Iskander Israel Rocha Parker

CONFLICTING CONCEPTIONS OF HERMETIC THOUGHT IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY ITALY: THE WRITINGS OF MARSILIO FICINO AND LODOVICO LAZZARELLI

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Central European University

Budapest

June 2020

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by

Iskander Israel Rocha Parker

(Mexico)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

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Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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External Reader

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I, the undersigned, **Iskander Israel Rocha Parker**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

During fifteenth century Italy, the desire to discover the roots of ancient wisdom and theology led some intellectuals to read, translate, and transmit the ideas from texts of Antiquity reconciling them with the Judeo-Christian ideology. Hermes Trismegistus, who formerly was considered a pagan idolater, reappeared again as the wise, pious, and rightful author of a collection of texts ascribed to him named the *Hermetica* or *Corpus Hermeticum*. Marsilio Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, named *Pymander*, is an example of adaptation for the Florentine society under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici, to whom Ficino dedicated his translation as the *Praefatio* explains. The impact of the *Pymander* influenced other intellectuals like Lodovico Lazzarelli, who trying to find a place in the court of King Ferdinand of Aragon or in Pontano's *Studio*, wrote the Hermetic dialogue *Crater Hermetis* synthesizing Ancient, Neoplatonic, Platonic, Jewish, Christian, and Hermetic concepts. Therefore, through a transtextual analysis of the aforementioned texts from Ficino and Lazzarelli, some Hermetic concepts will be discussed, such as the contemplation, *prisca theologia*, the dignity of man, or the creative capacity of humans, among others; framing the Hermetic thought of this period.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Professor György Endre Szönyi for the information he provided to me and his classes that helped me to develop this project.

I wish also to thank the Central European University and the Department of Medieval Studies for providing me with the opportunity to expand my knowledge through their conferences and classes, and letting me study in this institution so far from home.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my family for those who still stay with me and those who have left but I will not forget; to my friends for being in touch during the hard and good times, which now I can say belong to different countries, speak different languages, and listing them would take many lines.

os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus

OVID, Metamorfosis, I, 85-86

Let the immortal depth of your soul lead you; but earnestly extend your eyes upward

Chaldean Oracles.

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Introduction

In 1463, Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) finished the translation of the first fourteen treatises of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which he entitled *Pymander*. Ficino sent his translation with a dedicatory to Cosimo de' Medici as a manner of a preface.[1] In this part of the book, Ficino thanked, among other things, the economic and material support that Cosimo gave to him; but he also explains and introduced the figure of Hermes Trismegistus. Ficino did not present Trismegistus as a pagan guilty of idolatry, as Augustine did before;[2] he, however, redefined the image of Trismegistus presenting him as one of the *prisci theologi*.[3] This preface not only shows Ficino's vast knowledge of ancient and Christian authors but also presented ideas from the East, specifically from Gemistos Plethon, a Byzantine philosopher who participated at the council of Ferrara-Florence.

Some years later, between 1492 and 1494, Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500), while he resided in the kingdom of Naples, he wrote the *Crater Hermetis* dedicated to the King Ferdinand of Aragon. Lazzarelli wrote this text in the form of dialogue including king Ferdinand, Giovanni Pontano, and Lazzarelli himself as characters of the text. In the dialogue, several ideas attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and other Neoplatonic authors were synthesized with the Judeo-Christian ideology. Lazzarelli presented himself as a teacher explaining different Hermetic concepts to the king and Pontano. Besides that, Lazzarelli

[1] The translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was finished in 1463, which is the date of the letter sent to Cosimo de' Medici; however, the text was not published until 1471.

[2] August., *De civ. D.*, VIII, 23; Besides Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria and Michael Psellos also shared the same opinion about Trismegistus in the Byzantine Empire (In Copenhaver's Introduction of Trismegistus, *Hermetica*, xlii.)

[3] Ficino introduces the term *Prisca theologia* or *Ancient theology* to propose that there was wisdom and knowledge transmitted from one generation to another among the Pagans. D. P. Walker proposes that the origin of this idea came from Gemistos Pletho and was transmitted to Ficino; the distinctive element in Pletho's *prisca theologia* was the emphasis on Orpheus and his hymns (Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, 60–62); Meanwhile, Brian Copenhaver suggests that through the *prisca theologia* pagan knowledge was reconciled with the Christian (Copenhaver and Schmitt, *Renaissance philosophy*, 337); on the other hand, Wouter J. Hanegraaff suggests that the *prisca theologia* fulfilled two purposes; first, to fashion Ficino as the "chosen instrument of God", and in second place, to show the weak points that the Church had during the Fifteenth century (Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 8).

translated a couple of Hermetic treatises–also part of the *Corpus Hermetium*–naming them *Diffinitiones Asclepii*; in the prefaces previous to the translation, he recognized himself as a follower and a student of Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio, an errant preacher who called himself the messenger of God.

In this thesis, I aim to present the concepts and ideas ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus in the writings of Marsilio Ficino and Lodovico Lazzarelli. From Ficino, his translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum,* named the *Pymander,* with its *Praefatio* and from Lazzarelli's hermetic dialogue *Crater Hermetis* and his prefaces to da Correggio. The following work will consider and focus among other things the different textual relations between the aforementioned texts; taking into consideration the importance of their context. Through this work, I will attempt to identify the reasons behind the changes or adaptations in the Hermetic concepts used by Ficino and Lazzarelli.

One of my goals is to present a new scope towards the research of Hermetism and Hermeticism.[4] I will consider both lines of the Hermetic thought not as separate entities but as complementary ones since both reflect an influence on the writings. Besides that, I will use a transtextual analysis in the texts to explore the relationship between the texts to clarify and give prominence to the different influences and ideas showing its transformations and adaptations.

The choice of this method has originated after the reading of Gerard Genette's book entitled *Palimpsests*. Genette proposes that literature is an imitation or parody of one or many texts. Since Plato's representation of the world as a rough imitation of the Ideas, to Aristotle concept of *mimesis* in which literature imitates the essence of the humans and nature; the

[4] Hanegraaff undestands "Hermetism*"* as the philosophical approach towards Trismegistus' writings, while "Hermeticism" concerns with the texts ascribed to Trismegistus on magic, alchemy or astrology (Hanegraaff, "How Hermetic Was Renaissance Hermetism?," 182–83); However, this approach was originated in A. J. Festguière who divided this texts in a similar way into "erudite" and "popular," respectively (Festugière, *Ermetismo e Mistica Pagana*, 33); another classification was proposed by Garth Fowden who chooses "philosophical" and "technical" (Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 2 and 32.)

concept of imitation, *mimesis*, or *imitatio* is present in the study of literature. In this sense, there is no entirely original literary work, therefore it is possible to establish how an idea imitates or follows a previous one. Genette instead of imitation prefers the term *relation* to talk about the influences between texts. Genette uses the concept of transtextuality–as the term suggests–to explain the relations among texts. Inspired by the intertextuality of Julia Kristeva, [5] Genette redefines this term and expands it into five different categories: *intertextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality,* and *paratextuality*. The first one, intertextuality is defined as: "eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another,"[6] which means that alludes to a direct quotation or allusion of other text. Architextuality concerns the notion of genre, Genette points out that "It involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular […] or most often subtitular […], but which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature."[7] For the metatextuality, the commentaries around the main text are taken into consideration, Genette notes that "It unites a give text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it."[8] Hypertextuality works with another concept named hypotextuality, in which the second one inspires the first one, as Genette states: "I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary. […] a text derived from another preexistent text." [9] Finally, paratextuality focus on the relation of titles, prefaces, or

[5] Thomas Schmitz draws the attention on how Kristeva merged the study of the human mind, language, culture, and texts to develop the term of intertextuality. Schmitz, quoting Kristeva, emphasizes the idea that a text is a 'mosaic of quotes' to explain how intertextuality leads to the term of transtextuality of Genette, which has a more pragmatic approach. Genette also introduces six different hypertextual relations. The level of transformation or imitation and the intention of the text shape the parameters of the relation between the hypertext and the hypotext. In this manner, such relations classify the texts in different categories from parody to forgery. (Schmitz, *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts*, 77–83.)

[6] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 2.

[7] Genette, 4.

[8] Genette, 4.

[9] *Ibid.* 5

introductions, which are explained as "the generally less explicit and more distant relationship that binds the text properly speaking, taken within the totality of the literary work."[10] The five categories developed by Genette will help m to analyze and understand the transmission of ideas and their presentation in the texts.

Besides the relations between the texts, another factor taken into consideration for this research will be *contextualism*. Rabasa Gamboa has underlined this term explaining that each text needs to be framed into a singular time and space.[11] Therefore, contextualism will help me to discern and accentuate the differences between the hermetic concepts of Ficino and Lazzarelli.

Therefore, this thesis will consist of two chapters. The first chapter, entitled *The Quest for Ancient Wisdom*, will give an outline of the selection of texts and the context of the authors. In other words, the general biography of Marsilio Ficino from the modern scholarship and some sources closer to his time, his relationship with his patrons from the family of the Medici, and Gemistos Pletho who made an important influence towards Ficino's ideology. In the same vein, the information towards the life of Lodovico Lazzarelli, his search for patronage in Italy, and his encounter with Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio, which was a milestone in Lazzarelli's life.

The second chapter, entitled *Between the Hermetic lines*, will offer the transtextual-rhetorical analysis of Ficino's and Lazzarelli's writings. This chapter aims to present the transformations of Hermetic thought. Besides that, through this analysis, it will be proved that the success of the Hermetic thought during the Renaissance prevailed among other reasons because of its protean nature. The Hermetic thought also represents the syncretism that

[10] *Ibid. 3*

[11] El texto debía ser contextualizado en el tiempo y espacio donde el autor había vivido y producido su escrito; el texto requería ponerse en context histórico, esto es, en la matriz que enmarcó su nacimiento (The text should be contextualized in the time and space when the author has lived and has produced his texts; the text requires being in a historical context, in other words, in the matrix that framed its generation) (Rabasa Gamboa, "La Escuela de Cambridge," 155–56.)

enabled the Renaissance to mix ancient, Christian, Jewish, and Oriental ideas to develop and present their ideas under the shield of greater names, like Hermes Trismegistus.

Hermetic thought founds its bases on Hermetism and Hermeticism. The main source for Hermetism is the *Corpus Hermeticum* (C.H.), which is a collection of treatises ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus. This collection contains in the modern edition seventeen texts, including the *Asclepius* and some fragments of Stobaeus. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444) already mentioned a collection of fifteen texts.[12] Later, Michael Psellus (c. 1017-1078) arranged the collection in the numeration we know it nowadays, with special attention to the first fourteen treatises. Eventually, Marsilio Ficino translated those first fourteen texts with the name of *Pymander sive De potestate et sapientia Dei.*[13]

According to Andrè-Jean Festugière, Psellus would have made annotations in different parts of the collection of the C.H. pointing out the spread of these texts in the Eleventh century.[14] On the other hand, the *Asclepius* was translated in early times into Latin from a Greek version entitled the *Perfect Discourse (Logos teleios)* between the 100 and 300, and this treatise was spread in the Western part of Europe.[15] In the modern scholarship, this text is considered as an apocalyptic text because of the content of prophecies, which also were quoted by Lactantius from the Greek version.[16] In modern editions, the C.H. contains besides the fragments in Greek and Latin, also consider the fragments in Coptic and Syriac. Festugière has translated the C.H. into French in 1946 with the edition of Arthur D. Nock; in English, there are translations by Brian Copenhaver in 1991 and a previous one done by

[12] De toute manière, la citation de S. Cyrille parle d'Hermès comme de celui qui a divisé l'Egypte, mesuré et construit les canaux, donné des lois, dénommé, d'après les lois (νόμοι), les nomes d'Egypte (νομοί), institué les contrats, le calendrier, la rhizotomie; la géométrie, l'astronomie, l'astrologie, la musique et la grammatikè. On voit donc que cet étrivain d'Athènes (probablement un néoplatonicien, comme l'a suggéré Reitzenstein, Poimandres, p. 211) tenait Hermès pour le fondateur de toute civilisation, et l'auteur de la science cachée contenue dans les traités astrologiques et botaniques qui partent son nom. On n'en doit nullement conclure que les citations de S. Cyrille proviennent de ces Ἑρμαϊκὰ βιβλία (In Festugière's Introduction of Trismegistus, *Corpus Hermeticum*, XL.)

[13] In Copenhaver's Introduction of Trismegistus, *Hermetica*, xlii.

[14] In Festugiére's Introduction of Trismegistus, *Corpus Hermeticum*, XL.

[15] In Copenhaver's Introduction of Trismegistus, *Hermetica*, xliii–xliv.

[16] Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 38–39.

Walter Scott in 1924, and into Spanish by Miguel A. Muñoz Moya in 1988. From Ficino's edition, Maurizio Campanelli published the edited version of the *Pymander* in 2011.

During the Fifteenth century, Hermetic thought can be found in the *Crater Hermetis,* which was published with its complete title as *Ludovico Lazzarelli Septempedani Poetae Christiani ad divum Ferdinandum Ar. Siciliae de summa hominis dignitate dialogus qui inscribitur Via Christi et Crater Hermetis*. The title of the Crater Hermetis shows the syncretic approach that Lazzarelli had towards the Hermetic thought with other ideologies. Before its publication, Lazarelli translated the treatises of the C.H. XVI-XVIII–Diffinitiones Asclepii–, from a different manuscript not known by Ficino.[17] Those treatises dedicated to da Correggio have heavily influenced the Crater Hermetis.[18] The newest edition of this text was in charge of Wouter Hanegraaff with the title *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500): The Hermetic Writings and Related Documents* published in 2005 with the prefaces of Lazzarelli dedicated to da Correggio and the *Epistola Enoch* describing Lazzarelli's encounter with da Correggio. Besides him, Maria Paola Saci in *Ludovico Lazzarelli: Da Elicona a Sion* from 1999 highlights the relevance of Lazzarelli. Both of them took in consideration the work previously done by Paul Oskar Kristeller's article *Marsilio Ficino e Lodovico Lazzarelli Contributo alla diffusione delle idee ermetiche nel Rinascimento* from 1956; Kristeller was one of the scholars from the Renaissance who made the edition and publication of many texts and influenced the scholars from his time until our days.

Meanwhile, the source of Hermeticism lies in the collection of texts concerning alchemy, astrology, magic, theurgy, among others. The *Picatrix,* a collection of Hellenistic-Arabic magic, or the *Liber alchemiae*, the first alchemy book in Latin, were two important texts as examples of astrology, talismanic magic, and alchemy that had an impact in Renaissance intellectuals.

[17] Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 171; In Hanegraaff's Introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 57.

[18] In Hanegraaff's Introduction of Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 57.

In the conclusion, I will show the summary and results of the present research. Because of that, I will have to resume some concepts, terms, and ideas explained throughout the text, with a special emphasis on the textual relations between Ficino and Lazzarelli, and the construction of a text as a mosaic of influences. Besides that, I will comment on the Hermetic thought and its synthesizing qualities, which found an opportunity niche during the Renaissance.

The Quest for Ancient Wisdom

In the intellectual life of fifteenth-century Italy, a significant syncretic process took place because of a sum of many factors. The Council of Ferrara-Florence brought to Italy a group of theologians and intellectuals from the remains of the Byzantine Empire; the same group which also sought help against the Ottoman invasion. Therefore, Italian intellectuals benefited from the situation by learning, discussing, and acquiring texts from the Byzantines. In consequence, the syncretism between East and West occurred in Italy merging old and new ideas, which eventually spread to the rest of Europe.

This syncretic process, however, is more visible in some areas than others, for example, in translation. Gérard Genette explains that *translation* is the model of transposition *par excellence* since the change of meaning cannot be avoided.[19] Therefore, each translation should be understood in context. The translated text adds the ideology of the translator to the original, including the translator's influences and education. At the same time, the translated text also shows the trends prevalent in the translator's time, since each text has a concrete audience in mind—be they a single patron or group of people whom the translator expected to read his work. In addition to this, the final version could include paratextual and metatextual elements, such as prefaces or commentaries, which led the reading in a particular direction. During the translation process, not only the words change but concepts and ideas, both personal and contextual, also fuse between each other so the readers can sympathize more with the text and its meaning.

Another example of syncretism concerns religions. The reconciliation of the Abrahamic religions with ancient beliefs, specifically Christianity with Greco-Roman beliefs, took place in the fifteenth century. Thus, the intellectuals of this time—philosophers, poets,

[19] Transposition is one kind of hypertext defined by Genette as "serious parody". He connects the translation in this context because meaning and genre are modified in this translation process. Genette, *Palimpsests*, 214; Schmitz, *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts*, 82.

translators, and theologians—pursued the reconciliation between these belief systems by searching for the authentic and uncorrupted knowledge of the divine. They were leading a quest looking for the ancient wisdom lost in time to connect with God and to understand the world, universe, and human nature to redeem those ancient doctrines that fascinated them.[20]

Marsilio Ficino and Lodovico Lazzarelli both exemplify this synthetizing process. In their quest for reconnecting with God through ancient wisdom, they looked for and rehabilitated the figure of Hermes Trismegistus. Trismegistus was a mythical sage in Eastern and Western texts. Texts ascribed to him concern a range of different topics, from alchemy to philosophy, and even medicine. These texts were both criticized and praised by different religious authorities.[21] To attain the expected ancient wisdom, Ficino and Lazzarelli used the ideas ascribed to Hermes, infusing them with their own ideas and ideologies around them. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the life and influences of Ficino and Lazzarelli. As will be demonstrated, their specific intellectual circles such as the influence of Gemistos Plethon and Giovanni "Mercurio" da Correggio can explain the differences and similarities between their approaches to Hermetic thought, respectively.

[20] The quest for ancient wisdom is usually referred to as the *prisca theologia* and *philosophia perennis*. The former describes the wisdom and knowledge inherited by the *theologi* from Zoroaster and Hermes Trismegistus until Plato and eventually revived by Ficino. While the latter, presupposes a continuous, unconscious, and latent wisdom present at different times and in people from different countries. Wouter J. Hanegraaff ascribes credit to Ficino for the term *prisca theologia*, but recognizes D. P. Walker, who first used it in the Academia, Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 7–9. Eugenio Garin expressed that the *prisca theologia* was necessary for Ficino to reaffirm the presence of the Christian thought among the ancient pagan philosophers. In Garin, *Ermetismo del Rinascimento*, 11–12. Hanegraaff supported this thought by describing Ficino's perception of himself as a tool of God in this process. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 8. Platonic theologian, Agostino Steuco introduced the concept of *philosophia perennis* in his work entitled *De perenni philosophia* in 1540, the purpose of which, according to Hanegraaff, is to preserve the knowledge of ancient philosophers. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 9. Brian Copenhaver, on the other hand, emphasized the intention of unifying humanity's knowledge: Copenhaver and Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy*, 185.

[21] A. J. Festugière described the reception of Hermetic texts by religious authorities such as Cyril of Alexandria or Michael Psellos. In Festugière's Introduction of Trismegistus, *Corpus Hermeticum*, XL and XLVII–XLVIII. Also in Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*, 179. The descriptions from Augustine and Lactantius will be discussed in the following pages.

How did ancient wisdom reach Italy? Gemistos Plethon and Marsilio Ficino

Among the many influences that permeated Marsilio Ficino's ideas, Gemistos Plethon (1355/60-1452/4) seems to have affected Ficino the most, primarily his understanding of *prisca theologia* or the concept of *theologus*, which led him to include Zoroaster as a sage.[22]

As stated previously, the Council of Ferrara-Florence fostered a significant interaction among scholars and theologians in the fifteenth century. One of the goals of the council, also known as the Council of Union, was the reconciliation between the churches from East and West, while the other was to seek help against the Ottoman invasion.[23]

When the Byzantine delegation arrived at the Council in Ferrara, the emperor was accompanied by a group of intellectuals such as Bessarion, Mark Eugenikos, Isidore of Kyiv, and Syropoulos, most of them embedded in theology and the ecclesiastical organization; as well as a layman, Gemistos Plethon, whose main activity was teaching philosophy at his school in Mistra.[24] While the council was at Ferrara, Plethon's duty was to draw up the drafts before each session, and he repeatedly suggested that one of the most important points to discuss was the question of the *Filioque*, to which the Western Church barely paid attention.[25] The acts of Syropoulos attest to an important intervention by Plethon. On October 16, Plethon

[22] Ficino developed the figure of the *Theologus* in his treatise *De vita libri tres*. The *theologus* embodies three characteristics different from the physician, who cures the body, the philosopher, who cures with the word, and the priest, who cures the soul. Peter Serracino-Inglott explains the importance of the tripartite view of Ficino in body, soul, spirit; and how Ficino used the examples of Persia and Egypt to justify his argument, in Serracino-Inglott, "Ficino the Priest," 1–4.

[23] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 123.

[24] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 141; About Plethon's importance in Schmitt, *et al.*: "In his school at Mistra, the capital, and on various diplomatic missions, Pletho sought the restoration of ancient Greek values and a political reform inspired by ancient Hellenic models. The Platonic philosophy was to supply the foundation for an appeal to the continuity of the entire Hellenic tradition." In: Schmitt, Skinner, and Kessler, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 559. For "the intellectual circle of Mistra was largely formed as a collateral result of the hegemony of Palamism in the main theological and political centres. Mistra provided shelter to intellectuals literati forced by circumstances to leave Constantinople and Thessaloniki." In Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium*, 122.

