

Frane Petrić's Influence on Annibale Romei's Understanding of Beauty and Love*

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Summary

With their works Frane Petrić (Francesco Patrizi da Cherso) and Annibale Romei contributed to the Late Renaissance *trattatistica* on beauty and love. Petrić (Cres, 1529 – Rome, 1597) outlined his views on beauty and love in two manuscripts: the dialogue *Il Delfino, ovvero del bacio* (before 1560, *editio princeps* in 1975) and an unfinished manuscript, *L'amorosa filosofia* (ca. 1577, *editio princeps* in 1963) composed of four dialogues. Petrić also wrote about these topics in a more concise form in his printed "Discorso" included in *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile* (1560), whose focus was not on love and beauty, but on the process of poetic creation. However, in the mentioned treatise Petrić comes forward with his main views on love and beauty.

Annibale Romei (Ferrara (?), between 1523 and 1530 – Ferrara, 1590), a noble man of Ferrara, published his *Discorsi ... divisi in cinque giornate* in 1585, and its extended version *Discorsi ... divisi in sette giornate* in 1586. This paper analyzes the first two treatises in Romei's *Discorsi: Della bellezza* and *Dell'amore humano*. Frane Petrić, commended as an excellent connoisseur of issues regarding beauty and love, was invited in Romei's *Della bellezza* to hold an introductory speech about beauty. In the second treatise on love, this honour was bestowed upon Battista Guirino, who in his speech draws directly upon Petrić's teaching on beauty elaborated the day before.

Romei was familiar with Petrić's writings on beauty and love. In his *Della bellezza*, Romei adopts Petrić's views as presented in his *Discorso* on Luca Contile's

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love sonnets. In Romei's treatise *Dell'amore humano*, on the other hand, one may detect not only the influence of Petrić's *Discorso*, but also significant similarities with Petrić's views as outlined in both his *Il Delfino overo del bacio* and *L'amorosa filosofia*, some of which can also be found in Petrić's early works from 1553. While Petrić's impact on Romei's first treatise is irrefutable, solid arguments in favour of indisputable influence of Petrić's unpublished works on Romei's treatise on love cannot be provided. However, the correlations in their views cannot be disputed. All the similarities highlighted here clearly confirm that Petrić and Romei deal with beauty and love within the Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition.

Despite the fact that the influence of Petrić's views can be easily recognized in a number of Romei's arguments, Romei confirms himself as an original thinker when he argues that physical beauty is a matter of subjective opinion. Romei's original views also include his consideration of the relationship between beauty and ugliness, and, finally, his insistence on emphasizing the role of the intellect and free will in the experience of love.

Key Words: Frane Petrić / Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, Annibale Romei, beauty, love, kiss, self-love, Renaissance Platonism

1. Introduction

Today it is no longer necessary to insist on the fact that Marsilio Ficino's role in the revival of interest of western philosophy for Plato's thought, in particular thanks to his translations and commentaries of Plato's dialogues *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, was of indispensable significance for the development of the Renaissance philosophy of love. As John Charles Nelson already pointed out, "[t]he Platonic *trattato d'amore* is a literary genre which began with Marsilio Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium* by Plato, and achieved great vogue in the sixteenth century."¹

According to Nelson, the Renaissance writings on love may be divided into two groups:

- (1) prose commentaries of love verses (Dante, Lorenzo de' Medici,

¹ John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love. The context of Giordano Bruno's Eroici furori* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 69.

See also Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Die Philosophie des Marsilio Ficino* (Frankfurt / Main: V. Klostermann, 1972); Michael J. B. Allen, "Cosmogony and Love: The Role of *Phaedrus* in Ficino's *Symposium* Commentary," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 10 (1980), 131–153; Erna Banić-Pajnić, "Marsilio Ficino and Franciscus Patricius on Love," in Tomáš Nejeschleba and Paul Richard Blum (eds), *Francesco Patrizi Philosopher of the Renaissance*, Proceedings from The Centre for Renaissance Texts Conference, 24–26 April 2014 (Olomouc: CRT, 2014), pp. 213–231, on p. 213.

Hereafter in notes: Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love* (1958); Banić-Pajnić, "Marsilio Ficino and Franciscus Patricius on Love" (2014).

Girolamo Benivieni, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Pompeo della Barba, Giordano Bruno);

- (2) treatises on love (Marsilio Ficino, Leone Ebreo, Pietro Bembo, Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, Mario Equicola, Baldassare Castiglione, Bartolomeo Gottifredi, Francesco Sansovino, Giuseppe Betussi, Sperone Speroni, Tullia d'Aragona, Benedetto Varchi, Flaminio Nobili, Francesco De' Vieri, Torquato Tasso, Annibale Romei).²

The protagonists of this paper, Frane Petrić (Cres, 1529 – Rome, 1597) and Annibale Romei (Ferrara (?), between 1523 and 1530³ – Ferrara, 1590),⁴ are important representatives of the Renaissance *trattatistica* on love and beauty. Petrić formulated his views on love and beauty in his early dialogue *Il Delfino, ovvero del bacio*, in his “Discorso” included in *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile* (1560), in an unfinished manuscript in four dialogues entitled *L'amorosa filosofia* (ca. 1577),⁵ and shortly in *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591).⁶

² Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love* (1958), in the chapters: “Prose Commentaries on Verses,” pp. 15–66; “Love Treatises,” pp. 67–162.

³ There is no exact date, year or place of his birth. Prandi and Luciola assume that he was born between 1523 and 1530, and as a possible town of birth they mentioned Ferrara. Cf. Stefano Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese. I Discorsi di Annibale Romei e la cultura nobiliare del Cinquecento* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1990), p. 13; Francesco Luciola, “Romei, Annibale”, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 88 (2017), [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/annibale-romei_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/annibale-romei_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (June 2, 2020). See also Angelo Solerti, *Ferrara e la corte estense nella seconda metà del secolo decimosesto. I Discorsi di Annibale Romei gentiluomo ferrarese* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1891), pp. cxxv–cxxi.

Hereafter in notes: Solerti, *Ferrara e la corte estense nella seconda metà del secolo decimosesto* (1891); Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990); Luciola, “Romei, Annibale” (2017).

⁴ There is no reliable information about his education and generally about his youth. The only reliable fact is that he was staying in Padua, which is known from a letter sent to Alessandro Sacrati 27 May 1555, but the reasons for staying in Padua are unknown.

According to Prandi, Romei got married on January 22, 1562 with Giulia Giglioli di Adria, with whom he had twelve children. He was a diplomat in the service of Alfonso II d'Este, who sent him to Rome in 1580, where he participated in the discussions about the rivers Po and Reno.

The last biographical track is the date of his death: Romei died on 9 October 1590 in Ferrara. Cf. Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990), pp. 9–16; Luciola, “Romei, Annibale” (2017).

⁵ My discussion of Petrić's views in *Il Delfino, ovvero del bacio* and *L'amorosa filosofia* is an extended version of the chapter “Petrić's Philosophy of Love, *ingegno* and *ethereo corpicello*” contained in my unpublished doctoral thesis *Poetika Frane Petrića (Frane Petrić's Poetics)* (Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and University of Zagreb, 2013), pp. 71–78. I also shortly wrote about Petrić's *Discorso* in my doctoral thesis, pp. 55–60.

⁶ Petrić wrote about love in *Panarchia*, the second part of *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591). Cf. Banić-Pajnić, “Marsilio Ficino and Franciscus Patricius on Love” (2014), pp. 226–228. Although this work cannot be examined in detail here because it is not part of Renaissance *trattati d'amore*, some key points of Petrić's thought, which contribute to the overall understanding of his philosophy of love, should be singled out.



Still poorly known, Annibale Romei, philosopher and chess theoretician,⁷ published his *Discorsi del conte Annibale Romei gentil'huomo ferrarese divisi in cinque giornate* in 1585. In 1586, Romei published an extended version entitled *Discorsi del conte Annibale Romei gentil'huomo ferrarese, di nuovo ristampati, ampliati, e con diligenza corretti. Divisi in sette giornate, nelle quali tra dame, e cavaglieri ragionando*,⁸ dedicated to Lucrezia d'Este, the Duchess of Urbino.⁹ The work consists of seven discussions, divided into seven

The First, the Good, the Element, the One, God, Father (*primum unum*) is the cause and maker of all things. The second principle (*secundum unum*) is the son of the primary father and is always connected with his parent as a ray is with light. Love connects them. Cf. Franciscus Patricius, *Nova de universis philosophia* (Ferrariae: Apud Benedictum Mammarellum, 1591), in *Panarchia* X, f. 21.2–21.3:

“Amor ergo, hic tertius inter duos intercedit.”

This love is not understood as human love, that is, as emotion and passion (*affectus et passio*), but as *hyparxis* – namely as the third member of the divine Trinity (Father – Son – Spirit). Cf. *Panarchia* X “De secundo ac tertio principio,” f. 21.3:

“Spiritum, nec patrem esse, nec filium. Sed spirationem hanc, et inspirationem, et amorem illum quem pater habet in filium, et filius in patrem, a quibus Spiritus sanctus procedit, nec factus, nec genitus, nec creatus, sed ab eis tantum procedens.”

However, love is not understood only as the central link between the One and the mind (*intellectus / Nous*), but also as a “mover” towards God, as the original lust to achieve perfection, to return to the highest principle. The good is the thing that everyone naturally strives for, depending on their nature and *hyparxis*. Petrić distinguishes between two guides or “elevators” towards God: the love frenzy (*furor*) that, as he says, was named *anagoge* by the clergy, and philosophy. Cf. *Panarchia* XIX “De divinis proprietatibus,” f. 42.4.

⁷ Romei was known as a very good chess player. According to Solerti, in the Biblioteca Comunale of Ferrara an autograph is kept of a treatise on chess entitled *Trattato sul gioco degli scacchi* (dedicated to Eleonora d'Este) attributed to him. Cf. Solerti, *Ferrara e la corte estense nella seconda metà del secolo decimo sesto* (1891), p. cxxvii.

Prandi points out that the *Trattato* in the Biblioteca Comunale of Ferrara is not an autograph, but at the end of the tractate Romei's signature appears affixed by a third hand. Cf. Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990), p. 12, n. 19: “il *Trattato* non è autografo, alla fine peraltro compare una firma di Romei apposta da una terza mano, sotto una grossa cancellatura.”

Francesco Luciola also indicates that a treatise on chess is not written by Romei's hand.

Torquato Tasso, who probably met Romei already in 1567, dedicated to him a dialogue, *Il Romeo, o vero del giuoco* (1581), which will later be titled *Il Gonzaga secondo*. Cf. Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990), p. 16.

⁸ On the differences between the first and the second edition of Romei's *Discorsi* cf. Solerti, *Ferrara e la corte estense nella seconda metà del secolo decimosesto* (1891). In the appendix to his book, Solerti published Romei's *Discorsi* but did not offer an analysis of it.

⁹ After the *Discorsi*, Romei published a *Dialogo diviso in due giornate, nella prima della quali si tratta delle cause universali del terremoto e di tutte le impressioni et apparenze che, con stupor del volgo, nell'aria si generano; nella seconda, del terremoto, della salsedine del mare, della Via Lattea e del flusso e reflusso del mare s'assegnano cause diverse d'Aristotele e da*

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days, in which, besides the author, some distinguished ladies and thinkers of Renaissance Ferrara express their opinions. Each day, at the end of the discussion, the selected lady, 'the queen' (*Reina*), chooses a topic for the following day. Romei's treatises encompass a wide range of topics ranging from beauty, love, honour, duel, quarrel and conciliation, to nobility, deliberation on (dis) advantage of wealth in human life and the issue of precedence of arms over letters, the warrior over the writer.¹⁰ The topic of this paper covers the first two treatises of Romei's *Discorsi: Della bellezza*¹¹ and *Dell'amore humano*, in which the ferrarese philosopher articulates his views on love and beauty. His views are close to those of Frane Petrić, whom Romei himself considers to be the most competent to commence the first dialogue, *Della bellezza*. In the second dialogue, *Dell'amore humano*, the honour to speak about love was bestowed upon Battista Guirino, who in his speech draws directly upon Petrić's teaching as elaborated on the first day. Considering the role and significance that Romei attached to Petrić in his work, the question arises to which extent his teaching on beauty and love influenced Romei's views.¹²

qualunque filosofo che sin ad hora ne habbi scritto (Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini, 1587).

Cf. Prandi, *Il "Cortegiano" ferrarese* (1990), p. 17, n. 61.

¹⁰ The work encompasses the following writings: *Della bellezza*, pp. 1–22, *Dell'amore humano*, pp. 23–57; *Dell'honore*, pp. 58–94; *Dell'iniquità del duello, del combattere alla Macchia, e del modo di accommodar le querele, e ridur'à pace le inimicizie private*, pp. 95–135; *Della nobiltà*, pp. 136–178; *Delle ricchezze*, pp. 179–195; *Della precedenza dell'arme, ò delle lettere*, pp. 196–215.

¹¹ I shortly wrote about Romei's *Della bellezza* in my unpublished doctoral thesis *Poetika Frane Petrića (Frane Petrić's Poetics)* (Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and University of Zagreb, 2013), pp. 78–80.

