

Marc Laureys / Jill Kraye / David A. Lines (eds.)

Spheres of Conflict and Rivalries in Renaissance Europe

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Uwe Baumann, Marc Laureys und Winfried Schmitz



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Spheres of Conflict and Rivalries in Renaissance Europe

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Umschlagabbildung: Achille Bocchi, *Symbolicarum quaestionum, de universo genere, quas serio ludebat, libri quinque*, Bologna, 1574, p. 108 (Photo: Warburg Institute, Photographic Collection).

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Foreword

From 2012 to 2015 the Leverhulme Trust generously sponsored an International Network, devoted to ‘Renaissance Conflict and Rivalries’. This Network comprised six institutions, which in turn hosted its meetings and colloquia: the University of Warwick (its Centre for the Study of the Renaissance serving as the Network’s lead institution), the universities of Bonn, Leuven, Florence and Ca’ Foscari (Venice), as well as the Warburg Institute (University of London). A multi-disciplinary group of scholars from these institutions attempted to determine in what ways and to what extent conflict and rivalries actively contributed to cultural production and progress in the period roughly between 1300 and 1650 – an era conspicuously marked by both magnificent cultural achievements, not least because of a renewed and intensified engagement with the classical tradition, and devastating social, religious, institutional and political conflicts, leading to the fragmentation of the medieval universe. The project was guided by the underlying assumption that, ever since Hesiod’s distinction between good and bad Eris (*Works and Days*, 11–24), there has existed a notion of (either violent or non-violent) confrontation and management of opposing interests that can be a catalyst of intellectual creativity and cultural ferment. It is this positive culture of contention and competition, for which the German term *Streitkultur* was coined, that was at the heart of the Network’s concern.¹

The investigations pursued by the Network were articulated in three main categories: (1) ‘Forms’: media, languages and genres of polemical discourse; (2) ‘Spheres’: social, cultural, temporal or geographical milieus and backgrounds of the rival parties and their audiences; and (3) ‘Management and Resolution’: procedures, strategies and mechanisms of conflict and its containment.² These

1 The phenomenon of early modern *Streitkultur* was analysed at a few earlier workshops and conferences, organized by the team members of the University of Bonn; see BAUMANN / BECKER / STEINER-WEBER, ed. (2008); LAUREYS / SIMONS, ed. (2010); LAUREYS / SIMONS, ed. (2013).

2 The main directions of inquiry in the Network are outlined in the ‘Foreword’ of the proceedings of the first colloquium; see LINES / LAUREYS / KRAYE, ed. (2015), 7–11.

topics were explored in three dedicated colloquia. Five years after the publication of the papers of the first colloquium – much later than we would have wished – we are now able to offer the results of our second colloquium, devoted to the spheres, in which conflict and rivalries unfold. Conflict and rivalries, as we have interpreted them in this Network, took place in the public sphere. This public sphere cannot, however, be understood as single, all-inclusive and universally accessible. It needs rather to be seen as a conglomerate of segments of the public sphere, depending on the number and characteristics of the persons involved, as well as on the setting in which the conflict and rivalries arose.³ Hardly anyone had unlimited access to all of these segments and was able to move around freely between them. The sixteenth century, in particular, witnessed – not least due to the development of new media and the spectacular geographical expansion – the rise of various areas and levels of exchange, supervision and decision-making, which all possessed a certain social homogeneity and were determined by specific rules of inclusion and exclusion. These segments can be defined according to the actors involved (politicians, merchants, scholars, members of a certain nation or city) or the areas in which communication took place (court, church, university, academy, Latin-speaking *respublica litterarum*). Accordingly, specific segments often conditioned and regulated specific forms of conflict and rivalries. Segments of the public sphere were established and shaped through communication processes and therefore emerged, changed and disappeared over time. The Republic of Letters was a long-term transnational segment of the public sphere; the Council of Trent and the Westphalian peace congress were more short-lived, more restricted but still international segments; while the ‘sodalitas Erasmica’, the circle of humanists from Erfurt who as a group stood up for Erasmus in his conflict with Edward Lee,⁴ was a very local segment, constituted for an ad hoc purpose.

This last example shows immediately that spheres not only provided the societal framework of conflict and rivalries, but could also be founded and maintained for and through conflict and rivalries. Praise and blame were very often essential ingredients of the communication not only within the community in a particular sphere, but also between that community and outside individuals or groups; through these exchanges communities and spheres were constantly re-established and re-confirmed or re-oriented and re-defined.

Even when we locate conflict and rivalries in segments of the public sphere, specific controversies may, nonetheless, have been triggered by a personal dis-

3 What follows draws on and partly repeats verbatim LAUREYS / SIMONS / BECKER (2013), esp. 9–11.

4 The ‘sodales’ launched an attack against Lee in their *In Eduardum Leum quorundam e sodalitate literaria Erphurdiensi Erasmici nominis studiosorum epigrammata*, published in 1520 in Erfurt and Mainz.

pute between two antagonists, who then decided to 'go public' and raise their quarrel to the level of a more fundamental polemical discourse, the relevance of which extends far beyond the initial argument and context. Notable examples can be found from the early Renaissance onwards. Petrarch's *Invective contra medicum*, for instance, grew out of an argument with one of Clement VI's personal physicians, when Petrarch warned the ailing pope not to place his fate blindly in the hands of his doctors; in the end, however, it became a manifesto of Renaissance humanism.

Because of their public nature, conflict and rivalries were never pursued between two conflicting persons or parties alone, but always involved a third party, which the two opponents consciously implicated in their conflict. While this third party could simply be a real or intended audience of listeners or readers, it might also assume a more active role as judge or mediator. The opponents aimed to win over or disparage an individual or collective adversary before this third party. The two rival parties portrayed themselves and their confrontation on stage before this audience in order to gain aesthetic, social, moral or intellectual recognition, and not seldom also specific, even material, support for their cause.

The colloquium on the 'Spheres of Conflict and Rivalries in Renaissance Europe' was held in Bonn on 8–9 May 2014. The thirteen speakers explored a variety of questions related to the construction and involvement of different segments of the public sphere in Renaissance conflict and rivalries, as well as the communication processes that went on in these spheres to initiate, control and resolve polemical exchanges. Particular attention was devoted to topics roughly centring on four thematic areas:

- the identity of the rival parties and of the audience: number and size, intellectual background, socio-political status, religious, political and aesthetic stance, and gender
- the objectives of the rival parties: promotion and enforcement of personal or higher interests, pastime for aesthetic pleasure, self- and/or community-fashioning, gaining access to or consolidating the cohesion of a group, inspiring solidarity in others
- the roles and functions of the audience: listener/reader, supporter, mediator, referee/judge, appellate authority
- the formal and spatial structure and organization: the extent of ritualization and institutionalization in a given setting, the extent of publicness and the degree of accessibility and participation, social conditions and limitations, conditions of access and of publication, the role of authorities that impose such conditions

The present volume contains nearly all the papers presented at the colloquium in Bonn. One further essay, commissioned from Rubén González Cuerva, who at-

tended the colloquium but did not present a paper, is included in these Proceedings. Concetta Bianca deals with the orations against the Turks, written in great numbers after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and observes the various perspectives from which the polarity between Europe and the East was articulated in a few select examples from this tradition. Donatella Coppini devotes her essay to the polemical reactions against Antonio Beccadelli's *Hermaphroditus* and shows how specific coalitions between humanists become visible through the criticism of his poetry. After surveying a few general characteristics of polemical discourse in the Italian Renaissance and evaluating the impact of Aristotle's *Poetics* on literary-critical debates in the mid-sixteenth century, Francesco Bruni analyses a brief treatise, composed by Vincenzo Borghini, on the principles of polemical exchange and illustrates how Borghini applied them to his own disputes with various opponents through different channels of communication. Rubén González Cuerva discusses the construction, in Spanish popular theatre, of the image of Sigismund Báthory, Prince of Transylvania, as a perfect Christian prince and demonstrates the interplay between literary reception and political interests in that process in late sixteenth-century Spain. Focusing on Richard III and the Tudor rebellions, Uwe Baumann investigates their literary representations in history plays and historiography of the time and shows how these images were shaped and transmitted in the different segments of the public sphere associated with the two literary domains. Imke Lichterfeld explores the notion of the king's 'sphere', the symbolic space of divine kingship, in Shakespeare's *Richard II* and explains how it is assailed and eventually fragmented in the play. Jacomien Prins revisits the debate between Girolamo Cardano and Julius Caesar Scaliger on the power of music to influence its hearers' emotions, behaviour, and morals; she examines their differences but also points out their basic agreement, despite Cardano and Scaliger presenting themselves as enemies in the public sphere in which they operated. Jan Papy elucidates the delicate balance Justus Lipsius tried to find between concern for his image as a humanist scholar, inspired by Stoic philosophy, and his public engagement in numerous conflicts with scholarly rivals and opponents. Michael Gordian discusses the rivalries between licensed physicians and irregular practitioners of medicine and explains the ways in which the first group disparaged the second as unreliable charlatans with a view to portraying themselves as the sole genuine representatives of the medical profession. Marco Giani considers the political rhetoric of the Venetian historian and diplomat Paolo Paruta, clarifying how he defined his political positions and convictions both within the local sphere of the Venetian ruling class and in opposition to the external sphere of rivalling Florence. Florence Alazard assesses the literary expression of conflict and violence during the reign of the French king Louis XII and demonstrates that not all authors operated in one and the same all-embracing public sphere; she argues, rather, that certain

authors moved in carefully delineated segments of that public sphere, in which the discourse of conflict and violence was expressed through specific voices. Peter Arnold Heuser, finally, interprets the Peace Congress of Westphalia (1643–1649) as a very special sphere of diplomatic conflict and rivalries, involving larger and smaller political players across Europe.

* * *

In closing, we would like to renew our thanks to the Leverhulme Trust for the financial support that made our Network possible. We are also grateful to the Philosophische Fakultät of the University of Bonn for providing additional funds to help cover the costs of the colloquium. The publication of these proceedings would not have been possible without the financial support of, again, the Philosophische Fakultät as well as the Centre for the Classical Tradition (University of Bonn), the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance (University of Warwick) and the Warburg Institute (London); to all these institutions we owe a great debt of gratitude. We gratefully acknowledge additional support from individual research funds provided by Uwe Baumann (University of Bonn) and Concetta Bianca (University of Florence). Last but not least, we would like to thank most sincerely all those who assisted us in the editing of this volume, in particular Jannik Reiners in an earlier stage and Clara-Sophie Bibow, Katharina Hitzenbichler and Nicole Simon in a more recent phase of this editorial work.

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Concetta Bianca

Le *Orationes contra Turchos*

Sommario

Nulla di più conflittuale e drammaticamente dirompente fu la caduta di Costantinopoli nel 1453: la famosa e preziosa raccolta di testimonianze pubblicata da Agostino Pertusi, per lo più costituita da scambi epistolari, deve essere integrata con il genere dell'oratoria, nella quale si intrecciano maggiormente valenze di carattere politico e storico, a differenza del genere dei resoconti, dei lamenti e delle epistole che, tra prosa e poesia, testimoniano ora la successione dei fatti, ora la percezione individuale del lutto, ora un semplice scambio di informazioni. L'organizzazione per la vittoria sull'avversario presuppone un processo di conoscenza, mirato ad individuare le caratteristiche delle sfere politiche, religiose e culturali contrapposte. A partire da Biondo Flavio, con il suo *De expeditione in Turcos* indirizzato ad Alfonso d'Aragona (1 agosto 1453), vengono a delinearci con contorni più precisi i punti di attrito, non solo militari, ma soprattutto religiosi ed economici, tra l'Europa e l'Oriente.

Quando nel 1423 Alfonso d'Aragona, ancora viva la regina Giovanna, arrivava per la prima volta a Napoli, fu organizzato uno spettacolo, nel quale, intorno ad un elefante di legno, un gruppo di angeli lottava contro un gruppo di turchi.¹ Venti anni dopo, il 23 febbraio 1443, l'entrata trionfale di Alfonso di Aragona a Napoli venne celebrata con una serie di spettacoli e cerimonie, di cui rimangono alcune testimonianze contemporanee, nonché la descrizione del *Triumphus Alphonsi* nel *De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis* di Antonio Panormita:² prima della sfilata della grande Torre delle Quattro Virtù Reali e della divisa della Sedia Pericolosa, venne allestito un combattimento tra un gruppo di giovani catalani su cavallini di cartapesta, armati di scudo aragonese e spada, e un gruppo di fanti turchi dalle

1 Cfr. MAXWELL (1992); cfr. anche MOLINA FIGUERAS (2011), 101.

2 Il *De dictis et factis Alphonsi*, che risale al 1455, è consultabile nella Biblioteca Digitale italiana: <http://ww2.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit000602/bibit000602.xml>. Sul Panormita resta fondamentale RESTA (1968) – che costituisce il contributo fondante della storiografia umanistica. Si veda da ultimo FIGLIUOLO (2015). Su Alfonso si veda ora DELLE DONNE (2015); CAPPELLI (2016).

teste mostruose, vestiti secondo gli usi siriani e persiani.³ Negli anni successivi, il 2 giugno, a memoria dell'ingresso trionfale di Alfonso a Napoli, sarà organizzata una processione che si dirigeva verso Santa Maria della Pace e che si apriva con 8 uomini 'vestiti al costume de' turchi che portavano lo stendardo di S. Giorgio con la croce vermiglia',⁴ a simboleggiare l'avvenuta vittoria e sottomissione, istituendo una linea di continuità tra le crociate volte a riconquistare Gerusalemme e la lotta contro le forze emergenti dell'impero turco, la cosiddetta 'crociata dopo le crociate', come è stato suggerito dal titolo del recente libro di Marco Pellegrini.⁵ Lo stesso Alfonso, come è stato sottolineato dagli studiosi di storia della miniatura, è raffigurato nel Libro d'ore, il ms. Additional 28962 della British Library, come il re che mette in fuga la cavalleria mussulmana, interpretando il salmo 78 (*Deus, venerunt gentes in hereditatem tuam*) come lotta contro i pagani e dunque con riferimento alla riconquista di Gerusalemme.⁶ Come il padre Ferdinando, anche Alfonso era stato indentificato come *destructor Saracenorum*, facendo riferimento in questo caso alla sconfitta dei Saraceni nella penisola iberica, ma ben presto trasformatosi come l'eletto, voluto da Dio, scelto profeticamente per combattere i Turchi.⁷

L'immagine dei Turchi che emerge da questo tipo di testimonianze si configurava in sostanza come rappresentazione della lotta tra bene e male, laddove il male veniva sistematicamente sconfitto, anche perché il pericolo non era poi così grande: le scorrerie piratesche, gli attacchi sulle coste certamente rendevano difficili i commerci e la navigazione, ma i rapporti con l'Oriente, a partire dai Genovesi, chiamati 'novelli turchi', non si erano mai interrotti.⁸ Con tutta probabilità la sconfitta di Varna, dove addirittura era morto in battaglia il cardinale Giuliano Cesarini,⁹ uomo colto ed abituato fin dal concilio di Basilea alle trattative diplomatiche più difficili, aveva reso meno sicure le aspettative dei rapporti non certo tranquilli con l'Oriente. Il patto di Unione, sancito con fatica a Firenze con la bolla *Laetentur caeli* del 6 luglio 1439,¹⁰ tra le chiese d'Oriente ed Occidente portava con sé il fantasma della minaccia turca. Le tradizionali sfere di competenza tra le chiese cristiane di Oriente e Occidente venivano in qualche modo a sovrapporsi, annullando le differenze, proprio per far fronte alla minaccia turca.¹¹ Da questo punto vista è particolarmente illuminante il testo pubblicato nel 1995

3 MOLINA FIGUERAS (2011), 101.

4 Cfr. SENATORE (2010), 345; MOLINA FIGUERAS (2011), 104.

5 PELLEGRINI (2013), 12; cfr. anche HOUSLEY (2015).

6 MOLINA FIGUERAS (2011), 106-7 e fig. 30.

7 Cfr. BARCA (2000); MOLINA FIGUERAS (2011), 109.

8 PELLEGRINI (2013), 41.

9 Cfr. STRNAD / WALSH (1980); CHRISTIANSON (1979); ID. (1985).

10 Cfr. VITI (1994), 944, nr. 49.

11 Cfr. PERTUSI (2004); BISAHA (2006); MESERVE (2008); WEBER (2013).

da James Hankins, una sorta di *consilium* conservato nel ms. 405 della biblioteca Casanatense di Roma, stilato con tutta probabilità da un domenicano di curia,¹² ma commissionato direttamente da Niccolò V, come si deduce dalle parole finali.¹³ L'anonimo estensore, partendo dalla premessa che Costantinopoli (e non è secondario che egli preferisse indicare la città come 'Costantinopoli' e non 'Bisanzio'), se non avesse ricevuto soccorsi dall'Occidente, sarebbe andata in rovina e sarebbe caduta sotto il giogo dei Turchi,¹⁴ poneva tre quesiti: il primo consisteva nella domanda se i cristiani 'ex debito caritatis' dovessero venire in soccorso dei greci ('petentibus grecis');¹⁵ il secondo se i cristiani, tenendo conto che i greci erano carenti sul piano spirituale e temporale, fossero obbligati a portare loro soccorso ('utrum Grecis negligentibus salutem suam et spiritualem et temporalem [...] teneantur Christiani illis opem afferre'),¹⁶ in considerazione del fatto che il pericolo era veramente imminente. Il terzo punto – che probabilmente costituiva il vero e principale interrogativo a cui il *Consilium* intendeva rispondere – era se il sommo pontefice, oltre agli altri re e principi cristiani, fosse obbligato a partecipare.¹⁷ È questo certamente l'aspetto innovativo se si considera la tradizionale posizione, in base alla quale il pontefice incitava alle crociate per la riconquista di Gerusalemme, ma non vi partecipava.

Le argomentazioni contenute nel *Consilium* sono fondate su citazioni puntuali, da Agostino, Gregorio Magno, Tommaso d'Aquino, testi sicuramente tradizionali, accostati a Seneca, con la novità di citazioni tratte *ad licteram* dai registri pontifici.¹⁸ A sostegno della tesi che sarebbe necessario portare aiuto ai Greci, c'era anche la forte istanza che, in caso contrario, la loro *civitas* sarebbe andata distrutta: Costantinopoli rappresenta, come è asserito esplicitamente nel *Consilium*, l'*arx* e il *monumentum* della Cristianità. È minor male – viene argomentato – tollerare i *Greci* piuttosto che i *Teucrici*, perché nel primo caso c'è la possibilità di correzione e conversione, e non altrettanto per i secondi: l'Europa invasa dalla *natio Teucrorum*¹⁹ è proprio quella che Biondo verrà a descrivere geograficamente e politicamente nel suo *De expeditione in Turcos*. Il richiamo ad

12 Cfr. HANKINS (1995): il testo è edito per intero alle pp. 148–68. Cfr. VON PASTOR (1958), 598–600.

13 HANKINS (1995), 168: 'Postremo quantum possum, humiliter supplico prefato sanctissimo Domino Nostro, cuius est ista corrigere et emendare, pro cuius gloria et honore coram Deo et hominibus sic insulse hec scripta sunt zelo meo (licet forte non secundum conscientiam), si in aliquo erravi, ut indulgere dignetur'.

14 *Ibid.*, 148: 'asseritur civitatem eandem sine Christianorum auxilio perituram et in Teucrorum servitutem redigendam'.

15 *Ibid.*, 149.

16 *Ibid.*, 156.

17 *Ibid.*, 158.

18 Come nel caso di Gregorio VII: *ibid.*, 163.

19 *Ibid.*, 166–7: 'Illa enim Teucrorum natio [...] partem Europe, quam Greci incolant, Thraciam, Macedoniam, Illiricum, Epirum, Bulgariam Albanieque magnam partem subegit'.

Eugenio IV,²⁰ il papa dell'Unione,²¹ risulta nel *Consilium* particolarmente fondato proprio perché la rappacificazione dottrinale, o meglio il riconoscimento della *potestas* romana, sembra essere il migliore antidoto contro gli attacchi dei turchi; il *Consilium* si chiude con una *exhortatio* ai 'reges et principes Christiani, et precipue prelati et persone ecclesiastice'.²²

Con queste premesse, si comprende il ruolo di una lettera indirizzata a Niccolò V da parte del vescovo di Siena, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, il quale aveva avuto esperienza diretta del mondo germanico,²³ che costituiva in qualche modo il baluardo del mondo occidentale sulla linea dei Balcani. Proprio da Graz, il 12 luglio 1453, sull'onda della caduta di Costantinopoli, il Piccolomini esprimeva al pontefice le sue osservazioni e giudizi. 'Doleo – egli scriveva – templum illud toto terrarum orbe famosissimum Sophiae vel destrui vel pollui; doleo infinitas sanctorum basilicas opere mirando constructas vel ruinae vel spurcitiae Mahumeti subiacerere'.²⁴ Nello stretto connubio tra fede e cultura, Piccolomini continuava, riprendendo ed attualizzando il tema del *naufragium librorum*:

Quid de libris dicam, qui illic erant innumerabiles, nondum Latinis cogniti? Heu, quot nunc magnorum nomina virorum peribunt? Secunda mors ista Homero est, secundus Platoni obitus. Ubi nunc philosophorum aut poetarum ingenia requiremus? Extinctus est fons musarum.²⁵

La lettera si concludeva con un avvertimento ed un giudizio severo nei confronti dello stesso pontefice:²⁶ quando, dopo la morte di Niccolò V, sarà il tempo di valutare criticamente l'operato dello stesso pontefice, pure meritevole per le numerose e benemerite iniziative, non si potrà tacere del fatto che egli non sia

20 *Ibid.*, 164: 'Et sancte memorie Eugenius IV quantum in hac re laboravit, notum est et, si non in omnibus, in multis profecit, que coram Deo pretiosiora sunt omni auro mundi'.

21 Cfr. GILL (1961); PROCH (1986), 142 ss.; GILL (1979), nr. XVII; HAY (2000).

22 HANKINS (1997), 168.

23 Sottolinea l'importanza di questa lettera BALDI (2008), 62–8; cfr. anche HELMRATH (2000). Cfr. anche BALDI (2012).

24 PERTUSI, ed. (1999), 46.

25 *Idem.*

26 *Ibid.*, 46–8: 'Nemo est enim, cui magis tanti mali fama, quam vestrae pietati sit obfutura. Nam scriptores omnes, qui apud Latinos Romanorum Pontificum gesta referent, cum ad vestrum tempus fuerit ventum, in hanc sententiam de vestra gloria scribent: "Nicolaus papa quintus natione Tuscus sedit annis tot; Patrimonium Ecclesiae ex tyrannorum manibus vindicavit, divisam Ecclesiam unioni reddidit, Bernardinum Senensem in cathalogo sanctorum annumeravit, palatium Sancti Petri construxit, basilicam eius mirifice reparavit, jubileum celebravit, Fridericum tertium coronavit". Questi temi richiamano da vicino la biografia scritta da Giannozzo Manetti (MANETTI, ed. Modigliani [2005], 133–4): 'verum, antequam hec subsidia nostra, que opitulandi gratia mittebamus ad obsessam urbem applicarent, Constantinopolitani, sive volente Deo sive Turcis ob timorem predictorum auxiliorum ad opitulandum obsessis properantium enixius ac vehementius urbem oppugnantibus, tandem aliquando viribus victi et superati, (ah scelus indignum et omnibus seculis a cunctis christianis hominibus dolendum et detestandum!) turpiter succubuerunt'.

riuscito, come scrive Piccolomini, a persuadere i re cristiani a prendere le armi per combattere contro i Turchi.²⁷ Del resto nell'ottobre 1452 già Giorgio Trapezunzio aveva indirizzato al pontefice Niccolò V la *Pro defendenda Europa et Hellesponti claustra exhortatio*,²⁸ mentre nel dicembre 1452 il cardinale Isidoro di Kiev si era recato a Costantinopoli per ribadire con scarso successo l'Unione delle due chiese.²⁹

Sempre da Graz, in Baviera, in data 21 luglio 1453, Enea Silvio Piccolomini scriveva al cardinale Niccolò Cusano,³⁰ che tra l'altro si era recato in Oriente nel 1437 al tempo del Concilio di Basilea: 'Quae sit Turchorum potentia, quae Latinorum negligentia, non latet vestram Dignationem'.³¹ I temi sono gli stessi di quelli esaminati nella lettera al pontefice del 12 luglio, come ad esempio quando afferma: 'Nunc ergo et Homero et Pindaro et Menandro et omnibus illustrioribus poetis secunda mors erit'.³² Ma lo scopo emerge in modo estremamente chiaro: '... licet sanctissimum Dominum Notrum universumque senatus ordinem ad rei publicae christianae salutem summo nunc studio intentum esse confidam, magnopere tamen optarem hoc tempore vestram prudentissimam Dignitatem esse Romae'.³³ Enea Silvio sembra dunque non avere molta fiducia sulla tenacia dello stesso pontefice e del concistoro cardinalizio, proiettando in questo probabilmente la sfiducia dei padri conciliari di Basilea che egli conosceva bene. Ma conosceva bene anche i profondi legami tra Niccolò V e Niccolò Cusano, che erano nati proprio in Germania, come del resto testimoniano due glosse apposte su un libro del Cusano, il ms. 163 di Bernkastel Kues, dove il Parentucelli annotava che finalmente *iste* (probabilmente lo stesso Piccolomini) aveva abbandonato la causa dei Padri Conciliari di Basilea, e a sua volta il Cusano indicava che quella mano era di Parentucelli nello stesso anno in cui non era ancora né cardinale né papa.³⁴

27 PERTUSI, ed. (1999), 48: 'Pulchra haec et decora de vestro nomine praedicabuntur, sed illud omnia funestabit cum in fine adicietur: "at huius tempore urbs regia Constantinopolis a Turchis capta direptaque est, nescio an diruta incensave dici poterit...". Qui etsi totis conatibus opem ferre miserae civitati studuistis, non tamen Christianis regibus persuadere potuistis, ut arma simul capescentes commune fidei negocium adiuverent'. Si veda testo alla nota 50.

28 Edita in MONFASANI, ed. (1984), 435–42. Cfr. ORTALLI (2004).

29 Sul cardinale Isidoro di Kiev si veda il classico contributo di MERCATI (1926); cfr. anche SCHREINER (2006). Sulla lettera inviata nello stesso 6 luglio 1453 a Niccolò V cfr. SILVANO (2013).

30 Cfr. MONFASANI (2002). Cfr. anche BIANCA (2016a).

31 PERTUSI, ed. (1999), 50.

32 *Ibid.*, 54.

33 *Ibid.*, 58.

34 BIANCA (1983), 690.

Ancora da Graz il 25 settembre 1453 il Piccolomini scriveva al senese Leonardo Benvoglianti in qualità di ambasciatore presso il ‘dominium Venetorum’,³⁵ cioè presso la città che si trovava in prima linea per i suoi possedimenti nelle isole greche, minacciate dall’espansione prorompente dei Turchi. Al Benvoglianti il Piccolomini confidava il suo pensiero più intimo: ‘Omnium rerum vicissitudo est, nulla potentia perpetuo manet. Fuerunt Itali rerum domini, nunc Turchorum inchoatur imperium’.³⁶ Difficilmente le sfere di influenza restano in equilibrio, ci sarà sempre il prevalere, ora militare, ora culturale, di una sull’altra, quelli che la storiografia più agguerrita ha definito ‘atti di forza’.³⁷

La risposta a queste critiche sollevate dal mondo germanico e dal Piccolomini in particolare viene organizzata dal pontefice Niccolò V probabilmente facendo leva sul ritorno in curia di uno degli uomini più autorevoli e prestigiosi con un incarico che sembra rispondere alle critiche di tiepidezza: Biondo Flavio, che pure aveva svolto notevoli incarichi economici durante la permanenza della curia a Ferrara e Firenze, era stato, come è noto, allontanato dopo l’elezione di Niccolò V; ma era stato lo stesso Niccolò V, che avvertendo la debolezza sul piano esterno con la caduta di Costantinopoli e su quello interno con la congiura di Stefano Porcari,³⁸ a richiamare Biondo in curia.³⁹ È anzi probabile che il *De expeditione in Turcos*, composto da Biondo e presumibilmente recitato ‘in Campo Martio’ il 1° agosto 1453, cioè un testo a metà tra opusculum ed oratio, come scrive lo stesso Biondo,⁴⁰ fosse l’*opus* del ritorno, l’omaggio fornito al pontefice per rispondere agli attacchi su lentezze e incapacità che da più parti gli venivano rivolte. Del resto lo stesso Biondo non solo aveva partecipato al Concilio di Ferrara e Firenze in qualità di segretario del pontefice, ma aveva anche frequentato il cardinale Bessarione quando questi si trovava come legato a Bologna, aveva avuto accesso alla biblioteca del cardinale, come hanno dimostrato le sue annotazioni ad Ammiano Marcellino rinvenute da Rita Cappelletto su un codice del Niceno,⁴¹ e aveva probabilmente raccolto le confidenze, le preoccupazioni di chi aveva fatto il grande salto, dall’Oriente all’Occidente.⁴²

Biondo aveva già dato dimostrazione delle sue grandi attitudini innovative, sia quando componeva il trattato di storia per eccellenza come le *Decadi*,⁴³ sia quando avviava le ricerche antiquarie per la Roma classica e cristiana,⁴⁴ sia so-

35 PRUNAI (1966).

36 PERTUSI, ed. (1999), 64. Sulla lucidità di giudizio del Piccolomini cfr. CAVALLARIN (1980), 58.

37 Cfr. GINZBURG (2000).

38 Cfr. MODIGLIANI (2013).

39 Cfr. BIANCA (2016b).

40 NOGARA (1927), 31–51. Cfr. DEFILIPPIS (2009); ROSSI (2009). Si veda testo alla nota 50.

41 CAPPELLETTO (1983), 18–19.

42 Cfr. BIANCA (1999), 3–17.

43 Cfr. da ultimo DELLE DONNE (2016).

44 Cfr. DUPUIS-RAFFARIN (2003); MARCELLINO (2014).

prattutto quando illustrava l'Italia.⁴⁵ Il *De expeditione in Turcos*, indirizzata al sovrano Alfonso d'Aragona, emerge per caratteristiche che vogliono essere innovative, distaccandosi dal genere del lamento, e cercando di prospettare una analisi altamente scientifica. In primo luogo Biondo dichiara di basarsi su notizie certe, come sono appunto i registri originali di Venezia a cui allude fin dalle prime battute.⁴⁶ Ma soprattutto presenta con lucidità la contrapposizione tra Oriente e Occidente: tutta l'argomentazione è rivolta a sostenere la superiorità dell'Occidente, sulla scia della *comparatio* che sembra aleggiare negli ambiti più disparati; il ricorso alla storia delle crociate⁴⁷ è tutto rivolto a ribadire la supremazia del mondo occidentale, come d'altra parte la narrazione dei *gesta* dei turchi è volta a sottolineare la debolezza di questi ultimi.⁴⁸ In linea con l'esperienza dell'*Italia illustrata*,⁴⁹ Biondo cerca di fornire anche una *descrizione* dettagliata dei luoghi, tenendo presente sia i testi classici come Plinio e Strabone sia probabilmente le narrazioni e i resoconti dei veneti presenti in terra d'Oriente. Biondo in definitiva veniva a creare il supporto ideologico, politico, militare e geografico per consentire ad Alfonso d'Aragona di avere a disposizione il maggior numero di informazioni possibile.⁵⁰ In fondo il suo era un appello a tutti i sovrani ed i regnanti di Italia e di Europa,⁵¹ elaborato per conto del pontefice Niccolò V che in tal modo cercava di rispondere alle critiche che gli pervenivano in primo luogo dall'interno della stessa chiesa. Nella parte finale della sua *Oratio* Biondo non mancava di esaltare la volontà del pontefice di spingere verso una crociata militare, di cui Alfonso doveva essere alla testa,⁵² ma non mancava neppure di ricordare Eugenio IV⁵³ definendo la linea politica di quest'ultimo, tutta fondata sull'Unione, come la sola risposta valida di fronte ai particolarismi.

45 CLAVUOT (1990); CAPPELLETTO (1992); FUBINI (1997); PONTARI (2009a); ed ora, con precedente ed esaustiva bibliografia, PONTARI (2009b), 63 segg.

46 NOGARA (1927), 34: '... conditionibus hinc inde adiectis scriptoque solemnibus firmatis, quarum hanc formulam fuisse publicis in Venetorum documentis inspeximus'.

47 Di particolare interesse, nel *De expeditione in Turcos*, il riferimento alla IV crociata. Cfr. MAXSON (2013).

48 MAXSON (2013), 33-4.

49 Vd. *supra* nota 45.

50 NOGARA (1927), 31-2: 'Sed tua Maiestas, perpetuis et quidem maximis difficultium rerum curis occupata, libris perlegendis minimam hoc tempore curam impendere potest: quam ob rem non indecens est visum ea quae temporis iudicem accomodata a me otiosissimo et tibi deditissimo homine ita in unum opusculi et orationis compendium cumulanda esse, ut, quaecumque usui fore existimabis, in promptu et ad manus habeas praeparata'.

51 *Ibid.*, 51: 'nullo est ambigendum modo quin ceteri orbis christiani principes et populi momentem suadentem hortantem summum pontificem ita exaudiant, ut, rebus inter omnes ipsos compositis, in communem hostem Turcum arma populariter assumant'.

52 *Ibid.*, 47.

53 *Ibid.*, 43: 'Tenes recenti memoria magnum Eugenium, ...'.

Ma paradossalmente l'Unione, ribadendo i legami tra le due chiese, allargava ancora di più il divario e le sfere di influenza tra Oriente e Occidente.

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Donatella Coppini

‘Mentula, cunnus abest’. La critica dell’osceno in termini osceni nelle polemiche contro il Panormita

Sommario

Le polemiche suscitate dall’*Hermaphroditus* del Panormita continuarono a colpire l’autore a lungo dopo la pubblicazione degli osceni libretti, ad opera di personaggi quali Antonio da Rho, Maffeo Vegio, Pier Candido Decembrio, Lorenzo Valla, Porcelio Pandoni. Il passaggio dall’amicizia all’ostilità di alcuni di questi mostra che una rivalità sociale e ‘professionale’, più che un’autentica indignazione moralistica, fu spesso la causa di attacchi e critiche. Si esaminerà in particolare il linguaggio di alcune invettive anti-Panormita, in cui il bersaglio polemico autorizza – o si fa pretesto per – la deriva verso l’oscurità, la trasgressione di un codice espressivo-letterario, messa in atto proprio all’interno dell’operazione censoria, anche attestando, accanto a più implicite prese di posizione, la fortuna dell’opera biasimata.

Fra i numerosi prodotti letterari del periodo milanese del Panormita (1429–1433), c’è un epigramma intitolato *In invidios*:

Quid cures Rodus cum nostra poemata culpet,
si mea, Maecenas, carmina, docte, probas?
Quid cures quod me cimex Laurentius odit,
si me Crottiades unus et alter amat?
Quid cures carpat vitam Cato Saccus Iacchus,
si Ferrufino iudice vita proba est?
Quid cures quod me livor sectetur ubique,
si semper virtus invidiosa fuit?
Curandum placeas tantum doctisque bonisque:
summa quidem laus est displicuisse malis.¹

La distinzione fra la ‘sfera’ degli amici e sostenitori del Panormita e quella dei nemici e denigratori non potrebbe essere espressa con maggior evidenza e nettezza: i diffamatori, *mali*, si schierano negli esametri, affrontati nei pentametri dai sostenitori, *docti bonique*. Alla prima categoria appartengono Antonio da Rho, il francescano osservante che in una lunga invettiva contro il Panormita, che va nei

1 Cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), 163–4; ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 275.

due manoscritti che la tramandano² sotto il titolo di *Philippica*, e in altre composizioni, aveva duramente criticato l'opera giovanile del Panormita, l'oscena, vivace e innovativa raccolta epigrammatica intitolata *Hermaphroditus*, nonché il suo autore; Lorenzo Valla, l'ex amico, conosciuto a Roma nel 1428, che gli aveva tolto la parte di epicureo nel suo dialogo *De voluptate*, trasformato in *De vero bono*, per affidarla a Maffeo Vegio; Catone Sacco, il giurista milanese i cui rapporti col Panormita anche avevano subito un rovesciamento.³ Gli amici sono: quello che per il Panormita è il Mecenate per antonomasia, Francesco Barbavara, cancelliere e segretario di Filippo Maria Visconti dal 1425, che proprio probabilmente a causa delle controversie sorte intorno al Panormita sarà allontanato da Milano nel 1432 (sicuro *terminus ante quem* per la composizione);⁴ i fratelli Luigi⁵ e Lancelotto Crotti,⁶ consiglieri del Duca; Domenico Feruffini,⁷ che esercitava la stessa professione, e suo fratello Giovanni, professore allo studio di Pavia.⁸

Non tutti gli amici e i nemici milanesi del Panormita – umanisti e studiosi o funzionari della cancelleria ducale – trovano posto nella brevità dell'epigramma ora citato: fra gli amici c'era anche, prima di tutti, l'arcivescovo Bartolomeo Capra, potente e autorevole, consigliere dell'imperatore Sigismondo, che lo aveva introdotto a corte e che gli farà avere la corona poetica;⁹ il suo vecchio maestro Gasparino Barzizza, che morirà poco dopo l'arrivo del Panormita a Milano, nel febbraio 1431, lasciando libera la cattedra di retorica di Pavia, che anche col favore del Panormita sarebbe stata occupata dal Valla dopo Antonio da Rho; Antonio Cremona, costante 'intercessore' del Panormita, tanto da meritare il nome di Mercurio, che seguirà il Barbavara in una specie di esilio genovese, e quando il Panormita si trasferirà a Napoli si farà frate;¹⁰ e Francesco Pizolpasso,¹¹ Cambio Zambeccari,¹² Andrea Palazzi.¹³ Fra i nemici della prim'ora, accanto ad Antonio

2 Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 124 sup. e Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VI D 7.

3 Il personaggio è stato recentemente molto studiato da Paolo Rosso: cfr. Rosso (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2011, 2012); in particolare, per i rapporti col Panormita, Rosso (2000b).

4 Sul personaggio cfr. RAPONI (1964a). Rapporti di amicizia del Panormita sono attestati anche con Marcolino (cfr. RAPONI [1964b]) e gli altri fratelli del Barbavara.

5 Sul personaggio cfr. PETRUCCI (1985b).

6 Sul personaggio cfr. PETRUCCI (1985a).

7 Cfr. SPINELLI (1997a).

8 Cfr. SPINELLI (1997b); per i rapporti col Panormita: BECCADELLI, ed. Sabbadini (1910), 158 ss.

9 Sul personaggio cfr. GIRGENSOHN (1976).

10 Cfr. GUALDO ROSA (1984); BECCADELLI, ed. Sabbadini (1910), 45–53; RESTA (1954), 160–76.

11 Sarà arcivescovo di Milano dal 1435 al 1443. È stata studiata in particolare la sua biblioteca: cfr. PAREDI (1961) e SOTTILI (1966).

12 Sul personaggio, bolognese, questore presso la corte ducale di Milano, morto nel giugno del 1431, cfr. SABBADINI (1896), 358–9; FRATI (1909); per i rapporti epistolari col Panormita cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Sabbadini (1910), *passim*; RESTA (1954), *passim*.

13 Numerose le lettere indirizzategli dal Panormita: cfr. RESTA (1954), 213–5.

da Rho c'è Pier Candido Decembrio,¹⁴ segretario ducale e ambasciatore, ma anche autore di molte opere letterarie, traduttore dal greco e dal latino, prolifico epistografo, in competizione col Panormita nella giustificazione, chiesta da Filippo Maria Visconti, dell'emblema del sole adottato dal Duca¹⁵ e suo oppositore in una questione in cui il Panormita si era dimostrato politicamente scorretto – su cui torneremo.

L'*Hermaphroditus* poteva a buon diritto essere giudicata un'opera moralmente riprovevole, e per questa ragione, a ridosso della sua pubblicazione, subì attacchi feroci in ambienti ecclesiastici: Eugenio IV lo proibì, e religiosi fanatici lo bruciarono sulle pubbliche piazze. Ma, se anche il dedicatario Cosimo de' Medici mantenne le distanze, e non ricompensò in nessun modo il dedicante, non è vero che bruciò il libretto – come afferma il Raudense nella sua invettiva –¹⁶ perché il codice di dedica si trova ancora nella Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze, molto ben conservato.¹⁷ E al suo immediato apparire (1425–26) l'opera non suscitò reazioni negative negli intellettuali contemporanei. Anzi. L'autore poté giovarsi, in quella che mi è occorso di chiamare una 'seconda edizione' dell'opera, rappresentata da un manoscritto Laurenziano successivo a quello propriamente di dedica, delle positive 'recensioni' in forma epistolare di due dei più noti e autorevoli letterati del tempo, Guarino Veronese e Poggio Bracciolini – anche se la lettera di Poggio conteneva qualche riserva di tipo morale, che del resto fornì al Panormita l'occasione per scrivere una lunga apologia, anch'essa 'pubblicata' insieme all'opera, e Guarino, istigato da Alberto da Sarteano, e forse irritato col Panormita che gli aveva portato via un codice di Plauto, ebbe successivamente a ritrattare i suoi elogi per ragioni di opportunità religiosa e politica.¹⁸

Ma nell'immediato i tempi e i luoghi della diffusione dell'*Hermaphroditus* furono tali da consentire il prevalere delle ragioni della letteratura. La riproposizione di forme e argomenti classici, non scandalosi in età precristiana, poteva suscitare più entusiasmo che riprovazione morale nel dotto e spregiudicato pubblico umanistico, al quale il Panormita, definendosi con sicurezza *doctis*

14 Sul personaggio cfr. VITI (1987); la recente edizione di Federico Petrucci dell'epistolario giovanile, in DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), è corredata da una ricca e aggiornata bibliografia.

15 Le due orazioni del Panormita sono pubblicate in ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 285–99 (*Appendix VII*).

16 Cfr. il par. 132 della *Philippica* del Raudense in ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 140.

17 Esibisce la nota di possesso di Cosimo de' Medici, seguita da quella del figlio Piero, il ms. Laurenziano Plut. 34, 54, di mano di Jacopo Curlo. Secondo la mia ricostruzione, un secondo codice di dedica è rappresentato dal Laurenziano Plut. 33, 22, ancora di mano del Curlo, in cui l'*Hermaphroditus* è accompagnato dalle lettere elogiative di Guarino e di Poggio e dalla risposta apologetica del Panormita a Poggio, e dai *Carmina priapea*, attribuiti allora a Virgilio, anch'essi inseriti nel codice in funzione apologetica: cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Coppini (1990), CXIII–CXVII e CLXXXIV–CCl. Cfr. anche ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 32.

18 Cfr. GUARINI, ed. Sabbadini (1915–1919), II, 209–14; III, 321 (epistola 666).

irreprehensus, invitava Cosimo ad accostarsi, senza curarsi del *rudis popellus* degli incolti, ma seguendo, con l'autore, gli *aeterni viri*, i poeti dell'antichità che avevano fornito l'esempio di una poesia libera associata a una vita moralmente integra (*Hermaphroditus*, I 1). L'eccezionale numero dei codici che tramandano il *libellus* ne attesta il successo effettivo,¹⁹ mentre il fatto che l'*editio princeps* si collochi alla fine del Settecento,²⁰ preceduta da una cinquecentina in cui l'opera è resa irriconoscibile da tagli e mutamenti censorii,²¹ dimostra l'ovvietà che la stampa è meno libera del manoscritto, e anche che la libertà culturale del primo umanesimo durò in fondo poco.

Quando il Panormita arrivò a Milano, il suo biglietto da visita era costituito dal solo *Hermaphroditus*. Milano non era Firenze, né Siena, ed è significativo che lì uno dei più prestigiosi intellettuali fosse un frate. Ma se presso molti rappresentanti dell'élite culturale della città, e presso lo stesso principe – che fece quello che non aveva fatto Cosimo, cioè assegnò al poeta un ragguardevole stipendio – il Panormita trovò credito, e presso altri no, le ragioni non furono quelle della letteratura.

La successione alla cattedra di Retorica dello Studio di Pavia e la conquista dell'ambito 'posto' di poeta aulico scatenarono attacchi e polemiche contro il Panormita evidentemente da parte di personaggi interessati – e per questo, in un primo momento, da parte di umanisti, e non di influenti membri della Cancelleria o del Consiglio di Filippo Maria – che non esitarono a mettere in campo la loro 'milanesità' a fronte della 'sicilianità' del 'non italiano' Panormita: Antonio da Rho, nella sua *Philippica in Antonium Panormitam*, dopo aver ricordato una serie di negativi personaggi siciliani, mostri o tiranni, noterà la saggezza della natura, che ha diviso l'Italia dalla Sicilia con un braccio di mare.²² La discriminazione geografica da parte dei denigratori del Panormita è una costante che vale la pena di sottolineare: nella *Philippica* del Raudense l'appellativo *siculus* a più riprese appare un epiteto quasi infamante, o almeno altezzosamente pronunciato dal 'continentale' avversario;²³ intenzione offensiva è attribuibile all'esclamazione di paragrafo 18, 'O ineruditum hominem insularem vixdum primis elementis im-

19 Cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Coppini (1990), XIII–LXVI.

20 *Fescennina seu Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus, Pacifici Maximi elegiae iocosae, Ioannis Secundi Basia*, nunc primum Ennii Jacodetii cura collecta, typis Joa. Giraltii, [s.l.] 1790.

21 Antonii Bononiae Beccatelli cognomento Panormitae *Epistolarum libri V; eiusdem orationes II; carmina praeterea quaedam quae ex multis ab eo scriptis adhuc colligi potuerunt*, Venezia, Bartolomeo Cesano, 1553. Cfr. COPPINI (2012).

22 Cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 170: scrive il Raudense nella sua *Philippica* (par. 166): 'ipsa insula an Italiae deliciis seu motu ipso Gigantis, seu, quod verius est, natura operante, quasi eiusce Italiae faex quaedam membrumque putridum parvo mari seiuncta est.'

23 Cfr. i parr. 10, 11, 25, 30, 129 della *Philippica*: ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 58, 68, 72, 138; a par. 15 (ibid., 62) ha lo stesso senso denigratorio l'espressione 'iste noster e Sicilia censor'.

butum!'; in un'altra invettiva, tramandata anonima, ma ancora attribuibile al Raudense, l'ingiuria si estende a tutti i siciliani ('omnes insulares malos, Siculos vero pessimos – nulla in eis fides, nulla sanctitas, nulla religio, fidifragi, intemperantes, impudici')²⁴ e molte parole di ringraziamento sono rivolte al dio immortale che ha voluto separare l'Italia, e in particolare 'haec nostra Gallia Cisalpina', dall'impudicizia, dall'intemperanza e dai crimini della Sicilia.²⁵ A v. 16 del carne *Meretrices papienses*, anch'esso attribuibile a mio avviso ad Antonio da Rho, il Panormita è ancora spregiativamente *siculus iste*;²⁶ i primi tre distici di un epitafio infamante del Panormita (inc. *Insula Scyllaeis contermina flatibus undis*) introducono la narrazione autobiografica del personaggio (v. 9: 'Haec me foeda tulit tellus') offrendo della Sicilia una toposia moralmente connotata, che termina con l'osservazione dell'intenzionalità provvidenziale della natura che l'ha separata dall'Esperia: vv. 7–8:

quam mare, ne sanctam posset pervertere terram,
fluctibus immensis frangit ab Hesperia.²⁷

Il carne è attribuito al Decembrio nei manoscritti che lo tramandano, e non c'è ragione di contestare l'attribuzione. Ancora sicuramente il Decembrio riprende l'esclamazione contro i *Siculi* dell'invettiva anonima in una invettiva contro il Panormita su cui torneremo, attribuendola a san Gregorio: 'Recte igitur Gregorius, vir doctus atque sanctissimus, de te et compatriotis tuis cecinit: "omnes insulares – inquit – mali, Siculi vero pessimi!"'²⁸ E nella lettera scritta al Raudense dopo aver ricevuto la *Philippica* definisce il Panormita 'beluam illam siculam' e 'monstrum [...] siculum'.²⁹ Il ricorso alla stessa argomentazione del Raudense³⁰ attesta una sinergia nella topica dell'invettiva che i due dimostreranno anche nell'accordo sinfonico fra altri loro testi antipanormitani, come vedremo.

I testi collegati alla, o alle, polemiche in questione sono stati recentemente richiamati all'attenzione dal lavoro di David Rutherford, che ne ha pubblicata un'ampia serie, purtroppo non impeccabilmente, e da altri, come Holt Parker, che li ha ripresi nell'appendice alla sua traduzione inglese dell'*Hermaphroditus* del

24 Cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 262. Tutta l'invettiva è pubblicata in IDEM, 258–63.

25 Cfr. IDEM, 262.

26 Cfr. IDEM, 266: 'cum retrahit penem siculus iste suum'.

27 Cfr. IDEM, 269. Il testo è pubblicato anche in BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), 174–8, e per la prima volta in BECCADELLI, ed. Cinquini / Valentini (1907), 52–3. Cfr. inoltre l'indicazione dei codici che tramandano il carne e le proposte di accettare le buone lezioni del codice Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 112 inf. in COPPINI (1985), 334–5, nota 5.

28 Cfr. DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 419, rr. 522–4.

29 Cfr. IDEM, 435–6.

30 Cfr. nota 22.

Panormita.³¹ Un problema generale riguarda l'esatta datazione e successione di questi testi – nonché, talora, la loro attribuzione. È evidente in ogni caso che tutti vadano collocati negli anni milanesi del Panormita, cioè dal 1429 al 1432, ma vedremo che per alcuni potrebbe essere proposta una più precisa collocazione cronologica.

Antonio da Rho si era espresso sull'*Hermaphroditus* prima che il Panormita giungesse a Milano, e quindi in modo genuino, nella sua *Apologia*, scritta dopo che per la cattedra di teologia presso il Duomo di Milano gli fu preferito il domenicano Mario da Vimercate:³² scelta probabilmente determinata da giochi di potere fra ordini religiosi, ma in cui il Raudense vide anche messa in discussione la sua cultura, giudicata troppo 'umanistica' per quell'insegnamento. Nell'*Apologia* ripercorre la sua formazione, e, giunto al delicato punto della lettura dei poeti, mostra in generale verso tutti un atteggiamento di severo distacco critico, o di meditato e parziale apprezzamento. Una particolare ostilità è rivolta a quei poeti sui quali tutti pare potersi ribaltare la notazione di 'oscurità' espressamente inerente al solo Marziale:

Impraesentiarum vero Catullum, Albiū Tibullum, Propertium, Martialem obscenum, quem 'Cocum' nominant, denique nobis contemporaneum Panormitam Antonium quempiam, cuius, nisi seria post foedissima – sic enim Virgilius fecit – scripserit, non ingenium, sed vita aliquando damnabitur, et huiusmodi philodoxorum, cum perfunctorie semelque legisse mihi perabundet, frequentissimam turbam missam facio.³³

Da rilevare incidentalmente che qui, come diffusamente e più esplicitamente nella *Philippica* contro il Panormita,³⁴ gli elegiaci Tibullo e Propertio sono accomunati impropriamente nell'accusa di oscurità a Catullo e Marziale, perché probabilmente l'erotismo elegiaco è visto come un 'peccato' osceno. In tutti questi passi si assiste a una vera e propria demonizzazione dell'elegia; gli *auctores* incriminati come modelli di poesia e di vita del Panormita sono Tibullo e Propertio più di Marziale e Catullo; la parola *elegus* va intesa come un insulto. Oltre all'intenzione di condanna dell'erotismo elegiaco si potrà ravvisare nel Raudense una confusione fra i generi letterari elegiaco ed epigrammatico, indubbiamente favorita dalla loro mescolanza e dalla particolare nozione umanistica di 'epigramma',³⁵ nonché dal metro esclusivamente elegiaco degli epigrammi del Panormita.

Nell'*Apologia* Virgilio si salva perché la sua produzione *foedissima* – cioè i *Carmina Priapea*, che gli erano attribuiti – è stata riscattata da quella 'seria'

31 Cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005); BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), 128–262. Cfr. inoltre O'CONNOR (1997).

32 Il testo, con traduzione inglese, è pubblicato da Rutherford; vedi ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 196–241.

33 Cfr. IDEM, 217 (*Apologia*, par. 31).

34 Cfr. IDEM, parr. 40, 89, 120, 135, 137, 186.

35 Cfr. COPPINI (2000); CHARLET (2005); e naturalmente LAURENS (2012).

successiva; nella prima invettiva contro il Panormita, tramandata anonimamente, ma attribuita a Antonio da Rho da Ramorino e Rutherford,³⁶ e assegnata al 1429–30, l'autore dirà al Panormita, il quale potrebbe giustificare la sua produzione con l'esempio virgiliano (come di fatto diffusamente fa nell'*Hermaphroditus*),³⁷ di non ritenere possibile che il casto Virgilio sia stato artefice *tantae calumniae*, e che in ogni caso si sarebbe ampiamente riabilitato con l'illustre produzione della sua età matura:

Fortasse id Virgilium commisisse testaberis; Priapeiam mihi testem adhibebis. Non ex ea re efficies ut Maronem tantae calumniae auctorem extitisse profiter, quippe qui tanta vixerit pudicitia, ut 'virgo' a nonnullis publice sit appellatus. Sed sic esto. Nonne ea quae per aetatem fecit a turpi et immunda materia ad illustre et singulare opus revocavit, seque ab omni turpitudine expurgatum iri voluit?³⁸

E anche in questa invettiva gli elegiaci, e non gli epigrammisti, appaiono campioni di turpitudine nell'ironica affermazione 'Fecit idem grandis ille Nero, doctus fortasse disciplinis illis Propertii atque Tibulli tui.'³⁹ E l'autore fa capire che la sorte toccata a Ovidio relegato e morto a Tomi fu assolutamente meritata.⁴⁰

Del giudizio espresso non solo sul suo *ingenium*, ma anche o piuttosto sulla sua *vita* (due elementi che il poeta dell'*Hermaphroditus* aveva tenuto a separare, sulla scorta di analoghe distinzioni di Catullo, Ovidio, Marziale),⁴¹ il Panormita sarà

36 RAMORINO (1880), 10; ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 30. Nella *Philippica* il Raudense fa riferimento a una sua precedente invettiva: cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 186: 'In sententiam enim hanc nescio an eadem tuba ad eum alias me scripsisse et respondisse commemini.' Sabbadini, in BAROZZI / SABBADINI (1891), 2–3, respinse l'ipotesi attributiva di Ramorino, perché il Raudense nell'invettiva è citato in terza persona: cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 260: 'Sed quas laudes tuas, quaeso? An eas quas versiculis tuis Raudensem graviter criminando nactus es, quo famam ac nomen tuum dissipares?'. Riconobbe tuttavia le coincidenze tematiche con la *Philippica*, e ipotizzò in ogni caso che il suo autore fosse un frate. Anche nella *Philippica* il Raudense parla di sé in terza persona: un modo, mi sembra, di riconoscersi e attribuirsi autorità e importanza.

37 Virgilio era ritenuto autore dei *Priapea*. Cfr. nota 17. Così si leggerà un'allusione a Virgilio in *Hermaphroditus*, I 20, 4 ('Non debet teneros Hodus legisse Catullos, / non vidit penem, verpe Priape, tuum'); un riferimento giustificativo a Virgilio nella chiusa di II 11 ('Delitias pedibus celebres clausere poetae, / ac ego Nasones Virgiliosque sequor'). Virgilio sarà dunque il primo della schiera dei poeti che, in apertura della sua opera, Panormita dichiara di seguire, e invita Cosimo a seguire (I 1, 5–6: 'Hac quoque parte sequor doctos veteresque poetas, / quos etiam lusus composuisse liquet; 13–14: Tu lege tuque rudem nihili fac, Cosme, popellum; / tu mecum aeternos ipse sequare viros'). Un posto di rilievo occupa Virgilio nell'epistola apologetica a Poggio: cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Coppini (1990), 152.

38 Cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), *Appendix* III, 261.

39 Cfr. IDEM, 261.

40 Cfr. IDEM, 261, parr. 8 e 9 dell'invettiva.

41 Cfr. *Hermaphroditus*, I 1, 7–8: 'quos et perspicuum est vitam vixisse pudicam, / si fuit obsceni plena tabella ioci' con Catull. XVI 3–6, Ov. *Trist.* II 353–354, Mart. I 4, 8. Cfr. inoltre *Hermaphroditus* I 20, 1–2 ('Hodus ait nostram vitam non esse pudicam: / e scriptis mentem

quale esclusivamente – e qui in quanto autore dell'*Hermaphroditus* – questi versi sono indirizzati. Entrambe le composizioni si collocano bene nel momento del passaggio del Panormita da Pavia a Milano, a ridosso della nomina del Panormita a poeta aulico, e quindi nel 1429: 'Conveniunt huc omni ex urbe poetae', scrive il Decembrio (v. 1), e a un passaggio da Pavia a Milano il carne *Plaudite lenones* allude fin dal titolo, e poi ai vv. 25–26: 'nec satis est toti sordes sparsisse Ticino, / nunc urbem anguigeram commaculare cupit', mentre i vv. 31–34 possono ben far riferimento alla riprovata nomina del Panormita (ingiuriosamente indicato col nome della sua opera) a poeta aulico⁴⁸ ('O felicem urbem tantam, cui fortia facta / deerat qui caneret! Plaude, poeta venit. / Non erat in tota calamum qui verteret urbe: / qui exornet proceres Hermaphroditus adest').

Se il veleno del Decembrio si esprime in un linguaggio ineccepibile, i versi messi in bocca alle *meretrices papienses* alludono a formulazioni che ricorrono nell'*Hermaphroditus*, a volte le citano – anche attestando la fortuna dell'opera biasimata –, e spesso vanno oltre l'oscenità dell'opera, aggiungendo, col pretesto dell'adeguamento ironico al linguaggio del bersaglio polemico messo in atto con intenti critici, elementi lì assenti, di natura più scatologica che primariamente sessuale, ripugnanti e disgustosi, espressi con un dissimulato compiacimento che esclude il registro comico e che non è nell'*Hermaphroditus* del Panormita: si leggano ad esempio i vv. 13–16, 29–30, 65–70:

Tam bene paedicat puerum quod nulla marisca
 podice succrescit, tam bene trudit opus.
 Non tamen id peragit faciat quin merda galerum
 cum retrahit penem Siculus iste suum!

[...]

Dic tales socios, qualem iam diximus illum:
 sic merda est ano quam bene iuncta suo!

[...]

Pro ture hic fumant meretricum stercora, sanguis
 menstruus exundat perpetuoque fluit.
 Huc coitus tandem manant centone retorto,
 faex quoque bracarum contumulata sapit.
 Non deerunt bombi, ructus vomitusque lutosi,
 quae cacet aut meiat lupa semper erit.

In una lettera a Cambio Zambecari del 1429 il Panormita attribuisce ad Antonio da Rho – pur senza farne esplicitamente il nome – dei versi scritti contro di lui: verosimilmente, proprio il carne *Plaudite lenones*.⁴⁹

48 Cfr. SABBADINI (1916).

49 Cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Sabbadini (1910), 99–100.

Fra il 1429 e il 1430 circolarono versi scritti contro Antonio da Rho: al riguardo riceviamo indicazioni ambigue dall'epistolario del Panormita, che ora nega di aver composto poesie contro il Raudense (lettera al Cremona del settembre 1429),⁵⁰ ora minaccia di farlo a meno che il rivale non receda dalle sue provocazioni (stessa lettera), ora dice di aver deciso di comporre contro di lui *Priapeia altera*, e di aver già scritto epigrammi in cui ha superato, se non Virgilio, almeno se stesso (lettera a Cambio Zambecari scritta da Pavia nel 1429),⁵¹ o (in una lettera a Sancio Balbo) parla di un libretto contro il Raudense in cui ha superato l'*Hermaphroditus* in eleganza ed acrimonia.⁵²

Quali erano questi versi? Nella sua *Philippica* il Raudense fa riferimento a versi anonimi che gli sono pervenuti,⁵³ ad alcuni epigrammi infamanti fatti attaccare nottetempo in città dal Panormita,⁵⁴ a delle *Leges futuariae* probabilmente in versi,⁵⁵ ma anche a dei *novos versus* sui quali il moderno editore della *Philippica* non sa esprimere un'opinione precisa, perché ogni possibilità prospettata gli è parsa a ragione contraddittoria:

In omnem Italiam de tuis in me maledicentiis alium *Hermaphroditum* turpiorem iuxta genium tuum obscenioremque aliosque dialogos seu novas fabricas novosque versus, ut illa edicta ostiaria foedissima, quae nuper ex me edita tuo pro more mentiris, tu vero illorum inventor quam notus et auctor – nam lingua et calamus tuus ubique gentium putet – excita si libet ac semina.⁵⁶

In vari manoscritti si leggono molti epigrammi 'sciolti' del Panormita, e una raccolta intitolata *De poematis* comprende epigrammi composti successivamente a Napoli.⁵⁷ Ma alle carte 61r–62r del codice A D XI 44 della Biblioteca Braidense di Milano,⁵⁸ sotto il titolo di *Edicta hostiaria*, compaiono undici epigrammi contro Antonio da Rho, che vanno immaginati affissi alla porta della cella del frate. Gli stessi epigrammi potranno ben essere stati definiti, quasi sinonimicamente, *Leges futuariae*. Saranno dunque verosimilmente questi epigrammi i *Priapeia* panormitani ritenuti perduti ancora da Parker.⁵⁹ Lo stesso codice contiene anche un più lungo carne, ancora contro il Raudense: una prosopopea di Giovanna d'Arco,

50 Cfr. IDEM, 81–2.

51 Cfr. IDEM, 101–2.

52 Cfr. IDEM, 142–3: 'Libellum quendam epigrammatum edidimus hoc loci in Rodium theologum; longe Hermaphroditum exuperavimus et acrimonia et elegancia, et, tu etiam adicias, petulantia.'

53 Par. 52, ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 86.

54 Parr. 54 e 178, IDEM, 88 e 178.

55 Par. 137, IDEM, 146.

56 Par. 181, IDEM, 180.

57 Cfr. COPPINI (2010).

58 Cfr. DIONISOTTI (1937).

59 Cfr. BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), XIV.

che si lamenta che il frate le sia stato inviato come ambasciatore dai milanesi.⁶⁰ La limitatissima diffusione di questi carmi sarà imputabile allo stesso Panormita: sia stata o no l'ultimo atto dei suoi rapporti col Raudense, la quarta delle sue lettere *Familiares* ce lo presenta come magnanimamente riconciliato col frate: l'immagine ufficiale che il Panormita consegna di sé al suo epistolario è lontana dalle polemiche, dalle invettive, dalla scandalosa poesia giovanile.⁶¹

Cito i primi tre degli *Edicta* ad esempio:⁶²

I.

Quisquis es, uxoris coitu confecte maritus,

huc tua luxurians, si sapis, uxor eat.

Est mihi cauda salax, est non extincta libido,

et potero quod tu, fesse marite, nequis.

II.

Si qua meam subeat cellam, sit Vesta licebit,

aut sit casta magis, nulla pudica redit.

III.

Intret anus cellam, iam iam redit illa fututa,

seu intret virgo, virgo fututa redit.

Nel passo della *Philippica* del Raudense dunque *Edicta ostiaria* andrà scritto con la lettera maiuscola, e in corsivo, e per questi epigrammi infamanti a ragione il Raudense si sarà risentito. L'attribuzione degli epigrammi al Raudense stesso, a cui egli fa riferimento, è una chiara finzione letteraria (gli epigrammi vanno immaginati come composti dallo stesso frate), che il Raudense finge di prendere sul serio, anche se può essere vero che circolassero anonimi. E potrebbero anche essere gli stessi che, in una beffa di stampo goliardico, il Panormita fece affiggere nottetempo in giro per la città.

Una reazione agli epigrammi del Panormita può essere vista in un'invettiva al Panormita indirizzata presente nel codice Ambrosiano H 49 inf., anonima e incompleta.⁶³ Le accuse contro l'*Hermaphroditus* si mescolano a quelle contro il suo autore, rappresentato come un pederasta divoratore del patrimonio della

60 Cfr. ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 270. Cfr. VISMARA (1900); DIONISOTTI (1937). Di Vismara si veda anche VISMARA (1900b).

61 Cfr. l'autografo epistolario del Panormita nel codice Vaticano Latino 3371; la lettera al Raudense si legge alle cc. 3v-4r. È stata pubblicata da Rutherford: ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 256-7 (*Appendix II*). Comincia così: 'Litteras a te proxime accepi quibus ut una conveniamus hortaris gratia benivolentiae inter nos redintegrandae. Id ego et laudo et iuxta tecum concupisco.' Ritengo che una ritrattazione della posizione contro Antonio da Rho sia da leggere anche nella palinodia a Cosimo: BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), 124-5, vv. 9-10: 'Sic quoque non Rhodi famam nomenque celebre / Parnasi: at corvo non maculatur olor.' Per una diversa interpretazione dei versi, cfr. IDEM, 246.

62 Vd. l'edizione della serie in appendice a COPPINI (2009).

63 Pubblicata in parte in BECCADELLI, ed. Sabbadini (1910), 32-4, e integralmente in ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), App. III, 258-63.

moglie. È possibile che anche questa invettiva sia opera del Raudense, anche se vi si parla di lui in terza persona, perché lo stesso accade nella *Philippica* che sicuramente gli appartiene, e possiamo osservare che anche qui, come nella *Philippica*, Properzio e Tibullo appaiono indebitamente come i maestri del Panormita, campioni di poesia oscena ('Fecit idem grandis ille Nero, doctus fortassis diciplinis illis Propertii atque Tibulli tui').⁶⁴

E in una lettera indirizzata, questa volta apertamente, dal Panormita ad Antonio da Rho, che comincia 'Etsi facile multi existimant te quosdam in me versus edidisse',⁶⁵ possiamo individuare una risposta anche a questa invettiva, sebbene vi si faccia riferimento solo a versi – 'obscenos quidem illos ac petulantes': con ogni verosimiglianza il carne *Plaudite lenones* – che molti – ma non io, dice il Panormita – ritengono composti dal Raudense. Il Panormita critica quei versi anche dal punto di vista formale, difende il suo *Hermaphroditus* ancora una volta col ricorso ai precedenti antichi, pur prendendone le distanze, perché la sua età 'severos mores et severum dicendi genus exoptulat', giudica l'invidia di cui è oggetto un segno di grandezza e di gloria, associa agli *spurcissima verba* dei versi attribuiti al Raudense la scelta del frate di tradurre, per il Duca Filippo Maria, Svetonio (testo pieno di adulteri, stupri, incesti) anziché l'edificante Lucano, nega di essere l'autore di versi scritti recentemente contro il Raudense, e conclude: 'neminem offendo nisi lacessitus iniuria'.

A questo punto si colloca la lunga *Philippica in Antonium Panormitam* di Antonio da Rho, a cui ci è occorso di fare già più volte riferimento, costituita da quattro fondamentali obiezioni ad affermazioni della lettera del Panormita e da una *peroratio* finale. Poiché vi si fa riferimento all'incoronazione di Sigismondo come re d'Italia (ridicolizzando la delusione del Panormita, sicuro di ricevere l'incarico di pronunziare un'orazione in quell'occasione),⁶⁶ il testo sarà successivo al 25 novembre 1431. Nell'invettiva si dice tutto ciò che di male contro il Panormita poteva esser detto.

Vale la pena però di sottolineare che l'invettiva ancora ci rappresenta il Raudense coalizzato col Decembrio in funzione anti-Panormita: al Decembrio il Raudense si rivolge in seconda persona, come in una sesquipedale epistola, e il Decembrio è invitato a rendere al Panormita pan per focaccia: 'Aequae tu nunc, si lubet, quantum ad nos attinet, par pari referto'.⁶⁷

Dal canto suo, il Decembrio era già entrato in polemica col Panormita non solo col carne *Plaudite*, ma anche nella competizione relativa a emblemi vecchi e nuovi per Filippo Maria Visconti, che aveva indetto una 'gara' fra gli umanisti

64 ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 261.

65 IDEM, App. I, 248–55; BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), 154–62.

66 Cfr. par. 175, ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 176.

67 Par. 58, IDEM, 90.

della sua corte, chiedendo loro di presentare alcune *imagines* per le proprie insegne, che desiderava evidentemente rinnovare. In questo contesto, il Panormita compose una lunga *Oratio de effigie solis*, accompagnata da un'epistola al Visconti.⁶⁸ All'orazione fa riferimento il Raudense nella *Philippica*.⁶⁹ Nelle epistole VI 2 e 3 del Decembrio, indirizzate al Visconti,⁷⁰ databili fra la fine del 1430 e gli inizi del 1431, compaiono riferimenti polemici agli scritti del Beccadelli sull'argomento: il bersaglio è chiaramente identificabile, anche se il nome del Panormita non è fatto esplicitamente.⁷¹ Per chiarire lo sviluppo della vicenda è utile anche considerare altre due lettere del Panormita al Visconti: il Panormita le raccolse successivamente nei suoi *Poematum et prosarum libri*, nel primo dei quali si leggono al ventesimo e ventiduesimo posto.⁷² L'argomento delle due lettere le fa ritenere parallele alla VI 3 del Decembrio: nella prima infatti il Panormita offre una giustificazione a posteriori della simbologia attinente alla vipera viscontea, facendo capire che anche questa *figuratio* il Visconti desiderava rinnovare ('Hactenus quid significet novus hic tuae celsitudinis serpens explanasse mihi videor'), e promette di elaborare, far disegnare e inviare (evidentemente con la successiva lettera I 22) altre *figurationes* ('Quod reliqui erit, effingam alias adhuc figurationes et manibus puris depictas tibi e vestigio mittam'). Nella seconda, inedita (*inc.* 'Figurationes ad vexilla tua') sono proposte diverse immagini, di cui sono enunciati i significati simbolici: dopo quella di Apollo ('ne a praeclara et acutissima tua illa solis imaginatione discedam'), una palla che rappresenta la terra, un Pegaso, un Ercole (del cui significato è taciuta l'immediata applicabilità alla situazione politica contingente: 'Cur autem Cerbarum tricipitem trahat, id epistolis committere non sum ausus'), e infine, suggerita dal vescovo di Lodi Gerardo Landriani, un'immagine di Pallade. Se il Visconti ne sceglierà una, il Panormita la rifinirà e la perfezionerà; se di nessuna di queste il duca sarà soddisfatto, egli ne potrà proporre altre – conclude, invitando il signore a esprimere chiaramente i suoi desideri.⁷³ Nell'epistola VI 3 Decembrio si riferisce polemicamente all'orazione panormitana *de sole* e alla *epistola super orationem de effigie solis*,⁷⁴ ma, a differenza del Panormita delle due lettere dei *Poematum et*

68 I due scritti sono pubblicati da Rutherford: IDEM, 285–99.

69 Cfr. IDEM, 134.

70 Possiamo ora leggere queste lettere, con le altre 'giovanili' del Decembrio, nell'edizione di Federico Petrucci, dove sono numerate 47 e 48: DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 373–405.

71 Ricostruisce le relazioni fra i testi Petrucci in IDEM, 373–82.

72 Dell'inedito prosimetro sto allestendo l'edizione critica. Ho pubblicato la lettera I 20 (*inc.* Draco seu serpens squamis intermistim) in COPPINI (1980).

73 'Sin harum nulla satisfecerit, idque cognoro, quam ob rem minus satisfecerit, sexcentae praeterea extabunt imaginationes quibus tuae sats possim facere voluntati, modo quod cupis paulo apertius intelligam.' Il brano citato non presenta varianti nei manoscritti che tramandano la lettera.

74 Cfr. DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 379–81.

prosarum libri, si limita a elogiare la vipera viscontea ('[...] splendidissima per se satis sint recolende stirpis tue insignia viperea [...] Nullum enim ex antiquis vexillum tanta celebritate peditum vel ex omnibus undique deductis consimile his que supra retuli concernetur'),⁷⁵ e propone una sola immagine per il vessillo, '[...] virtutem, gloriam, maiestatem quod fingat et exprimat signum aliquod magnificum ac celebre nec a quoque usitatum': una palma, simbolo della virtù, fra due leonesse, rappresentanti la potenza e la virtù del principe, col motto *areti doxis odos* (traslitterazione dal greco equivalente a *virtus iter glorie*).