[25] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 137.

argued that the acts from the Seventh Council kept among the Latins the word *Filioque* does not appear as many times as Thomas Aquinas states. This statement was questioned by the Latins but the session of that day was over.[26] After this intervention, Plethon's participation seems to have been reduced and restricted.[27]

Some weeks afterward, the Plague began to threaten the Council of Union, which urged some of the Byzantine scholars to go to Venice and return home. But since the Latins and the Greeks had not reached any agreement, both the pope and the emperor agreed to relocate the council to another city. At this moment Cosimo de' Medici had the advantage of being the papal banker and had reestablished his economic position in Florence, thus the council was translated to Cosimo's city as early as February 15.[28]

In Florence, the reunion between Greeks and Latins made them face their admiration and-awe against each other. C. M. Woodhouse describes the clash between the two cultures vividly:

> The Greeks already knew about the wealth of Florence, for commerce and banking in their own country were dominated by Florentines, among other Italians. Now they could see for themselves how far Italy had surpassed Greece in the practical and visual arts and the material amenities of life, as well as in scholarship. Educated Greeks already reluctantly recognized the superiority of Italian culture. […] Educated Italians, by contrast, still revere Byzantium. […] In literary and philosophical education, there was still room for both points of view.[29]

[26] "At the third session, on 16 October, he [Plethon] made his one substantial intervention, ignoring (or perhaps seeking exemption from) the Emperor's orders. The occasion was a debate in which took place a comparison between Greek and Latin texts recording the early Councils of the Church. Mark Eugenikos was reading out the decrees in Greek. When he reached the Seventh Council (the second held at Nicaea, in 787), the Latins insisted on reading out their own version in Latin. Their text, which was written on very ancient parchment, included the crucial word Filioque. Cesarini argued that the manuscript could not possibly have been altered. He added that a learned western historian, Martin of Troppau, had recorded that the formula was recited in that form at the Seventh Council." In Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 141. Also in Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium*, 125–26.

[27] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 142.

[28] Woodhouse, 154.

[29] Woodhouse, 154.

Therefore, the first interactions between Byzantines and Florentines should have been tense; however, they found some middle ground, as Woodhouse suggests, in literature and philosophy, which allowed them to learn from each other.

Plethon as a consequence of his intervention in Ferrara enjoyed more of his free time in Florence. Therefore, Cosimo invited Plethon to join his humanistic circle. The language problem has been stated by scholars; Woodhouse proposes that Leonardo Bruni was the most suitable person to translate between Greek and Latin, not only because of his knowledge of these two languages but also because he was also familiar with philosophy.[30] One of the most relevant topics discussed, and the most shocking for Plethon, was the differences between Aristotle and Plato. The Latins' confusion between Aristotle, Plato, and the mediation of Averroes astonished Plethon, which led him to write his treatise Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται or *De differentiis*, which he dedicated to his peers in Italy.[31] In the treatise, Plethon argues the superiority of Plato over Aristotle:

> Our ancestors both Hellens and Romans, esteemed Plato much more highly than Aristotle. But most people today, especially in the West, who regard themselves a more knowledgeable than their predecessors, admire Aristotle more than Plato. They have been convinced by the claims of Arab Averroes that Aristotle alone has achieved a complete account of natural philosophy.[32]

At the beginning of this treatise, Plethon explains his respect and critique of the scholars and intellectuals of the West. He exalts the people from the East who had understood and

[30] Woodhouse, 165.

[31] For the place in which the treatise was written, see Schmitt, *et al.*: "In the famous treatise Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται, which he composed during his brief sojourn at Florence 'for the benefit of the Platonists' in Italy, Pletho opposed the Latin view that Aristotle taught that God is the creator of all things, that he has direct providence over the world and that the human soul is immortal." In Schmitt, Skinner, and Kessler, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 560. As opposed to this, Woodhouse states that Plethon wrote *De differentiis* only after his return to Mistra inspired by his lectures in Florence and then sent copies to Italy. He also addresses an important change in Plethon's work, since this treatise was published already with his nickname "Plethon;" in Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 219,186, respectively. Later Ficino would name him as *philosophum Graecum nomine Gemisthum, cognomine Plethonem, quasi alterum Platonem* as a result of a wordplay in his *proemium* to Plotinus's translation; in Prooemium ad Magnanium Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, *Plotini Divini Illius e Platonica Familia Philosophi de Rebus Philosophicis Libri LIIII in Enneades Sex Distributi, a Marsilio Ficino Ficino Florentino e Graeca Linguam Latinam Versi, et Ab Eodem Doctissimi Commentariis Illustrati, Omnibus Cum Graeco Exemplari Collatis et Diligenter Castigatis.*, [Basel 1562] Fol. 3a.

[32] Plethon, *De differentiis*, i. Translation in Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon,* 192.

followed Plato, instead of the West, including some of his Byzantine colleagues, who followed Aristotle. But for him, the main problem with the Latins was that they followed the Arabic interpretation, which consequently diminished their philosophical development.

Nevertheless, *De differentiis* was the result of Plethon's lectures in Florence dedicated to "those who were interested in Plato."[33] The impact of such lectures, as it is suggested by Woodhouse, eventually led Cosimo to found the so-called Academy of Florence ten years later, which would be managed by Marsilio Ficino.[34][35]

The lectures on Plato were not the only topic that was discussed during these gatherings. Plethon taught that Plato's philosophical tradition was inherited from Zoroaster through the Pythagoreans and Orpheus.[36] D. P. Walker argues that the influence of Orpheus in Plethon can be demonstrated in his work *Nomoi*, also known as *The Book of Laws*, which imitates the style of the Orphic hymns, even though he does state that there is no mention of the *Orphica* in Plethon's texts.[37] On the other hand, Woodhouse explains that Orphism exists in Plethon's works through the explanations of God, time, or metempsychosis.[38]

The other major influence on Plethon, besides the Platonic texts, were the *Oracula Chaldaica*, a collection of texts ascribed to Zoroaster, which contains discussions about the freedom of the soul and its reunion with God.[39] The *Oracula,* edited and commented by Plethon, was most likely the source for Ficino to translate them into Latin.[40]

[33] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 156.
[34] Woodhouse, 156–57.
[35] The term "Academy of Florence" is controversial in scholarship. James Hankins suggests that there are several definitions of the word "Academia", and proposes the idealization or myth of the Academia in Ficino's writings. For him, the Academia can be understood as a metaphorical term for the Platonic–including Neoplatonic and Hermetic–books, but also as a circle of intellectuals gathering to discuss and share their opinions towards culture, philosophy, theology, among others, in Hankins, "The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence," 434, 435.
[36] Keller, "Two Byzantine Scholars and Their Reception in Italy," 364; Dannenfeldt, "The Pseudo-Zoroastrian Oracles in the Renaissance," 10.
[37] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, 60.
[38] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 62.
[39] Dannenfeldt, "The Pseudo-Zoroastrian Oracles in the Renaissance," 9.
[40] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 373.

Concerning the Zoroastrian doctrine, Plethon understood it not as the Iranian dualistic religion, but rather as the inherited knowledge from Zoroaster, who had accessed to transcendental divine wisdom and existed until his days among the *magi*, the *Oracles*, and also in the writings of Plato. Through this doctrine, Plethon could track and confirm his own ideas, such as the adoration of the light and Sun present in philosophical thought from Plato to Julian.[41] Zoroaster, finally, gave Plethon the *auctoritas* he needed to express his ideas.[42][43] This rhetorical device is more evident in Plethon's reaction George Scholarios's text against *De differentiis*:

> Plato's philosophy came down to him from Zoroaster by way of the Pythagoreans. Zoroaster who lived 5,000 years before the Trojan War according to Plutarch, was the oldest of the so-called philosophers and law-givers except for Min of Egypt; and even then Egyptians were converted from Min's doctrines by the influence of Pythagoras. Plato also adopted the Zoroastrian doctrine: "the surviving oracles of Zoroaster are clearly consistent with the doctrines of Plato, totally and in every respect."[44]

This passage serves several purposes. First, Plethon proposes some sort of tradition in which Zoroaster is the fountain of wisdom for the Greeks, especially for Pythagoras and Plato. At the same time, he states that the purest transmission of Zoroaster's ideas is found in Plato's works. The arguments of Antiquity and purity tuned out to be beneficial to his defense of Plato against Aristotle. A curious side argument, which Plethon does not seem to develop, is his disdain towards the Egyptians. As Dannenfeldt points it out as follows: "[Plethon] also exhibits the traditional Greek disrespect for the ancient Egyptians in that he considered the

[41] Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 64–65.

[42] Woodhouse, 63.

[43] The term *auctoritas* was used by Quintilian in his book entitled *Institutiones Oratoria,* in which he explains that this rhetorical device could be used to give more authority to an argument, usually by quoting people from the past, including those who have divine influence: "As for reflexions drawn from the poets, not only speeches, but even the works of the philosophers, are full of them; for although the philosophers think everything inferior to their own precepts and writings, they have not thought it beneath their dignity to quote numbers of lines from the poets to lend authority (*auctoritas*) to their statements […]Some include under this head the supernatural authority that is derived from oracles, as for instance the response asserting that Socrates was the wisest of mankind: indeed, they rank it above all other authorities. Such authority is rare, but may prove useful. It is employed by Cicero in his speech on the Replies of the Soothsayers […]." Quint. *Inst.* V, 11, 39-42.

[44] Pletho, *On the Observations of George Scholarios in Defense of Aristotle*, 7. Translation in Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon,* 284-85.

legislation of Menes, the Egyptian lawgiver who is said to have lived 3,000 years before Zoroaster', to be incomplete and inferior."[45] Because, he argues, even the Egyptians followed Zoroaster's teaching indirectly, that the transmission of knowledge was through Pythagoras. Here, I propose that Plethon did not consider or thought about Hermes as an ideal figure since he diminished the Egyptians despite their antiquity or knowledge. Contrary to this suggestion, previous scholarship suggests that Hermes was introduced to Cosimo, and later to Ficino, through Plethon's transmission of wisdom; here it is important to highlight that there is no mention of Trismegistus in Plethon's works.[46] Therefore, the only one that should be followed is Zoroaster, the ideal philosopher, which would explain why Ficino included him in his genealogy of the *prisca theologia*. In addition, Plethon also presented Zoroaster as the model of the legislator:

> Legislators and philosophers though not infallible, make fewer mistakes. They may err through the weakness of human nature and there is also the danger that poets and sophists may be mistaken for them. Therefore it is important to specify which one intends to follow. The list begins with a group of legislators, in what is presumed to be chronological order: Zoroaster, Eumolpus (the founder of the Eleusinian mysteries, Minos, Lycurgus, […], and Numa (the only Roman in the list). Next comes a list of 'other philosophers', who are presented collectively without individual names: the Brahmans of Indica, the Magi of Media, the Kouretes, the priests of Dodona. […] Finally there is a group of philosophers in the strict sense: Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, Timaeus, Plutarch, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus.[47]

Plethon recognizes that the problem with humans is that they make errors but among them, legislators and philosophers make fewer; after his experience in the council, he probably did not trust theologians or rulers. Both Plethon and Cosimo experienced the failure of the council and witnessed how institutionalized religion was unable to reach an agreement.

[45] Dannenfeldt, "The Pseudo-Zoroastrian Oracles in the Renaissance," 10.

[46] "Some five years later, Pletho replied to Scholarius' attack, adding an important new element to the debate. He maintained that Plato continued the prisca theologia of Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, and Pythagoras and is, for this reason, nearer than Aristotle to Christian teaching, except perhaps that of the Arians." Schmitt, Skinner, and Kessler, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 561. In contrast, Woodhouse suggests that is quite possible that Plethon was either unaware of the *C.H.* or he intentionally ignored them because the hermetic texts could compete with the *Oracula*. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 60-59. Also in Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 15.

[47] Plethon, *Nomoi*, i, 2. Also known as *The book of Laws.* Translation in Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 327.

Therefore, Plethon sought a pure doctrine among the pagan philosophers, not only because they were less corrupted, but also because they were able to connect with God and experience that *religio* with him.

Thus, Plethon's ideas moved Cosimo to the quest for ancient wisdom and to reconnect with the divine.[48] Cosimo's activities, however, focused on the economic and political affairs of Florence and the family business. At the same time, his accumulated wealth allowed him to invest in someone who could do that research. Among his acquaintances, the son of his physician Diotifeci Ficino was a good candidate since he had received medical and philosophical instruction. This candidate was Marsilio Ficino.

The oldest information of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) comes from a text of Giovanni Corsi entitled *Vita Marsilii*. This *vita* was dedicated to Bindaccio da Ricasoli in 1506, but it follows the structure of the *encomium*; therefore some of the information displayed has been altered using metaphors or hyperboles for the sake of the genre.[49] Nevertheless, Corsi still writes that his text has "a methodical description of all that is best and most memorable in his [Ficino's] life and conduct."[50]

Corsi focused on different aspects of Ficino's life describing among other things his relations, works, translations, feelings, and attitudes; which are also recommendations of the instructions of the *encomium*. By the time Corsi wrote Ficino's life, Ficino's fame and works

[48] Hankins suggests that Cosimo has almost no interest in Plethon's syncretism or Ficino's research in the same line, and Hankins bases his argument on Cosimo's interest in "good literature" from Greek philosophers. Ficino's descriptions in different prefaces show a different perspective on this argument, which I will comment on in this research. In Hankins, "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" 147. Against P. O. Kristeller who wants to see the "Academia" as a sort of spiritual community with Ficino as a master and the rest as pupils in Kristeller, "The European Significance of Florentine Platonism," 65.

[49] *Encomium* or *Panegyric* is a kind of discourse used in classic oratory. The purpose of the *encomium* as Cicero explains was to entertain and to praise, which makes the best moment for them a funeral. In the *encomium*, however, there are instructions on which are the more suitable elements to praise, for example, "virtues are thought to be beneficial not so much to their possessors as to the human race in general." Therefore, the recommended virtues to praise are kindness, mercy, justice, beneficence, wisdom, magnanimity, among others; so the people who listen, or read, the *encomium* results pleased. (Cic. *De or*. 2. 84. 341-34)

[50] Corsi, "The Life of Marsilio Ficino," 2.

were already spread throughout Europe. In Corsi's words Ficino reached the highest point of a philosopher:

> Marsilio Ficino, who as guide penetrated the innermost sanctuary of the divine Plato, sealed for so many centuries, and thoroughly explored the whole of his Academy, the first noteworthy thing which came to mind and encouraged me to write about this man was that he himself not only investigated its precepts and mysteries but also penetrated, laid open, and then expounded them to others.[51]

Ficino was able to unlock and to teach the secrets of Plato, Neoplatonic philosophy, and Hermetic thought to the people of his time benefitting even Corsi, who wrote this *Vita*. From the previous quote, it needs to be highlighted that Ficino's fame also involved his work on the mysteries, which now were accessible to other intellectuals. Based on this information, it is justifiable to argue that the knowledge about the mysteries was well-known, accepted, and even desired among other humanists or intellectuals, especially as suggested the next couple of sentences, in which Corsi praises Ficino's abilities to complete the aforementioned task:

> This was something which no one else for the previous thousand years so much as attempted, let alone accomplished. This was made possible by the astonishing fecundity of his mind, his burning zeal, and his extraordinary indifference to all pleasure and, above all, to material wealth.[52]

Corsi in this part of the text wants to address an inherent superior nature to Ficino's skills, but most of them could be solved if his intellectual formation is considered. Also, Ficino's formation will help us understand the different influences that affected the development of his ideas. Therefore, the present work focuses on the following points to understand his perception of Hermes Trismegistus: his medical formation, his linguistic skills, and his knowledge prior to the translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

According to Corsi, before meeting Cosimo, Ficino studied medicine and Aristotelian philosophy in Bologna;[53] however, Eugenio Garin questions this assumption since there is no

[51] Corsi, 3.
[52] Corsi, 3.
[53] Corsi, 5.

information about Ficino in Bologna during his early youth, only in Florence.[54] The most probable reason for this is that Corsi never met Ficino while he was alive, and he relied on a quote from one of the most famous treatises named *De vita libri tres.*[55] In the proem dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, Ficino writes:

> Ego sacerdos minimus patres habui duos: Ficinum medicum, Cosmum Medicem. Ex illo natus sum ex isto renatus. Ille quidem me Galieno tum medico tum Platonico commedavit; hic autem divino consecravit me Platoni. Et hic similiter atque ille Marsilium medico destinavit: Galienus quidem corporum, Plato vero medicus animorum.[56]

De vita is a treatise divided into three parts full of recommendations, recipes, amulets, and instructions to have a longer, healthier, and "celestial" life. In this proem, Ficino calls himself a physician; probably Corsi's source to recognize him as one. Through this proem, it is clear how Ficino introduced himself with his various skills not only as an expert on Galen but also on Plato, which allows him to take care of Lorenzo de' Medici physically and spiritually.

This proem also helps us to understand the relationship that Ficino had with Cosimo. Ficino described it in terms of family connections including himself in the Medici's clan becoming an uncle for Lorenzo. *De vita,* as a gift, commemorated his "father" Cosimo and repaid him for introducing him to the Platonic knowledge, which has given Ficino the skill to heal souls, as he mentions in the following sentences:

> Iamdiu igitur sub Platone salutarem animorum exercui medicinam, quando post librorum omnium eius interpretationem, mox decem atque octo De animorum immortalitate libros at aeterna felicitate composui, ita pro viribus patri meo Medici satisfaciens.[57]

[54] Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1:231.

[55] Also known only as *De vita,* it finished between 1480 and 1489. This treatise has dedicatory letters to Lorenzo de' Medici, Filippo Valori, and king Mathias Corvinus of Hungary.

[56] As the least of the priests, I have two fathers: Ficino the physician, Cosimo de' Medici. From the first I was born, from the second I have reborn. The first one has commended me to Galen, who was a physician and a Platonist; the second one has consecrated me to the divine Plato. And both, in the same way, have destined Marsilio to be a physician (doctor): as Galen, doctor of bodies, as Plato doctor of souls. (In the edition of Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 102.)

[57] 'Therefore, following Plato, after translating all his books, I have practiced the healthful medicine of the souls and then I have composed eighteen books On the immortality and eternal happiness of the souls, so in this way, I could satisfy with my virtues in return to my father Cosimo.' (In the edition of Ficino, 102.)

In this proem to *De vita,* we can read the connection that Ficino established between philosophy and medicine. By the time Ficino wrote the *De vita*, as he describes, he already became a priest, merging in himself the healer of bodies from his previous knowledge, to the healer of souls through the knowledge from Antiquity and the Scriptures.

Ficino emphasizes his translation skills not only in this proem, but also in different translations, for example, of Plato, Plotinus, and even of letters to his acquaintances and courts such as Ferdinand of Aragon or Matthias of Hungary. Most of his translations were from Greek to Latin, including Plato's dialogues, the first fourteen treatises of the *Corpus Hermeticum* under the title *Pymander*, the *Oracula Chaldaica* in the version compiled by Plethon and Psellos,[58] and works of Plotinus, Proclus, Jamblichus, Michael Psellos, and Porphyry. Ficino's knowledge of Greek, according to Corsi's *Vita*, was linked to Platina's, which makes sense chronologically. Garin, however, proposes a different teacher, Francesco of Castiglione; and notes that Ficino made a request to learn Greek asking for the help of Cosimo and Cristoforo Landino.[59]

Ficino's knowledge of Greek and Latin applied to his translations explains one of the reasons for the fame of this Renaissance man. Paul Oskar Kristeller's approach to Ficino was based on his linguistic and translation skills.[60] Kristeller recognizes Ficino as an important scholar in the Western world.[61] Nevertheless, in Kristeller's analysis, the commentator and translator cannot coexist while approaching the same text at the same time, which leads Kristeller to disconnect two intertwined activities.[62] I suggest that Ficino was conscious about

[58] *Supra*, p. 13.

[59] Corsi even describes that Ficino learned Greek when he was 26 years old. In Corsi, "The Life of Marsilio Ficino," 5; Against Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1:229. Also, Garin about the petition: "A year before, in 1456, relying on Latin sources, Ficino composed for the counsel of Cristoforo Landino a volume of *Institutionum ad Platonicam disciplinam* that has been lost. The book was dedicated to Landino, but then was put aside for the exhortation of Cosimo and Landino in order to have time 'to learn first the Greek letters and absorb the Platonic doctrines from the original sources' (quoad Graecis litteris erudirer, Platonicaque tandem ex suis fontibus haurirem)." In Garin, 1:236.

[60] Kristeller, "The European Significance of Florentine Platonism," 55 and 57–58.

[61] Kristeller, "Marsilio Ficino as a Beginning Student of Plato," 94.

[62] Kristeller, 94.

the process of translation, and he was aware of the implications of the tropicalization of ideas, which I will try to demonstrate in the following chapter through the transtextual analysis.[63]

According to Corsi's account, once Ficino proved his linguistic skills, Cosimo lent him a villa in Careggi.[64] The reason behind this gift was the petition of the translation of the C.H.[65] The first fourteen treatises of the C.H. arrived Florence after being discovered by Leonardo da Pistoia in Macedonia, as Ficino describes in the preface of his translation: "At nuper ex Macedonia in Italiam advectus, diligentia Leonardi Pistorensis, docti probique monachi ad nos pervenit [*Pymander*]."[66]

Also, in the following lines, Ficino explains that the reason behind this translation was a request from Cosimo. Ficino translated the *C.H.* to please and recognize his patronage.

> Ego autem cum tuis exhortationibus provocatus, e graeca lingua in latinam convertere statuissem: aequum fore putavi Cosme felix, ut nomini tuo opusculum dedicarem. Nam cuius ipse adiutus opibus, librisque affatim refertus, studiis graecis incubui: eidem studiorum graecorum me decet offerre primitias.[67]

For many scholars, this translation was the key to the spread of Hermetic thought throughout Europe. Kristeller recognizes Ficino's influence in the transmission of Hermetic thought but hinders it under the Platonic tradition "For better or for worse, Ficino was largely responsible for the common tendency to associate Hermetic and other occult ideas with Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions."[68] Since the *Pymander* became the source to justify other occult and

[63] *Tropicalization* is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "the process to fit or adapt something into tropical weather." Nowadays, this term has been used in marketing to explain the process in which a product or concept is adapted to a local community taking into consideration the cultural and linguistic barriers.

