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ALL'OMBRA DI QUELLA BELLA SELICE: NOTES ON GOZZE'S ALL-FEMALE DIALOGUES ON BEAUTY, LOVE, AND HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

FRANCESCA MARIA GABRIELLI

Abstract: The five dialogues composed in Italian by the Ragusan philosopher Nicolò Vito di Gozze (Nikola Vitov Gučetić), and published in the decade from 1581 to 1591, are all structured along similar lines. Serving a didactic end and constructed in accordance with a teacher-pupil communication model, the works portray a polite and erudite leisure-time philosophical conversation held in a secluded setting and conducted between two historically identifiable characters of the same sex, bound by ties of personal affection. In keeping with the innovative trend in sixteenth-century Italian literature of incorporating female interlocutors in the dialogue genre, two of the five *cinquecentine* under consideration thematize a woman-to-woman conversation. The topic of the literary discussions is that of beauty and love, at the time considered as particularly welcoming for the female voice. However, in the *Dialogo iconomico*, the manuscript version of the Croatian philosopher's dialogue on household management (*Governo della famiglia*), the interlocutors are not two learned men as in the printed edition, but the very same female speakers featured in the two Neoplatonic dialogues. The aim of this essay is to offer a reading of Gozze's representation of the female voice in his dialogues on beauty and love, as well as in the *Dialogo iconomico* manuscript, which exhibits a high degree of illegibility. On that account, this essay presents the results of the attempt to decipher the manuscript by comparing it to the printed edition.

Keywords: Nikola Vitov Gučetić (Nicolò Vito di Gozze), Marija Gundulić (Maria Gondola), Cvijeta Zuzorić (Fiore Zuzori), Dubrovnik, Renaissance, dialogue, female speakers, beauty, love, household management.

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Francesca Maria Gabrielli, assistant professor, Department of Italian Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Zagreb). Address: Ul. Ivana Lučića 3, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia. E-mail: fmgabrie@ffzg.unizg.hr

The five late sixteenth-century philosophical dialogues composed in the Italian vernacular by the Ragusan humanist and statesman Nicolò Vito di Gozze (Nikola Vitov Gučetić) portray a polite, refined, and amicable conversation between two historically identifiable contemporary figures.¹ In order of publication, the Croatian philosopher authored two all-female dialogues on beauty and love, the *Dialogo della bellezza detto Antos* and the *Dialogo d'amore detto Antos*, both printed in 1581,² an all-male dialogue on Aristotle's *Meteorology* (*Discorsi sopra le Metheore d'Aristotele*), published in 1584 and reissued in 1585³ with a

¹ On the life and vast oeuvre of the Croatian author Nicolò Vito di Gozze (Dubrovnik ca. 1549–1610), who composed his philosophical and theological works in Latin and Italian, see Ljerka Schiffler, *Nikola Vitov Gučetić*. Zagreb: Hrvatski studiji Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2007 [rev. ed.; first edition: 1977]; Ivica Martinović, »Kasno-renesansni filozof Nikola Vitov Gučetić«. *Zbornik Dubrovačkog primorja i otoka* 6 (1997): pp. 203–225. See also Ivica Martinović, »Ljetopis života i djela Nikole Vitova Gučetića«. *Dubrovački horizonti* 36 (1996): pp. 23–33. For the surviving manuscripts of Gozze's works, see Gorana Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549–1610): ruke i rukopisi«. *Colloquia Maruliana* 30 (2021): pp. 243–260.

² On the title page of both dialogues we read "nuovamente posto in luce". No other edition of the two dialogues is extant. See *Dialogo della bellezza detto Antos, secondo la mente di Platone. Composto da M. Nicolò Vito di Gozze, gentilhuomo Ragugeo. Nuovamente posto in luce*. In Venetia: Francesco Ziletti, 1581, hereafter cited as *Dialogo della bellezza*; *Dialogo d'amore detto Antos, secondo la mente di Platone. Composto da M. Nicolò Vito di Gozze, gentilhuomo Ragugeo. Nuovamente posto in luce*. In Venetia: Francesco Ziletti, 1581, hereafter cited as *Dialogo d'amore*. According to the eighteenth-century biographer and historian Seraphinus Maria Cerva (Seraphin Marija Crijević), Gozze composed his dialogues on beauty and love in 1577, see Ivica Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«, in: *Filozofkinje u Hrvatskoj*, ed. Luka Boršić and Ivana Skuhala Karasman. Zagreb: Institut za filozofiju, 2017: p. 30, n. 5. See also Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina in qua Ragusini scriptores eorumque gesta et scripta recensentur. Tomus alter et tertius*, edited and introduced by Stjepan Krsić. Zagreb: JAZU, 1977: p. 536. For Natka Badurina's Croatian translation of the two dialogues, accompanied by Ljerka Schiffler's introductory study and glossary, see Nikola Vitov Gučetić, *Dialogo della bellezza / Dijalog o ljepoti. Dialogo d'amore / Dijalog o ljubavi*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2008. The translation was first published a decade earlier (Zagreb: Most, 1995).

³ *Discorsi di M. Nicolo Vito di Gozze, gentil'huomo ragugeo, dell'Academia de gli Occulti, sopra le Metheore d'Aristotele, ridotti in dialogo, et divisi in quattro Giornate*. In Venetia: Francesco Ziletti, 1584, hereafter cited as *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* 1584; *Discorsi di M. Nicolò Vito di Gozze, gentil'huomo ragugeo, dell'Academia de gli occulti, sopra le Metheore d'Aristotele, ridotti in dialogo, et divisi in quattro Giornate*. In Venetia: Francesco Ziletti, 1585, hereafter cited as *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* 1585. Considering that the 1584 and 1585 editions differ only in the dedicatory epistle, both volumes will be hereafter cited as *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*, unless the paratext is under discussion. As the titles reveal, Gozze was member of the "Accademia degli Occulti". According to Goleniščev-Kutuzov, the reference is to the homonymous academy in Brescia; see Il'ja Nikolaevič Goleniščev-Kutuzov, *Il Rinascimento italiano e le letterature slave dei secoli XV e XVI*, ed. Sante Graciotti and Jitka Křesálková. Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1973: p. 129, n. 18. However, Maylander maintains that the mentioned academy, though founded in 1563, was already dissolved in 1583 (and

curtailed version of the dedicatory letter penned by his wife Maria Gondola (Marija Gundulić),⁴ and lastly two all-male dialogues on practical philosophy, the first of which, entitled *Governo della famiglia* (1589),⁵ addresses the economic

restored, only briefly, in the 1620s), see Michele Maylander, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*, vol. IV. Bologna: Cappelli, 1929: pp. 87-91. From the title of a work preserved only in manuscript, the *Varie compositioni in Theologia del Sig. Nicolò di Vito Gozzi, Gentil'huomo Raguseo, Dottore in Theologia et Filosofia, et nell'Accademia degl'Insensati di Perugia detto l'occulto*, which Stepanić dates after 1603, we learn that Gozze was also member of the Perugian Accademia degli Insensati; see G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: p. 248.

⁴ In her dedicatory epistle, dated July 15, 1582, and published as the introductory paratext to Gozze's 1584 dialogue, Gondola articulates her vehement defence of her friend Fiore Zuzori, who was experiencing hostility in Ragusa at the time of writing, and of the female sex as such. The *cinquecentina* was reissued a year later with a curtailed version of the dedicatory epistle, dated March 27, 1585. For Maria Gondola's dedicatory letter to her friend Fiore Zuzori ("Alla non men bella, che virtuosa, e gentil donna, Fiore Zuzori, in Ragugia"), see Eleonora Carinci's introductory study to her edition of Camilla Erculiani's *Lettere di filosofia naturale*, in: Eleonora Carinci and Sandra Plastina, *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento*, Lugano: Agorà & CO., 2016: pp. 24-26, 45-48 (the volume includes the transcription of the paratext, see pp. 79-92). Carinci has demonstrated that Gondola's argumentation regarding the superiority of women is in large part compiled from two sources: Girolamo Camerata's *Questione dove si tratta chi più meriti honore o la donna, o l'huomo*, in: *Trattato dell'honor vero, et del vero dishonore. Con tre questioni qual meriti più honore o la donna, o l'huomo. O il soldato, o il letterato. O l'artista, o il leggista*, Bologna: Alessandro Benacci, 1567, and the Italian translation of Antonio de Guevara's *Libro llamado relox de principes en el qual va incorporado el muy famoso libro de Marco Aurelio* (*ibid.*: pp. 26, 45-46). For the intricate question of the Italian translations of Guevara's work see Livia Brunori, *Le traduzioni italiane del "Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio" e del "Relox de Principes" di Antonio de Guevara*. Imola: Galeati, 1979: pp. 9-18. Independently from Carinci's study, Martinović has recently offered a reading of Gondola's text that takes into detailed account her reuse of Guevara. The aim of his study is to demonstrate that the dedicatory letter should be considered the first Croatian woman-authored philosophical text; see I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: pp. 27-114. On a related note, Zdenka Janeković Römer, in an essay in which she analyzed Gondola's paratext in the context of the Renaissance *querelle des femmes*, was the first scholar to suggest that Guevara was one of Gondola's sources; see *eadem*, »Marija Gondola Gozze: *La querelle des femmes* u renesansnom Dubrovniku«, in: *Žene u Hrvatskoj: Ženska i kulturna povijest*, ed. Andrea Feldman. Zagreb: Institut Vlado Gotovac and Ženska infoteka, 2004: pp. 114-115.

⁵ *Governo della famiglia*, di M. Nicolò Vito di Gozze, *Gentil'huomo Raguseo, Accademico Occulto: nel quale brevemente, trattando la vera Economia, s'insegna, non meno con facilità, che dottamente, il Governo, non pure della Casa tanto di Città, quanto di Contado; ma ancora il vero modo di accrescere, et conservare le ricchezze*. In Venetia: Aldo, 1589, hereafter cited as *Governo della famiglia*. Daniela Frigo has pointed out that the title page of Tasso's 1583 dialogue *Il padre di famiglia*, also published by Manuzio, displays the same extended title as Gozze's. According to the scholar, this may signal that the publisher himself, or his collaborators, presented the two works to the public, and simply reused the same description in the later dialogue; on the other hand, the use of the same extended title possibly stemmed from a desire to emphasize the thematic continuity of the Aldine editions, see Daniela Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia. Governo della casa e governo civile*

topic of household management, while the second tackles the political topic of the city's governance (*Dello stato delle repubbliche*, 1591).⁶ As is well known, the two interlocutors of Gozze's dialogues on beauty and love, a subject-matter that was considered particularly appropriate for women speakers in the sixteenth century,⁷ are the wife of the author, daughter of the diplomat Giovanni Gondola (Ivan Gundulić), who was close to Lodovico Beccadelli,⁸ and her friend Fiore Zuzori (Cvijeta Zuzorić), a member of the Ragusan non-noble elite, married to the Florentine nobleman Bartolomeo Pescioni.⁹ Indeed, the Greek word *antos* ("flower") appearing

nella tradizione dell' "economica" tra Cinque e Seicento. Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1985: p. 37. Stepanić has recently observed that in the manuscript version of the *Governo della famiglia*, held in the National and University Library in Zagreb (R 3230), and entitled *Dialogo iconomico*, the two interlocutors are not two men as in the printed version (Gozze and Stefano Nicolò di Bona), but two women, the very same Fiore Zuzori and Maria Gondola that are represented as conversing in the dialogues on beauty and love, see G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisici: pp. 253-254. I will elaborate on the *Dialogo iconomico* in the final part of this essay. For Maja Zaninović's Croatian translation of the *Governo della famiglia*, accompanied by Marinko Šišak's introductory study and comments, see Nikola Vitov Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji*. Zagreb: Biblioteka scopus, 1998.

⁶ *Dello stato delle repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotele con esempi moderni Giornate otto, di M. Nicolò Vito di Gozzi Gentilhuomo Raguseo, Accademico occulto. Con CCXXII avvertimenti civili dell' istesso, molto curiosi, et utili per coloro, che governano stati. Et nel fine una Apologia dell' Honor civile. Con i Sommarii a ciascuna Giornata, et la Tavola delle cose più notabili*. In Venetia: Aldo, 1591, hereafter cited as *Dello stato delle repubbliche*. For Snježana Husić's and Natka Badurina's Croatian translation of the dialogue, accompanied by Marinko Šišak's introductory study and comments, see Nikola Vitov Gučetić, *O ustroju država*. Zagreb: Golden marketing and Narodne novine, 2000.

⁷ See Virginia Cox, »Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue«, in: *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza. Oxford: Legenda, 2000: p. 393, and *passim*.

⁸ On Giovanni Gondola (ca. 1507-1585) see the fifth book of Nenad Vekarić's ten-volume study, published between 2010 and 2019, in which the scholar reconstructed the genealogies of the Ragusan noble families; *idem*, »Ivan Marinov Gondola«, in: *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika. Sv. 5: Odabrane biografije (E-Pe)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: HAZU, Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2014: pp. 141-144. On Lodovico Beccadelli (Bologna, 1501-Prato, 1572) see the recent monograph by Tanja Trška, *Un arcivescovo del Cinquecento inquieto: Lodovico Beccadelli tra letteratura e arte*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2021.

⁹ The noblewoman Maria Gondola was born in Ragusa around 1557. Her approximately five years older friend Fiore Zuzori was born in Ragusa around 1552. Zuzori, whose family moved to Ancona in her childhood, married the Florentine nobleman Bartolomeo Pescioni in 1570, and returned with him to Ragusa that very same year, in view of the fact that he was appointed as consul of Florence in Dubrovnik. More than a decade later the couple relocated to Ancona, most likely in the year 1583. After her husband's passing in 1593, Fiore Zuzori remained in the Italian city where she died a nonagenarian in 1648. For Fiore Zuzori's biography, see at least Jorjo Tadić, *Cvijeta Zuzorić*. Belgrade, 1939 (the booklet is a reprint of an article published the same year in the journal *Srpski književni glasnik* 57); on Fiore Zuzori and Maria Gondola, see in particular: Zdenka Marković, *Pjesnikinje starog Dubrovnika od sredine XVI do*

in the title of both dialogues pays homage in erudite fashion to the latter female figure, Fiore, who plays the role of dominant speaker in both works. On the other hand, in the literary conversations presenting only male characters, the teacher figure is always Gozze himself, while his interlocutors are prestigious members of the Ragusan intellectual circles and/or the patriciate. The dialogue on meteorology features the philosopher and poet Michele Monaldi (Miho Monaldi), who belongs to the non-noble upper social strata, himself author of three philosophical dialogues, and of a lyric collection in which the already mentioned Fiore Zuzori features among the recipients.¹⁰ The interlocutor in the *Governo della famiglia* is the nobleman Stefano Nicolò di Bona (Stijepo Niko Bunić), a member of the prominent Bona family.¹¹ In the dialogical political treatise *Dello stato delle repubbliche* Gozze is depicted as conversing with the nobleman Domenico Ragnina (Dinko Ranjina), author of poems in Croatian and Italian, whose *microcanzoniere* in the Italian vernacular, published by Giolito in 1563 within the anthology *Il secondo volume delle rime scelte da diversi eccellenti autori*, presents among his poetic correspondents figures of the caliber of Lodovico Domenichi and Laura Battiferri.¹²

svršetka XVIII stoljeća u kulturnoj sredini svoga vremena. Zagreb: JAZU, 1970: pp. 57-111; Z. Janeković Römer; »Marija Gondola Gozze: *La querelle des femmes* u renesansnom Dubrovniku«: pp. 105-123; I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: pp. 27-114, and especially pp. 27-47. It should be noted that scholars tend to disagree on the exact circumstances of Fiore Zuzori's biography.

¹⁰ Michele Monaldi (1540-1592), whose family moved to Ragusa from Pesaro in the fifteenth century, wrote exclusively in Italian. As already mentioned, he authored a lyric collection, published posthumously in 1599 (In Venetia: Altobello Salicato, 1599), and three philosophical dialogues, among which is the *Dialogo dell' avere*, in which Gozze appears as dominant speaker. His work *Irene, ovvero della bellezza* is a philosophical dialogue between two fictional characters, Panfilo and Irene, on matters pertaining to aesthetics. See the posthumously published volume *Irene, ovvero della Bellezza. Del signor Michele Monaldi. Con altri due dialoghi; uno dell' Havere e l' altro della Metafisica*. In Venetia: Francesco Bariletto, 1599. On Monaldi's life and works, see the monograph by Ljerka Schiffler, *Miho Monaldi: ličnost i djelo*. Zagreb: Odjel za povijest filozofije Centra za povijesne znanosti u Zagrebu, Sveučilišna naknada Liber, 1984.

¹¹ In his comment to the translation of Gozze's *Governo della famiglia*, Marinko Šišak has remarked that Bona, among his other public duties, was elected rector six times; see N. V. Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji*: pp. 326-327, n. 5. As is well known, in Ragusa "government office was a privilege of the nobility, a distinction of their aristocratic legitimacy and exclusive social position"; Zdenka Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom: The Nobility of Dubrovnik Between the Middle Ages and Humanism*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015: pp. 158-159.

¹² For Domenico Ragnina's lyric collection, see Luciana Borsetto, »Sulle Rime di Domenico Ragnina (Dinko Ranjina)«, in: *Scrittori stranieri in lingua italiana, dal Cinquecento ad oggi. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Padova 20-21 marzo 2009*, ed. Furio Brugnolo. Padova: Unipress, 2009: pp. 97-126.

