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What is the Best Method to Study Philosophy? Sebastiano Erizzo (1525-1585) and the 'Revival' of Plato in 16th-century Venice

Abstract

The article offers the first textual and contextual study of Sebastiano Erizzo's *Treatise on the instrument and method of the ancients* printed in Venice by Plinio Pietrasanta in 1554. Through examination of previously unstudied paratextual material, it argues that the work is linked to discussions on method that took place at the University of Padua, and to the programmes of vernacularisation projected or developed under the aegis of the *Accademia Veneziana* and the *Infiammati*; it is the result of a close collaboration between Erizzo, Bassiano Lando, Girolamo Ruscelli and Lodovico Dolce.

Keywords

Sebastiano Erizzo, Platonic method, vernacular Plato, Girolamo Ruscelli, Bassiano Lando, Accademia Veneziana/della Fama; Accademia degli Infiammati, University of Padua

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to shed further light on the diffusion of Platonism in sixteenth-century Italy, in the context of debates on philosophical order and method that took place in Venice and Padua. More specifically, it will offer for the first time a textual and contextual analysis of a treatise that has escaped the attention of modern scholars: Sebastiano Erizzo's *Trattato dell'istrumento et via inventrice degli antichi* (*Treatise on the instrument and method of the ancients*) printed in Venice by Plinio Pietrasanta in 1554.¹ Erizzo dedicates the text to his Paduan professor of medicine Bassiano Lando (or Landi), whilst Erizzo's mentor and literary agent Girolamo Ruscelli prefaces it to Marcello Cervini, future pope Marcello II.²

¹ Sebastiano Erizzo, *Trattato dell'istrumento et via inventrice degli antichi* (Venice: per Plinio Pietrasanta, 1554). Plinio Pietrasanta was working for a press financed by Girolamo Ruscelli at the time.

² There is to date no comprehensive analysis of Erizzo's *Trattato*, if one is to exclude a brief mention in Marco Sgarbi, *The Italian Mind* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 220-22. On Erizzo, see Gino Benzoni, 'Sebastiano Erizzo', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 43 (1993), 198-204; on Cervini, see Léon Dorez, 'Le Cardinal M. Cervini et l'imprimerie à Rome', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Archéologie et Histoire*, 12 (1892), 289-313 (pp. 306-08); Stanley Morison, 'Marcello Cervini Pope Marcellus II Bibliography's Patron Saint', *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 5 (1962), 301-18; Paola Piacentini, *La biblioteca di Marcello II Cervini: una ricostruzione dalle carte di Jeanne Bignami Odier: i libri a stampa* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2001); Raphaële Mouren, 'La lecture assidue des classiques: Marcello Cervini et Piero Vettori', in *Humanisme et Église entre France et Italie du début du XV^e siècle au milieu du XVI^e siècle*, ed. by Patrick Gilli (Rome: École française de Rome, 2004), pp. 433-63; Chiara Quaranta, *Marcello II Cervini (1501-1555). Riforma della Chiesa, concilio, Inquisizione* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010). On Ruscelli, see Claudia di Filippo Bareggi, *Il*

Sebastiano Erizzo (1525-1585) belonged to a prominent Venetian patrician family. After receiving a humanistic education in Venice, where he learnt ancient Greek and Latin, he studied at the University of Padua with Bassiano Lando, then professor of medicine. Back in Venice he combined a political career with intense scholarly activities, setting up a private library of more than a thousand books and collecting ancient artifacts and coins. During that time he published, always in Venice and with the help of Girolamo Ruscelli (and, after Ruscelli's death, Lodovico Dolce), the *Trattato* on method under discussion here (1554), vernacular translations of Plato (*Timaeus*, 1557; *Euthyphro*, *Crito*, *Apologia*, *Phaedo*, together with a reprint of *Timaeus* in 1574), a treatise of numismatics that became a best-seller (*Discorso sopra le medaglie*, 1559), a commentary on Petrarch (*Espositione nelle tre canzoni di Petrarca chiamate le tre sorelle*, 1561), a collection of six *novelle* modeled on Boccaccio (*Le sei giornate*, 1567) and a political treatise (*Discorso dei governi civili*, 1571). Erizzo also intended to publish a collection of vernacular letters in three books, to be printed by Vincenzo Valgrisi and dedicated to Vespasiano Gonzaga.³ The collection was never printed, and is now in a Vicenza manuscript, which is probably the exemplar prepared for publication.⁴

mestiere di scrivere. Lavoro intellettuale e mercato libraio a Venezia nel Cinquecento (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988), pp. 79-80; 290-91; 350-53; Paolo Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza corretto. La stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani (1470-1570)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), pp. 241-97; Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy. The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 109-26; Antonella Iacono, *Bibliografia di Girolamo Ruscelli. Le edizioni del Cinquecento* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2011); *Girolamo Ruscelli dall'accademia alla corte alla tipografia, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Viterbo, 6-8 ottobre 2011)*, ed. by Paolo Marini and Paolo Procaccioli (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2012).

³ See two letters Erizzo addressed to Pier Antonio Tollerenti (dated 13 March 1567 and 20 April 1567 respectively), in Manuscript G 3 8 7 (277) (=hereafter G) in the Biblioteca Bertoliana di Vicenza, at ff. 145v-147v and 147v-148v ('Vorrei bene che si mostrasse che la opera fosse stampata in Cremona, et non altrove, et più tosto ancora sarei contento, che il libro fosse da m. Vicenzo dedicato al Signore Vespasiano Gonzaga, che ad altrui [...] Io faccio pensiero di compartire questo mio volume di lettere in tre libri, due di lettere famigliari a diversi amici, il terzo sarà delle lettere giovanili, ovvero amoroze...'). Unless otherwise stated, all transcriptions are mine. Accents, punctuation, and capital letters have been regularised to follow modern standards. Abbreviations have been expanded and *u/v* have been distinguished according to modern usage. Word boundaries have been kept as in the original except for *agli*, *negli* etc, and *cioè*.

⁴ G includes letters Erizzo wrote between 1543 and 1584; it is divided in three books (Books I-II are addressed to his *familiars*; Book III, under the heading '*lettere giovanili*', includes anonymous love letters), followed by three treatises: the *Discorso dei metodi et delle vie dagli antichi usate nel ritrovare le cose*; the *Discorso sopra tutte le cose che possono cadere sotto la dottrina et del più perfetto et vero modo d'insegnare*; and the manuscript version of the *Discorso dei governi civili*. For a detailed description of the manuscript, see Silvia Zoppi, *Sebastiano Erizzo. Lettera sulla poesia* (Florence: Olchski, 1989), pp. 8-11, with a list of all named addressees, pp. 71-74. Of the letters, four are reprinted in *Lettere di XIII uomini illustri* (Venice: per Comin da Trino, 1560), XV, pp. 620-35 (letter to Bassiano Lando, 17 November 1553=G, ff. 153r-154v); pp. 625-27 (letter to Bassiano Lando, 4 March 1552=G, f. 155r-v); pp. 627-35 (letter to G. G. M., s.l., s.d.=G, ff. 155v-159r); and pp. 636-37

In this article, I will first offer a detailed study of the cultural context in which Erizzo developed his ideas on method, and then analyse a number of unpublished works and letters from the Vicenza manuscript mentioned above. The first one is a short treatise on method dedicated to Bassiano Lando (*Discorso dei metodi et delle vie da gli antichi usate nel ritrovare le cose*), written shortly after the publication of the *Trattato*, in which Erizzo compiles all the ancient sources on method he could not include in the *Trattato*. The second one is a *Discorso sopra tutte le cose che possono cadere sotto la dottrina et del più perfetto et vero modo d'insegnare*, held at 'a Venetian academy', probably before the publication of the *Trattato*.⁵ Two letters, addressed to Bassiano Lando and Girolamo Ruscelli, in turn clarify various points regarding the content and structure of the *Trattato*.⁶ I will finally provide a detailed analysis of the *Trattato* itself and of the sources used by Erizzo.

As the title of the works mentioned above indicates, Sebastiano Erizzo was particularly interested in the question of philosophical method, especially in the context of teaching and learning. These texts closely follow the production of important works on method in Latin and the vernacular, starting with Peter Ramus's *Aristotelicae animadversiones* (1543), which advocated, in direct opposition to the scholastic method used at La Sorbonne, a new philosophical method to teach and order human knowledge.⁷ Similarly, in Italy, a number of prominent intellectuals, such as Sperone Speroni, Bernardino Tomitano, Benedetto Varchi and Alessandro Piccolomini, all members of the Paduan *Accademia degli Infiammati*, not only defended the use of the vernacular language to treat philosophical matters, but also reflected on the appropriate method to teach philosophy and rejected the traditional instruments of logic used in university teaching.⁸ As we will see, Erizzo's ideas on

(letter to Giovan Battista Camozzi, 31 December 1549=G, f. 159 r-v). Ten other letters are reprinted in Giuseppe Melchiori, 'Dieci lettere inedite di Sebastiano Erizzo', *Memorie romane di antichità e belle arti* 1 (1824), 211-48, which are mostly dated 1569-70, and concerns Erizzo's study of ancient coins.

⁵ These works are preserved in G at ff. 290r-308v and 308r-317v respectively.

⁶ The text is in G, at ff. 132v-142v.

⁷ On this question, see Cesare Vasoli, 'De Pierre de la Ramée à François Patrizi. Thèmes et raison de la polémique autour d'Aristote', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 70 (1986), 87-98. On Platonism in University teaching, see Charles B. Schmitt, 'L'introduction de la philosophie platonicienne dans l'enseignement des universités à la Renaissance', in *Platon et Aristote à la Renaissance. XVIe colloque international de Tours*, ed. by Maurice de Gandillac and Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Vrin, 1976), pp. 93-104; Vasoli, 'Platone allo Studio fiorentino-pisano', *Rinascimento*, 2nd s., 41 (2001), 39-69.

⁸ On Piccolomini and Speroni, see Jean-Louis Fournel, *Les dialogues de Sperone Speroni: libertés de la parole et règles de l'écriture* (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1990); Heikki Mikkeli, 'The cultural programmes of Alessandro Piccolomini and Sperone Speroni at the Paduan *Accademia degli Infiammati* in the 1540s', in *Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Conversations with Aristotle*, ed. by

method were also deeply influenced by prominent philosophers and physicians such as Niccolò Leonicensi, Giovan Battista da Monte and Bassiano Lando, who reinterpreted the traditional views on Aristotelian method, and, through a close reading of Galen and Plato, considered other methods (division and resolution) as valid ways to conduct scientific and philosophical research.

Context

We do not know in which Venetian academy Erizzo held his discourse on method mentioned above. It might have been at the informal academy at the private palazzo of the senator and poet Domenico Venier (1517-82), where Venetian and non-Venetian intellectuals gathered in the 1540s.⁹ Erizzo certainly knew Domenico Venier, who was a close friend of Erizzo's mentor Ruscelli and one of the petitioners for granting printing privileges to Erizzo for his *Timaeus* translation.¹⁰ Erizzo had also important links with other members of the Venier family: he exchanged numerous letters with Domenico's brother, Girolamo Venier, and later dedicated his *Discorso dei governi civili* to him.¹¹ Many members of the Ca' Venier salon later became part of the *Accademia della Fama*, also known as the *Accademia Veneziana*, which was founded in 1557 under the aegis of the Venetian patrician Francesco Badoer, and

Constance Blackwell and Sachiko Kusakawa (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 76-85; Vasoli, 'Sperone Speroni: la filosofia e la lingua. L'"ombra" del Pomponazzi e un programma di "volgarizzamento" del sapere', in *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno internazionale (Mantova, 18-20 ottobre 2001)*, ed. by Arturo Calzona (Florence: Olschki, 2003), pp. 339-59; Eugenio Refini, *Per via d'annotationi. Le glosse inedite di Alessandro Piccolomini all'Ars Poetica di Orazio* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2009), pp. 21-32; Elena Panciera, 'Alle radici dell'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova: i *Discorsi del modo di studiare* di Sperone Speroni', *Cahiers du CELEC en ligne* 6 (2012) available online at http://cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/files/Documents/cahiers_du_celec_6/E.%20Panciera.pdf (consulted 25.06.2015).

⁹ On Domenico Venier and his academy, see Martha Feldman, 'The Academy of Domenico Venier, Music's Literary Muse in Mid-Cinquecento Venice', *Renaissance Quarterly* 44/3 (1991), 476-512; Eadem, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 84-87.

¹⁰ The document is in *Girolamo Ruscelli. Lettere*, ed. by Chiara Gizzi and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2010), p. lxxvii. It shows that on 23 July 1557 Domenico Venier and Girolamo Ruscelli presented a 'fede di stampa' to the Venetian Senate for Erizzo's translation of the *Timaeus*.

