Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi* (1524)
The Philosophy of a Renaissance Scholar

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I declare that the work presented in the thesis is my own.

In faith,
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Acknowledgements

Thanks to: Niccolò Leonico Tomeo for legitimising the importance of contradiction and for endorsing the centrality of self-motion; Jelle J.W. Kalsbeek for the spelt jokes, the ochema reviews, the names of the projects and the games of mutual refraction; Sara Coviello for pouring tea and tears with me during mnemonic waves of wonder whilst being human all along; Ben Thomas for being the first one to introduce me to the Warburg; Katia Pizzi for tending to my linguistic vulnerabilities; Lorenza Gay for telling me to stop hiding; Claudia Daniotti for pointing to the blurry divide between life and labour; Zilya Amerkhanova for watching every single episode of the Warburg Wars series without ever changing channels; Atakan Akçali for the Turkish breakfasts; Samantha Scott for making me hear things from the horse's mouth; Federica Valentini for removing the word 'nostalgia' from my vocabulary; Guillermo Willis for sharing countless hours of queuing; Francesca Baggio and Bruno Corradi for the road trips and the rollercoasters; Federica Di Giovanni for weaving me into the fabric of her dreams; Guido Giglioni for the cacti, the hippos and the nicknames, and for convincing me of the importance of the imagination; Charles Burnett for teaching me how fertile the space is between reason and superstition; Anna Corrias for the first ever signature and for framing my ontological leaps to perfection; Margherita Mantovani for showing me the strength of weakness; Antonia Karais von Karaisl for her effortless talents as a contemporary grammaticus; Juan Acevedo for teaching me the word 'horme'; Carmen van den Bergh for allowing her students to become my teachers; Fabio Tononi for the irony curtain he built to protect us all from hypocrisy; Anna Quinz for blindly supporting my Verknüpfungszwang; Joanne Anderson for fostering my publishing dream; Jill Kraye for convincing me of my incompatibility with academia; Conor Mullan for warning me about TGs and for the three-legged stool metaphor; Ivan Baj for containing my voids in his glass vessels; Anny Ballardini for the stanzas in her memory palace; Lara Verena Bellenghi for forging the keys to unlock the gilded cage and for making translation unneeded for the first time ever; Hanna Gentili for the shared hindsight narratives of daily diasporas; and Nicolò Degiorgis for teaching me that not having an answer is also an option, for helping with the move from the studiolo to the studio, and for allowing me to start living within the gatefolds of his wordless worlds.

Abstract

The *Dialogi* (1524) by Leonico Tomeo (1456–1531) is a key philosophical text of the sixteenth century, now largely forgotten having been excised from the canon of Renaissance philosophical works. This dissertation intends to reclaim for Leonico Tomeo the place he fully deserves in the early modern Republic of Philosophical Letters. It does so by demonstrating that his idea of thinking as an exercise that is both scholarly and critical underpins a philosophy that is sensible to the role that history plays in shaping humanity's views about the world and the reality it inhabits. Leonico Tomeo's is also a philosophy that is open to the place that natural particulars and cultural rituals have in the construction of historically shaped worldviews. It is for this reason that Leonico Tomeo's philosophical investigations tend to be object-oriented. As we have seen in this dissertation, the objects are many: poems, plants, manuscripts, busts, but also all sorts of historical vestiges of the past, including languages and the soul, the *animus*/*anima*. Leonico Tomeo observes and studies the soul and its faculties within a linguistic and conceptual galaxy that is the result of centuries of speculations and experiments. In this sense, his philosophical approach is constitutively exegetic and archaeological.

Part 1 of the thesis sheds light on Leonico Tomeo's intellectual biography, paying particular attention to the critical aspects of his life and works rather than on its chronology, a field that has been more or less accurately investigated in the recent past by historians. Part 2 of the dissertation expands on the contextual premises of the preceding section by dwelling on Leonico Tomeo's engagement with early modern humanism. Finally, Part 3 explores the overarching themes of Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*, organising the complex material around three key concepts: soul, nature and culture.

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Introduction

Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, Scholar and Philosopher

The walls of the Sala dei Quaranta ('the Hall of the Forty') in the Bo Palace in Padua are frescoed with portraits of forty of the most famous foreign scholars, who completed their studies at the local university between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Commissioned to the artist Giacomo dal Forno (1909–1989) by the then Rector Carlo Anti (1889–1961), the frescoes were conceived to celebrate the splendour of the Paduan institution and establish the important role it had played in the diffusion of humanistic and scientific culture since its inception in 1222.[1] A programmatic inscription above the entrance door reads: 'The University of Padua sent back to their native countries all those who flowed here from the farthest confines of the earth to acquire the doctrines of civil law and the arts, after they had been turned into Latin scholars in language, knowledge and culture.'[2] Among Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), Michel de l'Hospital (1504–1573) and William Harvey (1578–1657), in a removed corner from the entrance, there is a portrait of Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (1456–1531). He is shown wearing a long scarlet and beige cloak while pointing to the floor with his right index finger. This iconographic detail is reminiscent of that employed by Raphael (1483–1520) in its depiction of Aristotle in the Vatican's Stanza della Segnatura, where it indicates Aristotle's concern with physics in opposition to Plato's metaphysics. Reading more into the Bo fresco, one may hypothesise, as has been done in the past, that Leonico Tomeo was Albanian, as the inscription to his right states. We can assume that his Eastern European origins were deemed to be certain and that he was therefore flanked by the compatriot Marino Bechichemo (1468–1526), professor of rhetoric at Padua in the early 1520s and by the Armenian Manuel Şaşıyan (Emanuele Sciascian, 1775–1858), founder of the first medical school in the Ottoman Empire.

With the benefit of hindsight, we are now in the position to say that the information concerning Tomeo's ethnic origin is wrong, or at least partially so. He was, in fact, born in Venice, although his family allegedly had Greek origins. It has recently been suggested, in light of a newly found poem by Giovanni Benedetto Lampridio (1478–1540), a humanist from

[1] Giorgio Zanchin, 'La Sala dei Quaranta nel Palazzo del Bo a Padova', *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica*, 5 (2007), pp. 9–20. See also, Camillo Semenzato, *Il Palazzo del Bo. Arte e storia* (Trieste: Lint, 1979).

[2] The inscription was written by the rector of the University of Padua between 1943 and 1945, Concetto Marchesi: 'UNIVERSITAS PATAVINA QUOT VEL EX ULTIMIS ORBIS FINIBUS / AD HAURIENDAS IURIS CIVILIS ET ARTES DISCIPLINAS / ADFLUXERE TOT HOMINES LINGUA DOCTRINA / HUMANITATE LATINOS FACTOS IN PATRIA REMISIT.'

Cremona, that Leonico Tomeo's family moved from Greece to Albania at the beginning of the fifteenth century and then soon settled in the Veneto, where Leonico Tomeo was born.[3] The confusion about his ethnic origin is rooted in the contradictory and sometimes mythical nature of the sources upon which scholars have based their arguments. The fact that he was regarded as a foreigner, however, should not be overlooked, for it sheds light on some particular aspects of the environment in which he operated and on the ways in which history could sometimes be associated with mythology. Among the large number of Greek émigrés living in Venice and the Veneto in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there were copyists, cardinals and grammarians, who collaborated with Italian intellectuals on the renewal of Greek thought and language prompted by the arrival of manuscripts from the Byzantine world and championed by the publishing enterprise of Aldus Manutius (1449–1515) and his Neakademia. As we shall see, Leonico Tomeo was familiar with many of Aldus's friends and, although he was not a Greek-born, his proficiency in the language gained him the respect of his Italian and foreign contemporaries. It should also be noted that, with regards to his origin, Leonico Tomeo often referred to Italian humanists as 'ours', which might indicate his sense of belonging, at least culturally, to Italy rather than to Greece or Albania.[4] After all, he was born and raised in the Veneto.

Tomeo's biography is punctuated with gaps and inconsistencies, one of which has permanently been impressed onto the walls of the university in which he taught. Regardless of its inaccuracy, the fresco at the Bo is the perfect starting point for the present thesis, for it foreshadows the complexities inherent to Leonico Tomeo's historiography. If we were to trust our eyes, that is, if we were to believe the Bo's depiction, we would be wrong about Leonico Tomeo in many respects. For, at the Bo, art is artifice and, in its effort to ape nature without the help of nurture, it borders on a fanciful vision. Dal Forno's work shows the likeness of individuals who, according to the university dean Anti, were responsible for the dissemination of Latinity across the world, despite many of the portraits being rather removed from reality and several historical and intellectual details being wrong. For instance, when confronted with Leonico Tomeo's depiction in the Sala dei Quaranta, whose iconography suggests his allegiance to Aristotelian physics, we would incorrectly claim that he eschewed Platonism, as will clearly appear in this dissertation. We would also believe, given the inscription above the entrance door to the university hall, that he was among those men who 'flowed from the farthest confines of the earth to acquire the doctrines of civil law and the arts' at the University of

[3] Maria Papanicolaou, 'Origine e nome di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo: La testimonianza di Giovanni Benedetto Lampridio', *Bizantinistica*, 6 (2004), pp. 217-248.
[4] See for example Leonico Tomeo's preface to Aristotle, *De somno et vigilia*, in *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, ed. by Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (Venice: Bernardino Vitali, 1523), p. 143.

Padua. This would muddy the intellectual waters in which he swam in light of the agenda of a twentieth-century university dean who wished to claim the superiority of its institution and of Latinity as a whole. If we were, again, to trust the fresco we would also think that Leonico Tomeo's presence in the Sala dei Quaranta would be justified by its renown, which does not seem to be the case given the scant literature existing on him. We would, moreover, assume that after studying at Padua, Leonico Tomeo returned to his alleged native country, Albania, imbued with a knowledge of 'Latin language, knowledge and culture'. In this regard, too, we would be mistaken.

What we can learn from the location of the fresco is that Leonico Tomeo studied at Padua, that he was respected enough to be included among a selection of famous scholars who attended the university and that he lived between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The inconsistencies suggested by the fresco are still valuable, if only for the fact that they cast before the eyes of a contemporary scholar of Leonico Tomeo the principle permeating his thought as a whole: concord in discord. As we shall see in the chapters to follow, Leonico Tomeo's writings, although multi-layered, can overall be deemed to be an attempt to establish an accord between the following discordant polarities: life and afterlife, physics and metaphysics, image and imagination, science and superstition, art and technology. Ultimately, however misleading, the fresco at Palazzo Bo is involuntarily representative of the dissonant voices populating the historiography on Leonico Tomeo from his time to the present.

Accordingly, this thesis intends to reassess Tomeo's place in the context of the Paduan Renaissance by examining his philosophical contribution to contemporary discussions on the nature of the soul and by critically assessing the various studies that have been written on him so far. My main focus will be Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi* (1524), a collection of eleven philosophical texts concerned with the life and afterlife of the human soul in its journey across the different levels of the cosmos. I will investigate the individual dialogues to tease out the distinctive traits of Leonico Tomeo's medico-philosophical thought and his re-elaboration of Greek, Latin and early modern sources. Relevant excerpts from Leonico Tomeo's translations of Aristotelian and Platonic texts will also be considered in order to enrich the understanding of the *Dialogi* with additional material. I will add private correspondence and contemporary testimonies of Leonico Tomeo's humanist fellows in order to delineate a complete intellectual biography.

The *Dialogi* are a collection of eleven texts centred on various aspects of the philosophical culture of the time. In this dissertation, the interrelated notion of souls, nature and language are among the principal recurring themes, connecting the many intellectual pursuits of Tomeo in the domains of philology, philosophy, medicine and magic. This inquiry

will bring to light several issues connected to the question of the soul, such as human immortality, theurgy, the imagination and the nature of substance. This will, in turn, prove that the intellectual and cultural scope of the *Dialogi* is ample, being a unique repository of ideas waiting to be read, contextualised and explained by the modern historian of ideas. In order to do so, I will mainly use the 1530 edition of the *Dialogi* published in Paris by Simon de Colines in one volume together with the rest of Leonico Tomeo's writings. For reasons of convenience, in this thesis I will refer to this collective volume as *Opera*.[5] My choice is also justified by the fact that the first edition of the work does not include the dialogue *Bembus, sive de essentia animorum* ('Bembo, or On the Essence of the Souls'), which Leonico Tomeo added at a later stage.

The dissertation is divided into three main parts. In Part 1 ('Leonico Tomeo: An Intellectual Biography') I provide a multidimensional account of Leonico Tomeo's life in its intersection with all the different fields of scholarship in which he left his mark. I therefore devote particular attention to some aspects of Leonico Tomeo's life and thought that have been neglected so far: the importance of his uncle's pharmacy vis-à-vis the medical components of his philosophy; his reading of classical and contemporary poetry in parallel to his own engagement with the genre; and his contribution to early modern art theory as reflected by his interests in collecting.

In Part 2 ('The *Dialogi*: A Compendium of Renaissance Philosophy'), I look at Leonico Tomeo's collection of dialogues, first published in 1524, as a compact and cohesive summa of philosophy produced by one of the most brilliant scholars of the Renaissance. The final edition printed in Paris in 1530 includes the following eleven dialogues: *Trophonius, sive de divinatione* ('Trophonius, or On Divination'); *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum* ('Bembus, or The Immortality of the Souls'); *Alverotus, sive de tribus animorum vehiculis* ('Alverotus, or The Three Vehicles of the Souls'); *Peripateticus, sive de nominum inventione* ('Peripateticus, or On the Discovery of Names'); *Sadoletus, sive de precibus* ('Sadoletus, or On Prayers'); *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu* ('Sannutus, or On Restraining Grief'); *Phoebus sive de aetatum moribus* ('Phoebus, or On the Habits of the Ages'); *Severinus, sive de relativorum natura* ('Severinus, or On the Nature of Relative Beings'); *Bonominus sive de alica* ('Bonominus, or On Spelt'); *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario* ('Sannutus, or On the Game

[5] The complete title of the work is: *Aristotelis Stagiritae Parva quae vocant naturalia. De sensu et sensili. De memoria et reminiscentia. De somno et vigilia. De insomniis. De divinatione per somnia. De animalium motione. De animalium incessu. De extensione et brevitate vitae. De iuventute et senectute, morte et vita, et de spiratione. Omnia in latinum conversa, et antiquorum more explicata a Nicolao Leonico Thomaeo. Eiusdem opuscula nuper in lucem edita. Item eiusdem dialogi, quotquot extant* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1530).

of Knucklebones'); and *Bembus, sive de essentia animorum*, already mentioned above. In this part of the thesis I discuss the central issues addressed in the *Dialogi*.

Part 3, finally ('Soul, Nature and Culture') focuses on the principal philosophical, medical and theological questions raised by Leonico Tomeo in his collection of dialogues by concentrating on three key concepts: soul, nature and culture. At the end of the thesis, the *Dialogi* will emerge as a multifaceted and rich work, representative of the age known as the Renaissance and whose author was as complex and nuanced as the book he first published in 1524.

It is therefore urgent and timely to reconstruct the life of Leonico Tomeo and to study his philosophical output. I will pursue this task by adopting a thematic approach. The goals I intend to achieve are principally two. First, I would like to avoid repeating the standard historiographical information contained in all the scholarly articles so far devoted to Leonico Tomeo. By contrast, I will concentrate on aspects of Leonico Tomeo's life that have been less studied and that instead are relevant for a sound understanding of his multi-layered philosophical work. To do so, my analysis will revolve around three main clusters: his medical humanism; his views as an art collector, and his legacy as a humanist and a philosopher. This approach will highlight specific facets of his life that will shed light on the philosophical ideas discussed in Parts 2 and 3 of my dissertation.

Working as one of the most sophisticated antiquarians and philologists of the time, Leonico Tomeo positioned himself at the crossroads of various recovered textual traditions – philosophical, medical and literary – and was therefore able to look at the human soul from more than one perspective. For he presented himself as a keen explorer of the many cultural records that humankind had left behind in the course of its checkered history, he distanced himself from both the radical Aristotelian (Averroist) solution of one incorporeal soul for all humankind and the Platonist (mainly Ficinian) solution of the soul as an individual instantiation of infinite incorporeal selves, opting for a more nuanced interpretation that could reconcile both views.

Part 1

Leonico Tomeo: An Intellectual Biography

Chapter 1
Life and legacy

Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (1456-1531) is one of the most original yet still underappreciated early modern thinkers. Born to Blasius de Tomeis and his wife Polissena in Venice, Leonico Tomeo studied with the Greek émigré professor Demetrios Chalchondyles in Florence, Padua, Rome, Bergamo and Milan. A respected humanist, a gifted translator, a trusted editor, a purist grammarian and an avid art collector, Tomeo cultivated numerous intellectual interests.[6] Brother of Bartolomeo (also called 'Fuscus'), Agostina and Angela, at the age of nine Leonico Tomeo was entrusted to the care of his uncle Alò in Padua, where he graduated *in artibus* in 1485.[7] Appointed by the Venetian state to teach Aristotle in the original Greek in 1497, Tomeo lectured publicly on the natural books in Padua and on Greek and Latin grammar at the Venetian School of Rialto.[8]

Rooted in the fertile soil of Paduan humanism, Leonico Tomeo's thought is an important link in the golden chain of Platonic and Aristotelian traditions. Despite being well received during his lifetime, his works still do not occupy the place they deserve in modern scholarship. Hailed by the most important thinkers of the early modern period, from Desiderius

[6] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Janus Lascaris, in Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, ed. by N. L. Tomeo (Venice: Bernardino Vitali, 1523), p. 233. See also Paolo Giovio, *Elogia veris clarorum virorum imaginibus apposita* (Venice: Michele Tramezzini, 1546), f. 57^{v}, in which Giovio recounts that Leonico Tomeo 'Florentiae graecas literas sub Demetrio didicisset'. Chalchondyles cites Leonico Tomeo in his private correspondence, reporting that he delivered to him a letter by Giovanni Lorenzi from Rome at an unknown date between 1475 and 1484. See Hippolyte Noiret, 'Huit lettres inédites de Démétrius Chalcondyle', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 7 (1887), pp. 486–488. For a complete biography of Chalchondyles, see Giuseppe Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini e le origini dell'Umanesimo*, 2 vols (Florence: Le Monnier, 1954).

[7] The names of Leonico Tomeo's siblings can be gathered from his father's will, held at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (Cancelleria Inferiore, Miscellanea notai diversi, busta 27, n. 2509). They are also indicated by Anna Pontani in 'Postille a Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Giovanni Ettore Maria Lascaris', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, 54 (2000), pp. 337–367. On Alò, see Archivio di Stato di Padova, *Estimo 1418*, 133, ff. 6^{rv} and 7^{rv}, polizze del 12 aprile 1492 and 18 maggio 1503. Also cited in Augusto Serena, *Appunti letterari* (Rome: Forzani, 1903), p. 6; Daniela De Bellis, 'La vita e l'ambiente di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova*, 18 (1980), 36–75, esp. 41, note 12. In the annals of the University of Padua, Leonico Tomeo is recorded as 'Nicholaus de Veneciis, et est civis Venetus originarius', as cited in the *Acta graduum academicorum Gymnasii Patavini, ab anno 1471 ad annum 1500*, ed. by Elda Martellozzo Forin (Rome and Padua: Antenore, 2001), on the following pages: 747, 754, 956, 973, 1016. His *promotores* ('promoters', that is the professors in charge of presenting a student for graduation) were Pietro Roccabonella, Paolo dal Fiume, Gerolamo Polcastro, Girolamo Della Torre and Nicoletto Vernia. Among the audience were Alessandro Zeno, Giovanni Calfurnio and Raffaele Regio.

[8] *Acta graduum academicorum Gymnasii Patavini, ab anno 1471 ad annum 1500*, pp. 41–42. See also Jacopo Facciolati, *Fasti Gymnasii Patavini* (Bologna: Forni, 1978 [1757]), p. 65. According to Charles Schmitt, Leonico Tomeo appears to have been not the first to lecture on Aristotle in the original Greek, since Francesco Cavalli preceded him in this office. See Charles B. Schmitt, 'Aristotelian Textual Studies at Padua: The Case of Francesco Cavalli', in *Scienza e filosofia all'Università di Padova nel Quattrocento*, ed. Antonino Poppi (Trieste: Edizioni Lint, 1983), pp. 287–314, esp. 288–289.

Erasmus (1466–1536) to Christophe de Longueil (1490–1522), as a formidable scholar, he was dismissed by others, mostly after the Enlightenment, as a mediocre philosopher and a repetitive Aristotelian.

On his death, Leonico Tomeo left to posterity a diverse body of writings, many of which have never been studied. Tomeo's first printed work was a translation of pseudo-Ptolemy's *Inerrantium stellarum significationes* ('Phases of the Fixed Stars'), published in 1516. The text covered the same subject-matter as Book 2 of Ptolemy's *Phaseis*, but was not written by Ptolemy.[9] Notable are Leonico Tomeo's commentaries on Aristotle's natural books that completed the unfinished work started by his colleague Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) upon his death and which were employed as standard university textbooks at the Universities of Padua and Bologna until the 1550s.[10] In 1524, Leonico Tomeo published the *Dialogi*, a collection of ten texts on the life, afterlife, powers and immortality of the soul that emerged from conversations and meetings he had with fellow humanists in the Paduan and Venetian countryside. In 1524, the *Opuscola* were completed, including eighty original problems written in the manner of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plutarch, twenty original questions about love, a translation of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanics* and a translation of some parts of Proclus's Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, specifically, the section devoted to the generation of the soul. In 1531, Leonico Tomeo published the *De varia historia libri tres* ('Three Books on Various Histories'), a three-volume miscellany of mythological, historical and philosophical episodes that enjoyed a notable success until the end of the sixteenth century in Italy and abroad.[11] He also composed poems, only a scant number of which have survived. Posthumously, Leonico Tomeo's nephew published the translation and commentary on Aristotle's *Parts of the Animals*. In 1543 the translation of the *Letter to the Epileptic Child* was included in the first Juntine edition of Galen's complete works.

Leonico Tomeo's writings were translated into different languages and sold across Europe promptly after their first edition. As Erasmus wrote to Cardinal Reginald Pole from Basel on 8 March 1526, most probably referring to the *Dialogi*, 'Longueil and Leonico are on sale here'.[12] In Switzerland, Leonico Tomeo's works circulated widely, as is witnessed by the

[9] Pseudo-Ptolemy, *Inerrantium stellarum significationes*, ed. by Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (Venice: Aldo Manuzio and Andrea Torresano, 1516).
[10] Leonico Tomeo intended to complete his unfinished commentary on the *De partibus animalium*, 'in order, at any rate, to offer you what your Pomponazzi, undoubtedly an extremely learned man, prevented by death could not accomplish'. See Ms Vat. Ross. 997, f. 8^{v}: 'ut quod Pomponatius tuus, vir sine controversia eruditissimus, morte preventus prestare non potuit, id utcumque a me nunc tibi tribueretur'.
[11] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, *De varia historia libri tres*. 1st edition: Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1531. 2nd edition: Basel: Officina Frobeniana, 1531. 3rd edition: Lyon: Sébastien Gryphe 1532 and 1555.
[12] Desiderius Erasmus, *Correspondence*, in *Collected Works*, 89 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), XII, tr. by Alexander Dalzell and annotated by James M. Estes, Letter 1675, p. 75.

1531, 1532, 1542, 1544 and 1555 editions of his *Dialogi* and *De varia historia libri tres* both by Sebastian Gryphius (c.1492–1556). One of Tomeo's most frequently printed texts was his translation of the pseudo-Ptolemaic *Phases*, included in several editions of Ovid's *Fasti* and a miscellany of excerpts gathered by the Veronese Pietro Pitati (fl. c.1550), combining texts by al-Kindi, Pliny, Haly, Albumasar, Leopold of Austria, Guido Bonatti, Regiomontanus and Johannes Stöffler.[13] *De varia historia libri tres* was also translated into the Italian vernacular by Giovanni Battista Castrodardo and published by the Venetian Michele Tramezino in 1544.[14] A French edition of the *Twenty Questions about Love* was printed, instead, by the Lyon publishers Maurice Roy and Loys Pesnot in 1537, followed by a new translation by François de la Coudraie in 1543 published in Paris by Alain Lotrian and accompanied by poems written by Clément Marot and Almanque Papillon.[15] Leonico Tomeo's translation of the *Mechanics* was also reprinted numerous times, notably in the editions of the Venetian Giunti (1552, 1562), the Swiss Laemarius (1597), the French La Rovière (1606) and Duvalle (1619–1629, 1639, 1654) and the Dutch edition of the *Mathematical Compendium* of Michael Psellus (1647).[54] Finally, Tomeo's *Opera* was published in Paris by Simon de Colines (c.1480–1546) in 1530.[16]

To art historians, Leonico Tomeo might be familiar for having been the owner of the notable Byzantine illuminated manuscript known as Joshua Roll. Bibliophiles are acquainted with his name because many of his precious manuscripts were acquired by the French collector Jean Grolier (1479–1565) and the de Mesmes family. Philologists are most likely acquainted with some of the codices Leonico Tomeo edited for the Venetian publisher Aldus Manutius, now mostly held at in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. By contrast, to historians of Italian literature, he might be the author of the first macaronic poem together with the Paduan Michele di Bartolomeo degli Odasi (c.1450–1492), known as Tifi Odasi. To the historian of Renaissance philosophy, however, Leonico Tomeo is still rather unknown.

[13] For the editions of Leonico Tomeo's *Phases*, see National Library of the Czech Republic, Prague, adlig. 14.H.232 (2765) https://ptolemaeus.badw.de/ms/502; Bibliotheka Jagiellònska, Cracow, Poland, 588, https://ptolemaeus.badw.de/ms/501; Bibliotheca Electoralis (Konvolut: Sign. 8 Phil. VIII, 79), ff. 110^{v}-101^{r}. See Ovidius, *Fastorum libri VI cum scholiis Philippi Melanchthonis ac succincta quadam enarratione locorum insignium difficiliumque. His accesserunt Claudii Ptolomaei errantium stellarum significationes, per Nicolaum Leonicenum a Graeco translatae* (Schwäbische Hall: Peter Braubach, 1539).

[14] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, *Li tre libri De varie historie, nuouamente tradotti in buona lingua volgare* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1544).

[15] *Le Pourquoy d'amour auquel sont contenuz plusieurs questions de Nicolas Leonique* (Lyon: Maurice Roy et Loys Pesnot, 1537); Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, *Les questions problematiques du pourquoy d'amours* (Paris: Alain Lotrian, 1543).

[16] This edition comprises of all the printed works published during Leonico Tomeo's lifetime. The manuscripts and letters he wrote to his friends, pupils and acquaintances were never published and many of them are still to be retrieved across the libraries of Europe.

1. From Aristotelianism to Platonism and Back: Representations of Leonico Tomeo during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment

Since the historiography of European philosophy was set on its modern course in the eighteenth century, Leonico Tomeo has been largely ignored both as a humanist and a philosopher. The increasing demarcation of the theoretical boundaries within which it was legitimate for the mind to operate, together with a tendency to emphasise the capacity of human beings to improve their conditions, undermined the role of the imagination to the benefit of pure reason.[17] As a result, during the Enlightenment, figures such as Leonico Tomeo, for whom the mind was not subject to the constraints of material life and for whom human existence relied on the operations of different beings at every level of the cosmos, suffered the fate of being undeservedly forgotten. In the few mentions made of Leonico Tomeo between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, he was remembered for having been the first lecturer on Aristotle in the original Greek at the University of Padua from 1497.[18] A place in the intellectual and cultural scope of pre- and post-Enlightenment philosophy could only ever be reserved for someone like Leonico Tomeo, if at all, in relation to his thorough study of the Greek philosophical tradition. The aversion for figures such as Leonico Tomeo could already be felt at the cusp of the seventeenth century. Meric Casaubon (1599–1671), for instance, the Anglican classicist who condemned the supernatural while defending humanist learning against the claims of the new natural philosophy pioneered by the Royal Society, harshly criticised the dialogue *Sadoletus*, condemning Leonico Tomeo for his poor understanding of Aristotle.[19]

[17] On the philosophy of the Enlightenment, see Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Gregorio Piaia and Giovanni Santinello (eds), *The Second Enlightenment and the Kantian Age* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015).

[18] Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Senato Terra*, reg. 12, f. 200^{r}: 'Venit in hanc urbem nostram rector artistarum Gymnasii nostri Patavini, et inter cetera ab eo exposita, petiit et supplicavit, summa cum instantia, nomine omnium illorum scolarium cupientium habere lectorem in lingua greca et explanatorem textuum aristotelicorum maxime in philosophia et medicina, pro coadiuvandis eorum studiis, ut ad talem lecturam constitueretur vir eruditissimus et doctor utriusque linguae peritissimus magister Nicholaus de Thomeis dictis omnibus scolaribus supra quam dici possit gratissimus et acceptissimus. Iccirco vadit pars quod ad dictam lecturam graecam auctoritate huius Consilii eligatur, constituatur et deputetur et ex nunc constitutus et deputatus intelligatur prefatus magister Nicolaus cum salario florenorum 100 in anno et ratione anni.' Quoted in Daniela De Bellis, 'La vita e l'ambiente di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', p. 41.

[19] Meric Casaubon, *De enthusiasmo precatorio dissertatio, civitate donata ex libro ejus de enthusiasmo edito Anglice*, in Johann Friedrich Mayer, *De pietistis ecclesiae veteris commentatio* (Hamburg: J. F. Mayer, 1696), p. 102: 'Est aliquis qui se ipse vocat nomine Nicolai Leonici Thomaei. Italus non mediocris sua aetate autoritatis et nescio an quisquam pejus meritus de Aristotele fuerit. Ejus editae extant quaedam Philosophici argumenti dissertationes, sive ut ipse vocare eas maluit, dialogi quorum unus inscribitur Sadoletus sive de precibus. In hoc disquirit ecquid sit quod precibus vires et valorem conciliat eoque etsi legi illum iterum iterumque, ambiguus tamen haereo utrum autorem ut Christianum egisse dicam an potius more meri Philosophi, quantumvis duobus Cardinalibus unoque Episcopo commune sive voluerit esse negotium, uni quidem dialogum inscribens, reliquos vero duos inducens secum colloquentes. Lector ipse sibi satisfacere facillime poterit eum perlegendo, est enim brevissimus. Quod si perlecto integro aliud a meo judicium feret, meam ingenii stupiditatem potius quam malitiam debebit accusare, qui non intermittam hanc rem etiam alio tempore expendere diligentius.'

What is striking about Casaubon's remark is its discrepancy with the fresco at the Bo Palace, where Leonico Tomeo is shown as an Aristotelian philosopher, pointing to the ground. Clearly, there was a consistent difference in perception moving from seventeenth- to twentieth-century physics. For this reason, it is worth observing what happened over the three centuries separating Casaubon from Anti to clarify the changing intellectual affiliations Leonico Tomeo was attributed over time.

In 1715, the Lutheran theologian Christoph August Heumann (1681-1764) declared that the attraction of early modern Catholic thinkers, whom he called 'papists', towards paganism had resulted in the development of a barbaric philosophy. He identified these false ideologies neither as a school nor as a kind of wisdom, but as a foolishness (*Thorheit*), which attempted to give superstition the status of an art while seeking and sought to draw profit from deceiving people.[20] Referring to the arcane and cryptic language of these occult pseudo-philosophies, he cited the riddle 'Aelia, Laelia, Crispis', which he explained through a Pythagorean reading of Plutarch's *Moralia*.[21] Heumann criticised riddles for their links to Hermeticism and unnecessary complexity, which, unlike the Scripture, prevented a sound understanding of their ultimate moral teaching.[22] Incidentally, a copy of the same marble inscription hung and still is to be found in the palace of one of Leonico Tomeo's closest friends and the dedicatee of his *Quaestiones amatoriae* ('Questions on Love', 1523), the Paduan noble and protonotary to Pope Leo X, Ludovico di San Bonifacio (d. 1551). Although Heumann did not specifically mention Leonico Tomeo in his biting criticism of what he understood to be deluded approaches to revealed truth, he certainly would have imposed on him the same fate he wished for some of his fellows, that is, to sink in the ocean of oblivion.[23] If he, like Casaubon, had read the *Sadoletus* or any of Leonico Tomeo's other ten dialogues, he would have warned his readers about the way in which Aristotelian physics had been misconceived and more on their dangerously Platonic imprint. Forty nine years after Heumann's invective, the *Historia critica philosophiae* ('Critical History of Philosophy') by Johann Jakob Brucker (1696–1770) provided a new way of assessing the legacy of Renaissance philosophy. Here Leonico Tomeo appeared in the section dedicated to philosophers pursuing the true philosophy of Aristotle

[20] Christoph August Heumann, 'Von denen Kennzeichen der falschen und unächten Philosophie', *Acta philosophorum, das ist: Gründliche Nachrichten aus der Historia philosophica, nebst beygefügten Urtheilen von denen dahin gehörigen alten und neuen Büchern*, 11 vols (1715–1727, repr. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1997), I, pp. 209–211.
[21] On the numerous interpretations of the so-called 'Stone of Bologna', see Carl Gustav Jung, 'The Aenigma of Bologna', in *Collected Works*, 19 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958–1969), XIV, esp. p. 150.
[22] Heumann, 'Von denen Kennzeichen der falschen und unächten Philosophie', p. 231.
[23] Ibid., p. 211.

(*genuina Aristotelis philosophia*).[24] Because of the influence that Brucker's encyclopaedic work exercised on post-Enlightenment culture, it is worth analysing in greater detail his understanding of Leonico Tomeo's nature as a humanist and philosopher and the differences between his view and those by Heumann and Casaubon.[25]

The *Historia critica philosophiae* emerged from what has recently been defined as the 'anti-apologeticism' of late seventeenth-century Protestantism, that is, the refusal of the predominantly early modern Roman Catholic idea of a *prisca philosophia*.[26] According to the latter, divine revelation was not confined to the Judeo-Christian tradition, but extended to paganism, the two traditions being compatible and in accordance with one another. Rebuffed by Lutheran thinkers such as Jacob Thomasius (1622-1684), who demonised the Hellenisation of Christianity, the *prisca theologia* was relegated by Brucker to the non-academic subterranean world of philosophy.[27] Brucker's distinction between eclectic philosophy (*philosophia eclectica*) and sectarian philosophy (*philosophia sectaria*) led to an enquiry into the development of the history of orthodox philosophy – biblicism at large – and its unorthodox counterpart – superstition.[28] Conceiving three main systems of thought extending from Zoroaster to his contemporary philosophers, Brucker distinguished between a history of philosophy (a rational discipline independent of religion), Biblical revelation (Christian revelation as superior to other forms of creed) and crypto-pagan heathenism (a superstition not based on revelation). Among the most successful manifestations of the latter, Brucker singled out late Platonism, which he defined as an example of eclectic way of philosophising (*ratio philosophandi eclectica*) 'slitting the throat of healthy philosophy with a knife'.[29] In his view, late Platonism succeeded in 'plundering the philosophical doctrines of the ancients and in systematising them in such a way that they looked more similar to the Christian teaching'.[30]

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[24] Johann Jakob Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae a mundi incunabulis ad nostram usque aetatem deducta*, 6 vols (Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf and Heirs of Weidemann & Reich, 1742–1767), IV, i, p. 156.
[25] On Brucker, see Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Theo Stammen (eds), *Jacob Brucker (1969–1770): Philosoph und Historiker der europäischen Aufklärung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998); Leo Catana, *The Historiographical Concept 'System of Philosophy': Its Origin, Nature, Influence and Legitimacy* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008); and Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Jacob Brucker and the History of Thought', in *The Making of the Humanities*, ed. by Rens Bod, Jaap Maat and Thijs Weststeijn, 3 vols (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), I, pp. 376–384.
[26] Sicco Lehmann-Brauns, *Weisheit in der Weltgeschichte: Philosophiegeschichte zwischen Barock und Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2004), p. 99.
[27] Jacob Thomasius, *Schediasma historicum, quo occasione definitionis vetustae, qua philosophia dicitur gnōsis tōn ontōn, varia discutiuntur ad historiam tum philosophicam, tum ecclesiasticam pertinentia* (Leipzig: Philipp Fuhrmann, 1665).
[28] Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*, II, p. 192.
[29] Johann Jakob Brucker, *Kurze Fragen aus der philosophischen Historie, von Anfang der Welt biss auf die Geburt Christi, mit ausführlichen Anmerckungen erläutert*, 7 vols (Ulm: Daniel Bartholomäi and Son, 1731–1736), III, p. 506.
[30] Ibid., pp. 431–322.

So far, Brucker seems to espouse Heumann's view. However, as we shall see in the course of this Introduction, the description he offered of late Platonism perfectly matches the view that scholars have been expressing about Leonico Tomeo for the past forty years, for in Brucker's *Historia critica philosophiae*, Leonico Tomeo was not assimilated to the crowds of overheatedly imaginative and melancholic Platonists described by Heumann, but to the ranks of genuine Aristotelians. Brucker, in fact, highlighted Leonico Tomeo's engagement with Aristotle in the original Greek as well as his refusal of all scholastic and Arabic accretions over the body of peripatetic knowledge. He also reported Erasmus's praise of Leonico Tomeo's philological prowess and moral integrity together with Paolo Giovio's and Francesco Patrizi's appreciation of his knowledge of antique mores and morals. Additionally, Brucker briefly discussed Leonico Tomeo's work by identifying the twelfth-century Byzantine scholar Michael of Ephesus as one of his sources for his translation of Aristotle's natural books, specifically *On the Motion of the Animals* and *On the Parts of the Animals*. Finally, Brucker warned his readers not to confuse Niccolò Leonico Tomeo with the Ferrarese humanist Niccolò Leoniceno (1428-1524).

Brucker's account of Leonico Tomeo overlooked the latter's *Dialogi* completely. This might be due to the sources on which he based his research or to the fact that the *Dialogi* were either unavailable to him or not as well known as his translations of Aristotle by the time Brucker wrote his encyclopaedia. Less than a century earlier, however, Casaubon had criticised the way in which Aristotelianism had been transfigured in the *Sadoletus*, which means that not only did Brucker ignore this source, but, most importantly, that his opinion on Leonico Tomeo likely relied upon an uncritical pastiche of secondary sources. At the same time, Brucker's position is symptomatic of a more general appreciation for Aristotelian philosophy, which the Protestants credited themselves with having stripped of the scholastic thorns grown over the course of the Middle Ages.[31] Brucker expressed the philological desire to hark back to the original thought of the Greek philosophers, while recognising that Aristotle did not discriminate between freedom and truth. Parallel to the Protestant revival of Aristotle's integrity, stood, according to Brucker, a number of Italian and Spanish philosophers, who devoted themselves to the philological study of Aristotle. Among these were Ermolao Barbaro (1454-1493), Pietro Pomponazzi, Alessandro Piccolomini (1508-1578), Jacopo Zabarella (1533-1589), Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631) and, of course, Leonico Tomeo. The similarity noted by Brucker between Northern European Protestantism and Southern philological philosophy shows the intellectual continuities he singled out between the two poles of early

[31] Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*, IV, i, p. 155.

modern reformed Europe, described as a mixed dish full of different foods (*satura lanx*). In filing Leonico Tomeo among the ranks of Paduan Aristotelians, Brucker seems to ignore his Commentary on Aristotle's *De incessu animalium* (which, as a matter of fact, he did not cite). In this work, Leonico Tomeo openly refers to Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Ermolao Barbaro as his intellectual models.[32]

Despite the influence of Brucker's work, Leonico Tomeo remained a footnote to modern accounts of Renaissance philosophy and this in opposition to the great esteem in which he had been held during his lifetime. What seems certain is that the post-Enlightenment insistence on Leonico Tomeo's Aristotelianism owes much to Brucker. Before Casaubon and Brucker, Leonico Tomeo was praised for his wit, erudition and poetical pursuits by Desiderius Erasmus, Guillaume Budé (1467–1540), Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), Christophe de Longueil and Reginald Pole (1500–1558), who regarded him as one of the most skilled philologists of his time: neither a Platonist nor an Aristotelian, but a scholar and a philosopher. Leonico Tomeo's correspondence and his dedicatory letters introducing the content and intention behind his works, testify to the active role he played within the broad network of humanists traveling, teaching and writing from all corners of Europe between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. His own *Dialogi* reveal much about the variegated nature of his thought, so much so that imposing specific labels on his nature as a thinker would only limit our understanding of his contribution. Leonico Tomeo's vast scope of interests and acquaintances is testified to by the range of his dedicatees, who include Janus Lascaris (c. 1445–1535), a Greek scholar from Constantinople, who built the library of the French king Louis XII at Blois, and Luca Bonfiglio (1470–1540), the Paduan chamberlain to Pope Leo X.[33] These two names already set the scene in which Leonico Tomeo's life unfolded, that is, the ecclesiastical circles close to the Pope and the European intelligentsia. Accordingly, before being regarded as a humanist, a philosopher, a philologist, a Platonic or an Aristotelian, Leonico Tomeo needs to be studied through his own words and deeds.

2. Leonico Tomeo's Post-Enlightenment Afterlife

[32] Leonico Tomeo, *De incessu animalium*, in *Opera* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1530), p. 234.

[33] On Janus Lascaris, see Börje Knös, *Un ambassadeur de l'hellénisme: Janus Lascaris et la tradition gréco-byzantine dans l'humanisme français* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1945); Anna Pontani, 'Le maiuscole greche antiche di Giano Lascaris: Per la storia dell'alfabeto greco in Italia nel 1400', *Scrittura e Civiltà*, 16 (1992), pp. 77-227; and David Speranzi, 'Per la storia della libreria medicea privata: Giano Lascaris, Sergio Stiso di Zollino e il copista Gebriele', *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 48 (2007), pp. 127-161. On Luca Bonfio or Bonfiglio, see the entry by Elpidio Mioni in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 100 vols (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960-2020), XII (1971), pp. 501-503.

Before analysing his thought in detail, it is worth examining the image of Leonico Tomeo conveyed by scholars from the end of the nineteenth century until the present day by scholars operating in different fields. This will allow us to assess the extent to which the opinions of Enlightenment savants influenced the views of historians of philosophy, while indirectly allowing us to establish whether Leonico Tomeo is currently regarded as a philosopher at all.

We find the first discrepancy with Enlightenment critiques against the *Sadoletus* in the biblical scholar Ezra Abbot (1819–1884). In his *The Literature of the Doctrine of a Future Life* (1862), Abbot praised Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi Dialogues*, especially the already mentioned *Bembus, sive de animorum essentia*, for their elegant style.[34] Not as a philosopher, but as a collector and editor of Greek texts, Leonico Tomeo was later remembered by the philologist Pierre de Nolhac (1859-1936) in his study of the library of Fulvio Orsini (1887).[35] Proper scholarly attention, however, was first dedicated to Leonico Tomeo only in 1903, when the historian Augusto Serena (1868–1946) collected a number of sources to reconstruct his biography. Serena's contribution was crucial, in that it made available a poem written by Leonico Tomeo in the vernacular at an unknown stage of his life.[36] This showed that Leonico Tomeo was interested in the general controversy on language (the so-called *questione della lingua*) alongside fellow humanists, whose poems were also published in the same miscellaneous volume. Moreover, the poem's central theme, that is, the journey of the soul across the cosmos, demonstrates the persistence of characteristic motifs within Leonico Tomeo's oeuvre.

In 1927 the British Cardinal Francis Aidan Gasquet (1846–1929) published a selection of the correspondence contained in the Vatican Library MS Rossiano 997.[37] Gasquet chose several letters by Leonico Tomeo, providing information on his relationships with his English pupils Reginald Pole, William Latimer (c.1467–1545), Cuthbert Tunstall (1474–1559) and Thomas Linacre (c.1460–1524). Gasquet's efforts enjoyed a modest success, being mostly appreciated for the re-evaluation of the figure of Pole rather than that of Leonico Tomeo, as the title of his book, *Cardinal Pole and His Early Friends*, clearly shows. While he made available material that had not been studied up to that point, the fragmentary nature of the selected texts was a limit to a better understanding of Leonico Tomeo's biography.

[34] Ezra Abbot, *The Literature of the Doctrine of a Future Life, Or a Catalogue of Works Relating to the Nature, Origin and Destiny of the Soul* (New York: Widdleton, 1862).
[35] Pierre de Nolhac, *La bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini* (Paris: Bouillon & Vieweg, 1887), esp. pp. 171-2, 181, 184, 188.
[36] Serena, *Appunti letterari*, pp. 1–30.
[37] Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Cardinal Pole and His Early Friends* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1927).

This trend continued well into the 1990s, when Jonathan Woolfson took his cue from Gasquet's publication in his *Padua and the Tudors: English Students at Padua 1485-1603*, focusing on the afterlife of Leonico Tomeo's teaching in an English context.[38] In 1995, together with Andrew Gregory, Woolfson also wrote an article on the collecting interests of Leonico Tomeo, focusing on a bust of Socrates donated to him by a Roman cardinal in the 1520s.[39] This article expanded on the work carried out by Irene Favaretto during the 1970s on early modern collecting practices in the Veneto. In her 1979 article, entirely devoted to Leonico Tomeo's art collection, Favaretto brought to the fore the mythological themes and the references to pagan mysteries and rites characterising the sculptures he owned.[40] Favaretto's archaeological perspective on Leonico Tomeo ran parallel to Daniela De Bellis's more recent investigations on the Platonic character of his philosophy.

To date, De Bellis's contribution remains the most influential from a scholarly point of view, having laid the foundations for the research of Deno Geanakoplos and Maria Papanicolaou on Leonico Tomeo's Greek origins, of Stefano Perfetti on his interpretation of Aristotelian zoology, of Luca D'Ascia on his understanding of theology and of Nick Holland on aspects of late Platonism in the *Dialogi*.[41] De Bellis' four articles devoted to Leonico Tomeo's commentary on Aristotle's natural books, his choice of philosophical language, his understanding of the soul's vehicles and his use of ancient Greek sources, endorsed the idea that his philosophy was mainly an attempt at harmonising Plato with Aristotle after the example of the more illustrious fifteenth-century precursors Cardinal Bessarion (1403-1472), Ermolao Barbaro and Marsilio Ficino.[42] The merit of De Bellis' study lies precisely in her ability to

[38] Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students at Padua 1485-1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

[39] Jonathan Woolfson and Andrew Gregory, 'Aspects of Collecting in Renaissance Padua: A Bust of Socrates for Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 58 (1995), pp. 252–265.

[40] Irene Favaretto, 'Appunti sulla collezione rinascimentale di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova*, 68 (1979), pp. 15–29. See also *Marco Mantova Benavides: Il suo museo e la cultura padovana del Cinquecento*, ed. by Irene Favaretto (Padua: Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, 1984); and I. Favaretto and Alessandra Menegazzi, *Un museo di antichità nella Padova del Cinquecento* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2013).

[41] Deno J. Geanakoplos, 'The Career of the Little-Known Renaissance Greek Scholar Nicholas Leonicus Tomeus and the Ascendancy of Greco-Byzantine Aristotelianism at Padua University (1497)', *Byzantina*, 13 (1985), pp. 355–372; Papanicolaou, 'Origine e nome di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo'; Stefano Perfetti, 'Three Different Ways of Interpreting Aristotle's *De Partibus Animalium*: Pietro Pomponazzi, Niccolò Leonico Tomeo and Agostino Nifo', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Carlos G. Steel, Guy Guldentops and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 297–316; Luca D'Ascia, 'Un erasmiano italiano? Note sulla filosofia della religione di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, 26 (1990), pp. 242–264; Nicholas Holland, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's Accounts of Veridical Dreams and the *Idola* of Synesius', in *Platonism: Ficino to Foucault*, ed. by Valery Rees et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 123–148.

[42] De Bellis, 'La vita e l'ambiente di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo'; ead., 'Veicoli dell'anima in Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', *Annali dell'Istituto di Filosofia dell'Università di Firenze*, 3 (1981), pp. 1–21; ead., 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo interprete di Aristotele naturalista', *Physis*, 17 (1975), pp. 71–93; ead., '"Autokineton" "Entelechia" in Niccolò Leonico Tomeo: L'anima nei Dialoghi intitolati al Bembo', *Annali dell'Istituto di Filosofia dell'Università di Firenze*, 1 (1979), pp. 47–68.

move away from post-Bruckerian conceptions of Leonico Tomeo, described as a monochrome representative of genuine Aristotelianism. Although the image of Leonico Tomeo as an opponent of scholastic and Arabic commentators aligns De Bellis with Brucker, the latter's emphasis on Leonico Tomeo's Aristotelianism has been adopted by De Bellis in her study of the *Dialogi*. Following De Bellis's account, scholars have attempted to reconstruct Leonico Tomeo's approach by emphasising convergences with contemporary thinkers and humanist scholarship, sometimes overshadowing his specific traits to the advantage of his continuities or his dependence on other thinkers. Despite its shortcomings, this tendency had led to a more inclusive understanding of Leonico Tomeo's multifaceted thought, whose originality, however, still needs to be critically ascertained.

More in line with Leonico Tomeo's own proclivities, the most convincing attempts at understanding his thought have been so far of a philological nature. Lotte Labowsky's article 'Manuscripts from Bessarion's Library Found in Milan', published in 1961, was pioneering in this sense.[43] Her archival work led to the identification of a number of volumes, originally in Bessarion's library, bearing evidence of Leonico Tomeo's own editorial and scholarly practices. Moreover, she provided interesting details concerning the neglect with which Bessarion's precious legacy had been handled and the impact that it nonetheless had on the renewal of Greek studies over the course of the Renaissance. From Labowsky's efforts emerged a number of studies, among which Maria Teresa Mariani's 1980 thesis on Leonico Tomeo's commentaries on the *editio princeps* of Lucian published by Aldus Manutius in 1503.[44] Mariani's unpublished project has remained almost completely unknown, being cited only by Anna Pontani in 2000. In 1996, Fabio Vendruscolo's 'Manoscritti greci copiati dall'umanista e filosofo Nicolò Leonico Tomeo' looked closely at Leonico Tomeo's editorial strategies, following the translation methods he adopted in the MS 402 of the Burgerbibliothek of Berne, containing excerpts from Theophrastus. Leonico Tomeo transcribed, translated and commented on passages from Theophrastus, in preparation for the Aldine edition of his works, published together with Aristotle's *Organon* between 1495 and 1497.[45] By cross-referencing individual clusters of text to passages contained in different volumes of his personal library, Vendruscolo was able to trace significant recurring patterns in Leonico Tomeo's method, as also emerged from other manuscripts he owned and consulted, now scattered in libraries across

[43] Lotte Labowsky, 'Manuscripts from Bessarion's Library Found in Milan', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5 (1961), pp. 108–131, 117–129.
[44] Maria Teresa Mariani, *La biblioteca greca di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e le sue annotazioni all'*editio princeps *di Luciano*', PhD Thesis, Milan, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1980.
[45] On Manutius's publication of Aristotle's and Theophrastus' works, see Elisabetta Sciarra, 'Aldo Manuzio: Dieci intermezzi tipografici', in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, https://marciana.venezia.sbn.it/mostre-virtuali/aldo-manuzio-dieci-intermezzi-tipografici/aristoteles-opera-venezia-aldo-manuzio.

Europe.[46] In 2004, Stefano Martinelli Tempesta showed many links that connected Leonico Tomeo's manuscripts to his philosophical writings.[47] He provided an outline of the recent codicological discoveries made on a number of manuscripts and printed books annotated by Leonico Tomeo. Among these, Berne MS 402, mentioned above, six volumes from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and an Aldine edition of Galen now at the John Carter Brown Library of Providence.

Anna Pontani's article 'Postille a Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Giovanni Ettore Maria Lascaris', published in 2000, was the first among the philological studies to provide an original interpretation of Leonico Tomeo's erudite art collection in light of the content of his Greek manuscript library. Pontani stressed the importance of the Joshua Roll, a tenth-century Byzantine parchment scroll depicting the story of Joshua as recounted in the New Testament for Leonico Tomeo's intellectual production and drew connections between his writings and his acquaintances with fellow members of the Paduan intelligentsia.[48] In 2006 Luigi Ferreri furthered Pontani's study on Leonico Tomeo's knowledge of Plutarch by analysing his emendations and commentaries to a copy of the 1519 Aldine edition of *Moralia*, later acquired by Fulvio Orsini and now held at the Vatican Library.[49] Ferreri focused on Leonico Tomeo's philological contribution, which he convincingly showed to have been employed as a standard reference for later editions, despite being often uncited.

Further manuscripts copied and owned by Leonico Tomeo were found in 2007 by Michele Bandini in the Library of the Escorial and in the Bodleian Library in Cambridge. Bandini's contribution emphasised the importance of researching the libraries of Leonico Tomeo's collaborators and friends for the purpose of reconstructing his library.[50] The library of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503–1575), ambassador for Charles V in Venice from 1540 to 1546, led to the identification of the *Ciropedia*, a codex produced in tenth-century Constantinople, as one of the manuscripts that Leonico Tomeo had acquired through his Byzantine copyist collaborators active in the Veneto. We shall add to Bandini's work on De Mendoza that he was the author of the introduction to Leonico Tomeo's translation of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanics* (1524), which strengthens the bibliophile relationship the two

[46] Fabio Vendruscolo, 'Manoscritti greci copiati dall'umanista e filosofo Nicolò Leonico Tomeo', in ΟΔΟΙ ΔΙΖΗΣΙΟΣ: *Le vie della ricerca. Studi in onore di Francesco Adorno*, ed. by. Maria Serena Funghi (Florence: Olschki, 1996), pp. 543–554.
[47] Stefano Martinelli Tempesta, 'Un postillato di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo perduto e ritrovato', *Studi Medievali e Umanistici*, 2 (2004), pp. 347–352.
[48] Anna Pontani, 'Postille a Niccolò Leonico', pp. 337–367.
[49] Luigi Ferreri, 'Lezioni di Marc-Antoine Muret e di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo alle *Vitae* di Plutarco', *Miscellanea Bibliotechae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, 13 (2006), pp. 167–194.
[50] Michele Bandini, 'Codici greci di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo all'Escorial e a Cambridge', *Studi Medievali e Umanistici*, 5–6 (2007–2008), pp. 479–485.

humanists might have had. Moreover, a collation of Aristotelian texts now at the University Library of Cambridge was identified by Bandini as belonging to Leonico Tomeo on the basis of several *marginalia* by his hand. Bandini's studies on the libraries of Leonico Tomeo's friends were then indirectly expanded by Donald Jackson's article on the Greek manuscripts of the Mesmes family.[51] On codicological grounds, Jackson proved the existence of twenty-two manuscripts once owned or copied by Leonico Tomeo among the vast library of the French family.

Further philological study was carried out in 2014 by Morgane Cariou, who analysed the codicological features of Leonico Tomeo's use of manicules and flower-shaped decorations on the *marginalia* of the manuscripts he edited, focusing on the volumes currently held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.[52] Cariou's study insisted on the role played by Leonico Tomeo in the philo-Hellenic enterprise championed by Aldus Manutius through his printing press, establishing the presence in the Bibliothèque Nationale of twelve manuscripts copied by Leonico Tomeo and at least another sixteen annotated by him. Cariou's contribution was also relevant for the reassessment of Leonico Tomeo's role in the development of early modern late Platonism and Orphism. Her philological analysis of MS gr. 2764 showed that Leonico Tomeo's editorial annotations on the first part of the codex containing the *Orphic Argonautica* and the *Orphic Hymns*, served as a model for the 1517 Aldine edition of the *Orphic Lithica*.[53] Cariou identified the hand of at least five copyists in a number of manuscripts owned and annotated by Leonico Tomeo, suggesting that the distinctive tree branch marking his editorial interventions was, in fact, characteristic of all his collaborators. Among the latter, Cariou was able to single out Zacharias Calliergis, a Greek intellectual from Sparta active at the Court of the Gonzaga and author of a comedy in prose inspired by Terence and Lucian entitled *Neaira* and Demetrios Moschos, a Greek copyist active in Padua at the cusp of the sixteenth century.[54] According to Cariou, the fact that it was a copyist who assembled MS gr. 2764, proves that Leonico Tomeo's contribution to Aldus's publications has gone unnoticed because of the collective nature of the enterprise. Cariou's article was also decisive for its accurate identification of the folios annotated and read by Leonico Tomeo himself. Her research proved the breadth of the humanist's readings, which was not limited to philosophy, but extended as

[51] Donald F. Jackson, 'Greek Manuscripts of the Mesmes Family', *Scriptorium*, 1 (2009), pp. 89–120.
[52] Morgane Cariou, 'À propos d'un manuscrit de Niccolò Leonico Tomeo: Le modèle de l'édition princeps du *Lapidaire Orphique*', *Scriptorium*, 68 (2014), pp. 49–77.
[53] Ibid., p. 58.
[54] On Calliergis, see Venetia Chatzopoulou, *Un Grec de la Renaissance, copiste et éditeur en Italie: Zacharie Calliergis*, PhD Thesis, Paris, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2007; ead., 'L'étude de la production manuscrite d'un copiste de la Renaissance au service de l'histoire des textes: le cas di crétois Zacharie Calliergis', *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, 7 (2012), pp. 2–36.

far as rhetoric, medicine, mathematics, epistolography, Roman tragedy, archaic, Hellenistic and imperial poetry.[55] Another important philological contribution has been recently carried out by Eleonora Gamba, who recapitulated the studies conducted on Leonico Tomeo until 2014 and added a further item to his library, Par. gr. 1833.[56] The latter codex, containing Proclus's commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* and the *Republic* and Books 3 to 9 of the *Deipnosophists* by Athenaeus, was copied and annotated by Leonico Tomeo, possibly for his own translation of parts of Proclus's Commentary on the *Timaeus*, which he published in 1524.