The presence of female interlocutors in Gozze's dialogues is aligned with the most innovative trends in sixteenth-century dialogical writing.¹³ Indeed, the Cinquecento incorporation of female speakers is a "striking departure" from the classical dialogical tradition, and from its fifteenth-century restoration in the form of the humanist dialogue.¹⁴ One of the crucial exceptions to the exclusive

¹³ On the inclusion of female speakers in sixteenth-century Italian dialogue, see the pioneering works by Virginia Cox, to which the following discussion is deeply indebted; *eadem*, »Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue«: pp. 385-400; *eadem*, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«. *Modern Language Notes* 128 (2013): pp. 53-78; *eadem*, »Note: Italian Dialogues Incorporating Female Speakers«. *Modern Language Notes* 128 (2013): pp. 79-83. On the dialogue genre in the Renaissance, see the following studies: David Marsh, *The Quattrocento dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1980; Luisa Mulas, »La scrittura del dialogo. Teorie del dialogo tra Cinque e Seicento«, in: *Oralità e scrittura nel sistema letterario. Atti del convegno, Cagliari, 14-16 aprile 1980*, ed. Giovanna Cerina, Cristina Lavinio and Luisa Mulas. Rome: Bulzoni, 1982: pp. 245-263; Nuccio Ordine, »Il dialogo cinquecentesco tra diegesi e mimesi«. *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 37 (1988): pp. 155-179; Peter Burke, »The Renaissance dialogue«. *Renaissance Studies* 3/1 (1989): pp. 1-12; Jon R. Snyder, *Writing the Scene of Speaking: Theories of Dialogue in the Late Italian Renaissance*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989; Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance dialogue: Literary dialogue in its social and political contexts, Castiglione to Galileo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Olga Zorzi Pugliese, *Il discorso labirintico del dialogo rinascimentale*. Rome: Bulzoni, 1995; Annick Paternoster, *Aptum: retorica ed ermeneutica nel dialogo rinascimentale del primo Cinquecento*. Rome: Bulzoni, 1998; Stefano Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia: il dialogo letterario nei secc. XV e XVI*. Vercelli: Edizioni Mercurio, 1999; *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue*, ed. Dorothea Heitsch and Jean François Vallée. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

¹⁴ See V. Cox, »Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue«: p. 386. See also *eadem*, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 53. The inclusion of women, as the scholar has pointed out, "serves to distinguish the modern tradition of dialogue quite sharply from the ancient, where male voices dominated virtually unchallenged"; *ibid*. See also P. Burke, »The Renaissance dialogue«: p. 9. David Marsh, in his work on the Quattrocento dialogue, has noted that "the vernacular [...] dialogues of the Cinquecento in Italy, such as Pietro Bembo's *Asolani* and Baldassarre Castiglione's *Courtier*, restore to the discussion the civilizing influence of women, who had been rigorously excluded from the humanist circles of the Quattrocento"; D. Marsh, *The Quattrocento dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation*: p. 5. There were however some exceptions to the exclusion of women in Quattrocento dialogues. Cox mentions, for instance, Martino Filetico's 1462 *Iocundissimae disputationes*; see V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: pp. 56-57. Another exception is Isotta Nogarola's 1451 *Dialogue on the Equal or Unequal Sin of Eve and Adam* (*Isotae Nogarolae de pari aut impari Evae atque Adae peccato dialogus*) between the author herself ("Isota") and the statesman and humanist Ludovico Foscarini ("Lodovicus"), which, as Margaret King and Diana Robin have remarked, is "structured like the university disputation", yet "it resembles the humanist dialogue in its playful presentation of alternative viewpoints"; Margaret L. King and Diana Robin, »Volume Editors' Introduction«, in: Isotta Nogarola, *Complete Writings. Letterbook, Dialogue on Adam and*

thematization of male speakers in the classical dialogue is, of course, the character of Diotima, who appears in Plato's *Symposium* when the character Socrates relates a conversation they once had, during which she delivered to a younger Socrates her teachings on love.¹⁵ This representation of an authoritative female voice on matters concerning love, as Virginia Cox has pointed out, lies at the core of the fact that in sixteenth-century dialogical writing, starting from Pietro Bembo's 1505 *Gli Asolani*, female speakers appear with increasing frequency in Neoplatonic dialogues on beauty and love.¹⁶

Eve, Orations, edited and translated by Margaret L. King and Diana Robin. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004: p. 13. Although King and Robin incline towards "Nogarola's final authorship", they remark that the work was perhaps based on a public, possibly epistolary debate with Foscarini (*ibid.*: pp. 139-140). According to Janet Levarie Smarr, "the dialogue, although published as a unit with a title, consists of an exchange of actually sent letters between the two debaters"; see *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005: p. 133. In line with Smarr's conclusion, Cox defines the work as an "epistolary debate"; see *eadem*, »Note: Italian Dialogues Incorporating Female Speakers«: p. 81. For a reading of the dialogue, I take the liberty of referring to Francesca Maria Gabrielli, »Feminism in Disguise: Isotta Nogarola's Defense of Eve (1451)«, in: *Disrupting Historicity, Reclaiming the Future*, ed. Silvana Carotenuto, Francesca Maria Gabrielli and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. Napoli: UniorPress, 2019: pp. 115-148.

¹⁵ See V. Cox, »Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue«: p. 386; *eadem*, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 53, n. 1. In his monograph on the philosophical dialogue, Hölsle has touched on the presence of another female voice in the ancient dialogical tradition, along that of Diotima. Indeed, the voice of Aspasia is famously thematized, albeit once again indirectly, in Plato's *Menexenus*, as well as in dialogues by other authors featuring Socrates. See Vittorio Hölsle, *Il dialogo filosofico. Una poetica e un'ermeneutica*, ed. Adriano Tassi. Brescia: Morcelliana, 2021: pp. 419-422. Both Diotima in the *Symposium* and Aspasia in the *Menexenus* are characterized as Socrates' teachers. For a reading of Plato's representation of Aspasia, see the essay by Carmine Pisano, who has remarked that the voices of both Diotima and Aspasia are depicted as authoritative, as well as a source of authority; see Carmine Pisano, »Aspasia 'maestro di retorica'«. *Mètis* 13 (2015): p. 195. On a related note, Hölsle has mentioned the importance, regarding the presence of the female voice in the dialogical tradition, of the dialogues composed in the first centuries of Christianity by Methodius (*Banquet of the Ten Virgins*), Gregory of Nyssa (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*), and Augustine (*De beata vita, De ordine*); see V. Hölsle, *Il dialogo filosofico*: pp. 422-424.

¹⁶ See V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: pp. 56, 65-66. As noted by Cox, Diotima is mentioned in a number of dialogues on love and beauty featuring female speakers, such as Speroni's *Dialogo d'amore* (1547), Tullia d'Aragona's *Dialogo dell'infinità d'amore* (1547), Giuseppe Betussi's *La Leonora, ragionamento sopra la vera bellezza* (1557), Francesco Patrizi's (Frane Petrić) *L'amorosa filosofia* (1577); *ibid.*: pp. 66, 74. The scholar has pointed out that Speroni's *Dialogo d'amore* is the first quasi-documentary dialogue on the subject-matter of love; *ibid.*: p. 59.

As far as the sixteenth-century dialogic production in the Italian vernacular is concerned, Cox has distinguished between dialogues featuring fictional characters, as is for instance Bembo's, and dialogues presenting historically identifiable figures, such as Castiglione's 1528 *Il libro del cortegiano*, an influential dialogical treatise that includes female interlocutors and ends, as is well known, with a Neoplatonic discussion on beauty and love led by the character messer Bembo. As the scholar has noticed, while female speakers first appeared in Bembo's *Asolani*, it was, indeed, with Castiglione's *Cortegiano* that women were for the first time incorporated as interlocutors in a Ciceronian dialogue, that is to say, in a dialogue presented as the transcription of an actual conversation in a recognizable setting, whose speakers are historically identifiable figures belonging to the intellectual and/or political elite, and in which, accordingly, considerations of verisimilitude and decorum—of what is plausible and what is appropriate—become crucial.¹⁷ Generally speaking, the Italian sixteenth-century dialogue production inclined towards this form of dialogue, which Cox has labelled “quasi-documentary”, especially in the light of its frequent recourse to the transcription device.¹⁸ However, while the dialogical writings in the first half of the century for the most part thematized a plurality of opinion, as for instance in Castiglione's case, the late-sixteenth-century dialogues exhibited a tendency towards closed forms, linear and didactic, characterized by an academic, systematic, treatise-like erudite tone,¹⁹ and were generally constructed in line with a revised version of the Platonic teacher-pupil model (where the respondent is the teacher, and the questioner is the pupil), while maintaining the predilection for the Ciceronian representation of a cultivated conversation among esteemed speakers in a secluded, private setting.²⁰

Regarding the inclusion of female characters, Cox has pointed out that the production of mixed dialogues, that is, of dialogues featuring both male and female speakers, increased around the 1540s.²¹ As far as quasi-documentary

¹⁷ See V. Cox, »Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue«: p. 387; *eadem*, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: pp. 56, 69-70.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: p. 54. See V. Cox, *The Renaissance dialogue*: pp. 23-24, 42-43, and *passim*.

¹⁹ Cox has dedicated the sixth chapter of her volume on sixteenth-century dialogue to “The changing form of the Italian Renaissance dialogue”, see *eadem*, *The Renaissance dialogue*: pp. 61-69; see also the last chapter entitled “From the open dialogue to the closed book”, *ibid.*: pp. 99-113. On the tendency towards closed forms in the dialogues of the second half of the sixteenth century, see also O. Zorzi Pugliese, *Il discorso labirintico del dialogo rinascimentale*: pp. 45-46, 114-128; S. Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia*: pp. 15, 288-291.

²⁰ See V. Cox, *The Renaissance dialogue*: pp. 16-17, 67-68, and *passim*.

²¹ See V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 61.

mixed dialogues are concerned, the scholar has remarked that women were generally allocated the role of pupil, and only in rare cases, as one may expect, that of dominant speaker, Diotima notwithstanding.²² In other words, in compliance with the prescriptive norm of verisimilitude, only women celebrated for their learning could plausibly be represented, within a framework featuring historically identifiable contemporary characters, in the role of *princeps sermonis*, to use the syntagm by the Renaissance theorist Carlo Sigonio, that is to say, in the role of dominant speaker.²³ However, while dialogues with female speakers alongside male were becoming more frequent as the century wore on, quasi-documentary dialogues with exclusively female speakers, on the other hand, remained rare.²⁴

Gozze's philosophical dialogues reflect the literary trends of late-sixteenth-century Italian dialogue production. All the five works under consideration are quasi-documentary didactic dialogues, thematizing, in line with the Renaissance revision of the Platonic model, the refined conversation between a questioner eager to know and a respondent eager to share her/his knowledge on a chosen philosophical subject-matter, learnedly quoting at length from an array of *auctoritates*. What is, however, striking in Gozze's dialogical oeuvre is that two of the five *cinquecentine* under consideration are structured as dialogues with exclusively female speakers. Indeed, as already mentioned, all-female quasi-documentary dialogues were a rare occurrence. Apart from Gozze's two Neoplatonic dialogues on beauty and love, Cox has tracked down only two other works in the Italian vernacular with historically recognizable, solely female

²² *Ibid.*: pp. 69-70.

²³ *Ibid.*: pp. 71-74. One example is the representation of Tarquinia Molza as "nuova Diotima" in Francesco Patrizi's 1577 dialogue *Amorosa filosofia*; *ibid.*: p. 74. For other examples of dialogues featuring women in the role of dominant speaker, *ibid.*: pp. 71-73. For Sigonio's syntagm *princeps sermonis*, see *ibid.*: p. 58; *eadem*, *The Renaissance dialogue*: pp. 61, 67, and *passim*; S. Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia*: p. 291. The fact that Sigonio in his 1562 *De dialogo liber* posits the necessary presence of a *princeps sermonis* in a literary dialogue corroborates the monological tendencies of late-sixteenth-century dialogical production, see V. Cox, *The Renaissance dialogue*: p. 61. See also *Caroli Sigonii De dialogo liber*. Venetiis: apud Iordanum Ziletum, 1562: f. 24r. On the theories of dialogue developed in Italy in the second half of the sixteenth century, see L. Mulas, «La scrittura del dialogo: teorie del dialogo tra Cinque e Seicento»; Jon R. Snyder, *Writing the Scene of Speaking: Theories of Dialogue in the Late Italian Renaissance* (on Sigonio's *De dialogo liber*, see pp. 39-86); S. Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia*: pp. 145-164.

²⁴ "Pochissimi", as noted by as noted by V. Cox, «Un microgenere senese: il commento paradossale», in: *Il poeta e il suo pubblico*, ed. Massimo Danzi and Roberto Loporatti. Geneva: Droz, 2012: p. 335.

speakers.²⁵ The dialogues belong to the Sienese geopolitical area, which was “in its final decades as an independent republic [...] a quite exceptional locus for women’s cultural participation”.²⁶ The first is an untitled dialogue on women’s nature by Marcantonio Piccolomini, teeming with musings that pertain to natural philosophy and theology, featuring three female speakers bound by ties of affection (1538),²⁷ the second is Aonio Paleario’s *Dell’economia o vero del governo della casa* (written around 1555), which depicts four female speakers bound by ties of kinship, who discuss topics related to the management of the household. The two Sienese dialogues under consideration remained unpublished until relatively recent years, and had only a limited manuscript circulation at the time.²⁸ Paleario’s dialogue appeared in print in 1983, edited by Salvatore Caponetto, while Piccolomini’s work was published as an appendix to a 1994 essay by Rita Belladonna.²⁹ Whereas the Ragusan cultural milieu of the time cannot be defined in the same philogynist terms as the Sienese,³⁰ it was, however, a late-sixteenth-century Ragusan philosopher who published two quasi-documentary philosophical dialogues with a woman-to-woman conversational structure, in which the dominant speaker displays an exceptional level of erudition.

²⁵ In the list of dialogues incorporating female speakers appended to her already mentioned 2013 essay (»Note: Italian Dialogues Incorporating Female Speakers«: pp. 79-82), which comprises fifty-nine dialogues composed between 1437 and 1628 V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 53), Cox has mentioned only four quasi-documentary dialogues with exclusively female interlocutors in the Italian vernacular, of which two are Gozze’s dialogues on beauty and love. Apart from the four dialogues under consideration, Cox has listed only one more dialogue with exclusively female interlocutors, the Latin work entitled *Dialogus* by Olimpia Morata, published posthumously in 1562. The Ragusan philosopher’s impressive contribution to the tradition of all-female quasi-documentary dialogues in the Italian vernacular is further enriched by the manuscript version of his *Governo della famiglia*, on which I will elaborate in the last part of this essay.

²⁶ V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 61. On Sienese learned women, see Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen: Women, Politics, and Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Siena*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

²⁷ The dedicatory letter is dated 1538.

²⁸ V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 75.

²⁹ See Aonio Paleario, *Dell’economia o vero del governo della casa*, edited and introduced by Salvatore Caponetto. Firenze: Olschki, 1983; Rita Belladonna, »Gli Intronati, le donne, Aonio Paleario e Agostino Museo in un dialogo inedito di Marcantonio Piccolomini, il Sodo Intronato (1538)«. *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 99 (1992): pp. 48-90 (for the transcription of Piccolomini’s dialogue, see pp. 59-90).

³⁰ A recent essay analyzes the “strategies of representation and ideas about learned women and women authors in the sixteenth-century Italian poetry written by Ragusan and Dalmatian authors”, see Borna Treska, »Učene žene i autorice u dubrovačkom i dalmatinskom renesansnom pjesništvu na talijanskom jeziku«. *Književna smotra* 54/206 (2022): pp. 67-88 (the quotation is from the English summary on p. 88).

Considering the limited circulation of the two all-female Sienese works, it seems plausible to assume that Gozze was not familiar with them.

Another intriguing aspect of Gozze's dialogical production is that the five quasi-documentary dialogues he composed in the Italian vernacular offer a very similar characterization of the speakers, notwithstanding their gender. To begin with, the five same-sex pair of interlocutors in Gozze's dialogues are all portrayed as enjoying strong ties of personal affection. Even if the conversational matrix is asymmetric as regards the erudition displayed by the speaker in the teaching role and the speaker in the learning role,³¹ in compliance with the didactic model typical of the time, the interlocutors, either two women or two men, are all carefully depicted as learned and virtuous, and most importantly as bound by explicitly thematized ties of *amicitia*, in line with the Ciceronian understanding of dialogue as a celebration of friendship.³² Indeed, as Renaud has pointed out, according to the "theory of conversation" Cicero put forward in the first book of his philosophical work *De officiis* "conversation flourishes best among friends (*in amicitiiis*)".³³ As far as Gozze's all-female dialogues are concerned, the bond of friendship between "Fiore" and "Maria" is immediately emphasized at the threshold of the literary conversations.³⁴ In other words, it is already in the introductory paratext, by way of which Gozze dedicates his two dialogues on beauty and love ("questi dialogi della bellezza et d'amore") to Zuzori's sister Nika, that we read about the "stretta amicitia" between the two women,³⁵ which is thereafter repeatedly reaffirmed

³¹ On the asymmetric and symmetric forms of dialogue, see S. Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia*: pp. 40-46.

³² On Ciceronian dialogue as a celebration of friendship, see J. L. Smarr, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women*: p. 3.

³³ François Renaud, «Cicero and the Socratic Dialogue: Between Frankness and Friendship (*Off.* 1.132-137)», in: *Socrates and the Socratic Dialogue*, ed. Alessandro Stavru and Christopher Moore, Leiden. Boston: Brill, 2018: pp. 707, 714. For the Latin quotation, see *Off.* 1.58. In his essay, Renaud analyzes the theory of conversation ("sermo") Cicero presented in the first book of his *De officiis*. According to the scholar, Cicero appears to have used "sermo" to indicate "philosophical dialogue", and possibly the Socratic dialogue (*ibid.*: p. 707). Renaud remarks that the friendship thematized in Cicero's *De officiis* is not "the perfect friendship of the wise", which is the topic of his *De amicitia*, but "the so-called common friendship" (*ibid.*: p. 724).

³⁴ Hereafter I will refer to the female speakers by their forename and the male by their surname, in accordance with their naming in the literary conversations under consideration.

