

# HELLENISTI!

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im neuzeitlichen Europa

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ΕΥΡΩΠΗ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΖΟΥΣΑ  
AUS- UND ÜBERBLICKE IN EUROPÄISCHER PERSPEKTIVE

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# GRAECA PER ITALIAE FINES

Greek poetry in Italy from Poliziano to the present

*Filippomaria Pontani*

**Abstract:** This is a quick and selective overview of the achievements and the spreading of ancient Greek verse in Italy from the Humanistic age through the 21st century: while chiefly interested in the literary and stylistic dimension of the relevant texts (the *apparatus fontium* attempts to trace the favourite models of each author, and helps assess his or her linguistic proficiency), the paper also tries to understand the changing contexts in which this kind of poetry blossomed. Were these attempts just short epigrams and *poésies d'occasion*? Who embarked on longer pieces, and why? For which readership were these poems intended? Starting from Filelfo and Poliziano, and running through the late Renaissance and the dark times of Greek studies during the Counter-reformation, this survey reaches down to some interesting cases in the period of Enlightenment, and it ends on some Italian professors who tried their hand at Greek verse, with sometimes more conventional, sometimes more surprising results.

## INTRODUCTION

“E’ impossibile scrivere letterariamente in una lingua morta. Perché la vita della parola non è nel suo significato materiale, che solo sopravvive, ma nelle immagini, nelle idee accessorie, in certe fine gradazioni, che sono un sottinteso aggiuntovi dal popolo. Le parole latine giacciono senz’anima, come in un dizionario; hanno perduto la fisionomia e il calore, e né il Petrarca, né nessuno può risuscitarle.”<sup>1</sup>

This harsh verdict on Petrarch’s Latin poetry, uttered in 1869 by one of Italy’s finest literary critics with notoriously little expertise in Greek and Latin,<sup>2</sup> is probably shared by most contemporary readers, and it applies *a fortiori* to modern poetry written in a no less dead language such as ancient Greek. Nevertheless, since the

\* My thanks to Francesco Valerio, to Stefan Weise and to the audience in Wuppertal for valuable suggestions.

1 De Sanctis 1964, 43. Translation: “It is impossible to write literature in a dead language, for the life of words does not lie in their material meaning (the only element that survives), but rather in the images, the concurring ideas, the subtle gradations implicitly allotted to each of them by the speakers. Latin words lie without a soul, as if in a dictionary, having lost their shape and their warmth, and neither Petrarch nor anybody else can revive them”.

2 See Solaro 2014.

humanistic age several Italian intellectuals have experimented with this kind of versification, aiming at different stylistic and literary effects and working in different linguistic and cultural contexts: to the best of my knowledge, no history of this phenomenon has ever been written, perhaps due to the difficulty of finding, organising and sorting out the relevant material – the so-called *Heuristik*.<sup>3</sup> The present overview has no ambition to fill in this gap, nor does it intend to advocate a higher literary *status* for modern poetry in ancient Greek as such: it rather selects some *Höhepunkte* of this peculiar genre, trying to sketch their cultural background, and thereby to provide a starting point for future, more detailed inquiries into the same field. The focus on Italy is justified by the fact that this country does represent, for historical reasons, a peculiar case in the frame of European cultures: it is the place where everything began, but also the place where the knowledge of Greek sank dramatically for many centuries. Looking into the role of Greek versification through different ages may help us better understand Italy's intellectual history, but above all visualise some metamorphoses of the classical tradition in modern times.

## 1. HUMANISM: GREEK POETRY AS A CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

Everyone knows that the return of Greek to the West after a long age of oblivion was chiefly the product of a new interest in antiquity, developing in Italy and particularly in Florence at the turn between the 14th and the 15th century: the fulfilment of this longing for Greek wisdom was made possible by the essential contribution of Byzantine scholars fleeing their homeland under the Turkish threat.<sup>4</sup> The most evident consequences of this *translatio studiorum* to the West have been often investigated – the re-discovery and the first Latin translations of ancient Greek works; the rise of brand-new collections of Greek manuscripts; the establishment of chairs of Greek in many Italian cities.<sup>5</sup> However, to this day we have no encompassing critical analysis of the production of Greek verse on Italian soil during the Quattrocento by both the Byzantine émigrés themselves and their Italian pupils and colleagues.

The data is indeed scattered, the start was slow, and it has been argued that only very few Italians, for all the grammatical instruction they received, and despite the travels to the East (e.g. of Giovanni Aurispa, Francesco Filelfo, Guarino Veronese), actually attained the degree of linguistic proficiency in Greek that might enable them to use it first-hand in a plausible way. For one thing, the lack of appropriate

- 3 The last, if uncritical, collection of Italian poets “in Greca lingua” is Crasso 1678! Hutton 1935 has a different focus. For Germany one can compare the volume by Lizelius. See Ludwig 1998, 53f.
- 4 There are many accounts of this process: perhaps the most obvious reference works are Wilson 1992 and Cortesi 1995. For some medieval remains of Greek in Western Europe see Berschin 1980 (for Italy 113–118. 198–207. 213–222. 252–274. 290–293).
- 5 See e.g., together with the handbooks quoted in the preceding note, the inventory of Cortesi-Fiaschi 2008, and some special analyses by Fryde 1996, Labowsky 1979 and Fiaccadori 1994, as well as Staikos 1998; and of course the old Sabbadini 1905.

tools (grammars and lexica expressly designed for Latin-speaking pupils did not appear before the end of the century; metre was even less institutionalised)<sup>6</sup> left prospective authors without a clear set of norms to comply with, so that verse attempts by amateurs can easily prove flawed or unsatisfying by our modern standards. The *terzine* by the renowned epigraphist and antiquarian Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–1452) may well have been the earliest Greek verse written by a Westerner in modern times, but their metrical (not to say syntactical) *facies* is so unclear as to be debated down to our own day, and they appear to entertain but a thin connection with ancient literary prototypes.<sup>7</sup> In the late 1450s, single Greek hexameters in honour of the Muses were inscribed on the paintings of the Belfiore Studiolo for the Este family: few are preserved today, and they should probably be ascribed to the Greek émigré Theodore Gaza rather than – as was often assumed in the past – to the Italian scholar Guarino Veronese.<sup>8</sup>

But the earliest overt attempt at Greek versification in Classical garb was not an occasional fruit of chance: Francesco Filelfo's *De psychagogia*, consisting of two books of elegies and Sapphic odes, is the first poetical sylloge in this language to be produced in the modern West.<sup>9</sup> Filelfo (1398–1481), a humanist and poet from Tolentino, spent most of his life as a teacher in various Italian cities (Venice, Bologna, Florence and Milan), and during his youth he was long active in Constantinople as a secretary to the Venetian *bailo* (1420–1427): he numbers among the most important translators from the Greek and among the foremost collectors of Greek books during the first half of the 15th century.<sup>10</sup> Why did he choose to write Greek verse on top of his many, reputed Latin odes?<sup>11</sup> Here is Filelfo's own explanation in a letter to the poet and doctor Gerolamo Castelli of April 1458:<sup>12</sup>

*Latini vero non modo nulli sunt hac tempestate qui Graecos versus scribant, sed ne ullos quidem de priscis accipimus ex his qui adhuc apud nos extant. [...] Ego autem cum alia pleraque scripserim Graecae soluta oratione volui etiam temptare hoc tempore siquid possem in huiusmodi numero et artiore dictionis genere, quo caeteri vel meo invitati exemplo suis se monumentis posteritatis immortalitati commendent.*

The author is clearly praising his own work in opposition to the almost total lack of comparable attempts among ancient authors: Filelfo may be right to discard in this context the frequent code-switching from Greek to Latin in Plautus' comedies, in Lucilius' satires and in other Latin texts down to the correspondence of Cicero and Pliny, but he should have taken into account the usage of Greek as an autonomous

6 Botley 2010.

7 A. Pontani 1994, 70f. and 75f.

8 Wilson 1991.

9 For all details about this important text see FILELFO 1997.

10 See e.g. Cortesi 1986; Eleuteri 1991; Robin 1991; Wilson 1992, 48–53; de Keyser 2015.

11 On which see Robin 2009.

12 FILELFO 1997, 1. "Not only are there no Latins today who write Greek verse, but we do not hear from our ancient sources about any extant author who did so. [...] Having written other works in Greek prose, I now wished to see if I could compose anything in this stricter rhythmic genre, so that the other learned men, stimulated by my example, may achieve immortal fame through their own works".

literary language by authors of the imperial age. However, while this is attested in writings of philosophy, history, or science (from Apuleius to Marcus Aurelius), it rarely extends to the domain of poetry, where we are confronted with scattered indirect evidence (the shadowy figures of Bruttianus, Caninus and Arrius Antoninus mentioned by Martial and Pliny the Younger), with some epigrams by Roman emperors now preserved in the *Greek Anthology* (Germanicus, Claudius, Tiberius, Hadrian; in a later age, one should of course recall the few Greek epigrams of Ausonius and Claudian), and with inscribed verse such as that by Julia Balbilla on the Colossus of Memnon in Egypt, and others in Gaul and Britain.<sup>13</sup> Overall, a slim body of evidence, conjuring up a limited audience and the unique purpose of erudite display rather than any genuine literary intention on the part of the authors.

Thus, while remaining at times skeptical about his own mastering of Greek,<sup>14</sup> Filelfo believed that his poetical attempt could represent a new start, and prompt other Western *ingenia* to practise this kind of composition: since its very beginning, then, the challenge of writing Greek verse was regarded as both a witness to the author's linguistic skill, and a stimulus for future generations. This entailed a deep awareness of the author's cultural responsibility, which is why Filelfo expressly forbade the circulation and publication of his sylloge, which suffered in his view of an unsatisfying degree of refinement: composed between 1457 and 1465, and sent off for review to cardinal Bessarion in 1465, the *De psychagogia* was copied by the author himself in a preliminary stage in ms. Laur. 58.15, which remains to this day the *codex unicus*.<sup>15</sup> Filelfo's will was respected until the 1997 edition: the sylloge thus remained virtually unknown to other humanists and to later scholars alike.

The author's caution was partly justified: his verse displays a number of prosodical flaws (not necessarily more numerous, it should be remarked, than most of the contemporary output by Byzantine epigrammatists), and above all an insufficient command of the workings and the secrets of Greek poetic style, particularly in its bold attempt to revive such a complex metre as the Sapphic stanza in an age when Aeolic poetry was totally unknown.<sup>16</sup>

However, the *De psychagogia* stands out not only for its novelty and ambition, but also for its light philosophical *allure* (references to Stoic doctrines, Plato and Plutarch), and for its smart adoption of Latin encomiastic patterns – by far the greater part of the odes are addressed to Filelfo's patrons and friends, mostly cardinals, popes and patriarchs, on the occasion of special events such as ceremonies,

13 See Kaimio 1979; Rochette 2010, 281–290 (esp. on prose authors); Hutchinson 2013, 135–146 (on poets); Adams 2003, 356–364; Clackson 2015, 93–98 (on epigraphic texts); Cirio 2011, esp. 53–55 (on Balbilla's epigrams and their context). On the general phenomenon see the essays in Adams/Janse/Swain 2003. I am indebted to Luca Mondin for help in this matter.

14 See his letter 48 to John Argyropoulos (Legrand 1892, 90): *Λατῖνος γὰρ ὑπάρχων αὐτός, οὐ δὴ πάμπαν δόναμαι ἐλληνίζειν*, “being Latin myself, I do not master Greek perfectly”.

15 FILELFO 1997, 2–4. The note at the end of the ms. (f. 80r) reads: *hi tres libri neque aediti sunt a me | Francisco Philelfo nec emendati. qua | re cum multa mutanda sient, ne quis | ex hisce quicquam exscribat rogo*.

16 See Maltese 1989; FILELFO 1997, 9–26; F. Pontani 2015.

funerals or religious feasts, though some lighter pieces also occur:<sup>17</sup> one may wonder how many of Filelfo's addressees were actually capable of appreciating his Greek, but this question runs the risk of missing the point. True enough, Filelfo wrote to several men of power of his own epoch; but rather than establishing a real political communication with them through this unusual channel, he regarded his odes as a learned tribute to their personality, and at the same time as a stone thrown in the pond of the intellectual world of contemporary humanists.

Here is the *incipit* of a Sapphic ode to the famous Greek Catholic archbishop and humanist Isidore of Kiev: we find almost no active poetic memory of ancient passages, a rather prosaic syntax, and an arbitrary mixture of dialectal features.

Francesco Filelfo, De psychagogia II.6 (to Isidore of Kiev, *post* 1459), ll. 1–12<sup>18</sup>

4 Μοῦσα δὴν ὀκνεῖς λίαν Ἰσιδώρῳ  
πατρὶ πανθείῳ γλυκεροῖς ἀείδειν  
σοῦ διὰ γλώττης μέλεσιν θεάων  
Περὶ πρώτη.

8 Οὗτος ἐν πρώτοις ἅγιος πεφύκει  
καὶ σοφὸς πρῶτος νοερᾷ μαθήσει·  
οὗτος ἐν πάσαις ἀρεταῖς ὡς ἄστρον  
ἔξοχα λάμπει.

12 Τοῦτον ὑψίστου θρόνος εὐσεβοῦντα  
ναοῦ ἐν τόσσαις ταραχαῖς κακούργων  
κάσεβῶν ἀνδρῶν μόνον αὐτὸς ἔξει  
ἀρχιερῆα.

2 πανθείῳ: de adi. cf. Orph. *H.* 35.7, 53.9 etc. | 6 νοερᾷ μαθήσει: iunctura apud Iamb. *protr.* 16.15 | 8 cf. Clem. Al. *protr.* 8.77.2.