¹¹ Erizzo exchanged seven letters with Girolamo Venier between 1543 and 1561 (see G, ff. 2r-46r), including his famous *Lettera sulla poesia*. He dedicated to him his *Discorso dei governi civili*, which was published by Francesco Sansovino as a sequel to Bartolomeo Cavalcanti's political treatise: *Trattati overo discorsi di m. Bartolomeo Cavalcanti sopra gli ottimi reggimenti delle repubbliche antiche et moderne. Con un discorso di m. Sebastiano Erizo gentil'huomo vinitiano dei governi civili* (Venice: appresso Iacopo Sansovino il giovane, 1571 [1570]). This publication was made at Erizzo's request, see letter to Federico Valaresso (7 October 1571) in G, f. 175v: 'questo è che, essendosi li mesi passati stampati da m. Francesco Sansovino certi *Trattati di Repubblica* del Cavalcanti, gli parve di aggiugnere nel fine del libro un mio discorso ancora *Dei governi civili*, da me scritto già molti anni; parendo a lui che, trattando questi due libri di una istessa materia, potessero bene andare uniti insieme'.

lasted until Badoer's imprisonment for fraud in 1561.¹² To date, Erizzo's direct involvement in the *Accademia Veneziana* cannot be proven by any document: his only work to be published during the short-lived *Accademia*—his *Timaeus* translation—was printed by Comin da Trino, and not by Paolo Manuzio, who was the *Accademia*'s appointed printer; nowhere in his works do we find any mention of the Academy's founder, Federico Badoer, or the title 'accademico', one of the conditions stipulated by the Academy's conventions.¹³ However, Erizzo was clearly linked to some important members of the *Accademia Veneziana*. He figures as one of the authors in an anthology of poems written by various members of the *Accademia* and edited by Dionigi Atanagi.¹⁴ In addition, Erizzo's preoccupation with the question of philosophical method and with the transmission of Platonism in the Italian vernacular echoes some of the Academy's projects. As Vasoli has shown, the *Accademia Veneziana* was important for the diffusion of Peter Ramus's ideas on method in Italy. One of its members was Francesco Patrizi, whose project was to develop a new philosophy, which defended Platonism in direct opposition to scholasticism.¹⁵ Another project of the *Accademia Veneziana* was to publish vernacular translations of Plato's *Timaeus* and Proclus' *Platonic Theology*.¹⁶

Erizzo's *Trattato* has also recently been linked to the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (1539-1542).¹⁷ Erizzo's professor, Bassiano Lando, was in close contact with two

¹² See Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan. Veronica Franco Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 177. On the *Accademia Veneziana*, see Paul L. Rose, 'The *Accademia Venetiana*: Science and Culture in Renaissance Venice', *Studi Veneziani* XI (1969), 191-242; Lina Bolzoni, 'L'*Accademia Veneziana*: splendore e decadenza di una utopia enciclopedica', in *Università, Accademie e Società scientifiche in Italia e in Germania dal Cinquecento al Settecento*, ed. by Laetitia Boehm and Ezio Raimondi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981), pp. 117-68 and Vasoli, 'Le Accademie fra Cinquecento e Seicento e il loro ruolo nella storia della tradizione enciclopedica', in *Università*, ed. Boehm and Raimondi, pp. 81-115.

¹³ See *Capitoli e Convenzioni fatte, e sottoscritte di propria mano da alcuni de' signori accademici* (a 13 d'Agosto 1559), in the only surviving copy, now in Manchester, John Rylands Library, Ms 20988, f. 3v, transcribed in Rose, 'The *Accademia Venetiana*: Science and Culture in Renaissance Venice', pp. 222-24: 'Che sia aperto il loco a ciascuno, dando opera approvata da l'Accademia, et stamparla sotto 'l nome di lei, et che colui che darà l'opera essendo soggetto degno del nome d'Accademico possa ne la dedicatione che volesse fare chiamarsi Accademico; ma però che alcuno non possa far dedicatione ad alcuna opera stampata da l'Accademia senza nome d'Accademico' (p. 223).

¹⁴ *Rime di diversi nobilissimi et eccellentissimi autori, in morte della Signora Irene delle Signore di Spilimbergo* (Venice: appresso Domenico e Giovanni Battista Guerra, 1561). On this anthology and its cultural context, see Antonio Corsaro, 'Dionigi Atanagi e la silloge per Irene di Spilimbergo', *Italica* 75/1 (1998), 41-61. I would like to thank Claudia Marconato for mentioning this article to me.

¹⁵ See Vasoli, 'Le Accademie', pp. 81-115.

¹⁶ See the *Somma delle Opere*, reprinted in Pellegrini, 'Sommaro dell'*Accademia Veneta della Fama*', *Giornale dell'Italiana Letteratura* 22 (1808), 3-32, 113-28, 193 and 23 (1808), 49-68.

¹⁷ See Sgarbi, *Italian Mind*, pp. 221-22. On the *Infiammati*, see Richard S. Samuels, 'Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement', *Renaissance Quarterly* 29/4 (1976), 599-634; Valerio Vianello, *Il letterato, l'accademia, il libro. Contributi sulla*

Infiammati, Giovan Battista da Monte and Sperone Speroni.¹⁸ In addition, we have evidence that by the 1560s Erizzo had developed friendship with former members of the *Accademia*, such as Francesco Sansovino and Marco Mantova Benavides.¹⁹ However, one has to exclude any direct influence, since Erizzo was only fourteen or fifteen years old when the *Accademia degli Infiammati* was founded, and there is to date no evidence that he was in Padua at the time.²⁰ In addition, despite some clear similarities (such as the preoccupation with the question of method, as well as an interest in non-Aristotelian sources, such as Galen and Plato), there are important differences between Erizzo's treatise and the vernacular treatises on logic written by the *Infiammati*, one of which being Erizzo's unparalleled knowledge of Platonic and Neoplatonic sources, which led him to defend the superiority of the method of division; another being a lesser preoccupation with the ideological promotion of the vernacular language; and a third one being an exceptional command of ancient Greek, which allowed him to develop a detailed and accurate understanding of Greek texts (Proclus, Damascius, Iamblichus) that were not easily accessible in translation.

cultura veneta del Cinquecento (Padua: Antenore, 1988), pp. 47-106; Salvatore Lo Re, *Politica e cultura nella Firenze cosimiana. Studi su Benedetto Varchi* (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2008), pp. 214-56; Annalisa Andreoni, *La via della dottrina. Le lezioni accademiche di Benedetto Varchi* (Pisa: ETS, 2012), pp. 43-63, with further bibliography at note 1.

¹⁸ See Silvia Ferretto, *Maestri per il metodo di trattar le cose*. Bassiano Lando, Giovan Battista da Monte e la scienza della medicina del XVI secolo (Padua: CLEUP, 2012), pp. 62-63.

¹⁹ See letter to Sansovino (14 novembre 1564) in G, ff. 55v-56r, where Erizzo expresses his friendship. Sansovino agreed to print his *Dei governi civili* in 1571 (see footnote 11 above). Erizzo wrote five letters to Marco Mantova Benavides (see G, ff. 87v-89r; 149v-150r; and 151v-152r, which concerns Erizzo's collection of ancient coins). Benavides dedicated to him his *Zographia*, (see Erizzo's letter at ff. 149v-150r (29 September 1566) and Marco Mantova Benavides, *Zographia siue Hieroglyphica sane pulcherrima ex uiuis cum naturae tum autorum fontibus hausta. Nunc primum in studiosorum gratiam edita* (Padua: Laurentius Pasqualius excudebat, 1566).

²⁰ Erizzo was in Padua between 1543-45 (see footnote below). *Pace* Sgarbi, there is no evidence that Erizzo was in Padua before that time, or that he learnt about Platonic ideas whilst listening to Varchi's lessons on love, which were delivered in 1539. The text cited to support this claim, Lodovico Dolce's dedication preface to Erizzo in the *Somma*, states that Erizzo studied Greek with Giovanni Bernardo Feliciano (in Venice, not Padua), and studied Plato and Aristotle in the original Greek at Padua with Bassiano Lando: see Lodovico Dolce, *Somma di tutta la filosofia di Aristotele* (Venice: appresso Gio. Battista, Marchio Sessa et fratelli, 1565), ff. 3v-4r: 'Percioché, essendo V.M. sotto la cura del detto clarissimo suo padre (che fu et ottimo senatore e, malgrado della invidia e della malignità, al pari di ciascun'altro gentilhuomo benemerito di questa Repub.) allevata da fanciullo negli studi delle lettere così grece come latine, in quelle fece ancor giovanetto così buon profitto, che ne diuienne egualmente intendissimo; e questo sì per la vivacità del suo ingegno, e sì per haversi dato con diligentissima cura alla disciplina dei principali maestri che in ambedue queste lingue fiorirono, come nella greca fu il dotto e buono M. Bernardo Feliciano, e nella latina i più lodati. Di poi, non si contentando di haver solamente apprese le lingue, ma essendo vago di saper le cose che in esse si contengono, negli studi di Padova salendo per li gradi delle dottrine alla cognitione della Filosofia, a questa applicò l'animo. Et ascoltando Platone et Aristotele nella propria natia favella, bevè il latte puro di questi due gran filosofi senza alcuna corrutione, cagionata sovente della ignoranza de' traduttori, valendosi ciò dell'opera di M. Bassiano Lando, il quale poi col suo favore inalzò alla pubblica lezione'.

The *Trattato* appears less idiosyncratic, however, when one links it to the years Erizzo studied at the University of Padua (1543-1545), where he followed the lectures given by the Paduan professor of medicine Bassiano Lando, celebrated for his mastery of philosophical and medical texts on method.²¹ The University of Padua was historically inclined to teach Aristotle as a preparation to logic and medicine, rather than to metaphysics or theology. This means that Paduan scholars traditionally applied Aristotelian philosophy to medical problems, including questions regarding the best scientific method.²² In addition, in the sixteenth century Padua was one of the first Italian universities to be affected by the new discussions on method developed by Ramus.²³ Two important Paduan professors, Giovanni da Monte (or Montano) and his pupil Bassiano Lando developed innovative ideas about Aristotelianism, often in connection with questions of method and the revival of classical texts that were not part of the traditional curriculum.²⁴ Through their reading of Galen they argued that both Plato and Aristotle had reflected on questions of method, and that, contrary to the scholastic and Arabic tradition, demonstration and syllogism were not the only ways to gain knowledge.²⁵ Da Monte and Lando might well have played an important role in the discussions held at the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (and, more specifically,

²¹ Erizzo was in Padua between 1543 and 1545, as suggested by four letters addressed to Girolamo Venier from Padua between 23 November 1543 and 13 October 1545 (G, ff. 2r-6v; the last letter is dated 13 October 1545, not 1544, as stated by Zoppi, *Lettera*, p. 71), and Dolce's testimony cited above. Bassiano Lando obtained a formal appointment in the faculty of medicine at Padua in 1543 (partly with the help of Erizzo's family): see Benzoni, 'Sebastiano Erizzo', p. 198 and Ferretto, *Maestri*, p. 37.

²² See John H. Randall, Jr., *The School of Padua and the Emergence of Modern Science* (Padua: Antenore, 1961), pp. 25-27; Antonino Poppi, *Introduzione all'aristotelismo padovano* (Padua: Antenore, 1970), p. 14; Eugenio Garin, *Aristotelismo Veneto e scienza moderna. Prolusione all'attività dell'anno 25° di fondazione del Centro* (Padua: Antenore, 1981), pp. 11-12.

²³ On the diffusion of Ramus' ideas in Italian universities, see at least Vasoli, *Studi sulla cultura del Rinascimento* (Manduria: Lascita, 1968), pp. 257-344.

²⁴ On Bassiano Lando, see, in addition to Ferretto, *Maestri*, Giuseppe Ongaro, 'Il *De humana historia* (1542) di Bassiano Lando', in *Atti della VI Biennale della Marca per la storia di medicina* (Fermo: Properzi e Spagnoli, 1967), pp. 265-78; Ongaro, 'Bassiano Lando e Andrea Vesalio', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di scienze lettere ed arti. Memorie della classe di scienze matematiche e naturali* 110 (1997-98), 55-61; Bartolo Bertolaso, 'Ricerche d'archivio su alcuni aspetti dell'insegnamento medico presso l'Università di Padova nel Cinque- e Seicento', *Acta medicae historiae Patavina* 6 (1959-60), 17-37. On Montano, see Jerome J. Bylebyl, 'Teaching *Methodus Medendi* in the Renaissance', in *Galen's Method of Healing. Proceedings of the 1982 Galen Symposium*, ed. by Fridolf Kudlien and Richard J. Durling (Leiden-New York: Brill, 1991), pp. 157-89; Ongaro, 'L'insegnamento clinico di Giovan Battista da Monte (1489-1551): una revisione critica', *Physis*, n.s., 31 (1994), 357-69; Daniela Mugnai Carrara, 'Le strategie didattiche di Giovan Battista da Monte (1489-1551) e il tentativo di riforma del curriculum patavino', *Medicina nei secoli* 16 (2004), 491-552.

²⁵ See Ferretto, 'La cultura medica all'Università di Padova nel Cinquecento: istanze di rinnovamento culturale e poteri politici', in *Libertas philosophandi in naturalibus. Libertà di ricerca e criteri di regolamentazione istituzionale tra '500 e '700*, ed. by Ferretto, Pietro Gori and Massimo Rinaldi (Padua: CLEUP, 2011), pp. 119-40.

the diffusion of Galenic and Platonic ideas): as mentioned above da Monte was a member, and Bassiano Lando was in contact with some of the *Inflammati*.²⁶ In the opening section of the *Trattato* Erizzo explains that he became aware of the importance of the method of division whilst listening to Lando's lectures on order and method in Padua, where Lando praised the 'beauty and utility' of division.²⁷ We know that Lando himself dedicated two of his works to Erizzo.²⁸ As we will see shortly, evidence also indicates that Lando read and commented on the *Trattato* prior to its publication.²⁹

Giovan Battista da Monte and Bassiano Lando developed a new, philological approach to Aristotle's works, questioning the traditional interpretation of Aristotelian methodology, and propounding alternative methods to teach and study philosophy and medicine. Since Antiquity, commentators had compared Aristotle's scientific demonstration with Platonic dialectic, and tried to reconcile Aristotle's criticism of the method of division with Plato's use of division in *Philebus*, *Sophist* and

²⁶ It is probable that Varchi's use of Galen in his writings on method (esp. *Del metodo* and *Degli ordini delle dottrine*) was influenced by the work of Leonico, via da Monte and Lando. See e.g. Benedetto Varchi, *Opere*, ed. by Antonio Racheli, vol. 2 (Trieste: Sezione letterario-artistica del Lloyd austriaco, 1859), pp. 797-98 and 802.

