

RYSZARD J. WIECZOREK (Poznań)

## *A Reading of Petrarch: 'Il Canzoniere' and the Italian Madrigalists*

Probably at no time in the history of European culture has *amor/eros* held such an important place in both philosophy and literature as during the Renaissance. Never was this topos the subject of such a large number of published treatises, beginning with Marsilio Ficino's *De amore* (c. 1469, pub. 1484) – an expansive commentary on Plato's *Symposium*. Confining ourselves to just the first half of the sixteenth century, we should mention here such major *trattati d'amore* as those by Pietro Bembo (1505), Francesco da Diacetto (1508), Mario Equicola (1525), Agostino Ninfo (1529), Leone Ebreo (1535), Sperone Speroni (1542), Giuseppe Bettussi (1544) and Tullia d'Aragona (1547). Other works published during this period also deal extensively with the nature of *amor*, in particular Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortigiano* (1528).<sup>1</sup> All of these writings drew to a greater or lesser extent on Ficino's Platonic conception of love as the desire for the beautiful and the good. As Bernard McGinn stresses, for Renaissance thinkers 'human sexual love was only a part of the wider picture of a universe suffused by love, a world in which *eros/amor* was a transcendental and cosmic term that could be predicated both of God and the entire universe'.<sup>2</sup> However, whilst Ficino and Giovanni

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<sup>1</sup> See *Trattati d'amore del cinquecento*, ed. Giuseppe Zonta, Bari 1912, <sup>2</sup>1967; John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love: The Context of Giordano Bruno's 'Eroici Furori'* (New York, 1968); Piero Floriani, 'Dall'amore cortese all'amor divino', in *Bembo e Castiglione: studi sul classicismo del Cinquecento* (Rome, 1976); Ioan Cogliano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1987). Olga Zorsi Pugliese, 'Love and Death and Their Function as Frames in the "Book of the Courtier"', in *Love and Death in the Renaissance*, ed. Kenneth R. Bartlett and Konrad Eisenbichler (Ottawa, 1991), 135-144, and Jill Krave, 'The Transformation of Platonic Love in the Italian Renaissance', in *Platonism and the English Imagination*, ed. Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, (Cambridge, 1994), 76-85.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard McGinn, 'Cosmic and Sexual Love in Renaissance Thought: Reflection on Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Leone Ebreo', in *The Devil*,

Pico della Mirandola represented the standard Christian view of cosmic love by a return to the Platonic position, and concentrated on love above all as the desire for beauty (although they conceive of it in different ways<sup>3</sup>), Ebreo, in his *Dialoghi d'amore* (c. 1501, pub. 1535), defined love somewhat differently, primarily in terms of goodness rather than of beauty alone. He was also the first to incorporate human erotic experience into philosophical and theological views of cosmic love and integrate human love into the cosmic circle.<sup>4</sup> A different profile again was displayed by Bembo's fundamental work *Gli Asolani* (begun c. 1497, pub. 1505, 1530 [2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition], and 1553 [3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition]), treating of nature, the affects, phenomenology and the aims of love.<sup>5</sup> And although the author considerably simplified, not to say trivialised, Ficino's Platonic conception of love, advancing a popularised theory of love, he did define, for many years to come, the basic range of themes and problems that would be addressed by the lyric poets of the cinquecento. The most famous part of the treatise was the chapter devoted to lovers in conflict, in which the device of antithesis – the direct confrontation of words, feelings, and ideas with their opposites – was exploited in spectacular fashion. The importance and the role of *Gli Asolani* is difficult to overestimate; it is worth remembering that it was thanks chiefly to this work that Bembo became a key spokesman on Neoplatonic love in Castiglione's dialogue *Il libro del cortigiano*.

The majority of Italian thinkers, following the path beaten by Ficino, considered the problem of *amor/eros* from a purely philosophical perspective. In this respect, *Dialogo della Infinità d'Amore* (1547) by Tullia d'Aragona deviates significantly from the Neoplatonism of other contemporary treatises. Questioning the aptness of philosophical logic as the language for the discourse on love, she introduces poetry as an alternative approach, in the con-

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*Heresy and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey B. Russell*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro and Jeffrey Burton (Leiden, 1998), 191-209, at 192.

<sup>3</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Commentaire sur le Banquet de Platon*, ed. and trans. by Raymond Marcel (Paris, 1956), Engl. trans. Sear Jayne as *Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition (Dallas, 1985); Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Commento sopra una Canzona d'amore di Girolamo Benivieni* (pub. 1486), ed. Eugenio Garin (Florence, 1942), Eng. trans. Sear Jayne as *Commentary on a Canzone of Benivieni* (New York, 1984); see also William R. Bowen, 'Love, The Master of all the Arts: Marsilio Ficino on Love and Music', in *Love and Death in the Renaissance*, ed. Kenneth R. Bartlett and Konrad Eisenbichler (Ottawa, 1991), 51-60.

<sup>4</sup> McGinn 'Cosmic and Sexual Love', 200; see Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d'amore*, ed. Santino Caramella (Bari, 1929), Engl. trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and J.H. Barnes as *The Philosophy of Love* (London, 1937).

<sup>5</sup> Pietro Bembo, *Gli Asolani*, in: Bembo, *Opere in volgare*, ed. Marco Mari, (Florence, 1961), Engl. trans. R. B. Gottfried (Bloomington, 1954), Germ. trans. Michael Rumpf as *Asolaner Gespräche. Dialog über die Liebe* (Heidelberg, 1992).

viction that only poets have the capacity to capture certain 'truths' about the human experience of love that philosophers fail to grasp. To this end – most significantly, in the context of our present enquiry – she invokes Francesco Petrarch, a poet who, in her opinion, 'towers incomparably over all others in the description of the pangs of love'.<sup>6</sup> This supports her argument that poets and poetry deserve a prominent role in the discourse on love.

A turning point in this discourse was, of course, the edition prepared by Bembo of Petrarch's *Il Canzoniere* (1501), which Isabella d'Este Gonzaga so eagerly sought to acquire, and which, by the end of the sixteenth century, had run to almost one hundred and sixty reprints and nearly as many commentaries. *Il Canzoniere* constituted above all an exemplary literary work and the most highly esteemed source of language acquisition among educated circles. It was read in editions festooned with lengthy and often contradictory commentaries, editions that frequently sported a relatively brief passage from Petrarch surrounded by far bulkier glosses.<sup>7</sup> Bembo's own poetical work, *Le Rime* (first published in 1530), regarded as 'an excellent example of orthodox Petrarchism',<sup>8</sup> became, after Petrarch's, the most widely reprinted *canzoniere* of the century. Also filled with allusions to Petrarch's lyric verse is Bembo's treatise *Gli Asolani*, although its phenomenology of love, as Gordon Braden observes, 'is Petrarchan to the point of parody'.<sup>9</sup> The extraordinary popularity of Petrarch's lyric verse and the rapid development of Petrarchism are questions that have been addressed many times, and are sufficiently familiar to be passed over here. It is worth remembering, however, that *petrarchismo* was not only the dominant lyric form in sixteenth-century Italy, but it also influenced social roles and mores within the polite societies of the court and the salon. The recognition that Petrarch gained among intellectuals and writers caused his popularity to grow in non-literary environments, as well – among ladies and gentlemen of noble birth and even courtesans. It was *bon ton* to carry about one's person a volume of *petrarchino* and to display it ostentatiously, and the manifestation of one's sentiments and *vie intérieure*, artificially shaped à la Petrarch, was considered a mark of social and literary culture.<sup>10</sup> One may, therefore, treat

<sup>6</sup> See Lisa Curtis-Wendlandt, 'Conversing on Love: Text and Subtext in Tullia d'Aragona's "Dialogo della Infinità d'Amore"', *Hypatia* 19/4 (Fall 2004), 86.

