philosopho*, who is particularly important since the word *filosofo* never appears in *Lo Studio d'Atene*, while this is the only occurrence in Burchiello's poetry.

From the bizarre images offered by 'El marrobbio che vien di Barberia' we can assume that the satire points at something that negatively affected the correct use of Latin, and that these facts also impoverished literature. Besides, in this hopeless situation even philosophy appears useless, since the *camarlingo-philosopho* teaches self-evident truths and his students are as stupid as chickens and night-birds.

Burchiello's poetry is also rich in puns, word play and mock-etymologies. Following this trend, the Latin of pedants becomes an object of satire in several texts of the collection. '"Quem queritatis" vel vellere in toto' for example, is written in a kind of dog Latin that anticipates the Paduan *macaronee*: [31]

1   'Quem queritatis' vel vellere in toto
festinaverunt viri Salomon,
et videantur Pluto et Atheon
cum magna societate sine moto.

5   Et clamaverunt omnes: 'Poto! Poto!'
ingressus filius Agamenon;
secundum ordo fecit Assalon
sibi Lacchesis Antropos vel Cloto.

---

[29] Jean Toscan and Giuseppe Crimi have established a connection between these phenomena in Burchiello with *fatrasies*, French poems form the thirteenth century based on nonsense. Very often in both the *fatrasies* and Burchiello's poems syntax does not follow conventional rules, not linking for examples the main sentence with its subordinates; see Toscan, *Le carnival*, vol. 1, p. 249; Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, pp. 1, 50.

[30] See Zaccarello's commentary in *SdB*, p. 13: '*Baldracca* […] qui citata per l'assonanza con l'altisonante *Baldacco*, antico nome di Bagdad.'

[31] *SdB*, pp. 24-25.

<div align="center">

Itaque nomen Cesare potentes
10   queror vexillum quomodo interficere,
de oculis oculorum vedentes.

Volo principe sacerdote armigere,
sufficit mihi quamvis diligentes
vos omnes qui vultis mihi intelligere.

15   Et ego volo dicere[32]
che ' lucci e ' barbagianni e le marmegge[33]
vorrebbono ogni dì far nuove legge.

</div>

(XVII)

Dog Latin is a mixture of Latin and vernacular, usually Latin words with Italian syntax and conjugations, which was used in satirical texts from the end of the fifteenth century in order to imitate humanistic Latin at the University of Padua.[34] Zaccarello stressed how this poem could be a parody of Latin hendecasyllables used in religious poetry that had already been satirised in a fifteenth-century Florentine sacred play (*Leggenda dei sette dormienti*) and in a poem by the Bolognese Niccolò Malpigli. In the sacred play *La leggenda dei sette dormienti* the anonymous author recounts a surreal dialogue between two 'heretical doctors' (*dottori eretici*) in which the Latin text, with vernacular syntax, is interspersed with vernacular words that are not conjugated but located at the very end of the verses in order to rhyme.[35] Malpigli's, on the other hand, attempts to blend Latin and vernacular in the same syntax, with four whole verses in Latin which are linked by the same rhyme (lines 1, 4, 5, 8).[36] The latter is a particularly interesting example, since

---

[32] A possible translation for these lines is: '"Who are you looking for?", indeed Solomon's men hurried in ripping all at once, and they would look like Pluto or Actaeon, motionless in a big fellowship. And they all cried out: "I am drinking! I am drinking!" when the son Agamemnon came in; Absalon came in another line, with him Lachesis, Atropos and Clotho. And so I wonder how those who had the imperial power killed the ensign, seeing with the eye's eyes. I want a prince, a priest and a soldier, if they love those of you that want to understand me, that to me is enough. And I want to say that ...'

[33] These animals could represent Florentine families. The Pandolfini's coat of arms has three dolphins that resemble (with *deminutio*) some *lucci*, 'pikes'; the Borgianni's name is similar to *barbagianni*, 'barn owl'; *marmegge* are worms that live in 'dry meat', i.e. 'carne secca', and therefore stands for the Carnesecchi family; see the commentary in *SdB*, p. 25. *Marmegge* could also be a metaphor for someone that behaves like a parasite. *Lucci* were proverbial for their greediness and *barbagianni* are *rapaci*, 'birds of prey' but also 'rapacious'; see Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, p. 200, n. 130.

[34] See Ivano Paccagnella, *Le macaronee padovane: tradizione e lingua*, Padua, Antenore, 1979, pp. 13-14.

[35] *Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre*, ed. Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis, 3 vols, Florence, Le Monnier, 1943, vol. 2, pp. 387-388.

[36] *Rimatori Bolognesi del Quattrocento*, ed. Ludovico Frati, Bologna, Romagnoli-Dall'Acqua, 1908, p. 16.

Malpigli was a papal notary who lived in Rome from 1412 to 1426 and also worked also as an abbreviator. It is possible that Burchiello could have been one of his readers later on in the same city.

Along with these two predecessors, Burchiello can also be considered the author of an embryonic text of macaronic poetry, by employing 'Latin that "lowers itself" to vernacular.'[37] Even though in '"Quem queritatis" vel vellere in toto' there is no use of vernacular words in the Latin section, the last three lines are an attempt to mix the two languages in the same sentence, while the syntax is vernacular and there are seemingly intentional inaccuracies in the grammar (lines 2 'viri Salomon', 6 'filius Agamenon', 11 'de oculis oculorum videntes').

La leggenda dei sette dormienti, Malpigli's and Burchiello's poems also have a common target, the philosopher. The content of all three is reinforced through quotations from different authorities, such as *Aristotil* for Malpigli, *Plato, Aristotile, Paphiriones, Averrois* in the *Rappresentazione* and several biblical and mythological characters for Burchiello, for example *Salomon, Pluto, Atheon, Agamenon, Assalon, Lacchesis, Antropos, Cloto, Cesare.*

Attempts to blend vernacular and Latin in the same poetry were not a Quattrocento novelty. Dante inserted short passages of liturgical Latin in his *Commedia*, following a trend that had begun in France in the twelfth century.[38] Many followed Dante's example in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In these cases an authoritative source was quoted in an attempt to strengthen the argument at hand.[39] Only in the fourteenth century do we find bilingual poems in the form of sonnets, called *semilitterati* and written entirely according to qualitative rather than quantitative metre. This genre of poetry was initially widespread in the area between Veneto and Emilia and it gradually spread to Tuscany, where the *sonetto semilitterato* flourished between the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth. 'Hodie natus est in Veneris' is the most significant example that precedes Burchiello in Tuscany. Written by the comic

---

[37] Cesare Segre, 'La tradizione macaronica da Folengo a Gadda (e oltre)' in *Cultura letteraria e tradizione popolare in Teofilo Folengo. Atti del convegno di studi promosso dall'Accademia Virgiliana e dal comitato Mantova - Padania 77, Mantova, 15-16-17 Ottobre 1977*, eds Ettore Bonora and Mario Chiesa, Milan, Feltrinelli, pp. 62-74: 63: 'Latino che si "abbassa" verso il volgare.'

[38] For example *Par*. VII.1-3 and *Par*. XV.28-30.

[39] See *Il sonetto latino e semilatino in Italia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento*, ed. Elena Maria Duso, Rome, Antenore, 2004, pp. VI-XII.

poet Orcagna (fourteenth century), it displays this technique satirically, which Burchiello later mastered, especially in the parody of didactic poetry: [40]

<blockquote>

1   Hodie natus est in Veneris
       quicunque dicant et non dicantur
       utinam interpretrator non diligantur
       chantantes trasformatus hic fueris.

5   Et ego dixi: 'tu che nomineris
       frequenter, fortes vel non destinantur
       et omnes mulieres supponantur
       perchè Ansalon lo scripse in Genesis?'

       Os meum mecum laudatur ibi
10   quale Ansalon scribe er Farisei
       come Hectorre ad Achille scripsit sibi.

       Allor invenne tutti e' Filistei
       gridando forte: 'tibi tibi tibi'
       per un che disse: 'Omé, omé, omei.'

15   Et vennovi gli Ebrei
       gridando forte: Fucechio, fucechio',
       chome huom che mai non perde suo malvecchio.[41]

</blockquote>

The similarities with Burchiello's '"Quem queritatis" vel vellere in toto' are remarkable. Presumably, Burchiello had read 'Hodie natus est in Veneris' and then aimed to replicate the use of dog-Latin. He managed, however, to lower his register even further, so much that in order to read this text no knowledge of Latin is needed.

In another poem, 'Nel bilicato centro della terra', satire is directed at both Latin and 'literary Tuscan that reaches towards Latin':[42]

<blockquote>

1   Nel bilicato centro della terra,
       dove mancando l'aire il mare abonda
       et onde Eülo vago foribonda
       faccendo con Neptunno a Giove guerra:

5   quivi nostro emispero s'apre e serra
       colla meridiana e trebisonda
       e la notturna spera più ritonda

</blockquote>

---

[40] See ibid., pp. XIII-XXVII. On the identity of Orcagna there are two main theories: he was either the painter and sculptor Andrea di Cione (thirteenth century) or Mariotto di Nardo di Cione, who died in 1424. See Cursietti, 'Alle radici della poesia burchiellesca', pp. 109-115.

[41] Transcribed from two manuscripts: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 1109 (f.140v); Magl. VII 457 (f. 2r) in Duso, *Il sonetto latino*, p. 27.

[42] Segre, 'La tradizione macaronica', p. 63: 'Toscano letterario che si impenna verso il latino'. Segre has mentioned the works of Battista Alberti, one of Burchiello's targets, as an example of this language.

<div align="center">

ogni natura di suo corso sferra.

Et onde nostra mente tien suo loco,
10   da memoria e da cerebro ab oggetto,
come favilla super fiamma in foco:

quivi fé Euclide e Taccuïn concetto,
ond'io Alfonso l'Almagesto invoco,
gloria di philosophico intelletto.

15   E detto questo truovo detto
in Tulio quinto sesto segnato 'A'
nelle genealogie di Pier Frustà.[43]

(XXXV)[44]

</div>

The poem is, overall, a parody of that kind of poetry whose aim was didactic and that developed content drawn from natural philosophy. For example, line 2 alludes to a theory developed also by Dante in his *Quaestio de aqua et terra* on the balance of elements – here *aire* and *mare*, air and water.[45] Parody is developed firstly through the contents, because the different sections of the text are not related to one another, and there is not a clear message or theory that emerges. The real focus here is language itself, and those figures of speech that were common in such texts. For instance, there is a mythical description of a storm, in which Aeolus and Neptune (air and water) fight Jupiter (earth). There is a mismatch here between the content and the form; the convoluted language contrasts the quite obvious image of the hemisphere of dry lands between east and west meridians, and that of the moon (*la notturna spera*) attracting natural elements. The second part of the poem leaves natural philosophy to go into the details of Thomistic epistemology. This brief discussion is left unfinished; despite the correct use of correlative conjunctions (*onde…quivi*) no conclusion is offered. Here we find one of the most important innovations that Burchiello brought into the satire of philosophy: a list of inconsistent authorities such as Euclid, Alfonso X, the *Almagest* and the *Tacuinum sanitatis*, the supposed 'glory of the philosophical intellect'.

Other languages are subject to satire in Burchiello's poems. Greek, for example, emerges in several texts and is spoken by all sorts of characters. In 'Novantanove maniche infreddate', a magpie, which is a bird already found in *Lo Studio d'Atene* as a

---

[43] Mock-quotation. Lanza has identified with this name Piero di mastro Domenico, also known as *Frusta*, the author of an *Ars memorativa* (1417-18). See Burchiello, *Le poesie autentiche*, p. 135.

[44] *SdB*, pp. 48-49.

[45] Ibid., p. 49.

personification of scholars, can speak Greek and also shows a severity that very probably is a parody of Dante's *Purgatorio*:[46]

> Et una gazza che parlava in greco
> disse 'voi perchè andate tante adorne?
> Come credete voi che l'uom sie ceco?'

(XVIII.12-14)

Satire of contemporary interest in Greek language and literature from this point, perhaps unexpectedly, is not developed further. Instead Burchiello introduces a language new to comic realist poetry, Hebrew. Hebrew was spoken by Jews in their communities in Florence and Rome, but a new interest for the language itself arose during the first half of the Quattrocento among humanists. One of the first attempts was made by Poggio Bracciolini, who learnt the rudiments – encouraged by Niccolò Niccoli – during one of his stays in Constance, where he had gone to follow the ecumenical council (1414-1418).[47] Bracciolini was followed some fifteen years later by another eminent humanist, Giannozzo Manetti, who studied Hebrew with the help of a Jewish tutor that later converted and was baptised with the name of Giovanfrancesco Manetti in 1430.[48] Even though intellectuals undertook the study of Hebrew in order to provide a new translation of the Bible, this effort was sometimes discouraged, perhaps because of an enduring popular prejudice against Jews.[49] 'Io vidi spogliare un dì tutte in farsetto' reflects this new interest in Hebrew by describing a journey that vaguely recalls Finiguerri's trip to Athens:[50]

> Molti aretini andavano in Buemia
> 10   per imparare a favellare ebraico,[51]

---

[46] *SdB*, pp. 26-27; see *Purgatorio*, XXIII.97-102, as suggested by Zaccarello in *SdB*, p. 26. According to *Purgatorio*, I.9-12 the Pierides, because of their pride, were transformed into magpies. Burchiello might also allude to Theodorus Gaza, a byzantine scholar friend of Filelfo that arrived in Italy in 1440; see Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, p. 19 n. 85.

[47] See the letter Niccolò Niccoli in Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. Helene Harth, 3 vols, Florence, Olschki, 1984-87, 46, vol. 1, p. 128.

[48] Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: the Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti and Desiderius Erasmus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 84.

[49] Even a humanist very interested in translation of the Bible such as Leonardo Bruni discouraged his friend Giovanni Cirignani from learning Hebrew (Botley, *Latin Translation*, p. 102): 'a rather useless task and, to my mind, a superfluous labour.'

[50] *SdB*, pp. 4-5.

[51] By inverting vowels, the word *ebraico* becomes *ebriaco*, 'drunk', perhaps an explanation for the line that follows; see Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, p. 306, n. 147.

> nel tempo che l'aceto si vendemia:
> l'uno era padovano e l'altro laico,
>
> ma venne lor sí fatta la bestemia,
> che ne fu presi più di cento al valico [...]

<div align="right">(II.9-14)</div>

The destination does not really exist − *Buemia* is another *nome parlante* made of an existing name with one vowel changed to hint at 'ox', *bue* − but it recalls *Boemia*, 'Bohemia', a name that Burchiello probably uses here to generically indicate the north of Europe. There is a remarkable similarity between this description and Bracciolini's experience, which leads to an identification of the *aretini*. Besides, Bracciolini was from Terranova nel Valdarno superiore, a village very close to Arezzo, where he spent the first years of his life. Burchiello's aim here is to reveal the absurdity of learning a language like Hebrew in a place such as Constance with no relevance to it − patently ignoring the real motivation behind this trip. Part of the mockery that points in this direction is the sentence at line 11, which tells of when the journey took place, that is 'when vinegar is harvested', another periphrasis that indicates 'never'.

Manetti, another scholar who studied Hebrew, collected several books in this language and translated biblical texts into Latin, with the purpose of demonstrating that a new translation of the Old Testament was necessary to confute the Jews.[52] Prejudice against Judaism is clear in a poem like 'La gloriosa fama di Davitti', which mocks also its language, and, ostensibly, the attempts to translate it:[53]

> 1   La glorïosa fama di Davitti
> che Minerva cantò con dolci versi
> sendo gli Ebrei spiriti perversi
> dal malvagio Fiton morsi e trafitti.
>
> 5   E perché e granchi son miglior rifritti,
> pietà mi venne e sì gli ricopersi
> in Galilëa ubi Pietro spersi
> ante musica gal ter negavitti.
>
> Coche dabosior stinche tralech
> 10   fest istu mitaur guzinon
> irabisi ster zucche sanza sprech.

---

[52] Botley, *Latin Translations*, p. 104.

[53] *SdB*, pp. 51-52.

> Allabismile talabal meon
> leïselem scasach salem malech
> algul ganzir marai gracalbeon;
>
> 15 disse 'Nonne non,
>   – al general che stava con riguardi –
>   non sunt, non sunti pisces pro Lumbardi.'
>
> (XXXVII)

As well as a parody of Latin (lines 8, 15, 17) this text includes a unique case of Hebrew glossolalia (lines 9-14). Some words are recognisable, as *stinche* (line 9, the name of the Florentine prison), *zucche* (line 11, 'pumpkins') and *salem malech* (line 13) that echoes the greeting in Hebrew *shalom aleichem*. The poem also develops several images based on the traditional accusation of deicide.[54]

Naturale and *accidentale*

Finiguerri's lecturers do not have any kind of knowledge whatsoever, *naturale*, *accidentale* or *munto*, whereas in Burchiello's texts a new interpretation of these categories emerges clearly; *munto* disappears, while *naturale* overcomes *accidentale*. The contrast is exemplified in a poem addressed to Rosello Roselli, 'Fior di borrana, se vuo' dire in rima':[55]

> 5 […] del falso accidental non fare stima,
>   che crëa versi crudi, aspri e cattivi,
>   ma natural e facilmente scrivi,
>   poi nella fantasia gli specchia e lima.
>
>   […]e tu d'alteza cadi nella mota,
>   e poi chi vuol seguir troppie scïentie
>   gli mulina il cervel come la ròta.
> 15 Tu hai la zucca vòta […].
>
> (CXIX.5-8, 12-15)

By once again attacking a poet, Burchiello gives in these lines some mocking advice on poetry-writing. Although this poem is a sharp critique to Rosello Roselli, the ironic advice outlines a context that provides an understanding of how *naturale* and *accidentale* have changed. *Accidentale* is 'false' (line 5), in this case meaning 'ephemeral' or 'useless', it therefore is not considered worthy of use, particularly in poetry, where it results in 'bad', 'raw' and 'harsh' verses (line 6). These who attempt to

---

[54] Alessio Decaria, '"Il filo di un ragionamento": lettura del "sonetto ebreo"', *Per leggere*, 18, 2010, pp. 15-29: 17.

[55] *SdB*, pp. 168-169; see Zaccarello, 'Indovinelli', p. 121.

learn too much *scienza* (a term strictly linked to the *accidentale*, see Chapter 1, pp. 48 and following) are destined to fail. This failure is described by the fall depicted at line 12, with mud representing the miserable condition of those who fall from a dangerous height, where mud corresponds to the supposed knowledge brought by the *accidentale*. Also Rosello's brain (and its synecdoche, his head) can be damaged by the *accidentale*, as is evident both in the realistic comparison (line 14, his brain is like a wheel that spins) and in the metaphor (line 15, his head is like an empty pumpkin). On the other hand, following *naturale* is simple and works with the poet's *fantasia*, the necessary source of inspiration to write poetry.[56] From Burchiello onwards, in comic literature *naturale* maintains a supremacy over *accidentale* and acquired knowledge is forsaken for one's natural instincts.

Nomi parlanti

Burchiello made a repeated use of *nomi parlanti,* taking them from Finiguerri's works and invented new ones by using the procedures already seen in Chapter 1. Names such as *Buezio* or *Balordia* were probably employed because they were already perceived as part of the satirical tradition of which *Questi ch'andoron già a studiare Âthene* is part. The name *Buezio* in particular is frequently used for many purposes and it loses its original reference to poor knowledge of Latin, for example, by being named as the source of mock-quotations in the poem *alla burchia* 'Zanzeverata di peducci fritti' and elsewhere:[57]

> 1   Zanzeverata di peducci fritti
>   e belletri in brodetto senza agresto
>   disputavan con ira nel Digesto
>   dove tratta de' zoccoli sconfitti;
>
> 5   e gli alïossi si levaron ritti
>   allegando Buezio in alcun testo
>   come e' non è a' fegategli onesto
>   a star nello schidion sì insieme fritti.
>
> (XLV.1-8)

The numerous personifications are joined in a narrative that describes a heated dispute between a syrup made of trotters (line 1) and a broth with an unspecified ingredient

---

[56] Elsewhere Burchiello's brain is described as filled with the necessary *fantasia* to write his poems (LXXVII.4), even though sometimes circumstances might limit its potential (XXXIII.13); see *SdB*, pp. 46, 109.

[57] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

(*belletri*). The quarrel concerns Justinian's *Digest* and it focuses on the supposed section of the *Digest* on *zoccoli*, 'hooves' (*sconfitti* could ambiguously mean 'defeated in the trial' or 'lacking horseshoe's nails'). *Digesto*, the compendium of Roman law, is used here for its similarity to the verb 'to digest', *digerire*. Personification of animal parts is carried through the second quatrain in which some lamb-heel bones quote a spurious passage by Boethius, who should discuss some pieces of liver together in a skewer. Similar quotations of Boethius are found in other poems, such as 'Civette e pipistregli e tal ragione':[58]

> 15 Questa è cosa provata
> come dice Buezio al quarto testo:
> chi vuol vin dolce non imbotti agresto.
>
> (CXLVIII.15-17)

Finally, in 'Di darme tante lode omai scivich', *Buezio* is only part of a convoluted circumlocution indicating the word 'consolation' and alluding to the *Consolation of Philosophy*:[59]

> Quel che Buetio chiuso da graticola
> ebbi sì lungamente mi bisogna,
> quando di sdegno il petto mi formicola.
>
> (XCV.15-17)

The title of Boethius's work is employed in 'Studio Buezio di sconsolazione', another poem describing in first person what the poet is doing in Venice: 'Studio Buezio di sconsolazione/ qui in Vinegia in casa un degli Alberti [...]'.[60] The whole first verse is clearly a parody; the mangled name *Buetio* and *consolazione* becoming *sconsolazione* is evidence.

It has already been noted above how a *nome parlante* similar to *Buezio* becomes part of Burchiello's repertoire, that is *Buemia*. Among the numerous toponyms like this there are derivations of the mentioned *nome parlante* Pecorone. Burchiello does not abandon this name but sheep (and goats) seem to lose progressively their original connection with Ser Giovanni's literary work and to gain a completely independent meaning.[61] Roselli, for instance, in one of the texts of the tenso, invited Burchiello to go to *Pecorile*.[62] This word is placed at the end of the verse and therefore rhyme undoubtedly

---

[58] Ibid., pp. 208-209.

[59] Ibid., pp. 136-137.

[60] Ibid., LIX.1-2, pp. 82-83.

[61] Examples of the use of *Pecorone* are found in *SdB*, LXXXI.8; XCII.1; CLII.2; CCXX.12.

[62] Ibid., CXX.10, pp. 169-170.

influenced this morphological change, one that was possible because of Pecorone's notoriety. Burchiello himself twisted further this reference inventing the *nome parlante Cavrenno*, which is the name of a place between Florence and Bologna but also an imaginary place connected to a series of authorities such as Mohamed, Proserpina, Macrobius, Avicenna, Hippocrates and Galen.[63] *Cavrenno* recalls the word for 'goat', *capra,* an animal semantically close to the sheep and therefore gravitating around the satire of *Pecorone*.[64]

Cultural references and fame

Ser Giovanni's *Pecorone* was for Burchiello an important link to the satire of Finiguerri's *Studio*. This name is found in another poem that once again recalls the trip of *Lo Studio d'Atene*:[65]

> Un nugol di pedanti marchigiani
> che avevano studiato il Pecorone
> vidi venire in ver settentrïone
> disputando le leggi colle mani [...].

<div align="right">(CLII.1-4)</div>

The multitude of pedants from the Marche could be a hyperbolic hint towards Francesco Filelfo, the humanist born in the Tolentino whom Burchiello personally knew, as explained below. An identification of the *marchigiani* is nevertheless unnecessary to identify in these lines a satire on pedants that are lampooned by mentioning *Pecorone* as their schoolbook. Moreover, these scholars use their hands to argue, a clear sign of difficulty with languages.

The poems of Burchiello's collection constantly quote non-existent passages and their phony *auctores*, albeit with some exceptions. Among works of Florentine provenance, along with *Pecorone* we find *Geta e Birria*, in 'Tre fette di popone e duo di seta'.[66] Finiguerri's *Studio* becomes part of this system, through the quotations pointed out above, and through one in particular that demonstrates how *Lo Studio d'Atene* was embedded in comic poetry in Burchiello's day, namely, the character Ser Catanzano. *Catanzano* is probably the name of a real person for Finiguerri (*Lo Studio d'Atene*, I.75,

---

[63] Ibid., CVI.3, pp. 150-151.

[64] The only scholar who relates *Pecorone* an *Cavrenno* is Crimi in *L'oscura lingua*, p. 285.

[65] *SdB*, pp. 214-215.

[66] Ibid., XXXVIII, pp. 52-53.

see p. 44), but to Burchiello it became the proverbial name of someone ignorant and lazy, for example:[67]

> Siché per questo e pegli atti di Gello,
> Ser Catanzano vide una fïata
> Giuseppo con la barba insaponata
> fuggiensi da Firenze pel balzello.
>
> (XXXIII.1-4)

The freedom of the technique *alla burchia* allows Burchiello to insert any kind of character into the narrative frame of the poems. As well as fictional characters from mythology and ancient literature, we find classical authors and ancient philosophers, who at times are characters taking part in the narrative, and others are quoted as mock-references. Burchiello, by way of whimsical descriptions or odd quotations, tackles erudition and philosophy directly, albeit without explicitly naming contemporary scholars or humanists. Ancient figures, however, are used to great effect, for example Cicero, referred to as *Tullio*, as in the Latin literature of the time, who supposedly wrote a treatise on pigeons with Democritus and the prophet Jeremiah, and talks about wine, food and medications to his friend Gaius.[68] He is also quoted as a source[69] and exchanges coagulated milk for baskets.[70] Greek philosophers are mentioned in a sonnet with no logical links to the rest of the narrative:[71]

> Accademici, Stoïci e Picuri
> 10   vestiti di color di fior di pesco,
> vogliono e' bericuocoli maturi.[72]
>
> (CXLIX.9-11)

Philosophers from the main ancient philosophical schools are represented wearing light pink clothes and requesting sweets from the city of Siena (*bericuocoli*). They are not spared from the process of *deminutio* pervasively used by Burchiello.

'Truovasi nelle storie di Platone' is perhaps the poem that most employs names of Greek philosophers and is very probably a depiction of Florence under Cosimo de' Medici:[73]

> 1   Truovasi nelle storie di Platone,

---

[67] Ibid., pp. 45-46; see Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, p. 301.

[68] *SdB*, XLVIII, pp. 66-67.

[69] Ibid., XXXV, pp. 48-49.

[70] Ibid., CXLVIII, pp.208-209.

[71] Ibid., pp. 209-210.

[72] I have added the apostrophe.

[73] Ibid., pp. 293-294.

ubi trattantur multe res divine,
ch'e' non si può far palle fiorentine
se non ci dà licenza Scalabrone.

5 Socrate ebbe un'altra oppenïone,
scrivendo la natura delle spine:
dice che 'l mondo allor dè aver fine
quando la tromba sonerà il moscone.

Lo 'mperador de' Greci, udendo questo,
10 gli venne per gran pena le morice,
onde convien ch'e' mangi pollo pesto;

ma s'egli e 'l ver quel ch'altri spesso dice,
chi impara a mente d'Avicenna il testo
sarà in vita eterna il più felice.

(CCXII.1-14)

The *palle* at line 3 is an allusion to the Medici emblem, which between the first and the second quarter of the fifteenth century was a golden shield decorated with seven red balls. This could be the key to interpreting the first quatrain, possibly a satire of Cosimo's interest in Platonic philosophy. *Scalabrone* seems to be a blend of two words, *scarabeo* and *calabrone* ('scarab' and 'hornet') and it becomes another satirical authority quoted by Plato, a mock-*auctor* who has the power to allow the existence of the Medici. Moreover, Socrates is the author of another imaginary work on the nature of thorns, in which the Final Judgment is announced by a fly playing a trumpet. This bizarre apocalyptic scene worries a mysterious Greek emperor (9-11), who is therefore advised to memorize Avicenna's texts in order to have a happier afterlife. The surreal account of Plato's writing, Socrates's thought and the destiny of the Greek emperor, deprive these names of their centuries-old authority and bring them down to an everyday context through realistic images that can sometimes be quite grotesque – see for example reference to haemorrhoids (*morice*, line 10).

The most obvious omission in the quotidian portrayal of ancient philosophers is that of Aristotle. This may have been an oversight but equally the image of Solomon ridden by his wife alludes strongly to Aristotle and Phyllis in the poem 'Zucche scrignute e sguardo di ramarro'.[74] Burchiello probably substitutes Aristotle with Solomon as they are both exemplary figures of wisdom and knowledge, keeping the comic reversal of roles between men and women.

---

[74] Ibid., XXVI, p. 37: 'E perché Salamone/ si lasciò già cavalcar dalla moglie […]'; see also Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, pp. 97-99.

The technique of the mock-quotation had been used before Burchiello by Cecco Angiolieri (ca. 1260-1313) in the poem 'Questo ti manda a dir Cecco, Simone'. Cecco quoted Solomon and Cato to prove that the only effective cure for the woes of love is not to lend them importance: [75]

> 5   E' disse di sua bocca Salomone
>   questa parola, se l'hai bene 'ntesa:
>   né più né meno lo mal a l'om pesa,
>   se non quanto esso al core se ne pone.
>
> […]
> Se voi d'Amor o d'altro bene stare,
> magistra sit tibi vita aliena
> disse Cato in su' versificare.

(lines 5-8, 12-14)

Even though there are similar patterns in the texts of Burchiello and Angiolieri, such as the contrast between authoritative names and the triviality of the argument, the difference between the two is marked. While the quotations in Angiolieri's poems are either plausible or cited literally (line 2), Burchiello mixed names and contexts that sound utterly incongruent. As a result, Burchiello's text has a bewildering effect not present in Angiolieri's.

Given that living scholars are almost absent in Burchiello's text, the theme of fame is not developed as it was in Finiguerri's *Lo Studio*. The only development of Finiguerri's metaphors in this sense is found in 'Un giudice di cause moderne', which establishes yet another kind of continuity with *Lo Studio d'Atene*:

> 1   Un giudice di caüse moderne
>   che studiava in sul fondo d'un tamburo
>   avea il cervel del calamaio sì duro
>   ch'arebbe asciutto un moggio di citerne [...].

(XIX.1-4)

This incipit recalls Finiguerri's focus on law teachers and notaries since Burchiello focuses on a judge in a non-existent place (line 2, the 'bottom of a drum'). Finiguerri uses the image of empty or mouldy inkwells (I.43-45; VI.22-24, see p. 56) to symbolize fruitless work and an empty fame. Referring to this judge, Burchiello similarly depicts an 'ink so dry' (*cervel del calamaio sì duro*) that could dry 'many water tanks' (*un moggio di citerne*). These lines must be related to 'Ficcami una pennuccia in un baccello', in which Burchiello, in using the first person, asks for some ink (line 2: 'et èmpimi d'inchiostro un fiaschettino') so that he can write poetry during his stay in

---

[75] *Rimatori comico-realistici,* vol. 1, pp. 430-431.

prison.[76] This is because his brain, unlike the judge's *cervel del calamaio*, is fruitful and full of *fantasia*, 'imagination' (line 4).

Comic realism

The poems in Burchiello's collection are imbued with realistic images, especially those *alla burchia*. His repertoire is built on medieval tradition, particularly concerning food, that plays such a pivotal role to the point of becoming a sort of 'obsession'.[77] *Plazers* that enumerate dishes are common in vernacular Italian medieval poetry but Burchiello represents a turning point in this tradition, as his work is populated by personifications and metaphors involving every sort of beverage and dish. In the poems discussed a wide range of these surreal images is provided and food plays an important role in the satire.[78] The evolution of this food-related theme from Finiguerri to Burchiello, however, is gradual, and can be seen in metaphors that depict absent-mindedness. Parallels between a person's judgement and flavourless food (*sciocco*) are frequent, for example in 'Se ' tafani che tu hai alla cianfarda', in which the addressee is called 'seed melon' (*mellon da seme*, line 2, i.e. a melon with more seeds than fruit), a circumlocution that comes to mean *sciocco* because tasteless melons were not eaten, but used only to extract seeds.[79]

The texts also maintain a prominent position for birds among its realistic images. Even so, whether the presence of birds or night birds can be considered as a clear sign of satire of intellectuals is probably debatable, given the pervasive ambiguity of the style. Many of these birds are strongly linked to philosophy and scholars more generally. Among the examples provided above there are owlets that study Latin,[80] a magpie that speaks Greek,[81] pikes and barn-owls that wish to make new laws daily.[82]

'Non pregato d'alcun Rosel, ma sponte', with its multiple references to geese and barn-owls, represents an explicit case in point:

---

[76] *SdB*, LXXVII, pp. 109-110.

[77] Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, pp. 59-67.

[78] *SdB*, II, VIII, XXXVII, XLV, pp. 4-5, 12-13, 51-52, 62-63.

[79] Ibid., CXCVI, p. 273.

[80] Ibid., VIII.17, p.13.

[81] Ibid., XVIII.12, p. 75.

[82] Ibid., XVII.16-17, pp. 24-25.

O terribil memoria grieve e soda
10   cervellin d'oca e gran teschio d'alfana
da farne spaventacchio a' barbagianni,

dottorato in fra l'oche in Valdichiana
ha' tu civile o canonica loda?

<div align="right">(CXVII.9-13)</div>

Roselli, once again the addressee of satire, is not mocked this time for his poetry. Instead, this is a direct attack on his intelligence, which is objectified through two metonymies. The first (line 9) is a description of his intellect (*memoria*) as crude and obtuse, and the second on his brain (line 10) and is developed through three images. Initially, Rosello's brain is that of a goose, notoriously small, but then even the small brain disappears into the empty skull of a horse, which is a 'scarecrow for barn owls' (line 11). These figures come together to produce an absurd and cutting satire of Roselli's supposed intellect: he gained a doctorate among geese (line 12).

2.3 Burchiello versus Filelfo

While most of the poems in Zaccarello's edition of Burchiello's texts address a generic interlocutor, a significant number of them – about a fourth – address an identifiable person.[83]

Two of the addressees are distinguished humanists whom Burchiello quite probably met. In Burchiello's *corpus* we find two texts addressed to Francesco Filelfo, neither of which were answered, and a short tenso with Leon Battista Alberti. Whereas the satire of philosophy in most poems mentioned above is only occasionally developed in isolated quatrains or tercets, these poems that target Filelfo and Alberti bring together many of the traditional themes and Burchiello's innovation.

Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481) was an easy target for Burchiello. The two were both in Florence during the early 1430s, when Filelfo taught rhetoric and moral philosophy at the Studio (1429-1434). Even though Filelfo was a valued scholar, his presence in Florence and his anti-Medicean position caused him to gain many enemies among both humanists and Medicean citizens. His unpopularity became such that in May 1433 an attempt on his life was made on the order of chancellor of the Studio, Girolamo Broccardi.[84] In the autumn of the following year, after the exile of the anti-Medicean

---

[83] Giunta, 'Premesse per un commento', p. 78.

[84] See *DBI*, s.v. 'Filelfo, Francesco'.

families, Filelfo fled to Siena. Traces of the disputes he had in these turbulent years are to be found in his writings and in those of other humanists such as Marsuppini and Bracciolini. There is also writing in the vernacular on these disputes: Burchiello's poems 'Tre fette di popone e due di seta' and 'Fiocco magogo, barba di cipolla' and a *frottola* by Bartolomeo Sachella, based in Milan where Filelfo worked from 1439 to 1474. The Milanese comic poet lamented Filelfo's presence in Milan, accusing him of being critical towards the Milanese vernacular and *maldizante* ('argumentative').[85]

There are few clues as to when and where the two poems were written. The first begins with a typical *alla burchia* incipit:[86]

> 1   Tre fette di popone e due di seta
>   e mestole forate bergamasche
>   e costole di cavoli e lasche
>   si fuggiron nel porto di Gaeta;
>
> 5   e mona Ciola, come mal discreta,
>   s'empiè di berricuocoli le tasche
>   sotto un tetto di tegoli di frasche
>   dove fu la question fra 'l Birria e 'l Geta.
>
>   E Siena è vecchia e porta ancor coralli,
> 10   e 'l duca delle rape ha la pipita,
>   e Vulcano ha le man pien di calli.
>
>   e così truovo che, *ab Urbe condìta*,
>   che Camillo sconfisse i fieri Galli
>   di meza note, e tolse lor la vita;
>
> 15   perdio, siemi chiarita
>   da te questa question, e poi risposto:
>   s'e' gli fé lessi, o veramente arrosto.

(XXXVIII)

This text conforms to the *alla burchia* technique and could be therefore read as a list of unrelated narrative scenes assembled to amuse the reader, in this case Filelfo. A closer look at the imagery, however, provides insight on how Filelfo and the poem are related and how satire is forged. In the first lines three slices of melon, two measures of silk (line 1), some ladles from Bergamo (line 2), some cabbage leaves and some fishbone (line 3) flee to the port of Gaeta (line 4). In the second quatrain and the first tercet the events depicted are not set in Gaeta but in Siena, where Lady Ciola, one of the city's proverbial characters, fills her pockets quickly with sweets (*berricuocoli* lines 5-6).

---

[85] Giovanna Polezzo Susto, 'Una frottola milanese contro Francesco Filelfo', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 24, 1966, pp. 429-442.

[86] *SdB,* pp. 52-53.

Lady Ciola is standing under a roof made of *frasche* (line 7), a word that means both 'tree branches' and 'lies', an ambiguity explained by the reference to Brunelleschi's *Geta e Birria*. The spot chosen by Lady Ciola is the same place where Geta and Birria had 'the' argument (line 8), the most famous dialogue in Brunelleschi's poem, in which Geta curses philosophy after he sees his double and does not know whether he still exists. Perhaps, too, Filelfo's personal history features in this first part of the poem since he fled Florence in 1434 when Cosimo de' Medici returned after his exile, along with many Florentine families such as the Albizzi, the Peruzzi, the Gianfigliazzi and the Strozzi. Filelfo fled to Siena, as he recalled in his *Satyrae*, and taught at the city's Studio for four years.[87] The greedy Lady Ciola can be even seen as a personification of Siena, who fills her pockets with sweets – the intellectuals fled from Florence – but does so right in the place where knowledge and philosophy had proved futile. Filelfo's preferences for the Florentine oligarchy opposed to the Medici were notorious, and they even influenced the topics of his courses at the Florentine Studio.[88] For instance, one of the *auctores* that he selected was Livy, whose history of ancient Rome *Ab urbe condita* was traditionally associated with Republican sympathies. The title of Livy's work is explicitly quoted at line 12, when the narrative changes for the third time. The Latin word *condita*, 'founded', is placed in this verse so that it is mispronounced with the stress on the penultimate syllable. In this way the Latin past participle *còndita* becomes the Italian adjective *condìta*, 'seasoned', and the subsequent citation from Livy, referring to Marcus Furius Camillus defeating the Gauls (lines 12-14), leads to the pun in the last tercet. After this, Filelfo is directly asked to explain whether roosters, in Italian *galli*, a word that means also 'Gauls', were boiled or roasted by Camillus. One last conspicuous clue is found at line 14, in which the battle between Camillus and the Gauls is set in the middle of the night, even though Livy's Camillus does not defeat the Gauls at night. Cosimo de' Medici, on the other hand, did return to Florence at night time, as described by Filelfo himself in the *satyra* mentioned above.

This poem combines the technique *alla burchia* with a satire of one of Filelfo's courses at the Studio, the satire being produced by a mock-quotation by Livy and two puns. Filelfo's choice of Livy is linked to his image of anti-Medicean intellectual and by referring to it, Burchiello perpetuates the satire directed against the Florentine University. Unlike Finiguerri, however, he does not target those who earned more from

---

[87] Filelfo, *Satyrae*, IV.9.

[88] See *DBI*, s.v. 'Filelfo, Francesco'.

their teaching, but instead someone who inflamed the intellectual debate by expounding his political choices.

In the second poem addressed to Filelfo 'Fiocco magogo, barba di cipolla', Burchiello focuses on the physical depiction of the scholar calling him 'flappy' and 'onion beard' (line 1, *fiacco*, *barba di cipolla*).[89] The poet then curses Filelfo, wishing that Medusa would 'open her head' (line 2). This alludes to the lethal gaze of the mythical Gorgon. *Alla burchia* technique is here not employed, even though lines 5-14 develop a surreal narrative made of mythological characters that, according to Zaccarello, satirize Filelfo's erudition (Priam, Sinon, Androgeos, Callisto, Philomela, Megaera, Cato the younger's wife Marcia).[90] We find another mock-quotation concluding the poem, from Seneca (lines 16-17): 'sì come dice Seneca a Lucillo/ la salsa nihil val senza serpillo'. This clearly refers to the *Epistulae ad Lucilium* but once again, also with a turn towards Latin, Burchiello deviates towards the comic-realist topic of food, *serpillo* being a kind of thyme.

2.4 Burchiello versus Alberti

Even though the poems exchanged with Alberti satirize his erudition and his position in Florentine cultural life as much as those addressed to Filelfo, they have a completely different rhetorical configuration. They are part of a genre with strict rules, the tenso, which is an exchange of poems between two or more interlocutors developed by the troubadour school and then by the Italian vernacular poetry of the thirteenth century. There is no specific metre for tensos, since poets always employed existing ones, from the *coblas doblas* to the *coblas tensonadas* to the *canzone* and finally the sonnet. Similarly, tensos do not develop specific themes but the genre itself rhetorically influences the texts.[91] In the fifteenth century *tensos* were only written in the form of sonnets, while the most relevant formal characteristic is the repetition of rhymes. The poet responding to the first poem, therefore, had to keep the same set of rhymes with the purpose of demonstrating superior writing skills. Alberti's and Burchiello's poems only partially follow this rule.

---

[89] *SdB*, XL, pp. 55-56.

[90] Ibid., p. 56.

[91] Claudio Giunta, *Due saggi sulla tenzone*, Rome-Padua, Antenore, 2002, pp. 122-123.

Alberti threw down the gauntlet and wrote the first sonnet, 'Burchiello sgangherato e senza remi' (see Appendix I for full text).[92] Burchiello initially responded with a poem that adheres to the tenso rules, 'Battista perchè paia ch'io non temi'[93] but carried on afterwards with other poems without the same rhymes and without any provocation from Alberti. These poems are 'O ser Agresto mio che poeteggi',[94] 'Dopo il tuo primo assalto, che la vista',[95] 'Battista Alberti, per saper son mosso',[96] 'Sotto Aquilon, nell'isola del gruogo'[97] and 'Se 'nanti al Carnascial non ci dai cena'.[98] The scholar Luigi Trenti convincingly argued that this exchange took place in Siena in 1443, when both Alberti and Burchiello lived there. This hypothesis is based on the poem 'Burchiello, or son le poste nostre sconte' (CXI)[99] by Roselli, in which Alberti's 'Burchiello sgangherato e senza remi' is quoted. This is relevant, because Roselli lived in Siena during the same years.[100]

Alberti's poem in the first half (lines 1-8) hints at Virgil's *Aeneid* by comparing implicitly Burchiello, or rather the boat he was named after, to Charon's boat. Classical references and high register in these lines contrast with the content of the second half (lines 9-16), which contains two riddles whose solution is plainly obscene: male genitalia.

Riddles such as these were typically employed in medieval tensos, where they could develop either a private dialogue between poets or a *quaestio*, i.e. a debate on theoretical issues.[101] The riddles found in Alberti's and Burchiello's poems are partly a comic evolution of those *quaestiones* and partly belong to another tradition, the medieval custom of concluding didactic poems with an open question. In this case Alberti and Burchiello, along with other authors in the *Quattrocento*, create riddles that are intended to surprise and mock the reader, because their solutions are grotesque and often hint at sex and other bodily functions.

---

[92] *SdB*, LIII, pp. 74-75.

[93] Ibid., LIV, pp. 75-76.

[94] Ibid., LV, pp. 77-78.

[95] Ibid., LVI, pp. 78-79.

[96] Ibid., LXXXVI, pp. 122-123.

[97] Ibid., CLXXIV, pp. 244-245.

[98] Leon Battista Alberti, *Rime e versioni poetiche*, ed. Guglielmo Gorni, Milan, Ricciardi, 1975, p. 3.

[99] *SdB*, pp. 157-158.

[100] Luigi Trenti, 'Alberti e il Burchiello', *Civiltà mantovana*, 29, 1994, pp. 111-119: 115-117.

[101] Giunta, 'Premesse per un commento', p. 82.

The best way to reply to such an insult was by multiplying riddles with new metaphors and by numerous references to male genitalia: [102]

<div style="text-align:center">

1   O Ser Agresto mio che poeteggi
e che tanto ben suoni il dabbudà
qual è la carne che cocendo fa
el savor s'ella stessi ne' laveggi?

[...] quale è l'uccel che mai non becca et ha
in gorga sempre e nel calcetto sta:
tu 'l de' sapere, po' che tu studi in leggi.

</div>

<div style="text-align:right">(LV.1-4, 6-8)</div>

<div style="text-align:center">

1   Battista Alberti, per saper son mosso
dal bel poema di tuo rima adorna,
qual sia quell'animal che porta corna
e non ha moglie né nel suo corpo osso.

</div>

<div style="text-align:right">(LXXXVI.1-4)</div>

The reason why Burchiello multiplies and emphasizes Alberti's riddle is in the riddles themselves. Alberti was a well-known intellectual and Burchiello played on his well-known erudition, and provoked him (LV.8), while mocking his attempts to write comic poetry. 'Burchiello sgangherato e senza remi' is the only text in his oeuvre that can be defined comic-realist. Burchiello drew attention to this poem by echoing his one and only comic metaphor. His riddles are a skilful display of variations on the same theme, not a novelty in his works. [103] One in particular combines a satire of mythological erudition and a more explicit satire of Alberti's supposed lack of intelligence: [104]

<div style="text-align:center">

15   Ancor colla dottrina
delle cornacchie che ti presta Giove,
dimmi a che tu t'avedi quando e' piove.

</div>

<div style="text-align:right">(LV.15-17)</div>

Here Burchiello evokes a 'doctrine of crows', apparently lent to Alberti by Jupiter. Crows are not among those birds that Finiguerri uses in his comparisons with scholars but they could easily be added to this category, firstly because, according to Burchiello, they own the doctrine and second, they are commonly considered loud animals.

The riddle that follows is a satire of the metaphors used in didactic poetry: [105]

<div style="text-align:center">

Dè, dimmi ancora qual benigno cielo
o quale stella con pietà s'inchina
che ' pesci non si muoiono or di gelo:

</div>

---

[102] *SdB*, pp. 77-78; ibid., pp. 122-123.

[103] Ibid., LXV.1-8; CXXXIII.12-17; CXXXVI.12-17, pp. 91; 187-188; 206.

[104] Ibid., p. 77.

[105] Ibid., p. 77.

però ch'i' sogno spesso la mattina
Arno veder con di cristall un velo
e ' pesci sanza gruogo in gelatina.[106]

(LV.9-14)

Burchiello's taunting of Alberti appears more direct. The conclusion of 'Battista Alberti, per saper son mosso', for example, is merciless towards Alberti's fame:[107]

E molto par che pesi
il nome tuo a certi corpi umani
par sopranome agli Omeri montani.

(LXXXVI.15-17)

Merging Alberti's name and *Omeri montani* conjures an image of bad poets. We find here a general reference to Alberti's notoriety and an allusion to classical literature Homer − besides the pun *òmero-Omèro* − transformed by the adjective *montano*, meaning, insultingly, 'coming from the mountains'. Alberti's notoriety is worsened further by the type of people that received this nickname, described as 'human bodies', *corpi umani*, suggesting their lack of rational thought.

Finally, in 'Sotto Aquilon, nell'isola del gruogo' we find another sharp criticism of Alberti:[108]

E tu, messer tornato pedagogo,
che per vergogna la fronte ti suda,
faresti meglio ândare a stare a Buda,
dove l'asino e 'l bue ara a un giogo.

(CLXXIV.5-8)

Alberti's title was *messer*, a title more usual for physicians, lawyers and scholars. In Burchiello's eyes, however, Alberti was only a school teacher, *pedagogo*, a title of which Alberti should have been ashamed. Moreover, Burchiello suggests that he leave and go to Buda, the Hungarian city that becomes a new *nome parlante*, and the syllable 'bu' thus provides a link with Finiguerri's *Buezio* and Burchiello's *Buemia*. Buda, through its hint at 'ox' is a reference to the line that follows, which is a parody of the biblical motto that one should not plough with both an ox and a donkey.[109] Once again,

---

[106] Burchiello asks Alberti which supernatural entity allows fish not to die frozen in the river Arno during the winter. This is because in his dreams the Arno's surface resembles thin crystal and fish would be trapped in a sort of jelly without spices.

[107] Ibid., p. 122.

[108] Ibid., pp. 244-245.

[109] Deuteronomy 22, 10. Zaccarello suggests reading these lines as an accusation of homosexuality in *SdB*, p. 245.

Burchiello suggests Alberti undertake a journey, whose purpose is similar to the scholars who went to Athens.

Alberti and Burchiello: common ground in satire of philosophy

We have noted above how 'Burchiello sgangherato e senza remi' is Alberti's only attempt to write comic-realist poetry. Alberti, however, was no stranger to comic literature and his *Momus* is the supreme example of his talent as a comic writer. Written between 1443 and 1450, for many years it circulated through few manuscript copies until its *editio princeps* in 1520.[110] Burchiello almost certainly never read this book – it was only available in Latin, a language that he probably only partly understood – but we can say with confidence that Alberti read Burchiello's poetry. There is no textual evidence proving that Alberti was in any way influenced by Burchiello, and one must always bear in mind that *Momus* is a sophisticated reworking of Lucian's satires reflecting his eclectic education. His learned satire in the *Momus* seems to have something in common with Burchiello's works.

Since Lucian mocked several philosophical schools and included many philosophers as characters in his dialogues, we find in Alberti's text Diogenes, Democritus and Socrates and fictional philosophers such as Oenops and Gelastus.[111] The numerous episodes that take place in the four books of *Momus* and the varied judgments expressed by characters paint an ambiguous picture in which philosophers, like Gods and human beings in general, are merely imperfect creatures that continually contradict themselves. Nevertheless, in many passages all philosophers, as if there were no difference among them, are despised as 'ambitious by nature, arrogant by inclination, and forceful disputants by habit'; they are accused of being convoluted, because they cannot 'explain any obscure matters without wrapping them in the thickest blankets of words.'[112] The

---

[110] Leon Battista Alberti, *Momus*, English transl. Sarah Knight, eds Virginia Brown and Sarah Knight, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2003, p. VII.

[111] Alberti, *Momus*, transl. Knight, pp. 394, n.4: 'The name "Oenops" is derived from the Greek *oinops* or "wine-colored", a common Homeric epithet used to describe the sea, but here is probably an allusion to the bibulous habits of the actor/philosopher'. Ibid., n.5: 'In Greek, *gelastos* means "laughable". Alberti's Gelastus is both laughing-stock and wit.'

[112] Ibid., I.32, transl. Knight, pp. 36-37: 'natura ambitiosi, mente arrogantes, usu vehementes (uti erant) altercatores'. Ibid., III.44, pp. 242-243: 'nihil expromant rerum reconditarum nisi id maximis verborum involucris implicitum, lingis ambagis'.

god Charon, for example, after experiencing for the first time the pleasures of nature, flowers, hills and rivers (IV.36-37), must then suffer the holding forth of Gelastus, who attempts to explain why nature works in such ways. This explanation arrives via Aristotelian metaphysics and Plato's account of creation in *Timaeus*.[113] Charon's comment on this speech is so close to Burchiello's satire that this passage could serve as a gloss to Burchiello's 'Nel bilicato centro della terra' (see p. 73): 'Charon said that he never heard anything more trivial explained more pompously, nor anything more muddled discussed more systematically'.[114] It is tempting to see in Charon an image of Burchiello – a comparison already made in the poem 'Burchiello sgangherato e senza remi' – as Charon is depicted as often skeptical and merciless and also he once inappropriately quotes the oracle of Delphi (IV.42).

Alberti's *Momus* mostly recalls Burchiello's eccentric accounts in those scenes that describe the incongruous behaviour of Diogenes and Democritus. Diogenes does not reproach Jupiter for casting a shadow on him, as he does with Alexander in the notorious episode told by Plutarch and Diogenes Laërtius, but mocks and shouts at him in front of a crowd (III.13). He then physically attacks the god Mercury (III.24). Democritus sits among animal carcasses, dissecting some of them, and then is caught by Apollo frozen like a statue while dissecting a crab. These bizarre depictions of philosophers resemble those of Burchiello, where philosophers' antics always undermine their fame. In this vein, in the 'crab' episode Alberti parodies both the letter of the pseudo-Hippocrates to Damagetus, a popular medieval text on the origin of melancholy, and the Aristotelian and Platonic *topos* of marvel as the origin of philosophy.[115] Democritus's account of his discoveries (III.51) is as convoluted as Burchiello's lines on natural philosophy: the vagueness of both adds to the ridicule of philosophers.[116]

To conclude, the cryptic verses of Burchiello demonstrate how Finiguerri's satire of scholars was influential and how the latter established some standard themes that made the object of mockery recognizable, even in the most ambiguous cases. These standards,

---

[113] See Luca Boschetto, 'Democrito e la fisiologia della follia: la parodia della filosofia e della medicina nel *Momus* di Leon Battista Alberti', *Rinascimento*, 35, 1995, pp. 3-29: 27 n. 54.

[114] Alberti, *Momus*, IV.38, transl. Knight, p. 396: 'Negavit Charon grandioribus verbis pusilliora aut ordinatius confusiora audisse uspiam dici.'

[115] See Boschetto, 'Democrito e la fisiologia della follia', pp. 7-10.

[116] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

however, were quickly turned into stereotypes and they were used to lampoon broader categories of intellectuals, such as poets. By introducing his *alla burchia* technique and a poetical structure free from ordinary logical sequences, Burchiello advanced the work of satire and adapted it to a context that was no longer similar to that of Finiguerri. Burchiello was the witness of a sudden change in Florentine public life and for unknown circumstances he was forced to leave his city when many other citizens suffered the same fate. In these unsettled circumstances, an outcast such as Burchiello was able to keep in touch with Florence's poets and intellectuals in his poetry by referring to well-known *topoi* of comic literature, even though this meant that they became hackneyed and thus lost some efficacy.

The evolution of Florentine cultural life also meant changes in the life of intellectuals. The strengthened role of the Studio Fiorentino in Florentine life created rivalries and contrasts in teaching of which the case of Filelfo is an example. The study of languages found other frontiers, for instance, the translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Latin, and the conspicuous role of polymaths such as Alberti. Amidst this cultural vibrancy Burchiello chose to perform his satire through convoluted images, realistic metaphors and by directly undermining the authority of ancient philosophers. This first explicit attack on philosophy was not yet directed to contemporary intellectuals referred to as 'philosophers'. Burchiello's first followers, who imitated his style and spread the use of *alla burchia* technique, took this step, marking an important turning point in the satire of the *Quattrocento*.

CHAPTER 3

BURCHIELLO AFTER BURCHIELLO

The great influence exerted by Burchiello's style on sixteenth century poetry is evident in the works of poets such as Pietro Aretino, Francesco Berni, Agnolo Bronzino and Annibal Caro. It is equally evident, however, in poetry of the second half of the fifteenth century, especially in works by Luigi Pulci, Lorenzo de' Medici and Bernardo Bellincioni.[1] We can find earlier examples of his legacy that reveal that Burchiello had admirers and imitators when he was still alive and immediately after his death (1449). This short Chapter focuses on the early followers of Burchiello and builds towards the discussions in Chapter 4.

The satire of some early followers kept targeting scholars and philosophers through the use of images and rhetoric borrowed also from Finiguerri. Several texts offer evidence that his poetry was a fertile source, for example two anonymous poems, part of a miscellaneous manuscript of the end of the century: [2]

I

1 Un poeta che studia in carne secca,
   filosafo ne l'alpe di Cavrenno,
   conduce da Grosseto tanto senno
   ch'alle civette se ne fa cilecca.[3]

5 E se non ch'egli è servo d'una trecca,[4]
   maremma sì l'arè' preso col cenno;[5]
   ma c'è Befana che caccia al tentenno:[6]

---

[1] See *SdB*, pp. XXII-XXIX and Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 ('Fabellae pulcianae Burchiellique salsa nugae', 'Il Burchiello tra le mani di Lorenzo', 'Berni e l'uso di una lingua quasi perduta').

[2] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Acquisti e Doni 759 (previously Florence, Biblioteca Ginori Venturi Lisci, 3). For the manuscript, which is a collection edited by Filippo Scarlatti (born 1442), himself a poet; see Mario Ferrara, 'Il codice Venturi Ginori di rime antiche', *La bibliofilia*, 52, 1, 1950, pp. 41–102. These texts are transcribed in *Lirici toscani*, vol. 2, pp. 641-648; I have modified punctuation where necessary.

[3] 'That he scoffs at the owlets'; this ironically means that the poet lacks so much judgement that he is even worse than the usual *civette*.

[4] 'Trecca': a woman who sells fruit and vegetables in the street.

[5] This verse alludes at the savageness of the Tuscan coastal area; we can assume that the addressee is compared to an animal whose habitat is the *maremma*. 'Col cenno': 'easily', 'without effort'.

però fuggite, gufi, la stambecca[7].

I' lessi già ne salmi di Bellico[8]

10   del dolce predicar di Colombaia,[9]
ch'el dopo nona facea per l'amico.[10]

Però, caciaio, fùggiti in Capraia[11]
e mena teco la mandria da vico,[12]
che di qua ogni gente sì t'abaia.[13]

15   Passa pella cerbaia[14]
e porta in testa ghirlanda di datteri,[15]
ché tu se' fatto poeta de' guatteri.

II

1   Poeta mio, che non istudi invano,
in sul Vannin ch'è già per legger cieco,
dove trattò gli onor del viver bieco,
dispregiando e' trionfi del Soldano,

5   Boezio, que par est, hal tu alla mano?[16]
O ch'è del Pecoron? Non l'hai tu teco,
col comento del Ghianda 'talïano?[17]
[...][18]

---

[6] 'Caccia al tentenno'; see *GDLI*, vol. 20, p. 901, s.v. 'tentenno': 'tipo di caccia alle allodole praticata di notte per mezzo di una rete conica sostenuta da un lungo manico'. See also Francesco d'Altobianco Alberti, I.422-423, *Lirici toscani*, vol. 1, p. 65: 'Quel che 'ntende per cenno/ o sta sodo al tentenno – ha buona testa [...].'

[7] *GDLI*, vol. 20, p. 54, s.v. 'stambecca': 'tipo di balestra'.

[8] 'Bellico': 'navel'.

[9] 'Colombaia':'pigeon house'. It could also be a sexual allusion; see *GDLI*, vol. 3, p. 304, although it probably alludes at someone's name. 'Colombaia' is also the name of a place in Val di Pesa, near Florence.

[10] 'Nona': 'nona' in the book of hours, i.e. three p.m.

[11] 'Caciaio': 'cheese-maker'.

[12] 'Da vico': 'from the street' or 'from the sewer'. 'Vico' is also a place in Val d'Elsa.

[13] See *SdB*, LXXXI.9-11, p. 115: 'E questi altri studianti più moderni/ si vorrebbon mandar dove che sia/ ché a Firenze n'è fatti troppi scherni'.

[14] 'Cerbaia': 'wood of Turkey oaks'.

[15] See ibid., XCII.1-2, p. 131: 'Questi che hanno studiato il Pecorone/ coronià•gli di foglie di radice'.

[16] 'Que par est': dog-Latin for 'qui par est', 'who is comparable', 'whose is as valuable as…'.

[17] 'Ghianda': 'acorn' and 'glans', hence most probably a sexual metaphor.

[18] This line was not transcribed in the manuscript.

Boemia con Grosseto alla Sambuca[19]
10 istudio han fatto altro che di frittelle,[20]
perché la gloria loro al ciel t'induca.

Nel concestor delle nove sorelle[21]
maccheron sanza cacio si manduca
in pentolin, perché non v'è scodelle.[22]
15 Dunque, s'tu vuoi la pelle
del vaio in capo, a studiar là t'invia[n],[23]
e po' ti va' conventa[r] in Balordia.[24]

These poems bring together many images common to the work of Finiguerri and Burchiello. We find familiar *nomi parlanti* such as *Cavrenno* (I.2; cf. Chapter 2, p. 79), *Grosseto* (I.3, II.9; cf. Chapter 1, p. 52), *Balordia* (II.17; cf. Chapter 1, p. 52; cf. Chapter 2, p. 65) and new ones shaped on these models, such as *Capraia* (I.12). Two *nomi parlanti*, *Buezio* and *Buemia* recur (cf. Chapter 1, p. 47 above; Chapter 2, pp. 65, 75) but are no longer spelled with an 'u' (*Boemia*, II.9; *Boezio* II.5). This small change of vowel reveals an important variation that occurred at this point of the tradition: these *nomi parlanti* were so widely known that there was no need to spell them with a 'u' to make explicit their satirical roots. Other relevant themes drawn from Finiguerri and Burchiello are night-birds (I.4, 8); mock-quotations (*Vannino*, II.2; *Boezio*, II.5; *Pecoron*, II.6; *Ghianda*, II.7; *Bellico*, I.9); expeditions abroad resembling the trip to Athens (II.16); comic-realist images, e.g., the Muses that eat tasteless food directly from their pots (II.12-14); a wreath made of dates that replaces the laurel wreath I.16); and the contrast between Latin and vernacular (II.7).

Most importantly, these texts are both addressed to a poet. This firstly shows that Burchiello's tendency to use themes that had been dedicated to satire of scholars was in

---

[19] 'Sambuca' is a town in Val di Pesa.

[20] 'Frittelle' in Burchiello's poems is a sinonym for 'a written piece that holds no value'; see for example ibid., LIV.1-2, p. 75: 'Battista, perchè paia ch'io non temi/ le tue frittelle erbate … '.

[21] The Muses.

[22] This comic-realist image recalls Finiguerri, *Lo Studio*, IV.40-42 in *I poemetti*, p. 70: 'Questo mi par de' più sciocchi figliuoli/ ch'avesse il padre suo, detto ser Mino,/ benché sien senza cacio ravïuoli.'

[23] 'Vaio' was a kind of expensive fur that distinguished people of high social status. For the use of it in Finiguerri see Chapter 1, pp. 47.

[24] *Crusca*, s.v. 'conventare': 'Dar le 'nsegne del dottorato, e ascrivere in quel collegio, quasi nel convento de' Dottori, cioè nell'adunanza'.

full use by this time and secondly, it demonstrates that the word 'philosopher' had come into use to ridicule of anyone with high intellectual aims (I.2).

Two more poets took part in this tradition of satire that owes much to Burchiello. The first is Francesco Scambrilla, probably a contemporary of Burchiello, who in this text takes aim at an astrologer:[25]

> 1   Strolago mio, over filosofante,
> che studi in ciel per voltare il pianeta,
> per seguir la virtù del geometa[26]
> che studiò in sogni ed ebbe virtù tante.
>
> 5   Sa'mi tu dir dove posò le piante
> il primo bruco dond'uscì mai seta,
> o qual fu il primo legno, che 'n Gaeta
> Zeffir condusse e levò di levante?
>
>   O sa'mi dir se 'n acqua zappatore
> 10   fa nascer frutto d'aire in Soria,
> ch'aleghi e' denti a l'uom che segue Amore;[27]
>
>   o sa'mi dir se la filosofia
> facessi per seder venir le more,
> per studiare al lume dell'ombria?[28]
>
> 15   O sai quel che sia
> quelch'esce fuor del corpo al miccerello,[29]
> che ragghia e mena e fottesi il cervello?

In this poem, Scambrilla does not list a series of well-known images, as in the anonymous poems above, but rather includes five different riddles that recall closely the exchange of poems between Burchiello and Alberti (see Chapter 2, pp. 85-94). Each of the riddles proves pointless, with the probable aim of targeting and mocking the addressee's lack of judgment. In a marked difference to Burchiello's and Alberti's texts,

---

[25] *Lirici toscani*, vol. 2, p. 474.

[26] 'Geometa' is perhaps a synonym of *geomante*, 'geomancer', who reads the future in signs left on rocks, soil or sand.

[27] This is a more complicated riddle than the first: 'Can you tell me if a man with a hoe (*zappatore*) in Persia can produce a fruit made of air from water, one that can make the lover's mouth water.' Scambrilla juxtaposes the image from courtly poetry of the lover that is tied by Love (*legare*) and the idiom 'allegare i denti', 'to make somebody's mouth water'; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'allegare'.

[28] 'More', a word that in vernacular has several meanings, is probably here, given the context, short for *morici*, 'hemorrhoids', used often by Burchiello. Besides, the condition here described to study philosophy is here paradoxical, 'in the light of shade'.

[29] 'Miccerello': 'donkey'.

Scambrilla's riddles do not carry sexual connotations. Scambrilla focused on the parody of courtly poetry (lines 5-8; line 11) and on grotesque metaphors (lines 12-17). Like the anonymous poet, Scambrilla also explicitly considered the study of philosophy as a reason to mock his enemy. Firstly, this astrologer is defined by the word *filosofante* (line 1) and then the grotesque description of the effects of philosophy clarifies that the word 'philosopher' is derogatory.