It is striking to note the analogies between Filelfo's declared aims and those of the other great scholar who realised a *Liber epigrammatum Graecorum* in the 15th century, namely Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494).<sup>19</sup> The most gifted poet of the Italian Quattrocento, the only humanist who could boast a real proficiency in Greek language and literature from Homer through Late Antiquity, and the only Westerner who could switch from Latin to Greek even when taking notes in his *zibaldoni* or when preparing his classes at the university of Florence, Poliziano was clearly in a position to attain better results than his predecessors, all the more so as his creative mind, his ambition and his natural *penchant* for versification led him to scribble

17 See Robin 1991, 120–137.

18 Ed. FILELFO 1997, 83. “O Muse of Pieria, foremost among goddesses, you have been hesitating too long to use your tongue and to sing with sweet rhythms in honour of the most divine father Isidore. He is among the holiest men, and the first in wisdom through his doctrine and cleverness; he shines extraordinarily, like a star, in all virtues. The very throne of the sublime temple will host him alone as a high priest, pious as he is amidst so many troubles brought about by evil-doing and irreligious men”.

19 Edition and commentary by F. Pontani 2002 (here POLIZIANO 2002).



Greek epigrams since the age of 17. Poliziano's process of *imitatio* shows a totally different character from Filelfo's experience: the quality of his verse improves over the years, and the refinement of his poetic diction blends several different textual inputs, from Homer to pastoral, from ancient epigram to Nonnus – some of these texts he was indeed among the first humanists to rediscover and peruse. His use of dialect – especially Theocritus' Doric – is more consistent than Filelfo's and partly reproduces the mixture so typical of the epigrammatic genre.<sup>20</sup>

The following sample, which belongs to the later part of Poliziano's career, represents a successful *Nachdichtung* of a bunch of ekphrastic epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*, and a striking one under at least three points of view: by consciously clinging to ancient models, it is the first (and in many ways the only) plausible re-creation of an antique Hellenic genre in the Western literary world; through its evident relationship with the passage on the same topic in Poliziano's earlier Italian poem *Stanze per la giostra* (1.99–103) and with Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (ca. 1485),<sup>21</sup> it opens up a new, intertextual dimension; through the richness and variety of its textual reminiscences, it displays a sovereign familiarity with Greek poetry from all centuries, including texts previously not read in the West. The latter issue is particularly important, for the addition of Nonnus (and Gregory of Nazianzus) to the canon of ancient Greek model sources will carry a huge poetic potential, and create the conditions for the development of a new, modern Christian poetry in Italian humanism.<sup>22</sup>

Angelo Poliziano, Liber epigrammatum Graecorum 54 (1493–94)<sup>23</sup>

Κύπρις ἀναδυομένη

Κύπριν Ἀπελλείας ἔργον χερός, ὡς ἶδον, ἔσταν  
 δαρὸν θαμβάλεος, τὴν ἀναδυομένην.  
 τὰς ἄτε παρθενικᾶς, ἄτε καὶ φιλοπαίγμονος αἰδῶς  
 τὴν ὄψιν μίγδαν ἔλλαχεν ἠδὲ γέλως.  
 5 καὶ τᾷ μὲν ραθάμιγγας ἀλιβρέκτοιο καράνου  
 δεξιτερᾷ θλίβεν καὶ κελάρυζεν ἀφρός·  
 ἦν δ' ἄρα τὰς νοτίδος τις ἔμοι φόβος. ἅ δέ γε λαιὰ  
 ἔσκεπε τὴν ἄβαν τὴν ἔθ' ὑποβρύχιον  
 (καὶ γὰρ ἔως λαγόνων ὕφαλος πέλε), καὶ τις ἔτι φριξ

20 See on this e.g. the introduction to Sens 2011, lxxv–lxxii.

21 See Warburg <sup>2</sup>1980, 15–31; Meltzoff 1987, 261–265.

22 See F. Pontani 2014 and 2017. Later Greek poets like Nonnus and Gregory of Nazianzus also exerted an important influence on Greek writing in other European countries until the shrinking of the canon in the 18th and 19th centuries. See Ludwig 2014, 165; Páll 2010, 134.

23 POLIZIANO 2002, 222–228. Translation: “As soon as I saw the rising Aphrodite, the work of Apelles, I remained long amazed. A mixed expression of modesty and smile got hold of her face, for she is a virgin, but also likes to play: with her right hand she wiped drops from her soak head, and the foam gurgled: I was afraid of the water. Her left hand protected her pubis, which was still below the water (for she emerged from the hips), and a shiver from her mother's throes still seized her young breast. If bound Ares once possessed such a beautiful being, he would never have accepted to be liberated from Hephaestus' chains”.

10                   ματρὸς ἀπ' ὠδίνων ὄμφακα μαστὸν ἔλεν.  
εἰ τοίαν πόκ' Ἄρης ἔχε δέσμιος, οὐκ ἀποδῦναι  
οὐδ' Ἀφαιστείας ἤθελ' ἀλυκτοπέδας.

de re cf. *AP* 16.178–182

1 cf. *AP* 16.178.2 Κύπριν Ἀπελλείου μόχθον ὄρα γραφίδος | ἔργον χερρός; cf. A. *Cho.* 231; E. *HF* 565 | 2 θαμβάλεος; adi. Nonnianum; ceterum cf. *AP* 16.178.1 τῶν ἀναδουομένων ἀπὸ ματέρος ἄρτι θαλάσσης | 3 φιλοπαίγμονος; de Venere apud Nonn. *D.* 48.274 | 4 ἔλλαχεν; potius ἔλλαβεν debuit, sed cf. fort. Theoc. 25.271 | 5 cf. Nonn. *D.* 48.348 (de Artemide) ἰκμαλέας ῥαθάμιγγας ἀποσμήξασα κομάων; ibid. 1.208 ἀλιβρέκτων δὲ κομάων; ibid. 42.86 ἀκοσμήτοιο καρήνου | 6 de verbo κελάρυζεν cf. e.g. Hom. *Od.* 5.323 | 9 φρίζ; in hac sede cf. Hom. *Il.* 7.63 | 10 cf. *AP* 7.4.6 μητρὸς ἀπ' ὠδίνων δέξατο Λητοΐδην (de Delo insula) | ὄμφακα μαστὸν: cf. Nonn. *D.* 1.71 et 48.957 ὄμφακι μαζῶ | 11 cf. *AP* 16.181.5f. εἰ τοίη ποτέ Κύπρις (sed aliud est ἀδύνατον); 180.5f. (de Marte, sed non de vinculis).

Due to the author's sudden death in September 1494, the *Liber epigrammatum Graecorum*, albeit ready for publication in more or less its present shape, did not appear before the posthumous Aldine edition of Poliziano's *Opera* (Venice 1498). Just a few weeks before his death, in a letter to the Bolognese humanist Antonio Codro Urceo (epist. 5.7, July 1494), Poliziano gave a rationale for his intention to publish the *Liber*, and even sent to his friend some samples of his output, including the epigram on the *Anadyomene* which we have just quoted:<sup>24</sup>

*Composui propemodum libellum Graecorum epigrammatum, quem saepe ut edam familiares mei me rogant, et pertinere dicunt (ita enim mihi palpantur) non ad Latinorum modo, sed omnino ad seculi gloriam, si Latinus homo tamdiu iam dormienteis excitem Graecas Musas. Non enim poema reperitur ullum citra sexcentos annos a Graecis conditum, quod patienter legas. Sunt hodie tamen unus et alter, qui nonnihilo dicuntur conari, quamquam adhuc non appareat. Ut igitur hos ipsos vel evocem vel irriterem, cogitabam libellum qualemcumque hunc nostrum publicare. [...] Aut igitur libellus hic probabitur ab iis quoque ipsis, qui componere putantur, atque ob id magna mihi omnino gloria tribuetur: aut improbabitur, et meliora ipsi fortasse scribent. [...] Prius tamen illud testabor, me non ideo certasse cum tam praeclaris ingeniis, quae diu comprobavit antiquitas, praesertim in arena ipsorum, quod inde mihi victoriam vel sperarem, vel quaererem: sed quod hoc magis videbar illa cogniturus, quo minus in experiundo consequerem.*

- 24 POLIZIANO 2002, xxiv-xxvi. Translation: "I have just composed a small book of Greek epigrams, which my friends often urge me to publish, saying (such is their flattering) that the fact that a Latin should wake up the Greek Muses (who have been asleep for such a long time) would contribute not only to the glory of the Latins, but to that of our age altogether. For one cannot find a single tolerable poem written by the Greeks in the last 600 years. There are a couple of people today who apparently prepare some attempts, even if they have not yet appeared in print. Therefore, I thought it wise to publish this small book, in order to stimulate or to defy them. [...] For either this book will be greeted with approval even by those who are themselves allegedly writing Greek verse (whence I shall gain a remarkable reputation), or it will be spurned, and they will perhaps write better verse. [...] First of all I shall confess that I did not enter the competition with so brilliant minds [*i.e.* the ancients], long consecrated by time, in the hope or in the longing for victory (all the more so as I am competing in their own field), but rather because I thought I could get to understand them the better, the less I equalled them in my attempts".

This letter is revealing under several aspects. First and foremost, it stresses that no good Greek verse has been produced over the last 600 years – this overall *damnatio* of Byzantine literature should not surprise us in the mouth of an Italian humanist,<sup>25</sup> although one may wonder if the chronological limit here declared implies that Poliziano regarded as the last “good” Greek poets precisely those 9th-century scholars and epigrammatists – from Leo the Philosopher to Constantine Cephalas – who were among the last to practise Classicising verse and who gave a decisive impulse towards the formation of the so-called *Palatine Anthology*.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, Poliziano’s letter unconsciously follows Filelfo’s lead in arguing that his book intends to *evocare vel irritare* other Westerners to do better: this humanistic *topos* rings here, however, more as a token of false modesty, especially against the background of contemporary Florence, where Poliziano’s great rival, the famous Greek scholar and diplomat Ianos Laskaris, was not only writing Greek epigrams himself, but also producing the *editio princeps* of the *Greek Anthology* (Florence 1494).<sup>27</sup> As a matter of fact, Laskaris had expressly provoked the Florentine youth into this contest, in the last sentences of his 1493 proslusion at the Studio.<sup>28</sup> Later history would show that Poliziano’s Greek epigrams, not Laskaris’, were to survive as a source of inspiration for future generations of humanists, as a number of editions, translations and imitations demonstrates.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, Poliziano gives a remarkably good reason for rivalling with the ancients in writing Greek verse, namely the wish to gain a deeper and more direct familiarity with the *tam praeclara ingenia* who represent the core of the Classical canon: while not giving up entirely an aesthetic ambition, he thus evokes a new, “didactic” dimension to what may seem a merely erudite exercise. In this respect, he essentially agrees with Laskaris, who had argued that *et in soluta oratione haudquaquam rhythmum et concinnitatem et numerum deprehendere aut deligere et constituere poteris, nisi prius carminibus saltem luseris et modulis*.<sup>30</sup>

A few years later, this very idea will be denied by another *vir magnus* of Italian humanism, the refined scholar and poet Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), in the dialogue that lays the foundations for the definition of the Italian “volgare”:

Pietro Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), I.6<sup>31</sup>

“E, se noi al presente la greca lingua eziandio appariamo [...] ciò solamente ad utilità della latina si fa, la quale, dalla greca dirivando, non pare che compiutamente apprendere e tenere e

25 An insightful overview of the difficult negotiation between the “classical” and the “Byzantine” Greekness during the Italian Renaissance can be found now in Lamers 2015.

26 See Lauxtermann 2003, esp. 147.

27 See Meschini 1976; F. Pontani 2016. On Laskaris’ biography see Pagliaroli 2004, with earlier literature.

28 See Meschini 1983, 112f., and POLIZIANO 2002, xxiiif.

29 See POLIZIANO 2002, xliv–xcii.

30 See note 28 (“even in writing prose you cannot grasp or select and establish the rhythm and the musical proportion, unless you have previously played with poems and verse”).

31 Dionisotti 1966, 85.

posseder tutta si possa senza quella, e non perché pensiamo di scrivere e comporre grecamente: ché niuno è che a questo fare ponga opera, se non per gioco.”

In Bembo’s view, the learning of Greek only helps towards a better understanding of Latin (incidentally, a frequent *topos* in the humanistic writings that promoted the institution of chairs of Greek in Italian cities):<sup>32</sup> therefore, Greek composition can only be conceived as a mere *lusus*, not as a serious occupation.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Bembo knew what he was talking about: first of all, during his years of apprenticeship at the school of Konstantinos Laskaris in Messina (approximately in the same months when Poliziano was composing the aforementioned epigram on the *Anadyomene*), he produced a short *épigramme d’occasion* on a rowing race between two crews of women – a disappointing achievement both on the metrical and the grammatical niveau, to the point that one would be tempted to emend it heavily were it not preserved in the autograph.

Pietro Bembo, distich for a female regatta (1492)<sup>34</sup>

Πράγματα νῦν πέρι ἄλλα ἐργάζεστε ναυτικοὶ ἄνδρες  
ναῦς γὰρ ἄγειν Ἐνετῶν κοῦραι ἐς ἄθλους ἔμαθον.