¹² To my knowledge, comparative analyses of Petrić's and Romei's views on beauty and love were not conducted in any previous study. Eugenio Garin opens the chapter "Platonismo e filosofia dell'amore" in his book *L'umanesimo italiano* (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1993), pp. 133–155, on p. 133, with a brief reminder on Romei's *Discorsi* in which the assembled guests discuss, "alla presenza di Francesco Patrizi," about beauty, love, honour, duel, nobility, riches and letters. Sabrina Ebbersmeyer in her book *Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft. Studien zur Rezeption und Transformation der Liebestheorie Platons in der Renaissance* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2002), p. 230, mentions that Petrić appears as a speaker in one of Romei's treatise in his *Discorsi*. In his book *Renaissance Theory of Love* (1958), on pp. 157–162, Nelson gives a short content description of Romei's discussions on beauty and love. Although he does not compare their works and philosophical views, Pietro Donazzolo in his study "Francesco Patrizio da Cherso erudito del seculo decimosesto (1529–1597)," *Atti e memorie della Società istriana di archeologica e storia patria* 28 (1912), pp. 2–147, on p. 31, points out that it is Romei who is the most responsible for the best knowledge of Petrić's name and merits. Stefano Prandi gives an extensive analysis of Romei's speeches in his monograph *Il "Cortegiano" ferrarese. I Discorsi di Annibale Romei e la cultura nobiliare del Cinquecento* (1990). In Romei's *Discorsi* Prandi sees the impact of the

The significance of Romei's praise of Petrić was best described by Pietro Donazzolo:

“E a far conoscere maggiormente il nome ed i meriti del Patrizio, concorse non poco Annibale Romei, gentiluomo ferrarese, il quale, riferendo i dialoghi avvenuti in quegli anni alla Mesola, nella villa ducale fra i più illustri personaggi che allora onoravano di loro presenza la Corte degli Estensi, vi comprende il Patrizio, dei cui discorsi e giudizi si rende fedele estensore.”¹³

Apart from the interest in the topics of love of beauty, and even the engagement in solving the technical problems of the Po and Reno rivers,¹⁴ Petrić

Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions, but also the influence of Aquinas and Aristotle, which leads him to conclude that Romei was influenced by the syncretistic tradition. Although he observes that Petrić plays a key role in Romei's *Discorsi* (p. 91) and singles out certain elements in which he sees the influence of Petrić's thought, Prandi does not single out Petrić as a possible relevant source for Romei's views on beauty and love. Ljerka Schiffler, the author of a monograph on Frane Petrić, emphasizes the importance of new research that would indicate the “still unconfirmed similarities and possible influences of Petrić's ideas upon thinkers of his and later periods within the Croatian and European philosophical and literary history (for example T. Tasso, A. Romei, G. Vico).” Cf. Ljerka Schiffler, *Frane Petrić / Franciscus Patricius. Od škole mišljenja do slobode mišljenja* (Zagreb: Institut za filozofiju, 1997), p. 289.

Hereafter in notes: Schiffler, *Frane Petrić / Franciscus Patricius* (1997); Donazzolo, “Francesco Patrizio da Cherso erudito del seculo decimosesto (1529–1597)” (1912).

¹³ Donazzolo, “Francesco Patrizio da Cherso erudito del seculo decimosesto (1529–1597)” (1912), p. 31.

¹⁴ Both Petrić and Romei participated in solving practical problems related to the river Po and Reno. About the problems and solutions of the troubles caused by the river Po, both have written several technical files. Petrić's technical texts were published in Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, edizione critica a cura di Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli (Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1975), pp. 189–411. See also Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli, “Delle lettere e degli opuscoli letterari, filosofici e tecnici di Francesco Patrizi,” in Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, pp. xvii–xxxiii, on pp. xxvi–xxx.

Hereafter in notes: Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975); Aguzzi Barbagli, “Delle lettere e degli opuscoli letterari, filosofici e tecnici di Francesco Patrizi” (1975).

In the *Appendix* of the above-mentioned book, Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli adds Romei's technical writings on problems related to the Po and Reno. Cf. Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975), pp. 451–512.

About Romei's technical writings see also Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990), pp. 23–27.

It should be noted that Aguzzi Barbagli gives great importance to Petrić's expertises, believing that all those who were also involved in solving the problems with the river Po, including Annibale Romei, only repeat Petrić's arguments. Cf. Aguzzi Barbagli, “Delle lettere e degli opuscoli letterari, filosofici e tecnici di Francesco Patrizi” (1975), p. xxviii. Although he points out some Romei's weaknesses in relation to Petrić's technical solutions, Prandi disagrees with Aguzzi's evaluation: “Non si può dunque sottoscrivere l'affermazione di Aguzzi-Barbagli



and Romei are also connected to the city of Ferrara. Ferrara, or, more precisely, the court of Ferrara, was an important centre of Renaissance Platonism and, as Prandi points out, was very important for the development of Romei's ideas. Ferrara is an important city for Petrić also. He comes to Ferrara in 1578 (or 1577) after accepting the invitation of Alfonso II d'Este to teach Platonic philosophy at the University of Ferrara, where he remains until 1592 when he goes to Rome to teach Platonic philosophy at Sapienza.

2. Frane Petrić on Beauty and Love

2.1. Il Delfino ovvero del bacio (before 1560)

Petrić's earliest interest in the issue of love can be seen in his dialogue *Il Delfino ovvero del bacio*.¹⁵ Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli was the first who in the *editio princeps* of Petrić's *Il Delfino* provided the "ca. 1577" as the year of its composition.¹⁶ However, Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli, in his article "Un contributo di Francesco Patrizi da Cherso alle dottrine rinascimentali sull'amore,"

che vedeva semplicemente in Romei uno di quelli che 'ripetevano più o meno gli argomenti dal Patrizi' <...>" Cf. Prandi, *Il "Cortegiano" ferrarese* (1990), p. 27.

¹⁵ Francesco Patritio, "Il Delfino ovvero del bacio" in Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, edizione critica di Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli (Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1975), pp. 135–164.

Hereafter in notes: Patritio, *Il Delfino* (1975).

Cf. Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli, "Un contributo di Francesco Patrizi da Cherso alle dottrine rinascimentali sull'amore," *Yearbook of Italian Studies* 59 (1972), pp. 19–50; Luko Paljetak, "Petrićev poljubac kao epicentar tektonskog područja ljubavi: O Petrićevu dijalogu *Il Delfino ovvero del bacio*," *Dubrovnik* 8/1–3 (1997), pp. 17–33; Francesco Patrizi, *Du baisier*, traduction et notes de Sylvie Laurens Aubry, avec une introduction de Pierre Laurens, préface de Charles Melman (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002).

Hereafter in notes: Aguzzi Barbagli, "Un contributo di Francesco Patrizi da Cherso alle dottrine rinascimentali sull'amore" (1972); Paljetak, "O Petrićevu dijalogu *Il Delfino ovvero del bacio*" (1997); Patrizi, *Du baisier* (2002).

¹⁶ Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli, "Delle lettere e degli opuscoli letterari, filosofici e tecnici di Francesco Patrizi," in Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975), p. xxiii:

"Parimenti difficile riesce la datazione dell'operetta <...> Sembrerebbe legittimo ritenere che il *Delfino* sia stato composto quando l'autore era sulla quarantina. Infatti dopo questo periodo il Patrizi volse i suoi interessi soprattutto a problemi filosofici, o di poetica. Potrebbe darsi che l'operetta sia stata composta prima del ritorno dalla Spagna, quando il filosofo si fermò a Modena e nel 1577 compose *L'amorosa filosofia*. Questa congettura è basata sul fatto che nel *Delfino* il Patrizi assume una posizione intellettuale talmente vicina a quella da cui scaturisce *L'amorosa filosofia*, che siamo spinti a considerare il primo dialogo come un inevitabile, complemento del secondo."

published three years before the edition of the *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, had proposed an earlier dating for Patrizi's dialogue *Il Delfino overo del bacio*.¹⁷ Why did Aguzzi Barbagli propose two different datations of *Il Delfino*? We do not know the answer to this question, but his earlier dating is in accordance with Petrić's own writing.

It should be also pointed that in 1980 Lina Bolzoni dated the composition of Petrić's manuscript on kiss around 1554, but "probably" and without argumentation.¹⁸ In his introduction to the French translation of Petrić's *Il Delfino*, Charles Melman referred to Petrić's text, dating it to 1560, but without title and pagination.¹⁹

But *Il Delfino* was written earlier. Petrić himself in his "Discorso," included in the edition *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile* (1560), refers to his writing on the kiss:

"Si come non puo parimente verun'altro che amante, giudicare la soavità dello assaporamento. Il quale si pruova nel bacio, in quelle tante sue maniere, che è stato da me, in altro tempo divisato."²⁰

On the basis of this quotation from Petrić's "Discorso" (1560) I have determined the datation of Petrić's manuscript on the kiss as before 1560.

Although the theme of the kiss was very popular in Renaissance erotic literature,²¹ in the moral literature and philosophical reflection of that time kiss

¹⁷ Aguzzi Barbagli, "Un contributo di Francesco Patrizi da Cherso alle dottrine rinascimentali sull'amore" (1972), p. 22:

"Il dialogo *Del bacio* presenta degli aspetti formali, che sono tipici delle opere del periodo giovanile. Esso ha un carattere di sistematicità che non ci è dato ritrovare nei lavori degli anni più tardi."

¹⁸ Lina Bolzoni, *L'universo dei poemi possibili. Studi su Francesco Patrizi da Cherso* (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1980), p. 53, n. 12:

"Questo dialogo, inedito e scritto probabilmente intorno al '54, è stato pubblicato da Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli in *Lettere...*, cit., pp. 135–166."

¹⁹ Charles Melman, "La philosophie arrêtee aux préliminaires," in Patrizi, *Du baiser* (2002), pp. 9–15, on p. 10:

"Saluons donc ici, dans le texte de Francesco Patrizi (1560) le démarche d'une pensée fermement attachée encore à montrer le rapport de ces surprenants comportements amoureux avec la norme et que l'appétit de le chair n'est jamais affaire que d'esprit bien réglé."

²⁰ "Discorso di M. Francesco Patritio," in *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile, divise in tre parti, con discorsi, et argomenti di M. Francesco Patritio, et M. Antonio Borghesi* (In Venetia: Appresso Francesco Sansovino et compagni, 1560), ff. 14r–24v, on f. 17r.

Hereafter in notes: Patritio, "Discorso" (1560); Contile, *Le rime* (1560).

²¹ Pierre Laurens, "Petite introduction à la philosophie du baiser," in Patrizi, *Du baiser* (2002), pp. 17–26, on p. 18.

and kissing are poorly represented.²² That is the reason why Petrić's dialogue on the kiss is of great importance. To be more specific, Petrić places the kiss at the very heart of his reflection on love, to the point of turning it into the specific philosophical subject of the dialogue.²³

In *Il Delfino ovvero del bacio* Petrić reflects on the sensual aspect of a kiss. In the discussion about the kiss as an expression of erotic lust, Petrić's interlocutor is Angelo Delfino, whose identity cannot be established with certainty,²⁴ but the word 'delfino' (eng. dolphin) hides a symbolic praise to the goddess of love. In fact, the sea animal is the attribute of the goddess Venus, who was born from the sea foam and was followed by dolphins to the island of Cyprus.²⁵

In his discussion of the sweetness of a kiss, Petrić displays his knowledge of the human anatomy, especially the eye, and the psychic and physical condition of being in love, which he owes to his medical education,²⁶ which he abandoned in order to study philosophy.

With *Il Delfino ovvero del bacio* Petrić participates in the then numerous debates about love, in which as he himself wrote, "many beautiful and wonderful things can be found, but nothing about the kiss, as if it does not have any power or value in love."²⁷ Starting from the view about the power and value of a kiss in the experience of love, Petrić reflects on the source of the sweetness of a love kiss. The source of the sweetness is not the kiss itself, but true love. The kiss, whose secrets he is trying to reveal, is not considered as a short-term bodily pleasure, but as an expression of true emotions towards the loved person. Such love consists in the fascination with the soul of the loved one, with which the soul of the lover is trying to connect. Only love understood in such a way makes the kiss passionate and sweet. Petrić lists six body parts of the loved one where kisses are applied (nostrils, bosom, neck, cheeks, eyes, mouth), and he describes four ways of kissing (with puckered lips, with wet lips, with teeth,

²² Ibid., p. 19.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli indicates several possible people hidden behind the name of Angelo Delfino. According to his view, Petrić's interlocutor had to be a member of a distinguished grand Venetian family Dolfino. A letter by Luca Contile addresses to Petrić on 3 August 1562 mentions Angelo Delfino as a member of the *Accademia degli Affidati*. Cf. Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975), p. 135.

²⁵ Paljetak, "O Petrićevu dijalogu *Il Delfino ovvero del bacio*" (1997), p. 17.

²⁶ Schiffler, *Frane Petrić / Franciscus Patricius* (1997), p. 267.