Scambrilla exchanged poems with Comedio Venuti, born in Cortona in 1424, a devotee of the Medici family and author of 'Sonetto de Comedio al Dannato ironice':[30]

<blockquote>

1   Se Pacuvio, Cecilio e Nevio e Plauto
      studiasse sempre e Menandro e Lucrezio,
      esser già non porresti in maggior prezio,
      né più dotto e diserto, esperto e cauto.[31]

5   Tu hai preso un tuo stil sì terso e lauto
      che avanzi Tulio, Virgilio e Boezio,
      Ovidio con Lucan, Silio e Vegezio,
      né nel tuo scriver mai se' gionto incauto.[32]

      Se' profeta alto e sommo istoriografo,
10   oratore erudito in tanta copia
      che pare a chi t'ascolta un gran miraculo,

      astrologo perfetto e buon cosmografo,
      ed hai d'onne scienzia meno inopia
      che del facundo Apollo il sacro oraculo.[33]

</blockquote>

Here, by hyperbolically praising his adversary, Venuti attempted to mock a 'true' philosopher, an expert in history, oratory and astrology. Satire can be detected in the long *alla burchia* lists of *auctores* to whom the philosopher is ironically compared, and through the introductory title of the poem, which contains the Latin word *ironice*, 'ironically'. Moreover, Venuti's aim in the use of pairs of adjectives (lines 4, 5, 12) was perhaps to parody the high register used by his addressee in his works.

---

[30] The poem is in *Lirici toscani*, vol. 2, p. 748; see Antonio Lanza, *La letteratura tardogotica: arte e poesia a Firenze e Siena nell'autunno del Medioevo*, Anzio, De Rubeis, 1994, p. 816, for information on Comedio Venuti.

[31] The list of *acutores* includes: Pacuvius and Cecilius Statius, Gnaeus Nevius, Plautus, Lucretius but only one ancient Greek, Menander.

[32] The second list of *auctores* includes: Cicero, Virgil, Boethius, Ovid, Lucan, Silius Italicus and Vegetius.

[33] Note the complex litotes to mean that the philosopher is more eloquent than the oracle of Delos.

These four texts are witnesses to the success of Burchiello's satire. Firstly, the poetical form of the sonnet, the only one ever used by Burchiello, was clearly considered more effective to reach specific targets. Secondly, many of Burchiello's ploys were easily reproducible, hence the flourishing of *nomi parlanti*, mock-quotations and riddles. The role of the philosophers, nevertheless, became more prominent and we find here the first hints of a tendency to use the word 'philosopher' in Florentine Quattrocento satire.

CHAPTER 4

MATTEO FRANCO AND ALESSANDRO BRACCESI

Non sonetti, che Quinti Curii o Plutarchii no(m) basterieno[1]

This chapter introduces another evolution in the satire of philosophers and philosophy represented by Matteo Franco and Alessandro Braccesi. Even though they differ in style, their work is similar in many respects. They came from similar backgrounds: they were contemporaries, worked in Florence for the Medici household and wrote poetry whilst practising other jobs. Little is known about their education, although from their works it is clear that Braccesi was better educated, formally, than Franco.

Franco and Braccesi are presented together because they represent the peak of Burchiello's legacy in the *Quattrocento*, and can be defined *burchielleschi* in style. They certainly belong to this literary fashion, although their poems mark a further change in the tradition of satire. They both gathered their poems in collections that as yet remain unpublished (Braccesi) or only partially published (Franco). This chapter includes some of their most significant poems, with a critical apparatus and commentary.

The information that we have on both authors allows us to infer that they had common friends, such as Niccolò Michelozzi, Angelo Poliziano and, more importantly, Marsilio Ficino, whose personality and philosophy they admired. There is no document that proves any contact between the two poets; two poems, however, provide evidence of a literary engagement that warrants further investigation, even though what evidence there is at present does not allow us to determine who inspired whom. These two poems are Franco's '"Buon dì!" "Buon dì" "Buon anno, e come stai?"' (I, p. 109) and Braccesi's '"Buon dì!" "Buon dì" "Buon anno, e come state?"' (I, p. 127).

---

[1] Franco, *Lettere*, III, p. 76.

4.1 Matteo Franco

Matteo Franco's poems rise out of two important contextualising factors. The first is a tight bond with comic tradition. He constantly drew on Burchiello's texts, as form and content clearly shows, but he did not forget the earlier comic tradition and his style was influenced by Pulci's works, whom he personally detested but poetically imitated. The second comes out of his background, as part of the Medici household. The peculiar environment of the Medici court and some precise stylistic choices led him to use poetry exclusively as a means to enter into dialogue with others. Through his poetry we can draw out references to people and facts that animated Florence from the 1470s to the early 1490s.

These allusions are particularly useful as Franco occupied a privileged position within the Medici family for a significant period of time. He was born in Florence in around 1448 and died in Pisa 1494. He entered the priesthood at a young age and began to work for the Medici during the early 1470s. Franco gained Lorenzo's and Giuliano de' Medici's patronage, became a friend of Poliziano and Ficino and travelled often with Lorenzo's wife Clarice Orsini. During the 1480s he served Lorenzo's daughter, Maddalena, while his possessions increased and his reputation among the clergy grew.[2]

Many elements of Franco's poems reveal relevant details of his life. They are found in five manuscripts and in one early printed edition. Each of these witnesses contains Franco and Pulci's tenso plus several other poems by both that are not part of their exchange. Franco's poetry seems, initially, inseparable from Pulci's. The preliminary studies for a critical edition of the tenso, edited by Decaria and Zaccarello, has revealed more on this close bond. We now know that Franco commissioned the copyist Tommaso Baldinotti, already known for his activity as a scribe and as a comic poet, to prepare a manuscript of his poems, today called 'manoscritto Dolci', after the name of a previous owner.[3] Thanks to the study of the structure and the rubrics in the 'manoscritto Dolci', we also know that Franco's intention was to award himself the moral victory of the tenso by demonstrating that Pulci could not adequately reply to his attacks. Franco

---

[2] Ibid., pp. 23-59.

[3] Decaria and Zaccarello, 'Il ritrovato *Codice Dolci*', pp. 129-137.

also tried to convey a representation of himself as the new comic poet of the Medici household, a role that for years had been occupied by Pulci.[4]

For the moment let us focus on the texts addressed to dedicatees other than Pulci and in so doing investigate Franco's less studied poems. Since Franco tried to ingratiate himself among the Medici household as a comic poet, he addressed several texts to those who were part of the prestigious Medici *élite*, including for example Marsilio Ficino, Niccolò Michelozzi and Iacopo di Poggio Bracciolini. He dedicated the poems that follow traditional comic themes, such as those lamenting his poverty and the so-called poems of *malo albergo*, 'bad accommodation' and *mala cena*, 'bad dinner', to some of these prominent persons. These last poems comically develop the narrative of an imaginary night spent as a guest of a revolting inn or alternatively a less-than-appetising dinner that the poet could not refuse to eat.

Philosophers

In the previous chapter we have seen how Burchiello used the word *filosofo*. Finiguerri did not use it at all, while in the comic literature of the late fourteenth century it was only employed to denote ancient philosophers. Some of the *burchielleschi* like Scambrilla started using it as a term of derision. Although Franco used it sparingly for contemporaries, in his poems the role of the philosopher is better defined.

The poem 'O gran compar, per mie musa t'invoco' (II, p. 110), although there is no explicit mention of a philosopher or philosophy, is an example of Franco's debt to Burchiello. This is essentially a portrait of someone addressed as *compare*, a word originally meaning 'godfather' but here used as 'close friend'.[5] This *compare* is mocked for his lack of intelligence, as line 3 clarifies with an antiphrastic definition. We understand at line 13 that this person wrote poetry, from the use of the synecdoche *rima*, 'rhyme', associated with the verb *cinguettare*, 'to tweet'. The main feature that is of interest here is the use of metaphors to describe the *compare*'s lack of judgement. In doing so, Franco joined Finiguerri and Burchiello in depicting a would-be intellectual as a bird of prey. At line 2 the *compare* is a *bozago*, like a 'vulture'. This image, however,

---

[4] Decaria, 'Il Pulci ritrovato', pp. 259-262.

[5] Paolo Orvieto identifies the *compare* mentioned by Pulci in a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici (Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, p. 984) and by Lorenzo in his *Uccellagione di starne* (45, line 7) with Poliziano; see 'Angelo Poliziano "compare" della brigata laurenziana', *Lettere italiane*, 25, 1973, pp. 301-318.

does not depict the bird in action but adds details to its literary image. In this case the bird is 'fattened' (line 2) by an animal carcass (line 3, *catriosso*). The latter is a metaphor that might indicate an intellectual source, for example a type of source that Franco disdained. Certainly the *compare* is accused of being rapacious like a vulture. Another realistic image is the 'old, worthless hound' (line 9) to which the *compare* is compared. The second comic-realistic theme developed from tradition is food, found here in the second *terzina* (lines 12 to 14). Franco developed the traditional image of the empty pumpkin standing for an empty head (see Chapter 2, pp. 77-78), here emphasized by the description of its use as a lantern. Moreover, food is used for a second time to describe another part of the *compare*'s body. His tongue and, therefore, the quality of the words he utters, is so disgusting that is like the liver of a ram (line 14).

The emphasis on the *compare*'s head, already seen in the image of the pumpkin, is enriched at lines 5, 6 and 10. The *compare*'s oddness is represented by the shape of his cranium, which has corners (*cantoni* and *beccategli*) because it was 'roughed off by an axe', that is, not properly refined. One of the peculiarities of Franco's style is found at line 5, in which the abnormality of the *compare*'s head is amplified by a list of three adjectives, two of which are synonyms for 'lunatic' (*strano*, *pazzo*) and one meaning 'hypocrite' (*bizoco*).

Franco's poems are part of an early stage of Burchiello's influence on comic poetry. At this point of the Quattrocento, Burchiello's peculiar techniques were widely imitated and used in different contexts. This, in part, was down to the simple structure based on verbal connections meant to surprise the reader.[6] In Franco's case, personal invective was often a priority. For instance, he engaged in several poetry exchanges, one of which began with a poem addressed to Marsilio Ficino to lament the poverty of his parish, 'Ho buon tempo, trionfo e nuoto a galla' (III, p. 111). An unidentified author who read this playful homage to the philosopher wrote another poem, possibly responding to Franco – the sequence of rhymes is not identical but similar – 'Sentito ho dir ch'un baccello da far lesso' (V, p. 113). This poem follows one of Burchiello's typical techniques, the illogical narrative populated by inanimate objects and animals. The anonymous poet who wrote 'Sentito ho dir ch'un baccello da far lesso' was quite probably upset by Franco's attempt to publicly confirm a friendly, albeit informal relationship with Ficino, which is also detectable in the poem 'Sfogar teco mi vo' del mio destino' (IV). The conspicuous number of ambiguous metaphors in 'Sentito ho dir ch'un baccello da far

---

[6] Zaccarello, 'Unknown Burchiello', p. 83.

lesso' disguises a real sequence of events that probably mocks Franco's efforts. The relevant character in the narration is the butterfly (V.2-3), as it had ''l Buetio in su la spalla'. Like Finiguerri's and Burchiello's scholars, this person is said to carry Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae* on his shoulders – with the name Boethius modified by the exchange of the 'o' with a 'u'. We do not have the means to identify this butterfly 'carrying Boethius', and this absence of clues is noteworthy because it implies that Burchiello's line 'tututti col Buetio in su la spalla'(*SdB*, LXXXI.17, see Chapter 2 p. 64) had become such a standard way to mock intellectuals that it could be quoted without further explanation.[7]

The mysterious story behind this exchange of poems is also reflected in their transmission: 'Sentito ho dir ch'un baccello da far lesso' is found in only one witness (P, see p. 108) and Franco's reply, 'Per bocca el tuo baccel mi meno spesso' appears in two manuscripts (P and B), perhaps a sign that Franco was significantly challenged or irritated by this intrusion and did not want these poems to circulate. Despite the difficulties in interpreting this whole dispute, we can draw two important conclusions. Firstly, attempts to ingratiate oneself with Ficino did not go unnoticed in Florence; secondly, the theme of the trip to Athens and the use of *nomi parlanti* such as *Buezio* had become, at this point of the century, very familiar.

In this way, Franco began to develop his own satire of the philosopher, reformulating some themes of the tradition in another significant text. In 'Philosopho, tu vai contro a divieto' (VI) Franco called his interlocutor 'philosopher', unlike all the other poets of the first half of the Quattrocento. Among the *burchielleschi* examples given in Chapter 3 the addressees were poets, while in this example the target of the satire is at last a true philosopher. Franco joined the tradition by misquoting famous names, in this case Priscian and Porphyry (line 3). He imagined that they would summon (Franco uses legal jargon, *citare*) the philosopher for misuse of their philosophy. Although this image is comically evocative, Franco revealed that he was only partially familiar with these sources. Porphyry, in fact, is the only philosopher among the two, while Priscian is misquoted mainly for two reasons, rhyme and tradition. Aelius Donatus and Priscian had also been mentioned by Finiguerri (Chapter 1, p. 54), and Priscian in particular is found in the poem that opens the *vulgata* edition of Burchiello's sonnets as the author of a mock quotation (I.4).[8] The main reason why Priscian is mentioned is the rhymes with

---

[7] *SdB*, p. 114.

[8] Ibid., p. 1.

the word-ending *–ano* throughout the first two *quartine* and Franco also emphasizes the theme of sodomy suggested at lines 4 and 8. If Franco's target was mocked because of his homosexuality, philosophy is closely related to this topic. This is deducible from the fact that the philosopher would engage in dialogue with, or quote from (*far lor motto*), Porphyry and Priscian in a way described by the ambiguous adverb *adrieto*, 'backwards'. Franco stated clearly at line 6 that 'philosophizing profusely' is not 'normal' and if the literal meaning of these words is not obvious, we should then bear in mind that *trattar philosophia* may be a metaphor for sodomy.

Franco, however, introduced innovation into his mockery of intellectuals by addressing his target with the word *philosopho* and then *philosophuzo*, with a distortion of the noun (similar to the one of Scambrilla's *filosofante*, see Chapter 3, p. 98) that expresses contempt. In the second instance, this philosopher is clearly linked to a contemporary intellectual at line 7, whom we can assume to be John Argyropoulos, the Byzantine scholar from Constantinople who taught at the Florentine Studio for several years (1456-71; 1477-81) and had many admirers, among them Angelo Poliziano. This affiliation of the *philosophuzo* to Argyropoulos is fundamental for distinguishing satire of the philosopher and philosophy in Franco's poems. Argyropoulos devoted nearly all of his teaching to Aristotle, translating and commenting the philosopher's treatises; neither Argyropoulos nor the addressee, however, were mocked for their philosophical interests.

'O archimista mio, cavol da sera' (VII, p. 116) is one of the examples that confirms once again how Franco was inspired by the tradition of mocking other groups of intellectuals. The first line of this poem, with an epithet in the first half of the hendecasyllable, mirrors the two analysed above, creating a pattern typical of Franco's dialogic style: 'O gran compar, per mie musa t'invoco', 'Philosopho, tu va' contro a divieto' and 'O archimista mio, cavol da sera'. Furthermore, the invective against the *archimista* is shaped both on Burchiello's mock-recipes and his riddles, as the poem's narrative lists a series of impossible experiments. The text focuses on the impossible advice and the grotesque charge of the images depicted, rather than on alchemy itself.

Philosophy

A new philosophy, fashionable during the second half of the Quattrocento, is the object of another poem by Franco, 'Tanta eloquentia, eloquentiami drieto' (VIII, p. 117). Written to Lorenzo de' Medici and targeting Neoplatonic ideas on the immortality of

the soul, this poem invokes the end of speculation on this immortalty, albeit not by personally attacking any of the philosophers involved. Those who philosophize are not individually named or described and the focus of satire rapidly shifts towards the doctrine itself.

Franco lampoons first the Neoplatonists' presumptuous behaviour by using two metaphors. The philosophers are depicted as swollen toads (line 3, *bocte campaiuole*) and Franco, by referring to their head as in 'O gran compar, per mie musa t'invoco' (line 5), wishes they would go rotten (line 2). Line 4 reports an imaginary dialogue between these philosophers that portrays in fact something that Neoplatonists in Florence never proposed, the nonexistence of God. Franco's probable aim is here only to emphasize the effect of these theories in order to win Lorenzo's sympathy (lines 5-8), given that Lorenzo proposed alternatives to Ficino's view on the soul (lines 9-12). The simplicity of the metaphor used is supposed to conflict with complex philosophical and theological matters at hand, for the soul to Franco is an innocent child that should not be harmed. Franco's oath at lines 13-14, wishing that the Lombards had destroyed every book when they invaded Italy, confirms a bond with Pulci's lexicon with the quotation of the cicadas (line 14), which Pulci used, as we shall see (see Ch. 8, p. 230), to refer to Ficino. Although particularly verbose people were also called 'cicadas' in comic poetry, this is a hint at Ficino's *Commentarium in Phedrum*, discussed in Chapter 8.

4.2 Matteo Franco's texts

Franco's poems are found in four manuscripts and one incunable. I have used the following sigla:

B = Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberiniano Latino 3912; s. XV-XVI.

D = Codice Dolci, privately owned; s. XV.

F = Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Coventi Soppressi B.7.2889; s. XV.

M = Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiano VII.1125; s. XVI.

P = Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 1336; s. XV-XVI.

Pa = Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino 217; s. XVIII.

T = Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, 965; s. XV.

BL = Franco, Matteo and Pulci, Luigi. *Sonecti di Messere Matheo Franco et di Luigi de Pulci iocosi et da ridere*, Florence, Bartolommeo di libri, ca 1490.

See Appendix II for full descriptions.

D, P and B were written by the same copyist, Tommaso Baldinotti, who also played a part in editing the collection of Franco's poems. The manuscript – or manuscripts – that Baldinotti used as archetype was provided by Franco, who helped Baldinotti to edit the Dolci manuscript.[9] A great part of Franco's work comprised the tenso with Pulci. Through the clues offered by the the Dolci manuscript, it is possible to see how Franco's aim was to hand down the image of himself as the moral winner against Pulci.[10]

Given the very complex relationships between the witnesses and the impossibility of establishing a reliable *stemma codicorum*, I shall follow the reading of D. It is, in my view, the reading closest to the author's original intention. As Decaria has demonstrated, D contains detailed rubrics that only a witness such as Franco could have suggested. Moreover, this collection gathers fewer texts than the other manuscripts, giving particular emphasis to Franco.[11] When it is not possible to follow D, I follow B

---

[9] Decaria, 'Il ritrovato Codice Dolci', pp. 138-147.

[10] Id., 'Il Pulci ritrovato', p. 259.

[11] Ibid., pp. 254-279.

and P, because the edition of this family of manuscripts was possibly supervised by Franco himself.[12] Pa is a *codex descriptum* transcribed from BL, and for this reason it is not included here in the apparatus. T and BL, although they both include many more poems by Pulci, are not part of the same family, displaying many distinctive errors.[13] M and F are both miscellaneous collections, in which the poems by Franco do not present significant changes from the family of B, D and P.

The order of the poems follows the commentary in Chapter 4.1.

I

1   'Buon dì!' – 'Buon dì!' - e: - 'Buon anno!' - e: - 'Come
    'Domin, quant' è che gl'entrò questa messa?'   [stai?'
    'Ora si è?' - 'I' credetti pur star senz'essa!'
    'Orbè, che è, dite?' – 'Come la fai?'

5   'Naffe! io non so! io ho di molti guai,
    ho in casa ancora la mia Tita e la Tessa
    con poca dota, el tempo pur s'appressa.'
    'O Bartol tuo?' - 'Ha 'vuto briga assai.'

    'O sciagurata! Io ho che fare anch'io,
10   ma pure i' mi ricoggo um po' di pane.'
    - 'Tu 'ncanni! Come ha' tu buon lavorio?

    L'acqua con che no' ci laviam le mane
    non guadagnan tra me e 'l garzon mio.'
    'Che son di quelle tuo galline nane?'

---

[12] For more information on P and B see Decaria and Zaccarello, 'Il ritrovato "Codice Dolci", p. 138. D was privately owned and has been very recently donated to Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence. I have not been able to obtain copies. I have used the transcription by Giulio Dolci in Pulci, Luigi and Franco, Matteo. *Il* Libro dei sonetti, ed. Giulio Dolci, Milan, Società Anonima Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1933. Dolci comments (ibid., p. 11): 'I sonetti del Pulci e del Franco furono stampati l'ultima volta in Lucca nel 1759 di su un "accuratissimo testo a penna di Carlo Dati", ma non senza errori, specialmente tipografici. I primi 83 sonetti si ristampano oggi da un ms. inedito, che è in possesso del compilatore di queste note. […] La grafia è ammodernata convenientemente in modo però da non far perdere agli scritti il loro sapore primitivo; e così la punteggiatura.'

[13] Franca Brambilla Ageno, 'Per l'edizione dei sonetti di Matteo Franco e di Luigi Pulci', in *Tra latino e volgare: per Carlo Dionisotti*, eds Gabriella Bernardoni Trezzini et al. Padua, Antenore, 1974, pp. 183-210: 198. Brambilla Ageno refers to T and E, where E is a 1759 edition of the collection: Franco, *Sonetti di Matteo Franco e di Luigi Pulci*. E, however, was copied also – not exclusively – from Pa. Having excluded, however, Pa as a *codex descriptum* from our apparatus, the *eliminatio codicorum descriptorum* rule leads us also to exclude E; see Decaria, 'Il ritrovato Codice Dolci', pp. 127-128.

15 'Da una in fuor son sane,
    quella ha non so che indoza al palatìo'
    'Benbè, la messa è detta.' – 'Addio!' – 'Addio!'

B 43v-44r sonetto fatto alla badia di Fiesole, udendo messa in una mulacchiaia di donne
T 52r
F 35v
M 41v sonecto di ser macteo franco dove dimostra quanto e chome cichalino le donne in chiexa alla messa
BL 42r-42v messere Matheo sendo a udire messa a Fiesole nella Badia

2 Domin] Donne T || che gl'entrò] gli ch'entrò F, ch'entrò M
3 Ora…pur] adesso i' mi credevo T || Ora] Hora F || credetti] cre'tti M || senz'essa] sanz'essa F M
4 dite] *add.* e F
5 Naffe] Gnaffe T || non] nol T || io non so! io ho] non so io M
6 ho… mia] che anche ho in casa la T || la Tessa] Latessa B
7 con poca dota] e le son grandi T, con poco dota BL
8 O… 'vuto] E Bartol tuo? Bartolo ha T || briga] brighe BL
9 O sciagurata] O chactivella M || Tapina ad me T
10 ma pure i' mi] se non ch'io T || ricoggo] ricolgo M T BL
12 l'acqua con che noi] et lacqua certo T
13 non… me] non guadagnar trame, è T || me] io M
15 da una in fuor son] et le son tutte T
16 Quella ha non so che indoza al palatio] Salvo che una che ha el pelatio T || una ve n'è che ha la 'ndoza el pelatio M
17 Benbè] orbe T, Bembè F, Uh addio M || Addio] *om.* M

2. entrò questa messa: 'how long ago has he (the priest) started the Mass?'; see *Crusca*, s.v. 'entrare': 'in alcune locuzioni, ha forza di cominciare'.
4. come la fai?: 'how are you?'; similarly, Lodovico Ariosto, *La Lena*, V.1, *Opere minori*, ed. Cesare Segre, Milan, Ricciardi, 1954, p. 400: 'Buon dì e buon anno. Come la fai? Vuonne tu dar bere?'
5. Naffe!: exclamation derived from *gnaffe*, standing for *mia fe'*, 'upon my word'.
11. tu 'ncanni: See *Crusca* s.v. 'incannare': 'avvolger filo sopra cannone, o rocchetto'.
16. indoza: see Crusca: 'dinota l'essere degli animali, quando per principio di sopravvegnente indisposizione intristiscono, non crescono, e non vengono innanzi'. See also Franco Sacchetti, *Il libro delle rime*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno, Florence, Olschki, 1990, CLIX.83-84, p. 200: '[…] per ch'e' si lagna/ della indozza […]', glossed by Brambilla Ageno: 'duolo, male'. **palatìo**: 'palate'.
17. benbè: *Crusca*, s.v. 'bembè': 'particella tronca così da bene bene, e vale lo stesso, ma per lo più ironicamente'.

II

1   O gran compar, per mie musa t'invoco:
    cantar vo' d'un bozago mal pasciuto
    d'un certo catriosso. O ingegno acuto!
    Spirami tu, ch'i' non ne dica poco.

5   Capo a' cantoni, stran, pazo e bizoco,
    digrossato con l'ascia e non compiuto.
    Prendi lo specchio, s'tu non l'hai veduto,
    compare, ch'i' non motteggio teco o gioco.

    Un bracco vecchio par, di poca stima;
10 o capo a beccategli, o carrettone!

Chi rece al Duom ti fare' lima lima.

Tu porti la lanterna col zuccone!
Quella linguaccia che cinguetta in rima
un fegato par proprio di castrone.

15   Hor a conclusione,
tornati al prato fra que' tuo cibissi.
O tu, trangugia meno apocalissi!

Resta ch'io non ti dissi
che tu se proprio un Nanni Betti, e peggio.
20   Non ti adirar compar, ch'i' mi mocteggio.

B 25v-26r sonetto del Franco al compare
D p. 76 Del Franco a un compare
P 27r sonetto del Franco al compare
BL 25r messer Matheo al compare da prato

2 bozago] buzago P
4 dica] dichi D P
6 disgrossato] digrossato B P
7 prendi lo] guarda allo D BL || s'tu non l'hai] e haralo D BL
9 un bracco] ombrato BL
11 rece] recie D
16 al prato] a Prato BL
17 meno] men l' B, manco D

5. Capo a' cantoni: *GDLI*, vol. 2, p. 697, s.v. 'capo': 'Capo […] intelletto, mente, pensiero, memoria. – Unito a un aggettivo qualificativo indica il carattere, l'indole di una persona. […] *Capo corto, capo grosso, capo di zucca, capo vano, capo d'assiuolo, capo d'oca*: persona sciocca, ignorante.' See also *GDLI*, vol. 2, p. 665, s.v. 'cantone': '*Capo a cantoni*: testa dura, caparbia, bizzarra'. A possible explanation could be found in the shapes: the *compare*'s head has 'corners', *cantoni*, and therefore is bizarre. In modern usage *testa quadra* still means 'someone slow at understanding'.
10. Capo' a beccategli: see line 4, 'capo a' cantoni'. *Beccatello* could be a small shelf sustaining a bigger beam or another name for *capretto*, 'little goat', see *GDLI*, vol. 2, p. 137. Given the shape of the shelf and the consistency with the word that follows, *carrectone*, the first option, is more likely.
Carrectone: 'cart', or, 'carter', as Burchiello implies in a poem mocking Rosello Roselli, in *SdB*, CXXIII.5, p. 173: 'Carretton, vetturin bolso e rappreso'.
11. lima lima: a gesture to mock someone, made by moving the index fingers one beside the other.
16. cibissi: a possible corruption of *abissi*, although this does not appear in any of the witnesses. It might also refer to *cibo* and to the onomatopoeic idiom *pissi pissi*, which is frequent in the *Morgante*, and mimics a soft whisper.
19. Nanni Betti: probably the Nanni Betti who served as treasurer at Santa Maria del Fiore between the 1420s and the 1430s. See *Gli anni della cupola 1417-1436. Un archivio digitale delle fonti di Santa Maria del Fiore*. Another Giovanni Betti (born 1396) worked at the Stinche administration and wrote comic poems; see *Lirici toscani del Quattrocento*, ed. Antonio Lanza, 2 vols, Rome, Bulzoni, 1973, vol. 1, pp. 267-271.

III

1   Ho buon tempo, trionfo e nuoto a galla;
ho in sala el brico, el boncio e ho il mozetto
che mi vien voglia accendere un torchietto.
Un nidiuzo ho di casa, anzi, di stalla,

5   che vi parre' el diluvio a scompiscialla
e mi riempion di bestie in fino al tetto.
Pongomi giù per far oggi un sonetto
e 'l pollo mi volava in su la spalla.

Tirale 'l collo, e era un dì da cavoli
10   L'un dice: 'la facieva ogni dì l'uovo!'
El Foggia grida e bestemmia e' bisavoli.

Sì chi vo' che tu vegga ov' io mi truovo!
Non vi verrien non che le muse, e' diavoli!
Ho sopra capo poi Pippo di Chiovo

15   un certo vicin nuovo
che dì e notte indiavola un suo figlio.
V'impazerebbe Homer non che Virgiglio!

Tu ridi, tu, Marsiglio!
Ti dico che 'l tuo Franco s'aviottola
20   per fare un dì come paleo, o trottola.

B 25r sonetto del Franco a ipso messer Marsilio
D p. 69 Del Franco a Ms Marsilio Ficino
P 26v sonetto del Franco a messer Marsilio
F 40r
BL 21v-22r messer Matheo a messer Marsilio Ficino

2 brico] bricco F
3 voglia] vogla F
5 scompiscialla] scompisciarla F
6 riempion] vempion BL F
7 oggi] ogi F
9 tirale] tiralle F
10 dice] grida D Pa || facieva] facìa F
17 impazerebbe] inpazerebbe F || Virgiglio] Virgilio F
18 Marsiglio] Marsilio F

2 bricco: short for *buricco*, 'donkey'. See *GDLI*, vol. 2, p. 372.
boncio: kind of fish, see *GDLI*, vol. 2, p. 304. See also Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, XIV.67 lines 7-8, 68 line 1, p. 327: 'Anguille e lucci e tinche e pesci persi/ pensa che quivi potevon vedersi,/ e che vi fussi boncio e barbio e lasca'.
mozetto: from *mozzo*, 'servant'.
3 torchietto: from *torchio*, 'torch'.
5 scompiscialla: see *Crusca* s.v. 'scompisciare': 'pisciare addosso, o bagnar di piscio checchessia'.

IV

1   Sfogar teco mi vo' del mie destino,
prima ch'i' canti dell'apocalissi.
Com'io, Marsilio, a Mecenate scrissi
mi diventò un Neri del Benino,

5   fu chi per pagonazo die' bruschino.
Mai sonò meglio cornamusa Parissi

com' un fe' me', bench'io sempre lo dissi:
pur pesco per cantargli un mattutino.

    Ille qui fecit missam è 'l tuo messere,
10 che ha trovato scritto in doppo cena
    che chi non fa a tagliar e rimanere!'

    El meschin Franco ne porti la pena:
    i' sento che'l mangiar insegna bere
    e che chi è ingiuriato se lo 'nsena.

15 I' son pazo in catena,
    ma s'i' scateno mai ogni catarro
    guarrà un zoppo bue che tira un carro.

B 24v sonetto del Franco a messer Marsilio
P 26r sonetto del Franco a messer Marsilio
BL 35r-35v messer Matheo a messere Marsilio Ficino

2 chi] ch'io B
6 mai… parissi] mai sono cornamusa me parissi B ‖ *i.m.* Paridi] Pa
10 dopo cena] *i.m.* Avicenna; il Bocc. in Maestro Simone disse: Vannacena Pa
14 che] *om.* BL ‖ lonsena] lo insena BL

2. apocalissi: *TLIO*: 'rivelazione'.
3. Mecenate: probably Lorenzo de' Medici.
4. Neri del Benino: son of Bernardo del Benino, who left part of his inheritance to the Hospital of the Innocenti when he died in 1468. See Philip Gavitt, *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence*: *the Ospedale degli Innocenti, 1410-1536*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1990, pp. 128-129.
5. pagonazo: purple.
bruschino: bright red. When Franco wrote to Lorenzo someone reacted with so much rage that they changed colour and became purple and red.
6. Parissi: Paris, here with the paragoge –si.
7. com'un fe' me: *Crusca*, s.v. 'cornamusa': 'fare alcuno cornamusa, vale dargli ad intendere cosa non credibile, o stravagante'.
8. pesco: *pescare* as *creare* or *scrivere*: see Burchiello in *SdB*, CXII.3-4, p. 159: 'e rime inaudite e versi pesco/ per dir le tuo magagne non raconte'.
per cantargli il mattutino: see *GDLI*, vol. 9, p. 962, s.v. 'mattutino': '*cantare il mattutino* (o il *mattutino degli Ermini*) *a qualcuno*: parlare a qualcuno in modo franco e risoluto; rimproverarlo, minacciarlo aspramente.'
10. dopo cena: A gloss in Pa (f. 61v) suggests 'Avicenna' on the example of Boccaccio's *Vannaccena* in *Decameron*, VIII.9, pp. 527-528: '–O maestro mio, – diceva Bruno – io non me ne maraviglio, ché io ho bene udito dire che Porcograsso e Vannaccena non ne dicon nulla. – Disse il maestro: – Tu vuoi dire Ipocrasso e Avicena –' **11.** this line is probably too corrupt to decipher the original meaning.
13. 'l mangiare insegna bere: see *Crusca* s.v. 'mangiare': 'Il mangiare insegna bere; proverb. che vale, che il bisogno insegna altrui operare'.
14. se lo 'nsena: see *Crusca*, s.v. 'insenare': 'riporre, nascondere in seno […] per metaf. vale avere a mente, tenere a memoria'.
16. s'i' scateno mai ogni catarro: see *Crusca* s.v. 'catarro': 'avere il catarro di alcuna cosa, vale credersi, immaginarsi di riuscirvi, o di saperla fare'.
17. un zoppo bue che tira un carro: see *Crusca*, s.v. 'bue': 'andare a caccia col bue zoppo, o simili, vale mettersi ad una impresa con provvedimento debole, e non bastante al bisogno'. See also Scambrilla XXI.13-14 in *Lirici toscani*, vol. 2, p. 478: 'Or son condotto ove 'l buon pan si vende/ e hami giunto un carro col bue zoppo.'

V

1   Sentito ho dir ch'un baccel da far lesso

accompagnò una gentil farfalla
la qual havea 'l Buetio in sulla spalla;
a uccellar andarno, o mai più presso.

5   Ma un, che parve lor non fusse desso,
pensò: 'Togli di man questa tal palla!'
Pur questa fantasia teneva a galla
mandando drieto a lor un certo messo.

In quello, un rusignol che lì cantava
10   l'ebbon veduto et hannolo ferito:
quest'è quel tal che ciascun disiava.

Rimase, onde n'un tratto uno smarrito,
perchè d'assottigliarsi eppur bramava,
tanto che'n fine el ebbon ben condito;

15   onde uno sbigottito
si volse allora, et con parole rade
aperse una bottega di guastade.

P 53r sonetto al Franco da uno grande amico

8 a lor] allor P
10 l'ebbon] tebbon P

1. baccello: the word has several meanings. The first is 'pod' (as in 'pea pod') but see also *Crusca*: 'membro virile', 'uomo semplice, e sciocco'. It is used by Burchiello with its sexual meaning; see LVIII.11, CLIV.4, *SdB*, pp. 81, 216. The whole meaning of this tale is obscure, probably the images were a code known only to Franco and the other poet.
2. farfalla: see *Crusca*: 'figuratam, si dice d'uomo di poco cervello, volubile, leggieri'.
4. uccellare: 'to go bird-hunting', but also 'to mock'.
5. desso: 'the same'.
6. 'togli… palla!': see *Crusca* s.v. 'palla': 'levare altrui la palla di mano, figuratam. vale torre altrui il comodo d'alcuna cosa, o l'autorità, e arrogerla a sé'.
17. guastade: see *Crusca*: 'Vaso di vetro, corpacciuto, con piede, e col collo stretto'.

VI

1   Philosopho, tu vai contro a' divieto,
magro digiuno, sì che noi ti citiamo
per parte di Porfirio e Prisciano
che tu ritorni affar lor motto adrieto,

5   perché tu sai che non è consueto
trattar philosophia a piena mano.
Philosophuzo argilopolitano,
Sendo passato da' lor uscio drieto.

Trarrela mai costui dalla caviglia,
10   o, vogliam dire, dagli orlicci de guanti,
che sempre al disputar se gli attorciglia?

Capo da dargli un de' propheti sancti,

> ch'a quel del Foggia proprio s'assomiglia,
> che sempre biascia musica e biscanti!
>
> 15   Poi non conosce a canti
> un asino vecchio da un usignolo
> sicché se 'l becca ognun, padre e figliuolo.

B 34v sonetto del Franco a uno che disputava in filosofia
P 61v sonetto a uno che spesso disputava in filosofia
T 49v
BL 40r M. Matheo per Niccolò d'Ugolin Martelli

1 Philosopho] philosapho BL ‖ contro a] contra T BL
2 noi ti citiamo] noi cianciamo T
3 e Prisciano] e di Prisciano B T
4 adrieto] a drieto B T BL
7 philosophuzo] philasaphuzo BL ‖ argiropolitano] angel policiano T
8 sendo passato] come passasti B ‖ drieto] cheto B P T BL
9 trarrela] trarrele B P, trarrala T ‖ dalla] della B ‖ caviglia] cavigli T
10 vogliam] voliam T ‖ dagli] degli B, delli T ‖ orlicci] orlici T
12 capo… santi] capo da darli un de perfecti sancti T
13 non conosce] non cognosci T
14 che] e B

2. magro digiuno: perhaps the *divieto*, 'ban' at line 1 is a prohibition to eat. It could be also an allusion to the sodomy clarified in the lines that follow.

4. che tu ritorni a far lor motto adrieto: 'far lor motto': 'talk to them'; with a synecdoche 'to quote them'. *Adrieto* (or *a drieto*) means 'previously' as in Sacchetti, *Trecentonovelle*, 194.2, p. 554: 'questo Matteo è raccontato a drieto in una novelletta […]'. The whole quatrain may allude to the philosopher's sodomy, since Priscian would be inappropriately quoted with Porphyry and the word ending –*ano* echoes through the first eight lines. *A drieto* could also allude to sodomy. In Pulci's *Morgante*, for example, it means 'backwards', see id., *Morgante e lettere,* XXV.317 lines 1-3, p. 773: 'Ippotamo, animal molto discreto,/ quasi cavallo o di mare o di fiume,/ entra ne' campi, per malizia, a drieto'.

6. a piena mano: these words could describe the way to 'deal with philosophy', i.e. 'profusely'. There is one occurrence in Agnolo Firenzuola, however, in which the sentence is used as an adjective, id., *Opere di Agnolo Firenzuola*, ed. Delmo Maestri, Turin, UTET, 1977., CIII.49-51, p. 963: 'O che braccione sode a piena mano,/ bianche, che paion proprio di bucato,/ morbide, come un cavol pianigiano.'

7. argiropolitano: reference to John Argyropulos (1415-1487), who taught at the Florentine Studio (1456-1471), left Florence for Rome and returned in 1477. Poliziano wrote a Greek epigram to him that urges Argyropoulos to return to Florence. Interestingly, Poliziano is quoted in T, in which *Angelo Policiano* could be, nevertheless, a *lectio facilior.*

8. uscio drieto: *uscio cheto* is the version in all the witnesses but the literal meaning of these words does not make much sense. *Cheto* in this context can only mean 'secret' or 'hidden', see *GDLI*, vol. 3, p. 38. It is probably a corruption of *drieto*, as the letters 'dri' could be easily mistaken for 'ch'. The word 'drieto' already rhymes at line 4, but at line 4 it has an adverbial meaning, while at line 8 it is adjectival. Franco could have perceived these two *drieto* as different words, and therefore I have used at line 4 the spelling *adrieto* rather than *a drieto*. We find this adjectival use of the word *drieto* also in Antonio Cammelli, *I sonetti faceti secondo l'autografo ambrosiano*, ed. Erasmo Pèrcopo, Pistoia, Libreria dell'Orso, 2005, CLXXIX.6-8 pp. 216-217: 'Così te sieno adunque accepte quelle/ come il tenor si richiede al soprano,/ ma fa che l'uscio drieto a l'ortolano/ ch'è posto al fin non ne senta novelle'. *Uscio* has a sexual meaning, given the frequency of its use in sentences like *uscio dell'orto* and *uscio di dietro*, meaning 'anus', see *GDLI*, vol. 21, p. 586.

9. Trarrela: the object is *philosophia* at line 6.

caviglia: ankle but also big nail or wall hook, used as a sexual metaphor for example by Boccaccio, *Decameron*, *Conclusione dell'autore*, p. 673: 'dico che più non si dee a me esser disdetto d'averle scritte, che generalmente si disdica agli uomini e alle donne di dir tutto dì "foro e caviglia e mortaio e pestello e salciccia e mortadello", e tutto pieno di simiglianti cose.' Given the reference to the glove's edges at line 10, this is not another sexual allusion but perhaps a reference to the philosopher's habits.

12. Capo da dargli un de' propheti sancti: there are no other examples 'capo da + infinitive verb' in contemporary literature, so we must assume that this is an ironic statement meaning: 'the philosopher has such a brilliant mind that he can be compared to a saint prophet.'

13. Foggia: the previous statement is supposedly denied with this comparison to this character Foggia who also appears in Franco's poem to Ficino (line 11): 'E 'l Foggia grida e bestemmia e' bisavoli.' Here Franco describes his parish. Therefore Foggia could be the name of his sexton.

VII

1   O archimista mio, cavol da sera
mandoti un gran segreto: or non far zitto!
Piglia un lupino ignudo a pinco ritto
che habbi isverginato una saliera;

5   aggiugni un po' di buon cacio di ghiera
e fa sopra Mercurio un buon soffritto;
stilla Marte e Saturno, e fia Sol fitto,
poi ti spillacchera ben la sonagliera.

Acciochè l'arte di puntin conoschi
10   prendi una talpa e fendile le schiene,
poi infila un ago da rimendar boschi,

ficagliel' su pel pantan delle rene,
ma destramente. Per amor de' toschi
congela a llento fuoco, affissa bene,

15   tien questo appresso a tene.
Un dì, limbicca un asin fatto a ago,
poi dì, alla tuo mercé: i' ti rincago.

B 24r sonetto del Franco a Francesco d'Albizo
D pp. 74-75, Del Franco a uno che lo secava che gl'insegnassi archimia un merciaio
P 24v sonetto del Franco a Francesco d'Albizo
BL 24v Luigi Pulci

5 un po'] rampo BL
8 spillacchera] spillacra B
11 rimendar] rimondar BL
14 congela] cuocila BL
17 ti rincago] tenincago D BL

1. cavol da sera: could refer to a proverb, see *Crusca*, s.v. 'cavolo': 'stimare uno quanto il cavolo a merenda; modo basso, che vale averlo in niuna stima'.
2. non far zitto: *Crusca*, s.v. 'zitto'*:* 'non fare zitto, vale tacere, non parlare'.
3-4. un lupino… una saliera: a sexual image populated by inanimate objects, since *pinco* is 'penis'.
7. stilla ... fitto: Franco refers to the job of the *archimista*: *stillare* is 'to obtain liquid from something by using heat'. One of the conditions to perform this experiment is daylight, as *sol fitto* means 'sun at its zenith', see *TLIO*, s.v. 'fitto'.
8. ti ... sonagliera: 'and the sun will shake the dirt off the collar'. 'Sonagliera': collar for animals with bells (*sonagli*).
9. di puntino: 'perfectly', see *GDLI*, vol. 14, p. 982, s.v. 'puntino'.
16. limbica: *limbiccare*: 'to distil'.
fatto a ago: 'sewn with a needle'. Cf. Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, ed. Marica Milanesi, 6 vols, Turin, Einaudi, 1978-88, vol. 1, p. 404: 'viddi un padiglione tutto fatto ad ago'.
17. alla tuo mercé: 'at your own mercy'.
rincago: perhaps from *rincagnare*, 'to crush somebody's nose', see *GDLI*, vol. 16, p. 494.

116

VIII

1   Tanta eloquentia, eloquentiami drieto!
       Quanquam gli marci' el capo a chi ne vuole,
       che gonfion come botte campaiuole.
       'Riniego Iddio!' 'toh, chi ci dà divieto?'

5   Chi più prudente, eloquente e discreto
       di te Lauro mio? Le lor parole
       si vendono a quartucci per le scuole.
       Credi al tuo Franco e leva via 'l tappeto!

       E dimmi a me, se pur se' sitibondo
10   saper quel ch'anima è e come e quale.
       Anima è un bambin, bel, bianco e biondo

       che sarebbe un peccato affarli male.
       Malaggia e' Longobardi che al fondo
       non mandoron i libri e le cicale,

15   che 'l parlar fussi equale
       che tanti scartabegli! Or chiscio via
       ch'alle man fussin delle donne mia.

B 22r sonetto del Franco a Lorenzo de' Medici
D pp. 63-64 Del Franco a Lorenzo de' Medici
P 20v sonetto a Lorenzo de' Medici del Franco
T 42r
BL 19v-20r messer Matheo a Lorenzo de' Medici

3 gonfion] gonfian T
4 riniego] rinieghi T
9 dimmi… sitibondo] dimmi se tu se pur sitibondo B
10 quelch'…come] come anima è, e che T, saper che anima è, e come BL
3 malaggia] malaggi BL
16 or] *om.* T || chiscio] schiscio B D
17 fussin] fussen T || delle donne mia] de la donna mia T

1. eloquentiami drieto: Franco creates a neologism from the first noun in the verse, *eloquentia*, 'eloquence'. This verb is changed further into a pronominal verb, which is followed by the adverb. *Eloquentiare* becomes therefore like a verb of motion that express Franco's irritation, an imperative that means: 'Try to follow me with your eloquence!'
2. marci: shortened form of *marcisca*, an optative subjunctive. This sentence therefore means: 'the head of those who want it (eloquence) may rot.'
4. This line depicts the dialogue of those philosophers who, in Franco's opinion, were allowed by Lorenzo to express whatever theory they wanted, denying even God Himself.
8. leva via 'l tappeto: see *Crusca* s.v. 'tappeto': 'dicesi proverbialmente levare da tappeto, o levarsi da tappeto, che vale abbandonar la 'mpresa, che s'ha tra mano, quando si conosce, ch'ella non può riuscire'.
11. Anima... biondo: cf. Dante, *Purg.* XVI.85-88: 'Esce di mano a lui che la vagheggia/ prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla/ che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia,/ l'anima semplicetta che sa nulla.'
17. donne mia: Franco could refer to Clarice Orsini and her daughter Maddalena, whom he served in several periods of his employment by the Medici family.

4.3 Alessandro Braccesi

Although Alessandro Braccesi (1445-1503) 'occupies an important, if not a leading, position among the Florentine humanists of the second half of the fifteenth century,'[14] the study of his literary works and letters has so far lacked depth.

Alessandro Braccesi, or in Latin Alexander Braccius, was born in Florence, became a notary and he also worked for the Florentine government in a number of temporary offices. He travelled to Rome, Siena, Perugia and Lucca, first serving the Medici family and then the chancery of the Florentine Republic. Thanks to his prominent employers, he became personally acquainted with many well-known officials and intellectuals of the age, such as Bartolomeo Scala, Marsilio Ficino, Angelo Poliziano, Cristoforo Landino, Naldo Naldi and Ugolino Verino and he was a close friend of Nicolò Michelozzi. Braccesi corresponded widely; his letters are held in several libraries.[15]

Despite this prominence there is a part of Braccesi's writings relevant to this thesis that awaits thorough research. It is not even clear, for example, whether he could read or write ancient Greek. There are, however, a number of elements to his writing that can serve as a point of departure. Braccesi's literary production seems split equally between Latin and vernacular. He wrote a collection of *carmina* (*amorum libellus, secundus liber epistolarum ad amicos* and *epigrammatum libellus*) that went through several revisions and in their last version were dedicated to Guidubaldo of Urbino.[16] Braccesi was also interested in the relationship between Latin and vernacular, as he translated Pius II's *Historia de duobus amantibus* and Appian's *Roman History*.[17] Also notable is

---

[14] Paul Oscar Kristeller, 'An Unknown Correspondence of Alessandro Braccesi with Niccolò Michelozzi, Naldo Naldi, Bartolommeo Scala, and other Humanists (1470-72) in Ms. Bodl. Auct. F. 2. 17' in *Classical Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, ed. Charles Handerson jr., 2 vols, Rome, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1964, vol. 2, pp. 311-359: 311.

[15] The most reliable information on Braccesi is collected by Alessandro Perosa and Paul Oscar Kristeller; see Alessandro Perosa, 'Storia di un libro di poesie latine dell'umanista fiorentino Alessandro Braccesi', *La bibliofilia*, 45, 1943, pp. 138-185:138 and *DBI*, s.v. 'Braccesi, Alessandro'; Kristeller, 'An Unknown correspondence', pp. 311-315. A brief volume on this humanist was published by Bice Agnoletti in 1901 but it is now outdated; see Bice Agnoletti, *Alessandro Braccesi: contributo alla storia dell'umanesimo e della poesia volgare*, Florence, Passeri, 1901.

[16] Braccesi, *Carmina*.

[17] The translation of the *Historia de duobus amantibus* was first printed in Milan in 1481-83. Both these translations are currently unpublished in a modern edition.

his vernacular production of poems, which is divided into two genres, love poetry and comic-realist poetry.

Braccesi composed and organized his love poems in a *canzoniere*, called *Amor libellus*, a sylloge that imitates Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, albeit with some original features.[18] One innovative aspect of these texts is the variety of topics and the focus on Neoplatonic themes filtered through Lorenzo de' Medici's *Comento de' miei sonetti*. For instance, Braccesi develops in his poems the theme of the lover becoming the object of his love (LIII). Although this theme had been developed in courtly poetry, Ficino described it in his *De amore* (II, VIII) and Lorenzo repeated it in his *Comento* (XXX). Another theme used by Braccesi (LIV), one that has a resonance with Lorenzo's work (III, XXXI, XXXVII), is the lover's dichotomy between pain and pleasure. There are more deeply rooted ties to Lorenzo such as the distance of the loved one experienced as deprivation by absence (LXIII-LXX), a Petrarchan theme that later became humanistic, and an overlap between erotic and theological themes – a trope common to both Lorenzo's *Comento* and the final section of Braccesi's collection (LXX-LV).[19] Braccesi, according to the scholar Franca Magnani, at one point had been a student of Cristoforo Landino but, as this cursory survey of his works might suggest, Neoplatonism in the works of Lorenzo de' Medici and Ficino may well have been an important influence.

A more explicit admiration for Ficino and his philosophy is found in Braccesi's *Epigrammatum libellus* (XII). One of these letters is addressed to Ficino, who is described in quite flattering words:

> […] you shall have, believe me, everlasting fame. This is because Britons read your works, which have already reached them; people from Tomi and Sabaeans read your works, and I do not even mention our people: your name is constantly in their mouths and they bring you to heavens with their praises. But why do I attempt to praise you with such a weak pen? Why do I sing this with hoarse verses? For this topic needs a sweeter and greater speech, and it must be better celebrated by a refined lyre. Nevertheless, I have written these things inflamed by a great love: grant indulgence, if you do not read a worthy poem.[20]

---

[18] Braccesi, *Soneti e canzone*, pp. IX-XXX.

[19] Ibid., pp. XXXII-XXXIX.

[20] Braccesi, *Carmina*, p. 85: '[…] ac tibi, crede mihi, fama peremnis erit;/scripta legunt quoniam tua iam vulgata Britanni, / illa thomitani gensque Sabaea legunt,/ ut taceam nostros, quorum versaris in ore/ et qui te in caelum laudibus usque ferunt./ Ast ego cur tenui calamo tibi dicere laudes/ tento? Quid haec raucis versibus ipse cano?/ Dulcius eloquium nanque haec maiusque requirunt,/ et magis exculta sunt celebranda lyra;/ haec ego sed magno succensus amore notavi:/ da veniam, nisi te carmina digna leges.'

There may be, then, much to be gained in re-reading Braccesi in the light of the treatises of Marsilio Ficino.

Braccesi was influenced by Landino in his opinion of *alla burchia* poetry. Landino stated that Burchiello's verses were not worth attention, and Braccesi expressed the same idea in his *Epigrammatum libellus*: 'Burchiello, who writes truly empty poems, departed from the other mountain in Aonia […].'[21] Braccesi, nevertheless, wrote more than two hundred poems not to do with love, mostly comic and *alla burchia*. Many of these poems, as we see below, imitate Burchiello's satire of the philosopher and of philosophy, although Braccesi himself was interested in Ficino's Neoplatonism and publicly praised Ficino. The coexistence of these contradictory strands in Braccesi's work might be explained by the changing foci of his interests, although this inconsistency is not exclusive to him, as Chapters 4 and 5 on Lorenzo de' Medici and Pulci will illustrate. Coming out of this context, Braccesi tried to defend his stylistic choices in the opening poem of his collection of vernacular poetry dedicated to Giovanni, Count of Carpegna (II, pp. 128 and following), although the responsibility, according to a perfect *alla burchia* logic, is not the author's. Burchiello's 'monkey' (line 16) decided instead of Braccesi, meaning that the inspiration brought by Burchiello's poetry was greater than Braccesi's own will.

Braccesi conformed to the most recognizable themes of satire in texts as 'Dolce Ser Ugo con la 'zeta in testa' (V, see pp. 131 and following), 'Eco venire un doctor cammufato' (VI, p. 132), 'Zuca mie vota, scioca di sapore' (X, pp. 134 and following), 'Tantaratara, date nel tamburo' (XI, pp. 136 and following). These poems are written for a public that was acquainted with this tradition, as references abound and then are revisited several times through the texts, as for example in the use of *nomi parlanti. Grosseto* is one of the mock-toponyms in Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene*, and it is the place where Braccesi's adversary, Ser Ugo, learnt Latin (V.2); not only did Braccesi refer to *Lo Studio*, but he also quoted a whole line from Finiguerri's poem: 'Questo mi parve ser Matteo del Testa,/ che imparò gramatica a Grosseto [...]' (see Chapter 1, p. 52). Other mock toponyms that are part of the tradition of satire of philosophy are *Balordia* (VI.8;

---

[21]'I send you the numerous poems of Burchiello' he writes in his *Carmina*, *liber secundus*, XXVIII, 'read them. And what are they? You will read nothing.' See Cristoforo Landino, *Carmina omnia*, ed. Alessandro Perosa, Florence, Olschki, 1939, p. 70: 'Plurima mitto tibi tonsoris carmina Burchi;/ haec lege. Sed quid tum? Legeris inde nihil'. Braccesi, *Carmina*, p. 105: 'Burchius Aoniis migravit collibus alter/ qui quoque nimirum carmen inane facit […].'

see *Lo Studio*, II.43 and Burchiello LXXXI.12) and *Buemia*, elsewhere spelt *Boemia* (VI.15; XI.16).[22] There is the same inconsistency in spelling for the *nome parlante* *Buezio*, spelt *Boetio* (VI.4), a sign that appeared in the early stages of comic poetry after Burchiello that these *nomi parlanti* were widely known (see Chapter 3, p. 97). This spelling discrepancy is not a mere copying error, since it is written by the author himself on the autograph manuscript. Other *nomi parlanti* from the tradition are *Pecorone* and *Castrone* (VI.17; see *Lo Studio* IV.60; Burchiello LXXXI.8, XCII.1),[23] to which Braccesi adds *ser Bimolle* (V.12), *Ugnano* and *Cartaggine* (XI.2, 16).

In a departure from Burchiello, though, the opposition between *naturale* and *accidentale* is not mentioned in Braccesi's poems. There is a hint of it, however, one that illustrates how this theme had developed through the century. The category *accidentale* is no longer cited explicitly, while *naturale* or *al naturale*, referring to the innate knowledge (as opposed to the acquired erudition that *accidentale* describes, see Chapter 1, pp. 48-51), becomes a frequent idiom.

Other traditional comic-realist themes are however frequently employed in this collection. Food plays an important role, and as usual we find heads compared to empty pumpkins (V.16; IX.1) or similar metaphors, as mentioned previously, describing a lack of intelligence. Nowhere is this better illustrated than where Ser Gigi cannot put together something as simple as cheese and pears and eats instead lasagne and soap (IX.10-11). The inspiration for such metaphors is Finiguerri, this is most obvious in the mouldy brain of the *doctor camuffato* (VI.5) that recalls the mouldy ink-well in *Lo Studio d'Atene* (VI.24).[24] Likewise, Burchiello is a detectable presence, and he is quoted more directly. For instance 'egli ha 'l cervel del calamaio sì duro' (XI.5) is almost identical to 'avea il cervel del calamaio sì duro' (XIX.3).[25] Additionally, the influence of Franco should not pass unnoticed, since Ser Ugo 'with an axe on his head' (V.1) resembles Franco's 'compare', whose 'unfinished head' has been 'roughed off by an axe' (see Chapter 4.2, p.110).

Burchiello's influence should not be understated; even a brief look at these manuscripts proves a close affinity. Braccesi used *alla burchia* techniques and even quoted Burchiello's lines word for word. This deference to the 'master' can sometimes appear

---

[22] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 115; *SdB*, p. 115.

[23] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 70; *SdB*, pp. 115, 131.

[24] Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 79.

[25] *SdB*, p. 27.

even too meticulous and leaves little room for Braccesi's original input. This is apparent too in Braccesi's satire of philosophy and philosophers.[26] 'Bologna grassa e Genova in garbuglio' (III, p. 129) and 'Favole greche e storie mal chiosate'(VII, p. 133), for example, share the same kind of *incipit alla burchia* – a list of inanimate objects or animals as the subject – to which is dedicated a substantial number of lines, and then a verb that generates a riddle. For instance, in one poem the list is made of diverse elements - such as Bologna, Genoa, (line 1), a goose, a chick (line 2), some traps and mice, a key, (line 3) vespers (line 4) and so on – incorporated in idiomatic sentences, while in the other there is a sort of ancient Greece theme uniting a weird inventory – Greek fables and stories badly glossed (line 1), Socrates's muddled aphorisms (line 2), syllogisms that are not solemn (line 3), epilogues in March and roasted chestnuts (line 4). The riddles partially follow the theme set in the first lines, quoting idioms in one case (III.15-17) and in the other bizarre quotations (VII.8, 12-14, 16). Riddles *alla burchia* are found in the poems above, triggered for example by the visual similarity between weeping and raining (VII.5-7), or by a pun (12-14). They are used elsewhere in Braccesi's poems to mock intellectuals more directly.

'Gherardin mio, la troppa amaritudine' (VIII, pp. 134) is a clear example of this use of riddles, one for each *terzina*, with a balanced variation of themes, mythological (lines 9-11), domestic (lines 12-14) and plant-related (lines 15-17). The intellectual called Gherardino is involved in a pseudo-natural description that probably satirises Gherardino's writings (lines 1-8). This technique recalls closely Burchiello's mock-scientific descriptions such as that analysed at Chapter 2 (see p. 73),[27] but 'Gherardin mio' is not a slavish imitation. His perspective, in fact, is different from that of Burchiello, since Braccesi himself composed didactic poetry, for example, 'Grandine è pioggia in aer congelata'.[28] In this poem Braccesi's rhetoric changes accordingly to the topic, for example, in the use of enjambment (especially significant between lines 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 7 and 8), ornate metaphors to describe complex phenomena (see the use of the verb *morzare*, line 11; *impeciare*, line 12) and quotations that lend credibility

---

[26] See Zaccarello, 'Unknown Burchiello', pp. 87-88.

[27] *SdB*, pp. 48-49.

[28] This is found in the comic corpus probably because for Braccesi the main distinction of genre of his vernacular work was between love and non-love poems. This means that comic poems mocking philosophical poetry and his attempts of writing scientific poetry would be gathered in the same sub-section. This is true in particular for MS R, which was structured by an alphabetical logic rather than a thematic one.

(Aristotle as the *Philosopho* at line 5). 'Gherardino mio' pokes fun at the same type of rhetoric by emphasizing it and combining it into illogical phrases (lines 1-4), incoherent descriptions (lines 5-8), *alla burchia* riddles (lines 9-17).

Za and Burchiello were not the only literary figures imitated by Braccesi. While his most innovative ideas have roots in their tradition, Braccesi began to explore some new areas that lead to an innovative body of parodic work. A significant part of this innovation originates in the mockery of the supposed linguistic expertise of intellectuals. This often comes in the form of Burchiello's blending of vernacular, Latin, and often dog-Latin in the same poem. We must remember that to Burchiello the sentence *parlare in grammatica* in the poem 'Son medico in volgare, non in grammatica' (Burchiello CXXXI, Chapter 2, p. 68), means 'to speak Latin' as opposed to 'to speak vernacular'. Burchiello, although he hinted at the hierarchy between the two languages, used this phrase to describe himself as a poor physician. In Braccesi's 'E ci è venuto un medico in volgare' (XII, p. 138), the word *volgare* has a much stronger connotation. There is no longer a dichotomy between Latin and vernacular and Latin is not part of the *medico* description. It refers instead entirely to the physician's incompetence. This is not to say there is no influence of Burchiello. The poem 'Venite gentes meco in caput mundi' (X, p. 135) is very similar in style and structure to '"Quem queritatis" vel vellere in toto' (Chapter 2, p. 70).[29] Both these texts combine dog-Latin and vernacular, although Burchiello's is a more explicit parody of doctrinal poetry and Braccesi's is closer to a parody of biblical language (see lines 1, 2, 9).

Braccesi's true innovation in this particular kind of parody comes through the introduction of ancient Greek, not in the same way as Finiguerri and Burchiello do (see Chapter 1, pp. 40-43 and Chapter 2, pp. 74-77), but by partially writing in mock-Greek, 'Dexis esti meros elatichon' (IV, pp. 130 and following). Although we might suppose that Braccesi follows once again Burchiello with the 'Jewish sonnet' and its glossolalia of Hebrew (Chapter 1, p. 75), we can point out some features that make this satire an innovative move on Braccesi's part.

'Dexis esti meros elatichon' is a rare, perhaps unique example of transliteration of ancient Greek in an Italian vernacular. Interestingly, it seems that Braccesi used this ploy in his letters to Naldo Naldi to cipher delicate information. However in this case

---

[29] Ibid., pp. 24-25. The same observation has been made by Duso, who has also noted that Braccesi's fine education is reflected in his vernacular poetry through the use and parody of Latin. Duso transcribes it from the Riccardiana manuscript (see below, p. 114) in *Il sonetto latino*, p. 41.

Greek is not transliterated into Latin but vice versa (Latin is transliterated into Greek).[30] 'Dexis esti meros elatichon' alternates Greek and Latin lines following a rhyme scheme, with the exception of the last *terzina*. All the Greek lines following the incipit are written with the purpose of sounding Greek, even though they do not make any sense. Someone who could read ancient Greek, therefore, would recognise some words but at the same time would be bewildered by their nonsense. The alternation of Latin and Greek makes this poem different from Burchiello's 'Jewish sonnet', because there is a comic narrative that is relatively clear in the Latin lines and that gives the impression that the Greek lines could be part of it. A contamination with vernacular cannot be excluded, as the Latin lines suggest – note the use of words from the comic tradition at lines 3, 7 and 15. Line 4, for example, could mean 'you carry the divisible sentence', if we suppose that *menas* is the Latinised second person singular of the vernacular *menare*, and that *loghu diaretichon* is a loose transliteration of λόγον διαιρετικόν. This sort of speculation over the meaning of the pseudo-Greek lines is very likely the object that Braccesi had in mind; presumably Braccesi exchanged messages in a sort of secret language with friends such as Naldi and to them every line of the poem might have been clear. What we can safely assume is that with Braccesi the target of derision changes from the fashion of learning ancient Greek – still popular among humanists during the second half of the Quattrocento – to the language in itself. The reader that Braccesi had in mind was not necessarily a friend with whom he shared a secret language: 'Dexis esti meros elatichon' is included in a manuscript (V) which was intended for a wider public and not for personal use (in this case the manuscript R). We can therefore assume that the text of 'Dexis esti meros elatichon' is not supposed to mean anything to the reader. Ancient Greek is here manipulated for comic purposes, and so reaches a status that is similar to that of dog-Latin.

Part of Braccesi's original contribution to the tradition of satire is found in the poem 'La gola, el ventre, el lezo pidochiume' (XIII, p. 138), a parody of Petrarch's sonnet 'La gola, el somno, e l'otïose piume'. The idea for this accomplished parody probably originated from the list of nouns in the first line: from Braccesi's point of view it might have resembled the incipit of a poem alla burchia. With this approach in mind, Braccesi developed a peculiar narration which persists with Petrarchan keywords (gola, line 1; smarrito/a, line 3; lume, line 5; Philosophia, lauro and mirto, lines 9-10; spirto, lines 12-13).

---

[30] Kristeller, 'An Unknown Correspondence', p. 329.

In lines 9-10 of Petrarch's 'La gola ...', a ragged woman is at the centre of a lament for intellectual poverty of his age. Braccesi's allegory depicts instead – perhaps under the influence of other allegories of Philosophy such as that of Boethius – a woman dressed in a fine dress that is torn and frayed. The poem thus imagines Philosophy as a woman who is 'rich and dressed'. Philosophy also crowns herself (or perhaps another person since the sentence is ambiguous) with a laurel and myrtle wreath – both plants being traditional symbols of poetry.

Though it might be the case that 'La gola, el ventre, el lezo pidochiume' is a parody of Petrarch's sonnet, it is equally likely that there was a second motive behind the text. A hint to this lies in the allegory of philosophy that is quite prominent among the other images in the text. The sentence that begins with the apostrophe to Philosophy continues at lines 11 and 12 with the description of a *schiamazo*, 'clamour', that is heard in 'Val di Pesa'; the *schiamazo*, which is personified, is then short of breath and lacking energy and ideas. This description, which makes little immediate sense, is a clear reference to Burchiello's poem 'I' vidi un dì spogliar tutte in farsetto' (II) where the personifications of 'cicadas' and 'crabs' in 'Val di Pesa' 'manufactured air on a roof' (lines 6-8) and also 'many people from Arezzo went to Buemia to learn to speak Hebrew'. [31] In this poem Burchiello lampoons those intellectuals going to odd places to learn useless languages (for example, Poggio Bracciolini; see Chapter 2, p. 75). Moreover, the context given in the poem emphasises the absurdity of this action, as other bizarre characters (cicadas and crabs) perform pointless actions, such as 'manufacturing air'. Braccesi, inspired by this poem, merged the allegory of Philosophy and the meaningless journey found in contemporary tradition and in particular in 'I' vidi un dì spogliar tutte in farsetto'. One more element to take into account is that the meaning of *schiamazo* is both 'clamour' and 'noise made by a flock of birds'. Once again these animals appear in the tradition of satire of philosophers as metaphorical counterparts of the intellectuals. We can therefore argue that a flock of noisy birds flying to Val di Pesa is the metaphorical description of yet another group of intellectuals (noisy, thus possibly long-winded) heading nowhere of interest, resembling the trip to Athens which had first been narrated by Finiguerri in *Lo Studio d'Atene*.

