

A FLORENTINE *TULLIO*: DUAL AUTHORSHIP AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION IN BRUNETTO LATINI'S *RETTORICA*

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Introduction

Brunetto Latini's *Rettorica* is both one of the earliest, and one of the best-known, examples of medieval prose translation from Latin into an Italian vernacular.¹ It takes the form of a translation into Brunetto's native Florentine of the opening parts of Cicero's *De inventione*, taken as far as 1.17.24, and accompanied by a substantial commentary. The *Rettorica* provides a distinctive example of the medieval Italian reception of Cicero's works, in which Brunetto Latini's translation strategies involve not only transferring the Latin original into a new language, but also a translation – a 'carrying over' into his receiving culture – of Cicero's fame and political personality.

The ambitious scope of Brunetto's translation was in part the product of the circumstances in which he undertook the work. In 1260–61, he was in exile from Florence, as a result of the violent confrontation between Brunetto's preferred political faction, the Guelfs, and the rival Ghibelline party. His approach to authorship and translation in the *Rettorica* displays a strong interest in establishing analogies between the contemporary crises of the Florentine republic and those of Rome during the Catilinarian conspiracy, which enable him to present himself as an *alter Cicero* and potential saviour of the state. He adopts three inter-connected strategies to further this aim: one textual; one linguistic; and one political. Textually, the *Rettorica* presents the Ciceronian translation and Brunetto's accompanying gloss as a dialogue, using rubrication and *mise-en-page* to collapse the temporal and linguistic divide between the two *personae* who make up the work's grammatically singular 'double author', in the collaborative pairing of Cicero and Brunetto. Linguistically, the Latin work's vulgarization into Florentine supports this temporal elision. It reinserts Brunetto (and with him, his Guelf fellow exiles) into the linguistic community of the hometown they have left behind, and additionally permits Brunetto to demonstrate his importance as a cultural mediator between antiquity and modernity, possessing language skills highly prized in Florence in both oratory and *dictamen*. Finally, in political terms, the accommodation of extensive selections from the history of the Catilinarian conspiracy into Brunetto's translated text bolsters his self-positioning as a second Cicero, a consummate statesman and rhetorician mistakenly exiled for service of the republic. The *Rettorica* thus not only provides rhetorical instruction to its readers, but also makes the case for Brunetto's own authoritative reincarnation of the Ciceronian *magnus vir et sapiens*, whose eloquence inculcates civic values within the political community.

Dual authorship and inscribed dialogue between author(s) and readers

¹ The work is generally dated to c. 1260–61. Reference text throughout: Brunetto Latini, *La Rettorica*, ed. F. Maggini (Florence 1968); the text is also consultable online at <http://www.classicitaliani.it/index125.htm> (consulted 27 November 2016). English translations are my own. Where reference is made to *De inventione*, text and English translations follow the Loeb edition: Cicero, *De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, Topica*, trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA and London 1949).

The *Rettorica* may be the earliest surviving example of Brunetto's creative *œuvre*, as distinct from professional documents produced in his activity as notary and civic scribe. To call it creative is, of course, to engage immediately with questions about the status of the translator and about the relationship between the source and the new version, much discussed in studies of translation. These debates have a venerable history: even the most recent scholarship on contemporary, twentieth- and twenty-first-century translation practice abounds in tags derived from Latin antiquity, where the concepts of the *fidus interpres* and the distinctions between translation *ut interpres* or *ut orator* or *verbum e verbo* versus *sensum de sensu* are frequently cited, and the precise meanings that such terms have historically implied are dissected.² These terms all raise the questions of the translator's fidelity to a source: of how that fidelity combines elements of verbal and/or conceptual closeness to the original; and how it attempts to make more or less 'visible' (to adopt Lawrence Venuti's term) to the translation's readers the underlying facts of its transposition from one language, time, and culture to another.³

In copies of the *Rettorica* the presence of two authorial agents is literally never 'invisible' or lost to the reader's sight. Like many medieval translators, Brunetto combined translation of *De inventione* with an extensive commentary, but adopted an unusual technique to emphasize the close, even interdependent, relationship between the two. On the manuscript page, and later in print editions, rubrics consistently display an alternation between two authorial voices in dialogue with each other. The labels distinguishing *Tullio* (the voice of Cicero) from *lo Sponitore* (the commentator, Brunetto) keep constantly in view the to-and-fro of interpretive effort involved in conveying a first-century BCE Latin text to a thirteenth-century CE Florentine audience. Cicero's authorial primacy, if only in temporal terms, is thus visually inescapable; in the most elaborate surviving manuscript, it is rendered still more graphically dominant through alternating script size: 'The parts written in larger script give the text of Tullio, and the smaller script gives the words of the *Sponitore*'.⁴

Within the *Rettorica*, the sections lying under *Tullio*'s name are brief, rendering only one or two Ciceronian periods at a time before switching to an expository gloss, often lengthy. Cesare Segre has characterized Brunetto's direct rendition of the *De inventione* text as extremely faithful ('fedelissima') in content, though with syntactic and lexical accommodations favouring didactic intelligibility for the vernacular audience over word-for-word accord.⁵ In this sense, Brunetto's approach favours textual 'invisibility', in Venuti's sense of prioritizing fluency and readability, so as to 'domesticate' a foreign-language text and attenuate its unfamiliarity for the receiving culture.⁶ Although the visual *mise-en-page* structure never permits the reader to forget that the text originates with someone other than Brunetto, his translation practice in other aspects seems intended to minimize and smooth over the temporal and linguistic switches between the two voices inscribed on the page.

Brunetto's approach to Cicero in the *Rettorica* in fact takes on some of the senses of the term 'translation' in the medieval notion of *translatio studii et imperii*, the transfer of both learning and

² The tags – which have long developed an almost free-floating existence of their own – derive respectively from Horace, *Ars poetica*, Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, and Jerome, *Ad Pammachium de optimo genere interpretandi* (in a passage itself citing but reversing the emphasis of the Horatian and Ciceronian *dicta*). My immediate source is Rita Copeland's magisterial study, *Rhetoric, hermeneutics and translation in the middle ages: academic translations and vernacular texts* (Cambridge 1991) 42–55.

³ Translation 'visibility' is extensively discussed by Lawrence Venuti, *The translator's invisibility: a history of translation* (London, 2nd edn, 2008).

⁴ MS BNCF II.IV.127, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence. This statement is adopted as the title rubric in Maggini's print edition, which accordingly uses a larger point-size typeface for *Tullio*'s text than for the *Sponitore*'s and signals rubrication by using a cursive italic font.

⁵ C. Segre, *Lingua, stile, società: studi sulla storia della prosa italiana* (Milan, 2nd edn, 1974) 214–26 (214, 221).

⁶ Venuti, *Translator's invisibility* (n. 3, above); overview of 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' translation, 17–39.

power from antiquity to the contemporary age. The transfer into vernacular Florentine effects an appropriation for the contemporary polity of all the prestige of ancient Roman cultural forms.⁷ In Brunetto's case, one might add the rider, *translatio imperii rei publicae*, for besides its technical content, the *Rettorica* breathes a firm ideology in which Cicero's role as a glorious defender of Roman republicanism, and opponent of empire and tyranny, forms a substantive part. Part of the domestication of Cicero's text for duecento Florence is bound up with affirming the political and constitutional relevance, for modern citizens, of acquiring the art of eloquence that in Brunetto's view contributed so strongly to the virtuous functioning of the ancient Roman republic.