Nel frattempo, o per fedeltà all'antico difensore dell'*Hermaphroditus*, o per imprudenza, o perché ormai le sue prospettive lo portavano altrove, il Panormita aveva apertamente preso posizione a favore di Guarino in una questione politicamente molto più scabrosa delle altre. Guarino aveva scritto un'orazione in lode del Carmagnola, il condottiero visconteo passato ai Veneziani.⁷⁶ L'orazione fu confutata dal Decembrio, e al Decembrio il Panormita indirizzò una *defensio* di Guarino.⁷⁷ Anche se la difesa del Panormita non tocca la questione politica, essa era inevitabilmente implicata, e girava intorno a un alto tradimento: è naturale che Decembrio cogliesse la facile opportunità di screditare il rivale agli occhi del Duca; e anche l'invettiva del Raudense poteva aver tratto sicurezza da questa situazione.

L'argomento fu ripreso dal Decembrio in una invettiva contro il Panormita, corrispondente all'epistola VII 1 (= 49 Petrucci). Petrucci la ritiene 'di poco precedente - o coeva - alla *Philippica* del minorita', osservando che 'Decembrio infatti indirizzerà ad Antonio da Rho l'epistola VIII 3 (= 52) del primo volume, ascrivibile al 1432, asserendo di aver ricevuto e letto la *Philippica*',⁷⁸ e rileva che il Decembrio annovera il Panormita fra i *monstra* generati dalla Sicilia (l'invettiva del Decembrio comincia così: 'Novis adhuc monstris infamis scatet insula'),⁷⁹ e che 'la medesima immagine verrà ripresa nella *Philippica* del Raudense: 'novum e Sicilia insula monstrum novumque portentum quoddam istac aetate nostra exortum esse.'⁸⁰ Ma queste ultime parole del Raudense sono precedute da un richiamo all'attenzione del Decembrio su questa immagine: 'Intelliges enimvero his ex ipsis [sc. litteris] novum e Sicilia insula monstrum [...];'⁸¹ l'immagine è dunque proposta come nuova agli occhi del Decembrio - cosa che sembrerebbe difficile se questi avesse già rappresentato la Sicilia pullulante di 'nuovi mostri'.

75 Cfr. IDEM, 387.

76 Cfr. SABBADINI (1896).

77 La *defensio* del Panormita è stata pubblicata da RESTA (1954), 178-81.

78 DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 396. L'epistola 52 Petrucci corrisponde al testo pubblicato da Rutherford (ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford [2005]) come *Appendix V*, 277-8.

79 Epistola 49, DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 406.

80 Par. 1, ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 50.

81 Cfr. IDEM, 50.

Un passo dell'invettiva del Decembrio inoltre mi pare diversamente interpretabile da come ce lo propone l'edizione Petrucci (in cui appare poco comprensibile):⁸²

Non enim decet una imperatorem cum amica ire in via, ut tu cum Ergotulo plerumque tuo seu potius non equum est, petam laureatum a nobis semidoctis dignitate preveniri.

Per prima cosa va identificata la citazione terenziana, da *Eunuchus*, 494–495 ('[...] Haud convenit / una ire cum amica imperatorem in via'), che vale qui come sentenza proverbiale chiarita dalla parte finale dell'ironico assunto, mentre il riferimento a Ergotele (il giovane Romaso Tebaldi, o Tedaldi) andrà inteso come parentetico (e costituirà un'aggiunta denigratoria nei confronti del Panormita). Proporrèi dunque di cambiare la punteggiatura del brano, e di leggere *poetam* in luogo di *petam*: 'Non enim decet una imperatorem cum amica ire in via (ut tu cum Ergotulo plerumque tuo), seu potius non equum est poetam laureatum a nobis semidoctis dignitate preveniri.'

Nel tono sarcastico si coglierebbe così un riferimento alla laurea poetica ricevuta dal Panormita nel maggio 1432, che costituirebbe un *terminus post quem* per la composizione.

Sembra possibile che i due testi decembriani (le lettere VII 1 e VIII 3) siano pressoché contemporanei, entrambi successivi alla *Philippica* del Raudense, a cui risponde propriamente la breve lettera VIII 3,⁸³ mentre la VII 1 ha la forma dell'invettiva contro il Panormita (se vi si vuole trovare un destinatario, questi è il duca Filippo Maria, al vocativo a r. 5).

I 'mostri' siciliani in ogni caso rappresentano un forte legame formale fra i due testi, alla pari dell'incipitario *Plaudite* delle due elegie prima citate: accordi sinfonici di voci indirizzate alla distruzione dello stesso personaggio.

L'invettiva decembriana *Novis adhuc monstris* confuta la difesa dell'orazione guariniana fatta dal Panormita, e controbatte le obiezioni che in essa venivano poste contro le critiche del Decembrio, in toni ironici e sarcastici critica la poesia, la moralità e la vita del Panormita, con riferimenti anche a particolari episodi infamanti, e scivola nell'accusa di tradimento politico rappresentando il Panormita e Guarino come filo-veneziani. Essa pullula di citazioni dall'*Hermaphroditus*; se ne individuano perfino – oggetto di biasimo e scherno – alcune riprese epiche che ai nostri occhi possono apparire godibilmente parodiche (così i versi 'Si mihi sint totidem penes, quot in arbore rami / hos omnes uno sorbeat Ursa die' sono messi in relazione col virgiliano 'Non mihi si linguae centum sint oraque centum', e l'aggettivo *merdivomus* appare coniato su un *flammivomus* a torto attribuito a Virgilio).⁸⁴ Anche qui il bersaglio polemico è superato in

82 Cfr. DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 411, rr. 180–2.

83 Cfr. IDEM, 439–47. Il testo è stato pubblicato anche nell'*Appendix VI* di ANTONIO DA RHO, ed. Rutherford (2005), 279–84.

84 Cfr. DECEMBRIO, ed. Petrucci (2013), 408–9.

oscenità dal suo censore, autorizzato dal precedente panormitano a usare un linguaggio e a costruire immagini oscene non riscattate dagli effetti comici che essi sortiscono nell'*Hermaphroditus*:

Ego litteras et calamos, tu penes queris et mentulas! Ego ceram et sigillum gestito, tu foramina merdivoma scrutaris et faeces! Ego papirum et atramentum, tu centones contractas et menstrua! Ego denique epistolas scribo, tu puellos imberbes subigis et inclinas, ac postremo cunnos et podices, officine tue instrumenta continua, putidis scalpis unguinibus! Quis catulaster venationi apprime accomodus et odore naris utilis tam sagaciter ferarum lustra persequitur, ut tu fetidas nates humentibus oculis et hiantibus labris ac patula nare rimaris?⁸⁵

Lo sgarro politico contribuì probabilmente a mettere il Panormita in una posizione di inferiorità; lo stipendio gli venne ridotto; i suoi protettori furono allontanati. Se alla polemica col Raudense fu messa fine, un nemico eccellente come il Valla continuò a polemizzare con lui. Altri amici e nemici lo aspettavano a Napoli, dove ebbe l'invidiabile (e probabilmente invidiata) posizione di consigliere regio di Alfonso V di Aragona.

La denigrazione del Panormita mediante l'uso compiaciuto dei suoi stessi stilemi era diventata una moda. Ne è testimone Porcelio Pandoni,⁸⁶ che in un carne indirizzato a Maffeo Vegio *pro obscenitate Hermaphroditum* riassume per allusione l'opera del rivale:

Est illic podex, tentigo, mentula, cunnus,
 et paedicones Hermaphroditus habet.
 Illa cacat violas, opobalsama mitticat illa,
 Alda cacat violas, pulchra Corina rosas.
 Illic et meretrix structa est iuvenisque petulcus,
 illa movere latus, ille movere nates.
 Hic futuit futuique cupit, nunc ille vel illa;
 Materia est inguen, dive Priape, tuum.
 Estne in podicibus gravitas probitasve decusve?
 Et femur et colei quid gravitatis habent?⁸⁷

Le allusioni ossessivamente si ripetono, al negativo, in una *Persuasio ad lecturam* della propria opera del Porcelio:

Egregii pueri et castae properate, puellae.
 Non est haec sicula carta notata manu.
 Mentula, cunnus abest, non incubat Ursa Priapo,
 paedicat nemo, non movet Alda latus.

85 Cfr. IDEM, 411, rr. 189–196.

86 Sulla polemica Porcelio–Panormita cfr. COPPINI (1985), 355–73.

87 Cito da COPPINI (1985), 358. Sono i vv. 17 ss. di un lungo carne pubblicato per intero da Parker in BECCADELLI, ed. Parker (2010), 178–84.

Hic nullus podex, hic nullum tenditur inguen,
Assyrios flores femina nulla cacat.⁸⁸

[...]

e, con poche variazioni, in alcuni distici indirizzati *Ad castos pueros et puellas*:

Egregii pueri et castae properate, puellae,
non est haec sricula carta notata manu.
Mentula, cunnus abest, nullum hic tenditur inguen,
nullaque cum Musis iura Priapus habet.

[...].⁸⁹

O che i versi del Panormita fossero memorizzati, o che i suoi detrattori li tenessero sotto gli occhi in codici da loro posseduti, si tratta anche di una bella testimonianza della fortuna dell'opera.

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Francesco Bruni

Forme della disputa intellettuale nel Rinascimento italiano e della polemica asimmetrica di Borghini contro Ruscelli

Sommario

Dopo una rassegna di alcune forme della disputa in età umanistica e rinascimentale, con particolare riferimento alla questione pro e contro il *De immortalitate animae* di Pietro Pomponazzi (un caso di particolare interesse anche per la soluzione della controversia), il lavoro esamina le questioni di critica letteraria dopo la riscoperta della *Poetica* di Aristotele intorno alla metà del XVI secolo. Le categorie di Aristotele sono applicate alla tragedia, al poema cavalleresco, al dramma pastorale, alla *Divina Commedia*. Fece scandalo la critica radicale che circolò sotto il nome fittizio di Castravilla. Il più acuto e intelligente difensore di Dante dalle accuse è Vincenzio Borghini, un monaco benedettino, protagonista della cultura fiorentina della metà del XVI secolo, autore tra l'altro di un galateo della disputa letteraria. Conoscitore profondo della storia antica e moderna di Firenze, espertissimo del volgare fiorentino, Borghini è inoltre critico della disinvoltura e della superficiale rapidità con le quali gli stampatori veneziani approntano i testi della letteratura toscana. Bersaglio principale della sua critica è Girolamo Ruscelli, *dominus* dell'editoria veneziana. Le diverse culture di Borghini e Ruscelli sono esemplari di ragioni diverse, difficilmente conciliabili, che dividono Firenze e Venezia. Borghini non amava stampare i suoi scritti, rimasti per lo più incompiuti, ma il suo pensiero giunge alla cultura fiorentina e italiana grazie alle *Annotationi et discorsi sopra alcuni luoghi del 'Decameron' di M. Giovanni Boccacci* (1573), attribuite collettivamente e anonimamente ai Deputati alla correzione dell'opera, che si deve in gran parte a lui.

non è questa nostra caccia per goderci per noi quel che troviamo [...];
anzi è per tor del mondo quella fiera che ha fatto et fa tanto danno al nostro paese,
detta ignorantia et presuntione
(BORGHINI, ed. Belloni [1998], 45–46)

a chi vuole scrivere bisogna sapere molte cose,
ma a chi vuol dire male d'altri, bisogna saperle tutte
(BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi [1841], 9)

1. Premessa

Il lavoro proposto al convegno di Bonn dell'8-9 maggio 2014 aveva per argomento la singolare polemica tra due personalità molto diverse, rappresentative di due centri culturali in forte concorrenza tra loro, le quali hanno dato il meglio di sé intorno alla metà del XVI secolo e negli anni immediatamente successivi: Vincenzo Borghini, attivo a Firenze, sua città natale, e Girolamo Ruscelli che, nato nel Lazio, a Viterbo, ebbe a Venezia il suo periodo d'intensa attività. Raccolgendo lo stimolo delle conflittualità e rivalità intellettuali,¹ ho pensato di premettere all'episodio da me scelto un'introduzione sintetica su vari tipi e modi di polemica lungo il XV e la prima metà del secolo seguente (con un brevissimo accenno al Petrarca). È accaduto che la rassegna della prima parte, per quanto breve, abbia richiesto un certo spazio; d'altra parte la polemica tra Borghini e Ruscelli implica un più ampio esame dei due letterati, nel quadro della questione italiana, teorica e pratica, della lingua, sicché il contributo sarebbe risultato eccessivamente lungo; una parte della materia, inoltre, richiede un esame analitico su questioni strettamente linguistiche, che fuori d'Italia interessano solo pochi specialisti. Rinviando dunque ad altra occasione l'esame dettagliato di alcuni aspetti dell'argomento specifico riguardante Borghini e Ruscelli, mi limiterò in questa sede a illustrare un abbozzo di galateo della polemica letteraria, uno scritto del Borghini sul quale è stata attirata da poco l'attenzione, e alcune verifiche sull'applicazione (o sull'applicazione mancata) di quelle regole da parte di Borghini, in rapporto ai suoi diversi interlocutori e al canale privato (epistolare) o semipubblico (mi riferisco alla circolazione di testi in forma manoscritta) e pubblico, attraverso l'edizione a stampa.

2. Le polemiche e i loro ambienti

Esaminerò dunque preliminarmente alcune modalità delle dispute letterarie e alcuni modi di risolvere (o di non risolvere) i conflitti intellettuali (§§ 2-4).

Il genere dell'*invectiva* ha conosciuto una notevole fortuna in età umanistica. Naturalmente la polemica, per esempio di argomento filosofico o teologico, nel Medioevo era nota e praticata (basti pensare alla dinamica vita intellettuale dei maggiori *Studia* universitari, e alla funzione euristica della *questio*), ma per lo scopo di questo lavoro è sufficiente muovere dalle polemiche di età umanistica,

1 A David Lines e ad altri componenti del gruppo che è stato attivo negli anni 2012-2015 (Leverhulme International Network on *Conflict and Rivalries*), devo l'aver dedicato attenzione anche alla soluzione (quando ce n'è una) della controversia o questione o polemica, un punto che non avevo considerato in occasione di lavori dedicati ad argomenti analoghi.

inaugurate da alcune opere del padre dell'Umanesimo: le *Invective contra medicum* (1352–54), il *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* (1367), il *Contra eum qui maledixit Italiam* (1373) di Francesco Petrarca.² Bersaglio di questi scritti sono un medico pontificio attivo ad Avignone; quattro frequentatori del Petrarca a Venezia (un uomo d'armi, un mercante, un nobile e un medico); Jean de Hesdin, dell'Ordine degli Ospedalieri di S. Giovanni, professore di teologia a Parigi.

Un obiettivo importante delle invettive di Petrarca è la critica delle fondamenta degli *Studia* universitari (delle facoltà di *artes* veicolo della filosofia aristotelica, del diritto, della medicina): si inaugura così la polemica antiscolastica degli umanisti che per un periodo rimarranno estranei e ostili al mondo universitario.³ Non per nulla, in un'opera di oltre mezzo secolo fa uno storico dell'Umanesimo geniale, anche se oggi dimenticato, Giuseppe Toffanin, dedicò un capitolo alla *casta degli umanisti*⁴ e cioè all'agguerrita minoranza che rinnovò la cultura insieme con la lingua latina, ripristinata nei modi dei classici di Roma antica. Come si sa al latino, rinnovato risalendo all'antico, si affiancherà ben presto lo studio del greco. I membri del gruppo impegnano polemiche numerose e spesso molto accese o acri sia contro gli avversari esterni sia al proprio interno.

L'aristocrazia intellettuale nata dal Petrarca impegnò infatti numerose polemiche contro gli ambienti estranei al nuovo credo: ricordo a questo proposito le polemiche degli umanisti contro i frati, in particolare quelli riformatori, comunemente detti Osservanti: l'*Oratio in hypocritas* di Leonardo Bruni (1417), il *De avaritia* di Poggio Bracciolini (1428), il *De professione religiosorum* (1441) di Lorenzo Valla.⁵

La coscienza di appartenere a un'élite accomunata dagli stessi ideali culturali, che combatte contro personaggi e gruppi esterni, talvolta ostili alla casta, è forte, ma non tanto da evitare che all'interno del gruppo scoppino rivalità destinate a sfociare in polemiche clamorose.⁶

2 Gli scritti polemitici di Petrarca hanno avuto una buona fortuna editoriale: si vedano le edizioni del testo latino con traduzione italiana e annotazione delle *Invective contra medicum*, ed. Ricci (1950), ed. Schiavone (1972), ed. Bausi (2005); del *De ignorantia*, ed. Fenzi (1999); del *Contra eum qui maledixit Italie*, ed. Crevatin (1995), ed. Berté (2005). Le quattro opere polemiche di Petrarca (le tre citate e l'*Invectiva contra quendam magni status hominem sed nullius scientie aut virtutis*; quest'ultima anche in PETRARCA, ed. Bausi [2005]) si leggono riunite nelle edizioni latino-francesi e latino-inglesi di PETRARCA, ed. Lenoir (2003), ed. Marsh (2003).

3 Ma meno a lungo di quanto si creda comunemente: LINES (2006).

4 TOFFANIN (1964), II, 83–7.

5 BRUNI (2003), 405–29.

6 Si vedano in proposito GRIGGIO (1996) e l'antologia di testi, con buona introduzione, sulle discussioni concernenti l'imitazione, dalla fine del XV secolo fino ai primi del XVI e sulla pedagogia gesuitica fondata appunto sull'imitazione e la partecipazione internazionale alla discussione relativa, partita dai circoli italiani, DELLANEVA, ed. (2007). Ulteriori indicazioni nel recente volume di LINES / LAUREYS / KRAYE, ed. (2015), con bibliografia aggiornata. Un ottimo studio si deve a CARUSO (2010); ricordo infine RUTHERFORD (2005).

Ovviamente, l'emulazione non è un'esclusiva degli umanisti: negli ordini religiosi le rivalità sono di casa: chi vuole cercare la Discordia la troverà nei monasteri e nei conventi, dirà l'*Orlando Furioso* (XIV 81–84). È il caso della disputa teologica sorta quando, nella Pasqua del 1462, il celebre predicatore Giacomo della Marca, francescano osservante, in una predica tenuta a Brescia sostenne che il sangue di Cristo caduto a terra nella Passione aveva perso la sua natura divina e perciò non doveva essere oggetto di adorazione. L'Inquisitore di Lombardia, Giacomo da Brescia, domenicano, condannò come eretica la tesi di Giacomo della Marca, al quale intimò una ritrattazione. Giacomo invece ribadì pubblicamente la propria posizione e ben presto la polemica si estese.

Nel Natale dello stesso anno si stabilisce a Roma, su iniziativa di papa Pio II Piccolomini, che tre teologi francescani e altrettanti domenicani espongano e argomentino a favore dell'una o dell'altra tesi. Un francescano e un domenicano si avvicendano a turno per risolvere la questione, ma il disaccordo rimane. Il papa riunisce i cardinali, la maggior parte dei quali propende per la tesi domenicana, alla quale inclina anche Pio II che, tuttavia, evita una pronuncia pubblica, per la ragione che si dirà subito dopo.⁷

Un vivo resoconto della vicenda viene proprio dai *Commentarii* di Pio II, grande umanista e grande papa, il quale, benché fornisca una sintesi minuziosa delle argomentazioni avanzate nel corso della disputa, lascia trasparire la propria disapprovazione per una controversia inopportuna, che metteva a rischio la compattezza della Chiesa in una fase così grave per la Cristianità, minacciata dall'espansione ottomana: Costantinopoli era caduta pochi anni prima, e per questa ragione Pio II evita di dar torto ai Francescani, attivissimi nella predicazione della crociata contro gli infedeli (per la quale il papa si spese, senza risultati, fino all'ultimo momento del suo pontificato): 'non est visum eo tempore decretum fieri declarationis, ne multitudo Minorum, cuius erat contra Turchos praedicatio necessaria, offenderetur'.⁸ Da esperto moralista, conoscitore degli uomini, Pio II osserva che uomini di santa vita, benemeriti come Giacomo della Marca, hanno bene operato per la fede e per essa si sono sacrificati, ma non sono esenti da punti deboli:

Pauperiem pati et famem et sitim et corporis cruciatum et mortem pro Christi nomine nonnulli possunt, iacturam nominis vel minimam ferre recusant, tanquam, sua deficiente fama, Dei quoque gloria pereat. Vir vere bonus etiam famam, ubi est opus, contemnere novit.

Il papa ordina di sospendere la disputa e impone il silenzio ai contendenti. In attesa di una determinazione che non ci fu, la questione rimase irrisolta.

7 Cfr. CHENU (1939).

8 PICCOLOMINI, ed. Totaro (2004), II, 2130.

Un altro ambiente al cui interno orientamenti intellettuali divergenti possono dar luogo a polemiche è quello delle Università: alimentano le dispute, per esempio, l'opposizione tra le facoltà che insegnano le *scientiae lucrativae* dei due diritti (civile e canonico) e della medicina, e quelle dedite alle *scientiae non lucrativae* (*artes* e teologia). Tra *artes* e teologia, poi, sussistono contrasti che hanno attraversato le università e la stessa storia intellettuale dell'Occidente, distinguendo (e talora opponendo) gli esegeti di Aristotele nelle *artes* e i teologi, tanto quelli estranei all'aristotelismo che quelli (Alberto Magno; Tommaso d'Aquino) che corroborano la filosofia cristiana con Aristotele, reinterpretando quest'ultimo e liberandolo dall'interpretazione averroistica: di qui la polemica condotta da Alberto Magno nello *Speculum astronomiae*⁹ contro il determinismo astrologico, e il *De unitate intellectus contra averroistas* di Tommaso d'Aquino.

Più tardi ebbe un'eco anche al di fuori degli ambienti universitari il *De immortalitate animae* del filosofo mantovano Pietro Pomponazzi, che nel 1516 pubblicò a Bologna (dove insegnava filosofia) l'opera così intitolata, ribattezzata ben presto polemicamente dagli oppositori *De mortalitate animae*. Pomponazzi, pur dichiarando in modo esplicito e ripetuto la propria fede religiosa, sosteneva con decisione che dalle premesse di Aristotele era impossibile dimostrare razionalmente l'immortalità dell'anima. L'opera suscitò rapidamente un dibattito assai vivace, alimentato dai suoi oppositori.¹⁰ Obiettarono infatti Gaspare Contarini, già allievo del Pomponazzi e uno degli spiriti più elevati dell'epoca, con uno scritto uscito anonimo e accolto nell'*Apologia* dello stesso Pomponazzi (Bologna, 1518); e, su invito di papa Leone X Medici, Agostino Nifo, allora professore nello Studio di Roma, con un *De immortalitate animae libellus adversus Petrum Pomponatium Mantuanum*. Nello stesso 1518 Pomponazzi rispose con l'*Apologia Petri Pomponatii* già citata e, l'anno dopo, con un *Defensorium P. Pomponatii Mantuani sive responsiones ad ea quae A. Niphus Suessanus adversus ipsum scripsit de immortalitate animae* (il Nifo era nativo di Sessa Aurunca, oggi in provincia di Caserta). Tra il 1518 e il 1519 interviene nella polemica con un *Flagellum in tres libros Apologie Peretti* (1518)¹¹ Bartolomeo Spina, un domenicano del convento di S. Giovanni e Paolo di Venezia, noto dagli *Opuscula* editi a Venezia nel 1519, tra i quali va ricordato anche, dello stesso Spina, una *Tutela veritatis de immortalitate anime contra Petrum Pomponacium Mantuanum cognominatum Perettum cum eiusdem libro de mortalitate [sic] animae fideliter toto inserto* (e si noti la varietà della titolografia). Da Bologna, dunque, a Padova, Roma e Venezia, e inoltre a Napoli, con Luca Prassicio, *Questio de immortalitate*

9 LEMAY (1997).

10 Per tutta la vicenda è prezioso il *dossier* raccolto e studiato da GILSON (1961). Vedi anche SPRUIT (2017).

11 *Perettus*, o in volgare *Peretto*, era il diminutivo con il quale, per la sua bassa statura, era noto Pomponazzi.

anime intellective secundum mentem Aristotelis a nemine verius quam ab Averroi interpretati (Napoli, 1521) e a Mantova–Venezia, con il dottore di teologia Ambrosius Neapolitanus (Ambrogio Fiandino), *De animorum immortalitate [...] contra assertorem mortalitatis* (Mantova 1519) e Battista Fiera, *Opusculum de anime immortalitate contra Pomponatium Mantuanum* (Venezia 1525).

Come spiega Gilson nel suo studio sulla polemica che si accese intorno al libro del Pomponazzi, il problema era stato aperto dal Gaetano o *Cajetanus*, il teologo domenicano nato a Gaeta (Tommaso de Vio, 1469–1534), il quale, benché fosse autore di un commento alla *Summa Theologiae* di Tommaso d’Aquino, diversamente da Tommaso non credeva che da Aristotele si ricavasse una dimostrazione filosofica dell’immortalità dell’anima. Da qui prese le mosse Pomponazzi per sostenere non la tesi della mortalità dell’anima, ma la tesi che secondo Aristotele l’anima può operare solo sulla *fantasia*, la quale raccoglie i dati sensoriali dell’esperienza, sicché, morendo il corpo e cessando con esso l’attività ricettiva e rielaborativa dei dati del mondo sensibile, anche l’anima viene meno. Nell’immortalità dell’anima si poteva credere (e Pomponazzi ribadì sempre che questa era anche la sua convinzione personale) per fede, non già per la via di Aristotele. Il *De immortalitate animae* era però un libro pericoloso per chi pensava che Tommaso d’Aquino fosse riuscito nel dimostrare filosoficamente l’immortalità dell’anima grazie ad Aristotele (a questo scopo S. Tommaso aveva elaborato il concetto dell’anima come *forma sostanziale* del corpo, capace in quanto tale di sopravvivere alla morte del corpo stesso): se Aristotele e la ragione erano tutt’uno, colpire la soluzione tomistica significava togliere fondamento alla dimostrabilità razionale di un cardine essenziale del cristianesimo. Ciò spiega il rapidissimo propagarsi della polemica.

È interessante la pacifica composizione della controversia:¹² proprio un domenicano, Crisostomo Javelli da Casale, dottore di teologia del convento di Bologna (la città in cui insegnava Pomponazzi), garantì sulla sincerità delle dichiarazioni ripetute con le quali il filosofo dichiarava la propria fede cristiana, e l’invitò a indicare prove razionali a favore dell’immortalità dell’anima. Poiché, secondo Pomponazzi (e tanti altri peripatetici rinascimentali), Aristotele e la ragione (e con essa la filosofia) erano tutt’uno o quasi, Pomponazzi invitò lo Javelli a individuare lui simili prove; e lo Javelli scrisse con argomentazioni attinte da fonti cristiane che poco avevano a che fare con l’aristotelismo universitario. In tal modo si placava una controversia a tratti aspra, nella quale Pomponazzi, che a lezione amava ironizzare sui frati che lo criticavano, era in ultima analisi d’accordo con il domenicano De Vio.

12 GILSON (1961), 259–77.

3. *L'età della critica letteraria e la Poetica di Aristotele: questioni e controversie*

Vorrei soffermarmi ora, anche se in maniera molto sintetica, sull'ultima, in ordine di tempo, delle opere di Aristotele presentatesi all'attenzione della cultura europea: la *Poetica*, che ebbe lunga autorità, in Italia e in Europa, dalla metà del XVI secolo fino alle soglie del Romanticismo. Il ritardo con cui si comincia a studiare la *Poetica*, rimasta ignorata per secoli, dipende probabilmente da ragioni molteplici, tra le quali la più evidente (ma certo non l'unica) va individuata nella circostanza che la *Poetica* non faceva parte del *corpus* delle opere di Aristotele (logiche, fisiche, metafisiche e politico-morali) che circolavano nelle Università europee, non rientrava insomma nei programmi anche di insegnamento. Fatto sta che è un umanista, non uno scolastico, Francesco Robortello, che nel 1548 pubblica il testo greco della *Poetica*, con traduzione latina e ampio commento anch'esso in latino. Il secondo commento, anch'esso in latino, alla *Poetica* fu pubblicato nel 1550 e si deve a Vincenzo Maggi, professore di filosofia negli Studi di Padova e poi di Ferrara. Tuttavia al Maggi era stata impartita un'ottima educazione umanistica (ormai formazione umanistica e scolastico-universitaria potevano sommarsi, come anche nel caso di Agostino Nifo; molto più rara era una simile confluenza nel sec. XV). È notevole, inoltre, che la gestazione degli interessi sulla *Poetica* risalga, tra i letterati più precoci (ormai sempre meno raramente padroni del greco) già alla fine degli anni Trenta, come si apprende da una lettera del Trissino datata 1538, che chiedeva aiuto al Maggi circa l'interpretazione di alcuni luoghi della *Poetica*.

Traduzioni e commenti in latino e in volgare si succedono numerosi, in Italia, per più di mezzo secolo (e ogni commentatore discute con varietà di toni i propri predecessori); contemporaneamente fioriscono numerosi gli scritti critici fondati sulla teoria aristotelica, e sui rapporti sussistenti fra la teoria e le realizzazioni dei poeti moderni. L'esegesi delle poche ma difficili pagine di Aristotele è perseguita con serietà e accanimento, per amor di restauro critico fine a sé stesso ma anche e soprattutto per un fine militante e creativo: il poema epico di matrice classica, per esempio, è messo a paragone (in regime di convergenza o distinzione od opposizione) con la tradizione, che è medievale, del romanzo cavalleresco, lungo un itinerario che, partendo dall'Italia (nella quale la *Gerusalemme Liberata* non sarebbe stata concepita e realizzata senza queste premesse critico-teoriche), si diffonde in Europa. In Italia, poi, non è facile conciliare l'epica cristiana della *Divina Commedia* con le categorie aristoteliche, e difficoltà analoghe si presentano riguardo all'accettabilità di Ariosto, assai poco conciliabile con l'unità d'azione. I tentativi di sostenere che il *Furioso* è un poema aristotelico sono manifestamente infondati, tuttavia accanto ai fautori del Tasso (i modernisti) non

mancono i difensori dell'Ariosto (per non dire che, a giudizio di altri critici, il consenso per uno dei due non esclude l'ammirazione per l'altro): discussioni di questo tipo saranno rifiutate dal gusto romantico, che le giudicava nocive per la libertà dell'invenzione letteraria, ma in un arco plurisecolare Aristotele è stato un riferimento importante, anche se più volte rifiutato o (è il caso di Shakespeare) ignorato, per la teoria critica e la prassi letteraria.

Ancora nel 1737 Metastasio si produrrà in una lucida, acuta comparazione,¹³ scritta con garbo e felicità di giudizio critico, tra Ariosto e Tasso: educato all'ariostismo, quando acquistò maggiore indipendenza di giudizio Metastasio scoprì le bellezze della *Liberata* e, come dice concludendo l'analisi dei due poemi, per la sua 'forse soverchia propensione all'ordine, all'esattezza, al sistema' si decise per la superiorità del Tasso (contraddicendo in tal modo Gianvincenzo Gravina, suo amato maestro). In questo sintetico scritto in forma epistolare Metastasio, che non amava pronunciare simili sentenze, accontentò il suo corrispondente e fornì un bel saggio di critica letteraria, nel quale si ammirano sia il gusto e l'amore per la poesia sia la capacità di ragionarne in termini critici.¹⁴

A far pendere il piatto della bilancia a favore del Tasso contano molto la solida struttura unitaria della *Liberata* e la sapiente invenzione degli episodi. Nel genere drammatico, strutturalmente diverso dall'epica tassiana, Metastasio fonde perfettamente la razionale, rigorosa gradualità di trame portate passo passo al graduale scioglimento dell'azione, e in ciò si dimostra fedele ad Aristotele, maestro suo come diversamente del Tasso. Naturalmente Metastasio è troppo fine lettore (e critico) per non apprezzare le bellezze del *Furioso*, i cui intrecci, tuttavia, corrispondono a criteri lontani dai suoi. Metastasio poi, salvo errore, è l'ultimo poeta europeo che abbia tradotto e commentato la *Poetica* (il suo *Estratto dell'Arte Poetica di Aristotele e considerazioni su la medesima* fu ultimato nel 1773), in seguito oggetto di lavoro esegetico da parte di una filologia classica ormai priva di ogni pretesa di controllo sulla letteratura creativa del teatro tragico, del poema eroico o di altri generi letterari.¹⁵

La teoria critica del secondo Cinquecento ingloba dunque la tradizionale *Ars poetica* oraziana nelle categorie della mimesi, della catarsi, dell'unità d'azione, che solo la *Poetica* di Aristotele formula con rigore teorico e definitorio. Di

13 La comparazione, come è noto, è un procedimento retorico di lunga fortuna nelle scuole della Grecia e di Roma antiche.

14 La lettera, datata Vienna, 7 aprile 1737, è diretta *A un cavalier napoletano* (METASTASIO, ed. Brunelli [1951-1954], III, 152-5). Molti anni dopo, il 10 ottobre 1768, lo stesso giudizio fu riusato da Metastasio in una lettera a Domenico Diodati (Napoli), che ricalca esattamente lo scritto di trent'anni prima, con varianti trascurabili e un leggero ampliamento nel finale (Id., IV, 663-8; il testo su Ariosto e Tasso alle pp. 665-7). Non so se le due lettere incorporino una comparazione scritta in data più antica e rimasta nel cassetto, o se lo scrittore abbia conservato la minuta della lettera del 1737 per riutilizzarla nel 1768.

15 Per un riscontro eloquente si veda COOPER / GUDEMAN (1928).

conseguenza, sul metro della *Poetica* sono misurate (non senza inconvenienti, che dipendono talora dalla teoria aristotelica, talora dall'intelligenza e dalla finezza di chi ne applica i principi) le nuove tragedie di stampo classico, come la *Canace* dello Speroni, o i nuovi generi letterari, come il dramma pastorale del Guarini.

Naturalmente in questa sede è appena possibile una menzione fugace di questa pubblicistica molto fitta e spesso molto interessante. Dalla preziosa trattazione sistematica sulla critica letteraria, teorica e pratica, del XVI secolo, che si deve a Weinberg,¹⁶ riporto i titoli dell'indice dedicati alla critica pratica (o applicata), che si risolvono spesso in discussioni più o meno accese e danno vita a una pubblicistica, inedita o a stampa, contrassegnata da polemiche di varia temperatura:

Part One: Poetic Theory

[...]

Part Two: Practical Criticism

The Quarrel over Dante

The Quarrel over Dante (Concluded)

The Quarrel over Speroni's *Canace* and Dramatic Poetry

The Quarrel over Ariosto and Tasso

The Quarrel over Ariosto and Tasso (Concluded)

The Quarrel over Guarini's *Pastor fido*

Conclusions on Practical Criticism

È sufficiente scorrere la bibliografia della letteratura primaria alla fine dell'opera di Weinberg,¹⁷ per ricavare una titolografia che suggerisce intonazioni diverse, orientate verso un esame obiettivo o verso posizioni di difesa o di biasimo.

Frequente è nei titoli il termine *giudizio* che, a partire dal significato fondamentale di procedimento giuridico avente lo scopo di decidere su una controversia ed emettere una sentenza, conosce un'estensione semantica e si applica al campo della critica letteraria e del giudizio critico. Di per sé la parola è neutra, ma nel corso del *giudizio* e del discorso che lo sorregge si giunge a un verdetto. Dall'ambiente del tribunale, dunque, l'impiego di *giudizio* si applica alla critica letteraria: così, gli Accademici Alterati (Firenze) nel 1575 inviano il loro *Giuditio sulla commedia d'Argisto Giuffredi intitolata Orsola*.¹⁸

Termini neutri sono anche *parere*, *ragionamento*, *discorsi et annotationi*, *observationi*, *considerationi*. Ludovico Castelvetro, critico severo e temuto, è autore

16 Insieme con l'opera di WEINBERG (1961) ricordo il volume, quasi contemporaneo, di HATHAWAY (1962), dal cui titolo, *The Age of Criticism*, deriva la prima parte del titolo di questo paragrafo.

17 WEINBERG (1961), 1113-58.

18 Qui e in seguito la citazione dell'autore permette di risalire alla bibliografia di Weinberg e alla sua trattazione di testi spesso poco conosciuti; rinvio alla pagina quando è necessario. I testi manoscritti si distinguono per la mancanza dell'anno.

sia di un ‘*Giuditio delle comedie di Terentio*’,¹⁹ sia di un ‘*Parere sopra ciascuna comedia di Plauto*’.

Per gli altri termini citati si possono ricordare, di Bernardo Tasso, il ‘*Ragionamento della poesia*’ (1562); di G. Guastavini, i ‘*Discorsi et annotationi sopra la Gierusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso*’ (1592); di L. Benucci, le ‘*Osservazioni sopra la Comedia di Dante Aligieri [sic]*’; di G. P. Malacreta, le ‘*Considerationi sopra il Pastor Fido tragicomedia pastorale del molto Illustre Sig. Cavalier Battista Guarini*’.

Nel 1550 esce anonimo (l’autore è Giovambattista Giraldi Cintio) un aspro ‘*Giuditio sopra la Tragedia di Canace e Macareo*’²⁰ di Sperone Speroni, il quale si difende con un’ ‘*Apologia contra il Giuditio fatto sopra la Canace*’, affidato alla circolazione manoscritta e pubblicato postumo molto più tardi, nel 1597. Si tratta di uno dei molti casi nei quali chi è attaccato risponde difendendo, e la serie delle repliche può svilupparsi a lungo, come si accennerà.

Analogamente, alle critiche di Castelvetro alla sua canzone *Venite all’ombra de’ gran gigli d’oro*, Annibal Caro risponde in prosa e in verso (=versi?) con l’ ‘*Apologia degli Academici di Banchi di Roma*’ (uscita nel 1558). La risposta alle critiche di Castelvetro, che lo stesso Caro riporta nell’*Apologia*, non entra nel merito tecnico, ed è impostata, invece, sul tema della *maldicenza*: è una lunga, brillante replica satirica, in prosa e in verso, che ha per bersaglio la persona del detrattore.²¹ Padrone dello stile comico, Caro mette in ridicolo l’avversario; quando però Castelvetro pubblica un intero volume nel quale asciuttamente lo sommerge di osservazioni critiche,²² Caro, che pure non era affatto uno sprovveduto, anche se nell’*Apologia* si era detto ‘uomo più di corte che di studi’²³ (in realtà era l’uno e l’altro), chiama a soccorrerlo l’amico Benedetto Varchi. Questi assolse il suo compito tardi, e molto parzialmente, con il lungo dialogo *L’Ercolano*, pubblicato postumo, e ormai fuori tempo, nel 1570 (Varchi era morto nel 1565).

Accade anche che un’opera intitolata *ragionamento* o *discorso* espliciti il tenore, favorevole o contrario, dello scritto: è il caso di Girolamo Zoppio, ‘*Ragionamenti in difesa di Dante*’ (1583) e, all’opposto, del ‘*Discorso nel quale si mostra l’imperfezione della comedia di Dante*’, operetta diffusa manoscritta sotto il falso

19 Segnalo con il corsivo la terminologia critica passata in rassegna.

20 WEINBERG (1961), 1122.

21 CARO (1912), 3–184. Il titolo completo è il seguente: *Apologia de gli Academici di Banchi di Roma contra a messer Lodovico Castelvetro da Modena in forma d’uno spaccio di maestro Pasquino con alcune operette del Predella del Buratto di ser Fedocco in difesa de la seguente canzone del commendatore Anibal Caro appartenenti tutte a l’uso de la lingua toscana et al vero modo di poetare.*

22 CASTELVETRO (senza data).

23 CARO, ed. Turri (1912), 5.

nome di un Ridolfo Castravilla, che dette spunto a molte confutazioni. Sotto lo pseudonimo di Donato Rofia, Jacopo Mazzoni pubblica un *'Discorso in difesa della Comedia del divino poeta Dante'* (1572) e, nel 1587, un grande volume *'Della difesa della Commedia di Dante'*.

Non necessariamente, però, l'*apologia* è in difesa propria, come dimostra, ancora dello Speroni, l'*Apologia di Dante'*, rimasta a lungo manoscritta fino all'età moderna. In questo caso sono più frequenti i titoli con la parola *difesa*: ricordo solo *'In difesa della lingua fiorentina e di Dante'* di Carlo Lenzoni, opera incompiuta e postuma pubblicata nel 1556 dal suo amico Cosimo Bartoli.

Gli anelli della catena di critiche e di confutazioni delle critiche possono moltiplicarsi, come avviene nelle questioni su Dante, Tasso, Guarini. Affiorano perciò nei titoli la *risposta* e la *replica*: al giudizio anonimo contro la *Canace* dello Speroni Felice Paciutto oppone una *'Risposta all'autore del Giudicio della Tragedia di Canace e di Macareo'*, rimasta manoscritta e pubblicata solo due secoli dopo; anche manoscritta è la *'Risposta al Discorso di Mr. Ridolfo Castravilla contro a Dante'* di Antonio degli Albizzi. Nel 1584 Camillo Pellegrino pubblica *'Il Carrafa o vero della epica poesia'* nel quale l'autore, senza contrapposizioni estremistiche, giudica la *Gerusalemme Liberata* alquanto superiore all'*Orlando Furioso*. Ribattono nello stesso anno gli Accademici della Crusca con una *'Difesa dell'Orlando Furioso dell'Ariosto. Contra 'l Dialogo dell'Epica Poesia di Cammillo Pellegrino'*²⁴ cui risponde rapidamente (1585) il Pellegrino con la *'Replica alla risposta degli Accademici della Crusca fatta contra il Dialogo dell'epica poesia in difesa, come e' dicono, dell'Orlando Furioso dell'Ariosto'*. Nasce così la più accanita delle polemiche letterarie della seconda metà del Cinquecento, che in forma discontinua e attenuata prosegue fino all'età di Metastasio.

L'esame della polemica su Ariosto e Tasso, molto interessante, non rientra nei limiti di questo lavoro: si può segnalare, tuttavia, un aspetto rimasto, che io sappia, inosservato. La disputa in questione non vede succedersi una fila ordinata di partecipanti pro e contro, ed è difficile da seguire per la rarità delle stampe dell'epoca e per l'accavallarsi e l'intrecciarsi dei disputanti. Protagonista della polemica contro il capolavoro del Tasso è l'Accademia della Crusca e più precisamente Leonardo Salviati, che vi partecipa sotto il nome accademico di *In-farinato* (né Tasso sapeva quale persona fisica vi si celasse dietro). È notevole la modalità testuale applicata dal Salviati, che non credo usata prima (né, forse, poi). In risposta a G. Ottonelli, *'Sopra l'abuso del dire Sua Santità, Sua Maestà, Sua Altezza [...]. Con le difese della Gierusalemme Liberata del Sign. Torq. Tasso dall'opposizioni degli Academici della Crusca'* (1586) Salviati risponde nello stesso anno, sotto pseudonimo, con una pubblicazione il cui lungo titolo ne

24 WEINBERG (1961), 1146.

illustra con chiarezza la novità testuale: ‘Considerazioni di Carlo Fioretti da Vernio intorno a un discorso di M. Giulio Ottonelli da Fanano sopra ad alcune dispute dietro alla Gierusalèm di Torq. Tasso. *Con quella parte d’esso discorso dell’Ottonelli la qual pertiene a questo soggetto, divisa in 187. particelle, e sotto a ciascuna particella la risposta particolare del detto Fioretti in forma e ordine di dialogo*’. Dunque Salviati, abbandonando ogni discorso d’insieme, ha sminuzzato in 187 segmenti il testo dell’Ottonelli, e a ciascuno ha apposto la sua replica, con ciò dando vita, come lui stesso dice, a un dialogo: forma discorsiva classica e rinascimentale (non ignota, peraltro, alla cultura del Medioevo), che in questo caso è però opera non di due personaggi che, esistenti o meno, interagiscono nel dialogo (come nel teatro) in figura di persone fittizie, ma di autori diversi e avversi, il secondo dei quali, all’insaputa del primo, trasforma il testo monologico dell’avversario in una testualità critico-dialogica di nuovo genere.

4. Teoria della disputa letteraria in uno scritto di Vincenzo Borghini

Vincenzo²⁵ Borghini (Firenze 1515–1580), benedettino (della Congregazione riformata di S. Giustina di Padova) di sincera, convinta pietà, ascritto alla Badia di Firenze, fu incaricato, grazie alla sua rettitudine e alle sue capacità lavorative e amministrative, di molti e gravosi compiti da Cosimo e Francesco dei Medici: sarà sufficiente ricordare l’impegno direttivo dell’Ospedale fiorentino degli Innocenti. Fu inoltre consulente del programma degli affreschi eseguiti dal Vasari e dai suoi aiuti nel Salone dei Cinquecento in Palazzo della Signoria (1563–1565), che celebravano le glorie di Firenze e dei Medici ed esigevano perciò una conoscenza approfondita della storia e delle discusse origini della città.

Viene a taglio, del Borghini, un breve testo incompiuto, *Dello scrivere contro altrui*, del 1559, che è stato definito una sorta di ‘galateo per la polemica letteraria’.²⁶ Secondo Borghini vanno evitate ‘parole ingiuriose et dispettose’,²⁷ ed è bene non rischiare d’incorrere nel ‘nome di arrogante’:²⁸ chi replica a una critica deve tenere un atteggiamento pacato perché il suo scopo non è convincere di errore l’avversario, ma i giudici del tribunale o, nel caso della disputa letteraria, i dotti. L’obiettivo è il *persuadere*, scopo finale della retorica, alla cui strategia il disputante farà bene ad attenersi:

25 Secondo la pronuncia del tempo, attestata dallo stesso BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 299.

26 Così BELLONI (1996) nello studio in cui ha richiamato l’attenzione su questo breve scritto; lo stesso studioso ha ripubblicato l’inizio del trattatello: BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 5–16; per la pubblicazione integrale si risale a BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841).

27 BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 9; BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 5.

28 BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 9; BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 4.

essendo questo modo di scrivere come una causa civile, dove si disputa non del dare o de l'havere, ma del saper o non saper, o esser vera o falsa una cosa, dove si procederà quasi quasi nel medesimo modo, par ragionevole servirsi delle medesime regole de' rhetori, i quali, essendo il fine di questa parte il persuadere i giudici e tirarli nella sua openione, per le persone loro mettono quella parte che chiamono ῥήθως, et infra le prime cose mettono la *modestia*, et biasimono soprattutto la *confidentia et arrogantia* del dicitore, il quale, [...] come in cosa già ottenuta, ne parli alla sicura; et non senza ragione: perché sapendo che a lor tocca a giudicare, si sdegnano che colui di già habbia dato il giuditio lui [...]. Cosa che appunto interviene in queste dispute, nelle quali chi scrive ha dir l'openion sua, confermandola et forzificandola il più et meglio che e' può, ma il giuditio l'ha lasciare a chi legge, et non si dar la sentenza in favore da sé a sé...²⁹

Il breve scritto di Borghini propone un interessante parallelo tra il duello cavalleresco e il metaforico duello culturale. Borghini suggerisce, infatti, che sulle regole della cavalleria si possano modellare, almeno in parte, i comportamenti da tenere in una disputa letteraria, allo scopo di rendere quest'ultima non più violenta, ma più regolata e moderata. Chi è oggetto di un'offesa può lavarla sfidando l'offensore (non mancano riferimenti alla cavalleria medievale e ai *cavalieri erranti*);³⁰ oppure, se l'offeso è una donna o un vecchio, al suo posto può scendere in campo una terza persona. Lo stesso sistema può trasportarsi nel campo delle difese letterarie (all'attacco Borghini è poco interessato, come si vedrà), e chi è attaccato potrà difendersi personalmente o per mezzo di altri; e se l'autore attaccato è morto, questa è l'unica via per difenderne il buon nome o piuttosto la validità dell'opera sua.

Di fatto Borghini intende replicare (e per questo motivo la difesa gli interessa più dell'attacco) all'egemonia degli editori veneziani che diffondono la letteratura in volgare senza averne una conoscenza adeguata, e a uno dei suoi maggiori esponenti (se non il maggiore), Girolamo Ruscelli, nominato due volte in questo opuscolo.³¹ Il suo obiettivo principale è difendere Dante e, con Dante, un'idea di letteratura diversa da quella veicolata da Venezia. Inoltre Borghini mette in rilievo che i testi di Dante e Boccaccio spesso non sono capiti dai consulenti editoriali attivi a Venezia, i quali incorrono, per incompetenza e frettolosità, in frequenti spiegazioni sbagliate o in correzioni banalizzanti dei testi.

È anche importante la base morale che giustifica la contesa letteraria e non permette o non dovrebbe permettere comportamenti sconvenienti che screditano

quel santo nome degli studi d'umanità, nome derivato dall'uomo, che significa cortesia, gentilezza, bonarietà e tutta amorevolezza; dove pel contrario, se si va usando di questi modi, e che gli uomini letterati vadano perseguendo l'un l'altro, come si fa, che come egli esce fuori uno scrittore che con quel poco che e' può voglia giovare al mondo, *par ch'egli*

29 BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 9–10; BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 4.

30 BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 18.

31 BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 12; BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 5–6 e 9.

esca una lepre in caccia, tanti cani ha alla coda in un subito, e tante pertiche, talché [...] s'avrebbero a chiamare studi di bestialità.³²

L'immagine dei cani che inseguono (e perseguitano) l'autore di un libro fresco di stampa è all'opposto della gentile metafora della verità nascosta nelle lontane antichità, cercata da cacciatori-dotti in luoghi diversi, il che non comporta spirito di parte o astio, ma collaborazione. Così scrive Borghini in una lettera a Girolamo Mei, che fa parte dello scambio epistolare tra i due che documenta la loro controversia su un punto importante della storia di Firenze (§ 5):

fra noi non è combattimento o disputa alcuna per nimistà o animosità di parte, ma per amor del vero e per gentilezza; anzi non combattiamo, ma siamo ambiduoï dietro a una bella cerva che ci si fugge dinanzi, per pigliarla, e si è nascosta in certi boschi e macchie d'antichità, ed un di noi la crede pigliare in un luogo, l'altro in un altro.³³

Per moderare non lo scontro militare ma la contesa letteraria, Borghini insiste sul paragone tra regole della cavalleria e regole della disputa, e in poche parole definisce la natura del cavaliere e del dotto:

la cavalleria presuppone forza, animosità e bontà, ma il nervo consiste nelle due ultime, il quale per una voce sola chiamerò onore [...]. Dico dunque che il nervo del cavaliere è l'onore, e perso l'onore, perde l'esser cavaliere [...]. Ma la dottrina ha tutto il nervo suo nel sapere, e perdendo il sapere, perde l'esser tale.³⁴

Ancora in tema di milizia e cultura, ecco le armi consentite e quelle proibite:

Resta a dire qualcosa dell'arme, le quali in quanto al fatto sono diverse, sendo quelle di ferro e queste di parole, ma in quanto alle qualità, hanno le medesime considerazioni, chiamandosi certe ordinarie e civili, certe altre strasordinarie e bestiali, le quali da cavalieri d'onore sono abominate, come sarebbero navagge, e ne' dotti *le villanie, le invettive*; perché in verità le liti degli uomini dotti avrebbero a esser senza collora e senza rabbia, e solo a beneficio della verità, se già l'offesa non fosse stata di sorte *villana ed asinesca*, che rendere il contraccambio della medesima moneta, sebben non è laudabile, sia almanco permissibile o tollerabile.³⁵

Ho messo in rilievo il termine *invettive*, corrente nell'età dell'Umanesimo latino (§ 1), e *villania*, perché anche Borghini ne fa uso in alcune sue polemiche, soggette a una particolare relazione con l'interlocutore.

32 BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 15.

33 Citato da Aiazzi in BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), XIIIn. Un'immagine analogica in BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 65, in un dialogo tra due interlocutori fittizi, che ha per oggetto il Bembo: 'qui non si ha, né per me difendendo, né per voi opponendo, a voler finalmente cacciare altro che il vero, pur che i nostri segugi lo sappino scoprire e i levrieri prendere.'

34 BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), 18.

35 *Id.*, 19–20. La *navaggia* è un'arma da taglio, dalla lama affilatissima, a serramanico (la parola è dallo spagnolo *navaja*, entrato in italiano nel XVI secolo).

Nel trattatello Borghini annuncia una minuta casistica, ma il lavoro fu ben presto lasciato interrotto, il che non gli impedì di dedicare alcune pagine³⁶ a una digressione che aveva ben poco che fare con la linea discorsiva della polemica letteraria e si addentrava invece nella storia bassomedievale di Firenze. È un esempio dell'incostante tenuta del tema principale, e della deviazione verso un argomento collaterale: uno dei motivi dell'incompiutezza degli scritti del Borghini e insieme della loro ristrutturabilità e ridestinazione.³⁷ È stato suggerito, infatti, che il trattatello sulla polemica letteraria sia confluito in un'originale esposizione sulle caratteristiche filologiche della tradizione manoscritta dei testi volgari, la *Lettera intorno a' manoscritti antichi*. Anche questo scritto rimase incompiuto, e parte dei suoi materiali fu travasata, in altra forma, e attraverso un lungo processo di riadattamenti, nelle *Annotationi et discorsi sopra alcuni luoghi del Decameron* (1573),³⁸ di cui si dirà nell'ultimo paragrafo di questo lavoro.

Se il *Dello scrivere contro altrui* fosse stato portato a termine, avrebbe probabilmente raccomandato l'utilità, almeno in certi casi, di tacere il nome dell'avversario. Scrivendo al vescovo Antonio Altoviti (1573), che in un suo scritto (rimasto inedito) aveva confutato le feroci critiche mosse a Dante dal misterioso Castravilla, Borghini consigliava di non nominare neppure lo pseudonimo dietro il quale si nascondeva l'autore della stroncatura, per evitare all'ignoto la fama scandalistica di cui era probabilmente alla ricerca:

e' mi par di vedere, che in questi tempi alcuni si vadano cercando fama col biasimare questo o quello scrittore; e tanto più quanto con persone illustri e care al mondo s'impacciano, giudicando, come colui che arse il tempio di Diana, di potere per tal via farsi conoscere [...] e se io avessi avuto a scrivere, credo che mi sarei risoluto di fingere, che si potessero dire quelle cose, che colui dice, quasi rispondendo a tacite obiezioni, come spesso si fa, dissimulando il trattato di colui, e mostrando più presto muovermi da romori e fama sparsa in comune e confusamente.³⁹

36 Id, 9–12.

37 Un altro esempio è fornito dal *Trattato della moneta* che a un'acutissima trattazione dell'argomento fa seguire una lunga divagazione sul modo di scrivere le cifre, particolarmente nel sistema dei numeri romani (BORGHINI [1584–1585], II, 127–250).

38 Si veda su ciò, e sulla cronologia lunga di queste rielaborazioni, scritte e riscritte, DRUSI (2012), 81–129. Del suo travaglio compositivo, dei tempi lunghi, della riscrittura e del riorientamento che essa comportava, Borghini era ben consapevole, come mostra ciò che confida a Onofrio Panvinio in una lettera del 1566 (*Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 52–61, a 53–5).

39 *Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 281; BORGHINI, ed. Belloni 1998, 165–6, da cui cito. Anche altrove scrive, sempre a proposito del Castravilla: 'Mi piace il Mazzoni che non nomina mai questo Castravilla, il quale è facil cosa che ad altro fine non accendesse questo fuoco che per essere nominato; et ben farà chiunque scriverà contro a questo suo libretto, nol nominar mai' (BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi [2009], 101). Il riferimento al Mazzoni riguarda la sua prima replica al Castravilla, del 1572.

Diversamente dalla dubbia fama dell'antico Erostrato, l'identità del Castravilla è rimasta ignota. C'era poi un altro motivo, prosegue Borghini, per non nominare il maligno contraddittore di Dante: circolava a Firenze la voce che a collaborare al libello si fosse prestato un fiorentino: un vero tradimento della patria, che era meglio passare sotto silenzio. Una nuova applicazione della distinzione tra avversari interni a Firenze e avversari esterni si avrà modo di osservare nel § 6.

5. Borghini: antichità fiorentine e attualità

Ottimo conoscitore delle lingue e letterature classiche, nel tempo lasciategli libero dagli incarichi Borghini si dedicò allo studio della storia e della lingua di Firenze, e nel XVI secolo fu il conoscitore più sensibile e competente del volgare fiorentino dalle origini al suo tempo.

Le troppe occupazioni di Borghini, da lui non cercate, spiegano solo in parte perché la sua dottrina non si sia espressa in esiti compiuti, e perché in vita la sua notorietà non abbia superato le mura cittadine. Critico severo dell'editoria e del disinvolto trattamento riservato alle edizioni dei grandi autori fiorentini del XIV secolo, affidate ai curatori attivi nel fiorentino mercato editoriale di Venezia, Borghini diffida della stampa, e il poco che di lui viene pubblicato in vita esce in forma anonima. I numerosi manoscritti superstiti contengono moltissimi appunti, considerazioni, testi di notevole lunghezza privi, però, della parola fine. Perfezionista incontentabile, Borghini non riesce a dare una conclusione almeno provvisoria a una sua scrittura e, desideroso com'è di spiegare tutto, abbandona spesso la linea principale del discorso per seguire un problema collaterale finché la divagazione non s'interrompe e il tema centrale è abbandonato, per essere poi ripreso in una diversa stesura. Il fatto è che, incline a un modo discorsivo molto analitico, Borghini pretende anche a una trattazione esaustiva di temi di ampio respiro, alla quale non riesce ad arrivare.⁴⁰ Il *Trattatello dello scrivere contro altrui* è solo uno dei molti esempi di questo abito compositivo.

Dopo l'edizione postuma dei suoi scritti storici (1584–85), lettere del Borghini sono edite nella raccolta settecentesca delle *Prose fiorentine*, e alcuni testi riemergono sporadicamente nel XIX secolo. Negli ultimi decenni studi monografici e nuove pubblicazioni di testi borghiniani hanno permesso una conoscenza più compiuta della sua opera.

Conviene partire dalla fine della sua carriera quando, ormai anziano, il Priore degli Innocenti redige un testamento (1574) nel quale chiede a un gruppo di amici

40 A questo proposito è eloquente la lunga citazione di Borghini, tra confessione e giustificazione, presente in uno dei manoscritti fiorentini studiati nel lavoro di Pozzi (1975), 91.

di ordinare le tante carte accumulate durante la sua vita operosa. Il testamento esprime la volontà che i suoi scritti siano distinti in tre centri d'interesse:

1. Della Verità de l'Origine della patria nostra;
2. De la Nobiltà del sangue;
3. Della proprietà della sua favella, la quale hoggi per una delle tre principali del mondo si conta.⁴¹

L'intento consiste nel ricostruire la fondazione di Firenze e percorrere la storia dei secoli meno documentati, all'incirca fino al XII. Benché Borghini abbia avuto sempre la massima attenzione per la lingua della sua città, solo piuttosto tardi il terzo argomento si affianca ai primi due, a significare che la vera storia di Firenze, dei suoi inizi, dei suoi sviluppi, non può fare a meno, per una compiuta identificazione della civiltà cittadina, di considerarne anche la lingua. Non si può tacere, poi, che ricostruire i tempi oscuri e poco documentati anteriori al XIII secolo significa anche risalire alla formazione della nobiltà di Firenze e insomma raggiungere la Firenze di Cacciaguida: non per nulla Dante è la Stella Polare del Borghini storico non meno che del Borghini filologo e studioso del fiorentino.

Un'altra molla di questo programma, che non si limita alle fonti storiografiche ma si fonda su un'ampia varietà di documenti, è la volontà di sostenere la *libertà* (nel senso dell'indipendenza da dominazioni straniere) di Firenze, e di mostrare che non vi è traccia di una dedizione all'Impero: problemi, questi, che minavano, ancora nel XVI secolo (e oltre) i fondamenti del potere dei signori italiani che, saliti generalmente al governo per vie clamorosamente oppure (è il caso dei Medici di Firenze nel XV secolo) silenziosamente illegali, cercavano una legittimazione ottenendo il riconoscimento pontificio o facendosi concedere (in cambio di lauti pagamenti) il titolo di vicario imperiale. Una volta consolidati, ambivano a liberarsi da quel titolo di dipendenza, che era formale ma che poteva pur sempre essere fatto valere, prima o poi, in seguito a circostanze mutevoli, per esempio in un momento di crisi dinastica. Si pensi che nel XVIII secolo la magistratura degli Anziani esercitava le sue modeste capacità di governo nella piccola repubblica di Lucca, negando la licenza di pubblicare a stampa le *Cronache* di Giovanni Sercambi, scritte quasi quattro secoli prima, nel timore che l'Impero asburgico potesse trovarvi appigli per rivendicare propri privilegi su quella piccola città stato, indipendente e però fragilissima.⁴² Ai timori verso l'alto (l'Impero, le Monarchie nazionali, altri stati stranieri o peninsulari) si somma-

41 Cito dal testamento, in BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 106-7. Circa la *favella* fiorentina come 'una delle principali del mondo' si veda la novella delle tre principesse, figura delle tre lingue greca, latina, italiana, in POZZI, ed. (1988), 737-41.

42 Per vedere la luce le *Cronache* di Sercambi dovettero attendere l'Unità d'Italia: furono pubblicate nel 1892 da Salvatore Bongi, che nell'introduzione informa su questo caso di autocensura dovuta al timore (SERCAMBI, ed. Bongi [1982], I, VII-XI).

vano e facevano tutt'uno i rapporti dei governanti con i governati, ispirati a reciproca diffidenza; ma questo è un altro discorso.

Tornando a Borghini, il suo trattamento della storia fiorentina è ispirato dunque da un forte patriottismo personale; in secondo luogo, Borghini aveva dettato il programma sulle glorie passate e presenti che celebravano, con le gesta di Cosimo I dei Medici, le fortune (fino alla fresca conquista della repubblica di Siena) del Ducato di Firenze, dipinte da Giorgio Vasari. Al sentire personale di Borghini si univa quindi un aspetto pubblico molto delicato, tanto più che l'ambizioso programma degli affreschi con le glorie di Firenze e dei Medici era una sorta di dono beneaugurante in vista delle nozze di Francesco I dei Medici (coadiutore del padre Cosimo già dal 1564) con Giovanna d'Asburgo (figlia dell'Imperatore Ferdinando I), celebrate il 13 dicembre 1565.

Non intendo sostenere che quello del Borghini fosse un atteggiamento storiograficamente tendenzioso: all'onestà intellettuale della persona si univano infatti l'ampiezza dell'informazione e il rigore dell'interpretazione. È chiaro però che storia e politica anche nel lavoro di Borghini si fondono, come avviene spesso nella storiografia italiana, benché la miscela sia diversa da quella, poniamo, di un Machiavelli.

A Firenze il problema delle origini cittadine nasce con il nascere delle cronache previllaniane, giunge a una prima espressione compiuta con Giovanni Villani, viene ripreso dalla storiografia umanistica, per es. da Leonardo Bruni e da Poliziano, interessa fra gli altri Guicciardini.

Nel corso del XVI secolo, si diffondono in Italia e in Europa le falsificazioni del domenicano Annio da Viterbo, e alimentano una revisione dei miti delle origini, cosa che spinge Borghini a una nuova discussione del problema, e a misurarsi con una tesi diversa dalla sua, avanzata da Girolamo Mei, un concittadino allievo di Pier Vettori.

Questa occasione permette di seguire una controversia epistolare, condotta in modo garbato da entrambe le parti.

6. Dalla teoria alla pratica del galateo della disputa letteraria: una questione di storia fiorentina nella discussione tra Borghini e Girolamo Mei

Come si è anticipato nel paragrafo precedente, una polemica impegnativa ma serena Borghini ebbe, per via epistolare e quindi privatamente, con Girolamo Mei. A stampa si leggono lettere che il Mei, allora a Roma, scrisse a Borghini dal 4

gennaio 1566 al 17 gennaio 1567.⁴³ La discussione verte sulle origini di Firenze, nata come colonia romana secondo Borghini, mentre Mei difende un'origine più recente, da Desiderio re dei Longobardi. Mei è molto cortese con Borghini, e insiste sul rispetto per la verità e l'assenza di ogni intenzione personalistica: 'voglio bene ch'ella si contenti che io sia ostinato (se questo nome però si conviene) in preporre la verità sempre a ogni altro rispetto, senza dispregio però e contumelia d'uom vivente'; del Borghini loda 'la *modestia* [parola cara al suo interlocutore: § 4] nello scrivere' e cioè nell'avanzare le proprie critiche alle proposte dello stesso Mei. Suo scopo è dimostrare la 'somma della *sua* causa, che altro non è che voler ritrovar la verità del sito [...] e dell'origine della Città nostra ...'⁴⁴

Quanto a Borghini, di natura mite, critica il Mei con grande urbanità. Da qualche stralcio delle sue lettere al Mei risultano gentilezza (e anche decisione):

Io non approvo punto la natura di certi che come dissentono d'alcuno in qualcosa, ne fanno subito un caso criminale, il che mi è paruto sempre cosa d'animo vile e non troppo giudizioso e forse *poco umano* [si ricordi l'opposizione *umanità-bestialità*, § 4]. Perché è cosa naturale che uno, come del gusto interviene, abbia un'opponione a suo modo e diversa da quella d'un altro; ma *venire all'ingiurie o combatter per questo come le fiere*, or questo sì bene mi par da riprendere in ogni costumata e ben creata persona: e lodo voi che abbiate quel bell'animo che per le parole e molto più col processo della vostra lettera dimostrate; e vi prometto che in questa parte sarò sempre ancor io del medesimo giudizio che voi.⁴⁵

Nella lettera di Borghini al Mei, insieme con la bella immagine della verità come *cerva* difficile da raggiungere (§ 4) si legge anche:

desidero quanto io posso che le mie lettere vi sieno così grate sempre, come sono veramente le vostre a me; le quali quanto più mi contraddicono più sono a mia soddisfazione, e ne fo maggior capitale. E sebbene a chi non conoscesse il fine di questo nostro procedere nel *rispondere e replicare* che talvolta ci corre, potesse parere che fra noi fusse un certo che di *differenza e quasi lite*, io che so bene l'intenzion mia, e con questa fiducia fo la medesima coniettura della vostra, non dubito che conoscerete e piglierete queste mie risposte non come fatte per *contendere*, ma per ricercare il vero, che per queste dispute levandosene la ruggine a poco a poco (come fa il ferro nel maneggiarsi) si fa più chiaro e pulito, e per sgannar me ancora, se in qualche cosa, come può facilmente accadere, io fussi in errore ...⁴⁶

43 *Prose fiorentine*, IV.2, 69–173; la serie include una lettera di Mei al suo maestro Vettori, riguardante la discussione in corso (pp. 73–7). Lettere inedite (a quanto mi risulta) di Borghini a Mei sono indicate in BORGHINI, ed. Francalanci / Pellegrini (1993), 245.

44 *Prose fiorentine* IV.2, 72, 79, 150.

45 BORGHINI, ed. Aiazzi (1841), XI n.

46 *Id.*, XII n.

La squisita cortesia del Borghini non toglieva però la fermezza con cui avanzava le sue osservazioni critiche (e nelle lettere del Mei si avverte qua e là una certa tensione); infine, essendo crollati i presupposti della sua tesi, Mei si ritirò dalla discussione. La polemica rimase privata, anche se altri dotti, vicini ai due contendenti, ne furono a parte: il Vettori, maestro del Mei, e Onofrio Panvinio, amico del Borghini, e altri.⁴⁷

La posta in gioco era alta: il problema delle origini di Firenze aveva un rilievo di forte attualità in una città che si trovava sotto il dominio di un nuovo ramo dei Medici, ed era passata dall'alleanza plurisecolare con la Francia al sistema spagnolo e asburgico. La lucida intelligenza di Cosimo I comprendeva l'importanza della cultura e ne cercava il sostegno: un risultato importante del suo governo consisté nel recupero di una parte cospicua degli intellettuali fiorentini formati negli anni del regime repubblicano.

Tra Borghini e Mei era in questione un argomento delicato: Vasari e i suoi aiuti avevano appena completato di affrescare il Salone dei Cinquecento, nel quale la gloria dei Medici era messa in rilievo nel quadro di una storia di Firenze antica (e di nobile origine romana), che mai aveva perso l'indipendenza. Su Firenze che 'non era stata mai soggiogata' è significativa la lettera di Borghini al Duca Cosimo (4 novembre 1564) nel quale l'informa sul modo con cui raffigurare un concetto di ardua visualizzazione, perché 'il non esser vinto non si può dipingere'.⁴⁸

Sulle origini fiorentine era acuto l'interesse fin dal tempo dei miti di fondazione formati in fase medievale; ed erano cariche di significati politici attuali (repubblica o principato?) la collocazione delle origini fiorentine nella tarda età repubblicana di Roma o invece nei primi anni dell'Impero. Un altro nodo sul quale aveva insistito la tradizione era la distruzione della città da parte dei barbari, per opera di Attila o di Totila (un'incertezza alimentata anche dalla somiglianza dei nomi).⁴⁹ La tesi della distruzione comportava la rifondazione della città per opera di Carlo Magno. In tal modo alla distruzione barbarica subentrava la rinascita, che si doveva al Sacro Romano Impero, difensore della fede, in una prospettiva che proiettava all'indietro nel tempo la salda alleanza, fondata su sostanziose ragioni commerciali e politiche, che dal XIII secolo era arrivata fino alla discesa di Carlo VIII e oltre, fino alla vittoria spagnola.

La svolta in senso filospagnolo – una scelta obbligata, per la verità, nelle nuove condizioni politiche europee – si doveva alla convinta decisione del Duca Cosimo, che non si era semplicemente adattato alla legge del più forte, ma con intelligente realismo aveva colto, insieme con i nuovi condizionamenti, anche le nuove opportunità.

47 Cfr. rispettivamente *Prose fiorentine* IV.2, 73-7 e IV.4, 52-61.

48 BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 141 e 142.

49 RUBINSTEIN (2004a).

Le tesi principali del Mei erano che in origine Firenze era stata una colonia militare romana; che la localizzazione della colonia militare non coincideva con il sito di Firenze; che la fondazione della città era molto più tarda, e si doveva all'ultimo re longobardo, Desiderio, del quale citava un editto.⁵⁰

Borghini, invece, riprendeva la tradizione sulle tappe della storia fiorentina quale si era formata da Villani a Poliziano: le origini di Firenze risalivano agli anni di transizione dalla repubblica al principato augusteo, quando era già attivo politicamente il giovane Ottaviano: esattamente dal secondo triumvirato (43 a.C.), formato da Antonio, Lepido e appunto Ottaviano, era stata fondata la colonia romana sul sito di Firenze.⁵¹ Firenze non era stata distrutta da Attila, che non aveva mai attraversato la Toscana, e aveva avuto a soffrire, come il resto d'Italia, nel tempo della guerra greco-gotica (mentre era stata espugnata, dopo un durissimo assedio, la vicina Perugia). Perciò Carlo Magno non aveva riedificato Firenze, l'aveva solo abbellita e potenziata: in tal modo non si rinunciava alla tradizionale alleanza con l'impero carolingio (e poi, nel tempo di Borghini, asburgico), e soprattutto erano assicurate la continuità cittadina ed entro certi limiti (la dominazione longobarda era innegabile) la sua indipendenza da dominazioni straniere.

La discussione (le lettere del Mei vanno dal gennaio 1566 al gennaio dell'anno seguente) si concentrò intorno alla fondazione di Firenze da parte di Desiderio, attestata dall'editto attribuitogli: Borghini ne sostenne la falsità. Infine Mei abbandonò la discussione (in seguito avrebbe studiato proficuamente la teoria musicale greca), e il carteggio fra i due dotti ebbe termine.

Della falsità dell'editto di Desiderio Borghini ebbe conferma da Onofrio Panvinio.⁵² Il supposto editto, caposaldo della tesi del Mei, si dimostrò come uno dei molti falsi messi in circolazione da Annio da Viterbo (1437–1502, Maestro del Sacro Palazzo nel tempo di Alessandro VI Borgia), che ebbero larga diffusione, non solo italiana.⁵³

Benché la discussione con il Mei si sia svolta in un periodo di tempo piuttosto limitato, dalla consultazione dei *Discorsi* di Borghini pubblicati postumi (sono menzionati nelle volontà testamentarie già ricordate) risulta che la tematica discussa con il Mei attraversa non pochi dei testi raccolti e pubblicati dagli

50 Un'edizione parziale delle lettere del Mei (non delle responsive di Borghini) è nelle *Prose fiorentine* IV.2, 69–173 (tra le lettere ne sono intercalate due ad altri destinatari, uno dei quali è Pier Vettori). Per ciò che riguarda i nodi indicati nel testo, si veda specialmente 80–81 e 83–4. Sulla polemica epistolare Borghini–Mei cfr. E. Carrara e R. Drusi in BELLONI / DRUSI, ed. (2002), 16–20 e 155–66 rispettivamente. Un'informazione sintetica è nell'introduzione a BORGHINI, ed. Francalanci / Pellegrini / Carrara (2001), 39.