But Bembo also tried his hand at Greek prose composition, with much better results: his speech *pro litteris Graecis* addressed to the Venetian senate in late 1494 or early 1495, is a very unusual text, for it does not show the limits of a virtuoso *tour de force*, but it rather seems to convey to the authorities an important political message in favour of the liberation of Greece.<sup>35</sup> The real purpose and the real audience of this text are still debated today, and scholars disagree on whether it should be regarded as little more than a *jeu d’esprit* or as a full-fledged and fully serious intervention in the public debate of Venice;<sup>36</sup> however, its very existence is a proof of Bembo’s long-standing engagement with the workings of Greek syntax, the meanders of Greek rhetoric, and a plurality of ancient sources, not all of which common in his day.

Between the late 15th and the early 16th century, a large number of scholars working on Italian soil – both Greeks and Italians – started to round off their works, their translations or editions, by means of introductory epigrams in praise of their sponsors, their friends, or the ancient or modern authors evoked in the book. This practice grew so popular (suffice it to think of the high number of Greek epigrams occurring in the prefaces to Aldus Manutius’ editions)<sup>37</sup> that Greek verse *de facto* became the usual tool for an exquisite and refined *poésie d’occasion* aimed at a narrow circle of erudites: among the most prolific Italian adepts of this genre one can quote two pupils of Poliziano, namely the Florentine Andrea Dazzi (1475–

32 An overview of some of these texts is provided by Gastgeber 2014.

33 On the general frame of Bembo’s Greek studies see Pagliaroli 2013, esp. 93–96 on his Greek works.

34 From ms. Vat. Chis. L. VIII. 304, c. 388: see Cian 1898–99, 395–96 note 1 (with a facsimile).

35 See the edition in Wilson 2003, esp. 10–13 for an appraisal of Bembo’s style.

36 See Pagliaroli 2013, 116f.

37 See the beautiful collection by Orlandi/Dionisotti 1975.

1548), whose innumerable Greek epideictic, satirical and funerary epigrams show a great ambition despite an insufficient command of metre and style,<sup>38</sup> and above all Scipione Forteguerra from Pistoia (Hellenised as Carteromaco),<sup>39</sup> whose devotion to the cause of the Greek language was so strong as to prompt him to jot down in 1502 the *nomos* of Aldus' New Academy in Venice (Νεακαδημία), a free association of erudites which explicitly forbade the oral and written use of any other language except Greek.<sup>40</sup>

Greek epigrams, however, were by no means the privilege of Italians: Eastern refugees in Italy (from Theodore Gaza to John Argyropoulos, from Andronikos Kallistos to Demetrios Chalcondylas) also took part in this fashion, and even this chapter of the history of Greek poetry still awaits a systematic study.<sup>41</sup> It is no chance that precisely a diplomat from Asia Minor and a Cretan scribe produced the only extant Greek odes of a considerable length, and with a clear political and historical subject: I am referring to Ianos Laskaris, whose long and remarkable Sapphic ode to Charles VIII and the Crusade against the Turks (1494–95) has just been unearthed and published,<sup>42</sup> and to Markos Mousouros, whose monumental *Ode to Plato* (published *in fronte operis* in the 1513 Aldine edition of Plato) was praised not only as a remarkable literary achievement, but also as the last and most powerful attempt to revamp the *Türkenfrage* in Western politics.<sup>43</sup>

Both these men, who were also outstanding philologists, wrote several other shorter epigrams, indeed Laskaris even decided to collect his poetical output in an autonomous sylloge (Paris 1527), which half responded to Politian's earlier *Liber*, and half aimed to become a milestone in the recreation of a literary genre.<sup>44</sup> Laskaris' style certainly influenced the style of some of his contemporaries and pupils, amongst whom I single out Lazaro Bonamico (1477/78–1552), a scholar from Bassano, who left some published and several unpublished Greek poems: the following epitaph, displaying a good familiarity with hexametric poetry and with the genre of hymns and oracles in particular, despite some metrical uncertainties (e.g. the bipartite scanning of line 1, which is a common feature of Byzantine hexameters), was found handwritten among his papers a few decades ago.

38 See Dactius 1549, esp. 106–130 and 294–300; Hutton 1935, 163.

39 His Greek poems are listed by Chiti 1902, 49–52 (on pp. 67–70 a selection of 10 epigrams).

40 On the exaggeration of this claim, variously assessed by modern critics, see Dionisotti, in Orlandi/Dionisotti 1975, xliii; Lowry 1979, 195–199; Wilson 1992, 129–131.

41 Many texts are to be found in the listings of Legrand 1885–1906; much is buried in manuscripts and sporadically edited.

42 F. Pontani 2015.

43 See most recently Ferreri 2014, 132–165 and Dijkstra/Hermans 2015.

44 See Meschini 1976, and – for Mousouros – F. Pontani 2003.

Lazaro Bonamico, epitaph for cardinal Niccolò Ardinghelli (1547)<sup>45</sup>

Νικόλεως Ἀρδίγγελος, ᾧ Μοῦσαι καὶ Ἀπόλλων  
 παιδεῖν κ' ἀρετὴν πᾶσαν ἔδωκαν ἔχειν,  
 καλλίστων πρηκτῆρ ἔργων, Ἄρνοιο παρ' ὄχθαις  
 ὃν τέκεν ἡ κόσμου κυδιάνερα πόλις,  
 5 κριτὴν δ' αὐτὸν ἀπέδειξε τρίτος ποτὲ Παῦλος ἄριστος  
 ἀνδρῶν ὄνθ' ἕνα τῶν πορφυρέων πατέρων,  
 τοιοῦτος δὲ ἑὸν, φεῦ, τῷδ' ἐνὶ σήματι κεῖται,  
 δάκρυα πολλὰ λιπὼν Ῥώμῃ ἐν ἐπταλόφῳ.

2 cf. fort. Orph. *H.* 76.4 πᾶσαν παιδείης ἀρετὴν; cf. *AP* 12.96.2 πᾶσιν ἔδωκαν ἔχειν, sed sim. saepius (Thgn. 1387; *AP* 16.215.8 etc.) | 3 cf. Hom. *Il.* 9.443 πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων; saepius παρ' ὄχθαις in clausula invenitur (*Il.* 12.313, 18.533 etc.) | 4 κυδιάνερα de urbe cf. *AP* 16.1.2 (de Sparta); *Orac. Sib.* 14.171 (Roma) | 7 ἐνὶ σήματι κεῖται: cf. *AP* 7.559.3 | 8 δάκρυα πολλὰ: cf. *Orac. Sib.* 2.157 | Ῥώμῃ ἐν ἐπταλόφῳ: cf. *Orac. Sib.* 2.18 et 13.45.

## 2. GREEK VERSE AND RELIGION (16TH–17TH CENTURY)

Lazaro Bonamico came from the North East of Italy, a region where the tradition of Greek versification remained alive throughout the 16th century, even at a time when it was declining elsewhere in the country. Some of the authors who contributed to this success had received a more or less accurate Greek instruction in Venice, e.g. Girolamo Aleandro (1480–1542, from Motta di Livenza), who knew intimately the *Greek Anthology* and produced some imitations,<sup>46</sup> or Giovan Battista Amalteo (1525–1573), the author of a brief Pindaric ode on the battle of Lepanto in 1571.<sup>47</sup> Others may have been trained in their hometown Udine, such as the renowned philologist Francesco Robortello (1516–1567), who elaborated a seminal theory of the epigram, and produced in 1548 a *Nachdichtung* of Pindar's Olympian I called Βιογραφισμοφῶδια and presenting the author's autobiography to Cosimo de' Medici,<sup>48</sup> or the much more obscure Pietro Cortona,<sup>49</sup> who became the personal doctor to the

45 See Meschini 1979, 61 (the article also gives an overview of Lazaro's broader output). Translation: "Niccolò Ardinghelli, to whom the Muses and Apollo yielded every virtue and education, was the author of splendid deeds, and was born on the shores of the Arno in the most illustrious city of the world: the excellent Paul III named him, a man of law, to the rank of the purple-dressed fathers: being so distinguished, alas, he is buried in this tomb, having left many tears in seven-hilled Rome".

46 See Venier 2009b and particularly A. Pontani 2002.

47 See *Trium fratrum* 1627, 149f. This ode was part of a trilingual triptych (the Latin text in Wright/Spence/Lemons 2014, 70-79): on Amalteo see Venier 2009a.

48 On Robortello see Carlini 1967 and Hutton 1935, 60–62; on the ode see Päll, this volume. More Pindaric odes in Greek (including Amalteo's Lepanto piece, one by Marco Antonio Gadaldino to Antonio Carafa, and an anonymous one to Robortello) are preserved in ms. Milan, Ambr. R 110 sup., ff. 178r, 185v, 212r, 215r.

49 Liruti 1830, 281.

duke of Bavaria and published in Venice in 1555 a book of *Varia carmina Graeca*.<sup>50</sup> Cortona's sylloge, perhaps the first attempt of this kind after Poliziano's *Liber*, contains several encomiastic pieces and *poèmes d'occasion* written for his patrons and friends, and the introduction also pays a homage to the importance of Greek tradition in an age when the Greek *ethnos* was being oppressed by the Turkish domination. But the very fact that most of the addressees are Germans, points to the fact that the idea of this book was born in close contact with a cultural environment which had grown in the meantime much more accustomed to a direct contact with Greek language and poetry, as many of the essays in the present volume demonstrate.

In fact, one of the many by-products of the cultural shift entailed by the religious Reformation was the progressive *translatio* of Greek and Hebrew studies from Italy to the countries of Northern Europe, above all France, Germany, and the Netherlands.<sup>51</sup> In the perspective of the catholic Counter-Reformation, the doctrinal danger brought about by a direct perusal of the Bible in its original languages was a sufficient reason for the gradual abandonment of Greek studies, and for a steady decrease of the chairs of Greek in Italian colleges and universities.<sup>52</sup> This phenomenon set in precisely when Greek versification, as we have just seen, had started to become a common heritage of humanists: this versification therefore never attained a full ripeness, as was the case in other European cultures. Indeed, even the theory of epigram put forth in J.C. Scaliger's *Poetics* (1561) clearly suggests the style of Catullus and Martial as worthy of imitation rather than the Greek counterparts.<sup>53</sup>

It is true that the Jesuit order was founded only in the late 1530s, but the leading role it quickly acquired in the domain of education makes it a representative touchstone for assessing the relative importance of different subjects in the school curricula. The 1599 version of the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* (obviously reflecting earlier practice) devotes a profound interest and a series of structured exercises to the study of Latin (Latin, after all, was the language of the Church Fathers, of the mass, and of most religious communication); Greek, on the other hand, occurs very sparingly, always in the shadow of the other language, and in a minor key. While Latin prose composition requires a hard, daily training (and some time is also explicitly allotted to practising Latin verse), the prescriptions concerning Greek look rather different:

50 Cortona 1555.

51 See, most generally, Saladin 2000; Momigliano 1960 and Momigliano 1988, 10; Tosi 2002, 2f. An interesting comparison can be made by looking at the Greek inscriptions on Western art of the late Renaissance and Baroque age – originality can be expected only in the Flemish countries: A. Pontani 1996, 242f.

52 The only comprehensive study of the role of Greek in Italy in the post-humanistic period is Curione 1941, which is in bad need of replacement. See already Mancini 1939, 414–416.

53 Hutton 1935, 63–65. Scaliger (1484–1558), who was born in Italy but spent most of his life in France, was also a fine, if not prolific, writer of Greek epigrams: see Scaliger 1574, part III, 53–58.

Ratio Studiorum Soc. Iesu (1599), Regulae professoris humanitatis<sup>54</sup>

1: *Curandum praeterea, ut mediocriter scriptores intelligant et scribere aliquid graece norint. [...]*

6: *Graeci thematis eadem ac latinae prosae ratio erit. [...]*

9: *Explicatio autem, ut huius scholae fert gradus, linguae potius cognitioni quam eruditioni serviat. Inclinate autem anno graecarum syllabarum ratio tradi poterit cum auctore alternis diebus. Poterunt etiam interdum dissoluta carmina concinnari.*

The goal is a modest linguistic knowledge, the *ratio Graeci thematis* is limited to prose (not poetic) composition, with some exercise allowed for the study of prosody, as a means of recognising and reconstructing the appropriate verse forms (*dissoluta carmina concinnari*); the only poetical authors quoted in the *curriculum* are Phocylides, Theognis, Synesius and Gregory of Nazianzus. The reticence of the *Ratio* clearly matches the lack of adequate professors.<sup>55</sup> The *professor sacrae scripturae* is expected to produce quotations from Greek (or Hebrew) editions only when some problem arises with the Latin Vulgate; and in general even the *suprema classis grammaticae* wants pupils to *Graeca describere* (and here again, above all John Chrysostom and Aesop) rather than to develop any autonomous creative skill in that language.<sup>56</sup> The consequences of this practice in a country dominated by the principle of the *sola Scriptura*, were dire: the rarity and the low quality of Greek composition in Italian prints of the 17th and 18th centuries attest to a general decline in linguistic knowledge – much worse than that denounced by Daniel Heinsius in a letter to Hugo Grotius of 1612.<sup>57</sup>

This decline affected both the standard Renaissance culture of virtuoso *divertissements*, epitaphs and *Buchepigramme*, and – perhaps less predictably – the domain of religious poetry: no Greek equivalent exists in Italy for the hundreds of Latin hymns, prayers and centos of the 16th, 17th and 18th century, as opposed – once again – to what happens in the frame of German humanism from Melanchthon onwards. One may well say that Greek verse becomes in this period “*ein konfessionelles Phänomen*”<sup>58</sup> – the religious poetry of the “Calvinist amazon” and Italian heretic Olympia Morata (whose name, incidentally, occurs among the addressees

54 Bianchi 2002, esp. 280 and 286–288. Translation: “They [*i.e.* the pupils] should be brought to understand plausibly the ancient authors and gain the skill to write something in Greek. [...] The rationale of the Greek composition will be the same as that of Latin prose. [...] The teaching in this school level should serve rather the linguistic knowledge than a full-fledged instruction. At the end of the year the system of Greek syllables can be taught, on alternate days with the reading of an author. They will also occasionally be able to reconstruct broken verses.” See on this fascinating topic particularly Benedetto 2013, 72f.