We owe a recent philological study on Leonico Tomeo to Ciro Giacomelli, who has worked on the library of Giovanni Battista da Lion (c.1480–1528), Paduan professor of medicine and art collector.[57] Lion owned a vast manuscript library, which included the current MS Par. gr. 1874, containing Alexander of Aphrodisias's Commentary on Aristotle's *Topics* annotated by Leonico Tomeo and E 61 Sup. Olim V 407, containing excerpts from the *Ecloga vocum Atticarum* by the Byzantine humanist Thomas Magistro (d. c.1330), an Attic lexicon, most likely presenting some marginalia by Leonico Tomeo.[58] Reflecting on Da Lion's library, Giacomelli countered the assumption, first formulated by Fritz Saxl in 1938, that Da Lion and most of his humanist friends including Leonico Tomeo were representatives of a characteristic Paduan strand of Renaissance Platonism. Giacomelli argues, in fact, that in Da Lion's library there was only one text which could be labelled 'Platonic', and this does not show any marginal annotations. Most works in Da Lion's library were of a rhetorical nature and mostly concerned with aspects of Aristotelian philosophy.

In another more recent article, Giacomelli has analysed a so far unstudied codex containing two medical treatises by the Byzantine physician Joannes Actuarius (c.1275–1328), *On the Spirit of the Animal* and *On the Therapeutic Method*.[59] On codicological grounds, Giacomelli has suggested that the manuscript was copied, annotated and edited by Leonico Tomeo, who, as on other occasions, signalled his intervention on the text with his distinctive tree branches and marginal manicules. Giacomelli has also identified close similarities between the Paduan codex and the Parisian gr. 2305. In addition, he considered a manuscript version of Actuarius's *On the Therapeutic Method* commissioned by Bessarion and held at the Marciana Library in Venice, which, in his view, demonstrates that the alleged Leonico Tomeo manuscript

[55] The list of manuscripts copied and annotated by Leonico Tomeo indicated by Cariou in her article is included in the appendix dedicated to the reconstruction of Leonico Tomeo's library as has been reconstructed to date.
[56] Eleonora Gamba, 'Un nuovo manoscritto copiato da Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (Par. gr. 1833): Appunti per la ricostruzione della sua biblioteca', in *Eikasmós*, 25 (2014), pp. 329–359.
[57] Ciro Giacomelli, 'Giovanni Battista da Lion (c.1480–1528) e la sua biblioteca greca', *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova*, 49 (2016), pp. 35–162.
[58] Giacomelli, 'Giovanni Battista da Lion', pp. 90–91, 135–136.
[59] Ciro Giacomelli, 'Su un codice greco di Giovanni Zaccaria Attuario nella Biblioteca Civica di Padova (C. M. 644)', *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, 13 (2018), pp. 93–128.

copy was independent from all other editorial operations carried out on the text over the course of the sixteenth century. He proved this point by comparing two published versions of the Greek text of *On the Spirit of the Animal* in 1557 and 1774, both of which differ considerably from the text edited by Leonico Tomeo. Giacomelli's contribution to the understanding of Leonico Tomeo's work as an editor of Greek texts is also valuable for its mention of an Aldine edition of Theocritus and Hesiod at the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, which also presents annotations by Leonico Tomeo.[60]

Despite the significant archival work carried out by Giacomelli, some of his conclusions seem to be too definitive. For instance, that the Paduan codex of Actuarius was edited and commented by Leonico Tomeo cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty in that, as Morgane Cariou has shown in her contribution, the same identifying motif (*sphragis*) was used by a number of Greek copyists, who collaborated with Leonico Tomeo. Moreover, drastically to rule out the possibility that Leonico Tomeo was in fact open to aspects of Platonic philosophy by simply relying on the indirect study of the library of one of his friends seems to be excessively radical. Giacomelli's rejection of Saxl's thesis results from the philological scrutiny of a circumscribed number of manuscripts and, like previous investigations, it completely overlooks Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*. In this sense, Giacomelli is as right about Leonico Tomeo as Brucker was when he classified him as a genuine Aristotelian. Surely, Leonico Tomeo's philosophical identity needs to be sought for in his writings and not merely in the libraries of his friends or in the books he owned, which most certainly populated his shelves for a brief period of time before moving into the house of other humanists in and beyond the confines of the Veneto. Giacomelli's work on the philological aspects of Tomeo's editorial activity is, nonetheless, invaluable and it will, hopefully, stimulate further research across Europe in order to reconstruct the Leonico Tomeo's library.

Besides the more strictly philological studies of Leonico Tomeo's works, there have been a few brief studies of the humanist's understanding of divination, medicine and mechanics. Giancarlo Carabelli's article 'Oracoli pagani nel Rinascimento: la riscoperta di Trofonio', published in 2002, has listed in passing Leonico Tomeo's dialogue *Trophonius, sive de divinatione* among the early modern texts rehabilitating the role of classical mythology in literature, philosophy, art and poetry.[61] In 2013, Anthony Ossa-Richardson has analysed excerpts from the same dialogue in his *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early*

[60] On the circulation of Theocritus in humanist circles, see Luigi Ferreri, *Le Théocrite de l'humaniste Marcus Musurus. Avec l'edition critique des Idylles XXIV-XXVII de Théocrite* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).
[61] Giancarlo Carabelli, 'Oracoli pagani nel Rinascimento: La riscoperta di Trofonio', *I castelli di Yale. Quaderni di filosofia*, 5 (2002), pp. 51–64.

Modern Thought, relating its content to a Greek source: Pausanias's *Guide to Greece*.[62] A further research path has been opened in 2010 by Stefania Fortuna in her article on Leonico Tomeo's translation of Galen's *Letter on the Epileptic Child.*[63] The study has enhanced the philological aspects of Leonico Tomeo's editorial work by providing insights into his personal readings of Greek medical texts. So far, Fortuna's article remains the only attempt made in this century to interpret Leonico Tomeo as a medico-philosophical humanist rather than as a Greek philologist. In the past century, Eugenio Garin emphasised the singular character of Leonico Tomeo's pneumatology in his article '*Phantasia* e *Imaginatio* fra Marsilio Ficino e Pietro Pomponazzi'.[64]

Complementary to Fortuna's study is Joyce van Leeuwen's 'Image, Word and Translation in Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's *Quaestiones mechanicae*', published in 2017.[65] Van Leeuwen attempted a reconstruction of Leonico Tomeo's illustrative process of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanics*, based on two manuscript versions of the text by establishing connections with similar contemporary enterprises, that is, the illustrated version of Vitruvius's *Architecture* by Giovanni Giocondo (c.1433–1515), published in Venice in 1511. Most likely known to Leonico Tomeo, Giocondo's text shows the many links that Leonico Tomeo established with the activity of other humanists. Leeuwen's contribution seems most significant, in that it points out the centrality of the visual implications of Leonico Tomeo's philosophy and it emphasises the importance of images not only for Platonic and late Platonic theories of the imagination, but also for questions of mechanical science. Two more articles have discussed in passing the influence of Leonico Tomeo's translation of the *Mechanics* on late Renaissance editions of the same text. Paolo Palmieri has noted Leonico Tomeo's emphasis on the magical nature of the circle, while Stillman Drake and Paul Lawrence Rose focused on the dependence of later translations of the *Mechanics* by Alessandro Piccolomini and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza on Tomeo's own. They also provided a useful yet incomplete list of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reprints of the *Mechanics*, including those by the Venetian Giunti (1552, 1562), the Swiss Laemarius (1597), the French La Rovière (1606) and

[62] Anthony Ossa-Richardson, *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 90–92.
[63] Stefania Fortuna, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Galeno: Manoscritti, edizioni e traduzioni', in *Storia della traduzione e edizione dei medici greci*, ed. by Véronique Boudon-Millot, Antonio Garzya, Jacques Jouanna and Amneris Roselli (Naples: D'Auria, 2010), pp. 323–336.
[64] Eugenio Garin, '*Phantasia* e *Imaginatio* fra Marsilio Ficino e Pietro Pomponazzi', *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*, 3 (1985), pp. 349–361, esp. 350.
[65] Joyce van Leeuwen, 'Image, Word and Translation in Niccolo Leonico Tomeo's *Quaestiones Mechanicae*', in *Translating Early Modern Science*, ed. by Sietske Fransen, Niall Hodson and K. A. E. Enenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 182–206. See also ead., *The Aristotelian Mechanics: Text and Diagrams* (Cham: Springer, 2016). On Leonico Tomeo's study of the *Mechanics*, see H. M. Nobis, 'Über zwei Handschriften zur frühneuzeitlichen Mechanik in Italienischen Bibliotheken', *Sudhoffs Archiv*, 53 (1969), pp. 326–32 (328).

Duvalle (1619-1629, 1639, 1654) and the Dutch edition of the *Mathematical Compendium* of Michael Psellus (1647).[66]

Finally, in the last decade, articles for online encyclopaedias have been written on Leonico Tomeo by Eleonora Gamba and Emilio Russo.[67] These offer detailed but not comprehensive overviews of publications concerning Leonico Tomeo.

3. Fritz Saxl's Leonico Tomeo: Philosophy, Art and Ritual

After this survey of the critical literature on Leonico Tomeo, it is safe to say that, by and large, a comprehensive account of his life and thought, which brings together its philological, philosophical and medical dimensions, is still lacking. Above all, it is striking to note that almost all of the contributions considered above, either overlook or contradict the essay that, to date, provides the best – although brief – contextualisation and characterisation of Leonico Tomeo as a complex Renaissance savant: 'Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance', by Fritz Saxl.[68]

In this important contribution published in 1938, Saxl argued that there was a link between Leonico Tomeo's dialogue on the vehicles of the soul, the *Alverotus*, and the iconology of the funerary monument that Marco Antonio Della Torre (1481–1511) had commissioned to the sculptor Andrea Riccio (c.1470–1532) in 1506 to honour the memory of his father Girolamo Della Torre (1444–1506), the renowned physician and professor at the University of Padua. Saxl claimed that the depiction of Aeneas's descent into Hades drew directly on Leonico Tomeo's interpretation of Virgil's lines detailing the presence in nature of invisible vehicles through which the soul ascends to the heavens. Moreover, Saxl highlighted Leonico Tomeo's relationship with the professor of medicine, Giovanni Battista da Leone, who commissioned a bronze candlestick for the Church of Sant'Antonio, and their role as patrons of pagan-themed art intended for a religious setting.[69] In light of the non-Christian nature of

[66] Paolo Palmieri, 'Breaking the Circle: the Emergence of Archimedean Mechanics in the Late Renaissance', *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 3 (2008), pp. 301–346, esp. 305, n. 4; Paul Lawrence Rose and Stillman Drake, 'The Pseudo-Aristotelian Questions of Mechanics in Renaissance Culture', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 18 (1971), pp. 65–104, esp. 68, 70, 79, 86.

[67] Eleonora Gamba, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (1456-1531)', in *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Marco Sgarbi (Cham: Springer, 2014), https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-02848-4_350-1; see also Eleonora Gamba, 'Un nuovo manoscritto copiato'; Emilio Russo, 'Leonico Tomeo, Niccolò', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, LXIV (2005), pp. 617–621.

[68] Fritz Saxl, 'Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance', *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 4 (1938), pp. 346–367.

[69] On Giovanni Battista da Leone, see Rebekah Anne Carson, *Andrea Riccio's Della Torre Tomb Monument: Humanism and Antiquarianism in Padua et Verona*, PhD Thesis, Toronto, University of Toronto, 2010, p. 48, n.

Leonico Tomeo's and Leone's engagement in the arts, Saxl's analysis brought to the fore the distinctive traits of Paduan humanism and the differences from its Florentine counterpart. As Saxl's observations prompted the present thesis, here I would like to quote a passage from his article to clarify the intellectual and cultural scope of my investigation. According to Saxl, in a section of the *Alverotus*, Leonico Tomeo's 'detailed Platonic commentary on Virgil's verses in the form of a dialogue' shows that 'the doctrine of the descent of the soul to earth, its punishment in Hell and re-ascent to Heaven, is of equal importance to the pagan philosopher and the Christian theologian'. Saxl then continues his argument by Leonico's Tomeo characteristic position towards Christian and Platonic themes:

> except for a casual word about the concordance between the notion of divine love in Plato's *Phaedrus*, and that of Christian love and charity, there are only two remarks about Christianity, one at the beginning and one at the end. Leonicus exhorts his hearers to accept these doctrines only in so far as they coincide with the doctrine of the church. I do not think that we have any reason to assume that the author indulges in these exhortations in order to save his face. The pagan world is treated as a separate unit with its own laws. Whereas Florentine Platonists concentrate on the interpretation of Christian and Platonic thought, Leonicus and his friends limit themselves to the philosophical and philological understanding of pagan ideas without reference to theology.[70]

This passage clearly shows Saxl's intuition of the multidimensional scope of Leonico Tomeo's life and thought. Two main observations emerge: the original character of Paduan Platonism with respect to paganism and Christianity, and the reconfiguration of Paduan humanism as a marriage of philosophy and philology. These two ideas will guide my analysis throughout. I will pay special attention to Leonico Tomeo's treatment of the pagan world 'as a separate unit with its own laws', in order to test Saxl's emphasis on the Platonic nature of the *Dialogi* with respect to Enlightenment criticisms regarding his unorthodox Platonism, on the one hand, and contemporary interpretations leaning more on the Aristotelian side of his work, on the other. Likewise, I will clarify the character of Leonico Tomeo's humanism, trying to understand the extent to which his transformation and re-elaboration of theories and ideas drawn from classical sources was in line with both the Renaissance renewal of antiquity (and therefore assimilable to the contemporary pursuits of art, bibliophilia and similar antiquarian disciplines) and the contemporary response to the threat posed by the Reformation and the Italian Wars on the development of the Renaissance ideals of cultural and political harmony.

7; Davide Banzato, 'Riccio's Humanist Circle and the Paschal Candelabrum', in *Andrea Riccio: Renaissance Master of Bronze*, ed. by Denise Allen and Peta Motture (London: Philip Wilson, 2008), p. 44.

[70] Saxl, 'Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance', p. 354.

Notions of soul, nature, language and art are central to this research project in so far as it aims at enriching the discussion through aspects concerning metaphysics, natural philosophy and medicine, not examined in Saxl's article, for Leonico Tomeo's contribution to the development of early modern philosophy draws on classical and contemporary sources. As will become apparent in Part 2 of this work, physics, medicine and metaphysics often intertwine and overlap in Leonico Tomeo's philosophical dialogues. Ultimately, this thesis responds to the invitation made by Saxl in one of his footnotes that 'a thorough study of the writings of Leonicus and his friends should be undertaken by a student of the history of Platonism'.[71] I shall start this undertaking from Leonicus first.

[71] Ibid., p. 354.

Chapter 2

Natural Particulars in Padua: Leonico Tomeo's Medical Humanism

In *De antiquitate urbis Patavii* ('On the the Antiquity of Padua), the historian Bernardino Scardeone (1482–1574) reflected on the relationship between Padua's favourable meteorological conditions and the flourishing of philosophy and physics in that city:

> We should turn our attention to illustrious philosophers and physicians. Ever since philosophy and medicine began to be praised and held in high esteem here in Italy, our city has always distinguished itself for its philosophers and physicians, to such a degree that when the medical faculty from Greece passed to the Latins, it first seems to have stopped and made its home here. Regarding the specific nature of this city – which, when compared to all other cities, has always had in every period physicians so famous and distinguished – Albert the German, in the book entitled *De natura locorum* ('On the Nature of Places'), made the intelligent remark that abundance of excellent physicians was the specific and unique characteristic of the city of Padua. I think that this is certainly due to the nature of the place, as explained by Cicero, for the Athenians are more intelligent than all other Greeks because their city is placed under the most pure sky and the quality of the air is extremely balanced. And that this is true of what people say of our city will be apparent from the great number of renowned physicians.[72]

In Scardeone's contention, the century-old tradition of Paduan doctors owes to the meteorological conditions of the city. As evidence of this stands the authority of the medieval philosopher Albert the Great and the Roman orator Cicero. Scardeone's choice of sources hints towards the contents of the curriculum taught at the University of Padua. He described it as an intertwined product of science (meteorology and medicine), civic humanism (Cicero) and philosophy (Albert the Great). The relationship established by Scardeone between a

[72] Bernardino Scardeone, *De antiquitate urbis Patavii et claris civibus Patavinis libri tres, in quindecim classes distincti* (Basel: Nicolaus Episcopius, 1560), p. 200: 'Jam ab his cohibendus est calamus, et ad insignes philosophos et medicos transferendus, quibus nostra civitas, ex quo philosophia et res medica hic in Italia laudi et gloriae haberi coepta est, ita semper excelluit, ut facultas medica ubi e Graecia profecta ad Latinos pertransiit, hic primum in hac urbe constitisse, ac domicilium suum posuisse videatur. De hujus autem civitatis genio, quae prae caeteris urbibus tam claros ac praestantes medicos in omni aetate semper habuerit, Albertus Germanus in libro, quem De locorum natura inscripsit, prudenter animadvertit, hoc esse proprium et peculiare Patavinae civitatis, excellentibus medicis abundare. Quod quidem ea arbitror loci ratione contingere, quam Cicero reddit, cum Athenienses acutiores caeteris Graecis sint: quod scilicet sub purissimo caelo, ac maxima aeris temperie illorum urbs sita est. Id autem verum esse, quod de hac nostra Patavina civitate dicitur, ex ingenti clarissimorum medicorum numero aperte constabit.' See Cicero, *De fato*, 7: 'Athenis tenue caelum, ex quo etiam acutiores putantur Attici.' For the locus in Albert the Great, see his 'De natura locorum librum' in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Borgnet (Paris: Vivès, 1890-99), vol. 9, f. 47^{r}. On the nexus between climate and psysiognomy, see *Governing the Environment in the Early Modern World: Theory and Practice*, ed. by Sara Miglietti and John Morgan (London: Routledge, 2017); Guido Giglioni, 'Luoghi, abiti e corpi: La fisiognomica ippocratica e la sua ricezione nel Rinascimento', in *Tra il visibile e l'invisibile: Testi di fisiognomica nella tradizione greco-latina e arabo-islamica*, ed. by Maria Fernanda Ferrini and G. Giglioni (Macerata: eum, 2019), pp. 177–188.

geographical place, its climatic conditions and the intellectual dispositions of its inhabitants brings to the fore the most significant features of knowledge production in early modern Padua. These three aspects are therefore particularly relevant and allow us to characterise Leonico Tomeo's thought as a typical yet highly original example of *Patavinitas*, combining physics, rhetoric and philosophy into a coherent discourse.

So far, the scientific components of Leonico Tomeo's philosophy have been investigated only from a philological point of view by Stefania Fortuna and Ciro Giacomelli, who have analysed, respectively, Leonico Tomeo's translation of Galen's *Pro puero epilectico consilium* ('Advice for an Epileptic Boy') and his manuscript of the Byzantine doctor Johannes Zacharias Actuarius (c.1275-c.1328).[73] On codicological grounds, Giacomelli has suggested that Niccolò Tomeo's emendations to the codex C. M. 644 were independent from all other editorial operations carried out on the text over the course of the sixteenth century. As with many of Leonico Tomeo's texts, however, his work on Actuarius was never published. This was one of the many factors that contributed to the overall scholarly disregard for his role in the history of science and medicine.[74]

A significant yet completely overlooked moment in Leonico Tomeo's biography, most likely because of the lack of documentary evidence related to it, is that of his childhood. As mentioned earlier, Leonico Tomeo was entrusted to the care of his uncle Alò at the age of nine.[75] The fact that Alò was an apothecary allows us to say with a fair amount of confidence that Leonico Tomeo might have engaged with medicine in the broadest sense of the term from an early age. In Padua, the apothecary (*special* or *spizialle* in the vernacular) was a multifaceted profession. Besides the commercial implications of the sale of spices and poultices, it also stimulated contacts with objects and subjects pertaining to diverse spheres of culture. In the Veneto region, pharmacies were copious, fifty alone in Venice. In Padua a document written on the occasion of a war initiated by Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara recorded the presence of forty-two apothecaries.[76] The Paduan pharmaceutical corporation (*fraglia de' speciali*) is the oldest ever established, its statute having been issued in 1260.[77] In Padua most apothecaries

[73] Fortuna, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Galeno'; Giacomelli, 'Su un codice greco di Giovanni Zaccaria Attuario'. Owsei Temkin translated Galen's *Pro puero epileptico consilium* into English in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2 (1934), pp. 179–189.
[74] Besides Fortuna and Giacomelli, see Eugenio Garin, '*Phantasia* e *imaginatio* fra Marsilio Ficino e Pietro Pomponazzi'.
[75] See Venice, Archivio di Stato, Cancelleria Inferiore, Miscellanea notai diversi, polizza n. 7, f. 19, 18 May 1503.
[76] Gino Meneghini, *La farmacia attraverso i secoli e gli speziali di Venezia e Padova* (Padua: Istituto Veneto di Arti Grafiche, 1946), p. 75. See also Eleonora Carinci, 'Una "speziala" padovana: *Lettere di philosophia naturale* di Camilla Erculiani (1584)', *Italian Studies*, 68 (2013), pp. 202–229; Maude Vanhaelen, 'Platonism in Sixteenth-Century Padua: Two Unpublished Letters from Sebastiano Erizzo to Camilla Erculiani', *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 12 (2016), pp. 137–147; Sarah Kyle, *Medicine and Humanism in Late Medieval Italy: The* Carrara Herbal *in Padua* (London: Routledge, 2017).
[77] Meneghini, *La farmacia attraverso i secoli*, pp. 75–77.

were located around the Palazzo della Ragione and the City Council, where the most intense commercial traffic took place in the streets surrounding the market. It is precisely in this neighbourhood that the pharmacy of Leonico Tomeo's uncle, *Al pomo d'oro*, was located.

Early modern pharmacies can be characterised as miniature museums of natural history, containing a range of exotic products imported from the East, which were employed in the production of the most diverse concoctions and poultices.[78] Notably, every spring, a theriac-making rite took place in the square outside the pharmacies under the supervision of delegates from the Venetian 'Provveditorato alla Sanità'. [79] On this occasion, the square was adorned with precious damasks and busts of Galen and Hippocrates. Rows of benches carried majolica jars filled with spices, herbs and gums used to prepare the Galenic remedy, regarded since antiquity as an infallible panacea. Pepper, myrrh, gum Arabic, cinnamon, fennel, rose petals, iris roots, amber and other herbs perfumed the air while scientists, craftsmen, artists and common people took part in the ceremony.[80] The pharmacy was therefore a place of medical, intellectual and artistic interest at once. Many of the tools employed in the theriac-making procedure usually adorned the interiors of the apothecary all year round, from the portraits of Saints Cosmas and Damian to that of the Archangel Michael, the patron saint of Paduan's apothecaries.[81]

I argue that the place of pharmacies in the wider urban landscape of early modern northern Italian cities is central for a sound understanding of Leonico Tomeo's early intellectual formation. That he lived in this environment suggests that he came into contact with potters, lens grinders, instrument makers, glassblowers, barbers, chemists and, of course, doctors. The public dimension in which empirical practices were developed indicates that Paduan scientific knowledge production was not merely confined to the classrooms, but also extended as far as public squares and apothecary workshops. Knowledge was a collective enterprise, emerging from the encounter of individuals with a mastery of the most diverse skills, ranging from chemistry to art as much as from zoology to theology. Such intellectual convergences are especially revealing of the way in which Leonico Tomeo would later approach the study of natural phenomena and his discussion of the soul's powers, especially sense perception and the imagination. After all, numerous early modern philosophers were

[78] Ibid., p. 78.
[79] Marcello Fumagalli, 'Storia e mirabili virtù del farmaco più antico: La Teriaca di Andromaco', *Notiziario Chimico Farmaceutico*, 2–3 (1997), p. 39.
[80] See Carinci, 'Una "speziala" padovana', esp. p. 227.
[81] Fumagalli, 'Storia e mirabili virtù del farmaco più antico', pp. 30–31; Meneghini, *La farmacia attraverso i secoli*, pp. 45, 70. See also Mirabai Starr, *Saint Michael: The Archangel. Devotions, Prayers and Living Wisdom* (Louisville, CO: Sounds True, 2007), p. 39; Dominique Rigaux, 'Pellegrinaggio e santuari di San Michele nell'Occidente medievale', in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Michael Archangel* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2009), pp. 577–597.

physicians by education. To name but one of the most celebrated at the time, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) was a physician who also devoted himself to the care of the souls through both religion and philosophy.[82] It does not come as a surprise, then, that Tomeo, too, was to some extent familiar with the basic precepts of natural science and medicine.

1. Medicine in Verses: A Macaronic Song from Padua

A piece of evidence that Alò's pharmacy had an impact on Leonico Tomeo's formation can be found in his earliest surviving written testimony. While still a university student, together with the poet Tifi Odasi, he composed the *Macaronic Song from Padua*, simply known as *Macaronea* (1488).[83] This poem written in the vernacular recounts the jesting deeds of a society of Paduan university students (*macaronea secta*) in the house of the apothecary Alò in the cathedral square.[84] As the owner of a run-down house which he cannot rent because apparently it is haunted by all sorts of spirits and ghosts, the young Leonico Tomeo addresses *cusinus*, a figure most certainly identifiable with Tifi's cousin Giampietro di Comino degli Odasi, owner of the *Luna d'Oro* pharmacy in the Piazza delle Erbe. *Cusinus*, also a famous necromancer, offers his help having been tempted by the gift of a succulent goose in return for his favour. The *macaronea secta* then starts to prepare the stuffing for the animal, each member contributing one ingredient. While at work, Tifi plots against his friends together with the doctor Bertipaglia and the painter Canciano. During the preparation of the sacrificial offering, Bertipaglia unexpectedly appears dressed as a horned devil. Frightened by the trick, everyone sets off, but they are arrested by the guards warned by Tifi. The poem ends with the guards

[82] On this aspect in Ficino's philosophy, see Guido Giglioni, 'Theory and Theurgy; or, How Ficino Wished to Dispatch the Averroist Intellect through Platonic Good Works', in *Harmony and Contrast: Plato and Aristotle in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Anna Corrias and Eva Del Soldato (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 56–74; id., 'Healing Rituals and Their Philosophical Significance in Marsilio Ficino's Philosophy', in *Platonism: Ficino to Foucault*, ed. by Valery Rees et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 55–77.

[83] Michele di Bartolomeo degli Odasi belonged to the Martinengo family, which in the middle of the fifteenth century had moved to Padua from Bergamo. Michele signed his works as Tifi, an epithet referring to the Argonaut's sailing master. He is believed to have been the 'Bargello' ('Captain of Justice') of Padua, as confirmed by his testament (Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 1591, c. 453). His contacts with intellectuals from the Paduan Studium are attested to by his correspondence and most notably by the *Macaronea*. The poem opens with the following lines: 'The author is Tifi Leonico and Parenzo.' This confirms the collaboration between Tifi and Domizio Parenzo. On Tifi Odasi, see Giovanni Fabris, 'Padova culla delle muse maccheroniche', *Padova*, 7 (1933), pp. 11–26; Ivano Paccagnella, 'Origini padovane del macaronico: Corado e Tifi', *Storia della Cultura Veneta*, 3 (1980), pp. 413–429. For early modern references to Tifi, see Scardeone, *De antiquitate urbis Patavii*, p. 238.

[84] Tifi Odasi et alii, *Maccheronee di cinque poeti italiani del secolo XV* (Milan: Daelli, 1864).

eating the goose and the rest of the banquet's delicacies, originally intended for the completion of the magical rite.[85]

It has often been denied that the 'Leonicus' mentioned in the poem refers to our Tomeo. The latter's participation in the enterprise, however, seems certain on account of his uncle's involvement in the story. Leonico Tomeo was also regarded as the 'most witty of men' by many of his humanist friends. The *Macaronea* seems therefore to be an early precedent of many witty episodes recounted in his later dialogues.[86] Moreover, his engagement with poetry is confirmed by the Modenese Panfilo Sasso in his *Epigrammata* (1499), in which he praises Leonico Tomeo's evocative style and his ability to bring the lover praised on paper to life.[87] One final very important proof of Leonico Tomeo's participation in the collective authorship of the *Macaronea* derives from the analysis of a manuscript produced in late fifteenth-century Italy and now kept in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The work, which contains several erotic poems by Catullus and Tibullus, bears a marginal note at folio 103^{v} that connects the name of Leonico Tomeo with that of the same female names mentioned in the first lines of the *Macaronea,* i.e., Flora and Angela, as well as to that of 'Domitio Pa.', which most likely corresponds to Domizio Parenzo, who has been sometimes associated with the production of the *Macaronea*.[88] To confirm Tomeo's interest in Catullan poetry there is a letter sent by Girolamo Avanzi (b. 1493) to Agustinus Moravus (Augustin Käsenbrot, 1467–1513), in which he recalled the interest of young humanists for the Latin poet, including Giacomo Giuliari, Giovanni Calfurnio, Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli and 'Leonicus Patavinus', that is, our Leonico Tomeo.[89]

The literary importance of the *Macaronea* consists in the vernacularisation of Latin with the aim of sneering at pedantic attitudes in doctors, students and bureaucrats of the time. The poem was the first example of what would later become a genre in all intents and purposes, i.e., macaronic poetry. Leonico Tomeo's involvement in this pursuit not only emphasises his detachment from a particular type of rigid scholasticism, but also reveals his stance on the debate concerning the primacy of Latin over vernacular idioms, a debate that had been ongoing. Finally, a further aspect that may confirm the role that Leonico Tomeo played in the literary

[85] The poem was left unfinished due to Tifi's death.
[86] See Sisto Medici, *Epistolae*, ed. by Giovanni Battista Contarini, in *Nuova raccolta d'opuscoli scientifici e filologici*, ed. by Angelo Calogera and Fortunato Mandelli, 42 vols (Venice: Simone Occhi, 1755-1771), XV-XVI (1767-1768), pp. 389–474, 279–359. For the reconstruction of the events reported above, see Epistles 418 and 419.
[87] Panfilo Sasso, *Epigrammatum libri quattuor. Distichorum libri duo. De bello Gallico. De laudibus Veronae. Elegiarum liber unus*, ed. by Johannes Taberius (Brescia: Bernardino Misinta, 1499), f. 62^{r}.
[88] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. Canon. Class. Lat. 34, ff. 103^{v}, 117$^{r.}$
[89] See Ludovica De Nava, 'L'epistola di Girolamo Avanzi ad Agostino Moravo di Olomuc', *Lettere Italiane*, 45 (1993), pp. 402-426, esp. 404.

enterprise of the *Macaronea* is the presence of themes dealing with natural magic, which, as we will see, is among the motifs discussed in the *Dialogi*.

More relevant to the enquiry into the medical aspects of Leonico Tomeo's thought is the sacrificial act involving the offering of a goose, which most certainly was intended to arouse laughter. It also indicates, however, that at the time, in the city where Pietro d'Abano (c.1257–1316) had been professor of medicine, the boundaries dividing this practice from magic were still rather blurred.[90] This is also evidenced by the historical accuracy with which the setting and the characters of the *Macaronea* are depicted. The necromancer Bertipaglia is almost certainly to be identified with Leonardo Buffi da Bertipaglia (d. after 1448), surgeon and professor of medicine at the University of Padua and Venice in the first half of the fifteenth century. Bertiaglia was one of the first to apply notions of anatomical pathology to surgery in the early modern period. This is proven by his commentary on Book 4 of Avicenna's *Canon*.[91] Ultimately, the *Macaronea* further demonstrates the importance of the formative environment in which Tomeo lived. At the same time, it brings to the fore the circumstances in which he might have first made the acquaintance of painters, priests, poets and philosophers from Padua and surroundings, including his uncle's pharmacy.

This relationship between medicine and poetry is strengthened by another important document to be found in the archives of the Biblioteca Comunale of Treviso. In the miscellany MS 582, containing a variety of writings and correspondence dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, there are two poems that are particularly relevant to the present discussion. The first, written by the humanist Girolamo Bologni (c.1454–1517) and included in his miscellaneous *Promiscuorum libri XXI* ('Twenty-One Books of Poetry of Various Kind') was dedicated to Leonico Tomeo and described the bust of the Roman military figure Gaius Volteius Capito that he had excavated in the village of Oderzo and which he sent to Padua along with a Latin poem. The second poem, most likely by the same author, is a 'prayer' addressed to the ill Leonico Tomeo:

> The ill Leonicus still suffers from a harsh condition
> And still labours with a lingering fever.
> No Machaon has been able to be of any help with this illness,

[90] Tifi Odasi, 'Macaronea', in *Maccheronee di cinque poeti italiani del secolo XV*, pp. 17-18: 'Mercurio fuerat lux illa sacrata, sed ille / ad strigariam zobiam spectaverat aptam. / Illa etiam nocte coniunx cavalcabat Herodis / et secum strige, secum caminat et Orcus; / Hanc expectavit tamen, oca tirante la gola.'

[91] Louis Elaut, 'Der Avicenna-Kommentar des Chirurgen Leonardo de Bertapaglia', in *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften*, 41 (1957), pp. 18–26; Tiziana Pesenti Marangon, '"Professores chirurgie", "medici ciroici" e "barbitonsores" a Padova nell'età di Leonardo Buffi da Bertipaglia', *Quaderni per la Storia dell'Università di Padova*, 11 (1978), pp. 1–38. On the influence of Avicenna in sixteenth-century Italy, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy: The Canon and Medical Teaching in Italian Universities after 1500* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Nor did any treatment work for the complex toga of Phrygia.
Oh Phoebus, it is your duty to come to help the divine poet.
Come then, agree, Divine one, to my prayers.
We promise a pleasing paean, if my friend is cured,
And a thousand poems published to your glory.
If you don't wish to lend an ear to a poet on behalf of a poet,
Phoebus, who then, I ask, will invoke your divinity?[92]

Unfortunately, the poem is not dated. Therefore, we can only speculate whether it was addressed to Leonico Tomeo in the last years of his life, before he died of old age in 1531. An ancient Greek form of poetry, the paean is traditionally associated with the god Apollo and takes its title from the refrain ἰὴ Παιάν dedicated to Apollo 'the saviour'. Paeon was the name of the Greek physician of the gods, who in the *Iliad* is reported to have healed the wounded Ares and Hades relying on herbal remedies.[93] The epithet 'paean' was also ascribed to the healer-god Asclepius. Generally, the paean was accompanied by a chorus, invoking the protection of a god against disease and misfortune.[94]

The prayer for Leonico Tomeo's recovery is particularly significant. It was indeed habitual practice among humanists to exchange brief poems of friendship in times of need. Moreover, it is interesting that the composition resonates with pagan motifs, for this reinforces the intellectual ties between Leonico Tomeo and the Hellenic revival that was taking place in the Veneto in the late fifteenth century. Not intended for publication, Bologni's poem offers a most valuable insight into the epistolary practices of the Italian republic of letters beyond the fictional and narrative dimensions of lyric and epic poetry.[95] The reference to Machaon, son of Asclepius and a famous doctor and surgeon, who healed his patients with the herbs that had been given to his father by the centaur Chiron, represents a learned reference to Homer. Bologni's invocation to Apollo emphasises the ties with medicine and Greek religion. In the Treviso manuscript, medicine is addressed as a healing prayer to the ill Leonico Tomeo.

[92] Treviso, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 582, cart. 18, f. 238, n. 176 and f. 241: '*Votum pro salute Leonici aegrotantis.* Maeret adhuc tristi languore Leonicus aeger / morosaque nimis febre laborat adhuc / Nec quisquam potuit morbo prodesse Machaon / Difficili Phrygiae cura nec ulla togae. / Phoebe tuum est munus Vati succurrere sacro. / Eja igitur votis annue dive meis / Sospite mox gratum paeana vovemus amico / Editaque in laudes carmina mille tuas / Si facilem vati pro vate negaveris aurem / Phoebe, vocet Numen quis, rogo, deinde tuum?'. I would like to thank Monia Bottaro of the Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso for her kind assistance in retrieving the relevant manuscript folia related to Leonico Tomeo. I have not been able so far to make completely sense of the expression 'difficilis Phrygia toga' apart as an elaborate metonymy to indicate Leonico Tomeo's cultural refinement.
[93] Homer, *Iliad*, V, 393–395.
[94] Lewis Richard Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1896); Grace H. Macurdy, 'The Derivation of the Greek Word Paean', *Language*, 6 (1930), pp. 297–303; Robert S. P. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 1142.
[95] From the *Promiscuorum libri XXI*, Bologni selected various compositions to be published in his *Electorum libri X*. The *Votum pro salute Leonici aegrotantis* is not among them. See Remo Ceserani, 'Bologni, Girolamo', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XI (1969), pp. 327–331.

2. *Et Amicorum*: The Place of Friendship in Leonico Tomeo's Medical Library

To shed further light on the view of medicine among Paduan humanists, Bologni's poem can be read together with some documentary sources. In his historical account of Padua mentioned above, Scardeone recalled Leonico Tomeo's friendship with the surgeon Domenico Senno (1461–1531). In the dialogue *Trophonius*, Leonico Tomeo remembers his friend in the following terms: 'These places abound on all sides with flowing fountains and are everywhere covered everywhere with healing herbs, which Domenico Senno, most knowledgeable among the physicists of our age, often assured me that they have immediate and most certain effects. He often comes to visit us in order to find them.'[96] Through Scardeone's work, Leonico Tomeo's words resonated as far as 1797, when the poet and translator Melchiorre Cesarotti (1730–1808) in his *Prose di vario genere* ('Literary Pieces of Various Kind') informed his reader about his praise of Senno.[97] Senno's healing herbs recall those of Machaon and prove how several of the tropes and places in the *Dialogi* emerge from the exchange of letters and the discussions that *literati*, physicians and philosophers exchanged among themselves.

Leonico Tomeo's engagement with early modern debates on medicine is demonstrated also by the quarrel with Pandolfo Collenuccio (1444–1504) on the intellectual formation of the Greek physician Dioscorides (c.40–90 AD). Whereas Leonico Tomeo argued that Pliny was a follower of the Dioscorides, Collenuccio thought that the opposite was true. Dioscorides's *Materia medica* ('Περὶ ὕλης ἰατρικῆς') examines plants, metals, poisonous substances and animals and their healing powers. The first printed edition in Greek was published by Aldus Manutius in 1499 and followed a Latin translation produced in the mid-fifteenth century by Ermolao Barbaro (1453–1493). Leonico Tomeo's interest in Dioscorides proves his familiarity with classical medicine and natural philosophy and is further evidence of his connections with the intellectual circle of the Neakademia in Venice, a learned club attended by scholars interested in Greek culture founded by Manutius.[98] Further evidence of Leonico Tomeo's engagement with Dioscorides is the dedicatory letter preceding the first Aldine edition of Dioscorides published in 1518 with the emendations of the Paduan physician Hieronymus

[96] Leonico Tomeo, *Trophonius, sive de divinatione*, in *Dialogi* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1530), p. 11, ll. 9-12: 'Undique enim irriguis scatent fontibus, ubique salutiferis convestiuntur herbis, quas Domenicus Sennus nostrae aetatis (ut scitis) inter herbarios praestantissimus certissimos et praesentaneos habere effectus mihi saepissime affirmavit. Solet enim harum inveniendarum gratia ad nos saepius accedere.'
[97] Melchiorre Cesarotti, *Prose di vario genere* (Florence: Molini, 1808), pp. 388–389.
[98] Louis-Mayeul Chaudon, *Nuovo dizionario istorico, ovvero Istoria in compendio di tutti gli uomini che si sono renduti celebri per talenti, virtù, sceleratezze, errori ecc.* (Naples: Michele Morelli, 1791), p. 42. On the Accademia Aldina or Neakademia, see Simone Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700: From Local to Global* (New York and Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Roscius (Girolamo Rossi). In his introductory dedication to Roscius, Gian Francesco d'Asola (c.1498–1557/8) recalls that Leonico Tomeo edited the Greek text of Dioscorides before it went to print.[99]

If one wants to shed some light on Leonico Tomeo's knowledge of medicine, it is important to look at the contents of his library more closely. Only a fraction of the large number of manuscripts, incunabula and printed books that Leonico Tomeo owned in his Paduan house has been identified. Numerous works bear connections with medicine, including the already mentioned codex of Actuarius[100] as well as collations of miscellaneous texts by Dioscorides and Galen. As noted in a letter he sent to his pupil Reginald Pole in 1524, Leonico Tomeo read 'all of Galen'.[101] In light of Leonico Tomeo's reference to *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* ('On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato') and other works by Galen, Stefania Fortuna has suggested that the manuscript he might have studied corresponds to a lost codex, once in the library of the Ferrarese physician Niccolò Leoniceno (1424–1528). Following Vivian Nutton's intuition and Jonathan Woolfson's endorsement, the manuscript in question has been identified with the label A73, in the inventory redacted by Leoniceno's nephew Vincenzo after his death in 1524. The latter contained a number of introductory and philosophical texts on Galen among which *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur* ('That the Qualities of the Mind Depend on the Temperament of the Body') and *De dignotione ex insomniis* ('On Diagnosis from Dreams').[102] Although it is unclear how Leonico Tomeo gained possession of A73, it is known that the codex was employed for the production of the first Greek edition of Galen, published by the heirs of Aldus Manutius in 1525.[103] Another manuscript of Galen owned by Leonico Tomeo is the Par. gr. 2273, containing *Ars medica* ('The Art of Medicine'). This, too, was a source for the Aldine edition, presenting a number of marginal annotations by a hand that is not Leonico Tomeo's own and that can also be found in his Aldine edition of Aristotle.[104] Although it seems that Leonico Tomeo's collaboration with the Aldine press was limited to the role of adviser regarding the accuracy of the translations from the Greek, his involvement with the edition of the classics is all the more fundamental in order to reassess the extent of his contribution to the revival of Greek thought in the Veneto. Tutor to the English students in

[99] See Annaclara Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola e la tipografia aldina: La vita, le edizioni, la biblioteca dell'Asolano* (Genoa: Sagep, 1988), pp. 140, 212–214.
[100] See Giacomelli, 'Su un codice greco di Giovanni Zaccaria Attuario'.
[101] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Ross. 997, ff. 30^{v}–31^{v}.
[102] Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors*, p. 93, note 4. Woolfson elaborates a suggestion by Vivian Nutton, *John Caius and the Manuscripts of Galen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 46, note 18.
[103] On the manuscripts employed for the production of Galen's first Greek edition by the heirs of Aldus Manutius, see Véronique Boudon-Millot, 'Introduction générale', in Galen, *Sur l'ordre de ses propres livres, Sur ses propres livres, Que l'excellent médecin est aussi philosophe*, ed. by V. Boudon-Millot (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007), pp. 114–115.
[104] Boudon-Millot, 'Introduction générale', p. 145; Fortuna, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Galeno', p. 328.

Padua Thomas Lupset (c.1495–1530) and John Clement (c.1500–1572), both collaborators of Giovanni Battista Opizzoni (c.1485–c.1532), the humanist doctor from Pavia responsible for the production of the Aldine Galen, Leonico Tomeo participated in one of the most important achievements of the Italian Renaissance and this confirms the intellectual relevance of his role as a philosopher and a philologist.

In order to understand the nature of Leonico Tomeo's manuscript annotations and their relationship to the debates he entertained with his fellow humanists following his readings, it is worth observing some examples in more detail. On the first folio of Leonico Tomeo's copy of Galen, now held at Yale University Library, besides his ex libris, stands a quotation from *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* which includes the words: 'Plato is the first of all philosophers.'[105] It does not come as a surprise that Leonico Tomeo fostered his academic interests through the study of Platonic texts. It is however significant that after reading Galen, whose praise of Plato as the most eminent of philosophers he quoted, the place of Plato in Leonico Tomeo's scholarship became increasingly important over the decades. If initially Plato was, for Tomeo, merely Aristotle's teacher, he subsequently became the most respectable and skilled doctor of souls.

Galen's medical Platonism was furthered by Leonico Tomeo through his translation of the *Pro puero epilectico consilium*, which was published posthumously as part of the Juntine edition of Galen's complete works in 1542. In the preface to the latter, the editor Agostino Gadaldini (1515–1575) wrote that he had received Leonico Tomeo's translation from Francesco Frigimelica (1491–1558), former professor of medicine in Padua from 1525 to 1546 and later, Papal chamberlain.[106] Leonico Tomeo's translation remained standard in subsequent editions of Galen's works.

Before ending this section, I would like to devote a few words to the relationship between medicine and magic in Leonico Tomeo. On 27 July 1524, he wrote a letter to Pole thanking him for delivering the cramp rings that Francis Poyntz (d. 1521) had given to him as

[105] Leonico Tomeo's annotation reads: 'ὥσπερ οὐδέ ὁ πρῶτος ἁπάντων φιλοσόφων Πλάτων, οὐδέ γάρ ἂν ῥαγῶσιν ὑπό φθόνου σύμπαντες οἱ μετ' αὐτόν οὐδ' ἂν ὑπό φιλονεικίας ἀναἰσχυντα σοφίζωνται, καθάπερ οἱ περὶ τόν Χρύσιππον, ἢ τὴν δόξαν ὑπερβαλέσθαι ποτὲ δυνήσονται τὴν Πλάτωνος ἢ τόν τῶν ἀποδείξεων μιμὴσασθαι κόσμον." Accents have been kept in the original as found in Leonico Tomeo's notes. The annotation is a quotation from Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, III, 4, 31. See Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, ed. by Phillip de Lacy, 2 vols (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1978–1980), I, pp. 198–199: 'Plato, the first of all philosophers. And Plato's successors, even if they all burst with envy or contentiously contrive shameless sophisms, as Chrysippus and his school did, will never be able to surpass his reputation or match the beauty of his words'. See also Fortuna, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Galeno', p. 329.

[106] Galen, *Opera omnia*, 12 vols (Venice: Heirs of Lucantonio Giunta, 1541–1542), f. 3^{v}: 'Nicolaus Leonicus fama admodum illustris vir, cuius translationem libelli, quem inscripsit Documentum de puero epileptico, ab excellentissimo Francisco Frizimeliga, medicinae professore, accepimus.'

a gift.[107] According to ancient beliefs, circlets of sacred metal were employed to prevent epileptic seizures due to their circular shape recalling that of a ligature. Galen and later Avicenna stated that fits could be avoided by ligature of a limb or part of it upon an 'aura' rising from them.[108] Poyntz was a member of King Henry VIII's court and a trustee of the Knightrider Street property acquired by Thomas Linacre (c.1460–1524), the celebrated English Galenist, for the College of Physicians. The exchange of cramp rings in England dates back to the Middle Ages, when they were first recorded as a gift in the life of St Edward in the *Golden Legend*.[109] The practice became very popular during the reign of Henry VIII, as is attested to by many testimonies. It has been ascertained that cramp rings were a token of the royal physician's friendship, although they were primarily apotropaic tools in so far as, after being blessed by the king, they were used as charms against epilepsy. In a letter to Guillaume Budé, Linacre, the President of the College of Physicians and a pupil of Leonico Tomeo in Padua, wrote that he 'has sent him some rings consecrated by the King as a charm against spasms.' Budé replied that he had distributed the eighteen rings he had received among the wives of his relatives, telling them that the silver and golden rings were amulets against slender and calumny.[110] For Leonico Tomeo, the rings by Poyntz were a token of their mutual friendship. He even expressed his enthusiasm to Pole by saying that Poyntz had 'desired, not through words but through works, to count me among your friends'.[111]

Leonico Tomeo's reaction has been interpreted as part of a gift-giving culture that was common among humanists.[112] I argue that in this case there seems to be more at stake. Firstly, Leonico Tomeo's choice of words seems to be very specific. His emphasis on works can be interpreted as evidence of a genuine religious sensibility on his part and it confirms his Aristotelian understanding of friendship as *sodalitas*. At the same time, it also demonstrates the devotional significance that Tomeo assigned to material objects, for he seems to regard some specific items almost as talismans or icons, instrumental to picture spiritual reality through the mind and ultimately approach the divine. This, as we will see in due course, is a crucial point of contention in the dialogue *Sadoletus, sive de precibus*. Secondly, Leonico

[107] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, f. 46^{v}. On cramp rings and their use in medieval and Renaissance England see Raymond Crawfurd, 'The Blessing of Cramp Rings', in *Studies in the History and Method of Science*, ed. by Charles Singer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), pp. 165–187.
[108] On epilepsy in antiquity, see Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Monica Centanni, 'Nomi del male: *Phrenitis* e *epilepsia* nel *Corpus Galenicum*', *Museum Patavinum*", 1 (1987), pp. 47–79.. See Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, VII, 3.
[109] Jacobus de Voragine, 'The Life of S. Edward the Confessor', in *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, transl. by William Caxton and ed. by F. S. Ellis, 7 vols (London: Dent and Sons, 1931), VI, pp. 3–22.
[110] As quoted in Crawfurd, *The Blessing*, pp. 173–174.
[111] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, f. 47^{v}.
[112] Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors*, pp. 114–116.

Tomeo's appreciation for the cramp rings seems to underlie a genuine interest in epilepsy as a medical concern, this being demonstrated by his translation of Galen's text on the same subject. Although we do not know whether his interest in the subject was personal or merely theoretical, possibly related to ideas of Platonic *furor* or Pauline *raptus*, the gift of cramp rings blessed by the King of England must certainly have amounted to more than just a sign of friendship to Leonico Tomeo, despite his humanist education and ethic.

3. Philosophy and Medicine: Caring for the Soul by Curing the Body

By and large, what emerges from the study of Leonico Tomeo's medical humanism is the composite nature of its approach. Being a discipline that at the time – and in that particular context – was at the crossroads of a variety of philological, poetical, empirical and theological pursuits, medicine was characterised by a complex relationship with both reason and belief. As we will see, in its capacity as a necessary tool for the preservation and education of the body, medicine plays an important role in the correct appreciation of those aspect in the *Dialogi* concerned with natural philosophy as derived from Aristotle.

The place of medical humanism within the disciplinary arrangement of Renaissance education is central for a sound reconstruction of Leonico Tomeo's thought. As indicated by the example of Alò's apothecary and its literary transposition in the *Macaronea*, the landscape of Paduan medicine was not confined to the university, but extended to public squares, markets, pharmacies and humanist households. The library holdings so far documented, alongside authorial interventions in manuscripts and books, confirm Leonico Tomeo's profound engagement with early modern debates on the correct interpretation of the works of seminal physicians of antiquity such as Dioscorides and Galen. Furthermore, the study and translation of Galen's works proves that, in Renaissance Padua, in order to be a proper philosopher, one had also to be trained as a physician or at least study in close contact with physicians. The operations of the soul (the object of natural science) depended on the health of the body. For someone like Leonico Tomeo, textual and physical bodies could therefore be equally dissected through philological means, in order to signal disruptions, understand their causes and restore lost balances. The model of logical *regressus* was in this sense central in so far as it allowed the physician, the natural philosopher and the religious man to infer the causes of phenomena through the study of their effects.[113]

[113] On *regressus*, see Heikki Mikkeli, 'The Foundation of an Autonomous Natural Philosophy: Zabarella on the Classification of Arts and Sciences', in *Method and Order in Renaissance Philosophy of Nature: The Aristotle*

From this point of view, the humanist enterprise of translating and emendating classical medical texts can be conceived as an attempt at establishing correspondences between naturalistic and materialistic interpretations of life at large with the aim of producing or recovering a lost state of harmony. The example of cramp rings discussed in this chapter testifies to an integrated system of beliefs, in which reason and revelation, respectively fuelled by a strong scientific approach to the explanation of phenomenal causes and a genuine religious faith, coexisted peacefully. The material culture of devotion, treating objects as physical embodiments of the divine, warding off manifestations of evil and illness at once, accounts for the apotropaic nature of art. Through the offering of a ring, epilepsy was avoided, and friendship renewed. This is to say that physical health was preserved, and love strengthened.

Commentary Tradition, ed. by Daniel A. Di Liscia, Eckhard Kessler and Charlotte Methuen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 211–228; Antonino Poppi, *Ricerche sulla teologia e la scienza nella Scuola padovana del Cinque e Seicento* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2001).

Chapter 3
Cultural Particulars: Leonico Tomeo's Art Interests

In the previous chapter, I have suggested that a fundamental aspect of Leonico Tomeo's medical humanism, beside the attention he paid to the role of the soul, was his emphasis on the material and bodily aspects of human experience. In order to achieve humoral balance, restore health and thereby ennoble one's spiritual disposition, medical remedies were necessary. In early modern Padua, the stuff of medicine ranged from the spices used to prepare the theriac and the majolica jars in which this was contained to cramp rings against epileptic seizures and offerings of sacrificial geese made during fictionally recreated necromantic rituals. Leonico Tomeo's interest in medical humanism was also material to the extent that it relied upon manuscripts and books to study the thought of the ancients, while in turn producing texts that responded to those ideas. In this dissertation, I contend that Leonico Tomeo's engagement with medical practice and scholarship, and indirectly also his doctrine of the soul, were as attentive to the material circumstances of knowledge production as they were natural philosophical. This concept can be explained by referring to apotropaic medical remedies that Leonico Tomeo thought can be used to ward off harmful influences and attract favourable powers by way of sympathy, but also, in more philosophical terms, by linking the operations of the soul to the dominion of physical nature. In Leonico Tomeo's cosmos, as will become apparent in Chapters 7, 8 and 9, the soul relies on the perception of abstract knowledge via corporeal things to ascend to the truth and beauty. Leonico Tomeo argues that the aery vehicles to which the soul is attached have to be swift and agile, and this can only happen through following a healthy diet and behaving in a morally responsible way. The body is also deemed necessary in order for the soul to move, have sensible experiences and, most importantly, think about the spheres of both immanent and transcendent reality. Tomeo agrees with those philosophers – the Platonists – mentioned by Aristotle as saying that 'the soul is not a body nor is it without a body'. The proof is that the soul is always attached to some kind of material substrate, despite it being a spiritual principle.[114] Medicine represents for Leonico Tomeo the discipline through which the empirical and the intellectual dimensions of life can be linked together. However, this does not mean that he intends to reduce the soul to a material cause or to develop a mortalistic theory of the mind's afterlife.

[114] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, 'Proemium', in Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, ed. by N. L. Tomeo (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1530), p. 8: 'Quamobrem philosophus Aristoteles hanc indissolubilem (ut arbitror) illorum cognationem volens innuere, in commentariis de anima recte dixisse inquit illos qui animam neque esse corpus neque sine corpore esse. Habet igitur (ut dictat ratio) sibi semper annexam cuiusdam naturam corporis'.

Besides medicine, the other pursuit through which, according to Leonico Tomeo, a movement takes place from the material to the immaterial is art. The continuities between medicine and art in the early modern period were mostly related to their common interest in the empirical dimensions of human knowledge.[115] Studies on the material culture of the Renaissance have highlighted the centrality of objects in the lives of humanists as markers of identity and self-fashioning.[116] Among these, scientific tools and instruments such as astrolabes, globes and telescopes attracted the interest of merchants and collectors for their aesthetic qualities and not just for their scientific utility.[117] The phenomenon of patronage and the relevance of knowledge production through the circulation of objects have also been widely explored in relation to the republic of letters. It has been highlighted how the increasing expansion of knowledge networks, commercial fairs, postal systems, shipping routes and commercial roads facilitated the circulation and therefore the availability of the most diverse goods, from medical remedies and healing herbs to ideas, books and artworks. A vast literature also exists concerning the other side of the art collecting coin, that is, the environments where these objects were consumed by their temporary or final owners: the scholar's study and their household.[118]

This chapter focuses on the place that art had in Leonico Tomeo's life and its relevance in shaping some of the views he held in the *Dialogues* concerning the stance of objects towards subjects. In Chapter 1, I have argued that Paduan apothecaries and herbalists like Alò had long concerned themselves with the relationship between image, word and nature through herbals, health-related texts and medical procedures. We shall now see how, from the sixteenth century onwards, the link between medicine and art was strengthened as a result of the humanists' interest in objects as thinking tools. By contextualising the role of art in Renaissance Padua

[115] On the development of linear perspective during the Renaissance, the classic study by Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991 [1927]) remains essential. On the parallel between art and science, see *The Natural Sciences and the Arts: Aspects of Interaction From the Renaissance to the 20th Century*, ed. by Allan Ellenius (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1985); Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science and Humanism in the R*enaissance (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sachiko Kusukawa, *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[116] On art and commerce in the Renaissance, see *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science and Art in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Pamela Smith and Paula Findlen (London: Routledge, 2002).

[117] On the artistic value of scientific instruments, see Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Vincent Ilardi, *Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2007), esp. 117–206; *Empires of Knowledge: Scientific Networks in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Paula Findlen (London: Routledge, 2018).

[118] On early modern knowledge networks, see for example *Merchants and Marvels*. On *studioli*, see Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

with reference to contemporary testimonies and by considering Leonico Tomeo's role as a patron and collector, I will show that art played an important role at the crossroads of that particular domain of human ingenuity that intersects science, philosophy and religious devotion. Much like medicine, art was of fundamental importance when one wished to explore the continuities between nature and culture. In the case of Leonico Tomeo, his attempt to provide a new understanding of the soul as a substance that could mediate between Platonic dualism and Aristotelian hylomorphism was also premised on his experience of art, both as a collector and a natural historian of aesthetic phenomena, to bridge the gap between the senses and the intellect.

