In comparison with modern poetry, which favours subjunctive and inwardly flexed forms, imbued with a truly individualistic and self-centred expression of self (or what Adorno called the “individuation without reservation” of lyrical creation), outwardly flexed forms that referred to an external reality still played a major role in Italian Renaissance poetry. Even at a time when Petrarchan *Fragmenta* exerted a powerful prescriptive influence on writing in verse, the range of subjects suitable for poetry remained wider than that which crystallised in that paradigm. It was therefore perfectly permissible for those who wrote poetry in that context to use content we would undoubtedly now attribute to the realm of prose. As will emerge more than once in the course of this book, it was also equally permissible for those authors to compose verses that made clear their roots in historical circumstances in a way that seems fundamentally unpoetic to our eyes.

Secondly, recent interest in the poetry of prominent figures in the Italian art world during the Renaissance has shifted modern prejudices in favour of subjectivist poetry to another level. Often returning to the image of an isolated genius operating within a cultural void, studies dedicated to these authors have also lost sight of the fact that poetic writing at that time was a practice usually anything but monological. From the mid-sixteenth century in particular, in conjunction with the expansion of literary society as masterfully examined by Carlo Dionisotti, it tended instead to be dialogical and frequently choral. For the most part, this communicative dimension was characterised more often than not specifically as a conversation among a circle of associates varying in number, aimed at strengthening personal relationships of respect or friendship through reciprocal declarations of appreciation, solidarity or ideal commonality in areas of political or aesthetic sensitivity.