51 Cfr. RUBINSTEIN (1957).

52 Si veda la lettera di Borghini (1566) in *Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 52–61.

53 STEPHENS (2004).

esecutori testamentari. Stupisce anzitutto che questi ultimi, dopo la dedica al Granduca Francesco, figlio ed erede di Cosimo I, in una seconda dedica *Alla nobiltà Fiorentina* (della quale Borghini rintracciava la storia fino ai tempi del Cacciaguida dantesco), scrivano:

Il Duca Cosimo di gloriosa memoria nell'occasione delle nozze del Principe [Francesco dei Medici] fece dipignere la sala maggiore del Palagio, e nell'una facciata rappresentare la guerra di Pisa, nell'altra quella di Siena, nel palco varii accidenti della città, e principalmente l'origine di lei, e come ella fu Colonia de' Triumviri, e d'Augusto principalmente, secondo che già dall'Accademia del Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici era stato provato. Usci fuori in que' di un libretto d'una nuova opinione, che la città nostra fusse edificata ne' tempi più bassi dell'Imperio de' Longobardi, la quale con tutto che da' più intendenti non fusse approvata, diede nondimeno molto da ragionare, et al nostro D. Vincenzio Borghini, che aveva d'ordine del Duca divisato tutta la Pittura, impose necessità di difenderla, oltreché il Duca glielo comandò, ond'egli si mise a scrivere sopra ciò, e nel trattar dell'origine della Città molte altre considerazioni gli sovvennero, alla nobiltà e grandezza di lei pertinenti, e pensò di dividere l'intrapresa opera da intitolarsi *Dell'origine e nobiltà di Firenze* in tre parti: la prima assegnò all'origine della Città, la seconda ai suoi primi avvenimenti, mentre stette sotto l'Imperio Romano, e di poi soggetta alle tante mutazioni d'Italia fino all'anno 1200, dal qual tempo in qua li affari di lei gli parevano per le storie manifesti, la terza alla nostra lingua ...⁵⁴

Come si vede, gli affreschi del Vasari in *Palagio* restavano un punto importante per la gloria politica (e storica, culturale, artistica) del principato mediceo. Stupisce il cenno al *libretto* filolongobardo, per così dire, che sembrerebbe proprio quello del Mei, rimasto peraltro inedito: tuttavia non pare possibile intendere *libretto* nel senso di opera lasciata manoscritta (come è il caso dello scritto del Mei, di cui si conosce solo il manoscritto, tuttora inedito), e non so indicare una spiegazione a questo proposito. Con Poliziano, poi, e la sua teoria sull'origine di Firenze, si spiega il cenno all'Accademia di Lorenzo il Magnifico.

Nella prefazione a Francesco dei Medici i *Deputati* ribadiscono la tesi di Firenze figlia di Roma, fondata dopo l'istituzione del secondo triumvirato (43 a.C.): Borghini discuteva e in parte modificava in parte accettava le proposte di Leonardo Bruni e del Poliziano. Quanto al Villani, lo correggeva senza respingerlo, e in fondo non negava le strutture portanti del mito delle origini di Firenze, sia pur rivedute e corrette alla luce di indagini che non sarebbero state concepibili nel tempo dell'antico cronista. I *Discorsi* intervengono anche su alcuni altri nodi dei tempi meno documentati della storia di Firenze (con particolare riferimento, tra l'altro, alla dualità Fiesole–Firenze).

54 BORGHINI (1584–1585), I, pagine non numerate.

Senza indugiare su questi aspetti, che meriterebbero un esame non cursorio, mi limito a ricordare alcune pagine di Borghini che riguardano la questione del Mei e della sua fonte inquinata, Annio da Viterbo.

Il 19 gennaio 1578, quando lavorava alla raccolta, che sarebbe uscita postuma, dei *Discorsi*, all'amico Baccio Valori scrive di aver completato la critica degli 'Aramei' (si dirà più avanti la ragione del nome), scontata ma utile per chi, come lui, scrive non solo per i pochi dotti, 'ma a' *suoi* cittadini, ove non sono 10 fra 100 ch'abbian lettere':⁵⁵ per i più, sono dunque utili spiegazioni anche su argomenti già noti alla minoranza dei fiorentini istruiti. Borghini aggiunge di essersi diffuso in spiegazioni abbondanti,

sapendo quanto importi che il Lettore a buon'ora faccia buono o mal concetto d'una cosa, e quanto giovi ne' giudicj popolari pigliare i passi innanzi, ci aggiungo o anticipo talvolta alcune cose, che senza questo o le tacerei, o aspetterei il luogo loro; ma non vorrei che intanto alcuno avesse fatto qualche impressione, che avesse ad esser poi doppia la fatica al trarglielie dal capo. Come voi vedrete, *parco nominibus nostrorum*, il che fo e per urbanità, e perché maggior mi resta la guerra, e propria con quell'Annio; onde oltre alla *carità del natio loco* [*Inferno* XIV 1], lo posso anche far con ragione [...]. Nella parte che segue, si tocca l'opinione del nostro Mei, pur sempre *suppresso nomine* ...⁵⁶

Dunque Borghini taceva il nome del Mei per evitare di polemizzare apertamente con un concittadino:⁵⁷ al motivo di non offrire l'esempio di una divisione interna

55 *Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 112.

56 *Ibid.*

57 Così come aveva suggerito di non nominare il Castravilla, perché nel suo libello antidantesco poteva, anche se improbabilmente, essere coinvolto un fiorentino (§ 4). In una lettera a Onofrio Panvinio del 25 gennaio 1566 (scritta dunque nello stesso mese in cui Mei scrive a Borghini la prima delle lettere editte nelle *Prose fiorentine*), Borghini aveva già chiaro che l'Editto di Desiderio su cui Mei appoggiava una parte delle sue tesi era un falso. Scrive infatti al Panvinio: 'Non vi potrei ancor dire di quanta mia soddisfazione sia stato quel che voi mi scrivete dello Alabastro di Viterbo [contenente il cosiddetto Editto di Desiderio], e vi dico liberamente ch'io era della medesima opinione, ma non m'ardiva a dirlo; e sebbene vi si toccavano con mano parecchie cose che *sapevano, per non dir putivano, di finzione*, e di quelle *burle Anniane* [...], nondimeno non presi mai animo a dirgli apertamente, ch'io lo tenevo per *una baia* ['burla, bugia, chiacchiere', parola frequente nel teatro comico e negli scritti giocosi fiorentini] *dell'Annio*, e di questo voglio che ne sappiate la ragione appunto. Quest'amico [Mei] mi aveva scritto una sua opinione intorno a' principj di questa Città [Firenze], la quale io non approvavo punto. E perché i fondamenti suoi dependevano principalmente da certe autorità, la prima delle quali io mi forzai farlo capace che non valeva cosa alcuna, né se ne poteva tener conto, ed all'altra sono intorno quasi per la medesima via; questa terza, che era di questo Editto Alabastrino, non mi è paruto bene ribattere con le medesime armi, acciò non dicesse che tutto quel che non faceva per me, me lo levassi da dosso colla semplice negativa' (*Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 62). Poco dopo (25 gennaio 1566) scrive ad Antonio Benivieni (riferendosi allo scambio d'idee con Onofrio Panvinio): "Il sopraddetto Fra Onofrio [...], che come sapete è persona che ha veduto, letto e scritto molte cose mi dice alla libera che quel Decreto Alabastrino di Viterbo è *una baia*, e che fu *una giostra* [inganno], che quel F. Giovanni Annio, come molte altre, volle fare in favor del suo Viterbo. Cosa, che (a dirla qui fra noi) si tocca quasi con mano, ed io l'aveva

alla cultura fiorentina, aggiungeva l'opportunità di una confutazione più importante e decisiva, diretta alle tesi di Annio da Viterbo, fonte del Mei.

Annio da Viterbo era stato inventore inesauribile di fonti antiche, ebraiche e romane, e aveva millantato la scoperta di numerosi testi, latini ed ebraici, anche epigrafici. La sua fantasiosa ricostruzione di una remota civiltà europea, più antica di quella portata in Italia dai Greci e poi sviluppata dai Romani, faceva risalire a Ercole Libico e soprattutto a Noè e ai suoi discendenti una sapienza originaria (una fede monoteistica) e un mondo ben presto avvezzo, grazie a Noè, alla viticoltura. Anche Ercole Libico aveva avuto parte nella civilizzazione dell'Italia,⁵⁸ e con lui Giano, del quale si pretendeva che fosse rimasta traccia in numerosi toponimi toscani (§ 8). La novità piacque e si diffuse, anche se non mancarono voci critiche.

Dunque le origini risalenti a Noè e a Ercole Libico precedevano di molto la civiltà dclassica, sicché ne risultava molto ridimensionata la gloria delle origini di Firenze, connessa alla sua fondazione nel I secolo a. C., in anni tardorepubblicani o protoimperiali. Per venire a una delle molte osservazioni svolte da Borghini nei *Discorsi*, ne ricordo una riguardante un toponimo toscano:

E porto Ercole, che ci è vicino, vogliono i più degli scrittori essere dallo Alcide detto, e non dal Libio: né basta ad abbattere l'autorità de' Greci dire senza altro fondamento, che egli habbiano falsamente attribuito al loro quel, che era dell'altro ...⁵⁹

Facendo leva su questo come su molti altri argomenti Borghini restituisce ai Greci il ruolo sottratto loro dalle tesi di Annio in favore di Ercole Libio e delle origini aramee. Per mettere in luce il rilievo politico e attuale di questa discussione sulle remote antichità toscane, conviene però sospendere l'esposizione per menzionare un episodio della cultura fiorentina risalente agli anni Quaranta del XVI secolo.

molto ben veduta, ma non mi pareva a proposito metterla a campo, perché non dicesse [*scil.* il Mei] ch'io avviliva e negava tutte quelle autorità che non facevano per me..." (*Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 220–21).

58 Di 'Ercole Egizio per sopra nome Libio' fa parola Borghini all'inizio del *Dell'origine della Città di Firenze*, né si tratta dell'unica proposta messa in giro da 'questi Aramei' (sul significato di questa denominazione si veda il § 7); BORGHINI [1584–1585], I, 14, 20).

59 BORGHINI (1584–1585), I, 22.

7. A ritroso: gli *Aramei* e la prima rappresentazione dei fasti di Cosimo dei Medici

Per la prima volta le ricostruzioni avventurose degli Aramei si erano manifestate a Firenze a partire dal 1539, e per questa ragione Borghini aveva scritto a Baccio Valori (1578) perché lo aiutasse a cercare un'opera del Gelli, letta parecchi anni prima, che si può ragionevolmente individuare nel *Dell'origine di Firenze*, pubblicato modernamente. Borghini attendeva allora a rielaborare i suoi studi sulle antichità fiorentine, usciti postumi nei due volumi dei *Discorsi*. L'operetta del Gelli, stampata evidentemente in poche copie, già allora era diventata una rarità. Non so se Borghini sia riuscito a raggiungere quell'opuscolo, di cui non si conoscono esemplari a stampa, ma solo un manoscritto da cui è stata tratta l'edizione moderna.⁶⁰

Giambattista Gelli (Firenze 1498–1563) e Pier Francesco Giambullari (Firenze, 1495–1555) erano stati gli ispiratori di una rappresentazione delle origini di Firenze proiettate verso un'epoca molto più antica dei Greci e dei Romani. Nel trattatello *Dell'origine di Firenze* (1544), Gelli proiettava le origini cittadine della Toscana a i primordi della storia umana: padre della civiltà in Italia era stato Noè il quale, connesso con l'Armenia, parlava l'*arameo*, una lingua simile all'ebraico, al caldeo, all'etrusco (che veniva in tal modo accostato alle lingue semitiche). Gelli ripete il racconto tradizionale, riportato anche dalla *Nuova Cronica* di Giovanni Villani (I, III–V), secondo il quale a Sem, Cam, Jafet (i figli di Noè), andarono i tre continenti (Asia, Africa, Europa), ma sulla base dei falsi di Annio da Viterbo assegna a Noè il ruolo di vero civilizzatore dell'Italia, di introduttore della religione monoteistica e di metodi avanzati di agricoltura. L'Italia ebbe fin dalle origini più lontane una società civile, giusta e sapiente, fondata sull'Antico Testamento, che è la premessa del Nuovo. All'azione di Noè e della sua stirpe si aggiungevano altri eroi, che avevano giovato alla civiltà italiana, come Ercole Libico, e queste forze benefiche sconfiggevano i giganti malvagi che non mancavano nella penisola.

In questa visione è annullata la trafila da Troia a Enea alle origini di Roma, alla quale si doveva a sua volta la fondazione di Firenze, ed è ridimensionato nettamente il ruolo dei Greci, che si sono appropriati dei lumi di Noè, e in parte li hanno oscurati attribuendoli a sé stessi e sostituendoli con la loro falsa religione:

i Greci non son però stati così i primi inventori di tutte le cose, come credono alcuni, et come l'uso delle lettere, la filosofia naturale et soprannaturale, l'astronomia, l'arte militare, l'agricoltura, l'arte del navigare et molte altre scientie et arti furon molto prima

60 GELLI, ed. D'Alessandro (1979).

in uso che la Grecia fosse habitata et come l'Italia, la quale essi dicono havere havuto principio da loro, è molto più antica et nobile di loro.⁶¹

Di conseguenza i Romani, ammiratori dei Greci, hanno avuto scarso significato nelle vicende della penisola, e Gelli parla del 'poco obbligo che noi habbiamo con la maggior parte de' Romani.'⁶² Scema perciò l'importanza del latino come origine del volgare toscano, e in alternativa si profila l'influenza di una lingua più antica, l'etrusca, apparentata all'ebraico e alla 'lingua aramea, non già quella che al presente si truova in Armenia oggi chiamata Soria ma quella di Noè et de descendenti suoi'.⁶³ Non mancano citazioni di Annio da Viterbo.

Il passo di Borghini citato alla fine del paragrafo precedente critica precisamente la tesi svalutatrice dei Greci sostenuta da Gelli, e ripristina l'Ercole greco di contro al supposto Ercole Libico.

Dalla ricerca dell'opuscolo di Gelli il Borghini non si attendeva nulla di sostanzioso. Scriveva infatti al Valori che 'è ben veder tutto', ma lo scetticismo era forte:

Il Gello scrisse già un Trattatello dell'origine di Firenze, il quale vidi allora, e me ne risi, perch'era tutto pien di baie aramee, e poi ne ho cerco a questi cartolai [librai], né l'ho saputo ritrovare, che son certe cose, che vanno via, né si ristampano più, e così agevolmente si smarriscono. Io dico scritto e composto dal Gello, non un libretto della medesima farina, e di non minor dolcezza, che si chiama *Il Gello dell'origine della lingua fiorentina*, composto dal Giambullari, che questo è altra cosa, e l'ho.⁶⁴

Non bisognava confondere l'operetta di cui Borghini era in cerca con un'altra, che portava il nome di Gelli nel titolo, ma di cui era autore Pier Francesco Giambullari (il quale aveva una conoscenza, non so quanto profonda, dell'ebraico). Di questo volumetto si pubblicarono due edizioni: la prima intitolata *Il Gello di M. Pierfrancesco Giambullari accademico fiorentino*, In Fiorenza, 1546; la seconda *Origine della lingua fiorentina, altrimenti il Gello di M. Pierfrancesco Giambullari Accademico Fiorentino*, Firenze, 1549: dalla citazione fatta a memoria risulta che Borghini aveva in mente la seconda edizione. L'edizione del 1546 era stata pubblicata dal Doni, quella del 1549 dal Torrentino, chiamato nel 1547 a Firenze da Cosimo come stampatore ducale. Sia nella prima sia nella seconda edizione Giambullari si fregia del titolo di *accademico fiorentino*, dunque la sua pubblicazione riveste un certo grado di ufficialità. In conclusione nel 1549 (e ancora un po' più avanti nel tempo: cfr. la n. 65 e il testo corrispondente) il Duca Cosimo continuava ad accettare quella tesi azzardatissima sulle origini di Firenze.

61 *Id.*, 116.

62 *Ibid.*

63 *Id.*, 77.

64 *Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 108. Si vedano l'introduzione di D'Alessandro in GELLI, ed. D'Alessandro (1979), 61–70 e D'ALESSANDRO (1980a e 1980b).

Nell'edizione 1546 del dialogo di Giambullari, di cui sono interlocutori Giambullari e Gelli, la dedica al Duca Cosimo recita, a maggior gloria del suo dominio, che l'opera vuole disingannare coloro i quali 'alla bella et tanto hoggi pregiata lingua, vogliono pure assegnare altra origine che quella, che leggendo conoscer potrà la E[ccellenza] V[ostra]', senza anticipare la tesi alternativa: che il fiorentino non deriva dal latino, ma ha origine dall'etrusco-arameo. Nell'edizione del 1549, invece, già nella dedica si avanza la tesi delle origini fiorentine non da Ercole 'greco et moderno' ma da Ercole 'Egizzio o Libico', al paragone del quale il panteon greco è da considerare meno antico e meno autorevole.

Riferendosi evidentemente all'opuscolo *Dell'origine di Firenze* Giambullari afferma che Gelli, uomo 'molto virtuoso' e suo 'amico', ha già scritto sull'"antichità di Firenze",⁶⁵ con evidente riferimento al *Delle origini di Firenze* del 1544. Poiché dell'"antichità di Firenze" si è già occupato, nel dialogo Gelli esporrà la tesi con nuovi argomenti, questa volta di natura linguistica, che confermano il racconto storico offerto nel *Dell'origine di Firenze*. Giambullari, da parte sua, si riserva un ruolo, si direbbe oggi, di spalla. In effetti il dialogo dedica grande attenzione alla lingua e mette in rilievo la toponomastica toscana che, essendo in parte irriducibile al latino (come anche alcune parole di origine non latina), viene fatta risalire all'etrusco, lingua apparentata con l'ebraico, l'aramео, il caldeo: insomma, con le altre lingue sapienziali della remota antichità.

Tra le opere di Gelli, uno degli scrittori migliori della cultura italiana mediocinquecentesca, sono da ricordare almeno i due dialoghi *I capricci del Bottaiо* e *La Circe*, e le numerose letture dantesche pronunciate nell'Accademia Fiorentina e poi date alle stampe. Partecipe della cultura platonica radicata a Firenze, Gelli ha una solida conoscenza di Aristotele e della filosofia scolastica, e sa coniugare l'illustrazione delle dottrine di Dante con un apprezzamento profondo della sua poesia.⁶⁶ Prima del suo commento ai canti I-XXVI dell'*Inferno* (1553-1563), Gelli aveva letto tre volte su altrettanti argomenti danteschi nell'Accademia Fiorentina, per illustrare tre luoghi del poema scelti non tanto per uno scopo esegetico, ma come occasione per riflettere su problemi di carattere filosofico. Qui interessa il più antico, del 1541. Gelli prende in esame poche terzine tratte dall'incontro di Dante con Adamo, in Paradiso: si tratta della risposta all'ultima delle domande rivolte mentalmente da Dante al progenitore, riguardante la lingua parlata da Adamo. La risposta di Adamo è questa:

La lingua ch'io parlai fu tutta spenta
Innanzi che all'opra inconsumabile
Fosse la gente di Nembrot intenta.
Che nullo effetto mai ragionabile

65 GIAMBULLARI (1549), 8.

66 Cfr. MAZZACURATI (1967) e ID. (1969), 51-7.

Per lo piacer uman, che rinnovella
 Seguendo il cielo, fu sempre durabile.
 Opera di natura è ch'uom favella;
 Ma, così o così, natura lascia
 Poi fare a voi, secondo che v'abbella.
 Pria ch'io scendessi all'infernale ambascia,
 Un s'appellava in terra il sommo bene
 Donde vien la letizia che mi fascia;
 Elle si chiamò poi, e ciò conviene;
 Però che l'uso umano è come fronda
 In ramo, che sen va, ed altra viene.

(*Paradiso* XXIV 124–138)⁶⁷

Come è evidente, la scelta di commentare questo luogo dantesco rispecchia l'impegno che, già dal 1539, Gelli dedicava al sostegno della teoria *aramea*: che la lingua adamitica fosse rimasta in uso da Adamo fino alla confusione babelica era in accordo con il fatto che, prima di Babele, la storia dell'umanità aveva sperimentato il diluvio; subito dopo, distrutti quasi tutti i viventi, Noè si era dato all'agricoltura, aveva piantato una vigna e scoperto il vino (*Genesi* 20). Fissata così, sulla scorta dell'autorità dantesca, la durata della lingua sacra, era possibile dedurne le conseguenze d'interpretazione su origini di molto anteriori ai Greci e ai Romani, e l'evoluzione della lingua sacra nell'*arameo*, nel caldeo, nell'etrusco. Gelli non tocca in modo esplicito la teoria aramea, e giustifica la scelta del passo sulla lingua ebraica in questo modo:

La lezione nostra sarà un luogo di Dante nel XXVI capitolo del *Paradiso*: il quale, per trattare alcune cose del parlare, mi è parso molto al proposito nostro, essendo questa nostra Accademia stata principalmente ordinata per utilità di questa lingua, o per dir meglio, usando le parole stesse del nostro Boccaccio nella quarta giornata, di questo nostro *fiorentino volgare* ...⁶⁸

tuttavia è significativo l'accostamento dell'ebraico alla lingua dei 'Caldei, o vero Assirii', sulla base dell'autorità di Beroso Caldeo e di Masea Damasceno e d'Ieronimo Egizio', vale a dire gli autori messi in circolazione dai falsi di Annio da Viterbo.⁶⁹

67 GELLI, ed. Negrone (1887), II, 617–8.

68 Id, II, 616.

69 Come osserva Negrone nel commento (ID, II, 621, alla n. 5), 'Masea Damasceno' (già nella prima edizione, pubblicata senza il consenso dell'autore da A. F. Doni (*Lettoni d'Accademici fiorentini sopra Dante* (1547, 25–38 per il testo di Gelli), fonde due autori diversi, Mnasea e Damasceno, e osserva che quasi lo stesso errore è in GIAMBULLARI (1546), 11 e (1549), 19: 'Minassea Damasceno'; come si vede, Gelli ripete in modo impreciso le indicazioni dell'amico Giambullari. PLAISANCE (1973), 413–4, in nota, e (1974), 177–8, dà notizia di un'egloga manoscritta diretta a Cosimo (1542) nella quale si espone la versione aramea su Firenze non

Nell'Accademia Fiorentina si coglie con chiarezza la coesione del quartetto composto da Gelli e Giambullari, e inoltre da Cosimo Bartoli e Carlo Lenzone; altri accademici erano invece avversi al gruppo degli Aramei: basterà ricordare le satire di Anton Francesco Grazzini, fondatore dell'Accademia degli Umidi (novembre 1539), trasformata nel febbraio 1540 in Accademia Fiorentina, e vivace poeta giocoso.⁷⁰ Altri esponenti dell'Accademia restavano silenziosi ma distanti dagli Aramei.

Giambullari morì nel 1555; nel 1566 uscì una sua *Historia dell'Europa*, curata dall'amico Cosimo Bartoli. Questi accluse in appendice all'opera storica un'*Oratione* che a suo tempo aveva 'recitata pubblicamente nella Accademia Fiorentina, nelle Essequie di Messer Pierfrancesco Giambullari'. In questo elogio funebre Bartoli tesse una riflessione sull'amicizia che l'aveva legato allo scomparso e traccia un profilo morale dell'amico; passa poi a ricordarne le opere e menziona il *Gello*, guardandosi bene dal menzionare la tesi aramea, nel frattempo screditata e abbandonata. Scrive infatti:

Puossi vedere il libro che egli nominò il Gello, nel quale tratta della origine della lingua fiorentina con tanta accuratezza et osservantia delle cose antiche, che non solo appresso de suoi cittadini, ma appresso de forestieri è stato maraviglioso.⁷¹

La tesi aramea aveva circolato a Firenze fino a poco oltre il 1550,⁷² e ciò spiega la reticenza del Bartoli. C'era però un precedente pericoloso per la dinastia medicea: quando nel 1539 il Duca Cosimo aveva sposato Eleonora, figlia del potente viceré di Napoli Pietro di Toledo, la festa nuziale aveva offerto ai fiorentini apparati effimeri che rappresentavano le supposte origini *aramee* della città.⁷³ Era il 1539, e di quella festa restava memoria in una pubblicazione dello stesso anno, di cui è curatore Giambullari:⁷⁴ *Apparato et feste nelle noze dello Illustrissimo Signor Duca di Firenze et della Duchessa sua Consorte, con le sue Stanze, Madriali, Comedia, et*

già figlia di Roma, secondo l'idea di Donato Acciaiuoli e del Villani, ma discendente da Noè. Su questa lezione D'ALESSANDRO (1980a), 358–62.

70 GRAZZINI, ed. Verzone (1882), 52, 68, 69, 81, 342.

71 GIAMBULLARI (1566), c. 166 (l'*Oratione* del Bartoli occupa le cc. 161–166v).

72 D'ALESSANDRO (1980b), 74 e 96–104.

73 Le origini aramee di Firenze e della civiltà toscana erano state proposte a Cosimo dei Medici da un'*egloga* del Gelli occasionata dalla sua nomina a Duca di Firenze (1537); cfr. PLAISANCE (1974), 177–8; D'ALESSANDRO (1980a), 358–62: Fileno e Mosso, pastori, si avviano a Firenze per festeggiare la nomina di Cosimo, e il primo ammaestra il secondo sulla vera storia di Firenze, che non ha debiti con Roma (diversamente da quanto hanno riferito Villani e Donato Acciaiuoli), alla quale ha trasmesso, invece, il culto religioso insegnato dai 'sacerdoti toscani' (e cioè etruschi; vv. 185–187). Da Annio da Viterbo (e dagli scrittori *Persi e Caldei* che questi pretendeva di avere scoperto: vv. 222–224) Gelli attinge la storia degli Ebrei e degli Egiziani che hanno agito in Italia, da Noè a Ercole Libico. Il testo si legge in GELLI (1855), 462–8 e, con breve commento, in GELLI, ed. Corona Alesina (1969), 77–9.

74 *Apparato et feste* (1539); D'ALESSANDRO (1980a), 354–6.

Intermedii, in quelle recitati. In Fiorenza, per Benedetto Giunta, nell'Anno, M.D.XXXIX, di XXIX d'Agosto (due mesi dopo il matrimonio).

La pubblicazione consta di tre parti. La prima è la lunga, minuziosa narrazione delle nozze, un rito celebratosi per alcune settimane, che comincia con la partenza via mare della sposa da Napoli e le feste che seguono la celebrazione del matrimonio. Giambullari si sofferma minuziosamente sugli *apparati* architettonici e figurativi, dotati di motti latini e concentrati sui fasti dinastici dei Medici, da Cosimo il Vecchio a Giovanni dalle Bande Nere (padre di Cosimo) e a Clemente VII Medici, che a Bologna incorona imperatore Carlo V, fino alle nove Muse e ad Apollo. Comincia la seconda sezione, letteraria, dell'*Apparato*, nella quale attraverso i fiumi toscani si celebrano le province che fanno parte dello Stato: sono le *stanze* e i *madriali* annunciati dal titolo della pubblicazione, 'composte', scrive Giambullari, 'dal nostro Gio. Battista Gelli'.⁷⁵ L'Arno, il Mugnone, la Sieve, l'Elsa, il Tevere illustrano il territorio con le sue città, e in questa sezione emergono spunti su Giano-Noè: 'L'antica Fiesole è, che edificata / Fu da Iapeto del gran Noè figlio' (p. 45); Arezzo, con Noè-Giano (p. 54); Cortona, il cui nome avrebbe origine da 'Crotone Egittio' (p. 56). La terza e ultima sezione pubblica la commedia *Il commodo*, di Antonio Landi, in cinque atti; tra un atto e l'altro gli *Intermedii* annunciati, insieme con la commedia, dal titolo.

Nel 1563 il Duca Cosimo si rivolge al Borghini perché indirizzi il Vasari verso un programma pittorico celebrativo delle glorie cittadine, delle origini e dell'indipendenza di Firenze, sulla base di fatti accertati storicamente. Alla fine del 1565 gli affreschi eseguiti potevano essere offerti alla vista degli sposi della seconda generazione della dinastia: Francesco e Giovanna d'Asburgo (il loro matrimonio è del 13 dicembre 1565),⁷⁶ e raccontavano una storia diversissima da quella illustrata in occasione delle nozze di Cosimo. Il recupero delle origini preclassiche cui si ispirava il Mei poteva mettere in conflitto le nozze del padre e quelle del figlio, cosa che andava assolutamente evitata; perciò era necessario che la mitologia esibita nel matrimonio del 1539 restasse nell'oblio.

8. Sullo stile polemico di Borghini nei confronti di Annio da Viterbo

È evidente che il passo citato in fine del § 6 in cui Borghini ribadisce Ercole greco contro Ercole Libico e respinge la svalutazione del ruolo dei Greci (e, per ciò che riguarda l'origine di Firenze, dei Romani) non è diretto contro il trattato *Dell'origine di Firenze*, ormai dimenticato, di Gelli, e gli altri testi *aramei*, fondati

⁷⁵ *Apparato et feste* (1539), 63.

⁷⁶ RUBINSTEIN (2004b), 131–63.

su escogitazioni molto fantasiose, ma contro la ripresa delle argomentazioni da parte di un avversario che con i documenti falsi a sostegno delle proprie tesi aveva guadagnato proseliti in Italia e in Europa e, a Firenze, di Gelli e Giambullari, e successivamente di un Girolamo Mei, allievo di Pier Vettori e ben più attrezzato linguisticamente e filologicamente.

Tanto più pericoloso era il ritorno delle idee aramee perché il matrimonio di Cosimo I, celebrato all'insegna delle mitiche origini *noachiche*, come si diceva allora, poteva essere deriso da un oppositore; era sufficiente il mito arameo già fatto proprio da Cosimo con l'assai diversa rappresentazione delle origini e delle glorie di Firenze nel Salone dei Cinquecento.

Non mancavano dunque a Borghini buone ragioni per tacere nei suoi *Discorsi* il nome del Mei e soprattutto del Gelli, e risalire invece alla fonte di quelle ricostruzioni, e cioè ad Annio da Viterbo. Alcune menzioni di Annio mostrano come la temperatura della polemica salga progressivamente nei *Discorsi* postumi e superi, in qualche caso, i confini fissati da Borghini al galateo della polemica letteraria. Nel primo dei *Discorsi*, intitolato *Dell'origine della città di Firenze*,⁷⁷ il problema delle ricostruzioni arbitrarie derivate da Annio da Viterbo viene ben presto alla luce. Era necessario sgombrare preliminarmente il terreno da *questi Aramei*⁷⁸ che, con i loro documenti falsificati, avevano fatto regredire le conoscenze. Si noti il tono bonario e controllatamente distaccato:

E poiché siamo in questo proposito caduti, è ben cominciare liberamente a dar fuori l'inventore, e l'occasione, e la natura di questa nuova dottrina. E questi fu a' tempi de' nostri padri un Giovanni Annio da Viterbo, buona persona per altro, e tutto da bene; ma dandosi nel bello degli studii suoi alla lingua ebraica, o come e' la chiama Aramea,⁷⁹

cominciò a fornire interpretazioni linguistiche che interessavano Viterbo e coinvolgevano anche la Toscana. I suoi scritti incontrarono il favore del pubblico, anche se Borghini non manca di nominare dotti che, in Italia e fuori, respinsero le sue tesi. Ma Annio

invaghito in questa nuova invenzione voleva che ogni cosa fusse Aramei, e tutto venisse di là, e tutte là si riferiscono le nostre voci e i nomi di questi luoghi, e se intere non vi quadravano, le andava spezzando parte a parte, et aggiungendo e levando lettere, e talor mutandole, pur cacciava là, dove intere per l'ordinario non sarebbon mai potute entrare. Mandò costui fuori a un tratto molti autori di onorato nome, di que' che nel catalogo di Plinio ancora si leggono, Beroso, Manetone, Mirsilo e Senofonte qual che e' si fosse, e de' Romani un Sempronio e Fabio Pittore, la nominanza de' quali fece nella prima giunta svegliare il mondo, come dovesse riuscire gran cosa. Ma tuttavia onde e' si uscissero, o dove si ritrovassero, non si è ancora saputo, né si son mai veduti gli originali; né molto

77 BORGHINI (1584–1585), I, 1–206.

78 ID, I, 20.

79 ID, I, 23–4.

rilieva al proposito nostro il saperlo o ragionarne più oltre, se non che cominciandosi poi a spiegare e considerare questi autori, non solamente gli eccellenti ingegni et gli scienziati, ma persone pur mezzanamente nelle buone lettere esercitate, alla conseguenza de' tempi, al sapore della lingua e delle cose, et a mille scipidezze che vi sono, scopersero finalmente con molta agevolezza e chiarezza, e si riser di sé medesimi, che mai havesser potuto credere o non havesser saputo prima scoprire la vanità di questi scritti o finzioni più tosto e trovati, chi che ne fussero i primi inventori.⁸⁰

Le ultime parole citate non assegnano la responsabilità dei falsi ad Annio, anche se dall'insieme dell'esposizione di Borghini la sua responsabilità emerge con chiarezza. Altrove, però, superate le cautele delle pagine di esordio, i falsi gli sono attribuiti senza troppi giri di frase, e il linguaggio si fa più aggressivo. Rinviando al testo appena citato, ecco come si esprime più avanti Borghini:

Ma l'allungarsi in dimostrare la falsità di quegli scrittori, dove e ne' tempi e nelle persone e nelle cose stesse sono errori da fanciulli, e la vanità similmente di que' Berosi, Manetoni e Mirsili pieni tutti di *novelle* [novità e racconti inventati] sarebbe un uscir fuori troppo del proposito nostro [...]. Dove ragionando de' gli Aramei si disse, che di sì fatte *baie* si crede essere stato il principale inventore quel F. Gio. Annio da Viterbo, dal quale ancora si va argomentando quell'Alabastro di Viterbo, ove si legge Fluentinos Palantes, che quanto sia stata *sciocca finzione e vana* non si può dir tanto che basti...⁸¹

parole che evidentemente non avrebbe scritto nelle sue lettere al Mei, che di quell'*alabastro* si era fatto difensore. Borghini prosegue annunciando una piena confutazione del preteso Editto di Desiderio (già oggetto di discussione con il Mei) nel discorso *Se Firenze fu spianata da Attila e riedificata da Carlo Magno*. In questo trattato, infatti, si legge una lunga critica dell'autenticità dell'Editto di Desiderio, dalla quale mi limito a riportare lo spunto su

quelle interpretazioni de' nomi et alcune voci nuove o fuor di tutto l'uso comune de' gli altri scrittori, che hanno un proprio e singulare sapore di quelle *baie Aramee*, delle quali altrove habbiam ragionato a bastanza; et alcune altre mi erano sospettosissime, et altre mi si mostravano manifestamente false...⁸²

e la citazione di una lettera mandatagli da Onofrio Panvinio:

Io credo al sicuro che quello Editto di Viterbo sia finto; le ragioni sono molte, le quali a bocca gliele dirò, venendo a Fiorenza. Le due principali sono la forma della lettera, che non è di que' tempi; la seconda il modo come è scritta. Io ho ferma opinione che sia stata finta da quel Padre Giovanni Annio, per che fece molte di queste burle ad altri propositi.⁸³

80 Id, I, 24–5.

81 Id, I, 229–30. Si noti *baie*, la stessa parola usata a proposito delle tesi *aramee* di Gelli (§ 7).

82 Id, I, 304–5.

83 Id, II, 305.

Denota, infine, il massimo della mite violenza polemica di Borghini (in virtù della citazione dantesca) questa uscita: 'E non mi siano di grazia opposti qui certi antichi Autori *finti* da quell'Anno, e le sue lunghissime *favole*, ché troppo *bassa voglia* sarebbe volere perdere il tempo in sì fatte *ciance*'.⁸⁴

Concludere questo paragrafo su una questione che in apparenza è di scarsa rilevanza ma si rivela di notevole interesse mettendo in rilievo l'acume linguistico del Borghini di contro alle orecchiate etimologie degli *Aramei*, e in secondo luogo portando nuovi elementi sulla delicatezza di un'idea delle origini di Firenze che avrebbe potuto gettare un forte discredito politico sul Granduca Cosimo, o meglio al suo erede Francesco (al quale sono dedicati i *Discorsi*).

Alla facilità con cui nei numerosi toponimi (anche) toscani in *-ano* nei quali gli *Aramei* scorgevano le tante tracce del passaggio di Giano, un altro dei supposti civilizzatori preromani (e pregrecci) della penisola (§ 6), Borghini oppone un'impeccabile spiegazione, valida tuttora, riducendo i segni di quella supposta divinità primordiale alle proporzioni di un modesto quanto diffuso suffisso prediale:

si consideri quante cose si son potute fingere di quella lingua Aramea straniera, e della nostra antica Toscana oggi spente, quando è bastato l'animo di toccare anche quelle, che vivono e tutt'ora si possono da noi riscontrare. E questo è, che essendoci alcuni luoghi, anzi pur molti per la Toscana, lasciando stare per ora il resto d'Italia, dove non meno se ne truovano, che finiscono in questa forma IANO, come è il nostro Ariniano che volgarmente si chiama oggi Arignano [oggi Rignano sull'Arno]. Questi [gli Aramei] appigliandosi alla coda, vogliono che sia detto da Iano, il quale venuto in questo paese ci collocasse un mondo di Colonie, e molte e molte cose facesse [...]. Ma di questa sorte, come Semproniano, Settimiano, Luciniano, Volumniano che secondo l'uso nostro piegandole alquanto, et un cotal poco alterando, pronunziamo Samprognano [oggi ripristinato come *Semproniano*], Settignano, Lucignano, e Volognano, e queste, che non variano quasi punto dal puro latino, Popiano, Luciano, Marciano, e molte altre tali, chi è nelle buone lettere sì poco pratico, che non vi riconosca subito il natio e sincero uso de' Romani, che tutti questi luoghi de' loro riempierono, et a questo modo chiamavano le lor ville e possessioni, aggiugnendo alle prime voci, o de' Padroni o di essi luoghi secondo la natura di quella lingua, quando volevano dire o una cosa essere proprietà di alcuno, o essere la cosa posseduta in quel tal luogo, questa final particella di ANO, e latinamente parlando diceano, Laberiano, Seiano, Cumano, sottintendendovi Agro o Fondo o Predio.⁸⁵

È significativa la data, 1578, della lettera a Baccio Valori nella quale Borghini prega il destinatario di aiutarlo nella ricerca del *Delle origini di Firenze* di Gelli. In quel tempo Borghini era impegnato nella revisione dei *Discorsi*, nei quali la critica

84 Id, I, 342.

85 Id, I, 27-9. I toponimi menzionati dal Borghini sono attestati in Valdarno, oltre che in altre località finitime; cfr. Pieri (1919).

implicita al Mei e quella esplicita ad Annio è ben presente. C'era stata una doppia comparsa delle tesi aramee in Firenze: la prima, legata alla coppia Gelli–Giambullari, la seconda a Girolamo Mei. Se Mei avesse insistito nel presentare la sua proposta, sarebbero venute fuori tesi sbagliate sulle origini fiorentine; in secondo luogo – e dal punto di vista politico quest'eventualità avrebbe colpito il prestigio del duca Cosimo e del suo successore Francesco – chi avesse recuperato la memoria dell'attività di Gelli e Giambullari come sostenitori della tesi aramea di prima fase, avrebbe potuto osservare che lo stesso Cosimo aveva fatto propria, a scopi celebrativi, la tesi aramea. In mezzo, sarebbero stati presi gli affreschi vasariani in Palazzo della Signoria.

Se la memoria della prima fase aramea era impallidita, e non più attuale nell'orizzonte culturale di Firenze negli anni Settanta del XVI secolo, rimaneva però il rischio potenziale di un riemergere, in forma diversa, di quelle dottrine: che questa preoccupazione fosse ben presente non solo al Borghini, lo dimostra la dedica *Alla Nobiltà Fiorentina* che, dopo quella al Duca Francesco, apre il primo volume dei *Discorsi* postumi. Le due dediche si devono ovviamente ai deputati che eseguirono le volontà testamentarie del Borghini,⁸⁶ tra i quali più d'uno doveva essere a parte del problema (così per esempio per esempio Baccio Valori, già ricordato). Così si legge dunque nella prima parte della dedica *Alla Nobiltà Fiorentina*:

Il Duca Cosimo di gloriosa memoria nell'occasione delle nozze del Principe [Francesco dei Medici] fece dipignere la sala maggiore del Palagio, e nell'una facciata rappresentare la guerra di Pisa, nell'altra quella di Siena, nel palco varii accidenti della città, e principalmente l'origine di lei, e come ella fu Colonia de' Triumviri, e d'Augusto principalmente, secondo che già dall'Accademia del Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici era stato provato. Uscì fuori in que' dì un libretto d'una nuova opinione, che la città nostra fusse edificata ne' tempi più bassi dell'Imperio de' Longobardi, la quale con tutto che da' più intendenti non fusse approvata, diede nondimeno molto da ragionare, et al nostro D. Vincenzio Borghini, che aveva d'ordine del Duca divisato tutta la Pittura, impose necessità di difenderla, oltre che il Duca glielo comandò, ond'egli si mise a scrivere sopra ciò, e nel trattar dell'origine della Città molte altre considerazioni gli sovvennero, alla nobiltà e grandezza di lei pertinenti, e pensò di dividere l'intrapresa opera da intitolarsi *Dell'origine e nobiltà di Firenze* in tre parti: la prima assegnò all'origine della Città, la seconda ai suoi primi avvenimenti, mentre stette sotto l'Imperio Romano, e di poi soggetta alle tante mutazioni d'Italia fino all'anno 1200, dal qual tempo in qua li affari di lei gli parevano per le storie manifesti, la terza alla nostra lingua...⁸⁷

86 Fra gli esecutori testamentari designati nel 1574 da Borghini figurano, con Baccio Valori, Antonio Benivieni, Braccio da Ricasoli, Giovambattista Cini, Niccolò del Nero, e altri; vedi BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 108.

87 BORGHINI (1584–1585), I, pagine non numerate. I Deputati proseguono spiegando che la parte sulla lingua non poteva essere pubblicata perché ne restavano molte trattazioni interessantissime ma non organizzate in maniera compiuta, per quanto ne restino appunti di grande

Stupisce il cenno al *libretto* filologobardo, che sembrerebbe proprio quello del Mei, rimasto peraltro inedito: *libretto* sembra proprio da intendere come opera a stampa, mentre lo scritto del Mei si conserva solo in forma manoscritta, e non so indicare una spiegazione a questo proposito. Risulta evidente, in compenso, che il matrimonio del Granduca Francesco accompagnato dal programma eseguito sotto la direzione culturale di Borghini poteva entrare in rotta di collisione con le celebrazioni (fortunatamente effimere) del matrimonio del padre Cosimo. Questo rischio, come si è visto, fu solo sfiorato.

9. La polemica dantesca di Borghini con Castravilla

Borghini pubblicò una parte minima del suo lavoro; postumi apparvero i *Discorsi* e solo nel XIX secolo, e soprattutto nella seconda metà del XX e negli ultimi anni vari scritti suoi, parzialmente compiuti o rimasti allo stato provvisorio furono pubblicati.⁸⁸ Nelle sue molte scritture non destinate, o non destinate nella forma in cui le lasciava in sospeso, a essere consegnate alle stampe, Borghini si lascia andare a espressioni polemiche molto colorite, anche se talvolta affiora, come si avrà modo di costatare, la consapevolezza che certe espressioni ingiuriose, nelle quali si esprime la *verve* fiorentina e personale dell'autore, dovrebbero essere temperate per quanto la sua teoria non escludesse i toni accesi (§ 4). Quanto all'essere rimasti i suoi scritti in forma di abbozzi, lasciati a vari stadi di elaborazione o ripresi e poi modificati e di nuovo abbandonati, va tenuto presente che ebbero una qualche circolazione negli ambienti cittadini colti. Prima di soffermarci su interventi ricchi di umori satirici e di invettive felicissime nella loro vivacità, è opportuna qualche riflessione preliminare.

Dell'amore per la patria fiorentina e insieme dello spirito critico che evita al nostro un'acritica chiusura provinciale si è già detto (§ 6). Prima di entrare nel merito di polemiche di tipo linguistico (anche con conseguenze riguardanti la critica letteraria, di cui Borghini si occupa solo in modo indiretto), occorre chiarire che l'umbratile Borghini, di molto superiore per conoscenze di lingua e di storia alla media, di per sé rispettabilissima, della cultura fiorentina coeva, esprime con la massima chiarezza alcune convinzioni comuni ai fiorentini colti del suo tempo (e, per la verità, di lunga durata in Firenze). Voglio dire che i gusto-

valore; perciò i curatori dei due volumi rimandano alle *Annotationi et Discorsi sopra alcuni luoghi del Decameron*, già pubblicate in vita (§ 11), in cui quella materia è confluita almeno in parte.

⁸⁸ Benché il pensiero linguistico di Borghini resti, in questo lavoro, ai margini, ricordo almeno la raccolta di vari testi di interesse linguistico teorico e applicativo (BORGHINI, ed. Woodhouse [1971]), lo studio di POZZI (1975) e l'importante edizione degli studi dedicati a Giovanni Villani (BORGHINI, ed. Drusi [2001]).

sissimi scatti d'ira di cui si è già dato qualche saggio nelle opere di polemica storica raggiungono punte assai più elevate su questioni di lingua, e però la capacità unica della satira e dell'invettiva di Borghini, frutto, ovviamente, del suo personalissimo temperamento e della splendida vivacità di una prosa quasi del tutto consegnata a scritture private, dà voce a convinzioni di lungo periodo, radicate profondamente in città.

Una prima approssimazione a questo nucleo cittadino condiviso, del quale Borghini è il massimo esponente, concerne alcuni caposaldi fondamentali. In primo luogo, va menzionata la diffidenza di Borghini verso la stampa (si veda in particolare al § 10); ed è noto che la circolazione dei testi in forma manoscritta è, durante il XVI secolo, fenomeno normalissimo.⁸⁹ Pur avendo avuto a lungo una circolazione solo manoscritta, fece scalpore la provocazione antidantesca del Castravilla (§§ 3 e 4). Tra le numerose repliche al Castravilla, anch'esse in forma manoscritta, una si deve al Borghini.

Nelle scritture private Borghini si lascia andare volentieri a toni molto più risentiti, che peraltro non mancano neppure nei *Discorsi* (pubblicati però non da lui bensì dagli eredi testamentari): ne sono bersaglio autori di edizioni commentate di testi toscani e compilatori di dizionari (i bersagli sono quasi sempre *lombardi*; l'accezione include il Veneto), che stampano libri di grande smercio anche se (o, come si vedrà, proprio perché) sono bruttati da errori. Questa produzione, prevalentemente veneziana, distorce la giusta comprensione di una letteratura fondata sulla lingua e i classici di Firenze, e dà luogo a una sorta di invasione culturale. A questa situazione reagisce energicamente Borghini, che inoltre si preoccupa di difendere Dante da interpretazioni malevole.⁹⁰

Fece rumore, in proposito, la stroncatura dantesca del Castravilla, che dal 1572 al 1608 (quando fu pubblicata) circolò manoscritta e suscitò numerose repliche (in gran parte manoscritte): il *Discorso di messer Ridolfo Castravilla, nel quale si mostra l'imperfettione della Comedia di Dante*. Il nome dell'autore è fittizio, e il vero autore restò sconosciuto. L'ignoto denigratore passa in rassegna i requisiti del poema epico (o eroico) secondo la *Poetica* di Aristotele, e sostiene che il poema è difettoso in ognuno dei suoi aspetti; anche la persona di Dante attira critiche acerbe. Per esempio, le azioni sono tre (Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso), contro la regola aristotelica dell'azione unitaria; il numero degli episodi (gli incontri di Dante con le anime) è soverchiante, a danno dell'azione principale; il protagonista, Dante, è una persona privata, vendicativa e odiatrice della patria,

89 RICHARDSON (2009).

90 Gilson (2018), 125–32.

mentre il poema epico esige eroi famosi e di alta condizione sociale (ai privati è riservata la commedia); e così via.⁹¹

Del Borghini si conosce una lettera (1573) ad Antonio Altoviti, vescovo di Firenze,⁹² il quale gli aveva fatto leggere uno scritto (oggi perduto) in cui le accuse di lesio aristotelismo suscitate dal Castravilla erano smontate una per una. Nell'elogiare lo scritto dell'Altoviti e nell'invitarlo ad accentuare l'apprezzamento per il valore estetico del poema, Borghini svolge alcune intelligenti riflessioni (questa volta di natura critica piuttosto che linguistica) sull'errore di applicare rigidamente alla *Commedia* la *Poetica* di Aristotele, un'opera costruita sulla base dell'*Iliade*, l'unico poema epico noto al filosofo greco: si tratta al contrario, dice Borghini, di incoraggiare poemi o tragedie che non siano esemplati servilmente sul modello omerico, ma s'ispirino con libertà ai principi generali dell'arte. Non l'*Iliade* va imitata pedissequamente, bensì la 'generale e propria idea, o forma, o natura che la vogliamo chiamare, di questa grande e magnifica poesia', in base alla quale Aristotele è arrivato alle sue conclusioni sul poema epico.⁹³

Circa i modi da tenere in una disputa, Borghini insiste sul fatto che uno scritto contenente solo critiche a un'opera molto celebrata, senza alcuna concessione (secondo Castravilla, Dante ha sbagliato tutte le mosse) risponde a una volontà di stupire e scandalizzare allo scopo di diventare famoso a qualsiasi costo: Castravilla si è comportato come l'antico Erostrato che, pur di conquistare una fama infame, aveva bruciato il tempio di Artemide Efesia. Borghini, per la precisione, allude a Erostrato senza nominarlo, e si augura che il vero nome del Castravilla resti misterioso, e se ne taccia anche lo pseudonimo, come ha fatto l'Altoviti.⁹⁴ Borghini loda anche che l'anonimo sia stato chiamato dall'Altoviti 'persona certo assai dotta', perché 'le villanie e l'ingiurioso procedere di alcuni mi sono sempre paruti costumi barbari, e veramente villanie'.⁹⁵

Secondo Borghini il poema di Dante è 'grandissima gloria della nostra patria' (s'intenda ovviamente la *patria* cittadina) e 'de' primi fondamenti di questa nostra lingua',⁹⁶ sicché screditare l'uno significa screditare anche l'altra, e viceversa. Ora, prosegue Borghini,

questo povero autore è stato troppo maltrattato ne' tempi più bassi, che molti ci si sono messi d'attorno a comentarlo con sì poco giudizio, con tanta poca cognizione d'ogni

91 Si può vedere il testo in CASTRAVILLA, ed. Rossi (1897) e BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 84-96; su Castravilla e Borghini, WEINBERG (1961), II 831-4 e 847-53.

92 Si legge in BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 162-82, che la trae, con miglioramenti, dalle *Prose fiorentine*, IV.4, 277-96.

93 BORGHINI, ed. Belloni (1998), 170.

94 Id, 166.

95 Id, 165.

96 Id, 163.

scienza, e senza sapere punto di questa lingua, che potrebbe parere a qualcuno che alcuni forestieri l'avessero fatto a studio per avvilirlo, e abbassarlo, e togli ogni gloria.⁹⁷

Si tratta di *forestieri* (di letterati attivi nell'Italia settentrionale): Firenze si sente assediata, e occorre provvedere alla difesa. Non fa ostacolo l'intrinseca difficoltà della *Commedia*, sì invece gli *espositori* ignoranti e arroganti che, invece di spiegare le dottrine e mettere in rilievo le bellezze del poema, l'hanno in modo offuscato, intenebrato, e tolto ogni luce, che molti ne hanno preso animo di spregiarlo; si tratta ora di liberarlo dalla 'ruggine appiccatagli da costoro'.⁹⁸

Fin qui la lettera di Borghini. Fra le sue carte si legge, insieme con vari appunti sul Castravilla, una replica articolata al libello, non portata a compimento. Lo scritto è, come sempre, ricco di intelligenza, e confuta l'applicazione faziosa delle categorie della *Poetica* alla *Commedia*. Ricordo almeno l'interessante accostamento di *ποιεῖν* a *fingere* e a *trovare* nel senso moderno di 'inventare':⁹⁹

altro non è imitare, o *ποιεῖν*, onde son detti 'poeti', che fingere una cosa che non sia; che è quel medesimo apunto che i nostri dissero 'trovare', onde furono i poeti detti trovatori, la quale proprietà ci è anchora rimasa, et 'trovato' chiamiamo una cosa che non è vera, ma finta da uno a suo proposito, onde diciamo tutto il giorno: 'questo è un trovato', per non dire: 'questa è una bugia' ...¹⁰⁰

Dell'*imitazione*, il termine corrispondente alla *mimesi* aristotelica, si offre una bella definizione: 'imitare vuol dire fare che quel che non è paia. [...] et questo è veramente poesia, fare in sur una cosa vera una finta et un trovato, che paia o si creda vero'.¹⁰¹ Alla svalutazione della *Commedia* come *insonio* (secondo la forma, prevalentemente settentrionale, che si legge nel Castravilla), Borghini contrappone, distinguendo *sogno* da *visione*, il carattere della *Commedia* come visione profetica.¹⁰²

Quanto ai modi della polemica, dello scritto ampio contro il Castravilla resta la stesura di due prefazioni, nelle quali Borghini esprime i concetti presenti anche nel *Dello scrivere contro ad altrui* e nella risposta all'Altoviti: tenere un modo *coperto*, non nominare cioè il bersaglio della critica, ed esprimersi con riferimenti generici, non individuati, anche se la confutazione ha di mira un individuo o anzi un testo specifico; evitare, in secondo luogo, l'aggressività verbale, le *parole villane*:

97 *Ibid.*

98 *Id.*, 163–4 e 164.

99 Dico nel senso moderno, perché in italiano *invenzione* ha conservato a lungo (almeno fino al *Dialogo dell'invenzione* di Alessandro Manzoni) il significato latino di 'ritrovamento' (di ciò che esiste di per sé), e non quello attuale di 'ideazione nuova, non ancora escogitata'.

100 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 148–9. Borghini conosce bene non solo *trovare* e *trovato* in italiano antico, ma anche la terminologia provenzale corrispondente.

101 *Id.*, 149.

102 *Id.*, 117.

Quanto al Castravilla, io fuggirei quanto possibil fusse l'offesa delle parole, et vorrei el concepto di Chremete ne l'*Andria* havessi luogo: dir il fatto et lasciar le parole villane, "Ah, rem potius ipsam dic, ac mitte male loqui" [Terenzio, *Andria*, vv. 873-874]; et questo sia il primo ricordo. Il modo potrebbe esser coperto et quasi *aliud agentis*, come pigliar un discorsetto che contasse le virtù che sono nel poema di Dante, come alcuni hanno fatto di quelli di Homero, così ne' concetti, come negli ornamenti et nelle parole ...¹⁰³

Queste intenzioni pacifiche, tuttavia, non durano a lungo: nella confutazione del Castravilla e delle sue critiche preconcepite, compattamente negative su Dante (e quindi, nella prospettiva di Borghini, sulla lingua stessa di Firenze), delle sue provocazioni Borghini, toccato nelle convinzioni più profonde, perde progressivamente la moderazione che si era prefissa. Il mite Priore degli Innocenti si lascia andare a espressioni lontane dalla gentilezza, dando prova di possedere in alto grado, l'arguzia e il *motto* pungente dei fiorentini, che aggiunge sapore alla *vis* polemica. Si produce una transizione dai *motti* con cui 'molti hanno già saputo con debito morso rintuzzare gli altrui denti' (*Decameron*, V *Concl* 3)¹⁰⁴ a *motti* più aggressivi, secondo la sintetica retorica della risposta arguta schizzata nella sesta giornata del *Decameron*: 'vi voglio ricordare', dice una delle novellatrici, 'essere la natura de' motti cotale, che essi, come la pecora morde, deono così mordere l'uditore e non come 'l cane: per ciò che, se come il cane mordesse il motto, non sarebbe motto ma *villania*' (*Decameron*, VI 3 3). Tuttavia non si esclude un motto più aggressivo e, appunto, mordace (è la distinzione che tornerà nelle pagine di Borghini sulla polemica letteraria): 'È il vero che, se per risposta si dice e il risponditore morda come cane, essendo come da cane prima stato morso, non par da riprendere come, se ciò avvenuto non fosse, sarebbe' (*Decameron*, VI 3 4).

Insieme con gli appellativi ironici o sarcastici, si veda come lo pseudonimo del Castravilla, che doveva essere taciuto, affiori progressivamente alla luce del sole (anche se le carte del Borghini restarono nel buio del cassetto) fino a prorompere, accompagnato da epiteti decisamente forti. La vivacità espressiva di Borghini si esercita così a spese dell'ignoto Castravilla con una serie di colorite, variopinte espressioni, in un crescendo derisorio:¹⁰⁵

- *questo buon(o) huomo*, pp. 104, 107, 117, 138
- *il nostro buon pecorino* p. 128; *questo b. p.*, p. 133
- *questo nostro Castravillani*, p. 129
- *questa dolce pecorella*, p. 137
- *Castravillani*, p. 138
- *questo pover huomo*, p. 138

103 ID, 96.

104 Cito da BOCCACCIO, ed. Branca (1991).

105 Cito da BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009).

- *questa pecoraccia*, p. 138
- *questo cicalamiento del Castravilla*, p. 139
- *questo Castravilla*, p. 141
- *il Castravilla*, p. 150
- *il buon Castravilla*, p. 151
- *un Piantavilla*, p. 153

Forse dopo avere scritto il testo Borghini tornò sulla prima introduzione, aggiungendovi un capoverso che lasciava maggior libertà di comportamento linguistico. Fatto sta che vi si legge (p. 100):

Io ho detto di sopra che fuggirei quanto si potesse l'offesa delle parole, et lo raffermo; anchor ch'a' modi da lui tenuti, *villani et scortesì*, et *la asinità sua*, maximamente ove parla del morale, ove usa parole da *castraporcelli*, non che da *castravillani*,¹⁰⁶ non gli sarebbe male investito pagarlo della medesima moneta.

10. L'anti-Ruscelli di Borghini, da *cortesia* a *villania*...

Il libro a stampa non va incontro, nel pensiero di Borghini, a una valutazione pregiudiziale di segno negativo. Ciò che sollecita il suo dissenso è piuttosto il modo in cui si è sviluppata in Italia l'industria editoriale, e in particolare l'egemonia produttiva degli editori di Venezia. Nell'Italia del XVI secolo Venezia è il veicolo del libro in Italia, compresi i libri della letteratura volgare. Alcuni difetti sono inerenti alla natura del libro a stampa che è diretto, come è notissimo, a un mercato di cui l'editore può prevedere e cogliere solo in parte i gusti e la domanda, e in regime di concorrenza con altri editori. Un prodotto che abbia buone possibilità di affermazione deve contemperare soluzioni diversificate, dal libro di piccolo al volume di grande formato, attrezzato con sussidi biografici, critici (fonti classiche, commenti, paratesti di varia natura), linguistico-esegetici; il tutto in tempi rapidi per non giungere in ritardo agli appuntamenti previsti e per contenere i costi. Frettolosità di revisione e rapidità di esecuzione sono indispensabili per fare del libro stampato un oggetto che si diffonda molto più del libro manoscritto, e però il passaggio dal manoscritto alla stampa equivale alla trasformazione del prodotto artigianale in prodotto industriale, con gli inconvenienti e i vantaggi del caso.

106 Borghini si riferisce soprattutto a questo passo del discorso di Castravilla: 'Il costume in prima, che si disquopre nella persona sua [di Dante], è d'un huomo tutto preugno di odii et di malignità, vendicativo, moroso, fantastico, di nemico della patria, la quale non lascia in tutte l'occasioni d'infamare [...]' (BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi [2009], 93).

In secondo luogo, e più specificamente, l'editoria veneziana diffonde una letteratura volgare nella quale sono in prima linea autori toscani o che al toscano si ispirano con opere come l'*Orlando Furioso* o l'*Arcadia* o il *Cortegiano* o i prodotti, più modesti ma di più larga diffusione (e però anch'essi toscani o arieggianti più o meno felicemente il toscano), per un pubblico di livello interessato a diversi generi di letteratura, dai testi di devozione religiosa ai poemi cavallereschi (i *libri de battaglia*). Dalla fascia orientale dell'Italia settentrionale (quell'ampia regione, comprensiva della Lombardia, del Veneto fino a Venezia, di parte dell'Emilia, all'occorrenza dell'odierno Friuli, comunemente denominata *lombarda*) provengono i primi grammatici del volgare, autori di regole del volgare alla cui determinazione la cultura fiorentina è e resterà a lungo indifferente: dal Bembo al Trissino, dal Fortunio al Dolce, e così via. Ciò dà ai *lombardi* una competenza, vera o presunta, in fatto di lingua volgare, che sfugge al controllo della cultura e dell'editoria di Firenze.

I molti scritti rimasti inediti rivelano in Borghini un fustigatore degli effetti negativi delle edizioni di Dante e Boccaccio promosse dai professionisti della stampa veneziana: superficialità e incompetenza linguistica contrassegnano gli autori di grammatiche e vocabolari e i curatori di testi fiorentini del XIV secolo. Fra tutti, scelgo Girolamo Ruscelli, bersaglio preferito del Borghini.

A Venezia Ruscelli (che era nato a Viterbo nel 1518 dove visse almeno fino al 1537) giunse, dopo una vita girovaga e non molto nota, spesa a Roma, poi a Milano (dove dovrebbe trovarsi intorno al 1542, e dove visse forse fino al 1546) e a Napoli (1547–49). Nel 1549 è a Venezia, dove fu attivissimo fino alla fine (morì nel 1566)¹⁰⁷. Giunto sconosciuto in città, Ruscelli emerse rapidamente nell'affollata scena editoriale cittadina. Aveva evidentemente ottime capacità di ambientamento, e portava con sé una ricca dote di relazioni con letterati attivi a Napoli, Roma, Milano e altri centri culturali, tutti disposti o desiderosi, non meno degli autori nordorientali facilmente accessibili da Venezia, di mostrare le loro capacità letterarie facendo pubblicare i loro testi nel più prestigioso dei centri editoriali; e gli editori veneziani avevano tutto l'interesse ad alimentarsi di una letteratura di fondamento linguistico fiorentino-toscano, scritta da autori di tutta l'Italia. Nei decenni centrali del XVI secolo la letteratura, essenzialmente fiorentina, proposta all'Italia dalle stamperie veneziane, assume dimensione italiana dal punto di vista di una ricezione nazionale articolata (quale è consentita dall'offerta di testi a

107 Attingo i dati biografici da PROCACCIOLI (2012). Su Ruscelli sono fondamentali i contributi, promossi da Paolo Procaccioli, di un gruppo di studiosi: nel loro insieme ricostruiscono organicamente l'attività di Ruscelli. Agli atti del convegno in MARINI / PROCACCIOLI (2012) si aggiungano RUSCELLI (2011), RUSCELLI, ed. Gizzi / Procaccioli (2010), RUSCELLI, ed. Gizzi (2016), RUSCELLI, ed. Iacono / Marini (2011), da vedere insieme con TELVE (2011) e IACONO (2011). Importante la rassegna e discussione di questo insieme di studi offerta da POZZI (2013).

stampa in volgare) degli autori fiorentini ma anche, passando dall'assimilazione alla produzione attiva, di un'inventività letteraria alimentata da scrittori e scriventi che si vengono formando in Italia, e non solo in Toscana.

Questa autorialità relativamente diffusa nella geografia letteraria italiana si esprime con la pubblicazione di raccolte di testi brevi – epistolari o lirici – dovuti a una pluralità di autori. Nei primi decenni del secolo si afferma per esempio, tra gli scrittori che raggiungono una posizione di grande prestigio, Pietro Bembo, veneziano. Di Bembo si stampa fra l'altro un canzoniere (pubblicato nel 1530) e un *Primo* (e poi *Secondo, Terzo...*) *libro* di lettere; e qui vanno citate anzitutto le *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), che propongono un'idea di lingua e letteratura fiorentina pensata indipendentemente dalle posizioni culturali di Firenze. A questi e altri protagonisti della scena letteraria si affiancano i comprimari, autori minori o minimi, che non sono in grado di pubblicare un canzoniere o un volume di lettere loro proprio, si invece di partecipare a raccolte collettanee. Lo strato sociale da cui provengono questi utenti non continuativi e comunque minori della letteratura resta quello sottile del patriziato,¹⁰⁸ e la pluralità degli autori favorisce la diffusione del libro entro la cerchia delle loro conoscenze: anche chi non è presente con proprie composizioni, ma è interessato ad acquisire (in omaggio o in acquisto) il libro cui ha collaborato l'amico, mentre Bembo o Ariosto s'impongono sul mercato per forza propria. Mi limito a un solo esempio: l'edizione, nel 1555, della collettanea di liriche intitolata *Del tempio alla Divina Signora Donna Giovanna d'Aragona*, dedicato a una nobildonna discendente da un ramo laterale della dinastia aragonese di Napoli, sposa di Ascanio Colonna: un centro di gravità napoletano-romano, dunque (ma i matrimoni organizzati dalla gentildonna per i figli stabilirono legami importanti anche con la Lombardia), bilanciato con intelligenza geopolitica da Ruscelli con una dedica a Cristoforo Madruzzo (o *Madruccio*, come legge la dedica), cardinale di Trento negli anni cruciali del Concilio, e collezionatore di un gran numero di dediche. Partecipano al volume, con le loro offerte poetiche, poeti noti e oscuri insieme con dilettanti e, presumibilmente, utenti occasionali della poesia (sarebbe utile un'indagine sistematica su questa o raccolta o su altre consimili). La provenienza degli autori è panitaliana; alle rime volgari seguono un fascicolo di poesie latine e uno di componimenti in greco e in spagnolo.¹⁰⁹

108 Non entra nel discorso la letteratura a stampa destinata al pubblico socialmente più modesto, cui si è già accennato, che legge ma non scrive (o meglio scrive testi di circolazione privata, che non arrivano alla stampa).

109 Così nell'esemplare da me consultato; ma la fabbricazione del libro è molto complicata, e altri esemplari presentano testi anche in francese e fiammingo; con una buona dose di millanteria, poi, Ruscelli pubblicizza l'opera come un omaggio mondiale alle virtù di Giovanna d'Aragona: 'di continuo ci vengono da ogni parte componimenti in ogni lingua, et già di Tedeschi, Fiamminghi, Francesi, Schiavoni, Moreschi, o Arabi, Inglesi, Ungheri, Polacchi,

Ruscelli non è certo l'unico a svolgere questo ruolo sulla scena editoriale veneziana, ma è forse il più incisivo nei circa quindici anni in cui è attivo a Venezia. La sua capacità di promotore della moderna letteratura militante si salda alla riedizione attrezzata dei classici del volgare. Come è noto, tra le diverse proposte avanzate nel corso del dibattito linguistico-letterario dei primi decenni del XVI secolo si afferma il canone proposto dalle *Prose* di Bembo, che seleziona come modelli esemplari Petrarca e Boccaccio, cui va aggiunto Dante, che riceve però riserve di lingua e di contenuto. A questa triade Ruscelli ne sostituisce una che presenta una variazione decisiva: conferma Petrarca e Boccaccio, ma a Dante sostituisce Ariosto. Anche se non perde occasione per rendere omaggio a Bembo, la variazione è decisiva, perché in Ruscelli Dante non è un modello discutibile (come in Bembo) ma un anti-modello. Quanto all'Ariosto, i silenzi di Bembo sul poema denotano una qualche riserva sulla lingua e forse sul genere letterario del romanzo cavalleresco. Mentre Bembo fissa in Petrarca e Boccaccio i modelli della scrittura volgare, l'introduzione del recente *Orlando Furioso* nella triade dei grandi della letteratura volgare indica un movimento verso il futuro e una prospettiva che non insiste sull'imitazione di autori inarrivabili ma guarda a un ulteriore progresso letterario nel futuro prossimo.

Il Ruscelli militante fa tutt'uno con il Ruscelli curatore del canone di classici, e perciò editore di Boccaccio (1552), Petrarca (1554), Ariosto (1556). Dante, invece, riceve critiche continue, molto più severe e continuate di quelle riservate da Bembo alla *Commedia*, e accompagnate per di più da pesanti sarcasmi. L'assoluta fedeltà al Bembo di molte sue dichiarazioni è solo apparente. Bembo non avrebbe mai opposto Dante e Petrarca come esponenti del disvalore e del valore poetico, come invece fa Ruscelli:

Et l'auttorità di Dante (perdoninmi alcuni) non vale. Percioch'egli così nella elezione della lingua, come anco d'intorno alle bellezze poetiche, non hebbe quel buono et perfetto giudicio, che si vede haver'havuto il Petrarca, come bene et dottamente è mostrato dal Bembo nelle sue prose.¹¹⁰

Ruscelli si protegge dietro lo scudo del Bembo per avanzare un'idea molto diversa dalle *Prose del volgar lingua*:¹¹¹ l'estremizzazione dell'antitesi tra Dante e Petrarca esprime una concezione della letteratura incompatibile con l'impegno politico e religioso e concettuale di Dante, e suggerisce il perfezionamento cui lo stesso Ruscelli intende contribuire, per esempio in fatto di ortografia del volgare, incoraggiando la partecipazione attiva di uno strato sottile ma geograficamente

Caldei, o Indiani, Ebrei, et d'altre lingue n'habbiamo tanti in mano, che per sé stessi sarebbero honesto volume' (RUSCELLI, ed. Iacono / Marini [2011b], 95n. e 112-13; IACONO [2011], 67-71).

110 RUSCELLI (2011), 199.

111 Sul bembismo tutt'altro che ortodosso di Ruscelli insiste opportunamente Pozzi (2013).

diffuso di una comunità poetante alla quale offre il modello maneggevole e riproducibile (diversamente dalla *Commedia*) del sonetto e degli altri generi metrici del *Canzoniere* di Petrarca. In tal modo Ruscelli incoraggia una sorta di mondanità letteraria non provinciale.

Diversissima è invece la posizione critica di Borghini e in genere della cultura fiorentina: cultore di Petrarca e Boccaccio, Borghini difende con la massima decisione il valore della *Commedia*, e Ruscelli diventa nei suoi scritti il bersaglio preferito di tutto ciò che ai suoi occhi rappresenta un trattamento incompetente in materia di comprensione del toscano letterario del XIV secolo e del fiorentino senz'altri aggettivi. Degli avversari culturali combattuti da Borghini il principale è, per attività, incisività, influenza e insomma pericolosità, il Ruscelli. Nei manoscritti del Priore degli Innocenti il letterato-imprenditore di Viterbo è oggetto di critica continua. La polemica verte sui suoi errori d'interpretazione, dovuta a ignoranza della lingua, che lo portano e a gravi sbagli nei commenti ai testi. Un'idea di letteratura diversissima da quella mercantile e mondana di Ruscelli, e molto interessata al mondo morale e religioso di Dante, rimane sullo sfondo, ma integra le ragioni linguistiche della dura polemica antiruscelliana. Che Borghini fosse tutt'altro che insensibile a una ragionata valutazione anche critica della *Commedia* risulta del resto dalle repliche al Castravilla.

In un'occasione, Borghini concede un certo credito al Ruscelli:

Girolamo Ruscello, *uomo vano e che sa pochissimo affatto della lingua* [...], *ma pure in certi libri* che scrisse contro al Dolce, o che fusse farina d'altri, o che il soggetto gli somministrasse la facultà, *non è senza qualche poco d'utile quella lezione*, purché vi si vadia con riguardo, e come in certi fiumi poco sicuri, tentando sempre il guado inanzi.¹¹²

I *certi libri* di Ruscelli cui allude Borghini sono i *Tre discorsi* che Ruscelli pubblicò nel 1553 per criticare severamente (con lunghe sequenze di una satira godibilissima) altrettante opere del veneziano Ludovico Dolce, autore e correttore del Giolito, il principe degli editori veneziani: il *Decameron* (1552); le *Osservazioni nella volgar lingua* (1550); la traduzione in ottave delle *Metamorfosi* di Ovidio (*Le Trasformazioni*, 1553).¹¹³ Benché Dolce, meno acuto del Ruscelli, appartenesse alla categoria dei curatori di testi frettolosi e poco competenti di cui Ruscelli era il massimo esponente, altrove Borghini, contraddiccendosi o comunque integrando il giudizio citato ora, scrive:

Io l'ebbi già [il Dolce] per assai galantuomo, e se bene questo Ruscello l'avea maltrattato in quei suoi libri, pure non avea sempre ragione, e in parte io l'avea per iscusato se in qualche cosa era inciampato.¹¹⁴

112 BORGHINI, ed. Woodhouse (1971), 67.

113 Cfr. RUSCELLI (2011) e la compiuta trattazione dei *Tre Discorsi* di TELVE (2011), con ampia analisi dedicata ai modi della polemica letteraria in Ruscelli.