1. Collecting Art in Renaissance Padua

> There were four things the Greeks used to teach their boys: letters, wrestling, music, and drawing (*designativa*), which some call portrayal (*protractiva*) ... It is true that nowadays drawing does not pass in practice as a liberal study except so far as it relates to writing – writing being the same thing as portraying and drawing – for it has otherwise remained in practice the province of painters. But as Aristotle says [*Politic*, 1338a], among the Greeks, activity of this kind was not only advantageous but also highly respected. When buying vases, paintings, and statues, things in which the Greeks took much pleasure, it was an aid against being cheated over the price; and it also contributed much to comprehending the beauty and grace of objects, both natural and artificial. These are things it is proper for men of distinction to be able to discuss with each other and appreciate.[119]

With these words, Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder (1370–1444), in his *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis adulescentiae* ('On the Noble Manners and Liberal Studies of the Youth', 1402), defines the place of the arts in fourteenth-century Padua.[120] According to Vergerio the Elder, drawing equals writing in so far as both were concerned with the description of what he called 'characters'. Far from being an activity reserved to artists, drawing was to be a topic of debate between men of letters. Beside purchasing and collecting after the example of the Greeks, they also thought that drawing would help understand 'the beauty and grace of

[119] Pier Paolo Vergerio, *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis adulescentiae*, ed. by Attilio Gnesotto, in *Atti e Memorie della Regia Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova*, 34 (1918), pp. 75–157, esp. pp. 122–123, as quoted and translated (with slight changes) by Michael Baxandall in 'Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965), pp. 183–204 (184). On Vergerio, see John M. McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996); id., 'Innovation in Early Humanist Rhetoric: The Oratory of Vergerio', *Rinascimento*, 22 (1982), pp. 3–32.

[120] On Vergerio, see Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio e la Riforma a Venezia* (1498–1549) (Rome: Il Veltro Editrice, 1988).

objects, both natural and artificial'. It is clear from Vergerio's words that within the humanist circles of the Veneto, art was both a sensory and an intellectual pursuit, one combining aesthetic appreciation with erudite reasoning. Art was central to the Paduan cultural milieu because it was a collective enterprise that contributed to the common good by exposing the individual self to the many vicissitudes of the world. This is to say that any dialogue prompted by the interaction with objects as well as by the activity of collecting, facilitated the understanding of the beauty of things depending on either nature or art (*ad deprehendendam rerum quae natura constant aut arte pulchritudinem*).

In this sense, the activity of 'buying vases, paintings and statues', as Vergerio describes it, is one that invites a transition from the contemplation of appearances and the handling of objects in a private context to the action implied in the acquisition and arrangement of objects in space, at both a private and a public level. Moreover, taste is complemented by touch through the mediation of verbal expressions. The presence of a vase, a painting or a statue in an environment is, as a matter of fact, articulated through written and oral forms of communication in which the object-subject relationship is necessarily at the centre of the debate. The liberal arts therefore contributed to the moral growth of an individual through the definition of what Vergerio called writing as an art of representing objects, for 'writing is itself drawing and designing' (*scribere et ipsum est protrahere atque designare*). The emphasis on the epideictic nature of material objects was of particular importance to humanists, as proved, for example, by such texts as Ambrogio Leone's *De nobilitate rerum dialogus* ('Dialogue on the Dignity of Things' 1525), discussing the importance of the ethical dimension of the visual arts for the development of a man's nobility of character.[121]

Like Vergerio and Leone, Leonico Tomeo devoted himself to the arts, seen as that disciplinary domain in which one could carry out antiquarian investigations, intellectual pursuits and craft expertise. Proof of this is the episode reported by Pierio Valeriano (1477–1558) in Book 33 of his *Hieroglyphica* ('Hieroglyphs').[122] Pierio recounts that one day, in the Venetian house of his uncle Urbano Bolzanio (1442–1524), a famous humanist from Belluno who had travelled to Egypt, Arabia and Palestina and the author of the first Greek grammar in Latin, Daniele Ranieri, Niccolò Leoniceno and Leonico Tomeo met to view a remarkable artwork. Supposedly having taken place in 1522, this gathering revolved around an artefact known as the 'Isiac Tablet' (*Mensa Isiaca*), a bronze tablet with enamel and silver inlayed hieroglyphics. Although probably produced during Roman times, in the Renaissance the *Mensa*

[121] On Leone, see *Ambrogio Leone's De Nola, Venice 1514: Humanism and Antiquarian Culture in Renaissance Southern Italy*, ed. by Bianca de Divitiis, Fulvio Lenzo and Lorenzo Miletti (Leiden: Brill, 2018), esp. pp. 59–76.
[122] Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura italiana dall'anno 1500 all'anno 1600*, 16 vols (Modena: Società Tipografica, 1787–1794), XII, p. 1104.

was regarded as an Egyptian original and its meaning connected to the mystic traditions of the ancient religions of the Near East. After the Sack of Rome in 1527, the tablet was brought to the north of Italy where it was first acquired by Urbano and his nephew Pierio and subsequently sold to Bembo, hence its alternative name *Bembine Tablet*. Only in the early seventeenth century did the Paduan antiquarian and collector Lorenzo Pignoria (1571–1631) first suggest that the images depicted lacked any meaning, an intuition from which the Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) dissented, as evidenced by his attempt at deciphering the *Mensa Isiaca* as late as 1652 in his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*.[123]

The episode recorded by Valeriano opens with Urbano studying Pindar in his Venetian house. Prompted by the arrival of his humanist friends, he explains the presence of an eye on the tablet by referring to the following passage from the eighth *Nemean Ode:* 'Joy is also eager to set before men's eyes a pledge of friendship.'[124] The Venetian nobleman Ranieri was particularly enthralled by the tablet's mystery, for his friend Pietro Bembo had previously sent to him from Rome a copy of a 'tablet remarkable for its antiquity' and a number of obelisks.[125] The pleasure that Ranieri, and evidently also Bembo, took in the mysterious nature of hieroglyphs is symptomatic of the humanist passion for the exotic. Sometimes the interest was so blind that it led even the most educated men of the Renaissance to commit awkward blunders. Ranieri's emphasis on the tablet's 'remarkable antiquity' reinforced the fascination with the world of antiquity, specifically with Egypt, and signals that one of the most important criteria for judging the value of an artwork was its age. Egyptomania, that is, went hand in hand with the humanist devotion to the past, elevated as a moral and aesthetic model.[126] Not content with the Roman and Greek traditions that they had revived through the translation of texts and

[123] On the *Mensa Isiaca* see Massimo Danzi, *La biblioteca del Cardinal Pietro Bembo* (Geneva: Droz, 2005) and Gareth D. Williams, *Pietro Bembo on Etna: The Ascent of a Venetian Humanist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 67. On Lorenzo Pignoria's attempt at deciphering the *Mensa Isiaca*, see Lorenzo Pignoria, *Mensa Isiaca: qua sacrorum apud Aegyptios ratio et simulacra subjectis tabulis aeneis simul exhibentur et explicantur* (Amsterdam: Andreas Frisius, 1670). For secondary literature on Pignoria, see Jean Seznec, 'Un essai de mythologie comparée au début du XVII[e] siècle (Lorenzo Pignoria)', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 48 (1931), pp. 268–281. On Athanasius Kircher's interpretation of the *Mensa Isiaca*, see Paula Findlen, 'Introduction', in *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, ed. by P. Findlen (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 17)

[124] Pindar, *Nemean Ode*, VIII, 43-44 ('For Deinias of Aegina Double Foot Race'), in *Odes*, tr. by Diane Arnson Svarlien (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991): 'The uses of friends are of all kinds; those in times of toil are the highest, yet the delight also seeks to set a trustworthy pledge before the eyes.'

[125] Pierio Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica sive de sacris Aegyptiorum literis commentarii* (Basel: Michael Isengrin, 1556), p. 233c: 'Tabulae cuiusdam ob antiquitatem admirabilis.' On Pierio Valeriano see Brian Curran, '*De sacrarum litterarum Aegyptiorum interpretatione*: Reticence and Hubris in Hieroglyphic Studies in the Renaissance: Pierio Valeriano and Annius of Viterbo', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 43–44 (1998–1999), pp. 139–182.

[126] On Egyptomania in the Renaissance, see James Stevens Curl, *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt as the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West* (London: Routledge, 2005); Brian Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance: The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007); Elena Vaiani et al., *Egyptian and Roman Antiquities and Renaissance Decorative Arts* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2018).

the adoption of heathen mores, humanists harked back further in time, attempting to quench their thirst for knowledge directly at the source of what they regarded as the most ancient form of wisdom, that of the Orient.

Venice occupied a privileged position within such a vivid geography of collecting.[127] Trading routes crossing through the *Serenissima* favoured the development of an art market in which East and West blended in unique ways. Testimonies of this encounter come from the inventories of Venetian citizens. To give only one example, the jurist Andrea Terzo decorated his self-contained study with thirteen paintings both big and small, and colourful Iznik ware from Constantinople.[128] The early modern Venetian passion for the East, however, facilitated the production of forgeries and, consequently, also the outlining of narratives based on misattributions and misconceptions, as is the case with Valeriano's *Hieroglyphs*.

An episode similar to the one reported by Valeriano is evoked by Bembo in a letter he addressed to Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485–1557), who had commissioned from Giovanni da Cavino (1500–1570) the roundels of the Veronese city gates. Bembo wrote that he had obtained the Greek inscription which the Venetian diplomat Andrea de' Franceschi (1473–1552) had given Ramusio as a gift. After having the inscription translated by the philologist Bernardino Donato (d. 1543), Bembo said that Ramusio's version was better. He concluded by saying: 'I still have not discussed the matter with Leonico, but I certainly believe that he will not add anything to your translation.'[129] This insight into the exchange of objects between humanists reveals their interest in the meaning of the works they collected beyond mere aesthetic appreciation. More importantly, Bembo's words testify to Leonico Tomeo's role as an advisor to his fellow humanists. One cannot rule out the possibility that the Andrea de' Franceschi mentioned above was a relative of Giacomo Antonio de' Franceschi, husband of Leonico Tomeo's sister Agostina and active as a music printer in Venice.[130] This adds to the reconstruction of the cultural network in which Leonico Tomeo operated by also revealing the

[127] On the flourishing of the arts and trading in Venice, see Linda Carroll, *Commerce, Peace and the Arts in Renaissance Venice: Ruzante and the Empire at Centre Stage* (London: Routledge, 2016); *Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797*, ed. by Stefano Carboni (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[128] Venice, Archivio di Stato, atti G. A. Catti, Inventory of 13 January 1604, reg. 3378: 'Tredici quadri tra grandi e piccoli and pezzi n. 26 tra grandi a piccoli de majoliche da Constantinopoli de più sorte.' On the diffusion of Oriental porcelain in Venice, see Ronald W. Lightbown, 'Oriental Art and the Orient in late Renaissance and Baroque Italy', *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 32 (1969), pp. 229–231.

[129] Pietro Bembo, *Lettere*, ed. by Ernesto Travi, 4 vols (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1987–1993), II, n. 732: 'Ho avuto piacer grande della tavola che vi ha donata M. Andrea Franceschi. Non si potea locar meglio. Olla fatta tradurre a M. Bernardin Donato: quae mihi non probatur; e piacemi molto più quella che mandata mi avete, e parmi che sia bella e buona. Con M. Leonico non ho ancora parlato di questo: ben credo che esso non aggiungerà niente alla vostra traduzione.' Quoted in Giulio Bodon, Veneranda antiquitas: *Studi sull'eredità dell'antico nella Rinascenza veneta* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 31–32.

[130] Venice, Archivio di Stato, Cancelleria Inferiore, *Miscellanea notai diversi*, envelope 27, n. 2509. In his testament dated 29 October 1475, Biagio de Tomeis leaves to his daughters Angela and Agostina 'pro earum maritare de meis bonis ducatos 500 pro qualibet earum, cum pervenerint ad hetatem annorum 18'.

close ties between the major agents of intellectual change between fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A further testimony of Leonico Tomeo's engagement with the arts comes from Giorgio Vasari's *Lives*. There it is reported that the engraver Girolamo Campagnola (1433/1435–1522) dedicated a poem to Leonico Tomeo, in which he extolled the achievements of the most famous Paduan artists, active during the government of the Carrara family.[131] In the absence of this text, we are unable to judge its significance or even its existence. More certain evidence of Leonico Tomeo's active participation in the Paduan art scene is provided, as already mentioned in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, by the documents in which the sculptor Andrea Briosco, also known as 'il Riccio', had been asked to execute the funerary monument of the surgeon Girolamo Della Torre. It is likely that together with his friend and colleague at the University of Padua, Giovanni Battista da Leone (c.1450–1528), Leonico Tomeo devised the iconography of the tomb. Fritz Saxl suggested that the monument's subject matter was based on Leonico Tomeo's dialogue *Alverotus*.[132] Although this conjecture is not easy to prove in the absence of documentary evidence, Saxl's analysis is important because it provides some coordinates concerning the extent to which Leonico Tomeo contributed to the flourishing of Paduan sculpture after Donatello. As the complex iconography of the Della Torre tomb has already been discussed on several occasions, I shall not need to dwell on this matter.[133] What I think it

[131] Marcantonio Michiel, *Notizia d'opere di disegno nella prima metà del secolo XVI esistenti in Padova, Cremona, Milano, Pavia, Bergamo, Crema e Venezia*, ed. by Jacopo Morelli (Bassano: Jacopo Morelli, 1800), p. 30; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550), pp. 232 and 432, notes 12 and 22. The only link between Campagnola and Leonico Tomeo that I was able to find involves the pharmacy of 'Al pomo d'oro', once property of his uncle Alò. Frescoed by Domenico Campagnola in 1528, the apothecary's façade was commissioned by the then pharmacist Meneghini. The poor state of the work does not allow us to study its subject matter. No further documentation survives regarding the work or the commission. On the seventeenth-century refurbishment of the pharmacy *Al pomo d'oro*, see Erice Rigoni, 'Di alcune case padovane del Cinquecento', *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova*, 44 (1955), pp. 71–98, esp. 78-81; Rosita Colpi, 'Domenico Campagnola (nuove notizie biografiche e artistiche)', *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova*, 31–43 (1942–1954), pp. 81–110 (100).

[132] Scant information survives regarding Giovanni Battista da Leone. From Scardeone's *De antiquitate* we understand that he was a professor of philosophy at the University of Padua, erudite and especially knowledgeable in Greek and Latin. An interpreter of Aristotle, he is reported to have been, together with Leonico Tomeo, tutor to Reginald Pole. This is a piece of information that we gather from Pietro Bembo's correspondence with the English cardinal himself. In a letter dated 15 March 1529, Leonico Tomeo wrote to Pole that Da Leone had died of typhus, which at the time led to death within seven or nine days. See Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, f. 35^{r}. On the epidemic spreading across Italy in the sixteenth century, see Alfonso Corradi, *Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al 1850* (Palermo: Gamberini e Parmeggiani, 1865). On Da Leone see Scardeone, *De antiquitate urbis Patavii*, p. 247; Saxl, 'Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance', 366–367. On Da Leone's library, see Giovanni Mercati, *Codici latini Pico Grimani Pio e di altra biblioteca ignota del secolo XVI esistenti nell'Ottoboniana e i codici greci Pio di Modena con una digressione per la storia dei codici di S. Pietro in Vaticano* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1838), pp. 273–274.

[133] On Riccio's tomb, see Saxl, 'Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance'; Carson, *Andrea Riccio's Della Torre Tomb Monument*; William Henry Patrick Laffan, *Andrea Riccio and the Tombs of Paduan Scholars*, MPhil Thesis, London, The Warburg Institute, 1993; Bertrand Jestaz, *Monuments venitiens de la première Renaissance: À la lumière des documents* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere e Arti, 2017). On Riccio, see Leo Planiscig, *Andrea Riccio* (Vienna: Schroll & Co., 1927); Francesco Cessi, *Andrea Briosco detto il Riccio scultore (1470-*

is important to emphasise here, however, is that Della Torre was a famous physician and that his tomb celebrated his achievements as a professor at the University of Padua, the moral dignity he earned through his profession and the gift of eternal fame he gained through his moral and spiritual conduct. Riccio's work, therefore, showcased a number of characteristic traits of art commission in Padua at the time, from the close relationship between science and sculpture to the focus on the soul's afterlife destiny, an aspect that was certainly close to the debate on the immortality of the soul.

A further source testifying to Leonico Tomeo's interest in and knowledge of the arts is Pomponio Gaurico's *De sculptura* ('On Sculpture', 1504), the first treatise entirely dedicated to this medium in the history of art theory. In Gaurico's text, Tomeo is presented as a connoisseur of sculpture visiting the workshops of both Gaurico and Briosco. The debate on the relationship between reality and imagination that Leonico Tomeo and Gaurico discuss in *De Sculptura* is of the utmost significance. Because of its complexity, I shall investigate it in greater detail below. What is important to say here, is that Leonico Tomeo's role as a patron is also proved by his generosity towards the artists.[134] In the National Archives of Padua, an Act of November 1529 states that in his house of Contrà Pontecorvo, Leonico Tomeo hosted Giovanni Ettore Maria Lascaris, son of the Venetian artist Pirgotele, who flourished at the end of the fifteenth century.[135] Celebrated by Scardeone, Lascaris shared with Leonico Tomeo his vast knowledge of Greek literature and poetry.[136] The fact that he hosted a young artist in his house is most certainly evidence of his continual engaging with art and the artistic profession. Furthermore, in the papers documenting the marriage between Leonico Tomeo's niece Laura with Marcantonio Bordon on March 29, 1529, the latter appears to be a relative of the famous illuminator Benedetto Bordon (1460–1531). Marcantonio seems to have bought a house in Contrà San Francesco (present-day 'via Galilei') that once belonged to Alvise Cornaro (1484–1566). There he moved with Laura. Leonico Tomeo paid 600 ducats for his niece's dowry by granting Bordon the rights of ownership of his house in Contrà Pontecorvo.[137]

Two further clues, finally, come from his *Dialogi*. One of the recurring characters in this work is Andrea Fusco or Fuscho from Faenza, of whom very little is known. The only

1532) (Trent: CAT, 1965); Davide Banzato, *Andrea Briosco detto il Riccio: Mito pagano e cristianesimo nel Rinascimento. Il candelabro pasquale del Santo a Padova* (Milan: Skira, 2009).

[134] Padua, Archivio Notarile Nazionale, MS c. 1742, ff. 140^{v}-141^{v}: 'presentibus magistro Andrea quondam ser Mathei Bertholini carpentario habitatore in contrada Pontiscurvi et domino Hectore Paleologo artium scolare filio ser Pirogotoli de contracta Sancti Antonii confessoris, testibus.'

[135] On the relationship between Leonico Tomeo and Pirgotele's son as well as on their manuscripts, see Pontani, 'Postille a Niccolò Leonico Tomeo'.

[136] Scardeone, *De antiquitate urbis Patavii*, p. 249.

[137] Padua, Archivio Notarile di Stato, MS 938, ff. 298^{r}-299^{r}. For the payment of the dowry, see ff. 300^{r}, 331^{r} and 332^{r}.

information surviving concerns his activity as a woodcarver and assistant to the architect Andrea Palladio (1508–1580).[138] Another recurring figure is that of Alessandro Capella, son of the more famous Febo, Great Chancellor of the Republic of Venice.[139] The historian Jacopo Morelli reported that Capella was secretary to Andrea Gritti and that he had been imprisoned with him in Pavia. From Morelli we also learn that he was an art collector and in this capacity he owned a portrait of the young Leonico Tomeo.[140] It is likely that the portrait in question was the same recorded by the collector and man of letters Marcantonio Michiel (1484–1552) in his *Notizie d'opere del disegno* ('Notes on the Pictures and Works of Art'), an account of the most notable art collections of Northern Italy written between 1521 and 1543.

2. Paduan Interiors: Inside Leonico Tomeo's Household

Tomeo assembled a conspicuous number of artworks in his Paduan house of Contrà San Francesco, which were recorded by Michiel in his *Notizia*:

> In the room on the ground floor the colossal marble head of Bacchus, crowned with vine-leaves, is antique. The small picture on canvas, a foot high, representing a landscape with some fishermen, who have caught an otter and two little figures watching nearby, is by John of Bruges. The marble half-relief, representing two centaurs standing and a satyr lying down asleep and showing his back, is antique. In the room upstairs the marble head of Caracalla is antique. The marble head of the soldier Galatea with helmet is antique. The other seven marble heads representing different men and women are antique. The little Jupiter in bronze, sitting down like Bembo's Jupiter, but smaller in size, is antique. The small Silenus lying on his back is antique. The two small figures of Hercules standing, the gilded one with apples in his hand, the other with the club, are antique. The marble hand of a little child is antique and a perfect work. The stucco bas-relief, one foot high, representing Hercules with Virtue and Voluptuousness, is an antique work from a temple of Hercules in Rome and all decorated likewise. The portrait of Messer Leonico himself, when a young man – now all deteriorated, turned yellow and obscured – is by Giovanni Bellini. The gouache profile portrait of his father was by the hand of Jacopo Bellini. The numerous medals, earthen

[138] Dora Thornton was able to retrieve Andrea Fusco's signature on a contract drawing for a design of 1578 for a ceiling to be executed in the Sala dei Pregadi. See Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study*, p. 60. In Fusco's inventory, his cabinet is also recorded. This contained his private architectural library, including treatises by Palladio, Vitruvius and Sebastiano Serlio, together with a medal bearing his likeness. See Isabella Palumbo Fossati, 'L'interno della casa dell'artigiano e dell'artista nella Venezia del Cinquecento', *Studi Veneziani*, 8 (1984), pp. 109–153, esp. 119, n. 20. On the medal, see George Francis Hill, *Portrait Medals of Italian Artists of the Renaissance* (London: Warner, 1912), no. 46. See also Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study*, pp. 72–73.

[139] On the Cappello (sometimes also Capello) family, see Antonio Longo, *Dell'origine e provenienza dei cittadini originarj* (Venice: Gasali, 1817); John Temple-Leader, *Libro dei nobili veneti* (Florence: Tipografia delle Murate, 1866), esp. p. 25.

[140] Michiel, *Notizia d'opere di disegno*, pp. 16, 118.

> vases, cameos etc., are antique. The vellum roll, containing the history of the Israelites and Jesus, with representations of ancient costumes and arms, mountains, rivers, towns and people, with the explanation of the history in Greek, is a Byzantine work executed five hundred years ago.[141]

Michiel's account provides important information for a basic reconstruction of Leonico Tomeo's house interiors and for a better understanding of his taste and choices as a collector. Although the incomplete nature of this report prevents us from knowing the exact number of objects he owned and the way in which he displayed them in his house, the *Notizia* clearly reveals the specific nature of the objects assembled. The presence of Flemish and Italian artworks indicates Leonico Tomeo's awareness of contemporary trends in taste; the works by the Bellinis point to his engagement with the fifteenth-century fashion for portraiture; Roman sculptures are in line with the humanist interest in the classical times, as illustrated by the depictions of such objects by Vittore Carpaccio in his paintings of *studioli*; medals reveal a connection with the flourishing genre of illustrated compendia of famous men, in which Leonico Tomeo also appeared through the popular work by Giovio; gems signal an interest in the book of nature, populating the shelves of private Wunderkammern with the materials described in Pliny's *Natural History*, a key text in Renaissance Padua; the Joshua Roll evidences Leonico Tomeo's philological interest in art as a repository of complex religious and intellectual content; and finally, the mention of Bembo's bronze statuette of Jupiter demonstrates that, besides their intellectual pursuits, humanists also shared a passion for art.[142]

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[141] Ibid., pp. 14–16: "Nella camera terrena la testa marmorea de Bacco coronato de vite maggior del naturale è opera antica. Lo quadretto in tela d'un piede, ove è dipinto un paese con alcuni pescatori, che hanno preso una londra, con due figurette che stanno a vedere, fu de mano de Gianes da Brugia. La tavola de marmo de mezzo rilevo, che contiene dui Centauri in piede, e una Satira distesa che dorme e mostra la schena, è opera antica. Nella camera ch'è sopra, la testa marmorea del Caracalla è opera antica. La testa del soldato galeata, de marmo, maggior del naturale, è opera antica. Le altre sette teste marmoree de uomini e de donne in varie guise sono opere antiche. Lo Giove piccolo de bronzo, che siede alla guisa del Giove del Bembo, ma minore, è opera antica. Lo Sileno piccolo, che giace stravaccato, è opera antica. Li dui Ercoli piccoli de bronzo in piedi, uno aurato con li pomi in mano, l'altro con la clava, sono opere antiche. La mano de marmo del puttino è opera antica e perfetta. La tavola de stucco de basso rilevo d'un piede, che contiene Ercole con la Virtù e Voluptà, è opera antica tolta in Roma da un tempio d'Ercole ornato tutto a quella foza. Lo ritratto de esso M. Leonico giovine, ora tutto cascato, inzallito, e offuscato, fu de mano de Zuan Bellino. Lo ritratto de suo padre a guazzo in profil fu de mano de Iacomo Bellino. Le infinite Medaglie, Vasi di terra, Gemme intagliate &c. sono opere antiche. Lo Rotolo in membrana, che ha dipinta la istoria de Israelite e Iesù Nave, con li abiti e arme all'antica, con le immagini delli monti, fiumi, e cittadi, e umane, con la esplicazione della istoria in Greco, fu opera Constantinopolitana, dipinta già 500. anni." For the English translation, see *Notes on the Pictures and Works of Art in Italy Made by an Anonymous Writer in the Sixteenth Century*, tr. by Paolo Mussi and George Charles Williamson, with slight change (London: Bell and Sons, 1903).

[142] See Evelyn Welch, *Art and Society in Italy 1300-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 49–52. On the Renaissance household, see also Francis William Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori and Rucellai* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900* (London: Palgrave, 2008); and Maya Corry, Deborah Howard and Mary Laven (eds), *Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017). On the history of museums and private collections in the early modern period, see Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.

It seems clear that for Leonico Tomeo objects were a means of organising ideas in space or of dwelling on them with the eyes and the mind. We can only speculate as to whether the display of artworks in the house of Contrà San Francesco varied according to the interests of Leonico Tomeo's guests, who entertained conversations on or around the objects on the walls and on the *scanzie,* the Paduan wooden shelves cut to size to fit the humanist libraries. On the latter, the busts of the authors, whose books were located nearby, populated a household that was shaped as an anthropomorphic landscape, embodying ideas in sculpted form. In a sense, the practice of collecting was perceived as an act of domestication whereby the invisibility of knowledge was made visible through the many forms of matter and the overwhelming power of nature reduced in scale to fit in a library.

Although we do not possess any documentary evidence related to Tomeo's Paduan house besides Michiel's account, we can gain some insight into how this would have been organised from a number of early modern sources. In *Venecia. Città nobilissima e singolare* ('Venice. The Most Noble and Singular City', 1581), the artist Francesco Sansovino observed that the Venetians called their dwellings houses 'case' and not palaces 'palazzi' out of modesty, only to then go on to describe the opulence of these houses, contrasting them with the frugality of those of his ancestors. Sansovino reported that 'there are countless buildings with ceilings of bedchambers and other rooms decorated in gold and other colours and with histories painted by celebrated artists'. It was common, it seems, for almost everyone to have 'their house adorned with noble tapestries, silk drapes and gilded leather, *spalliere* and other things according to the time and season'.[143] The profligate furnishings of Venetian households were meant for display and they therefore occupied the lower floor rooms, where, already on the threshold, visitors could be in awe.

In the dialogue *Il padre di famiglia* ('The Father of the Family', 1583), Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) described a typical Renaissance home. The interior, he said was so harmoniously organised that the disposition of the rooms in the ground-floor would mirror exactly those of the upper-floor environments. Upon entering, there would be a square salon, flanked by two rooms to the right and the left. Facing the entrance door, on the other side of the salon, there would be a door, typically leading to a garden, where servants would have their rooms and

[143] Jacopo Sansovino, *Venezia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice: Stefano Curti, 1663 [1581]), p. 384: 'Quantunque i passati si diedero alla parsimonia, erano, però, ne gli addobbamenti di casa splendidi grandemente. Sono infinite fabriche con i palchi delle camere e dell'altre stanze, lavorate a oro e altri colori et historiati con pitture e con artificij eccellenti. Quasi tutte hanno le habitationi coperte di nobilissimi razzi, di panni di seta, di corami d'oro, di spalliere e di altre cose secondo le stagioni e i tempi.' For the English translation, see Patricia Fortini Brown, 'Behind the Walls. The Material Culture of Venetian Elites', in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilisation of an Italian City-State*, ed. by John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 295–338 (296).

there would be granaries for the wheat, paddocks for the animals and a vegetable garden.[144] The structure of the Renaissance house was the most tangible evidence of the resident's identity and as such it displayed in equal proportion comfort (*comodità*), honour (*decoro*) and structure (*fabrica*). Accordingly, the house resembled the human body, at once organically structured, private and public. As observed by Palladio, the house was supposed to have noble and beautiful parts, but also ugly and ignoble but necessary parts, which were best kept hidden.[145] The objects in the house were likewise useful, aesthetically pleasing and possibly displayed as a sign of dignity or wealth in the presence of guests. As the character Giannozzo says to his wife in Leon Battista Alberti's dialogue *Della famiglia* ('On Family', 1433–1441), objects should be taken care of, so that 'they will be useful to you, to me and to our children. Therefore, my dear wife, it is your duty as well as mine to be diligent and take care of them'[146]

What emerges from the writings of Sansovino, Tasso, Palladio and Alberti is that the Renaissance house operated on a variety of levels, incorporating, as some scholars have argue 'the needs of business and hospitality along with accommodation for daily living'.[147] The private and the public were porous spaces to the extent that no clear boundary existed between the household as a social environment and the home as an intimate retreat. The space of the early modern household was fluid, and this allowed the self to grow through social relationships and objects alike.[148]

With regard to Leonico Tomeo's Paduan house, we learn from Michiel that most of his collection was kept in the upper-floor rooms. Here we would usually find the bedrooms, the library and the *studiolo*, the private space where humanists lived in emulation of the ancients. Although it has been suggested that sometimes libraries and *studioli* were not entirely separate spaces, the *studiolo* was meant to be a space of virtuous and aesthetic contemplation within which the humanist could study the texts of the ancients and meditate.[149] In the Veneto, in

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[144] Torquato Tasso, *Il padre di famiglia* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1825), p. 20.
[145] Andrea Palladio, *Four Books on Architecture*, transl. by Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), pp. 78–80.
[146] Leon Battista Alberti, *Della famiglia*, transl. by Guido Guarino (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1971), p. 190.
[147] Erin Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari (eds), *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700*: *Objects, Spaces, Domesticities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 3. See also, Silvia Evangelisti and Sandra Cavallo (eds), *Domestic Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
[148] On the household in Renaissance Venice, see Richard J. Goy, *Venetian Vernacular Architecture: Traditional Housing in the Venetian Lagoon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Nebahat Avcioglu and Emma Jones (eds), *Architecture, Art and Identity in Venice and Its Territories 1450-1750* (London: Routledge, 2017).
[149] Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: The British Museum Press, 2001); Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969); Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

particular, the *studiolo* was chosen as the preferred place for the re-enactment of Christ's Passion, as explained by the meditation manual *Zardino de oration* ('Garden of Prayer', 1514). This meant that it was appropriate for the *studiolo* to be sparingly decorated, its function being that of a layman's cell rather than a Wunderkammer. It was in the *studiolo*, we assume, that Leonico Tomeo wrote his works. There, surrounded by a few useful objects such as ink wells and candle holders and in the company of all the manuscripts and books he was consulting depending on the matter he was writing at the moment, he devoted himself to his intellectual pursuits.

Paintings and busts, together with all other large-size objects, were destined for the library, where they featured alongside the books and manuscripts that the humanists so eagerly collected.[150] It was also in the library that the would show their fellow friends their most prized possessions, typically small objects such as medals, coins, *naturalia* and *curiosa*.[151] These functioned as conversation pieces during humanist gatherings and as thinking tools in the solitude of study and meditation. The role of artworks was therefore of a mediatory nature, in that it initiated social processes and solitary meditation at once. What was unique about the early modern Paduan household, however, was its pretended similarity to the ancient Roman villa. In line with their philological interest in all things antique, Paduans assembled, disposed and described their artworks in light of the written testimonies of authors such as Cicero and Pliny. Therefore, *all'antica* objects attracted the interest of humanists for their utility, as specified by Alberti, for their social significance, as pointed out by Sansovino, and for their domestic value, as Tasso reported.

The intellectual relevance of Leonico Tomeo's collection needs to be gauged in relation to its humanist imprint and with reference to Cicero. As the latter had written in his letters to Cato, the library and the garden were typically one and the same space in Roman houses. Statues, too, were important in the philosopher's library. As Cicero wrote to Atticus:

> I am very glad to hear what you say about the Hermathena. It is an ornament appropriate to my 'little seat of learning' for two reasons: Hermes is a sign common to all gymnasia, Minerva especially of this particular one. So I would have you, as you say, adorn the place with the other objects also, and the more the better.[152]

[150] Melissa Meriam Bullard, 'Possessing Antiquity: Agency and Sociability in Building Lorenzo de' Medici's Gem Collection', in *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance*, ed. by Christopher Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 85–112.

[151] On Renaissance Wunderkammern, see R. J. W. Evans and Alexander Marr (eds), *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Paul Grinke, *From Wunderkammer to Museum* (London: Quaritch, 2006).

[152] Cicero, *Letters*, tr. by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, 4 vols (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1888-1900), I, p. 54: 'Quod ad me de Hermathena scribis, per mihi gratum est, est ornamentum Academiae proprium meae, quod et Hermes commune omnium et Minerva singulare est insigne eius gymnasi qua re velim, ut scribis, ceteris, quoque rebus quam plurimis eum locum ornes.'

As an attentive reader of Cicero and an emulator of the ancients (as was often the case among Renaissance humanists from the Veneto), Leonico Tomeo's Paduan house included both a garden and a variety of classical sculptures. As far as we know, he did not own a Hermathena, the composite bust representing the gods Hermes and Athena – symbols, respectively, of eloquence and the sciences. However, Tomeo possessed a sculpture of the god Jupiter, like the one owned by Bembo. Most pertinently, in one of the several descriptions of Bembo's Paduan house by Benedetto Varchi, the villa was described as a 'worldly temple dedicated to Minerva', the Roman counterpart to the Greek goddess Athena.[153] Although separate from the library, Leonico Tomeo's garden hosted a horse that his English student William Latimer had given him as a gift, and a pelican pet that kept him company for forty years. So strong was Leonico Tomeo's bond with the animal that he interpreted its sudden death as a premonition of his own, as indeed happened, for he died only a month later.[154] The natural historical side of his approach to the study of nature and human culture is also evident in this kind of biographical detail.

What clearly emerges from this brief overview of this humanist household is that in the early modern period, artworks were not passive museum pieces, but they rather enjoyed an active, lived and cultural role in the domestic space and the life of their owners. The 'learned sociability' of early modern artworks, as Peter Miller has defined it, was at the centre of a collective enterprise in which the *sodalitas* we explored in the previous chapter, together with erudite investigations of antique inspiration, complemented the life of the learned by extending knowledge beyond the abstract sphere of learning.[155] Artworks, that is, allowed the mind to move from experience through the senses to intellection, by facilitating bonds between friends and by stimulating the mind to think about a lost past through the material tokens of its immediate availability in the present. The accumulation of objects in the Renaissance household and, in particular, in the library, is therefore to be understood as symptomatic of more than a simple desire to possess goods, but rather as a yearning to command and expand knowledge beyond the realm of merely bookish learning. As one of Leonico Tomeo's friends, the antiquarian Alessandro Maggi da Bassano (b. 1509), pointed out in a letter that what a humanist collection ought to showcase was 'a taste and a knowledge of antiquities'.[156] The

[153] Benedetto Varchi, 'Settima orazione', in Francesco Sansovino, *Delle orazioni volgarmente scritte da diversi uomini illustri* (Lyon: Giuseppe and Vincenzo Lanais, 1741), p. 108: 'un piccolo e mondissimo tempio consagrato a Minerva.'
[154] Giovio, *Elogia clarorum virorum*, f. 58^{r}.
[155] Peter Miller, *Peiresc's Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 17.
[156] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 5249, c. 41^{r}.

enjoyment of the senses (taste) was always accompanied by an intellectual interest (knowledge).

In sum, from what has been argued so far, we can say that Leonico Tomeo's interest in the arts was varied and continuous throughout his life. He surrounded himself with paintings, sculptures and objects of various artistic and aesthetic value. As I have shown, they testify to more than a mere wish to possess or accumulate objects. His understanding of art was informed by his work as a philosopher. As such, it amounted to an intellectual pursuit that he shared with fellow humanists, whom he eventually included in his *Dialogi*. He shared this passion with numerous other early modern authors. In this capacity, collecting was for Leonico Tomeo an activity that was supposed to teach human beings how to 'overcome through technology those things by which we are defeated in nature', as he had read in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanica*, a tract he had translated into Latin in 1524.[157]

To corroborate my point that an exposure to the world of art helped Leonico Tomeo to elaborate a philosophical view of reality in which objects – natural and cultural particulars – played an important role as repositories of information and triggers of intellectual insight, in the next Section I will examine a piece in Leonico Tomeo's art collection, a marble tablet with two centaurs and a female satyr.

[157] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, *Quaestiones mechanicae*, in *Opuscula* (Venice: Gregorio de Gregori, 1524), p. 22: 'Arte enim superamus ea a quibus natura vincimur.' On this work, see Helen Hattab, 'From Mechanics to Mechanism: The "Quaestiones Mechanicae" and Descartes' Physics', in *The Science of Nature in the Seventeenth Century: Patterns of Change in Early Modern Natural Philosophy*, ed. by Peter R. Anstey and John A. Schuster (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), pp. 99–129; van Leeuwen, 'Image, Word and Translation in Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's *Quaestiones Mechanicae*'.

3. Leonico Tomeo and the Satyrs: A Case Study

In a seminal article, Arnaldo Momigliano argued that antiquarianism grows out of a tendency to historical investigations based on empirical evidence, such as archaeological remnants of the past and ancient artifacts.[158] Non-literary evidence is key to the antiquarian to gather proof of the past. The antiquarian, however, is not merely a collector or facts or a melancholic lover of the past, but an interpreter of those facts. In this sense, retrieving thoughts and things that belonged to a time recently or long gone concurs to the formation of an inventory of critical approaches emerging from object-attentiveness and textual analysis combined.[159]

Regarded as a refined antiquarian from his fellow humanist friends, Leonico Tomeo believed that the study of things past was a civic commitment with practical outcomes. To busy oneself about historical objects and puzzles was for him the sign of a fully lived *vita activa* through which the concepts and principles learned during the *vita contemplativa* came to full fruition. The concepts of skill (*ingenium*) and learning (*eruditio*) come back time and again throughout the *Dialogi*, in particular when Leonico Tomeo insists on the importance to verify the knowledge gained through the exercise of philosophical arguments with the study of history, medicine and art. This very idea aligns with the concept of *archaeographia* developed in the eighteenth-century by the French physician Jacob Spon (1647–1685) to describe the knowledge of ancient religion, art and science passed on to later generations through the monuments of the past.[160] It is a two-way traffic between ideas and objects in which Leonico Tomeo, as we have seen in the previous sections of this chapter dealing with his interest in art collecting, demonstrated a particularly 'archaeographic' sensibility.

In keeping a vivid interest in the arts, he fed on a general passion for objects that were being excavated and plundered in the main cities of the Peninsula, especially in Rome, to be sold or exported.[161] A figure active in these endeavours and a close acquaintance of Leonico Tomeo was the Roman Flaminio Tomarozzo, a member of the academic circles surrounding Jacopo Sadoleto, Angelo Colocci and Johannes Goritz. Tomarozzo most likely met Leonico

[158] Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 13 (1950), pp. 285–315.
[159] On antiquarianism in the Renaissance, see Peter N. Miller, *History and Its Objects: Antiquarianism and Material Culture since 1500* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).
[160] Ibid., p. 100.
[161] For a contemporary description of the phenomenon, see Andreas Fulvius, *Antiquitates urbis* (Rome: s.n., 1527), ff. 3^{v}-4^{r}. Secondary literature includes, Richard Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993); Genevieve Carlton, *Wordly Consumers: The Demand for Maps in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Barbara Furlotti, *Antiquities in Motion: From Excavation Sites to Renaissance Collections* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2019); Andrea Bacchi, *'Rinascimento privato': The Adventures of a Renaissance Sculpture. Antonio Minello's Apollo from Padua to Rome and Vienna*, tr. by Stephen Tobin (Milan: Walter Padovani, 2019).

Tomeo in Padua through their common friend Christophe de Longueil, before becoming secretary to Pietro Bembo in 1527.[162] In February 1525, Tomeo wrote to Tomarozzo to thank him for his generous intention to give him as a gift a bust of Socrates that had recently been found in Rome. Leonico Tomeo's letter is symptomatic of the critical distance he interposed between himself and the objects he collected. His scepticism about the identification of the Roman herm with Socrates is particularly telling as to the philosophical mindset with which he approached his interest in the arts.

> Why should I seek to get the Caligulas the Neros and the Domitians, who once were the most destructive monsters of humankind and whose statues, as work of eminent artists, are now most valued and coveted by everyone, when, thanks to your intercession and mediation, I can have the image of the father of philosophy, of that man from whom, as if from an inexhaustible well, all spiritual gifts have copiously flowed? Certainly, this unique statue, which not without reason from now on will be called 'Flaminian', will for me be worth all others, and not without reason. However, for the gods, tell me, Flaminio, on what basis did you infer that this is the head of Socrates, or who ever told you this? It must certainly be with 'a snub nose and protruding eyes' and in everything similar to a little satyr. These, they say, were the characteristic features of that man. This is what I now want to know from you: we can easily recognise the statues (damaged as they may be) of Roman princes and also of some Greek people, when there are coins bearing their images. Of Socrates, though, of whom we have never seen a single minted coin that reproduces his countenance (*facies*), I do not see how we can proceed to the identification. But I am certainly pedantic and a stickler to keep discussing this matter in such detail instead of being firmly convinced that that is the statue of Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus and the teacher of Plato, of he, if you wish to add, who died in the prison of Athens after drinking aconite. You only make sure that I can receive that statue and so that the journey might result secure and without obstacles. Spare no expenses, for I shall pay. Everything will be fine, I think, if Socrates will reach me safe and sound.[163]

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[162] On Tomarozzo, see Rossella Lalli, '"Il più accorto et savio et prudente huomo": Schede per un profilo biografico di Flaminio Tomarozzo', *Atti e Memorie dell'Arcadia*, 4 (2017), pp. 53–84.

[163] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Flaminio Tomarozzo (Padua, 2 February 1525), in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, ff. 53^{v}-54^{r}: 'Nam quid ego Caligulas aut Nerones aut Domitianos quaeram, humani generis pernitiosissima quondam monstra, quorum imagines, quia praeclaros habuerunt artifices et in pretio nunc habentur maxime et ab omnibus fere cupide expetentur, cum parentis philosophiae typum, illius inquam a quo ceu a perenni quodam fonte, omnes animorum dotes largiter emanarunt, te sequestre et medio habere possim? Profecto id mihi vel unicum signum omnium aliorum instar erit, quod Flaminianum posthac non immerito nuncupabitur. Sed cedo per deos, Flamini, undenam Socratis illud esse caput coniectasti, aut quisnam hominum hoc tibi dixit; σιμὸν γὰρ καὶ ἐξόφθαλμον certe esse debet et satyrisco perquam simile: isthaec enim, ut aiunt, viri illius fuerant insignia. Hoc abs te magnopere nunc scire cupio: nam Romanorum principum et Graecorum etiam quorundam, quorum extant numismata, si quod vel mutilum restat signum, cuiusnam fuerit ex illis facile dignoscere possumus; de Socrate autem, cuius nullum unquam excussum vidimus nummum, qui illius referre faciem possit, quomodo istuc ipsum affirmare possimus non sane dispicio. Sed nae ego illepidus sum et infacetus, qui hac de re tam anxie nunc contendo et non potius Socratis illam esse imaginem constanter credo, Sophronisci filii et Platonis magistri, adde etiam si vis, illius qui Athenis aconito epoto in carcere periit. Cura modo ut illam habeamus, neque pro vectura ut secure commodeque perferatur, arculae nostrae parcas; omnia enim belle se habebunt ex animi sententia, si ad nos incolumis et illesus pervenerit Socrates.' Regarding the specific features of Socrates's physiognomy (σιμὸν γὰρ καὶ ἐξόφθαλμον), Leonico Tomeo seems here to refer to Ammonius's Commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, ed. Adolfus Busse in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* (Berlin:

Beside the art historical testimony of the close relation between medal and bust collecting, what emerges from the above passage is the desire of humanists to surround themselves with *all'antica* objects while assessing their actual value and, above all, their link with the past.[164] It is worth reporting here the words of one of Tomeo's key Latin historiographical references, especially in the *Three Books*, Pliny the Elder, about the social function and cultural value of collecting in ancient Rome:

> We must not overlook a new invention: images made of bronze, if not of gold or silver, are set up in libraries in honour of those whose immortal spirits talk to us in the same place. In fact, even images of those whose likenesses do not exist are modelled, and a sense of longing produces faces that have not been handed down to us, as has happened in the case of Homer. Anyhow, so far as I am concerned, I think there is no better proof of good times than that everyone should always long to know what kind of a person someone was.[165]

In light of Pliny's emphasis on the material culture underlying the objects gathered by his most erudite contemporaries, always eager to embrace the latest fashion in collecting, Leonico Tomeo's desire to acquire Socrates's bust becomes even more understandable. The same level of closeness and familiarity with which Pliny describes the bronze, gilded and silver images populating the libraries of Roman intellectuals echoes Leonico Tomeo's hope that Socrates may reach him 'safe and sound', as if he were speaking of the man himself rather than his statue. Placing Socrates's bust beside the manuscripts and the printed books in which he

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Reimer, 1897), IV, 5, p. 20: 'τὸ γὰρ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι γεγραμμένον τοῦ Σωκράτους ὁμοίωμα εἰ μὴ καὶ τὸ φαλακρὸν καὶ τὸ σιμὸν καὶ τὸ ἐξόφθαλμον ἔχοι τοῦ Σωκράτους, οὐκέτ' ἂν αὐτοῦ λέγοιτο εἶναι ὁμοίωμα'. The source for Leonico Tomeo could have been Michael Psellos, *Ammonii Hermei commentaria in librum Peri hermeneias* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1503), sig. A6^{v}. The classic loci detailing Socrates's physiognomy are Plato, *Symposium*, 215AB and Xenophon, *Symposium*, V, 6. It is also worth noting that Leonico Tomeo follows the interpretation according to which Socrates had been killed by aconitum (*Aconitum napellus*) rather than hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). For an up-to-date summary of the question, see Enid Bloch, 'Hemlock Poisoning and the Death of Socrates: Did Plato Tell the Truth?', in *The Trial and Execution of Socrates: Sources and Controversies*, ed. by Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 255-78. In a very elegant way, the excerpt I have just quoted exudes philological and medical expertise. These are all indications of Leonico Tomeo's painstaking attention to historical and natural particulars and of his characteristic approach to critical antiquarianism.

[164] On *all'antica* art and collecting in the Renaissance, see Irene Favaretto, *Arte antica e cultura antiquaria nelle collezioni venete al tempo della Serenissima* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1990); Bodon, Veneranda Antiquitas; William Stenhouse, 'Roman Antiquities and the Emergence of Renaissance Civic Collections', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 26 (2014), pp. 131–144; Fernando Loffredo and Ginette Vagenheim (eds), *Pirro Ligorio's Worlds: Antiquarianism, Classical Erudition and the Visual Arts in the Late Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

[165] Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, XXXV, 9-10: 'Non est praetereundum et novicium inventum, siquidem non ex auto argentove, at certe ex aere in bibliothecis dicantur illis, quorum inmortales animae in locis iisdem locuntur, quin immo etiam quae non sunt finguntur, pariuntque desideria non traditos vultus, sicut in Homero evenit quo maius, ut equidem arbitror, nullum est felicitatis specimen quam semper omnes scire cupere, qualis fuerit aliquis.' For the English translation see, Pliny, *Natural History*, transl. by John Bostock (London: Taylor and Francis, 1855).

featured as an interlocutor, i.e., the Platonic dialogues, must have been a way for Leonico Tomeo to establish 'what kind of a person' the philosopher was. Similarly, the presence of the herm of Socrates in his Paduan library must have served as a memorandum of the virtues proper to the philosopher, the 'inexhaustible well', from which 'all spiritual gifts have copiously flowed', as Tomeo wrote in his letter. A similar expression he also utilised in his commentary on Aristotle's *Parts of the Animals*, this time referring to the power of the interpreting mind. As pointed out by Stefano Perfetti, Leonico Tomeo engaged directly with Aristotle's text highlighting the bond that can be established between a resourceful reader and an ever growing source of meaning. Leonico Tomeo therefore asked himself why he should be seeking out rivulets when he could make rivers flow.[166] Just as he did not regard artworks as mere commodities, but as edifying objects that could expand the mind of the wise collector, so he viewed his work as an exegete of ancient texts as capable of establishing an enlivening continuity between the scrutinised sources and the context in which he lived.

Further proof of the link between Leonico Tomeo's philosophical pursuits as a humanist and his antiquarian interest comes from one of the objects in his collection. Among the works listed in Michiel's account of Leonico Tomeo's collection, as we reported in Chapter 3, featured a half-relief marble slab, 'representing two centaurs standing and a satyr lying down asleep and showing his back', considered to be 'an antique work'. The marble tablet in question measures 62.5cm x 42cm x 6.5cm. It is easy to handle but extremely heavy. Historians have suggested that the sculpture is a Florentine production and should be dated to the first decade of the sixteenth century.[167] Besides Michiel's testimony in the *Notizia*, additional information about Leonico Tomeo's tablet can be gained from archival sources. This allows us to reconstruct the object's provenance, from Leonico Tomeo's Paduan house to the art collection of the patriarch of Aquileia, Giovanni Grimani (1506–1593), in Santa Maria Formosa, to the Sculpture Gallery of the Marciana Library in Piazza San Marco and, finally, to the Archaeological Museum of Venice, where it is currently on display.[168] A *stucco* copy of the sculpture also

[166] Stefano Perfetti, 'Three Different Ways of Interpreting Aristotle's *De Partibus Animalium*: Pietro Pomponazzi, Niccolò Leonico Tomeo and Agostino Nifo', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 316 (307–308). See Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Richard Pace, in Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, ed. by N. L. Tomeo (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1530), sig. aa7^{v}: 'Sed quid ego nunc rivulos consector, cum fontes aperire largissimos possim?'.

[167] Irene Favaretto, 'Rilievo rinascimentale con centauri', in *Alvise Cornaro e il suo tempo*, ed. by Giuseppe Fiocco (Padua: Comune di Padova, 1980), pp. 278–279; Maria Cristina Dossi, 'Rilievo con centauri', in *Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia*, ed. by Irene Favaretto, Marcella De Paoli and Maria Cristina Dossi (Milan: Electa, 2004), p. 97. On Leonico Tomeo's tablet, see also Bodon, *Veneranda Antiquitas*, pp. 42, 46; id., 'Archeologia e produzione artistica fra Quattro e Cinquecento: Andrea Riccio e l'ambiente padovano', in *Rinascimento e passione per l'antico*, ed. by Andrea Bacchi and Luciana Giacomelli (Trent: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2008), pp. 334–336, n. 45.

[168] Guido Beltramini, *Aldo Manuzio: Il Rinascimento a Venezia* (Venice: Marsilio, 2016), pp. 250–252.

exists. It had been commissioned by the collector and law professor at the University of Padua, Marco Mantua Benavides (1489–1582), who had followed Michiel's wrong intuition that the work was a Greek original and had a copy made for himself.[169] The scene shows two standing centaurs emerging from the opposite sides of the white marble slab, with no background detail. The silhouettes of the centaurs are bony and their movements very agitated. The centaur to the left carries a jar on his left shoulder while the other holds a harp close to his tail. Both centaurs gaze down at a third figure leaning against the lower edge of the sculpture, showing the back to the viewer and almost falling off the work towards us. The accurate hairstyle and the sinuous silhouette of the laying figure indicate that it is a female satyr, rather than a male satyr as suggested by Michiel.

No representation of female satyrs in classical art from the Greek and Roman periods has yet been retrieved, which indicates that this iconographic motif dates to the Renaissance.[170] The scene does bear connections with classical representations of the discovery of Ariadne by Dionysus's retinue, known as the *thyasos*. The subject matter, however, does not have a specific visual or textual referent in antiquity. This is an important element for an adequate analysis of Leonico Tomeo's approach to art because it underlines a continuity, at least an aesthetic one, between his collection and the visual culture of early sixteenth-century Veneto. Moreover, it points to the trend of *all'antica* art fashionable in the Renaissance, inspired by classical models, but often consisting of forgeries or late copies considered to be originals. In Renaissance Veneto, scenes similar to those depicted in Leonico Tomeo's tablet gained popularity after the publication of the poem *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* ('Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream', 1499), in which centaurs, satyrs and other creatures from the woods were shown in the act of uncovering a sleeping nymph with theatrical gestures.[171] In Padua, mythological figures, especially satyrs and fauns, were often cast in bronze and integrated into small-scale objects for the decoration of the humanists' self-contained wooden studies: candle-sticks, paperweights or pounce boxes for sand to dry ink.[172] The artist responsible for the vast majority of these decorative objects was the same Andrea Riccio who produced the tomb of the university professor Girolamo Della Torre, a monument to which, as we have seen in Chapter 3, Tomeo and his

[169] See Favaretto, 'Appunti', pp. 20–25.
[170] On the Renaissance contrivance of female satyr iconographies, see Lynn Frier Kaufmann, *The Noble Savage: Satyrs and Satyr Families in Renaissance Art* (Epping: Bowker, 1984); Françoise Lavocat, *La syrinx au bûcher. Pan et les satyres à la Renaissance et à l'âge baroque* (Geneva: Droz, 2005).
[171] Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphilii* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1499), f. 35ʳ.
[172] On bronze sculpture in Renaissance Padua, see *Donatello e il suo tempo*, ed. by Adriana Augusti Ruggeri (Milan: Skira, 2001); Davide Banzato, *Bronzi e placchette dei Musei Civici di Padova* (Padua: Editoriale Programma, 1989), pp. 100–200; Peta Motture, Emma Jones and Dimitrios Zikos (eds), *Carving, Casts and Collectors: The Art of Renaissance Sculpture* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Publisher, 2013).

colleague Giovanni Battista da Leone contributed.[173] Given the vast diffusion of these small-scale sculptures, it seems that in Padua, the wild character of satyrs, fauns and centaurs was tamed by their familiar role as decorative elements for the house.[174] No longer associated with barbarity and Bacchanalia, these mythological figures became an integral part of the early modern humanist household, actively asserting the relevance of an antique past that was felt to be intimately close.

As already argued in Chapter 3, the *studiolo* was the seat of a humanist's meditative and intellectual endeavours, the self-contained layman's cell, wherein praying and philosophising could become one act of inner contemplation. The contiguity – indeed, sometime continuity – of mind, art and places in Leonico Tomeo's approach to knowledge becomes even more clear now that we have moved the aspects of humanism, antiquarianism and art collecting closer together. Being keenly responsive to the idea of art objects functioning as thinking tools, Leonico Tomeo furnished his house with the same creatures that he encountered in the mythological and literary texts he worked on as an editor and translator.

Leonico Tomeo's fascination with mythological creatures is evident from several of his writings. In his dialogue on divination, the *Trophonius*, he mused on the possibility of natural and cultural encounters in the landscape around Padua populate with 'fauns, wild nymphs and rural deities'.[175] We have already hinted at the sileni and *telchines* mentioned in *De varia historia*.[176] Again, in the *Trophonius*, Tomeo quoted a passage from Cicero's *On divination*, connecting *fantasia* with dream vision and the figure of satyrs, bearers of future fame and fortune.[177]

The presence of satyrs can be found in Tomeo's own manuscript and book collection, in particular, in his 1503 Aldine copy of the *Greek Anthology*, a miscellany of 2,400 Greek epigrams collected by the Byzantine Maximus Planudes in the thirteenth century. The volume contains two full-page tempera and golden miniatures depicting scenes with satyrs, respectively at the beginning and at the end of the book. The two illuminated folia are an example of the short-lived sixteenth-century practice of decorating printed volumes.[178] This phenomenon concerned specifically Aldine editions destined for a humanist audience and therefore intended

[173] See Chapter 3 on the Della Torre tomb.
[174] On the presence of satyrs in Paduan collections, see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 301–303; *Andrea Riccio*: *Renaissance Master of Bronze*, ed. by Denise Allen and Peta Motture, in association with The Frick Collection (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2008), pp. 81–96.
[175] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 11, ll. 8-9: 'Profecto Faunos illic et agrestes Nymphas rurisque numina habitare et vagari solere contenderetis.' The reference is to Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, II, 16.
[176] See Chapter 3 of this thesis; Leonico Tomeo, *De varia historia libri tres*, ff. 87^{v}-88^{v}.
[177] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 10, ll. 13-18.
[178] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Ald. III. 22, ff. A2^{r} and 10^{r}.

exclusively for private consumption. Helena Szépe's research on the Aldine illuminated editions of the period has catalogued around sixty specimens. However, as Anna Pontani noted in her article on Tomeo's library, the Aldine edition of Planudes escaped Szépe's attention.[179] Szépe argues that the decoration of printed Aldines included heraldic elements and other symbols meaningful for the commissioner or his family. Pontani, by contrast, signals the existence of only one other illuminated copy of the *Anthology*, now held in the D'Elci collection of the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence.[180] This copy presents illuminations of a pagan bucolic nature, comparable to the contemporary ones contained in the MS Par. Lat. 11309, illustrating Virgil's *Georgics* and attributed to the painter Marco Zoppo.[181] The existence of these small-scale artworks testifies to a specific taste, shared by humanists pursuing the same studies and interested in art as a thinking tool.