[64] Corsi, "The Life of Marsilio Ficino," 5.

[65] Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1:263; And Kristeller, "Marsilio Ficino as a Beginning Student of Plato," 95.

[66] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 5. (And, not so long ago, coming from Macedonia to Italy thanks to the diligence of Leonardo da Pistoia, a learned and good monk, [the Pymander] came to us.)

[67] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., [Basel, 1532] Fol. 5-6. (Then, moved by your urgings, I have decided to translate [the Pymander] from Greek into Latin, and I have thought rightfully that I would dedicate this little work to your name, fortunate Cosimo. Because, when I used to "burn the midnight oil" for my Greek not only I was fulfilled abundantly with books but also I was benefitted by your wealth, it results suitable for me to offer you the first fruits of my Greek studies.)

[68] Kristeller, "The European Significance of Florentine Platonism," 57.

esoteric treatises, Wouter Hanegraaff recognizes it as a significant turn in the development of Western Esotericism emphasizing the importance of this translation framed in the context of the Renaissance *Platonic Orientalism*.[69] For Garin, the translation is the representation of the syncretism between oriental influences through merging Platonic and Stoic religious ideas.[70] Also, Brian Copenhaver's argument proposes that Ficino's *Pymander* offers a diachronic study both to justify different magic theories and to connect them under the Christian environment.[71] Finally, Maurizio Campanelli argues that the *Pymander* redefined the perception of Trismegistus since Ficino composed the *Praefatio* as a humanist biography breaking with the medieval perception of the alchemist Trismegistus, and presenting him as a prophet and philosopher with a Renaissance perspective.[72]

The *Pymander* takes its name from the first of the fourteen treatises of the C.H., which in Greek is Ποιμάνδρης (Poimandres). Ficino also added a subtitle for his translation *De potestate et sapienta Dei* (About the power and wisdom of God), which has a hypotext from the Bible, just as the subtitle added by Ficino to the *Asclepius*, *De voluntate Dei* (About the will of God) with the same hypotext. Both textual relations will be discussed in the next chapter. The first edition of the *Pymander* was published in Treviso in 1471.[73] But Ficino finished his translation in April 1463, which means that Ficino's earlier version was distributed among some of his acquaintances, besides Cosimo and Lorenzo.[74] The *Pymander* was printed on several occasions and in different places including Italy, France, Germany, and Poland just to mention a few.[75]

[69] Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 42 and 53.
[70] Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1:233.
[71] Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*, 101.
[72] Campanelli, *Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander Sive de Potestate et Sapientia Dei (Ficinus Novus)*, XXIV–XXV and XXXIX.
[73] Hanegraaff, "How Hermetic Was Renaissance Hermetism?," 184.
[74] Campanelli, *Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander Sive de Potestate et Sapientia Dei (Ficinus Novus)*, LXI.
[75] Hanegraaff, "How Hermetic Was Renaissance Hermetism?," 185.

The *Pymander* is considered a Hermetic group of texts describing among other things the origin of the universe and humankind, the hierarchy of the creatures linked to the Great Chain of Beings, the immortality of the soul, the influence of the stars and planets in the sublunar world, and the salvation of the soul. The original *C.H.* represents the syncretic thinking of the Late Antiquity, while the *Pymander* does the same during the Renaissance as different religious, philosophical, and doctrinal ideas merge in the texts to explain the aforementioned concepts.

The books of Hermes, as Ficino explains, were divided into two main books, the *Pymander* in Ficino's translation, and the *Asclepius*: "E multis denique Mercurii libris, duo sunt divine praecipue: unus "De voluntate divina", alter "De potestate et sapienta Dei: Ille Asclepius, hic Pymander inscribitur."[76] Before the translated text, Ficino wrote a preface and he kept the title of those treatises that have one in Greek.

In Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples' edition from Basel in 1532, the treatises have an *Argumenta* with a summary of the content explaining some of the ideas discussed in them. In the paratext of this edition, Lefèvre compares Ficino to a paternal figure since Ficino was moved by the inspiration of Trismegistus to explain and to help those interested in the wisdom: "[…] cum amore Marsilii, quem tanquam patrem veneramur, tum Mercurii sapientiae magnitudine permoti."[77] Lefèvre's and Corsi's depiction proves the spreading fame of Ficino. For this work, I will use this edition located in the Library of Ausburg and scanned by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. The edition also includes the translation of *De mysteriis* of Iamblichus and the translation of *De anima et daemone* and *De sacrificio et magia* of Proclus. This *Pymander* is considered an eleventh edition based on the ninth edition

[76] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 5. (Among the several books of Mercurius, mainly two are divine: one "About the will of God," the other "About the power and wisdom of God." They are named Asclepius and Pymander, respectively.)

[77] Faber Stapulensis Lectori in Trismegistus et al., [Basel, 1532] Fol. 8. ([…] with the love of Marsilio, who we praise as a father, and with the great wisdom of Mercury's influence.)

from Florence 1513, which includes both the text edited by Lefèvre and presented by Michael Isengin.[78]

Nevertheless, even if the figure of Hermes Trismegistus had its formal presentation in the *Pymander*, Ficino had mentioned Trismegistus in previous works. Ficino's previous medical formation allowed him to read hermeticist texts such as the *Picatrix*, which contains several recipes and amulets to heal and cure people, and this text also mentions the existence of Trismegistus and its importance. [79] The *Picatrix*, originally in Arabic, first appeared in Europe in a Spanish translation during the reign of Alphonse the Wise in the thirteenth century and the Latin translation was based on this Spanish text.[80] The *Picatrix* does not claim to be written by Trismegistus directly, but he is mentioned several times in hymns as an inspiration for the prophets,[81] and as an author of other treatises and books,[82] or invocations.[83] Many of the recipes, amulets, and talismans Ficino described in his *De vita*, especially in *De vita coelitus comparanda*, are mentioned in the *Picatrix*.

Besides the *Picatrix*, the *Asclepius*, the only complete Latin treatise available in the West, was well known by Ficino as he mentions in his preface to the *Pymander*: "Illum [*Asclepium*] Apuleius Platonicus latinum fecit, alter [*Pymander*] usque ad haec tempora restitit apud Graecos."[84] Ficino's words "usque ad haec tempora" suggest that they had the *Asclepius* among the Latins and it was not an unknown text. In the preface to the *Pymander*

[78] Hanegraaff, "How Hermetic Was Renaissance Hermetism?," 186.

[79] In the introduction of *Three books on Life*, Kaske and Clark confirm, as Garin does, that Ficino had no medical degree and his access to medical knowledge and literature was through his father as well as Giorgio Medico and Matteo Aretino, who may have been the ones to lend the *Picatrix* to Ficino. In Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 19.

[80] The original title of the *Picatrix* is *Ghayat al-Hakim*. The origins of this treatise could be traced to the Hellenistic magic, which in over the years added influences from other regions until the *Picatrix* was spread throughout Europe. In Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and Picatrix. I: The Spanish Version," 27–28; and Thomann, "The Name Picatrix: Transcription or Translation?," 289.

[81] *Picatrix*, 3.7, 221-222.

[82] *Picatrix*, 3.7, 271; and 4.3, 61.

[83] *Picatrix*, 3.7, 19-21.

[84] "Platonic Apuleius translated that one (Asclepius) into Latin, while during this time the other (Pymander) remained among the Greeks." Hermes Trismegistus, Marsilio Ficino, et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia Dei; Eiusdem Asclepius, de voluntate dei; Iamblichus de mysterijs Aegyptiorum, Chaldaeorum, & Assyriorum; Proclus in Platonicum Alcibiadem, de anima & daemone; Idem de sacrificio & magia* (Basel: Isengrin, 1532), fol. 5.

he attributed the *auctoritas* and part of his hypotexts to Augustine and Lactantius, who read and quoted the *Asclepius* in their works.[85] On one hand, based on a passage in the *Asclepius* on the animation of statues, Augustine in his *De civitate Dei* questions the purpose of the *Asclepius*.[86] He interpreted the animation of statues as a gamble (*ludificatio*) with the demon and declared that Trismegistus committed sacrilege against Christianity (*perniciosus sacrilegus*). On the other hand, in the fourth book of the *Institutiones Divinae*, entitled *De vera sapienta et religione*, Lactantius depicted Trismegistus as a prophet since the description on the greatness of the divine in the *Asclepius* presents some parallels with the Christian approach.[87]

Besides the *Picatrix* and the *Asclepius,* alchemical texts could also influence Ficino as Campanelli suggests. According to Campanelli, Ficino's proem has a hypotext from the *Liber Alchimiae.* The treatise was a translation of an Arabic alchemical text on the conversations between an Arab emir and a Byzantine philosopher, Khalid and Maryanus, about how to get the philosopher's stone and the "Magisterium" of Trismegistus. Campanelli explains that besides Cicero the *Liber alchimia* inspired Ficino to write the "biography" of Trismegistus and arrange his genealogy in three different Hermes.[88]

Ficino, thus, was aware of the existence of Hermes Trismegistus before the translation of the *Pymander.* Ficino's sources come from classical and late antiquity, the fathers of the Church, and medieval texts. All these influences merged in the preface that he wrote to his translation in order to improve the image of the ancient Trismegistus and present him as a sage, a philosopher, a king, a priest, with medical and astrological knowledge: a suitable candidate to receive the revelation of God and spread his wisdom among the rest of humanity.

[85] "Praefatio," *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander,* fol. 5.
[86] Aug., *De civ. D.*, VIII, 23, Asclep. 24.
[87] Lac., *Div. Inst.* IV, 6.
[88] Campanelli, "Marsilio Ficino's portrait of Hermes Trismegistus and its afterlife," 53–54 and 57.

Prior to the *Pymander*, Trismegistus appears in other texts by Ficino such as *De divino furore* (1457) and *De amore* (1469). Besides *De vita* or the *Platonic theology*, most of Ficino's texts were written in the form of letters or commentaries on his translations written for and dedicated to his acquaintances. Ficino compiled and edited his letters in 1494 and arranged them in twelve books.

De divino furore (On divine frenzy) is a reply to a letter of Peregrino Aglio, who belonged to Ficino's circle in Careggi. In the letter, Ficino defines what frenzies are and how Plato categorizes them, and to explain how Plato got that knowledge, Ficino connected Plato with more ancient philosophers. Ficino explained that Trismegistus was the source in whose foosteps Pythagoras, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Plato emerged.

> Cumque ii quos paulo ante memoravi philosophi, Deum summum fontem quendam ac lumen—in quo rerum omnium exemplaria, quas ideas nominant, eluxcescant—esse a Mercurio Trismegisto Ægyptiorum omnium sapientissimo didicissent, necessarium fore putabant animum eternam Dei mentem assidue contemplantem, rerum quoque omnium naturas clarius intueri.[89]

Ficino attributed the idea of contemplation to Trismegistus and considered him as the source of knowledge for the Greek philosophers. In *De divino furore,* he discusses the origin and fame of Trismegistus, whom he considered as a teacher and the wisest of all Egyptians and philosophers. The letter also shows an earlier development of the *prisca theologia* describing the transmission of knowledge from Trismegistus to Pythagoras, then Empedocles and Heraclitus, down to Plato.

De amore was dedicated to Giovanni Cavalcanti, to whom Ficino sent and dedicated several letters with the formula *amicus unicus*.[90] The text was written after the translation of the C.H. but before its publication in 1471, therefore it shows a development from his

[89] De divino furore in Ficino, *Marsilii Ficini Florentini Eloquentissi Viri Epistolae Familiares*, [Nuremberg, 1497] Fol 4. (And in connection with those philosophers I have just mentioned, they had learned from Mercurius Trismegistus—the wisest among Egyptians—that God is the uppermost fountain and light, from which the models of all things begin to shine—those models which are called "ideas". Those philosophers used to think that it would be necessary for the soul to constantly contemplate the eternal mind of God, and witness clearly the natures of all things.)

[90] The original title of *De amore* is *Commentarium Marsilii Ficini in Convivium Platonis, De amore.*

perspective seen in *De divino furore*. Ficino divided *De amore* into seven discourses to comment on Plato's *Symposium* and discuss ideas about love, whereby he coins the term "platonic love." *De amore* is probably the most famous commentary on the *Symposium* second only to the Girolamo Benivieni's poem with the commentary by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Ficino uses the *auctoritas* of Trismegistus to justify the antiquity of his arguments:

> Orpheus in *Argonautica*, cum de rerum principiis coram Chirone heroibusque cantaret, Mercurii Trismegisti theologiam secutus, chaos ante mundum posuit, et ante Saturnum, Iovem ceterosque deos amorem in ipsius chaos sinu locavit […]. Hesiodus in *Theologia* et in libro *de Natura* Parmenides pythagoreus Acusileusque poeta cum Orpheo et Mercurio consenserunt.[91]

Ficino presents Trismegistus as a theologian and Orpheus as a follower and transmitter of the knowledge of Trismegistus. Ficino's interpretation of the role of Orpheus resembles those in the platonic dialogues, also used in the C.H., in which the master teaches the disciple about cosmogony or soteriology. Ficino also wanted to reconcile Trismegistus with the Greek poets and philosophers among them; he sidesteps philosophers who proposed cosmogonies against the chaos or darkness as the origin, as appears in the first dialogue of the C.H.

De amore can be seen as an attempt to establish a chronology in which Trismegistus is the oldest one, followed by Orpheus. The chronology from *De amore* and *De divino furore* are consistent in exposing Trismegistus as the source for Greek knowledge. The *auctoritas* of Trismegistus appears repeatedly when Ficino wants to convince his reader about the antiquity of an idea or to justify the connections between the thinkers by establishing a transmission lineage of wisdom and knowledge.

In addition, there are several philosophical references to the hermetic thought in this text such as the description of the creation of the world introducing the idea of the "angelic

[91] Ficino, *Commentarium in Convivium Platonis de Amore*, I, 3.(In the *Argonautica*, following the theology of Mercurius Trismegistus, Orpheus sang about the beginning of the things in the presence of Chiron and the heroes. Orpheus set down the chaos before the universe, and before Saturn, Jupiter, and the rest of the gods. He placed Love in the bosom of Chaos […], Hesiod, in the *Theology* and Parmenides, the Pythagorean, in the book *On nature*, and the poet Acusileus had agreed with Orpheus and Mercurius.)

mind",[92] the influence of the celestial world in the sublunar region,[93] or the argument on the two lights in the soul, [94] which resemble some ideas exposed in the C. H.[95] However, these remain outside the purview of the present research.

The *Picatrix,* the *Asclepius,* and the *Liber Alchimiae* are examples for the influence of the Hermetic thought in Ficino before the translation of the *Pymander*. The elements in some of Ficino's writings besides the *Praefatio* show the presence of Trismegistus throughout the development of Ficino's ideas. But Ficino's intention to build a lineage of wisdom needed to connect the theologians, poets, and philosophers from the Antiquity to his own age so he introduced Plethon into this transmission of knowledge. On one hand, Plethon was a character that made an impression on Cosimo. On the other, Plethon's philosophical knowledge and his treatise of *De differentiis* helped Italians, especially Florentines, to understand and discern Averroistic, Aristotelian, and Platonic ideas.

In the preface to the translation of Plotinus's *Enneads* we can read how Ficino integrated Plethon to develop a lineage from Antiquity to his time, in which he includes Plethon and himself:

> At the time when the Council was in process between the Greeks and the Latins at Florence under Pope Eugenius, the great Cosimo, whom a decree of the Senate (Signoria) designated *Pater Patriae*, often listened to the Greek philosopher Gemistos (with the cognomen Plethon, as it were a second Plato) while he expounded the mysteries of Platonism. And he was so immediately inspired, so moved by Gemistos' fervent tongue, that as a result he conceived in his noble mind a kind of Academy, which he was to bring to birth at the first opportune moment. Later, when the great Medici brought his great idea into being, he destined me, the son of his favourite doctor, while I was still boy, for the great task.[96]

[92] Ficino, I, 3.
[93] Ficino, I, 3.
[94] Ficino, IV, 4.
[95] C.H., I. 30
[96] In the preface of the Plotinus's *Enneads* dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici; quoted in Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 156.

Woodhouse quotes this passage to explain the connection between Plethon and the "Academy of Florence."[97] But Woodhouse also proposes that Ficino wanted to establish a relation between his circle in Careggi to the school in Mistra.[98] I suggest that Ficino wanted to establish a connection with Plethon, but not on an institutional level, but in the transmission of knowledge.[99] Besides that, Ficino expressed his gratitude to his previous patron, Cosimo, the grandfather of Lorenzo de' Medici, his patron at the time. As a humanist, he needed to secure his position in the Medicean court by emphasizing the lineage of the family. In this sense, Cosimo was the reason for the connection between Plethon and Ficino, not only because Plethon introduced Cosimo to Plato and to Classical philosophy but also because of the desire to know and understand more about it moved Cosimo to invest in Ficino and Ficino's intellectual formation.

Woodhouse, however, omitted the next sentence, in which Ficino described how the curiosity of Cosimo led him to ask Ficino the translation of Hermes's texts.

> Operam praeterea dedit, ut omnes non solum Platonis, sed etiam Plotini libros graecos haberem. Post haec autem anno millesimo quadringentesimo sexagesimotertio, quo ego trigesimum agebam aetatis annum, mihi Mercurium primo Termaximum, mox Platonem mandavit interpretandum. Mercurium paucis mensibus eo vivente peregi: Platonem tunc etiam sum aggressus.[100]

[97] "ut inde Academiam quandam altam mentem conceperit.;" Prooemium ad Magnanium Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, *Plotini Divini Illius e Platonica Familia Philosophi de Rebus Philosophicis Libri LIIII in Enneades Sex Distributi, a Marsilio Ficino Ficino Florentino e Graeca Linguam Latinam Versi, et Ab Eodem Doctissimi Commentariis Illustrati, Omnibus Cum Graeco Exemplari Collatis et Diligenter Castigatis.*, [Basel 1562] Fol. 3a.

[98] About this, Woodhouse suggests that: "Ficino often made appeal to his Platonism and to his association with Pletho, in an effort to establish a connection between Mistra and the Platonic Academy in Florence." In Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 569.

[99] Hakins uses part of this preface to explain what should be understood as "Academy" for Ficino, not as an institution, but as "the works of Plato," he describes it as: "[…]the best interpretation of the Plotinus preface to understand Cosimo's 'Plethonian inspiration' as a poetic way of describing the more prosaic reality: that Cosimo had had copied a manuscript of Plato's works from Pletho's codex at the Council, and later gave this 'Academy' to Ficino, thus enabling him to produce a complete Latin version of the dialogues." On the other hand, Hankins does not comment on Ficino's translations chronology. In Hankins, "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" 159.

[100] Prooemium ad Magnaninum Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, *Plotini Divini Illius e Platonica Familia Philosophi de Rebus Philosophicis Libri LIIII in Enneades Sex Distributi, a Marsilio Ficino Ficino Florentino e Graeca Linguam Latinam Versi, et Ab Eodem Doctissimi Commentariis Illustrati, Omnibus Cum Graeco Exemplari Collatis et Diligenter Castigatis.*, [Basel, 1562] Fol. 3a. (In addition he [Cosimo] has given me texts; as a manner of fact, he had Greek books not only of Plato but also of Plotinus. Besides that, in the year

Ficino explained to Lorenzo the chronology of his translations, how Cosimo gathered the books, and the request of translating the texts in a specific order, first Trismegistus and then Plato and Plotinus. Among all his other translations, Ficino only specified the year for the *Pymander* setting that year as the beginning of his career and his path into the mysteries, which Ficino expanded in the next lines:

> Consequently, it did not go against the design of providence, which was to appeal most wonderfully to all men according to their skills, that, in days of old, a certain type of religious philosophy should have come to life both among the Persians, thanks to Zoroaster, and among the Egyptians, thanks to Hermes, and that both shared the same ideas; then that it should have been put in the care of the Thracians, thanks to Orpheus and Aglaophemus; then that it should have grown up as an adolescent among the Greeks and the Italians, thanks to Pythagoras; and that, at last, it should have come of age in Athens, thanks to the divine Plato. It was common practice among the ancient Theologians to mask the divine mysteries either with mathematical numbers an with poetic fictions and figures or with poetic fictions, so that there was no chance that it should be understood by just anybody. […] Indeed, nearly all the world is inhabitated by the Peripatetics and divided into two schools, the Alexandrists and the Averroists. The first ones believe that our intellect is mortal, whereas the others think it is unique: both groups alike destroy the basis of all religion, especially because they seem to deny that there is such a thing a divine providence towards men, and in both cases they are traitors to Aristotle. Nowadays, few people, except the great Pico, our companion in Platonism, interpret the spirit of Aristotle with the same reverence as was shown in the past by Theophrastus, Themistius, Porphyry, Simplicius, Avicenna, and more recently Plethon.[101]

Ficino explained how *pia philosophia* (*ut pia quaedam philosophia*) was like a human being born in Antiquity but maturing only with Plato, recognizing in this Classical philosopher the most developed ideas.[102] Ficino's explanation also led the reading to his own time, when the *pia philosophia* finally reached its highest point, recognizing Pico, Plethon, and—subtly—

1463, when I was thirty years old, he ordered me to translate Mercurius Trismegistus, and then Plato. I finished [translating] Mercurius in few months, while he [Cosimo] was alive; only then I went to Plato.)

[101] Prooemium ad Magnaninum Laurentium in Saffrey's translation in Saffrey, "Florence, 1492: The Reappearance of Plotinus," 497,499.