114 BORGHINI, ed. Woodhouse (1971), 277.

Questi sono i commenti meno sfavorevoli su Ruscelli. Veniamo ora a un campionario di considerazioni sdegnate che ridicolizzano gli errori interpretativi dovuti a incompetenza linguistica e a posizioni antidantesche, lontane dalle regole della corretta polemica letteraria tracciate nel *Dello scrivere contro altrui* e integrabili occasionalmente negli altri scritti di cui si è detto (§ 4). Basterà riferirsi a un'operetta tutta dedicata a Ruscelli, intitolata *La Ruscelleide* (sul modello di *Eneide, Teseide*),¹¹⁵ ricca di una lunga serie di contestazioni tutte riservate agli errori interpretativi di luoghi danteschi: quasi uno scritto di critica eroicomico (anteriore ai poemi eroicomici) che ha per oggetto l'interpretazione, o meglio gli errori d'interpretazione.¹¹⁶

In un'occasione, Borghini chiese al suo fornitore di libri se sul mercato librario circolasse un'edizione della *Commedia* di Dante con le cure del Ruscelli. Questi però aveva modificato i tre classici trecenteschi del Bembo nel modo già esposto, sicché Borghini, alla caccia di errori d'interpretazione sul testo della *Commedia* e di pesanti svalutazioni di Dante si fondò su un'opera importante del suo avversario: *Del modo di comporre in versi nella lingua italiana, nuovamente mandato in luce. Nel quale va compreso un pieno et ordinatissimo Rimario, con la dichiarazione, con le regole, et col giudicio per saper convenevolmente usare o schifar le voci nell'esser loro, così nelle prose, come ne i versi*, pubblicato nel 1558.¹¹⁷ L'opera è tripartita: a un ampio *Trattato del modo di comporre in versi nella lingua italiana* seguono *Il Rimario di tutte le voci della lingua italiana*, con ampia appendice per le rime sdruciole e un *Vocabolario di tutte le parole contenute nell'opera, bisognose di dichiarazione o di giudicio*. Quest'ultimo, dedicato alla lingua letteraria, è ricco di giudizi di valore sulle parole e gli autori che le usano, e di distinzioni tra parole e forme del verso e della prosa.

Riporto, come esempio delle ironie e dei sarcasmi di Ruscelli su Dante, il rifiuto compatto della lunga serie di parasintetici con prefisso *in-* di cui la *Commedia*, e più precisamente il *Paradiso*, è ricca. Scrive Ruscelli (le citazioni sono dal *Vocabolario*):

Intrearsi, cioè farsi tre, o in tre. Verbo di Dante, che come tante volte s'è detto altrove, tante voci si fece lecito di formare comunque fossero, quante il capriccio gliene dettava, o le rime gliene richiedevano, et accompagnollo in una sentenza con un altro verbo non più lodevole, cioè *Disuna*: 'che non si disuna. Da lui, non da l'amor, che in lor s'intrea'.

Analogamente per *illuiare*, riflessivo:

115 Nelle cicalate accademiche era già in uso il rovesciamento comico della suffissazione in voga nell'epica; ricordo solo la *Ficheide* di Annibal Caro (e, sul titolo, GARAVELLI [2002], 61-2).

116 Il testo fu pubblicato alla fine del XIX secolo (BORGHINI, ed. Arlia [1898-1899]) ed è stato riedito in BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 278-363, da cui si cita.

117 Uso la seconda edizione, del 1559, pubblicata a Venezia da Gio. Battista et Melchior Sessa fratelli.

è verbo fatto da Dante come *Immiarsi*, *Intuarsì*, cioè divenir te, o divenir me. Valse a Dante *illuiarsi* il medesimo che divenir lui, farsi lui, entrare in lui, unirsi con lui, etc. Ma non è da usarsi.

E, coerentemente: ‘*inleinarsi*, disse il medesimo Dante [...]. Ma è ancor ella da usar poco’; ‘*Immiarsi*, di Dante, ma da fuggirsi’; ‘*Intuarsì* [...], di Dante, et da spaventarsene’. Ancora: ‘*Immegliarsi*, verbo di Dante [...]. Ma non è voce da seguirsi’; ‘*Ingradare*, disse Dante, ma non è da seguirsi’; ‘*Inoltrarsi*, pur di Dante, et pur poco da seguirsi’; ‘*Insemparsi*, verbo dantesco, et da non recusarsi in alcuni luoghi di Romanzi, o satire, o altre sì fatte composizioni’ (suggerimento ovviamente sarcastico perché poco plausibile e perché Ruscelli propone in maniera improbabile il declassamento della parola dallo stile sublime del Paradiso al genere popolare del romanzo cavalleresco e al registro umile della satira; non diversa la valutazione di *Ingoiare*, bella voce da Romanzi, o terze rime in occasioni opportune [probabile allusione alla satira], usata da Dante, et da altri buoni, vale inghiottire’); ‘*Insusarsi*, ‘voce da non usarsi ancor ella, se ben [ma s’intenda: perché] l’usò Dante’; ‘*Inventrarsi*, pur da sventrarsi da gli scritti nostri’; ‘*Insollare*, che usò Dante, vogliono che significhi fare instabile, et possiamolo credere dalle parole di quella sentenza, ma non è però da *Insollarne* gli scritti di chi aspiri, che sieno stabili nelle menti o nell’orecchie, et lingue di persone giudiciose’; ‘*Inurbarsi*, voce ancor dell’istesso Dante, et non in tutto sconcia’¹¹⁸

Si esprime nella prosa borghiniana la tradizione comica fiorentina, in reazione alle derisioni e alle insolenti spiritosaggini che Ruscelli riserva a Dante, partendo da un’idea della letteratura lontanissima da quella prevalente a Firenze, e però non mancano espressioni fantasiosamente originali. Anche gli antichi ipercritici di Omero sono resuscitati per difendere Dante dai suoi persecutori: la *Frusta di Omero* (‘Ομερομάστιξ) di Zoilo, retore greco del IV secolo a. C., si reincarna nel Ruscelli:

- *questi dantimastigi* (p. 195);
- *questi vocabolaristarii et nuovi zoili* (p. 196);
- *questi zoili et scopatori de’ poeti* (p. 272)¹¹⁹

118 Borghini risponde osservando la naturalità di ricavare verbi da altre parti del discorso, come pronomi o avverbi (BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi [2009], 203–4). Di altra ragione la *in-* di *introcque*, voce illustrata da Ruscelli con un’erronea spiegazione a senso: ‘*Introcque*, per a dentro, disse il medesimo Dante, et è voce che niun contadino da Bergamo ne saprebbe formare a suo linguaggio un’altra più acconcia da far ridere’.

119 Dei *nuovi zoili* fa parte anche Castelvetro (BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi [2009], 212). *Scopatore* è termine tratto dalle compagnie di disciplina (alcune si chiamavano dei *battuti*): con un manico di scopa il disciplinato percuoteva chi lo precedeva nella processione, subendo a sua volta lo stesso trattamento da chi gli veniva dietro.

Quando Borghini mise mano alla *Ruscelleide* contraddisse consapevolmente allo stile misurato di cui aveva parlato nel trattatello *Dello scriver contro altrui* e, ferito dai maltrattamenti e dai sarcasmi che Ruscelli dedica a Dante, adottò una diversa strategia polemica, di tipo aggressivo (che però non intendeva render pubblica). Il principale, anche se non l'unico, pomo della discordia tra lui e Ruscelli è appunto la *Commedia*. Nella premessa alla *Ruscelleide* si legge:

sendo venuto in villa per pigliare un po' d'aria, mi son libero in un tratto et da molte brighe et da molti pensieri; onde, preso la penna in mano per mio passatempo, mi sono proposto inanzi uno o due libretti di *questo animale*, che così lo vo' chiamare contro alla natura mia et contro forse anchora l'uso d'ogni gentile et costumato scrittore, se l'*insolentia et bestialità sua* non fusse tale et tanta, che veramente a lui si convenisse propriamente *quel detto* che *Cortesia fu in lui l'esser villano*.¹²⁰

Il *detto* è una citazione dal nono e ultimo cerchio dell'*Inferno* (XXXIII 150), che colloca agli estremi del verso due parole di significato opposto, nelle quali si esprimono una differenza sociologica (la *corte* e la *villa*, intesa come la campagna abitata dai villani) e la distinzione tra la civiltà cittadina e la brutalità dei modi extraurbani. Ciò risulta ben chiaro alla coscienza linguistica e storica di Borghini:

Et se in qualche luogho io mi sono portato contro di lui [Ruscelli] *un poco aspramente*, mi scuserà il titolo preposto, che dice che 'Cortesia fu in lui l'esser villano'. Et chi considererà *quanto villanamente* egli offenda la prima luce nostra [Dante] a torto, la quale se bene a ragione havessi offeso tanto *incivilmente*, meritava altro che parole, mi scuserà se mosso da pio zelo, non da collera, l'ho voluto pagare della sua moneta.¹²¹

Altrove:

Di certi Ruscelli e simili mi pare opera perduta il ragionare, e ben sarebbe non aver mai cagione d'intrare *in sì bassa voglia* di leggere o ragionar di tali, ma per cavare d'error certi più semplici, che tirati dalle molte scritte e postille e lisciamenti fatti a molti libri, mentre come correttori si vanno guadagnando la vita, e abbagliati dalle varie malie e vane promesse e sicurezza del parlar, si vogliono mostrar padroni della lingua nostra, non che intendenti ...¹²²

120 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 278–9.

121 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2009), 325. L'opposizione della *villa* alla *cortesia* e anche all'*urbanità* (che è tra l'altro una categoria retorica di Cicerone) emerge con chiarezza ad altro proposito: 'l'avvezzarsi a ritoccare gli scritti altrui è *villano costume e scortese* (per chi non intendesse ben quel che vuol dire *villano*)' (BORGHINI, ed. Woodhouse [1971], 66, n. 5); 'egli è nella *città* una certa propria e natural *delicatezza e civiltà e*, a dir propriamente come oggi parliamo, una *gentilezza*, sì nel fare come nel parlare, che non è in *villa*' (Id., 139). Su *urbanitas* come modello (insieme con *patavinitas*) del neologismo *fiorentinità* entrato prima nel latino rinascimentale (*florentinitas*), poi nel volgare (*fiorentinità*), cfr. BRUNI (2004).

122 BORGHINI, ed. Woodhouse (1971), 30.

Si noti il prelievo dantesco *bassa voglia*, tratto di nuovo dal Basso Inferno (XXX 148) e impiegato anche a proposito di Annio da Viterbo (§ 8 e n. 77), con una significativa associazione di alcuni oppositori con le zone infernali dove sono puniti i peccati più atroci. Riferendosi, poi, a Ruscelli e ai suoi colleghi con l'epiteto di *correttori* si aggiunga che in altri luoghi Borghini usa il gioco di parole *correttori /corruttori*.

11. ... e il ritorno al galateo della disputa letteraria: la polemica asimmetrica con Ruscelli nelle *Annotazioni et discorsi sopra alcuni luoghi del Decameron*

Per un incrocio paradossale di circostanze toccò al *Decameron* la sorte di essere in una medesima edizione sottoposto a una revisione testuale ed esegetica che impegnò la migliore filologia fiorentina, con il Borghini come direttore ed estensore principale del lavoro e, insieme, a una riscrittura di varie sequenze delle cento novelle, divenute impresentabili in un'Europa occidentale divisa dalla frattura di confessioni cristiane in aspro, e sanguinoso, contrasto fra loro. Dopo il fallimento, intorno alla metà del XVI secolo, dei tentativi di una riconciliazione tra la Chiesa cattolica e i movimenti riformati, tra i due fronti si innalzarono rigidi steccati di natura religiosa (e ovviamente anche politica), e scoppiarono guerre e guerre civili, accompagnate da un'attività propagandistica che coinvolgeva, cosa di interesse diretto in questa sede, aspetti di carattere culturale. Il *Decameron*, fino ad allora letto come un'innocua opera d'intrattenimento anche nelle novelle che rappresentavano comportamenti, soprattutto erotici, del clero, già satireggiati nei *fabliaux* del XIII secolo, finì nell'indice dei libri proibiti. Per rimetterlo in circolazione era necessario modificare le parti in cui i religiosi erano rappresentati in situazioni sconvenienti, e risultava utile mettere in rilievo l'importanza dell'opera dal punto di vista della lingua, lasciando in ombra il valore letterario. Per evitare che la censura e correzione dell'opera fosse eseguita a Roma, e per non perdere il controllo di una gloria della cultura fiorentina, Cosimo dei Medici ottenne dalle autorità religiose romane che la cura dell'edizione riformata (o deformata) del *Decameron* fosse affidata ai dotti di Firenze. Usciva così nel 1573 *Il Decameron di Messer Giovanni Boccacci Cittadino Fiorentino. Ricorretto in Roma, et emendato secondo l'ordine del Sacro Concilio di Trento, Et riscontrato in Firenze con testi Antichi et alla sua vera lezione ridotto da' Deputati di loro Altezze Serenissime*, stampato dai Giunti di Firenze (Altezze al plurale, perché Cosimo si associò l'erede, Francesco). Del 15 maggio 1573 è la dedica dei Giunti al *Principe di Toscana*, cioè a Francesco dei Medici, da tempo associato al governo con il padre Cosimo. In questa edizione, i Deputati hanno provveduto a stampare

il *Decameron* in corsivo, distinguendo con il corpo tondo le parole o sequenze modificate o riscritte, nelle quali ai personaggi del clero sono fatti indossare panni laici.

Il *Decameron* del 1573 consta di solo testo: non si fece in tempo ad accomparlo con le *Annotazioni* dei Deputati,¹²³ che ne costituiscono il contributo nuovo, di natura filologica e interpretativa. Dopo l'indice delle novelle, i Giunti annunciano la pubblicazione imminente delle *Annotazioni* promesse. Nello stesso anno, infatti, escono le *Annotazioni et discorsi sopra alcuni luoghi del Decameron, di M. Giovanni Boccacci, Fatte dalli molto magnifici Sig. Deputati da loro Altezze Serenissime, Sopra la correptione di esso Boccaccio*.

Il lavoro del primo e del secondo volume fu diretto dal Borghini, che tenne i rapporti con le autorità ecclesiastiche di Roma, centralizzò gli spogli condotti dai suoi collaboratori sui manoscritti più antichi e si avvale della collaborazione dei Deputati (Bastiano Antinori, Agnolo Guicciardini, Antonio Benivieni);¹²⁴ motivi stilistici e di contenuto suggeriscono che Borghini sia stato anche l'estensore delle *Annotazioni* e, probabilmente, della dedicatoria dei Giunti a Fernando de' Medici, secondogenito di Cosimo. Vi si legge che

oltra la lunghezza del tempo et la trascuraggine d'alcuni stampatori, haveva l'audacia di molti [...] la purità e candidezza di questo autore di molto *corrotta e guasta*,¹²⁵ forse per rendere i libri loro più vendibili al vulgo con sì fatte promesse d'*annotazioni*, o pure per procacciarsi [...] alcuna lode.¹²⁶

parole nelle quali si riconoscono i riferimenti, così ricorrenti in Borghini, agli stampatori veneziani, al loro infondato interventismo sul testo, ai loro intenti commerciali. Non meno eloquenti sono alcune indicazioni del *Proemio* sul clima religioso che ha imposto la revisione di un testo che Borghini difende, comunque, dall'accusa d'immoralità:

nessuno si creda per questo titolo commune, dell'essere proibito, che sia dannato come persona meno che cattolica o *seminatore di nuove et perverse opinioni* [evidente allusione al mondo protestante], la qual cosa, sì come non è vera, così non è stata mai intentione de' Padri [le autorità religiose di Roma]; perché, ove da vero parla et non per burla, et viene a dichiarare i secreti del cuore, si mostra sempre non solo fedele et cattolico, ma molto anchora pio et religioso, et non meno anchora ne' fatti istessi. Il che, oltre a molte altre cose, nel suo testamento, ottimo inditio del ben disposto animo suo, si può vedere.¹²⁷

123 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001).

124 Si veda l'introduzione in BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), xxiii.

125 Emerge il motivo dei corruttori (al quale si accenna alla fine del § 10 e nel § 11), nella forma dittologica *guasto e corrotto*, dal *Decameron* ('guasto né corrotto', IV 5.15), con vari ampliamenti semantici nei numerosi reimpieghi cinquecenteschi.

126 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 3.

127 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 5.

In ogni età, scrive saggiamente Borghini, si è usato ‘scherzare intorno a cose, o per età o per professione, gravi, per cavarne l’occasione del riso.’¹²⁸ Però i tempi sono cambiati: ‘di questa sorte scritti, per i tempi passati, non si hanno i nostri preso troppo pensiero’, perché ‘non si macchia la pura et santa dottrina nostra né per favole di poeti, né per ciance di prosatori’ dell’età greco-latina,

né per alcune opinioni di filosofi contrarie alla nostra religione, i quali, a cagione del resto della dottrina loro, non solo sono da tutti letti, ma da santissimi huomini nostri anchor comentati [allusione, anzitutto, ad Aristotele e ai suoi grandi commentatori domenicani]; et però gli hanno lasciati et lasciano tuttavia leggere. *Et con questa tacita dissimulatione si sarebbe per avventura seguito anchora di andare avanti con alcuni libri, se nuove perturbationi di strane et nocive opinioni, da non molto tempo in qua, non fossero surte, che hanno messo sotto sopra il mondo.*¹²⁹

Eliminare il libro dalla circolazione sarebbe stato impossibile, e l’opera è importante anche per la lingua, prosegue Borghini, consapevole del fatto che certi libri – quello del Boccaccio, ma anche la *Monarchia* di Dante e la stessa *Divina Commedia* – potevano essere (e furono per secoli) strumentalizzati dalla polemica anticattolica. Molti, allora,

considerando che in questo scrittore era richiesta et si dovea attendere *principalmente la lingua*, et che cercare in lui solamente il riso era *bassa voglia et leggiera* [...] cercarono di medicare quelle parti, nelle quali, o per le occasioni accennate di sopra par che alquanto licentiosamente parlasse, *o che hoggi, a cagion di questi nuovi travagli (come spesso i tempi, i luoghi et i nuovi accidenti fanno mutare natura alle cose)*, si potesser pigliare altrimenti et a diverso fine che non fu quello allhora dello scrittore.¹³⁰

Per venire al lavoro dei Deputati, essi intervennero su due punti fondamentali: il miglioramento del testo, contro i *lisciamenti* (banalizzazioni) degli editori veneziani, e l’esegesi letterale, spesso equivocata da Ruscelli e dagli altri correttori-corruttori (il gioco di parole occorre spesso nella prosa borghiniana), come il Dolce.

Proprio la contingenza, imprevedibile fino a pochi anni prima, dell’edizione censurata, costrinse Borghini a mettere finalmente a frutto una parte della sua vasta dottrina filologica e linguistica; il fatto che l’edizione a stampa non specificasse i nomi dei *Deputati* fu, forse, un incentivo per l’umbratile Priore degli Innocenti. Fatto sta che la loro edizione non risponde solo alla riscrittura dell’opera imposta dai tempi mutati: la lezione del testo e il commento sono l’occasione per contrastare l’aggressiva politica editoriale veneziana sul terreno del *Decameron*. Come i deputati si presentano in modo anonimo, così le rettifiche al testo e all’interpretazione non nominano gli autori di lezioni da rifiutare o di

128 *Ibid.*

129 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 6.

130 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 7; si noti ovviamente il reimpiego di *bassa voglia*.

spiegazioni da rettificare.¹³¹ Con ciò si torna al rispetto del suggerimento borghiniano di evitare di nominare il bersaglio della polemica; non stupirà, tuttavia, che il bersaglio principale sia il Ruscelli.¹³² Il principale, non l'unico: talvolta le revisioni dei Deputati non riguardano l'edizione di Ruscelli. Accade anche che Ruscelli erediti e ripeta l'errore di editori precedenti. Qui ci limitiamo a pochi casi che illustrino, almeno in prima approssimazione, il rapporto tra le *Annotazioni* e l'edizione Ruscelli (che cito dall'edizione del 1552). I luoghi in questione sono stati riscontrati anche con l'edizione di Ludovico Dolce per l'editore Giolito, prendendo come testo base l'edizione del 1550, notevolmente arricchita di varianti offerte alla libera scelta dei lettori. Dolce, infatti, si limita a registrarle, senza compromettersi in una valutazione delle varianti e senza, per lo più, darne il significato, non sempre trasparente. Ruscelli, diversamente, muove da un metodo meno eclettico e giudica con la sicurezza (e spesso con la sicumera) che gli è propria.

La lezione o interpretazione criticata dai Deputati può essere propria del Ruscelli ma, in molti casi, è comune al Dolce e ad altre edizioni del *Decameron*. Tuttavia Ruscelli, con la ricchezza dei suoi commenti (laddove Dolce è più reticente e, in certo senso, sbaglia meno), si rivela il bersaglio principale dei Deputati (e, in definitiva, del Borghini).¹³³

Nella descrizione della peste con cui si apre il *Decameron* si legge: 'O quanti gran palagi, quante belle case, quanti nobili *habitari per adietro di famiglie pieni, di signori et di donne infino al menomo fante rimasero voti'.¹³⁴ L'asterisco che precede *habitari* rinvia al margine sinistro della pagina, con un breve commento: 'Habituri hanno qui i testi moderni, non so con quale sciocchezza. legg. il fin dell. giorn.' Le ultime parole rinviano, per un commento più ampio, alle annotazioni raccolte alla fine della Prima Giornata, dove Ruscelli localizza considerazioni troppo ampie per essere contenute in margine: dunque, una sorta di commento di secondo livello. Vi si legge:

Habituri: quanti nobili habituri, trovo io in tutti i testi più moderni, et per certo molto mi maraviglio onde tal cosa habbia havuto origine, habituro nome, non è voce né Toscana, né Lombarda, né Spagnuola, né anco Arabica, o Pappagallesca, né mai si truova in altro

131 Anche il *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, nella prima edizione come nelle seguenti, si pubblicherà in forma collettiva, senza i nomi degli autori.

132 Si conosce un'edizione del *Decameron* di Ruscelli del 1557, corretta ed emendata da Borghini (anche se non si tratta del manoscritto mandato effettivamente in tipografia). Si vedano CARRAI / MADRICARDO (1989) e IACONO (2011), 21–3.

133 Sull'edizione decameroniana di Ruscelli cfr. GIZZI (2003). Dopo la consegna di questo lavoro, è stata pubblicata in edizione moderna la grammatica del Ruscelli, più volte annunciata dall'autore, e pubblicata postuma (RUSCELLI, ed. Gizzi [2016]).

134 BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli (1552), 16; *Introduzione*, 48. Per comodità del lettore aggiungo i rinvii alla classica edizione di Branca (BOCCACCIO, ed. Branca [1987]) che, osservo di passata, nel commento riporta sistematicamente le osservazioni dei Deputati.

luogo se non in questo, ove è cosa certissima che la prima volta s'introducesse per errore delle stampe [...]. *Habituri* disse più volte il Boccaccio per *habitationi*, sì come i parlari, per parlamenti, affari, per faccende, et qualch'altro.¹³⁵

Dunque secondo la spiegazione, non molto lineare, del Ruscelli, *habituri* non è un sostantivo o nome ma un infinito plurale. I Deputati si concentrano sull'affermazione che *habituri* sia una sorta di fantasma che occorre solo in questo passo del *Decameron* (anche se nel seguito del commento, qui non riportato, Ruscelli sostiene che *habituri* si troverebbe più volte nel Boccaccio), e sanno citare vari luoghi da testi toscani del XIV secolo (pp. 56–59). Quanto al Dolce, nell'ed. 1550 stampa *habituri*, senza altra spiegazione né sulla lezione né sul suo significato.¹³⁶

Ora, è criterio espresso più volte da Borghini che la lezione dei manoscritti (di cui i *testi moderni*, e cioè le stampe, sono continuatori) vada conservata il più possibile, anche se è incomprendibile almeno in prima istanza. Correggere è operazione da evitare il più possibile, perché rischia di cancellare una lezione di cui, sulla base di studi più approfonditi ed estesi, si può fornire in un secondo momento un'interpretazione che recupera il senso e, con esso, una parola fino ad allora sconosciuta. Ma i curatori delle stampe veneziane conoscono la lingua in modo superficiale, e di fronte ai passi difficili li correggono disinvoltamente; perciò hanno sostituito con un infinito sostantivato al plurale il sostantivo deverbale *habituri*, di cui i Deputati sono in grado di offrire una documentazione coeva a Boccaccio, che include tra gli altri Giovanni Villani e l'Ottimo (così si chiamava e si chiama tuttora un antico commentatore fiorentino della *Commedia*).¹³⁷

Un caso analogo si presenta in *Decameron* IV 3.28: 'fatto prima sembante d'havere la Ninetta messa in un sacco, et doverla quella notte stessa fare in mar macerare' (ma nella tradizione manoscritta e a stampa è attestata la voce *mazzereare*, accolta nelle edizioni moderne). Mentre nel caso di *habituri* la parola è conservata a testo, e in margine e nella nota a fine giornata si propone decisamente la correzione *abitari*, questa volta Ruscelli corregge il testo e giustifica la correzione nella nota marginale:

Mazzereare non *macerare* come ben dice il diligentissimo Alunno hanno qui molti testi antichi, ma a me non piace.¹³⁸ *Macerar* propriamente è tener tanto una cosa in acqua, che

135 BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli (1552), 51.

136 BOCCACCIO, ed. Dolce (1552), 11. In questo caso, come nei seguenti, tace il magro glossario in appendice all'edizione di Dolce.

137 Borghini, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 56–9.

138 Ruscelli cita Francesco Alunno, *La fabrica del mondo*, del 1548. Nell'*Indice primo* del grande repertorio dell'Alunno, che unisce dizionario e ordinata esposizione enciclopedica del mondo (sulla struttura dell'opera cfr. MARAZZINI (2009), 74–86, 93–101), alla voce si legge: 'Mazzereare, per soffocare, et annegare in acqua', con rinvio al n°. 1521, dove si leggono alla v. *mazzereare* la spiegazione 'tenere una cosa nell'acqua tanto, che divenga molle, come il lino, il

cominci a marcire, o marcisca. Onde per trasportamento [traslato, metafora] si mette per domare et castigare, come macerata da i digiuni, dalle botte et così di molte altre cose.¹³⁹

Di nuovo la scelta della lezione è apodittica: *ma a me non piace*. Quanto a Dolce,¹⁴⁰ vi si legge semplicemente *macerare*, al solito senza spiegazioni né avvertenze.

A questo luogo i Deputati dedicano una discussione che comincia con un'alusione alla glossa di Ruscelli, come sempre innominato:

Questa voce *mazzerare*, che in questa novella più d'una volta et in altre ancora si truova [...], così per l'amor di Dio si lasci stare, che egli è *pure una simplicità (per non dir peggio) di alcuni di questi valent'huomini, che, col dir solamente che ella non piace loro, l'hanno tolta via.*¹⁴¹

Alla luce delle carte che non abbandonarono la sua scrivania per andare in stampa, si avverte come Borghini freni espressioni più colorite. Per ciò che riguarda il merito, come avviene per *abituri* e tanti altri casi, i Deputati citano attestazioni della voce (Dante e il commentatore trecentesco della *Commedia* Francesco Da Buti), ne forniscono l'interpretazione, e aggiungono poi attestazioni e interpretazione per *macerare*, voce simile nel significante e prossima nel significato, ma distinta. Confluenza e confusione di voci diverse non mancano anche altrove, e perciò riporto una riflessione dei Deputati in proposito: 'in queste voci, dove ha qualche somiglianza, strana cosa a vedere come ci traveggiano spesso *alcuni forestieri*, et quanto pericolo elle portino alle man loro'.¹⁴²

Altrove il dissenso non verte sull'incomprensione di una parola rara, che può comportare la correzione del testo con una *facilior*, ma sulla categoria grammaticale della parola: 'né fu perciò, quantunque cotal mezzo di nascoso si dicesse, la donna reputata sciocca' (*Decameron* II 3.2). Scrive Ruscelli in margine a *cotal*:

canape, et simili' con la citazione del luogo in questione del *Decameron* (IV 3.28), con la glossa 'affocare', e di un luogo della *Commedia* ('e mazerati presso alla Cattolica', *Inf.* XXVIII 80), 'perché *macerare* significa *domare*' (segue il rimando alla voce *macerare*).

139 BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli (1552), 196.

140 BOCCACCIO, ed. Dolce (1552), 204.

141 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 191.

142 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 193. Un caso analogo presenta *Decameron* IV 7.12 'era in quella parte del giardino [...] un grandissimo et bel cesto di salvia' (BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli [1552], 208), commentato così in margine: 'per certo è manifestissimo errore, che *cespo* non *cesto* ha da leggersi' perché '*cespo* è molto usato, *cespito*, et *cespuglio*, per piante che non sieno arbori ma come la Salvia et altre tali'; cfr. BOCCACCIO, ed. Dolce (1552), 218: *cesto*. Anche in questo caso i Deputati illustrano i significati delle due voci, simili per suono e significato, e ripristinano la lezione *cesto*. Ancora, nella stessa novella, *prontando* (IV 7.16) è corretto a testo *pontando* e spiegato in margine: 'pontando, spingendo' (BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli [1552], 208). Dolce, 218, ha *pontandole* e in margine *prontandole*. Gli esempi potrebbero moltiplicarsi facilmente.

‘Avverti *cotal* per ciò o tal cosa, molto duramente posto’,¹⁴³ di nuovo con un giudizio di gusto che coincide con l’estraneità del luogo citato al personale orizzonte linguistico di Ruscelli, con la condanna conseguente. Manca ogni commento in Dolce.¹⁴⁴

Ribattono i Deputati, citando letteralmente la glossa di Ruscelli:

Così si legge in tutti i migliori [*scil. testi, manoscritti e a stampa*] et sta bene et non ha difficoltà alcuna; ma perché egli è stato a torto havuto a sospetto et alcuni l’hanno molto sinistramente interpretato et poco men che dannato, dicendo ‘*cotal*’ per ‘*ciò*’ o ‘*tal cosa*’, molto duramente posto; il che, oltre che e’ non è così, levarebbe, a questo modo pigliandolo, tutta la argutia et piacevolezza di questo luogo, è bene che si sappia (acciò che questi troppo arditi non si avvezzino a mettere così facilmente le mani ne’ buoni autori) che *cotal* in questo luogo non è nome ma avverbio, come gli chiaman le scuole et importa *così* et *talmente*, secondo i luoghi; et qui: *così mezzo di nascoso et che appena se n’avvedesse la brigata*.¹⁴⁵

Dopo aver citato alcuni *loci paralleli*, i Deputati proseguono osservando che il Bembo [*Prose della volgar lingua* III 26]

addusse questo luogo proprio, come fece anche di *parte* [*Prose ecc.* III 65] quando significa *mentre*. Ma né la diligenza del Bembo giovò, né l’esser in questo libro [il *Decamerone*] più d’una volta, che quel chiosatore non vi cadesse in modo da ridere: *una sera a vegliare parte, cioè (dice egli) della quale volevano star qualche hora dopo cena ad andare a dormire*. Et non vide che si fermò troppo presto et che e’ seguitava una *che*, che era appiccata con essa: *parte che il lume teneva* etc., che se non altro, non la lasciava, a tirarla pe’ capegli, venir mai in quel senso. Donde si vede facilmente con quanto poco pensiero et poco men che dormendo fussero scritte quelle postille et che capitale, per conseguente, se ne debba fare.¹⁴⁶

Quel chiosatore altri non è che Ruscelli, nel testo del quale si legge (*Dec.* VIII 9.40): ‘parendo a messer lo Maestro una sera a vegghiar parte, che il lume teneva a Bruno, che la battaglia de’ topi e delle gatte dipingea, bene haverlo co’ suoi onori preso’¹⁴⁷ e, nell’annotazione in margine: ‘Una sera a vegghiar parte, cioè una sera della [*ma leggi: nella*] quale voleano stare qualche ora doppo cena ad andare a dormire, è parlar popolare, che così dicono, venitenne stasera con noi a vegghiar parte.’ Diversa la punteggiatura di Dolce: ‘una sera a vegghiare, parte che il lume teneva Bruno, et che la battaglia ecc.’¹⁴⁸

Le *Annotationi* si articolano in 125 unità, dedicate ad altrettanti luoghi del *Decameron*; peraltro molte unità restaurano e interpretano più di un passo de-

143 BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli (1552), 60.

144 BOCCACCIO, ed. Dolce (1552), 37.

145 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 102.

146 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 103.

147 BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli (1552), 378.

148 BOCCACCIO / ed. Dolce (1552), 392; non è chiaro se abbia capito.

cameroniano; e se si aggiunge che, quando ne hanno il destro, i Deputati (o meglio Borghini) non rinunciano a rigettare gli insulti a Dante tanto cari a Ruscelli, i luoghi emendati sono centinaia. Qui se ne è data una selezione molto ridotta, alla quale aggiungo ancora un altro caso, un po' diverso dai precedenti. Si tratta di uno dei brevi inserti dialettali che punteggiano il libro di Boccaccio. A Palermo una prostituta circuisce un mercante fiorentino e gli dichiara: '... altri che tu: tu m'hai miso lo foco all'arma [...] (VIII 10.15: questa è la lezione odierna, già difesa dai Deputati). In Ruscelli: '... altro che tu: tu m'hai messo lo foco all'arma',¹⁴⁹ senza commenti, perché lezione ereditata dalle stampe precedenti.¹⁵⁰ In questo caso il non fiorentino Ruscelli ha toscanizzato il siciliano *miso* in *messo*, mentre i Deputati fiorentini, attenti al dettato di Boccaccio, osservano impeccabilmente:

chi scrisse *messo*, andò dietro all'uso et regola della lingua nostra, ma non si ricordò che ragiona qui alla ciciliana, sì come egli ha avuto talvolta in costume di porre alcune parole del paese di chi parla; et chi tanto o quanto ha letto le cose delli antichi poeti, harà spesso trovata questa voce quando fioriva l'uso et, diremo così, la poesia de' Ciciliani ...¹⁵¹

Dopo aver ambientato la scuola siciliana presso la corte di Federico II, e accennato alla sua fortuna postuma ('poi che ella fu venuta al niente, per qualche tempo ne restò, et se ne vede ancora, alcun vestigio ne' nostri più antichi poeti, quasi che le lingue et orecchie, avvezze a quella maniera, non la sapessero così presto dimenticare',¹⁵² sono citate varie occorrenze di *miso*, tra le quali cito solo quella che permette di nominare Dante: 'Iacopo da Lentina, quello che Dante chiama *il Notaro: in tante pene è miso / che vive quando muore etc.*'¹⁵³

Dunque i Deputati correggono, insieme con i tanti errori di Ruscelli e dei suoi simili, editori non bene preparati di Boccaccio, anche l'indebita toscanizzazione della piccola macchia dialettale lasciata dal narratore. Si deve però osservare che l'antitesi tra il rigore della filologia dei Deputati da un lato, e dall'altro la disinvolta attualizzazione linguistica attuata sul testo del *Decameron* da Ruscelli, che si risolve in un ammodernamento dovuto in parte all'ignoranza della lingua antica e dunque alla banalizzazione delle lezioni *faciliores*, e in parte alla volontà di sostituire i modi arcaizzanti del XIV secolo con soluzioni moderne e quindi di comprensione più facile per il pubblico cinquecentesco, cui si propongono testi

149 BOCCACCIO, ed. Ruscelli (1552), 385.

150 BOCCACCIO / ed. Dolce (1552), 400: 'altro che tu: tu mi hai messo lo fuoco all'alma toscano acanino' e in margine: 'che tu, che mi hai messo il fuoco nell'anima'. Significativamente, i Deputati criticano il *Decameron* di Ruscelli, che aveva oscurato l'autorevolezza dell'edizione Dolce. Cfr. STUSSI (1993), particolarmente 130-7.

151 BORGHINI, ed. Chiecchi (2001), 284.

152 *Ibid.*

153 *Ibid.*

privi di asperità e non bisognosi di spiegazioni, questa antitesi segna la prevalenza del metodo di Ruscelli sul rigore di Borghini e dei fiorentini in genere.¹⁵⁴

Fatto sta il *Decameron* censurato e annotato dai Deputati non ebbe altre edizioni dopo la prima, e gli fecero seguito altre edizioni censurate, la prima delle quali fu quella di Lionardo Salviati (1582). Le *Annotazioni* del 1573, poi, rimasero prive di eco e di applicazione all'interno della stessa cultura fiorentina. In altra sede conto di tornare sul problema, che non riguarda solo il diverbio tra Borghini e Salviati o tra Borghini e l'editoria veneziana ma la struttura di lungo periodo della storia linguistica italiana considerata dal punto di vista del rapporto tra Firenze come capitale linguistica italiana (dal XV secolo fin oltre l'Unità italiana) e il resto del paese.

Senza allontanarci dagli anni che seguono di poco la morte del Borghini, ricorderò che nel 1595 l'Accademia della Crusca pubblica presso Domenico Manzani la *Commedia* dantesca riveduta nella lezione sulla base di alcuni manoscritti antichi conservati presso alcune biblioteche private fiorentine. Senza entrare nel merito della qualità filologica dell'edizione (il testo della *Commedia* pone problemi), è significativo che questa iniziativa chiude un'epoca, non ne apre una nuova. Questo Dante della Crusca, pubblicato senza *glosse* né *vocabolisti*, nudo testo, regredisce rispetto al *Decameron* del 1573, censurato ma accompagnato dalle preziose *Annotazioni* dei Deputati, e sembra preannunciare, nell'austera severità del suo apparato critico il grande silenzio di Dante nel XVII secolo (e anche la relativa perifericità di Firenze rispetto ai nuovi centri propulsivi del Barocco).

Per tornare, conclusivamente, allo stile della polemica letteraria di Borghini in rapporto ad alcuni dei suoi interlocutori, andranno rilevati in primo luogo l'attenuarsi della *vis* polemica esplicita nel passaggio dagli appunti privati all'uscita a stampa delle *Annotazioni e discorsi*, e la circostanza che non solo i bersagli delle critiche sono innominati (come previsto dalle riflessioni di Borghini sul tema), ma anonima è la piccola collettività dei Deputati (così anche nell'edizione dantesca del 1594).

In secondo, e ultimo, luogo, la polemica di Borghini contro Ruscelli è asimmetrica perché, quando uscirono le *Annotazioni e discorsi* Ruscelli era morto da 7 anni, sicché non seppe mai delle lunghe attenzioni dedicategli dal Priore degli Innocenti. Questi, poi, aveva risolto felicemente (anche se con una perdita inevitabile del vivacissimo sdegno delle sue invettive antiruscelliane) lo scopo di universalizzare le sue conclusioni, che andavano molto oltre i limiti di Ruscelli e segnavano alcuni punti fermi in fatto di esegesi e interpretazione dei testi.

154 In questa direzione anche Pozzi (2013).

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Breaking News, Court Debates and Popular Theatre in Late Sixteenth-Century Spain^{*}

Abstract

In Cervantes' short novel *Las dos doncellas* ('The Novel of the Two Damsels'), a gentleman arrives at an inn in La Mancha, and the people there run to ask him for the latest news from the court. Their main interest is the war against both the Dutch rebels and the Turks, but especially the deeds of 'the Transylvanian'. They were referring to Sigismund Báthory, Prince of Transylvania (1588–1598), a popular hero in contemporary Spain because he rebelled against his lord, the Ottoman sultan, and conducted a crusade against the Turks. As this article shows, the construction of his image as a perfect Christian prince took place in Spain through the spread of reports narrating Báthory's military successes and through the influential comedy *El prodigioso príncipe transilvano* ('The Prodigious Transylvanian Prince'). The Jesuits had a central role in this process: the information circulated through their communication networks between the Transylvanian Court of Alba Iulia and the Jesuit College in Lima, passing by way of Rome and Seville. Moreover, Báthory was a key ally of the Jesuits, who sought the support of King Philip II of Spain for his military initiatives. Popular interest in the Transylvanian Wars was thus linked to discussions of high politics at the Spanish court.

1. Transylvania and Eastern Europe during the Long Turkish War

The Long Turkish War of Hungary (1593–1606) has traditionally been neglected as a major factor in late sixteenth-century history; but it greatly influenced European politics and also attracted widespread interest throughout the Continent – possibly more than any other event at the time. One of the recurrent themes in contemporary accounts of the war is praise for Sigismund Báthory as a

^{*} Abbreviations: AGS (Archivo General de Simancas), E (Estado); AHN (Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid); ASV (Archivo Segreto Vaticano); BAV (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), Barb. Lat. (Barberiniani Latini); SS (Santa Sede); SS, Sp (Segreteria di Stato, Spagna). This article is an updated and revised version of GONZÁLEZ CUERVA (2006), 277–99. The research has been made possible thanks to the Marie Curie Action FP7-MC-IEF 328536 (CSPIC). I am grateful to George Peale for his advice and for generously allowing me to consult his forthcoming edition of *El capitán prodigioso*.

perfect Catholic and crusader prince. His participation opened another front in the war against the Ottomans, and this was warmly welcomed in Catholic Europe. Báthory fit to a 'T' the profile of a heroic prince, rebelling against his infidel lord and resisting his heretical subjects. The main struggle, however, was between Rudolph II, the Holy Roman Emperor (1576–1612) and Sultan Murad III (1578–1595). The traditional border tensions in Hungary escalated in 1592, after the Turks signed a peace treaty with Persia in 1590. As a result, the sultan had the opportunity to stabilize the western frontiers of his empire. The military potential of the Turks was much higher than that of Austria, but Rudolph II failed to call a crusade against the Infidels and to bring together the princes of Christendom. At that moment, France and Venice shared a profitable alliance with the sultan, and Poland feared the Habsburgs more than the Ottomans. Meanwhile, Philip II of Spain, the uncle of the emperor, was fighting simultaneously against the Netherlands, France and England. Moreover, he did not expect any concrete gain from the Hungarian War.¹

The only enthusiastic ally of Rudolph II was Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605). The pontiff saw the opportunity of declaring a crusade, for which he would be both the spiritual and the secular leader.² Roman diplomacy worked frantically to organize a Christian League, to which were invited Spaniards, Italians, French, Poles, Germans, Transylvanian, Moldavians, Cossacks, Muscovites, Vlachs, Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, Albanians, Greeks, Georgians, Arabs and Persians.³

The course of the war was indecisive, with constant sieges of cities and only one battle royal (Keresztes, in northern Hungary, in October 1596). On both sides, the annual campaigns were brief and combative, the logistics were generally catastrophic, and anarchy and disorder spread quickly. In the absence of a clear frontline, the vast space between Moldavia, Albania and northern Hungary became an insecure area destroyed by raids and internal rebellions. The chaos provoked a military rebellion of the Hungarian subjects of the emperor and of the Balkan vassals of the sultan. Both princes were forced to reach an agreement, the Peace of Zsitvatorok (November 1606). Although the treaty restored the borders of 1592, the Christian side celebrated the war as a success because the myth of Turkish invincibility had been overturned.⁴

In the middle of this chaos a new front opened. In 1594, the young prince of Transylvania, Sigismund Báthory, broke his covenant of vassalage to the Sublime Porte and joined the Catholic alliance. In 1595, his troops were victorious in several minor battles with Turkish forces. Western accounts presented a neat

1 NIEDERKORN (1993).

2 BARTL (1994).

3 JAČOV (2001), 57–98.

4 FINKEL (1988), 7–20.

religious struggle between Christian Transylvanians and Muslim Turks and between Catholics loyal to Báthory and Protestant rebels. The opponents of the prince were not only Calvinist magnates, but also members of Báthory's own lineage, who were disappointed with Sigismund's authoritarian strategy: he had taken advantage of the rebellion in order to expand his territories and had turned the other vassal states of Walachia and Moldavia into satellites of Transylvania.⁵

Who, then, was this brave prince? According to contemporary accounts, Báthory was the long-needed triumphal hero, the ideal Christian knight, devoted to God and to the pope, not to reason of state nor to a comfortable vassalage to the Ottoman Empire.⁶ In contrast, the papal sources displayed a more cautious attitude and described him as a young, inexperienced and impulsive prince. Sigismund came from a traditional Catholic family. His uncle István Báthory was elected Prince of Transylvania in 1571 and King of Poland in 1576. This accumulation of power allowed him to secure the Transylvanian throne for his young nephew Sigismund in 1581. He grew up in a cultivated environment in which Italian influences were strong, and his court in Gyulafehérvár (present-day Alba Iulia, Romania) was famous for its Italian musicians, poets and cooks.⁷

Observers of his court reported that his religiosity was intense and somewhat extravagant. From his childhood, the Jesuits had been responsible for his education and spiritual formation. The relationship between the prince and the Society of Jesus was enduring: his most famous counsellor was his confessor, the Castilian Jesuit Alfonso Carrillo (1556–1628). The pro-Catholic and authoritarian policy adopted by Báthory since the beginning of his personal rule in 1588 culminated in 1594, when he joined forces with Rudolph II against the Turks in the war. Carrillo had carried out a discreet embassy to Rome and Prague in late 1593 in order to secure the support of the emperor and the pope for this new turn. Báthory desired to make Transylvania into a Western European kingdom and sought three objectives: to establish a permanent papal nunciature in Alba Iulia, to receive the Golden Fleece from the king of Spain and to marry a member of the House of Austria.⁸

The Spanish ambassador in Prague, Guillén de San Clemente, at first presented a flattering image of Báthory as a committed and generous prince; but,

5 RANDA (1964), 88 and 101–7.

6 SORANZO (1600), 114–15: 'Mossa dunque da Amoro la guerra a Cesare, si dichiarò Sigismondo Battori Principe di Transilvania contra il Turco, cosa inaspettata da lui, e poco sperata anco da quelli, che ciò esaminavano solamente per ragione di Stato, percioche fù opra della sola Providenza di Dio.'

7 KLANICZAY (1983), 34–53; NOUZILLE (1998), 315–28.

8 Francisco de Vera to Philip II, Venice, 31 December 1594, AGS, E, 1345, n. 211; Guillén de San Clemente to Philip II, Prague, 3 May 1594 and 3 April 1595, AGS, E, 701, n. 65, 2^a and 702, s. n.; SZILAS (1966), 87–8.

after later events, depicted him as an unstable and cruel man of insatiable ambition. Báthory married Christine of Austria, a niece of Rudolph II, on 6 August 1594.⁹ The marriage was disastrous because of the prince's extravagant character and his sexual impotence. The rumour of his impotence spread and, in 1599, appeared for the first time in contemporary accounts, in which his former shining image was increasingly discredited.¹⁰ The previous year, he had begged the pope to annul his marriage and to raise him to the cardinalate. Although Clement VIII refused, Sigismund nevertheless wore the red robe of a cardinal in his palace of Alba Iulia. Shortly afterwards, he abdicated, got rid of all the precious objects in his palace and burnt his archives. He attempted twice to recover the reins of power, the second time with Turkish help. Finally, he was captured and died in Prague as a hostage in 1610.¹¹

2. *Relaciones de sucesos* as the Mass Media of Early Modern Spain

The actions of Báthory were quickly known in the Iberian Peninsula thanks to the publication of *relaciones de sucesos* ('accounts of events'). Renaissance Castile, despite its traditional image as strictly regulated by the Inquisition and censorship, was well informed about European affairs of the time by means of the very reliable post service of the Spanish king.¹² The *relaciones de sucesos* had played a leading role in the spread of information since the mid-sixteenth century and satisfied the needs and aspirations of a wide range of society.¹³ The *relaciones* were short documents that reported on specific events, either real or fictitious (though probable); but only when they began to appear at regular intervals and their content became multi-thematic can we speak of them as gazettes, the direct antecedent of newspapers. In the case of Spain, the first publication of this type was the *Gaceta Nueva*, founded in 1661 by the political publicist Francisco Fabro Bremundán.¹⁴ Recent research, however, has turned up earlier examples starting in 1619.¹⁵

9 Guillén de San Clemente to Juan de Idiáquez, Prague, 1 November 1594, AGS, E, 701, n. 117; Philip II to Guillén de San Clemente, Madrid, 11 June 1595, AGS, E, 2450, s. n.; Guillén de San Clemente to Philip II, Prague, 20 June 1595, AGS, E, 702, s. n.; and RANDA (1964), 104–5.

10 HARASZTI (1931), 195.

11 *Consulta* of the State Council, Madrid, 10 April 1610, AGS, E, 709, n. 116, 3^r.

12 CARNICER GARCÍA / MARCOS RIVAS (2005).

13 SEGUIN (1961), 51.

14 VARELA HERVÍAS (1960).

15 ESPEJO (2013b).

The aim of *relaciones* was to inform, amuse and move readers and listeners. The topics included were diverse: wars and battles, religious or courtly festivities, travel accounts or extraordinary events such as natural disasters, miracles or cases of personal disgrace.¹⁶ The texts shared a close formal unity even though they were diversely labelled as gazettes, *relaciones de sucesos, nuevas*, letters, forecasts or *avvisi*. They were made up of one or two folded sheets of poor quality paper, haphazardly printed using worn types and without any full stops. They sometimes included engravings, often reused from other gazettes and with no relation to the content of the text. The printing of *relaciones* was supposed to be an exercise for apprentices and provided an opportunity to make the most of old types and reams of paper. Thanks to their fast and cheap printing and extensive circulation (up to 1,000 copies), publishing *relaciones* was a profitable business.¹⁷

Booksellers and blind reciters distributed the *relaciones*, which were very widely disseminated.¹⁸ They reached throughout the entire Iberian Peninsula because they were inexpensive and could be read to groups in public places, so even the illiterate could memorize the content and narrate it to a new audience. *Relaciones* were an urban product, but broad networks of peddlers and travellers meant that they were also disseminated to the countryside. In addition, news reached other cities and provinces through correspondence.

We cannot identify the social groups interested in *relaciones* with certainty. The traditional assumption is that there were two parallel audiences: one that was cultivated and interested in serious accounts of political news in prose, and another that was popular and demanded reports of marvellous events in verse.¹⁹ In the case of Venice, which has been studied by Filippo de Vivo, international events and domestic policy were well known through printed *avvisi* and oral sources. A wide social spectrum engaged in passionate discussions of these events in venues from aristocratic salons (*ridotti*) to humble barber shops.²⁰ For the supposedly isolated Iberian Peninsula, Pedro Cátedra has demonstrated the unprecedented dynamism and wide diffusion of *relaciones*. In 1570, one or two

16 ESPEJO (2012), 106–13.

17 Juan René, one of the printers of *relaciones* of the Long Turkish War of Hungary, claimed that his printing house was able to produce more than 1,000 sheets per day: ‘Comúnmente de esta ordinaria se componen y tiran tres mill pliegos cada día que uvo de composición, y tres mill de una cara, que son mil quinientos de dos caras se tiran en cada un día, y que para eso an menester tres oficiales, uno componedor, que compone el un pliego, y los dos batidores y tiradores, que los imprimen’, cited in CÁTEDRA (2002), 75.

18 For the blind poets and narrators, see BOTREL (1973).

19 Juan Tamayo de Vargas, royal chronicler of Philip IV, severely criticized *relaciones* as an idle recreation for ignorant people: ‘[relaciones] que venden los ciegos, que ordinariamente o se escriben a gusto dellos interesados o con el testimonio de una simple carta y sin autoridad [...] para hacer granjería, engañando al vulgo que las cree por impresas y a los demás que por poco dinero leen costas extrañas’, cited in ALTABELLA (1983), 20–1.

20 DE VIVO (2012), 160–2 and 224–32.

copies of the polemical *Caso admirable y espantoso*, which defamed a recently deceased lawyer from Segovia, were sent from Seville to Segovia. The judicial proceedings that followed show that the entire city knew the scandalous news and that it was not blind reciters who spread the information but instead certain gentlemen, notaries, and Trinitarian Fathers. As Cátedra states, there were ‘bewildering methods of diffusion and reception as well as varied social groups which actively or passively took part in the process’.²¹

Relaciones were a lucrative business; but many historians have argued that they were also a tool used by the Spanish Crown and the Church to impose Counter-Reformation ideals on the popular classes. The royal authorities controlled the production of *relaciones* by issuing publication licences. For Augustin Redondo, this indicated effective control by the Crown; but Michele Olivari and Fermín de los Reyes Gómez have refined this view because the royal authorities had very limited powers of censorship and unlicensed *relaciones* were as abundant as licensed ones.²² De Vivo has challenged the deadlock implicit in the dichotomized models of political communication as a manifestation of either public opinion or propaganda. The first model tends to offer an idealistic version of communication, free from political control, while the second exaggerates the efficiency of imposing messages from the top down.²³

In any case, there were some common ideological features of *relaciones*: a sense of social cohesion against ‘the other’ (Muslims or heretics); an exaltation of Catholic faith and morality and a crusading ideal linked to the Spanish spirit. There was also an absolute contrast between, on the one hand, the messianic image of the Spanish monarchy and its allies (including the Prince of Transylvania) and, on the other, the ‘evil’ Ottoman Empire, depicted as the scourge of God. The *relaciones* always reported victories over the ‘common enemy’ and were successful, in part, because they temporarily dissipated the inveterate fear of Turks.²⁴

3. Seville and the Printing House of Rodrigo de Cabrera

In the final years of the sixteenth century, Seville witnessed a large increase in trade and an ‘information fever’, fuelled by its extensive network of international contacts. Cheaper and better-quality books coming from Flanders and Italy led to a crisis in the Seville publishing industry. On the other hand, the market for

21 CÁTEDRA (2002), 96: ‘apabullante abanico de modalidades de difusión y de recepción, así como también de variados medios sociales que participan en ellas, activa o pasivamente’.

22 REDONDO (2001); OLIVARI (2004); and REYES GÓMEZ (2000).

23 DE VIVO (2012), 30–4.

24 BUNES IBARRA (1989); RICCI (2002); and LEDDA / PABA (2009).

classical texts was already saturated. Therefore, the number of editions was reduced, and production was concentrated in the major publishing centres of the peninsula. Seville had been the undisputed leader in the book market throughout the peninsula in the first half of the century; but the heyday of the Cromberger publishing house was now in the past. In the late sixteenth century, Alcalá, Medina del Campo and Burgos took the place of Seville, which responded by specializing in the production of *relaciones*, a more profitable and safer investment that did not require too much technical sophistication and guaranteed a quick return. As Pedro Rueda has shown, *relaciones*, because of the small amount of space they occupied, were exported to America with great success.²⁵

Rodrigo de Cabrera, whose printing press was located ‘a la Madalena, en la casa que era Espital del Rosario’, was the largest publisher in Seville at the end of the sixteenth century. He was active at least from 1594 to 1599; and as well as reports on the war in Hungary, he published *relaciones* about the wars of Flanders, France and England and about the double wedding of Philip III to Margaret of Austria and of Princess Isabel Clara Eugenia to Archduke Albert. Cabrera represents a major milestone in the history of Spanish journalism because he was the first to provide continuous information about a single event: we know of at least 15 *relaciones* on the war in Hungary that were printed by his presses between 1596 and 1599.²⁶

These texts took the form of a correspondence, based on the manuscript letters sent from Rome to Lima by the Jesuit Father Juan de Mosquera to his former superior, the Father Provincial of Peru, Juan Sebastián de la Parra (1545–1622).²⁷ Mosquera reworked the abundant material available in Rome on the campaigns of Prince Báthory and translated it from Italian into Spanish. Along with Venice, the papal court was the major news centre during the transition from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. This fluidity of information was possible because of the dynamic diplomatic community in Rome, around which developed a group of agents, political writers and informers, the *menanti*.²⁸ Furthermore, Rome was the centre of the worldwide information network of the Catholic Church, which has been described as the nucleus of the first era of

25 RUEDA RAMÍREZ (2005), 147.

26 DOMÍNGUEZ GUZMÁN (2007); ESPEJO (2011); and ESPEJO (2013a), 79.

27 Sebastián de la Parra was twice Father Provincial of Peru (1593–1598 and from 1608 to his death) and began the implantation of Jesuits in Chile and Argentina. He died in the odour of sanctity, but his canonization process was never completed. See MENDIBURU (1885), VI, 246–7; JOUANEN (1941), I, 21, 35, 109, 112 and 119; and COELLO DE LA ROSA (2009), 197–9, 206–7 and 211.

28 INFELISE (2002).

globalization.²⁹ In the case of the war in Hungary, the extension and efficiency of the Jesuit network were tested, with positive results.

The events of contemporary Hungary were well known in Italy, following a fruitful tradition of intellectual transfer which had first been established in the fifteenth century through the court of Matthias Corvinus. Many Hungarian scholars studied in Italy, chiefly in Padua, including most of the councillors of Báthory during his minority. The return of Transylvania to the Catholic faith was a priority of the late sixteenth-century papacy, with Italian Jesuits such as the famous propagandist Antonio Possevino paving the way by writing about the situation in Hungarian lands. When the war against the Turks began in 1593, an enormous quantity of information, coming from these Jesuits and from the many Italian courtiers of Báthory, was available to Pope Clement VIII.³⁰

The sources were supplemented by the news arriving at the port of Venice and the court of Ferrara.³¹ Mosquera gathered these materials together, sometimes adapting the various *relaciones* and *avvisi*, and sometimes translating the Italian originals into Spanish. The Italian texts were published, in particular, by two prominent Roman printers, Gabia and Bernardino Beccari, as well as the 'Impressore Regio Camerale' in Milan, Pandulfo Malatesta.³² Henry Ettinghausen has recently pointed out that this mechanism for manuscript diffusion of Italian materials was very common in Spanish *relaciones*.³³ Mosquera sent his *relaciones* as manuscript letters to inform his colleagues in Seville and Lima; they were not intended for mass publication.

Father Juan de Mosquera was born in Monforte de Lemos, in the northern Spanish region of Galicia, around 1556. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1580 and was rapidly sent to Peru.³⁴ After three years, Mosquera requested to return to Europe and arrived in Seville in 1591. Claudio Aquaviva, General of the Jesuits, called him to Rome the next year, as he needed an experienced advisor on the Peruvian affairs of the Society. Mosquera acted as a respected mediator for the requests of his colleagues and acquaintances in South America.³⁵ Starting in March 1595, Mosquera began to write a monthly report to his former superior, the Father Provincial of Peru Juan Sebastián de la Parra, on Báthory's actions.

29 ALBANI (2012).

30 KLANICZAY (1983), 34–48; SÁRKÖZY (1998); and CIURE (2007).

31 For the case of Venice, see KISSLING (1977). In Ferrara, the printer Vittorio Baldini in 1595 began a complete series of war publications, which thereafter were published by Malatesta in Milan, Gabia in Rome and Cabrera in Seville. RICCI (2002), 69–70 mentions fifteen gazettes, as well as the printing of treatises against the Turks by prominent writers such as Achille Tarducci, Lazzaro Soranzo, François la Noue and Lazarus von Schwendi.

32 BULGARELLI (1967), 101–6; SZENTPETERI (2003), 222, n. 19.

33 ETTINGHAUSEN (2013).

34 *Catálogo de la Provincia del Perú*, 2 January 1583, in EGAÑA, ed. (1954–1986), III, 238.

35 EGAÑA, ed. (1954–1986), IV, 441, V, 100, 147 and 168.

Communications with America were centralized in Seville, where these ‘public letters’ of Mosquera were opened and diffused.³⁶ Mosquera was sent from Rome back to Seville by October 1596 and served as *ayudante del procurador de Indias*, a pivotal position for relations with the Jesuits in America.³⁷ Nevertheless, he did not abandon his career as a writer and translator of *relaciones*. Mosquera continued the series on the war in Hungary and also translated other ‘exotic’ news from Muscovy.³⁸ He died in Granada in 1610.³⁹

The story of the *relaciones* sheds light on the process of reception and diffusion of war information in Spain. Báthory rebelled against the Sultan during the Diet of Transylvania, on 16 June 1594, and he led his victorious campaigns against the Ottomans throughout 1595. The Italian reports describing these successes started promptly that same year, and Mosquera began his monthly reports in March 1595. Rodrigo de Cabrera, however, delayed publication until June 1596, but thereafter his press brought out *relaciones* at regular intervals. The first two had printing licences issued by the *asistente* of Seville and dated 17 and 19 June. They were intended to be sold as a set together with the *Carta de Mahomet* and the *Tercera relacion*, written in Rome on 6 May. The first *relacion* was a summary of the 1594 campaign; the second was a narration of the victories of 1595 (for which the *Carta de Mahomet* was a source); and it was only the *Tercera relacion* that contained fresh information about the preparations of the 1596 campaign.⁴⁰ Therefore, the first mission of Cabrera’s press was to provide a quick update of events for an unprepared audience. What was the reason for this delay?

4. A Transylvanian Mission in 1596

On 17 June the first *relacion*, based on Jesuit sources, was authorized in Seville. Shortly before, on 16 May, another Jesuit, Father Alonso Carrillo, arrived in Madrid as the agent of the Prince of Transylvania.⁴¹ We do not have evidence for the connection between these two events; but Carrillo and Mosquera had met in Rome in April 1596, and it is obvious that the Society of Jesus was interested in publicizing the victories of their Transylvanian protector. The context was es-

36 URIARTE (1904–1906), II, 172 and 202.

37 EGAÑA, ed. (1954–1986), VI, 237, 270 and 595.

38 ANTONIO (1783), I, 747.

39 BACKER / BACKER (1853–1861), II, 428.

40 URIARTE (1904–1906), II, 202. The texts cited are MOSQUERA (1596a), (1596b), (1596c) and (1596d).

41 Alfonso Carrillo to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Madrid, 17 May 1596, ASV, SS, Particolari, 1, 127^r.

pecially delicate: after the successful campaign of 1595, Báthory desperately needed the support of the emperor, the pope and the king of Spain to sustain his position against a Turkish offensive. Father Carrillo, Nuncio Visconti and Báthory himself travelled to the imperial court in Prague at the beginning of 1596 to plead for aid from Rudolf II.⁴² Then, Carrillo went on to Rome and Madrid to try and secure as much help as possible. After a positive reception by Clement VIII, who promised to give Báthory money, men and an honorific pontifical sword, Carrillo returned to his native Spain.⁴³

In spite of Philip II's reputation as the paladin of Christendom, the Spanish king was not very interested in contributing to the Hungarian Wars. In those years, the Spanish Crown was fighting simultaneously against France, England and the Dutch rebels, while relations with Emperor Rudolph II, the nephew of Philip II, were characterized by dissimulated mistrust.⁴⁴ Neither the imperial ambassador Hans Khevenhüller nor the special envoy Zdenko Adalbert Popel von Lobkowitz had the means to change Philip II's strategy. For this reason, Clement VIII took charge of putting pressure on the king through two prominent extraordinary papal embassies. The first arrived in February 1594 and was headed by the Auditor of the Sacred Roman Rota, Camillo Borghese, the future Pope Paul V. The Captain General of the Pontifical Guard, Gianfrancesco Aldobrandini, the nephew of Clement VIII, led the second embassy in January 1595. Both men left Madrid in disappointment because of the negative attitude of Philip II towards the war in Hungary. The king was frank with Borghese and told him that he was not going to help his nephew, Emperor Rudolph II, because 'the Emperor could well consider the state of the Christendom, how much he [Philip II] was engaged in the affairs of France, and the large expenses he had, so that he will be happy when His Imperial Majesty obtains honourable conditions of peace'.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, an open denial of the pope's demands was not feasible for the Catholic King; so he promised a subsidy of 300,000 ducats for the war, but the payment was reduced and delayed for more than two years.⁴⁶

42 Alfonso Carrillo to the nuncio Cesare Speziani, Alba Iulia, 28 December 1595, ASV, SS, Particolari, 4, 92; Guillén de San Clemente to Juan de Idiáquez, Prague, 13 February and 5 March 1596, AGS E, 703, s. n.

43 Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini to the nuncio Camillo Caetani, Rome, 9 April 1596, BAV, Barb. Lat., 5845, 14^a; OSSAT (1698), I, 226 and 246–7.

44 RODRÍGUEZ SALGADO (2011), 384.

45 Camillo Borghese to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Madrid, 6 February 1594, in HINOJOSA Y NAVEROS (1896), 366: 'el Emperador podía considerar bien el estado de la Christiandad, lo empeñado que el [Philip II] se hallaba en las cosas de Francia y los grandes gastos que tenía, y que cuando Su Magestad Cesarea lograra obtener honrosas condiciones de paz, el se alegraría de ello'. See also Philip II to Clement VIII, Madrid, November 1593, in TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS (1999–2002), III, 231–2.

46 *Puntos de lo que trajo Popel (von Lobkowitz) y la respuesta que se les dio*, San Lorenzo, 13 September 1595, AGS, E, 2450, s. n.; and NIEDERKORN (1993), 201.

Aldobrandini arrived on 26 January 1595 with similar requests to finance the war. He spent two frustrating months in Madrid trying to get the Spanish army and navy actively involved in the crusade against the Turks. Philip II refused all his petitions and, as had happened with Borghese, only a symbolic amount of aid was granted: first, the consignment of one third of the inheritance of the recently deceased Cardinal Quiroga, whose patrimony was seized by the king to plug his budget deficit; and second, a licence to raise 8,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry troops in his realms.⁴⁷

When Carrillo arrived in Madrid, the papal nuncio Camillo Caetani was still laboriously negotiating the payment of the money promised to Aldobrandini.⁴⁸ Carrillo was summoned to Toledo, where the king was recovering from an illness, and he was received very positively. He had three requests: financial aid for Prince Báthory, his appointment as a Knight of the Golden Fleece and a diversionary attack on Ottoman positions by the Spanish Mediterranean army.⁴⁹ On 28 June the king's reply arrived: Philip II granted an immediate subsidy of 80,000 ducats to be paid in Venice but refused to send any naval support. The Spanish navy was already on the high seas, and the Captain General, Gianandrea Doria, had different orders.⁵⁰ The king's generosity was striking. The Spanish court was famous for its delays and long negotiations, but Carrillo spent less than a month in Toledo. The rapid payment to Transylvania was even more remarkable if we consider that at the time Philip II was negotiating the royal bankruptcy of November 1596.

Caetani, however, had predicted that Carrillo would obtain more than he and the imperial ambassador had succeeded in getting because of various factors: the novelty of Carrillo's claims; the immense prestige of Báthory in those months; and the reputation or 'symbolic capital' that the Spanish Crown stood to gain. According to the surviving sources, it seems that both Philip II and his children were sincerely interested in the progress of Prince Báthory. The first request the king made to Carrillo was 'to know the true account of those matters' ('sapere la vera relatione di quelle cose'). Furthermore, the reputation of the Spanish king as the protector of Christendom would be reinforced if an 'exotic prince' appealed to him for assistance through an extraordinary embassy directed by a Spanish

47 Philip II to the Duke of Sessa, Madrid, 31 March 1595, AHN, Exteriores, SS, 20, 388–400; and Giovanni Francesco Aldobrandini to Clement VIII, Torija, 1 April 1595, in HINOJOSA Y NAVEROS (1896), 391–2.

48 Nuncio Camillo Caetani to Cardinal Aldobrandini, Madrid, 10 June 1596, ASV, SS, Sp, 47, 178^r.

49 Alfonso Carrillo to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Toledo, 29 May 1596, ASV, SS, Particolari, 1, 129^r; *memorial* of Alonso Carrillo to Philip II, Toledo, 1 June 1596, AGS, E, 703, s. n.

50 *Lo que Su Md. es servido que se responda a lo que el padre Alonso Carrillo a propuesto de parte del príncipe de Transilvania*, Toledo, 28 June 1596, AGS, E, 2450, s. n.; and VARGAS-HIDALGO (2002), 1456–60.

Jesuit.⁵¹ The propaganda value of this action was heavily publicized in Rome, Venice and Prague by the Spanish ambassadors in order to ensure that Philip II, who was being heavily criticized as a proponent of ‘reason of state’, pursued a virtuous policy.⁵²

This outcome also had a dynastic dimension. Funding Hungary’s Long Turkish War was not a popular policy among the leading ministers of Philip II (chiefly Cristóbal de Moura and Juan de Idiáquez); but it was supported by a group of courtiers who had lost power. The nuncio and the imperial ambassador relied on Dowager Empress Mary of Austria as their biggest asset.⁵³ She was the sister of Philip II and mother of Rudolph II, and she lived in apparently secluded retirement in the Descalzas Reales convent of Madrid. Mary founded the Jesuit College of Madrid, and a political group formed around her household, protected by the Jesuits and advocating a tighter alliance with the papacy and the Austrian branch of the dynasty. Prince Philip (who became King Philip III in 1598) was close to Mary and shared her political inclinations: he expressed this in June 1596 when support for Báthory was under discussion, and he demonstrated it openly throughout his reign.⁵⁴

The support of Philip II for Báthory was part of a broader strategy towards Central Europe: the king bestowed the Golden Fleece not only on the Prince of Transylvania but also on Archduke Matthias, the brother and presumed successor of Rudolph II, and on Ferdinand, Archduke of Inner Austria. Philip II wanted to show that he had other allies in Central Europe apart from his suspicious nephew Rudolph II and was also keen to initiate a strategic approach to the court of Inner Austria. Its ruler, Archduke Ferdinand, was the brother-in-law of Báthory, and his sister Margaret was the best placed candidate to marry Prince Philip; soon after the mission of Carrillo, Philip II’s closest advisor, Cristóbal de Moura, began negotiations for the wedding with Dowager Empress Mary.⁵⁵

51 Nuncio Camillo Caetani to Cardinal Aldobrandini, Madrid, 12 June 1596, ASV, SS, Sp, 47, 196^r: ‘Hanno piacere che si sia mandata persona espressa à far ricorso a Sua M.tà, et implorar il suo aiuto, giudicando che ciò appartenga molto alla sua riputat.ne. È stato molto accertato, che venisse un Gesuita per la molta autorità che tengono con li ministri, et che fosse naturale di questi regni.’

52 Guillén de San Clemente to Philip II, Prague, 21 October 1596, AGS, E, 703, s. n.; FRACHETTA (1598), 65–8.

53 Nuncio Camillo Caetani to Cardinal Aldobrandini, Madrid, 30 April 1596, ASV, SS, Sp, 47, 161^r–162^r.

54 Nuncio Camillo Caetani to Cardinal Aldobrandini, Madrid, 16 July 1596, ASV, SS, Sp, 47, 304^r–305^v; SÁNCHEZ (1998); MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN (1999); and GONZÁLEZ CUERVA (2008).

55 *Avvisi publici di Madrid*, 20 and 21 September 1596, ASV, SS, Sp, 47, 333^v–334^v and 381^r; Guillén de San Clemente to Martín de Idiáquez, Prague, 11 November 1596, AGS E, 703, s. n.

5. The Celebration of a Crusading Spain: *El prodigioso príncipe transilvano*

Thanks to the *relaciones* coming out of Seville, by the end of the summer of 1596 the deeds of Báthory were a favourite topic in Spanish inns and squares. Moreover, the Spanish king had shown his munificence with a generous monetary subsidy to the heroic prince. Precisely at that time, a play about Sigismund Báthory, *El prodigioso príncipe transilvano* ('The Prodigious Transylvanian Prince'), was written. The sources were the four *relaciones* published in June 1596 and discussed above. The inspiration is so direct that some passages from the *relaciones* were copied into the play.⁵⁶

Historical events that took place between 1594 and 1596 are mixed together and fictionalized: Báthory's breaking of his contract of vassalage to the sultan and the subsequent rebellion of Transylvanian magnates (June 1594); his signing of an alliance with the emperor (January 1595); his wedding to Archduchess Christine (July 1595); and the culminating battle of Giurgiu (28 October 1595). In the play, this battle coincides with other historical events dating to May–June 1596: the arrival of the papal ambassador Ludovico Anguisciola, who presented Báthory with a ceremonial pontifical sword; the embassy of Carrillo in Spain and the monetary aid of Philip II; and the progress made by an impressive Ottoman army headed by Sultan Mehmed III.⁵⁷ The chronological narration is thus forced in order to include these new events. As *relaciones* were quickly transmitted and the interesting campaign of 1596 is not mentioned, the play may have been written by late summer 1596.

