

## What happens to Aristotle in practice? Sperone Speroni's *Canace* before the background of the *Accademia degli Infiammati* and *Elevati*

Simona Oberto

Alongside with the rise of interest in new philosophical, scientific, linguistic and literary-poetic fields of knowledge Italy's 16th century presents a peculiar cultural mass phenomenon implemented mainly by a socio-intellectual elite, which leads to the founding of a very high number of academies. The available information on the approximately 170 institutions of this period varies significantly,<sup>1</sup> though written documents such as lectures, lessons, letters, treatises or dialogues of a single academy or testimonies by other academies can not only contribute to the reconstruction of structural aspects and/or poetological dynamics concerning a particular academic gathering, but also delineate the knowledge on those, which were the most important contemporary institutions.

Among the latter the *Accademia degli Infiammati* in Padua, one of the most important centers for the diffusion of Aristotelism, plays a decisive role. Unfortunately, the data on this benchmark for vernacular literature and for five further influential Cinquecento-academies<sup>2</sup> is still rather scarce, due to a lack of its sources and of the accounts

1 Cf. Maylender, Michele: *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia* Vol. I–V, Bologna: Forni 1976.

2 These academies are the *Intronati* (Siena), the *Elevati* (Padua), the *Etere* (Padua), the *Humidi* (Florence) and the *Fiorentina* (Florence). The *Infiammati* were influenced by the Sienese *Intronati*, which is testified by the academic structures, programs and the presence of former protagonists such as Alessandro Piccolomini; cf. Maylender 1976, «Accademia degli Intronati – Siena» and «Accademia degli Infiammati – Padova», Vol. III, pp. 350–362 and 266–270; Samuels, Richard S.: «Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement» in: *Renaissance Quarterly* XXIX,4/1976, pp. 599–634, especially pp. 608–611; a relationship between the two academies is further testified in Giraldi Cinzio, Giambattista: «Giudizio d'una tragedia di Canace e Macareo» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 95–159, here p. 130. As Maylender then asserts in the mid or late 1550s from the ashes of the declined *Infiammati* the new Paduan academy of the *Elevati* arose; Maylender 1976: *Infiammati*, III, p. 270; Maylender 1976: «Accademia degli Elevati – Padova», Vol. II, pp. 263–265; «Accademia degli Elevati» in: *Saggi scientifici e letterari dell'Accademia di Padova*, Vol. 1, Padova: Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti 1786, pp. XXIV–XXIX. After the fall of the latter around 1560 a third very important academy

on its activities. Thus the attempts to retrace paramount poetic-poetological elements generally recur to the works of those who are considered its major and most influential exponents as different in genre, chronology and orientation they might be.

Nonetheless a certain number of scholarly publications on the *Infiammati*<sup>3</sup> have directed the attention to important structural and programmatic aspects, such as the distribution of offices among the members, the main interests in philosophical and philological topics, the belief in the dignity of the *volgare* and its capacity of expressing high knowledge, following the teachings of the philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi on the one hand, and in the tradition of the cardinal and advocate of vernacular Pietro Bembo on the other hand.<sup>4</sup>

Before this background the aim of the present article is to examine and shed a new light on the way in which the *Infiammati*'s last <prince> Sperone Speroni interprets and deals with the rules of Aristotle's *Poetics* in his controversial tragedy *Canace* (1542), which so far has been analysed almost exclusively in consideration of the quarrels it provoked in contemporary literary circles.<sup>5</sup> In order to do so, *Canace* will at first be located within the specific institutional context of the *Accademia degli Infiammati* and for the first time its academic character, which hitherto has not been stressed sufficiently, will be emphasized by a particular attention for the *Infiammati*'s *impresa*. After

---

was founded in Padua by the duke Scipione Gonzaga, namely the famous *Eterei*, to which the young Torquato Tasso and Battista Guarino belong; cf. Maylender 1976: «Accademia degli Eterei – Padova», Vol. II, pp. 319–323; «Accademia degli Eterei» in: *Saggi scientifici e letterari dell'Accademia di Padova*, Vol. 1, Padova: Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti 1786, pp. XXIX–XLI. Cf. for the interaction between the *Infiammati* and the Florentine academies of the *Humidi* and later *Fiorentina*: Daniele, Antonio: «Sperone Speroni, Bernardino Tomitano e l'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova» in: *Sperone Speroni*, Padova: Editoriale Programma [Filologia Veneta II] 1989, pp. 1–53. Here pp. 53–54; see also Andreoni, Annalisa: «Benedetto Varchi all'Accademia degli Infiammati. Frammenti inediti e appunti manoscritti» in: *Studi rinascimentali* 3/2005, pp. 29–44. Here pp. 33–34 and Plaisance, Michel: *L'accademia e il suo principe. Cultura e politica a Firenze al tempo di Cosimo I e Francesco de' Medici*, Roma: Vecchiarelli 2004. Here p. 11.

3 See especially Bruni, Francesco: «Sperone Speroni e l'Accademia degli Infiammati» in: *Filologia e Letteratura* XIII, 1/1967, pp. 24–71; Cerreta, Florindo V.: «An Account of the early life of the Accademia degli Infiammati in the Letters of Alessandro Piccolomini to Benedetto Varchi» in: *Romanic Review* 48, 4/1957, pp. 249–264 and Cerreta, Florindo: «L'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova e l'opera del Piccolomini» in: *Alessandro Piccolomini. Letterato e filosofo senese del Cinquecento*, Siena: Accademia degli Intronati [Monografie di storia e letteratura senese IV] 1960, pp. 23–31; Daniele 1989; Maylender 1976: *Infiammati*, III, pp. 266–270; Samuels 1976.

4 Cf. Bruni 1967; Daniele 1989.

5 The starting point for this was given by Weinberg, Bernard: «XVIII. The Quarrel over Speroni's *Canace* and Dramatic Poetry» in: *A history of literary criticism in the Italian Renaissance* Vol. II, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press 1961, pp. 912–953.

focusing on the semantic and structural peculiarities of the tragedy, a closer look will be taken at the four *Lezioni in difesa della Canace* (1558), which Speroni held in the Paduan successor-academy of the *Elevati*. These lessons offer a first-hand critical evaluation of the *pièce*. As will be demonstrated, particularly in the aftermath of Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio's polemical *Giudizio sopra una tragedia di Canace e Macareo* (1543/1550), Speroni will repeatedly indicate a poetological compatibility of his characters with Aristotelian norms, though without always reaching convincing solutions in the specific performance. At the same time and at a very early stage of the Italian Aristotle-reception,<sup>6</sup> Aristotle's authority is shaken by Speroni's explicit reference to non-tragic Latin authors, mainly Ovid, and vernacular authors, above all Dante. The importance Speroni assigns to these in the theorization of dramatic rules, will be of great relevance for the present investigation, for not only do they legitimize thematic and metrical choices, that differ from the formal standards set by Gian Giorgio Trissino's *Sofonisba* (1514–15/1524) and Giraldi's *Orbecche* (1541/1543),<sup>7</sup> but also lead to essential alterations in the understanding of the <middle hero>, the *hamartia* and the generation of the tragic feelings. As the article will show, Speroni's modifications of the Aristotelian laws do not fulfill an exclusively apologetic function, but to a certain degree maybe also act as a <diversionary tactic> for his inclusion of elements that are alien to the genre of tragedy and are instead to be found for example in Terence's comedy *Andria* and Boccaccio's novel *Il Filocolo*.

### **I The *Infiammati*, their *Impresa* and the *Elevati***

It is generally accepted that the *Infiammati* were founded in 1540 by the aristocrat and bishop of Fréjus Leone Orsini (1512–64). The academy counted to its renowned members not only local personalities such as Speroni (1500–88) or Bernardino Tomitano (1517–76) but also the famous Tuscans Benedetto Varchi (1503–65), Alessandro Picco-

6 Weinberg states that: «The raising of one's voice against Aristotle was to become increasingly frequent as the great literary quarrels of the century developed», which is around the 1570s; Weinberg, Bernard: *A history of literary criticism in the Italian Renaissance* Vol. I, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press 1961. Here p. 529.

7 Cf. for the relationship between Speroni's *Canace* and Giraldi's *Orbecche* the «Introduzione» in: Roaf 1982, pp. I–LXI. Here pp. XXII–XXIII.

lomini (1508–78) and Ugolino Martelli (1519–92).<sup>8</sup> We also have indications on the functioning of the academy, which was headed by a president referred to as *principe*, who was elected by the members for a term of six months and who in the official meetings, which were held biweekly on Thursday and Sunday, was assisted by a varying number of *consiglieri* (advisors), *censori* (censors), as well as other officers.<sup>9</sup> We also know that any kind of academic literary production was subjected to the judgment of these adept members and could generally not be published under the academic name unless the same had given their consent. As soon as the publication had the permission to circulate in public though, all members and the academy itself were called to its protection and/or defense in case of critics.<sup>10</sup>

- 8 See for more details: Samuels 1976, p. 605; Daniele 1989, pp. 3–4; Panciera, Elena: «Alle radici dell'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova: i Discorsi del modo di studiare di Sperone Speroni» in: *Cahiers du Celec* 6/2013 online: [cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/files/Documents/cahiers\\_du\\_celec\\_6/E.Panciera.pdf](http://cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/files/Documents/cahiers_du_celec_6/E.Panciera.pdf) [visited last on: 23.10.2014]; Vasoli, Cesare: «Le accademie fra Cinquecento e Seicento e il loro ruolo nella storia della tradizione enciclopedica» in: *Aristotelismo Veneto e Scienza moderna*, Vol. II, ed. by Luigi Olivieri, Padova: Antenore 1983, pp. 81–115. Here especially pp. 89–95.
- 9 Cf. Cerreta 1957, pp. 250–251; Cerreta 1960, pp. 26–27 and Samuels 1976, pp. 609–610. Samuels offers a revised list of the first five *principi* of the *Infiammati* on p. 604 and a specification of the officers on p. 610. Also cf. Tomitano, Bernardino: *Ragionamenti della lingua toscana, in quattro libri*, Venetia: Giovanni de'Farri 1546, pp. 19–20.
- 10 Speroni, Sperone: «Apologia di Sperone Speroni» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 183–205. Subsequently Speroni 1982A. On p. 188 it says: «Nella *Accademia degli Infiammati* di Padova, uno de' quali era allora lo autore della *Canace*, soleva avere una legge, che componendosi alcuna cosa dagli Accademici, erano stabiliti gli approvatori, i quali quella sola che avea valore facean metter in conto, e tutte le altre a' compositori rendevano, perché dovessero migliorarle». Also cf. Padiglione, Carlo: *Le Leggi dell'Accademia degli Oziosi in Napoli*, Napoli: Giannini 1878, p. 24. Speroni's *Canace* is defended by his co-academics in Tomitano's *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, book I, pp. 70r–71r: «Adonque, creder si dee, magnifico M. Michele, che poco bene vogliate, à chi, senza palesar il suo nome, scrisse contra la Tragedia de lo Sperone, intitolata Canace. Rispose allhora il Barocci, se quel tale ciò fatto havesse, per istudio de [70v] la verità, sarebbe degno d'iscusatione; come fù ancho Aristotele, che per lei sinceramente insegnare, poco rispetto portò al suo maestro. Ma se, havendo il torto, scrisse nondimeno più odiosamente, di quello, che s'appartenga à persona gentile, & modesta, non meritarebbe andare di così fatto errore assolto. Disse il Macigni, in quel caso, qual pena gli dareste voi, se a voi stesse il condannarlo? Soggionse il Barocci, niuna altra, eccetto, che à ciascuno facesse il suo nome, palese. Il che essendo, darebbe occasione; onde tutti i belli ingegni di questa età, prendessero la difesa de la Canace, quale non degna pigliar lo Sperone. A questo disse il Manutio di gratia, non si entri per hora sù questi criminali: che forse il contraddittor de la Tragedia potrebbe esser morto: & se pur vive, chi sà, che insino à quest' hora, non habbia altra openione? Ciò si potrebbe sperare, se egli hà l'animo nobile, & conosce d'haver il torto, disse il Girello, ma se egli scrisse contra lo Sperone, come alcun crede, per invidia del suo valore, la speranza è tratta. Cotesto importa poco, disse il Contarini, per mio giudicio, da che è stato commune calamità, di tutti i grandi huomini, essere co scritti, & con l'altrui maldicenze perseguitati. Et che cosa non si scrisse contra Platone? Chi mai la perdonò ad Aristotele?»; cf. also book IV, pp. 246r–246v: «Oltre che la vostra Tragedia, Canace addomandata, vive tra le bocche de gli huomini, tanto quanto durerà l'odio commune contro chi non per ver dire, ma per isfogare l'impeto de l'invidia verso di voi, & l'odio contro à la patria vostra, si sforzò di ferirla con le maldicenze, più che con vere ragioni. Ma si come

Though very short-lived, for the evidence of the *Inflammati*'s existence seems to dwindle already by the mid 1540s, the group's coherence quickly grew strong enough to become a collective platform uniting what had previously been individual interests.<sup>11</sup> Their initial activities comprised readings of the ancient Greek and Latin authors, such as Homer, Theocritus (*Syrinx*), Horace (*Ode* III,13; *Carmina* II,8) and Tibullus (*Car-men* V), translations of the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid* (by Piccolomini)<sup>12</sup> and of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book XIII – Varchi), lessons on Aristotle's *Ethics* (held by Varchi in 1540)<sup>13</sup> as well as on Aristotle's *Poetics* by the Brescian Vincenzo Maggi and the Veronese Bartolomeo Lombardi, from which eventually the famous 1550 edition of the *Explanationes* resulted.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore theology, philosophy, law, medicine and mathematics<sup>15</sup> were scheduled among their concerns, alongside with the promotion of the vernacular language, leading to lessons on Petrarch and contemporary poets such as Pietro Bembo and Laudomia Forteguerra, but also to the composition of own Petrarchist poetry and dramatic works.<sup>16</sup> This belief in the vernacular, credited with the capability

---

appresso gli animi sinceri, è fatto scudo vostro, il conoscersi la qualità de l'animo di chi vi riprende, così siate certo che il tempo serà de la Canace ottimo difensore: & i posteri giudicando senza passione, torranno la protection vostra, giudicando la vostra virtù, correr l'istessa fortuna, con Cicerone & Virgilio, li quali dalle percosse de l'invidia furono tâto [sic] poco sicuri, quanto molto certi, d'essere à tutti i vegnenti secoli, immortalmente gloriosi»; Tomitano, Bernardino: *Quattro libri della lingua toscana*, Padova: Marcantonio Olmo 1570.