Alongside the process of rendering *De inventione* into Florentine and glossing it for the modern Tuscan reader, Brunetto operates a transformation of the figure of Cicero himself into a prototype of the kind of citizen whom Brunetto would have admired – indeed, felt himself to embody – in his own thirteenth-century polity.⁸ Latini was firmly committed to a particular form of Florentine Guelf republicanism: that of the Primo Popolo of 1250–60, under which he came to political maturity. The Primo Popolo's criteria for position in government favoured the guild-based *popolano* class to which Brunetto belonged over the traditional noble elite.⁹ His presentation of the character and experience of Cicero as both statesman and orator places him very much in this mould:

Tully was a new citizen of Rome without great rank; but through his wisdom he reached such high status that all Rome paid attention to his utterance. (1.16)

It is surely no coincidence that Brunetto's emphasis on *Tullio's* modest birth and family background, gaining access to power rather through intellect and oratorical ability than influence, virtually replicates his own.¹⁰ Son of a civic notary, he probably trained in law and rhetoric at Bologna, giving him the professional qualifications that propelled his rapid rise through the ranks of Florentine communal offices in the 1250s to become an official notary, administrator, and diplomat.¹¹ Brunetto's later career would see him reach still higher office in the 1270s–1290s; but at the time of the *Rettorica's* composition, he was in exile from Florence, following the collapse of the Primo Popolo regime after the battle of Montaperti in 1260. It was, I believe, in response to the fragility of his (and his fellow exiles') resulting position, that Latini chose in the *Rettorica* to build up a series of cultural and political parallels between the forms of civil life in ancient Rome and modern Florence that would promote his own Guelf and *popolano* vision of statecraft. More personally, his persuasive portrait of Cicero – as loyal servant of the state and 'the very wisest of all the Romans' (1.7) – manoeuvres its readers towards concluding that the *Sponitore* capable of rendering Ciceronian wisdom into Tuscan for modern readers is himself eminently worthy of reinclusion within the political order. Brunetto's *Rettorica* thus creatively re-semanticizes the *De inventione* through its domesticating translation practice. As the text unfolds, the *Rettorica* becomes in part a handbook of duecento Guelf popular republicanism; while Brunetto – co-author with, and interpreter of, *Tullio* – becomes a figure whose command of Roman forms both of

⁷ Copeland, *Rhetoric* (n. 2, above) 103–07.

⁸ I. Ventura, 'L'iconografia letteraria di Brunetto Latini', *Studi medievali* 38.2 (1997) 499–528 (514, 524).

⁹ J. M. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200–1575* (Oxford 2006) 48–50, 66–72.

¹⁰ See P. J. Osmond, 'Catiline in Fiesole and Florence: The after-life of a Roman conspirator', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 7.1 (2000) 3–38 (16–18); J. Bartuschat, 'La *Rettorica* di Brunetto Latini: rhétorique, éthique et politique à Florence dans la deuxième moitié du XIIIe siècle', in *La science du bien dire. Rhétorique et rhétoriciens au Moyen Âge*, Arzana 8, ed. M. Marietti and C. Perrus (Paris 2002) 33–59 (36–37); C. T. Davis, 'Brunetto Latini and Dante', in Davis, *Dante's Italy and other essays* (Philadelphia 1984) 166–97 (173–74, 178–80); Ventura, 'L'iconografia' (n. 8, above) 510–11.

¹¹ Julia Bolton Holloway summarizes Brunetto's career under the Primo Popolo in *Twice-told tales: Brunetto Latini and Dante Alighieri* (New York 1993) 28–42.

discourse and of governance takes on heroically Ciceronian proportions for his fellow countrymen, suggesting that in turn he may be considered ‘the very wisest of all the Florentines’.

To this end, Brunetto adopts a distinctive translation methodology in the *Rettorica*. It differs significantly from his other translation of the ancient text, in book III of his enormously successful French compendium, the *Tresor* (3.1–72).¹² The *Tresor*’s version of *De inventione* is more complete, covering almost all of Cicero’s first book rather than just the first 24 sections; and much more succinct, rendering in just 29 chapters what the *Rettorica* covers in 105. In the French version, translation and gloss are completely merged. The prose runs continuously, and where a phrase derives directly from the ancient source Brunetto simply notes: ‘Tully says’, ‘Tully concurs’, or ‘according to what Tully says’.¹³ The authorial voice of Cicero is fully subordinated to Brunetto’s. In the *Rettorica*, by contrast, the original source text is maintained distinctly, in its vernacular rendition; but each section of the Ciceronian text is supplemented, under a distinguishing rubric, by an often lengthy comment from Brunetto.

At first approach, the *Rettorica* may thus seem to observe precise distinctions regarding language, authorship, and temporal separation between source and original. By medieval norms, too, it approximates a familiar model for study of the classics, supplementing the original ancient text with an explanatory commentary of separate, later authorship, normally in Latin.¹⁴ Further investigation, however, reveals Brunetto’s self-positioning as collaborator and co-author with Cicero to elide or undermine those initial distinctions. The primary act of translation makes the textual ‘Tullio’ speak in the duecento Florentine idiom of Brunetto. The operation was one that Brunetto and his contemporaries often labelled *volgarizzare*.¹⁵ The term, as Alison Cornish notes, implies ‘not so much an importation of something foreign as a shift in register and social class’, and equally expresses a sense that the text is somehow diminished by the process of making itself accessible to the *illiterati* (the non-Latin literate), so that ‘in effect it disdains its own audience’.¹⁶ Latin to vernacular *volgarizzare* thus followed what Gianfranco Folena calls a ‘vertical’ pattern in which the source language carried higher prestige and cultural validity than the target tongue.¹⁷ Latini’s practice in the *Rettorica* does not however conform to precisely these implications of the term. Indeed, he consistently avoids the verb *volgarizzare* and instead insists that ‘Tullio’s book is transferred into vernacular [*recato è in volgare*] without error’ (1.12, emphasis mine), stressing

¹² For reasons of space and organization, I am unable in this essay to explore the way that the *Tresor* thus doubles Brunetto’s translation/*translatio* of Cicero. Nor can I here discuss the phenomenon of the *Tresor*’s rapid translation from French to Florentine (and other vernaculars), providing Brunetto’s Italian readership with yet another version of the Ciceronian original. Reference throughout is to *Brunetto Latini: Tresor*, ed. P. G. Beltrami, P. Squillacioti, P. Torri, S. Vatteroni (Turin 2007).

¹³ Examples taken from 3.1.2, 3.1.5, 3.2.3 (634–38); the simple ‘Tully says’ is the most common form throughout. Most editors, including Beltrami, date the *Tresor* later than the *Rettorica*; see I. Maffia Scariati, *Dal Tresor al Tesoretto: saggi su Brunetto Latini e i suoi fiancheggiatori* (Rome 2010) 182–87.

¹⁴ Brunetto drew extensively on existing commentary for his apparatus, making the text in some ways a dual translation from Latin, both of *De inventione* and of pre-existing *accessus* material. Gian Carlo Alessio discusses in detail Brunetto’s relationship to the gloss tradition, and one source in particular, in ‘Brunetto Latini e Cicerone (e i dettatori)’, *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 22 (1974) 123–69. See also Guido Baldassarri, who analyzes how the *Rettorica*’s introductory sections (1.1–12) follow medieval prologue/*accessus* conventions: ‘Prologo e *Accessus ad auctores* nella *Rettorica* di Brunetto Latini’, *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 12 (1976) 102–16.

¹⁵ Gianfranco Folena, *Volgarizzare e tradurre* (Turin 1991), outlines the medieval Italian lexis of vernacular translation, 31–42. See also A. Cornish, *Vernacular translation in Dante’s Italy: illiterate literature* (Cambridge 2011).

¹⁶ Cornish, *Vernacular translation* (n. 15, above) 3, 23. Cornish’s chapter 5, ‘The treasure of the translator: Dante and Brunetto’ (126–57), offers a stimulating analysis of Brunetto’s activity as *volgarizzatore*, including a comparative discussion of *Inferno* XV as raising issues of translation in Brunetto versus Dante.

