Editorial Post Script: A Non-Exhaustive Survey, and a Sampling of, Medieval through Early Modern Humour from Italy, Leaping to Modern Parodies — with a Focus on Forms and Genres of Humour from the Cinquecento

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Abstract. The textual (and cinematic) heritage of humour from Italy (even if we exclude humour from ancient Rome) comes in several genres and in sundry language varieties (within or outside Italo-Romance), and is staggeringly copious. We select some examples, especially from the Cinquecento.

Keywords: Humour in Italian literature, history of; Cinquecento; *poesia giocosa*; Parody.

1. Introduction

Humour in Italy throughout history has come in several genres and is quite copiously documented, and of course, Italy also saw the unfolding of the history of ancient Roman comedy (but we excluded ancient Roman humour from the scope of this double special issue). What is more, humour in Italy is not coterminous with Italian-language humour or even humour in Italo-Romance (thus, including humour in Italian dialects plus in Friulan or Sardinian): e.g., humour can be found here and there also Hebrew or (I presume) Greek texts from Italy (and, I suspect, in some Armenian texts produced by the Fathers Mekhitarists in Venice). On the other hand, a hallmark of textual production in the *veneto-brasiliano* (or *talian*) dialect of Brazil's ethnic Italian community is a literary corpus in humour,

revolving around the character of Nanetto Pipetta, and pivoting around a novel: a friar, Aquiles Bernardi (Frate Paulino), published in 1924–1925 an early version of *Nanetto Pipetta: Nassuo in Italia e vegnudo in Mèrica per catare la cucagna* [= 'Nanetto Pipetta: Born in Italy, and Having Come to America to Find Prosperity'] (Bernardi 1956), in the periodical *Stafetta Riograndense*, later renamed *Correio Riograndense.*

2. In Venosa in the Late First Millennium: Silano's Prank

Humour in Hebrew texts from Italy is documented as early as an account of a prankster from the late first millennium C.E., the poet Silano from Venosa in the southern Italian region of Basilicata: actually nothing he wrote (items of Hebrew hymnography) has survived, but in the *Chronicle of Ahimaatz* — a partly fabulous account of a family in Oria, a town in Apulia, in the early Middle Ages — memory (if memory rather than creative storytelling it was) of a practical joke which Rabbi Silano, a ninth-century Jewish hymnographer in Venosa,[1] allegedly played on a rabbinic emissary (and fund-raiser) from the Land of Israel in the last few centuries.

Silano had to act as an interpreter, but while translating — from Hebrew or Aramaic into the local dialect spoken by Venosa's Jewish community (late-first-millennium Venosan? Or some Greek vernacular?) — what the emissary had said, Silano interpolated some humour of his own, with a facetious reference of a local row of men and women (perhaps with a salacious innuendo, too). The guest, who may have understood what was going on by seeing that the audience was laughing, at any rate was so offended, that Silano was excommunicated, and the ban against him was only lifted years later, because of the intercession of Rabbi Ahimaatz who had arrived in town. Roberto Bonfil (2009) translated from Hebrew the episode as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 256 and 258):

> And by the mercy of Him who created the earth with His power, He who forgives crime and pardons sin, I shall rehearse and recollect the incident which took place in Venosa. A man came from the Land of Israel, learned and knowledgeable in the Law of God, well versed in the enchanting pedagogue. And he remained there for days and weeks, and would deliver a homily every Sabbath, addressing the people of God in the synagogue — the scholar would lecture and R. Silano would translate. One day the men came in wagons from the villages into the town; then the men stirred up a fight between them and the women came out of their houses, and with long staves used for scraping the oven and charred by fire, with these the men and women did beat each another. Then R. Silano erred and made a mistake, he searched his soul and committed a fault. He took the *midrash* on the week's portion of the Law which the scholar was to expound on the subsequent Sabbath and erased two lines from the letters which were inscribed there and in their place he wrote about the incident recorded above. And such was the text, that R. Silano set down: *The men came in a carriage, and the women came out of their ovens, and they struck the men with their forks.* When on the Sabbath the scholar came to these words, he held his tongue and uttered not a word; he stared at the letters, trying to comprehend and understand, and perused them time and again, then innocently read them out, expounding the matter as he found it written. Then R. Silano by laughing and mocking, all those assembled he addressed mirthfully: "Hear what the rabbi expounds to you concerning the fight that was stirred up yesterday among you, when the women struck the men with the oven staves and chased them away in all directions". When the scholar saw and understood what had happened, his face fell and he turned pale. He went to the scholars engaged in study in the academy and told them of the unfortunate event which befell him, and what had occurred. Then they were all deeply saddened, painfully distressed and depressed, and placed a ban on the astute R. Silano.

[1] From imperial Roman times, the town of Venusia, later Venosa, used to have a Jewish community. Venosa is now in the province of Potenza, in the Basilicata region, west of Apulia (Puglie). The entire Jewish population of Italy's peninsular South was expelled in the 16th century (those of Sicily and Sardinia already were in 1492).

3. Burlesque or Humorous Poets from the Middle Ages of Tuscany or Umbria

Among "Tensons of versifiers from Perugia" ("Tenzoni di rimatori perugini"), in Vol. 2 of *Sonetti burleschi e realistici dei primi due secoli* Angelo Francesco Massèra (1920) included the following, on pp. 28–29:

Tenzone tra Ser Cecco Nuccoli e Giraldello
[Tenson between Ser Cecco Nuccoli and Giraldello]

I — Ser Cecco
Vorrebbe vendicare un'ingiuria fatta alla sua somara.
[He wants to avenge an insult that was made to his she-ass.]

S'io potesse saper chi fu 'l villano,
che prese tanto ardir, per quel, ch'i' oda,
ch'a monna Raggia mia trasse la coda,
fariel grattar con ambedue le mano;
sí, ch'elli avrebbe lavorato in vano,
e del mio dir sentenzia si disnoda:
ond'io ne porterebbe vera loda,
s'el mercenaio arpuse[2] in l'arca grano.
Ben so ch'e1 'è vendetta corporale;
se non ch'en farla piggiorára l'onta
chi se ponesse col brutto animale.
Ben ce darei a tal derrata giónta,
e farébbei gustar sí fatto sale,
che deríe monna Raggia: — Io so' mò sconta. —
Sí fatta doglia porta monna Raggia,
che per la coda sua bellezza cala,
ché non si cura di coltel de l'ala.

If only I could know who was the boor
Who dared so much, as (I heard that much)
He pulled the tail of my Monna Raggia,
I would have him "scratched" with both hands;
So he would have worked in vain,
And of my speech, a sentence unfolds:
Hence, I would truly pride myself,
If the villain was to get retribution [grain in store].
I know well that it is corporal punishment;
But carrying it out would worsen the shame
He who would put himself on a par with that beast.[3]
I would gladly add more of the same [penalty]
And would make him taste such "salt",
That Monna Raggia would say: "I am vindicated".
Monna Raggia is so afflicted,
That on account of her tail, her beauty declines,
So much so she does not care of the wound ("knife")
to her side ("wing").

I — Giraldello
Celebra le lodi dell'offeso animale.
[He praises the animal offended.]

Ben me rincrebbe per ch'io foi lontano
da monna Raggia, ch'arviene a dar loda;
e però, mi' ser Cecco, el cor ven goda
che vendetta fu fatta a mano a mano.
Ma, se si ravvistasse il buon Tristano,
on avre' fatta vendetta piú soda;
se ciò non è, io prego che me 'nnoda[4]
colui, che cadde dal cenno sovrano.
Ma ben vi dico ch'a cotanto male
non si satisfaríe, ché la sua bónta,
che porta monna Raggia, è 'n le suoe ale:
ché del volare ell'è cotanto pronta,
ch'ella non prenderebbe due cicale;
e questo è vero, per quel, che si conta.
Nei suoi sembianti si mostra sí saggia,
che mai non se vorre' partir di sala;
però cacciate via la cosa mala.

I was quite sorry I was far away
From Monna Raggia, who deserves praise;
But, Sir Cecco, let thy heart take solace
As condign [tit-for-tat] vengeance was meted.
But, had good Tristan been in sight,
Harsher vengeance would have been made;
If such is not the case, I request to be tied up
By him, who fell at the sovereign nod.
But I tell you indeed that [repairing] to so much evil
Would not be satisfied, because her goodness,
That of Monna Raggia, is in her wings:
As she is so ready to fly,
She would not catch two cicadas;
And this is true, so they say.
In her appearance she shows herself so wise,
That one would never want to leave the hall;
However, chase ye away the evil thing.

[2] *Arpuse* stands for Italian *ripose* 'he placed'.
[3] The beast is the rascal who insulted Ser Cecco by pulling the tail of Ser Cecco's she-ass.
[4] The verb (*i*)*nnotare* means the same as *legare*, 'to bind'.

Like several medieval burlesque poets from Tuscany or Umbria, Ser Cecco Nuccoli was, by family and professional background (he was a notary), socio-economically comfortable. He was active in the second quarter of the 14th century. It is interesting that in Nuccoli's case, he felt he could afford to author (and divulge?) several semi-serious sonnets in which he expressed desire for a youngster, Trebaldino Manfredini from the upper valley of the river Tiber, and resentment for opposition on the part of the latter's mother. Massèra (1920) reproduced several such sonnets. Nuccoli's tensons, and those involving other poets from Perugia, are— according to Massèra (*ibid.*, p. 144) — from the years 1335–1337, at which time the Commune of Perugia was still struggling against the Tarlati family of Pietramala, the rulers of Arezzo

A sonnet by an anonymous poet wishes that several powerful families, or categories of persons, listed in that sonnet, be chased away from Tuscany, if Tuscany is to have peace (Massèra 1920, p. 61):

Chi cacciasse di Colle i Tancredeschi,	If the Tancredis were chased away from Colle,[5]
e di Montepulcian li Cavalieri,	And the Knights (Cavalieri) from Montepulciano,
e di Maremma Nel de' Pannocchieschi,	And Nello Pannocchieschi from the Maremma,
di Massa i Tudin, che son cerrieri;	And from Massa those boastful Tudini;
di Siena i Talomei, mercenar' freschi,	And from Siena the graft-taking Tolomei,
e di Pistoia tutti Cancellieri,	And from Pistoia all the Chancellors,
e di Fiorenza alquanti Popoleschi,	And from Florence all the leading Commoners,
che mutarien lo stato volontieri:	Who would be all too glad to be ennobled —
Toscana longo tempo riposasse;	The Tuscany would enjoy peace a long time.
Opizzi e Interminei, che son lucchesi,	Let the Oppizzi and Interminelli of Lucca
fussero de' primai, ch'Iddio pagasse;	Be among the first meted retribution by God,
ed in val d'Arno punisse i Franzesi!	And in the Arno valley, let Him punish the French!
E questo fusse innanzi, ch'i' ci andasse	Even before I go there, let it come to pass
anco, che Iddio vengiasse tanti offesi!	That God avenge so many who have been wronged!

The following is a sonnet by Niccolò del Rosso (b. ca. 1290, d. after 1348). It theme is that money buys anything and everything, and its lack ensures low status.

Denari fanno l'omo comparére;	Money make a man stand out in good shape;
Denari el stolto fingono scienziato;	Money makes it appear that a fool is a scholar;
denari còmpreno zascun peccato;	Money buys each and every sin [indulgence money];
denari mostran spendere e tenere;	Money shows when one spends and when he keeps;
denari dànno donne per godere;	Money supplies women for enjoyment;
denari tengon l'anemo beato;	Money makes one's spirit glad;
denari lo vile mantèn en stato;	Money keep a vile one at a good station in life;

[5] This was the city of Colle di Val d'Elsa. The 1320s and 1330s were a time when internecine violence affected that city woefully. The Colligiani (citizens of Colle di Val d'Elsa) chose as their rule the archpriest Albizo di Scolajo de' Tancredi, who with his brothers was a *protégé* of the Duke o0f Calabria, who was the deputy in Tuscany of the Angevin King of Naples. Albizo had dominated the city council in Colle since the time when, in 1319, the deputy of the bishop of Volterra had excommunicated Desso, Albizo's brother, and Albizo, at a meeting of the council on 23 July 1319, had a motion carried to the effect that Desso's excommunication be disregarded. On 8 September 1326, Albizo had the *priori* of the commune of Colle appoint him *capitano* of the city. The rule of Albizo, together with his brothers Desso and Agnolo, was so despotic, that the Colligiani rebelled, with the help of the noblemen of Montegabbro and da Pichena (even though they were related to the Tancredi family). On 10 March 1330, Albizo and Agnolo were killed in a public square, and then Desso was strangled in prison. After the conspiracy had resulted in that coup, the city was afraid lest the Rosso family of Florence (and other powerful Florentines) would try to avenge The Rosso's relatives, the Tancredi brothers. Therefore the city of Colle resolved to entrust the defence of Colle to the city of Florence, and the supreme power in Colle to Florentine appointees. Florence agreed, all the more so as (which is something that the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani pointed out) Albizo had seen to it that during a drought, food supplies were withheld from Florence. On 18 April 1333, thye cuty council of Colle tried to free the city from Florentine domination, was Colle was subjected to it again in 1336 (Repetti 1833, Vol. 1, s.v. Colle di Val D'Elsa).

denari gli enemici fan cadere.
E senza loro onn'omo par assiso:
ch'igli reze lo mondo e la fortuna,
e se tu vòi, te manda en paradiso.
Unde sazo me par chi gli raùna:
ché quigli soli, più d'altra vertute,
contra menalconia rende salute.

Money makes one's enemies fall down.
Without money, anybody looks as low as though he sits down:
As money rules the world and fortune;
And if you wish, it sends you to Paradise.[6]
Therefore, I consider sated him who manages to have money:
As money alone, more than any other virtue/quality,
Against melancholy restores good health.

The poet Pieraccio Tedaldi, the son of the Florentine Tedaldo Tedaldi, in 1315 took part at the battle of Montecatini and was taken prisoner by the Pisans. A biography by Salomone Morpurgo of Pieraccio Tedaldi appears on pp. 10–22 in Morpurgo's (1885) critical edition of Pieraccio Tedaldi's poems. In the following sonnet, Tedaldi complains about poverty:

E piccoli fiorin d'argento e d'oro
sommariamente m'hanno abbandonato,
e ciaschedun da me s'è allontanato
piú, che non è Fucecchio da Pianoro.
Ond'io pensoso piú spesso addoloro,
che quel, che giace in sul letto ammalato:
però che 'n cassa, in mano, in borsa o allato
non vuol con meco nessun far dimoro.
Ed io n'ho spesso vie maggior bisogno
piú, che non ha il tignoso del cappello;
e giorno e notte gli disio e sogno:
e nessun vuole stare al mio ostello;
e poco vienmi a dire s'io gli agogno,
ché ciaschedun da me si fa ribello.

Little florins of gold and silver,
They have left me for good.
And everybody distanced himself from me
More than Fucecchio is far away from Pianoro.
Therefore I more often think and self-commiserate
Than one who is lying ill in bed:
As in my cash, hand, purse, or alongside me,
No coin want to dwell with me.
And I often need money much more
Than a man affected with ring-worm needs his hat;
And day and night I desire it [money] and dream of it:
And nobody wants to stay where I dwell;
Don't ask me whether I long for that,
Because everybody rebels against me.

In this other sonnet, Pieraccio Tedaldi complains about his situation when he had no money, and when he has much money:

Omè, che io mi sento sí smarrito,
quand'io non ho danar ne la scarsella:
dove sia gente a dir qualche novella,
i' non son quasi di parlare ardito!
E, se io parlo, i' son mostrato a dito,
e sento dirmi: — Ve' quanto e' favella! —
I' perdo il cuor com'una femminella,
sí, ch'io divengo tutto sbigottito.
E, quando i' ho danari in abbondanza
in borsa, in iscarsella o paltoniera,
i' sono ardito ed ho di dir baldanza;
dinanzi ho 'l cerchio e
di driet' ho la schiera
di gente assai, che ciascuno ha speranza
ch'io lo sovvenga per qualche maniera.

Woe me, as I feel so lost,
When I have no money in my purse:
Where there is people gathered to exchange news,
I almost don't dare to speak!
And if I do speak, I am fingered,
And hear being told: "Look, how much does he chatter!"
I am then deserted by courage like some little woman,
So that I become quite dismayed.
And when I have money aplenty
In my bag, purse, or jacket,
Then I am daring and can speak proudly;
In front of me I have the wheel,[7] and
behind me a group
Of people, many of them, each one hoping
That I can help or provide for him in some manner.

One of the most remarkable medieval Tuscan *poeti giocosi*, indeed one who is now recognised as the father of that genre, Rustico de Filippo, was born between 1230 and 1240 in Florence to a working-class family, and died after 1291 but before 1300. "Of the 58 confirmed poems [by Rustico de Filippo], 29 are jocose, and 29 are courtly love poems"

[6] By buying from church institutions atonement for the sins of the living or the deceased.
[7] Either in the sense that the wheel of fortune is taking me up, or in the sense that I can afford to walk in the street and play by pushing a wheel forward.

(Saiber 2007, p. 1636).[8] The language of the courtly love poems is aulic, whereas the burlesque poems adopt a lower linguistic register. Arielle Saiber remarked (*ibid*.):

> The epitome of *vituperium*, of caustic condemnations and caricatures of human attributes and actions, Rustico's *poesia giocosa* was particularly degrading to woman and later earned him the title of "misogynist". Particularly vivid is his sonnet "Dovunque vai conteco porti il cesso" (Wherever You Go You Carry a Toilet with You), describing in grotesque detail the disturbing smells, sights, and sounds emitted by an elderly woman. […] In addition to such biting depictions, Rustico had no few scurrilous words for marriage, the overweight, the elderly, the money- or station-obsessed, or anyone who seemed worthy of gossip in some way. He focused all his attacks on specific people or groups and did not parody himself, as Cecco [Angiolieri] did.

Editions of the *poesia giocosa* or *poesia comico-realistica* include Massèra (1920), Marti (1956) and Vitale (1956), whereas literary discussions include Marti (1953), Suitner (1983), and Orvieto and Brestolini (2000).

4. Immanuel of Rome and his Hebrew Text Being an Alleged Parody of the *Vita Nuova* by Dante (Whose *Divine Comedy* he Emulated)

Manoello Giudeo, i.e., Immanuel Romano, or Immanuel of Rome, was a greater author in Hebrew than in Italian, one with comic verve in both languages, and the father of the Hebrew sonnet. In his output in Italian, he was invariably a comic poet, unless engaged in an exchange of poems with another poet, requiring him to engage in serious discussion. Manoello was in contact with the poet and politician Bosone da Gubbio (they exchanged poems), and perhaps also with the poet Cino da Pistoia, who in correspondence in verse with Bosone, refers to Immanuel and Dante together (see a discussion in Roth 1953).

In his more copious extant Hebrew output, a humorous intent does occur, but it is not necessarily prevalent. (Of course, humorous intent is not relevant for the several Hebrew commentaries to books of the Hebrew Bible that Immanuel also authored.) It is quite possible, indeed likely, that to gain acceptance as a poet in Italian for a non-Jewish audience even though he was Jewish, let alone for earning purposes, the easier course, if not the only course, was to be a comic poet. Even regardless of his Jewishness, for a poet in medieval Italy for whom earning was paramount, performing as a comic poet was the easier course of action. From 1312 at the court of Cangrande della Scala in Verona (b. 1291, d. 1329, sole ruler from 1311), the role of Manoello was as a *poeta giocoso,* a funny poet providing comic relief along with adulation[9] — which he did for Cangrande della Scala in *Bisbidìs* (amenable to the genre of the *frottola*) — as well as self-deprecation, which is found in his few extant Italian sonnets. See Alfie (1998a) concerning those sonnets. Immanuel was born in Rome, ca. 1261 (but ca. 1270 according to Leonello Modona, revised to 1261 by Roth 1953, p. 26, fn. 3), and died in Fermo after 1328, but before Cino da Pistoia's death in 1336–1337. Guy Shaked's (2002) revision of Immanuel's chronology (b. ca. 1292, d. after 1352) was cogently criticised by Simona Foà (2004), whose entry "Immanuel da Roma" in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* is authoritative. After leaving Rome, Immanuel also resided in towns in central Italy: Fabriano, Gubbio, Perugia, Orvieto, Ancona, and Camerino.

Concerning the vexed question of whether Immanuel and Dante were acquainted, it seemed for a long while clarified, and the myth of a friendship between Dante and Manoello discarded, in Umberto Cassuto's book *Dante e Manoello* (1921) — cf. Cassuto's German

[8] The sonnets of Rustico di Filippo are the subject of Levin (1986, in English), Buzzetti-Gallarati (1984), Marrani (1999), Stanghellini (2004). Also see Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo's edition (1971) of Rustico's sonnets.
[9] See studies by Fabian Alfie (1998a), Mario Marti (1956), Maurizio Vitale (1956), Carmelo Previtera (1939).

paper "Dante und Manoello" (1921–1922), and see Fortis (1996) about Cassuto's stance — but the situation is reversed if the conclusions of Giorgio Battistoni (1994–1999, 2004) are accepted.

Battistoni considers Immanuel and Dante to have been friends, and (as per a hypothesis of the German Theodor Paur[10] and with reservations, of Abraham Geiger,[11] accepted by Alessandro D'Ancona and Giosuè Carducci, but rejected by Leopold Zunz,[12] to whom Franz Delitzsch[13] in turn objected in 1886) identifies with Dante the character of Daniel who accompanies Immanuel on the journey in the hereafter, in his emulation of the *Divine Comedy*. Leonello Modona in a posthumous text printed in 1898, and Cecil Roth nearly thirty years later, flatly rejected the identification of Daniel with Dante, as Battistoni points out (2004, p. 92) before remarking that in an important study in instalments of 1905–1906, Cassuto refused to flatly reject the possibility that Immanuel, by Daniel, meant Dante, as such an identity would befit a parallel with the guide roles of Virgil and Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*.

During the 19th century — when Geiger claimed that the throne at which Beṣal'el and Oholiah work, in Immanuel's Paradise, was reserved to Dante (in the Pentateuch, Beṣal'el is the chief artist employed by Moses in the making of the Tabernacle and the Tent of the Covenant) — interest in Immanuel Romano was only constant inasmuch it concerned his relationship, if any, to Dante. There were those who believed the two were acquainted, or even friends (Samuel David Luzzatto, Moritz Steinschneider,[14] Flaminio Servi, Moisè Soave,[15] David Kaufmann,[16] Carlo Bernheimer, and the Giosuè Carducci). The German,

[10] The German historian, philologist, Dante scholar, and politician Theodor Paur (Neiße/Nysa, 1815 – Sellin auf Rügen, 1892) published his hypothesis about Immanuel in a German Dante studies journal.

[11] Abraham Geiger (Frankfurt, 1810 – Berlin, 1874) was a Jewish studies scholar, an Orientalist, a reformist rabbi, and the founder of Reform Judaism.

[12] Leopold (Lipmann / Yom Tov) Zunz (Detmold, 1794 – Berlin, 1886), who settled in Berlin in 1815, is considered the founder of the Wissenschaft des Judentums (modern Jewish studies).

[13] "Franz Delitzsch (1812–1890) and Hermann Strack (1848–1922) were two missionary Protestants who were also leaders in the fight against anti-semitism. [… They also] were deeply involved in the world of Wissenschaft des Judenthums, personally and professionally" (Levenson 2002, p. 383).

[14] Moritz Steinschneider (Prostějov, Moravia, 1816 – Berlin, 1907), a Jewish studies scholar and Orientalist, and major bibliographer, also published in Italian, e.g., Steinschneider (1877–1870, repr. 1984), about the literature of Italy's Jews, with Jaré (1880) being a publication of letters to Steinschneider about the same subject by Giuseppe Jaré (1840–1915). Steinschneider's relation to Italy and Italian scholars is the subject of Salah (2008, 2012). Reimund Leicht and Gad Freudenthal remarked (2012, p. xvi): "Steinschneider clearly shunned the literary genre of fluently written historical accounts and interpretations. His literary style went hand in hand with his preferences in historiographical matters: to large historical reconstructions he preferred well-established facts, raw materials painstakingly compiled and put at the disposal of the scholarly community for further research. Moreover, his books and articles are often obfuscated by a garbled manner of presentation, in part due to Steinschneider's idiosyncratic working methods, and in part to the fact that the early *Wissenschaft* experimented with different scientific styles, methods, and literary genres. Furthermore, and perhaps most important, Steinschneider deliberately chose a style that concealed the motives behind his scientific work, his historiographical convictions, and the overarching aims that motivated and informed his scholarly work. These he never expounded systematically. Short remarks and allusions, rare and often scattered in unexpected places, are the only window into Steinschneider's inner convictions and the ideological background of his gigantic scientific projects. Thus, when we think of Steinschneider, what often remains is the bare admiration in view of his breathtaking scientific productivity and knowledge and a respect for his scientific ethos. These feelings are, nonetheless, accompanied by a certain disappointment in light of his pedantry and his apparent wariness to draw general conclusions out of the mountains of facts he accumulated".

[15] The Jewish erudite Moisè Soave (Venice, 1820–1882) is the subject of Musatti (1888). Soave's *Dante Allighieri* [sic] *ed il poeta Emmanuele*, published in Venice in 1865, comprises on pp. 3–9 an Italian translation of part of Immanuel's description of Paradise. Salah (2013, p. 193, fns. 83–84) points out that Soave held different opinions at different times, eventually turning sceptical, concerning the identification of Daniel, Immanuel's guide in the hereafter, with Dante Alighieri.

naturalised French Orientalist and Jewish studies scholar Salomon Munk[17] and the German Father Franz Xaver Kraus[18] were sceptical, like eventually Cassuto.[19] Carducci's secular ideals projected back the new era on Dante and Manoello's supposed friendship, which he considered exemplary, overcoming the prejudices of a society still moulded by clericalism.

In 2012, Ann Brener published an article entitled "The *Scroll of Love* by Immanuel of Rome: A Hebrew Parody of Dante's *Vita Nuova*". That text by Immanuel Romano, *Měgillát haḥésheq* (*The Scroll of Desire*), which Brener considers to be a parody rather than — as Umberto Cassuto (1921) was the first to do — just a text displaying influence or imitation of the *Vita Nuova* (which Dante wrote some time between 1292 and 1295), is part of Immanuel's *Maḥbarot*, his playful, often irreverent or even salacious texts he completed and collated while in old age in Fermo. His emulation of the *Divine Comedy* is the last, the 28th chapter of these *Maḥbarot*. They are in Hebrew rhymed prose interspersed with metrical poems (actually, the earliest sonnets ever other than in Italian are found there). They share two main characters: the poet (writing in the first person, and portraying himself as a rogue and womaniser), and his patron (the Prince). The *Scroll of Love* is the third chapter of the *Maḥbarot*. Brener relates (2012, p. 151):

> The *Scroll of Love* begins with a conversation between the so-called Prince and Immanuel, the latter somewhat disconsolate over his latest fiasco in love, a story related in the previous chapter of the *Maḥbarot*. In order to console his friend, the Prince tells Immanuel about another lady, one who is "as fair as the moon / and as bright as the sun" and even a poet to boot.

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[16] David Kaufmann (Kojetin, Moravia, 1852 – Karlovy Vary, Bohemia, 1899) was a scholar in Jewish studies (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Kaufmann). He "received his Ph.D. from the University of Leipzig, and on 29 January 1877 he was ordained rabbi. In the latter year he declined the offer of a professorship at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, preferring to accept instead the chairs of history, philosophy of religion, and homiletics at the newly founded Rabbinical Seminary of Budapest, which he continued to hold till his death. He also at the same time taught Greek and German in the preparatory school of the same institution, carrying on this work in the Hungarian language, which he had rapidly mastered. As librarian of the seminary he acquired the large library of Lelio della Torre of Padua, the library of the seminary becoming by this addition one of the most valuable Hebrew libraries of Europe" (*ibid.*). Lelio Della Torre stood out for his attitude towards Saul Formiggini's translation of Dante's *Inferno* into Hebrew. Kaufmann also acquired the library of the rabbi and scholar Marco Mortara (1815–1894). Kaufmann researched Jewish history, medieval Jewish philosophy, and Jewish art history (he was the founder of the latter discipline).

[17] In 1864, Salomon Munk (Gross Glogau, 1803 – Paris, 1867) succeeded Ernest Renan as professor of Hebrew, Chaldaic and Syriac at the Collège de France, after being curator at the Bibliothèque Impériale from 1838, and secretary of France's Consistoire central des Israélites from 1840.

[18] Franz Xaver Kraus (Trier, 1840 – San Remo, 1901) was a Catholic priest, a scholar, and a very prolific author. Ordained in 1864, he then obtained two doctoral degrees at Freiburg: Doctor of Philosophy in 1862, and Doctor of Divinity in 1865 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Xaver_Kraus). "In the spring of 1872 he was attached to the faculty of philosophy at the university of Strasburg as professor extraordinary of the history of Christian art, and in the autumn of 1878 he succeeded Johann Alzog as Professor ordinary of Church history at Freiburg" (*ibid.*). "He was a man of deep religious feeling and Catholic faith, but, from association with the Liberal Catholics in France, Italy, and Germany, he became imbued with their views on ecclesiastical polity. At the time of the Vatican Council, he entered into close connections with the opposition party, and kept up these relations for some time. […] It is to him that we owe the distinction between 'religious and political Catholicism', a formula in which he imagined he had found the solution of many difficulties" (*ibid.*). "Kraus's literary leanings were directed especially towards Italy. After a close study of Dante, covering years of labour, he published 'Dante. Sein Leben und sein Werk. Sein Verhältniss zur Kunst und Politik' (Berlin, 1897). Somewhat earlier he had published 'Luca Signorelli's Ilustrationen zu Dante's Divina Commedia' (Freiburg, 1892)" (*ibid.*). "His political rather than his ecclesiastical views are reflected in 'Die Erhebung Italiens im 19 Jahrhundert: Cavour' (Mainz, 1902 — 'Weltgeschichte in Karakterbildern', vol. V)" (*ibid.*).

[19] In the *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, edited by Umberto Bosco, there is an entry "Immanuele Giudeo" by Fabrizio Beggiato and Giovanni Rinaldi (1971).