²⁷ See *Trattato*, pp. 9-10 [f. B [i]r-v]: 'Havendovi io più volte, eccellente M. Bassiano mio, ragionando con esso voi famigliarmente, sentito discorrere sopra quella mirabil via, per la quale alcuni degli antichi et de' più rari ingegni caminando, havevano la inventione nelle scienze; et da ciò udito da voi spesse fiate lodarla et levarla infino al Cielo; et non pur ritrovandovi voi qui ov'io sono al presente, ma ancora quando dimorava costì in Padova, sono per ciò venuto in maraviglia non picciola, non solamente delle belle lodi che davate a questa ragionandone, ma ancora, udendo dalle vostre lettioni di filosofia et etiandio di medicina, quanto voi in questa via vi mostraste eccellente. Onde avvenne che, entrato io di ciò in pensiero et la utilità di questo metodo considerando, come quegli che alcuna cosa nuova et non più udita sentisse, molte et varie cose meco intorno a ciò rivolgendo, sono in cotal materia nella mia mente nati diversi concetti. Appresso, vago investigatore divenuto – sempre leggendo i buoni scrittori antichi di questa via, se forse alcun di loro ne accennasse o facesse mentione; ovvero se scrivendo o forse qualche materia trattando la usasse – io veramente infra non poco spatio di tempo ho fatto di tutto un fascio, in cui molte cose stringo, così de' miei pensieri et concetti intorno a questa via, come di alcuni avvertimenti notati ne' migliori antichi scrittori ove di essa si fa mentione et si tratta, quantunque il più delle volte assai oscuramente. Ma perciocché intorno a ciò non mi pareva così d'essere risoluto, conciosia cosa che questo istrumento et via (come ben vi è noto) sia una materia gravissima et difficilissima, non ancora ch'io sappia trattata da alcuno de' nostri tempi; et ancora perché io ho riputato che mi torni a grande utile il sottoporre questa fatica mia alla censura del giudizio vostro, il presente discorso a voi mando'; p. 171 [f. Yiiir]: 'ora che dirò io di quella maraviglia, della quale empiete ciascuno, M. Bassiano mio, quando dai ragionamenti vostri, over lettioni, spiegate la bellezza et la utilità di questo metodo?'

²⁸ Erizzo is mentioned in Lando's *Iatrologia*; he is the dedicatee of his *Praefatio in Aphorismos Hippocratis*; he is also one of the dedicatees of the posthumous edition of Lando's commentary on *De anima*. See Ferretto, *Maestri*, pp. 66-67.

²⁹ See letter of Erizzo to Lando (4 March 1552) in G, f. 155r-v, reprinted in *Lettere di XIII huomini illustri nelle quali sono due libri di diversi altri autori [...]* (Venice: per Francesco Lorenzini da Turino, 1560) (=hereafter *Lettere*), pp. 625-27.

Statesman.³⁰ Neoplatonic interpreters like Proclus rejected the Aristotelian method of syllogism and stated that Plato's method of division, which he equated with the dialectic of the *Parmenides*, was the best way to gain truth.³¹ Another important problem was that Aristotle's position on method was not always consistent and clear. Averroes and the scholastics had attempted to smooth out these inconsistencies and offer a systematic reconstruction of Aristotle's views on methodology. The return to the Greek original texts of Aristotle and Galen, as well as the appearance in print of 'new', humanistic versions of philosophical and medical texts and commentaries that had been unknown or ignored in the Middle Ages led to a reassessment of Aristotelian views on methodology. Most of these texts (such as John Philoponus' commentary on the *Physics*, Eustratius' commentary on *Posterior Analytics*, Ammonius' commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Galen's *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis*) were printed in Venice and were used as teaching tools at the University of Padua. Thanks to them sixteenth-century commentators came to reconsider Aristotle's methodology: they recognized that the Philosopher's views were often inconsistent and incomplete, and that nowhere had Aristotle identified a unique, universal method that would be applicable to all disciplines. In addition, thanks to Galen, who had analysed in detail the various methods used by Plato and Aristotle, they came to see division as a legitimate logical method besides demonstration and definition.³²

Giovanni Battista da Monte was a pupil of Niccolò Leoniceno who, through close reading of Galen and the Greek commentators of Aristotle and Plato, questioned the medieval and Arabic interpretation of Aristotle's methodology, and the supremacy it

³⁰ See Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method*, 2nd edition (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 24-27.

³¹ See Proclus, *Parmenides Commentary* I, 650.17-651.9 and V, 982. 21-30 and *Platonic Theology* I, 9, ed. Saffrey-Westerink, p. 40. On Proclus and method, see Anthony C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 8-17 and Dino Buzzetti, 'On Proclus' Comparison of Aristotelian Logic and Parmenidean Logic', in John J. Cleary, *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp. 331-46.

³² See Garin, 'Le traduzioni umanistiche di Aristotele nel secolo XV', *Accademia fiorentina di scienze morali "La Colombaria"* 2, n.s. (1947-50), 44-104; Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983). More specifically on the question of method, see Eckhard Kessler, 'Method in the Aristotelian Tradition: Taking a Second Look', in *Method and Order in Renaissance Philosophy of Nature. The Aristotle Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Daniel A. Di Liscia, Kessler and Charlotte Methuen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 113-42 (pp. 118-19); Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo. "Invenzione" e "Metodo" nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo* (Naples: Città del sole, 2007), pp. 461-66 and 650-59. On the transmission of Philoponus' *Physics* commentary in the sixteenth century, see Schmitt, 'Philoponus' Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* in the sixteenth century', in *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, ed. by Richard Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1987), pp. 251-70.

gave to the method of demonstration.³³ In this context, Leonicensino had published in 1532 a treatise entitled *De tribus doctrinis ordinatis secundum Galeni sententiam*, where he openly rejected the interpretation of medieval commentators of Galen and advocated a return to the original Galen, described as the best imitator of Plato.³⁴ This text, as we will show, had a profound influence on Erizzo. Back in Padua in the 1540s Giovan Battista da Monte and his pupil Bassiano Lando sought to describe the best possible method to study and teach philosophy and medicine, based on a critical reading of ancient texts, and more specifically, of Aristotle, Galen and to some extent Plato. In that context, they both underlined the importance of division and resolution (rather than demonstration and syllogism), making frequent parallels between the methods used by Hippocrates, Galen, Plato and Aristotle.³⁵ As we will see, Erizzo is strongly influenced by this approach, although his scope is to defend the Platonic method of division as the best and only way to attain knowledge.

Paratexts

Before turning to an analysis of the *Trattato* itself, it is worth examining a number of unpublished texts and documents related to the question of order and method, which are now in a manuscript at the Biblioteca Bertoliana of Vicenza. The first one is a discourse held in ‘a Venetian academy’, which, as we have mentioned above, could have been the academy founded by Domenico Venier.³⁶ Erizzo was presumably quite young when he delivered it, since he describes himself as a ‘student lacking expertise’.³⁷ Here Erizzo presents a classification of all the sciences and arts, already showing a predilection for the method of division and a profound familiarity with

³³ On Renaissance debates on method in the context of medical teaching (Galen), see Vasoli, *Studi sulla cultura del Rinascimento* (Manduria: Lacaita, 1968), pp. 297-307; William P. D. Wightman, ‘Les problèmes de méthode dans l’enseignement médical à Padoue et à Ferrare’, in *Sciences de la Renaissance. Actes du VIII^{ème} Congrès international de Tours* (Paris: Vrin, 1973), pp. 187-96.

³⁴ See William F. Edwards, ‘Niccolò Leonicensino and the Origins of Humanist Discussion on Method’, in *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. by Edward P. Mahoney (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 283-305; Mugnai Carrara, ‘Una polemica umanistico-scolastica circa l’interpretazione delle tre dottrine ordinate di Galeno’, *Annali dell’Istituto e Museo di storia della scienza di Firenze* 8 (1983), 31-57; Eadem, *La biblioteca di Niccolò Leonicensino. Tra Aristotele e Galeno: cultura e libri di un medico umanista* (Florence: Olschki, 1991); Mikkeli, *An Aristotelian Response to Renaissance Humanism. Jacopo Zabarella on the Nature of Arts and Sciences* (Helsinki: Societas Historica Finlandiae, 1992), pp. 131-59; Massimo Rinaldi, *Arte sinottica e visualizzazione del sapere nell’anatomia del Cinquecento* (Bari: Cacucci, 2008), pp. 91-104.

³⁵ On da Monte’s defence of division and resolution as the best methods to cure diseases, see Bylebyl, ‘Teaching’, pp. 174-89. On Lando’s same position, see Ferretto, *Maestri*, pp. 99-110.

³⁶ Discorso di M. Sebastiano Erizzo in una Academia Venitiana: Sopra tutte le cose, che possono cadere sotto la Dottrina; et del più perfetto et vero modo d’insegnare, in G, ff. 308r-315r.

³⁷ G, f. 309r: ‘uno indotto et inesperto discepolo’.

Greek sources. His text is filled with Greek terms and makes frequent references to Plato, Galen, and Aristotle. He also reflects on a classification of the process of teaching knowledge, distinguishing between ‘il modo’ that is, the way in which one acquires knowledge, ‘l’istrumento’, that is the method, and ‘l’ordine essenziale’, that is the relation that governs things. He already notes here that Plato, Aristotle and Galen have shown the utility of the method of the division, an argument that will be central in the *Trattato*.³⁸

Shortly before and after the publication of the *Trattato*, Erizzo exchanged letters with his mentors Bassiano Lando and Girolamo Ruscelli, where he clarified a number of points regarding the content and structure of the *Trattato*. In the first letter (17 November 1553) Erizzo provides a response to comments made by Lando. We learn that, shortly before the treatise went to press, Lando read the text and made three important suggestions. First, Lando suggested that the title of the treatise be changed into *Della prestantia dell’istrumento diviso, o vero Della eccellentia del metodo divisivo*.³⁹ To this Erizzo responds that both Plato and Aristotle defined division as a ‘metodo’ and a ‘via inventrice’, quoting Eustratius’ commentary on Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* and Galen’s interpretation of Aristotle’s *Parts of Animals*.⁴⁰ In addition, he states, using a more general title will lead the reader progressively to

³⁸ G, f. 312r-v: ‘Dell’istrumento di dividere fa onorata mentione Platone nel *Fedro*, nel *Filebo*, nel *Parmenide*, nel *Sofista*. Aristotele ancora mostra in più luoghi questo istrumento della divisione essere utilissimo a ritrovare la natura della cosa, et scrisse ancora un libro intitolato *Divisibilium*. Onde molte fiate nelle proposte materie, così Aristotele, come Platone si servirono di cotale istrumento del dividere. Galeno appresso mostra la eccellenza di questa via, et in molti luoghi seguita questo metodo ne’ suoi libri medicinali. Fassi ancora mentione di un libro di Andronico scrittore antico, *Delle divisioni*, il quale fu da Plotino gravissimo filosofo approvato’. The reference to Andronicus derives from Boethius, *De Divisione* 875d-876d.

³⁹ See letter of Erizzo to Lando (17 November 1553) in G, ff. 153r-154v, reprinted in *Lettere*, pp. 620-25.