<sup>7</sup> William J. Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca and London, 1994) passim; Heather Dubrow, *English Petrarchism and its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca and London, 1995), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hugo Friedrich, *Epochen der italienischen Lyrik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1964), 318.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon Braden, *Petrarchan Love and the Continental Renaissance* (New Haven and London, 1999), 93.

<sup>10</sup> See Jean Kelly Gadon, 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?' in *Becoming Visible*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston, 1977) 139-64; Anna Klimkiewicz, 'Petrarkizm, imitacja, manieryzm w poezji włoskiego renesansu'; *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 5 (1997), 83-94, at 90-91.

Petrarchism as a phenomenon of manners and mores with the significance and scope of social communication, as a sort of social ritual.

In the pages that follow, after a brief presentation of the history of sixteenth-century musical settings of poems from *Il Canzoniere*, I will focus my attention on four Renaissance settings of one of Petrarch's most famous sonnets, *Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace* (No. 164), by Bartolomeo Tromboncino (1470-1534), Jacques Arcadelt (1507-1568), Cipriano de Rore (1515-1565) and Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643).<sup>11</sup> In analysing these pieces, it is not my intention to explore in detail the compositional strategies adopted by particular musicians, but rather to show where and how the Petrarchan speaker's rhetorical strategy generates the structure of these four settings. As we know, in the sixteenth century no art was more assimilated to poetry than oratory, and the rhetorical concerns for harmony, number, sound and structure all stood at the centre of poetic criticism. Consequently, extensive use will be made in the analysis presented below of the categories of rhetorical discourse and rhetorical norms, drawing in this respect on the influential work of William J. Kennedy and Thomas Greene.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.

The appearance of Bembo's edition of *Il Canzoniere* triggered a swift response from northern Italian musicians.<sup>13</sup> Their interest in the poetry of Petrarch was encouraged from the start by Isabella d'Este, as

<sup>11</sup> The second part of the present text draws on ideas first formulated by the author in a considerably shorter text published in Polish in 1991; see Ryszard Wieczorek, 'Sonet 164 "Or che 'l ciel e la terra" Petrarki w madrygale XVI wieku', in *Wiersz i jego pieśniowe interpretacje. Studia porównawcze* (Muzyka i liryka, 3), ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski (Kraków, 1991) 25-48. Three interesting articles on the Monteverdi madrigal have appeared in the meantime, but their authors situate this work in a different context, employ different methods of analysis and arrive at different conclusions; see Jeffrey Kurtzman, 'A Taxonomic and Affective Analysis of Monteverdi's "Or che'l ciel e la terra"', *Music Analysis* 12/2 (1993), 169-195; Gerhard Splitt, 'Das dramatisierte Sonett: Monteverdis-Vertonung "Hor che'l ciel e la terra" in Musikalisches Welttheater', in *Festschrift Rolf Dammann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. S. Schaal, T. Seedorf, G. Splitt (Laaber, 1995) 25-34; and Linda M. Koldau, 'Studi sul contrasto: il sonetto del Petrarca "Or che'l ciel e la terra" musicato da Claudio Monteverdi', *Campi immaginabili* 19-21 (1997), 37-67.

<sup>12</sup> See William J. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven and London, 1978); Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy. Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven and London, 1982).

<sup>13</sup> For a full Bibliography see: Joachim Steinhauer, 'Petrarca', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., ed. Ludwig Finscher, *Personenteil*, vol. 7, (Kassel 2001), 379-403, James Haar, 'Petrarch', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 7 (London, 2001), 498-499, and Ryszard Wieczorek, 'Petrarca', in *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM*, ed. Elżbieta Dziębowska, vol. 8 (Kraków, 2004), 70-72.

we learn from a letter she sent in 1504 to Niccolò da Correggio, in which she requests some canzoni by Petrarch that could be put to music.<sup>14</sup> She received in reply *Si è debile il filo*, which was soon set to music. This setting, ascribed to Tromboncino – a protégé of d'Este at her Mantuan court – appears in Petrucci's seventh book of frottole (1507), which also includes three further settings of Petrarch signed with the name of Tromboncino. Yet these are not the first published settings of Petrarch's poems; the earliest was *Ite caldi sispiri* by Giovanni Brocco of Verona, in Petrucci's third book of frottole (1505). Composers' interest in *Il Canzoniere* grew rapidly; the eleventh book of frottole (1514) already included twenty-one settings of Petrarch. Whilst this may not be an overwhelming figure in terms of the sixteenth century as a whole, it should be remembered that only extant repertory is taken into account here, without the huge amount of sources lost over time. The poems of Petrarch were undoubtedly widely familiar and sung. Early evidence to this effect comes in the work of the poet and musician Serafino de' Ciminelli dall'Aquila (1466-1500), who was praised by his first biographer, Vincenzo Colli, for the 'sonetti, canzoni e Trionfi dil Petrarca' that he performed with lute accompaniment.<sup>15</sup> The practice of the improvised singing of Petrarch's poems – according to specific melodic formulae – was confirmed in 1558 by Gioseffo Zarlino, writing of the model *arie di cantare* or *modi di cantare* according to which Petrarch's sonnets and canzoni should be rendered.<sup>16</sup> Among its seventeen works, Petrucci's final publication *Musica de Messer Bernardo Pisano sopra le Canzone del Petrarca* (1520) includes seven settings of Petrarch canzoni by Bernardo Pisano, a musician at Florence Cathedral, although these are restricted, as are the settings by the frottolists, to the first stanza alone. The importance of this collection to the evolution of the early madrigal has been somewhat exaggerated in scholarship; it appears to represent no more than a local, and short-lived, Roman fashion associated with Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici).

The first composers to fully comprehend that the musicality of Petrarch's poetry was expressed in the varied rhythms of his versification, and that his poems were not suited to strophic settings, were the early madrigalists. A considerable number of Petrarch's poems were set, of course, by Verdelot and Arcadelt, although these two composers were

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<sup>14</sup> Walter H. Rubsamen, *Literary Sources of Secular Music in Italy (ca. 1500)*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1943), 24.

<sup>15</sup> James Haar 'The Early Madrigal: A Re-appraisal of its Sources and its Character', in *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge, 1981), 173.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

not less interested in the poetry of their contemporary *petrarchisti*, such as Bembo, Aretino, Lorenzo de' Medici, Sannazaro or Cassola. Both composers' choice of poetic texts appears to be linked to a specific Florentine tradition and literary trend quite independent of Bembo's Petrarchism.<sup>17</sup> However, it would be difficult in their case to speak of a musical Petrarchism: the madrigals of this period still generally adhere to a typical chansonesque idiom, with a largely homophonic texture, clear and intelligible declamation of the poetic text, and also the segmentation of the musical discourse into single phrases clearly marked out by cadences. The growing popularity of Petrarch's poems is also confirmed by manuscript sources: the voluminous Florentine collection Bologna Q21, from c. 1526, has fifteen settings, mostly by Sebastiano Festa, and three further collections from Florence (Florence 2495, Brussels FA VI.5 and Florence 122-5, all from the early 1530s) contain five settings each by Verdelot, Arcadelt, Pisano and Matteo Rampollini.<sup>18</sup>

Rampollini occupies a special place in the history of settings of Petrarch's poetry. As the author of a collection of madrigal cycles setting the complete texts of seven canzoni (*Musica ... sopra di alcuni canzoni del divin poeta M Francesco Petrarca*) – published in 1562, but composed in the early 1540s – Rampollini marks a new stage in the interest in *Il Canzoniere*. As he asserts in the dedication of this edition, he was inspired by the inherent musical nature of Petrarch's poetry and of the words themselves.<sup>19</sup> Each cycle was designed as an unified set, and the whole series of forty-nine madrigals was conceived according to a well-thought-out plan. It is worth remembering that Rampollini was Bernardo Pisano's successor in Florence Cathedral and doubtless drew vital stimulation from the latter's work.