Here, then, there is a stark contrast in the texts. Whereas Petrarch lamented the scarcity of scholars undertaking new challenges, Braccesi describes a crowd walking downhill and filled with *fantasia* (lines 13-14), a word that in Burchiello describes the inspiration

---

[31] *SdB*, pp. 4-5.

necessary to write poetry (Chapter 2, p. 77). The allegory of philosophy, therefore, targeted a proliferation of people who thought themselves philosophers and 'crowned' themselves writers. The significance of this allegory is discussed further in Ch. 5 and Ch. 8. Pulci in particular developed it further and made Philosophy the main character of one of his poems against Marsilio Ficino.

In conclusion, Braccesi's little studied comic oeuvre provides several examples of satire of intellectuals and philosophers. His poems are of great interest because of Braccesi's ambivalent attitude: on the one hand, he was a prominent intellectual in the late Quattrocento and on the other, he was a prolific author of comic poetry. The most significant innovation that he brought into the satire of philosophy and philosophers were drawn out of his classical education. This is true especially when Braccesi abandons the imitation of the two greatest models of the Quattrocento, Za and Burchiello, to develop ideas of his own, in particular the transliteration of ancient Greek into vernacular and allegory of philosophy.

4.4 Alessandro Braccesi's texts

Braccesi's poems are found in two manuscripts:

R = Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 2725

V = Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 10681

See Appendix II for full descriptions.

V was written by a copyist under Braccesi's direct supervision, while R is an autograph.[32] According to Alessandro Perosa and Franca Magnani, V must be dated around 1472, while R is Braccesi's revision of the poems found in V, for the poems in R are partially arranged in alphabetical order.[33] We will follow, when possible, R's version.

I

1 'Buon dì' – 'Buon dì' – e: 'Buon anno' - 'Come state?'
   'Bene, e voi bene? che della brigata?'
   'Ho la fanciulla mie ch'è amalata'
   'Da quando in qua?' – 'Da poi ch'entrò la state.'

5 'La sarà forse grossa?' – 'Voi errate,
   ch'ell'ha il suo tempo' – 'A me pare oppilata.
   Io ho la mia quasi ch'è maritata.'
   'Chi?' – 'La Fiammetta.' – 'Voi mi consolate.'

   'Io prego Dio che mi aiuti di questa,

---

[32] See Michelangelo Zaccarello's description of the manuscript in 'Rettifiche, aggiunte e supplemento bibliografico al censimento dei testimoni contenenti rime del Burchiello', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 62, 2001, pp. 85-117: 102-103. A further analysis confirms that this is an autograph: see id., 'Un episodio sconosciuto nella ricezione dei Sonetti del Burchiello nel primo Cinquecento (Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 2725, cc. 80r-131v)' in *Reperta: Indagini, recuperi, ritrovamenti di letteratura italiana antica*, Verona, Fiorini, 2008, pp. 183-215: 213, n. 44 and also the appendix to this chapter, pp. 397-422. Franca Magnani mentions an autograph manuscript, the Riccardiano 2765 in Braccesi, *Soneti e canzone*, p. X, n. 11. In fact, she really is referring to R: the MS Riccardiano 2765 is a French collection of sacred plays from the thirteenth century, see *Inventario e stima della libreria Riccardi, manoscritti e edizioni del secolo XV*, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana e Moreniana, 1810, p. 54. That hers is but a typographycal error, is confirmed by her own article (mentioned in footnote 11, Braccesi, *Soneti e canzone*, p. X) in which she analyses a poem from MS R; see Franca Magnani, 'Il tipo gigghio in un componimento rusticale di Alessandro Braccesi', *Lingua nostra*, 42, 1981, pp. 1-3: 2.

[33] See Perosa in *DBI*, s.v. 'Braccesi, Alessandro'; Braccesi, *Soneti*, pp. LIII-LIV.

10   ch'io affogai la Sandra: pazienza'.
      'Andren noi insieme domani alla festa?'

      'Gnaffe! non io: ch'io ho assai penitenza,
      tanti pensier mi scompliglion la testa.
      Tutte siam nate sotto una influenza.'

15   'Come sta la Clemenza?'
      'È fresca e grassa che pare una ladra,
      e va più ch'ell'andassi mai leggiadra.'

      'Noi saremo una squadra
      ch'andrem domani a un prete novello.
20   Verrete voi?' – 'Io avrei poco cervello.'

      'Orsù, faccian fardello.'
      'Adio, vi lascio.' – 'Adio mona Simona.
      Tanto abbiam già grachiato che gli è nona'.

R 85v
V 108v

6 a me] anzi V
8 chi] qual V
10 la Sandra] quell'altra V
11 Andren noi insieme domani] andrete voi domattina V
14 Tutte siam nate sotto una] Noi nascemo sotto questa V
19 domani a un] domenica al V
21 Orsù facciam fardello] or usciamo a' cancello V
22 Adio vi lascio] Io vi lascio V
23 Tanto abbiam già grachiato] Noi abbiamo tanto gracchiato V

5. grossa: 'pregnant'
6. il suo tempo: 'menstruation'.
oppilata: *GDLI*, vol. 11, p. 1063: 'che ha flusso mestruale alquanto scarso o nullo'.
10. ch'io affogai la Sandra: *Crusca* s.v. 'affogare': 'affogare una fanciulla, si dice, quando ella si marita male'.

II

1   Prima ch'alcun questo volume apprenda,
      e per natura fusse detrattore,
      ch'avisi e' denti della bocca fore
      acioché col suo morso non mi offenda.

5   S'alcun sarà che rettamente intenda
      e vogli giudicar senza rancore,
      vedrà che non per acquistare honore
      ho fatto di sonetti una tregienda

      ma sol per dare a qualche scioperato
10   qualche tabaco, a veghia s'alcun fia
      che 'l mio bazo latin non habbi a sdegno.

E com'io non aspetto esser lodato,
così mi sarie fatto villania
da chi di biasmo mi facessi degno.

15   Ma scusimi el disegno
che fatto ha la bertuccia del Burchiello,
e spesso abburattòmi el cervello.

V 38r

3. ch'avisi: optative: 'may they have ...'
8. tregienda: 'chaos'.
9. scioperato: 'loiterer'.
10. tabaco: *GDLI*, vol. 20, p. 646: 'antico nome dell'inula viscosa (*Inula conyza*), erba medicinale con proprietà eccitanti, già nota prima della scoperta dell'America [...].' Cf. the verb *tabaccare* in Pulci, *Morgante e lettere,* XIX.148 lines 1-2, p. 503 and XXIV.94 lines 1-2, p. 678: 'A poco a poco si fu intabaccato/ in questo giuoco, e le rise cresceva'; 'A poco a poco questa filastroccola/ questi giganti tabaccava e sdrucciola'. See also Giovanni di Maffeo da Barberino, I.12 in *Lirici toscani*, vol. 1, p. 690: 'vivi sopposto al morso del tabacco'.
a veghia: alternative form of *veglia*, 'waking' or 'vigil'. This sentence means 'to check whether anyone does not dislike ...'.
11. il mio bazo latin: *bazo* is an *hapax* that cannot be a mistake by the copyist, as it is found in another poem by Braccesi (see XI.7). The words could mean 'my bizarre language'.
17. abburattomi: *Crusca*, s.v. 'abburattare': 'malmenare, dibattere, e scuotere alcuna cosa in quà'.

III

1   Bologna grassa et Genova in garbuglio,
l'oca in pastura e 'l pulcin nella stoppa
trappole e topi e chiave senza toppa
col vespro degli Armini in guazzabuglio,

5   moscon nel fiascho con pepe di luglio
e due quarti e un terzo d'una coppa,
quattro moggia di fieno e tre di loppa
e d'Ovidio maggiore el gran mescuglio

mandorno imbasciatori al Senatore
10 che dessi loro un giudice in volgare
qual sapessi chiosar loro uno errore:

se quando piove si può armeggiare
nella stecaia e portarne l'onore
senza pericol di non si imbrattare;

15 e se farneticare
si può da sano e sognando star desto
e s'ogni tempo si può còr l'agresto.

R 83r
V 52r-52v

2 pastura] pastoia V

129

4 col] el V
6 e… terzo] e duo terzi et un altro V || choppa] cioppa V
11 chiosar] chiarire V
13 stechaia] steccato V

1. Bologna grassa ...: this is the typical *incipit* to a sonnet in Burchiello's fashion: a long list of random items that are subjects of the main verb at line 9 (*mandorno*). Every item of this list is part of a proverb or an idiom.

2. oca ... stoppa: *Crusca*, s.v. 'oca': 'tener l'oche in pastura, proverb. che vale fare il ruffiano'; ibid. s.v. 'pulcino': 'più impacciato, che un pulcin nella stoppa, e simili, si dicono di chi non sappia risolversi, nè cavar le mani di cosa, ch'egli abbia a fare'.

4. vespro degli Armini: Cf. Burchiello in *SdB*, XCVII.4, pp. 138-139: 'zolfa degli Armini'. According to Varchi, outside the Armenian monastery in Florence one could hear Armenian, and therefore incomprehensible, liturgy of the hour; see Benedetto Varchi, *L'Ercolano: dialogo di Benedetto Varchi nel quale si ragiona delle lingue, ed in particolare della Toscana e della Fiorentina*, 2 vols, Milan, Società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1804, vol. 1, p. 183.

5. moscon nel fiasco: probably *moscon*, 'big fly', alludes to *moscadello*, a kind of wine, by exchanging the diminutival suffix –ello with the augmentative –one.

pepe di luglio: *Crusca* s.v. 'pepe': 'far pepe, vale accozzare insieme tutti e cinque i polpastrelli, cioè le sommità delle dita; il che, quando di verno è gran freddo, molti per lo ghiado non posson fare. Onde in proverb. si dice a un dappoco: tu non faresti pepe di luglio, non fare pepe di luglio'.

7. loppa: 'chaff'.

12. armeggiare: *Crusca*: 'fare spettacoli d'arme per allegrezza, e intertenimento'.

13. stecaia: *Crusca*: 'lavoro, che si fa a traverso de' fiumi per mandar l'acqua a' mulini, o simili edifizj'. The whole sentence describes an impossible and absurd task of having a joust inside a dam – probably because of the pun *stecca* ('wooden stick', 'lance') – *steccaia* – on a rainy day without soiling oneself.

17. còr l'agresto: the conclusion recalls the first eight lines by quoting another proverb in *Crusca* s.v. 'agresto': **'**cor l'agresto, vale rubare'.

IV

1 Dexis esti meros elatichon
 Memento pullos cum fagianibus
 In mensa bonum cum pippionibus
 Tu loghu menas Diaretichon

5 Lasseo, sintesis metochichon
 Est melior quam carne bovibus
 Et fucus bizochatus avibus
 Epirrima sindemos etichon

 Chiechristome tu parruhimmata
10 'Bibatio bonum' in fine dicentes
 Mellon petoglichi mirimmata

 Caseus dulcis et panis recentes
 Perismomen chito tu grammata
 Un par capponum sint tres comedentes

15 Et mulier volentes
 Non facit perditempus in amante
 Et mula nil valet sine portante.

V 79r
R 92r

3 In mensa bonum] incena boni V
4 menas] nomas V
7 fucus bizochatus] ficus bezichatos V
9 parruhimmata] parachimmata V
10 bibatio] bibatis V
12 dulcis] dolces V
13 Perismomen] Perispomen V
14 sint] sunt V

2-3. 'Remember (that) chickens with pheasants/ are good with pigeons on the table'.
6-7. '[…] it's better than meat (with) oxen/ and the insincere drone is better than bees'.
7. bizuchatus: this word is Latinized from the vernacular 'bizoco', which means 'Franciscan friar' or 'hypocrite', see *TLIO* and Franco's 'O gran compar' (II.5).
10. '"good drinking", they eventually said.'
12. 'Sweet cheese and freshly baked bread.'
15-17. 'And the willing woman/ is no time-waster as a lover,/ and a mule is worth nothing if it bears nothing.'

V

1 Dolce Ser Ugo con la 'zeta in testa
 tu imparasti grammatica a Grosseto
 e con le legge stai tanto in divieto
 che per te feria è sempre, e sempre festa.

5 Han per te e' piati havuto la tempesta
 et col giudice stai come olio cheto,
 per coprire d'ignoranzia el tuo segreto,
 alta per boria tenendo la testa.

 Torna in contado a lavorar co' buoi,
10 torna alla zappa a rivoltar le zolle
 ritorna alla prima arte e gioco tuoi.

 Attienti al mio consiglio, Ser bimolle:
 lascia la penna se giucar non vuoi.
 per la poca faccenda al duro, al molle.

15 I' cognobbi un che volle
 senza la zuca mettersi a notare:
 el Galloria poi l'ebbe a ripescare.

V 83v
R 92v-93r

4 che… festa] ch'ogni giorno per te è feria e festa V
7 tuo] gran V
8 testa] cesta V
12 attienti] attendi V ‖ Bimolle] Aiolle V
16 senza… notare] imparar senno e diventò scrignuto V
17 El… ripescare] tanto ebbe poco il maestro aveduto V

1. 'zeta: alternative form of *accetta*, 'hatchet'. Braccesi's spelling tends towards affrication in certain words, for example *treza* instead of *treccia*, 'Grandine è pioggia in aer congelata', in XIII.14.

3. con le legge stai tanto in divieto: 'you are so distant from laws ...'.
5. piati: 'legal claims'.
6. stai come olio cheto: *Crusca*, s.v. 'olio': 'star cheto, com'olio; vale star quietissimo, tacitissimo'.
12. bimolle: technical musical term meaning 'flat'. *Bimolle* might also refer to wine as 'molle', and might mean also 'wet'. Cf. Burchiello in *SdB*, XXIV.3, p. 35.
13-14 lascia ... molle: Braccesi invites Ser Ugo to stop writing, as if the exchange could be compared to a bet that Ser Ugo would lose. This bet is not important to Braccesi, as it is 'poca faccenda'. 'Fare al duro e 'l molle' is related to betting; Burchiello uses a similar sentence in *SdB* XV.3-4, p. 22.: 'giuocono i topi vecchi a mazasquido/ e per cominciare fanno al duro e 'l molle.'
17. Galloria: 'great happiness', but here somebody's name.

VI

<div align="center">

1   Eco venire un doctor cammufato
che l'ignoranza pare al naturale;
di fresco uscito par dello spedale:
per aver troppo el Boetio studiato

5   egli ha 'l cervel dentro tutto muffato.
Bietole a cena e 'l Codice Morale;
co' furlini imparò nel Dottrinale
e verde in Balordia fu dottorato.

     Allega poco pel magro terreno
10   e con le legge fa poche parole,
lasciando el testo al balcone, al sereno.

     Chi presto le ragion sua perder vuole,
soldi questo Dottor di borra pieno
ch'avvocolar per ogni poco suole.

15   Di Buemia le scuole
ha tolto in guardia el Messer Pecorone
e fatto ha compagnia con Ser Castrone.

</div>

R 93v-94r
V 55r

1 venire] di quanci V
4 Boetio] Buetio V
7 nel] sul V
11 al balcone] la notte V
12 Chi… vuole] chi perder con vantaggio il piato vuole V
13 dottor] campion V
17 Castrone] mellone V

7. furlini: *GDLI*, vol. 6, p. 498: 'ant. moneta usata nel Medioevo, del valore della quarta parte di un denaro [...] con valore generico: moneta di scarso valore'.
9. allega: pun, for 'allegare' is a word from legal jargon, alluding to the profession of the addressee, but it also refers to the stage in which a flower becomes a fruit, see *GDLI*, vol. 1, p. 316. Braccesi compares the *doctor camuffato* to a fruit that does not grow because of the 'barren soil' (*magro terreno*).
13. soldi: *Crusca* s.v. 'soldare': 'incaparrare, e staggir soldati, dando loro soldo, assoldare'.
di borra pieno: *borra* is scrap material from wool manufacturing, see *Crusca*: 'per metaf. ripieno, e superfluità di parole nelle scritture, così detta, perchè la borra ad altro non serve, che a riempiere'. Burchiello uses it with the same meaning in *SdB*, XVII.17, p. 25. 'Le palle hanno il cervel di borra'.

14. ch'avocolar per ogni poco suole: *Crusca*, s.v. 'avocolare': 'da vocolo, che val cieco, significa accecare'.
16. Pecorone: see Chapter 1, pp. 53 and Chapter 2, pp. 66. Cf. Burchiello XCII.1, CLII.2, CCXX.12; *SdB*, pp. 131-132; 214-215; 303.
17. compagnia: 'conversation'. Cf. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, I, p. 43: 'Ma per ciò che le cose che sono senza modo non possono lungamente durare, io, che cominciatrice fui de' ragionamenti da' quali questa così bella compagnia è stata fatta'.

VII

1   Favole greche e storie mal chiosate,
      anforismi di Socrate ingolfati
      e silogismi non matricolati,
      epiloghi marzuoli e tre bruciate

5   disputaron se nugoli, la 'state,
      sudon piangendo per li altrui peccati
      o se dal vento son perseguitati
      come nel sexto conclude l'abate.

      Giunse tra loro un giudice malescio
10   E, 'ntesa la quistion, rispose presto:
      'voi mi parete con gli ochi arrovescio.'

      Descrive Giamburichi nel suo testo:
      'Nolite liver trinche s'io non mescio,
      poi che questo anno è smarrito il bisesto.'

15   Dimmi che vuol dir questo:
      Sursum deorsum vetat in fabrile
      'a sorso a sorso si svuota un barile'.

R 94v-95r
V 39v

2 ingolfati] inzolfati V
4 o] *om.* V
5 disputaron] disputando
6 sudon… peccati] Sudan pel freddo non sendo gelati
7 o se dal vento son perseguitati] o se pur piagon per gli altrui peccati
9 tra loro] in quel mezo
14 poi… bisesto] perché l'anno comincia dal bisesto

1-4. favole greche ...: these first four lines list the subjects of 'disputaron' (line 5). The elements of the list are all couples of similar things: fables and stories (line 1), aphorisms and syllogisms (lines 2 and 3), chestnuts and epilogues that, like some kind of wheat, are ripe by March (*marzauolo*).
3. matricolati: *Crusca***:** 'per metaf. vale grande, solenne'.
5-6. se nugoli ... pecchati: nugoli is the subject of this if-clause. *Nugoli* is a very common word in Burchiello's work, but Braccesi could refer here to one particular poem, CLII, 'Un nugol di pedanti marchigiani'. The target of both poets is pedantry and philosophy. Cf. *SdB*, pp. 214-215.
9. malescio: *Crusca*: 'si dice del noce, e della noce, che è di peggiore qualità.'
12. Giamburicchi: *nome parlante* found only in Burchiello, CLXII.9, *SdB*, pp. 227-228, made by *Gian* and *buricchio*, 'donkey'.
13. 'Nolite liver trinche': Giamburicchi speaks in dog-Latin. *Liver* could be *liber*, 'book' or the adjective 'free', *trinche* is form the vernacular *trincare*, 'to guzzle'.

133

16-17. The sentence does not make sense in Latin, the first half could be translated as: 'up and down he forbids…' and *in fabrile* should be *in fabrilia*, 'in mechanical tools'. This sentence is invented to sound like its imaginary translation into the vernacular, at line 17.

VIII

1   Gherardin mio, la troppa amaritudine
che fa l'assentio in bocca de' collerici
non lascia contemplar se gli emisperici
han per obliquo migliore attitudine.

5   Uno emiciclo in forma di testudine
menò seco un triangol preso a·Llerici
che pose in capo el diametro a cherici,
sì gli dispiacque la lor gratitudine.

Ma perché se' d'ingegno philosophico
10   dimmi, per qual cagion la bella Venere
aspetta il suo Vulcan tanto a rintruonico?

Ancora mi di', quante moggia di cenere,
secondo la misura d'astronomico,
vuole un bucato di ricotte tenere?

15   E rispondimi in genere
a quest'altra quistione, dolce mie speme:
per qual cagione e' funghi non fan seme?

R 101v
V 79v

8 gli] di *add.* R || gratitudine] prontitudine V
15 a… speme] a questa mia quistione ancora insieme V

1. amaritudine: for the rhyme amaritudine-attitudine see Burchiello, CXXXI.2-6, CXXXVI.3-7, *SdB*, pp. 184-185; 191-192.
2. collerici: those who suffer from excessive *collera*, 'yellow bile', one of the four humours, which according to Avicenna, is bitter like absinth.
3-4. this second half of the sentence is not logically related to the first: bitterness prevents from the contemplation of hemispheres.
11. rintruonico: 'over and over again'.

IX

1   Zuca mie vota, scioca di sapore,
che men che 'l gallo tien di naturale!
La canova era allor vota di sale
quando nascesti, dolce mio Ser Lore?

5   Quando ti veggio e' mi viene il sudore,
tanto mi par d'ingegno brullo e frale.
Tu non facesti mai né ben né male

e se' come una guardia da sartore.

'Chi, chi, bi chi a chi.' Compita, castrone!
10 'Bi u, bu' e formaggio cacio e pere,
fratel della lasagna col sapone.

Gigi mie Gigi, se tu vuo' sapere
chi 'l primo fu che seminò el mellone
mangia un prosciutto intero senza bere;

15 e parratti vedere
dormendo aver nel capo un gheron manco
e pel poco studiare essere stanco.

3. canova: a room where wine and oil are kept. The person described here does not only lack intelligence, but has been a drunkard since he was born.

6. brullo e frale: 'bare and weak'. This couple of adjectives mocks high register poetry, and Petrarch in particular used *frale* in similar expressions, see Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata. Milan, A. Mondadori, 1996, pp. 1183, 1340, 1394: CCCVII.5, 'lento e frale'; CCCLIV.2, 'stanco e frale'; CCCLXV.7, 'disviata e frale'. Braccesi himself in his *canzoniere* uses pairs of adjectives with *frale* in rhyming position, see see *Soneti e canzone*, pp. 15, 27: XIII.2, 'lasso e frale'; XXII.14, 'dolorosa e frale'.

8. guardia da sartore: confirms the statement at line 7, as guarding someone as harmless as a tailor is pointless.

9-10. Imitation of the sounds by a first-time speller. See a similar example in Franco's 'Carissimo magior dite su presto', line 2 in Pulci and Franco, *Il* Libro dei sonetti, pp. 62-63.

11. fratel della lasagna col sapone: unlike cheese and pears (line 10), lasagne (*lasagne* is a very common word in Burchiello IV.2, X.15, LXXXV.2, CLXI.3, *SdB*, pp. 7, 16, 121, 226) that cannot be eaten with soap. These food-related metaphors describe a person's tentative attempts to read.

16. gheron manco: noun and adjective contradict each other. *Gherone* is a piece of fabric added to a garment, while *manco* means 'defective'.

X

1 Venite gentes meco in caput mundi,
docebo vos de natura gementes:
vinum barletta nil valet bibentes
et cuor d'amantis non potes ascondi.

5 Est bonum pisces qui dormit in fondi
quia non semper capitur volentes;
ideo pingui sunt frati gaudentes
in mensa cum cupponibus rotondi.

Currite firmi et vigilans dormite
10 oculi claude si multis videre.
Quomodo stillat guttibus de vite?

Qui trullum ventris non potest tenere

135

est sicut procurator sine lite
et sicut pretus sine Miserere?

15   Però vorrei sapere
quante volte vuol dare uno schidone
per fare stagionato un buon cappone.

R 122v
V 56v-57r

1 caput mundi] capus mondi V
3 barletta nil] barlecte nil V
4 cuor d'amantis] cor d'amante V
5 Est bonum piscis qui dormit in fondi] et bonum pisces qui dormit intondi V
8 cupponibus] capponibus V
12 potest] sapit V
14 pretus] prete V

1-4.: Latin mingled with vernacular. 'Come you people with me to the top of the world, I will teach you about the nature of those who sigh. Wine in a small cask is worth nothing to drinkers, and you cannot hide the heart of a lover.' The translation here and in the notes below are based on sense rather than grammar. Where possible, I have suggested the correct Latin forms.
1. venite gentes: this recalls a passage of the Old Testament, Joel, 3:11: 'Erumpite, et venite omnes gentes de circuituet congregamini […]'.
meco: *mecum*.
2. docebo vos: Kings, 12:23: 'Docebo vos viam bonam et rectam'; Job 27:11: 'Docebo vos per manum Dei quae Omnipotens habeat nec abscondam […]'; Psalm 33:12-13: 'venite filii audite me timorem Domini docebo vos quis est homo qui vult vitam cupit videre dies bonos'.
3. barletta: vernacular, small travel-cask used to carry wine.
4. cuor d'amantis: *cordem amantis*. Note the redundancy of preposition and genitive case.
5-8.: 'It's a good fish that sleeps on the seabed, because is not always taken with purpose; therefore the happy friars at the table with big circular chalices are fat.'
5. in fondi: *in fundo*.
6. volentes: *volens*.
8. cupponibus: while 'cup' should be *patera*, *poculum* or *scyphus*, 'cupponibus' derives from the vernacular *coppa* with the augmentative suffix –one.
rotondi: *rotundi*.
9-10.: 'Run still and sleep awake, close your eyes if you want to see.'
9. Cf. Mark, 14:38-41: 'Vigilate et orate ut non intretis in temptationem spiritus […] et venit tertio et ait illis dormite iam et requiescite sufficit venit hora ecce traditur Filius hominis in manus peccatorum'.
vigilans: *vigilantes*.
10. multis: *multa*.
11-14.: 'How do drops seep from vine? Someone who cannot retain a belly-fart is like a solicitor without a case and like a priest without *Miserere*?'
11. stillat guttibus de vite: *stillat guttas vitis*.
12. trullum: from the vernacular *trullo*, 'fart'.
14. pretus: form the vernacular *prete*, 'priest'.
15-17.: Burchiello in his mock-Latin poem (*SdB*, XVII, pp. 24-25) develops similarly the text, only explicitly using vernacular in the last two lines (16-17).
16. schidone: 'spit' or 'skewer'.
17. stagionato: 'perfectly roasted'.

XI

1   Tantaratara, date nel tamburo!
Ecco di qua l'arciprete d'Ugnano
che per saper cantar bene el sovrano
ugne le tempie col vieto bituro.

<div style="text-align: center;">

5 Egli ha 'l cervel del calamaio sì duro
 che nulla giova lusingarlo a mano,
 e è tanto ritroso, bazo e strano
 che far potrebbe a butteri col muro.

 State su, donne, che passa il priore,
10 fate la reverentia a tal prelato,
 ignorante e da bene, fategli onore!

 Di Monticelli empierebbe el mercato,
 tanto ha di quel ch'al giogo è servidore;
 e di grossezza è si ben foderato!

15 Degno d'esser creato
 vescovo di Boemia o di Cartaggine
 e pare al natural la dappocaggine.

</div>

R 123r
V 59r-59v

3 cantare bene] ben cantare V
4 ugne] ~~ungh~~ne R || vieto] vecchio V
5 del calamaio] nell'imparar V
7 e è] perché V
8 che far potrebbe] ch'ei potre' fare V
9 che… priore] e si riza al priore V
10 la riverentia] duo belli inchini V
11 ignorante… onore] scarso di sale e scioco di sapore V
14] grossezza] ignorantia V || foderato] covertato V

2. arciprete d'Ugnano: Ugnano was a small town west of Florence, unlikely to have an *arciprete*. Moreover, Ugnano recalls the words *ugna*, 'nail' and *ugnere*, 'to grease'. Braccesi may be hinting at the idiom *ugnere gli stivali* see *Crusca*, s.v. 'ugnere': 'vale piaggiare, adulare, lodare'.
3. cantar: 'write in poetry'.
4. ugne ... bituro: grease (his) temples with old butter. The *arciprete* wants to flatter the ruler (*sovrano*) with poetry, but he is stimulated (and rubs his temples) only with trite themes (he rubs with *vieto bituro*, 'rancid butter'). Cf. *Lo Studio*, II.138 in Finiguerri, *I poemetti*, p. 61.
5. cervel del calamaio sì duro: 'the ink in his inkwell is so dry'; see Burchiello XIX.1-4, *SdB*, p. 27: 'Un giudice di cause moderne/ che studiava sul fondo d'un tamburo/ avea il cervel del calamaio sì duro/ ch'arebbe asciutto un moggio di citerne'. Line 3 is quoted almost word for word by Braccesi. Note the authorial variant that brings the text closer to Burchiello's.
6. lusingarlo a mano: this hints to the rubbing of his temples mentioned in the lines above and it has a sexual connotation by alluding to masturbation, confirmed by version V at line 9.
7. **bazo:** see Braccesi's poem II, p. 128.
8. butteri: *GDLI*, vol. 2, p. 469: 'segno lasciato dalla punta di una trottola'. The arciprete is so mad that he is like a spinning top, leaving marks on the wall.
12. Monticelli: one of the Florentine districts, famous for its market, mentioned also in *La Nencia da Barberino*, ed. Rossella Bessi, Rome, Salerno, 1982, p. 140, II.2.
13. tanto… servidore: the slave of a yoke is an ox, although according to *Crusca*, s.v. 'bue': 'per metaf. presa dalla stolidità di questo animale, si dice bue a uomo d'ingegno ottuso'.
14. foderato: Finiguerri, *Lo Studio* VII.28-30, in *I poemetti*, p. 85: 'Gli aveva un ciambellotto pien di loia/ ed era foderato di rovaio,/ e altri panni non gli davan noia'. Since the fabric in Finiguerri's lines is lined with wind (see Chapter 1, p. 57), the *arciprete*, or his clothes, is lined with *grossezza*, 'stupidity'. Note the change from V to R, from *covertato* to *foderato*, another indication of Braccesi's wish to conform to tradition.
16. Cartaggine: *nome parlante* created by para-etymology: *carta* as 'book' or 'literary work' and the peggiorative suffix –*aggine*. The *arciprete* deserves to rule over the usual *Buemia*, 'land of fools' and also over the 'land of awful books'.

17. dappocaggine: from *dappoco*, something with little or no value at all.

XII

1   E ci è venuto un medico in volgare
ch'a gli infermi col guanto il polso toca
e di suo man porcina il fondo inbocca
donde bisogna il ventre lusingare.

5   Chi del malato si vuole spaniare
chiami costui ch'una trappola scocca.
'Che fa 'l bisogno? Bene! Zara a chi tocca!'
ch'ei nonne suole in fallo una menare.

      Pillole dà d'una certa ragione
10   che farebbero tornare suzo in tre ore
chi in corpo avessi Bisentio e Mugnone.

      Le sue zenzaverate hanno sapore
ch'arsenico par pretto e di stagione
e cuocon sempre in sul primo bollore.

15   Chi guarda il suo colore
vedrà ch'egli è tutto turbo e collerico
e ch'ei somiglia più el boia ch'el medico.

V 57r-57v

2 polso] poso V

1. in volgare: so incompetent that he does not know Latin. Cf. Chapter 1, pp. 41 and following (Finiguerri, *Studio*, I.19-21; II.29-30, in *I poemetti*, pp. 53, 57). Burchiello: 'Sono medico in volgare, non in gramatica', *SdB*, CXXXI.1, pp. 184-85.
2. ch'a ... toca: see Finiguerri's maestro Lionardo d'Ognissanti, 'quando tocca il polso tiene e guanti' and maestro Anton Falcucci, 'che, se toccassi il polso al Campanile/ sonando a festa, e' non l'arè trovato', *Studio*, II.78 V.104-105, in *I poemetti*, pp. 59, 78.
3-4.: e di sua man ... lusingare: 'and he slips the bottom of his pork-like hand to where one must amuse one's belly', possibly an allusion to sexual molestation.
5. spaniare: *Crusca*: 'per metaf. vale liberarsi, o sciorsi da alcuno impaccio, o legame'.
6. Zara a chi tocca: *zara* is a dice game; *Crusca*, s.v. 'zara': 'zara a chi tocca: proverb. e vale a chi ella tocca, suo danno',
7. ch'ei ... menare: 'as he never fails to fail'.
11. Bisentio e Mugnone: tributaries of the river Arno. These pills are so strong that they would resuscitate someone who had Besentio and Mugnone in their bodies.
12. zenzaverate: 'concoctions', a word used by Burchiello, *SdB*, XLV.1, p. 62.
13. pretto: 'pure'.
15. torbo: *GDLI*, vol. 21, p. 37: 'moralmente corrotto, incline al male, dominato da una passione'.

XIII

1   La gola, el ventre, el lezo pidochiume
hanno in cucina ogni cosa forbito;
el cüoco per sdegno s'è smarrito
e va sputando el vento pel cucciume.

5   La moglie, per trovarlo, ha spento el lume,
        el guattero per fame è sbigottito,
        el capital di Bobi s'è fuggito
        vegendo rincarato sì l'agrume.

        Ricca e vestita vai, Phylosophia,
10   e le tempie orli di lauro e mirto
        e lo schiamazo è corso in val di Pesa:

        el fiato è già ridotto in poco spirto.
        E ecci pien ciascun di fantasia
        e molti già s'avïon per la scesa.

15   Né si può far difesa
        contra la forza del popol minuto
        che fa l'assalto prima sia veduto.

V 100r

1-4.: This is a parody of Petrarch's sonnet 'La gola e 'l somno e l'otïose piume', *Canzoniere*, VII, pp. 35-40, which becomes a poem *alla burchia* from the list of subjects in the first line. Braccesi changes slightly the rhymes and their sequence. This is not a parody of the contents, as Petrarch's sonnet inspires a narration of events not interlinked. The original text is the following: 'La gola e 'l sonno et l'otïose piume/ ànno del mondo ogni vertú sbandita,/ ond'è dal corso suo quasi smarrita/ nostra natura vinta dal costume;/ et è sí spento ogni benigno lume/ del ciel, per cui s'informa humana vita,/ che per cosa mirabile s'addita/ chi vòl far d'Elicona nascer fiume./ Qual vaghezza di lauro, qual di mirto?/ Povera et nuda vai Philosophia,/ dice la turba al vil guadagno intesa./ Pochi compagni avrai per l'altra via:/ tanto ti prego piú, gentile spirto,/ non lassar la magnanima tua impresa. '
1. lezo: it is here an adjective, see *GDLI*, vol. 8, p. 1031: 'puzzolente, graveolente, fetente'.
2. hanno ... forbito: the subjects listed at line 1 'cleaned all the things in the kitchen'.
4. cucchiume: probably alternative form of *cocchiume*, 'bung-hole'. The indignant cook blows into wine barrels for no reason.
5. la ... lume: another useless action: the cook's wife wants to find her husband, so she turns the light off.
6. sbigottito: 'frightened', not because the light is off, frightened of hunger.
7. capital di Bobi: 'Bobi's savings', who flee, scared by rising prices of food.
8. agrume: *TLIO*: 'ortaggio dal gusto forte e pungente'.
9. ricca e vestita: the precise opposite of Petrarch's 'povera et nuda'.
11. val di Pesa: Pesa is a tributary of the river Arno.
12. el fiato ... spirto: (everyone's) breath is short.
14. scesa: 'downhill slope'.
15-17. pun with *popolo minuto*, the definition for the Florentine lower classes not represented by any guild but also, literally, 'small people'. Braccesi alludes to the revolt of the Ciompi (1378).

XIV

1   Grandine è pioggia in aer congelata
        dalla forza del vento, e è vapore
        humido e freddo, o vogliam dire umore,
        dal caldo spinto in nube più gelata.

5   Questa cagione dal Philosopho è data:
        che 'l freddo, in aer fuggendo il calore,
        alla parte ricorre interiore

della nube, dov'è più condensata.

E quello humor, che nella nube trova,
10 in tondi serra di tanta freddeza
che ciò che toca da morzar fa prova.

La state più che l'inverno si impeza
perché del freddo allor la virtù nova
chiamata dal calor s'unisce en treza.

15 E nel verno si speza
e per l'aer si sparge disunita,
che fa la neve spesso a poggi unita.

R 105v

1-4.: Poem on the nature of hail. This explanation is found in Aristotle, *Meteorology*, I, 12, and could have been found by Braccesi in several commentaries, for example, those of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas an Themon Judaeus; see Craig Martin, *Renaissance Meteorology: Pomponazzi to Descartes*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011, p. 18. See also Cecco d'Ascoli writing in vernacular in *L'acerba: (Acerba etas)*, ed. Marco Albertazzi, Trento, La Finestra, 2002, I, 7.13-24, p. 40: 'Ma qui pò dubitar[e] l'alma gentile:/ nel tempo caldo com[o] si forma il ghiazzo,/ e sprivase nel suo tempo simìle./ La spera che ten[e] focho in sua virtute/ dico che fuga il fredo col suo brazzo/ e tienlo in unità con sue ferute./ Così de focho li raggi reflessi/ inverso l'aire de la nostra terra/ per l'orizonte essendo conessi,/ e quando regie Chancro e poi Leone,/ assai più fredo nel mezo se serra:/ però il gh<i>azo piove la stagione.
11. morzar: *GDLI*, vol. 10, p. 976: 'ant. spegnere, smorzare (la luce); estinguere (il calore)'.
12. impeza: alternative form of *impecia* from *impeciare*, see *GDLI*, vol. 7, p. 420, s.v. 'impeciare': 'invischiarsi; restare impaniato, irretito'.
14. treza: 'trezza' is *treccia*, 'plait'. Other examples of the affrication occurs in Braccesi's *Soneti*, I.37-38, p. 4 and *Soneti*, 71.7-8, p. 73: 'Son le sue treze bionde/ l'esca della mia fiamma'; 'quella bionda treza/ e 'l bel volto ch'a morte mi conduce' 'presto mutare/ suolsi in altro color la bionda treza'.

The literary work of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1492) is varied and includes both prose and poetry of different genres. Lorenzo started to compose poetry at an early age – his *Corinto*, for example, was completed in 1465 at only sixteen years of age. He remained prolific up to his death in 1492. Among his oeuvre are comic works, written at several stages of his life: *Nencia da Barberino*, *Simposio*, *Uccellagione di starne, Giacoppo,* and a few *ballate*, *mascherate* and *canti carnascialeschi*. This small but notable corpus provides evidence that Lorenzo showed a more than passing interest in parody. *Nencia da Barberino*, for instance, probably written when he was about nineteen, is a mock-pastoral poem; *Uccellagione di starne* is the parody of a *caccia*, a poetic genre written for music that was popular in the fourteenth century.[1]

This chapter focuses on two of Lorenzo's parodies targetting the philosophy of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). Ficino represents the height of the philosopher's rebirth during the Quattrocento, at least in Florence. He was not simply an intellectual with a clerical or administrative job, nor was he a scholar at the Studio. Ficino initially trained as a physician, like his father Diotifeci, and studied the standard medieval *curriculum* for such a profession. This would have included Aristotle, Averroes and Avicenna. Cosimo de' Medici, however, encouraged him to further his studies of Platonic philosophy and to translate several Neoplatonic texts, for example, Hermes Trismegistus's *Corpus Hermeticum* and Plotinus's *Enneads*. Ficino expanded this work translating other Platonic and Neoplatonic texts, eventually completing translations of much of the Platonic corpus and often supplying *argumenta* and *commentaria*. Some of these separate ancillary *commentaria* acquired a different status and became distinct treatises that had a significant impact on later philosophy, such as the commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, known by the title of *De amore*. Ficino also wrote original philosophical works, such as *Theologia platonica de immortalitate animae*, completed in 1474 and *De vita libri tres*, completed in 1489.

---

[1] *Nencia da Barberino* is found in three different versions, independent from one another and Lorenzo's authorship has often been questioned; see Bessi's thorough summary of the *Nencia*'s bibliography in *La Nencia*, pp. 13-33. The latest edition of *Uccellagione di starne* is in Lorenzo de' Medici, *Opere*, ed. Tiziano Zanato, Turin, Einaudi, 1992, pp. 229-253.

Ficino became connected with the Medici family in 1462 when Cosimo commissioned him to translate Plato's work. He received from his patron two houses, one in Florence and one in Careggi. After Cosimo's death, however, this patronage was not formally passed onto his son Piero de' Medici and Ficino did not dedicate to the latter any work written after 1464, with the sole exception of the translation of nine Platonic dialogues that had been previously commissioned by Cosimo. The reasons behind this change in his status are not clear, although in the difficult period between Cosimo's and Piero's deaths, in which plots took place to kill the Medici or undermine their political power, Ficino may not have wanted to expose himself to disapproval.

As there was no formal link between Piero de' Medici and Ficino, it is easy to see why there is no trace of any official contact between Ficino and Lorenzo until 1473, when Lorenzo showed his willingness to resume his family's bonds with the philosopher.[2] During the summer of that year Lorenzo wrote *De summo bono*, a popularization of Ficino's *Epistola de felicitate*, and later that year he succeeded in granting Ficino, newly ordained as a priest, the parish of San Cristoforo in Novoli.[3] The short poem *Simposio*, however, shows how Lorenzo had been a reader of Ficino earlier than 1473. From this we know that not only did Lorenzo read *De amore* and the translations of Plato's dialogues, but he also made a parody of Ficino's philosophical beliefs, as illustrated below.

5.1 *Simposio*, a drinking party

Simposio, a poem in eight Chapters of *terzine,* follows a simple plot. Writing in the first person, Lorenzo describes several of his contemporaries as they walk towards Giannesse's tavern, since they have heard that a new barrel of wine is being tapped. The crowd is made of drunks who are looking forward to the prospect of getting even drunker at the tavern. This setting makes the procession to the tavern the perfect drinking party suggested by the title – an allusion to Plato clarified below. With the help of two acquaintances who become his personal 'guides', the narrator identifies and describes fifty-eight characters in all. Framed by this simple plot and apparently aiming at mocking friends and acquaintances, the poem engages with several levels of satire

---

[2] Fubini, *Ficino e i Medici*, p. 33.

[3] Ibid., pp. 33-35; James Hankins, 'Lorenzo de' Medici's *De summo bono* and the Popularization of Ficinian Platonism' in *Humanistica per Cesare Vasoli*, eds Fabrizio Meroi and Elisabetta Scapparone, Florence, Olschki, 2004, p. 67.

and parody that are more sophisticated than simple derision; Lorenzo's *Simposio* is clearly a satirical work that had many targets. It becomes essential, therefore, to understand when the poem was written. We summarize here the main points of its complex textual tradition.

Two different versions of *Simposio* are found in fifteen manuscripts and one sixteenth-century printed edition, one made up of six Chapters and the other seven Chapters plus a fragment of an eighth Chapter.[4] These are believed to be two different traditions – without archetypes in common – with two different titles, *Capitoli de' beoni* and *Simposio*. These two versions reflect two different stages of redaction and therefore the second with eight Chapters is deemed the definitive version.[5] The dating of *Simposio* has proved controversial, as there is no documentary evidence. The main clues are afforded by the characters, for example Piero de' Medici, probably that *messer Piero* at Chapter IV (lines 18-19), who died on December 2nd 1469.[6] This would be the potential *terminus ante quem* of the *Simposio*.

The most controversial character is Antonio degli Agli, called *pastor fesulano*, 'minister of Fiesole' (I.79-100), indeed the archbishop of Fiesole from 1466 to 1469, who is said to be in the process of changing 'court' (lines 88-100). Agli was promoted and transferred to Volterra in 1470 and these lines in the *Simposio* sound like a *post eventum*

---

[4] Manuscripts: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino 208; Palatino 209; Magl. VII 1041; Magl. VII 112; II III 64; Accademia della Crusca, n. 25; Biblioteca Laurenziana, Acquisti e Doni 264; XLI 25; Rediano 129. Modena, Biblioteca Estense, γ X 5 40; γ F 615. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, XIII D 2. Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional, 3085. Vatican City, Biblioteca Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3219; Chig. M VII 142. Printed editions: *I sonetti del Burchiello, di m. Antonio Alamanni et del Risoluto, di nuouo rivisti, & ampliati. Con la Compagnia del Mantellaccio composta dal mag. Lorenzo de' Medici, insieme con i Beoni del medesimo. Nuovamente messi in luce*, Florence, Giunti, 1568, ff. 111r-126v; *Il terzo libro dell'opere burlesche di m. Berni, di m. Gio. della Casa, dell'Aretino, de' Bronzini, del Franzesi, di Lorenzo de' Medici, del Galileo, del Ruspoli, del Bertini, del Firenzuola, del Lasca, del Pazzi, e di altri autori*, Florence, 1723, pp. 146-176; *Sonetti del Burchiello, del Bellincione ed altri Poeti Fiorentini*, London, 1757, pp. 43-46; Lorenzo de' Medici, *Poesie del magnifico Lorenzo De' Medici: in questa edizione nei luoghi mancanti e scorretti compiute e alla vera lizione ridotte. S'aggiungono le stanze in lode della Nencia, i Beoni, le Rime spirituali, e altre poesie inedite con alcune memorie attenenti alla sua Vita, Testimonianze, ecc.*, Bergamo, Lancellotti, 1763, pp. 181-224; id., *Opere di Lorenzo de' Medici detto il Magnifico*, 3 vols, Florence, Molini, 1825, vol. 3, pp. 111-150; id., *Opere* (1913), pp. 157-190; see id., *Simposio*, pp. 31-38; id. *Opere* (1992), pp. 182-183.

[5] Id., *Simposio*, p. 96.

[6] For the attempts of dating by identifying characters, see Rochon, *La jeunesse*, pp. 546-550; Medici, *Simposio*, pp. 3-27. The identification of Piero de' Medici is found ibid., p. 7.

prophecy. The latest and most credible theory, however, is that Chapters I-IV were written during the autumn (the season described in the poem's *incipit*) of 1469, and that Lorenzo merely alluded to the rumor of Agli's forthcoming promotion and relocation to Volterra.[7] Chapters V-VIII were composed after 1470, as we find the self-parody of *El tempo fugge e vola*, written after the death of Piero de' Medici (V.7-9). The latest date of composition would be 1474, when another character, Lupicino Tedaldi (VII.19-21), died.[8]

Simposio was therefore written between 1469 and 1474 and is one of Lorenzo's early literary experiments. It nonetheless shows no traces of naivety. Firstly, it draws from Florentine vernacular tradition, being written in a *terzine* scheme identical to Dante's *Commedia*, Petrarch's *Trionfi* and Boccaccio's *Amorosa visione*.[9] This is evident in the rhythmic structure and the formal structure of the *Simposio*. For example, the first person narrative; the presence of two guides that accompany Lorenzo; the individual similes and idioms, all point towards a parody of both Dante's and Petrarch's works. Besides, we know that during the Quattrocento Finiguerri's poems were well known and that they too were a parody of the didactic poems of the fourteenth century inspired by Dante's *Commedia*. Lorenzo, some forty years later, was undoubtedly inspired by Finiguerri but he did not merely imitate his model.

Enriched by several quotations from Petrarch's *Trionfi*, Lorenzo's parody went deeper, and even in the simplest units of its narrative, (such as the description of characters), the text can be interpreted in more than one way. The portrait of Agli is an excellent example of this complexity (I.79-100). It describes a bibulous priest, who has already found his Heaven in wine, and it exemplifies how the parody is layered in the *Simposio*. The cup that he uses for drinking, a symbol of his craving for wine, is repeatedly mentioned by the demonstrative *questa* at lines 88-94, triggering a parody of Agli's own poem 'O padre etterno, onde a noi nasce e piove', a work written for the *certame coronario*, the poetic contest organized in 1441 by Leon Battista Alberti. Lorenzo's parody is unequivocal; in Agli's poem we find the same anaphoric sequence of *questa*.[10]

---

7 See Zanato's introduction to the poem in Medici, *Opere* (1992), pp. 177-178. This would definitely exclude Martelli's hypothesis of several stages of writing up to 1486, when Poliziano in his *Nutricia* alluded to the *Simposio* and called its characters *senes*, 'old men', as those who were still alive would have been by that time; see id., *Simposio,* pp. 18-25.

8 Id., *Opere* (1992), pp. 177-78.

9 For a detailed analysis see Rochon, *La jeunesse*, pp. 553-560.

10 This parody was found by Martelli; see Medici, *Simposio*, p. 9. For Agli's text, see *De vera amicitia: i*

This direct mockery of Agli's text skilfully overlaps the other obvious references to Dante, Petrarch and Finiguerri, and adds another layer to the stratified parody.

This peculiar version of an upside down world where everybody is drunk and sobriety is the exception, is not in itself a novelty. We can trace this theme back to late antiquity. For instance, the *Coena Cypriani*, written in the third century AD, depicts a banquet held in Cana and attended by biblical characters – this text enjoyed great success in Europe during the Middle Ages.[11] This theme is also evident in the notorious medieval texts known as *Carmina burana*. These texts extolled the qualities of wine and inebriation and even drunkenness to create a parody of liturgies. In fact it might be argued that the *missa potatoribus*, 'drinkers' mass' might be a genre in itself.[12] Examples in Italian of this enduring tradition are Bono da Lucca (*Salutatorium*, thirteenth century) and Morando da Padova (*Vinum dulce gloriosum*, thirteenth century), although Lorenzo may have had closer examples from the oral tradition.

Even though Lorenzo was deeply indebted to the model provided by Finiguerri, the most significant kind of satire found in the *Simposio* goes beyond poems such as *Lo Studio d'Atene*.[13] The whole of the *Simposio* is an allegorical satire of Ficino's theory of *furor divinus*, at times so close to Ficino's ideas as to become a parody. Lorenzo's aim was so clear that the title of the poem, initially named only *Capitoli de' beoni*, became later *Simposio* explicitly recalling Plato's dialogue *Symposium* and, in turn, to Ficino's translation and commentary.[14] The main target of this satire is the theory of divine frenzy, of which we give an account below.

5.2 Ficino and divine frenzy

The Platonic concept of *furor divinus*, 'divine frenzy', had long been evident in Ficino's work, even before he learnt ancient Greek and translated Plato's dialogues during the

---

testi del primo Certame coronario, ed. Lucia Bertolini, Modena, Panini, 1993, lines 34-40, 127-42, 205-208, pp. 215-245.

[11] For a further list of classical and medieval sources see Barberi Squarotti, 'Da Bacco a Orfeo', p. 42.

[12] Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: the Latin Tradition*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 93-128.

[13] There is no definitive proof that Lorenzo read Finiguerri's poems, but his contemporaries did. For instance, Benedetto Dei, a merchant who served the Medici family, even wrote in one of his letters that he knew these poems by heart; see Guerri, *La corrente popolare nel Rinascimento*, p. 47.

[14] Martelli maintains that *Simposio* is the original title; see Medici, *Simposio*, p. 96.

1460s. Divine frenzy firstly emerged in his writings in a letter, later called *De divino furore*, written on 1 December, 1457 to Pellegrino degli Agli which became part of Ficino's first book of letters (I, 6). *De divino furore* is a text that circulated widely on its own, as the surviving witnesses testify.[15]

De divino furore introduces and develops the concept of divine frenzy, a notion taken from the Platonic treatise *Phaedrus*. Divine frenzy is part of Platonic purification of the soul and a way for the philosopher to reach the divine. Unlike in Christian mysticism, to both Plato and Ficino, God is knowable through an alienation of the mind from the body and is a state that someone appropriately instructed in philosophical knowledge is able to reach and enjoy. Ficino first explained how the soul originally dwells in heaven where 'it was nourished and rejoiced in the contemplation of truth'.[16] After the soul has spent a life in an earthly body, however, it is forgetful of the divine. Nonetheless, it might return, to contemplate the forgotten divine nature.

Only the mind of a philosopher can regain the necessary means to return back to heaven. In order to do so, the soul must be separated from the body and must strive for heaven to be drawn towards it. This striving for the divine is termed 'divine frenzy'. In Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates lists four kinds of frenzies: prophecy, purification, poetry and love, of which love is the greatest.[17] Ficino, in turn, focused on the two frenzies reachable by sight and hearing, that is, love, poetry and music. In the conclusion of his letter Ficino lists the four Platonic divine frenzies: 'love, poetry, the mysteries and prophecy' and states that, 'according to Plato, Socrates attributes the first kind of frenzy to Venus, the second to the Muses, the third to Dionysus and the last to Apollo.'[18]

---

[15] Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum: Marsilii Ficini Florentini philosophi Platonici opuscula inedita et dispersa*, ed. Paul Oscar Kristeller, 2 vols, Florence, Olschki, 1937, vol. 1, p. xciv.

[16] Id., *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, transl. members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, 9 vols, London, Shepeard-Walwyn, 1975-2012, vol. 1, p. 43; id., *Lettere: epistolarum familiarium liber I*, ed. Sebastiano Gentile, 2 vols, Florence, Olschki, 1990-2010, p. 19: 'Animum nostrum [...] in celestibus sedibus extitisse, ubi veritatis contemplation [...] nutriebatur atque gaudebat.'

[17] For a summary of Plato's theory of divine frenzy in the *Phaedrus*, see John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love: the Context of Giordano Bruno's* Eroici furori, New York, Columbia University Press, 1958, pp. 177-178.

[18] Ficino, *The Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 47-48; Ficino, *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, p. 27: 'quatuor divini furoris species esse: amorem, poesim, mysteria, vaticinium'; 'Primum quidem furorem Veneri, alterum Musis, tertium Dionysio, postremum Apollini apud Platonem Socrates tribuit.'

We know that in 1457 Ficino was familiar with Leonardo Bruni's partial translation of the *Phaedrus*. About a decade later he used his own translation of the mythical hymn in the *Phaedrus* (243E-256A) that he had completed sometime between 1466 and the end of 1468. During the same period he also wrote an introduction (*argumentum*) to the dialogue and chapter summaries with a commentary (227A1-278E5). [19] In his commentary to the *Phaedrus* Ficino developed the concept of divine frenzy and changed the order of the four kinds:

> [Socrates] divides frenzy into the divine and the human; the divine he separates into four: prophecy, the hieratic art, poetry and love. [20]

Love and poetry pertain to sight and hearing, bodily senses inferior to the power of the intellect:

> Why did Socrates put poetry third in the degrees of frenzy – for he reminded us that prophecy was first, the hieratic art second, poetry third, and love fourth. It's because prophecy pertains mainly to knowing, the hieratic art to affect and volition (so it succeeds prophecy), but poetry already declines to hearing in addition. [21]

During the same years Ficino wrote about frenzy in another text, the *argumentum* to the Platonic dialogue *Ion*, a text whose subsidiary title was *De furore poetico*. [22] As in *De divino furore*, the main focus is poetic frenzy but the commentary also provides a more detailed distinction of the four kinds of frenzy, along with a depiction of their specific roles. This is the *incipit* of the *argumentum*:

> Lorenzo, best of men, in the *Phaedrus* our Plato defines frenzy as an alienation of the mind. But he gives us two kinds of alienation, one coming from the human diseases, the other from God. He calls the former insanity but the latter divine frenzy. [23]

In this way, the distinction between human and divine frenzy becomes clearer, as do the purposes of divine frenzy:

---

[19] Id., *Commentaries on Plato*, English transl. and ed. Michael J. B. Allen, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2008, pp. XXXIII-XXVII.

[20] Ibid., ed. and transl. Allen, pp. 42-43: 'Furorem in divinum dividit et humanum: divinum in quatuor scilicet in vaticinium, mysterium, poesim atque amorem.'

[21] Ibid., pp. 50-51: 'Sed curnam poesim gradu furorum tertio numeravit? Primo enim vaticinium, secundo mysterium, tertio poesim, quarto amorem commemoravit. Quoniam vaticinium quidem ad cognitionem precipue pertinet, mysterium ad affectum (mysterium igitur sequitur vaticinium), poesis autem ad audi tum preterea iam declinat.'

[22] Kristeller, *Supplementum ficinianum*, vol. 1, pp. CXVI-CXVII.

[23] Ficino, *Commentaries*, ed. and transl. Allen, pp. 194-195: 'Plato noster, optime Laurenti, furorem in *Phaedro* mentis alienationem definit. Alienationis autem duo genera tradit, unam ab humanis morbis, alteram a deo provenientem: insaniam illam, hanc divino furorem noncupat.'

> But the divine frenzy is the illuminating of the rational soul via which God takes the soul which has fallen from the heights to the depths and leads it back from the depths to the heights.[24]

As the text progresses, Ficino sets out the process that allows the soul to return to the heights. Ficino does so by describing how the soul, generated by the One, falls into multiplicity, time, place and matter. In order to return to the One, the soul must ascend through these four degrees and divine frenzy is what turns the soul back to the heights, thereby recovering its unity. The order of frenzies in the *Phaedrus* changes once again in order to describe chronologically the necessary steps for the soul to recover its original status. The first condition relies on poetic frenzy that rouses those parts of the soul that are numb and calms those which are distressed. The second frenzy is priestly,

> which by way of acts of expiation and [sacred] rites and every kind of worship of the gods directs the intention of all the [soul's] parts to the mind, by which God is worshipped. Since the individual parts of the soul have now been made an entire one something out of the many [parts].[25]

With the third frenzy, prophecy, Apollo leads the soul above the soul's own mind into a further unity. With the fourth frenzy, love, the soul is converted from its own unity to the One, which is unity above essence.

The last of Ficino's treatises dealing with frenzy is *De amore*, his commentary on Plato's *Symposium,* completed by 1469 and translated by Ficino himself into the vernacular in 1474. *De amore* briefly develops the theme of frenzy in the last oration (VII), and alters once more some of the terms of his theory on *furor divinus*. The four stages of the fall from heaven are no longer multiplicity, time, place and matter (VII.13):

> La caduta dell'anima da uno principio dello universe infino a' corpi passa per quattro gradi: per la mente, ragione, oppenione e natura […].[26]

These four degrees, unlike the previous ones, correspond to the four hypostases beneath God, that is the angelic mind, the rational soul, quality and matter. Through these hypostases and their different degree of multiplicity does the soul fall into multitude,

---

[24] Ibid., pp. 194-195: 'Est autem furor divinus illustration rationalis animae, per quam dues animam, a superis delapsam ad infera, ab inferis ad supera retrahit.'

[25] Ibid., pp. 198-199: 'quod expiationibus sacrisque et omni deorum cultu omnium partium intentionem in mentem, qua deus colitur, dirigit; unde cum singulae animi partes ad unam mentem redactae sint, iam totum quoddam unum ex pluribus factus est animus.'

[26] Id., *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Sandra Niccoli, Florence, Olschki, 1987, p. 211.

time, place and matter. Ficino also added a significant detail, that the demotion of the soul in the body potentially has no limits (VII.13):

> Dico ch'ella cade, allora, quando ella si diparte da quella purità con la quale ella è nata, abracciando troppo el corpo.[27]

The process that involves the four kinds of divine frenzy is the same in *De amore* as in the *Argumentum in Ionem*, although great emphasis is given to love, considered the most noble among the *furores*.

As mentioned above, one of the four frenzies is termed *mysteria*, which alludes to the ritual mysticism known in the classical world. These rituals were made of dances, orgies and wine drinking; each working towards ecstasy and thereby towards contact with the divine. Ficino continually recalls Dionysus (sometimes by his Roman name Bacchus) as the God that presides over *furor mysticus* although he does not provide any detail on how this kind of frenzy functions. The frenzy that is depicted in great detail, on the other hand, is love, the object of discussion in *De amore*. Not only did Ficino describe how love allows the soul to know and reach God, but he also extensively illustrated the causes and the effects of the corresponding human frenzy.

Given this history of the theory of *furor divinus* in Ficino's thought, we can be sure that Lorenzo's *Simposio* is a parody of the *De amore* and of the *argumenta* to the *Phaedrus* and *Ion*, depicting the possible effects of *furor mysticus*. The *furor mysticus* in *Simposio* is not a frenzy that helps man to reach the divine in any way. On the contrary, the characters seem to embody the effects of the human frenzy *amor ferinus*, or 'beast-like love', the worst expressions of love.

5.3 Satire and parody of Ficino's *furores*

Throughout *Simposio* Lorenzo revisits elements of Ficino's theory on the *furor mysticus*. In the very first lines, for example, the poem starts its description *in medias res*, telling of Lorenzo's return to Florence after a brief absence. The fourth tercet, however, invokes the help of a divinity, Bacchus, to write the poem:

> […] e Bacco per le ville e 'n ogni via
> si vede a torno andar, col cui aiuto
> vo' a quest'opra el suo principio sia [...].
>
> (I.10-12)

---

[27] Ibid., p. 212.

This is a significant choice. Bacchus is not associated with poetic creation and consequently was never addressed as an inspiring divinity, except in special contexts, for example, in Virgil's second book of the *Georgics*, dedicated to agriculture and the cultivation of vine and olive tree (II.1-3).

Moreover, the enthusiasm that animates many characters in the *Simposio* is termed *furia*, a direct translation of *furor*, an example being the *gaglioffa furia* of Chapter I (line 53). This *furia* comes through in the haste of the drunkards, which Lorenzo labels *furore*:

> Chi è costui che vien con tal furore
> ratto, che ne va quasi par che trotte?
>
> (II.85-86)

Another word acts as a pun that points unmistakably in Ficino's direction:

> Se son nimici capital' del vino,
> el vino è poi lor capital nimico,
> ch'al capo drizza el suo furor divino.
>
> (VI.94-96)

The pun *di vino-divino* – this last adjective is appositely coupled with the noun *furore* – openly reveals Lorenzo's satirical intentions by associating the sacred side of frenzy to the triviality of wine, which is related to Bacchus and to the *furor mysticus*.

Such aspects of the text amount to a detectable presence of Ficino in *Simposio*. This presence is strengthened as numerous Ficinian ideas are incorporated into the narrative frame. For example, a recurrent theme in the *Simposio* is the great thirst that torments the characters throughout the poem.[28] Thirst is a metaphor largely used by Ficino in *De amore* to represent the desire of lovers, often referring specifically to beauty. For Ficino bodily needs can be easily forgotten, since one can satisfy hunger and quench thirst by eating and drinking. By contrast love desires beauty through reason, sight and hearing. Even in the case of sight and hearing, the kind of beauty that intellectual souls appreciate is not physical. Real beauty from this perspective does not concern the body (V.3):

> E per questo si vede che la natura della bellezza non può essere corpo, perché s'ella fussi corpo non converrebbe alle virtù dell'animo.[29]

This is because those who love are in need of beauty:

---

[28] Barberi Squarotti, 'Da Bacco a Orfeo', pp. 37-38.

[29] Ficino, *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Niccoli, p. 81.

> Per tutte queste cose si vede che quelli che accesi d'amore hanno sete della polchritudine, se vogliono per beveraggio di questo licore spegnere l'ardentissima sete, bisogna che cerchino el dolcissimo omore della bellezza, per spegnere la sete loro altrove che nel fiume della materia e ne' rivoli della quantità, figura e colori.[30]

Ficino adds to this a personification of the god of Love through two series of metaphors. These are detailed in Oration VI.9:

> E perché egli è figliolo della povertà, però egli è arido, magro e squalido, ha pie' gnudi, è humile, sanza casa, sanza lecto e copertura alcuna, dormire agli usci, nella via, a cielo sereno, e è sempre bisognoso. E perché egli è figliolo della abbondanza, però egli tende lacciuoli alle persone belle e buone; e è virile, audace, feroce, veemente, callido, sagace, uccellatore, e sempre va tessendo nuove tele; è studioso nella prudentia, facondo nel parlare e in tutta la sua vita va philosophando; è incantatore, fa mal d'occhio, è potente, malioso e sofista […].[31]

Love, here, is always needy and, as Ficino puts it later in the same oration, *sitibundus*, 'thirsty'. Moreover, the lack of balance between the four humors in the human body, typical of someone who is in love, causes a melancholic temperament, which is particularly dry. Finally, in the last oration, focused mainly on the effects of vulgar love, desire is likened to thirst. Those who love wish to receive in their person the object of their love, and the example of Artemisia of Caria and her longing for her dead husband provide a perfect union between the metaphor of thirst and the desire of lovers (VII.6):

> E che gli amanti desiderino tutta la persona amata in sé ricevere lo dimostrò Artemisia, moglie di Mausolo di Caria, la quale perdutamente amò el suo marito, e poi che lui fu morto ridusse el corpo suo in polvere, e con l'acqua se 'l bevve. [32]

Given that lovers affected by frenzy are metaphorically thirsty, those who are victim of *furor mysticus* in the *Simposio* are actually thirsty for wine. The very first drunk described, for example, is affected by thirst, with extreme consequences:

> 'O Bartol mio, chi vegg'io là a sedere,
> 65 – comincia' io – là presso al Romituzzo?'.
> E egli a me: 'È uom che vuol godere.
>
> Se vuo' veder come el vin gli fa puzzo,
> mostrar tel vo' per una cosa sola,
> che gli fu posto nome l'Acinuzzo.
>
> 70 Le secche labra e la serrata gola
> ti mostron quanto questo el vin percuote,
> ch'a pena può più dir una parola'.
>
> (I.64-72)

---

[30] Ibid., pp. 83-84.

[31] Ibid., p. 134.

[32] Ibid., p. 199.

This might be a portrait of Ficino, as claimed by Riccardo Fubini, who draws parallels between this character and Ficino's representation of Love quoted above.[33] Acinuzzo, a man troubled by thirst, with his parched lips and throat, is 'dry and squalid' like Love. If the identification with Ficino is correct, it is worth noting that the philosopher always believed that Saturn was a very powerful planet in his horoscope. This leads him to have a melancholic temperament, like that of Love, because the cold, slow and dry planet shapes the humours in its own image.[34] Acinuzzo/Ficino is not the only one suffering from this excruciating thirst and dehydrated lips and mouth. Anton Martelli, for example:

> Ve' gote rosse e labre asciutte e 'ncotte
> e 'l suo naso spugnoso e pagonazzo:
> non cura fiaschi, carratelli o botte.

<div align="right">(II.88-90)</div>

and Anton Vettori and Pecoraccia (VI.8): 'dua con le labra secche e assetate', and at Chapter 6 appears a particularly hyperbolic description of thirst for wine:

> La sete lor non è fuoco di paglia,
> né la sete bugiarda di Bertoldo,[35]
> ma natural, e par ognor più vaglia.