²⁷ Patritio, *Il Delfino* (1975), p. 136:

"Sono anco ricorso a quelli scrittori, i quali scrivono d'amore, ne' quali nel vero io ritrovo molte belle et meravigliose cose, ma del bacio, niuna, come che egli niuna forza, o valore, fosse in amore."

and with the tongue). The opening question about the source of the sweetness of a kiss can be fully answered only by considering the source of love itself. According to Petrić love is generated by beauty and by “the similarity of souls” (*la somiglianza*), while the eyes are given the role of the main guide of love. Petrić emphasizes how the rays emitted by the eyes reflect the inner beauty of the soul, which enlightens another soul.

Earthly love, which finds its highest expression in the kiss on the mouth, does not exclude the importance of heavenly love, which elevates the soul towards the source of all things. The discussion about the kiss contains a theme present already in Petrić’s analysis of Petrarch’s sonnet *La gola, e’l sonno, e l’ociose piume* (1553) and in his *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici* (1553).²⁸ This is the theme of the “ethereal corpuscle” (*ethereo corpicello*) received, or donned, by the soul on birth. Furthermore, his discussion is enriched with teaching about the influence of the planets on the characteristics and preferences of human souls, which is also elaborated in the commentary of Petrarch’s sonnet, *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici*, and later in *L’amorosa filosofia*. Petrić explains that the similarity between two souls as a source of love depends on the planet that illuminated these souls during their descent into the bodily dimension:

“L’anima humana, dopo che è da Dio creata et ha da venire a reggere corpo terreno, perchè l’incorporeo, quale è, possa a corporeo, quale egli è l’elementale nostro corpo, congiungersi, si veste ella un ethereo corpicello,²⁹ dal quale, quasi

²⁸ Francesco Patritio, *La città felice. Del medesimo, Dialogo dell’honore, Il Barignano. Del medesimo, Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici. Lettura sopra il sonetto del Petrarca. La gola, e’l sonno, e l’ociose piume* (Venetia: Per Giovan. Griffio, 1553).

Hereafter in notes: Patritio, *La città felice* (1553).

²⁹ Petrić’s notion of *ethereo corpicello* or *corpicello sottilissimo* has its source in the Neoplatonic notion of the *ethereal or astral body*, especially in Ficino’s theory of the vehicles of the soul (*vehiculum animae, aethereum corpusculum*; Greek *ochêma / pneuma*). Petrić himself refers to opinion of “the most famous academics” (*secondo l’opinion de gli Academici piu famosi*), obviously thinking of Ficino. Cf. Francesco Patritio, *Lettura sopra il sonetto del Petrarca. La gola, e’l sonno, e l’ociose piume*, in Patritio, *La città felice* (1553), ff. 55r–69v, on f. 62r; also on f. 60r: “the most mysterious ancient theologians” (*i piu secreti theologhi antichi*).

Cf. Patritio, *Il Delfino*, p. 146, on the teaching of “some wise men” (*alcuni savii huomini*), referring primarily to Plato, *Hermes Trismegistus, Zoroaster, Plotinus* and Proclus.

On the notion of the astral body in Neoplatonism see for example “Appendix II: The Astral Body in Neoplatonism,” in Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, second ed., a revised text with translation, introduction, and commentary by Eric R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 313–321.

For the Neoplatonic theory of the vehicles of the soul see for example John F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985); on its Ficinian

mezana, ella è dall'uno estremo di là suso all'altro di qua giù portata, et è perciò da alcuni savii huomini vehicolo e carro dell'anima chiamato. Et in questo così fatto corpo di là su di sopra i cieli l'anima nel terreno elemento discendendo, prende luminosa impressione da ciascuno de' pianeti, per le sfere de' quali ella passa; ma più da quelli ne prende, che sono in forte aspetto, e più che di tutti gli altri da colui, il quale Re degli altri si ritruova. Dal quale ella prenda qualità, nella maniera che altri, caminando nel sole, prende di coloro fosco. Et qual hora due anime prenderanno dal medesimo Regnante pianeta, o da altro di forte lume, qualità et influxo, si saranno elle simiglianti, et da così fatta simiglianza, o da quella del temperamento, che da questa in certa guisa si fa et non dalla esteriore, nasce l'amore che io diceva. <...> Et è / in così fatta maniera la somiglianza cagion dell'amore."³⁰

Petrić's teaching that the souls carry the sources of all things in themselves, as well as his fundamental idea that love stimulates one's desire to return to the metaphysical source of love and beauty are extremely significant for his philosophy of love:

"L'anima nostra <...> anzi del corpicello ethereo si vesta mentre è dal suo fattore, pieno di tutte le idee delle cose formate, prende in sua sostanza le ragioni di tutte le idee."³¹

In the end, we should point out the importance of his theory of light, which was elaborated in the context of interpreting the role of the eye in the experience of love (as already indicated by Plato), a theme that would be further elaborated in his theoretical commentary of Contile's rhymes.

2.2. "Discorso" in *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile (1560)*

Although his main focus is neither on love nor beauty, but on the process of poetic creation, Petrić wrote about beauty and love in a more concise form in his 1560 commentary of Luca Contile's (Cetona, Siena, 1505 – Pavia, 1574) love verses.³² In *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile* Petrić published his theoretic-

version, see the study by Anna Corrias, "Imagination and Memory in Marsilio Ficino's Theory of the Vehicles of the Soul," *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 6 (2012), pp. 81–114.

³⁰ Patritio, *Il Delfino* (1975), pp. 146–147.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³² See note 20. Petrić's theoretical commentary "Discorso" represents a very important stage in the development of his poetic views, but it can also be seen as a link between the *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici* (1553) and the *Della poetica* (1586–1588).

Cf. Riccardo Scrivano, "Luca Contile e Francesco Patrizi," in Riccardo Scrivano, *Cultura e Letteratura nel Cinquecento* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1966), pp. 183–194, on p. 192. In addition to Scrivano's chapter "Luca Contile e Francesco Patrizi," for an analysis of Petrić's



tical commentary “Discorso” of Contile’s first fifty love sonnets and added their “Argomenti”. According to Petrić, all things were created by God, and each thing, in accordance with its abilities, owns certain qualities of its maker. Among the many qualities instilled into man by God, there is also “the ray of infinite and superintelligible light” (*il raggio della infinita et sopraintelligibile luce*), which descends “into the soul of the world and its companions, then into nature, and finally into matter and bodies” (*nella anima del mondo, et nelle sue compagne. Indi nella natura, et in ultimo nella materia et ne corpi*).³³ In Petrić’s interpretation, beauty is the “ray of God’s light” illuminating everything:

“Il raggio della luce di Dio, ch’io dico, passando da lui per le sostanze di mezo, infino a corpi, reca à tutte splendore. Il quale propriamente si chiama bellezza. Et non è cosa che bella o paia, o sia, che ciò dal divino raggio non partecipi. Et e verissima cosa, che la piu grata, et la piu vera bellezza, o d’human viso, o d’altra cosa qual si sia, consista nello splendore. Essendo l’altra che è nelle proportioni delle parti, di questa fondamento.”³⁴

Nothing, Petrić writes, can be or seem beautiful unless it participates in the divine ray of light. Splendour (*splendore*) and proportions (*proportioni*) are the foundation of beauty.

The extent to which Ficino’s commentaries on Plato’s dialogues influenced Petrić is shown in Petrić’s division of beauty (which he, according to the teaching by *prisci theologi*, calls Venus) into bodily / earthly (*corporale bellezza / Venere volgare*) and incorporeal / heavenly (*incorporale bellezza / Venere celeste*).³⁵ Beauty, which according to Renaissance Platonism was given the task to generate love in human souls, is called ‘desire’ (*desiderio*). This desire certainly does not imply bodily lust and enjoyment in sensual charms, but a desire for the noetic reaching of intellectual beauty, the source of material beauty and all

comment see also Luciana Borsetto, “Concetti da porre in amorosa poesia. L’*accessus* neoplatonico del Patrizi alle *Rime* di Luca Contile,” in Ljerka Schiffler (ed.), *Zbornik radova VI. međunarodnog filozofskog simpozija Dani Frane Petriša* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo – Grad Cres, 1999), pp. 439–452.

³³ Patritio, “Discorso” (1560), f. 14v.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 15r.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 15r.

See “Comento di Marsilio Ficino Fiorentino sopra il convito d’amore del divinissimo Platone,” in Marsilio Ficino, *Il comento di Marsilio Ficino sopra il Convito di Platone, et esso Convito*, tradotti in lingua Toscana per Hercole Barbarasa da Terni (In Roma: In casa di Francesco Priscianese Fiorentino, 1544), ff. 1r–109v, in the chapter “Di due specie d’amori, et di due Veneri. Cap. VI,” ff. 13v–15v.

See also Marsilio Ficino, *El libro dell’amore*, ed. by S. Niccoli (Florence: Olschki, 1987).

Hereafter in notes: Ficino, “Comento sopra il convito d’amore del divinissimo Platone” (1544).

created things. The most beautiful and the loveliest beauty, for example of the eye or some other part of the body, consists of its splendour and proportion. Petrić finds a close connection between splendour and the eyes, and he distinguishes between corporeal eyes and the eyes of the mind. Bodily eyes help us to appreciate material splendour, i.e. beauty, while the eyes of the mind reach the splendour and beauty of the incorporeal. When talking about bodily beauty, Petrić singles out the human body as an example and a model of perfect material beauty. One organ of the human body, the eye, is given particular attention (as was the case in Plato's and Ficino's texts). In the admiration and reaching for beauty, great significance is attached to the sense of sight because the eyes are given the function of reflecting the splendour of the soul illuminated by divine light. The eyes are moulded only by various colours; they are a reflection of the quantity of light which the human body has received. It is through the eyes that the beauty of the human soul radiates like through "the clearest crystal". In them glows the divine ray of light:

"Et piu di tutte l'altre, bellissimi sono gli occhi, per essere essi soli di varii vaghi colori, che lumi sono formati. Et molto piu, perche essi sono ricetto di quanto splendore puo ricevere corpo humano, et perche per loro, quasi per chiarissimo cristallo traluce la bellezza dell'animo di dentro. Et percio in essi, piu che in altra parte, luce splendidissimo il divino raggio."³⁶

Love unites us with intelligible beauty. By observing and admiring the beauty of the human body, the soul of the lovers ascends to the contemplation of true, essential beauty. On the basis of such a view, it is clear why Petrić wrote that blessed is the one who falls in love, as opposed to the one who has not felt the ecstasy of love, as he is not the lover of divine things. Beauty, says Petrić, is "a truly divine thing," therefore, we respect her, feel awe, admire her, love her, lust after her and seek her:"

"[L]a bellezza è di vero divina cosa. Et per ciò da noi riverita, temuta, ammirata, amata, bramata, et ricercata."³⁷

Along the lines of Plato's teaching about love as virtuous improvement, "cause of virtue," or "service for virtue," Petrić explains that love is the desire, i.e. the aspiration for one's own perfection, in the sense of gaining not only the things lost, but also the good, virtuous things which one still does not possess:

"Amore è desiderio di goder la bellezza per propria perfettione, et la perfettione

³⁶ Patritio, "Discorso" (1560), f. 15v.

³⁷ Ibid., f. 18v.

tutta non sia il solo racquisto delle perdute cose, ma anco lo acquisto delle non havute, et buone; <...>.”³⁸

Bodily beauty is a sign of inner spiritual beauty. A beautiful soul naturally comes across as beautiful and good. By doing that, it provides an example to the one who falls in love with it so that he / she wants to be as much alike his / her loved one as possible. By imitating its actions, the lover does beautiful and good things. As beauty is a divine thing, a mysterious and supersensory virtue, it acts upon the lover by making him act in a divine way, therefore, virtuously. The one who does so is happy. By achieving happiness and inner satisfaction, one achieves inner perfection:

“[E]ssendo la corporal bellezza, per poco, segno certissimo della bellezza interior dell’animo: et il bello animo per natura operi bellamente, et così operando, dia essemplio all’amante, il quale cercando con tutto suo studio di trasformarsi nell’amato oggetto, è forza che tutto si dia nella sua imitatione, et per conseguenza che egli anchora operi bellamente. Et bellamente oprando, che bell’habito n’acquisti. Appresso essendo la bellezza divina cosa, con certa occulta, et invisibile virtù, sforza gli amanti suoi di operar divinamente, cioè virtuosamente. Et chi virtuosamente opera, è senza dubbio felice. Et chi è felice ha la sua perfettione intiera.”³⁹

2.3. L’amorosa filosofia (ca. 1577)

Petrić’s *L’amorosa filosofia*, an unfinished manuscript in four dialogues where he lays out his “original philosophy of love” (*una nuova filosofia di amore*),⁴⁰ is a significant contribution to the rich Renaissance tradition of philosophical thought on beauty and love. The work begins by praising the bodily and spiritual beauty of Tarquinia Molza (1542–1617), described as a *terrena dea* (“an earthly goddess”). The beauty that distinguishes Petrić’s muse, his Diotima, is of divine origin, an image of the divine light itself through which the human mind ascends to God.

From a multitude of words of eulogy, it is enough to single out just a few sentences to see why Tarquinia deserves to be the central figure in Petrić’s *L’amorosa filosofia*:

“*Giul.* Io ho bene udito raccontare che la signora Tarquinia è musica singola-

³⁸ Patritio, “Discorso” (1560), f. 19r.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 19r–19v.

⁴⁰ Francesco Patrizi, *L’amorosa filosofia*, a cura di John Charles Nelson (Firenze: Felice le Monnier, 1963), p. 7.