55 See on this – and on the place of Greek in the Jesuit teaching routine – Curione 1941, 44–52.

56 See Bianchi 2002, 290–294.

57 Heinsius 1613, 325 (= Molhuysen 1928, 220): *Ceterum, quod saepe admirari satis non possum, in tam uberi magnorum foecunditate ingeniorum, nemo fere est repertus, ne in ipsis quidem Graecis, qui leporem Graecae Musae, qualis in antiquis olim fuit, aut intellexisse satis aut exprimere feliciter videretur.* Heinsius then quotes Mousourus, Laskaris, Carteromaco, Poliziano (and particularly his *Venus emergens*). See Curione 1941, 53.

58 Rhein, this volume.



of Cortona's epigrams) was essentially written in Germany and for a Lutheran public.<sup>59</sup>

As with all rules, however, there is at least an exception. Tito Prospero Martinengo (†1594), a benedictine monk from Brescia, lived most of his life in the abbey of Sant'Eufemia in his hometown, except for some years at the abbey of Santa Giustina in Padua:<sup>60</sup> a reputed connoisseur of ancient languages and a *protégé* of cardinal Antonio Carafa, under the pontificate of Pius IV he cooperated to the editorial activity of the Roman curia for the *Epistles* of Jerome (1564–65), for other Church Fathers, and later for the 1587 Septuagint.<sup>61</sup> Together with his more influential relative Lucillo Martinengo he was put under trial in 1566 and sentenced for heresy in 1571 by the Roman inquisition, as an adept of the sect of Giorgio Siculo:<sup>62</sup> but the punishment was mild, and after his rehabilitation he managed to publish with the official Vatican printer Francesco Zanetti both an ambitious volume of Latin verse called *Theotocodia* (1583, 2nd ed. 1589), largely inspired by late antique Christian poetry and centos, and (in 1582, 2nd ed. 1590) a voluminous and long-awaited book of Greek verse of chiefly religious content, sometimes with facing Latin translation, the *Poëmata diversa*.<sup>63</sup>

It can be debated whether the *Theotocodia* originated as a doctrinal answer to the charge of heresy levelled at Martinengo by the inquisition; the *Poëmata diversa*, however, undoubtedly attest to a cultural phenomenon that is rather unusual for Italy and Italian standards: the advantages of a solid humanistic instruction are here exploited for the production of an utterly orthodox religious poetry in the Greek language, with occasional encomia of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>64</sup> It should be stressed that what is at stake here is not an *ex tempore* attempt by an erudite amateur: it is a conscious and full-fledged attempt at establishing a brand-new strand of Greek poetry about religious dogmas, persons and saints (Christ, the Virgin Mary, Peter and Paul, the names of Mary, st. Paul alone, etc.), much in the fashion of what was becoming a current practice in reformed countries.

Martinengo's degree of self-consciousness in his Greek versification – his utmost care in revising and emending his pieces, and his ideal of a “mission” to restore Greek verse to the Italian tradition – is apparent from material scattered in manuscripts: in a letter of 1578 he sends to the famous humanist and book-collector

59 Holzberg, this volume; Parker 2003.

60 Bossi 1983, 362f. His presence in Santa Giustina is ensured by a document in 1565 (Archivio di Stato di Padova, *Corporazioni soppresse*, S. Giustina, 28, f. 46r, kindly pointed out to me by Father Francesco G.B. Trolese O.S.B.), and extends at least down to 1569 (the autograph letter quoted in the following note expresses the wish to come back to Brescia as soon as possible), though in 1578 he still writes from San Salvaro near Monselice, the summer residence of the Paduan Benedictines (see below note 65).

61 See Zaggia 2003, II.606f. and 679–682; an autograph letter of 1569 to cardinal Carafa in fluent Greek prose is preserved in ms. Vat. Barb. gr. 280, f. 7r: see Mogenet-Leroy-Canart 1989, 140.

62 Prosperi 2000, 292f.; Zaggia 2003, III.896f. The letter to cardinal Carafa mentioned in the preceding note concerns precisely the charges of heresy and the slow and painful development of the court case.

63 MARTINENGO 1582; Zaggia 2003, II.681.

64 Zaggia 2003, II.685.

Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601) a short religious hymn, and he simultaneously asks the receiver to correct some of its lines in order to render it “more Doric in tone”.<sup>65</sup> Even more interestingly, upon sending to Pinelli a first draft of the hymn to the Virgin that will later be included in his *Poëmata diversa*, Martinengo writes:

“Et se fussi stato trascurato qualche accento, V.S. l'emendi. Del resto non so se vi sia cosa che non possi stare, a tale che potrebbe, credo, senza riprensione andar in stampa; sì che non solamente *fiant carmina in regionibus transalpinis, sed etiam in cisalpinis*. Et questo dico perche pare a Francesi et Alemani che appresso di noi questa nobile arte sia persa et extinta di far versi litterati greci et latini. Un altra volta poi le farò vedere *aliquid pindaricum*, che le delectara più”.<sup>66</sup>

Martinengo's metrical versatility (hexameter, elegiac couplet, iambic trimeter, Sapphic and Alcaic stanza, glyconeans, Anacreontic ode, Pindaric ode etc.), as well as his ambition (most of his odes exceed by far the measure of an epigram, and often run through several pages), are unparalleled in what we know of contemporary Italian humanists. His skill is particularly evident in the long Pindaric ode on the names of the Virgin Mary (24 triadic stanzas!), which keeps throughout a Doric patina and blends allusions and references to a great variety of different sources. No less striking is Martinengo's deep familiarity with a number of non-canonic authors, including Hellenistic and late antique poets: as the following excerpt clearly shows, the rumination of Gregory of Nazianzus and of Nonnus of Panopolis (chiefly the *Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel*) endows the author with a new and convincing Christian poetic style, which is deeply marked on the lexical and syntactical level by pagan models from Homer to the Orphic Hymns, from Callimachus to Proclus.<sup>67</sup>

65 Ms. Milan, Ambr. S 93 sup., f. 86r (the letter to Pinelli, dated Monselice, 19 Nov. 1578), mentioning texts preserved in the same ms. (f. 84r, the hymn, later printed – with the prospected corrections – in MARTINENGO 1582, 131; f. 82r, an elegy for Tarquinia Molza, later printed – with the prospected correction, and other variants – in MARTINENGO 1582, 271).

66 Ms. Milan, Ambr. R 119 sup., f. 176r (the letter, written in Monselice, dates from around 1578–1580, and it accompanies the hexametrical hymn to the Virgin later printed in MARTINENGO 1582, 8–42). Translation: “And if any accent has been neglected, please feel free to correct it. I do not know if there is still something wrong [in this text], otherwise I believe it could well go to the press, so that *poems may finally appear not only on the other side of the Alps, but also on ours*. I say this because the Germans and the French have the impression that in our countries the art of writing Greek and Latin literary verse has gone lost and died out. Another time I shall show you *something Pindaric*, which is going to please you more than this”.

67 One could compare the roughly contemporary Greek poetry by Laurentius Rhodomanus (1545–1606). For Rhodomanus' predilection for later Greek poetry see the analysis by Ludwig 2014, 165.

Tito Prospero Martinengo, hymn to Christ (1582), *explicit* <sup>68</sup>

ἀλλὰ σύ, Χριστέ θεός καὶ σωτὴρ ἄμβροτε κόσμου,  
 μυστιπόλοιο σέθεν τόνδ' ὕμνον δέχνησο πρόφρων,  
 οἷα μετὰ κομιδὴν τε τελεσφορίην τ' ἐρατεινὴν,  
 5 εὐώδες καρποῖο θαλύσιον, ἢ τιν' ὀπώρην  
 ἀμφιετὴ πεμπθεῖσαν ἀπ' ἀγροῦ διψάδος αἴης,  
 οὐ λιπαροῖο λίην καὶ πίνος, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴου,  
 στήθεος ἡμετέροιο. σὺ δ' ἄναξ ἴλαος αὐτὸν  
 εὐμειδῆς τε δέχοιο, καὶ ἡμῖν ἐγγυαλίξαις  
 σὴν χάριν ἀντ' αὐτοῦ μενοεικέα, καὶ σέο λάξιν.

1 σωτὴρ κόσμου: cf. NT Jo. 4.42 (etiam Rom. Mel. 1.24); ἄμβροτε: cf. e.g. Gr. Naz. *carm.*, PG 37.516.1 *πάτερ ἄμβροτε* | 2 μυστιπόλοιο: verbum hoc sensu (scil. sacerdotis) apud Nonnum invenitur, cf. Nonn. *par. Jo.* 1.65, 9.161 etc. | ὕμνον δέχνησο: idem Procl. *H.* 7.5 | δέχνησο πρόφρων: cf. AP 15.27.5, sed de iunctura Hom. *Il.* 23.647 *πρόφρων δέχομαι* | 3 τελεσφορίην: ex Call. *Ap.* 78 | ἐρατεινὴν hac sede saepius in sermone epico | 4 cf. Nonn. *D.* 36.364 εὐώδει καρπῷ | θαλύσιον: cf. Nonn. *D.* 25.316; vide Ath. *Epit.* 1.25.31 et Hsch. θ 66 (de ἄρτος) | 5 ἀμφιετὴ: ex Orph. *H.* 53.1 (de Baccho) | διψάδος αἴης: cf. clausulam *διψάδι/α γαῖαν/γαίη* (Orp. C. 3.35; 4.322), praes. Nonn. *D.* 19.121 | 7sq. cf. Hom. *Il.* 19.177sq. ἄναξ... ἴλαος ἔστω et al. (sed ἄναξ priorem syllabam brevem habet); praes. Call. *Dian.* 129 εὐμειδῆς τε καὶ ἴλαος et A.R. 4.714sq. ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτὸς / εὐμειδῆς τε πέλοιο; verbum ἐγγυαλίξω semper in clausula in sermone epico occurrit | 9 cf. Hom. *Il.* 23.650 σοὶ δὲ θεοὶ τῶνδ' ἀντὶ χάριν μενοεικέα δοῖεν; de λάξιν (sed circumflexum habet noster) vide Call. *Jov.* 80.

Despite its ultimate success to our eyes, Martinengo's lesson fell on no fertile ground: his achievement was far too eccentric and ambitious for the standards of Italian ecclesiastical instruction, and above all it required from its readership a familiarity with Greek literary culture that was by then almost impossible to obtain. On the other hand, what the ecclesiastical domain did offer to the history of Greek versification during the centuries of the Counter-Reformation, had not only a much more limited scope and ambition, but above all a totally different meaning. No less a figure than Maffeo Barberini (1568-1644; since 1623 pope Urban VIII), while primarily active as a Latin poet, also tried his hand at a couple of Greek epigrams, mostly *poésies d'occasion*, though one is in fact a poetic paraphrase of Psalm 75. Perhaps the most interesting of these texts is an *ekphrasis* of a *San Sebastiano*, maybe the very painting by Pietro Perugino (Paris, Louvre) that was kept in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome at least since the mid-17th century.<sup>69</sup> We can see in these lines, which revolve around the old *topos* of “*ut pictura poësis*”, a certain familiarity with Christian writings and with Homer, but no trace of a true stylistic assimilation of

68 MARTINENGO 1582, 24f. Translation: “But You, o Christ God the immortal Saviour of the world, accept with favour this hymn of Your priest, like a fragrant bread made from the first-fruits after the cultivation and the lovely ceremony, or like yearly fruits sent forth from a field of thirsty earth, not a rich and fat one, but a very dry one: our breast. Please, Lord, accept it with a benevolent smile, and grant us in exchange Your plentiful grace, and Your allotment”.

69 See Garibaldi 1999, 100–103. Habert et al. 2007, R.F. 957. The Perugino painting is not attested at Palazzo Barberini before the inventory of 1648: Aronberg Lavin 1975, 208; but see 27f. and 67 for more paintings of the same subject (by Paolo Perugino, Pinturicchio and Carracci) in Maffeo Barberini's collection.

the prototypes and no special poetic cleverness – it looks as if Barberini were simply trying to fit some prosaic verbs and a very ordinary syntax in a metrical mould, without attempting to recreate a real flavour of ancient verse.

Maffeo Barberini, εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Σεβαστιανοῦ εἰκόνα (1640)<sup>70</sup>

Δεσμευθέντα βέλη πρόμαχον Χριστοῦ διαπεῖρει,  
 ὄν μὴ ζῶντα γραφεύς, μήτε θανόντα γράφειν.  
 Ζῆν μὲν ἔτ' ἀθρέομεν, νεκρὸν δὲ φοβούμεθα πίπτειν,  
 καὶ μέγα δεῖν' ἡμῖν τραύματ' ἐνώρσε πάθος.  
 5 Ἔμπαγε τραυματίου ἐπιλεύσσετον ἄστερας ὄσσε,  
 καὶ στόμα μὲν χαῖνον λισσομένου δοκέει.  
 Οὐκ ἔξεστι τέχνη φωνὴν ἀπὸ χρώματι δεῖξαι,  
 νοῦς δὲ γραφέντα βλέπει χεῖλεα τοῦτο λέγειν·  
 10 Ἄμμα λύειν, ψυχὴ γὰρ ἐμὴ μεμαυῖα φέρεσθαι,  
 ὡς ἔλαφος διψῶν πίδακα, πρὸς σε, Θεός.