The peak popularity of *Il Canzoniere* in Italy falls in the mid sixteenth century, and it is most fully manifest in the mid-cinquecento Venetian madrigal. This is linked both to the early editorial and poetical work of Bembo and also with his celebrated treatise *Prose della volgar lingua*, which had occupied him for more than a decade when it was published in 1525. Bembo regarded Petrarch as the greatest master of stylistic harmony and argued for the superiority of Petrarch's verse over that of Dante because of its greater elegance, its avoidance of violent or excessive imagery. Recommending Petrarch's work as a model of domestic po-

<sup>17</sup> Stefano La Via, 'Eros and thanatos: a Ficinian and Laurentian reading of Verdelot's "Si lieta e grata morte"', *Early Music History* 21 (2002), 75-116.

<sup>18</sup> Iain Fenlon and James Haar, *The Italian Madrigal in the Early Sixteenth Century: Sources and Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1988), 34.

<sup>19</sup> Frank A. D'Accone, 'Matteo Rampollini and his Petrarchan Canzone Cycles', *Musica Disciplina* 27 (1973), 65-106.

etry, he sanctioned the norms of the Tuscan language as a literary language and devised linguistic theories in which he referred to both the rhetoric of Cicero and the poetical language of Petrarch. As well as drawing extensively on centuries-old literary tradition, he placed particular emphasis on new poetic values, such as the physical properties of words, their sound and rhythm, as a way of conveying what he describes as the qualities of *gravità* and *piacevolezza*. He observed not only that words should be selected and arranged according to their affective power – as in classical rhetoric – but also that this power resided in the technical components of words themselves (*numero* and *suono*) and in the way that they were combined with others (*variazione*). By explicating Petrarch in Ciceronian terms, Bembo implicitly located his lyrics in the performative domain of the orator. As Dean Mace has asserted, Bembo's theories were influential on the early madrigal aesthetic,<sup>20</sup> although they seem less convincing today. And whilst this influence was not so strong in Florence as it was in Rome, where Bembo became Papal Secretary in 1513, there is no doubt that his *Prose della volgar lingua* played an important role in sensitising composers to the tonal nuances of the Tuscan language and to the hitherto disregarded poetical qualities of *Il Canzoniere*.

The particular interest that surrounded Bembo's theories in Venice resulted to a great extent from the activities of the informal academy of Domenico Venier.<sup>21</sup> The elevated literary climate in Venice is most fully reflected in the madrigal prints of Adrian Willaert and Cipriano de Rore. Martha Feldman has distinguished two clearly defined categories appearing in Venetian madrigals that are most clearly differentiated in the works of Willaert: on one side stood 'the monolithic repertory of the *Musica nova*, representing so implacably a musical embodiment of the classic, "authentic" Petrarchism prized by the literary elite', and on the other stood 'the heterogenous repertory of anthologised works that were mostly more immediate in their appeal, with no obvious claims for a transcendent musical poetic'.<sup>22</sup> The private style, influenced to a great extent by Bembo and his followers, helped to transform the madrigal into a far more serious, high-minded genre. Of the twenty-five madrigals of Willaert's *Musica nova*, twenty-two are settings of Petrarch's sonnets from the 'In vita di Laura' section of *Il Canzoniere*. These most fully demon-

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<sup>20</sup> Dean T. Mace, 'Pietro Bembo and Literary Origins of the Italian Madrigal', *Musical Quarterly* 55 (1969), 65-86.

<sup>21</sup> Martha Feldman, 'The Academy of Domenico Venier, Music's Literary Muse in Mid-Cinquecento Venice', *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991), 476-512, and Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, 1995), 45-48.

<sup>22</sup> Feldman, *City Culture*, 204.

strate the Venetian madrigal style, modelled on the contemporary two-section motet with dense counterpoint. The continuously and rapidly shifting textures reflect here to a greater or lesser extent the rhetorical features of highly literary texts. And although this important collection did not find its way into print until 1559, its influence was felt long before – in the 1540s or possibly even towards the end of the 1530s.

The publication of Rore's first book of five-voice madrigals, in 1542, marks an important turning point in the history of Italian song. Rore incorporated into this collection sixteen settings of sonnets by Petrarch, with only four texts by other poets; a collection with such an emphasis was unprecedented. Rore's style is noticeably more dramatic than Willaert's, and his work shows a new awareness of musical rhetoric as a full partner of poetry, chiefly the work of Petrarch as interpreted by Bembo and his followers. As Feldman has shown, 'their elegiac breadth and polyphonic intricacy vested the Italian lyric with a complex musical language formerly reserved for sacred Latin texts'.<sup>23</sup> This stylistic change was confirmed by Rore in his second book of madrigals (1544), and especially in his expansive cycle of eleven madrigals from Petrarch's final canzoni *Vergina bella*, first printed in 1548 (*Musica di Cipriano de Rore sopra le stanze del Petrarca in laude della Madonna*). Other Venetian pupils of Willaert, such as Girolamo Parabosco, Perissone Cambio and Baldassare Donato, also displayed an entirely new approach to the structure of Petrarch's poems, creating works which reproduce the whole complexity of Petrarchan syntax and style. Just how influential on the choice of texts was the literary environment of Venice is indicated by the fact that the poems of Petrarch constitute nearly half of all the texts set by composers from Willaert's circle, and over forty of Rore's one hundred and seven madrigals are to Petrarch's verse – almost twice as many as in Arcadelt.<sup>24</sup>

A similar path to that taken by Willaert was trod by the young Orlando de Lassus; of the twenty-two works contained in his *Primo libro di Madrigali a cinque voci*, printed in Venice in 1555, as many as seventeen are settings of Petrarch. He not only set four texts also set by Willaert, but also borrowed from several of Willaert's madrigals from *Musica nova*, incorporating elements of Willaert's pieces into his own. As Sarah M. Stoycos has convincingly shown,<sup>25</sup> Lassus addressed his edition to Venetian audiences, which explains his attraction to Venetian traditions. Las-

<sup>23</sup> Martha Feldman, 'Rore's "selva selvaggia": The Primo libro of 1542', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989), 547-603, at 551.

<sup>24</sup> Feldman, *City Culture*.

<sup>25</sup> Sarah M. Stoycos, 'Making an initial impression: Lassus's first book of five-part madrigals', *Music and Letters* 86 (2005), 537-559.



sus's preference for Petrarch continued throughout much of his career as a madrigalist: all told, he composed close to sixty settings, reprinted many times and universally admired.