[102] "[…] et apud Persas sub Zoroastre, et apud Aegyptios sub Mercurio nasceretur utrobique sibimet consona: nutriretur deinde apud Thraces sub Orpheo atque Aglaophemo: adolesceret quoque mox sub Pythagore apud Graecos et Italos: tandem vero a Divo Platone consumaretur Athenis." In Prooemium ad Magnaninum Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, *Plotini Divini Illius e Platonica Familia Philosophi de Rebus Philosophicis Libri LIIII in Enneades Sex Distributi, a Marsilio Ficino Ficino Florentino e Graeca Linguam Latinam Versi, et Ab Eodem Doctissimi Commentariis Illustrati, Omnibus Cum Graeco Exemplari Collatis et Diligenter Castigatis.*, [Basel, 1562] Fol. 3a.

himself, too.[103] Ficino offered Lorenzo a review of the history of philosophy to show the importance of Plotinus, the reason behind this paratext. Ficino, also, kept on proclaiming the *prisca theologia*, in this version he mentioned Zoroaster but maintained Trismegistus as a second, but equally important, source of knowledge; the transmission of knowledge from the Antiquity to Florence is exposed openly and clearly to Ficino's readers.

The connection between Ficino and the Medicis represents the patronage of the Renaissance. Patronage as György E. Szőnyi points out was a catalyst for art;[104] but it was also the catalyst for the rest of culture, including translations and treatises.[105] Ficino's career and fame is an example of the patronage catalysis causing that Ficino's connections spread beyond Florence including the kingdom of Naples-Aragon or Hungary. In 1478, Ficino exchanged letters with Cardinal John, and dedicated to the King Ferdinand I of Aragon and Naples a short translation of Alphonse's oracles from angelic language into Latin:[106] *Oraculum Alphonsi regis ad regem Ferdinandum inter illos primum anglica lingua pronunciatum diende vero in linguam humanam a Marsilio Ficino translatum.*[107] Ficino's fame as a translator, philosopher, and interpreter of the mysteries was recognized in a number of aristocratic courts. The admiration of Ficino's skills shows the acceptance and curiosity towards the divine, ancient, and mystical knowledge during the Renaissance.

Finally, the frequent presence of Trismegistus as an *auctoritas* and other hermetic and hermeticist concepts and ideas are evident in Ficino's writings. Ficino's exposure to hermeticism before the *C. H.* is manifest in his formation and his letters; the clear influence

[103] "[…] praeter sublime Picum complatonicum nostrum, ea pietate qua Theoprastus olim et Themistius, Porphyrius, Symplicius, Avicenna, et nuper Plethon interpretantur." In Prooemium ad Magnaninum Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, [Basel, 1562] Fol. 3a.

[104] Szőnyi, "The World of Italian Renaissance," 31.

[105] More examples of this kind of patronage in Hankins, "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" 148.

[106] The Oracles that Ficino translated explain among other things the descent of the souls, the divine spirit, the hierarchy of God, angels, and soul, the influence of the planets in the sublunar world, and divination.

[107] "The Oracle of king Alphonse to the king Ferdinand I, those first announced in angelic language and then translated into human language translated by Marsilio Ficino." In Ficino, *Marsilii Ficini Florentini Eloquentissi Viri Epistolae Familiares*, [Nuremberg, 149] Liber sextus, Fol. 144-147.

of Trismegistus's texts on Ficino justify considering him a hermeticist. But it is only after the *Pymander* when he can be seen as a hermetist. Ficino is the example of the synthesis of the hermetic thought with Classical philosophy and Christian theology, which he wanted to present through the figure of *theologus,* inspired by Plethon. For Ficino, Plethon was an important bridge between the present and the past—a link in a line of wise or divinely inspired men through whom the divine knowledge was transmitted outside of institutional religion. Plethon sowed the seed that Ficino would use to develop his concept of *prisca theologia,* a succession of sages, which passed on wisdom and the idea of a pristine religion from one generation to the other.

Wandering wisdom. Lodovico Lazzarelli and Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio.

During the Fifteenth century, the syncretism of ideas merging Classical Antiquity, Medieval scholastics, and contemporary ideas shows the spirit of people of the Renaissance. Before, I have mentioned the *transposition*–following Genette's hypertextual practices–to explain that the translation as the process of changing a text from one language to another is susceptible to the ideas of the translator. Ficino's translations are an example of this hypertextual practice, which with Ficino's commentaries and proems it is possible to understand the influences and additions in the transmission and synthesis of ideas. But this is not the only example of the synthesis of ideas, Genette also explains about the *forgery* in which an author has the intention to imitate a text.[108] This hypertextual practice has been used and was promoted since Antiquity; in this vein, the *Aeneid* can be read as a *forgery* of the

[108] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 85.

Iliad, Virgil had the intention to imitate Homer in the style, metric, structure, and purpose of the text, among others.[109] The imitation among Renaissance people and Humanists was expected to satisfy the taste of the readers.[110] On one hand, moving from patron to patron, Lodovico Lazzarelli, as a poet, and as a philosopher and hermetic, tried continually to please his reader.[111] On the other, Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio, as a mendicant prophet, moved from place to place charming and attracting his audience with his inherited eloquence until he was kicked out by the local authorities.[112] To understand the development of Hermetic thought in Lazzarelli and da Correggio, I will focus on them in a similar way I have an approach towards Ficino, describing his formation, patronage, and knowledge of hermetic thought.

The biographical data of Lazzarelli's life usually is based in the *Vita Lodovici Lazzarelli Poetae Laureati per Philippum fratem eiusdem ad Angelum Colotium* written by Lazzarelli's brother, Filippo. But, as I have mentioned before, the *Vitae* followed the structure of the *encomium,* as was the custom. Therefore, the data described in the *Vita* should be read carefully and with the conscious that some information has been adapted intentionally, and some characteristics or qualities of Lazzarelli could have been magnified. Besides the *Vita*, we can read facts about Lazzarelli's life in his poems, proems, or works

Maria Paola Saci wrote in her book *Ludovico Lazzarelli: Da Elicona a Sion* a monography about Lodovico's life based on Filippo's *Vita* and Lodovico's poems and works;[113] while Wouter J. Hanegraaff, in his book, *Lodovico Lazzarelli: The Hermetic Writing and Related Texts*, followed Saci's steps including Lodovico's poems, paratexts, and

[109] Schmitz, *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts*, 81–83.
[110] Szönyi, "The World of Italian Renaissance," 21–22.
[111] Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 65.
[112] The descriptions of da Correggio's performances agree on the lack of high style, instead he used his charisma to spread an apocalyptic message; in Ruderman, "Giovanni Mercurio Da Correggio's Appearance in Italy as Seen through the Eyes of an Italian Jew," 314; Crisciani, "Alchimia, Magia e Patronage: Giovanni 'Mercurio' Da Correggio," 66.
[113] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 16–18.

works, besides the texts from other contemporary people. Hanegraaff's book includes the translation of the *Crater Hermetis*, which he analyzes extensively to prove that Lodovico, *par excellence*, is the Hermetic-Christian Renaissance man.[114] Before them, Paul Oskar Kristeller wrote an article in which he helped to prove the existence of Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio besides Lazzarelli's writings; and he wrote another article explaining how Lazzarellei and Ficino shared some topics.[115] Meanwhile, Yates describes Lazzarelli as the "most enthusiastic and exaggerated Hermetist," and as the one who was able to portray the relation between master and disciple, which is common in hermetic texts.[116] D. P. Walker examines Lazzarelli's texts under the light of the daemonic magic.[117] Most recently, György E. Szönyi and Brian Copenhaver explore the influences of Jewish mysticism and Pico's Christian Cabala in the writings of Lazzarelli, especially in the *Crater Hermetis*.[118]

Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500) was born in San Severino Marche in an educated environment. Since his early years, he has been depicted as smart and brilliant while he received a humanist education.[119] His first formation included Latin, which Filippo emphasizes with two authors Quintilian and Ovid.[120] Then he moved to Venice to learn

[114] Hanegraaff promoted the "image" of Lodovico Lazzarelli in other articles and publications, and introducing him in the Hermetic and Esoteric narrative as a relevant figure during the Renaissance, for example: Hanegraaff, "How Hermetic Was Renaissance Hermetism?," 195–200; Hanegraaff, "Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism," 7; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 10, 198–200, 329–32.

[115] Kristeller, "Lodovico Lazzarelli e Giovanni Da Correggio, Due Ermetici Del Quattrocento, e Il Manoscritto II.D.I 4 Della Biblioteca Comunale Degli Ardenti Della Città Di Viberbo," 212–14; Kristeller, "Marsilio Ficino e Lodovico Lazzarelli: Contributo alla Diffusione delle Idee Ermetiche nel Rinascimento."

[116] Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 171.

[117] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, 69–70.

[118] Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 61–70; Copenhaver, "A Grand End for a Grand Narrative," 207–23.

[119] Hanegraaff describes Lazzarelli as a gifted boy following the *Vita* written by Lodovico's brother, Filippo: "In Campli Lodovico began his studies under a certain Christoforo da Montone. Being introduced by the latter to a typological humanist curriculum, he appears to have been a very precocious child. As Filippo writes, not only was he 'wholly dedicated to his studies,' he was extremely ambitious as well […];" in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 9.

[120] "He was spurred on by praise and glory: a type of character which Quintilian in his *Education of the Orator* praises above all others in a boy. In his teens he composed verses of all kinds. He wrote several elegies and letters in verse imitating Ovid's *Heroides*, as well as many epigrams and pastoral poems, […]" Filippo, *Vita*, in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 289.

Greek under Giorgio Merula.[121] But also, later in his life, Lazzarelli learned Hebrew ca. 1467 from a Jewish man named Vitale.[122] About Lazzarelli's knowledge of Hebrew, Filippo writes:

> […] while already grown up he decided to study Hebrew, in which he made such progress that he not only wrote Hebrew letters or characters very well, but also read them perfectly and understood what he had read. He perceived many mystical and arcane things in their books, things they themselves do not understand at all–and were they to understand them, they would not persevere so obstinately in their perfidy.[123]

Even if Filippo praises Lazzarelli's skills to learn languages, he leads his description to depict Lazzarelli's life continuously in connection with the divine and the mysteries, which will be emphasized in the description of the *Crater*: "This may be a very short piece, but O, good God!—how rich are its sentiments and how profound its understanding, how mystic and arcane is its speech, gifted not just with human but with divine wisdom […]."[124] Thus, Lazzarelli's poems and works show his knowledge of ancient languages since this allowed him to read different sources and incorporate them in his writings, like in the *Crater Hermetis*, which has influence from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew esoteric texts.[125]

Lazzarelli wandered through Italy composing poetry to please his patrons, but with not the success he expected, however, he managed to engage the attention towards his works.[126] Through Lazzarelli's poetry, it is possible to read the humanist program of the Renaissance. This means, imitation–or *forgery* in Genette's hypertextual category–of the Greco-Roman authors including erudite comments–or metatexts–with quotes and allusions to philosophical, poetical, or theological works–or intertexts–; all of them to satisfy and praise the patrons and their taste.

[121] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 22; in Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 11.

[122] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 35–36; in Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 77–78.

[123] Filippo, *Vita* in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 301.

[124] Filippo, *Vita* in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 303.

[125] Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 67–69.

[126] Szönyi, 65.

Lazzarelli's poetry was recognized and praised while he was alive so we can read testimonies not only in Filippo's *Vita* as it follows:

> Having been given permission to speak, he recited an heroic poem, and the beginning of that oration follows here: "Behold, the long-awaited day now shines upon us // I kneel before the feet to venerate the Majesty, etc." This pleased the emperor, and he spontaneously crowned him with laurels in the church of San Marco which had been built in that city.[127]

But also in the writings of his contemporaries, like the humanist Bartolomeo Sacchi, also known as, Platina. Platina wrote a brief poem praising the qualities of Lazzarelli:

> Nunc liquido apparet Sententia Prisca Platonis
> Alternas rerum jam remeare vices.
> Nunc mihi credibile est, quod mentem Vatis Homeri
> Ennieus induerit, qui fuit ore potens.
> Quod de se affirmat Sancius non ecce refello (5)
> Pantoides fuerit, denique Pythagoras.
> Quis neget Ovidium Campis rediisse beatis
> Si Lazzarelli Carmina blanda legat?
> Inter se occurrunt aequo luctamine fasti
> Ni canat iste Deum ni canat ille Deos. (10)
> Hunc mage commendat sed Christi verior aetas,
> Et scriptum verae Religionis opus.[128]

Platina wrote this poem for Lazzarelli's *Fasti* as it is slightly suggested in the ninth line of the poem with the word *fasti*–the festival calendar. In this description, Platina recognizes Lazzarelli as Ovid reincarnated not only because of his *Fasti* but also because of his style, and even better because he commended to the Christian God. Platina's poem also shows the spread of the idea of metempsychosis and the necessary classical background to understand this concept, suggesting that the transmigration of souls was discussed only among

[127] Filippo, *Vita* in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 293.

[128] (Now clearly appears as the ancient opinion of Plato
that the alternate changes of things return one after another.
Now I can believe, that Ennius assumed the mind
of Homer the poet, Ennius who had a powerful voice.
Someone cannot deny what Sancius affirmed,
that he was the son of Panthous [Euforbus], and then Pythagoras.
Who denies that Ovid could have return from the land of the blessed ones,
if someone reads the pleasant poems of Lazzarelli?
Among them run the toiling streams of the "fastus"
Neither Ovid sings to God, nor Lazzarelli sings to the Olympians
But the latter commends stronger to Christ in the actual age
And his written work commends to the true Religion.)
In Lazzarelli and Lancillottio, *Bombyx 1765*, 26.

intellectual circles sharing the same background. Platina's resource of *redivivus* was a common rhetorical device to praise the skills of someone else, for example, Angelo Poliziano and Naldo Nadi used it before to describe Ficino as a reincarnated Orpheus.[129]

Lazzarelli's most famous poem the *Fasti* allowed him to establish connections with Italian courts. The *Fasti christianae religionis*, as Ovid's *Fasti*, contains a compilation about the liturgical feats based on the life of Christ, which Lazzarelli finished in 1480, but he kept correcting it until 1495.[130] But before the *Fasti*, when Lazzarelli was twenty years old, he already was recognized with the *De laudibus poesis et de dignitate poetica* dedicated to Emperor Frederick III, and with the *Hymn of Prometheus* to the Venice ambassador Francesco Giustiniani.[131] The *Hymn of Prometheus*, according to Saci, shows "alcuni elementi caratteristici dello stile intellettuale di Lazzarelli ed emerge la sua capacità di dare una sfumatura originale anche a temi culturali diffuse e di per sé non peculiari."[132] In this poem, Saci praises Lazzarelli's style and skills to discuss cosmogonic and soteriological ideas under the humanistic frame, but also it shows some inclinations of Lazzarelli toward these topics, which he will expose again in the *Crater Hermetis.*[133] Another important poem to mention here is *De bombyce*, an allegorical poem on the resurrection of Christ through the imagery of the silkworm in which Lazzarelli also includes several alchemical references. *De bombyce,* which is dedicated to Angelo Colocci a member of the Pontano's Academy, was edited until 1495 in Rome, but probably composed in Naples; the date of composition, however, remains problematic.[134]

[129] Voss, "'Orpheus Redivivus:' The Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino," 228.
[130] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 18.
[131] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, 13–14.
[132] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 27.
[133] Saci also highlights the importance of the physician environment of Lazzarelli, which–as it was discussed with the *Picatrix* before–suggests also a possible connection with a hermeticist line and Lazzarelli reading the *Picatrix,* because of his interest in the macrocosm and microcosm; In Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 257.
[134] Saci, 55–56; In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 50–57. Also, Francesco Lancellottio published Lazzarelli's poem *De Bombyce* in 1765; after that Lancellottio became a source for Lazzarelli's biographical data because of the recompilation of poems, epigrams, and quotes making

Lazzarelli's poetic skills allowed him to get in contact with different intellectual circles. During his early tutor years, he could be aware of Ficino's circle, since he was in connection with Antonio Campano.[135] While in Rome, Lazzarelli was in contact with several members of the Roman Academy of Pomponius Leto.[136] Once Lazzarelli arrived at Naples he met the secretary of King Ferdinand I of Aragon, Giovanni Pontano, which he included in the *Crater Hermetis* as one of the characters of this dialogue. It seems that an intellectual environment surrounded Lazzarelli during all his life; also, other intellectuals and rulers recognized his poetry. Nevertheless, Lazzarelli, apparently, did not belong to any of these circles.

In Rome, while Lazzarelli was writing his longest poem the *Fasti*, he shows openly his interaction with the Hermetic thought, following Hanegraaff analysis, in some lines of this poem: "Jesus is the Logos and the Word, the Mind and Wisdom // who first was Pimander in the mind of Hermes. […] The Word that was hidden to the ancients // Becomes apparent in the flesh, to turn us earthlings into gods."[137] Lazzarelli describes Pimander as an emanation of God's mind, and Pimander becomes almost synonymous with Jesus, like Word or Logos; and in this sense, he explains that these teachings worked as a pre-gospel in Antiquity.

Lazzarelli continues and recognizes Hermetic thought as a doctrine: "Forsaking his kingdom, Hermes wanted to know the road thither, he knew it, and henceforth had his name."[138] Lazzarelli affirms that Trismegistus owned the knowledge to reconnect with God. Through this verses, Hanegraaff agrees that Lazzarelli had read Ficino's *Pymander*, which

reference to Lazzarelli: *Ludovici Lazzarelli Septempedani Poetae Laureati Bombys Accesserunt ipsius aliorumque poetarum carmina, cum commentariis de Vitis Eorumdem Joanne Francisco Lancillottio a Staphylo auctore ad clarissicum virum Pompeium Compagnonium Maceratensem auximatum et cingulanorum pontificem. Aesii MDCCLXV. Apud Petrum Paulum Bonelli.*

[135] Infra p. 42.

[136] In Hanegraaff's introduction in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 16–17.

[137] In Hanegraaff's translation, verses 337-382, Lazzarelli, 19.

[138] In Hanegraaff's translation, verses 395-6, Lazzarelli, 19.

even Lazzarelli confirms in the first of his three prefaces to the *Crater Hermetis*; but also, Hanegraaff claims that in the *Fasti* is possible to read a "very specific, personal, and innovative interpretation of the hermetic message which would come to full development in his *Crater Hermetis;*" I agree with Hanegraaff that Lazzarelli establishes the doctrine of Hermes as an independent line, but Lazzarelli still follows some ideas from the proem of Ficino.[139]

In this period of his life, Lazzarelli met da Correggio in 1481, which changed his life and thought. The content of da Correggio's discourse performed in this year is still unknown; but Hanegraaff and Copenhaver agree on the possibility that in 1482 Lazzarelli gave da Correggio a collection of hermetic texts: Ficino's *Pymander*, the *Asclepius*, and Lazzarelli's translation *Diffinitionis Asclepii*, which Ficino did not translate.[140] Nevertheless, there are no clear proofs about the activities of da Correggio between 1482-1484, until his second apparition in Rome again, which Lazzarelli described emphasizing this moment of his life in the *Epistola Enoch*:

> An when I with astonished eyes had witnessed the sacred mystery of this unprecedented and enormous event, I pondered the matter attentively and with all the power of my mind and, in order not to waste any more time, I left the Parnassian hills and everything else, and right away followed him to Mount Zion–the first of his pupils.[141]

Lazzarelli narrates his whole experience as an *exaltatio.*[142] Da Correggio's most important apparition and source come from Lazzarelli's text named *Epistola Enoch de admiranda ac portendenti apparitioni novi atque divini Prophetae ad omne humanus genus* (A letter of Enoch about the admirable and portentous appearance of a new and divine Prophet to the

[139] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, 20.

[140] Copenhaver, "A Grand End for a Grand Narrative," 208–9; in Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 25–26.

[141] *Epistola Enoch*, 13.1; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 149.

[142] "I have decided to employ the term *exaltatio* to describe this program of deification, according to which a mystically elevating state can be achieved through the grace of God, by the efforts of the individual, or by accidental fortunate circumstances. In the latter two cases the exaltation needs catalyzers or supernatural help." in Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism. Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs*, 34.

entire human race.) The *Epistola* depicts da Correggio's performance of the 11th of April of 1484 with detail, and even includes a part of the alleged discourse of da Correggio. Lazzarelli, as Ficino did for Trismegistus, wrote a line of ancient sages, who transmitted the words from God to humankind, instead of using Graeco-Roman examples, Lazzarelli selected Hebrew names from the Bible. Lazzarelli starts from Enoch, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah as examples of prophets in the Old Testament, until Jesus, all of them, to explain the treatment of prophets during their time and expose how misunderstood they were. The description of the previous prophets served Lazzarelli, comparing himself to Enoch, to explain the truth and wisdom in da Correggio's actions and words. Once da Correggio is introduced in the text, Lazzarelli compared him with other Hebrew prophets, recognized because of their esoteric treatises, and also with Hermes, because just like Trismegistus, da Correggio received an epiphany from the Mind of God.[143] Lazzarelli's *Epistola* besides explaining the performance and attitude of da Correggio presents the reason why Lazzarelli changed from poetry to prophetic and theological texts.

In 1486, Franceso Colocci asked Lazzarelli to tutor Colocci's cousin, Angelo Colocci, whom Lazzarelli also dedicated the poem *De bombyce*.[144] According to Saci, Lazzarelli belonged to the Neapolitan court for ten years (1485-95), which coincide with the last years of Ferdinand I of Aragon, known as Ferrante, until his dead in 1494.[145] During Lazzarelli's last year in Naples, Charles VIII of France claimed the crown of Naples, expelling the son of Ferdinand I, Alphonse II, from Naples; but, in the end, Charles VIII yielded the power to Ferdinand II of Aragon.

Also in Naples, just as in Rome, Lazzarelli established relations with the members of the Academy of Naples, also known as Neapolitan Studio, and *Porticus* by Pontano.[146]

[143] *Epistola Enoch*, 6.4.4-6.4.5 in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 124–29.
[144] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, 50; Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 56.
[145] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 83.
[146] Hankins, "Humanist Academies and the 'Platonic Academy of Florence,'" 18.