El prodigioso príncipe transilvano is a controversial play without a well-established authorship. In the only early modern edition (Zaragoza, 1630), it was attributed to the famous Seville playwright Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579–1644), an attribution followed in Adolf Schaeffer's 1887 edition. Another manuscript version was edited in 1916 by Eduardo Cotarelo, who defended the authorship of Lope de Vega (1564–1635).⁵⁸ In the subsequent debate, the attribution to Lope has been discredited for stylistic reasons, while Vélez de Guevara's role has been nuanced.⁵⁹ According to George Peale, who is currently editing a critical version

56 See MOSQUERA (1596c), 1–4; and VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA, ed. Schaeffer (1887), 188–9.

57 JAITNER (1984), I, 423–7; KLANICZAY (1983), 49–52.

58 VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA, ed. Schaeffer (1887); VEGA, ed. Cotarelo y Mori (1916).

59 MORLEY / BRUERTON (1940); CIORANESCU (1954); CLARK (1971); RAMBAUD CABELLO (1995); GONZÁLEZ CUERVA (2006).

of the text, the play seems to be the work of an unknown Seville author of the late sixteenth century, and around 1621 Vélez rewrote it for a court festival.⁶⁰

The play emphasizes the Spanish contribution to the war and marks an evident contrast with Mosquera's *relaciones*, in which Spain is not mentioned. The play does not glorify the bravery of the Hungarian and Austrian troops but instead the wisdom and nobility of Father Carrillo, the alleged mastermind of the war, and the largesse of Philip II.⁶¹ It is clear that the play was intended for an audience of courtiers, as there are several unusual details that distance it from Spanish popular tradition. For example, there is no role for a *gracioso* ('fool'), nor any love intrigues. The detailed historical narration,⁶² as well as the implicit political realism, are also alien to the tradition: the marriage of Sigismund and Archduchess Christine of Austria was not a love match but a state alliance.

By contrast, a later remake with more love and mystery enjoyed a huge success: *El Príncipe prodigioso y defensor de la fe* ('The Prodigious Prince and Defender of the Faith'), by Juan de Matos Frago and Agustín Moreto. It was published more than twenty times between 1651 and 1803.⁶³ In the 1790s, it was included in the standard repertory of the theatrical seasons of Madrid, Valladolid, Puerto de Santa María, México and Havana.⁶⁴ A long road led from Mosquera's *relaciones* of 1596 and the debates in the Spanish court to the Caribbean theatres of the late eighteenth century. The adventures of Báthory were still a success two centuries later because they appealed to the core of early modern Spanish identity: the crusade against Islam and the search for an ideal hero to lead it, as in the medieval *Cid Campeador*.⁶⁵

60 VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA, ed. Peale (forthcoming). For Vélez de Guevara and the court, see DAVIES (1983), 20–29. Vélez also rewrote *El jenízaro de Albania*, a play on another Eastern Christian hero against the Muslims, Skanderbeg; see VEGA GARCÍA-LUENGOS (1998), 13–16.

61 In the play, Báthory constantly asks for his advice, and Carrillo represents the virtues of Castile. VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA (1887), 170, 187, 196 and 206. For the contribution of Philip II, see VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA (1887), 240.

62 The Transylvanian aristocrats of the play are recognizable as the real courtiers of Báthory: the chancellor Kovácsoczy, the count Sandor Kendi, the general Balthasar Báthory, the high steward Jósika, the captain Geszti or the governor Keresztury.

63 PROFETTI (1976), 492–9. In addition, there are many other editions wrongly attributed to Juan Pérez de Montalbán.

64 CIORANESCU (1954), 97; DOMÍNGUEZ ORTIZ (1984), 217; LEONARD (1951) and *Papel Periódico de La Havana* 5, 21 November 1790.

65 SÂM BRIAN (2012), 32–41.

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Uwe Baumann

Contrasting Interpretations (?) in Tudor Historiography and Renaissance Drama: The Cases of Richard III and the Tudor Rebellions

Abstract

This essay discusses and challenges Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere by examining Tudor historiography and its literary representation in the English Renaissance, with special attention paid to Richard III and the Tudor rebellions. After a presentation of the historical context, Richard's literary representation in Thomas More's *The History of King Richard III*, the anonymous *True Tragedy of Richard III* and William Shakespeare's *Richard III* are taken into account. Subsequently, the rebellions during the Tudor era are surveyed, the so-called Tudor Myth is critically examined, and the literary representations of both are analysed, focusing on selected history plays by Shakespeare and John Ford. Finally, Shakespeare's meta-dramatical history play *Henry VIII* is considered with regard to historiographical theory, methodology and argumentation.

The aim is to demonstrate that both history plays and historical works contributed to the public sphere(s) in the English Renaissance, and to illustrate how it perpetuated and shaped the Tudor Myth. The stereotypical, distorted, dark and propagandistic representation of Richard III as a tyrannical monster was deployed to legitimize and glorify Henry VII as the divinely sanctioned sovereign and thus to give political stability to the House of Tudor. Historical works as well as history plays were used to strengthen the ideology of (absolutist) Tudor rule and, moreover, hint at a slowly increasing process of alienation between the dynasty and the population, resulting in overtly critical comments and perspectives in the Stuart age and on the Stuart stage.

I

Modern research has repeatedly emphasized that the concept of the public sphere is much more complex and diversified in the late Middle Ages, in the Renaissance and in the early modern period than Jürgen Habermas's categories might suggest.¹ In none of these epochs can the public sphere be conceptualized as a

1 See HABERMAS (1962); see also CALHOUN, ed. (1992) and MAH (2000). Throughout this essay, the following abbreviations are used: *PW* = WARBECK, ed. Ure (1968); *H VIII* = SHAKESPEARE, ed. Foakes (1968); *R III* = SHAKESPEARE, ed. Hammond (1981).

unified process of information, control and decision, accessible to everyone. All of these epochs possess neither an 'all inclusive public sphere' nor a 'representative public sphere', which Habermas recognizes in the absolutist royal court. Instead, there are segments of public spheres, which are constituted and changed by dynamic processes. By the inclusion and exclusion of actors and audiences, partial public spheres (or segments of a public sphere) are created, which transfer knowledge and create opinions. Public sphere in the Renaissance thus always refers to segments of public spheres, which can primarily be described and differentiated with reference to their personnel (actors, audience) and their spheres of discourse (for example, politics, economy, religion). The discourses and formative changes of segmented public spheres articulate basic conflicts and differences of opinion, which accelerate the processes of change and accumulate the differentiated 'work' in shaping the mental infrastructure of an epoch.²

I would now like to illustrate this seemingly theoretical and abstract conceptualization of spheres, or segments of a public sphere and their functional dynamics, by taking some examples from one of my *provinciae*, my fields of research. At first glance, English Renaissance historiography,³ the general category which embraces the various works of history written in the period, addresses a significantly different and much smaller audience than the contemporaneous history play.⁴ The ability to read, as well as knowledge of rhetoric and didactics, are fundamental to understanding a work of history, which is also always received in the course of an individual act of reading. The English history play of the Renaissance, on the other hand, is a mass-compatible medium, focusing on the synesthetic representation of English history on stage to a largely illiterate mass audience (2,000 to 3,000 spectators per performance), thus clearly constituting a collective experience. While the difference between a work of history and a history play is quite obvious with regards to their intended audiences, a differentiation between the respective selection of topics and their representation is extremely difficult, since works of history provide the main source of characters, storylines and interpretations of history plays. The examples which I will analyse in depth are the historiographical and dramatical representations of

2 See, on this general consensus, GESTRICH (1994), IMHOF (1996), MELVILLE / VON MOOS, ed. (1998); VON MOOS (1998), KÖRBER (1998), REQUATE (1999), FAULSTICH / HICKETHIER, ed. (2000), LAMBRECHT (2000), ESSER / FUCHS, ed. (2002), VAN HORN MELTON, ed. (2002), RAU / SCHWERHOFF, ed. (2004), LANZINNER (2006).

3 See the sources in LEGGATT (1989), ISER (1988) and SCHRUFF (1999). See also KULLMANN (1993), KELEN (1996), PATTERSON (1993, 1994, 1995, 1997), KNAPP (1998), LUCAS (2009), ESCOBEDO (2009), DJORDJEVIC (2010), HERTEL (2010), FINN (2012), KEWES et al., ed. (2013), Es (2013). In general, see also BAUMANN (1998).

4 See, e.g., RIBNER (1954), SPIKES (1977), BORIS (1978), ISER (1988), LEGGATT (1989), KRIPPENDORFF (1992), KAMPS (1997), SCHRUFF (1999), BEYER (1999), CAVANAGH (2003), ARCHER (2005), BAUMANN, ed. (2007), DILLON (2008).

the last king of the house of York, Richard III (Part II), and of the rebellions during the early reigns of the Tudors (Part III). I will continue with an analysis of the function(s) of historiographical theory, methodology and argumentation in a meta-dramatical history play, *Henry VIII* by William Shakespeare⁵ (Part IV), before concluding with a systematic evaluation of the results (Part V).

II

Researchers unanimously agree that Edward Hall's chronicle *The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548) holds enormous significance for English Renaissance historiography.⁶ Hall's text combines detailed observations with a schematic pattern that was introduced by Polydore Vergil to represent English history. The chapter titles, and especially their evaluative adjectives, depict English history since the reign of Henry IV as a moral drama, which finds its resolution in the Tudor reign: 'The Vnquiete Time of Kyng Henry the Fourthe', 'The Victorious Actes of Kyng Henry the Fifth', 'The Troubleous Season of Kyng Henry the Sixt', 'The Prosperous Reigne of Kyng Edward the Fourth', 'The Pitifull Life of Kyng Edward the Fift', 'The Tragical Doinges of Kyng Richard the Thirde', 'The Politique Gouvernance of Kyng Henry The. VII.' and 'The Triumphant Reigne of King Henry The. VIII.' Summing up, we can say that Hall's chronicle turns English history into a series of dramatic alternations in which the rise of conflicts and the intensification of evil ('pitifull', 'tragical') presuppose success and triumph ('politique', 'triumphant').⁷

To Hall (as in Shakespeare's tetralogies), Richard II's deposition in 1399 by Henry Bolingbroke, who then became Henry IV, seems to trigger a tragic cycle of guilt, atonement and redemption. Henry IV faces – as divine punishment for his usurpation of Richard II's throne – numerous rebellions and the disobedience of his son, who in turn develops into a virtuous warrior king after his father's death. The glorious reign of Henry V, culminating in the great victory over France at Agincourt (1415),⁸ however, offers only a brief respite from the carnage of the Wars of the Roses. The bloody butchery peaks in the reign of the Antichrist personified: Richard III. The defeat of Richard III by Henry Richmond, who then becomes Henry VII, at the battle of Bosworth (1485) concludes the cycle of guilt, atonement and redemption: Henry VII's reign initiates a time of peace, stability and prosperity or as the so-called Tudor Myth would put it: with and through the

5 The question of Shakespeare's co-authorship of the play is left aside in this article.

6 See esp. ISER (1988), 48–59. See also HOLMES (1967), BARTLETT (1978), BEER (1992), HERMAN (1997), LUCAS (2009) and FINN (2012).

7 See ISER (1988), esp. 54–5.

8 See, e.g., BAUMANN (1998), 62–8 (reprinted in BAUMANN [2007], 49–56).

Tudor's reign, the history of England is accomplished.⁹ With regards to this Tudor Myth, which is based on a common longing for peace and on a desire for stability and political order, while at the same time providing ideological and propagandistic legitimacy for the Tudor regime, the representation of the reign and character of Richard III is of crucial importance: the defeat of Richard III is perceived as a divine tribunal, presiding over the judgement of an inhuman, cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant.¹⁰ On the other hand, Henry Richmond, the victor of the battle, is interpreted as God's envoy and advocate, ascertaining political stability and a just reign – a propagandistic conception, which outshines all legal insecurities that might be attributed to the Tudor rule.

Sir Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* had the strongest impact on the image of Richard III and his reign because More's text became the most important source for all the Tudor chronicles (from Hall to Holinshed).¹¹ In his *History* More uses the same motifs based on the image of the classical tyrant as in his *Declamatio Lucianicae Respondens* and his *Epigrammata*.¹² In addition, there is the fact that his characterization of Richard is partly orientated along the lines of Tacitus's descriptions of the Roman emperor Tiberius. *Simulatio*, the predominant characteristic of the Tacitean Tiberius, who is depicted as a tyrant and (somewhat indirectly) named as such (Tacitus, *Annales*, VI.6), is also the label which More assigns to Richard at the beginning of his portrayal:

Hee was close and secrete, a deepe dissimuler, lowlye of counteynaunce, arrogant of heart, outwardly coumpinable where he inwardely hated, not letting to kisse whome hee thoughte to kyll: dispitious and cruell, not for euill will alway, but ofter for ambicion, and either for the suretie or increase of his estate.¹³

In the light of all this, the text of More's *History* should speak for itself. Even the introduction of the main character, Richard – after More has presented in his portrayal of Edward IV the ideal sovereign (βασιλεύς) – seems to be ominous, purely through the deliberate contrast, the more so as the birth of Richard, accompanied by dark omens, is dramatized into an event at which nature itself changes its course:

Richarde the third sonne, of whom we nowe entreate, was in witte and courage egall with either of them, in bodye and prowesse farre vnder them bothe, litle of stature, ill fetured of limmes, croke backed, his left shoulder much higher then his right, hard fauoured of

9 See ISER (1988), esp. 53–9. See also HANHAM (1975a; 1975b), FREY (1976), BINNS (1977), MARTIN (2001), BRUSBERG-KIERMEIER (2001).

10 See HANHAM (1975a, 1975b); and, on the cultural history and the political implications of the concept of a tyrant, see Armstrong (1946, 1948), ADAMS (1977), BUSHNELL (1990) and BAUMANN (1985, 2016).

11 See SULLIVAN (1967), RUBIO (1971), HARRIS (1972).

12 See esp. BAUMANN (1985), 113–18.

13 MORE, ed. Sylvester (1963), CW 2, 8/7–11.

visage, and suche as is in states called warlye, in other menne otherwise. He was malicious, wrathfull, enuious, and from afore his birth, euer frowarde. It is for trouth reported, that the Duches his mother had so much a doe in her trauaile, that shee coule not bee deliuered of hym vncutte: and that hee came into the worlde with the feete forwarde, as menne bee borne outwarde, and (as the fame runneth) also not vntoed, whither menne of hartred reporte aboute the trouthe, or elles that nature chaunged her course in hys beginninge, whiche in the course of his lyfe many thinges vnnaturallye committed. None euill captaine was hee in the warre, as to whiche his disposicion was more metely then for peace.¹⁴

Richard himself is a person who feels bound neither by human nor by natural or divine law, as *More / the History's* narrator has also made clear in the introduction; in connection with the very brief mention of the murder of the two nephews (Edward, Prince of Wales, and Richard, Duke of York), he / the narrator states:

For Richarde the Duke of Gloucester, by nature theyr Vncle, by office theire protectoure, to theire father beholden, to them selfe by othe and allegyaunce bownden, al the bandes broken that binden manne and manne together, withoute anye respecte of Godde or the worlde, vnnaturallye contriued to bereue them, not onelye their dignitie, but also their liues.¹⁵

The classical concept of a tyrant as a wild animal is also to be found in *More's* portrayal. When Richard is officially appointed protector, *More / the narrator* comments on this briefly:

[H]ee was made the onely manne chose and thoughte moste mete, to bee protectoure of the king and hys realme, so (that were it destenye or were it foly) the lamb was betaken to the wolfe to kepe.¹⁶

Richard's main characteristic, hypocrisy, is constantly taken up by *More*;¹⁷ one example may suffice here. After he has been successful in getting his hands on the second nephew, or rather luring him out of the sanctuary, Richard welcomes him in an extremely delighted fashion ('[t]he protectour toke him in his armes & kissed him with these words: Now welcome my lord euen w^t al my very hart'),¹⁸ a reaction that the reader is immediately able to assess correctly by way of *More's*

14 *Ibid.*, 7/16–18/1. See in general GORDON (1979), FENLON (1981), DONNO (1982), GRANT (1983), HEINRICH (1987), WOMERSLEY (1993), YORAN (2001), CURTRIGHT (2006), HANHAM (1975a, 2007, 2008), DAY (2008), BREEN (2010), MEYER (2010), esp. 117–233, LOGAN (2011b), HALLETT / HALLETT (2011), GUY (2012), LEHMAN (2013), SCHMIDT (2006, 2009, esp. 135–56, 2013), HOFFMANN (2013), MEYER (2014).

15 MORE, ed. Sylvester (1963), CW 2, 6/2–8.

16 *Ibid.*, 24/27–5/1.

17 *Ibid.*, 47/14–49/5. See also 43/22–35, on the effects of Richard's character on the atmosphere of the court, or respectively the whole community.

18 *Ibid.*, 42/15–17.

introductory characterization of Richard ('not letting to kisse whome hee thoughte to kill').

Besides the fact that More repeatedly has Richard called a tyrant by other characters, or even calls him that as the narrator, it is in particular a passage near the end of his portrayal of Richard as a tyrant that the character-study clearly reveals the influence of the classical tyrant-motif. After he has given an account of the murder of the nephews by Richard's henchmen, More / the narrator describes how Richard nearly breaks down mentally under the burden of the crimes he has committed:

And yet all the meane time spente in much pain and trouble outward, much feare anguish and sorow within. For I haue heard by credible report of such as wer secret w^t his chamberers, that after this abhominable deede done, he neuer hadde quiet in his minde, hee neuer thought himself sure. Where he went abroad, his eyen whirled about, his body priuily fenced, his hand euer on his dager, his countenance and maner like one alway ready to strike againe, he toke ill rest a nightes, lay long wakyng and musing, sore weried with care & watch, rather slumbred then slept, troubled wyth feareful dreames, sodainly sommetye sterte vp, leape out of his bed & runne about the chamber, so was his restles herte continually tossed & tumbled w^t the tedious impression & stormy remembrance of his abominable dede.¹⁹

In addition to the classical sources, which generally speak of the misfortunes of the tyrant and which stress his constant fear of enemies and his horror in the face of his own crimes, in this case it seems to me another classical source has been used: Polybius's account of the demise of Philip V of Macedon, who had to endure much the same as More's Richard:

For it was now that Fortune, as if she meant to punish him at one and the same time for all the wicked and criminal acts he had committed in his life, sent to haunt him a host of the furies, tormentors and avenging spirits of his victims, phantoms that never leaving him by day and by night, tortured him so terribly up to the day of his death that all men acknowledged that, as the proverb says, 'Justice has an eye'.²⁰

All in all, one might say that in the complex character of Richard III, tormented by his guilty conscience, More has conceived a figure whose character is definitely influenced or even shaped by the classical tyrant motif.²¹ In his *History of King Richard III* he renders into English important elements of the classical tyrant-motif which he had already picked up in his earlier Latin works and thus

19 Ibid., 87/8–21.

20 POLYBIUS, *Historiae*, XXIII.10.2–3 (translation by W. R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library).

21 The fact that More's Richard is a caricature of the historical figure of Richard III is not seriously doubted by anyone today; see, e.g., LANGLEY / JONES (2014), esp. 209–73. See also MORE, ed. Sylvester (1963), CW 2, 71/1–73/12, where Buckingham stylizes Edward IV as a tyrant with elements of the classical tyrant-motif.

indirectly, through inclusion in the chronicles of the Tudor period, brings them within reach of a wider public.

The *True Tragedy of Richard III*, whose author is unknown, draws heavily on Thomas More's *History*.²² In the prologue 'Poetry' asks: 'What maner of man was this Richard Duke of Gloster?' 'Truth' responds: 'A man ill shaped, crooked backed, lame armed withall / Valiantly minded but tyrannous in authoritie.'²³ The ensuing presentation of Richard depicts him as a man who cruelly and relentlessly confronts his enemies and later on also his supporters (see esp. ll. 598–607, 649–50, 1441–43, 1630–38, 1932, 1969–82). He is presented as a character whose brutality is intensified by sarcasm and gruesome mockery (see, e.g., ll. 1506–30, 1571–81, 1966, 1981), while at the same time he is shown to suffer from rising remorse (see l. 1874). Richard III thus is portrayed as a tyrant identified by the topical traits of character known from antiquity's literature of tyrants. The protagonist of the anonymous *True Tragedy of Richard III*, however, never exhibits the diabolical violence that might turn him into an incarnation of evil; a Richard like that, the spawn of hellish powers, only appears in Shakespeare's play.²⁴

Shakespeare's Richard III²⁵ explains his motives and further plans at the very beginning of the play, in his introductory monologue:

But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph:
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world scarce half made up –
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them –
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,

22 See GREER (1932), WILSON (1952), LEVENSON (1973) and WALSH (2009).

23 GREG, ed. (1929), ll. 56–8.

24 See THOMSEN (1967), esp. 147–57; see also CHURCHILL (1900), LORDI (1961), MYERS (1968), HANHAM (1975A, 1975B), MURPH (1977), POTTER (1983), SEWARD (1983). A detailed study of Thomas Legge's famous Latin play, *Richardus Tertius* (1579), and its dramatic representation of Richard III remains a *desideratum*.

25 See, e.g., ALEXANDER (2005), BAUMANN (1998), esp. 68–71, BAUMANN (2016), BRUNKHORST (1982), CAMPANA (2007), CLEMEN (1968), CONNOLLY, ed. (2013), DARRAGI (1990), FRISCH (1993), GARBER (1988), GARDETTE (1990), GESSNER (1985), GOY-BLANQUET, ed. (1990), GURR (1997), HERTEL (2010), HÖFELE (2005), LEMON (2013), MÜLLER (1984), MYERS (1999), SLOTKIN (2007), SMITH (1994) and UNTERSTENHÖFER (1988).

And descant on mine own deformity.
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
 I am determined to prove a villain,
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
 (RW, I.1.14–31)

Shakespeare's Richard III is an accomplished dissembler and actor who perfectly keeps up his chosen roles. He acts out his overwhelming capacity of the persuasive art of *simulatio* with gusto,²⁶ and revels in the successful results of his dissimulations. His monologue, spoken after his 'conquest' of Lady Anne proves this:

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
 Was ever woman in this humour won?
 I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.
 What, I that kill'd her husband and his father:
 To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
 With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
 The bleeding witness of her hatred by,
 Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me –
 And I, no friends to back my suit at all;
 But the plain devil and dissembling looks –
 And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!
 (R III, I.2.232–42)²⁷

A question directed at Buckingham towards the end of the third act serves to clarify Richard's talent for persuasive role-playing:

Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,
 Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
 And then again begin, and stop again,
 As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?
 (R III, III.5.1–4)

Richard, often abused by the other characters of the history play as a devil or spawn of hell,²⁸ is a tyrant who possesses all the traits pertaining to antiquity's

26 See R III, I.1.117–21; I.3.47–50; II.1.53–73; II.2.151–4; III.1.79–83 and IV.4.397–417.

27 See also TOTTER (1993) and LAKOWSKI (1999).

28 See, e.g., R III, 1.2.46: 'thou dreadful minister of hell'; I.2.50: 'Foul devil'; I.2.78: 'diffus'd infection of a man'; I.2.91: 'devilish slave'; I.3.118: 'devil'; I.3.143–4: 'Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave this world, / Thou cacodemon: there thy kingdom is'; I.3.230: 'The slave of Nature, and the son of hell'; I.3.293: 'Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him'; IV.4.48: 'A hellhound that doth hunt us all to death'; IV.4.71: 'hell's black intelligencer'.

topical tyrant.²⁹ He is repeatedly and explicitly referred to as a tyrant, and his reign is called a *tyrannis*.³⁰ The presentation of his bloody deeds is even more direct. Anne emphasizes his blood-thirsty nature (see *R III*, I.2.101–54), and he is repeatedly called a bloody king.³¹ England under the reign of King Richard is conceptualized as an abattoir, a slaughter-house (see *R III*, IV.1.43). According to his opponent Henry Richmond, Richard is:

A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
 One rais'd in blood, and one in blood establish'd;
 One that made means to come by what he hath,
 And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him[.]
 (*R III*, V.3.247–50)

Shakespeare's Richard is a ruler who acknowledges neither divine nor human law (see *R III*, I.2.70–71). Shakespeare casts Richard as nature's antipode in a stichomythical dialogue between Richard and Queen Elizabeth:

K. Rich. As long as heaven and nature lengthens it.
 Eliz.: As long as hell and Richard likes of it.
 (*R III*, IV.4.353–4)

Richard, betrayed by nature as he lacks shapeliness and charm, becomes unnatural, an un-natural murderer of brother and nephews (see especially *R III*, IV.4.223–35). This Richard does not have any friends.³² He is called a dog,³³ a wild animal.³⁴ Queen Elizabeth clear-sightedly analyses the political situation in the second act:

29 See the literature cited in n. 24 above. Richard III does directly refer to two of his literary ancestors: Machiavelli (*Henry VI, Part 3*, III.2.191–5) and the Vice character of the morality tradition (*R III*, III.1.82–3).

30 See *R III*, II.4.51: 'insulting tyranny'; IV, 4, 51: 'grand tyrant of the earth'; V.2.2: 'yoke of tyranny'; V.3.169: 'tyranny'; V.3.247: '[a] bloody tyrant'; V.3.256–7: 'If you do sweat to put a tyrant down, / You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain'.

31 *Ibid.*, III.4.103: 'O bloody Richard'; IV.3.22: 'bloody King'; V.5.2: 'the bloody dog is dead'.

32 See *ibid.*, I.2.240: 'And I, no friends to back my suit at all'; V.3.201–4: 'I shall despair. There is no creature loves me, / And if I die, no soul will pity me – / And wherefore should they, since that I myself / Find no pity to myself?'

33 See *ibid.*, I.3.216: 'Stay, dog'; I.3.289–91: 'O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog! / Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites / His venom tooth will rankle to the death'; IV.4.48–54: 'A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death: / That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes, / To worry lambs, and lap their gentle blood; / That excellent grand tyrant of the earth, / That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls; / That foul defacer of God's handiwork / Thy womb let loose to chase us to our graves'; V.5.2: 'the bloody dog is dead'.

34 See *ibid.*, II.4.50: 'The tiger now hath seiz'd the gentle hind'; IV.4.22–3: 'Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs, / And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?'; IV.5.2: 'the most deadly boar'; V.2.7–11 (see the full quotation in the text below).

The tiger now hath seiz'd the gentle hind;
 Insulting tyranny begins to jut
 Upon the innocent and aweless throne.
 Welcome destruction, blood, and massacre;
 I see, as in a map, the end of all.
 (*R III*, II.4.50–54)

At the beginning of the fifth act, Richmond confirms that Elizabeth's bleak premonitions have come true. Interestingly enough, he uses similar metaphors and motives:

The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,
 That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,
 Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough
 In your embowell'd bosoms – this foul swine
 Is now even in the centre of this isle[.]
 (*R III*, V.2.7–11)

All the previously mentioned character traits – the cruelty, the raging like (or as) a wild animal, the friendlessness of the tyrant – correspond to the central topics of the classical literature of tyrants, or rather of tyrannical rule. Shakespeare's Richard is so dehumanized that even his mother rejects and curses him (*R III*, IV.4.192–6):

And there the little souls of Edward's children
 Whisper the spirits of thine enemies
 And promise them success and victory.
 Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.
 Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.

It is Anne, Richard's wife, who tells the audience about the nightmares which rob him of his sleep (see *R III*, IV.1.82–84). In the fifth act, the audience becomes the witness of such a dream: the ghosts of the people murdered by Richard appear to him in the night before the decisive battle against Richmond. Prince Edward, Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers, Grey, Vaughan, Hastings, the princes, Lady Anne and Buckingham curse Richard and, employing stereotypical phrases,³⁵ which are therefore very memorable, announce to him that he will face desperation, defeat and death the next day. Richard's monologue, spoken immediately after his awakening, offers deep insights into his pangs of conscience and articulates his existential self-doubt. Yet, it also reconfirms once more his tyrannical nature:

35 See *ibid.*, V.3.121, 127–8, 136, 141, 142, 144, 149, 155, 164 and 172–3; see also Polybius, *Historiae*, XXIII.10.2–3 (see above pp. 128–9, and n. 20); see also, on the pre-Shakespearean literary tradition and the typology of the ghost scene, DAHINTEN (1958).

O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
 The lights burn blue; it is now dead midnight.
 Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
 What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by;
 Richard loves Richard, that is, I and I.
 Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am!
 [...]
 I am a villain – yet I lie, I am not!
 Fool, of thyself speak well! Fool, do not flatter.
 My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
 And every tongue brings in a several tale,
 And every tale condemns me for a villain:
 Perjury, perjury, in the highest degree;
 All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
 Throng to the bar, crying all, 'Guilty, guilty!'
 I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
 And if I die, no soul will pity me –
 And wherefore should they, since that I myself
 Find in myself no pity to myself?
 (*R III*, V.3.180–204)

To conclude: Shakespeare presents Richard III as a ruler who, with all the traits of classical antiquity's typical tyrant, appears as a diabolical devil incarnate. The history play deliberately does not comment on the future of his victorious opponent, Henry Richmond, who will become Henry VII, the first king of the Tudor dynasty, nor on the question of whether he is a true king, a βασιλεύς.

III

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historiography, with its numerous accounts of rebellions and insurrections,³⁶ basically contradicts the mythical and propagandistic Tudor conception of a time when the social order was harmonious and stable. Every Tudor ruler had to face at least one significant rebellion:

If Stoke in 1487 was the last battle of the Wars of the Roses, Henry VII could not feel secure while Perkin Warbeck and Lambert Simnel prolonged the aftermath of the struggle of York and Lancaster. The resistance to the taxation demands of the first two Tudor taught them that their rule depended on the support of the taxpaying classes. In 1525 Henry VIII learnt that there were limits beyond which the taxpayers could not be

36 See the sources in GUY (1990), esp. 116–458 and 469–513. See also WIATT (1962), KINNEY (1972), FLETCHER (1973), WOODS (1974), DREHER (1982), DAVIES (1985), FLETCHER / STEVENSON, ed. (1985), HUME (1989), LIEDL (1994), ARTHURSON (1994), CHO (1999), BARTLETT (2000), HOYLE (2001), JAMES (2003), MOTTRAM (2005), KIRBY (2008) and BRYSON (2009).

pushed. Eleven years later Henry VIII was faced by the first of the four major rebellions which were concentrated into eighteen years of the mid-century [sc. The Pilgrimage of Grace (1536), The Western Rebellion (1547–1549), Kett's Rebellion (1549), and Wyatt's Rebellion (1553–1554)]. The period 1534–1558 was marked by radical religious policies and the inadequate Edwardian and Marian monarchies.³⁷

Although the majority of the rebellions were quite limited in scope, only occurred regionally and – being motivated by very diverse reasons – focused predominantly on specific religious conflicts and political decisions; concentrating on the relevant ministers or advisers of the king in their criticism, the rebellions were nevertheless symptomatic of an inner crisis and serve to illustrate the systemic weaknesses of the Tudor reign as such.

The history play of the Tudor age, especially those from its early acme starting in 1590, marginalizes rebellions and insurrections and is generally unconcerned with the Tudor kings or their reign, a choice that is understandable, considering the conditions of censorship at the time. The reign of Henry VII is ignored completely at first, and even in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* the *casus* of the Duke of Buckingham is depicted as the tragic fall of an ambitious and powerful nobleman rather than as an act of high treason committed by a political rebel (see Part IV); the other Tudor rulers, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth are – as we would expect, given the quite successful system of censorship (see, for example, *Sir Thomas More*)³⁸ led by the *master of the revels* – not at the centre of any history play of the Tudor age. This – as well as the focus and the character of the history play as a whole – changes decisively during the Jacobean age.

Stuart history plays are, *cum grano salis*, different from Tudor history plays. The primarily military activities relating to the foreign and domestic policies of kings and a few magnates are no longer the focus of interest. These plays are almost exclusively concerned with situations of conflict arising from home affairs and religious matters. We no longer see English history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – the late Middle Ages – on the stage; in almost all Jacobean history plays the history of the Tudor monarchs themselves is the centre of attention. The Tudors' own interpretation of history, the Tudor Myth, which had been passed on to the Tudor history play via Tudor historiography, is only of marginal importance to the Jacobean history play. In some cases, it has been replaced by the concept of the Elect Nation taken from a work which can hardly be ranked too highly in its importance as a historiographical source for the

37 FLETCHER (1973), 109–10; but see also FLETCHER (1973), 13–114 and 117–53 (edited documents).

38 See the sources and interpretations of the censor's hand in *Sir Thomas More*, ed. Gabrieli / Melchiori (1990), 17–20. See, in general, the sources and excellent analysis in PATTERSON (1984), *passim*.

Jacobean history play: John Foxe's *The Actes and Monuments*.³⁹ While, for Irving Ribner, the fact that dramatists rejected the prevailing conventions of Tudor historiography still constitutes a major reason for the history play's decline and lack of vitality in the Stuart era,⁴⁰ Ivo Kamps successfully showed in his *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama* of 1996, the most profound and convincing study of the Jacobean history play to date, that the new and different aesthetic and artistic design of the Jacobean history play can best be explained by the relationship of discourse and dialogue between 'new post-Elizabethan ways of thinking about historiographical representation' and the Jacobean history play.⁴¹ In the following I would like to enlarge further on this theory by analysing the concepts of kingship in two representative Jacobean history plays: John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* (between 1622 and 1634) and Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (c. 1612/1613).

In his history play *The Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck. A Strange Truth*,⁴² John Ford dramatizes the fate of the supposed pretender to the throne Perkin Warbeck, who poses as Richard, Duke of York and Edward's IV's younger son. A protégé of the duchess dowager Margaret of Burgundy, who acknowledges him as her nephew, Warbeck surrounds himself with followers and tries to gain support for his claim to the English crown both in Ireland and at the court of the Scottish king, James IV. At the beginning of Ford's play, while Henry VII laments that he has to defend himself against imposters such as Lambert Simnel or Perkin Warbeck in spite of his royal descent, Warbeck appears at the Scottish court. Fascinated by Warbeck's rhetoric and charismatic powers of conviction, King James concludes that this *eloquentia* must be the outward sign of inner kingship.⁴³ He welcomes Perkin Warbeck as his 'Cousin of York' and promises him every support he can offer. Lady Katherine Gordon, a Scottish lady of honour,

39 See, e.g., SPIKES (1977) and ESCOBEDO (2009).

40 See RIBNER (1957), 263–72, esp. 271.

41 KAMPS (1997), 197; see also 201: 'A comparison between the Tudor and Stuart historical drama on the question of historiographical appropriation does not yield easy generalizations, but we can observe certain plain tendencies. The most noticeable difference in the representation of things historical in the renaissance drama is that we approach and enter the seventeenth century, the drama's awareness of historical variety clearly intensifies. Stuart drama is generally more deliberate in its styling of historiographical representation.'

42 See BABB (1936), O'CONNOR (1955), HARBAGE (1959), ANDERSON (1960, 1962), WEATHERS (1964), HOMAN (1965), BARISH (1970), KISTNER / KISTNER (1971), NEILL (1976), BARTON (1977), O'CONNELL (1977), HAMILTON (1980), CANDIDO (1980), ANDREWS (1983), FEINBERG (1985), DUBINSKI (1985), LEGGATT (1986), FREER (1986), RANDALL (1986), HOWARD (1988), ANDERSON (1989), NOVER (1999), MONTA (1997), MURRAY (1997), BAUMANN (1998), esp. 138–41, ABATE (1999a, 1999b), HAN (2001), MALEY (2002), TAYLOR (2008), HOPKINS (1995, 1999, 2012), RADEL (2013), MEYER (2014). See the historical sources and analysis in ARTHURSON (1994) and WROE (2004).

43 See esp. FREER (1986), ANDERSON (1989).

also falls victim to Warbeck's rhetorical charm and is married to him by James, against the will of Katherine's father, by the way.

Ford contrasts the festive and harmonious atmosphere at the Scottish court with Henry's sober exercise of power, aimed exclusively at maintaining that power. Thus, after being forced to learn that his faithful servant Sir William Stanley, the Stanley who put the crown on his head on the battlefield at Bosworth, has supported Warbeck's cause, Henry is compelled to convict his former friend and ally of high treason and hand him over to the executioner. The bishop of Durham as good as demands Stanley's execution as visible proof of Henry's royal authority (see *PW*, II.2.14–24). Shortly before he is led to his execution, Stanley bids farewell to the world as befits his social standing (*PW*, II.2.10810): 'I take my leave, to travel to my dust: / Subjects deserve their deaths whose kings are just. / Come, confessor; on with thy axe, friend, on.'

The question insinuated in these verses, emphasized both by the rhyme ('dust' / 'just') and the fact that these are Stanley's *ultima verba*, whether Henry is, in fact, a just monarch, suggests the history play's interpretation as a 'lesson in kingship'. In *Perkin Warbeck* Ford presents different concepts of kingship,⁴⁴ and he balances out their advantages and disadvantages in the context of Warbeck's unsuccessful expedition to England. Henry VII, who acts with both foresight and political prudence, proves to be the predominant and superior figure, representing a sober and pragmatic kingship with Machiavellian traits and aimed at success, but which is, at the same time, sacramental. After Warbeck's unrealistic hopes that the English people will follow him are bitterly disappointed, James, spurred on by Henry, also turns away from the by now unpopular impostor. James has, so to speak, received his lesson in practical politics – conveyed to him by Henry – and drops Warbeck, because there seems to be little chance of success for his cause in general. James proves himself able to adapt to the new situation, while Henry, as the perfect pragmatic practical politician, rules the day, and Perkin Warbeck, like Henry a representative of sacramental kingship in his conception of himself, is obliged to recognize – just like Shakespeare's Richard II⁴⁵ – that trust in God and the attractive appearance of royal charisma are not sufficient in themselves to win victory in a secular fight for power. Surrounded by dubious and inept advisers, he fatalistically clings to his claim to power, his concept of historical truth. Ford, in his characters who portray rulers – James, Henry and Perkin Warbeck – exemplifies what the peculiar subtitle of his history play, *A Strange Truth*, may also refer to: that even a ruler chosen by God can only

44 See esp. ANDERSON (1960, 1962), NEILL (1976), BARTON (1977), DUBINSKI (1985), BAUMANN (1998), esp. 138–41, and MEYER (2014).

45 See ANDERSON (1962), LEGGATT (1986); see, on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the excellent analysis of ZIMMERMANN (1988), reprinted in BAUMANN (2007), 15–34; see also FALCO (1999).

rule steadily, successfully and justly if the sacramental royal myth is complemented by effective, sober and practical qualities of rule, which ensure the support of the nobility and the people.

Perkin Warbeck's powerful and enticing speeches do not have any political consequences in England and thus no longer fulfil their intended persuasive purpose. Unsuccessful rhetoric becomes an indicator of the faltering political mission; a last desperate attempt to gather the Cornish rebels around himself finally seals Warbeck's fate: he tries to escape, is arrested, brought to London and – after refusing to admit to his fraud – executed.

The primary sources for this last important history play of the Stuart era⁴⁶ were Francis Bacon's *Historie of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh* (1622) and Thomas Gainsford's *The True and Wonderfull History of Perkin Warbeck* (1618). A comparison between these sources and Ford's play is revealing: well-crafted rearrangements within the historically recorded events condense and concentrate the action – just as in Shakespeare's histories and tragedies.⁴⁷ More important than this, or than complementing the historical material with the strong female character Katherine, are the changes in the way King Henry and his opponent Perkin Warbeck are presented. Ford's portrait of Henry is much more flattering than that of his sources: while Bacon criticizes the king's greed and lack of foresight, the king in Ford's play uses his money in a purposeful manner to achieve his political and military goals. On top of that, his foresight and ability to anticipate the actions of others surprises his competent body of advisers again and again. Nevertheless, in Ford's version there are also dark spots in Henry's character: he has his friend Stanley executed – justly and out of necessity, judging from an exclusively political point of view – and he humiliates Katherine while Warbeck is incarcerated. But Ford's most important deviation from his source material lies in the conception of his title character, as he at no point in the action admits to being an impostor; he steadfastly sticks to his personal truth, that he is Richard IV and that the English crown belongs to him. This is probably 'the real stroke of genius' in Ford's conception of his title character, enabling him – just as Shakespeare did in his *Richard II* – to avoid being pinned down to any clear ideological or political position, as Peter Ure points out:

For the absolutely essential thing about Ford's portrayal of Warbeck [...], which makes the whole thing worthwhile and validates the labours of commentators, is this: Warbeck never does anything in the play to suggest either that he is playing a part and knows it, or – and this is the vital point – that he is, in Baconian fashion, playing a part and no longer knows of it. [...] But beyond these [comments by the source-historians], there is, in the heart of the artifact, something which is not wholly susceptible to their modes of

46 See esp. TAYLOR (2008).

47 See the synopsis by Ure in WARBECK (1968), xxxviii–xxxix.

qualification or explanation, something therefore free and anarchic: the Warbeck whose convictions about his own nature appear both sane and noble and appeal as such directly out of the play to its spectators. *That* is the stroke of genius, and it is that that appears independent of anything identifiable in the sources.⁴⁸

This last statement of Ure, an editor of outstanding merit, is nevertheless not quite correct; although the historians (from the early Tudor ones up to Francis Bacon) agree that Warbeck revealed his true origin during his arrest and admitted to his fraud, they still always stress that his confession was made under torture. The historians also agree on Perkin Warbeck being distinguished by a royal manner of appearance, considered by some as a clue for his York descent. Edward Hall even mentions that Henry VII sent out agents and promised rewards to those who would solve the mystery of Perkin's origin.⁴⁹ Only a few years before Ford created his history play, Sir George Buck stated in his *History of Richard III* as a conclusion to his examinations: 'he had all the marks and tokens of the young Duke of York, and was certainly the second son of King Edward'. It cannot be proved that Ford had access to George Buck's manuscript; but something else is sufficient for us, which Ivo Kamps refers to: 'if the cultural climate was such that Buck could so boldly affirm Warbeck's legitimacy, then Ford could surely contemplate the possibility of the same'.⁵⁰

In his dramatic presentation, John Ford writes further about several aspects which run counter to the Tudor interpretation of history (that is, to view Warbeck as a confessed impostor, thereby marginalizing him), but he leaves them, so to speak, without comment within the agon of dialogues, as he states programmatically in his letter of dedication (*PW*, Ded. 4–7): 'In other labours you may read actions of antiquity discoursed; in this abridgement, find the actors themselves discoursing: in some kind, practiced as well what to speak, as speaking why to do'. It is evident how close this position, gaining sharper outlines in the prologue (*PW*, Pr. 13–16: 'From him to clearer judgements we can say / He shows a history couched in a play, / A history of noble mention, known, / Famous, and true') comes to basic historiographical convictions of the period, as set out, for instance, in Thomas Hobbes's introduction to his translation of *The History of the Grecian War* by Thucydides (1628);⁵¹ the question of the legitimacy of Warbeck's claim, which is central to the conception of the title character, remains unanswered, and thus is turned into an essential element of dramatic presentation. Ford thereby points out the general dependency on perspective of any

48 *Ibid.*, xlii.

49 See KAMPS (1997), 175, with reference to BUC, ed. Kincaid (1979), Appendix C, 327.

50 KAMPS (1997), 175.

51 See THUCYDIDES, transl. Hobbes (1843).

– even historical – insight and evaluation;⁵² even the cynical, but not necessarily wrong, thesis, that it is always the victor who writes the history, has a question mark added to it. Henry VII does have the last words in this history play, and he states a moral of the action that has been turned into a generality in a politically very prudent, albeit traditional, way (*PW*, V.3.216–19: ‘and from hence / We gather this fit use: that public states, / As our particular bodies, taste most good / In health, when purged of corrupted blood’); but – just as in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, where Richard’s suffering and human desperation left a much more lasting effect than Henry Bolingbroke’s coolly calculated way to power⁵³ – Ford’s Perkin Warbeck lives on in the memory of the theatre audience as a heroic embodiment of a never realized historical alternative, as a subversive, theoretical and experimental deconstruction of the Tudor monarchy’s concept of itself, as another ‘strange truth’.

IV

Shakespeare’s *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry VIII* has only received proper attention during the last decades,⁵⁴ and a general consensus as to its interpretation has yet to be reached.⁵⁵ For E.M.W. Tillyard, *Henry VIII* constitutes the final chapter in Shakespeare’s dramatic presentation of the Tudor Myth,⁵⁶ to other scholars it represents a parable of mutability or a mirror image of the

52 See KAMPS (1997), 202: ‘Their [the Stuart plays] subversive character resides in their appropriation and juxtaposition of multiple historiographical perspectives borrowed from a culture in which these perspectives already existed. Their juxtaposition, however, subversively foregrounds epistemological ambiguities in the production of versions of the past. It undercuts the premises upon which monolithic discourse relies, and therefore exercises a nebulous yet subtle potentially pervasive effect on all political discourse that appeals to history.’

53 See, e.g., ZIMMERMANN (1988) and FALCO (1999).

54 See, e.g., MINCOFF (1961), CUTTS (1963), FELPERIN (1966), RICHMOND (1969), MILWARD (1970), VELZ (1972), PAOLUCCI (1972), BLISS (1975), MCINTURFF (1976), KIEFER (1979), CHAMPION (1979), RICHMOND (1979), BAILLIE (1979), AUBERLEN (1980), CESPEDES (1980), YOUNG (1981), CANDIDO (1983), TENNENHOUSE (1985), LEGGATT (1985), DEAN (1986), KIRKLAND (1987), MARISCAL (1987), NOLING (1988), RUDNYTSKY (1991), HEINRICH (1992), MÜLLER (1992), HUNT (1994), CARNEY (1995), CHO (1997), McMULLAN (1998), COOK (1998), HILBERDINK-SAKAMOTO (1999), MONTA (2000), LUIS-MARTINEZ (2001), MAYER (2003), LEAHY (2003), RICHMOND (2004), FRYE (2004), ZAIDI (2006), KYLE (2008), COGSWELL / LAKE (2009), NELSON (2009), MOORE (2011), BRUHM (2011), RANKIN (2011), LOUGHNANE (2013), RICHARDS (2013), MOORE (2013), KEEGAN (2013), ANDREA (2014), BAKER (2014).

55 As mentioned in n. 5 above, the question of Shakespeare’s co-authorship of the play is left aside in this article.

56 See esp. TILLYARD (1961).

general political climate during the first decade of the seventeenth century.⁵⁷ But these interpretations, or the often stressed affinities between *Henry VIII* and the romances, ‘for instance the use of the themes of forgiveness, patience in adversity, and providence’,⁵⁸ should not push one elementary fact into the background:

The play is, of course, written from the viewpoint of a late Elizabethan or early Jacobean author and it brings the series of the histories up to date, bridging the time between Henry VII and Elizabeth I and James I, but it remains a play on the second Tudor king and its central concern is the study of a king and the historical significance of his reign.⁵⁹

The deliberations which follow will highlight the dramatic presentation of both the king and the historical importance of his reign, as well as delineating the possibilities and boundaries of historical method and insight. Their discursive and dialogical function within the political discourse of the years 1612/1613 will then be the subject of analysis, which will lead to some conclusions with regard to our starting point, the concept of differentiated and segmented spheres.

During the first two acts, Henry’s royal authority seems restricted by the influence of his adviser and chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, an example of which is shown by Wolsey’s scheming against Buckingham (*H VIII*, I.1) right at the beginning. The king himself does not appear in this scene, but he is the focus of all the worries and actions of the others. Buckingham is sure that Wolsey will accuse him of treason before the king and wants to see Henry in order to defend himself (*H VIII*, I.1.128–9, 136, 157 and 190); Buckingham’s arrest on the grounds of high treason follows immediately, by order of Henry, as the Lord and the Sergeant do not cease to emphasize (five times in all: *H VIII*, I.1.201–2, 206–7, 212–13, 215–16 and 216–17). The king’s name and authority are constantly on everybody’s lips, yet he is / seems limited in his role as ruler, as is signalled by the stage direction for *H VIII*, I.2 in a condensed emblem (I.2*): ‘Enter KING HENRY, leaning on the CARDINAL’s shoulder.’ Wolsey is the one governing the state (and the king) at the beginning of the play, thereby making himself the king in a way, as the malicious remarks of his opponents (‘the king-cardinal’ [*H VIII*, II.2.19], ‘our court cardinal’ [*H VIII*, I.1.72]) point out. The formula used by Wolsey in letters to the pope and foreign princes shows that these evaluations are well founded: ‘Ego et Rex meus’ (*H VIII*, II.14).

Nevertheless, the king is not just Wolsey’s puppet, even during the first two acts; the most important indicator of his independence is his respect for the law, stressed again and again throughout the play (for example, *H VIII*, I.2.93–4: ‘We must not rend our subjects from our laws / And stick them in our will’). By

57 See, e.g., HEINRICH (1992), WICKHAM (1984), CAMPBELL (1963), BAILLIE (1979) and AU-BERLEN (1980).

58 MÜLLER (1992), 226.

59 *Ibid.*, 226.

admitting the priority of the law over his own will, Henry puts himself into the anti-absolutistic tradition of English political thought, and lends expression to a position directly opposed to the convictions of the ruling monarch James I, who was convinced (and presented historical and religious reasons for this) '[that] it followes of necessitie, that the kings were the authors and makers of the Lawes, and not the laws of the kings'.⁶⁰ In the play, Henry's just and benevolent treatment of the problem of unfair taxation gives a first impression of his real royal authority; and during the second act there is more and more evidence to show that Henry is about to emerge from Wolsey's political shadow, fulfilling several prophetic statements of his courtiers:⁶¹

In more concrete theatrical terms the emergence of Henry's true royal self coincides with the rejection of the false Catholic counsellor Wolsey and the adoption of the true Protestant counsellor Cranmer.⁶²

'[The] full stature of majesty',⁶³ as Frances A. Yates calls it, is demonstrated by Henry in his brilliant reaction to Gardiner's intrigue against Cranmer. He points out the archbishop's naivety to him in a friendly way, warns him against the insidious plans of his opponents and ensures him of royal protection. The king's interference shows that he has definitely learnt his lesson in the Machiavellian politics of power and the art of intrigue at court, but at the same time his interference is in every way a necessary and justified action in this special political situation.

In terms of structure, the averting of Cranmer's fall constitutes the inversion of the *de casibus* scheme which prevailed before (Buckingham, Katherine, Wolsey); but it is also a sign of the benevolent reign of a king following his destiny by turning away from the Catholic faction at his court and towards the Protestant one, thereby leading his country onto the path of religious reformation and independence from Rome. Both Buckingham and Katherine still praise Henry even after they have been sentenced (see especially *H VIII*, II.1.115–36, III.1.179–84), and it is this panegyric rhetoric and several distinct hints at providence

60 JAMES I, ed. McIlwain (1965), 62. See 3 12: 'The state of Monarchy is the supremest thing vpon earth. For Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but even by GOD himself they are called Gods. There bee three principall similitudes that illustrate the state of MONARCHIE: One taken out of the word of GOD; and the two other out of the grovnds of Policie and Philosophie. In the scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Deuine power. Kings are also compared to fathers of families: for a King is trewly Parens Patriae, the politique father of his people. And lastly, Kings are compared to the head of this Macrocosme of the body of Man.'

61 See esp. *H VIII*, II.2.21: 'The king will know him [sc. Wolsey] one day', and II.2.41–3: 'Heaven will one day open / The king's eyes, that so long have slept upon / This bold bad man [sc. Wolsey].'

62 MÜLLER (1992), 231.

63 YATES (1975), 72.

guiding history (for example, *H VIII*, II.2. 41–2: ‘Heaven will one day open / The king’s eyes’) which bring out the image of an energetic king acting prudently and to providence’s liking, culminating in Cranmer’s famous prophesy at Elizabeth’s christening:

God shall be truly known, and those about her
 From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
 And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
 Nor shall this peace sleep with her; but, as when
 The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
 Her ashes new create another heir
 As great in admiration as herself,
 So shall she leave her blessedness to one
 (When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness)
 Who from the sacred ashes of her honour
 Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
 And so stand fix’d. Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,
 That were the servants to this chosen infant,
 Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him;
 Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
 His honour and the greatness of his name
 Shall be, and make new nations. He shall flourish,
 And like a mountain cedar, reach his branches
 To all the plains about him: our children’s children
 Shall see this, and bless heaven.
 (*H VIII*, V.4.36–55)

Cranmer’s announcement of a golden era under Elizabeth and her successor, as well as the genealogy of monarchs (Henry VIII – Elizabeth I – James I), is marked quite clearly as a prophecy that, although taken up enthusiastically by Henry (*H VIII*, V.4.63–5: ‘O lord archbishop, / Thou hast made me now a man; never before / this happy child did I get anything’), is nevertheless shrouded in doubt by the play itself. This is because a prophecy has played a decisive, almost disastrous role once before, in the scene before the trial against Buckingham. The prosecution against Buckingham relies exclusively on the oral evidence of his surveyor, who says that he heard his master swearing a terrible oath to murder the king; he was unable to provide any proof corroborating his testimony; there was merely a reference to a ‘vain prophecy of Nicholas Henton [...], who fed him every minute / With words of sovereignty’ (*H VIII*, I.2.147–50). The following discussion about Henton’s prophecy clarifies its epistemologically ambivalent character;⁶⁴ nevertheless, it becomes a decisive piece of ‘evidence’ against Buckingham. It is not sufficient to distance Cranmer’s prophecy from Henton’s merely because the

64 See esp. *H VIII*, I.2.150–214.

audience in 1612/1613 knew about the former's historical truth,⁶⁵ as Ivo Kamps was able to prove in detail:

Deliberately, the play provides no sufficient grounds to make a meaningful epistemological distinction between the speeches of Nicholas Henton and Thomas Cranmer. Henry's interpretation of their speeches is purely opportunistic, designed to produce overtly ideological readings that serve the interests of those who have the power, Henry VIII and, by extension, James I.⁶⁶

The charge and trial against Buckingham, as well as the other trials against Katherine and Wolsey, imply more than the individual practical difficulties of finding the legal and historical truth, and point towards the emphatic contemporary discussion of different historiographical methods: the core of the charges against Buckingham is the oral evidence of an eye- and ear-witness; the prosecution against Katherine makes use of a large number of documents (re-) constructing history from an antiquarian perspective; and Henry's act of handing over the incriminating documents to Wolsey without any comment illustrates, as it were, Camden's fundamental historiographical conviction that the sources should speak for themselves in an emblematic manner.⁶⁷ This background of contemporary discussions of historical theory and historiography shrouds Cranmer's famous prophecy in doubt once again (and arguably, as a final result). As is well established, *Henry VIII* is closely based on historical sources, 'sometimes simply versifying Holinshed',⁶⁸ and was known to contemporaries under its alternative title *All Is True*. What Cranmer's speech does, by offering a concise summary of the last eighty years, is to suggest that it can be understood as a historiographical representation itself. Yet this highly meaningful speech has no basis in the historical sources; it has been invented by the dramatist. As an invention, it passes on a simple, if not simplistic, version of history, leaving out much that the play as a whole hints at, but still failing to make the genealogy Henry VIII – Elizabeth I – James I any more convincing.

The range and power of conviction of this providential model of history, as set out by Cranmer, is limited further by historical theory when taking into account the massive contemporary criticism levelled against invented speeches in historical works.⁶⁹ Jean Bodin, whose *Methodus* (1566) was partially translated into English by Heywood, criticizes historians 'who in the midst of their discourses, fall off from their intended Narrations, to play Orators or Rhetoricians, so de-

65 For that, the prophecy's history is too full of gaps (Edward, Mary), especially as a few earlier evaluations or characterizations (e.g., Anne Bullen) do not fit in properly.

66 KAMPS (1997), 128.

67 For the sources and an excellent interpretation of them, see *ibid.*, esp. 122–39.

68 *Ibid.*, 135; see also SHAKESPEARE, ed. Foakes (1968), xxxv–xxxix, and 183–215.

69 See the analysis in KAMPS (1997), esp. 133–9.

luding the expectations, and confounding the memories of their readers'.⁷⁰ Thomas Blundeville was even more explicit as early as 1574 when describing the historian's tasks as 'tell[ing] things as they were done without either augmenting or diminishing them, or swaruing one iote from the truth. Whereby it appeareth that the hystoriographers ought not to fayne anye Orations nor any other thing, but trully to reporte euery such speech, and deede, euen as it was spoken or done.'⁷¹

Henry's repeated declaration of the laws' priority – also testified to in the historiography of the time – marks a significant opposition to the contemporary ruler's position. The theatrical simulation of historiographical practices on the stage constitutes a potential, perhaps even actual, threat to 'any party or individual intent on accruing power on the basis of historical argumentation',⁷² by bringing the general problems connected to this out into the open.

By pointing out the problems concerning the reliability, scope and range of historical evidence as a whole, the history play *Henry VIII* becomes part of the public political discourse going on while it was written; for it was the usual practice under James I to refer his legal claims and claims to power back to history, as a few concluding examples may show.

James I's historical arguments for the safeguarding of his conviction that the kings were the authors of all laws are well known: they were, apparently, independent from Parliament in their divine and sanctified rule because 'kings ruled and even *owned* Britain before there were parliaments'.⁷³ By building an expensive tomb for Elizabeth and putting her funeral effigy on public display,⁷⁴

70 BODIN, transl. Reynolds (1966), 16. See also KAMPS (1997), 137: 'The liberal usage of invented speeches had come under constant attack from all but the most old-fashioned historians.' See, in general, the wealth of sources in *Theoretiker*, ed. Keßler (1971), esp. 31–43, and LANDFESTER (1972), *passim*.

71 BLUNDEVILLE, ed. Heinrich (1986), 40/13–22. But see also an opposite statement by the Italian humanist and historical theorist GIOVANNI PONTANO in his dialogue *Actius*: PONTANO, ed. Kiefer et al. (1984), esp. 476–7: 'In quibus, quotiens res ipsa tulerit, nervos orationis atque ingenii sui ostendet rerum scriptor. Nec solum quae dicta fuisse referentur ab imperatoribus, verum etiam ea afferet quae verisimilia quaeque dicenda tempus, periculum, rei que ipsius natura postulare videatur; uteturque in increpando acrimonia, in excitando vehementia, in sedando lenitate, in impellendo contentione, in extollendis rebus propriis, adversarii deprimendis, magnitudine ac linguae suae acie, rerum ipsarum qualitates ac ducum maxime personas secutus. Magnificans autem historiam conciones potissimum rectae illae quidem, ubi imperatores ipsi et loqui et agere introducuntur, ut quasi geri res videatur. Adhiberi tamen debent suo et loco et tempore suumque ubique decorum retinendum.'

72 KAMPS (1997), 139.

73 *Ibid.*, 138.

74 See the sources and details in WOODWARD (1997), esp. 129–34. See esp. the historical evaluation of the political atmosphere, *ibid.*, 134: 'There was a strong affinity between this early seventeenth-century image of Elizabeth and the Elizabeth of the late 1580s, a Queen at the

we might say that he turned Elizabeth into his political mother. On top of that, in 1608 James commissioned the celebrated historian William Camden to write a history of Elizabeth's reign for the propagation of the queen's honour.⁷⁵ The overwhelming propagandistic importance of historical reasoning for the dynastic and divinely sanctioned Stuart rule becomes obvious, in an exemplary way, with the second funeral for James's natural mother, Mary Queen of Scots. On 11 October 1612, and therefore in the direct chronological neighbourhood of the writing of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, Mary's corpse was ceremoniously brought to Westminster Abbey and buried a second time with great pomp.⁷⁶ By acting reverentially towards his mother, the king not only treated a victim of history justly, he was also able to gloss over his contradictory behaviour during her trial and after her execution. Thus, James's historical reasoning becomes the ideologically motivated rewriting of history.

V

In conclusion, it can be said that both the history play and the historiography of the English Renaissance are essential to the political sphere of discourse, regardless of the different segments of the public sphere addressed. Both publicize, although in different ways, the Tudor Myth, which is founded on an ideological-propagandistic interpretation of Richard III as a crooked monster, an incarnation of evil and a blood-thirsty tyrant. This stereotypical, dark (and distorted) picture of the last king of the House of York and his fall and death, apparently sanctified by divine providence, turns the victor, Henry VII, into the advocate of that providence, blessed by a royal-charismatic aura, thus marginalizing the weaknesses of the Tudor reign's legitimacy. Both history play and historiography serve to stabilize the Tudor rule, mirroring a broad agreement between the dynasty and the people.

height of her popularity in the reflected glory of the Armada victory. She was one again Gloriana, the empress of imperial reform. The disparity between this image and the historical Elizabeth, particularly of the last years of her reign, was not important. Elizabeth-Gloriana was re-fashioned as a foil to the Stuart King. The political integrity of the Virgin Queen was the polar opposite of the corrupt King whose behavior and policies were equally flawed.⁷

75 See CAMDEN, ed. MacCaffrey (1970). It is a not wholly uninteresting irony of history that Camden's *The Historie of the Most Renowned Princess Elizabeth* implicitly subverted the propagandistic hopes of the king, because the representation of Elizabeth presented in it (as a model of constitutional propriety, financial probity and Protestant energy) became a rhetorical weapon for James I's opponents to criticize his extravagance, political corruption and peace policy.

76 See the sources and details in WOODWARD (1997), esp. 134–40.

Yet this existing, largely political, consensus between rulers and subjects, is already undermined during the Tudor Age by some critical and subversive history plays, such as Shakespeare's *Richard II* and *Henry V*, plays that, in their representations of sovereignty, invite their respective audiences to independent reflections on the topic and to an active participation in creating a historical and political meaning.⁷⁷ Generally, the history plays of the Tudor Age expose, despite their support of the Tudor Myth, the theatrical aspects of the ruler's self-fashioning, which in turn is inspired by classical mythology and the British myths surrounding King Arthur.⁷⁸ Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were – from a modern perspective – populist and extremely popular monarchs, who presented themselves to their subjects during large public appearances, glamorous tournaments, festive processions and yearly summer progresses – a dazzling propagandistic self-representation which not only served to demonstrate the blessings of the Tudor reign but also helped to maintain the stability of the rule.

Orchestrated events like this no longer occurred during the reign of the Stuart kings. The last *adventus* took place in 1604, and apart from that only two other, half-hearted progresses in 1617 and 1633 were undertaken. The last important public tournament took place in 1619, and even the highly anticipated and publicly celebrated ceremonies of the Order of the Garter were relocated to remote Windsor.⁷⁹ Festivities and dramatic performances (such as masques) were then arranged only for the court, inside the palace's walls. And even to this rather small segment of the public sphere, Charles I's self-image of his reign, stylized in masques, gradually lost its appeal: 'I was wise enough not to watch it' is a courtier's comment on Sir William Davenant's *Britannia Triumphans* (1638),⁸⁰ a clear proof of the rising estrangement between dynasty and public sphere. Works of history and history plays of the Jacobean age assert the same significant alienation between dynasty and population: both express critical perspectives within the historical-political discourse of the Stuart age. The more decided and persevering the dynasty's reliance on its historically focused argumentation to strengthen its ideology of an 'absolutistic' divine right of sovereignty, the harsher becomes the criticism voiced both in history plays and in works of history. This development can be illustrated by distinctive symptoms, such as the emerging doubts about the traditional Tudor portrayal of Richard III by George Buck and the explicit emphasis of the history play's limited perspective in its presentation of historical and other events. Connected with this is the appeal to the London

77 See, e.g., GREENBLATT (1985), ZIMMERMANN (1988), BAUMANN (1998), esp. 57–61 and 62–8, MITTELBACH (2003), esp. 33–149.

78 See esp. the sources and their interpretations in BAUMANN (1999b, 2005a, 2005b).

79 See the sources in STRONG (1991), esp. 263–95.

80 See STRONG (1991), 292. See also ORGEL / STRONG, ed. (1973), 729.

public to take part in the discussion of political topics, such as historical theory and methodology, and to position itself ideologically with respect to these topics.

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Imke Lichterfeld

Space and Symbolism: The King's Sphere in Shakespeare's Histories

Abstract

In the historical tragedy *Richard II*, the king's 'sphere' can be defined as the royal body, the monarch's language, as well as the symbolic and metaphorical space of traditionally un-touchable divine kingship, including his crown, his throne, and his realm; even the earth becomes a political sphere. But when and how may this theoretically invincible royal sphere be infringed or violated?

Shakespeare's Richard II is an ineffective sovereign and unsuccessful leader; his arbitrary commands and eccentric behaviour create a realm-threatening power vacuum as the king has never truly learned how to seize true responsibility over his sphere and conform to royal duty. Richard does not act according to his position and symbolic status as decision-maker: The monarch only proves himself to be a self-fashioning and poetically versatile orator.

This chapter argues that the royal sphere of Richard II becomes a volatile space of doomed sacred dynastic safety, split into many divided sub-parts, as Richard cannot control its tools of spatial defence and therefore its unity. By contrast, Henry Bolingbroke (the king's cousin) treats space differently and seizes royalty via a realpolitical pragmatic sphere.

In Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the king's speech on mortality introduces the audience to a monarch who seems to have relinquished his power to his political opponent and feels himself doomed to die. His words are void of pragmatic propaganda and instructional value. They are a self-indulgent and sentimental profession:

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;
Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth,
Let's choose executors and talk of wills:
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
Our lands, our lives and all are Bolingbroke's,
And nothing can we call our own but death
And that small model of the barren earth

Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
 For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings; ... (III.2.145–56)¹

This brief excerpt from *Richard II* shows the eponymous king having just returned to England from his war in Ireland to find his state in disarray. Before, he was full of self-fashioned confidence and openly professed love for his homeland. Now, he has acquired knowledge that his cousin Henry Bolingbroke has blatantly returned from banishment in France to take hold of the inheritance of his late father's land. Richard had seized the Duchy of Lancaster to exploit its material value in order to finance his military excursion. He also finds out that some of his former followers, including his reliable uncle York, have joined Bolingbroke. Richard very quickly changes his mood in this scene from confident to melancholic. He had just declared – a mere 100 lines before and in the same scene – that '[n]ot all the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king' (III.2.54–5); but now he abruptly denies hope, strength and royalty, insisting instead on decay, the earthy ground, writing wills, giving property away and, lastly, the 'sad stories of the death of kings'.

The speech, which is the beginning of the famous 'hollow crown' lines (160–77), informs us about aspects of the spatial and symbolic sphere of kingship in Shakespeare's histories. In what follows I shall analyse some of the thoughts in *Richard II* which are inherent in the historical tragedy² and which concern a specific definition of 'sphere' as symbolic space.³ This definition can refer to space itself, that is, a located place, but 'sphere' can also be a space associated with the royal body: a symbolic and metaphorical space. Sphere then contains the idea of the monarch's place in the chain of being in an allegorical micro-macro-cosmic correspondence which, when in harmony, plays the melodic music of the cosmological spheres. In addition, the garden serves as a microcosmic sphere associated with the kingdom;⁴ in like manner, the idea of soil or land, that is, earth, belongs to the royal sphere. The main concern of this definition of sphere is

1 Quotations are taken from the following editions: *King Richard II* from SHAKESPEARE, ed. Forker (2002); *King Henry V* from SHAKESPEARE, ed. Craik (1995); *The Tempest* from SHAKESPEARE, ed. Vaughan / Vaughan (1999).

2 On the specifics of this genre, see HATTAWAY (2002), 4; CHERNAIK (2007), 7–8.

3 Sphere in this article is therefore defined as a symbolic space. This is not entirely incompatible with the notion of the semantization of space as in, e.g., BUELL (2008); HALLETT / NEUMANN (2009); TUAN (1977). Including the spatial turn, however, would be a digression which moves away from the idea that the king's symbolic space defines his sphere. It is not the case that place takes over a specific function according to this definition, even though this could be a different approach to, e.g., land in *Richard II*. Here, it is the king that establishes 'sphere' with its different attributes.

4 See SCHRUFF (1999), Chapter 3.3 ("Set to Dress This Garden": Zwei ideale Gärtnergestalten in 2 Henry VI und Richard II'), 153–64.

the idea of a royal and traditionally untouchable idea of God-given kingship. This is, by definition, a sphere of safety. A similar idea of royal castles or fortifications as secure spaces is debated in the play. Accordingly, I shall analyse the throne as the seat of the ruler, together with the prime metonymy of kingship and royal space: the crown. Naturally, I shall also consider the sphere of language itself, since drama presents itself through the medium and choice of words.⁵

This definition of sphere, of course, invites studies on situations when – and methods by means of which – it can be infringed, seized or violated. These interpretations already indicate an idea of 'sphere' which, in a more symbolic register of kingship, transcends space.

'How can you say to me, I am a king?'

To establish the limitations of the king's sphere in *Richard II*, it is essential to understand the identity and character of the king. Richard II is an ineffective sovereign and unsuccessful ruler. His arbitrary commands and eccentric behaviour create a power vacuum which threatens his realm. This allows us to investigate and evaluate the stability of Richard's sphere. It might at first seem intact towards the beginning of the drama, but it never truly is, and – as we shall see – can easily be invaded. Though some critics show compassion towards the king whose throne will be usurped and who might be called a man 'more sinned against than sinning',⁶ Richard nevertheless personifies utter weakness when defending his rights, or his sphere, by acting capriciously⁷ and illogically.

Richard was not a mirror of all Christian kings, like *Henry V*,⁸ but rather the archetype of the 'weak king dilemma',⁹ which reverberates throughout Shakespeare's histories and causes much internal, civil strife. It illuminates a dichotomy between the body politic and the body natural, which Kantorowicz famously interpreted more than half a century ago.¹⁰ In an ideal union of the two bodies of the king, the body natural supports the body politic, which, in turn, is the spirit of English kingship. When, however, the two bodies are divided, it promotes, instead of an ideal harmony, an atmosphere of frailty and fear which is transmitted to the nation, that is, the other characters in the play.

Richard II became monarch at a very young age; 'his government was in the hands of his nobles, as caretakers of the kingdom for a king too young to rule – or,

5 See MÜLLER (1979), 41–88.

6 HADFIELD (2007), 8. The quotation is from *King Lear* (III.2).

7 See HADFIELD (2007), 8; HOWARD / RACKIN (1997), 140.

8 See BAUMANN (1998), 62–8; MITTELBACH (2003), 159.

9 MANHEIM (1969), 71–80.

10 KANTOROWICZ (1997), Chapter 2.

as Richard [later] came to see them, intruders upon his royal prerogative'.¹¹ His father Edward the Black Prince of Wales and his royal grandfather King Edward III bequeathed a weighty inheritance to the young boy who – it seems in the play – has never truly learned how to grow up and seize true responsibility and duty. Richard is no longer child, nor is he old or insane, yet his rule is dramaturgically portrayed as imperfect: less so because of bodily pleasures, as Holinshed might have described the historical king. However, more so, as Robyn Bolam maintains, because 'Shakespeare's play introduces us to a king who indulges primarily in the luxury of eloquent words from the beginning of the dispute between Bullingbrook and Mowbray'.¹² Richard is certainly an orator, as Bolam claims, and he instrumentalizes language and communication within the public sphere to constitute his regal powers. His speeches are some of the finest and most beautiful of Shakespeare's melancholy reflections on the human nature of kings. The monarch proves to be a poetically versatile orator. This idea of linguistic self-fashioning has to be kept in mind when judging Richard's actions and the hold he has on his position as king. Although he speaks some of Shakespeare's most beautiful lines, Richard has no pragmatic competence nor force and, as Kantowicz states, the 'Universal called "Kingship" begins to disintegrate'.¹³ This universal terminology unquestionably overlaps with the king's symbolic sphere.

From the opening of the play, the king shows flawed decision-making. The conflict between Henry Bolingbroke of Hereford, son of the Duke of Lancaster, and Thomas Mowbray of Norfolk about the guilty party in the murder of the king's uncle Woodstock develops into an at first silent but then fully-fledged rivalry. The conflict is not only between the two opponents who confront each other but also represents the struggle between the king and his cousin Bolingbroke, various layers of which are presented. Most importantly, the conflict dominates the exposition of the play and consequently also establishes Richard's increasing weakness through the exposure of his self-centredness. He does not act according to his sphere and symbolic status as a decision-maker: when the combatants Mowbray and Bolingbroke accuse each other of high treason, Richard seems incapable of making a judgement. That he is, in fact, implicated in the assassination of Woodstock, and that therefore he has also transgressed his position, becomes clear only later. Both warriors insist on trial by combat. Richard at this stage tries in vain to appease them, but then allows them to fight a duel to the death. This apparently wise royal decision allots the judgement to God; however, permitting the duel to take place also means that Richard has given

11 CASTOR (2013), 3.

12 BOLAM (2002), 145. See BALDO (2012), 12–13; MÜLLER (1979), 43–4.

13 KANTOROWICZ (1997), 29; cf. ISER (1988), 85–130.

away his right to secular judgement. The anointed of the Lord, the highest figure in the earthly and sublunar realm, thus assigns the decision to the divine sphere.