1 cf. e.g. Gr. Nyss. *laud. Bas.* 2.3 (PG 46.789D) τὸν Χριστοῦ στρατιώτην ... καὶ πρόμαχον τῆς ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ παρρησίας etc., sed saepius in hymnis, e.g. Paul. Cryptoferr. *hymn.* 3.59 Gassisi; Sym. Thessal. *mirac. s. Dem.* 3.1.12 de πρόμαχος Χριστοῦ | διαπεῖρει verbum pedestre | 2 ζῶντα ... θανόντα: de oxymoro cf. e.g. AP 7.394.6 et saepius | 4 ἐνώρσε: cf. Hom. *Il.* 6.499; 15.366; E. *Suppl.* 713 | 5 ἔμπαγε: Gr. Naz. *carm.*, PG 37.623.7 et 1251.7 (cum μὴν) | ἐπιλεύσσετον: verbum apud Hom. *Il.* 3.12 tantum; de forma duali cum ὄσσε cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 23.464, 477 | 7 φωνὴν ... χρώματι: cf. AP 11.433.2; de re cf. e.g. Plu. *de glor. Ath.* 346sq., Rhet. Her. 4.28 | 9 ἄμμα λύειν: cf. E. *Hipp.* 781 | μεμαυῖα cum inf. cf. Hom. *Od.* 16.171 | 10 ὡς ἔλαφος κτλ.: cf. LXX *Ps.* 41.2.

Barberini's epigram is a virtuoso *Paradestück*, much in the same vein as Benedetto Averani's (1645–1707) *Praise of a girl*, published as an almost isolated piece in his posthumous collection of Latin poems and epigrams. While significantly longer than an epigram – and in fact the only long Greek piece in Averani's scarce output in this language –, this elegy suffers from the same stylistic problems as Barberini's, and despite some interesting quotations (above all from Homer and the bucolic *corpus*) and some smart mythological allusions (the *topoi* for beauty's hidden dangers – the rose, Aphrodite, Pallas – and for beauty's impossible vision – Tiresias, Actaeon, Semele), it does not always live up to metrical requirements, nor does it

70 BARBERINI 1640, 253f. I add here the author's own free Latin translation: *Depictus Christi miles, quem spicula figunt, | os neque viventis, nec morientis habet. | Ne cadat expirans metuis, quem vivere cernis, | teque pio sensu vulnera saeva cient: | Sed placide, quamquam sic saucius, inspicit astra, | dum labra suppliciter more precantis hiant. | Non datur artifici vocem depingere: pinxit | hunc tamen, ut credas talia verba loqui: | Vincula solve: tuum, Iesu, sitit anxia visum | mens mea, ceu fontis cervus anhelus aquam.* More literally: "Arrows transfix the enchaind soldier of Christ, whom the painter has represented neither dead nor alive. We see he is still alive, but we fear he might fall dead, and his horrible wounds arouse our great sorrow. Even so, the victim's eyes watch the stars, and his open mouth seems that of a man who is praying. Art cannot show the voice through colours, but the mind can see that the depicted lips are saying: 'Loosen the knot, for my soul wants to rush to You, God, like a thirsty deer to a source'".

rise to the status of an aesthetically autonomous piece, especially when compared with its obvious predecessors, i.e. the many erotic elegies of Classical antiquity.

Benedetto Averani, Κόρης ἔπαινος (ca. 1670–80) vv. 25–36<sup>71</sup>

25           τί χρῆ μακρολογεῖν; πάντες θεοὶ οὐρανίωνες  
                     κάλλεσιν εἰδομένην θῆκαν ἔπουρανίους,  
                     ἔξοχα καὶ φρόνιμον καὶ κόσμιον ἦθος ἔχουσαν,  
                     ἦδιστόν τ' ἄλγος, καὶ γλυκὴ πῆμα νέους.  
 30           ὥσπερ γάρ ποτε Πανδώραν θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες  
                     τοῖς δώροις αὐτῶν οὐλομένην ἔθεσαν,  
                     οὕτω καὶ σε θεοὶ δώροις μεγάλοισι ποίησαν  
                     ἔμμεναι οὐκ ἀγαθὴν ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλὰ κακῆν.  
                     πλήν συ κάκ' οὐκ ἀφίεις ἐκ κρυεροῦο πίθοιο,  
                     ἀλλ' ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν, ἐκ τε καλοῦ στόματος·  
 35           εἷς σε βλέπων γάρ ἀνὴρ, καὶ ἀκούων ἀδὸ λαλούσης,  
                     ἄγριον ἐξαίφνης ἔλκος ἔρωτος ἔχει. [...]

25 cf. Isoc. 12 (*Panathen.*).181 al. τί δεῖ μακρολογεῖν (nusquam apud poetas) | θεοὶ οὐρανίωνες: cf. Hom. *Il.* 1.570 etc. | 27 φρόνιμον καὶ κόσμιον: sim. Pl. *Phd.* 108a6 | ἦθος ἔχουσαν: cf. Critias fr. 6.12sq. | 29 θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες: saepius, cf. Hom. *Il.* 1.290 etc. | 30 αὐτῶν debut | 32 cf. *AP* 7.160.2 Ἄρης δ' οὐκ ἀγαθὸν φεῖδεται, ἀλλὰ κακῶν | 33 metrum claudicat; de clausula sim. cf. *Hom.* *Il.* 13.48 κρυεροῦο φόβοιο, 24.524 κρυεροῦο γόοιο | 35 de clausula cf. *AP* 9.440.8 (Mosch. *amor fugit.*) ἀδὸ λάλημα, fort. etiam Sapph. fr. 31.3sq. Voigt ἀδὸ φωνείσας | 36 ἄγριον ἔλκος (de Adone) cf. Bion *epit.* *Adon.* 16; vide etiam *AP* 12.72.5-6; Nonn. *D.* 15.320.

Averani, a Latin poet, a Latinist and professor of Greek in Pisa since 1676, was a rather obscure man of letters with no special claim to a major role in the history of Italian culture, and he acted for years as the leader of the “Accademia degli Apatisti” in Florence, writing *inter alia* a series of 86 dissertations on the epigrams of the Greek Anthology.<sup>72</sup> Academies played a major role in the intellectual life of many Italian cities in the 17th and 18th centuries: while some of them tried to compensate the vacuum of Greek studies in universities, the niveau of expertise of their members was uneven. A perfect example is provided by the only Academy where Greek versification became a widespread fashion for a long time, namely the glorious (and still existing) “Accademia dell’Arcadia” in Rome. The members of this institution, who had to acquire a bucolic nickname and thus became shepherds in the Academy’s foundational fiction, produced a massive amount of Latin encomiastic verse for official celebrations or feasts; the boldest among them did not refrain

71 AVERANI 1717, 244. Translation: “Why should I be long? All the heavenly gods made her similar to the heavenly ones in beauty, endowed with an exceedingly wise and modest character, a real sweet sorrow and pleasant torment for young boys. Just as the eternal gods once made Pandora terrible through their gifts, so the gods through their great gifts have made you not good towards men, but evil. Yet you do not let evils fly from a cold jar, but from your eyes and from your beautiful mouth: when a man sees you and hears your sweet voice, he suddenly feels the fierce wound of love”.

72 See Carranza 1962; Curione 1941, 65; Hutton 1935, 52f. and 377–381.

from trying their hand at Greek versification too.<sup>73</sup> These texts, mostly limited to a couple of elegiac distichs, stand out not only for their empty and conventional tone, but above all for the startling number of prosodical, metrical and grammatical mistakes they contain – an excellent proof of the poor state of Greek linguistic knowledge in Baroque Italy.

Perhaps the only exception in the *corpus* published by Zoras in recent times is represented by the long Pindaric ode dedicated by the Neapolitan Benedictine monk Giovan Battista de Miro (his Arcadian name was Meon Lasionius, 1656–1731)<sup>74</sup> to cardinal Gaspare Carpegna, a powerful member of the Roman Curia (he almost became a pope) on the very day of his admission to the academy. De Miro’s attempt, like Robortello’s and others’, reproduces the metrical scheme of an existing ode by Pindar<sup>75</sup> (this time *Olympian* 3), but it also shows a deeper acquaintance with Pindaric word-building and style, which enables the author, despite a number of syntactical *abusiones* and a partly prosaic tone, to attain a certain degree of originality.

Giovan Battista de Miro, Ode to Gaspare Carpegna (1695), ll. 37–71<sup>76</sup>

	Καρπίνεος δ' ἄρα ἄρωσ εὐκλεής,	antistr. II
	τῷ νῦν νεοποικίλος ὕμ-	
	νος συμπλέκεται, ἅμα πρόσθεν χρόνον,	
40	κῶπισθε νόφ δεδάηται·	
	ἔστι γὰρ πολλῶν καμάτων πολῦπει-	
	ρος, τοῖς λέλογγεν	
	κῦδος αἰείμναστον, ὑψί-	
	σταν δ' ἀρετᾶς περὶ δόξαν, οὐ παρὰ	
45	δάμου, ὡς πολλοί, κακόγλωσσοσ γὰρ αὐτός,	
	ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐσθλῶν, παρ' οὓς μὲν	epod. II
	αἱ ἀρεταὶ βλεφάροις	
	εἰσορώσ' εὐνοίς, ἰδὲ γλυκυτάτῳ	
	καρπῶ πάσασθαι ἁσμένως	

73 The relevant texts, mostly preserved only in manuscripts, have been collected, published and discussed by Zoras 1994.

74 See Ceresa 1990, who lists other scattered Greek odes: the long Italian eclogue *Alhano* published in Crescimbeni 1695, 65–69 is said to have been originally “scritta in Lingua Greca da Meone Lasionio P(astore) A(rcade)”.

75 See Päll, this volume.

76 Zoras 1994, 35–39. Translation: “Carpegna, the famous hero for whom a new, multiform hymn is wreathed, knows both the past and the future time, for he is expert of many toils, through which he attained unforgettable renown and high fame of virtue, not – as many others – from the ill-tongued populace, but from the best, whom virtues look at with propice eyelids, gladly letting them eat their sweetest fruit; for no hymn turns to their blame, and they know how to recognise a worthy man from another one: but the populace, roaring secretly, has in general an unfaithful tongue subservient to personal profit, which has never won over the mind of the best, if it boasts right deeds remaining untouched by the others’ calumny. But now the heart of all good mortals is dominated by desire, hope and prayer (may God not make them vain): to see the fortunate day when Carpegna will take hold of the reins of the supreme command, and will be called king of kings: on that day I shall found a temple to you, Eunomia, and a magnificent one to you, Muses, and I shall fulfil my longing *in re*”.

- 50 τῷ σφετέρῳ πορίσαντο·  
τῶνδε γάρ εἰς ψόγον ὕμνος μὴ τρέπε-  
τ' ἄξιον ἄνδρ' ἕτερόν τ' ἴσαντι γῶναι·  
ἀλλὰ χαμηλὰ βρέμων  
κέρδεσι γλώσσαν τὸ πλείστον τὰν ἀπίσταν
- 55 δᾶμος ἔχει θεραπεύουσαν· τὸδ' ἐ- str. III  
σθλῶν οὐκ ἐδάμασσε φρένα,  
τὰ οὐκ ἐτέρων κινέει δυσσημία,  
εἰ πράγμασ' ἀγάλλεται ὀρθοῖς.  
Ἀλλὰ νῦν πάντων ἀγαθῶν βροτέων
- 60 ἄτορ δαμάζει  
ἴμερος, κ' ἐλπίς, καὶ εὐχά  
(μὴ ἀνεμῶλια ποιείτω Θεός)  
ἀμέραν βλέψασθαι εὐπότμαν, ἐν ᾗ μὲν
- 65 ἥνια Καρπίνεος χερσὶν λάβοι antistr. III  
ἀρχᾶς μεγάλας, βασιλῆ-  
ων καὶ βασιλεὺς καλέσατο· στάσομαι  
ναὸν τότε, Εὐνομία, σοί,  
καὶ ὑμῖν Μῶσαι μεγαλοπρεπέα,  
κ' ἔργοις ἐέλωρ
- 70 παύσω.

**38** νεοποιίκλος: ex schol. Pi. O. 3.7b-8a | **45** κακόγλωσσοσ: cf. Call. Del. 96; Nonn. D. 2.161 al. (E. Hec. 661) | **49** καρπῶ: gen. debut | **52** ἕτερον debut | ἴσαντι: ex Pi. P. 3.30 | **53** cf. Pi. P. 11.30 χαμηλὰ ... βρέμει | **56** ἐδάμασσε φρένα: cf. Hom. Od. 9.454; Thgn. 2.1234 | **57** οὐχ debut | **58** cf. Pi. O. 7.46 πραγμάτων ὀρθὰν ὁδὸν | **59** βροτῶν debut (cf. Orph. L. 101) | **63** εὐποτομον debut | **65sq.** regum rex appellabatur rex Persarum.

Post-Renaissance Italy is no hospitable country for Greek verse: as one might easily expect by looking at the critical state of learning and teaching, Greek poetry exists as a *divertissement* only for (often self-proclaimed, and often inadequate) erudites, and only in isolated instances as a rhetorical instrument for Christian hymns or higher encomiastic attempts. While in Germany and England Greek verse played an important role both in scholars' instruction and in the development of religious poetry, in Italy it remained by all means a marginal element of the cultural discourse.

