

Erotokritos, the Cypriot *Canzoniere* and their dialogue with the Neoplatonic tradition

Marina Rodosthenous-Balafa
University of Nicosia

Renaissance Neoplatonism was a movement founded by the fifteenth-century Florentines Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and had a deep impact on the cultural, intellectual and religious life of Europe for more than two centuries (Allen 2001: III, 435).¹ This paper will discuss the possible impact that this philosophico-theological movement had on the Cretan lyrical romance *Erotokritos* by Vitsentzos Kornaros (Alexiou 2000)² and the Cypriot lyrical love poems that are widely, but inaccurately, known as *Ρίμες Αγάπης* (Poèmes d'amour) (Siapkaras-Pitsillidès 1975).³ Before I start my examination, it would be useful to give some introductory information about the two works and explain the reasons for their parallel reading.

Starting with the “work of honour”, *Erotokritos* dates from the end of the 16th century or beginning of the 17th century. It is a long narrative poem of around 10,000 fifteen-syllable verses in iambic couplets and describes the love story between the princess Areti and her underling Erotokritos, more precisely, the son of the

¹ For the revival of Platonic philosophy in the Renaissance, see Celenza 2007: 72-96. For more information on Renaissance Neoplatonism, see among other interesting studies: Robb 1935; Eisenbichler and Zorzi 1986. For the peculiar interrelation between Neoplatonism and Petrarchism in the High Renaissance, see Melczer 1975.

² For an English translation of *Erotokritos*, see Betts, Gauntlett and Spiliadis 2004.

³ All quotations from *Erotokritos* and the Cypriot *Canzoniere* are taken from Alexiou 2000 and Siapkaras-Pitsillidès 1975 respectively.

King's trusted counsellor.⁴ Despite the unequal social status of the couple, Kornaros's work, following the happy ending convention of the romantic genre to which *Erotokritos* belongs, but also the humanistic-Renaissance ideology of its time, ends with the wedding of the young protagonists. Strikingly, the love of the young couple, although not unrequited, is described in the Petrarchan manner, through the stereotypical oxymora, imagery, conceits, paradoxes and antitheses (Lassithiotakis 1996a and 1996b).

Turning to the anonymous poetic anthology of 156 lyrical poems written in the Cypriot dialect, we have no clear indication about the time of these poems' composition, but we suppose they were written between the middle and end of the 16th century.⁵ As for the authorship of the collection, many researchers nowadays tend to believe in the multiple authorship model, meaning that the collection was not composed by one single versifier but by many (Mathiopoulou-Tornaritou 2007; Pieris 2012: 363-4).⁶ These Greek-speaking poets, following the European Petrarchan *Canzoniere* trend of their time, anthologize the poems by genre and metric form. In this sense, the collection consists of several poems which paraphrase, condense or extend verses from Petrarch and other Petrarchan poets. Specifically, thirty-three poems have been identified as creative translations or free adaptations of known Italian poets, such as Petrarch, Sannazaro, Castiglione, Bembo, Sasso, Ariosto and others (Fedina 2010: 14). The great variety of metres and verse forms of the collection includes: sonnets, *canzoni*, *sestine*, *ballate*, *barzellette*, madrigals, *terze*

⁴ For some very useful studies on *Erotokritos*, see the introduction of the work's edition Alexiou 2000: ε'-π1' and the following collected volumes Alexiou 1999; Holton 2001; Holton 2006; Kaklamanis 2006; Lassithiotakis 2010 and Markomichelaki 2012.

⁵ For more introductory comments and information about this collection, see indicatively Siapkara-Pitsillidou 1976: 19-73; Pecoraro 1976: 97-127 and Grivaud 1996: V, 1115-28. See also some important suggestions for a new edition of the *Canzoniere* in Mathiopoulou-Tornaritou 1993: II, 352-390. For a thematic approach to this collection, see Ekdawi and Philokyrou 1994: 82-99 and Philokyrou 1996: 83-92.

⁶ I refer selectively to two of the most recent studies on this matter.

rime, *ottave* and poems in strophes of various lengths. Holton, based on an analysis of a poem in hendecasyllables, which is also a translation of the seventh eclogue of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, talks about "technical virtuosity of a high order" (1998/1999: 88-90), while Fedina remarks that the Italian hendecasyllables of the collection are creatively assimilated and adjusted to the Greek linguistic and cultural environment (2010: 192-3). At the same time, the Greek folk verse together with fresh and original rhymes based on the individual talent of the Greek-speaking poets, indicate the osmosis of the Greek East and the Italian West (Fedina 2010: 194-5) of this "experimental poetry which is without parallel in the Renaissance period in any other part of the Greek world" (Holton 1998/1999: 90).

The content of the greater part of the Cypriot *Canzoniere* deals with the unrequited love of the poet for his ideal beloved, as drawn from the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* or *Rime sparse* by Petrarch (Santagata 2010). It is noteworthy that the bipartite structure of the *Rime Sparse*, before and after Laura's death, is not followed in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*.⁷ Further, neither the name of Petrarch's beloved, Laura, nor the several puns on it appears in the Cypriot collection; instead, five poems of the collection name the beloved Chrystalleni ("Χρυσταλλένη") (see poems 87, 92, 100, 116, 129), while the rest use certain nouns in order to address her, such as "αγγελίσσα" (21, 22, 59, 100, 116), "θεά" (22, 98, 102, 138), "θείσσα" (12, 15, 75, 92), while the most popular is "κυρά" (2, 14, 16, 100-102, 109, 113 etc.).⁸ Moreover, in the Cypriot collection the specific chronological indicators that appear in the anniversary poems of Petrarch are differentiated.⁹ These thematic, formulaic and metrical deviations from the original show that the

⁷ For a possible division of the collection in two sections, according to the two different periods of the poet's life, see Carbonaro 2003.

⁸ The lists are not exhaustive.

⁹ See for example the Cypriot poem 108 verse 28, which refers to "δέκα χρόνους", whereas its Petrarchan prototype, poem XXX verse 28, refers to "sett' anni".

authors aspire to create an autonomous Cypriot Petrarchan poetry with its own dynamics.

After this brief introduction, I should explain the reason why I attempt to read these two works in parallel. Firstly, these works were composed under similar historical and cultural conditions. Both Cyprus and Crete in the mid to late 16th century were under Venetian rule and shared a common Italian intellectual background.¹⁰ Also, in 1570-71 many Cypriots refugees moved to Crete, where, as Tsiknakis observes, they influenced local daily life (2002: 207). Secondly, the comparison of these works illuminates and contributes to the understanding of the history of Greek lyric poetry, as suggested by Lassithiotakis (1996c: 174) – the first researcher, as far as I know, to carry out a wider and more systematic thematic comparison between the Cypriot *Canzoniere* and Cretan Renaissance works.¹¹

In this paper, the parallel reading of *Erotokritos* and the Cypriot collection will be based on extracts of the two literary works in relation to Ficino's translation and commentary on *Phaedrus* (Allen 2008: vol. I) and his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, to which he later gave the title *De amore*,¹² since it is not a faithful translation on the *Symposium*, but "a compilation of ideas about love", as drawn from Dionysus, Plotinus, Proclus, Aquinas, medical treatises and several works of Plato himself (Jayne 1985: 4-7).