Immanuel, forgetful of the woman for whom he pined, promptly falls in love with the woman so described by the Prince, and wants to meet her, but the Prince disabuses him of the notion "by explaining that the lady has taken a vow of chastity and is far too spiritual to even think about love" (Brener 2012, p. 153). Immanuel tells the Prince he will conquer her nevertheless, and improvises a poem. On the next morning, Immanuel goes to see her as she leaves a house of prayer, and tries to woo her, but she rejects him. He sends her a long letter, crowned with a sonnet. She sends him a long letter (crowned with a sonnet): in her letter, she spurns him, and reaffirms her commitment to a life of chastity. "Somewhat crestfallen by the lady's rebuke, Immanuel is ready to give up the battle, but the Prince, greatly amused, urges him on, taunting him with his failure" (Brener 2012, p. 159). An exchange of letters between Immanuel and the woman follows; and then (*ibid*., pp 159–161):

> Finally, in the third letter, pulling out all the stops, he composes an echo-poem of such beauty, and of such poetic virtuosity, that the lady is utterly vanquished. She now writes a third letter in which she bitterly laments the "twenty years" (1:64, line 428) spent among the nuns,[20] and, throwing caution to the winds, eagerly, indeed passionately, accepts Immanuel's love, as we can see for ourselves in just these few lines: […] Thrilled with his conquest, Immanuel runs to the Prince, trophy in hand, only to learn that the fallen nun is none other than the Prince's half-sister! The Prince is furious at the turn of events — having planned the whole thing as a prank, confident in his sister's refusal — and orders Immanuel to write back to the lady without delay, rebuking her folly and urging her to respect her vows of chastity. Completely cowed by the Prince's anger, Immanuel sends the lady yet a fourth letter, this one teeming with sarcasm and reproach, […] When the lady receives this last epistle […] she is so humiliated that she ceases to eat and drink, and soon dies. Heartbroken, Immanuel takes up his "wanderer's staff" and leaves the Prince's house (1:69, lines 547–49), mourning the lady with perhaps his best-known sonnet: […]

In that same article of hers, Brener (2012, p. 162) stated the following about Immanuel Romano: "It was also Cassuto [(1921)] who first noted that the second tercet of Immanuel's third and final sonnet (translated above), in which he laments the death of his lady, is practically a translation of Dante's *Donna pietosa*, lines 73–75 (*Vita Nuova* 23.27)". That poem claims (in Brener's translation): "Bright star! Death shall I love for thy sake: / How sweet it becomes, enjoined unto thee; / How wondrous is Death, bound to this star". Dante instead had written: "Morte, assai dolce ti tegno; / tu dei omai esser cosa gentile, / poi che tu se' ne la mia donna stata" ("O death, I consider thee very sweet; / Thou must be by now a gentle thing, / As thou have in my lady been").

In the *Scroll of Desire*, Brener claims, form (rhymed prose) militates towards parody rather than mere imitation of Dante's sublimity, all the more, it is worth adding, so as Immanuel portrays himself behaving selfishly and without accepting responsibility. Brener states (2012, pp. 163–164):

> In writing his *Scroll of Love*, Immanuel found a ready-made medium in the *maqama*-form in which, of course, his entire *Maḥbarot* is written. Like Dante's prosimetrium, the *maqama* offered a mixed form of prose and metrical poetry from beginning to end. Form was thus a ready-made factor in Immanuel's parody, for the sublimity of Dante's surrounding prose could not stand — was not made to stand — the test of the *maqama*'s rhymed-prose. With its short, snappy phrases and emphasis on puns, rhyme, and verbal pyrotechnics, the *maqama* was the perfect medium in which to both approximate — and distort — Dante's *Vita Nuova*. But though Immanuel received the *maqama* form ready-made, he also helped to shape his medium by including sonnets among his poems, for both the Hebrew and Arabic *maqama* traditionally included mono-rhymed lyrics alone. […] It was into this rhymed prose medium, then, that Immanuel poured the textual elements of his parody, creating a cast of characters about as different from the sublime figures of the *Vita Nuova* as certain well-known frogs and mice are different from Homer's epic heroes. Like Dante,

[20] If this is the sense to be inferred from "If only I were in my lover's house — / whoever made me be God's spouse?" (Brener's translation).

> Immanuel appears in the *Scroll of Love* as a poet.[29] But while the *Vita Nuova* presents Dante as a pilgrim of love, as one who progresses toward a salvific comprehension of love during the course of his book, Immanuel is a lover straight out of secular Hebrew poetry from Muslim Spain: arrogant and sensuous, receptive to feminine beauty, but blind to inner qualities — no *cor gentile* in this lover's breast! But the parody goes beyond the collision of two poetic traditions, for Immanuel specifically parodies the Dantean kind of lover. Look at the way our story begins: Immanuel may be all sighs and tears at the beginning of the *Scroll of Love* — just as a good lover of the *dolce stil nuovo* should be — but no sooner does the Prince begin to praise another woman than Immanuel is all agog to meet the beautiful unknown: hardly a candidate for a Dante-like transfiguration. But if Immanuel is no Dante, his lady is also no Beatrice: witness her snappy back-talk at the door of the church ("Knave, get thee hence!"), and the street-smart sense with which she sums up her contemporaries: […]

Brener associates the *Scroll of Love* to the Latin collection of model love-letters, the *Rota Veneris* by Boncompagno da Signa (1165–ca. 1240), in which, all poems, though intended for a gamut of circumstances, "are written tongue-in-cheek in a parody of the literary traditions characterizing *amor carnalis* and *amor spiritualis*" (Brener 2012, p. 165). Brener finds striking parallels in content, not form. Moreover, Brener points out that Immanuel's *Scroll of Love* is a parody of the *Vita Nuova* just as, according to recent scholarship, by Laura Kellogg (1991) and Fabian Alfie (1998b), Boccaccio's *Filostrato* deflates it and ironises about it.

I would like to point out in addition that Immanuel's quickly forgetting about his previous disappointment in love when told about the admirable poetess by the Prince is likely to be a parody about what Dante in chapters 35 to 39 of the *Vita Nuova* relates concerning his being tempted to fall in love with a young and beautiful woman who had been staring at him with compassion for him (her character from the *Vita Nuova* is known to Dante scholarship as the *donna pietosa*, to avoid confusion, as Dante refers to her as the *donna gentile*, a descriptor he uses allegorically in *Convivio* II.ii.1–2). And yet Dante, realising that he risks replacing his longing for the deceased Beatrice with his sentiment for the other woman, resists and remains faithful to Beatrice's memory.[21] Immanuel instead begins the *Scroll of Love* by prompting ditching his supposedly respiteless longing for his previous romantic interest.

Also consider[22] how Immanuel begins the fourth of his *Maḥbarot* (the *Scroll of Love* is the third): "Said Immanuel the author: / After I exited the house of the Prince, quite ashamed / Because I caused the death of the lady for whom I shall never be consoled, / I resided in the land of Nod [the Land of Wandering: like Cain!] for nearly ten years, / And waves of sorrow passed over me, / Until the time of old age began to grow, / And while I sat shivering and desolate, / Tied in ropes of contempt and fear / Because of the unfolding of the days, / Lo and behold: on the mountains the legs of a messenger announcing peace, / He came here, / And told me: 'The Prince sent me to thee, as he wishes to see thee". The poet is at first incredulous (the wording emulates the account, in *Genesis*, of Jacob's first muted response when told that Joseph is alive). One realises then that the poet's grief was not so much for the lady (like Dante's grief for Beatrice), but because he had no longer been welcome to see his patron.

Moreover, Immanuel as the successful seducer is such because of his overpowering strength deriving from his mastery of poetry. In a sense, one may say, his power over the impervious heart of the target of his seduction is like Orpheus' power, which incidentally, is a theme that Dante mentions when in the *Convivio* he deals with allegory:

> come quando dice Ovidio che Orfeo facea con la cetera mansuete le fiere, e li arbori e le pietre a sé muovere; che vuol dire che lo savio uomo con lo strumento de la sua voce fa[r]ia mansuescere e umiliare li crudeli cuori, e fa[r]ia muovere a la sua volontade coloro che non hanno vita di scienza e d'arte: e coloro che non hanno vita ragionevole alcuna sono quasi come pietre

[21] Cf. http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/popup_schede.asp?tipo=ske&scheda=donnapietosa
[22] In my translation, where the slash indicates the place of the rhyme in the rhymed prose.

> [like when Ovid says that Orpheus soothed with his lyre savage beasts, and moved towards himself the trees and stones; which means that the wise man, by means of his voice, would sooth and humble cruel hearts, and would move toward/at his will those who do not have a life of knowledge and art: and the ones who have no reasoning life at all are almost like stones].[23]

There is no doubt that Dante's love for Beatrice had been an ordinary passion of a man for a woman, with the additional moral and social hurdle that his coveting had been for a married woman, let alone his own marital commitments, but for ideological reasons enabled by the intellectual climate, and with another kind of enablement accruing from his own mastery of writing, he sublimated this into something allegorical and metaphysical. Immanuel of Rome's writing about love was unabashedly material, even overtly carnal.

Dante's theme of the *donna pietosa* in the *Vita Nuova* is one in which Dante notices that a woman other than Beatrice is taking pity of him, but he considers this a temptation to resist, as he is not to be diverted from his love for Beatrice into mutual love with a substitute. As for Immanuel's parody of the *Vita Nuova,* his courtship *in litteram* of the famously unattainable woman who (unlike Beatrice) succumbs to the poet's charms, came about as a diversion (suggested by Immanuel's patron's the supposedly unattainable woman's own brother) from Immanuel's raving passion for a woman, as briefly described at the very beginning of Immanuel's third *Maḥberet.* Immanuel pursues these romantic interests as a challenge. And he only spurns his patron's sister once she is willing to surrender to him, because his patron is irked by this unexpected development.

Concerning Beatrice's death, Paul Memmo wrote (1966, pp. 3–4):

> In the *Vita nuova* Dante describes his progress toward the divine as beginning with his first intuition of the ideal in the eyes of his beloved. Before he achieves his goal, he must endure repeated rejection by his lady because of his unworthiness. Accordingly, Dante makes her frequent rejections the spur to a higher stage of spiritual progress. But the full realization of Beatrice's excellence is not possible while she remains alive. Departing from the tradition of the troubadours, Dante makes the death of Beatrice the central event of the *Vita nuova*. It is her death that finally releases her love for the highest stage of Dante's spiritual evolution. Accordingly, the loss of Beatrice to this world spurs Dante to renounce the life of the senses for the new life of intellectual and divine contemplation. The new life, then, begins in death. After Dante, the lady who brings death to the lover's ignoble self and new birth to the spirit becomes a favorite theme in much of the Renaissance.
>
> The final sonnet of the *Vita nuova* describes the poets intuition of the significance of Beatrice, whom he sees "beyond the sphere that circles widest". In the *Convivio* Dante explains this sphere as the *primum mobile* that lies between the world of planetary spheres and the empyrean heaven. The poet conceives Beatrice as an angelic intelligence receiving homage from the angels. The conceit of the lady who transcends the *domina* of the troubadours to receive homage of the cosmic spheres is of the essence of the new style.

In abject contrast, the formerly unattainable woman who declared to Immanuel her surrender and is spurned by him, dies as a result. Immanuel concludes third *Maḥberet* with a brief description of his mourning, and a sonnet about death.

But then, Immanuel begins the fourth *Maḥberet* with a statement that he left his patron's house in shame, because he had caused the death of the *domina* for which he will be forever inconsolable, and then he "dwelt in the Land of Nod" (like Cain after killing Abel, as we have

[23] "Clement, in the *Exhortation to Greeks,* roundly rejects the idea of music's power over animals: 'How the world is it that you have given credence to worthless legends, imagining brute beasts to be enchanted by music...?' Eusebius followed scoffing at the notion 'that an unconscious instrument could subdue untamed brute'. […] Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio all interpreted Orpheus' power over animals allegorically. Dante, for example, in the *Convivio,* explains that Orpheus' power consisted in his knowing how to 'pacify cruel hearts with his voice and move unreasoning creatures at his will' [*Convivio,* treatise 2, chapter 1, par. 3]. For these writers, the Orphic power was not a metaphor for Christ's mission so much as it was for the mission of reason itself — that which distinguishes men from beasts. This view of animals had earlier been endorsed by Augustine in his vehement repentance of Manicheanism. (In his conception of music — pleasure taken in rational contemplation of harmonious proportions — animals would be excluded.)" (Hicks 1984, p. 51).

seen earlier) ten years until old age began, in sorrow until he received good and most welcome news: his patron invites him back and is eager to see him.

5. Outsider Status (Denominational or Economical) in Relation to a Burlesque Role: Burlesque *canterini* Performing at the Banquets of the Rich in Medieval Tuscany, vs. Manoello Giudeo (Immanuel of Rome) Negotiating his Burlesque Persona

Immanuel of Rome was born into the Zifroni (Sifronid) family, a visible and presumably somewhat affluent family in the Jewish community of Rome, and he and a cousin are known to have been educated enough to have authored intellectual works. Among the other things, Immanuel authored biblical commentaries in Hebrew, but he is better known for authoring prose interleaved with poetry in Hebrew, in a humorous vein. When he wrote in Italian for a mainly non-Jewish audience, however, it is the role of a *poeta giocoso* (a burlesque poet) that Immanuel found affordable. *That* was a role that general society would permit him to have. In his case (unlike poor Catholics whose lowly socio-economical identity forced them into the role of a burlesque entertainer), what marginalised him socially (and delimited the genre of poetry through which he would be let to address a non-Jewish elite audience) was his denominational identity, and poets with whom he was acquainted and exchanged sonnets were ever conscious of his alterity.

It is rather pathetic that in a particular couple of sonnets[24] (for the court in Verona?), while introducing himself as a "mal giudeo" ("evil Jew") he would play down denominational or political allegiance, by underscoring his chameleonic disposition:

Example A (MS Barb. Lat. 3953)

In steso non mi conosco, ogn'om oda,
che l'esser proprio si è ghibellino:
in Roma so' Colonnes' ed Ursino,
e piacemi se l'uno e l'altro ha loda.
Ed in Toscana parte guelfa goda;
in Romagna so' ciò ch' è Zappetino;
mal giudeo sono io, non saracino:
ver' li cristiani non drizzo la proda.
Ma d'ogni legge so' ben desiroso
alcuna parte voler osservare:
de' cristiani lo bever e 'l mangiare,
e del bon Moisès poco digiunare,
e la lussuria di Macón prezioso,
che non ten fé de la cintura in gioso.

Translation
In myself I do not recognise, let everybody listen,
An individual identity [inextricably] Ghibelline:
In Rome I am a supporter of the houses of Colonna and Orsini,
And I am happy whichever one receives praises.
And in Tuscany let the Guelph party enjoy favour;
In Romagna I know what is a Zappetino;
I am an evil Jew, not a Saracen: [so not as dangerous]
I do not raise my tail against Christians [the way scorpions' tails are raised to sting].
But [I pick and choose:] of every religion I am desirous
Of observing selectively some aspect of it [i.e., of its lifestyle]:
Of the Christians the eating and drinking [unencumbered by dietary laws],
And the good Moses' only prescribing little fasting [no asceticism],
And the licentiousness of precious Macon [i.e., Saracen polygamy],
Which has no religion below the belt.

[24] See Marti (1956, pp. 313–321) and Alfie (1998a).

Clearly, Immanuel here is embracing, nilly-willy, the stereotypes about the infidel, namely, about the Saracens (taken to be Christendom's enemy without) and about the Jews (taken to be the enemy within, because of their presence as a minority in the lands of Christendom), but then he proceeds to deflate the stereotype about Jews (he may be an "evil Jew", but it is still better than a Saracen), and against himself personally *qua* Jew (he does not raise his tail against Christians the way scorpions do, a scorpion being a metaphor for a dangerous infidel): in comic mode, he offers the reassurance that he is not even a fully committed Jew, and would gladly accept from the lifestyle of various faith communities precisely those aspects in which they are (or are supposed to be) more lenient.

When Maxime Rodinson (1951) discussed Immanuel's sonnets, he referred to the particular sonnet we have considered while claiming that Immanuel was being treated as his peer by the poet (and magistrate) Bosone da Gubbio (who in fact tried to defend both Dante and Immanuel in a response to Cino da Pistoia, who in a sonnet had placed Dante and "your" Immanuel side by side in the fire of hell). Rodinson made this interesting remark (1951, p. 231):

> Bosone lui répond vertement que ni Manoello, ni Dante ne subissent une telle honte et, même s'ils subissent la peine du feu, ils ont l'espoir d'une « grande aide ». On peut expliquer peut-être une telle indulgence post-mortuaire à l'égard du juif par le fait que Bosone aurait pris au sérieux les déclarations agnostiques de celui-ci dans une poésie en italien : pas plus qu'il ne prend parti en politique, qu'il n'est guelfe, ni gibelin, Blanc, ni Noir,[25] se rattachant au vainqueur quel qu'il soit, il ne sait choisir entre, d'une part, saint Pierre et saint Paul, et, d'autre part, Moïse et Aaron ou Mahomet et Tervagant.[26]

Let us turn to another sonnet by Immanuel of Rome, in which he claimed he would hail any winner (in practice, claiming that ideological loyalties are not his cup of tea, so rather than suspecting him of siding with some enemy, let his audience consider him inoffensive, in the sense that as long as they have it good, he will be a supporter, and in case their adversaries overtake, he would simply go away and flatter those new victors):

Example B (MS Barb. Lat. 3953)

Se san Piero e san Paul da l'una parte,
Moisès ed Aaròn da l'altra stesse,
Macón e Trivican, ciascun volesse
ch' io mi rendesse a volontà né a parte;
ciascun di lor me ne pregasse en sparte:
duro mi pare ch' io gli ne credesse,
se non da dir a chi me' mi piacesse:
— Viva chi vince, ch' io so' di sua parte! —
Guelfo né ghibellin, nero né bianco;
a chi piace il color, quel se nel porte:
che ferirò da coda e starò franco.
E mio compar tradimento stia forte:
ch' i' di voltar mai non mi trovo manco
e aitar ciascun che vince, infin a morte.

[25] The White Guelphs were Dante's party. The Black Guelphs, Dante's enemies, were Cino's party.

[26] Rodinson continued (1951, pp. 231–232): "On voit que, si l'on serre de près les textes, l'association étroite de Dante et d'Emmanuel dans ces poèmes n'implique pas nécessairement (mais aussi n'exclut pas) une intimité entre eux, mais simplement une amitié commune avec Bosone da Gubbio. Mais, d'autre part, cette amitié même est intéressante à constater. Elle montre à l'évidence que le poète juif se trouvait bien accueilli en milieu chrétien, en correspondance littéraire avec les poètes les plus renommés de l'époque et traité sur un pied d'égalité malgré son judaïsme. Ajoutons que nous possédons d'Emmanuel un poème en italien assez bouffon [see in this journal issue, Alfie (2016)] à la louange de Cangrande I Scaliger dont il ressort qu'il en fréquenta la cour. Rappelons que Dante exilé trouva lui aussi refuge à la cour des seigneurs de Vérone et en récompense place élogieusement Cangrande dans son Paradis".

Translation
If St Peter and St Paul on the one side,
And Moses and Aaron on the other were standing,
Macon and Trivican [i.e., the Saracens' faith founder and
the pagan god[27] that the medieval West ascribed to them],
if each [of these pairs] wished
That I should render myself [to their faith] willingly and overtly;
If each of them took me aside and beseeched me;
It seems to me hard that I would believe in him,
Except to say to him who most pleased me:
"Hail the victor, for I am on his side!"
Neither Guelph nor Ghibelline, black nor white;
Let he who likes a particular colour take it away with him:
I shall strike using my tail [the treacherous scorpion that being a Jew, you hold me to be],
and shall remain free.
And let my companion, betrayal [because for you, a Jew, *giudeo,*
and Judas, *Giuda,* are all the same][28] stand strong:

[27] The referent of *Trivigante* in Italian (*Trivican* is a variant of the name) is known in German as *Tervigant,* in Flemish as *Tervogant,* and in French as *Tervagan* or *Tervagant* or *Tervigant,* or *Tarvigant,* or *Trivigant.* The English form (from French) *Termagant,* used by Geoffrey Chaucer, eventually evolved into *termagant, termagent,* or *termagant wife,* in the sense 'shrewish woman'. In "*The Siege of Rhodes,* mounted by Sir William Davenant in 1656 as a fully sung opera and regarded by Dryden as the original model for the rhymed heroic play" (Winn 1996/1997, p. 114), a chorus "By Souldiers [sic] of Several nations" begins by these two lines: "Come ye termagant *Turks,* / If your *Bassa* [i.e., pasha] dares Land ye" (Winn 1996/1997, p. 118).

See "Mahom, Tervagan, Apollin" by Charles Pellat (1964), and "À propos de Tervagan, idole des Sarrasins" by François Viré (1953), as well as "Tervigant" (concerning the medieval German form of the name), being Section V (pp. 76–77) in "Notules philologiques" by A.L. Corin (1931), who considered the etymon to be **Ter Vigant* < *der vigent, der viant,* i.e., 'the fiend', 'the Devil'. Also see "Khadir et Tervagant" by Virolleaud (1953), preceded by the abstract "Khadir, Élie et Tervagant" (Virolleaud 1950) trying to relate Tervagant to a supernatural character from Islamic lore, namely, al-Khiḍr. By the way, I discussed the latter character as well as Elijah in a comparative perspective in Nissan (2013 [2014]). Dauzat (1950) responded to Virolleaud (1950).

There exists an article, "Tervagant", by Leo Spitzer (1948–1949): he claimed that the name *Tervagant* was a literary creation of the author of the *Chanson de Roland,* and that the etymology is from Latin *terrificans.* Henri Grégoire discussed the name *Tervagant* repeatedly (Grégoire 1939–1944 [1944]; Grégoire 1950; and Grégoire and Mathieu 1949–1950). Grégoire thought that the etymon of *Tervagant* is *Trivia,* an epithet of a goddess that takes three forms, as Luna (the Moon, goddess of the sky), Diana (the goddess of Earth) and Proserpina (the goddess of the netherworld) according to verse 184 of Dracontius' *Medea.* Spitzer, an acclaimed Romanist, criticised Grégoire's hypothesis, by stating (Spitzer 1948–1949, p. 407): "Mais la phonétique romane est traitée trop cavalièrement par l'illustre byzantiniste" (Spitzer also found two other difficulties with Grégoire's proposal). Also see Heisig (1932) and Françon (1953). Lizop (1965) considered a Gaulish theonym as a possible etymon. Paulette Duval (1978) claimed that the supposed Islamic trinity of Apolin, Mahomet, and Tervagant in the *Chanson de Roland* resulted from the influence of a famous work of alchemy translated from Arabic, and that Apolin is to be identified with the philosopher Apollonius of Tyana, whereas Tervagant is to be identified with Hermes Trismegistus. Also consider an article by James Bellamy (1987), "Arabic Names in the Chanson De Roland: Saracen Gods, Frankish Swords, Roland's Horse, and the Olifant". Bellamy (1987) claimed that text in the Arabic script was misread because of missing diacritic marks. Besides, see the paper "Apollin" by Zink (1982).

[28] The following anecdote is an example of how for some people, *Giuda* [*Iscariota*] and *giudeo* are still interchangeable. The following is quoted from Nissan (2011):

> It is doubtful whether the First Republic would have fallen, or, more precisely, whether the Christian Democrats and the Socialists would have been meted a fatal debacle in the polls in early 1993, had it not been for Antonio Di Pietro. He was the one whose Operazione Mani Pulite (Operation Clean Hands), the investigation for graft of numerous politicians and businesspeople in 1992, brought about the end in shame of the First Republic. Of peasant family background from Molise in eastern central Italy, this former electronics technician who then studied law was an examining magistrate and assistant chief prosecutor in Milan, when he carried out a relentless series of investigations that brought down several politicians. The media and much of the public

> For I find myself not lacking in turncoat behaviour
> And I cheer anybody who is a victor, unto death.

It is by no means the case that the burlesque poets from medieval Italy whose poems have come down to us were necessarily poor. Several of them where socio-economically comfortable. Nevertheless, burlesque poetry or musical performance was an outlet for capable men for whom "serious" poetry would have been a luxury.

Let us consider such poets or singers who, in medieval Tuscany, would entertain the elite at banquets, and whose poems often were burlesque, or then would propose the listeners a riddle — possibly about food, which was apt, because those listeners had been eating.

Elsewhere, in a study that managed to identify the rough dialectal area of origin of 15th-

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enjoyed his coarse browbeating under investigation of those politicians who were toppled, as well as of some — for example, Prime Minister Romano Prodi — who survived.

Then Antonio Di Pietro became a politician himself, and for a while he was a government minister. An episode in particular irritated Italy's Jewry. In Italy, the polite term for "Jew" had long been *israelita* (Israelite) – until the late 1980s when the Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane changed its name to Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane. This was a restoration of the dignity of the term *ebreo* (Jew). This term had already been neutral for years, because the derogatory term for "Jew" is *giudeo.* In standard Italian, *giudeo* is offensive, *ebreo* is what linguists would refer to as the "unmarked" (neutral, non-connotative) term, and *israelita* is polite and now felt to be prudish and obsolete, as though there had been some justification for using a euphemism, but Jews no longer want it.

Apparently not everybody in Italy makes a distinction between Jews and Israel, or for that matter between *giudeo* and Giuda (Judas Iscariot). The interchangeability, illegitimate yet adopted by some, is confirmed by an episode from 2006, under the Prodi government. On 8 October that year, Antonio Di Pietro, the examining magistrate and prosecutor turned politician, was interviewed by Simona Ventura on her television program *Quelli che il calcio.* Referring to Senator Sergio De Gregorio, who had left the party led by Di Pietro, the latter disparagingly described him as "il perfetto giudeo" ("the perfect Jewboy"), while apparently intending "il perfetto Giuda" ("the perfect Judas").

In the context, the butt of the attack was that particular non-Jewish opponent. (The relations between British premier Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan, who succeeded him after the Suez fiasco, were described by the latter as himself being both Judas and Brutus.) What stood out, however, in the descriptor used by Di Pietro was the offense to Jews: the media-watch *Informazione Corretta* [pro-Jewish, but headed by Angelo Pezzana, who is not Jewish] denounced this in an item titled "Tonino trash." This is an instance of the far-reaching Americanization of informal Italian communication. Tonino is an endearing form of Antonio, Di Pietro's first name. Giving this man the unflattering epithet "trash" in a report headlined on the media-watch shows how far some of Italy's Jews have come in feeling able to bluntly express their displeasure about anti-Jewish slights. [Pezzana deserves much credit for this.]

As to Di Pietro's style, he was a member of Prodi's government and yet, when as an examining magistrate he interrogated Prodi during Operazione Mani Pulite, he allegedly told Prodi: "I don't understand whether you're a [gullible sod] or feigning you're a [gullible sod]." Thus in general his verbal style is unacceptably aggressive, just as Forattini's cartoonist's style is unacceptably aggressive (see below). Still, it is telling that anti-Jewish prejudice surfaced so coarsely.

Di Pietro is known to have claimed once that he would prefer to go back to being a peasant, and drive a tractor in his native region of Molise. Arguably Di Pietro's personal background, far from the discourse of Italy's elite, goes some way to explain his insensitivity where some more worldly Italian might have sensed a taboo with regard to the Jews. Perhaps the reason for jarring incidents that reveal utter backwardness in how Jews are still perceived by some who have made it to the inner circles of power, is that upward social mobility has proceeded unabated but a better social status does not always foster intellectual refinement. And yet, quite to the contrary, sometimes dire prejudice is expressed in today's Italy by persons with a good intellectual preparation; nor should intellectual prejudice come as a surprise.

Di Pietro's incident was briefly reported by the Milan newspaper *Il Giornale* on 9 October 2006, in an unsigned piece on p. 9 entitled "«La gaffe di Tonino sul «giudeo» dell'Idv»".

century botanical Italian dialectal glosses to a list of fruits in a version of a work of entertainment literature in Hebrew that originated in Abbasid Mesopotamia (Nissan and Burgaretta, in press: Section 11, "Italian parallels for the tripartition of the fruits"), I pointed out Italian parallels of an idea about there existing three kinds into which thirty kinds of fruits are partitioned, based on which part of the fruit is eaten or thrown away. That idea has a Zoroastrian background.

Rosso (2012, p. 188) remarks that this tripartition is a *topos* one comes across also in sundry poems about the qualities of fruits, authored by *canterini* (poets/singers) from the Commune of Florence in the 14th century, such as in a poem by Pietro canterino in which he was addressing the city's magistrates. He even indicated the price, by weight, of fruits such as figs and pears.

That idea also appears in verse by Benuccio of Orvieto, who was apparently born in Orvieto in Umbria, and lived in Florence in the late 14th century and in the first decade of the 15th century. Benuccio was a poorly paid, usually burlesque *canterino* (poet/singer), that role being fairly common in Tuscany and Umbria (Scrivano 1966). He was also known as Bonuccio, or then Benuccio barbiere ("Benuccio the barber"). Before 1392, he was in Pisa for a while (Scrivano 1966).

Bonuccio's poem "O be' Signior, poi che mangiato avete" ("O my fine lords, as you have eaten") was published by Novati (1892/1905, pp. 75–77 in the 1892 edition) in a study about Florence's *canterini* and poetry about the qualities of fruits. Cf. a related essay by Francesco Novati (b. 1859, d. 1915), namely, Novati (1891), commenting upon, and correcting, Pellegrini (1890). Also see Frati (1894), Grieco (1989), and the chapter by Paolo Rosso (2012), which appeared in a book edited by Irma Naso (2012), *Le parole della frutta: Storia, saperi, immagini tra medioevo ed età contemporanea.*

Riccardo Scrivano (1966) wrote as follows, about being impecunious finding expression in Benozzo's post-dinner poem about food, in which the poet complained he had not been paid:

> Nella canzone "O be' Signior, poi che mangiato avete" — stilisticamente assai vicina al capitolo "Cari signor, po' che cenato avete" di Pietro Canterino da Siena — B. si lamenta con i signori fiorentini di non aver ancora ricevuto da essi compenso alcuno, dopo che egli aveva fatto ascoltar loro, su espresso invito, i propri sonetti e le proprie canzoni. La canzone innesta le lamentele e le richieste del poeta su di un tema, non insolito in questo tipo di minore poesia trecentesca, quello della varia natura delle frutta; tale tema, che costituisce l'ossatura anche del ricordato capitolo di Pietro Canterino, era stato svolto pure da Antonio Pucci in un capitolo citato dal Sacchetti nella novella CLXXV della sua raccolta. Specialmente se raffrontata con composizioni di altri autori che trattarono lo stesso tema, si deve sottolineare che B., in questa sua canzone, seppe animare l'argomento, senza indulgere a pedanterie elencatorie; e in questo appunto consiste quello che è il maggior pregio della sua canzone.
>
> [In the *canzone* "O be' Signior, poi che mangiato avete" ("O my fine lords, as you have eaten") — which by style is quite close to the *capitolo* "Cari signor, po' che cenato avete" ("O my dear lords, as you have eaten") by Pietro Canterino of Siena — Benuccio complains to the Florentine lords that he had not received as yet any payment, after he had made them listen, upon being invited by them, his sonnets and his *canzoni*. That *canzone* grafts the poet's complaints and requests on a theme, not unusual in this kind of minor poetry of the 14th century, namely, the theme of the different features of fruits. That theme, which is also the chassis of the aforementioned *capitolo* by Pietro Canterino, had also been developed by Antonio Pucci in a *capitolo* mentioned by Sacchetti in Tale 175 of his collected stories. Especially in comparison to works by other authors who dealt with that some theme, one needs to underscore that Benuccio, in this *canzone* of his, was clever enough to enliven the topic, without indulging in pedantic enumeration; it is precisely this that is the best quality of his *canzone*.]

6. Ruzante

The comediographer and actor Angelo Beolco, known as Ruzante (or Ruzzante)[29] after one of his characters, was born in 1496 in or somewhere around Padua, the son of a doctor of arts and medicine and the maid of his wife. Ruzante died in Padua in 1542. Ruzante is a prominent exponent of the rebirth of stage comedies in Renaissance Italy, about which see Andrews (1993), Ferrone (1982), Padoan (1982), and Guarino (1995).

As a name of a character, *Ruzante* appears to have first turned up in Angelo Beolco's one-act play *Parlamento de Ruzante che l'era vegnù de campo* (Talk of Ruzante, Who Returned from the Military Camp): the protagonist, Ruzante, is a peasant who enlisted in order to escape starvation. His wife finds a lover who becomes her new bread-winner. The soldier returns to Venice, is beaten by the lover of his wife, and she decides to remain with her lover. The name *Ruzante* reappeared as the name of a character in other works by the same author; the sense of the name, 'one who copulates with beasts', is even explained by that same character in the comedy *L'Anconitana* (The Woman from Ancona).