¹⁷ Folena, *Volgarizzare* (n. 15, above) 13–14.

the intelligence and accuracy of his translation.¹⁸

Brunetto's *Rettorica* uses the processes of translation and commentary to conduct a serious attempt at constructing a form of vernacular adequate to express the Ciceronian source text, in a manner that elevates Brunetto himself towards a togate authority of quasi-*romanitas*, rather than traduces Cicero into an *illiterato*.¹⁹ Cicero is indeed made to speak Brunetto's language, but that language is a formal one, dignified by usage in the public forum of thirteenth-century Florentine state infrastructure, which Brunetto considers with all the seriousness one might expect of a career political administrator. As previously noted, the 'domesticating' horizon of expectations established by his translation practice, explanations, and examples increasingly melds the two political landscapes – of duecento Tuscany and of late republican Rome – almost into one.

Brunetto makes plain from the start that his approach to the task of composing the treatise has not merely been to render Cicero's Latin into vernacular, but to share Cicero's authorship and authority:

Now it must be said who is the author, that is the maker, of this book, and what was his intention in the book, and what it treats, and the reason why the book has been made, and its usefulness, and what title the book has. The author of this book is double: one who, drawing on all the sayings of the philosophers before him and on the living waters of his own intellect made his book of rhetoric, and this was Marcus Tullius Cicero, the wisest and most learned of all the Romans. The second is Brunetto Latini, citizen of Florence, who put all his learning and wit to expound and make clear what Tullio had said; and this is the person whom this book calls the *Sponitore*, that is, who expounds the book of Tullio and helps with understanding it, using his own words and those of philosophers and teachers before him, and also provides whatever is needed regarding this art that was left out of Tullio's book, as the attentive reader will be able to see below. (1.6–7)

This account of his procedure in composing the *Rettorica* proposes from the start its dual authorship: 'The author of this book is double'.²⁰ The two participants in the collaborative work are formally identified, with the three-part Roman formal name of *Marcus Tullius Cicero* and the formal name and surname of *Brunetto Latini*; their citizenship, Roman and Florentine, is given; and the tags by which they will be identified in the remainder of the book – *Tullio* and *lo Sponitore* – are noted. Their authorial collaboration is recorded almost with contractual formality, with the data that one might expect to find in a deed of partnership; and just as two partners found a single company, so these two individuals merge into one author.²¹ Noun, verb form, and adjective are all singular, as the two separate writers coalesce into the single author, each with an equal footing in the enterprise of composition.²² Brunetto thus places himself alongside the text's originator and, neatly, almost elides the personal and temporal separations between them.

¹⁸ *Ritrarre* or *recare in volgare* appear in the title and sections 1.12, 12.1. On the *Rettorica*'s choice of terminology for the activity of translation, see Folena, *Volgarizzare* (n. 15, above) 35–36; Maffia Scariati, *Dal Tesoro al Tesoretto* (n. 13, above) 106.

¹⁹ See Bartuschat, 'La *Rettorica*' (n. 10, above) 35; Baldassarri, 'Prologo e *Accessus*' (n. 14, above) 113–16; Ventura, 'L'iconografia' (n. 8, above) 514, 524.

²⁰ On dual authorship, see C. Montella, 'Il doppio autore di Brunetto Latini e il traduttore di Leonardo Bruni: mondi della traduzione contrapposti', in *I luoghi della traduzione: le interfacce. Atti del XLIII Congresso internazionale di studi della Società di linguistica italiana, Verona 24–29 settembre 2009*, ed. G. Massariello Merzagora and S. dal Maso (Rome 2011) 629–38 (633–34).

²¹ Cristiana Fordyce stresses how the Florentine mercantile culture of Brunetto and his fellow Guelf *popolano* traders and professionals finds expression in commercially-oriented expressions in Brunetto's Ciceronian translations: 'The *Pro Ligario*: *volgarizzamento* as a means of profit', in *The politics of translation in the middle ages and the Renaissance*, ed. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, L. von Flotow and D. Russell (Ottawa 2001), 107–20 (107–08).

²² In the original: 'l'autore di questa opera è doppio'.

Scrutinizing the statement more closely, the dialogic production of the text between two partners expands, and additional voices are acknowledged as sources for what the reader sees on the book's pages. The first, Cicero, has drawn not only on 'the living waters of his own intellect', but also on 'all the sayings of the philosophers before him'; Brunetto, likewise, brings to his translation and exposition the tools of 'his own words and those of philosophers and teachers before him'.²³ The encyclopaedic model of authorship that Brunetto later made his own in the *Tresor* appears already to be an important point of reference here. Cicero as well as Brunetto is positioned within a long procession of rhetorical authorities whose wisdom is recapitulated at intervals, without ever losing the sanctifying authority of transmission from a more remote age.

Brunetto also gives due prominence to Cicero's legend of the foundation of rhetoric by 'a great and wise man' (5). The eloquence of this *magnus vir et sapiens* (*Inv.* 1.1.2) converted humanity out of bestial hostility and towards civilization. The legend provides a grand origin for the notion of an uninterrupted secular re-transmission of rhetorical authority, from remote pre-Ciceronian antiquity through to Brunetto's present.²⁴ From this mythical originator of rhetoric, the names of his successors Cicero and Brunetto are gradually supplemented with others. Besides authorities cited in the *De inventione* source text, such as Hermagoras and Aristotle, Brunetto names many additional sources, notably late classical authors such as Victorinus and Boethius. Other, later commentators from whose expertise he borrows, often heavily, remain unacknowledged, notably contemporaries such as Boncompagno da Signa, Guido Faba, and Bene da Firenze.²⁵ If temporal distance seemed elided in Brunetto's claim of joint authorship with Cicero, his approach to the citation of rhetorical sources shows a typical medieval sense that, whereas ancient writers need name-checking, closer contemporaries do not. In any case, the larger chorus of philosophers and commentators is not attributed direct authorship of the new work: they are merely cited as occasion demands, as Cicero himself will be in the *Tresor*. The partners named in the task of producing the *Rettorica* remain only the pair mentioned in the prologue: *Tullio*/Marcus Tullius Cicero, and *lo Sponitore*/Brunetto Latini.

Graphically and textually, the new text primarily follows the structure of a dialogue between *Tullio* and *lo Sponitore*; but there are also other forms of dialogue embedded within the text. Another important passage on the task of translating Cicero occurs in Brunetto's commentary on the sequence of events behind the book's production:

The reason why this book has been made is as follows. This Brunetto Latini, because of the war between the parties in Florence, was exiled from the city when his Guelf party, which was allied with the Pope and with the Church of Rome, was expelled and banished

²³ The title rubric also acknowledges Brunetto's use of additional sources, presenting a translation 'from the works of Tullio and many philosophers'.

²⁴ The medieval rhetoricians' appropriation of the Ciceronian myth, including Brunetto's in *Tresor* 3.1.7, is much discussed: see, for instance, R. Copeland, 'The history of rhetoric and the *longue durée*: Ciceronian myth and its medieval afterlives', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 106.2 (2007) 176–202 (193–98); Bartuschat, 'La *Rettorica*' (n. 10, above) 40–45; C. J. Nederman, 'The union of wisdom and eloquence before the Renaissance: the Ciceronian orator in medieval thought', *Journal of Medieval History* 18.1 (1992) 75–95; Q. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti: the artist as political philosopher', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986) 1–56 (17–20 on Brunetto); G. Baldassarri, 'Ancora sulle fonti della *Rettorica*: Brunetto Latini e Teodorico di Chartres', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 19 (1979) 41–69 (49–50); Davis, 'Brunetto Latini' (n. 10, above) 172–73.