¹⁰ For the historical context of Crete under Venetian rule, see Maltezos 2006: 17-47. For the historical context of Cyprus under Venetian rule, see Arbel 1995: IV, 455-536; for some cultural connections between Cyprus and Cretan Renaissance, see Holton 1992: 515-30. For particular information on books and reading in Nicosia during Renaissance, see Kitromilides 2002: 263-75, and for the circulation of books in Crete, see Kaklamanis 1986: 152-76.

¹¹ We need to mention that at a microscopic level Mathiopoulou-Tornaritou (1986: II, 486-498) examined the motif of the candle in the Cypriot *Canzoniere* and Cretan Renaissance literature.

¹² The full title of the work in Ficino's autograph manuscript is *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, but when Ficino translated the work into Italian in 1474, several years before he permitted it to be published, he called it simply *Sopra lo amore* (On love) (Jayne 1985: 1).

At the beginning of the 1990s Bancroft-Marcus referred to some indirect Neoplatonic allusions in *Erotokritos* and suggested that the work could be viewed, “in one of its aspects, as a Neoplatonic allegory” (1992: 43). A few years later, Lassithiotakis (1995) compared certain passages from *Erotokritos* with several Neoplatonic treatises on love, “trattati d’amore”. Although he remarked that Marsilio Ficino is the most famous representative of Neoplatonism and his treatise on Love, *De amore*, is the most direct or indirect source of the Renaissance treatises on love, he pointed out that each of them present notable differences in terms of style and content (Lassithiotakis 1995: 6-7). Therefore in his research he examines *Erotokritos* mostly in relation to the other treatises, rather than that by Ficino (Speroni, Betussi, Nobili, Bruno and others). In 2009 an international conference on *Erotokritos* was held in Kornaros’s birthplace, Siteia. There, Holton (2012: 36-7) gave support to Bancroft-Marcus’s view concerning a Neoplatonic reading of Kornaros and, at the same conference, I delivered a comparative reading of *Erotokritos* and *Canzoniere*, examining the twin concept of “high and low” and the interrelated motifs of “wings, time, fruit, and rose” (Rodosthenous-Balafa 2012: 121-44). That study showed the higher metaphysical sphere, which the beloved lady of the Cypriot *Canzoniere* inhabits, unlike the poet who seeks unsuccessfully to reach her; whereas in *Erotokritos* this metaphysical, Neoplatonic dimension of the higher level is camouflaged by the higher social status of Areti as a princess. An example illustrating this is the following:

ΡΩΤ. σ’ τόπο ψηλόν αγάπησα, μακρά πολλά ξαμώνω·
 κοπιώ εύκαιρα τα χέρια μου να πιάσω το δε σώνω:
 Τη θυγατέρα του ρηγός, του αφέντη μας την κόρη...

(I 149-51)

η καρδιά μου πεθυμώντα
 στα ψηλά θεν να πετάση
 και μηδ δύνοντα να φτάση
 στέκει χαμηλά κλαμώντα.

(*Canzoniere* 1.13-16)

However, the Neoplatonic dimension of *Erotokritos* becomes clearer in the passage below:

ΡΩΤ. ... μια κάποια λίγη πεθυμιά εσήκωσε το νου μου
 και δυο φτερούγες ήκαμε μέσα του λογισμού μου:
 τούτες την πεθυμιά πετού, στον ουρανό την πάσι
 κι όσο σιμώνου τση φωτιάς, τσι καίγει εκείν' η βράση,
 και πάραυτας γκρεμνίζομαι, απείς φτερά δεν έχω,
 γιατί ήφηκα τα χαμηλά και τα ψηλά ξετρέχω·
 και πάλι εκείνη η πεθυμιά δε θέλει να μου λειψη,
 πάραυτας κάνω άλλα φτερά, πάλι πετώ στα ύψη·
 και πάλι βρίσκω τη φωτιά, πάλι ξανακεντά με
 κι απ' τα ψηλά που βρίσκομαι με ξαναρίχτει χάμαι·
 κι όσες φορές εις τα ψηλά σώσω, φωτιές ευρίσκω
 και καίγονται οι φτερούγες μου και πέφτω και βαρίσκω.
 Και τούτη η πεθυμιά η λωλή πετώντας με πειράζει
 και πάγει τσι φτερούγες μου εις τη φωτιά, όντε βράζη[.]
 (I 331-44)

If we accept that the wing here is an upward power which, as Ficino comments on the eighteenth chapter summary of *Phaedrus*:

divinely implanted in the intellect and reason, insofar as it is powerful and free, effectively lifts them towards the divine. [...] But if the rational soul in this life turns itself towards the contraries – that is, towards the bad (which is longing for sensibles), towards the ignorant (which is the sense), towards the ugly (which is matter) – it binds the wing so that it cannot after this life immediately fly back to the heights (Allen 2008: 121),¹³

then, being alert to the Neoplatonic context of Kornaros's work, we will expect more allegories of this kind throughout our reading.

Erotokritos finally manages to overcome all the obstacles which keep him down and reaches his high goal, which is unification with his beloved. By contrast, in the case of the Cypriot

¹³ All references to Allen 2008 are to the first volume.

Canzoniere the beloved of the Petrarchan lover does not respond to his love and thus he keeps sighing, until he realises that this earthly love was but a reflection of the divine, and asks God to forgive him and help him to complete this spiritual circle and lift his soul to the divine.¹⁴

But before we circumscribe the circle of this paper, we must consider how lovers are initially attracted to each other. In the commentary on Plato's *Symposium* Ficino remarks that: "mortals are bewitched the most when, by very frequent gazing, directing their sight eye to eye, they join lights with lights" (Jayne 1985: 166, VII.10).¹⁵ In this sense, the poet in the Cypriot *Canzoniere* admits:

Ανέλπιστα δυο μμάτια μ' εσκλαβώσα
μ' έναν τους βλέμμαν όμνοστον με θάρος (28.1-2)

In other words, sight comprises the most important faculty in order for the lovers to fall in love. In the *Mythical Hymn* of the *Phaedrus* Socrates comments that "sight is the most acute of all the senses that function by way of the body, [...] the most perspicacious" and the only sense that can perceive Beauty (Allen 2008: 21, xxviii). Polydoros, Erotokritos's closest friend, to whom the protagonist first confesses his forbidden love for princess Areti, laconically mentions that:

ΠΟΛ. Τα μάτια μοναχά 'χουσι, σαν κείνα που θωρούνε,
σύβαση με τον Έρωτα και μια βουλή κρατούνε.
(I 1265-6)

¹⁴ Some of the Cypriot poems which elaborate this penitential theme are 131, 143 and 144. Williams, commenting on poem 366 of *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, which also treats this theme of repentance, argues: "It is God, through the Virgin Mary, who will grant him the power to transform his will; ultimately virtue is not a human achievement, it is a divine gift" (2007: 108).

¹⁵ In the references the roman number refers to the number of the speeches in the *Symposium* and the last number refers to the chapter of each speech.