Angelo Beolco's comedies are in dialect from the Venetia, even though in some of them some character speaks in Tuscan. There are differences as to the dialectal variety, reflecting the geographical origin of the characters, or their station in life, with a contrast between rural or urban speech. Sometimes, several dialects are used in the same play, which is the case of the dialogue *Bilora* (Weasel), which ends with a crime of honour.

Contrary to myth (which has it that Angelo Beolco was uneducated), Pier Mario Vescovo (1996) has shown that Ruzante had classical linguistic competence, and indeed Ruzante used Latin sources in some of his comedies (Tomassini 2007, pp. 1637–1638). And yet, in Ruzante's earliest comedy, *La Pastoral*, in verse (it is a comedy that reverses "the model of the pastoral or *magiaiuole* eclogues of Siena"), "the work presents a series of insolent peasant figures against an idyllic background. The shepherds of a very literary Arcadia are thus held up to ridicule by the rural and instinctive world of realism in dialect. This opposition anticipates Ruzzante's polemic against literary poetry in some of his later works" (Tomassini 2007, p. 1638).

Ruzante presented his poetics in one of his two *Orazioni* addressed to Cardinal Cornaro, then in the two prologues in prose of his comedy *Betía*, as well as in a letter, *Littera all'Alvarotto*. The transition from *Betía* to Ruzante's later, "classical" comedies saw him reject verse for prose, and the three dialectal dialogues written during that transition period "are also characterized by a sharper realistic approach to the definition of characters and themes rather than, as was common with cinquecento comedy, of events and plots" (Tomassini 2007, p. 1638).

Ruzante's three "classical" comedies, all of them in prose, are

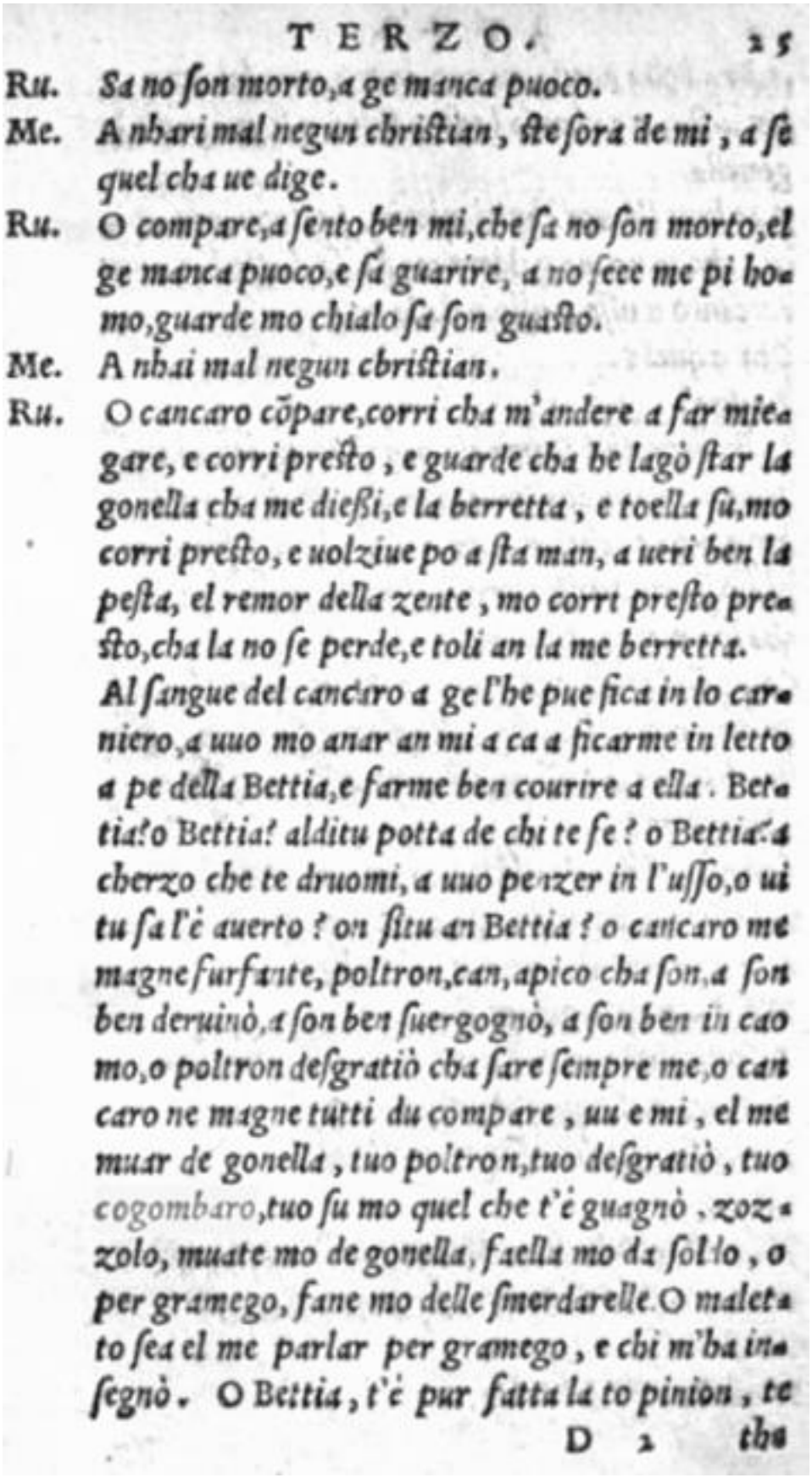
- *L'Anconitana* (based on a novella from the *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio),
- *La Piovana* (whose main model is Plautus' comedy *Rudens*), and
- *La Vaccària* (based on Plautus' *Asinaria*).

The comedy in five acts *La Moscheta* (Posh Talk) is considered by some to be Ruzante's masterpiece (it was translated into English in Cairns 1991 as "Posh Talk" by R. Ferguson, as well as in Franceschetti and Bartlett 1993); the character of Ruzante, in disguise and talking posh, tests the faithfulness of his own wife, but she realises the trick, and punishes her husband by restarting an affair with a friend of his.

[29] On Ruzante, see Tomassini (2007), Ferguson (2000), Lovarini (1965), Calendoli (1985), Prosperi (1970).


MOSCHETTA
COMEDIA DEL
FAMOSISSIMO
RVZZANTE,
Nuouamente uenuta in luce.
Con gratia, & priuilegio.
In Venetia, appresso Stephano de Alessi, alla Libraria del Caualetto, in calle della biscia, al Pontego de i Todeschi. 1555.

The front page of the 1555 print of Ruzante's *La Moscheta*.



TERZO. 25

Ru. Sa no ſon morto, a ge manca puoco.

Me. A nhari mal negun chriſtian, ſte ſora de mi, a ſe quel cha ue dige.

Ru. O compare, a ſento ben mi, che ſa no ſon morto, el ge manca puoco, e ſa guarire, a no ſeee me pi homo, guarde mo chialo ſa ſon guaſto.

Me. A nhai mal negun chriſtian.

Ru. O cancaro cõpare, corri cha m'andere a far miegare, e corri preſto, e guarde cha he lagò ſtar la gonella cha me dießi, e la berretta, e toella ſu, mo corri preſto, e uolziue po a ſta man, a ueri ben la peſta, el remor della zente, mo corri preſto preſto, cha la no ſe perde, e toli an la me berretta. Al ſangue del cancaro a ge l'he pue fica in lo caneiero, a uuo mo anar an mi a ca a ficarme in letto a pe della Bettia, e farme ben courire a ella. Bettia! o Bettia! alditu potta de chi te ſe? o Bettia! a cherzo che te druomi, a uuo penzer in l'uſſo, o uitu ſa l'è auerto? on ſitu an Bettia? o cancaro me magne furfante, poltron, can, apico cha ſon, a ſon ben deruinò, a ſon ben ſuergognò, a ſon ben in caomo, o poltron deſgratiò cha ſare ſempre me, o cancaro ne magne tutti du compare, uu e mi, el me muar de gonella, tuo poltron, tuo deſgratiò, tuo cogombaro, tuo ſu mo quel che t'è guagnò, zozzolo, muate mo de gonella, faella mo da ſoldo, o per gramego, fane mo delle ſmerdarelle. O maleta to ſea el me parlar per gramego, e chi m'ha inſegnò. O Bettia, t'è pur fatta la to pinion, te

D 2 tha

A page from the 1555 print of Ruzante's *La Moscheta*.

7. Burlesque Poems by Francesco Beccuti, Known as Il Coppetta (1509–1553)

This section uses material that also appears in Nissan (2016). Francesco Beccuti, nicknamed "il Coppetta" (1509–1553), was an Italian poet from Perugia. One of the greatest poets he was not, there are traces of mannerism in his verse. Arguably his humorous poems are the best part of his *opus.* Many manuscripts or early prints containing part of Beccuti's copious poems survive (e.g., in anthologies by various authors), and Andrea Crismani's PhD dissertation (2012) is a critical edition whose pdf file comprises 999 pages. One of the sources of Crismani's thesis is Vel566. It is a volume edited by Domenico Giglio and printed in Venice in 1566, and being an anthology of burlesque poems by Francesco Berni (1497/98–1535) and others: *Il secondo libro dell'opere burlesche di M. Francesco Berni, del Molza, di M. Bino, di M. Lodouico Martelli, di Mattio Francesi, dell'Aretino, et di diuersi Auttori* [sic]. Coppetta's poems included in Giglio's volumes are the ones whose numbers in Crismani's thesis are 129, 125, 131, 82, 133, 130, 135. Let us consider here a different poem, quite different from the ones listed as burlesque. It is a poem with incongruity yet neither humorous, nor deliberately grotesque. Rather, what it is after is "il concettino", the clever contrivance (poetically clever it is not). It is therefore a precursor of a fashion from the late 16th and the 17th century: Italy's *marinismo,* in some relation to England's Euphuism and to Spain's Gongorism.

The humanist and poet Francesco Beccuti was born in Perugia (in the Umbria region east of Tuscany) on Good Friday of 1509, into an aristocratic family, the son of Giovanni Beccuti (apparently a well-educated man, he held official posts) and Vincenza, the daughter of Ludovico Cenci. The latter surname is prestigious, even though it literally means 'rags'. *Coppétta* was an alternative surname of the Beccuti family. Francesco Beccuti himself wed Camilla Alfani in 1544 with a rich dowry, and held posts in the public administration of his native city, and also lived in Rome, probably as part of the entourage of some senior clergyman. In some of his verse, he expressed his contempt for life at court. The reform of Perugia's public administration in 1553, a reform wanted by Pope Julius III, marked the end of Perugia's autonomy, and the city's full integration in the Papal States.

Francesco Beccuti eventually became governor of Sassoferrato, Casa Castalda, and Norcia, on in the year of his death he was appointed governor of Foligno. Beccuti also was prominent at Perugia's Academy, a club of intellectuals active from 1545. Meetings appear to have taken the form of polite entertainment, and Beccuti's humour was cautiously irreverent. He often engaged in encomiastic verse. The later part of Beccuti's life was serene and socially well connected. He died on 19 August 1553 in an epidemic which also took the lives of several members of Perugia's Academy (Mutini 1970).

In the early modern period, Beccuti's poems appeared in many anthologies gathering verse by several authors. Sometimes, poems authored by Beccuti were misascribed to some other author: some of Beccuti's poems were misascribed to the much more famous Torquato Tasso. The first printed collection of Beccuti's poems was edited by Ubaldo Bianchi, and printed in Venice in 1580 under the title *Rime di M. Francesco Coppetta de' Beccuti perugino.* That edition comprised 129 sonnets, four canzoni, fifteen poems in ottava rima, two sestine, two capitoli, and four madrigals. More numerous poems appeared in a collection edited by Giacinto Vincioli which was printed in Perugia in 1720, and also comprised poems by other poets from the same city. The third edition was the most important one; it was printed in Venice in 1751 by Pitteri[30] and annotated by Vincenzo Cavallucci (Mutini 1970). Chiorboli (1912) is a good modern edition.

In Beccuti's *oeuvre,* one comes across a thematic combination of the four elements, in variants of a poem which on the face of it is a tragedy. Coppetta was a poet whose treatment

[30] Francesco Pitteri was one of the major printers and booksellers (*stampatori-librai*) of his generation.

of emotion is insincere, and in the case at hand, because of the plot, the effect is almost grotesque. The intent was neither tragic, nor tragicomic, notwithstanding there being incongruity between the plot and how it is presented. Rather, the effect sought was amazement at the poet's ingenuity (at most, it deserves a polite "Oh boy"). My translation is literal, in prose rather than in verse:

92
(Ch. CLXXX) [Crismani 2012, p. 299]

Lascia nel bagno il minor figlio e corre	She leaves in the bath her younger son, and runs,
la madre a quel che sopra 'l foco mira;	The mother, towards the one whom on the fire she sees;
l'un si sommerge e l'altro invan soccorre:	The one is drowned, and the other in vain she rescues:
cade ella in terra per gran doglia e spira;	She falls on the ground in her grief, and expires;
il caso rio, ch'ogni conforto abborre,	This unfortunate incident, which abhors any consolation,
a sospender se stesso il padre tira.	To hanging himself pulls the father.
E fu lor tomba terra, aere, acqua e foco,	A grave were to them, earth, air, water, and fire,
che non capia tanta ruina un loco.	As such a ruin just one place could not contain.

Considering both versions of the poem, it is rather clear that the poet began with the theme expressed by the last two lines, which are identical. The plot is the same, but is worded differently:

94
(Ch. CLXXIX) [Crismani 2012, p. 301]

L'un figlio ardeva e troppa fretta spinse	One son was burning, and exceeding hurry pushed
la madre a lasciar l'altro in preda a l'acque:	The mother to leave the other one as prey for the waters:
onde questo l'ardor, quel l'onda vinse,	Hence, this one the ardour, the other the wave overcame,
e l'incauta per doglia in terra giacque;	And the imprudent woman, chagrined, lied on earth;
il padre a un laccio si sospese e estinse.	The father hanged himself by a rope, was extinguished.
Misera prole, a che nel mondo nacque!	O pitiable offspring, which was born into the world!
E fu lor tomba terra, aere, acqua e foco,	A grave were to them, earth, air, water, and fire,
che non capia tanta ruina un loco.	As such a ruin just one place could not contain.

As for poems 82, 125, 129, 130, 131, 133, and 135 they respectively are:

82 a longish dirge (formally a canzone) for a dead cat, the dearest of all animals (rather boring);

125 a poem of some merit addressing a lookalike of a dead man (the author disbelieves the name he gives, and suspects he is a ghost, and even fancies being a ghost himself so he could better check);

129 a poem of some merit, and praised in the early modern period (formally, a *capitolo bernesco*) — apparently inspired by insuccess at court in Rome — about *noncovelle* 'nothing' (in present-day Italian, one would say *niente* or *niente affatto*) which could be eaten, and of which allegedly everything in the world was created, if asked what you are doing, you would typically reply "noncovelle", and if you were to have one thousand florins at home, you have nothing to fear provided you carry *noncovelle* on you: this is a variant of the lore of "farne quante Nemo",[31] Italy's branch of the German early modern tradition had the character Niemand, i.e., Nobody (no one instead of Everyman.

[31] Also consider Homer's Ulysses tricking the giant Polyphemus, by telling him that his name is "Noman". In international folklore, the Polyphemus tale-type is ATU 1148b, whereas the "Noman" motif is K602. See an article by Julien d'Huy, "Polyphemus: a Palaeolithic Tale?"

The character Nobody / Niemand. Detail from a broadsheet by Joerg Schan, Strassburg, 1533.

Gerta Calmann has pointed out:[32]

> "Nobody is my name, I bear everybody's blame". With these words Joerg Schan, a barber of Strassburg, introduced his hero in a broad-sheet published about I507, and went on to show how Nobody, eternally innocent yet eternally guilty, patiently bears the blame for the misdeeds of the whole household, particularly the servants. Schan was merely giving a new twist to an ancient jest, but in placing his Nobody among the pots and pans he created a literary and pictorial type which, as I hope to show, persisted through more than a century.
>
> The jest itself is almost inherent in the structure of language, and depends upon the impossibility of defining or depicting a negative except paradoxically. In some languages the

[32] On p. 60 in Gerta Calmann (1960), "The Picture of Nobody: An Iconographical Study". Incidentally, note that Castelli (1986, p. 297, §8) lists *Nessuno* ('Nobody') among *noms de guerre* of Italian anti-Nazi partisan fighters.

> negative seems to invite this kind of ambiguous usage, while for instance in French *personne . . . ne* virtually precludes it. The first recorded person to employ it to advantage appears to have been Odysseus, as Homer tells us in the ninth book of the *Odyssey*. When the cunning Greek found himself trapped in the Cyclops' cave he divulged his name to Polyphemus as Οὖτις — Noman — and thus when the blinded monster called on his fellows for help, he was met with indifference (if Noman was tormenting him, why did he make such an outcry?) and Odysseus escaped.
>
> It is unlikely that Schan knew this story, but it seems probable that he was acquainted with the mediaeval "Saint Nemo". The mystic shares with the humorist an interest in the absurdities of language; it was perhaps a devotional exercise of the monk Radulphus the Angevin (before 1290) to search the Bible for sentences containing the word *nemo*.[33]

The following is an entry[34] about the word *noncovelle*, from Vol. 3, exemplified and augmented by Luigi Lamberti (1759–1813) and published in 1811, of *Osservazioni sulla lingua italiana raccolte dal Cinonio*, a book about the Italian language by Marco Antonio Mambelli (1582–1644):

> XVIII. Noncovelle, *voce che nello scriver Berniesco*[35] *si usa nel senso di* nulla. (*Rim. Burl. Coppetta Capitol. di* Noncovelle *in principio*.)
>
> *Di lodar* Noncovelle *ho nel pensiero,*
> *Ma Niente m'infrasca e mi lusinga,*
> *E son corsi al romor già* Nulla *e* Zero.
>
> E non molto dopo:
> *Noi abbiamo primamente nel Vangelo,*
> *Che Dio di* Noncovel *fece ogni cosa.*
>
> *Questo nome è formato dalla negazione* non, *e da* covelle *o* cavelle, *parola che, secondo il Vocabolario, bassamente si usa per significare* qualche cosa, piccola cosa. *Lat.* aliquid. *La voce* noncovelle *manca alla Crusca di Firenze, non meno che a quella di Verona*.

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[33] In her book *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition,* Martha Bayless (1996) discussed, among the other things, the Latin parodic lives of the saints Nemo (Nobody) and Invicem (One-Another). In Italian, there exists the idiom (which is at present infrequent) *farne quante Nemo,* i.e., literally, "to be the protagonist as many deeds as Nemo", that is to say, as many as the biblical sentences containing *nemo*. This is an idiom whose use is humorous, by *mock-ignorance*. Another instance of this is the Tuscan idiom *finire come Tenenosse, che lo misono in du' casse* (Provenzal 1966, p. 116), i.e., "to come to a horrifically bad end", literally, "to end up like Tenenos, who was put inside two coffins", stemming from misunderstanding the Latin words from the Catholic liturgy, *et ne nos inducas*, "and dost not lead us" (into sin), which by the way has a parallel in the early morning Jewish liturgy. The words *et ne nos inducas* were misunderstood as though they were *et Tnenos in du' cas,* which was understood as though it meant the same as Tuscan *e Tenenosse in du' casse,* "and Tenenos in two coffins" — and dead in a state of sinfulness, thus really having come to a bad end in all senses.

It has been shown that the depiction of Nobody in early modern Germany owed something to depictions of the vagabond, sometimes portrayed as an owl: "Popular fantasy saw a close connection between the two sinister beings that travel by night, owl and vagabond" (Calmann 1960, p. 60), and both of them were likened to the spiritually supposedly blind Jews, who are therefore exiled from place to place. Owls were a symbol of scorn, and were, according to the medieval bestiary, attacked by all other birds, as social outcasts, especially Jews, were set upon, or ought to be set upon (hence, the Jewish badge, i.e., the sign, often a *rota,* a sewn circle of cloth, which Jews were forced to ear and which set them visibly apart from the rest of the populace), and like "the fool who was stoned and ridiculed by the vulgar whose credulity and fear were easily imposed upon" (Calmann 1960, p. 68).

Having referred to the blindfold Synagogue in Christian representations of the Jews, standing for the Jews' not wanting to see the light of Christianity, Eric Zafran (1979, p. 17) pointed out that "[p]artly for the same reason the owl, a bird of darkness, came to be identified with the Jews." Mariko Miyazaki (1999) has analysed, in relation to antisemitism and to the hooked nose ascribed to the Jews, owls shown in relief on misericords, i.e., wooden supports on which the faithful are permitted to lean on, when forced to stand in prayer for a long time.

[34] https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=FkY9AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA339&lpg=PA339&dq=noncovelle&source=bl&ots=EAScN0xSrk&sig=ID8rKGZ8tiXluIqStyOr8cmDPFI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiG2YXuh-vKAhXJmBoKHeVLCG8Q6AEIOTAE#v=onepage&q=noncovelle&f=false

[35] In present-day Italian, the adjective derived from *Berni* is *bernesco,* not *Berniesco*.

> [XVIII. *Noncovelle*, a term which in writing à la Berni, is used in the sense 'nothing' (Burlesque rhymes by Coppetta, in the chapter about *Noncovelle* in the beginning.)
>
> > To praise *Noncovelle* I have on my mind,
> > But *Niente* [Nothing] allures and entices me,
> > And running to the sound are already *Nulla* [Nothing] and *Zero* [Zero].
>
> And further down:
> > We have it mainly on the authority of the Gospel [more broadly: of the Bible]
> > That God created everything *ex nihilo*
> > [but expressed here colloquially as 'of Noncovelle'].
>
> This name is formed from the negation *non*, and from *covelle* or *cavelle*, a word which, according to the Vocabulary, in a low register is used in the sense 'some/any thing', 'a little thing'. In Latin, *aliquid*. The entry *Noncovelle* is missing [from the vocabulary of the purist Academy of the] Crusca of Florence, as well as from that of Verona.]

130 a longish critique of the social practice of the *sberleffo* (mockery): of how people one meets are likely to care nothing about what you say, and would make faces or otherwise mock upon parting behind the given person's back, and the problem is that is not done to anybody (if you want to want to do it, do it always to everybody, and then I would do likewise: "e se 'l volete far, fatel d'ognuno, / ch'anch'io farò sberleffi a certi amici");

131 having praised *noncovelle*, this other longish poem is in praise of *tutto* ('everything': "Io ch'una volta lodai noncovelle / deggio ben lodar voi che siete il tutto");

133 a poem about the merits of the *osteria* (public house) or *taverna* (tavern)[36] which the author used to avoid considering it fit for people one would rather avoid, whereas having tried it, now the author has never enough of it;

135 falling in love with the beloved was "asinitade vera" (something really befitting a donkey), and the author would take an oath of that much to Carlomanno, his horse; reasons are then enumerated (with some outré double-entendre); should the author ever reconsider, he is asking beforehand for an outright rejection, and for this he is obliged (yet instead of "ch'io ven ringrazio", "ch'io ven disgrazio" 'and for this I disgrace you' is replaced: "Quanto al venirvi innante, son si sazio di voi, che, se mai piu ci fo ritorno, mandatemi in malor, ch'io ven disgrazio").

Some of Beccuti's verse is lyrical, some other verse is encomiastic, and then again, he also authored moral, religious, or political verse typified by thoughtfulness,[37] and dating from

[36] Even in the 20th century, in the United States one would speak of "bars and taverns", as a pair, such as in this passage: "While the administration, namely the State Department, arranged for a privileged group of Africans to travel through the Deep South enjoying its amenities, meeting some of its leading white citizens, and even appearing on television, Afro-Americans there and elsewhere in the country were becoming increasingly vocal and impatient in their demand, as American citizens, for dignified service in public places. In response to their demand, and pressure from the administration, the Maryland legislature passed a public accommodations bill in early March — a bill which had been drastically weakened: It did not apply to 11 of the state's 23 counties and bars and taverns (Washington Post, March 12, 1963)", but allowing at the long last Black American citizens to eat at restaurants (Holder 1983, p. 46) — it was a "law that barred discrimination in restaurants and hotels, but only in the counties around Route 40" (Romano 2000, p. 574). Route 40 is a highway connecting Washington, D.C., and New York.

[37] "Ma si direbbe che l'altemarsi dei modelli e il gioco, a volte abilissimo, delle mediazioni, e degli intarsi si articolino in ogni momento sul fondo di una prolungata e indifferente disponibilità letteraria, sì che la pretesa di

the later period in his life. In the kinds of poems we have just enumerated, Beccuti formally and superficially conformed with Petrarch's model prescribed in Italy's Cinquecento and for two more centuries. Beccuti's humorous poems instead fit in a non-Petrarchist tradition.

Francesco Beccuti, known as Il Coppetta.

un'ampia e disinvolta eloquenza come la disposizione per un tono raccolto, conciso, víbrato, si giustificano di volta in volta più come variazioni occasionali su un testo prescelto che come punti d'arrivo di una maturata esperienza espressiva" ["One would say however that the alternation of models and the sometimes quite clever play of mediations, as well as the inlay work, are always articulated against the backdrop of a prolonged and non-selective literary availability. So much so that the posture of a vast and unimpeded eloquence, as well as Beccuti's showing himself capable of an engrossed, concise, energetic tone, can be explained on a case by case basis more as occasional variations on a chosen text, than as points of arrival of a mature expressive experience"] (Mutini 1970).

In my own opinion, Beccuti has a penchant for displaying eloquence, and his opus is punctuated with displays of what is intended as cleverness, rather than with witness of a trajectory towards maturity. As Mutini (1970) claimed, Beccuti set for himself goals on a case by case basis.

Another poem by Coppetta, no. 136 in Crismani's edition (2012), was not included in Giglio's anthology, yet is fairly remarkable, for the nugatory yet rather paranoid theme (a Tourette syndrome in reverse, in a sense), and for how it is handled. In the beginning, the first-name narrator expresses a wish for being "dechristened" just for the purpose of doing away with his first name. In the end, he asks the friend he is addressing to talk to some cleric about getting him rechristened with a prettier name. But here is the rub. In the beginning, the narrator declares he is willing to pay a golden *scudo* to get his problem solved. In the end, he tells his friend he would undergo the ceremony if it costs him nothing. (Of course, the friend would also be going into the trouble and doing this favour for nothing.)

The narrator has explained at length how troublesome his onomastic problem is.[38] And yet, instead of the process of narrating his troubles raising his willingness to incur a financial cost — a golden *scudo* — in order to get rid of the social cost of bearing the too common name *Martino* (as though carrying on living under another name was not going to be socially costly), this narrator has grown more stingy. And then again, which alternative first name would he prefer? He is willing to settle for some name that is admittedly not as nice as *Martino:* a name like *Gianni* ('John'!), or then Francesco ('Francis', which is also quite a common name, with the twist that it is the poet's own name). Quite possibly, this is one of the best poems by Coppetta.

Sotio, ti giuro per quel dio divino,
ch'io pagarei un scudo a sbattezzarmi
per levarmi quel nome di Martino:
tanto volgare ed usitato parmi
questo chiamar Martin, che sempre sento
mille volte per ora il dì chiamarmi.
Ho provato a passar per qualche armento,
ho sentito chiamar: 《Martin, Martino》;
risposto ho bene, ma ho risposto al vento.
Se talvolta son ito per camino
dove ho sentito c'ha chiamato un gallo,
han chiamato due or: 《Martin Martino》.
E s'un cozzon vuol montare a cavallo,
comincia a dir: 《Martin, pazzo poltrone!》
Così Martin ogn'or si trova in ballo.
Se un pecorar vuol chiamare un castrone
che porti il campanaccio sopra'l sale
e chiamandol Martin nanzi quel pone.
Concludo ch'ogni sorte d'animale
è chiamato Martin da' suoi primi anni
tanto la sorte e'l fato mi vuol male.
Ho provato allevar un barbagianni,
io stesso l'ho chiamato per Martino
per risquotermi in parte de' miei danni.
E per quest'ancora e per crudel destino,
che, se per sorte un becco vuo' chiamare,
non lo chiamo per altro che Martino.
Se vuoi quella faccenda nominare,
tu dici: 《Fra Martino scappucciato》,
per esser più onesto nel parlare.

Friend, by that god divine,
I would pay a *scudo* to be unbaptised
In order to get rid of that name, *Martin:*
I find it so vulgar and common
This calling out *Martin,* which I keep hearing
One thousand times every hour of each day calling me.
I tried to pass by some herds,
And heard them calling: "Martin! Martin!"
I replied appropriately, but in vain, to the wind.
If sometimes I have been walking on a path,
Where I heard a rooster call,
They kept calling out for two hours: "Martin! Martin!"
And if some bloke is about to ride a horse,
He starts to say: "Martin, you crazy sloth!"
So *Martin* is always involved.
If a shepherd wants to call a wether [a castrated ram]
So it would carry the bell, he mounts on its back
And, having called it *Martin,* puts the bell in place.
I conclude that all kinds of animals
Are called *Martin* since its early years,
So much destiny and fate wish me ill.
I tried to raise a barn owl,
I myself named it *Martin*
To partly indemnify myself.
And then again, it is for this reason
If perchance you want to name a billy-goat,
I name it nothing else than *Martin.*
If you want to refer to that given matter,
You say: "Brother Martin who lost his hood",
To be more chic while speaking.

[38] A reader's letter in the London newspaper *Evening Standard* of 9 February 2016, on p. 45, stated: "Your letters page [Feb 8] has messages from four different Andrews. Do the rest of us have a chance?" (brackets in the original). It was signed by James Archer. Clearly, the question is humorous. The idea is that on the evidence of such prevalence of the name *Andrew,* it is reasonable to wonder whether those bearing it were granted a special privilege in the context of readers' letters being selected for publication.

Se tu t'incontri in un imbriacato,
dici: 《Compagno, a dio, hai Martin teco》:
io ti so dir che l'hai bene abbracciato.
Se per sorte t'incontri in qualche cieco,
che s'urti teco, dici: 《Urta, Martino,
che valente sarai se cozzi meco》.
C'è peggio ancor, che non c'è alcun facchino,
isbirro, campanaro e pollastriere,
che si chiami altrimenti che Martino.
Si che pensa poi tu se volentiere
mi serbo questo nome poltronesco,
e se d'esser chiamato l'ho a piacere.
Pensa, Sotio mio caro, com'io sto fresco,
e, ben che brutto sia, m'eleggerei
più tosto nome aver Gianni o Francesco.
Sotio, ragiona un po' de' fatti miei
col vicario e col prete di Castello
e dilli, se non costa, che vorrei
ribattezzarmi e aver nome più bello.

If you come across somebody under the influence,
You say: "Hey mate, good bye, let Martin be with you":
I am able to confirm you have embraced him properly.
If perchance you come across some blind man
Who bumps into you, you say: "Keep bumping, Martin,
You'll get stronger by bumping against me".
What is worse, there is no streetporter,
Policeman, bellman, or poultry breeder,
Who is called otherwise than *Martin.*
So just figure out whether I willingly
Keep this most common of names,
And whether I like to be called that way.
Just think, my dear friend, I am in a nice mess,
And even though it would be ungainly, I would prefer
To be rather be named *John* or *Francis*.
Friend, have a word about my situation
With the vicar and the priest of Castello
And tell him, in case it would cost me nothing,
whether by rechristening a prettier name could be had.