The two scenes in the *Greek Anthology* owned by Leonico Tomeo depict a pagan sacrifice and a dance of satyrs. The latter bears close connections with the marble tablet analysed earlier, as well as with the volume's content. In the *Anthology*'s Cyzicene Epigrams, it is stated that 'in the temple at Cyzicus of Apollonis, the mother of Attalus and Eumenes, inscribed on the tablets of the columns, which contained scenes in relief'. The first of these was a scene showing 'Dionysus conducting his mother Semele to heaven, preceded by Hermes, Satyrs and Sileni escorting them with Torches'.[182] The illumination in Leonico Tomeo's Aldine seems to evoke similar episodes, in which satyrs embody the interplay of humanity and divinity. Like Leonico Tomeo's marble tablet with satyrs, the scene in the *Anthology* lacks a direct textual reference. In keeping with the iconographic canons governing the invention of the female satyr, the creatures in the Vatican Aldine are visual examples of the function that art had for Leonico Tomeo, that is, to awaken the memories and ideas gathered through the study of the past. Indeed, the similarities between the tablet and the manuscript illuminations are visually striking. The satyr to the extreme right of the *Anthology*'s folio closely resembles the one to the right of

[179] Pontani, 'Postille a Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Giovanni Ettore Maria Lascaris', p. 359; Helena Szépe, 'Bordon, Dürer and Modes of Illuminating Aldines', in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture*, ed. by David Zeidberg (Florence: Olschki, 1998), pp. 185–200 (185); ead., 'The Book as Companion, the Author as Friend: Aldine Octavos Illuminated by Benedetto Bordon', in *Word and* Image, 11 (1995), pp. 77–99; Susy Marcon, 'Brevi note sulla decorazione libraria veneziana al tempo di Aldo', *Miscellanea Marciana*, 13 (1998), pp. 29–48. See also, Lilian Armstrong, 'The Hand-Illumination of Printed Books in Italy 1456–1515', in *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination*, ed. by Jonathan J. G. Alexander (Munich: Prestel, 1994), pp. 35–47 (46–47).
[180] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, D'Elci, Aldine 54. See Pontani, 'Postille a Niccolò Leonico Tomeo e Giovanni Ettore Maria Lascaris', p. 360; See also Antoine-Augustin Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde* (Paris: Crapelet, 1834), p. 43.
[181] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Par. Lat. 11309, ff. 4^{v}, 21^{v}. See *La miniatura a Padova dal Medioevo al Settecento*, ed. by Giovanna Canova Mariani (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1999), pp. 247–249; ead., 'Marco Zoppo e la miniatura', in *Marco Zoppo e il suo tempo*, ed. by Berenice Giovannucci Vigi (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1993), pp. 121–135 (128).
[182] *The Greek Anthology*, ed. by W. R. Paton, 5 vols (London: Heinemann, 1916), III, pp. 94–95.

Leonico Tomeo's tablet, both holding a harp on the shoulder. The satyr with a stick intertwined with a snake recalls the myth of the Roman god Faunus, who, wanting to ravish his daughter made her drunk and had his way with her after turning himself into a snake.[183] The other satyrs in the *Anthology* play music, the merry occupation they typically engage in. On the tree branches above the satyrs are a squirrel, symbol of lust, and a dog, symbol of guidance.

Ultimately, rather than being literal transpositions of classical texts or imitations of Roman and Greek art, Leonico Tomeo's artworks were suggestive of a taste for all things antique. Objects were consumed both privately and publicly, especially during learned gatherings in countryside villas or city houses. Regardless of whether they were copies of classical works, such as Socrates's bust, or variations on Greek and Roman iconographic themes, such as the female satyr, Leonico Tomeo's artworks were refined examples of a desire to possess the past through a kind of objectifying gaze. This somehow tamed the discomfort caused by the loss of the past through a learned approach to antiquarianism.

[183] See Irene Earls, *Renaissance Art: A Topical Dictionary* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 256.

4. Leonico Tomeo's Notion of *fantasiabile*

To add a further philosophical layer to this discussion about Leonico Tomeo's interest in art, we can refer to his Commentary on Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscentia* ('On Memory and Recollection'). Let us start by examining Aristotle's own words (450b):

> Granted that there is in us something like an impression or picture, why should the perception of the mere impression be memory of something else, instead of being related to this impression alone? For when one actually remembers, this impression is what he contemplates, and this is what he perceives. How then does he remember what is not present? One might as well suppose it possible also to see or hear that which is not present. In reply, we suggest that this very thing is quite conceivable, nay, actually occurs in experience. A picture painted on a panel is at once a picture and a likeness: that is, while one and the same, it is both of these, although the 'being' of both is not the same, and one may contemplate it either as a picture, or as a likeness. Just in the same way we have to conceive that the mnemonic presentation within us is something which by itself is merely an object of contemplation, while, in relation to something else, it is also a presentation of that other thing. In so far as it is regarded in itself, it is only an object of contemplation, or a presentation; but when considered as relative to something else, e.g. as its likeness, it is also a mnemonic token.[184]

In this passage, Aristotle explains that the mind does not think in the absence of images. Although the represented object is not immediately present, it is still possible to imagine and therefore to think about it through the faculty called *reminiscentia* ('recollection'). For Aristotle, images are of two kinds: representations with contemplative purposes or mnemonic tokens bearing a likeness to an object or subject existing in reality. In the first instance, they are non-referential because they bear connections to a model that can only be imitated, and its essence never captured. In the second case, pictures are referential in so far as they simply re-produce an existing model. Socrates's herm, discussed in Section 3 of this chapter, belongs to the second category of objects. As Leonico Tomeo noted in his letter, however, the fact that we do not know the aspect of the original model, in this case Socrates himself, turns the bust into a mere object of contemplation. To understand how Leonico Tomeo interpreted Aristotle's 'contemplation', we shall refer to his commentary on the passage quoted above:

[184] Aristotle, *On the Soul*, tr. by W. S. Hett (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957). See also the more recent translation by David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 32-44. See Leonico Tomeo, Commentary on Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 123.

> That which is depicted in the painting is an animal. Aristotle says that it is an animal and an image at the same time. And this is the way he explains this point: when someone examines the animal and acts according to it, taking only account of the artistic skill (*peritia artis*), either admiring it or condemning and arguing against it, without paying any attention whatsoever to which animal the image is supposed to be an image of, in this case only the painted image is said to be an animal. However, when one discerns, observes and also examines whether this same painting (*pictura*) is an image (*imago*) or a likeness (*similitudo*), for example, of an actual lion or of a horse, then this painted lion or horse is a likeness and an image of an actual lion or horse. Therefore, it is at once an animal and a likeness, yet in two different ways. Consequently, just as the seeing we discussed consists in this, so the representations (*simulacra*) and the perceptual residues (*reliquiae*) are impressed in the primary sense organ [i.e., the common sense] by the external objects of sense perception (*externa sensilia*). Now we need to consider whether those beings that Aristotle calls *fantasmata* are in fact some kind of natures and things, and whether they are likenesses (*similitudines*) of external objects.[185]

The first point to make concerns the 'animal' that Leonico Tomeo mentions in his Commentary and which does not appear in Aristotle's passage. In their translation of the Aristotelian corpus, Smith and Ross have indicated that the Greek word ζῷον translates as 'painting' rather than as 'painted animals', in so far as in the latter phrase, the second term 'animal' would spoil the illustration because of its relationship to the first one, i.e., 'painted'.[186] More recently, in his translation of *On Memory and Recollection*, David Bloch has noted that the term used by Aristotle is better translated as 'painting', but he concedes that 'animal' would not be impossible.[187] Despite there being precedents of this use of the word in Empedocles and Hesiod, of which Leonico Tomeo might not have been aware, he chose nonetheless to translate Aristotle literally by therefore making the case for an actual animal being painted (*in tabella pictum animal*) rather than for a painted image in general.[188] Leonico Tomeo argues that what Aristotle identifies as non-referential contemplative images are judged uniquely according to their artistic skill (*peritia artis*), which can be admired, condemned or argued against. When

[185] Leonico Tomeo, Commentary on Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 123: 'Est autem id quod in tabella pictum est animal, simul, inquit, animal et imago, hoc videlicet modo quando enim quispiam illud inspicit, et circa illud operatur, solummodo de artis consyderans peritia, et illam vel admirans, vel contra reprehendens et damnans, neque omnino animadvertens ad id cuius pictum illud animal imago esse censetur, eo in casu illud solummodo pictum dicitur esse animal. Quando autem cum hoc quod id ipsum cernit, animadvertit etiam et consyderat quod pictura illa est imago et similitudo, verbi causa veri leonis, vel equi, tunc leo ille vel equus pictus similitudo est et imago veri leonis vel equi. Et tunc id unicum est animal et similitudo: vero alio et alio modo. Quemadmodum igitur in istis est videre quae diximus: ita simulacra illa et reliquiae quae in primo sensitorio ab externis sunt impressa sensilibus; quae ipse nunc appellat fantasmata existimare convenit quam de per se quidem naturae sunt quaedam et res, necnon etiam quod externorum sunt similitudines obiectorum.'

[186] Aristotle, 'Parva naturalia', in *Works*, ed. W. D. Ross, tr. by John Isaac Beare and George Robert Thomson Ross, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908-1952), p. E2, n. 1.

[187] Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, p. 33.

[188] As indicated by Ross and Smith, p. 2.

this is the case, no attention is paid to the question of 'what animal the image is supposed be an image of', which means that what matters is solely the form. It is only through discernment, observation and examination that paintings can be conceived as both images and likenesses at once. This implies that, in order to relate to visual representations appropriately, the mind needs to judge the form's capacity to conform to the content of the object represented. This is when the soul or mind is 'stirred up' by the encounter with art. Moving from the lower senses, it needs to ascend to reason through judgement and thus understand what it is ultimately thinking about. This approach to images is mostly evident in the example of Socrates's bust, on which Leonico Tomeo had a few reservations. His eager curiosity was tempered by caution: Did in fact the sculpted effigy correspond to the information recorded in textual sources?

Lack of actual referents poses a challenge for those kinds of artworks that are not mimetic, but display scenes or images contrived by the mind alone, that is, inventions produced by the imagination. And yet, for all his concerns about historical and factual accuracy regarding the case of the artistic representation of Socrates, Leonico Tomeo had an interest in subject matters infringing the laws of mimesis. In particular, it is the representations of fauns, satyrs and other creatures of the imagination that captured his attention, as we have seen in the previous section. Pointing to the subtle divide between reality and fiction, satyrs, centaurs, fauns and *telchines* illustrate Leonico Tomeo's intellectual interest in the arts, supported by his philosophical engagement with the doctrine of the imagination and reflected in his choices as an art collector. This once again demonstrates the extent to which art was for Leonico Tomeo a vehicle – a cultural vehicle in this case, different from the natural vehicles mentioned in Chapter 5 – moving the mind from experience to reasoning, and therefore a means of raising the soul from the world of sense perception to that of intellection.

Further evidence of Leonico Tomeo's interest in the intellectual potential of art – in this case, indirect evidence – comes from Gaurico's *De sculptura* mentioned above.[189] After the attempts of Leon Battista Alberti's *On Statuary*, Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Commentaries* and Porcellio de' Pandoni's lost treatise *On the Art of Smelting*, Gaurico's was the first text entirely dedicated to sculpture in the history of art theory.[190] In his work, Gaurico sets out the procedure to be followed to realise a perfect sculpture. The first stage consists of three phases. The first

[189] Pomponio Gaurico, *De sculptura* (Florence: Giunta, 1504). I am quoting from Gaurico, *De sculptura* (1504), ed. by André Chastel and Robert Klein (Geneve: Droz, 1969). On the role of Gaurico's text in the Renaissance and the following centuries see Erasmo Pèrcopo, 'Pomponio Gaurico, umanista napoletano', in *Atti dell'Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napol*i, 16 (1891–1893), pp. 145–261; *I Gaurico e il Rinascimento meridiona*le, ed. by Alberto Granese, Sebastiano Martelli and Enrico Spinelli (Salerno: Centro di Studi sull'Umanesimo Meridionale, 1992).

[190] See Paolo Cutolo, 'Introduction', Pomponio Gaurico, *De sculptura*, ed. by P. Cutolo (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999).

is *ductoria*, in which the artist elaborates on the subject matter's likeness in his mind; the second is *designatio*, in which the model is given the correct proportions and physiognomy is perfected; the third phase, finally, is *animatio*, through which the work is enlivened through expressivity. The second stage in the whole process concerns the actual realisation of the work, about which Gaurico describes different casting techniques.[191] In dealing with the fundamental constituents of an artist's education, Gaurico ventures into a discussion on the role of the imagination in art. In his view, a sculptor ought to be primarily εὐφαντασίωτος, that is, capable of representing the universally wide gamut of species and forms of life within his soul. The term εὐφαντασίωτος is certainly derived from Quintilian, who, in the absence of an appropriate Latin equivalent, used the Greek word to define the artist's ability to depict affects.[192] Quintilian emphasised that this capacity is easily acquired if not innate. This was an important point for Gaurico, who intended his dialogue as a vademecum or handbook for artists desiring to hone their imaginative skills by putting these in the service of the plastic arts:

> It is also necessary for him (the artist) to be especially gifted with imagination (εὐφαντασίωτος), in order to represent in his mind the infinite species corresponding to someone in pain, laughing, falling ill, dying, in peril and the infinite species. This is of the utmost importance also for poets and orators, but let this only be to the extent that is required by the object, so that vain fictions might be avoided, such as the dreams of a sick man... Should not the species of all things be conceived in the mind of the sculptor? Yes, plainly of all things. As much as it is appropriate for the philosopher to study the universe in order to know about man and himself, for the physician to know about the powers of potions to heal the body, for the jurist to know the laws and procedures necessary to preserve the respect of man for his duties, so the sculptor ought to grasp the ideal forms of the species of all things available to represent man.[193]

It is also the sculptors' duty to be καταληπτικὸς, that is, able to turn the 'prehensive' faculty of the imagination into material forms.[194] In conformity with the structure of nature, sculptors ought to conceive the perfect forms in their mind and transform them into sculpted objects. The

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[191] Gaurico, *De sculptura*, pp. 20-40. On Gaurico's phases of artistic production, see Robert Klein, 'Pomponius Gauricus on Perspective', in *Art Bulletin*, 43 (1961), pp. 211–230.
[192] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, VI, ii, 30.
[193] Gaurico, *De sculptura* pp. 59–61: 'Scilicet quam maxime εὐφαντασίωτος esse debebit, qui videlicet Dolentis, Ridentis, Egrotantis, Morientis, Periclitantis, et eiusmodi, Infinitas animo species imaginetur, quod etiam Poetis ipsis et oratoribus quam maxime necessarium, nec tamen nisi quatenus ipsa rei natura patietur, ne velut aegri somnia vane fingatur species, dolentis illud.... Sed nunquid rerum omnium concipiendae sculptoris animo species? Plane omnium. Sed ut philosopho rerum cunctarum cognitio datur ut hominem seque cognoscat, medico succorum vires ut homines sanet, civili legum atque actionum scientia ut hominem in officio contineat, ita sculptori rerum omnium species comprehendendae ut hominem ponat. Quo tanquam propositum tota eius et mens et manus dirigenda'.
[194] Gaurico, *De sculptura*, p. 61: 'Praeterea et καταληπτικὸς, hoc est qui omnium quas exprimere voluerit rerum conceptas animo species contineat reddatque.'

ability to be καταληπτικὸς and εὐφαντασίωτος belongs to sculptors, writers and orators alike because their activity consists in a continuous struggle to overcome the constraints of reality. This means that in Gaurico's view, to overcome nature and produce acceptable art, the power of the imagination can never stray too far from reality because in that case only vain visions would be produced. The latter, Gaurico believes, should only populate the dreams of ill individuals and not the works of artists. Gaurico's reference in this case is to Horace's *Ars poetica*, where it is conceded that artists can be audacious so long as they do not counter natural truths, which would lead them to empty representations (*vanae species*).[195]

Let us continue with our reading of Gaurico's text to see the outcome of his argument:

> Thus let the sculptor take account of the forms of all species in order that he might represent man, towards which end his hand and mind should be wholly directed; however, sculptors devote themselves to fashioning little satyrs, hydras and monsters the likes of which no one has ever seen, as if they had nothing else to do.[196]

From this passage Gaurico's critique emerge against the profligacy of Paduan sculptors and, in particular, of Riccio, who were mostly interested in mythological and often pagan subject matters. In Gaurico's view, the main preoccupation of an artist should be with the human figure rather than with imaginary creatures and monsters that have no referent in reality.[197] Gaurico's emphasis on the unstable status of the imagination and the subtle boundary separating reality from fiction - a concern of many - hints at philosophical preoccupations that were central to early modern humanism. Like Gaurico, numerous early modern theoreticians addressed the question of imaginative appropriateness. It was commonly assumed that when the mind is distracted and veers towards the longings of desire, the imagination is filled with stimuli. This causes the artist to become *fantastichetto*, that is, to overindulge in the powers of the imagination. The word *fantastichetto* describes the humoural imbalance caused by the introjection of overheated images through the faculty of perception.[198] The connection between

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[195] See Horace, *Ars poetica* (1-10), transl. by A. S. Kline <www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/HoraceArsPoetrica.htm >: 'If a painter had chosen to set a human head / On a horse's neck, covered a melding of limbs, / Everywhere, with multi-coloured plumage, so / That what was a lovely woman, at the top, / Ended repulsively in the tail of a black fish: / Asked to a viewing, could you stifle laughter, my friends? / Believe me, a book would be like such a picture, / Dear Pisos, if it's idle fancies were so conceived / That neither its head nor foot could be related / To a unified form. "But painters and poets / Have always shared the right to dare anything".'

[196] Gaurico, *De sculptura*, p. 61: 'Ita sculptori rerum omnium species comprehendendae ut hominem ponat. Quo tanquam propositum tota eius et mens et manus dirigenda, quamquam satyriscis, hydris, chimaeris, monstris denique, quae nusquam unquam viderint, fingendis ita preoccupantur, ut nihil praeterea reliquum esse videatur.'

[197] Gaurico, op. cit., pp. 50-70.

[198] The term 'fantastichetto' is very seldom to be found in writings. Most likely a diminutive of 'fantastico', it seems to indicate a state of sensory overstimulation. The lemma appears in Franco Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*, when the wife of a drunk artist complains that painters are all 'fantastichi e lunatichi'. In Cennini, 'fantastichetto'

heat and the faculty of human representation was grounded in medical evidence. Imagination was supposed to be hot and dry and memory cold and dry, both tempered by the central cognitive faculty of the brain.[199] From what has been said so far, it is evident why Gaurico chose Leonico Tomeo as one of the interlocutors for his dialogue. As a renowned representative of Paduan humanism and as a keen collector, Leonico Tomeo's presence in *De sculptura* allowed Gaurico to mediate the two poles of his investigation, i.e., art and science.

In order to further explore this point, it is worth going back to Leonico Tomeo's Commentary on Aristotle's *On Memory and Recollection.* In the short introduction (*compendiarius discursus*) he prefaced to the work, Leonico Tomeo surveys the views of Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes on the imagination and then reflects on the case of the hallucinated Antipheron of Oreus, a clinical case reported on by Aristotle, to explain the malfunctioning of certain faculties of the human soul.[200] Gaurico was cautious about the use of hallucinatory perceptions in art, as he pointed out that artists ought to avoid the representation of monsters, hydras, satyrs, chimeras and other monsters in their works, 'as if they had nothing else to do'. By contrast, because of its philosophical premises, Leonico Tomeo's understanding of art as a product of the imagination is far more inclusive and significantly less moralistic than Gaurico's.

In his Commentary, Leonico Tomeo defines the imagination (*fantasia*) as 'the act of the imaginative power concerning things that can be pictured and imagined... The imagination works around internal objects'.[201] The difference between perception and *fantasia* lies in the fact that the former relates to objects present to the senses whereas the latter operates in their absence.[202] Perception is involuntary whereas *fantasia* is an act of the will.[203] The imagination is also the middle term between perception and intellection, and in Leonico Tomeo's view 'the

indicates one's tendency to pursue trifling fantasies led by the passion of imitating too many models. It may also refer to a psychological state of deep love, reminding, to some extent, of Andreas Cappellanus' 'uncontrolled cogitation' (*immoderata cogitatione*) in *On Love*. For Cappellanus, see *On Love*, ed. and tr. by Patrick Gerard Walsh (London: Bloomsbury, 1982). For Silvestris, see *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*, ed. by Julian Jones and Elisabeth Jones (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977). On Sacchetti, see *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. by Michelangelo Zaccarello (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014). On Cennini, see *The Book of Art. A Contemporary Practical Treatise on Quattrocento Painting*, transl. by Christiana Herringham (London: Allen, 1899), p. 22.

[199] On this aspect in Cennini, see Andrea Bolland 'Art and Humanism in Early Renaissance Padua: Cennini, Vergerio and Petrarch on Imitation', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 3 (1996), pp. 469–487.

[200] Leonico Tomeo, Commentary on Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 125. For the locus in Aristotle, see *De memoria et reminiscentia*, 451a8.

[201] Leonico Tomeo, Commentary on Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, pp. 112-13: 'Est igitur fantasia (…) fantasticae potestatis actus circa res que fantasiari et imaginari possunt. (…) Fantasia vero circa interna operatur obiecta'.

[202] Ibid.: 'Differt igitur fantasia a sensu (ut ex Alexandri colligitur verbis in commentariis de anima) quoniam sensus quidem fieri et esse dicitur sensilibus praesentibus: fantasia autem est illis etiam absentibus.'

[203] Ibid.: 'Praeterea sensus quidem in nostra non videtur esse potestate. Non enim nostri arbitrii est absentibus sentire sensilibus et non sentire praesentibus. Fantasia autem in nostrae spontis arbitrio est reposita. Arbitratu namque nostro quaecumque voluerimus et cum voluerimus licenter et libere imaginari possumus.'

definition of imagination can rightly be this: a movement from the senses that are in action, that is to say, a movement brought about by the simulacra and the vestiges that are enacted by perceptions, produced in the first sensory organ'.[204] This theory, says Leonico Tomeo, is shared by both Aristotelians and Platonists. The former call the imagination 'perception' (*sensus*), the latter, 'common sense' (*sensus communis*), both terms indicating the soul-related and bodily movements deriving from perceptible things. Similarly, 'both philosophical views hold memory to be the repository of perceptions, a treasure trove, as it were'.[205]

In the same *discursus* prefaced to the Aristotelian commentary, Leonico Tomeo expands on the Stoic theory of the imagination. He says that Chrysippus explained the origin of the term *fantasia* to the Greek verb φαίνεσθαι, indicating that which is appropriated by the soul through light and reveals itself rather than being effected by the mind:

> Chrysippus, to start from here, was rightly acknowledged to be the first among the Stoics, says that the imagination is a certain passion produced in the souls which reveals both itself and the causal principle behind it while showing a subject. For instance, when we perceive something white, a certain passion, he says, is imprinted through the vision of the soul, so that we can say that we have a certain white thing in us that is able to move us. We can say the same thing of the other senses. By the way, how clever and astonishing the Stoics were in applying names to things! Among the ancient philosophers, they paid the greatest attention to the etymologies of words. For, not without reason, the same Chrysippus says that the name *fantasia* derived ἀπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς, i.e., from 'light', παρὰ τὸ φαίνεσθαι, from 'to appear' and 'to look'. For, just as (he says) light shows and indicates clearly both itself and all that is in it, and makes that appear, so the imagination both shows itself and also seems to indicate that which causes it. And this is what is called 'fantasiable' or 'imaginable', as before was said about 'white'. But to avoid perhaps making mistakes about things due to the proximity of words, one thing, he says, is the 'fantasiable' and another thing is what the common people call the 'fantastic'. For the 'fantasiable' is that which the *fantasia* produces, but the 'fantastic', being what we can call 'imaginary' in Latin, is a certain deceptive and futile figment that moves and arouses the soul, to which no 'fantasiable thing' in reality is deemed to correspond.[206]

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[204] Ibid., p. 113: 'Quamobrem fantasiae haec non immerito poterit esse definitio: motus scilicet a sensibus qui sunt in actu, motus videlicet a simulacris effectus et reliquiis quae sunt a sensationibus actu, factus in primo sensitorio.'
[205] Ibid.: 'Sensum enim inquit communem quandam animae et corporis esse motionem, huius quidem ab externis sensilibus patientis, illius vero agentis et iudicantis. Memoriam autem sensuum esse conservationem et veluti thesaurum quendam.'
[206] Ibid., p. 114: 'Chrysippus igitur (ut hinc exordiar) qui inter Stoicos primas sibi facile vendicavit, fantasiam passionem quandam in animis factam dicit esse quae et seipsam et efficiens prae se fert et ostendit subiectum: ceu cum album quippiam cernimus, passio, inquit, quaedam per visionem animae inuritur ita quod dicere possumus subiectum quoddam album in nobis habere quod nos movere valeat. Parique modo de aliis dicere licet sensibus. Porro quam ingeniosi et miri nominum impositores fuere Stoici et vocabulorum etymologiis maximam inter reliquos philosophos impenderunt operam, fantasiae nomen non ab re ἀπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς, i.e. a lumine deductum fuisse idem Chrysippus affirmat παρὰ τὸ φαίνεσθαι, i.e. apparere et videri. Quemadmodum enim, inquit, lumen et seipsum et omnia quae in ipso sunt clare ostendit et indicat apparereque facit, ita fantasia cum se ipsam ostendit, tum id etiam quod ipsam efficit, indicare videtur. Illud autem id est quod fantasiabile sive imaginabile appellatur,

By playing on the double etymology – the Greek and the Latin – of the philosophical concept of imagination (*imaginatio* and *phantasia*), and by adopting crucial elements characteristic of the Stoic tradition, Tomeo distinguishes between the *fantasiabile*, i.e., that which can be mentally represented and has an external referent which is empirically provable (a *subiectum*) and the *fantasticum*, i.e., that which is based on the imagination's power to create alternative worlds without any support in external reality (the *fantasticum*). This distinction corresponds to the difference argued by Aristotle in *De memoria et reminiscentia* and reiterated by Tomeo, between image and likeness. The 'fantastic' belongs to a dimension of pure imagery, to a kind of reverie that transforms the mind into an artist itself, fabricating worlds beyond reality. Opposed to this stands the 'fantasiable', the representational dimension depending on the senses and the *fantasmata* received from their referents in nature.

We are now in the position to understand why Leonico Tomeo had his doubts about Socrates' bust being a likeness while at the same time showing interest in sculptures representing creatures of variously conflated attributes. His flexible attitude towards the abilities of the imagination certainly depended on his approach to the study of the ancient sources. Leonico Tomeo understood the 'fantastic' as the instantiation of a Platonic principle and the 'fantasiable' as reflecting his Aristotelian allegiances. Despite their difference, in order for the mind to function correctly, the *fantasiabile* and the *fantasticum* are both needed. In Leonico Tomeo's view, the *fantasmata* that the imagination elaborates out of the external world are either transformed into knowledge of superior things through perception, language and logic or turned into a variety of imaginary beings, from exquisite products of human artifice to mere delusions.[207]

Tomeo expands the discussion in another passage of his Commentary, dealing with the fact that the imagination depends on a material object. According to Leonico Tomeo, the imagination is fundamental for the soul in order to extract knowledge from the particulars of sensible experience and produce the abstract knowledge of universals. In this way, to use Gaurico's words, one can become εὐφαντασίωτος:

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ut retro de albo dictum est. Verum ne vocabulorum vicinitate de rebus ipsis forte fallamur, aliud sane inquit esse fantasiabile et aliud id quod vulgo dicunt fantasticum. Fantasiabile enim id est (ut diximus) quod fantasia efficit; fantasticum autem quod imaginosum latine dicere possumus vana quaedam est et futilis fictio animam movens et vellicans, cui tamen nullum in re fantasiabile respondere censetur.'

[207] On Pomponazzi's use of the term 'fantasmata', see Eugenio Garin, '"*Phantasia"* e "*imaginatio"*'. On Averroes's understanding of knowledge and perception, see Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, ed. by F. Stuart Crawford (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953), pp. 397, 497-509, 536. On Averroes, see Deborah Black, 'Averroes on the Spirituality and Intentionality of Sensation', in *The Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century* (London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Aragno, 2011), pp. 159–174. On the relationship between perception and knowledge in the history of philosophy, see Spruit, *Species intelligibilis*.

> In the absence of the imagination (*fantasia*) there cannot be abstraction and comprehension of the universal itself, since from the images and likenesses existing in the painting of the imagination, which are indeed vestiges of external objects, the intellect collects universal explanations.[208]

Leonico Tomeo's *fantasia* rests upon Gaurico's belief that the first stages of thinking, even when reason is employed for the production of art, are necessarily related to the sensory data acquired from the external world. Unlike Gaurico, however, Leonico Tomeo is aware of the possibility, discussed by Aristotle, that the human mind may lose track of reality, what philosophers define as 'fabulous' and common people call 'fantastic'. These contrived inventions bear some tenuous links with reality, but do not coincide with it, much like the allegories characteristic of Plato. And yet, although these visions are deceptive and futile, Leonico Tomeo recognises the legitimacy of creation through artifice.

Compared with Socrates's bust, the tablet representing satyrs, rather than being inappropriately fictive, showcased the mind's ability to conceive of worlds beyond the literal, what Gaurico called 'vain visions' and we may assume Tomeo would have called an example of 'fantasiability'. This means that the artwork allowed the mind, in its ability to interact with both the world of the external senses and the one created by the artistic imagination, to reflect on the soul's ability to re-produce the things that it pictured and conceived within itself and that therefore did not 'exist' in the literal sense of the term. As such, the sculpture was able to stir up the soul by allowing it to verify the level of correspondence between the real and the imagined. This is a fundamental point because it illustrates that Leonico Tomeo believed in the soul's capacity to create worlds that did not correspond to reality as perceivable by the senses. This is to say that through the faculty of the imagination in general and through the means of art in particular, the soul legitimately operated on a non-literal, non-perceptual and non-empirical level by producing 'fantasiable' images whose conformity to the laws of reality lay in their being produced by the soul itself. In this instance, man would be both *opus* and *artifex,* for his soul, by being created and by creating in turn, participates in the divine universe of intelligible actualisation as well as in that of natural generation. The 'fantasiable' and the 'fantastic' are therefore tokens of the soul's composite nature crystallised in the material world in the form of art.

[208] Leonico Tomeo, Commentary on Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 119: 'sine fantasia abstractio et comprehensio ipsius universalis esse non potest: ab imaginibus namque et simulacris in fantasiae pictura existentibus quae sane sunt reliquiae (…) extrinsecorum obiectorum universales intellectus colligit rationes'.

5. A Scholar Immersed in Visual and Emblematic Culture

In addition to the evolution of medical and antiquarian humanism during the Renaissance, Tomeo's legacy plays an important role in the development of the late Renaissance visual arts. In this section, I will explore this aspect by concentrating on Sebastian Stockhamer's commentary on the *Emblematum liber* ('Book of Emblems', 1531) by the Lombard legal scholar and humanist Andrea Alciato (1492–1550). My aim is to illustrate how the complex nature of Tomeo's thought, which we have examined through the lens of his scholarly pursuits and interests, anticipated and informed one of the most important products of Renaissance visual culture.

Sebastian Stockhamer (d. around 1589) was a Bavarian jurist and an alumnus of the Universities of Ingolstadt and Coimbra. The Portuguese nobleman João Meneses Sottomayor commissioned him to write the first ever scholarly commentary on an emblem book, thus inventing a new genre. The importance of Stockhamer's enterprise is most relevant because his work on Alciato came to constitute the only format in which the *Book of Emblems* was read between 1556 and 1651. Stockhamer's commentary, published in 1556, was extremely successful and it was printed more than fourteen times within a century from its first publication, continuing to circulate until the mid-seventeenth century.[209]

It has been argued that Stockhamer's main merit lies in his ability to produce a commonplace book, providing in-depth commentaries on single lemmas that could be used for various independent purposes. Stockhamer's ambition was to stimulate his readers to consult the vast amount of works he quoted by creating a storehouse of knowledge in the manner of Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights*, Macrobius's *Saturnalia* and Pliny's *Natural History*.[210] Combining encyclopaedic knowledge of etymology, grammar, mythology and more, Stockhamer contrived a unique example of *Buntschriftstellerei* or collection of curiosities. The Horatian principle of instructing while delighting seems to be at the core of this pioneering literary endeavour of the late Renaissance. The breadth of Stockhamer's erudition is demonstrated by the sheer amount of classical and early modern sources cited. Alongside Diodorus Siculus, Isidore of Seville, Lorenzo Valla, Pomponio Leto, Guillaume Budé and Erasmus, is also Leonico Tomeo.

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[209] On Alciato, see Peter Daly (ed.), *Andrea Alciato and the Emblem Tradition* (New York: AMS Press, 1989); Elena Laura Calogero (ed.), *The Italian Emblem: A Collection of Essays* (Glasgow: Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2007); Mino Gabriele, *Il* Libro degli emblemi *secondo le edizioni del 1531 e del 1534* (Milan: Adelphi, 2009); Eugenio Canone and Leen Spruit (eds), *Emblematics in the Early Modern Age: Case Studies on the Interaction Between Philosophy, Art and Literature* (Pisa: Serra, 2012); Monica Calabritto and Peter Daly (eds), *Emblems of Death in the Early Modern Period* (Geneve: Droz, 2014); Karl Enenkel and Paul Smith (eds), *Emblems and the Natural World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017).

[210] Maria Berbara and Karl A. E. Enenkel (eds), *Portuguese Humanism and the Republic of Letters* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 213.

Figure 1

The most relevant item for this selective survey of Tomeo's legacy is Emblem 41, entitled 'Immortality Won Through Literary Pursuits' (Figure 1). The description reads: 'Triton, Neptune's trumpeter, whose tail shows him as a sea-monster, his face as a god of the sea, is surrounded by an encircling snake which bites on its own tail, gripped fast in its mouth. Fame follows after men of outstanding intellect and their noble achievements, and bids them to be read throughout the world.'[211] Stockhamer's commentary follows:

> Triton is imagined as a sea God and a trumpeter of Neptune. In Virgil, in Books 1 and 5 of the *Aeneid*, however, he plays (as he affirms) and thunders the sea level with a resounding trumpet, rousing and exciting everyone. Moreover, as Claudian holds in the book *The Marriage of Honorius and Mary*, in the upper part of the man's effigy, but not in the inferior of a fish, he has the form of a dolphin, about which Leonicus tells in Book 2, Chapter 84 of his *De varia historia*. He is surrounded is surrounded by an encircling snake (the same Latin words as in the previous quotation should be translated by the same English words). Triton stands for learned and bright men and singing poets. Moreover, it was common for the ancients to depict the snake eating its own tail, indicating the year or eternal time, as is remarked in John of Holywood's little book *De anni ratione* ('On the Reckoning of the Year'): 'I am the year, like a serpent, in which the sun thus revolves. The year that has long ago passed away is now the same state of time.' The whole world, too, is an orbit. The figure is also to be shown more correctly (as is omitted in all others) in Book 2, Chapter 2 of Pliny's *Natural History*. Therefore, in this picture it is shown that fame will make each of the most knowledgeable

[211] Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, ed. by Sebastian Stockheimer, 2 vols (Lyons: Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau, 1556), II, ff. 72^{v}-73^{r}: 'Neptuni tubicen, cuius pars ultima cetum,/ Aequoreum facies indicat esse Deum:/ Serpentis medio Triton comprenditur orbe,/ Qui caudam inserto mordicus ore tenet./ Fama viros animo insignes, praeclaraque gesta/ Prosequitur, toto mandat & orbe legi.' On Stockheimer, see Berbara and Enenkel (eds), *Portuguese Humanism and the Republic of Letters*, esp. pp. 171, 213-214.

> and most learned men of letters famous throughout the whole world and with an immortal name.[212]

Stockhamer briefly refers to Leonico Tomeo's description of Triton as a dolphin. The entry in the *De varia historia*, however, is far more eloquent. After minutely discussing Triton's mixed nature as a man and a fish, covered by hair difficult to eradicate from his head, covered in scales and with hands resembling those of a witch, Leonico Tomeo details the consequence of the sea monster's habit to stroll across the fields surrounding the small Greek village of Tanagra in Boeotia, eating animals and men. Tomeo then reports Pausanias's account of the inhabitants of Tanagra, who, wishing to capture the monster, decided to place a bucket of wine on the banks of the river and observed Triton from a distance. They watched him drink the wine and, when it he fell asleep, they approached him to cut off his head with an axe and then exhibited the decapitated corpse in the temple dedicated to Bacchus to propitiate a miracle.[213]

Here it is important to underline that in *De varia historia*, he devoted a large number of entries to other creatures like satyrs, fauns and the *telchines*, aquatic beings with the body of a fish or a serpent and the head of a wolf or a dog.[214] Among the latter's inclinations was the production of art, to which they contributed through the first creation of statues honouring the gods. To explain this point, Stockhamer chose Tomeo, for the latter's *De varia historia* provides the curious with a detailed description of the artistic passion that animates the *telchines*, and it does so both by delighting and instructing. At the same time, Stockhamer's inclusion of Leonico Tomeo in his commentary seems also a way to legitimise his own work on Alciato by acquainting his reader with an early modern precedent of the genre of commonplace writing.

The account that Tomeo provides of Triton in *De varia historia* is particularly revealing if read in tandem with the commentary on Alciato's emblem. First, the variety of sources cited by Stockhamer is significantly wide ranging. Within the space of roughly fifteen lines, the most famous Latin poet, an Alexandrian court poet, the beacon of Roman encyclopaedism, one of the most important medieval astronomers and an early modern humanist philosopher

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[212] Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, f. 73^{r}: 'Triton Deus Marinus & Neptuni tubicen fingitur. Virgilius lib. 1. & 5. Aeneidos personat autem (ut ille inquit) & circumtonat aequor tuba sonora, ciens omnes & excitans, ut Claudianus in libro de nuptiis Honorii, & Mariae habet autem parte superiori hominis effigiem, inferiori vero piscis Delphini formam, de quo plura Leonicus de varia historia lib. 2. cap. 84. Comprehenditur is in medio circulo serpentis. Triton viros praeclaros doctos, canentesque Poëtas denotat, Serpens autem apud antiquos, propriam devorans caudam, depingi solebat, annum significans seu perpetuum tempus, ut apud Ioannem de Sacrobusto in libello de anni ratione, sic annotatum est, Serpens annus ego sum sol sic circinat in quo Qui fluxit pridem status est nunc temporis idem. Orbem etiam totum circuli figura demonstrari (ut omnes alios omittam) pulchre Plinius lib. 2. cap. 2. naturalis historiae. Ostenditur ergo tali pictura, doctissimos literarumve studiosissimos quosque fama per totum orbem terrarum nomineque perpertuo celebres fieri.' See *Alciato at Glasgow* < http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A56a041 >

[213] Leonico Tomeo, *De varia historia libri tres* (Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1531), f. 134^{rv}.

[214] Ibid., ff. 87^{v}–88^{r}.

are made to coexist. The *Aeneid*, *The Marriage of Honorius and Mary*, *On the Reckoning of the Year*, the *Natural History* and *De varia historia* could not, at first sight, seem all the more disparate. If, however, one considers again Stockhamer's desire to prompt his readers to consult the works included in his commentaries, variety shows itself in a new light. It seems that the most important factors to be considered here in relation to the afterlife of Tomeo's thought are those of memory and delight.

Concerning memory, it should be recalled that emblem books had, among many other purposes, the function of providing a visual basis for learning. As has been noted, the cultural milieu of Coimbra, from which Stockhamer's work emerged, was characterised by a specific interest in emblematics.[215] Stockhamer's patron, João Sottomayor, was said to carry Alciato's book everywhere, leafing through it according to the necessity of the moment, from pleasurable reading to contemplation. Like a book of hours or a prayer manual, Alciato's *Emblematum liber* was to Sottomayor a pocket thesaurus of moral and spiritual edification. Upon his meeting with Stockhamer in Coimbra in the 1550s, it seems that the Portuguese was so impressed with the Bavarian's knowledge of the sources embedded in Alciato's brief texts that he commissioned from him an independent commentary.[216] Regardless of whether this account is real or fictive, it is most certain that, if Stockhamer produced such an ambitious work, a readership for it already existed. One can also assume that the works he cited in his commentaries were either easily or directly available to his audience, including Leonico Tomeo's *De varia historia*. It should be recalled here that Stockhamer's commentary was first printed in 1556 in Lyon by Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau. The French city was one of the most important centres for the development of humanism and this would have certainly facilitated the circulation of Stockhamer's work across Europe. If this was the case, Leonico Tomeo's oevure also continued to travel across the continent over time.

As a successful example of *Buntschriftstellerei*, Stockhamer's commentary was meant to entertain. As Sottomayor's example shows, books of emblems were, besides tools for mnemonic apprehension, also a vehicle of aesthetic pleasure and entertainment. Like Stockhamer's work, Tomeo's *De varia historia* was conceived as a repository of historical, mythological and scientific curiosities, a true primer of natural and cultural particulars. As already mentioned in the Introduction, *De varia historia* was the most successful of Leonico Tomeo's works. First printed in Venice by Giunta and in Basel by Froben in 1531, *De varia historia* was published multiple times during the sixteenth century. It was also published by Gryphius in Lyon in 1555, the same city where Stockhamer's commentary was printed. Due to its enormous

[215] Berbara and Enenkel (eds), *Portuguese Humanism*, p. 213.
[216] Ibid., p. 215.

success, *De varia historia* was also translated into the Italian vernacular and printed in Venice in 1544 by Michele Tramezzino.

As far as delight is concerned, a few words are in order to shed some light on the sixteenth-century humanist milieu. In a letter to Reginald Pole dated 31 May 1524, Leonico Tomeo declared himself to have been 'very impressed with Galen and even more with Aristotle and Plato' and that 'I divert myself with Cicero and the historians'.[217] In a letter of 8 February 1531 to Pole, Leonico Tomeo announced that he was 'printing something on philology'.[218] We can assume with a fair amount of certainty that the work he referred to was *De varia historia*, for only a few weeks after he sent the letter to Pole he died in Padua. What is most interesting is that he regarded this book as a philological work. This indicates that for Leonico Tomeo, the aim of the work was to outline a proto-history of ideas by relying on *brevitas* and *varietas*. That Tomeo diverted himself with Cicero and the historians is significant for the spirit with which he faced the Pantagruelian task of writing a three-tome encyclopaedia. To him and likely also to his readers, philology was also a divertissement. It seems safe to say that Stockhamer's intended public was not too dissimilar from Tomeo's, which once again underlines the importance of *De varia historia* as an early modern precedent of the new genre of commonplace writing.

The fact that Stockhamer included a reference to Tomeo in his entry on Triton, who 'stands for learned and bright men and singing poets', clearly means that he considered Leonico Tomeo to be one himself. The editorial success of *De varia historia* further proves his work of natural history and critical antiquarianism exercised a certain impact on later authors.

[217] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, ff. 30^{v}-31^{v}.
[218] Ibid., ff. 54^{v}-56^{v}.

Part 2

The *Dialogi*: A Compendium of Renaissance Philosophy

Chapter 4
Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi* within the Context of Renaissance Dialogue

Any investigation into the *Dialogi* must take account of the work's genre. This chapter will consider why the dialogue format suited particularly well Leonico Tomeo's approach to philosophical investigations. I will first examine the editorial history of the *Dialogi* by contextualising it against the revival of classical Greek and Roman dialogues that took place during the Renaissance. This will shed light on Leonico Tomeo's sources, his ways of appropriating past knowledge and the scope of his philosophical and literary autonomy. Second, I will briefly survey the biographies of the real-life characters of the individual texts in order to ground the intellectual import of the *Dialogi* in Leonico Tomeo's own humanist pursuits and cultural circles. Finally, I will consider the places and environments chosen by Leonico Tomeo to situate his reflections on philosophical, historical, religious and literary topics, with specific reference to the city of Padua. As a whole, this chapter dwells on the formal aspects of the *Dialogi* in view of the thematic reading provided of the single texts in the chapters to follow. Throughout, the focus will be on Leonico Tomeo's ability to tackle abstract and universal concerns through the filter of everyday life and social rituals.

1. The Publication of the *Dialogi*

The genealogy of the Italian Renaissance dialogue as it derived from classical models has received great attention from historians and literary critics. Works including Pietro Bembo's *Asolani* (1505), Baldassarre Castiglione's *Cortegiano* (1528), Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* (1535), Anton Francesco Doni's *I Marmi* (1552), and Giordano Bruno's *Cena delle ceneri* (1584) have been profusely examined and are now among the best studied works of the Renaissance.[219] It is precisely in light of this attention to the genre of the dialogue that the

[219] On Bembo, see for example, Riccardo Scrivano, 'Nelle pieghe del dialogare bembesco', in *Il dialogo: Scambi e passaggi della parola*, ed. by Giulio Ferroni (Palermo: Sellerio, 1985), pp. 101–109 (102). On Leone Ebreo, see, among others, Angela Guidi, 'Sofia e i suoi dubbi: L'immagine della filosofia nei *Dialoghi d'amore* di Leone Ebreo', in *The Medieval Paradigm: Religious Thought and Philosophy*, ed. by Giulio d'Onofrio (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 843–874. On Doni, see Giovanna Rizzarelli (ed.), *I* Marmi *di Anton Francesco Doni: La storia, i generi e le arti* (Florence: Olschki, 2012). On Bruno, see Michele Ciliberto and Nicoletta Tirinnanzi (eds), *Il dialogo recitato: Per una nuova edizione del Bruno volgare* (Florence: Olschki, 2002). On the Renaissance dialogue, see Jon R. Snyder, *Writing the Scene of Speaking: Theories of Dialogue in the Late Italian Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in Its*

neglect into which Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogues* has fallen seems, to some extent, surprising. Having already set out his philosophical (mis)fortune in Chapter 1 of this thesis, it is now important to examine the editorial vicissitudes behind the *Dialogi*, in order to gain a better understanding of the historical and cultural circumstances that led to their publication.

The quantity of books available in mid-sixteenth century Italy was striking, so much so that Anton Francesco Doni (1515–1574) described the Venetian book industry as an impenetrable forest in facing 'the eyes of the mind'.[220] Amid this forest, in 1524, appeared also Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*. When he published this work, Leonico Tomeo was already in his sixties. The reasons that convinced him to publish the book at such a late stage are unknown. From a set of letters now in the Vatican Library, we learn that Tomeo was unsure about the quality of his work and therefore he withheld it from the public.[221] Tomeo's modesty aside, the reasons for slowing down the printing may have been as complex as the ones that characterised the publication history of his commentaries on Aristotle's books on animals.[222] This publication was considerably delayed because of a misunderstanding between Leonico Tomeo and his patron Ludovico Gonzaga from Mantua. Leonico Tomeo had sent Gonzaga a copy of his commentary on the *Parva naturalia*, together with a letter of encomium, now lost, and a request of financial support to pursue his work on Aristotle, but he never received a reply. After some time, Leonico Tomeo expressed his disappointment in another letter, in which he demanded the support he had been denied and specifying also that the book he had sent was not a gift, but a proof of his intellectual position.[223]

It has been demonstrated that, to an even larger extent than commentary writing, dialogue production presented humanists with numerous obligations. The choice of characters was fundamentally aimed at gaining the favour of potential or habitual patrons and the creation of an intellectual reputation.[224] This would most evidently be the case with Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*, except that they were printed when its author was already in his sixties, an age too advanced, it seems, to start worrying about one's reputation. The dire economic conditions in which Padua found itself as a result of the Italian Wars and the plague that broke out in the city

Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Valée (eds), *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Olga Weijers, *In Search of the Truth: A History of Disputation Techniques from Antiquity to the Early Modern Times* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

[220] Anton Francesco Doni, *La libraria*, ed. by Vanni Bramanti (Milan: Longanesi, 1972), pp. 127-8: 'La molta comodità de' libri e gran quantità ci hanno oggi mai fatta una selva inestricabile sugli occhi dell'intelletto'.

[221] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, f. 37^{r-v}.

[222] On humanist humility, see David Cooper, *The Measure of Things: Humanism, Humility and Mystery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Richard Strier, *The Unrepentant Renaissance: From Petrarch to Shakespeare to Milton* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011).

[223] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997.

[224] Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 36.

in 1510 were certainly not behind Leonico Tomeo's decision to work on the *Dialogi*. As a successful and admired tutor of important students at Padua during the 1520s, he most certainly did not need to rely on a publication to make a living. Equally unsatisfactory seems to be the explanation that Leonico Tomeo resorted to the literary technique of lending authority to unorthodox or controversial arguments by voicing them through the carefully chosen characters of the dialogues.[225] It is true that he made the culturally and politically powerful Pietro Bembo the protagonist of the two potentially most controversial texts of his dialogue collection, the ones dealing respectively with the immortality and the essence of souls. It is also true that he dedicated his dialogue on prayer, for which he relied exclusively on pagan sources, to Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto, thereby shielding himself from potential accusations of unorthodoxy.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the *Dialogues* were first published in 1524 by Gregorio de Gregori in Venice. Together with his brother Giovanni, Gregorio was among the most prolific printers active in Venice between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. Giovanni started his activity in Padua, where he resided in Contrà San Francesco. Given that Leonico Tomeo during those years was living in the same area of the city in those years, we must assume that it was there that he first met his future publisher.[226] The De Gregori typography specialised in textbook editions, initially destined to the faculties of law and medicine. Their scope later expanded to include literature, philosophy and theology, always with a particular attention to philological works. During the 1520s, the De Gregori were the first to publish the Italian editions of Erasmus's works. The *Modus orandi* published by De Gregori in 1525, that is, a couple of months after the *Dialogi*'s publication in September 1524, is important to measure the originality of Leonico Tomeo's approach to philosophy against that of the most celebrated figures of the Renaissance.[227] The choice of the publisher of Tomeo's *Dialogi* seems to be in line with the principles of the second-generation humanism I have mentioned above, especially considering De Gregori's catalogue, which included a vast amount of philologically pioneering works.

The first edition of the *Dialogi* consisted of ten texts. A supplementary one was added in a second edition in 1530, to address the question of the essence of the souls, which Tomeo had left pending for six years. The *Dialogi* are set in *loci amoeni*, usually the Paduan houses

[225] For other early modern examples of delegation of authority, see Giovanni Fratta, *Della dedicatione dei libri, con la corretion dell'abuso in questa materia introdotto* (Venice: Giorgio Angelici 1590), esp. f. 22^{v}. See also Marco Santoro, 'Contro l'abuso delle dediche: *Della Dedicatione de' libri* di Giovanni Fratta', *Paratesto*, 1 (2004), pp. 99-120.

[226] Tiziana Pesenti, 'De Gregori, Giovanni e Gregorio', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXXVI (1988), p. 206.

[227] On De Gregori, see Luigi Servolini, 'Le edizioni dei fratelli De Gregoriis e una loro raccolta nella Biblioteca di Forlì', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 54 (1979), pp. 120–133; Larry Silver, '"Those Other Venetian Book Illustrations"', *Word and Image*, 31 (2015), pp. 155–163.

and the countryside villas of Leonico Tomeo and his fellow humanists. These usually meet to discuss various matters, such as the dignity of Latin over the vernacular, the immortality of the soul, the role of philosophy and its relationship to medicine, the arts, politics and the importance of prayer as a means to achieve a closer contact with God. The pretexts prompting these conversations are always apparently trivial, like a birthday party, a political event or a religious ritual. Early in the dialogues, however, these pretexts acquire a symbolic value that is inherently related to the central meaning of the text. The sources on which Leonico Tomeo relied upon in his dialogues include Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Theophrastus, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus, Galen, Lucian, Cicero, Pliny, Thomas Aquinas, Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, among others. In order of appearance in the first edition, the ten dialogues included the following titles: *Trophonius, sive de divinatione*; *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum*; *Alverotus, sive de tribus animorum vehiculis*; *Peripateticus, sive de nominum inventione*; *Sadoletus, sive de precibus*; *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*; *Phoebus sive de aetatum moribus*; *Severinus, sive de relativorum natura*; *Bonominus sive de alica*; *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario*. The 1530 edition of Tomeo's *Opera* by Simon de Colines also included the dialogue *Bembus, or On the Essence of the Souls*.

The *Dialogi* were printed three times as an independent text, first, as already said, in Venice in 1524 and subsequently in Lyon by Sebastian Gryphius in 1532 and 1542. Evidently, the text did not enjoy the great editorial success of *De varia historia* or the Commentary on the *Parva naturalia*. The reason for this lies in the purpose of the *Dialogi*. While *De varia historia* was an encyclopaedic collection of facts that appealed to a diverse and extended readership and Commentary had been designed were intended for didactic purposes and written with the aim of becoming a textbook for students learning Aristotle at university, the *Dialogi* are characterised by a highly complex play of philosophical, literary and mythological references and by a sophisticated use of the Latin language. The intended readership of the *Dialogues* was not only extremely erudite, but also rather selective, including the same people who appeared as the principal characters in the texts themselves. The fact that the *Dialogi* were printed twice in Lyon most likely depends on Leonico Tomeo's contacts with the local printer Gryphius, who was a close acquaintance of his friend Christophe de Longueil.[228] Numerous other works by Leonico Tomeo were printed in Lyon, which in the sixteenth century was the most important centre for the distribution of humanist texts outside of Italy. What is more, he was generally perceived as an Aristotelian, precisely on the grounds of his university teaching and because

[228] On Leonico Tomeo and Longueil, see Christophe de Longueil, *Lucubrationes, Orationes III, Epistolarum Libri IV* (Lyon: Sebastian Gryphius, 1542), p. 193 and Padua, Biblioteca Antica del Seminario Vescovile, Cod. 71, f. 139^{v}.

of his work on the *Parva naturalia*. These two factors most probably led his other writings to fall into oblivion, at least from the eighteenth century onwards, as I have detailed in Chapter 1. Evidence of this, as already pointed out, is the absence of the *Dialogi* from the otherwise accurate entry dedicated to Leonico Tomeo by Jacob Brucker in the *Historia critica philosophiae.* Brucker associated Tomeo with the 'philosophers pursuing the true philosophy of Aristotle' (*De philosophis genuinam Aristotelis philosophiam sectantibus*) and therefore failed to mention his *Dialogi* as well as his partial translation of Proclus.[229] After Brucker, the *Dialogi* were seldom mentioned and even more rarely discussed or studied. It is therefore possible to say that the legacy of Leonico Tomeo's most original work dates to the end of the sixteenth century, when his work was still read and used as a reference text by his former students.

Despite the subdued afterlife of the *Dialogi*, probably caused by its limited circulation and the level of scholarly expertise required from its potential readers, it is still surprising that the text has been overlooked for so long by both historians of philosophy and cultural historian, especially when we bear in mind that they mention some of the best studied personalities of the Renaissance, ranging from Pietro Bembo to the anti-Machiavellian Cardinal Reginald Pole and the chamberlain of Pope Leo X, Jacopo Sadoleto.

2. Lucian, Cicero, Plato and Aristotle: The Models of the Renaissance Dialogue

Before focusing on the defining characteristics of Leonico Tomeo's dialogues, it will be worth providing a short outline of the principal models used by Renaissance writers in their composition of dialogues. Lucian, Cicero, Plato and Aristotle were certainly the most representative cases.

The Lucianic dialogue proved to be particularly apt for the satirical purpose of criticising moral, social and intellectual commonplaces, together with fallacious socio-cultural types.[230] Its influence should be traced back to Erasmus, who not only translated many of Lucian's dialogues from Greek into Latin, but also used Lucianic strategies to deride the monastic and ecclesiastical abuses of his time in some of his *Colloquia*.[231] Lucian sheds light on the

[229] Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*, IV, pp. 155–157.
[230] See *Luciani compluria opuscula ab Erasmo et Thoma Moro interpretibus optimis in Latinorum linguam traducta*, ed. Christopher Robinson, in Desiderius Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, part I, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company; Leiden: Brill, 1969), pp. 361–627.
[231] On Erasmus' engagement with Lucian, see for example Anna Peterson, 'Dialoguing with a Satirist: The Translations of Lucian by Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 8 (2018), pp. 1–22.

nature of the *Dialogi*, for Leonico Tomeo was an avid reader of his work and also translated some of his dialogues. One of these, the *Symposium*, is now held in Eton College Library in an elegant manuscript bound in precious leather and owned by the French bibliophile Jean Grolier.[232] This text is a particularly important new find, as at the moment it represents the earliest surviving text by Leonico Tomeo, dating to 1508. Although it is likely that the Eton dialogue was copied by the compiler of the codex, it is nonetheless chronologically valuable for our studies on Tomeo in that it gives us some glimpse of his literary undertakings in the decades preceding the publication of his printed works. In the preface to his translation, addressed to Giovanni Battista Suardo, Leonico Tomeo says that he has translated the dialogue twenty years prior, in the 1480s. At that time, we know that Tomeo had just obtained his degree from the University of Padua after having travelled with his teacher Chalcondyles to Florence, Milan and Bergamo. From a letter now in the Vatican, we learn that Giovanni Battista Suardo was an old acquaintance of Tomeo from Bergamo.[233] The Eton manuscript is therefore important under many respects, for it sheds light on humanist literary exchange practices, on Leonico Tomeo as a sought-after translator of Greek texts into Latin and on the interest of late Renaissance book collectors and philologists in his work. More importantly, however, it confirms the tendency of Leonico Tomeo to produce and circulate his work in manuscript rather than printed format. This also explains the many difficulties in retrieving and identifying some of his works at present and a few problems in assessing the actual scope of his influence as a thinker during and after his life. In general, Lucianic instances in the *Dialogi* can be detected in the use of irony, most often relegated to the dedicatory letters prefacing the individual texts, scorning the superstition of the *vulgus*, and in the harsh critique against the moral corruption of university students and professors choosing their careers for economic profit and social prestige.