He goes further in order to discourage Erotokritos's love for Areti, clarifying that love occurs only through an *exchange* of glances from both sides (Jayne 1985: 177):¹⁶

ΠΟΛ. Σα δε συναπαντήξουσι τα μάτια να σμιχτούσι,
 εύκαιρα βασανίζονται εκείνοι π' αγαπούσι·
 τούτο 'ν' το πρώτο ερμήνεμα ενός που ανατρανίζει
 μια λυγερή κι αρέσει του και δούλεψην αρχίζει·
 το δη μια, δυο και τρεις φορές κ' οι όρεξες δε σάζου·
 ουδ' οι καρδιές συβάζονται, μηδέ τα μάτια μοιάζου,
 εκείνον οπ' ορέγετο σ' άργητα τονέ φέρνει,
 σκολάζει και ξεγνοιάζεται, πλιο δεν ξαναγιαγέρνει·
 και δε μπορεί μιαν άσπλαχνην άνθρωπος ν' αγαπήση,
 γιατί έτσι τ' αποφάσισε της ερωτιάς η κρίση. (I 1135-44)

Kornaros wisely employs the above idea to protect the honour of his idealized heroine Areti, during a public spectacle in which she would be the focal point.¹⁷ We are referring to the joust,

¹⁶ Peri, who demonstrated that Kornaros was aware of the medical theories of his time (1999: 83), remarks that Lassithiotakis underlines the Neoplatonic aspect of the theme of love by sight (1999: 57). He believes though that the particular theme is a very common one in literature, philosophy and medicine – ancient, medieval and Renaissance – so it is difficult to say that *Erotokritos* has something specifically Neoplatonic (1999: 57). It is true that we cannot say with complete certainty the extent to which a theme relates to philosophy, religion, medicine or any other area, since all these disciplines are often interconnected. The reader should be able to view any thematic analysis from various perspectives and combine the various readings of a composite work, like *Erotokritos*. This study examines possible philosophic (Platonic-Ficinoan) ramifications of particular Kornarean themes. At several points, it is considered important to refer to Peri's medical reading of *Erotokritos*, precisely because the particular themes under examination share more than one aspect: the philosophic, the medical and even more that still need to be investigated. Celenza's observation is very illuminating for the reader of Ficinean Platonism and reinforces our argument: "To understand Ficino's style of Platonism, two factors should be foregrounded: first, that he was the son of a doctor, had medical training, and considered himself a doctor; and second that, at least from 1473 onward, he was an ordained Catholic priest, who considered everything he did to be in the service of Christianity" (2007: 81-2).

¹⁷ For the decorum of sight in *Erotokritos*, see Lendari 2012: 89-103.

organised by King Iraklis especially for his daughter Areti, in order to give her the chance to choose her future husband among the many princes and brave fighters who would participate. During the joust, however, Areti could see for herself the several young and handsome prospects. At the same time, her beauty could be equally seen, admired and commented on by them. Also she could potentially exchange glances with anyone she admired, but Areti had already confirmed her mutual love with Erotokritos by exchanging looks with him:

ΠΟΙ. Δε τη και ξαναδέ τηνε, αρχίνισε κ' η κόρη
 κ' εσυχοστρέφετο κι αυτή, με σπλάχνος τον εθώρει·
 κει που 'θελε να κρατηχή, καιρός πολός να διάβη,
 'Ερωτας τσ' ήφτε τη φωτιά κ' ήστεκε ν' αναλάβη·
 εθώρειε το Ρωτόκριτο πώς ήτον κ' ελυπάτο
 και με την άκρα του ματιού συχνιά του απιλογάτο.
 Εις κάποιον τρόπον εις τ' αλλού ήπαιζε με το μάτι,
 οπού γνωρίσασι κ' οι δυο πως μια φιλιά¹⁸ τσ' εκράτει.
 (I 2115-22)¹⁹

Under these circumstances, and in accordance with Areti's decorum²⁰ and moral virtues, she should be completely faithful to Erotokritos, so Kornaros stresses that while she was the centre of this public event:

¹⁸ For a possible explanation of the use of the term “φιλιά” for love between the protagonists in *Erotokritos* (A 10), see the argument which is expressed in the *Mythical Hymn*: If the lover “is in possession of a shared love as the likeness of love: it is not love itself but he calls and thinks of it as friendship” (Allen 2008: 35, xxxii).

¹⁹ Cf. ΡΩΤ. Τούτο με σώνει κι ας περνώ, σώνει με και κατέχω
 πως ρέγεται να με θωρή, κέρδος μέγαλον έχω·
 και τίβεται άλλον απ' αυτή δε μοιάζει ν' ανιμένω·
 ετούτο ας έχω για θροφή, να τρώγω, να χορταίνω. (I 2183-6)

See also II 47-8.

²⁰ Markomichelaki examines several matters of decorum in *Erotokritos* (2006: 355-67).

ΠΟΙ. Κ' εκείνη, μ' όλες τσ' ομορφιές σπού 'χε και τα κάλλη,
 δεν την εσυντηρούσανε τόσα περίσσα οι άλλοι·
 γιατί, σα δεν εστράφηκε να δη ποτέ κιανένα,
 τα κάλλη τση επομείνασιν εις τσ' άλλους θαμπωμένα.
 Τα μάτια κ' εις την ομορφιά μεγάλη χάρην έχου
 κ' οι διωματάρου να τα δου πάσκουσι και ξετρέχου
 κι όντε στραφούσι δυο και τρεις φορές και δεν τα δούσι
 όλες τες άλλες ομορφιές ποσώς δεν τσι ψηφούσι.
 Όλοι την Αρετή παινούν ογιά την ομορφιά της,
 μα λογισμό δεν ήβαλε κιανείς για όνομά της·
 ωσά δεν ανατράνισε να δη κιανένα ετούτη,
 ολόσβηστα επομείνασι της ομορφιάς τα πλούτη.

(II 2211-22)

As has already been shown, reciprocal looks lead to mutual love. But what is it that moves the lover to look upon and love one person? In other words, what do lovers seek at the outset? What else but beauty since, as is pointed out in Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium*, "love is the desire of enjoying beauty" (Jayne 1985: 58, II.9).

Polydoros, whose words seem to reflect the ideas of Ficino's treatise on love, employs the same idea in his conversation with Erotokritos, using the words "beauty" and "desire", and adding "hope", which is essential for the lover:

ΠΟΛ. Το δου μια κόρην όμορφη, η πεθυμιά 'ναι η πρώτη
 να του κινά να *ρέγονται* της λυγερής τη νιότη:
 και πάντα τούτη η πεθυμιά είναι με την *ολπίδα*
 κ' έχουν τα μάτια προδοτή σαν κείνα που την είδα·

(I 1113-16)

Similar phraseology is found in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*, where the poet addresses directly his beloved and confesses how his love started:

έξευρε κ' ένι πρώτα η *ομορφιά* σου
 στην ποιαν εδόθην τέλεια η *όρεξή* μου·
 'χ την *όρεξήν* μια πεθυμιά δική μου
 γεννάται με το *θάρος*

κι ώσπου να μ' έρτη ο χάρος
 με *θάρος* μαρτυρίζεται η πνοή μου (91.23-8)

Although one would expect the lover to feel only joy and peace when he faces or thinks of his beloved, on the contrary he is presented as terrified, sweating from fear and losing his mind:

ΡΩΤ. κι ως το [his love for Areti] λογιάσω, μου 'ρχεται μεγάλη
λιγωμάρα,
 τα μέλη αποκρυγαίνουνσι και πιάνει με **τρομάρα**.
 θαμπώνονται τα μάτια μου κ' η όψη απονεκρώνει,
 κ' *ίδρο* του ψυχομαχισμού το πρόσωπο μου δρώνει·
 κι οπίσω α θέλω να συρθώ, η *πεθυμιά* μ' αμπώθει
 (I 289-93)

and in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*:

Όταν την ευγιενειάσ σου να βιγλίσω,
χάννεται ο λογισμός μου
σκοτίζεται ο σκοπός μου
 και δεν ηξεύρω πόθεν ν' αρχινίσω
 ο δίκιος *πόθος* τάσσει μου το θάρος
 κι ο **φόβος** σου με βάλλει 'ς μέγαβ βάρος. (91.15-20)

The above symptoms, apart from the medical connotations they bear,²¹ remind us of the lover's reactions in *Phaedrus*, who has already contemplated the Ideas in heaven. Therefore, when the lover sees a face on earth adorned with the divine form, aptly copying divine Beauty itself, he reacts in the following way:

first he shivers with fear, and something of the dread of the ancients return to him. Then in gazing, he worships [the beloved] as a god, and but for the fact that he is afraid of being accused of vehement insanity, he would make sacrifices to his beloveds (*sic*) as to the statue of a god. But as he gazes, a change takes over from the dread; and as it were an unaccustomed sweat and heat possesses him. (Allen 2008: 21-3, xxix)

²¹ For the cyclothymic attitude of the lover, as seen from a medical point of view, see Peri 1999: 68-9.

Progressively, as the lover continues gazing at the beloved, in other words as he keeps receiving the influx of beauty through the eyes, this affects his nature and he stops grieving and rejoices (Allen 2008: 23, xxix). However, according to Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium*:

the soul would be satisfied to have seen the beloved only once [...] the eye and the spirit, which, like mirrors, can receive images of a body only in its presence, and lose them when it is absent, need the continuous presence of a beautiful body in order to shine continuously with its illumination, and be comforted and pleased. (Jayne 1985: 115, VI.6)

This explains the need of the lovers in both *Erotokritos* and the *Canzoniere* to look constantly at their beloved since:

ΠΟΙ. Όποιοι αγαπούσι καρδιακά παρηγοριά μεγάλη
 παίρνου να βλέπουν εις τ' αλλού των ομματιών τα κάλλη·
 χαίρουνται, αναγαλλιούσινε με τη θωριάν εκείνη
 κι α θέλου να στραφούν κι αλλού, η αγάπη δεν τσ' αφήνει·
 έτσι ήτο στο Ρωτόκριτον, έτσι στην Αρετούσα·
 με τη θωριάν εθρέφουντα, μαστορικά επερνούσα·
 (I 2187-92)

In the *Canzoniere* the poet says to his beloved:

δεν σου ζητώ παρά να σε βιγλίζω·
 μ' εκείνον τα δροσίζω
 τα πάθη και λαμπρά μου
 μ' εκείνον το κακόν μου
 ξορίζω 'που ξαυτόν μου
 κ' εν αλαφρόν το πάθος μου, κυρά μου,
 κ' εσέναν δεν σε βλάφτει
 κ' εμέν δροσίζει το λαμπρόν που μ' άφτει. (92.19-26)

Moreover, sight can also function as a medium of resurrection of the beloved:

αμμ' αν εσού σ' αυτόν μου να βιγλίσης,
 δύνεσαι απόυ νεκρόν να μ' αναστήσης. (58.7-8)

The ability of the sight to delight, reform and resurrect the lover is also connected in the Cypriot *Canzoniere* with the imagery of a cave, where the lover lives in tears in the darkness and suddenly faces his beloved who is likened to the sun²² and helps him to leave the darkness behind:

κρύβομαι με στον σπήλιον—εις την σκότην,
 ώσπου θωρώ την φώτην—εις το χώμαν·
 και με στις γης το στρώμαν—την εσπέραν
 ως την κινούργιαν μέραν—δίχως ύπνον
 δακρύζω γοιον το νήπιον—με στα δάση.
 [...]

 Σπολλάτε της κυράς μου: μιαν εσπέραν
 ήρτεν γοιον τον αέραν—με τον ύπνον
 κ' είδα την είμιον είμιον—γοιον τον ήλιον
 κ' έκραζέμι με αχ τον σπήλιον—κι αχ το χώμα
 εκείνον που 'χα στρώμαν—με στα δάση
 μ' έννοια να μ' αγιδιάση—'που την σκότην. (111.2-6, 25-30)

The dark cave, together with the fire, cannot but remind the informed reader of another work of Plato. I am referring to the popular and multi-interpreted myth of the cave in the Seventh Book of the *Republic* (Adam 1980: II, 88-97, i-iii). In *Erotokritos*, the whole concept is somewhat subverted. First of all, there is a metaphorical reference to the caves of the Underworld and there is a literal reference to another dark place, the prison, where Areti is kept away from the light. Also, the personified sun in this case is not the beloved woman, but the beloved man, who enters the dungeon and revives Areti.²³

ΠΟΙ. Μα σαν είδε τον ήλιο της μες στη φλακή κ' εμπήκε,
 εξαναγίνη το ζιμό, την ασκημιάν εφήκε·
 εγιάγειρεν η ομορφιά που τση 'το μακρεμένη,
 ήβρασε πάλι, ενέζησε, οπού το 'χιονισμένη. (V 1121-4)

²² For the beloved as sun in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*, see among other poems nos. 66 and 127.

²³ For the symbolism of light and its structural role in *Erotokritos*, see Rodosthenous-Balafa 2013: 39-58.

Consequently, as long as the lovers are present, the couple stops feeling pain; but when one of them is absent they desire each other since they are in possession of a “shared love” (Allen 2008: 35, xxxii), a term which we will analyse further on:

ΠΟΙ. Ὅση ὥρα το Ρωτόκριτον εθῶρει ἡ Αρετούσα,
 τα σωθικά τῆ κ' ἡ καρδιά το δρόσος εγροικούσα·
 ορέγετο τα κάλλη του, παρηγοριά τσ' εδίδα,
 εχαίρετο, ελαφρώνετο στὴν πελελὴν ολπίδα·
 μα σαν εμίσειε ἀπὸ κει και πλιο δεν τον εθῶρει,
 κιαμιὰς λογιῆς ἀνάπαψη δεν ἠύρισκε ἡ κόρη·
 πλια ξάψε στὴν ἀγάπη του, πλια στὴ φιλιὰ του εμπήκε
 και πλια μεγάλη τὴν πληγή στα σωθικά τῆ εφήκε:
 συχνιά εμυγομαραίνουντο, συχνιά εἶχε λιγωμάρες,
 συχνιά 'χε μες στο λογισμό τσ' ἀγάπης τσι τρομάρες.
 Ἀμ' ὅσην ὥραν ἤβλεπεν ἐκεῖνο που τὴν κρίνει,²⁴
 οἱ λογισμοὶ κ' οἱ πόνοι τῆς τῆς κἀναν καλοσύνη,
 μα σαν τον εἶχε στερευτή, περίσσα ετυραννάτο
 κι ὅλη ἐξαναμαλάσσετο κι ὅλη ἐξαναγεννάτο.
 Ἐπέρνα μέρες σκοτεινές, νύκτες ἀσβολωμένες,
 ἀποσπερνές λαχταριστές κι ἀυγές περιορισμένες. [...]
 Ἀν ἔχει ἀγάπη ἡ Αρετὴ κι ἀν ἔχει πόθου οδύνη,
 βρίσκειται κι ὁ Ρωτόκριτος σ' πλια παῖδα παρά κείνη [...]
 Χίλιες φορές λιγοθυμιά του 'ρχουντο τὴν ἡμέρα
 θωρώντας με το λογισμό τῆ μαρμαρένια χέρα.
 (III 9-24, 365-6, 371-2)