Giovanni Pontano, the secretary of the Neapolitan-Aragonese court, gain power and status guiding the Studio, since Alphonse I and getting more support from Ferdinand I.[147] Hankins argues that in the Studio: "They include some noblemen but also secretaries, diplomats and tutors in the royal household who within the academy treat each other on a footing of equality,"[148] which could be appealing to Lazzarelli since until this moment he had not joined formally to any other group or court. Hanegraaff proposes that it is difficult to establish a close relation between Pontano and Lazzarelli, and because of the lack of documentation; he describes this relationship as 'hazy'.[149] But he acknowledges Pontano's interest in the Hermetic thought, which Pontano knew from Ficino's *Pymander,* laying his argument on Pontano's dialogue *Aegidius.*[150]

Lazzarelli wrote in this period and in Naples his major hermetic text entitled *Ludovici Lazzarelli Septempedani Poetae Christiani ad divum Ferdinandum Ar. Siciliae Regem de summa hominis dignitate dialogous qui inscribitur 'Via Christi' et 'Crater Hermetis'* (A Dialogue on the Supreme Dignity of Man, entitled 'The Way of Christ' and 'The Mixing-Bowl of Hermes,' by Lodovico Lazzarelli of Septempeda, Christian Poet. Dedicated to the divine Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Sicily.)[151] The *Crater Hermetis* was published the first time in 1505 alongside with Ficino's *Pymander* and the *Asclepius*. Jacques Lefèvre edited the book in which he included a preface to the bishop of Meaux, Guilliaume Briçonnet, describing the importance of these three hermetic texts in a religious and philosophical context:

> Quare cum is sit optimus vite nostre finis deum scilicet cognoscere et ad ipsum pansis (ut aiunt) velis contendere totoque currere affectum: ratus sum pietati mentis tuerem haud ingratam me facturum si duo opuscula Mercurii

[147] Hankins, 21.
[148] Hankins, 16.
[149] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 58–59.
[150] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, 60. Against this, Saci and Garin suggest that the relation between Lazzarelli and Pontano is a clear friendship, in Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 85; and Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1:274.
[151] In Hanegraaff's translation .

> Trismegisti vetustissimi quidem Theologi unum *de sapietia et potestate Dei* qui et *Pimander*, alterum *de voluntate divina* cui nome *Asclepius* recognoscerem et aliquantulum lucis argumenta afferent. […] *Crater Hermetis* non vetus sed presentaneum pium tamen opus adiungitur, quod eo libentius a me factum ducesque congnoscam te nulla unquam rerum divinarum sacietate teneri.[152]

Lefèvre expressed in the preface his admiration towards Trismegistus's texts, which recognizes Ficino's translation was unquestionably old text and that the *argumenta* clarify the texts. But also, Lefévre included the *Crater* as a text able to satisfy both the spiritual and wisdom curiosity.[153]

The *Crater Hermetis* is a dialogue in which Lazzarelli, Pontano, and King Ferdinand I participate. In this dialogue, Lazzarelli presents himself as a master introducing and teaching some hermetic and hermeticist concepts to the King and Pontano. Besides the conversation between the three characters, the text includes five poetic pieces inserted in the dialogue. Most of the poetic segments are hymns summarizing or explaining through rhetorical devices the concepts described by Lazzarelli. In the text, Lazzarelli quotes several times the Old and New Testament but also Pseudo-Dionysius's the Areopagite works as authorities of Christian ideas; there are, however, many references to Jewish mysticism and Cabala, besides the Hermetic quotes showing the syncretism of the work and an attempt to reconnect Ficino's *prisca theologia* with Jewish-Christian wisdom.

[152] Because of that reason, since, it is clear, it would be the best at the end of our lives to know God and–as people say– to extend towards him, if you want to endeavor and to move with all your will; I have supposed, once I have seen the piety of your mind, and by no means ungrateful; therefore, I have collected for you two little works of the most ancient theologian Mercurius Trismegistus; one *About the wisdom and power of God*, which is the *Pimander*; the other one *About the will of God* that I have recognized in the name of *Asclepius* and the *argumenta* bring a little bit of light. […] The *Crater Hermetis* is not old but of the present pious people, still the work is added, which you will considered collected by me with pleasure and I know that you have no satiety about the divine things. Trismegistus et al., *Contenta in hoc volumine. Pimander. Mercurij Trismegisti liber de de [sic] sapientia et potestate dei. Asclepius. Eiusdem Mercurij liber de voluntate diuina. Item, Crater Hermetis a Lazarelo septempedano. Petri Portæ Monsterolensis dodecastichon ad lectorum. Accipe de superis dantem documenta libellum; sume hermen/prisca relligione [sic] virum. Hermen/Thraicius quem no[n] equauerit Orpheus; et quem non proles Calliopea linus. Zamolxin superat cum Cecropio Eumolpo quos diuiniloquos phama vetusta probat. Vtilis hic liber est/mundi fugientibus vmbram*, 1.

[153] Kristeller commented that the *Crater* was added to the edition of the *Pymander* after Lefèvre's trip to Italy; in Kristeller, "Marsilio Ficino e Lodovico Lazzarelli: Contributo alla Diffusione delle Idee Ermetiche nel Rinascimento.," 240.

Because of the death of Ferdinand I and the invasion of Charles VIII, and according with Filippo's *Vita*, Lazzarelli returns to his homeland affected because of his illness.[154] Saci suggest that in his way back home he visited Rome, by the time *De bombyce* was published, but also that he visited Milan looking for his master Giovanni da Correggio, but not finding him or any protector Lazzarelli moved to San Severino.[155]

Lazzarelli's interest in Hermetic thought not only embraces his interest in the hermetic texts, also the hermeticists ones. Lazzarelli was interested in alchemy as his poem *De bombyce* alludes to it. Saci suggests that it was after Naples when Lazzarelli's alchemical interest became stronger; and also argues that Lazzarelli's *Vademecum* was dedicated to Giovanni de Branchis, who taught alchemy to Lazzarelli.[156]

To trace when or where Lazzarelli got his first encounter with Hermetic thought is difficult task, since Lazzarelli moved from place to place since he was young, he traveled around Italy visiting Padua, Venice, Rome, and Naples.[157] To support himself economically, Lazzarelli worked as a tutor.[158] He taught the brother of Giovanni Antonio Campano, who was in connection with Ficino. Saci suggests that Lazzarelli could have a first encounter with the *Pymander* in this moment of his life before 1468:

> Negli anni immediatamente precedenti era stato istitutore ad Atri presso la famiglia di Matteo Acquaviva, miembro dell'Accademia pontaniana e in seguito editori de Pontano […] poi a Teramo presso il vescovo della città per istruirne il fratello; il vescovo era allora Antonio Campano, amico e corrispondente di Marsilio Ficino del quale possedeva alcuni manoscriti. Potrebbe risalire a quest'epoca la scoperta da parte del Lazzarelli del *corpus* ermetico[…] di mano del copista Wolfango da Vienna la data di inizio e di fine del suo lavoro: 1467 novembre 21-1469 giugno 5.[159]

[154] About the description of the Lazzarelli's death in Filippo's *Vita*, who describes pleasant death of a man who got a full life, which is a feature suggested also in instructions of the *encomium:* "I will relate in a few words how he behaved during his illness and at the time of his death. For he was so well-disposed and ready to die that he was not at all afraid to die. He endured his illness with great patience." In Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 305.

[155] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 101.

[156] Saci, 99–100.

[157] Copenhaver, "A Grand End for a Grand Narrative," 207.

[158] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 11.

[159] Saci, *Ludovico Lazzarelli da Elicona a Sion*, 23.

Hanegraaff, however, counter-argues Saci's theory because of the lack of significant evidence.[160] Another argument which Hanegraaff casts doubts on happened between 1468-1469 when Lazzarelli wrote the *De gentilium deorum imaginibus*, which he dedicated to Federico da Montefeltro Duke of Urbino, who gave him a "gift" as a reward:

> With respect to the question […] of a possible early familiarity of Lazzarelli with the *Hermetica*, it seems significant that his long poem on Mercury discusses the god entirely according to classical Greek mythology, without even the slightest allusion to Hermes Trismegistus.[161]

Nevertheless, if Lazzarelli's poem about the pagan gods described Greco-Roman gods, there is no necessity to put Trismegistus in this category, because Trismegistus was considered a prophet or philosopher since Augustine and Lactantius.[162]

Besides the *Crater Hermetis*, when Lazzarelli gave da Correggio the translation of the *Diffinitiones Asclepii,* which Filippo also mentions in the *Vita,* but he did not mention da Correggio as a receiver at any point.[163] Lazzarelli wrote three prefaces to the translation in which it is possible to read his appreciation of the Hermetic texts and his wishes to da Correggio. The prefaces precede each translation, Ficino's *Pymander*, Apuleius's *Asclepius,* and Lazzarelli's *Diffinitiones*. Lazzarelli followed the general trend considering Apuleius of Madaura the Latin translator of the *Asclepius.* Also, he included himself in the group of transmitters of Hermetic thought to the West, like Ficino and Apuleius. From the three prefaces to da Correggio, only the one that precedes the *Asclepius* was written as an ode, the other two are dedicatory letters. The prefaces are testimonies of the synthetic ides of Lazarelli, in those he merged Hermetic Ficinean ideas with his own approach, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Besides Lazzarelli's ideas, the prefaces, along with the *Epistola Enoch,* describe Lazzarelli's perception of and relationship with da Correggio; these texts are a significant source of information about da Correggio.

[160] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 11.
[161] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, 14–15.
[162] Supra pp. 23-24.
[163] In Filippo's *Vita* translated by Hanegraaff in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 303.

Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio (cc. 1451/ cc. 1503) is often described as 'singular' or 'strange,' and there is little information about him or his life. Lazzarelli's aforementioned texts were for many years the sources that mentioned him. For many years, before Kristeller found a commented sonnet ascribed to da Correggio, Kurt Ohly argued that da Correggio was a literary device created by Lazzarelli to create propaganda and give more plausibility to his writings.[164] In addition to the sonnet found by Kristeller, there are two accounts that describe the apparitions of da Correggio in different places. One of them from Trithemius describing da Correggio's apparition in France at the presence of King Louis XII; while the other one from an Italian Jew named Abraham Farrissol, who was a scribe, cantor, and educator, and he described da Correggio's apparition in Ferrara, being himself a witness of da Correggio's performance.

Da Correggio's performance is described with detail in Lazzarelli's *Epistola Enoch*. The event narrates Da Correggio second performance in Rome in his way to the Vatican during the feast of Palm Sunday of 1484: "[…] he was clothed in a silvery grey silken tunic and a black robe, girt with a golden girdle, wearing red boots and a purple mitre. Next he went to the Vatican, preceded by two servants […];"[165] but then da Correggio changes his clothes: "[…] he got off his horse, put sandals on his feet, and dressed and robed himself in bloodstained linen. His hair, parted in the middle after the fashion of the Nazarenes, he crowned with a bloodstained crown of thorns […];"[166] at this moment da Correggio imitates Jesus in his garments and symbols, but Lazzarelli makes emphasis in one element in the crown of thorns, which has an inscription on a silver disk:

> This is my Servant Pimander, whom I have chosen. This Pimander is [*my little supreme and is going to become greater*], in whom I am well-pleased to cast

[164] In Crisciani, "Alchimia, Magia e Patronage: Giovanni 'Mercurio' Da Correggio," 63–64; Ruderman, "Giovanni Mercurio Da Correggio's Appearance in Italy as Seen through the Eyes of an Italian Jew," 310–11.

[165] Lazzarelli, *Epistola Enoch*, 6.1 in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 119.

[166] Lazzarelli, *Epistola Enoch*, 6.2.1 in Hanegraaff's translation Lazzarelli, 121.

> out demons and proclaim my judgment and truth to the heathen. Do not hinder him, [*but listen and watch with all reverence and veneration*]: thus speaks the Lord your God and Father of every talisman of all the world, Jesus of Nazareth […][167]

The description of this garment suggests that Lazzarelli was able to see it closely and copy it; also the garment shows a compilation of different references from the Bible and Hermetic thought. Lazzarelli depicts da Correggio almost as a walking emblem;[168] because besides the clothes and the garment, da Correggio held a staff and a breastplate, also full with symbolism.[169] For Lazzarelli, da Correggio was the embodiment of the Mind: "This is an image of the mind, or, more exactly, a translation or downpouring of all the things that are governed and accomplished in the mind of God."[170] The sum of symbols, the performance and the custom of reading emblems should have been an spectacle in the streets of Rome, which besides the first impact that provoked in the common people, those who had a trained eye deciphering emblems and symbols should have felt attracted to da Correggio's performance, one of them Lazzarelli, who interpreted the meaning of da Correggio's appearance in five paragraphs. As it was mentioned before, Lazzarelli could have experienced almost an *exaltatio* witnessing da Correggio's performance, however, Lazzarelli's narration is biased because of his relation with him.

Abraham Farrisol described another description of Da Correggio. He experienced a similar event in Ferrara:

> I myself saw in my time and in my town [Ferrara] a man who was a great celebrity at the time, who used to go and preach and exhort in most of the gentile regions […] he almost imagined his utterances to be inspired by the

[167] Lazzarelli, *Epistola Enoch*, 6.2.2 in Hanegraaff's transaltion with few modifications done by me in Lazzarelli, 121.

[168] "[…] while the emblem is, at least potentially, paradigmatically extensible through and (infinite?) series of analogical variations on a theme from the common formulary of proverbial lore, ancient maxims and the like." In Russell, "Perceiving, Seeing and Meaning: Emblems and Some Approaches to Reading Early Modern Culture," 80.

[169] Lazzarelli, *Epistola Enoch*, 6.3 in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 121.

[170] Lazzarelli, *Epistola Enoch*, 6.4.1 in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 123.

> Holy Spirit, prophesying and interpreting the *Torah*. He called himself Son of God, Mercurius Trismegistus, Enoch and Metusaleh […][171]

Farrisol perception of da Correggio seems distant with fewer details about the performance but with a focus in the general situation. Farrisol does not even know the name of da Correggio, but recognizes his fame; at the same time, he regards da Correggio with some disdain because of his theological assertions. Nevertheless, Farrisol acknowledged that da Correggio had a certain level of eloquence–which I think it should be read as charisma–same eloquence that helped da Correggio to bypass the authorities thanks to his followers.[172]

Farrisol's experience contrasts with Lazzarelli's, the first did not feel attraction either the speech or the charisma of da Correggio; while the second, Lazzarelli, was not only captured by the charisma but also he was fascinated by the preacher, as it can be read in the *Epistola Enoch* and the prefaces he annexed to the *Diffinitiones*, which Lazzarelli dedicated to da Correggio ca. 1482, after his first visit to Rome in 1481.[173] Besides that, Lazzarelli's *addenda* in da Correggio's discourse show some elements included intentionally or improved with Lazzarelli's rhetorical skills, like the salvation of the soul or reconnection with God, which will also reappear in Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis*.

But were these two events–1481 and 1484–enough for Lazzarelli to change his life? This question has been addressed before, even Hanegraaff asks this question.[174] But, in general, most of the arguments point towards that the most cultivated one influenced the other, which means Lazzarelli presenting the Hermetic texts to da Correggio; but the impact of da Correggio's performance awakening the curiosity of Lazzarelli is difficult to ignore.

Da Correggio's *persona* remains difficult to understand and diverse information has been written about him, like his origins. For example, Kristeller suggested that da Correggio was

[171] In Rudermn's translation, Ruderman, "Giovanni Mercurio Da Correggio's Appearance in Italy as Seen through the Eyes of an Italian Jew," 312.

[172] Nevertheless, there are some instances that mention that da Correggio was incarcilated in Bologna, Florence, and Rome in Ruderman, 312, 315 and 316.

[173] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 25.

[174] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, 24–25.

the son of Niccolo da Correggio, who was a poet in the court of Ferrara, which could explain some of his rhetorical skills.[175] On the other hand, Hanegraaff suggests that da Correggio was the bastard son of Antonio da Correggio and was born in Bologna in a wealthy family, probably following Lazzarelli's description in the *Epistola Enoch*: "Denique Bononiam ad uxorem & filios reversus est ubi assinduum cum suis habet incolatum."[176]

Nonetheless, thanks to Kristeller it is possible to acknowledge the existence of da Correggio through a sonnet commented by Carlo Sosenna, also Kristeller mentioned in the article against Ohly some of da Correggio's texts: a treatise named *Contra pestem*, *Oratio S. Crucem,* and a text entitled *Exhortationes in barbaros, Turcas, Scythas.*[177] Also, in an effort to change the image of the illiterate da Correggio, Chiara Chrisciani analyses the influence of the alchemy of Ramon Llull in da Correggio's treatise named *Quercus*, in which the oak is presented as a simile of the tree of Eden explaining the death and resurrection of Christ, topics which are part of the *Crater Hermetis.*[178]

Definitively, the relation between Lazzarelli and da Correggio is difficult to explain, even more to determinate the extent of the influence between them; but after their meetings, their careers had changed. Lazzarelli always portrayed da Correggio as a master and prophet, a figure worthy to follow; Lazzarelli suggests that da Correggio was the reason behind his change of career and life. Da Correggio texts present many allusions to Lazzarelli's ideas, which could show some conversations between them. I suggest that Lazzarelli wanted to

[175] Kristeller suggests on da Correggio's life: "Trascurato dai vecchi eruditi, ha attirato recentemente l'attenzione di parecchi studiosi. Egli fu probabilmente della stessa famiglia feudale dell'Alta Italia che produsse pure Niccolò da Correggio, poeta di pregio legato alla corte di Ferrara." In Kristeller, "Lodovico Lazzarelli e Giovanni Da Correggio, Due Ermetici Del Quattrocento, e Il Manoscritto II.D.I 4 Della Biblioteca Comunale Degli Ardenti Della Città Di Viberbo," 213.

[176] In Hanegraaff's introduction to Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 23. In Hanegraaff's translation of the *Epistola Enoch*, 11.2: "Thereafter he returned to Bologna to his wife and children where he is still living with his family" in Lazzarelli, 141.

[177] Kristeller, "Lodovico Lazzarelli e Giovanni Da Correggio, Due Ermetici Del Quattrocento, e Il Manoscritto II.D.I 4 Della Biblioteca Comunale Degli Ardenti Della Città Di Viberbo," 214.

[178] Crisciani, "Alchimia, Magia e Patronage: Giovanni 'Mercurio' Da Correggio," 69–71.

depict da Corregio in a similar way that Ficino did with Plethon, a master or wise man able to guide humanity through a *docta religio*.

Between the Hermetic lines of Ficino and Lazzarelli

The revival of the Hermetic thought among different circles of intellectuals after the Ficino's translation, the *Pymander,* allowed to synthesize different ideas and ways of thought with the Christian thinking; Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis* is an example of this, since, in this Renaissance hermetic dialogue Jewish, Christian, Ancient, Medieval, and Hermetic ideas converge together. In this chapter, I will try to show through a transtextual analysis of how Ficino's *Pymander* and his writings made an influence on Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis* and other writings. The transtextual analysis is based on the textual relations described on Gerard Genette's book *Palimpsests,* in which he describes five textual relations: architext, metatext, intertext, paratext, and hypertext.[179] Through the transtextual relations, I will try to prove how some hermetic conceptions adapted by Ficino not only affected but also were reused by Lazzarelli to develop some of his ideas. Also, this work will be supported highlighting the use of rhetorical devices to change or emphasize different elements in the texts.

The *Pymander,* as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, was one of the first translations of Ficino, which he finished in 1463 but it was printed until 1471. Cosimo requested the translation from Greek to Latin of the fourteen Hermetic treatises found by Leonardo da Pistoia. Ficino delivered the final version including a *Prefatio*, written by Ficino, along with the *Asclepius*. Maurizio Campanelli and Brian Copenhaver agree that Ficino's skills redefined the image of Hermes Trismegistus, the so-called author of the Hermetic texts, for the fifteenth century society.[180] Later, Jacques Lefèvre edited the version of 1471 and reprinted the compilation of Ficino with Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis* in 1505;

[179] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 1–7.

[180] Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*, 174; Campanelli, "Marsilio Ficino's portrait of Hermes Trismegistus and its afterlife," XXV.

and in 1532 the edited compilation of Ficino was reprinted again but in this time with other three translations of Ficino of Proclus, Iamblichus, and Psellos.

Ficino in his *Prefatio* explains clearly the purpose of his translation: "Propositum huius operis est, de potestate et sapientia dei differere"[181]; and the structure of the book: "Ordo autem voluminis est, ut in libellos quatordecim distinguatur: utque primae Dialogi partes Pymandro dentur, secundas teneat Trismegistus, tertias Aesculapius, quartum locum obtineat Tatius"[182] Ficino also prepared his reader explaining the characters, which take part of the text, so the reader would not be surprised once a different character appears in the text. Besides that, Ficino explains a final reason for this structure and the characters: "Intendit ergo Mercurius in divinis Aesculapium ac Tatium erudire. Divina docere nequit, non didicit."[183] Ficino highlighted an important feature of the Hermetic thought, that is present in both Hermetism and Hermeticism, the relation between master and disciple.[184] Meanwhile, Lazzarelli paraphrases the same idea in the *Crater Hermetis* almost at the end of the text after explaining the mystery of the divine generation: "Nemo enim disposite et digne praecipit quod ignora."[185] After this, Lazzarelli had introduced a list of masters that had fully grasp the divine wisdom, among them, are Hermes, Enoch, or Abraham, and even if he has not mentioned himself, he taught the mystery to Pontano and King Ferdinand.[186]

The relation between master and disciple has a relation with the dialogic structure of many of the hermetic and hermeticist treatises, which can be traced to the Platonic dialogues. The master-disciple relation appears continuously in different texts, for example: in the *Liber*

[181] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol 6.(The purpose of this book is to discern about the power and the wisdom of God.)