11 Cf. Samuels 1976, p. 611 and Andreoni 2005.

12 Cf. Panciera 2013. Piccolomini seems to have published two translations of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* in the same year and neither of them directly carries the *Inflammati* or other academic members in its name: Piccolomini, Alessandro: *Il sesto di Vergilio, tradotto dal s. Stordito Intronato, in lingua toscana, in uersi sciolti da rima. Le due orationi le quali sono nel terzodecimo libro del Metamorfofi d'Ouidio, l'una d'Aiace, & l'altra d'Vlisse. Tradotte parimente dal medesimo s. Stordito Intronato, in uersi sciolti da rima*, Venetia: Andrea Arrivabene da Pozzo 1540; *Virgilio, i sei primi libri del Eneide, tradotti a piu illustri e honorate Donne, da Alessandro Piccolomini, Aldobrando Cerretani, Bartolomeo Carli Piccolomini, Bernardino Borghesi, Hippolito de Medici*, Venetia: Comin de Trino 1540.

13 Cf. Andreoni 2005.

14 Maggi, Vincenzo / Lombardi, Bartolomeo: *Vincentii Madii Brixiani et Bartholomaei Lombardi Veronensis in Aristotelis librum de poetica explanationes Poetica*, Venetiis: Valgrisius 1550. For details on the *Explanationes* see the chapter «IX. The tradition of Aristotle's *Poetics*: Discovery and Exegesis» in Weinberg 1961, I, pp. 349–423, here especially pp. 373–380. For information on Piccolomini's recourse to Maggi's and Lombardi's *Explanationes* in his translation and commentary of Aristotle's *Poetics* see Weinberg 1961, I, pp. 517–528.

15 Cf. Andreoni 2005, p. 32; Tomitano 1546, pp. 17–22; Davi Daniele, Maria: «Bernardino Tomitano e la *Questio de certitudine mathematicarum*» in: *Aristotelismo Veneto e Scienza moderna. Atti del 25. anno accademico del Centro per la Storia della Tradizione Aristotelica nel Veneto*, Vol. II, ed. by Luigi Olivieri, Padova: Antenore [Centro per la Storia della Tradizione Aristotelica nel Veneto: Saggi e testi 18] 1983, pp. 607–621.

16 Cf. Samuels 1976, p. 611; also cf. Tomasi, Franco / Zaja, Paolo (Eds.): *Rime diverse di molti eccellentissimi autori (Giulio 1545)*, San Mauro Torinese: Edizioni Res [Scrinium 19] 2001, in which a large

of transmitting high doctrinal knowledge, reaches its peak with Speroni's election to presidency for the term of 1541–1542 and his new disciplinary choices for the *Infiammati*, that turn the *volgare* and philosophy into the main priorities of the institution.<sup>17</sup>

The reasons for choosing the vernacular language and philosophy as guiding principles of the *Infiammati* have partially been identified in the influence of Pomponazzi's lessons during Speroni's permanence in Bologna (1523). Pomponazzi considers the classical languages a hindrance to philosophical knowledge, for they distract the speculation from its actual object, leading the attention to focus on the *verba* rather than the *res*.<sup>18</sup> Speroni's linguistic-strategic choice in the language-debate is then symptomatic for the second reason allegedly determining an alterity of the *Infiammati* from the

---

number of *Infiammati* (Orsini, Aretino, Piccolomini, Alamanni, Martelli, Varchi, Tomitano) published their poetry, seemingly after or contemporarily to the decline of the academy; Tomasi, Franco: «IV. Letture di poesia e il Petrarchismo nell'Accademia degli Infiammati» and «V. Eseggesi di Petrarca nelle Accademie del XVI secolo (1530–1550)» in: *Studi sulla lirica rinascimentale (1540–1570)*, Roma: Antenore [Miscellanea erudita 80] 2012, pp. 148–218; Piccolomini, Alessandro: *Lettura del S. Alessandro Piccolomini Infiammato fatta nell'Accademia degli Infiammati*, Bologna: Bartholomeo Bonardo & Marc'antonio da Carpi 1541. This lecture was published without Piccolomini's consent: cf. Piccolomini's letter to Varchi on August 20th 1541 in: Cerreta 1960, pp. 272–273.

17 Cf. Tomitano 1546, pp. 8–9; 20–21.

18 Vasoli, Cesare: «Sperone Speroni: La Filosofia e la lingua. L'ombra di Pomponazzi e un programma di volgarizzamento del sapere» in: *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento: Atti del convegno internazionale, Mantova, 18–20 ottobre 2001*, ed. by Arturo Calzona, Firenze: Olschki [Ingenium 7] 2003, pp. 339–360. Here pp. 345–347; Vasoli, Cesare: «Le Accademie fra Cinquecento e Seicento e il loro ruolo nella tradizione enciclopedica» in: *Università, Accademie e Società scientifiche in Italia e in Germania dal Cinquecento al Settecento. Atti della settimana di studio, 15–20 settembre 1980*, ed. by Laetitia Boehm and Ezio Raimondi, Bologna: Società Ed. Il Mulino [Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico, Quaderno 9] 1981, pp. 81–115. Here 89–92; Bruni 1967, pp. 37–45. For this reason scholars speak of a form of anti-humanism in the academy of the *Infiammati*, cf. Bruni 1967, p. 55 and Panciera 2013. Meanwhile Speroni distances himself from two other postulates of his teacher, namely the mortality of the soul and literature's gnoseological ineptitude. In 1516 Pomponazzi had edited the treatise *De immortalitate animae*, in which he argued that the debate on the immortality of the soul could not be definitely solved by the rational means offered by Aristotelian philosophy and he thus declared the question a «neutrum problema»; cf. Pomponazzi, Pietro: *Abhandlung über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, transl. and ed. by Burkhard Mojsisch, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1990. The ecclesiastic authorities counter-reacted to this work by publicly burning it and entrusting Agostino Nifo with the composition of a confutation of Pomponazzi's statements. Speroni explicates his opinion in the *Discorso dell'Anima umana*: Speroni, Sperone: «Discorso dell'Anima umana» in: *Opere di M. Sperone Speroni degli Alvarotti, tratte da' Mss. originali*, Tomo terzo, Venezia: Domenico Occhi 1740, pp. 368–373. Cf. for Pomponazzi's depreciation of literature: Baroni, Giorgio /Alhaique Pettinelli, Rosanna: *Storia della critica letteraria in Italia*, Torino: UTET 1997. Here p. 195: «Alla separazione tra filosofia e religione corrisponde anche, nel suo pensiero, la separazione tra filosofia e poesia e, quindi, una svalutazione delle capacità conoscitive della poesia. In quanto filosofo, considera il linguaggio un semplice mezzo di comunicazione e rifiuta perciò il latino umanistico, scegliendo per le sue opere il latino tradizionale della scolastica, in cui non di rado immette forme volgari e dialettali».

*Studio padovano*, that is to say his skepticism towards university structures.<sup>19</sup> In this sense the academy becomes a privileged space for the study, translation and experimental production of literature, for which there was no space at the university, with the aim of augmenting the prestige of the vernacular,<sup>20</sup> a testimony of which is given by Bernardino Tomitano's dialogues.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from being a close friend of Speroni's,<sup>22</sup> who figures as a speaker in the *Ragionamenti della lingua toscana* (the first edition is from 1545) and the *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana* (1570), Tomitano significantly contributes to what has been considered another one of the *Infiammati's* central traits, namely their anti-Dantism:<sup>23</sup> In fact the *Ragionamento* makes the speaker Speroni recall Bembo's negative opinion on Dante, according to which the Trecento-author had been a better philosopher than poet and was thus unworthy of being imitated.<sup>24</sup> As shall be shown in the course of this article the alleged anti-Dantism does not apply to Speroni, for whom Dante is *the* verna-

19 This skepticism, among other things, conducted Speroni to abandon his philosophy teaching appointment at the university in Padua in 1528, where the study of the classical languages was central and linked the philological and philosophical activities to one another. Cf. Davi, Maria Rosa: «Filosofia e Retorica nell'opera di Sperone Speroni» in: *Sperone Speroni*, Padova: Editoriale Programma [Filologia Veneta II] 1989, pp.89–112; Girardi, Maria Teresa: *Il sapere e le lettere in Bernardino Tomitano*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero 1995. Here p. 62; Bruni 1967, p. 37 for the «antitesi tra filologia e filosofia».

20 Cerreta 1960, p. 25.

21 On p. 5 Tomitano 1546 states: «dimostrero [...] non essere questa nostra lingua poco fa cresciuta & nodrita, & da ciascuno hoggimai Toscana addomandata, priva di quelle forme di ragionare gentilmente & di que pregi, che alla greca & Romana favella furono conceduti». Cf. also Bruni 1967, p. 31 («Tomitano [...] nei *Ragionamenti* si fa suo [i.e. Speroni's] portavoce»). Cf. Weinberg 1961, I, pp. 348–349 for the Aristotelism in the *Ragionamenti* and Daniele 1989 for Speroni's general theories on language and their relationship to other contemporary ideas.

22 Cf. Colombo, Michele: «Bernardino Tomitano e i Quattro libri della lingua thoscana» in: *Momenti del Petrarco Veneto: Cultura volgare e cultura classica tra Feltre e Belluno nei secoli XV–XVI. Atti del convegno di studio Belluno-Feltre, 15–16 ottobre 2004*, ed. by Paolo Pellegrini, Padova: Antenor [Studi sul Petrarca 37] 2008, pp. 111–133.

23 Cf. Andreoni 2005, p. 30 («In un contesto bembiano e antidantista come quello degli Infiammati, presentarsi citando in apertura una «dotta non meno che vera sentenza» del «nostro divino poeta Dante» era atto di non basso profilo e indicava una netta presa di posizione che lo svincolava dalle riserve dei veneti sulle [sic] poesia dantesca»); Baroni / Alhaique Pettinelli 1997, p. 195: «La sede più prestigiosa dell'antidantismo italiano fu l'Accademia padovana degli Infiammati [...] dove le proposte linguistiche di Bembo subirono una radicalizzazione estremizzante, integrandosi con l'influsso razionalistico di matrice aristotelica già esercitato da Pietro Pomponazzi». The alleged anti-Dantism does not categorically affect all the *Infiammati* and should thus be revised.

24 Tomitano will revise his opinion on Dante in the *Quattro libri* 1570. Cf. Greco, Aulo: «Tomitano, Bernardino» in: *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, consulted online: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardino-tomitano\\_\(Enciclopedia-Dantesca\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardino-tomitano_(Enciclopedia-Dantesca)/) [visited last on: 24.10.2014]; Accame, Maria: «Le rime di B. Tomitano tra petrarchismo bembesco e manierismo» in: *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia dell'Arcadia 7/1977*, pp. 165–203. Here p. 176.

cular instance legitimizing the choice of <immoral> characters and nonconformist metrical aspects in his tragedy.

The heterogeneous interests of the *Infiammati* are then displayed in what is a typical feature of Italian 16th century academies: the *Impresa*. This mixed genre consisting of an iconic and a textual element, referred to as *pittura* and *motto*, throughout the Cinquecento works as a programmatic manifest of the academic institution. Several quite different components, which generally at first sight do not reveal their deeper link and that are chosen for the polyvalence of their exegetical potential (as well as a protection against non-initiates), are ingeniously combined to disclose the textual fund of the academy's literary values. Thus *imprese* are not self-evident and require an interpretative effort by those interested in the poetological choices of an academic institution.<sup>25</sup> So what do we see on the *Impresa* of the academy in question?

caption

---

25 I have made an attempt to describe the genetic principles, the creational skills, the programmatic values, accompanied by exemplary interpretations of the *imprese* of the *Accademia degli Intronati* and *degli Eterei*, in: Oberto, Simona: «Die *Impresa* als Ausdruck literarischer Programmatik in den italienischen Akademien des 16. Jahrhunderts», in: *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 66, 2/2016, pp. 141–162.