However, one disclaimer should be made at this point: the situation we are describing applies to Italian scholars and poets, but at the same time, during the late 16th, the 17th and part of the 18th centuries, Italian printers (especially in Venice, but also in Florence and Rome) published dozens of excellent epigrams and poems in ancient Greek (chiefly *Buchepigramme*, but sometimes even more ambitious pieces) written by scholars from the Heptanese, from Crete or from continental or insular Greece. Some of them became reputed intellectuals in the Italian context, be it Padua, Tuscany, or particularly the Roman milieu of the Collegio Greco and of Propaganda Fide: one need just recall the prolific papal librarian from Chios Leone Allacci, who wrote several, splendid longer odes in ancient Greek, or the Paduan professor from Beroia Giovanni Cottunio, who published in 1653 two books

of Ἑλληνικὰ ἐπιγράμματα (with a long dedication to Louis XIV king of France, opened by the claim to be the first to write such a sylloge in centuries), but stands out also as the author of an ambitious handbook *De conficiendo epigrammate* (Bologna 1632).<sup>77</sup> An inquiry into their skill as poets in ancient Greek by far exceeds the modest scope of the present survey, but it would be useful in order to contrast it with the achievements of their Italian colleagues, since the latter's poetical attempts prove so dramatically inconsistent even when they appear on the same page as the well-thought epigrams or odes of their Hellenic counterparts.<sup>78</sup>

### 3. THE 18TH CENTURY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

It is generally agreed among scholars that the 18th century witnessed a slow revival of Greek studies in Italy, with new chairs being inaugurated or revived in universities, and a growing interest for the language.<sup>79</sup> It is particularly in the second half of the century, however, that the great season of Italian antiquarianism took over in libraries and museums (Scipione Maffei at Verona; A.M. Bandini at Florence; J. Morelli at Venice; G. Mingarelli at Bologna):<sup>80</sup> while these phenomena did not necessarily go beyond a strictly erudite approach, it is true that they created a fertile *humus* for single *ingenia* who may devote their time to writing in ancient Greek – and this happened indeed in at least two ways.

On the one hand, the tradition of Greek *poésie d'occasion* was unexpectedly revived by the “*Sappho rediviva*”, namely the Bolognese female poet Clotilde Tambroni (1758–1817), who acquired a vast popularity also through her manifold contacts with such illustrious personalities as Mme de Staël, Richard Porson, F.A. Wolf and J.-B.-G. de Villoison.<sup>81</sup> Tambroni was no scholar herself, and in writing Greek poetry as a learned pastime she profited a great deal from the favourable cultural atmosphere of her hometown: the style of her odes, mostly long and printed in special *plaquettes*, is not original either in terms of topic or of diction, and it largely follows in the footsteps of the encomiastic tradition so typical of Italian academic writing, full of hyperbolae and *topoi*. Still, her skill is particularly evident

77 The activity of these scholars is largely described in Legrand 1894–1903; most of them occur in Tsirpanlis 1980. On Allacci see especially Rotolo 1966; on Cottunio's epigrams see particularly Samarà Papaioannou 1982–83 (and Hutton 1935, 68 and 268f.).

78 See for instance the epigram by Sebastiano Fantaccini (a member of the same “Accademia degli Apatisti” as Benedetto Averani) in the collection mentioned by Legrand 1894–1903, I.76.

79 See Curione 1941, 71–85 and Mancini 1939, 417–421, insisting on the role of the Florentine-Pisan school of Anton Maria Salvini, Alessandro Politi, Angelo Maria Ricci and others, as well as on the importance of Ludovico Antonio Muratori's dissertation *De Graecae linguae usu et praestantia* (1693), perhaps the most authoritative appeal to the recognition of the paramount role of Greek culture in all disciplines of the world of learning.

80 Curione 1941, 120–136. Tosi 2015, 205f.

81 Tosi 2002, 3–5 and above all the edition of her poems in TAMBRONI 2011 (the only critical edition of a Greek modern poetical sylloge beyond Filelfo's and Poliziano's).



in her choice of the right stylistic and linguistic model for each situation: Callimachus, for instance, is ubiquitous in the elegy she addressed to the renowned Parmese printer Giambattista Bodoni for an elegant edition of the Cyrenaen's *Hymns* published in 1795. Tambroni's text, of which we shall read but the first lines, plays on the double encomium of the author and the publisher, who appear to admire one another.

Clotilde Tambroni, elegy for the printer Giambattista Bodoni (1795), vv. 1–8<sup>82</sup>

Εὔτε ποδήνεμος Ὅσσα κατήλυθεν ἀγγελιώτις  
 εἰς ἔδαφος μακάρων σοῦς ἐρέουσα πόνους,  
 Καὶ σπεύδουσα κόμιζε, Βοδώνιε, ἀγκαλίδεσσι  
 τεῦχος, ὅπερ κέκαμες τοῦτο πανυστάτιον,  
 5 Λαμπράς τ' ἀμφιλαφεῖς σελίδας, κλέος εὐρὺ λαοίσας,  
 θαῦμα μέγα θνητοῖς, χάρμα τ' ἐπουρανοῖς·  
 Αἶψα μάλ' ἐξ ἐδέων ἀνστήσαν πάντες αἰοδοὶ  
 Ἐλλάδος εὐρυχόρου, Αὐσονίης τε καλῆς,  
 Ὡς μιν ἐώρων πλησίον ἦδη· καὶ τόθ' ἕκαστος  
 10 εἰδέμεν ὅτι φέρει βούλετ' ἐπαντίασας.

1 ποδήνεμος: de Iride dictum apud Hom. *Il.* 2.786 etc. | ἀγγελιώτις: Call. *Del.* 216 | 3 ἀγκαλίδεσσι: cf. Hom. *Il.* 18.555, Call. *Dian.* 73 | 4 πανυστάτιον: Call. *Lav.Pall.* 54 | 5 ἀμφιλαφεῖς: cf. e.g. Call. *Dian.* 3; *Cer.* 26 al. | κλέος εὐρὺ: cf. Hom. *Od.* 1.344 etc. | 7 ἐδέων debuit | de re cf. Hom. *Il.* 1.533f. | ἀνστήσαν cf. *Il.* 18.358 ἀνστήσασα | 8 εὐρυχόρου: de Graecia cf. Hom. *Il.* 9.474 al. | 9 ἐώρων debuit? | 10 ἐπαντίασας: cf. h.Hom. *h.Ap.* 152.

On the other hand, the only true philological approach to Greek texts in the Italian Settecento grew out of the first scientific work on the newly discovered papyri of Herculaneum, which aroused a large wave of interest from scholars from all over Europe. It is no chance that Naples soon became, in the second half of the century, in the words of no less a scholar than J.-B.-G. de Villosion,<sup>83</sup> “la ville où l’on vend le plus de grec”, and the most important centre for Greek studies in the Italian peninsula.<sup>84</sup> This state of affairs is mirrored in the revivals of Greek promoted with antithetical aims by two very different intellectuals.

Giacomo Martorelli (1699–1778), a reactionary professor particularly keen on Greek grammar (he had translated into Italian the popular handbook of Port Royal), is reported to have provocatively argued in one of his lectures that “si doveva leggere scrivere e pensare pretto pretto greco e abbandonare tutte le altre lingue”.<sup>85</sup> this *mot*, however, was not to be taken seriously, but rather to be read as an extreme

82 TAMBRONI 2011, 89–99. Translation: “When wind-swift Fame arrived to the dwelling of the gods in order to announce and celebrate your achievements, o Bodoni, and she hurried carrying in her bosom this very last book of yours, with its ample and brilliant pages, all full of glory, a great miracle for men and a joy for the heavenly ones, immediately all the singers of wide Greece and of beautiful Ausonia rose from their stalls, as soon as they saw her approaching: and then everyone wanted to know what she was carrying with her”.

83 Joret 1910, 168. See Curione 1941, 133f.

84 See La Torraca 2012.

85 Genovesi 1962 (1754), 60. On Martorelli see Matarazzo 2008.

reaction to the revolutionary gesture of the great economist and philosopher Antonio Genovesi (1713–1769), who decided to lecture publicly in Italian rather than Latin.

Now, if Martorelli conceived of Greek as an instrument of traditionalism and old-fashioned ideals, the philologist and papyrologist Pasquale Baffi (1749–1799), who belonged to the Albanian community of Calabria, and had an early Greek religious and linguistic education, saw matters in a very different way. The head of Naples' Royal Library, the first serious scholar and editor of the Herculaneum papyri, and a leading specialist of *Handschriftenkunde* and editorial technique (he studied Byzantine documents of Southern Italy, and even prepared a radically innovative Greek grammar, as well as an edition of Hermias' commentary to Plato's *Phaedrus* that unfortunately never reached the press),<sup>86</sup> Baffi was in touch with all the most famous Classicists of the continent (from Zoega to Villoison, from Schow to Harles),<sup>87</sup> who often asked him for help in collating or describing manuscript sources. Baffi was also politically engaged: his progressive ideals and his adhesion to the Enlightenment led him to side with the Neapolitan revolution of 1799 against the Bourbon regime, a choice that he paid with his life.

The reason why he is particularly important in our context is that he wrote a long Pindaric ode in ancient Greek to Catherine II of Russia,<sup>88</sup> a text that combines encomiastic traits with an unprecedented skill to re-use pure Pindaric material in the description of a recent and totally new reality. While sticking (like De Miro) to one specific metrical pattern, namely that of *Olympian* III, Baffi employs the peculiar technique of pasting together various items from Pindar's vocabulary and syntax, thus achieving something similar to a *sui generis* cento.

However, it is clear that in Baffi's case the strictly formal aspect matters less than the ideological meaning of the text: the celebration of the tsarina as the ideal ruler of European Enlightenment takes place in Greek, Greek being not only the language of the Theban archegete of encomiastic poetry, but also the language of Orthodoxy, namely the very religion espoused and protected by Catherine. Baffi's ode numbers among the most ambitious intellectual products of a circle of Neapolitan intellectuals who sided with Catherine in her war against the Sultan, hoping that a Turkish defeat may soon lead to the independence of Greece: this philhellenic circle included some elements of Greek descent, such as Giorgio Corafà and the important poet Tommaso Velasti, who considered the military development of the Russo-Turkish war under the perspective of a renewed Greek national identity.<sup>89</sup>

86 See d'Oria 1987.

87 See d'Oria 1980, esp. 112 with Grégoire Orloff terming Baffi "peut-être le plus habile helléniste de l'Europe".

88 It is still unpublished, and preserved in the autograph ms. Florence, Biblioteca Marcelliana, B.I.18, ff. 285r–287r: this is the copy sent by Baffi to the Florentine erudite Angelo Maria Bandini.

89 See d'Oria 1999; d'Oria 1987, 99–104; d'Oria 2014, esp. 443; Venturi 1979, 109–127. It should be recalled that another Pindaric ode to Catherine was produced, on a similar tone, by Lord Frederick North, earl of Guilford (see Päll, this volume), and that Sapphic odes were addressed to Catherine in 1775 by the learned bishop Eugenios Voulgaris (1716–1806), who had also

Corafà and Velasti edited in 1771 a sylloge of Italian, Latin and Greek poems and epigrams in support of Catherine II and of the Russian general Theodore Orlov in their battles against the Turks:<sup>90</sup> Baffi's Pindaric ode, although it did not end up in this book, must date from the same period, and was therefore animated not only by an erudite interest or by a simple intellectual exhibitionism, but rather by a humanistic ideal that combined philological skill and political engagement in the revival of Greek language and culture as a global and continuous heritage stretching throughout the centuries.<sup>91</sup>

Pasquale Baffi, ode to Catherine II of Russia (1770s), vv. 84–107<sup>92</sup>

- 85 Παντᾶ ἐπεὶ  
τᾶσδ' ἀγλαίαν τὴν ἔφρανας,  
ἄσυχον πρὸς νᾶσον ἀειμακάρων,  
Ἀχοῖ, πόρευσον  
ἀφνεᾶς βάθρον νεοίκου  
ἐσσαμένῳ πόλιος Πέτρῳ κλυτῷ
- 90 τοιάδ' ἀγγέλοισα, κλεινὰν ὄφρ' ἰδοῖσα
- ἔργμασι θεσπεσίοις ἄνασσαν φῆς, antistr. IV  
οὐδεὶς ὅτι δηριέθ' οἷ  
τῶν νῦν γε καὶ ἐσσομένων καὶ τῶν πάρος  
ἐσλῶν περὶ πλήθει, λαόν
- 95 τε δικαίῳ πηδάλῳ νεμέμεν  
πεῖθοντα, σκάπτῳ τ'  
ἐγκαθίζουσιν μονάρχῳ  
εὐνομίαν θέμεν ἀστοῖσι· φάθι,  
πρὶν ἀτολμάτου ἐπειρᾶθ' ὡς ἔργου, ἴνας
- 100 ἐκταμεῖν εὐρυσθενεῖ Θρηκί, epod. IV  
χ' ὕβριν ἀλεξάμεναι  
Ἑλλάδι. Δεῖξον ὅτι προτέρας

written a book on Catherine's legislation (Venice 1770 and Moscow 1770: see Legrand 1918–28, II.204–206 and 116–120).

90 *Componimenti poetici di vari autori in lode di Caterina II*, Napoli 1771 (Legrand 1918–28, II.137): see d'Oria 1989 and 1997–98. Most of the Greek poems in this book are by Heptanesian Greeks, although Baffi (Πασγάλης ὁ Βάφφω, p. 115) contributed a piece on the Crescent of the infidels.

