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Dante in Old Croatian Poetry

From the very beginnings of a Renaissance literature written in Serbo-Croat at Dubrovnik and farther north all along the sea coast of Croatia there have been echoes, more distinct in some cases and vaguer in others, of Dante Alighieri's work, especially of his *Divine Comedy*. In this brief survey of his influence I will limit myself to the oldest period of Croatian poetry at the time of the Renaissance, from its earliest written records, around the middle of the 15th century, to the end of the Cinquecento. Without aiming at completeness, I wish to say a little about some facts that had escaped the notice of scholars and add a few details to matters that have already been dealt with by others.

Dante's influence, if it may be styled so, is not limited to one place. It spreads from Dubrovnik in the south through Split in central Dalmatia to Zadar in the north. Nor is it restricted to one literary *genre*. We find traces of it in allegorical poems, in pastoral romances and, which is more unusual, in lyrical poetry where, next to the more obvious though less easily definable echoes of the *Vita Nova* and the *Canzoniere*, there are palpable proofs of the Croat poets' acquaintance with the *Divine Comedy*. Moreover, the famous humanist and Latin poet Marko Marulić (1450—1524) of Split, who is best remembered today, especially among his fellow-countrymen, for his epic poem *Judith* "composed in Croatian verse", has left us an elegant Latin translation, one of the earliest into any language, of the first canto of the *Inferno*.¹ It is only natural that traces of Dante's poem should be found also in the Croatian works of a poet so well versed in the *Divine Comedy*.

Let us then begin with a consideration of Dante's impact on Croat lyrical poetry written at Dubrovnik, since it is chronolog-

¹ V. Gortan, "La version latine du Ier chant de *La Divine Comédie* par M. Marulić", *Studia romanica et anglica zagradiensia*, 9—10, 1960.

ically the earliest. The first recorded Ragusan poems were preserved in a codex compiled early in the 16th century by Nikša Ranjina, the first and larger part of which, dated 1507, contains 610 poems by Šiško Menčetić Vlahović (1457—1527) and Džore Držić (1461—1501), while the second part includes 210 poems of a later date, some of which may be attributed to Menčetić. To this collection has recently been added, as a valuable source and supplement, a newly discovered manuscript containing all the poems of Džore Držić, twenty-one of which were so far not known. The manuscript has been unearthed by J. S. G. Simmons, Librarian of the Taylor Institution, Oxford, in Marsh's Library, St. Patrick's Cathedral Precincts, Dublin, Eire, and signaled to Josip Hamm. A new edition of the complete poems of Džore Držić, based on this manuscript, has just been edited by Professor Hamm for the Yugoslav Academy of Zagreb in the series "Old Croatian Authors".² The great majority of all these poems belongs to the 15th century, since the best poet of the group, Džore Držić, died in 1501 and the most prolific, Šiško Menčetić, had apparently produced most of his poems before the turn of the century.

Many years ago in another place I have dealt with the various elements which, in the formation of this new kind of lyric poetry, have been grafted on to the indigenous stock of Croat folk-poetry.³ There I spoke of the influence of the Italian poets of the *Quattrocento*, noting the role played not only by the so-called *strambottisti*, such as Serafino de' Cimminelli di Aquila, Antonio Ricco, Baldassare Olimpo degli Alessandri da Sassoferrato, the Florentine Cristoforo l'*Altissimo* and others, but also by the "healthier" poets such as Luigi Pulci, Lorenzo de' Medici and Angelo Poliziano. I have also dealt there with the direct influence of Petrarch and the indirect influence of Provençal poetry, which element, before reaching Dubrovnik, had become, by a process of assimilation, an integral part of Italian literature. Literary historians have noticed all these cross-currents but have exaggerated the Troubadour element and belittled the indebtedness of the Ragusan poets to the *Quattrocentisti*.

There is, however, another great school of Italian poetry whose influence, distinctly though indirectly reflected in the Ragusan *Canzoniere*, has generally been overlooked or completely forgotten, namely the school of the *dolce stil novo* among the poets of which Dante, as the author of the *Vita Nova* and the *Rime*, occupied the first rank. This poetic school attained

² *Pjesni Ljuvene, Stari pisci hrvatski* (farther referred to as SPH) XXXIII, JAZiU, Zagreb, 1965.

³ *Italian Influence on the Poets of the Ragusan Republic*, pp. 91—137. London, 1931.

its highest achievements at Florence in the last decade of the 13th century. Its verse is almost exclusively amorous. The definition of love is given by the harbinger of the school, the Bolognese Guido Guinicelli, in the fine canzone "Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore" and again in Guido Cavalcanti's canzone "Donna mi prega perch'io voglio dire", which is really a scientific treatise, and finally in Dante's sonnet "Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa", which will later be epitomized by him in the episode of Francesca da Rimini as "Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende" (*Inf.*, V, 100).

A philosophical tendency is revealed in these treatises on the nature of love, and the *a priori* principles deduced from them are applied in the poets' other works and used in analysing their individual passions. It is a characteristic trait of this school to personify distinctly the various motions of the soul which become *spiriti* or *spiritelli*; e.g. love is a *spiritello*, which, springing forth from the eyes of the beloved woman and passing through the lover's eyes, finds its way to his heart. There is no more popular theme among the poets of this school than this conceit of the origin of love which occurs on every page of their *canzonieri*. So Guido Guinicelli, in sonnet No. 13 ("Lo vostro bel saluto e 'l gentil sguardo"), says that love

Per li occhi passa, come fa lo trono,
Che fêr per la finestra de la torre
E ciò che dentro trova, spezza e fende.

Guido Cavalcanti opens a sonnet with the line:

Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core,

and Dante himself, in a sonnet in praise of Beatrice (*Vita Nova*, XXI), says:

Mostrasi sì piacente a chi la mira
Che dà per gli occhi una dolcezza al core.

This metaphysical conceit of love passing through the eyes to the heart — harshly, like lightning entering a tower through a window — is reproduced in the works of the Ragusan poets. So Džore Držić has:

Evo t' sam jur skončan, smrt mi je primila,
Kroz pogled tvoj sončan kojim me s' smamila.
(SPH XXXIII, No. 40, p. 40, ll. 9—10)

Or still better:

Proklinjem on stril ki s tvoga pogleda
Srce mi rani a nidan lik ne da.
(SPH XXXIII, No. 58, p. 54, ll. 41—42)

Or again, in one of his newly discovered poems (SPH XXXIII, No. 83, pp. 79—80):

O strilo perena, srce mi proskoči,
Ki čas bi spravljena kroz tužne mē oči.
(II, 21—22)

An anonymous poet has:

Ar mi si očima ranila srdače,
A nitko lijek ne ima nego ti, sunače.⁴

But the best example of all and the one which comes closest to the Italian models is Menčetić's

Oči mē tužite, jer vam se plač prima,
Ter srce združite, kô za vas smrt ima;
Jere je po vâs dan ljubavi put prvi,
Gđi kako u svoj stan s naporom još vrvi.⁵

The poet says that through the eyes ("po vâs" = through you, i. e. through the eyes to which the poem is addressed) was first open ("dan", literally "given") the way to love which still painfully (with effort) flows into the heart as if it were its home.

A similar convention of the *dolce stil novo* poets is to personify the heart and the soul which then move, act and speak independently. This device is used at least in one of the old Ragusan poems. It is one of the few sonnets proper included in the later part of Nikša Ranjina's *Canzoniere* (SPH II, No. 760, p. 504) and is composed entirely according to the metaphysical rules of the early Italian poets. The heart and the soul of the tortured enamoured poet, ready to leave his body, come to his eyes and lips impelled by a desire to go to dwell in the bosom of the beloved woman; but there they are stopped by the poet who feels faint when the "sun of his lady's merry laughter" issues from her mouth. His soul is joined with her soul and his heart with her heart, and Love is enthroned over all:

Srce mē kroz ljubav koli bi jadovno
Da mnokrat puknuti od jada je htjelo,
Najliše kad ljubav priđaše u bijelo
U liče nu tvoje jāk ruža rumeno.

Dušica otit hteć od mene smiljeno
Tuj prijede na oči mē, tuj na usti smilo;
Tuj jedan i drugi iskaše, mâ vilo,
Da bitje u prsi stave tve ljuveno.

⁴ M. Rešetar, *Pjesme Šiška Menčetića i Džore Držića*, SPH II, 1937², No. 673, p. 456, ll. 7—8.

⁵ V. Jagić, *Pjesme Šiška Menčetića Vlahovića i Gjore Držića*, SPH II, 1870, No. 2, p. 126, ll. 1—4. Exceptionally I quote from Jagić's old edition because I cannot accept Rešetar's reading "povazdan" (all day long), in the third line of the cited poem, which makes no sense. I therefore retain Jagić's "po vâs dan".