⁴⁰ *Lettere*, pp. 620-21: ‘Et Eustratio, in conformità, dice sopra Aristotile [sic] [*Posterior Analytics* II 91b] queste parole: “Nam secundum convenientem ordinem divisiones facientes differentias omnes inveniemus indefectuose ex quibus definitio componetur”. Dalle quali parole di Eustratio siamo ammaestrati che, per mezzo della divisione, noi ritroviamo quello che più nelle cose importa: che sono tutte le differentie loro essenziali, dalle quali la difinitione si compone’; p. 621: ‘Et Aristotele ancora tutte le differentie de gli animali nel libro *Delle parti*, come si assicura Galeno ancora con queste parole: “Conatur enim in eo libro Aristoteles [sic] omnes animalium differentias enumerare”. Si che non bisogna traviare da questo sentiero: che la divisione sia istrumento et via (che è quello che i Greci dicono metodo) inventrice delle cose’. Cf. Eustratius, *Commentaria in secundum librum posteriorum resolutivorum Aristotelis* [...] Andrea Gratiolo Tuscolano ex Benaco interprete (Venice: Apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1542) (=CAGL 7), p. 120 [118]; Galen, *De methodo medendi* I, 3 in *Galenii omnium operum secta classis* (Venice: Apud Vincentium Valgrisium, 1562), p. 4 (Thomas Linacre’s translation, on which see note 45 below).

discover the benefits of this method.⁴¹ Secondly, Lando enquired about the pertinence of defining the methods of division and resolution as ‘principal modes of knowledge’ (‘principali scientie’), which Erizzo defends, quoting a passage of Proclus’ *Platonic Theology*, where division and resolution are called *πρωτουργοῖς ἐπιστήμαις*.⁴² Finally, Lando suggested reducing a long passage on the creation of the world and avoiding long quotations of Platonic passages. Erizzo responds that it is key to his argument to underline that God had used order and division in His creation; and that he quotes Plato at length because it is a ‘cosa nuova e quasi resuscitata’; in that context, he argues, the use of long quotations enables him to provide strong evidence and make his analysis credible.⁴³

Similarly, in a letter to Ruscelli (Padua, 15 September 1553), written shortly after the publication of the *Trattato*, he gives a good illustration of how the method of division can help us reach a definition.⁴⁴ Here Erizzo responds to Ruscelli’s request to explain the opinion of the ancients on ‘the constitution of the arts’, as a complement to his *Trattato*. Lamenting the fact that the most complete account—Galen’s *De constitutione artium*—is lost (only the third book, *De constitutione artis medicae* has come down to us), Erizzo analyses what other sources have said on the topic. Here he uses a few passages from Plato’s *Sophist*, which he quotes in Ficino’s translation, Galen’s *De constitutione artis medicae*, which he paraphrases in Italian, and the ‘Greek commentators of Aristotle’ on Book II of Aristotle’s *Physics*, which he translates in Italian, leaving a few technical words in Greek. He concludes that, in order to reach a proper definition of the constitution of the arts, one needs to use the method of division. The sources he quotes are texts that have recently appeared in the new Latin translations printed shortly before in Venice by members close to his circle: Galen’s *De Constitutione artis* appeared in Bartolomeo Silvani’s translation in the

⁴¹ *Lettere*, pp. 621-22: ‘studiosamente da me si è fatto di porre un titolo così generale, senza specificare in esso quale sia questa via inventrice, per condurre a passo a passo colui che legge a scorgere particolarmente il detto metodo, et insieme col nome gli effetti suoi mirabili spiegare’.

⁴² *Lettere*, p. 622: ‘all’altra obiettion che Vostra Eccellenza scrive che si potria fare in quel luogo, dove ella dice ch’io chiamo la resolutiva et divisiva principali scientie, rispondendo dico che Proclo, nel primo lib. della *Teologia secondo Platone*, in quel luogo dove egli va investigando il sentimento vero e il proposito del *Parmenide* di Platone, dice queste formali parole: “Ma la dialettica nostra per lo più usa le divisioni et le resolutioni come prime et principali scientie” [follows the quotation of the passage in Greek]’. See Proclus, *Platonic Theology* I, 9, p. 40.7, which is also used in the *Trattato*.

⁴³ *Lettere*, pp. 623-24: ‘in cosa nuova et quasi resuscitata alla mente di Platone et de gli antichi, bisognava citare le parole formali et nulla premetter; dico che, per provare la mia opinione, faceva mestiere di testimonii [...]; altrimenti, facendo in cosa, come ella dice, nuova, non fora creduto né a me né alle ragioni ch’io produco’.

⁴⁴ The letter is in G, ff. 132v-142v.

Giunta edition of 1542 published under the aegis of Giovanni Battista da Monte;⁴⁵ Philoponus' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* appeared in Venice in 1548 in Giovanni Battista Rasario's translation;⁴⁶ and Plato's *Sophist* was available in Ficino's translation.⁴⁷

Another unpublished document entitled *Discorso dei metodi et delle vie da gli antichi usate nel ritrovare le cose* and dedicated to Bassiano Lando, confirms this. In this short treatise, Erizzo states that, at the request of Lando, he compiled all the ancient sources mentioning the method of division that he had not been able to include in the *Trattato*.⁴⁸ Here Erizzo states that Plato praised the method of division in the *Philebus*, the *Parmenides*, the *Statesman*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Sophist* and others. Accordingly Plato frequently uses division and distinction, of which he is the inventor, 'in order to avoid equivocations and ambiguities and discover the nature of things'.⁴⁹ He then analyses some passages from the *De Hippocratis et Platonis dogmatibus*, where Galen praises Plato's method of division.⁵⁰ He quotes some

⁴⁵ On Renaissance Latin translations of Galen, see Richard J. Durling, 'A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 24/3-4 (1961), 230-305; Stefania Fortuna, 'Galen's *De Constitutione Artis Medicae* in the Renaissance', *The Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 43/1 (1993), 302-19; Eadem, 'Niccolò Leonicensino e la traduzione latina dell'*Ars Medica* di Galeno', in *I testi medici greci: tradizione e eadotica. Atti del III convegno internazionale (Napoli, 15-18 ottobre 1997)*, ed. by Antonio Garzya and Jacques Jouanna (Naples: d'Auria, 1999), pp. 157-73; Eadem, 'Prefaces to the First Humanist Medical Translations', *Traditio* 62 (2007), 317-35; Mugnai-Carrara, 'Nicolò Neoniceno e l'*ars medicinalis* di Galeno: congettura ed esegesi', in Fortuna et al., *Sulla tradizione indiretta dei testi medici greci: i commenti. Atti del IV seminario internazionale di Siena (Certosa di Pontignano, 3-4 giugno 2011)* (Pisa-Rome: Fabrizio Serra, 2012), pp. 171-84; Christina Savino, 'Giovanni Battista Rasario and the 1562-1563 Edition of Galen. Research, Exchanges and Forgeries', *Early Science and Medicine* 17/4 (2012), 413-45; Fortuna, 'The Latin Editions of Galen's *Opera omnia* (1490-1625) and Their Prefaces', *Early Science and Medicine* 17/4 (2012), 391-412.

⁴⁶ *Aristotelis Physicorum libri quatuor, cum Ioannis Grammatici cognomento Philoponi commentariis, quos nuper ad Graecorum codicum fidem summa diligentia restituit Ioannes Baptista Rasarius* (Venice: apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1558).

⁴⁷ Ficino's translation of Plato's complete works was reprinted many times, the most important editions being those of 1556 (Venice: apud Ioannem Mariam Bonellum, 1556) and 1570 (Venice: apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1570).

⁴⁸ G, f. 290r: 'Dapoi che fu interrotto quel giorno il ragionamento che noi facemmo da quel nuovo accidente quando voi eravate in Vinegia, discorrendo io sopra tutte le parti del mio trattato *Dell'istrumento et via inventrice de gli antichi*, voi mi scrivete di costì una amorevole lettera, pregandomi ch'io vi facessi parte di quelle cose che allora vi dissi di haver raccolte dagli scritti d'approvati autori intorno al metodo et le vie da quelli usate nel ritrovare le cose, le quali non erano state da me poste nel detto trattato'.

⁴⁹ G, f. 290r: 'Dico adunque che noi sappiamo la via divisa essere dal divino Platone commendata in più luoghi: nel *Filebo*, nel *Parmenide*, nel *Civile*, nel *Fedro*, nel *Sofista*, et altrove. Il qual Platone si valse molto di cotali modi del distinguere et del dividere et ne fu il primo inventore, per quanto si vede, per togliere le ambiguità et le equivocationi, et per aprire la natura delle cose'.

⁵⁰ G, ff. 290v-291r: 'Da quel luogo di Galeno noi vediamo che Hippocrate et Platone, con li loro divini ingegni, ritrovarono queste due meravigliose vie infra tutti gli antichi medici et filosofi, cioè due speculationi: l'una che si fa dal conoscimento delle cose simili et delle dissimili, l'altra che si acquista per lo metodo della divisione'. Cf. e.g. Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis dogmatibus* IX, 6, 52-60.

passages from Galen's commentary on Hippocrates' *De natura humana*, before excerpting long passages from Plato's *Sophist*, *Phaedrus*, *Statesman*, *Republic V*, and *Parmenides*. Finally, he makes a detailed analysis of the method used in the *Parmenides*, filtered through Proclus' exegesis. Here he follows Proclus, who had stated that Parmenidean dialectics is analogous to the method of division.

Defence of the vernacular

Erizzo wrote all his works in the vernacular. In the *Trattato* itself, Erizzo never justifies his choice of language. However, in a letter to Bassiano Lando, Erizzo expresses his disapproval towards Agostino Valier's apparent contempt for the vernacular, which suggests that he was clearly in favour of using it.⁵¹ In addition, Erizzo must have been, at least in part, influenced by Ruscelli's and Dolce's strong defence of the vernacular, which echoed the ambitions of the *Accademia Veneziana*, as well as the programme of vernacularization of philosophy developed by the *Infiammati*. Both Ruscelli and Dolce were deeply involved in the printing, editing, translating and correcting of vernacular texts, which is such a mark of the Venetian press in the 1540-50s.⁵² In the preface to the *Trattato*, Ruscelli expresses himself openly in favour of the Italian vernacular, adopting some ideas developed by the *Infiammati*, such as the notion that vernacular translations help students avoid spending too much time learning ancient languages.⁵³ Thus Ruscelli explains that the progress of knowledge has been impeded by two facts: first, the lack of order in teaching and learning; secondly, the difficulty and time commitment required for

⁵¹ See, e.g., a letter to Bassiano Lando (10 March 1551) in G, f. 73r: 'ma ben la prego che non lo faccia così nimico dello scrivere volgare, come mostra che sia per sua cagione'. It is worth noting that Agostino Valier, future bishop of Mantua, was a member of the *Accademia Veneziana* and published in 1575 the *Libri tres de rhetorica ecclesiastica*, where he defended the method of division and attributed its invention to Plato. See Lina Bolzoni, *La stanza della memoria: modelli letterari e iconografici nell'età della stampa* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), pp. 39-42.

⁵² See Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere*, pp. 282-318; Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza corretto*, pp. 241-97 and Richardson, *Print culture*, pp. 109-26. Ruscelli entered into a bitter dispute with Dolce: see Stefano Telve, *Ruscelli grammatico e polemista: I tre discorsi a Lodovico Dolce* (Rome: Veccharelli, 2011).

⁵³ See Sperone Speroni, *Dialogo delle lingue*, ed. by Antonio Sorella (Pescara: Libreria dell'Università, 1999), p. 186: 'io dico che i studi della lingua greca, et latina, sono causa della nostra ignorantia, che se il tempo, che in loro ci demo, se spendesse da noi in imparar philosophia, havrebbe forse la nostra novella età i Platoni, et gli Aristoteli dell'antica'; Fournel, *Les dialogues de Sperone Speroni*, p. 127; Panciera, 'Alle radici', pp. 5-6; Vasoli, 'Sperone Speroni', p. 343; Alessandro Piccolomini, *Preface to Parte prima della filosofia naturale* (Venice: Daniele Zanetti, 1576), p. 1a; Stefano Caroti, 'L'Aristotele italiano di Alessandro Piccolomini. Un progetto sistematico di filosofia naturale in volgare a metà '500', in *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento*, pp. 361-401 (pp. 374-76). Benedetto Varchi expresses similar ideas in his *lezioni* on Aristotle (at the *Infiammati*) and Dante (at the Florentine Academy): see Andreoni, *La via della dottrina*, pp. 43-53.

learning foreign (i.e. Latin and Greek) languages, suggesting that Erizzo's work addresses these two problems.⁵⁴ Similarly, in the preface to Erizzo's *Timaeus*, printed three years later, Ruscelli celebrates Erizzo's translation as part of a larger project (which was never completed) of publishing all Plato's dialogues in Italian to promote vernacular philosophy, echoing Alessandro Piccolomini's ambition to vernacularize Aristotle's complete works.⁵⁵ Finally, in his dedication preface to the *Somma*, Lodovico Dolce praises Erizzo for having learnt the Italian vernacular by reading the 'good authors', and for producing excellent translations of Plato, which are equally praised by specialists of Greek literature and by those who know the vernacular.⁵⁶ Yet Erizzo himself does not seem particularly interested in celebrating the vernacular as a privileged language for the dissemination of philosophical knowledge. In his preface to his other translations of Plato, published after Ruscelli's death, he remains silent about the reasons that led him to translate Plato in Italian.⁵⁷ Like his master

⁵⁴ The text is in *Trattato*, pp. 4-5 [ff. Aiiiv-iiiir], transcribed in *Girolamo Ruscelli. Dedicche e avvisi ai lettori*, ed. by Antonella Iacono e Paolo Marini (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2011), pp. 69-73: 'Le cagioni di questo ritardamento et di questo impedimento di poter noi arrivare, non che avanzar gli altri nelle scienze, puossi chiaramente dire che sieno solamente due: l'una l'ordine mal preso nell'insegnarsi da altri, o nell'apprendere da noi stessi quelle scienze alle quali ci diamo; et l'altra la difficoltà et lunghezza che habbiamo nell'apparar le lingue straniere a noi, nelle quali fin qui si stanno quasi tutte l'arti e le dottrine che noi procuriamo d'acquistar, tutte, o parte' (p. 70).