Even though, generally speaking, Coppetta had a penchant for being rather unconvincing when it comes to expressing emotion in his poem, in the poem we have just considered he is successful in the depiction of situations, and in the humorous psychology of how the poem begins and ends.

9. Beccuti vs Berni

In his humorous poems, Beccuti departs from the Petrarch's model and is germane to Francesco Berni's model of humorous poetry (*poesia bernesca*). We have already come across a volume edited by Domenico Giglio and printed in Venice in 1566, and being an anthology of burlesque poems by Francesco Berni (1497/98–1535) and others: *Il secondo libro dell'opere burlesche di M. Francesco Berni, del Molza, di M. Bino, di M. Lodouico Martelli, di Mattio Francesi, dell'Aretino, et di diuersi Auttori* [sic].

Francesco Berni was already in the 16th, 17th, and early 18th centuries, and is at present, considered to have been the main exponent of Italian comic poetry in the Renaissance. The poet Giuseppe Parini (1729–1799), in the spirit of the Enlightenment, disliked Berni, whereas the critic and polemicist Giuseppe Baretti (1719–1989), writing using his pen-name Aristarco Scannabue (literally, 'he who cuts the throat of an ox') in his journal *La Frusta Letteraria* of 15 February 1764, derided anybody who would confuse Berni with his precursors or with his epigons. Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837), in his *Zibaldone di pensieri*, considered Berni germane to the comic writers of antiquity, in that his comic sense consisted of the things more than of words.

Mutini (1967) combines a biography of Berni with an analysis of Berni's literary output and of its reception. "Furono gli uomini del Risorgimento (dal Giusti al Settembrini) che fecero eclissare la fama del B., esercitando sul poeta una censura che era mancata ai letterati della Controriforma" ["It was the men of Italy's national movement, the Risorgimento, — from the satirical poet Giuseppe Giusti (1809–1850) to Luigi Settembrini (1813–1876), a scholar in literary studies — who caused Berni's fame to be eclipsed, by exercising on that poet such censorship as not even the Contra Reformation had inflicted upon the authors of its times"] (Mutini, *ibid*.).

The influential historian of literature Francesco De Sanctis (1817–1883), a sociological determinist, in his *Lezioni zurighesi* found Berni's poetry devoid of civil values: "Non è più la coltura che ride dell'ignoranza e della rozzezza; è la coltura che ride di se stessa; la borghesia

fa la sua propria caricatura" ["It is no longer culture deriding ingnorance and coarseness; it is culture deriding itself, the bourgeoisie drawing its own caricature"]. The extremely influential aestheticist critic Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) condemned Berni in 1941, and that proved fatal for the fortunes of Berni in academia, as Mutini avers. Also the critic Attilio Momigliano considered Berni's poetry to represent a moral otium "inconceivable after Italy's unification". For Momigliano, Berni lacked both spiritual and artistic seriousness. In contrast, Luigi Pirandello liked Berni, on the evidence of his important essay about humour, *L'umorismo*.

Francesco Berni (1497/98–1535).

For example, Beccuti's poem on *noncovelle* 'nothing' is a *capitolo bernesco*. Mutini (1970) remarks that Beccuti appears side by side with Berni, in Cesare Caporali's "Esequie di Mecenate" ("Maecenas' Funeral"), where Berni has the role of a cook in Parnasus, "che fra le capricciose anime belle Seco aveva anche un mio vicin, ch'a volo Su l'ale si levò di Non covelle" ("who among the fine and whimsical souls had with him also a neighbour of mine, who rose in flight on the wings of *Noncovelle*"). Mutini (1970) went on to claim, concerning Beccuti's humorous poetry:

> Questa produzione rappresenta forse l'aspetto più interessante del canzoniere, intessuta di reali esperienze maturate durante il soggiorno romano, ma già falsata in una prospettiva di indolente conformismo, idealmente equidistante dal sarcasmo dei Berni come dalla scrittura furbesca e pigramente allusiva del Caporali. Sì che le poesie del B. si prestano, per una singolare coincidenza di cultura e di stile, a colmare il divario che esiste, nella prosecuzione di un medesimo genere letterario, tra la satira e il gioco, tra la poesia che costringe la tradizione nei limiti di un personale contenuto ironico e il dileggio che prelude alla vanità buffonesca del poema eroicomico ove l'impegno controriformista si maschera dietro la malintesa letterarietà dell'autoderisione.
>
> [This output perhaps constitutes the most interesting aspect of Beccuti's poetic opus, enmeshed with actually lived experience which matured during Beccuti's stay in Rome, but already [like in later poets] marred by a perspective of indolent conformism, ideally equidistant from from Berni's sarcasm and Caporali's cunning and lazily allusive writing. Therefore Beccuti's poems are fit, by a peculiar coincidence of culture and style, for fitting in the gap that exists, in the continuum of the same literary genre, between satire and playfulness, between such poetry that constrains the tradition within the limits of personal ironic contents and the mockery anticipating the buffoonery's vanity of the [Cinquecento's] heroicomic epic, where anticonformism engagement hides behind the misunderstood literariness of self-deprecation.]

10. The Paradoxical Encomium

In her article about Galileo Galilei's burlesque poem in praise of nudity, purported to be the "sommo bene" ("utmost good"), Anne Reynolds remarked (1982, pp. 334–335):

> The paradoxical, poetic exegesis of "non-themes" was a response in part to scholastic methods of critical commentary and also to the imitative mode of voguish sixteenth-century poets of the "Petrarchising" school. Many poems, for example, may well be considered (self-) conscious revitalizing poetic imagery and the poetic logos. Berni's "anti-Petrarchan" poems are well known. Less known, although equally virulent, are lines written by Ludovico Dolce in a series of *capitoli In lode dello sputo:* […]

Those poems by Ludovico Dolce were in praise of sputum. Here are a few lines, of a pseudo-medical flavour (my translation):

Volete voi saper, s'uno è ammalato,	If you want to know whether somebody is ill,
Ponete un poco quando Sputa, mente.	Pay some attention when he *spits.*
E vedrete uno sputo ricamato.	And you shall see embroidered sputum.
Cotesto vi sara segno evidente	This shall be, for you, evident evidence,
Più che '1 colore di quella facenda,	More so than the colour of that thing,
Che non può dirsi Petrarchevolmente.	That is cannot be said in the manner of Petrarch.

Dolce's poems in praise of sputum belong to the genre of the *paradoxical encomium.* Paolo Cherchi (1975) discussed it occurrence in Italy's Manierismo. It is a genre that used to be in vogue in England as well,[39] as shown by Miller (1956): see there a long list of such works. Miller began his paper by stating (*ibid.*, p. 145):

> The paradoxical encomium is a species of rhetorical jest or display piece which involves the praise of unworthy, unexpected, or trifling objects, such as the praise of lying and envy or of the gout or of pots and pebbles. Although this form of mock eloquence enjoyed a considerable vogue in England during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, it has not always been recognized by students of English literature for what it is: a distinct genre, with a tradition dating

[39] "The translations from Erasmus and other encomiasts of the paradoxical surely played a significant part in arousing English interest in the form. But it would seem that there was, as well, already a subliterary tradition of paradoxical encomia in England. There existed such things as a fifteenth-century ballad in praise of money; […]" (Miller 1956, p. 155).

> back to the earliest periods of Greek rhetoric. Its affinities with other varieties of ironic expression, with parodies of the *Ars poetica*, and especially with such techniques as burlesque and mock-heroic, have tended to blur its character as an independent literary form; and its concern with trivial subjects has probably contributed to the comparative lack of scholarly interest shown in it.

Romei (1998, p. 11), while enumerating some misattributions of 16th-century Italian humorous poems, noters that RPBA 1603 III, cols. 126r–127r ascribed to Ercole Giovannini a poem in praise of the flea, *Capitolo in lode del Pulice* (whose *incipit* is "Afferma ogni spirto pidocchioso"), but that it actually was a rehashed version of a *capitolo* by Ludovico Dolce. The key to the acronym (given here according to Romei 2006, but with modification according to the citation in Romei 1998) refers to an anthology of humorous verse in three volumes, published in Vicenza in 1603 by Barezzo Barezzi:

> RPBA 1603 I = *Delle rime piacevoli* del Berni, Casa, Mauro, Varchi, Dolce e d'altri auttori [sic], li quali sopra vari soggetti capricciosi hanno mostrato la bellezza de gl'ingegni loro. Libro primo. Ridotte a lezzione candida e buona [...]. In Vicenza, per Barezzo barezzi libraro in Venezia, 1603.
>
> RPBA 1603 II = *Delle rime piacevoli* del Berni, Coppetta, Francesi, Bronzino, Martelli, Domenichi, Strascino e d'altri auttori simili, piene d'arguzie, motti e Sali. Libro secondo. Ritocche e poste in buona lezzione [...]. In Vicenza, per Barezzo Barezzi libraro in Venezia, 1603.
>
> RPBA 1603 III = *Delle rime piacevoli* del Borgogna, Ruscelli, Sansovino, Doni, Lasca, Remigio, Anguillara, Sansedonio e d'altri vivac'ingegni, mentre hanno scritto sue invenzioni, capricci, fantasie e ghiribizzi non meno festevole che leggiadramente. Libro terzo [...].In Vicenza, per Barezzo Barezzi libraro in Venezia, MDCIII.

Renaissance France was another country where one finds instances of paradoxical encomium (Miller 1956, pp. 151–152, his brackets):

> Examples of the paradoxical encomium in Renaissance France are to be found in the works of both the Marotic poets and those of the Pléiade. One may cite the "Encomie du corbeau" of Estienne Forcadel; the "Hymne de la surdité" of Du Bellay; Ronsard's "La Grenouille", "Le Freslon", and "Le Fourmi" (all in *Le Bocage* [1554]); and Rémy Belleau's "Le Papillon". Rabelais, as one would expect, turns the tradition to vigorous account, his most famous pseudo-encomium being Panurge's praise of debt and debtors in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Book III, chaps. iii–iv). Chapter viii of the same book has a panegyric on the codpiece (*la braguette*); and in Book IV, chapter lvii, one finds the praise of "Messere Gaster", the source of all inventions. Another form that often becomes a type of paradoxical encomium, the "blazon", also enjoyed a brief vogue in Renaissance France, resulting in eulogies of the various parts of the body, the furniture of a house, heretics, flowers, birds, and even, as we find, the "Blason de l'épingle".

Miller claimed that of paradoxical encomia of the 16th century, the majority "were the productions of Latin scholars of various countries, and it is probable that their very internationalism accounts for the rapidity with which the form spread to the individual vernaculars" (Miller 1956, p. 152). "The paradoxical encomium continued to be written in Latin for at least another century, but it reached its apogee in the volume of Dornavius" published in Hanover in 1619 (*ibid*.). Miller went on to state (*ibid*.):

> The Latin pseudo-encomia that won most applause, judging from their repeated appearance in nearly all these collections, would appear to be those by Daniel Heinsius on the louse (*Laus pediculi*), Philipp Melanchthon on the ant (*Laus formicae*), Bilibaldi Pirckheimer on the gout (*Laus* or *Apologia podagrae*), Caelio Calcagnino on the flea (*Pulicis encomium*), M. Antonius Majoragio on mud (*Luti encomium*), Joannes Passerati on the ass (*Encomium asini*), Janus Dousa on shade (*In laudem umbrae*), Justus Lipsius on the elephant (*Laus elephantis*), Franciscus Scribanius on the fly (*Muscae ex continua comparatione cum principe encomium*), and Erycius Puteanus on the egg (*Ovi*

encomium). All these authors — German, Dutch, Italian, French — were, it will be observed, humanists and scholars of some importance.

11. Some Other Burlesque Authors of Italy's Cinquecento

The *poesia giocosa*, not limited to the Middle Ages, is the subject of Croce (1945), Floriani (1987), and Previtera (1953). Italian burlesque prose and verse from the 16th century includes some (e.g., paradoxical encomia) by Annibal Caro, an author especially known other than for his humour. But see Ferroni (1968), Cherchi (1975).

Cesare Caporali (Mutini 1975), who like Coppetta was from Perugia (1531–1601), the illegitimate son of a canon, was an author with a good classicist education, and who in part of his *oeuvre* was a humorous poet. His social beginnings had made him poor, but because of his poetry he managed to find patronage (with three cardinals, as well as with noblemen) as well as rewards (Romei 1998, pp. 18–20). As a Bernesque poet, his style, in comparison to Coppetta's, was, it has been claimed, rather careless. Caporali was more pliant than Berni. Caporali was clearly influenced by Berni, but also by Pietro Aretino. Satirical and burlesque poetry in Italian in the 16th and 17th centuries is the subject of, for example, Romei (1984) and Corsaro (1999). Corsaro (2002) discussed comic exegesis in the 16th century. Pèrcopo (1865, 1908) are editions of the humorous poems by a particular author. Stella Galbiati (2007) tried to theorise satire in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Il Lasca (Antonio Francesco Grazzini), born in Florence in 1503 and who died there in 1584, by profession an apothecary, was an important humorous poet and comediographer. Not all of Lasca's *oeuvre* is Bernesque or even just humorous. He was among the founders of Florence's Accademia degli Umidi (then renamed Accademia Fiorentina), and nearly four decades afterwards, of the Accademia della Crusca. "Anton Francesco Grazzini, detto il Lasca, has earned a place for himself in Italian Cinquecento literature principally through his *Cene* and *Commedie*. These works have overshadowed his *Rime,* bernesque, amorous, religious and occasional, even though many of these are by no means lacking in merit" (Fucilla 1954, p. 420).

Guido Casoni was the author of a humorous text (of madhouse humour indeed) about a psychiatric hospital, *L'hospidale* (or *L'ospedale*) *de' pazzi incurabili,* which was republished in 1586 at the printers Giulio Cesare Cagnacini e Fratelli in Ferrara, by Tomaso Garzoni da Bagnocavallo, "con tre capitoli in fine sopra la pazzia". I have learned from a well-known psychologist of humour, Giovannatonio Forabosco (in an email he sent me in reply about this 16th-century text on 10 May 2014), that in recent decades *L'ospedale de' pazzi incurabili* was published in facsimile in 700 copies, and that Garzoni was the subject of a scholarly conference in the town of Bagnacavallo indeed. Garzoni added three poems (*capitoli*) of paradoxical encomium, entitled *In lode della Pazzia* (In Praise of Madness) at the end of his *Hospidale de' pazzi incurabili;* those three poems were by Teodoro Angelucci, by Guido Casoni, and by Garzoni himself, in that order.

Romei (1998, p. 14) also mentions a capitolo (which was published elsewhere) in praise of the *Pazzia*, by Lasca, as well as two capitoli in praise of the horse, respectively by Alessandro Pera, and by the self-described Accademico Sviluppato. Romei (1998, p. 15) mentions some self-deprecatory or comic self-portaits in verse, an antecedent being, in ancient Rome, Horace's device of the *deminutio sui* (self-diminishing).

The *capitolo ternario* was a metre established by Berni, and typical of 16th-century Bernesque poetry,[40] whereas Italian humorous poetry of the 17th century was metrically

[40] See Silvia Longhi's volume (1983) *Lusus. Il capitolo burlesco nel Cinquecento*.

diverse (Romei 1998, p. 12). Romei (*ibid*.) remarked about humorous poetry in the late 16th century flourishing in the North, as opposed to the South:

> […] Di fronte a queste sparute presenze viene da chiedersi se tanta pochezza sia reale, cioè se la poesia bernesca non abbia attecchito al sud, o se sia apparente, cioè se l'indistria editoriale, di gran lunga più forte al nord, abbia attinto ai serbatoi più vicini, esercitando una sorta di censura di mercato. Le vicende dell'ultimo passato e del prossimo fitiro fanno propendere per la prima possibilità.
>
> A fronte del deserto meridionale sta la piccola turba dei settentrionali, Prevalgonio i domini veneziani, con in testa Padova (P. Anselmi, G. B Barbi, Giulio Padovano, A. Zambardi), poi Venezia (Accademico Confuso, Accademico Sviluppato), Vicenza (G. Aviano), Serravalle (G. Casoni), Cividale (G. B. Fabri), Adria (L. Groto), Verona (D. Rondinelli). Notevole anche la concentraione lombarda con G. Borgogni (di Alba, ma milanese d'elezione), Silvio Geloso (milanese), G. B. Vignati (lodigiano), ed emiliana con A. M. Garofani (di Parma), Tommaso Garzoni (di Bagnacavallo), E. Giovannini (di Capugnano). Firenze e la Toscana in genere stanno attraversando un periodo poco brillante: tolti i sopravvissuti e i neonati, restano Scipione Metelli (di Castelnuovo Lunigiana) e L. Salviati. Roma sembra tacere.

> […] As opposed to these sporadic instances, one must ask oneself whether such paucity is real, that is to say, whether Bernesque poetry failed to take root in the South, or whether that paucity is merely an appearance, to wit, whether the publishing industry, much stronger in the North, tapped closer reservoirs, thus exercising a kind of censorship on the part of the market. What had happened in the recent past [i.e., in the mid-16th century, as opposed to its last three decades, which are the temporal scope of Romei (1998)] and what was going to happen in the near future [i.e., in the early 17th century] suggest that the first option was the case indeed.
>
> As opposed to the southern desert, one finds the little crowd of the Northerners. The Venetian domains prevail, headed by Padua (P. Anselmi, G.B. Barbi, Giulio Padovano, A. Zambardi), followed by Venice (Accademico Confuso, Accademico Sviluppato), Vicenza (G. Aviano), Serravalle (G. Casoni), Cividale [del Friuli] (G.B. Fabri), Adria (L. Groto), Verona (D. Rondinelli).[41] There also was a considerable set of authors concentrated in Lombardy — with G. Borgogni (from Alba, but who resided in Milan), Silvio Geloso (from Milan), G.B. Vignati (from Lodi) — and in Emilia, with [Anton Maria] Garofani (of Parma), Tommaso Garzoni (of Bagnacavallo), E. Giovannini (of Capugnano). Florence, and more generally Tuscany, were [during the last three decades of the 16th century] undergoing a far from brilliant period: apart from survivors and the newly born, one only finds there Scipione Metelli (of castelnuovo Lunigiana) and L. Salviati. Rome appears to be silent.]

Girolamo Amelonghi (or Amelunghi, or Amalonghi), known as il Forabosco (as well as o anche Martin Paladel, or Ser Galigastro da Varlecchio), from Pisa, was the author of a burlesque epic (*La Gigantea*) about respectively giants and responding to a burlesque epic about dwarves (*La Nanea*, perhaps by Serafini), published together as *La Gigantea insieme con la Nanea* in Florence in 1566, and then again in Florence in 1586, and then again, with the addition of Lasca's *La Guerra dei Mostri* (The War of Monsters), in Florence in 1612 and in Yverdon in 1772. *La Gigantea* comprises 128 octaves; it describes, farcically so, a war made by the Giants against the Gods. In a letter, Lasca accused Amelonghi of plagiarising, in *La Gigantea*, some work by Betto Arrighi that at present is not extant. Buiatti (1978) remarks that nevertheless, in the second stanza of *La Guerra dei Mostri*, Lasca had acknowledged Amerlonghi as being the author of *La Gigantea.* Amelonghi is the subject of a biography by Buiatti (1978). *Forabosco* was his nickname, whereas there existed a fairly well-known painter of the baroque, Girolamo Forabosco (his real name), whose paintings are found at the Prado in Madrid and at the Uffizi in Florence.

La Nanea and *La Guerra dei Mostri* emulated *La Gigantea*, as did Sciarra Fiorentino's *Stanze sopra la rabbia di Macone* (Stanzas about Mahomet's Anger), stanzas that constitute the (largely mythological) first canto of an unachieved epic (those stanzas are playful, and what makes the epic heroi-comic is that when the poet refers to some goddess, he explicitly makes her a harlot): that first canto nowhere, other than in the title, refer to Saracens or Turks,

[41] Dionisio Rondinelli, from Verona, came from a Florentine family of men of letters (Romei 1998, p. 14).

and Sciarra Fiorentino was apparently none else than the military leader Piero Strozzi (1510–1558), a relative of the house of Medici, yet a fierce opponent of their main line; as at the battle of Montemurlo, his father and he failed to overthrow the Medici rule in Florence, he fled to France, to the court of Catherine of Medici. In the 1540s, he fought for France in Italy and then Scotland; in the 1550s, he still fought in the service of France, and was named Marshal of France in 1554, but died of his wounds while participating in the siege of Thionville, near Metz in Lorraine. "He is generally credited as the inventor of the dragoon military speciality (arquebusiers à cheval or horse arquibusiers)".[42]

Piero Strozzi's supposed anti-Saracen or anti-Turk animus in the title of his unfinished epic *sopra la rabbia di Macone* was probably preposterous: so inimical was he to Cosimo I of Medici, that in order to damage the latter's father-in-law, don Pietro di Toledo, the Vice Roy of Naples, Piero Strozzi tried in 1543 to take by surprise and loot the city of Monopoli, with the help of Ottoman ships. Strozzi failed in that attack, because a spy revealed his plan to the Vice Roy. Moreover, in 1542, having been offered and having accepted the fortified small city of Marano Lagunare (part of territories contended by Austria and the Republic of Venice) by a group of Venetian subjects that had rebelled and captured it, Piero Strozzi blackmailed Venice: Venice did not want the Austrians, or the small Spanish fleet in Trieste, to intervene in Marano Lagunare, and yet, Venice ordered the shelling and destruction of a small fort in Lignano, built by the men of the Udine merchant Beltrame Sacchia, the leader of the original taking of Marano Lagunare. Strozzi tried, and failed, to get the King of France interested in his initiative in Marano; therefore, Strozzi could expect an Austrian counter-attack. Strozzi had friends in Venice (e.g., the Patriarch of Aquileia, Marino Grimani). Strozzi blackmailed Venice into buying from him Marano; otherwise, he threatened, he would offer it to the Ottoman Sultan. Venice's envoy, Antonio Cappello, reached an agreement with Strozzi: the Republic of Venice paid 35,000 ducats, and bought Marano.[43]

If Strozzi was indeed the same as the poet Sciarra Fiorentino, then those two episodes proving Strozzi's readiness to use the Turks against his opponents in Italy make it quite clear that the declared subject of his planned epic (of which he only wrote the first canto) being *sopra la rabbia di Macone* was only a mannerism, and did not reflect actual animus. In life, his animus was directed against some rulers in Italy.

Italian humorous literature during the Renaissance is much more various than this brief sample may suggest. At http://www.nuovorinascimento.org/cinquecento/burleschi.pdf one can access a valuable bibliography of Italian burlesque authors and literature as originally published in the Renaissance, and prepared in 2006 by Danilo Romei in Florence (Romei 2006). Cf. the survey of humorous poets in Romei (1998).

Apart from the Bernesque poets, other humorous poets of the 16th century include the Fidentian school (*i fidenziani*), i.e., the imitators of the *Cantici di Fidenzio* by Camillo Scroffa (Romei 1998, pp. 20–23). These poets were especially active in the city of Vicenza. Moreover, Macaronic poetry, combining Latin with the vernacular (following in the steps of Teofilo Folengo's *Baldus*), eclipsed in the late 16th century, flourished again in the 17th (Romei 1998, pp. 23–24). Macaronic poetry was rather diverse. It departed from the model of *Baldus* in a zoo-epic fragment, the unfinished epic *Macaroidos*, by Bernardino Stefonio (1560–1620), a respected Jesuit and author who chose not to sign it, even though that text describes a war not between animals, but rather between food staples of days of abstinence (these foods *di magro* are headed by Fagiolo, King of Florence: the association of beans with Florence was proverbial) and of days when meat is permissible; these foods *di grasso* are headed by Prince Macarone (Romei 1998, pp. 23–24).

[42] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piero_Strozzi
[43] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piero_Strozzi

Italian satire in the 16th and 17th century is the subject of a volume by Vittorio Cian (1945), *La Satira,* Vol. 2: *Dall'Ariosto al Chiabrera,* and a volume by Antonio Corsaro (1999), *La regola e la licenza. Studi sulla poesia satirica e burlesca fra Cinque e Seicento.* Also see Galbiati's article (1987) "Per una teoria della satira fra Quattro e Cinquecento".

12. The Pox (*mal francese*) as a Literary Vehicle for Burlesque Satire

The *mal francese,* "French disease", the pox, became a major concern in 16th-century Western Europe. An edited book by Kevin Patrick Siena (2005), *Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe,* has an abstract that begins as follows: "Few illnesses in the early modern period carried the impact of the dreaded pox, a lethal sexually transmitted disease usually thought to be syphilis. In the early sixteenth century the disease quickly emerged as a powerful cultural force. Just as powerful were the responses of doctors, bureaucrats, moralists, playwrights, and satirists". In particular, among the chapters in that paper collection, "[s]tudies in literary and metaphoric responses examine how early modern writers put images of sexual infection and the diseased body to a range of rhetorical and political uses" (*ibid*.).

Chapter 7 in Siena (2005) is "French Diseases and Italian Responses: Representations of the mal francese in the Literature of Cinquecento Tuscany", by Domenico Zanrè. Originally from Peterhead, Father Domenico Zanrè used to be a lecturer in Italian at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, before studying for the priesthood in Rome, being ordained in Aberdeen, being an assistant priest in Inverness, then being seconded as Private Secretary to the Papal Nuncio in London, and finally becoming, in 2015, the first parish priest at a new Catholic church, St. Columba's in Culloden, Inverness, Scotland.[44]

Both and Lombardi (2002) and Zanrè (2005) are concerned with a work by Il Grappa, namely, *I Cicalamenti del Grappa intorno al sonetto "Poi che mia speme è lunga a venir troppo"* (Grappa's Chatter Concerning the Sonnet "Since what I long for is too long in coming" [by Petrarch]). A work of comic exegesis; it was published by Venturino Ruffinelli, in Mantua in 1545. It was reprinted by B. Canovetti in Lucca in 1862.

"The use of the *mal francese* as a literary vehicle for burlesque satire is evident in [that] largely unknown work by il Grappa" (Zanrè 2005, p. 189). "This commentary […] purports to be a scholarly exegesis of poem 88 of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*" (*ibid*.). The subheading of Grappa's work is "Dove si ciarla allungo delle lodi delle donne et del mal francioso", i.e., "where one chats at length about the good qualities of women, and about the French Disease". There is a mock-dedication of Grappa's work, and the dedicatee is indicated by a fictitious name: "Signora Antea Arcifanfana", of San Petronio Vecchio, "clearly a fictitious name that stages the stage for the ludic pronouncements that are to follow" (Zanrè 2005, p. 189). Zanrè explains (*ibid*., pp. 189–190):

> […] Signora Antea, il Grappa informs the reader, is an ideal dedicatee, since she herself is 'un cimitero di mal francioso' (a veritable graveyard of the French Disease) (*I Cicalamenti,* fol. 2^{r}). Like her Boccaccian counterparts in the Preface to the *Decameron,* Signora Antea is shut away at home, with only her needle, thread, and spindle for company. Similarly, just like Boccaccio's 'gentildonne fiorentine', she is suffering from an illness — in her case, it is not love-sickness, but rather the *mal francese.* The reader is assured from the very beginning that il Grappa will offer 'una spositione tanto nuova' (an exposition so original) that it will not only surprise other commentators, but even Petrarch himself, the original author of the sonnet (*I Cicalamenti,* fol. 6^{v}).
>
> Il Grappa's commentary begins with a rhetorical question: would Petrarch have acquired so much learning and knowledge, evident in his elegant compositions, if he had not contracted the *mal*

[44] http://www.stcolumbasculloden.org/fr-domenico-zanre.html

> *francese* from his beloved Laura? ((*I Cicalamenti*, fols 15^{v}–16^{r}). The reason that Petrarch spoke so warmly of her in his *Canzoniere* was thus to express his gratitude to her for bestowing him with such a gift. Indeed, according to il Grappa, women in general are to be praised, since they are the 'cagione di tanti nostril beni' (the reason for such great riches bestowed upon us) (*I Cicalamenti*, fol. 16^{r}).
>
> The characteristics of the disease, according to il Grappa, are akin to the behaviour of a pedant towards his pupils: as log as students follow the rules and are obedient, they will be given useful instruction; when they choose to transgress and become disobedient, the *mal francese*, just like the pedant, is forced to scourge them in order to teach them a lesson. Whoever does not abide by the rules suffers as a result — this, il Grappa intimates, was the case with Petrarch, who apparently gave little care to his affliction, a fact that is evidence in poem 88: […]

Parodic or playful exegesis in 16th-century Italy is the subject of a volume edited by Antonio Corsaro and paolo Procaccioli (2002), *"Cum notibusse et commentaribusse". L'esegesi parodistica e giocosa del Cinquecento.* Il Grappa also authored a mock-commentary (printed in 1545, perhaps in Mantua) of Firenzuola's poem in praise of sausage. That mock-commentary was reprinted vy Romagnoli in Bologna in 1881, an edition then reprinted in facsimile in 1968, in Bologna by the Commissione per I Testi di Lingua.

13. Comic Songs: The Mid-16th Century Emergence of the *canzone villanesca* and Its Subgenre Related to Octaves Inserted in Farce, and the Case of Velardiniello's Rustics Describing Animals Performing Absurd Actions, in the Tradition of Fantasy Nonsense of Burchiellesque Verse

In Italian poetry, the *strambotto* is a poem of love, intended to be set to music. It comprises just one stanza of eight lines (thus, an octave), the lines being hendecasyllables; or then, the *strambotto* only comprises six lines, all of them hendecasyllables. While the origins of this metrical form are controversial, at any rate the name *strambotto* came into use in the 15th century. In music, the *strambotto,* a polyphonic form typical of Italy's Quattrocento, has the melody of the first two lines (i.e., the first hendecasyllabic couplet) repeated in the next three couples of lines, but sometimes there is a melodic variant in the last two lines.

In music, the *villanella,* or *villanesca,* or *canzone villanesca* (the very name states an association with rustics) is a genre of songs, of Neapolitan origin, whose vogue was in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is a genre of a popular register (as opposed to the high-brow madrigal). Vivacious stanzas (in the dialect, or in Tuscan as being the Italian language of culture) were set to music to be sung polyphonically, usually by three voices. One rhythm was kept all along the melody.