²⁵ See Alessio, 'Brunetto Latini' (n. 14, above) 126–30; Bartuschat, 'La *Rettorica*' (n. 10, above) 34; J. O. Ward, *Ciceronian rhetoric in treatise, scholion and commentary* (Turnhout 1995) 24–25; V. Cox, 'Ciceronian rhetoric in late medieval Italy: the Latin and vernacular traditions', in *The rhetoric of Cicero in its medieval and early Renaissance commentary tradition*, ed. V. Cox and J. O. Ward (Leiden and Boston 2006) 109–43 (109–14); R. G. Witt, 'Brunetto Latini and the Italian tradition of *Ars dictaminis*', *Stanford Italian Review* (1983) 5–24 (now in R. G. Witt, *Italian humanism and medieval rhetoric*, Variorum [Aldershot 2001] ch. V) (18–19, 23); E. Artifoni, 'I podestà professionali e la fondazione retorica della politica comunale', *Quaderni storici* n.s. 63.3 (1986) 687–719 (693–94).

from the city. And then he went into France to look after his own concerns, and there he encountered a friend, who was from his own city and his own party, very wealthy, well mannered, and intelligent, who showed him great honour and helped him greatly, and for this reason he [Brunetto] named him his 'Port', as can plainly be seen at many points in this book. He was naturally a very good speaker, and greatly desired to know what learned men had said on the subject of rhetoric; and for love of him, this Brunetto Latini, who understood Latin very well and had dedicated himself to the study of rhetoric, undertook the making of this book. (1.10)

A second, implied dialogue is therefore present in the text, between Brunetto and the friend, nicknamed his 'Port' (*Porto*), who despite natural intelligence and untrained eloquence yet requires Latini's rhetorical instruction.

This, presumably, is to equip him for future political success in a resurgent Guelf regime, when both he and Brunetto will have returned to Florence from their exile in France. This assumption will be corroborated later, in the longest of the *Sponitore's* chapters, when Brunetto reiterates his didactic intentions towards his dedicatee and beyond that, via the *Porto's* future rhetorical performances, to a larger circle of compatriots:

The Sponitore explains all that has been said up to now.

And on this point, before going any further, the *Sponitore* would like to ask his Port (for love of whom he is composing the present book, not without greatly burdening his faculties) to keep his understanding sharp and his intellect attentive, and his memory retentive in grasping the words that have been said up to this point, as well as those which will follow, so that he may become, as he desires, a perfect exponent of *dictamen* and a noble orator, of which arts this book is the lantern and the spring. (76.2)

The relationship of Brunetto and his *Porto* shifts between that of client-patron and master-pupil. Brunetto hints that he is benefiting from the other's financial or socio-political heft, but the *Porto* also defers to Brunetto ('showed him great honour'). The wording of this and subsequent allusions to the *Porto* makes plain Brunetto's superiority in intellectual stature and recalibrates external or material inequalities by emphasizing his advantage in scholarship and experience over the other.²⁶ In Alison Cornish's penetrating study of Brunetto's translation practice, she suggests that the dedication 'reduces the goal of Brunetto's literary endeavours', revealing a rather brutally pragmatic, clientelistic concern with maintaining social and party favour in pursuit of personal advantage.²⁷ No doubt there is considerable self-interest in the relationship, given Brunetto's career involvement in Guelf politics, where patronal sponsorship could bring practical advancement. Yet by underscoring the pre-eminence of rhetorical practice in their visions of good governance, the *Rettorica's* implied conversations between the double author and the *Porto* as dedicatee also provide a more ideologically elevated view of how contemporary Florentines may reactivate the moral grandeur of Cicero's Rome.

As noted above, the *Rettorica's* *mise-en-page* uses rubrication to mark the alternating voices of *Tullio* and *lo Sponitore*. This makes the collaborative dialogue between the two halves of the authorial *persona* constantly present and visible to the reader, however much their authorship merges into one through the transposition of Cicero's Latin into Brunetto's Florentine vernacular forms. By contrast, the dialogue with the *Porto*, the ideal first reader but never (*pace* Cornish) an exclusive one, is less visually evident, far more sporadic, and is also one-way. The *Porto's* role is to maintain deferential, silent attention to the words of Brunetto and his co-author, Cicero. When he is granted some autonomy, in projecting how he will capitalize on the *Rettorica's* lessons in

²⁶ See further remarks addressed to the *Porto*, e.g. 28.2, 32.6.

²⁷ Cornish, *Vernacular translation* (n. 15, above) 144–45.

‘the fair speeches he will make following the rules of the art’ (33.3), it turns out that the result will not so much benefit the *Porto* as consolidate the prestige of the work’s dual author. The patron’s speeches are less important for their material, political outcomes than for intellectual and intangible ones, when ‘the book and the *Sponitore* will consequently receive perpetual praise’ (33.3).²⁸

With this remark, Brunetto directs attention towards a large and long-term future audience, setting aside when, how, and where any single utterance of the *Porto* might happen to occupy a fleeting historical present. Brunetto’s hope for ‘perpetual praise’ seems to challenge the well-known principle that translation is an inherently short-term practice, each generation requiring new versions of the monumental original. In my view, though, Brunetto is not with this asserting hubristically the endurance of his translation simply as textual production. Rather, what is worthy of achieving ‘perpetual praise’ from future generations is the attempt made in the *Rettorica* to actualize a Cicero – and through him, perhaps even the original *magnus vir et sapiens* of the first civilization – for a troubled contemporary age, and so to urge that verbal rather than physical engagement between opponents is the best route to civic co-existence.²⁹ The *mise-en-page* exchanges between *Tullio* and *lo Sponitore* even provide a visual model for the reader of the ideal harmony achieved via dialogue, alongside what is signified in the textual content.

The specifics of Florentine volgare

Brunetto’s enterprise in translating Cicero into the *volgare* is thus one in which the notion of dialogue plays a substantial part and for which an abundance of interlocutors is envisaged. The substance of the text on the page is produced through the strongly marked structure of dialogue through which Brunetto presents the *De inventione* translation, in the textual persona of *Tullio*, alongside the modern commentary, in the persona of *lo Sponitore*; and in which the *Porto* is periodically addressed directly. Beyond this friend and patron, and sharing his audience position, there also surely lies a wider public, made up of contemporary and future members of the Florentine vernacular language group who share an interest in rhetoric. (The survival of seven complete or partial manuscript copies demonstrate that there was, indeed, a ready audience for the text through to the tre- and quattrocento.)³⁰ The precise meaning of the term ‘rettorica’ is the subject of a lengthy and distinctly politically-oriented set of definitions by the *Sponitore* (1.1–4), establishing that it concerns eloquence both spoken and written (*dire* and *dittare*), as an ‘art of using full and perfect eloquence in both public causes and private ones’ (1.4).³¹ As Enrico Artifoni has noted, the scribal form of the word *rettorica* itself, with a double *-tt-*, follows a common Italian duecento conflation of the terms *rettor* and *rector*, with similar forms appearing in both colloquial Latin and vernacular sources, marking the verbal arts as a primary part of political

²⁸ Paola Allegretti discusses the echoes between Brunetto’s desire for *perpetua laude* here and the famous episode in *Inferno* XV, suggesting that the *Rettorica* rather than the *Tresor* constitutes Dante’s primary frame of allusion: ‘Dante e Brunetto sui “duri margini” (*Inf.* XV.1): strategie di risarcimento postumo’, *Margini* 2 (2008) http://www.margini.unibas.ch/web/rivista/numero_2/saggi/articolo4/dante_brunetto.html (consulted 27 November 2016).

²⁹ Brunetto thus seems to me to have something in common in his conception of translation with some of Walter Benjamin’s notions about the ‘translatability’ of texts, in which the permanence of any single version is less significant than the attempted ‘reconciliation and fulfilment’ between two cultural-linguistic spheres: ‘The task of the translator: An introduction to the translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens*’, trans. H. Zohn, in *The translation studies reader*, ed. L. Venuti (London 2000) 75–83 (78–79).