⁵⁵ See Ruscelli's preface (addressed to Cardinal Durante) to Erizzo's *Timaeus* translation, in *Il dialogo di Platone, intitolato il Timeo, ovvero della natura del mondo, tradotto di lingua Greca in Italiana da M. Sebastiano Erizzo, gentil'huomo venetiano. Et dal medesimo di molte utili annotationi illustrato, et nuovamente mandato in luce da Girolamo Ruscelli* (Venice: per Comin da Trino, MDLVIII), f. *iiv: 'Et questo è che, essendomi io – come sa il mondo – da già molti anni affaticato di ridurre in colmo la bellissima lingua nostra italiana, et, havendo di continuo d'ogni parte d'Italia (et ancor di molte di fuori) dai virtuosi lettere che mi lodano (che però di Dio solo è sempre ogni vera lode) et mi ringratiano benignamente di questo officio et mi confortano a non rallentarlo, sono in particolare stato da molti amici et signori miei pregato et come astretto a procurar di donare a essa lingua nostra gli scritti tutti, o tutto il volume di questo divino filosofo del qual ragiono; et massimamente vedendosi che non solo noi non l'habbiamo in questa lingua tradotto, ma che anco nella latina è molto bisognoso d'intendimento in tanti luoghi, o per dir meglio di conformità con le parole greche et con la intentione della sentenza dell'autore'. On Piccolomini, see Anna Sikiera, 'La questione della lingua di Alessandro Piccolomini', in *Alessandro Piccolomini (1508-1579). Un Siennois à la croisée des genres et des savoirs. Actes du colloque international (Paris, 23-25 septembre 2010)* (Paris: Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2011), ed. by Marie-Françoise Piéjus, Michel Plaisance and Matteo Residori, pp. 217-33.

⁵⁶ See Dolce, *Somma*, ff. 4r-v: 'Né ciò ancora lei bastando, ma vedendo quanto hoggidi la volgar lingua sia prezzata da' belli intelletti, questa ancora con le lettioni dei buoni scrittori apparò [...]. Come sono alquanti dialogici de' più difficili et importanti di Platone tradotti da lei così fedelmente e con sì facile, ornata, e gentil maniera, che da' dotti della greca lingua, e da' bene intendenti della volgare vengono sommamente lodati...'

⁵⁷ See Erizzo's preface 'Ai lettori' to his 1574 translation of Plato's dialogues, in *I Dialoghi di Platone intitolati l'Eutifrone, ovvero Della santità, l'Apologia di Socrate, il Critone, o Di quel che s'ha affare, il Fedone, o Della immortalità dell'anima. Il Timeo, ovvero Della natura. Tradotti di lingua greca in italiana da m. Sebastiano Erizzo, e dal medesimo di molte utili annotationi illustrati; con un comento sopra il Fedone, nuovamente mandati in luce* (Venice: presso Giovanni Varisco, e Compagni, 1574), f. b4r: '...ingegnadomi di tradurre questi dialoghi con quella maggior fedeltà e chiarezza che dal mio debile giudizio mi è stato permesso, col riscontro di molti esemplari antichi'.

Bassiano Lando, he appears more preoccupied with developing a new, ‘philological’ reading of ancient philosophical texts, where words and concepts are defined and used in a clear, consistent way.⁵⁸ In Erizzo’s case, the question also concerns how to translate Greek philosophical terms. As Franco Tomasi has recently shown, Erizzo was acutely aware of the difficulty of finding the correct terminology to render Greek concepts in the vernacular. This preoccupation led him to ask advice to Bassiano Lando on the meaning of one specific Greek word, and to add to his translation annotations that indicate which Greek term is being translated, or underline any departure from Ficino’s translation.⁵⁹ A preliminary examination of the translation, which would deserve a more detailed study, shows that, in some instances, Erizzo is too quick to reject Ficino’s choice of translation;⁶⁰ in others, he appears to improve Ficino’s version.⁶¹ In many cases, Erizzo seems particularly preoccupied with finding the correct terminology to render key technical and medical words.⁶²

In the *Trattato* itself, Erizzo shows a similar preoccupation with philological matters. For instance, he reflects carefully on how to present his sources. As one of the letters mentioned above indicates, shortly before the publication of the *Trattato* Erizzo asked Lando some advice on whether to quote the ancient authors in the original Greek or Latin, or in Italian translation.⁶³ We do not know what Lando advised him to do;

⁵⁸ See Ferretto, *Maestri*, pp. 120-23.

⁵⁹ See Franco Tomasi, ‘Una scheda su Sebastiano Erizzo traduttore del *Timeo* (e una lettera inedita a Bassiano Lando)’, *Quaderni Veneti* 3 (2014), 47-55. In the translation itself, Erizzo indicates when he departs from Ficino by writing in the margin ‘Ficino erra’, ‘Ficino varia’ or ‘Ficino manca’.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, *Il dialogo di Platone, intitolato il Timeo*, f. 14v [ad *Tim.* 42d4]: ‘ἔσπειρε τοὺς μὲν εἰς ἥλιον, dice il testo greco. Marsilio, errando dice, alios in terram’. Erizzo translates as ‘seminò alcuni in Sole’, whilst the correct text is ἔσπειρεν τοὺς μὲν εἰς γῆν. Ficino’s version is therefore correct.

⁶¹ See, for instance, at f. 41v [ad *Tim.* 92c]: ‘Iddio sensibile: θεὸς αἰσθητός. Marsilio varia’. The text is εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεοῦ αἰσθητός, which Ficino renders as ‘intelligibilis dei imago, sensibilis’ (Ficino, *Platonis Opera omnia* (Venice: per Bernardinum de Choris and Simonem de Luero, impensis Andreae Toresani, 1491), f. 262v), whilst Erizzo has the more correct ‘immagine dello intelligibile, Iddio sensibile’; f. 37v [ad *Tim.* 86 c]: ‘et colui che di molto et fluttuante seme intorno alla midolla abbonda, et che a guisa di uno arbore gravido di troppo [*sic*] frutti, più del convenevole fuor di misura sia morbido [...]: Marsilio varia’. The text is τοῦ συμμετρου πεφυκὸς ἤ, which Erizzo renders as ‘fuor di misura sia morbido’, whilst Ficino had ‘nimia ubertate luxuriat’ (see Ficino, *Platonis opera omnia*, f. 262r: ‘qui vero fluido studioque circa medullam abundat semine atque ut arbor pluribus quam conveniat fructibus gravida nimia ubertate luxuriat’).

⁶² See, for instance, at f. 22r [ad *Tim.* 57e]: ‘Noi certamente habbiamo trattato la generatione della disaguaglianza. Qui Marsilio male tradusse, chiamando ὁμαλότητα la pianezza, significando più tosto in questo luogo Platone la ugualità, ovvero l’aguaglianza de gli elementi’. The text is οὕτω δὴ στάσιν μὲν ἐν ὁμαλότητι, κίνησιν δὲ εἰς ἀνωμάλου φύσεως ἀεὶ τιθῶμεν, which Ficino renders as ‘sic itaque statum quidem in planitie lenitateque, motum vero in contraria semper natura ponemus’, whilst Erizzo has ‘così adunque noi sempre ponemo lo stato veramente nelle ugualità, et il movimento nella disuguale natura [Underlined sections are mine]’.

⁶³ *Lettere*, p. 624: ‘Ma a questo proposito ancora vi è alcuno che mi dice che, allegando io in molti luoghi i testi degli autori proprii, doverei citargli nella lingua che questi hanno scritto (o greca, o latina che ella si fosse), et non allegare le tradutioni; ovvero, se io pur non volessi citargli nella lor lingua

however, in the printed version of the *Trattato* Erizzo uses quotations either in the Greek original or in the new humanistic Latin translations (whenever these exist), as well as his own vernacular translation of Greek texts. In many instances Erizzo chooses to cite the original Greek when he wishes to reflect on the meaning of concepts, underline the use of an important philosophical word, or justify his own choice of terminology.

What is also striking here is that, in addition to the ‘old’ humanistic translations by Acciaiuoli and Ficino, Erizzo uses both the original Greek texts that were available in Bessarion’s Library, and the Latin translations of Aristotelian and medical texts that were produced or printed in his native Venice at the time he was writing his *Trattato*. For instance, he quotes Galen’s *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis* in his Greek teacher Giovanni Bernardo Feliciano’s translation, which was printed in Basle in 1535.⁶⁴ Similarly, he quotes Eustratius’ commentary on Book II of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* in Andrea Grazioli’s translation, published in Venice in 1542.⁶⁵ He also uses Ammonius’ commentary on Porphyry, whose translation by Gaurico had first appeared in print in Venice in 1504.⁶⁶ Finally, he uses John Philoponus’ commentary on Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* in the new translation of Andreas Gratiolus revised by Philippus Theodosius and printed in Venice in 1542.⁶⁷

propria, farli tutti uguali in ciò et trasportare quei luoghi in lingua nostra, conforme alla lingua di tutta l’opera’.

⁶⁴ *Claudii Galeni Pergameni De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis opus eruditum, et philosophis et medicis utilissimum: nouem libris (quorum primus desideratur) comprehensum, iamque recens latinitate donatum. Ioanne Bernardo Feliciano interp. [...] (Basel: Apud Andream Cratandum, 1535).* On Giovanni Bernardo Feliciano, also known as Regazzola, see See Dolce, *Somma*, ff. 3v-4r quoted at note 17; David A. Lines, ‘Giovanni Bernardo Feliciano and the edition of Eustratius’, in Eustratius, Aspasius, Michael Ephesus et al.: *Aristotelis Stagiritae Moralia Nicomachia. Übersetzt von Joahannes Bernardus Felicianus (CAGL 11)* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2006), pp. v-xv; Fortuna, ‘Le illustrazioni nei testi medici: le edizioni latine di Galeno del XVI-XVII sec.’, in *Scienza antica in età moderna. Teoria e immagini*, ed. by Maraglino Vanna (Bari: Cacucci, 2012), pp. 311-38.

⁶⁵ *Eustratii Episcopi Nicaeni Commentaria in secundum librum posteriorum resolutivorum Aristotelis. Innominati item authoris expositiones compendiarie in eundem. Andrea Gratiolo Tusculano interprete* (Venice: Apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1542). The translation is based on the Aldine edition of the original texts published in 1534. The passage Erizzo quotes is at p. 120 [118]: ‘nam secundum convenientem ordinem divisiones facientes differentias omnes inuenimus indefectuose, ex quibus definiti componetur’.

⁶⁶ See Ammonius Hermeae, *Commentaria in quinque voces Porphyrii, übersetzt von Pomponius Gauricus. In Aristotelis categorias, übersetzt von Ioannes Baptista Rasarius. Neudruck der Ausgaben Venedig 1539 und Venedig 1562 mit einer Einleitung von Rainer Thiel und Charles Lohr (CAGL 9)* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2002).

⁶⁷ The text was first translated into Latin, from the 1504 Aldine edition of the Greek text, by Andreas Gratiolus (printed in 1539). It was then reprinted in 1542 with revisions by Philippus Theodosius (printed in 1542). For the text, see *Commentaria Ioannis Gramatici Alexandrei cognomento Philoponi in libros posteriorum Aristotelis. Recens cum Graeco exemplari per doctissimum Philippum Theodosium collata* (Venice: apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1542), p. 138 (CAGL 5). On these editions, see Charles H. Lohr, ‘Renaissance Latin translations of the Greek commentaries on Aristotle’, in

Erizzo is critical towards these new translations. For instance, when quoting the 1542 edition of John Philoponus' commentary mentioned above, Erizzo silently corrects their version of Aristotle's text, which reproduces Agostino Nifo's translation. Erizzo's text has 'oportet autem cum totum aliquod tractet (πραγματεύηται) aliquis, dividere genus in atoma specie', whilst the 1542 edition has 'oportet autem cum totum aliquod negocietur aliquis, dividere genus in atoma specie prima'.⁶⁸ Whilst the 1542 edition follows Agostino Nifo's translation, Erizzo's text follows nearly word for word John Argyropoulos' version, which has 'oportet autem cum totum aliquod quispiam tractat [*sic*], genus in ea dividere quae sunt prima'.⁶⁹ Erizzo's correction is deliberate, since he makes the same correction when he quotes Philoponus' commentary on the passage.⁷⁰ He probably modifies the text because Agostino Nifo follows closely Boethius' version, i.e. the vulgate used by medieval commentators, and which circulated widely in the Cinquecento.⁷¹ To the medieval vulgate Erizzo evidently prefers Argyropoulos' humanistic translation.

To this Erizzo adds a meticulous reading of Plato's dialogues, which he quotes in Ficino's translation.⁷² Thanks to his exceptional knowledge of ancient Greek he also reads in the original Proclus' *Platonic Theology* and *Parmenides* commentary, as well as Damascius' *Philebus* commentary (wrongly attributed to Olympiodorus in the manuscript tradition). These texts, which were not easily available in Latin, are directly quoted from the Greek.⁷³ Evidence confirms that Erizzo had access to the original manuscripts of Proclus and Damascius, preserved in San Marco Library in

Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy, ed. by Jill Kraye and Martin W. F. Stone (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 24-40 (pp. 27-30). Erizzo is clearly using the 1542 rather than the 1539 edition: Erizzo has also 'lineam ut genus divide in rectam lineam in circularem' instead of 'in rotundam' (1539 edition); 'deinde accipe definitiones' (instead of 'deinde accipere definitiones in 1539 edition); 'cuius partes extremis interiacent' instead of 'cuius partes extremis impediuntur' (1539 edition). Note that, in the same passage, Erizzo's text mistakenly has *per communia primorum* instead of *per communia prima* for διὰ τῶν κοινῶν πρώτων, which might be a typographical error.

⁶⁸ See *Trattato*, p. 125 [f. [Qiii]r], with reference to *Posterior Analytics* II, 96 b15.

⁶⁹ The two versions had been printed together in the 1543 edition of Nifo's commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*: see Augustini Niphi Suessani philosophi In Aristotelis libros posteriorum analyticorum subtilissima commentaria, cum duplici textus translatione Joannis Argyropili videlicet, & ejusdem nova ab ipso fidelissime recognitis [...] (Venice: apud Hieronymus Scotum, 1553).