The year 1555 also saw the publication of the first settings of Petrarch texts by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina; another of his publications, from 1558, also contained centos comprising lines from various Petrarch poems, and a 1586 collection included the two canzoni most favoured by the madrigalists: *Si è debile il filo* and *Se l' pensier che mi strugge* (cited by Bembo as an example of Petrarch's linguistic mastery). Both in these settings and also in the later cycle *Vergine bella* (1581), modelled on a cycle by Rore, Palestrina closely observed the formal construction of the texts and maintained conservative methods of setting them. A large concentration of Petrarch texts is also found in Philippe de Monte's first book of five-voice madrigals (1554), in which nine of the fifteen texts are by Petrarch.

An entirely independent path was taken by Nicola Vicentino. Although he set only two Petrarch sonnets, *L'aura che'l verde lauro e l'aureo crine* and *Passa la nave mia*, his madrigals hold a most exceptional place in the history of settings of Petrarch's lyric verse. With their rich (five- and six-voice respectively) texture, advanced chromaticism, unexpected modulations and harsh dissonances, they emphasise the 'manneristic' traits of these sonnets.<sup>26</sup>

The fascination with Petrarch's texts swept the whole of Italy over this period. Some of his sonnets enjoyed a most exceptional popularity, such as *Solo e pensoso*, familiar from almost twenty settings composed between 1540 and 1618,<sup>27</sup> and *Pace non trovo*, which was the subject of literary and musical paraphrases, travesties and parodies.<sup>28</sup> Only towards the end of the sixteenth century, with the emergence of a phase of literary anti-Petrarchism, did the popularity of Petrarch's poetry among composers considerably decline. However, his sonnets were still being used by representatives of the late madrigal, such as Giaches de Wert

<sup>26</sup> Denis Stevens, 'Petrarch in Renaissance Music', in *Francesco Petrarca, Citizen of the World*, ed. Aldo S. Bernardo (Padua and New York, 1980), 151-178, at 172.

<sup>27</sup> Hartmut Schick, "'Solo e pensoso": vier Madrigalkomponisten interpretieren Petrarca', in: [www.phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/SekLit/P2004A/Schick.htm](http://www.phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/SekLit/P2004A/Schick.htm). (2004). See also Bernhard Janz, *Die Petrarca-Vertonungen von Luca Marenzio. Dichtung und Musik in späten Cinquecento-Madrigal* (Tutzing, 1992), Massimo Privitera, 'Malinconia e acedia. Intorno a "Sole e pensoso" di Luca Marenzio', *Studi musicali* 23 (1994) 29-71, and Ilaria Zamuner, 'Luca Marenzio centonatore. Selezione poetica tra formacanzoniere petrarchesca e opera aperta tassiana (1585-88)', *La cartellina. Musica corale e didattica* 21 (1997) 39-34.

<sup>28</sup> James Haar, "'Pace non trovo": A Study in Literary and Musical Parody', *Musica Disciplina* 20 (1966), 95-149.

and Luca Marenzio, who, in their settings – particularly in the famous sonnet *Solo e pensoso* from 1581 (Wert) and 1599 (Marenzio) – brought out the dramatic and expressive elements of the poetry on an unprecedented scale.<sup>29</sup> The greatest number of Petrarch texts were set by Wert and Monte (65 and 68 settings respectively), although they still represented only a small percentage of the vast madrigal output of these two composers. Mechthild Caanitz lists almost 1450 sixteenth-century settings of poems by Petrarch,<sup>30</sup> but one must not forget that many of these are Petrarchisms, quoting only the opening line of a Petrarch poem.

Petrarch holds a most singular place in the oeuvre of Monteverdi. By contrast to most of the madrigalists, Monteverdi set only six Petrarch poems over the course of his long life. The first two, from the 'In morte di Laura' section of *Il Canzoniere* (*Zofiro torna* and *Oimè il bel viso*), he included in his sixth book of madrigals published in 1614, but they clearly belong to a much earlier period than the concertato compositions in the book of madrigals, and are undoubtedly linked to his own personal experience (in 1607 his wife died). Further settings appear in his final publications: two each in the eighth book of madrigals from 1638 (*Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace* and *Vago augelletto*) and in *Selva morale e spirituale* from 1641 (*Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse* and *O ciechi, il tanto affaticar*). With the sole exception of *O ciechi, il tanto affaticar* (from Petrarch's *Trionfo della morte*), they are all settings of sonnets from *Il Canzoniere*.

## 2.

*Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace*<sup>31</sup> (see Appendix) is one of the most famous sonnets from *Il Canzoniere*, and one which had considerable influence, direct or indirect, on succeeding generations of poets. And yet it did not enjoy such a great popularity among Renaissance composers as did other Petrarch poems. What is more, of the ten settings of this text enumerated by Thomas Marrocco,<sup>32</sup> three constitute a 'parody'

<sup>29</sup> Schick, "Solo e pensoso".

<sup>30</sup> Mechthild Caanitz, *Petrarca in der Geschichte der Musik* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1969), 78.

<sup>31</sup> Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Gianfrancesco Contini, Torino, 1974; Engl. trans. Stephen Minta, *Petrarch and Petrarchism. The English and French Traditions* (Manchester, 1980) (see Appendix). See also: *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The 'Rime sparse' and Other Lyrics*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, Mass., 1976).

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Marrocco, 'A Checklist of Musical Settings on the Poems of Francesco Petrarca', *Quadrivium* 15 (1974), 115.

of earlier settings, in keeping with the Renaissance concept of *imitatio*. The first sixteenth-century setting is a four-voice frottola by Tromboncino from before 1516. This is followed by a four-voice madrigal by Arcadelt (published in 1539), a five-voice madrigal by de Rore (pub. 1542), a four-voice parody of Arcadelt's setting by Francesco Menta (pub. 1560), a five-voice parody of de Rore's setting by Stefano Rossetto (pub. 1560), a four-voice setting, also parodying Rore, by Hippolito Chamaterò (pub. 1569), settings by Philippe de Monte (pub. 1576), Orazio Vecchi (pub. 1604) and Sigismondo d'India (pub. 1618), and finally the famous setting by Monteverdi (pub. 1638). It is worth noting here that the parodies by Menta, Rossetto and Chamaterò retain both the modal characteristics of their models and also their compositional strategy (respectively: F mode and homorhythmic opening in the settings by Arcadelt and Menta, and D mode transposed and imitative counterpoint opening by Rore, Rossetto and Chamaterò). To the settings listed above, we must add an anonymous setting from a 1577 collection (only two books of this edition have been preserved), which displays the same contemplative, homorhythmic opening as in Arcadelt and Monteverdi.<sup>33</sup> There also exists a setting by Marc Antonio Ingegneri from his second book of madrigals (published in 1572) of the anonymous sonnet *Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace*. Here, only the opening line is from Petrarch; the remainder of the text has little in common with the author of *Il Canzoniere*, although it is also filled with similar Petrarchan dualities and key words. This setting by Ingegneri also contains a most interesting allusion to Rore's setting, although it is not a parody to the same extent as are the madrigals of Rossetto or Chamaterò, differing in terms of both key and overall compositional plan.<sup>34</sup>

Tromboncino's four-voice frottola *Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace*<sup>35</sup> (in the Aeolian mode) was published in 1516 in *Frottole libro secundo ... Andra Antico*,<sup>36</sup> and the following year in Petrucci's edition of organ transcriptions.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, Arcadelt's four-voice madrigal<sup>38</sup> (in the Ly-

<sup>33</sup> See incipit in Harry B. Lincoln, *The Italian Madrigal and Related Repertories: Indexes to Printed Collections, 1500-1600* (New Haven, 1988), 773.

