

## *Ore rotundo* – a phrase reborn in the Renaissance

Horace's *Ars Poetica* (hereafter *AP*) always offered itself easily for those who like to have rules in the form of memorable phrases or gnomic sentences and are fond of quotations. But *AP* is full of quotations in a double sense: it offers not only prospective but contains actual ones taken over from previous texts. However, as it often happens to quotations, they are reshaped, transformed, or even distorted, and this is especially true of *AP*, a half-serious, half-ironical didactic poem in which Horace adopts an elusive character by constantly changing, adopting, rejecting, then readopting several different persona such as professor of poetics, vates, retired poet, simple spectator in the audience, intimate friend of connoisseurs.

The phrase “speaking *ore rotundo*” does not belong to the most popular ones, still proved to be suitable enough to be quoted in certain circumstances. There were times (perhaps they are over now) when it could have been used in several languages as a flourish to praise an eloquent speaker in a similarly elevated oration, but in what follows my intention is to explore a relatively brief period in the *Nachleben* of the phrase when it was understood and meant as much more than a flourish. In the second half of the Quattrocento, thanks to Ficino, it raised remarkable interest and became almost an emblematic expression among Florentine humanists. This revival is not only interesting by itself or from the interpreters' perspective but an investigation of the echoes this passage evoked in their minds may also yield, I hope, results that can help us understand the original Horatian phrase more fully.

### **Horace**

After line 322 the topic changes brusquely, as so many times before. Until that point the focus has been on the relative importance of content (especially characterization) and diction, the section ending with the conclusion that an authentic and true representation, even in an unpolished form, is generally more favourably accepted by the public than technical perfection devoid of insights into human nature. The next paragraph switches to a new (or partly new) subject; we are given a comparison of Greek and Roman attitudes to art and life in general. The passage begins with the famous acknowledgment by the Roman poet of the Greeks' inborn or inherent affinity towards poetry and power of speech:

323-4 *Grais ingenium, Grais dedit ore rotundo*

*Musa loqui, praeter laudem nullius avaris.*

In Greek culture artistic excellence and ambition to gain fame through artistic excellence are paramount, in sharp contrast to Roman society where materialistic values are so deeply rooted that they almost exclude any serious poetical activity. The hidden logical link between the two sections can be established in several ways. The new topic clearly places the previous question into a different and broader perspective. For one thing, artistic perfection is not an issue which confines itself within the boundaries of a profession, it also correlates to audience expectations and reception. Secondly, the reaction of an actual audience which decides in favour of, or against, poetic achievements, depends on certain basic cultural and social values this particular audience cherishes or not. It is also emphasized that poetry has a religious dimension as well; in Greece it was introduced and cultivated under the Muses' divine guidance and tutelage. Roughly speaking, this is the context in which the phrase *ore rotundo loqui* turns up. The question naturally arises: what does it mean precisely? And what is the relationship between the two gifts that were given to the Greeks (*ingenium* and *os rotundum*)?

Grammatical features (i. e. the parallel structure of the two clauses and the asyndetic connection between them) *prima facie* suggest an opposition, but in a complementary rather than exclusive way. The possible antecedents of the phrase confirm this suggestion. Brink takes the expression *os rotundum* as related primarily to *ars*, and his interpretation rests on a number of passages (quoted already by Lambinus) where the rounded quality of style is related to the rhythmical fluency of sentences. The underlying image is, obviously, a wheel or some other circular object rounded with an instrument so neatly that it can roll smoothly without any bumping. In a rounded speech words are put together so carefully that the speaker can utter them fluently without interrupting or breaking their rhythmic flow. It is often used as a specific characteristic of periods in which the clauses, the rhythmical units follow each other so closely that the sentence "returns into itself" (a metaphor whence it is called "period") in a rounded, i. e. compact or terse form.<sup>1</sup>

I think this traditional interpretation of the phrase is essentially correct, there is, however, one aspect that is glossed over by commentators. It is generally taken for granted that the term *rotundus* has an unambiguously *positive* meaning. The Greek history of the metaphor, however, does not justify such an assumption. It shows a different and more varied picture of its force as an evaluation term. Already on its first occurrence the

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<sup>1</sup> So e.g. Lambinus, Ernesti, Kiessling-Heinze, Rostagni, Brink, Rudd, Cope.

adjective appears in a negative context. In Aristophanes' *Acharnians* the younger generation is characterized by their vigorous fluency and aggressive way of speaking in opposition to the elders' inarticulate and timid mumbling: 'Ο δὲ νεανίας ἑαυτῷ σπουδάσας ξυνηγορεῖν / εἰς τάχος παῖει ξυνάπτων στρογγύλοις τοῖς ῥήμασιν (ll. 683-684). Because of the fight metaphor (the youngster joins the battle and hits his opponent with words), ῥήματα are seen here as if they were a weapon, the adjective στρογγύλα referring to the quality of this weapon: the round form of a stone or a slingball,<sup>2</sup> and the speed (εἰς τάχος) of his throwing hinting at his verbal fluency. The emphasis is clearly on technical perfection,<sup>3</sup> but also on the ambiguity of perfection achieved in skills that can serve aggressive intentions, and turn harmful.

In one of his fragments (fr. 488) the adjective στρογγύλον in its abstract neutral form is used of a mouth (χρῶμαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ στόματος τῷ στρογγύλῳ), referring, as it seems, to the speaker's fluency or loudness (in the latter case the mouth is opened so widely as to form a circle, presumably also hinting / with a playful reference to the grotesquely enlarged hollow of a servant's comic mask). Without knowing its context exactly it is impossible to define the basis of the metaphor, but the utterance itself in which it occurs is a preparation for a counter-attack, in which the speaker turns his enemy's own weapon against him, so the phrase, in all likelihood, should be understood in an ambiguous sense again.