³⁵ Nicolò Vito di Gozze, «Alla molto magnifica Signora mia osservandissima Nika Zuzori, in Ancona», in: *Dialogo della bellezza*: ff. a2r-a3v, quotations on ff. a2v, a2r. The transcriptions offered in this essay from published and manuscript sources are partially conformed to modern usage to facilitate reading: while the original orthography has been retained throughout, punctuation has

in the dialogical texts. While the dedicatory letter to Gozze's *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*—in which the author, Maria Gondola, defends the volume's dedicatee, Fiore Zuzori, from the attacks she was experiencing in Ragusa at the time of writing—can be interpreted as the concretization of the affectional relationship portrayed in the dialogues on beauty and love,³⁶ the friendship *fil rouge* can be further discerned beyond the paratextual space of the work. Indeed, in the very short prefatory narrative to the four-day philosophical conversation, which serves the purpose of setting the scene and presenting Gozze's prestigious interlocutor, Monaldi is qualified as “*honorato cittadino della nostra città, huomo di molta dottrina e di gentilissimi costumi ornato, et molto mio domestico*”, which highlights the amity between the protagonists of the dialogical exchange.³⁷ In the immediately following first reply of the dialogue, the character Monaldi confirms the knot of friendship that ties him to the main speaker: “*Onde avviene, signor Gozzi, che voi uscite di casa così di rado? E non lasciate che gli amici vostri, che desiderano grandemente vedervi et udirvi, vi possano godere a lor piacere?*”³⁸ In like manner, the dedicatory epistle to Gozze's cousin Nicolò Alovio di Gozze that accompanies the *Governo della famiglia* evinces the close bond between the main speaker of the dialogue and his amiable interlocutor, with whom he engaged in familiar conversation (“*questo presente dialogo, che io ho fatto ragionando domesticamente in villa con il mio amorevole et non mai a pieno lodato signor Stefano Nicolò di Bona*”).³⁹ More explicitly, in the short narrative introduction to the literary conversation under consideration, the narrator defines Bona as “*mio caro amico*”.⁴⁰ While the dedicatory epistle to the dialogical treatise *Dello stato delle repubbliche* confirms the monological tendencies of late-sixteenth-century literary conversations

been modernized, abbreviations have been expanded, the usage of ‘u’ and ‘v’ has been uniformed, accents, apostrophes, and capitalization have been standardized, modern conventions of word separation have been implemented. The long s in the published texts has been replaced with ‘s’, ‘ß’ with ‘ss’, and the ampersand with ‘et’. Furthermore, as far as the transcription of manuscript texts is concerned, the signs ` ` have been used to indicate additions above the line, while the brackets || signal a portion of text that was struck through.

³⁶ See Maria Gondola, «Alla non men bella, che virtuosa, e gentil donna, Fiore Zuzori, in Ragugia», in: *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* 1584: ff. *2r-***4v.

³⁷ *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*: f. 1r.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Nicolò Vito di Gozze, «Al magnifico signor Nicolò Alovio di Gozze. Suo cugino honorando», in: *Governo della famiglia*: f. a2r.

⁴⁰ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 1.

by avoiding any reference to the dialogism of the work it precedes,⁴¹ on the other hand, in the very brief prefatory narrative to the mimetic portion of the text—in which the dialogue, in line with conventions, is indeed presented as based on an actual conversation (“Il magnifico signor Domenico Ragnina [...] venne un giorno in casa a visitarmi, dove per assicurarmi da’ travagli di questo nostro noioso secolo volentieri me ne sto ritirato, e dopo alcune cerimonie cominciò meco in questa maniera a ragionare”)—the deep affection of the narrator for his friend Ragnina is expressed in the following terms: “da me molto amato per le sue segnalate virtù che l’animo suo nobilissimo adornano e per altre sue rare qualità”.⁴² Ragnina’s subsequent first reply echoes the words pronounced by the speaker Monaldi at the outset of the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*, once again confirming the centrality of *amicitia*: “voi di rado vi lasciate vedere alli vostri amici, se ben molti vi bramano vedere et udire”.⁴³ Friendship, in other words, serves as the foundation for all five literary conversations. However, the friendship between the speakers Fiore and Maria, portrayed as a deeply felt bond of affection between two exceptionally virtuous women, is in the dialogue on love *expressis verbis* defined as “vera amicitia”:

Maria: Chi dunque non dirà, mia bella et gentil Fiore, che tra noi non sia vera amicitia et vero amore, dappoi che nell’amare et esser amato siamo tanto uguali?

⁴¹ In his dedicatory letter to Pope Gregory XIV, Gozze defines his work as “questo mio picciolo volume delle republiche” (f. †3v). Indeed, in the paratext under consideration neither is the transcription topos mentioned, nor are the speakers presented, unlike in the other dedicatory epistles. Interestingly, the theme of friendship is evoked, yet this time the “amicitia” articulated is not instrumental to the characterization of the interlocutors but serves the rhetorical function of *captatio benevolentiae* (“per la lunga amicitia, e per la continovata osservanza che la Republica nostra hebbe sempre con la casa di Vostra Santità”); see Nicolò Vito di Gozze, »Al santissimo et beatissimo signor nostro Papa Gregorio XIII«, in: *Dello stato delle republiche*: f. †2v. On the other hand, the dedicatory letters to all the other philosophical works under consideration depict the dialogues as the result of conversations that actually took place. In the dedicatory letter to the dialogues on beauty and love we read, as referred to the dedicatee Nika Zuzori: “onde crederò ch’ella prenderà maggior piacere d’alcun’altre leggendo quei medesimi ragionamenti ch’ella [Fiore Zuzori] altre volte con la mia diletta consorte fece in villa” (f. a2v); in Maria Gondola’s dedicatory letter to her husband’s dialogue on meteorology we read: “Avendomi il mio marito presentato questi giorni passati li presenti discorsi sopra la *Metheora* d’Aristotele, i quali fece con il gentilissimo Michiel Monaldi” (1584, f. *2r); as already mentioned, in the dedicatory letter to the *Governo della famiglia*, the dialogue is also depicted as the result of an actual conversation: “questo presente dialogo, che io ho fatto ragionando domesticamente in villa con [...] Stefano Nicolò di Bona” (f. a2r).

⁴² *Dello stato delle republiche*: p. 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*: p. 2.

Fiore: Non lo dirà alcuno, perché maggior amore del nostro, né maggior amicitia della nostra non si può trovare; né crederò ch'altro simile giamai si troverà nel sesso femminile fra quanto gira il sole.⁴⁴

While it must be noted that the sixteenth-century literary production did exhibit a growing interest in the theme of female friendship and female solidarity,⁴⁵ the aforementioned passage from the dialogue on love suggests that Gozze's Neoplatonic dialogues do not offer a general consideration of ordinary friendship, but the explicit and radical incorporation of women within the ideal of *vera et perfecta amicitia*.⁴⁶ In other words, in Gozze's all-female dialogues the exclusively masculine classical ideal of true friendship, of the friendship among the good

⁴⁴ *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 24r. On this passage, see also Maiko Favaro, »Personaggi femminili e filosofia d'amore. Sul *Dialogo d'amore* di Nicolò Vito di Gozze«. *SigMa - Rivista di Letterature comparate, Teatro e Arti dello spettacolo* 4 (2020): p. 517.

⁴⁵ Cox has emphasized the emergence of "a subgenre of poems of female *amicitia*" in mid-Cinquecento Italy, "following the model of Colonna and Gambarà's poetic correspondence of the 1530s", Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy 1400-1650*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008: p. 115. On the theme of female friendship in sixteenth-century female-authored lyric poetry, epistolary writing, and heroic poetry, see the recent doctoral thesis by Adriana Laura Guarro, *Ties that Bind: Women and Friendship in Early Modern Italy*. Los Angeles: University of California, PhD diss., 2020. The thematic knot of female solidarity is also prominent in sixteenth-century female-authored works pertaining to the Ragusan cultural sphere. Apart from the already mentioned dedicatory epistle by Maria Gondola, dated 1582, sisterhood is a crucial theme in the literary production of Speranza and Giulia di Bona (Nada and Julija Bunić), two sisters of Ragusan origin, who were born and lived in Manfredonia. For their literary production, see the lyric collection by Speranza di Bona, *Difesa de le rime et prose de la signora Speranza, et Vittoria di Bona in difesa di suo honore, et contra quelli, che ricercò farli infamia con sue rime*, [s.n.], [s.l.], [s.d.]. Due to the absence of chronological indications on the title page, the date of the dedicatory epistle is generally used as the volume's *terminus post quem* (1569). It seems worth noting that in Monaldi's already mentioned *Rime* we find a sonnet dedicated to both sisters, a sonnet addressed to Giulia di Bona, as well as an *ottava rima* poetic exchange between the poet and Giulia di Bona (see ff. 7v, 21v, 22r). For Speranza and Giulia di Bona, I take the liberty of referring to the following essays: Francesca Maria Gabrielli, »Sestra sestri: bilješke o kanconijeru Nade Bunić (Speranze di Bona)«. *Građa za povijest književnosti hrvatske* 38 (2015): pp. 83-182 (the essay includes the transcription and Croatian translation of the long dedicatory letter to the lyric collection, characterized by a vehemently polemical tone directed against the Manfredonian community, see pp. 127-182); *eadem*, »Voci e sguardi di donna nelle rime di Speranza e Giulia di Bona«, in: *Književnost, umjetnost, kultura između dviju obala Jadrana i dalje od mora IV = Letteratura, arte, cultura tra le due sponde dell'Adriatico e oltre IV*, ed. Nedjeljka Balić Nižić, Luciana Borsetto and Andrijana Jusup Magazin. Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2016: pp. 37-61; *eadem*, »Alma città di cui fatal impero / splende hora e splendorà secoli e lustri': mitotvorna predodžba o Dubrovniku u kanconijeru Speranze di Bona«. *Croatica* 41/61 (2017): pp. 253-271.

⁴⁶ *Amic. 22*. See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Laelius de Amicitia*, in: *How to be a Friend: An Ancient Guide to True Friendship*, translated and with an introduction by Philip Freeman. Princeton and

and virtuous few, is challenged and enlarged to accommodate women.⁴⁷ To emphasize the importance of Gozze's revision of the classical conception of *amicitia*, it is worth mentioning that the seven interlocutors, bound by ties of friendship, of Moderata Fonte's all-female and prowoman fictional dialogue *Il merito delle donne*, composed around 1592 but published posthumously in 1600, similarly embark on a discussion of *amicitia*, and on such occasion the character Corinna profoundly troubles the androcentrism of the friendship ideal. Yet, rather than redefining it along the lines of male-female equality, the speaker reclaims it as a domain to which women are naturally more inclined,⁴⁸ therefore inverting, rather than subverting, the hierarchical binaries on which patriarchy is grounded. Different is the message that emerges from Gozze's dialogues. Indeed, considering the exceptional virtue, as well as mutual goodwill and affection that characterizes all the same-sex pairs of friends in Gozze's dialogues,⁴⁹ it seems safe to conclude that true friendship is the main element that institutes and enables the five philosophical conversations at issue, regardless of the speakers' gender. In the five dialogues, in other words, both the female and the male interlocutors are represented as equally capable of virtue-friendship. As regards the virtuous and learned male characters, considering the androcentrism traditionally embedded in the notion of true friendship, there was no need to qualify in explicit terms the perfect nature of their friendship, while the affectional relationship between the female interlocutors had, on the other hand, to be unequivocally defined and accurately described as "vera amicitia". True friendship is, of course, an elitist ideal, and Gozze's dialogues do not propound male-female equality in general

Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018: p. 44. Cicero's syntagm is evoked in the dialogue on love on f. 23v ("la vera et perfetta amicitia").

⁴⁷ For a history of the friendship ideal, see *Friendship: A History*, ed. Barbara Caine. London and Oakville: Equinox, 2009.

⁴⁸ "[...] una donna presto se amicherà con un'altra e manterrà meglio l'amore che non fanno gli uomini tra essi", see Moderata Fonte, *Il merito delle donne ove chiaramente si scuopre quanto siano elle degne e più perfette de gli uomini*, edited and introduced by Adriana Chemello. Mirano: Eidos, 1988: p. 76. See also the English translation of the dialogue by Cox, and especially her comment on p. 123, n. 4; Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women: Wherein is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men*, edited and translated by Virginia Cox. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. For a discussion of the passage, see also Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2009: pp. 282-283.

⁴⁹ In Cicero's view (see *Amic.* 20), the main ingredients of true friendship are virtue ("virtus"), goodwill ("benevolentia"), and affection ("caritas"). See M. T. Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia*: pp. 38-41.

terms, but rather suggest, which is also a stance of considerable philogynist value, the equality of exceptional men and exceptional women on the grounds of their moral and intellectual excellence. Of course, the true friendship ideal is coupled with the asymmetric structure of the didactic conversations, indicating that the two same-sex interlocutors are equal in virtue but unequal in knowledge, at least as far as the subject-matter at issue is concerned. The dialogical exchange itself can be therefore read as an equalizing tool, ultimately harmonizing the level of knowledge the two perfect friends share on a specific philosophical topic, and therefore strengthening the “voluntatum, studiorum sententiarum summa consensio” that grounds true friendship in Cicero’s view,⁵⁰ while offering, at the level of the characterization of the speakers, a glorifying portrait of the Ragusan intellectual elites, depicted as capable of engaging—outstanding women included—in amicable, refined and erudite philosophical conversations.

As far as the female speakers in the dialogues on love and beauty are concerned,⁵¹ the erudition of the respondent is conveyed by way of the academic tone and philosophical complexity of her teachings, while the knowledgeability of the questioner emerges from the learned quality of the queries she poses, which steer and regulate the conversation. Fiore’s “ragionamenti” are labelled as “dotti” by her interlocutor Maria,⁵² and the main speaker uses the same adjective to designate the requests and doubts her pupil expresses throughout the conversation. Indeed, Maria’s “dotte richieste” and “dotti dubbi” manifest her pre-existing philosophical knowledge,⁵³ plausibly legitimized in the dialogues as stemming from her husband’s

⁵⁰ *Amic.* 15. See M. T. Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia*: pp. 28-31 (“common set of beliefs, aspirations, and opinions”).

⁵¹ On Gozze’s Neoplatonic dialogues, see Ivana Zagorac, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić: o ljepoti, ljubavi i ženama«. *Filozofska istraživanja* 107 (2007): pp. 613-627; Maiko Favaro, »Nicolò Vito di Gozze, Fiore Zuzori e Maria Gondola. Un episodio della ‘questione femminile’ nella Dalmazia rinascimentale«, in: *Il dialogo creativo. Studi per Lina Bolzoni*, ed. Maria Pia Ellero, Matteo Residori, Massimiliano Rossi and Andrea Torre. Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2017: pp. 199-208; *idem*, »Personaggi femminili e filosofia d’amore. Sul *Dialogo d’amore* di Nicolò Vito di Gozze«: pp. 507-526; Luka Boršić, »Filozofkinja Maruša Gundulić«. *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 46/2 (2020): pp. 287-308.

⁵² Maria: “[...] gli alti vostri ragionamenti della bellezza [...] i quali finora sono stati tali che più dotti non havrei saputo desiderargli”; *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 7r.

⁵³ Fiore: “Con le vostre dotte richieste, Gondolina mia dolce, molto m’invagHITE [...]”; *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 20r. Fiore: “[...] ma lasciamo da parte i vostri dotti dubbi, alli quali credo haver tanto sodisfatto quanto m’era possibile di sodisfare”; *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 29r.

teachings,⁵⁴ and reveal the quality of her ongoing thinking process. The fact that Gozze did not deem it necessary to legitimize in the textual tissue of the mimetic dialogues the outstanding philosophical learnedness of the speaker Fiore, signals, in accordance with the norm of verisimilitude, that the speaker's erudition was plausible *per se*, suggesting, in other words, that Zuzori had a reputation for being exceptionally learned.⁵⁵ Still, apart from Gozze, Zuzori's contemporaries did not explicitly exalt her as learned, but rather, in line with conventions, as extraordinarily beautiful and virtuous, although the fact that she appears as dedicatee of literary works by her contemporaries can be read as implying her learnedness, considering that a work's dedicatee is publicly proclaimed as its first, and most important, reader. It was only in the portraits offered by later biographers, beginning from

⁵⁴ Throughout the dialogue the speaker Maria repeatedly remarks that she has acquired her philosophical knowledge from her husband, mainly using the formula "come intendo dal mio marito", or a variant of it, as for instance in *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 25v, *Dialogo d'amore*: ff. 3r, 6r, 6v, 8v, etc. On f. 9v of the dialogue on love it is Maria's knowledge of Latin that is represented as stemming from her husband's teaching, as it transpires from the question she poses to Fiore: "ditemi per cortesia, poi che dall'amore procede questo piacere (che i Latini chiamano, come intendo dal mio marito, *voluptas*) che cosa egli si sia et a che modo si pigli nella diffinitione dell'amore?". Regarding the crucial role, for the appearance of women authors in the Renaissance, of the collaboration between men and women, especially within the matrix of what Ross has labelled the "domestic paradigm", i.e., on the grounds of the legitimizing presence of a father-teacher or husband-teacher, see S. G. Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: passim*, quotation on pp. 2-3.