<sup>34</sup> Laurie Stras, 'Recording Tarquinia: imitation, parody and reportage in Ingegneri's "Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace"', *Early Music*, August 1999, 358-377.

<sup>35</sup> For a complete edition see Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal* (Princeton, 1949), vol. 3, 10-13.

<sup>36</sup> RISM [1516]<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> RISM 1517<sup>1</sup> (*Frottole Intabulate da sonare organi*).

<sup>38</sup> For a complete edition see Jacob Arcadelt, *Opera omnia* (CMM 31), ed. Albert Seay (American Institute of Musicology 1968), 58-61.

dian mode), published in 1539 in *Terzo libro de i madrigali a quattro voci*, actually dates from a considerably earlier period, as it is transmitted by the Florentine collection Florence 122-5, from the early 1530s, which also includes three settings from Petrarch's *Il Canzoniere* by Verdelot (as well as Arcadelt's settings of poems by Bembo, Aretino, Lorenzo de' Medici, Sannazaro, Cassola and other *petrarchisti*). Besides *Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace*, the *Terzo libro* also contains settings of three other Petrarch sonnets, two by Arcadelt.<sup>39</sup>

Published three years later than Arcadelt's *Terzo libro* was the first madrigal publication by Rore: *Madrigali a cinque voci* (1542). Of the twenty texts set here, as many as twelve are sonnets by Petrarch, and four more are also sonnets (by other poets). This represented a landmark edition, as no previous collection of madrigals had contained so many settings of sonnets, and none had been ordered by mode according to the traditional numbering 1–8. This organisation clearly indicates the composer's involvement in the book's publication. Significant in this context is the sequence in which the madrigals are ordered: the placement of the sonnet *Hor che 'l ciel e la terra*<sup>40</sup> (in the Dorian mode transposed) as the second work in order was not accidental, as it has its symmetrical counterpart in the penultimate poem in the collection: the anonymous *Hor che 'l aria e la terra*, linked to the former not only by subject matter and lexis, but also by the same basic declamatory rhythm that opens the work.

It is difficult to establish how many years separate the madrigal by Rore from the setting by Monteverdi<sup>41</sup> (in the Aeolian mode) for six voices (C, Q, A, T I, T II, B), two violins and continuo, published in his eighth book of madrigals in 1638; there is, however, some evidence to suggest that the Monteverdi may pre-date Rore's rendering by at least five years.<sup>42</sup> It forms part of the cycle of *Canti guerrerri* (preceded only by his setting of the anonymous *Altri canti d'amor*) and – apart from *Vago augelletto*, placed in the cycle of *Canti amorosi* – it is the only setting of a text by Petrarch in the entire collection. The inclusion of *Hor che 'l ciel e la terra* in the cycle of *Canti guerrerri*, representing a 'genere concitato', is justified both by the overall character of the sonnet, illustrating the narrator's spiritual turmoil, and also by its lexis (see line 7: *guerra è'l mio stato*). As for the inclusion by Monteverdi in his eighth book of madrigals,

<sup>39</sup> Iain Fenlon and James Haar, *The Italian Madrigal*, 260.

<sup>40</sup> For a complete edition see Cipriano de Rore, *Opera omnia* (CMM 14), ed. Bernhard Meier (American Institute of Musicology 1963), vol. 2, 4-9.

<sup>41</sup> For a complete edition see Claudio Monteverdi, *Tutte le opere*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipero (Vienna, 1929, rev. ed. Vienna, 1967), vol. 8, No. 1, 39-74.

<sup>42</sup> Steven Saunders, 'New Light on the genesis of Monteverdi's eight book of madrigals', *Music and Letters* 77 (1996), 186.

dominated by the poetry of Rinuccini, Tasso, Guarini and Marino, of a sonnet by Petrarch – a poet who by 1638 was decidedly outmoded – it can be seen as highly significant. It indicates that the composer considered this poem, filled with tensions and contrasts, as carrying an emotional charge that was perfectly suited to his ideas and his new musical language, generally referred to today as baroque.

It is also worth noting that Monteverdi's piece contains subtle allusions to two earlier settings: by Arcadelt and, in particular, Vecchi. The veneration which Monteverdi held for these two composers hardly needs stressing: it is testified on the one hand by his preparation of an edition of Arcadelt's *Primo libro* in 1627,<sup>43</sup> and on the other by his borrowings from Vecchi's *Canzonette Libro I* (1580). Beyond the homophonic deployment of four voices at the beginning used by Arcadelt, Monteverdi returned more directly to Vecchi, whose setting opens in hushed recitative in the low voices – an idea followed closely by Monteverdi. After several bars, however, he departs from the model, shaping the work in a completely different, innovative way.<sup>44</sup> It is highly likely that Monteverdi chose the sonnet *Hor che 'l ciel e la terra* because it had been set earlier by Vecchi; in this way he could pay the ultimate tribute to the composer who had inspired his earliest extant collection of music: the *Canzonette* from 1584.

The sonnet *Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace*, from the 'In vita di Laura' section of *Il Canzoniere*, is archetypally Petrarchan not only in its perfect fusion of classical allusions (echoing Virgil, Ovid and Tibullus), but also in its deployment of the dramatic motif of the lover's sleeplessness.<sup>45</sup> Here, as in two of his sestinas (Nos. 22 and 237), Petrarch identifies the poet-lover with Dido by echoing the famous description of Dido on the eve of her suicide.<sup>46</sup> The poet not only exploits Virgil's passage for its value as interpretative gloss, but also imitates Virgil's complex rhetoric. As Nancy K. Ruff observes, 'the recollection of Virgil's Dido meant, for Petrarch's early readers, her condemnation and, by association, the condemnation of the poet-lover who laments within the same nocturnal set-

<sup>43</sup> RISM 16277.

<sup>44</sup> Glen E. Watkins and Thomas La May, 'Imitatio and Emulatio. Changing Concepts of Originality in the Madrigals of Gesualdo and Monteverdi in the 1590s', in *Claudio Monteverdi. Festschrift für Reinhold Hammerstein*, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Laaber, 1986).

<sup>45</sup> Nancy K. Ruff, 'Craving Love or Death: Classical "Furor", Scriptural "Caritas" and the Lover in Petrarch's "Canzoniere"'; in *Love and Death in the Renaissance*, ed. Kenneth R. Bartlett and Konrad Eisenbichler (Ottawa, 1991), 145-160, and Greene, *The Light in Troy*, 116.