Another important model for the *Dialogi* was Cicero. The Ciceronian dialogue presented the possibility of staging a group of speakers belonging to an aristocratic urban elite, who, in a remote pleasant environment, engage in an open-ended exchange of equally valid ethical perspectives and moral arguments on a given topic. Authors often adopted the so-called *in utramque partem* strategy of providing balanced arguments on both sides of the debate. This model proved particularly appealing during the Renaissance for the moral, ideological and political agenda promoted by such authors Leonardo Bruni (c.1370–1444), in his *Dialogi ad*

[232] Eton, Eton College Library, MS 262. See Anthony Hobson, *Renaissance Book Collecting: Jean Grolier and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Their Books and Bindings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. ix.
[233] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ross. 997, f. 3^{rv}.

Petrum Paulum Histrum (1401), and Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), in his four-day dialogue *I libri della famiglia* (1441).[234] The characters of the Ciceronian dialogue endorse the view propounded by the main character rather than there being multiple figures involved in the discussion. In the *Dialogi*, the influence of the Ciceronian model can be detected in the non-urban setting, granting the speakers the necessary intimacy to discuss topics as distant from worldly concerns as the homes in which their debates took place. The *in utramque partem* technique is also markedly present, contributing to the general sense of poise in the narrative. Overall, a balanced conversation on metaphysical topics set in a countryside context, according to the Ciceronian model, contributes to the *Dialogi*'s unity of action and space.

Besides Lucian and Cicero, the other crucial influence on the *Dialogi* is that of Plato. The Platonic dialogue was imitated in the Renaissance in its *Symposium* mode, where a narrative staging of banquet and festivity was followed by a succession of speeches in which the interlocutors voiced their views on a chosen topic. The Socratic mode was also emulated. Here a dominating interlocutor reminiscent of Socrates led one or a limited number of other characters from a seemingly casual remark to a moral or ethical truth obtained through maieutic means. More often than not, during the Renaissance, the Platonic model was integrated with its Ciceronian counterpart so as to match the appropriateness or *decorum* of the theories presented by the protagonist with the strategies adopted to praise the *ethos* of the speakers. In many cases, in the *Dialogi* Leonico Tomeo fused the diegetic staging of a courtly setting in the Ciceronian mode with the mimetic rendering of the interlocutors' words in Socratic-Platonic style.[235] This contributed to the development of a discursive tool that became crucial in a variety of humanist, rhetorical, scientific, religious and artistic endeavors. Given its internal variety, the dialogic form was well suited to address the tensions and ambiguities underlying the discussion of philosophical themes. The Ciceronian urbanity of the characters, so similar to that of Renaissance courtiers, paired with the Socratic wit, reminiscent of the Erasmian and largely humanist critique of excessive morality, brought to the fore a dialogue merging together worldliness with otherworldliness. In this sense, the dialogical layout was closely intertwined

[234] David Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue*; Annick Paternoster, Aptum*: Retorica ed ermeneutica nel dialogo rinascimentale del primo Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998); Marc Föcking, '"Dyalogum quendam', Petrarcas *Secretum* und die Arbeit am Dialog im Trecento', in *Möglichkeiten des Dialogs. Struktur und Funktion einer literarischen Gattung zwischen Mittelalter und Renaissance in Italien*, ed. by Klaus Hempfer (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), pp. 75–114.

[235] Reinier Leushuis, *Speaking of Love: The Love Dialogue in Italian and French Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), p. 8–9.

with the message conveyed by the interlocutors, for the duality inherent in the pairing of Ciceronian and Platonic models helped make the discussion more theoretically forceful and rhetorically convincing.

In addition to the recovery of classical templates by Plato, Cicero and Lucian, Leonico Tomeo was also open to suggestions coming from the rediscovered *Poetics* of Aristotle. The latter defined the dialogue with respect to poetry, theatre and rhetoric, emphasising the opposition between the dramatic and the philosophical aspects of staged discourse (*Poetics*, 19). Mimesis was often discussed by Aristotle in relation to the dialogue because of the importance of realism for the veracity of the intellectual content. In relation to mimesis, linguistic accuracy was also a primary concern in the *Poetics* (*Poetics*, 20–21). This aspect became central in the Renaissance, when debates on the dignity of Latin and the vernaculars were particularly intense. Whether a dialogue was to imitate real-life dynamics of interaction between scholars, or whether it was more appropriate for a dialogue to be entirely fictive, the question became a central concern for Renaissance authors debating where to draw the line separating verisimilitude from the imitation of reality.

This tension is most evident in Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*, whose narrative combines aspects drawn from the observation of nature with others characteristic of a philosophical attitude that is open to religious and theological concerns. The place of reason is secured by strong reliance on philosophical ideas and texts criticising superstitious and dogmatic beliefs while celebrating the intelligible hierarchy of beings, intellectual growth and spiritual development. By contrast, the side corresponding to the knowledge of nature based on the direct experience of the senses is represented by the attentive description of the external world, from animate and inanimate beings to human artefacts. The model of Aristotle's *Poetics* is also relevant for philological reasons, for Leonico Tomeo acted as a proof-reader and editor of the Latin translation of the *Poetics* produced in the 1520s by the Florentine Alessandro de' Pazzi, who dedicated his work to Leonico Tomeo.[236]

Besides the four models of dialogic writing popular in the Renaissance, critics have proposed alternative classifications and typologies for the wide and diverse corpus of this early modern genre. Among these, the most relevant for our study of the *Dialogi* is the so-called *peirastic* dialogue. Unlike the *narrative* or *diegetic* variants, in which the reader is reminded of the validity of the author's opinion, the *peirastic* type consists in the constant alternation of standpoints and opinions on a given topic. This is a marked characteristic of the *Dialogi*, through which Leonico Tomeo is able to address one of the most decisive issues of Renaissance

[236] See Alessandro Pazzi to Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, in Aristotle, *Poetica*, transl. by A. Pazzi (Venice: Heirs of Aldus Manutius, 1536), sigs A3^{v}–A5^{r}.

literature, that is, how to teach an audience without appearing to be doing so. The way of the *civil conversatione* – the civilised exchange of opinions – was in this sense crucial, for it allowed Leonico Tomeo to stage debates that were voicing dissonant opinions through the linguistic *decorum* of the speakers and the formal coherence fundamental to early modern writings.[237]

3. The Dialogue's Unity of Form and Content

In her influential study of Renaissance dialogue writing, Virginia Cox has argued that 'the interest of the dialogue, for the historian of philosophy, lies in the philosophical import of the form: the answer to the question of what kind of thought "thinks itself as a dialogue"?'. Cox has also pointed out that, depending on the answer one gives to this question, it is possible to identify true and false dialogues, the former being 'genuinely dialectical' and the latter being 'monologues in disguise'.[238] Although it is a common assumption in some particular views of philosophy that the faculty of reason is self-referential to the extent that it continuously attempts to understand itself, it would be wrong to say that Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi* embrace the notion of the dialogue as the soul's soliloquy about the meaning of 'soul'. Similarly, it would be reductive to say that the *Dialogi* are 'monologues in disguise', if only for the presence of dissenting opinions within the space of a single text and for the amount of space allowed to positions that are not entirely orthodox. Yet they also are not 'genuinely dialectical', for in more than one instance the exchange of opinions between the characters is lost in favour of long, theoretical expositions of philosophical concepts by the part of a single figure, as in Plato's *Timaeus*.

In addition to the question of formal coherence, that of the philosophical content needs to be addressed here. Leonico Tomeo's dialogues provides the reader with several intersecting lines of thought. By not presenting one incontrovertible truth about each of the questions addressed in each dialogue and by reconciling the empirical and metaphysical dimensions of the

[237] Nuccio Ordine, 'Il dialogo cinquecentesco italiano tra diegesi e mimesi', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 37 (1988), pp. 155–179; Franco Pignatti, 'Aspetti e tecniche della rappresentazione nel dialogo cinquecentesco', in *Il sapere delle parole: Studi sul dialogo latino e italiano del Rinascimento*, ed. by Walter Geerts, Annick Paternoster and F. Pignatti (Roma: Bulzoni, 2001), pp. 115–140; Valerio Vianello, *Il 'Giardino' delle parole: Itinerari di scrittura e modelli letterari nel dialogo cinquecentesco* (Rome: Jouvence, 1993), pp. 9–23. The most thorough assessment of the various classifications can be found in Stefano Prandi, *Scritture al crocevia. Il dialogo letterario nei secoli XV e XVI* (Vercelli: Mercurio, 1999), esp. pp. 17–59.

[238] Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 2. See also Mark Jordan, 'A Preface to the Study of Philosophical Genres', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 14 (1981), pp. 199–211 (202, 206).

issues under scrutiny, Tomeo delivers a conceptual prism that generates a large number of possible readings. We can therefore say that, while the form is stable and organic owing to its resting on consistent and clear stylistic prescriptions, the content varies because of the changeable and varied nature of its subject matter.

The marked dualism of the Renaissance dialogue has been addressed by David Simpson in his study of Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779). Simpson noted that the philosophical dialogue can be distinguished between the 'ornamental' and the 'poetic'.[239] In the first instance, the form and content of the dialogue are not integrated at any level whereas the opposite is the case in the second instance. The poetic dialogue includes characters, settings and a sheer variety of other elements that are constitutive of the meaning that one author intends to convey through their work. What is more, the reader is treated not as an external participant or viewer, but is actively engaged in the production of meaning. This seems to further corroborate the idea that the unity of the *Dialogi* emerges from an equal degree of formal consistency and variety of viewpoints.

We can therefore say that the *Dialogi* present several key features of Renaissance dialogue writing. Through the Aristotelian principle of verisimilitude, Tomeo constructed credible meta-narratives on philosophical concepts such as nature, the soul and matter set in a real environment and enacted by historically existing characters. By subscribing to the Platonic model of the symposium, in which philosophical issues are introduced through the device of a festivity. The Ciceronian example entered the *Dialogi* for its emphasis on historical veracity and its insistence on the intellectual pursuits of the élites. Although less evident, the Lucianic model is also of relevance to the *Dialogues*, if only for the critique of the degradation of contemporary culture that Leonico Tomeo made in passing on more than one occasion.

By and large, the influence of the four classical models discussed above can be detected in the following characteristic features. Each text opens *in medias res*. Discussions are triggered by the off-hand comment of one of the speakers, who only under the pressure of his listeners will start a lengthy discussion on a complex topic that needs to be proved through convincing arguments. The solution to the issue is therefore only provided at the end of the dialogue, as if it flowed naturally from the ongoing conversation. A considerable amount of digressions weaves in and out, colouring the dialogues, most often when the characters seem to have diverging opinions. The texts usually terminate with an open ending. A conclusion or solution to the problem debated is provided, but the possibility for the discussion to be picked up anew in any given moment, either by the same speakers or by new ones, is always granted. It is therefore

[239] David Simpson, 'Hume's Intimate Voices and the Method of Dialogue', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 29 (1979), pp. 68–71.

possible to say that Leonico Tomeo's choice of the dialogue format was not mere verbal dressing intended to meet the literary standards of early modern writing. Rather, the dialogue offered the most suitable means for him to address the principal topics of his philosophical inquiry.

Chapter 5
The *Dialogi*: Stories and Arguments

In the letter to his former student Reginald Pole, dated 1 August 1524, which serves as a short preface to the *Dialogi*, Leonico Tomeo recounts how he had written a few dialogues in the style of Plato (*sermones Academicorum more*), 'dealing with various matters, but especially with those pertaining to philosophy'. Some of the dialogues were circulating as manuscripts among certain friends, some others were still in the author's hands.[240] According to Leonico Tomeo's own recollections, those same friends asked him to collect and publish them all as one little volume (*sub unius commentarioli volumine*). Among his friends, 'the most learned' (*humanissimus*) Reginald Pole was particularly insistent. Leonico Tomeo decided therefore to present this work as a small gift (*exile munusculum*) to his former student, all the more so because Pole had read all of Plato and Aristotle's works together with all the relevant commentators when he was a young boy.[241]

Before being published in 1524, the *Dialogi* had already circulated in manuscript form for at least two decades among Leonico Tomeo's friends. A summa of his scholarly and philosophical thinking, the *Dialogi* encapsulates the multi-layered legacy of an early modern thinker who fully deserves to be ranked among the most significant representatives of the time. Before moving to a close reading of the text, however, it would be helpful to provide some short synopses of each single dialogue in the collection.

1. *Trophonius*, or Divination

Trophonius is the first of the ten dialogues collected in the 1524 edition and the longest of them all. The narrative is set in the middle of the summer, in the little village of San Zenone, near Asolo in the Veneto, where Leonico Tomeo and his brother Fosco are staying at a friend's place to escape the torrid heat of Padua (*flagrantissimo sole ardebat dies*). Another friend of theirs, Alessandro Capella, suddenly bumps into them while they are enjoying a bit of fresh air

[240] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Reginald Pole, in *Dialogi*, sig. AA2^{r}, ll. 1-6: 'Cum ab hinc aliquot annos variis de rebus, sed quae praecipue ad philosophiam spectarent, sermones quosdam Academicorum more confecissem, quorum aliqui in lucem ita prodierunt ut in amicorum quorundam manibus solum versentur, nonnulli vero adhuc in archetypis iaceant.'
[241] Ibid., sig. AA2^{r}, l. 34; AA2^{v}, ll. 1-2.

outside the door of their friend's house. Little to no information survives about Alessandro Capella. We learn from Leonico Tomeo that he was a close friend of his and that he was well versed in literature and the classics. His surname suggests that he was a member of the noble Cappello family, numerous members of which served as diplomats and ambassadors to the Venetian Republic throughout the Renaissance.[242] A witty conversation begins, which is interrupted by the arrival of the unnamed host, who knows Capella and invites him and the other two friends to come inside and join him in a pleasantly cool room in the house 'that looks out over North' with a view of the mountains.[243] Capella says that he has been reading Aristophanes at home and, since it is still non possible for them to go anywhere 'because of the heat', he suggests that they might discuss together a certain passage from Aristophanes's *The Clouds*.[244] The textual *locus* refers to the moment in the story when the character Strepsiades decided to enrol in Socrates's school and, entering the 'Thinkery', says that 'he feels apprehensive and trembles, as if he were descending into the cave of Trophonius. He therefore asks Socrates to give him the honey-cake he is carrying with him'.[245] Capella says that he had already consulted several *grammatici*, but their interpretations did not satisfy him. Therefore, Capella asks Fosco to act as a proper *interpres* between him and Leonico Tomeo (acting, that is, as both a scholar and a mediator), for he knows well both Latin and Greek, which is the specialty of Fosco's brother, Niccolò. The substance of Capella's query regards the origin of the saying reported by Strepsiades in *The Clouds*, that is, that something can be as frightening as descending into the cave of Trophonius. Is there anything from the ancient sources (*antiquorum thesauri*) that can shed light on this strange dictum?[246] Fosco assures his hearers that, apart from a great number of little stories (*fabellae*) and nonsense (*nugae*), there is a lot of serious stuff to say about 'the method of interpreting oracles' (*oraculorum ratio captandorum*).[247] For the most part, he relies on Pausanias and Cicero. Capella notices how deep in thoughts Fosco is when he finishes to speak. Fosco explains that he was intrigued by

[242] See Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Alessandro Capella, in Aristotle, *Parva naturalia* (Venice: Bernardino Vitali, 1523), f. 72^{rv}. On Alessandro Capella, see Michiel, *Notizia d'opere di disegno*, p. 118: 'Alessandro Capella Veneziano, figliuolo di Febo Gran Cancelliere della Repubblica, fu uomo di bell'ingegno, di lettere adorno, e d'amore costante inverso la patria; alla quale servendo come Segretario del famoso Andrea Gritti Proveditore in campo, fu fatto prigione seco lui, e condotto a Pavia.' See also Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, *Opera*, p. 69. On the Cappello family, see Antonio Longo, *Dell'origine e provenienza dei cittadini originarj* (Venice: Gasali, 1817); and John Temple-Leader, *Libro dei nobili veneti* (Florence: Tipografia delle Murate, 1866), p. 25.
[243] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 5, ll. 44-47.
[244] Ibid., p. 5, l. 50: 'quopiam adhuc per aestum exire nobis permittitur'.
[245] Ibid., p. 6, ll. 11-14: 'Locus autem est ... ex Aristophane in nebulis, ubi senex ille qui se Socrati docendum tradiderat, dum illius scholam ingreditur, se subvereri et tremere dicit, ceu si ad Trophonium descenderet, et mellitam placentam, quam secum portet, Socratem efflagitat.' See Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 506–508.
[246] Ibid., p. 6, l. 24.
[247] Ibid., ll. 33-37.

the philosophical and cosmological question regarding the ultimate cause of the oracles, and asks his brother Niccolò to provide an explanation in this regard.

Leonico Tomeo articulates his detailed answer by inviting his friends to move from the city to the countryside. He states that he and his *sodales* should resume their discussion 'using a different starting point', for they are also changing place and 'leaving these closed walls so as to enjoy the open air and a freer sky'. At which point, the unnamed host supports Leonico Tomeo's proposal by emphasising the links between one's own health and wholesome environments: 'there are plenty of places where we will be able to temper in a healthy way the remaining heat of the day with the agreeable shade of the trees and the most cooling shadows of the mountains'.[248] Leonico Tomeo's complex and all-encompassing discussion of natural divination through oracles takes place in the countryside and then veers the specific question of artificial divination in the domestic context of the city house, where the characters sublimate their ideas of wit (*lepor*) and linguistic elegance (*verborum urbanitas*) in a dialogue defined as one of the most precious tokens of friendship.[249]

2. *Bembus* 1, or the Everlasting Life

The first of the two dialogues devoted to Pietro Bembo opens with the character playing Leonico Tomeo praising Bembo's unparalleled level of learning and philosophical competence. He then recalls that when Bembo was once ill in Padua, several friends came to visit him, including Giovanni Badoer (c.1465–1535), poet and politician, and Antonio Giustinian (c.1466–1524), professor of philosophy in the school of Rialto and ambassador. On that occasion, Bembo asked Badoer and Giustinian why they disagreed on political matters when, as the example of Aristotle and Plato demonstrated, if two individuals use different words to express their ideas, it does not necessarily follow that they disagree altogether.

Soon enough, the discussion between the characters in the dialogue – Badoer, Giustinian and Bembo – turns into a philosophical reflection on the disagreement that divides the Aristotelians (the *Peripatetici*) from the Platonists (the *Academici*) when they deal with the causes of reality. This is a characteristic leitmotif throughout the *Dialogi*. In Giustinian's opinion, when two philosophers disagree, it is not just their words that differ, but also the

[248] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 10, ll. 60-63: 'aliud dicendi sumendum est initium, ut locum etiam mutemus, et hos conclusos parietes relinquamus, ut aperto aere et liberiori coelo perfrui possimus ... pleraque sunt loca ubi grata arborum opacitate saxorumque frigidissimis umbris, diei adhuc reliquum aestum salubriter temperare poterimus'.
[249] Ibid., p. 17, l. 63.

objects in the world which are denoted by those same words. Giustinian believes that Plato and Aristotle dissented on several other accounts, including providence, fate, deities, demons and the underworld. As a result, Giustinian concludes, even a blind man could see that Aristotelians and Platonists not only disagree but speak about entirely different things.

Prompted by these statements, Bembo embarks on a lengthy discussion grappling with the hard questions concerning the eternity of the soul and the origin of the world. Badoer expresses his doubts about the theories put forward by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, which he finds particularly taxing because of their linguistic obscurity and convolutedness. In keeping with the principles of Aristotle's cosmology, and while elucidating the four causes of the soul's movement (that is, efficient, formal, material, and final), Bembo argues that the relationship that connects motion and intellection is not of a material nature, but concerns the everlasting power of the soul. Bembo then wonders whether relying too much on the analogy between thinking and moving, one can say that self-motion is the same as self-thinking. For how can we justify the idea of self-thinking as absolute stability and contemplative rest? This question brings to the fore the need for the philosophising scholars to find a principle of self-sufficiency that may escape the lingering dichotomies of spontaneous and forced motions. This principle can only be the intellect. This leads the dialogue to the following end: eternal self-motion is the source of activity for everything else in the cosmos; understood in these terms, self-motion can only be seen as an inexhaustible source of life that, in Plotinian and post-Plotinian terms, is so overwhelmingly copious and powerful that it is able to grant life continuously to all the parts of the universe. The ultimate meaning of soul and the reason why soul is imperishable is therefore the perpetual and steady cycle of life.[250] The capacity of infusing life into other beings is the most important characteristic that the soul possesses together with its ability to sustain its continuous and circular movement. Bembo's emphasis is on the self in the expression 'self-motion', that is, the αὐτός in αὐτοκίνητος, perpetual sameness as uninterrupted self-identity. Rather than persisting as a static logical relation, the idea of the soul as αὐτοκίνητος implies a dynamic relation whereby the spiritual world is described as a process. The dialogue ends with a recapitulation of the arguments previously set forth and with the invitation of Giustinian to Bembo to have lunch together (*symposium*), so that, Giustinian playfully explains, they can feed their body after having fed their souls with philosophical discussions.

[250] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 23, ll. 32-34: 'Vita vero nihil aliud esse censetur nisi perennis quaedam iugisque motio. Sibi ipsi igitur motum praestabit et a se ipso movebitur animus. Quamobrem hoc etiam modo ex incessanti illius motu animi apparebit aeternitas.'

3. *Alverotus*, or the Embodied Life

The dialogue opens with the diplomat Alessandro Capella, already met in the *Trophonius*, who is on his way back to Padua from Verona, where he visited the senator Daniele Ranier (1476–1535). Upon encountering Leonico Tomeo and Luca Bonfiglio, Capella asks them to provide a detailed account of the birthday celebration for their mutual friend Jacopo Alverotti that had taken place some days prior in Padua. The conversations entertained between Leonico Tomeo, the brothers Luca and Girolamo Bonfiglio, Giovanni Battista Della Torre and Giovanni Battista da Leone are reported in detail. These characters crop up more than once in the *Dialogi* and some of them are also the dedicatees of Leonico Tomeo's translations of or commentaries on the works of ancient philosophers. Luca and Girolamo Bonfiglio were of noble Bolognese descent. About Luca (c.1470–1540), already mentioned in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, we know that he became a priest in the Church of Santa Sofia in Padua and in 1515 he was nominated chamberlain to Pope Leo X, probably through the mediation of his protector Pietro Bembo. In 1530, he took part in the Diet of Augusta, to which he invited Erasmus of Rotterdam. Erasmus declined Bonfiglio's invitation and thanked him for the gift of a copy of Leonico Tomeo's dialogue *Bembus, seu de immortalitate animorum*. Bonfiglio was also the dedicatee of Leonico Tomeo's 1523 commentary on Aristotle's *On Sleep and Sleeplessness*.[251] About Girolamo we only know that he was a physician. More information survives about Giovanni Battista Della Torre, already mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3 as the commissioner, together with his brothers Girolamo, Giulio and Raimondo, of the funerary monument of his father Girolamo and brother Marcantonio. Giovanni Battista da Leone, also discussed in Chapter 3, was one of the teachers of Reginald Pole and, together with Leonico Tomeo, worked on the iconography of the Della Torre tomb. The characters chosen for the dialogue *Alverotus* are indicative of the intellectual background underlying the general discussion on the vehicles of the soul. The conversing figures of diplomats, clergymen, physicians and humanists point towards the political, religious, medical and philosophical implications of the dialogue's subject matter.

In the *Alverotus,* Leonico Tomeo recovers the late Platonic doctrine of the vehicles of the soul and argues for the existence of three kinds of such vehicles. The first, the ethereal one, is simple, immaterial and immortal; therefore, it is the purest carrier of life in nature, supporting the life cycle of the body without being susceptible to suffering.[252] The second vehicle, the aery

[251] On Luca Bonfiglio, see Mioni, 'Bonfiglio, Luca'. On Luca Bonfiglio's letter to Erasmus, see Egbertus van Gulik, *Erasmus and His Books*, transl. by J. C. Grayson, ed. by James K. McConica and Johannes Trapman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), p. 425.
[252] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 31, ll. 59-61.

one, is of a thin and pneumatic nature and is exposed to passions and affections.[253] The third, finally, which is the closest to matter, is consigned to the body, which it nourishes, and is inseparable from it, owing to its earthy and muddy nature. This vehicle is most easily corruptible and dies with the death of the body.[254] Leonico Tomeo describes the pneumatic vehicles as bodies that support the general vital functions and certain cognitive powers. In the earthly vehicle, perceptions derived from the soul's encounter with the world are gathered but kept separated from one another. Only in the ethereal vehicle are perceptions synthesised and reduced to a common denominator called 'common sense' (*sensus communis*), which is able to transform the raw data of perception into viable material for the rational soul, which develops them into thoughts and eventually discourse. The aery vehicle, by contrast, acts as an intermediary substance between the other two, to the extent that it participates both in the world of perception, in which the earthly vehicle is immersed, and in the realm of intellection, to which belongs the ethereal vehicle.

4. *Peripateticus*, or Language

By opening the *Peripateticus* with two perambulating humanists debating about the discovery and attribution of names, Leonico Tomeo suggests that the act of walking, much like what happened for Aristotle while he was teaching, is related both to the thinking process involved in the production of knowledge and to the structure of the environment in which that same knowledge is produced, that is, the celebrated περίπατος for Aristotle and the courtyard of his Paduan house for Leonico Tomeo. The dialogue starts with a reflection on the nature of language addressed to Leonico Tomeo by his friend Alessandro Capella. Capella is a character already encountered in the *Trophonius* and *Alverotus* and bound to reappear in the dialogue *Phoebus*. The *Peripateticus* is the only text having no more than two interlocutors. Unlike other dialogues, it does not provide a framing context for the philosophical discussion: there are no descriptions of the natural or architectural environment in which the characters lead their debate, nor are there any indications as to whether the surroundings influence or mirror their thoughts directly. As indicated by the title of the dialogue, Leonico Tomeo envisaged the text as a discussion of Aristotelian theories, particularly those on language and logic, which were common in medieval classroom disputations and continued to be relevant during the

[253] Ibid., p. 32, ll. 6-9.
[254] Ibid., p. 32, ll. 24-31.

Renaissance, at a time when linguistic debates were frequent and essential on several levels.[255] Regarding the specific question of whether the origin of language is natural or socially constructed, Leonico Tomeo claims that neither Plato nor Aristotle were the first to assume that one had to deal with both nature and culture when examining the different aspects of language. The matter had already been discussed in these terms by Heraclitus and Parmenides.[256]

5. *Sannutus* 1, or Human Sorrow

The first to the two dialogues devoted to Marco Sanudo is as a diegetic dialogue, in which Leonico Tomeo reports to his friend Balbo a conversation he had entertained some time earlier with Sanudo, member of the Collegio dei Savi in Venice, Luca Bonfiglio and Alfonso Paolucci upon the death of his own brother Fosco. The scene is set in a city house, where the characters walk under a porch to take refuge from the sun while discussing the most appropriate means of restraining grief. Paolucci was an agent to Duke Alfonso I of Ferrara at the papal court in Rome. Mention of him is often made in relation to the duke's letter to Paolucci, in which Alfonso requested that Paolucci put pressure on Raphael to complete a work for his *camerino*.[257] The man to whom Leonico Tomeo reports his dialogue is only identified by his surname, Balbo. We can suppose that he was Pietro Balbo, governor of Padua and a man recalled by Pietro Bembo in his *Rerum Veneticarum libri XII* ('History of Venice in Twelve Books') for his wisdom and tolerance.[258] In *Sannutus* 1, Leonico Tomeo discusses death and grief following Aristotle, Cicero and, to a minor extent, Stoic authors. By referring in particular to the treatise *On Life and Death* by Aristotle, Leonico Tomeo analyses the effects of mourning upon the mind. Fury, illness, violence, superstitious devotion and philosophical prayer are all considered in relation to the irruption of death in one's life. *Sannutus* 1 illustrates Leonico Tomeo's characteristic approach to Christian humanism, informed by reason and faith as well as by ethical and literary exercises. *Sannutus* ends with a brief monologue, in which Leonico Tomeo proclaims the superiority of God and the importance of philosophy for the cultivation

[255] On the *questione della lingua* in Renaissance Italy, see, for example, Caterina Mongiat Farina, *Questione di lingua: L'ideologia del dibattito sull'italiano nel Cinquecento* (Ravenna: Longo, 2014) and Alan R. Perreiah, *Renaissance Truths: Humanism, Scholasticism and the Search for the Perfect Language* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).
[256] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 40, ll. 56-61.
[257] See for example, Charles Hope, 'The "Camerini d'Alabastro" of Alfonso d'Este I', *The Burlington Magazine*, 113 (1971), pp. 641–647, esp. n. 1.
[258] Pietro Bembo, *History of Venice*, ed. and transl. by Robert W. Ulery, Jr, 3 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007–2009), II, p. 5.

of a soul that is worthy of its divine origin. As the most efficacious medicine against the illnesses of the mind and the spirit, philosophy restores the imbalances produced by the agitations and passions of the soul, thus adding to the latter's salvation.

6. *Severinus*, or the Matter of Relations

The *Severinus* is a diegetic dialogue in which Leonico Tomeo reports to his brother Fosco a conversation on the essence of nature that he had on the Venetian island of San Giorgio Maggiore with a monk called Severino. The dialogue takes places during a crowded day of festivity and, to avoid the noise and confusion, Tomeo, 'B. Carzonus' and 'N. Spinellus' travel by boat to the quiet island to enjoy the gardens of the convent. While in the cloister, Leonico Tomeo and his friends encounter Severino, who is walking in a pensive state while holding a book in his hands. Severino addresses Leonico Tomeo directly, rejoicing for his presence on the island and asking him to turn his presence into an occasion to discuss the complex matter of nature and essence. The two walk underneath the porch in the cloister and then to the grove, where rare trees grow. In the shadowy garden, Leonico Tomeo and Severino stroll until they reach an adjacent small garden and sit under an old laurel tree, with the ground covered with soft ivy.[259] The other two friends do not participate in the conversation, but it is worth mentioning them because, as in all the other dialogues, Leonico Tomeo seems to choose his characters to allude to the disciplinary divisions to which his arguments belong. Although in the *Severinus* Leonico Tomeo indicates Spinelli's name only with the letter 'N', the man to whom he referred to could be Niccolò di Forzore Spinelli, also known as Niccolò Fiorentino (1430–1514), a medallist active in Florence, the Flanders and Burgundy. Among his most important works are the medals he made of Alfonso d'Este, Lorenzo il Magnifico and Silvestro Daziari, bishop of Chioggia. Relying on the making of Daziari's medal in 1485, we might be able to date the episodes narrated in Leonico Tomeo's *Severino* around the mid-1480s, when Spinelli was in the Veneto.[260] We are unable, however, to identify the figure of 'B. Carzonus' with absolute precision. From the surname we can suppose that he was a member of the noble Garzoni family of Tuscan and later Bolognese origin, who founded one of the principal banks

[259] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 65, ll. 8-15.
[260] Keith Christiansen and Stefan Weppelmann (eds), *The Renaissance Portrait: From Donatello to Bellini* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), p. 181.

of the Serenissima in 1430.[261] In the *Severinus*, Leonico Tomeo and the dialogue's namesake discuss the relationship between matter and being in light of the theories of Aristotle, several late Platonic philosophers and Thomas Aquinas. Like the *Peripateticus*, *Severinus* deals with the question of language. Its main focus, however, is on the demonic character of nature and on the place of matter in relation to the soul. Tomeo's reflection on Aristotle's theory of relative beings is structured in accordance with scholastic methods of teaching. The interplay of Severino and Leonico Tomeo echoes the dynamics of classroom learning in which a master explains the content of ancient sources to his pupil during an exchange of opinions.

7. *Sadoletus*, or Prayers

The *Sadoletus* examines the question of the efficacy and value of prayers. The conversation is set in a town near Padua, where a harvesting ritual is taking place. Leonico Tomeo assists from a private balcony together with Girolamo Magnani (d. 1527), Bishop of Vieste, and Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto (1477–1547), Bishop of Carpentras. The two guests are moved by the harvesters' chants and prayers and ask Leonico Tomeo to provide a philosophical explanation for their emotions. Action is virtually absent, as the dialogue consists of an exchange of opinions between the characters on the function of prayer as a phenomenon whereby the divine and the human connect by way of sympathy. For Leonico Tomeo, in keeping with the views of Plato, Plutarch, Pliny, Proclus and Christian authors, prayers are the demonstration that a special link connects human beings to God. Reiterating the social function of orations and illustrating the most appropriate methods to perform it, he harshly rebuffs superstitious devotion.[262] We might say that for Leonico Tomeo human invocations to God are not mechanical ceremonies betraying selfish desire, nor a leisurely activity, but a commitment to be part of the universal harmony, the *concentus*, of nature.

8. *Phoebus*, or the Cycle of Life

[261] About the Garzoni family, see Loren Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Venice, 1400-1600* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), pp. 274–276.

[262] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 46, ll. 10-30.

The *Phoebus* is a diegetic dialogue in which Leonico Tomeo extols the virtues of the diplomat and secretary of the ducal chancellery Febo Capella (1420–1482) to his friends Alessandro Capella, the son of Febo, and Angelo and Girolamo of the noble family Da Mula, supposedly descended from Amulius, king of the Albans.[263] In recounting the details of the visit he once paid to Febo's house with his uncle Alò, Leonico Tomeo reports the conversation they entertained about the changing behaviours of individuals during the three stages of their life and the evolving mores of a community at different moments in history. The scene is set in the Venetian house of the Da Mula brothers during a very hot summer afternoon. Girolamo was a physician versed also in rhetoric and poetry. About his brother Angelo we only know that he was a humanist.[264]

Febo, the dialogue's namesake, was a Grand Chancellor of the Venetian Republic, who was assigned to the Council of the Ten and performed missions to King René d'Anjou and Emperor Frederick III.[265] Besides his diplomatic occupation, Febo Capella was also a humanist, who corresponded with Marsilio Ficino, from whom he asked a copy of his Latin translation of Plato. Ficino dedicated his letter *Quid sit lumen in corpore mundi, in angelo, in Deo* (1476) to Capella. While secretary to Francesco Barbaro in Milan in 1443, Capella was asked by Girolamo Querini to purchase classical works in manuscript form.[266] Capella was the ideal Renaissance man, leading both an active and a contemplative life, thus embodying the *habitus* of his age, as is suggested by the title of the dialogue that Leonico Tomeo dedicated to him. In the *Phoebus*, Leonico Tomeo establishes a continuity between the mores of a historical period, that is, the customs of an age, and the behaviours typical of the different phases constituting the life cycle of an individual, i.e., infancy, adulthood and old age, according to the model outlined by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (II, 13, 1390a).[267] The private sphere of human existence and the social dimension of collective history are assimilated to one another. By referring to Aristotle's *Parva naturalia* and in particular *On Youth and Old Age*, Leonico Tomeo defends the role of natural philosophy, proving the necessity for the soul to move from effects to causes

[263] Giuseppe Bettinelli, *Dizionario storico-portatile di tutte le venete patrizie famiglie* (Venice: Giuseppe Bettinelli, 1780), p. 113.
[264] On Girolamo Da Mula, see Cesarotti, *Prose di vario genere*, p. 387, n. 81. On the Amulio or Da Mula family, see Stanley Chojnacki, 'Kinship Ties and Young Patricians in Fifteenth-Century Venice', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 38 (1985), pp. 240–270.
[265] On Febo Capella, see Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 348–349.
[266] Marsilio Ficino, *Opera* (Basel: Henric Petri, 1576), pp. 717–720. On Ficino and Capella see also P. O. Kristeller, 'Marsilio Ficino e Venezia', in *Miscellanea di studi in onore di Vittore Branca*, 6 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1983), III, pp. 475–492 (482, n. 40). On Capella and Guglielmo Querini (1400–1468), see Giuseppe Dalla Santa, 'Di un patrizio mercante veneziano del Quattrocento e di Francesco Filelfo suo debitore', *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, XI (1906), pp. 63–90 (75).
[267] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 61 and 63.

in order to participate in the life of the natural world without being affected by its inevitable tendencies to decay.

9. *Bonominus*, or the Transmission of Knowledge

The *Bonominus* is dedicated to the humanist Domenico Bonomino from Brescia (d. 1516 or 1530). Lecturer in Greek and Latin letters in Padua until 1497, Bonomino was a close aquaintance of Bembo and Marino Bechichemo (Marin Bečić, a humanist born in 1468 in Shkodër, current Albania).[268] In the first page of his dialogue, Leonico Tomeo addresses his English student William Latimer, praising Bonomino for his erudition and recalling his philological committment to the purity of the Latin and Greek languages, which he tried to purge of its medieval accretions. Because of personal but unspecified matters hinted at by Leonico Tomeo and other humanists, Bonomino never succeeded in publishing his works, whose quality everyone seems to have praised highly after reading them in manuscript form.[269] Unlike the *Peripateticus*, the *Bonominus* provides detailed descriptions of the environment in which the characters converse and employs the natural surroundings as a foil to reflect the humanists' inner worlds. The sun shining at the start of the dialogue, for instance, sets when the interlocutors cease to discuss and leave for home. Moreover, Bonomino voices concerns that were particularly dear to Leonico Tomeo himself, who in more than one occasion had lamented the poor state of the arts and the need to restore the original purity of Latin and Greek.[270] Moreover, unlike the *Peripateticus*, the *Bonominus* does not deal with the philosophical implications of language, but rather with the formal characteristics of communication, i.e., rhetoric. Great attention is devoted to the ways in which meaning can be distorted over time through textual reception and to the importance of philology as an instrument of critical inquiry. The dialogue between Bonomino and Tomeo unfolds as an erudite discussion on the mechanics of knowledge production and transmission. The matter at the centre of the discussion regards spelt as a botanical specimen and its correct linguistic and taxonomic identification.

[268] See 'Domenico Bonomino', in *Enciclopedia Bresciana*, ed. by Antonio Fappani, 22 vols (Brescia: Opera Diocesana di San Francesco Sales, 1997–2007), I, p. 320.
[269] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 69, ll. 1-29.
[270] See Perreiah, *Renaissance Truths*.

10. *Sannutus* 2, or Leisure Time

The second dialogue in the collection named after Marco Sanudo espands the inquiry carried out in the *Phoebus* and the previous *Sannutus* on the soul's engagement with nature. The dialogue consists of a conversation held in Tomeo's Paduan house on the occasion of his friend Marco Sanudo's birthday. Around an abundant meal, Tomeo, his brother Fosco, Sanudo, Francesco Priuli, Benedetto Longo, Antonio Canali and Alessandro Leopardi discuss the appropriateness of leisure time for men leading active lives in politics and other socially-committed activities. Sanudo was a senator of the Venetian Republic, who favoured the nomination of Jacopo Tiepolo as ruler of Candia in order to protect the territories under Venetian dominance from the attacks of the Turks. Marco was the cousin of Marin Sanudo (1466–1536), the author of the *Diarii*, a chronicle of the political history of the Serenissima between the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century.[271] Francesco Priuli (1423–1491) was a fleet commander, who took over Queen Caterina as ruler of Famagosta in 1489, once she abdicated upon the attempt of the Turks to invade the island.[272] Antonio Canali was a member of the fleet that defended Famagosta.[273] Benedetto Longo was the governor of Chania, the administrative centre of the Venetian territory of Crete.[274] Alessandro Leopardi or Leopardo (1466–1512) was a Venetian sculptor and bronze founder, responsible, among other things, for the casting of the celebrated equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni installed next to the School of San Marco.[275] In *Sannutus* 2, Leonico Tomeo and his guests discuss the traditional game of knucklebones, exploring its history and its variants across time and space. The ultimate goal of the dialogue, however, is philological and consists in an investigation of the most appropriate translation of the Latin term *talus*, meaning knucklebone, indicating both the animal part and the game.

11. *Bembus* 2, or the Conscious Life

[271] For early modern sources on Marco Sanudo, see Gabriello Simeoni, *Comentarii sopra alla tetrarchia di Vinegia, di Milano, di Mantova e di Ferrara* (Venice: Comino da Trino, 1546), p. 33; Marco Antonio Sabellico, *Opera omnia*, 4 vols (Basel: Johann Herwagen the Younger, 1560), II, p. 747. For secondary literature, see John Knight Fotheringham, *Marco Sanudo: Conqueror of the Archipelago* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915).
[272] Clifford Edmund Bosworth, Emeri J. van Donzel, B. Lewis and Charles Pellat (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 9 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1980), V, p. 304.
[273] Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London: Adam Islip, 1603), p. 870.
[274] London, British Library, MS Arundel 255, f. 179^{r}: 'Commissio qua constituit Benedictum Longum rectorem Caneae insulae Cretae'.
[275] There is no monograph on Leopardi and scholarly work on his figure is scant. For a brief discussion of his work, see Vasari's 'Life of Andrea del Verrocchio', in *The Lives of the Artists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 232–241.

The dialogue was published independently in Venice by Giovanni Antonio Nicolini da Sabbio in 1530 and as part of Leonico Tomeo's collected works by Simon de Colines in Paris that same year.[276] In his dedicatory letter to Reginald Pole, Leonico Tomeo explained that he wrote a philosophical follow-up to complement his study of the soul's immortality with an investigation of its essence.[277]

The dialogue opens with Leonico Tomeo asking Pietro Bembo whether he is willing to reflect with him on the essence of the soul. Leonico Tomeo says that he has been assiduously reading about the matter in Platonic and Aristotelian sources, but that, his familiarity with the texts notwithstanding, he is still divided within himself on this topic. Bembo initially hesitates, but then accepts his friend's prompting, starting with a consideration on the undefinable nature of God. He states that names are not clear indicators of the essence of an entity, be this entity God or the soul. This is particularly evident with the Greek word for soul – ψυχή – for this term is related to the word for 'cooling', associated with the phenomenon of life in its ability to moderate the heat of the vital flame.[278] This 'cooling' function cannot be the 'essence' of the soul for the very simple reason that a soul is an incorporeal entity and not a material quality. Philosophers should focus on the operations of the soul, Bembo says. Bembo then undertakes a learned digression detailing four different interpretations concerning the *essentia* of the soul provided by philosophers since antiquity, namely traducianism, creationism, mitigated creationism and the theory of the vehicles. Finally, he examines the views of Galen and Hippocrates, colouring the debate with medical undertones.

The dialogue is in fact a long monologue by Bembo. Leonico Tomeo was certainly aware of the heated debate that had been caused a few years earlier by the publication of Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae* in 1516. The main thesis defended in that seminal treatise assumed that the human soul was of a perishable nature. Pomponazzi had arrived at that conclusion by reinterpreting notoriously contested places in Aristotle's *De anima*, especially in Book 3. In Chapters 4 and 5 of that book, Aristotle had asked whether the part of the soul corresponding to the intellect was separable, impassive, receptive, unmixed, simple and self-reflective (III, 4-5, 429a10-430a25). As both a university teacher of Aristotle's psychology and a commentator of the Aristotelian corpus equipped with a thorough knowledge of the newly rediscovered Greek exegetes, Leonico Tomeo knew the scholastic side of the

[276] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, *De animorum essentia dialogus* (Venice: Giovanni Antonio Da Sabbio and Brothers, 1530).
[277] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Reginald Pole, in *Dialogi*, p. 76.
[278] The Greek word for cooling is το ψύχειν. See Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 78, ll. 11-12: '[the word ψυχή] τοῦ ψύχειν, id est refrigerandi quandam illius representat vim, sine qua stare non potest vita'.

interpretative story as well as the possible Platonic uses of those sections of *De anima*. Through his account, Leonico Tomeo decided to reconcile the theory of the immortal soul, which in the Christian tradition had been exemplified by Thomas Aquinas, with the notion of its eternal essence, which in the history of Western philosophy is especially associated with Plato and its later legacy, in particular Proclus's doctrine of the pneumatic vehicles of the soul. They also allowed Leonico Tomeo to hold together an explanatory framework that was extraordinarily composite, erudite and sometimes prone to possible heretical readings. The vehicles, finally, unified ideas of moral probity with the need to demonstrate intellectual persistence. In other words, the *essentia* of the soul included within itself the transcendental dimensions of life, truth and the good.[279] In the dialogue, Bembo's approach is deliberately ecumenical. He recognises that the discussion about the essence of the soul is so complex that, as he proved by explaining all the different opinions held by the ancient philosophers, there are elements of truth in every theory. No doubt, – so Bembo reassures Leonico Tomeo in the dialogue (and Leonico Tomeo in turn reassures his readers at large) – the Christian position is the most reliable. However, he does not provide any justification as to why that is the case. To sum up his reflection, he claims that the essence of the soul is by itself incorporeal. And yet this essence is exposed to the passions that come from its bodily dwelling.[280] Bembo therefore argues that the essence of the soul is immortal and immaterial, but always attached to a material substratum, a body through which it lives, moves, perceives and thinks.

12. A Diverse and Harmonious Worldview of the Universe

As is apparent from these short synopses, the topics explored in the *Dialogi* are numerous and diverse. And yet the work stands out as a cohesive and consistent inquiry into the world of human thinking expressed by a learned representative of an economically and culturally vibrant society. In the opening dialogue of the collection, divination is meant to demonstrate, in both theoretical and empirical terms, that the cosmos is an orderly and vitally interdependent body whose regular and recurring operations allow human beings to organise their lives in socially and politically significant ways. Nature, for Leonico Tomeo, fosters prudence. Of the foundations that accounts for the cosmos's working as an organised unity the principal is the

[279] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, pp. 81, ll. 33-39; 82, ll. 21-24; 83, ll. 3-10.
[280] Ibid., p. 83, ll. 3-5.

soul, which Leonico Tomeo characterises in terms of eternal self-motion (αὐτοκίνητος). The soul is immortal for it is the enactment of eternal self-identity.

While immaterial, souls are embedded in nature and related to matter. To show that the harmony among the various parts of the universe is complex, Leonico Tomeo proposes a sophisticated discussion over the nature of language, for it is by focusing on the origin and uses of language that one can understand the innumerable links between nature and culture, knowledge and persuasion, intellect and the will, God and human beings. Just as nature fosters prudence, so language reveals the moral implications of human life. For Leonico Tomeo, philosophy is knowledge that has a fundamentally moral and social use. Grief and other forms of human affliction testify that philosophy is first of all a medicine of the mind. Control over passions and pain reiterates, from a different angle, the eternal and imperturbable character of the soul, but also its benevolent and generous disposition towards material nature. Emotions, relations, rituals, cycles, names, titles, designations, games, festivals and celebrations are all natural and social phenomena that further demonstrate the interconnected and sympathetic fabric of the cosmos. This remarkably rich philosophical treatise ends with the most metaphysically committed dialogue of the whole collection. It is as if Leonico Tomeo, by dwelling on an in-depth scrutiny of the essence of the soul, wished to confirm that the ever expanding universe of human knowledge, in all its features, from ethereal bodies to grains of spelt, rested on a most solid foundation: the soul acting as both consciousness and conscience, the living and perpetual re-enactment of the intelligible template of the created universe, in the spheres of both natural and moral order.

Chapter 6

Scholarship and Philosophy: The Scope of Leonico Tomeo's Philosophical Antiquarianism

In the dialogue *Trophonius*, the character Fosco Leonico Tomeo, Niccolò's brother, expands on the cultural and social meanings that the institution of the oracle accreted in the course of Greek civilization. Seemingly hinting at the possibility that a supernatural cause may be behind the divinatory power of the oracles, another character, Alessandro Capella cannot help detecting in Fosco's speech a continuous oscillation between *historia* and *philosophia*, which he sees as somehow problematic:

> I have said this for this reason: I noticed that you made your appearance, as if you were on a stage, by continuously changing your role from grammarian to philosopher and that, going beyond the boundaries of historical investigations, you suggested that we should scrutinise the hidden causes of the most occult phenomena.[281]

The tension between *historia* and *philosophia* is especially interesting here, and it expresses a characteristic position of Leonico Tomeo's humanism. In *Trophonius*, divination is presented as a matter that has been dealt with by Aristotle and his school, and therefore it requires a different philosophical approach to answer the critical demands made by historians, geographers and antiquarians.[282] Leonico Tomeo's concern with resorting to the most appropriate interpretative tools and historical records in order to read and decipher specific conceptual issues is symptomatic of the systematisation of knowledge that humanists championed through their work as *grammatici*.

As we are going to argue in this chapter, Leonico Tomeo was a humanist philosopher insofar as he applied his sharp antiquarian and critical skills to assess the value of the philosophical traditions of pagan antiquity and their impact on the contemporary philosophical scene. For Leonico Tomeo, philosophy was an interpretative practice based on rational arguments and factual evidence and constantly feeding on learning and ingenuity. It wouldn't be too much of a stretch to characterise his philosophical endeavour as archaeology of philosophical traditions. As we will see, Presocratic wisdom, Platonism, Ionian natural

[281] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 10, ll. 29-31: 'Hoc iccirco dixi, quia te velut in scena aliqua ex grammatico philosophum continuo prodiisse animadverti abstrusasque occultissimarum rerum causas historiae metas transgressum rimandas proposuisse.'
[282] Ibid., p. 10, ll. 45-53.

philosophy, atomism, Stoicism, Galenism are an integral part of Leonico Tomeo's intellectual enterprise.

In general, he thought that that there could not be knowledge without learning, understanding by learning both study and scholarship, that is, both the process through which knowledge is acquired and the competence provided by acquired knowledge. Like the Latin terms often recurring in his *Dialogi*, *doctrina* and *eruditio*, instruction and information imparted by instruction are for Leonico Tomeo the two guides that should always inform the investigations of a philosophical scholar.

In Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*, another polarity intersects the one just mentioned between knowledge acquisition and acquired knowledge. It is the interplay of knowledge (*res*) and the way in which knowledge is communicated (*verba*), traditionally denoted as the difference between *scientia* and *eloquentia*. If in the case of the relationship between *doctrina* and *eruditio* the emphasis falls on the matter of the scholarly work, here the focus is on the form of such a work. For Leonico Tomeo, just as there is no intellect without the intelligible matter, so there cannot be content without form (i.e., language and style).

From a historiographic point of view, what Renaissance humanism ultimately means is still up for debate. Scholars have embarked on hair-splitting quarrels for almost a century, and although many more sources are today available in translation and a significantly higher amount of monographs and critical editions of early modern writings have been published, there is still no consensus as to what the term 'humanism' ultimately stands for. Even more importantly for this dissertation, what remains problematic is the role that philosophy played in this debate.[283] The story – a story that, admittedly, is getting trite these days – goes that, while P. O. Kristeller denied or played down the philosophical import of the humanists, Eugenio Garin stressed their function as harbingers of philosophical modernity during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[284] More recently, Jill Kraye has criticised the artificial and simplistic division between the *studia humanitatis* and philosophy that resulted from the Kristeller-Garin debate in a number of articles. This has helped restore a more nuanced

[283] On the origin of the term 'humanism', see Augusto Campana, 'The Origin of the Word "Humanist"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 9 (1946), pp. 60–73; Paul F. Grendler, 'Five Italian Occurrences of *Umanista*, 1540–1574', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 20 (1967), pp. 317–325; Benjamin G. Kohl, 'The Changing Concept of the *Studia Humanitatis* in the Early Renaissance', *Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1992), pp. 185–209; Carlo Dionisotti, 'Ancora humanista–umanista', in *Studi in memoria di Paola Medioli Masotti*, ed. Franca Magnani (Naples: Loffredo, 1995), pp. 67–71.

[284] P. O. Kristeller, 'Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance', in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, 4 vols (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1956–1996), I, pp. 553–583. See also, *Kristeller Reconsidered: Essays on His Life and Scholarship*, ed. by John Monfasani (New York: Italica Press, 2006); Eugenio Garin, *L'umanesimo italiano: Filosofia e vita civile nel Rinascimento* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 1995 [1952]); id., *La cultura del Rinascimento* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 2010 [1967]); John Monfasani, 'Paul Oskar Kristeller and Philosophy', *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 57 (2015), pp. 383–413

understanding of early modern humanists, who were not simply the heirs of the *ars dictaminis*, understood as a combination of grammar and rhetoric as taught in the Middle Ages, but also promoters and champions of natural, moral and political philosophy.[285] As intimated by David Lines, the relationship between humanism and philosophy cannot be correctly appreciated unless one understands both terms according to contemporary usage.[286] This indirectly points to the fact that the word 'humanism' as a technical term was first introduced by a German scholar, Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer (1766–1848), only in 1808 and it should therefore be treated with all the cautions reserved to any label or *-ism*.[287] Christopher Celenza has suggested that humanism was rather a life style than an activity of the mind, with decisive links to the world of material culture and the history of collecting.[288]

It should be said that Renaissance humanists were already fully aware of their contentious function within both the educational system of the time and the public sphere at large. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), a humanist and a philosopher, believed that a philosophical approach imbued with learning was supposed to concern itself with the reasons behind both human and divine matters.[289] Donato Acciaiuoli (1428–1478), a scholar and a civil servant, argued that philosophy had an effect on one's intellect (for it turns our attention to the operations of the soul) and on one's affects (for it turns the soul to God).[290] Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), a philologist and a teacher, reconciled philosophy and philology through *grammatica*, understood as the critical interpretation of poetry, history, oratory, medicine and law.[291]

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[285] Jill Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy', in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 303–386; *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts: Moral Philosophy*, ed. by Jill Kraye, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); ead., 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon', *Rinascimento*, 56 (2016), pp. 3–22.

[286] David A. Lines, 'Defining Philosophy in Fifteenth-Century Humanism: Four Case Studies', in *Et Amicorum: Essays on Renaissance Humanism and Philosophy in Honour of Jill Kraye*, ed. by Anthony Ossa-Richardson and Margaret Meserve (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 281–297.

[287] Charles Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 [1995]), p. 8.

[288] Christopher S. Celenza, 'Ideas in Context and the Idea of Renaissance Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75 (2014), pp. 653–666; id., 'What Counted as Philosophy in the Italian Renaissance? The History of Philosophy, the History of Science, and Styles of Life', *Critical Inquiry* 39 (2013), pp. 367–401.

[289] See Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Ermolao Barbaro, *Filosofia o eloquenza?*, ed. by Francesco Bausi (Naples: Liguori, 1998), pp. 38–40.

[290] Donato Acciaiuoli, *Expositio libri Ethicorum Aristotelis* (Florence: Tipografia di San Jacopo di Ripoli, 1478), sigs a1r–5v. See also Eugenio Garin, 'Donato Acciaiuoli cittadino', in *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bari: Laterza, 1973), 199–267 (228–229); Luca Bianchi, 'Un commento "umanistico" ad Aristotele. L'*Expositio super libros Ethicorum* di Donato Acciaiuoli', *Rinascimento* 30 (1990), pp. 25–55.

[291] Angelo Poliziano, *Lamia, sive Praelectio in Priora Aristotelis analytica*, ed. by Ari Wesseling (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. XIII–XXXVIII. See also Christopher S. Celenza, 'Poliziano's Lamia in Context', in Angelo Poliziano, Lamia: *Text, Translation, and Introductory Studies*, ed. by C. S. Celenza (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 1–45; Cesare Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo: 'Invenzione' e 'Metodo' nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo* (Naples: Città del Sole, 2007 [1968]), pp. 183–203.

In his double capacity as both *professor* and *literatus*, Leonico Tomeo practised philosophy as an author and a commentator. In the prefatory letter that he wrote to introduce his Commentary on Aristotle's *De somno et vigilia*, he condemned all forms of cognitive vacuity, pretension of learning and sterile elitism. He insisted that knowledge should always be put to good use and transformed into a means of social progress and public interest. For him, the Renaissance of philosophy – the 'parent and nourisher of all good things' – happened with the revival of concrete learning between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[292] What we gather from this letter are his deep knowledge of classical texts, his refusal of arrogance and fame, his civic commitment and interest in the political situation linked to the Italian Wars and his admiration for the knowledge made available through the books and manuscripts imported from the East to Venice.

Leonico Tomeo is a humanist given the ample variety of his pursuits as a refined man of letters, a knowledgeable professor, an informed citizen and a devoted friend. Civic commitment and intellectual ambition merge in the life of a man who always aimed at reaching a wise balance between activity and contemplation. In what follows, I will focus on Leonico Tomeo's as an antiquarian, a commentator and a professor of natural philosophy to see how, in concrete terms, his humanist ideals translated themselves into his writings.