<div align="right">(VI.112-114)</div>

Significant here is the qualification of thirst as 'natural'; it echoes Dante's *Purgatorio*, and the *incipit* of Canto XXI:[36]

> 1   La sete natural che mai non sazia
>   se non con l'acqua onde la femminetta
>   samaritana domandò la grazia,
>
>   mi travagliava, e pungeami la fretta
> 5   per la 'mpacciata via dietro al mio duca,
>   e condoleami a la giusta vendetta.

<div align="right">(XXI.1-6)</div>

---

[33] Fubini, 'Ficino e i Medici', p. 17.

[34] For a discussion of Ficino's horoscope, see Ruth Clydesdale, 'Jupiter Tames Saturn. Astrology in Ficino's *Epistolae*', in *Laus Platonici philosophi: Marsilio Ficino and his influence*, eds Stephen Clucas, Peter J. Forshaw, Valery Rees, Leiden, Brill, 2011, pp. 117-131: 123-126. For the influence of Saturn on melancholy in Ficino, see Noel L. Brann, *The Debate over the Origin of Genius during the Italian Renaissance: the Theories of Supernatural Frenzy and Natural Melancholy in Accord and in Conflict on the Threshold of the Scientific*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, pp. 96-100.

[35] Bertoldo might have been a real person or a proverbial character.

[36] Dante, *Purgatorio*, p. 363.

While Dante climbs the fifth terrace of the Purgatory, he is tormented by a desire to know why an earthquake has unexpectedly shaken the whole Mount. 'Natural thirst' is the metaphor for this urge to know and is justified by a reference to the episode of the Samaritan woman taken from the Gospel of John (4,5-33). This passage and its reference to Dante's metaphor are essential for understanding another reference to thirst. This is found in a speech by a character called Adovardo:[37]

> E lui: 'Già Adovardo non son io,
> ma son la sete, più singular cosa,
> 15   che data sia agli uomini da Dio,
>
> più cara, eletta, degna e preziosa:
> e or qui nasce una sottil dispùta
> e un bel dubbio in questo dir si posa.
>
> Se 'l ber caccia la sete, ch'è tenuta
> 20   sì dolce cosa, adunque el ber è male;
> ma 'n questo modo poi ell'è soluta;
>
> mai non si sazia sete naturale
> come la mia, anzi più si raccende
> quanto più béo, com'io beessi sale;
>
> 25   e com'Anteo le sue forze riprende
> cadendo in terra, come si favella,
> la sete via dal ber più sete prende;
>
> e perché l'acqua della feminella
> spegne la sete, per giucar più netto,
> 30   acqua non béo, per non gustar di quella.
>
> Lasciamo andare, in questo è 'l mio diletto,
> per qual contento son, lieto e giocondo:
> egli è 'l mio sommo ben, solo e perfetto
>
> e quando non sarò più sitibondo
> 35   daretemi d'un mazzo in sulla testa,
> se manca quel per ch'io son visso al mondo'.

(II.13-36)

Adovardo's words make up one of the most peculiar passages of the whole *Simposio* – the dense system of references contrasts sharply with the quite simple satirical power. In order to fully understand their parody, we must recall that Lorenzo projects the effects of the noblest *furor*, love, onto *furor mysticus*. The thirst of Ficino's lovers resembles

---

[37] Martelli believed that the name *Adovardo* is an error of the archetype. This character declares himself to be priest of the parish of San Giovanni, even though no vicar is found with this name in the registers. Perhaps Lorenzo meant Lionardo (di Bartolomeo Bartolini) or Bernardo (di Domenico Mazzinghi); see Medici, *Simposio*, p. 48.

the thirst of those who experience the *mysteria* and reach their status through wine-drinking. Adovardo cherishes his thirst to the point that he claims to be a personification of Thirst (lines 13-14) and he goes so far as to declare thirst the single greatest gift given by God to humanity (lines 15-16). The argument that follows is an obvious parody of a philosophical dispute, which is concluded humorously with the quotation from Dante. Adovardo wonders how he can keep his thirst by drinking but he then states that this 'natural thirst' can never be quenched. Dante's line 'la sete natural che mai non sazia' is quoted here (line 22) along with the episode of the Gospel (lines 28-30). The purpose of this reference to *Purgatorio* is to parody both Dante, at a textual and literary level, and Ficino, by employing a solution that amplifies the faults of this metaphor. According to Adovardo, the only way of not losing his thirst is by avoiding water because the water of the Samaritan woman can forever quench thirst. In doing this, Adovardo renders wine-drinking safe once again. Ficino's thirst for beauty becomes here a more ordinary thirst for wine that does not imply any higher aim. The controversial metaphor becomes somewhat quotidian or trivial even, as the 'problem' of thirst comes to be resolved in the most obvious way. If water is to be avoided, according to Adovardo wine is the 'perfect, only good' (line 33), words that increase the profanity of his speech, which used an episode from the Gospel to justify wine-drinking and then applies the attributes of God to wine.[38]

'Natural thirst' in the world governed by *mysteria* is no longer a consequence of frenzy, but one of its causes. Drunkards like Adovardo make every possible effort to retain thirst, since it allows them to keep drinking. This behaviour is brought to extreme consequences by Adovardo, who wishes his own death (lines 34-36) and Leonardo di Ricco da Cignano, who similarly desires his own death:

> Lui disse: 'In parte el ver cantato avete,
> 110   ma anco mi parti' per ir al Bagno,
> per ritrovarvi la perduta sete.
>
> Bench'ancor béa per me e un compagno,
> più (quel ch'io non solea) ch'a' venti tratti
> com'una palla grossa allor ristagno.
>
> 115   In Casentino ho fatto mille imbratti,
> per far la dïabete ritornare,
> e 'nsin qui 'nvan molti rimedi ho fatti.
>
> Questa cagion a piede or mi fa andare,
> e vorre' ch'una febbre mi venisse,

---

[38] Bottoni, *La messinscena del Rinascimento*, p. 27.

Donde, se questo effetto non sortisse,
contento son renunzïar la vita'.
'Or seguite el cammino – el mio ser disse –

che Dio vi renda la sete smarrita!'.

(VII.109-124)

Leonardo has apparently lost the ability to drink great quantities of wine. He is upset because after the twentieth glass he is unable to drink anymore and he is trapped like a 'great ball' (lines 112-14). The remedies Leonardo tries are then listed, the first being a conventional cure in a spa town (line 110).[39] The relevant part of this monologue begins at line 115, where the other treatments become even more surreal and the terms of this image, the lack of thirst as a disease, are reversed. Leonardo's aim becomes to contract a more serious sickness like diabetes (line 116) or 'high fever' as a means to drink again. Diabetes, termed *diabete* or *diabetica*, was known at the time only through its symptoms, an unquenchable thirst and a constant need to urinate.[40] Following a sort of anti-climax of the human body, from spa remedies to diseases to death, these unsuccessful efforts lead Leonardo, like Adovardo, to desire his own death.

Lorenzo's tendency to use hyperbolic images and depictions of a world upside-down – one populated by people who wish to worsen their health and to die – responds to traditional themes of comic literature that go back to late Latin antiquity but also recall Ficinian metaphors. For instance, a noticeable consequence of this use of inverted values in the *Simposio* is the decay of the human body. Descriptions of every sort of bodily function are frequent and hyperbolic, and, moreover, the drunkards in this procession suffer from all sorts of illnesses and infirmities, and they are all, tellingly, quite repulsive. These representations of decay are comparable to the effects of vulgar love in Ficino's *De amore*. These involve the three different elements developed in the *Simposio*, that is, inferior body senses, deformity and disease. In the first oration, for example, there is a description of beauty which can only be perceived by intellect, sight and hearing. These are the faculties that, according to Ficino, are superior to smell, touch and taste because they do not rely on the body. Smell, taste and touch do not recognise beauty and cannot lead to pure love, but instead give rise to only vulgar love (I.4):

---

[39] Zanato identifies this town as Bagno a Morba; see Medici, *Opere* (1992), p. 221.

[40] See *Crusca*, s.v. 'diabete e diabetica'.

> Sì che e piaceri del gusto e tacto che sono voluptà, cioè piaceri tanto vehementi e furiosi che la mente del proprio stato rimuovono, e l'uomo perturbano, non solo non le desidera amore anzi l'ha in abbominatione, e quelle fugge come cose che per la loro intemperanza sono contrarie alla bellezza. La rabbia venerea, cioe luxuria, tira gli huomini alla intemperanza, e per conseguente alla inconrispondentia; et perché similmente pare che alla deformità, cioè bruttezza, gli huomini tiri, e amore alla bellezza: la deformità e la pulchritudine sono contrarii.[41]

The effects of Lorenzo's own version of *furor mysticus* resemble closely the effects of vulgar love and the senses related to it. This is perhaps most evident in the case of taste where the drunkards are said to be hearty eaters. Food is normally associated with wine, but taste is not the only overdeveloped sense that contributes to making the characters ludicrous. A notable attribute of theirs is a foul smell (III.106; IV.94; VII.54; VIII.14-15, 20, 23-24). Lorenzo himself is attracted to the crowd by his inferior senses and meets men deformed by their passion for wine. On one occasion Lorenzo's first guide, Bartolino, even admits that he is falling in love with someone through the senses of sight and hearing, as described in *De amore*:

> Ve' come lieto vien, che nel vin galla:
> è Bertoldo Corsin, che m'innamora:
> tanto e sì ben al suon del bicchier balla.
>
> (III.10-12)

Most of the characters are simply 'fattened' (I.6; III.76, 92; VI.35) or 'ragged' (I.77; III.37), but others display more unusual deformities such as 'gigantic' noses (I.80; II.109), a resemblance to monkeys (II.97-98), prominent double chins (III.22), big jaws and 'owl-like eyes' (VI.47), a short neck (VI.68-69), or they are so unhealthily thin that it appears they have been eaten by maggots (VIII.25).

Deformities of the body, however, are only some of the repulsive consequences of vulgar love in the *De amore*. Men embracing vulgar love suffer from the alienation of the mind that causes a frenzy that transforms them into beasts, as is also the case for the characters in the *Simposio* (VII.3):

> El nostro Platone diffinisce nel Phedro el furore essere alienatione di mente, e insegna due generationi d'alienatione, delle quale stima che l'una venga da infermità humana, l'altra da spiratione divina: la prima chiama stoltitia, la seconda furore divino. Per la malattia della stultitia l'uomo cade sotto la spetie dell'uomo, e di huomo quasi bestia diventa: due sono le generatione della stultitia, l'una nasce dal difecto del celabro, l'altra dal difecto del cuore.[42]

---

[41] Ficino, *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Niccoli, p. 16.

[42] Ibid., p. 187.

After differentiating good and bad frenzy, Ficino distinguished two further kinds of human frenzy, called appropriately *insania*, 'illness', one affecting the brain and one the heart. The first causes three bizarre kinds of behaviour, in a way which readily recalls Lorenzo's drunks:

> El cervello è occupato alcuna volta dalla collera adusta, alcuna volta dal sangue adusto, alcuna volta dalla nera feccia del sangue: di qui gli huomini pazzi diventano. Quegli che sono tormentati dalla collera adusta, benché non sieno da alcuno ingiuriati, acremente s'adirano, gridano forte, adventansi in qualunque si scontra in loco e manomettono sé e altri. Quegli che sono occupati dal sangue adusto trasandano molto nel ridere, sopra tutti si vantano, grande cose di sé promettono, con canti e balli festa fanno. Quegli che sono agravati dalla nera feccia del sangue malinconosi sempre stanno, e certi loro sogni si fingono, e quali in presentia gli spaventano e di future gli fanno temere.[43]

The brain, however, is not the only organ affected:

> Ma per difecto di cuore diciamo propriamente venire quella stultitia, dalla quale sono coloro afflicti, e quali si veggono nell'amore perduti. A costoro s'attribuisce falsamente el sacratissimo nome dell'amore; ma perché non paia che vogliamo ristrignere el vocabulo comune usiamo in costoro ancora el nome d'amore.[44]

The behaviours listed by Ficino could easily fit any drunkard, and those in the *Simposio* are no exception. They dance, shout, laugh, attack others and threaten to kill themselves. Besides, this *insania*, according to Ficino, is also related to the decay of the body (VII.5):

> io risponderò che questo non parrà maraviglioso se si considerrà l'altre infermità che per contagione s'appiccano: pizzicore, rogna, lebbra, mal di pecto, tisico, male di pondi, rossore d'occhi, pestilentia. E dico che la contagione dello amore agevolmente viene, e è sopra tutte le pestilentie gravissima […].[45]

This list too mirrors the characteristics of those affected by diseases in the *Simposio*. They have for example varicose veins (I.63), diabetes (III.25-27) and scabies which advances so as to become leprosy (IV.27). The group description at Chapter VII emphasizes this aspect by extending diseases and deformities to the whole crowd:

> Tra lor ve n'era alcun zoppo e sciancato,
> e gamberacce e occhi scerpellini,
> e altri dalla gocciola scempiato;
>
> 10   e visi rossi come cherubini,
> borse e brachieri a uno e dua palmenti,
> e ciglia rotte e nasi saturnini.
>
> (VII.7-12)

---

[43] Ibid., pp. 187-188.

[44] Ibid., p. 188.

[45] Ibid., p. 195.

Lameness (line 7), varicose veins, reversed eyelids (line 8), apoplexy (line 9), hernias, trusses (line 11) and wounded eyebrows (line 12): this is the monstrous sight in front of Lorenzo that seems to take shape from Ficino's list above. The multitude embraces the *furor mysticus* and is affected by it, as those who suffer from vulgar love are the cause of their own deformity and illness.

Lorenzo created in the *Simposio* the picture of a city populated by drunken men, perhaps among them Ficino himself, to represent one of the four divine frenzies, the *mysteria* mentioned by Ficino in his letters and treatises up to 1473 but never developed in his later writings. The behaviour of the characters and the consequences of Lorenzo's parody of the *mysteria* were inspired by Ficino's *De amore*, and in particular by the effects of love, another type of frenzy which is the object of the treatise. Lorenzo, however, chose the effects of vulgar love, which, according to Ficino, makes men sick and transforms them into beasts.

There is further intertextuality between Lorenzo and Ficino, unrelated to the theory of divine frenzy. This revolves around a character named Ulivieri, identified by Zanato as Olivieri Arduini, the Aristotelian philosopher and friend of Ficino.[46] In chapter 5 Olivieri spits on the ground, and this unusual behaviour attracts the attention of a crowd (V.61-66):

> Come fu 'n terra giunto quello umore
> del fiero sputo, nell'arido smalto
> unissi insieme l'umido e 'l calore;
>
> e poi quella virtù che vien da alto
> 65   gli diede spirto e nacquene un ranocchio,
> e 'nnanzi agli occhi nostri prese un salto.

This passage refers to the theory of spontaneous generation, an idea that many classical and medieval authors had held. For example Aristotle, Lucretius, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas all held that imperfect animals such as insects and frogs are generated from putrid matter by virtue of the sun, which stimulates the birth of species already

---

[46] In the first book of his letters Ficino writes to and about Oliviero Arduini. In a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici (101), Ficino praised Arduini (id., *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 153): 'I would warmly recommend to you the outstanding Aristotelian philosopher Oliviero Arduini, had his book on Aristotle not already done so very effectively'; id., *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, p.178: 'Oliverium Ardouinum insignem Peripateticum commendarem tibi non mediocriter, nisi Aristoteles suus eum tibi plurimum commendaret.'

present in matter.[47] The example of frogs is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[48] Ficino also debated spontaneous generation in his later works, the *Theologia platonica* and *De vita*, and there are at least two allusions in *De amore*.[49] One such allusion describes how the universe is animated by the 'World Soul', and how the world itself is made up of twelve spheres, each with a different soul. Reinforcing his statements, Ficino poses a rhetorical question (VI.3):

> Chi negherà vivere la terra e l'acqua, le quali danno vita agli animali generati da lloro? E se queste fecce del mondo vivono, e sono piene di viventi, per che cagione l'aria e 'l fuoco, essendo più excellenti, non debbono vivere, e similmente avere e loro animali? E così e cieli in simile modo.[50]

Later in *De amore*, in a chapter on the dynamics of vulgar love, the focus falls on the qualities of blood. A specific kind of blood is that of adolescents, which is, according to Ficino, hot and sweet (VII.4):

> Perché la vita è el principio del vivere, cioè la generatione, nel caldo e nell'umido consiste, e esso seme è caldo e humido.[51]

Possibly these words inspired Lorenzo to develop an episode in the *Simposio* that would mock the whole concept of spontaneous generation. In the poem, the context lowers the phenomenon to the level of bodily functions, as Olivieri's spit is implicitly compared to putrid matter, and then Uliveri's own comment reinterprets it with Burchiello's words:[52]

> Com'Ulivier gli pose addosso l'occhio,
> disse: 'Io ne debbo avere el corpo pieno,
> ché gorgogliar gli sento' [...].
>
> (V.67-69)

Riccardo Fubini makes the case that this episode refers to Ficino's re-evaluation of vulgar love and its corresponding myth – that of a 'vulgar' Venus celebrated as the *vis*

---

[47] See Edward Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs: the Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 580-581.

[48] *Metamorphoses*, (XV.375).

[49] Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic theology*, English transl. Michael J.B. Allen and John Warden; eds James Hankins and William Bowen, 6 vols, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001-2006, 4.1, pp. 145-147; id., *Three Books on Life*, English transl. and ed. John R. Clark and Carol V. Kaske, Binghamton, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance Society of America, 1989, 3.16, pp. 321-328.

[50] Id., *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Niccoli, p. 115.

[51] Ibid., p. 189.

[52] Medici, *Opere* (1992), p. 207. For this passage cf. also *SdB*, LXXXV, pp. 121-122: 'Fuoco ho il fegato e ghiaccio la sirocchia,/ tosso, sputo, anso e sento di magrana,/ e 'n corpo mi gorgoglia una ranocchia.'

generandi of the World's Soul. Rochon, on the other hand, quotes another letter by Ficino, which was, perhaps, Lorenzo's source.[53] There is an important passage in the commentary to Plato's *Phaedrus*, however, that aids understanding one of the playful comments in the *Simposio* describing this event:

> Disse el mio duca: 'Ve' quell ch'egli ha fatto
> or ch'egli ha sete; e però pensar dèi
> quell ch'e' farà, se berrà qualche tratto.'
>
> (V.52-54)

These words imply that something even bigger than the frog that has just come alive (V.65-66) can be 'generated' when the person spitting has drunk wine. Spontaneous generation seems strictly related to wine in this context, as Ficino suggests in the *argumentum in Ionem*, a seminal commentary, as mentioned above, on the theory of divine frenzy (III.7). If, therefore, Lorenzo's intention was to once again to lampoon Ficino, he was most probably referring to this passage in the commentary to Plato's *Phaedrus*:

> The Nymphs are divinities presiding over generation; accordingly, they are said to dwell in streams or woods, since generation is accomplished through wetness and descends to the wood, that is, to prime matter. Dionysus is their leader; for he is the god who presides over both generation and regeneration.[54]

Dionysus, through the Nymphs, presides over generation, which is reached through prime matter and wetness. Tellingly, everything leads back to wine.

5.4 *Simposio* and tradition

By depicting a world dominated by *furor mysticus*, Lorenzo enters the Quattrocento tradition of satire, exemplified most obviously by his predecessors, Burchiello and Finiguerri. *Lo Studio d'Atene* plays a key role in the *Simposio*, from the Dantean parody to the rhyming scheme to the tools employed to enliven the description of the procession, which might otherwise be a rather monotonous list of drunkards. Lorenzo's contribution, however, belongs to a distinctive moment in the tradition. Satire, in order

---

[53] Fubini, 'Ficino e i Medici', p. 18. Rochon (*La jeunesse*, p. 561) quoted Ficino's *Di Dio et anima*; see Kristeller, *Supplementum ficinianum*, vol. 2, pp. 128-157: 'Anaxagora e Archelao dicono che tutti gli animali di caldo et umido sono composti, e 'l caldo dell'umido nutrirsi et per tale nutrimento partorire stimano per le membra facultà di muoversi et di sentire, et questa potentia vita appellano'.

[54] Ficino, *Commentaries*, ed. and transl. Allen, pp. 106-107: 'Nymphe sunt numina que generationi presunt. Ideo dicuntur aquas inhabitare vel silvas, quoniam generatio et per humorem expletur et descendit ad silvam id est materiam primam. Dionysus his est prefectus.'

to be effective, no longer targeted literary fashions or social groups as Finiguerri's had done, but philosophy and philosophers directly, who had now become noticeably more prominent socially. The shift of focus to philosophy rendered Finiguerri's poetry a source of forms rather than content, for example in the use of comic-realist metaphors. For instance, drunkards are sometimes likened to birds, for example Lorenzo's first guide Bartolino, who wishes to reach the tavern and is instead held by Lorenzo:

> Non altrimenti a parete uccelletto,
> sentendo d'altri uccelli e dolci versi,
> sendo in cammin, si volge a quello effecto:
>
> 40   così lui, bench'a pena può tenersi,
> ché gli parea el fermarsi fatica,
> ché non s'acquista in fretta e passi persi.
>
> <div align="right">(I, lines 37-42)</div>

This simile recalls Finiguerri's description of Biagio Nicolini (VII.123-25, see Chapter 1, p. 50), although the latter plays the part of the hunter that captures birds in his net ('parete'), while Bartolino is depicted as like a trapped bird.

Another common image is the inkwell. In *Lo Studio* they appear dry or mouldy, and therefore symbolise a lack of fame (I.43-45; VI.22-24, see Chapter 1, pp. 56 and following). In the *Simposio* this trope takes on a different role and comes to represent notaries:

> Mostrommi el duca mio un che venìa,
> e io, come gli vidi el calamaio,
> 75   dissi: 'E' convien che questo notaio sia'.
>
> <div align="right">(V.73-75)</div>

Finiguerri's direct attacks, aimed at revealing his victims' inadequacy, are imitated a number of times in the *Simposio*. An example comes in the figure of Antonio Schiattesi, a Dominican friar with a doctorate in theology and teacher at the Studio in 1477, who is, along with his brothers, part of a larger group.[55] This kind of collective portrait is very similar to the description of the Salutati brothers in *Lo Studio*, as their kinship bonds them through the same metaphor (see Chapter 1, pp. 54 and following). Whereas the Salutati brothers, unworthy of their name, are compared to blind people that hold each other, the Schiattesi brothers follow in their father's steps in drinking and eating. They are first compared to pigs running towards food and then to garrulous birds (IV.63-66).

---

[55] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Poesie*, ed. Federico Sanguineti, Milan, BUR, 1992, p. 90.

The portrait of Antonio Schiattesi occupies a few more lines by virtue of his status as an educated figure. Like many of the characters in *Lo Studio*, he is portrayed as holding an ill-deserved title:

> El terzo che tu vedi ch'è già quinci,
> 80   pur di teologia ha qualche inizio
> e dottorossi per mezzo d'amici;
>
> (IV.79-81)

Not only did he not earn his doctorate honestly, but his only thoughts seem unable to go beyond wine and food:

> Se come e' mangia e bee e come è grasso,
> e' fussi dotto, niun Santo Agostino
> allegherebbe o chi 'nsanguinò 'l sasso.[56]
>
> (IV.88-90)

The adynaton in the form of a counterfactual conditional sentence is very close to some found in *Lo Studio*, see for example the description of Filippo di Ser Piero Mucini (I.43-45, Chapter 1, p. 56). The final lines dedicated to Schiattesi draw this character even closer to those of *Lo Studio* by mentioning the uselessness of his knowledge of Greek and Latin, an essential part of both *Lo Studio* and of Burchiello's poems (see Chapter 1, pp. 40-43 and Chapter 2, pp. 74-77). Here, for instance, Schiattesi's linguistic competence does not guarantee wisdom:

> Egli ha studiato in greco e in latino
> tanto, che sa che 'l grasso di vitella
> allarga el petto e be'lo come el vino.
>
> (I.91-93)

Similar hints to Finiguerri's poem are found in many other characters in the *Simposio*. One peculiar image, however, epitomizes Finiguerri's deep influence on Lorenzo, a reuse of the biblical and classical trope of the *puer senex* (VI.120). Finiguerri inverted it in a character that is 'young in judgement and old in age', while Lorenzo, consistent with the main topic of his poem, employs it to describe the whole crowd of drunkards (VI.99): 'ciascun giovane è d'anni, al ber antico'.

We do not have a written source confirming that Lorenzo read *Lo Studio d'Atene*. We do, however, know that he read Burchiello's works, as we know that Lorenzo owned a

---

[56] In medieval and Renaissance iconography St Jerome was represented with a stone in his hand covered in blood. According to medieval hagiography, he spent four years in the desert beating his chest with a stone.

copy of a collection of Burchiello's poems.[57] Burchiello's influence is less obvious than Finiguerri's but nevertheless pervasive. The use of Burchiello's lexicon, rhymes and cultural landmarks is consistent, although the only relevant link with satire of intellectuals is the use of *civette* ('owlets') as a metaphor of lack of judgement ('occhi di civetta', VI. 47). *Civette*, nevertheless, are found in both Finiguerri (IV.88-93, see Chapter 1, p. 59) and Burchiello (VIII.17, see Chapter 2, p. 69).[58]

---

[57] See Michelangelo Zaccarello, '"Buffon non di comun né d'alcun sire" Il Burchiello posseduto da Lorenzo (Laur. Pl. XL, 48)', in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: politica, economia, cultura, arte. Convegno di studi promosso dalle Università di Firenze, Pisa e Siena : 5-8 novembre 1992*, Pisa, Pacini, 1996, pp. 609-632: 609-610.

[58] See Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, pp. 363-374.

5.5 A parody of the Ficinian soul in *Ragionavasi di sodo*

'Why do you grieve so much, my unhappy soul? O my daughter, weep no more. Behold, I, your father, am here with you. I am here, your cure and your salvation.'

These are the first words pronounced by God in an imaginary dialogue between Him and the soul, written by Ficino in a letter to Michele Mercati, later known by the title of *Dialogus inter Deum et animam theologicus*, 'The theological dialogue between God and the Soul'.[59] In doing so, Ficino chose a peculiar representation for this relationship, perhaps inspired by St Augustine's personification in his *Confessions*, in which the Saint addresses God. Given the pathetic tone of the letter, it might have been a suitable target for a parody. It inspired, nevertheless, Lorenzo de' Medici's sonnet 'Ponete modo al pianto, occhi miei lassi', which stages a dialogue between the sonnet itself and Lorenzo's own eyes.[60]

There is in addition a further poem that deals with the relationship of the soul with God, the *ballata* 'Ragionavasi di sodo'.[61] The latter and 'Ponete modo al pianto, occhi miei lassi' represent the diversity of Lorenzo's oeuvre. 'Ponete modo al pianto, occhi miei lassi' is part of *Comento de' miei sonetti*, a prosimetrum that glosses some of Lorenzo's own love sonnets, and 'Ragionavasi di sodo' is part of a group of poems in the form of *ballata*, probably written between 1470 and 1474.[62]

The genre *ballata*, in its form and destination, has always long been considered inferior to the *canzone*, since it was designed for music and dance, as its name would suggest. By virtue of this status, poems in the form of *ballata* have always explored a broad range of topics, especially comic.[63] Lorenzo's *ballate,* partly following this tradition and

---

[59] Ficino, *The letters*, vol. 1, p. 35; Ficino, *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, p. 12: 'Misera, quid tantum luges, anima mea? Pone iam finem, o filia, lachrymis. En adsum tibi, pater tuus, adsum medicina salusque tua.'

[60] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Tutte le opere*, vol. 1, pp. 459-460.

[61] Martelli, 'Un caso di *amphibolatio*', pp. 336-337.

[62] See Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento de' miei sonetti*, ed. Tiziano Zanato, Florence, Olschki, 1991, for the critical edition and id., *Tutte le opere*, ed. Paolo Orvieto, 2 vols, Rome, Salerno, 1992, vol. 1, pp. 325-52 for the dating. For the dating of Lorenzo's *ballate* see Paolo Orvieto: 'Carnevale e altre feste fiorentine del tempo di Lorenzo de' Medici' in *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo tempo*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini Florence, Olschki, 1992, pp. 103-124: 110.

[63] For an introduction to the genre *ballata* see Paolo Orvieto and Lucia Brestolini, *La poesia comico-realistica : dalle origini al Cinquecento*, Rome, Carocci, 2000, pp. 167-184.

developing Burchiello's allusive metaphors, stand out for their unique ambiguity, often hinting at sex. Some of the most patent examples of this production are 'In mezzo a una valle è un boschetto' and 'Fra Empoli e Pontolmo'. The first describes the female anatomy through topical images of a *locus amoenus* and the second narrates a sexual encounter through a representation of a nocturnal misadventure in two different roadside inns.[64] This kind of double entendre may be considered an embryonic stage of Carnival songs and of its sub-genre *mascherate*. Lorenzo's *ballate* are narrated in the first person plural and usually portray a group of men representing a guild and describing tools and activities from their professions. These descriptions invariably convey sexual meaning.[65] Of the twenty-nine *ballate* only five are *mascherate*, the remaining twenty-four centring on love, the fleeting pleasures of youth, and laments over the vagaries of Fortune.

Ragionavasi di sodo describes the relationship between husband and wife, but, unlike the other *ballate*, its literal meaning is sexual, while the metaphors allude broadly to philosophy and theology:

> 1   Ragionavasi di sodo,[66]
>   un marito con la moglie:
>   'S'tu non muti viso o voglie,[67]

---

[64] Medici, *Tutte le opere*, vol. 2, pp. 734-735, 775-776.

[65] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Canti carnascialeschi*, ed. Paolo Orvieto, Rome, Salerno, 1991, pp. 17-19. In the notes that follow, I refer to Orvieto's commentary, which focus on the sexual implications in Medici, *Tutte le opere*, vol. 2, pp. 738-740, and Martelli's analysis of the metaphors in 'Un caso di *amphibolatio*', pp. 325-335.

[66] 'di sodo': these words are chosen carefully by Lorenzo as *sodo* is the first half of the word *sodomia*. Although *sodo* is an adjective meaning primarily 'hard', *di sodo* is an adverbial clause that has several meanings. It could mean 'with the flat side of the axe', cf. Franco Sacchetti, *Trecentonovelle*, CX, p. 307: 'Piglia la scure e mena, e dà con essa al porco nel capo; e non gli dié di sodo, ché la scure schianci […].' It can mean 'solidly', cf. Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architetti*, ed. Carlo L. Ragghianti, 4 vols, Milan, Rizzoli, 1943-47, vol. 1, p. 607: 'Hassi a murare di sodo, senza vano'. *Di sodo* always alludes to something full and solid, it metaphorically becomes 'seriously' see Varchi, *Ercolano*, vol. 1, p. 172: '*Favellare in sul saldo*, o *di sodo*, consideratamente, e da senno, e come dicevano i Latini, *extra iocum*, cioè fuor di baja'. Orvieto relies on this meaning. Martelli comments that *sodo* could also be a noun meaning 'promise, guarantee, commitment', but he does not provide any source (p. 326). *Sicurtà* means 'safety' but also 'deposit'; see *Crusca*, s.v.

[67] 'muti viso': Martelli maintained that it would be impossible for the wife to 'change face' (p. 325). 'Mutar viso' can also mean 'to change one's facial expression', and metaphorically 'to change one's attitude'. Cf. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, X, 10, p. 663: 'Le quali parole udendo la donna, senza mutar viso o

io non muterò mai modo'.

5 La sua moglie si dolea
che faceva un certo giuoco,[68]
che veder non lo potea;
e dicea pur: 'muta loco'.
Il marito disse poco:
10 'seguir vo' l'usanza mia:
nol vo' far per altra via,
se miglior ragion non odo'.[69]

'Tu ti se' male allevato[70]
Hai apparato cattiva arte:
15 non è buono alcun mercato,[71]
che non fa per ogni parte'.
Il marito a questa parte:
'Tu ne se' cagion tu stessi,
ché, se miglior viso avessi,[72]
20 non commetterei tal frodo'.[73]

La si dolse co' parenti,
(ma doluto prima gli era)
Co' vicin fe' gran lamenti
e dicea mattina e sera:
25 'Fallo il tuo in tal maniera?
Non par mai che vi s'assetti,[74]
che le lacrime non getti:[75]
pensi ognun com'io ne godo!'.

Disse: 'Porta in sofferenza'[76]
30 il marito; e: 'se t'avvezzi

---

buon proponimento in alcuno atto, disse …'; Niccolò Machiavelli, *Istorie fiorentine*, V.8, in *Opere*, ed. Mario Bonfantini, Milan, Ricciardi, 1954, p. 783: 'Onde che messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi e gli altri capi de' fuori usciti fiorentini vedendo le cose perturbate, e il mondo avere mutato viso'.

[68] 'giuoco': Martelli interpreted it as 'joke' or 'deception'.

[69] 'se miglior ragion non odo': Orvieto argues that this means: 'if you do not propose a better intercourse'.

[70] 'male allevato': Martelli retrieves the etymology of 'allevare', which in Italian would normally mean 'to breed' or 'to raise a child', but derives from the Latin *allevare*, 'to lift up', to 'raise on high'.

[71] 'mercato': Martelli read it as 'pact', agreement'; Orvieto as jargon for 'sexual intercourse'.

[72] 'miglior viso': 'fare buon viso' is 'to be friendly'. 'Miglior' might simply be the comparative for this sentence.

[73] 'non commetterei tal frodo': 'frodo' for Martelli is meant in its technical sense, 'fraud'. To Orvieto the whole sentence means 'I would not have to practice sodomy'.

[74] 'non par mai che vi s'assetti': to Martelli *parere* is phraseological, the whole sentence means 'every time he approaches me'.

[75] 'che le lagrime non getti': to Martelli the subject is the wife herself, 'io'; to Orvieto the subject is the husband, and therefore *lagrime*, 'tears', would be a metaphor of sperm.

[76] 'Porta in sofferenza': Martelli argues that the sentence is biblical (*Rom*. 9 22, 'Sustinuit in multa patientia').

<div align="center">

aver meco pazienzia,
non vorrai che 'l modo sprezzi;
e dirai ti faccia vezzi.
Se tu gusti il giuoco mio,
35   tu dirai quel che dico io:
che sia questo il proprio modo'.[77]

</div>

Given that many of the *ballate* carry a double entendre, this more explicit text appears incongruous in Lorenzo's wider comic corpus. In Martelli's words, however: 'it soon becomes apparent that the easier interpretation is the harder: which is to say that the deceiving senses lie to us and they lead us down a blind alley.'[78]

To summarize the literal meaning, a husband and a wife discuss their sexual habits. While the wife complains that she cannot see her husband and asks him to change position, alluding to sodomy (lines 5-8), the husband would be keen to change only if his wife changed attitude or if she provided a valid reason (lines 3-4, 9-12). Their relationship is not fair as it would not satisfy both of them, claims the wife (lines 13-16). In his eyes, as she does not change her behaviour, she is responsible for their misery (lines 17-20). She complains about him to her neighbours and relatives, asking whether their husbands behave likewise (lines 21-25) and describing her suffering (lines 26-28). The husband, in a final attempt to convince her, invites her to be patient as she is finally going to appreciate his 'way' and she is eventually going to admit that she enjoys their sex life (lines 29-36).

The text also has an allegorical meaning – once we recognise the husband and wife represent God and the soul. First we must consider the influence on the *ballata* of the Book of Jeremiah (31, 31-34) in which God promises to restore his relationship with the Israelites. This text from the Old Testament is woven into Lorenzo's sonnet XV of the *Comento*, which reports almost literally some of Jeremiah's words.[79] God's words to the Israelites are about a new alliance, *novus foedum*, that have the following consequences: 'There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, Learn to know Yahweh! No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is Yahweh who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call

---

[77] Medici, *Tutte le opere*, vol. 2, pp. 738-740.

[78] Martelli, 'Un caso di *amphibolatio*', p. 328: 'L'interpretazione più facile si rivela ben presto la più difficile: che è come dire che il senso ingannatore ci mente e ci avvia per una strada senza uscita'.

[79] Id., 'Un nuovo autografo laurenziano', *Interpres*, 5, 1983-84, pp. 45-69: 67-69.

<div align="center">

167

</div>

their sin to mind […].'[80] In other words, men will come to know God directly, without intermediaries.

The *ballata* focuses on this *novus foedum* and on God's disregard for it. The soul in 'Ragionavasi di sodo', laments that He is still invisible to her (lines 5-8) and stresses the inequity of their relationship (lines 13-16). A good pact, she remarks, would satisfy both parties (lines 15-16) but He has broken their pact. He moved out of her sight from her so that she could not see Him, or know Him. She suffers and laments her pain in her canonical prayers with those directly related to God – Christ and the Virgin Mary – and with those close to Him, angels and saints (lines 21-28). God's reason for breaking his promise (line 20) is the soul herself. In order to satisfy her request, He needs her to change first, to purify herself from any evil (lines 3-4; 10-13; 18-20). God's final request to the soul is to be patient and bear sufferance; she would eventually recognize His way as the best. God, by referring to the virtue of patience, implicitly appeals to two of the theological virtues required from anyone, faith and hope. Moreover, the soul must experience pain in her worldly life in the journey towards God.

Although there are no clues in the poem hinting at Ficino, it is not unlikely that Lorenzo had him in mind. The debate on the nature of the soul and its immortality dominated Florentine intellectual debate, as contemporary satire demonstrates, and Ficino was its protagonist. One example has already been provided (see Ch. 4, p. 117) with Matteo Franco's poem 'Tanta eloquentia, eloquentiami drieto!', against the speculations on the soul and another by Luigi Pulci, who questioned the validity of such speculation (see 'Costor che fan sì gran disputazione', Chapter 7, p. 236).

A connection between 'Ragionavasi di sodo' and Ficino's writings is possibly found in *De christiana religione*, written in 1473-74. Chapter XXIV quotes several passages from the prophets of the Old Testament, with the aim of demonstrating how the prophecies reported before the coming of Christ are fulfilled in Christ himself, and how the Jews continue to wait for a Messiah that has already come. Among the prophets quoted we also find the passage of Jeremiah used by Lorenzo and, although Jeremiah is cited in numerous other passages of the treatise (Chapters XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXI), this specific quotation is a literal transcription of Lorenzo's reference:

---

[80] 'et non docebunt ultra vir proximum suum, et vir fratrem suum dicens cognosce dominum omnes enim cognocent me a minimo eorum usque ad maximum ait Dominus quia propitiabor iniquitati eorum et peccati eorum non ero memor amplius'.

Promette Idd[i]o in queste parole fare qualche volta patto e testamento nuovo: et dare nuova leggie differente da quella che dette a Moisè poi che aveva liberati e' Giudei dagli Egiptii. Et permette di non la scrivere in tavole più, ma nelle menti, significando che quella prima si potea spegnere ma non la seconda, e che le cirimonie vechie, dopo la introductione del testamento nuovo, secondo intelligentia spirituale observare si dovevono. Certo, come iscrive Pagolo appostolo, quando el propheta dice 'pacto' et 'testamento nuovo' significa che l'altro invechiava et poteva morire. Ma quando fu questo: quando s'adempie quello decto: 'Io gli vedrò e sarò loro Iddio', etc cetera, vede sempre Iddio coll'intellecto gli huomini ma etiam con oc[c]hi gli vidde quando assunse l'uomo dico quello huomo el quale dagli uomini veramente fu stimato Iddio.[81]

Here Ficino gives another interpretation of Jeremiah's words by maintaining that it is God that, with the *novus foedum*, sees the soul directly and not vice versa.

'Ragionavasi di sodo' is Lorenzo's innovative contribution to the tradition of the satire of philosophy. The text, unlike the *Simposio*, is not related to its immediate predecessors; rather it merges two other traditional comic forms, the *ballata*, as already pointed out, and another form called *contrasto*. *Contrasto* is originally a troubadour genre that became widespread in Italy, mainly in poetry. Its distinctive characteristic was that it develops a dramatic dialogue between two or more characters. The most notable examples are by Iacopone da Todi, Bonvesin da la Riva (c. 1245-c. 1315) Cielo d'Alcamo (13th cent.) and Cecco Angiolieri (c. 1260-c. 1313). The last became a master, so to speak, of the vernacular *contrasto* in the form of the sonnet, as a parody of courtly poetry and *stilnovismo*. His best know *contrasto* is '"Becchin' amor!" – "Che vuo' falso tradito?"', a bitter exchange between Cecco and his lover Becchina, who rejects him. Another, '"Oncia di carne, libra di malizia"' is a more explicit dialogue on sex, which the cruel Becchina denies Cecco. Recalling these comic antecedents Lorenzo referred to a wider and older vernacular tradition, and not only did he knowingly allude to sodomy, but he lowered the sacred and celebrated relationship of the soul and God to a domestic argument between husband and wife.

One strong element of continuity with the other authors, nevertheless, exists. Personifying God and the soul by following Ficino's citation of St Augustine falls into the category of satire outlined in Chapter 4 in relation to Braccesi's poem 'La gola, el ventre, el lezo pidochiume' (see pp. 138). We do not know exactly when Braccesi depicted a personification of Philosophy recalling medieval allegories and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, but it is clear that this form of satire had become more

---

[81] Marsilio Ficino, *Libro di Marsilio Ficino fiorentino Della cristiana religione ad Bernardo del Nero clarissimo cittadino fiorentino*, Florence, 1476, ff. 98r-98v.

commonly acknowledged and more consistently formulated by the end of the century. The final and most meaningful example of this is given at Chapter 7 (see p. 249) in a discussion of a *contrasto* by Pulci.

Given this, 'Ragionavasi di sodo' was the most sophisticated example of satire of philosophy in the Quattrocento. The implications of the *novus foedum* do not only pertain to theology but also the very core of Ficino's philosophical system.

CHAPTER 6

LUIGI PULCI AND MARSILIO FICINO

Luigi Pulci (1432-1484) is one of the most distinctive writers of the Florentine Quattrocento. His chivalric poem *Morgante* was instantly successful and remained popular in the centuries that followed because of its original language and the way it related a combination of traditional chivalry stories, biblical allegories and themes from classical literature and comic-realism.

Pulci was of noble family, the second brother of three with Luca and Bernardo, both of whom also wrote poetry. During Pulci's youth the family fell into hardship. Work on Pulci usually associates him with the Medici household on account of his friendship with Lorenzo de' Medici. Recent studies have confirmed, however, that Pulci's first patron was in fact Francesco di Matteo Castellani (1418-1494), another Florentine aristocrat who employed the young Pulci as a secretarial assistant and for his poetic skills.[1] Pulci probably served both Castellani and the Medici family for some time during the early 1460s, while dealing with the substantial economic debts of his family and especially those of his older brother Luca. Because of these debts, Pulci and his siblings were temporarily exiled from Florence in 1466 and even the death of Luca in 1470 did not help Luigi's finances. These difficulties were often eased by Lorenzo de' Medici, who saw in Pulci a faithful servant and a master of comic poetry.[2] In addition to the fact that Lucrezia Tornabuoni, the wife of Piero de' Medici, appointed Pulci to write a chivalric poem that later became the *Morgante*, the appreciation of the Medici family is also evident in Lorenzo's early comic writings, which were much influenced by Pulci's style. It even seems – if we are to believe Pulci's letters – that at this time Pulci and Lorenzo wrote poetry together.[3]

Pulci, unlike his father and despite his commitments to the Medici, was never appointed a magistrate by the Signoria. By contrast, his *concittadino* Bartolomeo Scala, a 'mere' miller's son, was able to embark on a political career that led him first to the position of

---

[1] Carlo Carnesecchi, 'Per la biografia di Luigi Pulci', *Archivio storico italiano*, 17, 1896, pp. 371-379; see also Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 49-80.

[2] Lorenzo's financial help is mentioned in several letters: e.g. Letter XXIII in Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, p. 975.

[3] Ibid., letters II, VIII, XX, XXX, pp. 939, 952, 971, 984.

chancellor of the *Parte guelfa* (1459) and then to chancellor of the Signoria (1465). The apparent injustice, given the difference between the Pulci and Scala families, angered Luigi and he subsequently attacked Bartolomeo in his poetry.[4] Pulci's deep resentment is clear in a series of poems: 'E' c'è venuto un soffrittar da Siena', 'Messer, noi farem poi mala farina', 'La poesia contende con lo staio', 'Venganne tutti i tuoi tabelloni', 'Messer Bartolomeo de' bell'inchini', 'I' piglierò pe' pellicini il sacco'. [5] Chronologically speaking, this is the first time (as far as we know) that Pulci employed his poetic gift to criticize or condemn a rival.[6] This resentment never left Pulci who, without an institutional role, served Lorenzo's personal and diplomatic needs. For example, Pulci accompanied Lorenzo's wife Clarice on a trip to Rome; he persuaded scholars who had left the Florentine Studio for Bologna, Ferrara, and Padua to return to Florence; and, most importantly, Pulci frequently accompanied the mercenary *condottiero* Roberto Sanseverino (1418-1487) as an observer.[7] From the late 1460s to his death, Pulci was in charge of assisting Sanseverino, who was hired first by Francesco and then by Galeazzo Maria Sforza, both allies of the Medici. When the duke of Milan was murdered in 1476, Lorenzo managed to prevent Sanseverino being hired by his opponents. Lorenzo also attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to have Sanseverino work for the city of Florence using Pulci as a mediatior.[8] Clearly, Lorenzo trusted Pulci in this and other delicate duties. This was the case for over a decade until the end of his life. Pulci died in Padova while on yet another mission with Sanseverino.[9]

---

[4] Alison Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430-1497, Chancellor of Florence: the Humanist as Bureaucrat*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 28, 42. See also Letter XXII (1472) in which Pulci requested the office of magistrate and reminded Lorenzo that his father had been magistrate. Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, pp. 973-974. In Letter XXIII it is clear that Lorenzo's efforts on Pulci's behalf were unsuccessful and Pulci did not obtain a *mazzocchio*, the 'magistrate's hat'. Ibid., p. 975.

[5] *SE*, pp. 17-27.

[6] Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 55-71.

[7] For the trip with Clarice Orsini in 1472; see Pulci's letters XXIV-XXVI in Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, pp. 977-982. A description of Pulci's mission for the Studio is described in Verde, Armando Felice. *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473-1503: ricerche e documenti*. Vol. 4.1, *La vita universitaria. Gli statuti; Anni scolastici 1473/74 - 1481/82*, Florence, Olschki, 1985, vol. 4.1, pp. 130, 202. Franco satirized Pulci's allegedly unsuccesful mission to Pisa in Pulci and Franco, *Il* Libro dei sonetti, XXXVI.1-4, p. 44: 'Odi all'orecchio un po', che nissun oda;/ per gli scolari nel Padovano andasti,/ ingiustamente quanti ne 'nfamasti,/ perché non ti facevon drieto coda.'

[8] Verde, *Lo Studio* vol. 4.1, p. 202.

[9] Lorenz Böninger, 'Notes on the Last Years of Luigi Pulci (1477-1484)', *Rinascimento*, 27, 1987, pp. 259-271: 267-268.

Pulci wrote constantly and, alongside his *Morgante*, there is a vast production of short poems, many of which have a specific addressee. In most poems Pulci made these addressees a target of satire, this was the case for Bartolomeo Scala. Prominent among the addressees are also hypocritical Christian worshippers, depicted for example in 'In principio era buio, e buio fia' and 'Questi che vanno tanto a San Francesco'.[10] Pulci here aimed at ridiculing the hypocrisy of pilgrims ('In principio era buio e' buio fia' was probably written during the Jubilee of 1475) and friars who, in his eyes, sinned repeatedly and drank hidden in taverns while all the time maintaining a superficial public face of penance and piety. In a third poem, 'Poich'io partii da voi, Bartolomeo', Pulci writes a methodical parody of a range of Biblical episodes: from the disciple Peter walking on the water with Jesus (Matthew 14:22-33) to Samson's strength (Judges, 13-16) and from Moses crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17-14:29) to the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Besides parodies of religious import, other conflicts influenced his writing while Pulci was part of the Medici household. He had two noteworthy conflicts that left traces in written documents, especially letters and sonnets. One gave rise to the tenso with Matteo Franco, discussed in Ch. 4 above (pp. 102), which took place from 1473 to 1476.[11] Some years later, probably after Pulci's death, Franco organized the poems in a collection that was subsequently printed with some success, as already mentioned in Chapter 4 (p. 108).[12] The second occurred with Ficino, in letters, sonnets and in part of the *Morgante*.

The parody of religion, the mocking of hypocrites and his dispute with Ficino contribute to the sense that Pulci was more a 'medieval' than a Renaissance man. This interpretation is set out in Paolo Orvieto's *Pulci medievale*. Orvieto points to Pulci's profanity, aggressive behaviour and quasi-banishment from Florence to argue that Pulci's work provoked much controversy.[13] This interpretation, however, has been recently questioned. According to Alessandro Polcri, there is no conclusive evidence showing that Pulci became an outcast, either culturally or politically. Moreover, especially in light of the trust that Lorenzo undoubtedly put in Pulci as a mediator

---

[10] Pulci, *Opere minori*, pp. 198-199. Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 81-82. *SE*, p. 77, p. 86.

[11] Stefano Carrai, *Le muse dei Pulci: studi su Luca e Luigi Pulci.* Naples, Guida, 1985, pp. 75-84.

[12] Decaria, 'Il Pulci ritrovato', pp. 259-262.

[13] See Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 213-243.

between him and Roberto Sanseverino, it becomes problematic to conclude that the Medici really wanted to drive him out of Florence.[14]

The controversies that surrounded Pulci are of great interest. The following pages focus on one particular part of Pulci's life and work, his dispute and tenso with Marsilio Ficino. Their aim is to explain the complexity of a relationship that had alternate phases and that resulted in some of the sharpest and most elaborate satire of philosophy of the fifteenth century.

6.1 Pulci and Ficino. Evidence of their dispute

Evidence that Pulci and Ficino engaged in a dispute comes from both participants. Ficino explicitly attacked Pulci in four letters of his epistolary, two of them in the first book and two in the third. None are dated. The oldest manuscript of the first book of letters dates back to 1475, which thereby becomes their *terminus ad quem*, and it contains one letter to Bernardo Pulci and one to Bernardo Rucellai (113 and 114), Pulci's friend and Lorenzo's brother-in-law respectively.[15] Both are entitled *Contra mendaces et impios detractores*, 'Against liars and impious slanderers'. In these letters Ficino showed no mercy in depicting Pulci's faults and, although they do not go into great detail, it is evident that Ficino refers to Pulci's behaviour as well as to his writings (I, 113):[16]

> I cannot deny that a man is a liar who exercises a venomous tongue and pen irreverently and insolently against divine majesty, which is truth itself.

In the letter to Rucellai, Ficino was understandably less cautious. He uses therefore many realistic metaphors in describing Pulci, who is compared to a 'dog that barks' and has a 'foul mouth' and a 'corrupt mind'. Ficino also emphasizes, once again, the impiety of Pulci's writings (I, 114):[17]

---

[14] See Polcri, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 5-35.

[15] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, XC sup. 40; see Ficino, *Lettere*, vol. 1, pp. XCVIII-XCIX.

[16] Ficino, *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 168; id., *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, vol. 1, p. 198: 'Negare non possum eum esse mendacem, qui contra maiestatem divinam, que infinita veritas est, venenosam linguam calamumque tam impie tamque insolenter exercet.'

[17] Ibid., p. 170; id. *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, vol. 1, p. 220: 'Quonam pacto potest insanus, qui Deum odit, homines ullos, qui Dei imagines sunt, diligere? Rogas me ut eum quibuscunque possum rationibus corrigam: littus arare me iubes. Nemo infestius, nemo rursus ineptius contra res divinas invehitur quam

174

How can a madman, who hates God, love men who are the images of God? You ask me to correct him with whatever principles I can. You ask me to plough the sea shore. No one attacks divine matters more aggressively nor more foolishly than that little man you ask me to correct. That Thersites should be punished rather than corrected. What an abomination, that he should with impunity disgorge such invective from his venomous mouth against God!

In the oldest manuscript of this first book of letters we find another undated letter that follows the letters currently numbered 113 and 114 and addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, entitled *Gravis est iactura tempori* (the title later became *Tempus parce expendendum*). Here Ficino warns Lorenzo against 'flatterers and disparagers', alluding, probably, to Pulci.[18]

Two more letters in the third book (5 and 6) are entitled *Maledici contemnendi*, 'Slanderers are to be scorned'. The letters are dated between 1476 and 1478 and are addressed to Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici. From their tone it is possible to assume that Ficino had been insulted rather personally by this stage (III, 5):[19]

So let that little imp bite your Christian priests with impunity, as he was long ago allowed to bite Christ. Let the mob judge at random a teaching which is scarcely known even to the very few. Let little men, who have no sense, pass sentence as they please on my life, which is known to God alone.

Perhaps for this reason, in the same letter, Ficino mentions philosophy as the weapon to fight such assaults:[20]

Thus the lofty ramparts of sacred Philosophy keep all such trifles far from us. Yet today the same Philosophy gives me one bidding, that I should indicate to you the very way to discharge your duty as you have done most diligently for us at other times.

Further, in the letter to Giuliano there is helpful detail on the nature of the argument which concerned the soul and God (I, 6):[21]

---

iste homuncio quem emendare me rogas; puniendus est potius Tersites iste quam castigandus. Proh nefas! Impune invectivas multas ore venenoso evomuit contra Deum.'

[18] This letter is now number 84; see id., *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 132; id., *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, vol. 1, p. 148. Gentile has pointed out the changed sequence of these letters; see Ficino, *Lettere*, vol. 1, p. CCLXIX. See also Polcri, *Luigi Pulci*, p. 45 and Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 219-221.

[19] Ficino, *The Letters*, vol. 2, p. 12; id. *Opera*, p. 755: 'Liceat ergo, liceat impiolo illi christos tuos impune tangere, cui iamdiu licuit christum. Sit passim doctrine iudex vulgus, quae vix nota ets que paucissimis. Forat ut libet homunculi, quibus nulla sententia est de mea vita sententiam, quae soli nota est Deo.'

[20] Id., *The Letters*, vol. 2, p. 12; id., *Opera omnia*. 2 vols, Basilea, officina Henricpetrina, 1576 (reprint Turin, Bottega d'Erasmo, 1962), vol. 1, p. 755: 'Omnes igitur eiusmodi nugas sacrae Philosophiae parietes altissimi a vobis longius arcent: hoc tamen unum ipsa me Philosophiae hodie monet, utrem ipsam tibi significem, quo officio tuo fungaris, quemadmodum alias in re nistra diligentissime es perfunctus.'

I am not surprised that that dog constantly snarls at me, for it is his custom to snarl at good men and men of learning, as it is his custom to snarl at the soul and at God.

A last letter, dated 1 January 1477 (1476 Florentine calendar) and addressed to Giovanni Cavalcanti, reports that Giuliano and Lorenzo reprehended Pulci (III, 36): [22]

A few days ago, the two Medici each used against our adversaries in our cause not only rebuke but even invective. Lest, perchance, I should send anything beyond letters, whether of a public or private nature, to you, now avid for letters alone, farewell.

The 'invective', however, does not seem to have had serious consequences on Pulci's relationship with Lorenzo, as we read in a letter of 3 January, 1477. Pulci here confirms his loyalty to Lorenzo, after dealing with some urgent matters – the Duke of Milan had just been murdered.[23]

There is no reply to any of these letters, so we do not know whether Bernardo Pulci did complain about his brother or whether Rucellai asked Ficino to bring Luigi back to the 'righteous path' or whether these letters were part of an attempt by Ficino to discredit Pulci.

References to Pulci are to be found in other letters and in some of his philosophical works too there are allusions to Pulci. In these cases, however, Pulci is not targeted for his blasphemy. For example, it has been noted how in the concluding paragraph of his *De vita Platonis*, written by 1477, Ficino albeit without naming him, attacked Pulci:[24]

There are certain vulgar verse-makers, who undeservedly grab for themselves the name of poet […]. Once, similar poetasters did not think twice about biting the divine Plato, considered by the Greeks the son of Apollo, and Socrates, considered by Apollo the

---

[21] Id., *The Letters*, vol. 2, p. 13; id. *Opera*, vol. 1, p. 755: 'Quod canis ille continue contra ma latret, quemadmodum contra bonos doctosque viros, animamque ed Deum, semper est solitus.'

[22] Id., *The Letters,* vol. 2, p. 44; id., *Opera*, vol. 1, pp. 736-737: 'Medices utrique paucis ante diebus in causa nostra adversus adversarios nostros non correptione tantum usi sunt, sed etiam invective. Verum ne quid praetor literas ad te literarum nunc solum avidum forte mittam vel publicum, vel privatum.'

[23] Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, p. 1000. For the relationship of the two letters, see Polcri, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 48-49.

[24] Ficino, *Opera*, vol. 1, p. 770: 'Sunt plebei quidam versificatores, qui immerito poetarum sibi nomen usurpant […].Tales igitur olim poeticuli divum Platonem a Graecis Apollinis filium et Socratem ab Apolline Graecorum sapientissimum iudicatum, mordere non dubitarunt. […] Qui sicut alios plerosque modestissimos doctissimosque ficta quadam historia vituperavit […].Obmutescant igitur apud superos inferni canes atque apud inferos latratu Cerberum comitentur.' *De vita Platonis* has been dated to 1477 by Kristeller; see id., *Supplementum Ficinianum*, vol. 1, pp. 100-101. The first to notice the allusion to Pulci in this description was Verde in *Lo Studio*, vol. 4.1, p. 314; then Michael Allen, 'Ficino's lecture on the Good?', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30, 1977, pp. 160-171: 162-163; then Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 209-213.

wisest among Greeks. […] He vituperated others in this way, most of them very upright and learned, with some false story […]. May they fall silent, then, among the afterworld's dogs of Hell and may they join Cerberus in barking in Hell.[25]

Ficino had already denounced comic poets in his *In Philelbum* (I.17) of 1469, expressing ideas found in Plato's works.[26] That this is not an invective aimed at comic poets in general but rather at Pulci in particular is clear from the reference to Cerberus, also found in the letter to Bernardo Rucellai mentioned above:

> […] he joins Cerberus in barking even after he is dead![27]

Here Ficino's evocation of Cerberus, the mythical dog from the underworld, may be seen as a *signum* that helped Ficino to refer to Pulci indirectly. The same use of a classical metaphor is made by Ficino with the giants. We can assume that this is another *signum* of Pulci, who was famously short:[28]

> Do not be too disturbed Bernardo, if giant Pulci snarls ferociously at everybody. […] Now you are striving in vain to correct that lost soul, the giant Pulci […]. It is said that in ancient times a presumptuous war was declared by the Giants against Jupiter, but in these times a pathetic war has been declared by dwarves against the most high God.

Giants also appear in the *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum*. Written between 1475 and 1477, in the *Disputatio* Ficino gives his opinion on astrologers and muses on how useless it would be to foresee future events in order to avoid them or change them:

> So pray arise, philosophers. Arise all you who yearn for freedom and most precious peace. Come, gird yourselves now with the shield and spear of Pallas. War is impending for us against those petty ogres. By foreknowledge of the future they presume to equate

---

[25] Ficino, *Opera*, vol. 1, p. 770: 'Sunt plebei quidam versificatores, qui immerito poetarum sibi nomen usurpant […].Tales igitur olim poeticuli divum Platonem a Graecis Apollinis filium et Socratem ab Apolline Graecorum sapientissimum iudicatum, mordere non dubitarunt. […] Qui sicut alios plerosque modestissimos doctissimosque ficta quadam historia vituperavit […].Obmutescant igitur apud superos inferni canes atque apud inferos latratu Cerberum comitentur.'

[26] See Michael Allen, *Synoptic Art*: *Marsilio Ficino on the History of Platonic Interpretation*, Florence, Olschki, 1998, pp. 94-123.

[27] Ficino, *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 169; id., *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, vol. 1, p. 199: '[…] nisi forte etiam post mortem latratu Cerberum comitentur.' The words used here in the passage of *De vita Platonis* are identical.

[28] Id., *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 170. The letters were translated by the members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, based on the text of a manuscript witness (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 797). In other versions of the text Pulci's name disappears, see for example Gentile's edition, id., *Lettere*, ed. Gentile, vol. 1, pp. 114-115: 'Noli nimium turbari, Bernarde, si ille omnes tam turpiter latrat […]. At tu frustra conaris istum perditum emendare […]. Gloriosum bellum Iovi quondam a Gigantibus indictum fuisse narratur, ignominiosum summo Deo his temporibus a pigmeis.'

themselves with God, who is infinite. By upholding heavenly fate, they presume to take away freedom of direction from God, who is above the heavens, and who is the highest freedom. But those who aspire with such arrogance to climb the world of the gods will in humiliation be cast down headlong to the infernal regions. Almighty God, extend your hand to us from on high. Give your soldiers strength; for now we are undertaking to defend your sovereignty.[29]

Ficino defines those who try to forecast the future as *nefarios gigantulos* (literally 'ill-doing little giants'), a curious image, since giants cannot be small, with the exception perhaps of 'the giant Pulci'. Of note also is that one of the most popular characters in the poem *Morgante* appears a demi-giant: Margutte wanted to be a giant but changed his mind to eventually become a 'little giant' (XVIII.114). Mythical creatures aside, Pulci also dealt with astrology in the *Morgante* and he said of himself that he had tried to read the future by using magic.[30] The connection between the introductory section of Ficino's *Disputatio* and Pulci's epic is unmistakable.

Judging by his writings, Ficino sought to convey to others that Pulci's main fault was impiety and disrespect towards religious institutions. In *De vita Platonis* and *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum*, however, Ficino had Pulci in mind but did not deem it necessary to point directly at him and so used only vague metaphors.

On the other hand, Ficino is mentioned only once in Pulci's letters, and not, perhaps surprisingly, in a negative way. In a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici Pulci expresses great anguish on account of Franco's attacks on him (the letter is not dated but we can assume that it belongs to the period of the tenso, 1473-1476). He gives here an account of how he had asked Ficino to give a message to Lorenzo (XXXVI, 'per messer Marsilio hiersera gliel dixi').[31]

---

[29] Id., *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 76-7; id., *Opera*, p. 781: 'Surgite igitur philosophi precor, surgite omnes libertatis tranquillitatisque pretiosissime cupidi, eia agite, iam accingite vos clypeo Palladis atque hasta, bellum in præsentia nobis imminent contra nefarios gigantulos illos, qui et futurorum præscentia Deo prorsus immenso se æquare conantur et fati cœlitis defensione supercœlestis Dei, qui est summa libertas liberum imperium auferre. Sed qui tam superbe ad superos ascendere moliuntur, miserabiliter præcipitabuntur ad inferos. Porrige manum nobis ex alto Deus omnipotens, vires tuis militibus subministra, tuum istud defendere imperium.'

[30] References to giants and Cerberus can also be found in some of Franco's poems against Pulci; see Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 227-228.

[31] Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, p. 992.

One of Pulci's letters and a passage in the *Morgante* also refer to an 'academia'; both vaguely hint at some disagreement.[32] For this reason it has been suggested that the argument between Pulci and Ficino started as early as 1473 (the date of the letter), when Ficino possibly was the head of a purported Platonic 'Academy'. The use of this word, however, does not prove that Ficino was necessarily involved; further, the notion that there was such a thing as a Florentine Platonic Academy centred around Ficino only became accepted in the sixteenth century. The word 'academia' was employed during the same years to refer to other groups of intellectuals, such as that gathered around John Argyropoulos.[33]

Also of interest is that Pulci would include many of his personal issues in poetry, as seen above with the examples of the poems addressed to Scala and Franco. There are, therefore, several unsparing depictions of Ficino, mainly in four sonnets and in the *Morgante*. The four sonnets are: 'Marsilio, questa tua philosophia', 'Buona sera, o messer, vien za, va drento', 'O venerabil gufo soriano' and 'Se Dio ti guardi, Marsilio Ficino'. These are discussed in Chapter 8 (pp. 222-241). One more sonnet, probably written by Pulci with his friend Benedetto Dei, 'Costor che fan sì gran disputazione', is a parody of the Ficinian theories on the soul.[34]

The sonnets leave no doubt as to Pulci's opinion on Ficino, albeit providing little evidence on the nature of their dispute, the evidence afforded by the *Morgante* is more revealing but fraught with complications. The interpretation proposed in the pages

[32] Letter XXXII (31st August 1473), ibid., p. 986: 'Tu harai detto ch'io affrettai il partire per non trovarmi coll'accademia. Lasciagli venire in qua, et sentirai ch'io te ne scardassi qualcuno. So mi capiteranno alle mani, et da lloro sapremo come andorno le muse; et se io non havessi havuto gran fretta ti contentavo costì; ma io ti farò più honore di qua, dove molti udiranno.' Stanza XXV.117 in the *Morgante* is more vague: 'La mia accademia un tempo o mia ginnasia/ è stata volentier ne' miei boschetti,/ e puossi ben veder l'Affrica e l'Asia:/ vengon le ninfe con lor canestretti/ e portanmi o narciso o colocasia,/ e così fuggo mille urban dispetti;/ sì ch'io non torno a' vostri arïopaghi,/ gente pur sempre di mal dicer vaghi.'

[33] Hankins challenged the notion of the Florentine Academy, while the same idea has been defended by Arthur Field; see James Hankins, 'The Myth of the Platonic Academy in Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44, 1991, pp. 429-475: 439-440; Arthur Field, 'The Platonic Academy of Florence' in *Marsilio Ficino : his theology, his philosophy, his legacy*, eds Michael J.B. Allen, Martin Davies, Valery Rees, Leiden, Brill, 2002, pp. 359-376. An example of how the word *accademia* was commonly used during this period is found in a letter by Agnolo della Stufa that referred to the 'academici dell'Argiropulo'; see Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala*, p. 42.