The *Impresa* of the *Infiammati* depicts Hercules, clearly identifiable by his classic attributes the lion skin and the wooden club, burning on a pyre, while the *motto* says: «Arso il mortale, al ciel n'andrà l'eterno».<sup>26</sup>

The story of the demigod's apotheosis on Mount Oeta shown by the *Impresa* is narrated especially by two authors, Ovid and Seneca, of which the first assumes a very relevant role in Speroni's apology and the lessons on *Canace*.<sup>27</sup> The ninth book of the *Metamorphoses* (9, 1–272), the ninth letter of the *Heroides* («IX Deianira Herculi») and Seneca's (presumably apocryphal) tragedy *Hercules Oetaeus* tell of how Hercules' second wife Deianira, blinded by jealousy, sends him a garment drenched in the blood of the centaur Nessos, in the attempt to regain her husband's affection. The core action is thus determined by love.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately she is not aware of the centaur's deceit and becomes the cause of excruciating pains, for the poisoned garment sticks to Hercules' flesh and corrodes it to the bones. Unable to longer resist without crying out, the hero finds his only chance of dying an honorable death in suicide. He consequently stacks up wood to a pyre, sets it on fire and leaves his body to the flames, while recalling his labors to the gods above and asking them to accept him or, as in Seneca's version, his soul among them.<sup>29</sup> Jupiter eventually fulfills Hercules' wish, elevating his

26 The *Impresa* can be found in Ferro, Giovanni: *Teatro d'Imprese*, Venetia: Giacomo Sarzina 1623, p. 399. It is also mentioned by the *Intronato* Bargagli, Scipione: *Dell'Imprese*, Venetia: Francesco de' Franceschi 1594, p. 208: «La seconda condizione adunque che le figure dell'Imprese col nome dell'Accademia debban consonare, viene coll'autorità raffermarsi di quella degl'Infiammati di Padova; d'un Ercole nel monte Oeta, che sopra la Catasta delle legna accese, abbrucia il corpo suo, col Motto: ARSO IL MORTALE, AL CIEL N'ANDRÀ L'ETERNO».

27 Further sources for the myth are: Sophocle's tragedy *Trachiniae*, a passage of which (Hercule's speech) is transl. by Cicero in the second book of the *Tusculanae*. The editio princeps of Sophocle's tragedy is printed in 1502: *Sophokleus Tragōdiai hepta met hexegeseōn. Sophoclis Tragaediae Septem Cvm Commentariis*, Venetiis: In Aldi romani academia 1502; and the 24th chapter of Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* (Deianira's act); Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Famous women*, ed. and transl. by Virginia Brown, Cambridge: Harvard University Press [The I Tatti Renaissance Library 1] 2001, pp. 96–97.

28 Ovid makes Deianira comment: «quem non mille ferae, quem non Stheneleius hostis / non potuit Iuno vincere, vincit amor» (IX, v. 25–26); Ovid: *Heroides. Briefe der Heroinen*, transl. and ed. by Detlev Hoffmann, Christoph Schliebitz and Hermann Stocker, Stuttgart: Reclam 2009, pp. 92–103. In Seneca's tragedy Deianira also points out that «scelus est amoris» (V. 1015); Seneca, Lucius Annaeus: «Hercules Oetaeus» in: *Tragedie*, ed. and transl. by Gian Carlo Giardina and Rita Cuccioli Meloni, Torino: UTET 2009, pp. 615–732. Here p. 676. Seneca's tragedy re-elaborates Sophocle's *Trachiniae* as well as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (IX) and *Heroides* (IX). Cf. Marcucci, Silvia: *Analisi e interpretazione dell'Hercules Oetaeus*, Pisa/Roma: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali 1997. See especially Chapter 1, pp. 19–100. The *editio princeps* of Seneca's tragedies was printed in Ferrara in 1484.

29 Seneca 2009, p. 715: «spiritum admitte hunc, precor, in astra» (v. 1703–1704).

son into the Olympus and turning him into a divinity. Both versions of the myth are concluded by the indication that while Hercules' motherly, human and mortal component is destroyed by the fire, his fatherly, divine and thus immortal component has arisen into the skies.<sup>30</sup> Before specifying some of the possible symbolic meanings of the myth, I would like to direct the attention towards the *motto*, which literally says «Burned the mortal, the eternal will proceed to the sky». As we can easily see, the line quotes the Latin texts on Hercules' final destiny in a vernacular translation. The translation though is not the only aspect of the *motto* which connects to the *Infiammati*'s program of valorization of the *volgare* and renders it unique compared to other contemporary *imprese*, which predominantly prefer Latin or even Greek for their *motto*.<sup>31</sup> The latter is also an *endecasillabo*, the most important vernacular verse form, which on the one hand is indissolubly linked to Petrarchist poetry and on the other hand since Trissino's *Sofonisba* has become the verse form of the tragic genre. The *motto* thus presents the academic features of <vernacularization> of ancient texts as well as the formal asset of the tragic verse and Petrarchism. At this point the question is: who or what is it that according to the *Infiammati* arises to heaven?

Among the very numerous meanings assigned to the mythological figure of Hercules throughout the centuries there are at least four, which can be considered relevant for the *Infiammati*: (1) his personification as virtue and spiritual fortitude,<sup>32</sup> that eventually lead to the conquest of glory and immortality,<sup>33</sup> (2) his role as *figura Christi*,<sup>34</sup> (3) his

30 Seneca 2009, p. 729 («quidquid in nobis tui / mortale fuerat, ignis evictus tui: / paterna caelo, pars data est flammis tua [...] virtus in astra tendit» v.1966–1971) and Ovid: *Metamorphosen*, transl. and edited by Hermann Breitenbach, Stuttgart: Reclam 2003. Here p. 291: «Was blieb von Herkules' Wesen, / War nicht leicht zu erkennen: verschwunden war alles, was / irgend / Er von der Mutter besaß, er bewahrte nur Jupiters Prägung» (IX, v. 263–265). In Virgil's *Aeneid* Hercules is already among the gods, cf. X, v. 464–465.

31 The *Intronati*'s motto for example is «Meliora latent», while the *Eterei*'s is «Victor se tollit ad auras».

32 This interpretation is given by the Sophist Prodicus of Ceos (5th century BC), who narrates the story of Hercules' choice for virtue and against vice, which can be found in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.1, 21–34); cf. Mayhew, Robert: *Prodicus the Sophist*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011. Here p. 53–59.

33 Cf. Seneca 2009, p. 731 («Es numen et te mundus aeternis tenet, credo, triumphis. [...] cum summas / exiget horas consumpta dies, / iter ad superos gloria pandet» v. 1980–1981; 1986–1988). Furthermore Marcucci 1997, p. 89 underlines that in the second part of the forth choir of *Hercules Oetaeus* «si precisa la sorte che spetta alle anime virtuose: quella del *catasterismo*. La *virtus* trova posto *inter astra* (v. 1564)».

34 Cf. Frugoni, Chiara: «Ercolo» in: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*, consulted online: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ercole\\_\(Enciclopedia-dell-Arte-Medievale\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ercole_(Enciclopedia-dell-Arte-Medievale)/) [visited last on: 16.08.2015]. The possibility of a religious interpretation of the *Impresa* may have been intended to

identification with the human soul ascending to God in Mysticism<sup>35</sup> and finally (4) his function as an example for the destructive power of irrational passions,<sup>36</sup> first and foremost love. As Tomitano testifies in his *Ragionamento* the academy aims to a representation of the first of these meanings, Hercules as symbol of virtuous action leading to immortality,<sup>37</sup> which allegorically can be interpreted as the *Infiammati*'s commitment (their <Herculean labor>) of rendering the vernacular language, and at the same time themselves, immortal<sup>38</sup> through virtuous contents, especially philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

This specification does not automatically exclude the other symbolic meanings. Briefly summarizing what has been said on the *Impresa* so far we can see that on both levels (*pittura* and *motto*) it can imply the genre of the tragedy (*Hercules Oetaeus* –

---

signalize the compliance of the academy to the catholic belief in the years immediately preceding the Counter-Reformation.

- 35 Cf. Steiner, Rudolf: «Ottava conferenza: Il mito di Eracle: le dodici <fatiche> per diventare uomo» in: *Le sorgenti della cultura occidentale*. Vol. 1, transl. by Silvia Nerini, München: Archiati 2006, pp. 161–178. Pp. 164–165: «Le dodici fatiche non sono altro che prove che l'uomo deve superare per ascendere gradualmente al livello più alto che può raggiungere [...] le dodici fatiche costituiscono dodici stati d'animo consecutivi [sic] dell'uomo. Per mezzo di queste fatiche l'uomo giunge a poco a poco ad acquisire la vera e propria coscienza divina». This interpretation of Hercules' could be seen as a further proof of the distance between Speroni's and Pomponazzi's opinion on the soul.
- 36 Cf. Seneca: «Hercules Furens» in: *Tragedie*, ed. and transl. by Gian Carlo Giardina and Rita Cuccioli Meloni, Torino: UTET 2009, pp.79–160.
- 37 Tomitano 1546, pp. 62–63: «Hercole travagliato & affaticato, dopò lunghi et fortunevoli casi alla fine arso di sopra il monte Eta, essere nel cielo doppo l'incendio suo trasferito: Essempio agiatissimo à dimostrarci quella immortalita, laquale dopò le vittorie delli terreni affetti, riportano gli animi nostri sempiternamente delle passate note il frutto possedendo. dalla [sic] cui sententionsissima favola hanno l'insegna lor presi li nostri Academici, da l'arsura d'Hercole infiammati, come sapete, nominandosi».
- 38 Considering Bembo's influence on the *Infiammati*, their reaching out for immortality also implies the dimension of an achievement of personal literary glory and fame, a <poetics of gloria> as it has been called by Gerhard Regn, following the Petrarchist norms deriving from the *Prose della volgar lingua* and composing aesthetically <perfect> literary works; cf. Regn, Gerhard: «Petrarkische Selbstsorge und petrarkistische Selbstrepräsentation: Bembo's Poetik der Gloria» in: *Autobiographisches Schreiben und philosophische Selbstsorge*, hg. von Maria Moog-Grünwald, Heidelberg: Winter [Neues Forum für allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft 22] 2004, pp. 95–125.
- 39 An analysis of the philosophical components and background of the tragedy would exceed the purpose of the present article and can thus not be given. Nonetheless it would reveal interesting details, especially in consideration of the Pomponazzian influence on Speroni, who in *Canace* presents semi-philosophical issues on the soul and the process of love; cf. Speroni, Sperone: *Canace. Tragedia di Messer Sperone Speroni nobile Padovano*, Fiorenza: Francesco Doni 1546. Here Act II, pp. 14r–16r and cf. Speroni, Sperone: «Lezioni in difesa della Canace di Sperone Speroni. 1. Tre lezioni sopra i personaggi» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 207–254. It will be quoted as Speroni 1982 LP. On this topic see especially pp. 227–228; 237 (mentioning Landino's *Disputationes Camaldulenses*).

Trissino *Sofonisba*). Its main topics can be considered love and virtue, linked to the specific authority of Ovid, on the basis of the vernacular.

Despite the bright intellectual production, the presidency of the *Infiammati*'s last and best-known *principe* Speroni unfortunately coincides with or anticipates the decline of the institution.<sup>40</sup> Beyond the gradual departure of some the academy's principal promoters (Orsini, Varchi, Piccolomini, Martelli) the symptoms of its profound crisis have among other things been identified in Speroni's «coronation incident»,<sup>41</sup> that is, his initial reluctance to accept the title and the academic responsibilities proceeding from it. In the name of the higher institutional ideal, Piccolomini took on the burden of the arrangements, however testifying the difficulties of the period in his letters, which were related not only to the fear of being on the edge of decay, but also to the disappointment of possibly losing Bartolomeo Lombardi's eagerly anticipated lectures on Aristotle's *Poetics* in the winter-semester of 1542.<sup>42</sup>

About ten years after the disappearance of the *Infiammati* we find Speroni and Tomitano as active members of a second Paduan academy, the *Elevati*, which probably subsisted only from 1557 to 1560, when Speroni left Padua for Rome. The information on this institution is significantly inferior to the one available on the *Infiammati*, though they seem to have undertaken activities in the vernacular, but also in Latin, counting rhetoric, poetics and mathematics to their interests.<sup>43</sup> In addition to the nature of the activities, the high number of members in common offers an evidence for the *Elevati*'s descent from the *Infiammati* and contributes to explain why Speroni in 1558 held three lessons on the characters and one on the verses of his *Canace* in the *Ac-*

40 The *Infiammati*'s *principi* were: Leone Orsini (June–August 1540), Giovanni Cornaro (August–November 1540), Galeazzo Gonzaga (November 1540 – May 1541), Alessandro Piccolomini (May–October 1541), Sperone Speroni (November 1541 – March 1542); Samuels 1976, p. 604.