91 See d'Oria 1999, 148.

92 Ms. Florence, Maruc. B.I.18, ff. 285r–287r. Translation: “Oh Echo, since you have announced everywhere Catherine's splendour, go to the quiet island of the blest, announcing such things to the glorious Peter, who laid the foundation of this new, wealthy town, so that seeing the Queen famous for her divine deeds you may say that none of her predecessors and successors can rival with her for the multitude of her virtues, in the art of steering an obedient people with a right rudder, and of offering good order to the citizens by using her monarchic sceptre: tell him, how she laid hand to something unattempted before, namely to cut the sinews of the powerful Thracians and to avert their violence from Greece. Show him that she has laid hold of the Turks even better than her predecessor (she whom his bed hosted in the past), and a very bitter end awaits them, the most hateful; and add that the Moschovians have erected for her everywhere the monument of a stele, that will be renowned among the generations to come”.

105 τὰν αὐτοῦ εὖναι πρὶν λάχον  
 Τοῦρκον ἄμεινον ἔμαρψε,  
 πικροτάτα δὲ τελευτά νιν μένει  
 τὸν στυγερώτατον· αὐτῇ δὲ φάθι  
 ἔσσομένοισι κλυτὸν  
 μνᾶμα παντᾶ Μοσχικοῦς στάλας ἐγεῖραι.

**85** ἔφρανας: Pi. I. 3/4.20 | **87** πόρευσον: Pi. O. 1.77 | **88sq.** βάθρον ... πόλιος: Pi. O. 13.6 | **88** νεοίκου: Pi. O. 5.8 | **89** Πέτρω κλυτῶ: de Petro Magno (1672-1725) agitur, qui Petropoli sepultus est | **92** δηρίεθ' – πλήθει: Pi. O. 13.45 | **95** δικαίῳ πηδαλίῳ: Pi. P. 1.86sq. | **96sq.** σκάπτω – μονάρῳ: Pi. P. 4.152–154 | **101** ἀλεξέμενα debuit | **102** προτέρας: scil. Catherina I | **103** τὰν – λάχον: Pi. P. 2.27 | **104** ἔραμψε ms., correxit Weise | **105** πικροτάτα – μένει: Pi. I. 7.48 | **106** στυγερώτατον: Pi. O. 10.90 | **107** μνᾶμα... στάλας: Pi. N. 4.81; AP 7.338.2.

#### 4. PROFESSORS AT WORK (19TH–21ST C.)

Pressed between the Jesuit tradition of Latin rhetorical and poetic exercise, and a growing but sterile antiquarianism, with few exceptions Italian classicists of the late 18th and early 19th centuries had little familiarity with the most developed techniques of philological and linguistic analysis:<sup>93</sup> this is what the greatest of Italian poets, Giacomo Leopardi, found so disappointing even in the Roman erudite *milieus*. Things changed very slowly after the unification of the country in 1861, and the rise of a new national legislation on the schooling system: Greek studies were introduced in the curriculum (starting with the 3rd or 4th class of the “Ginnasio”) by the Casati law of 1859–60, which partly reflected the German Humboldtian model<sup>94</sup> – indeed, Classical instruction was still regarded by minister Scialoja, the author of a fundamental inquiry on education in 1872, as the cornerstone of all education. However, on the one hand Greek suffered from a remarkable shortage of books, handbooks and adequate teachers,<sup>95</sup> on the other it was perceived by many as an old-fashioned, elitist subject sacralising a dead past and an empty rhetorical syllabus to the disadvantage of a more modern, scientific instruction.<sup>96</sup> It was only towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century that scholars of European standing such as Girolamo Vitelli advocated a role for Greek against the nationalist claims of other intellectuals, who insisted on protecting local (ultimately, ecclesiastical) traditions against the penetration of foreign (mainly German) scholarly and educative trends.<sup>97</sup> It was precisely this “modern” Germanophile option that later influenced Giovanni Gentile’s 1923 wide-ranging reform of the education system under Fascist rule, which introduced Greek as a substantial discipline of the Liceo classico, and thereby assigned it a pivotal role in the formation of the

93 See Degani 1999 and Degani 1988, 7f.; Timpanaro 1977, 3–5.

94 Bonetta 2013, 65–71.

95 Degani 1988, 5f.

96 See Bonetta 1995, esp. 23 and 70–75; Benedetto 2013, 78–83; and, for the situation of Southern Italy, several contributions in Cerasuolo 2014.

97 Benedetto 2013, 83–87.

elites, a role that despite the many intervening reforms it has kept until very recently.

It is no chance that whatever evidence we have of Greek versification in this period derives more or less directly from a context of teaching and education. Diego Vitrioli (1818–1898) was a teacher and a professor in Messina: his Latin poems were internationally praised (his *Xiphias* won the first *Certamen Hoeffftianum* in 1845), but he also tried his hand at some short Greek *épigrammes d’occasion*, printed out in capital letters as if they were epigraphic texts, sometimes attacking rivals, more often celebrating friends or ladies of the Sicilian aristocracy, as is the case in the present *ekphrasis*:

Diego Vitrioli, epigr. XVII *Alla signora Ghiselli* (ca. 1860?)<sup>98</sup>

τῆς ἀρετῆς μορφήν εἰ γράψαι λευκοχίτωνα  
ἦθελ’ Ἀπελλεῖω Σάντιος ἐν πίνακι,  
Ἰταλιδῶν ἄνθος φαέθον, Γισέλλια, μητρῶν,  
σοῦ μορφήν Ῥαφαῖλ ἔγραφεν αὐτοτάτην.

1 ἀρετῆς μορφήν: scil. εἰκόν, vide e.g. *AP* 16.313.1sq. (sed etiam *Lib. Decl.* 37.1.8 et saep. alibi) vel τύπος (Io. Dam. *in Io. Chrys.*, *PG* 96.768.4; Manuel Philes *carm.* 1.239.3 Miller) | λευκοχίτωνα: cf. praes. *Musae*. 62 (de Herone) | 2 Ἀπελλεῖω: adi. in epigr. ephrasticis tantum occurrit (et in eadem versus sede): cf. *AP* 16.178.2 (*Antip. Sid.*; πῖναξ) et 181.2 (*Iul. cons.*; παλάμη) | 3 φαέθον: de sole (*Hom. Il.* 11. 375; *Od.* 5.479) | 4 αὐτοτάτην: ex *Ar. Pl.* 83 αὐτότατος.

It should be stressed that Vitrioli’s skill in Greek prosody and style is far from satisfying: metrical blurs are frequent, useless particles (δέ, γε, γοῦν) have the only goal of fixing the metre, the Greek cadence follows a distinctly Latin pattern, and the insertion of rare lexical items rings frigid and artificial.<sup>99</sup> Not much more accomplished and effective was the Greek verse of one of the most important Italian poets, Giovanni Pascoli (1855–1912), who according to many should be regarded as the best Latin poet of modern Europe. The stylistic refinement and the ideal and cultural richness of Pascoli’s Latin *Carmina* – which received a number of prizes from the *Hoeffftianum* – have often elicited comparisons with ancient prototypes such as Catullus, Vergil and Horace,<sup>100</sup> and have pushed some critics to argue that Pascoli’s real poetical world should be detected rather in his Latin than in his Italian poetry.<sup>101</sup>

98 VITRIOLI 1930, I.182. This is Vitrioli’s own Italian translation: “Se di Virtù l’immagine / con apellèo pennello / in bianco ammanto pingere / volesse Raffaello, / o dell’itale madri fiore eletto, / di te, Ghiselli, pinto avria l’aspetto.” And this is his Latin version: *Si Raphael nitido speciem virtutis amictu | vellet apelleo pingere cum graphio, | o flos italidum pulcher, Ghisellia, matrum | Urbinas vultum pingeret ipse tuum.*

99 See the excellent analysis by Megna 2006 (esp. 175f. on our epigram).

100 The most important study on this topic – in many ways a paradigmatic analysis of poetic bilingualism – remains Traina 1961 (32006).

101 See Garboli 2002, I.57–74. But Vitelli had a different opinion: see Bossina 2015, 147f.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of his scanty versification in ancient Greek. Albeit an excellent connoisseur of Greek lyric and epic poetry, which inspired several of his Italian works (most notably his *Poemi conviviali*, a masterpiece of contemporary literature largely devoted to protagonists of the ancient world from Odysseus and Solon to Alexander the Great), Pascoli could not really boast *tria corda* like Ennius. His attempt at a Greek hexametrical rendering of an Italian poem on Garibaldi by his former teacher (and himself illustrious poet) Giosuè Carducci, was jotted down in 1884 at Matera, where Pascoli was teaching at the local secondary school: as far as we can tell from the surviving autograph drafts, it remained little more than a torso with some lines mechanically drawn from well-known Homeric formulae, and many problematic solutions under the prosodical and metrical point of view.<sup>102</sup>

Beyond this, Pascoli's Greek vein was mostly limited to a few *épigrammes d'occasion*: the only one to end up in the official collection of his *Poëmatia et epigrammata* commemorated Carducci's visit to a popular restaurant in Livorno:

Giovanni Pascoli, *Poëmatia et epigrammata* lxvi (ca. 1890?)<sup>103</sup>

Οινώτριος

Τῆδ' ὦ ξεῖνε, φίλοις Οἰνώτριος ἔζετ' αἰδῶν,  
 τρις δ' ὄγε Πιερίδων μνήσατ' ἰοπλοκάμων·  
 οἱ δὲ σιωπῶντες μελιθῆα οἶνον ἐπινον  
 5      τερπόμενοι τ' οἶνω, τερπόμενοι τε μέλει·  
 οἶνου τ' ἦν γλυκεροῦ μεγάλη χάρις, ἡ δὲ τ' ἀμείνων·  
 ἡ μὲν γὰρ βαυῆ γίνεται, ἡ δ' ἐς αἰεί.

1 τῆδ' ὦ ξεῖνε: cf. *AP* 7.249.1 (Simonid.) | ἔζετ' αἰδῶν: Phanocl. fr. 1.3 Pow. (de Orpheo) 12 μνήσατ': de Musis cf. e.g. *h.Hom.* 25.7; Thgn. 1056 etc. | ἰοπλοκάμων: de Musis cf. *Pi. P.* 1.1 et Simon. fr. 555.3 Page, necnon *Lyr. Adesp.* 83 Page | 3 σιωπῶντες: nusquam in sermone epico; potius σιωπῆ in clausula (cf. e.g. *Hom. Il.* 9.190 ἦστο σιωπῆ), sed vide praes. (de Phe-mio) *Od.* 1.339 τῶν ἔν γε σφιν αἶειδε παρήμενος, οἱ δὲ σιωπῆ / οἶνον πινόντων | μελιθῆα οἶνον: cf. *Hom. Il.* 6.258 (cum clausula ἐνεῖκω) et *Od.* 9.208 (claus. ἐρυσθρόν) | 4 sim. *Lib. prog.* 12.7.9 Foerster τερπόμενους μὲν οἶνω, τερπόμενους δὲ στεφάνοις; in sermone epico cf. *Hom. Il.* 18.526 τερπόμενοι σύρτζι; Thgn. 1.778 τερπόμενοι κιθάρῃ etc. (vide etiam Thgn. 1.1042, 1047 etc.); de constructione sim. cf. e.g. *AP* 7.579.2 ἐξόχου εἰν ἀγοραῖς, ἐξόχου ἐν φιλίῃ, necnon *Polit. epigr.* 30.6 ἐξοχον ἐν τε χοροῖς, ἐξοχον ἐν τε λύρῃ | 5 οἶνου ... γλυκεροῦ: cf. *Orac.*

102 See Traina/Paradisi <sup>2</sup>2008, 43–50; but the text should still be read in Citti 1988.

103 PASCOLI 1970, 572f. This is Pascoli's own Latin translation: *Hic, hospes, amicis Oenotrius sedebat canens, | ter autem is Pieridum recordatus est cincinnos-habentium-violas-imitantes; | illi autem taciti dulce vinum bibebant, | cum delectati vino, tum delectati cantu. | Vini fuit dulcis magna gratia, altera vero melior, | altera enim brevis gignitur, altera in perpetuum.* "Here, o stranger, Oenotrius used to sit and sing to his friends, and thrice did he remember of the Muses with dark locks: they silently drank sweet wine, enjoying both wine and song: the pleasure from sweet wine was great, but the other one even greater, for the former lasts little, the latter one forever." A useful commentary, by Patrick Manuello, can be found at the following website: <<http://greciaantica.blogspot.it/2010/03/la-cultura-classica-in-pascoli-2-un.html>> (12 April 2016).

*Sib.* 8.211, sed vide *Od.* 20.69 μέλιτι γλυκερῶ καὶ ἡδέϊ οἴνω | μεγάλη χάρις: cf. *AP* 9.611.1 | ἄμεινον: in clausula e.g. *AP* 7.493.7 | ἄ βαιή: de χάρις saepe apud Gr. Naz. *carm.*, vide *PG* 37.642.10, 894.5 etc.

Pascoli's poetic diction is indeed learned, and blends suggestions from Simonides' Thermopylae epitaph, from Homer, Theognis, and from the many sympotic epigrams of the *Greek Anthology*. The poet reshuffles this material into a genuinely original poetical product, but his style appears to be somewhat cold, erudite and conventional, exactly the opposite of what happens with the dizzying appropriation and recreation of Latin style in his *Carmina*. This epigram, in other words, is more the work of a professor than that of a poet.