Nu ih ja uzdržah; da, kad se sunačce
Iz usti smihom tvih ukaza veselim,
Ončas se moja moć sva sasma udavi;

Jer duša dušicu a srce srdačce
Oćuti, da kruto izgrli sve sa svim,
Da ljubav vrhu svijeh pristolje postavi.⁶

This sonnet, as far as I can ascertain, is neither a translation nor a direct imitation, though it might have come straight out of any of the *canzonieri* of the *dolce stil novo* school. In ideas and execution it is akin to Cavalcanti's "A me stesso di me pietate vene" and to Cino de' Sighibuldi's "Tanta è l'angoscia ch'aggio dentro al core", but it comes still closer to some of Dante's poems from the *Vita Nova*, e. g. to the canzone "Si lungamente m'ha tenuto Amore" (XXVIII), to the sonnet "Era venuta nella mente mia" (XXXV) and especially to the sonnet "Gentil pensiero, che parla di vui" (XXXIX) where we actually have a conversation between the soul and the heart ("L'anima dice al cor . . . Ei le risponde"). The Ragusan sonnet, from a different aspect, might also be considered a distant relation of John Donne's *Ecstasy*.

According to the *dolce stil novo* poets, the seat of love is the third heaven of Venus, the "terzo ciel" of Dante's Canzone XV:

Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete.

Džore Držić mentions three times "the third stars" and "the third heaven" of love. In his poem "Gizdava t' jur nika vidih da gre vila" (SHP XXXIII, No. 4, p. 15), the beauty of his lady is exalted by God above the third stars:

Neka se ne snizi izvrsna nje gizda,
Ku Višnji uzvisi vrh tretih jur zvezda,
(ll. 23—24)

while in the poem "O kruno pridraga, biserni moj cvite" (SPH XXXIII, No. 5, pp. 15—16), which in his collection immediately follows, the poet tells how the "angelic image" of his lady burns on his heart and how Love has bound him to her by the stellar power of the third heaven:

Ar ljubav tolika hitro ga pritvori,
Andelska tva slika da na njem sva gori.
Tebi me još izda ter u hip on sveza
S kripostju od zvezda od tretih nebesa.
(ll. 19—22)

And finally, in the recently discovered poem "O strilo perena, mâ zлата strelice" (SPH XXXIII, No. 83, pp. 79—80), quoted

⁶ In the last line but one again I follow Jagić's reading "sa svim" in preference to Rešetar's misleading "sasvim".

before, he speaks of the feathered arrow which has been forged for Love in the third heaven:

O strilo perena, lipa ti s' uresa
Za ljubav stvorena vrh tretih nebesa.
(ll. 3—4)

But it is not as author of the *Vita Nova* or the *Rime* that Dante was primarily revealed to the Ragusan poets. They knew him in the first place as the poet of the *Divine Comedy*, and there their interest was not restricted only to the more popular *Inferno* with which, however, the greatest number of parallels is to be traced, but they also display a familiarity with all the three *Cantiche* of Dante's work.

If we then begin our investigation with the *Inferno* we shall see that Dante's well-known simile of the swimmer or castaway, a drowning or shipwrecked person who, after long struggling with the waves, finally comes panting ashore and looks back at the "perilous water":

E come quei, che con lena affannata
uscito fuor del pelago alla riva,
si volge all'acqua perigliosa, e guata,
(*Inf.*, I, 22—24)

is rendered by Menčetić in his long poem (84 lines) "Ako tko poželi čut moje dobro kad" (SPH II, No. 361, pp. 219—221) as follows:

Od morske pučine kad sile popridu,
Svak misli što čine tko na kraj izidu.
Na more poziru, koje bi s mukami,
Tere se udiru u prsi rukami.
(ll. 21—24)

But this "quotation" from the very first canto of Dante's *Inferno* is not simply stuck on, it does not hang in the air. It is deftly inlaid and embedded in the substance of Menčetić's poem so that the surface of the borrowed passage is continuous with that of the enclosing mass of the poem. Menčetić organically connects Dante's metaphor with the body of his poem, he assimilates it and uses it for his own purpose.

In his poem Menčetić tells of his pride for having spurned and conquered love, for having freed himself from the fetters of lust. And just as Dante at the beginning of his *Inferno* finds himself astray in the dark Wood of Error from which he escapes and starts on his journey of purification through the three realms, so our poet escapes from the tortures of love, from his little *Inferno*. In fact in his poem he twice refers to Hell: As people say that "there is no peace in hell", so to those who follow love life is without peace or joy. The poet there-

fore wishes to remove from his heart "the burden of an infernal pain which is heavier than death":

Jer kako ne vele u pakli pokoja,
Tač ljubav tko žele život je bez goja;
Ter se mnim ispri srce me brjemena
Težega od smrti prem truda paklena.
(ll. 7—10)

In this last line we seem to hear an echo of Dante's words about the "selva oscura" which is "so bitter that scarcely more is death":

Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte.
(*Inf.*, I, 7)

For Menčetić is not thinking of the quoted passage isolated and alone, but he takes in the whole surrounding context of Dante's initial canto.

In the second part of the simile, although Menčetić in some respects still follows Dante, the two poets drift apart. Dante says:

così l'animo mio, che ancor fuggiva,
si volse indietro a rimirar lo passo,
che non lasciò giammai persona viva.
(ll. 25—27)

For him the Dark Wood, "the pass that no one ever left alive", is the image of Sin or Error, "not so much of any specific act of sin . . . as of that spiritual condition called 'hardness of heart', in which sinfulness has so taken possession of the soul as to render it incapable of turning to God, or even knowing which way to turn".⁷ For Menčetić, essentially a Petrarchan poet, the troubled sea from which he emerges is a much more restricted image, limited to the bitter woes of love:

Tako ja povenu u strahu s boljezni,
Kada se spomenu od gorke ljubezni.
(ll. 25—26)

Here again "gorka ljubezan" (bitter love) seems to echo the bitterness (tanto è amara) of Dante's Dark Wood.

Another "quotation", in which Dante clearly states one of the main principles of his theory of love, his famous

Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona,

from the episode of Francesca da Rimini (*Inf.*, V, 103) is rendered by Džore Držić in his poem "Vilo, ka prostrili me prsi s ljubezni" (SPH XXXIII, No. 18, p. 24) as

Ar tko ljubi virno, ima ljubljjen biti.

⁷ Dorothy L. Sayers' note on "the Dark Wood" in her translation of the *Inferno*. *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine*. Cantica I. Hell. p. 75. London, 1949. Quoted from 1964 reprint.

And, slightly altered, this is repeated in his fine poem "O kruno pridraga, biserni moj cvite" (No. 5, pp. 15—16), quoted before in connexion with the "terzo ciel":

Nis' tvrđa kamena, nit može toj biti,
Gdi s' vilo ljubljena, da nećeš ljubiti.
(ll. 13—14)

And, finally, he uses the same idea to conclude one of his poems, recently published for the first time (SPH XXXIII, No. 96, p. 86), of which the opening lines are missing:

Jer kade huđe bi ki človik izgubljen,
Ner poznav gdi ljubi, da nije obljubljen?
(ll. 27—28)

Another echo of Dante's same line ("Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona") is to be found in the third of a collection of apophthegms in verse "taken from the Holy Writ and from the philosophers" (*Pričice izete iz svetoga pisma i filozofa*) compiled by Nikola Dimitrović (died 1554):

Imo bi ljubiti, ako hoć ljubljen bit;
Što budeš zajmiti, to će t' se i vratit;
Ludo se vladati, nikoga ne ljubit,
A paka ufati od družijeh ljubljen bit.⁸

It is interesting to note that a century later another Ragusan poet, Dominko Zlatarić (1558—1610), in a long poem on the nature of love, "Krasnu te svršeno i dragu Bog sazda",⁹ will deliberately quote Džore Držić's version of Dante's saying:

...nis' tvrđa kamena,
Da možeš ne ljubit, od koga s' ljubljena,
(ll. 47—48)

but then, as if to show his direct and immediate acquaintance with Dante, after the two lines quoted he proceeds to translating almost literally Dante's "Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona":

Jer zakon ljuveni ki vlada svijeh naju
Hoće, svi ljubljeni da ljubit imaju.
(ll. 49—50)

Zlatarić's poem, in which these lines occur, shows that his conception of love was very much like that of the earliest Ragusan rhymesters. Secrecy is a condition essential to love's

⁸ V. Jagić i Đ. Daničić, *Pjesme Nikole Dimitrovića i Nikole Nalješkovića*. SPH V, Zagreb, 1873, p. 3, ll. 7—10.

⁹ P. Budmani, *Djela Dominka Zlatarića*. SPH XXI, Zagreb, 1890, No. 85, pp. 214—216.

existence, consequently the lover dare not look at his beloved freely, lest the flame with which he secretly burns should be revealed. Discussing the difference between sacred and profane love, the poet proclaims himself an advocate of the sacred Platonic passion. He prays God to keep him from wishing anything that could harm his beloved's good name. It is still the strain of the lyric poetry of Dante and his followers, with its conceits and metaphysical norms of love, that makes itself felt here. But this foreign element is by now assimilated and no longer seems to be introduced from outside. It is rather felt as forming an integral part of Ragusan literature.