In general, lovers in both works seem to suffer from mixed feelings: joy and pain, which reminds us of the mixed feelings of the lover in *Phaedrus* where:

his whole soul being pricked on all sides is both excited and in pain from the goad; and again the memory of that beauty delights him. But from the mix of these two he is troubled by the vehemence and novelty of such passion; and in his anguish rages and is insane. Thus affected, and because of the frenzy, he cannot sleep at night nor ever remain still by day; but he hastens

²⁴ Cf. ἡ κόρη που τον κρίνει, V 56.

everywhere afflicted by the desire to see the youth in his beauty.
(Allen 2008: 23, xxix)

Insomnia is one of the main symptoms that both Erotokritos and Areti experience.²⁵ And even when Areti manages to sleep for a while, her slumber, is disturbed with pains and moans, since her only preoccupation is to think of her love:

ΠΟΙ. και φαίνεται τση κ' η αγρυπνιά τη θρέφει και χορταίνει (I 454)

ΠΟΙ. Κάνει την κ' είναι ξυπνητή όλο το μερονύχτι,
για να θυμάται της φιλιάς, κ' εις αφορμή τη ρίχτει
κ' ύπνον αν είχε κοιμηθή, ήτονε ξυπασμένος,
μ' αγκούσες, μ' αναστεναμούς, σαν κάνει αρρωστημένος.
(I 1059-62)

ΡΩΤ. δεν ημπορώ να κοιμηθώ, να πιω, μηδέ να φάγω· (I 1210)

More particularly, in the case of *Erotokritos* the poet uses a specific imagery to show the antithesis between the protagonist and the rest – not only humans, but also animals, who seek rest at night:

ΠΟΙ. ... και το κορμί του εσύρωνε κ' ήτρεμε ωσαν καλάμι.
Και μη μπορώντας να βαστά το μάκρος απ' την κόρη
εβάλληκε τσι πόνους του να συγκερνά ως εμπόρει.
Κι όντεν η νύκτα η δροσερή καθ' άνθρωπο αναπεύγει
και κάθε ζο να κοιμηθή τόπο να βρη γυρεύγει,
ήπαιρνε το λαγούτο του κ' εσιγανοπορπάτει[.] (I 386-91)

The same motif in which the lover, unlike the living beings who sleep at night, stays awake suffering endlessly is recurrent in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*:

Όλην την ημέραν κλαίω και την νύχταν, όνταμ παίρνου
την ανάπασην οι ζώντες, τότες εις αυτόν μου φέρνου

²⁵ For the medical explanation of the symptom of insomnia, as it is found in the medical treatises of the time, see Peri 1999: 63-5.

οι πικρές έννοιες την θλίψην, τότ' αζάφτει το λαμπρόμ μου.
(145.1-3)

Όλα τα ζα ναπαύγουνται τες νύχτες,
αφόν εις την δουλειάν τους βάλουν τέλος,
κ' εγώ 'δε νύχταν παύγω 'δε στον ήλιον·
(110.13-15)

Την νύχταν πάσα ζον κάπου κοιτάζει,
τίτοια στο δάσος κι άλλα με στο σπήλιον
πνάζοντα την ημέραν ποιον κοπιάζει
και κάποιον βόσκ' εις όπου 'χει τον ήλιον·
κ' εγώ απ' όλη νύχτα μαρτυρίζω
αχ το παωρνόν τα δάκρυα με σκουλλίζου.
(78.19-24)

Another symptom that the lover faces in *Phaedrus* is the renunciation of his family and the refusal to deal with his property and his previous customs and activities:

His parents, brothers and all his friends he surrenders to oblivion, nor is he the least moved when his patrimony is wasted out of neglect; and he utterly despises his traditional ways and the honors in which he used to glory. (Allen 2008: 25, xxix)

In *Erotokritos* Areti confesses in her lament that she has abandoned her parents and property: “αρνήθηκα τα πλούτη μου,²⁶ τον κύρη και τη μάνα” (V 995), whereas *Erotokritos* was forced into exile by the King and thus had to abandon his parents.

Further, in Book I Areti confesses to her nurse that she despises all her former amusing and enjoyable activities, such as playing with dolls, sewing, reading and writing (I 975-1005). Similarly, *Erotokritos* left his hunting dog, gave up his horse, abandoned his falcons and gave up revelries. His father remarks that he does not perform his tasks. He no longer speaks to the servants to give instructions and does not behave as the responsible owner of his place, but more like a guest (I 135-7, 787-90).

²⁶ See also V 345-8.

But is there a remedy to this impassivity of the lovers and refusal to lead their lives as before? The answer is also given in *Phaedrus*. The “doctor” of these “gravest diseases” (Allen 2008: 25, xxix), as Socrates puts it, is the beloved person.

In these terms, just as Areti considers Erotokritos to be a doctor, who heals wounded ladies, Erotokritos considers her to be his remedy:

APE. Ως και σγουράφος ήμαθε δίχως δασκάλου πράξη·
 η Μοίρα μου τον ήκαμεν, ογιά να με πατάξη·
 εδά μαθαίνει και γιατρός,²⁷ τσι πληγωμένες γιαίνει·
 συχιά δροσίξει τσι καρδιές εκείνες που μαραίνει.
 (II 1351-4)

APE. και το σκοπό παρηγοριά και τη φωνή [of Erotokritos] γιατρό μου
 (I 1006)

APE. κ’ ετούτη η θύμηση [of Erotokritos] ήτονε πάντα το γιατρικό μου
 (V 994)

PQT. και χώνει μου το γιατρικό, οπόχει να με γιάνη (I 2030)

Also, the four apples which were held by Areti and sent to him while he was sick, become his “doctors”: “κείνα εγενήκασι γιατροί κ’ εκείνα τον εγιάνα” (I 2018).