⁷⁰ The text of the 1542 edition has 'cum aliquis negociatur totum', whereas Erizzo has 'cum aliquis tractat vel negociatur totum'.

⁷¹ Boethius' text has 'congruum autem est cum totum aliquod negocietur aliquis, departiri genus in atoma specie prima': see, among the many sixteenth-century editions of Boethius' works which circulated in Europe, *Anitii Manlii Severini Boethi [...] opera quae extant omnia [...]* (Basel: apud H. Petrum, 1546), p. 533.

⁷² See, for instance, *Trattato*, p. 64 [f. [Hiii]v], where he quotes Plato's *Philebus* in the 'commune traduzione del Ficino'.

⁷³ See letter of Erizzo to Lando (4 March 1552) in *Lettere*, p. 622.

Venice. From two sixteenth-century inventories of San Marco Library edited by Omont, we know that Erizzo borrowed a copy of the *Platonic Theology* on at least one occasion in June 1548.⁷⁴ He borrowed Damascius' *Philebus* commentary between July 1552 and February 1553;⁷⁵ and Iamblichus' *De secta Pythagorica* between 7 November 1553 and 10 August 1554.⁷⁶ We have no evidence that he borrowed Proclus' *Parmenides* commentary from San Marco; however, a letter from the end of 1549 shows that he asked another philosopher and translator of Greek texts, Giovan Battista Camozzi, to lend him a copy of that text.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See Henri Omont, 'Deux registres de prêts de manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Saint-Marc à Venise (1545-1559)', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 48 (1887), 651-689 (p. 666): '1548, die 4 junii. A messer Sebastian Erizzo fo imprestati libri doi, videlizet: Diodoro Siculo, dal 11 fino 15mo. Proclo in theologiam Platonis'. Bessarion's copies of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* are *Marcianus gr.* 192 and *Monacensis gr.* 547.

⁷⁵ See Omont, 'Deux registres', pp. 683-84: 'N. v. ser Sebastiano Erizo, q. ser Antonius, habuit librum, no 660, in papiro, dictum Olimpiodorus in Gorgiam, et reliqui [= *Marcianus gr.* 197], juxta mandatum D. Reformatorum, et deposuit unam cathenulam auream. 1552 [ab inc., 1553] die 17 februarii, rehabuit suum pignus, cathenam supradictam, per Franciscum, suum servitorem, qui restituit librum suprascriptum'. Of this manuscript Erizzo had two copies made, each in two volumes. The first copy is *Vindobonensis phil. gr.* 13 (Olympiodorus' *Alcibiades* and *Phaedo* commentaries; Damascius' *Phaedo* and *Philebus* commentaries and Hermias' *Irrisio gentilium philosophorum*) and 221 (Olympiodorus' *Gorgias* commentary); the second copy is now in *Cizenses* 59 and 60 (same texts except the *Irrisio*). On these manuscripts, see Gerd Van Riel et al., *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Philèbe de Platon* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2008), pp. cc-cci.

⁷⁶ I have not been able to identify the first book, which presumably contained the first three books of Iamblichus' *De secta Pythagorica* and one of Simplicius' commentaries. The second book borrowed by Erizzo is mentioned in the 1474 inventory of Bessarion's library, no. 533 ('Iamblici de secta Pythagoreorum libri quatuor, et eiusdem in epistola Porphyrii, et expositio Hieroclei in carmina Pythagorae aurea, in pergameno): see Lotte Labowsky, *Bessarion's Library and the Biblioteca Marciana. Six Early Inventories* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1979), p. 219. The manuscript is now in Turin, Biblioteca nazionale, ms. gr. 146.

⁷⁷ Letter to Giovan Battista dated 31 December 1549, in G, f. 159 r-v, reprinted in *Lettere*, pp. 636-37, where he rejects his friend's offer to lend him 'i quattro libri greci di Alessandro sopra la *Metafisica* di Aristotele che sono ancora tradotti latini da quello Spagnolo', and requests instead to borrow Proclus' *Parmenides* commentary in exchange for Olympiodorus' *Gorgias* commentary ('se vostra signoria sarà contenta in iscambio dell'Alessandro mandarmi il Proclo, l'accomoderò volentieri del mio Olimpiodoro sopra 'l *Gorgia*, il quale ho da quello esemplare antico, che ella vide nel mio studio, fatto trascrivere'). Both texts were available in Latin translations, but these were never printed: Proclus' *Platonic Theology* was translated in Latin in 1462 by Pietro Balbi. The text survives in at least three manuscripts, two of which belonged to Cardinal Bessarion; Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* was translated into Latin in 1521 by Nicolaus Scutellius, and the text survives in at least two manuscripts. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Proclus as a Reader of Plato and Plotinus, and His Influence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance', in *Proclus, lecteur et interprète des anciens. Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, ed. by Jean Pépin and Henri-Dominique Saffrey (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987), pp. 191-211; reprinted in Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, vol. IV (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1996), pp. 115-38; Saffrey, 'Pietro Balbi et la première traduction latine de la *Théologie platonicienne* de Proclus', in *Miscellanea codicologica F. Masai dicata*, ed. by Pierre Cockshaw, Monique-Cécile Grand and Pierre Jodogne (Gand: E. Story-Scientia, 1979), pp. 425-37; reprinted in Saffrey, *L'Héritage des anciens au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), pp. 189-202. On Camozzi, translator of Greek commentators of Aristotle (Theophrastus, Olympiodorus, Psellus, Alexander of Aphrodisias), editor of medical texts (Paul of Egina), and of the Aldine edition of Aristotle's *Opera omnia* (1553) see Peter Schreiner, 'Giovanni Battista Camozzi', *Dizionario bibliografico degli italiani* 17 (1974), 297-98.

Erizzo's approach towards language seems to reflect, therefore, the twofold nature of his audience. The presence at Padua and Venice of academic circles where programmes of vernacularization of classical philosophers were being developed, as well as Erizzo's close contact with prominent promoters of the vernacular such as Girolamo Ruscelli and Lodovico Dolce, both explain why he wished to express himself in the vernacular and provide vernacular translations of Plato. At the same time, however, the *Trattato* is clearly addressed to an audience of scholars, University professors and fellow students who were familiar with Latin and ancient Greek, and were keen to question scholastic philosophy and terminology through a return to Greek original texts and the use of philologically accurate Latin translations. This is reflected by Erizzo's long quotations in Latin, citations in Greek and digressions on terminology.

A Concordist Defence of Plato's Method of Division

The argument of Erizzo's *Trattato* is twofold. In the first part, Erizzo demonstrates that reality is fundamentally structured according to division, and that division is therefore a legitimate method to discover, describe and explain it. In the second part, Erizzo combs the writings of the ancient philosophers for anything they might have said on 'division'. Drawing on Aristotelian commentaries that propounded a Platonized interpretation of Aristotle, as well as on Proclus' Neoplatonic interpretation of Parmenidean dialectics, Erizzo argues that Plato invented the method of division, that all the ancient philosophers (including Aristotle and the Aristotelians) had praised its utility and beauty, and that it was the best method to gain knowledge and memorize it.⁷⁸ According to him, Aristotle's apparent rejection of division in *Prior Analytics* had been misinterpreted and should be reconsidered in the light of the 'faithful commentators'. As such, Erizzo's concordist approach differs markedly from that of Ramus and Patrizi, who adopted a radically anti-Aristotelian position; he also differs from his Paduan master Lando, who was defending the utility of two methods in medicine and philosophy, those of division and resolution. For Erizzo defended division as the only method capable of leading to truth. His wide knowledge of Platonic and Neoplatonic sources leads him to identify, like Proclus, Plato's dialectics with the method of division, and thus to consider division as the best method to study

⁷⁸ *Trattato*, p. 171 [f. Yiii]: 'Giova grandemente il metodo divisivo non solo al ritrovamento delle cose, ma etiandio a conservare le cose trovate nella memoria, per l'ordine che da quello nasce'.

all disciplines. This concordist attitude is not new, since it was adopted by the Greek commentators of Aristotle mentioned above. However, what is striking here is that Erizzo offers a systematic reinterpretation of Aristotle's texts on method—including those that present a clear condemnation of the Platonic method of division—and refutes the 'calumniators' who, 'forse per dimostrarsi troppo Aristotelici', undermined the value of division and accused Plato of not knowing how to use syllogisms.

Erizzo never mentions by name these anti-Platonic 'calumniators', so it is difficult to identify them with certainty. Plato's ignorance of logic and syllogism is a topos that was central to the fifteenth-century Plato-Aristotle controversy between Bessarion and George of Trebizond, whose works had enjoyed renewed popularity and been reprinted in Venice at the turn of the century.⁷⁹ Erizzo might also have had in mind some of Lando's many detractors at the University of Padua. We know, for instance, that Lando was repeatedly attacked for his heterodox positions,⁸⁰ and that he had decided not to publish a treatise on method to avoid further criticism on the part of his enemies. In a letter addressed to Lando Erizzo welcomed his master's decision, 'lest those malign and invidious minds lacerate [his] work with their sharp teeth'.⁸¹

In the opening section, Erizzo gives a long and detailed demonstration of what is 'scienza' and what its objects are, and shows that there is only knowledge of

⁷⁹ See Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis libri quatuor* (Venice, in aedib. Aldi, 1503); George of Trebizond, *Comparationes philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis* (Venice: per Iacobum Pentium de Leuco, 1523). On Trebizond's accusation that Plato ignored logic and the art of syllogism, see Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis* I, 4-5. On the controversy, see Mahoney, 'Aristotle and Some Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophers', in *The Impact of Aristotelianism on Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Riccardo Pozzo (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), pp. 1-34 (pp. 14-16). On the revival of Bessarion in the sixteenth century, see Eva del Soldato, 'Sulle tracce di Bessarion: appunti per una ricerca', *Rinascimento*, 2nd s., 50 (2010), 321-42.

⁸⁰ See Ferretto, *Maestri*, pp. 21-24, with reference to Lando's criticisms against his Paduan colleague Capodivacca, professor of medicine from 1543. There was a general disagreement as to whether one needed to study the philosophers (Aristotle and to some extent Plato) to gain medical expertise (da Monte-Lando) or if Galen was sufficient (as argued by Capodivacca, Paterno and Mercuriale). In his *De differentiis doctrinarum sive methodis* (Padua, 1562), Capodivacca openly opposed Leoniceno's interpretation of Galen and da Monte's emphasis on practice in the medical curriculum, defending the method of demonstration to teach and practice medicine, but he does not adopt anti-Platonic positions. See Giuliano Gliozzi, 'Girolamo Capodivacca' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 18 (1975), 649-51; Giulio F. Pagallo, 'In confinio scientiae naturalis et artis medicae: medici e filosofi sul tema della subalternatio nello Studio di Padova del '500', in *Girolamo Mercuriale. Medicina e cultura nell'Europa del Cinquecento. Atti del convegno (Forlì, 8-11 novembre 2006)*, ed. by Alessandro Arcangeli and Vivan Nutton (Florence: Olschki, 2008), pp. 11-27.

⁸¹ See Lando, *Praefatio in Aphorismos Hippocratis*, in *Bassiani Lando Placentini philosophi et medici Opuscula* (Padua: apud Simonem Galignanum, 1552), cited in Ferretto, *Maestri*, p. 67, note 64; and letter of Erizzo to Lando (4 March 1552) in *Lettere*, pp. 625-27: 'Percioché, se la scriveva a coloro che non sanno, non faceva profitto alcuno; oltre che, se questi erano maligni o invidi (come molti si ritrovano a' tempi nostri) haveriano con acuto dente d'invidia lacerate le cose sue...?'

universals.⁸² These universals can be reduced to the ten categories of Aristotle, which are equivalent to the ten ‘capi universali’ of the Cabbalists and the ten oppositions of the Pythagoreans. Here Erizzo is alluding to the ten sephirot of the Kabbalah and the Pythagorean table of opposites, which had been associated with the ten Aristotelian categories by Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.⁸³

The universals are not sufficient, however, Erizzo argues, to acquire knowledge: we also need to order reality.⁸⁴ In a long digression—the one Lando suggested to remove in the letter mentioned above—Erizzo shows that philosophers and theologians alike have described the Universe and its creation by means of division. Similarly, God created the world through separation and division. This leads him to describe division as a possible method for gaining knowledge.⁸⁵ Paraphrasing Eustratius’ commentary on Book II of *Posterior Analytics*, and Ps.-Ammonius’ commentary on *Isagoge*, he states that there are four methods or instruments, of which division is the most important, because it brings order to reality and is the method that was adopted by the best and most illustrious ancient philosophers.⁸⁶ Among them, Plato is the philosopher who used it principally.⁸⁷ According to the ‘espositori più fidi di Platone’,⁸⁸ namely, Proclus and Alcinous, the best method to reach truth is Plato’s dialectics, and of the four methods division is superior to the others, because it imitates the procession of

⁸² *Trattato*, p. 22 [f. [Ciii]v]: ‘Da che si conchiude, col testimonio d’Aristotele, che la scienza consiste nel conoscere lo universale, il quale non cade nel senso, ma nell’intelletto nostro’.

⁸³ On the Pythagorean table of opposites, see Ficino, *In Parmenidem* LXX, who is drawing on Proclus, *In Parmenidem* VII,1198. On the ten sephirot, see Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones cabalistiche secundum opinionem propriam* 66.