It is also used ironically in Plato's *Phaedrus* by Socrates of Lysias' speech in which each individual word is perfectly chiselled out masterly (σαφῆ καὶ στρογγύλα, καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἕκαστα τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀποτετόρνενται, 234e), but the speech as a whole, as it proves later in the discussion to be lacking any insight into the nature of love, will be considered as a complete failure. One can argue that since the chisel and globe metaphor is used otherwise positively by Plato (namely, in passages about circular and spherical movement he takes as perfect and divine),<sup>4</sup> it is possible that what Socrates finds faulty in Lysias is that, by paying attention only to individual words and matters of euphony, his artistry is partial. Socratic irony, however, still may hold, at a deeper level: in his view no human chisel can produce a perfect sphere, a form which by definition exists only as an intelligible entity. The globe

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<sup>2</sup> Olson 2002, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> „the point is that the prosecutor has polished the individual phrases ... in his speech carefully in advance,” Olson 2002, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> Tim., Phdr. Leges.

metaphor touches the heart of imitation problem; if someone, either an orator or a poet, is not aware of his position in the world, in Plato's view, he or she is inevitably forced to things of secondary or tertiary status.

A similar negative tone can be seen in connection with two other possible (but generally neglected) antecedents of the expression *ore rotundo*. In Euripides' *Bacchae* 269 Tiresias talks disparagingly in similar terms about Pentheus's well-sounding but unwise words against Dionysus, by using the adjective εὔτροχος of the speaker's tongue: σὺ δ' εὔτροχον μὲν γλῶσσαν ὡς φρονῶν. In this image tongue is viewed as functioning perfectly but wholly independently of reason. An even closer metaphor, in which the wheel is applied of human mouth, can be found in one of the fragments of Euripides's first *Hippolytus Veiled* (Fr. 439), where presumably the Nurse is complaining in the following way: νῦν δ' εὐτρόχοισι στόμασι τάλιθέστατα / κλέπτουσιν, ὥστε μὴ δοκεῖν ἄ χρῆ δοκεῖν. (It is to be observed, though, that Kannicht in the latest edition of the fragments prefers the reading εὐρόοισι preserved by Clemens.)

The metaphor turns up first without any negative connotations in Aristotle, though only once and in a rather restricted sense, concerning gnomic utterances. His advice concerns maxims that are "not paradoxical, but not yet clear", for which one should add reasons "as tersely as possible."<sup>5</sup> It is used in an unambiguously positive way, surprisingly late, only in the literary essays of Dionysius Halicarnasseus, a contemporary to Horace, whose rhythmical analyses, in turn, abound with the term, being applied more than a dozen times and in contexts wider than those in Aristotle.<sup>6</sup> It is probable, however, that this late evidence of its being in fashion is accidental and it had previously become part of the vocabulary of rhetorical criticism as a positive evaluation term; already Socrates' indignant question in the *Phaedrus* quoted above partially ("Shall I praise Lysias' speech for his words being chiselled out?") suggests a term already accepted and a quality appreciated by speech enthusiasts. More certain evidence is available in the rhetorical works of Cicero and Demetrius (a Peripatetic critic of controversial date), both of whom used the adjective in a similar fashion.<sup>7</sup> Besides, it also seems likely that it was Cicero who introduced this metaphor into the Latin critical terminology, for he uses a mitigating formula before applying it on two different passages, a possible sign of translating a new, unfamiliar expression (*verborum ... apta et quasi rotunda construction, Brut. 272, prae fraction nec satis, ut ita*

<sup>5</sup> περὶ δὲ τῶν μὴ παραδόξων ἀδήλων δὲ προστιθέντα τὸ διότι στρογγυλώτατα. *Ar. Rhet.* 1394 b34. Kennedy's translation does not keep the metaphor but grasps the essence: "as stretchy as possible".

<sup>6</sup> See Cronjé.

<sup>7</sup> *De fin.* 1.3.7, *Brut.* 272, *Or.* 40, *Dem. Interpr.* 20.

*dicam, rotundus, Or. 40*). It is not easy to judge to what texts Horace had access, but on the basis of the mocking or almost sarcastic usages of the word by Aristophanes, Euripides, and Plato it seems possible to me that there is a hint of distance and irony in Horace's seemingly unreserved admiration for the Greek, just as self-irony in his exaggerated low (self-)estimation of the Romans. This impression may find support in the previous line (ll. 322), in which the very same contrast is mentioned that serves as context for the Euripidean and Platonic adjectives, the contrast which is caused by well-sounding but hollow words: *versus inopes rerum nugaeque canorae*.<sup>8</sup>

Keeping all this in mind, Horace's use of the metaphor seems to be more opaque and multivalent. It results from the ambivalence of the wheel/circle/chisel metaphor<sup>9</sup> (which suggests both real and seeming perfectness) and from the combination of it with the mouth metonymy. For this *iunctura callida*,<sup>10</sup> by which he connects roundedness to the mouth (instead of the speech or text itself), may evoke further meanings. This metonymy, in which the organ of speaking stands for the way of speaking, the speaker's style, and assumes metaphorically an attribute of his actual words,<sup>11</sup> serves the purpose to convey the idea that the speaker's verbal mastery is so perfect that it manifests itself not only in his speech but in his own body as well; *ars* has, in fact, become *natura*.<sup>12</sup> In the phrase *os rotundum* nature is shown enhanced on a higher level, in which technical mastery is so deeply interiorized that it functions instinctively.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Horace's reference to the Greeks' – for poetry mostly favourable, but in Roman soil unrealizable – way of life was quoted by a couple of Renaissance poets as a symbol of an ideal but for some reasons unattainable state of affairs in a similarly ironical tone – these citations are clearly indebted to Horatian playful exaggeration. A case in point is Janus Pannonius's complaints to his Italian friends about his own situation behind the Alps: *Vobis ingenium, vobis dedit ore rotundo / Musa loqui; externi barbara turba sumus* (*Ep. 222.7-8*). I thank Ágnes Szalay-Ritoók for drawing my attention to this passage.

<sup>9</sup> One may think of the widely open mouth of a theatrical mask as a further possible model but I have not found any passage which would corroborate such an association.

<sup>10</sup> It is likely that it counted as a new word-composition in Latin, but it is not clear whether it was common in Greek. Horace's phrase may be a mirror translation of Demetrius's στρογγύλου στόματος (*Interp. 20*), but even if that is the case, Horace makes one step further by using the expression at a more general level.

<sup>11</sup> As it appears from translations, the metonymy does not seem to work in English. Neither old nor recent ones keep the metonymy: "The Greeks have the gift of genius from the Muse, and **the power of well-rounded speech**. They covet nothing but praise" (Russell 1972). "To the Greeks, covetous of nothing except glory, the Muse granted inspired talent, to the Greeks she gave **eloquence in full measure**" (Golden). "To the Greeks, covetous of nothing but praise, the Muse gave genius; to the Greeks **the power of expressing themselves in round periods**" (Smart & Buckley). "To the Greeks, The Muse gave native wit, to the Greeks she gave **speech in well-rounded phrase** [in note: *ore rotundo* is here used of style, not utterance]; they craved naught but glory" (Fairclough 1926). "The Muse gave genius to the Greeks, and **the power to speak / With eloquent voices**" (Ferry 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Actually, there is another (more common) metonymy in *loqui ore rotundo*: oral delivery stands for poetry and literature in general.