Again, it is no coincidence that the only poetical sylloge embracing a number of Greek texts to be published in Italy in the 20th century, comes from one of the leading Hellenists of his times, partly trained in Germany and later a professor at the University of Florence: Girolamo Vitelli (1849–1935), from a rural area of Campania, was not only an excellent textual critic and the founder of Italian papyrology, but also the man who introduced in his country the methods and the conceptual tools of German *Alterthumswissenschaft*, which had remained largely foreign even to his earlier colleagues (Pascoli himself regarded the philological approach as a pedantic pastime of frustrated professors).<sup>104</sup> This is particularly important in view of Vitelli's Greek versification, for he managed to enrich the century-old Italian tradition through the cross-fertilisation with the German academic practice about which so much is said in this volume.<sup>105</sup>

A selection of Vitelli's numerous *épigrammes d'occasion* in ancient Greek and Latin, addressed above all to his Florentine students and friends, were gathered by his pupil Ermenegildo Pistelli, whose enthusiastic preface celebrated the peculiarly high quality of Vitelli's Greek verse against the background of the entire Italian tradition.<sup>106</sup> The Greek pieces (17 in number), are mostly written in elegiac distichs, but they sometimes show higher ambitions: epigram 9 is in fact a long epic-dramatic dialogue in various metres between outstanding members of the Florentine papyrological circle, including Medea Norsa, Pistelli and Vitelli himself (most interestingly, the text is equipped with marginal annotations and critical signs, as if it were a diplomatic edition of a papyrus); epigram 41 is a witty piece on proof-reading, all played on the key of the technical terminology of Hellenistic documents from Egypt. More epigrams will be composed in Vitelli's later years, above all the interesting distichs to Rudolf Pfeiffer on the new edition of Callimachus' *Coma Berenices*, which Vitelli and Norsa had edited before the German scholar.<sup>107</sup>

104 See Pasquali 1994, 205–215 (orig. published in 1935).

105 See particularly the papers by Hillgruber and Holtermann, this volume.

106 See E. Pistelli, in VITELLI 1927, ii: “L'Italia ha avuto altri poeti latini di fine gusto o anche, come il Pascoli, d'alta ispirazione. Ma gli epigrammi latini del Vitelli saranno da tutti giudicati perfetti, e quanto ai versi greci, si vedrà che nessuno in Italia ne ha mai scritti con tanta sicurezza formale e con una finezza ed eleganza che non esitiamo a giudicare sofoclee”.

107 See Bossina/Bergamo/Cannavale 2013, 407 (and 397–401 for the identification of οὐρανόπηκτος); see also 407 note 18 for Pfeiffer's positive judgment on these pieces, and 420

Vitelli's texts are not only flawless in terms of prosody, metre and style, but also well-thought and refined in their phrasing: in a review of *Subsiviva*, Giorgio Pasquali praised the author (his former teacher) as the first to show not only “una padronanza assoluta della lingua poetica e del verso greco”, but also an unprecedented command of Greek poetic style – a novelty in a country where, throughout history, “Carmi greci ... ne sono stati scritti pochi”.<sup>108</sup> This one deals with a specific historical situation, namely the early stages of W.W. I, and Vitelli's specific engagement in the creation of an orphanage in Florence (the plaque at the entrance will bear his name, though the donors are many):

Girolamo Vitelli, A Iolanda de Blasi (1915)<sup>109</sup>

Εὖ ποιέουσ', Ἰολάνδη, ἀφειδέως χρυσὸν ἔδωκας  
 παιδεσσι μικροῖς, ὧν ἀγαθοὶ πατέρες  
 οὖρες' ἐφ' ὑψιλόφοις καὶ Ἰσοντίου ἀμφὶ ρέεθρα,  
 ἐν γῆ τ' ἐν πόντῳ τ' ἐν νεφέλαισί θ' ὁμῶς,  
 5 Ἀυστριακοῖς στυγεροῖς θάνατον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσιν,  
 μαρνάμενοι πάτρις εἵνεκεν ἡμετέρης.  
 οὔνομ' ἐμόν, πρόφασις κεινὴ, προάγει τόδε ἔργον  
 ἐσθλὸν γενναῖον καὶ ὀσίης ἀγάπης.  
 οὔνομ' ἐμόν κεινόν, σάφα οἶδ'· ἀλλ' οὔνομα κεινόν  
 10 ὑμετέρῳ χρυσῶ χρύσειον αἶψ' ἔσεται.  
 τῷ δ' οὐ σὺ μικροῖς παιδεσσι χαρίζεαι οἴοις,  
 ἀλλ' ἄμ' ἐγὼ φέρομαι χρύσεια δῶρα σέθεν.

1 ἀφειδέως cf. fort. Alc. fr. 338.6 Voigt | χρυσὸν ἔδωκας: cf. Theoc. 11.81 | 3 οὖρες' ἐν ὑψιλόφοις: cf. Colluth. 17 | ἀμφὶ ρέεθρα: saepius, cf. Hom. *Il.* 2.461, 533, 7.153 al. | 4 ἐν – πόντῳ: cf. *AP* 7.506.1 | 5 cf. Hom. *Il.* 17.714; *Od.* 2.283 etc. θάνατον καὶ κῆρα et *Il.* 3.6 φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσαι | 6 cf. Tyrt. fr. 10.2 West περὶ ἧ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον (et *AP* 7.140.4 et 724.4) | 7 πρόφασις κεινὴ: cf. D. *de cor.* 150 al. | τόδε ἔργον: cf. Hom. *Il.* 10.39 | 9 σάφα οἶδ': cf. Hom. *Il.* 20.201, 432 etc. | an κεινον? | 12 χρύσεια δῶρα: cf. Hom. *Od.* 16.185.

Since Vitelli's times, several other university professors of Classics have attempted to write Greek verse, with very uneven outcomes. To quote but two examples, the conventional results achieved in the last decades by Ignazio Cazzaniga and Saverio Siciliano attest to the inadequacy of – respectively – a mythological poetry that attempts to imitate ancient prototypes in stereotyped Hellenistic forms (Cazzaniga's learned epyllion acquires originality only through the final reference to the author's personal experience as a soldier on the island of Leros during W.W. II), and of a

note 46 for more Greek lines (written in 1933) and Pasquali's comparison of Vitelli's Greek with Pascoli's Latin poetry.

108 Marvulli 2006, 70 and 66.

109 VITELLI 1927, 40. Translation: “You have done well, Iolanda, to give lots of gold for the small children whose brave fathers bring death and ruin to the odious Austrians, on the high-crested mountains and along the stream of the Isonzo, fighting for our common fatherland on land and sea and from the sky. My name – an empty excuse – promotes this beautiful, noble work of holy love. My name is empty, I know: but that name thanks to your gold will itself soon be golden: hence, you do not make an offering to the small children alone, but I also get a share of your golden gifts”.



rather awkward “spontaneous” erotic poetry that conveys personal feelings along commonplace lyrical patterns (Siciliano signs as “Archilochus”!).<sup>110</sup> Much like in the days of old, this kind of fossilised tradition can (sometimes) achieve good results for a closed communication within academia, but it can hardly revive a genuine interest for and belief in Greek as a plausible vehicle for literary expression.

The opposite is true of what we must consider the most recent case of new ancient Greek poetry in Italian quarters, namely the sylloge by Alvaro Rissa (a pseudonym for the Florentine Hellenist Walter Lapini, a professor at the university of Genoa) published in late 2015.<sup>111</sup> While some rare satyric or scoptic epigrams are attested in the Italian tradition from Politian to Vitelli, this book follows consciously and overtly the path of parody: not, however, a mere frigid parody of the ancient texts or characters, but a sagacious “Petronian” degradation of the contemporary world in Classical garb. An epic poem in Homeric terms is devoted to the very prosaic and grotesque daily adventures of a character called Ugo Fantozzi (the main character of very popular movies by the Genoese actor Paolo Villaggio).<sup>112</sup> An allegedly Sophoclean *agon logon* takes place between two Pisan schoolmasters attempting (alas in a very realistic way) to recruit as many students as possible for their colleges by offering them various kinds of bonuses and privileges. Everyday realities such as sex and football are ironically described in serious-looking elegies.

While education is obviously an important topic (the problems and paradoxes of Italian secondary schools and universities are often evoked; and of course much of the irony can be understood only by students who have taken at least one course in ancient Greek), these poems, all with facing Italian translation, try to break the walls of the classroom in order to show the unexpected potential of Greek verse today:

110 Renna 2014 (Cazzaniga’s poem dates back to 1972); Siciliano 2006.

111 See RISSA 2015. The pseudonym is inspired by a scene in the Italian comedy “Ecce bombo” (1978, dir. N. Moretti), where the poet “Alvaro Rissa” appears in an “esame di maturità”.

112 From *Fantozzi* (1975) to *Fantozzi 2000 – La clonazione* (1999): see Buratto 2003.

Alvaro Rissa, Homeri Φαντοζζιάς, vv. 8–15 (the Muses are talking to Lapinos)<sup>113</sup>

- 8 Ἐἶα προφέσσωρες, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,  
τίπτ' ἔργοιο τόπον, τὸν πᾶρ θεοὶ ὕμιν ἔδωκαν  
μισεῖτ'; ἀλλὰ ταχέως ἀδινού παύσεσθε γόοιο·  
πουλὺ γάρ, ὦ Λαπῖνε, κακώτερος ἔσσεται αἰὼν  
νῦν ὅτε Ματθαῖος βασιλεὺς γένητ' ἀντὶ πολίτου,  
ψυχῆς ἠδὲ νόου στερέων Ἴταλοὺς ταχυβούλους.  
Φημὶ προφεσσώρων ἀμέλειν Ματθαῖον ἀπάντων  
15 ἠδὲ βροτοὺς ἄλλους, ὄσσοις τρέφει εὐρεία χθών.<sup>7</sup>

eadem sede nonnulla verba in Homeri versibus inveniuntur (e.g. 8 εἶα, 9 ἔδωκαν, 10 κακώτερος, 11 νῦν ὅτε etc.) | 8 κάκ' – οἶον: Hes. *Th.* 26 | 10 ἀδινού ... γόοιο: cf. Hom. *Il.* 18.316 al. | 11 ἔσσεται αἰών: *Orac. Sib.* 1.195, 7.11 | 13 ταχυβούλους: ex *Ag. Ach.* 630 | 14 fort. ἀμέλειν | 15 ὄσσοις – χθών: cf. Hom. *Il.* 11.741.

Alvaro Rissa, Sophoclis Πρόεδροι, vv. 130–40<sup>114</sup>

- 130 ΠΑ. Ἐγὼ μαθητὰς ποικίλως ποιῶ χλιδᾶν  
ἀβρῶς τε μυρίοις διατᾶσθαι τρόποις·  
ὀσημέραι γὰρ αὐτοβοῦς αὐτοὺς ἄγει,  
ἐμοῦ κυβερνητοῦντος, εἰς Δάντου στάσιν,  
καὶ ῥάδι' ἔνδον καὶ στερεοῦς ἰδρύσαμεν.  
135 ΜΑ. Κὰν τῷδε νικῶ σ'· ἀλλὰ καὶ φρουροῖς ἐὼ  
χρησθαι μαθητὰς χαρτοπώλαις ἐμφανῶς.  
ΠΑ. Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐὼσιν οἱ νόμοι τοιαῦτα δρᾶν.  
ΜΑ. Ἡμεῖς ἑαυτοῖς τοὺς νόμους πορίζομεν.  
Ἵπως δ' ἀρέσκω, κἂν προφυλακτικ' ἐν σχολῇ  
140 πωλεῖν ἐφῆν, τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὄν φίλος.

In this almost “Aristophanic” satire,<sup>115</sup> Lapini’s creativity lies above all in his lexical choices: many neologisms are either comically re-created in Hellenic fashion (e.g. προφέσσωρες, αὐτοβοῦς), or morphologically and semantically adapted to the new parodic context (e.g. ῥάδιον, στερεός, χαρτοπώλης, προφυλακτικόν),<sup>116</sup> giving

113 RISSA 2015, 10: “‘Ah, professori, brutta razza, ventre soltanto! / Perché odiate il posto di lavoro che gli dèi / vi diedero? Ma ben presto porrete fine al fitto lamento: / per tutti, o Lapino, la vita sarà più dura, / ora che Matteo si è impadronito del potere / privando di anima e cervello gli instabili Italiani. / Io dico che i professori non interessano né a Matteo / né agli altri mortali, quanti ne nutre la vasta terra’” (author’s translation; Ματθαῖος is of course Matteo Renzi).

114 RISSA 2015, 54. “Pappo: ‘Io concedo agli allievi ogni capriccio, / e li faccio star comodi in mille modi: / infatti tutti i giorni guido io stesso / l’autobus che li scarica alla fermata del Dante, / dentro il quale ho collocato radio e stereo.’ Macco: ‘Anche in questo io ti batto: io permetto persino / che i bidelli vendano cartoleria agli studenti.’ / Pappo: ‘Ma la legge non lo consente!’ / Macco: ‘Noi ci facciamo le leggi da soli. / Pur di rendermi gradito, a scuola farei vendere / anche i preservativi, tanto sono amico degli studenti’” (author’s translation).

115 It could be partly compared with Julius Richter’s dramatic poetry, on which see Holtermann, this volume.

116 Neologisms like these (e.g. φείσορος = phaser; αἰσθητήρ = sensor; ῥαδιόφωνος = radiophone; ῥόβοτος = robot; σᾰῖ-φᾰῖ = sci-fi etc.) are also very common in the parodistic Greek science–

rise to a deeply ironic macaronic Greek that has no antecedent in the Italian tradition. Whether this eccentric attempt will inaugurate a new tradition, remains to be seen, or perhaps hoped.

fiction epic *Αστροναυτιλία* (Prague 1995) by the Czech author Jan Křesadlo (1926–1995) which Stefan Weise is going to re-edit with German translation and notes. See Weise 2010.

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