

"BAISE M'ENCORE, REBAISE MOY, ET BAISE": NEOPLATONIC LOVE, CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY, AND LOUISE LABÉ'S CONSTRUCTION OF AUDIENCE.



Sandro Botticelli, "Venus and Mars" (1485), London: The National Gallery.

NEOPLATONIC THEORY OF LOVE

- Evident in Labé's sonnets IX & XIII, and crucial for understanding sonnet XVIII
- Key aspect in Renaissance reception of Petrarchism
 - In RVF 366- Petrarch turns his love and attention from Laura to a love of the Virgin Mary, using similar language and imagery as he used to describe Laura.
 - Allowed Petrarchan poetry to be adapted and used as an illustration of Neoplatonic ideas about love, and later, to be adapted to religious ends during the Catholic (Counter-)Reformation
- Well-known ideas circulating in early modern Lyon
 - Symphorien Champier (1471-1539)
 - Maurice Scève (1500-1564)
 - Antoine Héroët and group around Marguerite de Navarre (sister of François Ier)
 - 1542 - *La Parfaicte Amye, Androgyne* (Héroët - published with Étienne Dolet)
- Neoplatonic theory of love: based on theory of Diotima's ladder as described in Plato's *Symposium*
 - Ultimate object of Eros - desire to possess/conquer its object
 - Ascent from lust to morality -
love of beauty in one person > all persons > beautiful ideas > form of beauty > form of the good=God
- Renaissance Theorists:
 - Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) - *De Amore* -1484, *Sopra lo amore* 1544
 - Pietro Bembo (1470-1547) - *Gli Asolani* -1505
 - Baldassare Castiglione (1478- 1529— *Il Cortegiano* (1528)
 - Dolet publishes a French translation of the book of the Courtier (Jacques Colin) in 1537 and 1538.
 - Book IV- Character of Pietro Bembo & Theory of Neoplatonic love
 - Strong Petrarchan echoes
 - Focus on the soul's ascent and eventual union with God
 - Theory of the kiss (mors osculi)
 - Leone Ebreo (Judah Leon Abravanel) (1464-1523) — *Dialoghi d'Amore* (1535)
 - Active dialogue between a man (Filo) and woman (Sophia)
 - Christian dimension to love between men and women
 - Idea of the union of souls further developed by incorporation of Aristotle's idea of *Philia*
 - Two souls in love - mutually transform each other to become both 1 and 4
 - Greater agency for the beloved woman?