Richard's arbitrary character surfaces two scenes later when he halts the duel, almost provoking ridicule: '*A charge sounded. Stay, the king hath thrown his warder down*' (I.3.118). Richard calls off God's judgement at the precise moment when it is about to be revealed. He thus perverts the system to which he himself belongs and thereby undermines his own position, as Phyllis Rackin confirms:

When Richard stops the trial by combat he interferes with a symbolic embodiment of his own authority. Trial by combat is a ritual based upon the assumption that right makes might, an assumption that underlies the authority of the whole feudal system, including the authority of God's anointed king. In preventing the symbolic ritual of chivalry, Richard attacks the source of the only authority that makes him king.¹⁴

Being probed about his judgements and criticized by his supposedly loyal subjects takes away Richard's self-confidence and finally convinces him to question his God-given identity. Having at first mocked their loud complaints – 'We were not born to sue but to command' (I.1.196) – he later doubts his status, and rightly so, as Rackin argues; he even refers to his ultimately physical, human normality:

Cover your heads and mock not flesh and blood
[...]
For you have but mistook me all this while:
I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,
How can you say to me, I am a king? (III.2.171–7)

These lines, which emphasize his loss of identity and power, strongly articulate how much Richard lacks belief in the immediacy and dominance of his status and thus in the solid foundation of a truly invincible royal sphere.

In the chain of being, analysed extensively by historicists in the 1940s,¹⁵ every material and organic thing is assigned a place. God is at the summit of the chain, the king heads the microcosmic state and the lion rules the animal kingdom. The divine pattern corresponds to each microcosmic realm, the heavens to the state and so on. The place to which an individual belongs could also, according to the definition being explored here, be regarded as its untouchable, symbolic sphere.

By questioning his own position, as the passage quoted above demonstrates, Richard attacks his own sphere. By failing to accept not only the power but also the duty of kingship, he actively breaks the terms of his standing in this chain: he attacks the divine right of kings, which allows him a certain freedom but also

14 RACKIN (1990), 49; see also ISER (1988), 88–9; WINNY (1968), 48–50; TRAVERSI (1957), 13–18; LEGGATT (1988), 54–61.

15 Among these are TILLYARD (1943); and LOVEJOY (1953).

demands that he behaves dutifully and with loyalty towards position and dynastic lines.¹⁶ The verses additionally underline the physical aspect of the king's body and Richard's rejection of his identification as a born leader: 'mock not flesh [...] you have but mistook me [...] I live with bread' (III.2.171–5). Instead of accepting the responsibility of kingship, he tries to integrate himself into the structure below: 'How can you say to me, I am a king?' (III.2.177). There is, to be sure, an understandable reason for his utterance, as he is not able to appease his unruly cousin Bolingbroke; but the force of his denial is striking since it causes the kingdom to disintegrate.

'This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England'

Further spheres of kingship are disrupted and become damaged in *Richard II*. Richard's ineffectiveness and deterioration continue throughout the play. One further layer of this definition of sphere is presented within the scope of nature: the garden. The allegory of the garden as a microcosmic sphere can easily be interpreted to reveal the hidden moral and politically symbolic meaning of the suffering realm which lacks cohesion like a garden full of weeds. The world associated with this garden is no longer dominated or cultivated by a patriarchal ruler. The queen walks through the garden, observes and listens to the conversation of the gardeners who discuss how the balance of the royal structure, echoed in the garden, seems to be harmed. Unruly nature has disrupted order, and the garden clearly represents an untended state which is in steep decline. Speaking about its fertility and the values which correspond to it, the gardener's servant remarks:

Why should we [the gardeners] in the compass of a pale
Keep law and form and due proportion,
Showing, as in a model, our firm estate,
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,
Her fruit-trees all upturned, her hedges ruin'd,
Her knots disorder'd and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars? (III.4.40–47)

It becomes obvious that this garden is not an Eden – it is a garden which shows how its owners have failed. Ralph Williams comments that Shakespeare describes 'a sort of primal scene, a fall in the garden of England'.¹⁷ Instead of prosperity and flowering, the king creates a wasteland.¹⁸

16 See ISER (1988), 39–45.

17 WILLIAMS (2007), 3. See SCHRUFF (1999), 157.

The early modern audience was fully conversant with the idea of the garden as a microcosm which represents the country and therefore the sphere of the king, his symbolic space.¹⁹ The notion of England as a garden was also referred to by John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, and father of Henry Bolingbroke. On his deathbed, he voiced his lament for the soil of England.²⁰ The repetition of England as a garden and further discourses on its earth and soil are evoked again and again on various levels, as Warren Chernaik points out: "The related terms "earth" (occurring 29 times), "land" (28 times) and "ground" (12 times), along with the related theme of England as garden, make up a recurrent symbolic pattern."²¹ The earth becomes the political sphere; the allegorical garden as well as its soil are classified as spheres denoting the future of England. In this drama, the references are different in nature, often metaphorical or allegorical as above, sometimes specific as will be seen below. Gaunt on his deathbed invokes prophetic powers to denounce the king's mishandling of his country and employs a multitude of synonyms for the destroyed royal sphere from a lexical field that reverberates with 'earthy' spatial terminology:

This royal *throne* of kings, this scepter'd *isle*,
 This *earth* of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other *Eden*, *demi-paradise*,
 This *fortress* built by Nature for herself
 Against infection and the hand of war,
 This happy breed of men, this *little world*,
 This precious *stone* set in the silver sea,
 Which serves it in the office of a *wall*,
 Or as a moat *defensive* to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands,
 This *blessed plot*, *this earth*, *this realm*, *this England*,
 This nurse, this teeming *womb* of royal kings,
 [...],
 This *land of such dear souls*, *this dear dear land*,
 Dear for her reputation through the world,
 Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,
 Like to a tenement or pelting *farm*:
 England, bound in with the triumphant sea
 Whose *rocky* shore beats back the envious siege
 Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
 With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds:
 That England, that was wont to conquer others,

18 Contrast this to SCHRUFF (1999), 167.

19 On the garden as an enclosed space, see ICHIKAWA (2013), 101.

20 See MÜLLER (1979), 51–5; SUERBAUM (1983), 73–88.

21 CHERNAIK (2007), 92.

Hath made a *shameful conquest* of itself.
 Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,
 How happy then were my ensuing death! (II.1.31–68, my emphasis)

According to Gaunt, King Richard has laid waste to his country through misrule. If the English earth is treated in this manner, he does not want to live to endure this any longer; indeed, death is a blessing in such an England, as Bolam explains: ‘Gaunt grieves for the barren garden he believes England has become [...], but also because Richard’s debasement of land ownership by seizing it for his own use.’²² Gaunt bemoans that Richard has become a farmer, a tenant, a mere businessman, using the land as a material commodity. When the king who should make it flourish and should act as its protector has reversed his position, the land suffers and is diminished in quality. The terminology he employs refers to England as a historical place (‘throne of kings’), a secluded and defensible paradise (‘isle’; ‘Eden’; ‘fortress built by Nature’; ‘stone set in the silver sea’), a beloved soil (‘dear dear land’), but this is contrasted to words of neglect, destruction and mere materialistic value (‘leased [...] farm’; ‘shame’; ‘bonds’; ‘scandal’).²³ Soon after Gaunt professes this desolation, he dies. As they prove to be his *ultima verba* – the last words of a dying man – they gain a foreshadowing impact: his prophetic words and the pathetic, yet alluring, aesthetic image he creates, determine the remaining development of the play.

In contrast, but also in addition, to this, the reader or viewer might also believe Richard’s elaborate words on earth and soil when he delivers a speech on his return from Ireland. By touching the sand on the shore, he underlines his claim to power, speaking some pompous but nevertheless beautiful lines on England. This is without doubt a self-fashioned and stylized outburst, which, because it is heard by his followers, functions as political propaganda. Yet the content completely challenges Gaunt’s portrait of a farmer-tenant-king who is not concerned with the well-being of his soil:

I weep for joy
 To stand upon my kingdom once again.
 Dear *earth*, I do salute thee with my hand,
 Though rebels wound thee with their horses’ hoofs:
 As a long-parted mother with her child
 Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
 So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my *earth*,
 And do thee favours with my royal hands.
 Feed not thy sovereign’s foe, my gentle *earth*,
 [...]

22 BOLAM (2002), 154. Hertel calls Gaunt’s speech a eulogy as well as an elegy. See HERTEL (2014), 2.

23 See HERTEL (2014), 3.

This *earth* shall have a feeling and these stones
 Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
 Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms. (III.2.4–26, my emphasis)

In this way, Richard counterposes Gaunt's apparent verdict. We therefore seem to have a non-violent, intellectually creative and indirect confrontation of words between Gaunt and Richard which highlights the opposing interests in this play. Richard, too, evokes the sphere of the earth – the word is repeated four times in this short excerpt – when he associates himself with his kingdom. This demands awareness – from the reader or viewer – of how similar means create opponents.

The use here of the earth, or the land, as a political sphere is striking. *Richard II* is not the only play which is concerned with this topic. In Shakespeare alone, there are many examples which can be compared to this treatment of land. In *The Tempest*, Caliban insists that the 'island's mine by Sycorax, my mother' (I.2.332), and Prospero counteracts with the magic knowledge how to work his 'cell' (I.2.20). *King Lear* centres on the division of land and how this destroys the kingdom: Lear's breaking up of unity causes havoc in his realm. *Henry V* deals with the possession of land in France: the battlefield becomes the sphere of power and prowess. The history ends on a prophetic note with the next king, the weak Henry VI, who 'lost France and made his England bleed' (Epilogue 12) and who sits on a mole-hill, much like Richard II: 'For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground / And tell sad stories of the death of kings' (III.2.155–6). Henry VI, too, sees this as his only remaining microcosmic realm.

The orator Gaunt vanquishes his opponent through his son Bolingbroke, who seizes any chance he gets to assume power, though without deploying many words.²⁴ Richard crumbles into a heap of insecurity when he learns of Bolingbroke's military power soon after the profession of love for his country quoted above. Interestingly, Richard fashions himself as a mother and not as a strong patriarchal father figure. This almost self-effeminizing is ominous in light of Bolingbroke later proving himself to be a much more masculine warrior on the throne, one who constantly has to defend himself against interior political strife.

The fascinating but alarming aspect of *Richard II* is that the king so easily, quickly and unexpectedly sheds his dominance over the land. Threatened by the military power of Bolingbroke, but not yet asked to hand over his crown, Richard seems entirely willing to offer his possessions to his rival cousin. He thus consciously allows a power vacuum to appear and diminishes his own sphere. This void is then filled, without great effort, by Bolingbroke, and the formerly un-touchable, royal space of the king is readily invaded and seized. Bolingbroke's

24 This article does not centre on the idea that Richard infringed Lancaster's 'sphere' by first seizing Gaunt's land, though this reversal of occupation could be seen as an attack on a 'subsphere' which is part of the whole kingdom.

charge hails a change of politics with a different kind of politically motivated patriotism, in which leadership is constructed very differently from the way it was under Richard. Bolingbroke accepts the challenge when allowed to enter the emptied royal sphere; he decides to seize the opportunity directly: ‘In God’s name, I’ll ascend the regal throne’ (IV.1.114). He introduces a different, simple and factual treatment of the royal sphere.

The usurpation of the throne of a living monarch cannot, however, take place without raising crucial questions. Richard may be weak, but he is still the divinely anointed king of England. The Bishop of Carlisle therefore warns of a break in the cosmic order and reminds the reader of the traditional body politic which is inherited and which Richard must not dispense with. The consequences of an infringement of the royal sphere are implicitly elaborated when Carlisle prophesies:

What subject can give sentence on his king?
 And who *sits* here that is not Richard’s subject?
 [...]
 My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,
 Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford’s king:
 And if you crown him, let me prophesy:
 The blood of English shall manure the *ground*,
 And future ages groan for this foul act;
 Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
 And in this *seat* of peace tumultuous wars
 Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;
 Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny
 Shall *here* inhabit, and this *land* be call’d
 The *field* of Golgotha and dead men’s skulls.
 O, if you raise this *house* against this *house*,
 It will the woofullest division prove
 That ever fell upon this cursed earth.
 Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,
 Lest child, child’s children, cry against you woe! (IV.1.122–50, my emphasis)

Carlisle highlights the idea that the land is doomed if one house, a sphere of domestic and dynastic safety, rises up against the other.²⁵ He is prophesying the ensuing War of the Roses which will dominate Shakespeare’s other tetralogy, and he compares the cursed and blood-soaked English soil to Golgotha. In his speech, Gaunt had called England the ‘seat of Mars’, and now the soil turns from a ‘seat of peace’ into one of ‘tumultuous wars’. At the same time, Carlisle questions the loyalty to the king of those who ‘sit’ there. The reliability of sitting comfortably

25 See MÜLLER (1979), 70–8.

and safely is thus undermined, and with it also the consistency and strength of the highest seat in England and the person who occupies the throne.

The throne and the crown are the most prominent symbolic images of kingship. Bolingbroke easily penetrates the royal sphere when he ascends the throne. He almost toys with it, as if it were merely a place to sit, without any symbolic value. He decides to fill the power vacuum by usurpation. The shattering effect of this becomes clear straight away through the foreboding interruption of Carlisle; and the explosiveness of the conflict shows an exquisitely dramaturgical and highly dramatic composition, which Heinz Zimmermann calls 'seismographic'.²⁶ It visually demonstrates the transgression of the royal sphere.

Richard's identity crisis and consequential denial of his kingship disrupts the symbolic geography of the realm. He deconstructs his position and subdivides his formerly whole royal sphere into many little sub-parts, which each get damaged and become prone to invasion; among these is the crown as the metonymical image of kingship: 'Here cousin, seize the crown' (IV.1.182). Richard, however, simultaneously calls the crown hollow, thereby indicating its volatility in his eyes:

For within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene (III.2.160–164)

This crown is not a glorious symbol of monarchy. It already represents the disintegration of the king's natural body – a decaying sphere which is dominated by death. Death keeps 'his court and there the antic sits': decomposing death puts paid to the 'little scene' of man. Kingship symbolized by the crown proves an empty, deteriorating shell.

The image of kingship as a castle or fortification is equally undermined. Castles and fortifications are supposed to be places of safety and resistance; but these tools of spatial defence do not function in *Richard II*. Flint Castle (III.3) is not a fortification that provides shelter, the Tower is not a mighty fortress and Pomfret Castle (V.v) is not a borough of security. These ideas echo Gaunt's speech. He invoked the 'defensive', 'stone', and 'wall'-like character of England as a fortress in the mighty sea. But in the personal dispute between the two antagonists, Richard renounces the value of any symbolic space that could transfer safety to his own personal sphere. Instead, Richard elevates Bolingbroke's status to that of a true rival for the crown. He thus denies the corresponding line of

²⁶ ZIMMERMANN (2007), 9.

defence between his realm and his body: the royal sphere. Instead, he insists on his physical deficiencies, as can be deduced from the following verses:

As if this flesh which walls about our life,
 Were brass impregnable, and humour'd thus
 Comes at the last and with a little pin
 Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king! (III.2.167–70)

What is thought to be 'brass impregnable' is easily penetrated by 'a little pin': not only is the body defenceless, but Richard's own space and his sphere of inviolable indefeasibility is wide open to intruders. Similarly, the abdication scene mocks the intrusion into the supposedly impregnable royal sphere. It presents a self-removal from the sphere of kingship by an inversion of a coronation:

With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
 With mine own hands I give away my crown,
 With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
 With mine own breath release all duty's rites ... (IV.1.207–10)

With this reversal of his coronation, Richard 'deprives his body politic of the symbols of its dignity and exposes his poor body natural to the eyes of the spectators'.²⁷ His natural body is now separate from the symbolism of kingship and the royal sphere. The consecration of the royal sphere and its symbolism are willingly ignored and released. Michael Hattaway claims that the 'patterned forms of this speech [...] are entirely appropriate to a ritual of state played out in public'.²⁸ While these lines are pathetic and demonstrate Richard's political impotence on a practical level, they are also heartbreakingly beautiful and a prime example of his versatility as an orator with a political agenda. This is a vital point: it refers to the idea of a public accusation of Bolingbroke's usurpation by means of a political attack which is hidden behind a moving act of rhetorical and symbolic self-sacrifice. These lines are a piece of public propaganda which apparently tolerate but, in reality, powerfully criticize Henry's usurpation, and which prove fatal for his ensuing rule. They set the scene for Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays as well as the doubtful prayer of King Henry V before the battle of Agincourt in the eponymous history, with their underlying implication of forced infringement, which Richard evokes with his tears.

27 KANTOROWICZ (1997), 36.

28 HATTAWAY (2008), 11.

'And nothing can we call our own'

Through this inverted coronation ritual, Shakespeare's play shows the different attitudes towards the symbolic value of kingship and duty, and at the same time it bluntly underlines again the difference between the opposing factions. The audience has never fully grasped Bolingbroke's motives. He has no monologues and gives no insight into his character. He does not speak except in short, factual sentences. Bolingbroke may lack the quintessential and symbolic quality bestowed by an inherited crown, but he has the pragmatic instincts of a seasoned practitioner of realpolitik and even some amount of historiographical competence.

Richard instrumentalizes the rhetoric of his sphere but cannot command the pragmatic sphere of realpolitik. Bolingbroke's contention is demonstrated, not through words, but through deeds able to breach spheres. That again is the crux of this play. It seems to legitimize pragmatic politics,²⁹ which, however, leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Bolam calls *Richard II* [...] the Shakespearean text most associated with the political power of words in the theatre'.³⁰ The examples presented above have highlighted brief aspects of this: the choice and register of words determine the political sphere and how one king's weakness in its preservation allows another to seize the royal sphere. *Richard II* is a 'drama that is also *about* language – its power and its weaknesses'.³¹ It questions language as space – and all spheres in literature are language-based; and it clearly shows the existence of a right to speak and a right to be silent. Richard is an aesthetic poet; Bolingbroke is not. Yet the play questions and subversively confirms the power of language in the royal sphere: Bolingbroke crowned as Henry IV will not bring peace to the land.³² He emerges as strong in one sphere, but weak in another. Thus, neither Richard and Henry IV succeed in holding on to their own royal sphere.

At the end of *Richard II*, Henry IV has seized the throne: he is the new ruler. Yet, through mere words – the same power which cost him his crown – Richard is able to erode Henry's position and highlight his lack of a trueborn royal sphere.

29 See KRIPPENDORF (1992), 109.

30 BOLAM (2002), 143.

31 BOLAM (2002), 142.

32 See KRIPPENDORF (1992), 125.

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Competing Views on Music's Power to Stir the Emotions: Girolamo Cardano and Julius Caesar Scaliger

Abstract

In his *On Subtlety* (1550) Girolamo Cardano discusses an issue that was of great interest to many of his contemporaries: ancient music's emotional effects. He asks himself why ancient music was more learned, effective and nobler than that of the present day in order to revive its powers. In his search for an answer to this question, he critically discusses ideas about the connection between the nature of emotional states and pieces or styles of music. In order to undermine Cardano's belief in the possibility of reviving the powerful music of the ancients, his rival Julius Caesar Scaliger tried to demonstrate in his *Exoteric Exercises against Cardano's 'On Subtlety'* (1557) that Cardano's was creating new mysteries and obscurities with his explanation of subtle musical phenomena. This chapter argues that – through their debate – Cardano and Scaliger broadened the explanation of music's effects and made an important contribution to larger issues concerning the connection between music and the emotions.

Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) wrote two music treatises, both entitled *De musica (On Music)*, which are well known to historians of music for their discussions of performance practice.¹ Yet, he still has not attracted the scholarly attention he undoubtedly deserves for his philosophy of music. As a mathematician, encyclopaedist, astrologer, medical practitioner and music theorist Cardano was most interested in aspects of phenomena which he took to be the most subtle and hard to understand. Yet, modern scholars have sometimes lacked the flexibility of mind to deal with them. Clement Miller, one of the most influential musicologists to have studied Cardano, for example, complained that 'In common with many other educated men of the Renaissance Cardano was addicted to astrology and the occult.'² In this criticism of Cardano's unscientific habits of mind an echo may be heard of Julius Caesar Scaliger's vehement critique (1484–

1 For an English translation of these two music treatises, see CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973).

2 CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 29. Until far into the seventeenth century, the debate between Cardano and Scaliger was so appealing that scholars felt compelled to take sides in the debate to underline their own scientific credentials; to a certain extent this practice still exists.

1558), accusing his colleague Cardano of scientific charlatanry. Scaliger was referring to Cardano's *De subtilitate* (*On Subtlety*, 1550), an exposition of his philosophy of nature.³ This treatise was not a strictly natural-philosophical work, but was meant to reveal a kind of hidden knowledge of the world as well as Cardano's erudition to a non-academic readership. As such it enjoyed enormous success in Cardano's own time and continued to be frequently reprinted and widely read throughout the seventeenth century.⁴ The very title of the book was intended to arouse the reader's curiosity for 'all forms of subtlety', including music's mysterious power to influence the hearer's emotions⁵, behaviour, and morals.⁶ In the book, Cardano tried to go beyond the great encyclopaedic works of antiquity and the Middle Ages, which he found unreliable and out of date. Yet, presumably because he had to write in Latin, Cardano became more entangled in the learned traditions of the past than he would have liked. This was bound to bring him into conflict with Scaliger, who in his *Exotericae exercitationes de subtilitate adversus Cardanum* (*Exoteric Exercises against Cardano's 'On Subtlety'*, 1557) accused him of confusing the explanation of subtle phenomena with the creation of new mysteries and obscurities.⁷

Evidently, Cardano and Scaliger were caught up in a complex mixture of theoretical conflict and personal rivalry. Building on and further developing existing research on their famous controversy, in this chapter I discuss two themes which are, I hope, of interest not only to historians of music, philosophy and medicine, but also to scholars interested in the nature of historical controversies.⁸ The first of these, as noted by D.P. Walker, is that polemical writings often present to a modern scholar specific interpretative problems, especially when the two rivals presented each other as enemies in the public debate, but in

3 Cardano's *De subtilitate* and *De varietate rerum* are combined and analysed in detailed in RIXNER / SIBER (1819–1826), II. For a short introduction to these texts, see also FIERZ (1983), 88–116.

4 FIERZ (1983), 89.

5 For the sake of intelligibility, the modern term 'emotion' is sometimes used in this article as a translation of historical Latin terms such as *passio* (passion of the mind) and *affectio* (affection). For the historical development from passions and affections to emotions, see DIXON (2003).

6 The debate between Cardano and Scaliger on music theoretical issues can be found in *De subtilitate* Book XIII 'De sensibus sensibilibusque ac voluptate' (488–94), in which Cardano discusses hearing and the effects of music, while in Book XVIII 'De mirabilibus' (726–7) he deals with sympathetic vibration of strings. Scaliger discusses these views of Cardano in his *Exotericae exercitationes* in the following passages: SCALIGER (1557), 366^r–368^v (Ex. 297); 368^v–369^r (Ex. 298.1); 370^r–370^v (Ex. 298.5); 381^r–383^r (Ex. 302); 453^r–457^r (Exx. 344 and 345).

7 On Scaliger's *Exotericae exercitationes*, see SAKAMOTO (2010), 195–207 and (2016).

8 On the controversy between Cardano and Scaliger, see MACLEAN (1984) and (2008), GIGLIONI (2015), and PRINS (2017).

fact agreed on the main subject under discussion.⁹ This was, I believe, also often the case in the controversy between Cardano and Scaliger, and the resultant misrepresentation of each other's points of view makes it very difficult to analyse their thought. The other theme concerns the relation in Renaissance scholarship of language to physical and psychological realities. During the course of the sixteenth century, a traditional body of thought was widely accepted as the basis of theories of human physiology and psychology, in which health was seen as a harmony and music as capable of deeply influencing the human body and soul.¹⁰ This body of thought, however, was demolished very slowly when observation and empirical facts obtained a different status in different scholarly disciplines, such as natural philosophy, psychology, medicine, and music theory.

In fact, the controversy between Cardano and Scaliger had its origin in the changing status of traditional ideas and the emerging demarcation between exoteric and esoteric scholarly knowledge. Both scholars accused each other in this debate of adhering to a wrong natural-philosophical world view – be it a Platonic, Aristotelian, eclectic or modern one – and the use of illegitimate methodologies. More serious for the modern scholar than such often deliberate misconstructions of the other's point of view are the consequences of the basic agreement between the two, which has to be reconstructed in some way or another. I shall argue in this essay that in such a reconstruction the concept 'sphere' can be used to go beyond the often desperate desire of opponents to contradict each other. The dilemma for both Cardano and Scaliger was the following. If the human body and soul were holistically envisioned as a harmonious unity, then music could be beneficially used in moral education and healing practices. Within traditional thought about music's power to influence its hearer's *ethos*, that is, his emotions, behaviour, and morals, hitherto educational or therapeutic failure did not jeopardise the very belief in the power of music.¹¹ However, when observation and empirical facts obtained a different status in natural philosophy, medicine, and music theory, failure became a serious issue to deal with. Both Cardano and Scaliger reacted differently to this challenge, but their reactions can be analysed as belonging to the very same universe of discourse in which the demarcation between esoteric and exoteric medicine was shaped.¹²

9 The methodological approach presented in this chapter is adopted from WALKER (1989), 14.

10 On the history of views of music psychology and music therapy, see GOUK (2000), HORDEN, ed. (2000) and KASSLER (1995).

11 On *harmonia* and *ethos* in ancient Greek music, see MATHIESEN (1984).

12 The term 'universe of discourse' is borrowed from MACLEAN (1984), 252. On the Renaissance discipline of medicine see STRAISI (2007); on Cardano's place in Renaissance medicine, see STRAISI (1997).

Cardano's Defence of the Ancient Greek Belief in Music's Power

Cardano and Scaliger knew very well the legendary miraculous power of Greek music.¹³ They knew, for example, that Orpheus had (according to myth) been able to charm not only animals and trees, but even the guards of the underworld.¹⁴ Once he entered the underworld to bring back his wife Euridice, Orpheus started playing: the melodies coming from Orpheus' lyre made even the cold heart of Hades start to melt. Scaliger was of the opinion that there was no place for stories of this kind in a philosophy of nature. In contrast with his opponent and fully in line with the intellectual fashion of his time, however, Cardano wondered why the music of his own time had lost the miraculous power attributed to ancient Greek music. As a scholar and enthusiastic music amateur, it became one of the great ambitions of Cardano's life to understand this question.¹⁵

Inspired by the music philosophical thought of famous Neoplatonic Renaissance scholars like Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Cardano thoroughly researched the question of the miraculous power of ancient Greek music.¹⁶ His point of departure was Plato's famous doctrine that music has the power to influence its hearer's emotions, behaviour, and morals. In the *Republic*, for example, Plato had theorized about the unique place of music in the education of young children, arguing that even before a child is old enough to reason

rhythm and harmony sink deep into the recesses of the soul and take the strongest hold there, bringing that grace of body and mind which is only to be found in one who is brought up in the right way. [...] Approving all that is lovely, he will welcome it home with joy into his soul and, nourished thereby, grow into a man of a noble spirit. All that is ugly and disgraceful he will rightly condemn and abhor while he is still too young to understand the reason; and when reason comes he will greet her as a friend with whom his education has made him long familiar.¹⁷

Cardano's own interest in the moral and healing force of music echoes, in a sixteenth century way, that of Plato and Aristotle and tells us something about

13 See, for example, CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), III, 572 and SCALIGER (1557), Ex. 302, 381^r.

14 These stories were presented, for example in BOETHIUS, ed. / transl. Bower / Palisca (1989) 1–8.

15 On Cardano as a music theorist, see his *Della natura de'principii et regole musicali* in CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), IV, 621–30; *De propria vita* (ibid.), I, 31a, 39b; *De libris propriis* (ibid.), 161, 165, 194, 258, and 276; *De subtilitate* (ibid.), III, 488–94 and 726–7; and *De utilitate ex adversis capienda* (ibid.), II, 116b–117b. See further CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973); MOYER (1992), 158–68; SCHÜTZE (2001); WALKER (1941–1942).

16 On Ficino's music philosophy, see WALKER (2000), 3–29 and PRINS (2014), 25–213.

17 PLATO, transl. Cornford (1945), 90. The translations in this article are mine unless otherwise indicated.

how he was educated, not just in music, but in general, to an intellectual appreciation of the beauty of the world.¹⁸ Moreover, his Platonic orientation fuelled the debate with the proclaimed Aristotelian Scaliger, as will be discussed in further detail below.¹⁹

For Plato the relationship between music and mind in this context was very straightforward. Beauty, goodness and truth were linked in his thought: if a person were to experience musical beauty when he was young, he would become a good human being who was also capable of perceiving the truth.²⁰ Cardano visualized Plato's 'recesses of the soul' as a kind of string: if it was tuned and tempered at a young age, it would vibrate at a constant and moderate speed and thereby guide higher cognitive functions such as the aesthetic and moral reason later on in life. But whereas Plato wrote about this subject as an armchair philosopher, Cardano (as an 'experimental psychologist' *avant la lettre*) tried to revive the recommended Platonic practice of tuning the recesses of the souls of his own children, which led to serious problems. In the beginning of the report of his experiment, which is presented in his 'De utilitate ex adversis capienda' (*On Gaining Advantage from Misfortunes*, 1561), Cardano mixed Plato's doctrine of musical ethos with Aristotle's view of listening to and making music as a pleasurable activity:²¹

[Music] appears to be valuable, for both Plato and Aristotle maintain that boys should be instructed in it. [...] Music is also of worth because it is a pleasing pastime and is useful for discipline and as a cultural value of life. Also, since it affords pleasure without detriment it is beneficial to all and especially to children.²²

Yet, when Cardano tried to instruct his own boys in music, this proved to be incredibly difficult. Ancient Greek monody (music for one voice) had given way to polyphony; as a result, Cardano had to let singers into his home who, to his mind, were all too often of easy virtue:²³

18 On Cardano's biography, see the English translation of his autobiography: CARDANO, transl. Stoner (1930).

19 On Scaliger's Aristotelianism, see, for example, HAUGEN (2007), 819–51 and MARTIN (2014). On the similarities between Platonic and Aristotelian views of harmonics and the ethical power of music, see ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), 529–31.

20 On Plato's ideas about the musician and his art, see BARKER (1984–1989), I, 124–69.

21 On Aristotle's ideas about the musician and his art, see BARKER (1984–1989), I, 170–82.

22 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), II, 116b–117b, translation in CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 197–8 (modified).

23 For an analysis of Cardano's ideas about the musician and his arts from a gender studies perspective, see GIGLIONI (2008). Even though such a perspective is valuable from the point of view of the emancipation of homosexuality and its history, and it is indeed likely that Cardano was involved in homo-erotic practices, to my mind such interpretations are often fairly limited, because they tend to be exclusively focused on the disclosure of 'suppressed histories' and its beneficial effect on the acceptance of a minority. Hence, this kind of reading

Yet if one considers our modern complicated way of singing, which consists of many persons singing together and which cannot take place at one's own leisure, since there is a need for fellow singers and since so many of them have corrupt morals, we conclude that this practice is really of no use to anyone. You find hardly any musician in our time who does not abound in every kind of vice, and thus such a musician is the greatest impediment [...] to all men in general. [...] If we do it [i. e. making music] at home the singers will [...] corrupt the characters of our young boys and adolescents, for most of them are drunkards and gluttons, also wanton, fickle, impatient, coarse, indolent, and tainted with every kind of unlawful desire. The best of them are fools.²⁴

The inevitable conclusion is that Cardano's project of reviving the miraculous power of ancient Greek music failed completely. But observation and empirical reality did not triumph over bookish traditional knowledge in this case. Even though the singers of his time had a very destructive influence on the tuning of souls, Cardano was not of the opinion that music should be expelled from the home and education of children.²⁵ He defended the Platonic doctrine of the moral power of music by arguing that the problem could be solved by using instrumental music instead of polyphonic singing. He argued, moreover, that because string instruments or pipe organs only needed one person to play them, one could practise them by himself and in so doing receive music's beneficial influence:

In this kind of [instrumental] music one can meet the three conditions that Aristotle proposed, namely, the confirmation of change of morals, moods or behaviour. These conditions also apply to the present times, both in the morals of children and adolescents and in the organization of life.²⁶

Whereas for Scaliger music had no place of importance in his philosophy of nature, Cardano fused Platonic and Aristotelian ideas into a theory in which harmonic beauty, goodness, and truth were paired with good health. Moreover, they were still associated in a magical way with the forms and sounds of certain privileged instruments, which could have either a beneficial or an undermining effect on a person's health. For example, Cardano mostly detested the playing of

of Cardano's texts tends to overlook many other aspects of his musical universe, which are equally distant from our modern world view. Cardano's preference for instrumental music, for example, might also have been inspired by ancient music-theoretical views on the ethical character of certain types of music and musical instruments, such as those expressed in the Pseudo-Aristotelian Problem XIX.27: see ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), 552–3.

24 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), II, 116b–117b, translation in CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 197–8 (modified).

25 Moral education became a focal point in Cardano's studies, especially when his eldest son murdered his wife and was given the death penalty for his offence. See FIERZ (1983), 147.

26 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), II, 116b–117b, translation in CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 197–8 (modified).

horns, 'because their use is neither distinguished nor noble nor beneficial to the brain, lungs, or abdomen, for it causes hernias.'²⁷

Cardano and Scaliger on Music's Influence on Body and Mind

During the course of the sixteenth century a new musical reality emerged, in which beauty and the complementary ideas of goodness, truth, and good health were gradually replaced by concepts of expressivity and emotion. I will now discuss the emergence of this form of thought, which was ontologically more subjective than the original ancient doctrine of music's power to stir the listener's emotions, and its reception. Within the history of traditional ideas about music's power, music was supposed to be capable of stimulating or sedating the rhythmic movements of body and soul. By doing so, it was supposed, moreover, to restore both body and soul to a healthy and harmonious state, which was thought of as the ideal middle in between the extremes of very passionate and apathetic. This ideal was defined in terms of a 'well-tempered' string, that is to say, a state in between too taut and too slack. In contrast to an emerging naturalist view of the universe which emphasized natural law, the magical thought underlying the Renaissance reception of both the doctrines of world harmony and of music's power to influence man's soul was based on a specific astrological conception of human freedom. Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino had given voice to that idea, respectively in the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* and the *Three Books on Life*, where they had argued that men in a certain sense stand apart from the great chain of being. From their unique perspective as lords of creation, they can envision, understand, and manipulate the whole world, and therefore they are to a certain extent free to make of themselves what they like.²⁸

In the musical magic of Ficino the central question had always been how man could discover the stellar influences on his life and take steps to counteract them, if necessary, or direct them for his own benefit.²⁹ More specifically, Ficino's astrological-magical interpretation of the ancient belief in music's power to influence the hearer's emotions, behaviour, and morals was formulated to explain how one could draw down and employ heavenly influences to heal illness, improve health, and stimulate spiritual growth. Both Cardano and Scaliger rejected these kinds of magical or supernatural practices, albeit often implicitly. In Ficino's theory, music produces certain effects on an individual, depending on the

27 Ibid.

28 For Pico's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* and Ficino's *Three Books on Life*, see respectively PICO, ed. Borghesi / Papio / Riva (2012) and FICINO, ed. / transl. Kaske / Clark (1989).

29 WALKER (2000), 12–24.

constellations with which it is associated, that is to say, with the person's horoscope, but in their ambition to investigate nature scientifically and to share its secrets with a large audience Cardano and Scaliger totally rejected this idea.³⁰ Hence, this body of traditional magical-astrological thought was demolished very slowly in the writings of Cardano and Scaliger, who accorded a different status to observation and empirical facts. In the course of this process, a transition took place from thinking in terms of metaphysical harmonic powers and associations with divine concord to explanations firmly grounded in the physical, natural world. Consequently, in theories of music's power the supernatural was replaced by the natural and the affective.

In the eleventh and twelfth books of *On Subtlety* Cardano described man in a naturalistic way as an animal and social creature.³¹ In the comprehensive account of psychology included in his *Exoteric Exercises* Scaliger offered a very similar view.³² Man, moreover, was seen by both scholars as having divine characteristics as well as human and bestial ones. Their conception of the sense organs and their localization in the brain of the so-called internal senses, or powers of mind, was roughly based on Aristotle's *On the Soul* mixed with later interpretations of the human soul. In the brain there were five ventricles that were supposedly the sites of the (1) common sense (a power bringing together the input of the senses), (2) imagination, (3) fantasy, (4) cogitative power (which was not the same thing as reason), and (5) memory.³³ This division of mental activity into distinct processes that were allocated among specific sites within the brain was a medieval concept that derived from Galenic ideas about brain function; it was still common knowledge in the Italian academic circles of the sixteenth century.

In the context of their psychologies, Cardano and Scaliger both tried to answer the question of why music is able to stir man's emotions. In their search for an answer both of them tried to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural in Ficino's theory of sensation, according to which the sense-organ was of the same substance as what is sensed.³⁴ Ficino had identified the air in the ear with spirit – a substance between body and soul. This 'spirit' was supposed to be of the same nature as the animated air creating sounds.³⁵ Consequently, as explained by Walker,³⁶ musical spirit could directly affect the human spirit, which

30 Even though also Ficino's *Three Books on Life* was written to reveal secret knowledge of the universe to a public audience, its tone is very different from that of Cardano and Scaliger.

31 FIERI (1983), 98–105.

32 MACLEAN (2008), 405, n. 44.

33 SIRAISSI (1990), 82. On Renaissance conceptions of psychology, see KESSLER / PARK (1988). On Aristotle's theories of the sense-organs and the powers of the soul, see JOHANSEN (1997) and (2012) respectively.

34 WALKER (2000), 7–8.

35 On the history of the concepts 'spirit' and 'pneuma', see VERBEKE (1945).

36 WALKER (2000), 3–11.

as the exterior senses'.³⁷ Presumably inspired by pseudo-Aristotelian Problem XIX.27 Ficino had moreover argued that sound can affect the human spirit so strongly, because it is able to transmit movement and is itself moving.³⁸ Hearing, then, in Ficino's theory, puts the listener in more direct contact with external reality – be it physical or metaphysical – since sound consists of aerial movement that can actually occur in the hearer's spirit. Furthermore, it can powerfully affect the whole listener, because musical sound, by working on the spirit, has a direct influence on both body and soul. Hence, music was an essential part of Ficino's concept of the spiritual brain, because it connected the physical human brain with both the physical world (*mundus sensibilis*) and the metaphysical world (*mundus imaginabilis* and *mundus intellectualis*) (ill. 1). This blurring of the physical and the metaphysical, in which the 'immaterial' soul could use a vaporous material entity to have effects on the physical world was the very foundation of Ficino's theory of musical healing. Yet it became a problem for Cardano and Scaliger.³⁹ They tried to formulate an alternative theory in which supernatural musical effects were replaced by natural effects on the hearer's emotions, behaviour, and morals.

In the chapter on the sense of hearing in *On Subtlety* Cardano started with a traditional answer to the question of why music is capable of influencing the emotions of the hearer: he presented the notion of the sense-organ being of the same substance as what is sensed, that is, of numerical proportion. Fully in line with both Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine, he argued

All senses have three things in common. First, as I said, they arise in a proportion, for as such they are known and thus are pleasing. So it happens that an octave in 2:1 relationship is highly pleasant to the ears; then follow a double octave in 4:1, and an octave and fifth in 3:1, a fifth in 3:2, and a fourth in 4:3.⁴⁰

Having treated the second similarity of all senses, that is, that all things in moderation are pleasing, Cardano suddenly abandoned the Pythagorean tradition in which the harmonious proportions of privileged consonances were seen as the cause of the moral, comforting, and healing effects of music; in its place he offered the following subjective and relative explanation for the miraculous effects of listening to music:

37 FICINO, ed. / transl. Kaske / Clark (1988), 110.

38 Presumably, Ficino's view on the ethical character of sound in motion was inspired by the Pseudo-Aristotelian Problem XIX.27. See ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), 552–3. The *Problemata Physica*, whose authenticity was eventually denied, were probably the work of Theophrastus, but were considered genuine well into the seventeenth century.

39 MACLEAN (2008), 396–411.

40 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), III, 572, translation in CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 211–2 (modified).

Thirdly, better things are always pleasing after worse ones, but the opposite is displeasing. So light pleases after darkness, sweetness after bitterness, oil of roses after dill, and consonances after dissonances.⁴¹

Subsequently, in his discussion of the sense of hearing Cardano compared sight and hearing and came to the conclusion that the latter is superior, because it is more acute and subtle.⁴² Based on the exclusive subtlety of the sense of hearing, he argued that it was “very evident that musical sounds had the power to move the emotions”.⁴³ In order to illustrate music's power to stir the emotions, he retold the ancient story of Agamemnon, who, ‘being doubtful of the fidelity of his wife, Clytemnestra, left behind a citharist who so moved her to constancy and virtue with the sound of a cithara that Aegisthus could not have her without killing the citharist’.⁴⁴

In his *Exoteric Exercises*, Scaliger explicitly rejected Cardano's views on the superiority of the sense of hearing and on music's power to influence the morals, behaviour, and emotions of a listener. Moreover, he identified them as expressions of the objectionable Platonic idea that the effects of music on the listener are the result of an innate harmony between the soul and music.⁴⁵ In ‘Exercise’ 302, for example, Scaliger repeated the question posed in Problem XIX.27 of why what is heard, alone among perceptible objects, possesses ethical character.⁴⁶ In answering this question, he first of all rejected Cardano's view that the sense of hearing has a privileged connection with the human passions. He also criticized the way in which Cardano had presented ancient stories of the miraculous power of music to substantiate his claim. In order to understand music's power to stir the passions of the mind, he then proposed to substitute these legendary ancient stories with sound evidence provided by modern scientific views of physiology. According to Scaliger, sound has a direct effect on passions and of the mind and mental states such as anger, tranquillity of mind, pleasure, furor, and compassion because of an innate harmony between the movement of human spirits and the movement of air in musical sounds. He argued, furthermore, that music affects the listener because the animal spirits about the heart take in the trembling motion of the music and are stirred up.⁴⁷ These terms of debate, however, belonged to the doctrine of the passions of the mind, a theory that originated with Aristotle, but that – enriched with

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid. Cardano's view of the superiority of the sense of hearing may be inspired by the Pseudo-Aristotelian Problem XIX.27 or by Ficino's reception of it.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 SCALIGER (1557), Ex. 297, 366'.

46 SCALIGER (1557), Ex. 302, 381'. Cf. ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), 552–3.

47 On Cardano's view of animal spirits, see MACLEAN (2008), 400–401.

Neoplatonic elements by scholars such as Ficino – also informed Cardano’s thought.⁴⁸

In ‘Exercise’ 302, Scaliger also tried to formulate an alternative answer to the question of why the ear is capable of perceiving even the most minute change in inflection of a human voice or subtle change in the size of a musical interval.⁴⁹ In line with Aristotle, he explained this phenomenon by arguing that the sense of hearing has an innate subtle power of discernment that is purely natural and has nothing to do with listening to music. Things that are seen and heard, according to Scaliger, both make a deep, albeit different, impression on the human mind. Whereas Cardano argued in line with Aristotle’s *Sense and sensibilia* 437^a4–6 that for the development of intelligence hearing takes precedence, Scaliger highlighted the first line of this passage, arguing that in the context of man’s survival seeing is the superior sense.⁵⁰

Even though Cardano endorsed the Platonic doctrine of an innate harmony between the soul and music, his psychology of music was very eclectic, and based on a similar mixture of traditional views and experience as what we encounter in Scaliger. Cardano’s Platonic belief in an innate harmony between music and the human soul and Scaliger’s belief in an innate harmony between the movement of human spirits and the movement of air in musical sounds were in fact very similar. Moreover, they used the same sources (such as the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems*) in a similar way, and were equally unaware that the *Problems* is not an original work of Aristotle.⁵¹ In Cardano’s reception of the *Problems* again he investigated critically the relation between musical proportions and numbers – the very foundation of the Platonic belief in an innate harmony between music and the human soul. He concluded that: ‘Perhaps you will say in this comparison of interval sizes that deception has determined the intervals, and that one proportion applies to voices and another to instruments.’⁵² Though he tried very hard to negate the prejudice that musical sound has no numerical base, he had certain doubts about this Platonic dogma. In fact, Cardano’s explanation of music’s power to stir the passions of the mind, just like Scaliger’s, tended toward an explanation not in terms of their ontological and proportional similarity, but in terms of a more natural and subjective psychology. Moreover, as I discuss in

48 On the prehistory of musical affections, see PALISCA (2006), 179–202.

49 SCALIGER (1557), Ex. 302, 382’.

50 ARISTOTLE (2014), 1521; ‘On things heard’, 800^a, 2682 ff.; ‘On marvelous things heard’, 830^a5, 2777.

51 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), II, 652, translation in CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 207–9. In imitation of the Aristotelian *Problems*, Cardano devised a series of problems on the most varied subjects, among which the relation of musical proportions to numbers and of sound to sleep.

52 *Ibid.*, translation in CARDANO, ed. / transl. Miller (1973), 208.

further detail below, Cardano used the concept of spirit in the very same way as Scaliger in his explanations of music's power to influence the listener's soul.

In order to demonstrate that Cardano and Scaliger were both working on a similar intellectual project, let's have another look at *Illustration 1*. In this Neoplatonic illustration, the sense of hearing has a direct connection with the mind (*mens*) and reason (*ratio*), that is, with the human soul (see the words 'here is the soul' (*hic anima est*) in the centre of *ill.* 1). Furthermore, the sense of hearing (*auditus*) is directly linked both with all the internal senses or powers of the mind and with the physical and metaphysical realms. In the answers given by Cardano and Scaliger to the question of why listening to music can deeply influence the hearer's emotions, behaviour, and morals, they discarded the direct connection of the sense of hearing with the metaphysical realms of the 'Imagination' and the 'Intellect' (depicted as spheres outside the human brain, in which the Platonic ideas of archetypal proportions were situated), which had played an essential role in the musical philosophy of Ficino. In sharp contrast with their famous predecessor, they both tried to formulate a natural explanation of music's power in terms of the external sense of hearing and the internal senses or powers of the mind. In their explanations, the supernatural was substituted by the affective, and the spiritual brain by the physiological brain. Yet, in order to formulate a consistent theory of music's power, they still had to make use of the concept of spirit, because there was no other solution to the mind-body problem yet.⁵³ But the use of the concept of spirit in the context of medical ideas – such as the use of spirit in musical healing – became one of the other points of their debate.

Cardano and Scaliger's Reformulation of Ancient Ideas about Musical Healing

Cardano and Scaliger inherited a complex tradition of conceptions of musical healing. They were based on the Pythagorean-Platonic doctrine of an innate harmony between the soul and music, which was enriched with Aristotelian and Neoplatonic elements. In their psychologies three types of actions of the soul were distinguished: internal and incorporeal actions of the intellect and will; external and corporeal actions of the senses; and the passions and affections located between the reason and the senses, but which lay nearest to the senses.⁵⁴ These passions and affections were associated with the internal senses or powers of the mind (*ill.* 1). Although in one sense active, these affections were called

53 For Renaissance theories about the relationship between body, soul, and mind, see MICHAEL (2000).

54 MACLEAN (2008), 403–5.

passions because when they were stirring in people's minds, they altered the humours in their bodies, causing some passion or alteration in them. They could alter the mind or body in one of two ways: they might lead to vice as perturbations troubling the soul, corrupting the judgement, and seducing the will, or alternatively they might produce good when moderated by reason, thus leading to virtue.⁵⁵ Moreover, based on Cardano and Scaliger's shared belief that music affects the listener because the spirits about the heart take in the trembling motion of the music and are stirred up, a whole system was developed of how music (*musica instrumentalis*) could influence the human body and soul (*musica humana*) (table 1).⁵⁶ By its direct influence on the passions, affections, and spirit, music could alter the body or soul either in a harmful or a beneficial way, that is to say, by disturbing or restoring the ideal condition of health as a harmony. Learned doctors who practised musical healing were supposed to know precisely the effects of certain types of music. Cardano, for example, recommended singing, because it was supposed to liberate the chest and lungs and thereby restore the healthy circulation of air and blood inside the human body.⁵⁷ Despite the fact that Scaliger never theorized about musical healing himself, he reported about the enormous influence of music on the hearer's soul.

<i>Musica mundana</i>		<i>Musica humana</i>		<i>Musica instrumentalis</i>
<i>Element</i>	<i>Primary qualities</i>	<i>Humour</i>	<i>Temperament</i>	<i>Tone</i>
fire	dry and hot	yellow bile	choleric	high tone (string)
air	hot and moist	blood	sanguine	medium high tone
water	moist and cold	phlegm	phlegmatic	medium low tone
earth	cold and dry	black bile	melancholic	low tone

Table 1. A fourfold system of harmonic correspondences between the world, man, and music.

In traditional theories about music as a medicine, music was sometimes seen as a painkiller or a calming medicine for gout. Hitherto gout had been often presented as a psychosomatic disease, which could be used to learn moral lessons.⁵⁸ Following the tradition of satirical eulogies of gout, Cardano himself wrote such a work himself in which he argued:⁵⁹

55 GIGLIONI (2008), 208–12.

56 On the history of the concept of health as a harmony, see KÜMMEL (1977), 89–156 and KASSLER (1995) 33–6.

57 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), VI, 64.

58 Lucian of Samosata's (c. AD 125 – after AD 180) *Podagra*, a mock Greek tragedy featuring gout, was imitated often during the Renaissance.

59 For Cardano's *Podagrae Encomium (Satirical eulogy of gout)*, see CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), I, 221–5.

Gout makes a man devout, morally pure, temperate, careful, wakeful. [...] No one is so mindful of God as the man who is gripped by the pains of gout. He who suffers gout cannot forget that he is mortal, because it affects him in every part of his being.⁶⁰

Yet, in the same treatise, Cardano also used this satirical view of gout to criticize the implicit relationship between sin and illness in traditional medicine. Consequently, he described the illness in purely physiological terms as a 'dreadful and abominable thing, a long-lasting and incurable disease', which is consistent with his view on disease in *On Subtlety*.⁶¹ In the discipline of medicine, gout was conceptualized as a metabolic disorder, in which noxious substances – such as overdoses of harmful humours like black bile – locked up bodily parts, which could cause excruciating pain. Within the tradition of ideas about a musical cure for gout, it was supposed to be curable with stimulating Phrygian flute music, because of the similar shape of the (afflicted) hipbone and the flute.⁶² Famous scholars such as Boethius had passed down the remarkable story about how Ismenias the Theban by playing the right music had driven away all the distresses of many Boeotians suffering the torments of gout.⁶³ In line with this tradition, Ficino had argued in his *Three Books on Life* I.x that music would influence the pace of the heartbeat, and hence of the circulation of spirit in the body, as a result of which noxious substances such as black bile would be (re)moved (table 1). However, no precise musical prescription of gout was given by Cardano, presumably because he trusted his own observation that the intensity of pain in the case of gout could be so overwhelming that music would be of no avail whatsoever. But because Cardano was of the opinion that soft and calming music could be used to distract and soothe any patient in pain, he saw no harm in following the tradition.

Notwithstanding Cardano's nuanced view of gout, Scaliger accused him of uncritically believing authoritative stories about miraculous musical healings. He criticized Cardano of uncritically adopting the Ficinean interpretation of the Platonic doctrine of an innate harmony between the soul and music, and of defining gout in terms of a lack of spirit or a block in the blood-spirit circulation. He argued:

60 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), I, 221.

61 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), III, 641.

62 Already in the pseudo-Aristotelian Problem XIX.1 the question was asked 'why do those who are suffering and those who are enjoying themselves both have the *aulos* [flute] played to them? Is it so that the former will feel less grief, while the latter will feel more pleasure?' See ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), 532–3.

63 The story of Ismenias the Theban was presented in BOETHIUS, ed. / transl. Bower / Palisca (1989), 1–8. For the history of ideas about the musical healing of gout, see KÜMMEL (1977), 344–62.

If gout only consisted of spirit, then it would be actually possible to fight the pain by way of elimination [of *spiritus* from the painful part of the body]. If, however, the matter in a human body is thick, cold, and leathery, then it would be even more impossible to speak about healing, because if one diverts the spirit, as a result the matter [of a body] will become even thicker. Yet we have learnt from the philosophers and physicians that pain can be remedied in three ways: 1) by way of eliminating the pain itself using painkillers; 2) by way of eliminating the cause [of the pain] through medicine, which can either purge the body or stimulate digestion; 3) by way of anaesthetizing the [painful] body part, that is, by means of pushing back the spirit. [...] But by applying the latter method it is impossible, as you [Cardano] argue, to heal gout often, or to heal it at all.⁶⁴

Yet, the alternative view of pain control Scaliger offered in this quotation for Cardano's view was very similar to the medical thought of his so-called opponent. Both theorized about illness and cure in very similar terms, such as the use of certain methods of pain control in case of chronic diseases such as gout. This dimension of tacit agreement can be demonstrated in further detail on the base of another famous case study in the history of ideas about music as a medicine, that is, the musical healing of melancholy. This case study, moreover, will offer further evidence for the fact that the Cardano–Scaliger controversy cannot be analysed in terms of a Plato–Aristotle controversy, but bears witness to the fact that sources from the learned traditions were increasingly used critically and tested through emerging empirical practices.

In ancient and medieval medicine black bile was classified as the lowest of all bodily humours, and the melancholic temperament was consequently seen as the most unfavourable and unhealthy temperament (see *table 1*). Melancholy was associated with the calamitous influence of the planet Saturn, and was seen as a disorder associated with demonic distraction from the good, the moral, and the healthy. In contrast with this predominant negative view of melancholy, however, already in antiquity a positive interpretation can be found of the disease in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems*, in which melancholy is associated with exceptional talents. The dilemma of how a person could be both ill and great is posed directly in *Problem XXX*: “Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly melancholics (...)?”⁶⁵ And the question is answered in characteristic Aristotelian idiom:

To sum up, because the power of the black bile is uneven, melancholic people are uneven; for (*the black bile*) becomes both very cold and very hot. And because it is character-forming (for of the things in us, the hot and cold are especially character-forming), just like wine being mixed in the body in greater or less amounts, it produces certain qualities of character in us. Now both wine and black bile are full of breath. But since it is possible that what is uneven is well tempered and in a fine condition, and when

64 SCALIGER (1557), Ex. 132, 189.

65 ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), 277.

it should be the disposition is hotter and then again cold, or the opposite owing to there being an excess, all melancholy persons are extraordinary, not owing to disease, but owing to nature.⁶⁶

Ficino had revived this positive conception of melancholy and associated it with creativity, especially musicality, and intelligence.⁶⁷ In his *Three Books on Life* music was presented as a very powerful means to further the health of a melancholic scholar, because the human and musical spirit were supposed to be very similar. As a consequence of this similarity the human spirits and affections could be easily stirred up in people's minds, which would then alter the quantity of humours in their bodies. If well-tempered music was used, this would automatically have a tempering effect on the quantity of black bile in the blood, because in Ficino's magical world view like attracts like.

This mysterious relationship between genius, music, and madness was questioned by Cardano, because to his mind it was not supported by any empirical evidence. In his *On Subtlety* he started his discussion of melancholy with a diagnosis of the illness:

Among those with very warm and moist bodies [table 1: *temperaments*], intelligent people have the worst disposition, unless they devote themselves to the study of philosophy. One of the effects of diligent study is melancholy. It is caused by the decomposition of the fatty fluid [black bile] due to excessive study and waking. If intelligent people will nonetheless persist in their evil and malicious ways, all one can say is that they are behaving true to their nature, and that for them the study of philosophy has been to no avail.⁶⁸

In sharp contrast with the idealistic tone of the account of the musical healing of melancholy in Ficino's *Three Books of Life*, in this passage Cardano portrayed a naturalistic and realistic picture of a melancholic man, whose habits were so deeply ingrained in his nature that recovery – be it temporarily or permanent – would be unlikely, even if one used very powerful music as an antidote. In formulating a diagnosis, moreover, Cardano focused on the physiological facts: given that no one had ever seen 'black bile', he did not use the term, but spoke of 'fatty fluids'. At first sight, Cardano's case study of melancholy resembles the one presented by Ficino: in the process of deep thinking, the melancholic patient consumes a great part of his spirits, as a result of which his blood becomes thicker and full of noxious fatty fluids. Furthermore, Cardano's search for a solution was not very different from Ficino's: he looked for ways in which certain passions

66 ARISTOTLE, ed. / transl. Mayhew (2011), Book XXX, 293. The classic treatment of the Renaissance reception of Book XXX ('Problems connected with intelligence, understanding, and wisdom') is given in KLIBANSKY / PANOFKY / SAXL (1964).

67 KLIBANSKY / PANOFKY / SAXL (1964), 29 and WALKER (2000), 3–11.

68 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), III, 572, translation in FIERZ (1983), 101 (modified).

could be stirred up in people's minds, with the aim of altering the humours in their bodies. Rather than choosing a kind of music which fitted a patient's horoscope, as Ficino had done, Cardano believed that it would be far more effective for melancholic patients to fill up their supply of spirit in the following way:

Due to their intellectual activities, intelligent men are less enslaved to Venus, because study dissipates the animal spirits and redirects them away from the heart to the brain, that is, in the opposite direction of the genital organs. For this reason, these men beget weak children who bear no resemblance to them. They will greatly benefit from associating with beautiful women, reading love stories, and putting up pictures of beautiful maidens in their bedroom.⁶⁹

The solution for melancholy presented here is simple: contact with exciting, stimulating, and suggestive things stirs the affections, which in turn leads to an increase of the pulse. The argument that intellectual activities have a direct influence on the animal spirits was given above by Scaliger to correct what he had identified as Cardano's belief in an innate harmony between music and the soul, but is used in this context by Cardano himself. Hence, just like Scaliger, Cardano believed that music affects the listener because the animal spirits about the heart take in the trembling motion of the music, and were stirred. Consequently, the circulation of blood and spirit is stimulated, resulting in an accelerated drainage of noxious substances such as black bile and an influx of beneficial substances such as spirit.

In summary, Ficino took the Platonic idea that the effects of music on the listener were a result of an innate harmony between the soul and music as point of departure in his supernatural theory of musical healing, which he fused with the Platonic concept of frenzy as the sole basis for the highest creative gifts. Moreover, he attempted to bring the mysterious relationship between genius, music, and madness into the bright light of rational Aristotelian–Galenic medicine. In sharp contrast with his predecessor, Cardano was of the opinion that in this bright light the subtle relationship between genius, music, and madness disappeared completely, as a result of which music's power could only be explained in physiological and affective terms. I would not be surprised if Scaliger would have agreed with this point of view, if only they both had been able to move away from their famous conflicts and rivalries.

69 CARDANO, ed. Spon / Buck (1966), III, 572, translation in FIERZ (1983), 101 (modified).

Conclusion

Whatever the differences in their answers to the question of why listening to music could deeply influence the hearer's emotions, behaviour, and morals, Cardano and Scaliger belonged to a single sphere of discourse, whose contours can be best perceived through the formulation of their polemic.⁷⁰ When empirical facts gained a different status in different scientific disciplines, this led to the demolition of traditional ideas about music's moral and healing power. This was not a straightforward process, but rather an erratic, inconsequential, and fragmented development, in which neither Cardano nor Scaliger can be classified as a scholar who furthered or impeded scientific progress.⁷¹ Sometimes the protagonists of this chapter reverted to traditional ideas to prove their points; sometimes empirical evidence was used to impugn traditional beliefs.

In the spirit associated with sixteenth-century scholarship, Cardano and Scaliger had the ambition to reveal both the secrets of the universe and of man's inner world, and to share them as public knowledge with a large audience. In their polemical debate the rediscovery of ancient sources and the emergence of a new empirical attitude toward reality prompted new questions about the legendary power of music and new answers to old ones. Increasingly, they began to answer the question of why listening to music can deeply influence the hearer's emotions, behaviour, and morals in physiological terms. As a result, the traditional link between being good and being healthy became a key issue in the field of medicine, and consequently the improvement of someone's morals by playing the right music did not automatically lead to the recovery and the improvement of someone's health anymore. Furthermore, efforts were made to substitute traditional magical explanations of music's power with explanations in subjective terms of human affections and passions and musical affects. Holism, moreover, became outmoded as a point of departure in regular medicine, as did the idea that one could influence the human body directly by stirring the emotions musically. As a consequence, music therapy became an individual medical art that was contrasted with mainstream medical science.

Based on the textual evidence presented in this chapter, it can now tentatively be concluded that Cardano and Scaliger belonged to one sphere of discourse, in which a new view of music's influence on the hearer's mind emerged. Precisely because of its public nature, the rivalry between Cardano's and Scaliger was an important agent of change in late sixteenth-century musical and medical theo-

70 This conclusion corroborates Maclean's view on the debate. See MACLEAN (1984), 252.

71 In the analysis presented in this article, we have seen that Scaliger accused Cardano of unscientific practices and, as Giglioni notes, in his account of the rise and fall of civilization Cardano placed Scaliger at the lower end of the curve, in which knowledge of the world had developed into a scientific natural philosophy. See GIGLIONI (2015), 216.

ries, which continued to be perceptible long after the two scholars' deaths in the widespread European reception of their two influential treatises.⁷² Perhaps to a certain extent their debate helped to shape the demarcation between regular, exoteric and alternative, esoteric medicine, which is still present in our culture.

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⁷² Both Cardano's *On Subtlety* and Scaliger's *Exoteric Exercises* had an influence upon philosophers (of nature), and scientists, including Justus Lipsius, Francis Bacon, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Johannes Kepler. See, for Cardano's influence, for example, FIELD (1994) and for Scaliger's influence, see, for example, GOUK (1991).

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Lipsius the Stoic? The Paradox of Fame and his Public Rivalries

Abstract

Already during his lifetime Justus Lipsius was a controversial figure. His entire life was filled with conflicts and rivalries, not least due to his recurrent religious shifts and changing political loyalties. Moreover, like many humanists, Lipsius was often involved in philological rivalries with fellow scholars and intellectuals. While concern for fame was omnipresent in his life and work, the Neostoic philosopher paid equal attention to his public persona, attempting to convey an image of himself as a detached philosopher-philologist who only worked and lived to promote the *bonum commune* and to safeguard Europe's intellectual and cultural heritage. This paradoxical attitude towards fame, especially apparent in his public rivalries, will be analysed in the context of Lipsius's general views on calumny, rivalry and conflict. How did the humanist scholar Lipsius, who proclaimed himself a Stoic, respond when he was attacked or slandered? And what was the purpose of making these debates and conflicts public?

Throughout his published correspondence, the humanist scholar Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) presented himself as a man in search of constancy and tranquillity of mind, one who cultivates *modestia* in his life and Stoic calm in his books and his garden, while maintaining close bonds of friendship with the *docti* and *boni* of Europe and educating his pupils in *virtus* and *doctrina*.¹ Directly or indirectly, his letter-collections portray, to his contemporary readers and to posterity, a disciplined and talented figure, who writes philological and philosophical works in order to devote himself to wisdom and prudence, not to pursue fame for its own sake.² Moreover, in an ingenuously constructed literary monument, Lipsius depicted himself as a dedicated scholar whose sole wish was to live a life in accordance with his own gentle nature, free of discord and strife. This message, which he tried to convey to his readers on many occasions, found its most

1 See ENENKEL (1997); VAN HOUTD et al., ed. (2002).

2 VAN HOUTD / PAPPY (1999).

eloquent expression in the autobiographical letter he sent to the Antwerp humanist Johannes Woverius (1576–1636) on 1 October 1600:

I loved good things and good people, and was loved in turn. I devoted myself to learning and even more to wisdom. I avoided quarrels as much as honours. At home as well as in public, I was gentle and kind, inspiring respect rather than fear. I did have slanderers and detractors, but they were few. I calmed or changed them all with patience and silence.³

In this elegant passage, Lipsius maintains that he possesses a number of moral qualities, which he also wants to inculcate in others. These were the qualities which befitted the *viri boni et docti*, the small élite of virtuous scholars who carefully cultivated the *studia humanitatis* and, by so doing, preserved humankind from moral degeneration and protected Europe from a decline into barbarism.⁴

Religious Controversies: Coornhert vs Lipsius

This, it should be emphasized, is what Lipsius wants us, the readers of his *Opera omnia*, to believe. A quick look at his biography, however, immediately shows *why*. Lipsius's changes of religious allegiance distressed contemporary scholars and made him the target of relentless criticism. The facts are, indeed, telling. Born a Catholic, Lipsius went to Rome, returned to Leuven and then obtained the chair of history at the Lutheran University of Jena. After leaving Jena, he returned to the Low Countries and accepted an invitation from the Calvinist University of Leiden. Due to the bitter controversies arising from the publication of his *Politica*,⁵ in which he questioned religious tolerance, he left Leiden, decided to re-embrace the Catholic faith of his youth and moved to Leuven, where he accepted the chair of history at the university and the chair of Latin at the Collegium Trilingue. In Leuven, Lipsius not only published his famous edition of Seneca and his learned treatises on Stoic doctrines and physics, but also wrote devotional

3 ILE XIII, 00 10 01 = *Cent. misc.* III.87: 'Quod superest, bona et bonos amavi, amatus sum, scientiam et magis sapientiam colui, lites fugi, honores fugi, domi forisque benignus, comis et quem vereri posses, non timere. Calumniatores tamen aut carptores habui, sed paucos, eos ipsos patientia et silentio mitigavi aut mutavi.' In referring to Lipsius's letters, I use the numeration in GERLO / VERVLIET (1968), preceded by *ILE*, the standard abbreviation for LIPSIVS, ed. Gerlo et al. (1978–); I also give a reference to the original letter-collections, LIPSIVS (1601) and (1607), using the standard abbreviations, *Cent. misc.* III and V, followed by the letter number.

4 VAN HOUDT (1998), 405–32.

5 LIPSIVS, ed. / transl. Waszink (2004).

tracts in honour of the Holy Virgin of Halle and Scherpenheuvel which supported the Counter-Reformation agenda of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella.⁶

It is not difficult to understand why the fierce polemics surrounding the publication of Lipsius's *Politica* have been discussed so often in the scholarly literature.⁷ They deserve our attention once again in this context because the antagonism between Lipsius and his Calvinist opponents in Leiden illustrates most clearly the types of communication which took place in the public sphere as a means of initiating, controlling and resolving polemical exchanges. Lipsius's claim in his *Politica* that the prince should 'handle and control sacred matters and the religion' insofar as they fell within his charge, was as important as it was controversial.⁸ The *Politica* was obviously the work of a humanist scholar well versed in the classics, who was proposing a kind of toleration which was similar to the Roman Republican ideal of *libertas*, that is, a liberty of person and of mind within the limited framework of the established order.⁹ According to Lipsius, the prince should not intervene in the internal affairs of the church, much less meddle with doctrinal issues: he simply had no 'rights in sacred matters' ('in sacra ius').¹⁰ It was, nevertheless, not only his right but also his duty to secure the unity of the church and of religion, since religious discord inevitably led to civil disruption and war:

Thus I am strongly of the opinion that in one realm, one religion must be preserved. But then two questions can still be asked: must dissenters always be punished, and all of them? It is not curiosity which drives me to ask this question, but the common interest, and the present state of Europe, which I cannot behold but in tears. O better part of the world, which fires of strife has religion not ignited in thee! The heads of the Christian Commonwealth clash with each other, and some thousands of men have perished or are perishing under the pretence of religion. Who would then be silent? Not I.¹¹

So, is dissension to be tolerated? According to Lipsius, those religious dissidents who were responsible for the strife which was tearing Europe apart deserved no mercy: 'Burn, cut, in order that some member perishes rather than the whole body [of the state].'¹²

Lipsius's views unsurprisingly provoked sharp attacks. For the radical Protestant Dirk Volckertsz. Coornhert (1522–1590), poet, artist, theological writer, public servant and controversialist, religious freedom was a higher priority than

6 MORFORD (1991), 14–51.

7 LIPSIUS, ed. / transl. Waszink (2004), 165–98.

8 *Ibid.*, 387 (IV.2).

9 MORFORD (1991), 109–11 and (2001), 57–74.

10 LIPSIUS, ed. / transl. Waszink (2004), 386–7 (IV.2).

11 *Ibid.*, 391 (IV.3).

12 *Ibid.*, 393 (IV.3).

political unity.¹³ He therefore immediately published a response to Lipsius's *Politica* in Dutch. Since he was committed to making theological and political doctrine widely available, along with classical works in translation, Coornhert did not seek to avoid public controversy, dedicating his *Proces vant Ketterdoden ende Dwang der Conscienten* to the magistrates of Leiden. They, however, refused to accept the dedication, though they did not forbid its sale. By the time the book was finally suppressed by the States of Holland (on 31 January 1591), Coornhert's slanderous accusation that Lipsius was a Machiavellian who regarded public religion as subordinate to politics was so widespread that Lipsius was forced to publish a reply. His short polemical tract, *De una religione, adversus dialogistam liber*, which appeared on 12 October 1590, showed Lipsius the controversialist at his best and worst. He was at his best when patiently dissecting Coornhert's objections, demonstrating, for instance, that his opponent, who lacked Lipsius's humanist learning, had failed to recognize that the phrase 'ure, seca' ('cut, burn!') was a medical metaphor borrowed from Cicero's *Philippics*, 8.5.15, and had therefore taken it literally, wrongly assuming that Lipsius was an advocate of religious absolutism and believed that any means, however cruel – such as the Spanish Inquisition's use of the *auto-da-fé* – justified the end of saving a soul.¹⁴ Lipsius also showed that Coornhert had failed to understand his effort to balance limited religious toleration with the need for peace and order; for neither Coornhert nor others had noticed that, a few lines after the phrase which they had so strongly attacked, Lipsius maintained that dissidents who practised their faith quietly and peacefully were to be treated with toleration. Private offenders who kept their wrong opinions to themselves were not to be persecuted nor punished; as Curtius Rufus, the Roman biographer of Alexander the Great, had observed: 'no king can control hearts as much as he can control tongues'.¹⁵

Lipsius was at his worst when he blustered against Coornhert's inadequate knowledge of the Latin language and of Roman history: 'mittatur senex in scholas!' ('let the old man be sent to school!').¹⁶ Coornhert's predilection for writing in Dutch was a profanation to Lipsius and elicited his disdain. The two had, in fact, corresponded with each other before: Lipsius wrote his letters in Latin, and Coornhert replied in Dutch. Their correspondence in the 1580s had been courteous; but by the time that Lipsius replied to Coornhert in *De una religione*, their differences were irreconcilable, and it was too late to repair their mutual misunderstandings. Coornhert prepared a response to Lipsius's *De una religione*, but he was already fatally ill and died in October 1590. Whereas his

13 GÜLDNER (1968), 112; BONGER (1978); VOOGT (1997), 1231–49.

14 GÜLDNER (1968), 65–168.

15 LIPSIVS, ed. / transl. Waszink (2004), 395 (IV.4), quoting Curtius Rufus, *Historiarum Alexandri Magni libri qui supersunt*, VIII.4.