[182] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., [Basel, 1532] Fol. 7. (So, this is the order of the volume: there are fourteen treatises. So the book displays Pymander in the first parts of the Dialogue, the second parts have Trismegistus; the third ones have Asclepius; in fourth place gets Tat.)

[183] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., [Basel, 1532] Fol. 7. (Therefore, Mercurius aims to instruct Asclepius and Tat in divine knowledge. It is impossible to teach the divine things, if no one has learned it first.)

[184] Hanegraaff, "How Hermetic Was Renaissance Hermetism?," 182–83.

[185] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 28.3. For nobody can teach clearly and fittingly what he does not know. In Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 257.

[186] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 29.1-5.

alchemiae, as Campanelli describes, there is a similar structure in which the philosopher Maryanus taught the prince Khalid about the *Magisterium of Hermes*, which is a different way to describe the Philosopher's stone.[187] Another example, as Ficino exposed, appears in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the divine mind Poimandres reveals the knowledge of the divine to Trismegistus, and at the end of the first treatise Trismegistus described how he became a guide to the rest of humanity: "Having made them rise, I became guide to my race, teaching them the words - how to be saved and in what manner - and I sowed the words of wisdom among them, and they were nourished from the ambrosial water."[188] In the following treatises, Trismegistus becomes the master of Tat, Asclepius, and king Ammonius.

Ficino also used the master-disciple relation to explain how the *prisca theologia* was taught explaining that through pagan history, wise teachers taught the knowledge of the divine things from one generation to the next one until his time. The *prisca theologia* in the *Pymander's Prefatio* starts with Trismegistus and ends with Plato, eventually, Ficino would add Zoroaster as the teacher of the magi and the Chaldeans.[189] But as Wouter Hanegraaff explains that adding Zoroaster before or at the same time as Trismegistus it did not affect that much, since Ficino's final aim was to present a parallel line of the revelation of God as a pagan gospel.[190]

In the *Praefatio,* Ficino did not present himself as a master, he offered this book of divine wisdom to Cosimo not only to present Cosimo's the fruits of the investment on Ficino but also to explain that Cosimo could become as Trismegistus as the most pious, righteous, and wise person of his time: "Neque fas erat, opus tam sapientis philosophi, tam pii

[187] Campanelli, "Marsilio Ficino's portrait of Hermes Trismegistus and its afterlife," 53–54; Al-Hassan, "The Arabic Original of 'Liber de Compositione Alchemiae,' The Epistle of Maryanus, the Hermit and Philosopher, to Prince Kahlid Ibn Yazid," 213–14.

[188] C. H., I. 29; In Copenhaver's translation in Trismegistus, *Hermetica*, 6.

[189] Prooemium ad Magnanimum Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, *Plotini Divini Illius e Platonica Familia Philosophi de Rebus Philosophicis Libri LIIII in Enneades Sex Distributi, a Marsilio Ficino Ficino Florentino e Graeca Linguam Latinam Versi, et Ab Eodem Doctissimi Commentariis Illustrati, Omnibus Cum Graeco Exemplari Collatis et Diligenter Castigatis.*, [Basel, 1562], Fol. 3a.

[190] Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 50.

sacerdotis, tam potestis regis dicare cuiquam, nisi ipse cui dicatur, pietate, sapienta, potentia, reliquis omnibus antecelleret."[191] Ficino sees in Cosimo a potential character to become like Trismegistus. Cosimo as the head of the Medici achieved a considerable quantity of power. His philosophical capacities, however, are still difficult to measure, because of his meetings with Plethon and translation requests to Ficino it is possible to suppose his curiosity towards philosophical trends.[192] Also, it is difficult to deny Cosimo's religious interest after his intervention on the Council of Ferrara-Florence. Nevertheless, through the *prisca theologia* proposed by Ficino, it is possible to create a parallel religiosity not attached to the institution– from which Cosimo could have a disappointment after the lack of success of the Council of Union, as it was commented in the previous chapter–and establish a *docta religio*, which originated in the wisdom of the ancient masters and evolved until reaching the same point of Christian ideas.[193] The transmission of ancient wisdom from Trismegistus and Zoraster until the Ficino's times appears with more clarity in the preface of the translation of Plotinus in the dedicatory to Lorenzo de' Medici. In this paratext, the *prisca theologia* now includes not only Zoroaster but also the transmission line after Plato, including Plotinus, Porphyry, and Plethon. Inserting Plethon, Ficino easily added Cosimo in this transmission of wisdom: "the great Cosimo, whom a decree of the Senate (Signoria) designated *Pater Patriae*, often listened to the Greek philosopher Gemistos (with the cognomen Plethon, as it were a second Plato) while he expounded the mysteries of Platonism."[194] The scheme does not differ much

[191] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 6. (And it would not be right to dedicate a work of a so wise philosopher, so pious priest, so powerful king to anyone, unless to whom [this work] is dedicated, who surpass all the other people in piety, wisdom, and power.)

[192] Supra note 48.

[193] About the *docta religio*, Garin explains: "Ficino with admired astonishment was rediscovering in that ancient, to his eyes most ancient wisdom, the same accents of the Christian gnosis, the concept of a *pia philosophia* proper to the whole humankind, which a *docta religio* came to uncover within the meditation of the sages of all time. What Ficino found in Hermes Trismegistus was the idea of an eternal revelation, common to all human beings and to all nations, which culminated in an exemplary way in Christianity." In Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1:233.

[194] In the preface of the Plotinus's *Enneads* dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici; quoted in Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 156.

from the one presented in his *Pymander*'s *Praefatio*, in which a master taught a disciple the wisdom of the teachers of the past. But also, Ficino inserted himself in this line of transmission as an heir of this wisdom since he is the translator of this knowledge.[195]

Later, in the *Crater Hermetis,* Lodovico Lazzarelli also used the master-disciple relation, in which Lazzarelli was the master, and King Ferdinand and Giovanni Pontano were the disciples, that wanted to be initiated and learn the divine mysteries and ancient wisdom.[196] But Lazzarelli also had his own explanation on how he achieved this ancient wisdom, in the *Epistola Enoch* and the prefaces dedicated to Giovanni 'Mercurio' da Correggio he described a similar line of transmission based on the Jewish prophets.[197] Lazzarelli instead of basing his arguments on the figure of the 'master' with the *auctoritas* of the philosophers, he has used the figure of 'prophet' with the *auctoritas* of the Bible.[198] And a prophet–just like Trismegistus–unlike the master receives the wisdom directly from God. Lazzarelli, in this case, acquired the Hermetic wisdom from the *Pymander*, and probably from the *Picatrix*;[199] but also, after his meeting with da Correggio, Lazzarelli ratify his ideas with his teacher-prophet.

Besides the relation master-disciple, another important feature among texts on Hermetic thought is the revelation. The hermetic revelation does not only involve the direct connection with God–or an emanation of God–but also enlightenment. Trismegistus, in an altered state of mind, is able to establish a connection with Poimandres, who is the emanation of the divine mind, and at the end of the dialogue, Trismegistus finally is able to understand

[195] Prooemium ad Magnanimum Laurentium in Plotinus and Marsilio, *Plotini Divini Illius e Platonica Familia Philosophi de Rebus Philosophicis Libri LIIII in Enneades Sex Distributi, a Marsilio Ficino Ficino Florentino e Graeca Linguam Latinam Versi, et Ab Eodem Doctissimi Commentariis Illustrati, Omnibus Cum Graeco Exemplari Collatis et Diligenter Castigatis.*, [Basel, 1562] Fol. 3a.

[196] Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 66.

[197] Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 111.

[198] *Auctoritas*, v., note 25.

[199] Garin, *Ermetismo del Rinascimento*, 42.

the physical and spiritual realities.[200] Ficino used the direct revelation of the first dialogue in which Trismegistus talked with Poimandres and the apocalyptic message in the *Asclepius* as a testimony of the prophetic nature of Trismegistus using mainly Lactantius's argument:

> Scripsit Mercurius libros ad divinarum rerum cognitionem pertinentesque plurimos […] nec ut philosophus tantum, sed ut propheta saepe numero loquitur, canitque future. […] Lactantius autem illum inter sybillas ac prophetas connumerare non dubitat.[201]

Besides that, Ficino mentioned in *De divino furore* that through prophecy a human reached the divine realm;[202] and in the letter sent to the King Ferdinand of Aragon in 1478 he explained the importance of the angelic oracles to connect with God.[203] Lazzarelli, on the other hand, not only read the revelation from Trismegistus the prophet but also listened to the prophet 'Mercurio' da Correggio, whose performance drove Lazzarelli into an *exaltatio*. In the *Epistola Enoch*, Lazzarelli–as it was already mentioned in the previous chapter–argued the importance of the prophet and the contribution towards the spread or ratification of the divine wisdom.

In this sense both, Ficino and Lazzarelli, explained the ancient and divine origin of his ideas, developing to some extent an *auctoritas* based on the religious and philosophical authorities of the past. Therefore, the Hermetic thought, developed by Ficino and extended by Lazzarelli, has a frame of references that can persuade the reader and add credibility to the arguments.

[200] C.H., I, 1; Hanegraaff, "Altered States of Knowledge: The Attainment of Gnosis in the Hermetica," 138.

[201] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 5. (Mercurius wrote many books concerning the knowledge of divine things […] he said it but not just as a philosopher, and more as a prophet and he tells the future. […] But, Lactantius does not hesitate counting him among the Sybils and the prophets.) >

[202] De divino furore in Ficino, *Marsilii Ficini Florentini Eloquentissi Viri Epistolae Familiares*, [Nuremberg, 1497] Liber primus Fol. VI.

[203] The title of the oracles is Oraculum Alphonsii regis ad regem Ferdinandum inter illos primum angelica lingua pronuntiatum deinde vero in linguam humanam a Marsilio Ficino translatum inserted in a letter addressed to the king Ferdinand in 1478; in Oraculum Alphonsii regis in Ficino, [Nuremberg, 1497] Fol. 144-157.

Ficino's *Praefatio* is not a simple text because the structure and the content work together. The *Praefatio* as a paratext to the *Pymander* offers information about the main text, which in this case is a translation, and as it was mentioned Ficino describes the content and the purpose. But, besides that, Ficino's paratext is more complex, since it has more textual relations that show Ficino's rhetorical skills and the composition of his ideas. In the *Praefatio*, also, there are a couple of intertexts that helped Ficino to establish his point of view and opinion and redefine the image of Trismegistus.[204] Ficino made allusions to different texts and he used the *auctoritas* of Augustine in *De civitate Dei* and of Lactantius in *Institutiones Divinae.* Ficino aimed at two main objectives with the intertexts. First, he showed his formation and knowledge in Christian theological subjects by reconciled the opinion between these two fathers of the Church, since both arguments seem to point in the same direction. Second, Ficino expressed his posture towards Trismegistus following Lactantius: "Quo factum est, ut Aurelius Agusutinus dubitaverit, peritia ne syderum, an revelatione daemonum multa protulerit. Lactantius autem illum inter sibyllas ac prophetas connumerare non dubitat."[205] Ficino used the repetition of the verb *dubitare* but in two different forms: for Augustine, the verb appears with a potential mood, not even Ficino presents a certain comment about Trismegistus interpretation; meanwhile, for Lactantius, the same verb appears but with a negation removing the doubt affirming his posture of Trismegistus as a prophet and exalting it by leaving the verb at the end of the sentence.

Another important textual relation in the *Praefatio* is the connection with its hypotexts from the aforementioned Augustine and Lactantius, but more connected with Cicero. The

[204] Campanelli also suggests that there were a couple of medieval alchemical books that could have some influence in the process of redefining Trismegistus image in the *Praefatio* in the introduction of Campanelli, *Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander Sive de Potestate et Sapientia Dei (Ficinus Novus)*, XXV–XXVIII.

[205] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 5. (So that Aurelius Augustinus, as it happens, [pondered] that he had foretold many things by divination of the stars or by demonic revelation. But Lactantius does not hesitate [counting] him among the Sibyls and the prophets; in Klustein's transaltion in Klutstein, "Ficino's Hermetic Translations: English Translation of His Latin Pimander.")

Praefatio besides being the *Pymander*'s paratext imitates the style of older writings. Thus the *Praefatio* also becomes a hypertext, more specifically a forgery in the first place to Cicero's *De natura deorum* and in second to *De civitate Dei* and *Institutiones Divinae*.[206] Ficino started the *Praefatio* with the genealogy of Trismegistus by expanding the explanation of Trismegistus from its hypotext in *De civitate Dei*, which has a hypotext from *De natura Deorum*:

> Eo tempore, quo Moses natus est, floruit Atlas astrologus, Promethei physici frater, ac materus avus maioris Mercurii, cuius nepos fuit Mercurius Trismegistus. Hoc autem de illo scribit Augustinus: quanque Cicero at Lactantius Mercurios quinque per ordinem fuisse volunt: quintumque fuisse illum, qui ab Aegyptiis Theuth, a Graecis autem Trismegisuts appellatus est.[207]

Ficino based his argument in Cicero and Lactantius, without setting the argument against Augustine's. Thus, Ficino enhanced the information provided by those authorities from the past and tropicalizing the figure of Trismegistus for his time, portraying also as a priest:

> Trismegistum vero, id est ter maximum nuncuparunt: quoniam et philosophus maximus, et sacerdos maximus, & rex maximus extitit. Mos enim era Aegyptiis (ut Plato scribit) ex philosophorum numero sacerdotes, ex sacerdotes coetu regem eligere. Ille igitur quemadmodum acumine atque doctrina, philosophis omnibus antecesserat: sic sacerdos inde constitutus, sanctimonia vitae, divinorumque cultu, universis sacerdotibus praesitit: ac demum adeptus regiam dignitatem, administratione legum, rebusque gestis superiorum regum gloriam obscuravit: ut merito ter maximus fuerit nuncupatus.[208]

[206] About the forgery, Genette explains that the forgery has two main purposes either to continue or to extend a text; Genette, *Palimpsests*, 85.

[207] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 3. (In that time, when Moses was born, the brother of the physician Prometheus, the astrologer Atlas flourished, also [he was] the grandfather on the mother side of the old Mercurius, whose grandson was Mercurius Trismegistus. About him Augustine wrote, although Cicero and Lactantius thought that were five Mercuries in order; and that one [Trismegistus] was the fifth, who was named Theuth by the Egyptians but Trismegistus by the Greeks.)

[208] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., [Basel, 1532] Fol. 3-4. (In fact, they called him Trismegistus, it is thrice-greatest: because he showed himself as the greatest philosopher, the greatest priest, and the greatest king. Thus, the custom among the Egyptians–as Plato described–was to choose priests from the number of philosophers, to choose one king from the assembly of priests. So, because of his keen intelligence and instruction, he preceded before all the philosophers. As a priest preceded before all the priests about the sacredness of life and the cult of gods; in the end, with royal dignity, on the administration of laws, on the higher circumstances and achievements obscured the glory of the [other] kings; so deserving it, he has been named the thrice-greatest.)

Now, Trismegistus' image has fewer features of paganism as his genealogy could present, since Ficino almost depicted him as a man that could fit into the Renaissance time; Ficino's Trismegistus easily could be considered as a polymath. An interesting characteristic of Trismegistus is that he is depicted also as someone who was erudite in the administration of laws; an aspect that previously, Plethon emphasized for Zoroaster, as an important characteristic related to the philosophers. Ficino's Trismegistus became a character worthy of being followed and imitated, an example of a human who got the highest point because of his merit. The hyperbolized description of Trismegistus also is an subtle allusion to the *Asclepius*, which Ficino added to his translation, on describing how humans should be praised because of its nature to reach the divinity by using his mind.

> The form of humankind is multiform and various: coming down from association with the (higher form) just described, it makes many conjunctions with all other forms and, of necessity, makes them with almost everything. Hence, one who has joined himself to the gods in divine reverence, using the mind that joins him to the gods, almost attains divinity. […]"Because of this, Asclepius, a human being is a great wonder, a living thing to be worshipped and honored […][209]

In this way, it is possible to read the traces of what Ficino will consider the dignity of man.[210] And Ficino explained that there are necessary elements to reach the divine wisdom and apprehend the divine:

> Hic inter philosophos primus, a physicis ac mathematicis ad divinorum contemplationem se contulit. Primus de maiestate dei, daemonum ordine, animarum mutationibus sapientissime disputavit. Primus igitur theologiae appellatus est autor.[211]

[209] Asclepius, 5-6 in In Copenhaver's translation in Trismegistus, *Hermetica*, 69.

[210] Kristeller explains that the "dignity of man" was an important topic for Ficino in the *Theologia Platonica* because through this the humankind can move through the Great Chain of Being; in Kristeller, "The European Significance of Florentine Platonism," 63. Also, this topic would reach it highest development on Pico's *Oration;* in Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 66.

[211] Praefatio in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 4. (He was the first among the philosophers, who has served of natural philosophy and mathematics to the contemplation of the divine things. The first who explained wisely about the greatness of (the) god(s), the order of the daemons, the transformations of the souls. In consequence, the first who could be named author of theology.)

Besides explaining the content of the *Pymander* and the *Asclepius*, Ficino enlisted some Hermetic concepts that the reader will find in the text, and after master the mathematics, natural philosophy, practice the contemplation, learning about the daemons, and the transformation of the soul, the reader can apprehend the divine wisdom learning about God. The same concepts, eventually, would be used and explained by Lazzarelli in his writings.

Nevertheless, Ficino assured to present the title of the *Pymander* and the *Asclepius* with an *addendum* to erase any past of the pagan approach in case there was still any suggestion on reviving the pagan religiosity, as Plethon could hint with his philosophical approach.[212]

Ficino added to the *Pymander* the subtitle *De potestate et sapientia Dei* that alludes and has an inspiration from the Bible.[213] The power and wisdom of God appear continuously through the Bible, but not all of them could be connected to the subtitle that Ficino proposed. For that reason, I would like to suggest to hypotext that could be the inspiration for the subtitle of the *Pymander.* Among the books of the Bible, *Wisdom* could be an option, this book should have gathered the King's Solomon wisdom; in this book, it is discussed how the rulers have inherited the power from God and they must imitate God's wisdom on Earth since they are only guarding it in God's name: "Melior est sapientia quam vires, et vir prudens quam fortis. Audite ergo, reges, et intelligite; discite, judices finium terrae. Praebete aures, vos qui continetis multitudines, et placetis vobis in turbis nationum. Quoniam data est a Domino potestas vobis […]."[214] In this vain, this hypotext resembles the message dedicated

[212] Schmitt, Skinner, and Kessler, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 561–62; Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, 12,77, and 373.

[213] Copenhaver suggests that by setting the subtitles, Ficino followed a Trinitarian thought being the three characteristics of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit related to *Potentia, Sapientia, and Voluntas*; in Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*, 175–79.

[214] Wisdom, 6: 1-4 (Kings Should Seek Wisdom. Listen therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High; he will search out your works and inquire into your plans. Because as servants of his kingdom […].) From now on, the Latin version has been taken from the Vulgate, while the English version comes from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE).

to Cosimo suggesting that he had the potential to become as Trismegistus. Another hypotext, could be traced to the *Epistle to the Ephesians* ascribed to Paul.[215] Paul described many reasons why he should be considered as an apostle, in this section he describes that he has had a revelation through which he understood the mystery of Christ only revealed to a group of selected ones, previously to the prophets and now to the apostles:

> Mihi omnium sanctorum minimo data est gratia haec, in gentibus evangelizare investigabiles divitias Christi, et illuminare omnes, quae sit dispensatio sacramenti absconditi a saeculis in Deo, qui omnia creavit: ut innotescat principatibus et potestatibus in caelestibus per Ecclesiam, multiformis sapientia Dei[216]

And, in a similar way that Ficino depicts Trismegistus, Paul becomes a master who will teach the Gentiles about the wisdom of God.

For the *Asclepius*, Ficino added the subtitle *De voluntate Dei*, which presents a similar situation as the subtitle of the *Pymander*. I suggest Ficino made an allusion to the *Second Epistle of Peter* since, in it, Peter discusses the origin of the prophetic messages. Even if Ficino did not explain many things about the *Asclepius*, he must have included the text already famous in the Latin speaking part of Europe and redefine the perception of the text in order to fit it with Ficino's description of Trismegistus: "Hoc primum intelligentes quod omnis prophetia Scripturae propria interpretatione non fit. Non enim voluntate humana allata est aliquando prophetia: sed Spiritu Sancto inspirati, locuti sunt sancti Dei homines."[217] Lactantius accepted the *Asclepius* because of its prophetic nature about the first coming of Christ, while Peter in the *Second Epistle* discusses the prophetic message of the second

[215] One of the last works of Ficino concerns the revelation of Paul, Ficino named this work as *De raptu Pauli* in which he discussed the ascension of Paul to heaven with other theological subjects based on previous comments on the Epistles of Paul, but the work was interrupted because of Ficino's death; in Lauster, "Marsilio Ficino as a Christian Thinker: Theological Aspects of His Platonism," 46–47.

[216] Ephesians, 3:8-10 (Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to bring light to everyone on what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages by God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.)

[217] II Petri, 20-21 (First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.)

coming of Christ. Therefore, Ficino not only presented a Renaissance image of Trismegistus full of virtues and studies but also his path had been always aimed to reach the wisdom of God, which could be proved now with Ficino's translation.