³⁰ The manuscripts are discussed by E. Guadagnini and G. Vaccaro, ‘“Selonc ce que Tullies dit en son livre.” Il lessico retorico volgare nei volgarizzamenti ciceroniani’, in *Cultura, livelli di cultura e ambienti nel Medioevo occidentale, Atti del convegno SIFR, Bologna, 5–8 ottobre 2009*, *Aracne* 10 (Rome 2012) 553–69 (560–61, 565–66). They correct Bolton Holloway’s list of ten manuscripts (*Twice-told tales* [n. 11, above] 516–17).

³¹ See Baldassarri, ‘*Prologo e Accessus*’ (n. 14, above) 103–04.

science.³² Brunetto emphasizes the political relevance of rhetoric again when his translation places ‘this art of rhetoric in that category which we declare to be part of civic lore, that is the art of city governance’ (17).³³ The wider Tuscan audience for Brunetto’s rhetorical lore is presumably one that, like the *Porto*, studies manuals such as the *Rettorica* for primarily practical purposes, as politically active members of the Italian republican communes, where the arts of speech were indeed very central to civic life.³⁴

In these communes, among the *illiterati* non-conversant with Latin, *popolani* enjoyed increasing access to roles in government that had previously been dominated by the elite noble dynasties. Brunetto could therefore have imagined finding an increasingly wide audience for his vernacular *Tullio*’s instruction in oratory. As noted earlier, the *Rettorica* is probably in large part the product of Brunetto’s own experience of such regimes, under the Florentine Primo Popolo. Gian Carlo Alessio suggests it may even have been conceived whilst he was still based in Florence, with easy access to the kind of rhetorical manuals that so evidently form the basis for his commentary and were in wide use on the dictaminal courses that Brunetto himself probably followed at Bologna university.³⁵ If this were indeed the case, his decision to begin the *Rettorica* in his native vernacular would be easily explicable, springing from consideration for an audience immediately *in situ* (if begun, or at least planned, in Florence); or at worst sharing his involvement in a recent, but not yet definitive, reversal of faction politics (if begun as his exile started, as most scholars believe).³⁶ The incomplete state of the work (all manuscripts end at or before *De inventione* 1.17.24, *Rettorica* 105.3) and the recasting of much of the same rhetorical content into a new framework and a new language of translation in the *Tresor* have plausibly been seen as marking acceptance that exile would prove a more than temporary disruption to Brunetto’s and his fellow Guelfs’ political careers. It eventually endured for several years, c. 1260–66. At some point, rather than marking time with a monothematic work in their shared language for circulation among a small community of Florentine exiles, there would have been good social, political, and financial reasons for Brunetto’s turn to French, in the *Tresor*.³⁷ The longstanding literary tradition of French justified its description in the *Tresor* as ‘the speech that is most pleasing and most widely accessible among all languages’ (1.1.7). It was also a necessary instrument for interaction with the Florentine Guelfs’ French host communities, as well as a choice displaying diplomatic Francophilia towards Charles of Anjou, the potential captain of Guelf resistance to the Hohenstaufen-backed Ghibelline regime that governed Florence 1260–66.³⁸

The *Rettorica*, by contrast, may be imagined as including yet another, different potential strand of dialogue in its linguistic choices, and in its emphasis on a dual Tullian-Brunettian, Romano-Florentine authorship. This would be a dialogue with the Florence whose *volgare* the work embraces – and not only with its Guelf, exiled component. Shared tongue of Brunetto

³² Artifoni, ‘I podestà professionali’ (n. 25, above) 701–02; Beltrami, *Brunetto Latini* (n. 12, above) xii–xiii. See also Bartuschat, ‘La *Rettorica*’ (n. 10, above) 39–40.

³³ Brunetto’s *civile scienza*, which I translate here as ‘civic lore’, renders Cicero’s *civilis scientia* (*Inv.* 1.5.6).

³⁴ See S. J. Milner, ‘“Le sottili cose non si possono bene aprire in volgare”: vernacular oratory and the transmission of classical rhetorical theory in the late medieval Italian communes’, *Italian Studies* 64.2 (2009) 221–244 (236–40); Cornish, *Vernacular translation* (n. 15, above) 30–31.

³⁵ Alessio, ‘Brunetto Latini’ (n. 14, above) 126–27.

³⁶ Beltrami, *Brunetto Latini* (n. 12, above) xi–xv, and n. 17, dates the *Rettorica* to 1260–61, i.e. the first months of an exile that became effective in September 1260, the moment of the Guelfs’ abandonment of Florence following the Ghibelline victory at Montaperti.

³⁷ Brunetto describes the *Tresor* as ‘written in vernacular, in the language of France’ (1.1.7). More specifically, it is written in Picard, widely used in the Arras area, where Brunetto spent several years: Bolton Holloway, *Twice-told tales* (n. 11, above) 54–56.

³⁸ Bolton Holloway, *Twice-told tales* (n. 11, above) 60–65; see also Milner, ‘“Le sottili cose”’ (n. 34, above) 239 and n. 79.

and his *Porto*, this *volgare* is also the language that potentially creates commonality with their factional opponents and that, through a structured use of diplomacy and verbal negotiation, might bridge the divide that has opened up between them.³⁹ The rising importance of adversarial debate in medieval Italian communal and factional politics probably finds its counterpart in Brunetto's direct engagement with the challenging rhetorical lore of the *De inventione*: 'as an art of discourse that addressed itself specifically to the handling of conflict, [it] must have seemed to offer its practitioners vital instruction in the art of successfully negotiating a profoundly fractured civic environment', Virginia Cox notes.⁴⁰

From this perspective, it is surely no coincidence that the longest section of the work where Brunetto speaks as the *lo Sponitore* should be the part where he discusses 'controversies' and 'matters under contention' (*in tencione*) in chapter 76.⁴¹ This occupies fully 33 paragraphs of gloss on, and excursus to, the doctrine of the six parts of oratory; in Maggini's print edition, *Tullio*'s text here occupies a scant seven lines of text, to seventeen pages of commentary from the *lo Sponitore*. Brunetto thus makes a truly lengthy case for the importance of using verbal skill to resolve disputes. A substantial section analyses debates on political action 'between the advisers of rulers and of communes' (76.8), explicitly locating the rhetorical practitioner in a recognizably Italian and communal environment. Following the discussion of *tencioni*, the *Rettorica* moves into the discussion of *exordium* and offers instruction on the manipulative arts of *insinuatio*, a skill extremely pertinent to the debating practices of the Tuscan communes.⁴² *Insinuatio* could assist speakers to dress partisan arguments persuasively and might enable them to resolve disputes through verbal sparring rather than physical violence, always a professed objective in Tuscan factional competition. But it is perhaps telling that Brunetto abandoned his translation just at the point where Cicero's text turns to the presentation of the most morally dubious material, at section 105, 'On discreditable causes'. The decision not only chimes with communal culture's prevailing emphasis on the importance of civic cohesion, but also protects Brunetto from the potential embarrassment of providing theoretical instruction and commentary in an area where his own previous practice, as a highly partisan Guelf faction politician, might not bear too much scrutiny.⁴³

In chapter 76, Brunetto's close and lengthy analysis of the Ciceronian principles underpinning the structure and delivery of the speeches constituting a *tencione* focuses on a theoretical point in his source text that would have significant practical relevance for Florentine vernacular speakers of both Guelf and Ghibelline persuasions. These speech forms are presented as vital elements in the negotiation and (ideally) resolution of potential rifts in the communal governing councils, where conflict is, as Brunetto observes, a daily reality:

[...] every day people discuss different matters among themselves, during which it often happens that one person gives his opinion and presents it in his own manner, and another

³⁹ But cf. Cornish, *Vernacular translation* (n. 15, above) 144–14, for an account that sees the identification of a named dedicatee as a partisan and narrowing strategy (see n. 27, above).