<sup>13</sup> "a mastery that can forget art", Brink 1963, p. 348.

## Marsilio Ficino

One and a half millennium later in 1457 Horace's expression was picked up by the young Marsilio Ficino in a very influential letter, addressed to his seventeen-year-old friend and talented poet, Pellegrino degli Agli. In this letter Ficino defines the nature of poetic madness basically in Platonic terms, even though at that time his Platonism depended only on available Latin translations, excerpts, and commentaries,<sup>14</sup> which were complemented, on several points, with passages from Roman literary tradition.

When he makes a distinction between a lower or lighter (*levior*) and a more sublime or solemn (*gravior*) type of poet-musicians along Platonic lines, he chooses the Horatian phrase (exclusively!) to describe the ecstatic state the latter experience while creating: *Hi vero sunt qui divino afflati spiritu gravissima quaedam et praeclarissima carmina ore, ut aiunt, rotundo prorsus effundunt*. The expression is clearly transposed into a context slightly different from the original one. Already the predicate and the adverb of the sentence (*prorsus effundunt*, in contrast to the simple *loqui*) bring the meaning of *rotundus* into a different direction: the metaphor of flowing water is put into play. The inspired poet is imagined as a fountain pouring out water through its mouth "in a straightforward manner", i. e. abundantly, without any effort. In this way his state or activity is seen as an even more natural and more basic process (as compared to the Horatian phrase), his bodily organs functioning as if they were natural elements. The elementary imagery in general was traditionally part of the vocabulary used of divinely inspired poets' creative work, and this passage also contains a metaphor connected to another element. The transmission of divine energy and knowledge to the poets, in accordance with the traditional concept of soul as a breathlike material, is described in terms of blowing or breathing: the poets are *divino afflati spiritu*.<sup>15</sup> The crossing of these two different metaphors of course do not cause any problem in our understanding of the inspirational process. It is not simply because they describe two different phases or aspects of the process (namely the relation between the divine source and the poet, on the one hand, and that between the poet and his words, on the other), but because metaphors originating from different domains can cooperate and cohere perfectly, insofar as they contain corresponding elements.<sup>16</sup> In our case both metaphors suggest a steady elementary movement the source of which is beyond human control. And this

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<sup>14</sup> The *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* in Bruni's translation, and the *Timaeus* with Calcidius's commentary, see Gentile 1983.

<sup>15</sup> Closely following Vergilian and Ciceronian phrases such as *adflata est numine* (*Aen.* 6.46), *quodam afflatu quasi furoris* (*De or.* 2.94), *quasi divino spiritu inflari* (*Arch.* 18).

correspondence is also shared by our original metaphor (evoked by the adjective *rotundo*), which has a slightly different contribution to this cross-metaphorical interplay. As we saw, it allows us to see the process of inspired singing in terms of a circular solid object (such as a chariot wheel or a ball) rolling smoothly. As a result of this triple crossing, the original meaning of the Horatian phrase is slightly changed, the emphasis is transposed. What is stressed on is not so much the balanced unity of art and nature where technical perfection becomes nature, as in Horace's AP, but the easy, effortless, "natural" way of composing orally under divine influence, a state of mind in which the poet fulfils his function as a medium as easily and perfectly as natural elements work.<sup>17</sup>

There is, however, a further additional element in Ficino's description of the state of being divinely possessed. He also defines the subject of the songs: the inspired poet brings forth *gravissima quaedam et praeclarissima carmina*. As it appears from the subsequent sentences, the adjective *grave* should be understood in terms of both conceptual content and musical qualities. The latter ones are more clearly defined: a divinely inspired song imitates and evokes celestial harmony the poet's (and everyone's) soul experienced before his embodiment (*efficacissimam harmoniae caelestis imitatricem*). The former feature should be definitely connected to words and may refer to certain hidden truths a poem can reveal (*Delphicos sensus exprimit*),<sup>18</sup> but we are not allowed to gain more insight into the nature of these thoughts<sup>19</sup> and it also possible that Ficino considered oracular language and ambiguous mode of expression also as an essential characteristic of divine poetry.

The next question is why Ficino found this particular Horatian phrase as the best and only quotation to illustrate how divine inspiration makes poets create. I have already touched the question of metaphor crossing, that is, how easily the phrase *ore rotundo* evoking a certain type of rolling movement complements other traditional metaphors used of inspirational state of a singer. But there must have been several other factors as well that may have played a role in his choice.

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<sup>16</sup> Lakoff – Johnson 1980, 108ff. Actually, most modern languages inherit or share both the liquid and the breath metaphors for describing divine „inspiration” and „influence”.

<sup>17</sup> It is worth noting that there are several other traditional (and Platonic) metaphors of inspiration which are not brought into play in this passage which describes the state of possession from the perspective of the creative process. Just to name a few of them, an inspirational state is 1. elevation, flying, aviation 2. rise in temperature and energy, 3. awakening, alertness, intense concentration, 4. alienation and loss of consciousness. To some of these metaphors (which are easily combinable) we shall return later.

<sup>18</sup> Allan 1984, p. 43-44.

<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, he puts stress on the verbal aspect of poetry in opposition to pure music: *Quo fit ut non solum auribus blandiatur, verum etiam suavissimum et ambrosie celestis similimum menti pabulum afferat*. In a letter sent presumably in 1476 to Alessandro Braccio he is more straightforward: inspired poetry should be about only God (*quandoquidem aspirante Deo canis, cane Deum* (Ep. fam. 1.130, titled *Vera poesis a Deo ad Deum*).

First, it is important to recall that the original passage in *AP* begins with a reference to the Muses (*Musa dedit*). Admittedly, most readers of Horace understand the endowment as a result of an indirect influence, and not as something involving a direct and individual intervention by the goddess. Ficino, however, took it, I guess, exactly in that sense. On his reading, *Musa dedit* may have served as a clue that the passage is about actual moments of inspiration. I would not go into the question whether his interpretation is borne out by the context (I do not think it is), but we should not forget that this is one of the relatively few passages in the *AP* that have something to say about the relationship between the Muses and the poets, and this is the only one which provides a vivid detail as well. Ficino's decision, therefore, is at least understandable.