[34] Paolo Orvieto, 'A proposito del sonetto "Costor che fan sì gran disputazione" e dei sonetti responsivi', *Interpres*, 4, 1981-82, pp. 400-413.

below is that the final section (Cantos XXIV-XXV) of the *Morgante* should be regarded as an experimental phase in which Pulci, before his dispute with Ficino, sought to write a heroic-poem inspired by Ficino's Neoplatonic philosophy. After the rupture with Ficino, Pulci began depicting him, from Canto XXVI to Canto XXVIII, as King Marsilione.

Before setting out this interpretation in detail, we need: a) to see how Pulci's characterization of King Marsilione changes from Canto XXV to Canto XXVI; and b) to revise the dating of the last five Cantos of the poem.

6.2 The 'second poem': Cantos XXIV-XXVIII

On February 7th, 1483 the printer Francesco di Dino completed the first printed edition of the *Morgante* in twenty-eight Cantos, a chivalric poem inspired by the Carolingian *Chansons de Geste*, the medieval literary cycles on the adventures of Charlemagne. Pulci drew on this tradition and its stories of the struggle between Christendom and Islam in his mock-heroic epic. His version includes many elements of burlesque, grotesque and comic.

The poem had circulated before November 1478 in manuscripts containing a shorter version of twenty-three Cantos.[35] Pulci had begun this first part in 1461, when Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Piero de' Medici's wife and mother of Lorenzo de' Medici, asked him to write a chivalric poem on Charlemagne. Exactly when Pulci began writing the last five Cantos is unclear. It has been supposed that they were written shortly after 1478, but their heterogeneity has led scholars to propose various dates. Clues for dating the last six Cantos include the allusion to the death of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, which occurred on March 25, 1482 (XXVIII.132) and a reference to Girolamo Savonarola's first sermons in Florence during the Advent of 1482 (XXVIII.42-45).[36] As for the other Cantos, the evidence is ambiguous, for example the bestiary – a list of mythical animals used for the purposes explained below (see p. 188) – in Canto XXV (322-331), derived from Albert the Great's *De animalibus* and Pliny's *Naturalis historia*. It has been assumed that Pulci

---

[35] Franca Brambilla Ageno, 'Le tre redazioni del Morgante', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 9, 1951, pp. 5-37.

[36] Carrai, *Le muse dei Pulci*, pp. 173-187.

used the edition of *De animalibus* printed in Mantua in early January 1479, and Cristoforo Landino's vernacular translation of *Historia naturalis*, printed in 1476.[37]

No autograph manuscript of the *Morgante* survives and we must rely on the printed editions to infer that the two sections of the poem, Cantos I-XXIII and Cantos XXIV-XXVIII (Canto XXIII is still part of the 'first poem' from the point of view of content) are, in some ways, distinct. Their main differences are the following:

1. The first part of the *Morgante* is a collection of stories, each loosely linked to the others. The narrator does not pay special attention to creating a consistent macro-structure. The reason for this apparent haphazardness is perhaps that the *Morgante* was composed episode by episode and not homogeneously, each story being created perhaps to be read aloud.[38] Hence many themes are replicated in different episodes and the characters retain the same behaviour throughout the Cantos. The second part of the poem, by contrast, focusses narrowly on the Battle of Roncevaux. Pulci, however, added some original features to the standard plot.[39]

2. The stated aim of the *Morgante* is to celebrate Charlemagne (I.4-5). Pulci, however, did not accomplish this task in the 'first poem', which amounts to a list of the adventures of the French paladins.[40] The discrepancy between Pulci's target and the actual contents of these Cantos has been partially explained by the discovery of a source, the anonymous poem later named *Orlando laurenziano*, which Pulci followed closely.[41] In the 'second poem' Pulci reinforces his desire to celebrate Charlemagne's life, this time accomplished in his account of the Battle

---

[37] Luigi Pulci, *Morgante*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno, Milan, Ricciardi, 1955, p. 922.

[38] Carrai, '*Morgante* di Luigi Pulci', pp. 769-789.

[39] Franca Brambilla Ageno, 'Scelta linguistica e reazione antiletteraria nel *Morgante*', *Lettere Italiane*, 7, 1955, pp. 113-129 113-129.

[40] Mark Davie, *Half-Serious Rhymes: the Narrative Poetry of Luigi Pulci*, Ballsbridge, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1998, pp. 13-15.

[41] See Pio Rajna, 'La materia del *Morgante* in un ignoto poema del sec. XV', *Propugnatore*, 2, 1869, pp. 7-384: 7-32, 220-252, 353-584. For the debate around this discovery see Brambilla Ageno,'Scelta linguistica', pp. 113-129; Carlo Dionisotti, '*Entrée d'Espagne, Spagna, Rotta di Roncisvalle*' in *Studi in onore di Angelo Monteverdi*, ed. Giuseppina Gerardi Marcuzzo, 2 vols, Società tipografica editrice modenese, Modena, 1959, vol. 1, pp. 207-24: 207-241; Paolo Orvieto, 'Sul rapporto *Morgante - Orlando laurenziano*' in *Ritterepik der Renaissance: Akten des deutsch-italienischen Kolloquiums, Berlin, 30.3-2.4.1987*, ed. Klaus W. Hempfer. Stuttgart, Steiner, 1989, pp. 146-152: 146-152; Davie, *Half-Serious Rhymes*, pp. 33-63.

of Roncevaux and of Charlemagne's legendary (XXVIII.53-57) and historical life (XXXVIII.67-104).[42]

3. Unlike the 'first poem', the last five Cantos often assert the veracity of the narrative by recalling sources, *auctoritates*. For Charlemagne's legendary life, Pulci names a 'citarista Lattanzio, [...] molto gentil, molto famoso artista' who lived in Aachen (XXVIII.53 1-3) but, in fact, he quotes Andrea da Barberino's poems (c.1370- c.1441) *Reali di Francia* and *Aspramonte* and another anonymous poem, *Spagna in rima*. For the historical account of Charlemagne's life, Pulci mentioned Alcuin of York, although he actually quotes Donato Acciaiuoli's *Vita Caroli Magni*. He also cites someone called Arnaldo (XXV.115, 169; XXVII.80; XXVIII.26), who is an imaginary source.[43] Pulci also quotes the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi* (XXVII.69, 72, 257), which he believed had been written by Turpin, archbishop of Reims in the eight century and eyewitness to the Battle. This fictitious account of Charlemagne's war against the Saracens is, in fact, an anonymous work of the mid-twelfth century.

    Characters are brought into focus in the last five Cantos, while in the 'first poem' they remain undeveloped 'sketches'. This difference may be illustrated by looking specifically at four characters: Charlemagne, Gano, Rinaldo and Marsilione.

    a) Pulci's Charlemagne in the first part of the poem does not have the strong personality that he has in the *Chanson de Roland* tradition and, despite being the Holy Roman Emperor, he is often deceived by Gano di Maganza (I.15-16; VIII.54; 71; X.13-15; XII.4-8), whom Charlemagne always forgives (XI.5; XII.209-210). Besides, Charlemagne is mournful when the paladins are not at the court to help. In the second part of the poem, although very old, Charlemagne is 'less petty, more grandly foolish, and finally more heroic' and fights and defeats his enemies after the Roncevaux rout.[44]

    b) Gano di Maganza in the first twenty-three Cantos is a colourless character. He spies on the paladins and Charlemagne with the sole purpose of thwarting their plans and damaging the French court. Gano changes in the second poem, as he is no longer immune to guilt, which torments him deeply (XXV.48, 75, 85).[45]

---

[42] Costance Jordan, *Pulci's* Morgante*: Poetry and History in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, 1986, p.125.

[43] Pulci, *Morgante* (1956), p. 866.

[44] Jordan, *Pulci's* Morgante, p.126.

[45] Pulci, *Morgante*, ed. Davide Puccini, 2 vols, Milan, Garzanti, 1989, vol. 1, pp. LIII-LIV.

c) Rinaldo in the first poem is the perfect paladin. He defeats dragons, hell monsters, giants, and a very long list of Muslims. Rinaldo never refuses to fight, except on one occasion, typically for this genre of heroic poem, when he falls in love with his enemy (Antea, XVI.14-21). In the second part of the poem, however, Rinaldo's character is tempted by demons to misbehave and develops an evil side, a novelty in the tradition (XXV.291-304), especially during the battle of Roncevaux (XXVII.63, 91, 95).[46]

d) Finally, the character of Marsilione undergoes maybe the most significant change. This is discussed below at Chapter 8.

4. In the second poem the style varies more than in the 'first poem'. The second poem still makes frequent use of elements of that comic-realist style just as the first poem does. Important to note, however, are the quite pointed changes in register for some of the descriptions, for example when the betrayal is organized and apocalyptic signs forecast the massacre of Roncevaux (XXV, 73-80). Orlando's death, too, represents another instance of the text making unexpected use of a higher register (XXVII, 116-208).

5. Pulci uses classical and well-known medieval or contemporary sources more frequently in the last five Cantos than in the first twenty-three. For example, Virgil (*Bucolicum Carmen*, *Aeneid*), Lucan (*Pharsalia*), Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia*), Statius (*Thebaid*), Dante (especially the *Inferno* but also the *Paradiso*), Petrarch (*Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*) are all prominent. These quotations are often related to an elevation of stylistic register.

6. Unlike the first twenty-three Cantos, the 'second poem', at least in Cantos XXIV and XXV, has an undoubtedly original plot. The Battle of Roncevaux was a well-known event in the Middle-Ages, but Pulci, in keeping with the liberty afforded to him by tradition, invented new episodes leading up to the Battle. First, Canto XXIV is dedicated to Antea's revenge. Antea, the beautiful daughter of the Sultan of Babylon, becomes queen of the city after the death of her father, caused by a Muslim converted by Rinaldo. She and the Spanish King of the Saracens, Marsilione, are convinced by Gano to attack Paris. When these news arrive at Charlemagne's court in Paris, the responsibility is immediately attributed to Gano,

---

[46] Ruedi Ankli, *Morgante iperbolico*: *l'iperbole nel* Morgante *di Luigi Pulci*, Florence, Olschki, 1993, pp. 264-304.

who is slapped on the cheek by Ulivieri, the Marquis of Vienna.[47] The slap is followed by the siege of Paris, when Antea brings two giants with her who are overcome by the magic of Malagigi, Charlemagne's magician. After a duel between Orlando and Antea, she and Marsilione withdraw their armies. The classic story of the Battle of Roncevaux then takes place, with many details changed for purposes discussed below.

Another original invention is Astarotte, a character who is mainly depicted in Canto XXV. Some poems of the chivalric tradition, such as the *Cantari di Rinaldo da Monte Albano*, mention Rinaldo's wandering through the Middle East as a pilgrimage towards Jerusalem; Pulci, however, transforms it into an adventurous tour of heathen lands.[48] Since Rinaldo is still far away when the Battle is about to begin and the Christian army cannot win without one of its paladins, the author needs a way to bring him to Roncevaux. Malagigi forecasts the future and knows of the betrayal. He evokes the demon Astarotte to bring Rinaldo to the battlefield.[49]

---

[47] The slap is a typical example of how Pulci was inspired by his sources without copying them literally. This episode appears in the *Spagna in rima*, but is set during a council of the French court, which had gathered to decide on who should be sent to answer one of Marsilione's legations. When Charlemagne chooses Gano, the latter complains because he is afraid of being killed by the heathens. After Ulivieri's punishment, Gano swears to take revenge on the paladins. This is the reason that moves him to betray Charlemagne once he reaches Marsilione's court; see *La Spagna. Poema cavalleresco del secolo XIV*, ed. Michele Catalano, 3 vols, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1940, XXIX.25-30, vol. 3, pp. 21-22.

[48] *Romanzi dei Reali di Francia*, ed. Adelaide Mattaini, Rizzoli, Milan, 1957, pp. 893-894.

[49] The anonymous author of *La Spagna in rima* offers a similar ploy but in a different context. Charlemagne uses Macabel, a demon evoked by Orlando, to go to Paris and to prevent Maccario from seizing his throne. *La Spagna. Poema cavalleresco del secolo XIV*, vol. 2, XXI-XXIII.25-30, pp. 254-312.

6.3 Metamorphosis: King Marsilione becomes Marsilio Ficino

King Marsilione is an essential character in the plot of the last five Cantos. Significant for this discussion is the way that the fictional Marsilio (a name that is always used as short for *Marsilione*) undergoes a change that encourages the identification with Marsilio Ficino.[50]

The alteration that Marsilio undergoes in these Cantos is not however uniform. The inconsistencies between the old Marsilio and the new Marsilio can be detected in some passages describing the personality of the character. In Canto XXIV, for example, the King is described as wise and reasonable:

> era pur savio il re Marsilione
> e molto a Bianciardin prestava fede.
>
> (XXIV.15, lines 1-2)

In this way, wisdom appears as one of the main traits of Marsilione. This theme is continued throughout the Canto:

> […] fu la risposta fatta da Marsilio
> che teneva e di piombo e di coturno.[51]
>
> (XXIV.17, lines 3-4)

Marsilione is nevertheless Muslim and therefore retains some evil traits attributed to him in the first twenty-two Cantos. For example, he arbitrarily kills a member of Charlemagne's legation (XXIV.29.5).

At Canto XXV Gano goes as Charlemagne's ambassador to Marsilio's court in Zaragoza and the two of them plan that Gano will convince Orlando to meet Marsilione in Spain, without an army, to sign an agreement and stop the war and all hostilities, leaving the French army undefended from a Saracen attack. In this context Marsilione, despite being a Muslim, is still wise. Blame is not attributed to Marsilione. Tellingly the text cites Gano as the betrayer:

> O traditor rubaldo e maladetto
> che non cura più Iddio nel suo decreto!
>
> (XXV.67, lines 5-6)

and a few lines on:

---

[50] Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 244-283.

[51] See *Crusca*, s.v. 'piombo': 'Andar col calzar del piombo: Proverbio, che è Andar considerato, e non si muove a furia.'

> Era Gan traditor di sua natura,
> prescito più che Giuda Iscariotto.
>
> <div align="right">(XXV.69, lines 1-2)</div>

The abrupt change in Marsilione happens only at the very beginning of Canto XXVI. After the usual formulary sentences in the first stanza, the second offers a list of lamentations for the ill-fated battle of Roncevaux. Verse 5, stanza 2, is the very first to label Marsilione 'betrayer' (rather than Gano): 'O traditor Marsilio saracino'. This continues in the following verse 'potranno i tuoi inganni alfin vedersi?' Marsilione the wise King has disappeared and a 'jealous betrayer' takes his place throughout the rest of the poem:

> Questo è Marsilio traditore astuto […].
>
> <div align="right">(XXVI.9, line 5)</div>

> Ch'io avevo Marsilio cognosciuto
> traditor prima che fussi creato.
>
> <div align="right">(XXVI.20, lines 4-5)</div>

> Ma quel Marsilio, se nessun lo ignora,
> fra molti vizii tutti osceni e brutti
> una invidia ha nell'ossa che il divora,
> che si cognosce finalmente a' frutti:
> io l'ho sempre veduto in uno specchio
> un tristo, un doppio, un vil traditor vecchio.
>
> <div align="right">(XXVI.21, lines 3-8)</div>

> 'Quel traditor, non dico di Maganza,
> anzi Marsilio, anzi altro Scarïotto'
>
> <div align="right">(XXVI.107, lines 1-2)</div>

> '[…] del tradimento, tu tel puoi pensare:
> sai che Gano e Marsilio è traditore.'
>
> <div align="right">(XXVI.149, lines 5-6)</div>

The same features are used to describe the Muslim King in Canto XXVII:

> Marsilio è tanto cattivo ribaldo […].
>
> <div align="right">(XXVII.3, line 5)</div>

> […] poi disse al re Marsilio: 'Il tempo è giunto
> a punir te dell'opere tue ladre
> perché tu meritasti un capresto unto
> mentre tu eri in corpo di tua madre.'
>
> <div align="right">(XXVII.36, lines 1-4)</div>

> […] e disse: 'O traditor Marsilio, ora ecco
> dove tu commettesti il grande scelo!'
>
> <div align="right">(XXVII.270, lines 5-6)</div>

and finally in Canto XXVIII:

<div align="center">'e il traditor di Marsilio è punito […]'</div>

<div align="right">(XXVIII.4, line 3)</div>

The only exception to this is in Canto XXVII, during the battle. As Marsilione commands his troops, he once again proves his wisdom:

<div align="center">Fece Marsilio, come dotto e saggio
uno squadron ristretto di pagani,
uomini tutti ch'avevon coraggio […].</div>

<div align="right">(XXVII.9, lines 1-3)</div>

The fictional Marsilione has been linked to the real Marsilio Ficino by Orvieto, who points out that in the 'second poem' Marsilione is described rather oddly.[52] At this stage Marsilione behaves in ways that we have not observed previously. He swears at God, for instance, and shows himself to be two-faced and envious.[53] Moreover, there are other aspects of these Cantos related to the Muslim King that are described differently from the traditional account of the Battle of Roncevaux of the *Chanson de Roland*. For instance, Marsilione searches for the arm of his son which has been cut off by Orlando; Marsilione wants to display it in various mosques as a relic. In *La Spagna in rima*, *Rotta di Roncisvalle* and *Chanson de Roland* there is another version of the amputation, as Marsilio's own arm is cut off and not his son's.[54] In addition to these discrepancies, there are some textual resemblances between the poem and the sonnets that Pulci wrote against Ficino. These are analysed in detail at Chapter 8.[55] Finally, there is additional evidence showing that the first readers of the poem, such as the humanist Angelo Colocci, believed that Marsilione in the *Morgante* was a portrait of Ficino.[56]

A closer reading of the text gives insights as to why Pulci depicts Marsilione as evil. This was not a chance happening. Most probably during the process of writing the last five Cantos something changed in Pulci's life and this event encouraged him to alter features of Marsilione half way through the second part of the *Morgante*, at Canto XXVI.

---

[52] See the whole chapter 'Per un'interpretazione allegorico-polemica dei cantari XXIV-XXVIII' in Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 244-283.

[53] Ibid., pp. 253-258.

[54] Ibid., pp. 257-259.

[55] Ibid., pp. 264-265.

[56] Alessio Decaria, 'Notizie su Luigi Pulci in uno zibaldone colocciano', *Interpres*, 28, 2009, pp. 255-265: 255-265.

6.4 Dating Canto XXV

Section 6.2 of this chapter (pp. 180-184) has discussed why Pulci scholars have dated Canto XXVIII of the *Morgante* to 1482 and the importance that has been given to the sources of the bestiary at Canto XXV. The present section suggests a different dating. The bestiary is the second of its kind in the *Morgante*. On this occasion Pulci changed source, drawing on three texts: Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, Albert the Great's *De animalibus* and Lucan's *Pharsalia.* The bestiary is a list of legendary creatures that appears during one of Rinaldo's adventures on his way to Roncevaux, while accompanied by Astarotte. After stopping to rest in Zaragoza, they assist at Queen Blanda's banquet without being seen (XXV.292-305). Queen Blanda, Marsilione's wife, has a daughter named Luciana, who once was in love with Rinaldo. The paladin recalls a tapestry that Luciana embroidered for him with animals from all around the world. This is setting for the bestiary of Canto XIV.42-92. Astarotte replies to Rinaldo claiming to know of another tapestry with more exotic animals, hence the second bestiary of Canto XXV.

Franca Brambilla Ageno in her edition of the *Morgante* argues that the main source of the first stanzas at Canto XXV was the translation into Florentine vernacular of the *Naturalis historia* by Cristoforo Landino, published in 1476 in Venice by Nicola Jenson.[57] The table provided in Appendix III shows that Pulci's text follows closely Pliny's descriptions albeit with some exceptions. The following is a list of the errors common to both the *Morgante* and Landino's version (see Table 1):

- The animal called *callirafio* (312, line 7) in the original Latin is *rufium*. It is preceded by the word 'galli', which generated the mistake: the union of *Galli* and *rufium* must have created *Gallirufium*, then *Callirufium* and finally *Callirafium*.
- The word *macli*, found in both Landino's text and in the *Morgante* (320 line 4), originated in a similar way to the word *callirafio*. In Pliny's text it is preceded by the word *narratam*, whose final letter 'm' becomes the beginning of the following word, 'acli';
- The word *tarandrus* (*tarando*, 322 line 1) undergoes the elision of the second 'r'.

These errors, Brambilla Ageno argues, link Landino's translation to the text of the *Morgante*. They are, however, found in four Latin editions of the *Naturalis Historia*, all

---

[57] Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* (1476).

printed in Italy between 1470 and 1476.[58] Their text includes the words *calliraphium*, *machlin* and *tarandus*. [59]

On the other hand, there are some words in Pulci's text that do not have equivalents in Landino's translation:

- Pliny's *rhinoceros* becomes Landino's *rhinocerote*, whereas Pulci spelled it differently, *rinoceronte*. The word *rinoceronte* (312, line 2) in this spelling is not attested before the *Morgante*.
- Pliny's *crocodilus* and Landino's *crocodillo* are different to Pulci's modern form *coccodrillo* (315, line 4).[60]
- At stanza 318 Pulci described a 'forked tongue', 'lingua biforcuta', not found in Pliny's nor Landino's text. The Latin text reports 'ungulis binis', while Landino's 'lunghia di due pezi'. Pulci most probaly misread from the Latin text and not from Landino's vernacular.

In addition to the textual evidence, we know that Pliny's *Naturalis historia* had circulated in Florence before Landino's translation. The word *catoblepa*, for instance, found in Fazio degli Uberti's *Dittamondo* (c. 1318-1360) along with the words *cefos*, *noceronte* and *leofante*, each of which feature in the *Morgante* (V.23).[61] The animal named *catoblepa* (314, line 1) is found also in Ficino's *Theologia platonica* (XIII.4):

> Among the western Ethiopians purportedly lived beasts called the catoblepas that would kill men simply by looking at them (basilisks also do this near Cyrene), so effective is the power in the vapours of [their] eyes.[62]

This textual evidence suggests that the *Naturalis historia* was read in Florence before Landino's translation. For instance, Ficino concluded his work in 1474, two years

---

[58] Id., *Historia naturalis* (1470, 1472, 1473, 1476).

[59] Id., *Historia naturalis* (1470), ff. 189v, 185v, 194r; id. *Historia naturalis* (1472), ff. 178r, 175v, 183r; id. *Historia naturalis* (1473), ff. 99v, 97v, 102v; id. *Historia naturalis* (1476), ff. 86r, 84r, 87v.

[60] Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, eds Ruggiero Romano and Alberto Tenenti, Turin, Einaudi, 1994, p. 328.

[61] The word 'coccodrillo' is found in Sacchetti's *Il libro delle rime*, X, 12, p. 15; in Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, IV, p. 328; Fazio degli Uberti, *Il dittamondo e le rime*, ed. Giuseppe Corsi, 2 vols, Bari, Laterza, 1952, vol. 1, pp. 402-403.

[62] Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, transl. Allen and Warden, vol. 4, pp. 194-195: 'Apud Hesperios Aethiopas fuisse traditur bestias, nomine catoblepas, quae solo aspectu homines interimerent, quod et apud Cyrenem faciunt basilisci. Tanta est vis in vaporibus oculorum.' It is notable that neither the *Morgante* nor the *Theologia platonica* mention the eyes of the *catoblepa* but its look (*guardo* and *aspectu*).

before the publication of Landino's *Historia naturale*. Moreover, Pulci could have consulted a manuscript copy or any of the editions printed between 1470 and 1476.

The second source of the bestiary is Albert the Great's *De animalibus*. Brambilla Ageno has argued that Pulci used the edition printed in Mantua in January 1479.[63]

Table 2 in Appendix III compares the text of the *Morgante*, to the text of the 1479 edition, and in the third column the text of a modern edition of Albert's work.

There are five names quoted identically in the *Morgante* and in the 1479 edition of Albert's work, these six words have the same errors:

- in the words *arundutis*, *athylon*, *dryatha* the original 't' becomes 'c' (*arunducus* in the print and *arunduco* in the poem; *achylon* and *achiton*; *dryacha* and *driaca*);
- in the word *athylon* 'l' becomes 't';
- in the word *iboz* 'z' become 'r' (*ibor*);
- the word *asfodius* undergoes two changes, firstly the two consonants 'sf' become 'ls', then an 'r' is inserted because of rhotacism and the word becomes *alsordius* and then *alsordio*.

The words that distinguish the *Morgante* from the edition printed at Mantua, however, are more numerous:

- The Mantua edition spells *cafezacus* correctly, but Pulci writes *caferaco*;
- *Scaura* becomes unexpectedly *saure*, with an unpredictable elision of the velar sound;
- *Aracsis* becomes *arachs*, losing the last syllable in the print, to which Pulci adds the final 'e';
- The *cornuta aspis* become plural, with a lenition of the 't' ('cornude');
- *Alhartraf* becomes *albatraffa* in the poem, with a standard rhotacism but an unusual insertion of a 'b' instead of the 'h' (the consonant 'h' was normally substituted with the velar 'c').
- *Caprimulgus* becomes *caprivulgus* in the Mantua edition, but Pulci uses *caprimulgo* in the *Morgante*.
- *Memnonides* becomes *menonides* in the Mantua edition; Pulci's version is even simpler, *meonide*;

---

[63] See Brambilla Ageno's commentary in Pulci, *Morgante* (1955), p. 922: 'vari indizi mostrano che l'autore si valse di quest'ultima'.

- *Caristae* corresponds to Pulci *carità*. The original meaning of the word *carità* is completely inappropriate in this context, so there must be another reason why Pulci used it instead of copying the word *cariste* from the printed edition. This cannot be satirical because the rest of this bestiary does not have a comic register;
- *Lucidiae* becomes *licidia* in the *Morgante*.

We can observe two fundamental factors in this comparison of the texts. First, the number of misspellings unique to the *Morgante* outnumbers the words that the Mantua edition and the *Morgante* have in common. Secondly, an important reason for Pulci doing this work was his desire to find original information on lesser known animals and, where possible, report as many peculiarities as possible. This said, his interest in animals is most significant only for the first part of the bestiary inspired by Pliny's *Naturalis historia*. In the second part of the bestiary Pulci seems to copy the names of animals from Albert's work and is not generous with details. This suggests that Pulci used an abridgment of Albert's work that reported only snakes and birds, which is the focus of Chapter XXIII and XXV of *De animalibus*.

In conclusion, there is no convincing evidence that Pulci used the editions of *Naturalis historia* and *De animalibus* as suggested by Franca Brambilla Ageno. Pulci could have read any version of Pliny's treatise, either in manuscripts or in any of the four Latin editions printed between 1470 and 1476. Also, it is more probable that Pulci read an abridgement of Albert the Great's *De animalibus* than the 1479 *editio princeps* of Albert's work. The dating of Pulci's bestiary cannot be determined by the printing of these two texts in 1476 and 1479.

This conclusion is supported by other clues that point towards a predating of Cantos XXIV and XXV:

1. These Cantos have in common with the 'first poem' the change in the character of Malagigi, the magician of the Carolingian court.[64] In the 'first poem' he appears several times to help Charlemagne and the paladins against the Saracens. On these occasions, he never refuses to intervene with his magic and to change the course of events, nor does the narrator ever explain how it is that Malagigi is able to perform magic so efficiently. However at Canto XXI Malagigi is asked to perform magic and refuses, explaining that magic requires the right place and time and it cannot be used at will (102-103). The same

---

[64] See also Jordan, *Pulci's* Morgante, pp. 133-134.

happens at Canto XXIV, where the narrator similarly justifies Malagigi's choice and gives a brief account of the conditions under which magic can be performed (XXIV, 106-113). The suddenly scrupulous Malagigi, concerned with God's rules and free will, reappears at Canto XXII, marking a significant continuity between Canto XXI and Canto XXIV.

2.   Franca Brambilla Ageno pointed out that the demon Astarotte, mentioned for the first time at Canto XXV (49, line 3), is in fact referred to at Canto XXI. Pulci tells of a demon that 'stayed inside the horse' ('che nel cavallo stette'), anticipating the events that take place further on in the poem. At Canto XXV Astarotte enters the body of Rinaldo's horse in order to collect Rinaldo from Egypt. When Pulci wrote Canto XXI, therefore, he had already conceived or perhaps written the section of the plot that concerns Cantos XXIV and XXV.[65]

3.   Finally at Canto XXV.169 Pulci thanks Angelo Poliziano for some suggestions – probably concerning the idea of inserting Astarotte into the plot of the *Morgante*. Poliziano joined the Medici household, where Pulci probably met him, no earlier than 1473.

In light of the three points, I suggest that Cantos XXI-XXV were written during the same period across the first half of the 1470s. A letter from Pulci to Lorenzo dated January 1472 adds weight to this argument as it quotes an episode in Canto XIX.170-173.[66]

Brambilla Ageno's hypothesis that the bestiary in Canto XXV was written after 1479 would leave a gap of six Cantos (XIX-XXV) and more than seven years (1472-1479). The evidence gathered above, however, provides continuity between Cantos XIX-XXIV, datable to the first half of the 1470s. More importantly, Cantos XXIV and XXV no longer have a *terminus post quem* in 1479, a fundamental premise to draw them nearer to Ficino's works. This is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

---

[65] See Brambilla Ageno in Pulci, *Morgante* (1955), p. 650: 'Questo accenno all'episodio di Astarotte narrato nel cantare XXV dimostra che il secondo poema (cantari XXIV-XXVIII) era in parte composto, o almeno concepito, prima che venisse finito il primo (cantari I-XXIII); si può pensare anche a un episodio avvenuto durante qualche "evocazione" di Astarotte, e che abbia suggerito l'episodio relativo.'

[66] Id., *Morgante e lettere*, XXIII, pp. 976-977. This clue was first pointed out by Ernest H. Wilkins, 'On the Dates of Composition of the *Morgante* of Luigi Pulci', *PMLA*, 66, 1951, pp. 244-250: 246.

CHAPTER 7

PULCI AND PHILOSOPHY: PARODY OR INSPIRATION?

Cantos XXIV and XXV are noted for their breaks in narrative to allow to philosophical and theological material. There is a difference, however, between the two: Canto XXIV incorporates theoretical disquisitions, while Canto XXV includes stanzas on philosophical or theological matters that are integrated into the plot as speeches given mainly by two characters, Marsilione (42-46) and Astarotte (119-167; 228-244). There has been much speculation as to the reasons behind these breaks in the narrative, though a satisfactory explanation is yet to be proposed. [1] What is clear is that these philosophical and theological themes share much with Ficino's philosophy, especially his treatises finished before 1474. In this Chapter I consider these two Cantos and their marked increase in philosophical content.

Ficino's influence is, most immediately, detectable in the lexicon of these two cantos. Even though the expressions shared between the *Morgante* and Ficino's texts are very common in theological and philosophical discourse, it is important to note that not only were they unusual in a chivalric poem, but they do not occur in the first twenty-three cantos of the *Morgante* either. They must have sounded as peculiar to the loyal *lettore* of the poem as they do now. Philosophical language appears at the very beginning of Canto XXIV. One of the first stanzas exemplifies this:

> Io cominciai a cantar di Carlo Mano:
> convien che 'l mio cantar pur giunga in porto,
> e ch'io punisca il traditor di Gano
> d'un tradimento già ch'io veggo scorto
> cogli occhi della mente in uno specchio;
> e increscemi di Carlo, che è pur vecchio.
>
> (XXIV.4, lines 3-8)

---

[1] Lebano, for example, has claimed that all these sections in the *Morgante* are parodic in 'I miracoli di Roncisvalle', pp. 120-134. Orvieto has remained undecided, maintaining that (*Pulci medievale*, p. 263): 'Pulci imita e nel contempo dissacra'. Puccini, in the introduction to his edition of the *Morgante*, suggests that Pulci tried to incorporate Ficinian philosophy into his poem; see *Morgante* (1989), vol. 1, p. LV. Gilda Corabi ('Demonologia pulciana: caratteri generali e strategie retoriche', *Semestrale di studi (e testi) italiani*, 18, 2006, pp. 79-105: 94), following Getto (*Studio sul* Morgante, Florence, Olschki, 1967, p. 16), has argued that Pulci 'non sente la responsabilità etica e teoretica di trattare la tematica religiosa con rigore: la affronta al pari della materia cavalleresca, per provare la sua arte e la sua fantasia (spesso dissacrante)'.

Specchio, 'mirror', is a term not found in the first twenty-three Cantos. *Occhi della mente*, likewise used here for the first time, is a common Ficinian phrase which is quite common to his letters.[2] Pulci, in the task of depicting an historical event attempts to lend credence to the veracity his version. Such 'veracity' comes through the mind's eyes and the mirror, supposedly sources of knowledge thanks to which events come to be interpreted and interpretable in narrative. The function of these terms becomes clearer when we analyse their meaning in Ficino's treatises. In *De amore*, for example, the trope of mind's eye is significant. One of many passages in which it occurs is in Oration VI.18:

> Similmente Iddio crea l'anima e donagli la mente, la quale è virtù d'intendere, e questa sarebbe vota e tenebrosa se il lume di Dio non gli stessi presente, nel qual'e' vega di tutte le cose le ragioni, sì che intende per lume di Dio e solo questo lume intende, ben che paia ch'e' conosca diverse cose, perché intende decto lume sotto diverse idee e ragioni di cose. Quando lo huomo con gli occhi vede l'uomo fabrica nella fantasia la imagine dell'uomo, e rinvolgesi a giudicare decta imagine. Per questo exercitio dell'animo dispone l'occhio della mente a vedere la ragione e idea dello huomo che è in esso lume divino, onde subitamente una certa scintilla nella mente risplende, e la natura dello huomo veramente di qui s'intende; e così nell'altre cose avviene.[3]

In this passage Ficino describes the process of intellection; the phrase 'mind's eye' expresses metaphorically the way in which the intellect apprehends an object. In using this phrase Pulci guarantees that his knowledge is not only intuitive but both intellectual and rational, and therefore truthful.

Also 'specchio' is also employed here in a typically Ficinian mode. The proem of the *Theologia platonica de immortalitate animorum* provides a good example:

> My main intention in writing it has been this: that in the divinity of the created mind, as in a mirror at the centre of all things, we should first observe the works of the Creator, and then contemplate and worship the mind of the Creator.[4]

From this point of the poem onwards, Pulci uses the phrase *occhi della mente* or similar metaphors concerning sight to depict a type of vision that reaches beyond appearance towards truth.

---

[2] It is also found for example in Plato, *Republic* 533d; *Symposium* 212a 1-2; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.3, 10.

[3] Ficino, *El libro dell'amore*, p. 158.

[4] Id., *Platonic Theology*, transl. Allen and Warden, vol. 2, pp. 10-11: 'In quo quidem componendo id praecipue consilium fuit, ut in ipsa creatae mentis divinitate, ceu speculo rerum omnium medio, creatoris ipsius tum opera speculemur, tum mentem contemplemur atque colamus.'

The mind's eye is also the tool that allows knowledge of the future, even though not everyone has this power. This is true in the case of demons, who cannot predict the future as they are said to have a veil (this metaphor appears for the first time in the poem) covering their mind's eye (XXV.146, line 4). Ficino uses the same metaphor, the veil that impedes the mind from seeing, in his *Theologia platonica* (XIII.2). In this passage, while demonstrating the immortality of the soul, Ficino examines the seven kinds of release of the soul. The seventh is that which results from the chastity of a mind devoted to God. Ficino then lists exemplary characters who could reach this state of release and concludes as follows:

> But all these men, like those who were dreaming, took whatever they were seeing with the mind and immediately concealed it under the veils of the phantasy in such a way that their mind's visions, obscured beneath the shadows of the phantasy, needed an interpreter.[5]

The meaning of this passage is quite different to what Pulci states in the *Morgante* but the metaphor, 'the mind obscured by a veil', resembles closely Ficino's. Ficino's influence is clearer still in Canto XXVIII:

> Questa nostra mortal caduca vista
> fasciata è sempre d'un oscuro velo,
> e spesso il vero scambia alla menzogna;
> poi si risveglia come fa chi sogna.
>
> (XXVIII.35, lines 5-8)

Here, although the mind is no longer prominent, sight is not used in its literal meaning and it must be interpreted as the mind's sight. The text moves, therefore, closer still to Ficino's, especially in Pulci's phrase 'come fa chi sogna', that recalls Ficino's 'like those who were dreaming' ('quemadmodum et somniantes') in the passage quoted above from *Theologia platonica* XIII.2.

---

[5] Id., *Platonic Theology*, transl. Allen and Warden, vol. 4, pp. 166-168: 'Sed ii omnes, quemadmodum et somniantes, quicquid mente cernebant, phantasiae velaminibus statim operiebant, ita ut visa mentis phantasiae umbraculis obscurata interprete indigerent.'

7.1 Free will in relation to magic, religious tolerance and salvation

Pulci also incorporates many of Ficino's ideas in his idiosyncratic philosophical and theological theories. The first theme considered here is free will.

Pulci's first philosophical intervention comes in Canto XXIV.104-113, following the *marguttino* episode. Antea, the Queen of Babylon and allied with Marsilione, attacks Charlemagne's Paris and brings with her two giants. To salvage the situation, Malagigi, the French magician, creates a creature called *marguttino*, a deformed demi-giant with two heads who lures Antea's giants into a forest. He then traps them in tree branches and a squire sets fire to the branches, killing the giants. Pulci here feels the need to justify his narrative choices:

> Ora ècci un punto qui che mi bisogna
> allegar forse il verso del Poeta:
> 'sempre a quel ver c'ha faccia di menzogna'
> è più senno tener la lingua cheta,
> ché spesso 'sanza colpa fa vergogna';
> ma s'io non ho gabbato il bel pianeta
> come Cassandra già, non è dovuto
> che il ver per certo non mi sia creduto.
>
> (XXIV.104)

The *Poeta* is clearly Dante and Pulci is quoting *Inferno*, XVI.124-126, in which Dante, developing the concept of the ineffable, asks readers to believe what he is describing, even though it seems too extraordinary to be true (a ride on the back of the monster Geryon). Pulci asserts the truth in his words by stating that:

> Io veggo tuttavia questi giganti
> con gli occhi della mente […].
>
> (XXIV.105, lines 1-2)

The phrase *occhi della mente* is here mentioned for the second time and the meaning of it is clearer than in the first occurrence: the mind's eye is a trustworthy inner tool which makes Pulci capable of seeing the past clearly. This is because, according to what he writes two lines further on (105, line 4): 'io non parlo simulato e fitto'. Stanzas 106-113 justify in detail what has just happened in the poem's narrative with interesting philosophical implications:

> Chi mi dicessi: 'Or qui rispondi un poco:
> se Malagigi avea questa arte intera,
> potea pur far, come il boschetto, il fuoco
> e strugger que' giganti come cera',
> nota che l'arte ha modo e tempo e loco […].
>
> (XXIV.106, lines 1-5)

196

The objection, formulated as a dialogue, doubts the real skills of the magician, as he is not able to kill the giants using magic alone. Pulci in his reply narrows the use of magic into three specific categories: manner, time and space. The reason for this is explained in this way:

> Ma quello Iddio che impera a tutti i regi
> ha dato termine, ordine e misura,
> e non si può passar più là che i fregi,
> però che a ogni cosa egli ebbe cura;
> e fatture, aüruspi e sortilegi
> non posson far quel che non può natura,
> e le imagin più oltre son di ghiaccio,
> perché e' fe' la potenzia nel suo braccio.
>
> (XXIV.107)

Pulci here refers to the universal order ruled by God. The domain of magic can only lie in Nature, and what Nature cannot do cannot be done by magic either. This is also the case in Ficino's *De amore*:

> Ma perché si chiama l'Amore mago? Perchè tutta la forza della magica consiste nello amore [...]. Le parti di questo mondo, come membri d'uno animale dependendo tutte da uno Auctore [...] e membri di questo grande animale, cioè tutti e corpi del mondo, intra loro concatenati, accattano intra lloro e prestano loro nature. Per questa comune parentela nasce amore comune, da tale amore nasce el comune tiramento, e questa è la vera magica. [...] Adunque l'opere della magica sono opere della natura, e l'arte è ministra; perché l'arte, quando s'avede che in qualche parte non è intera convenientia tra le nature, supplisce a questo in tempi debiti per certi vapori, qualità, numeri, figure, così come nell'agricultura la natura parturisce le biade e l'arte aiut'a preparare la materia.[6]

This passage lays out Ficino's theory that the universe is like an animal whose parts depend on the Creator, that is, God. The bond between these parts is a form of attraction, love, and this attraction is the domain of natural magic. Pulci and Ficino, therefore, share the same perspective on magic: they both postulate first that the cosmos depends on God, then they make clear that magic stays strictly inside the boundaries of Nature and they both call magic *arte* because magic, in this respect, is a practical way of manipulating Nature.

Pulci also relates the rules of magic to free will. He maintains that Malagigi is unable to harm Antea's giants and that he is only able to create a trap, because at the real heart of magic is, in fact, free will:

> Dunque Malgigi e gli altri nigromanti
> ci posson cogli spiriti tentare,
> ma non poteva uccidere i giganti
> per arte, o il fuoco i demòni appiccare;

---

[6] Id., *El libro dell'amore*, p. 144.

> potea ben fare apparir lor davanti
> il bosco, e lor vi potevano entrare
> e non entrar: ch'a nessuno è negato
> libero arbitrio che da Dio c'è dato.
>
> (XXIV.111)

Pulci posits here a firm boundary between the power of magic and the influence of free will. God Himself provides free will, which cannot be infringed by any natural or unnatural manipulation of Nature.

We should also point out, in relation to this passage, that Pulci's argumentative poetry is very close to Ficino's prose. This similarity is clear, for example, in the list of the three conditions which must be satisfied in order to perform magic (XXIV.106-107). In the following passage of *De amore* Ficino similarly describes the essence of beauty (VI, 5):

> Finalmente che cosa è la bellezza del corpo? Certamente è uno certo acto, vivacità e gratia risplendente nel corpo per lo influxo della sua idea. Questo splendore non discende nella materia, s'ella non è prima aptissimamente preparata. E la preparatione del corpo vivente in tre cose s'adempie: ordine, modo e spetie; l'ordine significa le distantie delle parti, el modo significa la quantità, la spetie significa lineamenti e colori.[7]

In order to receive the 'splendour' of beauty, Ficino lists three features as necessary conditions, *ordine*, *modo* and *spetie* and likewise Pulci points out, with a list that comprises three parts, that 'l'arte ha modo e tempo e loco' (106, line 5) and that God 'ha dato termine, ordine e misura' (107, line 2).

According to Pulci, these laws of Nature can be broken only by those who transcend them, like demons:

> [...] ma gli spirti infernal malvagi e rei
> privati son delle virtù divine;
> ma perché pur molti segreti sanno,
> per virtù natural gran cose fanno.
>
> (XXIV.108, lines 5-8)

Ficino puts forward the very same idea in his *De amore* (VI.10):

> Questa arte magica attribuirono gli antichi a' demoni, perché e demoni intendono qual sia la parentela delle cose naturali intra lloro, e qual cosa con qual cosa consuoni, e come la concordia delle cose, dove manca, si possa ristorare.[8]

---

[7] Ibid., p. 91.

[8] Ibid., p. 145. In Ficino's work, however, the word *demone* does not always have the meaning that Pulci implies, which is a devil from hell. Ficino often refers to Platonic demons, lower divinities and means which allow men to communicate with the divine. They could be also evil and in this case they would be the same as the Christian fallen angels.

Once again Ficino and Pulci express the same concept: demons know some secrets on the relationships between things and the ways to restore harmony between them. They can perform the art of magic because of their status of demons. It is in their nature ('virtù natural') to manipulate natural elements. Pulci, in fact, distinguishes a further category of creature, the *spiriti folletti*:

> Vanno per l'aire come uccel vagando
> altre spezie di spiriti folletti,
> che non furon fedel né rei già quando
> fu stabilito il numer degli eletti.

<div align="right">(XXIV.109, lines 1-4)</div>

The nature of these creatures seems to be something other than human, though it would not appear to be divine. Assuming that demons are, as in Christian theology, angels who have rebelled against God and have been punished, the *spiriti folletti* are those who, at that point, had not yet taken any decision. The status of the *spiriti folletti* resembles what Ficino describes in the *Theologia platonica* (X.2), where he explains the chain of being in order to demonstrate how 'things divine' are not attached to 'things mortal'. In the list of beings, 'lower beings' are linked in their higher parts to the lower parts of the 'higher beings' that immediately follow. Immediately above men 'there must be spirits who are familiarly linked to men and under whose instruction, says Plato, we have discovered the miracles of the art of magic.'[9] Further in the same chapter, these spirits are classified hierarchically:

> But Plato calls the one soul of the one machine Jupiter, but the twelve souls of the twelve spheres he calls the gods in Jupiter's train. To the purer parts of the spheres, that is, the stars and planets, he similarly attributes souls that participate in mind, and these too he calls gods. To the parts of fire he allocates fiery daemons and heroes, to those of the clear air airy ones, and to those of the misty air watery daemons and heroes.[10]

According to Plato, Ficino's source for this hierarchy, demons can be classified by the element in which they live, which in turn gives them specific skills (XVI.7):

---

[9] Id., *Platonic Theology*, transl. Allen and Warden, vol. 3, pp. 116-117: 'Esse rursus oportet spiritus hominibus familiaritate coniunctos, quorum instructione magicae artis Plato vult reperta fuisse miracula.'

[10] Ibid., pp. 118-121: 'Sed ipsam unam unius machinae animam Iovem nuncupat Plato, animas autem duodecim sphaerarum duodecim vocat deos Iovis pedissequos. Sphaerarum partibus purioribus similiter attribuit animas mentis participes, stellis scilicet et planetis, quos etiam vocat deos. Ignis partibus daemones heroesque igneos. Aeris clari aereos. Aeris caliginosi aquaticos daemones atque heroes.'

Clearly the airy demons move the airy spirit in us, and when the spirit has so to speak vibrated, the humors too are moved in the body and images are aroused in the phantasy.[11]

This depiction of airy demons is mirrored by Pulci's description of the *spiriti folletti* at Canto XXV:

> E sopra tutto a questo ti bisogna
> non ti fidar di spiriti folletti,
> ché non ti dicon mai se non menzogna
> e metton nella mente assai sospetti
> e farebbon più danno che vergogna.
>
> (XXV.160, 1-5)

Let us return to Canto XXIV where, supporting his theories on *spiriti folletti*, Pulci explicitly quotes Matteo Palmieri (109, line 5). In his poem *Città di vita*, Palmieri assumes that the angels who did not decide for or against the rebellion were condemned to reincarnation as humans (V.72-86; 102-110; 120-123; 129-140).[12] In order to understand better the implications of the link to the *Città di vita,* a brief digression is now necessary.

Palmieri's poem was inspired by both Dante and Platonic philosophy and recounts a journey into the next world told in the first person. The narrator is accompanied by the Sybil of Cuma. In the first book the Sybil shows Matteo the whole journey of souls before their earthly life. Her explanation begins at the distinction of angels into three categories, the most important being the third, those who did not decide whether to rebel against God or join the angels that remained loyal to Him. These 'neutral' angels, whom God positioned in the Elysian Fields (over the planets in the Ptolemaic system) undertake a year-long journey through the spheres of the planets, coming under planetary influence. After this journey the souls take human form.[13]

---

[11] Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 308-309: 'Movent sane aereum in nobis spiritum aerei daemones, quo quidem quasi vibrato et humores moventur in corpore et in phantasia imagines excitantur.'

[12] Pulci uses the past historic and this could mean that Palmieri had died before he wrote these lines. Matteo Palmieri died in April 1475. For the dating of Palmieri's death, see Alessandra Mita Ferraro, *Matteo Palmieri. Una biografia intellettuale*, Genoa, Name, 2005, p. 165. Cf. Matteo Palmieri, *Libro del poema chiamato* Citta di Vita *composto da Matteo Palmieri Florentino: Transcribed from the Laurentian MS XL 53 and Compared with the Magliabechian II ii 41*, 2 vols, Northampton, Smith College, 1927-28, vol. 1, pp. 23-24.

[13] Ferraro, *Matteo Palmieri*, p. 371.

Pulci identifies Palmieri's neutral angels with the *spiriti folletti*, even though, unlike Palmieri's angels, the *spiriti folletti* wander through the air and can be captured and used to obtain information. This is suggested in Canto XXV:

> Màndati ancor due spiriti folletti,
> Floro e Farès, e parlerai con loro
> in uno specchio dove e' son costretti,
> e molte cose degne dirà Floro […].
>
> (XXV.92, lines 1-4)

These spirits, as we have already seen above, are characterized by deceitfulness (XXV.160-161, lines 1-6). They manipulate the opinion of men and tell of things that they have not done. Palmieri's angels and Pulci's *spiriti folletti* are, therefore, in important ways quite dissimilar. In this light, the real reason behind Pulci's reference to Palmieri seems to be the chance to change the topic from *spiriti folletti* and neutral angels to metempsychosis:

> Non so se 'l mio Palmier qui venne errando,
> che par di corpo in corpo ancor gli metti,
> onde e' punge la mente con mille agora
> esser prima Eüforbio e poi Pittagora;
>
> […]
>
> e forse qui s'inganna il Tïaneo
> che si ricorda, dice, esser pirrato,
> e come e' prese un altro in mar più reo,
> e come gentilezza gli ebbe usato.
>
> (XXIV.109, lines 5-8, 110 lines 1-4)

In Palmieri's version of the phenomenon of metempsychosis – the transmigration of the soul – the soul may have three different earthly lives, but after the third it comes to be either blessed or damned. This procedure is explained at Canto XVIII of *Città di vita* (129-143). Pythagorean ideas of metempsychosis, however, were well-known, as well as the fact that the Pythagoras himself claimed to be a reincarnation of the Homeric character of Euphorbus – a claim recorded, for instance, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XV.160-164) and Diogenes Laertius's *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, (VIII.4), which Ambrogio Traversari had translated in 1433.

The passage on metempsychosis in the *Morgante* reveals Pulci's urge to reject the theory, as Ficino does in his *Theologia platonica* (XVII.4):[14]

---

[14] Admitting the transmigration of the soul would mean denying the bond between the soul and its body established by Christian theology. Ficino, however, was fascinated by this theme as some recent studies

So, treading in the footsteps of Xenocrates and Ammonius, we do not deny that Plato had affirmed certainties about the soul, but much that he says about the soul's circuit, being poetic, we take to mean differently than the words appear to signify [literally]. And this is especially since he did not invent such circuits himself but described those of others; first those invented by the Egyptian priests under the figure of the purging souls, then those intoned in poetic songs only by Orpheus, Empedocles, and Heraclitus. I leave aside the fact that Pythagoras introduced the transmigrations of souls always into those his customary conversations and symbols.[15]

Ficino illustrates here the way in which the first six academies following Plato's death interpreted Platonic thought, and which of these academies had the best method for understanding Plato's writings. While Plotinus and Proclus thought that Plato's texts were not entirely poetic, the other four held the opposite opinion. For instance, Carneades believed that Plato was doubtful and had not come to any meaningful decision in his writings. Similarly, Archesilas thought Plato held nothing for certain but that his thought was verisimilar and probable. Xenocrates and Ammonius supposed that Plato reached few truths concerning divine providence and the immortality of the soul. Ficino followed the latter by affirming that Plato should not be interpreted literally on some points concerning the soul, as he often adopted a poetic way to describe things. In this context, Pythagoras's metempsychosis is also a concept not to be read literally.

Further in the *Morgante* Pulci deals with other Ficinian ideas. Canto XXV, for example, focuses more specifically on free will and related topics in the speech of King Marsilione. As remarked above, the philosophical discussions of Canto XXV are integrated into the narrative frame.[16] This is how this episode fits into the story: Gano

---

show. See for example Pasquale Terraciano, 'Tra Atene e Alessandria. Origene nella *Theologia Platonica* di Marsilio Ficino', *Viator*, 42, 2011, pp. 265-294: 278.

[15] Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, transl. Allen and Warden, vol. 2, pp. 44-47: 'Nos ergo Xenocratis et Ammonii vestigia sequentes Platonem affirmavisse quaedam de anima non negamus, sed multa, quae de circuitu eius ab ipso tractantur, tamquam poetica, aliter intelligimus quam verba videantur significare, praesertim cum circuitus huiusmodi haud ipse invenerit, sed narraverit alienos, primum quidem ab Aegyptiis sacerdotibus sub purgandarum animarum figura confictos, deinde ab Orpheo, Empedocle, Heraclito poeticis dumtaxat carminibus decantatos. Mitto quod Pythagoras animarum transmigrationes consuetis illis semper confabulationibus suis symbolisque inseruit.'

[16] We might argue that Pulci's confidence with this kind of digressions grew and changed from Canto XXIV to Canto XXV. We do not know, in fact, whether Canto XXIV had been in circulation before 1483, although there is a clue that testifies to its success: a small volume printed in 1492 with this Canto

goads Marsilione into saying whether the Saracen King intends to take his revenge after his defeat by the French court in Paris. Gano proposes Marsilione's conversion to Christianity as means to obtain an effective peace between the two kingdoms. Marsilione, who must only very carefully reveal his intentions and cannot simply refuse Ganelon's proposal, tells a story to convince his interlocutor that his conversion was undesirable:

Poi finse una sua certa novelletta:
– In una selva presso a Siragozza,
per quel ch'io udi' già dire in Tolletta
dove ogni nigromante si raccozza,
è una buca nello entrare stretta,
ma poi sotterra molto spazio ingozza,
dove stanno a guardar sei gran colonne
certi spirti gentil con varie gonne.

L'una colonna dicon che par d'oro,
l'altra d'argento, e poi rame, e poi ferro;
l'altra è di stagno tutto puro e soro,
e l'ultima di piombo, s'io non erro.
Io non credetti alcun tempo a costoro,
però che il ver con la ragion l'afferro,
sì che già molti vi mandai in effetto;
e ritornati, così m'hanno detto:

'Queste colonne son significate
per le sei fede, e quella d'oro è prima;
l'altre, secondo poi la qualitate,
di grado in grado più e men si stima:
quivi son le carattere segnate
di cui convien ch'ogni anima s'imprima
e la sua fede elegga in questo chiostro
prima che infusa sia nel corpo nostro.

Gli spiriti che guardan questo loco,
mentre l'anime passano, ognun priega;
elle sen vanno come uccello a gioco:
volgonsi a quella ove il desio le piega,
perché ancor semplicette sanno poco,
ma pur libero arbitrio non si nega;
quella che abbraccion, poi la fede è loro:
beato a quel ch'abbracciato arà l'oro'.

Io parlo per paraboli a chi intende,
ch'io so che tu se' pur quel Gano antico
a cui bianco per nero non si vende,
e non si scambia il dattero col fico.

(XXV.42-46, lines 1-4)

---

alone that is named after Antea's giants. See Luigi Pulci, *Falabacchio e Cattabriga giganti*, Florence, Lorenzo Morgiani and Johannes Petri, about 1492.

Even though we are not able to locate a direct source for this peculiar *novelletta*, we can see in it a further step in Pulci's plan to further discussion on free will. The story is clearly allegorical. The six columns represent six religious faiths.[17] The first three are ostensibly Christianity, Judaism and Islam but the other three are unidentified, though they might well represent, according to Brambilla Ageno, the Chaldean, Egyptian and Hellenic faiths.[18] Each pillar is made of a metal which determines the quality of the faith it represents, the best obviously being gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead following. This hierarchy recalls another: a traditional relationship established between the sun, planets and metals, which was still very important during the Renaissance. Ficino, for example, recalled this order several years later in his third book of the *Liber de vita coelitus comparanda* (III.2).[19]

---

[17] Columns as metaphors for different religious faiths are a novelty, and even though they recall Boccaccio's novella of the three rings (*Decameron*, I.3), there is no known precedent for this metaphor.

[18] Pulci, *Morgante*, pp. 864.

[19] Ficino, *Three books on life*, transl. Clark and Kaske, pp. 250-253: 'Sunt autem quaerenda et exercenda quae ad aliquem planetam attinent, eo videlicet dominante (ut diximus) in die et hora eius, si fieri potest, etiam quando ipse sit in domicilio vel exaltatione vel saltem triplicitate sua et ter mino et angulo coeli, extra combustionem directus ac saepius orientalis, si Sole sit superior, item in Auge, et aspiciatur a Luna. [...] A Venere quidem per animalia sua, quae diximus, et per corneolam et sapphyrum lapidemque lazuli, aes croceum atque rubeum et corallum omnesque pulchros variosque vel virides colores et flores atque concentus suavesque odores atque sapores. A Luna per alba et humida et viridia, per argentum atque crystallum et uniones et argenteam marcassitam. Quoniam vero Saturnus quidem statui et perseverantiae dominatur, [...] ab illo quidem per materias quasdam quodammodo terreas et fuscas atque plumbeas et fuscam iaspidem et magnetem et camoinum atque chalcidonium et ex parte quadam per aurum et auream marcassitam. A Marte vero per ignea, rubea, aes rubeum, sulphurea omnia, ferrum lapidemque sanguineum. Neque diffidas Saturnum habere nonnihil in auro; nam propter pondus id putatur habere. Quinetiam Soli aurum simile sic omnibus metallis inest, sicut Sol in planetis omnibus atque stellis.'

'But those things which pertain to any planet should be sought and performed precisely when it has dignities as I have previously specified: in its day and hour if possible, also when it is in its own house or in its exaltation or at least in its triplicity, in its term, or in a cardine of heaven, while it is direct in motion, when it is outside of the burned path, and preferably when it is east of the Sun, if it is above the Sun, if it is in apogee, and if it is aspected by the Moon. [...] If anyone begs a favour from the Moon herself and Venus, he will be obliged to do it when they are in similar periods. One obtains things from Venus through her animals which we have mentioned and through carnelian, sapphire, lapis lazuli, brass (yellow or red), coral and all pretty, multi-coloured or green colours and flowers, musical harmony, and pleasant odors and tastes. From the Moon, through things that are white, moist, and green and through silver and crystal and pearl sand silver marcasite. But since Saturn governs stability and perseverance, [...] to get something from Saturn, we use any materials that are somewhat earthy, dusky and leaden; we use smoky

Before a human being is born, faith is chosen by the soul rather than being the result of fortune. What happens to the soul before birth is described in Dante's *Purgatorio*, the only explicit source of this *novelletta*.[20] The underground cave also recalls the analogy of the cave in Plato's *Republic* (VII.7), which Pulci might have found in Ficino's *Theologia platonica* (VI.2), although another part of Dante's *Commedia* might have suggested this allegory.[21] A further source for this *novelletta* could be once again Palmieri. In *Città di vita* the soul receives different influences from the spheres of the planets. At the end of its journey, each soul freely decides to follow the influence of a planet that will shape its future life on Earth. This journey has much in common with the *novelletta*, for instance, the status of the soul before earthly life and the free choice that the soul makes which influences the rest of its existence. Besides this, Pulci's metals might be symbols for planets, which could be another link to Palmieri.

The emphasis on free will at Canto XXIV and again in Marsilione's speech might have been Pulci's attempt of merging these ideas with another theory on the soul, one that Ficino was developing during the first half of the 1470s. Canto XXV provides an explicit reference to this theory where it occurs in relation to Astarotte, one of Pulci's most notable literary characters. Astarotte's first function is to aid the narrative plot, a role that was suggested by the demon Macabel in the poem *Spagna in rima*.[22] Astarotte is knowledgeable as are many of the demons found in the lives of saints, and his origin

---

jasper, lodestone, cameo, and chalcedony; gold and golden marcasite are partly useful for this. From Mars, materials which are fiery or red, red brass, all sulphurous things, iron, and bloodstone. Do not doubt that Saturn has quite a bit to do with gold. His weight leads people to believe so; furthermore, gold, being similar to the Sun, is by the same token in all metals in the way that the Sun is in all the planets and stars.'

[20] This is clearly recalled in the use of the adjective semplicette (45, line 5) used to refer to souls, which is exactly the same as in the Purgatorio XVI (line 88, 'l'anima semplicetta che sa nulla'). Marco Lombardo's speech in this Canto describes how the newly created soul can choose to follow whatever it thinks is good but it will surely follow a false good if not guided, an issue that Pulci does not contemplate in Marsilione's speech.

[21] In Canto XIV of the Inferno Dante describes the Old Man of Crete, a statue beneath the Mount Ida whose head is made of gold, his arms and chest of silver, his bust of copper, his legs and left foot of iron and his right foot of clay. Tears flow through the cracks in the statue, gathering at his feet. As they stream away, they form the Acheron, the Styx, the Phlegethon, and the Cocytus, the pool at the bottom of Hell. Pulci's and Dante's images have in common the cave and the metaphorical use of metals.

[22] Evoked by Orlando in Pamplona in order to know what is happening in Paris, Macabel takes Charlemagne back to the French capital in time to save his throne.

probably resides in hagiography, since Astaroth is the demon that challenges St Bartholomew in a discussion on theology.[23]

One of Astarotte's speeches takes place during the the flight over the Pillars of Hercules, which lead the demon to talk about the Antipodes and their religion. Astarotte argues that even those who could not possibly acknowledge Christ, such as the Antipodes, are going to be saved on Judgment Day, as long as they have had a religious faith in their earthly lives (XXV.233-236). The key concepts of these four stanzas are the same as those found in the fourth chapter of Ficino's *De christiana religione*, written originally in Latin in 1474, after Ficino had joined the priesthood in December 1473. The Italian edition was printed in 1474 (hence before 25 March 1475 according to the Florentine calendar), while several editions in Latin were printed from 1476 onwards.[24]

Astarotte's argument uses a reverse chronology. His speech, therefore, begins at the very end of the world, Judgment Day:

> Dunque sarebbe partigiano stato
> in questa parte il vostro Redentore,
> che Adam per voi quassù fussi formato,

---

[23] A complete list of manuscripts with the life of St Bartholomew is given in the *Acta Sanctorum* database. The name *Astarotte* derives probably from *Astaroth*, a creature of the Catholic demonology. In the Bible Astarte is the leading goddess of Sidon and her name is found in its singular form in 1 Kings, 11.5, because Salomon is influenced by the cult of his foreign wives; in 2 Kings 23.13, because the temple which Salomon built for her is named here. The plural form of the name is quoted in Judges 10.6.

Orvieto has supposed that Poliziano was the source for this episode. Poliziano, he suggests, perhaps translated for Pulci two pseudo-Homeric poems, the *Cercopes*, in which small demons are teasing and capable of clever arguments arguments. Another source found by Orvieto is the infernal spirit called Floron; see Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, p. 249. Floron is found in Cecco' d'Ascoli's commentary to Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de spera*; see Joannes de Sacro Bosco, *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and its Commentators*, ed. Lynn Thorndike, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1949, pp. 398-399. According to Cecco d'Ascoli, the demon Floron is mentioned in the *Liber de umbris* by Solomon and is confined in a steel mirror by an invocation. The demon knew many of the secrets of nature; it seems formerly to have belonged to the order of the Cherubim. In Pulci's system of demons and *spiriti folletti*, however, the description of Floron does not have much in common with Astarotte. The latter is not be imprisoned in a mirror and, although he is able to talk about the secrets of nature, he cannot name Christ (XXV.126-127) while Floron has no such problem. Pulci read this commentary by Cecco d'Ascoli but the character Floron influenced the author in another passage, in XXV.92, where Gano lists the gifts from Marsilione and among them there is a mirror where two *spiriti folletti*, Floro and Fares, are captive.

[24] Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum*, vol. 1, pp. LXXVII-LXXVIII.

> e crucifisso Lui per vostro amore?
> Sappi ch'ognun per la croce è salvato;
> forse che il ver, dopo pur lungo errore,
> adorerete tutti di concordia,
> e troverrete ognun misericordia.
>
> <div align="right">(XXV.233)</div>

Taking another step backwards, Astarotte explains, by borrowing concepts that were common in contemporary theology, that the only condition to fulfil in order to be saved is to have faith and to be 'obedient', 'God-fearing', 'pious', and 'respectful':

> Basta che sol la vostra fede è certa,
> e la Virgine è in Ciel glorificata.
> Ma nota che la porta è sempre aperta
> e insino a quel gran dì non fia serrata,
> e chi farà col cor giusta l'offerta,
> sarà questa olocaüsta accettata;
> ché molto piace al Ciel la obbedïenzia,
> e timore, osservanzia e reverenzia.
>
> <div align="right">(XXV.234)</div>

Pulci explains later in the text that even when the ancient Romans worshipped the pagan gods, before the coming of Christ, God approved of this devotion because any kind of religion distinguishes humans from animals. A well-known argument is here used to justify this theory: when the Romans were at a particularly pious stage of their history they enjoyed great success and at other times they fell into decay (XXV.235). However, those who do not know of Christianity but worship nature and the cosmos do not risk punishment:

> Dico così che quella gente crede,
> adorando i pianeti, adorar bene;
> e la giustizia sai così concede
> al buon remunerazio, al tristo pene:
> sì che non debbe disperar merzede
> chi rettamente la sua legge tiene.
>
> <div align="right">(XXV.236, lines 1-6)</div>

These ideas are remarkably similar to ones in Ficino's *De christiana religione*, in which the intervention of divine Providence does not allow any time and space to be without religion of any sort:

> Per la qual cosa la divina providenzia non permette essere in alcuno tempo Regione del mondo alcuna d'ogni religione interamente spogliata: benché permecta in diversi luoghi, tempi, varii modi d'adoratione observarsi.[25]

This is because religion is what distinguishes humans from beasts:

---

[25] Id., *Libro della cristiana religione*, f. 9v.

> Ma nessuno inditio di religione le bestie mai in sé dimostrono, si che a noi resta propria la elevatione della mente inverso Iddio re del cielo. Così come l'abito del corpo ricto inuerso el cielo a noi è proprio et il culto diuino quasi così agli huomini è naturale come agli uccelli el uolare.[26]

Only Christians, however, hold true faith:

> Coloro adunche sopra gli altri o invero soli sinceramente Iddio honorano, i quali con bonità d'operazioni, verita di linghua, chiarità d'intellecto quanta possono & carità di volontà quanta debbono, continua reverentia gli portano.[27]

These words recall *Morgante*, XXV.233 and the conditions on which, from Pulci's perspective, salvation is ensured on Judgment Day. The word *reverentia*, for instance, is found in both Pulci's and Ficino's texts.