⁴⁰ Cox, 'Ciceronian rhetoric' (n. 25, above) 118; see also S. J. Milner, 'Communication, consensus, and conflict: rhetorical precepts, the *ars concionandi*, and social ordering in late medieval Italy', in *The rhetoric of Cicero*, ed. Cox and Ward (n. 25, above), 365–408 (370–71).

⁴¹ I maintain the use of the Italian term *tencione* in what follows, for its interesting double meaning as both a controversy/confrontation (e.g. between political opponents in debate or in armed conflict) and as a literary genre (in modernized spelling, *tenzone*) of formalized verbal duelling, often through poets' exchanges of sonnets or quatrains debating matters of love, politics, or religion.

⁴² Cox, 'Ciceronian rhetoric' (n. 25, above) 118–21; Milner, 'Communication, consensus' (n. 40, above) 368–69, 372.

⁴³ Allegretti, 'Dante e Brunetto' (n. 28, above), notes that the *Rettorica*'s final words are those of Catiline's self-defence for his conspiracy as defending the poor and wretched (105.3), an uncomfortable reminder of the rhetorical sophistries produced by civil war.

says the opposite, so that they are in contention [*in tencione*] with each other. (76.5)

Besides its emphasis on spoken oratory, chapter 76 is also one of the sections where Brunetto makes a quite extended survey of epistolary aspects of rhetoric. There is considerable scholarly discussion of this dictaminal contamination – which could also be classed as duecento modernization – of the Ciceronian original.⁴⁴ Brunetto comments that ‘Tullio in his book is dealing with speeches that are made in the audience’s presence’ (76.26), while in Brunetto’s view, *dire* and *dittare* are simply two different branches of the art (76.23). He discusses the multiple linguistic forms in which epistolary *tencioni* may be expressed, ‘in Latin or in prose or in verse or in *volgare* or in any other form’ (76.14). However, he also admits that letters need not express *tencione*, but may instead promote friendship across a distance:

[...] the epistle, that is the formally composed letter, often does not take the form of debate or contention, rather it is a gift that one person sends to another, in which thoughts are able to speak and a person who is silent may be heard and from a distant place [*terra*]⁴⁵ may seek and acquire favour, favour can be strengthened and blossom into love, and many things can be put in writing which one would be fearful and incapable of saying aloud in the presence of the recipient. (76.19)

Chapter 76’s commentary is not always easy to follow – the *Sponitore* urges his *Porto* four times to pay close attention (76.2, 4, 17, 23) – and is sometimes contradictory.⁴⁶ But although Latini’s attempted melding of *dire* and *dittare* is not fully resolved, the chapter as a whole rather consistently emphasizes aspects of rhetorical lore that could usefully underpin a potential dialogue between Brunetto and his Guelf compatriots in France, and the Ghibelline community in occupation in Florence. These include the interest in specifically vernacular eloquence, rendered in their common tongue;⁴⁷ the emphasis on *tencione* and the resolution of disputes through discussion; and the question of epistolary communication to promote friendship ‘from a distant place’. There is potential contradiction between arguing that rhetoric pertains to the conduct of *tencioni*, oral or written, but is also employed in letters consolidating friendship. Both arguments, however, would be pertinent to exploring ideas about how Brunetto and his fellow Guelfs, in France, might gain the attention of an audience in Florence that consists of compatriots who are also hostile. The use of the Florentine *volgare* shared by both groups, Guelfs and Ghibellines alike, offers a means of emphasizing their commonality. It demonstrates that Brunetto and his companions remain committed to the discourse of the city’s public service – ‘discourse’ in the sense of commitment both to its local *volgare* and to its rhetorically-driven forms of republican governance – and it also shows that they are willing to conduct negotiations that could reconcile the *tencione* currently dividing them.

⁴⁴ P. Sgrilli, ‘Tensioni anticlassiche nelle *Rettorica* di Brunetto Latini’, *Medioevo romanzo* 3 (1976) 380–93 (386–93); Davis, ‘Brunetto Latini’ (n. 10, above) 169–70, 178–79. I am not fully convinced by Montella’s ingenious suggestion that the ‘double author’ conceit makes Cicero contribute the oratorical instruction and the *Sponitore* the dictaminal element (‘Il doppio autore’ [n. 20, above] 634).

⁴⁵ The term *terra* that Brunetto uses here commonly signifies ‘city’ in medieval Italian (in 1.10, he speaks of Florence as his and the *Porto*’s *terra*), as well as ‘land’.

⁴⁶ The question whether *Tullio*’s parts of speech map exactly onto the parts of a letter, for instance, seems unresolved: the correspondence is asserted in paragraph 18, but contradicted in 26, with their rival diagrams of the six parts of a *diceria* and five of an *epistola*. See Witt, ‘Brunetto Latini’ (n. 25, above) 11–15, 22–23; Milner, ‘Communication, consensus’ (n. 40, above) 385; Montella, ‘Il doppio autore’ (n. 20, above) 634–35. Witt further suggests that Brunetto abandoned the translation precisely on realizing the contradictions in trying to reconcile dictaminal with oratorical precepts, especially over the issue of *tencione*.

⁴⁷ Observations on *salutatio* are abandoned as concerning ‘writers composing in Latin more than in vernacular’ (76.32).

Revivifying Cicero and the politics of Brunetto's translation

Finally, there is another weapon in the arsenal of arguments for intellectual recognition and political repatriation that Brunetto appears to be launching at his Florentine compatriots, close or distant, single or collective, Guelf or Ghibelline as they may be. This is the notion that Brunetto is himself a Cicero figure, who provides public service to the commune simply through his mastery of eloquence. As Brunetto renders the words of Cicero into Florentine, he also undertakes a trans-temporal, socio-political *translatio* that deliberately establishes direct analogies between the contemporary Florentine popular commune and the Rome of the late republic: the Rome of Cicero.⁴⁸

In so doing, he is following well-established patterns. The Florentine legend of origins that was coming into firm existence in the duecento mythologized Florence as a 'second Rome', where topography, administration, language, and genealogy all maintained unbroken continuity from an original foundation during the Catilinarian conspiracy.⁴⁹ The legend's details varied between tellings, but the medieval sources all agreed that the city had been founded on the site of the camp from which Catiline and his troops were besieged within Fiesole, prior to his final defeat in battle. Indeed, a version of this story appears in Brunetto's own *Tresor* (1.37). The supposed foundation date thus conveniently but contentiously permitted either broadly Guelf, pro-republican or more Ghibelline, philo-imperial interpretations of the Roman link, falling as it did in the crisis that presently propelled Julius Caesar to power.⁵⁰ More generally, the whole tradition of rhetorical and dictaminal instruction in Tuscany shared the same tendency to assume permissible equivalence between the forms of contemporary civic life and those of classical Rome. As Virginia Cox puts it, there is a 'relatively unconflicted self-identification' in duecento Tuscan appropriations of ancient rhetorical culture, evident even at the lexical level of translation practice, where the vocabulary of Roman republican governance is systematically rendered with that of the communes: *res publica* as *comune*, *senator* as *anziano*, and so on.⁵¹

In the very first chapter of the *Rettorica*, Brunetto places himself firmly within this mainstream of translation practice when he renders Cicero's reflection on the woes of Rome, *nostrae rei publicae detrimenta* (*Inv.* 1.1), as 'the misfortunes of our commune' (*nostro comune*: 1). The assumption of cultural equivalence between his own age and his co-author's in his choice of terminology becomes more explicit in the gloss, explaining that 'perhaps he calls it "our commune" because Rome is the head of the world and all men's common homeland' (1.16).⁵² The statement's leading use of a present-tense verb posits the continuity of Roman conceptions of citizenship and governance down to the present day, while the rendition of Cicero's *res publica*

⁴⁸ B. Roux, *Mondes en miniatures: L'iconographie du Livre du Tresor de Brunetto Latini* (Geneva 2009) 45; G. Tanturli, 'Continuità dell'umanesimo civile da Brunetto Latini a Leonardo Bruni', in *Gli umanissimi medievali. Atti del II Congresso dell'Internationale Mittellateinerkomitee, Firenze, Certosa di Galluzzo, 11-15 settembre 1993*, ed. C. Leonardi (Florence 1998) 735-80 (738-44).