Hereafter in notes: Patrizi, *L’amorosa filosofia* (1963).

rissima, ma che ella habbia bellezza da potere altrui muovere ad amore, e che habbia lettere, non che filosofia, io non ho giamai udito lodarla da veruno."⁴¹

"Et questo è che secondo il giudicio mio non è mai stata, ne è ne possa essere per lo avenire già mai, donna che si possa in tutte le parti pareggiare alla signora Tarquinia nostra."⁴²

In a letter addressed to Fulvio Orsini on 27 July 1577 Petrić writes about Tarquinia as a woman who deserves to be adored and appreciated all over the world:

"La Signora Tarquinia Molza, miracolo di tutte le donne, e per la incomparabile dottrina della lingua volgare, la latina e greca, e per la filosofia e poesia sue, e per la musica, e per la bontà et altre virtù singolari dell'animo, e per le bellezze et gratie singolari, <...>"⁴³

In the first dialogue, beauty is described as the living ray of God, a gift from God and the greatest proof of the incomprehensible light of the creator of the universe, an image of the ideas themselves, but also as an object of desire for all creatures:

"O bellezza raggio vivo di Dio; dono sopra tutti gli altri divini doni divinissimo; o bellezza verace testimonio della incomprendibile luce del fattore dell'universo, chiara e vivace imagine delle forme esemplari di là suso; o bellezza che sola de le idee divine a noi discendi perspicua et ammirabile; o bellezza che la stessa bontà vie più efficace, la quale da tutte le anime e da tutti i corpi desiderata, <...>"⁴⁴

Blessed is the one who can see and recognize beauty because it is "the luminary of the light of God," which "opens the path for us, enlightens our mind and leads it to the first source of every light and every good:"

"Tu sola, o lume della luce di Dio, ci apri il sentieri, ci allumi la mente, e ci guidi al primo fonte d'ogni luce e di ogni bene. O beato chi ti vede e ti riconosce;"⁴⁵

A clear analogy with Renaissance Platonism can be noticed in the first dialogue. In his commentary of Plato's *Symposium*, Marsilio Ficino explains that beauty is a ray of divine light and that those who contemplate it long to return to and reunite with the greatest source of all things:

"[C]hi contempla la bellezza in questo quattro, cioè nella mente, nell'anima,

⁴¹ Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963), p. 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³ Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975), p. 11–12.

⁴⁴ Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963), p. 31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

nella natura, et nel corpo, et in essi ama lo splendore di Dio, per lo splendore stesso di dio viene à vedere, et amare esso Iddio.⁷⁴⁶

“[L]a bellezza essere una certa gratia vivace, et spirituale, infusa primieramente nel angelo illustrato dal raggio di Dio, poi ne gl’animi de gli huomini, et nelle figure de corpi, et nelle voci: la quale gratia per la ragione, per viso, et per l’udito muove, et diletta gli animi nostri, et diletta, gli piglia: pigliandoli, gli infiamma d’ardentissimo amore.”⁷⁴⁷

Petrić met Tarquinia Molza in 1571 when she was twenty-nine years old.⁴⁸ He was utterly enraptured by her spiritual beauty and extraordinary intellect, on which he extensively elaborated in his *L’amorosa filosofia*; the fact that he dedicated to her the third volume of his *Discussiones peripateticae* (Basileae, 1581) speaks in favour of that.⁴⁹

The content of the four letters sent by Petrić to Tarquinia, dated 13 November 1577, 25 September 1578, 17 October 1578, and 24 October 1578, shows their mutual friendly relations, but also a shared interest for astrology and cosmology.⁵⁰ Thanks to Petrić’s first dialogue in *L’amorosa filosofia*, we find out that Tarquinia had a rare talent for many things. She easily absorbed Pythagorean, Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, read the greatest classics of poetry such as Catullus, Tibullus, Horace, was interested in music, learned Greek (with Petrić’s help), and acquired all the mysteries of Christian theology with ease. Through the praises by the protagonists of the dialogue, or the muses that inspire them, in *L’amorosa filosofia* Petrić emphasizes Molza’s spiritual and intellectual qualities, her loveliness and uniqueness. The influence of heavenly bodies on the world below and the concept of the world as unity and harmony – already present in his earlier works *Lettura sopra il sonetto del Petrarca La gola, e’l sonno* (1553) and *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici* (1553) – take on a central place in the pages of the first dialogue of *L’amorosa filosofia*. In line with his belief that “tutte le cose di qua giù di lasù derivano”⁵¹ and his

⁴⁶ Ficino, “Comento sopra il convito d’amore del divinissimo Platone” (1544), f. 12v.

⁴⁷ Ibid., f. 45v.

⁴⁸ See the note of Danilo Aguzi Barbagli in Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975), p. 13, n. 1.

⁴⁹ Franciscus Patricius, *Discussionum peripateticarum tomus tertius* / Frane Petrić, *Peripatetičke rasprave svezak treći*, translated by Tomislav Čepulić and Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin, edited by Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin and Olga Perić (Zagreb: Institut za filozofiju, 2009), on p. 6:

“Ad Tarquiniam Molziam, diam mulierem <...> Cui enim omnium hominum laudabilibus lucubrationes meas donarem, quam tibi, viraginum omnium, quot sunt, quot fuerunt, quotque alios erunt in annos, doctissimae?”

⁵⁰ Cf. Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti* (1975), pp. 13–22.

⁵¹ Patrizi, *L’amorosa filosofia* (1963), p. 69.

fully elaborated view on the influence of the planets on the nature and ability of individuals, Petrić assigns a specific influence to each planet.

L'amorosa filosofia also contains Petrić's views (already expressed in his commentary on Petrarca's sonnet and his treatise on the diversity of poetic inspirations) on the role of the muses that bestow a certain gift, ability and knowledge upon the human soul on birth.

Depending on the topic he elaborates, each protagonist in the dialogue has a corresponding muse that helps him make a speech praising Tarquinia Molza (see Table 1).⁵²

Table 1. Organization of eulogy dedicated to Tarquinia Molza

| Speaker | Profession | Associated Muse | Planet | Domain of protection | Petrić's characteristic of the Muse | Speech topic |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Carlo Segonio | historian | Thalia | Moon | comedy | birth, sprout | family history, childhood |
| Hortensio Grilenzzone (Benedetto Manzuolo) ⁵³ | dean, philosopher (poet, bishop) | Euterpe | Mercury | music | perspicacity; the power of contemplation | perspicacity, the power of the spirit |
| Giovanni Fallopa (?) ⁵⁴ | poet | Erato | Venus | love poetry | love; enables the soul to ascend to intelligible beauty through material beauty | beauty |

⁵² See also the table by John W. Crayton, "Introduction," in Francesco Patrizi, *The Philosophy of Love*, translated by D. Pastina i J. W. Crayton (Philadelphia: Xlibris Corporation, 2003), p. 15.

⁵³ Patrizi announced the speech by H. Grilenzzone (p. 20), but in the final paragraph of his speech, he wrote down another name: Benedetto Manzuolo (p. 25).

⁵⁴ The name of the third speaker is repeatedly left blank. Cf. Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963), pp. 25–35. On p. 11 Petrić mentions the name Giovanni Fallopa as a speaker who follows after the speech of Patritio, but after Patritio follows Venieri (p. 67).

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--|--------------------------|
| Fabrizio Dentici | musician | Melpomene | Sun | tragedy | governs the pleasures gained by the sense of hearing | musical talent |
| Gasparo Silingardo | cleric, later bishop | Clio | Mars | history | glory; keeps order of the things within the world of elements | tranquillity, composure |
| Marco Felino | cleric | Terpsichore | Jupiter | dance | visual pleasure | virtues |
| Francesco Patritio | philosopher | Polyhymnia | Saturn | lyrics | ability of memory | mind |
| Maffeo Venieri | poet | Urania | starry sky | astronomy | loveliness; governs the harmonic movements of the sky | gracefulness |
| Benedetto Manzuolo | poet, bishop | Calliope | entire universe | epic poetry | contains the qualities of all muses, maintains order between the divine and human things | synthesis of all virtues |

Source: Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963), pp. 12–75.

In the second dialogue, where Tarquinia herself is one of the interlocutors, love and its effects are at the core of the discussion. Through the words of Tarquinia Molza, Petrić argues that love, which he divides into benevolence, mercy, friendship, enjoyment, excitement, inclination, cupidity, yearning, desire (*benevolgenza, carità, amicitia, diletione, affettione, inclinazione, cupidità, cupidigia, cupido, concupiscenza, desiderio, appetito, voglia, talento, brama*), carries in itself a wish for the good. All mentioned forms of love are finally divided into four basic kinds: natural love (*naturale*, the love for things that bring pleasure), parental love (*parentesco*), friendly love (*compagnevole / amichevole*) and passionate love (*venereo*). Tarquinia's drawing upon the Latin

proverb "Charitas incipit a se ipso,"⁵⁵ according to which love must start from ourselves,⁵⁶ prepares the ground for the following discussion. The third dialogue entitled "Che tutte le spetie d'amore nascono dallo amore di se stesso" shifts the discussion toward the notion of *philautia*, i.e. self-love, which encompasses the essence of Petrić's new philosophy of love. According to Tarquinia's words, *philautia* (*amore portato a se stesso*) is the first, original love we carry since our birth. It is the underlying principle and the foundation of all other kinds of love, all inclinations of our soul, all our actions and passions:

"*Tarq.* <...> la philautia è presa per quello amore primiero, et per così dire originale, che tutti gli huomini, tutti gli animali et in somma tutte le cose per natura e dal primo loro nascimento portano a se stesse, per lo quale amano l'essere proprio et il bene essere loro et il sempre essere. Et il quale è principio e fonte et fondamento di tutti gli altri amori et di tutti gli affetti dell'animo nostro et tutti i pensieri et di tutte le attioni, di tutte le passioni, di tutti gli studi e di tutti gli essercitii che noi facciamo, di qualunque maniera essi si sieno."⁵⁷

God creates the world and all things out of his kindness and love for himself. God impressed a part of himself into all the things he created. Petrić writes:

"*Tarq.* Et la bontà di Dio, non potendo stare in se stessa, fece di sè parte alle cose col produrle."⁵⁸

"*Tarq.* Voglio dire le cose havere havuto lo essere corrispondente allo essere di Dio, il quale et è et è buono."⁵⁹

Petrić finds a confirmation of his thesis about self-love as the basis of all other kinds of love in the wise men's teaching: "it is welfare what all the things want."⁶⁰ This wish and effort to keep (*conservare*) one's own being (received from God), to reach one's own perfection and the highest good is nothing else but an aspiration to return to the highest source of all things. The discussion carries on towards the affirmation of the feeling of love as the original human aspiration for the highest good situated in the intelligible sphere. Therefore

⁵⁵ Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963) p. 91.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91:

"*Tarq.* Et quando si dice: 'Charitas incipit a se ipso', non è dubbio che si intende che lo amore dee prima cominciare da sè e poi stendersi nel prossimo."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109:

"*Patr.* Dite vero. Et per ciò essere stato detto da'savi, il bene esser ciò che tutte le cose desiderano."

God, desired by all things, the one to whom we bear resemblance and aspire to return, creates the world and all things out of his kindness, and owing to the love of himself.

Philautia forms the thematic framework of the final, fourth dialogue in which Paolo Porrino, Tarquinia's husband, acts as an interlocutor. As Porrino's interpretation is contrary to Tarquinia's presentation of love, Petrić admits that after talking with her husband, who also offered good arguments, he remains confused.

The notion of *philautia*, which forms the basis of Petrić's *new philosophy of love*, remains of great interest to many scholars whose research on this issue has branched in two different directions. On the one hand, John Charles Nelson advocates the view that with his concept of love presented in *L'amorosa filosofia* Petrić departs from the traditional Platonic interpretation of love. He not only significantly deviates from Renaissance treatises on love, but, as Nelson points out, he also deviates from Christian teaching.⁶¹ As opposed to other works by Petrić in which Ficino's influence can be easily recognized, in *L'amorosa filosofia* Maria Muccillo sees Petrić's departure from Ficino.⁶² According to her, Petrić's notion of *philautia* excludes a significant part of the moral and spiritual message contained in Ficino's teaching because it emphasizes the narcissistic aspect of love. According to Tarquinia's words, self-love is a necessary and constitutive part of human nature, and such a concept is "very distant from Ficino's."⁶³ Cesare Vasoli also wrote about the abandonment and decomposition of the Platonic myth of love in Petrić's work,⁶⁴ while according to Sabrina Ebbersmeyer Petrić "replaced the Platonic-metaphysical content with the Aristotelian-naturalistic content and thus brought to an end the genre of Platonic love dialogue."⁶⁵

⁶¹ Nelson, "Introduzione," in Francesco Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963), pp. v–xvi, on p. v, x, xv.

Hereafter in notes: Nelson, "Introduzione" (1963).

⁶² Maria Muccillo, "Marsilio Ficino e Francesco Patrizi da Cherso," in *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone. Studi e documenti* II, ed. by Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Firenze: Olschki, 1986), pp. 615–679, on p. 642.

Hereafter in notes: Muccillo, "Marsilio Ficino e Francesco Patrizi da Cherso" (1986).