⁵⁵ However, as noted by Cox, in the dedicatory letter to his dialogues on beauty and love Gozze resorted to an *in potentia* justification, suggesting that the dialogues represent the two speakers' potential, rather than actual, philosophical prowess, their "dispositione [...] alle lettere speculative" (»Alla molto magnifica Signora mia osservandissima Nika Zuzori, in Ancona«: f. a3r); see V. Cox, »Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue«: pp. 388-389. It seems safe to assume that Gozze derived his *in potentia* argument from the already mentioned *Questione dove si tratta chi più meriti honore o la donna, o l'huomo* by Girolamo Camerata (see n. 4 in this essay), a text the Croatian philosopher was most certainly familiar with. Indeed, as Carinci has remarked, Gozze recycled some passages from Camerata's text in the dedicatory epistle to his dialogues on beauty and love, just as his wife did in the paratext she authored; see E. Carinci, »Introduzione«, in: *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento*: pp. 26, 47, and *passim*. In his *Questione*, Camerata posits that the question of the relative dignity of the female and male sex can be debated in two ways "o considerando quello che hora è in effetto, o quello che devria et potria essere, quando non vi fosse impedimento" (f. 14r). Yet, it seems worth noting that Gozze's *in potentia* justification is in contradiction with his presentation, in the very same paratext, of the dialogues as transcriptions of actual conversations, in line with dialogical conventions (»Alla molto magnifica Signora mia osservandissima Nika Zuzori, in Ancona«: f. a2v), see n. 41 in this essay. This internal contradiction can be read as pointing to the difficulties implicated in traversing the rarely explored territory of representing an exceptionally erudite all-female quasi-documentary philosophical conversation.

Seraphinus Maria Cerva (Serafin Marija Crijević) in the eighteenth century, that Zuzori was extolled as a woman of letters and author in her own right. No literary work from Zuzori is, however, extant.⁵⁶ In any case, the erudition of the speaker Fiore (philosophical as well as literary, comprising not only knowledge of Latin, but also of Greek)⁵⁷ is in Gozze's dialogues represented as vast, and the learnedness of her interlocutor, capable of actively engaging in complex philosophical conversation, is likewise portrayed as conspicuous. Apart from their philosophical capabilities, both speakers are depicted, especially in the dialogue on love, as well versed in literature. The dialogue on love is indeed interspersed with quotations from Italian, Latin, and on one occasion Croatian literary sources.⁵⁸ The erudite conversation between the two women is not only enriched with explicit literary

⁵⁶ Fiore Zuzori was praised for her beauty and virtue by contemporary authors, both Ragusan and Italian, on which see Z. Marković, *Pjesnikinje starog Dubrovnika od sredine XVI do svršetka XVIII stoljeća u kulturnoj sredini svoga vremena*: pp. 57-59, 85-107. Among the poets who dedicated their poems to her are the following: the Ragusan poet Domenico Slatarich (Dominko Zlatarić), who also penned the introductory paratext to Cesare Simonetti da Fano's lyric collection dedicating it to her (*Rime del signor Cesare Simonetti da Fano. Nuovamente poste in luce*. Padova: Paolo Megiatti, 1579); the Italian poet Cesare Simonetti himself, who in the aforementioned collection included his madrigal *Per l'illustre signora Fiore Pescioni* (ff. 24r-25v); the Ragusan philosopher and poet Michele Monaldi, in whose posthumously published lyric collection, which his nephew dedicated to Fiore Zuzori, the renowned woman is exalted in two sonnet exchanges "per le rime" between him and Giambattista Boccabianca (*Rime del sign. Michele Monaldi alla molto illustre signora, la signora Fiore Zuzeri Pescioni*. In Venetia: Altobello Salicato, 1599, f. 19r-19v); and Torquato Tasso. For the eight poems—three sonnets and five madrigals—Tasso dedicated to Zuzori at the initiative of Giulio Mosti, nephew of the prior of the Hospital of Sant'Anna in Ferrara where Tasso was imprisoned from 1579 to 1586, see Josip Torbarina, »Tassovi soneti i madrigali u čast Cvijete Zuzorić Dubrovkinje«. *Hrvatsko kolo* 21 (1944): pp. 69–96; Martino Rossi Monti, »Patnje mladog Giulija. Bilješke o Cvijeti Zuzorić, Torquatu Tassu i Giuliju Mostiju«, in: *Filozofkinje u Hrvatskoj*, ed. Luka Boršić and Ivana Skuhala Karasman. Zagreb: Institut za filozofiju, 2017: pp. 115-129. Fiore Zuzori was remembered in historical biographies as a poet, but her production is not extant. For instance, in his bio-bibliographical lexicon entitled *Bibliotheca Ragusina*, on which he worked in the period between 1726 and 1744, her first biographer Seraphinus Maria Cerva claimed that "Floria de Zuzoris olim non modo Ragusii, sed in tota fere Italia poeticae artis laude notissima ea est, ad quem laudandam aggredior", see *idem, Bibliotheca Ragusina in qua Ragusini scriptores eorumque gesta et scripta recensentur. Tomus alter et tertius*: p. 3.

⁵⁷ For Fiore's knowledge of Greek words, see *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 2v ("to calon"); *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 19r ("zelotopia").

⁵⁸ As Prandi has pointed out, the incorporation of lyric quotations in dialogues on love was a conventional procedure initiated by Bembo's *Asolani*; see S. Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia*: p. 58. As far as the Croatian literary quotation is concerned, on f. 19v of the *Dialogo d'amore* Fiore evokes the *Jejupka* by Mikša Pelegrinović, a poet from the island of Hvar, ca. 1500-1562; see Natka Badurina's comment to her Croatian translation of the dialogue (p. 268, n. 5); for bibliographical information about the translation, see n. 2 in this essay.

quotations, mostly voiced by the main speaker, but also with more subtle intertextual allusions. For instance, in her reply to Maria's quotation from Petrarch's *Trionfo d'amore* ("perciò ben disse quel gentil poeta: *tal biasma altrui che se stesso condanna*"), Fiore embeds an allusion to a line from the same source ("così avviene di queste Fedre, vili et maligne, che non potendo havere la nostra dolce conversatione, come dentro nell'animo ciascuna la desidera, il dispetto che gli cruccia gli cagiona l'invidia del nostro bene"),⁵⁹ showcasing the refined sophistication of their "dolce conversatione".⁶⁰

Apart from challenging the androcentric ideal of true friendship, the portrait of the characters Fiore and Maria, each being at once each other's lover and beloved ("nell'amare, et esser amato, siamo tanto uguali"),⁶¹ subverts the traditionally masculine depiction of the Platonic lover.⁶² In other words, Gozze's endowment of his female speakers with the desexualized role of Platonic lovers undermines the hegemony of the male as active desiring subject in the Platonic and Neoplatonic thematization of eros, including its heteronormative sixteenth-century revision, most famously emblemized in messer Bembo's speech at the end of the *Cortegiano*.⁶³ As Castiglione's character messer Bembo elucidates, in line with

⁵⁹ *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 27r. See *Trionfo d'amore* I, 118 ("Tal biasma altrui che se stesso condanna") and I, 114 ("Fedra amante terribile e maligna"). Francesco Petrarca, *Trionfi*, edited and introduced by Guido Bezzola. Milano: BUR, 2006, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Incidentally, the syntagm "dolce conversatione" can be read as evoking the opening letter of Petrarch's *Familiare*s: "Dulce mihi colloquium tecum fuit [...]". *Francisci Petrarcae "Epistolae de rebus familiaribus et variae"*. *Volumen primum*, ed. Giuseppe Fracassetti. Firenze: Le Monnier, 1859: p. 26.

⁶¹ *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 24r.

⁶² Regarding Gozze's destabilization of the androcentrism traditionally embedded in the role of Platonic lover, my argumentation builds on and partly reproduces conclusions I formerly articulated in Francesca Maria Gabrielli, «Il nostro sesso è perfetto: strategije otpora u posvetnoj poslanici Marije Gundulić (1582)», in: *Crveni ocean: prakse, taktike i strategije rodnog otpora*, ed. Lada Čale Feldman, Anita Dremel, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Maša Grdešić and Lidija Dujčić. Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2016: pp. 150-154.

⁶³ See Jill Kraye, «The transformation of Platonic love in the Italian Renaissance», in: *Platonism and the English imagination*, ed. Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994: pp. 76-85. As Marc Schachter has pointed out, the "question of women's desire" is touched on in the final part of the *Cortegiano* (IV, 72), where "its suitability for enabling spiritual ascent is debated"; Marc Schachter, «Louis Le Roy's *Sympose de Platon* and Three Other Renaissance Adaptions of Platonic Eros». *Renaissance Quarterly* 59/2 (2006): p. 410, n. 9. Indeed, after Bembo's speech, the character Gaspar Pallavicino remarks that women cannot embark on the path of spiritual ascent, while Magnifico Iuliano expresses a contrary opinion ("Non saranno in questo le donne punto superate dagli omini, perché Socrate istesso confessa, tutti i misterii amorosi che egli sapeva,

Ficino's doctrine,⁶⁴ sight and hearing are the only senses adequate for enjoying the beauty of the beloved, and for activating, on that account, the contemplative ascent of the male lover guided by reason.⁶⁵ After having reveled in his beloved through his eyes and ears, the male lover sows the seeds of virtue in her soul, and as a result he can reap the fruits of her virtuous behaviour, thus engendering beauty in beauty ("e questo sarà il vero generare ed esprimere la bellezza nella bellezza, il che da alcuni si dice esser il fin d'amore").⁶⁶ In Gozze's dialogue on love, the role of lover as depicted in messer Bembo's presentation, inflected by Ficino, of Diotima's teaching ("generare ed esprimere la bellezza nella bellezza") is performed by both female speakers.⁶⁷ Maria is represented as loving Fiore through the sense of sight, while Fiore is depicted as loving Maria through the sense of hearing:

essergli stati rivelati da una donna, che fu quella Diotima [...]"; *Cortegiano* IV, 72. The discussion is closed by the Duchess: "Di questo [...] sia giudice messer Pietro Bembo, e stiasi alla sua sentenza, se le donne sono così capaci dell'amor divino come gli omini, o no"; *Cortegiano* IV, 73. By way of aligning with Bembo's discourse, in which the contemplative path is represented as a male prerogative, while women are invested with the instrumental role of the beautiful beloved, the Duchess denies women the possibility of considering themselves as capable of spiritual ascent, i.e., of embodying the role of Platonic lovers. See Baldassar Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, edited by Nicola Longo, with an introduction by Amedeo Quondam. Milano: Garzanti, 2009: pp. 453-455.

⁶⁴ See Jill Krayer, »The transformation of Platonic love in the Italian Renaissance«: p. 83.

⁶⁵ *Cortegiano* III, 62. "Rimovasi adunque dal cieco giudicio del senso e godasi con gli occhi quel splendore, quella grazia, quelle faville amorose, i risi, i modi e tutti gli altri piacevoli ornamenti della bellezza; medesimamente con l'audito la suavità della voce [...]; e così pascerà di dolcissimo cibo l'anima per la via di questi dui sensi, i quali tengon poco del corporeo e son ministri della ragione, senza passar col desiderio verso il corpo ad appetito alcuno men che onesto"; Baldassar Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*: p. 440.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: p. 441.

⁶⁷ For Diotima's teaching, see *Symp.* 201d-212c; Plato, *The Symposium*, edited by M. C. Howatson and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield, translated by M.C. Howatson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008: pp. 37-50. As is well known, for Diotima "the object of love" is "procreating and giving birth in the beautiful" (206e; Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 44), and the fitting offspring of "those who are pregnant in their souls" is "wisdom and the rest of virtue" (209a; Plato, *The Symposium*: pp. 46-47). Therefore, the person pregnant in soul "goes about looking for the beautiful in which to procreate", and, "if he comes across one who has a beautiful, noble and gifted soul as well", then "his words immediately flow in abundance about virtue"; "by attaching himself to the beautiful and associating with it [...] he gives birth to and procreates the offspring with which he has long been pregnant", and they "share in nurturing what they have created together" (209b-209c; Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 47). In a later passage, Diotima qualifies such offspring as "beautiful discourse" (210a; Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 48).

Maria: Io lo credo certo, mia bella et gentil Fiore, che tal effetto l'amore possa causare negli animi degli amanti quando sono privi della vista della loro amata, perché per esperienza in me lo provo, che quando non veggo voi, il giorno mi si cangia in tenebrosa notte, perché altro sole fuori di voi non veggio, et non è cosa bella al mondo che possa satiare la mia honesta voglia fuor che il vostro bello et divino aspetto.

Fiore: Io vi credo ogni cosa, mia dolce Gondolina, perché dell'amor vostro io ne sono certissima, et crediatemi che non meno l'amor in me causa il medesimo effetto che in voi, quando però dalla vostra dolce conversatione mi trovo priva.⁶⁸

Although the priestess of Mantinea is never explicitly mentioned in Gozze's dialogues, her words and teachings reverberate in the textual tissue, especially in the dialogue on love, and this does not come as a surprise considering that the asymmetric conversation between the teacher Diotima and her pupil Socrates can be regarded as the founding and legitimizing model of Gozze's all-female literary conversations featuring a female authoritative voice on the interconnected philosophical subjects of beauty and love. Not only does Diotima's teaching resonate in the conversation between the teacher Fiore and her pupil Maria,⁶⁹ a "budding philosopher" as the young Socrates,⁷⁰ but Fiore faithfully reproduces the discourse Diotima pronounced when she recounted to her interlocutor the

⁶⁸ *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 19r.

⁶⁹ For instance, in the dialogue on beauty, Fiore's laughter at Maria's uncharacteristically naive hypothesis that "la vera bellezza è la Vergine bella" can be read as evoking Diotima's laughter at Socrates' response in *Symp.* 202b; see *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 8r. On the other hand, the *Dialogo d'amore* in more than one occasion evokes Diotima's teachings, such as in the following *loci*: "Platone nel detto luogo di *Simposio* ha rifiutato questa opinione, dicendo che l'Amore non sia Iddio, ma un demone di mezzo tra i dei et gli huomini", f. 3r (see *Symp.* 202e; "He is a great spirit, Socrates. All spirits are intermediate between god and mortal"; Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 39); "Platone disse nel detto luogo del *Simposio* che l'Amore era un desiderio dell'immortalità", f. 9r. (see *Symp.* 207a; "If the object of love is indeed everlasting possession of the good, as we have already agreed, it is immortality together with the good that must necessarily be desired. Hence it must follow that the object of love is also immortality"; Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 44).

⁷⁰ Christian Keime, »The Role of Diotima in the *Symposium*: The Dialogue and its Double«, in: *Plato's Styles and Characters: Between Literature and Philosophy*, ed. Gabriele Cornelli. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2016: p. 391. For a different reading of the dialogues, according to which the role of the speaker Maria as "a 'female Socrates'" can be read as suggesting that the thoughts the character voices in the dialogues written by Gozze "are indeed authored by Maruša Gundulić, the historical person and a woman philosopher", see L. Boršić, »Filozofkinja Maruša Gundulić«, the quotations are from the English summary on p. 308.

myth of the birth of Eros, with the difference that Gozze's main speaker goes on to accurately expound it by resorting to a variety of *auctoritates*, in line with the tendencies of the dialogue genre in the period under consideration.⁷¹ If the two women are both represented in Gozze's dialogues as lovers in the Platonic sense of the word, and at the same time as each other's beloveds, then they are both, in accordance with Diotima's teaching, pregnant in soul,⁷² and the fruit of their engendering in beauty is their conversation on virtue, their "beautiful discourse".⁷³ As a result, "such a couple have a much closer partnership with each other and a stronger tie of affection than is the case with the parents of mortal children, since the offspring they share in have more beauty and immortality".⁷⁴ The word here translated as "tie of affection" is the Greek word for friendship, *philia*.⁷⁵ In accordance with Diotima's teaching, the two speakers in Gozze's dialogues are two Platonic lovers bound by a strong tie of friendship, and their mutual, utterly spiritual affection is a trigger of intellectual and moral nobilitation, a vehicle for wisdom. All things considered, the representation of the relationship between the two female speakers in Gozze's dialogues on beauty and love is founded on the imbrication of two traditions: the Platonic teaching on eros, and the Ciceronian depiction of virtue-friendship. When Fiore evokes Petrarch's lyric to exemplify the transformation of the lover in the beloved ("Di questa trasformazione spesce volte il Petrarca canta essersi trasmutato in un lauro verde, perché l'amore faceva tal effetto in lui"),⁷⁶

⁷¹ After a brief disagreement between the two interlocutors, which serves the purpose of remarking Fiore's role as teacher ("attendete a quanto v'insegno"), the main speaker, to the satisfaction of her pupil ("fate quello che più vi piace, che io del tutto resto contenta"), starts recounting the myth narrated by Diotima in the *Symposium*; *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 9v: "Finge Platone nel *Simposio* che quando la dea Venere nacque i dei fecero un convito [...]". For the myth of Eros as recounted by Diotima, see *Symp.* 203b-204a.

⁷² *Symp.* 208e-209a: "But [there are] those whose pregnancy is of the soul—those who are pregnant in their souls even more than in their bodies, with the kind of offspring which is fitting for the soul to conceive and bear. What offspring are these? Wisdom and the rest of virtue [...]". Plato, *The Symposium*: pp. 46-47.

⁷³ *Symp.* 210a. Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 48.

⁷⁴ *Symp.* 209c. Plato, *The Symposium*: p. 47.

⁷⁵ In Ficino's translation the word used is "amicitia". See Marsilio Ficino, *Divini Platonis opera omnia quae extant*. Geneva: Franciscum le Preux, 1590: p. 330. As is well known, Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation of Plato's *opera omnia* was first published in 1484.