In some instances the Ragusan poets consciously and intentionally quote Dante. In the case of the famous *terzina*

Ed ella a me: "Nessun maggior dolore,
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
nella miseria; e ciò sa il tuo dottore,"
(*Inf.*, V, 121—123)

Menčetić knows that the lines are so well-known and trite that, when he uses them to open with them poem No. 306 (SPH II, p. 177), he introduces the quotation, as a "quotation", by the little phrase "people say":

Govore jur druži: "Ni veće žalosti
Ner smišljat u tuzi minute radosti."
(II, 1—2)

But here again the quotation does not hang in the air; the whole poem is an expansion of the idea expressed in Dante's *terzina* which is incorporated as a kind of motto in the first two lines of Menčetić's poem. In fact his whole poem (of twenty lines) consists of variations on this given theme, and in lines 13—16 the poet actually states again and paraphrases the original subject:

... zač veće ni muke
Negoli izgubit dragu stvar iz ruke.
Ter sad pun dreselja, kada se spomenu
Od togaj veselja, vas jadom povenu.

The whole of Dante's central idea is contained in the last two quoted lines: *Nessun maggior dolore* (vas jadom povenu), *che ricordarsi* (kada se spomenu) *del tempo felice* (od togaj veselja) *nella miseria* (sad pun dreselja).

A freer variation on the same theme is found in the opening "terzina" of Menčetić's poem No. 308 (SPH II, p. 178) which is divided in his *Canzoniere* from the above quoted only by one other poem:

U veljih jes tugah tko je bil prjeđe blag
U zlatu i slugah, a zatim grede nag;
Nu muke ni veće ljuvene nesrjeće.
(II, 1—3)

The poem is interesting also from the point of view of metre. It is composed of three-line stanzas (I call them "terzine"), the first two lines being usual Ragusan dodecasyllables with internal rhymes while in the third line the two hemistichs rhyme together. This metrical form, which is used also by Džore Držić in two poems (SPH XXXIII, No. 11, p. 20 and No. 42, p. 42), has probably its origin in the Italian *sesta rima* which rhymes in the same way: *ababcc*.

The motif of "Nessun maggior dolore" will be used by other Ragusan poets as well, by Nikola Dimitrović, for instance, in his already mentioned collection of wise saws, the 12th of which runs as follows:

Tko nejma, boli se; tko je imal, još veće,
Kada pak vidi se u rukah nesreće,
(SPH V, p.4)

while the 22nd comes still closer to Dante's saying:

Nije veće žalosti, živ čovjek ku čuti,
Nego li iz radosti u tugu panuti.
(*Ib.*)

And, to end this long line of descendants from Dante's famous *terzina*, here is what Mavro Vetranović Čavčić (1482—1576) made of it in his *Pjesanca Latinom*:¹⁰

Radosti minute nu neću pobrajat
Ni tuge priljute iz nova ponavljat;
Zač veća nije žalos ni veća boljezan,
Minutu ner rados pripijevat u pjesan.
Vaj kad se prikrati minuta tva rados
I svasma obrati u tužbu i u žalost.
(ll. 47—50)

Vetranović, as we shall see in a moment, knew Dante's work very well. Other echoes from the *Inferno* have been noticed in his work, and in a miracle play on the resurrection of Christ (*Uskršnjutje Isukrstovo*) he even quotes part of the inscription over the Gate of Hell in Dante's original Italian.¹¹

Passing from echoes of the *Inferno* to those of the *Purgatorio*, we have first of all the fine concluding *terzina* of canto XIV with which Virgil, speaking to Dante in the second *Girone*, ends his sad reflections on the things which human choice relinquishes and the things it grasps:

¹⁰ V. Jagić i I. A. Kaznačić, *Pjesme Mavra Vetranovića Čavčića*. Dio I. SPH III, Zagreb, 1871. Pp. 82—88.

¹¹ V. Jagić, I. A. Kaznačić i Đ. Daničić, *Pjesme Mavra Vetranovića Čavčića*. Dio II. SPH IV, Zagreb, 1872. P. 207, between lines 208 and 209.

Chiamavi il cielo, e intorno vi si gira,
mostrandovi le sue bellezze eterne,
e l'occhio vostro pure a terra mira.
(ll. 148—150)

These lines are, at first sight, quite casually cited by Zlatarić in a poem beginning "Ah, nemoj toli stat nemiran odveće" (SPH XXI, No. 29, p. 182):

Vrte se nebesa i s njima naša čes,
Ter mnoga čudesa vidit nam dano jes.
(ll. 7—8)

Zlatarić obviously knew his Dante well, for we have already noticed him elsewhere quoting the saying "Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona". His poem is addressed to his friend and fellow-poet Savko Bobaljević (*Gospodinu S. B.*) whom he consoles and urges not to lose courage because from all sides "the envy of wicked people" gives him such grave trouble:

I misli veselih ne gubi, gdi od svud
Nenavis ljudi zlih zdaje ti žestok trud.
(ll. 3—4)

It is true that the quotation from Dante has been given a new turn in Zlatarić's version, but it is significant that Zlatarić has not tacked it on on the spur of the moment; he has been reminded of it because his friend has been suffering from the envy of the wicked, and Virgil addresses the quoted words to Dante while they go along the *Girone* of the Envious, and the topic of their talk is Envy.

Another and more familiar passage from the *Purgatorio* attracted the attention of at least one Ragusan poet. It is the account of the Garden of Eden on the summit of Purgatory where to Dante appears Matelda gathering flowers:

e la m'apparve, si com' egli appare
subitamente cosa che disvia
per meraviglia tutt'altro pensare,
una donna soletta, che si gia
cantando ed iscegliendo fior da fiore,
ond'era pinta tutta la sua via.
(XXVIII, 37—42)

The beginning of the second *terzina* is clearly reflected in a long "poem of chastity" (*Poema de Castitate*) which is contained in the second part of Ranjina's *Canzoniere*, where it bears the title *Capitolo de la Castità* (SPH II, No. 641, pp. 442—445) and which used to be, and still is by some scholars, attributed to Džore Držić.¹² In the Ragusan poem Dante's Matelda becomes a fairy (*vila*):

¹² See J. Hamm's study in his edition of Džore Držić's *Pjesni Ljuvene* (SPH XXXIII, pp. 113—114).

Upazih nika vil cvit po cvit po polju
Gdi štiple ter u kril svoj slaga na volju.
(ll. 45—46)

Dante's "iscegliendo fior da fiore" rendered faithfully by "cvit po cvit... gdi štiple" (where "štiple", of course, does not mean "pinches", but "culls" or "gathers"), leaves no doubt as to the origin of the Ragusan poet's phrase. But Dante's *terzina* just quoted reminded me, and there is no reason why it should not have reminded the anonymous Ragusan poet, of a strikingly similar passage in the *Purgatorio*, in fact in the canto which immediately precedes the one in which Matelda appears. It is Canto XXVII in which, during the ascent to Earthly Paradise, Dante falls into a slumber and dreams of Leah and Rachel, the types of the active and contemplative life respectively. Like Matelda, Leah is also going along a meadow gathering flowers and singing:

Giovane e bella in sogno mi pareo
donna vedere andar per una landa
cogliendo fiori; e cantando dicea:
"Sappia, qualunque il mio nome domanda,
ch'io mi son Lia, e vo movendo intorno
le belle mani a farmi una ghirlanda."
(ll. 97—102)

Here we see Leah making for herself a garland of the flowers she had culled. It is interesting that the Ragusan poet, in two lines which follow immediately after his quoted couplet, speaks of his Vila having made a garland and put it on her head:

pak vidjeh gdje savi venačac jedan lip
i gdi ga postavi na kosi i na hip.
(ll. 47—48)

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that these lines occur in a "poem of chastity", just as Dante in a vision sees Leah in a canto of the *Purgatorio* at the beginning of which he and Virgil and Statius are greeted by the Angel of Chastity whom they see beyond the fire standing at the entrance to the Pass of Pardon and hear him pronouncing the blessing on the pure in heart: "Beati mundo corde."

With one exception, reminiscences from the *Paradiso* in the works of the Ragusan poets are vaguer than those from the other two *Cantiche*. The exception is St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary in the Emyrean with which the last canto of the *Divine Comedy* begins:

Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio,
umile ed alta più che creatura,
termine fisso d'eterno consiglio,

tu se' colej, che l'umana natura
nobilitasti sì che il suo Fattore
non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.

(Par., XXXIII, 1—6)

In his prayer Bernard implores the Virgin to intercede for Dante that he may attain to the vision of God and that, under her protection, he may persevere in truth and righteousness. The prayer is also a hymn of praise to the Virgin. "St Bernard, in life the most ardent worshipper in the Virgin-cult, now extols her as excelling all creatures, angelic or human, in lowliness, goodness, and vision."¹³ Bernard's devotion to Mary was especially expressed in his four homilies *De Laudibus Virginis Matris*.

No Ragusan poet who wrote religious verse — and most of them, following the example of Petrarch, concluded their amorous *canzonieri* with an apostrophe to the Virgin — was able to resist the temptation of imitating the prayer of St. Bernard. Perhaps there was a special reason for this. At the beginning of canto XXXI Dante contemplates the snow-white rose, filled with the souls of the redeemed:

In forma dunque di candida rosa
mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.
(ll. 1—3)

Turning then to hear his guide Beatrice speak of this celestial scene, he finds her gone for she could take him no farther on his journey. In her place he finds Bernard, a soul of extreme benevolence of aspect, who has come to lead him to the vision of God and who in a way introduces himself to Dante:

E la Regina del cielo, ond'ì ardo
tutto d'amor, ne farà ogni grazia,
però ch'io sono il suo fedel Bernardo.
(XXXI, 100—102)

And then follows a *terzina* which I refrain from quoting because it has been quoted, with pride, by every Croat writing on Dante. To convey his awe at the presence of St. Bernard, Dante asks the reader to imagine the feelings of a pilgrim from a remote region of Christendom, perhaps from Croatia, gazing at the veil of St. Veronica in Rome. It is just possible that the reference to Croatia in this context endeared both Bernard and his prayer to our poets.