<sup>46</sup> *Aeneid* 4, 522f.



ting'.<sup>47</sup> This poem, as Stephen Minta opines, 'is coloured by a totally convincing sense of sexual frustration, a frustration that is born and dies and is reborn countless times as the poet alternately satisfies himself and tortures himself with the image of his beloved'.<sup>48</sup>

*Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace* is a sonnet with a classical strophic pattern, containing fourteen hendecasyllabic lines grouped in two quatrains and two tercets. In the musical setting by Tromboncino, the hendecasyllabic line is invariably matched by eleven units of musical declamation, but in Arcadelt, Rore and Monteverdi the number of syllables correlated with the notes is slightly greater: the removal of elisions by these composers transforms the *endecassilabo* into a twelve- or even thirteen-syllable line. The sonnet's division into two parts is related, above all, to the different type of narration employed in each: the two quatrains are filled with description, whilst the two tercets are reflective in character. This distinction is accompanied by a different rhythmic pattern (*abba* in the quatrains, *cde* in the tercets), which gives rise to a substantial intonational division at the end of the second quatrain. The overall construction of the sonnet imposed a binary structure on the composers, who structured their settings in two independent parts separated by a cadence; in the renderings by Rore and Monteverdi these are clearly distinguished as a *prima pars* and *seconda pars*. In the Monteverdi, these sections are so dissimilar to one another that they are sometimes treated as two separate, musically unrelated, works.<sup>49</sup> Whereas nature and the narrator are completely distinct from one another in the two quatrains, in the tercets they are closely related, through the description of the fountain (as a metaphor for the poet's lady).

As we know, the musicality of Petrarch's poetry results from the rhythmic variation of its versification and the freedom with which secondary accents are distributed in the lines. Consequently, this poetry is not suited to strophic song forms. And yet both Tromboncino and, in part, Arcadelt chose this very method of setting the sonnet under discussion. The former treats it in a manner that is typical of the frottola: the lines forming rhyming couplets are set in both quatrains and both tercets strophically, that is, the musical setting accompanies only the first quatrain and the first tercet; furthermore, he also sets the two rhyming middle lines of the quatrain (*bb*) in an identical manner. In the Arcadelt, too, the quatrains are essentially set in a strophic pattern; the music of the second quatrain is a faithful repetition of the first. Besides this, one can

<sup>47</sup> Nancy K. Ruff, 'Craving Love', 145.

<sup>48</sup> Minta, *Petrarch and Petrarchism*, 67.

<sup>49</sup> Guido Pannain, 'Studi monteverdiani', *Rassegna Musicale* 32 (1962), 12.

also discern in his setting an attempt to link the two rhyming middle lines of the quatrain (*bb*) in a single musical phrase. In the two tercets, meanwhile, Arcadelt clearly emphasises – contrary to Tromboncino – the caesura, highlighting the internal division of the tenth line (*move'l dolce e l'amaro, // ond'io mi pasco*) and the thirteenth line (*mille volte il di moro // e mille nasco*). The caesura is exposed even more distinctly in the setting by Rore, and for Monteverdi it constitutes a rule from which he never departs. This is linked to the opposite phenomenon, namely the emphasising of the enjambment. This occurs in Petrarch's sonnet only once, between lines 5 and 6. Here, the narration collides with the clausula of the line, and the enjambed unit of the sentence is strongly emphasised. These syntagmatic peculiarities of the poem are brilliantly matched in the setting by Rore, who makes excellent use of the contrapuntal device referred to by Zarlino (1588) as 'fuggir la cadenza' ('evading the cadence'). For Monteverdi, meanwhile, the enjambment provides an opportunity for the obsessive repetition (over 29 bars) of the section of text from the caesura to the end of the following line (*e chi mi sface sempre m'è inanzi per mia dolce pena*).

The form of the sonnet imposes numerous restrictions, but at the same time offers a degree of licence. In the case of *Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace*, of exceptional significance for the structure of the work as a whole is the additional caesura between the first and second quatrains. This results from Petrarch's unusually strong contrasting of the two quatrains on several planes at once: the planes of subject matter, dramaturgy, the tonal organisation of the narrative and finally the rhetorical figures in the text. It is this contrasting which appears to have fascinated composers most of all, attracting their particular attentions.

Contrastive action in the area of subject matter involves the abrupt transition from macrocosm to microcosm – from nature to the individual, who is the lyrical subject. The sonnet begins with a subtle description of the natural world. This description, full of words expressing immobility, quietude, silence, calmness and somnolence (*tace, sonno affrena, in giro mena, giace*), is intended to create the maximal distance and contrast to the second quatrain. The speaker juxtaposes the calmness of three of nature's four elements: earth and the animals that inhabit it immobilized in sleep (line 1 and 2), air and the heavens covered with the starry train (line 1 and 3), and water and the sea in waveless repose (line 4) – all against the turbulence of the fourth element, fire – specifically the fire of passion within him (line 5). The second quatrain brings a sudden transition in the lyrical subject from the position of an observer of the outside world to the position of analysis and expression of his own inner state, filled with pain, conflict and turmoil (*ardo, piango, guerra el mio stato*).

The rapid succession of the four active intransitive verbs conveying this turmoil provides in turn a foil to the slowly unfolding paratactic period of the first quatrain, where each line ends with the statement of a single verb (*tace ... affrena ... mena ... giace*). As Greene notes, 'the four explosive verbs in the first person crash upon the nocturnal stillness, almost as though bursting from the deferral of subjective feeling. They bring in their aftermath a series of oppositions and paradoxes that are peculiarly obtrusive because they so patently have no place in the silent cosmos'.<sup>50</sup> Finally, the first and last words of lines 7 and 8, *guerra* and *pace*, indicate the oxymoronic contrarieties and antithetical conflicts which the speaker as lover experiences inwardly. The sonnet's two quatrains present a contrast between nature's peacefulness at night and the lover's inner restlessness – a contrast that stands unresolved rhythmically, grammatically and syntactically at the end of the second quatrain.

This contrastive action which is manifest in the two quatrains becomes a fixed element in the mood of the whole sonnet. By contrast to the literal statement of the two quatrains, the tercets turn on two similes, both of which heighten the speaker's irresolution. In the first tercet, like a source of sweet and bitter water, the hand of Laura cures and irritates him. In the second, the speaker dies and is reborn a thousand times a day; here the word *salute*, with its moral and religious overtones, conveys fitting gravity.<sup>51</sup> The contrastive effect involves the use of a number of opposing notions expressing emotional conflict and the polarisation of feelings (*dolce/amaro, risana/punge, moro/nasco, guerra/pace*), as well as the powerful oxymoron *dolce pena*. As Greene rightly asserts,<sup>52</sup> everything in these lines is engaged oxymoronically with its contrary. Thus the noun *martir* (line 12), although it happens not to be qualified oxymoronically by an adjective, nevertheless *is* qualified in the larger context of the sonnet by the presence of the repeated adjective *dolce* (lines 6 and 10) and by the verbs *risana* (line 11) and *nasco* (line 13). Also the closing line of the sonnet presents a resounding echo of the earlier paradoxes of feeling, which Petrarch expresses in characteristic fashion: the narrator is at once both near and far from his salvation (line 14), and although his lady's constant presence in his thoughts does bring him some peace and solace (line 8), it also wounds him and causes him pain (lines 5 and 6).<sup>53</sup> All these notions serve to represent the inner discord of the lyrical subject, his inner conflict, fluctuating emotions and helplessness. As Greene

<sup>50</sup> Greene, *The Light in Troy*, 117.

<sup>51</sup> Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms*, 39-40.

<sup>52</sup> Greene, *The Light in Troy*, 117.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*



sees it, we can read the last line without qualification only if we take *salute* (line 14) 'to refer to that psychological and ontological integrity that would also be semiotic repose, that ultimate peace he seems to glimpse fragmentarily in the dim presence of "her". This *salute* is truly, unambiguously distant, and its distance is reflected in the oxymoronic verbal texture. We have the right, then, to speak of a fall into oxymoron, understood both as a rhetorical instrument [...] and a norm of personal emotion'.<sup>54</sup>

The contrastive action in the area of dramaturgy is linked to a certain potential theatricality in the two quatrains. That immobile nature, 'lying in wait', acts as the backdrop to the drama that is about to unfold. This theatricality is also fully reflected in the syntax. The main clause begins with a sudden eruption of the lyrical 'I', marked by a rapid, nervy declamation in first-person parataxis, but the whole of the first quatrain is but a subordinate clause (*Hor ... veglio, penso, ardo, piango*), the removal of which would not disturb the flow of ideas, as it introduces another logical unit – a description of nature, of an enclave of calm.