Secondly, without knowledge of Greek Ficino had access to a more limited range of literary texts concerning poetic frenzy. Among Roman poets it is relatively rare that they reflect on changes felt in their verbal capacities as affected by their ecstatic state, instead they speak of it rather in terms of growing heat or rising excitement, elevation or flying up, swelling river, and other images. The heat metaphor plays a side role in the Agli-letter,<sup>20</sup> but in 1474 when Ficino returned in his *Platonic Theology* to the phenomenon of poetic frenzy he himself illustrated it with the Ovidian couplet which highlights only the "mental warming up" aspect, without mentioning any change concerning his speaking abilities:

*est deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo,  
impetus ille sacrae semina mentis habet.*

As a big exception (where the sound aspect is touched) Vergil's description of Sibylla in the beginning of *Aeneis* 6 can be named. In this account divine influence is most strikingly felt in her gasping breathing and her changed voice: *nec mortale sonans*, a change which clearly involves not only the volume but the content of her words as well. Their ambiguity is above human intelligent to grasp the same way as their force exceeds human scales. Though this passage is about a seer and not a poet, theoretically it might have served as a model for Ficino, as it certainly did for others in later literary tradition, of how poetic frenzy makes itself visible and audible in an exalted person's voice. But in fact it did not, and one possible reason for not choosing this passage could have been Ficino's express intention to separate and contrast the four types of madness in the Agli-letter. In this particular case therefore a shuffling between the different kinds of ecstatic states must have been disturbing; what he needed here was an image showing *poetical* frenzy in its own characteristic form.

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<sup>20</sup> *poesis autem, quod divine quoque harmonie proprium est, vocum ac motuum numeris gravissimos quosdam et, ut poeta diceret, Delphicos sensus ardentius exprimit.*



This leads to my next point. In Ficino's letter, just like in Plato's *Phaedrus*, poetic madness does not represent the highest form of *furor divinus*. Here it takes the honourable second place behind amatory madness in the hierarchy, elsewhere the lowest grade.<sup>21</sup> Ficino never considered it as the most elevated one. In his later discussions the main focus is on the gradual, step-by-step process of elevation or alienation of the soul from body through a series of the different types of madness, which create in this way four subsequent phases in one process, an interior improvement striving to achieve a final unity with God, in which the different parts of the soul play their role in accordance with their inherent capacities.<sup>22</sup> Bearing this context in mind, the emphasis on the poet's mouth, his bodily organ, may gain significance. Is it not an indication of the limited possibilities of poetry, an activity that can be otherwise, on its own terms, perfect? Ficino always takes it important to stress, following Plato, the sharp contrast which often exists between a poet's simple personality and his divine endowment.<sup>23</sup> They are not rarely uneducated or even untalented persons (such as Tynnichus), but it holds of all of them that while being possessed they do not use the highest mental capacities of the soul. This aspect does not lessen, of course, their merits but helps to explain why poetic frenzy is not placed on the highest level. At this point it is worth recalling those passages from Euripides and the *Phaedrus* where to speak with a nimble tongue /mouth did not count as a praise. I would not like to overstate my case by suggesting that Ficino also uses it disparagingly but I do think that in his view the basically laudatory phrase *os rotundum* highlights the special limitations of poetic art as well. It is not a decisive argument but cannot be accidental that when years later he translated the *Phaedrus*, he rendered Plato's στρογγύλος in the passage quoted above (note 2) by the Latin *rotundus*.<sup>24</sup>

And finally, a remarkable correspondence deserves mentioning. It is between the way how the young Ficino comprehends poetical frenzy in his letter *De divino furore* and how it is described in a more detailed way in Plato's *Ion*, a dialogue he was not yet familiar with at the time of the composition of the letter.<sup>25</sup> His ignorance of the Platonic analysis, however, makes this similarity, which cannot be based on direct textual influence, even

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<sup>21</sup> As in his *Phaedrus*-commentary, and differently to his Preface to *Ion*, *Symposium*-commentary and *Platonica Theologica*, see Allan.

<sup>22</sup> Allan.

<sup>23</sup> E. g. PTh.

<sup>24</sup> *dilucide et rotunde et eleganter singular verba*.

<sup>25</sup> As it was pointed out by Gentile, all the Greek works Ficino refers to in this letter were available in Latin and all of his references depend textually on these Latin versions available to him. We have therefore no reason to suppose that Ficino knew any original Greek text at that time. See also Sheppard.

more interesting. In the *Ion* the most certain and striking sign that a rhapsode is under divine influence is that he suddenly abounds in words (εὐπορεῖ ὅτι λέγει),<sup>26</sup> but when he is devoid of divine presence, he is unable to utter a single word. By crossing the fountain and the wheel metaphor simultaneously of the poet's mouth, Ficino, as we saw, comes to a similar result. The open mouth with rounded lips is not so much a sign of verbal mastery (as the chisel metaphor would suggest), as a bodily manifestation of an enthusiastic state of mind, which realizes itself in verbal fluency.<sup>27</sup>

Horace' image of the poet "speaking *ore rotundo*" remained equally valid and expressive in Ficino's eyes in his mature years. Though it did not occur in his important discussions of the subject of the next decades,<sup>28</sup> in 1491, when he characterized the poetical activity of his patron, Lorenzo de Medici as being under the double inspiration of the Muses and Dionysus, he returned to the same Horatian expression: *Cognovimus et nos ingenium nostro saeculo felicissimum, quattor has aequae furorum dotes a quattuor numinibus consequutum. ... Tum vero afflatus ex alto caelestia super hominem carmina effundit ore rotundo, profunda quorum sensa nullis umquam penetrare fas est nisi ingeniis simili quodam furori correptis. Rapit vero secum noster ille Patronus, nonnullos interdum attentius atque felicius audientes, in eos videlicet praeter ceteris ubertate furoris exuberans.*<sup>29</sup>

Ficino's notion of poetic inspiration exerted a significant influence on his contemporaries. In the following I will focus on three colleagues and friends of him in the Florentine Studio: Cristoforo Landino (who actually started as a teacher of his), Angelo Poliziano, and Naldo Naldi. Each of them takes over and develops Ficino's ideas in a slightly different direction.