⁷⁶ *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 22r. For the image in Petrarch's *canzoniere*, see *RVF* 23, l. 39 ("facendomi d'uom vivo un lauro verde"); Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata. Milano: Mondadori, 2010: p. 97. On the theme of the transformation of the lover in the beloved, see also Tullia d'Aragona's dialogue on love, and in particular the following reply of the speaker Tullia: "L'amore onesto, il quale è proprio degli uomini nobili, cioè che hanno l'animo gentile e virtuoso, qualunque essi siano, o poveri o ricchi, non è generato nel disiderio, come l'altro, ma dalla ragione; ed ha per suo fine principale il

Maria replies: “Se dunque è tale la trasformazione dell’amante nell’amata come dite, mia bella et gentil Fiore, di me potete credere che io mi sia tutta cangiata nel mio bel Fiore [...]”.⁷⁷ The word *antos* in the title of both dialogues can be therefore read as referring not only to Fiore, but likewise to Maria, transformed as she is, on account of her love, into her friend Fiore. The word *antos*, to put it another way, evokes the bond between the two women. Considering that the two speakers are in the dialogues depicted as both spiritual lovers and perfect friends, this transmutation can be read as aligned with Cicero’s ideal of *vera amicitia*, according to which a true friend is “alter idem”, another self.⁷⁸ After all, “it is love [*amor*] from which the word ‘friendship’ [*amicitia*] comes, and this is the origin of goodwill”.⁷⁹

Gozze’s representation of a woman-to-woman conversational dynamics in a philosophical dialogue in which the two speakers are portrayed as capable of true friendship and Platonic love carries conspicuous emancipatory potential. There is, however, a seeming paradox at the heart of Gozze’s all-female dialogues. The philosopher’s subversive characterization of the two female speakers, his philogynist revision of the traditionally androcentric conceptualization of Platonic eros and *vera amicitia*, is embedded within a clearly conservative, at times even misogynistic, matrix.⁸⁰ Indeed, the female interlocutors tirelessly reaffirm that the role of the lover is inherently male, repeatedly circumscribing the female role to that of the beloved, as for instance in the following passage from the dialogue on beauty, where the ties of affection between the two women (“et io voi sola”) appear as a mere anomaly in a rigidly heteronormative system:

trasformarsi nella cosa amata con disiderio che ella si trasformi in lui, tal che di due diventino un solo o quattro; della qual trasformazione hanno favellato tante volte e così leggiadramente sì messer Francesco Petrarca, sì il reverendissimo cardinal Bembo. La quale, perché non si può fare se none ispiritalmente, quindi è che in cotale amore non hanno luogo principalmente se non i sentimenti spiritali, cioè il vedere e l’udire, e più assai, come più spiritale, la fantasia”. Tullia d’Aragona, «Dialogo della infinità di amore», in: *Trattati d’amore del Cinquecento*, ed. Giuseppe Zonta. Bari: Gius. Laterza e figli, 1912: pp. 222-223.

⁷⁷ *Dialogo d’amore*: f. 22r.

⁷⁸ *Amic.* 80; M. T. Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia*: pp. 138-139.

⁷⁹ *Amic.* 26; M. T. Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia*: pp. 54-55.

⁸⁰ See Francesca Maria Gabrielli, «‘Il nostro sesso è perfetto’: strategije otpora u posvetnoj poslanici Marije Gundulić (1582)»: pp. 155-162; this portion of my essay builds on and partially reproduces the argumentation therein articulated. On the ambivalent stance regarding the female sex articulated in Gozze’s works, see also Valentina Gulin Zrnić, «A Kaleidoscope of Female Images in the 15th and the 16th Century Dubrovnik. One of the Approaches to the Second Sex in Three Acts». *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku* 37/1 (2000): pp. 43-66; Erna Banić-Pajnić, «Žena u renesansnoj filozofiji». *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 59-60 (2004): pp. 69-89.

Maria: [...] donde avviene, mia bella et gentil Fiore, che da tutti egualmente non è desiderata una istessa cosa bella? Intendendo noi che Nasone amò solo Corina, Virgilio Galatea, Catullo Lesbia, Propertio Cynthia, il Petrarca Laura, Dante Beatrice et io voi sola, et così altri chi una donna et chi un'altra.⁸¹

Furthermore, the interlocutors of the two dialogues endorse a conventional representation of female virtue, according to which modesty and chastity are the most prominent female virtuous accomplishments, to be defended at the cost of one's life, as in Fiore's misogynistic remark: "se una donna bella al mondo non facesse stima [della pudicizia], et non l'havesse più in pregio che la vita, non saria degna d'esser viva".⁸² This contrast between the conservative content of the dialogues and the subversive representation of the speakers is only apparent, considering that the two women portrayed in the dialogue, as well as the ties of affection that bind them to each other, are explicitly defined as exceptional: "né crederò ch'altro simile giamai si troverà nel sesso femminile fra quanto gira il sole".⁸³ While the exceptional rhetoric defuses the subversive potential of Gozze's dialogues, their philogynist edge is still undeniable, inasmuch as the portrait of the two speakers clearly promotes and exalts women's intellectual feats and a female bonding based on affection and solidarity. Indeed, the two Neoplatonic dialogues can be read as a means, on the one hand, to celebrate Fiore Zuzori, not only as beautiful and virtuous, as her contemporaries usually extolled her, but also as exceptionally learned, while, on the other hand, authorizing the voice of Maria Gondola, who will indeed very soon, in the summer of 1582, take up the pen to write the dedicatory letter to her husband's dialogues on Aristotle's *Meteorology*, articulating her defence of the female sex and, most importantly, of her friend Fiore Zuzori. Unequivocally feminist unlike her husband's dialogues,⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 26v.

⁸² *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 30v.

⁸³ *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 24r.

⁸⁴ For more detailed discussion, see Francesca Maria Gabrielli, »Il nostro sesso è perfetto': strategije otpora u posvetnoj poslanici Marije Gundulić (1582)«: pp. 143-166. The essay aims at showing that Gondola's dedicatory letter is characterized by an unequivocally feminist stance—which subtly distances the literary work under consideration from the ambivalence in this regard of her husband's dialogues on beauty and love, paratext included—and on that ground defends the attribution of the work to her. Among the scholars who have expressed their doubts concerning Gondola's authorship is Carinci, who has recently hypothesized that the two dedicatory letters at issue, Gondola's and Gozze's, were possibly authored by the same person, or were the result of a

Gondola's text, which offers exempla of women explicitly exalted for their intellectual endeavours, can be read as a concrete instantiation of the true friendship celebrated in the Neoplatonic literary conversations.

To return now to the characteristics Gozze's five philosophical dialogues have in common, it is worth remarking that the works under consideration closely mirror each other with regards to the stylization of the benevolent, harmonious, and cooperative conversational ethos of their speakers. Indeed, in the dialogues, which are all founded on the goodwill of friendship, the respondents learnedly teach, profusely mentioning *auctoritates* and *exempla*, while the questioners actively learn, attentively listening, at times interrupting to express their doubts or to ask for clarifications, more rarely to contest what is being said, while never failing to politely express their sheer satisfaction at the explanations of the respondents. In the Neoplatonic dialogues, the display of affection between the two speakers is intensified with respect to the other dialogues, a fact that can be ascribed to the subject-matter of the two-day literary conversation, as well as to the gender of the speakers, perceived as having "a particular affinity" for matters

collaboration between husband and wife, on the grounds that both texts recycle passages from Camerata's *Questione dove si tratta chi più meriti onore, o la donna, o l'uomo* (see E. Carinci, »Introduzione«, in: *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento*: p. 47). See also n. 4 and 55 in this essay. In Gozze's dedicatory letter the passage from "perché tutte le nostre cognitioni ci vengono dal senso" to "apprender tutte le eccellenti discipline dell'intelletto" (»Alla molto magnifica Signora mia osservandissima Nika Zuzori, in Ancona«: f. a3r) reproduces extracts from Camerata's *Questione* (ff. 17r-17v). In her dedicatory letter, Gondola loosely follows the argumentation on women's more temperate complexion articulated in Camerata's section under consideration, and reproduces *verbatim* the notion that women have more temperate senses ("senso più temperato", f. 17v): "Et se vogliamo ceder in parte a gli huomini ch'eglino sono più audaci e più animosi, non però segue ch'essi siano più perfetti, perché noi siamo più disposte alle cose più perfette, che sono le discipline eccellenti dell'intelletto, che non sono gli huomini, havendo noi il senso più perfetto e più temperato" (»Alla non men bella, che virtuosa, e gentil donna, Fiore Zuzori, in Ragugia«, in: *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* 1584: f. **4r). Gondola also draws from many other portions of Camerata's text, for which see the notes to the transcription by E. Carinci, in: *Corrispondenze scientifiche tra Cinquecento e Seicento*: pp. 79-92. The reuse of the same source by husband and wife, however, while it confirms that Gozze and Gondola conversed upon, and had access to, the same books, in line with the "domestic paradigm" (S. G. Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*: pp. 2-3) highlighted in the Neoplatonic dialogues themselves (see n. 54 in this essay), is not a sufficient reason, in my opinion, to question Gondola's authorship of the dedicatory letter, especially considering the different edge of the philogyny articulated in her paratext when compared to Gozze's production. Among the scholars who have questioned Gondola's authorship are also Erna Banić-Pajnić, »Žena u renesansnoj filozofiji«: 70, n. 3; and M. Favaro, »Nicolò Vito di Gozze, Fiore Zuzori e Maria Gondola. Un episodio della 'questione femminile' nella Dalmazia rinascimentale«: p. 205.

concerning love.⁸⁵ Indeed, towards the end of the dialogue on love, which is the topic of the second day, the conversation between Fiore and Maria is explicitly defined as an “*amoroso ragionamento*”, suggesting that the colloquy on the interconnected philosophical topics of beauty and love is, at the same time, a colloquy showcasing an interpersonal relation of mutual love.⁸⁶

Apart from sharing a similar characterization of the speakers, Gozze’s five dialogues are also structured in analogous ways. The texts either throw the reader *in medias res* into a dialogue in dramatic form, as in the two all-female dialogues on beauty and love, or they offer a very brief first-person narrative introduction before the dialogical conversation in mimetic form begins, as in the three all-male dialogues. The dialogues on beauty and love, when considered separately, portray a conversation set in a one-day timeframe, and the same goes for the dialogue on household management, while the remaining all-male dialogues are conducted over a period of four (*Discorsi sopra le Metheore*) and eight days (*Dello stato delle repubbliche*). The scene-setting is in all dialogues very concise. Following the Ciceronian model, the conversations are all conducted in a private, secluded area, far from the public eye, either in the garden surrounding the nobleman’s “*villa*”, or in his “*casa*”. As far as the published versions of the dialogues are concerned, the two all-female dialogues are set outdoors, in the garden of Gozze’s summer residence, and the same goes for the all-male dialogue on household management, in which the garden is defined as the space of “*solazzi e piaceri*”, that is to say, of leisure and pleasant amusements.⁸⁷ That the garden-setting is particularly fitting for the female speakers is suggested in the dialogues on beauty and love. Indeed, at the very outset of the dialogue on beauty, Maria compliments Fiore by identifying her as the garden’s most beautiful flower, on which the whole beauty of the *locus amoenus* depends (“*in questo giardino mai non si trovò, né credo si troverà, un più bel fiore di voi, da cui hoggi tutta la beltà et vaghezza pende*”), while in the dialogue on love, as already mentioned, Maria proclaims that her love has transmuted her into the flower that is her beloved Fiore (“*di me*

⁸⁵ V. Cox, «Seen but not Heard: The Role of Women Speakers in Cinquecento Literary Dialogue», p. 393. As noted by Cox, this affinity is “made explicit” in Gozze’s dedicatory letter to the Neoplatonic dialogues (*ibid.*, n. 24). See «Alla molto magnifica Signora mia osservandissima Nika Zuzori, in Ancona», f. a3r: “Oltre che se della bellezza et d’amore (dono veramente dalla natura più alle donne che agli huomini concesso) deliberai di trattare, parvemi, se a loro la natura di questi doni è stata più cortese et liberale, ch’elle più convenientemente di questi ragionar possino [...]”.

⁸⁶ *Dialogo d’amore*: f. 38v.

⁸⁷ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 1.

potete credere che io mi sia tutta cangiata nel mio bel Fiore”).⁸⁸ Therefore, the word *antos* in the titles of the dialogues not only evokes the mutual love of the two female speakers, but also the idyllic space in which their conversation is conducted. With the exception of the dialogue on household management, Gozze’s all-male dialogues are set within the walls of the nobleman’s home. This indoor space is in the literary conversation on meteorology more precisely defined as the nobleman’s “studio”,⁸⁹ a room emblematic of intellectual *gravitas*. Indeed, the speaker Gozze is represented, at the beginning of the conversation, as immersed in the study of Aristotle’s *Meteorology*.⁹⁰

The description of the *locus amoenus* in the three dialogues set in the garden of the nobleman’s villa is virtually the same. The dialogue on beauty opens with Fiore addressing Maria with the following request: “Poscia c’habbiamo veduto il vostro vago et bel giardino, Gondola mia gentile, pregovi che ce n’andiamo a seder all’ombra di quella bella selice a canto a quel ruscello di limpid’acqua”, while in the dialogue on love, on the following day, Maria similarly asks: “andiamo sotto quella bella selice appresso quel ruscello di limpida acqua, dove hieri ragionissimo della bellezza”.⁹¹ On the other hand, in the all-male *Governo della famiglia* it is the narrator who, in the brief introductory passage, positions himself in the same idyllic spot (“postomi all’ombra d’una bella selice, a canto d’un ruscello di limpida acqua”).⁹² What lies behind the inconsistent pairing of gender and setting in Gozze’s dialogues is of great relevance. Indeed, thanks to a recent essay by Gorana Stepanić, in which she has thoroughly described and analyzed the hands of the surviving manuscripts of Gozze’s works, we now know that in the manuscript version of the all-male *Governo della famiglia*, preserved under the archival signature R 3230 in the National and University Library in Zagreb, which Stepanić has identified as Gozze’s only extant autograph manuscript, the speakers are two women, Fiore Zuzori and Maria Gondola. Before Stepanić, all the scholars who attempted to describe the manuscript—which is entitled *Dialogo iconomico* in homage to the classical tradition of *oikonomia*, the discipline that aims at the good management of the household, the *oikos*—failed to decipher the

⁸⁸ *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 1r; *Dialogo d’amore*: f. 22r.

⁸⁹ *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*: f. 1r (“in questo mio studio”).

⁹⁰ Monaldi asks: “[...] ma ditemi di gratia, che libro è questo che havete adesso innanti?” Gozze replies: “Questo è la *Metheora* d’Aristotele, la quale ho preso a rivedere a questi giorni per chiarirmi d’alcuni dubbii che m’erano caduti nella mente”. *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*: f. 1v.

⁹¹ *Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 1r; *Dialogo d’amore*: f. 1v.

⁹² *Governo della famiglia*: pp. 1-2.

identities of the speakers.⁹³ In view of the high degree of illegibility of the manuscript, Stepanić has expressed her skepticism regarding the possibility to decipher its content and collate it with the published edition.⁹⁴ Although the *Dialogo iconomico* is “to some extent different from the printed version (for example, in the choice of the speakers in the dialogue)”, the scholar’s general impression is that “the main structure and most of the text in the printed edition are the same”.⁹⁵ While I concur that the degree of illegibility of the manuscript is high, it is however possible to read it, although tentatively and not integrally, by carefully comparing it to the published edition. The task at issue is not irrelevant, notwithstanding the fact that we possess the published version, or rather, the task of deciphering the content of the manuscript is relevant precisely on account of the fact that we possess the printed edition.⁹⁶ Indeed, in the interpretative perspective adopted in this essay, the importance of the *Dialogo iconomico* exceeds the fact that it constitutes, as Stepanić has demonstrated, the only autograph manuscript by Gozze we possess.⁹⁷ The *Dialogo iconomico* offers us the possibility, unprecedented as far as I know, to investigate the modifications, if any, that a Renaissance author would implement in a woman-to-woman dialogue to transform it into a man-to-man conversation, while respecting the prescriptive norms of verisimilitude and decorum imposed by the presence of historically identifiable characters. In other words, a comparison between the all-female *Dialogo iconomico* and the all-male *Governo della famiglia* would necessarily enlighten us, to put it in Cox’s words, “about the gendered speech decorum of the age”.⁹⁸ To that end, in the last part of this essay I will present the results of my attempt to decipher the *Dialogo iconomico*.

The fact that Gozze initially envisioned his *Governo della famiglia* as an all-female conversation agrees with the sixteenth-century perception of the subject-matter of household management as suitable for the inclusion of the female voice.⁹⁹ As already mentioned, Diotima’s conversation with Socrates in Plato’s

⁹³ See G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: pp. 253-254.

⁹⁴ See *ibid.*: p. 256.

⁹⁵ See *ibid.*: p. 259 (the quotation is from the English summary).

⁹⁶ See also *ibid.*: p. 256.

⁹⁷ See *ibid.*: *passim*.

⁹⁸ V. Cox, »The Female Voice in Italian Renaissance Dialogue«: p. 54.

⁹⁹ According to Cox, women appear as interlocutors in Italian Renaissance dialogues mainly in dialogues on love and beauty, in religious dialogues, in “dialogues on women’s conduct and duties, on the ‘estates’ of women’s lives, and on the management of the household”, as well as in dialogues that offer

Symposium had a legitimizing effect on the incorporation of female speakers in sixteenth-century dialogues on beauty and love. It seems therefore worth noting that the teaching voiced by the priestess of Mantinea delineates a connection between beauty, love, and household management. Indeed, according to Diotima's musings on love as the desire to engender in the beautiful, "those who are pregnant in their soul" need an encounter with beauty to express the wisdom they carry within them, and "the most important and beautiful expression of this wisdom is the good ordering of cities and households".¹⁰⁰ It is therefore only fitting that, after having evoked Socrates' female teacher in their conversation on beauty and love, Gozze's two female speakers, both pregnant in their soul, embark on a philosophical conversation on the ordering of households.

The perception of the discipline of household management as a welcoming topic for the inclusion of the female voice in philosophical dialogues stems from antiquity. Indeed, Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, the first text in which, as Carlo Natali has pointed out,¹⁰¹ *oikonomia* appears as "practical science"—repeatedly evoked in both versions of Gozze's dialogue on household management,¹⁰² and in general in Renaissance literary texts on the subject-matter of *oikonomike technē*,¹⁰³ such as, for instance, the third book of Leon Battista Alberti's fifteenth-century dialogue *I libri della famiglia*, and Paleario's already-mentioned all-female

"theoretical debates on women's status and role"; *ibid.*: p. 64. Paleario's already mentioned all-female dialogue corroborates the perceived suitability of the topic of household management for the female voice. See also J. L. Smarr, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women*: pp. 3-4.