⁶³ Muccillo, "Marsilio Ficino e Francesco Patrizi da Cherso" (1986), pp. 645–646.

⁶⁴ Cesare Vasoli, "*L'amorosa filosofia* di Francesco Patrizi e la dissoluzione del mito platonico dell'amore," *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 43/3 (1988), pp. 419–441, on p. 441.

⁶⁵ Sabrina Ebbersmeyer, *Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft* (2002), p. 251.

On the other hand, Ljerka Schiffler,⁶⁶ Mladen Živković,⁶⁷ Igor Škamperle,⁶⁸ and Elisabeth von Erdmann⁶⁹ firmly placed Petrić's *L'amorosa filosofia* into the framework of Renaissance Platonism. Even the recent research by Erna Banić-Pajnić points out that "[t]here are some interpreters who interpret this self-love [Petrić's notion of *philautia*] as mere egoism, yet it is possible to interpret it in another way, that brings Petrić's conception close to that of Ficino."⁷⁰ She presents an entire range of elements of Petrić's dialogue in which the correspondence between his and Ficino's conception of love is evident.⁷¹

In her book *Echoes of an Invisible World*, Jacomien Prins briefly reflects on Petrić's concept of love, emphasizing that Petrić's *L'amorosa filosofia* is "the philosophical treatise which, <...> is written in the tradition of love treatises inspired by Plato's *Symposium*."⁷² However, her comparative analysis of Ficino and Petrić's thought, focused primarily on those relevant approaches with which the two philosophers influenced the Renaissance transformation of the doctrine of the harmony of the spheres and the theory of music, shows that Petrić's concept of love as "a kind of blind will aimed at self-preservation"⁷³ is opposite to Ficino's teleological conception of universal love. Moreover, Prins highlights that Petrić, with his understanding of *philautia*, opposes Ficino's theory of cosmic love. With his "naturalistic view in which the human soul is characterized as essentially driven by self-love and egoism", Petrić "confronts the normative religious conception of the human soul."⁷⁴

Nelson already mentioned Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as the source of Petrić's understanding of *philautia*, particularly books VIII and IX, in which the Stagirite taught about friendship.⁷⁵ After criticizing friendships guided

⁶⁶ Schiffler, *Frane Petrić / Franciscus Patricius* (1997), p. 259.

⁶⁷ Mladen Živković, "Petrićev pojam ljubavi," in *Zbornik o Frani Petriću 1597–1997* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo; Cres: Grad Cres, 1999), pp. 127–149, on p. 129.

⁶⁸ Igor Škamperle, "*L'amorosa filosofia* di Frane Petrić e il concetto di *philautia*," *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 38 (2012), pp. 23–34, on p. 23.

⁶⁹ Elisabeth von Erdmann, "Gott, der Raum und der Dichtermensch. Eine Spurensuche bei Frane Petrić," *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 40 (2014), pp. 419–442, on pp. 436–437.

⁷⁰ Banić-Pajnić, "Marsilio Ficino and Franciscus Patricius on Love" (2014), p. 224–225.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁷² Jacomien Prins, *Echoes of an Invisible World: Marsilio Ficino and Francesco Patrizi on Cosmic Order and Music Theory* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 373.

Hereafter in notes: Prins, *Echoes of an Invisible World* (2014).

⁷³ Prins, *Echoes of an Invisible World* (2014), p. 320.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁷⁵ Cf. Nelson, "Introduzione" (1963), pp. xi, xiii; Maria Muccillo, "Marsilio Ficino e Francesco Patrizi da Cherso" (1986), p. 644.

by pleasure and utility in book VIII, and praising those guided by virtue, in book IX of his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle carefully considers the notion of self-love. According to his explanation, friendly inclinations towards our fellow creatures, as well as features that determine friendships follow from man's feelings towards himself. A good, honest and virtuous man wants what is good for himself, but also for his fellow men. Therefore, an extreme degree of friendship is similar to the love for oneself.⁷⁶ The question of whether one should love oneself or the other person more, i.e. whether love for oneself should be scorned and condemned, is answered by Aristotle in the following way: self-love has an opprobrious meaning when it comes to a greedy person who is guided exclusively by their own benefits, bodily pleasures and material goods; on the other hand, honest and virtuous people, who are trying to please the rational part of the soul, cannot be reproached for their self-love. A good man guided by his mind to do good, will do good to other people, too.⁷⁷ This is a "good form of self-love."

The analogies with Aristotle's understanding of self-love as well as the differences in relation to Renaissance treatises on love, can be discerned in Petrić's discussion about love, but they are insufficient for the conclusion that in *L'amorosa filosofia* Petrić does not follow (also) Renaissance Platonic thought. Petrić's notion of love, characterized by a natural aspiration to return to God, does not contain the notion of egotism, but implies love towards the highest good, God, resulting from the awareness of oneself, which has the purpose of returning to the highest source of all things:

"Tarq. <...> Il fine nostro non è egli lo unirsi a Dio?
Patr: Sì è."⁷⁸

In this context, it should be added that, besides Ficino, Mario Equicola's *Libro de natura de amore* (1525), as already pointed out by Nelson, and more recently by Sandra Plastina in more detail, was also very relevant for Petrić's notion of self-love.⁷⁹ Furthermore, in answering the tenth question in his lessons

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IX, 1166a1–1166b1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1168a–1169a.

⁷⁸ Patrizi, *L'amorosa filosofia* (1963), p. 115.

⁷⁹ Sandra Plastina, "Is Francesco Patrizi's *L'Amorosa Filosofia* a heterodox reading of the *Symposium*?", *Intellectual History Review* 29 (2019), pp. 631–648. See also Nelson, "Introduzione" (1963), p. xv–xvi.

Cf. Mario Equicola, *Libro de natura de amore di Mario Equicola secretario del illustrissimo S. Federico II Gonzaga marchese di Mantua* (Venetia: Per Lorenzo Lorio da Portes, 1525), in "Libro secondo," "Origine de li affecti," ff. 42v–ff. 56r, on 43v: "<...> cosi lo amor di noi stessi, tutti affecti comprende, como origine, fonte, principio et patre di quelli," on f. 55v: "Non po esser che non ami se medesimo, chi ama Dio, anzi colui sol sa amar se stesso, che ama Dio: perche

Sopra alcune quistioni d'amore Benedetto Varchi concludes that "all human loves have their beginning, middle and end in self-love:"

"A noi basta aver provato, che tutti gli amori umani hanno principio, mezzo e fine dall'amor proprio, perché tutti cominciano da cotale amore, e in cotale amore forniscono, e conseguentemente, che alcuno non può amare più altrui, che sé stesso."⁸⁰

Petrić's concept of love in *L'amorosa filosofia* excludes any relation with narcissism and an "unhealthy" way of understanding oneself. Moreover, it proves his reception of the fundamental Renaissance Neoplatonic idea of man's divine nature as mediated through the works of the Hermetic tradition. Therefore, the notion of *philautia* should be interpreted as love towards the true inner nature of man, i.e. the soul.⁸¹

However, Petrić's final thoughts in *L'amorosa filosofia* reveal how the discussion about love with Tarquinia Molza and Paolo Porrino perplexed him. As this work remained unfinished,⁸² we cannot be certain about his final conclusion or his ultimate answer.⁸³ This is where Erna Banić-Pajnić sees the main

colui con con diligentia ama se che fa ogni cosa per fruir il vero et summo bene: il quale non e altro che Dio: Chi po dubitare che chi ama se stesso e amator de Dio?;" in "Libro secondo," "Del nome di amore," ff. 56r–ff. 60r, on f. 56r: "Amore di noi stessi principio et origine de tutti affetti: che in noi sorgono et possono sorgere;" in "Libro terzo," "Amor de l'homo a l'homo," ff. 110r–ff. 118v, on f. 114v: "Dissero alcuni li amori esser quatro, del marito et moglie, de genitori a figlioli, del amante al amato, el quarto magior di tutti, del corpo a l'anima, cioe amor di se stesso;" in "Libro terzo," "Amor del homo a Dio," ff. 104v–110r, on f. 108v: "Ama prima dunque l'homo se stesso, per proprio ben di se stesso: per la fede poi comincia ad amar Dio, non per esso Dio, ma per se stesso: poscia legendo, meditando, orando, contemplando, ama Dio, et per Dio ama se stesso: Felice colui che non sapendo se non amare se stesso, et per se stesso Dio, comenza ad amar solo Dio, et per Dio se medesimo."

⁸⁰ "Quistione decima. Se alcuno può amare più altrui, che sé stesso," in Benedetto Varchi, *Sopra alcune quistioni d'amore*, in Benedetto Varchi, *Opere* II (Trieste: Della sezione letterario-artistica del Lloyd Austriaco, 1859), pp. 551–553, on p. 553.

⁸¹ Cf. Škamperle, "L'amorosa filosofia di Frane Petrić e il concetto di *philautia*" (2012), pp. 23–34.

⁸² Although the reasons why Petrić did not finish the manuscript are not clear, John Charles Nelson mentions the fact that in 1577 Petrić was invited to take over the department of Platonic philosophy in Ferrara, and he also finds the death of Paolo Porrino in 1578 very significant in that sense, as he believes that Petrić postponed the conclusion and publishing of the work out of respect towards Paolo Porrino.

Cf. Nelson, "Introduzione" (1963), p. xv.

⁸³ Irma B. Jaffe and Gerardo Colombardo believe that if Petrić had finished the work, his thought might have been directed towards connecting Platonism and Aristotelism.

See Irma B. Jaffe and Gerardo Colombardo, *Shining Eyes, Cruel Fortune: The Lives and Loves of Italian Renaissance Women Poets* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), p. 314.

reason why “we cannot conclude unambiguously what was Petrić’s opinion about *philautia*.”⁸⁴

3. *Annibale Romei on beauty and love*

3.1. *Della bellezza*

On the first day, at the court of Alfonso II d’ Este, in the company of ladies and knights, Romei starts a discussion about beauty,⁸⁵ which, as he himself points out, rightfully takes first place among all the things that inspire enjoyment and admiration.⁸⁶ He points out that he himself reflected many times on what we call beauty, wondering if it really existed in the world or if we formed it with our thinking, because experience confirms that it is a matter of subjective view.

Praised as an expert on beauty and love, Frane Petrić, “noble Dalmatian, very learned, especially in Platonic philosophy,”⁸⁷ highly regarded at the glamorous court of Alfonso II d’Este in Ferrara, is called upon to hold “a speech about beauty” (*un discorso sopra la bellezza*).⁸⁸

Accepting Romei’s request, Petrić begins his presentation by explaining that beauty is the most pleasant feature distributed through the universe, and arises out of proportion and colour. God creates beauty with the goal to inspire

⁸⁴ Banić-Pajnić, “Marsilio Ficino and Franciscus Patricius on Love” (2014), p. 226.

⁸⁵ Annibale Romei, “Giornata prima. Nella quale tra Dame, e Cavaglieri ragionando, si tratta della bellezza,” in *Discorsi del conte Annibale Romei gentil’uomo ferrarese, di nuovo ristampati, ampliati, e con diligenza corretti. Divisi in Sette Giornate, nelle quali tra dame, e cavaglieri ragionando* (In Ferrara: Per Vittorio Baldini, 1586), pp. 1–22.

Hereafter in notes: Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586).

⁸⁶ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 4:

“Fra tutte le cose, che porgono diletto, e maraviglia pare che la bellezza tenghi il primo luogo.”

Petrić presented a similar thought in his “Argomenti” in Contile, *Le rime* (1560), ff. 25r–36v, on f. 25v:

“la bellezza qual si sia, partorisce sempre maraviglia nell’animo di colui, che la vede, e la conosce;”

⁸⁷ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 4:

“È il Signor Francesco Patritio nobile di Dalmatia huomo molto dotto, e massime nella Filosofia Platonica, il quale dalla fortuna un pezzo combattuto, ridottosi finalmente all’Asilo de letterati, che (tale è la casa di questo Principe) è stato con grado honorato da Sua Altezza raccolto.”

⁸⁸ It should be also mentioned the fact that Frane Petrić is called to discuss with Giulio Cesare Brancaccio in the seventh *Discorso* about the preference of books / letters and weapons where he opposes to Brancaccio, advocating for the primacy of the letter. The discussion indicates that Romei might be familiar with Petrić’s work *La militia romana di Polibio, di Tito Livio, e di Dionigi Alicarnaseo* (Ferrara, 1583).

admiration and the pleasure of love in all the souls that can understand it. Petrić articulated a similar view already in his commentary of Luca Contile's rhymes, in which he explained that beauty consists of proportion and splendour.⁸⁹

In the following lines, Petrić expounds his animistic conception of the cosmos and the idea of the world as the unity of the sensory and the intelligible world, with special reference to the relevance of the *anima del mondo*.⁹⁰

Petrić (Romei's *alter ego*) distinguishes between two types of beauty: sensory and intelligible. Within the framework of the analysis of sensory beauty, he briefly discusses the beauty of the sky, the four elements, minerals, rocks and plants,⁹¹ as well as artistic beauty. This is followed by a speech about intelligible beauty which Petrić begins with an interpretation of the beauty of the human soul:

“[L]a bellezza dell'anima humana si trova nella parte più eminente dell'anima, la quale è esposta alla divina luce. Questa è detta intelletto, per il quale l'anima nostra intende, e sà non solo l'essenza delle cose corporee sensibili, ma ancho per le cose visibili alla cognitione delle invisibili s'inalza, <...>.”⁹²

Both Petrić and Romei emphasize the meaning and importance of “the divine light” or “the ray of the light of God” (*il raggio della luce di Dio*) which illuminates all created things, making them beautiful. In addition, they share the belief that, with the help of the mind, we can ascend to the cognition of the highest beauty via sensory things, which represent the images of intelligible things. After a brief explanation of what the beauty of the world soul, i.e. nature (*la bellezza dell'anima mondana, detta Natura*), and the beauty of angels consist in, Petrić, the main protagonist of Romei's dialogue, turns to consider the highest divine beauty as the cause of all forms and ways of its manifestation. Like the Sun, “the eye of the world” (*occhio del Mondo*),⁹³ which illuminates all material things, making their perception and cognition possible, the divine light in the human mind offers a possibility of retrieving the highest intelligible truth and beauty. This essential, divine beauty consists “of an ideal proportion

⁸⁹ See note 34.