The most faithful rendering of the opening of Bernard's prayer ("Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio") we find in a

¹³ See Barbara Reynolds' note on "The Prayer to the Virgin" in her and Dorothy L. Sayers' translation of the *Paradiso*. (*The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine*. Cantica III. Paradise. London, 1962, p. 347).

poem by Nikola Nalješković (SPH V, No. 6, p. 113) of which the first line is an exact quotation:

O majko djevice, o kćeri od sina,
O slavna kraljice od nebes jedina.

Šiško Menčetić in his turn begins the concluding short poem of the first part of his *Canzoniere* (SPH II, No. 366, p. 223) with an almost verbatim translation of the fifth *terzina* of Bernard's prayer, which runs as follows:

Donna, sei tanto grande e tanto vali,
che qual vuol grazia ed a te non ricorre,
sua disianza vuol volar senz'ali.
(ll. 13—15)

And here is Menčetić's version of these lines:

Uzmožna gospođe, tko milos ku žudi
A k tebi ne pođe, on zaman sve trudi;
On hoće kako stvar bez krila letiti
Tko bude Božji dar bez tebe želiti.
(ll. 1—4)

It is to be noticed that in the very next two lines of his poem Menčetić paraphrases the two concluding lines of the first stanza of the final canzone ("Vergine bella, che di Sol vestita") in Petrarch's *Canzoniere*:

Soccorri a la mia guerra,
Bench' i' sia terra — e tu del ciel regina.

To him Petrarch was obviously a more congenial poet; and this is how he imitates his two quoted lines:

A zatoj grem k tebi, dobro crv da sam ja,
A tvoje na nebi kraljicom ime sja.
(ll. 5—6)

The same contamination of Dante's lines with those of Petrarch we find in other poets, in Mavro Vetranović for instance. He has a whole series of poems addressed to the Virgin (SPH III, Nos. 10—18, pp. 399—426) where echoes of both Dante and Petrarch regularly recur ("djevo prislavna, gospoje i majko", p. 400, l. 53; "višnja kraljice i kruno svijeh žena", p. 401, l. 59; "u sunačcu odjevena", p. 417, l. 8, which is Petrarch's "di Sol vestita", etc.), but the closest parallel to the opening of Bernard's prayer is his poem No. 12 (SPH IV, p. 36) which begins:

Pričista djevice i majko blažena,
Anđelska kraljice i kruno svijeh žena.

But the poet who seems to have felt most deeply and intensely the exalted poetry of Dante's *Paradiso* is Džore Držić. In

one of his recently unearthed poems (SPH XXXIII, No. 89, p. 84) he freely paraphrases the "Salve Regina" with an eye on St. Bernard's prayer. A clear indication that he was partly following also Dante is provided by the fact that in his paraphrase he reproduces exactly Dante's *terza rima*, and so he provides the earliest and, as far as I know, the only example of this particular metre in old Croatian literature. His poem is composed of seven regular *terzine* (hendecasyllables rhyming aba, bcb, cdc, etc.) with the obligatory added line at the end which rhymes with the middle line of the last *terzina* and clinches the poem. As a sample here are Držić's first four *terzine*:

Zdrava kraljice, mati od milosti,
Pravo ufanje, život neskončani,
Čisti studenac izvrsne sladosti,

Eve sinovi kroz grijeh prognani
s tužnim uzdahom tebe vapijemo,
Tebe molimo, sužanstva nas brani.

Pogledaj kako u suzah plovemo,
Ter nas slobodi sej tamne tamnice,
Gdi sve bez tvoje pomoći ginemo.

Puna milosti, pričista divice,
Ka s' oca majka i kći sina tvoga,
Pomozi nas, o naša odvjjetnice.

Of course, "divice, / Ka s' oca majka i kći sina tvoga" is again an exact rendering of, almost an "improvement" on, Dante's "Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio".

Džore Držić is the only Ragusan poet in whose work we find, next to St. Bernard's prayer, reflected also other passages of the *Paradiso*, but, being a good poet, he never copies slavishly his model. In fact, all his poems, especially those in the first part of his *Canzoniere* where he speaks of his Platonic passion, seem to be inspired by the *Paradiso*. We have already noticed that in his poems he three times mentions the "third heaven" which may not only be the "terzo ciel" of Dante's canzone "Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete" but also the "third sphere" of Love, the "terzo epiciclo" of Venus in his *Paradiso* (cantos VIII and IX).

The words "paradise", "heaven", "stars", "angel" constantly recur in Držić's poetry. His Lady's face is celestial, or rather paradisiacal ("rajsko nje lice"), her eyes burn with light, they have all the paradisiac graces:

Oči joj jak zvizde gore u svitlosti,
U njih su sve gizde i rajske milosti.

(No. 3, p. 14, ll. 6—7)

She is like an angel crowned in Paradise (No. 6, p. 17):

Očima s' sunačce i anđel pozorom,
Svitli raj vinačce goji t' rano zorom.
(ll. 7—8)

Her fame ("glas") is not of this world; it is angelic, celestial, paradisiac (No. 9, pp. 19—20):

Nu nije zemeljski ni na ov svit stvoren,
Ner s nebes andelski u raju uzoren.
Ter bi dan toj vili, umrli da znaju,
Ku milos Bog dili prid sobom u raju.
(ll. 11—14)

Everyone runs to see her face, for she is like an angel come from Paradise (No. 11, p. 20):

Eto, svi jur teku nje ličce da vide,
Sī anđel, još reku, iz raja kad pride?
Koji me otravi u željah ljubavi.
(ll. 16—18)

From this point of view especially significant is the short poem (No. 2, p. 14) where, speaking of his beloved, the poet imitates Dante speaking of Beatrice. His Lady has descended from heaven and she is the only ornament of this world. Now imagine, says the poet, how beautifully adorned must be "bright Paradise" where a whole ring of such ladies rejoices dancing and singing with the angels without end and without number:

Pokli ni stvar ina da saj svit uresa
Ner ovaj jedina ka sleti s nebesa,
Svak začni misliti ter umom poziraj
Čim ima tuj biti urešen svitli raj,
Gđi tacih gospoja kolo se veseli
Bez konca i broja pojući s anđeli.

In the opening poem of his *Canzoniere*, "Oh tužne sej pjesni s uzdahom složene", Držić states his theory of love and applies it to his own passion. The word love is first mentioned there in a context which is clearly reminiscent of the concluding line of Dante's *Divine Comedy*:

Ljubav ka nebesa i vas svit vlada,

and it is apt to end this section dealing with the impact of the *Paradiso* on old Ragusan poetry with Dante's line:

L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.¹⁴

¹⁴ I noted briefly most of these parallels between Dante and the old lyrical poets of Dubrovnik in my *Italian Influence on the Poets of the Ragusan Republic* where, on pp. 125—129, I deal especially with the indirect influence of the *dolce stil novo* school and the direct influence

So far I have been dealing with echoes of Dante in old Croatian lyrical poetry. These echoes, with one or two exceptions, were limited to the imitation or, in some cases, even to the translation of single lines or single *terzine* from Dante's work. It is only when we come to Mavro Vetranović, whose shorter poems, as we have seen, bear traces of a thorough acquaintance with the work of Dante, that we pass from lyrical poetry to more ambitious works where Dante's *Divine Comedy* as a whole is the source of inspiration. From this point of view Vetranović marks a very convenient phase of transition from one kind of imitation to another, for in his work we find examples of both.

Vetranović is not only the most prolific Ragusan poet of the period but also one of the best and most original. The first of his two compositions which both bear the title *Remeta* ("The Eremite") is an "idyllic" poem in which he gives an attractive realistic picture of the life of a hermit monk on the lonely deserted island of Sv. Andrija near Dubrovnik. The poem is rightly praised as one of the most genuine and original works of old Ragusan literature. For his allegorical epic *Pelegrin* ("The Pilgrim") Vetranović borrowed the fundamental idea from Dante. In the pilgrim's wanderings through the world, the poet depicts the three spiritual states of sin, repentance and redemption which correspond to Dante's Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. But there the parallel ends, because the phantastic adventures of Vetranović's pilgrim have nothing in common with Dante's progress through the three realms.

Much has been made of and written upon the supposed Dantean character of the *Pelegrin* but, with the exception of a few scattered reminiscences, there is nothing in it that resembles Dante's work. One of the best Croat literary historians, Mihovil Kombol, in his *History of Croatian Literature* dismisses very briefly Vetranović's "longest work" and, quite legitimately, does not even mention Dante's name in connexion with it. In the concluding paragraph of the chapter dealing with Vetranović, he limits himself to saying that "he had a literary education like his other contemporaries" and that "he knew the classics, Dante, Ariosto... and some Italian satirical poets".¹⁵ With his conclusion we may rest satisfied.

of Dante. Nothing had been written on the subject before and very little has been written since, with the exception of Arturo Cronia's remarks in his *La fortuna di Dante nella letteratura serbo-croata* (Padova, 1965). His remarks, however, are practically out of date because what he has to say on the subject is taken, mostly verbatim translated into Italian, from my book published in London thirty-five years ago. Cronia repeats all my parallels hardly adding one of his own and never even troubling to refer to his source of information.