41 Cerreta 1957, p. 253 and cf. Panciera 2013. Indifferent to anything concerning the coronation at first, Speroni played the game of cat-and-mouse with the *Infiammati* for several weeks (from the beginning of October until November 13th), declaring that he would have a substitute receive the traditional academic insignia at his place during the ceremony, then claiming a sudden departure for Venice, while actually sojourning at his house in the countryside, finally giving in to the patient suasion of the outgoing president Piccolomini and admitting his annoyance towards the preparations, while giving clear advice on how everything was to proceed.

42 Cerreta 1960, pp. 26–29 and 273–276.

43 Cf. Maylender 1976, *Elevati*, II, pp. 263–265. The name «Elevati» could be a further clue for the connection to the *Infiammati*, indicating the second moment of the Herculean *Impresa*, from the burning to his «elevation» into the sky.

*cademia degli Elevati*, where we also find plans for the staging of the tragedy.<sup>44</sup> Before being able to focus on these poetological writings, it is necessary to take a closer look at the drama itself.

## II *Canace*: Formal and academic features

Nella *Accademia* [sic] *degli Infiammati* [...] [U]scì adunque [...] la tragedia intitolata *Canace*, per comparire davanti a' giudici che ne tenesser consiglio e al loro modo la esaminassero, e fu modestia padovana questa. Ma che ella poscia fosse mandata per tutta Italia e, innanzi che la fornisse il poeta, due o tre volte sì come cosa perfetta stampata [...] fu forse [...] un comune consentimento di tutto il popolo [...].<sup>45</sup>

With these words Speroni's *Apologia* introduces the circumstances of the creation of his tragedy, clearly signaling: a) the background of the *Infiammati*, who are in charge of its critical examination and b) the premature publication without the author's consent. In fact as he points out a little below in the same text, *Canace* is missing out on a proper beginning (a prologue), on choirs, on many verses in the central part and finally a title.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless instead of completing or rewriting it, following the harsh critics by Giraldi's *Giudizio*, the author is almost totally engaged in the poetological debate and especially in the defense of what is more his work-in-progress than an accomplished drama.

The plot of the notorious tragedy Speroni owes a significant amount of his fame to is centered on the incestuous love between the twins Canace and Macareo, more precisely on the last day of their life, which is also their 18th birthday. The unnatural passion of the siblings is the result of a divine revenge carried out by Venus, the goddess of love, against their father Aeolus, the god of the winds, who in a storm had almost killed her son Aeneas. While Aeolus is unaware of the <depraved> relationship and is joyously preparing the celebration, his wife Deiopeia, one of Juno's former nymphs, is haunted by a dream, in which Venus announces that she will torment the

44 Cf. Roaf 1982, pp. XV–XVII (the tragedy was staged in 1561); XXXIX; pp. 293–295 («Appendice I») for manuscript details on the staging of *Canace*; Samuels 1976, p. 616.

45 Speroni 1982A, p. 188 and cf. Speroni 1982 LP, p. 221: «al tempo che qui in Padova era l'*Accademia degli Infiammati*, a pezzo a pezzo, sì come io la scriveva, la dava al Cancelliere dell'Accademia, che così eravamo tenuti per legge a fare. Ella poi non fu mai né veduta né censurata, né da me, né dagli altri, ché, s'io avessi voluto farla pubblicamente vedere, l'arei data fuori intiera, se non perfetta».

46 Speroni 1982A: p. 189 and cf. Speroni 1982LP, pp. 220–221; 246.

twins «fin ch'el nepote / De la sua propria madre / Farà nascendo, forse à le sue spese / L'error altrui palese».<sup>47</sup> The meaning of the mysterious message becomes clear very soon: On the same day Canace gives birth to a child (on stage), whose life she and her wet nurse try to save by carrying it out of the room in a basket filled with flowers as an offer to Juno. Unfortunately in the presence of Aeolus the child starts to cry, revealing the stratagem and causing his grandfather's devastating fury. The child will be strangled in his mother's presence and his body will be left to the wild animals in the woods, while Canace is ordered to stab herself and the wet nurse dies of poisoning. When finally Aeolus regains his reason and regrets his decision, thanking his fate for the survival of at least one of his children, the son, Macareo, takes revenge on the father by committing suicide. A particular feature of the drama is that all the tragic events are announced in the first <scene> by the shadow of the dead child.

From the formal point of view, analogously to Trissino's *Sofonisba*, none of the early editions (1546) presents a division in acts and scenes, although the classical five-act-structure is somewhat implied through the presence of (unwritten) choirs at the end of the dialogues.<sup>48</sup> The latter consist of 350 to 480 partially rhymed *endecasillabi* and *settenari*, between not more than three characters on stage at once.

In consideration of the very delicate topic of Speroni's drama, the question of his founts has arisen to a central and well investigated point of the debate on his *Canace*.<sup>49</sup> On a general level Ovid's *Letters of the Heroines*, more precisely the eleventh letter from the dying Canace to her brother Macareo, Hyginus' *Fabulae* (Nr. 238 «Those who killed their daughters»; Nr. 242 «Men who committed suicide») and Virgil's *Aeneid* (Books I and VI) can be mentioned among the sources.

This gaze on the dramatic pretexts already shows the presence of authors, who are very important to the *Infiammati*, Ovid and Virgil, but Speroni goes one step further establishing two particular links between his tragedy and the academic *Impresa*. In first place the tragedy and the *Impresa* have the textual basis of Ovid's *Heroides* in common: Hercules' end is narrated in the ninth letter, while Canace's final moments

47 Speroni 1546, p. Biiv.

48 Cf. Roaf 1982, pp. LXX–LXXVIII.

49 Roaf 1982, pp. XXI–XXIII; Giraldi 1982, pp. 98.

are told in the eleventh letter. Further relevant connections can be then found on the level of the plot. Just like Hercules, the twins Canace and Macareo are demigods and analogously to Hercules' parents Jupiter and Alcmena, their parents' <social status> differs too, being that Aeolus is a proper god and thus in a higher position than Deiopeia, who is a nymph. In both myths the core action is determined by love and, what is more, in both cases the destructive power of the passion breaks out from a divine ire, considering that Juno is Hercules' lifelong enemy from birth on, while Venus vindicates herself on Aeolus putting a curse on his children. Finally both stories culminate in multiple suicides, up to two, Hercules' and Deianira's, in the ancient texts and three in Speroni's tragedy (Canace, the wet nurse and Macareo), for a total of four deaths in the *Canace*.

Apart from the declared and evoked pretexts though, Speroni's *Canace* presents two further peculiar sources, which have so far passed unnoticed, among other things because the author doesn't mention them one single time in his poetological writings. We are talking about Terence's comedy *Andria* and Boccaccio's novel *Il Filocolo* from which Speroni captures numerous structural elements as well as significant aspects from the plot. Terence's comedy is centered on the conflict between a father, Simo, and his son Pamphilus, whose love affair with the sister of a prostitute called Glycerium (the girl from Andros) contravenes the social customs, the law, the fatherly will and is thus shameful (act V).<sup>50</sup> What Simo doesn't know, is that the girl is pregnant and will give birth to a child on the same day, on which he has set up a feigned wedding with an unknown girl in order to obligate his son to submit to his will and put an end to the relationship. After a series of intrigues, counter-intrigues and misunderstandings initiated by the son's servant Davus, who is the main motor of the action, not only one, but two couples of lovers will find their happy end in a wedding.

Analogously to the *Andria* the first act of Speroni's tragedy opens on a day of celebrations (birthday), on which the father of the celebrated discloses his intentions to a faithful servant and, analogously to the father in the comedy, is unaware of the fact that

50 Cf. Terenzio: *Andria*, transl. and critical edition by Maria Rosa Posani, Bologna: Pàtron 1990. Here p. 232 («Vide num eius color pudoris signum usquam indicat? / Adeo[n] inpotenti esse animo, ut praeter ciuium / morem atque legem et sui uoluntatem patris / tamen hanc habere studeat cum summo probro»; V,3 v. 878–881).

his son's shameful and <unlawful> relationship has led to a pregnancy and the imminent birth of a baby boy.

Closely related to this aspect is the central role assigned to the socially low characters of a male and a female servant or better wet nurse (Davus and Mysis – *Andria*; Famiglio and Nutrice – *Canace*) in the comedy and the tragedy – they make out half of the *dramatis personae*. Not only do these characters know of the relationship from the beginning, but they also emotionally participate or offer active solutions to the lover's situation (*Andria* acts I–V; *Canace* acts II–III). While in Terence's comedy it is the male servant who actively seeks to help his master, in Speroni's *Canace* it is the wet nurse, who develops a plan to save the twins and their child (disclosed in act III) and who, in the same way as Terence's Davus, is torn between the loyalty to her masters and the fear of the father's punishment on all of them (*Andria* act I; *Canace* act II).<sup>51</sup> Speroni's recourse to Terence and the comical register contributes to explain the very high presence of these socially inferior characters and their soliloquies in the tragedy (there is one in every single act), which cannot be justified by the officially declared sources nor the ancient tragedies, where we have an average of one single servant per drama (e.g. in Sophocles' or Euripides' dramas). At the same time the male protagonist in both plays is initially caught in contrasting preoccupations: his love, guilty feelings, compassion and fear over the circumstances the beloved is in, the decision to marry her and acknowledge the child, and the respect as well as deceit of the father.<sup>52</sup>

The next decisive analogy between the two plays lies in the arrangement of the structural peak of the plot, even though Speroni will claim it derives from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,<sup>53</sup> namely the birth of a child at the beginning of the third act, with both female protagonists calling out to Juno Lucina for support.<sup>54</sup> Another important correspon-

51 The wet nurse in Speroni's *Canace* presents features of Terence's Davus, in the sense that she is the one organizing the plot and directing the twin's actions towards success, as well as features of Terence's Mysis, Glycerium's servant, when pointing out Canace's condition to Macareus and defending her cause: cf. *Andria*: I,3 v. 206–228 pp. 110–114 (Davus torn between the fear of his master's punishment of all of them, his desire to save the lovers and his disapproval for their lack of responsibility); II,2 pp. 132–138, IV,2–3 pp. 198–206 (Davus' action plans); I,5 v. 268–280 pp. 120–122 (Glycerium's fears); and Speroni 1546, pp. 16r–17r, 15v, 17v (torn feelings of the wet nurse and disapproval of the lover's behavior); 18r, 20r–v (salvation plans); 15r–16r (Canace's fears).

52 Cf. *Andria* (I,5 v. 251–263 pp.118–120) Pamphilus; Speroni 1546, II, pp. 14r–15r (Macareo).

53 Speroni 1982 LP, II, p. 221.

54 *Andria*: III,1 v. 474 p. 156: «Iuno Lucina, fer opem! Serva me, obsecro!»; Speroni 1546, p. 17r: «O'



dence exists between the forth acts of the two dramas, more precisely in the stratagem of the transportation of the child and its discovery by the grandfathers. In Terence's *Andria* Davus organizes the transfer of the baby, laid upon herbs from an altar, with the intention of having it discovered by the father of the unknown bride, thus blowing up his master's wedding. In Speroni's *Canace* the wet nurse instead tries to carry the baby, which is hidden in a basket of flowers for Juno's altar, away from Aolus, without succeeding and causing his terrible fury. While of course opposite results are achieved in the two plays, the fathers of the female figures are then provided with the unexpected double status of parents of two dramatic protagonists: Chremes is the father of Pamphilus' unknown bride and eventually turns out to also be Glycerium's father; Aeolus is the father of the <bride> and also of the <groom>. Both characters react with rage to the presence of their grandchild, but while the double status in the *Andria* leads to a happy ending, in the *Canace* it becomes the detonator of the catastrophe.

Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, an extremely successful vernacular prose novel also presents subjects in common to Speroni's tragedy.<sup>55</sup> It tells the story of the lovers Florio and Biancofiore, whose different social background (he is a prince, she is an orphan, who eventually turns out to be of noble lineage) induces his parents to sell her as a slave in the Orient, where she will become the prisoner of an admiral. After numerous travels and adventures the lover, who is travelling under the pseudonym of <Filocolo> (according to Boccaccio's etymology it means <labor of love>), arrives to where she is imprisoned and after further dangers, will be finally able to marry her.

Apart from the fact that the father figure in the novel also represents a hindrance to the lovers, while the inferior personnel of maids and helpers contribute to the success of their reunion, the most interesting analogy between Boccaccio's and Speroni's work lies in the stratagem of the basket filled with flowers. In order to help Florio join Biancofiore in the tower, the castellan Sadoc develops a plan:

---

GIVNONE Lucina / Dea di parti [...] ponga fine à miei mali / La tua bontà infinita». This aspect reminds Giraldi of Terence's *Andria*, without leading him to suspect any deeper link between the two dramas; cf. Giraldi 1982, p. 121.