¹⁰⁰ *Symp.* 208e-209a; Plato, *The Symposium*: pp. 46-47.

¹⁰¹ Carlo Natali, »Introduzione«, in: Aristotele, *L'amministrazione della casa*, ed. Carlo Natali. Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1995: p. 18. As is well known, the most relevant classical works on the discipline of household management are Xenophon's dialogue *Oeconomicus*, the first book of Aristotle's *Politics*, and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, which was still attributed to Aristotle in the Renaissance.

¹⁰² For a contextualization of Gozze's *Governo della famiglia* within the early-modern *oikonomia* tradition, see D. Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia. Governo della casa e governo civile nella tradizione dell'"economica" tra Cinque e Seicento: passim*. On the *Governo della famiglia*, see also the following essays: Šišak's introductory study to the already mentioned Croatian translation of the dialogue, M. Šišak, »Upravljanje obitelji Nikole Gučetića«, in: N. V. Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji*: pp. 7-26; Giovanni Rossi, »Sulle orme di Aristotele: i trattati 'politici' di Nicolò Vito di Gozze, umanista raguseo«, in: *Vita pubblica e vita privata nel Rinascimento. Atti del XX Convegno Internazionale (Chianciano Terme-Pienza 21-24 luglio 2008)*, ed. Luisa Secchi Tarugi. Firenze: Cesati, 2010, pp. 407-421; Claudio Griggio and Maiko Favaro, »Umanesimo e filosofia in Dalmazia. Su Nicolò Vito di Gozze (Ragusa, 1549-1610) e sul suo *Governo della famiglia*«. *Rivista di letteratura italiana* 34/1 (2016): pp. 97-110; Marco Sgarbi, »Economia e politica in Nicolò Vito di Gozze«. *Storia del pensiero politico* 1 (2017): pp. 3-24.

¹⁰³ For the syntagm, see Carlo Natali, »Introduzione«: p. 9. For a survey, see D. Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia. Governo della casa e governo civile nella tradizione dell'"economica" tra Cinque e Seicento*.

literary conversation—is a philosophical dialogue featuring the participation of a female interlocutor. The *Oeconomicus* can, in other words, be considered as the legitimizing model of Renaissance dialogues on the topic of household management incorporating female speakers, Gozze's *Dialogo iconomico* included.¹⁰⁴ The presence of the female voice within the dialogical textual tissue of the classical dialogue under consideration can be read as depending on the fact that in the *Oeconomicus* “the marital relationship is viewed as fundamental to the success of an oikos”.¹⁰⁵ Xenophon's dialogue is characterized by a complex structure, in which “stories are nested within stories with remarkable complexity”.¹⁰⁶ In particular, Socrates is represented as recounting to Critobulus a conversation he once had with Ischomachus, an expert in household management, during which the latter related to his interlocutor the dialogues he had with his wife at the beginning of their marriage. The conversation between Ischomachus and Socrates follows a teacher-pupil model, and it is Socrates who is allocated the role of pupil, eager to learn on the subject-matter at hand, “for it is very characteristic of a philosopher to want to learn”.¹⁰⁷ Didactic are also the conversations by way of which Ischomachus instructs his young and inexperienced bride on matters pertaining to the management of their household. In Gozze's *Dialogo iconomico* the dominant speaker is Fiore, and the fact that she is substituted with the speaker Gozze in the published version of the dialogue suggests her function as a spokeswoman for the author, while Maria plays the role of zealous pupil, whose questions convey her pre-existing knowledge, and it seems worth noting that her learning role can be read, once again, as subtly evoking that of Socrates, on the lines of the dialogues on beauty and love. On the other hand, Fiore's authoritative role on the

¹⁰⁴ See J. L. Smarr, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women*: pp. 3-4. According to Smarr, “given the role of wife as manager of the household”, which Xenophon thematizes in his *Oeconomicus*, strictly defining the responsibilities of husband and wife in accordance with the outside/inside divide, “it became thinkable for women to participate in or even take over this topic of discussion”; *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Sarah B. Pomeroy, »The Family in Classical Greece and in the *Oeconomicus*«, in: Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*, edited, translated and introduced by Sarah B. Pomeroy. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994: p. 33.

¹⁰⁶ S. B. Pomeroy, »Language, Style, Structure, and Dramatic Date«, in: Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*: p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ *Oec.* XVI, 9; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*: p. 185. This remark does not appear in Alessandro Piccolomini's translation, see *La economica di Xenofonte, tradotta di lingua greca in lingua toscana, dal S. Alessandro Piccolomini, altrimenti lo Stordito Intronato*. Venezia: al segno del Pozzo [Andrea Arrivabene], 1540: f. 26r.

subject-matter of *oikonomia* can be connected to the presence, in the *Oeconomicus*, of a reference to another female figure, depicted, unlike the young wife of Ischomachus, as an expert in matters pertaining to the management of the household. Indeed, in his conversation with Critobulus, interested in learning about estate management, and about the husband-wife relationship in particular, Socrates evokes the figure of Aspasia: “I will introduce Aspasia to you; she is much more knowledgeable in this matter than I am, and she will show you all this far more expertly than I should”.¹⁰⁸ Even if Aspasia never speaks in the dialogue, the reference to a female authority in the discipline of *oikonomia* holds the potential to function as a legitimizing source for women’s assumption of the role of dominant speakers in dialogues on the subject-matter under consideration. What is more, after having mentioned Aspasia, Socrates adds: “I think that a wife who is a good partner in the estate carries just as much weight as her husband in attaining prosperity. Property generally comes into the house through the exertions of the husband, but it is mostly dispensed through the housekeeping of the wife”.¹⁰⁹ On the one hand, equal value is assigned to the male and female contribution to the household, on the other hand, a strict division of gender-roles is asserted. The latter is a defining feature of ancient *oikonomia*, ubiquitously reproduced in the Renaissance, and reaffirmed with vigour in both versions of Gozze’s dialogue on household management. Once again, as in Gozze’s dialogues on beauty and love, the philogynist impact of the presence of two learned female speakers is defused by the conservative content of the dialogue itself.

The *Dialogo iconomico* is an early and incomplete version of the *Governo della famiglia*, possibly its first version.¹¹⁰ The autograph manuscript, whose last four surviving folios are detached, is preserved in the same booklet which contains the idiograph manuscript of the first three books of Gozze’s dialogue

¹⁰⁸ *Oec.* III, 14; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*: p. 121. In Piccolomini’s translation: “Ti potrei, rispose Socrate, recar Aspasia a la presentia, la qual molto meglio di me ti saprebbe mostrar il tutto di questo, come quella che più lo intende che non fo io”. *La economica di Xenofonte, tradotta di lingua greca in lingua toscana*: f. 9r.

¹⁰⁹ *Oec.* III, 15; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*: p. 121. In Piccolomini’s translation: “Et in vero stimo che le donne che sono come deveno essere sieno un ottimo aiuto et acrescimento de la casa, ed un grandissimo momento a la felicità de gli huomini, però che per le operationi e negotii de gli huomini vengon le sustantie e la robba ne le case, e per la prudentia de le donne si conservono e si spendono utilmente, secondo i bisogni”; *La economica di Xenofonte, tradotta di lingua greca in lingua toscana*: f. 9r.

¹¹⁰ See G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: p. 253. For a description of the manuscript, see *ibid.*: pp. 253-254.

on meteorology.¹¹¹ Indeed, the *Dialogo iconomico* begins after the ending of the incomplete meteorology manuscript.¹¹² To be more precise, the autograph begins on the verso of the folio presenting only the heading “Quarto” (modified as “Quarta”), referring to the fourth “libro” (or “giornata”) of the dialogue.¹¹³ As Stepanić has pointed out, the fact that the incomplete meteorology manuscript and the *Dialogo iconomico* were written in the same booklet seems to suggest that the idiograph is a draft version, and that the fourth “giornata” was not yet finished at the time of writing.¹¹⁴ Generally speaking, the *Dialogo iconomico* is considerably shorter than the *Governo della famiglia*. With respect to the printed version, the autograph is not introduced by a dedicatory letter, and does not include the final portion on possessions and acquisition of riches.¹¹⁵ The *Dialogo iconomico* ends with the following reply by the dominant speaker Fiore: “Perché sono stati alcuni d’opinione li quali hanno detto che la possessione delli beni temporali debba esser commune et non privata, il che falsamente fu imposto d’Arist. al Pl’”,¹¹⁶ which

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*: p. 252.

¹¹² Furthermore, it should be noted that the manuscript of the dialogue on meteorology does not include the dedicatory letter.

¹¹³ The manuscript version of the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* presents the title *Li quattro libri della Meteora d’Arist. brevemente ridotti nel dialogo per M. Nicolo Vito di Gozze, gentilhuomo rauego dell’Academia delli Occulti*. This title was struck through and the following new title was added above the old: *Discorsi di m. Niccolo di Vito Gozze Gentilhuomo Rauego dell’Academia degli occulti sopra le Metheore d’Aristotile ridotti in dialogo e divisi in quattro giornate*. For the heading “Quarto” corrected as “Quarta”, see f. 181r. The manuscript will be hereafter cited as *Li quattro libri della Meteora*.

¹¹⁴ See G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: p. 252. The numeration of the two manuscripts under consideration is inconsistent and shows signs of later interventions. In this essay I will refer to the foliation as indicated in the manuscripts. As far as the *Dialogo iconomico* is concerned, the numeration begins on f. 2r (the blue-ink number 1 on the verso of the preceding folio, where the *Dialogo iconomico* begins, is a later intervention), and is consistent from f. 2r to f. 42v (some numbers are written or rewritten in blue ink). The numeral written on the upper right margin of the subsequent folio was struck through and incongruously corrected as 48; the foliation is thereafter consistent from f. 48r to f. 51v. The numeral written on the upper right margin of the subsequent folio is again 51 with the blue-ink addition of the letter *a* (f. 51a). The subsequent folio is numbered 52, and the foliation is again consistent from f. 52r to f. 58v. The subsequent four folios, from f. 59r to f. 62v, are detached. The numeration is legible on f. 59r (59, partially rewritten in blue ink) and f. 62r, the last surviving folio of the manuscript. Comparing the content of the autograph and that of the published edition it is possible to deduce the order of the remaining two loose folios.

¹¹⁵ See *Governo della famiglia*: pp. 117-130.

¹¹⁶ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 62v. The transcriptions of passages from the *Dialogo iconomico* offered in this essay are the result of an effort to decipher it by comparing it to the published edition. Due to the high degree of illegibility of the manuscript, the transcriptions are tentative. For the norms followed, see n. 35 in this essay.

appears in a slightly modified version in the *Governo della famiglia* (Gozze: “Perché sono stati alcuni d’opinione che la possessione de’ beni temporali debba esser commune e non privata, il che falsamente fu imposto da Arist. al divin Platone”).¹¹⁷ When compared to the autograph version, the *Governo della famiglia* is characterized by the presence of certain differences, some minor, some more conspicuous. On the one hand, the minor differences pertain to the author’s *usus scribendi*,¹¹⁸ and concern, among other things, his lexical and stylistic choices, his use of tenses and of the article, his orthographic solutions, etc. Minor are also the linguistic modifications required to accommodate the different gender of the speakers.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, the more conspicuous differences with respect to the manuscript can be provisionally categorized as additions, substitutions, and omissions.¹²⁰

The additions can be read as intended to amplify the academic tone of the dialogue. Indeed, in the *Governo della famiglia* many erudite passages were

¹¹⁷ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 117.

¹¹⁸ Following Bratislav Lučin, Stepanić defines *usus scribendi* as the cluster of “graphic, orthographic, lexical, stylistic” solutions of the author. See G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: p. 256, n. 33. See also Bratislav Lučin, »Prema kritičkom izdanju Marulićevih hrvatskih stihova: *Judita* kao orijentir«. *Colloquia Maruliana* 26 (2017): p. 6, n. 2. On that note, Stepanić has expressed reservations about the possibility to reconstruct Gozze’s *usus scribendi* by way of a comparison between the autograph and the printed edition. Indeed, on the grounds of the high degree of illegibility of Gozze’s autograph, the scholar has concluded that the printed version was prepared on the basis of another manuscript, probably authorized by Gozze; see *ibid.*: p. 256.

¹¹⁹ The *Governo della famiglia* presents also modifications concerning marginal titles.

¹²⁰ This is a list of the more conspicuous additions and, less frequently, substitutions with respect to the autograph that can be found in the *Governo della famiglia* (the textual portions at issue are hereafter approximately indicated by page and line numbers): p. 2, ll. 15-20; from p. 4, l. 24 to p. 5, l. 12; p. 7, ll. 15-16; from p. 7, l. 18 to p. 9, l. 7; p. 14, ll. 11-28; p. 17, ll. 14-25; p. 20, ll. 16-22; p. 21, ll. 9-24; from p. 23, l. 22 to p. 24, l. 7; from p. 24, l. 13 to p. 25, l. 8; p. 25, ll. 12-22; from p. 25, l. 28 to p. 26, l. 2; p. 26, ll. 12-14; p. 28, ll. 5-28; from p. 30, l. 8 to p. 32, l. 7; from p. 32, l. 24 to p. 35, l. 7; p. 35, ll. 10-13; from p. 35, l. 20 to p. 36, l. 11; p. 36, ll. 15-19; p. 37, ll. 16-22; p. 37, ll. 24-26; p. 38, ll. 24-28; p. 40, ll. 2-4; p. 41, l. 1; p. 41, ll. 7-21; from p. 46, l. 18 to p. 48, l. 20; p. 49, ll. 6-8; p. 49, ll. 11-19; from p. 49, l. 28 to p. 50, l. 9; p. 51, ll. 15-16; p. 51, ll. 18-19; p. 52, ll. 10-13; from p. 53, l. 26 to p. 54, l. 15; p. 54, ll. 17-23; p. 55, ll. 12-13; p. 55, ll. 14-19; from p. 55, l. 28 to p. 56, l. 5; from p. 57, l. 22 to p. 58, l. 7; p. 58, ll. 25-28; from p. 59, l. 25 to p. 60, l. 3; p. 60, ll. 5-10; p. 60, ll. 11-20; from p. 60, l. 26 to p. 61, l. 4; p. 61, ll. 10-24; from p. 61, l. 28 to p. 62, l. 5; p. 62, ll. 10-17; p. 62, ll. 24-28; p. 64, ll. 18-27; from p. 65, l. 25 to p. 66, l. 18; from p. 68, l. 6 to p. 69, l. 13; p. 72, ll. 7-15; p. 73, ll. 24-28; p. 74, l. 6-18; p. 74, ll. 19-21; from p. 75, l. 13 to p. 76, l. 4; p. 77, ll. 20-22; p. 79, ll. 9-20; p. 83, ll. 2-14; p. 84, ll. 21-26; p. 85, ll. 1-14; p. 86, ll. 12-18; p. 87, ll. 4-9; from p. 87, l. 28 to p. 88, l. 16; from p. 94, l. 11 to p. 98, l. 10; p. 103, ll. 11-12; from p. 103, l. 15 to p. 104, l. 2; p. 104, ll. 3-5; p. 104, ll. 17-28; p. 105, ll. 18-20; from p. 106, l. 27 to p. 107, l. 2; p. 107, ll. 9-12; p. 107, ll. 23-25; p. 109, ll. 21-28; from p. 114, l. 23 to p. 116, l. 10; from p. 117, l. 10 to the end of the dialogue on p. 130.

added, often of considerable length and containing Latin quotations. Therefore, a noticeable difference between the all-female and all-male version of the dialogue is the enhancement, in the *cinquecentina*, of the erudite tone of the conversation. This is not to say that the dominant speaker's replies in the *Dialogo iconomico* are not erudite. On the contrary, Fiore's didactic exposition is interspersed with references to various *auctoritates*, and in her explanations she also resorts to Latin quotations, only much less frequently than her conversational double Gozze.¹²¹ It goes without saying that if the main speaker in a didactic dialogue is depicted as quoting from Latin sources, this necessarily reflects on the portrait of her/his interlocutor, who is accordingly represented as capable of understanding Latin. However, while the speaker Maria was in the dialogue on love explicitly portrayed as Latin literate,¹²² in the *Dialogo iconomico* she does not seem to be pronouncing any Latin words.¹²³ On the other hand, Gozze's interlocutor Bona in the *Governo della famiglia* pronounces Latin words and quotes from Latin sources.¹²⁴ Generally speaking, Maria's role as learned questioner in the *Dialogo iconomico* is functional to the orderly progression of the conversation as it was in the dialogues on beauty and love, though somewhat less markedly, and the same goes for the role of Gozze's interlocutor Bona in the *Governo della famiglia*. However, Maria's learnedness, already legitimized in the dialogues on beauty and love, in the *Dialogo iconomico* is not explicitly represented as stemming from her husband, although he is evoked as author of the meteorology dialogue, a reference present in the printed version as well.¹²⁵

If the only conspicuous modifications in the published version were additions with respect to the autograph it would be possible to decipher the latter integrally,

¹²¹ If we disregard her references to Latin book titles, the speaker Fiore in the *Dialogo iconomico* resorts to Latin quotations eight times, both from classical and biblical sources: ff. 17v, 18r (two Latin quotations), 21r, 51ar, 52r, 57r, [60r]. All the Latin quotations at issue are also voiced in the *Governo della famiglia* by the speaker Gozze, see pp. 38, 40, 44, 93, 99, 106, 111. On the other hand, in the dialogues on beauty and love Fiore pronounces Latin words and resorts to Latin quotations on four occasions (*Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 20r; *Dialogo d'amore*: ff. 7v, 10r, 38r), and, as already noted, she pronounces Greek words twice (*Dialogo della bellezza*: f. 2v; *Dialogo d'amore*: f. 19r; see n. 57 in this essay).

¹²² See n. 54 in this essay.

¹²³ Considering that I was unable to decipher the manuscript *in toto*, this conclusion is tentative.

¹²⁴ See *Governo della famiglia*: pp. 7, 30, 54.