16 LIPSIVS (1675), p. 307, quoting Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae*, I, pr. 4.

Dutch text was not published until 1631, Coornhert's Calvinist friends issued a Latin version in 1591, the *Defensio Processus de non occidendis haereticis*, in 1591 already. In addition to this, a Latin summary of the controversy, with what was alleged to be Lipsius's original text of the offending chapters, was published in Gouda in 1592. So, death did not stop the public controversy. Lipsius did not wait and could not wait any longer. Already under pressure due to the controversy over his *De constantia* and his disputed views on providentialism, he left Leiden in March 1591, never to return.¹⁷ *Fama* or public criticism, as Lipsius himself admitted in his autobiographical letter of 1600, was one of the reasons for his departure. He had been unable to rise above Coornhert's relentless attempts to stain his reputation through derision or, to use Lipsius's term, *calumnia*.¹⁸

Philological Controversies: Tacitus

Lipsius not only took part in religious, philosophical and political disputes. Like many humanists, he was also frequently involved in philological rivalries with fellow scholars and intellectuals. Whereas concern for his reputation appears to have been central to his public disagreement with Coornhert, another of Lipsius's famous controversies had to do with his philological achievements as a textual critic of the Roman historian Tacitus.¹⁹ This episode reveals how conflicts of this kind were controlled and resolved at the time, and how Lipsius the humanist scholar tried to protect his public persona as Europe's leading philologist. As in the case of his controversy with Coornhert, fame and calumny were integral to Lipsius's concerns. A striking example is a letter in which Lipsius ventilated his opinion on the publication of the *Iusti Lipsii in C. Cornelium Tacitum notae cum manuscripto cod. Mirandulano collatae*, published under the pseudonym 'Lucius Pompeius Lampugnanus'. In this work, purportedly published at Bergamo in 1602, Lipsius's emendations of and comments on Tacitus in his 1595 edition were critically evaluated on the basis of a new manuscript which had supposedly turned up.²⁰ Lipsius's reaction reveals a particularly sensitive aspect of his personality – his philological pride. At the end of May 1602, he informed his printer Jan Moretus (1543–1610) that he was planning a written defence 'contre nostre Italien'.²¹ Two weeks later, he finished off his reply, which he entitled *Dispunctio notarum Mirandulani codicis ad Corn. Tacitum*.²² In the meantime, he continued

17 DE NAVE (1970), 1–39.

18 ENENKEL (1999), 59.

19 RUYSSCHAERT (1949); BRINK (1951), 32–51.

20 VANDER HAEGHEN / LINGER (1964–1975), III, 925.

21 Lipsius to Moretus, 21 May 1602: ILE 02 05 21 = LIPSIVS, ed. Gerlo / Vervliet (1967), no. 129.

22 Lipsius to Moretus, 16 June 1602: ILE 02 06 16 M = LIPSIVS, ed. Gerlo / Vervliet (1967), no. 130.

his efforts to track down the real identity of his Italian slanderer.²³ Lipsius's reaction was surprisingly quick and fervent. Moreover, it contrasted sharply with his carefully polished self-image in both the preface to the *Dispunctio* and the letters selected for publication by Woverius for the posthumous fifth *Centuria* of letters, the *Centuria quinta miscellanea*, which contains letters written by Lipsius between March 1601 and his death in March 1606. In 1607, Woverius, appointed by Lipsius as one of his executors, with sole responsibility for his literary remains,²⁴ not only published the fifth *Centuria*, but also oversaw the publication of the pamphlet *Assertio Lipsiani Donari adversus Gelastorum Suggillationes*,²⁵ which appeared for the first time in 1607 and was reprinted again the same year together with the *Fama postuma*, a volume of miscellaneous works in which Lipsius was praised to the skies.²⁶ Woverius certainly took his task as Lipsius's literary executor to heart. What is more, the *Centuria quinta miscellanea* contained only 99 letters, not 100 as in the other *Centuriae*; and, in place of the hundredth letter, Woverius included a speech composed by Lipsius under the title 'De calumnia oratio'. In the preface, he justified this editorial decision by stating that the speech would offer benevolent readers 'a salutary antidote for slander and its cancerous ulcers'.²⁷

Lipsius's letters concerning his anonymous philological opponent from Italy were deliberately selected and published as part of the massive apologetic campaign set in motion by Woverius and others immediately after the humanist's death in 1606. Publishing Lipsius's letters on the conflict with his slanderous Italian opponent was another clear appeal to the court of his peers – the *boni doctique* who made up the small élite of intellectuals to which Lipsius himself belonged. Recognition from them was regarded as far more valuable than the fame bestowed by the general public. As Lipsius had observed, the ancient Stoics held that 'glory depends on the judgements of the many; but renown on the judgements of a few men'.²⁸

So, what approach did Lipsius take in dealing with this conflict, and why did he select it? Time and again, the letters about the Tacitus affair, which Woverius included in the fifth *Centuria* of Lipsius's correspondence, present someone who

23 ILE 02 07 15 M² = LIPSIUS, ed. Gerlo / Vervliet (1967), no. 133; ILE 02 07 21 = CASAUBON (1709), p. 152 (*Ep.* 291); ILE 02 10 11 M = LIPSIUS, ed. Gerlo / Vervliet (1967), no. 143. See also RUYSSCHAERT (1949), pp. 15–16.

24 MORFORD (1991), 44 and 50.

25 LIPSIUS (1637). See VANDER HAEGHEN / LENGER (1964–1975), III, 1125, and MASSING (1990), 165, n. 7.

26 See VANDER HAEGHEN / LENGER (1964–1975), III, 1111–14 (editions of 1613, 1629 and 1637).

27 WOVERIUS (1637), 266: 'Salutare istud adversus calumniam eiusque carcinomata quasi alexipharmacum accipe.'

28 ILE VII, 94 10 12, ll. 11–12: 'Stoicorum nostrorum scitum est *gloriam multorum iudiciis constare, claritatem paucorum*.' On this passage, see PAPPY (1998b).

was at odds with himself as regards the line of conduct he should follow: full of haughtiness and anger at first, but gradually regaining his sense of proportion and his Stoic calm.²⁹ Although his Italian opponent did not really deserve such attention, as prudent friends had warned Lipsius, he nonetheless wrote a reply, because he wanted to set an example: it was necessary to teach impudent and ill-informed challengers a lesson. At the same time, however, Lipsius assured his former student Erycius Puteanus (1574–1646) that this would be a one-off response; for it was as useless to try to impose one's opinion by means of instruction (*docendo*) in the field of textual criticism and philological interpretation as it was when it came to taste and smell. In short, Lipsius demonstrated a remarkable self-confidence when fighting back against his Italian opponent and slanderer. He attempted to counter-attack while remaining in his ivory tower of philological expertise, claiming for himself a virtual monopoly of Tacitean exegesis. This was an area in which he had played a pioneering role, thanks to his innate intuition and acuity, rather than slavishly copying variant manuscript readings; and, therefore, Lipsius knew that he would eventually emerge as the victor in the battle with his opponent.³⁰

The battle was not, however, fought by Lipsius alone; for his students readily came to his defence. Lipsius, in his letter to Moretus, had quoted Horace's verses on Lollius (*Odes*, IV.9.43–4) – according to the poet, Lollius's consulate would be renewed again and again, as long as he continued to be a good and loyal judge, pursuing the *honestum* and refusing the gifts of his harmful flatterers;³¹ and, in 1607, Puteanus repeated these lines in his *Lipsiomnema anniversarium* of 1607. He stressed that Lipsius had risen above all sorts of calumny by means of his virtue and learning, which had enabled him to conquer his enemies.³² But the war was not over yet. The details of the matter were presented by Woverius in his edition of the first part of the fifth *Centuria* of Lipsius's correspondence. In the seventh letter, for instance, Lipsius briefly explained that he was forced to respond to his Italian enemy, but that he would do this only once, while in the eighth letter, addressed to his former student Philip Rubens, he set out once again the reason for his vehement reaction: his aim was not to throw the dirt back at his opponent, but rather to wipe it off himself ('non ut regererem sordes, a me abstergerem').

Whenever a slur was cast on Lipsius's reputation as a scholar and his philological achievements were criticized, he clearly felt entitled not only to push his slanderers back but also to hurl them to the ground ('non reieci solum hunc

29 Lipsius to Claudius Dausqueius: ILE 02 06 09 = *Cent. misc.* V.4.

30 Lipsius to Erycius Puteanus: ILE 02 08 21 P = *Cent. misc.* V.5.

31 ILE 02 08 21 P = *Cent. misc.* V.5.

32 PUTEANUS (1607), 20.

Andabatam, sed deieci?').³³ Excuses and justifications followed later, and these were taken up by Woverius. Peace-loving as he was, Lipsius did not usually react in such a violent manner, but he had to do so when he was viciously attacked out of envy (*invidia*). Furthermore, Lipsius explicitly warned his students in Italy not to react any further, since he was not seeking revenge,³⁴ but rather what was rightfully due to him (*ius*).³⁵ And although the whole of Europe acknowledged Lipsius's moderation and his almost excessive patience ('modestum me, imo et perpatientem fuisse'), it was simply impossible to keep one's temper in this affair, as all sound judges would agree.³⁶ Indeed, it would be inappropriate to keep silent in this case; for a wise man (*sapiens*) must rebuke impudence (*protervia*) just as parents must punish the wantonness of their children (*lascivia puerorum*).³⁷ These, then, were allegedly the motives which incited Lipsius to write the *Dis-punctio* and to ask his friends in Italy to distribute the work throughout the peninsula.

It is obvious, nevertheless, that it was the insinuation that Lipsius had corrupted the text of Tacitus which was the main – and perhaps even the sole – reason for his prompt and vigorous counter-attack. For Lipsius, it was imperative to make sure that his name remained untainted in the eyes of the *boni* and *docti* of the *Respublica litteraria*; and in order to do so, he was perfectly willing to set aside his Stoic calm for a while. It was Woverius's difficult task to touch up this picture by either masking or justifying Lipsius's longing for undying glory.

Slander and backbiting occupied a central place in the mental universe of humanist authors, most, if not all, of whom were extremely concerned about their literary fame and very keen to win the admiration of their contemporaries and of posterity. But reconciling Lipsius, the humanist scholar in pursuit of fame, with Lipsius, the detached Stoic philosopher, required a great deal of image management, as we can see in his ingeniously ambiguous attitude towards conflicts and rivalries. After his death, Woverius, who understood – and refined – his friend's apologetic technique of strategic self-representation, sought to portray Lipsius as someone who remained unperturbed, however much his name was vilified by the slanderous attacks of his opponents. He was a victim of a European-wide crisis which had destroyed the *honestum* and the *bonum* and fomented deceit, vanity and even depravity.³⁸ In such a world, Lipsius had to take refuge with kindred spirits; hence, he lavished praise on those of his Italian

33 ILE 02 10 27 = *Cent. misc.* V.8. An *andabata* was a gladiator who fought blindfolded.

34 Lipsius to William Richardot, who was in Padua: ILE 02 07 17 = *Cent. misc.* V.9.

35 Lipsius to Puteanus, who was in Milan: ILE 02 10 21 = *Cent. misc.* V.13.

36 Lipsius to Marcus Welser: ILE 02 08 16 W = *Cent. misc.* V.11. See also DE LANDTSHEER / NELLEN, ed. (2011).

37 ILE 02 10 21 = *Cent. misc.* V.13.

38 Lipsius to Jean Du Buisson: ILE 03 11 19 D = *Cent. misc.* V.38.

correspondents who sympathized with him for their virtue and learning, which guaranteed them a place among the *boni doctique*, while at the same time denouncing the hubris and envy (*livor*) of his anonymous opponent. Yet it was not by counter-attacking slanderers, he claimed, but rather by excluding and isolating them that one was able to rise above the crowd of *indocti*.³⁹ In this way, rivalry, conflict and calumny made Lipsius a better person: by softening his heart and moderating his judgement, they showed him true modesty. The slanderous assaults of his enemies, far from tarnishing the brilliance of his virtue, would render it even more splendid: it would glitter like a sword which is polished ('ut ferrum ab attritu, sic illa nitescet').⁴⁰

It should be clear by now how Lipsius, and after him Woverius, transformed weakness and vainglory into a powerful moral message. In the philological conflict recounted in the posthumous fifth *Centuria*, Lipsius does not come across as a slave to fame and glory, but instead as someone who, through a cathartic experience, finally succeeded in turning his life into an example of Stoic modesty and constancy in the face of conflicts, rivalries and slander. Lipsius's life thus became a lesson to all his readers – friends and enemies alike. The self-image which emerges implicitly from Lipsius's letters on the conflict with his Italian opponent is that of a Stoic scholar who counterattacks only when there is no other option; he is, therefore, the diametrical opposite of the band of calumniating enemies whose innocent victim he has been for so long. He does not need to have recourse to mud-slinging in order to make his name, for his scholarly reputation is firmly based on his virtue and learning. He does not waste his time in defaming others; instead, he employs his moral and intellectual qualities to serve the common good of mankind. Whatever insults he is forced to endure, Lipsius stubbornly refuses to pay his critics and opponents back in the same coin. Unwilling to engage in endless and sterile verbal warfare, Lipsius maintains his modesty and constancy throughout and confronts his enemies with the only weapons his Stoic conviction provides him with: patience and contempt.

Transferring Conflicts to the Public Sphere: Use and Abuse

In addition to treating counter-attack as a weapon of last resort, Lipsius responded to his many critics, not privately, but publicly. This enabled him to undermine their position by revealing to his wide readership the perverse strategies and hidden motives on which their criticisms were based. In this way, Lipsius elegantly shifted the attention from himself as the victim and his critics as

39 Lipsius to Puteanus: ILE 05 04 07 = *Cent. misc.* V.66.

40 ILE 04 11 09 = *Cent. misc.* V.58.

the assailants to the phenomenon of conflict and rivalry itself. He also succeeded in transferring this phenomenon from a strictly personal sphere (the assaults on his own good name as a person and as a scholar) to a broader social and political one (the destruction of society). In his mind, the criticism and suspicion which he had suffered since the publication of his *De constantia* in 1583 and which intensified after his return to Leuven in 1592 and the publication of his tracts on the Blessed Virgin of Halle and Scherpenheuvel in 1604 and 1605, were both a cause and a symptom of the social and political disintegration which he observed taking place throughout Europe.⁴¹

Nevertheless, Lipsius's observation was equally a product of the deeply rooted *Kulturpessimismus* which he aired on several occasions in his vast correspondence. Instead of supporting the *studia humanitatis*, political and religious rulers preferred to set people against each other and foster conflicts.⁴² In this climate, the various attacks he endured were symptomatic of a deep moral and cultural crisis which was crippling the entire Continent, destroying true virtuousness and honest learning (*honestum et bonum*).⁴³ As a humanist scholar, he devoted his life to writing philological and philosophical works, not for the purpose of securing fame for its own sake, but in order to serve the *bonum commune* and safeguard Europe's intellectual and cultural heritage. Carrying true glory (the bright light of virtue itself) in his own person, Lipsius did not need to diminish the fame of others by spiteful attacks and interminable rivalries.⁴⁴

Yet, even though Lipsius's rich and coherent philosophical programme enabled him to reduce to some extent the tensions inherent in his combined self-image as a humanist scholar and a Stoic philosopher, it remained difficult for him in practice to strike the correct balance between dignity and humility, between self-esteem and self-deprecation. Whether or not Lipsius chose to respond to his critics and enemies, he always agonized over the attacks he suffered and often felt the need to ventilate his concerns and share his grievances with friends and readers. His almost obsessional focus on fame and criticism shows that he was far more concerned about these external things than his philosophical beliefs allowed or even condoned. He did not bear slander and criticism from his opponents with the unshakeable patience and contempt of a Stoic *sapiens*. On the contrary, he almost continually tormented himself by thinking, talking and writing about them. He used – and needed – the public sphere to resolve his private concerns and internal conflicts.

41 MULSOW (2001), 307–47.

42 On Lipsius's pessimism regarding political life, see VAN HOUTT (1998), 405–32; and PAPPY (1998a), 260–1.

43 Lipsius to Jean Du Buisson: ILE 03 11 19 D = *Cent. misc.* V.38.

44 *Cent. misc.* V.8, 22, 24, 25 and 26.

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Michael Gordian

Pious Frauds or Malicious Impostures? Conflicts and Rivalries about Feigning and Disguise in Early Modern Medical Writings

Abstract

The sphere of Renaissance and early modern medical practitioners was characterized by long-lasting and intense rivalries between licensed physicians and their itinerant and unauthorized counterparts. As the entire medical profession had frequently been called into question and linked to malpractice and imposture, the harsh invectives against irregulars were an important part of the social and intellectual practice of early modern learned physicians.

Licensed physicians constantly tried to establish a secure social rank for themselves in the face of unstable perceptions of their profession. In this context, the very act of recognizing a charlatan was a key move in the consolidation of professionalism.

This article examines how established physicians appropriated and even reinforced these critical attitudes towards the medical profession, directing them against itinerant and irregular practitioners. Through vigilant surveillance and patrolling of the borders of their profession, licensed physicians created symbolic boundaries between themselves and other practitioners. At the same time, trying to establish a positive notion of their own medical practice, regular physicians claimed a monopoly over the useful lie, the honest deceit, and the 'pious simulation' for their own benefit.

The sphere of Renaissance and early modern medical practitioners was characterized by long-lasting and intense rivalries which were dominated by individual interests and economic competition.¹ The agents, that is, the opposing parties in these conflicts, were regular and licensed physicians, on the one hand, and their itinerant and unauthorized counterparts, on the other.² In this ongoing

1 This subject has increasingly attracted scholarly attention in recent years. For a detailed study on the conflicts between the College of Physicians and irregulars in London, see PELLING (2003); for the French context, see LINGO (1986).

2 This conflict was by no means limited to the Renaissance and the early modern era. A similar rivalry between licensed and unauthorised healers also – or even more so – took place in the Enlightenment. The eighteenth century has rightly been described as the 'golden age of quackery'; see PORTER (1989), 222. For a concise study, see CRYLE (2006). For case studies on the eighteenth century, see RENNER (2013), 245–67 and GOUBERT (1977).

rivalry, an ambitious and self-confident minority of licensed, university-trained physicians partially succeeded in their attempt to marginalize the much larger group of itinerant and irregular healers. The harsh invectives against irregulars cannot solely be explained by individual rivalries and Renaissance scholars' propensity to engage in conflicts.³ Rather, invectives and verbal attacks were an important part of the social and intellectual practice of early modern learned circles – a phenomenon referred to in German-language scholarship as *Streitkultur*.⁴ These conflicts formed a central part of the collective 'consolidation of professionalism' among licensed physicians, through which they attempted to position themselves against supposedly inferior competitors and, in this way, to dominate medical practice.⁵

The phenomenon of charlatanism has received increasing scholarly attention in recent years, yet it continues to present challenging problems of definition.⁶ In this paper, my aim is to discuss the pervasive conflicts between licensed and itinerant healers which, as I shall argue, were centred on the notions of (false) self-presentation, deceit and medical imposture. My sources of information about these medical conflicts are the writings of regular physicians, a corpus of material and a means of access to this world which are inevitably biased and partial, especially because the relationship between the two parties was hostile. Rather than restricting the scope to a particular nation or nations, I shall consider sources from various European countries and regions, in order to reflect the pan-European extent of early modern medicine and of medical conflicts.⁷

First, however, the highly contentious concept of 'charlatanism' requires some preliminary remarks. David Gentilcore has shown that charlatans were not merely colourful characters who enlivened the squares and market-places of European towns, but that they represented a more or less definable and specific profession in pre-modern Europe.⁸ Furthermore, Roy Porter has argued that we should not dismiss charlatans as impostors and bunglers who swelled their own

3 LAUREYS / SIMONS, ed. (2013), 4.

4 For a collection of essays on the early modern *Streitkultur*, see JÜRGENS / WELLER (2013).

5 CRYLE (2006), 246; see also LINGO (1986), 583.

6 CRYLE (2006), 245. The area of overlap between mountebanks, charlatans and quacksalvers is still disputed in scholarship. According to KATRITZKY (2007), 57, however, there is a distinction between these three closely related types: 'Broadly speaking, mountebanks are itinerant performers who may or may not sell medical products or services, charlatans are itinerant performers who sell medical products and services, and quacksalvers are sellers of medical products and services who may or may not be itinerant or perform in public.'

7 PELLING (2003), 9.

8 For a detailed study of charlatans as a particular type of medical practitioner as opposed to a mere pretender, see GENTILCORE (2006a); at 255, challenging PORTER (1989), 1, who stressed that 'nobody ever called himself a quack', Gentilcore maintains that some licensed charlatans identified themselves as such.

coffers at the expense of a credulous public.⁹ It is not my intention, however, to discuss charlatans from the perspective of social history or the history of medicine. Nor shall I analyse the institutional structures of (irregular) medical practice or provide a prosopographical study of charlatans as the ‘excluded middle’ of the medical world of early modern Europe. Instead, I shall approach this subject from the angle of cultural history, placing emphasis on the perceptions of charlatanism and the discursive modes through which they were addressed by contemporaries and, more specifically, by other practitioners in the context of the medical rivalries of the time.

1. The ‘Cunning Devices and Deceits’ of Charlatans

A seventeenth-century physician employed by the Papal States succinctly described charlatans as ‘those people who appear in the square and sell a few things with entertainment and buffoonery’.¹⁰ In fact, it was not just mere ‘buffoonery’, since charlatans sold their wares and services using multi-faceted and sometimes quite sophisticated selling strategies, as well as employing different media, including an array of handbills, posters, licences on display and other props such as animals. We might say that the charlatans embodied the entrepreneurial spirit which underpinned the growing mercantile economy in urban conglomerations of early modern Europe. Many unlicensed practitioners developed clever strategies not only to produce, but also to market, their wares and services. Some conjured up an aura of religious healing, portraying their wares as ‘miracles’ rather than medicine, while others appropriated the prestige of classical learning by giving their remedies Latin and Greek names. As ingenious self-publicists and commercial showmen, they strongly incentivized customers to use their medical services and to buy their goods, which included herbs, pharmaceuticals, hygiene products and cosmetics.

Charlatans skilfully constructed an aura of professionalism. Since secrecy and mystery were essential elements of their success, they were reluctant to reveal the tricks of their trade, in the same way, for example, as *professori dei secreti*, who also played an important role in early modern culture.¹¹ If the ingredients of a medical secret became available to the public, it would lose the alluring air of intrigue which was created by secrecy. Some itinerant healers offered almost the entire spectrum of theatrical performances from short acts to full-length plays. The combination of performance and healing was highly successful. By joining

9 PORTER (1986), 17.

10 Quoted in GENTILCORE (2006a), 253.

11 See EAMON (1994) and (2010); see also JÜTTE (2011).

entertainment and spectacle to various forms and methods of medical treatment, charlatans appealed to a wide and diverse audience and actively participated in the popular culture of their day.¹² They not only passively borrowed from mainstream theatre culture, but also adapted theatrical routines, which served their economic agenda.¹³ Masters of eloquence and self-fashioning, they conjured up a colourful variety of tricks and created a carnevalesque atmosphere.

Charlatans were by no means a clearly defined professional group. Rather, they crossed fluidly between – and combined – different sedentary and (semi-) itinerant occupations, with significantly varying social statuses, from generally respectable merchants and licensed medical practitioners to jugglers, vagabonds and beggars.¹⁴ Some quacks operated alone, others in larger, usually well-organized troops. A number travelled extensively throughout Europe, while others remained for the most part in their own country or region. Some were well educated, and it has been claimed that, at least in London, many were probably literate and, in various ways, well intentioned and skilled.¹⁵ We are thus dealing with a large and heterogeneous group of professionals to which no single definition applies. I use the term ‘charlatan’ in the non-pejorative and rather loose manner suggested by Porter, which covers all categories of itinerant and illegal practitioners and the full range of their activities.¹⁶ For my purposes, charlatans were itinerant and unlicensed medical practitioners, who were regularly on the move and who commonly employed theatrical performances to sell their wares and services.

The largely negative perception of charlatans on the part of medical authorities manifested itself, according to Gentilcore, in ‘harsh laws and lax licensing’.¹⁷

12 Representations of other irregular and sometimes closely related professions such as potion sellers, wise women, astrologers, and fortune-tellers also drew extensively on theatrical spectacles. GENTILCORE (1998), 116, has stressed the significant overlap between *commedia dell’arte* troops and charlatans, although, as he notes, not all itinerant comedians sold remedies and not all unauthorized healers performed extemporised comedies; see also GENTILCORE (2006b), 301–34. According to KATRIZKY (2012), 11–13 and 43–159, the influences and connections between healthcare and the stage, in its widest sense, were not limited to charlatanism; aspects of spectacle and performance were also recurrent in regular healthcare and in the medical writings of licensed physicians.

13 KATRIZKY (2012), 215–80, argues that theatrical and medical economies did not merely overlap but were interdependent.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 143. On similarities between early modern vagrants, beggars and itinerant actors of various kinds, see PUGLIATTI (2003). It is worth noting that itinerant healers, non-medical traders and itinerant actors were all obliged to obtain trading and performing licences, as they were regulated by the same legislation, usually administered by the same civil authorities.

15 See PELLING (2003), 4.

16 PORTER (2000), 11–12 and 28–30; see also KATRIZKY (2007), 5.

17 GENTILCORE (2006a), 251. It is also worth noting, however, that traditional itinerant healers were commonly consulted by the majority of the population, not only because they were available almost everywhere, but also because they were not necessarily less successful than

Charlatans were clearly defined from a legal point of view. In the sixteenth century, controlling, inspecting and licensing itinerant and unauthorized practitioners became an administrative routine for *protomedicato* tribunals and colleges of physicians all over Europe.¹⁸ Although often publicly licensed as healers, charlatans were, at the same time, objects of widespread mistrust.

Generally, the flood of edicts, rigorous prohibitions and severe new laws had only a limited impact on traditional methods of healing; these regulations defined medicine as an official area but did not cause significant change in medical culture or practice. In addition, the harsh punishments prescribed were rarely imposed, and early modern medical legislation deterred neither illegal healers nor their patients. The strongest source of opposition was licensed physicians, who, often driven by disdain for their itinerant and unlicensed counterparts, seized any opportunity to stain their reputation and bring them into disrepute.¹⁹ Most licensed physicians stigmatized charlatans as inferior healers and their cures as deleterious, while others virulently condemned the theatrical aspects of this trade.²⁰ At the very heart of their denunciations was the question of deception, disguise and mendacity, which was passionately discussed in the early modern era.²¹

Girolamo Bardi (b. 1603), an Italian physician and professor of philosophy at Pisa, associated the practices of unlicensed healers with the notorious ruses employed by conny-catchers, jugglers, conjurers and other tricksters, who

their licensed counterparts. Even members of the upper echelons of early modern society consulted irregular healers and did not always subscribe to the apodictic opposition between 'popular' (and illegal) and official medicine.

- 18 These colleges acted above all as tribunals; they dealt with public health and tried to regulate medical practices. Their forms of control were primarily exclusionary and punitive. On colleges and health officials, see CIPOLLA (1976); on the *protomedicato* in Spain, see LANNING (1985) and, for Italy, GENTILCORE (1994). For the College of Physicians in London, see PELLING (2003), 1–25.
- 19 In his study on eighteenth-century charlatanism in Russia, RENNER (2013), 252, argues that the closer unlicensed healers came to the conceptual barrier built around the enclave of state-regulated and officially approved medical practice, the more they were attacked by licensed physicians. This seems to apply also to earlier medical conflicts in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- 20 Both Calvinists and the Catholic Church often discouraged attendance at irregular healing performances of any kind. For an overview on the European tradition of anti-theatrical polemics and attacks, see BARISH (1981).
- 21 The literature on early modern debates about lying and deception is vast; on the problem of simulation and dissimulation, see ZAGORIN (1990), VILLARI (1987) and CAVAILLÉ (2002). On early modern debates about deception and fraud, see VAN HOUTD, ed. (2002), HUG (2010) and ELIAV-FELDON (2012). Perceptions of deception and lying were closely linked to the question of sincerity and honesty; see, e. g., MARTIN (1997). Another important aspect which, however, goes beyond the scope of this paper, is early modern casuistry; see SOMMERVILLE (1988).

haunted the collective imagination of the upper social echelons in early modern Europe:

At vero sicut alearum, vel aliorum iocorum ludicris ludis, a manuum celeritate tantum dependentibus, adstantem oculis circulatores imponunt, sic et isti hominibus ipsis, et eorum ingenio, et cerebro, et vitae (quod peius est) technas, dolosque suis samnionibus construunt, quibus decipiuntur, et in foveas ab ipsis paratas, non tamen prae ignorantia crassisima animadversas volentes, nolentes pertrahuntur ...²²

Fierce attacks on unauthorized practitioners permeated contemporary medical treatises and were common currency among accredited physicians. The German physician and scholar Guilelmus Adolphus Scribonius (1550–1600), for instance, who wrote about medicine, natural philosophy and astronomy among other subjects, expressed his aversion to unlicensed practitioners in the title of one of his learned medical treatises, which was specifically directed ‘against deceitful urine mongers’ (‘contra uromantes impostores’).²³ Quacks were also a major concern for the Northamptonshire physician John Cotta (1575–1650), who wrote extensively about the alleged threat posed by itinerant practitioners.²⁴ In his *A Short Discoverie* from 1612, a work which has been described as much ‘more than a diatribe against unlicensed physicians’,²⁵ Cotta complained that charlatans do not care about ‘the benefite of the sicke, but the colour of fraud and comodity by deceit’.²⁶ Another English physician, John Securis [Hatchett] (fl. 1550–1580), struck a similar note in his *A Detection and Queremonie of the Daily Enormities and Abuses Committed in Physick* of 1566, with which he attempted to disclose the ‘false, deceitful [and] unjust’ medical practices employed by irregulars.²⁷

‘Charlatan’ became a frequently used term of stigmatization and denunciation. At the very centre of this vehement disapproval and these harsh attacks was the accusation of deceit, illicit pretence and mendacity. Calling a practitioner a ‘charlatan’ meant unmasking and ridiculing him as an agent of medical imposture. Although beyond my chronological remit, Samuel Johnson’s definition of a quack from his *Dictionary* of 1755 is worth quoting: a quack, he writes, is ‘1. A boastful pretender to arts of which he does not understand. 2. A vain boastful pretender to physick, one who proclaims his own Medical abilities in public places. 3. An artful, tricking practitioner in Physick.’²⁸ Johnson’s definition was broadly in

22 BARDI (1644), 271.

23 SCRIBONIUS (1617). For a detailed study on early modern uroscopy, see STOLBERG (2009).

24 See COTTA (1617) and (1612); the latter treatise enjoyed considerable popularity and was reprinted several times; for a study, see PETTIGREW (2005), 119–38.

25 PETTIGREW (2005), 124.

26 COTTA (1612), 106.

27 SECURIS (1566), B5^r.

28 Quoted in PORTER (1989), 4.

line with earlier perceptions of unauthorized practitioners.²⁹ Indeed, the sixteenth-century Italian physician Scipione Mercurio (c. 1545–1615) identified telling lies and wearing masks as the main characteristics of charlatans.³⁰

The etymology of ‘charlatan’ underlines this pervasive association, as the term derives from an epithet used in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance to refer to someone from the north Italian town of Cerreto, the inhabitants of which were reputed to be simulating mendicants and vagabonds.³¹ In the course of the sixteenth century, *chiarlatano* also acquired the connotation of ‘subtle and insidious eloquence’.³² Rather than investigating the extent to which charlatans were, or were not, skilful tricksters and impostors,³³ however, I want to stress that charlatanism was a constructed and projected category which functioned as a disparaging reference to imposture, hurled by licensed physicians at their itinerant and unlicensed rivals.

It is worth noting, nevertheless, that accredited physicians also directed their accusations of illicit pretences and disguises at authorized and licensed members of the profession. Rodrigo de Castro (c. 1546–1627) tried to convince the city magistrates of Hamburg to regulate the practice of medicine and emphasized the importance of distinguishing between pretenders and reliable practitioners. The aim of his seminal work *Medicus-politicus*, published in 1614, to which I shall return below, was not only to depict the ideal physician but also to expose the errors and impostures of bad practitioners.³⁴ In the chapter ‘De veri et falsi medici agnitione’, de Castro directed his wrath against the ‘pseudomedici’, who, regardless of their academic degrees, should, in his view, be severely punished by prudent magistrates for their malpractice:

At vero, pseudomedici, quibus indicis ab iis differant, operae pretium erit, nunc explicare, ut sicuti priores illi a professoribus in Academiis promoventur et honorifice insiguntur: ita etiam hi debitis stigmatibus inusti a civibus fugiantur, et a prudentibus magistratibus pro grassandi licentia et nocuenti ratione puniantur gravissime.³⁵

29 GENTILCORE (2006b), 1.

30 *Ibid.*, 13; and MERCURIO (1603), 176^v: ‘per Ciarlatani intendo saltainbanco, bagattellieri, buffoni, et universalmente qualunque persona in piazza stando in banco, o in Terra, ò à Cavallo, vende medicine, polveri composti, oglii per guarir alcune infermità, perdicando con mille giuramenti, e buggie, mille meraviglie delle cose, che vendono’.

31 See GARZONI (1996), 1188.

32 CAMPORESI, ed. (1973), cxv.

33 In criticizing Porter, CRYLE (2006), 244, maintained that this question was anachronistic.

34 See the title of DE CASTRO (1614), which claims that ‘malorum vero fraudes et imposturae deteguntur’.

35 *Ibid.*, 201. The physician-poet Thomas Sonnet Courval (1577–1627), in COURVAL (1610), B3^v, pursued a similar agenda in his satire, not only attacking the deceptions (‘ruses et tromperies’) of unauthorized practitioners but also encouraging civil authorities (‘les prudens Magistrats des Republiques’) to identify impostors among licensed physicians. On Courval, see LINGO (1986).

Attacking and denouncing colleagues as impostors was a commonplace feature of medical literature from antiquity to the early modern period.³⁶ The influential Italian physician Giovanni Argenterio (1513–1572), today mostly remembered for his criticism of Galenic theory,³⁷ complained in his *De consultationibus medicis* of 1551 about the feigned erudition ('*simulata eruditio*') of physicians.³⁸ According to him, some licensed and orthodox physicians tried to use their education and training to present themselves as knowledgeable and reliable professionals. Referring ostentatiously to medical authorities of whom they had little knowledge, they blackened the reputation of the entire profession.³⁹

2. Licensed Physicians and the Early Modern Ideal of the *medicus politicus*

Licensed practitioners, however, did not condemn theatrical performance *per se* in connection with healing. First of all, early modern medical practice was profoundly shaped by the culture of theatre and performance. As has been shown in a recent study, established physicians such as Thomas Platter (1499–1582) were very receptive to and interested in theatrical culture.⁴⁰ Different (public) healing rituals such as the royal touch were European-wide elements of medical culture which reinforced the role of the medical practitioner as a performer and, ulti-

36 Pietro Castelli (c. 1590–1661), e.g., stated that 'such [i.e. bad] physicians are very similar to actors on the tragic stage. For they have the looks, behavior, and the mask of those they represent, but they are not the very ones'; quoted in SCHLEINER (1995), 15; see CASTELLI (1637), 2: 'Simillimi enim huiusmodi Medici sunt personis, quae tragoediis introducuntur; quemadmodum enim illi figuram quidem, et habitum, ac personam eorum quos referunt habent, illi ipsi autem vere non sunt.' Castelli was echoing the opening words of Hippocrates's *The Law*; see HIPPOCRATES (1923), 263: 'Medicine is the most distinguished of all the arts, but through the ignorance of those who practise it, ... it is now of all arts by far the least esteemed. ... Such men in fact are very like the supernumeraries in tragedies. Just as these have the appearances, dress and mask of an actor without being actors, so too with physicians; many are physicians by repute, very few are such in reality.'

37 See SIRAISSI (1990), 161–80.

38 ARGENTERIO (1551), 13; see also SCHLEINER (1995), 14.

39 This type of criticism against licensed practitioners culminated in an anonymously published German pamphlet of 1698, *Machiavellus medicus*. Deception and imposture were the central themes of this short polemical tract, in which the various ruses practised by physicians were systematically exposed. While this criticism was not entirely new, the method of presentation was: stripping the contemporary ideal of the prudent physician of its positive connotations, the author mocked the deontological literature of the time, which I shall discuss below. The term 'Machiavellian' serves here as a loose label for immorality, that is, a devious physician who makes cunning use of his rhetorical and dialectical abilities, ignoring social and moral norms whenever it suits his purposes; see ECKART (1982b).

40 KATRITZKY (2012), 9.

mately, blurred the boundaries between medical practice and performance. Another example is Hippolytus Guarinonius (1571–1654), a famous physician and versatile scholar from Hall in Tirol. In his *Grewel der Verwüstung Menschlichen Geschlechts* (1610), he rehearsed the standard attacks on and invectives against charlatans.⁴¹ He also harshly condemned astrology-based medicine and theatrical techniques employed by quacks, but, at the same time, drew on similar methods for his own profit.⁴²

Self-fashioning and impression management were of crucial importance for licensed physicians, because of the influence they had on perception, prestige and power.⁴³ Argenterio's critique of the *simulata eruditio* of licensed physicians went right to the heart of the matter. Apart from erudition, the principle rationales of (false) self-presentation of early modern physicians were prudence, gravity, and honourability, all of which were in line with ideal forms of comportment among members of the upper echelons of early modern society. A number of authors, most of whom were established and renowned physicians, addressed this subject in professional treatises.

Early modern medical theory was heavily based on the Greco-Roman tradition, above all, on the works of Hippocrates and Galen. Yet unlike most other medical subjects, pretence and deceit in the interest of curing was largely neglected by ancient writers.⁴⁴ Apart from occasional references to deceptions such as 'sugar-coating' medication in the Hippocratic corpus, we do not find any systematic discussion of this subject in ancient medical authorities. Although feigning and concealing constitute a perennial problem, which has been widely discussed from medical, clinical, and psychological perspectives up to the present day, in no other period did this subject receive more attention than in the early modern era. Occasional references to ruses and deceptions can be found in ancient medical writings, especially in the Hippocratic corpus and in Galen's works;⁴⁵ nevertheless, these were not regarded as raising important theoretical issues either in antiquity or in the Middle Ages. The élite of sixteenth-century physicians, however, developed a keen interest in this subject. What is more, they justified their own use of similar strategies and incorporated them into their

41 GUARINONIUS (1610), 93, 132, 206, 319, 823, 965. On Guarinonius and his work, see KATRITZKY (2012), 29–44.

42 KATRITZKY (2012), 158–9.

43 This applied to early modern scholars in general; see KIRWAN (2013), 1–20.

44 Galen's short treatise *Quomodo morbum simulantes sint deprehendi* formulated the basic methods for discern deceptions but did not address the use of simulation and dissimulation by physicians.

45 SCHLEINER (1995), 6.

professional work ethics.⁴⁶ An entire literary genre bears evidence to this collective effort.

The image of the ideal physician in this period was that of the *medicus prudens*,⁴⁷ who united worldly wisdom with *decorum*, eloquence and encyclopedic knowledge. An integral part of his prudence entailed adopting all necessary means – including lies and ruses – in the interest of healing. In his important deontological treatise, *De cautelis medicorum* of 1495, which addressed work ethics and medical etiquette for physicians, Gabriele Zerbi (1445–1505) stressed that the practitioner had to convey an impression of professionalism and trustworthiness through the display of a specific *decorum* and a code of behaviour.⁴⁸ After initially condemning pretence and ruses,⁴⁹ Zerbi established the category of benevolent and permissible deceit and subtly justified the use of such means for the benefit of the patient, recommending that the physician should not refrain from telling lies that are in accordance with his duties and therefore licit: ‘Et ad infirmum denuo reversus, firmam ei promittat salutem et non vereatur etiam mendaciis uti sunt nam hec officiosa mendacia et salutem ei promittat.’⁵⁰

In the eyes of seventeenth-century physicians, it was incumbent on the *medicus prudens* to devise skilful strategies of disguise and deception in the service of the healing process. The Sicilian physician Fortunato Fedele (1550–1630) endorsed such strategies, which he referred to as ‘pious simulation’.⁵¹ Many of those who promoted this ideal were renowned and high-ranking physicians. A good example is Giulio Alessandrini (1506–1590), who held the important post of court physician to Ferdinand I and Maximilian II. A marginal note in his influential medical treatise of 1557 on the education and duties of a physician states unequivocally: ‘Licere decipere aegrotos’.⁵²

46 For an overview of the deontological discourse of the Renaissance and the early modern era with regard to the thorny questions of deceit and lying, see *ibid.*, 1–106.

47 In this context, the term ‘political’ did not so much refer to structures or affairs of the government and the state, but was, more or less, a synonym of prudent; see ECKHART (1984), 212–13. In DE CASTRO (1614), the term *medicus-politicus* unites the ideal of individual prudence with the public role of the physician in service of the authorities.

48 LINDEN (1999), 19–37 and (2000), 222–31.

49 ZERBI (1495), B1: ‘Et est cautela cum diligenti attentione, evitatio deceptionis et fraudis et delusionis et infamiae et ignominiae et dedecoris’; and B2: ‘Fidelis enim medicus ... cavet ne per imperitiam, aut inadvententiam, seu per negligentiam deficiat eius opus, quod est inductio in quopiam sanitatis, dolos et fraudes non committit, sed et fugit preceps, et precia emulorum sui egroti spernit, et fugat.’ See also BERGDOLT (2004), 133–5.

50 ZERBI (1495), B4r. Zerbi also advised physicians, when pronouncing a judgement on a patient’s health, to show themselves to be happy, but never to do so in relation to death; see *ibid.*, C2: ‘De salute autem iudicium depositurus medicus sermonem amplificet, et letum se ostendat, nunquam vero sic de morte.’ This arguably implied a certain degree of dis/simulation.

51 FEDELE (1602), 184: ‘pia simulatione’. For a detailed discussion of this phrase, see SCHLEINER (1995), 5.

52 ALESSANDRINI (1557), 329.

Deception and lying were legitimized as psychological instruments used, for instance, in treating fearful patients. Very much a concern of ancient physicians,⁵³ utilizing deceit in this manner remained an important and intricate question in the early modern era. Rodrigo de Castro, a highly regarded physician of Sephardi origin who established himself in Hamburg, discussed this problem in his *Medicus politicus* of 1614. He maintained that since fearful patients were very sensitive to any verbal nuance or facial expression, the doctor should prudently conceal through simulation whatever might increase their anxiety:

priorem de medicis confirmari posse existimamus, quia aegri suapte natura suspiciosi cum sint, et formidolosi, accuratissime non solum verba, et ratiocinationes, sed gestus, et nutus medicorum observant, a cunctis, quae vel ex vultu medici colligunt, sibi metuentes; prudentis ergo medici fuerit, quae aegro metum allatura putarit, aut animi perturbationem, ea simulatione tegere.⁵⁴

Although he generally agreed with Aristotle that all lying was bad and that only the truth was good and praiseworthy, de Castro carefully distinguished between a *mendacium nocivum*, ‘a harmful lie’, and a *mendacium officiosum*, ‘a serviceable lie’, from which something useful could spring.⁵⁵ Having established the crucial difference between malevolent deceptions and white lies, he affirmed that some simulations were harmful neither to the worldly wisdom nor to the good reputation of the practitioner since they were a feature of prudent professional behaviour.⁵⁶ De Castro left no doubt as to his view on this delicate subject and granted licensed physicians *carte blanche* to employ any kind of deception and simulation which would benefit the patient: ‘His ita cursim annotatis, sit constans assertio, licere medico pleraque salutis aegroti causa fingere, pleraque dissimulare, polliceri etiam multa, quae animum in bonam spem erigere ipsi possunt.’⁵⁷

This treatise, in which de Castro portrayed the ideal practitioner, was one of the most influential texts of its kind. As such, it not only disseminated but also further corroborated the belief that licensed physicians were permitted to deceive patients and to lie to them; and it did so quite successfully.⁵⁸ A number of later

53 SCHLEINER (1995), 9.

54 DE CASTRO (1614), 142.

55 Ibid., 144. De Castro went on to argue, *ibid.*, that a serviceable lie could be used as medication: ‘Ita insuper mendacio utendum, uti medicamento et condimento, hoc est, nunquam magnopere mentiendum aut sine magna proximi utilitate.’

56 Ibid.: ‘Neque id quicquam illius prudentiae, probitati, sapientiae, famaevae obstare, quia bonus dolus est seu solertia quaedam atque prudentia’; see also *ibid.*, 142, where de Castro says that benevolent simulation ‘digna laude virtusque reputanda censetur’.

57 DE CASTRO (1614), 144; see also SCHLEINER (1995), 12.

58 In 1714, precisely a hundred years after de Castro’s seminal treatise, Friedrich Hoffmann (1662–1740), a Pietist from Halle and an important medical author of his day, summed up the entire early modern discourse on this controversial subject. In his treatise *Medicus politicus*,

seventeenth-century physicians such as Gaspar dos Reyes Franco (b. c. 1600), a Portuguese physician who lived in Carmona, accepted de Castro's views in his voluminous medical compendium *Elysium iucundarum quaestionum campus, omnium literarum amoenissima varietate refertus* of 1661. Dos Reyes wrote that the physician was not only allowed to deceive, but, at times, was obliged to do so.⁵⁹

Renaissance and early modern physicians were very aware of the moral problem of deceit and lying in connection both with healing techniques of charlatans and with their own medical practice. More importantly, they drew a fundamental distinction between their own use of such means and that of other, supposedly inferior and unskilled, healers. It is hardly surprising that professional physicians perceived the deceptions of these unauthorized medical practitioners, whom they looked down on and regarded as the 'other', quite differently from their own employment of similar tactics.⁶⁰

3. Conclusion

In the Renaissance and early modern medical market, which was characterized by a variety of medical occupations and agents of healing,⁶¹ itinerant and unaccredited practitioners did not really constitute serious economic competition for professional physicians. The two groups operated at different ends of the spectrum and usually recruited their customers in different circumstances and with different means.⁶² In other words, the competition was more a symbolic than actual rivalry.⁶³ Nonetheless, charlatans were a thorn in the side of accredited

he wittily turned the famous and fashionable Renaissance *dictum* 'Qui nescit simulare, nescit regnare' into 'Qui nescit simulare, nescit etiam curare': HOFFMANN (1738), 183; on Friedrich Hoffmann, see FRENCH (1993).

59 DOS REYES FRANCO (1661), 83: 'Solum igitur circa curationem, quotiescumque oporteat, medicus aegrotantem fallere potest, et debet, omni dolo, et nulla non utens cautela, ut aegrotantem decipiat immorigerum ...'

60 It has been argued in an influential study about belief in witchcraft that the early modern mindset was culturally predetermined to think in terms of opposites and contraries; see CLARK (1997). This binary thinking becomes apparent in various intellectual contexts, including the medical discourse of the time.

61 GENTILCORE (1998), 2.

62 The sales tactics and performances of itinerant healers may have been flashy, but in many cases, however, the therapies and methods with which charlatans treated their patients did not, in fact, differ greatly from those offered by less flamboyant types of medical practitioners; see LOUX (1993). For a case study of the overlapping techniques of persuasion and healing see, e.g., GARBER (2006).

63 As Renner argued, with regard to perceptions of charlatans in early modern Russia, this rivalry was, in fact, a one-sided construction by the learned physicians; see RENNER (2013), 260.

physicians and were believed to represent an affront to the moral and social order and to pose a threat to the community's livelihood and moral standing.⁶⁴

Although they usually were not in direct competition with each other, both parties implicated patients, who belonged to the sphere of the general public, as a third party in their rivalry when they attempted to win their trust. This was not always an easy task, however, since the entire medical profession had frequently been called into question and linked to imposture, whether in relation to the *gravitas* and learned speech of the professional physician or to the theatrical entertainment of the charlatan.⁶⁵ Everyone involved in providing health care was under suspicion. The public could be as scathing about professional healers as about charlatans. It is widely acknowledged that accusations of medical malpractice and imposture were a recurring motif in European literature, going back to antiquity and still flourishing in the Renaissance.⁶⁶

Medical authorities were, of course, well aware of anxieties about the treacherous potential of medicine and constantly made efforts to present the profession as reliable and trustworthy.⁶⁷ Without oversimplifying or generalizing a complex

64 See BROCKLISS / JONES (1997), 232–3.

65 A famous example from the sixteenth century is the diatribe against physicians in AGRIPPA VON NETTESHEIM (1584), V5: 'Sed etiam a militia et nobilitate ad medicinam properemus, quae ipsa etiam quaedam homicidiorum ars est, prorsus mechanica, licet philosophiae titulo se traduci posse praesumat, ac supra iuris prudentiam proximas theologiae sedes ambiat, unde maxima inter medicos et iuristas contentio est.' The next chapter on practical medicine ('De medicina operatrice') opens, *ibid.*, V8^v: 'Tota praeterea medendi operatrix, ars nullo alio fundamento quam fallacibus experientia super extracta est, ac tenui aegrotantium credulitate roborata, non minus venefica, quam benefica, ut sepiissime et fere semper plus periculi sit a medico ac medicina quam ab ipso morbo.' Agrippa summed up his aversion to physicians with these words, *ibid.*, V11^v: 'At sunt revera medici homines omnium scelestissimi, discordantissimi, invidentissimi, mendacissimi.'

66 See BERGDOLT (1991), 264–82. Diatribes against physicians who lacked professional skills continued to be produced in the Renaissance and the early modern era. The poet Ercole Bentivoglio (1506–1573) remarked that he considered a peasant to be wise if he did not consult physicians: 'Pero saggio il Villan chiamo io, che quando / Egli ha la febbre, et che piu arde, et bolle / Non va cura di medico cercando': BENTIVOGLIO (1719), 90. The philosopher Raffaello Carrara tried to unmask the deceptions of physicians ('gl'errori, et gl'inganni de' Medici') in his biting satire *Le confusioni de' medici* (CARRARA [1652]). Physicians were also widely believed to abuse their professional status in order to conceal their true intention of accumulating wealth, prestige, or power. Another famous example is, of course, Molière, who repeatedly ridiculed and attacked physicians. In his play *Le Medecin malgré lui* (1666), the Sganarelle uses the disguise of doctor as a cover for any number of abuses. For further sceptical polemics against medicine in seventeenth-century Germany, see ECKART (1982a); for a general discussion of how professional physicians attempted to combat their bad reputation, see SUMICH (2013).

67 It has been argued that the strict code of medical ethics was a collective effort to enhance the reputation of physicians in premodern Europe; see RIDDER (1997). Medical ethics, as part of the collective moral propaganda for physicians, was supposed to conceal their lack of sub-

picture, it is reasonable to say that, in an age when medical progress was slow, the chances of successful healing were often quite limited. The reputation of practitioners, therefore, depended not only on their ability to cure diseases but also, to a significant degree, on their *decorum*, that is, their bearing and demeanour.⁶⁸ The deontological literature of the time, with its emphasis on outward appearances and on rules for governing the social interaction and communication of physicians nicely conveys just how important self-fashioning and performing were for medical practitioners.⁶⁹

What is remarkable about the medical treatises written by established physicians, in my view, is the way in which they appropriated and even reinforced critical and sceptical attitudes towards the medical profession but directed them against charlatans or, rather, against anyone they considered to be bad practitioners.⁷⁰ In an attempt to discredit their opponents, licensed physicians took up the controversial issues of simulation, fraud, and mendacity, and placed them at the very heart of their polemics and invectives. Renaissance and early modern physicians found an effective means of denouncing other practitioners which not only echoed already widely circulating negative beliefs about physicians but also targeted the reputation and honour of their opponents – if, indeed, charlatans had any honour at all in their eyes.⁷¹ In other words, they tried to minimize and undermine the ‘social capital’ of itinerant and illicit healers.

Merely mounting such attacks, whether spoken or written, was not enough, however, since professional physicians also had to construct, convey, and communicate a positive notion of themselves. As with other early modern scholars

stantiated medical and physiological knowledge and, ultimately, their limited possibilities of curing their patients.

68 The polyhistor Johann Mencke (1674–1732) asserted in his *De charlataneria eruditorum* (1715) that ‘the art of medicine is difficult because it has no well-defined rules and principles, and this renders arduous the distinction between quack doctor and honest doctor’; quoted in GAMBACCINI (2004), 95.

69 According to de Castro, the self-presentation of physicians was not only a question of attire and outward appearance but also, and perhaps more importantly, pertained to communication and interaction with patients. He, nonetheless, discussed the outward appearance of the physician in the chapter ‘De medici amictu, vultu, et ad aegrotantem ingressu’, stressing that it should be dignified and, above all, moderate; see DE CASTRO (1614), 124–7.

70 On various occasions, regular practitioners also denounced their own colleagues as charlatans and often indulged in passionate accusations of academic and scientific misconduct and malpractice. These attacks on their colleagues persisted throughout the early modern era and culminated at the beginning of the eighteenth century in a series of tracts, of which perhaps the most famous example is Mencke’s *De charlataneria eruditorum* (1715). A good example of earlier criticism is Giovanni Argenterio’s complaints about the feigned erudition (*simulata eruditio*) of other licensed physicians; see ARGENTERIO (1551), 13.

71 It has been argued that in the late Middle Ages honour was closely linked to sovereignty and authority; see GÖRICH (2001), 27–34. On the medieval and early modern ideal of honour, see SCHREINER / SCHWERHOFF, ed. (1995).

who engaged in strategies aimed at managing their reputations, this struggle for social power was waged via a battle for public image.⁷² Licensed physicians constantly tried to establish a secure social rank for themselves in the face of unstable perceptions of their profession. They eagerly took on the role of indispensable medical authorities, collectively emphasizing their expert knowledge and superior judgement.

In this context, the very act of recognizing a charlatan has been described as a key move in the consolidation of professionalism.⁷³ Identifying medical malpractice was thus in itself a defining trait of the competent and trustworthy physician and a result of his professional insight. It was a process of self-conscious separation from the 'other' and a way of improving one's standing in the general perception of the wider public.⁷⁴ The line drawn between licensed and illegal healers was meant to signal a threshold, a significant distinction between two different systems of knowledge.⁷⁵ Through vigilant surveillance and patrolling of the borders of their profession, licensed physicians created symbolic boundaries between themselves and other practitioners.⁷⁶ In this conflict, as in so many others, distinctions mattered, and the minority of regular physicians felt the need to construct difference and distance from their opponents.⁷⁷ In what could be seen as comparable to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the 'scientific field' as a 'locus of struggles',⁷⁸ the early modern medical sphere was dominated, like most other fields or spheres, by specific interests, a fierce competition for profits, and on-going power struggles between individuals and groups.

As we have seen, Renaissance and early modern physicians also felt the need to establish a positive notion of their own use of deceit and simulation. This was possible since feigning (*simulatio*) and disguise (*dissimulatio*) were elusive and controversial concepts which constituted a moral grey area with regard to what was, and was not, licit. The employment of simulation and disguise was not reprehensible *per se* but depended on the context, the underlying intention, and the agent who used them. Disguise and occasional feigning were, for example, widely considered to be an integral feature of the behaviour of prudent worldly

72 KIRWAN (2013), 1.

73 CRYLE (2006), 246.

74 LINGO (1986), 583.

75 RENNER (2013), 252.

76 This was, of course, not only a symbolic and abstract exercise; the controlling and licensing of itinerant healers by the *protomedicato* tribunals and colleges of physicians was a process of concrete unmasking of alleged impostors and pretenders.

77 PELLING (2003), 4.

78 See BOURDIEU (1999), 31. For a good analysis of the creation of symbolic boundaries among early modern scholars (including physicians), see FÜSSEL (2006), 287.

rulers, as well as courtiers, diplomats and secretaries.⁷⁹ In this light, what could have been more convincing than the claim that white lies and benevolent deception were sometimes necessary in the interests of healing? Regular physicians thus established a monopoly over the useful lie, the honest deceit, and the 'pious simulation' (*pia simulatio*)⁸⁰ for their own benefit. This was not, however, just an abstract and theoretical debate, but rather a genuine power struggle over who possessed the right to use such means. In Renaissance and early modern conflicts and rivalries within the sphere of medicine, licit pretences and ruses were a prerogative and a social privilege which authorized physicians jealously guarded for themselves and from which they excluded other practitioners by branding their use of similar tactics as illicit, immoral, and even threatening.

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79 The literature on this subject is vast; see, e.g., VILLARI (1987) and SNYDER (2009), 106–58; for a comprehensive study of treatises for courtiers and the question of feigning and disguise, see HINZ (1992). For a case study on diplomacy, see KUGELER (2006). On early modern secretaries, see CAMOS, ed. (2006).

80 See ARGENTERIO (1551), 13.

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Marco Giani

The Mouthpiece and the Florentine Influence: Venetian Political Spheres in Paolo Paruta's Rhetoric

Abstract

Paolo Paruta (1540–1598) may be considered the mouthpiece of late Renaissance Venice. In his dialogue *Perfettione della vita politica* (1579), readers are introduced to the sphere of the Venetian ruling class. Paruta emphasizes its unity: Venice must show just one face, since the public image of a harmonious ruling class ought to be maintained. Living within this closed inner sphere is an art that must be taught, as demonstrated in a juvenile *causa* 'debate' between Paruta and his friend Angelo Dolfin, about the Republic's policy during the Great Siege of Malta (1565). At the same time, Paruta, as a sort of Venetian champion, had to face the external sphere of Florence: his *Discorsi politici* (1599) show that – as a political writer in the age of the Counter-Reformation – Paruta had to respond to what Machiavelli had written; as a historiographer of the Wars of Italy, he could not ignore Guicciardini's opinions about Venice's deeds. In order to secure total victory, Paruta decided to use his enemies' linguistic weapons; but he did not realize that those weapons were poisoned with the new, modern outlook spreading from the pen of those two Florentine authors.

Paolo Paruta (Venice, 1540–1598) was one of the most important Venetian political writers of the early modern period. Coming from a family of the lower nobility, he was educated at the *Studio* (University) of Padua, where he had the opportunity to study rhetoric and philosophy. Back in Venice, he worked for several years as a private merchant; in 1572 he published his first work, a funeral oration for the Venetian nobles who had fallen in the Battle of Lepanto. More importantly, in 1579 he published his greatest work, the dialogue *Della perfettione della vita politica*. One year later, in 1580, he was charged by the Republic to write the official *History of Venice*: he was well paid by the Republic and had access to the secret Venetian State Archives. His high-level political career also started, and in 1592 he was appointed Venetian ambassador at the Papal Court of Pope Clement VIII. He left Rome in 1595: after being appointed *procuratore di San Marco* in 1596 (this was the highest position in the Republic of Venice after the *doge*), Paruta died in 1598. In the following years Paolo's son, Giovanni,

published his father's posthumous works: the *Discorsi politici* (1599) and the *Historia Vinetiana* (1605).¹

1. The Double-Faced Sphere of the Political Debates in Late Sixteenth-Century Venice

Paruta may be considered the mouthpiece of late Renaissance Venice, because he succeeded in perpetuating the Myth of Venice in the age of the Counter-Reformation not only thanks to his literary works, but also to his activity as politician. During his mission in Rome as Venetian ambassador,² for example, he daily had to defend, over several years, the reputation of the Most Serene Republic during his meetings with the pope and with his colleagues in the papal court. But Paruta had already taken on this role of Venetian mouthpiece several years earlier – more precisely in 1580, when he was appointed as the Republic's official historiographer. One may well wonder why the Senate chose as its mouthpiece a writer who was almost unknown, except for the funeral oration in honour of the fallen in the Battle of Lepanto. The answer lies in two of his other early writings.

Just one year earlier (in 1579) Paruta had published his dialogue *Della perfezione della vita politica*. The work is set during the last part of the Council of Trent, among some Venetian men hosted by a Venetian ambassador. In these three books (a sort of Venetian *Nicomachean Ethics*), Paruta dramatizes every topic considered important for the Venetian ruling class, such as: 'What is the perfect way to gain human happiness: religion or politics?'; 'What are the basic moral and political values for the Venetian ruling class?'; or 'Is it true that the Venetian Republic is even more perfect than the Roman one so praised by Machiavelli?' The characters of this dialogue are the most important men of the Venetian ruling class of the mid-sixteenth century, both lay and clergymen.³

As readers we are introduced into the sphere of the Venetian ruling class, depicted as accustomed to listening and discussing together all day, not only because they were merchants, but also because it was required by their republican institutions: during the several sessions of the republican councils, every Venetian patrician was trained to become a good listener and a good speaker. Furthermore, Paruta emphasizes the unity of the Venetian political sphere. Even when debates within the Venetian Senate were harsh, after a vote the assembly

1 For Paolo Paruta's biography see CERVELLI (1986). All the Parutian texts quoted can be read and downloaded for free from the "Parutiana" section of this website: <https://unive.academia.edu/MarcoGiani>.

2 For Paruta's embassy in Rome, see ANDRETTA (1994).

3 For the dialogue and its characters, see BENZONI (2005).

had to put on a united public front; all the previous inner disagreements had to be concealed. (Publishing the debates was forbidden.) Thus, there was place for political debate within the inner sphere, but not in the external one. We can think of the inner sphere as closed: Venice needed to show just one face, because the public image of a harmonious ruling class had to be maintained. This feature can be noticed in the most important debate within Paruta's dialogue, the one about the choice between *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*. Here the several characters hold strikingly different positions, yet in the end the triumph of *vita activa* is almost complete, and Paruta's readers learn with no uncertainty that they should follow the political way to gain human happiness.

Another relevant text is the *Discorso sulla pace col Turco*, written by Paruta some years after the Battle of Lepanto in order to defend the Venetian Republic from the accusations coming from Spain.⁴ In 1573, after fighting in Lepanto together with the Kingdom of Spain and the State of the Church (the so-called Holy League), the Republic of Venice signed a unilateral peace agreement with the Ottoman sultan, thus spelling the end of the Holy League. Paruta wrote this text in order to defend Venice's action: above all, the war against the Turks was too expensive for the Venetian Republic. Nevertheless, critics have not noticed the rhetorical status of this text: this is not a public oration, but a private letter that Paruta wrote to Lorenzo Priuli, at that time Venetian ambassador in Madrid.⁵ In this text Paruta analyses all the Spanish arguments against the Venetian peace with the Turks, then tries to demolish them. In the process, he shows Priuli how he should rebut the Spanish accusations in Madrid. In fact, this text is a sort of rhetorical mine of arguments, an internal Venetian mine, located within the inner Venetian sphere; reading this *discorso* we can observe the rhetorical work-in-progress of the Venetian ruling class.

Given his accomplishments, it is not surprising that the Republic chose Paolo Paruta as its own official historiographer: he was clearly able to present the history of Venice in a favourable light, emphasizing the superiority of Venice to all other European states.

4 The latest edition of this text can be found in PARUTA, ed. Jacoviello (1992), 411–30; nevertheless, the best version still remains the nineteenth-century edition: PARUTA, ed. Monzani (1852), I, 427–48.

5 For the attribution of the sender, see VITALE (1962), LI.

2. The Political Education of Young Nobles in Venice

How could young nobles learn how to act within the Venetian sphere? Here an almost unknown juvenile work of Paruta – his *Causa* with Angelo Dolfin (1565) – provides the answer.⁶ After his return from Padua (1562), Paruta founded a private academy in his own house in Venice: this *Causa* is a rare evidence of this ‘Parutian Academy’. In this text the young Paruta and a friend of his, Angelo Dolfin, pretend to be Venetian senators debating a political and economic issue: should the Republic demand the return of two Venetian ships confiscated by the Ottomans in Istanbul during the Siege of Malta (1565)? Just as in the real debates of the Venetian Senate, there are two opposing opinions, but in the end there is only one good conclusion. This text shows that the dialectical scheme was not only a classical legacy, but also a living political experience and praxis for Venetian patricians, already from their youth. To summarize, they had to learn how to act within the inner sphere.

3. The Collision with the Florentine Sphere

For every mouthpiece, as champion of his field, there should be one (or even more) enemy from the opposite field: which one did Paruta have to deal with?

In the late sixteenth century the entire Italian peninsula was under Spanish influence: Venice stood as the only really independent Italian republic. Nevertheless, some decades earlier the Venetian Republic had been attacked by Machiavelli and Guicciardini, the main political writers of Florence, the former free republic that had been, together with Venice, the main centre of Italian republicanism. Meanwhile, Florence lost its own independence and republican freedom: in 1530 the Florentine republic ended and became the Duchy of the Medici, a little monarchy under the strong influence of the Hapsburgs. Nevertheless, during (and after) the troubled years of the Wars of Italy Machiavelli wrote *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi*, and Guicciardini wrote his *Storia d’Italia*. Through these writings, they were both able to offer their Italian readers a Florentine interpretation of the Wars of Italy. This interpretation strongly criticized the behaviour of the Venetian Republic during those years. Machiavelli was a strong opponent of Venetian republicanism: he criticized the essence of the Venetian republic, in his opinion too interested in peace, as opposed to his real model, the warmongering Republic of Rome. On the other hand, Guicciardini liked the Venetian institutions, but he disapproved of some of Venice’s actions during the Wars of Italy, blaming the Most Serene Republic for its selfishness.

⁶ For this text and its history, see PARUTA, ed. Monzani (1852), I, IX–XI and GIANI (2017).

Paruta, in fact, had to face this external, Florentine sphere. He was the champion of the Venetian line-up: even though the two Florentine champions were already dead, still they were formidable. As a political writer in the age of the Counter-Reformation, Paruta had to respond to what Machiavelli had written; as a historiographer of the Wars of Italy, he could not ignore Guicciardini's opinions about Venice's deeds.

The first three texts of the Second Book of Paruta's *Discorsi politici* are explicit responses to Florentine accusations: in the introduction to each of them, Paruta quotes a claim by Machiavelli or by Guicciardini against Venice. More specifically, in the first *Discorso* Paruta answers Machiavelli, who had written, in his *Discorsi*,⁷ that the Serenissima did not make many conquests because of the lack of perfection of its orders (thus contrasting it with the great Roman Republic, whose institutional perfection was made clear by the vastness of its state). In the second *Discorso* Paruta responds to Guicciardini, according to whom in the first part of the Wars of Italy the Venetian Republic helped the city of Pisa (which had rebelled against Florence and was besieged for this reason) only in order to conquer it.⁸ According to Guicciardini, this episode proved that Venice was making plans to become the main Italian state in the Peninsula. In his third *Discorso* Paruta again rebuts a statement by Machiavelli: the Florentine author had written that the remarkable Venetian defeat in the Battle of Agnadello (1509) showed everyone the weakness of the entire Venetian state.⁹ In this *Discorso* there is also an implicit criticism of Guicciardini, who, in his *Storia d'Italia*, had published an oration by the Venetian ambassador at the Imperial Court, Antonio Giustinian: in Paruta's opinion, this was a fake document – no Venetian patrician would ever have pronounced such a servile oration before a foreign ruler.¹⁰

Here I will not analyse each argument and counter-argument used by Paruta in these texts to defend the perfection of the orders or the righteousness of the historical deeds of the Venetian Republic. What really matters is that, in rebutting the attack of the Florentines, the Venetian champion gets wounded. This happens despite Paruta's confidence in his ability to disprove all the arguments used by the Florentines against Venice and despite his self-representation as the victor.

7 In his *Discorsi*, Libro Primo, chapter VI ("Se in Roma si poteva ordinare uno stato che togliesse via le inimicizie intra il popolo ed il senato"). See MACHIAVELLI, ed. Cantimori / Andretta (2005), 120–5.

8 In Libro Terzo, chapter 1 of his *Storia d'Italia*: see GUICCIARDINI, ed. Mazzali / Pasquini (2006), I, 260.

9 In his *Discorsi*, Libro Terzo, chapter XXI ('Le republiche forti e gli uomini eccellenti ritengono in ogni fortuna il medesimo animo e la loro medesima dignità'). See MACHIAVELLI, ed. Cantimori / Andretta (2005), 425–9.

10 For the sixteenth-century interpretations of this oration, see JACOVIELLO (1997).

In fact, Paruta could have won this battle by using the traditional weapons of his two mentalities, the classical one (learnt during his studies at the University of Padua) and the Venetian one (the Myth of Venice of which he was the mouth-piece). Furthermore, Paruta, as a sincere Catholic author, could have used the Roman Church's condemnation of Machiavelli to dismiss his opinions. Instead, he decided to secure total victory by using his enemies' own weapons; he did not realize that those weapons were poisoned with the new, modern outlook spreading from the pen of those two Florentine authors.

One of the most important features of Machiavelli's political thought is his insistence that the main criterion used to judge the perfection of a political state should be historical experience, not tradition or the authority of some classical author. In the case of Machiavelli's criticism of the weakness of the Venetian orders, for instance, he argued that – even though the Republic of Venice was commonly praised in the Italian political tradition – the lack of a vast state or the defeat of Agnadello demonstrated its weakness.¹¹ In his rebuttal, Paruta says that historical experience itself shows the impossibility for the Venetian state to gain land: then he proves Venice's superiority through numerous historical examples (for example, in Agnadello the Most Serene Republic experienced a military defeat that would have destroyed any other state).¹²

Yet, as mentioned earlier, the victory against the Florentine was not painless. One of the main differences between the Venetian tradition and Machiavelli's thought concerned the importance of land conquests for judging the perfection of a republic. For Machiavelli, territorial conquests were a basic feature of a state, as proved by the geographical breadth of the Roman conquests. On the contrary, in Venice social harmony and the welfare of the citizens were considered even more important than territorial extension. At the beginning of his *discorso* Paruta follows this Venetian tradition, but shortly afterward he accepts the Machiavelian 'imperialist' equation: territorial expansion demonstrates the political perfection of a state. Having accepted the basic rule of his enemy's game, Paruta starts with his difficult undertaking: wishing to defeat Machiavelli on his own terms, in the last part of his *discorso* Paruta tries to demonstrate how historical conditions were stacked against Venetian expansion and instead favoured that of Rome.

In his second *Discorso* Paruta, fighting against his beloved Guicciardini, seizes a weapon even more dangerous than historical experience: reason of state. At the start of the text¹³ Paruta introduces Guicciardini's criticism of Venice's behaviour during the Florentines' siege of Pisa (1494–1509): Guicciardini holds that the

11 See GIANI (2016), 199.

12 See Appendix, § 1.

13 See Appendix, § 2.

Venetians helped Pisa not because of their generosity toward another free republic in trouble, but because of their imperialist greed, mixed with their geopolitical short-sightedness. (They were looking for territorial expansion while the whole Italian peninsula was overrun by foreigner invaders.) Following his earlier technique, Paruta explains that this historical judgement is wrong because it oversimplifies a more complex historical situation – in doing so, he borrows a Florentine image (not often used in Venice) of ‘getting into the marrow’ (*penetrare alle midolle*). Yet unexpectedly Paruta introduces a double criterion for judging Venice’s deeds: the first is the ordinary sense of justice and equity; the second is reason of state. The latter is – in Paruta’s opinion – the proper one.

This is a remarkable innovation in the Venetian field. According to the myth of Venice, the Most Serene Republic had always behaved rightly, moved only by respect of international justice (giving each his due) and of Christian charity (helping the poor and the unfortunate). Of course, that was simply a sort of propaganda history, an ideological justification of Venetian imperialism used by Paruta himself in his historical works. He demonstrates his talent in such operations in the first part of the *Discorso*, where he depicts Pisa’s citizens as hopeless rebels in pursuit of republican freedom, forsaken by their friends in their time of need.

Yet in the second part of the *Discorso* Paruta justifies Venice’s decision only by considerations of reason of state – that is, not by what is right, but simply by what is useful to the state rulers.¹⁴ This point is made by presenting many arguments – for instance, that the Florentine conquest of Pisa would have strengthened Florence, the only Italian ally of the King of France, or that Venice, in order to survive the impending political storm, had to increase its international reputation.¹⁵ Thereafter Paruta makes an even more astounding concession to his adversaries’ accusations: let us concede that it really was Venice’s intention to conquer Pisa – what then? Here Paruta writes one of his most Machiavellian sentences: ‘Certainly the actions of a Philosopher, and those of a Prince, ought not be measured by one and the same Rule; nor must we fancy the condition of men, and of affairs, to be what peradventure they ought to be, but what they are for the most part.’ Then Paruta writes that the most important virtue for a state ruler is magnanimity; but this nobility of spirit and longing for glory is reduced to a truly Machiavellian category: the military conquest of land. The examples Paruta offers of such imperialist magnanimity include not only the ancient Romans, unsatisfied with the prospect of remaining confined to central Italy, but even the fourteenth-century Venetians, unsatisfied with the prospect of remaining confined to the Venetian Lagoon and to their own commercial business.

14 See Appendix, § 3.

15 See Appendix, § 4.

This point directly contradicts the traditional Venetian vision of the city's origin, supported by Paruta himself in the previous *discorso*: according to it, early Venetians were always depicted as honest fishermen and hard-working merchants, uninterested in war.

Paruta continues, arguing that, without this military reputation, Venice would have been unable to maintain its independence during subsequent challenges, such as the rise of *signorie* (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) and the foreign invasions during the Wars of Italy (early sixteenth century). This last argument is not necessarily Machiavellian: it seems obvious that only a strong Venice could have managed to remain a free republic. Nevertheless, the assumption that a state incapable of waging war cannot survive is an important feature of modern Florentine political thought. Both Machiavelli and Guicciardini agreed that a modern state, in order to survive, must conquer some territory outside its city walls: although this might be deeply repulsive to republican ideology, it is necessary in order for a state to be, not just a free association of citizens (as depicted in the classical tradition and in Paruta's *Perfettione*) but also the ruler of a foreign population.

Conclusion

Paruta's narration and, above all, interpretation of the modern history of Venice is where this mouthpiece of the closed Venetian political sphere fights against the only real rival sphere of his time, the political thought of Machiavelli and Guicciardini. After this encounter Paruta may seem to emerge as the winner, but in fact he also carries numerous ideological injuries: the Florentine sphere had started to poison him, and his historical and political thought was no longer as intact as before.

This new stage in Paruta's thought would bring about several interesting results even outside of his interpretation of the history of Venice against Machiavelli and Guicciardini. For instance, thanks to his new 'territorial mind', Paruta writes his best pages in *Discorsi politici* about some of the most current topics in the late sixteenth century, such as military fortifications or the relationship between contemporary Europe and the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the incursion inside the closed Venetian tradition by the great representatives of Florentine political thought would yield its greatest fruit far away from its original ground: but this is another story.

Appendix: Quotations from Paruta's *Discorsi politici*

Given that there is no modern English translation of Paruta's *Discorsi politici*, the following extracts are accompanied by the seventeenth-century English translation by Henry Carey, Earl of Monmouth (London, 1657).¹⁶

Paruta's *Discorsi politici* is a collection of 25 single *discorsi*: the first 15 in Libro Primo, the latter 10 in Libro Secondo: so before each paragraph of the Italian text I give the number of the Book and Discorso in question (i. e. 'DP I.II' indicates the second *discorso* of Book One).