Later, Lazzarelli commented on Ficino's *Praefatio* in one of the three prefaces dedicated to Da Correggio. Each preface preceded a part of the Hermetic texts, one for the *Pymander,* another for the *Asclepius*, and another one for Lazzarelli's translation of the *Diffinitiones Asclepii*. The first one entitled *Ioanni Mercurio de Corigio Lodovicus Enoch Lazarellus Septemdanus quondam poeta nunc autem per novam regenerationem verae sapientiae filius salutem* resembles a dedicatory letter in which are explained the reasons and purposes of the compilation.[218] Lazzarelli started his letter complaining about the misunderstandings throughout ages of the wisdom of the prophets, Jesus, Moses, and Trismegistus:

> Divinorum librorum Hermetis Trismegisti tum Mosis et prophetarum tum vel maxime Iesu Christi salvarotis nostris sacratissimorum verborum studiosus aedo factus sum o mi praeceptor, o dulcissime mi Pater Ioannes Mercuri, ut caetera quaecumque tum veterum tum novorum scripta mihi penitus sordeant et stomacosam faciant nauseam.[219]

Lazzarelli set at the same position to Jesus, Moses, and Trismegistus as three figures that have apprehended the wisdom of God, and because of that Hermetic texts also should contain the same divine content as the Gospels or the *Exodus*. Lazzarelli described the content, as Hanegraaff addressed in his translation, with several intertexts from the Bible, mainly from *Wisdom*. In the biblical quote, it is described it: "Pro quibus angelorum esca nutrivisti populum tuum, et paratum panem de caelo praestitisti illis sine labore, omne delectamentum

[218] Lodovico Enoch Lazzarelli Septemdanus, once a poet, but now by new regeneration a son of the true wisdom, sends greetings to Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio in Hanegraaff's translation.

[219] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep. (Dear teacher, dearly beloved father Giovanni Mercurio[,] I have become so absorbed in the study of the divine books of Hermes Trismegistus and also in the most holy words of Moses and the prophets, and most of all in those of Jesus Christ our Saviour, that all other writings, whether of ancients or of moderns, have completely lost their appeal, to me and made me sick to my stomach.; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 153.)

in se habentem, et omnis saporis suavitatem."[220] While, Lazzarelli wrote: "Ibi angelorum esca, ibi Dei substantia uniuscuiusque serviens voluntati, ibi paratus de caelo panis omne in se habens delectamentum et omnis saporis suavitatem."[221] He described that divine wisdom is nourishment for the soul. Lazzarelli continued his letter describing the content of the *Pymander* emphasized the cosmological–which was not so emphasized by Ficino before–and the soteriological content of the Hermetic texts, which led him to abandon his former poetic interest and changing it to the theological: "Valeat igitur Parnasus ille mons Aonius, nam moentm Sion posthac sedulous celebrabo. Valeat fons Heliconius, nam me posthac cristallinae illius fontis aquae potabunt […]."[222] It is important to highlight, Lazzarelli continuous metaphors referring to drinking water and his allusion, which even if they allude to Christian ideas, at the end of this preface, he connected it with the *Crater* mentioned in the Hermetic texts: "et ipse Hermes non tantum assecutus est, verum in alios suis sacris praeceptis et institutis divinoque crathere largissime effudit";[223] stating what he previously mentioned as *illius fontis aquae potabunt*. Also, in the third preface to the *Diffinitiones Asclepii*, Lazzarelli paraphrased again the same idea of leaving the poetry and focusing in the Hermetic thought:

> […] ab Aganippeo Pegaseoque fonte qui me nequaquam explebat declinassem et tanquam cervus sitiens ad amaenissima Sion vireta, ad suavissimum fontem ex ore dei et agni egredientem, ad inaccessibilem lucidissimamque dei caliginem conarer proficisci, contigit ut inter antiquos divorum hominum libros quos sedulous perscrutator inquiro in quoddam nectareum poculum

[220] Wisdom, 16:20

[221] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep. (Here is the food of the angels, here is the substance of God, which attends to everyone's will, here is prepared the bread of heaven that has in it all delight and all that is sweet to the taste […]; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 153.)

[222] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep. (So farewell, Aonian Parnassus, for henceforth I will sedulously celebrate Mount Zion. Farewell, well of Helicon, for henceforth I will be refreshed by the cristal-clear waters of other well […]; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 155.)

[223] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep. ([…] such as Hermes has not only reached himself, but has also abundantly poured forth to others in his sacred writings and teachings in his divine *Crater* [Mixing-Bowl];in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 157.)

> omni dulcedine plenum quod ex divino immensoque Hermetis Trismegistii crathere emanasse non dubito ex insperato inciderem […][224]

The same idea Lazzarelli connected it of drinking wisdom from the *crater* of Hermes: *nectareum poculum omni dulcedine quod ex divino immensoque Hermetis Trismegistii crathere,* which for this preface it has evolved not only *clear* and *abundant* but has become *sweet nectar from the crater*, which shows since Lazzarelli's early interest in Hermetic thought on the metaphor and allusion of the *crater.*

Besides that, Lazzarelli included a metatext related to Ficino's *Praefatio* and *Pymander*'s translation. Lazzarelli praised among other things the style and Ficino's description of Trismegistus:

> […] praefationem Marsilii Ficini in eos libros non praetermisi quos superioribus annis latinos ab illo factos nunc cum his aliis meae tanquam fidei monumentum ad te mitto. Ibi multa de Hermete nostro recte eleganter concinne et copiose dicta esse comperui quae me erga Marsilium operis interpretem mirum in modum amore affecerunt quod patrem tuum avum meum […][225]

Lazzarelli wrote this paratext for both the *Pymander* and the *Praefatio,* which bias the reading of Ficino's ideas. Lazzarelli could not attack Ficino's rhetorical skills, those that Lazzarelli referred to as *eleganter, concinne et copiose*. Lazzarelli, however, seemed not to agree with the chronology concerning Trismegistus, as Ficino proposed in his *Praefatio.* Lazzarelli expressed his disagreement twice in the preface a veiled and an open one. The first one already expressed through the intertext of *Wisdom* since that chapter has recalled some

[224] Ioanni Mercurio de Corigio Lodovicus Enoch Lazarellus Septemdanus quondam poeta nunc autem per novam regenerationem verae sapientiae filius salute pacem et gratiam in domino nostro Iesu Christo. (I took my leave from the fountains of Aganippe and Pegassus, which had never quenched my thirst, and while as a hart that is thirsting after Zion's green fields I tried to reach that sweetest fountain that wells up from the mouth of God and of the Lamb, towards that inaccessible and most lucid darkness of God, it happened that among the old books of godlike men which I sedulously explored I quite unexpectedly fell upon a goblet of nectar filled with all sweetness, which I do not doubt has emanated from the divine and immense mixing-bowl[*Crater*] of Hermes Trismegistus […]; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 161.)

[225] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep. ([…] I did not omit the preface by Marsilio Ficino to those books that he recently translated into Latin, and which I am now sending you, with these others as a token of my esteem. In it, I found many things that were quite elegantly, gracefully and eloquently written about our Hermes, which filled me with love for the translator of the work, Marsilio, to a wonderful degree, because he had celebrated your father (and my grandfather) with so many excellent praises […]; Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 155.)

events from the *Exodus* like the Manna falling from heaven or the torments in Egypt, which depicts a time of suffering, lack of wisdom, and attacks against the Jews. While the second one, Lazzarelli has expressed more explicitly: "Moses vero eo tempore fuit ut ex sacris litteris et multis antiquorum monumentis clarissime apparet, cum Pharaones non divi non veri et perfecti homines, sed equivoce homines nuncupati in Aegypto regnarent."[226] Therefore, Lazzarelli used the *auctoritas* of Diodorus to sustain his argument on Trismegistus living before Moses and, in this way, going against Ficino, who followed Augustine, Lactantius and Cicero: "Non enim post Mosis tempora ut ibi asseritur floruit Trismegistus, sed longe potius ante Mosis aetatem, ut liquid ex Diodori libris colligi potest. Hic enim Aegypti regna describens deos primum in Aegypto, tum homines regnasse memoriae prodidit."[227] In this argument, results important to highlight that Lazzarelli used a similar vocabulary that Ficino has used in his *Praefatio*, in which he has written: *Eo tempore, quo Moses natus est, floruit* […], while Lazzarelli: *[…] post Mosis tempora ut ibi asseritur floruit […]*, the lexical similarity points a clear metatext to Ficino's text.

The relevance of Moses in Lazzarelli's arguments appeared once again in the *Crater Hermetis* with the same intention. Lazzarelli added his own intertext setting Moses after Trismegistus and prove the Antiquity of Trismegistus along with his divine connections:

> At ceteros praetermittendo, quid de Hermete dicemus? Qui omnem sapientae semitam perscrutanus, oration licet parva immense tamen sententiis de vera sapientia monumenta posteris dereliquit, unde, ut coniectura percipio, ad Hebreos sapientia emigravit. Moses namque Hebraeus apud Aegyptios natus eam ex Aegypto per Pentateuchum trasntulit ad Hebraes et eum in Actibus

[226] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep.; Lazzarelli, 156. (But Moses, as is quite clear from the sacred scriptures and many records of the ancients, lived in a period when the Pharaohs reigned in Egypt: people who were neither divine nor true and perfect men, but can scarcely be called humans at all; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 157.

[227] Io. Mercurio De Co. Lodo. Enoch Laza. Sep.; Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 156. (For Trismegistus did not live after the times of Moses, as he tells us there, but, rather, a long time before, as can clearly be gathered from the book of Diodorus. For his description of the dynasties of Egypt he relates how first the gods and then men reigned in Egypt; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 157.)

> Apostolorum scritpum legimus omnis Aegyptiorum disciplina fuisse eruditissimum.[228]

Therewith, Lazzarelli proposed Egyptians as the first recipient of Trismegistus's wisdom, and only then Moses, who taught the wisdom to the Jewish, and eventually to the Christians; instead of the Greeks as Ficino did in his *Praefatio*. In this transmission line, Lazzarelli dismissed the pagan intellectuals choosing the Jewish-Christian line as the rightful owner of the wisdom of God, instead of the pagans as a parallel line transmitting Ficino's *prisca theologia*.

Lazzarelli, however, did not reject every argument from Ficino; he agreed with the translator of the *Pymander* that Trismegistus was the *author of theology*:

> Hic est ille, o Poeta doctissime, quem Maia genitum deorum interpretem, eloquentiae deum, repertorem lyrae, et multis perfectum officiis veteres dixere poetae. Ab hoc omnis suam antiqua theologia traxit originem.[229]

Even if Lazzarelli addressed many of the epithets of the god Hermes to Trismegistus, he kept Ficino's intertext on the theological authorship of Trismegistus, and the essence of the transmission of wisdom based on the relation master-disciple.

In the *Crater Hermetis* Lazzarelli acts as the master and the disciples are Pontano and King Ferrante. The *Crater Hermetis* along with other Hermetic and Hermeticist texts present a similar dialogic structure, which in terms of genre follows the architextual structure of the Platonic dialogues since questions and answers–closer to debates or discourses–are used to transmit knowledge and wisdom.[230] The paratextual information that Lazzarelli provided to

[228] Lazzarelli, Crater Hermetis, 3.2 (To leave the rest for what it is, what shall we say of Hermes? He explores the whole way of wisdom, and left monuments of true wisdom to posterity, that are scanty in words but immense in meaning; so I venture to suggest that it was by way of him that wisdom reached the Hebrews. For Moses, who was a Hebrew born in Egypt, transferred it to the Hebrews by ay of his Pentateuch, and we read in the Acts of the Apostles that he was most learned in all the arts of the Egyptians; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 173.

[229] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 4.2 (This is the man, my most learned of Poets, whom the poets of Antiquity said was born of Maia: the interpreter of the gods, the god of eloquence, the inventor of the lyre, and perfect in many arts. All of the ancient theology takes its origin from him; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 173.

[230] Genette defines an architext as the textual relation that it has with the genre following either the paratextual information, or the reader or audience criteria; Genette, *Palimpsests*, 4.

the *Crater* appears only in the title: *Ludovici Lazzarelli Septempedani Poetae Christiani ad divum Ferdinandum Ar. Siciliae Regem de summa hominis dignitate dialogus qui insciribitur Via Christi et Crater Hermetis*, which confirms that Lazzarelli considered the genre of his text as a dialogue.[231] Also, in this paratext, Lazzarelli no longer presents himself as an *Enoch*, which can suppose that he only presented with that *nom de plume* with da Correggio, but he presented himself as a Christian poet. Lazzarelli described his dialogue as the *via Christi*, which has an allusion to the *Epistle to the Corinthias* ascribed to Paul, in which Paul described the purpose of the apostles –or spiritual teachers–is to teach the mysteries of Christ and God, as Lazzarelli intends in the dialogue: "Ideo misi ad vos Timotheum, qui est filius meus carissimus, et fidelis in Domino: qui vos commonefaciet vias meas, quae sunt in Christo Jesu, sicut ubique in omni ecclesia doceo."[232] Lazzarelli placed at the same level the wisdom from Trismegistus with an allusion to the fourth Hermetic treatise entitled the *Crater sive Monas* in Ficino's translation. This Hermetic treatise is a dialogue between Trismegistus and Tat, who discuss about cosmos, God, contemplation, mind, and wisdom; the *mixing-bowl* or *crater* is a metaphor to explain that knowledge and wisdom were served by God and it is open to all those who want to drink from it. Lazzarelli used not only the *Crater sive Monas* but also the *Diffinitiones Asclepii* as the main hypotext to develop his dialogue; on one hand, he explained some of the concepts already used in the *Crater sive Monas*.[233] On the other, the *Diffinitiones Asclepii*, which Lazzarelli translated for da Correggio, present a similar situation as the Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis* since in both of them the master–Trismegistus and Lazzarelli–teaches the disciples–Tat with King Ammon and Pontano with King Ferdinand–who established dialogue to solve their questions and understand the divine wisdom with the

[231] "A Dialogue on the Supreme Dignity of Man, entitled The Way of Christ and the Mixing-Bowl of Hermes, by Lodovico Lazzarelli of Septempeda, Christian Poet. Dedicated to the divine Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Sicily," in Hanegraaff's translation.

[232] I Corinthians, 4:17

[233] To make a difference between the fourth dialogue of the C.H. named *The Mixing-bowl* or *Crater*, and Lazzarelli's text *Crater Hermetis*, I have used the title proposed by Ficino *Crater sive Monas.*

help of their spiritual teachers. About the *Supreme dignity of man*, it is difficult not to consider or evoke Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio*, which, indeed, acquire the title of *De homino dignitate* once it was published in 1496, but as György E. Szönyi addressed properly, it is the allusion on the potential of the human explained by Pico.[234] Therefore, Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis* becomes a hypertext and with more precision a *forgery*–in Genette's classification–of the aforementioned texts.

In the *Crater sive Monas*, Trismegistus explained to Tat that it is natural for humans to seek divine wisdom, which can be obtained after drinking from the *crater*. It explains why humans feel an inherited attraction towards the divine, and Trismegistus, at the end of the dialogue, explains it with an analogy of the lodestone: "Habet enim vim certam visio: eos qui intuendi desidero flagrant apprehendit, eoque trahit modo, quo lapis, qui magnetes dictus est, ferrum."[235] The same analogy appears in the first hymn of the *Crater Hermetis:* "Munda hanc prorsus imaginem: // ut sole attrahitur vapor, // ut magnes calybem trahit, // sic flammis rapiar tuis."[236] Lazzarelli used the analogy to express his own attraction to the divine while he praised God. Even Ficino, in *De vita coelitus comparanda*, used the same analogy to explain the attraction of the lower to the superior inserted as a natural consequence of the Great Chain of Beings:

> Sed dic interea cur magnes trahat ubitque ferrum–non quia simile, alioquin et magnetem magnes traheret multo magis ferrumque ferrum; non quia superior in ordine corporum, immo superius est lapillo metallum. Quid ergo? Ambo quidem ordine Ursam sequente clauduntur, sed superiorem in ipsa Ursae proprietate gradum tenet magnes, inferiorem vero ferrum. Superius autem in eodem rerum contextu trahit quidem quod est inferius et ad se convertit, vel aliter quomodolibet agitat aut afficit virtute prius infusa. Inferius vicissim eadem ad superius infusione convertitur vela liter agitator vel prorsus afficitur. […] Per haec insuper confirmant nonnulli etiam illud magicum: per inferioria

[234] Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 66–67.

[235] "Crater sive Monas" in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 40. (Certaintly, the vision has a particular power; it seizes those that burn in desire of contemplating it and draws them, as the stone, that is named lodestone, draws the iron.)

[236] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 5.3) (Make this image wholly clear: // as vapor is drawn upwards by the sun // and the magnet attracts the steel, // so am I transportated by your flames; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 179.

> videlicet superioribus consentanea posee ad homines temporibus opportunis coelestia quodammodo trahi, atque etiam per coelestia supercoelestia nobis conciliari vel forsan prorsus insinuari. Sed postremum hoc illi viderint[237]

In the *De vita coelitus comparanda,* the idea of the inferior attracted to the superior persists as a light reference to the *Crater sive Monas*. Since the *De vita coelitus comparanda* is an astral-healing treatise, Ficino explained the power of images in talismans, and he inserted here an important activity for Hermetic thought, which is the knowledge of the stars, in other words, astrology. Learning the movement of the heavenly bodies was an activity derived from philosophic nature and mathematics, that Ficino explained in the *Praefatio* was used by Trismegistus for the contemplation of the divine.

Lazzarelli also joined the Great Chain of Beings and the astrology in a similar way, and to sustain his argument he used the *auctoritas* of Trismegistus in the fifth treatise of the *Pymander*:

> Sicut divinorum amor, contemplation et sapientia lignum est vitae, ita caducarum et materialium rerum affectus et prerscrutario lignum scientiae boni et mali appellari potest. […] Non opifex Deus sua vetuit opera considerari, sed in eis insisti et tamquam finem affectari ultimum. Sic enim veteres caelum solem lunam et stellas elementaque et quaedam insuper animalia deos esse dixerunt. Vult autem et praecepit Omnipotens ita haec Omnia per discursum considerari ut per quosdam paene gradus ad se mentis tandem nostrae fiat reflexio et in suae divinitatis consideration humanus semper animus conquiescat. […] Et Hermes ait: "Denique cum Deum videre volueris, suspice solem, fili, respice lunae cursus, suspice siderum ordinem reliquorum."[238]

[237] Ficino, De vita III, XV, 31-89 (But tell me, while we are on this subject, why does the lodestone everywhere draw iron? –not because they are similar, otherwise lodestones would draw lodestones much more readily and iron, iron. Not because lodestones are superior in order of bodies; on the contrary, metal is superior to gem. Why then? Both are comprised in the order depending on the Bear, but the lodestone holds the superior rank in the very property of the Bear; iron, however, the inferior. The superior draws what it is inferior in the same chain of beings and turns it towards itself, or else otherwise agitates it in some way or other, or influences it by a power infused beforehand. The inferior in turn by the same infusion is turned towards the superior or otherwise agitated or deeply influenced. […]Through this, moreover, many people confirm that magic doctrine that by means of lower things which are in accord with higher ones, people can in due season somehow draw themselves celestial things, and that we can even through the celestial reconcile the super-celestials to us or perhaps wholly insinuate them into us – but this last matter I leave to them; in Kaske and Clark's translation in Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 317–19.)

[238] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis,* 9.2-4 (Just as the love, the contemplation, and the knowledge of divine [things] is the tree of life, so the desire for and searching [of] imperfect and material things may be called the three of the knowledge of good and evil. […] But the Creator God has not forbidden man to look at his works, but to focus on them only, and to cherish them as the ultimate goal. Thus the ancient called the heaven and the

In the same manner that Ficino explained that the purpose of understanding the knowledge behind the talismans is to reconcile with the super-celestial in *De vita coelitus comparanda*. Lazzarelli explained that is through contemplation of the works of God, which is the heavens and nature; humans can cherish and grasp an image of God. Both, Lazzarelli and Ficino, agreed that the ultimate goal is not the praise of the things that humans can see but the divine realm that is beyond it since heavenly bodies are only the representation of a higher reality.

Because to apprehend the divine and reach the highest potential of human capacities is the purpose of the human, which is explained in the *Crater sive Monas: Homo enim effectus est divini operis contemplator: quod profecto dum admiraretur, autorem eius agnovit.*[239] For that reason, Ficino mentioned in the *Praefatio*–setting Trismegistus as a role model for humanity, that the contemplation should be practiced along with piety, rightfulness, and wisdom, while Cosimo was depicted as a potential candidate. Similarly, in the *Crater Hermetis*, Lazzarelli, as a master, taught King Ferdinand and Pontano how to reach their highest potential through wonder, prayer, praise, and contemplation.

> FERD. Totus immutor hodie tuis verbis, o Lazzarelle, totus excedo totus me desero. Tu autem quid, o Pontane? PONT. Ita hodie, benignissime Rex, hoc sermone immutari me sentio quem ad modum Glaucum in Euboica Antedone se verti gustu graminis in aequorei numinis naturam sensisse ferunt. SEPTEMP. Optima est haec hodie immutatio vestra, cum paulatim divino lumine regeneratii in veros homines emigratis; verus autem homo, ut ait Hermes, aut caelicolis est praesentantior aut saltem pari sorte potitur. […] Oportet autem, vos o Rex, tuque, o Pontane, ut hanc veritatem consequamini frequentibus admirationibus, obsecrationibus, laudibus, contemplationibus diu circa divina versari, quod ut oportunis homines valeant exsequi, idcirco dicit Hermes Musas ad homines descendisse. Converte huc igitur, o Pontane, omnes tuarum Musarum vires, tuque, beate Rex, omne tui ingenii huc robur

sun, the moon and the stars, the elements and even some animals gods. But the Almighty wants and ordains us to look intelligently at all these things, in such a way that by degrees, as it were, our mind will finally form an image of him, and the human soul eventually comes to an eternal rest in the consideration of his divine being. […] And Hermes says: "So if you want to see God, look at the Sun, my son, watch the course of the Moon, look at the order of the rest of the stars;" in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 193. Also, Hanegraaff mentions in his notes a that Ficino omitted some words from his translation from Greek to Latin, but in Campanelli's edition of the text the only change is one verb *respice* in Lazzarelli and *suspice* in Ficino.