¹²⁵ *Dialogo iconomico* f. 6v ("havendole il vostro marito dichiaratolle nella 2^a giornata della *Metheora*"); *Governo della famiglia* p. 13 ("havendole io dichiarate nella seconda giornata delle *Metheore*").

notwithstanding its high degree of illegibility, by comparing it to the *Governo della famiglia*, but this is unfortunately not the case. Indeed, in the *Dialogo iconomico* there are some textual portions which in the later version have been substituted with other textual material or omitted, and those are the *loci* that pose the greatest challenge to the deciphering of the manuscript, some of them remaining completely or mostly illegible. An example of substitution is the following. In the *Dialogo iconomico* the speaker Maria is represented as agreeing with the main speaker Fiore regarding how important it is for the future husband to wisely choose his future wife, and in particular to scrutinize her ancestors so as to secure a future offspring without defects of both body and soul: “Egli è vero ciò che dite di che non è dubio alcuno”.¹²⁶ This compliant reaction is in the *Governo della famiglia* substituted with a comment in which Bona learnedly contests Gozze’s stance: “Fermatevi per cortesia, voi vi dimostrate contrario al vostro Marsilio Ficino nella *Platonica theologia*, ove dice queste formali parole: *filii, qui mores parentum sequuntur, consuetudine potius imbibunt, quam genitura*”.¹²⁷ Consequently, the first portion of the main speaker’s subsequent reply constitutes an addition with respect to the autograph, necessary to defend the harmony of views between him and Ficino, provisionally undermined by Bona. As an example of a textual portion in the autograph which was omitted in the published version of the dialogue, I would like to mention a passage which stands out for the striking misogyny it articulates. Indeed, in a section of the *Dialogo iconomico* thematizing the husband’s education of his wife, the speaker Fiore pronounces the following words in reference to women perceived as in need to be disciplined: “ma se fusse imprudente et temeraria si debbe riprender con parole dure et aspre perché simil done si domano come gli animali con le bastonate et minacie”.¹²⁸ On the other hand, in the corresponding *locus* of the *Governo della famiglia*, the speaker Gozze only asserts the following: “ma se fosse imprudente et temeraria debbessi riprender con parole e dure et aspre”.¹²⁹ The misogynistic harshness of the manuscript in this particular passage was, in other words, attenuated in print.

Notwithstanding the differences, both major and minor, between the printed version and the autograph, the speaker Gozze’s expositions for the most part mirror those of the female *princeps sermonis*, and the words his male interlocutor

¹²⁶ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 25r.

¹²⁷ *Governo della famiglia*: pp. 53-54.

¹²⁸ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 20v.

¹²⁹ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 44.

pronounces to interrupt him, ask for clarifications, articulate his doubts, or express his satisfaction at the explanations received, for the most part echo those voiced by Fiore's female interlocutor. The all-male and all-female versions of the dialogue, in other words, are characterized by the same polite, amicable, and cultivated conversational ethos. What is more, the mutual compliments and displays of affection which permeated the textual tissue of the dialogues on beauty and love are considerably toned down in the *Dialogo iconomico*, in accordance with the different subject-matter thematized. The *Dialogo iconomico* presents a learned and polished speech exchange which, if we disregard the heightened erudition of the *Governo delle famiglia*, closely resembles that of Gozze's all-male dialogue, and the philosopher's decision to substitute the two female interlocutors with two male speakers without any substantial intervention in the conversational style of the dialogue confirms that impression. There is no relevant difference in the speech decorum that emerges from the two dialogues.

To exemplify the similarities and differences between the two versions, let us briefly compare the exordium of the two texts. This is my tentative transcription of the *incipit* of the autograph:

Dialogo iconomico

Fiore Zuzori et Maria Gondolla

Essendo ritornate l'anno seguente nella staggione di primavera al solito luogo di villa la bellissima Fiore Zuzori in compagnia della gentillissima Maria Gondolla mia consorte, dove, doppo che hebbero presso alcuni sollazi et piaceri che li belli et leggiadri luogi di villa sogliono reccare et specialmente in quella staggione, postessi a sedere all'ombra di quella bella selice acanto di quel ruscello di limpida aqua, cominciaro |in questa guisa| ragionar della iconomica disciplina, della quale hoggi nella cità nostra i padri di famiglia par che poco si curano, il che si conosce chiaramente per la discostumata vita de' loro figlioli. Et il sole alquanto s'era alzato dal'orizzonte al cerchio meridionale sa||`gli`endo quando senza più aspettare la bellissima et virtuosissima Fiore cominciò in questa guisa parlare.

Essendo l'homo naturalmente fatto et creato dalla Maestà divina tra tutti gli altri [f. 2r] animali sollo sociabile et familiare, et per le sue disordinate passioni soggetto alle regolle et discipline morali civile et iconomiche, per mezzo delle qualli gionge a quel suo ottimo et perfetto bene il quale la nostra natura humana in questo presente stato beatifica secondo che sia a lei possibile d'esser beatificata; il quale homo non sollamente è nato che per le virtù morali governasse se stesso imponendo le norme alle sue depravate passioni, ma ancora è nato per governo degli altri et massime per quegli che imediatemente 'lo' seguono, doppo il governo di se stesso, che gli sono per natura più domestici et più familiari, et sono la moglie, li figliuoli, li servi et le possessioni, li qualli per lor instrutione si riducono sotto la disciplina iconomica, la qualle |ci| insegna al marito et alla moglie il modo del regollato et virtuosso vivere, né meno ancora insegna alli padri come debbono accostumar i lor figlioli et alli patroni il giusto dominio de li servi, et chi debba haver 'la cura' delli negoti intrinseci della casa et chi di quelli che sono fuor di casa, spetanti alla cura familliare [...].¹³⁰

What follows is the transcription of the *incipit* in the published version of the dialogue:

Essendomi trovato nella stagione di primavera nella mia villa in compagnia del molto magnifico signor Stefano Nicolò di Bona, gentilhuomo nostro e mio caro amico, dove, doppo alcuni solazzi e piaceri che li belli e leggiadri luoghi di villa sogliono recare et specialmente in quella stagione, postomi all'ombra d'una bella selice, [p. 2] a canto d'un ruscello di limpida acqua, mi pregò ragionare della economica disciplina. Alli suoi prieghi sodisfar volsi, come ad un mio caro e singolar amico, e via più volsi fare, poscia che di questa disciplina hoggidi nella città nostra i padri della famiglia par che poco si curino, il che si conosce chiaramente

¹³⁰ *Dialogo iconomico*, ff. [181v]-2r. The indication f. 181v follows the foliation of the meteorology manuscript. Indeed, the number 1 drawn in blue ink on the upper left margin of f. 181v, where the *Dialogo iconomico* begins, is a later intervention. In the portion of the manuscript under consideration there are two marginal titles: "L'homo per natura è animal sociabile", [f. 181v]; "Che cosa ci insegna la disciplina iconomica", f. 2r.

per la discostumata vita de' loro figliuoli. Et il sole alquanto s'era alzato dall'orizzonte al cerchio meridionale sagliendo, quando senza più aspettare il mio gentil Bona volse ch'io cominciassi, e lo feci in questa guisa.

Essendo l'huomo per natura creato dalla Maestà divina fra tutti gli altri animali solo sociabile e familiare, lo disse Platone nel *Protagora* e Avicenna nella *Metafisica*, e con bella e molta ragione volse dimostrare Marsilio Ficino nella *Platonica Theologia* e sopra il dialogo primo *De legibus*, che quando l'huomo fosse solo, mai potria vivere, e per le sue disordinate passioni è soggetto alle regole e discipline morali, civili et economiche, per mezzo delle quali è possente giungere a quel suo perfetto, ottimo e natural bene, il quale la nostra natura humana in questo presente stato fa beata, secondo che a lei sia possibile d'esser beatificata; il qual huomo non solamente è nato che per le virtù morali governasse se stes- [p. 3] so, regolando le sue depravate passioni, ma etiandio è nato per lo governo de gli altri, e massime per quelli che immediatamente lo seguono, doppo il governo di se stesso, i quali gli sono naturalmente più domestici e più famigliari, e questi sono la moglie, li figliuoli, li servi e le possessioni, la norma delle quali riducesi sotto la disciplina economica, la quale insegna al marito et alla moglie il modo del regolato e virtuoso vivere, non meno ancora insegna alli padri come debbono ammaestrare i loro figliuoli et alli patroni giustamente possedere i loro servi, e chi debba havere la cura delli negotii intrinseci della casa e chi di quelli che sono fuori di casa, spettanti alla cura familiare [...].¹³¹

The textual tissue of the two versions is quite similar, notwithstanding the obvious modifications regarding the author's *usus scribendi*. Interestingly, the interventions in this portion of the autograph, in which some words and word parts were struck through or added above the line, were all respected in the *Governo della famiglia*, and a comprehensive comparison of the two versions of the dialogue confirms that this is frequently the case. As far as the content of the two opening passages under consideration is concerned, in the brief introductory

¹³¹ *Governo della famiglia*, pp. 1-3. There are two marginal titles in this part of the *cinquecentina*: “L'huomo per natura è animal sociabile”, p. 2; “Che cosa ci insegna la disciplina economica”, p. 3.

narrative of the all-female dialogue the togetherness of the two speakers is remarked by representing them as jointly returning to their “usual” (“solito”) arcadic scenery, and jointly beginning to converse (“cominciarno |in questa guisa| ragionar”). In other words, the opening paragraph of the *Dialogo iconomico* evokes the habit of affectionate conversation between the two women that Gozze represented in the dialogues on beauty and love. In the *Governo della famiglia*, as already noted, it is the narrator of the introductory passage, and main speaker in the mimetic dialogue about to commence, who chooses to sit “all’ombra d’una bella selice”, and the spot is not represented as a location where the two male characters regularly meet. As in all Gozze’s published philosophical dialogues, the questioner asks the main speaker to converse on the chosen subject-matter. Moreover, the narrator in the opening scene-setting of the *Governo della famiglia* explicitly underscores that friendship is the foundation of the upcoming conversation (“mi pregò ragionare della economica disciplina. Alli suoi prieghi sodisfar volsi, come ad un mio caro e singolar amico”), while in the *Dialogo iconomico* such specification was unnecessary, considering that the work is orchestrated as a continuation of the conversations held in the same scenery between Fiore and Maria, who have already been endorsed as true and perfect friends in the dialogues on beauty and love. As far as the direct speech exchange between the two characters is concerned, Gozze’s first reply for the most part mirrors that of Fiore, but it is enriched with an erudite addition (“lo disse Platone nel *Protogora* e Avicenna nella *Metafisica*, e con bella e molta ragione volse dimostrare Marsilio Ficino nella *Platonica Theologia* e sopra il dialogo primo *De legibus*”). This is only the first of the many learned additions the philosopher wove into the textual tissue of the already erudite early version of his dialogue.

There is another difference between the two versions of the dialogue that is relevant in the interpretative perspective adopted in this essay, and it regards the voicing of concerns related to the Ragusan community. Indeed, the significance of the subject-matter chosen for the leisure-time philosophical conversation is in both versions of the dialogue articulated in polemical terms. In other words, the presentation of the conversational topic of household management in the brief introductory narrative is immediately accompanied by a reprobation of the Ragusan fathers, represented as disinterested in properly parenting their children, who consequently embrace morally corrupt behaviour. To assert that the Ragusan fathers appear unconcerned about the upbringing of their children is tantamount to saying that the Ragusan *patres familiarum* appear unconcerned about the proper management of their household. The criticism voiced by the male narrator

in the introductory passage of both the *Dialogo iconomico* and the *Governo della famiglia* is rather severe, not only considering the relevance afforded to pedagogical questions in many humanist writings (such as, for instance, Alberti's dialogue *I libri della famiglia*),¹³² but on account of the stringent links traced in practical philosophy between the domain of the *oikos* and that of the *polis*,¹³³ explicitly remarked in Gozze's dedicatory letter to his relative Nicolò Alovio di Gozze, who, being a nobleman, was a member of the ruling elite: "per saper ben governare la città conviene et è necessario saper bene governare la propria casa".¹³⁴ Considering their polemical exordium, it comes as no surprise that both versions of the dialogue contain passages that offer a grim portrait of the city-state, primarily targeting its elites.¹³⁵ However, it is only the speaker Maria who voices explicit criticism against Ragusa in the autograph, as far as I could decipher it, while in the published version both male characters engage in polemical observations explicitly aiming at their homeland. Let us briefly consider the textual portions at issue. The following reproving observation articulated by the speaker Maria in the *Dialogo iconomico* concerns the uneducated Ragusan youngsters. The passage was

¹³² Not only is the first book of Alberti's dialogue dedicated to the education of children, but in the third book, in which the subject-matter of household management is thematized, the character Giannozzo, presented as an authoritative figure in that regard, declares the following: "Anzi niuna cosa tanto mi pare alle famiglie quanto questa una necessaria, fare la gioventù sua costumattissima e virtuosissima"; Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, ed. Ruggiero Romano and Alberto Tenenti. Torino: Einaudi, 1969: p. 228.

¹³³ On this matter, see, for instance, D. Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia. Governo della casa e governo civile nella tradizione dell'"economica" tra Cinque e Seicento*: pp. 10-11.

¹³⁴ »Al magnifico signor Nicolò Alovio di Gozze. Suo cugino honorando«, in: *Governo della famiglia*: f. a2v. As pointed out by Šišak in his comment to the translation of Gozze's dialogue, Nicolò Alovio di Gozze, a relative of the author, among his other public duties was elected rector four times, see N. V. Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji*: p. 326, n. 3.

¹³⁵ Janeković Römer, in her review of the already mentioned Croatian translation of the *Governo della famiglia*, notes that "Gozze, while discussing the family, had his noble class in mind". The scholar, indeed, maintains that "never stating it explicitly [...] Gozze limited his discussion to the members of his class alone"; Zdenka Janeković Römer, »Nikola Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji (The Governing of the Family)*, ed. Marinko Šišak, trans. Maja Zaninović. Zagreb: Biblioteka Scopus, 1998. Pages 355«. *Dubrovnik Annals* 5 (2001): p. 126. The scholar's observation is confirmed by Frigo's reading of the precepts articulated in the treatises on household management in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Gozze's included, as aimed at offering an ideal model for the noble class. See D. Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia. Governo della casa e governo civile nella tradizione dell'"economica" tra Cinque e Seicento*: p. 31, and *passim*.

substituted in the printed edition¹³⁶ and is unfortunately not legible integrally, but the part I was able to decipher reads:

Maria: [...] molti figliolli nella città nostra postoglisi il libro stampato dinanzi non sano mover capo donde si comincia legger, ma sano molto bene slegare la lingua `senza risparmiare alcuno'¹³⁷

Fiore, whose response was equally substituted in the *Governo della famiglia*, aborts the topic straight away by retorting as follows: “[...] conviene tacer per non incorer sotto la lima di coteste lingue”.¹³⁸ This is not to say, however, that Fiore’s speech in the *Dialogo iconomico* is devoid of a polemical edge. On the contrary, the female speaker formulates some reproving remarks, but, as it seems, without ever explicitly mentioning Ragusa.¹³⁹ For instance, she criticizes in general terms the greedy priorities of contemporary fathers: “ma hoggidi Gondolla mia la maggior parte delli padri più atendono di accumullar le case d’oro et d’argento che curar `li figlioli` nelle virtù”.¹⁴⁰ Her words are echoed by the speaker Gozze with only slight modifications.¹⁴¹ However, in Bona’s subsequent reply, in a portion that constitutes an addition with respect to the *Dialogo iconomico*, the male speaker explicitly indicates that the target of the two interlocutors’ polemics is Ragusa. Indeed, Bona exclaims: “Dio volesse che nella città nostra simili errori non dominassero”.¹⁴² Apart from criticizing the general disinterest of the fathers in educating their children, the main speaker of the *Dialogo iconomico* also highlights the general cruelty of the masters towards their servants, referring in particular to the estate owners who misuse their labourers: “non siano come sono alcuni di questi patroni di villa che alli lor contadini fanno crepare nelli servigii”.¹⁴³ Her reply is echoed by Gozze, but with a telling addition, which once again explicitly reveals that his criticism has to do with Ragusa: “non siano questi barbari (dico ad alcuni nostri) come sono alcuni patroni di villa, che i loro contadini

¹³⁶ Interestingly, Maria’s reply was substituted with textual material voiced by the main speaker Gozze, rather than his pupil Bona, see *Governo della famiglia*: p. 62, ll. 10-17.

¹³⁷ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 29r.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*: f. 29v.

¹³⁹ Considering that there are passages which I was unable to decipher integrally, my conclusion is tentative.

¹⁴⁰ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 37r.

¹⁴¹ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 76 (“ma hoggidi, Bona mio, la maggior parte de’ padri via più atendono ad accumular le casse d’oro e d’argento che allevare nelle virtù e buoni costumi i figliuoli”).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*: p. 77.

¹⁴³ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 55r.

fanno crepare nei servigi”.¹⁴⁴ In the subsequent replies by Bona and Gozze, which constitute additions with respect to the autograph, the negative assessment of Ragusa escalates, and the “barbarians” are *expressis verbis* identified with those who rule the city-state, as it emerges from the following words uttered by the main speaker: “Questi governano la Republica”.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, as far as the criticism voiced by Fiore’s interlocutor is concerned, Maria attacks the Ragusan youngsters in the *Dialogo iconomico* on one more occasion, when she widens her condemnatory remark to explicitly include their fathers.¹⁴⁶ Her reply, which contains some words that I was unable to decipher, seems closely echoed by the speaker Bona: “Non come nella città nostra, che quando i figliuoli arrivano all’età di quattordici anni abbandonano le schole, fanno poca stima delli maestri, anzi che è peggio gli fanno bravate e minaccie quando da quelli sono corretti o castigati, malgrado de’ loro padri, che più attendono a coltivar le vigne che ammaestrar i figliuoli”.¹⁴⁷ However, the polemical edge in the *Governo della famiglia* is radically amplified in the subsequent textual portion. The criticism spirals both in the continuation of Bona’s discourse (“e pure quando da gli huomini nascessero le bestie, ciascuno di noi diletterebbesi di ammaestrare e disciplinare questi animali [...]; ma perché Dio ci ha concesso che da noi fossero generate ragionevoli creature, noi, per dappocaggine nostra, quelle facciamo diventare bestie e fiere, senza vergogna e senza studio alcuno di lode”), as well as in Gozze’s reply.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, in the autograph Fiore merely exclaims “O che maleditioni divine” and changes topic, returning to the safe space of her philosophical argumentation.¹⁴⁹ While the female speakers in the *Dialogo iconomico* do not seem to criticize Ragusan women,¹⁵⁰ the male speakers of the dialogue concertedly rebuke Ragusan wives for their excessive talkativeness (both interlocutors use the disparaging

¹⁴⁴ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 103.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 32v.