⁹⁰ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), pp. 5–6. In Romei's interest in astrology, in his description of the celestial world, and conception of the universe as a living organism Prandi sees the influence of Petrić's views from his manuscript *Del Cielo and Nova de universis philosophia*, in particular “Pampsychia,” which was published in Ferrara in 1591. Cf. Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990), pp. 90–92.

⁹¹ In this place Petrić leaves out the analysis of the beauty of human body, emphasizing that he will dedicate to that topic at the end of his speech.

⁹² Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 8.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Here Petrić refers to Heraclitus.

and shining light” (*nella proportione ideale, e nella sua risplendente luce*).⁹⁴ It is the cause of the beauty and splendour of the entire universe.

Human beauty exceeds all the beauty of the lower or material world.⁹⁵ Man, “a small world,”⁹⁶ as he is called by Romei, or “the divine animal” (*divin’animale*), which in itself possesses the divine ray, has a dual nature. On the one hand, he is limited by physical reality, while on the other, his soul is created with its eyes directed towards the sky. The concept of man as “a small world,” which contains in itself all the features of the macrocosm, is typical of the Hermetic tradition and had been already presented by Petrić in his 1553 commentary on Petrarch’s sonnet *La gola e’l sonno e l’ociose piume*.⁹⁷ Within Romei’s conception of man as “a small world,” man is placed at the centre of the world. Here, as if “in an ample theatre,” he watches and admires it, contemplating the works of God and the beauty of the entire universe:

[S]i puo dir con la scrittura sacra, che Dio creò l’huomo ad imagine sua; conciosia che nell’huomo risplenda il raggio della divinità. Questo divin’animale, che noi chiamiamo huomo, fu composto d’anima e di corpo; il qual corpo dovendo essere albergo d’un’anima bellissima et immortale, fu creato non coperto di pelli, di setole, di piume, ò di squame, nè con denti ferini, nè con corne, nè con rostro, ò con unghie rapaci; ma politissimo, e con gl’occhi verso il Cielo; et fu posto nel mezzo del Mondo, accioche quasi in ampio theatro mirasse e contemplasse le opere del grand’Iddio, e la bellezza di tutto l’universo.⁹⁸

God, the creator and giver of beauty, manifests himself in the natural world in two ways: through colour and proportion. In man, colour and proportion – elements of divine beauty – are at the highest level of excellence. Thus, the human body becomes a small model of the material world, and soul the image of the intelligible world:

“<...> il corpo humano non sia altro che un picciol modello del Mondo sensibile; e l’anima il simulacro del Mondo intelligibile.”⁹⁹

Thus, the beauty of man is clearly defined as a shadow, as the image of the intelligible beauty which can be reached through bodily beauty. Petrić had

⁹⁴ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 11.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 12:

“e però fu meritamente l’huomo chiamato picciol Mondo;”

⁹⁷ Francesco Patritio, “Lettura sopra il sonetto del Petrarca La gola e’l sonno,” in Patritio, *La città felice* (1553), ff. 55r–69v, on f. 60r.

⁹⁸ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 12.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

elaborated his conception of the human body as the most excellent example and model of sensory beauty in 1560 in his already mentioned commentary of Contile's rhymes:

“Ma percioche le nostre cognitioni, sono sempre dalle sentimenta originate, noi co corporali conosciamo prima la corporal bellezza. La quale tra tutti gli elementali corpi è piu perfetta, et piu d'ogni parte compita, nell'humano corpo, che in altro veruno.”¹⁰⁰

The beauty of the human body is higher in women than men. God sent the woman to the man to be his companion and provided her with a beauty which can generate love in a man (“per produr amore nell'huomo”¹⁰¹). The main task of a woman's beauty, as seen by Romei, consists in the stimulation of man's desire to generate in beauty (“generar nel bello”¹⁰²). Romei emphasizes what Anacreon already stated: as running is the adornment of a horse and wisdom of a man, so beauty is the real adornment (*fregio*) of a woman.

The beauty of the human face lies in proportional lines, well distributed colours, air and grace. Gracefulness and beauty necessarily go together. Without grace – which for Romei (in Petrić's words) lies in the body's sweet, pleasant and graceful movements – beauty is imperfect. It is only in association with grace that beauty has the power to capture the souls of those able to grasp it.

The beauty of the human body, which is the most excellent among all the sensuous beauties, was created by God in order to arouse in humans a sincere and sacred divine love that unites them with the highest creator of all things. Admiring human beauty, man raises his mind to the contemplation of the true, essential beauty, compared to which material beauty is like a shadow and a simulacrum.¹⁰³

Petrić's interpretation of beauty gains a broader dimension after Tarquinia Molza is involved in the discussion. She wants to know how it is possible that nature, which always has beauty as a model in front of it, creates ugliness (*la bruttezza*):

“<...> parlando dell'humana bellezza; perche ella tra noi sia cosi rara; e cosi frequente la bruttezza; <...> come può dunque essere Signor Patritio, che la Natura, la quale il vero modello della bellezza ha sempre innanzi, ad imagine

¹⁰⁰ Patritio, “Discorso” (1560), f. 15v.

¹⁰¹ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 12.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 14.

del quale ella intende di formare il bello, a guisa d'inetto Pittore, ò Scultore, il piu delle volte dia nel brutto?"¹⁰⁴

In his discussion of the relationship between beauty and ugliness, Romei introduces an element of novelty with respect to Petrić's theory. In his effort to respond to Molza's question, at the very beginning Petrić remarks that beauty is born out of form, and ugliness out of matter. This is where Petrić the interlocutor refers to Plotinus, who, according to Petrić, defines beauty as "a flower of form which overcomes matter."¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Romei explains that beauty and ugliness largely depend on nature, celestial influences, but also on the father's semen and the mother's womb. Since Mother Nature has to introduce a form similar to the ideal beauty into matter, i. e. into the human body, it is necessary that many things are properly arranged: the man's semen must be well deployed, the uterus must be well tempered and the heavenly heat of benign stars must be impressed in woman's body. Therefore, it is essential that many things work together in order to create beauty. So, it is no wonder, continues Petrić, that beauty is so rare, while ugliness is such a common occurrence. But there is no doubt that tastes differ and each lover praises those parts in which the beauty of his beloved is most outstanding. Although in that way Petrić, that is Romei, makes it very clear that beauty is a thing of subjective impression, which clearly shows a departure from Petrić, his basic attitude, which again confirms his close relationship with Petrić, is that the most excellent of all sensory beauty is the one that is the closest and most similar to the intelligible beauty in which it has a share. The beauty that is the most similar to intelligible beauty is the one that stands out for its proportions, because it is the foundation of perfection. "Without a doubt," says Petrić, "proportion is most similar to intelligible beauty because there is no order without proportion," and "order is a simulacrum of the intelligible beauty and divine mind."¹⁰⁶ Moreover, in Romei's treatise, proportion is conceived as the main cause of the beauty of the entire material and intelligible world. However, sensory beauty, which primarily refers to the beauty of the human body, cannot be called perfect if it provides pleasure only to senses, but it must be a pleasure and stimulation to the mind

¹⁰⁴ Romei, "Della bellezza" (1586), pp. 16–17.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 17:

"<...> e però il divino Plotino diffinisce la bellezza non esser'altro, che il fior della forma vincente la materia."

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 19:

"La proportione senza dubbio ha maggior similitudine con la bellezza intelligibile; perche non puo esser proportione senza ordine: e l'ordine è proprio della ragione; la qual ragione non è altro, che un simulacro della bellezza intelligibile e dell'istesso divin'intelletto."

as well.¹⁰⁷ Among all the beauties of the sensible world, the first place belongs to the human body. The human body, in fact, is “the model of the big world” (*il modello del gran Mondo*).¹⁰⁸

God, conceived as “the divine architect of the world” (*divin'Architetto*), creates the universe according to the idea of proportion also instilled into man, the human architect, in order for him to understand the order and the harmony of the world. “Proportion is the main cause of the beauty of the entire universe, both the sensory and intelligible world.”¹⁰⁹ It is an exemplary form of the universe, a model according to which the supreme architect creates the world. Proportion is the cause of the harmony of numbers, the beauty of the body and the virtues of the soul. Beside proportion, colours also play an important role when it comes to the beauty of the human body. Colour, which along with proportion, is the main source of beauty, is inseparable from the light spreading throughout the entire universe. The light is a ray of the divine essence overflowing into the universe; it is the mediator and the cause of the visibility of beauty, but also manifests the degree of perfection of material beauty. By participating in the light, which is given the role of the link between the higher and the lower world, all the things become beautiful. Their beauty has its source in God. It is precisely the colours that are given an important role in the birth of love.¹¹⁰ The pancalistic vision of the world, the aesthetics of proportions and splendour articulated in this dialogue are the clearest confirmation of Romei's good knowledge of Petrić's views, especially those presented in his 1560 “Discorso” included in *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile*.

3.2. *Dell'amore humano*

On the second day, Battista Guirino (Giovanni Battista Guarini, the author of the pastoral drama *Pastor fido*), following up, as he himself points out, on Petrić's lecture on beauty, initiates the debate on human love.

¹⁰⁷ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 19:

“<...> ma di più quella è della bellezza sensibile parte piu principale, che non solo al senso, ma ancho alla mente porge diletto.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 19:

“la proportione è la principal causa della bellezza di tutto l'universo, cosi del mondo corporeo sensibile, come dello intelligibile;”

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21:

“perche la luce è causa dell'apparenza di tutte le bellezze sensibili; <...> i colori nelle bellezze humane tengono il primo luogo, e sono per se stessi atti à produr amore;”

First, Guirino recalls that on the first day they had the opportunity to listen to Petrić's speech about beauty, "the mother of love." As Petrić, Romei also considers Plato as the authority when it comes to questions regarding beauty and love. Thus, in his attempt to define love, Romei recalls Plato's words in the *Phaedrus* according to which love is none other than the desire for the union with the good, while in the *Symposium* he defines love as the desire to create beauty. In this sense, Guirino concludes that love is a "strong excitement of the human soul prompted by the perceived beauty."¹¹¹ Among all the thrills and actions of the soul, love occupies the first place. Beauty is necessary for the awakening of love, because it is an active cause of love. However, in addition to beauty, Guirino emphasizes, the similarity of character, i.e. the accordance of the two souls (*oculta conformità di natura*), as the source and cause of love. This soul matching, as interpreted by Guirino, has its origin in the heavenly spheres:

“[E] però questa oculta conformità è una delle principali et essenziali cause d' amore, la quale non piglia origine da altro, che da i celesti influssi nella generation dell' huomo.”¹¹²

Although he confirms his thesis by referring to Plato (especially to his dialogue *Lysis*) and Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, there is no doubt that Romei could also be inspired by Petrić. Specifically, Petrić presented his doctrine on the effects of the heavenly planets on the characteristics and preferences of human souls in his early writings (the commentary of Petrarch's sonnet and *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici* published in 1553, which Romei most likely had read¹¹³) and would also introduce it in his dialogue about the kiss, in which

¹¹¹ Annibale Romei, "Giornata seconda. Nella quale tra Dame, e Cavaglieri rag[i]onando, si tratta dell' amor humano," in *Discorsi del conte Annibale Romei gentil'huomo ferrarese, di nuovo ristampati, ampliati, e con diligenza corretti. Divisi in Sette Giornate, nelle quali tra dame, e cavaglieri ragionando* (In Ferrara: Per Vittorio Baldini, 1586), pp. 23–57, on p. 25:

"Dico adunque, che Amor non è altro che una gagliardissima perturbatione dell'animo humano, eccitata da conosciuta bellezza per una oculta conformità di natura, che ha lo amante con la cosa amata, risolvendosi in desiderio d'unirsi col bello con amor reciproco."

Hereafter in notes: Romei, "Dell'amore humano" (1586).

¹¹² Romei, "Dell'amore humano" (1586), p. 27.