55 The print-editions of Boccaccio's *Filocolo* start in the second half of the 15th century (1472, 76, 78, 81, 88, 97, 99) and are very numerous in the 16th century as well (1503, 14, 20, 27, 30, 38, 51, 75, 94).

di qui a pochi giorni in queste parti si celebra una festa grandissima [...] i [sic] quel giorno i tempj di Marte & di Venere sono visitati con fiori, con frondi [...] nel qual giorno io fo pe vicini paesi le rose et li fiori tutti cogliere, & tante ceste ne fo portare [...] dove l'ammiraglio coronato & vestito di reali drappi con grandissima compagnia viene [...] Io ti porrò, se tu vuoi, in quella cesta, che a Biancofiore presentarsi deve & coprirotti di rose & di fiori quanto meglio si potra, ma s'egli avvenisse, che la fortuna nemica de nostri avisi ti scoprisse, & facesseti al signor vedere, niuna redentione saria a la nostra vita.<sup>56</sup>

In Speroni's *Canace* as in Boccaccio's novel a helper-figure (the castellan vs. the wet nurse) develops a stratagem, which includes the elements of the celebration day, the sacrifice to the gods, the transport of someone in a basket hidden under flowers and the great danger of being discovered by the lover's antagonist (the admiral vs. Aeolus). What Sadoc only mentions in the last quoted sentence (no salvation in case of discovery), for Canace and Macareo becomes bitter reality, while Florio, who is almost discovered, instead succeeds in his attempt.<sup>57</sup>

The recourse to the *Filocolo* thus integrates the structural and thematic suggestions from Terence's *Andria* in Speroni's *Canace*, contributing to the integration of comical and novelistic elements in his tragedy.

56 Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Il Filocolo di messere Giovanni Boccaccio infino a qui falsamente detto Filocolo*, ed. by Gaetano Tizzoni, Vinegia: Bindoni 1538. Here pp. 495–496. The orthography has been adapted to the modern standard. Cf. Speroni 1546, pp. 22r–23r for the strategy of hiding the newborn under the flowers in a basket destined to the altar of Juno.

57 Cf. Boccaccio 1538, p. 499. Further references to Boccaccio might be found in the novel of Griselda (*Decameron* X,10) and in the novel of Tancredi and Ghismunda (IV,1). In X,10 the female protagonists after having kissed her child goodbye («presala della culla e baciatala e benedettala») asks the «famigliare» not to leave her child, a girl, that by the will of her husband Gualtieri shall apparently be killed, to the wild beasts: «non la lasciar per modo che le bestie e gli uccelli la divorino». In the report of the *famigliare* in Speroni's tragedy (act V) Canace also kisses her child goodbye («Basciandogli hor la faccia, et hor il petto»; «basciando il volto / del figliuol innocente»), who will instead experience the kind of death Griselda dreads for her girl. In IV,1 we instead have a father–daughter conflict, in which the parent takes extreme measures against the daughter's relationship to a man of inferior condition, using the verb «incrudelire» four times («io contra mia natura in te incrudelisca»; «a incrudelir»; «incrudelendo»; «nella persona di lei incrudelire»). Ghismunda's lover's heart is sent to her by one of her father's servants, which becomes the reason for her suicide on her own bed. In the end Tancredi regrets his actions bitterly. Analogously Eolo and Canace have a conflicting relationship and Macareo fears that «la giustitia / Paterna incrudelisca / Ne la figlia innocente» (same verb as Boccaccio). Just as Tancredi has done, Aeolus will send his daughter an object, that will lead her to commit suicide upon her bed («sovra el suo letto») and will finally regret his fury. Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Il Decamerone*. Vol. 2, Firenze: Salani 1923. X,1 pp. 497–513, here p. 502; IV,1 pp. 364–376, here pp. 369, 372–373, 375; Speroni 1546, pp. 35r, 36r; 15v; 35r.

### III Giraldi's *Giudizio sopra una tragedia di Canace e Macareo*<sup>58</sup>

The combination and re-elaboration of sources raises a central problematic and touches the nerve of Giraldi's critics on *Canace*: Who or what moved Speroni to compose a drama novel of characters and verse types, and above all, with which intention? From Giraldi's point of view, the Paduan academic clearly transgresses the Aristotelian norms and thus decisively compromises the quality of his tragedy.

As he states in his *Giudizio* in first place the didactic function inherent to the genre, the generation of «terrore» and «pietà» in the spectator, in Speroni's *Canace* is nullified by the recourse to «così sozza e scelerata materia» and its teaching the wrong things.<sup>59</sup> In no way do the two incestuous siblings correspond to Aristotle's «middle hero», because unlike Oedipus for instance, Canace and Macareo are aware of their kinship and nonetheless engage in a depraved affair. This way Speroni exhibits a «perseveranza volontaria nel male»<sup>60</sup> that is not instructive for the public and is opposed to the Aristotelian principle of only imitating illustrious actions in the tragedy.<sup>61</sup>

Secondly, Speroni has made an inappropriate use of his sources by changing the «substance», the «favola» taken over by Ovid, which according to Aristotle is not consented, and by combining different versions of the myth of Canace and Macareus in a confused manner.<sup>62</sup>

Thirdly, the tragedy infringes the rules on the decorum of the characters, among other things by having its female protagonist, a queen («Reina»), give birth to a child on stage («a gambe aperte»), and lament her fate in public without any shame. This to Giraldi is neither verisimilar, nor terrible or pitiful, but rather comic. In the time it takes Canace to complain, Giraldi sarcastically comments, she could have brought an armed man to life.<sup>63</sup>

58 The present article follows Roaf, for whom the author of the *Giudizio* is Giraldi and not Bartolomeo Cavalcanti as for Weinberg; cf. the «Introduzione» in Roaf 1982, pp. I–LXI and Weinberg 1961, II, pp. 918–923.

59 Giraldi 1982, p. 98 («È mala cosa [...] insegnare [...] il male perché indi poi s'impari la pena»). For illustration purposes I will present Giraldi's main critics very schematically.

60 Giraldi 1982, p. 104.

61 Giraldi 1982, p. 112.

62 Giraldi 1982, p. 108 («È lecito bene nelle favole note [...] fingere alcuna cosa, mutare alcuni nomi [...] ma non mutare la sostanza d'essa»; «questo autore confonde la favola»).

63 Giraldi 1982, pp. 120–121; also cf. pp. 115–118 (Aolus) and 139 («certi intrighi sforzati, certi spiriti

Fourthly, the choice of mixing and rhyming *endecasillabi* and *versi rotti* to Giraldis seems inappropriate, forasmuch as this combination has principally been used for the low lyrical form of the *frottola* and does not meet the drama's high subjects («Non sono da materia grave simili versi»). Moreover this specific combination is disrespectful towards the functional distinction between the verse-types set by Bembo (*gravità* and *piacevolezza*) and towards Dante (whose *Divina Commedia* is written in *endecasillabi*), whom Speroni apparently is a follower of.<sup>64</sup> With regard to the quantity of *versi rotti* instead he trespasses the metrical rules of two higher authorities, namely Aristotle and Trissino. Even assuming that Aristotle might have allowed the introduction of shorter verse-forms, with regard to the contemporary authority for tragic language in the vernacular («uomo di molta autorità circa tali cose ne'tempi nostri»), Trissino, Speroni's choice is problematic for three reasons: a) because the *endecasillabo* is considered as an equivalent of the iambic verses recommended as tragic line-type by Aristotle, implemented by Trissino and should therefore be predominant, b) because Trissino only admits *versi rotti* in situations of particular dramatic intensity, when for example a state of terrible pain is reported,<sup>65</sup> and c) because Trissino's verses are *sciolti*, without rhymes, to assure a certain naturalness of the expression.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the constant normative reference to Aristotle Giraldis grants a certain permission to ignore the authority's rules, but only if this leads to a more wonderful and honorable end, which is rather difficult, because the Stagirite «ci pose inanzi la più perfetta imagine di Tragedia che si possa immaginare».<sup>67</sup> Finally harsh critics are directed against Speroni's style. His *Canace*, according to Giraldis, is «tangled with roundabout words, which are useless and excessive» as well as distorted and obscure expres-

---

deboli, I quali sono prima morti che siano nati, com'è l'Ombra che esce prima d'ognuno in scena»).

64 Giraldis 1982, pp. 129–130.

65 Giraldis 1982, pp. 130–131. Cf. pp. 132–138 for further critics on Speroni's verses: «la Tragedia ha erato presso i volgari molto tempo, ma ultimamente ha avuto i suoi versi dal Trissino e ha presa la sede della sua maestà in quella sorte de'numeri che egli molto giudiziosamente l'ha dato [...] E chi da quei versi si partirà, si troverà, come costui [i. e. Speroni], ingannato» and Giraldis sarcastically continues: «E però ben disse quest'autore che non erano atti i versi del Trissino a' suoi concetti, perché, essendo essi non pure confusi ma rotti e manchi, era molto convenevole che fossero i versi altresì tali» (pp. 132–133).

66 Giraldis 1982, pp. 132 («i quali versi sciolti, quantunque nudi e senza il liscio delle rime, tanto in dicevol materia piacciono alle buone orecchie»). Also cf. the dedicatory epistle to pope Leo X. in Trissino, Giangiorgio: *La Sofonisba Tragedia e i Simillimi Commedia*, Milano: Daelli 1864, pp. 3–7. Here p. 6.

67 Giraldis 1982, p. 128.

sions that are completely inadequate for the language of a tragedy.<sup>68</sup> Giraldi identifies the present vices as clear symptoms of the academic background of the tragedy:

E questo mi pare oggi di particolar vizio d'alcuni di quei Padovani [...] che nell'Accademia degli Infiammati si sono intromessi [...] i quali hanno pensato che l'altezza e la gravità dello stile tutta sia nelle gonfiate voci, ne gli intricati parlari, nell'accogliere disusati modi di dire; il che ha fatto che sempre ho tenuto che questa Tragedia, non meno di questi vizi che molti altri piena, sia stata composta da uno di coloro di quella Accademia, tanto mi ha ella parso portar seco del Padovano.<sup>69</sup>

Giraldi's condemnation of Speroni's tragical subject, characters, academic style and purpose culminates in the words: «Né troverete Tragedia alcuna che sia tutta ne'primi fondamenti contra l'arte, come è questa».<sup>70</sup>

#### IV Aristotle in Speroni's *Lezioni in difesa della Canace* (1558)<sup>71</sup>

Giraldi's charges represent the inescapable starting point in Speroni's attempt to restore the dignity of his *Canace*, which will take place in the *Apologia* and the *Lezioni in difesa della Canace*. Since the four lessons to the *Elevati*, three on the characters and one on the verses of *Canace* resume and amplify the postulates Speroni previously discussed in the *Apologia*, the following investigation will principally focus on these.

68 Giraldi 1982, p. 116; «in questa sua favola non è scena (oltre che sono tutte intricate con girandole di parole inutili e soverchie) che non abbia con sé qualche imprudenza. Però che, mentre ch'egli ha voluto stare su figure puerili e modi di dire distorti e adombrati e non convenevoli alla materia tragica, non ha atteso all'altezza de'sensi né a gravità né a decoro alcuno di persona né a modo alcuno di dire lodevole in simil materia».

69 Giraldi 1982, p. 141. Also cf. p. 124: «questo autore, parlando in Toscano alle volte da Tedesco [...] nelle elocuzioni, nelle figure, negli argomenti [...] nella disposizione, nell'ordine, nel modo di procedere, nelle comparazioni, nel persuadere, nelle similitudini [...] da cose impertinenti e poco considerate [...] senza misura di tempo, senza considerazione di decoro»; p. 139: «questi è tanto intento a gli adombramenti, alle girandole e a gli strepitosi suoni delle voci, che mi pare piuttosto leggere un lascivetto innamorato che un autore tragico; anzi uno del quale si possa sicuramente dire che egli non sappia cosa sia stile. Non vedo in questo suo modo di comporre una prudenza soda, una grandezza magnifica, un parlar grave, ma più tosto modi di favellare inconsiderati, più tosto pieghevole alla lascivia che alla gravità, all'umile che all'alto».

70 Giraldi 1982, p. 129.

71 In the 1597 edition of *Canace* de'Conti presents 6 lessons on the tragedy, three on the characters and three on the verses. Weinberg also speaks of a total of six lessons in his *History of literary criticism*. According to Roaf, whom the present article follows, in the autographs though there is no evidence for a subdivision of the lessons on the verses, thus she presents Speroni's metrical disquisition as one single text; cf. Speroni, Sperone: *Canace Tragedia del Sig. Sperone Speroni alla quale sono aggiunte alcune altre sue compositioni, & una apologia, & alcune lettioni in difesa della tragedia*, ed. by Ingolfo de'Conti, Venetia: Giovanni Alberti 1597. Here pp. 221–253; Weinberg, Bernard 1961, II, pp. 924–926; Roaf 1982, pp. XXXIX–XL.

Speroni's first lesson on the characters is dedicated to the demonstration that his protagonists are neither immoral nor unworthy of the tragic genre and that they correspond to Aristotle's «middle hero». As a premise for this objective he begins by offering an interpretation of the 13th chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1452b–1453a), following the edition of his co-academics Maggi and Lombardi. The importance of the «middle hero», according to Speroni, is given by his capacity of generating the tragic feelings through a similarity between someone experiencing an evil and someone feeling pity for him. The academic explains that the «middle hero» is a creation that responds to the nature of the spectators, who being themselves neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly bad (quoting from Plato's *Phaidon*), notice similarities to the characters on stage and are thus moved to «compassione» and «terrore».<sup>72</sup> This way the generation of the tragic feelings derives not from the intrinsic construction of the *mythos* according to Aristotle's laws of necessity and probability, but from a common anthropological disposition between the dramatic characters and the public.