¹⁴⁷ *Governo della famiglia*: pp. 67-68.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: pp. 68-69.

¹⁴⁹ *Dialogo iconomico*: f. 32v.

¹⁵⁰ However, in the dialogue on love Maria criticizes the envious speech of uneducated women, most likely Ragusan (“la cattive lingue di quelle vil femine che voi sapete”), and Fiore joins her (“queste fedre, vili et maligne, che non potendo havere la nostra dolce conversatione, come dentro nell’animo ciascuna la desidera, il dispetto che gli cruccia gli cagiona l’invidia del nostro bene”); *Dialogo d’amore*: ff. 26v-27r (see also n. 59 in this essay). On a related note, in the dialogue on love Maria also criticizes “il nostro volgo ignorante”; *Dialogo d’amore*: f. 29v.

term “cicale”),¹⁵¹ and the dominant speaker Gozze asserts, with reference to those women who adorn themselves excessively, that “la vanità del loro cervello le fa discostumare la città”.¹⁵² Lastly, within a textual portion that is an extensive addition with respect to the autograph version,¹⁵³ Bona deplores the Ragusan youngsters, depicted as ashamed of going to school (“i gioveni nostri si vergognano, come si vestono di mantelli, andar alla schola per imparare, con eterno vituperio della nostra Republica”).¹⁵⁴

In short, while in the *Dialogo iconomico* only the pupil Maria explicitly expresses reproving remarks concerning her homeland, circumscribing her comments to the bleak consequences of the fathers’ negligence as regards the education of their children, Ragusa is criticized by the two male speakers of the *Governo della famiglia* with respect to all the parts that constitute the *oikos*: fathers, wives, children, masters, servants. The severity and comprehensiveness of the negative assessment of the Ragusan community, whose difficulties are depicted as originating in the unsuccessful household management of the Ragusan *patres familiarum*—of the fathers with respect to their wives and children, and the masters with respect to their servants—is therefore augmented in the published edition.

This brings me to my final considerations, which concern the dating of the manuscript and the potential reason why Gozze changed the interlocutors. As already noted, the dialogue on meteorology was presumably not yet finished when Gozze drafted the *Dialogo iconomico*. At the time of writing, Gozze, as it

¹⁵¹ *Governo della famiglia*: p. 48. Interestingly, Alberti adopts similar words to criticize women in the *Libri della famiglia*. In the third book, while reporting a conversation he had with his wife, on the lines of the model offered by Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, the speaker Giannozzo asserts the following: “Sempre fu ornamento di gravità e riverenza in una donna la taciturnità [...]. Brutto costume e gran biasimo a una donna star tutto il dì cicalando [...]”; Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*: p. 279. In like manner, in the portion of the *Governo della famiglia* under consideration the absence of taciturnity among women (“taciturna”, “taciturne”) is deprecated by both speakers (Bona exclaims: “E qual donna si trova mutola? Qual taciturna e di parole scarsa?”; Gozze retorts: “Veramente se ne ritrovano e taciturne e modeste e savie altresì, ma rare nella città nostra”; *ibid.*), while to reprimand excessively talkative women both speakers use the term “cicale”. In her already mentioned review of the Croatian translation of the *Governo della famiglia*, Janeković Römer has hypothesized “the possible influence of Alberti’s treatise *I libri della famiglia* on the work of Gozze”, noticing that “the similarity between some of their statements is more than striking”; Z. Janeković Römer, »Nikola Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji (The Governing of the Family)*: p. 125.

¹⁵² *Governo della famiglia*: p. 50.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*: pp. 94-98.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 95.

seems, had only completed the first three books of the meteorology dialogue. Interestingly, the third book of the literary conversation at issue, both in its manuscript and published version, contains an important chronological indication voiced by the main speaker Gozze: “ma io queste imagini non ho visto giamai, et sono `pure` trentaun anno hoggi della vita mia”.¹⁵⁵ The reference is to the year 1580, inasmuch as the philosopher Gozze was born in 1549. Martinović maintains, more precisely, that the chronological indication in the third book of the dialogue on meteorology refers to February 22, 1580.¹⁵⁶ Assuming that the speaker’s hint is reliable, we can tentatively consider such date as the *terminus post quem* for the *Dialogo iconomico*. On the other hand, the dedicatory letter to the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* authored by Maria Gondola was, in its first version, dated July 15, 1582.¹⁵⁷ If we postulate that Gozze had completed his meteorology dialogue by then, in accordance with the indication in the paratext,¹⁵⁸ we can tentatively place the *Dialogo iconomico* in the period between the two dates under consideration, on account of the fact that the autograph was drafted, as it seems, after Gozze had composed the first three books of the meteorology dialogue, but presumably before the philosopher completed the work at issue (the date of Gondola’s dedicatory letter can be considered, in other words, as the *terminus ante quem* for the *Dialogo iconomico*).¹⁵⁹ On a related note, in the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*, at the end of the fourth day of the literary conversation, and therefore in a textual portion not included in the idiograph, the speaker Gozze manifests his intention to engage

¹⁵⁵ *Li quattro libri della Meteora*: f 143r (the folio number is drawn in blue ink). In the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* the indication is on f. 97r; see I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: p. 30, n. 6.

¹⁵⁶ See I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: p. 30. Stepanić has tentatively dated the idiograph to 1581, see G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: p. 252.

¹⁵⁷ Maria Gondola, »Alla non men bella, che virtuosa, e gentil donna, Fiore Zuzori, in Ragugia«, in: *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* 1584: f. **4v.

¹⁵⁸ See the *incipit* of the dedicatory letter: “Avendomi il mio marito presentato questi giorni passati li presenti discorsi sopra la *Metheora* d’Aristotele, i quali fece con il gentilissimo Michiel Monaldi”; *ibid.*: f. *2r.

¹⁵⁹ With the caveat of the possible unreliability of the chronological indications in literary texts and paratexts (exemplified, for instance, by Gondola’s dedicatory epistle itself, whose date was changed in the second edition of the volume; see »Alla non men bella, che virtuosa, e gentil donna, Fiore Zuzori, in Ragugia«, in: *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* 1585: f. **4r). Stepanić more cautiously dates the *Dialogo iconomico* to a period before 1584, when the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* were first published; see G. Stepanić, »Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610): ruke i rukopisi«: p. 253.

in philosophical conversation with Ragnina on the theme of Aristotle's *Politics*.¹⁶⁰ The work envisaged by the speaker is the future dialogical treatise *Dello stato delle repubbliche*, which Gozze published in 1591. In the 1589 *Governo della famiglia* the political dialogue is mentioned three times. First in the dedicatory letter—dated January 1, 1589—where we read that Gozze composed his dialogical political treatise before his dialogue on the management of the household, but for the time being he is keeping it “nelle tenebre delle mie scritture”,¹⁶¹ and twice in the final part of the *Governo della famiglia*. Indeed, the speaker Gozze mentions the “ragionamento che ho fatto col signor cavalier Ruginero sopra la *Politica* di Aristotele”,¹⁶² and later on, towards the very end of the literary conversation, his interlocutor Bona exhorts him as follows: “vogliate mostrare in luce una volta quel vostro ragionamento circa il governo della republica che col signor cavalier Ragnino havete fatto, poscia che materia tale deve havere luogo doppo questo, et la nostra Republica n'ha molto maggior bisogno”.¹⁶³ However, in the *Dialogo iconomico* there is no reference to the dialogical treatise on Aristotle's *Politics*. Indeed, the autograph, or rather the portion of the autograph we possess, is not accompanied by a dedicatory letter and does not include the corresponding *loci* in which the political dialogue is mentioned. Considering that the speaker Gozze for the first time alludes to his intention to write the political dialogue at issue at the very end of the dialogue on meteorology, which was, as it seems, not yet completed at the time when the *Dialogo iconomico* was drafted, it seems reasonable to assume that the philosopher Gozze penned his early version of the dialogue on household management before composing his dialogical political treatise, and not the other way around. In other words, the references to the dialogue on Aristotle's *Politics* in the *Governo della famiglia* can be interpreted as an instance of unreliable narration, possibly meant to avoid disclosing the existence of a version of the dialogue on household management drafted before Gozze's political dialogue, that is to say, to keep his all-female *Dialogo iconomico* “nelle tenebre delle mie scritture”. In view of the fact that the major difference between the

¹⁶⁰ *Discorsi sopra le Metheore*: f. 147r: “Horsù non più cerimonie, io in tanto mi sforzerò di preparar un'altra mensa dell'abondantissima dispensa del nostro Aristotele, che sarà della *Politica* sua, la quale a farla mi spinge il signor cavalier Ragnina, al desiderio e virtù del qual desidero sodisfare”. See I. Martinović, »Kasnorenesansni filozof Nikola Vitov Gučetić«: p. 213.

¹⁶¹ »Al magnifico signor Nicolò Alovio di Gozze. Suo cugino honorando«, in: *Governo della famiglia*: f. a2r.

¹⁶² *Governo della famiglia*: p. 117.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*: p. 129.

Dialogo iconomico and the *Governo della famiglia* lies in the gender of the two interlocutors, the reason why Gozze was at pains to suggest to his readers that the dialogue on household management was composed after the political dialogue, while indicating that the political dialogue was written following the completion of the dialogue on meteorology, with the cumulative effect of erasing any trace of the *Dialogo iconomico*, is possibly connected to the concrete historical circumstances of the women depicted as speakers in the dialogue.

In the years under consideration, between 1580 and 1582, Zuzori's household was experiencing increasing difficulties due to the repercussions of her husband's bankruptcy proclaimed in Ragusa on November 5, 1577.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Zuzori's husband—the Florentine nobleman Bartolomeo Pescioni, who was appointed as consul of Florence in Dubrovnik in 1570—had unsuccessfully engaged in the trading and banking lines of work, mostly dealing with textile. Due to his difficult financial situation, Pescioni in 1582 temporarily resigned his consul's office,¹⁶⁵ and in 1583 the couple presumably left Ragusa and returned to Ancona,¹⁶⁶ perhaps

¹⁶⁴ For a detailed investigation, grounded in archival documents, of the circumstances surrounding Pescioni's bankruptcy, to which this part of my essay is indebted, see J. Tadić, *Cvijeta Zuzorić*: pp. 19-21; I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: pp. 28-47.

¹⁶⁵ Martinović has remarked that Zuzori and her husband could not have returned to Dubrovnik before Pescioni handed over his consular duties to Raffaele Naldini, which, "according to Jorjo Tadić, happened on August 13, 1582". The scholar has added that Tadić did not mention the archival source on which he based such chronological indication. See I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: p. 38, n. 17. I have tracked down the archival source at issue: *Diversa Cancellariae*, series 25, vol. 156, ff. 20v-21r *a tergo*. The document records the first appointment of Pescioni as consul, while the ensuing changes in that regard are annotated on the margins of f. 20v. From the document under consideration, it emerges that on August 13, 1582 Pescioni handed over his consular duties only temporarily. The authorization of the Grand Duke of Florence in this respect is recorded on f. 21r; this is the transcription of the document:

Al magnifico Bartolomeo Pescioni console della Nazione fiorentina in Raugia, intus
Don Francesco Medici
Gran Duca di Toscana

Magnifico nostro carissimo, siamo molto contenti che non solo possiati andar in Ancona a spedir i vostri negotii, ma che in vostra assenza possiate sostituire in viceconsolo Raffaello Naldini, sperando che lassareti tal ordine che l'ufficio non sia per patire et state sano. Di Fiorenza li 18 di giugno 1582.
El Gran Duca di Toscana.

See also J. Tadić, *Cvijeta Zuzorić*: p. 21. Tadić elaborated on the document under consideration, but in indicating the archival source he failed to mention that it is located "*a tergo*" (see *ibid.*, n. 61).

¹⁶⁶ Considering that, as Tadić pointed out, an archival source still locates Pescioni in Dubrovnik in December 1582, it seems safe to assume that the couple left Ragusa in 1583. See J. Tadić, *Cvijeta*

also on account of the hostility Zuzori was experiencing at the time, of which Gondola's dedicatory epistle is considered a plausible testimony. Indeed, it seems safe to assume that the attacks to which Zuzori was subjected in Ragusa—which Gondola in her paratext vehemently criticized, bemoaning Zuzori's imminent departure from the city—were connected to a mounting discontent related to her husband's bankruptcy, and to Zuzori's contingent efforts to salvage her dowry.¹⁶⁷ In light of the difficulties Zuzori was encountering in Ragusa, the fact that she, unlike her friend Gondola, was represented in the *Dialogo iconomico* as carefully refraining from attacking the city-state, can be read as an attempt by the author to avoid exacerbating her already delicate position. As is well known, Gondola's reprobation of Ragusa in the dedicatory letter to her husband's dialogue on meteorology caused the withdrawal from circulation of the volume, first published in 1584, on account of the negative reactions of the Ragusan elites.¹⁶⁸ The book was reissued a year later, in 1585, but this time with a curtailed version of the

Zuzorić: p. 21; see *Diversa Cancellariae*, series 25, vol. 170, *a tergo*, f. 82r. Indeed, the fact that one of the madrigals Tasso dedicated to Zuzori at the initiative of Giulio Mosti (see n. 56 in this essay) was set to music and published in 1584, suggests that the couple must have already returned to Ancona at the time. The madrigal under consideration was set to music by Rinaldo del Mel and published in the volume *Il Primo libro de Madrigali a cinque voci de Rinaldo Del Mel nuovamente posti in luce*. Venezia: appresso l'herede di Girolamo Scotto, 1584. See Matilde Tortora, »Il repêchage delle partiture musicali dei madrigali del Tasso dedicati a Cvijeta Zuzorić«, in: *Petrarca i petrarkizam u hrvatskoj književnosti*, ed. Bratislav Lučin and Mirko Tomasović. Split: Književni krug, 2006: p. 267. See also Martino Rossi Monti, »Patnje mladog Giulija. Bilješke o Cvijeti Zuzorić, Torquatu Tassu i Giuliju Mostiju«: p. 117.

¹⁶⁷ Scholars have rarely traced an explicit connection between the bankruptcy and the attacks experienced by Zuzori in Ragusa, as depicted by Gondola. For instance, Tadić singled out the couple's financial difficulties as the reason of their departure from Ragusa, but he interpreted the hostility towards Zuzori, thematized in the dedicatory letter, as stemming from malevolent gossip originating from the fact that Zuzori was allegedly not compliant with Ragusan behavioural norms; see J. Tadić, *Cvijeta Zuzorić*: pp. 17, 21. Marković read the attacks thematized in the dedicatory letter as arising from a generalized envy caused by the exaltation of Zuzori; Z. Marković, *Pjesnikinje starog Dubrovnika od sredine XVI do svršetka XVIII stoljeća u kulturnoj sredini svoga vremena*: pp. 108-109. Janeković Römer interpreted the attacks against Zuzori as deriving from the malevolent gossip triggered by the new lifestyle promoted by the learned circles around Zuzori and Gondola, while mentioning the bankruptcy as an aggravating circumstance; see Z. Janeković Römer, »Marija Gondola Gozze: *La querelle des femmes* u renesansnom Dubrovniku«: p. 106. Boršić, on the other hand, building on Martinović's contextualization of the dedicatory letter within the circumstances of the bankruptcy, explicitly connected the hostility thematized in the dedicatory letter to the couple's financial problems; see L. Boršić, »Filozofkinja Maruša Gundulić«: p. 290.

¹⁶⁸ See, for instance, I. Martinović, »Maruša Gundulić u obranu Cvijete Zuzorić: renesansni uzorak hrvatskoga ženskoga pisma kao filozofsko djelo«: p. 39. See also n. 4 in this essay.

female-authored paratext. Only Gondola's denunciation of Ragusa was removed from the two folios shorter version of the dedicatory epistle, and it is not clear whether the expurgation was voluntary, in view of the backlash against the paratext, or possibly the result of an act of censorship.¹⁶⁹ All things considered, it seems plausible to conclude that Gozze replaced the female interlocutors in his dialogue on household management with two male speakers after the first publication of the *Discorsi sopra le Metheore* in 1584, to avoid the grim repercussions that the voicing of criticism against Ragusa through the mouth of a woman could potentially trigger. While, on the one hand, the reprobation of Ragusa was expunged from the female-authored dedicatory letter to the dialogue on meteorology, in the *Governo della famiglia*, on the other hand, Gozze decided not only to maintain it, but to amplify it, at the cost, however, of his female speakers. The philosopher who presented to the world two learned women engaged in sophisticated philosophical conversation had to ultimately mute his female speakers due to the restrictions that the period under consideration, notwithstanding its philogynist tendencies, still imposed upon the female voice. However, the very fact that two female speakers were substituted with two male speakers without radical changes to the dialogical exchange suggests that, in Gozze's view, there is no difference between a learned and virtuous man, and a learned and virtuous woman.

¹⁶⁹ See Antonin Zaninović, »Drugo izdanje djela Nikole Gučetića *Discorsi sopra le Metheore d'Aristotile*«. *Anali Historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku* 2 (1953): p. 206.