1. Humanism and Philosophy: Leonico Tomeo and the Plato-Aristotle Controversy

Besides his interests in art collecting and object-oriented investigations, another important outcome of Leonico Tomeo's antiquarian pursuits is related to his recovery and interpretation of the philosophical heritage of pagan antiquity. Among his most significant contributions is his way of handling the contemporary *querelle* between Platonism and Aristotelianism.

In the 'Proem' to his Commentary on Aristotle's *Parva naturalia*, Leonico Tomeo demonstrates to be fully aware that a major difference distinguish Platonic innatism from

[292] Niccolò Leonico Tomeo to Luca Bonfiglio, in Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 142: 'enim omnia Barbarorum non minus armis quam libris ea tempestate praeventa et occupata erant, ut nullus in Italia reperiretur locus qui politioribus literis sedem confugiumque praestare posset.Neque id tantum humanioribus contigerat studiis (levior enim unica in re certe fuisset iactura) sed Dialectica, Geometria, Arithmetica, Musica, Ars medica, ipsaque denique bonorum omnium parens et altrix Philosophia, temporum vitio barbare et inepte loqui didicerant, nominisque maiestatem et rerum peritiam duro et incondito elocutionis stylo dehonestaverant. Verum deo favente maximo, ab Orientis aliquando plaga afflictis et pene deploratis artibus primum luminis affulsit iubar, felicique sortis eventu Graecia iampridem praeceptores nobis transmisit et libros: a quibus postea annis volventibus isthaec satis exculta et illustrata aetas in nullo non studiorum genere plane profecisse videbatur, antiquorumque insistens vestigiis, explosa iam et deturbata barbarie, praeclarum latinitatis cultum induere coeperat.'

Aristotelian naturalism. And yet both philosophies agrees on the need to find a solid foundation that may secure the certainty of human knowledge. For Leonico Tomeo it is rather indifferent whether this foundation should be looked for in Platonic ideas or Aristotelian forms, for both solutions belong to the same philosophical tradition that warrants the immutability and eternity of the *species*:

> To this we say that our soul shapes and has within itself the immutable and eternal species of things, whose knowledge we call steady and reliable. For the time being, however, I am thinking of not explaining whether the soul always has these innate species and that which we call production and abstraction of species is either some kind of extrapolation and unfolding of the species pre-existing in the soul, as thought by the Academics, or whether some new shaping of species takes places through the intellect, and the soul itself, not having anything previous in it, builds this fully furnished edifice (as the Peripatetics seem to say). I will therefore leave this whole question to be discussed to another more appropriate opportunity, if this presents itself. No doubt, this kind of consideration presupposes the question of the ideas, which is most profound and is characteristic of the literature *de anima*. For the moment, it should suffice to say on this matter that the great uncertainty of the difficulty remains, i.e., in what way the soul builds and prepares for itself an apparatus of species and forms that is of such nature and so magnificent, and it produces so many ways of considering reality, if it didn't have previously within itself any perceived species, and also how the same soul can evaluate and judge in a correct way the things that have been produced by it, whether they are true and stable or rather false and fleeting like phantoms, and finally according to what rule and what kind of measure it can recognise and evaluate the truth in them.[293]

In the dialogue *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum*, Leonico Tomeo discusses which of the two positions is preferable (once granted the universal truth of the Christian doctrine of creation), whether the Aristotelian thesis of the eternal existence of the world or the Platonic contention that the universe is the result of a demiurgic fashioning on the gods' part. In the dialogue, the character Giustiniani points out how the Aristotelians 'confirm with certainty that the world was not born at a particular time, nor that it is ever about to perish, whereas the

[293] Leonico Tomeo, 'Pooemium', in *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 3: 'Ad quod animam scilicet in nobis aeternas stabilesque rerum species sibi conformare et in se habere quarum certe invariabilem dicimus esse scientiam. Verum utrumne anima semper has habeat connatas species et id ipsum quod specierum generationem et abstractionem appellamus, prolatio quaedam est et explicatio vere praeexistentium in illa specierum, ut Academici voluerunt: vel nova quaedam est specierum per intellectum conformatio, animaque ipsa nihil prius in se habens, talem sibi architectatur ornatum (ut Peripatetici affirmare videntur) in praesentia explicare non cogito, et in aliud accommodatius, si dabitur, disquirendi tempus hanc integram rem servo. Profundissimam enim de ideis quaestionem et commentariis de anima peculiarem, haec nimirum sibi expostulat contemplatio. Obiter autem istuc dixisse sufficiat, magnam utique subesse difficultatis ambiguitatem, quonammodo anima si nullam prius perceptam in se habuerit speciem, talem tantamque sibi extruat paretque formarum et specierum suppellectilem et tot generet contemplationum modos, et quo etiam modo eadem anima quae a se genita sunt et producta, recte perpendere et diiudicare possit utrum ne vera sint et constantia, an fictis potius et evanescentibus similia simulacris, quave rursum regula et quibus mensurae modulis veritatem in ipsis dignoscere perpendereque possit.'

Platonists assume that the world was made by God and that, as far as this is concerned, it can come to an end'.[294] This fact alone demonstrates not only that the origin of the world is unknown, but that the opinion of philosophers on this matter cannot be univocal because of its uncertainty. Giustiniani continues by arguing that Plato agreed that souls are eternal. Aristotle, however, neither investigated the origin of souls nor did he openly endorse their eternity. Plato demonstrated that they were perennially moved by themselves, while Aristotle denied them any kind of motion.[295] Giustiniani then goes on to say that Plato and Aristotle dissented on several other counts, including providence, fate, deities, demons and the underworld. As a result, Giustiniani concludes, even a blind man could see that Aristotelians and Platonists not only disagree, but speak about entirely different things.

In the dialogue Giustiniani plays the role of the philosophical antagonist whose position Leonico Tomeo intends to vanquish utilising the barrage of arguments deployed by the character Bembo. For Leonico Tomeo – and this is one of the cornerstones of his critical and archaeological delving into the philosophical traditions of antiquity – Platonism and Aristotelianism are the two souls of one school that in the course of it century-long history has continuously wavered between the poles of nature and intellect as the confines of its intellectual enterprise.

Leonico Tomeo's stance within the debate over the difference or unity of the Platonic and Aristotelian schools is part of a larger debate that affected the philosophical scholars of the Renaissance. During the middle of the fifteenth century, a group of émigrés who settled in the Italian peninsula coming from the Greek-speaking world confronted the decade-long debates over the superiority of either Plato or Aristotle, the possibility of their reconciliation and the nature of their critical relation to Christianity. Because these émigrés actively participated in humanist culture while being involved with ecclesiastical and diplomatic affairs, their specialised knowledge of ancient philosophy, based on their reading of Greek texts, many of which were previously unavailable to the Latin West, greatly influenced the way in which Aristotle and Plato were read and studied at the time. The Plato-Aristotle controversy of the fifteenth century renewed the debates of late antiquity, when the late Platonists attempted to reconcile Aristotle, as well as the struggles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when Latin theologians and masters of arts came to terms with the arrival of the all-encompassing

[294] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, pp. 18, ll. 55-57; 19, l. 1: 'Mundum praeterea nostri neque aliquando genitum, neque interiturum unquam pro certo confirmant: illi vero et a deo fabrefactum esse illum, et quantum in ipso est, corrumpi posse autumant.'

[295] Ibid., p. 19, ll. 3-6: 'Animos praeterea generat Plato et, ut sibi videtur, ostendit illos esse perpetuos. Aristoteles vero neque ullum animorum recenset ortum, neque plane aeternitatem declarat. Eosdem perenniter a se ipsis moveri contendit Plato: ab iisdem vero omnem motionis abnegat modum Aristoteles.'

Aristotelian encyclopaedia of philosophical knowledge. The Greek émigrés, however, had access to a larger corpus of ancient writings and thus addressed these questions with a level of philosophical and historical sophistication that surpassed many earlier humanists and schoolmen.

Although the Plato-Aristotle controversy gradually lost its initial impetus after Bessarion's death in 1472, the polemics altered the practice of philosophy in Italy. Among the scholars who recognised the importance of the humanist and philological approach to the study of philosophy, interest grew in Plato's texts, for they could provide a fresh alternative to the kind of Aristotelianism that was being taught in universities. Both Marsilio Ficino and Nicholas of Cusa spearheaded this movement (albeit in different forms), translating, commenting and reusing Plato. Both were convinced that the recovery of Platonic philosophy could act as a solid foundation for Christian theology. Ideals of philosophical reconciliation, such as those found in the ancient late Platonists and Bessarion, attracted the most ambitious thinkers, such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who sought to mediate Aristotle with Plato, but also with the whole universe of Graeco-Roman and 'barbaric' wisdom, including Jewish Cabalism, Pythagoreanism, Islamic philosophy and Hermetic theology, as became apparent in his 900 Theses (1486).

By all means, the thorniest issue remained the link between the philosophical ideas debated by Plato and Aristotle and the application of these same ideas to Christian dogma on the part of some humanists. Many of the philosophical doctrines of antiquity contrasted with the teachings of religion, and yet there could be a number of possible solutions to this problem, as Nicholas of Cusa and Ficino had demonstrated. The specific issues relating to Plato were several. Plato may have been clear that God created the world, but he was less clear about whether the world was created from nothing. In fact, he seems to have believed that the so-called receptacle or substrate of creation – matter – had existed from all eternity. He also seems to have believed that the lower parts of the world and human nature had been indirectly fashioned by lesser deities and not by God himself, as taught by Christianity believed. Plato also seems to have believed in reincarnation, while showing profound respect for civic religion and the traditional gods. He believed in the animation of the heavens and the world, a doctrine disapproved by Christian orthodoxy. He also believed in the temporal priority of soul over body, a direct challenge to the Christian view that each soul had been individually created by God at the moment of conception, and remained associated with one body forever until the final resurrection.

Tomeo's engagement with the subject of religion, and above all with Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical stance towards faith, as we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 7.4,

rested on a cautious approach whereby reason never mingled with revelation and philosophy was neatly separated from religion. As Tomeo stated in the *Trophonius*:

> Since religion has been mentioned, I believe that, among other things, some lightminded people should be warned not to slip, slowly and in an inconsiderate way, from the pure path of religion into superstition and be ruined. It is in fact a slippery slope, and it requires the vigilant attention that is provided by caution.[296]

Further in the *Trophonius*, Tomeo presents himself as not up to the task of clarifying knotty issues in Platonic philosophy such as the divine and the preternatural because of his neglect of scholarly pursuits (*literarum studia*) in favour of teaching duties as a professor of Aristotelian philosophy and as a commentator of Aristotle's oeuvre:

> As you know, I have long deserted scholarship and applied myself entirely to the study of Aristotle's works, which I also teach at university. These do not treat anything of this nature [i.e., divination] or only very briefly; rather, they deal with natural causes and those phenomena which are closely dependent on them. Those things that you are very eager to hear from me certainly are hidden and are derived from the middle of philosophy (as they say), surely not from that philosophy that inspect the natural causes and investigates the properties and effects of things, but from the one which makes all efforts to reach higher and more divine contemplations.[297]

In his preface to the posthumously published translation of Aristotle's *On the Parts of the Animals*, Tomeo articulated at length the difference between an expert (*peritus*) and a knower (*sapiens*). The main difference between the two lies in the former's reliance on the experience and the latter's ability to transform experience into knowledge through the intellect. In this sense, Tomeo argues, natural science cannot be defined as a proper science, but rather as an expertise (*peritia*) and as an erudition (*eruditio*). As such, it can be assimilated to what is generally referred to as παιδεία, that is, the classical learning curriculum of the Greco-Roman world comprising of gymnastics, grammar, rhetoric, music, mathematics, geography, natural history, and philosophy. This, because natural science does not proceed directly from the

[296] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 49, ll. 39-42: 'Quo in loco (quoniam religionis facta est mentio) obiter levioris ingenii nonnullos commonefaciendos esse censeo, ne huiusmodi in re ab incorrupta religionis semita sensim et incaute ad superstitionem delabantur et ruant. Nam lubricus sane locus est, et vigili cautionis indigens cura.'

[297] Ibid., p. 10, ll. 46-53: 'Nedum ego, qui iam diu (ut scitis) ab iis literarum studiis defeci et totum me in Aristotelicos commentarios, quos etiam publice profiteor, conieci, in quibus aut nulla de istiusmodi, aut exigua quaedam et ad physicas magis causas, et has quidem deprope spectantia pertractantur: ista vero quae vos a me in praesentia audire percupitis, et abstrusa sunt certe, et ex media (ut aiunt) philosophia, non ea quidem quae physicas de proximo rimatur causas rerumque proprietates et effectiones speculatur, sed ex illa quae sublimioribus divinioribusque contemplatonibus universam plane impendit operam'. See Cicero, *Orator*, III, 11: 'video hanc primam ingressionem meam non ex oratoriis disputationibus ductam sed e media philosophia repetitam, et eam quidem cum antiquam tum subobscuram aut reprehensionis aliquid aut certe admirationis habituram.'

causes, "but is drawn from the several common principles that can square with many things at once".[298]

3. The Style of Leonico Tomeo's Humanism and Its Legacy

In the manuscript *Carcer* ('Prison'), which has been published only a few years ago, the physician Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) staged a dialogue between himself and his friend Lucillo Maggi (1510–1570) during the latter's imprisonment due, it seems, to charges of performing illicit magic.[299] Maggi, also known as Filalteo or Philalteus, the Greek name he fashioned for himself according to the humanist practice that Leonico Tomeo embraced, too, was a native of Pavia. As a student at Padua in 1527, Filalteo studied Greek literature and philosophy under Leonico Tomeo and Marcantonio Zimara (c.1460–1535) until he was expelled from the University for having participated in the riots between the confraternities of students from Brescia and Vicenza.[300] The letters of his youth, published in 1564 as an example of erudite and refined epistolary writing in the manner of Cicero, include three epistles addressed to Leonico Tomeo, dated between 1530 and 1533.

From these letters we learn that during his university years in Padua, Filalteo used to attend Leonico Tomeo's house regularly and there, together with other humanists, he first discussed matters of natural philosophy that eventually culminated in his commentaries on Aristotle's *Physica*, *De coelo* and *De anima.*[301] Filalteo evocatively describes an old and wise Leonico Tomeo (*senex optimus vitae integerrimae et animi sinceri*), whose fame, borrowing the words of Virgil and Lucretius, 'extends and is transmitted unto the outermost shores of Europe', most likely a reference to Leonico Tomeo's teaching to the community of English students present in Padua. Moreover, the beauty of Leonico Tomeo's body in old age is, in Filalteo's view, a sign of the nobility and the purity of the soul that inhabits it, just as Plato recounts in the *Cratylus* (400 C), where Plato (at least in Filalteo's interpretation) says that the

[298] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 118: 'sed ut in pluribus communibus utatur principiis quae multis aeque quadrare possunt.'
[299] Girolamo Cardano, *Carcer*, ed. by Marialuisa Baldi, Guido Canziani and Eugenio Di Rienzo, Latin text ed. by Cecilia Mussini and Angelo de Patto (Florence: Olschki, 2014). On Cardano's *Carcer*, see Germana Ernst, 'Life in Prison: Cardano, Tasso and Campanella', in *Et Amicorum: Essays on Renaissance Humanism and Philosophy in Honour of Jill Kraye*, ed. by Anthony Ossa-Richardson and Margaret Meserve (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 338–354, esp. 339. See also Silvia Fazzo, 'Lucillo Filalteo, interlocutore del *Carcer*', in *Girolamo Cardano*: *Le opere, le fonti, la vita*, ed. by Marialuisa Baldi and Guido Canziani (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1999), pp. 427–453.
[300] Lucillo Maggi to Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (May 1530), in Lucillo Maggi, *Libri tres epistolarum in adolescentia familiarium* (Pavia: Antonio Bissi, 1564), f. 65^{r}: 'Non potuissem quicquam proficere, si in ea turba et tumultu, quem nationes ciebant mihi manendum statuissem.'
[301] Lucillo Maggi., *Libri tres*, op. cit., *f.* 65^{rv}.

body is not so much a 'body' as much as a 'sign'.[302] Filalteo also speaks of Leonico Tomeo as the editor of his translation of Philoponus's commentary on the *Prior Analytics*, eventually published in 1544.[303]

In another letter sent from Bologna in March 1533, Filalteo laments not having received Leonico Tomeo's reply to his previous letter sent to him in October 1530. Having died on 28 March 1531, it is not known whether Tomeo did not reply because he was ill or whether he simply never received Filalteo's letter. It is clear, however, that as late as 1533, Filalteo was still not aware that Tomeo had died two years before. Filalteo's second letter opens with a reference to the Roman hero Gaius Mucius Scaevola's saying that 'no one can die before being born'. Held as a manifesto of his own humble ignorance owing to his young age, Filalteo uses Scaevola's words to ask for Leonico Tomeo's help in interpreting Aristotle's theory of the intelligible species.[304] In particular, Filalteo wishes to better understand if and how the sensible data acquired through perception are responsible for the production of the universals.[305] Filalteo's principal difficulty lies in the theory according to which our knowledge of the intelligible forms depends on the *minima naturalia*. In his view, in order for science to reach a level of universality, the causes of perception need to be different from those of intellection. And yet he keeps wavering on this point. To gain a better understanding of the matter, Filalteo asks Leonico Tomeo to briefly share his opinion in this regard, specifying that, among the Aristotelian commentators, he finds Alexander of Aphrodisias the most accurate.[306]

In a letter to Leonico Tomeo dated January 1532, Filalteo's relationship to Alexander of Aphrodisias's ideas seems to have changed, at least as far as the question of the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul is concerned, for here he defines the defenders of mortalistic positions as unworthy of being called men, let alone philosophers.[307] In Filalteo's opinion, the soul is simple and knows the universals; the body, on the other hand, is corruptible

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[302] Ibid., f. 65^{v}: 'fama tui nominis pervaghatur et ad oras Europae extremas transmittitur. Ut certe haec tua corporis in senectute pulchritudo admirabilis cernitur, ita animi candor, ac maiestas coniectura deprehenditur. Cum enim corpus (ut est in cratilo Platonis) sit quasi graece non soma sed signum, plane illud etiam fatentur Platonici pulchritudinem corporis esse inditium eius quam est in animo'. See Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, I, 968–983: 'Praeterea si iam finitum constituatur / omne quod est spatium, si quis / procurrat ad oras / ultimus extremas iaciatque volatile telum, / id validis utrum contortum viribus ire / quo fuerit missum mavis longeque volare, / an prohibere aliquid censes obstareque posse?' See Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 171: 'Qui nunc extremis Asiae iam victor in oris.'

[303] Ibid., f. 68^{v}: 'nec quicquam gratius fore tibi deditissimo uni mihi fore existimabis, quam simbola et signa animi erga me tui ad me saepius dare, de Philoponi commentariis et tu quaeso feceris verbum cum Lovaniensi amico utriusque nostrum ne perire sinat meas eius generis vigilias, quas si recuperabis, feceris tu quidem mihi gratissimum, praesertim si censebis edendas in lucem, malim ego tuo stare iudicio, quam cuiusvis huius temporis viri.'

[304] Ibid., *Libri tres*, f. 76^{v}: 'Ilud Scevolae sapienter dictum, neminem mori posse antequam sit natus.'

[305] Lucillo Maggi., *Libri tres*, op. cit., f. 77^{rv}.

[306] Ibid., f. 78^{r}.

[307] Ibid., f. 89^{v}: 'Corpus enim caducum animus in posterum sempiternus, de quo qui aliter opinantur in magno sunt errore, nec homines, nedum philosophi appellari deberent.'

and affected by contrarieties. Filalteo argues for the non-material nature of the soul through the words of Hippocrates in *On the Nature of the Child*, where it is stated that it takes between thirty-six and forty days for a foetus to be formed in the womb. This, according to Filalteo's, demonstrates that the origin of the soul is not corporeal, for it does not originate from the paternal seed, but enters the body through an external form. The mind (*animus*) acts as 'the governor and ruler of the living being's structure (*machina*)'. Whether it comes 'from the heavens, a star or rather from God', it is placed in command of the body and can even be separated from it without being destroyed.[308] In concluding his letter with a reflection on the soul's immortality as argued by Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, Filalteo affirms that the office of assigning human beings a soul is entrusted by God to Christ.[309]

The recurring motif of the soul's immortality in Filalteo's letters echoes Leonico Tomeo's own considerations in his Commentary on the *Parva naturalia* and in his *Dialogi*. The question of the dualism between the bodily structure (*machina*) and the animating principle (*animans*) is addressed by amalgamating medical and metaphysical explanations in both instances. Whereas Filalteo relies on Hippocrates to explain vital force as originating from outside the body, Leonico Tomeo turns to Galen to explain how the movements of the soul necessarily owe to the inextricable link to the body.[310] Although brief, this survey of Leonico Tomeo's influence on and relationship with philosophers and humanists active between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries is a first attempt at exploring neglected research paths involving philosophers, natural historians and physicians who have not usually been part of the canonical list of Renaissance thinkers involved in the debate over the nature of the soul and its relationship with individual bodies and the universal body of nature. Much is still to be investigated in this sense and even though they exceed the scope of the present thesis, alternative research paths should be pointed out and picked up in the future.

[308] Ibid., f. 90^{r}: 'Atque si animus aliunde et non a mortalibus parentibus accedit post quadraginta aut sex et triginta dies humanae fabricae in utero genitricis, ut est in libello Hippocratis de pueri natura, plane compertum videtur non e semine ortum, neque cum corpore habere commune quippiam. Accedit sane, cum opus est absolutum, tanquam rector et moderator animantis machinae, qui si a coelo, vel astro, vel potius a Deo corpori praeficitur, etiam seiungi potest sine interitu suo.' For the locus in Hippocrates, see *The Hippocratic Treatises on Generation and on the Nature of the Child, Diseases IV*, ed. by Gerhard Baasder et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981), p. 9, 18.1.
[309] Ibid., ff. 90^{v}-91^{r}: 'Quare sine mole et materia ille [i.e., *animus*] consistit, hoc est sine causa moriendi, verum cum mihi occurrant innumerabiles rationes ad hoc de immortalitate animi dogma, elogio Platonico in libris de Republica fecero nunc finem confirmandi in quibus Socrates post multa argumenta eo pervenit, ut si quis Dei filius animam nostri generis nobis dixerit immortalem, credendum mandarit. Accepimus dudum id a filio Dei Christo redemptore, de quo nemo unquam mortalium satis honorifice loqui potuit.'
[310] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, pp. 81, ll. 5-17; 83, ll. 3-5.

Part 3

Soul, Nature and Culture

Chapter 7
The Soul as the Principle of Cosmic Life, Human Identity and Epistemic Truth

This chapter deals with the notion of the soul as is being discussed in various contexts in the *Dialogi*. The questions concerning the immortality, the essence and the eternity of the soul as they are addressed especially in *Bembus, sive de animorum immortalitate* and *Bembus, sive de animorum essentia*, are certainly the most important issues tackled by Leonico Tomeo. The topic of the soul, however, is also one of the general guiding themes accompanying the reader throughout the work cropping up in many different contexts. Following the analysis of the realm of nature, that is, of bodily generation and cosmic life, here I will concentrate on what the essence of a human soul is for Leonico Tomeo and whether human souls are immortal. Embedded within the general cosmological framework of his philosophy, stirred up by the senses and the imagination and finally called back closer to its origin by relying on the cultural practices of prayer, divination and natural magic, the soul reaches a state of purification that allows it to return to its original cause.

Leonico Tomeo maintains that the first cause or the One in late Platonic terms can neither be known nor described or understood. Drawing on late Platonic positions, especially Proclus's, he develops a mitigated apophatic approach to the nature of God. This point is linked to the metaphysics of the soul. If we cannot utter anything meaningful concerning the ultimate cause of everything, this is because such a cause is beyond being. And yet we cannot avoid asking the question of what the substance of the soul is. Leonico Tomeo intends to demonstrate that the soul is self-moving and everlasting, but, in line with the teachings of the Christian Church, it is not eternal nor pre-existing.

The demonstration that the soul's existence is continuous across time and space illustrates Leonico Tomeo's engagement with some of the most contentious issues among early modern humanists. These include the concepts of self-motion (τό αὐτοκίνητον), uninterrupted and continued motion (ἡ ἐνδελέχεια) and actualisation (ἡ ἐντελέχεια). These three ideas bring full circle the research programme that Leonico Tomeo had initiated in the early years of his philosophical and teaching career. His understanding of the basic ontological categories in the *Dialogi* is closely related to his early writings on Aristotle. Therefore, before moving to the analysis of the immortality and the essence of the soul in the two dialogues dedicated to Bembo, it is worth dwelling on a few statements made by Leonico Tomeo in the 'Proem' to his

Commentary on Aristotle's *Parva naturalia*, on which he worked during the 1480s and 1490s while teaching at the University of Padua.

In the 'Proem', Leonico Tomeo explained his general position concerning natural philosophy and the latter's role with respect to both physics and metaphysics. In his view, philosophy is twofold: theoretical and practical. While theory consists of contemplation, practice implies action. Theoretical philosophy, in turn, can be divided into three parts, for it refers to three main objects: the divine, the physical and the mathematical. Leonico Tomeo argues that in the *Parva naturalia* Aristotle dealt with these three aspects and investigated the following points: what the first principles of natural things are; what their essence is; which part of the soul judges about them; what relationship they have with other beings; what the achievements of the sciences of nature and of human beings are and what their utility is; and, finally, what their division is.[311] Here it should be recalled that Leonico Tomeo's commentaries were used in Padua and in Bologna as university textbooks. Before delving into the discussion of the physical aspects of the soul as explained in the *Parva naturalia*, he is keen to remind his students-readers of what the essence of a soul is.

In the 'Proem', Leonico Tomeo begins his historiographical account with Proclus, who claimed that Antiphon believed that matter was the nature of things.[312] Others, Leonico Tomeo continues, and especially those who doubted the existence of the gods, regarded nature as a whole made of many parts, but in the *Laws* Plato accused them of taking material nature (the body) as its very essence (the mind).[313] Others still, in particular the exponents of the Ionic school, claimed that nature corresponded to physical powers like weight, lightness, thinness and density.[314] The Stoics, by contrast, believed that the nature of things was a ubiquitous permeating and assisting spirit.[315] There were also philosophers who claimed that nature was the mind (*animus*) itself.[316] Leonico Tomeo then explains that, in Plato's view, nature or essence is to be considered as an intermediary being between the body and the mind. Plato's

[311] Leonico Tomeo, 'Prooemium', in Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, in *Opera*, p. 1: 'Sunt autem isthaec septem sane illa quae proloquia sive praefata philosophi appellare consueverunt, ista videlicet: quae sint rerum naturalium initia prima; quae illarum sit essentia; quae animi pars de illis iudicium ferat; quem habeant ordinem ad alia entia; quae naturalis sint scientiae opera et quae vires, quae illius sit utilitas; et postremo quae illius sit divisio.'

[312] Ibid.: 'Rerum naturam nonnulli materiam esse dixerunt, quam certe opinionem Proclus Lycius Antiphonti videtur adscribere.'

[313] Ibid.: 'Alii autem universum compositum esse voluerunt, ut plerique ante natum Platonem fuisse dicuntur: quos non immerito in suis de legibus commentariis taxavit Plato, quoniam quod natura constaret ipsam esse naturam dixerunt.' The reference is to Plato, *Laws*, X, 891C, 892 AC.

[314] Ibid.: 'Alii vero, ut universa fere Ionicorum fuit schola, corporeas potestates, gravitatem scilicet et levitatem, raritatem et densitatem, eiusmodique alia rerum naturam esse affirmaverunt.'

[315] Ibid., p. 1: 'Stoicorum autem natio spiritum quendam artificio praeditum et constantem, undique sparsum et omnia tranantem et permeantem, naturam rerum esse voluerunt.'

[316] Ibid., p. 2: 'Fuerunt etiam qui animum ipsum naturam esse dicerent.'

nature cannot reach the state of self-reflective unity, for this is a faculty that belongs to individual minds.[317] Therefore, if 'nature is superior to all bodies', it cannot however operate without them when it gives birth to living beings. In doing so, nature 'builds and adorns the whole corporeal sphere' while emanating from 'superior causes'.[318] According to Plato, Leonico Tomeo argues, nature is 'an incorporeal substance or essence inseparable from the bodies, which contains the principles of these bodies and is not capable of considering itself'.[319] Aristotle, on the other hand, believed that nature was the inseparable form of a being, whose properties, actions and operations flowed 'from a perennial origin of the source'.[320] For this reason, Leonico Tomeo claims, the Peripatetics believe that 'Aristotle defined nature as the principle of motion and rest'.[321] Leonico Tomeo then goes on to say that 'divine beings called νοητὰ by the Greeks and intelligibles (*intelligibilia*) in Latin, by virtue of their own being as well as through the principles of their own essence, both 'free themselves from motion and separate themselves from sensible matter'.[322] Natural beings (*naturalia*), on the other hand, called δοξαστά or ἀισθητά in Greek and 'matters of opinion or sense perception (*opinabilia vel sensilia*)' in Latin, are immersed in matter and do not emerge from it either by means of their own essence or their own logical principles (*rationes*).[323] Leonico Tomeo maintains that between the objects of divine knowledge and those of natural knowledge lie the mathematical beings, which the Greeks call the διανοητά and in Latin can be translated as '*imaginabilia*', that is, objects of mental representation. These 'detach themselves from sensible matter by means of logical principles, for they cannot do this by virtue of their own being. The objects of mental representation have some forms and figures attached to themselves that cannot in any possible way be separated and severed from the properties and conditions of the bodies'.[324] In light of these three types of objects and disciplines, Tomeo proves that the science of the soul lies between the science of God and that of nature as both Plato and Aristotle had been able to

[317] Ibid., p. 2: 'Praeterea neque in seipsam natura reflectitur, neque seipsam cognoscit quod sane proprium peculiareque animorum esse censetur.'
[318] Ibid., p. 2: 'Corpora autem omnia superegredi et eminere non immerito naturam asserit, quoniam omnes illorum possidet rationes universaque prolifico generat foetu et a superioribus proxime procedens causis, tum omnem corporeum exornat et componitque globum.'
[319] Ibid., p. 2: 'huiusmodi naturae descriptionem esse voluit Plato. Natura est substantia sive essentia incorporea, a corporibus inseparabilis, illorum in sese continens rationes et ad se ipsam respicere non valens'.
[320] Ibid., p. 2: 'a perenni quodam fontis initio emanare'.
[321] Ibid., p. 3: 'Quapropter principium eam motionis et quietis esse definit, eius scilicet in quo est primo, per se, et non per accidens.' Here Leonico Tomeo is quoting the opening of Aristotle's *Physics*.
[322] Ibid., p. 3: 'Divina enim entia, quae νοητὰ graeci, nos intelligibilia dicimus, tam per esse suum, quam per suae rationes essentiae, cum a motu sese exerunt, tum etiam a sensibili abstrahunt materia.'
[323] Ibid., p. 3: 'naturalia vero, quae δοξαστὰ ἠ ἀισθητὰ illi, nos opinabilia vel sensilia appellamus, materiae immersa, neque per esse suum, neque per rationes proprias ab illa unquam emergere valent.'
[324] Ibid.: 'Mathematica vero, quae διανοητὰ graeci, e nostris autem quidam imaginabilia vocant, a materia quidem sensili per rationes sese abducunt, cum per esse suum id minime facere queant. Formas enim quasdam et figuras secum habent annexas, quae sane a corporum proprietatibus conditionibusve haudquaquam secerni seiugarique possunt.'

do in the *Timaeus* and *De anima*, respectively.[325] To those who doubt whether it is possible to develop an incontrovertible science of the soul based on the study of perception, opinion and the lower imagination, Tomeo responds by saying that his central aim in this work is to account for the soul's ability to create a whole universe of representations and concepts and to judge their level of truthfulness with respect to reality. The aim, in other words, is to establish a kind of knowledge of nature that is steady and reliable (*scientia invariabilis*) by looking at how nature operates through the body and as soul.[326] Related to this, in the *Bembus, sive de essentia animorum*, but also in *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum*, Leonico Tomeo investigates the meaning of *essentia*, not through metaphysics but through natural philosophy.

1. τό αὐτοκίνητος and ἡ ἐνδελέχεια: Self-Movement and Immortality

Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum opens with the character playing Leonico Tomeo praising Bembo's erudition and the influence he exercised on the way in which one should write of philosophy. He then recalls that when Bembo was once ill in Padua, several friends came to visit him, including Giovanni Badoer and Antonio Giustiniani. On that occasion, Bembo asked Badoer and Giustiniani why they disagreed on political matters when, as the example of Aristotle and Plato demonstrated, if two individuals use different words to express their ideas, it does not necessarily follow that they disagree altogether. Already from the very first lines, it is apparent that the aim of Leonico Tomeo in this dialogue is to emphasise once again the substantial accord between Aristotle and Plato, and this accord is all the more crucial, for their views of the soul overlap in a series of key points. To demonstrate the accord, Leonico Tomeo has Bembo embark on a lengthy discussion dealing with the question of the eternity of the soul and the origin of the world. Badoer expresses his doubts about the theories put forward by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, which he finds particularly complex because of their linguistic obscurity and convolutedness. Bembo recognises the composite nature of Plato's discourse and points out that, other than in the *Phaedrus*, the question of the immortality of the soul is also discussed in the *Republic*, the *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*. Because of its complexity, Bembo believes that the problem should not be approached 'with unwashed hands' (*illotis manibus*), that is, irreverently or without the necessary preparation.[327] The expression derives from sacred rites

[325] Ibid., p. 3: 'scientiam de anima mediam quodammodo inter divinam et naturalem esse.' This is the conclusion in the margin of the argument in the text.
[326] Ibid, p. 3.
[327] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 20, l. 5.

of purification performed in ancient Greece, when nobody was permitted to pour a morning libation to Jove with unwashed hands.[328] In the Renaissance, the proverb was popularised by Erasmus, who included it in his *Adagia*, where, by extension, it came to signify that, without sufficient knowledge of the relevant facts, nothing can be argued or understood, but only profaned, polluted and violated.

In Bembo's account of the everlasting essence of the soul, part of the discussion deals with the phenomena of death and decay. By recalling Plato's words in Book 10 of the *Republic*, Bembo clarifies that a being can be destroyed because of itself (*a seipso*) or because of external agents (*extrinsecus*).[329] He explains that, for instance, wood perishes by itself because of putrefaction or wood worms. In this case, perishability is linked to matter, as explained by Plato. Wood, however, can also be destroyed by external agents, when it is burnt by fire, or chopped by an axe or sawn by a saw. In view of these analogies, Bembo asks his interlocutors, if the destruction of something is always caused by these two different sources, internal and external?[330]

To solve this puzzle, Bembo introduces a syllogism which he thinks is endowed with universal validity. The inspiration comes from the *Phaedrus*:

> The soul moves itself; that which moves itself is the principle of motion; that which is the principle of motion is unbegotten; what is unbegotten is incorruptible; what is incorruptible is immortal; the mind is therefore immortal.[331]

The use of a syllogism confirms Leonico Tomeo's desire already expressed in his commentaries on the *Parva naturalia* to develop a reliable science of the soul. Bembo continues by saying that, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato explains that the soul is immortal because of its rational function, which holds in itself the principles of life and motion:

> through its own motions, the mind indeed drives all things celestial and also the ones on earth and within the seas. And these are the names of such motions: to want, to consider, to take care, to advise, to have opinions, whether these are correct or incorrect, to be joyful, trustworthy, sorrowful, fearful, loving and hateful.[332]

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[328] The proverb is cited by Hesiod in *Works and Days*, 740-1.
[329] Plato, *Republic*, X, 610C-611A.
[330] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 20, ll. 23-30.
[331] Ibid., ll. 40-42: 'Animus se ipsum movet: quod a se ipsum movet, motionis est principium: quod est principium motionis, est ingenitum: quod est ingenitum, est incorruptibile: quod est incorruptibile, est immortale: animus igitur est immortalis.'
[332] Ibid., p. 21, ll. 19-21: 'Trahit quidem animus caelestia omnia, et terrena insuper, et ea quae in mari sunt, suismet motionibus, quarum ista sunt nomina: velle, considerare, curare, consulere, opinari, sive recte, seu perperam,

In the dialogue, Bembo argues that the only difference between Plato's and Aristotle's views on immortality is of a linguistic nature, for what the former calls 'motions', the latter calls 'passions', but in both cases these *motiones* cannot be considered as corporeal movements of the mind.[333] Aristotle and Plato disagree only as to their modes of expression, but not as to their ideas because there is always disagreement between master and pupil on the meaning of words.

As Daniela De Bellis has pointed out in her article devoted to *Bembus, sive the immortalitate animorum*, the demonstration of self-motion was especially relevant among humanists who were engaging in the investigation of Platonic sources led by Cicero's comments. In his *Tusculanae disputationes*, the latter has suggested that the ἐνδελέχεια could be translated as 'quaedam continuata motio et perennis', while the Platonic concept of αὐτοκίνητον could be assimilated to the eternity of the self-moved ('quod semper movetur aeternum est'). [334] In order to obviate the theoretical problem of reconciling the Platonic concept of self-movement with the Aristotelian understanding of the soul as the actualising principle of life, Leonico Tomeo followed Cicero's suggestion and claimed the equivalence of ἐνδελέχεια and ἐντελέχεια, that is, the fundamental correspondence of the two ideas of continuous existence as defined by Plato and of actualised existence as postulated by Aristotle.

The humanists involved in the debate about the accuracy of such an interpretation were numerous. Cristoforo Landino (1424-1498) and Poliziano (1454-1494), for example, argued that, rather than making a mistake, Cicero had the merit of having revealed an unknown passage from a lost work by Aristotle, where ἐνδελέχεια indicated the actualised perfection of the soul.[335] Unlike Landino and Poliziano, the French humanist Guillaume Budé (1467-1540) believed that Cicero's pre-eminence was due to the Florentines' pride in the quality of their Latin rather than being the result of accurate philological work.[336]

In order to prove that the soul as the principle of actualisation and perfection of the animated body depends on the correct way of interpreting the nature of motion, Tomeo provides in *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum* a very detailed analysis of motion based

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gaudentem, confidentem, dolentem, timentem, amantem: perosum.' In this passage, Leonico Tomeo is translating Plato, *Laws*, X, 896-987.

[333] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 21, ll. 24-26: 'Quod enim Aristoteles animi affectiones, sive aegritudines seu passiones appellat, id motiones vocat Plato, cum uterque tamen corporeos motus ab animorum essentia censeat alienos.'

[334] See De Bellis, '"Autokineton" e "Entelechia", pp. 49–50. See also Henri Alline, 'L'histoire et la critique du texte platonicien et les papyrus d'Oxyrhynchus 1016-1017', *Revue de Philologie*, 34 (1910), pp. 251–294; Eugenio Garin, 'Ἐνδελέχεια e ἐντελέχεια nelle discussioni umanistiche', *Atene e Roma*, 5 (1937), pp. 177–187. See Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, I, 11; I, 53.

[335] Angelo Poliziano, *Centuria I*, in *Opera* (Lyon: Gryphius, 1533), pp. 506, 513; Cristoforo Landino, *De anima*, Book 1, ed. by Alessandro Paoli in *Annali delle Università Toscane*, 34 (1915), fasc. 1.

[336] Guillaume Budé, *De asse et partibus eius*, in *Opera* (Basel: Nicolaus Episcopus, 1557), p. 13.

on an attentive terminological investigation. He distinguishes between two kinds of movement: one that moves another body, and one which moves the mover and another body at the same time. The soul is the most excellent of movers and movements in that it not only moves itself, but it also causes motion on a cosmic level. As demonstrated by Plato, the soul moves itself continuously and the intellect – which is the highest part of the soul, superior to the rational principle of the mind (the *animus* or διάνοια) – thinks itself and through itself thinks of the rest of reality. The intellect 'understands itself when its act coincides with the essence of the mind, and it perfects itself, and, although improperly, nevertheless it is said quite neatly that acts on itself and suffers on itself'.[337]

After establishing that both Plato and Aristotle agree on the movement of the soul being self-generated, through Bembo's words Leonico Tomeo continues his analysis of the motion of the entire universe. He argues that the universe is composed of opposing principles (hot and cold, etc.), of which we perceive only the middle terms, that is, the state in between their transformation or movement from one state to the other. The same happens with the soul, of which we are only able to detect its intermediate condition while this is suspended between pure being and movement, essence and activity. This point, as De Bellis has also pointed out, might derive from Leonico Tomeo's engagement with Ficino's philosophy, in particular with the latter's view of the soul as *medium copulans*. The soul is therefore a principle of mediation, as Plato had reported in the *Phaedrus* (245C) 'the source and principle of movement'.[338]

Bembo then continues his discussion and refers to Aristotle's *Physics* and *On the Soul* to clarify what he means by characterising the soul as αὐτοκίνητος, that is, as that which is moved by itself. He also dwells on Aristotle's subtle distinction between the notions of 'intellect' and 'intellection'. Whereas the latter is the activated state, the former is its potential counterpart, comparable with the 'idea' of Plato.

> Ordinary people call everything that is moved by itself 'endowed with a soul', that is, they perceive that it is driven from within, in the sense that the force and power – first to move itself and then the body – belongs to the soul.[339]

[337] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 21, ll. 45-48: 'Intellectus siquidem, quem animi supremum ambo esse volunt caput, et se ipsum intelligit, quando eius essentia illius est actio et se ipsum perficit et licet improprie per transumptionem tamen in se ipsum et agere et pati non inconcinne dicitur.'
[338] De Bellis, '"Autokineton" e "Entelechia", p. 57. See Ficino, *Opera*, p. 1233; id., *Platonic Theology*, ed. Michael J. B. Allen and James Hankins, 6 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001-2006), IV, p. 135.
[339] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 22, ll. 36-38: 'Animatum enim omne id appellat vulgus, quod a se ipso moveri, id est intrinsecus agitari percipiunt, ceu animae sit ista vis et potestas, se ipsam prius, et corpus deinceps movendi.'

Bembo compares self-motion and bodily motion to, respectively, the active and potential intellects of the Aristotelian tradition. It is yet another way of grafting Platonic themes (in this case the idea of the soul as perpetual self-motion) onto the Aristotelian body of knowledge (his theory of the intellect):

> within the order of beings that have the ability to use the intellect there is a power that receives the function of the intellect from another power. This is Aristotle's opinion, i.e., that the mind is the one he calls potential intellect, while the other power has from itself the intellection, which it then communicates to the other intellect, for the intellect that has the intellection from itself is the spring and origin of any kinds of intellection, and certainly understands all other things no less than itself, as this is the mind that the Peripatetics call the active intellect.[340]

This ability to know reality through intelligible abstraction, exemplified by the active intellect actualising the cognitive core of the potential intellect is reflected in the sphere of motion, that is, active and passive motion, as Bembo points out:

> In the same way, among the things that are in motion, some are perceived as being moved and driven only by other things, as all bodies are, whereas those things that are endowed with a soul are intended to impart motion to all other things as well as to move themselves. That such is the nature of the mind has been previously demonstrated, I think, in a sufficiently clear way.[341]

In keeping with the principles of Aristotle's cosmology, after the link between motion and intellection has been assessed, Bembo discusses the four causes of the soul's movement, i.e., efficient, formal, material and final. This leads Bembo to ask a crucial question through Plato's words: 'in the treatise on the *Laws* that we have already mentioned, the divine Plato, wishing to indicate a different path, i.e., that nature which moves itself is the cause of all motions, says: "If everything that moves stood still, what then would be the thing that is first moved?"'[342] Otherwise put, if we rely too much on the analogy between thinking and moving, and self-

[340] Ibid., p. 22, ll. 38-43: 'Quemadmodum enim in entium quae intelligunt ordine quiddam est quod ab alio intelligendi accipit munus, veluti de Aristotelis sententia mens illa est quam potestate intellectum vocat ille, aliud autem a se ipso intellectionem habet, quam impertit alteri, ipsum autem cum omnimodae sit fons et origo intellectionis, et alia sane omnia et se ipsum non minus intelligit, ut illa est mens quam actu intellectum Peripatetici appellant'.

[341] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 22, ll. 43-45: 'Ita in iis quae moventur, haec quidem ab aliis solum agitari moverique percipiuntur, ut corpora sunt omnia: illa vero et aliis motum praestant omnibus, et se ipsa movere nata sunt, quales esse animos retro (ut arbitror) manifeste satis est demonstratum.'

[342] Ibid., p. 22, ll. 53-56: 'Quamobrem in iisdem de legibus commentariis divinus Plato omnium esse causam motionum naturam se ipsam moventem alia etiam ostendere volens via, Si omnia, inquit, quae moventur, starent, quidnam esset id quod primo moveretur?'.

motion is the same as self-thinking, how can we justify the idea of self-thinking as absolute stability and contemplative rest?

This question brings to the fore the need for the philosophising scholars to find a principle of self-sufficiency that may escape the lingering dichotomies of spontaneous and forced motions. This principle can only be the intellect. Bembo insists that our inability to see reality as it is, and consequently our inability to approach the divine, depends on the dull character of our senses and our mind, both of which do not allow us to understand the causes of phenomena, but only to perceive their effects. Bembo attributes this deficiency to the anatomical constitution of the animal body, but also to meteorology, thus combining Aristotle's *On the Heavens* with Plato's *Laws*. Since it is not generated, the principle of movement is necessarily incorruptible, an argument that at the time was also discussed by Pomponazzi and Bessarion in their writings concerning the immortality of the soul.[343]

Philosophers are supposed to demonstrate the thesis of the immortality of the soul not by relying on 'probable reasons', which are only good to produce persuasion (*quae fidem solum faciunt*), but by standing on the unshakable ground of necessary principles that are absolutely compelling (*certissimae necessitatem in se demonstrationis habere*). This is the way in which proven knowledge proceeds (*scientiae modus*), and this also applies to the *scientia* of the soul.[344] Leonico Tomeo is here trying to connect the emphasis on perpetual self-motion that is characteristic of the Platonic tradition with the Aristotelian notion of motionless self-intellection. This is Leonico Tomeo's main argument: eternal self-motion is the source of activity for all things in the universe, and this is the meaning that one should assign to the soul.[345]

In Leonico Tomeo's view, as represented in this dialogue by the character Bembo, the act of infusing life into other beings is the most important characteristic that the soul possesses together with its ability to sustain its continuous and circular movement. The principle that is passed onto by the soul through movement is life. Eternal self-movers like the soul, Bembo explains, can be defined according to their unique abilities:

> since the soul provides motion and life to all the other things (and it is because of it that Aristotle calls the living being αὐτοκίνητον, that is, 'moved by

[343] Pietro Pomponazzi, *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*, ed. by Thierry Gontier (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012), p. 55; Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis*, ed. by Ludwig Mohler, in L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, 2 vols (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1927), II, p. 373.
[344] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 23, ll. 20-22: 'Caeterum hoc in loco obiter vos admonitos voluerim, hanc philosophi rationem non ex probabilibus quae fidem solum faciant, procedere rationibus, sed certissimae necessitatem in se demonstrationis habere.'
[345] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 23, ll. 32-34: 'Vita vero nihil aliud esse censetur nisi perennis quaedam iugisque motio. Sibi ipsi igitur motum praestabit, et a se ipso movebitur animus. Quamobrem hoc etiam modo ex incessanti illius motu, animi apparebit aeternitas.'

> itself'), necessarily the soul provides itself with life and motion in a much higher degree and much before giving life and motion to the rest. Therefore, the soul is always in motion and it never dwindles.[346]

Bembo then concedes that his theory of immortality might present a possible fault, especially when this is considered in relation to the nature of celestial bodies. He says that, if we reckon that celestial spheres are αὐτοκίνητα, we are attributing the origin of movement, and consequently of life, not only to the soul, but also to the body, which is, of course, problematic:

> For if we concede that, because the soul is always in motion, it is moved by itself, we will assign the origin and the principle of motion not only to the soul, but also to the body. This cannot happen in any way, for the result would be that two first principles can be found for one single thing. If, however, we say that the soul is ἑτεροκίνητον, that is, driven by the impetus of another principle, we will be forced to concede, according to Plato's opinion, that sometimes it stops from moving and sometimes it will end, which is something that, except a few, no philosopher concedes.[347]

In Leonico Tomeo's opinion, this interplay of αὐτοκίνητον and ἑτεροκίνητον needs to be clarified in the clearest of terms to prevent the *animus* from becoming yet another instance of matter in motion. In *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum*, Tomeo relies upon Proclus to corroborate his seemingly paradoxical view of the soul as perpetual motionless motion. In this respect, the most relevant issue concerns the existence of a relationship between the soul and its objects, that is, between divine intellect and the dimensions of natural reality, which are unified into coherent entities by the intermediary action of life. The latter combines the opposites through a continuous motion that is spiritual rather than physical:[348]

> the nature of the soul is simple, and it does not contain anything mixed within itself that is different and dissimilar from itself. For this reason, it can never be divided nor die.[349]

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[346] Ibid., p. 23, ll. 37-40: 'Quamobrem cum caeteris omnibus vitam et motum praestet animus (illius enim gratia Aristoteles αὐτοκίνητον, id est a se ipso motum appellat animal) multo profecto magis et prius sibi ipsi et vitam praestare et motionem necesse est. Semper igitur movetur animus et deficit numquam.'

[347] Ibid., p. 23, ll. 43-48: 'Si enim quoniam semper movetur, a semet illud moveri concesserimus, non solum animo, sed corpori etiam principium et originem dabimus motionis, quod fieri haudquaquam potest, ut unius scilicet rei duo prima reperiantur exordia. Si autem ἑτεροκίνητον, id est alterius impulsu agitatum illud esse dixerimus, de Platonis sententia aliquando a motu esse cessaturum illud, et interiturum quandoque concedere cogemur: quod, exceptis paucis, philosophantium concedit nemo.'

[348] On immobile movement, see Stephen Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΣ: *A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), pp. 60–65.

[349] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 24, ll. 28-29: 'Simplex praeterea animi est natura, neque habet in se quicquam admixtum quod dispar sit sui atque dissimile.'

As a conclusion of his long argument, Bembo discusses the physiological effects caused by the presence of the soul within the body. He focuses in particular on heat, excretion, motion and the humours. He then celebrates the numerous qualities of the soul that determine the possibility for human beings to establish a direct connection with the gods, especially through pneumatic vehicles. Leonico Tomeo deals with the vehicles in the dialogue *Alverotus*. Like the three vehicles, says Bembo, the soul is tripartite because it moves itself, it moves eternally and it is immortal. This is also why, Bembo argues, the soul is one and three at once, for we can observe the order of the causes of phenomena by examining its nature. For example, that the soul moves itself demonstrates that there is an eternal movement and that this is the cause of immortality.

Broadly speaking, in *Bembus, sive de immortalitate animorum*, Leonico Tomeo maintains that the main argument in support of the immortality of the soul is the idea of continuous self-motion. The emphasis is on the self in the expression 'self-motion' – i.e., the αὐτός in αὐτοκίνητον – that is, perpetual sameness as uninterrupted self-identity.

2. *Bembus* 2, or on the Essence of the Minds

As already mentioned in Chapter 5, Leonico Tomeo published *Bembus, sive de animorum essentia* in 1530, that is, six years after the first edition of the *Dialogues*. In the dedicatory letter to Pole, he subscribed to the view that the philosophical understanding of the soul's nature was in fundamental agreement with the principles of the Christian faith, 'which alone seems to be wise and to have the right notions'. For Leonico Tomeo, 'those tenets are constantly true which our religion prescribed to be held and observed in a way free from doubt by its followers'.[350] We must assume that it was precisely because of his ecumenical philosophical views that he structured this final dialogue as the result of a dialectical engagement with opposing theories. In addition, relying on what he says in the prefatory letter, we must look at his work as emerging from a series of discussions that he had with his former pupil Bembo.[351] *Bembus, sive the animorum essentia* expresses the doubts and convictions of Leonico Tomeo in the final years of his intellectual career, bringing together his philologically-informed approach to Christian humanism with the elegance of his prose and the depth of his philosophical insight.

[350] Leonico Tomeo to Reginald Pole, in *Dialogi*, p. 76: 'Et alioquin religioni nostrae pie semper addictus, quae sola sapere et recte sentire videtur, ea constanter vera esse existimo, quae illa a sectatoribus suis indubitanter teneri observarique praescripsit.'
[351] Ibid.: 'multiplici etiam variaque lectione ipse collegeram, in unum dialogi corpus coniecta'.

Without any preamble, the dialogue opens with Leonico Tomeo asking Bembo whether he is willing to reflect with him on the essence of the soul. Leonico Tomeo says that he has been assiduously reading about the matter in Platonic and Aristotelian sources, but that, his familiarity with the texts notwithstanding, he is still undecided on this topic. Bembo initially hesitates, but then accepts his friend's prompting, starting with a consideration on the undefinable nature of God. 'We all know that God is the first being, supremely good and the cause of all goods', says Bembo. 'However, we cannot explain with words what He is and the way in which He produced these goods.'[352] Everyone, Bembo continues, states that 'God has no beginning, but they cannot understand that He is everywhere, nor how He is everywhere and in what way'.[353] Bembo's conviction that God cannot be named needs to be read against the negative theology of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Leonico Tomeo, like numerous other scholars including Nicolaus of Cusa and Bessarion, knew the speculative fecundity of the approach based on the principles of Platonic negative theology. The kind of Platonic reading infused with elements of late Platonic sources championed by Cusa and Bessarion was harshly opposed by George of Trebizond, who claimed that Proclus was a plagiarist and his early modern champions dissimulators trying to persuade the masses that Christianity originated with Platonism.[354] A Christian humanist like Erasmus did not accept the authenticity of the writings attributed to Dionysius, nor did Valla.[355] Contrary to Erasmus and Valla, Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples (c.1455–c.1536) regarded Dionysius as the convert of St Paul and, following a French tradition, as the first bishop of Paris.[356] Leonico Tomeo never clearly pronounced himself on this matter, but he acknowledged an element of ineffability in the way in which the human mind was drawn to investigate the essence of the soul.

Along these lines, Leonico Tomeo has Bembo say that '"God" is not the name of His substance, and we are completely unable to find it to be the name of His essence'.[357] He should, however, be referred to with names that go beyond all names:

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[352] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 77, ll. 54-56: 'Nanque verbi gratia deum esse primum ens, summe bonum, et bonorum omnium causam, omnes scimus: quid autem sit is, et quo ea produxit modo, verbis explicare non possumus.'

[353] Ibid., pp. 77, l. 56; 78, l. 1: 'Praeterea de deo vere praedicant et dicunt omnes quod omni caret principio: quod ubique est et tamen quomodo ubique sit et qualiter, intelligere non possunt.'

[354] George of Trebizond, *Comparationes phylosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis* (Venice: Giacomo Penzio, 1523), f. G8^{r}. As quoted in John Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), p. 158.

[355] J. B. Trapp, 'Erasmus on William Grocyn and Ps-Dionysius: A Re-Examination', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 59 (1996), pp. 294–303.

[356] Eugene Rice, 'The Humanist Idea of Christian Antiquity: Lefèvre d'Etaples and His Circle', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 9 (1962), pp. 126–160.

[357] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 78, ll. 3-4: 'neque deus illius nomen est substantiae et omnino essentiae illius nomen reperire non possumus'.

> After all, what is so extraordinary about God, who goes beyond all forms of being and whose image (*species*) we seem to perceive while groping about in a thick cloud, every time we strive to reach Him in some way by rejecting and setting all things aside, if we consider that we are not even able to find out the names of the higher minds which our theologians call angels, names which would have the power to represent their essences and maybe – as I believe – the soul itself, which is the subject we are discussing now? As seems to be the case, this very name – *anima* – does not reveal the essence of the soul among the Greeks, despite they had most accurate nomenclators; rather, it denotes το ψύχειν, that is, it denotes a certain cooling power without which life cannot exist.[358]

Through Bembo, Leonico Tomeo is here saying that names are not clear indicators of the essence of an entity, be this entity God or the soul. This is particularly evident with the Greek word for soul – ψυχή – for this term is related to the word for 'cooling', associated with the phenomenon of life in its ability to moderate the heat of the vital flame. This 'cooling' function cannot be the 'essence' of the soul for the very simple reason that a soul is an incorporeal entity and not a material quality. Philosophers should focus on the operations of the soul, Bembo says. Therefore, the investigation needs to look at faculties and powers rather than substances. This point, in particular, is connected to the reflections made in the *Peripateticus* about language as being both human and divine:

> The soul is therefore expressed and characterised in various ways. Sometimes they call it heart or mind, sometimes thought or will, some other times reasoning, and in so doing they designate it not according to the dignity of its being, but according to certain faculties and powers that denominate it.[359]

Having set out his doubts about the possibility to define the essence of the soul, Bembo is invited by Leonico Tomeo to continue his reflections, especially on the kinds of beings that exist in nature. The aim is to proceed by analogy and deduction towards increasingly more abstract principles. Bembo starts by differentiating between sensible and intelligible species. The former, he argues, are subject to time, space, decay and defect, whereas the latter are eternal, incorruptible and move everything else. Among the kinds of being that need to be examined with care in this context, Leonico Tomeo provides a detailed analysis of the technical

[358] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 78, ll. 5-12: 'Caeterum quid tam admirandum est de deo, qui omnem supereminet essentiam, et cuius per rerum omnium abnegationem remotionemque, siquando ad eum quoquo modo pertingere contendimus, in profunda nubis caligine caecutientes cernere videmur speciem, quando ne mentium quidem supernarum, quos nostri Angelos vocant, reperire quis potest nomina, quae illarum essentiam representare valeant? Et fortasse (ut arbitor) de anima ipsa, de qua nunc agitur, istuc ipsum merito dici potest non enim, ut videtur, nomen hoc apud Graecos, licet accuratissimi rerum nomenclatores extiterint, illius ostendit essentia, sed τοῦ ψύχειν, id est refrigerandi quandam illius representat vim, sine qua stare non potest vita.'