Another kind of contrastive effect is the use of differing sound instrumentation between the two quatrains. The juxtaposition of words here is not accidental, and their specific sequence lends a different tonal character to each of the quatrains. The accumulation of a great many vowels and semivowels (*l, m, n, z*) in the first quatrain (a total of 92) already sets up a certain contrast to the second quatrain (83). A much stronger contrast is created, however, by the differing use of double consonants: these occur in the first quatrain in eight words (*terra, augelli, sonno, affrena, notte, carro, stallato, letto*), but in only two in the second quatrain (*vegghio, guerra*). These double consonants help to shape the fluidity and 'softness' of the narration, giving one the impression of a greater mellifluousness in the first quatrain in relation to the 'hard', 'coarse' second quatrain. In this way the sound instrumentation heightens the intensity of all the intrinsic properties of the two quatrains, lending them an additional poetic quality and enhancing the meaning of particular words.

Yet the contrastive action of greatest significance takes place on the level of the rhetorical figures of the verbal text, which are linked, above all, to Petrarch's use of contrasting poetical figures: polysyndeton in the first quatrain, and asyndeton in the second. And whilst the sonnet is of a regular construction and unspectacular syntax, these figures bear a fundamental influence on the contrastive effect of the two quatrains. The polysyndeton, involving the linking of particular words, parts of lines or

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

lines with the conjunction 'e', was interpreted by composers in different ways. The settings by Tromboncino and Arcadelt open with a calm, undisturbed declamation of the text; this mood is felt particularly clearly in the setting by Arcadelt, who, after a long, emphatic chord underscoring the word *Hor*, continues with a calm four-voice homorhythmic texture, only slightly embellished with short melismata. In Rore's setting, too, the first quatrain is marked by a calm dotted *soggetto* with the leap of a fifth upwards; in typical Venetian style, the syncopated entry of the quintus is distinctly contrasted with unsyncopated entries in the other voices. A similar procedure is employed by Monteverdi: he begins the first quatrain with an extremely simplified, tension-free sequence of freely-changing chords, thus emphatically isolating the word *Hor*, as if he wished to stress his familiarity with the earlier setting by Arcadelt. This calm musical narration continues for quite some time without any great harmonic changes, as a monotonous *falsobordone* organised rhythmically around the rhythms of the text.

In the second quatrain of the sonnet, Petrarch employed asyndeton – a 'conjunctionless' construct through which he obtains a maximal condensation of utterance and a terseness and concentration of expression. Due to their strophic patterns, the settings by Tromboncino and Arcadelt fail to exploit the possibility of depicting this figure in music. The same does not apply to the madrigal by Rore. The calmly evolving melodic lines of the opening – in interwoven imitational strands – are followed by the appearance in all voices of the dramatic exclamations *veglio*, *penso*, *ardo*, *piango*, ascending stepwise then immediately falling, rich in syncopations and suspensions, with an unpredictable harmonic course and irregular rhythms. In contrast to the first quatrain, Rore does not employ here even the briefest melisma, declaiming each word in a plaintive two-note gesture and separating them with rests. Moreover, these motifs are subject to a sort of 'interference', the global result of which, through the play of syllables and rests, is the multiple appearance of every single word. Only with the shift to a third person narrative at the end of line 5 does the composer return to the standard counterpoint and declamatory rate.

Monteverdi interprets this asyndeton in a similar way, albeit through somewhat different means. The two-note motifs rising in fourths that accompany the words *veglio*, *penso*, *ardo* and *piango* are divided by short rests, as in Rore's rendering, and additionally each word is emphasised with a new chord (the word *veglio* appears here twice), which forges an harmonic progression around the circle of fifths (D-G-C-F-B flat). When this section of text is restated, the composer isolates the words from one another (by means of semibreve rests), combining them in a completely

new chord progression (A-D-G-C). This dynamically changing chordal writing, underscored by the strings, helps to heighten the emotional intensity of this section of the poem, forming an exceptionally powerful contrast with the setting of the first quatrain, which was harmonically very static. Furthermore, this asyndeton appears in both an harmonic and a semantic context: its second appearance 'interferes' with the subsequent words *e chi mi sface* and the oxymoron *dolce pena*. Extreme contrasts also accompany the last two lines of the second quatrain: here, the lively dotted figures expressing the narrator's spiritual turmoil (*guerra è'l mio stato*) are strongly contrasted with the simple chordal texture that accompanies the following words of the poem (*e sol di lei pensando hò qualche pace*).

All the contrastive operations discussed above converge on the oxymoron *dolce pena* (sweet pain), fully revealing its poetic qualities. Yet in setting these two quatrains in a strophic pattern, both Tromboncino and Arcadelt overlooked the potential of this extraordinary figure. It is quite surprising that Arcadelt, so alive in other madrigals to nuances of poetic language, is not interested here in the musical dramatisation of poetic contrasts and antithesis. The weight of this oxymoron is only fully appreciated by Rore and Monteverdi, who in their settings repeat many times the whole section of text encompassing the enjambed lines 5 and 6. It is worth noting that in Rore's madrigal the second statement of the oxymoron in the cantus is combined with a very long (in the context of this virtually syllabic madrigal) melisma of seven notes. An oxymoron is, of course, a figure with a strong grammatical coherence, in spite of the tension that is created between the noun and the attribute with which it is combined. Rore consequently sets it as a uniform, integrated musical phrase, albeit one which contains within it a subtle rhythmic contrast, resulting here from the melismatic setting of the noun *pena* and the syllabic setting of the attribute *dolce* – a contrast that is wholly suited to these contradictory notions.

But it is Monteverdi who expresses most fully this oxymoron's inherent contrast. Like Rore, he takes account of the enjambment and merges lines 5 and 6 in the rapid declamation *e chi mi sface sempre m'è inanzi per mia dolce pena*. Without the use of any melismata, he deploys instead a brilliant device: onto this oxymoron he superimposes the members of the asyndeton *vegghio, penso, ardo, piango*, broken up by rests. This syntactical interference results in a cluster of words uttered simultaneously in 'dolorous' declamation: *vegghio/pena* (I feel/pain), *penso/pena* (I think/pain), *ardo/pena* (I burn/pain), *piango/pena* (I cry/pain), preceded by the combination *veglio/sface* (I feel/it troubles me). This simultaneous declamation is further 'seasoned' by the harsh dissonance of a major seventh on

the word *piango* (bar 43) and by sevenths and the false relation of a simultaneous semitone (notated as a diminished double octave, bars 56-57). This place is notable for another reason, as well: on this same 'dolorous' oxymoron, Monteverdi employs in the bass voice a note sequence identical with the structure of the Ancient Greek chromatic tetrachord *b-c-c#-e*, which, colliding with the note *c* in the tenor voice, forms a peculiar, strange-sounding harmony (bar 56). As Wolfgang Osthoff has observed, an identical bass-voice progression occurs in another work from the eighth book of madrigals, also to a text by Petrarch (*Vago augelletto*), and also to words expressing lament (*dolorosi guai*).<sup>55</sup> The use in both instances of a chromatic tetrachord provides clear proof of Monteverdi's allusion to ancient music, with all its subtle, affective connotations.