In the Cypriot *Canzoniere* the eyes of his lady are presented as a herbal remedy for the poet’s health:

μόνον στα γλυκιά μμάτια της κυράς μου
 στέκεται το βοτάνιν της υγειάς μου. (32.7-8)

For a fuller understanding of the cause of the mixed feelings or the *contradictions* (Lassithiotakis 1995: 21) the lovers experi-

²⁷ Erotokritos becomes the “doctor” of his friend Polydoros (IV 1551) and vice versa (V 149-150). Areti has been the “doctor” of Frosyni (III 106).

ence, it is useful to look at Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium*:

It also happens that those who have been trapped by love alternately sigh and rejoice. They sigh because they are losing themselves, because they are destroying themselves, because they are ruining themselves. They rejoice because they are transferring themselves into something better. They are also alternately hot and cold, like those whom a tertian fever attacks. They are cold rightly, because they are deserted by their own warmth, and they are also hot since they are enflamed by the splendors of the celestial ray. Timidity follows cold: courage, heat. Therefore they also seem alternately timid and bold. (Jayne 1985: 52-53, II.6)

Apart from the Neoplatonic allusions that the motif of mixed feelings and contradictory situations acquires, it also has a very rich literary tradition.²⁸ In fact, it is widely elaborated in the Petrarchan tradition through several stereotypical antitheses, oxymora and conceits. The examples that follow show clearly this common Petrarchan tradition of both Cypriot and Cretan literature of the 16th century:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| κ' εγώ θωρώντα το άφτω και χιονίζω | (99.18) |
| ΠΟΙ. κι ώρες ζεστός επόμενε κι ώρες κρυός σα χιόνι | (I 488) |
| ΠΟΙ. σαν το κερι ανέλιγωνε κ' εφύρα σαν το χιόνι | (I 756) |
| ως γοιον στον ήλιον χιόνιν εφυράτον | (85.11) |
| Φοβούμαι και θαρώ, γλυκιά κυρά μου,
αφταίννω και χιονίζω στο καμίνι,
έναν καιρόν γελά και κλαι καρδιά μου,
θωρώντα ποια 'σαι με 'ντα καλοσύνην. | (50.1-4) |

²⁸ For the medical explanation of the lovers' changing temperament, see Peri 1999: 68-9.

ΠΟΙ. κ' ευρίσκετο ο Ρωτόκριτος μέσα στο ναι κ' εις τ' όχι·
 ώρες σ' αέρα δροσερό κι ώρες σ' φωτιά κ' εις λόχη:
 Ήτρεμεν, εφοβάτονε κ' εβλέποντο μη σφάλη
 να δείξη τον αδιάντροπο σ' έτοια κερά μεγάλη·
 και πάντα με κλιτότητα και με ταπεινοσύνη
 εθώρειε κι ανατράνιζε την ομορφιάν εκείνη.

(I 2173-8)

These contradictions cause the lover to desire and admire the beloved, but also to be afraid to show his feelings, since as mentioned in Ficino's *Symposium*: "that splendor of divinity, shining in the beautiful like a statue of God, compels lovers to marvel, to be afraid, and to worship" (Jayne 1985: 52, II.6).²⁹

At the same time, these antithetical feelings make the lover experience death while he is alive, or be both dead and alive or dying while alive and so on.

Κάθα να δω το βγιενικόν το δεισ σου
 όλος αφταίννω και θαρώ μεσόν μου
 κι αντάν την ευγιενειάν και την τιμήσ σου,
 το θάρος όλον φεύγει 'πο ξαυτόν μου·
 με την τιμήν την λύπησην σ' αυτήσ σου
 ελπίζοντα, γλυκιάίνει το λαμπρόν μου·
 κι αν τούτον μου λαλή να σ' ακλουθήσω,
 τ' άλλον απού μακρά να μεν τολμήσω.

Αν το 'να μου λαλή να μεν τολμήσω,
 τ' άλλον με σφίγγει και διδεί μου θάρος,
 κ' είμαι μεσόν τους όπου να γυρίσω
αποθαμμένος πριν με πάρη ο χάρος·
κι αν εν και χίλιες φόρες ξηψυχήσω,
πάντα 'μαι ζωντανός με μέγαν βάρος
 κι ως γοιον ολπίζω κ' είμαι φοβουμένος,
ζω με τον χάρο ζωντανός κι αποθαμμένος.

Ανίσως κ' είμαι ζωντανός ή αποθαμμένος
 θέλοντας όσα πάθη να μου δώσης,
 γιατί αποβγαίννω κ' είμαι αναπαμένος,

²⁹ See also Lasithiotakis 1995: 24-5.

τόσον βουργά γοιον πιον να με πληγώσης
 γιατί δεν πλήσω αν είμαι λαβωμένος,
 χαίρομαι όνταν εσύ να με λαβώσης
 αμμί' έτσου ως όπου ζώντα πεθηνίσκω,
 πάντα μου ζω κι ανάπαμην δεν βρίσκω. (69.1-24)

Έννοια γλυκιά με την πικριά σμιμένη
 τους αγαπούν εις τούτον αποσώννει
 και δεν νιώθουν πως ζουν αποθαμμένοι. (17.12-14)

Και ως γοιον ελπίζω και θαρώ φοβόντα,
 ζω με στον άδην ποθαμμένος ζώντα. (70.31-2)

ΠΟΙ. κ' εφαινετό του ζωντανός εμπήκεν εις τον Άδη
 (III 1650)

All these paradoxical variations are directly related to the common oxymoron *viva morte*, very often encountered in Petrarch and various Renaissance treatises on love. As Lassithiotakis remarks: "this is not a simple poetic *conchetto*, since it reflects the whole Renaissance theory on love" (1995: 25). This is mainly because it is directly related to the way mutual love functions and influences the lovers. Cavalcanti in the Second Speech of the Ficino's *Symposium* starts from the axiom that whoever loves is dead in himself, since the soul of the lover neither functions nor exists in itself (Jayne 1985: 55, II.8).³⁰ The idea is clearly illustrated in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*:

Καρδιάν σ' εμέναν δεν έχω γνωρίζω
 αμμέ ζω τέλεια χώρια 'χ την ζωήν μου[.] (70.13-14)

Δίχα καρδιάν και δίχα νουν πηγαίννω (82.11)

όλως έχασα γω τον εμαυτόν μου; [...]
 που ζω για σεν, 'που μεν ζηχωριστόντα[.] (8.2, 8)

³⁰ This discussion is probably based on Aquinas (Jayne 1985: 60).

The main question raised here, though, is whether the lover lives in another person. Cavalcanti answers the question by dividing love into two kinds: the unrequited/simple love, where the beloved does not love the lover, therefore the lover is completely dead and only indignation should revive him (Jayne 1985: 55, II.8).³¹ That is probably why the poet in the Cypriot *Canzoniere* says that those who love but are not loved would be better off not to have been born:

Κι από ποθεί και δεν ε αγαπημένος
ήτον καλλιόν να μη 'τον γεννημένος. (53.7-8)

Then there is the second kind of love, where the beloved responds in love, and the lover leads a life in the beloved's body, since the lovers "exchange themselves with each other" (Jayne 1985: 55, II.8):

διατί να ξεύρης κι όλοι που ποθούνσιν
δίχως καρδιάν κ' εις άλλον σώμαν ζούσιν. (39.7-8)

This is the reciprocal love, according to which Cavalcanti explains:

while I love you loving me, I find myself in you thinking about me, and I recover myself, lost by myself through my own negligence, in you, preserving me. You do the same in me. [...] I have you before and more than I have myself, and I am closer to you than to myself, since I approach myself in no other way than through you as intermediary. (Jayne 1985: 56, II.8)

In this context we can interpret Areti's words in Book V, where she believes that her beloved is dead, which means that she

³¹ See indicatively how the Cypriot poet addresses his beloved, who does not share the same feelings with him: "ω κακιωμένη της φιλιάς και φύσης" 47.7; "λύπην δεν έχεις" 55.7; "Τίντα θαρείς με τόσην σκληροσύνη,/ την έχει στην καρδιάς σου να κερδέσης;" 37.1-2.

cannot function anymore. In the passage below, she is supposedly addressing the soul of the dead Erotokritos:

APE. Με τη ζωή σου είχα ζωή και με το φως σου εθώρου,
τα πάθη μου θυμώντας σου επέρνου σαν εμπόρου.
Τον εαυτό μου αρνήθηκα και μετά σέναν ήμου,
στο θέλημά σου ευρίσκετο θάνατος³² και ζωή μου.