¹⁵ Mihovil Kombol, *Povijest hrvatske književnosti*, 2nd ed., Zagreb, 1961, pp. 112 and 121.

To find an allegorical work in which Dante's influence is more profoundly felt and reflected we have to pass from Dubrovnik to Zadar in northern Dalmatia and look for it in Petar Zoranić's¹⁶ *Planine* ("The Mountains"), his only preserved work which is an allegorico-pastoral extravaganza where prose and verse are intermingled.¹⁷

Much has been written about Zoranić,¹⁸ but despite all the studies dealing with his work there are still problems that have not yet been cleared, let alone solved. One of the main questions requiring solution is the extent and the disentanglement of foreign elements in the *Planine*.¹⁹ Although most critics and literary historians mention as his models Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and the Latin poets, in the first place Virgil and Ovid, an inveterate opinion has taken root among literary experts that Zoranić's *Planine* are one of the many, more or less insignificant, imitations of Sannazzaro's *Arcadia* which had inundated the whole of European literature in the 16th and 17th centuries.

At times some of these scholars are apt to forget that Zoranić was a very learned man and that his culture did not lag far behind that of his model Sannazzaro, so that he approached the works of Virgil and of Dante with more deference and reverence than Sannazzaro's *Arcadia*. Very often Zoranić begins to imitate Sannazzaro, but then he soon reverts to Sannazzaro's own models and, leaving the small stream of the Neapolitan poet, he turns to the fountain-head, to

... quel Virgilio, e quella fonte,
che spande di parlar si largo fiume.

(*Inf.*, I, 79—80)

¹⁶ Practically nothing is known about his life. It is certain that he was born at Zadar in the first decade of the 16th century. Most literary historians give 1508 as the year of his birth. According to the latest researches he was born in August or September 1506. The date of his death is also very controversial. According to the same recent source he was dead "a couple of years" after 1543. See Stjepan Antoljak, "Novi podaci o hrvatskom pjesniku Petru Zoraniću", *Grada* XXII, Yugoslav Academy of Zagreb, 1952, pp. 245—273.

¹⁷ It was written in 1536 and first printed in Venice in 1569. P. Budmani prepared an edition for the Yugoslav Academy (SPH XVI, Zagreb, 1888), it was again edited with excellent notes by V. Štefanić (Zagreb, 1942), then the Yugoslav Academy published a phototyped reproduction of the original Venetian edition (Zagreb, 1952) and, finally, it was critically edited in 1964 in Zagreb, together with J. Baraković's *Vila Slovinka*, by Franjo Švelec. It is to this last edition that references are made here.

¹⁸ Švelec registered 64 items (essays, articles) on Zoranić and his work.

¹⁹ I have tried to solve it in my "Strani elementi i domaća tradicija u Zoranićevim *Planinama*" (*Zadarska revija*, Zadar, VIII/1959, No. 1, pp. 8—24) of which A. Cronia has surreptitiously also made ample use.

He turns also directly to Dante. In fact, it would be appropriate for Zoranić to address to Dante himself the words of homage with which Dante greets Virgil:

Tu se' lo mio maestro, e il mio autore;
tu se' solo colui, da cui io tolsi
lo bello stile, che m'ha fatto onore.
(*Inf.*, I, 85—87)

Furthermore it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that Zoranić is a patriotic poet who consciously leans upon the Croat literary tradition and upon the folk poetry of his own country, quoting in the *Planine* his fellow-poet Marko Marulić of Split, adopting and adapting some of his metrical features for his own use, composing poems based on the native popular folksongs, and rekindling with his patriotic ardour even what he borrows. And so Zoranić succeeded in blending into one poetic whole all the heterogeneous elements of which his work is made up and which are so interlaced that very often it is difficult to ascertain precisely where one ends and where the other begins. I will attempt to disentangle from this "ravelled skein" the thread of Dante's influence.

First of all special stress has to be laid once more upon the fact that to Zoranić Sannazzaro is not the only model as he is to so many pastoral poets of the period. Nor is Petrarch, though he has been imitated by Zoranić in the "sonnets" inserted in his *Planine*, the ubiquitous tutelary genius as he is in the *canzonieri* of most contemporary poets. Dante's influence on Zoranić was much more significant and more considerable than is generally supposed, and since Dante is an incomparably better poet than either Petrarch or, of course, Sannazzaro, this influence has been more beneficial.

Another thing to be noticed is that, while echoes of Sannazzaro and Petrarch are to be found mainly in the verse insertions (in the eclogues in dialogue form and in the would-be sonnets), Dante's presence is felt almost exclusively in the narrative prose sections of *Planine*; and that is perhaps the reason why it was more difficult to detect. In these prose passages we often come across reminiscences and even frank borrowings of single lines or phrases from the *Divine Comedy*; but what has to be stressed at the outset is that Zoranić was obviously impressed and attracted by the structure and by the moral system of Dante's work. And that is clearly seen in his *Planine*.

In order to be able to gauge exactly Dante's ascendancy over Zoranić in this respect it will be necessary to glance at the subject-matter of Zoranić's work. The story of his *Mountains* is briefly this: The poet is escorted by the Fairy of Love on a fantastic journey as far as the Devil's Gate. There, after looking

down the pit of Hell through a magic stone, he proceeds alone on his way to the Mountains. The next three days he spends with the shepherds in perfect Arcadian surroundings. The first day they all sing love songs; the second day they tell tales in which, by way of metamorphoses, the poet explains the genesis of rivers, towns and hills in his native district around Zadar and Nin; the third day they sing eclogues in dialogue form. On the fifth day of his journey the poet finds his way to the Vilenica, the Fairy, who cures him of his love-sickness. Here the poet falls asleep and in a dream he sees the Garden of Glory. There four Muses appear to him carrying golden apples which stand for literary works in the vernacular tongue. The Latin, Greek and Chaldean Muses have many apples, but the Croatian fairy has only a few. On the sixth day Zoranić, with the help of another "vila", follows the course of the river Krka and then reaches by sea his ancestral home on the anniversary of the death of Bishop Divnić who is buried in the cathedral of Nin. Zoranić pays homage at the bishop's tomb and in a vision beholds the misery of this world. A little later he is snatched to heaven and sees Truth flanked by St. Jerome, the patron saint of Dalmatia, and Bishop Divnić; the latter advises him to leave earthly love and seek the truth. And Zoranić saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Even from this brief summary one can see that the poet was following in the footsteps of Dante. The allegorical journey represents human life. The underlying idea is the purification of sin and earthly love, and the attainment of real happiness in the contemplation of Truth. The topography of Zoranić's Hell, of which the reader is allowed a glimpse through the Devil's Gate, is based on that of Dante. The two Lucifers are strikingly similar. Dante's Satan, by flapping his huge bat-like wings, produces "three winds" which freeze the whole of Cocytus:

Sotto ciascuna (i. e. spalla) uscivan due grandi ali,
 ... e quelle svolazzava,
 sì che tre venti si movean da ello,

Quindi Cocito tutto s'aggelava.

(*Inf.*, XXXIV, 46, 50—52)

In the same way, in Zoranić's description of Hell, Lucifer flapping his immense wings freezes all the waters: "Nesmernim kreljuti Lucifer polepetavši sve vode u magnutje ustinuvši poledi" (Ch. V, p. 53).²⁰ Zoranić's Garden of Glory ("Perivoj od

²⁰ This was first noticed by Tomo Matić ("Zoranić's *Planine* und Sannazzaro's *Arcadia*", *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, XIX/1897, pp. 496—497) and later expanded by Vjekoslav Štefanić in his edition of *Planine* (note 3, p. 49). T. Matić, who has since dealt with Zoranić in

Slave") is a replica of the Garden of Eden on the top of Dante's Purgatory; even the tree of knowledge of good and evil is there, and a gloss at the side reminds us of its importance, "Arbor scientiae boni et mali", while Zoranić's Vision of Heaven at the end of the work takes the place of Dante's Paradise.

Zoranić follows Dante also in details. Just as Dante in the first line of his *Inferno* in a roundabout way tells his age ("Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita") so Zoranić in the very beginning of his work says that he fell in love having completed the third part of his life ("prem tretí vik žitka moga svršujući", Ch. I, p. 39). Then he is transferred to the foot of the mountain Velebit on a golden apple which glides on the surface of the water faster than arrow shot from the bow, "brže neg strila iz luka puščena" (Ch. III, p. 49), and this reminds us of Phlegyas' little craft flying over the squalid waves of the Marsh of Styx in the Fifth Circle of Dante's Hell:

Corda non pinse mai da se saetta,
che si corresse via per l'aer snella,
com'io vidi una nave piccioletta

venir per l'acqua verso noi in quella.
(*Inf.*, VIII, 13—16)

Considering Zoranić's familiarity with the classics, particularly with Virgil, he might have also been reminded of the nymph Cymodocea pushing Aeneas' ship which then

... fugit illa per undas
Ocior et jaculo et ventos aequante sagitta.
(*Aeneis*, X, 247—248)

The striking description of daybreak after the first night of the poet's journey across the Mountains, which is incidentally the finest piece of prose in the whole work, excessively vivid and picturesque, was probably inspired by the fine *terzina*

Quali i fioretti dal notturno gelo
chinati e chiusi, poi che il sol gl'imbianca,
si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo.
(*Inf.*, II, 127—129)

The corresponding passage in Zoranić runs as follows:

Ni još sasvima rosa sa cvitov opala biše, a sunce svitlu glavu
iz najvišega vrha iskomoljujući meni grede u oči udiraše, a rosno
listje po dubju i cvitke tolikoje zrakom upirući kako pozlaćeni
činjaše.