At this point Speroni, with the authority of Plato's *Laws*, Ovid's *Tristia* and Suetonius' *Life of Nero* at first proves Macareo to be a valid tragic hero.<sup>73</sup> He then declares the legitimacy of the other characters on the basis of the mythological tradition, pointing out that Juno is Jupiter's sister, that the twins' crime was committed during the Iron Age and that in Homer's *Odyssey* Aeolus weds six sons and daughters with each other. Speroni also recurs to the *Bible*, more precisely the *Book of Kings*, in which it comes to an intercourse between David's son Amnon and his daughter Tamar. Furthermore the vernacular literature offers examples of incest, for instance Petrarca's *Trionfo d'Amore*, that narrates how Seleucus offers his wife Stratonice to his son Antiochus. The interim result of this enlisting of sources is that the crime of incest is merely prohibited by the law, not by nature.<sup>74</sup> By declaring it to <act> of nature (thus implicit-

72 Cf. Speroni 1982 LP, p. 210 and cf. P. 211: «avendosi la tragedia a rappresentare alla moltitudine, la quale è d'uomini posti tra buoni e malvagi, però faceva bisogno che le persone tragiche fossero mezzane, acciò dalla somiglianza che era tra esse e il popolo del teatro avesse a nascer la compassione e il terrore che la tragedia propone».

73 Cf. Speroni 1982 LP, p. 212.

74 Speroni 1982 LP, pp. 213–216. Cf. 216: «nel vero non è dalla natura vietata la congionzion del fratello e della sorella, ma dalle leggi e non già da tutte; perciò che ai popoli dell'Egitto e a quelli della Persi similmente era concesso».

ly making it worthy of imitation), Speroni aims at releasing the topic, and subsequently also his characters, from the status of «sceleragine», of un-tragic immorality.<sup>75</sup>

The only poetical authority capable of solving the dilemma on the morality of the characters in *Canace* once and for all, according to Speroni, is Virgil.<sup>76</sup> From this point on the investigation points at relativizing the gravity of the twins' crime by distinguishing between an incest dictated by love and one dictated by evilness. As one could see in the 6th book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil divides his <hell> («inferno») into two parts, the first one inhabited by evil characters, the second one by those who were neither too good nor too bad, where he places the lovers. According to Speroni, Virgil doesn't punish notorious characters like Phaedra and Pasiphae for their evilness or their disrespect of the laws, but rather for the excess of love behind their acts. This aspect is directly applied to the topic of incest, which is not to be considered an evil, because «qualunque fallo per forza di smisurato amore si commetta, non è da chiamarsi sceleratezza».<sup>77</sup>

With these observations Speroni lays the foundation for his second lesson, in which he is determined to prove two aspects: First of all that love is a tragic subject apt to generate «pietà», secondly that even immoral characters can provoke the same effect, explicitly contradicting Aristotle's *Poetics*. The authorities chosen for this purpose, namely Ovid, Boccaccio and Dante, are again no dramatic poets.<sup>78</sup>

According to the *Infiammati* «in ogni caso d'amore, di qualunque maniera egli sia stato, s' ha auto pietà di coloro che per amore hanno patito».<sup>79</sup> In fact, as the stories of Biblis and Myrrha in the *Metamorphoses* show, the first of which is even quoted in the tragedy,<sup>80</sup> despite the immoral nature of their love respectively for the brother and the father, their final prayers were granted by a compassion coming from above, that

75 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 215.

76 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 216: «conciosia cosa che fra poeti non si debba riputar scelerato quello che egli ancora non volle giudicar per tale».

77 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 218. In the end Speroni theorizes the scission between what in modern terms are the categories of the implicit author and of the empirical author by underlining that no matter how the characters call themselves, this does not have to correspond to their evaluation by the author.

78 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 221: «E usarò in questo l'autorità d'Ovidio, di Boccaccio e di Dante».

79 Ibid.

80 Cf. Speroni 1546, p. 30r.

manifested itself in their transformations (fount; tree). The forth *giornata* of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in which the unhappily ended love stories are told, causes the same reaction of compassion, even though they infringe all kinds of laws (of hospitality, *ius gentium*, public faith, respect toward the father or master).<sup>81</sup>

The most ample evidence of the tragic potential of love though is found in Dante's *Divina Commedia*, more precisely the fifth *canto* of the *Inferno*, where the protagonist encounters the famous couple of lovers Paolo and Francesca (v. 73–142), but also the *canti* on future prediction (Inf. 10) and suicide (Inf. 13).<sup>82</sup> After listening to Francesca's narration of the adultery with her brother-in-law, Dante is so touched, that he faints: «di pietade io venni men» (v. 140–141). By quoting further *canti* from the *Inferno* (Inf. 19, 33, 20 and 13 in lesson III) Speroni not only underlines that Dante is by no means merciful towards all the sinners. He also asserts that Dante stresses the word «amore» in order to increase the reason to have pity on the couple.<sup>83</sup> This episode becomes the starting point for a philosophical (Neo-Platonic) digression on the phenomenology and nature of love that is intended to give further reasons to have «com-

81 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 222. The novels IV,1; IV, 4; IV, 5 are mentioned: «Di tutto questo vuole che si abbia auto compassione, tutto che I peccati in sé fossero grandi».

82 Dante's *Commedia* is the source of numerous significant intertextual recourses in *Canace*. Since in the present context I cannot offer a thorough investigation of the intertextual relationship between *Canace* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, I will simply offer a selection of particularly evident cases. In the first <act> the shadow of the dead child has the power to foresee future events, evoking the 10th *canto* of Dante's *Inferno*, where the damned are able to predict the future; *Ombra* (pp. 4r–4v): «Hor che io mi morì [...] Incomincio à sapere / Le cose à nome & tutto [...] Debbo io morto saper quel che già mai / Vivo non imparai? [...] Toglie altrui la memoria / De le cose sapute, à me la venda / De le non conosciute?» – Inf. 10, v. 97–101: «El par che voi veggiate [...] / dinanzi quel che'l tempo seco adduce / [...] «Noi veggiam [...] / le cose» disse «che ne son lontano»»; Deiopeia speaking to her maid uses the words of Dante's Pier delle Vigne: «Tu la cui fede hà seco ambe le chiavi / Vnde si serra & apre / l'arbitrio del mio core» (pp. 9v–10r) – Inf. 13, vv. 58–60: «Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi / del cor di Federigo, e che le volsi, / serrando e disserrando»; Aeolus' sentence against the twins is a variation of Dante's unmerciful act against Branca Doria: «Qui sarebbe impietade / l'haver compassione» – Inf. 33, v. 150: «e cortesia fu lui esser villano»; Aeolus explicitly condemns his children to hell (31v): «Vadino ne l'Inferno [...] all'Inferno»; in the last <act> Macareo questions on the sister's death and his wish to remain united to her in the afterlife evoke *Inferno* 5: «Spirti cortesi [...] Intendo pienamente ogni vostr' atto / Nel silentio dolente [...] Vissi seco, e per lei / Se seco non potei / debbo morir per lei [...] ragion è ben che la mia morte / Con lei mi ricongiunga / Seco ovunque ella sia [...] Dimmi ti priego il modo, il tempo e il loco / De la sua dipartita» – Inf. 5, v. 139–140: «Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse / l'altro piangea» (topic of the painful silence); v. 100–106: «Amor, ch'al cor gentil ratto s'apprende, / prese costui de la bella persona [...] / mi prese del costui piacer sì forte, / che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona. / Amor condusse noi ad una morte» (motive of living for the beloved and remaining united after death). Quoted from Alighieri, Dante: *La Divina Commedia. Inferno*, edited by Natalino Sapegno, Firenze: La Nuova Italia 1985.

83 Speroni 1982 LP, pp. 223–227: «fa che tre volte ella replichi questa parola amore, come che per questo s'accresca la ragione d'averle pietà» (p. 224).



passione a gli amanti nei tristi o fortunevoli casi loro». <sup>84</sup> Speroni categorizes love as a) desire of beauty, b) excess of friendship and c) excess of love, of which particularly the third aspect relates to poetological problems. While the first two kinds of love are of a superior species, that excludes a physical interaction (Speroni quotes from Aristotle's *Ethics*), the third kind, excess of love, degrades the human being by a physical union and makes him similar to the animals. <sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, Speroni says, one can't just simply eliminate this manifestation of love, but rather keep in consideration as a human mistake (the argument of incontinence from previous lesson is repeated). This is exactly the point the academic wants to reach: by declaring love a human mistake («errori umani»), the academic can systematize it as Aristotelian *hamartìa*. In fact he says: «se così è che l'error de gli innamorati [sic] sia umano, adonque noi semo nella particola di Aristotele dove dice che persone tragiche sono quelle che *non per dedecus et pravitate sed humano quodam errore in infelicitatem lapsi sunt* [sic].» <sup>86</sup>

An important detail is to mention here: The crucial link between human fallibility and excess already exists in Aristotle's writings, but not in the *Poetics*. In the second book of his *Rhetoric* the philosopher analyses the emotions and the way they affect human behavior and he points out that the youth is less able to resist them, so that most of its mistakes are caused by excess or passion. <sup>87</sup>

After all the efforts made, seemingly to underline the compatibility of *Canace* with the rules of Aristotle's *Poetics*, it is surprising to notice how in the «second round» of the same lesson, Speroni follows a strategy, which is exactly the opposite, namely the open contradiction and criticism of the Stagirite, paradoxically by using the philosopher's own arguments. The main theme of the second half of the lesson is that «anche sopra gli scelerati può farsi cader compassione». <sup>88</sup>

The Paduan is aware of the risk of this maneuver, nonetheless he offers a very own interpretation of the genetic circumstances of the *Poetics*, that clashes directly with

84 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 227.

85 Speroni 1982 LP, pp. 227–229.

86 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 228. Roaf points out (note 67, p. 250) that Speroni here modifies the particle 68 from the Maggi-Lombardi edition of the commentary to Aristotle's *Poetics*.

87 Aristotele: *Retorica*, ed. by Marco Dorati, Milano: Mondadori 1996. Book II, 1389b, p. 209: «I loro errori sono sempre per eccesso e per troppo ardore». Subsequently Rhet.

88 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 229.

Giraldi's understanding of the work.<sup>89</sup> According to Speroni, Aristotle's poetological classic is nothing more than a handbook for beginners in the composition of dramas. The didactic aim is directed towards a public of inexperienced recipients, for it only presents the <basics> of the dramatic art, among which the general rule on the choice of a <middle> character: «quest'arte, certa cosa è che la vuol insegnar a persone che non la sanno, però che chi sa, non impara, ma più tosto insegna. [...] Che debbe adonque far Aristotele? Insegnarla facilmente e non adducendovi cose che nell'insegnarle partoriscono difficoltà.»<sup>90</sup>

An experienced dramatist is instead authorized to take distance and modify Aristotle's rules, thus proving his excellence.<sup>91</sup> Speroni does this by presenting seven circumstances, in which «pietà di uno scelerato» is generated and by which Speroni over-emphasizes the third element of the *mythos*, the *pathos*. These are: 1) when the death penalty is enacted or the punishment exceeds the crime, for example when a prince attempts to the perdition of the culprit's soul; 2) when innocents are killed in the presence of their parents (the examples are taken from the second book of the *Aeneid* and the 33rd *canto* of Dante's *Inferno*); 3) when death occurs by the hands of a close family member (this is analogous to the 14th chapter of the *Poetics* [1453b]; examples are taken from Virgil and Ovid); 4) when the nature of the killer is inferior to the one of his victim; 5) when burial is denied to the body of a culprit (examples from Virgil and Homer); 6) when a culprit is forced to commit suicide (examples from Boccaccio *Dec.* 8,7 and Dante *Inf.* 13); 7) when the <scelerati> do not deserve the punishment and finally 8) depending on the place where they die (examples from Virgil and Cicero).<sup>92</sup> As

89 Ibid.: «So l'opposizione che mi si farà a questo luogo, cioè che questo sia contrario alla dottrina d'Aristotele».

90 Ibid. and cf. p. 230: «se egli avesse volute addurre le ragioni perché anche de gli scelerati si possa sentir pietà e terrore [...] avrebbe ripiena l'arte sua di difficoltà e intrichi, conciosiache questo nasca dalle circostanze dei casi, che sono molte» as well as «Appendice II» (pp. 295–302) in Roaf 1982; on p. 298: «se Aristotele con quel suo ingegno miracoloso fosse nato a'nostri giorni in Italia, egli quantunque veduti avesse con diligenza e bene intesi tutti i poeti greci e latini [...] nulladimeno vedendo anche l'uso moderno del poetar volgarmente, nella lingua, ne' costumi e ne' versi, esser molto diverso dal latino e dal greco, non trovando da confermar le sue leggi con la volgar poesia, egli, che'l sentimento voleva aver per iscorta e con quello più e più volte iterato generava la esperienza, onde suol nascere quel che è principio delle scienze e dell'arti, con gran riguardo di non parere presuntuoso in dar leggi a' poeti vivi che alcun vivente non osservasse fatto avrebbe la sua Poetica».

91 Ibid.: «coloro che intendono l'arte possono anco, col giudizio ch'hanno, allargarsi dai precetti e far qualche cosa anche che non sia dall'arte insegnata; e in questo si dimostra la sua eccellenza».