⁴⁹ N. Rubinstein, 'The beginnings of political thought in Florence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942) 198-227; C. T. Davis, 'Topographical and historical propaganda in early Florentine chronicles and in Villani', *Medioevo e rinascimento* 2 (1988) 35-51; Osmond, 'Catiline' (n. 10, above) *passim*; S. U. Baldassarri, 'Like fathers, like sons: theories on the origins of the city in late medieval Florence', *Modern Language Notes* 124.1 (2009) 23-44.

⁵⁰ Osmond, 'Catiline' (n. 10, above) 6, 34-35; S. Baldassarri, 'Like fathers, like sons' (n. 49, above) 30-31.

⁵¹ Cox, 'Ciceronian rhetoric' (n. 25, above) 114-121 (116). Cox stresses the rather different spirit of early humanist Latin-oriented scholars, based largely in Bologna and Padua, who appreciated their historical distance from Roman antiquity, and the somewhat pragmatic, creatively anachronistic appropriations more typical of the Tuscan *volgarizzatori*. On the adaptation of contemporary political terminology to describe Roman institutions see also Folena, *Volgarizzare* (n. 15, above) 41; Fordyce, 'The *Pro Ligario*' (n. 21, above) 110; Segre, *Lingua, stile, società* (n. 5, above) 60, 191.

⁵² Davis, 'Brunetto Latini' (n. 10, above) 173-76.

as *comune* also affirms Latini's Florentine Guef ideology of would-be-Roman republicanism. As already noted, the same tendency also colours Brunetto's portrait of Cicero himself as a prototype Guef *popolano*, 'a new citizen of Rome without great rank' (1.16), familiarizing the Roman author for thirteenth-century Florentine readers; and also encouraging identification between this sympathetic vision of *Tullio* and the wise *Sponitore*, who together constitute the book's double author.

Brunetto's exile in France was caused by the resurgence of the Ghibelline magnate forces whom Guef propagandists so often portrayed as latter-day Catilinarians. Self-identification with Cicero could thus carry persuasive symbolism for his own political future. Just as Cicero's bold strike against the arrogant Catiline led to an exile that was followed by repatriation to popular acclaim, so Brunetto may be hinting that the more level-headed elements in the Ghibelline regime might do well to consider recalling to Florence a statesman with the intellectual and more specifically rhetorical talents of a vernacular *Tullio*.⁵³ Perhaps tellingly, among the examples presented in his *Sponitore* persona to gloss the chapters on rhetorical *materia*, the case of Cicero's exile appears and is presented for consideration in flattering terms:

[...] here is an example for a speech that could be set out in this way: 'Is Marcus Tullius Cicero to be sent into exile, or not, since he executed many Romans, in front of the Roman populace [*popolo*], at a time when the commune [*comune*] was in danger?' Regarding this proposition there are two parts, one for and one against. The affirmative part runs thus: 'Cicero should be exiled, because he did indeed perform that act.' The negative runs thus: 'He should not be exiled, for even to mention his name introduces something good, while banishment and exile imply something bad, nor is it to be believed that a good man might do something worthy of banishment and exile.' (19.5)

Keeping to the same frame of reference, allusions both to Cicero as individual, and to the Catilinarian conspiracy, crop up in the following chapter:

The subject of the case consists of those words or that deed by means of which someone is called under scrutiny and question; as in the following example: Pompey says to Catiline: 'You are fomenting treachery in the commune [*comune*] of Rome'. And Catiline replies: 'No, I am not'. In this case Pompey and Catiline are the names of those speaking; and the case is this: 'You are acting treacherously' – 'I am not'. And it is called a case because one imputes and speaks out against the other and raises contention with him. ... A demonstrative case that cannot be subdivided is one where the speakers wish to show whether something is honourable or not with reference to a named individual, in this way: 'Marcus Tullius Cicero is worthy of praise'. The other says: 'No, he is not'; and this gives rise to the debate, whether he is to be praised or blamed. (20.3, 8)

Other references to the Catiline conspiracy recur throughout Brunetto's glosses.⁵⁴ Brunetto focuses closely on this episode, in which the arrogance and malice of the aristocrat were countered effectively by the moral force of both the personality and more importantly the words of Cicero as well as by the actions of Caesar, Cato, and Pompey, all in defence of Rome in its last republican moments. The imaginative melding of Florence and Rome is underscored again in Brunetto's lexical rendering of the conspiracy as a clash between *popolani* (both lesser and greater, *minuto*

⁵³ He presumably would be less anxious to replicate the later parts of Cicero's career; in the event, Brunetto's repatriation was followed by 30 years of secure tenure of high office.

⁵⁴ Besides 1.18, 20.3 and 20.8, already cited, the conspiracy provides exemplary material for rhetorical exercises at 38.3, 49.2, 57.3, 59.1–2, 98.2, 102.3, 102.5–7, 105.3 – notably, this last is the very final example, on which the *Rettorica* ends, and being spoken by Catiline, is indeed an example of *turpis causa* (see n. 43, above).

and *grasso*) and *potenti* or magnates for control of the *comune*, using terminology that reflects very precisely the minutiae of social distinction in thirteenth-century Florence.⁵⁵

As Catiline said: ‘Since power in the *comune* has fallen into the hands of the *minuta gente* and under the sway of the *popolo grasso*, we nobles, we *potenti* to whom high office is due, have been made like the *vile popolo*, and stripped of honour and favour and authority.’ (102.3)

There is something compelling in this adoption of an anti-Catilinarian, pro-republican frame of reference for the exemplification of the parts of speech and of their effective deployment in a *volgarizzamento* which in language choice alone addresses primarily a Florentine and Tuscan readership. Brunetto was clearly attracted towards these examples when he chose them to gloss his translation of potentially dry passages from *De inventione* on *materia* and *exordium*. They do not however necessarily all originate with him: in the *Commento* ‘*Ars rethorice*’, which Gian Carlo Alessio has indicated as a major source for Brunetto’s *Sponitore* voice, the fragmentary Latin manuscript includes two of these telling exemplifications from the conspiracy, including the debate over whether or not Cicero should be exiled.⁵⁶ Since the *Commento* manuscript now ends at a point equivalent to chapter 26 of Brunetto’s 105, the full extent of his borrowings is impossible to establish, though it is worth noting that even between the just-cited chapters 19 and 20, where two of the examples relating to Cicero also appear in the Latin text (*is he to be sent into exile?* and *is he worthy of praise?*), Brunetto manages to insert a third reference to the Catilinarian conspiracy, not present in the *Commento*: Pompey and Catiline’s contention regarding treachery. His attentiveness to Roman history and his immersion in the Ciceronian tradition meant that he was ready to amplify his sources and reinforce their preoccupation with key moments in classical history with material of his own choosing, so as to bolster a pattern of Romano-Florentine trans-temporal correspondence in the realms both of rhetorical theory and also of practice, on the political stage. The amplification of examples relating to precisely this moment of crisis, with its contention not only over serious constitutional issues, but also over delicate but crucial matters of personal reputation, further bolsters the sense of self-identification with Cicero on Brunetto’s part, writing as a political exile acutely aware of the need to repudiate juristic infamy, given that ‘banishment and exile imply something bad’.⁵⁷

Florentine commentators and chroniclers more generally were very ready to see the political disturbances of the 1260s to early 1300s as historically parallel to those of the crisis surrounding Catiline. The array of virtuous opposition positions afforded by Cicero, but also by Caesar, Pompey, and Cato meant that it was possible to clothe any one of several positions within contemporary Florentine faction conflicts as virtuous defences of the *commune* (equated, as we have seen, with the Roman *res publica*) against crisis. Stephen Milner notes, for instance, that the Ghibelline Guidotto da Bologna’s *Fiore di Rettorica*, a vulgarization of the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, portrays its supposed author not as Latini’s ‘new citizen of Rome without great rank’, but rather in terms closer to the knightly, magnate elite: ‘agreeable and steadfast, full of

⁵⁵ On magnates, *popolo grasso*, and *popolo minuto*, see Najemy, *A History of Florence* (n. 9, above) 6–27, 35–44.