(Ch. III, p. 49)

three separate essays, is a pioneer in the serious study of the poet's work. His criticism and V. Štefanić's explanatory notes are indispensable to every student of Zoranić.

This, freely translated, reads:

The dew had not quite fallen yet from the flowers and the sun,
beginning to show its bright head from behind the highest peak,
fixed its beams upon my eyes and, striking the dewy leaves of the
trees and the flowerets, tinged them with gold.

Here, as in several other instances, Zoranić is deeply struck by a passage of Dante and feels impelled to write something himself, something different perhaps, but not so different as to deviate completely from the origin of inspiration.

Franjo Švelec prefers to see Zoranić's source of inspiration for the above passage in another of Dante's many evocations of early dawn:

Tempo era dal principio del mattino;
e il sol montava in sù con quelle stelle
ch'eran con lui, quando l' amor divino
mosse da prima quelle cose belle.

(*Inf.*, I, 37—40)

Švelec says that this *terzina* "has long since been established as Zoranić's model". I do not know who and when established this, but I fail to see here any resemblance between Dante's lines and the prose passage of Zoranić. Švelec himself admits this in his next sentence: "It is clear at first sight," he says, "that Zoranić's description is quite different from that of Dante."²¹ And I quite agree with him.

But full credit is due to Švelec for having first noticed that here Zoranić was actually following in the footsteps of Marko Marulić rather than of Dante. Here are Marulić's lines quoted by Švelec:

Još iz dna izvita ne biše sva zora,
ni rosa sa cvita opala, da gora
biljaše jur zgora visoko vrhami,
a struja od mora mišaše iskrami.

(*Judita*, I, 105—108)

The verbal parallels between these lines and Zoranić's prose passage (especially Marulić's "Još . . . ne biše . . . ni rosa sa cvita opala" and Zoranić's "Ni još . . . rosa sa cvitov opala biše") make the case not only plausible but convincing. But I still insist that if either Marulić or Zoranić, or both, were thinking here of Dante at all, and I think that they both were, then they were thinking of the "fioretti dal notturno gelo chinati e chiusi" and not of the "Tempo . . . dal principio del mattino". Another argument in favour of this I find, at least for Marulić, in his

²¹ F. Švelec, "Planine Petra Zoranića", *Zadarska revija*, Zadar, XIII/1959, No. 1, p. 64.

use of the not too common expression "gora biljaše" which renders exactly Dante's "imbianca".

But Marulić, a good translator of, and expert on, Dante, seems to have been thinking also of another and more famous *terzina*:

L'alba vinceva l'ôra mattutina
che fuggia innanzi, sì che di lontano
conobbi il tremolar della marina.
(*Purg.*, I, 115—117)

And it is not for nothing that four lines farther Dante speaks of the "dew fighting with the sun":

Quando noi fummo dove la rugiada
pugna col sole, per essere in parte
dove ad orezza, poco si dirada...
(*Purg.*, I, 121—123)

This must have been familiar to both Marulić and Zoranić. But apart from this, the last line of Marulić's cited stanza is clearly reminiscent, to me at least, of the concluding line of the first of Dante's two *terzine* just quoted. Of course, Marulić's

a struja od mora mišaše iskrami

is a necessarily rather poor rendering of Dante's really untranslatable line

conobbi il tremolar della marina,

where Dante, by three times almost regularly alternating the liquid consonants "l" and "r" (iL tRemoLaR deLla maRina) achieves a magic sound-effect and conjures up the vision of a vast expanse of water trembling and sparkling in the early morning twilight.

There is another twilight in Zoranić's *Planine* inspired by the ancient Greek legend of Eos, the dawn goddess, who fell in love with a mortal, Tithonus. She begged Zeus to make Tithonus immortal, but omitted to obtain eternal youth for him, so that he became an old shrivelled creature, little more than a voice, or was turned into a grasshopper. The myth has always been popular with poets, from the days of classical antiquity to Alfred Tennyson in whose fine poem *Tithonus* "this grey shadow, once a man" laments his "cruel immortality".²²

Zoranić must have known the story from classical sources, but the image of the "concubine" of ancient Tithonus coming forth reluctantly from her lover's arms was certainly suggested

²² See P. Harvey's *Companion to Classical Literature* (Oxford, 1937) s. v. "Tithonus".

to him by the *terzina* with which Dante opens Canto IX of the *Purgatorio*:

La concubina di Titone antico
già s'imbiancava al balco d'oriente,
fuor delle braccia del suo dolce amico.

Zoranić in his turn begins Chapter XV (p. 132) of his *Planine* as follows:

Jasna Zora jure iz ruk staroga ljubvenika ishodeći rosno cvitje
lici svojimi bilimi i rumenimi kripljaše... (The bright Dawn,
coming forth from the arms of her old lover, braced the dewy
flowers with her white and rosy cheeks...)

In a previous chapter (Ch. XIII, p. 107) Zoranić had used in passing the same image:

Jur svitla zora bila i rumena lica iz krila staroga ljubvenika
podvizaše... (Already the bright dawn was lifting her white
and rosy cheeks from the bosom of her old lover...)

In Zoranić's both passages we have the Dawn disengaging herself from the arms or bosom (*fuor delle braccia*) of her old lover (*Titone antico*). Her cheeks are white and rosy. The rosy hue is an attribute of Dawn in classical antiquity; in Homer she is rose-fingered (*rhododactylos*). Hence Zoranić's rose-coloured (*rumena*) dawn, but her white colour (*bila*) in his work very likely comes from Dante's "s' imbiancava".

To exhaust this "crepuscular" subject I may mention that Zoranić begins several chapters of his work by a description of daybreak, which is quite natural, for in this way he wishes to mark a new stage on his journey after each night's rest. So we have Chapter XIV (p. 111) beginning:

I budući svitla Danica sunčenoga zraka topline bojeći se pobigla,
a sunce jasnuti počamši... (As the bright morning star, fearing
the heat of the sunshine, had fled and the sun had started to
lighten...)

The first sentence of Chapter XVI runs as follows:

Jure sunčeni zrak tepleći zemlju sa cvitov rosu opluti činil biše.
(The sun, warming the earth, had already caused the dew to dry
from the flowers.)

Chapter XXI begins:

Jur svude jasna zora novi dan navišćevaše i ptičice sunčenu
svitlost žubereći pozdravljahu... (Everywhere the clear dawn
announced the new day and, warbling, the little birds greeted the
sunlight...)

All these descriptions may be vaguely reminiscent of one or another of Dante's lovely vignettes inspired by nature. One

of his chapters Zoranić exceptionally begins by describing not the dawn but the evening twilight, when the poet with his shepherd friends and their flock reach the sheep-fold:

Jure sunce u nazapadnje more svitlo lice ukri, donjim, ako su ki, dan vodeći, kada na stan s živinami dojdosmo. (The sun had already hidden his bright face in the western sea, taking the day to the antipodes, if there be any, when we reached the sheep-fold with our animals.

(Ch. VII, p. 69).

This might have been suggested by Dante's description of the end of the first day of his ultramundane journey:

Lo giorno se n'andava, e l'aer bruno
toglieva gli animai, che sono in terra,
dalle fatiche loro...

(*Inf.*, II, 1—3)

After this long digression let us retrace our steps in order to proceed with Zoranić on his journey. Coming to the much discussed line:

sì che il piè fermo sempre era il più basso,
(*Inf.*, I, 30)

he abandoned Dante's ambiguous vagueness which has kept commentators busy for centuries giving rise to a fierce controversy (whether the poet was mounting or descending, whether "fermo" meant "the right foot", etc.), and by adopting the more plausible of the two possible interpretations, made it clear in his translation of the line that the poet was climbing the mountain and not descending: "Uputih se tada i gredući vazda noga stanovita dolnja biše" (Ch. III, p. 49. "I started then and, as I went, the fixed foot was always the lower"). In a previous sentence in the same paragraph he had said: "Uz goru uputih se" ("I started going up the mountain"), which makes it clear that he was mounting, just as in a later passage (Ch. XXI, p. 157), when he was descending, he says that he kept fixing the higher foot: "Niz vrh uputih se vazda gornju nogu stanoviteći."²³

As Dante is hindered on his journey by a leopard, a lion and a she-wolf, so Zoranić is assaulted by a seven-headed monster representing the seven deadly sins (Ch. III, p. 49). The heads belong to a lion, a bear, a raven, a harlot, a snake, a toad and a wolf, so that two correspond to Dante's beasts. Just as Dante is helped out of difficulty by Virgil, so the "Vila" comes to the rescue of the Croatian poet. The words of Virgil