[359] Ibid., p. 78, ll. 12-15: 'Ed idcirco variis exprimitur signaturque modis anima nanque cor illam et mentem aliquando appellant, alias cogitationem et voluntatem, nonnunquam ratiocinationem, non ex illius essentiae dignitate, sed ex viribus quibusdam et potestatibus illam denominantes.'

terms μορφή and εἶδος. "Form" can be said in two ways: either as μορφή (or *figura*, in Latin), which results from the composition of dissimilar parts (*ex dissimilarium partium proportione quadam*), or as εἶδος which is derives from a balanced proportion of homogeneous parts (*ex similarium partium proportione quadam*).[360]This distinction explains why the human soul is a sort of unstable compound when it is connected to a body. More than that, its composite nature seems to be at the very core of its essence since its essence is an inexhaustible and perpetual flow of energy.

To shed more light on this dynamic core of the soul, Bembo undertakes a learned digression detailing four different interpretations concerning the *essentia* of the soul provided by philosophers since antiquity, namely traducianism, creationism, mitigated creationism and the theory of the vehicles. According to traducianism as summed up by Bembo, the essence of the soul is material and derives from the seed of the father that is transmitted to the mother. Bembo associates traducianism with Aristotle and the early Peripatetics as well as with Lactantius and Tertullian.[361] In opposition to traducianism stands creationism, the position defended by the majority of the Church Fathers and scholastic theologians. According to this theory, the origin of the soul is divine, but the instrument through which this comes to be in the world is material, for it is at the moment of conception that God introduces inside the fetus in a woman's womb the individual soul He created.[362]

More than once, we have characterised Tomeo as a Christian humanist after the example of Erasmus because of his emphasis on the private dimension of devotion, his refusal of ceremonies or works, his critique against superstition and credulity, and his advocacy of erudition and faith as complementary. In *Bembus, sive de animorum essentia*, Tomeo underlines the validity of the Christian religion with particular insistence. Apart from openly declaring his faith – and there are no reasons to doubt the sincerity of this profession –, he investigates the question of creation mainly through pagan sources. It should be noted that Leonico Tomeo makes not many references to the Church Fathers in the *Dialogi* and mainly in connection to philology. This is the case, for instance, of the *Bonominus*, in which Tomeo refers to Saint Jerome for reason of textual criticism. In the *Alverotus* he turned to the Bible to corroborate his allegorical reading of the vehicles of the soul as fiery chariots. In the *Severinus*, Thomas Aquinas is profusely mentioned in relation to the problem of consubstantiality. In

[360] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 78, ll. 40-43: 'formam ipsam sub duplici differentia ab antiquis intellectam, et nobis declaratam fuisse palam esse, vel illam quam ex dissimilarium partium compositione resultare videmus, quam Graeci μορφήν, nos figuram dicere possumus, vel illam quae ex similarium partium proportione quadam efficitur, quam εἶδος Graeci, nostri cum formam, tum speciem appellare solent.'
[361] Ibid., p. 82, ll. 51-56.
[362] Ibid., p. 79, ll. 45-53.

Bembus, sive de animorum essentia, finally, despite all the disclaimers made by Leonico Tomeo about the dogmatic reliability of Christian theology, the creation of the souls is treated as one of the several doctrines providing an explanation of the origin and nature of the soul.

From this point of view, we should remember that, for Christian humanists such as Leonico Tomeo, the Church Fathers could be seen as repositories of valid arguments to protect the *studia humanitatis* from the attacks of those who were driven by the desire to purge scholarship from pagan accretions. The most emblematic case in this sense is certainly that of Erasmus.[363] Humanists, including Leonico Tomeo, praised the Church Fathers for their struggle to defend civilization from savagery and barbarism, fundamental also to preserve the ritual and intellectual culture of the Christian religion. The rhetorical skill, persuasion and eloquence of the Church Fathers resonated in particular with the humanist exegetical campaign, aiming at removing from the body of biblical tradition the superimposition of countless scholastic *subtilitates*.

Of the four major philosophical views listed by Bembo in the dialogue, the mitigated creationist theory argues that all human souls had been originally made by God at the beginning of the world and by Him dispatched to earth. Here they have been animating bodies and from here they will depart only at the end of history. This is the opinion of Origen and, as we will see, the one that Leonico Tomeo seems to hold as philosophically most convincing.[364] Finally, the fourth and last theory expounded by Bembo in the dialogue is the one championed by the Platonists, who assumed that between the body and the eternal soul there were a number of pneumatic or aery vehicles that allowed the soul to ascend to the higher spheres, depending on which faculties a human individual had more developed during their stay in the sublunary world.[365]

In addition to the four principal theories concerning the origin of the human souls, the discussions between Bembo and Leonico Tomeo contain several forays into the history of ancient philosophy and medicine. The aim is to render the debate as nuanced and concrete as possible. The Stoics, for example, are reported to believe that the soul is the result of the agglomeration of four principles or elements that form four different levels of spiritual maturity: cohesion (ἕξις), nature (φύσις), soul (ψυχή) and the rational soul (ψυχή λόγική). The Stoics devote particular attention to the rational soul, which they believe is corporeal and, as is attested to by medicine, reaches a state of internal harmony through the fusion of discordant

[363] On Erasmus' approach to religion and philosophy, see Jill Kraye, 'Pagan Philosophy and Patristics in Erasmus and His Contemporaries', *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, 31 (2011), pp. 33–60.
[364] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 80, ll. 1-4.
[365] Ibid., p. 80, ll. 4-17.

principles or complexions. For the Stoics, the rational soul is a humid spirit that constitutes the material aspect of the human soul and takes shape in the human body.[366]

Bembo then discusses the mortalist views of Galen and the Hippocratic doctors, for whom the soul was inseparable from matter as generated from the material fluids of the body, that is, the blood and all other humours that flow through the whole organism. The soul is therefore hosted by an instrument that has towards the soul the same function that a tool has for a carpenter. Despite their divergent opinions, Bembo explains that Galen, Plato and Aristotle all agree that the body is a prison and a constraint for the soul rather than a necessary component of its essence. Similarly, all three reckon that the soul is constituted by opposing principles, in that the harmonious working of the soul is the result of multiple parts and powers.[367]

3. Selfhood and Truth

The two dialogues dedicated to Bembo are central texts within the wider context of the *Dialogi*, for they demonstrate how, despite the importance attributed to the realm of generation and natural change in other texts, Leonico Tomeo believes that one cannot have a proper understanding of both the immortality and the essence of a soul – any soul, in fact – by only relying on one's own experience of the natural world.

We have seen that in *Bembus, sive de animorum immortalitate*, the main issue under scrutiny is the question whether the intellect needs to be regarded as immaterial and independent from the body or as existing while having some kind of relationship with a corporeal substratum. The problem that Leonico Tomeo insistently underlines in this dialogue concerns the possibility for the soul to maintain itself alive without an object and more specifically, whether intellection can function in the absence of an instrument, for, as is confirmed from the study of the natural world, the intellect seems to be bound to a material vehicle.

This question, left pending in the first dialogue dedicated to Bembo, is taken up *Bembus, sive de animorum essentia*, where Leonico Tomeo turns from natural philosophy to the history of the principal philosophical doctrines on the subject. It is by examining the Greek and Latin terms defining the soul's self-motion, actualisation and continuous existence that he tackles the

[366] Ibid., p. 80, ll. 36-48.
[367] Ibid., pp. 80, ll. 49-61; 81, ll. 1-10.

question of the temporal creation of the soul (which is the Christian position) and its compatibility with Aristotle. It should be pointed out that Leonico Tomeo never goes at great lengths to provide a philosophical demonstration of the temporal creation of the soul to prove his allegiance to Christianity, nor does he join the Aristotelian-Averroist camp and outrightly claim that the world is eternal. He remains, as is so often the case, in the middle. The reason, it seems, is not because of a fear to compromise by taking a clear side, but because of a deliberately nuanced approach to the question of the soul, one that emerges from the collection and collation of principles from all schools and times. Unlike Pomponazzi, he discards the Alexandrist (and potentially mortalist) thesis in favour of a position that is largely redolent of the Thomist theory of the soul as an individual form (a self) that activates a body while remaining immaterial and unperishable. To this kind of Aristotelian orthodoxy, he adds all those Platonic items that can reinforce the idea of the soul as everlasting life and consciousness.

Chapter 8

Between Convention and Discovery: The Icastic Power of Language

This chapter considers Leonico Tomeo's contribution to the early modern debate concerning the philosophical relevance of language as a social marker, a communication medium, a glue of collective identity and a tool of discovery and invention. The dialogues that are being examined here are *Peripateticus, sive de inventione nominum* and *Bonominus, sive de alica*. As we have seen in the previous chapters, starting with the knowledge of nature that is constantly being acquired through the senses, the soul as *animus*/*anima* is that unique power that mediates between matter and the intellect, and is therefore capable of transforming, on the one hand, the impressions of the senses into concepts and, on the other, the urges of desire into volitions. The passive state of mere receptivity characterising the first encounter between the soul and the world turns into an active production, consisting first of sensations, images, then of thoughts, then of words and finally of wordless and imageless contemplations. The unorganised information gathered by the sensory organs is ordered by the mind. Here it is shaped by the imagination, enriched by the encounter with memory, further transformed by recollections, ordered as discourse and then developed into intelligible forms. As such, the soul undergoes a journey of progressive revelation, moving by degrees from particulars to universals.

In order for the the soul to keep itself alive, it needs to use a material instrument called 'body'. Through it, the soul perceives, nourishes itself and moves itself. If this does not happen, or if this is hampered, then practical and theoretical remedies have to be adopted. If the body suffers and its humoural stability is altered, then medicine intervenes, whereas if the body does not successfully manage to reach beyond its limited confines of experience, then natural philosophy provides the necessary instructions for it to relate to the external world. Once these elementary functions are correctly performed, the soul can proceed to the translation of the natural processes it witnesses and directly experiences into speech and linguistic categories. Having explored the above in the previous sections of this dissertation, in this chapter, my main concern is with the transformation of perceptual information into language.

Peripateticus opens with a reflection on the nature of language addressed to Leonico Tomeo by his friend Alessandro Capella, who is a character that, as we have seen, appears more than once in the *Dialogi*. As already noted in Chapter 5, *Peripateticus* is the only text with only two interlocutors. Relying on what we have said in Chapter 4 about the structure and evolution of Renaissance dialogue, we can ascribe this feature to the Socratic mode of

conducting a conversation between a limited number of characters having a specific philosophical objective to reach. On the other hand, it is also evident that Leonico Tomeo and Capella discuss their points following the rules of a scholastic disputation.[368] This aspect, too, makes *Peripateticus* stand out in the *Dialogi* and it might indicate that Leonico Tomeo had originally conceived the dialogue in question with a clear pedagogic intent in mind. As suggested by the title, he envisaged the text as a discussion of Aristotelian theories, particularly those on language and logic, which were common in medieval classroom disputations and continued to be such in the Renaissance.

The dialogue entitled *Bonominus* re-enacts a scholarly discussion among humanist friends who are represented while busily trying to make sense of the linguistic and taxonomical vicissitudes of technical words used in history and science. Specifically, by claiming that words proceed from objects rather than preceeding them, Leonico Tomeo demonstrates that human language does not flow naturally from the essence of things, but is rather an artificial mirror of their relational properties. As such, grammar, the instrument of human language, articulates the ties between things known and knowing subjects, that is, between nature and the soul as mind.

By and large, the question of language is important with respect to the *Dialogi* as a whole as well as to the activity of Leonico Tomeo as a humanist and a grammarian. The philological nature of his thinking markedly emerges from his insistence on the meaning and correct translation of words. In Leonico Tomeo's work, words measure the precision with which the human mind attributes values to signs and symbols through convention and discovery.

1. The Discovery of Names: Language and Artifice in the *Peripateticus*

In order to illustrate the Peripatetic principle of correspondence between words and things, in the opening scene of the *Peripateticus*, Leonico Tomeo presents himself and his friend Alessandro Capella in the act of walking in circles. This movement, according to Leonico Tomeo, suits the discussion of Peripatetic theories about language particularly well. He is playing with the Greek adjective περιπατητικός, which denotes the action of someone walking or strolling around. The philosophical school founded by Aristotle in Athens in the fourth

[368] On scholastic disputations see Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice and Performance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

century BC came to be known as the *Peripatos* because of the presence of περίπατοι or covered walkways with colonnades, underneath which the members met, and because of Aristotle's habit of walking while teaching. By opening the *Peripateticus* with two walking humanists debating about the *inventio* of names, Leonico Tomeo suggests that the act of walking, much like it happened for Aristotle while he was teaching, is related somehow both to the thinking process involved in the production of knowledge and to the structure of the environment in which that same knowledge is produced, that is, the περίπατοι for Aristotle and the courtyard of his Paduan house for Tomeo.

In order to illustrate this point further, Leonico Tomeo explains that the philosophers called 'peripatetics' were those who listened to Plato's lessons in Athens. Once he passed away, however, the same name was given to those who succeeded him in the Academy. Upon Plato's death, the Academy split into two branches, one headed by Aristotle and later called Lyceum and the other by Xenocrates.[369] Here Leonico Tomeo points out that the term 'peripatetic' refers to a school of thought, yet it does not necessarily indicate the ideas or theories that emerged from it. The term, as any other term, is subject to change, depending on the historical moment in which it is employed and the social context in which it is used.

Regarding the question of whether the origin of language is natural or artificial, Leonico Tomeo claims that neither Plato nor Aristotle were the first to assume that one had to deal with both nature and culture when examining the different aspects of language. Heraclitus and Parmenides, as mentioned in Chapter 5, had already pointed out the natural and cultural aspects of human language.[370] As part of the discussion concerning the relationship between nature and culture, Leonico Tomeo adds the parallel debate about the difference between human and divine languages.[371] Divine speech is unavailable to man, who can only get a glimpse of the highest form of communication through the recitation of liturgy by priests. Leonico Tomeo argues that the divine mysteries to which only priests and magicians have access have been handed down through a chain of revelations, starting with Zoroaster and the Chaldean Oracles, and then continuing with Plato and the Jewish prophets.[372] Here Leonico Tomeo anticipates themes that are also discussed in the dialogue *Sadoletus*, which debates the function of prayer and other inspired forms of speech. He maintains that prayers ac as preternatural magnets through which human beings establish a contact with the divine. A large part of this discussion (such as the distinction between the commonly used names and those known only to God) is taken from Plato's *Cratylus*.

[369] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 45, ll. 28-31.
[370] Ibid, p. 45, ll. 55-62.
[371] Ibid., p. 42, ll. 53-62.
[372] Ibid., pp. 41, ll. 59-62; 42, ll. 1-4.

The metaphysical nature of speech accessible to human beings of high wit is contrasted with the mimetic character of language as presented by the Roman chronicler Aulus Gellius in his *Attic Nights*. The episode reported in the *Peripateticus* concerns the demonstration, provided by Nigidius Figulus, a Roman scholar contemporary of Cicero, of the way in which language works. Gellius recounts that, in his *Commentarii grammatici* ('Grammatical Notes'), Nigidius had proved that nouns and verbs had been formed not by chance, but by a certain power and design of nature. In Nigidius's view, this was a concern typical of philosophers inquiring whether words originate by nature or were man-made. Among the many arguments Nigidius employed to demonstrate the natural character of language the following struck Gellius in a particular way and, evidently, also Leonico Tomeo:

> 'When we say *vos*, or "you"', says Nigidius, 'we make a movement of the mouth suitable to the meaning of the word; for we gradually protrude the tips of our lips and direct the impulse of the breath towards those with whom we are speaking. But on the other hand, when we say *nos*, or "us", we do not pronounce the word with a powerful forward impulse of the voice, nor with the lips protruded, but we restrain our breath and our lips, so to speak, within ourselves. The same thing happens in the words *tu* or "thou", *ego* or "I", *tibi* "to thee", and *mihi* "to me". For just as when we assent or dissent, a movement of the head or eyes corresponds with the nature of the expression, so too in the pronunciation of these words there is a kind of natural gesture made with the mouth and breath. The same principle that we have noted in our own speech applies also to Greek words.'[373]

Leonico Tomeo informs that the naturalistic explanation offered by Nigidius Figulus is followed by the Academics and all the Stoics, led by Zeno and Chrysippus. The Peripatetics, on the other hand, with Aristotle as their leader, contend that the names of things are established not by nature but as the result of convention, while some of them have also been found by chance.[374]

To shed more light on Tomeo's comparison between the Aristotelian and the Platonic positions towards language, it may be worth referring to a late sixteenth-century paraphrasis of

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[373] Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, transl. by J. Rolfe, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), IV, p. 228: 'Nomina verbaque non positu fortuito, sed quadam vi et ratione naturae facta esse, P. Nigidius in Grammaticis Commentariis docet, rem sane in philosophiae disceptationibus celebrem. Quaerienim solitum aput philosophos, φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα sint ἢ θέσει. In eam rem multa argumenta dicit, cur videri possint verba esse naturalia magis quam arbitraria. Ex quibus hoc visum estlepidum et festivum:'Vos', inquit, cum dicimus, motu quodam oris conveniente cum ipsius verbi demonstratione utimur et labeas sensim primores emovemus ac spiritum atque animam porroversum et ad eos quibuscum sermocinamur intendimus. At contra cum dicimus 'nos', neque profuso intentoque flatu vocis neque proiectis labris pronuntiamus, sed et spiritum et labeas quasiintra nosmet ipsos coercemus. Hoc idem fit et in eo, quod dicimus 'tu', 'ego' et 'tibi' et 'mihi'. Nam sicuti, cum adnuimus et abnuimus, motus quidam ille vel capitis vel oculorum a natura reiquam significat non abhorret, ita in his vocibus quasi gestus quidam oris et spiritus naturalis est. Eadem ratio est in Graecis quoque vocibus, quam esse in nostris animadvertimus'. See Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 42, ll. 19-27.

[374] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 42, ll. 46-49.

the *Peripatetic* by the Florentine philosopher Giovanni Battista Gelli (1498–1563) in his *Letture sopra la Commedia di Dante* ('Commentaries on Dante's '*Comedy*', 1553–1563). Because of Gelli's long treatment of Leonico Tomeo's dialogue and the pedagogical use he made of it during his lectures at the University of Florence in the 1550s, it seems more pertinent to focus on his understanding of the text. Gelli summarises Tomeo's position by referring to the foundational passage from Aristotle's *De interpretatione* (16a 3–8):

> spoken words are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all (humans), neither are spoken words. But what these are in the first place, signs of – affections in the soul – are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of – actual things – are also the same.[375]

Gelli uses Aristotle's fourfold schema – thing, concepts, names and signs – to show that Leonico Tomeo is right when he argues that Plato and Aristotle are in agreement on this matter, for when Plato speaks of a natural origin of the words, he is referring to things and notions, which Aristotle, too, thinks are natural, unlike the phonetic and physical aspects of a language, which instead are the result of historical and cultural processes:

> Thus, according to Leonico, when Plato says that names have been imposed on things by nature, he speaks of those names and those mental and natural concepts. And when Aristotle says that names have been imposed on things according to human whim, he refers to those which are uttered through voice and letters because these are artificial. And this is why, according to Leonico, they (Aristotle and Plato) do not disagree on the meaning, but only in the words. This is rather appropriate if one carefully considers the theory and the method of enquiry of the one and the other. For, Plato walked throughout many matters with a pure and sincere intellectual understanding whereas Aristotle did not trust the intellect at all except when he found it based on sense.[376]

Gelli's reading of the *Peripateticus* shows, in straightforward terms that are suitable for an audience of university students, how Leonico Tomeo demonstrated that Aristotle's and Plato's positions were in agreement. This is all the more interesting for the second part of the

[375] Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, transl. by J. L. Ackrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 43.
[376] Giovanni Battista Gelli, *Commento edito e inedito sopra* La Divina Commedia (Florence: Bocca, 1887), pp. 392–394: 'Quando adunque Platone dice che i nomi sono stati imposto a le cose da la natura, egli intende di quei nomi e di quei concetti mentali e naturali, dice il Leonico. E quando Aristotile dice, ch'ei sono stati imposti loro da 'l piacimento degli uomini, egl'intende di quel co' quali ei si manifestono con la voce e con le lettere, perché ei son artifiziali. E così non vengono a essere, secondo il Leonico, discordi l'uno da l'altro nel senso, ma solamente nelle parole; cosa non punto disconveniente, a chi va ben considerandola, da il dogma e da 'l modo del procedere dell'uno e de l'altro. Per ciò che Platone camminava in molte cose con la cognizione intellettiva pura e sincera; e Aristotile non si fidava punto dello intelletto, se non quanto ei lo trovava fondato in su 'l senso.'

Peripateticus is in fact a consistent attempt by Leonico Tomeo to reconcile the views of Plato and Aristotle by reflecting on the ways in which the denotative power of language produces definitions that accommodate the nature of things to the 'art' of human language. The distinction between Platonic concepts and definitions, and Aristotelian names and letters is investigated by referring to the different objects at the centre of the two philsophers' enquiry. Leonico Tomeo explains that names are similar to images produced by the faculty of the soul called imagination that feigns the likenesses of things as if it were painting.[377] Letters are also artificial because they are the minimal units constituting names following convention.[378] Concepts and definitions, on the other hand, are natural because the human faculty of judgement, as if it were 'an architect of speech' and a 'most prudent creator of names', indexes the essence of things according to the needs of nature in an appropriate manner.[379]

It is at this crucial point that, relying on Proclus or possibly Ammonius in his *De interpretatione* commentary, Leonico Tomeo introduces the notion of 'verbal imagination' (λεκτική φαντασία).[380] He argues that this kind of φαντασία accommodates the nature or essence of things to the 'art' of human speech, whose material components have been created through convention. By 'verbal imagination', Proclus had meant the ability of human language to visualise through rhetorical figures of the imagination the abstract concepts of the intellect. By adopting the Proclean notion of verbal imagination, Leonico Tomeo champions the idea of a linguistic tool through which the perceptions gained through the senses can become vivid in the mind and activate the bodily functions of the lower imagination. By emphasising the causal powers of verbal imagination, Tomeo argues that words and names have the ability to render those same perceived images in a vocal way, that is, through sounds and speech, both internal and external. Referring to Aristotle's theory of language, Tomeo argues that names and words are artificial because they derive from the inventive capacity of the soul to re-produce the essence of things vocally. Things and concepts are natural because they bear a link with the object they signify mentally or imaginatively. The icastic or vivid power of language has therefore a causal import because it effects or enacts through speech a fraction of the substance, as it were, of the natural object from which it derives.

[377] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 42, ll. 11-16 and ll. 57-62.
[378] Ibid, p. 42, ll. 42-44.
[379] Ibid., p. 42, ll. 33-34 and ll. 47-51.
[380] Ibid., p. 42, ll. 59-61. See Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, ed. by Giorgio Pasquali (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1994 [1908]), ch. 51, pp. 18-20. On the complexity of the meanings of Proclus's φαντασία, including the meaning of λεκτική φαντασία, see Étienne Évrard, 'Φαντασία chez Proclus', in *Phantasia · Imaginatio*, ed. by Marta Fattori and Massimo Luigi Bianchi (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1988), pp. 57–68. See also Nicoletta Scotti Muth, *Proclo negli ultimi quarnt'anni* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1993), p. 355. Leonico Tomeo mentions Ammonius on p. 41 of the *Dialogi*.

Tomeo's discussion of language in the *Peripateticus* brings to the fore the many components of his scholarship: medicine, natural philosophy and grammar. In the first place, because of their aery nature, words need to be considered as the result of the empirical process of breathing. The meaning they convey relies on natural processes linked to the body.[381] Secondly, the function responsible for the formation of a language of vivid representations and descriptions of things is the imagination, what Proclus had called λεκτική φαντασία. Through this faculty, the soul transforms the *phantasmata* received through perception into linguistic patterns that help the process of thinking to produce notions. Thirdly, words are tokens of the relational capacity of the mind in its attempt to communicate knowledge. As such, they operate according to the rules of convention and need to be studied by grammarians. The combination of medicine, natural philosophy and grammar reconfirms the interdisciplinary nature of Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogues*.

In sum, in the *Peripateticus* Leonico Tomeo shows that language is at once natural and cultural because it is produced by two different aspects of the soul. The essence of things is captured by the intellect, that is, the highest function of the soul as detached from the material constraints of perception and the lower imagination. The relations of things are, by contrast, captured by reason, that is, the function of the soul that operates through convention or artifice in order to accommodate the human need of man to communicate, so as to provide intepretative patterns that are capable of grasping the ceaseless change of the world. Following the perception of nature through the senses, language is another means through which the soul both inhabits and shapes its view of the cosmos.

2. 'What Physicians Cannot Do, Grammarians Certainly Can': Language in the *Bonominus*

A further elaboration of the theories discussed in the *Peripateticus* is contained in the dialogue *Bonominus*, in which Leonico Tomeo surveys the etymology, meaning and interpretation of the term *alica*, which is the Latin word for 'spelt', across time and space. Rather than being a natural philosophical investigation of spelt, the *Bonominus* deals with the formal aspects of language, including knowledge transmission and production. The aim of this dialogue was to underline the importance for humanists and grammarians to cleanse Latin and Greek of their

[381] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 42, ll. 57-59.

imperfections and in particular, to restore elegance and decorum by removing all Arabic and scholastic accretions.

In line with his philological approach, Leonico Tomeo opens his dialogue on spelt with a distinction between the terms describing the flour and the drinkable concoctions made from the grain. The fact that more than one product can be made from spelt implies, in his view, that there are several kinds of spelt grains in nature. This indirectly justifies the fact that Renaissance doctors are unaware of the powers and nature of certain kinds of spelt, for the grain they are familiar with is not the one that was diffused in antiquity. The term 'spelt' is therefore ambiguous and misleading because it denotes a variety of referents in nature, much like the term 'peripatetic' did in the homonymous dialogue analysed earlier. From the outset, it is evident that Leonico Tomeo regards language as potentially deceptive due to its components of conventionality and artificiality. In this sense, the *Bonominus* needs to be read in tandem with the *Peripateticus*, for the latter prepares the ground for the formal discussion on language that takes place in the former. As mentioned earlier, the text consists of a dialogue between the physician Girolamo Russo, Bonomino and Leonico Tomeo himself. As happens also in other texts – for instance, the *Alverotus* – the chosen characters are representative of their profession: Russo stands for medicine, Bonomino and Leonico Tomeo for philology. The latter's statement at the beginning of the dialogue is evidence of this: what 'physicians cannot do in this kind of question, grammarians certainly can'.[382]

To support his view that the doubts and uncertainty of doctors can be compensated by the knowledge of grammarians, Leonico Tomeo brings the evidence of Galen, Paul of Aegina, Dioscorides and Pliny, whose testimonies on spelt he relies upon for his dialogue.[383] Before delving into the discussion, Leonico Tomeo says that grammar is necessary for doctors and philosophers to understand the meaning of things, for, as the proverb goes, it is fallacious to go 'beyond the shoe'. This is a reference to Pliny's *Natural History* (XXXV, 85) where it is reported that a shoemaker once approached the painter Apelles because he had noticed that the representation of a shoe in one of his works was imperfect. Apelles amended the mistake, but soon afterwards the shoemaker started to point out numerous other imprecisions; at which point Apelles told him that a shoemaker should not judge beyond the shoe. Not only is Pliny mentioned by reference to natural history, but his work is also used as a thesaurus for the grammarian interested in reconstructing the meaning of words through the study of their transmission in the textual tradition. Moreover, the episode hints towards the pedagogical

[382] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 69, ll. 46-48: 'Nam quod huiusmodi in rebus medici nequeunt, grammatici certe possunt.'
[383] On Galen, see Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 71, ll. 17-20. On Paul of Aegina, see p. 71, ll. 36-39. On Dioscorides, see p. 71, ll. 40 and 52. On Pliny, see p. 71, ll. 50-52.

importance of proverbs in humanist culture. The dignity of proverbs was extolled on multiple occasions in the Renaissance period owing to their utility in persuading the audience to accept a particular theory, their contribution to the stylistic ornamentation of discourse, their importance for understanding ancient authors, and the links they revealed to the philosophical and theological ideas from which they derived.[384] Tomeo's reliance on a proverb certainly had the intended effect of enhancing the credibility of his theories, especially his belief that physicians and philosophers needed to limit themselves to their area of expertise rather than claiming the superiority of their disciplines in the arts.

After this brief introduction, Tomeo turns to the grammatical and natural historical analysis of spelt. The centre of the *Bonominus* lies in a detailed account of philological and antiquarian character focused on spelt as a kind of wheat and as a word. The investigation is therefore twofold, dealing at once with an object and with the term employed to denote that object in speech. With respect to spelt as wheat, Leonico Tomeo reports Pliny's testimony about the existence of *alica*, a preparation made from groats and a similarly popular spelt porridge called *puls*, one of the basic components of the Roman citizens' diet. Although *alica* could be made from a variety of oats, it was most commonly prepared with 'land-races' of emmer. Roman *alica*, Pliny also explained, was similar to the Greek *chondros*, a poultice made from *zeia dikokkos*, a type of double-husked spelt. Besides its dietary uses, spelt was also ascribed ritualistic values. Offered to gods of the countryside as grains or as a poultice, spelt was present during violent sacrifices performed in Roman times in the form of *mola salsa*, a mixture of grains or flour and salt (*Historia naturalis*, XVIII, 50, 71, 106–116).[385]

After having discussed Pliny's description, Leonico Tomeo claims that the fact that one word denotes three things demonstrates the shortcomings of language. What is more, this incongruity between language and reality lays bare the gaps between the component of artificiality in words, the natural core of their referents and the virtual inaccessibility of their corresponding ideas, the concepts which Gelli referred to in his reading of the *Peripateticus*. The first difficulty highlighted in the *Bonominus* is the arduous interpretation of the phrase *triticeum genus* employed by Galen to describe spelt in the *De alimentis* (X, 18).[386] There are names defining the species: *tiphen* and *olyra*. The matter is further complicated by the account of the term spelt in translation. The Greek for spelt is ζειά, Latinised into *zeia*, under which fall

[384] On Renaissance proverbs, see for example, Walter Gibson, *Figures of Speech: Picturing Proverbs in Renaissance Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Cohen and Lesley Twomey (eds), *Spoken Word and Social Practice: Orality in Europe (1400-1700)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
[385] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 70, ll. 8-18.
[386] Ibid., p. 71, ll. 29-30.

two different grains, as reported by Dioscorides: simple and complex.[387] Errors in translation have been made, according to Leonico Tomeo, by Dioscorides, who ascribed the term *zeia* to all the varities of the grain instead of a specific one. The *dicoccus*, for instance, which Dioscorides would have opposed to *zeia*, is not to be identified with the genus *zeia* as a whole, but as a particular species of it (*De materia medica*, II, 88–90).[388]

According to Leonico Tomeo, evidence of linguistic exactness may come from the writings of the Byzantine grammarian Theodorus Gaza, who, in his interpretation of Theophrastus's *De stirpibus*, used the term *zeia* to refer to spelt. Similarly accurate is the translation by Simon of Genoa, a thirteenth-century physician celebrated by Leonico Tomeo for his knowledge of Greek. In the *Clavis sanationis* ('Key of Healing'), Simon correctly referred to the genus of spelt as *alica* and understood that, despite the different linguistic permutations, the Greek term *zeia* described the same grain as the Latin *spelta*.[389] Leonico Tomeo then provided a survey of the translations of the term *alica* in Galen, Pliny, Paul of Aegina and Saint Jerome. Moreover, he considered Theophrastus's distinction in his *Inquiry into Plants* (VIII, 9) between *zeia* or *tiphe*, *olyra* and *bromus* according to the thickness of the plant's stem, the amount of fruits that are produced by it, its resistence and the amount of roots it grows.[390] The taxonomic precision demonstrated by Theophrastus is the same adopted by Tomeo in his dialogue, debunking linguistic and conceptual obscurity through philological accuracy.

Dispelling all errors, Leonico Tomeo also embarks on a phonetical enquiry into the permutations of the term *spelt* across the centuries. He says that the Latin *halica* was not a translitteration from the Greek ἅλις, but, instead, corresponded to the plural of the Greek word for 'ground salt'. In Tomeo's view, this demonstrated that the aspiration of the initial vowel did not make a word into the desired thing itself.[391] Proof of this was the fact that in the Italian village of Feltre in the Veneto, there grew what was, in fact, spelt (*alica*), but, owing to a change of letters, was commonly referred to as seaweed (*alga*) by the local inhabitants.[392] This is a crucial point in the dialogue because Leonico Tomeo clearly states that language can only be an approximation and an artificial means through which things are signified and indexed, for changes and adaptations in ortography and grammar do not affect the object they refer to. A

[387] Ibid., p. 71, ll. 40-49.
[388] For this discussion, Luigi Arata, 'A proposito di alcuni cereali vestiti nell'antica Grecia', *Rivista di Storia dell'Agricoltura*, 48 (2008), pp. 3–36, is extremely helpful.
[389] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 71, ll. 13-16. See Valerie Knight, 'Simon and the Tradition of the Latin Alexander of Tralles', in *Simon of Genoa's Medical Lexicon*, ed. by Barbara Zipser (London: Versita, 2013), pp. 99–116 (111).
[390] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 71, ll. 20-33.
[391] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 72, ll. 44-45.
[392] Ibid., p. 71, ll. 15-18.

change of vowel to the term *alica* into *halica* or to the term *alica* into *hordus* does not change the grain taken individually in nature, nor does it modify its concept and definition in abstract terms. Rather, language separates to a further degree the distance between the human mind and the natural world because it removes signs from signifiers through the interposition of grammatical conventions.

The *Bonominus* ends with a recurring scene in Tomeo's dialogues, in which the protagonists are represented at sunset while leaving the place in which they were having their conversation. The destination of the interlocutors indicates in a symbolic way the intellectual directions they took during their dispute. Tomeo walks from the courtyard of his house into his private library whereas Russo leaves to assist one of his patients.[393] The separation between the practical approach of a doctor and the theoretical position of a grammarian with respect to the phenomenon of language is clearly marked. The same dichotomy mirrors the character and constitution of speech, the object of their discussion, at once an instrument and an end. It is a duality that reflects the double nature of the soul, as embodied activity and immutable essence.

What in the end the *Peripateticus* and the *Bonominus* demonstrate is that after perception, the soul orders the world through language, and it does so by conflating through this tool elements of natural knowledge and social creativity. By following the rules of grammar and logic, the soul gives rise to a kind of communication that emphasises the relations existing between objects in nature and their knowing subjects. The soul, however, has all the resources provided by the intellect to delve into the very substance of things. In Leonico Tomeo's reconstruction, while Aristotle is the main theoretical referent on matters of logic and grammar, Plato provides the cosmological link between nature and intellect. By combining these two aspects in his *Dialogi*, Tomeo illustrates one of the ways in which the soul is characterised by both individual and universal features. Through social and cultural conventions, embedded in historical traditions, the soul operates in a worldly manner, relying on the common usage of words to express its knowledge of nature gained through the senses. By processing this wealth of information and abstracting from it the immutable *species* of things, the soul mediates between the representations of the imaginations and the meanings of words, so as to turn the descriptive potential of the images into universal concepts. Above all, the soul has the power to recover an ultimate foundation of truth and provide a stable basis for science.

[393] Ibid., p. 72, ll. 51-57.

Chapter 9
The Culture of Divination in Leonico Tomeo's Account of Human Rituals

In the previous two chapters, we have seen that in Leonico Tomeo's understanding of the way in which the sublunary world is organised, the soul as *animus*/*anima* is the ruling principle that perceives, moves and lives through the body. In doing so, it is also affected by its encounter with the world of generation. Following the death of the body, the soul can ascend, provided that it musters the level of intellectual abstraction and moral discipline that is needed for the task. The natural appetite that the soul possesses towards the good and God ought to be tended to through the exercise of virtue. Unlike the descent, the ascent is a voluntary act that the individual soul performs in light of a desire to free itself from that which has been added to it during its cosmic journey. The methods of ascent are multifarious and there is scarcely any agreement among philosophers concerning the need for ritual or any other corporeal act to return to God.

During the Renaissance, methods of ascent were discussed by philosophers in relation to natural magic understood as the practical part of natural philosophy.[394] Opposed to ceremonial magic, natural magic was deemed to rely upon the knowledge of natural particulars and the manipulation of the occult powers of nature through sympathetic correspondences. 'Occult' were called the hidden properties of objects and entities capable of producing manifest effects that could not be causally explained or empirically proven simply relying on the elemental qualities of hot, cold, wet and dry. Occult powers were natural, and yet the way in which they operated eschewed perception and reason. This is why in the Renaissance natural magic was often connected to the possibility of understanding the nature and power of God.[395] Through the manipulation of signs, symbols and sensible objects that were regarded as god-sent, not only could the soul be reminded of the divine during its mortal life, but its intellectual ability was supposed to partake in divine power by activating these signs, symbols and objects.

[394] On Renaissance divination and natural magic, see Paola Zambelli, *L'ambigua natura della magia: Filosofi, streghe, riti nel Rinascimento* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1991); Germana Ernst and Guido Giglioni (eds), *I vincoli della natura: Magia e stregoneria nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Carocci, 2012); Brian Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). On dream divination in Leonico Tomeo, see Holland, 'Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's Accounts of Veridical Dreams'.

[395] See Brian Copenhaver, 'The Occultist Tradition and its Critics', in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-century Philosophy*, ed. by Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 454–512.

Among the several disciplines that constituted natural magic were optics, botany, metallurgy, magnetism, cosmetics, alchemy and astronomy.[396]

In the Latin West, natural magic had been received through the mediation of key Arabic texts such as al-Kindi's *De radiis stellarum* and *Picatrix* which claimed the intellectual value of the discipline and presented it as a complex manipulation of the hidden powers and properties of plants, minerals, animals and herbs. The difficulty of mapping the territory of natural magic depends on the fact that its history is closely intertwined with that of esotericism, whose definition and practice were intensely discussed throughout the medieval and early modern periods.[397] By and large, what made natural magic so controversial was the extremely composite character of its tradition. This, however, was also the prime factor behind its appeal, for it allowed philosophers to operate across disciplines (philosophy and magic) and methods (theory and practice).

In Padua, debates about the scope and limits of magic had been significantly affected by the views of Pietro d'Abano (1257–1315) and Marsilius of Padua (c.1275–c.1342), who effectively brought to light all the implications associated with medicine, politics, astrology and art.[398] Accordingly, magical phenomena in nature were regarded as the result of the interaction between the powers of the cosmos and the material substratum of organic life. Processes of change and mutability were explained through forces that were invisible to the eye, yet produced tangible effects on nature and, consequently, on history.

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[396] On Renaissance natural magic, see Brian Copenhaver, 'Natural Magic, Hermetism and Occultism in Early Modern Science', *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, ed. by David Lindberg and Robert Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 261–302; Richard Kieckhefer, 'Did Magic Have a Renaissance? An Historiographic Question Revisited', in *Magic and the Classical Tradition*, ed. by Charles Burnett and W. F. Ryan (London: Warburg Institute, 2006), pp. 199–212; Stephen Clucas, *Magic, Memory and Natural Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider (eds), *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[397] On natural magic and demonology, see D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1958); Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1964); William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Paola Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance: From Ficino, Pico, della Porta to Trithemius, Agrippa, Bruno* (Boston: Brill, 2007); Wouter Hannegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Frank F. Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

[398] On the impact of Pietro d'Abano on medical, philosophical and artistic practices see Luigi Olivieri, *Pietro d'Abano e il pensiero neolatino: Filosofia, scienza e ricerca dell'Aristotele greco tra i secoli XIII e XIV* (Padua: Antenore, 1988); Eugenia Paschetto, *Pietro d'Abano, medico e filosofo* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1984); Graziella Federici Vescovini, 'Pietro d'Abano e gli affreschi astrologici del Palazzo della ragione di Padova', *Labyrinthos*, 9 (1986), pp. 50-76; ead., *Le Moyen Age magique: la magie entre religion et science du XIIIe au XIVe siècle* (Paris: VRIN, 2011). On Marsilius of Padua, see Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Marsilius of Padua and Italian Political Thought of His Time', in John Hale, Roger Highfield and Beryl Smalley (eds), *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), pp. 74–75; Paolo Marangon, 'Marsilio tra preumanesimo e cultura delle arti: Ricerche sulle fonti padovane del primo discorso del *Defensor Pacis'*, *Medioevo*, 3 (1977), pp. 89–119; Gerson Moreno-Riano, *The World of Marsilius of Padua* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); and Gerson Moreno-Riano and Cary J. Nederman (eds), *A Companion to Marsilius of Padua* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

In the *Dialogi* and in particular in the *Trophonius* and the *Sadoletus*, Leonico Tomeo contributed to the early modern debate on natural philosophy and natural magic. He addressed the legitimacy of man's desire and tendency to initiate contacts with spiritual intelligences. In support of his views, he relied on several arguments of ancient philosophers and natural historians, together with contemporary sources discussing the controversial boundaries between theurgic and religious rituals. Like Ficino, Leonico Tomeo placed strong emphasis on the medical implications of celestial manipulation and closely considered the multifarious role of *spiritus* in the as multifarious relationships between body and souls, microcosm and macrocosm. For Leonico Tomeo, natural magic, divination, theurgy and religious devotion are all means through which the human connects with the divine. Therefore, it does not act upon or change being in any way, but merely invokes the protection and help of the One. It is up to philosophy and intellectual abstraction, as we have seen in Chapters 7 and 8, to achieve θέωσις, that is, the complete union with the principle of all creation.

In investigating the aspects of natural magic, divinatory practices and religious ritual embedded in the *Dialogi*, I intend to show how Leonico Tomeo's reflections on this subject shed important light on his position concerning the unique amalgamation of nature and culture that he sees at work in human communities since ancient times. In order to do so, I will focus on the questions of divination and prayer in the *Trophonius* and the *Sadoletus*.

The *Trophonius* is set in a countryside villa near Abano, in the Veneto, where Leonico Tomeo and his friends, as already mentioned in Chapter 5, converse on the topic of oracles and investigate the effects and the causes of natural and artificial divination. The *Sadoletus* is devoted more specifically to the topic of prayers and their value within the divinatory and religious universe of human worshipping practices. By and large, the *Trophonius* and the *Sadoletus* show that divination and theurgy demonstrate the individual soul's ability to liberate itself from the determinism of nature through the aid of god-given materials scattered across the world. Moreover, through his attention to divination and prayer, Leonico Tomeo reaffirms his loyalty to the programme of Christian humanism.

1. Between Nature and Culture: Divination in the *Trophonius, or On Divination*

In this dialogue Leonico Tomeo dwells on the myth of Trophonius as reported by Pausanias in the *Description of Greece*.[399] According to Pausanias, Trophonius was the legendary oracle of Lebadeia (modern day Livadia), in Boeotia and was the longest surviving after the spreading of Christianity.[400] Compared to other Greek oracles, Trophonius required a greater physical and spiritual preparation as pilgrims were buried in a dark cavern, sometimes for entire days. Pausanias claims to have visited the oracle himself and so is able to provide extensive descriptions of the monumental and ritualistic apparatus of the cavern, which Leonico Tomeo describes in detail. Mindful of the secrecy imposed on the pilgrims, however, Pausanias does not reveal anything of what took place underground. Several Christian sources testify that the pilgrims' experience of consulting the oracle was so frightful that they were unable to laugh for the rest of their lives. As a result, the Greek proverb, 'one consulted the oracle of Trophonius', was used to describe people who were in a constant state of emotional distress or extreme sadness.

Leonico Tomeo relates Pausanias's description of the ritual. They who wish to consult the oracle are taken at night to the river Hercyna, sacred to Asclepius, the tutelary numen of medicine, and Hygea-Hercyna, the numen of health. Having reached the river, pilgrims are washed and anointed following the same ritual used on corpses prior to their entombment. The priests then accompany them to two springs: that of Oblivion, to forget everything they have thought until then, and that of Remembrance, to retain the experience they will have inside the grotto. The grotto is described as a monument in the shape of a bread oven, two metres in width and four in depth. Anyone who is permitted entrance is given a portable ladder. Once inside, pilgrims face two serpents, to which they have to feed honey pies, and once they have passed them, they are to lie on their backs on the floor in order to be swallowed up by a water whirl. Only then, will pilgrims be instructed by Trophonius regarding their future. Each of them will have a different experience, either visual or verbal depending on the disposition of the soul and the body. This last point – that is, the distinction between verbal and visual meanings – is key to understanding Leonico Tomeo's view of divination as well as his conception of the apophatic access to God.

To explain why that is the case, it is necessary to turn to Leonico Tomeo's discussion of natural and artificial divination. Leonico Tomeo's main reference in this regard is Cicero's treatise *On Divination* (XVIII, 34). Artificial divination relies on conjecture and the continuous

[399] For the description in Pausanias, see *Description of Greece*, transl. by Thomas Taylor, 3 vols (London: Priestley, 1874), III, pp. 83–88.
[400] On the rediscovery of the myth of Trophonius in the early modern period, see Carabelli, 'Oracoli pagani nel Rinascimento; Ossa-Richardson, *The Devil's Tabernacle*, pp. 90–92.

observation of things.[401] Natural divination, by contrast, is performed by those who predict the future without the use of reasonings and conjectures based on the observed and recorded signs, but as a result of a possession or ecstatic trance, through a movement of the soul free and detached from reason; this often takes place in dreams. The distinction between natural and artificial divination singles out the specific powers of the soul involved in the making of predictions about the future. Artificial divination relies on human reason, struggling to read the signs of the divine in the empirical world, whereas natural divination is performed by the imagination that dreams, has visions and leads to non-rational prognostications.[402] Not only do these two kinds of divination depend upon contrasting uses of the soul's functions, i.e., intellect and imagination, but they also have different effects: artificial divination produces discursive knowledge while natural divination induces a clash between the sensitive soul and a material object that causes frenzy. Leonico Tomeo, as we will see, regards natural divination more highly because it allows the soul to detach itself from the realm of generation and natural determinism, and to ascend to the divine through the imaginative power by resorting to revelation rather than conjecture and superstition.

Regarding the role of vapours in artificial divination and their relation to apophasis, Leonico Tomeo describes vapours as specific blends of air and spirit.[403] The role of vapours is mediatory in that they provide the senses with information regarding the natural seat of the oracle while prompting an intellectual response about the significance of its prognostications. Moreover, vapours show that the soul's future lies in the sphere of divine meaning that is hidden within the soul because this has known all of nature from eternity and is therefore able to make predictions about its future. Much like prayer in the *Sadoletus*, divination through vapours is a private act. The fact that nature is needed as an intermediary only reinforces the idea that the macrocosmos and the microcosmos are closely connected.

Fascinated by the account of vapours as translators of the shadowy presentiments of the future within the soul, Allessandro Capella and Fosco ask Leonico Tomeo to guide them into the nearby woods, curious to know whether the Paduan countryside is inhabited by fauns, satyrs and oracles as Greece was in antiquity. Leonico Tomeo answers by saying that what they meant is that 'all these things depend on the variability of the sky and on the different ways in which the earth breathes'.[404] Leonico Tomeo hints at nature's ability to eternally preserve the causes pertaining to all species in the universe. Nature lies below the soul because it is governed by

[401] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 12, ll. 52-59.
[402] Ibid., p. 12, ll. 7-12 and 17-21.
[403] Ibid., p. 13, ll. 13-19 and 45-49.
[404] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 13, ll. 7-8: 'Quae omnia sane fieri ex caeli varietate, et ex disparili terrarum spiratione'.

change and it does not know its cause. Yet, nature rules over the body because it begets and animates all beings.[405] Accordingly, Leonico Tomeo believes that human beings do not have to deny and sacrifice themselves to become aware of the divine in so far as this pervades the cosmos, down to the minutest detail, as for example the healing herbs in the Paduan hills. Leonico Tomeo's optimistic and constructive view suggests that any cause of disruption in divination can be controlled by human beings, granted that they understand their disposition and are willing to align this to the changeable course of nature.

By drawing on Cicero's distinction between natural and artificial divination, Leonico Tomeo clearly demonstrates that, while this art is the gift of the gods alone, yet it is in man's power to foretell the future through a range of techniques such as oneiromancy (divination through dreams) and haruspicy (divination through animal entrail). These techniques Tomeo holds to be fallacious because they rely on superstition and operate through conjecture and the ability to decipher the motions of cosmic sympathy. In order to further demonstrate that divination happens because nature is imbued with divine energy and not as a result of human artifice, Leonico Tomeo recounts an episode of superstitious divination that took place in a village near Verona.[406]

2. The Theurgic Magnet: Prayer and Paganism in Leonico Tomeo

Leonico Tomeo regards prayer as a means through which the sublunary beings influence, dialogue with and possibly ascend to the higher spheres of the cosmos. Like a theurgic magnet, prayer unites the physical and the metaphysical through a double ensoulment, at once universal and subjective. The view of the soul as the power that mediates between nature and the intellect is corroborated by the way in which Leonico Tomeo deals with the phenomenon of prayer in the dialogue *Sadoletus*, presented at once as a religious and a philosophical endeavour, that is, an act of faith and an intellectual meditation. The two combined allow for the soul to become aware of the network of relations in which it finds itself.[407]

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[405] On the concept of nature in the Renaissance, see Daniel A. Di Liscia, Eckhard Kessler and Charlotte Methuen (eds), *Method and Order in Renaissance Philosophy of Nature: The Aristotle Commentary Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); David Hawkes and Richard Newhauser (eds), *The Book of Nature and Humanity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); Andrew Berns, *The Bible and Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy: Jewish and Christian Physicians in Search of Truth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[406] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 15, ll. 16-29.

[407] On the themes discussed in the *Sadoletus*, see Allegra Baggio Corradi, 'The Paduan Philosopher at Prayer: The Continuity of Being in Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's *Sadoleto*', in *Harmony and Contrast Plato and Aristotle in the*

The *Sadoletus* opens with a reflection on divine providence. 'We do not in any way consider', says Leonico Tomeo, 'that God himself and superior natures can be moved from their position and come to us'.[408] The only individuals capable of addressing God appropriately are therefore the philosophers, who ascend to him with their mind rather than with their bodies. Becoming similar to God is the ultimate goal of a pious individual.[409] Significantly, Leonico Tomeo likens prayer to a magnetic phenomenon whereby two physical bodies are attracted and induce an encounter between natural and supernatural worlds:

> Observations confirm that the Herculean stone that they call the magnet attracts in the most evident of manners distant iron through an occult power and the harmony of nature (as they say). Homer, as a matter of fact, believes that to see iron and to be in its vicinity drew brave men to it. The credulous ancients maintained that gods were moved by prayers and supplications and that they came to human gatherings.[410]

In this dialogue, too, a knowledge of Greek sources, which goes beyond Plato and Aristotle and shows Leonico Tomeo's antiquarian interest in philosophical ideas dating back to the time of the mystery cults.[411] Vital interpretations of ensouled nature were first attempted by Presocratic philosophers. Thales, for instance, as Aristotle points out in *On the Soul*, believed that magnets were endowed with a soul of some sort as they had the power to move and draw iron towards them.[412] Plutarch's interpretation seems to be the most akin to Leonico Tomeo's own. In the *Platonic Questions*, he argued that stones give off heavy exhalations, whereby the adjacent air, being impelled along, condenses that which is in front of it; and that air, being driven around in a circle and reverting to the place it had vacated, drags the iron forcibly along with it.[413] Proclus, finally, had declared that in the cosmos everything prays except the One.

Early Modern Period, ed. by Anna Corrias and Eva Del Soldato (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 75–96.

[408] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 46, ll. 27-28: 'Deos enim esse credi et illos rerum curam gerere humanarum, maxime ex usu vitae est.' See also, ibid., ll. 33-4: 'Qui enim deos aut nullos esse aut humanas non curare res credunt et neque votis illos, neque precibus ullis moveri existimant ii profecto nulla mentis ratione, sed infreni viventes libidinis impetu, quod turpiter, sive avare, sive crudeliter appetunt, id pulso procul metu, dummodo latere se credant, omni prorsus studio totisque viribus parare contendunt.'

[409] Ibid., p. 46, l. 42.

[410] Ibid., p. 46, ll. 11-15: 'Herculeus lapis quem Magnetem vocant (…) clarissime occulta quadam vi et naturae (ut aiunt) concordia distans ad se trahere ferrum percipitur; ferri vero praesentiam et conspectum audaces ad se viros rapere Homerus est author. Votis porro et precationibus elicitos fuisse deos et ad humanos accessisse conventus credula existimavit antiquitas.'

[411] On the Renaissance engagement with mystery cults, see William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy* (Washington: National Geographic, 2010); Ildikó Csepregi and Charles Burnett (eds), *Ritual Healing: Magic, Ritual and Medical Therapy from Antiquity until the Early Modern Period* (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012); Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

[412] Aristotle, *De anima*, 405a19.

[413] Plutarch, *Platonic Questions*, in *Moralia*, LXVII, 999c-1011e. See also Plutarch, *On the Procreation of the Soul in the Timaeus*, LXVIII, 1012a-1030c. For secondary literature on the subject of magnetism, see Charles

By turning towards the sun, the flower prays, that is, it discovers the source of its life, its nourishment and its origin. Prayer is in this sense an ἐπιστροφή, a return to the cause of existence through the intellect.[414]

In Leonico Tomeo's analysis, prayers could also be seen as acts of liberation through which the individual soul was released from the burden of individuality and materiality by rising to the One. What was reached was *concentus*, i.e., harmony. Rather than being a hindrance to the attainment of the divine, matter was deemed to have the disposition to receive the power of life and knowledge. The following passage from the *Sadoletus* illustrates the proximity of Leonico Tomeo's thought with that of classical sources dealing with prayer and its material instruments:

> And this indeed is that harmony that, acting as it were through the consent or connection of nature, the Greeks call sympathy, since things that are inanimate and incapable of perceiving are made able to reply and adapt themselves to more and more of the faculties of the celestial principles. In addition, these things naturally imprint certain signs which those who know things, both through practice and experience and by following the advice of the celestial faculties, are able to understand and recognise in a correct way. As some argue, the beginnings of natural magic derived from these signs. (…) Certainly, prayers and supplications have the extraordinary power that allows the souls to go back to their origin. This happens through the intercession of certain signs that God the creator instilled in all souls. Rightly, they cannot be uttered and, if that were possible, it would certainly not be licit to reveal them in public.[415]

It is clear from this passage how inanimate beings are traces of the divine in the sublunary world, which turn towards their origin, as if they were praying. In doing so, they show us the way back to the source of our life and knowledge. Human freedom depends on the object of our prayers. This means that it is only possible for us to accomplish an ἐπιστροφή by imitating the disposition and the action of those elements which are constantly addressing the One in silence. People who are able to imitate these powers, or as Leonico Tomeo calls them, the *periti rerum*, i.e., the philosophers, are also the ones who can listen to the secret and silent language of nature. Although it is possible to derive knowledge about God through the material signs

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Burnett, 'Music and Magnetism: From Abu Ma'shar to Kircher', in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. by Laurence Wuidar (Leiden, Brill, 2010), pp. 11–22.

[414] For Proclus's doctrine of prayer see Danielle A. Layne, 'Philosophical Prayer in Proclus's Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 67 (2013), 345–368.

[415] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, pp. 48, ll. 60-63; 49, ll. 1-3 and ll. 9-12: 'Et haec profecto est concordia illa, ceu consensus sive naturae contagio quam graeci sympathian vocant, cum inanimes et surdae res ad alias et ad alias superum potestates habiles aptaeque reddantur, a quibus vestigia etiam quaedam naturaliter habent impressa, quae a rerum peritis, cum usu et experientia, tum illarum interdum admonitu, comprehendi et dignosci recte possunt, ex quibus naturalis (ut nonnulli aiunt) magicae fluxerunt initia. (…) Ad quem profecto regressum maximam supplicationes vim habent et preces, signis quibusdam intercedentibus quae opifex ille Deus cunctis inseruit animis, quae neque recte dici possunt, neque si possent, illa certe in vulgo proferre fas esset.'

that He himself scatters across nature, it is not legitimate to publicly disclose the secrets grasped through philosophical efforts.

3. Dionysius the Areopagite and Erasmus in the *Sadoletus*

The way in which Leonico Tomeo tackles the question of prayer sand its theurgic efficacy reminds me of three possible referents: the private character of prayer was also championed by Erasmus; the image of prayer as a step in the process of philosophical ascent has Proclean resonances; the ineffable character of the One as the ultimate driver behind any kind of effective prayer and invocation is described by Dionysius the Areopagite.