⁵⁶ Alessio, ‘Brunetto Latini’ (n. 14, above) 152–53. Tanturli ‘Continuità’ (n. 48, above) 739–43, 769, notes that, despite the prominence of the *Commento* identified by Alessio as a key source, the *Rettorica*’s portrait of Cicero independently stresses his political engagement and his emphatic republicanism, rather than more academic and philosophical talents, drawing on first-hand familiarity with other overtly political Ciceronian material, such as the orations that Brunetto also translated into *volgare* (for specific divergences from the *Commento*, see 739, 741).

⁵⁷ Justin Steinberg offers a valuable discussion of the category of *infamia* and its connection with exile, taking Dante Alighieri as case study: *Dante and the limits of the law* (Chicago 2013) 17–28. He compares Dante’s presentation of his own case with that of the Brunetto Latini character of *Inferno* XV, 36–40 (and see below). See also Fordyce, ‘The *Pro Ligario*’ (n. 21, above) 108–09, 113.

graces and virtues, tall and well-formed; he had outstanding skill in arms as a knight, and was stout-hearted, well equipped with great wisdom, skilled in learning and insight, perceptive in all things'.⁵⁸ Cicero, in other words, was a figure open to appropriation by both sides in the Florentine factional struggles over the structures and tenure of power, in a commune that imagined itself always in Roman terms, whether republican or imperial.⁵⁹

In this sense, the tendencies of Brunetto in the *Rettorica* to impose himself onto, or merge himself into, the model of Cicero in personal and biographical terms, was only taking a pre-existing set of parallels towards their always possible conclusion. His strategy in doing so, however, was a novel one. The dual authorship that the *Rettorica* proposes between *Tullio* and *lo Sponitore* allows Brunetto, in voicing both parts, to imply identity of outlook, achievements, and moral stature, between both *personae* of the double author. Julia Bolton Holloway has used the metaphor of manuscript copying to suggest that Brunetto's textual appropriation of Cicero makes the *Rettorica* a kind of palimpsest, in conception if not in construction, letting Brunetto write over Cicero.⁶⁰ True, Brunetto's duecento preoccupations sometimes seem to erase the grandeur of antiquity beneath the domesticating emphasis of his *volgare* choices, especially when his lexis makes *plebs* into *popolo*, *res publica* into *comune*, and so on. It is possible, however, to understand Brunetto's importation of Cicero into the vernacular in a different spirit. The parallels his vocabulary and examples assert between the political crises of Roman antiquity and the Florentine present do not so much diminish the past as dignify the present age, reinforcing the historical and political self-image of Florence as a second Rome. Brunetto's lexis may be medieval, but the textual qualities of his translation of *De inventione* display genuine attempts at reproduction of the Ciceronian period, pushing at the expressive capacities of a *volgare* which still had only a brief history as a formal written language.⁶¹ The *mise-en-page* separation of the voices of *Tullio* and *lo Sponitore* under different rubrics demonstrates, through the sustained graphic iteration of Rome and Florence in dialogue, how much Brunetto Latini has assumed the mantle – or rather, the senatorial toga – of Cicero in addressing problems of eloquence that, in the *Rettorica*'s account, prove inseparable from those of governance. Both partners in the enterprise of dual authorship offer to re-perform the political conversion of a fractured community that can be effected if a *magnus vir et sapiens* addresses an audience of compatriots with sufficient eloquence, and in an idiom that they can access with ease.

Volgarizzamento in this spirit does not diminish the source text, nor erase it in palimpsest, but renews it in creative fashion. Brunetto's version of Roman republican *fiorentinità* uses the local *volgare* persuasively to draw in ever widening sections of a Florentine speaking and reading community, to listen to the literally fundamental (foundational) dialogue on the 'art of city governance' delivered collaboratively by *Tullio* and *Sponitore*. It also offers them a compelling self-portrait of Brunetto as an *alter Cicero* whom they surely cannot afford to exclude from the public life of that *altera Roma* that Florence is agreed to be. The famous epitaph on Brunetto Latini penned by the chronicler Giovanni Villani gives a measure of the remarkable extent to which this self-presentation was finally accepted by his contemporaries:

In the year 1294 there died at Florence a worthy citizen who was called ser Brunetto Latini.

⁵⁸ Milner, '“Le sottili cose”' (n. 34, above) 237, quoting Giambattista Speroni's critical edition of Guidotto (149); see also Bolton Holloway, *Twice-told tales* (n. 11, above) 266; Cornish, *Vernacular translation* (n. 15, above) 52–53, 56–59; Davis, 'Brunetto Latini' (n. 10, above) 171.

⁵⁹ Osmond, 'Catiline' (n. 10, above), stresses the persistent duality in medieval portrayals of Cicero's opponent, Catiline, as either rogue republican senator or proto-chivalric aristocrat, depending on the narrator's emphasis and selection of material.

⁶⁰ Bolton Holloway, *Twice-told tales* (n. 11, above) 265.

⁶¹ Folena, *Volgarizzare* (n. 15, above) 42–44; Segre, *Lingua, stile, società* (n. 5, above) 214–26; Ventura, 'L'iconografia' (n. 8, above) 511–12.

He was a great philosopher, and a great master in rhetoric, equally skilled in speaking well as in writing excellent letters. And it was he who set forth the Rhetoric of Tully, and made the good and useful book called the Tesoro, and the Tesoretto, and the key to the Tesoro, and many other books of philosophy and on the vices and virtues, and he was the Secretary of our commune. He was a worldly man, but we have mentioned his name on the grounds that he was the first to teach and instruct the unpolished Florentines, and train them in good speaking, and in the art of guiding and ruling our republic according to the art of politics.⁶²

Villani's epitaph preserves the image of Brunetto as he himself might wish to be remembered. It is an irony of history that posterity's more enduring image of Latini should be that presented in Dante's *Inferno* XV. In the *Inferno* episode, as Justin Steinberg notes, it is the figure of Dante-pilgrim who takes on the Ciceronian role and wears the robes of authority (Brunetto declares 'I will follow at your skirts': *Inf.* XV, 40).⁶³ Brunetto is given a speech in which his authentic preoccupation with the Catilinarian conspiracy and its Florentine legacy, attested in the *Rettorica* and *Tresor*, becomes the fodder for far-from-decorously worded vituperation. Among all of the much-debated reasons for Dante-poet's decision to include Brunetto in his poem and to allocate him this particular place, it is almost certain that one factor was simply Latini's contemporary fame. Paradoxically, Dante's shameful fiction of a damned Brunetto draws much of its force from what, till then, had been a firmly-founded external reputation, based on Latini's unquestionable command of eloquence, and his very achievement of a quasi-Ciceronian position as politician and philosopher, 'the very wisest of all the Florentines', in his own time.

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⁶² Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. G. Porta, 3 vols (Parma 1990–91) VIII.10. Translation mine.

⁶³ In *Inferno*, Brunetto is literally beneath or behind the hem of the Dante-character's robe, since an elevated dyke raises Dante and Virgil above the sinners on the fiery plain. Steinberg's reading of the whole episode (*Dante and the limits of the law* [n. 57, above] 35–40) is attentive and rewarding.