²³ First noticed by V. Štefanić, *o. c.*, p. 137, n. 1.

and the Vila to the respective poets on this occasion are identical.²⁴ Virgil says:

A te convien tenere altro viaggio,
(*Inf.*, I, 91)

and the Vila: "Drugi put držati triba ti je" (Ch. III, p. 50). Vila's words immediately following these, "Tribi jest da kripka i smina srca budeš" (It is necessary that you should be of strong and bold heart), come very close to Virgil's words addressed to Dante in front of the Gate of Hell:

ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta.
(*Inf.*, III, 15)

The inscription over the Gate of Hell has only two lines in Zoranić (Ch. IV, p. 52):

Po mni se uhodi u najgorčiji stan,²⁵
lako se prohodi, da teško zide van,

which means: "Through me is the way into the bitterest dwelling; it is easy to enter, but difficult to come out." Zoranić's first line is the famous Dantesque

Per me si va nella città dolente,
(*Inf.*, III, 1)

and the second is both a pale reflex of Dante's terrible last line of the inscription:

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate,
(*Inf.*, III, 9)

and a brief epitome of three lines from Petrarch's *Trionfi*:

Carcer ove si vien per strade aperte,
Onde per strette a gran pena si migra,
Ratte scese all'intrare, all'uscir erte.
(*Triumphus Cupidinis*, III, 149—151)

In a previous chapter of his *Planine* (Ch. III, p. 50) Zoranić quotes this aphorism as St. Augustin's "Facilis descensus Averni", which he then paraphrases as follows:

²⁴ Also noticed by Štefanić, o. c., p. 43, n. 5.

²⁵ F. Svec's reading "najgorčiji" must be a printer's error, for the original edition, which both P. Budmani (SPH XVI, 1888) and V. Štefanić follow, gives clearly and correctly "najgorčiji". This is required also by the metre; without that extra "i" the dodecasyllable would have only eleven syllables. The Dictionary of the Yugoslav Academy of Zagreb, s. v. "gorak", gives "gorčiji" as a more frequent comparative than "gorči" in the 15th and 16th centuries, quoting, among many examples, this particular superlative from Zoranić. The form "gorčiji" is still current in some parts of Yugoslavia.

... jer strašne i čudne stvari, sa mnom grede, vidit ćeš, meu ke ulisti lasno je, da pak van na svitlost iziti muka i trud potriban jest. (Going along with me you will see strange and terrible things among which it is easy to enter, but it requires great effort and pain to come out into the light of day).

This was one of the current and very popular maxims of the period. It was frequently quoted and elaborated both in Italy, by Pietro Bembo and other poets, and at Dubrovnik, amongst others, by Dinko Ranjina (1536—1607) and by Zlatarić. In Bembo's early *Capitolo* "Amor è, donne care, un vano e fello" we have:

L'entrar precipitoso e l'uscir erto.²⁶

Ranjina imitated the whole of Bembo's *Capitolo* in his *Elegija aliti tužba na ljubav* (SPH XVIII, No. 24, p. 18) where in passing he paraphrases also Bembo's above quoted line:

Stan u tvoj uniti s prva jur lasno je,
ali pak iziti veomi prem mučno je.
(ll. 9—10)

Zlatarić finally concludes this line of development which goes from Dante via Petrarch and Bembo to Zoranić and Ranjina. Here is his couplet (SPH XXI, No. 134, p. 246):

Lasno bi uljesti u ove prostore,
ali van izljesti trudne su pokore.

The versions of Ranjina and Zlatarić are more than reminiscent of Zoranić whose work they both might have known since Ranjina was born in the year that the *Planine* were composed and Zlatarić more than twenty years later. The verbal parallels between their lines on one hand and Zoranić's verse and prose passages on the other (stan, lako, lasno, ulisti, uljesti, muka, mučno, trud, trudno) are too many to be purely fortuitous.

When Zoran, which is the pastoral name of Zoranić himself in the *Planine*, leaves the Gate of Hell, his guide, the Vila, makes him wash his soot-covered face in the water of a clear spring (Ch. V, p. 54):

I budući tuj čista, hladna i bistra vruljica iz mramorne i živice stine izvirajući, na njoj obraz omagljen iz tmin, ke propast paklena ispušća, nikuko oskvrnjen oprati i očistiti vila čini mi. (And there, as a pure and cool and clear source burst forth from the marble live rock, the Vila made me wash and cleanse my face besmirched and somewhat soiled by the smoke emanating from the infernal abyss.)

In a similar fashion Virgil washes Dante's discoloured face with dew when they emerge from the Pit of Hell:

²⁶ P. Bembo, *Gli Asolani e le Rime*, Torino, 1932, pp. 182—183.

Ambo le mani in su l'erbetta sparte
 soavemente il mio maestro pose;
 ond' io che fui accorto di su' arte,
 porsi ver lui le guance lagrimose:
 quivi mi fece tutto discoperto
 quel color che l'inferno mi nascose.

(*Purg.*, I, 124—129)

There is yet one more passage in the *Planine* which seems to be directly taken from Dante's *Purgatorio*. In his Vision of Heaven, right at the very end of his work, Zoranić meets St. Jerome and Bishop Divnić and, forgetting that this latter is only a spirit, he advances to clasp him in his arms, but only embraces the empty air (Ch. XXIV, p. 166):

I k njemu pristupiv za zagrlit ga gdi se gospoda zagrljuju i trikrat rukami obujam, ništar ne zauhitih. (Advancing to him to embrace him as gentlemen embrace, I thrice clasped him around with my hands and caught nothing.)

Our experts on Zoranić (V. Štefanić and, after him, F. Švelec) cite as his source for this passage the scene in Virgil's *Aeneid* when Aeneas in Elysium vainly seeks to embrace the soul of his father Anchises (VI, 700—702):

Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum;
 Ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago
 Par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.

We might equally well quote Book II, ll. 792—794 of the *Aeneid* where Virgil uses exactly the same three lines in a different context. There Aeneas, at Dido's request, relates the fall of Troy and the subsequent events. He tells how he carries off from burning Troy his father Anchises on his shoulders and takes his son Ascanius by the hand, his wife Creusa following. She gets lost, but later her ghost tells Aeneas the destiny that awaits him. It is then that he attempts to take her in his arms and her image escapes his hands.

Of course, in both passages Virgil is imitating Homer's *Odyssey* where in Book XI Odysseus recounts his visit to Hades, where he sees the ghosts of many dead heroes, their wives and daughters, and converses with some of them, including his own mother Anticlea whom he three times tries in vain to embrace (ll. 204—208). Now, Zoranić was not imitating Homer for, as far as we know, he knew no Greek. In this case he was not imitating Virgil either. In my opinion he was following Dante who, in his turn, had imitated Virgil's lines in a passage of his *Purgatorio*. On the shore of Mount Purgatory, when he meets his friend Casella, he has an experience similar to that of Aeneas when he meets his father Anchises in the nether world or when he encounters the ghost of his wife Creusa:

Così al viso mio s'affissar quelle
anime fortunate tutte quante,
quasi obbliando d'ire a farsi belle.

Io vidi una di lor trarsi davante
per abbracciarmi con sì grande affetto,
che mosse me a far lo simigliante.

O ombre vane, fuor che nell'aspetto!
tre volte retro a lei le mani avvinsi,
e tante mi tornai con esse al petto.

(*Purg.*, II, 73—81)

Little is known of Casella, but the old commentators all agree that he was a musician of Florence or of Pistoia, and a personal friend of Dante's, some of whose verses he is said to have set to music, including the canzone "Amor che nella mente mi ragiona" which Casella sings to Dante in this same canto (l. 112) and which is included in the *Convivio*. It is not without interest to mention that Milton refers to this passage in his sonnet *To Mr. H. Lawes, on His Airs*, of which here are the three concluding lines:

Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

The composer Lawes (1596—1662) was an intimate friend of Milton's just as Casella was of Dante's, and as Casella set to music Dante's canzone so Lawes wrote the music for Milton's masque of *Comus*, for the famous performance at Ludlow Castle on Michellmas Night in 1634.

It is surprising that in Zoranić's *Vision of Heaven* there is hardly any trace of Dante's *Paradiso*. However we do hear an echo from it on the third day of Zoran's sojourn in the Mountains (Ch. XIV) when two shepherds, Rajko and Svitko, alternately sing a religious antiphonal poem full of quotations from the Book of Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon and the Epistle of James.²⁷ The poem begins with an apostrophe to the Trinity sung by Rajko (p. 125):

Semogući trine Gospode krasosti,²⁸
a sve tri jedino v jednakoj kriposti,
dahni u me milosti kriposnivi duh tvoj,
da tvojoj svitlosti zgodim i družbi ovoj.

²⁷ See V. Štefanić's notes 46—58 in his edition of *Planine*, pp. 131—134.

²⁸ In his edition F. Švelec reads "trino" in order to make it rhyme with "jedino". The original edition gives very clearly "trine", and I do not think that the "emendation" is justifiable. It is better to sacrifice the rhyme. "Trine" is not a substantive; as an adjective it belongs to "Gospode", and the whole line is one indivisible vocative. Therefore it is wrong, I think, to divide "Semogući trine" from "Gospode krasosti" by a comma as Švelec does.