With regards to the private nature of oration, Luca D'Ascia has observed that Leonico Tomeo's *Sadoletus* bears conceptual links with Erasmus's *Modus orandi deum* ('On Praying to God', 1524).[416] Erasmus argued that prayer grants the soul the possibility to establish a communion with God and is therefore also a vehicle for its immortality. As a spiritual exercise for the soul yearning to become one with its origin, prayer is a private act of devotion for which no ceremonies are needed. Sharing Erasmus's critique against superstitious and ritualistic practices, Leonico Tomeo's position on praying goes beyond theology and argues for the intellectual implications of prayer, including its philosophical overlapping with theurgic and divinatory rituals.

In the *Sadoletus*, Tomeo's spirit of reformed Catholicism is played out through Sadoleto's doubts concerning the effects of human prayers on divine will, a point that was being discussed by Erasmus in the same years. The following passage clearly conveys Tomeo's distinction between the mechanic, repetitive and insincere way of praying characteristic of false believers and the philosophical prayer infused with authentic *pietas*:

> One should not babble every day saying prayers like old women, nor should one tire and wear out God (as they say) with the unremitting foolishness of vows. By contrast, we should pray following the rule, only during morning and evening functions, without using the lips, but relying on the pure and authentic love of the heart. In this way prayers will certainly acquire due weight and will not (as they say) be tossed around aimlessly by the winds. They will be capable of exercising and fully accomplishing their work in an effective way.[417]

[416] D'ascia, 'Un erasmiano italiano?'. See also Lee Daniel Snyder, 'Erasmus on Prayer: A Renaissance Reinterpretation', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 12 (1976), pp. 21–27.
[417] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 49, ll. 39-46: 'Non enim anilibus precum delirantis totos dies blaterandum est, neque adsiduis votorum ineptiis Deus (ut aiunt) defatigandus et obtundendus. Sed matutinis duntaxat vespertinisque adorationibus, non labiis, sed puro synceroque cordis affectu rite precandum est. Hoc enim modo

The ethic of robust self-reliance pioneered by Erasmus in his treatise is similar to the position advocated in the *Sadoletus*, in which Leonico Tomeo claims the necessity for the individual soul to conform its will and disposition to that of the gods by accepting the order of the universe and therefore the law. It should be mentioned here that the connection between Tomeo and Erasmus is not merely a matter of learned references, but is rooted in history. As proved by surviving correspondence, Erasmus held Leonicus Tomeo in great esteem. In a letter dated 1521, most likely prompted by Tomeo's philological prowess, Erasmus claimed that the school of Padua had 'two beacons of the century', the first being Pietro Bembo and the second Leonico Tomeo.[418]

In the dialogue, Jacopo Sadoleto is depicted as a Platonist who defends the notion of intellectual prayer. In addition to the causes of prayers stand their different recipients. Sadoleto explains that prayers can have cosmic, purifying and vivifying powers by affecting the various degrees of being through the species and the genera of deities to which they are addressed. For Leonico Tomeo, prayers are cosmic (connected to the rains and the winds); purifying or apotropaic (connected to illnesses, pestilence and all other impurities); vivifying or animal (related to the growth of crops and fruits); and perfecting (replenishing the soul with health in its simplest form). Other differences concern the various relationships among the individuals who pray. In this case, we have philosophical, theurgic and legal or institutional prayers. Similarly, depending on the object of one's orations there are prayers for the good of the soul, for the good temperament of the bodies and for material goods. Finally, there are differences among prayers that are based on the different seasons and the geographical proximity to particularly sunny areas, where deities have a more incisive impact.[419] Leonico Tomeo then describes the different moments involved in the 'true and accurate prayers' by referring to the following Greek concepts also discussed by Proclus: νόησις (knowledge heated by the fire of the divine series); οἰκείωσις (familiarity with the divine through purity, chastity, education, good conduct and submission of the soul); συναφή (contact with the divine through tension); ἐμπέλασις (partial participation in the divine light) and θέωσις (union that fixates the One of the soul into the one of the gods).[420]

preces et legitimum utique habebunt pondus, neque (quod aiunt) a ventis ferentur irritae, et opus certe suum efficaciter perficere et plene complere poterunt.'

[418] Desiderius Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, ed. by P. S. Allen, H. M. Allen and H. W. Garrod, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906–1958), VIII, p. 245: 'Habet enim ea schola, praeter alios exacte doctos, Nicolaum Leonicum et Petrum Bembum, duo praecipua huius seculi lumina.'

[419] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 51, ll. 1-22.

[420] Ibid., pp. 49, ll. 60-63; 50, ll. 1-10.

Leonico Tomeo concludes the *Sadoletus* by setting out his defense of apophatism. Elaborating on the Platonic and theurgic assumption that prayers are philosophical endeavours which allow a human soul to establish a contact with the divine, Leonico Tomeo reconfirms the thesis that there cannot be knowledge of the One, but only active participation in and attraction to it by theurgic means. To illustrate this point, he quotes a passage from Dionysius the Areopagite's *Divine Names* (III, 1–2, 680C-680D). A prayer is an invocation and an act of remembrance towards God that does not imply his naming. Silence is held as the utmost example of oration and the necessary condition for a prayer to qualify as such. Prayer is therefore silent discourse, inaudible *logos* surrounded by light. Indeed, all philosophical discourse insofar as it is inner meditation, can be said to be prayer.

In light of Dionysius, it is possible to understand why in hearing the chants of the harvesters in the procession through the city, Sadoleto is moved to the point that his mind is elevated, and his soul is called back to the origin of the harmony he perceives within himself. Sadoleto asks Leonico Tomeo to provide a philosophical explanation of the profound emotion that overwhelms him:

> Leonico, don't you hear with what harmonious grace and pleasant agreement of sounds everyone's ears are charmed by the choirs of those who sing and pour out hymns and prayers to God according to the old way of thanking him for the harvest? I do not know whether others are affected by them. I certainly am very affected by this, to tell you the truth, and these hymns and prayers move me in an extraordinary manner and call out my mind very deeply I do not know how.[421]

The deep call of the mind that Sadoleto refers to allows Leonico Tomeo to ascribe the cardinal's emotion to the movement of the soul induced by musical harmony.

4. Calling Back the Soul: The Interplay of Philosophy and Theurgy

In this chapter we have followed Leonico Tomeo further specifying the polarity between nature and culture in his inquiry about the role of rituals in human society. Rituals can be of different kind and have different impact on human lives. Leonico Tomeo focuses on divinatory, theurgic

[421] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, pp. 46, ll. 54-55 and p. 47, ll. 1-3: 'Audisne – inquit – Leonice canentium choros, hymnosque et preces veteri instituto pro frugibus Deo fundentium quali harmoniae gratia illi et quo leporis concentu omnium aures iocunde simul et efficaciter permulceant? Nescio profecto quid alii, ego certe (ut vera fatear) ab huiusmodi re multum afficior, moventque me mirifice, et nescio quomodo animum altius evocant meum.'

and religious practices to show that human beings shape the relationship between nature and culture through acts of complex interpretation, so as to interpret countless signs in nature in a correct way and turn their attention to the divine in nature in the form of inner prayers. Rather than lacking words to describe and understanding what is behind the sensible appearances, Leonico Tomeo is confident that a divinatory approach to nature can lead the mind back to the causes of natural phenomena, allowing for a participation in the divine potential of the human intellect.

Leonico Tomeo looks at techniques such as divination and prayer as legitimate means through which human beings aspire to free himself from their mortal condition. What we learn from *Trophonius* and *Sadoletus* is that Leonico Tomeo's thought develops by constantly relating the legacy of pagan wisdom to Christianity. Learned and popular religion as well as truthfulness and falsehood hinge on a hierarchical scheme that provides a solid structure to the spatial and temporal unfolding of the soul's life. The tiered structure outlined by Leonico Tomeo is not a rigid system that rules out change and rebuffs exceptions. By contrast, Leonico Tomeo appreciates the contribution that can come from divination (despite all the ambiguities that come from intersecting nature with artifice), understood as a means through which, ranging from learned to vernacular positions, different languages can be uttered to summon the divine.

From reading the *Dialogi* we understand that in Renaissance Padua, just as in classical antiquity, prayer and divination were social practices that could be both popular and learned. The analysis of *Sadoletus* finally, has showed that Tomeo shared Platonic and theurgic views of prayers as means of gradual return through which a soul can go back to its principle. This conversion is explained by the Platonic doctrine of cyclical procession, endorsing the view that all beings are never fully separated from their source and remain intimately bound to it even during their permanence in the sublunary world. Proclus, as is well known, systematised this view with his doctrine of the circle of μονή, πρόοδος and ἐπιστροφή: from the stability of the original cause, the One, (μονή) a process of emanation is brought forth (πρόοδος), which then turns into a return to the One (ἐπιστροφή). It is precisely the moment of ἐπιστροφή, the return, which Leonico Tomeo emphasises to explain the active nature of prayers. His reflection on prayer as a theurgic magnet adds to the composite nature of his Platonic borrowings.[422] For Leonico Tomeo, the Dionysian idea of prayer coincide with a unique type of silence, full of energy and disinterested devotion. Tomeo reaches the conclusion that in addressing God,

[422] On Platonic theology in the Renaissance, see *The Rebirth of Platonic Theology*, ed. by James Hankins and Fabrizio Meroi (Florence: Olschki, 2013); Michael J. B. Allen, *Studies in the Platonism of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico* (London: Routledge, 2017).

philosophical intention is necessary not only to avoid breaching the law, but also to prevent superstition from taking over reason.

We can therefore say that the praying philosopher described by Leonico Tomeo in his *Dialogi* favoured private acts of intellectual growth. Ultimately, in Leonico Tomeo's inclusive and spiritualistic cosmos, prayer is neither a deliberate demand, nor a wish to be fulfilled, nor a leisurely activity. Rather, it is the re-enactment of a primordial ritual that leads a soul to the actualisation of happiness and cosmic harmony, through *concentus*, the musical connection of nature.

Chapter 10
Rhythms and Rituals: The Natural and Social Fabric of Human Life

After having examined in Chapter 7 Leonico Tomeo's views on the soul, described as both life and consciousness, namely, a force acting as the principle of cosmic life, human selfhood and epistemic certainty, and after having devoted two further chapters to Leonico Tomeo's depiction of nature as the one animated vehicle that makes the cosmos one living being, susceptible to be used and consulted as a reliable source of divinatory, theurgic and religious rites, in this final chapter I will expand this notion of rite by focusing on the social, moral and cultural meanings underlying action that Leonico Tomeo saw in everyday life.

1. The Vital and Moral Stages of Human Life

In the dialogue entitled *Phoebus, sive de aetatum moribus*, Leonico Tomeo discusses the changing behaviour of an individual during the different stages of his existence. The reflection is prompted by a quarrel between one of the Da Mula brothers, Girolamo, and his father during a meeting in their Venetian house. Girolamo's father turns to Leonico Tomeo and asks why it is always so common for sons to disagree with their fathers. Leonico Tomeo replies that this is quite normal, for, as the rebellion of the giants against the gods demonstrates, sons are driven by their instincts and passions whereas fathers are in full command of their rationality. Girolamo's father objects to this interpretation, believing, instead, that unlike gods, human beings are not rational creatures. He therefore asks Leonico Tomeo to expand on his explanations. Leonico Tomeo is convinced that the pursuit of intellectual activities ensures the protection of the gods because it allows the mind to detach itself from worldliness and to approach the realm of divine intelligibility.[423] It is evident from the outset that in the *Phoebus*, Leonico Tomeo considers the relationship between the humoral constitution of the body and the moral character of an individual according to the standards of his medical and Christian humanism. The blend of science and metaphysics is typical of his worldview and is a recurring feature in the *Dialogues*. As such, faith and works are both needed in order for the soul to fit into the way in which he understands the scope of human salvation.

[423] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 60, ll. 34-39.

Building upon this point, Leonico Tomeo develops a philosophical discourse positing the importance for human beings to cultivate virtue, prudence and dedication during an equally active and contemplative life and in order for their souls to be granted salvation. He supports his reflection with historical evidence, recounting to his friends the encounter that he and his uncle Alò had with Febo Capella, an erudite and politically committed young man from Venice. Author of a series of commentaries on Aristotle, Febo shared his thought on the habits of the ages with Leonico Tomeo and Alò by adopting the same clarity of style required by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. Through Febo's words, Leonico Tomeo alludes to the source he relied upon for the construction of his dialogue, a technique he often uses in his work.[424]

Febo opens his speech by arguing that historical periods are separated by a temporal divide and by varying degrees of rational behaviour on the part of human beings. Youth represents the stage of eagerness, aesthetic beauty and irrepressible passions. Natural desires are animated by the heat of the blood that moves the spirits and agitates them vehemently. Impetus, rage, fury and an interest in riches are also characteristic of young age. The desire to belong to a specific social group and the sentiment of anxiety are all recurring features of this stage of life. Youths are also prone to spending most of their time in the city, they often abuse others verbally and appreciate witticisms.[425]

During adulthood, on the other hand, human beings become sceptical because of their past experiences. Unlike young people, adults are of a cold nature and therefore lack desires and strong yearnings. Pusillanimity is a typical characteristic of adults and, since their past is disproportionately long compared to their future, they rely on their memories very strongly. Like young people, adults are very garrulous and prone to act badly as well as to be arrogant and insolent. Unlike youths, though, they spend most of their time in the countryside and prefer to be surrounded by old friends. About the third and initial stage of life, infancy, Febo claims that only scant information is to be found in Cicero and Aristotle. According to the latter, children marvel at spectacles, which they regard as magical and their main occupation is playing games and listening to stories.[426]

After having reported Febo's account of the three stages of life and their habits, Tomeo invites his friends to ponder about what they just heard so as to better understand that new ages in history as well as in the life of a single individual are born out of the changes in one's soul, causing a whole range of transformations. Leonico Tomeo then admonishes Girolamo Da Mula for rebelling to his father and encourages him to pursue his studies, especially philosophy,

[424] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*., p. 61, ll. 10-30.
[425] Ibid., pp. 61, ll. 29-56.
[426] Ibid., p. 63, ll. 7-14.

which will grant his soul the ability to restrain instinct through reason. The dialogue ends with a bell ringing, at the sound of which the hosts gathered in Da Mula's house leave to attend to their duties at the Senate.[427]

The *Phoebus* is relevant for our discussion on Leonico Tomeo's philosophy because it correlates the life cycle of the soul with the private history of an individual and with the history of humankind as a whole. In his dialogue, Leonico Tomeo explains the behaviour of individuals during infancy, youth and adulthood by considering the formation of their elemental, ethical and intellectual constitution. The levels of heat and material density of the blood determine how the body of an individual reacts to external and internal impressions. Leonico Tomeo explains that, if not channelled correctly, fury can lead to insanity and therefore to illness. It is medicine, in this case, that can help the sick person to regain the humoural balance necessary for his body to become hospitable for his soul. However, Leonico Tomeo argues, if fury is correctly funnelled, it can grant the intellectual mind with the gift of divine inspiration, reinvigorating its soul with the ability to restrain instinct. In this case, what he believes is needed is not medicine, but philosophy. The latter allows the mind to gain control of the lower desires of biological life by grasping the causes of its changing habits. The movement from instinct to intellect is one that requires time and toil. From youth to adulthood, the soul undergoes a metamorphosis by degrees. During the process, it is assisted by different disciplines: medicine heals the body, natural philosophy explains the material causes of bodily illnesses and finally philosophy consoles the soul.

2. *A Time to Mourn*: Ritualising Human Suffering and Joy

Like the *Phoebus*, the *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu* consists of a reported conversation that Leonico Tomeo had at an unspecified moment in his life with his friends Marco Sanudo, Luca Bonfiglio and Alfonso Paolucci upon the unexpected death of his brother Fosco. Leonico Tomeo reminisces about the grief and sorrow he felt upon Fosco's departure. Everything he attempted, from studying to being surrounded by friends, did not bring him solace. Leonico Tomeo describes the different stages of mourning, from the neglect of grief that causes physical illness to the eradication of pain through resentment, passing through the recognition of the most difficult truth and finally to its acceptance. Often, says Leonico Tomeo, mourning leads

[427] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 63, ll. 55-63.

to mental disorders, especially insanity and delusion. Both are caused by the inability of a weak mind to distance itself from the memories of the past in order to avoid becoming furious.[428]

Tomeo discusses rage on several occasions in the *Dialogi*. In the *Trophonius,* for instance, he provides the example of the hallucinating Antipheron of Oreus, based on a passage from Aristotle's *On Memory and Recollection*, which he also elaborated upon in his commentary on the *Parva naturalia*. The image of the furious philosopher, falling pray to divine rapture thus transcending the world through the intellect, is a commonplace in Renaissance medical philosophy and literature. Marsilio Ficino's *De amore* ('On Love', 1469), Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* ('The Frenzy of Orlando', 1516) and Giordano Bruno's *De gli eroici furori* ('The Heroic Frenzies', 1585) are but three among the many early modern works focusing on divine madness. What Leonico Tomeo, Ficino, Ariosto and Bruno share is the conviction that because the body is given over to the agitation of desire, it may become the source of bestial insanity. In particular, Ficino describes how an excess of burnt bile, black bile and burnt blood in the brain can drive a man mad, while the same unbalance in the heart merely causes him to become anxious and disquieted. What should be underlined here is that madness, as much as the soul itself, can be understood in two ways: at once bestial and divine. In the first instance, it depends on instinct and passion whereas in the second, it is driven by an intellectual desire to participate in the beauty that lies beyond the material world.

In the *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, Leonico Tomeo develops his reflection on grief in relation to the duality underlying the soul and its desire to reach the bliss of divine life, arguing for death as a necessary moment in this journey to purification. In his view, grief can only be restrained through dialogue, that is, through philosophical practice. It is important, in this respect, to maintain a certain critical distance between oneself and the deceased because, in order for the soul not to be affected by the bodily passions, reason needs to prevail over instinct. From this point of view, the *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu* should be read vis-à-vis the *Phoebus*, for both dialogues demonstrate that a sound doctrine of the soul accounts for the body and its affections, reserving, however, only to philosophy the task of purification. Leonico Tomeo stresses this point at the beginning of his dialogue with a reference to the healing capacity of speech as praised by Euripides: 'Speech is a powerful cure for the tortured mind, if you wait for a convenient opportunity to be offered.'[429]

Leonico Tomeo's initial reflection on grief then takes account of its opposite: pleasure. To investigate the relationship between grief and joy in an appropriate way, Leonico Tomeo

[428] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 52, ll. 16-18.
[429] Ibid., p. 52, l. 30: 'Medela sermo est mentis affectae potens, si molle fandi tempus expectes dari.' See Euripides, *Hippolytus*, I, 479-80.

expresses his doubt to his friends asking whether it is a tendency of common people to cherish enjoyment and whether philosophers are the only ones who can understand the causes behind human suffering. To this, Sanudo replies that, contrary to what Leonico Tomeo thinks, pleasures are equally distributed among human beings and worth experiencing. This is demonstrated, for instance, by the value placed by ancient authors on the death of heroes for an entire people. The heroic deeds human beings accomplish during their lives to favour their state as well as the impact that their death has on the future of the population persuade Leonico Tomeo that death should not be associated with mourning, but rather with fame.

At this point, Leonico Tomeo dispels the false belief that the dead linger in a state of fear and need to be helped by the living. Who believes this, he says, gropes about in the thickest fog, relying on superstition rather than reason.[430] Perhaps Leonico Tomeo's veiled critique was addressed against the sale of indulgences, i.e., the payment of a sum of money granting the remission of the temporal punishment in Purgatory. This remark about the inappropriateness of demonstrating faith through works in *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, illustrates Leonico Tomeo's characteristic approach to Christian humanism. Informed by reason and faith as well as by ethical and literary exercises, his Christian humanism testifies to his position about culture and religion. This is evident in *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, in which Leonico Tomeo reflects on the moral implications of grief. In line with the Ciceronian tone of many of his dialogues, he emphasises the importance of *disciplina* to counter the human tendency to tremble and hesitate in times of peril and danger. As taught by philosophers, hardship is meant for human beings to prove their righteousness with respect to God.[431] Bursting in tears in public or mourning by letting *otium* prevail over *negotium*, is inappropriate for a human being of strong moral and intellectual temper. The most suitable form of consolation is dedication, for only through the will does one become apt to receive the spiritual gifts that reward strength. As we have seen in Chapter 9, Leonico Tomeo expresses similar concerns in the dialogue *Sadoletus*, where he argues that in order for prayer to become a philosophical act of inner divinization, ceremonies and ritualistic manifestations of faith are unnecessary.

Leonico Tomeo's reflections continue with a comparison between the too radical approach of Stoicism to resilience and the excessive piety of Domitian, who mourned his fish when they died:

[430] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, pp. 54, ll. 59-62 and p. 55, ll. 1-2.
[431] Ibid., p. 55, ll. 34-44.

> We are not born from oak or stone, as Cicero says. And I believe that we should reject that savage and inhuman freedom from pain, which, no doubt, necessarily results in both a certain harshness of character and roughness of mores. And yet, just as I do not allow nor praise this insensibility, so I do not approve that we should be touched and disheartened by any kind of sorrow. I don't want a philosopher to be like Crassus or Domitius. The one cried when his pet eel died in the pool, the other is said not to have shed a tear when he buried his three wives. Let these emotions and feelings be present, but they should be moderate and feeble, such that they can be easily controlled, settled and turned into something better.[432]

In order to understand the natural cause of the differing attitudes towards mourning, one needs to consider the configuration of the human mind. Leonico Tomeo states that, in accordance with the principles of philosophy, the human mind is divided in two parts: reason (*ratio*) and desire (*appetitus*). Only when the strong part of the mind moderates and masters its weak counterpart (*mollis et humilis pars*), individuals will live in a harmonious condition, allowing them to feel themselves in a state of peace. Leonico Tomeo ascribes grief, mourning and all other negative states of social and private behaviour to a lack of balance between rationality and vitality. The discussion about discipline naturally evolving into a discourse on the most appropriate and moderate proportion between instinct and rationality then veers towards a reflection on the opposition between artificial and natural causes. Leonico Tomeo affirms that if the causes of grief were natural, individuals would be in a constant state of mourning and that this not being the case, it is necessary for other causes to be at stake.[433] The grief of a farmer for instance can exercise an impact on his work in the fields, which, in its turn, has consequences on the world as a whole.

The cosmic dimension of the farmer's grief directs the eyes of the humanists towards the heavens:

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[432] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 55, ll. 50-57: 'Non enim ex quercu (ut inquit ille) aut e silice nati sumus. Et Stoicorum indolentiam illam tanquam feram et immanem aspernandam et explodendam esse contendo, quam sane et animi duritiem quandam et morum etiam asperitatem sequi necesse est. Verum ut hanc non admitto neque laudo, ita neque quibuscunque tangi frangique doloribus sane probo. Neque enim Crassi similem virum natura philosophum esse volo, neque rursum Domitii, quorum alter extincta in piscinis muraena flevisse, alter vero, cum tres extulisset uxores, neque lachrymasse dicitur. Adsint bona cum venia animorum motus affectionesque istae; verum modicae sint eae et exiles, et quae facile coerceri diducique et in melius converti possint.' See Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, III, xii, 6: 'Non enim silice nati sumus, sed est natura in animis tenerum quiddam atque molle, quod aegritudine quasi tempestate quatitur'; Id., *Academica*, iv. 31 : 'Non enim est e saxo sculptus, aut e robore dolatus homo; habet corpus, habet animum; movetur mente, movetur sensibus.' The image of oak or stone is also in the *Odyssey*, but the meaning is rather different: 'Yet even so tell me of thy stock from whence thou art; for thou art not sprung from an oak of ancient story, or from a stone.' See Homer, *The Odyssey*, XIX, 163; English tr. A. T. Murray (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1919). On the anecdote regarding Lucius Licinius Crassus (140–91 BC) and Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus (ca. 2 BC–41 AD), see Aelian, *De natura animalium*, VIII, 4; Plutarch, *De sollertia animalium*, 976a; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, III, xv, 4.

[433] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 56, ll. 18-24.

> It is evident that nothing greater or better has been given by the gods to humankind than contemplation and the free activity (*motus*) of the mind: it is through this activity that we know and perceive nature, the causes and all celestial beings as well as the gods themselves, and only through this effort the human soul is made similar to the gods as it runs through the earth and the seas in a moment and with its sharp power beholds and contemplate the divine essences. This activity (*motio*) of the roused minds, which we call contemplation, has been conceded and handed down to the human souls as a divine gift. Despite this divine gift, these souls can by no means enjoy this activity in a proper and pure way unless they first extricate and free themselves from the pollution of the bodies and reject their company. For, as Plato says, the bodily mass brings infinite troubles and impediments, and because of our insatiable desire (which is also necessary) for drinks and food, it causes us enormous pains. As a result, various kinds of diseases that derive from this situation prevent us from being able to understand and contemplate the true essences of things as we should.[434]

The cosmic dimension of the farmer's grief is a sign that the philosopher can interpret relying on his knowledge of causes gained through natural philosophy. In Leonico Tomeo's opinion, the opposition of a human being to death amounts to disobeying God's will. This can cause illness, grief and pain. On the other hand, through the exercise of philosophy and the education of the soul to prudence and cautiousness, it is possible to become full of God. Using Socratic tones, Leonico Tomeo declares that 'the life of the philosophers as a whole is a meditation on death'.[435] For philosophy to instruct the soul to the divine, it is necessary to foster the connection between body and soul during mortal life. Examples of the failure to do so are the tendency of women to cry for their deceased husbands and the theatricality of Southern Italians and Greeks upon the death of their relatives. The Germans and the French are, by contrast, impassible, while the Egyptians, the Lydians and the Syrians understand death as a form of peaceful yet frightening event, and consequently act rationally rather than passionately.[436] The only way, Leonico Tomeo argues, in which the soul can be habituated to its eventual separation from the body is through the care of the pneumatic vehicles, as we have seen in Chapter 8.

[434] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 57, ll. 42-52: 'Cum enim hominum generi nihil vel maius vel praestabilius a diis immortalibus contemplatione liberoque mentis motu concessum esse constet (illo enim cum rerum naturam et causas caelestiaque omnia, tum ipsos cognoscimus et percipimus deos: illisque similis hoc tantum opere humanus efficitur animus, cum temporis scilicet puncto terras percurrit et maria, divinasque acie sua spectat et contemplatur essentias), cum haec inquam animorum motio incitatorum, quam contemplationem vocamus, deorum munere humanis sit permissa et tradita animis, haudquaquam ii recte incontaminateque illa uti possunt, nisi prius quantum fieri potest a corporum contagio sese liberent et expediant, eorumque aspernetur consortia. Infinitas enim nobis molestias (ut ait Plato) et impedimenta varia moles affert corporea, et, ob necessariam esculentorum poculentorumque indigentiam plurimum, nobis facessit negotii; ad haec morborum diversa genera inde nata nobis proculdubio sunt impedimento, ne veras intelligere contemplarique rite valeamus essentias.'

[435] Ibid., p. 58, ll. 21-22: 'Non ab re igitur divinus ille Socrates hanc rem innuere volens, universam philosophantium vitam mortis commentationem esse dixerat.'

[436] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 58, ll. 51-57.

The *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu* ends with a brief monologue, in which Leonico Tomeo proclaims the superiority of God and the importance of philosophy for the cultivation of a soul worthy of reaching a divine state of inner meditation. As the most efficacious medicine against the illnesses of the mind and the spirit, philosophy restores the imbalances produced by the agitations and passions of the soul, thus granting the latter salvation. The *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu* is complementary to the *Phoebus* in that both investigate the instinctual behaviour of the soul when confronted with change, passion, suffering and death. The *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, in particular, focuses on the importance for the soul to cultivate its intellectual potential in view of its process of afterlife bliss. Leonico Tomeo's emphasis in this dialogue is on the rule of reason over superstition and more specifically, on the greater need for the soul's rational part to be educated by philosophy rather than for its bodily instrument to be healed by medicine or purged from sin by popular religious practices. In support of this theory, Leonico Tomeo gathers a variety of sources, including Euripides, Cicero, Plato and Aristotle.

3. *And a Time to Dance*: Games and Leisure in Human Life

In the *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario*, Tomeo combines a philological inquiry into the meaning of the term 'knucklebone' with a narrative account of the history of the game. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the scene is set during a dinner celebration for the birthday of the Venetian governor Marco Sanudo. The conversation is sparked by Sannuto's hesitation to concede that pleasure and entertainment are appropriate ways for virtuous men to spend their time. In response to Sannuto, Leonico Tomeo and his brother Fosco deliver two speeches on the textual and historiographical relevance of the game of knucklebones and on the part of the animals carrying the same name. Like the *Bonominus, Sannutus, sive de ludo talario* tackles the study of natural philosophy through philological means, illustrating the approach that Leonico Tomeo takes to the construction of his philosophy.

Fosco starts with a reference to Pausanias's *Description of Greece* (II, 20, 9) where Palamedes is reported to have offered a dice to the goddess of Fortune in a temple dedicated to her in Corinth. Fosco substantiates his speech with the authority of both Herodotus and Pausanias, whose accounts of the importance and widespread use of knucklebones in antiquity he presents as historical testimonies of the game's intellectual nature. Both authors, says Fosco, were cited by his brother in his *De varia historia*, which proves their relevance for humanist culture. It is important to underline here that the reference Fosco makes to Leonico Tomeo's

work is significant because at the time of the *Dialogues*' first edition in 1524, *De varia historia* had not yet been published. We must suppose that the three encyclopaedic tomes on historiographical and mythological curiosities had been circulating among Leonico Tomeo's friends and colleagues at least since the 1520s.

As we learn from Leonico Tomeo discussion, the bones had at least four different uses in antiquity. If pierced and sealed with inscriptions, they supposedly had divinatory powers (*astragalomanteia*). Pausanias reported that knucklebones were thrown inside oracular caves, as, for instance, in the city of Boura in Acaia, where four *astragali* were usually tossed onto a tablet in a grotto consecrated to Heracles and, following fifty six throws, a response was formulated based on the outcome of the final sum (VII, 25, 10.). *Astragali* also acted as apotropaic tools when worn as jewels or talismans and were sometimes also used as measures or money.[437]

After these initial discussions, Fosco satisfies Sanudo's desire to know more about the history of the game. He therefore explains that knucklebones were probably invented by the Lydians during a period of famine. From this point of view, the most detailed account in this regard is that of Herodotus (*Histories*, I, 93). After dwelling on the origin of the game, Fosco highlights the linguistic problems connected to the term 'knucklebone'. He does so by emphasising the work carried out by first generation humanists like Giorgio Merula, who delivered several lectures on relevant sources like Julius Pollux and Eustathius of Thessalonica.[438] At this point, Sannuto admits his ignorance and confesses his curiosity to know more about the different names by which the game was called across time and space. Fosco turns to his brother Leonico Tomeo and ask him to take the lead in the discussion, celebrating his expertise as a *grammaticus* and recalling the lectures that he had delivered on the subject at the University of Padua.[439] Leonico Tomeo therefore begins his speech dealing with the philological reconstruction of the term 'knucklebone', providing, he says, a shortened version of the lecture he had delivered on the subject some time earlier. He first addresses the most recent work dealing with the matter, which is Theodorus Gaza's translation of Aristotle's *Parts of the Animals*. Leonico Tomeo points out the mistakes made by previous scholars, and then considers more closely Aristotle's own text, in which a four-faced dice is indicated with the Greek term *astragalos*. Dice fall either on their upper or on their lower side, respectively corresponding to the internal and the external side of the hip-joint of the animal from which

[437] See Jacopo De Grossi Mazzorin and Claudia Minniti, 'L'uso degli astragali nell'antichità tra ludo e divinazione', in *Atti del sesto convegno nazionale di archeozoologia* (Pisa: Università di Pisa, 2012), pp. 213-220.
[438] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 74, ll. 20-27.
[439] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 74, ll. 32-35.

they are produced, not from the heel as is commonly thought. This is demonstrated by the fact that the upper part of the heel bone is folded back into what looks like a horn. Dice have no such shape and that is because they are made from animal hip-joints, which lack any horn-like protuberance, not from heels. Because of the wrong translation of Aristotle's text, it was thought that a dice (*talus*) had six faces and a tessera (*tessera*) four.[440] This, however, is wrong, if only one were to look at the anatomical structure of the bone in question. Leonico Tomeo ends his speech with a recapitulation of his philological enquiry, which his friends seem to appreciate very much. Some of them then leave the house where they had gathered by boat, while Leonico Tomeo, Fosco and Sanudo head back to the library.

At this point, it is important to expand on the remark that Fosco made at the beginning of the *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario* about his brother's lecture on the game of knucklebones. According to Eugenio Garin, Leonico Tomeo, inspired by Theodorus Gaza's translation of Aristotle's *History of the Animals*, delivered a lecture on the meaning of the term 'knucklebone', which he subsequently integrated with quotations from Aristotle, Lucian and Suetonius among others and eventually published in the *Dialogues*. Garin's observation is important because it draws a parallel between the *Sannutus*, sive de ludo talario and Erasmus' *Knucklebones or The Game of Tali* in his *Colloquies*. In Garin's view, Leonico Tomeo's speech at the University of Padua inspired Erasmus's work on the same subject.[441] What interests us here is not the chronological order of the two texts, but their similar content. An accurate analysis of Leonico Tomeo's and Erasmus' texts would exceed the scope of the present thesis. It is, however, important to point out once again that the two men had certainly met in Padua around 1509 and exchanged ideas on several matters. From the point of view of philosophy, the *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario* assigns an important role to nature as a tool for the education of the soul, which functions as an operational force that perceives and learns about the world through its encounter with its objects. The connection between knucklebones and oracles is especially important because it illustrates the means by which the soul can move from playing to knowing through conjecture, for the act of throwing knucklebones on a table is not a mere past time, but an attempt of the soul to claim the favour of fortune for itself, gaining insights into the workings of the divine through the conjectural redistribution of its parts.

4. The Relational Nature of the Human World

[440] Ibid., p. 74, ll. 55-60.
[441] Eugenio Garin, 'Noterella erasmiana', in *Rinascita*, 5 (1942), pp. 332-3.

The dialogue *Severinus, sive de relativorum natura* opens in the middle of the plot. Leonico Tomeo is telling his brother Fosco that the so-called *species* or natural kinds become available to the intellect and can therefore be thought whereas the *species* are unperceivable and therefore unknowable. There is, however, a third category, a formless being (*informe quiddam*), whose being is, as it where, almost nothing (*minima essentia*). Leonico Tomeo is referring to the *Timaeus*'s notion of 'receptacle' (χώρα).[442]

Leonico Tomeo surveys the theories of matter as the *informe quiddam*. He comes to argue that both God and prime matter exceed all kinds of being; matter being defined as 'similar to God in a different way' (*primam scilicet materiam deo dissimiliter esse consimilem*), escaping every notion of the intellect, as if it were 'a Homeric Proteus'.[443] Among the essences that can be regarded as beings in an ontologically attenuated sense, Leonico Tomeo introduces the 'relative beings' (*correlativa*). These exist as habits because of the shadowy substance of their nature, which can barely become known to the human senses.[444]

Leonico Tomeo then expands his account by reporting to his brother Fosco the conversation he once had with the monk Severino about the nature of relative beings, the notions of essence and nature, and the idea of properties and differences. Severino prompted Leonico Tomeo to recount his experience as a professor of Aristotelian natural philosophy at the University of Padua in order to improve the content of the lectures on the categories he was delivering in the convent of the island of Saint George in Venice. Severino said at the time that he used to teach his fellow monks that, in accordance with Aristotle's *ipse dixit*, the question of essence ought to be distinguished from that of quality. This because essence constitutes the fundamental and immutable substance of a being, and without substance identity is lost. Qualities are, on the contrary, accidental and are therefore supplementary. Severino told Tomeo that Aristotle's theory had been clarified and commented upon by several Latin authors in the Middle Ages, the most relevant of these being Thomas Aquinas. The latter elaborated on Aristotle's concepts of essence and existence by arguing that the only being in which existence and essence coincide is God, whereas mortal beings are a blend of the two coexisting in a material carrier. Thomas had called the principle of material specification *principium individuationis*. After having examined the historical precedents to his reflection on essence, Severino asked Leonico Tomeo whether he was willing to share with him his knowledge of the Greek authors, who discussed the question of essence and existence. Leonico Tomeo accepted

[442] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 64, ll. 7-19.
[443] Ibid., p. 64, ll. 13-16.
[444] Ibid., p. 64, ll. 25-27.

and confirmed that the issue raised by Severino had been dealt with since the times of Aristotle and is still a matter of contention among Renaissance philosophers.[445]

Leonico Tomeo opens his account by reminiscing about the conversation he had had some days earlier with the Veronese doctor and humanist Giulio Bravo on the question of relativism in Aristotle. From the outset, Leonico Tomeo points out that it is commonly assumed by his contemporary Paduan philosophers that Aristotle's theory of relative beings endorses the divisibility of nature. Contrary to this view, Leonico Tomeo proposes that, when we refer to Aristotle's categories of substance, quality, quantity and relatives, nature should be interpreted as matter and therefore as opposed to substance or essence. He specifies that his interpretation emerges from the analysis of Aristotle's predicates, namely the words he employed to signify objects in the world. The ten-fold system of categories elaborated by Aristotle contains, in Leonico Tomeo's view, the highest kinds under which lower beings can be classified. Among these categories, none surpasses the others. This because being is not genus and does not therefore need to be differentiated from other beings in view of its attributes.[446] Additionally, being is not material, which means that it is not subject to affections and can therefore also not be judged in terms of quality.[447]

Aristotle thinks that there are ten kinds of being, that is, substance, quantity, quality, relatives, somewhere, sometime, being in a position, having, acting and being acted upon. The category Leonico Tomeo is concerned with in the *Severinus* is that of relatives. Contrary to what the term suggests, the category does not concern relations among things, but rather the way in which something is towards something else in the world. The Greek term for relations, τὰ πρός τι, means precisely 'things with respect to something'. In Leonico Tomeo's hands, Aristotle's discussion falls under the domains of grammar and linguistics rather than under metaphysics because the act of existing and being of an object towards another object is determined by language and material circumstances rather than by ideas, theories or forms. In support of this view, Leonico Tomeo provides the following example. To say that 'a pine tree is bigger' is an incomplete statement because it does not specify what the tree is bigger than. 'A pine tree is bigger than a mushroom', on the contrary, is correct from a grammatical point of view and a conceptual one. Relations define the way in which the substance of a being is towards the substance of another being in the world through language.[448] It should be mentioned here that philosophers and historians have often pointed out the obscurity of Aristotle's discussion on relative beings and especially the difficulty in understanding whether

[445] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 65, ll. 33-40.
[446] See Aristotle, see *Metaphysics*, 998b 23.
[447] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 65, ll. 55-60.
[448] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p.66, ll. 12-22.

he was interested in things related or relations among things.[449] From this point of view, the emphasis on language that characterises the *Severinus* is all the more significant because it highlights Leonico Tomeo's philological approach to philosophy while strengthening the ties between the soul and the worlds on nature and culture through the notion of relational beings, the τὰ πρός τι.

Leonico Tomeo's reflection on Aristotle's theory of relative beings is arranged following the scholastic method of teaching. The interplay of Severino and Leonico Tomeo echoes the dynamics of classroom learning in which a master explains to his pupil the content of ancient sources during an exchange of opinions. Severino, the student, and Leonico Tomeo, the master, need also be considered beyond the literary characters they are made to interpret and the recurring humanist tropes they are made to utter. The opposition of a teacher and a student is instrumental to the multiplication of the dialogue's layers in so far as Leonico Tomeo and Severino are two modes of being in the world that depend on one another and establish relations between abstract concepts and concrete objects through dialogue. In the *Severinus*, both men are represented as simultaneously teachers and students. Severino, by his own admission, teaches Aristotle's categories to his fellow novices in his convent, yet with Leonico Tomeo he is a student. Similarly, Leonico Tomeo acts as a teacher on the island of St George where Severino's monastery is, yet while he speaks with his Veronese friend Bravo about relativism, he is a student. The twofold nature of relative beings is demonstrated from an intellectual point of view through the language employed by Leonico Tomeo, as is demonstrated, for instance, by his reference to Severino's doubtful approach to Aristotle's categories with the Latin term *anceps*, literally two-headed, i.e., wavering, uncertain, dangerous. Leonico Tomeo explores the ambiguity of relativism from all perspectives, giving rise to a dialogue whose subject matter is mirrored by its formal structure.

To illustrate this point further, Leonico Tomeo refers to an example already used by Thomas Aquinas to discuss the possibility for an individual to be both a servant and a master, two opposing states of being that confirm the possibility for the soul to participate in two distinct modes of existence during a single lifetime. The reference to Thomas is significant here, for, the passage in the *Summa theologiae* distinguishes the relative beings into beings *secundum esse* and beings *secundum dici*. Being manifests itself in different ways depending on whether they are or are said in different ways.[450] Leonico Tomeo argues that master and servant are equivalent to natural philosophy and nature because these two are related in such a

[449] On relative beings in Aristotle, see Anna Marmodoro and David Yates (eds), *The Metaphysics of Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[450] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 66, ll. 31-62. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 7, ad. 1.

way that one cannot exist without the other. Knowledge precedes nature and it is not at all considered to be corrupted by corrupted things that can be known. The squaring of the circle demonstrates this. It is evident in Leonico Tomeo's view that the squaring of the circle is something comprehensible, but it has not been understood nor proved by anyone clearly.[451] The same is true of relative beings because they can be detected, but not fully explained. After a few criticisms levelled at the scholastic approach to Aristotle's text,[452] Leonico Tomeo introduces an ample discussion dealing with those Greek philosophers who, in his opinion, commented or interpreted Aristotle's thought in a correct way. Among them, Leonico Tomeo lists Iamblichus, Porphyry and Simplicius. The three Platonists, Leonico Tomeo argues, agreed on the fact that, if one interprets Aristotle correctly, the nature of relative beings is real (*veram scilicet et exactam relativorum esse naturam*).[453]

At the end of the discussion, Severino thanks Leonico Tomeo for the explanation he provided, which exceeded his expectations. The monk then enquires about the Greek sources Leonico Tomeo mentioned during his monologue and the humanist replies that it would be beneficial if more original texts could become available for humanists and grammarians to study. Leonico Tomeo laments a lack of sources and considers the poor state in which the arts and the sciences have fallen as a direct consequence of this shortage. This, Leonico Tomeo thinks, is further exacerbated by the rivalries between thinkers over the centuries and by a certain linguistic obscurity that hampered the advancement of knowledge. Severino then enquires about the possible heretical nature of the sources Leonico Tomeo praises, to which the humanist replies that he need not worry because he always refers first of all to God and follows his word as sheep follow the shepherd.[454] Finally, Leonico Tomeo reminds Severino that all hardships with which humankind is faced at various moments in history are to be regarded as occasions for improvement. War, famine and illness are not dangers, but events leading to renewal and the restoration of health, on both a particular and a universal level. The dialogue ends with the bells of the monastery signalling dawn, to which sound Severino withdraws into the church to pray while Leonico Tomeo descends to the hippodrome.

The conclusion we can draw from Leonico Tomeo's *Severinus* is that the question of the reality of beings resulting from relations can certainly generate a sense of relativism, while doubts about the ontological status of relative and related things can led to scepticism. Leonico Tomeo was even more aware of these possibilities, for as an expert of rhetoric and the linguistic disciplines of the trivium, he knew that the sophistic uses of languages were always present.

[451] Ibid., p. 66, ll. 12-14.
[452] Ibid., p. 66, ll. 19-29.
[453] Ibid., p. 66, l. 27.
[454] Leonico Tomeo, *Dialogi*, p. 66, ll. 28-31.

Reliance on late Platonic sources in the interpretation of Aristotle's categories was therefore key for Leonico Tomeo, who, on the one hand, defended the notion of a cosmos as an interdependent living universe, and, on the other, referred to the *intellectus* as the ontological place in which the universal and necessary knowledge of the mind (the *intellectio*) and the very object of this knowledge (the *intellectum*) could coincide.

To conclude, the analysis of the dialogues *Phoebus, sive de aetatum moribus*, *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario* and *Severinus, sive de relativorum natura* has demonstrated the significance of four particular aspects of the life of the human soul: ageing (*Phoebus*), mourning (*Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*), playing (*Sannutus, sive de ludo talario*) and doubting (*Severinus*). Through ageing and mourning the soul is touched by the material circumstances of life, thus understanding the close dependence of thoughts on bodies and things. Upon the death of a brother, for instance, as is the case with Leonico Tomeo in the *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, the soul is moved to tears because of a physiological reaction caused by a sudden humoural imbalance. During youth, as is recounted in *Phoebus*, the soul can lose its control due to the heat of the blood. The discipline aiding the soul to foster a connection with the body during mortal life is medicine. What medicine cannot do; however, the soul is able to accomplish by restraining its innate proclivities through discipline, philosophy, speech and dialogue. These faculties allow the soul to progressively detach itself from its bodily fetters and turn its eyes towards the higher spheres. Discipline is born out of play. As Leonico Tomeo demonstrates in the *Severinus*, in order to perform a complete ascent, the soul ought to study the causes of phenomena through natural philosophy and then organise them through philosophical arguments. The aim is for the soul to distinguish the substance of beings from their accidental properties. The movement from knowledge *secundum dici* to science *secundum esse* is one that requires the soul to appraise the material aspects of its natural life, to appreciate the gifts coming from its appropriate education, i.e., culture and friendship, and finally to recognise its limits in order to ascend and abandon its material sheath.

In order to chart the soul's progressive movement from experience to learning, the *Dialogi* combine Plato and Aristotle into a unified line of inquiry. As we have seen in the individual texts considered in this chapter, both Plato and Aristotle provide Leonico Tomeo with nuanced reflections about the soul, blending physics and metaphysics. Rather than claiming a complete accord between Plato and Aristotle, Leonico Tomeo argues that the ideas of both are needed to formulate a sound doctrine of the soul. Moreover, Leonico Tomeo never claims the superiority of Plato and Aristotle over Christianity, nor does he argue the opposite. The reason is that Leonico Tomeo's approach to the study of ancient sources is archaeological

and philological, and therefore aimed at the recovery of original and proper meanings. Leonico Tomeo the *grammaticus* is able to adopt explanatory patterns from ancient medicine and natural philosophy and to apply them to the understanding of a new reality after a rigorous process of historical contextualization. Both the physician and the natural philosopher operate as practitioners who are attentive to the operative dimensions of their work. The *grammaticus*, in turn, relies on the practical teachings of medicine and natural philosophy by correcting their mistakes and by developing the most accurate theories about the soul. In the *Dialogi*, medicine and natural philosophy are fundamental to describe the soul's powers and affections.

Generally speaking, the question of experience is important in relation to the *Dialogi* as much as to the activity of Leonico Tomeo as a scholar and a humanist. It demonstrates that Leonico Tomeo's work is relevant with respect to the early modern debate concerning the relationship between medicine and natural philosophy. Moreover, the philological nature of Leonico Tomeo's inquiry into nature emerges specially from his insistence on the meaning and correct translation of technical terminology, both medical and natural philosophical, which in the wider context of the *Dialogi* is evidence of his desire to study the mechanics of knowledge transmission from antiquity to the Renaissance. In the final analysis, the *Phoebus*, the *Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, the *Sannutus, sive de ludo talario* and the *Severinus* demonstrate that the study of the soul is linked to the changeable universe of material generation. More specifically, as is clear from the *Severinus*, the movement necessary to progress from an understanding of the soul *secundum dici* to one *secundum esse* underlies a linguistic question. It is precisely up to the soul to establish relations between itself and the world through the power of language, which, as demonstrated by the dialogue *Peripateticus*, is both natural and social.

Conclusion

The *Dialogi* are a key philosophical text of the sixteenth century which is now largely forgotten because it was excised from the canon of Renaissance philosophical works. This dissertation is an attempt to reclaim for Leonico Tomeo the place he fully deserves in the early modern Republic of Philosophical Letters, all the more so because he builds his philosophy on the practice of 'letters' (*litterae*), that is, on a combination of pedagogical commitment, critical inquiry, scholarly expertise and historical investigation. Leonico Tomeo embodies the figure of the philosophising scholar to perfection – both *philosophus artista* and *grammaticus*, to use two technical terms that belong to the educational system of medieval university and to the world of trivial and quadrivial disciplines, where the teacher is also the institutional provider and keeper of learning and human culture (the *umanista*). Between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, this figure was slowly replaced by the new model of the philosopher as a free thinker – obsessed, after Descartes, with dispelling any possible association he might be charged of having with the farraginous world of cumulative learning and with the spectre of being perceived as an overzealous teacher, blinded by formal pedantry and intellectual dogmatism.

This dissertation has shown that Leonico Tomeo's idea of thinking as an exercise that is both scholarly and critical underpins a philosophy that is sensible to the role that history plays in shaping humanity's views about the world and the reality it inhabits. It is also a philosophy that is open to the place that natural and cultural particulars and rituals have in the construction of historically determined worldviews. It is for this reason that Leonico Tomeo's philosophical investigations tend to be object-oriented. As we have seen in this dissertation, the objects are many: poems, plants, manuscripts, busts, but also all sorts of historical vestiges of the past, including languages and the soul, the *animus*/*anima*. Leonico Tomeo observes and studies the soul and its faculties within a linguistic and conceptual galaxy that is the result of centuries of speculations and experiments. In this sense, his philosophical approach is constitutively exegetic and archaeological. The words used by Leonico Tomeo to speak of and argue about the soul are many, for this is a unique combination of life and intellect.

Leonico Tomeo's insistence on the pneumatic vehicles of the soul – and, in the end, on nature itself as the one vehicle ruled by the *intellectus* – confirms his view that the energy of *animus/anima* is behind corporeal embodiment, cosmic connectivity and the persistence of individual selfhoods. Echoing a well-known Aristotelian locus, in the 'Proem' to his Commentary on Aristotle's *Parva naturalia*, Leonico Tomeo, as already discussed in this

thesis, reiterates that, within the system of philosophical disciplines, the knowledge of the soul (*scientia de anima*) sits in the middle between the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of God.[455] Because of its middle (*media*) nature, the soul is the grand unifier of all the apparent divisions in the cosmos and the force that keeps all the parts of the cosmos together. In the philosophical account provided in the *Dialogi*, life in full awareness is the ultimate meaning of the soul (*animus*/*anima*). In this sense, it is a divine attribute: it is the divine intellect as everlasting self-knowledge, but it also the highest accomplishment that the human mind can achieve through language and action. It is civilization as is manifested in countless cultural instantiations.

It goes without saying that history (as both an object and a method of knowledge) plays a pivotal role in Leonico Tomeo's philosophy. The awareness that enlightens the life of a scholar investigating the innumerable material circumstances and constraints of knowledge acquisition is the path through which the human mind can reconnect to its intelligible origin. It is certainly not by accident that in Leonico Tomeo's discussion concerning the essence of the soul and its immortality, the highest level of tension is reached when he defends the ontological status of the soul as *ingenitum* principle of self-motion while acknowledging its having been created by God. How can the soul be eternal as essence and temporal as existence? Here is where the archaeological and antiquarian components of Leonico Tomeo's philosophy come to the fore and demonstrate their decisive role in fashioning his philosophical universe. We can say that Leonico Tomeo's *animus*/*anima* does have a body. This body is the ever-expanding corpus of human learnings, disciplines, traditions and records.

The central argument of this thesis is therefore that Leonico Tomeo developed an original philosophical view of the natural and the human worlds as a scholar interested in the records of human ingenuity (*ars* and *historia*), in the mechanisms of bodily life (medicine and anatomy) and the time-honoured traditions of philosophical doxography. Leonico Tomeo preferred to focus on the soul as the intersection of different cultural instances rather than engaging in the more customary metaphysics of the *intellectus*, characteristic of the scholastic and university tradition. In the *Dialogi*, we are shown in many concrete ways how the soul establishes a system of links with the surrounding cosmos, human societies and cultural meanings.

Part 1 of the thesis has shed light on Leonico Tomeo's intellectual biography. I have devoted particular attention to the critical aspects of his life and work rather than on its chronology, which has already been more or less accurately investigated in the recent past by

[455] Leonico Tomeo, 'Prooemium', in Aristotle, *Parva quae vocant naturalia*, p. 2: 'scientiam de anima mediam quodammodo inter divinam et naturalem esse'.

historians. A multidimensional account of Leonico Tomeo's life at its intersection with philosophy emerged from considering the following factors: the important role played by his uncle's apothecary in triggering a lifelong interest in medicine; his passion for collecting that can be regarded as parallel to his study of the aesthetic phenomenon in general; and his philosophical views about the imagination. Here the conclusion I have reached is that Leonico Tomeo came to conceive of art not as a shadow or an imperfect copy of an unfathomable idea, but as a thinking tool to test and translate the aesthetic encounter of human beings with the world into a tangible and experienceable object. We have seen that 'fantasiability' is the mind's ability to negotiate the always shifting boundaries of the imagination in its relationship with external reality. Leonico Tomeo envisages two poles within the domain of what can be represented by the human mind: the *fantasiabile*, i.e., the possibility for an external object (the *subiectum*) to become an object of experience and knowledge, and the *fantasticum*, that is, the possibility for the cognitive *obiectum* to cut free of its original ties with the *subiectum*.

Part 2 of the dissertation has expanded on the contextual premises of the preceding section by dwelling on Leonico Tomeo's engagement with early modern humanism. A detailed contextual framework against which to situate the conceptual principles analysed thereafter was painted in this section. First, I have shown that the *Dialogi* counted among the numerous texts written during the early modern revival of the classical dialogue. As such, they were not a unique instance, but a product of their time, especially in the way in which they presented an idealised antiquity. Second, the stylistic features of the *Dialogi* reflect the philosophical import of the work, so as to reveal the continuity between the form and the content of the writing. We have seen that Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi* are especially effective at articulating an open relation between different points of view that are apparently irreconcilable or dissonant. Consensus is usually reached after polite and urbane processes of intermingling voices that differ in tone and that belong to different philosophical perspectives.

Finally, in Part 3 of the dissertation, I have explored the major themes of Leonico Tomeo's *Dialogi*, organising the vast material around three key concepts: soul, nature and culture. I have showed that, to implement the study of life in both its material and immaterial dimensions, Tomeo relied upon a variety of other disciplines: theology, philology, rhetoric, moral philosophy, literature, medicine and art. I have pointed out evidence of this approach in the dialogues *Phoebus, Sannutus, sive de compescendo luctu*, *Sannutus, sive de ludo talareo* and *Severinus, sive de relativorum natura*, which respectively deal with ageing, mourning, playing and doubting. The *Severinus*, in particular, indicates that the movement necessary to progress from an understanding of the soul from *secundum dici* to *secundum esse* underlies questions of a linguistic nature. I have explored the ability of the soul to establish relations

between itself and the world through the function of speech. *Peripateticus* and *Bonominus* have revealed that, starting with grammar, the soul is able to construct a higher, inspired and philosophical language that flows directly from the essence of things. Through the common usage of words, the soul expresses its knowledge of nature gained through the senses. In developing this kind of linguistic competence into a complex, philosophical discourse, the soul appropriates the world through a personalised speech. This takes place through what Leonico Tomeo defined as the ability of speech to render the likeness of things in the mind of the reader or hearer through vivid words.

I have explored the knowledge that the human mind has of sensible reality when the soul has 'descended' into the world of generation and nature by studying the various means through which the soul returns to its origin: divination, theurgy and religious devotion. In *Sadoletus* and *Trophonius*, Leonico Tomeo intended to demonstrate that there are many aspects of pagan culture that can be reconciled with Christianity. In this sense, he can be regarded as a representative of Christian humanism. *Sadoletus* and *Trophonius* are exemplary in this sense, for they show that Leonico Tomeo was able to assert the legitimacy of divinatory expertise and its many links with the natural philosophical study of nature and the philological scrutiny of the scriptures. By probing the relationship between the natural and the human world, I have considered the concepts of immortality, essence and eternity by concentrating on *animus*/*anima*. As demonstrated by the dialogues *Bembus, sive de animorum immortalitate* and *Bembus, sive de animorum essentia*, by adapting and tweaking characteristic tenets of late Platonic philosophy, Leonico Tomeo developed a theory of the immortal soul that could be compatible with Christianity.

The conclusion I would like to draw from this study is that Leonico Tomeo paid particular attention to the material aspects that define the human experience of the world. The notion of vehicle has proved to be very helpful in this case. Of these vehicles, some are cultural, others natural. Among the cultural vehicles, I have examined theurgic tools such as prayers, rites and artworks; among the natural vehicles, I have discussed the function of the aery and aethereal *corpuscula* within the larger cycles of cosmic life. It was especially through these cultural *obiecta* and pneumatic *corpuscula* that Leonico Tomeo tried to bridge the gap between the senses and the intellect, both as a collector and an experienced observer of the aesthetic phenomenon. As many other authors of his time, Leonico Tomeo, too, was involved in the philosophical *paragone* of which of the two grand systems – the Platonic and the Aristotelian – was the better suited to address the principal critical issues central to the ongoing debates between European humanists. Leonico Tomeo was both Platonic and Aristotelian to the extent that he relied on Plato to strengthen the links with the world of the eternal intelligible patterns,

and on Aristotle to demonstrate that these same patterns shape material nature down to the last detail of its harmonious and teleological constitution. Since the kind of reality that is accessible to human experience is composite by nature, a recovery of Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines is the most convenient solution for Leonico Tomeo as a humanist. It is in this light that the *Dialogi* should be appreciated as a crucial product of early modern humanism that deserves its place in the canon of early modern philosophy.

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