Astarotte afterwards introduces another theme, explaining how some men (Muslims and Jews) know of the existence of Christ and yet do not acknowledge his divinity; nor do they convert to Christianity. Astarotte maintains that they will be damned because they have the choice, while those unaware of Christ have no choice:

> [...] la mente è quella che vi salva e danna,
> se la troppa ignoranzia non v'inganna.
>
> Nota ch'egli è certa ignoranzia ottusa
> o crassa o pigra, accidïosa e trista,
> che, la porta al veder tenendo chiusa,
> ricevette invan l'anima e la vista:
> però questa nel Ciel non truova scusa.
>
> (XXV.236 lines 8-9, 237 lines 1-5)

The intellect should therefore discern the truth and leave the mind's eye free to see; note the use of *vedere* and *vista* to refer to the mind. The Jews, for instance, await another Messiah, when in fact Christ has already walked the Earth:

> E se la prava oppinïon de' matti
> aspetta altro Messia che il vostro ancora,
> e confessa i miracol ch'Egli ha fatti,
> e come E' disse a Lazzer: 'Veni fora'
> e muti e ciechi sanava ed attratti,
> che negar non si può; certo ella ignora
> che liberassi gli uomini e le donne
> per la virtù del Tetragramatonne.
>
> (XXV.242)

---

[26] Ibid., f. 6r.

[27] Ibid., f. 10v.

This stanza cites two common indictments of Judaism, the madness in denying Christ as the Messiah and the rejection of the miracles described in the Gospels.

De christiana religione develops the same issues, especially in Chapters XXIX-XXVII, in which the Muslim and Judaic arguments against the divinity of Christ are targeted. Chapter XXXVII focuses on the obduracy of the two other monotheistic religions, given that proof of the superiority of Christianity has been provided by the powers of the intellect:

> La profundità de prophetici e christiani misterii divina et perché è divina però non si può dell'umana intelligentia penetrare e così peradverso [...] la difficillima interpetrazione della sacra scriptura.[28]

Along with historical reasons, the Christian faith − with its prophecies, mysteries, and the Bible − is not easily penetrable by human intelligence. Intellect, however, is ultimately what saves us, as Astarotte states at stanza 236. In Chapter XXIX Ficino discusses the Jewish version of Christ and then analyses the different kinds of divine revenge against Judaism. Likewise, Ficino quotes John the Baptist and Flavius Josephus as evidence and argues the veracity of Christ's miracles:

> Havete uno libro delle vita di Giesù nazareno nel quale si leggie che Giesù, in tra gli altri miracoli che quivi molti si narrono, etiamdio risuscitò il morto perchè solo sapeva rectamente pronuntiare quello nome proprio di Dio, che apresso di voi sopra gli altri è venerando, et perché è composto solo di quatro lettere et quelle sono vocali. Con grandissima dificultà si pronuntia ha questo suono: Hiehouahi. Che significa: fu, era e sarà. Questa è l'opinione della magior parte de' giudei.[29]

Here Ficino, among other miracles, mentions the resurrection of Lazarus. He claims that, according to a Jewish book, the explanation for this miracle would be the correct pronunciation of the name of God in Hebrew, made up of four vowels. Stanza 242 similarly mentions Lazarus and the four letters forming the name of God − hence the name *Tetragramatonne*.[30]

---

[28] Ibid., f. 110v.

[29] Ibid., f. 84v.

[30] The influence of Ficino's treatise in Astarotte's speeches has been analysed only by Mark Davie. Davie is the first to consider how the *Morgante* (especially XXV.242) and *De christiana religione* have much in common. See Mark Davie, 'Pulci e Ficino: verità religiosa per sola fede' in *Il sacro nel Rinascimento. Atti del convegno internazionale (Chianciano-Pienza 17-20 luglio 2000)*, ed. Luisa Secchi Tarugi, Franco Cesati, Florence, 2002, pp. 405-412: 407-412.

There is an issue, however, that Ficino never confronts directly in his works: whether a soul is assigned to a specific religion by fate by God or through its own free will. According to the *Theologia platonica* every soul is generated independently of its earthly body. Significantly, Ficino omits an explanation of why, when free will is guaranteed, a soul would choose to incarnate in a body in that part of the world where Christ is unknown. The eighteenth book of the *Theologia platonica* (Chapters III-VII), for example, describes in detail the journey of a soul from the moment of its creation to its descent into the body. Chapter VI in particular focuses on how the soul enters the body and by whom it is led while it lives in the body. Ficino only reports the opinions of others regarding the choices that the soul makes before earthly life:

> Those who think that souls have lived before this entry [into the body] declare that they naturally selected their life's demon guide at the very beginning of their descent, before they have entered the body.[31] But others think that only after they have begun to exercise choice by selecting a moral way of life, do they choose in the meantime, though in secret, that life's demon-guide [...]. Those who think the souls choose [the demon] earlier than this claim that they accept it from the crowd of demons chiefly which is attached to the same star, the star to which a soul too has been assigned by the world's artificer Himself. For there are as many legions of demons and heroes as there are stars. And from such a huge crowd, they claim, the demon is allotted before all others who is most in harmony with that chosen life and with the configuration of the heavens as it pertains at the very moment of the choice of the descent; and they argue that the greatest difference in men's mental capacities and fortunes derives from these causes.

In this passage, Ficino reports that, according to Plotinus, a soul initially chooses a demon and that demon is attached to the star previously assigned to the soul by God. Free will is here guaranteed in the choice of the demon, while God decides the star assigned to each soul. The combination of a demon and the configuration of heavens is what establishes each man's capacities and fortunes. No religion or region of the world is mentioned.

We are closer to understanding the *raison d'être* of the *novelletta* in the *Morgante*. Marsilione's *novelletta* somehow fills the theological gap that Ficino left in his treatises. Pulci, using his own literary devices, attempts to introduce a Platonising and Hermeticising interpretation of what was left unclear by Ficino. This aim is reached by the creation of a curious allegory, one that recalls Platonic themes, such as the cave and the guardian spirits, and Hermetic themes, for example the hierarchy of metals. In the case of metals Pulci chooses to have six columns, six being a recurrent number in

---

[31] Plotinus, *Enneads*, 3.4.

Ficino's philosophy.[32] It is also important to remark that according to Ficino there were three schools of gentile theology: the Persian, the Egyptian and the Greek. Since according to Ficino divine Providence does not allow any region of the world at any time to be completely without religion, these three gentile religions might well correspond to the three continents known at the time, Asia, Africa and Europe. If we add these three schools to the three monotheistic religions, we obtain the six faiths represented by the pillars.

The inexperience of the new soul that follows desire rather than reason is Pulci's response. Despite the presence of the guardian spirits (perhaps suggesting the Platonic demons), the new souls choose whichever column they prefer, apparently without being aware of the consequences.

7.2 Further theological and philosophical issues related to Ficino

Astarotte's digressions engage in other topics related to theology. These appear in no particular order. The figure of Astarotte, in fact, seems to display all his knowledge without following any coherent logic.

One of the topics discussed by Astarotte, for instance, is Original Sin. According to the demon, sinning deliberately is worse than any other offence (XXV.152, lines 6-8). Astarotte chooses some examples to prove his argument, for instance, Adam and Pilate, both of whom sinned unaware of their wrong-doing. Hence, they were forgiven (XXXV.153). Likewise, in Chapter XXXIII of *De christiana religione* Ficino discusses Original Sin and the redemption of Christ. The argument stems from the fact that Jews do not believe that Christ, with his death and resurrection, was able to rectify Adam's sin, as the punishment for Original Sin still affects men. In order to argue against this theory, Ficino mentions Adam's free will and his awareness when he committed Original Sin:

> Ancora vi contraponete in questo modo la macula contracta da genitori: per origine, non essendo volontaria nella progenie, non è peccato. Anzi, è peccato essendo una certa perversità declinante dalla rectitudine e inepta a conseguire l'optimo fine, come è il difecto nello zoppo. [...] Oltre a questo è volontario non tanto di volontà propria della progenie, quanto d'essa volontà di Adamo el quale per moto di generazione in un certo

[32] Six are the ancient theologians of his *prisca theologia*, although six is also the number of the days of creation in the Bible, of the intervals between the planets, and it is the first perfect number; see Allen, *Synoptic Art*, p. 25.

modo muove tutti di sua stirpe nascenti, non altrimenti che la volontà d'una anima muova a effecto molti membri del corpo.[33]

The Latin title of this paragraph reads: 'Sin is intentional, because if it is not intentional it is not sin.'[34] As does Astarotte, Ficino distinguishes types of sin according to the intentions of the sinner. Free will is also related to Adam and Original Sin, as the following passage, which addresses the Jews in the second person, clarifies:

> So bene che voi in questo luogho così contradite el peccato di Adam perchè procede dall'acto proprio di suo libero arbitrio essersi appartenuto alla propria persona più che alla spetie. A questo, secondo la mente de nostri theologi, in tale forma rispondo. Alla persona di ciascuno in duo modi si può la cosa adaptare o secondo essa persona o secondo dono di gratia. Similmente alla natura in due modi adaptare si suole: o secondo essa natura, cioè quello che nasce da principii e elementi di quella, o di dono di gratia supernaturale.[35]

Jews claim that the Original Sin was Adam's responsibility, as he committed it out of his own free will. Ficino, however, opposes this idea, relying on the theologians' authority, just as Astarotte does ('e domanda i teologi tuoi, poi' XXV.142, line 3). Moreover, according to Ficino, the human race is afforded justice by divine grace:

> La natura humana, da principio, ebbe la originale iustitia non da principii suoi intrinsechi, ma dal dono della grazia divina, el quale dalla origine a tutta la natura nel primo genitore fu conferito. Colui perde questo dono per colpa del primo delicto.[36]

At the root of all humanity, Adam's sin caused the loss of this divine gift for everyone. Astarotte's concern, however, is not for the human race but for himself and the damned angels. Angels cannot be forgiven because, unlike Adam's, their sin was committed in full knowledge. Hence mercy will not be granted:

> e non fu men d'ingrato che superbo
> il peccato di tutti e la malizia;
> e non si pente il nostro animo acerbo,
> però che ciò che dal volere inizia,
> cognosciuto il ver prima, per se stesso,
> non tentato d'alcun, mai fu dimesso.
> […]
> Ma la natura angelica corrotta
> non può più ritornar perfetta e intera,
> la qual peccò come natura dotta,
> e per questa cagion poi si dispera.
>
> (XXV.152, lines 3-8; 154 lines 1-4)

---

[33] Ficino, *Libro della cristiana religione*, f. 96r.

[34] Id., *Opera*, p. 63: 'Peccatum adeo est voluntarium, quod si non esset voluntarium, non esset peccatum.'

[35] Id., *Libro della cristiana religione,* f. 96v.

[36] Ibid. 96r.

These angels chose freely to rebel against God. This means that they, unlike mankind, had the option to either follow or repress the impulse to rebel. This option corresponds to the gift of justice. Astarotte's statement is the logical conclusion of Ficino's analysis. This is clear in the use that Pulci makes of the terms *natura angelica* and *natura dotta* to indicate the precise status of the angels. In the same way, Ficino's phrase to depict men's essence is *natura humana*. Ficino is not Astarotte's only source for ideas on Original Sin. Astarotte makes distinctions concerning it found in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. Thomas here separates sins committed in *ignorantia* and sins committed in *malitia*, a word that Astarotte uses in the *Morgante*, XXV.152, line 4.[37]

Another relevant passage of Astarotte's disquisitions is dedicated to the nature of God in which he briefly defines the Trinity:

> e domanda i teologi tuoi, poi:
> voi dite: 'in una essenzia tre persone',
> ovvero 'una sustanzia', e così noi:
> 'un atto puro sanza admistïone'.
>
> (XXV.142, lines 3-8)

Firstly the demon distinguishes two perspectives, *voi*, presumably Malagigi and the theologians, and *noi*, the demons, but then Astarotte claims that the two visions of the Trinity are essentially the same, giving particular emphasis to the word *sustanzia* (line 5). From his perspective, God is a pure *atto* as well as a substance. The importance given to this unity was part of a debate on Trinity, especially for those who, like Ficino, were trying to illustrate how Platonic philosophy might embody Trinitarian ideas. Ficino's aim was only partly successful, since in the Neoplatonic system there could not be one sole substance for the three persons.[38] In his works published in the 1470s, Ficino does not explicitly interpret the dogma of Trinity in Neoplatonic terms (although we find one example in *De amore*, I.3; III.2) but in biblical terms (*De christiana religione*, XXXI), by finding textual evidence from the Old Testament.

Following his explication of the Trinity, Astarotte lists in stanza 143 various metaphors expressing how this unity establishes God as the prime cause of everything. Pulci here refers to the three main Neoplatonic causes. The 'exemplary' cause, the 'final' cause and the 'efficient' cause correspond, in Ficino's system, to the three persons of the

---

[37] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.2 quaest. 76; Original Sin also includes three kinds of *ignorantia*, i.e., *ignorantia iuris*, *ignorantia facti* and *ignorantia omnium peccatorum*.

[38] Michael Allen, 'Marsilio Ficino on Plato, the Neoplatonists and the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 37, 1984, pp. 555-584: 559.

Trinity. These are borne out textually: line 2, exemplary, 'un ordin donde ogni ordin sia costrutto'; line 3, efficient, 'una caüsa a tutte primitiva'; line 6, final: 'un principio onde ogni principio è indutto'. Another Neoplatonic cause, the instrumental, is found in the metaphor of line 5, 'un foco donde ogni splendor s'avviva'. The remaining causes, shared by both Neoplatonists and Aristotelians are the material (line 4, 'un poter donde ogni poter vien tutto'), and the formal (line 7, 'un saper donde ogni sapere è dato'). Pulci added two other fundamental attributes to God that recall the Trinity (as described in *De amore* III. 2) in which the power of God can be seen as the Father, His wisdom as the Son and His goodness as the Holy Ghost. Pulci uses here the words *poter*, 'power' (line 5, 'un poter donde ogni poter vien tutto'), *saper*, 'wisdom' (line 7, 'un saper donde ogni sapere è dato'), and *bene*, 'goodness' (line 8, 'un bene donde ogni bene è causato'). This description of the Trinity, like the ideas on the Original Sin summarized above, was a common theological issue discussed, for example, in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologica*.[39]

A further element links Astarotte's speeches to *De christiana religione*, the allusion to the Sibyls prophesying the birth of Christ and the consequent reference to the 'Golden Age'. This is most evident in stanza 241:

> Vedi quanto gridato hanno i profeti
> della Virgin, dell'alto Emanuello,
> e da quel tempo in qua son tutti cheti
> che il Verbo santo si congiunse a quello;
> tante Sibille, insin vostri poeti
> disson che il secol si dovea far bello:
> leggi Eritrea, del signor nazzareno,
> che dice insin che e' giacerà nel fieno.

(XXV.241)

Like Pulci, Ficino (*De christiana religione*, XXVI-XXVIII) discusses the truthfulness of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah, and gives details on the Sibyls (Chapters XXIV-XXV). The Sibyls were considered prophets during the early Middle Ages; Ficino, following this tradition, lists some of those who announced the future birth of Christ and the main events of his life. The Erythraean Sibyl is among them (*De christiana religione* XXIV-XXV):

Gli altri libri erano d'altre Sybille. Questi libri non si discernevano per titolo alcuno di quale Sybilla fussino, se non ne' versi della Herithrea, perchè ne' versi anestò il nome

---

[39] *Summa theologica* 1.1, quaest. 30.

suo.[40] […] Il senato romano, come di sopra dicemmo, conservava e' libri sibillini ne' quali Lactantio, familiare di Costantino imperadore, lesse molte cose pertinenti a Cristo figliuolo di Dio, principalmente quella Heritrea. [...] Aggiunse la Heritrea: diranno la sibilla essere stolta e mendace, ma adempiute che queste cose saranno si ricorderanno di me. Nessuno più mi chiamerà mendace essendo propheta del grande Iddio. Adduce Aurelio A[ug]ustino molti versi della sibilla Heritrea translatati in lingua latina e quali vide in greco [...].[41]

This interpretation of the Sibyls' oracles leads Ficino to introduce Virgil's celebrated fourth eclogue as a reinterpretation of the Sibyls' revelation on Christ:

E' versi di Virgilio riducendogli in prosa apunto sono questi che ora raconteremo. Già l'ultima età del verso della Cumea è venuta. El grande ordine nasce dallo intero de' secoli. Già torna la vergine. Già tornano gli aurei secoli. Già nuova progenie dal cielo alto si manda.[...] Nascente colui età di ferro nell'età dell'oro si convertirà e in quel tempo sarà l'ornamento de' secoli. [42]

The sixth verse of Pulci's stanza 241 also refers to Virgil's eclogue, which mentions the song of the Cumean Sibyl.[43]

One last common reference between Pulci's and Ficino's texts is the Antipodeans. When Astarotte explains the issue of salvation, he states that part of humanity cannot know of the coming of the Messiah:

> E come un segno surge in orïente,
> un altro cade con mirabile arte
> come si vede qua nell'occidente,
> però che il ciel giustamente comparte.
> Antipodi appellata è quella gente;
> adora il sole e Iuppiter e Marte,
> e piante ed animal, come voi, hanno,
> e spesso insieme gran battaglie fanno.
>
> (XXV.231)

In Canto XXVII Pulci acknowledges the roundness of the Earth:

> Credo che quegli Antipodi di sotto
> dubitassin fra lor più volte, il giorno,
> che non fussi del ciel l'ordine rotto,
> ché il bel pianeta non facea ritorno,
> o che e' fussi quel dì l'ultimo botto,
> e ritornassi all'antico soggiorno
> prima che fussi il gran caòs aperto;

---

[40] Ficino, *Libro della cristiana religione*, f. 43v.

[41] Ibid., f. 46r.

[42] Ibid., f. 44v.

[43] Virgil, *Eclogues* IV.4.

e in dubbio stessi lo emisperio incerto.

<div align="right">(XXVII.215)</div>

After the battle of Roncevaux Charlemagne pleads with God to stop the sun, as he needs more daylight to recover the bodies of the dead Christians.[44] This means, according to Pulci, that on the other side of the world the Antipodes should have been surprised to have such a long night. Pulci took this notion, according to Jordan, from Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli (1397-1482), the mathematician and cartographer patronised for most of his life by the Medici family.[45] By 1474 Toscanelli had developed a sea chart where he traced the supposed westward journey from Europe to Asia. This idea was very important to Pulci, who reconsiders Dante's Ulysses in a new light at Canto XXV. The paladin Rinaldo, like the Greek hero, burns with desire to cross the Pillars of Hercules, although the new geographical notions justify Rinaldo's thirst for knowledge.[46] Before, however, Pulci had written these lines, Ficino matched the use of the term Antipodes and the roundness of the Earth in his treatise *Theologia platonica* (IV.2), in which he explains the rotation of the celestial spheres as physically moved by souls. Describing how the spheres are concentric, Ficino assumes that the Earth is a sphere and that the hemisphere below ours is inhabited by the Antipodes:

> whoever wants heaven to be at rest should, when it takes his fancy, attach Saturn's sphere to the [world's] axis. Then one semicircle of the sphere would be above our head, the other above the head of the Antipodes. Now since all parts of this sphere would be mutually completely alike without any difference of nature, there is no reason why the one part would be more here than the other part there. Thus the lower semicircle, because

---

[44] An allusion to Joshua, 10:13.

[45] Jordan, *Pulci's* Morgante, p. 153.

[46] See ibid., p.152-155. Gustavo Uzielli has identified Pulci's source with the works of Lorenzo Buonincontri, a Florentine philosopher who, from April 1475 to 1478, held some lectures on Marcus Manilius's astronomical poems. Manilius's work *Astronomicon* is possibly quoted at Canto XXV (230, lines 3-4); see Gustavo Uzielli, *Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli iniziatore della scoperta dell'America: ricordo del solstizio d'estate del 1892*, Florence, Stabilimento tipografico fiorentino, 1892, p. 88; Arthur Field, 'Lorenzo Buonincontri and the First Public Lecture on Manilius in Florence, 1475-78', *Rinascimento,* 36, 1996, pp. 207-225; Rossella Bessi, 'Luigi Pulci e Lorenzo Bonincontri', *Rinascimento*, 14, 1974, pp. 289-295.

it is equally suited to our region here as to the region of the Antipodes, will strive to be there just as it was here.[47]

7.3 *Morgante* as *historia* between knowledge and magic

The philosophical and theological themes in this chapter have been interpreted in many ways. Since the first twenty-three Cantos conform to more traditional versions of the chivalric poem, the somewhat unexpected display of such knowledge – to which we should add natural philosophy, given the prominence of the bestiary in Canto XXV – has mainly been seen either as Pulci's amateurish attempt to raise the profile of his work or as a mockery of philosophy, Ficino's in particular.[48] The comparisons between Pulci's text and Ficino's treatises written before 1475, however, seem to provide compelling evidence that Pulci had a basic knowledge of Ficinian theories, which he attempted to integrate and to develop in the poem.

In order to establish more definitively whether this work is a parody of philosophy, it is necessary to consider the prominence of the various philosophical concepts incorporated into the text.[49] One such concept is free will, which features prominently in Cantos XXIV and XXV. A brief digression concerning magic is necessary to explain this point.

In these two Cantos Pulci gives much information on his personal life and we learn of his fascination with magic. We know that he went to Norcia to see the cave of the Sibyl.[50] Pulci also professes a desire to see a place he called the 'enchanted waters' (XXV.112, line 7). This metaphor indicates a period of Pulci's life when he was reading

---

[47] Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, transl. Allen and Warden, pp. 310-311: 'Si stare quis caelum velit, figat ipsum Saturni caelum in cardine quandocumque lubet. Tunc semicirculus ipsius sphaerae alter super caput nostrum, stat alter super caput Antipodum. Cum vero partes omnes huius sphaerae sine ulla naturae discrepantia inter se simillimae sint, nulla est ratio per quam alia pars hic sit magis, illic allia. Ergo inferior semicirculus, quia cum loco hoc nostro aeque convenit ac cum regione Antipodum, ita nitetur hic esse, sicut ibi, et superior semicirculus propter eamdem convenientiam ad locum illum contendet esse illic, sicut et hic erat.'

[48] Attilio Momigliano, *L'indole e il riso di Luigi Pulci*, Rocca San Casciano, Cappelli, 1907, p. 327; Corabi, 'Demonologia pulciana', p. 94; Lebano, 'I miracoli di Roncisvalle', p. 126.

[49] Many scholars have dismissed Astarotte's speeches as satirical. See for example Momigliano, *L'indole e il riso di Luigi Pulci*, p. 332; Salvatore Nigro, *Pulci e la cultura medicea*, Bari, Laterza, 1972, p. 74; Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, p. 264; Davie, 'Pulci e Ficino', pp. 407-412.

[50] As found in a letter he wrote to Lorenzo de' Medici from Naples on 4 December 1470 and in a stanza of the poem, XXIV.112, line 4; see Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, pp. 960-963.

Cecco d'Ascoli's works, in which magic is a prominent topic (XXIV.112, line 6-8).[51] During this time also Franco accused Pulci of practising magic and of being involved in evocations of demons:

> Maggior forza del Cielo ebbon gli spirti,
> che s'incantorno già in casa Neroni:
> venti anni stesti sanza confessioni,
> pur Sallay a confessar fe' irti.[52]

This fascination with magic is evident in the *Morgante*. There is, however, something more to the use of magic in the text. A number of scholars have drawn attention to the theme of literary composition and the way it relates to the theme of magic, for example in Canto XXV.113, at line 5 'questo era il mio Parnaso e le mie Muse'. Here magic is symbolized by Mount Parnassus, while the Muses recall poetic invention. Orvieto, among others, has argued that this verse works as a commentary on poetry, which Pulci, in his view, could no longer practise because of his alleged 'exile' from the Medici household.[53] The text, however, points in another direction:

> e dicone mia colpa, e so che ancora
> convien che al gran Minòs io me ne scuse,
> e ricognosca il ver cogli altri erranti,
> piromanti, idromanti e geomanti.

> (XXIV.113, lines 5-8)

What is clear here is that Pulci predicts that his soul would go to Hell, specifically to the Dantean fourth *bolgia* of the eighth circle. He was convinced that he would be among the *altri erranti*, the sorcerers, astrologers and false prophets. By listing three different kinds of forecasters, and precisely those who predict the future with fire, water and the signs on the ground, Pulci was not referring to Dante – there is no mention of these techniques to predict the future in the *Inferno.* This clarification sheds light on Pulci's main 'magical' activity of astrology.[54] The supposed influence of the stars and the

---

[51] Pulci quoted elsewhere Cecco's main poem, *Acerba* (XXIV.113, lines 1-2), a sort of handbook for those who were initiated in magic. Pulci also provided in the *Morgante* technical details on the practice of magic (XXIV.104-111).

[52] Pulci and Franco, *Il* Libro dei sonetti, p. 49.

[53] Orvieto, *Pulci medievale,* p. 274.

[54] Further to this, Pulci's personal letters – especially those sent to Lorenzo de' Medici at the early stages of their relationship (1463-1470) – show familiarity with the occult. For example, in a letter from the 1460s he refers to a demon called Salay; see Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, p. 942.: 'Idio ci aiuterà o Salaỳ'. In a letter written during February in 1466 he asks (ibid., p. 943) 'Che debbo dunque fare? Darmi al trecentomila diavoli?'. Later in March during the same year he states (ibid., p. 950): 'Non ci siamo interamente raccozzati insieme, tanto pel tuo partire savamo sbaragliati; et oltre a questo stima che Salaỳ

planets on human affairs and terrestrial events was a very important issue during the Renaissance, and especially to Pulci. This is at the heart of Cantos XXIV-XXV, where the focus on free will leads naturally to references to astrology.[55]

The 'second poem' was conceived with different purposes from the first and was composed seemingly with the intention of reporting history. The change from first to second poem becomes clear by comparing the *incipit* of Canto I and *incipit* of Canto XXIV. In the first we read that the angels, by virtue of their perfect memory, inspired the poem (I.1). From Canto XXIV onwards the perspective radically changes when Pulci, becomes a 'more typical poet who represents what he has seen' and, although he follows the tradition by evoking the Muses, he is the main authority and is no longer guided by angels. In this way, Pulci himself becomes the creator of his poetry.[56] He then implicitly compares his work to the work of a magician and represents his stories as an artificial or magical reality that is wholly indistinguishable from reality itself. The comparison between poetry and magic allows also the parallel between 'Gigi' Pulci and Malagigi the magician.[57] The parallel between magic and poetry justifies the quotation of Mount Parnassus and the Muses (XXV.112, line 5, see p. 218). Hence magic is an art as much as poetry and requires as much inspiration as the writing process.

In the 'second poem' Pulci no longer relies on divine help. Not only does Pulci not ask for divine assistance, but he also claims to recount accurately what he has seen. The words used in the opening stanzas of Canto XXIV describe this process:

<div align="center">Io cominciai a cantar di Carlo Mano:</div>

---

ancora di noi voglia la sua parte: forse ci arà un dì tutti.' During that year 'Salay' is frequently named in these letters (23rd August 1466, ibid., p. 950): 'qui con certi alberelli et consigli di Salaỳ mi governo'; (4th November 1466, ibid., p. 952) 'non posso ad altro pensare che a tte e a Salaỳ: da un tempo in qua, queste sono le mie tarantole [...] e ricordatevi di me [...] come il trentamila diavoli'.

[55] This feature of this section of the *Morgante* is analysed in Jordan, *Pulci's* Morgante, pp. 125-181.

[56] Ibid., p. 130.

[57] The character of Malagigi derives from the magician who in the Matter of France was called *Maugris* or *Maugis*. In Italy, Andrea da Barberino had already written of a magician with this name. Pulci's nickname was 'Gigi', as we read Matteo Franco's sonnets and letters; see Franco, *Lettere*, pp. 73-75. It was probably the nickname 'Gigi' which suggested the identification of Pulci with Malagigi.

Pulci's contemporaries also established a parallel between Pulci's writing and Malagigi's magic, for example Nicodemo Folengo, who wrote an epigram for the recently deceased *Malacisius Florentinus*. 'Malacisius' is, according to Cordiè and Perosa, Latin for 'Malagigi'; see Nicodemo Folengo, *Carmina*, ed. Carlo Cordié and Alessandro Perosa, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, 1990, pp. 28-29. 'Malacisius', according to Folengo, was a facetious and witty poet; see ibid., p.120.

> convien che 'l mio cantar pur giunga in porto,
> e ch'io punisca il traditor di Gano
> d'un tradimento già ch'io veggo scorto
> cogli occhi della mente in uno specchio.
>
> (XXIV.4, lines 3-7)

As pointed out above, the phrases *occhi della mente* and *specchio* recall Ficinian ideas and are used in particular by Ficino in the treatises written during the first half of the 1470s. If the stanza quoted above is interpreted philosophically, then authorship is not guaranteed only by the author and sight is not that of normal eyes, but of the mind's eye. As this sight does not involve the imperfect human body, it never fails, hence it must reveal the truth. In Ficinian philosophy the *specchio* is God's mind where everything is reflected; we can therefore assume that the mind's eye is the means to understanding and the mirror is the object of his sight, which reflects the 'real' essence of things, as other later passages confirm (XXIV.45, line 4: 'convien che il vero appaia in ogni specchio', XXVI.122, line 7: 'Omè, che 'l ver m'apparve in chiaro specchio'). Pulci assures that he is not simply recounting a story but that this is history and it is true.

The need to recount the history of and pay homage to Charlemagne is explicit in Canto I. This homage was probably a request that came from Lucrezia Tornabuoni herself since the medieval myth of Charlemagne re-founding Florence was still alive in the Quattrocento.[58] Pulci did not fulfil his intention of honouring Charlemagne in the 'first poem', telling instead the adventures of the paladins, in which Charlemagne plays a minor role.[59] The motives behind Pulci's sudden urge to fulfil his promise to honour Charlemagne, more than ten years after that first Canto was written, are unclear.[60] One as yet unproven hypothesis, however, is that Pulci was influenced by Plato's views of poets. According to Plato, poets, as enemies of truth, should be banished from the ideal city.[61] This idea and its implications in Ficino's philosophy are a complex issue that has been examined elsewhere.[62] Worth emphasizing, however, is that, to Ficino, not all poets write the same kind of poetry, and that only some poetry is worth saving. One of the genres admitted to the city, for instance, is narrative poetry that recounts and

---

[58] Despite Leonardo Bruni's attempts to disprove this myth; see Cabrini, 'Coluccio Salutati', p. 267.

[59] Davie, *Half-Serious Rhymes*, pp. 13-15.

[60] A partial explanation was provided by Pio Rajna and his discovery of the so-called *Orlando laurenziano*, the direct source of the 'first poem'; see Rajna, 'La materia del *Morgante*'. For an analysis of the relationship between the two texts see, Davie's chapter 'Point of departure: *Orlando rifatto*' in *Half-Serious Rhymes*, pp. 33-62.

[61] See for example Plato, *Republic*, 10.607B5; Ficino, *Opera*, p. 1315.

[62] See Allen's chapter 'Poets ouside the city' in *Synoptic art*, pp. 93-123.

celebrates the deeds of the ancestral founders of the *patria*.[63] There could not have been a better chance for Pulci to prove himself with this task than finally narrating the great *gesta* of one of Florence's founders. The considerable use of Ficino's philosophy in these Cantos seems to support to this interpretation.[64]

In conclusion, the difficulties posed by the project of writing about history were resolved by the resources offered by philosophy. Before the events that led to the dispute between Pulci and Ficino, Pulci followed and possibly admired Ficino and borrowed ideas from his works while writing the *Morgante*.

---

[63] Ibid., p. 99.

[64] One further clue is the use of Pulci's unexplored sources. In an article that I intend to publish, I have demonstrated that Pulci read and used the Latin translation of Diodorus Siculus's *Bibliotheca historica* in Canto XXV. This is a text that was quite obscure and it definitely stands out among Pulci's other sources. The *Bibliotheca historica* was also an important source to Ficino, since it was his authority for including Orpheus among the ancient theologians; see Daniel P. Walker, 'Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonists', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 16, 1953, pp. 100-120: 100.

CHAPTER 8

PULCI'S SATIRE OF FICINO

> La nostra storia è sì fiorita e varia
> ch'i' non posso in un luogo star mai saldo.[1]

8.1 A new chronology: 1473-1483

The satire of philosophers reaches its apotheosis in the Quattrocento with Pulci's poetry. Pulci's satire, however, needs to be re-contextualized and so does the dispute between Pulci and Ficino. Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrate that Pulci's dispute with Ficino is part of an intricate context. This chapter proposes a new chronology for the phases of the dispute between Pulci and Ficino and places Pulci within the traditional satire of philosophers and philosophy. The chapter also includes a critical edition of the poems written by Pulci against Ficino.

The evidence gathered in Chapters 6 and 7 suggests that Pulci did not oppose the Ficinian Academy (if there ever was such a thing) during the early 1470s. On the contrary, Pulci made partial use of Ficinian theories to justify his new focus on history when he began the final Cantos of the *Morgante*. Cantos XXIV and XXV, in which we find Ficinian ideas on the soul, free will and salvation, were written (I state) between 1473 and 1478 (see Chapter 6, pp. 188-193) while Ficino was completing and publishing his commentary *De amore* and his treatises *De christiana religione* and *Theologia platonica*. In April 1478 the Pazzi conspiracy resulted in the murder of Giuliano de' Medici. This event marked a watershed in the *Morgante*. After Giuliano's death Pulci began work on Canto XXVI.

As Decaria has argued in a recent essay, the episode of the Battle of Roncevaux in the *Morgante* is an account of the betrayal and defeat suffered by the French army against the Saracens and also an allegory of the Pazzi conspiracy. The conspiracy was seen as a betrayal of the Medici family.[2] Besides the change that the character of King Marsilione undergoes from Canto XXVI onwards, Decaria identifies Canto XXVIII.147-152, as a passage key to understand Pulci's allegory. This allegory works on two levels. The first comes in the parallels with the Pazzi conspiracy: Orlando, victim of the betrayal, is Giuliano de' Medici and King Marsilione is Ficino, who was trusted by the Medici

---

[1] Pulci, *Morgante* XXV.168 lines 3-4.

[2] For a summary of this see Decaria, 'Tra Marsilio e Pallante', p. 306.

whilst being close to the Salviati family, hence indirectly implicated in the conspiracy. Pulci claims to have followed two sources, 'Lattanzio' (XXVIII.53), who in the allegory is Pulci himself, and 'Alcuino' (XXVIII.16), representing Poliziano. The second allegory, developed in Canto XXVIII, does not stem from the *littera* but from the first allegory. Pulci saw in Giuliano the image of Pallas, the tragic character of the *Aeneid* killed by Turnus. A further two characters in Virgil's works, Menalcas and Mopsus (*Eclogues*, V), are implicitly compared to Pulci and Poliziano who, like the two shepherds who mourned their semi-divine fellow Dafni, praised Giuliano in his life (*Stanze per la giostra*) and death (*Morgante*).[3]

It has not been noted, however, that the symbols that support these allegories are found in only in the last three Cantos (XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII). The only ambiguous passage found earlier in the poem is at Canto XXV.72-75. Divine fury manifests itself through several marvels and, among them, lightning strikes a laurel, even though this does not happen in the *Chanson de Roland*. Decaria reasons that this laurel symbolises Lorenzo de' Medici, who was frequently referred to as *Lauro*.[4] The lack of other symbols related to the allegory and the fact that in the preceding stanzas (69-70) Gano is still scorned as the betrayer, however, weakens the identification of the laurel with Lorenzo/Lauro. Besides this, at Canto XXVII Marsilione is hanged from the remains of the same tree, which is no longer a laurel but a carob. Pulci hints here at the medieval belief that Judas, the most famous of all traitors to whom both Gano and Marsilio are compared, hanged himself from a carob.[5] The change from laurel to carob emphasizes Marsilio's new role as the betrayer of the French, who stand allegorically for the Medici. If the laurel at Canto XXV were a representation of Lorenzo, and if the lightning were a symbolic representation of the attempt to kill him, the change into carob would not make sense. Add to this the fact that Petrarch provides an eminent predecessor for the image of lightning striking a laurel in 'Standomi un giorno solo a la fenestra'.[6]

---

[3] Ibid., pp. 319-327.

[4] Ibid., pp. 312-313.

[5] Gano: XI.6, line 5; XVI.84, line 7; XVI.70, line 6; XXII.29, line 1; XXIV.34, line 3; XXIV.42, line 6; XXV.4, line 6; XXV.69, line 2; XXV.114, line 2; XXVII.167, line 6; Marsilio: XXVI.25, line 4.

[6] Petrarch, *Rerum Volgarium Fragmenta*, 323.25-36. This has been pointed out also by Decaria, 'Fra Marsilio e Pallante', pp. 312-313. There is a carob mentioned in Canto XXV: Gano, while plotting the betrayal, goes under a carob tree and a fruit hits his head (XXV.77). The carob from which Marsilione is hanged at Canto XXVIII, however, is clearly the same tree that was burnt by the lightning: 'E quando e'

Once we acknowledge the importance of the Pazzi conspiracy in the dispute with Ficino, we are able to distinguish in Pulci's texts two different kinds of satire. In *Morgante* XXVI-XXVIII and in the poem 'Se Dio ti guardi, Marsilio Ficino' (see below, I, pp. 243 and following), Pulci patently accuses Ficino of betrayal. In four other poems satirizing philosophy, 'Costor che fan sì gran disputatione', 'Marsilio, questa tua philosophia' (II, p. 245), 'O venerabil gufo sorïano' (III, p. 247) and '"Buona sera, o messer, vien za" "va drento"' (IV p. 249) Pulci, through themes and rhetoric borrowed from the tradition, ridicules Ficino the philosopher and his philosophy.

With this distinction in mind, we should take into account one last issue, the so called poems of religious parody, considered to be the main cause of Pulci's supposed intellectual exile from Florence.[7] A new dating of these poems by Decaria, which I follow here, sees 'In principio era buio, e buio fia', as written before August 1473 and 'Poi ch'io partii da voi, Bartolomeo' as written before 1475.[8] This chapter discusses the third, 'Costor che fan sì gran disputatione'. The outrage caused by these poems is witnessed in some poems by Feo Belcari, Matteo Nerucci and an anonymous reader of Machiavelli's *Mandragola*.[9] Pulci's response to this amounts to a brief apology in his religious poem 'Confessione', dated 1483 (lines 66-67).[10]

The poems parodying religion were initially intended for a private circulation and were addressed to three members of the Medici household: Pandolfo Rucellai, Benedetto Dei and Bartolomeo dell'Avveduto. Another poem is very similar in contents to the three above, 'Questi che vanno tanto a San Francesco', and its only autograph witness shows that Pulci did not aim this kind of contents to a wider public.[11] Despite the undoubted controversy, the reaction to Pulci's satire of religion did not seem to harm his personal

---

vide quel carubbo secco/ e quello allòr fulminato dal cielo,/ parve che 'l cor gli passassi uno stecco/ e che per tutto se gli arricci il pelo […].' (XXVIII.270, lines 1-4)'.

[7] Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 222-244; id., 'A proposito del sonetto "Costor che fan sì gran disputazione" e dei sonetti responsivi', *Interpres*, 4, 1981-82, pp. 400-413: 412-413.

[8] *SE*, pp. 67-76. For the dating proposed by Orvieto see Pulci, *Opere minori*, pp. 193-196.

[9] For Belcari, see Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 221-227; for Nerucci, see Verde, *Lo Studio*, vol. 4.1, pp. 130-136 and Decaria in *SE*, p. 70; for the last witness, see Decaria, ibid., p. 71.

[10] The text of Pulci's 'Confessione' is in Pulci, *Opere minori*, pp. 219-229. For its dating, see Carrai, *Le muse dei Pulci*, 173-187. Decaria maintains that Pulci's 'Confessione', in fact, is not an apology for his 'heretical' poems, see Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 127-138. Pulci also vaguely refers to a controversial poem in Canto XXVIII.46.

[11] *SE*, p. 86.

and professional interests. In 1476 Matteo Franco lamented the fact that Pulci remained dear to Lorenzo.[12]

Given this brief history, it can be assumed that during the first half of the 1470s Pulci was on good terms with Ficino and also that he had come into contact with Ficino's treatises, commentaries and public lectures. This influenced some passages of Cantos XXIV and XXV of the *Morgante*. During these same years, most probably early in the decade, Pulci wrote poems of religious parody that contain certain heretical ideas. It is however important to remember that such themes were not uncommon in contemporary comic literature – both Franco and Lorenzo de' Medici also wrote satirical verses on the nature of the soul and its relationship with God (see Chapter 4, p. 117 and Chapter 5, pp. 164-170).[13] In this period too Luigi was involved in a tenso with Franco which lasted until at least 1476. Immediately before 1476 Ficino wrote the letters to Bernardo Pulci and Bernardo Rucellai, lamenting Pulci's immorality (see Chapter 6, p. 176). The cause for Ficino's anger is not clear from these letters, although in the letter to Rucellai, according to some scholars, there are references to *De christiana religione*, which Pulci quoted in Canto XXV (see Chapter 7, pp. 208-211).[14] Ficino, perhaps, did not appreciate Pulci's amateurish attempts of incorporating his philosophy into the poem. We do not have enough evidence to assert that this was what angered Ficino, although it is reasonable to assume that the poems of religious parody were not the sole reason of Ficino's bitter reaction. We do know that Ficino started to promote an image of Pulci that exaggerated his most provocative features, outlining a portrait of a heretical poet who despised and mocked Christianity. This portrayal was underpinned by Pulci's notoriety – the poems against Scala and Franco, already known to a wider public, reveal

---

[12] The famous letter dated 1474 'scritta con la mano che trema per la febbre' has been used to argue that the poems of religious parody deeply damaged Pulci; see Decaria in *SE*, p. 69, who uses it to date 'Costor che fan sì gran disputatione'. The letter laments Franco's aggressive poems ('sonetti dove erano coltellate'), testfies that Ficino was still on good terms with Pulci ('per messer Marsilio hiersera gliel dixi') and refers to other poems that he wrote for an anonymous recipient ('E de' sonetti aiutati a fare, ho tratto sempre a un altro ch'io ho veduto et trovato cogli occhi miei in casa'). Pulci wrote three poems against Franco for someone identified by the name of 'Agnolo orafo'. Ibid., pp. 61-64. 'Sempre la pulcia muor, signore, a torto', an apologetic poem by Pulci, mentions a controversial 'sonetto' that could be any of the attacks on Scala or Franco. See Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 213-222; Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 117-119; *SE*, pp. 96-97. For Franco's letter to Lorenzo de' Medici, see Franco, *Lettere*, p. 240.

[13] Polcri, *Luigi Pulci*, p. 64.

[14] Raymond Marcel, *Marsile Ficin*, *1433-1499*, Paris, Les belles lettres, 1958, pp. 428-430.

a short temper and testiness – and by the poems of religious parody, that in the meantime had circulated in and around Florence.

The poems against Ficino may have been written after these first attacks in 1476. Later in that year Ficino asked Lorenzo and Giuliano to intervene and, according to his letter dated January 1477, his wish was granted. In 1477 Ficino alluded to Pulci and his *Morgante* in the prologue to *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum* and in the concluding paragraph of *De vita Platonis* (see Chapter 6, p. 176). Ficino, however, was not on good terms with the Medici at this point and the events of April 1478 worsened his position.[15] The *Morgante* was published in November 1478 in its version of twenty-two Cantos. In the aftermath of Giuliano's death, Pulci wrote Cantos XXVI and XXVII, depicting Ficino as an evil betrayer, and the poem 'Se Dio ti guardi, Marsilio Ficino'. In 1482 he concluded the poem with the final Canto and the complete *Morgante* was finally published in 1483.

This hypothetical sequence of events helps us understand the two kinds of satire of Ficino in the *Morgante*. First, we see the deformed portrait of Marsilione/Marsilio, the evil betrayer, and then Ficino as the worthless Platonic philosopher.

---

[15] Fubini, 'Ficino e i Medici', p. 51.

8.2 Marsilio the betrayer

The identification of King Marsilione with Marsilio Ficino was discussed by Orvieto, who documents mainly five aspects of the text that draw the two figures together. First, is a tendency to describe the King with unusual features: blasphemy, envy, cowardice and betrayal. For instance, when Orlando acknowledges the betrayal in Roncevaux, he delivers a speech referring to King Marsilione in a way that is markedly inconsistent with any of the stories of the *Morgante*:

24 S'io avessi pensato il traditore
  Marsilio in questo modo a vicitarmi
  venissi come ingiusto e peccatore,
  io arei preparato i cori e l'armi;
  ma perché sempre gli portai amore,
  credea che così lui dovessi amarmi,
  e che fussi sepolto ogni odio antico:
  ché qualche volta ognun pur torna amico;

25 salvo che lui, che per viltà perdona
  e resta pur la mente acerba e cruda.
  Pertanto io gli confermo la corona
  de' traditori, e scuso or Gano e Giuda;
  ch'io non truovo in lui cosa che sia buona,
  ma fa come sparvier che in selva muda,
  che t'assicura e par che e' sia la fede;
  poi, se tu il lasci un tratto, mai non riede.

26 Ecco la fede or di Melchisedec,
  un uom che è di più lingue che Babel,
  da dirgli alecsalam salamalec,
  proprio un altro Cain che invidi Abel.
  Ma forse sarò io nuovo Lamec;
  forse lo spirto è quel d'Achitofel,
  forse di Marsia, che s'asconde al cielo
  di corpo in corpo anzi al signor di Delo.

27 Or pur chi inganna ognun, anche sé inganna,
  e non sia ignun che a se stesso si celi,
  perché pur se medesimo alfin danna.

        (XXVI.24-27, lines 1-3)

Orlando is perhaps here speaking for Giuliano, although other details suggest that these stanzas represent what Pulci felt himself. The reference to a 'past hatred', *odio antico*, is particularly relevant and might hint at a reconciliation that took place in the gap between Ficino's first and last letters, a period of about two years in which we have argued that Pulci wrote 'Marsilio, questa tua philosophia', 'O venerabil gufo sorïano' and '"Buona sera, o messer, vien za" "Va drento"'. The forgiveness (24, lines 7-8) that Ficino granted must have been related to something more serious than some mere

poems of parody.[1] Besides, the betrayal appears twofold, as Pulci added to the Pazzi conspiracy a reproach of Ficino's false forgiveness and deceitful friendship, encapsulated by the image of the disloyal sparrow-hawk (25, lines 6-8).

The second clue is in the plot. Orvieto mentions two passages in which Pulci modified the traditional plot of the *Chanson de Roland* in order to focus more sharply on the perverse nature of Marsilione. In the first, King Marsilione's son, Zambugeri, attempting to defend his father, has an arm cut off. Marsilione does not help him:

> Marsilio sparì via come un uccello
> o come cervio spaventato in caccia;
> e Zambuger non farà più alle braccia.

> 37   Fece Marsilio del braccio cercare,
> acciò che questa reliquia devota
> per le moschee si potessi mostrare:
> non so s'ognun che legge intende e nota […].

(XXVII.37, lines 6-8; 38 lines 1-4)

According to folk tradition it is Marsilione, and not his son, who suffers the amputation of an arm.[2] These stanzas reveal Marsilione's cowardice, selfishness (36) and, worse, the shameful hypocrisy in taking advantage of someone else's disgrace (37).[3] The second episode concerns Marsilio's death. King Marsilione does not throw himself down the stairs of his palace as in the *Spagna in rima* (XXXIX, 15-17), but dies hanged from a carob, like Judas (XXVII.267-285).

It is important to read these depictions of Marsilione against the idea of 'Ficino the betrayer' discussed above. The image of Ficino as a betrayer comes through in Marsilio in a number of ways. Moreover, his characteristics are emphasized to the point that Marsilio/Marsilione becomes a stereotypical image of evil, a caricature that resembles the monotonous and predictable Gano of the first *Morgante*. The betrayal, for example, is not the consequence of determined choices but is part of Marsilio's nature. In this

---

[1] Orvieto has argued that Ficino forgave Pulci for his poems of religious parody; see id., *Pulci medievale*, p. 267.

[2] The arm of St Julian has been kept as relic in the Cathedral of Macerata since Epiphany day, 1442; see Rab Hatfield, 'The Compagnia de' Magi', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33, 1970, pp. 107-161: 137. Perhaps Pulci had this relic in mind because *San Giuliano* may point at Giuliano de' Medici.

[3] Orvieto sees in the amputated arm shown around the mosques Ficino's desire to display the fallacies of the *Morgante*. This is probably too vague to be linked to something so specific does no more than only represents Ficino's selfishness and insincerity. See Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, p. 259.

way, Pulci, through Ulivieri's voice, coherently depicts an old King Marsilione, rotten and corrupt to the core:

> Ed Ulivier dicea: – Caro cognato,
> meglio era, omè, tu m'avessi creduto!
> Già è più tempo ch'io t'ho predicato
> ch'io avevo Marsilio cognosciuto
> traditor prima che fussi creato;
> e tu credevi e' mandassi il tributo!
>
> (XXVI.20, lines 1-6)

Hyperbole – here a betrayer even before birth – is the main figure of speech in these descriptions.[4] Envy, for example, is one of the many faults of Marsilio, rooted deep in his bones:

> Ma quel Marsilio, se nessun lo ignora,
> fra molti vizii tutti osceni e brutti
> una invidia ha nell'ossa che il divora,
> che si cognosce finalmente a frutti […].
>
> (XXVI.21, lines 3-6)

The hyperbolic nature of Marsilio's intrinsic evil is often described through a list of adjectives:

> […] io l'ho sempre veduto in uno specchio
> un tristo, un doppio, un vil traditor vecchio.
>
> (XXVI.21, lines 7-8)

Interestingly, the Ficinian mirror that has allowed Pulci to see the truth of past events (XXIV.4, line 7; XXIV.45, line 4) now reflects the 'real' Marsilio.

The final passage resembles closely some lines of the poem 'Se Dio ti guardi, Marsilio Ficino', which is aimed quite explicitly at insulting Ficino as a betrayer (see below p. 243; see also the same rhyme vecchio-specchio, lines 10-12). In this poem, textually linked to Cantos XXVI-XVII, Pulci alludes to the conspiracy and to Ficino's vain hope of escaping some kind of punishment (lines 5-7). The metaphors in this text are realistic (see the *bestia* at line 9, the *orinale* at line 18 and the *granata* at line 20) and they ostensibly aim at personal offence (by comparing for example Ficino to a nun, line 19). Within this personal attack there lies a complex system of literary references. For example, the *incipit* quotes a poem by Burchiello; Cerberus at line 8 refers to the myth and to Ficino's letter to Rucellai and also to *De vita Platonis*. As in another passage of

---

[4] Orlando's words to Marsilio are in these respects very appropriate: 'Poi disse al re Marsilio: – Il tempo è giunto/ a punir te dell'opere tue ladre,/ perché tu meritasti un capresto unto/ mentre tu eri in corpo di tua madre.' (XXVII.36, lines 1-4).

the *Morgante* (XXVI.26 lines 4-6, '[…] proprio un altro Cain che invidi Abel./ Ma forse sarò io nuovo Lamec;/ forse lo spirto è quel d'Achitofel […]'), Pulci used the Bible to label Ficino as ungrateful by comparing him to Jerusalem, traditionally personified and accused of being ungrateful to God (lines 13-14).

One last detail in this poem leads back to the *Morgante*, where Ficino is likened to the 'God of cicadas' (line 16). Cicadas were used in comic literature as a metaphor for loquacious people, but from Pulci's perspective it held a peculiar meaning in relation to Ficino.[5] We find cicadas, for instance, also at Canto XXVII:

> 40 Un cerchio immaginato ci bisogna
> a voler ben la spera contemplare:
> così, chi intender questa istoria agogna,
> conviensi altro per altro immaginare;
> perché qui non si canta e finge e sogna:
> venuto è il tempo da filosofare;
> non passerà la mia barchetta Lete,
> che forse su Misen vi sentirete.
>
> 41 Ma perché e' c'è d'una ragion cicale
> ch'io l'ho proprio agguagliate all'indïane,
> che cantan d'ogni tempo e dicon male,
> voi che leggete queste cose strane,
> andate drieto al senso litterale
> e troverretel per le strade piane:
> ch'io non m'intendo di vostro anagogico
> o morale o le more o tropologico.

(XXVII.40-41)

These stanzas are a warning that the account of the battle is about a real event, the Pazzi conspiracy. Pulci also claimed to fight against the false accounts of some 'cicadas', perhaps Ficino, as we read in 'Se Dio ti guardi', although among the numerous flaws of Marsilio in Pulci's verse we never find loquaciousness. The direction to follow, perhaps, is another, one that we find in Ficino's texts. For example, in Plato's *Phedrus* the dialogue is set on the banks of a river, under the shade of a tree occupied by a chorus of cicadas. Ficino translated and wrote the *argumenta* for *Phaedrus* between 1466 and 1468 interpreting the presence of the cicadas as follows:[6]

---

[5] Varchi, *Ercolano*, vol. 1, p. 93, gives the following gloss: 'Cicala, cioè uno che favella troppo, e senza considerazione'.

[6] Ficino, *Commentaries*, transl. Allen, vol. 1, pp. 170-171: 'Denique cicadis introduci demonia negare non poterit, quisquis earum officium hic adiuverit, quod Plato saepe alibi, praesertim in Convivio, daemonibus proculdubio tribuit. Astant nobis supra caput; disputant invicem; nostra interim contuentur, improbant malefacta, benefacta probant, tanquam humanarum rerum observatores, quod daemonibus Hesiodus

Whoever has heard, finally, of the office that Plato attributes here to the cicadas and that he often undoubtedly attributes to daemons elsewhere and especially in the *Symposium* cannot deny that daemonic offices are introduced by way of the cicadas. They stand by us overhead; they dispute together; they meanwhile survey our deeds, condemning the bad and approving the good, as observers of human affairs. This is the office that Hesiod too attributes to the daemons. They receive gifts from the gods and pass them on to us; they make the offices that we perform known to the gods; they approach the Muses. These and the like statements of Socrates here would have us understand by the cicadas the airy daemons. For these animals live by song that is, by a kind of sound, and via the sound by the drinking in of air; and after they appear to be dead, they are at last inwardly reformed.

Cicadas are to Ficino airy demons that condemn and approve our deeds, like the troublesome *spiriti folletti* found at Canto XXIV (see Chapter 7, p. 199). Pulci might be combining here the two metaphors, making Ficino the king of wordy intellectuals and of those who, like airy demons, spy on others and mercilessly judge them. The metaphor, furthermore, was one that Pulci had used before with similar connotations, in one of the poems addressed to Scala in a *nome parlante*:[7]

> Messer Bartolomeo de' belli inchini
> noi ci acordiam chiamarti Ser Cicala,
> tanta boria hai di quel Vopisco e Scala
> e troppi pesci novi hoggi infarini.
>
> (lines 1-4)

Scala's fault was conceit, here highlighted by the word *Vopisco*, Scala's Latin pseudonym earned by his intellectual activity. The match between these two uses of the metaphor is not exact. Scala is *Ser Cicala* because, in Pulci's eyes, he was wordy and boastful; Ficino is the 'King of Cicadas' because he was a malevolent slanderer ('cantan d'ogni tempo e dicon male', XXVII.40, line 3). The similarities are nevertheless striking.

8.3 Ficino the Philosopher

This section aims at connecting Pulci's poems with the tradition of satire discussed in the previous chapters. First of all we should remark that Pulci, unsurprisingly, had been

---

quoque dedit. Suscipiunt divina munera; ad nos traducunt; diis officia renuntiant; ad Musas accedunt. Haec et similia hic verba Socratis demones aerios per cicadas accipi volunt. Sicut enim hec animalia cantu id est sono quodam perque sonum eiusmodi aeris haustu vivunt, denique postquam videntur mortua intrinsecus reformantur, sic aerei demones boni inquam cantu id est contemplatione divinorumque laude vivunt contenti aere; et quam facile dissolvendi videntur tam facile perpetuo aeris haustu intrinsecus recreantur.'

[7] *SE*, p. 25.

influenced by the Florentine comic tradition and this impact can be observed throughout his poetic oeuvre. Even though Pulci had other significant resources, for example, Dante's *Commedia* for lexicon and figures of speech, especially in the *Morgante*, the echo of Burchiello can be sometimes heard in the choice of words, metaphors and rhymes.[8] Burchiello's influence is stronger in Pulci's sonnets, as we might expect, given that at the end of the fifteenth century Burchiello was deemed a model for comic poetry, especially in the Medicean environment. Pulci, for example, reproached Franco for thinking of himself as a new Burchiello: 'e giureresti già d'esser Burchiello'; 'Tu hai boria di Franco e di Burchiello', 'Non so del Za, Orcagna o burchielleschi/ i versi tua, sed verba iniuriosa/ o certa gargagliata di tedeschi' are lines from poems of the tenso that leave little room for doubt.[9] Finiguerri is here mentioned (as *lo Za*); we know also that Pulci read Brunelleschi's *Geta e Birria*, which inspired the first encounter of the eponymous giant Morgante with the half giant Margutte (*Morgante*, XVIII).[10]

As for satire of philosophy, we find some of Finiguerri's relevant images in a poem against Scala. Pulci's strategy in his attacks on Scala was to magnify his social status of parvenu – the recurrent theme in these lines, for instance, is that of flour, as Scala was only the humble son of a miller from Colle Val d'Elsa. In spite of the fact that Pulci had followed Scala's lectures on Virgil, delivered before becoming chancellor of Florence, the latter was depicted as a worthless intellectual.[11] In 'Messer Bartolomeo de' belli inchini', Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene* is the prototype:[12]

> Tu pur diguazzi e becchiti il cervello,
> gridando: 'Dammi, dammi!' e 'Vaio, vaio!',[13]
> menando il cul com'uno Arrigobello[14]
> togato e filettato di Rovaio.

---

[8] For Burchiello's impact on Pulci's oeuvre, see Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, pp. 317-353.

[9] '"Franco", che vuol dir? Franco del cervello', line 5 in, *SE*, p. 52; 'Tu hai boria di Franco et di Burchiello', lines 1, 9-12 in Pulci, *Opere minori*, pp. 168-169.

[10] See Puccini, 'Una fonte per Margutte', pp. 534-539. Pulci read Finiguerri's *Lo Studio d'Atene* in a copy borrowed from Francesco Castellani; see Francesco di Matteo Castellani, *Ricordanze. I, Ricordanze A: (1436-1459)*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli, Florence, Olschki, 1992, p. 52; Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, p. 58.

[11] Pulci also aimed at replicating the confrontation between Burchiello and Alberti by subtle hints such as the use of lexicon and metaphors; see Chapter 2, pp. 74 and following. This has also been suggested, albeit without a further analysis, by Decaria in *SE*, p. 20.

[12] Ibid., p. 25. I have capitalized 'arrigobello', line 9 and 'rovaio', line 11.

[13] See *SdB*, I.12, p.3: 'Toian gli vide e disse: 'Végli, végli!'.

[14] According to Brambilla Ageno, 'Arrigobello era detto un pagliaccio, che, suonando, invitata la gente ai giuochi'; see Pulci, *Morgante* (1955), XXIV.92, line 8, p. 807.

While Scala's *toga*, 'gown', is fringed with nothing – *Rovaio* is the name of a wind – he shouts demanding *vaio*, a kind of expensive fur that distinguished people of high social status. Scala resembles Din da Pistoia in *Lo Studio d'Atene*, who wears a mantle lined with *Rovaio* (see Chapter 1, p. 57) instead of *vaio* (see also Braccesi XI.14 at Chapter 4, p. 137).[15]

Also Burchiello's poetry of satire of intellectuals is detectable in these poems against Scala. We find vocabulary from the tenso with Alberti (see Chapter 2, pp. 85-94), for example the *nome parlante* 'Ser Agresto' in 'Venganne tutti e tuoi tabellïoni' and the transformation of the adversary into the humble condition of *pedagogo*, 'school teacher' in 'Messer Bartolomeo de' belli inchini' (see Chapter 2, p. 91):

> Non vuo' tu che si dica: 'Vello vello!
> Un pedagogo ch'è facto notaio!'

The denigration of Scala includes the satire of his poor knowledge of ancient Greek, a theme widely used throughout the tradition ('Messer Bartolomeo de' belli inchini'):

> El tuo greco giargon ti varrà poco,
> ché ne sai men che un cuoco […].

Finally, a notable variation on satire of intellectuals is the poem 'La Poesia contende con lo Staio', a rewriting of Burchiello's 'La poesia contende col rasoio'.[16] Burchiello had personified his two professions, barber (represented by the Razor) and poet (Poetry) in an imaginary dialogue, while Pulci applied this personification to satire, drawing from those poems that in the same years used personification and allegory for satirical purposes (for Braccesi, see Chapter 4, p. 138; for Lorenzo de' Medici, see Chapter 5, pp. 164-170). In 'La Poesia contende con lo Staio' Poetry, seen as a means to social advancement, argues with a *staio*, a container for a unit of grain measurement, (because of Scala's background):[17]

> 'E' non harebbe punto d'arroganza
> se non fussi io – risponde allhor costei –;
> di Scala e di Vopisco hor glien'avanza'.

---

[15] Pulci wrote in a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici about Scala: 'Vengane Ser Agresto con la palandra foderata di Rovaio […]'. Id., *Morgante e lettere*, p. 937.

[16] *SdB*, CXXVI, pp. 177-178. Decaria's critical edition of the text revealed this original feature; see his comments in *SE*, p. 19.

[17] Ibid., p. 21.

Scala's arrogance is inflated, in Pulci's eyes, also by the Latin pseudonym *Vopisco*, a word that indicates the second born of a couple of twins.

Other comical poems written at an early stage testify to his assimilation of the tradition of satire of philosophy. These texts, clearly shaped on the style *alla burchia*, quote names of ancient philosophers in unexpected and often bizarre contexts. One such instance comes in a poem that describes the adventures of a *cavadenti*, a 'dentist' from Vezzano. In the text even Avicenna, the famous physician, refuses a 'treatment' from this *cavadenti* and sets about 'beating' him ('Un giorno venne a maestro Vezzano'):

> Avicenna saltò d'un pizzicagnolo
> e diedegli un rugiolon che la berretta[18]
> gli balzò proprio in mezzo del rigagnolo.[19]
>
> (lines 9-11)

Avicenna's work is also part of a mock-quotation by Ser Nencio di Butone ('Un medico, Ser Nencio di Butone'), an incompetent physician who seems to refer to another mock-quotation of Avicenna by Burchiello (see Chapter 2, CCXII.1-14, p. 82):[20]

> Et Avicenna al septimo mellone
> allega, come quell che è doctorato […].
>
> (lines 5-6)[21]

Another mock quotation is from Alexander of Villedieu's *Doctrinale puerorum*, a common textbook of Latin in the Middle Ages (also in Braccesi VI.6, see Chapter 4, p. 132). Here Pulci, placing himself again in the tradition, aims at satirising the poor knowledge of Latin of a school teacher:

> Un pedagogo ch'avea il becco giallo,
> non ritrovando il verbo principale
> un dì che ne cercava in *Dottrinale*,
> ne fu menato a' Cinque del Bigallo.[22]
>
> (line 1-4)[23]

Another poem, probably written in the first half of the 1460s, shows an early interest in the opposition between *naturale* and *accidentale* (see Chapter 1, pp. 48-51):[24]

---

[18] *Rugiolone* is 'punch'; see *Crusca*, s.v.

[19] *SE*, p. 85.

[20] *SdB*, CCXII.13, p. 293.

[21] *SE*, pp. 88-89.

[22] The *Compagnia della Misericordia* together with the *Compagnia del Bigallo* took care of orphans in the so-called *palazzo del Bigallo*.

[23] Ibid., p. 85.

<div style="text-align: center;">

1   Quel che vien da virtute è vero onore,
e sopre ogni virtute è discretione:
ma non s'insegna a' ludi di Platone,
vien da natura, ch'è il suo preceptore.

5   Questa è madre di tante etterne suore
che chi l'abbraccia con affectïone
credo che possia sua requisitione
gustar del pan degli angioli il sapore.

Troppo è cosa magnalma esser discreto
10   e misurare altrui come se stesso
ché tutti siàn di man d'un Policreto;

non ti conosco più, né se' più desso,
misero mondo, e non sarai più lieto,
perchè sanza costei t'inganni spesso.

</div>

This poem in praise of virtue is not particularly original in itself, though the first four lines present an interesting juxtaposition of learning virtue by education (*accidentale*) and innate intelligence (*naturale*), this contrast, as we have seen (p. 51) had been common in the Quattrocento mockery of intellectuals. This juxtaposition probably stems from Pulci's knowledge of Horace's *carmina* on virtue (III 2, lines 17-24) but also of the burgeoning interest in philosophy.[25] We also find an allusion to these studies in one of the first Cantos of the *Morgante*:

<div style="text-align: center;">

Quando Marsilio vide il cavaliere,
fra sé diceva: 'Aiutami Macone!
ché poco val qui contro a suo potere
allegar Trismegisto o vuoi Platone.'

</div>

<div style="text-align: right;">

(XIII.37, lines 1-4)

</div>

This allusion to Ficino, made obvious by the reference to Hermes Trismegistus, must have been intended as a facetious pun on the name *Marsilio* and is completely unrelated to the dispute of the 1470s. Studies on Plato, however, had previously featured in Pulci's satirical repertoire and been the object of *deminutio*: the comparison of eminent characters and complex ideas to realistic comic images of everyday banality. The word that defines Plato's works in 'Quel che vien da virtute' is *ludi* (line 3), that is, 'plays', 'jokes', 'jousts' or 'primary schools'. The phrase 'i ludi di Platone', in other words,

---

[24] Ibid., p. 88. The poem is in a miscellaneous manuscript (Florence, Magliabechiano VII 1025) originally owned by the aristocrat Francesco Castellani, Pulci's first patron. For the dating, see Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 25-28.