### **Cristoforo Landino**

In chronological order first comes Landino, with his Horace commentary from the mid sixties, which I shall treat very briefly. In his short remark on the adjective *rotundus* Landino observes that it denotes something eloquent and perfect because of its global shape: *Ore rotundo: eloquio ornato et perfecto: nam forma sp<h>erica ceteris perfectior est* (269),

<sup>26</sup> 532c, see also 533a-c and 536c-d.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that the adjective *rotundus* can also be used of a style which is fluent and easy-flowing.

<sup>28</sup> See note 15. It is worth noting, however, that he considered the sounding aspect of poetry as the most important contribution in the elevation process the same was as before, see e.g. in his Phaedrus-commentary: *Poetico ergo furore primum opus est, qui per musicos tonos quae torpent suscitet, per harmoniacam suavitatem quae turbantur mulceat, per diversorum denique consonantiam dissonantem pellat discordiam variasque partes animi temperet.*

<sup>29</sup> *Epistolarum libri XII, IX.*

and in his note to line 441 he takes it synonymous with the adjective *tornatus* (*rotundos, i. perfectos. Nam quae torno fiunt, rotunda fiunt.*<sup>30</sup>

For him the image is thus definitely about a globe (and not a wheel). He considers *rotundus*, just like *tornatus*, as referring to the *spherica forma* which is more perfect than any other ones. Landino's comment is slightly different to what is usually offered by others from Pseudo-Acro on. They mostly give only synonyms as much as possible,<sup>31</sup> but do not try to explain the expression in a kind of theoretical way, by pointing out the general idea behind the metaphor. In contrast, Landino is concerned only about this aspect of it. And his wording is also peculiar. He chooses an uncommon and in classical Latin even unused (though certainly understandable) adjective of Greek origin, obviously to point out its Greek background. Keeping in mind also his well-known propensity to allegorical interpretation, I guess, he may have seen in *ore rotundo* not so simply an expression of the Greek poets' perfect eloquence, but also an allusion – via the image of the most perfect global form – to their close connection with the divine sphere. In the Agli-letter Ficino himself refers to the passage from *Timaeus* that divine poets imitate celestial harmony, a sound which is created by the most superior, circular movement the divine souls and heavenly bodies make in their own sphere around the Earth.<sup>32</sup> In his preface to his Vergil-commentary Landino resounds almost word by word this Ficinean idea: *Alii [sc. poetae] autem, ...qui graviori ac firmiori iudicio divinam harmoniam imitati altos intimosque mentis sensus eleganti carmine expriment atque divino ipso furore afflati res saepe mirabiles ... proferunt.*<sup>33</sup> I do not want overstate my case. Landino's interpretation is not explicit; what I suggest is only a possible reconstruction of his not standard observation *ad locum*. If this assumption holds he gives a new dimension to the notion of perfection, by suggesting that the word *rotundus* hints at the Platonic idea of circular movement, a form of change that is a main characteristic of the soul, god and any divine being.

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<sup>30</sup> Landino 1490/91, p. 326 and 332.

<sup>31</sup> *Id est, ornate, polito, erudite, perfecto* (Acro et Porphyrio). Another typical note from Lambinus: *Id est, rotunde, presse, enucleate, eleganter, suavitate, non putide, non inepte, non obscure, non hiulce, non aspere.*

<sup>32</sup> On the form of the universe: τῷ δὲ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶα περιέχειν μέλλοντι ζῶω πρέπον ἂν εἴη σχῆμα τὸ περιεληφὸς ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα ὅποσα σχήματα· διὸ καὶ σφαιροειδές, ἐκ μέσου πάντη πρὸς τὰς τελευτὰς ἴσον ἀπέχον, κυκλοτερές αὐτὸ ἐτορνεύσατο, πάντων τελεώτατον ὁμοιοτάτον τε αὐτὸ ἐαυτῷ σχημάτων (*Tim.* 33b). On the motion of the universe: Τούτοις δὴ τοῖν κινήσειον τὴν ἐν ἐνὶ φερομένην αἰεὶ περὶ γέ τι μέσον ἀνάγκη κινεῖσθαι, τῶν ἐντόρων οὖσαν μίμημά τι κύκλων, εἶναι τε αὐτὴν τῆ τοῦ νοῦ περιόδῳ πάντως ὡς δυνατὸν οἰκειοτάτην τε καὶ ὁμοίαν (*Leg.* 898ab).

<sup>33</sup> Landino 1465, quoted by Lentzen. It is interesting to see that in Landino's text (*carmina fundere*) *ore rotundo* is substituted by *eleganti carmine* (*exprimere sensus*) Perhaps Landino considered this detail as too personally characteristic of Ficino. On Ficino's letter influence on Landino's critical activity in general, see Field, Gentile 1990.

As to the phrase *ore rotundo*, Ficino's influence on Landino can be felt in his poems as well. There are two passages where he uses it, once playfully, to make ridicule an aggressive anonymous speaker because of his affected enthusiasm,<sup>34</sup> once seriously, to praise Bernardus Bembo for his grandiosity.<sup>35</sup> The first one is especially telling. Not only because it provides clear evidence that for Landino the expression meant madness, but also because it is used of a theologian, a person who was supposed to be in communication with God:

*Insanis totam rumpit vocibus aedem,  
pulpit quique manu concutit atque pede,  
qui furit, exclamat, strepit, intonate omnibus unum  
luxuriae crimen turpius esse ferens:  
hunc moneo vitate virum: licet ore rotundo  
Chrysippi ritu tristia verba cadant.*

### Angelo Poliziano

Poliziano did not address the interpretational question of the Horatian phrase directly, but we have an interesting recollection from one of his students, Nicole Bérault, in which the French humanist applied the very same expression to describe his professor's enthusiastic way of lecturing. Presumably his choice was non accidental, because Poliziano showed particular interest in the phenomenon of *furor poeticus*, both as a poet, as a philologist and as a teacher, most notably in his lectures commenting on Homeric epics and Statius' *Silvae*. It is these discussions that provide the context in which Bérault's anecdote finds its place.