The vogue of the *villanella* was not confined to Naples or more generally, Italy. It reached the Flanders and Germany. One finds prominent musicians among authors of *villanelle,* including the following:

- The madrigalist and "musical Petrarchist" Luca Marenzio (Coccaglio near Brescia, 1553 or 1554 – Rome, 1599), active in Trento, then Modena, then Florence, then Rome, and who also travelled in Poland and Venice. Apart from madrigals, he also composed, in a popular vein, *Villanelle et arie alla napolitana* (*Enciclopedia Garzanti della Musica,* Milan 1974, s.v. Marenzio, p. 347);
- The Flemish composer Orlando di Lasso (Mons, ca. 1532 – Munich, 1594) a versatile polyphonist formed on both the Flemish and Italian traditions, and who was also open to French influences. Lasso was active in Naples (1549–1542), Rome (1553–1554), and Antwerp (1555–1556: in Antwerp, he published his early collections of madrigals and mottettos). Then, from 1556 to his death, Lasso was

based at the court in Munich, but he nevertheless made several journeys, in order to hire singers or players for the Bavarian court, and those travels took him to the Netherlands, to places in Germany, to Bohemia, and (in 1567 and 1574) to Italy (*Enciclopedia Garzanti della Musica*, Milan 1974, s.v. Lasso, p. 313);

- The Flemish composer Adrian Willaert (Bruges?, ca. 1490 – Venice, 1562), best known for his madrigals, and who pioneered sustained attention to the poetry of the lyrics. Willaert's volume *Canzoni villanesche alla napolitana* appeared in 1545. Many of Willaert's madrigals appeared in anthologies. His books of madrigals are two, one of these published in 1546, whereas the other one appeared posthumously, in 1563, and also included songs in the Neapolitan fashion. Willaert's collection *Musica nova* (1559) comprised madrigals, mottettos, and polyphionic dialogues (*Enciclopedia Garzanti della Musica*, Milan 1974, s.v. Willaert, pp. 626–627).

In an article entitled "The Canzone Villanesca and Comic Culture: The Genesis and Evolution of a Mixed Genre (1537–1557)", and publisahed in the journal *Early Music History,* Donna Cardamone and Cesare Corsi (2006) traced the early history of the genre of the *villanesca* to other textual genres, "by engaging concepts from two related approaches, namely, genre criticism and speech-act theory" (*ibid.*, p. 59), "reinforcing claims by Gennaro Monti and Alfred Einstein that the canzone villanesca is essentially a strambotto (or ottava rima) transformed by the addition of a refrain after each hendecasyllabic couplet" (*ibid*.). Culturally, the roots of the genre are situated in Naples, and the verse was in the Neapolitan dialect. The relation to the *strambotto* in relation to the *canzone villanesca* and the *villanella alla napoletana,* their metre and their musical forms, was discussed in Cardamone (1977).

Even though they adopt a formalist approach, Cardamone and Corsi (2006) warn that metre and structure are not enough, to do justice to the *canzone villanesca:* "it has become increasingly clear that when intrinsic qualities like attitude, tone and use-value are addressed, the result is a far more comprehensive view of the changes that the villanesca experienced during the initial phrase of its development (1537–57), when Neapolitan songwriters reproduced or varied the generic expectations of their audiences" (*ibid.*, p. 59). Their "our investigation was in fact motivated by Corsi's discovery of recurrent patterns while preparing a typology of 148 villanesche by Neapolitan songwriters (that is, poet-composers) published between 1537 and 1546" (*ibid.*, p. 60). The typology developed by Corsi "revealed not only the presence of subgenres with models the characters and plot lines of Italian comic genres, but also pronounced affinity with the speech acts associated with both erudite and improvised comedy as well as farces" (*ibid.*). Then Cardamone "undertook a typology of sixty-four villanesche by Neapolitan songwriters working in Rome and published there between 1537 and 1557 […], which revealed new patterns in the proliferation subgenres as well as the continuing evolution of the villanesca as subgeneric mixture in which dramatic and lyric/melic modes presentation blend perfectly" (*ibid*.). Cardamone was writing in the first person, in her paper with Corsi (Cardamone and Corsi 2006, pp. 60–61, my brackets):

> Since subgenres may now be viewed as the common means of renewal, they will form the basis for a new model of explanation regarding the villanesca's genesis, which I will argue is a secondary stage in the evolution of the strambotto or ottava rima, specifically the kind cultivated by the legendary Neapolitan bard, musician playwright Velardiniello in his *Farza de li massari* [Farce of the Farmers]. Unfortunately, nothing whatsoever is known of Velardiniello's life, and the period of time in which he flourished has been the subject of much debate. Yet telling linguistic imitations of his farce, with pointed references to the characters and their attitudes, turn up consistently in early villanesche, indicating that Velardiniello must have been active in Naples during the 1530s and 1540s. To demonstrate his pervasive influence on Neapolitan songwriters with respect to the emergence of subgenres, I will address the subject matter of predominant text types in the villanesca repertoire, drawing liberally upon ottave from Velardiniello's farce and villanesche that reveal processes imitation. […]

Velardiniello's *Farza de li massari* is composed of octaves. It "may have been popularised initially by Velardiniello himself, taking to the stage as a singing actor with colleagues, reciting the ottave to a formulaic melody" (Cardamone and Corsi 2006, p. 62). "The farce concludes with a series of ottave in which farmers provide 'eyewitness' accounts of various creatures engaged in absurd acts such as dancing, playing musical instruments fighting. Ridiculous gestures abound, inviting improvised antics the part of the singing actors to uphold the spirit of gross exaggeration" (*ibid.*). Consider the following two octaves, which I reproduce in both Velardiniello's original in the Neapolitan dialect, and the English translation from Cardamone and Corsi (2006, p. 62, my brackets):

Una lampuca ho visto co na groia	I saw a colourful fish [*recte:* a mahi-mahi fish]with a crane
Fare a punia contra tre cicale;	Fighting [hitting with fists] against three crickets;
No turdo ho visto che pasceva aloia,	I saw a thrush that was feeding on aloe [precious, bitter]
E no reviezzo cauzarse le stivale;	And a wren [not so! It is a robin!] put his boots on;
Ho visto ancor na mosca a Sant'Aloia	I have even seen a fly at Saint Eligio
Iocar co no galiero a carnevale;	Playing with a dormouse at carnival;
Ma, sopratutto, ho visto un gruosso bufolo	But, above all, I saw a huge [water] buffalo
Na vespa occider co no tarratufolo.	Kill a hornet with a clam.

Thus, thematically we have a zoo-epic, even though it is only sometimes that the animals are pitted in a fight against each other. The other example from Cardamone and Corsi (2006) is this other octave (*ibid.,* p. 62, my brackets):

Io vidde un gran miraculo a la Costa:	I saw a great miracle at the sea coast:
Un ascio cavalcare un orso imbardella,	An owl riding a harnessed bear,
E vidde con quest'occhi una ragosta	And with these eyes I saw a lobster
Far la pavan a suon di ciaramella;	Dancing the pavane to the sound of a bagpipe [no! A shawm!][45]
E no vozzacchio farese na sopposta,	And a buzzard make itself a support [ot is it a suppository?]
E po iocare a mammara cecella;	And then playing mammara cecella [carrying anothe player];
Po vidde dar no iuntro a na cestunia	Next I saw pieces of rope [hit a tortoise/turtle]
E dare a na marotta vinte punie.	Give twenty blows to a turtle and a magpie.
	[*Recte:* And give a magpie twenty blows.]

"Mammara cecella (mammara nocelle) is a children's game in which two persons cross hands, making a little chair to carry a third person" (Cardamone and Corsi 2006, p. 62, fn. 11, citing p. 377 in the *Nuovo Vocabolario dialettale napoletano* by Francesco D'Ascoli).

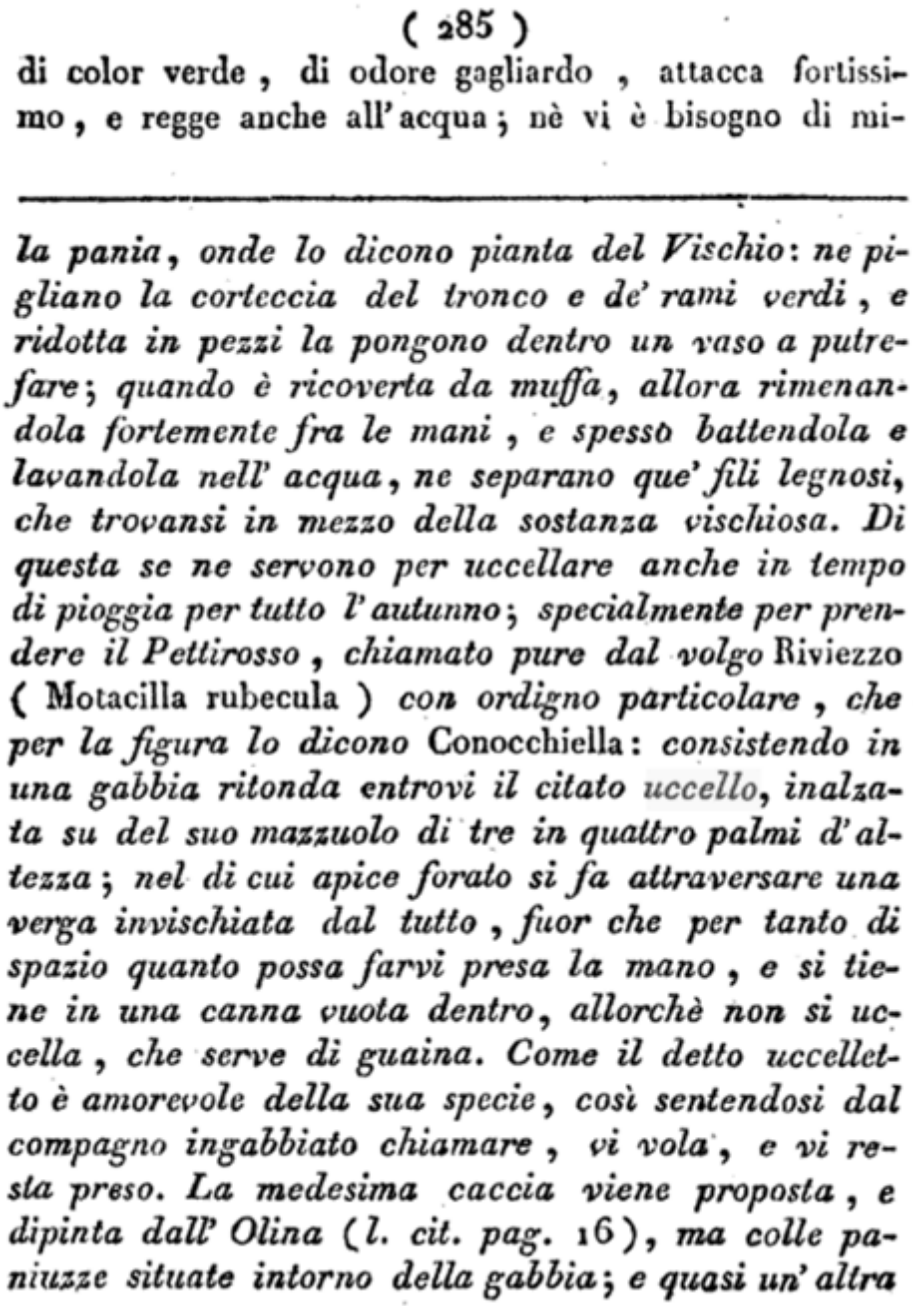
The first of these two octaves was made into a *villanesca* by adding a refrain: "Among the villanesche in Giovan Domenico da Nola's second book (1541) is an ottava from Velardiniello's farce transformed into a villanesca with a recurrent refrain and slight linguistic variations, providing rare evidence of an explicit borrowing process" (Cardamone and Corsi 2006, p. 63):

Una lampuca ò visto co 'na groya,
Una lampuca ò visto co 'na groya, [sic: repeated]
Fare la pugna contra doi cicale.
Uno scurzo ho visto che passeva loya,
Ho vist'anchor 'na mosca a Santa Loya,
Fare la pugna contra doi cicale.
Un rivezzo calzarse le stivale,
Iocar co 'no galier a carnevale,
Fare la pugna contra doi cicale.
Ma sopra tutt'ò vist'un grosso bufalo,
Stordir 'na vespa co 'no taratufalo,
Fare la pugna contra doi cicale.

[45] "[T]he largest size is called a *piffero;* a smaller, *ciaramella;* and a still smaller, and shriller, *pippizzera*" (Sinclair 1908, p. 209). Cf. Baines (1979, pp. 133–134).

The Neapolitan dialectal bird-name *reviezzo,* which Cardamone and Corsi (2006, p. 62) translated with "wren", actually denotes 'robin' (the red-breasted bird whose standard Italian name is *pettirosso*). Both *marotta* 'magpie' (in standard Italian the bird-name is *gazza*) and *reviezzo* are also currently found as family names in the Italian onomasticon.

In Vol. 4 of the journal *Atti del Real Istituto d'Incoraggiamento alle Scienze Naturali di Napoli,* printed by the printing house of Angelo Trani ("dalla Stamperia della Società Tipografica") in Naples in 1828, a footnote on p. 285 discusses the use of bird-lime for ensnaring birds, which, it was claimed, could also be done — by using a kind of cage called *conocchiella* — even during rainy periods in the autumn, especially in order to capture the robin (*pettirosso*), which the people also call *riviezzo*: "*specialmente per prendere il Pettirosso, chiamato pure dal volgo* Riviezzo (Motacilla rubecula)" (the latter scientific name was introduced fior the redbreast by Linnaeus — Linn. *Faun. Suec.* p. 95 — but the current scientific name is *Erithacus rubecula*):



(285)

di color verde, di odore gagliardo, attacca fortissimo, e regge anche all'acqua; nè vi è bisogno di mi-

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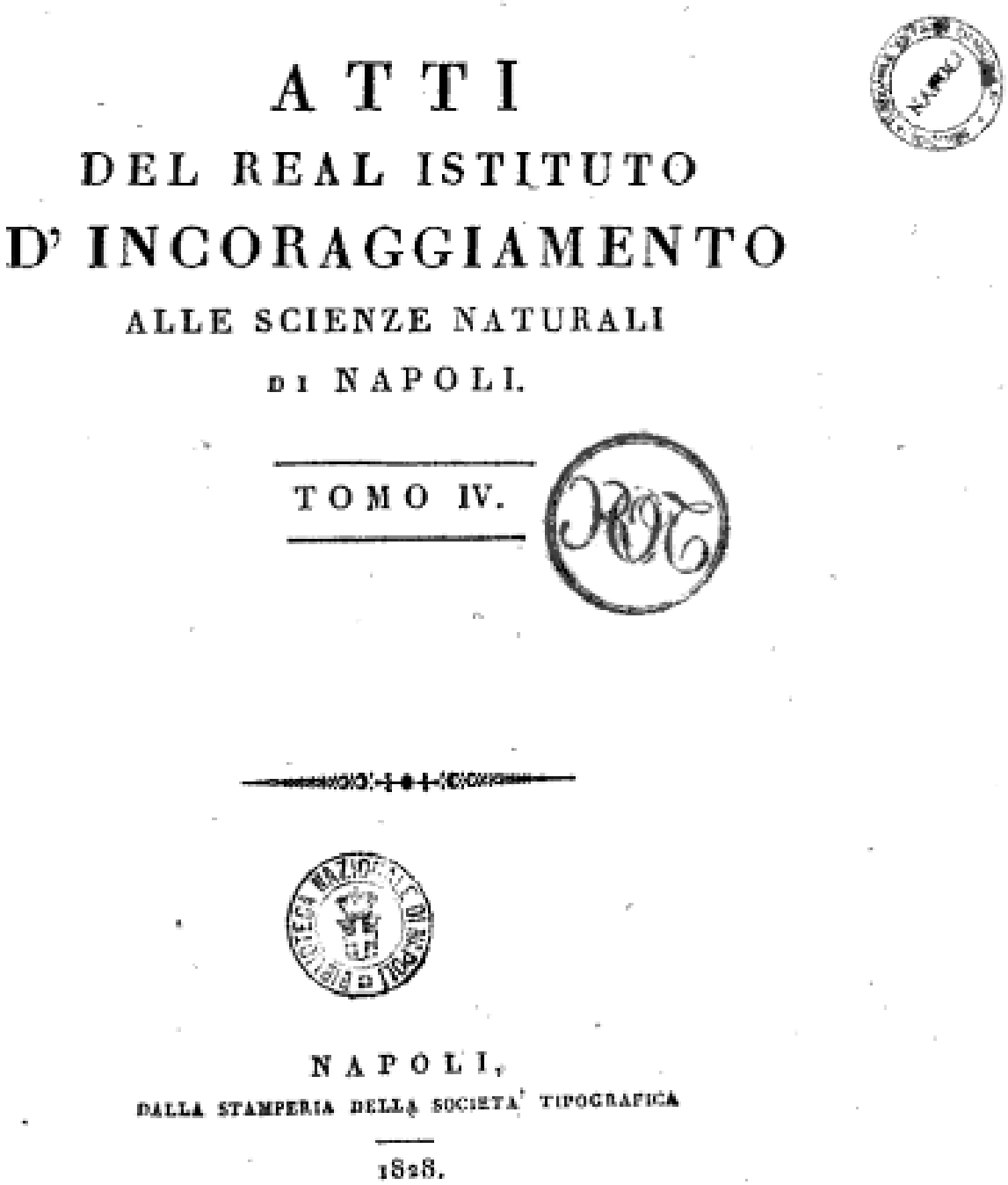
la pania, onde lo dicono pianta del Vischio: ne pigliano la corteccia del tronco e de' rami verdi, e ridotta in pezzi la pongono dentro un vaso a putrefare; quando è ricoverta da muffa, allora rimenandola fortemente fra le mani, e spesso battendola e lavandola nell' acqua, ne separano que' fili legnosi, che trovansi in mezzo della sostanza vischiosa. Di questa se ne servono per uccellare anche in tempo di pioggia per tutto l'autunno; specialmente per prendere il Pettirosso, chiamato pure dal volgo Riviezzo (Motacilla rubecula) *con ordigno particolare, che per la figura lo dicono* Conocchiella: *consistendo in una gabbia ritonda entrovi il citato uccello, inalzata su del suo mazzuolo di tre in quattro palmi d'altezza; nel di cui apice forato si fa attraversare una verga invischiata dal tutto, fuor che per tanto di spazio quanto possa farvi presa la mano, e si tiene in una canna vuota dentro, allorchè non si uccella, che serve di guaina. Come il detto uccelletto è amorevole della sua specie, così sentendosi dal compagno ingabbiato chiamare, vi vola, e vi resta preso. La medesima caccia viene proposta, e dipinta dall' Olina (l. cit. pag. 16), ma colle paniuzze situate intorno della gabbia; e quasi un' altra*



ATTI
DEL REAL ISTITUTO
D' INCORAGGIAMENTO
ALLE SCIENZE NATURALI
DI NAPOLI.

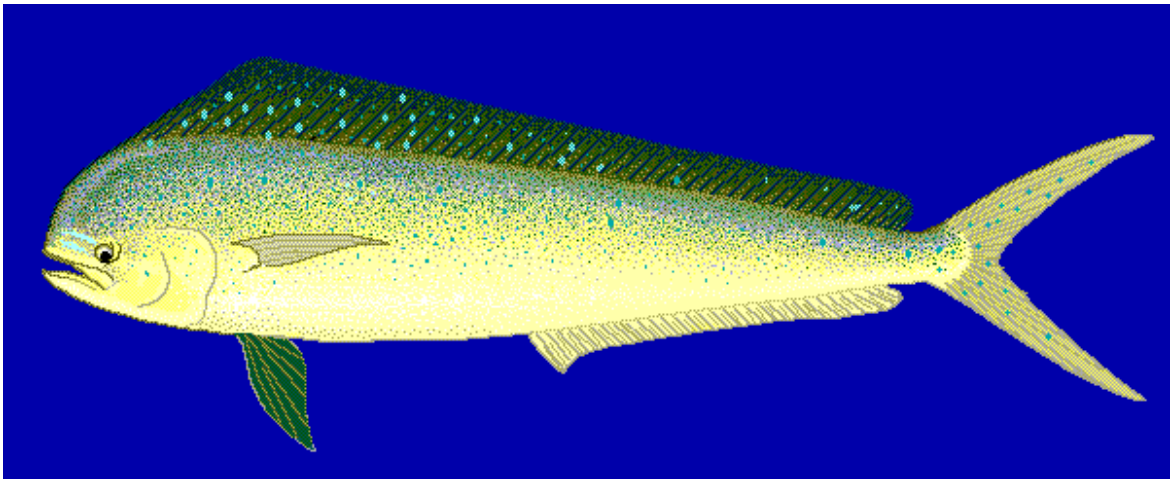
TOMO IV.

NAPOLI,
DALLA STAMPERIA DELLA SOCIETA' TIPOGRAFICA
1828.

The front page of Vol. 4 of the *Atti del Real Istituto d'Incoraggiamento alle Scienze Naturali di Napoli.*

The fish name *lampuca* is also found in Maltese (*lampuka*). The standard Italian form is *lampuga*, along with *corifena* or, for the given species, *corifena cavallina*, corresponding to the scientific name *Coryphaena hippurus* (introduced by Linnaeaus in 1758). The genus belongs to the family *Coryphaenidae* within the order *Perciformes*. Valenciennes in 1833 introduced a scientific name, *Lampugus siculus*, which was not retained because it is a synonym; the genus name clearly reflects the vernacular term *lampuga* (even though Valenciennes turned it into a masculine Latin form). This ray-finned fish is surface-dwelling, and a migrant one, and is found in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans, in tropical and subtropical waters. Nevertheless, it is also found in the Mediterranean Sea. It approaches the coast only at the time of egg laying, which is in the autumn. Because of its quite wide geographical spread, this fish is denoted in English by the names *mahi-mahi* (/ˈmɑːhiːˈmɑːhiː/), originally a reduplicative Hawaiian term whose semantic motivation is from the sense 'very strong'. This is because in the ocean, it may weigh even, exceptionally,[46] 18 kg, whereas in Italy[47] its weight ranges between 0.3 and 8 kg. Another widespread English name for the same fish is *dolphinfish* (plural *dolphinfishes*), even though this fish is unrelated to dolphin, which are mammals. This particular species is, more precisely, called the *common dolphinfish*, the other species in the family known in English as the *pompano dolphinfish*. "In parts of the Pacific and along the English-speaking coast of South Africa, the mahi-mahi is commonly referred to by its name in Spanish, *dorado*".[48]

> Mahi-mahi have compressed bodies and a single long-based dorsal fin extending from the head almost to the tail. Mature males have prominent foreheads protruding well above the body proper. Females have a rounded head. Their caudal fins and anal fins. are sharply concave. They are distinguished by dazzling colors — golden on the sides, and bright blues and greens on the sides and back. The pectoral fins of the mahi-mahi are iridescent blue. The flank is broad and golden. Out of the water, the fish often change color (giving rise to their Spanish name, *dorado*, "golden"), going through several hues before finally fading to a muted yellow-grey upon death.



A dolphinfish, i.e., a mahi-mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*), called *lampuga* in Italian.[49]

[46] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahi-mahi states: "Catches typically are 7 to 13 kg (15 to 29 lb) and a meter in length. They rarely exceed 15 kg (33 lb), and mahi-mahi over 18 kg (40 lb) are exceptional. Mahi-mahi are among the fastest-growing of fish."

[47] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coryphaena_hippurus states: "Raggiunge una lunghezza massima di circa 2 metri ed un peso di circa 20 chilogrammi. Nei mari italiani il peso medio delle catture varia da 3-4 etti a 8 chilogrammi".

[48] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahi-mahi This is also the source of the following indented quotation block.

[49] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coryphaena_hippurus#/media/File:Cohip_u0.png

At present, mahi-mahi fish appears occasionally on Italian markets, which are reasonably interested in this fish. In contrast, in the oceans (especially in the Pacific), the mahi-mahi is much more important, commercially.[50] In the Atlantic, it is found as far north as north-western Spain.

Let us consider Italian dialectal names for fish of the species *Coryphaena hippurus*. Bear in mind that by law, the various harbour-offices (*capitanerie di porto*) of Italy's port-cities with a fishing fleet have a list of official regional names for the various fish species, for use for commercial purposes, in order to avoid confusion. This is said as an aside.

The data in the following table are taken from an entry, authored by Paolo Boni and dated 25 September 2006, of "Corifena o lampuga (*Coryphaena hippurus*) (Prodotti della pesca)" at http://www.ars-alimentaria.it/schedaProdotto.do?idProdotto=818946&siglaRegione=&tipologia=

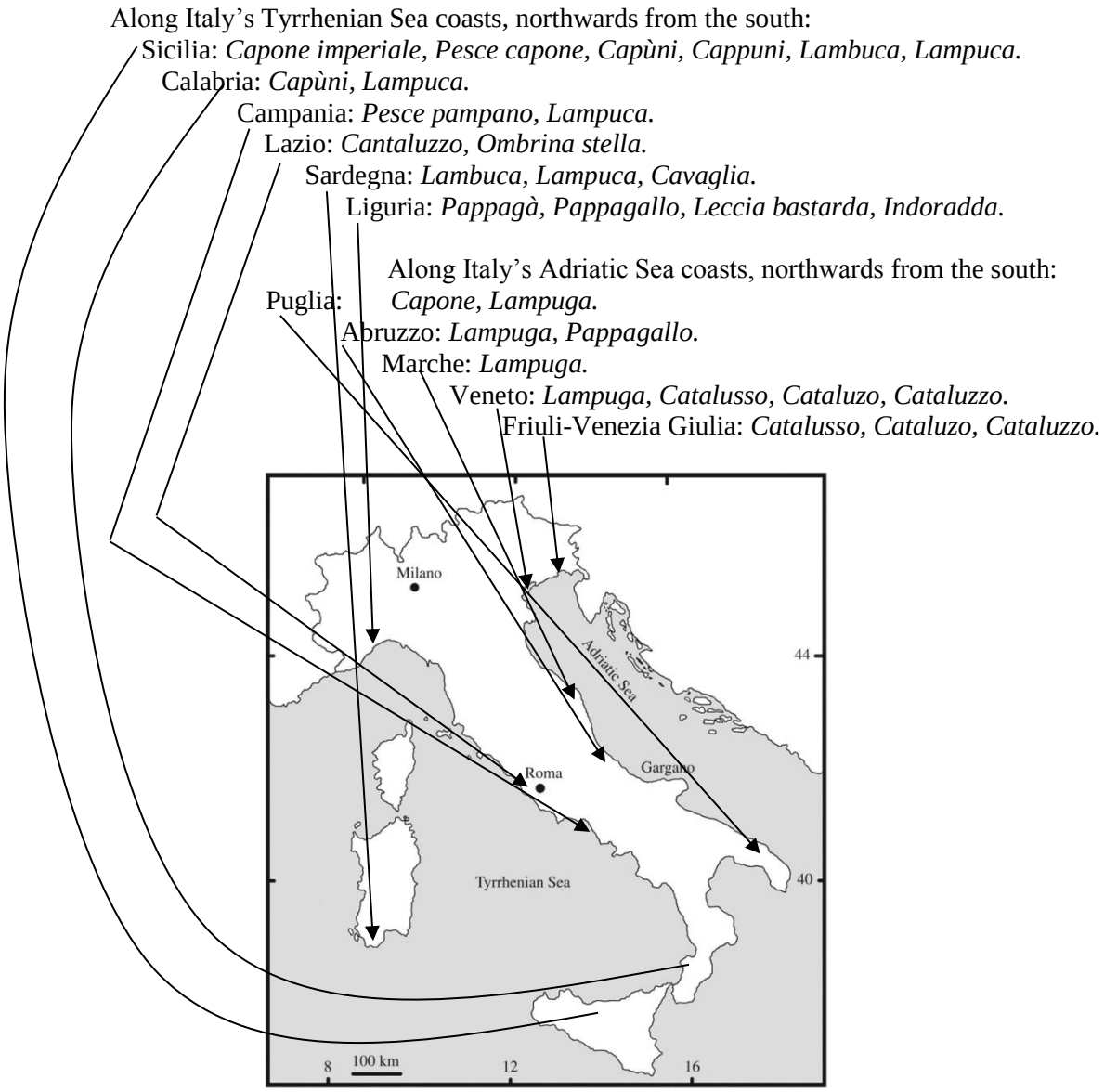


Image made by Robbie Cada (http://www.fishbase.org), and in the public domain; retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36952432

[50] http://www.repertorioittico.uniprom.it/default.asp?cerca=Y&ID=96 states, under the rubric "Valore commerciale": "Specie di discreto interesse sui nostri mercati ove compare saltuariamente, di notevole importanza invece in altre parti del mondo, in particolare nell' areale del Pacifico, ove se ne sta incrementando la pesca e se ne sta sperimentando l' allevamento; commercializzata fresca o congelata, sia intera che in tranci".

Above: A mahi-mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*), photographed in the Gulf of Mexico.[51]

Left: A male mahi-mahi, photographed in Costa Rica.[52] Independently, the page http://www.trueknowledge.com/q/rakingo_fish (dated 12 August 2010, and accessed in 2011) states: "A rakingo is a large male dolphinfish or mahi-mahi. On the West Coast they are known as dorado. On the East Coast they are known as dolphin. In Hawaii and most of the non-coastal United States, they are known as mahi-mahi. 'Rakingo' is another name for the male, or "bull", which has a pronounced forehead compared to the female, or "cow", of the species. To most fisherm[e]n, a rakingo is a large male dolphinfish known for hard-fighting behavior and aerial acrobatics. Both of which have made the rakingo one of the most sought after by anglers around the world".

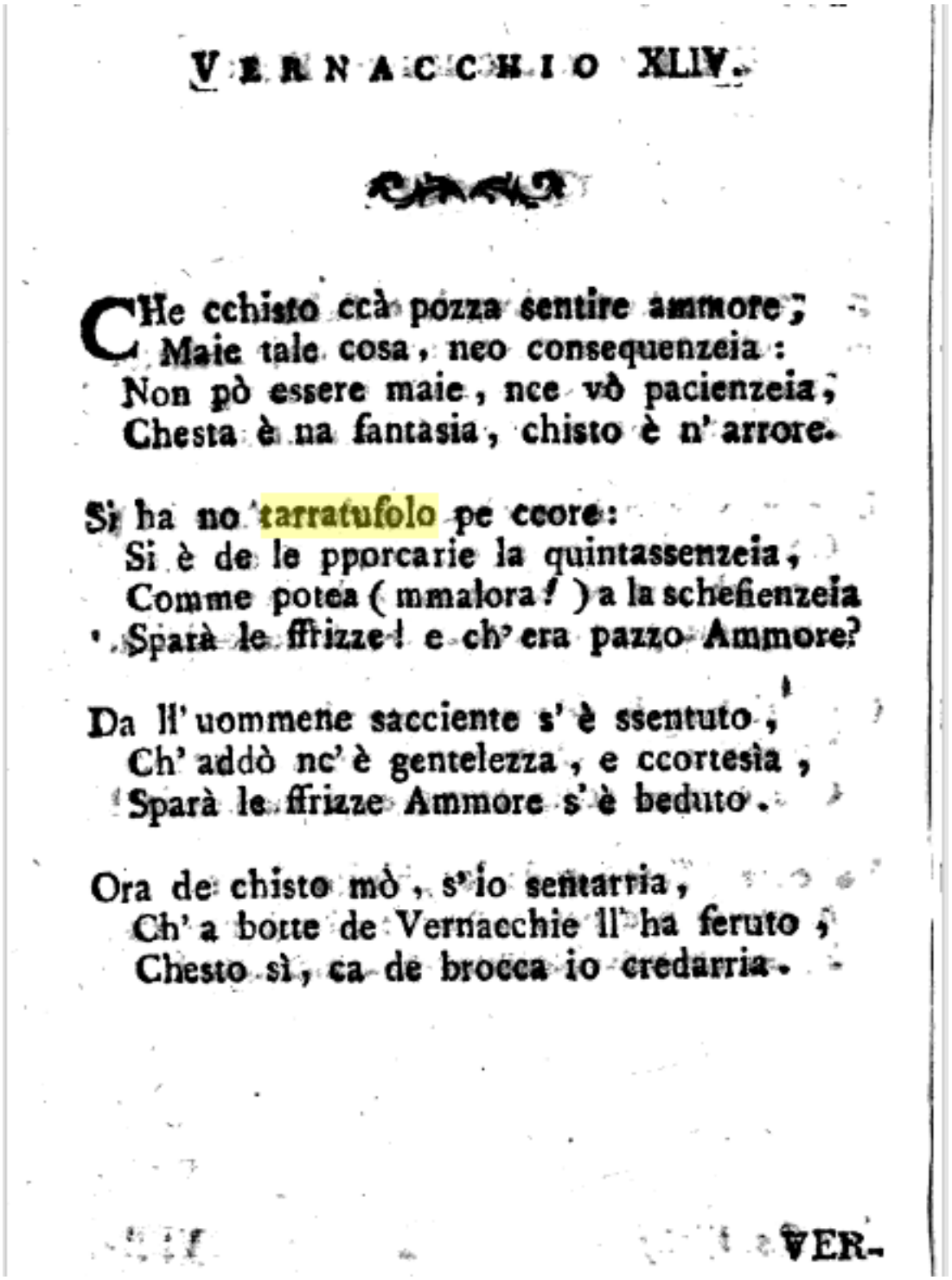
Next page: A Minoan fresco, showing a young fisherman with dolphinfishes from Akrotiri, on the Greek island of Santorini, and dated to ca. 1600 B.C.E. Height: 1.10 m. Note the blue and yellow colours of the fish.