92 Speroni 1982 LP, pp. 230–235.

one can easily observe, not only are the authors quoted by Speroni relevant academic authorities, but also all the mentioned circumstances verify in his *Canace*. The author's aim is hereby to underline that the quantity of present circumstances is proportional to the degree of compassion arising for <immoral> characters and is therefore very high in his tragedy.

The opposition to Aristotle's rules continues in the third lesson, where Speroni intends to show, how characters that the ancient author praises, as Orest and Alcmaeon, are actually <scelerati> instead (they are guilty of the crime of matricide). The strategy of inculcating characters sanctioned as virtuous by Aristotle is a further attempt to exculpate the twins in *Canace*. Moreover, underlining the Stagirite's fallibility leads to his de-authorization: «non si può negare che Aristotele non sia stato il maestro di coloro che fanno, ma [...] resta che Aristotele si possa aver ingannato e, se così è, non repugna che anco egli si sia ingannato nel dar la regola delle persone della tragedia.»<sup>93</sup> This de-authorization does not primarily aim at destroying Aristotle's influence, because even though Speroni makes a critical and unorthodox use of his laws, he is dependent on them. The actual targets are once more Giraldi's critics which Speroni challenges through a full display of Aristotelian competences in a self-censure of his own tragedy. In this sense he first defines the elements of the «favola», then the «agnizione e peripezia», the «legamento» and «discioglimento».<sup>94</sup> While the given definition of *anagnorisis* corresponds to the definitions in the *Poetics* (transition from ignorance to knowledge [1452a]), the definitions of *mythos* (one single and simple action by one single character) and *peripetheia* (as the opposite result of a character's purpose) partially differ from Aristotle.<sup>95</sup> «Legamento» and «discioglimento» are described as structural parts of the tragedy, the first containing the initial, positive state of the action, the second the unhappy, miserable ending.

If the author of the *Giudizio* would have wanted to rightfully criticize the *Canace*, Speroni states, he should have noticed that in *Canace* none of the elements of a correct

93 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 236.

94 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 243.

95 Cf. Aristoteles: *Poetik*, ed. and transl. by Manfred Fuhrmann, Stuttgart: Reclam 1982. Here 1451a and 1452b, pp. 28–36 (*mythos*: one complete action, that in the tragedy is complicated); 1452a, p. 34 (*peripetheia*: development opposite to the intended).

tragic plot, «favola», «agnizione e peripezia», «legamento» and «discioglimento» are given, unless the character of Aeolus is considered as the tragic hero. He is the one experiencing the transition from happiness to unhappiness (principle of «legamento» and «discioglimento»), the *peripetheia* (by the unexpected discovery of the child in the basket) and the *anagnorisis* after the death of his children. He is the one causing the spectator's compassion:

Onde non solamente si genera in noi la compassione e il terrore argumentando dal simile, ma più tosto argomentando dal minore al maggiore, perciò che gli spettatori della tragedia così diranno: se Eolo, ch'è dio, per aver offesa deità maggior della sua sostiene tanta miseria, quanto maggiormente avverrà questo a noi se offenderemo Dio essendo uomini?<sup>96</sup>

The anthropological motivation for the generation of *eleos* and *phobos* from the first lesson, in a certain sense based on the identification between characters and public, here is complemented by a seemingly opposite one. Compassion and terror derive from the distance to the character of Aeolus and the reflection on the proportionality of the consequences for «common mortals». This argument also leads to Aristotle though, who again in the second book of the *Rhetoric* states that men are compassionate towards those, whom they are not too closely acquainted with, thus to whom a certain distance persists, that nonetheless allows the generation of emotions analogous to the ones of who is suffering.<sup>97</sup>

In the fourth and final lesson on *Canace* Speroni defends his last element of innovation, his use of rhymed and mixed verses. The explanations on the verse complete the previously debated aspects on the *mythos* and the characters: «se avete udita una cosa della tragedia che è l'anima sua, cioè la favola e le persone [...] udite qualche cosa del corpo suo, cioè de'versi, li quali sono istrumenti con esso i quali imita la tragedia le azioni delle persone».<sup>98</sup> He hereby proceeds in two steps. First of all Speroni signalizes that his authority for the combination of *endecasillabi* and *settenari* is Dante, more

96 Speroni 1982 LP, p. 245.

97 Rhet. II, 1386a, p. 191: «Gli uomini provano compassione, poi, per le persone che conoscono, quando non siano legati a esse troppo strettamente: nei confronti di queste, la loro disposizione è la stessa che avrebbero se dovessero soffrire loro stessi».

98 Speroni, Sperone: «Lezioni in difesa della Canace di Sperone Speroni. 2. Lezioni sopra i versi» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 255–274. It will be quoted as Speroni 1982 LV. For Aristotle the characters are not the «soul» of the tragedy, Speroni here forces the *Poetics*.

precisely his just recently rediscovered treatise *De vulgari eloquentia*, and that *versi rotti* are thus admissible for the tragic genre. Secondly, by the authority of Bembo's *Prose della vulgar lingua* and Trissino's *Della Poetica*, he states that rhymes are a fundamental part of the tragic verse. Only the first <step> includes a reference to Aristotle and will consequently be at the center of the following investigation.

The crucial point that determines the academic's choice of Dante's linguistic-poetic work lies in his definition of a tragic style. According to Speroni, who paraphrases and forces passages from the second book of *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante states that: «lo stile alto dee esser composto di versi misti, però nella mia tragedia ho fatto tal mistione».<sup>99</sup> After having justified the combination from a stylistic point of view, it is necessary for him to justify it in the specific genre of the tragedy. To do so he recalls Aristotelian metrics with the aim: a) of showing that the vulgar verses work analogously to the Greek verses described by the Stagirite and b) to upset the preeminence of the *endecasillabo* as the only tragic verse form to the advantage of the *settenario*.

At the beginning of his *Poetics* Aristotle presents two possible verse types, the heroic and the iambic verse, of which the first one is stable and pompous, while the second one is more flexible and apt to human action. For this reason, Speroni says, on the long run the iambic meter has been privileged.<sup>100</sup> Since it is the duty of the epic to represent great and admirable actions, its logical vehicle is the hexameter. The tragedy instead, for which it is central to represent human actions («azioni umane») in a natural manner, requires a meter that is less <heavy>, namely the iamb (this again contradicts Giraldi).<sup>101</sup>

At this point Speroni returns to Dante, who had indicated three main vernacular verse types, the *endecasillabo*, the *settenario* and the *pentasillabo*, illustrating that the first of these can be considered as an equivalent of the ancient hexameter.<sup>102</sup> In consideration of the Aristotelian premises, Speroni concludes: «lo endecasillabo [...] perché è

99 Speroni 1982 LV, p. 259. For Dante the combination is acceptable only if the *endecasillabo* remains predominant; see Alighieri, Dante (1968): *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, Padova: Antenore. Here II,12 pp. 53–55.

100 Speroni 1982 LV, p. 265.

101 Ibid.

102 Speroni 1982 LV, pp. 262–263; 265.

simile allo esametro, non ha luogo nella tragedia». Without further explications he then adds: «Né vi ha luogo il pentasillabo perché è troppo lieve [...] troppo mobile». What is left is the verse type in between, the *settenario*, which is finally legitimized by Aristotle's demand for balanced proportions: «Aristotele [...] esclude dalla bellezza il troppo grande [...] e la troppa piccolezza, e si attiene alla mediocrità. Così adunque faccio io de'versi. Ho escluso l'endecasillabo con Aristotele, ora il pentasillabo con Aristotele».<sup>103</sup>

## V Conclusion: Academism and Infractions of the Aesthetics of Tragedy

Speroni's *Canace* stands at the crossing point of the development of Italian vernacular tragedy. While on the one hand it cannot ignore the achievements and criticisms of former Aristotelian dramatic theories (by Trissino and especially Giraldi), on the other hand it presents conscious alterations to the vigorous Aristotelism that do not exclusively fulfill an apologetic function, but also decisively reflect the academic background of the *Infiammati* and *Elevati*. In fact Speroni repeatedly indicates the specific context, in which *Canace* developed and was never accomplished.

The *Impresa* has revealed the first symptoms of this decisive interaction between *Canace* and the *Infiammati*, by visualizing Ovid as an authority (1), love as an important topic (2) and the *volgare* as poetic tragic vehicle (3). These three elements are applied in Speroni's drama, in which Ovid's *Heroines* and *Metamorphoses* are among the main reference texts, the core action is determined by love and the metrics based on two vernacular verse forms (*endecasillabo* and *settenario*). Moreover these three elements are fundamental for the apology and the lessons, where they present themselves in a second, poetological dimension. Next to Ovid other ancient authors, primarily Virgil, are exploited to illustrate the thematic choices for the tragedy, alongside with the authorities of vernacular literature (Dante and Boccaccio), in accordance with interests of the *Infiammati*. The same can be said of the reference to Bembo's *Prose della*

<sup>103</sup> Speroni 1982 LV, p. 266. This strategy seems convincing to Speroni to the point that his final polemical thoughts are once more directed against Giraldi, claiming that it is not impossible to use the same metrical form in different genres: «che maggior miracolo è che i versi giambi siano tragici che i rotti de' mandriali e de le frottole? Perché riprender me e non Aristotele? È così gran cosa che una guisa di versi sia stata usata a diversi officii?» (p. 268). For particularities of Speroni's metrics see Ariani, Marco: «Il «puro artificio». Scrittura tragica e dissoluzione melica nella «Canace» di Sperone Speroni» in: *Il Contesto* 3/1979, pp. 79–140.

*volgar lingua* in the metrical disquisition. A further symptom of the academic presence in Speroni's poetology is the reference to Maggi and Lombardi's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* (*Explanationes*) in his *Lezioni* to the *Elevati*.

At the same time *Canace* and subsequently the lessons present unique features that go beyond its academism and lead to a transgression of the aesthetics of tragedy. By combining the Ovidian substance with elements from the vernacular literature, especially Dante's *Divina Commedia* and Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, and particular references to Terence's comedy *Andria*, Speroni <contaminates> his drama with ingredients which are generally alien to it, particularly in the case of the <opposite>, comical genre. This leads to evident modifications in the *decorum* of the tragedy, i.e. the inclusion and dynamic function of a very high number of inferior characters, servants and maids, as well as the female protagonist giving birth to a child on stage, which strains the limits of dramatic representation. The influence of the comedy on *Canace* might also explain the metrical mixture of *endecasillabi* and *settenari*, of higher and lower verses. In the poetological writings this transgression manifests itself through the constant reference to non-tragic ancient and vernacular authorities (Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Boccaccio, Bembo), against which Aristotle, who has been degraded to just one of many authorities in the field of tragedy, has to compete.

Considering this construction mode, Latin pretexts and authorities (*Heroines*, *Metamorphoses* and *Andria*; Ovid and Terence; Virgil) associated to vernacular authors (especially Boccaccio) the use of a high form of vernacular (following Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* and Bembo's *Prose*) for a selected public of academics, it seems that Speroni's *Canace* works analogously to the *commedia erudita* and in this sense can be defined as a <*tragedia erudita*>. <sup>104</sup> These features can then also be read as an ennoblement of the vernacular authors and of a non-canonized genre, the novel, in the highest of all genres, the tragedy. The official poetological statements of the Paduan do not

104 The Italian *commedia erudita*, implemented decisively by Ludovico Ariosto, implies the imitation of the Latin comedies of Plautus and Terence combined to elements from the vernacular novelistic, especially Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in the *volgare*; cf. Werle, Peter: ««Di cosa nasce cosa, e il tempo la governa»: Zum Konflikt von Anthropologie und Gattungskonventionen in Machiavellis Komödie *La Mandragola*» in: *Renaissance – Episteme und Agon: für Klaus W. Hempfer anlässlich seines 60. Geburtstages*, ed. by Andreas Kablitz, Heidelberg: Winter [Neues Forum für allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft 33] 2006, pp. 173–188.

mention this overstepping the genre boundaries and instead concentrate on a selective reply to Giraldi's criticisms that manifests the ambiguous role Aristotle assumes for Speroni. In the lessons on the characters the Stagirite's authority is basically cut back on the basis of the argument, that love is in itself a worthy tragic subject,<sup>105</sup> which allows Speroni to offer a new interpretation of the <middle hero>, who can be a simple lover, the *hamartia*, love as a human mistake, and an overemphasizing of the *pathos* – the higher the quantity of tragic incidents the better the tragedy – that differ from the *Poetics* and set very own standards. The topic of love and the fact that lovers are never immoral characters are further capable of arousing the tragic feelings, by which the spectators, who partially identify with the characters and partially distance themselves from these, learn (by seeing the punishment) what is good for their lives. In this sector Aristotle, who according to Speroni wrote nothing but indications for beginners in the dramatic art, has to compete with Ovid, Dante and Boccaccio. Aristotle's fallibility is though revoked in the lesson on the verses: Speroni faithfully recalls passages of the *Poetics* to justify his use of *versi rotti*. Nonetheless Aristotle is not an absolute authority, but rather flanks Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*. The Greek author thus is not a self-sufficient figure in Speroni's poetology – his status <fluctuates> between authorization and de-authorization according to the specific needs of the academic.