¹¹³ Evidence in support of the assertion that Romei was very likely acquainted with Petrić's early works *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici* and *Lettura sopra il sonetto del Petrarca "La gola, e'l sonno, e l'ociose piume"* can be found in Romei's treatise *Dell'honore*, where Petrić, as one of the interlocutors, expresses, as Prandi already noted, his opinion on the topic of discussion in a very similar, in some parts almost identical, way as in his dialogue *Il Barignano* (1553). Cf. Prandi, *Il "Cortegiano" ferrarese* (1990), pp. 163–164.

Petrić's commentary of Petrarch's sonnet, *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici*, and *Dialogo dell'honore, Il Barignano* were published together with his *La città felice* in 1553. Fran-

he speaks of beauty and the similarity of souls as the source of love. In that dialogue, Petrić also explains that the similarity of two souls as a source of love depends on the planet which illuminated the souls during their descent into the corporeal domain.¹¹⁴

Furthermore, Guirino emphasizes the important role of the intellect in the experience of love. In fact, love conceived as a craving that develops into the desire for uniting with the beautiful cannot evolve into a desire unless the intellect, as the protector and controller of all our actions, gives its consent.¹¹⁵

He also explains the role of the eyes in love experience. Eyes bring beauty to the lover, charming his heart. The soul of the lover, excited by the action of pleasure given to him by this beauty, begins to contemplate it:

“Conchiudendo noi dunque col Poeta, diremo, che gli occhi sono quelli che l’immagine della bellezza dell’amata rapiscono, et al cuore dell’amante la trasportano; et indi l’anima da quella ecitata con soavissimo piacere comincia a contemplarla, <...>.”¹¹⁶

Despite the fact that when Romei describes the eyes as the main guide on the path of love (*gli occhi sono duci alla strada d’amore*) he is referring to Petrarch, in this passage it is also easy to notice the influence of Petrić’s “Discorso,”¹¹⁷ while there is also some similarity with Petrić’s interpretation in *Il Delfino overo del bacio*:

“*Patr.* <...> io dimando quale sia il Duce che nell’human cuore dalla simiglianza e dalla bellezza conduce amore.

Del. Cotesto io non so.

Patr. Gli occhi, che non sono essi altro che un varco, per lo quale amore dal bello simile nella vostra anima, o huomini, si tragetta.

Del. E per qual modo si tragetta egli per quindi, o spirito amoroso?

cresco Patritio, *La città felice*. Del medesimo, *Dialogo dell’honore, Il Barignano*. Del medesimo, *Discorso della diversità de i furori poetici. Lettura sopra il sonetto del Petrarca. La gola, e’l sonno, e l’ociose piume* (Venetia: Per Giovan. Griffio, 1553).

¹¹⁴ See note 30.

¹¹⁵ Romei, “Dell’amore humano” (1586), p. 27:

“<...> a voler dunque che Amore si risolva in desiderio bisogna che la ragione vi consenta, <...>”

Here Romei refers to Petrarch, but Stefano Prandi recognizes the influence of Thomas Aquinas’ views. Prandi refers to Tomas Aquinas *Summa theologiae* I–II, qu. 26, art. 1, and in particular qu. 27, art. 2. Cf. Prandi, *Il “Cortegiano” ferrarese* (1990), p. 134.

Cf. Leone Hebreo, *Dialoghi di amore* (In Vinegia: In casa de’ figliuoli di Aldo, 1552), in “Dialogo primo di amore”, ff. 3r–34v, on ff. 33r–34v.

¹¹⁶ Romei, “Dell’amore humano” (1586), p. 29.

¹¹⁷ See note 36.

Patr. Non per altro che per i raggi de gli occhi e de' lumi di tutta la bellezza e del bello simili portano con esso seco de gli spiriti del cuore di lui.¹¹⁸

In his further elaboration, Guirino, Romei's *alter ego* in the second dialogue, discusses different kinds of love. He distinguishes between the animal form of love (*Amor ferino*), which does not deserve to be called love because it represents a "raging storm of lust," and three kinds of human love (*tre specie dell'Amor humano*), which differ from one another with regard to their ultimate goal. First, the divine kind of love (*Amor divino*), which, says Romei, Plato in *Phaedrus* called divine ecstasy or divine madness (*furor divino*), resembles the heavenly love generated from the heavenly Venus. In the experience of the divine love, the lover, observing beauty as an image of the divine itself, ascends to the true, essential beauty. The second human kind of love excludes the desire for an intellectual apprehension of the source of beauty, but satisfies itself only with pleasure given by the vicinity of the beloved women. This sort of love does not contain negative elements in itself, or bad intentions (*senza punto macchiar i casti pensieri*), rather it represents a pure, innocent love (*Amor casto*), which finds its reward in the kiss conceived as a combination of two souls.¹¹⁹ The last, third kind of love is the one that dissolves into a desire for uniting with the beautiful, not only with the soul but with the body as well, but in an admissible and honest way (*con modo lecito, et honesto*). This kind of love has its origin in the Greek god of the wedding ceremony Hymen (Hymenaios, or Hymenaeus). With this, partly spiritual, partly physical kind of love, which could, although Romei does not name it, be marked as 'honest,' man strives to preserve his kind, and that is what, according to Guirino, Plato thought when he said that love is a desire to give birth in beauty. Reproduction is, therefore, the main objective of this kind of love.¹²⁰

Here it is necessary to point out the fact that Petrić also distinguishes among three different forms of love: divine (*amor divino*), human (*amor humano*) and animal / bestial (*amor bestiale*). Starting with the eyes that reflect the light of the divine ray impressed in the soul, human love ascends from enjoying the beauty of the mind of the beloved person, thus rising ultimately to the highest form of love – the divine love that enables a man to comprehend and return to the origin of all things. As opposed to the human and divine kind of love, the animal / bestial form of love that aspires for the merger of beings, is not as virtuous or

¹¹⁸ Patritio, *Il Delfino overo del bacio* (1975), p. 151.

¹¹⁹ Romei, "Dell'amore humano" (1586), p. 30:

"conciosia che il bacio sia piu tosto congiungimento d'anima, che di corpo;"

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

praiseworthy, but still does not deserve to be condemned (of course, provided that, says Petrić, it is guided by the intellect!), because it is a human need in the same way as eating, drinking and sleeping are natural actions to all human beings.¹²¹ In their understanding of the animal / bestial kind of love, Petrić and Romei expound rather different views. Petrić points out that, contrary to some opinions, *amor bestiale* is a part of the human form of love as long as man controls his actions and desires with the help of the intellect. Otherwise, man truly becomes a beast (*bestia*).¹²² Under *amore ferino*, Romei implies a form of love which excludes the activity of the intellect and is exclusively drawn by the desire to satisfy physical desires. For this reason, it is considered reprehensible and is not included among the human forms of love.

Even though both Petrić and Romei define love from Neoplatonic standpoint as a desire, a craving for the return and union with the divine source, Romei made a step forward with his thesis that love cannot develop into desire without the consent of the intellect. Regarding the aforementioned thesis and following the doctrine about the impact of the celestial bodies on the feeling of love, Tarquinia Molza joins the discussion asking whether love is a matter of choice or fate. Guirino replies that love has its origin in heavenly actions. Without abandoning the view that love is subject to heavenly influences, Guirino explains that fate instils love in human hearts, however love does not lay its roots without choice. The feeling of love cannot develop into desire without the consent of the intellect, i.e. without choice, which is an act of free will. Molza responds to this by saying that she feels that love resists free will, i.e. choice, because experience shows that love acts violently. Guirino responds that, indeed, there are animal / bestial forms of love (*amori ferini*) that should not be commended and approved, in which love establishes a strong hold in the human heart without the consent of the intellect, necessary to control the lustful part of the human soul. Although his interlocutors, Tarquinia Molza and Camilla Canale, cited examples from Plato, Petrarch and Ariosto,¹²³ confirming that love does not listen to the intellect and strongly captures the human soul, Guirino firmly believes that man has free will and can break free of the passion of love when and how it suits him:

“[T]engo che la verità sia in contrario; e che sia in poter nostro liberarci dall’amorosa passione, come e quando a noi piace;”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Patritio, “Discorso” (1560), f. 17r–17v.

¹²² *Ibid.*, f. 17v.

¹²³ Romei, “Dell’amore humano” (1586), pp. 33–35.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Camilla Bevilacqua reminds Guirino that he said that love is born from a cognition of beauty, but she finds that difficult to understand because experience shows that beauty is a subjective matter and depends on who is looking: while one sees beauty in something, another sees ugliness.¹²⁵ Guirino responds that ugliness does not necessarily exclude beauty. However, the truth is, he adds, that love is born from the knowledge of beauty as love is a legitimate offspring / effect of beauty:

“Sarà dunque vero, che Amor nasce da conosciuta bellezza; perche di bruttezza l’odio, e di bellezza Amore e legittimo parto.”¹²⁶

Leonora Sacrata asks whether love and desire are the same thing, because that is what Leone Ebreo speaks of in the third dialogue (*nel terzo suo Dialogo d’ Amore*) of his book *Dialoghi di amore* (1535), and experience shows that we love because we want and we want because we love.¹²⁷ Guirino begins by pointing out that Leone Ebreo, a man adorned by a perspicacious mind, made a mistake; moreover, he contradicted himself in the first part of his work on love, where he distinguished between love and desire.¹²⁸ Love, continues Guirino, is one quick first movement born in the human soul with the aim of understanding the similarities of beauty which, without the consent of hope, disturbs the soul. Desire rooted in hope follows love. It is the path leading us to the goal – a union with the beautiful. Still, love is understood as desire because after the first movement love turns into a desire and therefore it is true that we love because we want and we want because we love:

“Ed all’hora è vero, che noi amiamo, perche desideriamo; e desideriamo perche amiamo.”¹²⁹

Vittoria Tassona notes that they spent all the time discussing about love, without considering whether love is a good or a bad thing (*cosa rea*).¹³⁰ Guirino responds that this question often tormented poets, especially Petrarch. He adds that the reasons why one could believe that love is a bad thing are of great importance. First, love is a big thrill of our soul (and excitements are

¹²⁵ Romei, “Dell’amore humano” (1586), p. 38.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

Cf. Leone Hebreo, *Dialoghi di amore* (1552), in “Dell’origine di amore. Dialogo III.,” ff. 98r–228v, on f. 119v.

¹²⁸ Romei, “Dell’amore humano” (1586), p. 39.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 40.

contrary to stillness and serenity as the main conditions of human happiness); secondly, it deprives us of freedom, and, third, it clashes with our intellect.¹³¹ Moreover, love is the reason why we lose ourselves, spiritually transforming into another. However, Guirino believes that love is good, even necessary for a good and blessed life:

“e tengo che Amore sia cosa ottima, anzi necessaria al bene e beato vivere.”¹³²

In doing so he, of course, does not mean the animal / bestial kind of love which he considers bad because it strives only to satisfy physical pleasures, but primarily that kind of love which, owing to its excellence, is called divine. Through the beauty of another human being, this love raises the human spirit towards the true beauty, simultaneously awakening a sincere love for the creator, God.

To Camilla Mosti's question whether it is better to love or to be loved, Guirino responds that it is better to love because “loving” (*amare*) is a pleasant and good activity. In addition, the one that loves conceives more. He adds that the word “loving” can be comprehended in two ways: first, as a desire for union with the beloved thing in order to gain its perfection (as an example, Guirino points to the love of all creatures for God, with whom they are trying to unite in order to achieve their perfection) and, secondly, as a desire to give the loved person a certain perfection (in such way God loves all created things and wants them to be reunited with him in order to grant them the highest perfection).¹³³

Vittoria Bentivoglia wants Guirino to explain how it is possible that the lover transforms himself into the loved one, i.e. to explain to her in detail what kind of transformation he is talking about.¹³⁴ Guirino answers by saying that this kind of transformation does not indicate a material and physical transformation, but a spiritual one. In the *Symposium*, Guirino reminds, Plato noted that love ties lovers with a solid knot so that the two become one. According to Guirino, every time it imagines something, our soul becomes more and more like that thing and finally it spiritually transforms itself into the imagined thing. That is why Romei agrees with Petrić that blessed are those who use the beautiful gift of the mind to imagine and contemplate the sublime divine things, because this way they become “the same deity” (*l'istessa divinità*).

In Guirino's last two answers it is possible to detect Petrić's thought as elaborated in his commentary of Luca Contile's love rhymes. There Petrić,

¹³¹ Romei, “Dell'amore humano” (1586), p. 40.

¹³² Ibid., p. 41.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 46.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

drawing from Plato and Ficino as authorities in matters of love, defined love as a desire to enjoy beauty, but also as an aspiration for virtuous improvement.¹³⁵

Finally, it is necessary to single out Anna Strozza's question. She wants to know if it can be true that a lover loves the chosen woman more than himself:

“[N]è mi sò risolvere, se possa mai esser vero, che più di se stesso ami l'amante l'amata.”¹³⁶

Guirino replies that her question is not closely related to the topic of their discussion, arguing that love is as a desire for union, and a union presupposes two objects. The question, continues Guirino, would be better suited to the framework of the kind of love called “benevolence” (*benivolenza*), which represents a desire to provide or see perfection in a subject.¹³⁷ In the context of the latter kind of love, says Guirino, attention should be paid to the fact that all kinds of love have their source in self-love.