[51] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coryphaena_hippurus#/media/File:Dolphinfish_(Coryphaena_hippurus).jpg "Dolphinfish (Coryphaena hippurus) Image ID: fish4173, NOAA's Fisheries Collection Location: Gulf of Mexico Credit: SEFSC Pascagoula Laboratory; Collection of Brandi Noble, NOAA/NMFS/SEFSC […] This image is in the public domain because it contains materials that originally came from the U.S. *National* Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, taken or made as part of an employee's official duties".

[52] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahi-mahi#/media/File:Mahi_mahi_costa_rica.jpg

Whereas *bufolo* and *tarratufolo* rhyme (as though both of them had an etymological Latin diminutive ending, even though Latin *bubalus* did not), in contrast in in Giovan Domenico da Nola's text, in the adaptation with a refrain we find *bufalo* rhyming with taratufalo, whose ending was modified to suit the rhyme.

The Neapolitan word *tarratufolo* 'clam' occurs in a song, reproduced below from *La violejeda / spartuta / ntra buffe, e bernacchie / pe chi se l'ha mmeretate / soniette / De chi è Ammico de lo ghiusto*, a book of 322 pages published in Naples in 1788 by the printer Giuseppe Maria Porcelli. The second stanza begins by stating, "There is a clam instead of the heart" ("Si ha no tarratufolo per ccore"), as a clam is cold and resists attempts to open it:



VERNACCHIO XLIV.

CHe cchisto ccà pozza sentire ammore;
Maie tale cosa, neo consequenzeia:
Non pò essere maie, nce vò pacienzeia;
Chesta è na fantasia, chisto è n' arrore.

Si ha no tarratufolo pe ccore:
Si è de le pporcarie la quintassenzeia,
Comme potea (mmalora!) a la schefienzeia
Sparà le ffrizze! e ch' era pazzo Ammore?

Da ll' uommene sacciente s' è ssentuto,
Ch' addò nc' è gentelezza, e ccortesìa,
Sparà le ffrizze Ammore s' è beduto.

Ora de chisto mò, s' io sentarria,
Ch' a botte de Vernacchie ll' ha feruto;
Chesto sì, ca de brocca io credarria.

VER-

Contrast "Fare a punia contra tre cicale" in Velardiello's text, where *fare a pugni* 'to exchange blows' is meant, and, in Giovan Domenico da Nola's text, "Fare la pugna", i.e. 'to do a battle'. The second occurrence of the refrain changes the sense of the situations: now it is the fly that fights instead of playing, and the wren that plays at Carnival. The water buffalo now merely stuns, instead of killing, a hornet by hitting it with a clam.

As for the absurdity of the song, they remark (Cardamone and Corsi 2006, pp. 62–63):

> Several Neapolitan songwriters active during the 1540s produced absurd songs in which the models set by Velardiniello are perfectly apparent, including his tendency to locate the viewer in different geographic locations. This song type has been categorised Appendix 2 as 'Fantasie burchiellesche', since the discourse derived from a kind of 'non-sense' verse known then as *burchiellesca*.

Domenico di Giovanni, named "il Burchiello", was a poet born in Florence in 1404, and who died in Rome in 1449. At his barber's shop, painters and poets used to convene, but so did opponents of the House of Medici. Therefore, in 1434 Burchiello went into exile in Siena. He went to prison more thsan once, for common offences. He moved to Rome in 1445, in order to reopen there his barber's shop. He died a pauper. Burchiello's sonnets inaugurated a school of poets versifying *alla burchia,* producing sonnets, most often with a coda (an additional stanza), typified by content such that imagery is juxtaposed with no apparent connection, as playful nonsense. It has been suggested that there may have been references by allusion whose referents are no longer accessible, but that at the time of writing could be deciphered by the original audience. It has also recently been interpreted as alluding to sexual practices, themselves intended to describe fraudulent political practice. (This kind of interpretation is something that Cardamone and Corsi 2006, p. 63, fn. 13, propose for the second octave, as the terms for the animals 'owl' and 'bear', and the musical instrument 'shawm' also signify the male organ, and the verbs *cavalcare* and *suonare* also signify copulation.) The *poesia burchiellesca* was practised also by Florentine artists whose prominence was in some other branch of the arts or humanities. It paved the way for the Bernesque poetry of the next century.

Another example given by Cardamone and Corsi (2006), this one on p. 64, is of a *canzone villanesca* with a refrain by Giovanthomaso di Maio, of 1546 (the translation is theirs, the brackets are mine):

Ho vist'una marotta fa'na danza,	I saw a magpie do a dance,
E n'aseno sonare 'na zampognia [sic],	And a donkey playing a bagpipe,
E 'na raosta cogliere cotogna.	*And a lobster picking quinces.*
E 'na monina corer con 'na lanza,	And a little monkey tilting with a lance,
Occider n'urza al alpe de Bolognia, [sic]	To kill a bear in the mountains of Bologna,
E 'na raosta cogliere cotogna.	*And a lobster picking quinces.*
E viddi questa a Monpollier [sic] in Franza,	And this I saw at Montpellier in France,
Un estricio allottar co 'na cecognia,	A porcupine wrestling with a stork,
E 'na raosta cogliere cotogna.	*And a lobster picking quinces.*
E da Caserta poi viddi a 'na vignia	And then a vineyard near caserta I saw
'No gallo vecchio secutar 'na scignia,	An old rooster pursue a monkey,
Et essa se salvò sopra 'na pignia.	And she escaped upon a pine cone.

Concerning the form of the name for Montpellier, consider that still on 1 February 1879, Pierantoni, a member of Italy's Camera dei Deputati (House of Representatives), is on record as saying "Le città di Monpellieri, Tolosa, Narbona" (*Atti Parlamentari*, p. 3826, now accessible online at the website of the Camera).[53] *Tolosa* for *Toulouse* and *Narbona* for *Narbonne* are still standard forms in Italian, whereas *Monpellieri* has disappeared from usage.

Concerning themes, Cardamone and Corsi remarked (2006, p. 67):

[53] http://storia.camera.it/

> Yet another subgenre undoubtedly inspired by Velardiniello is type in which old women, typically procuresses or guardians with robust sexual appetites, bear the brunt of vicious caricature (categorised in App. 2 as 'Vecchia mezzana'). Seven *Ottave sulle donne* attributed to Velardiniello, conceivably fragments from larger work, are characterised by three motifs that re-emerge in villanesche: deprecatory descriptions of physical monstrosity, mockery of unseemly erotic desire, and the tension that arises unmarried men and women when confronted by rapacious hags: […]

Another theme is the *becco,* i.e., the cuckolded husband (Cardamone and Corsi 2006, p. 69):

> In the majority of 'Becco' canzoni (especially those by Maio and Nola) the speaker appears to be a farmer, given the pervasive use of avian metaphors and rustic sayings directed towards an interlocutor of humble birth. References to thieving birds (magpies, crows, starlings) abound, as in Velardiniello's farce, where they function similarly as symbols of hard luck.

14. Allusions in the Eye of the Beholder? Possible *double entendre* in Joseph Santafiore's *commedie rusticali*

Concerning sexual referents being identified now by scholars in Burchiellesque poems as well as in *villanesche* — which is a prominent aspect of the previous section — I would like to point out that whereas it is quite credible that the original audiences may have relished that kind of allusions, one still has to wonder whether a given instance is in the eye of the scholarly beholder.

Consider a minor, "rustic" Tuscan comediographer of the Italian Renaissance, who has been claimed by a (non-Jewish) Italian historian of the Italian theatre to have been Jewish. I am referring to Joseph Santafiore's farces or *commedie rusticali* (*Testuggine* and *Ciambelle*) recovered by Clelia Falletti. See Falletti (1983, 2002). By that same author, also see Falletti Cruciani (1999), about the Italian theatre in the Renaissance, which is also the subject of Cruciani and Seragnoli (1987).

I am not fully convinced by Falletti's hypothesis about his Jewish background, although I cannot rule it out. If she is correct, then it really must have been a pun the playwright savoured in the privacy of his own self, when in a scene, he ascribed mention of a kind of tasty bakery to a character of loose morality: in Hebrew, the same word can be analysed as a racy reference to marital relations. It cannot even be said that any Jewish or non-Jewish audience, in the Renaissance or in our own times, has had any fruition of that humorous bit. The playwright inserted that pun for his own amusement. Even when I personally devoted a section in a paper published in a journal to popular blazons occurring in the text of that particular scene, I did not mention that pun. If I recall correctly, it was too late when I noticed it myself.

Santafiore's using Hebrew words in *Testuggine* is not sufficient evidence, as it has happened that some early modern non-Jewish author in Italy used Hebrew terms (when portraying Jews). And yet, I seize the opportunity to add evidence in support. Falletti remarked that in *Ciambelle,* the contest between the *ciambelle* (bagels) and the *zughi melati* (rod-like cookies) is symbolic in the marital sphere, but now consider this: Hebrew *zug* ([dzug] in the pronunciation of Italian Jews) means 'couple', especially 'husband and wife' (from the Greek *zygon* for 'yoke'); cf. *zivvúg* 'pairing off' (whether preordained or otherwise) and 'matching companion'. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Santafiore probably resorted to a bilingual *double entendre.* Or is this just an illusion, enabled by Falletti's hypothesis about Santafuiore's Jewish background? (There were several Jews in Santa Fiora on Monte Amiata in the sixteenth century.) Cf. in the fourth section of Nissan (2007).

15. Pasquinades, and their Repression

In an article about humorous poetry in Italy in the late three decades of ther 16th century, and which begins with the repression of the pasquinades from the beginning of that period, Danilo Romei (1998) made the following three examples of pasquinades on p. 3. The subject of the first two is repression by burning offenders on the stake:

Figli, meno giudizio E più fede comanda il Sant'Uffizio. E ragionate poco, ché contro la ragione esiste il foco. E la lingua a suo posto, ché a Paolo IV piace assai l'arrosto.	Sons, exercise ye less judgement And more faith, the Inquisition commands. And reason little, Because against reason, a remedy exists: fire. Hold your tongue in its proper place, Because Paul IV is fond of roasted meat.

Gian Pietro Carafa (1476–1559) was pope, as Paul IV, in 1555–1559. He was harsh indeed (for example, in 1555, with his *Cum nimis absurdum*, he expelled all Jews other than allowing them to reside in the ghettos of Rome and Ancona), and, upon his death, riots erupted in Rome; a statue of his was beheaded, and the mob played a ball game with the statue's head.[54]

Another pasquinade — this one, of 1570, against Pius V (Michele Ghislieri, who had headed the Inquisition, and then was pope in 1566–1572), and inspired by the burning at the stake of Aonio Paleario — is as follows:

Quasi che fosse inverno, brucia cristiani Pio come legna, per avvezzarsi al caldo dell'inferno.	As though it was winter, Pius burns Christians like wood, In order for him to get used to the heat of Hell.

The conversion of Henry IV from Protestantism to Catholicism as being the price of his obtaining the throne of France inspired this pasquinade, of 1594:

Enrico era acattolico, e per amor del regno eccolo pronto a diventar cattolico apostolico. Se gliene torna il conto Clemente, ch'è pontefice romano, domani si fa turco o luterano.	Henry was not a Catholic, But as he craved to reign, here he is, willing To become an Apostolic Catholic. Should he find it advantageous, Then Clement, who is the Pope in Rome, Would tomorrow become a Turk or a Lutheran.

During the Wars of Religion, Henry of Navarre (1553–1610) was head of France's Huguenots (Protestants) after the death of Louis I of Condé in 1569. Henry was King of Navarre in 1572–1610. He was King of France, as Henry IV, in 1589–1610, as he had allied himself to Henry III, King of France, and Henry III has appointed Henry of Navarre to succeeed him as King of France. Henry of Navarre defeated the Catholic League, and his next goal was to enter Paris, but he could only enter Paris, in 1594, by public abjuration of Protestantism. Once enthroned, he recognised the Huguenots' freedom of conscience and of worship, as Protestants, with the Edic of Nantes, in 1598 (which was only revoked by Louis XIV). Henry IV's life came to an end when he was murdered by a clergyman, Rastignac.

The pasquinade that mentions Henry IV, does so in order to attack Pope Clement, as though he, too, was no more attached to his religion than because of opportunism. That

[54] The mob freed at least one Jewish detainee (told by the man who freed him, that he was never wronged by a Jew). The mob also burnt papers of the Inquisition, and, without realising that much, papers that had been requisitioned by the Inquisition; as the Jewish community of Rome understood that unwittingly, Jewish texts that had been requisitioned by the Inquisition were burnt on that occasion, the Jews mourned for the book, but mourned inconspicuously, so as not to antagonise the mob. Clearly, on the occasion of the demise of their arch-enemy Paul IV. the Jews could not afford to display joy either, the way the Catholic mob was doing, because Jews could expect harsh punishment. The Roman aristocracy mourned for Paul IV indoors, because of the riots.

pasquinade draws a comparison, but by itself, of course, it is no evidence for the claim it makes about Clement. Ippolito Aldobrandini (1535–1605) was pope, as Clement VIII, in 1592–1605. He recognised Henry IV as King of France.

The subject of Dell'Arco (1967) and Marucci et al. (1983) is pasquinades from Rome. Anonymous poetry in Rome, published under the cover of the mask of Pasquino, had evolved from a wider spectrum, down to systematic and extreme denigration (sometimes by versifiers for a price) within attacks reflecting a struggle between factions within the Curia. But then, the Church clamped down on this. Romei (1998) began his article by defining its temporal scope, namely, the last three decades of the 16th century; the first section is entitled "L'età della prudenza" ("The Age of Prudence"):

> Se la cronaca letteraria dell'ultimo trentennio del Cinquecento si chiude emblematicamente con un rogo (l'eroico supplizio di Giordano Bruno, immolato in Campo di Fiori il 17 febbraio 1600), ben si può dire che che si era aperta, proprio nel 1570, con un'impiccagione, quella di Noccolò Franco a ponte Sant'Angelo: supplizio sicuramente meno illustre, probabilmente meno eroico, ma di significato non meno esemplare.
>
> Il crimine punito con tanto rigore nella persona di un intellettuale che appare ormai nelle vesti dimesse di un sopravvissuto e di un emarginato (che aveva, del resto, rinunciato da tempo a ogni ambizione di protagonismo letterario) era un crimine poetico: un'attività pasquillante tanto aggressiva nelle forme quanto sostanzialmente innocua negli effetti, proprio perché voce isolata e velleitaria, che rivela come il Franco non sapesse emanciparsi dai modelli e dai comportamenti di un'età irreparabilmente trascorsa. L'autodafé di cui il Franco fu vittima patetica e spaesata non mirava, nella sostanza, a togliere di mezzo un pericoloso oppositore, bensì a sanzionare con spietata fermezza proprio la fine di un'epoca e di un costume e l'instaurazione di un ordine nuovo, pronto a reprimere capillarmente il dissenso e la devianza anche in settori remoti dalle più aperte e scottanti controversie dottrinali.
>
> Chiuso da poco il concilio di Trento, eletto al soglio di Pietro il grande inquisitore Michele Ghislieri (san Pio V), la chiesa cattolica si provvedeva degli strumenti giuridici e degli organi operativi atti a soffocare la poesia del «mal dire». Fu appunto Pio V a promulgare il 19 marzo 1572 la bolla *Romani Pontificis providentia*, che metteva ordine nella legislazione in materia di libelli infamanti, inasprendo le pene comminate agli autori, ai possessori, ai divulgatori di scritti che recassero offesa all'altrui fama, con particolare osservanza al nome dello Stato.

> [If the literary chronicle of the last three decades of the 16th century is symbolically concluded with a burning at the stake (the heroic ultimate price paid by Giordano Bruno, sacrificed on C ampo di fiori on 17 Fenruary 1600), one can well say that that period of time was opened, in 1570, with a hanging, the one of Niccolò Franco at Sant'Angelo Bridge: as a death penalty, the execute was certainly not as illustrious, it probably was not as heroic, but its meaning was no less exemplary.
>
> The crime that was punished so rigorously in the person of an intellectual at a time when he just modestly was a marginalised survivor (and one who for a longe time had already renounced any ambition of literary prominence) was a poetic crime: his activity as the author of pasquinades, his was an activity as aggreesive in its forms as it substantially was innocuous in its effects, precisely because his was an isolated, hopelessly ambitious voice, which shows how Franco was unable to free himself from models and behaviours of a time irreparably past. The execution whose pathetic and out-of-place victim Franco was, basically did not have the goal of eliminating some dangerous opponent, but rather marked with merciless firmness the very end of an era and its manners, and the instauration of a new order [the one of the Council of Trent], willing to repress capillarily dissent and deviance even in such sectors that were far away from the most open and burning controversies about doctrine.
>
> The Council of Trent having recently been concluded, the gran inquisitor Michele Ghislieri having been made pope (St. Pius V), the Catholic Church was endowing itself the the juridical instruments and operational organs intended to smother the poetry of "talking ill". It was precisely Pius V who promulgated, on 19 March 1572, the bulla *Romani Pontificis providentia* ("By the providence of the Roman Pontiff"), which reorganised the legislation concerning libellous texts, by envisaging harsher penalties for the authors, possessors, or distributors of writings offensive for the good name of others, with special regard for the name of the state.]

16. Giordano Bruno's Contrast of the "Pegasaean Horse" and the Donkey from Cillene

Pegasus, i.e., the horse of [Mt.] Pegasus, was contrasted to the donkey of Cillene, a mountain in Arcadia, by the philosopher Giordano Bruno, the one eventually burnt at the stake at Campo de' Fiori in Rome on 17 February 1600. Bruno authored among the other things a text about knowledge and mysticism, titled *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo* (literally, 'the Kabbalah of the Pegasean horse', but by *cabala,* Bruno means 'an irregular series of considerations'). That was in 1585, a year when he had been living in London (he left for Paris in October).[55]

Bruno glorifies the asinine ignorance of the donkey (as opposed to the enhanced version of a horse that Pegasus is), and it is unclear whether Bruno actually intended the blasphemy against Christianity that was read by some into the text. Just as Erasmus (whose writings Bruno read eagerly) praised folly, Bruno celebrated ignorance. To Bruno, there are various kinds of ignorance, some of them clad as though they were knowledge, including that of the theologians of the Church and the ignorance of the Synagogue. Asininity vs knowledge according to Bruno were discussed by Nuccio Ordine (1987), *La cabala dell'asino: Asinità e conoscenza in Giordano Bruno*. Ruggeri's introduction to the his 1864 edition[56] of Bruno's *Cabala del cavallo Pegaseo* explains that Bruno claimed that it was to thwart Christian opposition and censorship, that he merely applied the manner of reasoning of the Jewish rabbis to the fable of Pegasus and the donkey. In Bruno's text, the character of Onorio (Honorius) recalls his several past identities. He originally was a donkey, in the service of a Theban gardener first, then of a coalman. Next, because of the trend of beings to ascend, he became a horse similar to Pegasus, in the service of Apollo and of those reigning in the Parnasus. Next, Honorius was reduced by degree, from the winged horse he had been, and was made into a man. That was at the time of Philip of Macedonia. With the help of Nicomachus, he, Honorius, entered the body of Aristotle. When his identity was Aristotle's, Honorius was well educated in the humanities, and set to reform scholarly disciplines. This was rather easy for him, because Socrates was dead, Plato exiled, and the other thinkers scattered away. He was therefore like a one-eyed man amongst the blind. He ascribed to the ancients thoughts befitting little children or old hags. In that manner, Aristotle caused both the natural and the divine science (which owing to the Chaldeans and the Pythagoreans had been quite advanced), to recede. And yet, Bruno claims, an Arab proclaimed Aristotle to have been the very geny of nature. Bruno says in addition that the donkey is not only lording it over at Aristotle's school, but is also found all over the place. How many people are excluded from the courts of the kings and the courts of justice, the churches and the temples, universities and academies, because they are not endowed with the virtues of the donkey. The donkey, for Bruno, is similar to the moving spirit of the world. The donkey, the Triumphant Beast incarnate, the "ideal and kabbalistic donkey", would deserve to become a constellation.

Note that in Cesare Caporali's 1560s humorous fantasy travelogue *Viaggio in Parnaso,* where he meets deceased *literati* (also Bembo) and toes are turned into dactyls and spondees, Caporali is forced to stop his journey as his she-mule has an affair with the donkey Pegaseo.

17. Galileo Galilei Ridiculing in Bernesque Fashion the Long Robes of Academics

Anne Reynolds (1982) discussed a humorous poem *Capitolo contro il portar la toga* (Against Wearing the Toga) by the famous physicist Galileo Galilei, probably from the years 1589–

[55] A current edition is: Giordano Bruno, *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo,* ed. Carlo Sini, 1998; translated into English by Sidney L. Sodergard and Madison U. Sowell (2000) as *The Cabala of Pegasus.*

[56] Bruno's own text, followed with his addition about the *Asino Cillenico,* is accessible online (based on the Milan edition of 1864, edited by Claudio Ruggeri and published by G. Daelli e Comp. Editori) at this address on the Web: http://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Cabala_del_cavallo_Pegaseo_con_l'aggiunta_dell'Asino_Cillenico

1592, at which time he resided in Pisa. It was mandatory for professors (and for a time, also students) at the University of Pisa to wear long robes, a "toga".[57] "Critics have conjectured about Galilei's probable antipathy towards the 'costume-parading' of his higher-paid colleagues at the University. Such antipathy is more than likely when one considers Galilei's statement on the nature of the social mask" (Reynolds 1982, p. 330).

Galileo's poem belongs in a category of burlesque poems that feign to be concerned with discussing the philosophical pursuit of the *sommo bene*, i.e., "utmost good". In *bona fide* discussions, the referent is considered to be God, and the pursuit is by contemplative means. Bernesque poets instead had given *sommo bene* irreverent referents, such as sex — which was the case of Giovanni Mauro's *Capitolo in lode di Priapo* — whereas "Benedetto Varchi proclaims his discovery of the supreme good in boiled eggs, while Francesco Berni extols its worth in a mock-serious commentary to his own *Capitolo della primiera*" (Reynolds 1982, p. 332). Galileo instead argued that that the utmost good is nudity (my translation):

Mi fan patir costoro il grande stento, Che vanno il sommo bene investigando, E per ancor non v'hanno dato drento. E mi vo col cervello immaginando, Che questa cosa solamente avviene Perché non è dove lo van cercando. Questi dottor non l'han mai intesa bene, Mai son entrati per la buona via, Che gli possa condurre al sommo bene. [...] Volgo poi l'argomento, e ti conchiudo, E ti fo confessare a tuo dispetto, Che '1 sommo ben sarebbe andare ignudo. E perché vegghi che quel ch'io detto È chiaro e certo e sta com'io lo dico, Al senso e alla ragion te ne rimetto. Volgiti a quel felice tempo antico, Privo d'ogni malizia e d'ogni inganno, Ch'ebbe sì la natura e '1 cielo amico; E troverai che tutto quanto l'anno Andava nud'ognun, picciol e grande, Come dicon i libri che lo sanno.	They cause me much pain, Those who investigate the utmost good, Which they have not managed yet to attain. I figure out in my brain, That this thing is only happening Because it is not where they are looking. These doctors have never understood it well, They never entered the good way, Which can lead them to the utmost good. [...] I change topic, and for your sake I conclude, And I make you aver nilly-willy, That the utmost good would be to go around naked. And so that you would see that what I said Is clear and certaibn and is how I say, I entrust it to your good sense and reason. Turn to that happy time of old, Bereft of any malice or deceit, And to which both nature and heaven were friends; And you shall find that all year long, Everybody was going around naked, the young and the old, As stated in the book that know that much.

"Mauro carries the metaphor a step further when he juxtaposes the loss of innocence caused by the loss of the Golden Age with the wearing of clothes and the present woes of civilization" (Reynolds 1982, p. 332). "The pose adopted by Galilei at the beginning of his capitolo is immediately evocative of another of Mauro's poems, the *Capitolo dei frati*" (*ibid.*, p. 333). "Reminiscent of Galilei is Mauro's treatment guarantees intellectual and social freedom clergy"; "Mauro exploits the potential for deceit in the costume metaphor of his *Capitolo delle bugie*, within an anticlerical context of 'dressing up the truth'" (*ibid.*, p. 334).

Reynolds claims (*ibid.*): "The poems of Francesco Berni, progenitor of the lively sixteenth-century tradition of satiric verse and preferred poet of Galilei, provide many points of reference to Galilei's toga poem. A tentative confirmation of his commitment to Berni may be drawn from" evidence she marshals in her article. Among the other things, Reynolds was able to point out parallels between particular lines in Galileo's poem, and these poems by Berni: *Capitolo della gelatine, Capitolo a messer Baccio Cavalcanti, Capitolo del debito, Capitolo dei cardi,* and *Capitolo d'un ragazzo.*

Galileo Galilei was no stranger to irony. In a letter to Paolo Gualdo in Padua, Galileo informed him that the philosopher Libri, a staunch opponent of "this chatter of mine" ("queste

[57] Academics' long robes were not the ancient Roman toga. Renaissance treatises dealt with ancient clothing.

mie ciancie") had died, and that even though he never wanted to see what Galileo had been claiming while on earth, perhaps he, Libri, will see them during his transition to heaven ("il quale, non le avendo mai volute vedere in terra, le vedrà forse nel passer al cielo"). This example opens a chapter, "Ironia di Galileo", on p. 150 in the second edition (1960) of Sagredo's (i.e., Rinaldo De Benedetti's) *Aneddotica delle scienze*.

18. A Writer in Galileo Galilei's Orbit Emulating Ruzante in Prose, Inventing a Paduan Rustic in Order to Comment about the "New Star" of 1604

It is known that Galileo Galilei read Ruzante's comedies, and in fact, one of Galileo's correspondents, G.F. Sagredo advised him in a letter of 15 March 1615 to read authors such as Berni and Ruzante, and leave aside for a while Aristotle and Archimedes (Reynolds 1982, p. 334). A writer in Galileo's circle even devised an imitation of Ruzante, the *Dialogo de Cecco de Ronchitti da Bruzene in perpuosito de la stella nuova,* in order to comment on scientific matters. Eileen Reeves remarked (2009, pp. S190–S191):

> The unscheduled astronomical event seems to have left the strangest of traces in the early modern era. At stake was a personnel problem: the wrong people may well have been the first to witness the emergence of new stars, meteors, and large sunspots in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the right people were often enough without adequate explanation of these phenomena. Popular reaction to these occurrences is, and will doubtless remain, almost wholly lost to us, but a persistent doubling occurs at the site of the intellectual exchanges concerning them. A factitious tone, often established through the comparatively low registers of dialogue, dialect, and reported speech, maintained or created social and intellectual distance between discourses otherwise lacking sufficient distinction, and generated the impression of a steady evolution in scientific representation. Moreover, if the rapid development of a research-oriented natural philosophy in the early modern period depended upon the unprecedented combination of a crude and relatively unsystematic empiricism with improved instrumentation and an increasing reliance on quantification, it is plausible that the frequent inclusion of the pseudo-popular perspective in descriptions of puzzling celestial events signaled at once an awareness of the importance of the empirical view, and a self-conscious recognition of its shortcomings.
>
> Fictionalized low- and middle-brow views of the sunspots of 1611–1613, the focal point of this essay, are perhaps the most plentiful instance of this sort of ventriloquizing. […]

The explosion of a supernova appeared, in 1604, as a "new star". It was then that an author in Galileo Galilei's orbit chose to write about this, by inventing the character of a Paduan rustic. Reeves explains (1999, pp. S192–S193):

> The rhetorical usefulness of the fictionalized popular observer did not, of course, go entirely unacknowledged. In the case of the New Star of 1604, a writer in Galileo's orbit deployed a pseudo-archaic Paduan dialect to construct a dialogue in which clever rustic speakers, armed with a rope and ready to climb trees in order to carry out measurements, ridiculed the traditional estimates of the place and the essence of the supernova offered by Aristotelian natural philosophers. The point of *Dialogue of Cecco de Ronchitti* was not to glorify the astronomical knowledge or even the native good sense of the *vulgo*, but rather to demonstrate the frailty of the established position. The availability of the construct that was Paduan dialect, particularly its rich vocabulary for familiar celestial objects, allowed the writer to exploit a pleasant dissonance between the comic language of the speakers and the elite objects of their scorn.
>
> The homely metaphors and the regional flavour of the Paduan dialogue cannot be read as "strategies of condescension" — a situation where an elite author or speaker, precisely because his cultural competence is secure, can temporarily suspend the rules of acceptable diction and adopt the accent or turns of phrase of an audience at some social remove from him — for the addressees of this dialogue were perforce members of the sdame rather restricted class of readers of a literary dialect. […]

This carried risks. Galileo sought to distance himself from the fictional character of Cecco de Ronchitti, but a rival of Galileo debunked the Galileian ideas of the *Dialogue of Cecco de Ronchitti*, by using its rusticity in order to claim that the ideas expressed were not valid, because a competent natural philosopher hiding behind the fictitious persona of Cecco was only pretending to speak seriously. Reeves relates (1999, p. S193):

> […] In 1606, Galileo adopted the pseudonym "Alimberto Mauri" in order to renew discussion of the New Star, and because he sought to establish some distance from the Paduan persona of Cecco de Ronchitti, he described him as negligible "either because of his outlandish style or because he is one of those astronomers who has soaked his brain in those crazy books" […] His Florentine rival Lodovico Delle Colombe responded by associating the transparent fiction of rusticity with the nullity of the intellectual effort,
>
> > As far as I know, this "Cecco" has a fine mind, and is well versed in natural philosophy, but he takes pleasure in tricking the gullible, and he is only pretending to speak seriously. He is putting on this name and this way of speaking, and he calls himself a country fellow, because clever people realize that he knows how to say things in rustic fashion. Therefore I will profit from the privilege he concedes to me, treating him as such, since at times noble cavaliers dress up like buffoons, or like other absurd persons, exposing themselves to eggs and to snowballs, but knowing that these will bring them neither shame nor damage. In fact they enjoy it, and they laugh along with those who afflict them. ([…])
>
> These dangers, notwithstanding, the Florentine burlesque poet and courtier Alessandro Allegri would likewise assume the role of unlettered observer, albeit to slightly different effect. […]

Galileo had discovered the moons of the plantet Jupiter, moons he called the "Medici Stars", in 1610. In 1613, a poem by Alessandro Allegri was published, and (Reeves 1999, pp. S194–S195):

> […] Allegri described an unlikely frenzy of popular astronomical interest in Florence. In addition to the superior telescopes made in the Gran Duke's workshop, he alleged, "every lantern-maker on every street" had one to point to the heavens […] The preface of the poem makes clear, however, that these verses involve less the usual stratification of elite knowledge and lower-class foolery than an amalgam of the two, a studied appropriation of recent discoveries by a sly speaker who presented himself as "just a simple fellow". […] Allegri's ludicrous comparison of Venus' bright appearance with the ruddy display of the bonfires set for "the Forty-Eight" — an aristocratic Senatorial body designed to ease the Medici return to power in 1531— suggests that the whole pattern of the planet's "revolts" [i.e., the phases of Venus, discussed in 1612 by Galieo, and similar to those of the moon] had really to do with the political fortunes of the Grand Ducal family. The implication of the "simple fellow", its astuteness couched in seeming stupidity, is that the Medici stars orbiting Jupiter were just another one of their extravaganzas, and that Galileo's discoveries, while not evacuated of their scientific import, were above all fodder for political spectacle.