[239]"Crater sive Monas" in Trismegistus et al., *Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, de potestate et sapientia Dei*, [Basel, 1532] Fol. 36. (Certaintly, the human purpose is being the spectator(contemplator) of the divine work, and while it is admired, the human recognizes his Author.)

> applica. Obsecrate, admiramini, laudate, contemplanini divitatem: hoc enim pacto ad maximum deificum mysterii Arcanum, quod modo enarraturus sum, commode disponemini. His quo rebus, ut ait Hermes caelum celestisque delectantur[240]

The contemplation, which is the purpose of humanity depicted in the *Crater sive Monas*, should come with piety and wisdom as Lazzarelli and Ficino explained. Following the recommendations and instructions of Lazzarelli and Ficino, the ruler, king, or philosopher seeking the divine will experience an *exaltatio*. In the *Crater Hermetis*, King Ferdinand and Pontano agree that this *exaltatio* was the consequence of Lazzarelli's words.[241] The situation resembles Lazzarelli's experience with da Correggio narrated in the *Epistola Enoch*.

Only after receiving the divine wisdom, it is possible to become a *verus homo*, in other words, to reach the highest capacities for humans, which it is not a permanent state and should be pursued frequently. It is difficult to ignore the emphasis on the habit of pursuing this state. The intention behind this could be to secure Lazzarelli's position at the court, especially since the next quote from Trismegistus–Hermes in the text–suggests that the effortless way to attain the *verus homo* state involves the inspiration from the Muses, and poets have been the best recipients for the Muses inspiration.[242]

Ficino also praised the poetic skills, which helped to connect with the divine. In the letter *Quattor divini furoris species* dedicated to the poet Naldo Naldio, Ficino explained the

[240] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 22.1-22.3 (FERD. I feel wholly changed by your words today, Lazzarelli, wholly in ecstasy, wholly beyond myself. How about you, Pontano? PONT. I feel so changed by today's discussion, my gracious king, as Glaucus in Antedon of Euboia must have felt when he ate dog's-grass (as they say) and felt how he was being changed into a sea god. LAZZ. You experience an excellent transformation today, for you are gradually being regenerated by the divine light and transformed into true men; and the true man, as Hermes says, is even greater than the gods that dwell in heaven, or at least as powerful. […] In order to reach this truth, you, [King], and you too, Pontano should pursue these divine things for a long time, with frequent wonder, praise, and contemplation; and Hermes says that it was in order to make it easier to man to reach that goal that Muses descended to man. So direct all the [virtues] of your Muses towards that goal, Pontano, and you blessed king, apply thereunto all your spirit's strength. Pray, wonder, praise, and contemplate the divine; thus you will prepare yourself in the right way for the tremendous and god-creating mystery that I am about to tell you. Even heaven and its inhabitants take pleasure in these things, as Hermes says; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 233.)

[241] Szönyi, "The Hermetic Revival," 68.

[242] The relation between poets and Muses can be traced to ancient Graeco-Roman poetry, like Homer, Hesiod, Virgil, Ovid, among others, who used to start the poems with an invocation to the Muses to receive divine inspiration. Probably, because of Lazzarelli's continuous allusions to Mount Helicon and the use *auctoritas* of Hesiod, his main influence in this relation could come from this poet.

four kinds of *furor* that produced an *exaltatio* in the human. Among those four frenzies, the poetic one was in connection with the Muses: "poesis musas attribuat,"[243] but this particular *furor* cannot be accessed to any human, only with the poets: "Quoniam vero Musae nobis in praesentia non aspirant: quod non possumus laudare poesi: amore certe mutuo probamus: semperque probabimus."[244] In the *Divino Furore* dedicated to Peregrino Aglio, Ficino described with more precision the impact and consequences of this particular *furor*:

> Atque, ut arbitror, Musas divinus ille vir celestes cantus intelligi vult, ideoque canoras et Camenas a cantu appellatas esse dicunt. Unde Musis, id est celestibus numinibus atque cantibus, divini homines conciti, ad eorum imitationem poeticos modos ac numeros meditantur.[245]

Ficino described that once the poets get in contact with the Muses–or celestial songs–they have such frenzy that the poets desire to imitate that experience again explaining the reason behind the different rhythms in poetry. Parallelism appears in the *Crater Hermetis*, Pontano expressed his desire to revive his experience again, and as a solution, Lazzarelli suggested that Pontano should summon the virtues (vires) that he received from the Muses to reach his desired aim; and only once King Ferdinand and Pontano have fulfilled the requirements of praying, praising, and contemplation, they will be able to perform the *deificum mysterii arcanum.*

In the following part, Lazzarelli explained the contemplation and the god-creating mystery, inspired by the Muses and God in the form of a hymn. Among hermetic texts, which include dialogues, treatises, or epistles, those that concern hymns or poetry have received little attention. Even in this research, I have paid little attention to the poetic texts, which could be benefited from further analysis in the future. In the meantime, I will focus on these

[243] Quattor divini furoris, Ficino, *Marsilii Ficini Florentini Eloquentissi Viri Epistolae Familiares*, [Nuremberg, 1497] Fol. 153. (Poetry is attributed to the Muses.)

[244] Quattor divini furorris, Ficino, [Nuremberg, 1497] Fol. 153.(Indeed, since Muses do not favor us, because we cannot praise them with poetry, at least we try with mutual love and we will always try.)

[245] De divino furore Ficino, [Nuremberg, 1497] Fol. 5.(And, as I think, that the divine man [Plato] wants that the Muses should be understood as Celestial singing, and, as it is said, they are called Camenas or Canoras because of the singing. From which, the divine men agitated by the Muses–in other words, by the celestial divinities or by the celestial singing–reflect on the poetic measures and rhythm to imitate them.)

two hymns about the contemplation and god creation, which are included inside the *Crater Hermetis*.

Through the hymn of the contemplation, Lazzarelli presented the power of words. Lazzarelli recites at the beginning of the contemplation hymn: "Eia mens mea cogita // nunc miracula maxima. // Quis fecit nihilo Omnia? // Solus sermo Dei Patris."[246] Like in the biblical *Genesis* it was God who can create through word, it is God who needs to enunciate the things to bring them into reality. And it is God who among all the creatures gave voice and words, *verbum* and not *sermo*, to the humankind: "Quis cum vox aliis data est, // mentem et verbum homini dedit, // veram Patris imaginem? // Quis Mens Sermoque Patris est."[247] And it is because human is the reflection of the image of God, *created in his image and likeness*, the human can use the words in a similar way, to create and achieve divinity by imitating the creation: "Quis cum compleat omnia, // ipsum solum hominem elevat // sorbet, vertit et in Deum? Noster spiritifer Deus."[248] Thus, through the word, humans can imitate and apprehend God experiencing the *exaltatio*.

The last part of the *Crater Hermetis* is the most controversial since in it is discussed the human ability of creation, which is also revealed through a hymn–the hymn of divine generation–highlighting Lazzarelli's poetic skills and the power of words: "En nunc incipio: muta silentiis // pronis cuncta meos auribus audiant // divino gravidos eloquio sonos; // en tango digitis lyram."[249] Thus, since humans are the image of God, they can also imitate God

[246] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis,* 23.3 (Up then, my mind, and now reflect // upon tremendous miracles. // Who was it that made all things from nothing? // Only the word spoken by God the Father; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 235.)

[247] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis,* 23.3 (Who, when other were given a voice, gave man a mind and speech, // as a truthful image of the Father? // He who is the Mind and Word of the Father; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 239.)

[248] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis,* 23.3 (Who, while he perfects all things, // exalted only man, // draws him in and turns him into God? // Our spirit-giving God; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 239.)

[249] Lazzarelli, *Crater*, 27.1 (Hark, now I begin: be silent, all, // that all may hear with willing ear // my words, pregnant with speech divine. Hear, I put my fingers to the lyre;in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 253.

because they have received *mentem et verbum*. In this way, the mystery starts explaining how God creates, and, as a consequence, humans can imitate the process of creation:

> Nam sicut Dominus vel genitor Deus
> Caelestes generans procreat angelos,
> Qui rerum species, qui capita omnium
> Exemplaria primaque
> Divas sic animas versus homo facit,
> Quod terrae [vocat Athlantiades] deos,
> Qui gaudent homini vivere proximos,
> Laetanturque hominis bono.
> Hi dant somnia praesaga feruntque opem
> Aerumnis hominum dantque mala impiis,
> Dant praelcara piis praemia, sic Dei
> Complent imperium Patris.
> [Hi sunt discipuli hi sunt famuli dei
> Quos mundi figulus fecit apostolos
> In tellure deos quos nimis extulit
> Sensu de super indito.]
> Hi fati reprimunt quaeque pericula,
> Morborumque fugant perniciem procul
> Complenturque per hos verba prophetica
> Hi verbum faciunt Dei.[250]

[250] "Crater Hermetis" in Trismegistus et al., *Contenta in hoc volumine. Pimander. Mercurij Trismegisti liber de de [sic] sapientia et potestate dei. Asclepius. Eiusdem Mercurij liber de voluntate diuina. Item, Crater Hermetis a Lazarelo septempedano. Petri Portæ Monsterolensis dodecastichon ad lectorum. Accipe de superis dantem documenta libellum; sume hermen/prisca relligione [sic] virum. Hermen/Thraicius quem no[n] equauerit Orpheus; et quem non proles Calliopea linus. Zamolxin superat cum Cecropio Eumolpo quos diuiniloquos phama vetusta probat. Vtilis hic liber est/mundi fugientibus vmbram*, [Paris, 1505] Fol. 78.

> (For just as the Lord or God the begetter
> [while he is generating] the celestials, procreates the angels
> who are the forms of things, the heads, and first exemplars of all:
> Just so the true man creates divine souls
> [That he<God> calls *Atlantiads*,] gods of earth,
> who are glad to live close to humans
> and rejoice at the welfare of man.
> They give prophetic dreams, they offer help
> in man's need, they punish the godless,
> and splendidly reward the pious.
> Thus they fulfill the command of God the Father.
> These are the disciples, these are servants of God,
> whom the potter of the world made apostles,
> whom as gods on earth he mightily exalted, // putting sense into them from above.
> They overcome the trials of fate
> and chase away destructive illness,
> thereby fulfilling the [prophetic] words.
> They create the Word of God)

Here, I have followed Lefèvre's edition of 1505 from Paris, and I have modified Hanegraaff's translation, and added parts from Walker's in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 253–55; in Walker's translation and version in Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, 67.

Lazzarelli established a hierarchy in the process of creation. God has an unfinished and constant activity of generation (*generans*), which allows him to procreate (*procreat*)–an action situated before the Creation–, so only the *verus homo* can create (*facit*). Therefore, humans can imitate God but limited by their own capacities and without transgressing the divine order. In this hymn, I have followed Daniel P. Walker's version of the hymn, which has a variation from Hanegraaff's, instead of *vocitat turba vetus* appears *vocat Athlantides;* and, also there is another stanza, which does not appear in Hanegraaff's version, but it appears in Walker. Also, all Walker's variations have appeared in Lefèvre's edition of Paris in 1505. This variation of the text results worthy to be explored in the future and should take on consideration more versions of the *Crater Hermetis*

Walker proposes that *Athlantides* is just another way to call *hermetists*.[251]. Besides that, Lazzarelli has not used the term *hermetist* or any other similar to it after his introduction to Pontano and King Ferrante. The *verus homo* and the *Athlantides* received the wisdom, power, and revelation from God, they have understood the *arcana arcanorum*, as Lazzarelli described, which made them *gods of the earth* since they have reached the highest level for humans. Since the *Athlantides* have achieved all the requirements previously described by Lazzarelli to King Ferdinand and Pontano, Walker's interpretation seems appropriate.

In this sense, the *verus homo* can create using the mind and speech: "Mentem propterea persimilem sibi // sermonemque homini iam genitor dedit,"[252] that this time is *sermo*, the same word used in the Contemplation hymn to describe how God created from nothing instead of *verbum* used to describe the humanity in general.

Finally, Lazzarelli explained that the process reaches its final aim using words and letters: "Nam divina generatio mystica verborum prolatione, quae litterarum componuntur

[251] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, 68.

[252] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 27.1, vv. 61-2 (That is why the Begetter has given man // a mind like his own, and speech; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500)*, 255.

elementis, perfectissime consumatur."[253] It echoes Lazzarelli's influence of Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism originated probably from his early formation in Hebrew with Vitale, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. Lazzarelli only defines the Kabbalah as part of the knowledge from the Jewish sages in relation to the *ars magica* or *divina secreta*.[254] Some of the Jewish sources appear as interexts to provide more powerful arguments, among them appear, the *Beresit Rabba*, the *Abodah Zarah*, or the *Sefer Yetzira*.[255] A further transtextual analysis with these sources could show what kind of influence from the Jewish mystic literature has been exerted on Lazzarelli's texts.

Lazzarelli, in contrast with Ficino, not only added the influence of Jewish mysticism but also clearly expressed his position about the mystery of creation. In *De vita coelitus comparanda*, on the other hand, Ficino explained the process of introducing a *daemon* into statues, in which the voice and its echo are involved; but, in the end, he has followed Thomas Aquinas' arguments, and disapproved this practice.[256] Nevertheless, Ficino and Lazzarelli have shared similar opinions in relation to poetry as a powerful divine activity. On several occasions, Ficino has mentioned the power of words and its divine influence, emphasizing in the *De vita coelitus comparanda*, its healing power once the words are merged with music;[257] which is slightly mentioned in the Lazzarelli's hymn: *Morborumque fugant perniciem*.[258]

Therefore, I would like to propose that the final aim of the humans–especially those who desire to connect with God under the Hermetic thought–is to imitate and apprehend the

[253] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 29.5 (For the divine generation is most perfectly accomplished by a mystic utterance of words, composed of the letters of the alphabet; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 259.

[254] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 30.3.

[255] Each of these influences could be found in Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis*, 20.2; 22.2; and 29.2, respetively.

[256] Ficino, *De vita*, III. XVI.

[257] Ficino dedicated a chapter in *De vita coelitus comparanda* to explain the power of words and its realtion with the healing process entitled *De virtute verborum atque cantus ad beneficium celeste captandum ac de septem gradibus perducentibus ad coelestia*; in Ficino, *De vita*, III. XXI.

[258] Trismegistus et al., *Contenta in hoc volumine. Pimander. Mercurij Trismegisti liber de de [sic] sapientia et potestate dei. Asclepius. Eiusdem Mercurij liber de voluntate diuina. Item, Crater Hermetis a Lazarelo septempedano. Petri Portæ Monsterolensis dodecastichon ad lectorum. Accipe de superis dantem documenta libellum; sume hermen/prisca relligione [sic] virum. Hermen/Thraicius quem no[n] equauerit Orpheus; et quem non proles Calliopea linus. Zamolxin superat cum Cecropio Eumolpo quos diuiniloquos phama vetusta probat. Vtilis hic liber est/mundi fugientibus vmbram*, [Paris, 1505] Fol. 78.

divinity through the practice of the most divine skill, which is to speak either through the speech or poetry. Ficino explained in *De divino Furore* the desire of poets to imitate the celestial songs recreating the celestial sound, so they can recreate their *exaltatio;* meanwhile, Lazzarelli has experienced and made someone else experiencing–at least in the *Crater Hermetis*–an *exaltatio* through the poetry and speech. Through the word, the human can heal, protect, or even initiate someone else into the mysteries, which could transform the simple human into a *verus homo*, a *deus terrae*, who once has understood its real power could be able to create and give life to the earth. Lazzarelli explained that explaining the power of words was his purpose since the beginning of the dialogue with Pontano and King Ferdinand not only to please the ear, *sed verborum actibus, ut sapientes Aegyptii;*[259] because only by learning its true power humans *qua ratione bonum consequi possumus.*[260] In the end, Lazzarelli called himself a *hermetist* because he was able to understand that meaning and power of words, reaching the divine wisdom, and embodying the master of mysteries fulfilling his duty and instructing his disciples into the wisdom of God.

Through this transtextual analysis, I have intended to show the complexity and the relations between Ficino's and Lazzarelli, taking into consideration some important influence from the *Pymander* and other important sources. Ficino and Lazzarelli have synthesized many traditions with the Hermetic thought as a result of their formation that also included a set of rhetorical tools inherited from Antiquity, which adds another layer of interpretation. Besides that, it is difficult to ignore the context that surrounded the composition and publication of Ficino's and Lazzarelli's works for more than once, they needed to secure their patronage. Nonetheless, these two philosophers were able to express their own ideas, which do not have to be entirely compatible, in fact, through this comparison and textual relation

[259] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis,* 2.2 ([…] but to express the active power of the words, like the Egyptians; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, *Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500),* 169.

[260] Lazzarelli, *Crater Hermetis,* 2.2 ([…] that will make us realize by which road we can reach out the Good; in Hanegraaff's translation in Lazzarelli, 171.

analysis it is possible to perceive the evolution, influence, transmission, or continuity of their own ideas.

Conclusion

Just as the present work, a text is a mosaic of texts and influences, which are rearranged, adapted, and synthesized by the author; in the same way, Ficino's and Lazzarelli's text were written as I have proved through the analysis presented in this work.

To start with some conclusions of this work, I would like to begin with the importance of a transtextual analysis. The final aim of this analysis was not to prove how much influence has one author on the other but to show how an author adapts an idea to satisfy his purposes and to highlight some elements that often are taken for granted. The prefaces and proems presented throughout this research have provided relevant information on the personal ideas or thoughts of their authors. For example, the chronology of Trismegistus, Ficino followed the Latin narrative–with Augustine, Lactantius, and Cicero; while Lazzarelli the Greek one–with Diodorus; the importance of this fact reflects the interest of both Ficino and Lazzarelli to find the oldest and purest origin of the divine wisdom among humans, or in other words, to find roots of ancient wisdom. The prefaces along with the titles, both as paratexts, are the first impression that the reader would have with the text; but also this paratextual information leads the reading to a certain point justifying the author's ideas. Just as the redefining image of Trismegistus from a pagan idolater to a wise, pious, and rightful man, who could fit into the Renaissance courts, and even become a role model.

Ficino and Lazzarelli, as humanists, besides expressing their ideas they still needed to find patronage and protection, and for that reason, they found in the paratexts the space to please and praise their patron at that moment or a future one. These tasks definitely would not be possible if they would not have received the rhetorical and literary formation from Antiquity, which was flourishing in that time; and their language skills not only in Latin but

also in Greek, and Hebrew in the case of Lazzarelli, allowed them to access to more resources than in previous generations.

Nevertheless, the textual relations explained through the transtextual analysis should be justified with a clear presentation of the related context–as I intended to do in the first chapter, which also can bring light on some personal relations or reasons that sometimes are difficult to insert openly in the text. As I suggested before, the deception that Plethon and Cosimo experienced after the Council of the Union, led them in the search of a *docta religio*–following Garin–, to re-establish a connection with God based on the study of ancient philosophers, sages, and theologians, and parallel to the institutional one. Therefore, with the renewed image of Trismegistus presented in Ficino's *Praefatio* a new direction towards the study of ancient doctrines, philosophies, and ideas started. In this sense, Ficino developed the *prisca theologia* to justify Trismegistus lineage and transmission, but also he benefitted from this by establishing the importance of the relation between master-disciple to teach and explain this approach towards divinity and presenting himself as a master in his later proems. Meanwhile, Lazzarelli synthesized the Jewish mysticism with the new image of Trismegistus, but he recognized the work of Ficino, and also benefitted from the master-disciple structure, presenting himself as one in the *Crater Hermetis*. Due to the limits of space and time I was not able to go deeper in the Jewish mysticism, the rest of Ficino's letters, like the one addressed to King Ferdinand on the oracles in *lingua angelica*, or take on consideration other the poetic texts; future research, however, could study and do the proper analysis to establish the relation between them.

On the influences from the Plethon to Ficino, I would like to emphasize that, as far as I could research, there is no mention of Trismegistus by Plethon–as some researches suggested–but the redefinition of Zoroaster and the revalue of ancient ideas on grasping the divine wisdom impacted Ficino since he included Plethon in his list of wise people and

masters. On the influences from da Correggio to Lazzarelli, several questions remain open, however, the *exaltatio* that Lazzarelli experienced while he witnessed da Correggio's performance, led him to understand the power of words and speech, which I suggest inspired him to comment about this power and its relation with poetry in the *Crater Hermetis*. Also, in the master-disciple relation, it is important to highlight that in both cases–Plethon with Ficino, and da Correggio with Lazzarelli–are Ficino and Lazzarelli who decided the position of disciples while they added and promoted the qualities for their masters, using the authority, fame, and the status of master developed through the prefaces to introduce themselves, Ficino and Lazzarelli, in a larger transmission line of wisdom. Just as Ficino did while he described the *prisca theologia* succession of masters and disciples from Trismegistus to Plato and expanding it including Zoroaster, the philosophers after Plato until Plethon while Ficino described his own experience translating Plethon or Trismegistus. Or as Lazzarelli did, when he enlisted the different prophets from the Bible comparing them to da Correggio and Lazzarelli acknowledged himself as the disciple, even if it was Lazzarelli who introduced da Correggio to the Hermetic texts.

Therefore, the Hermetic thought is a complex synthesis of elements, among them, the search of a *docta religio*, the transmission line of wisdom in the *prisca theologia* explained in the master-disciple relation, the value of human capacities exalting the dignity of the man, which includes the capacity of creation, or the importance of contemplation to reach the divine wisdom, took place in the texts of Marsilio Ficino and Lodovico Lazzarelli showing the protean nature of Hermetic thought in a synthetic environment like the fifteenth century.

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