---

105 In this case Speroni might again be following Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, in which love is one of three tragic subjects for poetry; DVE II,2 pp. 34–36.



## Bibliography

### *Primary literature*

Alighieri, Dante (1968): *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, Padova: Antenore.

Alighieri, Dante: *La Divina Commedia. Inferno*, ed. by Natalino Sapegno, Firenze: La Nuova Italia 1985.

Aristoteles: *Poetik*, ed. and transl. by Manfred Fuhrmann, Stuttgart: Reclam 1982.

Aristotele: *Retorica*, ed. by Marco Dorati, Milano: Mondadori 1996.

Bargagli, Scipione: *Dell'Imprese*, Venetia: Francesco de'Franceschi <sup>2</sup>1594.

Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Il Filocolo di messere Giovanni Boccaccio infino a qui falsamente detto Filocolo*, ed. by Gaetano Tizzoni, Vinegia: Bindoni 1538.

Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Famous women*, ed. and transl. by Virginia Brown, Cambridge: Harvard University Press [The I Tatti Renaissance Library 1] 2001.

Ferro, Giovanni: *Teatro d'Imprese*, Venetia: Giacomo Sarzina 1623, p. 399.

Giraldi Cinzio, Giambattista: «Giudizio d'una tragedia di Canace e Macareo» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 95–159.

Maggi, Vincenzo / Lombardi, Bartolomeo: *Vincentii Madii Brixiani et Bartholomaei Lombardi Veronensis in Aristotelis librum de poetica explanationes Poetica*, Venetiis: Valgrisius 1550.

Ovid: *Metamorphosen*, transl. and edited by Hermann Breitenbach, Stuttgart: Reclam 2003.

Ovid: *Heroides. Briefe der Heroinnen*, trans. and ed. by Detlev Hoffmann, Christoph Schliebitz and Hermann Stocker, Stuttgart: Reclam 2009.

Piccolomini, Alessandro: *Il sesto di Vergilio, tradotto dal s. Stordito Intronato, in lingua toscana, in uersi sciolti da rima. Le due orationi le quali sono nel terzodecimo libro del Metamorfofi d'Ouidio, l'una d'Aiace, & l'altra d'Vlisse. Tradotte parimente dal medesimo s. Stordito Intronato, in uersi sciolti da rima*, Venetia: Andrea Arrivabene da Pozzo 1540.

Piccolomini, Alessandro: *Virgilio, i sei primi libri del Eneide, tradotti a piu illustri e honorate Donne, da Alessandro Picholomini, Aldobrando Cerretani, Bartolomeo Carli Picholomini, Bernardino Borghesi, Hippolito de Medici*, Venetia: Comin de Trino 1540.

Piccolomini, Alessandro: *Lettura del S. Alessandro Piccolomini Infiammato fatta nell'Accademia degli Infiammati*, Bologna: Bartholomeo Bonardo & Marc'antonio da Carpi 1541.

Pomponazzi, Pietro: *Abhandlung über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, transl. and ed. by Burkhard Mojsisch, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1990.

Seneca: «Hercules Furens» in: *Tragedie*, ed. and transl. by Gian Carlo Giardina and Rita Cuccioli Meloni, Torino: UTET 2009, pp.79–160.

Seneca, Lucius Annaeus: «Hercules Oetaeus» in: *Tragedie*, ed. and transl. by Gian Carlo Giardina and Rita Cuccioli Meloni, Torino: UTET 2009, pp. 615–732.

Sophocles: *Sophokleus Tragōdiai hepta met hexegeseōn. Sophoclis Tragaediae Septem Cum Commentariis*, Venetiis: In Aldi romani academia 1502.

Speroni, Sperone: *Canace. Tragedia di Messer Sperone Speroni nobile Padovano*, Firenze: Francesco Doni 1546.

Speroni, Sperone: *Canace Tragedia del Sig. Sperone Speroni alla quale sono aggiunte alcune altre sue compositioni, & una apologia, & alcune lettioni in difesa della tragedia*, ed. by Ingolfo de'Conti, Venetia: Giovanni Alberti 1597.

Speroni, Sperone: «Discorso dell'Anima umana» in: *Opere di M. Sperone Speroni degli Alvarotti, tratte da' Mss. originali*, Tomo terzo, Venezia: Domenico Occhi 1740, pp. 368–373.

Speroni, Sperone: «Apologia di Sperone Speroni» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 183–205.

Speroni, Sperone: «Lezioni in difesa della Canace di Sperone Speroni. 1. Tre lezioni sopra i personaggi» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 207–254.

Speroni, Sperone: «Lezioni in difesa della Canace di Sperone Speroni. 2. Lezioni sopra i versi» in: *Sperone Speroni: Canace e Scritti in sua difesa*, ed. by Christina Roaf. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua [Collezione di opere inedite o rare 138] 1982, pp. 255–274.

Terenzio: *Andria*, transl. and critical edition by Maria Rosa Posani, Bologna: Pàtron 1990.

Tomasi, Franco / Zaja, Paolo (Eds.): *Rime diverse di molti eccellentissimi autori (Giulio 1545)*, San Mauro Torinese: Edizioni Res [Scrinium 19] 2001.

Tomitano, Bernardino: *Ragionamenti della lingua toscana, in quattro libri*, Venetia: Giovanni de'Farri <sup>2</sup>1546.

Tomitano, Bernardino: *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, Padova: Marcantonio Olmo 1570.

Trissino, Giangiorgio: *La Sofonisba Tragedia e i Simillimi Commedia*, Milano: Daelli 1864, pp. 3–7.

*Secondary literature*

«Accademia degli Elevati» in: *Saggi scientifici e letterari dell'Accademia di Padova*, Vol. 1, Padova: Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti 1786, pp. XXIV–XXIX.

«Accademia degli Eterei» in: *Saggi scientifici e letterari dell'Accademia di Padova*, Vol. 1, Padova: Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti 1786, pp. XXIX–XLI.

Accame, Maria: «Le rime di B. Tomitano tra petrarchismo bembesco e manierismo» in: *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia dell'Arcadia* 7/1977, pp. 165–203.

Andreoni, Annalisa: «Benedetto Varchi all'Accademia degli Infiammati. Frammenti inediti e appunti manoscritti» in: *Studi rinascimentali* 3/2005, pp. 29–44.

Ariani, Marco: «Il «puro artificio». Scrittura tragica e dissoluzione melica nella «Canace» di Sperone Speroni» in: *Il Contesto* 3/1979, pp. 79–140.

Baroni, Giorgio / Alhaique Pettinelli, Rosanna: *Storia della critica letteraria in Italia*, Torino: UTET 1997.

Bruni, Francesco: «Sperone Speroni e l'Accademia degli Infiammati» in: *Filologia e Letteratura* XIII,1/1967, pp. 24–71.

Cerreta, Florindo V.: «An Account of the early life of the Accademia degli Infiammati in the Letters of Alessandro Piccolomini to Benedetto Varchi» in: *Romanic Review* 48, 4/1957, pp. 249–264.

Cerreta, Florindo: «L'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova e l'opera del Piccolomini» in: *Alessandro Piccolomini. Letterato e filosofo senese del Cinquecento*, Siena: Accademia degli Intronati [Monografie di storia e letteratura senese IV] 1960, pp. 23–31.

Colombo, Michele: «Bernardino Tomitano e i Quattro libri della lingua thoscana» in: *Momenti del Petrarchismo Veneto: Cultura volgare e cultura classica tra Feltre e Belluno nei secoli XV–XVI. Atti del convegno di studio Belluno-Feltre, 15–16 ottobre 2004*, ed. by Paolo Pellegrini, Padova: Antenore [Studi sul Petrarca 37] 2008, pp. 111–133.

Daniele, Antonio: «Sperone Speroni, Bernardino Tomitano e l'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova» in: *Sperone Speroni*, Padova: Editoriale Programma [Filologia Veneta II] 1989, pp. 1–53.

Davi Daniele, Maria: «Bernardino Tomitano e la *Questio de certitudine mathematicarum*» in: *Aristotelismo Veneto e Scienza moderna. Atti del 25. anno accademico del Centro per la Storia della Tradizione Aristotelica nel Veneto*, Vol. II, ed. by Luigi Olivieri, Padova: Antenore [Centro per la Storia della Tradizione Aristotelica nel Veneto: Saggi e testi 18] 1983, pp. 607–621.

Davi, Maria Rosa: «Filosofia e Retorica nell'opera di Sperone Speroni» in: *Sperone Speroni*, Padova: Editoriale Programma [Filologia Veneta II] 1989, pp.89–112.

Frugoni, Chiara: Ercole in: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*, consulted online: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ercole\\_\(Enciclopedia-dell'-Arte-Medievale\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ercole_(Enciclopedia-dell'-Arte-Medievale)/).

Girardi, Maria Teresa: *Il sapere e le lettere in Bernardino Tomitano*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero 1995.

Greco, Aulo: «Tomitano, Bernardino» in: *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, consulted online: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardino-tomitano\\_\(Enciclopedia-Dantesca\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardino-tomitano_(Enciclopedia-Dantesca)/).

Marcucci, Silvia: *Analisi e interpretazione dell'Hercules Oetaeus*, Pisa/Roma: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali 1997.

Mayhew, Robert: *Prodicus the Sophist*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011.

Maylender, Michele: *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia* Vol. I–V, Bologna: Forni 1976.

Padiglione, Carlo: *Le Leggi dell'Accademia degli Oziosi in Napoli*, Napoli: Giannini 1878.

Oberto, Simona: «Die *Impresa* als Ausdruck literarischer Programmatik in den italienischen Akademien des 16. Jahrhunderts», in: *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 66, 2/2016, pp. 141–162.

Pancierera, Elena: «Alle radici dell'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova: i *Discorsi del modo di studiare* di Sperone Speroni» in: *Cahiers du Celec* 6/2013 online: [cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/files/Documents/cahiers\\_du\\_celec\\_6/E.Pancierera.pdf](http://cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/files/Documents/cahiers_du_celec_6/E.Pancierera.pdf).

Plaisance, Michel: *L'accademia e il suo principe. Cultura e politica a Firenze al tempo di Cosimo I e Francesco de' Medici*, Roma: Vecchiarelli 2004.

Regn, Gerhard: «Petrarkische Selbstsorge und petrarkistische Selbstrepräsentation: Bambos Poetik der *Gloria*» in: *Autobiographisches Schreiben und philosophische Selbstsorge*, ed. by Maria Moog-Grünwald, Heidelberg: Winter [Neues Forum für allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft 22] 2004, pp. 95–125.

Samuels, Richard S.: «Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement» in: *Renaissance Quarterly* XXIX,4/1976, pp. 599–634.

Steiner, Rudolf: «Ottava conferenza: Il mito di Eracle: le dodici <fatiche> per diventare uomo» in: *Le sorgenti della cultura occidentale*. Vol. 1, transl. by Silvia Nerini, München: Archiati 2006, pp. 161–178.

Tomasi, Franco: «IV. Letture di poesia e il Petrarchismo nell'Accademia degli Infiammati» and «V. Eseggesi di Petrarca nelle Accademie del XVI secolo (1530–1550)» in: *Studi sulla lirica rinascimentale (1540–1570)*. Roma: Antenore [Miscellanea erudita 80] 2012, pp. 148–218.

Vasoli, Cesare: «Le Accademie fra Cinquecento e Seicento e il loro ruolo nella tradizione enciclopedica» in: *Università, Accademie e Società scientifiche in Italia e in Germania dal Cinquecento al Settecento. Atti della settimana di studio, 15–20 settembre 1980*, ed. by Laetitia Boehm and Ezio Raimondi, Bologna: Società Ed. Il Mulino [Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico, Quaderno 9] 1981, pp. 81–115.

Vasoli, Cesare: «Le accademie fra Cinquecento e Seicento e il loro ruolo nella storia della tradizione enciclopedica» in: *Aristotelismo Veneto e Scienza moderna*, Vol. II, ed. by Luigi Olivieri, Padova: Antenore 1983, pp. 81–115.

Vasoli, Cesare: «Sperone Speroni: La Filosofia e la lingua. L'ombra di Pomponazzi e un programma di volgarizzamento del sapere» in: *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento: Atti del convegno internazionale, Mantova, 18–20 ottobre 2001*, ed. by Arturo Calzona, Firenze: Olschki [Ingenium 7] 2003, pp. 339–360.

Weinberg, Bernard: *A history of literary criticism in the Italian Renaissance* Vol. I, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press 1961.

Weinberg, Bernard: «XVIII. The Quarrel over Speroni's *Canace* and Dramatic Poetry» in: *A history of literary criticism in the Italian Renaissance* Vol. II, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press 1961, pp. 912–953.

Werle, Peter: ««Di cosa nasce cosa, e il tempo la governa»: Zum Konflikt von Anthropologie und Gattungskonventionen in Machiavellis Komödie *La Mandragola*» in: *Renaissance – Episteme und Agon: für Klaus W. Hempfer anlässlich seines 60. Geburtstages*, ed. by Andreas Kablitz, Heidelberg: Winter [Neues Forum für allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft 33] 2006, pp. 173–188.