A rustic with a telescope turned up in a comedy by one of Galileo's friends (Reeves 1999, p. 196):

> Galileo's close friend Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger also portrayed the "simple fellow" as a rustic with access both to the telescope and to current astronomical arguments in his *Tancia*, first performed at the Medici Court in 1611. In this comedy [a comedy in verse], Giannino, a country boy from Fiesole, wishes for a spyglass in order to convince others about the two rustics, Cecco and Ciappino, whom he alone can discern in the distance.

Giannino delves into explanations of the telescope gratuitously, and the heroine respknse is "What does this matter to me?" (Reeves 1999, p. 197). "The conservative moral of the play — country folk should marry each other, not city-dwellers — serves likewise to emphasize the comedic appeal, rather than the actual likelihood, of the rambling rustic observer" (*ibid*.).

19. Italian Burlesque Poets from the 17th Century: The Case of Alessandro Tassoni

Of course, the Seicento, too, included some burlesque poets. For example, in Naples, Giulio Acciano (1651–1681) was a burlesque and satirical poet. Alessandro Tassoni (Modena, 1565 – Modena, 1635) is considered his city's poet laureate, because of his heroicomic epic *La secchia rapita* (*The Rape of the Pail*, i.e., *The Stolen Bucket*), written between 1614 and 1615, and first published in Paris in 1620 (under the pseudonym *Aldrovinci Melisone*), and in 1624 and 1630 in Italy, under Tassoni's real name, after he somewhat modified the text to accommodate Church censorship. His statue is in front of the tower, the Ghirlandina, which is the town symbol.

The poem is loosely based on a war originating from the battle of Zappolino fought between Modena and Bologna in 1325. Most of the events reported in the poem are completely fictitious, even incorporating in the war the battle of Fossalta which had been fought almost a hundred years before. The central episode, in which the Modenese steal a bucket from their rivals, is not reported by the main contemporary historians, however a bucket, purported to be that very trophy, has been on display, in the basement of the Torre della Ghirlandina, from the times of the battle to present.

In the poem, the theft of the bucket results in the eruption of an extremely complicated war, where even the Olympian gods take part (this is in the tradition of classical poems such as Homer's Iliad) and is eventually resolved by the intervention of the Pope. The narration is dotted by references to situations and persons contemporary to the author, and with farcical appearances such as the "Conte di Culagna" (Count of Ass-land)[58] probably the best known character of the book.[59]

Alessandro Tassoni inaugurated the 17th-century fashion of ironic titles of polemical texts. This he did by devising a personal name for a fictitious author of a riposte. Tassoni was an established author and polemicist when, in *Considerazioni sopra le rime del Petrarca col confronto dei luoghi de' poeti antichi di varie lingue* (Modena 1609), he attacked the Petrarchists and also (for the sake of better attacking those who were writing poetry in the manner of that great poet) the poetry of Petrarch himself, i.e., Francesco Petrarca (Arezzo, 1304 – Arquà, 1374).

The young Giuseppe degli Aromatari (b. 1587) retorted by defending Petrarch's first ten sonnets from his *Canzoniere*, in a book entitled *Risposte di G*iuseppe *degli A*romatari *alle Considerazioni di A. Tassoni sopra le Rime del Petrarca* (Padua 1611). Quickly, Tassoni published a riposte entitled *Avvertimenti di Crescenzio Pepe da Susa a G*iuseppe *degli A*romatari *intorno alle Risposte date da lui alle Considerazioni del Sig. A. Tassoni sopra le Rime del Petrarca* (Modena 1611), feigning that the riposte was by a man whose name was *Crescenzio Pepe*, and that he was from the Piedmontese town of Susa (cf. in Dante, e.g. *Purgatorio* 16:38, "vo suso", i.e., "I ascend"). It was so because Giuseppe degli Aromatari was born in the town of Assisi. Moreover, the fictitious surname *Pepe* ('pepper') was responding to the young opponent being from a family which according to its name had been trading in spices (*degli Aromatari*).[60]

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[58] The character of the Conte di Culagna was invented by the comic poet Cesare Caporali (Perugia, 1531–1601).

[59] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alessandro_Tassoni

[60] Moreover, the fictitious author of the riposte (supposedly friendly towards Giuseppe degli Aromatari, and warning him that for the time being Tassoni would not reply, but that should he do so, he would use such and such arguments, as well as insinuating that degli Aromatari was merely a port voice of his teachers in Padua) was given by Tassoni the first name *Crescenzio*, because its literal sense was the same ('increase') as of the Biblical Hebrew name *Yoséf*, of which *Giuseppe* is the standard Italian form. Alberto Asor-Rosa (1962) remarked that much. The controversy continued with other, more vehement texts by degli Aromatari, *Dialoghi di Falcidio Melampodio* (a pen-name derived from the ancient Roman name *Falcidius*, but alluding to *falce* 'scythe', 'sickle', intended as a lethal weapon, and from *melampodio*, an Italianised form of the Greek name for

Alessandro Tassoni (1565–1635).

Incidentally, I would like to point out that one finds *Susa* 'of above' vs. *Jusa* 'of below' (cf. Italian *su* 'up' vs. *giù* 'down') in early 18th-century Sicilian toponomastics:

> In Veria v'è una gran gara tra due chiese e confraternità sotto il titolo dell'Annunziata, e perchè una stà fabbricata nell'alto della terra, e l'altra nel basso, per distinguerle le chiamano la *Susa*, e la *Jusa*. Più volte i sudetti fratelli vennero alle mani. [...]

'hellebore', a traditional medication for madness), and Tassoni (who this time, feigned the riposte, entitled Tenda rossa, 'red tent', Tamerlane's symbol of threat, was authored by Girolamo Nomisenti, supposedly a servant of his, to signify that degli Aromatari did only deserve a reply from a servant).

> [In Veria there is a great competition between two churches and fraternities of the Announce, and as one of them was built in a high place, and the other one below, in order to distinguish them from each other they are called the *Susa* [cf. Italian *su* 'up, above'] and the *Jusa* [cf. Italian *giù* 'down']. Several times, those friars had violent rows. …]

This is quoted from Pitrè (1885, §6 on p. 22), based on *Avvenimenti Faceti*, being MS Biblioteca Nazionale di Palermo XI. A. 20, a collection of facetious local anecdotes written by an anonymous Sicilian author, probably a cleric, an itinerant preacher, in the first half of the 18th century. Giuseppe Pitrè published the book in the original Italian with insertions in a dialect from the province of Messina. Pitrè admitted he was unable to identify the place named as *veria*.

Authors of humorous poetry who were born during the 16th century, but whose output rather fits in the 17th, include for example the following (Romei 1998, p. 12): Alessandro Allegri (1560–1629), Francesco Bracciolini (1566–1645), Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane (1568–1642), Francesco Ruspoli (1573–1628), and Girolamo Leopardi, whose work was published in 1613, 1616, and 1636.

20. Leaping to the First Three Decades of the 20th Century: Eduardo Scarpetta's and Paolo Vita-Finzi's Parodies

In the compass of the present survey, we cannot do justice to humour throughout the history of Italian literature. Rather, we now leap to the 20th century, and select just one author, because of how culture-bound the appreciation of his output must be. In fact, he is remembered for his parodies. Paolo Vita-Finzi was born in 1899 in Turin, and died in 1986 at a resort town, Chianciano Terme. He was a diplomat, a journalist, and an author of political essays, but in retrospect, above all a great parodist. Concerning Vita-Finzi's *Antologia apocrifa*, of which Formiggini published two volumes (1927, 1933), and of which two augmented editions appeared (in 1961, an edition dedicated to the memory of Formiggini, and as late as 1978), respectively with the Ceschina and Bompiani publishing houses, the writer Alfredo Ronci (2010) stated: "Because of this collection of parodies of contemporary Italian writers, Vita-Finzi has situated himself in the history of our literature as the greatest Italian parodist of the century" ("Per questa raccolta di parodie di scrittori italiani contemporanei, Vita-Finzi si colloca nella storia della nostra letteratura come il massimo parodista italiano del secolo"). Already Guido Almansi and Guido Fink, in their anthology of parodies, *Quasi come* (1978), had referred to Vita-Finzi as "il Massimo parodista italiano del secolo".

Andrea Barin (2012–2013) has pointed that out in a section in his thesis, that Vita-Finzi had a precursor, with parodies destined for the stage. Eduardo Scarpetta (1853–1925), an actor and comediographer from Naples, authored the play *La geisha*, a parody of an opera by Sidney Jones. Scarpetta's *La geisha* was premièred to great acclaim at the La Valle theatre in Rome, on 6 February 1904. Next, Scarpetta wrote the play *Il figlio di Iorio* (*Iorio's Son*), a parody of Gabriele D'Annunzio's tragedy *La figlia di Iorio* (*Iorio's Daughter*) (which is itself set in a rural setting taking clad in a mythical halo, where people punish sorcery with death). Scvarpetta had turned D'Annunzio's male *dramatis personae* into females, and vice versa. The composer Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) had previously given Scarpetta his permission for a parody by Scarpetta of *La Bohème.* D'Annunzio instead notified Scarpetta his opposition to a parody of *La figlia di Iorio*. Scarpetta's *Il figlio di Iorio* was nevertheless premièred at the Teatro Mercadante in naples on 3 December 1904, and the performance had to be interrupted because of vehement protests of part of the public. A few days later, Marco Praga, a playwright, in his capacity as director general of the Società Italiana degli Autori ed Editori, filed charges against Scarpetta for plagiarism and counterfeit. It was a *cause célèbre*, and the

legal proceedings took four years, until 1908, when the court fully exonerated Scarpetta, thus recognising the legitimate status of parody in Italy (Barin 2012–2013, pp. 13–14).

The 1927 volume of *Antologia apocrifa* by Paolo Vita-Finzi parodied fifteen authors. In the order in which they appeared, these were the journalist and writer Antonio Baldini, the jurist and economist Luigi Luzzatti (Italy's only Jewish prime minister ever), the writer Guido da Verona (himself on occasion a parodist), the critic Adriano Tilgher, the poet and writer Gabriele D'Annunzio, the poet and writer Annie Vivanti, the comediographer Marco Praga, the writer Massimo Bontempelli, the critic and writer Alfredo Panzini, the philosopher and politician Giovanni Gentile, the poet Marino Moretti (who was also a sculptor and a painter), the playwright and writer Luigi Pirandello, the economist Achille Loria, the novelist and comediographer Lucio d'Ambra, and the poet and writer Aldo Palazzeschi (to which seven poems were mock-attributed).

The 1933 volume of *Antologia apocrifa* parodied thirteen authors. These were, in that order, the historian Giuseppe Ferrero, the concise poet Giuseppe Ungaretti,[61] the journalist Mario Missiroli, the playwright Renato Simoni, the writer Giovanni Papini, the comediographer Antonio Aniante,[62] the painter and writer Lorenzo Viani, the dialectal poet Trilussa,[63] the writer Domenico Giuliotti, the journalist Orio Vergani, the playwright [Piero] Rosso di San Secondo, the crtitic Emilio Cecchi, and the writer Achille Campanile. The latter was a humorist. Umberto Eco (1986), discussing the opus of Vita-Finzi as a parodist, remarked that "there is a short story by Campanile that the great Achille would have signed without hesitations. Perhaps because it is difficult to parody a humorist, and when one is clever, one becomes him" ("c'è un racconto di Campanile che il grande Achille avrebbe firmato senza esitazioni. Forse perché è difficile parodiare un umorista e, quando si è bravi, si diventa lui").

The 1961 edition of *Antologia apocrifa,* published by Ceschina, included commentary by some prominent critics (for example, in an endorsement, Silvio D'Amico defined Vita-Finzi's work as "critica in atto, critica esemplificata"), and beside the parodies from the 1933 and 1927 volumes, also included parodies of twelve more authors: the philosopher Benedetto Croce, the poet Giovanni Pascoli, the critic Mario Praz, the writer Alberto Moravia, the journalist and writer Curzio Malaparte, the poet Eugenio Montale, the journalist Giovanni Ansaldo, the writer and screenwriter Giuseppe Marotta, the experimental writer Carlo Emilio Gadda, the writer Vittorio G. Rossi, the writer Dino Buzzati, and the poet Guido Gozzano.

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[61] Ungaretti's poem "Infinito" ("Infinite") and consisting of the two words "M'illumino d'immenso" ("I am enlightened by the immense") is considered the shortest poem in Italian literature. Vita-Finzi parodied Ungaretti in a poem entitled "Convalescenza" ("Convalescence") and consisting of the words "Rilievito / docilmente / a questa brezza / fievole" ("I rise, leavened again, docilely, in this feeble breeze"), followed with the postscriptum "*Di questa poesia sono stati stampati dieci esemplari numerati su carta del Giappone, con ritratto dell'Autore e riproduzione del manoscritto autografo, che costituiscono l'edizione originale; 30 esemplari su carta di Fabriano e 50 esemplari su papier d'Arches. Precede uno studio di 148 pagine di Alfredo Gargiulo. La poesia ha inoltre un commento di Paul Valéry e note esplicative di Valéry Larbaud. Seguono una versione in francese di Lionello Fiumi e uno studio sulle fonti e sulle varianti*" ("Of this poem, five numbered exemplars have been printed on Japanese paper, with a portrait of the Author and a reproduction of the autographous manuscript, this being the original edition; 30 exemplars on Fabriano paper, and 50 exemplars on papier d'Arches. This precedes a 148-page study by Alfredo Gargiulo. Moreover, the poem is commented by Paul Valéry, and explicative notes by Valéry Larbaud. This is followed with a translation into French by Lionello Fiumi, and a stody of the sources and the variants"). Concerning this parody, see Almansi and Fink (1978, p. 170) and Barin (2012–2013, pp. 73–74).

[62] Aniante's response was to send a periodical a letter in which he disowned all his own books, except the most recent one (Barin 2012–2013, p. 46). Giuseppe Prezzolini suggested that Vita-Finzi's book of parodies may hopefully encourage the authors parodied to improve.

[63] By his real name Carlo Alberto Salustri, by his pen name Trilussa (1871–1950).

The 1978 edition of *Antologia apocrifa*, published by Bompiani (which was thanks to the intervention of Umberto Eco),[64] was augmented with ten more parodies, as well as a third preamble. This time, the further authors parodied were the economist and sociologist Vilfredo Pareto, the poet Ernesto Ragazzoni, the writer Giuseppe Berto, Benito Mussolini, the writer Lucio Mastronardi, the journalist Carlo Laurenzi, the historian Roberto Ridolfi, Ennio Flaiano,[65] the writer Ercole Patti, and the writer Carlo Cassola.

Vita-Finzi's parody of the poet Eugenio Montale amplifies stylistic and phonetic features of that author, but departs from a penchant for unassuming expression. Andrea Barin (2012–2013, pp. 77–78) remarks that in this case, the parody is comic more than mimetic:

> Una caricatura che, oltre a ironizzare sulle suggestioni delle immagini montaliane, ingigantisce la moderata tendenza del poeta a preferire i suoni aspri e graffianti. Nascono da questa caricatura alcune quartine micidiali come:
>
> "Tale è la traforata foiba carsica
> strinata ancora dalla fiamma stigia:
> in grigia mescolanza di cinigia
> spenti s'annullano gli anni riarsi"
>
> Degno di nota è in particolare il verso quindici del componimento, che, con incredibile perizia parodica, mette insieme ben cinque "r" e cinque "t".
>
> "irretito mi sfibro sul pietrisco del greto".
>
> Di questa e di altre peripezie tecniche è capace il Vita-Finzi quando trasforma una moderata tendenza fonica dell'autore parodiato nel pretesto per il più virtuoso degli esercizi di ingigantimento delle proporzioni.
>
> [It is a caricature that, apart from ironising on the evocativeness of Montale's imagery, magnifies that poet's moderate trend to prefer harsh and scratching sounds. This caricature generates a few lethal quatrains such as the following:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Tale è la traforata foiba carsica | Such is the pierced karstic *foiba* (closed dell)[66] |
> | strinata ancora dalla fiamma stigia: | Still singed by the flame of Styx: |
> | in grigia mescolanza di cinigia | In a grey mix of hot scorching ashes — |
> | spenti s'annullano gli anni riarsi | Extinguished, the parched years are annihilated. |
>
> In particular, line 15 in the poem is remarkable, as, by incredible parodic skill, it puts together no less than five "r" and five "t":
>
> irretito mi sfibro sul pietrisco del greto.
>
> Snared, I am worn out on the rubble of the gravel-bed.[67]
>
> Of such and other technical acrobacies Vita-Finzi is capable, when he transforms a moderate phonic trend on the part of the author being parodied, into the pretext for magnification exercises of exceeding virtuosity.]

The title of Giovanni Pascoli's poem *Le ciaramelle* (*The Shawms*) provided Vita-Finzi with the opportunity to distort it into *Le caramelle* (*The Sweetmeats*). As sweetmeats are typically considered trifles, the humour here participates of the genre of the paradoxical encomium.

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[64] Eco wrote about Vita-Finzi more than once. An article in a weekly entirely devoted to Vita-Finzi is Eco (1986).

[65] At the end of a paper of his about Paolo Vita-Finzi in a weekly, *L'Espresso,* Umberto Eco (1986) gave this example from Vita-Finzi's parody of Ennio Flaiano: "Kidnappings in Italy are growing exponentially. In 1973 there have been 200, of which 3000 in Milan alone" ("I rapimenti in Italia crescono a ritmo esponenziale. Nel 1973 ce ne sono stati 200, di cui 3000 nella sola Milano").

[66] The noun *foiba* is charged in Italy, because at the end of the Second World War, allegedly groups of ethnic Italians were shot in revenge by Slavic militiamen at the brink of *foibe* and dropped inside these.

[67] My English translation has similar phonetic features. Perhaps in English it is easier to obtain these.

Vita-Finzi developed the theme as a stunning emulation and gentle satire of Pascoli's manner (note that Pascoli's *Le caramelle* belongs to his *Canti di Castelvecchio*):

Oggi ho impastato le caramelle, le caramelle d'erba trastulla: gocce di miele, raggi di stelle, lievi che sembran fatte di nulla.	Today I kneaded sweetmeats, Sweetmeats of play-grass: Honey drops, rays of stars, So light they seem to be made of nothing.
Colto ho le bacche sulla pendice presso la Torre, sul rivo a specchio, tratto ho la scorza dalle myricae nei praticelli di Castelvecchio.	I collected berries on the slope Near the Tower, on the mirror-clear creek, I peeled the *Myricae* In the pasture fields of Castelvecchio.[68]
D'ogni sapore, d'ogni profumo, ho messo un poco, senza far torti: polpa di pesche, spire di fumo, voci di bimbi, brusio degli orti.	Of every taste, of every fragrance, I have put a little bit, excluding none: The flesh of peaches, curls of smoke, Children's voices, the humming of orchards.
E v'ho mischiato rose e mortella, zirli di tordi, fiocchi di neve, l'erica, il vischio, la pimpinella e il blando e uguale suon della pieve.	And I mixed in roses and myrtle, Thrush's whistles, snowflakes, Heather, mistletoe, the pimpernel, And the bland, uniform pealing of the parish church.
Poi con lo zucchero sciolto nel pianto coperto ho il nocciolo d'ogni pastiglia: le asciuga il vento del camposanto che fra i cipressi freme e bisbiglia.	Then with sugar melted in weeping I coated the core of every pill: They are dried by the wind of the graveyard That quivers and whispers among the cypresses.
Mentre singhiozza da presso il rivo fra il gracidare delle ranelle, dolce è il mio piangere senza motivo assaporando le caramelle.	While nearby the creek sobs Among the little frogs' croaking, Sweet is my unmotivated weeping While tasting the sweetmeats.
Volete ribes, menta, lampone, gusto di fragola, gusto d'arancia? Son dolci e acidule quelle al limone come le lacrime lungo la guancia.	Would you have black-currant, mint, raspberry, The taste of strawberry, the taste of orange? They are sweet and sour, the lemon ones, Like tears tracing their path on your cheek.
C'è la cedrina, ci son le more, c'è l'amarena, c'è il ratafià: e chi le succhia sente nel cuore una dolente felicità.	There is lemon-scented verbena, there are blackberries, There is sour black cherry, there is cherry-brandy: And he who sucks them feels in his heart An aching happiness.

This is a poem that did not appear in the 1927 edition of *Antologia apocrifa,* but was included in its augmented editions. Guido Almansi, a scholar who mostly wrote in Italian newspapers and who also published books about the comic and about parodies (the latter is *Quasi come*), so appreciated this particular poem that he included it in his and Guido Fink's book *Quasi come* (Almansi and Fink 1978).[69] In *Quasi come,* eight texts by Vita-Finzi were included. In a postscript to the new preamble of the last edition of *Antologia apocrifa,* Vita-Finzi (1978, p. 20) praised *Quasi come*.

Vita-Finzi's splendid poem distilled the quintessence of Pascoli's poetry and its devices, and while doing so, it considers Pascoli's corpus, rather than emulating the particular poem *Le ciaramelle* (*The Shawms*), which I translate in the following, and yet, in *Le caramelle* we find Pascoli's evocation of the little boy, as well as his sentimentalising little nothings, including unmotivated weeping:

[68] The reference is to books of Pascoli's collected poems, *Myricae* (1891) and *Canti di Castelvecchio* (1903).
[69] Parody in Italian literature is the subject of a book by Gino Tellini (2008).

Udii tra il sonno le ciaramelle,	I heard in my sleep the shawms,
ho udito un suono di ninne nanne.	I heard a sound of lullabies.
Ci sono in cielo tutte le stelle,	There are in the sky all the stars,
ci sono i lumi nelle capanne.	The lights are on in the huts.
Sono venute dai monti oscuri	They have come from the dark mountains,
le ciaramelle senza dir niente;	The shawms, without telling;
hanno destata ne' suoi tuguri	They waked in their hovels
tutta la buona povera gente.	All the good poor people.
Ognuno è sorto dal suo giaciglio;	Everyone stood up from his bedding;
accende il lume sotto la trave;	He lights the candle under the beam;
sanno quei lumi d'ombra e sbadiglio,	Those lights feel of the shade and the yawn,
di cauti passi, di voce grave.	Of cautious steps, and of a grave voice.
Le pie lucerne brillano intorno,	The pious lamps sparkle around,
là nella casa, qua su la siepe:	There in the house, here on the bush:
sembra la terra, prima di giorno,	The earth seem, before it is day,
un piccoletto grande presepe.	A little big Manger scene.
Nel cielo azzurro tutte le stelle	In the blue sky all the stars
paion restare come in attesa;	Appear to remain as though waiting;
ed ecco alzare le ciaramelle	But then the shawms rise
il loro dolce suono di chiesa;	Their sweet sound of church;
suono di chiesa, suono di chiostro,	A sound of church, a sound of cloister,
suono di casa, suono di culla,	A sound of home, a sound of cradle,
suono di mamma, suono del nostro	A sound of mum, a sound of our
dolce e passato pianger di nulla.	Sweet and past weeping for nothing.
O ciaramelle degli anni primi,	O shawms of the early years,
d'avanti il giorno, d'avanti il vero,	Of before it is day, of before there is truth,
or che le stelle son là sublimi,	Now that the stars stand there sublime,
conscie del nostro breve mistero;	Aware of our brief mystery;
che non ancora si pensa al pane,	As one does not yet think of bread,
che non ancora s'accende il fuoco;	As one does not yet light the fire;
prima del grido delle campane	Earlier than the peeling of the bells
fateci dunque piangere un poco.	Please make us weep a little.
Non più di nulla, sì di qualcosa,	No more for nothing, but rather forsomething,
di tante cose! Ma il cuor lo vuole,	For many things! But the heart wants it,
quel pianto grande che poi riposa,	That great weeping that then rests,
quel gran dolore che poi non duole;	That great pain that then does not ache;
sopra le nuove pene sue vere	About its real new pains
vuol quei singulti senza ragione:	It wants those unmotivated sobs:
sul suo martòro, sul suo piacere,	About it martyrdom, about its pleasure,
vuol quelle antiche lagrime buone!	It wants those ancient good tears!

Note that sometimes one finds *ciaramella* translated in some dictionary with *bagpipe*, but that is wrong. A *ciaramella* (or *cennamella*) is a shawm, and does not have a bag. However, a *ciaramella* (shawm) is often played along with the *zampogna* (bagpipe).

> In English the name only first appears in the 14th century. There were originally three main variant forms, (1) *schallemele* (*shamulle* or *shamble*), (2) *s(c)halmys* (*shalemeyes* or *chalemyes*, all plural forms in Middle English), and (3) *sc(h)almuse* (or *schalmesse*), each derived from a corresponding variant in Old French: *chalemel*, *chalemie*, and *chalemeaux* (the plural of *chalemel*), each in turn derived from the Latin *calamus* ("reed"), or its Vulgar Latin diminutive form, *calamellus*. (The name of a somewhat different reed instrument, the chalumeau, also shares this etymology.) The early plural forms were often mistaken for a singular, and new plurals were

formed from them. The later reduction in the 15th and 16th centuries to a single syllable in forms such as *schalme*, *shaume*, *shawme*, and finally (in the 16th century) "shawm", was probably due to this confusion of plural and singular forms,

In German the shawm is called *Schalmei* (or for the larger members of the family *Bombard*—also in English in the 14th century—later corrupted to *Bombhardt* and finally in the 17th century to *Pommer*) This is borne out by the very similar names of many folk shawms used as traditional instruments in various European nations: in Spain, many traditional shawms with different names can be found, such as the Castilian, Aragonese, and Leonese dulzaina (sometimes called chirimía, a term that derives from the same Old French word as shawm); the Valencian and Catalan shawms (*xirimia*, *dolçaina*, or *gralla*) or the Navarrese *gaita*. In Portugal there is an instrument called *charamela*; and the name of the Italian shawm is *ciaramella* (or: *cialamello*, *cennamella*).

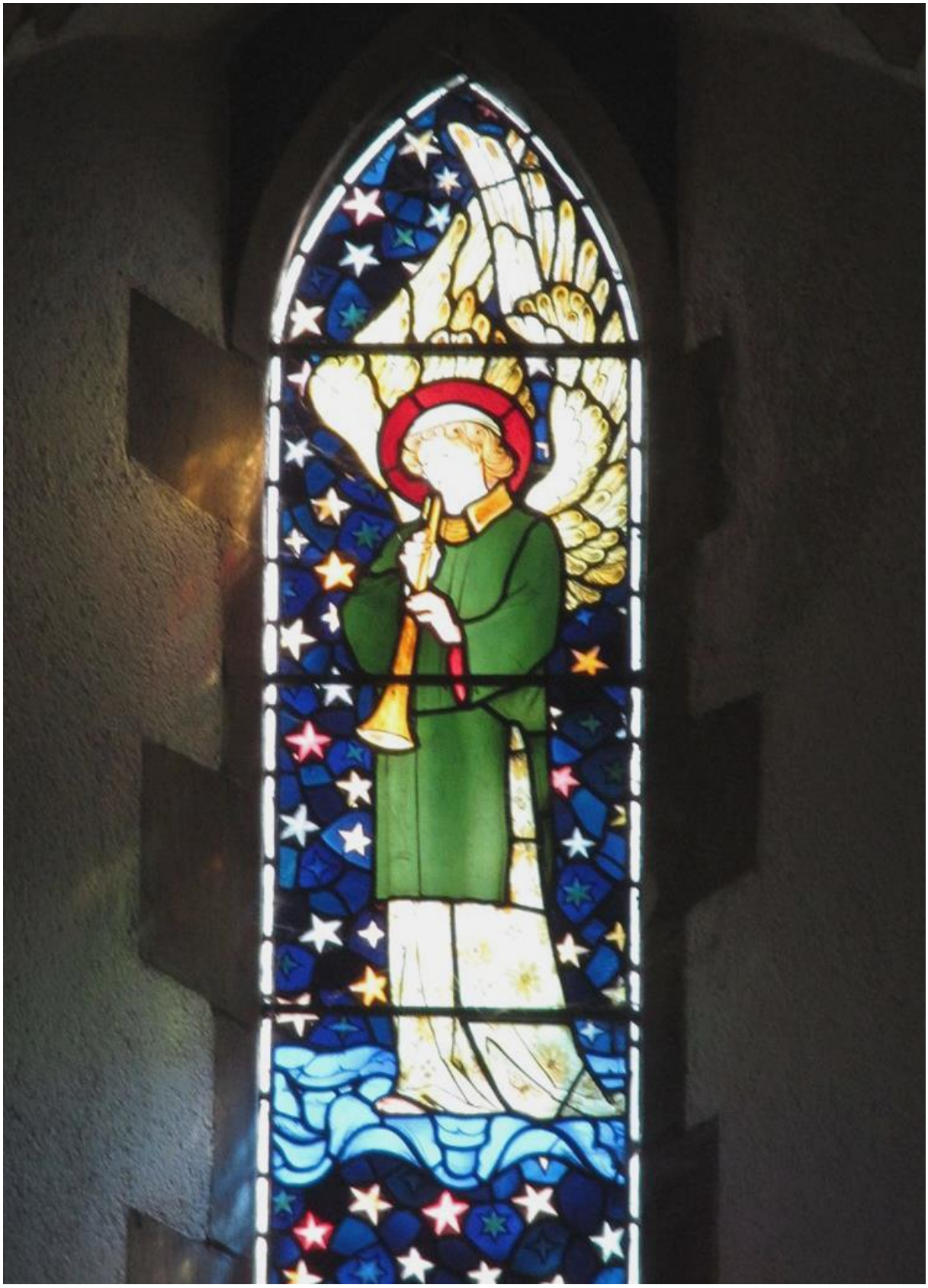
However, it is also possible that the name comes from the Arabic *salamiya* (سلامية), a traditional oboe from Egypt, as the European shawm seems to have been developed from similar instruments brought to Europe from the Near East during the time of the Crusades. This Arabic name is itself linguistically related to many other Eastern names for the instrument: the Arabic *zamr*, the Turkish *zūrnā*, the Persian *surnāy*, the Chinese *suona*, the Javanese *saruni*, and the Hindu *sahanai* or *sanayi*.[70]

A *ciaramella* being played. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ec/Ciaramella_detail.jpg

Concerning Vita-Finzi mention of Pascoli's *Myricae* and then of the wind of the graveyard drying the sweetmeats, consider that in Alfredo Panzini's humorous account of a trip on holiday, *La lanterna di Diogene* (*Diogenes' Lamp*), published in 1907 by the Jewish-owned Treves publishing house, Ch. 12 is entitled "Il camposanto ove nacquero le 'Myricae'" ("The graveyard were the *Myricae* were born").[71]

[70] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shawm

[71] It is the San Mauro graveyard where Giovanni Pascoli's relatives were buried, and the assassination (an unsolved case) of his father in 1867 — commemorated in a famous poem — was remembered and discussed by villagers. Panzini's book ends with the funeral, at the Cimitero Monumentale in Milan, of a fellow teacher; commemorations at the teacher's funeral are stopped short as a rabbi is scheduled next to speak at a different funeral, of two deceased Jews.