Another poetic figure of important contrastive significance is antithesis. This device usually occurs wherever the need arises to depict powerful emotional colour, and the combining of contrasting meanings in a single syntactical-logical whole is intended to serve the expression of something 'inexpressible'. In the sonnet under discussion, Petrarch employed antitheses in the first tercet: *dolce/amaro* (sweetness/bitterness), *risano/pungue* (heals/wounds). They are terminated only by hyperbole, as the ultimate limit of the condensation of emotional atmosphere (more on hyperbole below). This gradation of emotional tension through the use of antitheses was only transferred into the sphere of musical tensions by Monteverdi. This he achieved through the simultaneous use of several figures of musical rhetoric, such as *gradatio*, *mutatio per genus* (diatonicism – chromaticism), and above all *patopoiia*. Illustrating suffering in a 'classical' way with semitone inflections, he imparted to the setting of this section of the text a most extraordinary form: by means of a sequence of continual semitone rises in the prime and the fifth of a succession of chords, he forged a lengthy, highly agitated, musical narrative filled with unresolved tensions, culminating only after 23 bars (*seconda parte*, bars 5-28).

Petrarch's poem also owes its peculiarity to the specific use of hyperbole. The poet's placement of this ancient rhetorical figure (usually involving the magnification and intensification of certain characteristics, most often in quantitative terms) in the penultimate line of the sonnet (*mille volte il di moro e mille nasco*) is fully justified here by the contrastive action of the two quatrains, and helps to enhance the emotional colouring of the whole sonnet. The magnification of the change in the narrator's emotional state – *moro/nasco* (I die/I am born) – is already

<sup>55</sup> Wolfgang Osthoff, 'Petarca in der Musik des Abendlandes', *Castrum Peregrini* 20 (1954), 26.

expressed most distinctly in the setting by Rore, who repeats this phrase four times. Yet this hyperbole was illustrated in a quite remarkable way by Monteverdi, who repeats the line *mille volte il di moro e mille nasco* as many as seventeen times (*mille* appears twenty-six times); in addition, superimposing onto one another the words *moro/nasco*, he emphasises the continuity and endlessness of the changes in these two states, which is further heightened by the use of the hyperbole.

Petrarch's use of antithesis and hyperbole imparted a marked fluctuation of emotions to the sonnet: war and peace, bitterness and sweetness, wounding and healing, a thousandfold death and rebirth – all these metaphors portray an unrelenting clash of opposites, an inner conflict and torment, which cannot reach its end (line 12: *mio martir non giunga a riva*). It is a state that lasts eternally, as the conflict remains open and never resolved. The narrator's healing is just as distant (line 14: *tanta da la salute mia*) as the drying-up of the 'living source' (line 9: *fonte viva*), which is an obvious metaphor for Laura – the source of memories both sweet and bitter (line 10: *dolce e l'amaro*) and the cause of the inner conflict. The poem ends on a moderate climax: its emotional temperature does not fall to the very end, and the reader is deprived of a proper conclusion.

In this context, of key significance are the words of the last line of the sonnet (*tanto da la salute mia son lunge*). The word '*salute*' has, besides the religious sense of 'salvation', a wide range of meanings: 'welfare', 'safety', 'refuge', and also 'health' and 'well-being'. As Minta notes,<sup>56</sup> Petrarch's use of the term is thus highly suggestive: if he is clearly a long way from religious salvation, he is at least equally far from any possibility of emotional or sexual release. The weight of this line was already recognised by Tromboncino, who reiterated it with a variationally altered setting, in a manner unusual for the frottola. Arcadelt, in turn, expands the last line to dimensions almost three times as great as his settings of earlier lines, and repeats the word *lunge* (distant) three times in each voice of the composition. In contrast to his settings of other lines, he also delays the imitational entries of the voices, which may also testify a wish to emphasise that distance (*lunge*). Ultimately, this word, heard ten times, appears for the last time furnished with a long, ten-note melisma, which can be compared only to the closing section of the first part of the madrigal (bars 71-87). Rore proceeds in a similar way, exposing the last line of the sonnet four times in each of the five voices (seconda parte, bars 116-132). For Monteverdi, the final line provided an opportunity to deploy every compositional means possible. He showed particular reverence for the

<sup>56</sup> Minta, *Petrarch and Petrarchism*, 68.

word *lunge*. He created corresponding musical icons both from the longest melismata in the whole work (nineteen notes), in keeping with sixteenth-century madrigal tradition, and also from the unusual shape of the melodic lines in the outermost voices. After huge interval leaps (a tenth) heading in opposite directions, these lines again evolve in opposite directions, ultimately reaching an exceptionally great distance between the voices – as far as three octaves plus a fifth (*seconda parte*, bars 65-84).

As we have seen, the contrastive effects described above were created by the composers to varying extent and through the use of procedures often completely at odds with one another. Among them, Rore and Monteverdi clearly transcended the limits of conventional musical language, in order most fully to integrate with Petrarch's lyricism and convey the multiplicity of antitheses and contrasts. In this, one would be entirely justified in inscribing their settings into the tradition of musical Petrarchism, marked as they are with the same tensions and contrasts with which all Petrarch's lyric verse is replete, and of which Bembo wrote at such great length in *Gli Asolani*. As we read in one of Petrarch's sonnets, 'Amor [...] vol, che tra duo contrari mi distempre' ('Love [...] wishes me to be untuned between two contraries', sonnet No. 55). It was this same oxymoronic structure of erotic experience that prompted one of the speakers in *Gli Asolani* to eloquently reflect that 'each man must possess two souls leading him in opposite directions, since no one with a single soul could desire antithetical goals and feel antithetical emotions'.<sup>57</sup>

*Translated by John Comber*

## Appendix

Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace  
e le fere e gli augelli il sonno affrena,  
notte 'l carro stellato in giro mena  
e nel suo letto il mar senz' onda giace;

veglio, penso, ardo, piango, e chi mi sface  
sempre m'è inanzi per mia dolce pena;  
guerra è il mio stato, d'ira e di duol piena;  
e sol di lei pensando hò qualche pace.

Così sol d'una chiara fonte viva  
move 'l dolce e l'amaro, ond'io mi pasco;  
una man sola mi risana e pungue;

<sup>57</sup> Bembo, *Gli Asolani*, 30.

e perchè 'l mio martir non giunga a riva  
mille volte il di moro e mille nasco:  
tanto da la salute mia son lunge.

(Petrarch's text from: Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*,  
ed. G. Contini, Torino 1974)

Now that the heavens and the earth and the wind are still,  
and the wild beasts and the birds are checked in sleep,  
Night leads her starry chariot on its round,  
and in his bed the sea lies waveless;

I lie awake, I think, I burn, I weep, and she who is my undoing  
is always before me, to my sweet sorrow;  
war is my state, full of anger and grief,  
and only in thinking of her do I have some peace.

Thus from one clear, living fountain alone  
springs the sweetness and the bitterness of which I feed;  
one hand alone heals me and pierces me;

And in order that my suffering should have no end,  
a thousand times a day I die and a thousand times I am born:  
so far am I from my salvation.

(Translation from: Stephen Minta,  
*Petrarch and Petrarchism*)