And Svitko takes up the song in the same tone:

Semogi, ki si troj, a v trojstvu jedinan,
udahni u me duh svoj, da bude napravan
poj moj i uslišan pri milosti tvojoj,
a pake ugodan svoj družini ovoj.

Then follow the paraphrases of passages from the Psalms etc. This opening, however, comes very near to some of Dante's invocations and allusions to the Trinity; for example:

O trina luce, che in unica stella
scintillando a lor vista si gli appaga,
guarda quaggiù alla nostra procella.

(*Par.*, XXXI, 28—30)

Or, still nearer:

E credo in tre persone eterne, e queste
credo una essenza sì una e sì trina,
che soffera congiunto "sono" ed "este".

Quest'è il principio, quest'è la favilla
che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace,
e, come stella in cielo, in me scintilla.

(*Par.*, XXIV, 139—141, 145—147)

The unusual adjective "trin", in the obvious meaning of "trine" or "threefold", has an alien ring in Zoranić's context and betrays a foreign origin. It has never been used in Serbo-Croat before or since. The Dictionary of the Yugoslav Academy of Zagreb gives it as a hapax legomenon evidenced by this single citation from Zoranić; "trine Gospode" was probably suggested to him by Dante's "trina luce" and/or "essenza... trina". It is also to be noticed that this is the only verse interpolation in the *Planine* where we hear an echo, no matter how faint, of Dante's work. All parallels mentioned before occur in prose passages.

Zoranić based also the moral system of his world on that of Dante. It has already been mentioned that his ideal consisted in the contemplation of the revealed Truth. Towards the end of his *Planine* (Ch. XXIV, p. 167), as if wishing to give in a succinct form the moral contents of his work, he confesses that "he follows not Martha or Leah, but Rachel and Mary" ("ne slidim ljubeći Martu, ali Liju, da Rakel i Mariju"). Ultimately these were Jacob's words to Laban when he discovered that instead of the promised Rachel he had been given in marriage Leah (*Genesis*, XXIX, 25): "Did not I serve with thee for Rachel?" Petrarch alludes to the Old Testament story in his *Trionfi*:

Volgi in qua gli occhi al gran padre schernito,
che non si muta, e d'aver non gl'incresece
sette e sett' anni per Rachel servito.

(*Triumphus Cupidinis*, II, 34—36)

This passage must have been well known to Zoranić, for the very next line

Vivace amor che negli affanni cresce!

he not only translates in a prose passage of his *Planine* ("ljubav u pečali goji se") but quotes it in the original Italian in a marginal gloss (Ch. VII, p. 72).

Petrarch used the same motif again in his popular *Canzone CCVI* ("S'i' 'l dissi mai, ch'i' vegna in odio a quella") which was imitated not only in Italy (by Francesco Accolti, Francesco Molza, Claudio Tolomei) but also at Dubrovnik by Menčetić ("Ako sam toj rekal, moj džilju gizdavi", SPH II, No. 364, p. 222). Here are the concluding lines of Petrarch's *canzone*:

Per Rachel ho servito e non per Lia;
Ne con altra saprei
Viver; e sosterrei,
Quando 'l ciel ne rappella,
Girmen con ella — in sul carro de Elia.

Zoranić might have been thinking of the first line of this quotation, for in the same context he refers also to Petrarch's *Secretum*; but the idea is too common and typical of the period to be looked for in any particular model.

All the same, there are indications which point to Dante as Zoranić's source of inspiration in this case. We have already noticed that Rachel and Leah in the *Divine Comedy* symbolize respectively the contemplative and the active life. "L'antica Rachele" is mentioned very early, in the "Proemio" of the *Inferno* (II, 102) and again in the "Limbo" (IV, 60), while in the "Empireo" she sits with Beatrice (*Paradiso*, XXXII, 8). But it is in the *Purgatorio* that she is contrasted with her sister Leah. There, in the third and last vision of Dante's mentioned before (XXVII, 97—108), the two sisters appear to him as Old Testament types of the active and contemplative life. Leah, whom we have already seen gathering flowers, in that same place beautifully explains their respective functions:

Per piacermi allo specchio qui m'adorno;
ma mia suora Rachel mai non si smaga
dal suo miraglio, e siede tutto giorno.

Ell'è de' suoi begli occhi veder vaga,
com'io dell'adornarmi con le mani:
lei lo vedere, e me l'oprare appaga.

(*Pur.*, XXVII, 103—108)

In the *Convivio* (IV, 17) Dante again discusses the relations between the active and the contemplative life as represented in the New Testament by Martha and Mary. Zoranić's fusion of the Old and New Testament symbols used by Dante to represent the intellectual and moral virtues ("virtù intelletuali" and "virtù morali" in the *Convivio*, "duhovne kriposti" in Zoranić) and the marginal gloss against this passage in the *Planine*, "Vita activa, Vita contemplativa", suggest that he was following the moral system of Dante as expounded in the *Convivio* and applied in the *Divine Comedy*.

Literary critics and literary historians, intent mainly on Zoranić's borrowings from Sannazzaro, were naturally apt to underestimate or even neglect the influence of Dante in his work which in its essence remains Dantesque. It is Dantesque in its conception, in its moral idea which runs like a scarlet thread through the whole work and, in spite of digressions which at times assume undue proportions, it is Dantesque in plan and construction.

With Zoranić we may conclude this account of Dante's influence on old Croatian literature. The end of this influence, in this particular form, coincides with the end of the 16th century, when it gradually begins to peter out. To round off the picture we may just mention two not very exciting poets who wrote after this period. The first is Juraj Baraković of Zadar (1548—1628) who follows in the footsteps of, and partly imitates, his fellow-citizen Zoranić. Although born in the middle of the 16th century, Baraković wrote and published his works early in the 17th. In his long fantastic poem *Vila Slovinka* ("The Slav Fairy") the poet recounts his wanderings and adventures round Zadar, Nin and Šibenik in the northern Croatian littoral, giving in passing an account of Hell vaguely reminiscent of Dante's *Inferno*.

The other poet, Jerolim Kavanjin of Split (1643—1714), takes us almost into the 18th century, for it was only in his old age that he composed his mammoth poem in thirty cantos *Povijest vandelska bogatoga a nesrećna Epuluna i ubogoga a čestita Lazara* ("The Gospel Story of the rich but unhappy Dives and the poor but happy Lazarus"), briefly known as *Bogatstvo i uboštvo* ("Riches and Poverty"), which remained in manuscript until 1913. Speaking of the life to come, Kavanjin gives in his work also an account of the three realms which is distantly reminiscent of Dante. Scattered throughout there are faint echoes of the *Divine Comedy*, surprisingly more frequent from the *Paradiso* than in the poems of other Croatian writers.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to deal with parallels between Dante's work and old Croatian translations of semi-religious accounts of life beyond the grave, such as *St. Patrick's*

Purgatory or the Irish *Vision of Tundale*,²⁹ which latter was probably known to Dante. Visions of heaven, purgatory and hell had originated in paganism, had flourished all through the Middle Ages in a Christian form and had retained their popularity long after. Nor would there be much point here to draw parallels between passages in Dante and the old Yugoslav popular ballads, though much has been written on the subject. Here again it is difficult to tell whether a motif has been borrowed from Dante or taken from a common stock. In this context perhaps it is not amiss to be reminded of Niccolò Tommaseo's appended note to Canto XXVII of the *Inferno* in his commentary to the *Divine Comedy* where he, as an expert on the subject, quotes in his own Italian translation (*tradotto alla lettera*) the whole of the old ballad *Ognjena Marija u Paklu* ("The Flaming Mary in Hell"), taken down by "il signor Vuck Stefanovich" in Montenegro, and gives some ten parallels between lines in it and passages in Dante's *Inferno*.³⁰

Reverting to literature proper we must say that Dante's influence, of course, does not end with the 16th or the 17th century. It only takes a different course. It is towards the end of the 18th century, with the early announcements of romanticism, that Dante's real fame in Croatia and in Yugoslavia in general begins. We now gradually pass on to an earnest study of Dante and to more and more serious translations of his great work, together with eulogies and poems in his praise. And I should like to end this survey of Dante's influence on, and presence in, old Croatian literature by quoting a forgotten epigram of the 18th century Ragusan Latinist Raymond Kunić (1719—1794) addressed to Florence, notorious for having exiled her greatest son, but also famous for having given birth to the Tuscan Homer:³¹

Te fraudum sedem, ac sceleris, Florentia, Dantes
 Ille tuus dixit; nec tamen eripuit
 Splendoris tantum, quantum dedit. Illa dolentis
 Credita non ulli vana querela jacet;
 Sed magis atque magis tua laus viget; esse fereris
 Quod semper Thusci Patria Maeonidae.

²⁹ "Čistište sv. Patricija u hrvatskom glagoljskom tekstu 15. stoljeća" and "Tundalovo videnje u Luličevu zborniku". *Starine* 41, Yugoslav Academy, Zagreb, 1948, pp. 111—157. Both edited by Stjepan Ivšić.

³⁰ *La Divina Commedia con le note di Nicolò Tommaseo, I, Inferno*, Torino, 1920, pp. 293—295.

³¹ "Ad Florentiam, de Dante Aligherio", *Raymundi Cunichii Ragusini Epigrammata*, Ragusii, 1827, p. 158.