But first let us see how Poliziano comprehended poetic frenzy. In his posthumously edited lecture notes he picked out and developed an element of inspiration theory. This element was the extraordinary facility of speech a poet may possess in frenzy. In Poliziano's view, this fluency reaches its purest and highest form in the moments of improvisation. The most emblematic figure for him is Homer: *pulcherrima illa carmina, quae iure aetas omnis mirata est, illaborata ipsi atque extemporanea fluebant, vivoque, ut ita dixerim, gurgite exundabant.*<sup>36</sup>

The chosen metaphor characteristic of Homer remains within the familiar domain of water but here *the* poet is likened to a whirlpool of an extremely active river and his poems

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<sup>34</sup> Landino, *Xandra* 9.1-6 (*De theologo contionatore luxurioso*).

<sup>35</sup> *Hic salibus lepidus variis, huic ore rotundo / grandibus in rebus grandia verba sonant* (*Carmina varia* 8. 21-22, Perosa 1939).

<sup>36</sup> *Oratio in expositione Homeri* (Megna 2007, pp. 13-14). his lectures on Homer were held in 1486. In his interpretation he relied on the story about Thestorides in Ps-Herod, *Vita Hom.*, 195ff.

to spontaneous and abundant streams coming out of its depth.<sup>37</sup> The exuberance of productive energies and the effortless way how they work without labor (*illaborata*) in him during improvisation is so strongly stressed that one might have the impression that Poliziano thought little of craftsmanship and meticulous polishing of literary works. In fact, both in theory and his poetical practice, Poliziano considered *labor limae* almost as important as *furor divinus* either as a complementary phase or an alternative way of creating; this question is, however, from our perspective, a side-issue.

In his Statius commentary, another traditional image occupies central position: the fire or heat metaphor. When he comes to the phrase *subito calore*, used by Statius in his prose preface to his collection of various short poems, Poliziano connects “sudden excitement”, with a reference to Quintilian, to the genre *silva*, on the ground that its basic characteristic is improvisation. Then he identifies the excited, roused state of that sort of poetry with *enthusiasm* and *furor poeticus*: SUBITO CALORE. *Quasi χαρακτηρισμός sylvae est. Nam ut dictum a Fabio est, qui sylvam componunt calorem atque impetum sequentes ex tempore scribunt. Calore. Ergo omnino videtur hic poeta concitatoris ingenii fervidiorisque fuisse et quod impetu magis acceleritate polleret, quam robore et viribus; quapropter in his libellis vivit illa incitatio et eminent. Natura enim operi impar non erat fervorque ille animi ad finem usque perseverabat. ... Verum nulla tanta ars est, quae afflationem illam mentis, quam ἐνθουσιασμόν Graeci dicunt, imitari possit, unde existit Platonis illa atque ante ipsum Democriti opinio: «poetam bonum neminem sine inflammatione animorum existere posse et sine quodam afflatu quasi furoris».*<sup>38</sup>

Though the underlying image is different, Poliziano walks along similar paths and grasps the essence of inspirational poetry again in improvisation. By emphasizing the unexpected, uncontrolled, unique and occasional aspect of inspiration, Poliziano reshapes Ficino’s model in a way that takes him in a direction different to what Landino suggests by his reference to artistic perfection in the *AP*-commentary.

Poliziano’s most original innovation concerning inspiration theory, as generally agreed, his reinterpretation of the famous magnetic ring metaphor of Plato’s *Ion* in his poem titled *Nutricia*. From our perspective, his innovation is relevant only indirectly, because it stands in the playful extension of the attractive force of the magnet (i.e. divinely inspired poet) on the paper and any prospective reader as well,<sup>39</sup> and he says nothing about

<sup>37</sup> The image is a transformation of the traditional image of Homer as Okeanos from which all poets as rivers originate; the expression *vivo gurgite* comes from Quintilian’s characterization of Cicero’s impetus (10.1.109). Poliziano keeps the image in his verse prelude to Homer: *cur non totum in praeconia solvam / Maeonidae magni, cuius de gurgite vivo / combibit arcanos vatum omnis turba furores, Ambra 12-14*

<sup>38</sup> Poliziano 1978, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> Coppini.

the state of inspired poet. On touching that subject, Poliziano focuses on two traditional elements: the process how the poet's ego is taken into possession gradually by the god and, as a consequence of the god's presence, the superhuman increase of the poet's voice.<sup>40</sup> In all these descriptions two points deserve stressing in Poliziano's approach: his playful attitude and his concentration on psychological details. The two points are not independent of each other. Both indicate that Poliziano conceived poetic frenzy and inspiration not in terms of religion, but human psychology and intellectual activity. But it should be seen not so much as a devaluation as a different attitude to poetical activity.<sup>41</sup>

Having outlined the most important facets in his inspiration theory, we can return to his student's recollection. What remained in Bérault's memory was a passage recited by Poliziano from his *Rusticus* (lines 17-22), a rather peculiar mixed genre of praise poetry, literary criticism and history of literature (in the company of three other pieces of *Silva*), meant as a kind of complementary material to Poliziano's course on Vergil's *Georgica* and Hesiod's *Erga* in the Florentine Studio.<sup>42</sup> At a certain point, Poliziano, as it seems, switched unexpectedly into declaiming his own poem, a passage containing an imitation of the Vergilian *laus vitae rusticae* (*Georg.* 2.458ff and 495ff), and the lines as acted out by his professor stuck in Bérault's memory forever: *Quoties haec lego, toties audire videor Politianum ipsum divino quodam furore percitum subito atque extempore fundentem hos versus ac suo illo ore rotundo canoraque ac plusquam cygnea voce modulantem.*<sup>43</sup>

Though the situation where the phrase *ore rotundo* is uttered, is extremely intricate both at textual and personal level (due to the multiple overlaps between different passages and different personas), Bérault's intention is clear: he presents us with a case of an untraditionally long, four-link chain of inspiration, in which readers, commentator-teachers and their audience are all part of the same magnetic chain. The Muses inspire Vergil, who in his turn inspires Poliziano, who inspires Bérault and his fellow students. What makes things more complicated is that Poliziano's inspiration takes place in more steps, and what makes it almost hopelessly intricate is that the whole process is told by Bérault, in whose account different persons' voices merge into one.

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<sup>40</sup> Following Vergil. Poliziano perhaps he might have referred to the Horatian "open mouth", but he did not.

<sup>41</sup> It is in accordance with his insistence on the physiological and psychological side of the experience that in one of his brief analyses in the late *Miscellanea*, he also deprived it of its divine dimension. He made the assertion that it would be heretical to think Homer literally divinely inspired, the word inspiration can be used of him only metaphorically, see Galand-Hallyn 1989, p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> Godman, Klecker, Bausi.