“[T]utti gli amori dall'amor di se stesso prendono origine;”¹³⁸

It should be noted that in *L'amorosa filosofia* Petrić wrote that love has to start from the love for ourselves because it is the foundation of all other kinds of love: “tutte le spetie d'amore nascono dallo amore di se stesso”. In addition, the self-love that is with us from birth is at the same time, according to Petrić, the main motivation and driving force of all our thoughts, actions and learning. In the continuation of his explanation, Romei converges with Petrić's basic views. Specifically, Guirino states that those who say that God creates the world to please himself are not mistaken.¹³⁹ In *L'amorosa filosofia*, Petrić explained to his interlocutors that God, the highest good, creates the world and all the things out of his goodness, which is his driving force. God loves all the things he created out of his goodness as a result of his love to himself. Finally, God, desired by all things, and with whom we finally unite, instills in human beings the love for themselves because he loves himself and everything that he creates. Petrić's

¹³⁵ See note 38 and 39.

¹³⁶ Romei, “Dell'amore humano” (1586), p. 53.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53–54:

“il dubbio non ha luogo nell'amor di che noi habbiamo trattato, il quale è desiderio di unione, <...> perche l'unione presuppone due almeno, <...> Ha dunque luogo la dimanda in quell'amore, che si chiama benivolenza, che non è altro, che desiderio di dare, ò di vedere perfezione in qualche soggetto;”

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54:

“<...> et chi dicesse anco, che il Creatore non per altro creò il mondo, che per compiacer à se stesso, non direbbe male;”

concept of self-love implies love for the highest good, God, that originates from the cognition of our own divinity. Through an understanding and cognition of his own divine nature, man is able to approach the highest source of all things. This view by Petrić, however, does not appear in Romei's considerations. Besides that, Romei's analysis of self-love is much more concise and does not develop into a deeper discussion. In his final words, Guirino points out that it is true that a man in love wants more good to his lover than to himself, but according to his opinion, it should be concluded that every lover always loves himself more. There are, Guirino concludes, many examples to support this (although they demonstrate a contrary view, they are very similar to those cited by Paolo Porrino in Petrić's *L'amorosa filosofia*): stories of women who chose death due to severe pain caused by the loss of a beloved husband, as the only way to deal with suffering, but also examples where famous husbands, wanting to provide themselves with eternal glory, willingly exposed themselves to death. All of these are reasons to believe that human beings in their doing depart from the love of ourselves and, of course, the desire for our own satisfaction (*per amor di se stessi, e per compiacer à se stessi*).¹⁴⁰

In the context of broader discussions about human love, Guirino also answered other questions posed by the present ladies, for example: whether the absence of the lover strengthens or weakens love; whether jealousy is a sign of great love; whether the loved one should respond to the love; whether it is possible that one man sincerely loves two women at the same time. After his answer to the last question – can the love of a lover survive even though love is not returned? – the discussion about human love ends with the announcement of the next (third) day's main topic – honour.

In addition to the impact of Petrić's *Discorso* on Luca Contile's love sonnets, in Romei's treatise on human love it is easy to discern even the key elements of Petrić's philosophy of love as articulated in his dialogues *Il Delfino overo del bacio* and *L'amorosa filosofia*. But the question is whether Romei could have been acquainted with Petrić's views from his unpublished works. Petrić's rich correspondence shows his many friendships and contacts with prominent figures of the 16th century. Moreover, they are a good indicator of how much Petrić participated in the social and intellectual life of his time. So we cannot exclude the possibility that Petrić's manuscripts circulated among the nobles at the court of Ferrara and in academic circles where he was very known and appreciated. Also, they could have been integrated in his lectures on Platonic philosophy at the University of Ferrara. Since it is not possible to

¹⁴⁰ Romei, "Dell'amore humano" (1586), p. 54.

confirm that Petrić and Romei ever met in person,¹⁴¹ we cannot, with the exception of his *Discorso*, speak with certainty about a direct influence of Petrić's unpublished works on Romei's treatise on love. However, the similarity in attitudes are more than obvious.

Finally, it is necessary to point out, and this is what Romei's treatises show very well, that "besides intellectuals and nobles, Renaissance love debates have a third protagonist: a woman."¹⁴² "One of the great novelties of the early modern tradition of literary dialogue, particularly in its sixteenth-century vernacular variant," as pointed by Virginia Cox, "was the incorporation of female speakers alongside male. This serves to distinguish the modern tradition of dialogue quite sharply from the ancient, where male voices dominated virtually unchallenged."¹⁴³ According to Cox, it is not difficult to conclude why women are frequent interlocutors in Renaissance debates about love. Many Renaissance dialogues about love are inspired by Plato's Diotima, who introduces Socrates to the secrets of love. Of course, there is also a specific nature of women, their share in beauty and refined understanding of the problems of love. This makes them an authority in discussions regarding beauty and love.¹⁴⁴ It is enough to recall just Cappellano's *De amore*, Gottifredi's *Specchio d'amore*, Speroni's *Dialogo d'amore*, Petrić's *L'amorosa filosofia*, Gučetić's (Nicolò Vito di Gozze) *Dialogo della bellezza* and *Dialogo d'amore*, Monaldi's *Irene, ovvero della bellezza* in order to see that women make a valuable theoretical contribution in sixteenth-century *amorose* discussions. One woman in particular stands out: Tarquinia Molza (1542–1617), a famous singer and poet at the Ferrarese court of Alfonso II d'Este. Admired and celebrated by many poets and philosophers for her knowledge and agile intellect, she becomes a protagonist of many Renaissance treatises on love, like those of Tasso,¹⁴⁵ Petrić and Romei.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Prandi, *Il "Cortegiano" ferrarese* (1990), p. 91.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 128–129.

¹⁴³ Virginia Cox, "The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue," *MLN* 128 (2013), pp. 53–78, on p. 53. On the topic on female interlocutors in Renaissance treatises see also Virginia Cox, "Note: Italian Dialogues Incorporating Female Speakers," *MLN* 128 (2013), pp. 79–83.

¹⁴⁴ Cox, "The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue" (2013), p. 65–66.

¹⁴⁵ Tarquinia Molza is one of the interlocutors in Tasso's dialogues *Il Ghirlinzone ovvero l'epitafio* (1585) and *La Molza ovvero de l'amore* (1585–86).

¹⁴⁶ Tarquinia Molza chooses the topics for the last two of Romei's discussions, *Delle ricchezze*, and *Della precedenza dell'arme, ò delle lettere*.

Romei, "Della nobiltà" (1586), p. 177: "à poco à poco fù con Aplauso di tutti elletta Reina la Signora Tarquinia Molza, Gentildonna Modonese per il suo raro, et pellegrino ingegno, molto dalla Duchessa amata, e da tutta la Corte reverita, la quale dopò lo haver ricusato con modestia, accettò finalmente l'honor, e l'Imperio."

4. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Romei was familiar with Petrić's writings on beauty and love. First of all, in his treatise on beauty Romei confirms his adoption of Petrić's views expanded in the *Discorso* on Luca Contile's love rhymes, while in the treatise on love, beside the influence of the mentioned theoretical commentary of Contile's sonnets, similarities can be perceived with Petrić's views in his *Il Delfino overo del bacio* and *L'amorosa filosofia*, some of which can also be found in Petrić's early works from 1553. While Petrić's impact on Romei's first treatise is irrefutable, in the second instance it is not possible, with the exception of his *Discorso*, to argue in favour of a demonstrable influence of Petrić's unpublished works on Romei's treatise on love. However, the correlations in their views cannot be disputed.

Key similarities connecting Petrić's and Romei's reflections on beauty and love are summarized in the following list:

- (1) the view that man receives from God the ray of light by which he ascends to the cognition of the highest cause;
- (2) the comparison of the transcendent source with the builder;
- (3) the idea of a connection between the two regions: the sensible and the intelligible world;
- (4) the interpretation of the role of material beauty in the world – “a great machine”¹⁴⁷ full of beauty through which we conceive all things;
- (5) the concept of man as a locus of encounter between the higher, intelligible and the lower, material world;
- (6) the distinction between the spiritual and sensual beauty that has its origin in the suprasensory region;
- (7) the view that love connects us with the intelligible beauty: the soul (of the lover) by contemplating the beauty of the human body ascends to its source – divine beauty;
- (8) the emphasis on the role of the heavenly planets;
- (9) the insight that beauty and the similarity of souls are the sources of love;
- (10) the view that God instilled in the souls at the moment of their birth a divine ray of light that awakens in them a desire to return to its source.

The mind is prompted by its own light to retrieve the divine light. The divine ray that illuminates the human soul makes it beautiful, and that is what really fascinates lovers. The experience of love, therefore, is an encouragement and affection, i.e. a desire for the return to the source. In the divine kind of love

¹⁴⁷ Romei, “Della bellezza” (1586), p. 9: “gran macchina, che Mondo si chiama.”

Petrić and Romei both see the highest and purest form of love by which the mind conceives the source and cause of the beauty of all created things. This beauty, of course, has its roots in the material beauty which represents the path by which the soul returns to its creator. In addition to the common conception of the human as the perfect example of beauty and the basic view that human beauty participates in the divine, as well as the attribution of a key role to the eyes, Petrić and Romei are also linked by the interest for the human aspect of love, the effects of love on the psychological aspect of man.

All the common elements highlighted here clearly confirm that Petrić and Romei deal with beauty and love through a framework of key Platonic and Neoplatonic segments of thought.

In the end, it should be noted that, despite a number of Romei's arguments in which Petrić's views can be easily recognized, Romei displayed his originality particularly where he argued that physical beauty is a thing of subjective opinion. To this should be also added Romei's interest in addressing the problem of the relationship of beauty and ugliness, and finally his insistence on the role of the intellect and free choice, i.e. free will, in love experience. Without intellect and will, Romei writes in his *Discorsi*, love cannot grow into a desire for a union with beauty.

Utjecaj Frane Petrića na Romeijevo razumijevanje ljepote i ljubavi

Sažetak

Frane Petrić (Francesco Patrizi da Cherso) i Annibale Romei sudjelovali su u kasno-renesansnim raspravama o ljepoti i ljubavi. Petrić (Cres, 1529 – Rim, 1597) je svoje stavove o ljepoti i ljubavi izložio u dvama rukopisima: dijalogu *Il Delfino, overo del bacio* (prije 1560, *editio princeps* 1975) i u nedovršenom rukopisu *L'amorosa filosofia* (oko 1577, *editio princeps* 1963) sastavljenom od četiri dijaloga. Petrić je o navedenim temama također pisao u kraćoj formi u svom tiskanom "Discorso" pridodanom djelu *Le rime di Messer Luca Contile* (1560), u kojem glavna tema nisu ni ljubav ni ljepota, već sam proces pjesničkog stvaranja. Ipak, u toj raspravi Petrić izražava svoje glavne stavove o ljepoti i ljubavi.

Annibale Romei (Ferrara (?), između 1523 i 1530 – Ferrara, 1590), plemić iz Ferrare, objavio je svoje *Discorsi ... divisi in cinque giornate* 1585. godine, a proširenu verziju *Discorsi ... divisi in sette giornate* 1586. Rad analizira prve dvije rasprave toga Romeijeva djela: *Della bellezza* i *Dell'amore humano*. Frane Petrić, hvaljen kao vrstan poznavatelj pitanja koja se tiču ljepote i ljubavi, pozvan je da u Romeijevoj raspravi *Della bellezza* započne govor o ljepoti. U drugoj raspravi o ljubavi, čast da

prvi govori pripala je Battisti Guirinu, koji se u svom izlaganju izravno naslanja i nadovezuje na Petrićevo učenje o ljepoti o čemu se raspravljalo dan ranije.

Romei je bio upoznat s Petrićevim djelima o ljepoti i ljubavi. U svojoj raspravi *Della bellezza* Romei je usvojio Petrićeva gledišta izložena u teorijskom komentaru Contileovih ljubavnih soneta, dok se u raspravi *Dell'amore humano*, pored utjecaja spomenutog komentara, mogu uočiti sličnosti s Petrićevim stavovima izloženima u *Il Delfino overo del bacio* i *L'amorosa filosofia*. Dok je Petrićev utjecaj u prvoj Romeijevoj raspravi nedvojben, u drugoj raspravi nije moguće, s izuzetkom njegova *Discorso*, argumentirati u korist neporecivog utjecaja Petrićevih neobjavljenih djela na Romeijevu raspravu o ljubavi. Međutim, sve ovdje istaknute sličnosti jasno potvrđuju da Petrić i Romei o ljepoti i ljubavi promišljaju iz okvira platoničke i novoplatoničke tradicije.

Unatoč brojnim Romeijevim argumentima u kojima se može lako prepoznati Petrićev utjecaj, Romei je pokazao i svoju originalnu misao koja se najbolje uočava na onim stranicama gdje tumači da je tjelesna ljepota stvar subjektivnog mišljenja. Tomu treba pridodati i Romeijev interes za promišljanje odnosa ljepote i ružnoće te, naposljetku, njegovo inzistiranje na isticanju uloge intelekta i slobodnog izbora, tj. slobodne volje u ljubavnom iskustvu.

Ključne riječi: Frane Petrić / Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, Annibale Romei, ljepota, ljubav, poljubac, ljubav prema samom sebi, renesansni platonizam