⁸⁴ *Trattato*, p. 27 [f. Diir]: ‘...non bastano gli universali per sé al ritrovamento delle scienze, ma bisogna etiandio fuggire la confusione et procedere investigando le cose che si vogliono sapere con ordine’.

⁸⁵ *Trattato*, p. 45 [f. [Fiii]r]: ‘Et perché noi fin hora habbiam parlato dell’ordine in generale, et perché spetialmente ci habbiam proposto d’investigare qual fosse quella via, o (per usare il nome greco) quel metodo particolare, per lo quale caminando gli antichi più chiari filosofi, ritrovavano la natura delle cose [...], diremo che la via, secondo che scrive Aristotele nel terzo della *Retorica*, è una diritta ragione di procedere nella dottrina et etiandio del giudicare’.

⁸⁶ *Trattato*, pp. 49-51 [ff. G[i]r-Giir]: ‘ora, dalle cose dette assai si vede chiaro che di queste quattro vie da noi brevemente toccate, la via divisiva è la principale, la guida, et la reina della nobiltà di cui nel processo del nostro discorso più ampiamente ragioneremo. [...] Appresso io dico che questa via procede per gli universali, et non per gli particolari, et che per questa tutte le cose che investigando si vanno, per ordine et senza confusione si dispongono, separando quelle che nulla alla proposta che si vuol trattare appartengono. [...] Posti adunque da noi tutti questi fondamenti, mi da l’animo di mostrare assai chiaro che questo è quello istrumento et via inventrice, per la quale gli antichi, più chiari et illustri filosofi procedendo, andavano ritrovando le cose, et venivano insieme a notizia della loro natura; et che le loro inventioni di filosofia, o di alcun’arte havevano origine da cotale istrumento’.

⁸⁷ *Trattato*, p. 51 [f. Giir]: ‘[...] il divino Platone principalmente usò questa via del distinguere et del dividere, non solo per levare la equivocatione et i diversi significamenti delle cose, ma spetialmente per aprire et dichiarare la loro natura’.

⁸⁸ *Trattato*, p. 63 [f. [Hiii]r]: ‘in diversi luoghi habbiamo letto negli espositori più fidi di Platone dove (come s’è visto) di questo metodo amato et seguitato da esso Platone si fa assai honorata mentione’.

beings from the supreme principle (whilst resolution, the second best method, imitates the conversion of beings).⁸⁹ Paraphrasing Proclus, Erizzo shows that Plato used dialectics in the *Sophist*, the *Parmenides* and the *Philebus*. He concludes that the method of division is Platonic dialectics and that Plato used this instrument to treat of elevated theological matters.⁹⁰ Erizzo then embarks on a detailed analysis of the dialogues where Plato describes the method of division. This section is characterized by long quotations of the relevant passages in Ficino's Latin translation,⁹¹ followed by a paraphrase of commentaries on the passage. Thus Erizzo adds to the *Philebus* passages a paraphrase of Ps-Olympiodorus' (in fact Damascius') commentary, and concludes that 'according to Olympiodorus, Plato mentions and explains in the *Philebus* the method of division'.⁹² The second dialogue to describe division is, according to Erizzo, the *Phaedrus*. After quoting relevant sections in Ficino's translation, he mentions a passage from Ficino's 'brieve argomento', where Ficino equates dialectics with division and composition, and God's gift is said to be to divide and compound.⁹³ Finally, Erizzo analyses relevant sections of *Republic* VII (in Ficino's translation), followed by Ficino's *argumentum*. Erizzo then turns to the passages from the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, where Plato is actually using the method of division; here he mixes Ficino's Latin version and quotations in Greek, followed by Ficino's interpretation.

In what is perhaps the most interesting section of the treatise, Erizzo offers a new analysis of all the passages where Aristotle mentions division.⁹⁴ His use of Greek commentators, who had adopted a concordist interpretation of Plato and Aristotle,

⁸⁹ *Trattato*, pp. 56 [f. [Giiii]v] and 63 [f. [Hiiii]r]. Cf. Proclus, *Platonic Theology* I, 8-9, and *In Parmenidem*, I, 650.17-651.9 and V, 982. 21-30. Erizzo provides a translation of the text, mixed with passages in Greek.

⁹⁰ *Trattato*, pp. 58-59 [ff. H[i]v-Hiiir]: 'Vedesi adunque chiaro da queste parole ancora dallo stesso Proclo che questo metodo divisivo fu la dialettica di Platone, et che con tale istrumento procedendo, trattava egli materie grandi et teologiche oltre alle altre'.

⁹¹ *Trattato*, p. 64 [f. [Hiiii]v]: 'nella commune traduttione di Ficino'.

⁹² *Trattato*, p. 70 [f. [Iiii]v]: 'Di maniera che si vede, secondo la opinione di Olimpiodoro, che in questo dialogo si fa mentione et si spiega da Platone il metodo divisivo'. Erizzo is here paraphrasing Ps. Olympiodorus (in fact Damascius), *In Philebum* §7 (division of dialogue in three parts); § 9 (the dialogue treats of a variety of topics, including theology, questions on intellect and soul, ethics, physics and logic), ed. Van Riel et al., p. 3; § 54 (division corresponds to procession; resolution corresponds to conversion); the intermediary ones to the very existence of reality: definition corresponds to existence *per se* and demonstration to existence *ex alio*), ed. Van Riel, p. 17; §§55-57 and 62-69.

⁹³ *Trattato*, p. 83 [f. Liir]. Cf. Ficino, *Argumentum in Phaedrum* 3.1 (ed. Allen, pp. 46-47).

⁹⁴ *Trattato*, p. 124 [f. Qiiiv]: 'Noi ci habbiam proposto di aggiungere all'autorità di Platone quella di Aristotele ancora, et andare in diversi luoghi investigando, dove egli parla et fa mentione di questo metodo; et vedere etiandio se esso Aristotele, nell'insegnarci la sua filosofia, nelle sue quistioni tenne mai questa via'.

leads him to underline that Aristotle did not reject the method of division, but considered it positively and indeed used it in his writings. Erizzo's approach consists of quoting Aristotle's text (in Greek or in Latin) and that of a commentator, followed by a detailed analysis of that commentator's argument. For instance, Erizzo analyses a passage from *Nicomachean Ethics* (X, 1, 1172b3: 'τὸ διορίζειν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι τῶν πολλῶν, cioè è il distinguere non è opera della multitudine ignorante'), followed by Donato Acciaiuoli's commentary on the passage, to conclude that Aristotle praised division.⁹⁵ Erizzo then interprets another Aristotelian passage where Aristotle prescribes the use of division to reach a definition of things (*Posterior Analytics* II, 96b-97a, quoted in Latin), in the light of Philoponus' and Eustratius' commentaries, to show that the Platonists used the method of division to define things, and that Aristotle too showed the utility of division and used it in his teaching.⁹⁶ Erizzo then turns to the passages where Aristotle has been interpreted as rejecting the method of division. Many of his contemporaries, he deplures, drew on these texts to reject the method of division, even though they themselves used division in their reasoning.⁹⁷ According to him, these passages need to be reinterpreted in the light of Eustratius' commentary, which demonstrates that Aristotle does not reject division as such. In the

⁹⁵ *Trattato*, p. 125 [f. [Qiii]r]: 'Vedesi adunque quanto utile et eccellente cosa sia la divisione, et quanto etiam la venga a lodare Aristotele, dicendo che la facultà del dividere non è così in tutti, né proprio opera del vulgo. Onde, se il saper distinguere le differentie delle cose non è proprio della volgar gente, ma una eccellentia rara, come afferma Aristotele, che si ritrova in pochi huomini, quinci la dignità di questa via divisiva si dimostra'. Donato Acciaiuoli's commentary was first printed in Florence in 1478 (*Donati Acciaiuoli Florentini proemium in expositionem libri ethicorum Aristotelis* (Florence: apud Sanctum Jacobum de Ripoli, 1478)), and reprinted in Venice in the 1535 Giunta edition (*Aristotelis Stagiritae peripateticorum principis, Ethicorum ad Nicomachum libri decem, Ioanne Argiropylo Byzantio interprete, nuper recogniti & cum Donati Acciaiuoli Florentini viri doctissimi commentariis castigatissimis nunc primum in lucem editi* (Venice: in officina Lucaeantonii Iuntae, 1535)). On the Renaissance reception of Aristotle's *Ethics* with reference to Acciaiuoli, see Lines, 'Aristotle's *Ethics* in the Renaissance', in *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. by Jon Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 171-93.

⁹⁶ *Trattato*, pp. 127-138 [ff. [Qiiii]r-S[i]v], with reference to Philoponus, *In libros posteriorum Aristotelis*, pp. 138-141 and Eustratius, *Commentaria in secundum librum posteriorum resolutivorum Aristotelis [...]* Andrea Gratiolo Tusculano ex Benaco interprete (Venice: Apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1542) (CAGL 7), pp. 120 [118]-126.

⁹⁷ *Trattato*, p. 138 [f. S[i]v]: 'ma perché sono hoggidi alcuni i quali, come che essi molto sappiano et sieno appresso tutti in grande stima et autorità tenuti, non perciò possono sostenere che altri che essi alcuna cosa sappia che da loro intesa o conosciuta non sia, però dannano alle volte questo metodo, coloro calunniando che per mezzo di questo hanno nelle scienze fatto qualche profitto; io, non traviando della proposta materia, non voglio restare con la verità di rispondere a quel tanto che essi, per dar colore et autorità alla loro opinione, s'ingegnano di provare, non già perché egli di ciò faccia mestieri alla chiarezza della materia, ma per dare maggior lume alla verità, riprovando il falso; anzi, scoprendo la ignorantia et la malitia di tali huomini. Dico adunque che coloro i quali cercano, non sapendo essi né conoscendo questo metodo di biasimarlo in altrui et abbassarlo, tolgono principalmente per scudo delle loro ragioni l'autorità d'Aristotele in alcuni luoghi, dove lor pare che esso biasimi questa via et non ne faccia quella stima che di sopra mostrato habbiamo'.

first passage (*Posterior Analytics* II 91b), Aristotle states that it is impossible to use the method of division to establish a deduction. Drawing on Eustratius and the ‘altri buoni et fedeli espositori’, Erizzo argues that, even if division is not able to deduce, and can lead to errors when not used correctly, it is nevertheless a method that is useful and should not be rejected.⁹⁸ The traditional rejection of division as a ‘via ordinaria’ can only be explained by an ignorance of the sources—in particular of Plato and Galen—and a wrong interpretation of Aristotle.⁹⁹ Quoting Averroes and Alexander of Aphrodisias, Erizzo states that, even if division cannot ‘sillogizzare’ and cannot be used for demonstration, Aristotle and his commentators considered it as a method as valid as the others.¹⁰⁰ What is striking here is that Erizzo does not quote Averroes’ text from the Giunta edition, but from Leoniceno’s translation of the same passage in the *De tribus doctrinis*.¹⁰¹ Erizzo’s definition of division as ‘via ordinaria’

⁹⁸ *Trattato*, pp. 140-141 [ff. Siiv-[Siii]r]: ‘nondimeno, tutto che la divisione atta non sia a sillogizzare, et che molti possano essere gli errori possibili a commettersi nel dividere, afferma Eustratio che non perciò dobbiamo noi sprezzare la divisione come inutile, anzi opporci a cotali errori et fuggirli, per mezzo di alcune osservazioni, con le quali potremo noi direttamente dividere. [...] Adunque conchiude egli, secondo la opinione d’Aristotele, che la divisione dichiara la natura et la essentia della cosa, et ci mostra la diffinitione, procedendo noi con ragione; ma dicendo la diffinitione, non viene però a dire il sillogismo’; p. 142 [f. [Siii]v]: ‘Dal predetto testimonio d’Aristotele noi veggiamo chiaro che cotale metodo non è, come questi dicono, inutile alla cognitione, ma da questa via noi acquistiamo notitia, pigliandola nel modo debito, quantunque noi non potremmo già dire ch’ella sillogizzasse [...]. Aristotele, nel precedente testo 25 non biasima perciò questa via, perché ella non sia sillogistica, né la sprezza, come vogliono questi, ma approvandola più tosto per utile la confermi, il che veggio ancora essere opinione di Eustratio a questo passo et de gli altri buoni e fedeli espositori’.

⁹⁹ *Trattato*, p. 143 [f. [Siiii]r]: ‘Ora dalle cose dette possiam trarre che di gran lunga s’ingannano coloro i quali, poco stimando, anzi sprezzando la divisione, cercano di scacciarla dal numero di quelle vie che ordinarie si chiamano, perché essa divisiva nulla sillogisticamente provi; et che perciò Aristotele non ne faccia conto, come di sopra discorso habbiamo. Perciò che questi non fanno, ovvero non attendono, che Platone prima, et poi Galeno, col predetto consentendo in molti luoghi, attribuiscono alla divisiva l’ufficio di costituire tutte le arti. Oltre che, dicendo essi che la divisione nulla provi semplicemente, et che perciò non è via ordinaria, dicono cosa diversa dalla opinione d’Aristotele, il quale, come s’è detto, nel secondo libro della *Posteriore* pur vuole che il metodo della divisione provi alcuna cosa, sì come fa ancora la induttione, quantunque alcuna di queste sillogisticamente non provi.’