<sup>43</sup> Lecoq 1993, p. 326. Galand-Hallyn 2005, p. 331-332 also has some good points about the rhetoric of the passage.

Let us see Poliziano's position. He gets inspiration as a reader, which prompts him both to write a poem about what he read and to held enthusiastic lectures.<sup>44</sup> But the most fascinating moment, from his students' perspective, was when he suddenly improvised or delivered certain lines from his own poem *ore rotundo* (for the sake of simplicity, I disregard the question whether it was a pretended, seeming, or real improvisation). We are clearly invited to see that it was an experience when the magnetic attraction of poetry worked even through interpreters and his audience, several moves away from the divine poet.<sup>45</sup>

As to the way Bérault phrases this experience, it is not difficult to recognize Poliziano's own favourite expressions for poetic frenzy (*subito atque extempore fundentem hos versus*), and I think Galand-Hallyn is also right to see in *ore rotundo* a reference Ficino's letter.<sup>46</sup> The expression appears in Landino (and, as we shall see, in Naldi as well) as a characteristic feature of poets or speakers in ecstasy, so it seems a most obvious conclusion that all these passages have their common origin in Ficino's influential letter where the idea first turns up. In what Bérault's text differs from the rest is that in his description this Ficinean conception is blended with Poliziano's interpretation, and *ore rotundo* appears as a characteristic closely connected to improvisation.

### Naldo Naldi

Our third and last figure is Naldo Naldi, a less known but very intimate friend of Ficino's.<sup>47</sup> In his description of Matthias Corvinus' library, Naldi provides an overview of Greek and Roman poets, a new humanist canon.<sup>48</sup> He introduces Pindar as follows:

[The fifth poet who sits down on the shelf is]  
*Pindarus, alatis humeris, aditurus et alta  
sidera, Thaletis qui prima inventa sequutus  
censet aquam rebus primordia certa creandis*  
155 *sorte dedisse nova; qui curribus instat equorum  
carmine narrandis; qui rursus et ore rotundo*

<sup>44</sup> For the links between poet, reader and philologist, see Coleman 2012, p. 286 and 289.

<sup>45</sup> We have similar notes taken by another of Poliziano's students about his lectures on Homer which also mention his ecstatic outbursts. The situation, however, is slightly different, because on this course Poliziano not only declaimed *Ambra*, his own poem about Homer, but commented on it as well. Nevertheless, Petreio's observation is very similar to that of Bérault: *Non ne hoc loco Policianum, non secus ac si adesset, se ipsum excitantem videmus?*, see Perosa 1994, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> See Galand-Hallyn 2005, p. 332 and Murphy 1997, p. 193. Apart from the phrase *cygnea voce*, which is an allusion to Horace's Pindar-ode (see the analysis of Naldi's text below), the rest are generally used terms.

<sup>47</sup> For his life, see Grant 1963.

<sup>48</sup> For different appreciation of this list, see Karsay 1994, Pajorin 2001 and Bolonyai 2012.

*Pythia cantat ovans, et scandit in astra volatu  
ardua, cum terras humiles despectet ab alto,  
omnia cum famam praeter putet esse caduca.*<sup>49</sup>

The portrait has a number of different layers. Grammatically, it consists of five clauses. The first one (which is, in fact, a participle construction) contains two slightly modified phrases from Horace's *Carmen* 4.2, the most influential appreciation of Pindar in Roman literary tradition<sup>50</sup> (*Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari, /Iulle, ceratis ope Daedalea /nititur pinnis, vitreo daturus / nomina ponto*). The second one is a scholarly comment on Pindar's most famous gnoma ("water is best"). The third one is a catalogue like description of the genre *epinikion* Pindar excelled in. The fourth one offers similar information but formulated in a special way: two expressions from the *AP* (*ore rotundo* and *Pythia cantat*) are put together in a cento like fashion. The last clause may first seem to be a simple elaboration of the first image (i. e. the winged poet) taken over from Horace's *Iulus-ode* – in fact, it contains, as I will argue, a hidden quotation from Pindar as well.

Out of these I will touch only on the last two clauses, starting with the one containing the expression *ore rotundo*. In what sense is it used by Naldi? The direct textual context allows at least two meanings: it may refer either to "artistic perfection" as understood originally in Horace's *AP* or to "an ecstatic state of mind" as conceived by Ficino. Why? The adjacent expression (*Pythia cantat*) is a word by word quotation from a passage where it is used of a musician who after long years of practice has become an accomplished artist and is mature enough to compete on one of the most prestigious musical competitions in Delphi: *qui Pythia cantat /tibicen, didicit prius extimuitque magistrum* (414-415). So, if we let the original contextual meaning of the expression *Pythia cantat* come into play, it seems a safe inference that it refers to Pindar's mastery of art.

On the other hand, there are two considerations that may support the interpretation that in Naldi's poem, too, Pindar should be viewed as an inspired poet par excellence. First, the *epinikion* is named in the *AP* as one of the genres which came into existence with the Muses' active help: *Musa dedit fidibus ... /... et pugilem uictorem et equom certamine primum /... referre*. Probably it is not accidental that Horace uses the same expression (*Musa dedit*) to describe this relationship in this passage (83-85) as in the one we are exploring (323-324). Second, the verb *ovare* denotes an unusual degree of joy expressed with triumphant cries

<sup>49</sup> *De laudibus bibliothecae augustae* 2.149-159.