[25] For the link with Horace see ibid., p. 166.

undermines the authority of the Greek philosopher at the centre of a revival in the Florentine intellectual world.[26]

Pulci, therefore, had assimilated the traditional themes of philosophers and philosophy when he wrote – probably with his friend Benedetto Dei, a merchant who served the Medici family – to Pandolfo Rucellai the poem 'Costor che fan sì gran disputatione', his mock counter-theory on the nature of the soul:[27]

1 Costor che fan sì gran disputatione
 dell'anima, ond'ell'entri e ond'ell'esca,
 e come il nocciol sì stie nella pesca,
 hanno studiato in su'n un gran mellone.

5 Aristotile allegano, e Platone
 e voglion ch'ella in pace requïesca,
 fra suoni e canti, e fannoti una tresca
 che t'empie il capo di confusione.

 L'anima è sol, come si vede expresso,
10 in un pan bianco caldo un pinocchiato,
 o una carbonata in un pan fesso.

 E chi crede altro, ha 'l fodero in bucato;
 e que' che per l'un cento hanno promesso
 ci pagheran di succiole in mercato.

15 Mi dice un che v'è stato,
 nell'altra vita, e più non può tornarvi,
 ch'a pena con la scala si può andarvi;

 costoro credon trovarvi
 e beccafichi e gli ortolan' pelati,
20 e buon' vin' dolci e lecti sprimacciati:

 e vanno dietro a' frati.
 Noi ce n'andrem, Pandolfo, in val di Buia
 senza sentir più cantare 'Alleluya'.

This poem is part of a wider satire on the studies of the soul written in Florence during the 1470s. Whereas Lorenzo's 'Ragionavasi di sodo' is a subtle game played on the multiple levels of the texts, Pulci's poem resembles – or probably vice versa – Franco's

[26] *GDLI*, vol. 9, p. 262. For the relationships with the *Morgante* and the importance of the word *ludi* in this poem, see Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, pp. 163-165.

[27] For the autorship of this poem see Orvieto, 'A proposito del sonetto'. Even though Orvieto argues that Benedetto Dei is the author of this text, he admits that Pulci helped Dei (p. 412). From the perspective of style and in terms of content, the poem resembles Pulci's modes of expression to the point that 'Costor che fan sì gran disputatione' has been included in Pulci's minor works by Orvieto (Pulci, *Opere minori*, p. 197) as well as Decaria (*SE*, p. 78).

'Tanta eloquentia, eloquentiami drieto!', a direct criticism of the 'fashionable' studies on the soul. Ficino, who at the time was writing his *Theologia platonica*, is certainly at the centre of this mockery, although we should not overlook Palmieri's poem *Città di vita* on the journey of the soul, which Pulci knew and quoted in the *Morgante* (see Chapter 7, pp. 200). Although Franco's and Pulci's poems are both addressed to someone, the way they structure their respective arguments is completely different. Franco's focus is on his addressee, Lorenzo de' Medici, while Pulci systematically dismantles the public image of philosophers and their theories.

The main technique employed is again the *deminutio*, focussed in particular on food. For instance, the location of the soul is compared to the position of a stone inside a peach (line 3) and the soul in itself is like jam (*pinocchiato*) on a slice of hot bread (line 10) or a piece of pork (*carbonata*) in a sandwich (line 11). Food-related metaphors go beyond simile: those who promised an afterlife were cheats, paying with boiled chestnuts (*succiole*) instead of real money. Pulci depicted this unreal afterlife or paradise by giving prominence to those characteristics that make it appealing to the body and not to the soul – it is a place where one can eat delicious meats (*beccafichi*, *ortolani*, line 19), drink sweet wine and sleep on soft beds (line 20). Another realistic metaphor appears at line 4, which alludes to the custom of teaching the alphabet by writing on the skin of apples.[28] 'Apple', *mela*, becomes by augmentation *mellone*, a fruit that was traditionally associated with lack of judgement (see Burchiello's 'Se ' tafani che tu hai alla cianfarda', CXCVI, Chapter 2, p. 84; Braccesi's 'Eco venir un doctor camuffato', Chapter 4, p. 132).

The process of *deminutio* involves other images such as *tresca*, 'blustering' or 'dance', the metaphor of the confusion caused in people's heads by philosophers (line 7); a broken or bottomless sheath (*fodero in bucato*, line 11) representing the philosopher's faulty intellect; and a ladder leading to afterlife (line 17).

The technique employed by Pulci is here borrowed mainly from Burchiello, who extensively used *deminutio* in his poems targeting philosophy. This poem, however, unites Burchiello's style with Finiguerri's purposes. We can compare Pulci's and Finiguerri's aims, as they both openly attacked their contemporaries and the latest

---

[28] Boccaccio, *Decameron*, VIII.9, p. 531: '[…] non imparaste miga l'abicì in su la mela, come molti sciocconi voglion fare, anzi l'apparaste sul mellone'. Orvieto in Pulci, *Opere minori*, p. 197, has also suggested another passage in Sacchetti, *Trecentonovelle* CXLVII, p. 400: 'Antonio, che già avea studiato e letto l'abicì in sul mellone […]'.

intellectual trends. This return to the beginning of the century is not present in Franco's 'Tanta eloquentia, eloquentiami drieto!' (see Chapter 4, p. 117), which only proposes – probably imitating Pulci – a metaphor to describe the soul, without comic food-related metaphors. Moreover, Franco did not allude to any precise philosophical theory, even if is possible to detect in his poetry an influence of Ficino's *Theologia platonica* in the choice of topics that Franco addresses. He mentions, for instance, the location of the soul (lines 1-4, 9-11) and the soul's immortality (lines 6-7, 15-20), the latter being, of course, the principal theme of Ficino's work.

The three remaining poems addressing Ficino continue in this direct tone. Each mentions Ficino by name and even go so far as to put together mock etymology of 'Ficino', with the result that it becomes a *nome parlante*. Pulci alluded to the alternative spelling of the surname Ficino, *Fecino*, when he wrote 'o mio Marsil da feccia' (III.19), creating a link between *Fecino* and *feccia*, 'excrement'.[29]

The scatological theme is also central to 'Marsilio, questa tua philosophia' (II), where it is entwined with philosophy. In this text philosophy is likened to food that once eaten (line 3), digested and discharged, ends up in a sewer (*chiasso*, II.4) or is ingloriously vomited in Careggi, the town outside Florence where Ficino owned a villa (II.19). This parallel between knowledge and food was not new in the tradition of satire, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (see pp. 43-45).

Another traditional theme in Pulci's poems is how a philosopher's lack of common sense contrasts sharply with his supposed great knowledge. For instance, returning to the discussion in Chapter 1, in Birria's speech (p. 39) philosophy might raise the intellect but consumes the brain and deprives people of the judgement necessary to make simple decisions. In Ficino's case, philosophy has not given him the common sense to avoid Pulci's attacks, as we read in 'O venerabil gufo sorïano' (III.1-4). Animals such as owls, another recurrent metaphor of the tradition, are part of Pulci's mockery. Ficino is firstly compared to birds, as are many other intellectuals in that century: a pigeon (II.13) and a night bird, an owl (III.1). The philosopher is also compared to other animals according to their characteristics, for example a rabbit (III.6) on account of its cowardice and a dormouse for its proverbial – at least in Italian – habit

---

[29] This has been noted by Decaria in *SE*, p. 32. Pulci did not use mock etymologies for Ficino only. He also lampooned Franco in '"Franco" che vuol dir? Franco del cervello'; see ibid., p. 52. Pulci probably sought revenge against Franco, Ficino and others who, punning on his name, compared him to a flea.

of hibernating. Pulci also mocked Ficino's habits, for example the practice of singing accompanied by a cither (II.5-8) and retiring to his villa in Careggi.[30]

It is with the poem '"Buona sera, o messer, vien za', va drento"' that Pulci, it could be argued, reaches the high point of satire of philosophy in the Quattrocento. The poem is a dialogue between two characters, one probably Pulci himself and the other a girl called Sofia. The concentration of rhetorical devices makes this poem Pulci's sharpest criticism of Ficino. Its potency stems from the main peculiarity of the text: we soon learn that Sofia is the personification of Philosophy, and she blames Ficino for having seduced and then abandoned her in a sewer.

This personification and allegory of Philosophy is similar to Braccesi's poem 'La gola, el ventre, el lezo pidochiume' (see p. 138). This parody of Petrarch's sonnet 'La gola, el somno, e l'otïose piume' includes an allegorical account of Philosophy. Briefly, if Petrarch's Philosophy, due to the cultural poverty of his time, is 'poor and naked', Braccesi's is 'rich and dressed' and evokes traditional medieval allegories of philosophy as well as a surreal crowd of would-be philosophers (see Chapter 4, p. 138). Pulci's Sofia, however, is a more powerful character than Braccesi's Philosophia. Sofia takes part in the narrative by borrowing some features from Burchiello's poems. In the poems *alla burchia* the personification of objects and animals is frequent, but abstract ideas form part of the narrative less frequently. Two examples are similar to the role of Sofia in '"Buona sera, o messer"'. In one of Burchiello's satirical texts considered at Chapter 2 (p. 68), 'El marrobbio che vien di Barberia', we are informed that the 'treasurer of orthography' has fallen ill and for this reason Poetry has lost weight, a condition that resembles Sofia's miserable state. This kind of allegory results in the personification of Poetry in 'La poesia contende col rasoio', which we have already seen reinterpreted by Pulci in 'La Poesia contende con lo Staio'. In both texts Poetry engages in a dialogue, as Sofia does with Pulci.

By imagining that Ficino's mistress was Philosophy, Pulci acknowledged Ficino to be a philosopher. Unremarkable though this might seem to us, it is significant. It is the first time, as far we know, in the Quattrocento that a fifteenth-century Florentine philosopher is explicitly called a 'philosopher' in the vernacular. Ficino, however, did not meet expectations, 'betraying' and 'abandoning' Philosophy. The idea for this allegory of

---

[30] Decaria has quoted passages of Ficino's *De vita* (see ibid., p. 32, n. 7), although we can find allusions to his practice of music earlier in his letters, for example in the first book (5, 92, 128, 130); see Ficino, *Le lettere*, vol. 1, pp. 17, 161, 234, 238.

philosophy might have come from Ficino himself, who described a graceful woman named *Sophia*, the personification of *Philosophia*, in the opening invocation to Lorenzo de' Medici of his *Commentaria Platonis*.[31] On another occasion, however, Ficino gave a peculiar representation of Philosophy that follows, the famous medieval description of Philosophy as the 'handmaid' of theology:

> In our times there are many who are not philosophers but lovers of philosophical show, who in their arrogance lay great claim to being masters of Aristotelian thought, although they have heard the words of Aristotle himself very seldom and only for short periods. Even then they have understood little, since they have heard him not speaking his own words in Greek but stammering someone else's in a foreign tongue. […]

> Such men are still boys, even when they are seventy years old, being devoid not only of eloquence but of grammar. They ponder too earnestly, not natural, or divine matters, but certain usage of a foreign tongue which they stupidly confuse and confound. Thus these vain sophists introduce matters for discussion more suited to a gathering of boys than a group of men. They speak in such a way that you condemn philosophy because of their discourse, and they live in such a way that you censure philosophy because of their lives. Our Plato therefore rightly called them not the husbands but the adulterers of philosophy, from whom he said illegitimate sons, that is, absurd opinions, are begotten amongst the philosophers.[32]

This is an excerpt from a letter by Ficino to Giovanni Piero of Padua, found in the first book of letters (100) (therefore written before 1475). The powerful and unambiguous images in Ficino's letter against aspiring philosophers might have been an inspiration to Pulci, who implicitly listed Ficino among the so-called incompetent intellectuals quoted above. In Pulci's poem, Ficino had promised to marry Sofia, but she remained his mistress (line 11), just as in the words of Plato reported in the letter.[33] Ficino is also a *scilinguato*, a 'stammerer' which is an odd insult if we consider that nowhere else Pulci

---

[31] See Decaria's argument, in *SE*, pp. 34-35. See also Ficino, *Opera*, vol. 2, p. 1129.

[32] Id., *The letters*, vol. 1, pp. 152-153; id., *Lettere*, vol. 1, pp. 176-177: 'Sunt multi nostris seculis non philosophi sed philopompi qui sensum Aristotelicum se tenere superbe nimium profitentur. Cum tamen Aristotelem ipsum raro admodum atque parumper loquentem et tunc quidem non Grece propria exprimentem immo barbare aliena balbutientem audiverint, ideoque minime intellexerint, hi cum in foro inter pueros garriunt scire nonnihil vulgo videntur. […] Huiusmodi homines etiam in septuagesimo etatis anno pueri sunt, expertes non eloquentie solum, sed grammatice; neque res naturales aut divinas, immo barbaras quasdam dictiones anxie nimis excogitant, quas invicem inepte permisceant et confundant, unde sophiste leviculi digna puerorum circulis in medium adducunt potius quam corona virorum. Ita locuntur, ut ex eorum sermone philosophiam contemnas; ita vivunt, ut ex eorum vita philosophiam vituperes. Quamobrem eos Plato noster merito non maritos philosophie sed adulteros nuncupavit, ex quibus filii non legitimi, id est opiniones absurde, inter philosophos oriantur.'

[33] Plato, *Republic*, VI, 49E-496.

pointed at this easily mocked flaw.[34] Ficino's stutter in the poem, in fact, is borrowed arbitrarily from the letter, in which the *philopompi* have this feature. Ficino, in using this metaphor, referred to those who read Aristotle's works in translation and not directly from Greek. Pulci, however, might have not employed this word by mistake, but aimed at discrediting Ficino's translations of Plato, which are mentioned also in 'Marsilio, questa tua philosophia' (lines 15-16). This poem also reproaches him of 'swearing against philosophy' – instead of swearing against God.

The peculiar swearing – the misuse of philosophy – may be also the reason behind the word *retico*, 'heretical', that might refer to a philosophical, rather than religious, heresy. The whole poem '"Buona sera, o messer"' revolves around the desertion of Philosophy in favour of something or someone else. The root of this is probably Ficino's focus on theology – he was ordained as a priest in December 1473 and is found searching for churches in line 16.

A final element of note in Pulci's poem (lines 12-14) is his use of mythical images that parody Ficino's use of the same images. As Pulci is related to Cerberus, Thersites and the Gigantomachy in the letter to Rucellai (I.114, see Chapter 7, p. 176), Ficino is compared to Io's inability to rest, Celaeno's rapacity and Tantalus's unrelenting thirst.

---

[34] This has been used by Decaria in his critical edition of these poems to justify some of his choices in the most corrupt lines. Below is proposed a different text; this is in part informed by the fact that *scilinguato* hints at this letter rather than describing a real stutter; see *SE*, p. CLXXXVII.

8.4 Texts

A critical edition of these poems, along with the edition of the poems of religious parody, was originally planned as part of this thesis. In May 2013, however, Alessio Decaria published a critical edition of Pulci's *sonetti extravaganti*, which includes editions of both of the texts that I had planned to include.[1] I have amended my final Chapter, retaining only the poems against Ficino. My texts often differ from Decaria's versions, which I have provided for comparison alongside my own text (in the right column).[2]

Pulci's poems against Ficino are found in two manuscripts and one incunable, included among the witnesses to Franco's poems (see Chapter 4, pp. 108-109):

Pa = Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino 217. Eighteenth century.

T = Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, 965. Fifteenth century.

BL = Franco, Matteo and Pulci, Luigi. *Sonecti di Messere Matheo Franco et di Luigi de Pulci iocosi et da ridere*, Florence, Bartolommeo di Libri, ca 1490.

See Appendix II for full descriptions of these witnesses.

I have excluded Pa from the *recensio* as a *codex descriptum* copied from BL. BL and its *codex descriptum* Pa underwent censorship with the aim of protecting Ficino, not unlike the poems by Pulci to Bartolomeo Scala, which were toned down in defence to him.[3] In poems I-III, the change is regularly from *philosophia* to *geometria* and from *Ficino* to *cessolino*. In poem II *Marsilio* becomes *viso d'allocco* and *Platone* becomes *Catone*. These texts have a high degree of corruption in all the witnesses and the errors clearly show two independent traditions, one being BL and Pa and the other being T. The interpretation of some passages is particularly challenging, especially for those poems not found in all three witnesses.

The spelling found in BL is retained as it is more consistent than T.

---

[1] *SE.*

[2] Ibid., pp. 40-43. They are presented in the same order, numeration is XV to XVIII. The texts have no commentary.

[3] Ibid., pp. CLXVIII-CLXXX.

I

1	Se Dio ti guardi, Marsilio Ficino,	Se Dio ti guardi, Marsilio Ficino,
	da cader d'un guancial, ma non d'un tecto!	dal cader d'un guancial ma non d'un tecto,
	Dimmi s'avessi gusto ad un sonecto.	dimmi s'havessi gusto ad un sonecto.
	'Ben sai che sì'; or apri quel bocchino.	'Ben sai che sì'; hor apri quel bocchino.
5	Tu haresti giurato, ermellino,	Tu haresti giurato, l'ermellino,
	uscirtene così, pulito e necto,	uscirtene così pulito e necto,
	ma i' cola, ribaldo, t'imprometto.	ma i', co'la, ribaldo t'imprometto:
	Cerbero tu, tu venenoso e chino,	Cerbero tu, tu venenoso e chino.
	bestia fuggita in qua dalle maremme;	Bestia fuggita qua delle Maremme,
10	non ti vergogni, vil traditor vecchio,	non ti vergogni, vil traditor vecchio
	usurpar l'altrui gloria e l'altrui gemme	usurpar l'altrui gloria e l'altrui gemme
	e le virtù d'un sol, ch'al mondo è specchio?	e le virtù d'un sol, ch'è al mondo specchio?
	Ingrato più ch'a Dio Hierusalemme,	Ingrato più ch'a Dio Hierusalemme,
	al buon pastor d'in sul monte Livecchio.	al buon Pastor d'in sul monte Livecchio,
15	Hor sturati l'orecchio:	hor sturati l'orecchio:
	ché tu sei pur lo Dio delle cicale	ché tu sè pur lo dio delle cicale
	e di' che per dolor n'avesti a male.	e di' che per dolor n'havesti male.
	Alzate l'orinale,	Alzate l'orinale,
	che questa monacuccia fie infreddata!	che questa monacuccia fie infreddata:
20	Io t'ho a spazare un dì con la granata.	io t'ho a spazare un dì con la granata.

T 15r Luigi Pulci a Messer Marsilio Ficino
BL Luigi Pulci ad uno suo adversario di piccola statura

1 ti] te T ‖ Marsilio Ficino] bructo cessolino BL
2 tecto] tetto T Pa ‖ da] dal BL
3 havessi] avessi T ‖ ad un] d'un T ‖ sonecto] sonetto T
4 bocchino] bucchino T
5 haresti] harresti T ‖ ermellino] l'ermellino BL ermallino T
6 necto] netto T
7 ma i'] ma T ‖ ribaldo] *add.* io T
9 fuggita] fugita T, fuggito BL
10 vecchio] vechio T
12 sol] sole T BL
14 pastor] pastore BL
15 orecchio] urechio T
16 pur] per BL
17 dolor] dolore BL ‖ havesti] avesti T
19 questa] questo T ‖ fie] fia T
20 spazar] spazare BL

1-2. Se… tetto: *se* + subjunctive express the optative mood. The whole sentence therefore means: 'Marsilio Ficino, may God save you from falling off a bed, not off a roof.' See the opening line of *SdB*, LXVII.1-2, p. 94-95: 'Se Dio ti guardi, Andrea, un'altra volta/ dalle man del bastardo che ti prese […].'
3-4. avessi bocchino: 'avere […] gusto […] per qualcosa: compiacersene, esserne soddisfatto, provare piacere', see *GDLI*, vol. 7, p. 182. The metaphor of *gusto* as 'taste' is also used here, since Pulci orders Ficino to open his mouth as if he was spoon-feeding him.
5. ermellino: 'ermine'. See *GDLI*, vol. 5, p. 250: 'Essere ermellino: essere senza macchia, non avere colpe', here used ironically. See also *Morgante* II.25, lines 1-3: 'Come e' fu l'alba, ciascun si levava/ e

credonsene andar come ermellini,/ né per far conto l'oste si chiamava […].'; XIV.80, lines 3-4: 'e 'l pulito ermellino/ che parea tutto bianco e puro e netto'.

7. cola: probably an alternative form of *colla*, 'fune usata per infliggere torture' *GDLI*, vol. 3, p. 279. This line recalls a passage in the *Morgante* (XXVII.275, lines 4-8) whose meaning is not clear: 'Disse Turpin: "Tu menti per la gola,/ ribaldo: appunto qui t'aspettavo io." /Rinaldo gli rispose: "Omai cò'la!/ Non vo' che tanta allegrezza tu abbi/ che in vita e in morte il nostro Iddio tu gabbi"'. *Cò'la* is here short for *còglila*, meaning 'grasp it' as 'understand what I am saying'. These are words addressed to Marsilione/Marsilio. Orvieto, noting the similarity with the poem, proposed to amend Brambilla Ageno's and De Robertis' editions, both with *cò'la*, with *cola*, given that Rinaldo discloses here the Marsilio's death by hanging. Orvieto's version of this passage benefits from a further comparison with the *edition princeps* and results in the following reading: 'Disse Turpin: "Tu menti per la gola,/ ribaldo: appunto qui t'aspettavo io"/ Rinaldo gli rispose: "Ma i', cola,/ non vo' che tanta allegrezza tu abbi,/ che in vita e in morte il nostro Iddio tu gabbi'. Although I doubt that the passage in the *Morgante* and the line in the poem are related, I agree with Orvieto's reading of this line, given the structure of the sentence: *cola* is object of the transitive verb 'imprometto', after which we have a full stop. See Pulci, *Morgante* (1955), p. 1053; id., *Morgante e lettere*, p. 879; Orvieto, *Pulci medievale*, pp. 277-278; *SE*, pp. CLXXXIV-CLXXXV, 123.

8. Cerbero tu: see Ficino's letter to Rucellai (I.114): 'he joins Cerberus in barking even after he is dead!' Ficino, *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 169; id., *Lettere*, vol. 1, p. 199: 'nisi forte etiam post mortem latratu Cerberum comitentur.'

10. vil traditor vecchio: see *Morgante*, XXVI.21, lines 7-8: 'io l'ho sempre veduto in uno specchio/ un tristo, un doppio, un vil traditor vecchio.'

12. sol: Lorenzo de' Medici, the intended victim of the conspiracy. For the sun as a symbol of Lorenzo in Pulci's work, see 'Da poi che 'l Lauro, lasso, non vidi', line 80-95 in Pulci, *Morgante e lettere*, pp. 945-947; 'Giostra', LXIV.2-5, LXXVI.1-4 in id., *Opere minori*, ed. Paolo Orvieto, Milan, Mursia, 1986, pp. 61-120. **specchio:** for the use of this word in the *Morgante* and in Ficino's work see Chapter 7, p. 193. Decaria has argued that Pulci here quoted Lorenzo de' Medici's *De summo bono*: 'Marsilio, habitator del Montevecchio,/ nel quale il cielo ogni sua gratia infuse/ perch'e' fussi a' mortal' sempre uno specchio'; see Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, p. 234.

14. Livecchio: *Uliveto*. *Monte Uliveto* is the Mount of Olives, where Jesus, in the Gethsemane garden, prayed before his crucifixion (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39).

20. io… granata: *spazare* is here 'to spank', see for example *SdB*, CXXII.7, p. 172: 'sich'e' convien che 'l maestro il cul ti scopi'; ibid., CXXIII.3-4: 'sich'e' convien ch'io te miteri e scopi/ d'altre vergogne tue di maggior peso.' See also Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, pp. 324, 343. For *granata* see *Crusca*: 'mazzo di scope, o simili, con legame di rogo, o altro, col quale si spazza'.

II

1	Marsilio, questa tua philosophia
	non se ne sente in bocca mai a persona
	che tu la metti dond'è il dopo nona
	e riesce poi in chiasso o in pazeria,
5	tanto che fie poi ver la profezia
	di dir la cetra tua: suonami, suona!
	ché 'l popol ti vorrebbe già in canzona,
	e io son bucherato, tuctavia.
	'Sonetti a me?' 'Sonetti a te!', dich'io.
10	Tu stuzichi, e che il foco che t'abruci
	al cul l'harai, se tu sarai restio.
	A ber tu me? Via, luci luci luci!
	Il più reo pippioncin, pio pio pio!
	Mozagli il pincio, muci muci muci!
15	Che dì tu, che traduci?
	Platone? Sia col malan che Dio ti dia!
	Oh tu bestemmi la philosophia!
	Nani nani, bugia!
	Tu ne recesti un dì tanta a Careggi
20	che tu non n'hai, se tu non ne releggi.

Marsilio, questa tua philosophia
non se ne sente in bocca mai persona,
ché tu la metti dond'è il dopo nona
e riesce poi in chiasso o in pazeria.

Tanto che fia poi ver la prophetia
di dir la cetra tua: 'suonami, suona!'
ché 'l popol ti vorrebbe già in canzona,
e io son bucherato tuctavia.

Sonetti a me? Sonetti a te, dich'io.
Tu stuzichi (e che?) il fuoco, che t'abruci:
al cul l'harai, se tu sarai restio.

A ber tu me? Via, luci luci luci,
il più reo pippioncin, pio pio pio,
mozagli il pincio, muci muci muci!

Che di', tu, che traduci
Platon? Sia col malan che Dio ti dia!
Oh tu bestemmi la philosophia.

Nani nani, bugia:
tu ne recesti un dì tanta a Careggi
che tu no·n'hai, se tu non ne releggi.

T 16r Luigi a Messer Marsilio Ficino
BL Luigi Pulci a uno geometra suo nimico

1 Marsilio] viso d'alloccho BL || philosophia] geometria BL
2 bocca] bocha T, boccha BL || a] om. T
3 dopo] doppo T
4 in pazeria] impazeria BL
5 ver] vera T, vero BL
7 popol] popul T || canzona] canzone
8 bucherato] bucarato T || tuctavia] tuttavia T
10 abruci] abbruci
11 cul] culo BL || harai] arrai T || sarai] serai T
15 ber] bere T BL
16 pippioncin] pipionacio T, pippioncino BL
17 mozagli] mozali T
19 Platone] Catone BL || malan] mal T, malanno BL
20 bestemmi] bastemmi T || philosophia] geometria BL
21 Nani nani] naici naci T
22 Careggi] Chareggi T, Larciano BL
23 che… releggi] ritorna in chiasso o ghiottoncel villano BL

3-4. dopo nona… chiasso: in the Christian liturgy the *nona*, 'none', or ninth hour, describes the time between 12 am and 3 pm, lunch time. Since *chiasso* is 'sewer', Pulci perhaps suggested that Ficino's

245

philosophy was to him as trivial as food, eaten at lunch time, digested and left in the sewer. Decaria relates this metaphor to the words spoken by Ficino in Lorenzo de' Medici *De summo bono* (V.92-108). In his speech, the relationship of the soul to God is represented through the metaphor of taste. **pazeria:** the prison ward for the insane. Although the meaning is quite obvious, deriving from the adjective *pazzo*, the word occurs only from the sixteenth century onwards, see *GDLI*, vol. 12, p. 885. It defined, however, a precise place inside the *Stinche*: see Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 79.

6. di… suona: there is here an intentional pun between *cetra***,** 'cither', the instrument played by Ficino, and *cetera*, 'discorso confuso' (for both words see *GDLI*, vol. 3, pp. 20-21), a term used by Pulci also in *Morgante*, XXIV.21, line 5: 'Non so come le cetere or distende'. The pun explains the sentence 'suonami, suona!' – referred to the cither – and the verb 'dire' with *cetra* as the object. Ficino is mocked for both his boring speeches and for his habit of playing and singing. **Suonami, suona!: '**Sonare alcuno, per Dargli busse, Percuoterlo', see *Crusca*. See, for example, Antonia Pulci's *La rappresentazione di Santa Guglielma* in Pulci, Antonia. *Saints' Lives and Bible Stories for the Stage*, ed. Elissa B. Weaver, transl. James Wyatt Cook, Toronto, ITER, 2010, pp. 160-161: 'Aspetta un po'. Tu vorrai ch'io ti suoni?' transl. by James Wyatt Cook as: 'If you'd like me to trash you, just you wait.'

7. in canzona: see *Crusca* s.v. 'canzona': 'Ed essere in canzona, Essere in baia'.

8. bucherato: see Crusca s.v. 'bucherare', 'to pierce' but also 'procacciarsi occultamente voti per ottener gradi, e magistrati'. Although normally the past participle *bucherato* means 'pierced', here it means 'very busy in trying to achieve this result', i.e. to have Ficino derided.

12-14: three lines of onomatopoeia aim at comparing Ficino to an animal. See for example *Crusca s.v.* 'muci': 'Voce, colla quale si chiama il gatto'.

12. a ber tu me?: see Crusca, s.v. 'bere': 'Dar bere, e Dar a bere una cosa, vale Farla credere.' The sense is: 'you cannot make me believe your theories'.

14. pincio: see *Crusca*, s.v. 'pincio': **'**Membro virile'.

18. Nani nani: See *GDLI*, vol. 11, p. 170: **'***Nanni* […] nella locuz. Fare il nanni: comportarsi in modo goffo e impacciato, fare lo stupido'.

19. recesti: 'Mandar fuor per bocca il cibo, o gli umori, che sono nello stomaco.' The food metaphor that opens the poem returns here, and Ficino is able to retain any philosophy only if he keeps reading. See also Ficino's letter to Rucellai in *The Letters*, vol. 1, p. 170: 'What an abomination, that he should with impunity disgorge such invective from his venomous mouth against God!'; id. *Lettere*, vol.1, p. 220: 'Proh nefas! Impune invectivas multas ore venenoso evomuit contra Deum.'

III

1 O venerabil gufo sorïano	O venerabil gufo sorïano,
philosophia non ti die' buon consiglio	philosophia non ti die' buon consiglio
del tarabuso investigar l'artiglio	del tarabuso investigar l'artiglio
pe' denti stuzicar d'un cane alano,	pe' denti stuzicar d'un cane alano;
5 che sai che non ti può morder sì piano	ché sai che non ti può morder sì piano
che non ti schiacci un tanto, vil coniglio!	che non ti schiacci, un tanto vil coniglio.
I' truovo tutto il popolo in bisbiglio	I' truovo tucto il popolo in bisbiglio,
ch'aspecta ch'io lo 'mbecchi di mie mano	ch'aspecta ch'io lo 'mbecchi di mie mano.
e dicon: 'Pincio!' 'Cosso!' 'Abaccia il nonno!',	E dicon: pincio-gosso-abaccia il nonno,
10 ché tu minacci già d'andare agli Octo	ché tu minacci già d'andare agli Octo
o di salir più alto al maggior donno:	o di salir più alto, al maggior donno:
quanto più su sarrai, maggior fia il botto.	quanto più su sarrai, maggior fia il botto.
Però fa come il ghiro quando ha sonno:	Però, fa' come il ghiro quando ha sonno,
entrati in qualche buca e non far motto	éntrati in qualche buca e non far motto,
15 ch'el ghiaccio e 'l solco è rotto,	ché 'l ghiaccio e 'l solco è rotto,
ché tu se' il saracino già posto in piazza	ché tu se' il Saracin già posto in piaza
e di carta e d'orpello è la corazza.	e di carta e d'orpello è la coraza.
E certo ognun sguaza;	E certo ognun gavaza;
ma soprattutto, o mio Marsil da feccia	ma soprattutto, o mio Marsil da feccia,
20 io t'ho in quel chiasso là di Vacchereccia.	io t'ho in quel chiasso là di Vacchereccia.

BL Luigi Pulci al decto geometra suo nimico

2 philosophia] geometria BL
9 cosso] gosso BL
18 sguaza] guaza BL
19 mio Marsil] cessolino BL

1. O… sorïano: that the intellectual should be compared to a night bird is unsurprising. The adjective *soriano* associated with it, however, is more obscure. The first meaning is 'Syrian'; it might mean 'grey' because of the colour of a type of cat (*gatto Soriano*, 'tabby cat'). See *GDLI*, vol. 19, p. 493. Pulci, ironically, might have been merging this word and the word *soro*, meaning 'pure', 'innocent', that we find several times in the *Morgante* (XVI.108, line 4; XVII.13, line 1; XXII.58, line 4; XXII.124, line 5; XXV.43, line 3; XXVIII.138, line 5). Decaria has seen in this line a parody of Lorenzo de' Medici's line in *De summo bono*: 'O venerando, immenso, etterno lume […]'. See Decaria, *Luigi Pulci*, p. 236.
9. 'Pincio… nonno!': although this line undoubtedly reports voices of people witnessing the dispute, its interpretation is not straightforward. For *pincio* see above II.14; we have amended *gosso*, which is not found in any other text, to *cosso*: 'grossa farfalla notturna' (which could have the meaning, like *pincio*, of *membrum virile*) or 'piccola pustola dell'epidermide piena di pus' or 'bitorzolo', or 'malumore, stizza'; see *GDLI*, vol. 3, p. 892. All these meanings were used in Florence when Pulci was writing and could have been offensive names by which Pulci was known. *Abacciare*, rather than a mispronunciation of *abbracciare* might be an alternative spelling, with a normal exchange of 'v' and 'b', of *avacciare*, 'to hasten'. If *nonno* is Ficino, 'abaccia il nonno' would explained in the lines below: Marsilio was about to report Pulci to the authorities. Decaria has provided a different version of this line and has maintained that Pulci intended to recreate a sort of baby-talk to mock Ficino's stutter. See *SE*, p. CLXXXVII.
10. Octo: *Otto di Guardia*, one of the Florentine magistracies.
11. maggior donno: Lorenzo de' Medici. The poem was definitely written before Ficino did so, and therefore before January 1477 (see Chapter 6, p. 176).

15. ghiaccio… rotto: Here Pulci here joins two proverbial expressions. For *rompere il ghiaccio* see *Crusca* s.v. 'ghiaccio': 'fare la strada altrui in alcuna cosa, cominciandola a trattare, e agevolandone la intelligenza'; for *uscir del solco* see *Crusca* s.v. 'solco': 'in modo proverbiale significa Traviar dal bene'.

16. saracino: does not refer to the Saracen Marsilione in the *Morgante* (as Orvieto as argued in *Pulci medieval*, p. 251), but to a puppet traditionally used during carnival, see *Crusca* s.v. 'saracino': 'Statua di legno a similitudine di uomo Saracino, nella quale i cavalieri correndo rompon la lancia'. Cf. Crimi, *L'oscura lingua*, p. 327.

17. carta… corazza: like the *saracino* at line 16, Ficino has little defence: an armour made of paper or thin copper (see *Crusca* s.v. 'orpello': 'rame in sottilissime lamine, colla superficie in tutto di colore simile all'oro').

18. sguaza: if *guaza* in BL does not make sense, the shorter and plausible *sguaza* is preferrable to Decaria's *gavazza*. *Sguazzare* is 'Godere, Trionfare, Far buona cera, Far tempone'.

IV

1 'Buona sera, o messer, vien za' 'Va drento. Tu fili?' 'Ella va mal, Cristo mal dia. Messer, mi filo in chiasso, e son Soffia. Ribaldo in giù e 'n su suona stormento.'	'Buona sera, o messer, vien' za' 'Va drento! Tu fili?' 'Ella va mal… Christa mal dia! Messer, mi filo in chiasso, e son Sofia, ribaldo in giù e 'n su suona stormento'.
5 'Racconcia un poco il lume ch'è già spento. Conoscot'io: se' tu Philosophia? Chi t'ha condocta qua figliuola mia in tanto vituper, miseria e stento?'	'Racconcia un poco il lume, ch'è già spento. Conoscot'io: sè tu Philosophia! Chi t'ha condocta qua, figliuola mia, in tanto vituper, miseria e stento?'
'Condocta meschin m'ha, povera, brulla, 10 captivo scilinguato fatto prete. Promesso sposar m'ha: stavo fanciulla;	'Condocta meschin me, povera brulla, captivo scilinguato fatto prete; promesso sposar me: stavo fanciulla.
né ch'Io, né ch'Io, o messer, non conoscete star, Celeno arpia non voler nulla e Tantalo non aver più strana sete.	Necchio, necchio… oh, messer, non conoscete istar Celeno arpia, non voler nulla e Tantal non aver più strana sete?
15 E retico lui vedrete cercar chiese, star tristo in sin nell'uova; casa sua presso Sancta Maria Nuova,	Retico lui, vedete, cercar chiese, star tristo in sin nell'uova. Casa sua presso Sancta Maria Nuova,
passato ove si truova piazza bella, star chiesa di San Giglio, 20 a man ritta, a terzo uscio: u' gli è Marsiglio.'	passato ove si truova piaza bella, star chiesa di San Giglio, a man ritta, a terzo uscio: u' gli è Marsiglio.'

T 15v Luigi Pulci
BL Luigi Pulci a un suo adversario

1 messer] misser T, messere BL
2 Cristo] crista BL
3 Sofia] sophia T, soffia BL
4 Ribaldo] ribaldi T ‖ in giù e 'n su] in su e in giù T
5 un… lume] el lume un po' T
6 philosophia] la monarchia BL
7 figliuola] figliola T, figluola BL
8 vituper] vituperio T BL
9 Condocta] condonda T ‖ m'ha] me BL
10 captivo] cattivo BL ‖ scilinguato… prete] uno sciagurato mi udirete BL
11 m'ha] me BL, mi T
12 né ch'Io, né ch'Io] nechio nechio T, necchio necchio BL
14 strana sete] fame o sete BL
15 E retico] e retro T, Heretico BL
16-17 cercar… Nuova] *om.* BL
16 cercar] cerchar T
18 sua] suo T
19 piaza… Giglio] La piaza grande star n'uno sportello BL
20 u'… Marsiglio] V. egli è crespello BL

1. za: See *GDLI*, vol. 21, p. 1043: 'in questo luogo, qua'. Although this usage was rare in Tuscany, we have examples in *GDLI* from Latini, Francesco da Barberino and Sacchetti. Decaria has argued that this example and *crista* at line 2 in BL are an intentional imitation of a 'lingua franca' spoken in the harbours of the Mediterranean at the time (*SE*, p. CLXXXV and bibliography at n. 94). There is no reason, however, why Philosophy would have spoken such a language rather than, for example, Latin. The rare *za* seems to recall, in fact, the Latin *hac*. And another hint at Latin (*ubi*) is at line 20, besides, we have seen also with Braccesi, Pulci's contemporary, that affrication (sometimes with the graphic use of 'ç' for 'z') was not uncommon – see Chapter 4, XIII.14, p. 140.

3. mi filo in chiasso: *chiasso* can be here either 'sewer' or 'brothel', see *Crusca*.

4. in giù e 'n su: for this version rather than 'in su e in giù' see *Morgante* XIX.81 lines 5-6: 'Margutte in giù e 'n sù, di qua, di là/ dell'acqua va cercando il me' che può'. **stormento:** another hint at Ficino's use of the cithar (see II.5-8).

9. meschin: the 'miserable person', not in the sense of 'poor' but 'vile', is Ficino.

10. scilinguato: 'stutterer'.

11. fanciulla: here 'maiden'.

12. Io: according to Ovid, *Met*., I.724, the priestess seduced by Jupiter and transformed into a heifer, was forced by Juno to wander without rest, plagued by a Fury.

13. Celeno arpia: according to Virgil, she is one of the terrible Harpies met by Aeneas on the Strofades islands. She foresees the future of the Trojans (*Aen*. III.216-358). Dante, *Inf.*, XIII.11-12, mentions her.

14. Tantalo: proverbial myth of a man who is punished in the Tartarus for his evildoing: with his feet in water and below a tree bearing fruits, hungry and thirsty, he can reach neither the fruits nor the water.

19. chiesa di San Giglio: church of Sant'Egidio, inside the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.

20. u': short for the Latin *ubi*, 'where'.

CONCLUSION

Satire of philosophy was not an entirely new genre in the comic literature of the fifteenth century; it was present, in some form, throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. The present study shows, however, that this type of satire was reborn during the Florentine Quattrocento in important ways. This process mirrored the reborn figure of the philosopher: from scholar of the Studio, to humanist and philosopher, the Florentine intellectual experienced great transformation in the space of a hundred years. Florentine comic poets pilloried the changes happening within the intellectual world, those that were most prominent and at the time perceived as fashionable.

The language, style and themes of this tradition belong to the vernacular comic-realistic poetry of the thirteenth century. The first time that they are applied to intellectuals occurs in Stefano Finiguerri's poem *Lo Studio d'Atene*. Similarities with satirical works of the Middle Ages attacking clerical ignorance are evident, although Finiguerri's innovation lay in the allusions to the trips that scholars were undertaking to the Greek East and to Bruni's eulogy of Florence. In this way all intellectual activities taking place in Florence became targets, including the 'medieval' Studio and the innovations brought by humanists. The images and rhetorical devices in *Lo Studio d'Atene* drew from this and became so popular that they were repeated throughout the century in different forms. The theme of a trip to Athens, for example, became standard fare for satire, to the point that it became almost stale. This is a pattern followed through the history of satire in which old themes become stock-in-trade. Finiguerri's imagined trip is a good example of this process; the description of a bizarre trip from Florence to Athens inspired generations of poets – there are allusions to it in nearly all the authors discussed here. With Burchiello, the satire of intellectuals developed a new line. The learning of language (in Greece) gave way to language learning itself as the object of satire. It is in this way that Burchiello became a pioneer of comic satire through his anticipation of macaronic Latin. Later in the century Alessandro Braccesi followed Burchiello with a poem in mock-Greek that was conceived as a pure *divertissement* and no longer as a parody. Similarly, many other themes underwent processes of refinement, decadence, and regeneration. This is true for the *nomi parlanti*, the numerous realistic metaphors and mock-quotation of notorious

251

philosophers.

The innovation introduced by Burchiello to the genre is significant. He reworked ideas present in the comic literature of previous centuries; those of Orcagna, Cecco Angiolieri and Franco Sacchetti each found their way into his considerable body of work. Significant too is the way he incorporated into his work bizarre narratives centred on philosophers from antiquity that hint at the contemporary intellectual environment. Burchiello's eclecticism and his engagement with Leon Battista Alberti bring us to the main change that came about in the second half of the century. Whereas we may presume that in the case of Finiguerri his satire was the product of popular opinion and knowledge, Burchiello's texts suggest a deeper knowledge of classic literature and culture. This marked a shift to more complex and nuanced cultural references. With Braccesi and Lorenzo de' Medici this trend finds fuller expression. Well-educated authors of erudite poetry ridiculed philosophers and, in the case of Lorenzo, explicitly parodied philosophy. To parody philosophy successfully required some understanding of the theories that are derided. Both *Simposio* and 'Ragionavasi di sodo' confirm how well Lorenzo was versed in Ficinian thought.

The irreverent literary output of these comic poets in the second half of the fifteenth century shows the uninterrupted exchange between so-called 'official' and 'non-official' literatures. To speak of them as 'culture' and 'counter-culture' is, however, problematic. Their coexistence in the work of authors such as Braccesi and Lorenzo indicates that the satire was not intended as the denial of learning, but rather as cultured entertainment and as a means of ridiculing personal enemies. Further blurring the line between 'culture' and 'counter-culture' is the fact that both Braccesi and Lorenzo produced these works of satire and parody borrowing themes and devices from Finiguerri and Burchiello – their education therefore bridged any divide between 'high culture and 'counter-culture'. Scholars have acknowledged this hybrid nature of Lorenzo's vernacular poetry and that of others too. The present study evidences a similar mingling of 'high' and 'low' culture in Braccesi's comic *corpus*.

The artificial opposition between high-culture and counter-culture is the reason why understanding Pulci's relationship with Ficino is essential. Pulci's aim was not to reject the philosophical ideas that Ficino articulated; in fact, Pulci even embraced some of these ideas. Cantos XXIV and XXV of the *Morgante* represent

a unique combination of chivalric comic poetry and Neoplatonic philosophy, or at least Pulci's attempt to grasp the latter and include it organically in his own work. Here great emphasis is put on themes found in Ficino's *De amore*, *Theologia platonica* and *De christiana religione* such as free will, the journey of a newly created soul and magic. When accurately dated, these two Cantos reveal that during the first half of the 1470s Pulci was in good terms with Ficino and that their dispute arose only later. Their relationship continued to deteriorate, ultimately causing Pulci to change the character of Marsilione into the evil Marsilio after April 1478 and the Pazzi conspiracy.

Pulci's philosophical endeavours, however, did not preclude the production of shorter satirical poems. Pulci was not alone in following this trend: as Franco, Braccesi and Lorenzo de' Medici had done, he mocked contemporary studies on the immortality of the soul and summoned other traditional themes such as the opposition between *naturale* and *accidentale*. The coexistence of these two opposite strands in Pulci's work, philosophy and satire of philosophy, is a further confirmation of the comingling of high-culture and counter-cultures in the Florence of the end of the fifteenth century. Emerging from a tradition that had grown over the previous century, Pulci's attacks against Ficino represent the satire of the philosopher at its strongest. It is no coincidence that Ficino was the most prominent self-proclaimed philosopher of the Florentine Quattrocento.

This takes us back to the primary objective of this thesis, tracing the rebirth of the philosopher in the fifteenth century through comic literature. This change is documented through the eight chapters. We find scholars of the Studio and humanists, ancient philosophers alongside the leading intellectuals of the time, then the first individuals to be labelled scornfully *filosofo* (*filosofante*, *philosophuzo*) and finally the parody of philosophical theories and the satire of Ficino. It was from this Florentine tradition that the rampant satire of pedants developed in during the sixteenth century with Berni, Aretino, Folengo, Scroffa and also the sub-genre of the *elogio paradossale*, whose connection with the poets of the Quattrocento still requires investigation.[1]

---

[1] Maria Cristina Figorilli, for example, has studied the *elogio paradossale* and in particular the eulogy of ignorance in fifteenth-century Italy that has much in common with the comic poetry analysed in the foregoing pages. See ead. *Meglio ignorante che dotto: l'elogio paradossale in prosa nel Cinquecento.* Naples, Liguori, 2008.

APPENDIX I

Messer Baptista Alberti al Burchiello[1]

  1   Burchiello sgangherato e senza remi,
       composto insieme di zane sfondate,
       non possono più le Muse star celate
       po' che per prora sì copioso gemi.

  5   Ingegno svelto da pedali estremi
       in cui le rime fioche e svariate
       tengon memoria dell'alme beate
       a cui parlando di lor palma scemi,

       Dimmi qual cielo germina o qual clima
 10   corpo che sia omai di vita privo,
       sentir sì faccia di suo fauce strida.

       I' so un animal che non si stima
       a cui grattargli il mento torna vivo:
       quando è più morto, e più feroce grida.

 15   poi mi dirai dove l'aria è sì cruda
       che per fatica pel ceffo si suda.

---

[1] *SdB*, LIII, pp. 74-75.

Manuscripts descriptions

B = Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberiniano Latino 3912

Written between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. Average dimension of folios 210x135 mm. Paper with parchment flyleaves, i+55+i, ff. 1-44 numbered with roman numerals, ff. 45-46 with arabic numerals, ff. 47-55 not numbered. The recto of the first flyleaf reports: 'N. A. 2205 / P. Andrea Gerini'. All the folios were written by the same hand, over 27 lines, humanistic minuscule, with red rubrics in red ink. A floreal illumination surrounds the top left hand corner on f. 1r, where on the bottom of the page there is another illumination of a coat of arms. F. 46 includes a table of contents. Ff. 43-44 are blank.[1]

D = Codice Dolci

Written during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, average dimension of folios 203x137 mm. 31 ff., paper, written in two hands, both humanistic minuscule. The first hand wrote the texts on one column, 29 lines per page, the second hand, from the same period, wrote the first seven rubrics in red ink. The remaining rubrics were probably written by a third hand in a blank space on the top of the page. Watermark 'chapeau' (Briquet 3373: Florence, 1473-1483). Historiated initial on f. 1r. over three lines.[2]

F = Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Coventi Soppressi B.7.2889[3]

Written during the last decade of the fifteenth century. Ff. ii+112+i, paper, written by one hand. It is made of several quires, each of them written independently as they report titles as *Cançone*, *Sonettj*, *D(e)tti* in red ink. Miscellanous collection of prose and poetry of the second half of the fifteenth century, including *canzoni*, carnival songs, sonnets, Poliziano's *Detti piacevoli*. Ff. 97r-108v report a selection of Burchiello's poems.

---

[1] See the description Brambilla Ageno, 'Per l'edizione dei sonetti', pp. 187-188.

[2] See the description in Decaria, 'Il ritrovato *Codice Dolci*', p. 129.

[3] See the description in *SE*, pp. LXXXVIII-LXXXIX and Michele Messina, 'Una raccolta di curiosità letterarie del tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico', *Aevum*, 25, 1951, pp. 68-94, p. 69.

Pa = Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino 217

Written during the first half of the eighteenth century. Ff. 186, cursive hand. It includes five different sections: I. *Sonetti di Matteo Franco e di Luigi Pulci*, written by Rosso Antonio Martini, who also wrote: 'Fatti copiare in quest'anno 1724 da me Rosso Antonio Martini da un MS. favoritomi dal signor dottore Anton Maria Biscioni, copiato da un codice della libreria di S. Lorenzo. Nota che questi sonetti sono il Libro de' sonetti citati dal Vocabolario della Crusca, e sono stampati'. II. *La Confessione di Luigi Pulci a Maria Vergine*. III. 'Una fanciulla da Signa – D'un garzon s'innamorò', copied from a sixteenth century MS in Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, XLI.33. IV. *La Istoria di Beca, attribuita a Lugi Pulci*, 'Copiata a dì 20 settembre 1727 dall'esemplare stampato in Firenze rincontro a S. Apollinare l'anno 1622'. V. 'Le galee per Quaracchio'.[4]

M = Florence, Bibioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiano VII.1125

Written during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Ff. ii+73+i, paper. Written in four different hands, all *mercantesche*. Miscellaneous collection of poetry, includes texts by Antonio di Guido, Burchiello, Bernardo Cambini, Leonardi Bruni, Lorenzo de' Medici, Francesco Cei.[5]

P = Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 1336. Sec. XV-XVI [6]

Written between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. Measurements: 135x100 mm. Ff. i+75+i, f. 1 not numbered; ff. 2-7 numbered from 1 to 6 with the alphabetical table of contents; ff. 8-75 numbered with roman numerals I-LVII, LIX-LXIX. One hand, humanistic minuscule, wrote one sonnet on each side of the folia. The last nineteen sonnets written in a second hand and the table of contents. 'Tu mi domandi sempre s'i' vo' nulla', f. 71r, written in a third hand. [7]

---

[4] See the description in Francesco Palermo, *I manoscritti palatini di Firenze*, 3 vols, Florence, 1853-68, vol. I, pp. 401-402.

[5] See the description in *SE*, pp. XC-XCI.

[6] See the description in Brambilla Ageno, 'Per l'edizione dei sonetti', pp. 186-187.

[7] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

R = Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 2725

The quires are to be dated individually from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. The quires of interest here include ff. 80r-131v, written in the first years of the sixteenth century. The folios were lost, as the first sonnet has only lines 6-17. Collection of 138 sonnets ordered alphabetically.[8]

T = Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, 965

Written during the beginning of the sixteenth century. Dimensions 210x140 mm, paper, parchment flyleaves, ff. i+71+1. Ff. 1r-51v have one sonnet for each side of the folia and are written by one cursive hand. '*Bon dì! – Bon dì! – e: -Bon anno! – e: – Come stai?*', f. 52r written by a second hand.[9]

V = Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticano Latino 10681

Written during the end of the fifteenth century. Parchment, 210x140 mm, ff. ii+115+iii, numbered with roman numerals. F. 1 illuminated with flowers and the Carpegna coat of arms, plus the inscription: 'Soneti e canzone / di Alessandro Brac / cio Mgn.co Signore / Giovanni Conte di / Carpigna', followed by a dedicatory sonnet to the Count of Carpegna. The first letter of every poem is coloured in blue. The volume has two sections: the first (ff. 1-37v) includes Petrarchan poems, the second (ff. 38r-115v) poems *alla burchia*. In blank spaces there are annotations by both the copyist and Braccesi.[10]

---

[8] See the description in Zaccarello, 'Rettifiche, aggiunte', pp. 102-103.

[9] See the description in *SE*, XCVII-XCIX.

[10] See the description in Braccesi, *Soneti e canzone*, p. XLIX.

The following tables compare the text of the bestiary in *Morgante*, XXV.322-331 with its sources. I have used them in Chaper 6 to date Canto XXV (see pp. 188-193).

Table 1

The first column of the following table gives the text from the *Morgante*; the second the text from the 1476 edition of Cristoforo Landino's translation;[1] and the third Pliny's text.[2]

311. Disse Astarotte: - La gran Libia mena molti animali incogniti alle genti, de' quali alcun si dice **anfisibena**,[3] e innanzi e indrieto van questi serpenti che in mezzo di due capi hanno la schiena; altri in bocca hanno tre filar di denti, con volto d'uom, **manticore** appellati; poi son **pegàsi** cornuti ed alati:	VIII.23 **Amphesibene** hanno due capi l'uno nel luogho suo, l'altro ne la coda, chome se non bastassi che gittassino el veleno per una boccha.[4] VIII.21 Nascevi ancora, secondo che Ctesia scrive, uno animale decto **Mantichora**. Questa ha tre filari di denti in forma di pectine congiuncti. Ha faccia et orechi d'huomo. Occhi verdi et di colore sanguigno. Ha corpo di leone coda di scarpione et cosi fora con la puncta.[5] VIII.21 L'Ethiopia produce assai lynci et Sphingi [...] et molti altri animali simili a un monstro. Cavagli alati et cornuti e' quali chiamano **pegasi**.[6]	VIII.85 Geminum caput **amphisbaenae**, hoc est et a cauda, tamquam parum esset uno ore fundi venenum.[7] VIII.75 Apud eosdem nasci Ctesias scribit quam **mantichoran** appellat, triplici dentium ordine pectinatim coeuntium, facie et auriculis hominis, oculis glaucis, colore sanguineo, corpore leonis, cauda scorpionis modo spicula infigentem.[8] VIII.72 Aethiopia generat multaque alia monstris similia, pinnatos equos et cornibus armatos, quos **pegasos** vocant [...].[9]
312. da questi è detto il fonte di Pegàso. Un altro, il qual **rinoceronte** è detto, offende con un corno ch'egli ha al naso, perché molto ha l'elefante in dispetto, e se con esso si riscontra a caso, convien che l'un resti morto in effetto; e **callirafio** il dosso ha maculato; e **crocuta** è di lupo e di can nato.	VIII.20 Ne medesimi giuochi fù l'animale decto **Rhinocerote** el quale ha un corno nel naso. Questo è un altro inimico agl'helephanti e havendo a combattere con loro aguza el corno e una pietra et nella battagla s'ingegna ferire nella pancia, perchè è luogho molto piu tenero. E lungho quanto l'helephanto ma ha più corte gambe et di colore simile al bosso.[10] VIII.19 E giuochi di Pompeo magno	VIII.71 Isdem ludis et **rhinoceros** unius in nare cornus, qualis saepe, visus. alter hic genitus hostis elephanto cornu ad saxa limato praeparat se pugnae, in dimicatione alvum maxime petens, quam scit esse molliorem. longitudo ei par, crura multo breviora, color buxeus.[13]

[1] Pliny, *Historia naturale*.

[2] Id., *Natural History*.

[3] The 'anfisibena' is named in Dante's *Inferno*, Canto XXIV.87, and by Boiardo, *Amorum libri tres*, II.26.

[4] Pliny, *Historia naturale*, f. 98r.

[5] Ibid., f. 97v.

[6] Ibid., f. 97v.

[7] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, p. 62-63: 'that the amphisibaena has a twin head, that is one at the tail-end as well, as though it were not enough for poison to be poured out of one mouth.'

[8] Ibid., p. 54-55: 'Ctesias writes that in the same country is born the creature that he calls the *mantichora*, which has a triple row of teeth meeting like the teeth of a comb, the face and ears of a human being, grey eyes, a blood-red colour, a lion's body, inflicting stings with its tail in the manner of a scorpion.'

[9] Ibid., pp. 52-3: ' Ethiopia produces […] many other monstrosities - winged horses armed with horns, called *pegasi* […].'

[10] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 97r.

	furono e' primi che mostrorono a Roma un animale chiamato Chao et alquanti lo chiamano **Calliraphio**. Ha forma di lupo. Ma indenaiato come el pardo.[11]	VIII.70 Pompei Magni primum ludi ostenderunt chama, quem Galli **rufium** vocabant, effigie lupi, pardorum maculis.[14]
	VIII.21 **Crocute** sono nate di cane et di lupo et ogni dura cosa rompono co' denti et smaltischano nello stomaco.[12]	VIII.72 [...]**crocotas** velut ex cane lupoque conceptos, omnia dentibus frangentes protinusque devorata conficientes ventre [...].[15]
313. **Leucrocuta** è un altro animale: groppa ha di cervio, e collo e petto e coda di leon tutto, e bocca da far male, che fessa insino agli orecchi la snoda, e contraffà la voce naturale alcuna volta per malizia e froda; ed **assi** un'altra fera è nominata, molto crudel, di bianco indanaiata.	VIII.72 **Leucrocuta** è pessima fiera simile all'asino di grandeza. Ha groppe di cervio, collo et pecto et coda di lione, capo di martora, unghia fessa in due parti, bocca fessa insino a gl'orecchi et in luogo di denti ha uno osso intero et piano. Dicono che questa fiera contrafà el parlare degl'huomini.[16]	VIII.72 Indicos boves unicornes tricornesque, **leucrocotam**, pernicissimam asini feri magnitudine, clunibus cervinis, collo, cauda, pectore leonis, capite melium, bisulca ungula, ore ad aures usque recesso, dentium locis osse perpetuo. hanc feram humanas voces tradunt imitari.[18]
	VIII.21 In India sono buoi con l'unghie d'un pezzo et hanno un solo corno. Item una fiera detta **Axi**. La pelle sua tutta indenaiata di biancho.[17]	VIII.76 In India et boves solidis ungulis, unicornes, et feram nomine **axin** hinnulei pelle pluribus candidioribusque maculis.[19]
314. Ed un serpente è detto **catoblepa**, che va col capo in terra e con la bocca per sua pigrizia, e par col corpo repa; secca le biade e l'erba e ciò che tocca, tal che col fiato il sasso scoppia e crepa, tanto caldo velen da questo fiocca; col guardo uccide periglioso e fello; ma poi la donnoletta uccide quello.	VIII.22 Appresso a questa è una fiera decta **Catoblepa**. Non troppo grande, pigra in tutte le membra. El capo ha grave et malagevolmente el porta et sempre è chinato verso la terra, altrimenti sarebbe somma peste agl'huomini perchè qualunche vede e' suoi occhi di subito muore.[20]	VIII.77 Iuxta hunc fera appellatur **catoblepas**, modica alioqui ceterisque membris iners, caput tantum praegrave aegre ferens — id deiectum semper in terram —, alias internicio humani generis, omnibus, qui oculos eius videre, confestim expirantibus.[21]

---

[13] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 52-53: 'At the same games there was also a rhinoceros with one horn on the nose such as often been seen. Another bred here to fight matches with an elephant gets ready for battle by filing its horns on rocks, and in the encounter goes especially for the belly, which it knows to be softer. It equals an elephant in length, but its legs are much shorter, and it is the colour of box-wood.'

[11] Ibid., f. 97r.

[12] Ibid, f. 97v.

[14] Ibid.: 'The games of Pompey the Great first displayed the *chama*, which the Gauls used to call the lynx with the shape of a wolf and leopard spots.' What Shulters points out, i.e. that Luca Pulci named the 'callirafio' in his poem *Ciriffo Calvaneo* (VI.25), is not pertinent: Canto VI is not by Luca Pulci but by Bernardo Giambullari, who continued the *Ciriffo* after 1484 and wrote cantos VI-X; see John Raymond Shulters, *Luigi Pulci and the Animal Kingdom*, Baltimore, J. H. Furst. 1920, p. 31 and *DBI*, s.v. 'Giambullari, Bernardo'.

[15] Pliny, *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 52-53: 'hyenas like a cross between a dog and a wolf, that break everything with their teeth, swallow it at a gulp and masticate it in the belly.'

[16] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 97v.

[17] Ibid., f. 97v.

[18] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 54-55: 'Indian oxen with one and with three horns; the *leocrocota*, swiftest of wild beasts, about the size of an ass, with a stag's haunches, a lion's neck, tail and breast, badger's head, cloven hoof, mouth opening right back to the ears, and ridges of bone in place of rows of teeth - this animal is reported to imitate the voices of human beings.'

[19] Ibid., pp. 56-57: 'He says that in India there are also oxen with solid hoofs and one horn and a wild animal named axis, with the hide of a fawn but with more spots and whiter ones'

[20] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 97v.

315. **Icneümone**, poco animal noto, con l'aspido combatte, e l'armadura prima si fa tuffandosi nel loto; dormendo il **coccodrillo**, il tempo fura, e in corpo gli entra come in vaso vòto, però ch'e' tiene aperta per natura la bocca, quando di sonno ha capriccio, e lascia addormentarsi dallo scriccio.	VIII.23 Ha mortale guerra l'aspido con lo **Ichneumone**. Questo è noto animale maxime per questa gloria. Nascie in egypt, tuffasi nella belletta et dipoi, rasciutto alsole, più et più volte si rituffa in modo che rimane in volto in molte choverte. Dipoi combatte con l'Aspido et da quello con tale armadura si difende e sta alla dura insino ad tanto che a un puncto preso, se gli ficcha in boccha et nella stroza. Né gli basta questo che anchora un non meno feroce animale vince.[22] VIII.25 El **crocodillo** nasce nel Nilo, bestia di quattro piedi in terra et in aqqua nocivo. Né altro animale terrestre si trova sanza lingua se non questo. Questo solo morde movendo la mascella di sopra et non quella di sotto et ha edenti in forma di pectini. Cresce più che diciotto gomiti. Fa huova grandi come quelle dell'ocha. Queste porta sopra a quel luogho insino al quale per una certa divinatione sa che quello anno debba crescere el Nilo. Ne si truova animale che da si picchola origine diventi tanto grande. E armato d'unghie et ha il chuoio apto a resistere a ogni colpo. El dì sta in terra, la nocte nell'aqua et l'uno et l'altro fa con certa ragione: havendo rispecto al tempo. Questo satollo di pesci et colla boccha sempre piena s'addormenta nella ripa del fiume. Et un piccholo uccello, quivi chiamato Trochilo et in Italia Re de gl'uccelli, lo 'nvita a aprire la bocca per inghoiarlo et saltandogli spesso al muso gli netta la boccha et cosi saltandogli in boccha et ritornando indietro lo stuzica con tanta voluptà che apre tutta la boccha et finalmente per questo piacere s'addormenta. Il che, quando vede lo Ichneumone, chome un dardo s'allancia in boccha et corre al ventre et rodelo.[23]	VIII.87-88 [...] deinde internecivum bellum cum **ichneumone**. notum est animal hac gloria maxime, in eadem natum Aegypto. mergit se limo saepius siccatque sole, mox ubi pluribus eodem modo se coriis loricavit, in dimicationem pergit. in ea caudam attollens ictus inritos aversus excipit, donec obliquo capite speculatus invadat in fauces. nec hoc contentus aliud haud mitius debellat animal.[24] VIII.89 **Crocodilum** habet Nilus, quadripes malum et terra pariter ac flumine infestum. unum hoc animal terrestre linguae usu caret, unum superiore mobili maxilla inprimit morsum, alias terribile pectinatim stipante se dentium serie. magnitudine excedit plerumque duodeviginti cubita. parit ova quanta anseres, eaque extra eum locum semper incubat praedivinatione quadam, ad quem summo auctu eo anno egressurus est Nilus. nec aliud animal ex minore origine in maiorem crescit magnitudinem. et unguibus autem armatus est, contra omnes ictus cute invicta. dies in terra agit, noctes in aqua, teporis utrumque ratione hunc saturum cibo piscium et semper esculento ore in litore somno datum parva avis, quae trochilos ibi vocatur, rex avium in Italia, invitat ad hiandum pabuli sui gratia, os primum eius adsultim repurgans, mox dentes et intus fauces quoque ad hanc scabendi dulcedinem quam maxime hiantes, in qua voluptate somno pressum conspicatus ichneumon, per easdem fauces ut telum aliquod inmissus, erodit alvum.[25]

---

[21] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, p. 57: 'In its neighbourhood there is an animal called the *catoblepas*, in other respects of moderate size and inactive with the rest of its limbs, only with a very heavy head which it carries with difficulty - it is always hanging down to the ground; otherwise it is deadly to the human race, as all who see its eyes expire immediately.'

[22] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 98r.

[23] Id., *Historia Naturale*, ff. 98r.-98v.

[24] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 64-65: 'and in the next place she has given it war to the death with the ichneumon. That animal, which is also a native of Egypt, is specially known because of this exploit. The asp repeatedly plunges into mud and dries itself in the sun, and then when it has equipped itself with a cuirass of several coatings by the same method, it proceeds to the encounter. In this it raises its tail and renders the blows it receives ineffectual by turning away from them, till after watching for its opportunity, with head held sideways it attacks its adversary's throat. And not content with this victim it vanquishes another animal no less ferocious, the crocodile'.