¹⁰⁰ *Trattato*, pp. 143-144 [f. [Siiii]r-v]: ‘Ma la via divisiva Averroè mostra essere più certa della via della induttione nel commento del quinto libro della *Fisica* d’Aristotele, dove dice: “Aristoteles postquam enumeraverat illa, per quae determinantur species motus ex inductione, vult enumerare eadem secundum divisionem, quae via est certior”. Dalle quai parole si vede chiaro, secondo il commentatore, che la induttione è via, ovvero s’ella alcuna cosa insegna, molto più la divisione o il metodo divisivo si deve dire che sia via; et per conseguente affermare, secondo i peripatetici, ch’essa ancora deve esser posta nel numero delle altre vie’.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Averroes, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics* V, commento 7, which Erizzo does not quote from the Giunta edition (IV (Venice: Giunta, 1550), p. 97), but from Leoniceno’s version (see Niccolò Leoniceno, *De tribus doctrinis liber*, in *Nicolai Leoniceni Vicentini, philosophi et medici clarissimi, opuscula: quorum catalogum versa pagina indicabit* (Basel: per D. Andream Leennium, 1532), p. 81). On Averroes’ commentaries in the Renaissance, see F. Edward Cranz, ‘Editions of the Latin Aristotle accompanied by the Commentaries of Averroes’, in *Philosophy and Humanism*, pp. 116-28; Schmitt, ‘Renaissance Averroism Studies Through the Venetian Edition of Aristotle-Averroes (with particular reference to the Giunta edition of 1550-1552)’, in *L’averroismo in Italia. Atti dei Convegni Lincei 40 (Roma, 12-20 aprile 1977)* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1979), pp. 121-42; Charles

further echoes the arguments developed by Leoniceno in his *De tribus doctrinis* against the medieval commentators of Galen, who excluded division from the ‘true doctrines’.¹⁰² Erizzo is evidently reusing Leoniceno’s critique to attack some of his contemporaries who were opposed to the introduction of new methods in the University curriculum. Quoting a famous passage where Aristotle rejects the method of division, Erizzo states that Aristotle only rejected division as a way to demonstrate, but still considered it as a method that could lead to the acquisition of knowledge.¹⁰³ Finally, he refutes the ‘calumniators’ who, ‘perhaps to show themselves too Aristotelian’, draw on two passages from *Posterior Analytics* (I, 31 46a and 46b), where Aristotle rejects those who use the method of division instead of demonstration and syllogism. According to Erizzo, Aristotle does not criticize Plato, but those who use the method of division wrongly or misinterpret Plato’s philosophy.¹⁰⁴ Here he rejects Philoponus’ testimony according to which the Platonists used the method of division to ‘sillogizzare’ and ‘demonstrare’: as argued by another commentator, Ammonius Hermiae, Aristotle does not contradict Plato, but those who misunderstand

Burnett, ‘Revisiting the 1552-1550 and 1562 Aristotle-Averroes Edition’, in *Renaissance Averroism and its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anna Akasoy and Guido Giglioni (Dordrecht-New York: Springer, 2013), pp. 55-64.

¹⁰² See *Nicolai Leoniceni Vicentini, philosophi et medici clarissimi, opuscula*, f. 73r: ‘Haec solutio illam quam antea notavi barbariem prae se fert: quia vult per ordinarium intelligi id quod rem per propria et non extranea certificat. Excludit [*sc.* Plusquam Commentator] etiam doctrinam divisivam a numero doctrinarum verarum, quo nihil potest esse Galeno, qui Platonius fuit, contrarium magis [...] Excludit etiam topicam inductionem et exemplum quas Aristoteles in principio librorum posteriorum resolutiorum pro veris doctrinis computat’, and ff. 80v-81r: ‘oportuit enim ipsos quum de Galeni opinione disceptarent, eundem Galenum non Aristoteli, a quo non raro dissentit, sed magis Platoni cuius semper summus fuit imitator, ostendere consentientem. Quamquam neque quum dicunt doctrinam divisivam nihil probare, atque ideo non esse ordinariam, omnino in hoc placent Aristoteli, qui libro secundo resolutiorum posteriorum vult methodum divisionis probare aliquid, sicuti et inductionem, licet neutra earum syllogistice probet’.

¹⁰³ *Trattato*, p. 145 [f. T[i]r]: “Via enim haec est, ex hac vero demonstrare non licet [*Prior Analytics* I, 31, 46b34]”. Da che noi possiamo risolverci che, quantunque per la divisione non habbiamo modo di dimostrare, vuole nondimeno esso Aristotele ch’ella sia una via, cioè via intellettuale, per la quale la mente humana viene in conoscenza delle cose’.

¹⁰⁴ *Trattato*, pp. 145-46 [f. T[i]r-v]: ‘Ma perciò che pur li medesimi calumniatori di questo metodo, forse per dimostrarsi troppo Aristotelici, oltre quanto habbiam detto di sopra vanno dicendo che Platone nulla seppe o intese de’ sillogismi, o del metodo dimostrativo, concio fosse cosa che egli, volendo alcuna volta sillogizzare o dimostrare, ciò facesse per via della divisione, parmi, dal proposito nostro non traviando, di oppormi ragionevolmente a cotali uomini, per mostrare loro quanto s’ingannino della loro opinione et quanto in ciò vadano errando dal diritto sentiero. Dico adunque che questi, per dare il pregio a sì fatta opinione loro, allegano di ciò per testimonio Aristotele nel luogo della *Priore* da noi di sopra rammemorato [*Prior Analytics* I, 31, 45a], dove egli dice parlando della divisiva: “Primum autem omnes qui ea utuntur, ipsum hoc latuit. Et suadere conabantur, quasi fieri posset, ut de substantia et de eo quod est quid, demonstratio efficeretur”. Nel qual luogo egli non è dubbio che Aristotele riprende quelli che, usando il metodo divisivo, stimavano con questo di dimostrare la diffinitione della cosa et raccogliere la sostantia. [...] Ma perché esso Aristotele riprenda cotali huomini, i quali, come egli dice, non intendeano dividendo quello che faceva mestieri d’intendere, non dannà però in ciò, né riprende Platone’.

Plato's thought.¹⁰⁵ The same 'calumniators' argue that Plato used division to 'dimostrare' and 'sillogizzare' because he did not know how to use syllogisms; in fact, they say, Plato never described any dialectical rule in his writings. Drawing on the same argument Bessarion used in the *In calumniatorem Platonis* Erizzo underlines that the absence of clear exposition on the part of Plato is to be explained by the Pythagorean rule of silence, as well as by the fact that Plato's writings are reporting Socrates' teaching rather than his own. Yet Plato does practice the art of syllogism in his writings, as exemplified by the way in which he demonstrates his arguments and refutes those of his opponents.¹⁰⁶

In the final section of the *Trattato*, Erizzo shows that Aristotle used the method of division, particularly in the *Parts and Generations of the Animals*, the *Ethics*, *On Heavens* and the *Physics*;¹⁰⁷ that Galen too praised and used division in his writings, as well as Theophrastus and Andronicus.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Erizzo's *Trattato* is the sole vernacular treatise on method that advocates the use of the Platonic method of division to describe reality and teach philosophy. And yet it is the direct result of a series of influences, at the crossroads of academies, Universities, printing presses and civic life. It would perhaps not have existed had it not been written in Venice, where Erizzo could access Greek texts from Bessarion's library, borrow manuscripts from other scholars, purchase freshly printed editions and translations, and benefit from the support of some prominent typographers and

¹⁰⁵ *Trattato*, p. 146 [f. T[i]v]: 'Et se i predetti calumniatori oltre di ciò allegano da capo Aristotele nel 2 libro della *Posteriore* dove egli dice: "At vero neque per divisionem via est sillogizare, sicut in resolutione circa figuras dictum est" [*Posterior Analytics* II, 5, 91b]; al qual passo questi dicono che Filopono afferma, che i Platonicis cercavano per il metodo divisivo sillogizzare et dimostrare, i quali esso filosofo riprende et rifiuta, come non sillogizzanti non dimostranti [Philoponus, CAGL 7, p. 119], da che poi concludono che Aristotele in ciò riprendesse esso Platone. Si può loro con verità rispondere quello che Ammonio sopra i *Predicamenti* nel principio dice a cotale proposito, che, ingegnandosi alcuni di dire che Aristotele in molte cose contraddice a Platone, si deve a questi rispondere ch'esso Aristotele non contraddice semplicemente a Platone, ma a coloro che non intendono le cose di Platone [Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Explanatio*, CAGL 9, p. 98]'.
¹⁰⁶ *Trattato*, pp. 147-50 [ff. Tiir-[Tiii]v], esp. pp. 149-50: 'Perché adunque Platone non habbia trattato o dato regole delle scienze et arti, et per conseguente non ci habbia in particolare insegnato la dottrina sillogistica et dimostrativa, come fece Aristotele ne' libri suoi, non dobbiamo noi meravigliarci, non havendo egli scritto opere come da sé, et quelle che come cose d'altrui scrisse, non scrisse egli per via di dottrina, secondo che il predetto Aristotele lasciò scritto. [...] Tutte le regole in ciò necessarie sono da lui molto bene state osservate, concio sia cosa che in tutti i suoi dialoghi da chi legge si possano vedere sillogismi, dove fa luogo et demonstrationi secondo che comporta la materia proposta'. Cf. Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis* I, 2 and 4-5.

¹⁰⁷ *Trattato*, pp. 155-62 [ff. Viir-[Xi]v].
¹⁰⁸ *Trattato*, pp. 162-68 [ff. X[i]v-[Xiiii]v].

literary agents of the sixteenth century, such as Girolamo Ruscelli and Lodovico Dolce. Close to Venice was the University of Padua, where Giovan Battista da Monte and Bassiano Lando developed innovative ideas about method through a close reading of Galen, Aristotle, Plato, leading to a rejection of traditional modes of thought, and a new understanding of how to order, acquire, teach and retain knowledge. Thanks to an exceptional command of ancient Greek and Latin, Erizzo could thus pursue the work initiated by Marsilio Ficino and Niccolò Leonicensi: the revival of Platonic and Neoplatonic wisdom and the reassessment of the traditional interpretation of Aristotle, breaking away, at least in part, from the scholastic tradition and moving towards a concordist interpretation of Plato and Aristotle. Like Proclus and Ficino, Erizzo equates Plato's method of division with dialectics, underlining its universality as both what structured reality and what should be used to describe and memorize it. In that way, Erizzo was accelerating a process that had already been initiated by Ficino, Diaceto, and Francesco Verino il Vecchio, adding to the progressive introduction of Platonic ideas in University teaching, the notion that the use of Platonic methodology could well be an appropriate way to acquire and retain knowledge.

Twenty years after the publication of Erizzo's *Trattato*, Cosimo de' Medici created the first official chair of Platonic philosophy at the University of Pisa. Its holder, Francesco Verino il Secondo, describes to his mentor Baccio Valori what would be the ideal curriculum of studies, along lines that strikingly echo what Bassiano Lando and Sebastiano Erizzo had argued in their writings. Thus Verino proposes to teach in the first year Plato in relation to Christianity; in the second year, Plato in relation to Aristotle; in the third, Plato in relation to Hippocrates, through the medium of Galen's *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*; in year four, Plato's ethics and political thought.¹⁰⁹ Verino's book ends with 'a defence of Plato's doctrine

¹⁰⁹ *Vere conclusioni di Platone conformi alla dottrina Christiana et a quella d'Aristotile. Raccolte da Messer Francesco de Vieri detto il Verino secondo. Divise in tre parti* (Florence: appresso Georgio Marescotti, 1590), pp. 4-6: 'Questo scrittore così grande io istimo che e' si dovesse esporre ne' giorni delle feste in questa maniera: che il primo anno e' si dimostrassero et si esponessero tutte le principali verità nelle quali Platone è conforme con la fede nostra, per far frutto a' theologi et a' professori della christiana dottrina, la quale tra tutte tiene il principato per altezza di concetti, per il fine certo et vero al quale la ci invia, et per che è da Dio rivelataci. Il secondo anno vorrei che quel medesimo scrittore si confrontasse con Aristotile in quelle conclusioni nelle quali (senza storcere i testi) e' son d'accordo, perché così la peripatetica filosofia sarebbe più credibile e più sicura. Il terzo, il medesimo lettore della platonica filosofia io stimo che la dovessi confrontare con le opinioni del gran medico et primo Ipocrate per giovare all'intelligenza di esso et di tanti et tanti libri di Galeno De placitis Ipocratis et Platonis. Il quarto et ultimo anno mi piacerebbe che quello stesso lettore et maestro di quella scienza fusse tenuto di ridurre ad ordine sommario le più importanti leggi, le quali ci ha lasciate l'istesso Platone in tanti et tanti suoi libri, fondate su la morale et su la civile Filosofia; onde avverrebbe che

against erroneous calumnies' (*difesa della dottrina di Platone da alcune calunnie à torto datele*), as a response to one of his chief enemies at the University of Pisa, Girolamo Borri, who had advocated a return to Aristotle and Averroes and the strict use of Latin. In an essay on Aristotelian method, Borri argued that only Aristotle has provided the necessary order and method, drawing on a number of passages where Aristotle criticized Plato's method of division.¹¹⁰ In this context, Erizzo's treatise appears as a missing link in the long history of the Platonic tradition, and as one of the first explicit attempts in the Renaissance to introduce the study of Platonism in the University curriculum.

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ancora i dottori di legge ne caverrebbero grandissimo beneficio et ne potrebbero arricchire et aggrandire le loro legali letture'.

¹¹⁰ *De Peripatetica docendi atque addiscendi methodo, ad Franciscum Mariam* (Florence: apud Bartholomaeum Semartellium, 1584).