Panel from the east window of St. James's Church, Staveley, Cumbria, portraying an angel playing a shawm.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ab/Staveley_angel_playing_shawm.jpg

Let us consider how Paolo Vita-Finzi parodied the *incipit*, the very beginning of Luigi Pirandello's play *Uno, nessuno e centomila* (*One, None, and One Hundred Thousand*), while giving the parody the title "La donna dal fiore al naso" ("The Woman with a Flower on her Nose"), clearly patterned after Pirandello's title *L'uomo dal fiore in bocca* (*The Man with a Flower in his Mouth*), about a man who had a deadly tumour in his mouth. Vita-Finzi's parody of Pirandello is about a foruncle.

> Un brufolino… Che cos'è, in fondo, un brufolino? Un'escrescenza minuscola: un puntino rosso con un puntino bianco in cima. Cosa, davvero, da non preoccuparsene più di tanto.
>
> Né, in circostanze normali, il prof. Saro Lapàpera si sarebbe preoccupato minimamente di quel bitorzolino sul naso della sua fidanzata Tuzza.
>
> [A foruncle... What is, at the end of the day, a foruncle? It is a tiny wart: a little red dot with a little white dot on top. It is really something not to worry about too much.
>
> Neither, under normal circumstances, Prof. Saro Lapàpera[72] would have been remotely concerned of that tiny growth on the nose of his fiancée, Tuzza.][73]

Let us consider for comparison the beginning of Pirandello's *Uno, nessuno e centomila*, which is thematically germane, but stylistically different (as sometimes Vita-Finzi rather draws upon the corpus of an author rather than a given work):

> – Che fai? – mia moglie mi domandò, vedendomi insolitamente indugiare davanti allo specchio.
>
> – Niente, – le risposi, – mi guardo qua, dentro il naso, in questa narice. Premendo, avverto un certo dolorino.
>
> Mia moglie sorrise e disse:
>
> – Credevo ti guardassi da che parte ti pende.
>
> Mi voltai come un cane a cui qualcuno avesse pestato la coda:
>
> – Mi pende? A me? Il naso?
>
> E mia moglie, placidamente:
>
> – Ma sí, caro. Guàrdatelo bene: ti pende verso destra.
>
> ["What are you doing?" my wife asked me, upon seeing me unusually spending time in front of the mirror. "Nothing", I replied, "I am staring at myself here, inside my nose, in this nostril. Whenever I squeeze, I feel some pain".
>
> My wife smiled and said: "I thought you were looking on which side it is leaning". I turned like a dog whose tail was threaded upon: "Is it leaning? My nose?" At which, my wife, placidly: "Indeed, darling. Have a good look: it leans to the right".]

> Avevo ventotto anni e sempre fin allora ritenuto il mio naso, se non proprio bello, almeno molto decente, come insieme tutte le altre parti della mia persona. Per cui m'era stato facile ammettere e sostenere quel che di solito ammettono e sostengono tutti coloro che non hanno avuto la sciagura di sortire un corpo deforme: che cioè sia da sciocchi invanire per le proprie fattezze. La scoperta improvvisa e inattesa di quel difetto perciò mi stizzí come un immeritato castigo.
>
> [I was aged twenty-eight, and until then I had always thought that my nose was, if not quite handsome, at any rate definitely decent, like, taken together, all my other body parts. Therefore, I had found it easy to concede and to claim that which those usually concede and claim, who have not been as unfortunate as to get a misshapen body: namely, that it is foolish to be vain about one's looks. This is why the sudden, unexpected discovery of that defect irritated me as an undeserved punishment.]

[72] This professor may be just a grammar school or high school teacher, because such teachers, too, are given the title "professore" in Italy. *Saro* is a rare first name in Italian, and is rather lower-class, though in this particular case it is middle-class. Its is a masculine form of the more widespread *Sara* ('Sarah'). As for the surname *Lapàpera*, it is comic, because *la pàpera* denotes either 'the female duckling' or 'the slip of the tongue'.

[73] The first name *Tuzza* ['tuttsa] is a clipped form of *Santuzza* ('little saint'), a Sicilian name.

> Vide forse mia moglie molto piú addentro di me in quella mia stizza e aggiunse subito che, se riposavo nella certezza d'essere in tutto senza mende, me ne levassi pure, perché, come il naso mi pendeva verso destra, cosí...
>
> – Che altro?
>
> Eh, altro! altro! Le mie sopracciglia parevano sugli occhi due accenti circonflessi, ^ ^, le mie orecchie erano attaccate male, una piú sporgente dell'altra; e altri difetti...
>
> – Ancora?
>
> Eh sí, ancora: nelle mani, al dito mignolo; e nelle gambe (no, storte no!), la destra, un pochino piú arcuata dell'altra: verso il ginocchio, un pochino.
>
> [Perhaps my wife saw much deeper than I did, inside that irritation of mine, as she immediately said in addition that, if I was so certain of being flawless in everything, I should duisabuse myself of that notion, because just as my nose was leaning to the right, likewise… "What else?" What else! It turned out that my eyebrows looked, above my eyes, like two circumflex accents, ^ ^, and my ears are attached badly, one of them beiong more outthrust that the other; and again other defects… "Even more?" Indeed, even more: in my hands, in my little finger; and in my legs (no, they are not crooked!), the right leg is just a bit more arched than the other one: near the knee, just a little bit.]
>
> Dopo un attento esame dovetti riconoscere veri tutti questi difetti. E solo allora, scambiando certo per dolore e avvilimento, la maraviglia che ne provai subito dopo la stizza, mia moglie per consolarmi m'esortò a non affliggermene poi tanto, ché anche con essi, tutto sommato, rimanevo un bell'uomo.
>
> Sfido a non irritarsi, ricevendo come generosa concessione ciò che come diritto ci è stato prima negato. Schizzai un velenosissimo «grazie» e, sicuro di non aver motivo né d'addolorarmi né d'avvilirmi, non diedi alcuna importanza a quei lievi difetti, ma una grandissima e straordinaria al fatto che tant'anni ero vissuto senza mai cambiar di naso, sempre con quello, e con quelle sopracciglia e quelle orecchie, quelle mani e quelle gambe; e dovevo aspettare di prender moglie per aver conto che li avevo difettosi.
>
> [Having examined myself carefully, I had to concede that all those defects were for real. It was only then, for sure by mistaking for pain and dejection the amazement I experienced after being irritated, my wife sought to console me by exhorting me not to feel so miserable about it, as even with those defects, all in all, I was a handsome man.
>
> I would like to see you not becoming irritated, upon receiving as a magnanimous concession that which as our due had been previously denied to us. I ejected a quite venomous "Thanks a lot!" and, feeling certain I had any reason to feel either pain or dejection, I considered those defects of no consequence, and yet I gave much impiortance to the fact that for so many years, I had been living without ever changing my nose, keeping that very same nose all the time, as well as my eyebrows and my ears, my hands and my legs. It had taking me getting married, to be made aware that they are defective.]

As can be seen, Pirandello's text considered makes no reference to regional identity. In contrast, Vita-Finzi's anthroponomastic choice ("Tuzza") sets the situation among Sicilians. Pirandello was from Sicily, and part of his works are set in Sicily.

Ronci (2010) also mentions Vita-Finzi's parodies of the writer Annie Vivanti, of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile (who was the nemesis of his publisher, Formiggini, but in Gentile's case, Vita-Finzi quoted verbatim an actual passage by the philosopher), and of the much celebrated, turgid, sensual poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, the one who used to be referred to as "il Vate", "the Seer".[74]

Vita-Finzi postured as though D'Annunzio[75] had become aware of the existence of an *Antologia novissima della fallace modernità* (*A Quite New Anthology of Fallacious*

[74] D'Annunzio also gave himself the title "il Duce" before Mussolini appropriated it. This was when D'Annunzio, at the command of a militia — Mussolini's newspaper raised funds for him — conquered the free city of Fiume, a demographically mixed city that following his military action and his defeat by the Italian army, was annexed by Italy.

[75] Barin (2012–2013, pp. 86–98) discussed Vita-Finzi's parody of D'Annunzio at length.

Modernity, a transparent amused reference to the *Antologia apocrifa*), and therefore contributed to it verse that "had escaped [and was not included in] my heavenly epic, *The Book of Beatitude*"[76] ("sfuggito al mio poema paradisiaco *liber beatitudinis*". D'Annunzio *Poema paradisiaco* is of 1893). After a narrative preamble about the circumstances of obtaining this supposedly authentic poent by the Seer, a poem comes that is a good imitation of D'Annunzio (during his time in the army, Vita-Finzi and a companion competed in their expertise in D'Annunzio's poetry), but at the very end, the imitation turns into a corrosive parody:

Vieni, sorella. Il tacito giardino	Come, o sister. The silent garden
dei versi miei, golfo di sogni, è immoto:	Of my verse, a bay of dreams, is still:
Vieni al giardino del Fratel tuo Grande.	Come to the garden of the Brother thine Great.
S'ergono contro al cielo iacintino	They rise, against the sky hyacinthine,[77]
i rigidi cipressi; egli di loto	The rigid cypresses;[78] he of lotus
v'intreccia e di papaveri ghirlande,	Braids there, and of poppies, wreaths,[79]
anima: di papaveri e di loto.	O soul: of poppies and of lotus.
Le statue di marmo in cori insigni	The marble statues in illustrious choruses[80]
paion dormire; udendo i versi arcani	Appear to sleep; upon hearing the arcane verse
i fauni fanno dolci suoni e strani,	The fauns make sweet sounds and strange,
lente cadon le rose estenüate,	Slowly the roses fall extenuated,
piegan vinti dal sonno i bianchi cigni,	They fold, won by sleep, the white swans,[81]
mentre nei rivi ceruli e benigni	While in the creeks, cerulean and benign,
scorron soavi l'acque inzuccherate.	Suave the sugared waters stream.[82]
Scorron soavi l'acque inzuccherate	Suave the sugared waters stream
de la mia strofe ne la pura sponda	Of my stanza in the pure river-bank
eco di tempi che non sono più:	An echo of times that are no more:
e nel tacito vespero d'estate	And in the silent vesper of summer
sorgono lievi imagini obliate,	Slight forgotten images rise,
la bella Otero e Isaotta la bionda	The comely Otero[83] and Isaotta the blonde[84]

[76] In fact, the parody was mainly inspired by D'Annunzio's *Poema paradisiaco*.

[77] In D'Annunzio's poem "Hortus conclusus", one finds "cielo vespertino", "vesper-time sky".

[78] One also finds "rigidi cipressi" in D'Annunzio's poem "Hortus conclusus".

[79] One also finds the word "ghirlande", as well as roses, in D'Annunzio's poem "Hortus conclusus".

[80] In D'Annunzio's poem "Hortus conclusus", one finds "d'una grande / statua solitaria" ("of a great lonely statue") at the first two lines of a stanza, whereas in the first two lines of the next stanza one finds "i curvi cori di marmo" ("the curved choruses of marble"). Barin (2012–2013, p. 96) shows side by side, with wording highlighted in several colours, text from D'Annunzio's poem "Hortus conclusus" and Vita-Finzi's parody "Hortus apertus".

[81] There are swans also in D'Annunzio's poem "Hortus conclusus".

[82] By means of "sugared waters", Vita-Finzi is poking fun at D'Annunzio's poetry, and signalling that it is preposterous. The effect is reinforced as the same line is repeated as the next stanza's first line.

[83] "La bella Otero" ("the comely Otero") was how the Spanish dancer Carolina Otero (1868–1965) used to be referred to, in Italy.

[84] This is the eponymous protagonist of Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Isaotta Guttadauro* (*Iseult Golddrop*). The collection of verse *Isaotta Guttadauro e altre poesie*, pervaded by eroticism and with a decadent taste for juxtaposing delicate images and deformity or corruption, was first published (by Editrice La Tribuna in Rome) in 1886. In 1890 it was divided into *L'Isottèo* and *La Chimera.*

John Woodhouse (2001, pp. 62–63) explains: "The pompous title of D'Annunzio's new collection, *Isaotta Guttadauro*, probably derived from a recherché anthology, the *Liber Isottaeus*, put together by Basinio Basini in 1439 to honour Isotta, the lover of Sigismondo Malatesta". Sigismondo Malatesta (1417–1468) was a ruler of the Adriatic Sea coast city of Rimini, and he was the one of the Malatesta dynasty who had the Tempio Malatestiano built there. "It was typical of the kind of exotic titles which D'Annunzio mentally collected in order to startle or surprise his readers, though it is true that much later he would study the history of the Malatesta in great detail in order to provide himself with subject-matter for his dramas" (Woodhouse 2001, p. 63).

In the original 1886 edition of *Isaotta Guttadàuro* (on the front page, there is an accent on the *a*), the initial part following the "Prologo" is "Il libro d'Isaotta" (comprising "Sonetto liminare", "Il dolce grappolo", "Ballata d'Astíoco e di Brisenna", "Isaotta nel bosco", "Sonetto d'aprile", "Ballata delle donne sul fiume", and "Ballata e

sestina di commiato"), followed by "Sonetti delle Fate" ("Sonnets of the Fairies"), "Sonetti d'Ebe" ("Sonnets of Hebe", the goddess of youth), the poems of "Rurali", then the poem "Booz addormentato" ("Boaz asleep", inspired by the biblical Book of Ruth, with an explicit acknowledgement of Victor Hugo), then the poems of "Idillii", then the romances and rondels of "Intermezzo melico", the poems of "Donne" ("Women"), the "Epilogo", the "Epodo", and endnotes. Of Boaz, the poem about him stated "D'argento era la barba, come rivo d'aprile" ("His beard was of silver, like a creek in April"). He has a dream about his offspring, and is surprised by this, as he was childless, a widower, and aged eighty.

The critics' reception of *Isaotta Guttadauro* was one of disappointment. The newspaper *Corriere di Roma* published a parody, entitled "Risaotto al pomodauro". It was signed "Raphael Panunzio". It may be that the author hiding behind that pen-name was Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo, but the newspaper editor was happy to let it be believed that he himself was the parodist, as explained in a webpage (accessible at http://guide.supereva.it/letteratura_italiana/interventi/2008/12/risaotto-al-pomodauro), itself entitled "Risaotto al pomodautro – Guide", which introduces the matter as follows:

> Sulle pagine del *Corriere di Roma* comparve, però, una parodia sgraziata e oggi introvabile, "*Risaotto al pomodauro*" (noto anche come "Risaotta al pomodauro"), che derideva fin dal titolo le preziosità cacofoniche della lingua poetica dannunziana e mescolava (proprio come in un risotto) vari ingredienti, fra cui il pepe dell'aneddotica biografica.
>
> [But on the pages of the *Corriere di Roma*, a graceless parody appeared, at present not to be found, "*Risaotto al pomodauro*" (also known as "Risaotta al pomodauro"), which derided even in its title the cacophonic preciosity of the language of D'Annunzio's verse, and mixed in (the way one would do while preparing a risotto) several ingredients, including the pepper of biographical anecdotes.]

That parody went as far as suggesting that D'Annunzio obtained his collaboration at the *Tribuna*, the newspaper of Prince Maffeo Sciarra (who also funded the publication of *Isaotta Guttadauro*) thanks to the good graces of the noblewoman Maria di Galles, D'Annunzio's wife. (His multiple adulterine relations were notorious, but here, he was presented as a cuckold.) That parody was believed to have been penned by the newspaper editor, the prominent Edoardo Scarfoglio, until then rather friendly with D'Annunzio. The latter was so incensed that he published an open letter heaping insults upon Scarfoglio, who found himself in the position of having to challenge D'Annunzio to a duel. D'Annunzio was wounded at a hand. The duel took place in Rome, on 20 November 1886 at Porta Pia, precisely the gate associated wirth Rome's annexation by Italy: the Kingdom of Italy's army entered the city through an opening (*la breccia di Porta Pia*) made in the city walls by cannon balls on 20 September 1870. (It so happens that the officer who ordered to open fire in that quick military confrontation was a Segre from Piedmont, and was Jewish. He was a grandfather of my teacher from high school, the late Emma Debenedetti.)

There has been a suspicion (which I disbelieve, given how lurid the parody was) that the scandal was intended to generate publicity for the book, considering that the subsequent relations between D'Annunzio and Scarfoglio resumed as before, and the prominent writer Matilde Serao, Scarfoglio's wife, went on to write about D'Annunzio's life and works. That would have not been uncharacteristic of D'Annunzio. As Woodhouse remarked, "In adolescence he circulated rumours of his own death to the Italian newspapers, helping to stir up interest in the imminent publication of his latest work. That slim volume, mentioned in most of the ensuing obituaries, sold well and found sympathetic reviewers. As time passed, other stories accumulated and attached themselves to his public persona, until truth and fiction became indistinguishable" (Woodhouse 2001, from the blurb). In his *Libro segreto, Prose di ricerca*, D'Annunzio gave a "not unboastful account [...] where he alleged that he deliberately offered Scarfoglio his arm in order, by accepting a slight wound, not to overwhelm his old friend with his superior fencing skills" (Woodhouse 2001, p. 63, fn. 47).

Risaotta is a distortion of the name Isaotta, by portmanteau formation with the plural noun *risa* 'bursts of laughter'. As for *pomodauro*, it is a distortion (in exactly the same way that *Isaotta* is a distortion of *Isotta*) of *pomodoro* 'tomato' (the etymological sense being 'golden fruit'). Out of affectation, D'Annunzio named his protagonist *Isaotta Guttadauro* instead of *Isotta Goccia d'Oro*.

The headline alluded to *risotto al pomodoro* 'risotto with tomatoes'. The headline "Risaotta al pomodauro" is very similar to "risa otto al pomodauro" ("bursts of laughter, eight, with tomatoes"). This is because in Italian, the idiom *farsi quattro risate* (literally, 'to make for oneself four bursts of laughter') denotes 'to have some fun' (especially at the expenses of somebody); had this been a staged play, then having fun while expressing disapproval could be accompanied with throwing tomatoes at the actors on stage.

The form *Isaotta* is unjustifiable other than by whim (he wanted the name *Isa* — itself clipped from *Isabella* and the like — to stand out inside the name *Isaotta* instead of the usual *Isotta*). The newspaper had made Isaotta into Risaotta, which suggests *risa otto*, as well as suggesting a distortion into *risaotto* out of *risotto*. The headline

e colei che compiacque al rege Artù.	And she who surrendered herself to King Arthur.
Or piange una fontana solitaria:	Now a lonely fountain weeps:
pallide, e dolce, e senza nube il cielo	Pale, and sweet, and with no cloud the sky
che d'opale si tinge a l'occidente.	Which of opal is painted to the west.
Leni i miei versi sperdonsi ne l'aria,	Lax, my lines of verse are disperded in the air,
vaghe apparenze, gigli senza stelo,	Vague appearances, lilies with no stalk,
nuvole bianche, tuniche di velo	White clouds, tunics of veil
d'infinito conteste e di nïente.	Woven of infinite and of nothing.
Non forse hanno quei versi il suono muto	Do not those lines of verse have the mute sound
D'un cembalo che più suono non dia?	Of a harpsichord that make sound no more?
Non forse han la spirtale melodia	Do not they have the spiritual melody
che senza corde effonder sa il leuto?	That without strings the lute knows how to emit?
O, sembra, la dolcezza essenzïale	Or then it seems the essential sweetness
stanca spirante da le vuote fiale	Wearily expiring from the empty vials
poi che il natio profumo hanno perduto.	Once they have lost their native fragrance.
S'apron lenti i miei versi, oh come buoni,	Slowly my lines of verse open up, o how good,
oh come stanchi, al vespero silente;	O how weary, at the silent vesper;
e somigliano a candidi paoni	And similar to candid peacocks
nati in un mese un po' convalescente.	Born in a month somewhat convalescent.[85]
Tutto bianco ne appare il bel giardino,	Thus wholly white the comely garden appears,
anima, mentre io siedo a te vicino	O soul, while I sit next to thee,
cantando inaudite mie canzoni.	Singing thus far unheard songs of mine.
So che sei stanca, è vero? Oh, molto stanca,	I know thou art weary, are thou not? Very weary,
oh tanto stanca e pallida e dolente	O so exceedingly weary and pale and in pain,
che cadon da la mano esangue e bianca	That they fall, from thy bloodless and white hand
le rose che fiorìan sì dolcemente.	The roses that so sweetly had been in bloom.
Or non parlare: io parlo, a l'infinito.	Now do not speak: I speak, *ad infinitum*.[86]

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was stating that the proper response to the play was to have fun jeering at it, and to throw tomatoes. Of course, even an author with less exhalted an opinion of himself than D'Annunzio would have felt the sting. D'Annunzio's attitude is known as *superomismo,* where the Superman is not the concept known from Germany, but rather an aesthete whose superior qualities supposedly free him from the usual social and moral constraints.

Woodhouse somewhat simplified the matter (2001, p. 63): "Edoardo Scarfoglio thought that the title was pretentious, and the delay in publication gave him the opportunity to play a joke on his friend by publishing a parody (condoned if not actually written by Scarfoglio) over three editions of the *Corriere di Roma*, in October 1868. The satirical piece was entitled, not *Isaotta Guttadauro,* but *Risaotto al pomodauro* (a garbled version of 'risotto with tomato sauce'). D'Annunzio challenged him to a duel (which took place outside Porta Pia on 20 November 1886), and was lightly wounded in the arm. Perhaps it was another publicity stunt; certainly D'Annunzio had an urgent need to sell a few volumes that year. The two men were anyway firm friends again soon afterwards, and in less that a year were indulging in another escapade at sea".

[85] At this point, the parody is already turning corrosive. It will burst out in the comic last stanza.

[86] In his poem "La pioggia nel pineto" ("Rain in the Pine-Wood"), already in its first verse D'Annunzio invites his female interlocutor, Ermione (Hermion), to shut up ("Taci", i.e., 'Keep silent' or 'Shut up!'), even though that poem is entirely a soliloquy. This is why at high school (Jewish day school in Milan) my class erupted in laughter at this "Taci". And yet, it is among D'Annunzio's best poems. Is is part of the collection *Alcyone,* which in turn is his best work, and is one of his three *Laudi* books, all of which were first published in 1903. "La pioggia nel pineto" conveys an attitude that has been described as *panismo,* after Pan, the Greek god of the forests. In D'Annunzio's own generation, the Hebrew poet Shaul Tschernichowski came close to such a neo-pagan view of nature, but in some respects a closer situational similarity — as well as an explicit presence of nymphs and Pan himself — can be found in an English-language text from a very different genre: namely, a rather contrived short story by Jewish American poet and novelist Cynthia Ozick, "The Pagan Rabbi" (1968). Whereas Ozick's story is situated after the eponymous character hanged himself in a park, D'Annunzio's poem "La pioggia nel pineto" is quietly joyful, stress is absent, and in the end the couple it features comes out of the wood even though the vegetation, so it would appear, would rather retain their legs as they walk on it. Throughout that poem, the poet invites Ermione to join him in their melting into the leafy nature, operant by dint

Ma tu puoi, non è vero, alzare un dito? Fammi col dito il gesto che consente.	But thou canst raise a finger, canst thou not? Signal with thy finger the gesture of consent.[87]
Chiara la luna, di chiaror d'opale, bagna le cose d'un suo bianco latte ne l'incanto del giorno moribondo. Candide nel crepuscolo autunnale sì come emerse da un lontano mondo appaion dolci le tue carni intatte, mentre batte ai miei versi il cor profondo.	Clear is the moon, of the clarity of opal, It wets things with a white milk of hers, In the enchantment of the dying day. Candid in the autumn's twilight As though they emerged from a world far away Thy intact flesh appears sweet Whereas my verse's heart is beating.
E bagnerà quel bianco latte il seno anima, e scenderà lunghesso i fianchi come s'infiltra tacito un veleno; e scenderà quel latte ai tuoi ginocchi — così tondi i ginocchi, e così bianchi! — al suono lene dei miei versi stanchi, anima: e che il tuo cor non ne trabocchi!	And that white milk will wet the bosom, O soul, and shall descend along the flanks As when a poison tacitly infiltrates; And that milk shall descend down to thy knees — Knees so rounds, so white! — At the lax sound of my weary verse, O soul: And let it from thy heart not overflow!
E scenderà quel latte ai tuoi ginocchi.	And that milk shall descend down to thy knees.
(Novilunio d'aprile, MDCCCXCI)	(New moon of April, 1891)

The idea of the parody of D'Annunzio — the device Vita-Finzi uses in order to deflate D'Annunzio — is that the white light of the moon is made to descend along the body of the sister (Barin 2012–2013, pp. 70–71). The title of this parody of D'Annunzio is in Latin, "Hortus Apertus" ("An Open Garden"), by opposition to "hortus conclusus" ("a sealed garden", in Hebrew *gan na'úl*), which is how in *Song of Songs* 4:12 the brothers refer to their sister (the protagonist), while they wonder whether she is chaste ("a sealed garden") or otherwise (*Song of Songs* 8:8–9). She confirms that she is chaste.

This section gives an idea of the complexity one may come across, when it comes to appreciating humour from the 20th century, and this in a genre that is quite demanding of both the parodist, and his readership. This is a kind of humour that can quite elude a reader. See a survey of earlier Italian parody in an article by Nella Giannotto (1997).

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of his monologue. The metamorphosis is gradual: "piove su i nostri volti / silvani /" ("it rains on our Sylvan faces", vv. 20–21 and 116–117); "E immersi / noi siam nello spirto / silvestre, / d'arborea vita viventi; /" ("And immersed we are in the spirit of the forest, alive of an arborescent life", vv. 52–55); "Piove su le tue ciglia nere / sí che par tu pianga / ma di piacere; non bianca / ma quasi fatta virente, / par da scorza tu esca. /" ("It rains on your black eyelids, so that it looks like you were weeping, but out of pleasure; not white, but almost as though you were made greenish [added emphasis], it looks like you were coming out of the bark", vv. 97–101). In Israeli culture, what comes closest, in my opinion, is a journal cover by the artist Shula Keshet, with her photograph superposes to that of a wood. Gloriously, D'Annunzio, the male chauvinist, is absent.

It is a photograph portraying Keshet, not a painted portrait. On the canvas, two images are combined. Beyond a tree at the centre, in the background there is the face of a woman. Especially her dark eyes and long eyebrows can be seen, whereas at the bottom of the cover, the sides of the contour of her chin is shown, with a little bit of the neck. At the top of the cover, the transition between front and hair is barely detectable. Her nose does not appear, other than in the light yellow-greenish colour which forms the background. The contour of her mouth can be guessed, being identical with the contour of a dark area which forms the ground at the bottom of a tree, depicted at the centre of the cover. The lower branches of the tree form arcs which join the woman's eyebrows, from between them. Smaller plants, including shrubs and herbs in flower, appear on both sides of the tree, and the green shrubs cover the area where the woman's cheeks should be. Red flowers and green leaves appear under her eyes, as well as on the sides of her chin, within her face contour. The tree top is not very leafy; between the branches, light green leaves combine with the yellow-greenish background, to paint the woman's front in light green. A narrow upper band, right before her hair line, shows red flowers on the yellow-greenish background. When the cover is seen from a distance, the woman's portrait stands out more clearly.

[87] This is because the logorrhoic D'Annunzio would not let a woman interlocutor speak, in a poem.

21. Concluding Remarks

This long survey is per force patchy, as fuller coverage would have required writing a book. The century to which we devoted more attention here is the 16th (the Cinquecento). Sections 2 to 5 are concerned with the Middle Ages; in that context, we have given examples of humour in texts other than in Italo-Romance or Latin: namely, the account of Silano's prank from Venosa, and literary humour in Hebrew by Immanuel of Rome, quite possibly responding to Italian literature and, in particular, Dante.

Within the Cinquecento, we considered Ruzante's comedies; Bernesque poets; the genre of the paradoxical encomium; Grappa's *Cicalamenti* (poking fun about the French Disease); the transition in the mid-16th century to the *canzone villanesca* and *villanella alla napolitana* (the low-brow poor relative of the high-brow madrigal, in music) from the Quattrocento's *strambotto* in a single octave, and from the Quattrocento's Burchiellesque nonsense sonnets (which by recent scholarship are claimed to be replete with lewd allusions: we probklematise this, and also consider possible bilingual wordplay from a "rustic comedy", a *commedia rusticale,* by the Tuscan playwright Joseph Santafiora); pasquinades and their repression in Rome; and Giordano Bruno's irreverent contrast of the "Pegasaean Horse" and the donkey from Cillene. For sure, Guiordano Bruno is best known other than for humour. We have also considered humour by Galileo Galilei and his circle. As for the 17th century, we especially paid attention to the heroicomic poet Alessandro Tassoni.

We then lept to the early 20th century, and considered parodies by Eduardo Scarpetta and, especially and in detail, by Paolo Vita-Finzi. This enabled us to show the complexity of humour involved in such parodies, as well as the Italianness of the individual examples of parody, because being able to understand the parody and realise the humour involved is quite demanding, and requires familiarity with Italian literature. Italy's *belles lettres* are quite rich, and so is the proteiform humour found there.

A few words about an author who dealt with humour at a meta-level, which is what an anthologist or, *mutatis mutandis,* a theorist does. I would like to mention a work in three volumes about humour by the painter, poet, polymath, and politician Tullo Massarani (Mantua, 1826 – Milan, 1905), namely, *Storia e fisiologia dell'arte di ridere. Favola, fiaba, commedia, satira, novella, prosa e poesia umoristica.* Vol. 1 is *L'antichità e il Medio Evo* (1900). Vol. 2 is *Dal Risorgimento delle lettere in Europa all'apogeo e alla decadenza* (1901). Vol. 3 is *Nel mondo moderno* (1902).

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[88] Leicht and Freudenthal (2012) contains mostly expanded and revised versions of papers delivered at the conference "Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907). Bibliography and the Study of Cultural Transfer. A Centennial Conference", held on 20–22 November 2007 at the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin — the former Königliche Preußische Bibliothek — where Steinschneider worked for over twenty years (1869–1890).

[89] This edition of Mambelli includes only the *Osservazioni intorno le particelle.* The complete work includes also a *Trattato de' verbi*.

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[90] The title of Woodhouse's book is because he interpreted the personal name of the poet and writer Gabriele D'Annunzio as "[the angel] Gabriel of the Announce [to Mary]". Actually the surname *D'Annunzio* originally was a patronym.