(V 989-92)

Of course, the transfer/transposition of Areti's self to Erotokritos had already happened in Book III, where she confesses to him that it is impossible for the heart to renounce him, because a radical transformation happened in her. Through her love for him, she was reborn and thereby lost her former nature and image, taking on his:

APE. η στόρησή μου εχάθηκε και τη δική σου επάσε (III 1440)

We need to underline here that the similar natures of the lovers comprise an indispensable element of reciprocal love, since "likeness generates love" (Jayne 1985: 57, II.8).³³ In other words, the likeness compels the lover to love both himself and the other, since they look the same.

Another way of producing likeness between the lovers is, according to Cavalcanti, the engraving³⁴ of one's figure on the soul of the other, in order to become a mirror in which the image

³² As for death, Cavalcanti in Ficino's *De amore* says: "in reciprocal love there is only one death, a double resurrection. For he who loves dies in himself once, when he neglects himself. He revives immediately in the beloved when the beloved receives him in loving thought. He revives again when he finally recognizes himself in the beloved, and does not doubt that he is loved. O happy death which two lives follow!" (Jayne 1985: 56, II.8). Cf. subversion of this idea in the Cypriot *Canzoniere*: "Ζωντανόν με δυο θανάτους", poem 118.

³³ Jayne (1985: 61) comments that the background of this idea is based on Aquinas and Proclus, *Elements of Theology*.

³⁴ See poem 8, of the Cypriot *Canzoniere*: Ω τυπωμένοδ δει στον λογισμόν μου,/ που ζω για σεν, 'που μεν ξεχωριστόντα (7-8).

of one is reflected in another (Jayne 1985: 57, II.8).³⁵ This has already happened to Areti, who wishes she had not been able to have him in her heart, since this causes her to constantly see him and be unable to escape from the torments of love (I 1617-18).

But how does Areti manage to see Erotokritos, since he is in her heart? Apart from the eyes of the face the lovers acquire, according to Ficino's *On Love*, "the eye of the soul" (Jayne 1985: 115, VI.6) or in other words "the eye of the intellect",³⁶ which are the repository of the innate ideas and therefore can see all the images stored in the memory:

ΠΟΙ. Τα μάτια δεν καλοθωρού στο μάκρεμα του τόπου,
μα πλια μακρά και πλια καλά **θωρεί η καρδιά** τ' ανθρώπου-
εκείνη βλέπει στα μακρά και στα κοντά γνωρίζει
και σ' ένα τόπο βρίσκεται κ' εισέ πολλούς γυρίζει.

³⁵ In the seventh speech of Ficino's *Commentary on the Symposium* is explained how the lover becomes like the beloved: "the features [of the beloved] are so firmly implanted and embedded in the breast by mere thought that they are imprinted on the spirit, and by the spirit are immediately imprinted on the blood" (Jayne 1985: 165, VII.8). I believe that this comment is helpful for the reader to interpret Areti's words to Erotokritos:

ΑΡΕ. Και πώς μπορεί τούτη η καρδιά που με χαρά μεγάλη
στη μέση της εφύτευσε τα νόστιμα σου κάλλη
και θρέφει σε καθημενό, στα σωθικά ριζώνεις,
ποτίζει σε το αίμα τση κι ανθείς και μεγαλώνεις [...]
Σγουραφιστή σ' όλο το νουν έχω τη στόρησή σου
και δε μπορώ άλλη πλιο να δω παρά την edική σου: [...]
Εγώ, όντε σ' εσγουράφισα, ήβγαλα απ' την καρδιά μου
αίμα και με το αίμα μου εγίνη η σγουραφία μου-
κι όποια με το αίμα της καρδιάς μια σγουραφία τελειώση,
κάνει την όμορφη πολλά κι ουδέ μπορεί να λειώση-
πάντα 'ναι σάρκα ζωντανή, καταλυμό δεν έχει
και ποιος να κάμη σγουραφία πλιο σαν εμέ κατέχει;

(III 1415-18, 1423-4, 1429-34)

Cf. the Cypriot *Canzoniere*, poem 114.8: "που στην καρδιάμ μου βάφτηκε κ' είναι με τόση χάρη".

³⁶ That is how Ficino translates in the Italian version the phrase *animi acies* (Jayne 1985: 148).

Τα μάτια, να 'ναι κι ανοιχτά, τη νύκτα δε θωρούσι·
 νύκτα και μέρα της καρδιάς τα μάτια συντηρούσι.
 Χίλια **μάτια** 'χει ο λογισμός, μερόνυχτα βιγλίζουν·
 χίλια η καρδιά και πλιότερα κι ουδεποτέ σφαλίζουν.

(I 1077-84)³⁷

Areti, however, does not only keep Erotokritos in her heart, but she also has his “wings” in her, a motif to which we referred at the beginning of this paper:

APE. Ο Ρώκριτος είν' Έρωτας κι αν και φτερά δεν έχει,
 μηδέ θαρρής κ' εχάσε τα, πού βρισκονται κατέχει·
 εις την καρδιά μου τα 'πεψε κ' εκεί 'ναι τα φτερά του

(III 253-5)

Clearly these wings consist in part of Erotokritos's representation as the “winged Love”, “pterōta”, an adjective/image which has passed down to us, according to the *Mythical Hymn of Phaedrus*, from certain followers of Homer (Allen 2008: 25, xxix), and symbolizes the lifting-up of the soul. This ascent is necessary for the salvation of souls who originate from heaven and need to circumscribe the circle and go back (Allen 2008:

³⁷ See also I 961-6:

APE. Μαγάρι ας ήτο βολετό, μαγάρι να το μπόρου
 ένα που δεν εγνώρισα, στο νου να μην εθώρου·
 μα ολημερνίς κι ολονυκτίς κρίσην έχω μεγάλη
 να σγουραφίζω στην καρδιά 'νους που δεν είδα κάλλη·
 και σοθετή κι ωριόπλουμη εγίνη η σγουραφιά του
 τη στόρηση εσγουράφισα απ' τα καλώματά του.