[25] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 64-67: 'This belongs to the Nile; it is a curse on four legs, and equally pernicious on land and in the river. It is the only land animal not furnished with a tongue and the only one that bites by pressing down the mobile upper-jaw, and it is also formidable because of its row of teeth set close together like a comb. In size it usually exceeds 18 ells. It lays as many eggs as a

316.Un'altra bestia, che si chiama **eale**, la coda ha d'elefante e nero e giallo il dosso tutto, e dente di cinghiale; il resto è quasi forma di cavallo; ed ha due corni, e non par naturale, ché può qual vuole a sua posta piegallo, come ogni fera talvolta dirizza gli orecchi e piega per paura o stizza. 317. **Ippotamo**, animal molto discreto, quasi cavallo o di mare o di fiume, entra ne' campi, per malizia, a drieto; e se di sangue soperchio presume, cercando va dove fusse canneto tagliato, e pugne, come è suo costume, la vena e purga l'omor tristo allotta; poi risalda con loto ov'ella è rotta. E non ti paia oppinïon qui folle 318. che da quel tratto è la flobotomia, perché Natura benigna ci volle insegnar tutto, per sua cortesia. Non si passa di questo se non molle il cuoio, tanto duro par che sia; co' denti quasi di verro ferisce e con la lingua forcuta annitrisce.	VIII.21 Appresso a chostoro è anchora **Eale** animale grande quanto un cavallo d'aqqua. Ha coda d'elephante et e dicolore nero et giallo. Ha mascelle di cinghiale et le corna lunghe più che uno gomito le quali muove et volge chome vuole et quando combatte rizza hor l'uno, hor l'altro, et variale et pel diricto et pel traverso come giudica essergli più utile.[26] VIII.25 Un'altra bestia di maggiore altezza è nel Nilo, la quale si chiama **hiopotamo,** cioè cavallo di fiume. Ha l'unghia di due pezi come el bue, el dosso e crini et l'anitrire ha di cavallo, la coda torta, e' denti simili al chinghiale, ma meno nocivi; la pelle non si può passare se non è molle. Et per questo ne fanno schudi et elmi. Pasturasi di biade che sono ne' campi et entravi all'indietro acciochè paia che ne sia uscito et non vi sia appostato.[28] VIII.26[...] lo **hippotamo** e stato maestro in dimostrarci una spetie di medicina: Imperochè quando per troppo mangiare e ripieno et troppo grasso, esce a riva et apposta dove di proximo sia stato tagliato el canneto, et a una di quelle taglature acosta una vena et taglala, onde uscendo el sangue rimane col corpo scarico et sano. Et quando è uscito tanto sangue che gli paia abastanza, con la belletta ritura la piaga.[29]	VIII.73 Apud eosdem et quae vocatur **eale**, magnitudine equi fluviatilis, cauda elephanti, colore nigra vel fulva, maxillis apri, maiora cubitalibus cornua habens mobilia, quae alterna in pugna sistit variatque infesta aut obliqua, utcumque ratio monstravit.[27] VIII.95 Maior altitudine in eodem Nilo belva **hippopotamius** editur, ungulis binis quales bubus, dorso equi et iuba et hinnitu, rostro resimo, cauda et dentibus aprorum aduncis, sed minus noxiis, tergoris ad scuta galeasque inpenetrabilis, praeterquam si umore madeant. depascitur segetes destinatione ante, ut ferunt, determinatas in diem et ex agro ferentibus vestigiis, ne quae reverteni insidiae comparentur.[30] VIII.96 [...] hippopotamius in quadam medendi parte etiam magister exstitit. adsidua namque satietate obesus exit in litus recenti harundinum caesura speculatum atque, ubi acutissimam vidit stirpem, inprimens corpus venam quandam in crure vulnerat atque ita profluvio sanguinis morbidum alias corpus exonerat et plagam limo rursus obducit.[31]

goose, and by a kind of prophetic instinct incubates them always outside the line to which the Nile in that year is going to rise a full flood. Nor does any other animal grow to greater dimensions from a smaller original size; however, it is armed with talons as well, and its side is invincible against all blows. It passes its days on land and its nights in the water, in both cases for reasons of warmth. This creature when sated with a meal of fish and sunk in sleep on the shore with its mouth always full of food, is tempted by a small bird (called there the trochilus, but in Italy the king-bird) to open its mouth wide to enable the bird to feed; and first it hops and cleans out the mouth, and then the teeth and inner throat also which yawns opens as wide as possible for the pleasure of this scratching; and the ichneumon watches for it to be overcome by sleep in the middle of this gratification and darts like a javelin through the throat so opened and gnaws out the belly.'

[26] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 97v.

[27] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 54-55: 'Among the same people is also found the animal called the yale, the size of an hippopotamus, with an elephant's tail, of a black of tawny colour, with the jaws of a boar and movable horns more than a cubit in length which in a fight are erected alternately, and presented to the attack or sloped backward in turn as policy directs.'

[28] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 98v.

[29] Id. *Historia naturale*, f. 98v.

[30] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 68-69: 'A monster of still greater height is also produced in the Nile, the hippopotamus, which has cloven hoofs like those of oxen, a horse's back, mane and neigh, a snub snout, a boar's tail and curved tusks, thought these are less formidable, and with a hide that supplies an impenetrable material for shield and helmets, except if they are soaked in moisture. It feeds on the crops, marking out a definite portion beforehand for each day, so it is said, and making its footprints kead out of the field so that no traps may be laid for it when it returns.'

319.**Leontofono** è poco cognosciuto, che del leone è pasto velenoso; **tragelafo** è come becco barbuto; **toos**, il qual non è sempre piloso: la state è nudo, e di verno velluto; **licaon** è come lupo famoso; altri animali appellati sono **alci**, cavai silvestri, e traggon di gran calci.	VIII.38 **Leontophono,** cioè Amazaleone, è piccholo animale, né altrove nasce se non dove sono leoni. Adunque tal natura è di questa bestia, che se leone gusta di questa carne subito muore.[32] VIII.33 Un animale altrimenti che il cervo, se non che ha la barba et e' velli chome un beccho, è per questo chiamato **Tragelapho,** perchè tragos in grecho significa beccho et Elapho cervo.[33] VIII.33 **Thoos** è spetie di lupo ma e più lungo et ha le gambe più corte. Veloce nel saltare. [...] Questo non muta colore, ma muta abito, impochè el verno è vestito di peli, la state è nudo.[34]	VIII.136 **Leontophon** accipimus vocari parvum nec aliubi nascens quam ubi leo gignitur, quo gustato tanta illa vis et ceteris quadripedum imperitans ilico expiret.[36] VIII.120 Est eadem specie, barba tantum et armorum villo distans, quem **tragelaphon** vocant, non alibi quam iuxta Phasim amnem nascens.[37] VIII.123 Nam **thoes** — luporum id genus est procerius longitudine, brevitate crurum dissimile, velox saltu, venatu vivens, innocuum homini — habitum, non colorem, mutant, per hiemes hirti, aestate nudi.[38]
320. Poi son **bissonti**, buoi silvestri ancora che nascon molto in Iscizia e in Germania; ed un serpente che si chiama **bora**; e **macli** è bestia, ch'a dir pare insania, che con le giunte nïente lavora, sì che dormendo rimane alla pania, perché appoggiato a un alber s'accosta, e chi quel taglia lo piglia a sua posta.	VIII.15 Item uno animale decto **Alce** simile aun cavallo senon havessi elcollo et glorecchi assai piu lunghi.[35] VIII.15 Pure vi sono notabili generationi di buoi salvatichi decti **bissonty** [...].[40] VIII.14 Fanno fede che questo si creda certe serpi in Italia spesso vedute et sono chiamate **Boie** [...].[41] VIII.15 Item in Scandinavia isola è una bestia decta **macli,** non mai veduta in Italia ma narrata da molti; la quale è simile alle decte di sopra, ma non si possono piegare nelle gambe, il perchè non giace quando dorme, ma appoggiasi a uno albero. Adunque chi lha vuole pigliare sega gl'alberi tanto che ogni poco pondo gli possa fare cadere. Appoggiasi dunque	VIII.39 praeterea **alcen** iumento similem, ni proceritas aurium et cervices distinguat.[39] VIII.38 [...] insignia tamen boum ferorum genera, iubatos **bisontes** excellentique [...].[43] VIII.37 Faciunt his fidem in Italia appellatae **bovae** in tantam amplitudinem exeuntes, ut [...].[44] VIII.39 Item natam in Scadinavia insula nec umquam visam in hoc orbe, multis tamen narratam **achlin** haud dissimilem illi, set nullo suffraginum flexu, ideoque non cubantem et adclinem arbori in somno eaque incisa ad insidias capi, alias velocitatis memoratae.[45]

---

[31] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 68-71: 'The hippopotamus stands out as an actual master in one department of medicine; for when its unceasing voracity has caused it to overeat itself it comes ashore to reconnoitre places where rushes have recently been cut, and where it sees an extremely sharp stalk it squeezes its body down on to it and makes a wound in a certain vein in its leg, and by thus letting blood unburden its body, which would otherwise be liable to disease, and plasters up the wound again with mud.'

[32] Id., *Historia naturale*, ff. 101r-101v.

[33] Ibid., f. 100v.

[34] Ibid., f. 100v.

[35] Ibid., f. 95 v.

[36] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 96-97: 'We are told that there is a small animal called the 'lion's-bane' that only occurs in regions where the lion is found, to taste of which causes that mighty creature, the lord of all the other four-footed animals, to expire immediately.'

[37] Ibid., pp. 86-87: 'the animal called the goat-stag, occurring only near the river Phasis, is of the same appearance, differing only in having a beard, and a fleece on the shoulders.'

[38] Ibid., pp. 88-89: 'For the jackal – which is a kind of wolf, longer in the body and differing in the shortness of the legs, quick in its spring, living by hunting, harmless to man – changes its raiment though not its colour, being shaggy through the winter but naked in the summer.'

[39] Ibid., pp. 30-31: '[…] and also the elk, which resembles a bullock save that it is distinguished by the length of its ears and neck.'

[40] Pliny, *Historia naturale*, f. 95r.

[41] Ibid., f. 95r.

321. E **cefi** sono altri animali strani che nascon nelle parti d'Etïopia, c'hanno le gambe di drieto e le mani dinanzi, come forma umana propia: questi vide ne' giuochi pompeani prima già Roma, e poi non n'ebbe copia. E Gano a questi giorni a Carlo scrisse e come falso di questi promisse. 322. Ed una fera **tarando** è chiamata, la qual, dov'ella giace, il color piglia di quella cosa che ella è circundata, sì che a vederla la vista assottiglia; un'altra ancora è salpiga appellata, che nuoce assai senza muover le ciglia; e spettafico, arunduco e molti angue che pur Medusa non creò col sangue.	per dormire, ma cadendo l'albero cade anchora la bestia et in questa forma si pigla, perchè altrimenti per una inaudita velocità non si potrebbe piglare.[42] VIII.19 Item d'Ethiopia mostrorono **Cephi**. Questi hanno e' piedi et le gambe di drieto simili a piedi et ale gambe dell' huomo et quelle dinanzi simili alle mani. Questo animale da quel tempo in qua non è stato veduto a Roma.[46] VIII.33 El **Tarando** in Schytia muta colore, il che non fa altro animale [...] El tarando è della grandezza del bue. El capo è maggiore che di cervo ma simile a quello et con le medesime corna. Ha l'unghie fesse et pelo dorso. Ma quando vuole essere di suo colore è simile all'asino. Ha el chuoio sì duro che se ne fanno corazze. Dovunche sta piglia el colore delle chose propinque. Il perchè rade volte è preso perchè non si può schorgere.[48]	VIII.70 Iidem ex Aethiopia quas vocant **cephos**, quarum pedes posteriores pedibus humanis et cruribus, priores manibus fuere similes. hoc animal postea Roma non vidit.[47] VIII.123 Mutat colores et Scytharum **tarandrus** nec aliud ex iis quae pilo vestiuntur, nisi in Indis lycaon, cui iubata traditur cervix. [...]tarandro magnitudo quae bovi est, caput maius cervino nec absimile, cornua ramosa, ungulae bifidae, villus magnitudine ursorum, sed, cum libuit sui coloris esse, asini similis. tergori tanta duritia, ut thoraces ex eo faciant. colorem omnium arborum, fruticum, florum locorumque reddit metuens in quibus latet, ideoque raro capitur.[49]

[43] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, p. 29: '[…] but some remarkable breeds of wild oxen, the maned bison […]'

[44] Ibid., pp. 28-29: 'Credibility attaches to these stories on account of the serpents in Italy called boas, which reach such dimensions that …'

[45] Ibid., pp. 30-31: '[…] also the achlis, born in the island of Scandinavia and never seen in Rome, although many have told stories of it – an animal that is not unlike the elk but has no joint at the hock and consequently is unable to lie down but sleeps leaning against a tree, and is captured by the tree being cut through to serve as a trap, but which nevertheless has a remarkable turn of speed.'

[42] Id. *Historia naturale*, f. 95v.

[46] Ibid., f. 97r.

[47] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 52-53: 'the same show exhibited what they call *cephi* from Ethiopia, which have hind feet resembling the feet of a man and legs and fore feet like hands. Rome has not seen this animal subsequently.'

[48] Id., *Historia naturale*, f. 100v.

[49] Id., *Natural History*, transl. Rackham, pp. 88-89: 'The reindeer of Scythia also changes its colours, but none other of the fur-clad animals does so except the Indian wolf, which is reported to have a mane on the neck. […] the reindeer is the size of an ox; its head is larger than that of a stag but not unlike it; it has branching horns, cloven hooves, and a fleece as shaggy as a bear's but, when it happens to be self-coloured, resembling an ass's coat. The hide is so hard that they use it for making cuirasses. When alarmed it imitates the colours of all the trees, bushes and flowers and places where it lurks, and consequently is rarely caught.'

Table 2

This table shows in the first column the text of the *Morgante*, in the second the 1479 edition text[50] and in the third the text of a modern edition of Albert's work.[51] The text describing the animals is only transcribed when there is a corresponding description in the *Morgante*.

321. Ed una fera tarando è chiamata, la qual, dov'ella giace, il color piglia di quella cosa che ella è circundata,sì che a vederla la vista assottiglia; un'altra ancora è **salpiga** appellata, che nuoce assai sanza muover le ciglia; e **spettafico**, **arunduco** e molti angue che pur Medusa non creò col sangue.	25.II **Salpiga**[52] 25.II **Spectaficus**[53] 25.II **arunducus**[54]	25, II, 47 **Salpiga** serpens esse dicitur qui propter parvitatem non videtur et tamen vim nocendi habet maximam.[55] 25, II, 53**Spectaficus**[56] 25, II, 9**Arundutis**[57]
322. Poi son **celidri**[58], serpenti famosi, e dipsa, emorroìs e **caferaco**, **saure** e prèster, tutti velenosi; e non pur una spezie di draco; ed animali incogniti e nascosi, che stanno in mare e chi in padule o laco; e molti nomi stran di basilischi si truova ancor con vari effetti e fischi;	25.II **Celidrus**[59] 25.II **Cafezacus**[60] 25.II **Scaura**[61]	25, II, 21**Celydrus**[62] 25, II, 18**cafezatus**[63] 25, II, 49**scaura**[64]
323. **dracopopode**, **armene** e calcatrice, **irundo**, **alsordio**, **arache**, **altinanite**,	25.II **Dracocopodes**[65] 25.II **Armene**[66]	25, II, 29 **Draconcopodes**[81] 25, II, 3 **Armene**[82]

---

[50] Albert the Great, *De animalibus*, Paulus de Butzbach, Mantua, 1479.

[51] Id., *De animalibus libri XXVI, nach der Colner Urschrift,* ed. Hermann Stadler, Münster, Aschendorff, 1916-21.

[52] Ibid., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 298v.

[53] Ibid., f. 298v.

[54] Ibid., f. 296v.

[55] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 157; Id., *On Animal*s: *a Medieval Summa Zoologica*, transl. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, 2 vols, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. Vol. 2, p. 1732: 'The Salpiga is said to be a serpent. It is not seen because of its smallness, but nevertheless its capacity for harm is very great.'

[56] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1573.

[57] Ibid., p. 1560.

[58] Brambilla Ageno has underlined how this animal is quoted as the 'chelydrus' in Lucan, *Pharsalia*, IX, 711 and stressed that Pulci uses the 1479 edition's version 'celidrus'; see Pulci, *Morgante* (1955), p. 928.

[59] Albert the Great, *De animalibus* (1479), f. 297r.

[60] Ibid., f. 297r.

[61] Ibid., f. 298v.

[62] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1564.

[63] Ibid., p. 1563.

[64] Ibid., p. 1572.

[65] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 297v.

[66] Ibid., f. 296r.

[81] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1567.

centupede e **cornude** e **rimatrice**; **naderos** molto è solitario, immite, **berus** e **boa** e passer e **natrice**, che Lucïana non avea sentite, ed **andrio**, **edisimon** ed **arbatraffa**; e non si ricordò della giraffa.	25.II **Irundo**[67] 25.II **Alfordius**[68] 25.II **Arachs**[69] 25.II **Altynanyty**[70] 25.II **Centupeda**[71] 25.II **Cornuta aspis**[72] 25.II **Rymatrix**[73] 25.II **Naderos**[74] 25.II **Berus**[75] 25.II **Boa**[76] 25.II **Natrix**[77] 25.II **Andrius**[78] 25.II **Ahedysymon**[79] 25.II **Alhartraf**[80]	25, II, 35 **Irundo**[83] 25, II, 6 **Asfodius**[84] 25, **II**, 8 **Aracsis**[85] 25, II, 7 **Altynanyty**[86] 25, II, 25 **Centupeda**[87] 25, II, 16 **Cornuta aspis**[88] 25, II, 45 **Rymatrix**[89] 25, II, 41 **naderos**[90] 25, II, 15 **berus**[91] 25, II, 14 **Boa**[92] 25, II, 40 **Natrix**[93] 25, II, 5 **Andrius**[94] 25, II, 10 **Ahedysymon**[95] 25, II, 11 **Alhartraf**[96]
324.. E degli uccelli **ibìs**, che par cicogna, perché e' si pasce d'uova di serpente; fassi il cristeo al tempo che bisogna con l'acqua salsa, chi v'ha posto mente, rivolto al culo il becco per zampogna: ché la Natura sagace e prudente intese, medïante questo uccello,	23.XXIV **Ibis** […] est autem avis magna in multis cyconie natura imitans sed non est cyconiam quia rostrum longum quidem sed aduncum habet. Hec autem avis pugnat cum serpente quodam qui etiam ybis vocatur et declinatur yibis ybis yibi quia potest in omne	23, XXIV, 57 **Ibis** […] est autem avis magna in multis ciconiae natura imitans, sed non est ciconiam quia rostrum longum quidem sed aduncum habet. Haec autem avis pugnat cum serpente quodam qui etiam ybis vocatur et declinatur yibis ybis yibi quia potest

---

[82] Ibid., p. 1558.

[67] Ibid., f. 297v.

[68] Ibid., f. 296r.

[69] Ibid., f. 296r.

[70] Ibid., f. 296r.

[71] Ibid., f. 297r.

[72] Ibid., f. 296v.

[73] Ibid., f. 298r.

[74] Ibid., f. 298r.

[75] Ibid., f. 296v.

[76] Ibid., f. 296v.

[77] Ibid., f. 298r.

[78] Ibid., f. 296r.

[79] Ibid., f. 296v.

[80] Ibid., f. 296v.

[83] Ibid., p. 1568.

[84] Ibid., p. 1559.

[85] Ibid., p. 1560.

[86] Ibid., p. 1560.

[87] Ibid., p. 1564.

[88] Ibid., p. 1563.

[89] Ibid., p. 1570.

[90] Ibid., p. 1570.

[91] Ibid., p. 1562.

[92] Ibid., p. 1562.

[93] Ibid., p. 1570.

[94] Ibid., p. 1559.

[95] Ibid., p. 1560.

[96] Ibid., p. 1561.

apparare poi i fisici da quello.	venenosum et ova serpentis pro desideratissimo cibo fert suis pullis. [...] Hec avis cum constipata fuerit ex ano per rostrum cibos eicit et aliquando clistere sibi faciens aquam maris salsam in posterius inicit et sic se laxat. Unde et Galienus narrat per huiusmodi visa avium ibidum et ardearum, clisteris usum esse inventum.[97]	in omne venenosum et ova serpentis pro desideratissimo cibo fert suis pullis. [...] Haec avis cum constipata fuerit, ex ano per rostrum cibo eicit et aliquando clistere sibi faciens aquam maris salsam in posterius inicit se laxat. Unde et Galienus narrat per huiusmodi visa avium ibidum et ardearum, clisteris usum esse inventum.[98]
325. **Agotile**, appellato **caprimulgo**, poppa le capre sì che il latte secca; e **chite**, uccello ignorato dal vulgo, la madre e 'l padre in senettute imbecca; un altro è appellato **cinamulgo**, del qual chi mangia, le dita si lecca: e non ispari il ghiotto questo uccello, perché di spezierie si pasce quello.	23 **Agothylez** grece, latine **caprivulgus** vocatur [...]capras querens lactis irriguas quibus se supponit et sugit lac earum et consequitur succionem eius exsiccatio lactis in uberibus et hebetatio vel excecatio visus caprarum.[99] 23.XXIV **Kythes** et cum pullis perfecti sunt reponunt suos parentes in nidis de quibus exiverunt ne amplius laborent et eos cibant in nidis illis pietate naturali.[100] 23 **Cynamulgos** avis est que in ethyopia et climatibus secunndo et primo in altissimarum arborum extremis ramusculis de cynamomo nobiliori texit nidum ad quem cum incole scandere non possint propter altitudinem arborum et fragilitatem ramusculorum sagittis plumbatis nidos deiciunt et colligunt cynamomum. Ipsam etiam avicula cum suis interioribus non exviscerata comediturpropter aromaticitate eorum quibus nutritur.[101]	23, 4 **Agothylez** Graece, Latine **caprimulgus** vocatur, [...] capras quaerens lactis irriguas quibus se supponit et sugit lac earum, et consequitur succionem eius et exsiccatio lactis in uberibus et hebetatio vel excaecatio visus caprarum.[102] 23, XXIV, 65 **Kythes** [...] et cum pullis perfecti sunt, reponunt suos parentes in nidis de quibus exiverunt ne amplius laborent, et eos cibant in nidis illis pietate naturali.[103] 23, 21 **Cynamulgos** avis est quae in Ethyopia et climatibus secundo et primo in altissimarum arborum extremis ramusculis de cinamomo nobiliori texit nidum, ad quem cum incolae scandere non possint propter altitudinem arborum et fragilitatem ramusculorum, sagittis plumbatis nidos deiciunt et colligunt cinamomum: ipsa etaim avicula cum suis interioribus non exenterata comeditur propter aromaticitatem eorum quibus nutritur.[104]

[97] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 285r.

[98] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1499; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, pp. 1631-1632: 'The ybis [...] is a large bird, mimicking in many ways the nature of the stork. But it is not a stork because although it has a long beak, the beak is curved. This bird fights with a particular serpent which is also called *ybis* but whose name is declined *ybis, ybis, ybi*. It fights with is because it has power over every venomous creature and bring serpent eggs to its chicks as a greatly desired food. [...] When the bird is constipated, it takes the food out of its anus with its beak, giving itself an enema by injecting sea water into its posterior, in this way relieving itself. This is how, according to Galen, from seeing things of this sort among ibises and cranes, the use of the enema syringe was discovered.'

[99] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 273v.

[100] Ibid., f. 285v.

[101] Ibid., f. 275r.

[102] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1439; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, p. 1555: 'The *agothylez* is so named in Greek. In Latin we call it the *caprimulgus* [goat milker]. [...] It seeks out goats full of milk, places itself beneath them and sucks out their milk. As a result of this there arises both a drying up of the milk in the teats and a dulling or even a blinding of the goat's sight.'

[103] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1501; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, p. 1634: 'When the chicks are grown, they put their parents back in the nest they have just left so that they work no more and they feed them out of a natural piety.'

[104] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, pp. 1446-1447; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, p. 1564: 'the cynamulgus is a bird which lives in Ethyopia, in both the first and the second *climata*. It weaves its nest out of the finest cinnamon on the outermost small branches of the tallest trees. The region's

326. **Meonide** ancor son famosi uccelli che fanno appena creder quel che è scritto, però ch'ogni cinque anni vengon quelli di Meon al sepulcro insin d'Egitto; combatton quivi, o gran misteri e belli! mostrando pianto naturale afflitto come facessin l'essequie e 'l mortoro; poi si ritornon nel paese loro.	23.XXIV **Menonides** quidam vocant aves a loco ab egyptiis sic vocatas. Catervatim enim ab egypto volant ad ylium ad sepulchrum mennonis pytagorici philosophi sempre in quinto anno. Et cum biduo ibi circumvolaverunt x die pugnam ineunt et se rostris et unguibus lacerant et tunc reveruntt in egyptum.[105]	23, XXIV, 75 **Memnonides** quidam vocant aves a loco ab Egiptiis sic vocatas. Catervatim enim de Egipto volant ad Ylium ad sepulcrum Memnonis, Phytagorici philosophi, semper in quinto anno: et cum biduo ibi circumvolaverint, tertio die pugnam ineunt et se rostris et unguibus lacerant: et tunc revertuntur in Egiptum.[106]
327. Ed **ardea** quasi l'aghiron simiglia, che fugge sopra i nugol la tempesta; **coredul**, ciò che per ventura piglia, del cor si pasce, e l'avanzo si resta; **carità** vola, e parrà maraviglia, per mezzo il foco, e non incende questa. Né so se ancora un uccel cognosce nimico al corbo, appellato **corete**.	23 **Ardea** […] alte volat dicta ardea quasi ardua eo qui alte eat volando. Dicunt enim hanc avem cum tempestate presentit alte supra nubes volare […].[107]	23, 5 **Ardea** […] alte volat dicta ardea quasi ardua eo quod alte eat volando. Dicunt enim hanc avem cum tempestatem praesenti, alte supra nubes volare […].[111]
	23 **Coredulus** avis sic est vocata eo qui venatione vivat et cordi eorum que venatur edat et parum de corpore reliquo prede accepte.[108]	23, 31 **Coredulus** avis sic est vocata eo quod venatione vivat et corda eorum quae venatur edat et parum de corpore reliquo praedae acceptae.**[112]**
	23 **Cariste** sunt aves ut dicit solinus et Iorach que innoque flammis involant ita que nec pennis nec corpore aduruntur.[109]	23, 23 **Caristae** sunt aves ut dicunt Solinus et Jorach quae innocuae flammis involant ita quod nec pennis nec corpore adurunt […].**[113]**
	23 **Choretes** aves sunt pugnantes cum corvis […].[110]	23, 25 **Choretes** aves sunt pugnantes cum corvis […].**[114]**

---

inhabitants, since they cannot climb to it due to the height of the tree and the fragility of the branches, knock the nests down with arrows weighted with lead and then collect the cinnamon. This little bird is not disembowelled but is eaten with its innards, due to the aromatic nature of the things it feeds on.'

[105] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 285v.

[106] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1502; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1636: 'Some people name the *memnonides* after some birds which the Egyptians name after a place. They fly in flocks fro Egypt to Ilium, to the tomb of Memnon, a Pythagorean philosopher. They always do this in the fifth year and, when they have flown around for two days, they enter into a fight on the third day, cutting each other with their beaks and talons. They then go back to Egypt.'

[107] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 273v.

[108] Ibid., f. 275v.

[109] Ibid., f. 275r.

[110] Ibid., f. 275v.

[111] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1440; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1555: 'The ardea [...] is a bird which takes its name, according to some, from the fact that it flies high and thus has a lofty [*ardua*] flight. For they say that this bird flies high above the clouds when it senses a storm is coming [...].'

[112] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1450; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1568: 'The coredulus is a bird so called because it lives by hunting and eats the hearts [*corda*] of those it hunts. It eats very little else of the prey it has caught.'

[113] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1448; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1565: '*Caristae* are birds which, as Solinus and Jorach say, fly unharmed through flames, burning neither their feathers or body.'

[114] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1449; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1566: '*Choretes* are birds that fight with ravens.'

328. Ed un uccel che di state si vede dopo la pioggia, si chiama **drïaca**, che la Natura creò senza piede; ed **atilon**, che gridando s'indraca drieto alla volpe; se l'asino vede, amico il segue e con esso si placa; **bistarda** è grave, e dir non ne bisogna, ché, come vil, si pasce di carogna.	23.38 **Dryacha** avis est pedibus carens […] hec non apparet nisi post pluviam in principio estatis […].[115] 23 **Athylon** autem avis amica asini et inimica vulpis […].[116] 23 **Bistarda** […] sed vel cadavera forte inventa comedit […].[117]	23, 38 **Daryatha** avis est pedibus carens […]. Haec non apparet nisi post pluviam in principio aestatis […].[118] 23, 27 **Achylon** autem avis est amica asini et inimica vulpis […].[119] 23, 17 **Bistarda** […] sed vel cadavera forte inventa comedit […].[120]
329. Non so se del **caladrio** udito hai dire, il qual, posto all'infermo per obietto, si volge addrieto se quel dèe morire, così al contrario pel contrario effetto; **ibor** come caval s'ode annitrire, luce **licidia**, un pulito ugelletto, tanto che quasi carbonchio par sia, sì che di notte dimostra la via.	23 **Caladrius** […] que presentata infirmo etiam indicat oens morborum disponens et nonnullos dicitur curare. Si enim infirmo obiecta avis vultum et et oculos in infirmum convertit indicat sanandum. […] Si autem obiecta infirmo avertit ab ipso vultum et oculos significat moriturorum. [121] 23.XXIV **Ibor** […] habet enim hinnitum sicut equus.[122] 23.XXIV **Lucidie** aves sunt pennas habentes noctilucas et ideo prorectis pennis vias demonstrat et ideo nomen hoc acceperit.[123]	23, 20 **Caladrius** […] quae presentata infirmo et indicat omnes morborum dispositiones et nonnullas dicitur curare. Si enim infirmo obiecta avis vultum et oculos in infirmum convertit, indicat sanandum […]. Si autem obiecta infirmo avertit ab ipso vultum et oculos, significat moriturum […].[124] 23, XXIV, 58 **Iboz** […] habet enim hinnitum sicut equus.[125] 23, XXIV, 67 **Lucidiae** aves sunt pennas habentes noctilucas et ideo praeiectis pennis vias demonstrat et ideo nomen hoc acceperunt.[126]
330. **Incendula**, col gufo combattendo, vince il dì lei, e il gufo poi la notte. Ma sopra tutto **porfirio** commendo, un certo uccel che non teme di gotte: ché ciò che piglia lo mangia bevendo, sì che e' vuol presso la madia e la botte; l'un piè par d'oca, perché e' nuota spesso, e l'altro con che e' mangia è tutto fesso.	23.XXIV **Incendula** […] pugnans cum bubone que quia de die clarius videt victo bubone de die devorat et frangitova ipsius. Nocte autem cum prevalet videre bubo agreditur incendulam […].[127] 23.XXIV **Porfirion** avis est ut dicunt quidam esterarum regionum unum	23, XXIV, 59 **Incendula**[…] pugnans cum bubone quae quia de die clarius videt, victo bubone de die devorat et frangitova ipsius. Nocte autem cum praevalet videre bubo agreditur incendulam […][129] 23, XXIV, 91 **Porfirion** avis est ut dicunt quidam exterarum regionum,

---

[115] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 276r.

[116] Ibid., f. 275v.

[117] Ibid., f. 274v.

[118] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1453; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1571: 'The *daryatha*, as Aristotle says, lacks feet. [...] This one appears only after a rain shower in the beginning of summer.'

[119] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1449; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1567: 'the *achyton*, however, is a bird friendly to the ass but unfriendly to the fox.'

[120] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1445; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1562: 'Rather, it eats carcasses it has found.'

[121] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 275r.

[122] Ibid., f. 285r.

[123] Ibid., f. 285v.

[124] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1446; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, pp. 1563-4: 'When presented to a sick person, it indicates all the conditions of his decease and it is said to cure quite a few. If it is held up to a sick person and if it turns its face and eyes on him, it indicates he will be cured. [...] If, however, it is held up to a sick person and it turns its face and eyes away from him, it signifies that he will die.'

[125] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1499 ; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1632: 'It has a whinny like a horse.'

[126] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1501; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1635: '*Lucidiae* are birds with feathers that glow in the dark. Therefore, having thrown their feathers ahead of them, they point out their paths and this is why they have taken this name.'

[127] Id., *De animalibus* (1479), f. 285r.

	pedem habens anserinum ad natandum et alium divisis digitis ut avis terestris. Hec avis sola habet inter alias quod pede aquam hauriens bibit et pede cibum in os ponit et oportet ipsam in omni bolo bibere quia aliter sibi cibus propter appetitus debilitatem non descenderer.[128]	unum pedem habens anserinum ad natandum et alium divisis digitis ut avis terestris. Hec avis sola habet inter alias quod pede aquam hauriens bibit, et pede cibum in os ponit: et oportet ipsam in omni bolo bibere quia aliter sibi cibus propter appetitus debilitatem non descendit.[130]

---

[129] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, pp. 1499-500; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1632: 'The *incendula* [...] fights with the owl [*bubo*]. Because it sees more clearly by day than the owl, it overcomes the *bubo* by day and breaks and eats its eggs. At night, however, when the *bubo* has the sight advantage, it attacks the *incendula*.'

[128] Ibid., f. 286r.

[130] Id., *De animalibus* (1916), vol. 2, p. 1506; *On Animals*, transl. Kitchell and Resnick, vol. 2, p. 1642: 'The *porfirion* [osprey? flamingo?] is a bird, as some say, of the outer regions which has one foot like a goose for swimming and the other with separated toes, like a land bird. This bird alone among the others has the habit that it drinks water by drawing it up in its foot, and that it puts food in its mouth with its foot. It has to drink, moreover, at every mouthful of food since, due to weakness in its appetite, the food does not go down any other way.'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agnoletti, Bice. *Alessandro Braccesi: contributo alla storia dell'umanesimo e della poesia volgare*. Florence, Passeri, 1901.

Albert the Great. *De animalibus*. Paulus de Butzbach, Mantua, 1479.

— *De animalibus libri XXVI, nach der Colner Urschrift*, ed. Hermann Stadler. Münster, Aschendorff, 1916-21.

— *On animals*, transl. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr., and Irven Michael Resnick. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Alberti, Leon Battista. *Rime e versioni poetiche*, ed. Guglielmo Gorni. Milan, Ricciardi, 1975.

— *I libri della famiglia*, eds Ruggiero Romano and Alberto Tenenti. Turin, Einaudi, 1994.

— *Momus*. English transl. Sarah Knight, eds Virginia Brown and Sarah Knight. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2003.

Albesano, Silvia. *Consolatio philosophiae volgare: volgarizzamenti e tradizioni discorsive nel Trecento italiano*. Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006.

Alighieri, Dante. *Commedia*, ed. Emilio Pasquini and Antonio Quaglio, 3 vols, Milan, Garzanti, 1982.

— *Convivio*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno. Florence, Le Lettere, 1995.

Allen, Michael J.B. 'Ficino's Lecture on the Good?', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30, 1977, pp. 160-171.

— 'Marsilio Ficino on Plato, the Neoplatonists and the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 37, 1984, pp. 555-584.

— *Synoptic Art*: *Marsilio Ficino on the History of Platonic Interpretation*. Florence, Olschki, 1998.

Gli anni della cupola 1417-1436. Un archivio digitale delle fonti di Santa Maria del Fiore, digital archive available on the *Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore* website.

Ankli, Ruedi. Morgante *iperbolico: l'iperbole nel* Morgante *di Luigi Pulci*. Florence, Olschki, 1993.

Ariosto, Lodovico. *Opere minori*, ed. Cesare Segre. Milan, Ricciardi, 1954.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World*, transl. by Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1968, p. 4.

Barberi Squarotti, Giovanni. 'Da Bacco a Orfeo. Vino, uva ed ebbrezza nella letteratura dell'età laurenziana' in *Favole antiche: modelli, imitazione, riscrittura*, ed.

Giovanni Barberi Squarotti. Alessandria, Dell'Orso, 2000, pp. 9-52.

Baron, Hans. *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political literature*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Battaglia, Salvatore. *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 24 vols, Turin, UTET, 1961-2009.

Bayless, Martha. *Parody in the Middle Ages: the Latin Tradition*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1996.

Black, Robert. *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany. Vol. 1, Teachers, pupils and schools, c. 1250-1500.* Leiden, Brill, 2007.

Black, Robert and Pomaro, Gabriella. *La* Consolazione della filosofia *nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento italiano: libri di scuola e glosse nei manoscritti fiorentini*. Florence, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Decameron*, ed. Cesare Segre. Milan, Mursia, 1966.

Böninger, Lorenz. 'Notes on the Last Years of Luigi Pulci (1477-1484)', *Rinascimento*, 27, 1987, pp. 259-271.

Boschetto, Luca. 'Democrito e la fisiologia della follia: la parodia della filosofia e della medicina nel *Momus* di Leon Battista Alberti', *Rinascimento*, 35, 1995, pp. 3-29.

— 'Burchiello e il suo ambiente sociale: esplorazioni d'archivio sugli anni fiorentini' in Zaccarello, Michelangelo, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 35-57.

Botley, Paul. *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: the Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti and Desiderius Erasmus*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Bottoni, Luciano. *La messinscena del Rinascimento: 1, Calandra: una commedia per il papato*. Milan, Franco Angeli, 2005.

Braccesi, Alessandro. *Carmina*, ed. Alessandro Perosa. Florence, Bibliopolis, 1943.

— *Soneti e canzone*, ed. Franca Magnani. Parma, Studium Parmense, 1983.

Bracciolini, Poggio. *Lettere*, ed. Helene Harth, 3 vols, Florence, Olschki, 1984-87.

Brambilla Ageno, Franca. 'Le tre redazioni del Morgante', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 9, 1951, pp. 5-37.

— 'Scelta linguistica e reazione antiletteraria nel *Morgante*', *Lettere Italiane*, 7, 1955, pp. 113-129.

— 'Per l'edizione dei sonetti di Matteo Franco e di Luigi Pulci', in *Tra latino e volgare: per Carlo Dionisotti*, eds Gabriella Bernardoni Trezzini et al. Padua, Antenore, 1974, pp. 183-210.

Branciforte, Suzanne. 'Antonio di Meglio, Dante, and Cosimo de' Medici', *Italian Studies*, 50, 1995, pp. 9-23.

Brann, Noel L. *The Debate over the Origin of Genius during the Italian Renaissance: the Theories of Supernatural Frenzy and Natural Melancholy in Accord and in Conflict on the Threshold of the Scientific*. Leiden, Brill, 2002.

Brown, Alison. *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430-1497, Chancellor of Florence: the Humanist as Bureaucrat.* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979.

Brucker, Gene A. 'Florence and Its University' in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe*, eds Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Seigel. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 220-236.

Bruni, Leonardo. 'Laudatio florentinae urbis', in *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni*, ed. Hans Baron. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 217-263.

— 'Panegyric to the City of Florence' transl. Benjamin E. Kohl, in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. Benjamin G. Kohl, Elizabeth B. Welles, Ronald G. Witt. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978, pp. 135-175.

Burchiello. *Sonetti*, Florence, Francesco di Dino, 1481.

— *I sonetti del Burchiello. Edizione critica dalla vulgata quattrocentesca*, ed. Michelangelo Zaccarello. Turin, Einaudi, 2000.

— *I sonetti del Burchiello*, ed. Michelangelo Zaccarello. Turin, Einaudi, 2004.

— *Le poesie autentiche*, ed. Antonio Lanza. Rome, Aracne, 2010.

Cabrini, Anna Maria. 'Coluccio Salutati e gli elogi di Firenze fra Tre e Quattrocento' in *Le radici umanistiche dell'Europa. Coluccio Salutati cancelliere e politico. Atti del convegno internazionale del Comitato nazionale delle celebrazioni del VI Centenario della morte di Coluccio Salutati, Firenze-Prato, 9-12 Dicembre 2008*, eds Roberto Cardini and Paolo Viti. Florence, Polistampa, 2012, pp. 251-276.

Cammelli, Antonio. *I sonetti faceti secondo l'autografo ambrosiano*, ed. Erasmo Pèrcopo. Pistoia, Libreria dell'Orso, 2005.

Carnesecchi, Carlo. 'Per la biografia di Luigi Pulci', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 17, 1896, pp. 371-379.

Carrai, Stefano. *Le muse dei Pulci: studi su Luca e Luigi Pulci.* Naples, Guida, 1985.

Castellani, Francesco di Matteo. *Ricordanze. I, Ricordanze A: (1436-1459)*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli. Florence, Olschki, 1992.

Cecco d'Ascoli. *L'acerba: (Acerba etas)*, ed. Marco Albertazzi. Trento, La Finestra,

2002.

Ciociola, Claudio. 'Poesia gnomica, d'arte, di corte, allegorica e didattica' in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, eds Enrico Malato et al., 14 vols. Rome, Salerno, 1995-2005, vol. 2, pp. 327-454.

Classen, Joachim C. 'Horace a cook?', *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, 28, 1978, pp. 333-348.

Clydesdale, Ruth. 'Jupiter Tames Saturn. Astrology in Ficino's *Epistolae*', in *Laus Platonici philosophi: Marsilio Ficino and his influence*, eds Stephen Clucas, Peter J. Forshaw, Valery Rees. Leiden, Brill, 2011, pp. 117-131.

Corabi, Gilda. 'Demonologia pulciana: caratteri generali e strategie retoriche', *Semestrale di studi (e testi) italiani*, 18, 2006, pp. 79-105.

Crimi, Giuseppe. *L'oscura lingua e il parlar sottile. Tradizione e fortuna del Burchiello*. Rome, Vecchiarelli, 2005.

Cursietti, Mauro. 'Alle radici della poesia burchiellesca', *La parola del testo*, 6, 2002, pp. 109-131.

Curtius, Ernst Robert. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. W. R. Trask. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953.

Davie, Mark. *Half-Serious Rhymes*: *the Narrative Poetry of Luigi Pulci*. Ballsbridge, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1998.

— 'Pulci e Ficino: verità religiosa per sola fede' in *Il sacro nel Rinascimento. Atti del convegno internazionale (Chianciano-Pienza 17-20 luglio 2000)*, ed. Luisa Secchi Tarugi. Franco Cesati, Florence, 2002, pp. 405-412.

Davies, Jonathan. *Florence and Its University during the Early Renaissance*. Leiden, Brill, 1998.

De Carlos, Helena. 'Poetry and Parody: Boethius, Dreams, and Gestures in the Letters of Godfrey of Rheims', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18, 2001, pp. 18-30.

De Cesare, Raffaele. 'Di nuovo sulla leggenda di Aristotele cavalcato', *Miscellanea del Centro di studi medievali*, 1, 1956, pp. 181-247.

Decaria, Alessio. 'Il Pulci ritrovato e nuove ipotesi sul *Libro dei Sonetti*', *Bollettino storico della Svizzera Italiana*, 111, 2008, pp. 247-280.

— *Luigi Pulci e Francesco di Matteo Castellani: novità e testi inediti da uno zibaldone magliabechiano*. Florence, Società editrice fiorentina, 2009.

— 'Notizie su Luigi Pulci in uno zibaldone colocciano', *Interpres*, 28, 2009, pp. 255-265.

— '"Il filo di un ragionamento": lettura del "sonetto ebreo"', *Per leggere*, 18,

2010, pp. 15-29.

— 'Tra Marsilio e Pallante: una nuova ipotesi sugli ultimi cantari del *Morgante*' in *L' entusiasmo delle opere: studi in memoria di Domenico De Robertis*, eds Isabella Becherucci, Simone Giusti, Natascia Tonelli. Lecce, Pensa Multimedia, 2012, pp. 299-340.

Decaria, Alessio and Zaccarello, Michelangelo. 'Il ritrovato *Codice Dolci* e la costituzione della vulgata dei *Sonetti* di Matteo Franco e di Luigi Pulci', *Filologia Italiana*, 3, 2006, pp. 122-154.

Del Puppo, Dario. 'In margine ai codici delle rime del Burchiello: individuo e società nelle antologie e nelle miscellanee letterarie del '400' in Zaccarello, Michelangelo, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 101-125.

De vera amicitia: i testi del primo Certame coronario, ed. Lucia Bertolini. Modena, Panini, 1993.

Dionisotti, Carlo. '*Entrée d'Espagne*, *Spagna*, *Rotta di Roncisvalle*' in *Studi in onore di Angelo Monteverdi*, ed. Giuseppina Gerardi Marcuzzo, 2 vols, Società tipografica editrice modenese, Modena, 1959, vol. 1, pp. 207-241.

Eichel-Lojkine, Patricia. *Excentricité et humanisme: parodie, dérision et détournement des codes à la Renaissance*. Genève, Droz, 2002.

Fazio degli Uberti. *Il dittamondo e le rime*, ed. Giuseppe Corsi, 2 vols, Bari, Laterza, 1952.

Ferrara, Mario. 'Il codice Venturi Ginori di rime antiche', *La bibliofilia*, 52, 1, 1950, pp. 41–102.

Ferraro, Alessandra Mita. *Matteo Palmieri. Una biografia intellettuale*. Genoa, Name, 2005.

Ferruolo, Stephen. *The Origins of the University: the Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1100-1215*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1985.

Field, Arthur. 'Lorenzo Buonincontri and the First Public Lecture on Manilius in Florence, 1475-78', *Rinascimento,* 36, 1996, pp. 207-225.

— 'The Platonic Academy of Florence' in *Marsilio Ficino : his theology, his philosophy, his legacy*, eds Michael J.B. Allen, Martin Davies, Valery Rees. Leiden, Brill, 2002, pp. 359-376.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Libro di Marsilio Ficino fiorentino Della cristiana religione ad Bernardo del Nero clarissimo cittadino fiorentino*. Florence, 1476.

— *Opera omnia*. Basilea, officina Henricpetrina, 1576 (reprint Turin, Bottega d'Erasmo, 1962).

— *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, transl. members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, 9 vols, London, Shepeard-Walwyn, 1975-2012.

— *Three Books on Life*. English transl. and ed. John R. Clark and Carol V. Kaske. Binghamton, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance Society of America, 1989.

— *Lettere: epistolarum familiarium liber I*, ed. Sebastiano Gentile, 2 vols, Florence, Olschki, 1990-2010.

— *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Sandra Niccoli. Florence, Olschki, 1987.

— *Platonic Theology*. English transl. Michael J.B. Allen and John Warden; eds James Hankins and William Bowen, 6 vols, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001-2006.

— *Commentaries on Plato*. English transl. and ed. Michael J. B. Allen, Cambridge MS, Harvard University Press, 2008.

Figorilli, Maria Cristina. *Meglio ignorante che dotto: l'elogio paradossale in prosa nel Cinquecento.* Naples. Liguori, 2008.

Finiguerri, Stefano. *La buca di Monteferrato, Lo Studio d'Atene e Il Gagno: poemetti satirici del XV secolo*, ed. Ludovico Frati. Bologna, Romagnoli, 1884.

— *I poemetti*, ed. Antonio Lanza. Rome, Zauli, 1994.

Firenzuola, Agnolo. *Opere di Agnolo Firenzuola*, ed. Delmo Maestri. Turin, UTET, 1977.

Folengo, Nicodemo. *Carmina*, ed. Carlo Cordié and Alessandro Perosa. Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, 1990.

Franco, Matteo. *Lettere*, ed. Giovanna Frosini. Florence, Accademia della Crusca, 1990.

Fubini, Riccardo. 'Ficino e i Medici all'avvento di Lorenzo il Magnifico', *Rinascimento*, 24, 1984, pp. 3-52.

Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri, Mariateresa. *L'intellettuale tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Rome, Laterza, 1994.

Garavelli, Enrico. 'Presenze burchiellesche (e altro) nel Commento di Ser Agresto di Annibal Caro' in Zaccarello, Michelangelo (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 195-239.

Gardini, Nicola. *Rinascimento*. Turin, Einaudi, 2010.

Gavitt, Philip. *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence*: *the Ospedale degli Innocenti, 1410-1536*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1990.

Gehl, Paul F. *A Moral Art: Grammar, Society, and Culture in Trecento Florence*. Ithaca,

Cornell University Press, 1993.

Getto, Giovanni. *Studio sul* Morgante. Florence, Olschki, 1967.

Ser Giovanni. *Il Pecorone*, ed. Enzo Esposito. Ravenna, Longo, 1974.

Giunta, Claudio. *Due saggi sulla tenzone*. Rome-Padua, Antenore, 2002.

— 'Premesse per un commento alle tenzoni di Burchiello' in Zaccarello, Michelangelo, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 75-100.

Grants, Edward. *Planets, Stars, and Orbs: the Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Guerri, Domenico. *La corrente popolare nel Rinascimento: berte burle e baie nella Firenze del Brunellesco e del Burchiello*. Florence, Sansoni, 1931.

Hankins, James. *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*. Leiden, Brill, 1990.

— 'The Myth of the Platonic Academy in Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44, 1991, pp. 429-475.

— *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols, Roma, Storia e Letteratura, 2003-04.

— 'Lorenzo de' Medici's *De summo bono* and the Popularization of Ficinian Platonism' in *Humanistica per Cesare Vasoli*, eds Fabrizio Meroi and Elisabetta Scapparone. Florence, Olschki, 2004.

Hatfield, Rab. 'The Compagnia de' Magi', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33, 1970, pp. 107-161.

Inventario e stima della libreria Riccardi, manoscritti e edizioni del secolo XV, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana e Moreniana, 1810.

Jordan, Costance. *Pulci's* Morgante*: Poetry and History in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, 1986.

Kristeller, Paul Oscar. 'An Unknown Correspondence of Alessandro Braccesi with Niccolò Michelozzi, Naldo Naldi, Bartolommeo Scala, and other Humanists (1470-72) in Ms. Bodl. Auct. F. 2. 17' in *Classical Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, ed. Charles Handerson jr., 2 vols, Rome, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1964, vol. 2, pp. 311-359.

— *Supplementum ficinianum: Marsilii Ficini Florentini philosophi Platonici opuscula inedita et dispersa*, Florence, Olschki, 1937.

Landino, Cristoforo. *Carmina omnia*, ed. Alessandro Perosa. Florence, Olschki, 1939.

Lanza, Antonio. *Polemiche e berte letterarie nella Firenze del primo Quattrocento*. Rome, Bulzoni, 1971.

— *Polemiche e berte letterarie nella Firenze del primo Rinascimento*, 2nd edn.

Rome, Bulzoni, 1989.

— *La letteratura tardogotica: arte e poesia a Firenze e Siena nell'autunno del Medioevo*, Anzio, De Rubeis, 1994.

Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre, ed. Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis, 3 vols, Florence, Le Monnier, 1943.

Le Goff, Jacques. *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages,* transl. Teresa Lavender Fagan. Oxford, Blackwell, 1992.

Lebano, Edoardo. 'I miracoli di Roncisvalle e la presunta ortodossia del diavolo-teologo Astarotte nel *Morgante* di Luigi Pulci', *Italica*, 46, 1969, pp. 121-134.

Lirici toscani del Quattrocento, ed. Antonio Lanza, 2 vols, Rome, Bulzoni, 1973.

Lockwood, Dean P. 'Aristophanes in the XVth Century', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 40, 1909, p. LVI.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Opere*, ed. Mario Bonfantini. Milan, Ricciardi, 1954.

Magnani, Franca. 'Il tipo *gigghio* in un componimento rusticale di Alessandro Braccesi', *Lingua nostra*, 42, 1981, pp. 1-3.

Mainardi, Arlotto. *Motti e facezie del Piovano Arlotto*, ed. Gianfranco Folena. Milan, Ricciardi, 1995.

Marcel, Raymond. *Marsile Ficin, 1433-1499.* Paris, Les belles lettres, 1958.

Marenbon, John. *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150-1350): an Introduction*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.

Martelli, Mario. 'Un nuovo autografo laurenziano', *Interpres*, 5, 1983-84, pp. 45-69.

— 'Un caso di *amphibolatio*: la canzone a ballo *Ragionavasi di sodo*', in *Lorenzo de' Medici. Studi*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini, Olschki, Florence, 1992, pp. 309-337.

Martin, Craig. *Renaissance Meteorology: Pomponazzi to Descartes*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Martines, Lauro. *The Social World of Florentine Humanists, 1390-1460*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.

Mattioli, Emilio. 'I traduttori umanistici di Luciano', in *Studi in onore di Raffaele Spongano*, Bologna, Boni, 1980, pp. 205-214.

Medici, Lorenzo de'. *Poesie del magnifico Lorenzo De' Medici: in questa edizione nei luoghi mancanti e scorretti compiute e alla vera lizione ridotte. S'aggiungono le stanze in lode della Nencia, i Beoni, le Rime spirituali, e altre poesie inedite con alcune memorie attenenti alla sua Vita, Testimonianze, ecc.*. Bergamo, Lancellotti, 1763.

—   *Opere di Lorenzo de' Medici detto il Magnifico*. Florence, Molini, 1825.

—   *Opere*, ed. Attilio Simioni, 2 vols, Bari, Laterza, 1913-14.

—   *Scritti scelti di Lorenzo de' Medici*, ed. Emilio Bigi, 2nd edn. Turin, UTET, 1965.

—   *Simposio*, ed. Mario Martelli. Florence, Olschki, 1966.

—   *Canti carnascialeschi*, ed. Paolo Orvieto. Rome, Salerno, 1991.

—   *Comento de' miei sonetti*, ed. Tiziano Zanato. Florence, Olschki, 1991.

—   *Tutte le opere*, ed. Paolo Orvieto, 2 vols, Rome, Salerno, 1992.

—   *Opere*, ed. Tiziano Zanato. Turin, Einaudi, 1992.

—   *Poesie*, ed. Federico Sanguineti. Milan, BUR, 1992.

Messina, Michele. 'Una raccolta di curiosità letterarie del tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico', *Aevum*, 25, 1951, pp. 68-94.

Momigliano, Attilio. *L'indole e il riso di Luigi Pulci*. Rocca San Casciano, Cappelli, 1907.

Morford, Mark. 'Juvenal's Thirteenth Satire', *The American Journal of Philology*, 94, 1973, pp. 26-36.

Morpurgo, Salomone. 'La Compagnia della Gazza: i suoi capitoli e le sue tramutazioni', *Miscellanea fiorentina di erudizione e storia*, 2, 1897, pp. 92-109.

Nauta, Lodi. 'Linguistic Relativity and the Humanist Imitation of Classical Latin', in *Language and Cultural Change: Aspects of the Study and Use of Language in the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Lodi Nauta, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, pp. 173-185.

Nelson, John Charles. *Renaissance Theory of Love: the Context of Giordano Bruno's Eroici furori*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1958.

La Nencia da Barberino, ed. Rossella Bessi. Rome, Salerno, 1982.

Nigro, Salvatore. *Pulci e la cultura medicea*. Bari, Laterza, 1972.

Orvieto, Paolo. 'Angelo Poliziano "compare" della brigata laurenziana', *Lettere italiane*, 25, 1973, pp. 301-318.

—   *Pulci medievale: studio sulla poesia volgare fiorentina del Quattrocento*. Rome, Salerno, 1978.

—   'A proposito del sonetto "Costor che fan sì gran disputazione" e dei sonetti responsivi', *Interpres*, 4, 1981-82, pp. 400-413.

—   'Sul rapporto *Morgante-Orlando laurenziano*' in *Ritterepik der Renaissance*: *Akten des deutsch-italienischen Kolloquiums, Berlin, 30.3-2.4.1987*, ed. Klaus

W. Hempfer. Stuttgart, Steiner, 1989, pp. 146-152.

— 'Carnevale e altre feste fiorentine del tempo di Lorenzo de' Medici' in *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo tempo*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini. Florence, Olschki, 1992, pp. 103-124.

Orvieto, Paolo and Brestolini, Lucia. *La poesia comico-realistica: dalle origini al Cinquecento*. Rome, Carocci, 2000.

Oxford English Dictionary, available on the Oxford University Press website.

Paccagnella, Ivano. *Le macaronee padovane: tradizione e lingua*. Padua, Antenore, 1979.

Palermo, Francesco. *I manoscritti palatini di Firenze*, 3 vols, Florence, 1853-68.

Palmieri, Matteo. *Libro del poema chiamato* Citta di Vita *composto da Matteo Palmieri Florentino: Transcribed from the Laurentian MS XL 53 and Compared with the Magliabechian II ii 41*, 2 vols, Northampton, Smith College, 1927-28.

Park, Katharine. 'The Readers at the Florentine Studio according to Comunal Fiscal Records (1357-1380, 1413-1446)', *Rinascimento*, 20, 1980, pp. 249-310.

Pasquini, Emilio. 'Il codice di Filippo Scarlatti (Firenze), Biblioteca Venturi Ginori Lisci, 3', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 22, 1964, pp. 363-580.

Peirone, Claudia. 'Finiguerri e altri; la parodia nel Quattrocento ("La turba in cammino": modello e antimodello da Dante a Lorenzo)' in *Lo specchio che deforma: le immagini della parodia*, ed. Giovanni Barberi Squarotti. Turin, Tirrenia, 1988, pp. 61-81.

Perosa, Alessandro. 'Storia di un libro di poesie latine dell'umanista fiorentino Alessandro Braccesi', *La bibliofilia*, 45, 1943, pp. 138-185.

Petrarca, Francesco. *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata. Milan, A. Mondadori, 1996.

Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis*. Ed. Johannes Andreas, bishop of Aleria. Rome, Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz, 1470.

— *Historia naturalis, ed*. Johannes Andreas, bishop of Aleria. Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1472.

— *Historia naturalis*, ed. Nicolaus Perottus. Rome, Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz, 1473.

— *Historia naturalis, ed*. Philippus Beroaldus. Parma, Stephanus Corallus, 1476.

— *Historia naturale*, transl. and ed. Cristoforo Landino. Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1476.

— *Natural History*, transl. and ed. H. Rackham, 10 vols, London, Heinemann, 1938-63.

Polezzo Susto, Giovanna. 'Una frottola milanese contro Francesco Filelfo', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 24, 1966, pp. 429-442.

Polcri, Alessandro. *Luigi Pulci e la chimera: studi sull'allegoria nel Morgante.* Florence, Società editrice fiorentina, 2010.

Puccini, Davide. 'Una fonte per Margutte', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 177, 2000, pp. 534-539.

Pulci, Antonia. *Saints' Lives and Bible Stories for the Stage*, ed. Elissa B. Weaver, transl. James Wyatt Cook. Toronto, ITER, 2010.

Pulci, Luigi. *Falabacchio e Cattabriga giganti.* Florence, Lorenzo Morgiani and Johannes Petri, about 1492.

— *Morgante*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno. Milan, Ricciardi, 1955.

— *Morgante e lettere*, ed. Domenico de Robertis. Florence, Sansoni, 1962.

— *Morgante*, ed. Davide Puccini, 2 vols, Milan, Garzanti, 1989.

— *Opere minori*, ed. Paolo Orvieto. Milan, Mursia, 1986.

— *Sonetti extravaganti,* ed. Alessio Decaria. Florence, Società editrice fiorentina, 2013.

Pulci, Luigi and Franco, Matteo. *Il* Libro dei sonetti, ed. Giulio Dolci. Milan, Società Anonima Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1933.

Rajna, Pio. 'La materia del *Morgante* in un ignoto poema del sec. XV', *Propugnatore*, 2, 1869, pp. 7-384.

Ramusio, Giovanni Battista. *Navigazioni e viaggi*, ed. Marica Milanesi, 6 vols, Turin, Einaudi, 1978-88.

Rimatori Bolognesi del Quattrocento, ed. Ludovico Frati. Bologna, Romagnoli-Dall'Acqua, 1908.

Rimatori comico-realistici del due e trecento, ed. Maurizio Vitale, 2 vols, Turin, UTET, 1956.

Romanzi dei Reali di Francia, ed. Adelaide Mattaini. Rizzoli, Milan, 1957.

Rochon, André. *La jeunesse de Laurent de Médicis (1449-1478).* Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1963.

Rocke, Michael. *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence.* New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Rose, Margaret A. *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-modern.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Sacchetti, Franco. *Il libro delle rime*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno. Florence, Olschki, 1990.

—   *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. Davide Puccini. Turin, UTET, 2004.

Sacro Bosco, Joannes de. *The* Sphere *of Sacrobosco and its Commentators*, ed. Lynn Thorndike. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1949.

Sarton, George. 'Aristotle and Phyllis', *Isis*, 14, 1930, pp. 8-19.

Segre, Cesare. 'La tradizione macaronica da Folengo a Gadda (e oltre)' in *Cultura letteraria e tradizione popolare in Teofilo Folengo. Atti del convegno di studi promosso dall'Accademia Virgiliana e dal comitato Mantova - Padania 77, Mantova, 15-16-17 Ottobre 1977*, eds Ettore Bonora and Mario Chiesa, Milan, Feltrinelli, pp. 62-74.

Shulters, John Raymond. *Luigi Pulci and the Animal Kingdom*. Baltimore, J. H. Furst. 1920.

I sonetti del Burchiello, di m. Antonio Alamanni et del Risoluto, di nuouo rivisti, & ampliati. Con la Compagnia del Mantellaccio composta dal mag. Lorenzo de' Medici, insieme con i Beoni del medesimo. Nuovamente messi in luce. Florence, Giunti, 1568.

Il sonetto latino e semilatino in Italia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento, ed. Elena Maria Duso. Rome, Antenore, 2004.

Sonetti del Burchiello, del Bellincione ed altri Poeti Fiorentini. London [Lucca and Pisa], 1757.

La Spagna. Poema cavalleresco del secolo XIV, ed. Michele Catalano, 3 vols, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1940.

Spagnesi, Enrico. *Utiliter edoceri. Atti inediti degli ufficiali dello Studio Fiorentino (1391-96)*. Milan, Giuffrè, 1979.

Statuti dell'Università e studio fiorentino dell'anno MCCCLXXXVII, ed. Alessandro Gherardi. Bologna, Forni, 1973.

Tavoni, Mirko. *Latino, grammatica, volgare. Storia di una questione umanistica*. Padua, Antenore, 1984.

Terraciano, Pasquale. 'Tra Atene e Alessandria. Origene nella *Theologia Platonica* di Marsilio Ficino', *Viator*, 42, 2011, pp. 265-294.

Il terzo libro dell'opere burlesche di m. Berni, di m. Gio. della Casa, dell'Aretino, de' Bronzini, del Franzesi, di Lorenzo de' Medici, del Galileo, del Ruspoli, del Bertini, del Firenzuola, del Lasca, del Pazzi, e di altri autori. Florence, 1723.

Toscan, Jean. *Le carnaval du langage: le léxique érotique des poètes de l'équivoque de Burchiello à Marino (XVe-XVIIe siècles)*, 4 vols, Lille, Atelier, 1981.

Trenti, Luigi. 'Alberti e il Burchiello', *Civiltà mantovana*, 29, 1994, pp. 111-119.

Uzielli, Gustavo. *Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli iniziatore della scoperta dell'America: ricordo del solstizio d'estate del 1892*. Florence, Stabilimento tipografico fiorentino, 1892.

Varchi, Benedetto. *L'Ercolano: dialogo di Benedetto Varchi nel quale si ragiona delle lingue, ed in particolare della Toscana e della Fiorentina*, 2 vols, Milan, Società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1804.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architetti*, ed. Carlo L. Ragghianti, 4 vols, Milan, Rizzoli, 1943-47.

Vasoli, Cesare. 'The Renaissance concept of Philosophy' in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 57-74.

Verde, Armando Felice. *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473-1503: ricerche e documenti*. Vol. 4.1, *La vita universitaria. Gli statuti; Anni scolastici 1473/74 - 1481/82*, Florence, Olschki, 1985.

Walker, Daniel Pickering. 'Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonists', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 16, 1953, pp. 100-120.

Wilkins, Ernest H. 'On the Dates of Composition of the *Morgante* of Luigi Pulci'. *PMLA*, 66, 1951, pp. 244-250.

Zaccarello, Michelangelo. '"Buffon non di comun né d'alcun sire." Il Burchiello posseduto da Lorenzo (Laur. Pl. XL, 48)', in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: politica, economia, cultura, arte. Convegno di studi promosso dalle Università di Firenze, Pisa e Siena : 5-8 novembre 1992*, Pisa, Pacini, 1996, pp. 609-632.

— 'Indovinelli, paradossi e satira del saccente: "naturale" ed "accidentale" nei sonetti del Burchiello', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, 15, 2000, pp. 111-127.

— 'Rettifiche, aggiunte e supplemento bibliografico al censimento dei testimoni contenenti rime del Burchiello', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 62, 2001, pp. 85-117.

— (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini: Burchiello e dintorni a 550 anni dalla morte. Atti del convegno, Firenze, 26 Novembre 1999*. Rome, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2002.

— 'Schede esegetiche per l'enigma di Burchiello' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 1-34.

— 'Primi appunti tipologici sui nomi parlanti', *Lingua e stile*, 23, 2003, pp. 59-84.

—   'An Unknown Episode of Burchiello's Reception in the Early Cinquecento: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms 2725, fols 80^r-131^v', *The Modern Language Review*, 100, 2005, pp. 78-96.

—   'Un episodio sconosciuto nella ricezione dei *Sonetti del Burchiello* nel primo Cinquecento (Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 2725, cc. 80r-131v)' in *Reperta. Indagini, recuperi, ritrovamenti di letteratura italiana antica,* Verona, Fiorini, 2008, pp. 183-215.

—   'Una forma istituzionale della poesia burchiellesca: la ricetta medica, cosmetica e culinaria tra parodia e nonsense', in *Nominativi fritti e mappamondi. Il nonsense nella letteratura italiana. Atti del Convegno di Cassino (9-10 ottobre 2007)*, eds Giuseppe Antonelli and Carla Chiummo, Rome, Salerno Editrice, 2009, pp. 47-64.

Zancani, Diego. 'Burchiello e la tradizione misogina' in Zaccarello, (ed.), *La fantasia fuor de' confini*, pp. 115-125.