§ 1. Machiavelli and *esperienza* (historical experience)

From: DP II.I = PARUTA, transl. Carey (1657), 111–12.

<p><1> Non poca meraviglia deve occupare l'animo di coloro che si pongono a considerare, come la Repubblica di Venezia, essendo con ottime leggi ed ordini instituita, e conservatasi per lungo tempo con autorità e con forze, non abbia però molto allargati i termini del suo imperio; come fece la Repubblica di Roma in minore spazio di anni, e con una forma di governo che non mancava di molte imperfezioni. Questa cosa a me ancora ha data alcune volte occasione di pensarvi, con desiderio di penetrare alle vere cagioni di questi effetti. Vedo, ciò essere stato posto in considerazione da alcun altro scrittore moderno; ma, oltre il restare quei suoi Discorsi ora sepolti in perpetua oblivione, non sono per avventura le cose da lui addotte tali, che possa l'animo di chi penetra molto a dentro al ministero delle nostre civili operazioni, restarne ben appagato. Parve a quei, che la grandezza dell'imperio romano alla sola virtù di quegli ordini ed alla forma del suo governo attribuir si dovesse: dalla quale perché la Repubblica veneziana è diversa, però crede non avere ella potuto acquistare tanto stato. [...]</p>	<p>Men may be allowed to wonder not a little, if they take it into their consideration, why the Commonwealth of Venice, having so excellent Laws and Institutions, and having so long preserved her self in power and authority, hath notwithstanding much enlarged the precincts of her Empire, as did the Commonwealth of Rome, in a lesser space of time and in a form of Government which was not void of many imperfections. The thought thereof hath made me oftentimes desire to search into the true causes of it. I find this hath been taken into consideration by some other modern Writers, but to boot that his discourses are already buried in oblivion, it may be the things by him alleadged have not been such, as may give full satisfaction to one who shall look narrowly into the carriage of our civil actions. He was of opinion that the greatness of the Roman Empire was soly to be attributed to the vertue of her Ordinations, and Form of Government; from which since the Venetian Commonwealth doth differ, he thinks that the cause why she hath not been able to make so great acquisitions. [...]</p>
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16 The text is downloadable from EEBO website (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>).

<p><2> Ma, molto da ciò diversamente ne insegna l'esperienza; essendosi vedute molte repubbliche antiche, fondate da sapientissimi uomini, e con ottimi ordini ugualmente negli studi della pace e della guerra confermate; né però alcuna tra tante avere potuto, non dirò acquistare tanto stato come fece quella di Roma, ma appena allargare molto fra' vicini i termini del suo dominio. Non bastano, dunque, semplicemente, per fare questi grandi acquisti, gli intrinsechi ordini della Repubblica (benché anco questi vi concorrano, e forse principalmente); né ad alcun difetto di questa parte devesi attribuire il non possedere ora la Repubblica di Venezia stato maggiore: ma molti altri rispetti vengono in considerazione, per li quali si va col discorso scuoprendo quelle più vere cagioni di tali effetti, che tra l'incertezza di così fatte cose ritrovare si ponno.</p>	<p>But experience teacheth us much otherwise; since we have known many antient Commonwealths founded by very wise men, and confirm'd with excellent Orders, equally for what concerns Peace as War, yet not any one amongst so many hath been able, I will not say to acquire so much Dominion as did the Commonwealth of Rome, but nor hardly able any ways to extend their Precincts amongst their Neighbors. The intrinsecal Orders of the State are not simply of themselves sufficient to make so great Atchievements, (though they may peradventure concur very much thereunto:) Nor ought the State of Venice her not being Mistress of larger Territories, be attributed to any defect in this behalf; but many other things are to be taken into consideration, whereby the truest causes of such effects, which amidst the uncertainty of such like affairs can be found out, may be discovered by looking into.</p>
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§ 2. Guicciardini and the Venetian help to Pisa

From: DP II.II = PARUTA, transl. Carey (1657), 123.

<p><1> Ho presa molte volte una grande, e, come io stimo, ragionevole meraviglia, veggendo da alcuni storici esser dato grave biasimo alla Repubblica di Venezia, perché ella prendesse la difesa della città di Pisa contra' Fiorentini: e a me pare, quando io vi penso, che si cerchi di traggere occasione di biasimare il consiglio di quei savi e magnanimi senatori che aveano allora in mano il governo delle cose pubbliche, da quelle medesime cose dalle quali altri hanno tolto materia d'esaltare e di celebrare con grandissime laudi altri principi ed altri stati. Di tale giudizio volendo conoscere la verità, conviensi di farne più particolari e più interne considerazioni; poiché molte volte avviene, che penetrandosi alle midolle della cosa, si trovi quella diversa da ciò che pareva nella prima scorza, e ne venga quasi a mutare aspetto e qualità.</p>	<p>I have often, not without some, to me appearing reason, wondred, that some Historians should so much blame the Commonwealth of Venice for having taken upon her the defence of the City of Pisa against the Florentines, whereby they may seem to reproach the counsels of those wise and stout Senators, who had then the managing of publick affairs in their hands, for those very things, for which other Princes and States, have been by other Writers much celebrated. He who will know the truth of such judgments; must take unto himself more particular, and inward considerations, for it often times falls out, that looking into the very pith and marrow of business, the clean contrary is found to what did first appear, and the face of things do seem to alter.</p>
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<2> Potrà, dunque, tale operazione esser misurata, ovvero con ordinarie ragioni di giustizia e d'equità, ovvero con termini di stato, che vi sono anco più propri. [...]	Such actions may then be measured, either by the ordinary reasons of justice and equity, or else by the reasons of State, which are the more proper. [...]
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§ 3. The second part of Paruta's *Discorso* about Pisa: the *reason of state* criterion

From: DP II.II = PARUTA, transl. Carey (1657), 127.

<8> Ma veniamo ad altra considerazione più propria di questa materia, cioè delle ragioni di stato: nelle quali quantunque concorrono molte delle medesime cose, si vestono però d'altri rispetti; con i quali i principi, tenuto o solo o principalmente conto di ciò che loro torna più utile, non chiamano ne' loro consigli la giustizia o l'equità, o non le attribuiscono quella parte che se le deve.	But let us come to another consideration, more proper for this business, that is, to the reasons of State, wherein tho many of the same things do concur, yet they are clothed with other respects, wherewith Princes building either onely or chiefly upon what may most redound to their own advantage, do not advise with counsel or equity, or do not attribute thereunto what is requisite.
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§ 4. The importance of international *reputazione*

From: DP II.II = PARUTA, transl. Carey (1657), 128.

<9> Ora, voglio concedere che potesse esser vero quel sospetto per lo quale hanno strepitato tanto le voci di chi ha cercato di macchiare il nome e la dignità della Repubblica; cioè, che procurassero i Veneziani di porsi ad un libero possesso di quella città, portati da solo desiderio d'accrescere il loro dominio. Per certo, con altre regole si conviene di misurare l'operazioni d'un filosofo e di un principe; né bisogna formarsi la condizione degli uomini e delle cose quali forse elle dovrebbero essere, ma quali per lo più sono. È de' principi propria virtù la magnanimità; onde essi versano sempre intorno a' fatti grandi, e per la quale si fanno riverire e temere dagli altri: però, in quei principi che sono stati i maggiori ed i più celebrati, viene dato a gran laude il desiderio di gloria e d'imperio; come	Now take it for granted, that that suspicion might be true which they have so much divulged, who have endeavored to cast a blur upon the honor and dignity of the Commonwealth, to wit, that the Venetians intended to make themselves absolute masters of that City, only out of a design of increasing their dominion. Certainly the actions of a Philosopher, and those of a Prince, ought not be measured by one and the same Rule; nor must we fancy the condition of men, and of affairs, to be what peradventure they ought to be, but what they are for the most part. Magnanimity is the proper vertue of Princes, which makes them always busie themselves about great matters, and whereby they make themselves be dreaded and revered by others. Therefore the desire of Glory and Empire is highly praised in such Princes as
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<p>veggiamo negli Alessandri, ne' Ciri, ne' Cesari, ne' Carli ed in tutti i più famosi, ne' quali non pur si lauda ma si ammira certa forza di spiriti grandi e generosi, onde erano eccitati sempre a nuove e gloriose imprese. Se i Romani, i cui fatti sono pur dall'universale consenso degli uomini lodati e celebrati, si fussero contentati di starsi con i loro confini rinchiusi dentro del Lazio, sarebbe rimasa occulta ed oscura la loro virtù, né con tanto grido il loro nome sarebbe passato alla memoria de' posteri: e se i Veneziani non avessero avuto pensieri maggiori che di viveri involti intorno alle loro private faccende mercantili, come si convenne fare nel principio ancora debole della città, disprezzando l'occasioni che loro in diversi tempi s'offerirono d'allargare i termini al loro dominio, non pur non sarebbe montata la Repubblica a tanta stima e riputazione, come ha fatto, ma né anco averebbe potuto, in tante rivoluzioni di cose ed in tanti moti d'armi straniere, conservarsi per sì lungo tempo in libertà.</p>	<p>have been greatest and most celebrated, as Alexander, Cyrus, Caesar, Charls, and all the rest of the most famous men, in whom a spirit of Grandure and Generosity, which did still egg them on to new and glorious enterprises, is not only commended, but even admired. If the Romans, whose actions are praised and celebrated by the general consent of all men, had been content to contain themselves within the precincts of Latium, their worth would have been hidden and obscured, nor would their names have been so highly cry'd up to the memory of posterity. And had not the Venetians had larger thoughts then to keep within their private merchandising affairs (as it became them to do in their weak begining) dispising or negleting such occasions as they sundry times met with of enlarging the bounds of their Dominions, the Commonwealth would not only not have gotten such esteem and reputation as it hath got, but could not have kept herself so long in liberty, amidst so many revolutions of affairs, and such movings of Forein Armies.</p>
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Florence Alazard

Des lieux pour dire le conflit autour de la guerre: *Je ne sçay qui* et *Labeur*¹

Sommaire

Cet article a pour objet les modalités d'expression du conflit et de l'opposition pendant le règne de Louis XII. Il s'intéresse en particulier aux modalités souterraines de cette expression, à la façon dont, par exemple, les Grands Rhétoriciens se saisissent de leur position privilégiée auprès du roi pour exposer, dans leurs textes, la variété des opinions concernant la guerre. Faut-il pour autant en conclure qu'une sphère publique existait? La prudence est de rigueur. Sans doute faut-il plutôt envisager comment certains ont pu élaborer des sphères segmentées dans lesquelles l'expression du conflit était possible, à condition qu'elle soit située et tenue par des voix spécifiques (*Je-ne-sçay-qui* et *Labeur*, par exemple).

On a longtemps associé la naissance d'un discours critique à la construction d'un espace public que Jürgen Habermas avait d'abord observé dans l'Europe du XVIII^e siècle et dans le contexte de l'affirmation d'une bourgeoisie éclairée et des usages multipliés de la raison.² Les historiens du Moyen Âge ont récemment nuancé ce tableau, proposant d'avancer dans le temps l'acte de naissance de cet espace, insistant aussi sur la variété de ces espaces publics qui incite à ne pas considérer la sphère publique comme une seule et unique entité homogène; montrant aussi que ces espaces publics ne sont pas des champs en expansion permanente, mais au contraire voient alterner des moments de croissance et des périodes d'atrophie.³ Si bien que l'on doit aujourd'hui davantage évoquer 'une sorte de sphère publique éphémère [qui] apparait dans des contextes historiques et géographiques variés'.⁴ Dès lors, l'affiliation du discours critique, ou dissen-

1 Une version orale et anglaise de cet article a été prononcée sous le titre 'Conflicts on War during the reigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII: *Je ne sçay qui* and *Labeur* as Spheres of Conflict', Université de Bonn, 8 mai 2014.

2 Habermas (1997).

3 Boucheron / Offenstadt (2011).

4 '[A] kind of ephemeral public sphere emerged in various historical and geographical contexts', Rospocher (2012), 19.

suel, avec ces espaces publics se trouve aussi mise à l'épreuve. C'est l'objet de cette contribution qui, prenant acte de la réflexion récente sur la fragmentation et la dispersion de l'espace public à la fin du Moyen Âge, voudrait interroger la façon dont se sont agencés les différents segments de la sphère publique, et souhaiterait comprendre comment la littérature, à la fin du XV^e et au début du XVI^e siècle, se présente comme un milieu favorable à l'expression du conflit. Il s'agira aussi de participer à la réflexion collective portée par ce volume, et en particulier de s'interroger sur la manière dont les discordes ont pu contribuer à forger des espaces singuliers, ensuite dévolus à des pratiques sociales et culturelles spécifiques.

Au cœur de cette période historique désignée comme féconde pour observer les aléas d'un espace public multiforme, se trouve le règne de Louis XII. Pendant longtemps, ce dernier a été étudié soit comme un ' roi modéré ' qui représentait ' une monarchie tempérée, pacifique et attentive au bonheur matériel de ses sujets ',⁵ soit comme un ' roi de guerre ' seulement intéressé par l'idée de faire main basse sur le Saint Empire Romain Germanique, ou encore comme un ' roi de second rang '⁶ dont le règne a longtemps été analysé comme un ' no man's land '.⁷ Récemment cependant, Nicole Hochner a montré que

la monarchie de France est enlisée dans un débat majeur relatif à l'identité et à la nature du pouvoir royal qui s'ouvre dès après le décès de Louis XI, et que le règne de Louis XII ne sait (ou ne veut) résoudre⁸

et elle a insisté sur la nature pluraliste d'une idéologie royale qui, loin d'être univoque, n'était pas, de surcroît, l'objet d'un contrôle.⁹ Il n'empêche: les écrivains et les poètes – ceux que, pendant longtemps et peut-être de manière inappropriée, on a désigné sous le nom de ' Grands Rhétoriqueurs ', les identifiant ainsi à un groupe homogène et fermé¹⁰ – étaient invités à soutenir la politique royale. Ainsi, André de La Vigne, Pierre Gringore, Claude de Seyssel et d'autres encore, tous très proches des cercles du pouvoir, participèrent à l'élaboration d'une production littéraire presque entièrement vouée à l'explication et à la justification de la descente française en Italie.¹¹ Mais ce serait une erreur de les présenter comme de simples courroies de transmission de la politique royale. Au contraire: leurs textes ont aussi proposé une image plus subtile de la façon dont

5 Avezou (2003), 124.

6 Sur l'historiographie du règne de Louis XII, voir: Avezou (2003).

7 Chevalier (1985), 334.

8 Hochner (2006), 11.

9 *Id.*, 279–80.

10 Sur les Grands Rhétoriqueurs: Zumthor (1978); Thiry (1980); CORNILLIAT (1994). Pour une mise au point historiographique: Devaux (2003).

11 Sur cette question: Brown (1985) et DUMONT (2013).

cette politique était comprise et jugée. De façon surprenante aussi,¹² ces textes ont accordé une place à la dissension et au désaccord: non seulement ils n'ont pas gardé secrètes les voix qui désapprouvaient les guerres d'Italie, mais de plus ils ont aussi organisé, en leur sein, le débat des différentes positions relatives à l'action de la royauté française dans la péninsule. Je voudrais ici interroger la vitalité de ce segment de l'espace public qu'occupèrent les Grands Rhétoriciens: comment parvinrent-ils à élaborer un lieu spécifique et dédié à l'expression du conflit? Comment leurs réflexions sur la guerre permirent-elles de nourrir l'espace public, sans toutefois remettre en cause la stabilité du royaume? En répondant à ces questions, j'espère pouvoir montrer que la variété et la pluralité des segments de l'espace public permirent l'expression des conflits, mais aussi les continrent, afin de préserver la nature même de la monarchie.

1. Les voix du désaccord dans la littérature française pendant les guerres d'Italie

On sait que la descente de Charles VIII en Italie 1494 donna lieu à une importante littérature chargée, au retour du roi, de célébrer la geste royale.¹³ Mais André de La Vigne, qui à cette date bénéficiait déjà d'une certaine reconnaissance dans le paysage littéraire français, prit les devants et profita de l'expédition royale pour composer une œuvre dont il espérait qu'elle le servirait pour être enfin enrôlé comme 'facteur royal'. C'est ainsi qu'il composa, à Chambéry, alors que le roi préparait ses troupes à Lyon, *La Ressource de la Chrestienté*.¹⁴ Ce texte peut d'abord être décrit comme un débat allégorique qui met en scène *Dame Noblesse*, *Magesté royale*, *Dame Chrestienté*, *Bon Conseil*, *l'Acteur* et *Je ne sçay qui*. Ce dernier est une figure vraiment problématique, car il n'est pas une allégorie, au même titre que *Dame Noblesse* ou *Dame Chrestienté*, ou encore, dans d'autres textes du XVe siècle, *France*. *Je ne sçay qui* n'est personne, mais il est aussi – on le verra plus loin – tout le monde. Pour autant, incarne-t-il le sens commun, les gens, ou les sujets du roi? Non plus, car il représente d'abord tous ceux qui s'opposent à la politique de Charles VIII. C'est donc lui qui, dans le texte, prend en charge l'argumentation contre l'engagement français dans la péninsule. Il ne se contente pas alors d'objecter en s'appuyant sur le contexte particulier de l'expansion de l'empire ottoman, et donc du risque que ce dernier n'intervienne finalement dans

12 Surprenant, précisément parce que l'historiographie des Grands Rhétoriciens a longtemps présenté ces derniers comme les simples exécutants d'une commande royale qui n'aurait pas souffert qu'ils s'en affranchissent.

13 Hochner (2006); Shaw (2013) et Dumont (2013).

14 de la Vigne, éd. Brown (1989). Sur ce texte, on pourra aussi se reporter à: Lestringant (2004).

le conflit.¹⁵ Plus fondamentalement, *Je ne sçay qui* développe des idées qui peuvent être interprétées comme de véritables critiques de la guerre, même si elles sont très éloignées du pacifisme chrétien.¹⁶

Plourer, gemyr guerre fait tost et tart,
 Maleur et dueil d'elle seuffre la France,
 Souspirer gens voit on fort a l'escart,
 L'onneur blesse puis fait croistre souffrance,
 Douleur produit et perd toute chevance,
 Las et confus rent trop souvent fongneurs,
 Rigueur regner fait et estainct plaisir
 Hellas! hélas! Fuyez guerre, seigneur!¹⁷

Ce discours doit être compris dans le contexte des débats sur la guerre juste, qui étaient loin d'être récents à la fin du XVe siècle.¹⁸ En effet, on sait combien la guerre avait été l'objet d'une intense réflexion au Moyen Âge et que, après les analyses des théologiens, des moralistes et des juristes, la pratique de la guerre avait été en partie régulée et soumise à un certain nombre de restrictions. L'historiographie récente des guerres d'Italie a mis en évidence combien ces dernières avaient bouleversé le bel ordonnancement médiéval de la guerre. Ainsi, on décrit volontiers aujourd'hui les guerres d'Italie comme des conflits qui, s'opposant à un usage modéré et régulé de la guerre, fondé sur la moralisation du conflit et sur la condamnation de la guerre entre chrétiens, requéraient une violence particulièrement meurtrière et entièrement tournée vers la destruction du camp opposé.¹⁹ Mais il convient sans doute de nuancer cette supposée opposition entre les guerres médiévales et les guerres d'Italie. Déjà, John Lynn nous avait prévenu: le discours sur la guerre régulée et modérée est un ' discours d'aspiration ', et non la description de la réalité.²⁰ Il faut aussi rappeler que les guerres médiévales associaient les guerres réelles (celles des chevauchées meurtrières), les guerres rêvées (celles de la littérature) et les guerres parfaites (celles des tournois). Ce serait donc une erreur de comprendre *Je ne sçay qui* comme la voix du passé, comme l'incarnation de ces guerres idéales révolues. Au contraire, *Je ne sçay qui* est plus probablement l'expression d'un véritable discours qui pouvait être répandu, soit dans les cercles lettrés de la cour de France,

15 ' Pencez vous point que Turcs n'ayent couraige / Et cueur au ventre pour défendre leur vie? ', de la Vigne, éd. Brown (1989), 131.

16 Voir: Galland-Hallyn / Hallyn (2001), 335.

17 de la Vigne, éd. Brown (1989), 131. On pourrait aussi y ajouter des motivations religieuses, car la guerre est décrite par *Je ne sçay qui* comme contraire aux volontés de Dieu qui doit pouvoir disposer et organiser le destin sans que les hommes ne se précipitent pour le modifier, précisément par la guerre (*id.*, p. 132).

18 Bacot (1989); Cardini (1992), 318-79; Flori (2001).

19 Fournel (2004).

20 Lynn (2006), 141.

soit dans les villes. Ce qui est peut-être le plus surprenant, c'est la façon dont André de La Vigne lui accorde une place non négligeable pour qu'il exprime la dissension. Mais il y a plus: *Je ne sçay qui* est celui (il est même le seul) qui explique et révèle le vrai but de la guerre à laquelle Charles VIII se prépare. En effet, toutes les allégories du dialogue évoquent la guerre en des termes qui peuvent l'identifier à une croisade. Ainsi l'*Acteur* est très explicite lorsqu'il rappelle la nécessité de 'subjuguier et vaincre les ennemys de Dieu et les persecuteurs de sa loy et nostre foy'.²¹ Peu après, *Dame Noblesse* insiste de nouveau sur le but de la guerre et affirme que Constantinople est bien l'enjeu:

Pourtant je prie et requiers humblement
 Tout gentil cueur qui tiendra de noblesse,
 S'il a vouloir, povoir ne hardement,
 Qu'a ceste foy il viengne hardyment
 Soubz ma banyere qui personne ne blesse,
 Ou je le tien lasche cueur en foiblesse,
 Irreprovable jusqu'a Constantinoble,
 Gayne, canart, indigne d'estre noble.²²

Ainsi, les allégories sociales et politiques du dialogue participent à la fiction incarnée par l'entreprise française qui laisse croire que Charles VIII n'est pré-occupé que d'aider et de sauver la chrétienté et que son projet s'inscrit dans l'esprit de la croisade. Contrariant les discours de ses prédécesseurs, *Je ne sçay qui* dévoile la véritable ambition de la descente française, par exemple lorsqu'il rapporte le fait que le roi de France prétend 's'aventurer d'aller passer les mons',²³ ou encore lorsqu'il affirme: 'Et pour ce doncq ne soyons en soucy / D'aller a Napples pour faire du Rolant'.²⁴

Je ne sçay qui n'est plus alors seulement la voix du conflit et de la dissension: il est celui qui comprend ce qui advient et il est celui qui rend explicite une politique française qui semble pourtant encore bien obscure à ses contemporains. Sa présence ne sert donc pas seulement à dénoncer la guerre en général, mais aussi, voire surtout, à incriminer cette guerre-là.

Il va de soi qu'à la fin du dialogue, *Je ne sçay qui* a perdu: l'*Acteur* l'a rabroué, l'accusant de ne considérer que son seul intérêt et non le bien commun:

Après toutes ces choses dictes par Je ne sçay qui, lequel evidamment Magesté Royale destournoit a son pouvoir d'aller au secours de la tresnoble Dame Chrestienté, pource que pas ne luy plaisoit l'entreprise pour aulcunes choses a luy plus prochaynes et

21 de la Vigne, éd. Brown (1989), 125.

22 *Id.*, 128.

23 *Id.*, 133.

24 *Id.*, 135.

particulières, comme celui qui d'honneur ne tient compte si non d'autant que touche son profit.²⁵

Et finalement, *Bon Conseil* intervient dans la discussion et ordonne à *Je ne sçay qui* de se taire à jamais et de se plier à la loi générale commandée par *Magesté Royale*:

Par quoy de brief sans plus rien en debatre
 La m'en yray me deduyre et esbatre
 Gorrierement, quoy qu'on parle et qu'on disse
 Ruer par terre ces mastins et combattre
 A force d'armes pour du tout les abatre.²⁶

Grâce au soutien de *Bon Conseil*, *Magesté Royale* a donc gagné et se prépare à la guerre. On peut assurément penser qu'André de La Vigne 'a conçu la figure [de *Je ne sçay qui*] pour disqualifier d'avance les arguments de l'opposition',²⁷ il n'empêche: ce qui a été dit est dit et demeure. Une voix discordante a donc osé s'exprimer et a pu être entendue, et bien qu'elle ait été disqualifiée par d'autres, elle ne peut être abolie.

André de La Vigne ne fournit guère d'indice sur le groupe social que *Je ne sçay qui* est censé représenter et il nous laisse donc dans la difficulté pour l'identifier. Mais dans le manuscrit original, le poète a peint *Je ne sçay qui* sous les traits d'une figure composite et hybride: il porte une partie de l'habit ecclésiastique, une partie de l'armure d'un noble et le chapeau à plumes d'un homme du tiers.²⁸ Sans doute convient-il alors d'interpréter ce personnage comme la représentation de plusieurs groupes sociaux, simplement associés par leur opposition à la guerre, quand bien même elle reposerait sur des motifs différents. Car rassemblant ces oppositions en une figure unique, fût-elle hybride, *La Ressource* contribue à ouvrir un espace spécifique pour l'expression du conflit. Ainsi peut-on l'interpréter non pas seulement comme une œuvre de propagande – ce qu'elle est aussi – qui soutient l'entreprise royale, mais également comme un moment singulier d'émergence, de reconnaissance, et de légitimation de la contradiction et du conflit. Mais il y a plus: *La Ressource* a surtout modelé la façon dont les conflits étaient représentés et utilisés dans la communication royale pendant les guerres d'Italie.

La complexité et la sophistication de cette communication ne s'arrête pas en effet avec le règne de Charles VIII. Au contraire, d'ailleurs, elle trouve une vigueur nouvelle lorsque Louis XII reprend de plus belle le rêve italien de son prédécesseur. Parmi les écrits qui participent à la construction de ce qu'on hésite

25 *Id.*, 135.

26 *Id.*, 140.

27 Galland-Hallyn / Hallyn (2001), 334.

28 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, ms. fr. 1687, f. 31r.

pourtant à appeler l'idéologie royale, il faut distinguer *L'Arrest du roy des Rommains*, publié en 1508 et composé par un auteur dont le nom, selon l'acrostiche final, serait Maximien, mais dont on ne sait rien.²⁹ Ce texte met en scène l'*Acteur*, qui raconte ses songes et qui rapporte les entretiens qu'il a pu avoir, lors de ses rêves, avec des allégories comme *Église*, *Mars*, *Saturne*, *Bruyt Commun*, *Noblesse*, *Labeur* et *France*.³⁰ Parmi ces interlocuteurs, *Bruyt Commun* semble partager nombre de ses traits avec *Je ne sçay qui*. Ainsi, *Bruyt Commun* condamne la guerre et son bain de sang:

Saturne et Mars par aspec inhumain
 Ont le cueur gros gonflé comme une yraigne,
 Et aux pays qu'ilz tiennent soubz leur main
 L'effusion du pauvre sang humain
 Vont poursuyvant par champ, val et montagne.³¹

Finalement, *Bruyt Commun* oblige France à convoquer le conseil royal afin de savoir que faire. Et l'épisode permet le débat, la discussion et le désaccord. *Labeur* apparaît ainsi et affirme que 'quoy que l'on devise, qu'il n'avoit pas le bec gellé'³² et explique qu'il en va de sa véritable nature de condamner cette 'folle entreprise' et de contester *Noblesse*:

Si je demonstre de plain sault
 Que ne suis qu'un povre lourdault,
 Excusez ung peu ma simplese.
 Contrainct suis l'Estat de noblesse
 Contrarier en ses haulx faits.³³

Comme au temps de *Je ne sçay qui*, c'est finalement *Noblesse* qui gagne et qui met fin à l'expression du conflit, comme le rapporte l'*Acteur*:

Noblesse, oyant Labour parler,
 Luy alla rompre la parolle,
 En disant, pour le ravaller,
 Qu'il luy estoit besoing d'aller
 Encor une espace à l'escolle,
 Et allega de chaulde colle
 Que l'Eglise et luy en ce pas
 Cuydoient tous deux jouer ung roolle,
 Mais on ne leur souffreroit pas.³⁴

29 Maximien, ed. Montaiglon (1857). Sur ce texte, voir: PICOT, t. I (1884), 334–5.

30 Sur le songe dans la littérature des Rhétoriciens: ANGELI (1985); CORNILLIAT (1987).

31 Maximien, ed. Montaiglon (1857), 130.

32 *Id.*, 142.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Id.*, 144.

L'Arrest du roy des Rommains doit être compris dans le contexte de la propagande royale qui insistait sur le caractère régulé de la monarchie française et sa protection contre la tyrannie. Dans les deux textes (*La Ressource de Chrestienté* et *L'Arrest du roy des Rommains*), le désaccord est incarné par des personnages singuliers: *Je ne sçay qui*, *Bruyt Commun* et *Labeur* sont le peuple, ils sont les sujets du roi. Ils ne représentent ni l'ensemble de la société, ni les seuls cercles de la société qui étaient concernés par l'élaboration de la politique royale. Mais leur présence dans ces textes montre combien les propagandistes français étaient conscients à la fois de l'existence du désaccord et de la nécessité de l'exposer. La divergence devait être encadrée: le conflit autour de la guerre n'était pas censé dépasser certaines limites.

2. Les règles qui encadrent expression du conflit

Les limites permettaient surtout de construire le conflit comme une étape décisive dans le processus qui conduisait à l'élaboration d'un vrai consensus: il s'agissait à la fois d'encadrer la manière dont il était possible de rapporter le conflit et d'élaborer les instruments qui permettaient de le délégitimer. Car ce qui importait, c'était la tension entre ce qui était dit et ce qui était finalement accepté: en définitive, les lecteurs retenaient-ils que certains ne voulaient pas soutenir l'entreprise guerrière du roi ou bien ne conservaient-ils en tête que la seule condamnation de ces mêmes discours? Les sources nous manquent pour répondre à cette question, mais, d'une certaine manière, la réponse est dans la question: les thèses non-conformistes qui étaient rapportées par les imprimés étaient dans le même temps exprimées et déniées, et elles se trouvaient donc confinées dans l'un des espaces de parole spécifique, celui par exemple qu'incarnaient *Je ne sçay qui* et *Bruyt-Commun*.

Dans *La ressource de la Chrestienté, Bon Conseil*, parlant après *Je ne sçay qui*, insiste sur le fait que ce dernier

a grant langaige et a peu de substance,
Tant seulement tout a la résistance
Et au rebout de ce que voulons faire,
Pource qu'il a quelque aultre chose a faire.³⁵

Expliquant pourquoi *Je ne sçay qui* a tort et pourquoi la guerre est bonne pour le royaume, *Bon Conseil* supplie *Magesté Royalle* ' que ceste emprise soit de vous

35 DE LA VIGNE, éd Brown (1989), 136.

accomplie, / Et hardyement y boutez corps et ame'.³⁶ Après ce discours, c'est l'*Acteur* qui parle:

Lors Magesté Royale, oyant les parolles de Bon Conseil, monstra par son semblant estre terriblement joyeuse d'avoir oÿ si gracieuses et douces parolles jaçoit ce qu'auparavant par le moyen de Je ne sçay qui fust auclunement chagrineuse et mal a son aise. Toutefois des choses predictes commença a regarder ça et la les assistans, comme deliberee et appareillee d'accomplir ce que Bon Conseil luy avoit mys au devant, en reboutant et desprisant les parolles dudict Je ne sçay qui.³⁷

Et finalement, il revient à l'*Acteur* de conclure et d'annoncer que plus personne n'est désormais autorisé à parler:

Après toutes ces choses dictes, aucuns aultres se volurent ingerer de dire leur opinion, demandant humblement audience a Magesté Royale, laquelle interdisting le plus parler de ceste matiere.³⁸

Mais le silence ne suffit pas: *Magesté Royale* veut que chacun, dans le conseil, choisisse son camp. Elle se lève de son siège et demande aux présents de rejoindre soit *Bon Conseil*, soit *Je ne sçay qui*. On ne s'étonnera pas: sous la plume d'André de La Vigne, la majorité choisit ' Magesté Royale, Dame Chrestienté, Noblesse, Bon Conseil et la plus grant partie de l'assemblée ', tandis que ' l'autre partie avec Je ne sçay qui s'en alla par un petit destourné guichet grongnant, groussant et grumellant '.³⁹ Ainsi donc, même circonscrit, le lieu où s'exprime le conflit demeure un problème: l'*Acteur* ne peut le supporter. Il n'empêche: cet espace existe et profite d'une forme de reconnaissance. *Je ne sçay qui* n'est pas entièrement seul: certains l'ont rejoint, il grogne, mais on ne lui a pas interdit d'exprimer ses idées. Ainsi peut-on comprendre comment s'est forgé l'espace propre à l'expression du conflit sur la question de la guerre.

Peut-être cependant ne s'agit-il là que de sauver les apparences. En effet, *Magesté Royale*, lorsqu'elle demande aux siens de choisir, produit d'abord une sorte de panique parmi ses sujets ' pource que les oppinions de la plus grant partie d'iceulx estoient differantes les unes aux aultres '.⁴⁰ La diversité des opinions effraie donc la communauté elle-même: soudainement tout un chacun prend conscience du dissensus qui menace le royaume et ne semble pas prêt à le supporter.

Quelques années après la mise en scène par André de La Vigne de la figure de *Je ne sçay qui*, Jean d'Auton, alors qu'il raconte la fin de la guerre de Louis XII contre Venise, fait intervenir *Labeur* qui, dans *Les Epistres*, incarne le Tiers État et le

36 *Id.*, 139.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Id.*, 141.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*

sacrifice qu'il consent pour le royaume.⁴¹ Jean d'Auton oppose *Labeur*, son amour et son dévouement pour le roi, à un chevalier qui, au contraire, est représenté comme un menteur qui exagère son rôle dans la bataille d'Agnadel et la victoire française (qu'il raconte à *Labeur*) et qui tente de profiter de la crédulité de *Labeur*, afin de lui faire accroire que seule la noblesse devrait être remerciée pour la victoire. Mais *Labeur* n'est pas impressionné: il est le bon sujet qui est à la fois loyal envers son roi et suspicieux à l'égard de la noblesse. Il y a plus cependant: *Labeur* personnifie à lui seul toutes les tensions que la guerre a générées dans le royaume de France. Il soutient le roi, mais ne porte pas moins un discours réservé sur la guerre, comme par exemple lorsqu'il presse Louis XII de rentrer en France après la bataille d'Agnadel.⁴² Jean Marot, dans son *Voyage de Venise*, qui rapporte également les débuts de la guerre de la ligue de Cambrai, met lui aussi en scène les conflits et dissensions qui affectèrent la société française alors que le roi préparait la guerre.⁴³ L'auteur attire l'attention de ses contemporains sur le fait que certains (mais il ne dit pas précisément qui) déploraient la décision royale de partir en guerre, parce que ' lon ne doit la personne / De nostre Prince ainsi mettre en hasart ' ou parce que ' des brebis que pastour abandonne, / Souvent le loup en devore à l'escart '.⁴⁴ Tous ces textes, composés alors que Charles VIII ou Louis XII se préparaient à la guerre ou en revenaient, ont largement contribué à construire le conflit comme un moment essentiel dans la décision de partir en guerre: loin d'être caché, le désaccord était au contraire exposé comme l'un des moteurs permettant l'expression de la souveraineté du roi de France.

La littérature française pendant les guerres d'Italie mettait ainsi en scène plusieurs espaces de conflit, tous incarnés par des allégories ou des figures éclectiques qui étaient supposées exprimer d'autres idées que celles véhiculées par la monarchie. Bien sûr, ces idées n'avaient pas vocation à remporter l'adhésion des lecteurs, mais cela n'avait pas d'importance car elles avaient pour objet de faire savoir que la monarchie française pouvait supporter, jusqu'à un certain point, la dissension.⁴⁵

Cette littérature avait surtout pour fonction de délimiter l'espace public, de préciser sa segmentation et les limites qui encadraient l'expression des conflits. Les Grands Rhétoriciens montraient ainsi que la société française faisait l'ex-

41 Jean d'Auton (1509).

42 ' Et ie demeure a faire ma besoigne / En attendant seure voix qui me die / Le roy senvient et laisse lombardie / La ie seray content et assouvy / Espris de ioye et en plaisir ravy / Come celuy qui nouvelles entent / De ce qui plus il espere et attent / Reviens doncques ton peuple ten supplye ', *id.*

43 Marot, éd. Trisolini (1977).

44 *Id.*, 51.

45 Perrine Galland-Hallyn et Fernand Hallyn (2001) soulignent ainsi que *La Ressource* prouve ' la nécessité du conseil: le monarque n'est pas absolu, il est à la fois lui-même et l'ensemble des états qui, devant lui, ont droit à la parole ' (334).

périence du conflit et de l'antagonisme sur la guerre, mais ils suggéraient aussi que ces luttes n'affectaient pas l'ensemble de la société: c'était la condition requise pour l'expression du conflit. Malgré le manque de sources, des études restent sans doute à mener pour identifier les éventuels groupes sociaux, voire les individus, qui se trouvaient derrière les réticences à la guerre. Il n'empêche: la lecture des textes montre que, bien que représenté (ou parce que représenté), le conflit était contrôlé et encadré. En autorisant cette expression-là du conflit, il s'agissait aussi d'empêcher la naissance d'un désaccord plus profond qui aurait pu menacer l'ensemble de la société. C'est pourquoi il faut être prudent: la profusion des idées et des opinions variées, voire contraire, dans la littérature ne signifiait pas que chacun était libre d'exprimer son point de vue, mais elle montrait que le pouvoir royal, soutenu par les cercles lettrés, parvenait à façonner le commentaire politique.

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Peter Arnold Heuser

The Peace Congress of Westphalia 1643–1649 as a Sphere of Conflict and Rivalries

Abstract

In the Westphalian cities of Munster and Osnabruck, the Peace Congress of Westphalia worked out a series of peace treaties signed in 1648. These treaties ended the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) between Spain and the emerging Dutch Republic, and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in the Holy Roman Empire. They established the independence of Switzerland from the Empire and changed the system of political order in Europe. For nearly half a decade, between 1643 and March 1649, the congress brought together a total of nearly 300 envoys (ambassadors, residents, agents), representing European powers and Imperial estates of different size and political importance. Their peace negotiations and their interactions constituted a distinct sphere of diplomatic conflicts and rivalries, with complex external relations to the European capitals, to political leaders and political factions in different parts of Europe. This contribution sketches a typology of these conflicts and rivalries, depicts the forms of communication and media the actors used, describes how their intellectual backgrounds influenced their "Streitkultur" and deals with the techniques that the congress developed to overcome or at least to neutralize conflicts and rivalries in favour of an overall peace agreement.

Introduction

Negotiated simultaneously in the two Westphalian cities of Munster and Osnabruck, the Peace Congress of Westphalia (1643–1649)¹ worked out a series of peace treaties signed between January and October 1648 at Munster. These treaties not only ended the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)² in Central Europe, but

1 As an introduction, see DICKMANN (1998); DUCHHARDT, ed. (1996); DUCHHARDT, ed. (1998); REPGEN (1998a); REPGEN (1999); CROXTON / TISCHER (2002); BOSBACH (2011). I have provided references only to the most indispensable bibliography; moreover, the manuscript was completed on 5 March 2015, so current debates and literature are considered only up to 2014/2015.

2 For the resulting peace treaties, the *Instrumentum pacis Monasteriensis* and the *Instrumentum pacis Osnabrugensis* 1648, see ACTA PACIS WESTPHALICAE (= APW) III B 1/1–3 (1998–2007).

they also brought the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648)³ between Spain and the emerging Dutch Republic to a definitive conclusion and contributed to the development of a system of political order in Europe.⁴ The Spanish–Dutch peace of Munster (signed on 30 January 1648 and confirmed by oath on 15 May 1648) established the sovereignty of the Dutch Republic.⁵ For the Holy Roman Empire, the peace treaties signed on 24 October 1648 – the *Instrumentum Pacis Monasteriensis* (IPM) and the *Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis* (IPO) – formulated a new basic law, a *Reichsgrundgesetz*.⁶ Inter alia it renewed and extended a religious peace that included three confessional denominations: the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans and the Reformed Church.⁷ The congress also strengthened the independence of the Swiss Confederation.⁸ Moreover, it tried to conciliate the European rivalry between Bourbon France and Habsburg Spain, but the Spanish–French peace project finally failed.⁹

Between 1643 and March 1649, delegations and embassies of nearly 300 envoys (ambassadors, residents and agents) filled both cities, representing about 190 powers and legal entities of different sizes and political importance,¹⁰ and made the Peace Congress of Westphalia the largest and – as far as its internal structures are concerned – the most complex secular congress ever to take place in early modern Europe. For more than five years, without any official starting point and open-ended, the delegate conference constituted an arena, a diplomatic sphere, where distinct conflicts and rivalries from all over Europe clashed and were intended to be solved – at least to be neutralized or counterbalanced (Part I).

Since the aim of the present contribution is to sketch a typology of those conflicts and rivalries, I can provide only a brief overview of the current state of research on the Westphalian Peace Congress, taking into account some new trends and fields of research. My main focus will be to explain the conflicting roles of early modern ambassadors by studying the examples of the French and Swedish delegations, as well as analysing their complex external relations to the European capitals, to political and military leaders and to political factions throughout Europe. I shall deal not only with the mechanisms of conflict, but also with the techniques and operations of reconciliation and pacification that the congress used to overcome or at any rate neutralize conflicts and rivalries in

3 For the Spanish–Dutch peace of Munster 1648, see SMIT, ed. (1948); DETHLEFS, ed. (1998); GROENVELD, ed. (1998).

4 For the current debate on the existence of a 'Westphalian system', see DUCHHARDT (2012).

5 LADEMACHER (1998).

6 STEIGER (1998).

7 HEUSER (2017).

8 For the details, see STADLER (1998).

9 ROHRSCHEIDER (2007).

10 BOSBACH (1984), 15 (table no. 2a and 2b).

favour of an overall peace agreement (Part II). Crucially, Europe was still at war during the Westphalian Peace Congress: while at Munster and Osnabruck the delegates carried on their peace negotiations, European wars continued without an armistice; and therefore military events, particular victories and defeats, incessantly influenced the negotiation process. Last but not least, I shall describe the forms of communication and media that actors at the peace congress used and show how their intellectual backgrounds influenced their *Streitkultur*,¹¹ that is, the cultural framework of their approach to conflict (Part III).

Dealing with the decade between 1640 and 1650, this contribution marks – chronologically – the final point of the Bonn colloquium. In the 1640s, the European Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth century was far away; the Congress of Westphalia belongs instead to the Baroque era. But nevertheless, addressing the central questions of the colloquium, the Westphalian Peace Congress forms a legitimate topic of inquiry, since, for the delegates, the cultural effects of the Renaissance still mattered; this contribution, therefore, deals with the history of its reception and transformation. The humanist profile of the envoys at Munster and Osnabruck emerges from the Renaissance, moulding their diplomatic or familiar letter-writing, the memoranda and pamphlets which they wrote and their *ars disputandi* – its rhetorical design and its oratorical shaping in gestures, facial expression or voice formation, its adaptation of literary forms and the literary models to which they referred. The French delegate Abel Servien, for example, one of the founding members of the Académie française, admired the art of diplomatic letter-writing of Arnaud d'Ossat (1537–1604), a French statesman of the Renaissance period.¹² His colleague and personal enemy, Claude de Mesmes, count d'Avaux (1595–1650),¹³ belonged to the Parisian school of the Neo-Latin rhetorician Nicolas Bourbon (1574–1644),¹⁴ as did many of his associates, such as d'Avaux's almoner and preacher, François Ogier (1597/98–1670).¹⁵ The Renaissance ideal of the diplomat as an *orator* was still alive.¹⁶

Whether they were noblemen, acting in high political positions, or law graduates, the delegates to the Westphalian Peace Congress belonged to the functional elites of the early modern state and hence to the political elites of the early modern European powers. Often, they originated in 'dynasties' of humanist lawyers established during the sixteenth century and had received a humanist education. For instance, the French ambassador at Munster, Claude de Mesmes, count d'Avaux, a member of the royal Grand Conseil and an experienced diplo-

11 For a definition, see BAUMANN / BECKER / STEINER-WEBER, ed. (2008).

12 APW II B 8 (2011), 502.

13 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 21–2.

14 HEUSER (2008), 291.

15 APW II B 8 (2011), 342–3.

16 HEUSER (2010a). For the contexts, see FEUCHTER / HELMRATH, ed. (2008); FEUCHTER (2011).

mat, was a grandson of the famous Parisian humanist Henri de Mesmes (1532–1596),¹⁷ lord of Roissy and Malassise, councillor of the royal Cour des Aides and Grand Conseil, a French state councillor and chancellor of the king of Navarre. Historically, Henri de Mesmes is renowned as a cultivated Parisian book collector, as a patron of the arts and especially as the Maecenas of the Pléiade poets. The father of the congress delegate, Jean-Jacques de Mesmes, lord of Roissy and count d’Avaux (1559–1642), councillor of Paris Parliament and French state councillor, who continued this famous ‘dynasty’ of the Parisian *noblesse de robe*, fostered its *habitus* as connoisseurs and patrons of art and literature. The same applies to his son, Claude, who was the patron of writers as different as Vincent Voiture (1598–1648), the prestigious French poet, letter writer, member of the Académie française and animating spirit of the group frequenting the salon of the marquise de Rambouillet, the German Neo-Latin poet Jacob Balde SJ (1604–1668) and the distinguished German philologist and *doctor iuris*, Johann Friedrich Gronovius (1611–1671). While negotiating at the peace congress at Munster, the count d’Avaux commissioned his outstanding city palace at Paris: the Hôtel d’Avaux, which later became the Hôtel de Saint-Aignan and is now the Musée d’art et d’histoire du judaïsme in the Marais district (71, rue du Temple), which Pierre Le Muet (1591–1669) built between 1644 and 1650 and which Remy Vuibert (1600–1652) sumptuously furnished with paintings and frescoes.¹⁸

The envoy of Hesse-Kassel, Johannes Vultejus (1605–1684), later on chancellor of Hesse-Kassel,¹⁹ was also descended from a ‘dynasty’ of Renaissance humanists and humanist lawyers: his grandfather Justus Vultejus (1529–1575), the founder of the two noble family branches von Vultejus and von Vultée, which are still flourishing, was a humanist pedagogue and renowned Hebraist at Marburg University. Hermann Vultejus (1555–1634), the father of the congress delegate, became a *doctor iuris utriusque* and professor at Marburg University, holding first a professorship of classical Greek, then an influential chair as a law professor.

To cite a further example, the Württemberg Varnbüler dynasty, today the noble Freiherren Varnbüler von und zu Hemmingen, sent the ducal councillor and *doctor iuris utriusque*, Johann Konrad Varnbüler (1595–1657),²⁰ to the congress: the grandson of the ducal councillor, *doctor iuris utriusque* and professor of law at Tübingen, Nikolaus Varnbüler (1519–1604), and the son of Hans

17 For the de Mesmes family, see JOUANNA et al. (1998), 1099–1100; HEUSER (2008), 269–70, 282–3.

18 HEUSER (2008), 269–70, 282–3, 290–1.

19 LEHSTEN II (2003), 95, 205–9; ‘Vultejus, Johannes’, in Hessische Biografie <<http://www.lagis-hessen.de/pnd/117450367>> (Stand: 12.2.2014).

20 NEUBURGER (2011).

Ulrich Varnbüler (1551–1630), the secretary of the ducal council (Oberrats- und Ehegerichts-Sekretär) at Stuttgart, the residence of the dukes of Württemberg.

Nowadays, the exploration of the *Streitkultur* of politicians and diplomats like these congress delegates²¹ is part of the cultural history of politics and diplomacy. In the past, historians were primarily interested in the instrumental aspects of political assemblies such as the Westphalian Peace Congress, above all in the process of formulating the exact wording of historical treaties and conventions, like the articles of the IPM and IPO. Since the 1990s, a cultural turn in the history of politics and diplomacy has helped to widen the field of historical interest and has encouraged a broad input of methods and theories from neighbouring disciplines such as philosophy, sociology (for example, the systems theory of Niklas Luhmann and his theory of action) or, most recently, the economic sciences (game theory and scientific concepts of bargaining, for instance).²² Among the main topics of current research are politicians and diplomats as a social and intellectual group in the early modern state. The focus is on their political, scholarly and private networks, their perception of politics and diplomacy, their performance, their conflicting roles, their contribution to press propaganda, to press control and press censorship, the intercultural dimension of diplomacy, the political significance of ceremonial and the instrumental and symbolic aspects of diplomatic acting, negotiating and decision-making.

When it comes to the Westphalian Peace Congress, historians are in a fortunate position, since they have recourse to a unique collection of source material, collected from all over Europe, which has been carefully edited and annotated. The Congress of Westphalia is the first and only European peace congress for which the main *acta* have been made accessible in print in a scholarly critical edition: the *Acta Pacis Westphalicae* (APW),²³ a selected edition in 46 volumes which has been published since 1962. The APW include several series of congress correspondences, selected congress diaries, negotiation records and a heterogeneous group of negotiation documents or *Verhandlungsakten*. Meanwhile, thanks to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, the APW are also accessible as an online-edition, the *Acta Pacis Westphalicae digital* (APW digital).²⁴ Both the printed and digital formats ensure easy access to the complex internal dynamics and external re-

21 For the relations Dutch congress delegates cultivated within the ‘Republic of Letters’, see BOTS (2000).

22 As an introduction to this field of historical research, see SCHORN-SCHÜTTE, ed. (2004); STOLLBERG-RILINGER (2004); FREVERT / HAUPT, ed. (2005); STOLLBERG-RILINGER, ed. (2005); SCHORN-SCHÜTTE (2006); STEINMETZ (2007); SCHORN-SCHÜTTE (2009); KÖHLER (2011).

23 For the APW, see the Bibliography (Sources) at the end of my contribution.

24 <http://apw.digitale-sammlungen.de>.

lations of the delegates' conflicts and rivalries, the rhetorical and oratorical shaping of their *Streitkultur* and the media used by the actors.

I. The Westphalian Peace Congress 1643–1649: A Sphere?

Between 1643 and 1649, the European peace congress that took place in the Westphalian cities of Munster and Osnabruck constituted an arena, a battle ground where a myriad of political and personal conflicts and rivalries clashed and were intended to be resolved, pacified or neutralized. As a political arena, where the envoys (ambassadors, residents, agents) of different European powers, their staffs and collaborators interacted for years, the congress was not an exclusive sphere in the proper meaning of the word, that is, in the semantic tradition of the celestial spheres, the fundamental structures of the cosmological models developed by Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy and Copernicus (Greek *σφαίρα* / *sphaira*, Latin *sphaera*): firmly fixed but independent of each other. The peace congress, by contrast, never had an independent existence and could never be self-sufficient. Over the years, admittedly, the congress developed its own internal dynamics, but it never became a self-contained system because of the continuous interaction that took place between the delegates at Munster and Osnabruck, their congress embassies and their political backers in the European capitals and residences – their political instigators, supporters, rivals or enemies. The political arena of the peace congress was in constant interaction with other political arenas in the Holy Roman Empire, in the European monarchies of France, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Portugal and in the reach of other European actors of different sizes and importance.

To sum up, the Westphalian Peace Congress was a political arena which not only disposed of its own internal dynamics but was also continuously interwoven in a complex network of external relations. Taking up a concept of the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas,²⁵ the congress constituted a 'public sphere', but a public sphere in a broader sense of the word because it was open to other political arenas throughout Europe and therefore never independent, isolated and homogeneous. Simultaneously, the congress as a 'public sphere' was highly segmented because of the characteristic forms of inclusion, exclusion and restrictions the delegates and their backers practised. The Vatican secretary of state, for example, never authorized the papal nuncio and congress mediator Fabio Chigi (1599–1667),²⁶ the future Pope Alexander VII (r. 1655–1667), to establish any official ties with Protestant powers or to engage in any official negotiations

25 HABERMAS (1989).

26 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 58.

with Protestant congress delegates. And in the course of the congress, neither the French nor the Spanish ambassadors at Munster were ever allowed to meet in public, because of the severe conflicts over ceremonial in which the French and the Spanish crown were engaged. Any meeting in public had to be avoided, since it could be interpreted as a model case, decisive in the controversial question of their precedence: the rank of the two crowns in the hierarchy of monarchies in the Christian West.

II. Conflict and Rivalries at the Westphalian Peace Congress

With their different series of congress documents (correspondences, diaries, records of proceedings and *Verhandlungsakten*),²⁷ the *Acta Pacis Westphalicae* (APW) are a unique corpus of sources for the exploration of conflict and rivalries at the Peace Congress of Westphalia. The quality and density of this material comes close to what is normally only available for contemporary history and current issues.²⁸ Therefore, the written evidence allows us, in many cases, to illuminate and to analyse conflicts in which congress delegates were involved, not only from one, but from many sides, including the specific perspectives of different actors and observers.

II.1. Ceremonial and Symbolic Politics as a Source of Conflict and Rivalries

Since the cultural turn in the 1990s, a methodologically renewed history of politics and diplomacy has learned to consider not only the instrumental but also the symbolic aspects of politics. Ceremonial is no longer interpreted as a mere annex or appendix to politics but as a distinct expression of it: a manifestation and visualization of political claims and aspirations.²⁹ For the Westphalian Peace Congress, the research results available show how – on several occasions – conflicts about ceremonial claims and aspirations brought the congress near to collapse.³⁰ The pragmatic solutions which the actors found reveal interesting aspects of their handling of conflict and rivalries. For example, in 1644 the congress abandoned the solemn entry (*‘feierliche Einholung’*), the collective ceremonial which previously had served to welcome arriving delegates outside

27 See APW (1962–2015).

28 AUER (1998), 143–4.

29 STOLLBERG-RILINGER (1997); STOLLBERG-RILINGER, ed. (2001); STOLLBERG-RILINGER (2004); STOLLBERG-RILINGER (2008); KÖHLER (2011).

30 ROHRSCHEIDER (2008); MAY (2009); ROHRSCHEIDER (2009); MAY (2010); MAY (2011); STOLLBERG-RILINGER (2011); MAY (2012); MAY (2014); MAY (2016).

Munster. The envoys realized that this ceremonial form of welcoming was on the brink of causing the congress to break up because of the controversial questions of rank and precedence it provoked. For the entire five years of the congress, the Spanish ambassadors were careful not to participate in any solemn entry, cortège or church procession in which the French ambassadors took part.³¹

In his French and German doctoral thesis from 2012, Niels Fabian May analyses the role and significance of the Westphalian peace negotiations in the development of diplomatic ceremonial throughout the seventeenth century.³² Based merely on diplomatic correspondence from the congress, May's study focuses on the actor's perspective and concludes that the demonstration of rank – the prince's status and the diplomat's own status – was not the only motive in ceremonial conflicts. Throughout the century, ceremonial significations became more and more fixed, which led to a multiplication of conflicts.

II.2. Diplomats as Actors in Conflicting Roles: Micro-Politics versus Macro-Politics

The ambassadors, residents and agents who, in the years 1643–1649, crowded the streets, the meeting rooms and conference halls of Munster and Osnabruck, never acted exclusively as peacemakers by conviction, as disinterested, selfless and altruistic irenicists whose only concern was to compose the articles or paragraphs of a perfect and everlasting peace treaty. Instead, all of them were actors playing conflicting roles: as individuals with personal interests, with likes and dislikes, as members of family groups, as patrons or clients serving certain principals and superiors, as politicians who acted as members, as adherents, as sympathizers, as rivals or enemies of other politicians, court factions or political groupings in their home countries.

A cursory glance at the French congress embassy³³ at Munster and Osnabruck will serve to illustrate this general observation. Henri II d'Orléans (1595–1663), the duke of Longueville³⁴ and head of the French embassy, was the highest-ranking French diplomat at the Congress of Westphalia. But although he took an active part in all French negotiations, he was never the leading French negotiator at the congress, a position held by the counts d'Avaux and Servien, two competing 'secondary' ambassadors of the French crown in Westphalia.

31 HEUSER (2010a), 64–7.

32 MAY (2012); MAY (2016).

33 BÉLY (1998).

34 For the following considerations, see CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 173–5.

Descending from an illegitimate branch of the Valois dynasty, the duke of Orléans-Longueville spent his life striving for equality as a member of the French royal family, a *prince de sang*. As a sovereign count and future prince of Neuchâtel, a territory located between the Spanish Franche-Comté and Switzerland,³⁵ he pursued a close association of Neuchâtel with the Swiss Confederation and insisted on the title of Highness (*Altesse*), claiming at the peace congress – though without much success – to be treated not only as a French plenipotentiary, but as a sovereign in his own right.³⁶ As governor of the province of Normandy, as heir of the wealthy estates, positions, relations and clienteles of the dukes of Orléans-Longueville,³⁷ and, moreover as a skilled and experienced military commander, he was a powerful French political leader who could seriously trouble the interests of Cardinal Jules Mazarin, the French prime minister and leading figure of French politics, and the dowager queen and regent of France, Anne of Austria.

When Longueville came to Westphalia, his relationship to Queen Anne and Cardinal Mazarin was by no means free from tension. Several years earlier, Louis XIII of France had appointed Longueville to be part of the regency council intended, in case of the king's death, to conduct French political affairs until Louis XIV, his successor, reached the legal age. But when Louis XIII died in May 1643, Queen Anne and Cardinal Mazarin prevented the inauguration of the regency council and quickly sent Orléans-Longueville to the Congress of Westphalia, in order to get rid of an influential opponent at court for some years. For Queen Anne and Mazarin, Longueville was even more dangerous, since in 1642 he married Anne Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, the sister of the Grand Condé, the first *prince de sang*. During the series of civil wars known as the Fronde, Longueville, his wife and his brother-in-law persisted in opposition to Mazarin and Queen Anne and urged the conclusion of a peace with Spain.³⁸

Claude de Mesmes, count d'Avaux, was the most experienced of the French peace negotiators at Munster and Osnabruck. Before leaving for Westphalia, he had visited many courts throughout Europe in two decades of diplomatic service. During these years, he had acquired a special expertise concerning Germany. For the French crown, he had negotiated the preliminary treaties for the Congress of Westphalia (Hamburg 1641), besides a continuation of the Franco-Swedish alliance. Belonging to one of the leading families of the *noblesse de robe* of the Paris Parliament,³⁹ he kept a resolute distance from Cardinal Mazarin. Paul Sonnino interpreted the endless quarrels that, during the congress period, arose between

35 SCHEURER (1999).

36 MAY (2009); MAY (2010).

37 FOISIL (1981).

38 SONNINO (1998); SONNINO (2008).

39 See nn. 15–17 above.

d’Avaux and his colleague Servien, Mazarin’s partisan and favourite at the congress, as a ‘prelude to the Fronde’.⁴⁰

Abel Servien, marquis of Sablé and Boisdaphin, count of La Roche des Aubiers (1593–1659),⁴¹ the third French peace negotiator at the Congress of Westphalia, also had to cope with a number of conflicting roles that were inextricably intertwined in his person. As a client, a creature and partisan of the French prime minister Mazarin, he had to defend and to push forward his patron’s interests at the peace congress, with regard not only to the negotiations but also to other members of the French embassy, above all the duke of Orléans-Longueville and the count d’Avaux. At Munster and Osnabruck, Servien had to act simultaneously as a *ministre public* of the French Crown, as a client and creature of Mazarin, and as a *honneste homme* who had to take into account his personal sense of honour and his own system of values. As a *particulier*, Servien acted as a patron and as the head of an own clientele to which belonged, for example, the French resident at Osnabruck, Henri Groulart, lord of La Court (1596–1657).⁴² Servien acted as the head of a familial clan with interests in Normandy, Savoy, the Île-de-France including Paris and the newly conquered region round Calais. And he acted as a man of letters and founding member of the Académie française. He even managed to act simultaneously as a peace negotiator and as a military entrepreneur: together with Cardinal Mazarin, Hugues de Lionne (1611–1671)⁴³ and other members of their political faction in France, Servien was the co-financier of a battle fleet operating in the Mediterranean Sea to help the Republic of Venice against the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the peace negotiator Servien organized and pre-financed both the secret acquisition of battleships for the private fleet of Cardinal Mazarin and French military subsidies for Hesse-Kassel.⁴⁴

II.3. The Embassies: Internal Conflicts and Rivalries

In the course of the negotiations, the congress embassies consisting of two or more competing ambassadors became the arenas of severe internal conflicts and rivalries. Those quarrels arose as a consequence of the delegates’ conflicting roles, an example of which we have seen above in II.2. The counts d’Avaux and Servien, the two ‘secondary’ ambassadors of the French embassy, were engaged for years in a ruthless competition that became notorious at the congress and

40 SONNINO (1998).

41 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 271–3; recently FERRETTI, ed. (2014).

42 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 156.

43 *IBID.*, 169–70.

44 For details, see HEUSER (2011), LXIX–LXXI.

reached its climax in spring 1648, when Servien managed to enforce the recall of his detested colleague.⁴⁵ The conflict arose at the border between different systems of patronage and clientele. D’Avaux belonged to the clientele of the Condé family and the patronage system of one of the leading families of the Paris Parliament *noblesse de robe*, while Servien belonged to the rival clientele of Mazarin.

The same observation can be made about the internal conflicts that arose between the two Swedish ambassadors at Osnabruck. Johan Axelsson Oxenstierna, count of Södermöre (1611–1657),⁴⁶ the son of the Swedish royal chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654),⁴⁷ was the representative of the mighty Swedish Oxenstierna faction at the Westphalian Peace Congress. His competing colleague Johan Adler Salvius (1590–1652),⁴⁸ the *homo novus* of Swedish diplomacy in the seventeenth century, exerted, as the curator of French subsidies, a powerful influence on the Swedish war economy and was dependent on the young Queen Christina, who clashed with the Oxenstierna faction on both domestic and foreign affairs.

Within the delegation from the Electorate of Mainz, whose archbishop-electoral was the archchancellor of the Holy Roman Empire, severe conflicts and rivalries arose when the prince-electoral Anselm Casimir Wamboldt von Umstadt (1583–1647) died and was replaced by Johann Philipp von Schönborn (1605–1673),⁴⁹ who realigned the Electorate’s congress policy.⁵⁰

The internal conflicts and rivalries that arose within embassies transcended the sphere of the congress, since they included and involved the delegates’ home courts and governments, their patrons and political factions. The public sphere of the peace congress was thus not the sole arena of conflict which adversaries targeted. All the letters that Servien and d’Avaux wrote in the context of their mutual conflicts, as well as all the printed pamphlets that they directed against one another after the congress had ended,⁵¹ addressed a courtly society in their home country that had a genuine interest in French congress politics and in the power struggles and hierarchical encounters between French political elites. At the congress, these conflicts and rivalries found expression in various contexts, in both predominantly symbolic and primarily instrumental aspects of the negotiation process, and therefore they are very well represented in written congress sources: in the diaries and formal or informal letters of actors or observers, in the

45 For details, see HEUSER (2008), 269–93, 301–2; HEUSER (2011), LXXII–LXXIII.

46 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 217–18.

47 *IBID.*, 216.

48 *IBID.*, 261–2.

49 *IBID.*, 270–71.

50 For some details, see FUSSBAHN 1999, 160–64.

51 HEUSER (2010a), 77–9.

Verhandlungsakten of the congress, and in printed pamphlets or the newly established periodical press. For this reason, internal conflicts and rivalries between congress delegates are especially valuable for exploring the *Streitkultur* of early modern diplomats from a variety of perspectives.⁵²

II.4. The Negotiations: Techniques and Operations of Conflict, Reconciliation and Pacification

The Congress of Westphalia dealt with different kinds of conflict and rivalry throughout Europe, as well as in colonies outside Europe, and aimed for a universal, stable and lasting peace. The delegates therefore experimented with various techniques of negotiation, developing and refining both direct and indirect forms, and establishing different types of mediation and arbitration. And they did so without ever organizing a plenary session of all delegates. As a result, the internal structures of the Westphalian peace negotiations were highly complex.⁵³ The Imperial and French delegates, for example, decided not to negotiate face to face, but exclusively via the mediation of a third party, and requested the papal nuncio Fabio Chigi and the Venetian ambassador Alvise Contarini (1597–1651)⁵⁴ as official mediators, who for years practised a shuttle diplomacy between the embassies of both parties.⁵⁵ France and Spain, whose delegates, as already indicated, were not even authorized to meet each other in public because of the unsettled conflict in which their monarchs were engaged over their rank in Christendom, negotiated in the same way and via the same mediators; this allowed them to avoid setting any precedent for the order of priority of the two crowns.⁵⁶

Both official mediators, Chigi and Contarini, did not act simply as altruistic, disinterested ‘honest brokers’ between the conflicting parties, but were themselves actors with a specific political and personal agenda. Chigi represented the Counter-Reformation interests of the Roman Curia and pursued his own career plans in Rome, eventually ascending to the papacy. Contarini represented the interests of the Venetian Republic, eager to persuade the Catholic powers of Europe to stop their mutual conflicts in favour of a concerted action against the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.

The Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III and the Swedish delegation decided to negotiate face to face, without appointing any mediator. Spain and the

52 HEUSER (2008), 269–93, 301–2; HEUSER (2010a); HEUSER (2010b).

53 For the details, see BOSBACH (2011).

54 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 65–6.

55 For the details, see RUPPERT (1979); AUER (1998); TISCHER (1999).

56 For the details, see TISCHER (1999); ROHRSCHEIDER (2007).

emerging Dutch Republic did the same. And the Imperial Estates (the ‘Reichsstände’) negotiated in the well-established and familiar procedure of the Imperial diets: either in the three *curiae* of the Electors (the ‘Kurfürstenrat’), the Princes (‘Fürstenrat’) and the Imperial cities (‘Städtekurie’), or in the two confessional *corpora* (the ‘Corpus Evangelicorum’ and the ‘Corpus Catholicorum’).

Other envoys were never fully admitted to the congress and therefore obtained at most an informal status or acted and petitioned as simple agents. The Portuguese envoys at Munster, for example, attended the congress under the protection of the French embassy, but were not accepted by the Spanish and the Imperial diplomats, who stigmatized them as ‘rebels’.⁵⁷

Apart from official forms of mediation such as those conducted by Chigi and Contarini, the congress also practised semi-official or informal forms of intermediation. The French and Spanish ambassadors, for instance, referred at certain stages of their peace negotiations to a Dutch ‘interposition’⁵⁸ as a counterweight to the ‘mediation’ of Chigi and Contarini. Furthermore, during the spring and summer of 1648, the Bavarian ambassador Johann Adolf Krebs⁵⁹ acted as an informal mediator between Elector Maximilian I of Bavaria, the Imperial diplomats and those Imperial estates who formed a ‘third party’ favouring a prompt peace agreement with France and Sweden.⁶⁰ Finally, at a late stage of the Spanish–French negotiations, the parties discussed the option and the modalities of a Dutch arbitration⁶¹ to decide the remaining controversial articles of the Spanish–French peace project.⁶² In general, the negotiating procedures employed at the Westphalian Peace Congress displayed an astonishing adaptability and were modified by the actors, if necessary, with surprising pragmatism.

III. Media of Conflict and Rivalries

The Congress of Westphalia never held plenary sessions which included all the delegates. Convening at Munster and Osnabruck, this meant – as we have seen in Part II – a multitude of negotiations taking place simultaneously: some delegates holding their meetings according to the customary procedure of Imperial diets, acting in the *curiae* or *corpora* of the Imperial estates, other delegates attending smaller conferences, mostly held in the embassies of the parties involved, either

57 CARDIM (1998).

58 See APW II B 8 (2011), 60.

59 CROXTON / TISCHER (2002), 151–2; LEHSTEN II (2003), 47–8.

60 HEUSER (2011), CII–CVI.

61 For the difference between the mediator and the arbiter (a political judge), see KAMPMANN (2001); KAMPMANN (2005).

62 HEUSER (2011), C–CI.

through face to face negotiations or with the help of mediators. Consequently, the Westphalian Peace Congress was never an arena where great oratorical events happened ‘in pleno’, as they famously did, for example, in the Imperial diets of the mid-fifteenth century: considering the great ‘Reichstagsreden’ of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464), later Pope Pius II, or those of the diplomat Johann Hofmann von Lieser (†1459) – orations which were copied and which had a sizeable autonomous influence as political media.⁶³

Nevertheless, the Congress of Westphalia is of the greatest interest for research in the history of communication. The delegates not only passed down to us their conference papers, the minutes of their meetings and their negotiation documents (their *Verhandlungsakten*, verified in the volumes of the *Acta Pacis Westphalicae*),⁶⁴ but they also produced a meta-discourse about all those meetings and conferences. Actors at the congress and their observers reflected on the course of events: in their official congress correspondence, in confidential letters, in their congress diaries, in minutes and in the contemporary historiography. In these documents, researchers interested in the history of communication find a rich record of meta-narratives that diplomats who were involved in the negotiations committed to paper: a precious treasure which allows us to comprehend how the congress refined the techniques of diplomatic interchange and argumentation: the adaptation of politeness and impoliteness in the negotiations,⁶⁵ the choice of arguments ‘ad rem’ versus arguments ‘ad hominem’, the delegates’ handling of technical terms,⁶⁶ and their integration of forms of bargaining into the negotiations.⁶⁷ This rich meta-discourse reflects the verbal as well as the non-verbal level of the negotiations,⁶⁸ the symbolic aspects of politics,⁶⁹ including the festive events in which delegates participated,⁷⁰ the first and last visits of envoys arriving or departing, the visits of condolence they made, not to mention the propagation of rumours, ‘on dits’, congress jokes and anecdotes.⁷¹

Some congress delegates were experts in printed propaganda, making use of the periodical as well as the non-periodical press for their political and personal purposes.⁷² The Thirty Years’ War and the Congress of Westphalia were an object

63 See HELMRATH (1994); HELMRATH (1998); FEUCHTER / HELMRATH, ed. (2008); FEUCHTER (2011); DANIELS (2013).

64 BRUNERT (2014).

65 For the theoretical and historical implications, see KÖHLER (2011).

66 For the details, see HEUSER (2014).

67 For the theoretical implications, see KÖHLER (2011).

68 BRUNERT (2011).

69 See II.1 above.

70 STIGLIC (1998).

71 HEUSER (2008), 268–93.

72 BABEL (1992); REPGEN (1998b); BABEL (2005); BOSBACH (2005); MAYER-GÜRR (2007); HEUSER (2010a); HEUSER (2010b); ROSSEAUX (2010).

of continuous reporting in a new print medium, the periodical newspaper.⁷³ And the correspondence series of the French embassy at the Westphalian Peace Treaties has recently been analysed to show how French diplomacy used newspapers to calm down or to stimulate conflicts and rivalries.⁷⁴ The meta-discourse of congress delegates, such as the French ambassador Abel Servien, gives us a good insight into the whole spectrum of strategies used by politicians, during the decade 1640 to 1650, to control and to exploit the new medium. The source material attests to the suppression of news items, as well as interventions concerning their content and style, and allows us to attribute some of them to identifiable politicians, diplomats or military officers. Confidential letters of French politicians of the 1640s contain a meta-discourse about the press policy of French government as well as about the suspected or verified press policy of other European powers.

As far as the non-periodical press is concerned, the French correspondence series allows us to determine when, why and how politicians and congress diplomats acted as political pamphleteers. Sometimes the source material permits us to reconstruct the whole process of composing, printing and distributing anonymous pamphlets. The identification of political actors as pamphleteers enables us to reintegrate anonymously published pamphlets into their political contexts.

Conclusion

For a period of five years, the Congress of Westphalia was a ‘melting pot’ of political conflicts and rivalries between European powers, between political factions and between the congress delegates who carried on the Westphalian peace negotiations under the constant influence of military campaigns, with wars in Europe continuing in the absence of an armistice. As such, the peace congress constrained political and personal enemies to put up with one another and to get along for years in two mid-size Westphalian cities; it constituted an open, but also highly segmented political sphere. This characteristic segmentation arose from the inclusion of specific delegates in certain parts of the congress’s activities and their exclusion from other parts, such as formal and informal events or entire negotiations. Moreover, the delegates were engaged in constant interchanges with their home courts, with governments, politicians and political factions in their home countries. The congress developed techniques and operations to handle all those conflicts and rivalries, went a long

73 ROSSEAUX (2010); BÖNING (2019).

74 HEUSER (2010a); HEUSER (2010b).

way towards an institutionalized and professionalized diplomacy and helped to elaborate the spectrum of diplomatic techniques and operations which are still in use in modern states and international organizations. That is why any historian who is interested in the cultural framework of this early modern approach to conflict should share in what the American historian Gordon Alexander Craig has called ‘the pleasure of reading diplomatic correspondence’,⁷⁵ including that of the Peace Congress of Westphalia.

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