In the Cypriot *Canzoniere*, this motif is only implied:

Αντάμ με πόθον δυο καρδιές ποθούνται
 μακρύς καιρός ποτέ δεν τες χωρίζει,
 την ζήλαν 'δε το φτόνος δεν φοβούνται
 'δε μισιτιά μεσόν τους να 'ρτη ορίζει·
 κι ανίσως και καθ' ώραν δεν βιγλούνται,
 η πεθυμιά δια κείνον δεν γυρίζει.
 Λοιπόν, αν είμ' απόμακρα 'χ το δεισ σου,
 αμμέ καρδιά μου πάντα 'ναι σ' αυτής σου. (43.1-8)

157).³⁸ Erotokritos, however, as Bancroft-Marcus observes “chooses as his *impresa* for the joust the moth aspiring after the flame which scorches it (μέσα στη φωτιά καημένο ένα ψυχάρι B 528); seduced by his lady’s brilliance (λαμπυράδα), he cannot keep away from her for all the pain he suffers” (1992: 41) – an image which recalls the burning wings of Erotokritos, to which we referred at the beginning of this paper, that struggle in vain to reach the heights. Bancroft-Marcus, trying to associate the symbolism of these two images, considers that it is no accident that the word for moth, ψυχάρι, derives from ψυχάριον, “little soul”. Therefore, she explains that the torments Erotokritos goes on to suffer “justify his name, which means ‘tormented by love’; and the girl he wishes to be united with in marriage is called Αρετή or Αρετούσα, ‘Virtue’” (1992: 42). In these terms, Bancroft-Marcus concludes that this might be a “half-Platonic, half-Christian allegory of the quest of the Soul after Virtue” (1992: 42).

This paper fully subscribes to the Neoplatonic allegory of *Erotokritos*, as suggested by Bancroft-Marcus, and reinforces this opinion by adding another Neoplatonic component, which also connects with the very first and polysemous verse of the work: “Του κύκλου τα γυρίσματα που ανεβοκατεβαίνουν”.

In the *Mythical Hymn* of *Phaedrus*, Socrates clarifies that “only the cogitation of the philosopher recovers wings” (Allen 2008: 17, xxv) and adds that “the cogitation of every soul [...], which is about to receive a state appropriate to itself having gazed for a while at true being, loves and is nourished by and rejoices in the contemplation of those things which are true, until *the circumference brings it back in a circle to the same point*” (Allen 2008: 13, xxi).³⁹ In this intellectual circuit the soul perceives, among others, three Ideas: *justice*, *temperance* and *knowledge*, which principally lead to felicity and most pertain to beauty (Allen 2008: 131). In this regard, during the five-year trial, Erotokritos fights

³⁸ Interestingly, the beloved of the poet in the Cypriot collection has also the ability to fly: “πετώντα” (13.4).

³⁹ The emphasis is mine.

for the King's side because he seeks *justice* for him (IV 1383), he remains *patient* and seizes the right timing to marry Areti, to whom he has been completely faithful throughout all this time, and, finally, he acquires the *knowledge* that his beloved truly loves him through the trial he puts her through. In this way, by perceiving and cultivating these three ideas, we could assume that Erotokritos has been educated philosophically; therefore, he acquired more stable wings, which allowed him to fly up, where through reciprocal love he succeeded in circumscribing the circle and achieving his goal,⁴⁰ which Areti aptly states in Book I of the work: “Κι αν αγαπά κι αν αγαπώ ο κύκλος σα γυρίση” (I 1685).

Unlike Erotokritos, who manages to complete this circular movement, the poet in the Cypriot *Canzoniere* does not acquire the appropriate wings, and so endlessly sighs. This lament, according to Ficino's *Symposium*, originates from the fact that the source of all beauty and love is God. But the soul being preoccupied with its shadow, forsakes its own beauty and is so captivated by the charms of corporeal beauty that it neglects its own beauty, and forgetting itself, runs after the beauty of the body, which is a mere shadow of its own beauty (Jayne 1985: 140, VI.17).⁴¹ And

⁴⁰ See another view about the circle in Ficino's *Commentary on the Symposium*: “This divine beauty has generated love, that is, a desire for itself, in all things. Since if God attracts the World to Himself, and the World is attracted, there exists a certain continuous attraction (beginning from God, emanating to the World, and returning at last to God) which returns again, as if in a kind of circle, to the same place whence it issued. And so one and the same circle from God to the World and from the World to God is called by three names [...] Beauty, [...] Love and [...] Pleasure” (Jayne 1985: 46, II.2).

⁴¹ At this point in the *Commentary on Love* Ficino cites a certain passage from Orpheus which relates to the tragic fate of Narcissus (Jayne 1985: 152). He explains: Narcissus “*does not look at his own face*, that is, does not notice its own substance and character at all. *But admires the reflection of it in the water and tries to embrace that*, [...] *He abandons his own beauty, but he never reaches the reflection*. That is, the soul, in pursuing the body, neglects itself, but finds no gratification in its use of the body. For it does not really desire the body itself; rather, seduced,

since it never notices the fact that, while it is desiring one thing, it is pursuing another, it never satisfies its desire (Jayne 1985: 141, VI.17).

In contrast to this pathetic and devastating situation of the soul, as described above, the poet of the Cypriot *Canzoniere* at the end of the collection, realises his disorientation, that is his attraction to corporeal love, as being the reflection of the divine, and asks God to forgive him and show him a new path to save and lift up his soul. That is precisely why at the end of the collection we have many penitential poems:

Εκράτησεμ με η τύχη τόσους χρόνους
στην φώτην με χαράν, στην πίκραν θάρρος,
κι αφόν το φως μου στέρεψεν ο χάρος,
άλλους πέντε με κλάματα και πόνους.

Τώρα την φάλλια βλέπω και γνωρίζω
και εις όσον εμπορώ στρέφομαι κλιόντα
τ' απομονάδιν της ζωής διδόντα
σ' εσέν, Σωτήρ, οπού τιμώ κι ολπίζω[.]

(131.1-8)

like Narcissus, by corporeal beauty, which is an image of its own beauty, it desires its own beauty. [...] For this reason, *melted into tears, he is destroyed*" (Jayne 1985: 140-141, VI.17). [Ficino italicizes the specific phrases (Jayne 1985: 152).] It would be worth comparing in another study the reaction of Narcissus with the reaction of Areti, when she finds the painting of herself by Erotokritos. Kornaros mentions that when she sees a likeness of herself, in other words when she faces her reflection, her torture increases (I 1491-2) and she behaves as follows:

ΠΟΙ. κ' εφάνιστή τση κ' ήστραψε η Ανατολή κ' η Δύση
και μες στα μάτια τση 'δωκε φωτιά κι αστροπελέκι
κι ωσά βουβή και ωσάν τυφλή κι ωσάν το λίθο στέκει. [...]
κ' επάνασιν οι λογισμοί οι πρώτοι κ' ήρθαν άλλοι
θεμελιωμένοι πλια βαθιά και πλιότερα μεγάλοι. (I 1506-8, 1533-4)
ΑΡΕ. [...] η αγάπη
μ' έβαλε σε βαθιά νερά κι ο νους μου επατραράπη [...]
Και δίδε μου παρηγοριές, τα πάθη ν' αλαφρώσου,
μηδέν πληθύνη ο πόνος μου και ξεψυχήσω ομπρός σου.
(I 1675-6, 1689-90)

This paper has discussed two “love stories” which draw on the same philosophical background, that of Renaissance Neoplatonism. Not surprisingly, various common motifs and themes came to the fore, but different outcomes and attitudes of the lovers were revealed. This is mainly because, although both works share the same Renaissance theory of love, the conventions of their literary genres prescribe a different elaboration: happy outcome for the romance and endless pain for the lyrical Petrarchist poet.

In any case, the same imageries, coming from common direct or indirect sources, such as Ficino, lead us to consider whether more comparative studies of this kind might illuminate and enrich substantially our knowledge of Greek lyric poetry of the 16th century.

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