<sup>50</sup> Castagna 1989.



and clamours in an emotional state that is not very far from ecstasy. These two factors considered, it seems to be justified to understand the phrase *ore rotundo ovans*, along the same lines as Ficino suggested, as an image of poetic frenzy.<sup>51</sup>

This suggestion, i. e. that Pindar is described by Naldi as a model of the inspired poet in Neoplatonic terms, can be made more convincing by identifying the text that lies behind the last section of the portrait. It is a passage from Plato's *Theaetetus*, a half serious, half joking description of *the* philosopher. He is characterized as a man who withdraws in his ivory tower, is reluctant to engage in community life, and spends all his time with investigation. At this point, Socrates borrows an expression from Pindar to show the universality of his research: *his mind, considering all these things petty and of no account, disdains them and he is flying in all directions, as Pindar says, "both below the earth," and measuring the surface of the earth, and "above the sky," studying the stars, and investigating the universal nature of every thing that is, each in its entirety, never lowering itself to anything close at hand.*<sup>52</sup>

Naldi's Pindar flies up to the stars, looks down at the world below and despises all earthly things in the same way as Plato's philosopher does: *scandit in astra volatu / ardua, cum terras humiles despectet ab alto, / omnia cum famam praeter putet esse caduca.*<sup>53</sup> It is worth observing, however, that the Pindaric influence is not so striking on the textual level. But this loose connection is not difficult to account for. If Naldi knew the Platonian passage, he certainly read it in Ficino's translation. But in Ficino's Latin version it is almost impossible to isolate Pindar's actual words from their context and identify them as a quotation (printed in bold): *sed re vera corpus dumtaxat illius in urbe habitat atque versatur: mens autem haec omnia parvi, immo nullius aestimans passim volat, ut ait Pyndarus, et quae **sub terra** sunt et quae plana dimetiens perque astronomiam **caelum transcendens** omnem perscrutata naturam rerum omnium quae ad universum pertinent, his autem quae prope sunt solis nullo modo applicans se.* (τῷ ὄντι τὸ σῶμα μόνον ἐν τῇ πόλει κεῖται αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπιδημεῖ, ἡ δὲ διάνοια, ταῦτα πάντα ἡγησαμένη σμικρὰ καὶ οὐδέν, ἀτιμάσσασα, εἰς τῶν ἐγγύς οὐδέν αὐτὴν συγκαθιεῖσα. πανταχῇ πέτεται κατὰ Πίνδαρον "**τᾶς τε γᾶς ὑπένερθε**" καὶ τὰ ἐπίπεδα γεωμετροῦσα, "**οὐρανοῦ θ' ὕπερ**" ἀστρονομοῦσα, καὶ πᾶσαν πάντη φύσιν ἐρευνωμένη τῶν ὄντων ἐκάστου ὅλου, *Tht.* 173 e).

Reading the Latin text, one might think of *passim volat* or *nullius aestimans passim volat* as Pindaric expression, but hardly of *sub terra* and *caelum transcendens*. Nevertheless, the disappearance of the quotation in its context did not prevent Naldi to take the passage

<sup>51</sup> In *De laudibus*, Pindar is characterized on two further passages with the expression *ore rotundo*: 3.134-5 and .

<sup>52</sup> Translation by Fowler. The passage is also part of Iamblichus' *Protrepticus*, a most influential work in the Renaissance (*Protr.* 73.1), which was also translated in an abbreviated form by Ficino.

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as an important testimony for Pindar's highly esteemed poetry, otherwise known to him only through the mediation of Roman literature.

And finally, one question remained unanswered. Why did this particular Horatian phrase in the sense as Ficino interpreted it gain – if not extreme, but moderate – popularity among Florentine poets and philologists in the last decades of the Quattrocento? I guess, apart from Ficino's influential personality both as a thinker and as a friend, the appeal of the image must have laid mainly in the simple, compact, and transparent model of communication it suggested. In this model the poet is shown as directly, conspicuously and constantly influenced by the god while carrying out his other poetic roles as well at the same time. The aspect that is highlighted by the phrase “*ore rotundo (carmina fundere)*” draws attention to the fact that the poet is not only in connection with the divine sphere but also concentrates on his production and communicates with his audience.<sup>54</sup> The image still keeps the poet's person in the centre, even though he is seen more visibly at work.

The model has a further advantage, which is connected with this overlap of different functions. It also privileges certain types of literary genres in which the poet may come into contact with the god in his own persona as a poet, such as lyric (especially hymnic and elegiac) poetry, or grand scale epic. This has an obvious reason: in other genres where the author (for a moment let us consider him as not yet dead) speaks exclusively or mainly through his different characters it is much more complicated to define how inspiration is received and how it works actually, and almost impossible to illustrate it. A literary work written down on a piece of paper is simply not suitable as an image of showing its author at work, and doubly unsuitable of showing him in frenzy, and triply so of showing him exerting influence on his audience. In case of drama similar, insurmountable difficulties would arise in representing the author directly in frenzy.

This generic preference has a personal or practical aspect as well. It seems a general phenomenon that in this particular period and particular environment the interest for the *furor divinus* theory went, almost in all cases, hand in hand with a practical concern. Each of the Florentine humanists who showed serious interest for, and somehow became involved in, the inspiration theory, also showed interest, either as a poet or an interpreter of poets or

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<sup>54</sup> To a certain extent, the case is similar to the situation Ion, the rhapsode is in. He also integrates at least three different roles in his person (he gets inspiration from Homer, then acts out the scenes, and finally explains what he delivered), and his experiences are transposed during the dialogue on the poet's relation with the god. Ion's case, however, is much more complicated (he plays different characters, and though he also impersonalizes the poet, he is not identical with him), and is not suitable to provide an emblematic image of the inspired poet. What he knew from his experience was not how it feels to be in possession of a god but how it feels identify, by getting inspiration from a poet, with a certain human character.

both, in the actual and active experience of being in divine possession. In fact, several of the theoretical discussions themselves came into existence as direct responses to fellow humanists' poetical activity. The main animator and model in this respect again was Ficino, for whom poetic inspiration was clearly much more than a theoretical issue. In the early years of his career he gave singing performances accompanied by his lyre, and he aspired not only to be a poet-rhapsode who could enchant his audience like Orpheus, but who could receive Orpheus's soul itself in his body after Homer, Pythagoras and Ennius in a way of metempsychosis, and let the mythical figure sing through his body, one may add, *ore rotundo*. Characteristically enough, his aspiration is attested to us most memorably by Naldo Naldi:<sup>55</sup>

*Illic usque manens alios non induit artus  
Neve sacrum passus deseruisse nemus,  
Marsilius donec divina e sorte daretur,  
Indueret cuius membra pudica libens.  
Hinc rigidas cythara quercus et carmine mulcet  
Atque feris iterum mollia corda facit.*

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<sup>55</sup> It is worth noting, as a final code to our story, that Demetrius Calcondylas also quoted the famous Horatian lines when he held his first introductory lecture in 1493 as a professor of Greek in Florence, but only with the intention to emphasize the importance of Hellenic studies and without any reference to Ficino's interpretation of it, see Meschini 1983, pp. 106-107.

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